



U8/U9 Academy Session 1

Main Topic: Dribbling to beat a defender. 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.

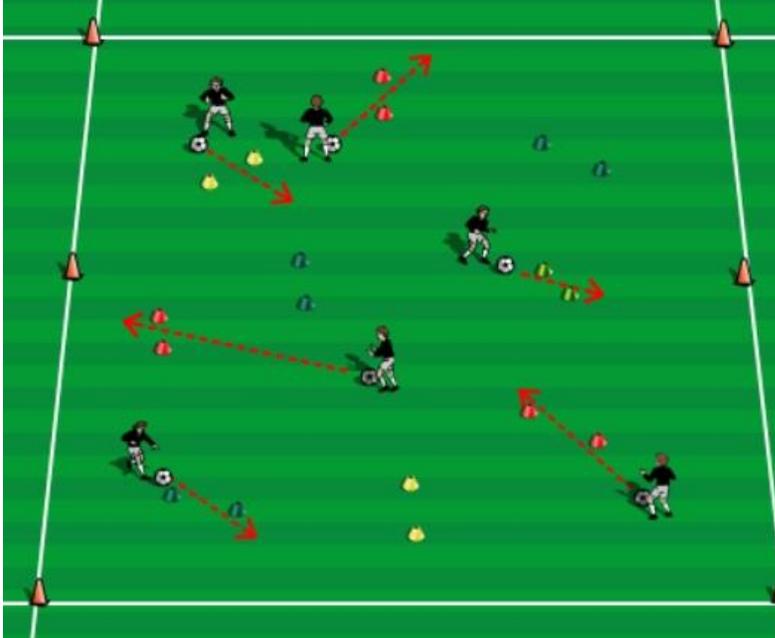
Other topics

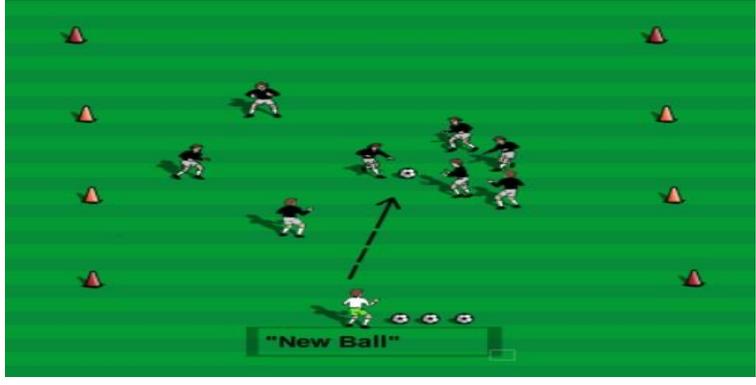
Formation Introduce the players to the formation they will be using for games.

For U8 they will play 6 v 6. The recommended formation is GK - 2-3

For U9 they will be playing a 7 v 7. The recommended formation is GK -2 -3- 1.

Activity Name/Description	Diagram/Instructions	Coaching Points/Questions
Warmup Activities		
<p>1st Activity – Stop & Go</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. every player dribbling a ball 2. On coaches direction, players stop ball and then go with speed 3. Coach demonstrates stop & go, and players try to copy 4. Players invent their own stop & go 5. Coach observes, and choose players to demonstrate their stop & go for others to copy 	<p>20 X 20 yard grid</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See ball through bottom of eyes 2. Speed up after stop 3. Change of direction with inside and outside cuts with each foot 4. Utilize different surfaces of the foot to dribble

<p>2nd Activity – Shadow Players begin to move in any direction throughout the grid one partner leading and the other closely following. The trailing player tries to imitate the dribbling movements of the lead player. Stop the game after 30 seconds and switch so the leader now becomes the follower.</p>	<p>20 X 20 yard grid Divide the team into pairs. All players are within the grid, with one ball per player.</p>	<p>Play the game without a ball first. After the game has been played with a ball, try to pair players with similar dribbling ability. Make sure the players are getting their head up to avoid the other players in the grid.</p>
<p>3rd 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 approximately 2 ft apart as gates all over the playing area (try to have as many gates as you have players or even a few more). Players dribble through one gate and then proceed to dribble through another gate. 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.</p>		<p>See how many gates they can dribble through in a minute.</p>
<p>4th Activity – Gate Escape with Defenders</p>	<p>Same game as above but start out by designating 3 players as defenders without a ball. The defender will try to steal the ball from another player. Once they do they start dribbling through the gates and the player that lost the ball is now a defender.</p>	

<p>5th Activity – 1 v 1 Set up two goals (cones) at each end of the grid. Have two lines on each side of the coach. The Coach will roll out a ball and the first player in each line will go out to win the ball and try to score. A point is scored whenever one of the players dribbles through one of the goals.</p>		<p>Having two goals at each end of the grid gives the attacking player options to try to score. It also discourages the defender from just standing in front of the goal. Point out to the attacking player that they are able to score in either goal (cones)</p>
<p>6th Activity - Formation The purpose of this activity is to introduce the players to formation they will be using during games.</p>	<p>On the field set up cones to represent the formation you will be using during games and explain each position. You can have the players stand next to the cone that represents their position. GK – 2 – 3 (This formation is recommended – coaches may utilize GK – 2-2-1 or GK-2 1 2)</p>	
<p>7th Activity – Game 4 v 4 Set up to cone goals at each end of the playing area. Goals are scored when a player dribbles through the cone goal. This provides an appropriate target to attack and numerous 1v1 opportunities. Coach should have a couple balls so if a ball goes out of the grid he can yell “new ball” and roll a new ball into play.</p>		<p>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.</p>
<p>Cool Down</p>		
<p>Cool Down - Juggling The purpose of this activity is to develop Hand-Eye Coordination. Players drop the ball and juggle once and then catch it. If a player cannot use their foot then have them juggle the ball once using their thigh.</p>		<p>Players pick up their ball and gently drop it to juggle it once using their foot or thigh. We don't want them to toss the ball in the air but to just drop it gently, juggle once and then catch the ball. Repeat alternating feet/thigh. They can allow the ball to hit the ground inbetween</p>