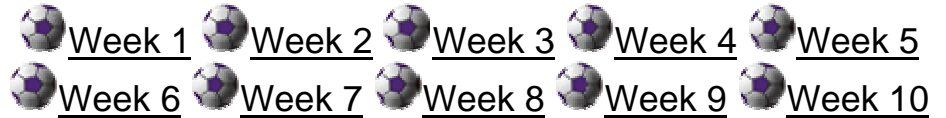




U8 Coaching Corner 10-week program



At the Under 8 age group the focus must always be upon players enjoying the game and training with a ball. As the players move from the under 6 division we can start to identify some key areas that the players can focus upon in training.

There are two key areas that training in this age group should focus upon, dribbling and ball striking.

Dribbling incorporates

- the ability to dribble in space
- the ability to dribble past opponents
- the ability to dribble away from opponents

Ball striking incorporates

- striking the ball with the inside of the foot
- striking the ball with the instep/laces

The Earlham Soccer Club has devised a short 10 week program that will focus upon these essential techniques which will be available throughout the season on the club website.

Training sessions at this age group should last for about one hour. The Field = dimensions are for a group of between 6 – 8 players. Make them larger or smaller depending upon the size of your group. Repeat games or activities so that you fill the time allowed for them if they are going well and the players are having fun. If not, move onto something else.

Week 1

Coaching topic: Dribbling to keep possession.

Coaching points:

Technical:

1. Maintain close control of the ball.
2. Keep your head up.

3. Use the body to shield / protect the ball.
4. Change direction.
5. Acceleration.

Tactical

1. Look for players to dribble away from pressure.

Practice session.

1. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 20. {5 minutes}

The players dribble round the Field = using the inside of the foot to turn and change direction. Encourage the players to use both feet.

2. Game: Stuck in the Mud. Field = 20 x 20. {10 – 15 minutes}

Select one or two players to be tagging players. The rest of the group have a ball each and dribble round the field. The players without a ball aim to tag all the dribbling players. When a player is tagged they stand with the ball held above the head and their legs apart. They can be set free by the dribbling players passing or dribbling the ball through their legs. The game ends when all the dribbling players have been caught.

3. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 20. {5 minutes}

As earlier the players use the inside of the foot to turn and change direction. Encourage the players to accelerate out of the turn.

4. Game: Protectors. Field = 20 x 20. {10 – 15 minutes}

Select two or three defenders with the other players having a ball each. The players aim to maintain possession of the ball. The defending players aim to win the ball from any of the dribbling players. If a player loses a ball they then try to regain possession. If the ball runs out of play it cannot be reclaimed by any of the players. Any player in possession of a ball at the end of the game wins a point. Each game lasts 15 – 40 seconds. Change defenders and play 4 – 6 games.

5. Scrimmage. Field = 35 x 25 with a goal at each end. {5 – 20 minutes}

Teams = 3 v 3 or 4 v 4.

Week 2

Topic: Dribbling to keep possession.

Coaching points:

Technical:

1. Maintain close control.
2. Keep your head up.
3. Use the body to shield / protect the ball.
4. Change direction.
5. Change speed.

Tactical:

1. Look for the players to dribble away from pressure.

Practice Session.

1. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 20. {5 minutes}

The players dribble using the outside of the foot to turn and change direction. Encourage the players to use both feet.

2. Game: King of the jungle. Field = 20 x 20. {10 minutes}

The players have a ball each and dribble around the field. The players aim to maintain control of their ball while kicking the other player's balls out of play. If a player's ball goes off the Field = they lose a life but return to the game immediately. Play for a minute with the player losing the fewest lives winning the Game:

3. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 20. {5 minutes}

As earlier the players use the outside of the foot to turn and change direction. Encourage the players to accelerate out of the turn.

4. Game: One v One multi goal. Field = 25 x 25. {15 – 20 minutes}

The players are in pairs with a ball between them. Set up 5-6 small goals {2– 3 yards wide} around the field. The players play one on one with all the games taking place at the same time and score a goal every time they dribble through one of the small goals. Play for 30 – 40 seconds with the player scoring the most goals winning the Game: Switch players at the end of each game and play 5 – 6 games.

5. Scrimmage. Field = 35 x 25 with a goal at each end. {15 – 20 minutes}

Teams = 3 v 3 or 4 v 4.

Week 3

Coaching topic: Dribbling in space.

Coaching points:

Technical:

1. Keep your body over the ball.
2. Make sure the toe is pointed down.
3. Make contact with the laces.
4. Play with your head up.
5. Maintain control of the ball.

Tactical / decision making:

1. Look for players to take longer touches when they have space in front of them and smaller touches when space is limited.

Practice session.

1. Technical Activity Field = 25 x 25 {5 mins}

Players dribble around the Field = taking smaller touches when they have players around them.

2. Game Dodgems Field = 25 x 25 {10 minutes}

The players have a ball and stand on different sides of the field. On the coaches command the players dribble to the line opposite and stop the ball with the sole of the foot. The first player to reach the line with the ball under control wins the Game: As a variation the coach shouts back home and the players have to turn and dribble back to their starting position.

3. Technical Activity Field = 25 x 25 {5 minutes}

As in the first activity, encourage the players to take longer touches when they have space in front of them.

4. Game Bulldog Field = 30 x 20 {15-20 minutes}

The players line up on one side of the Field = with a ball each. The coach or a selected player stands in the middle of the field. The players aim to dribble the ball past them and across the line opposite where they put their foot on the ball. If the player in the center kicks a player's ball off the Field = that player joins them in the center for the next Game: The last player to be eliminated wins the Game:

Week 4

Topic Dribbling in space

Coaching points

Technical

1. Keep the body over the ball
2. Make sure the toe is pointed down on contact
3. Make contact with the laces
4. Keep your head up
5. Maintain control of the ball.

Tactical

1. Look to take small touches when close to opponents and longer touches when in space.

Practice session

1. Technical Activity Field = 25 x 25 {5 minutes}

Players dribble within the Field = aiming to avoid the other players. Look for the players to demonstrate the correct dribbling technique i.e. taking shorter touches, when they have players around them.

2. Game Hunters Field = 25 x 25 {10 minutes}

Give pinnies to 2 – 4 players. The rest of the group have a ball each and aim to eliminate the players with pinnies by hitting them on or below the knee or forcing them out of the square. Encourage the players to dribble the ball as they are chasing their opponents. Set the dribbling players a target time. The game ends when all the players have been caught.

3. Technical Activity Field = 25 x 25 {5 minutes}

Set up as in the first activity. Look for the players to demonstrate the correct dribbling technique i.e. take longer touches, when they have space in front of them.

4. Game 1 – 2 – 3 Go Field = 30 x 20 with a small goal at each end {15 – 20 minutes}

Divide the players into two Teams = who line up on opposite corners of the field. Each player is given a number with a player on the opposite team having a corresponding number. The coach calls out a number and the respective players come out and play one on one until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. After 5 minutes start calling out numbers at intervals so you have two or three games going on at the same time. The first team to score 5 goals wins the Game:

5. Scrimmage Field = 35 x 25 {15 – 20 minutes}

Teams = 4 v 4 with small goals. If you have a larger group play two games of 3 v 3 {Field = 30 v 20} or one group of 5 v 5 {Field = 40 x 30}

Week 5

Topic: Dribbling to beat a player.

Coaching points

Technical

1. Maintain close control
2. Keep the head up
3. Change direction
4. Change speed

Tactical

1. Always encourage players to dribble in one-on-one situations.

Practice session.

1. Technical Activity Field = 25 x 25 {5 minutes}

The players dribble round the Field = using the inside of the foot to change direction. Encourage the players to use both feet.

2. Game: The Chain Game Field = 25 x 25 {10 – 15 minutes}

Divide the players into two Teams =. The players in one team have a ball each while the players in the other team get into pairs and form a chain by joining hands. The players in the chain aim to kick all the opponents balls off the Field = while staying joined together. The game ends when all the balls have been kicked out of play. The players then switch roles.

3. Technical Activity Field = 25 x 25 {5 minutes}

The players dribble using the inside of the foot to change direction as in the initial warm up. Look for the players to accelerate after they have changed direction.

4. Game: Dribble zone soccer. Field = 25 x 25. {15 minutes}

The players are in two Teams = with each player paired up with an opponent on the other team. The players on one team start with the ball with the other team defending. The Field = is divided in half and the aim of the game is for the players to maintain possession of the ball in the opponents half of the field. If the defending players win the ball they attempt to dribble the ball in to the opponents half and maintain possession there. Each game should last for 20–30 seconds and at the end of the game any player in possession of the ball in the opponents half wins a point for their team. Change possession after each Game:

5. Scrimmage Field = 35 x 25 {15 – 20 minutes}

Teams = play 4 v 4 or 5 v 5 with goalkeepers. If you have more players, play two games of 3 v 3 on a slightly smaller field.

Week 6

Topic: Dribbling to beat a player.

Coaching points:

Technical:

1. Maintain close control.
2. Keep the head up.
3. Change direction.
4. Change speed

Tactical decision-making.

1. Always encourage players to dribble in one-on-one situations.

Practice session

The Field = sizes are a guideline and would be typical for a group of between 6 – 8 players. Make your fields slightly larger for example 25 x 25 if you are combining with another group and have 10 – 12 players.

1. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 20 {5 minutes}

The players dribble round the Field = using the outside of the foot to change direction. Encourage the players to use both feet.

2. Game: Flag Soccer. Field = 20 x 20 {10 – 15 minutes}

The players have a soccer ball each and a pinnie attached to the hip {flag football style}. The players dribble round the Field = maintaining control of their ball. If a player has their flag pulled out or the ball runs out of play they lose a life. Play for up to 90 seconds with the player losing the fewest lives winning the Game:

3. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 20 {5 minutes}

As in the warm up the players use the outside of the foot to change direction. Encourage the players to accelerate after they have changed direction.

4. Game 1 – 2 – 3 Go. Field = 30 x 20 with a goal at each end {15 – 20 minutes}

Divide the players into two Teams = who line up on the opposite corners of the field. Each player is given a number with a player on the opposition team having a corresponding number. The coach calls out a number and the respective players come out and play one on one until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play. After 5 minutes call out numbers at short intervals so you can have 2 – 3 games going on at the same time. The first time that scores 5 goals wins the Game:

5. Scrimmage. Field = 35 x 25 with a goal at each end.

Teams = play 3 v 3 or 4 v 4.

Week 7

Coaching topic: Shooting / Ball-striking with the inside of the foot.

Coaching points

Technical:

1. Approach the ball from an angle.
2. Place the non kicking foot next to the ball.
3. Make contact with the inside of the foot.
4. Strike through the center of the ball.
5. Keep the knee over the ball.

Tactical:

1. Encourage the players to shoot at every opportunity with either foot.

Practice session.

1. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 30. {5 - 10 minutes}

Players are in pairs and stand 10–15 yards apart. They strike the ball to each other using the inside of the foot. Encourage the players to use both feet.

2. Game: Hunters. Field = 20 x 20. {10 minutes}

The players are in two Teams =. The players on one team have a ball each and aim to catch their opponents by hitting them on or below the knee as they dribble round the field. The players have to dribble or strike the ball with the inside of the foot to eliminate their opponents. Play for one minute or until all the players have been caught and then switch roles.

3. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 30. {5 minutes}

Setup in pairs, as earlier in the session. Encourage the players to strike the ball over longer distances as the players improve.

4. Game: Goals Galore. Field = 20 x 30 with 3 goals at each end. {20 minutes}

The Field = is divided in half with two or three goals {5-6 yards wide} at each end. The players are in two Teams = and must remain in their own half. They have a ball each and can score in any of the opponents three goals. Any of the players can be goalkeepers and players can shoot any of the balls in their half or behind their goals. The first team to score 7 goals wins the Game:

5. Scrimmage. Field = 40 x 30 with small goals at each end. {20 minutes}

Teams = 4 v 4 or 5 v 5.

Week 8

Coaching topic: Shooting / Ball-striking with the laces.

Coaching points:

Technical:

1. Approach the ball from an angle.
2. Place the non kicking foot next to the ball.

3. Make contact with the laces.
4. Strike through the center of the ball.
5. Keep the knee over the ball.

Tactical:

1. Encourage the players to shoot at every opportunity with both feet.

Practice session.

1. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 30. {10 minutes}

The players are in pairs and stand 15-20 yards apart. The players strike the ball to each other using the laces. Encourage the players to use both feet.

2. Game: Shooting at goal. Field = 20 x 30. {15 minutes}

The players are in groups of three with one player at each end 20 yards apart and a goalkeeper in a small 5-6 yards goal in the center. The players take it in turns to shoot at goal. Switch goalkeepers every 3 minutes.

3. Game: Goals Galore. Field = 20 x 30 with three goals at each end. {20–25 minutes}

The Field is divided in half with three goals {5-6 yards wide at each end. The players are in two Teams = and must remain in their own half. They have a ball each and can score in any of the opponents three goals. All the players can be goalkeepers and can strike any of the balls in their own half or behind the goals. The first team to score 7 goals wins the Game:

4. Scrimmage. Field = 40 x 30 with small goals at each end. {15-20 minutes}

Teams = 4 v 4 or 5 v 5.

Week 9

Coaching topic: Shooting/Ball-striking.

Coaching points

Technical:

1. Approach the ball from an angle.
2. Place the non kicking foot next to the ball.
3. Make contact with the laces or inside of the foot.
4. Strike through the center of the ball.
5. Keep the knee over the ball.

Tactical:

1. Encourage the players to shoot at every opportunity with both feet.

Practice Session.

1. Technical Activity. Field = 20 x 30. {15 minutes}

The players are in groups of three with one player at each end of the Field = 20 yards apart. The goalkeeper stands in the center in a small goal {5-6 yards wide}. The players take it in turns to shoot at goal. Change the

goalkeepers every 2-3 minutes. Encourage the players to use both feet and to use the laces and the inside of the foot to strike the ball.

2. Game: Long Shots. Field = 20 x 30. {20-25 minutes}

The players are in two Teams = and have a ball each. The Field = is divided in half with a large goal {8 yards wide} at each end and the players must remain in their own half. Choose one player as a goalkeeper. Any player can shoot at goal and players can retrieve balls from inside their own half or behind their goal. The first team to 7 goals wins the Game: Repeat with a different goalkeeper.

3. Scrimmage. Field = 40 x 30 with goals at each end. {20 – 25 minutes}

Teams =. 4 v 4 or 5 v 5.

Week 10

Coaching topic: Small sided tournament.

Field = sizes. 35 x 25. with a small goal {2-3 yards} at each end.

Select Teams = of 3 or 4 players and play a small tournament. Try and balance the Teams = in terms of ability. I would also consider joining with another team so you have more Teams = and a larger pool of players.