



U06/U07 Academy Session 1

Main Topic: Introduction to dribbling. Dribbling is the most important skill we can teach our young players. We must allow them to experiment using the different parts of the foot they can use to dribble the ball. Change of direction and change of speed are crucial to successful dribbling. Change of direction is the ability while dribbling to alter course to the left or the right or a 180° turn using the different parts of the foot. Change of speed while dribbling could be from slow to fast or fast to slow, to come to a complete stop or to move from a standing start. The players must keep the soccer ball in control while they are dribbling. This generally means the ball must remain within arm reach. They must also learn to push the ball when dribbling instead of kicking the ball, running to get it, and then kicking it again.

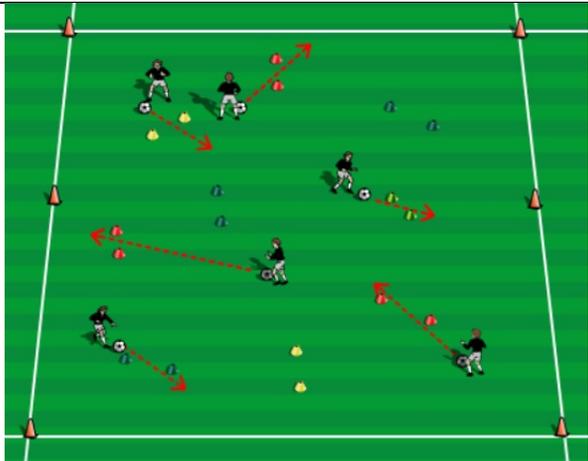
Other topics

Field Boundaries. We want to introduce the players to the concept of a field boundary. At this young age it will be difficult for them to completely understand the idea of a boundary but we still want to encourage them to play within their playing area. Allowing them to use their imagination by making the playing area an island, jungle, pirate ship or ocean helps them understand the concept of a boundary.

Formation. We want to introduce the players to the concept of the diamond formation. For the diamond formation we have one player who plays up top, a player who is on the left, a player on the right, and a player at the back of the diamond.

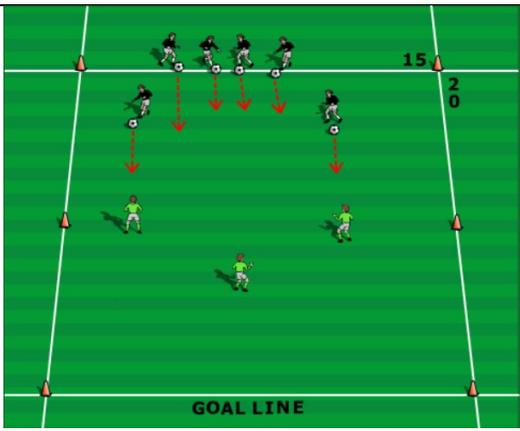
| Activity Name/Description | Diagram/Instructions | Coaching Points/Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Warmup Activities | | |
| <p>1st Activity – Body Awareness Purpose is activities to improve their balance, coordination and agility. <u>Balance – Stationary</u> Stand on one leg – stand back on two feet and switch to standing on the other leg <u>Balance/Agility</u> 1. Hop in one place on one leg, then stop and repeat on the opposite leg, then switch while hopping 2. Hop and move around 360°. Change direction.</p> | <p>WITHOUT A BALL. For this first session, keep the movements simple. Standing on one leg, standing on the other leg, jumping on one leg, jumping on the other. Jumping on the other leg while turning in a circle. Start by demonstrating the movements and then ask them to show you movements they can do.</p> | |
| <p>2nd Activity - Exploring the playing area In a follow the leader format, take some time walking the players around the practice area boundary pointing out when they are on and when they are off.</p> | <p>WITHOUT A BALL Have the players run around their field space and just around the outside of their field space. Yell “freeze” and ask them if they are in our out of their “field”.</p> | |
| Maze Games | | |
| <p>3rd Activity – Ball Retrieve Purpose is to get the players to go after their ball and return it to the coach. Coach sends each player’s ball out approximately 20 feet for the player to retrieve. Let them experiment on different ways they can bring the ball back and then start giving them conditions, i.e. ball must stay on the ground, they must use their feet, they can only use the inside of the foot, etc.</p> | <p>There are 6 parts of the foot that can be used to dribble a soccer ball. Inside, Outside, Toe, Heel, Sole (bottom), Instep (Laces) Have the players try using each part of their foot. We are not concerned yet that they are using both feet but do verify that they are using the correct part of the foot when directed.</p> | <p>What are the different parts of our foot you can use to dribble? <i>Have players answer and demonstrate what they know</i> Which way allows us to bring the ball back the fastest? <i>Have players demonstrate when they answer</i></p> |
| <p>4th Activity –Stop and Start (variation of red light/green light) The purpose of this activity is to get the players to stop the ball with the bottom (sole) of the foot. Players are to keep the ball close so they can stop quickly.</p> | <p>All players dribble around the playing area. When coach says, “Freeze!” they stop the ball with the bottom of their foot. Once they have stopped and are resting with one foot gently on their ball, the coach yells “GO!” and they start dribbling again. As they speed up, the ball must stay close so they can still stop it quickly. Have them dribbler quicker and faster and work on stopping the ball in a controlled manner.</p> | |
| Target Games | | |

5th Activity – Gate Escape
 The purpose of this activity is to introduce the players to dribbling under pressure, change of direction, and moving to a target. Two cones are placed approx 2 ft apart as gates all over the playing area (try to have as many gates as you have players). Players dribble through one gate and then proceed to dribble through another. Once they get the hang of it, encourage them to try to do it a little faster but it is important to ensure once they pick up the speed they are still dribbling under control.



The (coaches/parents) are trying to steal the ball. The players can escape by dribbling their ball through one of the gates. Once the player dribbles through the gate, the (coaches/parents) must go try to find another ball to steal. Try to see how many gates we can dribble through without losing our ball. Once we lose our ball how quickly can we get it back.

6th Activity - Cross the Island
 (Variation of Sharks and Minnows)
 The purpose of this activity is to introduce the players to dribbling from one goal line to the other, dribbling under pressure, and trying to win the ball back if they lose it to another player. For this activity, the coaches are the defenders and attempt to steal the players' balls as they dribble down the field. The coach should encourage the player to win the ball back after they have stolen it.



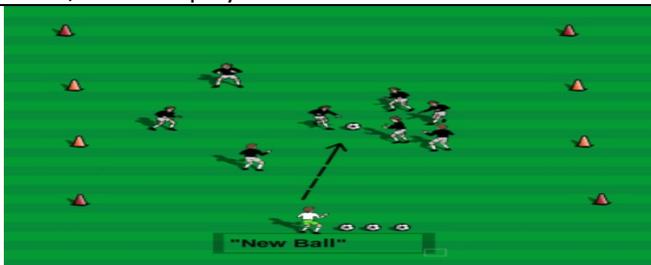
The player start at one end of the grid and when the coach says "Go", they attempt to dribble their ball to the other end of the grid. The coaches/players try to steal their ball. If they lose their ball, they must try to win it back. If they reach the other end of the grid, they wait for the coach's command and play again. Don't have players "out" if balls are taken, have them become the "sharks"

Final Game

7th Activity - Diamond Formation
 The purpose of this activity is to introduce the players to the diamond formation.

On the field set up four cones for each group that represent the diamond formation (top, left, right, and back). Point to a player and tell them their position. The player should go stand next to the cone that represents their position. Do this for the 4 positions. Once the positions are filled tell another player a position. That player goes to that position, high fives the player that is there, and that player comes off the field to wait for a new position.

8th Activity - Game
 The purpose of this activity is to start to introduce the players to playing a game. Should be 4v4 with goals scored when a player dribbles through the cone goal. This provides an appropriate target to attack and numerous 1v1 opportunities.



Set up two cone goals at each end of the grid. Players score only by dribbling through one of the cone goals. This will encourage dribbling. Additionally, having two goals at each end will encourage players not to just stand in front of a goal.

COOL DOWN