

# **Basic Skills for U8 Players**

**Dribble with Both Feet**

**Pass with both Feet—short and long**

**Shoot with both feet—pass shot and drive shot**

**Throw-ins**

**Goal Kicks**

**Corner Kicks**

**Goalkeeping**

**MOST IMPORTANT RULE!!! HAVE FUN!!!**

## **DRIBBLING**

### **BASIC TECHNIQUE:**

1. Work on players NOT using toes—use inside and outside parts of the foot
2. Work on being able to look up while dribbling
3. Work on being able to stop and start dribbling
4. Work on being able to dribble with speed
5. Work on using both feet

### **GAMES AND ACTIVITIES**

#### **CONES**

Any number of players can be used.

Players dribble a ball in a winding fashion around cones that are set out in a line.

#### **VARIATION IDEAS**

- 1) Try putting the cones in an S shape or circle to have variety.

2) Once a player reaches the end of the line of cones, have them dribble back through. To encourage the kids to "look up," start the next player up the row of cones at the same time that the previous player is dribbling back. They have to look up to avoid hitting each other.

3) Work on using both feet

### **RED LIGHT-GREEN LIGHT**

Players each with a ball, facing coach. When coach says "Green Light," players start dribbling forward; on "Red Light," players stop

#### **VARIATIONS**

- 1) Work with both feet
- 2) Use hand signals to make players look up from the ball

### **BUFFALO RUN**

Any number of players can be used.

All players line up, with a ball, on one end line. The players try to dribble to the other end line without the coach, who stands in the middle, stealing their ball. The players who do lose their balls to the person in the middle must join that person. The game is over when only one person still has a ball.

### **KING/QUEEN OF THE CIRCLE**

4 or more players are needed.

A circle is marked off as a playing area, and every player is in the circle, with a ball. The players dribble around and try to kick the other's balls out of the circle, while keeping control of their own ball. The last player with their ball in the circle wins.

### **WORM**

3 or more players are needed.

All of the players get in a line with a ball. The first player, who is the "head" of the worm, starts dribbling and everyone follows. Give the players as much room as possible so they can twist and turn all over the place. You need a lot of time for this one because everyone will want to be the head!

## **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.

# **PASSING**

## **BASIC TECHNIQUES**

1. Work on short passes and longer passes—short passes can use inside of foot; longer passes use large front part of foot (avoid the toes!)
2. Work on being able to look up while passing
3. Work on being able to control a pass that is sent to a player
4. Work on using both feet

## **GAMES AND ACTIVITIES**

### **ROUND-UP**

5 or more players needed.

Players form a circle with one person in the middle. The middle person has a ball and passes it to someone in the circle, who passes it back.

Once the players grasp the concept, have the circle jog around.

## GOOOOOOAAAAAAL!!!

Even numbers are needed.

Partners stand 10-20 feet from each other, depending on skill level. A 3 foot wide "goal" is between them. The players have a certian amount of time to make as many good passes, on the ground, and between the cones as possible. They compete against other groups.

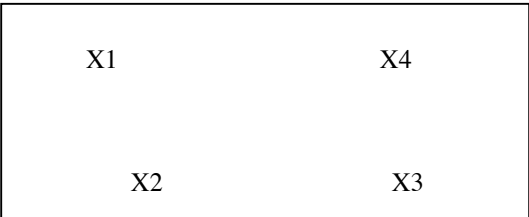
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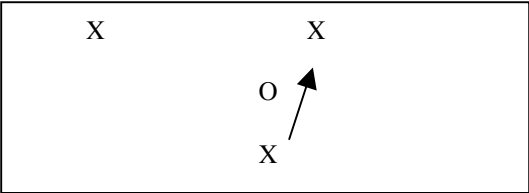
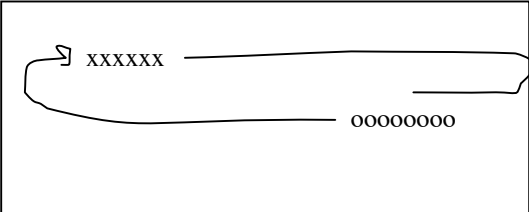
4 or more players needed.

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 begining of the season, so they learn everyone's names.

If the players are doing well and you have enough players, add another ball.

PASSING ACTIVITY	ORGANIZATION	KEY COACHING POINTS
	<p>4v0</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• X1 passes to X2, X2 to X3, X3 to X4, X4 to X1 and so on</li><li>• Stationary to start</li><li>• Add movement</li><li>• Progress to limited touches</li><li>• Unrestricted</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Passing technique</li><li>• Weight of pass</li><li>• Vision—look for receive and pass</li></ul>

<p>PASSING ACTIVITY</p> 	<p>3 v 1 keep away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted space—start 10x10, then expand</li> <li>• Start unlimited touches, then limit</li> <li>• O can knock out to start, but then must control and dribble out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving technique</li> <li>• Quality of reception and moving ball away from pressure</li> <li>• Off the ball movement</li> <li>• Pass selection</li> </ul>
<p>PASSING ACTIVITY</p> 	<p>ORGANIZATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two facing lines</li> <li>• X with ball, one touch, pass to O</li> <li>• O one touch, pass to X</li> <li>• Move in circle and keep the touch/pass sequence</li> <li>• Progression—longer passes</li> </ul>	<p>KEY COACHING POINTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One touch then clean pass</li> <li>• Use broad part of foot to pass, not toe</li> <li>• Accuracy, then speed</li> <li>• Touch on reception and preparation to pass</li> </ul>

## SHOOTING/FINISHING

### BASIC TECHNIQUES

1. At this age, shooting is much like passing—in-close use a short pass shot; further out, use a long-pass shot.
  2. Short shots: use inside of foot
- Longer shots: use large front part of foot (avoid the toes!)

### GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

#### GUARD THE CASTLE

You need at least 3 players.

The goal is a castle and the defenders protect the castle. The attackers try to blow up the castle by scoring a goal.

To make it harder on one group give their opponents a larger team. Or just as a fun practice ender have the kids play against the coach as either an attacker or a defender.

## **RACE TO FEED THE DRAGON**

# PLAYERS: 2 or can be done individually

EQUIPMENT: an even number of balls between 6 and 20, one cone, and one goal

Place the balls in two even piles on the halflines, and put the cone about 1/3rd of the way from the goal.

Before starting, ask the kids if they know what a soccer dragon looks like. Then tell them with wide eyes that the goal is a dragon and it is VERY hungry, and this dragon likes to eat soccer balls.

Have the players stand with one on each side of the goal. They will then run as fast as they can to get a ball from their pile, then dribble back and shoot it in the goal before they get to the cone. They must then run behind the goal, and go for another ball. The game continues until one player has shot all of his/her balls. The player who has scored the most is the winner.

If you want to use this as an individual drill, it is over when all the balls have been shot.

If there isn't a net on your goal, and you have extra players, have them collect the balls at the goal so it cuts down on chasing time between turns.

## **PASS AND SHOOT**

Two lines—one in front of the goal about 10-15 yards away, the second on either the right or left side, same distance. Players in the line to the side of the goal have the balls, and the person at the front of the line passes to the player in the middle line. The middle line player controls the pass and then shoots the ball into the goal. Players switch lines and continue. Move passing line to the other side, and work on players passing and shooting with both feet.

## **WORLD CUP**

Players are with a partner (though can be done individually). Each team chooses a name of a national soccer team (like England, Mexico, Brazil, United States). All teams play at the same time. The coach rolls the ball out in the half-field area, and the teams try to control the ball and shoot in the goal. They have to yell their team name as they shoot at the goal. When a team scores a goal, they sit down and wait for another team to score as well. Then the teams that scored play off against each other. Game continues until only one team is left.

## RULES AND SKILLS FOR U8—Throw-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks and goal-keeping

Players will need to learn the rules and skills for these activities in the U8 game.

### **Throw-ins:**

When the ball goes out of bounds, the other team starts play by throwing the ball back into the field. To throw the ball in, a player **MUST:**

- 1) Keep both feet on the ground
- 2) Have at least one foot on or behind the touch line—best to work on keeping both feet on or behind the line
- 3) The player throwing the ball must use both hands to throw, and the throw must have both hands coming over the head and then throwing the ball forward.
- 4) Once the ball is thrown in (toward a team-mate ideally), the player who threw the ball cannot touch it again until:
  - a. At least one other player has touched it; AND
  - b. The player who threw the ball is back on the field

### **Goal Kicks:**

When the attacking team kicks a ball over the end line, then the other team restarts play with a goal kick. At U8, the goal kick takes place anywhere inside or on the arc around the goal. The goalie or another player puts the ball on the ground and then kicks it. The ball must leave the arc area, and no one can touch it until it does leave the area.

### **Corner Kicks:**

When the defending team kicks a ball over its own end line, the other team restarts play with a corner kick. One player on the attacking team places the ball in the corner of the field on the side the ball went out. Other players have to stay at least 5 yards away from the ball. The player with the ball kicks toward the goal to start play.

### **Goal-Keeping:**

At U8, teams play with 4 players on the field for each team, and one of these players is a goalie. The goalie is the only player who can pick up the ball with his or her hands. The goalie generally wants to stay around his or her goal area. There is an arc painted around each goal. Players from the other team **MAY NOT** shoot the ball from inside the arc—that is the goalie's area, and that is the area in which the goalie can pick up the ball. Once the goalie picks up the ball, he or she may punt it or throw it downfield to restart play.