

Developing a dribbler

There is nothing more exciting than seeing attacking players dribble past defenders. Greats such as Pele, Best and Maradona have influenced current stars like Messi and Ronaldo. Develop your players to play with the same style and freedom of expression. This session uses games to improve their dribbling skills.



What you tell your players the session is about

1. Learning to dribble. Changing speed, directions and completing skills.
2. Beating your defender to create goal scoring opportunities.
3. Learning to play under the pressure of close marking.

Session planner

Warm up 10 mins	Session 10 mins	Developments 15 mins	Game 20 mins	Warm down 5 mins
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Activity	Kit	Outcome
Warm up	Balls and cones	Players complete various ball skills. From <i>The Ultimate Football Warm-Ups Manual</i> , exercise 31
The session	Balls, cones and poles	Players learn to complete various dribbling moves at speed
Development	Balls and cones	Players being positive on the ball and beating defenders with dribbling moves learnt in the session
Game	Balls cones and two goals	Players going 1v1 to compete with and without the ball
Warm down	n/a	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



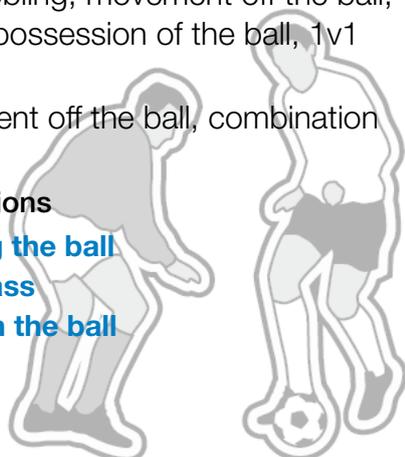
Where it fits

Individual skills: Dribbling, movement off the ball, decision making in possession of the ball, 1v1 attack and defence

Team skills: Movement off the ball, combination play in attack

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What to think about

- Players change speed when dribbling to surprise defenders. By going slow in one direction they can force a defender to one side before quickly changing direction and accelerating into the space created.
- Players making good decisions on the ball. Dribbling in space or in 1v1s should be encouraged. However, when they are outnumbered, it's important to keep possession.
- Movement off the ball from team mates helps to isolate the defender in a 1v1. In addition, it can create passing opportunities to complete a one-two or overlapping move.





Set-up

Create a circular playing area, 30 yards in diameter with a circuit of balls, cones and goals stationed around the space.



What you get your players to do

The players try to dribble across the area as quickly as possible. On the way, they complete various skills and moves through the obstacles. These include 1 – turn in the gate, 2 – slalom through the poles, 3 – perform a skill on the mannequin, and 4 – quick feet through the crazy cones. Use three or four balls at a time so players get plenty of opportunities.



What to call out

- “Change the speed of your dribble.”
- “Be clever, use disguise in your play.”
- “It’s a 1v1, take them on.”



Development

Set up a small-sided game where lots of goals can be scored using dribbling skills. Mark out a 40 yards by 30 yards playing area with four gated goal zones in the corners and one in the centre. The goal zones should be no larger than 5 yards by 5 yards and can be made smaller to make scoring harder. The aim is for players to dribble into the zones to score a goal. The player scoring is then allowed to make an unopposed pass to a team mate to continue the game.

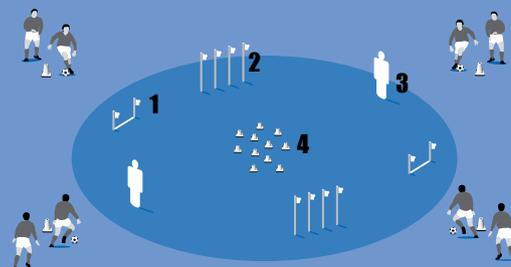


Game situation

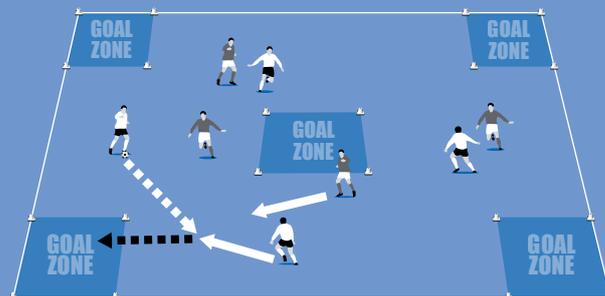
Play a normal game and encourage dribbling, but also good decision making in possession of the ball. There are rules you can include to ensure dribbling is used at every opportunity. One example is to play a man marking game where players choose an opponent on the other team. These players are only allowed to be tackled by their direct opponent in the game.

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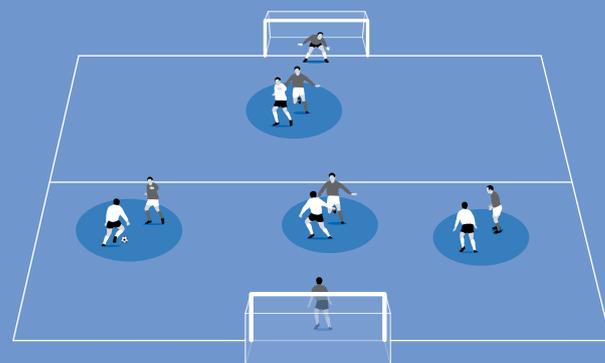
player movement \Rightarrow pass $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$
 run with ball $\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\Rightarrow$



The players have to complete a series of skills to get across the area at top speed.



The white attacker dribbles into a goal zone.



Each player is man marked by a player on the opposite team.