

2010 1 / 2 Grade Soccer Practice Guide



Presented by Mahomet Parks and Recreation

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Purpose:

The purpose of this guide is to provide a basic outline to volunteer coaches that will assist you through the season. This guide has a practice outline for all eight weeks of the season.

League Format:

30 minutes instructional/practice, 30 minute game, meets once/week

2010 Youth Soccer League Cheat Sheet					
Leagues	Field Size	Goal Size	Time	Ball Size	Players on Field
1st and 2nd Grade	50 yd. x 30 yd.	6-8 ft long. 4 ft high	four 10 minute periods	Size 3	4 on 4 no goalie

Practice Guide:

Practices will consist of a warm-up then move to practice drills. All the drills are in the practice guide are in the instructor's manual. If you do each drill 2 or 3 times and still have some practice time left just repeat the drills over, repetition helps the kids learn, or do a new drill you would like to try. The below guide also encourages a progression approach to development of soccer skills/fundamentals.

Remember, above all HAVE FUN. If something's not working, don't spend too much time on it, move on to something else. Patience, flexibility and fun are the most important attributes of coaching at this level.

*****SEE NEXT PAGE FOR WEEKLY PRACTICE GUIDE*****

2010 1st and 2nd Grade Youth Soccer Practice Guide			
Week	Warm-up	Practice	Game Time
1a	Do some stretching, Then have them either sprint/jog a couple laps ex. 20 yards and back or you could set up some cones about 5 to 10 yards apart and have them weave through the cones while dribbling, do this drill a couple times. Total time 5 to 10 minutes	Red Light Green Light do 2 or 3 times and Simon Says do 2 or three times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
1b		Tigers in the Jungle do 2 or 3 times and Cops and robbers do 2 to 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
2a		Follow the Leader do 2 to 3 times and Last Man do 2 to 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
2b		Dribble Freeze Tag do 2 to 3 times and Egg hunt 2 to 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
3a		Sharks and Minnows do 2 or 3 times and Pac Man do 2 to 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
3b		Braveheart do 2 or 3 times and Cliffhanger do 2 to 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
4a		Gates Passing do 2 to 3 times and Moving Target. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
4b		Dribbler's Alley do 2 or 3 times and Give and go do 2 or 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
5a		Bombs and Missles do 2 or 3 times and InterMilan do 2 to 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
5b		Crabs on the Beach do 2 or 3 times and Junkyard Soccer do 2 or 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute

6a		Moving Goals do 2 or 3 times and Partner Shooting do 2 or 3 times. Total times 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
6b		Snake do 2 to 3 times and Olympics do 2 to 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
7a		Dunk Hunt do 2 or 3 times and Junkyard do 2 or 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes	30 minute
7b		Sharks and Minnows do 2 or 3 times and Partner Shooting do 2 to 3 times. Total time 20 to 25 minutes.	30 minute
8a		Enough practice just play and have fun	1 hour
8b		Enough practice just play and have fun	1 hour

Fun games for under 8's

Fun Games that Teach Skills

NOTE: Several of the games listed are "knock out" games where the losers are knocked out and the last player left is the winner. Since the first ones knocked out are often the ones who need the most practice, those knocked out should be required to do something to either get back into the game or to keep them working on their ball skills until the game is over. One possibility is to set up a parallel game for those knocked out to participate in.

I recommend having the kids that are knocked out do a penalty ("jump as high as you can three times" or "four jumping jacks") and then go back in the game.

NAME OF GAME **Simon Says**

PURPOSE OF THE GAME: To encourage children to run with the ball, keeping it close to their feet

AREA NEEDED: 20 m x 20 m

STORY: Simon is the King of Knotty Ash. In Knotty Ash all of the people are children. When King Simon says "foot, knee, sit, elbow, head on the ball" you have to do it straight away. The coach can also integrate commands such as change direction, go faster and so on, into the game. If King Simon does not issue the command or a child responds slowly, he/she receives a "GOTCHA". However, children should not be eliminated from the game.

EQUIPMENT. Eight cones to mark area and one ball per child

ORGANIZATION: Mark out a 20 m x 20 m area using the cones. Ask each child to dribble around Knotty Ash (the area) with the ball remaining close to the foot. (Tell children to imagine that the ball is connected to their feet by a short piece of elastic.) The coach calls out a command which the child should follow only when preceded by "Simon says"

The drill/game "Simon Says" encourages children to move with the ball under close control. They have now begun the process of dribbling. The next progression would be to encourage the children to use their peripheral vision. The following game "Tigers in the Jungle" will create an environment to enhance this process.

NAME OF GAME. **Tigers in the Jungle**

PURPOSE. To encourage children to look up whilst dribbling at speed

AREA NEEDED. 20 m x 20 m

STORY. Each child chooses to be a type of animal that lives in the jungle and makes the sound of that animal. Only tigers are not allowed. The tiger is the most feared animal in the jungle and is going to try to kick the other animals' footballs into the surrounding alligator infested swamp. If the tiger kicks a ball into the swamp the child can dodge the alligators and bring it back into the jungle again. The child then stands with legs apart and ball in the air making the animal noise. When another animal/child dribbles the ball through this child's legs, he/she is free to continue the game. BEWARE OF THE TIGER!

EQUIPMENT.. Eight cones and a soccer ball for each child except "the tiger"

ORGANISATION.. Set out a 20 m x 20 m area with the cones. Ask the animals to dribble around the jungle, without dribbling into each other or the swamp (ie, the area

outside of the grid). The tiger, a child without a ball, is going to prowls around the grid and on the coach's command enter the jungle and attempt to kick as many footballs as possible into the swamp. Remind children of safety points regarding challenging for the ball. All players can re-enter the grid once they have retrieved their ball from the swamp. A drill such as "Tigers in the Jungle" encourages children to dribble the ball at speed whilst using their peripheral vision in a controlled, pressurised and "fun" situation. The next coaching technique to be taught when dribbling would be to change speed and direction whilst beating a defender. The game "Crabs on the Beach" will help to illustrate how to develop these techniques in a fun environment.

NAME OF GAME: Crabs on the Beach

PURPOSE. To encourage children to dribble with the ball and change speed and direction to beat an opponent. The art of "feinting a dummy" can be introduced at this stage.

AREA NEEDED. 30 m x 20 m grid

STORY: Each child assumes the name of a sea creature, except the crab. Each creature has to run from the beach to the sea with a ball, avoiding the crabs who are trying to "pinch" the balls. A child whose ball is pinched then becomes a crab.

EQUIPMENT: Ten cones and a football for each child except "the crab"

ORGANISATION: Set out a 20 m x 30 m area with the cones. Make one 30 m line the sea and the other 30 m line the beach. Ask the children (sea creatures) to stand on the beach line, each with a foot on the ball. Place a child (the crab) in the middle of the area in a crab like position (on all fours with tummy upwards) On your command tell the creatures to dribble their ball from the beach to the sea whilst avoiding the crab. When they reach the sea line they must wait with a foot on the ball until all players have crossed the beach. The crab must aim to kick each child's football out of the grid via the 20 m side lines. Any creatures losing their balls then become crabs. The game continues on the coach's command with players now returning from the sea back to the beach. The last three children to be dribbling their footballs become "SEA CHAMPS".

Puppy in the Park

The coach tells them how they must imagine that the ball is their new 'birthday puppy'. Their leg is the 'lead' and their foot the 'collar'.

A puppy is safely on the lead if their foot on top of the ball.

The grid area is the park and outside the grid is a river or busy road. Once in the park, the child must keep his puppy under 'control'. Failure to do so may result in the puppy leaving the park and running into the road or river.

Task 1 The first task is for the child to take his puppy for a run around the park (ball familiarity, dribbling and running with the ball).

Task 2 The 'park keeper' enters the park (the coach) "if he comes near you - show him you have your pup under control" (stopping/checking). Move off when the 'parkie' has gone (stop start movements).

Task 3 The 'dog catcher' enters the park (coach) and chases you - "keep your puppy away from him" (dribbling, feinting, screening).

Task 4 The coach places some cones in the grids.

'You have now entered a section of trees in the park - move around but don't let your pup near another puppy in case they fight and don't let your puppy near a tree in case (use your imagination).

Task 5 Take half the group and their ball out. Put bibs on them. They are now the 'Rottweilers, (R).

The puppy group moves around avoiding each other and the trees, the road and the river. On the command the 'Rottweilers' enter the park and try to chase the puppies out! The Rottweilers must stay on their leads with their 'masters' whilst the puppies must get away - still avoiding the river, trees and each other. The group change roles.

Task 6 Increase park to 60 yards x 30 yards

The puppies must leave the park to go home but they must cross some wasteland where the Rottweilers are waiting. The R's must stay in the wasteland once the puppies make it through to home (without being kicked out into the road/river) they are safe. Reverse roles again .

Task 7 Puppies now have to confront the Rottweilers at the park gets to get safely into the wasteland and then again at the garden gate to get safely home! (Practice both ways.)

These practices can be progressed to shooting and beating the goalkeeper at the end of the dribble. This is guided discovery, - so think those progressions out for yourself.

Numbers

The exercise is good for 1 vs 1 dribbling skills. It is especially good on a hot day as the kids defending can rest a bit. Divide the kids into 2 groups. If you have ten kids, say, assign each kid a number between one and five. So each team has a number one, a number two, etc. Try to make sure the kids with the same number are evenly matched. Set up two very wide "goals" with pylons. Spread the five kids on each side across each goal line. Call out one or more numbers, and those kids come out to play 1 vs 1, 2 vs 2, etc. and the rest of the kids stay spread across the goal line as defenders. Throw a ball from the sideline into the centre and let them play it until a goal is scored, the defenders stop it, or it goes out of bounds.

Variation: Colours. Use two each of different coloured pinnies, armbands, or stickers to place on shirts, as younger kids will have trouble remembering numbers.

Monkey in the Middle

All players form a circle and choose someone (the "Monkey") to be in its center. The players forming the circle pass one ball among them while the person in the center tries to gain control of the ball. When this happens, the person in the circle who last touched the ball goes to the center. Some level of competitiveness develops but never on an individual basis and the "losers" quickly gets a chance to redeem themselves.

Ice Monster

Mark off an area for the game to be played and select one kid to be the "Monster". Have the rest of the kids (each with a ball) dribble around within the area. The "Ice Monster" attempts to touch each player's ball, at which point that player "freezes" with their foot on the ball. If a player's ball goes out of bounds, they also freeze. The last remaining unfrozen player gets to be the new Ice Monster for the next round.

Cops and Robbers

Have the kids (each with a ball) line up on one side of the field. These guys are the "Robbers". Have two more kids (the Cops) facing the Robbers somewhere near halfway to the other side. The object is for the Robbers to dribble to the other side without having a Cop tackle the ball away. If a robber loses his ball to a cop, he goes to jail (designate a small area off to the side or use a Goal structure.) Have the Robbers repeat the crossings until there are only 2 left. Make these guys the new cops, pull everyone out of jail and start over.

Pirate (or Monster)

A keepaway game. Coaching points: concentrate on the player's close dribbling and screening techniques. Everybody inside a circle (center circle is fine) with a ball. One player without a ball is the Pirate. Everybody starts dribbling around. The Pirate player tries to steal a ball from any player and pass it out of the circle - now, the two players are Pirates and go after the others.....then three, then four. Finally only one player is left with a ball. He/she becomes the Pirate the next game.

Variation: Bomber. Just like above except the "IT" player has a ball and tries to roll/throw it at the other player's and knock their ball out of the circle.

Kick out

Everyone dribbles and shields their ball within a circle while trying to kick everyone else's ball out, and simultaneously to protect their own. You can't kick someone else's ball out if your ball isn't in the circle. If your ball goes out you have to leave the circle it gets down to two kids in a duel. The coach may participate to keep the game from becoming too competitive, as the ones eliminated early may feel bad.

Give and go

This one is good for getting the kids to move after they make a pass. It is appropriate for kids a little older, who pass the ball but like to stop and really admire their better passes. Everyone spaces themselves around the center circle. Give the ball to one person and they call out someone's name and pass to them. They then run to the receiver's position in the circle. The receiver upon hearing their name called steps forward to receive the pass and yells "I got it!" The sequence is then repeated. Several things are accomplished besides getting them used to movement. The "I got it!" yell addresses the problem of nobody playing the ball in a game because they thought the other was going to play it. We all learn each other's names quickly.

Invariably, someone is always left out so start a countdown from 10 to 0 and they have to figure out who has been left out (the left out person should be quiet). They start yelling among themselves to figure out who it is and this fosters communication on the field. (It's pretty humorous too).

After a few practices, they get it down so they look pretty sharp. Then you toss in another ball. They love it! Now they have to think a bit because people are moving and two are busy with the other ball.

Egg Hunt

Have more balls than players. Have the players line-up across one end of the field. Take their balls and spread them out around the field, these are the eggs. At the other end of the field is a goal called the "basket". Blow the whistle and turn them loose. The object of the game is to get all the "eggs" in the basket as quickly as possible. They are all on the same team, and aren't allowed to take a ball away from another player. Time them to see how fast they can accomplish the task.

The kids really like this game. The more balls (eggs) the better. You should see them score, and turn right around and go back for more balls.

Marbles

Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble (a #2 ball works well). Have them try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts, don't require them to use their own ball, they are free to use any other ball they can find.

At first the players may get really excited and kick the marble. If this happens, call time-out and put it back.

Variation: eliminate the teams and play it in a circle. The game is over when the ball exits the circle.

Teach the parents

During the last practice of the season have a scrimmage between the parents and the players (with the coaches helping the players). This serves a couple of purposes. The kids love this game. They get a chance to show their parents what they can do and they enjoy beating their parents. (The parents never win, the coaches make sure of that....) Also, since many of the parents have never played soccer it shows them how difficult the game really is. The hope is that a parent may now think twice before "yelling" at a child for missing and "easy" shot in a game. Everybody seems to enjoy this scrimmage.

Shark and minnows

Teaches kids with the ball to shield it from an opponent and teaches kids without the ball how to take it away from an opponent. Use pylons to create a 15-yard square. One player, the shark, starts outside the square without a ball. All other players, the minnows, start inside the square with a ball. When the coach yells, "Shark's getting hungry!" the shark starts running around the outside of the square and the fish start dribbling around inside the square. When the coach yells, "Shark attack!" the shark enters the square and has 30 seconds to send as many balls as possible outside the square. When a ball leaves the square for any reason, the corresponding fish must leave the square and stay out until the coach gives the "Stop!" command at the end of the 30 seconds. A fish has done well if still alive. The shark has done well if few fish survived. Choose a new shark and play another round until every player has been the shark once.

Camp Town Races

Line up all the players on one end of the field. They each have a ball. On the whistle, they all dribble to opposite end, shoot ball into goal, get ball out of goal, and run back and

finish with a shot on opposite goal. The first one to finish is the winner. Ask them "Who is going to win the race?" They all learn to say "The player who can dribble it the straightest!" A variation is to start half at one end and half on the other. This really teaches them to try to do it fast while maintaining possession. This drill really helps players deal with the balls that pop out of the bunch.

DRIBBLING

Explode

Every kid has a ball. You get them all around you dribbling their balls as close as they can get. Make sure they begin their dribbling using the insides of both feet...no toe balls at the first practice! Make them keep control of the ball....always within one step....and do not let them run into one another or dribble their ball into another ball or another player. Keep telling them to get their heads up and see the open spaces. Yell "Explode!" at which point they all run away (dribbling their balls) as fast as they can. First one to get to a boundary or cone "wins".

Flags

Players start with a ball and 2 flags. A flag is a cloth strip about 2 inches wide and a foot long. Flags are stuck into the waistband of the players' pants at each side. A player is eliminated when he/she loses both flags and his/her ball. A ball is lost when it is kicked out of bounds (by another player with a ball) or stolen (by a player with at least one flag but no ball). You can only take someone's flag away when you have a ball. The first flag usually goes pretty quick. The real fun comes when they learn to protect both the ball and the remaining flag by using the flagless side to shield

Dribble Relay

Set up an 'obstacle-course' with cones as 'gates' - and team 'A' races team 'B'-they have to go out and back - if they lose control and miss a gate, they have to regain control and go through the gate. A variation is to have a small 'square' at the end. They have to stop the ball in the square, then sprint back and high-five the next player before he/she can take off. Another variation is to have several parents positioned at different places along the 'course' and have a different one hold up a number of fingers at random times during the race - and award points to the player that sees it and correctly yells out the number first. This gets the players heads up.

Freeze Tag

Set up a large rectangle with cones and have the players dribble in the rectangle. After a short time, take the ball away from one or two players who then become "it." Any player whose ball is touched by an "it" player becomes frozen and has to stop dribbling, spread his legs apart, and hold his ball above his head. He is frozen in this position until another player dribbles his ball between the frozen players legs. Switch the "it" players often and make it a contest to see who can freeze the most at one time.

Red Light/Green Light

Each player with a ball lines up at one end of the penalty area. A coach stands at the other end and yells, "Green light," and turns his back to the players. The kids race across the

penalty area to see who can reach the coach first. After a few seconds, the coach yells, "Red light." At that command, the players must stop and put a foot on top of the ball. The coach turns back around and looks for players whose ball is still moving. Those players must move a certain distance back to the starting line. Repeat calling red light/green light until someone wins the race. This game encourages fast dribbling while keeping the ball close.

Simon Says

Just like the common children's game, the coach gives instructions like "Simon says dribble with your left foot" or "Simon says switch balls with someone." The players only follow the instructions if they begin with "Simon says..." Anyone following instructions that do not start with "Simon says..." are knocked out. But the knocked out players should be doing something with the ball, not just watching the game continue. Continue the game until one player is left.

Follow the leader

Pick a leader and have him dribble anywhere on the field, encouraging him to make lots of turns, changing speed, etc. All other players have to follow the leader and do whatever that player does. Switch leaders often.

Get 'em

All players must stay within a grid. Player 'A' is "It" and is the only player to start with a ball. Player 'A' dribbles and tries to hit the other players below the waist with the ball. When hit, that player gets a ball and joins player 'A'. The game is over when all of the players have been caught. The last player caught starts with the ball for the next game. If you think the task will be too difficult for the one player to get another at the start of the game, start with 2 players being "It". Encourage quick movements and sudden changes of direction to catch players off guard. Encourage deceptive passing of the ball: look one-way and pass the other; use the outside of the foot. Players not caught should run, jump, and use zig-zag movements.

Dribbler's Alley

Four or more players needed. Set up one less pair of cones (gates) than the number of players you have in a line. Each gate should be about 6 feet wide and have about 10 feet between each gate. Every player guards a gate and the remaining player tries to dribble through the gates.

Last Man Out

Two players or more needed. All players stand at a cone about 20 feet from a group of balls. There is one less ball than the number of players. On the coach's command, the players run to the balls, get one and begin dribbling. The player who didn't get a ball tries to steal one from the others. The coach keeps time and after a preset period has passed, the coach stops the game. The player who, at that time does not have a ball, is out. Remove one ball from the group and repeat until there is only one person with a ball.

Tag

This drill is based on the common kids' game of tag. Mark off a grid or circle. Everybody needs a ball. Whoever is "it" must dribble to another player and tag him. The other player avoids being tagged by dribbling away from "it." If the player being chased loses his ball outside the grid, dribbles out of the grid, or is tagged, he is "it" and the game continues.

Ball Tag

Everyone has a ball and dribbles in a confined area. The player who is "it" must pass his ball so that it hits another player's ball. The player whose ball was hit then becomes "it."

Hat Tag

Bring a half dozen baseball caps to practice. Then, in a slight variation of ball tag, we assigned hats to the "taggers," gave everyone a ball and had them dribble within a grid about the size of the penalty area. Whoever got tagged, got the hat and went off in search of someone else to tag.

Bumper car dribble

The whole team does this in a small grid. Try and match players of similar height. Have one player dribbling while another partner is trying to nudge them off the ball shoulder to shoulder. This teaches them to dribble under physical pressure and teaches the players that contact is a good and fun thing. Before games I have 2 players inside a circle formed by the rest of the team playing for possession of a ball, gets the players in the mode of fighting for the ball on the field (30 sec).

Musical Chairs

One less ball than the number of players in the drill. Players run around in goal areas in a scramble until whistle is blown. Players race to get ball from center circle and dribble to score on goal. Player without ball help get balls to center, repeating this until only one player left. Make sure to keep things moving along, don't wait very long to blow the whistle. Once players have concept start adding in defenders. One more that may work for you is using a ball as the goal. Have players match up by ability. Throw one ball out as the goal. Throw a second out that the two players will try and possess and score. First player to ball is attacker, second defends goal (ball) and tries to gain possession of ball. If successful, roles reverse. Only run this for 30-45 sec depending on effort of the players. I usually have 2-3 pairs doing this at once each with their own goal (ball) and playing ball.

Egg Hunt

Have more balls than players. Have the players line-up across one end of the field. Take their balls and spread them out around the field, these are the eggs. (If you have an unusual colored ball --make it the Golden Egg or something special.) At the other end of the field is a goal. I use a portable goal and call it the "basket." Blow the whistle, or whatever, and turn them loose. The object of the game is to get the "eggs" in the basket as quickly as possible. They are all on the same team, and aren't allowed to take a ball away from another player. I like to time them to see how fast they can accomplish the task.

Snake

Players are grouped into threes (preferred) or fours. First player is the "head" of the snake, and does not have a ball. She's essentially the leader in a follow-the-leader game. Second player has a ball at her feet, and must follow the head of the snake, dribbling wherever she goes. Third player is the "rattle". No ball, just following. Emphasize to the "heads" to vary their lead -- some fast, some slow, some sideways, some stopping, etc. I let one lead for about 20 seconds or so. Then, on a whistle from a coach, #2 drops the ball to #3 and becomes the head of the snake. The rattle (#3) becomes the dribbler and the former head circles around to become the rattle.

Line Soccer

Start with two lines of players facing one another. Give each player a number and a "matching" player in the other line. Kick the ball between the two lines and call out a number. The two players with the corresponding number will play one on one while trying to kick the ball through the opposing line. This game teaches the players in the line not to chase after the ball since they have to defend their line in a limited area.

Circle Game

Set up a 20x40 yard grid, make a center circle, and split players into two teams that can be identified by a color. Have all the kids dribble their balls in the center circle. Call out a color. That team dribbles toward their goal. The other team leaves their ball and runs to slow the attackers down trying to get them to a sideline and to dribble out-of-bounds, or not get to their goal line before the coach counts to 7 or Award 1 point for each out-of-bounds and 1 point for each player "held" for the coach's count. Attackers get 1 point for each "goal". Play to 10 points.

Sharks and Minnows

Start with a defined area marked, adjusted for size depending on the age of the players. Half the players have balls and are Minnows. The rest do not have balls and are the Sharks. The Minnows start at one end of the area and must dribble across the area and across the opposite goal line without losing possession of their ball. The Sharks defend the area, trying to kick the Minnows' balls out of the defined area. Minnows who retain possession turn around and go back for round two. A Minnow who loses their ball join the Sharks for round two. The last successful Minnow is the Grand Champion.

Variations of Sharks and Minnows

Sharks steal ball and go to a goal instead of just kicking the ball out.

Instead of eliminating players until only one is left, give points to the sharks for kicking out balls but let everyone stay in the game. Everyone gets a turn as a shark.

Sharks who take possession of a ball immediately become Minnows; Minnows who lose the ball become Sharks.

Players are not knocked out, but must perform some task before getting back into the game. (Such as ball dance.)

Minnows must control the ball in a goal area to encourage good ball control instead of just kicking the ball over the end line if a Shark gets close.

Death Square

Everyone dribbles around trying to keep their own ball and kick out everyone else's ball. If a player's ball is kicked out, he must retrieve it, then dance on the ball for 10 touches before getting back in. A player gets a point for every ball he kicks out (so if you spend time outside dancing on your ball, you have less time to win points).

Under Pressure

Get all the kids dribbling around in a square area and then remove one, two, or three balls, depending on how much pressure needed. Then announce that whoever has possession of a ball after 1 minute is a winner. If they can chase someone out of bounds they automatically win that ball. Count down the last 10 seconds real loud to increase the activity. Kids without a ball have to do some token penance; a couple of pushups, make a weird face for the others, nothing real negative.

1 v 1 to Goal

Divide players into two teams of 4 or 5 each + one goal and a supply of balls. Station each team at a corner post of the goal, standing off, but facing the field. Place a GK in goal facing the field. Coach/assistant stands behind the center of the goal with a supply of balls. Coach tosses a ball over the crossbar to about the penalty spot. A player from each team both sprint to the ball and attempt to control it, turn, and get a shot off. The second to the ball defends (if he then wins the ball, then he tries to shoot). When there is a score, save, or ball goes out of play, restart the same way with a different pair of players.

Treasure Chest and Trolls

This is a three-team, three-goal game. Play with 1-3 balls to keep everyone moving and looking up. Three players on each team play, while a sub is kept locked in "troll prison." Each team has three pieces of gold behind the goal they have to defend. Small disc cones, water jugs, etc. can be used. Whenever a team scores in the opponent's goal, they get to claim a piece of treasure for their treasure chest. The trolls, older kids or parents, had their own treasure chest and would occasionally run randomly within the field of play. If you hit the troll with the ball, you could claim a piece of troll treasure OR free a teammate from troll prison. (decision-making!) The grand finale is the "breakout" from troll prison. Let each of the prisoners escape with a ball and head for the goal while the trolls run wild on the field for a final, furious minute of play.

PASSING

The Name Game

4 or more players needed. Players stand in a circle and pass the ball to one another, but they must call out the name of the person they are passing to. This is great at the beginning of the season, so they learn everyone's names. If the players are doing well and you have enough players, add additional balls.

Battle Field

Any number of players can be used. All players line up on one end line and try to run to the other end without being hit with a ball kicked by a coach. Those who are hit join the firing squad. The game ends when everyone has been hit.

Gotcha!

Each player will need a ball. Player 'A' is "It" and is the only player to start with a ball. All the other players are around the outside of the gridded space. Player 'A' dribbles and tries to hit the other players below the waist with the ball. When hit, that player gets a ball and joins player 'A'. The game is over when all of the players have been caught. The last player caught starts with the ball for the next game. If you think the task will be too difficult for the one player to get another at the start of the game, start with 2 players being "It". Encourage quick movements and sudden changes of direction to catch players off guard. Encourage deceptive passing of the ball: look one-way and pass the other, use the outside of the foot. Players not caught should run, jump, and use zig-zag movements.

Monkey in the Middle

The players make a circle with one player (the monkey) in the center. The players try to pass the ball around and the monkey tries to intercept it. When the monkey gets the ball he joins the circle and whoever made the "fatal" pass becomes the monkey. This game can be modified by increasing the number of monkeys and/or balls that are used.

Marbles

Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble. Have them try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts I don't require them to use their own ball. If they lose theirs, they are free to use any other ball they can find.

Who's Open

Four or Five players in circle formation about 15 yards in diameter (adjust for age). All players except one have a ball at feet. Two players inside circle with one designated as attacker and the other defender. To start, attacking player moves and calls name of player he wants to serve him a ball. He must control ball and return to the open player who did not have a ball at start of exercise (you can't give it back to the player who served it). Attacker then asks for another ball (calling name and making appropriate run) and repeats the exchange. Defender tries to dispossess attacker.

JUGGLING

P-E-L-E

Play with two players. First player juggles one, second player has to match. First player then juggles two and second player matches. First player then juggles three and so on. When a player misses, the other player gets a letter - first P then E then L then E. After awarding a letter, the players start out at one again. The first player to spell PELE is the winner. This can be played thighs only, feet only, head only or any combination.

Black Jack (21)

Play with two or more players. First player juggles as many touches as they can and keeps track of count. Second player goes after first misses. After second player misses, first player goes again starting count where they missed in first turn. For example if player got five touches in first turn, they would start second turn at six. First player to

Black Jack (21) wins. This game can also be made more challenging by restricting it to certain body parts.

Combinations

Work to get "called" combinations. For example "Around the World" would be left foot, left thigh, head, right thigh, right foot.

Juggling with Movement

Start at one spot and walk/jog/run while juggling the ball. See how far you can go without dropping the ball. One variation of this is to start at the outside of the penalty area on the field, juggle up to the goal area and shoot/volley the ball into the net without letting it hit the ground.

Timed Juggles

See how many touches the player can get in a certain amount of time. We do a three minute timed contest. They don't have to be consecutive without a miss. This works great for getting the players focused and working hard for a certain time period and is great for aerobic fitness.

Team Juggling Contest

Have each player juggle and see how many touches they can get. Add the total touches for the whole team and create a team record. If they beat their team record, the coaches run a lap around the field. If they don't beat their record, the players run a lap around the field. When the kids are not very good jugglers, it doesn't take very long. I have seen huge improvements in my teams' juggling skills by doing nothing more than this in practice. It's just enough focus to get them working on their own.

GOAL KEEPING

Keeper Wars

Using four cones create two goal about 5-10 yards apart (depending on age, ability, etc). The width of the goals should be just beyond the armspan of the keepers. The keepers sit just in front of the cones facing each other. Each attempt to score goals on the other by throwing the ball through the goal. The ball must be kept below their shoulders.