

Sharks and Minnows

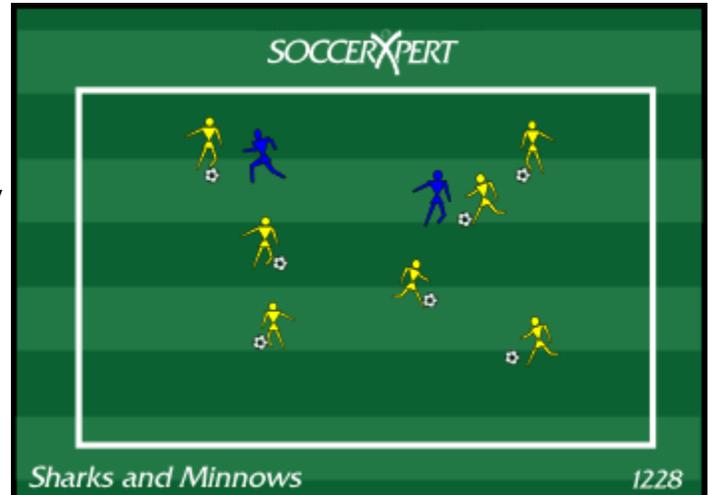
Dribbling, sharks minnows, shielding, turning, youth soccer drill, fun soccer drill, free soccer drill, dribbling

Drill Objective:

This drill focuses on the U6 and U8 player and their ability to dribble out of pressure. This drill can be used to focus on the player using their body to protect the ball by placing their body in between the ball and the defender.

Drill Setup:

Build a grid approximately 20X25 yards this field should be adjusted based based on the skill level and number of players participating. Each player should have a ball except for 2 sharks.



Drill Instructions:

The players with balls (the minnows) attempt to protect their ball from the two "Sharks". The Sharks attempt to gain possession and knock the minnows (ball) out of the grid. Once this happens, the minnow can run around the grid once and return to the game. Each minnow has two changes, and the last 2 minnows remaining become the sharks in the next round.

Drill Coaching Points:

- Keep the dribblers under control and not panicked once the sharks get near them.
- Inform players to keep the ball close within playing distance.

Drill Variations

- Players only use left foot to dribble.
- Players use outside of feet to dribble.
- Players use sole of feet to dribble.

Pirates of the Pugg

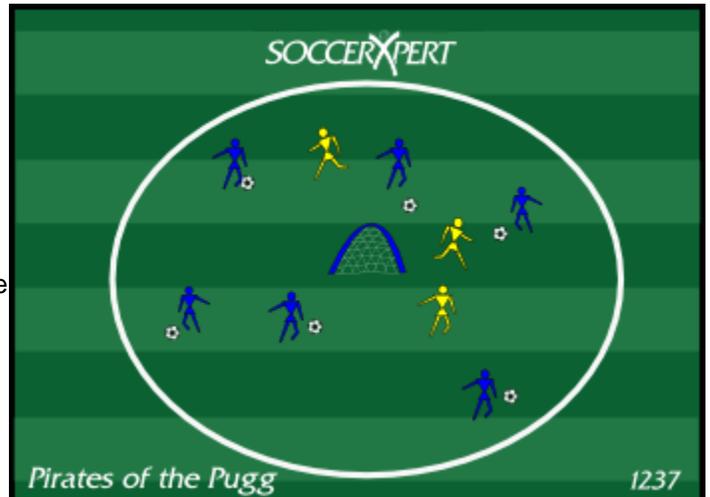
Pirate Game, Pugg Net, soccer dribbling skills, pirate of the pugg, pugg goal, goals, goal

Drill Objective:

This soccer drill is a great soccer drill using a Pugg goal that can be tweaked to focus on many aspects of the game. For younger players ages 8-11, the primary focus should be on good dribbling technique in traffic which requires vision and awareness. The coach can also focus on transition from offense to defense if the ball is lost, or recovering from a tackle and finding safety. Defensively, this allows defenders to steal the ball from attackers and play to a particular goal or target.

Drill Setup:

Build a circle approximately the size of the center circle with a Pugg goal in the middle of the circle. The actual size of the circle will vary depending on the age and skill level of the players. With all players in the playing area, dedicate 9 players with the ball, and 3 players without a ball will be the "Pirates".



Drill Instructions:

Instruct the "Pirates" without the ball to defend the players with the balls. Once the Pirate wins the ball, they attempt to score on the Pugg goal in the middle of the circle. If the Pirate scores the goal, that player too becomes a Pirate. Play continues until the last player with the ball wins. If the pirates have a hard time getting started, the coach can help the pirates at first.

Drill Coaching Points:

Attacking: keep the ball close with head up so the players are aware of defenders and safety areas (space). If the ball is lost, recover quickly and fight to win it back.

Defending: Transition quickly from defense to offensive and stay focused once the ball is won, and find the target.

Monster Turns

Dribbling, monster turns, youth soccer drill, fun soccer drill, free soccer drill, dribbling

Drill Objective:

This drill focuses on the U6 and U8 players dribbling skills. The added pressure allows the players to turn away from pressure while remaining in control of the ball.

Drill Setup:

Create a 20x25 yard grid. Adjust the size of the grid based on the number of players and the skill level of the players. All players should be in the box with a ball and 2 coaches will be the "Monsters" in the game.

Drill Instructions:

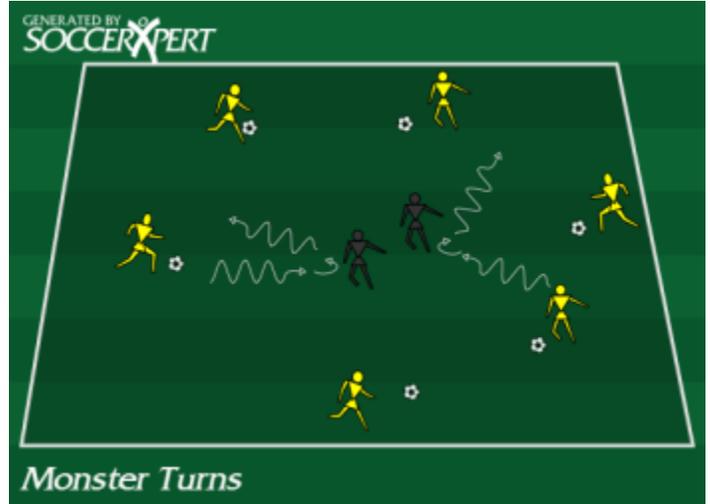
Have the players dribble in the grid. To receive a point a player must dribble at the monster, execute a turn to get away from the monster without being tagged by the monster. Play for 30-45 seconds and play again and have each player to attempt to beat their own score.

Drill Coaching Points:

- Players should keep the ball close within playing distance.
- Players should accelerate to get away from the monster.

Drill Variations

- Use sole of foot to turn
- Use inside of foot to turn
- Use Outside of foot to turn



The Numbers Game

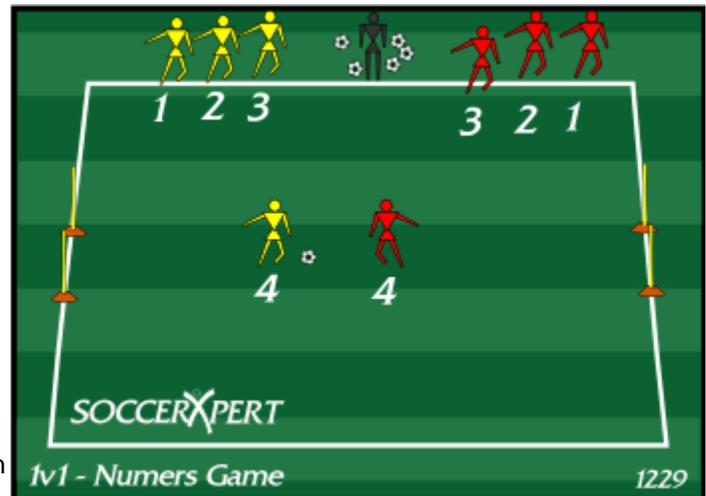
Numbers game, soccer drill, fun soccer drill, free soccer drill, youth soccer drill, dribbling, fitness, attacking

Drill Objective:

This drill focuses on the 1v1 situational play for younger players. This focuses on the individual dynamics of this game such as dribbling, shooting, shielding, turning and beating an opponent.

Drill Setup:

Create a small 1v1 field approximately 15X20 with two small goals on each endline. Split the group into two even teams and assign a number to each player in each group. For instance if you have 5 players in each group, number off 1-5 in each group. One group should wear alternate jerseys.



Drill Instructions:

The coach will play a ball into the area and call out a number. Those players must then sprint onto the field and play a 1v1. The game should continue until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds.

Drill Coaching Points:

- Encourage players to take on their opponent.
- Encourage players to shoot when they have a chance of a goal.
- Instruct the players to protect the ball when necessary.

Drill Variations

- Have more than one 1v1 going at the same time.
- Call out two or more numbers to create a 2v2 or 3v3.

1v1 50/50 to Goal Team Competition

1v1, Team Competition, going to goal, scoring goals, practice, training, sessions, drills

Drill Objective:

The purpose of this soccer drill is to work on soccer fitness, scoring goals, shoot, and winning 50-50 balls. This is a fun drill for the younger soccer player.

Drill Setup:

Score on a pugg goal. Split the remaining players into two even teams and align them on each side of the goal. The first player in line must start with one hand on the goal post. A cone should be placed approximately 20 yards from goal in front of each line. The coach should have a supply of soccer balls available.



Drill Instructions:

On the coach's command, the first player from each team should sprint around the cone in front of their line. As the players approach the cone the coach should play a 50/50 ball in the middle of each cone. The two players should battle for possession and quickly attack the goal.

The players should battle each other for the ball and either player can score a goal once possession is won. As a goal is scored the team scoring the goal is awarded a point.

First team to 10 wins.

Drill Coaching Points:

Players should be instructed to:

- Sprint at top speed around the cone
- Battle and win the 50/50 ball
- Quickly attack the goal once possession is won.
- Continue to fight for the ball when defending.
- Have fun.

Simon Says

Young soccer drill, dribbling

Drill Objective:

This soccer dribbling drill is for U6 and U8 players. This drill focuses on dribbling and keeping close control for quick instructions. Also works on listening skills for the younger player.

Drill Setup:

Outline a 20X30 grid with cones. Each of the players need a ball.

Drill Instructions:

Play Simon Says with the team as the players dribble in the grid. If a player does something they are not supposed to, issue them a GOTCHA. See who gets the least number of GOTCHA's. Examples of commands could be: Change direction, stop the ball, stop the ball and put your belly on the ball... etc. Also, try to throw in a trick or two like: kick the ball as far away as you can.

Drill Coaching Points:

- Have players do actions like clapping in between their legs and skipping to increase body awareness.
- Focus on dribbling skills and keeping the ball close and under control.
- Focus on players listening skills.

Drill Variations

- Without ball
- With ball
- Try soccer moves – pull back, inside cut, outside cut, tick-tocks, right only, left only, etc.



Extreme Tag

Soccer dribbling skills, keeping head up soccer drill

Drill Objective:

This is a fun drill that focuses on young soccer players dribbling skills and aids in player awareness. It is a great drill that causes players to change directions quickly to find space and avoid being tagged.

Drill Setup:

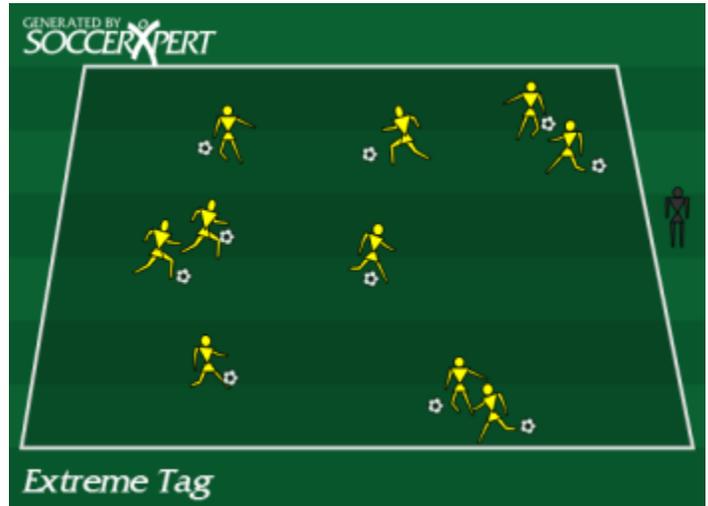
Create a grid approximately 20X20 depending on the number of players. Each player should have their own soccer ball.

Drill Instructions:

With this drill, the players are dribbling around in the grid trying to avoid a tag from the other players. However, the tag must be made below the player's knee in order to receive credit for the tag. Each successful tag below the knee will result in a point being awarded to the tagging player. If the player gets tagged, a point is subtracted from their total. The first player to 5 wins that round. Play a couple rounds depending on the length of time each game takes.

Drill Coaching Points:

- Make sure players are dribbling with their head up
- Instruct players to find open space.
- Players will want to leave their ball when being chased, so make sure the players keep their ball in close control.
- Make sure the kids have FUN!



Soccer Ball Smash

Soccer passing drills, passing soccer balls

Drill Objective:

This drill will focus on the player who is just learning to pass, as this drill will focus on passing accuracy.

Drill Setup:

Set up a large grid approximately 40X50 yards. Pair up each of the players and make sure each player has a ball. The two partners should stand near to each other inside the grid but spread away from other groups of players when starting this drill.

Drill Instructions:

Instruct player 1 to pass his ball forward. After Player 1's ball stops moving, player 2 then passes their ball at player 1's ball in attempt to hit player 1's ball. If player 2 misses, then player 1 tries to hit player 2's ball from where it landed previously. Each time a player hits their opponent's ball, they collect a point.

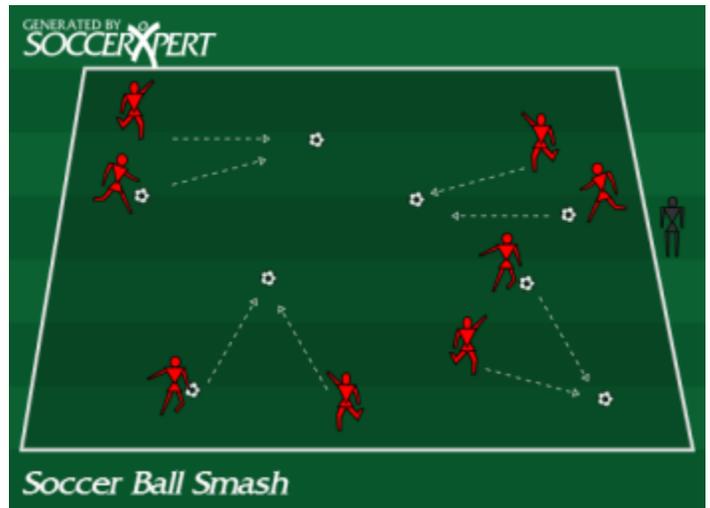
The first player to 5 wins that match.

Drill Coaching Points:

- Make sure the players are striking the ball with the correct surface of the foot.
- make sure the weight of the pass is good
- watch the plant foot to make sure it is pointing to it's target.

Drill Variations

- Alternate the groups and repeat.
- Limit players to passing with certain parts of the foot: inside, outside, instep



Criss Cross Dribbling Game

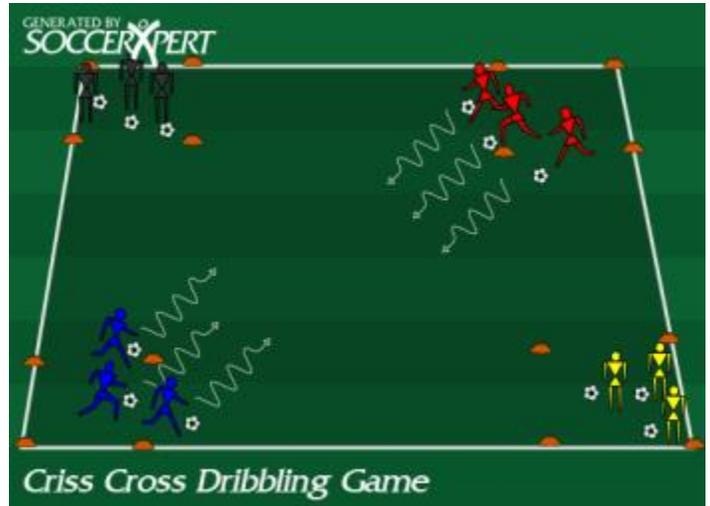
Soccer dribbling game

Drill Objective:

This dribbling drill is geared towards the younger player. This will help players play with speed while keeping their heads up. Be warned, this drill can be dangerous for players who have a tendency of dribbling with their head down.

Drill Setup:

Create 4 - 7X7 yard grids by making a big 30X30 grid and sectioning off the corners of the larger grid. Create four different color teams of 3-6 players per team. Make sure you have enough balls for every player and assign each team 1 of the 4 grids. Number the teams 1 through 4.



Drill Instructions:

The coach should yell a pair of team numbers to start these teams “switch” (switch boxes with each other). Start off with only two groups working against each other as their objective is to dribble to their opponent’s grid as fast as they can and stop their ball in the grid. The first team with the entire team is in their opponents grid with their balls completely stopped is awarded a point. Remind players to keep their heads up and ball close since they are headed into oncoming traffic, players must be aware of players coming towards them.

Drill Coaching Points:

The key to this soccer drill is to keeping the ball close and head up. Once this is accomplished encourage the player to do it with greater speed.

Drill Variations

Once the teams have conquered the control factor with 2 teams switching, make all 4 teams switch at once. Switching the groups diagonally will cause all 4 teams meet in the middle. This can get pretty messy, so make sure your players are ready for this before you attempt it.

Guard the Castle

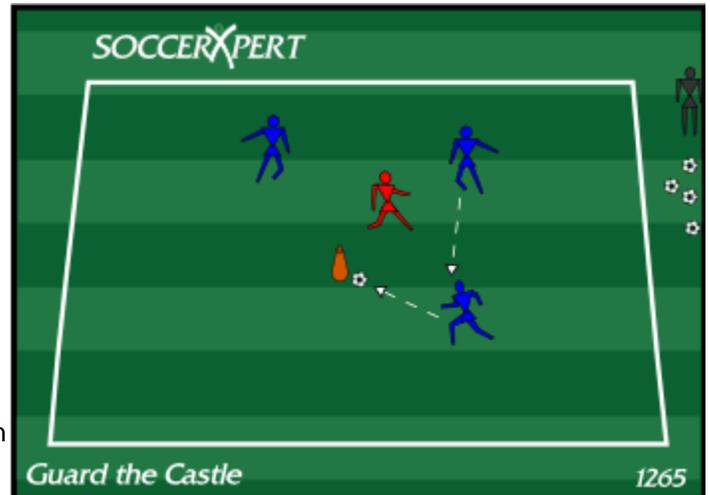
Soccer Passing Drills, Soccer Passing Games, passing soccer, soccer pass, coaching soccer pass

Drill Objective:

This drill is a great small sided game that focuses on passing in numbers up situations. This is a fun drill and the kids will love it!

Drill Setup:

Set up a grid that is 12 X 12 yards. Organize the team into groups of four. One of the four players should wear an alternate jersey and be the designated defender (guarder of the castle). Take a ball and place it on top of a disc cone in the middle of the grid, this will become the "castle". If you do not have disc cones, a tall cone will work just as good.



Drill Instructions:

It will be up to the 3 attackers to pass the ball around the defender in the grid in attempt to knock down the castle with a pass. The castle is considered knocked down when the ball is knocked off the cone or the tall cone is knocked down with a pass.

Drill Coaching Points:

- Instruct players to get their heads up to find the pass.
- Make sure the players are passing the ball with proper weight on the ball.
- Make sure players are moving about the grid in order to find open space. Make sure players know it is ok to dribble the ball to space or beat the defender before making the pass.
- Make sure players are making the easiest decisions when passing.

Drill Variations

- Depending on the age level and skill of the players, you can remove the 12 x 12 grid limitations, or make the grid smaller for very skilled players.
- If players are standing next to the cone, you can build a 3x3 grid and not allow players to step into that small grid.
- Require players to complete a certain number of passes before they are allowed to knock down the castle.
- Play 1v1 and focus on dribbling skills.

3v1 - Attacking the Goal

3v1 Attacking the Goal, Soccer Finishing Drill, Soccer Attacking Drill

Drill Objective:

This attacking soccer drill focus on the attacking movement and composure in front of the goal. Players will become comfortable in front of the goal and will be able to recognize situational play.

Drill Setup:

Designate 2-3 defenders in red to rotate 1 at a time every 2-3 attacks. Have the keeper be in goal with the remaining players form 3 lines (left, center, right) approximately 20-25 yards from the goal. The ball should start with the center player.



Drill Instructions:

The center player starts with the ball and 1 player from each group attacks the defender (playing 3v1). The attackers should string together quick accurate passes to off balance the defender and keeper and attempt to score. Defenders should rotate after 2-3 attacks.

Drill Coaching Points:

- Make sure passes are quick and to feet
- Find back-side player to off balance the defenders
- Be patient and if the attackers get in trouble, they should knock it back to the center player to swing the play in the other direction
- Play QUICK. If the play is too slow, the ball is considered dead and the next group begins.
- Outside attackers should attempt to draw the defender and keeper into them, and slide the ball backside to the open player.

Drill Variations

- Limit touches to 1 or 2 touch
- Add a 2nd defender

Coaching Youth Soccer - Tunnel ball

Preparation

You will need a marked out square. Split the kids in half, or get the parents involved. The kids will need a soccer ball each and you will need to get as many parents to help you as possible.

Explanation

The parents will be standing inside the area, spread apart from one another with their legs together.

The kids will be next to you and on your command will dribble their soccer ball in and out of where their parents are standing still. This is a good time to get some coaching points in.

When you shout "tunnel ball" the parents will open their legs wide and the young players have to kick (pass - inside of foot) the ball through the legs of the adults. The kids should then retrieve their ball and continue to dribble.

Progression

When coaching youth soccer remember to be patient and if something isn't working be prepared to change it.

A nice little progression for this game can be to get the kids to crawl through the adult's legs after they have kicked their ball through.

Coaching points

- > Don't let the kids put their hands on the soccer ball
- > See if the kids can change direction by placing the bottom of their foot on the ball and rolling it behind them. This will eventually turn into the drag-back turn.

Backyard Soccer - World Cup Passing!

This backyard soccer game is great for coaching kids how to pass the soccer ball correctly and accurately. I have used this drill for adult soccer players as a quick, relaxed warm up game and it always goes down well.

Preparation

Take a look at the diagram below for World Cup Passing - backyard soccer style. You will see that there are cones in the grid with players either side. A ball placed on the cone with another ball at a players feet.



Explanation

This soccer game is great fun for this age group and also ideal at improving players passing technique and accuracy.

The basic idea to this backyard soccer drill will be for the player to pass the ball at their feet toward the soccer ball balanced on top of the cone. If the player knocks the ball off they will receive two points, if they touch the ball without it falling off they receive one point. If the ball falls off then it must be replaced. Time the game and give the kids a couple of minutes to improve their accuracy.

There are plenty of progression ideas for this drill. I always like to start without the soccer ball on the center cone and allow the players to pass the ball to one another. Once every-one is comfortable with basic passing then the ball can be placed upon the center cone and the game can begin by shouting "GO!". World cup passing becomes more exciting with players counting their score and telling the coach at the end of the game who has the most points. Points could be recorded by the coach or the winner of one game could play the winner of another game until there is a champion.

Progression

A great progression to this backyard soccer game which I use for the older kids as well (as a fun warm up game) is the use of player's bodies. Get the players into groups of three and get one player to stand where the cone was with their legs wide open. The game now is to pass the ball between the players' legs for two points or you get one point for hitting the legs.

After two minutes, swap the player in the middle and allow the other two to battle it out.

Another progression to this game (for older players perhaps) can be the short pass, long pass drill. Still in the same positions and in groups of three, the player on the outside will pass to the player in the middle who will receive the ball and turn to face the other player who will then pass the ball to the other outside player they are facing. This is brilliant at getting the kids to use turns and flicks and demonstrated in the skills section of my website.

Coaching Points

- > Demonstrate clearly the ABC of passing and get one of the players to show everyone else.
- > Make sure the kids use little touches and demonstrate what happens if you kick the ball too far in a game.
- > Make sure the kids use the inside and outside of their feet whilst dribbling - not their toes.
- > Demonstrate every turn that you use and show the players how this could work in a game situation.
- > Make sure the kids change direction frequently and keep their heads up to see where they are going and ensure they do not bump into anyone.