

19 Soccer Drills for u8



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Dribble and turn through the gates

Purpose:

The purpose of this ball mastery U8 drill is to help players get lots of repetition of using a skill or turn to change direction.

Set up:

- 15 x 20 yard area
- 1 soccer ball per player
- 6 gates

How it works:

Set up your area and spread your 6 gates around the area (the gates should be roughly 1 yard wide) and make sure all your U8 soccer players each have a ball.

For each gate, a player dribbles through to give them 1 point, with the player collecting the most points becoming the winner for the round.

As a progression, you can now start introducing some [soccer skills](#) they must perform when they dribble through a gate.

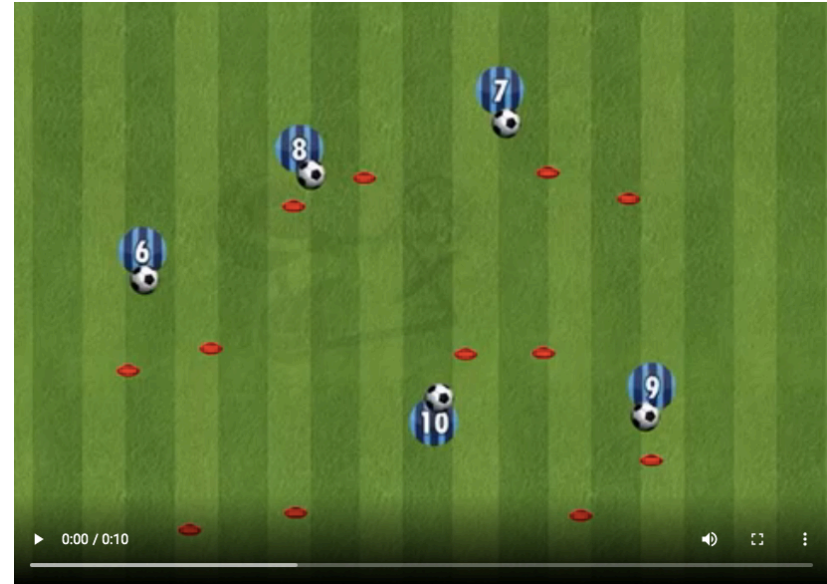
Make sure you encourage players to practice using the skills with both feet

Coaching points:

- Players should dribble with their head up so they can see where the space is
- Small touches to keep the ball under control
- The skill should be performed quickly with a big touch, change of direction and accelerate into space.

Questions that can lead to coaches points:

- How do you know where the space is and which gate to dribble to?
- What type of touches do you want to take to keep the ball under close control?
- When your skill, what speed should it be at and what should you do next?



Ball mastery drill for u8s

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is for players to practice using [soccer skills](#) to beat and dribble past defenders with a small amount of pressure

Set up:

- 3 cones per pair
- 1 soccer ball per player

How it works:

Set up 2 cones opposite each other 15 yards apart with 1 cone in the middle (this cone will act as a defender). Players will dribble towards the middle cone and perform a skill that will take them both to either side of the cone, to avoid bumping into each other players will need to dribble with their heads up.

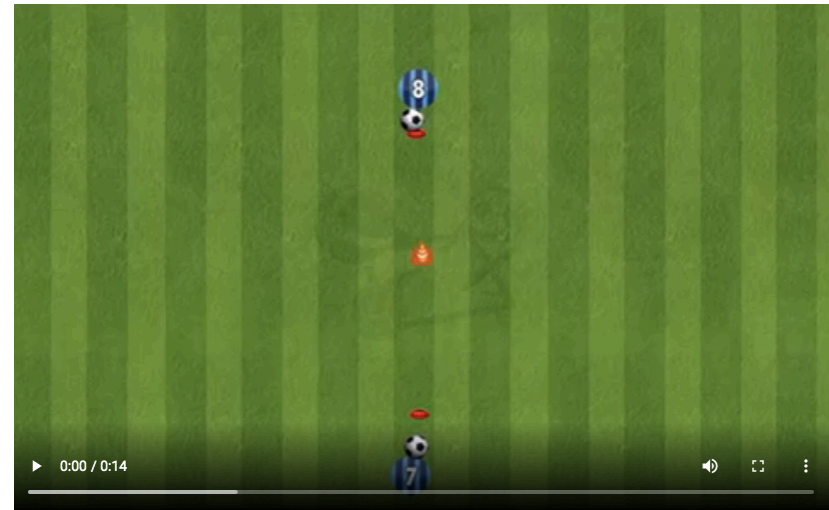
After their skill, players will accelerate to the cone in front of them and perform a turn so they are now facing each other again, ready to dribble to the middle cone to perform the skill again.

Coaching Points:

- Dribble with your head up so you can see your partner and when to use a skill while approaching the middle cone
- Close ball control as you approach the cone, quick skill and change of direction with a big touch out of your feet
- Accelerate away from the middle cone and towards the opposite cone.

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- Where should you be looking when you are dribbling your soccer ball?
- What should you do when approaching the middle cone, how do you beat the defender?
- What must you do after you have performed your skill to get away from the defender?



Round the square ball mastery soccer drill

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help players practice different types of touches when dribbling and changing direction.

Set up:

- 1 6x6 yard square (1 square per pair)
- 1 soccer ball per player

How the drill works:

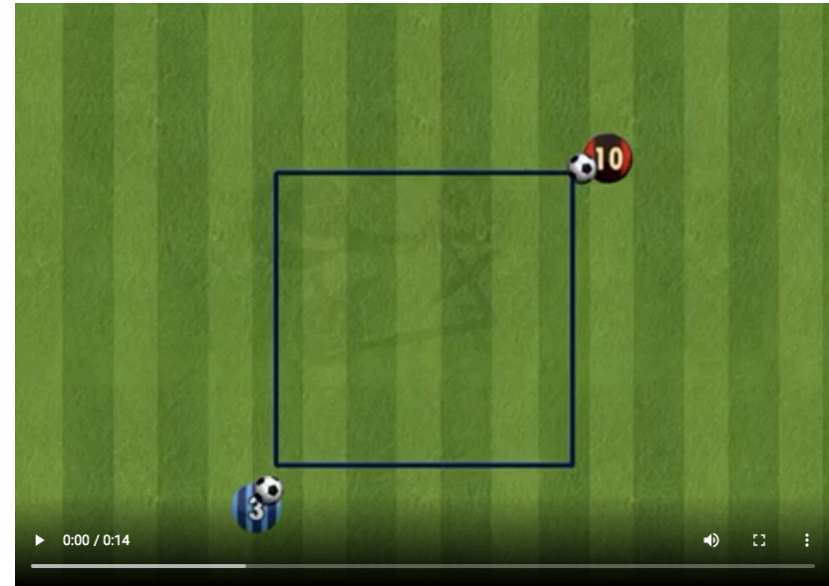
Set up your square and get your players into pairs with a soccer ball. The players will start on opposite sides of the square with one player becoming the tagger and the other player trying not to get tagged. As soon as the player is tagged the round will end with both players heading back to the opposite sides of the square to start the next round. At the end of each round swap the roles round with the two players. You can introduce different touches and turns players can use to get around the square. For example inside of the foot only, left foot, or right foot only as well.

Coaching points:

- Take small quick touches to keep the ball under close
- Slow down once you approach the corners but accelerate out of the corners
- Keep your head up so you are aware of where the tagger is and so you can change direction accordingly

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- What type of touches of the ball do you need to take to keep the ball close to you?
- How should you change your speed going into the corners/coming out of the corners?
- What should you make sure you are doing while dribbling so you know where the tagger is?



Skill on a cone ball mastery drill

Purpose:

To get as much repetition of a specific soccer skill as possible

Set up:

- 15 x 16 yard area
- 1 soccer ball per player
- 10 cones

How the drill works:

Set up your area and spread out 10 cones across the area, make sure that every player has their own soccer ball. This is a great drill to use for practicing different types of skills while making it competitive as well. Every time a player dribbles up to one of the 10 cones in the middle they must treat the cone like a defender and perform the desired [soccer skill](#) to be able to get past them. Give your players some practice rounds so they are able to get the hang of the skill, then you can make it more competitive.

To make the soccer drill more competitive you can introduce a time limit where players try to perform as many skills of the cone as possible. The player with the highest score will be the winner.

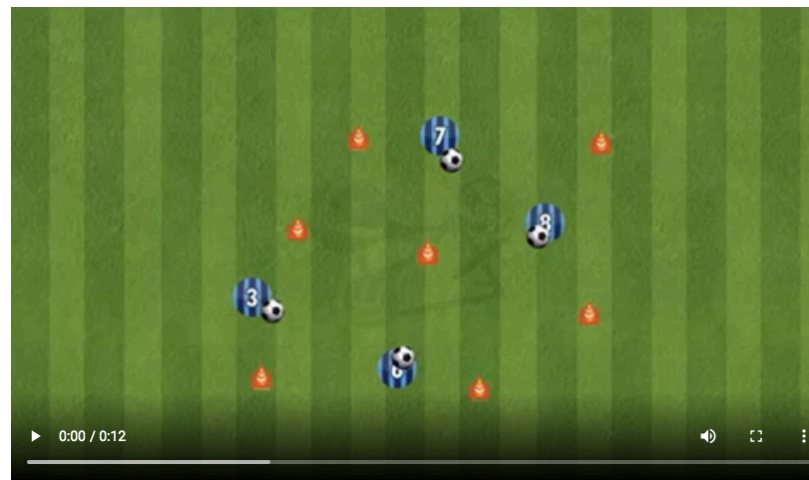
Make sure you vary the skills being used and players are practicing the skills using both feet.

Coaching points:

- Dribble with your head up, try to find cones in space that no one else is at
- Perform the skill slow to start off with, as you more confident try and test yourself by going a but faster.
- After you have performed your skill make sure you use a change of direction and accelerate away

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- Where should you be looking when you are dribbling the soccer ball?
- How can you test yourself if you are getting more confident/ How can you make it easier if you are finding it hard?
- What should you do after you have performed the skill on a cone?



1v1 with everyone on same field

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to encourage players to practice 1v1 scenarios in a pressure-free, game-realistic environment.

Set up:

- 20 x 30-yard area
- 2 pug goals
- 1 soccer ball per pair

How the drill works:

Set up your soccer field and make sure every player has a partner with every pair having a soccer ball.

If there is an odd number the group can work as 3 with one player becoming the magic player.

This will work as a normal 1v1 but with all pairs playing on the field and scoring in the same goals, when the ball goes out of bounds play will resume with a dribble on.

You can introduce different rules and ways of scoring to help get the desired outcome.

For example, players will get 3 goals instead of one if they are able to use a certain skill on the defender or if they can score a goal in front of the defender or behind their defender.

Players will play rounds of 3 minutes, then at the end of the round, they will find a new partner.

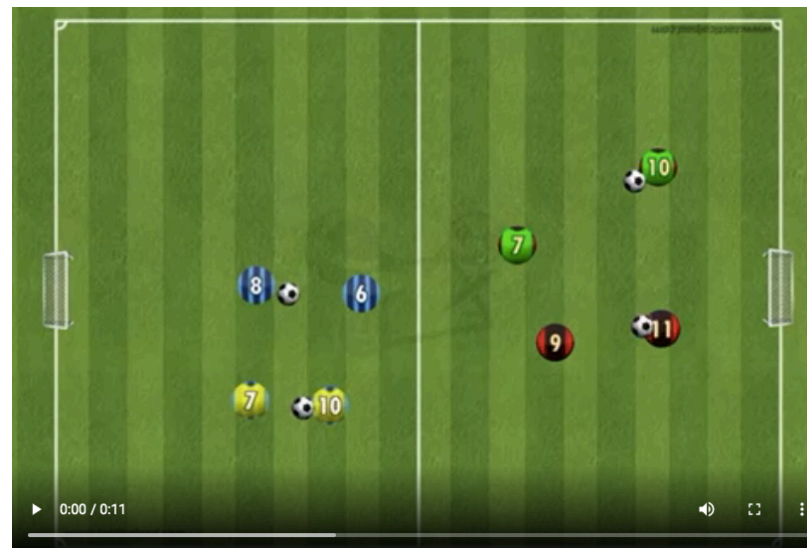
The player who has scored the most goals at the end of all the rounds will win the winner.

Coaching points:

- Try to the best the defend with a skill, change of direction and a change of pace
- Dribble with your head up so you can see what is going around you, that way you can make the best decisions
- Be confident try new skills and ideas

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- What are some different ways you can beat the defender?
- Where should you be looking when you are dribbling?



1v1 for a change In direction

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to encourage players to use skills to change direction to beat the defender

Set up:

- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 3 goals
- 5 x 10 yard area

How the drill works:

Create your area and place 2 goals in the corners of the area at a 45-degree angle on the 10-yard line and one goal in the center of the opposite 10-yard line.

The players will work in pairs with one player being a defender and the other being an attacker.

The defender will start with the ball and pass it to the attacker, as soon as the attacker has taken a touch the defender can pressure the attacker.

To score 3 points the attacker must score in either goal to the left or right of the defender, if the defender wins the ball they can then score in the opposing goal that the attacker started on which will be worth 1 goal.

Coaching points:

- Use your body shape to convince the defender you are going to go in one direction when you want to go in the other direction.
- Your first touch should be out of your feet
- Combine body feints, skills, change of pace and direction to help confuse the defender

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- How can you use your starting body position to help confuse the defender?
- What should your first touch be like?
- What can we do to help make beating the defender even easier?



1v1 dribbling through gates in pairs

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to encourage players to change direction more spontaneously and react to what is going on around them

Set up:

- 15 x 20-yard area
- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 6 gates

How the drill works:

Create your area, divide your players into pairs, and spread your 6 gates around the area.

In their pairs 1 player will be a defender with the other being an attacker, the attacker with the ball must try to dribble through as many gates as possible however they cannot dribble through a gate that a defender is blocking.

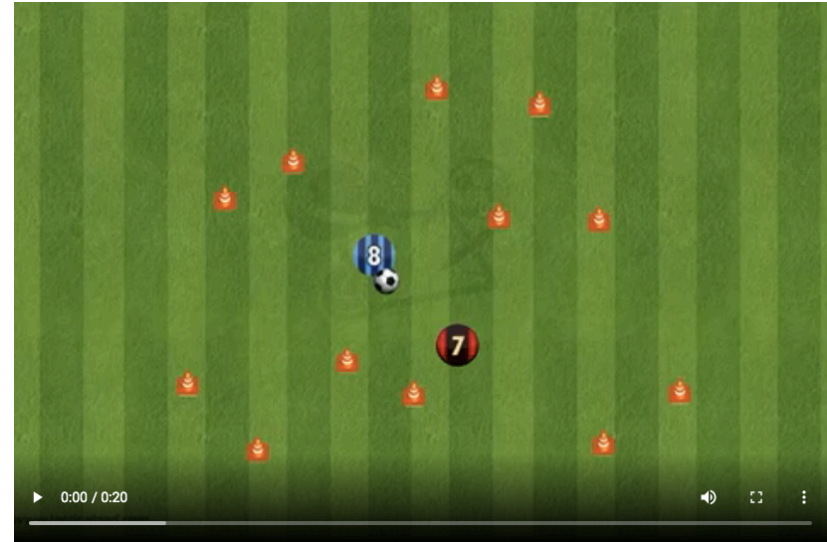
at the end of the round, the players will swap roles with the player in the pair dribbling the most gates becoming the winner.

Coaching points:

- Dribble with your head up so you can see what is going on around you
- Use quick changes of direction and acceleration to get through the gates
- Take small touches to keep the soccer ball close to you

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- How can you see what is going on around you?
- What can you do get through more gates before the defender gets there?
- How can you keep the ball close to you?



u8 1v1 soccer ladder

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to get a lot of 1v1 experience in a small area and provide the opportunity to work to the top of the ladder if they win their 1v1s

Set up:

- 5 x 10-yard area (1 area per pair)
- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 2 goals per area

How the drill works:

Create your areas and place 1 pair of players in each area with one soccer ball.

This will be regular 1v1.

Rounds of 3 minutes can be played, with the player scoring the most goals moving up the ladder and the player scoring the least amount of goals down the ladder.

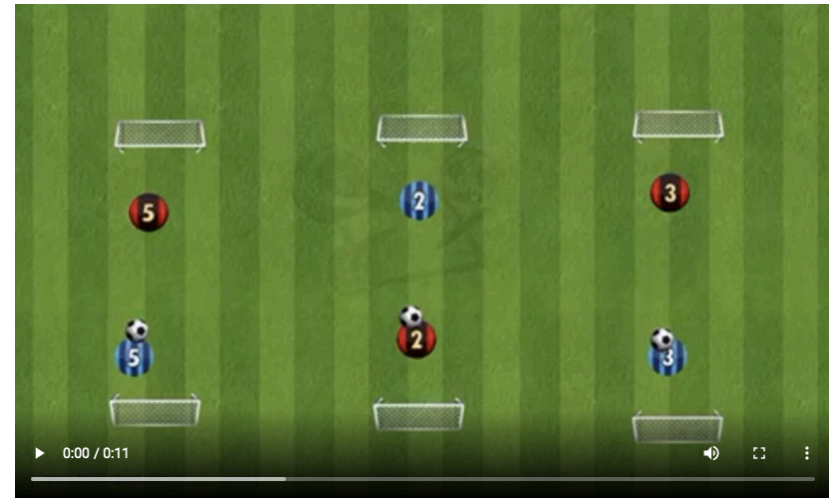
You can give players extra goals if they are able to beat the defender using a certain skill or goal scored. It will be a regular 1v1 soccer game however players will be able to dribble the ball back into play.

Coaching points:

- Practice using different [soccer skills](#) to beat the defender
- Use quick changes of direction and speed to beat the defender
- Watch how the defender reacts to your skills so you can figure out a way to get past them

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- What can you do to keep the defender guessing and on their toes?
- As well as soccer skills what else can you use to beat the defenders?
- How can you make sure you are adapting your skills to ensure that you are able to continue to beat the defender?



1v1 U8 soccer drill with bounce players

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help players understand how [passing and moving](#) can help give them the advantage in a 1v1 scenario

Set up:

- 15 x 20 yard area
- 4 players per area
- 1 soccer ball
- 2 goals

How the drill works:

Create your area with 2 goals on either side with 2 players in the middle and 2 players on the outside on opposite sides.

In it will be a normal 1v1 however the player on the ball is able to pass and receive the ball to and from the outside players.

The defender can close down the angles of the outside players when they are on the ball however they cannot steal the ball.

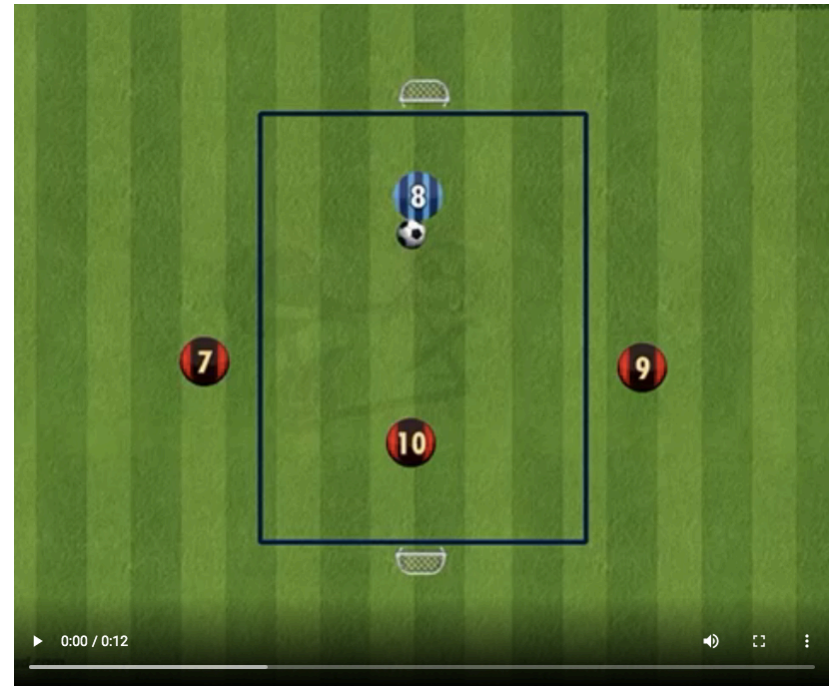
After 5 minutes the players from the middle will swap with the players on the outside.

Coaching points:

- Play with your head up to so you can see spaces to exploit to dribble into or receive a pass
- Your first movement should be away from the space (to drag the defender away from the space) the second movement should be towards the space you want to receive the ball
- You should be passing and receiving the ball in an open body position

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- What are you looking for when you are playing with your head up?
- How can you create space for yourself?
- What body position should you be passing and receiving the ball in?



Jockeying defending drill for u8

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help players get a basic understanding of [how to defend 1v1](#)

Set up:

- 2 cones 15 yards apart
- 1 soccer ball per pair

How the drill works:

Set up your cones 15 yards apart with a defender on one cone and the attacker on the other.

The defender will start the drill by passing the ball to the attacker, the defender will then pressure the attacker as they dribble forward using changes of direction to force the defender to adjust their defensive stance. The defender will shadow the jockey (The focus is not on winning the ball but rather to focus on their jockeying technique) the attacker until they reach the cone that the defender started on.

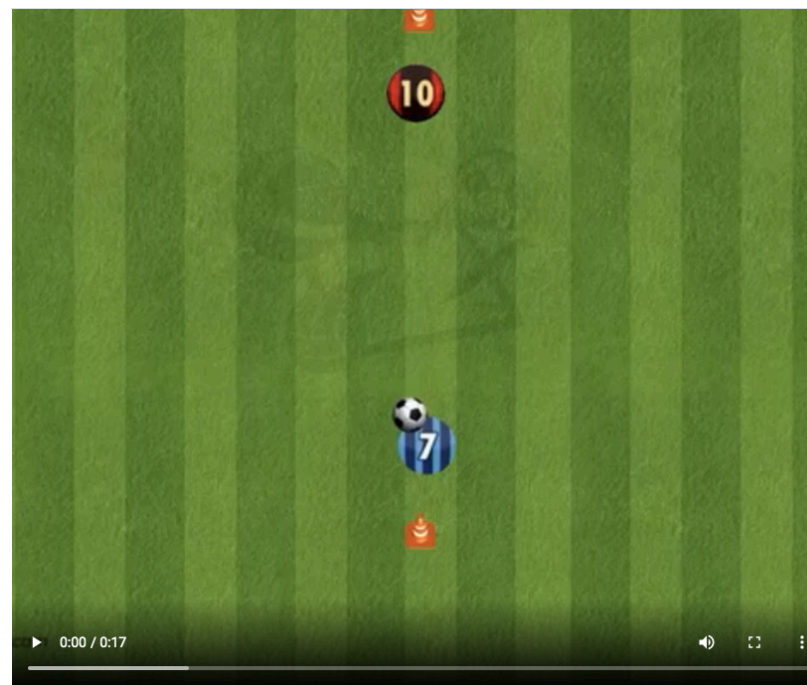
Once the attacker has reached the cone they will become the defender and pass the ball to the attacker who was previously the defender.

Coaching points:

- Pressure the attacker as quick as you can but give yourself a yard of space to avoid getting too close
- Jockey the attacker in a side on position, so you can easily adjust to changes of direction
- Do not jockey the attacker by standing directly in front of them, stand slightly to the side so you are able to control where they go.

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- How quick should you pressure the attacker and how far should you be away from them?
- What body position should you be in while jockeying the attacker?
- Where should you position yourself while jockeying the defender?



Protect the soccer ball U8 defending drill

Purpose:

The purpose of this soccer drill is to help players learn [how to shield the soccer ball](#) and protect it from other players trying to steal it.

Set up:

- Circle 6 yards in diameter
- 2 players per circle
- 1 soccer ball per pair

How the drill works:

Set up your circle areas 6 yards in diameter with one of the players in the pair being in possession of the ball and the other player trying to win the ball back.

The player without the ball has 10 seconds to try and win the ball back, if they manage to win the ball and maintain control of it they will get 3 points. If they are able to force the ball out of the area they will get 1 point.

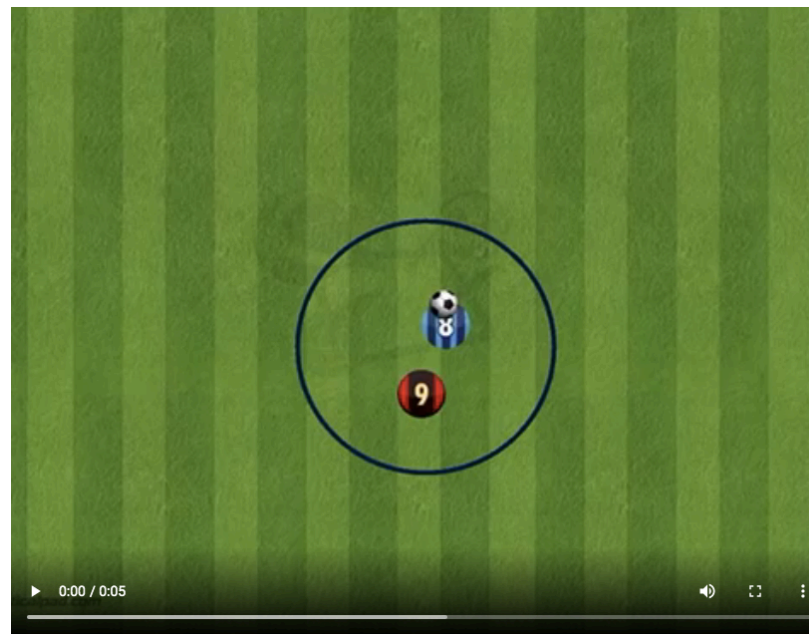
However, if the player in possession of the ball is able to keep control of the ball for 10 seconds they will get 3 points.

Coaching points:

- Keep a side on body position when protecting the soccer ball, while controlling the ball on the front foot
- Your knees should be bent with your butt sticking out to help stabilize yourself and to brace for contact from the player trying to win the ball back.
- Using your front foot keep the ball moving by taking small touches so your body will always be between the ball and the player trying to steal it.

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- What body position should you be in while protecting the soccer ball?
- How can you help stabilize yourself to brace yourself against the player trying to win the ball?
- How can always make sure that your body is always between the ball and the opposition player?



Defending in pairs for u8s

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help players to learn to defend in pairs with one player pressuring and the other player covering.

Set up:

- 15 x 10 yard area
- 3 goals
- 3 soccer balls

How the drill works:

Set up your area with the width being 15 yards and the length 10 yards, set up 1 goal on the defenders' side with the attackers' side having 2 goals placed in each corner.

Divide your players into pairs with the defenders' starting with the ball, the drill will begin when the attacking pair has received the ball from the defending pair.

As soon as an attacking player has touched the ball the defender team can begin to pressure to win the ball back.

The attacking team must score in the 1 goal, if they do this they will receive 2 points.

If the defending team is able to force an attacker out of bounds the defending team will get 1 point, however, if the defending team is able to win possession back and score in either of the 2 goals they will get 3 points.

As soon as the ball is out of bounds or a goal is scored the next attacking and defending team will go next.

Coaching points:

- The player closest to the ball should pressure
- While pressuring the players body position should show them away from goal while cutting off the attackers passing option to their team mate
- If the 1st defender is pressuring the other player is covering.

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- Which player should pressure the ball?
- What body position should the player pressuring the ball have?

- If you are not pressuring the ball what should you do?



1v1 defending corner to corner u8 Drill

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help u8 soccer players work on their 1v1 defending skills against an attacker to show them away from the goal

Set up:

- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 10 x 7 yard area per pair
- 1 tall cone per area
- 1 goal per area

How the drill works:

Set up your area with a width of 10 yards and a length of 7 yards. At one 10 yard end place a cone in the middle and on the opposite 10-yard line place a goal.

The defender will start in the bottom left corner and pass the ball to the attacker in the top right corner.

If the attacker is able to dribble past the cone on the side the defender is showing them they will get 1 point, however, if they are able to dribble past the defender on the opposite side of the cone they will get 2 points. If the defender is able to dispossess the attacker or if the defender forces the ball out of bounds they will get 1 point however if they are able to dispossess the attacker and score a goal they will get 3 points.

After 5 turns the defender and attacker will swap over, for the next rotation make sure that players start in different corners to practice defending on both sides.

Coaching points:

- Pressure the attacker as quick as you can but give yourself a yard of space
- Position yourself at an angle so you show the attacker away from the side where they can score more points.
- Keep your eye on the ball, wait for the attacker to make a mistake so you are able to step in and win the ball

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- When should you pressure the attacker and how much space should you give them?

- How can you show the attacker why they want to go?
- When should you step in to try and win the ball?



1v1 to turn the defender u8 defending drill

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help your u8 soccer player to defend when the striker has their back to goal in front of them

Set up:

- 1 soccer ball per pair
- 7 x 10 yard area

How the drill works:

Set up your area with 1 player becoming the defender and the other the attacker.

Both players will start on the halfway line of the area facing the same direction with the attacker having the ball and the defender an arms-length behind the attacker.

When the attacker says 'go' the attacker must try and turn the defender and dribble past the line behind them.

The defender must try to steal the ball and dribble past the line they are both facing to start off with.

If the attacker is able to dribble past the defenders' line then they will get 2 points.

If the defender is able to dribble past the attackers' line then they will get 3 points however if they are able to force the attacker out of bounds or get the ball out of bounds they will get 1 point.

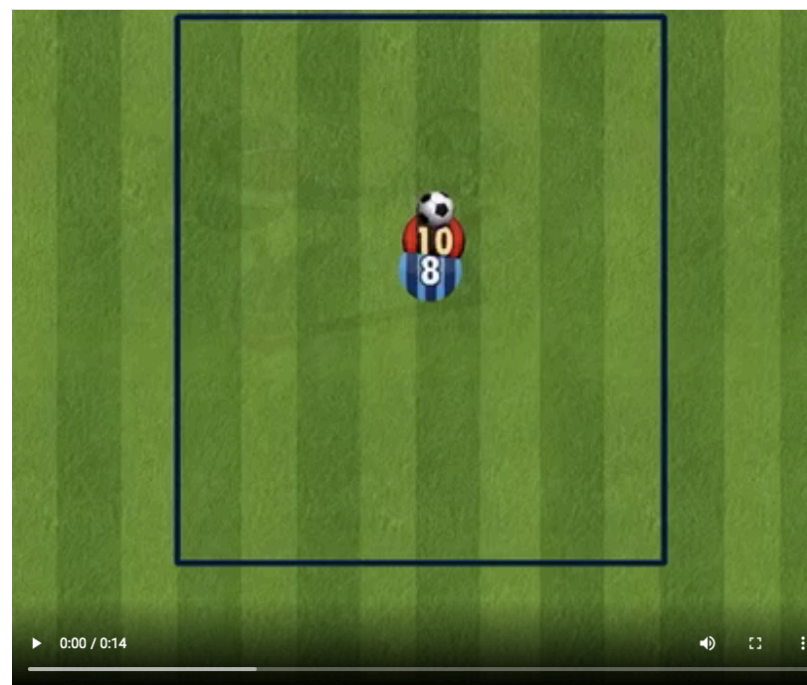
Coaching points:

- Stand an arms length away from the attacker (too far away and the attacker will have too much space, too close and the defender could get turned a lot easier)
- Stand in a side on body position so you are able to easily adjust to changes of direction
- Force the attacker backwards

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- How far away should you be from the attacker?

- What body position should you be in when defending an attacker with their back facing you?
- What direction should you force the attackers in?



1 v 4 rondo

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help your u8s soccer players be comfortable [receiving and passing](#) under pressure.

Set up:

- 1, 7 x 7 yard square
- 1 soccer ball
- 5 players

How the drill works:

Set up your 7x7 yard square and place 4 players on each side of the square with 1 player in the middle, the player in the middle will be the defender with the other 4 players trying to keep possession of the ball.

The possession players must try to get as many passes in a row as possible, if the defender is able to steal the ball then they will become a possessing player with the player who lost the ball becoming the defender

There are lots of [different varieties of rondos](#) you can use depending on what your outcome is. For u8s' my main focus is to get the players passing using the inside of their foot, receiving the ball on the back foot, and moving to create options for their teammate on the ball.

Coaching points:

- Pass with the inside of your foot
- Receive the ball in an open body position
- Create angles to support your teammate on the ball

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- What part of the foot should use to pass the ball with?
- What body position should you be in to receive the ball?
- How can you support your teammate on the ball?



Increased pressure passing 2 squares

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help your u8 soccer players gradually get used to passing and receiving under pressure.

Set up:

- 10 x 15 yard area split in half
- 8 players divided into 2 teams of 4
- 1 soccer ball

How the drill works:

Set up your area and divide it in half and split your players into 2 teams with one in each half. One team will start with the ball in their own half and they will be the possessing team, the other team will be the defending team.

Once the possessing team makes 5 passes without pressure 1 defender from the defending team can come into the area to try and win the ball back.

If the possessing team is able to make 5 passes in a row again then another defender will enter their area and for every five passes, they will get 1 point (including when they are passing without pressure), Even if all the defenders are in the other teams' area.

The phase of play will come to end either when the ball ends up going out of bounds, or if a defender is able to steal the ball and either dribble or pass the ball back into their own half where they will now become the team in possession.

The team with the most points after 5 minutes will be the winners.

Coaching points:

- Communicate with your teammates so they know if you are in space and where the defenders are
- Receive the ball in an open body position to keep as many options open to you as possible
- Check your shoulders and scan the area you are working in so you know where teammates and defenders are.

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- How can you help your teammates on the ball/what information can you give them?
- Why should you receive the ball in an open body position?
- Before you receive a pass what should you have already done?



4 teams 3 balls passing drill

Purpose:

The purpose of this passing drill for u8s is to help them become more aware of their surroundings by constantly scanning the area.

Set up:

- 4 teams of 3
- 3 soccer balls
- 2 goals
- 15 x 20 yard area

How the drill works:

Set up your area with 2 goals, divide your players into 4 teams, and select one of those teams to become the attacking team.

The attacking team will not have a soccer ball, while the 3 possessing teams will have a soccer ball per team.

The attacking team must try to steal the soccer balls from the possessing teams and score as many goals as they can within 4 minutes.

At the end of the 4 minutes, a possessing team will become the new attacking team, the rotation will continue until all teams have had a turn being the possessing team.

The winning team will be the team that scored the most goals while they are the attacking team.

Coaching points:

- Constantly scan the area around you so you are able to see the attackers, your teammates, other teams and spaces to move into
- Receive the ball in an open body position to give yourself more passing options when you receive the ball
- Your first touch should be away from pressure and towards the space

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- Why should you be constantly scanning the area around you?
- Why should you receive the ball in an open body position?
- Where should your first touch take you?



Passing across thirds

Purpose:

The purpose of this drill is to help your u8s pass the ball forward to create goal-scoring opportunities.

Set up:

- 20 x 25 yard area divided into vertical thirds
- 4 teams of 3
- 2 goals
- 1 soccer ball per team

How the drill works:

Set up your area, divided into thirds with 4 teams of 3 and 1 soccer ball per team.

The aim of this drill is for the teams to score as many goals as they can however individuals cannot dribble through the sections to go forward the ball must be passed forward.

You can also make this more challenging by introducing the last line as an offside line so players must check their runs or allowing goals to count as double if a pass is successfully played to a teammate between two players. The team that scores the most goals will be the winning team.

Coaching points:

- Scan the area so you already know what you are going to do with the ball before you have received the pass from a team mate
- Use the whole width of the area when attacking
- Try to take a few touches on the ball as possible

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- Why should you scan the area before you receive the pass?
- Why do you want to use the whole width of the pitch when attacking?
- How many touches should you take when trying to attack quickly?



Passing round a square

Purpose:

The purpose of this soccer drill for u8 is to get a lot of repetition passing with the inside of their foot and receiving the ball on their back foot.

Set up:

- 7x7 yard square
- 4 players per square
- 1 soccer ball

How the drill works:

Create your square and place one player on each of the corners, the player with the ball will start by passing the ball clockwise (passing to the player to their left).

The player receiving the ball check back to create space for themselves to receive the pass and then with their second touch pass the ball to the next player.

The ball must stay on the outside of the square.

Make sure that players are able to practice using both feet by alternating which direction the ball travels, you can also ask players to receive the ball using the inside or outside of their back foot.

To make this more competitive if you have 2 squares you can challenge the places to see which team is able to 40 passes first or the most amount of passes in a time limit.

Coaching points:

- Check back to create space for yourself to receive the pass
- Be on your toes ready to anticipate the pass
- First touch should be out of your feet and towards the direction of your teammates

Questions that can lead to coaching points:

- How can you create space for yourself?
- How should be standing when waiting to receive a pass?
- Where should you first touch take you?

