

At the very young ages of three and four, two-team games are not nearly as important as teaching the fundamental of ball control and dribbling and striking the ball. To make this fun, it's important to allow the children to use their imagination...

BALL-CONTROL/DRIBBLING -- The Ball as a Vehicle

Equipment Needed: 12- or 16-inch Rings, a ball for every player

Drill Setup:

> Players begin with their ball inside the ring. The Ring is the Player's "Garage" and the ball is the Player's "Car"

Drill Sequence:

> Have the players "Start" their car by placing one foot on top of the ball; now have the players rock the ball back and forth using the sole of their foot and making the sound of a car motor running -- "Vroom, vroom"

> "Back Out of the Garage" -- using the sole of the foot, the players should roll the ball backwards out of their Garage

> "Drive Away" -- here is where you begin teaching dribbling as the players move about using the inside of their feet to "drive" their "car" [Dribble their ball]

> "Go Back "Home" -- drive the car [dribble the ball] back into the garage

Drill Progression

> "Race Car" -- dribble the ball at speed! Set up an oval using cones and have the players run with the ball around the oval but again, have them make the sounds of a race car

> "BullDozer" -- set up a grid and place upright cones throughout the grid; now have the players dribble or "drive their BullDozer" into the grid and knock over the cones using the side of their feet to strike the ball.

> "Construction Crane" -- here is where you can work on a young player's hand-eye, foot-to-hand coordination. The players leave their ball in the ring, and run into the grid where all of the upright cones have been knocked over. The object now is to have the players pick up as many cones as possible but they must use their feet to pick up the cones -- the player puts a foot into the knocked-down cone, lifts it up under control and grabs it with their hand and then run back toward their ring. You can have all the players "Build" a house or building by stacking the upright cones.

DRIBBLING/COMPETITION -- "Hungry Hippos"

Equipment Needed: twice as many balls as there are players; two large hoops or make two square grids with cones

Drill Setup:

> One big grid where all the balls are placed

> Two teams, each team with a home base (hoops or cone square); this home base is the Hippo

Drill Sequence:

> At Coach's command, the players run into the big grid and using their feet only, collect a ball and dribble it back to their home base; the Coach tells the players that they need to feed the Hippo with soccer balls; the team that collects the most balls wins the game.

DRIBBLING/BALL CONTROL/STOPPING THE BALL -- "SpongeBob-Soccer Pants"

Drill Setup:

> Each player with a ball

> Fun drill to get parents involved

Drill Sequence:

> At Coach's command each player begins dribbling around the grid. The Coach and/or Parent approaches the player like a Defender and says "SpongeBob" and makes an attempt to steal away the ball. The Player can protect the ball by answering back "Soccer Pants" and placing his or her foot on top of the ball.