



Murrieta Youth Soccer League

U-6 Recreation Soccer - Coaches Manual

Introduction

Producing soccer players who will truly enjoy the game will only materialize if the Murrieta Surf Soccer Club has a clear long-term development plan that the coaches and the parents believe in, support and implement.

To achieve this state, the club and its coaches must create a soccer environment in which players are encouraged to be creative and expressive. This environment must not emphasize a fear of failure nor be an environment that is fixated on results.

The corner stone to creating this soccer environment is to have a program where the core value promotes the ball becoming the player's friend and not their adversary.

The enhancement of technical ability together with awareness of time and space must be prioritized in our coaching, starting with the very youngest players.

Only in this way will we create the soccer environment that will allow players to develop a "soccer-intelligence".

If established, this will raise the standards of play and encourage player's longevity in the game.

We must recognize that soccer is not introduced in this country in the same manner that it is in the rest of the world. We should look to the rest of the world, especially the high performing countries and learn from their clear vision and philosophy. Why reinvent the wheel?

It may be hard to predict the future in any walk of life. But soccer history leads us to predict with certainty, that the game in the future, will be played even quicker and be more technical and tactical. In order to meet the demands of the future game we must provide our players with the skill-set to succeed and stay in the game.

This begins with developing coaches that buy into this philosophy and who are prepared to create that environment. Our soccer culture needs to be developed by creating coaches that prioritize the importance of technique and creativity over athleticism and remove the win at all costs that exist in too many programs.

Players that are made to feel confident, capable and trusted to be creative will have a greater chance of fulfilling their potential. At worst they will have more fun.

The purpose of this manual is to outline the Murrieta Surf Soccer Club's belief that the game of soccer should be introduced to better help our young players have fun and better meet the demands of their future game.

We seek players to enjoy a life-long association with the game. It is not just about the present, it is about the future. To this end we want players to keep playing for many years. We want you the coach to enjoy coaching for many years. You are the point where the player meets the game.

Gwynne Williams
January 2016

What Is Recreation Soccer?

Definition:

Recreation is defined as activities that are undertaken for enjoyment, amusement and pleasure. Simply put – ***having fun***.

Psychologists find it difficult to separate recreation from the general concept of play, and scholars have long taught us that play is a vital part of learning.

Recreation has many health benefits, both mental and physical, and helps to develop a balanced, well-rounded and wholesome individual.

What is recreation for the majority happens to be work for the minority. Those that are fortunate enough to make a living from an activity they started as recreation, have one thing in common. They pursued their involvement beyond a recreational activity and mastered the skills that have enabled them to attain a higher level.

Sadly the standards of those high achievers are all too often used as a false measure to judge the masses. Consequently the recreational aspect of soccer can be easily lost.

At its core, recreation soccer should be a fun activity that is mentally, physically and socially stimulating for the players. It should promote fun, skill development and promote social life skills such as hard work, sportsmanship and integrity.

There is not only one-way to teach anything.

Nor is there only one style of coaching soccer. However in general young soccer players require a certain amount of uninterrupted play. This allows for experimentation first hand. Creativity comes from this experimentation. Even though players will fail at times, it is the repetition of trying something until it works that is so vital to learning. Only if players are allowed to fail and then encouraged to keep going will this process be part of the foundation of skill acquisition. Our club's long-term goal must include preparing players to recognize and solve the challenges of the game, and gain the necessary techniques to meet the demands of the problems they face within the game.

We call this "Technique on demand."

This manual is designed to help the youth soccer coach gain basic information that will help them present the game of soccer to children in ways that celebrate the beauty and spontaneity of the game. The game is already contained within the child. We are merely seeking to create an environment to augment and facilitate its development. This manual is not designed to preach the "secrets of the game." There are no secrets in soccer. This is the beauty of the game we call soccer.

"If you can perceive it and you believe it, you can achieve it."

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Before we can start to look at the different age groups in recreation soccer. It would be prudent to start with an overview of "Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development" and take into account that not all players that are of the same chronological age are in the same stage of physical and mental development.

Soccer, like our school system, group players together by age. This may not necessarily be the best way to group but historically this is how it has been conducted throughout the world.

Stages of Child Development

Age 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

Sensory Motor / _____/

Pre-Operational / _____/

Concrete Operational / _____/

Formal Operational / _____/

From the above diagram it is clear that not all stages of development can be pigeon-holed by age. There is overlap in all stages of development and coaches can expect and should prepare for the discrepancies that they will inevitably face when trying to understand the make-up of their team.

"If you can change your mind you can change the game."

Understand Who You Are Coaching

Players Under 6

The difference between boys and girls is minimal - weight and height are about the same.
Have two speeds, extremely fast and stopped.
Are easily fatigued but have rapid recovery.
Learn through play and the repetition contained within practicing until it is right.
Often fall down because they think it is fun to do so. They are still top heavy.
Have much creativity and imagination and desire to explore.
Emphasis should be on fundamental movements.
Will not know left from right.
Can only concentrate on one task at a time and then only for short periods of time.
Have very limited awareness of time and space.
Will not see things in three dimensions and have difficulty seeing boundaries.
Every thing is based on "me myself and I".
They may know the word team but do not understand group activity or collective play - they all want the ball all the time.
They will tell you what to do all the time. It is about them and them alone.
Will not want to share the ball.
They do not desire passing to another player.
They are unable to see the world from another's perspective. It is the world according to them.
They all want the ball and will swarm around the ball.
Your 4 v 4 game, in reality is 1 v 7.
They enjoy playing not watching.
Coaches will mistakenly be heard yelling- "Spread out"! or "Pass the ball"!
How well would they share an ice cream at this age? Sharing a soccer ball is no different.
They must have constant praise and need to develop without pressure.
They look for adult approval. To them it confirms they are the center of the universe.
Note the development range will be from as young as 2 at the bottom of the scale ranging up to as much as 7 years. This range is always a challenge for the U-6 coach.

“ Failure to prepare is preparing to fail.”

Educators agree that structuring the play environment enhances learning.
As a coach you must structure the learning environment to better bring out the game of soccer that is within the child. Remember the game itself is the greatest teacher.
You the coach create the environment, and it must be positive if you are to be a successful.

A Good Coach

Is a student of the game and a life-long-learner, sets an example, is organized, enthusiastic and looks the part.

Is a good communicator that uses their voice to encourage, direct and motivate players.

Has knowledge of age specific needs and is adaptable.

Has a good understanding of the game and the appropriate demands that accompany the age group.

Knows a picture is worth a thousand words, and gives players good information.

Makes every practice fun.

Uses activities that are relevant to the player’s ability.

Remembers that soccer is play with a purpose. It is a means to an end.

You cannot be an effective coach based only on your own knowledge of the game. It is much more than that. It is knowledge of individuals and their development. The players are all unique individuals, and are all at different levels of development.

It is their team not yours.

A good coach does not focus on what the player cannot do. They focus on what they can do and build upon that.

We are looking for coaches that can inspire and instill a life-long love of the game. Is that you?

The coach is the point where the player and the sport come together.

Note, a coach will either stand in the way of creativity or foster it. There is no neutral here.

The Golden Rule

Good communication is vital.

As a coach, when talking to your players you should follow the “golden rule” of talking no more than their age in seconds.

EG. If they are 10 years old – talk no more than 10 seconds at a time.

Why? Because they are there to play and they will tune you out if you go on longer.

Being clear concise and organized is the key to keeping them focused and on task.

Every Practice Should Have

A soccer ball for every player.

Cones or discs for marking out areas. Bibs to distinguish players on a team.

Goals with nets for goal-scoring. This should be a feature of every practice. Scoring a goal is the desire of your team every time they gain possession.

Opportunities to improve technique through repetition.

Opportunities for players to experiment and be creative without criticism.

A free flowing game period that is uninterrupted by the coach to allow for free expression.

Remember the way your team practice is the way your team will play and repetition is the mother of all skill.

***Preparing Your Team - Winning v Developing
(There are only two types of coach!)***

<i>Objective - To Win</i>	<i>Objective - To Develop</i>
Choose players that are physically more advanced especially in strength and speed. They are usually the tallest ones. Efforts to improve and behavior receive less attention than their performance on the field, which is centered only on the result.	Everyone plays, not just the strongest ones. Coach prefers players with ball sense who have an understanding of keeping possession and who are soccer intelligent. Good behavior on and off the field is desired. Making consistent effort is important.
There is little or no room for less able or underdeveloped players. The game here is undemocratic.	Everyone has the same right to play regardless of physique and ability. The game here is democratic.
From the beginning there is an over emphasis on tactics and formations.	Games serve to highlight how the players are developing what they practice. Tactical appreciation is built through experience in decision-making.
Players rely mainly on long passes. They play faster than their skill level allows.	All players are encouraged to touch and keep the ball. They tend to make shorter passes and dribbles.
Little thought given to build up. Usually the ball does not go through the mid-field, but rather from the back to the front and beyond.	Ball generally moves through the lines of the team with the emphasis on communication and cooperation.
When attacking there are few changes in direction. No switching from left to right. Runs and passes are in straight lines.	Often the point of the attack is changed with the objectives of unbalancing the opponent and creating space for penetration.
The coach instructs with the objective of winning the game. Players have to obey the coach, who gives orders from the sidelines. He/she dictates the solutions to the problems.	The coach motivates the team with a view to improving the performance of each player and the team as a whole. The player decides what the next move will be based on their reading of the situation.
To win the players are taught to be disloyal, to create traps, be dishonest and to deceive opponents and the referee. The ends justify the means.	Players are taught the values of sportsmanship, honesty, respect for the rules, the game and opponents.
The game plan has been thought out by the coach. Usually as it applies to the adult game. There is no time or room for experimentation and flair. (No risk soccer - result is all that matters)	The individual is encouraged to introduce flair, skill and imagination. (Take appropriate risk)
Premature specialization in roles. Always the same players play. Subs get only limited exposure and usually only when the result is not in question.	Everyone gets opportunity to experience different roles in the heat of competition. Everyone plays regardless of ability or score of the game.
Premature exposure to the demands of the adult game instead of adapting competition for efficient learning. It takes years of learning to develop the correct habits that adults display in 11 v 11 soccer.	With the aim of efficient learning of complex skills, competition is adjusted according to physical and intellectual abilities at each stage of the player's growth. Confidence and self-esteem are a priority.
Excessive emphasis is placed on the physical component, as this is the manner by which results are achieved most quickly.	Technical emphasis is a priority. Ability to improve under different conditions, create an intellectually sound player.
Everything connected with the game is valued more than the individual. Questionable behavior to achieve a result is accepted and even encouraged.	Development of the person through the sport is used as training for life.

A Discussion On Winning And Losing Ages U6 Through U10

Exposure to competition is a vital element in a soccer player's development.

Recreation soccer is not soccer devoid of competition by any means.

However at these young ages, a competitive environment must not be a results fixated environment.

Young players play because they love to win not because they have to win. They strive to be their best rather than compete to be the best.

There is a difference and the difference must be clear, managed and maintained.

A competitive environment at this level encourages decisions from player and coach alike to focus on performance rather than outcome.

Favoring ball skills and inventiveness as a means to success within the rules of the game is what we seek.

The result is only one indicator and at these tender ages is far from the most important. Always remember, "winning is the deodorant of the game" - it covers up all that smells!

Competition between children will always exist whether adults are present or not. Making soccer fun does not mean removing competition. Competition if kept in perspective can be positive and healthy. Set up skill based objectives as a focal point of learning the game.

In youth soccer the emphasis and manner of the coach will determine if the competitive environment is positive or not.

Soccer games are important to a player's development. They bring out ball skills, decision-making, insight and fitness. These competitive situations that occur in games are a series of tests for the players, both physical and mental.

Therefore success can come in many forms and at many times during play. We must focus on the journey not the destination with our young developing minds and bodies.

Winning games at these tender ages can in fact be very easy and require no coaching skill. If you have one athletic player that can dominate the other team or even an unskillful team that is organized you will win more than you loose. However placing the emphasis on only winning and the physical aspects of the game alone does not prepare players for the game in the future. If this becomes your focus these players will be lost and out of the game too soon because they will lack the tools to compete against skillful players in the future.

These years (U-6 through U-10) are the golden age of learning. These players are like sponges. They desire to improve and want to have fun. We must base their development on the skills they will need to stay in the game for the long term, rather than focus on winning in the moment.

As the game continues to develop our coaches must also evolve because they are the leaders. They will either create or destroy. There is no neutral. It has been said that coaches touch the future of the game when they coach young developing players. Coaches, I ask you, "What would you like to see in the future?" The future is in your hands right now. You are the sculptures of our future game.

"Whether you think you can or you cannot, you're probably right."

Understanding Practice

“Confidence is a by-product of performance. Performance is a by-product of practice.”

It is crucial that coaches maximize the time that they have with their players. Making every minute of every practice stimulating and challenging. This is known as “economical training”. Analyzing top performers from all disciplines including music, dance, chess and sport has clearly shown that the best performers are the ones that have typically had at least one thousand hours of quality practice every year for at least ten years. That equates to over three hours every day for ten years. There are other factors including genetics that dictate whether a performer will reach the top in sport, but this dedication to time and appropriate practice is a constant. We must be conscious that unless we develop the player with the necessary skills, they will not want to dedicate the required time to practice. They will become frustrated and bored. No player enjoys failure and without the skill set to succeed it is a certainty that players will reach a ceiling and the fun will go away. The challenge becomes finding the right balance because even too much and they lose enjoyment and will look to drop out.

Statistics in the US tell us that over 75% of players playing organized sport at the age of ten stop playing and are lost from the sport by the age of thirteen. The reason they stop is because it is not fun and because they do not have the skill set to compete. They become frustrated and are lost forever.

Who makes the game fun and interesting?

The coach with continued support from the player’s parents. This is a huge responsibility to be placed on the adults’ shoulders. This is why we need educated coaches and parents. It does not matter whether the coach is a first time volunteer or a seasoned professional. Understanding your role and where the players are in their development, as well as where they have come from and where you are trying to lead them is the key.

The length and frequency of practice is a corner stone in the foundation of the game. Too little is not good but too much is certain disaster. If you teach them the skills they will practice for hours on their own. This is a quality we encourage and is needed to succeed.

The following table is a guideline for games to practice ratio in recreation soccer, based on how the game has developed in our country.

<i>Age Group</i>	<i># of games per year</i>	<i># of practices per week (suggested length)</i>
Under 6	0-16	1 (30 - 45 min)
Under 8	12-20	2 (45 - 60 min)
Under 10	15-20	2 (60 - 75 min)
Under 12	20-25	2 (60 - 75 min)
Under 14	25-30	2-3 (60 – 75 min)
Under 16	30-35	2-3 (75 – 90 min)
Under 18	30-35	2-3 (75 – 90 min)

The players that you coach will be of varying levels of ability. It is important you recognize and plan for this.

A “one size fits all” approach is doomed to failure.

Some players will need constant repetitive activities to improve their mechanics of movement.

While others will need more game-like activities that require decision making as well as technical demands.

The skill of the coach requires that they see which players are at what stage of development and tailor the practice accordingly.

At the very least you can expect three levels within the group you are coaching.

Level one - Those that will be striving to keep up.

Level two - Those that are average within the group.

Level three - Those that are advanced and want to forge ahead.

Without a clearly defined philosophy, and buy in from the coach and parents, it is inevitable that the coach will fall into the trap of the one-size fits all disaster.

No matter which level they concentrate on, the other two levels will be inadequately provided for and the process of turning them off the game will have begun.

Knowledge of the game and observing how situations impact the game are the basis of coaching.

Quite simply if you do not see the situation you cannot address the correct process to resolve or enhance the situation.

The experienced coach observes the action, makes note of what is needed and creates the right environment to address the action at the time or at a subsequent practice. You are in fact taking out of the game a relevant portion and enhancing it before putting it back into the game. Simply put building the game a block at a time.

It is a good guideline to follow that your practice will always flow from the simple to the complex. Ideally you will start off with unopposed activities that will generate maximum ball touches with maximum opportunities for success. Gradually introduce opposition before building to the complexities of the demands of the game. It is possible especially with the U-10 and U12 ages to create a numbers up or down situation to increase the chances of success before going to the all out competition that comes from the game.

While the coach has many dimensions to consider in planning and managing a team, appropriate spacing of activities is a very important consideration. The game is movement in relation to space, time and players, (team mates and opposition).

Appropriate space assists positively and inappropriate space is a negative to avoid.

Simply put, appropriate space is the conductor of technique. Inappropriate space is the thief of technique.

The Myth of Formations

It is easy for coaches to become obsessed in the cerebral mind games of formations believing that there is some secret pathway to advantage and or success in a formation. Those that do so, miss the most important point of all. The emphasis of the experienced coach will not be on formations but rather the attacking and defending principals of the game.

It is upon these principals that every movement in the game hinges. The game is in a constant state of flux and changes as fast as the ball moves.

It is not formations that are successful in soccer. Formations have never won or lost a game. It is the ability of the players to perform these attacking and defending principals in time and space and relation to others and the ball. The beauty of soccer is that it is such a simple game. There are only two situations in the game of soccer. Either your team has the ball or it does not.

When your team has possession of the ball they have only one objective – score a goal.

When your team does not have possession they have only one objective – win the ball back.

It is in these two fundamental situations that all the game is tied to the principles. There is nothing else hence the simple beauty of soccer.

The following are the principles of the game. Every action both positive and negative is based on one or more of the principles.

Principles of Defense

Principles of Attack

Immediate pressure
(Win the ball or delay)

Penetration
(With or without the ball)

Support
(Depth and Concentration)

Support
(Angle and distance)

Compactness

Width

Balance

Mobility

Control and restraint

Improvisation

Win the ball

Score a goal

These principal's are the DNA of the game. They are quite simply the most important considerations that a player or coach must base all decisions and assessment on. They are all intrinsically linked through communication.

Players Under – 6 Overview

Play: 4 vs 4

Field Length: Minimum 30 yards long - Maximum 40 yards long.

Field Width: Minimum 20 yards wide - Maximum 25 yard wide.

Playing time: 4 x 8 minute periods with 5 minute breaks.

Restrictions: No goalkeeper, no offside

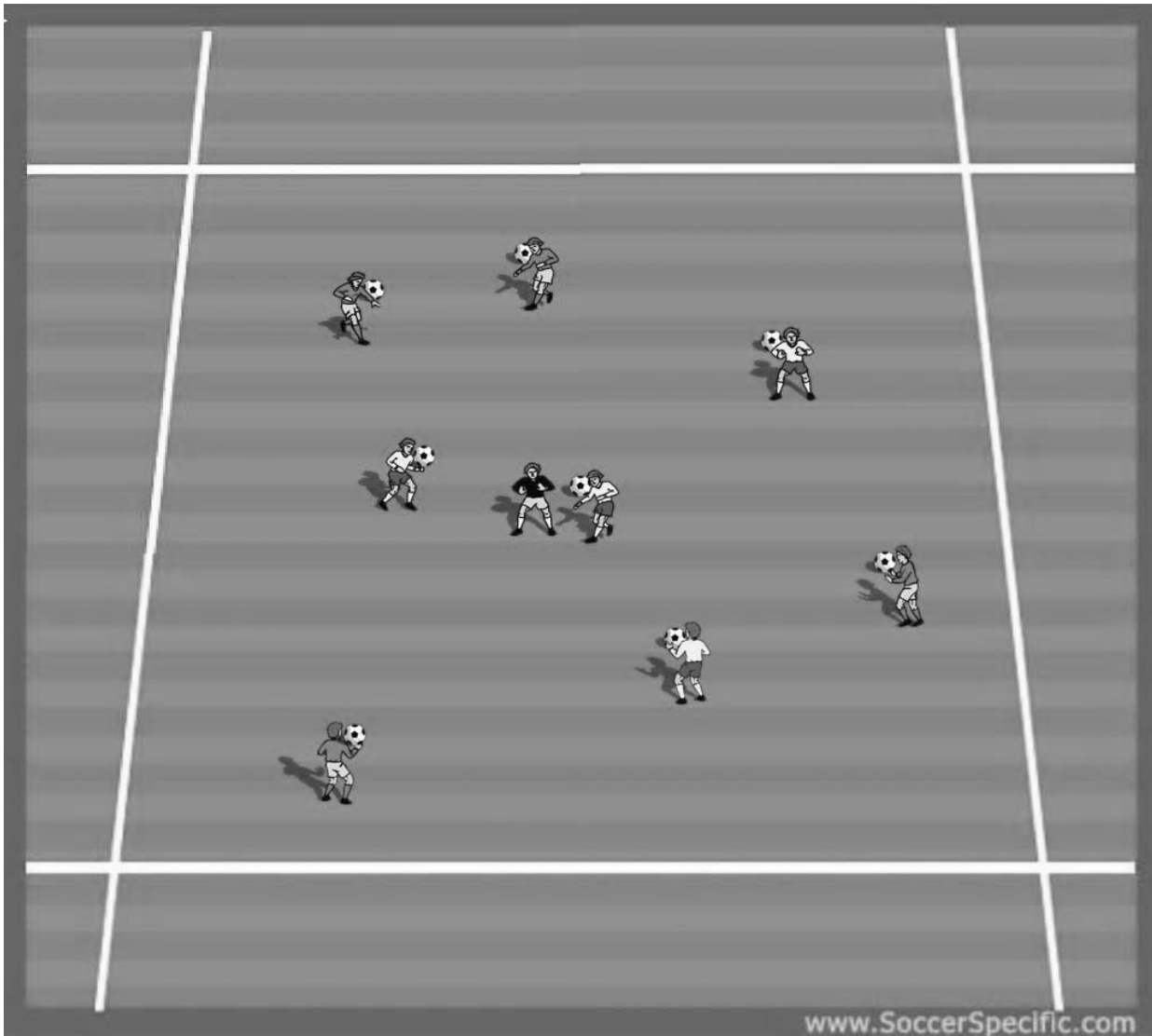
Ball: Size #3

Goal size: 4 x 6 feet.

Maximum roster size: 14 players

The following series of activities can be utilized during every training session. You can increase the difficulty as the players mature in their ability to be comfortable with the ball and coordination improves.

Game 1. Go Fetch



GO FETCH

Objective: Have fun

Follow instructions

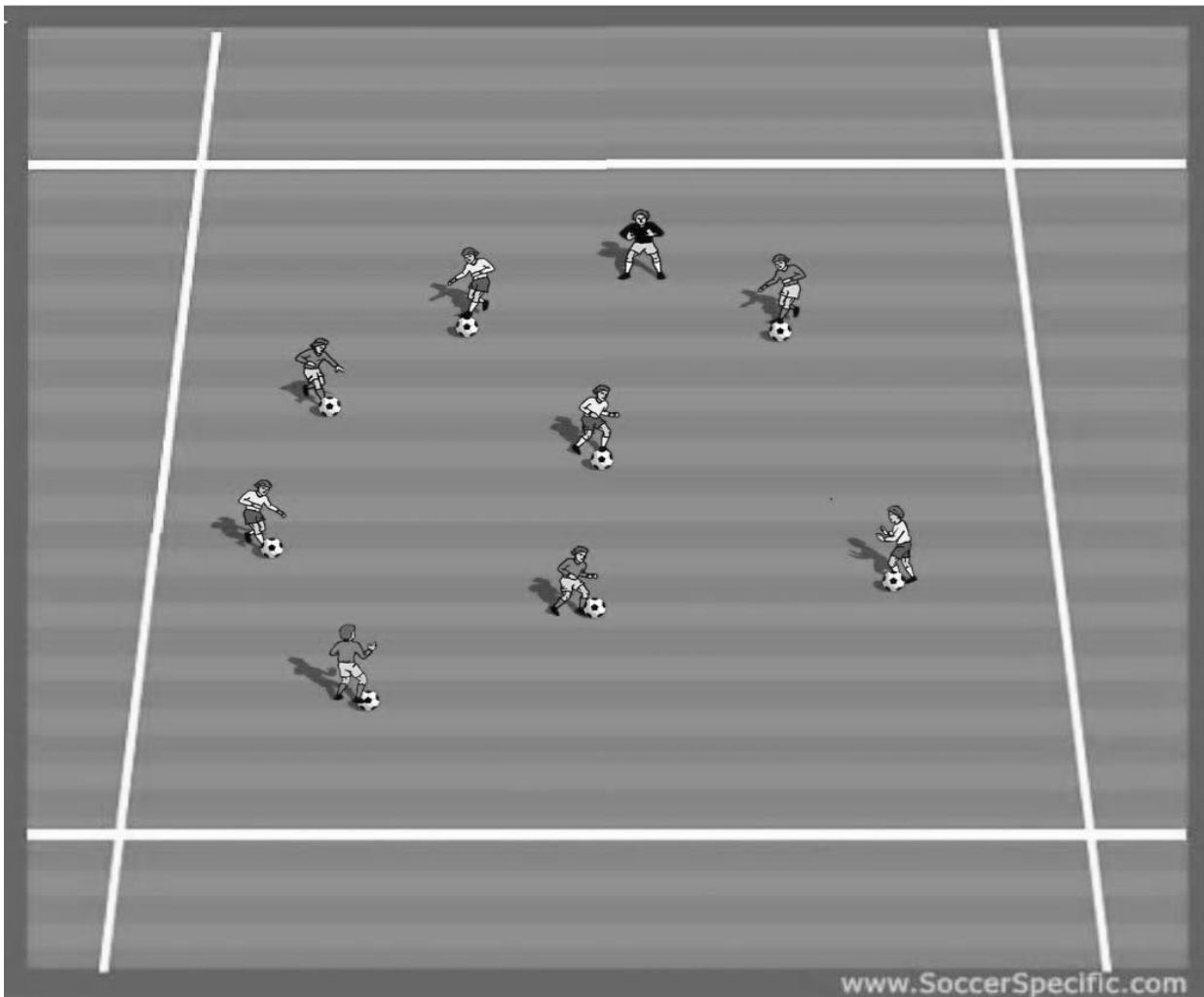
Activity through movement

Use gross motor skills

The coach starts in the middle of the field with all the balls. He explains that he will throw away the balls in different directions and that each player when called must bring back a ball as quickly as they can to the coach. The coach can put restrictions on how they may return the ball. Example - one hand, with the ball touching the forehead, or with the ball touching the belly button etc.

Once the players show comfort with the activity they can be asked to use their feet.

Game 2. Body Part Dribble

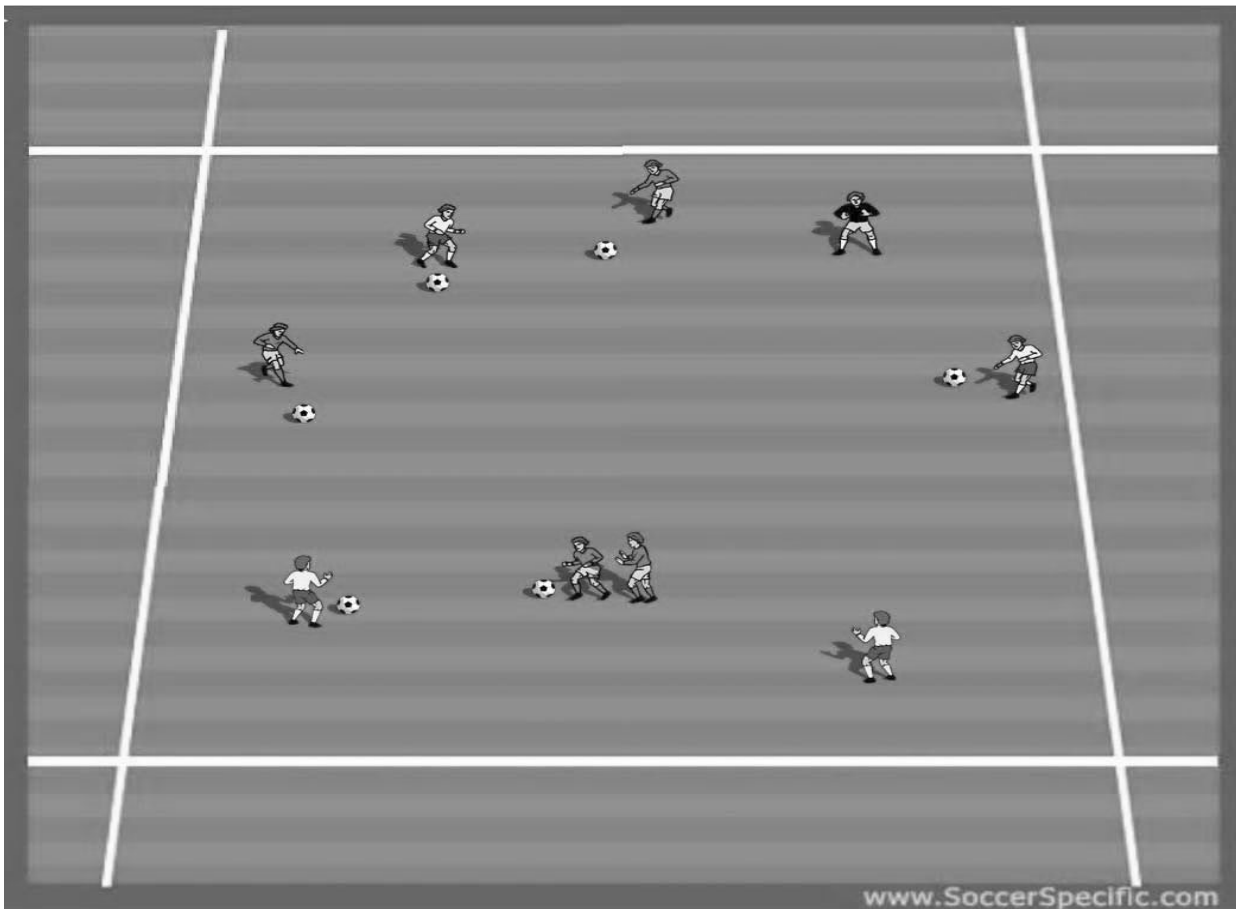


BODY PART DRIBBLE

Objective: Have fun
Follow instructions
Activity through movement/coordination
Dribbling skills/ ball control

Each player has a ball in an area 20 x 20 yards. Player's dribble their ball in the area and avoid bumping into other balls and players. As they dribble the coach calls out a body part such as elbow or knee. The player then stops the ball and places the body part on the ball as quickly as possible. "Simon Says" is a good variation as well. As soon as the player has met the command and placed the corresponding body part on the ball they can recommence their dribble. Most players in this group will not understand left and right at first. This is something that you can teach them.

Game 3. Ghost Country- With A Ball



GHOST WITH BALL

The ball can be introduced once the players have gained the idea. They then try to keep the ball away from the Ghost. If the Ghost touches the ball they have to either drop out until there is only one left or a variation is to have the players dribble around a corner cone and then they are able to rejoin the game. The coach can “ham” up the activity to increase the imagination and the fun level.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 4. Space Travelers.



SPACE TRAVELERS

This game is known by many other names.

All players start on the same end-line with a ball. They have to travel through time across the galaxy to the other end-line, without losing their ball to the coach (The space invader). If the coach captures a player's ball they immediately join the space invaders team.

The game keeps going from one end to the other until the coach declares the winners.

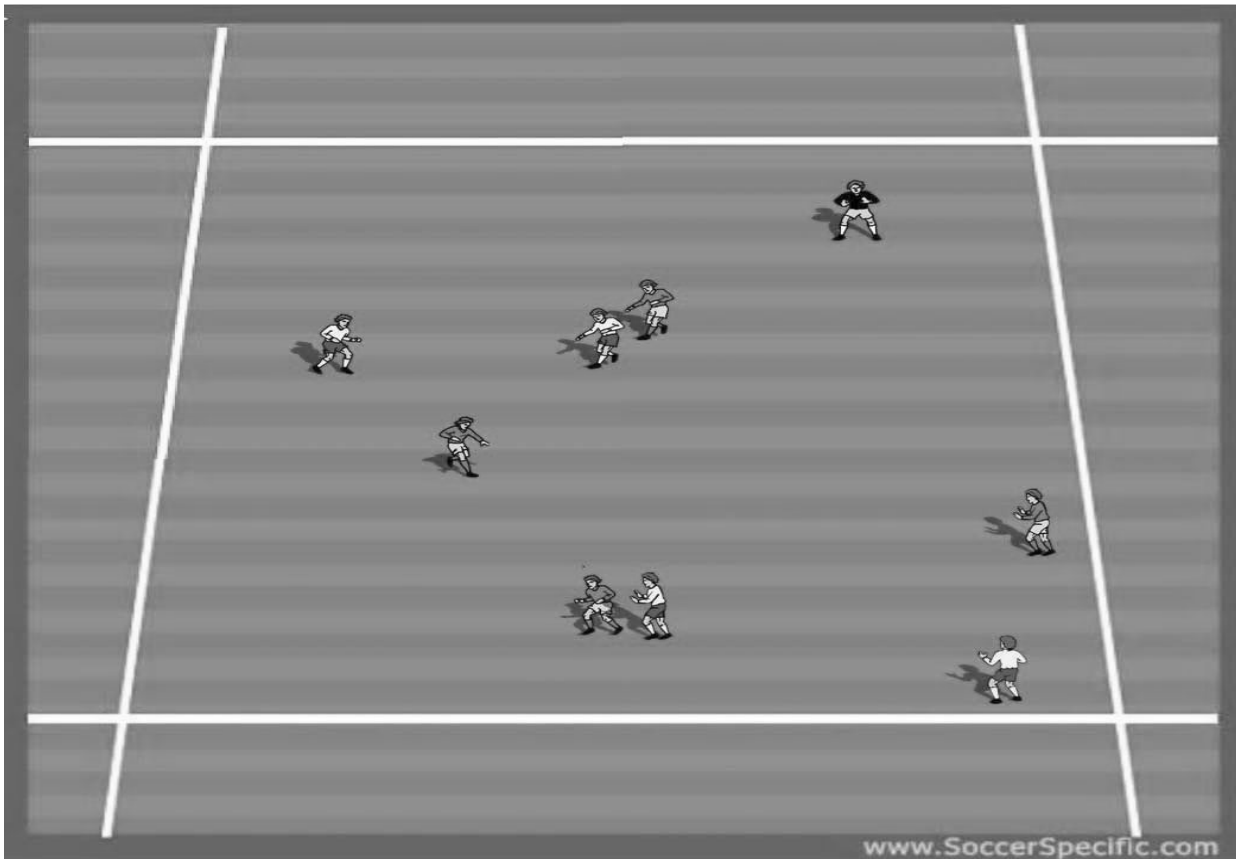
Each time there will be more and more players joining the space invader and the degree of difficulty increases for the space travelers.

This game is exciting and teaches direction as well as running with the ball.

This game could be started without the ball and have the ball introduced when the players have the concept.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 5. Everybody's It- Without A Ball

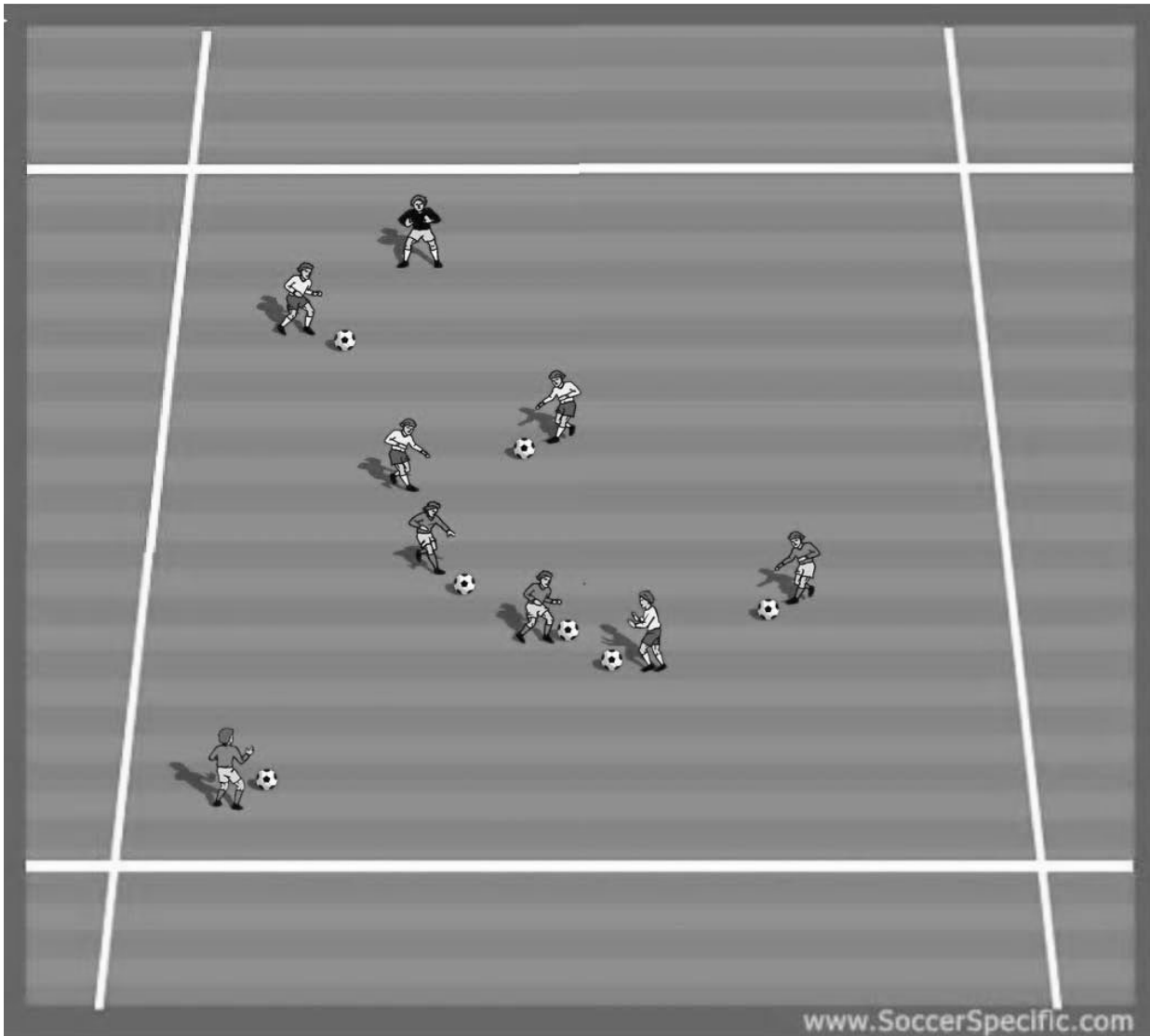


EVERYBODY'S IT WITHOUT A BALL

This activity borders on the edge of mayhem. In a square 20 x 20 yards each player runs around staying inside the boundaries. The object is to tag as many players as you can without getting tagged yourself. Play should last 30-45 seconds. It is a game of vision and movement.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 6. Everybody's It – With A Ball

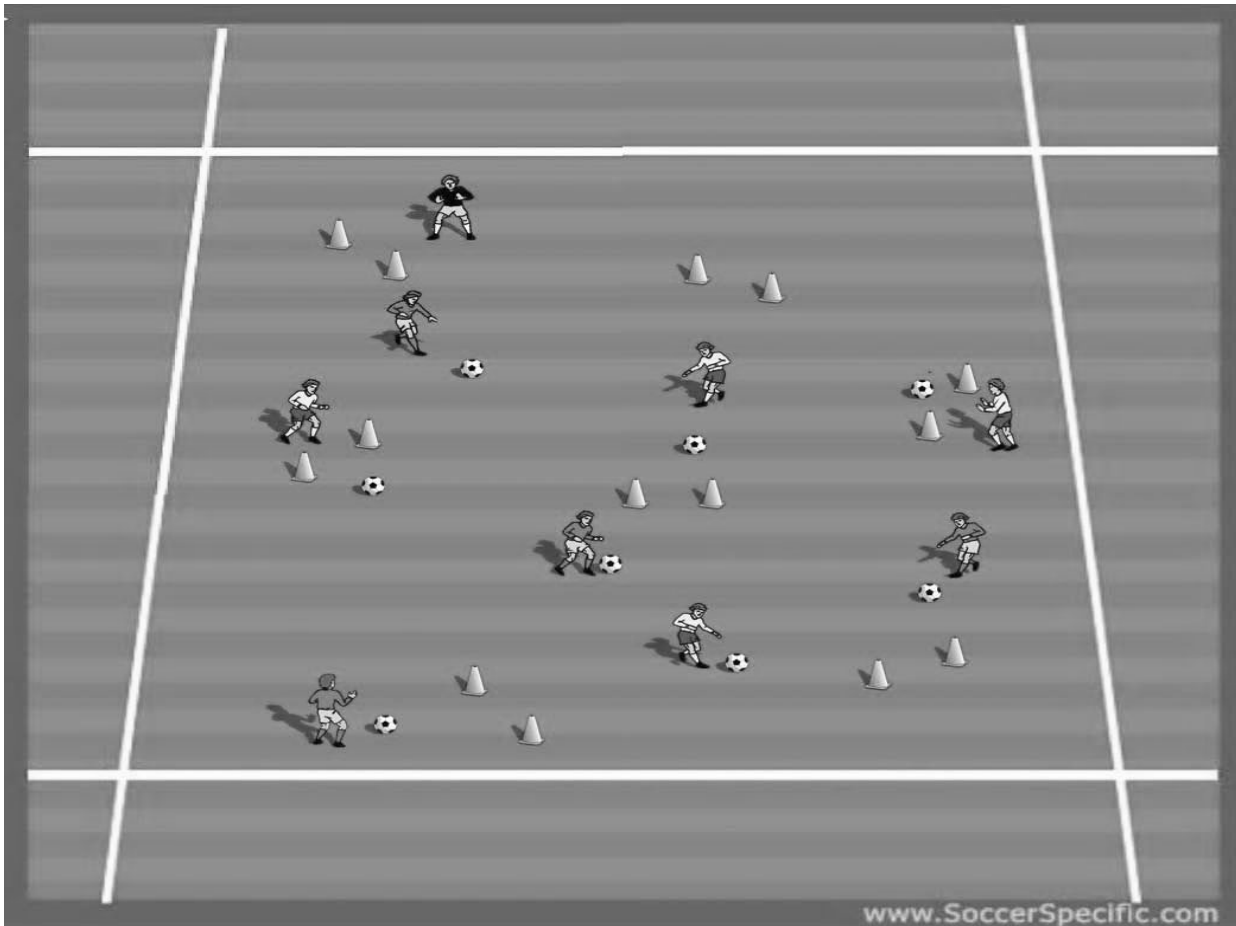


EVERYBODY'S IT WITH A BALL

After they have the concept you can introduce the ball so that they have to try to keep their ball under control and move toward someone and tag them. Encourage the ball to be close to them at all times.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 7. Count the Gates



COUNT the GATES

The coach places cones two at a time about 3 feet apart to form gates all over the playing area. (20 x 20 yards).

Upon the command go, the players have to dribble through as many gates as they can in 30-45 seconds. They should shout out their increasing total as they progress. Do not allow a player to go through the same gate consecutively.

In the break moments while the players recover ask them to state their total. Do not put much stock in the accuracy of their counting.

This game could be started without the ball and have the ball introduced when the players have the concept.

Objective: Have fun

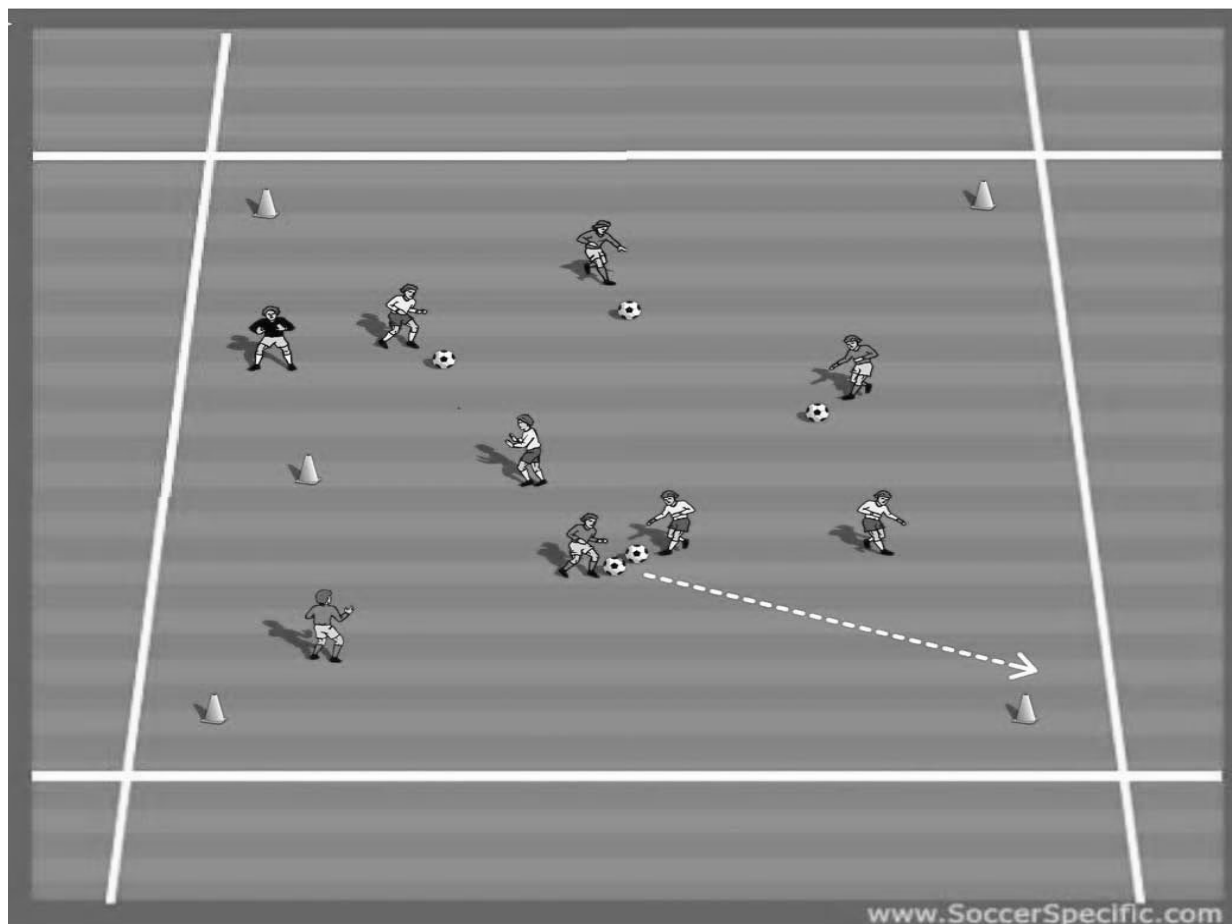
Dribbling skills/ ball control

Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges

Changing direction

Changing pace

Game 8. Cars

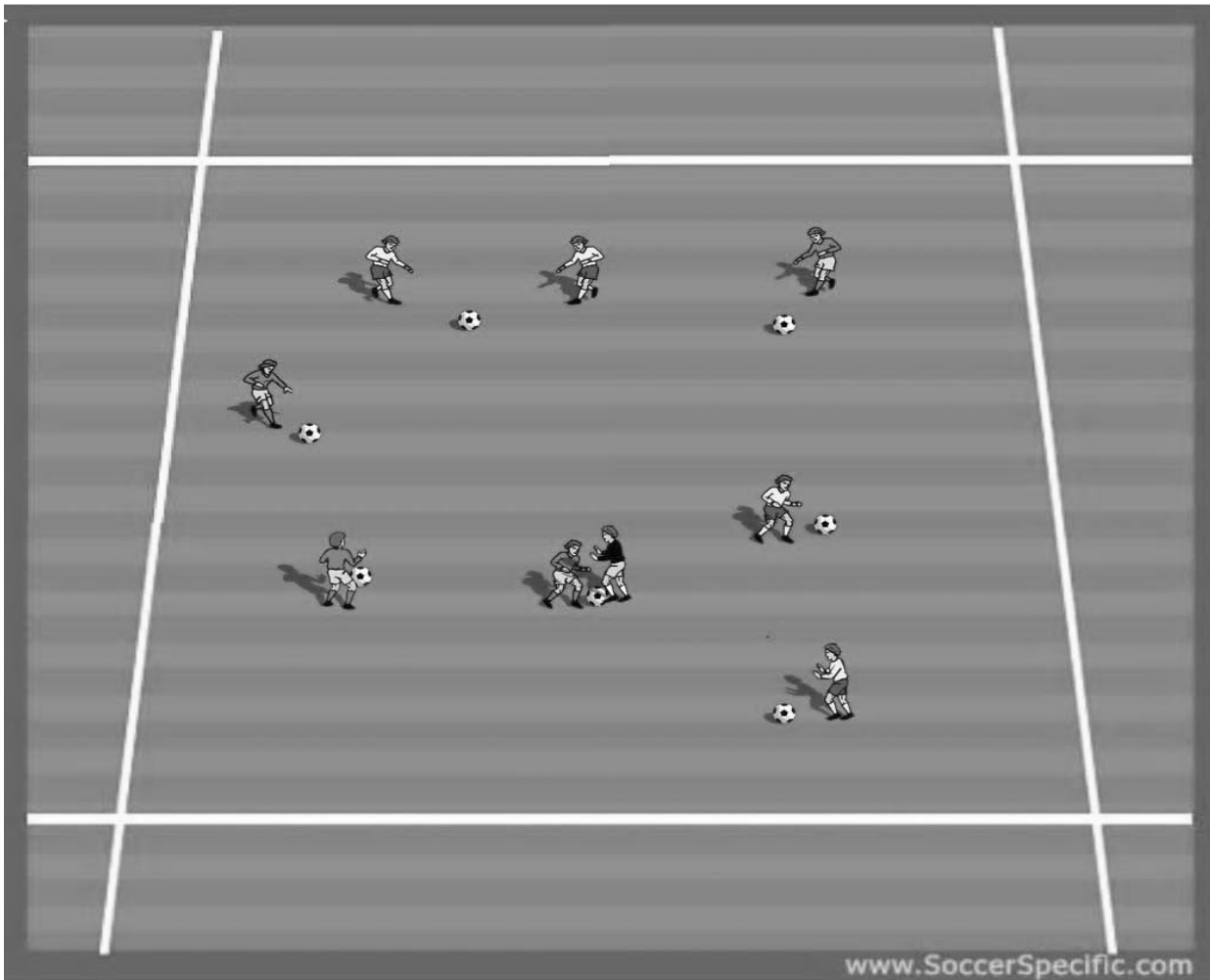


CARS

Every player has a ball that is a car. Let them decide what make of car they have. They have to drive their car along the freeway inside your 20 x 20 yard square. If two or more balls collide they have had a crash. In order to get back in the game they must take their car to the "shop". The "shop" is a dribble around one of the corner disc markers. As soon as they dribble around the corner disc they are back on the freeway and can continue to race and overtake other cars.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 9. Hospital Tag



HOSPITAL TAG

Same as tag, in that each player dribbles a soccer ball and that they try to tag each other with their hands. In this game, each time a player is tagged he/she must place their hand on the spot on their body at which they were tagged. Obviously, if tagged a third time, players have no more hands to cover those spots, so they must go to the hospital to see the doctor. The coach acts as the doctor and performs a magical task (pretend) to heal all the little soccer players so they can continue playing the game.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 10. Red light - Green light

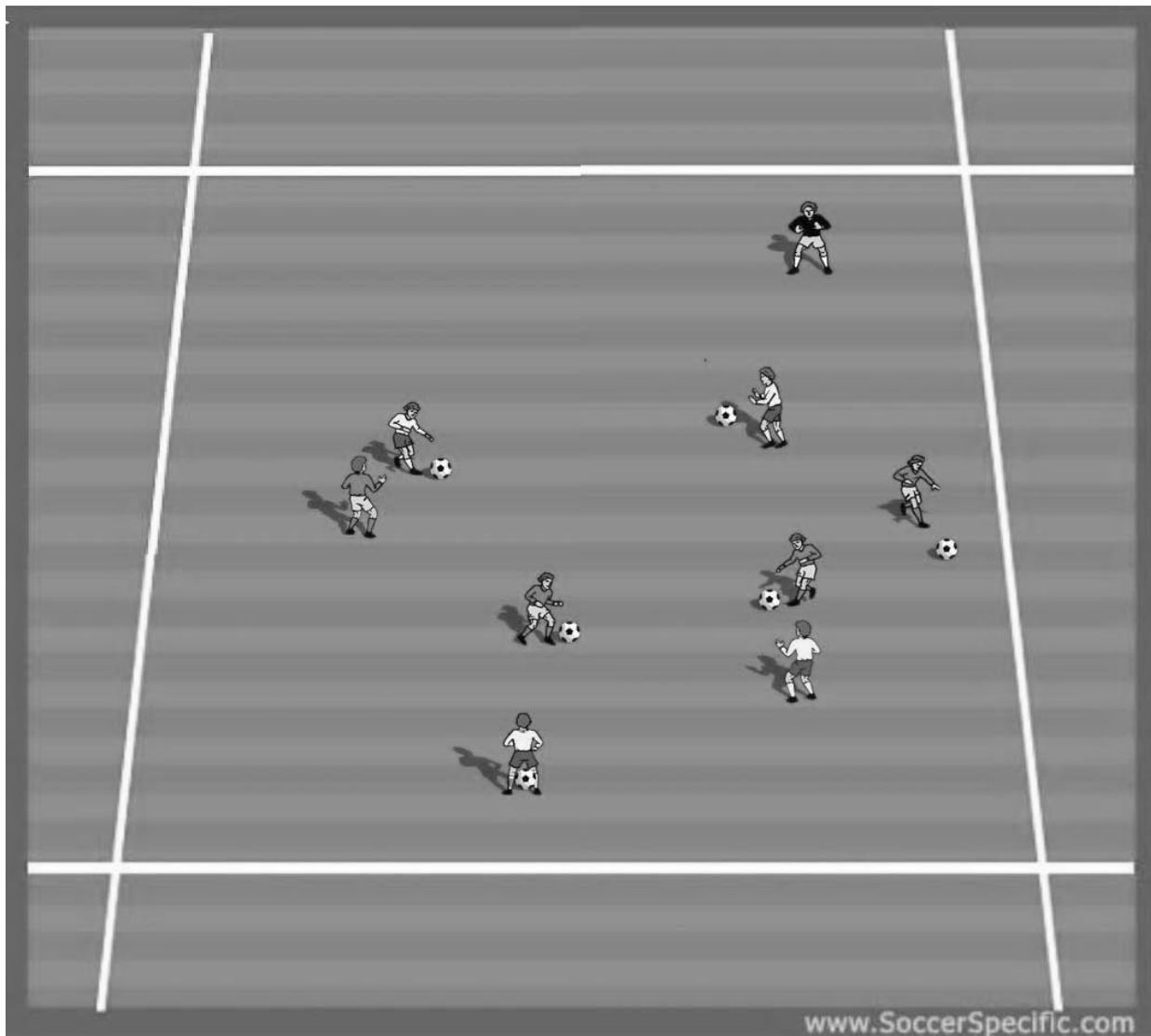


RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

All players have a ball and dribble in a limited space (or towards the coach). When coach says “red light”, players must stop ball and put foot on top of ball. When coach says “yellow light”, players must dribble very slowly. When coach says “green light”, players dribble fast. Coach controls this game with frequency of light changes and variety of changes. Once players catch on to this game, add lights of other colors and affix different actions to them. (i.e. purple light = hop back and forth over ball, orange light = run around the ball, black light = dance, blue light = hide behind the ball etc. etc.)

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 11. Kangaroo Jack

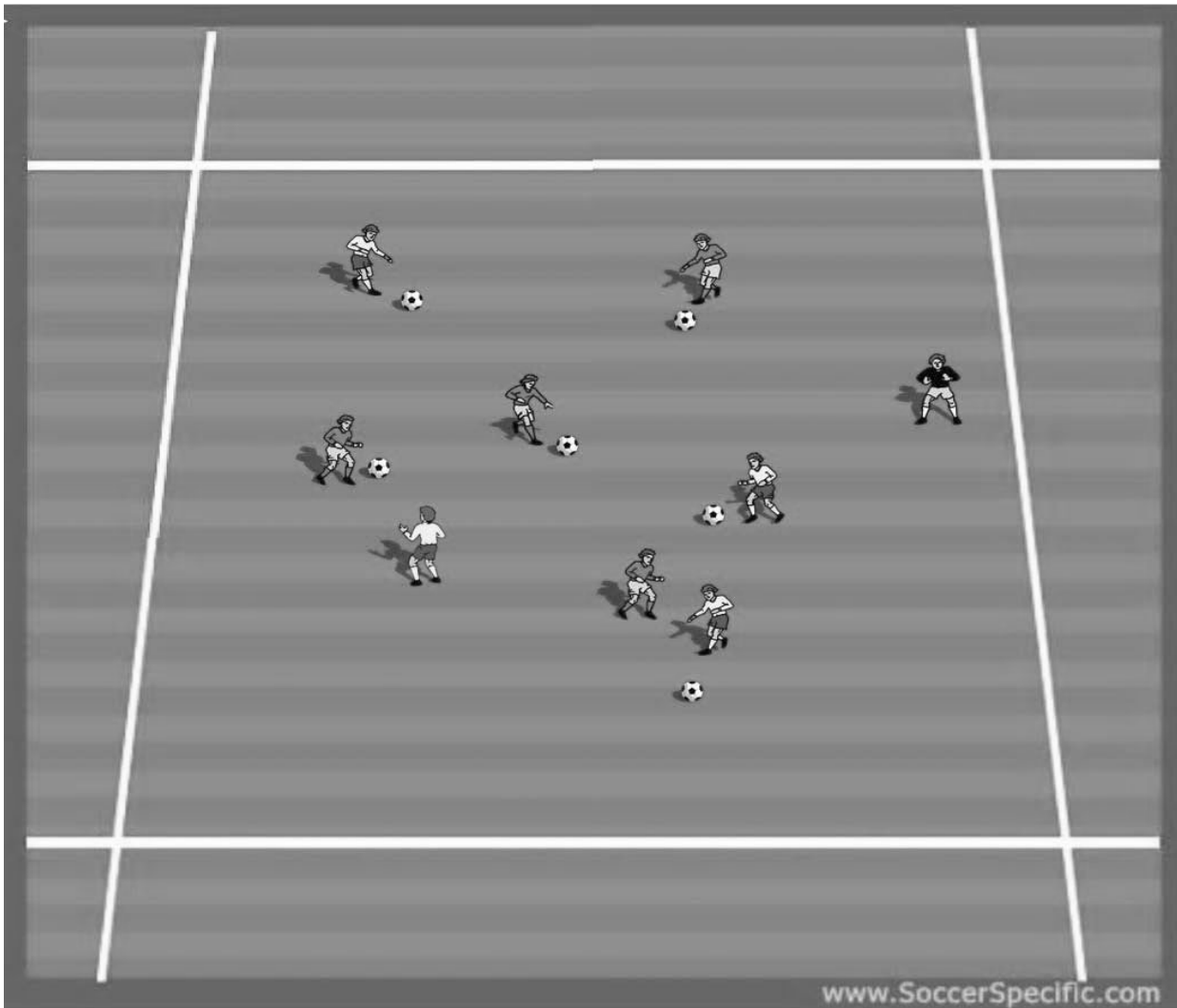


KANGAROO JACK

All players except two or three begin with a ball. Players without balls are kangaroo jacks and must hop like a kangaroo and try to tag players. If a player gets tagged, he/she becomes a kangaroo as well until all players are turned into kangaroos.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 12. Snake

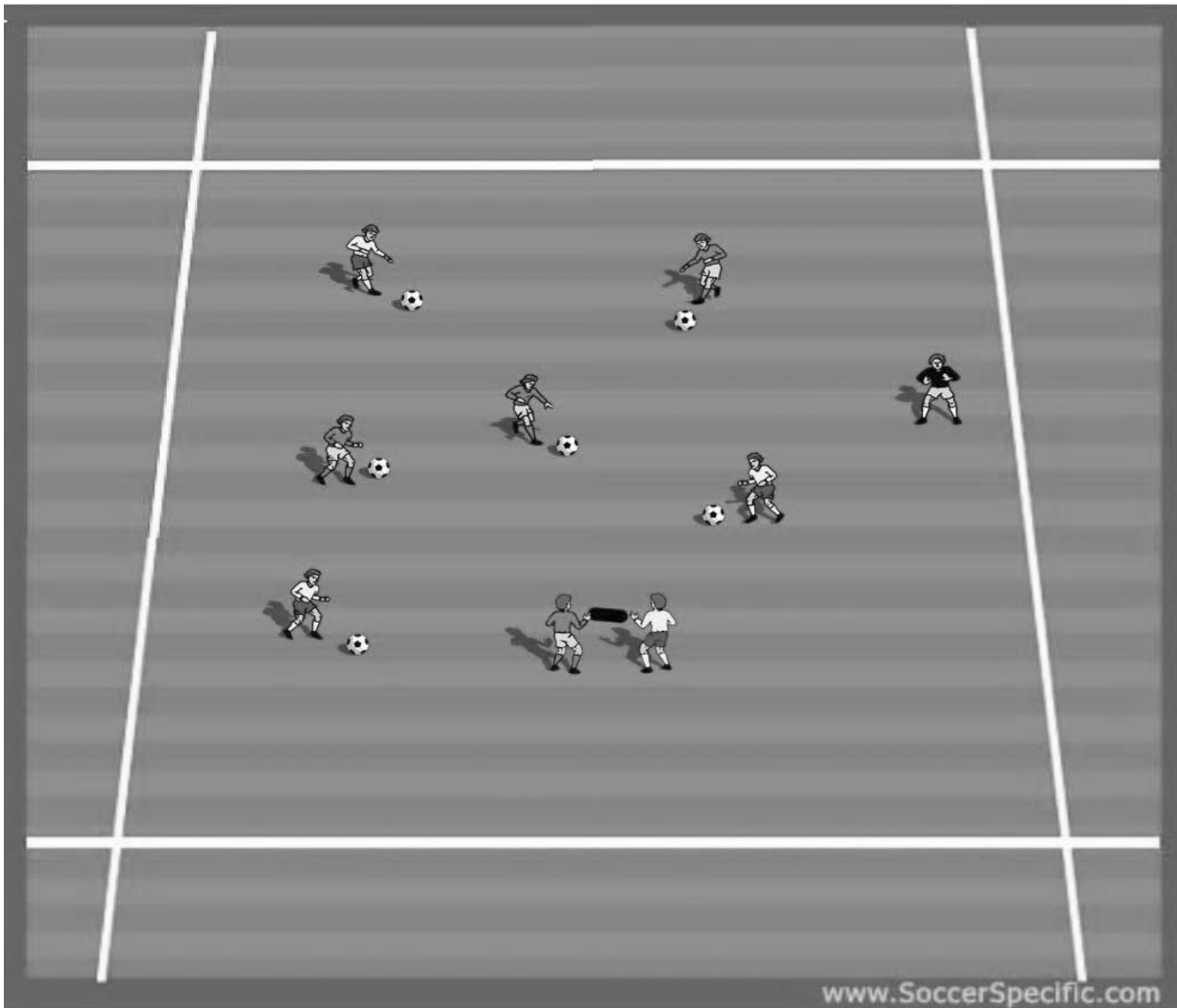


SNAKE

In an appropriate space for the numbers you have, have all players dribbling soccer balls except for 2-3 players to start. These players hold hands and work together as one snake to tag the other player's, The players with balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, the join hands with players making up the snake the snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must stay together as one animal and not break off into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 13. The Moving Goal

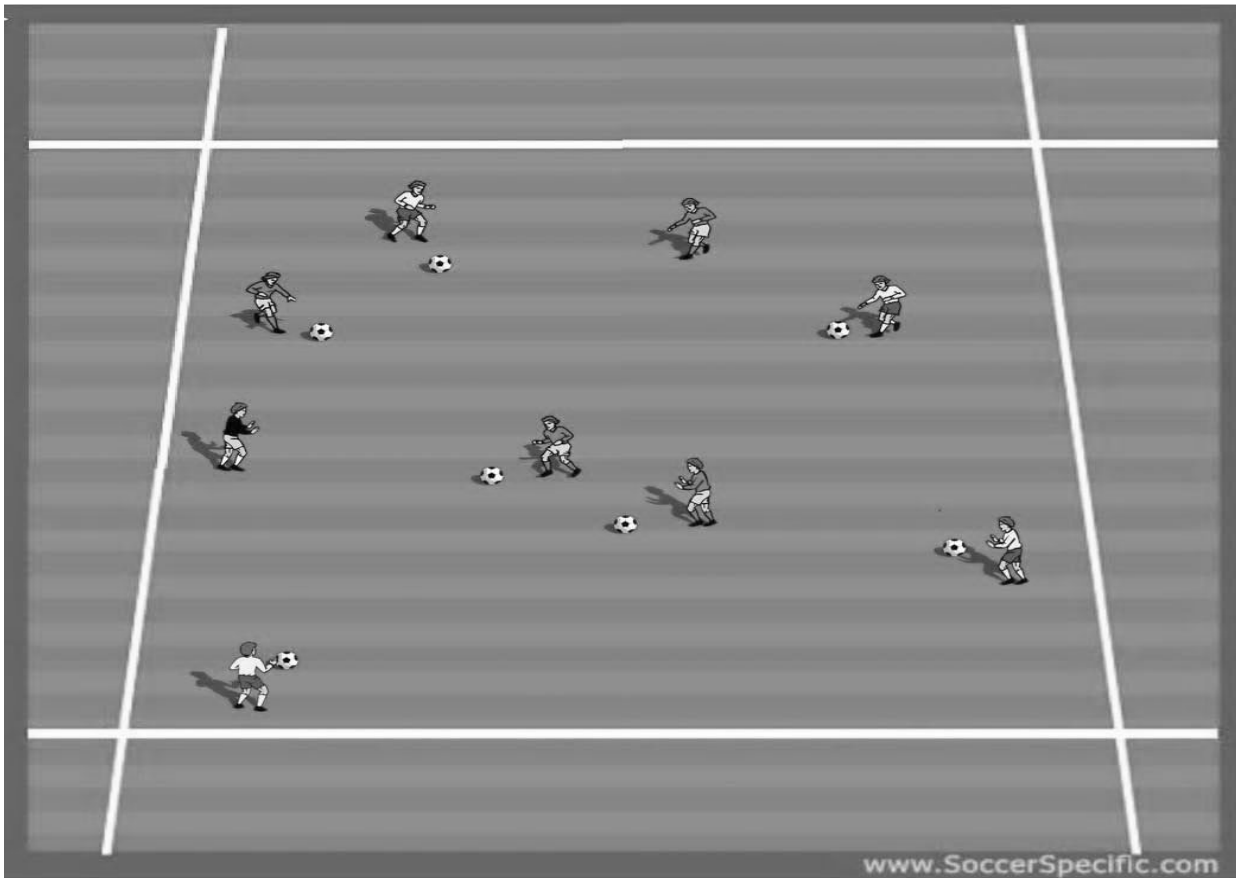


MOVING GOAL

Two coaches or parents join hands with arms extended to form a movable goal with each coach/parent serving as a post and their arms serving as the crossbar. Players each have a ball and try to score by kicking or dribbling their ball through the goal. However, the coaches/parents constantly move and turn to force the players to keep their head up and to change direction as they dribble.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision
Changing direction
Changing pace
Shooting the ball

Game 14. Count The Fingers

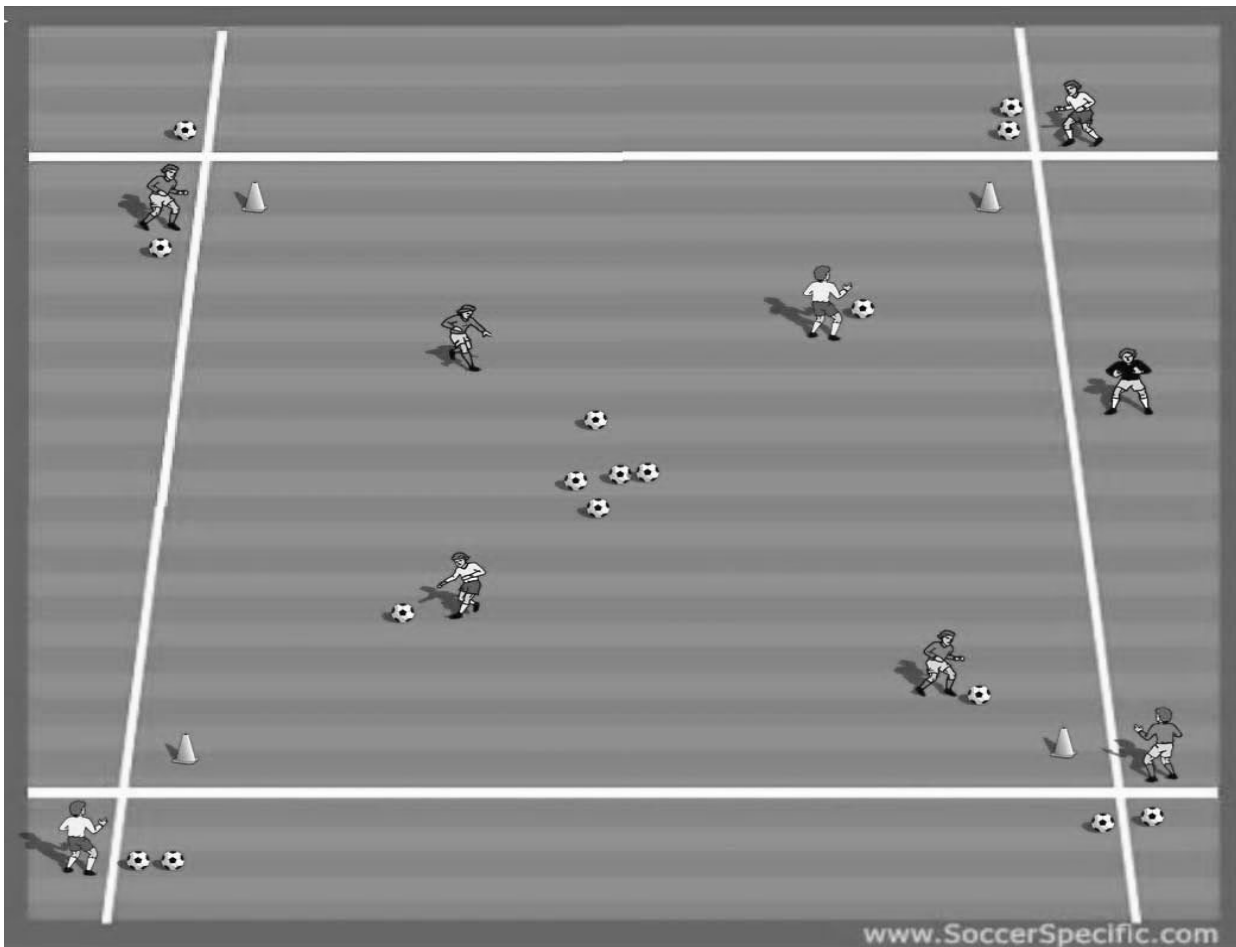


COUNT THE FINGERS

All players have a ball. They dribble in a restricted area. The coach raises one arm and holds up a number of fingers. The players must call out the number of fingers the coach is holding up. The coach continually changes the number and his/her position so that the players must learn to dribble with their head up. As they develop counting you can raise two arms and they must total the sum of the fingers held high.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction

Game 15. Steal The Gold



STEAL THE GOAL

In a 20-yard square. The balls are placed in the middle of the square. The players are divided into four groups and are assigned a corner. This is their bank. On the command from the coach one player from each corner runs and dribbles a ball, (the gold) back to their bank. Once the gold is secure in the bank the next player can go to steal a piece of gold. Once all the balls are removed from the center of the square players may steal a piece of gold from another bank. The game continues for about 2 minutes. The winners are the players that have the most gold in their bank.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision/avoid challenges
Changing direction
Changing pace

Game 16. End-Line Soccer

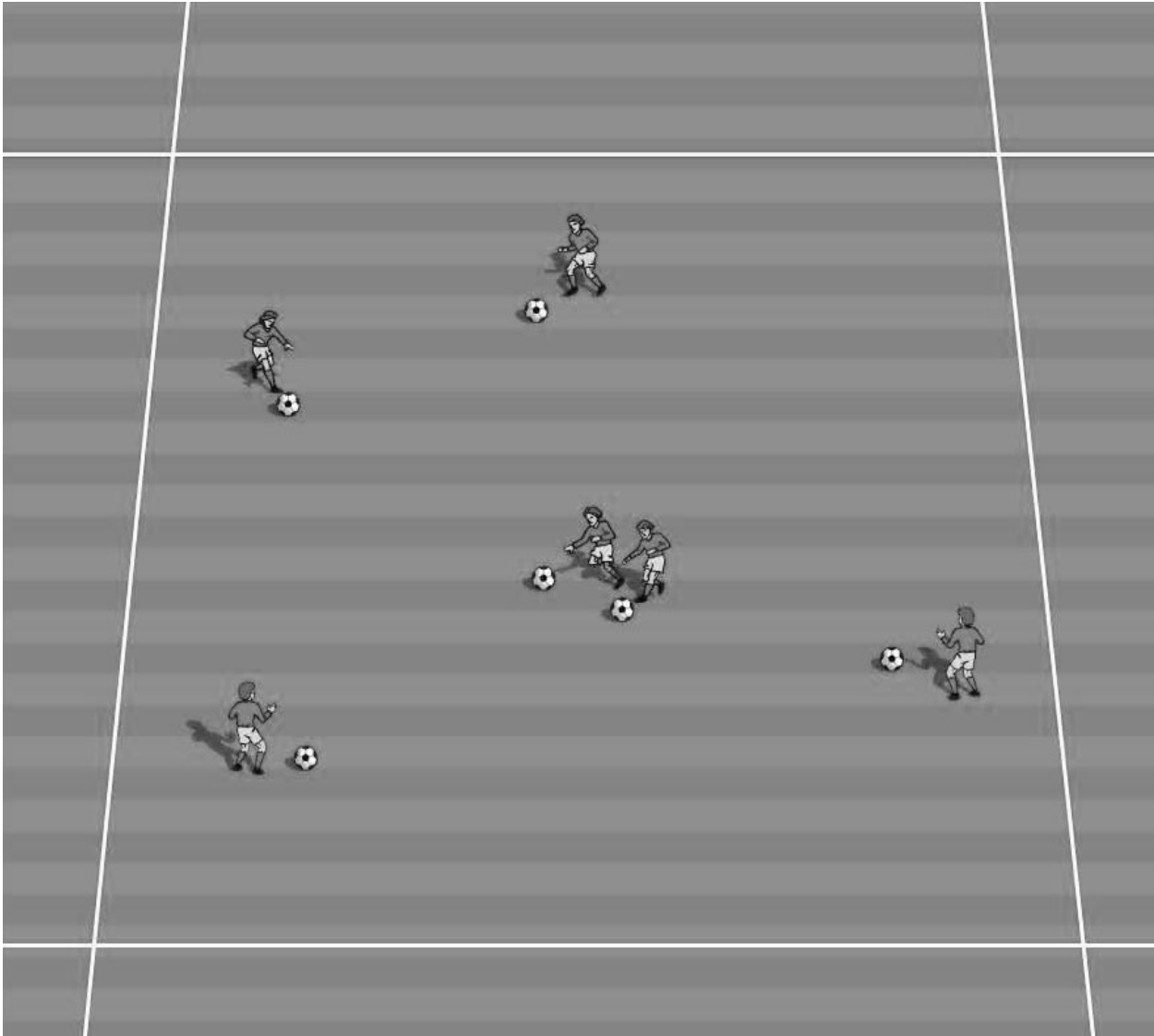


SIDE LINE SOCCER

On a regular U-6 soccer field divide the players into two teams. Each team player is given a number that corresponds with a player having the same number on the other team. Coaches can match up similar player with the same number. Each team stands on an end-line. The coach rolls in a ball and calls out a number. The corresponding numbers then play 1 v 1 until one of them scores or the ball goes out of play.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Shielding
Head-up and alert/ vision
Changing direction
Changing pace
Shooting the ball
Tackling/winning the ball back

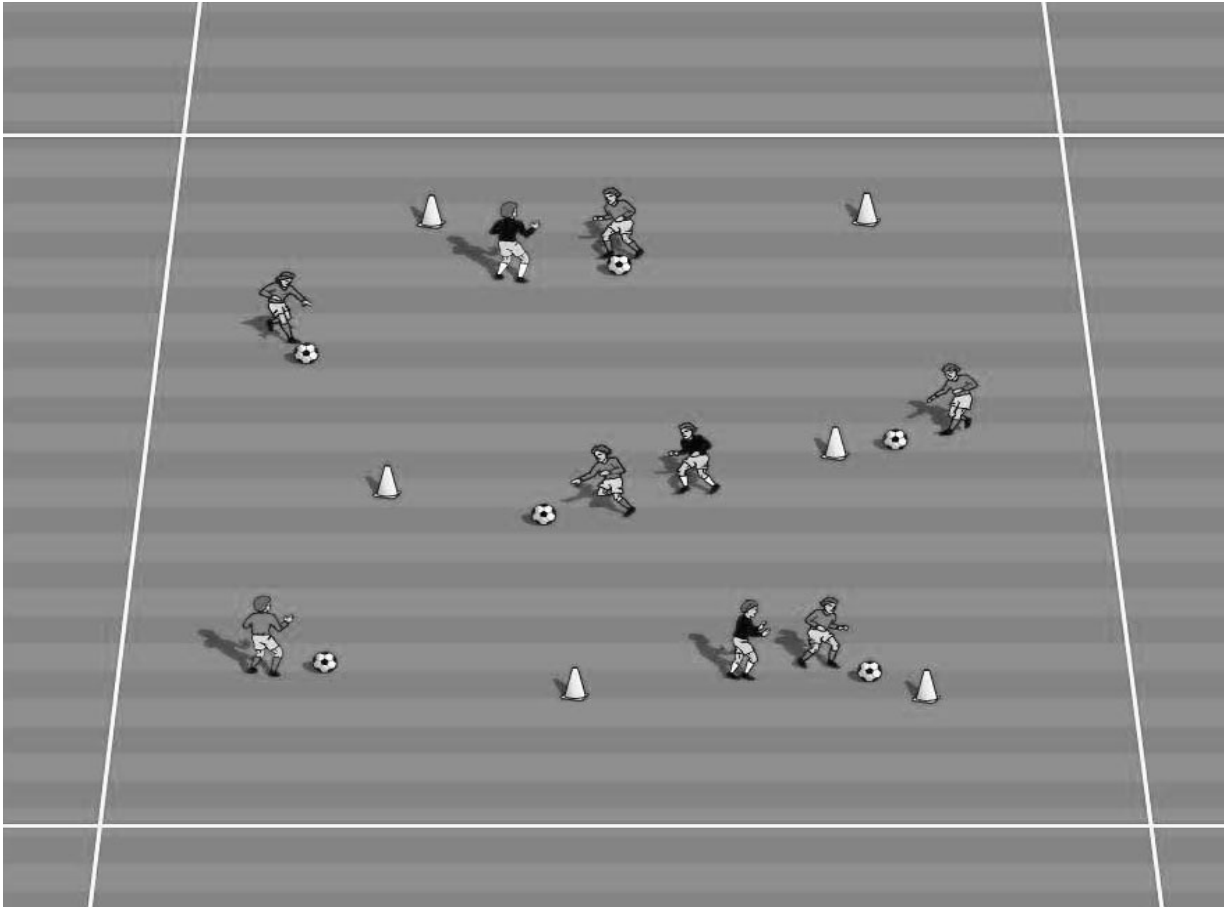
Game 17. Knee Tag



All players have a ball. They must dribble their ball trying to keep the ball moving and under control. As they dribble past another player they try to tag them with one hand on the knee. They receive a point for each knee tagged. Coach allows play to continue for 30-45 seconds and then asked individuals their score.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Shielding
Head-up and alert/ vision
Changing direction
Changing pace

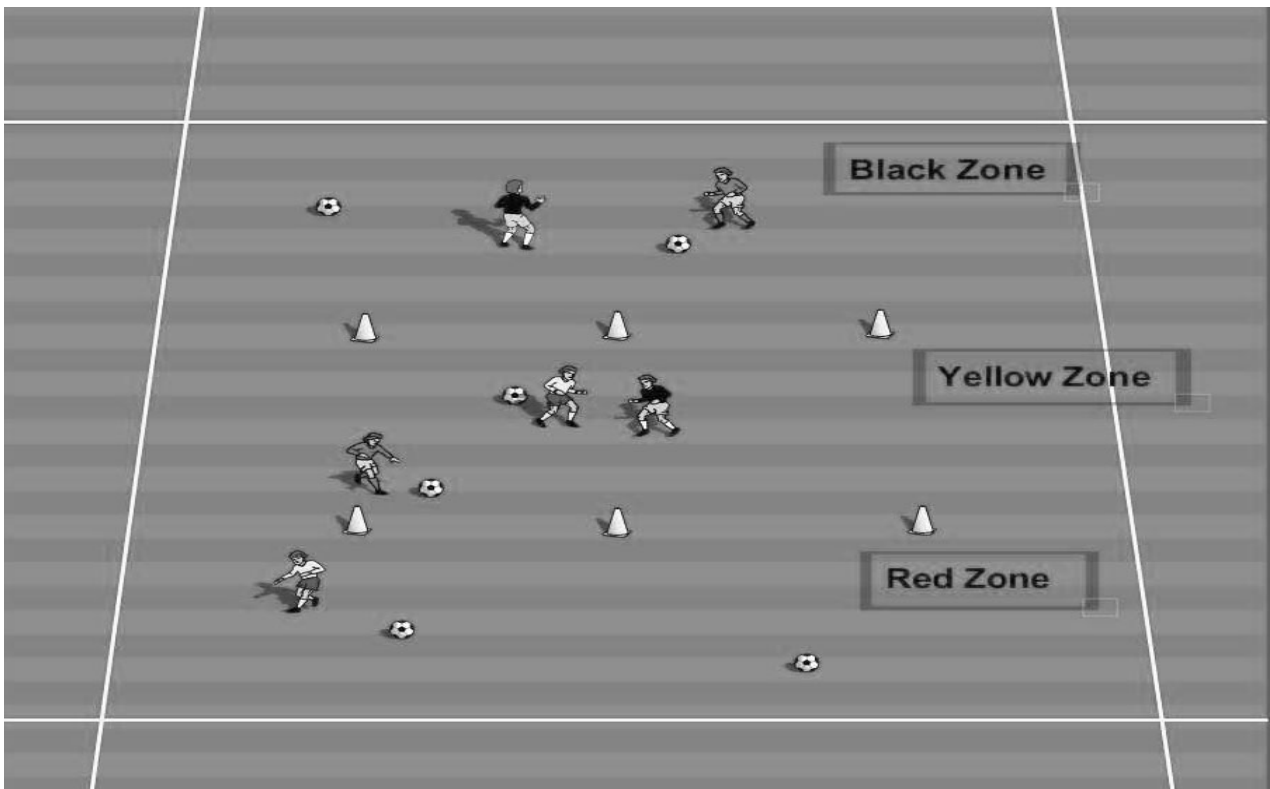
Game 18. Cops And Robbers



Have 2 cops, everyone else is a robber. Only robbers have a ball. Robbers dribble around and try to knock over the cones (banks) by kicking their ball against a cone and knocking it over. The cops run round and try to stand up the cones before all the money comes out.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision
Changing direction
Changing pace
Passing with accuracy
Teamwork- for cops and robbers alike

Game 19. Capture The Balls



2 v 2 v 2, or a 3 v 3 v 3 game.

Set up a field 20 yards wide by 25 yards long. Divide the players into three teams. Each team has a home zone. The teams try to gather up as many balls as they can and bring them to their home zone. They may take balls from any other zone. They can protect their own zone by taking away balls that are in the process of being taken from their own zone. Winners have the greatest number of balls in their zone at the end of time. Play games of 45-60 seconds at first and gradually increase the time to about 2 minutes.

Objective: Have fun
Dribbling skills/ ball control
Head-up and alert/ vision
Shielding
Changing direction
Changing pace
Teamwork/ Strategizing

Some Final Thoughts

Too many games and too much meaningless competition will desensitize players to the special quality of the game and the concept of “match-day” being something special.

There is good reason why we recommend a certain number of practices take place between games. However practice does not make perfect. It only makes permanent. Only perfect practice makes perfect.

We must be cognizant of rushing our players to the next level before they have the tools to enjoy and master the level they are in.

Skill is what players seek.

Skill is the learned ability to bring about a predetermined result with maximum certainty, with the minimum outlay of time and energy, or both.

Competing in too many games or in too many meaningless games dulls the thrill of anticipation and reduces the gains in emotional intelligence associated with preparing to compete against opposition.

Balanced competition, with and against like-skilled and like-motivated players improves learning and development.

Recreation soccer is the foundation of the game. The stronger the foundation the healthier our club will be. If we can improve the quality of recreation soccer the game as a whole will improve. (A rising tide floats all boats.)

The future of our club/game is happening now in recreation soccer. The player’s experiences in our recreation program will determine what is to come for them and the whole club.

The Board of Directors and the Coaching Directors at the Murrieta Surf Soccer Club would like to place on record our sincere appreciation for the investment that you are making in our players and club. We trust that you have a very positive experience coaching our players.