



Murrieta Youth Soccer League

U-8 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 8

There is a notable improvement in pace and coordination from U- 6 to U- 8.
They still have a limited ability to work on more than one task at a time.
Concepts of time, space and boundaries are only just beginning to develop.
They perceive their effort as the measure of good performance.
They have a great need for approval and praise from adults.
They have a desire for social acceptance.
Want everyone to like them.
Are extremely aware of adult reactions.
Are easily bruised psychologically by both peers and adults alike.
A social order is now beginning to develop.
Negative comments carry a huge weight and will turn them off quickly.
They only play to have fun.
True playmates are beginning to emerge.
However they gravitate to only one or two close friends not large groups. Hence partner work is enjoyable.
They are beginning to develop motor memories.
Still prefer playing to watching.
Imagination is not as active as the U- 6 age group.
They will not allow as much silliness. They expect everyone to follow rules.
Team concept is limited. "I play on Coach Bill's Team" or "I play on the Tigers".
Club and league concepts are non-existent and have no place here. Some will keep score but it is not important in the scope of things and is forgotten within minutes of the final whistle.
Puberty issues for girls may have already started.
There is a wide range of abilities within the group.
The development range will be from as low as 3 all the way up to 9 and 10 years.

“ 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 – 8 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 11 minute periods with 5 minute breaks for U-8

Restrictions: No goalkeeper, no offside

Ball: Size #3

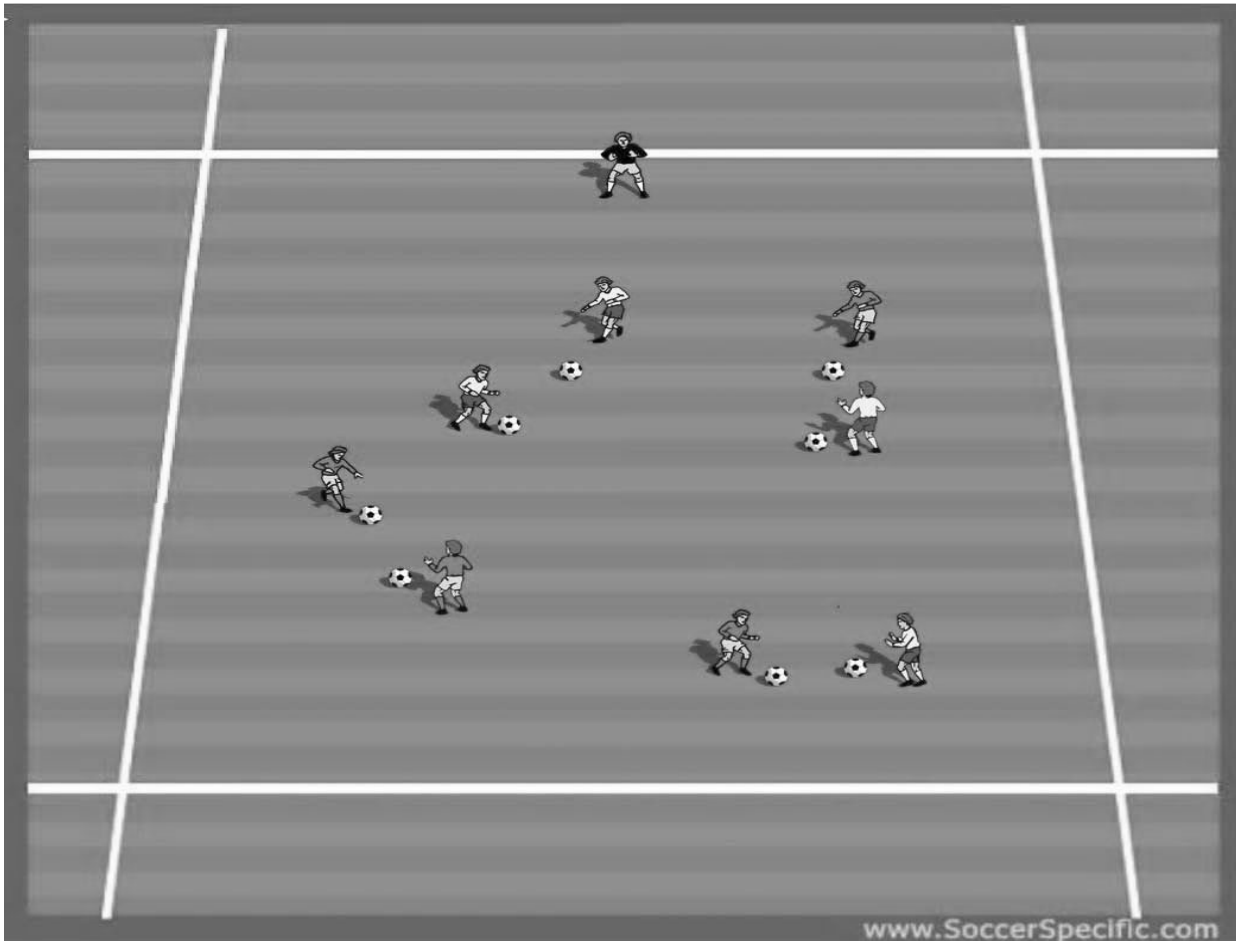
Goal size: 4 x 6 feet.

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.

Players Under 8

Game 1. Mathematics Dribble



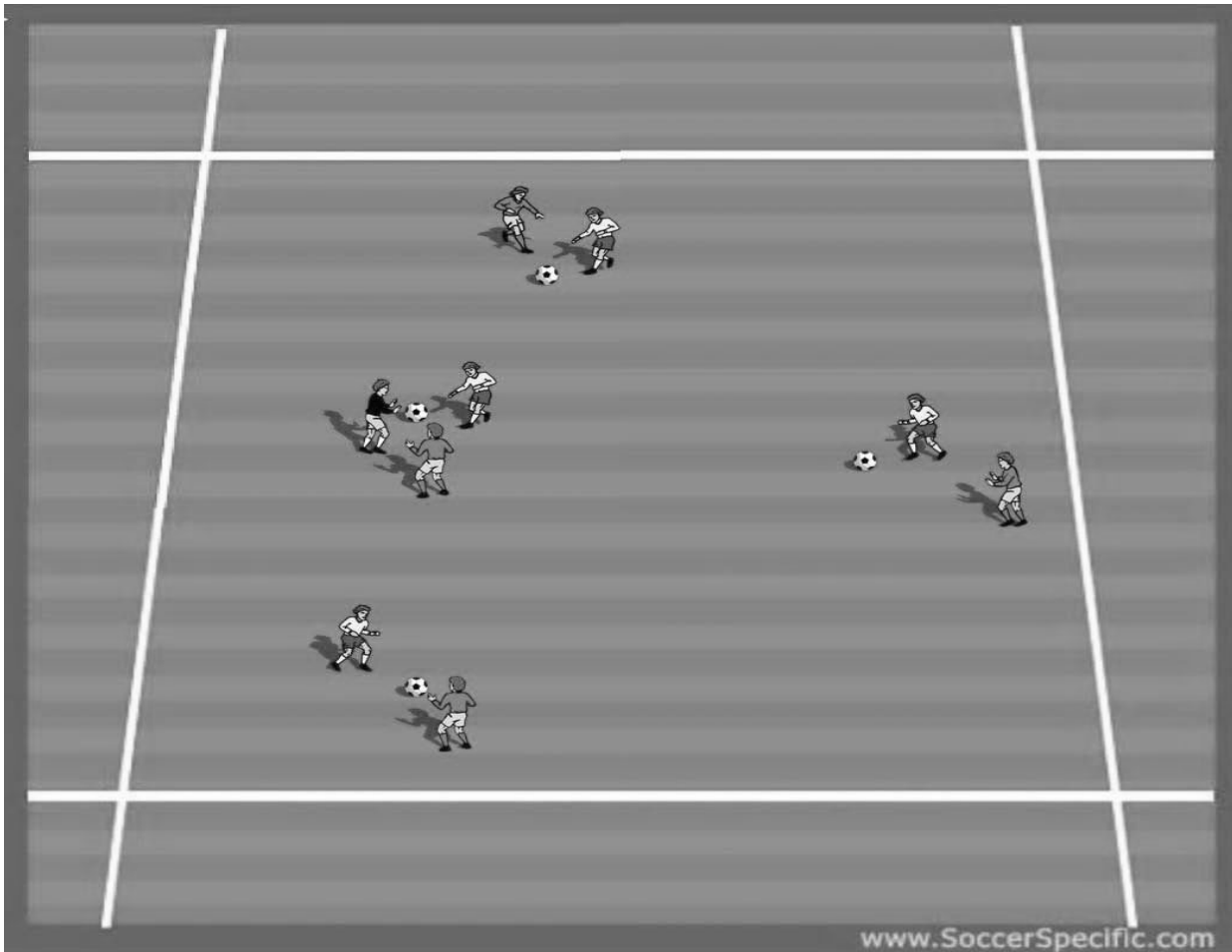
MATHEMATICS DRIBBLE

Every player has a ball and works within a confined area. Players dribble to keep control while avoiding each other. While they dribble the coach calls out a math problem. The answer to the math problem is the key to them forming groups. Example “3 minus 1” is called out. So players would need to dribble as fast as they can to a partner. When they get together they hold their ball above their head to display they have control and have completed the task.

This activity produces quick reaction to cues and awareness of others. It connects the mind and the body.

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

Game 2. Go Fetch In Pairs.

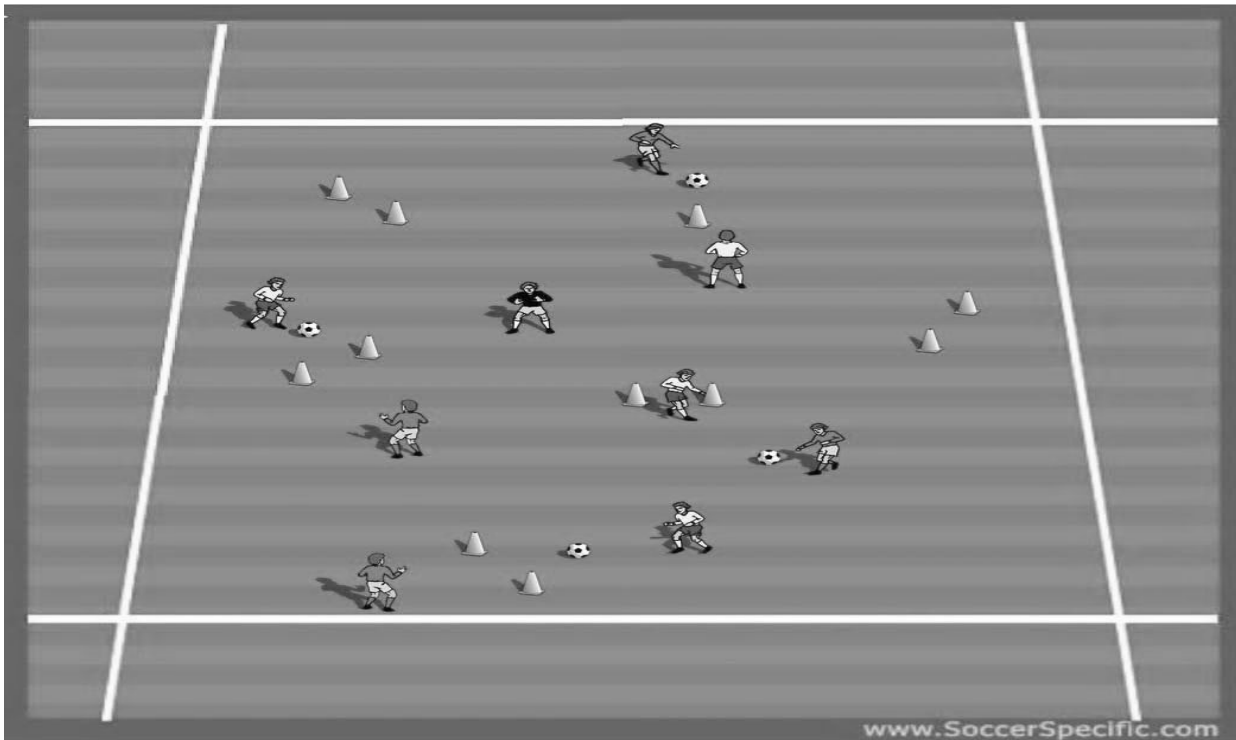


GO FETCH in PAIRS

Work with one ball between two players. Each pair hands the coach their ball in turn. The coach then throws the ball away as he calls out a number between 2 and 10. Whatever number the coach calls out the pair of players must return the ball to the coach by passing the ball with their feet in exactly the stated number of touches. The players will decide how to solve the problem. The coach can move from one spot to another to increase the degree of difficulty. This activity encourages working in pairs, pacing of passes, playing to a target and keeping the head up to scan the environment.

Objective: Have fun
Head-up and alert/ vision
Listening / calculating
Accuracy of passes/ weight of passes

Game 3. Pass Through The Gates



PASS through the **GATES**

Using pairs of cones placed 3 feet apart. The coach creates 8 to 10 small goals or gates.

Each pair of players has one ball between them.

After a signal from the coach the players attempt to pass to each other through a gate. This continues until one pair has passed through all the gates.

The activity could be varied to have the pass count how many gates they can pass through in one minute. Do not allow them to pass through a gate a second time until all gates have been passed through

This activity encourages problem- solving, speed of passing, changing direction, passing and receiving, communication and cooperation.

Objective: Have fun

Head-up and alert/ vision

Accuracy of passes/ weight of passes

Communication

Problem solving

Game 4. Pac-Men



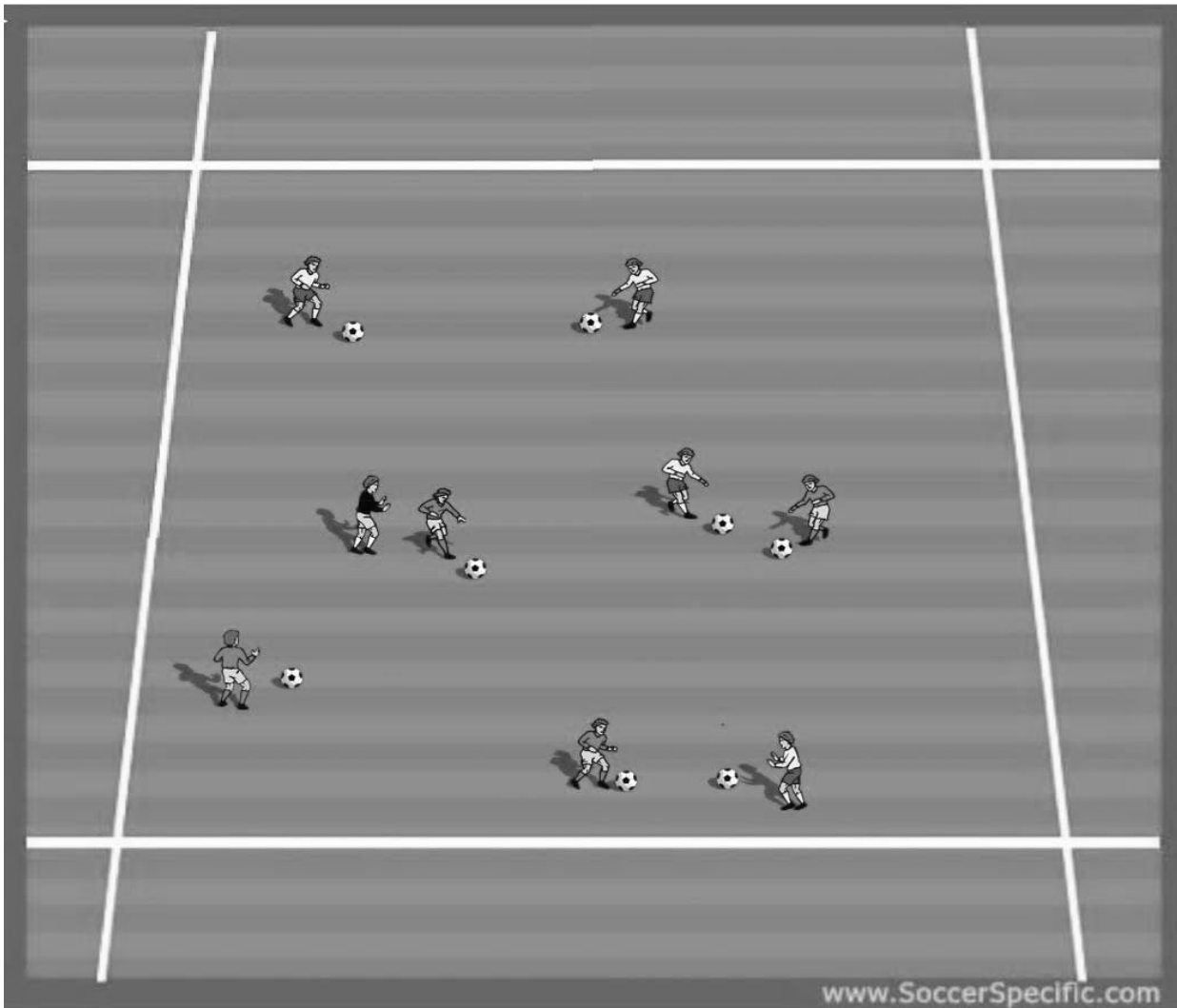
PAC MEN

In a confined area 20 x 20 yards all players are free to move about without balls. Their balls are placed just outside the area ready for them to retrieve them when needed. One pair have a ball each. The two players with the balls are Pac-Men. They dribble around the area and attempt to hit the others below the knee with a pass. The players without the balls try to avoid being hit by running and dodging and jumping. Once a player has been hit below the knee they become the Pac-Man by retrieving their ball and joining in. The game continues until all players have been turned into Pac-Men.

This activity encourages dribbling and passing to a moving target, decision making, changing direction, cardio-respiratory endurance and allows all levels to play equally.

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

Game 5. Free Dribble



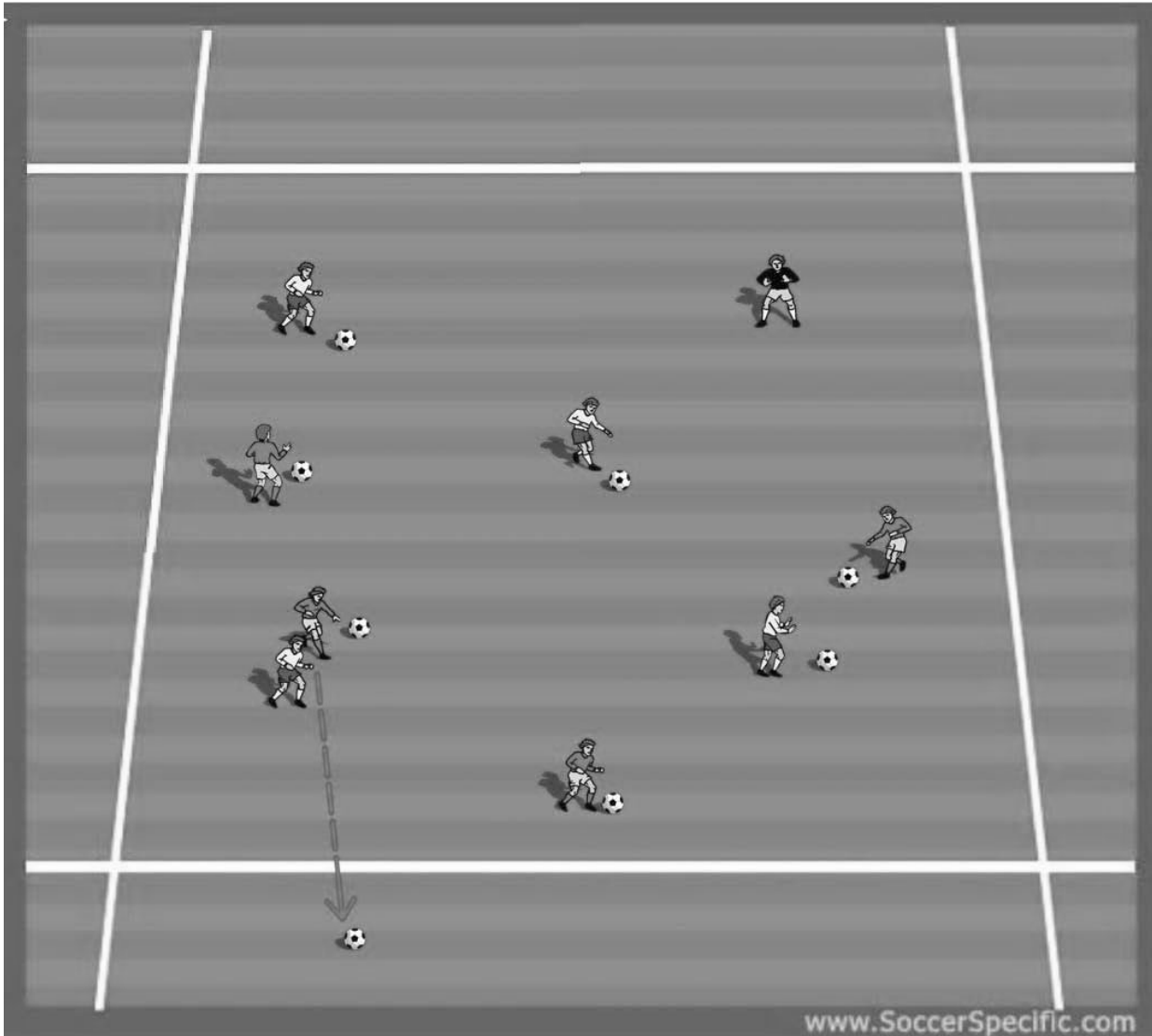
FREE DRIBBLE

Everyone with a ball, use the inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session. Kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction.

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

Game 6. Knock Out

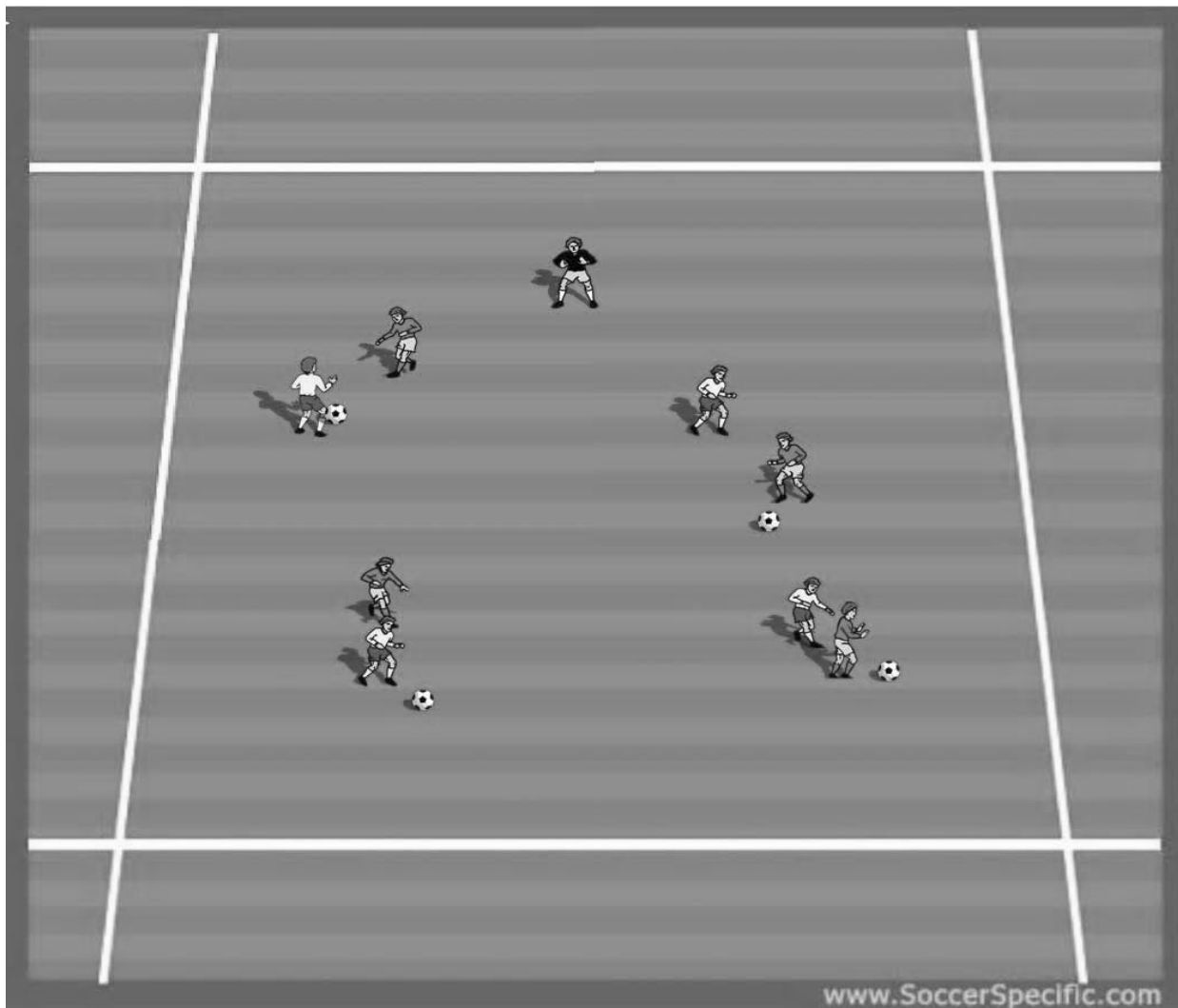
Have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player's balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 5 jumping jacks or juggling 3 times).



KNOCKOUT

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

Game 7. Keep Away 1 v 1

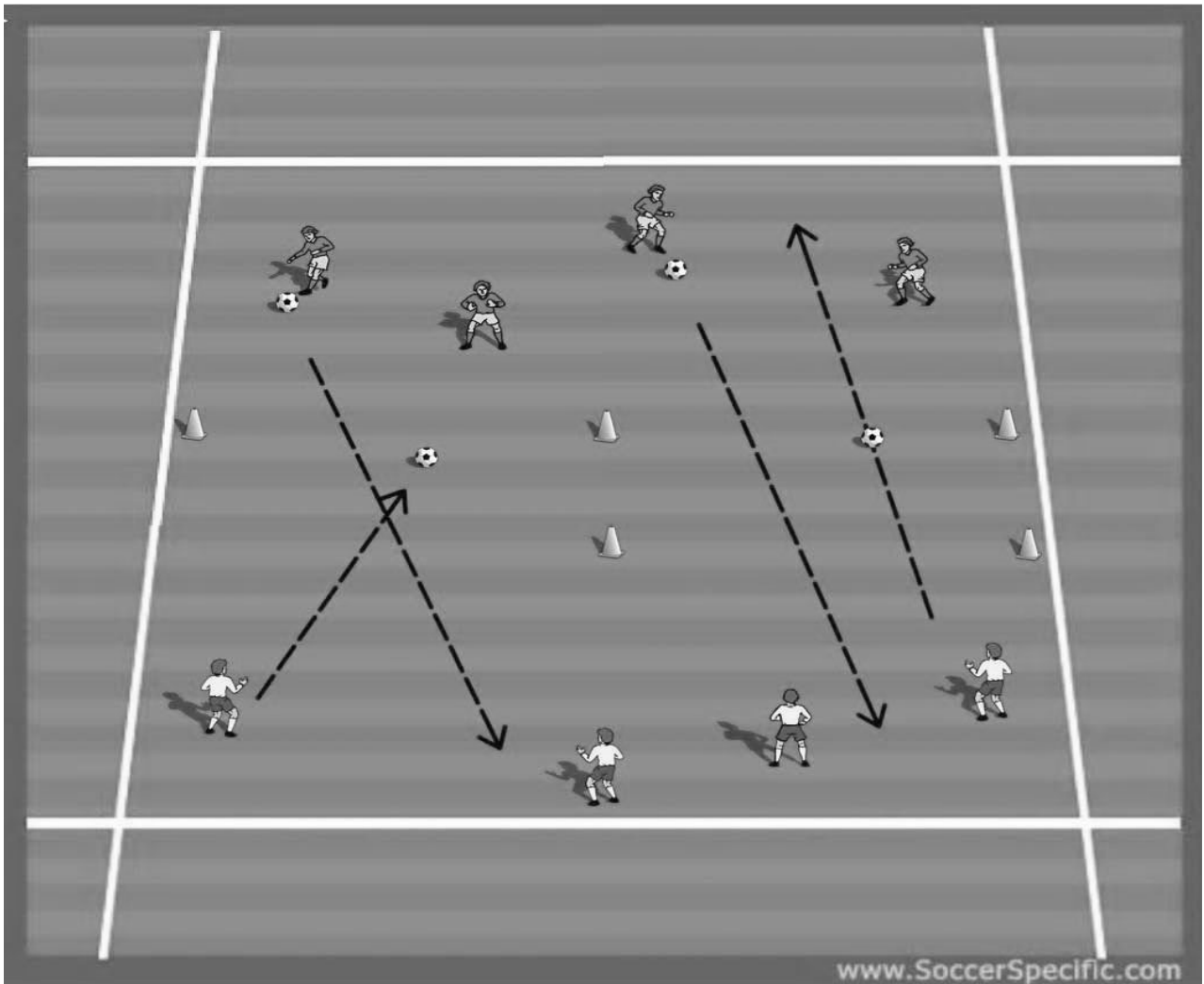


KEEP AWAY 1 vs 1

In a grid 20 x 20 yards, one player has a ball and the other is without. The object is for the player with the ball to keep it while the player without tries to win the ball. If ball goes out of bounds the player that last touched the ball loses possession. This encourages shielding, moving into space, turning away from pressure. You can also play this activity that allows the players without the ball are able to steal any players ball.

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

Game 8. Messy Back Yard

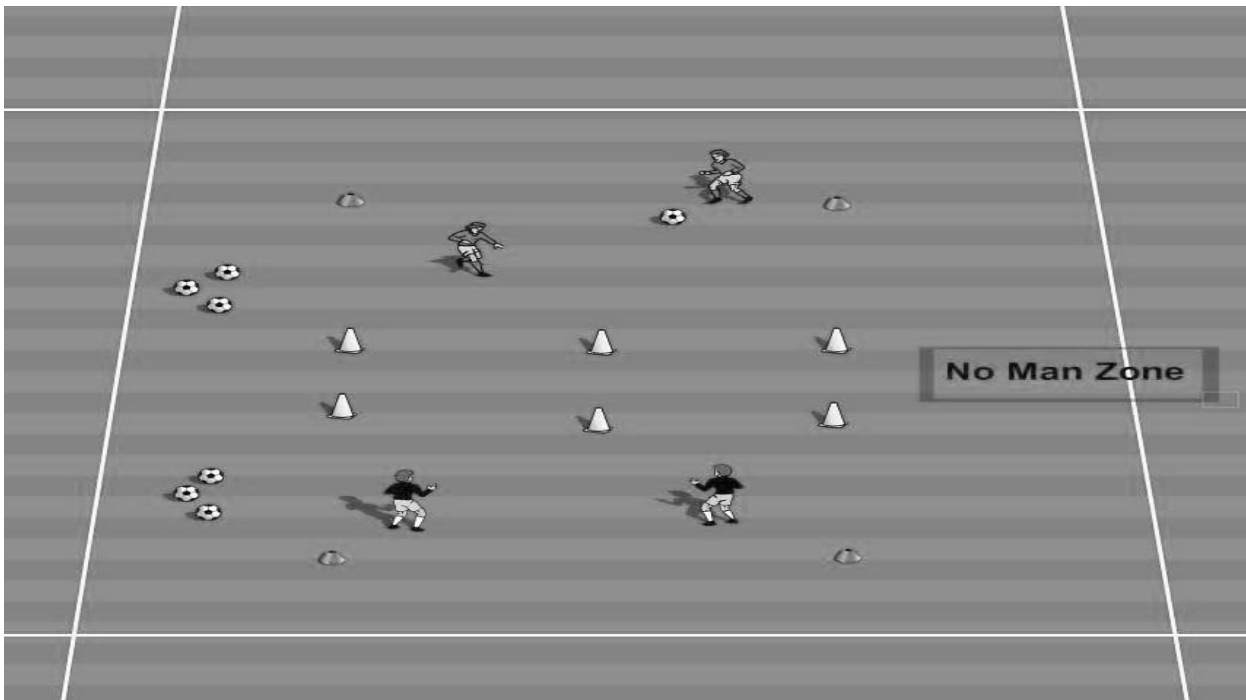


MESSY BACK YARD

Split the squad into two teams. The playing area 40 x 20 yards is split into two halves. Create a narrow buffer zone 2 or 3 yards wide in the middle. This is a no go zone. Each team is only allowed in their own half (their backyard.) Every player has a ball at the start of the game. When given the command to start all players clean up the balls in their backyard by passing them into the other teams backyard. Play continues for 1-2 minutes. The team with the least number of balls in their backyard will be declared the winners once time expires.

Objective: Have fun
Head-up and alert/ vision
Moving 1 line with a ball
Controlling the ball
Passing the ball

Game 9. Soccer Tennis



Create teams of two players.

Create a court 10 yards x 10 yards with a 2-yard wide no-go zone to represent the net across the center. Players will play to see which pair serves first. To start playing for serve one player hand serves the ball directly to one of the opposition player. The ball is allowed to bounce once and may then be played back directly or touched an unlimited number of times before it is played back across the net to the other side of the court. Team-mates are allowed to pass the ball to each other as long as the ball remains off the ground. Players attempt to return the ball in such a way that the other team cannot return the ball. Once the ball touches the ground a second time the play is over and the winning team start to serve for the game. The ball must be returned to the other teams court. It cannot touch the ground in the no-go zone and must bounce in the court to be in play. If the opponent chooses not to let the ball bounce and plays the ball before it has landed that is ok.

The team that wins serve must serve from behind the base line. The serve is started by dropping the ball first and then playing the ball on the full volley. The object is to serve the ball into the oppositions court. Points are only awarded on your own serve. Games are played to seven points but you must win by two clear points.

Objective: Have fun

Head-up and alert/ vision

Moving in line with a ball

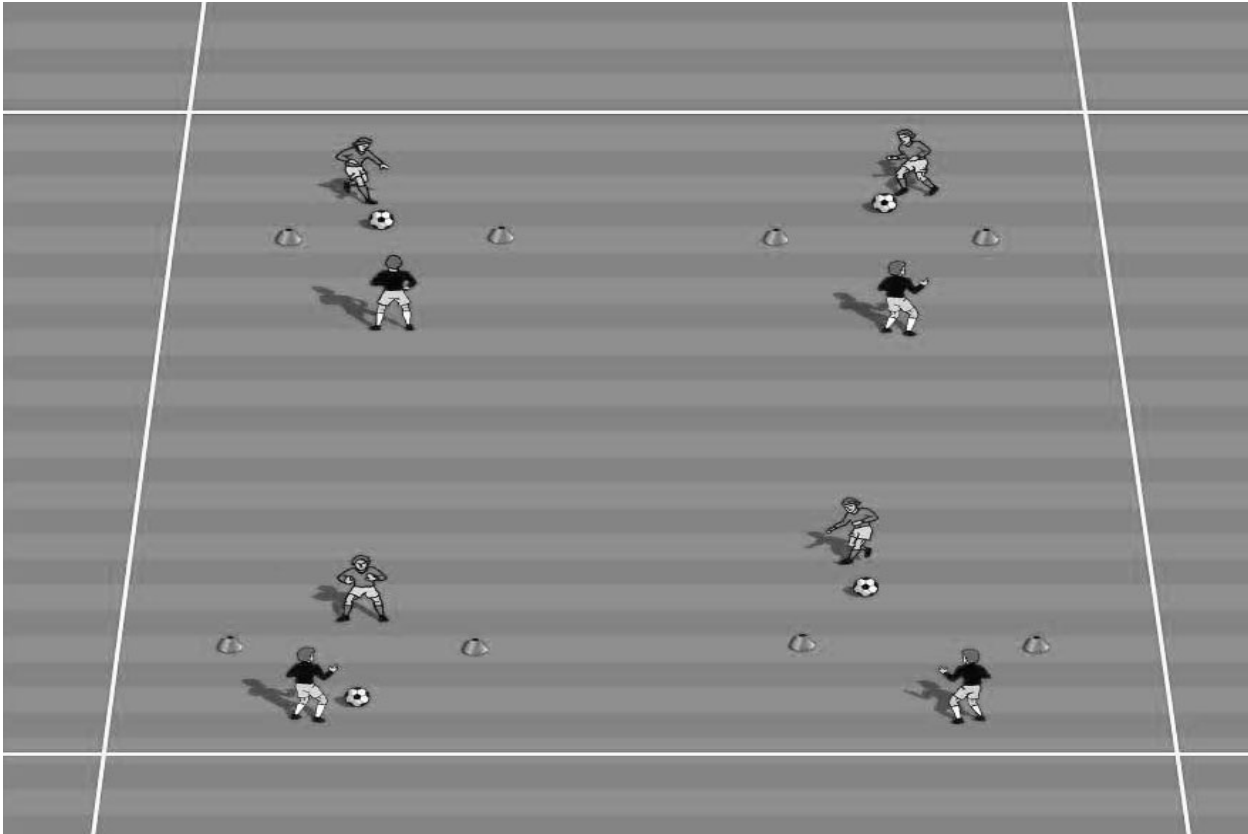
Controlling the ball

Controlled touches

Accurate passing

Support your partner

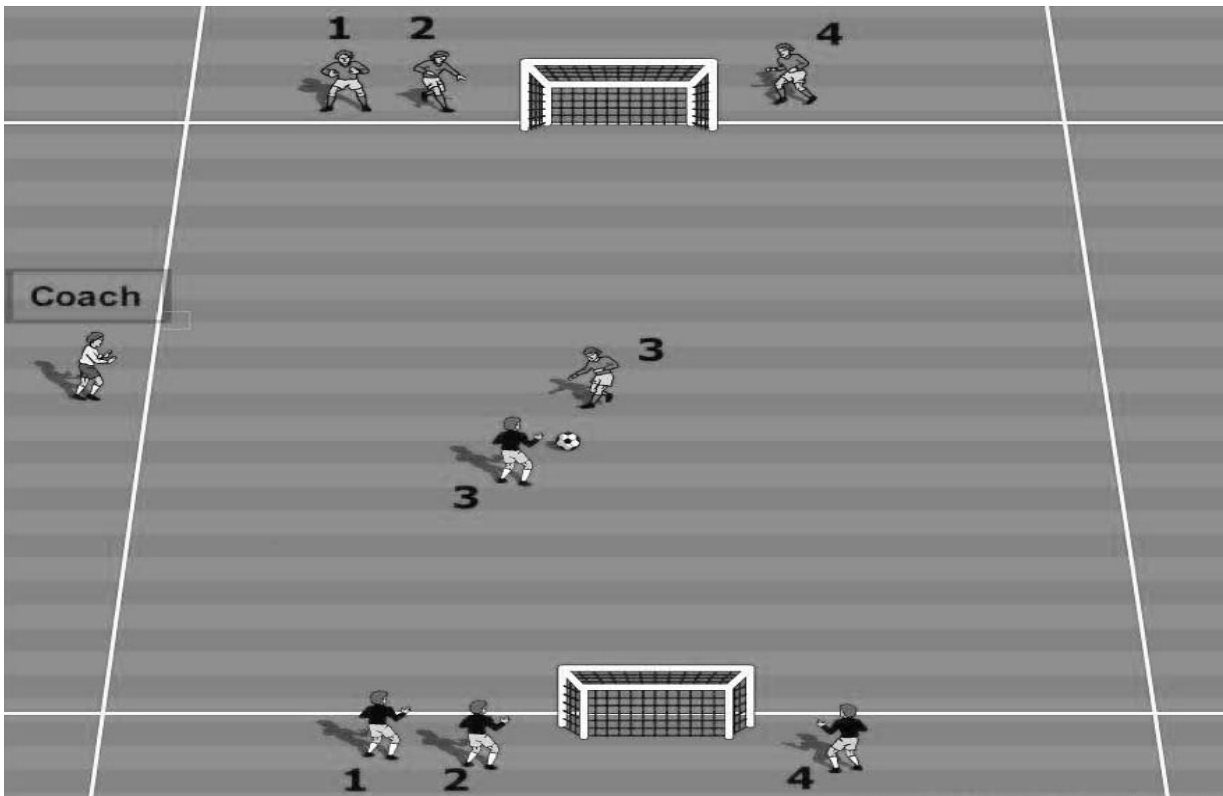
Game 10. Pong



Two players play each other and share a ball. They place cones or discs anywhere from 2 to 5 yards apart. They choose the distance apart. The rules are that the ball can never stop and must always remain on the ground and must go through the two marking cones or discs without touching them. Whenever this is violated the other player receives a point. Because of the rule that the ball can never stop moving players have to play with one or two touches. The closer the cones are together the closer the players will be. The further apart the cones or discs are the more lateral movement will occur. Games should be played for 3 or 4 minutes and the player with the greater number of points is the winner. In the event of a tie a one-point shootout is played to decide the winner.

Objective: Have fun
Head-up and alert/ vision
Moving in line with a ball
Controlled touches
Accurate passing

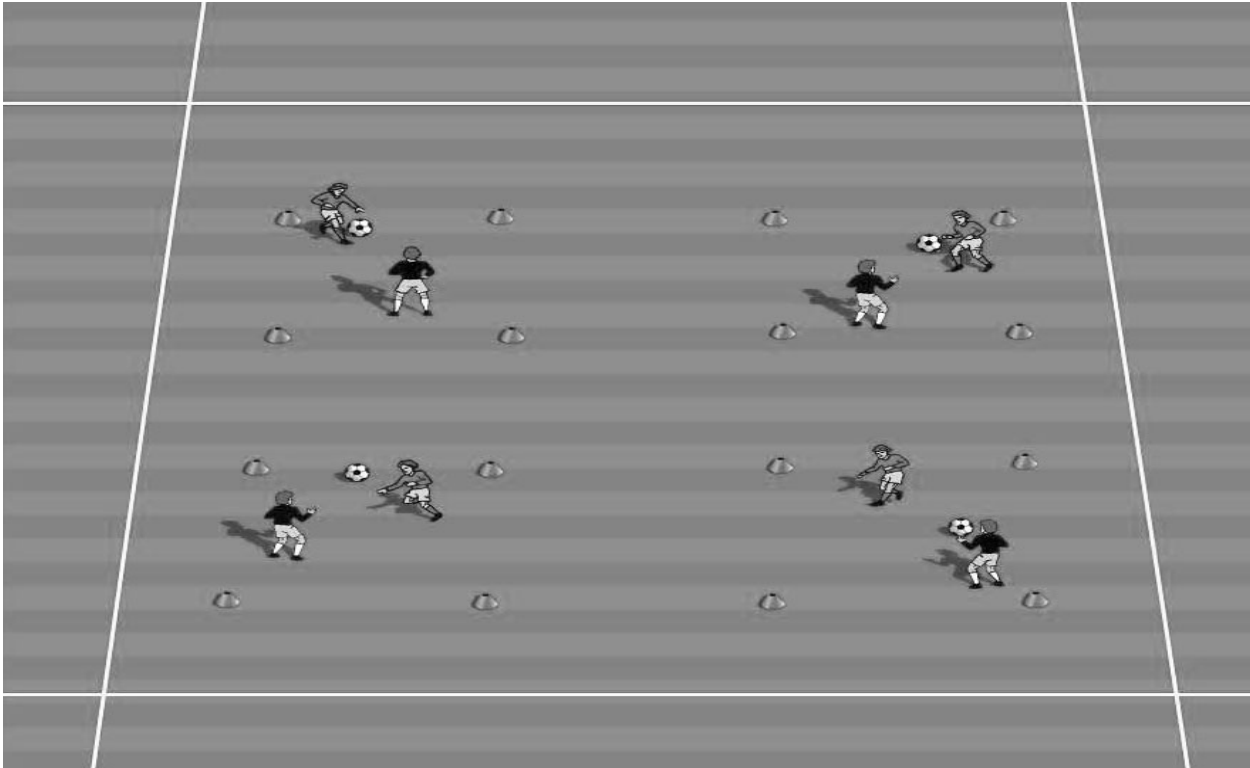
Game 11. Get Out Of Here



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. Teams stand on an end line. The coach rolls in a ball and calls out a number. Coach can vary service or play direct to a player of their choice. The corresponding numbers then play 1 v 1 or 2 v 2 until one of them scores or the ball goes out of play. To end the mini-game the coach yells “get out of here” as soon as the play ends.

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
Passing and support if playing 2 v 2
Defensive support without the ball

Game 12. Juggling



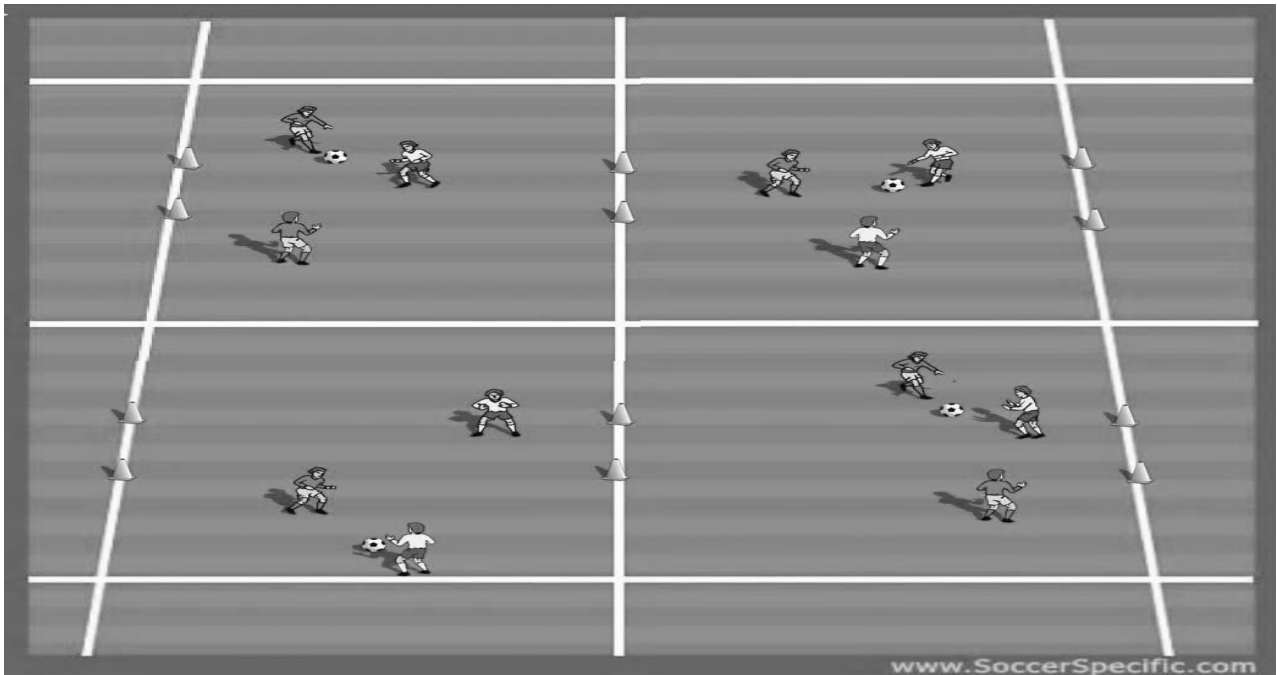
Players can either be partnered up or be individuals. Create small squares using four markers. The smaller the squares the greater the difficulty in control. 3 or 4 yards square is a good start. Players must juggle the ball with control and stay inside the square. Depending on the level of your players you need to create a situation that is challenging yet attainable.

Less able players may need to start by dropping the ball by hand and just have them lift the ball back to their own hands each time. As they progress they can attempt two touches and so on. There is nothing wrong with starting by using the hands at this age. Once some level of competency is established they will gravitate to wanting to cut out the use of the hands.

You can have them use the right foot only and then the left. As they become more proficient other body parts (thigh) can be used as well. I would stay away from juggling with the head at this early stage unless you have suitable balls, a volleyball or something lighter is good to use when they are ready to experiment with juggling with the head.

Have them total the number of juggles for their own tally. In this way they play against themselves and the others and are challenged. If separated in pairs, one rests and counts for the other player.

Game 13. Two Verses One



TWO vs ONE

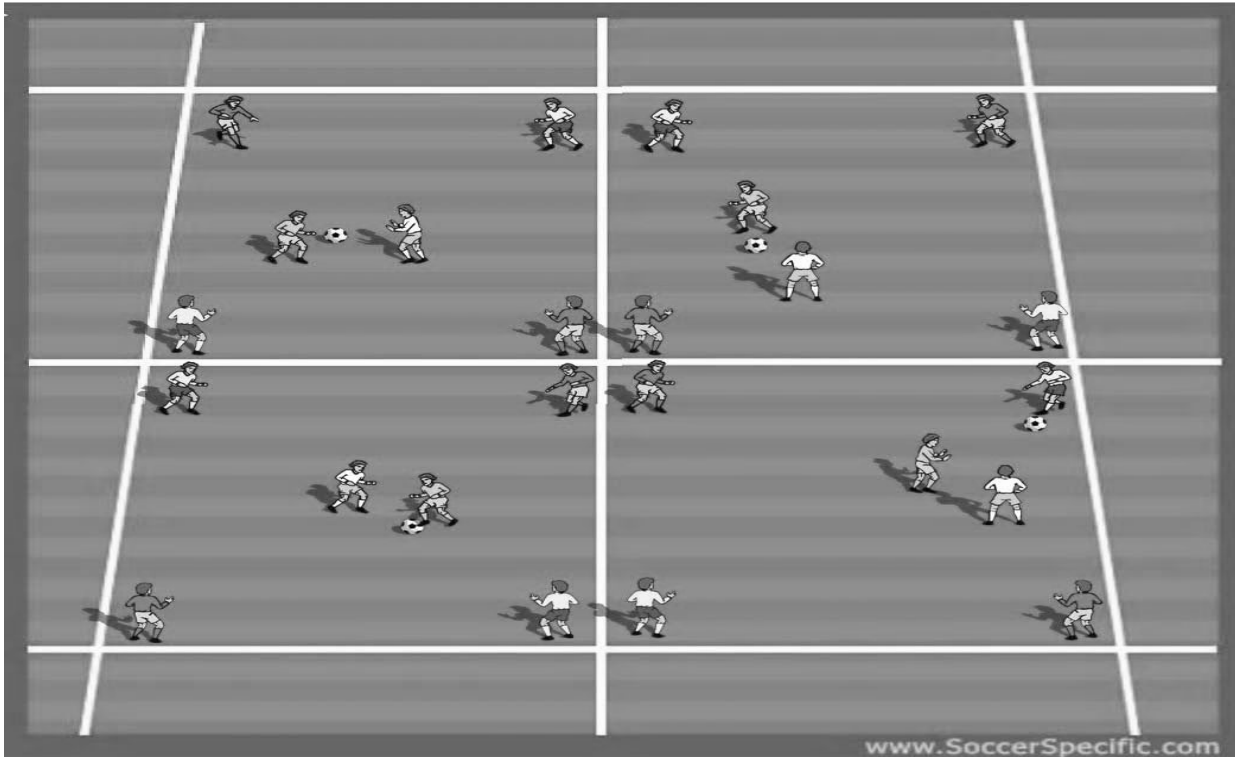
This can be played without goals at first to highlight finding space, positional play and support for the two when in possession. The one defender highlights control and restraint, intercepting passes and using the field lines to assist him or her. If the one defender wins the ball they simply return the ball to the two and commence again. Rotate the “one” every two minutes so that all three experience playing both sides of the ball.

Add goals that are about two yards apart. Everything from above applies as well as you have given the game direction. In this situation the “one” can score if they win possession. You could place a three-touch limit on the “two”. This will increase the tempo.

Objectives:

- Have fun
- Passing and support/ spacing
- Head-up and alert/ vision
- Tackling/ constraint, winning the ball back

Game 14. One Verse One With Four Bumpers



ONE vs ONE + FOUR BUMPERS

In a grid 15 yards x 15 yards.

The aim of the game is to keep possession.

Whom ever has the ball can make use of the four bumper players to maintain possession.

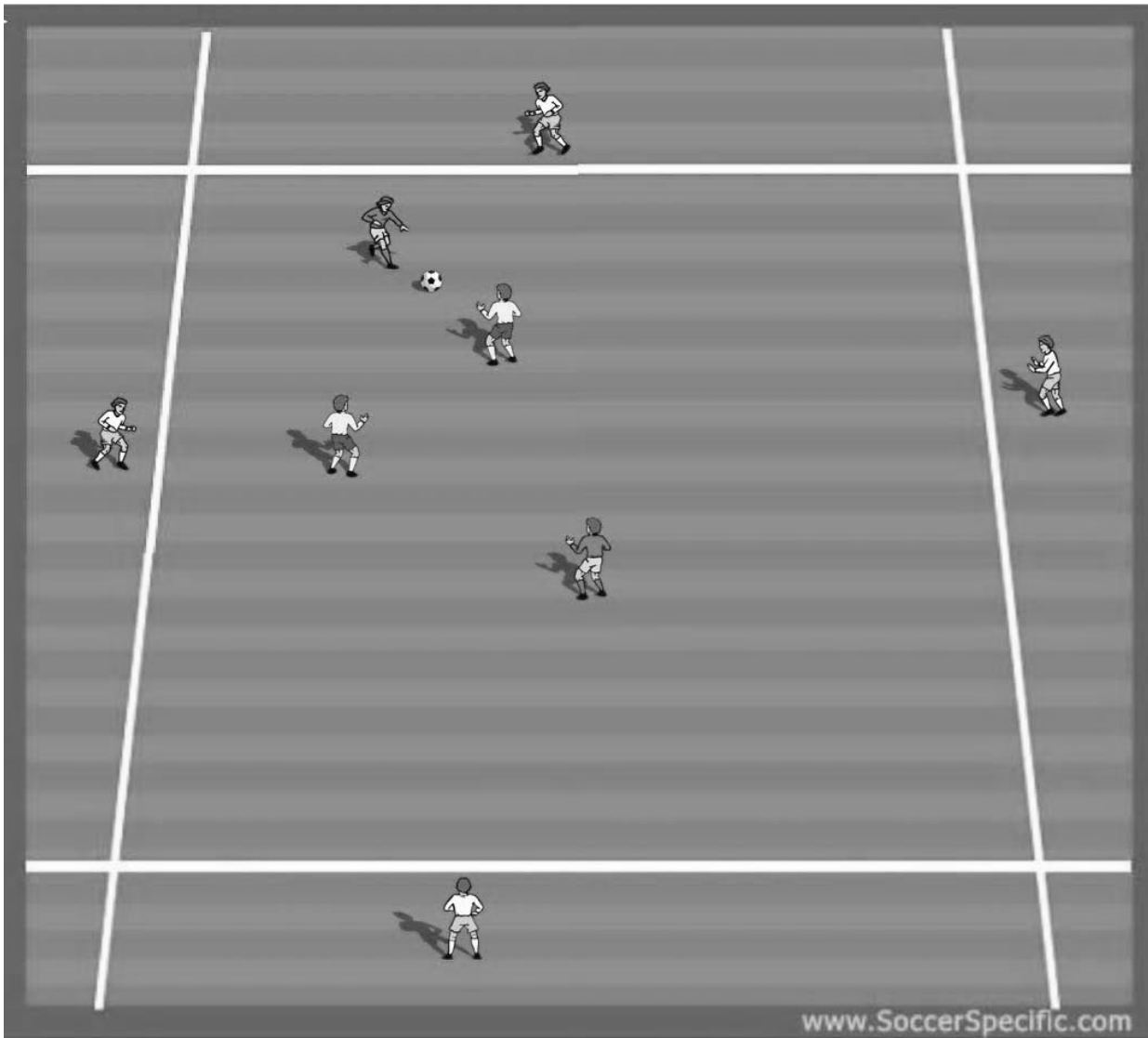
You can limit the bumper players to two or three touches. They should always look to play with the player that was in possession. However if that player is not available they can play to another bumper player until they are available. Bumper players must be encouraged to play the ball to the player in the square as often as they are available and not just keep the ball on the outside.

The opponent in the middle can tackle or try to anticipate the incoming pass and intercept.

Objective:

- To have fun
- Shielding
- Passing and moving
- Tackling
- Intercepting passes

Game 15. Two Verses Two With Four Bumpers



TWO vs TWO + FOUR BUMPERS

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.