



Lane Youth Soccer Association provides a fun, competitive youth soccer experience for ALL children of Lane County ages 4 to 19. Skill development and a love for the game is taught within a co-ed, fun environment by *trained*, volunteer coaches and referees fostering positive coaching. All children, regardless of experience, ability or family income are welcome to register and will have the opportunity to play a minimum of one-half of all games they attend. We do not require try-outs, never cut players, do encourage everyone to play as much as possible and offer strong financial assistance for those in need. Balanced play between teams demonstrating good sportsmanship is strongly emphasized. We also encourage parent involvement at all practices and games.

Elements of training - What is Taught

To play the game, players need the elements of the sport:

- *Techniques (skills)* -dribbling, ball control, throw-ins, passing, shooting, heading, tackling, goalkeeping
- *Tactics* - executing the principles of play as an individual, in small groups and as a team-member.
- *Conditioning* - increasing the body's ability to expend energy in a more efficient manner.

Elements of training – How We Teach

How the game is taught is as important as *what* is taught. One of the best environments to teach soccer is in a dynamic, fun environment that maximizes the time spent with players' feet on the ball. Standing in lines, waiting for a "turn" or listening to long lectures is, at best, inefficient and may actually be counter-productive. Dynamic activities that allow all players continuous interaction with the ball, teammates and opponents are the ideal "*how*" to teach soccer. This can be accomplished well through the use of interactive training games and small sided play.

General training format:

1. Warm-up
2. Free Play
3. Introduce skill or tactic
 - a. Static demonstration by coach or skilled player
 - b. All players practice skill in static manner
 - c. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - d. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic
 - e. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - f. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
4. Cool-down and stretch
5. Coach review success of training and plan next training

Dribbling

1. Warm-up - dribble ball through short obstacle course of flags, cones, buckets, parents
2. Free Play - King of the Ring
3. Introduce skill or tactic
 - a. Static demonstration of dribbling with different parts of foot by coach or skilled player
 - i. Explain proper form and key components:
 - (1) Vision
 - (2) Touch
 - (3) Turning
 - (4) Beating the defender
 - (5) Shielding
 - b. All players practice skill in static manner
 - i. Really look for proper form. Make corrections here, but don't spend more than 2-3 minutes on this. Get help from assistant coaches and/or parents.
 - c. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - d. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic.
 - i. Vision - Demonstrate how players' vision should be at the defender's waist so player can maintain view of ball through bottom of peripheral vision.
 - (1) Red-light, Green-light (w/ hand signals so players must play with heads up)
 - (2) Big Bad Bear
 - ii. Touch
 - (1) Prancing ponies.
 - (2) Juggle between feet.
 - iii. Turning
 - (1) Lunge
 - (2) Pull back
 - (3) Step over
 - (4) Shield turn
 - iv. Beating the defender and shielding
 - (1) Shadow - defender shadows attacker w/ light pressure
 - (2) Sharks & Minnows
 - (3) Hungry hippos
 - (4) Crab Canyon
 - v. Again look for success and make corrections as necessary.
 - (1) use compliment sandwich
 - e. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - (1) Traffic Jam
 - (2) Bedrock Bar-b-que
 - (3) Catch Me if You Can
 - (4) Seek and Destroy
 - f. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
 - i. 15 X 30 pitch, 3 v 3 with single, 1 yd. goal in middle of pitch
4. Cool-down and stretch
5. Coach reviews success of training and plan next training

Throw-in

1. Warm-up - frisbee
2. Free Play - keep away with hands only (no feet)
3. Introduce skill or tactic
 - a. Static demonstration by coach or skilled player
 - i. Both feet must remain on ground.
 - ii. Can stand on line or behind touch line.
 - iii. Ball must go behind head.
 - iv. Ball directly overhead with both hands.
 - v. No offside!!!
 - b. All players practice skill in static manner
 - c. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - i. Players pair-up five yards apart and make 10 good thrown-ins to partner.
 - ii. Players back to 10 yards apart and make 10 good throw-ins to partner.
 - iii. Again look for success and make corrections as necessary.
 - (1) use compliment sandwich
 - d. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic
 - i. Windows - one circle inside second circle. Players throw ball back and forth between circles while outside circle rotates after each throw.
 - e. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - i. Into the Well - players try to hit buckets spread around a circuit with ball
 - ii. Throw-in tournament - each player gets three throws from a cone. Coach marks furthest throw with another cone. After each player completes throws, record length of best throw. Run tournament over 3-4 practices and watch their distance increase each practice.
 - f. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
 - i. 3 v 3, 10 X 30 pitch w/ 2 yd. goals at each end. All restarts, including after goals and/or goal kicks are done with throw-ins. Playing area is intentionally small to create more throw-in opportunities.
 - ii. U12 and up can begin learning set pieces
 - (1) designated runner - one "apparently uninvolved" player sprints from back field down touch-line and receives through overhead
 - (2) give back - ball is immediately kicked back to thrower who has run to open area of field
 - (3) "corner kick" - in attacking third, use throw-ins as a corner kick set piece
4. Cool-down and stretch
5. Coach review success of training and plan next training

Control

1. Warm-up - pair of players jog touch line to touch line passing ball between (2 laps)
2. Free Play - three legged race w/ soccer ball
3. Introduce skill or tactic
 - a. Static demonstration by coach or skilled player
 - i. Eye contact
 - ii. Move to the ball
 - iii. Body relaxed and balanced
 - iv. Cushion the ball
 - v. Prepare for 2nd touch
 - b. All players practice skill in static manner
 - i. Really look for proper form. Make corrections here, but don't spend more than 2-3 minutes on this. Get help from assistant coaches and/or parents.
 - c. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - i. Players pair-up five yards apart and receive 10 good passes to partner with both left and right foot/thigh, chest and head (U12 & above).
 - ii. Players back to 10 yards apart and receive 10 good passes to partner with both left and right foot/thigh, chest and head (U12 & above).
 - iii. Again, look for success and make corrections as necessary.
(1) use compliment sandwich
 - d. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic
 - i. Windows
 - ii. Chaos in the Circle
 - iii. Criss-Cross
 - e. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - i. Guard the Castle
 - f. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
 - i. Keep the Prisoner
4. Cool-down and stretch
5. Coach review success of training and plan next training

Passing

1. Warm-up - Penny Soccer: one player has three balls and passes one ball between the other two. Before first ball has stopped rolling, player tries to pass a second ball between the other two. Player counts successful passes without allowing balls to stop rolling
2. Free Play - Keep-away between two teams. First team to 10/15 consecutive passes wins. No boundaries, use entire area available.
3. Introduce skill or tactic
 - a. Static demonstration by coach or skilled player
 - i. Explain proper form and characteristics
 - (1) accurate
 - (2) correct pace
 - (3) well timed
 - (4) deceptive
 - (5) Maintain possession
 - b. All players practice skill in static manner
 - i. Really look for proper form. Make corrections here, but don't spend more than 2-3 minutes on this. Get help from assistant coaches and/or parents.
 - c. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - i. Players pair-up five yards apart and make 10 good passes to partner with both left and right foot.
 - ii. Players back to 10 yards apart and make 10 good passes to partner with both left and right foot.
 - iii. Again look for success and make corrections as necessary.
 - (1) use compliment sandwich
 - d. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic
 - i. Passing circle - player pairs push pass ball to each other across circle all at the same time.
 - ii. Gates - player pairs push pass ball to each other between random pairs of cones or hoops as many times as they can in 2 minutes. All player pairs run at the same time and count passes to see who "wins".
 - e. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - i. Passing square (four players) - 10 yard square, one player at each corner, pass around square to outside foot
 - (1) emphasizes accuracy helping teammate control ball
 - ii. Passing square (three players) - now player runs to open corner after passing to corner
 - (1) adds idea of "pass and go"
 - f. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
 - i. 3 v 3 v 3 on 15 X 30 pitch - require all passes to be followed by a run (no passing and standing). One team rotates in after every point for the scoring team. You can require 2,3 or 4 passes be completed before a shot can be taken.
 - ii. Crazy eights - 20 X 40 pitch. 3 v 3. Place four balls on four cones along the 40 sides. Players score by knocking the balls off the cones of the opposing team with push-passes.
4. Cool-down and stretch
5. Coach reviews success of training and plan next training

Shooting/Finishing

1. Warm-up - on center circle, players jog in and out, alternate skips, hops, high steps, heel flicks, etc.
2. Free Play - 4 v 4 v 4, 30 X 30 pitch with four goals, one on each side, no keepers, players can score in any goal.
3. Introduce skill or tactic - All of the various kicking techniques may be used, but this outline will focus on the instep drive.
 - a. Static demonstration by coach or skilled player
 - i. Explain proper form and characteristics
 - (1) kicking ankle locked
 - (2) other foot planted next to ball, pointed toward target
 - (3) hips opened toward target
 - (4) swing leg through making contact with top of foot
 - (5) maintain eye contact with ball
 - b. All players practice skill in static manner
 - i. Really look for proper form. Make corrections here, but don't spend more than 2-3 minutes on this. Get help from assistant coaches and/or parents.
 - c. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - i. Players pair-up five yards apart and make 10 good gentle shots to partner with both left and right foot.
 - ii. Players back to 10 yards apart and make 10 good shots to partner with both left and right foot.
 - iii. Again look for success and make corrections as necessary.
 - (1) use compliment sandwich
 - d. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic
 - i. Shooting exercise - players divide into three lines. Ball is passed from player one to player two and onto player three who shoots. Players rotate to next line.
 - e. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - i. 3 v 3 on 15 X 30 pitch with one center goal. Shots can come from either side. No keeper.
 - (1) emphasizes accuracy
 - (2) encourage players to "serve to finish"
 - ii. Crazy Eights - 20 X 40 pitch. 3 v 3. Place four balls on four cones along the 40 sides. Players score by knocking the balls off the cones of the opposing team.
 - (1) encourage players to "take the shot"
 - f. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
 - i. 4 v 4 with 30 X 40 pitch divided into 3 zones; 1 defender in zone one, 2 mids in zone two, 1 striker in zone three, no keeper
4. Cool-down and stretch
5. Coach reviews success of training and plan next training

Heading

1. Warm-up - players walk a simple obstacle course while gently and repeatedly bouncing ball off head into hands.
2. Free Play -
3. Introduce skill or tactic
 - a. Static demonstration by coach or skilled player
 - i. Contact the ball flat on the forehead, above the eyes
 - ii. Keep eyes open, mouth closed
 - iii. Neck should be kept rigid
 - iv. Propel trunk forward from waist to meet ball
 - v. Arms can be used for balance and protection
 - vi. Follow through after contact
 - b. All players practice skill in static manner lobbing ball to their own head
 - i. Really look for proper form. Make corrections here, but don't spend more than 2-3 minutes on this. Get help from assistant coaches and/or parents.
 - c. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - i. Players pair-up five yards apart and complete 10 good heads to partner.
 - ii. Players pair-up ten yards apart and complete 10 good heads to partner.
 - iii. Again, look for success and make corrections as necessary.
 - (1) use compliment sandwich
 - d. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic
 - i. Windows
 - ii. Heading tournament - player pairs compete to see who can complete the most heads before dropping the ball.
 - e. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - i. Head only soccer - use hands, no feet, ball advanced only with heads
 - ii. Head volleyball
 - f. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
 - i. 3 v 3, 10 X 30 pitch w/ 2 yd. goals at each end. All restarts, including after goals and/or goal kicks are done with throw-ins. All goals must be scored with heads. Any other shots on goal will be disallowed.
4. Cool-down and stretch
5. Coach review success of training and plan next training

Tackling (Defending Methods)

1. Warm-up - pairs jog touchline to touch-line and gently bump shoulders, two laps.
This is an important warm up in that it gets the kids comfortable with getting close to each other which is critical to a proper tackle.
2. Free Play - 3 v 1 keep away, no boundaries
3. Introduce skill or tactic
 - a. Static demonstration of block tackle by coach or skilled player
 - i. Explain proper form. Make contact with ball with inside of foot. Body over the ball. Shoulders bumping or even going past opponents. No poking with toe!
 - b. All players practice skill in static manner
 - i. Really look for proper form. Make corrections here, but don't spend more than 2-3 minutes on this. Get help from assistant coaches and/or parents.
 - c. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - i. Players pair-up two steps apart with ball between. Step, tackle with left and right foot five times each.
Ball should not move. Player's body should be over the ball with shoulders touching or even going past each other. Don't allow them to reach in and poke at the ball. Poking at the ball from a distance is one of the biggest and most common mistakes defenders make.
 - ii. Players pair-up four steps apart with ball between. Step, tackle with left and right foot five times each.
 - iii. Again look for success and make corrections as necessary.
 - (1) use compliment sandwich
 - d. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic.
 - i. Hungry hippos
 - (1) as more hippos are created, begin to introduce concept of delay, 2nd and 3rd defenders and where that player should play
Emphasize defender's first job is to delay. They don't have to immediately go after the ball. Delay, watch for the attacker to make a mistake, then go after the ball. Make sure they "run through the ball". Don't let them poke.
 - ii. Run the Gauntlet
 - iii. Gladiator
This is a dynamite game. One of the few "line drills" I will run. I will have 2-3 pairs competing simultaneously, so the kids actually stand very little. Highly aerobic and popular with the kids.
 - e. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - i. Four corners - 15 X 30 pitch, 1 small goal in each corner.
 - (1) begin with 1 v 1
 - (2) progress to 1 v 2
 - (3) progress to 2 v 3
 - f. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
Defending thirds - 4 v 4 v 4, 20 X 40 pitch divided into three equal sections. Play 4 v 4 until goal is scored, scoring team subs out with remaining four. Each solid tackle that successfully wins the ball gets one point and each goal gets two point.
No keepers.
4. Cool-down and stretch
5. Coach reviews success of training and plan next training

Attacking Methods

1. Warm-up - pairs passing
2. Free Play - 3 v 1 Monkey in the Middle
3. Introduce skill or tactic
 - a. Static demonstration/discussion
 - i. Wall pass
 - ii. Give & go
 - iii. Take over
 - iv. Overlaps
 - v. Hard to feet, soft to space
 - vi. Switch
 - vii. Drop
 - b. Progress to dynamic practice of skill/tactic
 - i. Players pair-up and practice wall pass, give & go, etc..
 - ii. Again look for success and make corrections as necessary.
 - (1) use compliment sandwich
 - c. Introduce basic game that incorporates skill/tactic.
 - i. Four corners - 15 X 30 pitch, 1 small goal in each corner.
 - (1) begin with 2 v 1
 - (2) progress to 2 v 2
 - (3) progress to 3 v 2

Introduce roles & responsibilities of 1st, 2nd and 3rd attackers. Encourage/ emphasize use of wall passes, give & go, etc.
4. As players demonstrate success, build-up to more advanced games
 - a. Three lanes w/ wingers
 - b. Finish with small game that emphasizes skill or tactic
 - i. Defending thirds - 4 v 4 v 4, 20 X 40 pitch divided into three equal sections. Play 4 v 4 until goal is scored, scoring team subs out with remaining four. Each solid tackle that successfully wins the ball gets one point and each goal gets two point. No keepers.
5. Cool-down and stretch
6. Coach reviews success of training and plan next training.

Restarts

1. Kickoff (Law 8)
 - a. Ball forward
 - b. Goal can be scored
 - i. Set pieces
2. Dropped ball (Law 8)
3. Free kick (Law13)
4. Penalty kick (Law 14)
5. Throw-in (Law 15) No offside!
 - a. Set pieces
6. Goal kick (Law 16)
7. Corner kick (Law 17) No offside on initial kick.

LYSA Methods of Balanced Play

1. Narrow goal flags to make goal smaller (U6 & U8).
2. Move strong player to a defense position.
3. Limit strong player to own half of field.
4. Allow trailing team to add more players on the field.
5. Require players on winning team to use weak foot to strike.
6. Require players on winning team to make two/three passes before striking.
7. Require players on winning team to only shoot from corner kicks earned.
8. Require players on winning team to only shoot with headers from corner kicks earned.
9. Winning team designates a weak player to be the sole striker.
10. Mix up teams; trading players from winning team to trailing team.
11. Once ball crosses half-line, require all front line players to touch ball before striking.
12. Reduce the number of front line players on winning team and limit remaining players to own half of field.
13. Winning team has to make strikes outside of goal box.
14. Winning team has to make strikes outside of penalty area.
15. After an unsuccessful shot on goal, require winning team to dribble ball back to mid-field line and then advance the ball again.
16. If you have additional ideas on balancing play, please tell us.

Training Games

Red Light Green Light - Dribbling

Players line up, each with a ball, 15 yards away from coach. Coach yells, "Green light" and players try to dribble ball to coach as quickly as possible. Coach periodically yells, "Red light" and players stop, trapping ball with foot. Those players who cannot immediately stop ball because they have lost control are required to move back to beginning, before coach once again yells, "Green light". The first player to coach while controlling their ball is the winner. Once players have the idea of the game, progress game by using hand signals such as raising and lowering your arm instead of using voice. This will encourage players to dribble with their heads up.

Big Bad Bear - Dribbling

Create a 30 X 30 yard grid marked with cones with two small "caves" in opposite corners. Players must stay within the grid. The coach is the "Big Bad Bear" and the bear must try to capture the players. The players dribble around the area while the bear tries to capture them. The bear cannot capture the players if they hide in the cave. The players can only stay in the cave for 10 seconds and must go to the other cave to avoid capture. If a player is captured they become a Bear and help the Big Bad Bear capture the remaining players. Last player to be captured is the winner.

King of the Ring - Dribbling

Create a circle with 30 yard radius. Players must stay within the circle each with a ball. Players dribble around circle while simultaneously trying to kick out the other players' balls while protecting their own. If player's ball is kicked out of circle, player is removed from game. Last player to retain ball is winner.

Traffic Jam - Dribbling

Create a grid approximately 30X30 yards. Randomly place tall cones and training sticks (flags will work as well) in the middle of the grid. Split the group into four even teams. Each team starts on the corners of the grid with one ball per group. On the coach's command, the first player from each line will race through the "Traffic Jam" (training sticks and cones) in attempt to not hit a stick, cone, or another player. Once the player makes it through the traffic jam, instruct them to dribble with speed to the line they are facing and pass the ball to the first player in line. That player should immediately head towards the traffic jam with speed in an attempt to get through the traffic jam first. At first, don't keep score, merely let the players enjoy the close calls before playing the game. After 8-10 minutes, combine the two teams that are facing each other into one team. Next, have the players race through the traffic jam to the cone on the opposite side of the grid, around that cone and back through the traffic jam. As each player finishes the race, they must sit down to signify to the group that they have completed the race. The team that has all the players sitting down first wins the game.

Sharks & Minnows - Dribbling, tackling

Create a circle with 30 yard radius which is the pond. Players must stay within the pond each with a ball. The minnows (players) dribble around circle while the shark (coach) tries to kick each player's ball out of the circle. If player's ball is kicked out of circle, player becomes a shark and tries to win balls from remaining players and kick it out of the pond. Last player to retain ball is winner and gets to choose whether they want to be the first shark of the next game or remain as a minnow. Progress by allowing players the choice of becoming a shark or holding their ball in the air until a teammate "tags" them by passing his/her ball between first player's legs.

Hungry Hippos - Dribbling, tackling

Create a 15 X 25 yard rectangle. Zoo keepers (players) line up on one 15 yard side of rectangle. When the coach says, "Go!", the zoo keepers must dribble their ball to other side of rectangle where their favorite zoo animal is waiting to be fed. The hungry hippo (coach) tries to win the ball from each player and dribble it back to the beginning side. If successful, that zoo keeper becomes a hungry hippo and joins the coach in trying to win balls from the remaining zoo keepers.

Crab Canyon - Dribbling

Create a 5 X 15 yard rectangle divided into three 5 yard sections. Place one player or "crab" in each 5 yard section who plays as a defender. Crabs must lay back and only walk while on hands and feet in a supine position. Remaining players, one at a time, dribble through each grid while crabs attempt to win ball. After all players have made one trip through, trade out crabs and allow three new players to be crabs.

Catch Me if You Can - Dribbling

Create several 10 X 10-yard grids. Start two players on two diagonal corners of the grid. Each of the two players has a ball. When the coach yells "GO", the players must dribble around the outside of the grid in an attempt to catch their partner. When the coach yells "STOP", the players must stop the ball. When the coach yells "TURN", the players must switch the direction around the grid. With the help of assistant coaches and/or parents, run several grids simultaneously to maximize each players time on the ball. Variations - Add commands such as: "LEFT" to use the left foot only. "RIGHT" to use the right foot only. "BOTTOM" to use the bottom of the foot only.

Bedrock Bar-b-que - Dribbling, tackling

Create a 20 X 20 yard square. Divide players equally into each of four corners to create four teams. Place all balls into center of square. When coach says, "Go!", players, one at a time from each team run to center, and dribble a ball back to home corner and tags team mate who then repeats process. The winning team is the team that has the most balls after all balls have been removed from center. Now reverse process in the second go-round, having players return balls to center one at a time, and the previously losing teams have an advantage and there will probably be a new winner the second time around. Progress - as players gain success, allow waiting players to go to adjacent corners and steal balls from opposing teams. This adds a new, fun dimension and requires the players to make decisions - is it better to wait for turn at free center balls or go steal from opposing teams.

Seek and Destroy - Dribbling

Build a rectangle with cones 20 X 30 yards. Every player begins in the rectangle with a ball. The coach and assistant coach start in the rectangle without a ball. The coaches jog around in the grid and players try to kick their balls and hit the coaches feet. The players get a point each time they hit the coach. The coach should yell OUCH each time they are hit to make the game FUN. To progress the game, players can then try to hit each other players' ball with their ball trying to knock it out of the rectangle. If a player's ball is knocked out of the rectangle, they leave the rectangle for a count of 20 before reentering and continuing play.

Into the Well - Throw-in

Create 5 to 25 yard diameter circle depending on age of players. Circle the players around a target (trash can) with soccer ball in hand. The players attempt to throw the balls into the trashcan all at once. The object is to improve the number of balls that go into the trashcan, not to have a winner. Have the teamwork on improving the number of balls in the target.

Progress by increasing the circumference of the circle and/or allowing a parent to move around the circle carrying the target.

Chaos in the Circle - Control

Four players are inside a 15 yard diameter circle with the rest of the team outside. Four of the outside players have a ball. The inside players have to run around within the circle and free themselves for a pass coming from the outside. Initially let them just return the ball to the outside player and then move on to take another pass from another outside player. Progress by allowing outside players to throw ball in at different levels requiring players in circle to control ball with different parts of the body. Also, after players have become relatively proficient at controlling the ball, have them control it and perform a turn move and then return it to another outside player.

Pass and Go Circle – Passing, Control

Create a 30 yard diameter circle (smaller for younger players). Players space evenly around perimeter. One player starts in center. Ball is passed into center player who **moves toward** ball to control it and passes it randomly to another player at the perimeter. Center player moves to perimeter away from the pass. First perimeter player follows pass into center and replaces first center player. Second perimeter player passes ball into new center player and the play is repeated. Encourage all players to move toward ball, control and quickly (one touch if possible) pass to next player. It may initially take players several minutes to get the rhythm, but it will eventually flow. Progress by asking perimeter players to walk clockwise around perimeter (this emphasizes that good players are always moving). Progress by adding in a friendly defender. Progress by adding a second ball and second center player.

Criss-Cross - Passing, Control

Place four marker discs in corners of a 10-15 yard square. Place one ball at each of two adjacent cones. Divide players equally at each of four corners. Players pass - two touch - to opposite player and then run to end of line at disc on their right. Don't have long queues, split larger groups into more than one grid. Progress by making it competitive - challenge two grids who can play for longest without losing control. Also, add a cooperative defender in the middle.

Guard the Castle - Passing, Control

Create a grid that is 12 X 12 yards and place a ball on top of one cone in the center. Divide players into four teams. One of the four players should wear an alternate jersey or pinnie and be the guard of the castle (ball in center). Remaining three players attempt to knock ball off of cone with a second ball by passing among themselves until one player has a clear shot on castle ball. Progress by making grid smaller thereby requiring players to have better control. If guard is standing too close to castle, make a grid around the castle and don't allow guard to step inside of smaller grid. Also, you can require attacking players complete a specific number of passes before each strike at the castle.

Finding the Target – Passing, Control

Create a large grid approximately 40X40 yards. Adjust the size of the field based on the number of players and their age. Divide the team into two even teams in alternate jerseys. Each team should build a 10X10 grid on their attacking end and place one target player in this grid. The two teams play against each by keeping possession from the opposing team. The team in possession should be looking to play a lofted ball into their team's target player who is inside the 10X10 grid. If the target player successfully controls the ball inside the box that team is awarded a point. The player that played into the target player then becomes the target player.

Four Corners Passing Game – Passing, Control

In a 40X40 yard area, create four grids that are about 5x5 yard in each corner of the larger grid. Split the group into two teams and put one team in an alternate color. While each team is in possession of the ball, this team should pass among their teammates to keep possession. A point is scored by passing the ball to a teammate that is inside one of the smaller corner grids. The teams can score in any of the corners. However, they cannot score in the same area twice in a row. Do not allow players to stand inside the grids waiting for a pass. Instead, instruct the players to work on the timing of the runs and timing of the pass to connect inside the grid. Change the scoring rule and only award a point when a give-and-go is performed with the player that is in the grid.

Angle of Support – Passing Create a grid that is 10 X 10 yards. Organize the team into groups of four players per grid. Each of the three “attacking” players should position themselves near three different corners of the grid with one ball. The player with the ball passes to either player at an adjacent corner. The player who did not receive the pass quickly moves to the open corner. The player receiving the pass, controls the ball and then passes to either teammate at an adjacent corner. The fourth player serves as a defender and moves around the center of the grid attempting to intercept each pass and/or challenges the attacker who currently possesses the ball. This soccer game is simple, but players will have to pay attention to the ball movement and anticipate the next move to move to space quicker. After 5 minutes of play, switch out the defender with one of the attackers and continue play.

Keep the Prisoner - Passing, Control, Tackling

Create a 50 yard circle around the center circle (or another 20 yard circle) which serves as the “prison”. Play 7 v. 3. One player of the seven team is the prisoner and is restricted to playing inside the prison (center circle). The remaining six players in the outer circle play possession soccer and try to “break-out” their teammate by making a successful pass to the prisoner in the middle. The opposing team of three play as prison guards (defenders) and prevent the ball from being passed into the center circle. Guards are allowed to run across and through the center circle but they are not allowed to stop and intercept passes while inside the center circle. Rotate players after each prison break or a set amount of time if no prison break occurs. Progress by limiting number of touches by prison breakers and/or reducing the size of the outer circle.

Gates - Passing, Control, Dribbling

Randomly spread pairs of cones two feet apart around a 30 X 30 grid to create 10 - 20 “gates”. Divide players into pairs with one ball per pair. As coach yells, “Go!”, players dribble ball from gate to gate in a random order and complete a single push pass to buddy as many times as they can in a set amount of time. Players count the number of successful push passes made and the pair with the most passes wins. Successive passes must be made in alternate gates; only one pass per gate and then players must dribble to another gate. Progress by shrinking area or by including additional moving obstacles (coaches/parents) that causes players to look up more.

Run the Gauntlet - Tackling

Create a 5 X 20 grid divided into four 5 X 5 sections. Place one cooperative defender in each section. Remaining players take turns attacking each section one a time and trying to dribble past each defender in sequence. Defenders must remain in their respective section. After all players have made one trip through, trade out defenders and allow four new players to be defenders. Progress by allowing defenders to becoming more aggressive. Divide players into two (or three) equal teams with additional grids for each team and run a race to see which team can run their gauntlet the fastest.

Gladiator - Tackling

Divide players into two lines 10 yards apart. Coach kicks ball out 10 - 15 yards and one player from each line runs down ball and tries to return to coach before other player tackles/wins ball and returns to coach. Run 2 - 3 pairs out in close sequence not waiting for first pair to return to minimize players standing in queue. Progress by changing grouping to 2 v 1 or 2 v 2 and/or by requiring player with ball to run around a cone set 20 yards off to one side.

Pirates – Tackling

Build a circle approximately the size of the center circle. The actual size of the circle will vary depending on the age and skill level of the players. Place a Pugg Goal (or a pair of cones/flags) in the middle of the circle. All players start in the playing area. All but 2 players have a ball; the two without are the "Pirates." The players with balls dribble nonstop around the circle and the "Pirates" tackle attempting to win the ball from any player. Once the Pirate wins the ball, they attempt to score on the Pugg Goal in the middle of the circle while the other player attempts to win the ball. If the Pirate scores the goal, the first player becomes a Pirate. Play continues until the last player with the ball wins. If the pirates have a hard time getting started, the coach can help.

Triangle Goal – Tackling/Defending

Create a grid about 35X35. You can adjust the grid larger or smaller depending on the age and skill level of your players. Create a triangle in the middle of the grid (about 5 yards each side) with training sticks or flags to serve as a goal. Place a goalkeeper inside the triangle. Split the group into two even teams of 4v4 or 5v5. Instruct both teams to attack the three-sided goal. The Goalkeeper should defend all three sides of the goal. If a team scores a goal, a point is awarded to the team and the ball is live on the other side of the goal. If the goalkeeper makes a save, he is to distribute the ball into open space away from players. For a goal to count, the ball must cross through the goal no higher than the top of the flag or training stick. Progress game by requiring a certain number of passes between teammates before a shot can be taken. Progress by limiting the number of touches by each player (three, two or one) before they have to pass.

2 V 2 Quick Score – Defending or Attacking

Create a grid approximately 25X40 yards. This is a large field for 2v2, but this is intentional as it will create more breakaway situations and will encourage players to attack the space while going to goal. Place a small goal or Pugg goal on each end line. Split the team into 2 equal groups, one with an alternate jersey color. Assign each player a partner on his team. These players will continue to be teammates throughout the entire game. Assign each team a goal to defend. 2 players from each team step out to play 2v2. The remaining players should line up across their defensive end line with a large supply of balls. Play 2v2 inside the grid to the small goals. If a team gets scored on they step off and two new team members step on with the ball. They look to get a quick attack on the team that just scored. As a team scores a goal, they must quickly transition to stop the quick attack.

The scoring team stays on the field and plays 2v2 until they get scored on. If the ball goes out of play, the ball restarts from a teammate on their end line. Players only switch after their group gets scored on. First team to 20 wins.

Four Corners Attacking Game - Attacking

Create a 15 X 30 pitch with one 2 foot wide goal in each corner. Divide players to each end. Initiate play by one player serving the ball to an opposing player at the opposite end. Players play 1 v 1 and try to score in either of two goals at opposite end from where each starts by dribbling the ball through cones (no long shots allowed). Progress to 1 v 2, 2 v 2 or 2 v 3.

Three Lanes w/ wingers - Attacking

Create a 25 X 50 pitch w/ five yard lanes down each side. Divide players into equal teams (5 v 5 works well). Each team has two designated wingers who can only play in the outside lanes and remaining players can only play in center lane. Set a cone at midfield on each touch line. Normal goal at each goal line. No keepers. When ball is passed out to winger, defending winger must run to and touch center cone before defending regardless of current location on field. Goals can only be scored off serves from winger.