

**Pa West Soccer Association
Recommended U8 Lesson Plans**

Warm Up

Simon Says.

Organization: In a 20x30 yard area using cones play Simon Says. If you wish, you can create a story where Simon is the King of “Knotty Ash.” In “Knotty Ash” all of the people are children. When King Simon says “foot, knee, sit, elbow, head on the ball, etc.” you have to do the command. The coach can also integrate commands such as change directions; go faster and so on, into the game. If Simon does not issue the command or a child responds slowly, he/she receives a “gotcha.”

Progressions: 1 minute without ball, 1 minute with ball in hands, minimum of 4 minutes of commands with ball at feet.

Comments: Children should not be eliminated from the game.

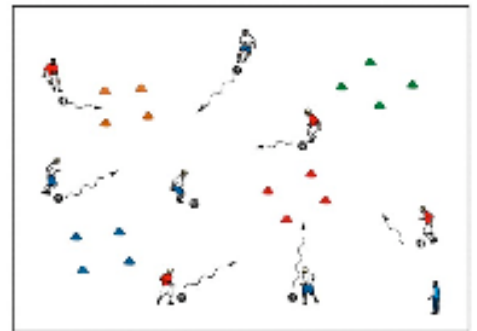


Island Game.

Organization: Small zones (islands) are set up in the playing area (use disc cones). The players run about in the playing area. At a signal, the players run quickly to an island. No more than two players can occupy one island. A player (or 2) who fails to find an island scores one minus point. The player with the fewest minus points wins.

Progression: Every player has a ball and players must dribble the ball to the island.

Comments: Don't be afraid to use non-verbal signals



Ball Retrieval.

Organization: Children work in pairs. The coach tosses the ball for each player and their partner to bring back. Have all of the players gather closely around you (no lines). Each pair, hands you their ball, which you toss randomly into an open area where the pair must retrieve the ball (lines are not needed...just help each pair in turn as they come back) and get it back to you as quickly as possible.

Progressions: 4 hands, 4 elbows, one hand and one back, 2 foreheads, 8 passes, 7 passes with feet, 6 passes with right foot, 3 long passes, etc.

Partner Exercises.

Organization: Divide players into two groups. Each player in Group A has a partner in Group B. B runs behind A at an easy pace. At the coach's signal (hand signal, dropped ball), each pair must perform specific tasks.

Progression: A stands with legs apart and B crawls under him, A falls onto his stomach and B jumps over him (variation: five quick hops in a row), A reacts as above and B forms a “bridge” over him, A changes the way he is running (skipping, sideways) and B follows his lead. After a few minutes, each player has to dribble a ball too (adjust tasks accordingly).

Comments: Players switch roles halfway through the exercise.

Pair Tag.

Organization: Put players into pairs (one player is #1 and the other is #2). Players start out running freely in the field. When the coach calls out a number, the players called have 10 seconds to tag their partners. The coach signals the end of 10 seconds with a signal.

Progressions: Players score one point each for every successful tag. Who can score the most points in five rounds?

Comments: Individual players' points may also be added for a team total.

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Progressions: 4 hands, 4 elbows, one and one back, 2 foreheads, 8 passes, 7 passes with feet, 6 passes with right foot, 3 long passes, etc.

Activities

Monster Turnaround.

Organization: In a 20x30 yard area, organize one ball per player and two "Monsters" (can be coaches) without a ball. The players run around with their ball. To score points they have to run towards a monster and execute a turn. They score a point if they can get close to a monster and turn away keeping control of the ball. If they get too close, the monster can kick their ball away, which they then have to retrieve. How many points can you score in 30 seconds?

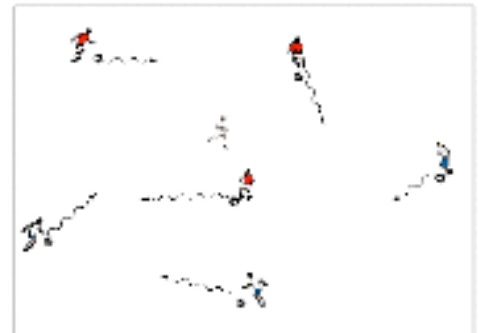
Progressions: Repeat trying to beat your own score. Turn using sole of foot. Turn using outside of foot.



Tigerball.

Organization: Each player has a ball, except for the "tiger." At the coach's signal, the tiger tries to steal a ball from one of the players. To win it, he must steal the ball with his feet and then hold it above his head in his hands...then he can give it to the coach. The player who lost the ball becomes a tiger too. The last player who has a ball is the winner and becomes the first tiger in the next round.

Progressions: Use left foot, use soles of both feet, etc



Soccer Golf.

Organization: Each player has a ball. Select several objects, bleachers, telephone poles, center circle etc, as holes. After a demonstration of the course, players proceed in pairs through the course. Each touch of the ball counts as a stroke. You could establish par for the course. Each player keeps his/her own score.

Progressions: Pairs play the course taking turns to kick the ball

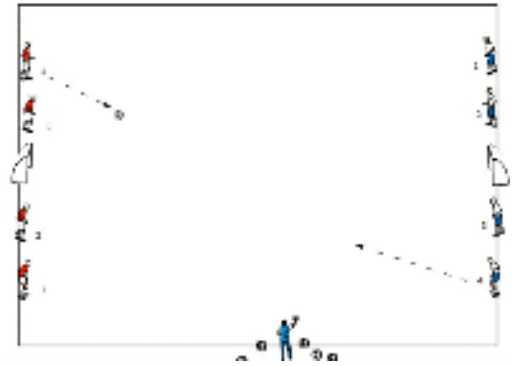
Numbers Game.

Organization: Two teams of equal numbers. Coach calls out a number and that number goes out into the field. The remaining players stay on the goal line, either side of the goal. After a goal, or a period of play, coach calls out another number.

Progressions: Call out same number at each end, 1st number from the end and 2nd number from the other end. Call out two numbers for each end and call out different combinations of numbers, so players learn to interact with different subsets. Give advantages to certain teams so players can learn to deal with numbers up and down situations (for example, 2 players from one end and one player from the other end).

Coaches should keep comments to a minimum

Comments: Don't be afraid to have more than 1v1 or 2v2 going at once



Everyone vs. Everyone.

Organization: A number of small goals are set up in a field. The coach provides about half as many balls as there are players. Each player tries to win one of the balls and shoot through one of the goals. It doesn't matter which side he shoots from. If he knocks over one of the cones/posts, he must set it up again immediately. The player who scores the most goals in one minute is the winner. Allow adequate breaks after each round of play.

Progression: Score by dribbling through a goal, score by shooting through a goal, play a couple of rounds for each, etc.

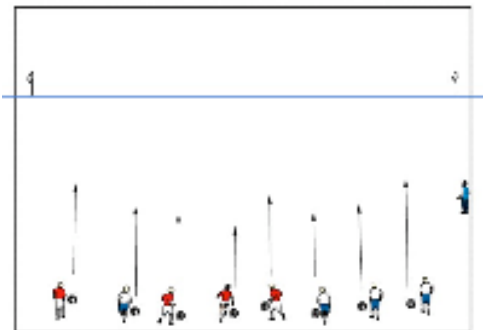


Edge of the World.

Organization: Each player has a ball in a rectangular area (adjust size for ability of players). Players start at one end of the area and pass their ball to the other end line. They must run after their own ball and control it before it falls off the edge of the earth. Player can only strike the ball once when passing it. The challenge is to get as close to the line without going over.

Progression: Pass ball with laces, with inside of foot, work in pairs (one kicks, one stops), etc.

Comments: Can be played in the penalty box, center circle or any confined area.

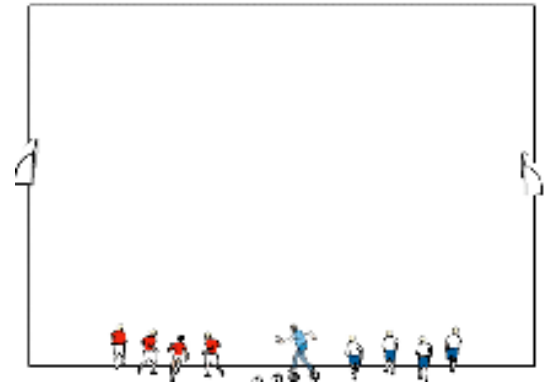


Outta There.

Organization: Set-up a 25yd x 15yd area with goals at each end. The coach stands on the touchline with all of the balls at his/her feet. Players are on either side of the coach lined up in pairs. The pairs to the right of the coach defend the goal to the right and visa versa for the players to the coach's left. There are no preparatory vocal commands (just roll the ball in).

If ball goes out of bounds-"Get out of there" applies to both teams. If one team scores, "see ya or hosta la vista" etc. applies to the scored upon team. Don't retrieve balls, when all balls are used up, explain "we're out of balls" and every player races to get a ball.

Progressions: Can be played 1 v 1 to start.



Hospital Tag.

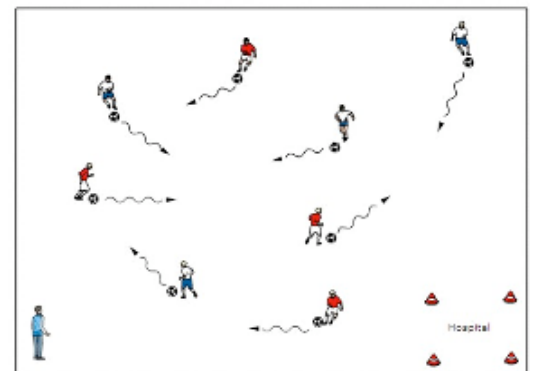
Organization: All players each with a ball in a defined area. Set up a second space for a "Hospital." Players must dribble around in the main space and try to tag other players while controlling the ball. If tagged, players must hold the part of the body that was tagged. After player is tagged for the third time, he must go to the hospital. While in the hospital, the players must practice more dribbling. After completing a specific task they come back to the game and begin with a fresh start. Who never went to the hospital?

Progressions: Only dribble with one foot, only use the inside foot, only use the outside of the foot, etc.

Comments: Encourage rapid changes of speed and direction.

Encourage players to attack while they have free hands, but when

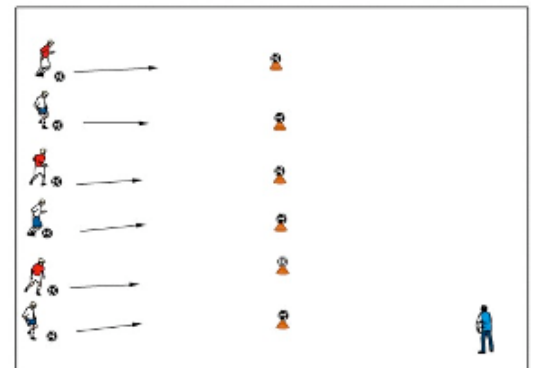
both hands are holding tagged body areas, they must employ defensive dribbling and go away from attackers.



Ball Hunting.

Organization: On the baseline of rectangular playing area are 4-6 players. In the middle of the playing area are three cones, each with a ball on top of it. The players shoot from the baseline simultaneously, trying to knock the balls off the cones. Balls that are knocked off are immediately put back in the cones. Who hits the most balls?

Progressions: Shoot using any surface, shoot using laces, shoot using inside of foot, etc.



Shadow Running.

Organization: The front player is the runner and the second player is his shadow. The runner tries to shake off his shadow by changing pace and direction. The shadow tries to remain at a distance of 1-2 yards behind the runner. The runner can stop and carry out stretching exercises or he can make arm movements or turns while running. His Shadow must imitate all of these movements. After 1-2 minutes the two players swap roles.

Progressions: Add ball for each player.

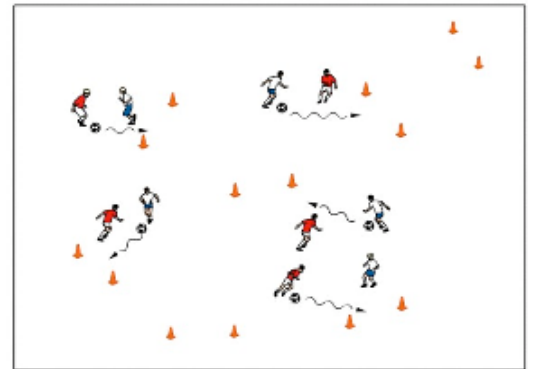
Comments: Make sure the players in each pair are evenly matched

Pairs Game.

Organization: A number of goals are set up in a field (one more than the number of pairs). Each player tries to score as often as possible. The coach divides the players into pairs, who play 1 v 1 on the small goals. Each pair has a ball. Players may score on any goal from either side. Due to the high physical intensity, the game should be played in intervals: one minute of play should be followed by a one-minute active rest period, during which players can play and pass through the small goals at a relaxed pace. At a signal from the coach, the 1 v 1 begins again.

Progressions: Score by shooting into a goal, score by dribbling through a goal and stopping the ball within 2 yards (leave the ball for your opponent to become the attacker), etc.

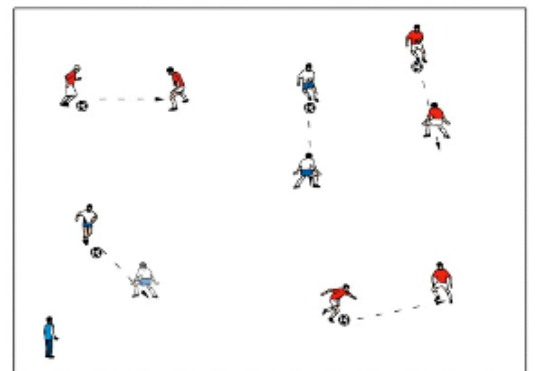
Comments: The players who score the most goals win. Again, well-matched pairs are vital



Tunnel Passing.

Organization: Two players face each other at a distance of 1 meter. Player 1 has 30 seconds to pass the ball as many times as possible through the tunnel formed by the separated legs of Player 2. The first player kicks the ball through the partner's legs and then runs behind Player 2 to return kick the ball to the original side. Meanwhile, Player 2 remains still and counts the number of goals scored by the opponent. Then the players switch roles and Player 2 gets 30 seconds to pass the ball. The winner is the player who, using either left or right foot, passes the ball more often through the tunnel formed by the opponent. In case of a tie, repeat the test.

Progressions: Right foot only, left foot only, alternate feet, inside of foot, etc.



Sharks and Minnows.

Organization: Mark off an area on the field as the pond. Choose a couple of players to be the sharks – they won't have the balls, but they are on the prowl for someone else's ball. All the other players are minnows dribbling around the pond. The sharks must try to take someone else's ball away or kick that person's ball out of the pond. If they succeed, they become a minnow, and the person whose ball was kicked out becomes the shark.

Progression: Have two ponds, one where all the minnows are swimming and another where they need to go before 10 to 15 seconds are up. Between the two ponds are the rapids, where the sharks are waiting. If the sharks kick a minnow's ball away (as the minnow swims through the rapids) the minnow must join the shark. Eventually you'll end up with almost everyone being sharks and perhaps just one minnow trying to swim between two ponds with his ball



Gate Passing.

Organization: Divide the players into pairs. Set up a series of small goals, approximately two yards apart in a 30 x 30 yard area...making sure you have more goals than pairs. Give your pairs 30 seconds to see how many goals they can pass through in that time.

Progression: Pairs cannot go to a goal they already played or to a goal at which another pair is playing...they have to look for a goal that's empty.



Tail Tag.

Organizations: Players run around in a 20 x 15 yard playing area. Each player has a flag (vest/bib, ribbon, etc.) tucked into the back of his shorts with most of it hanging free. All of the players try to steal the other players' flag (but cannot take them out of their hands). The players hold the flags that they have stolen in their hands. If a player loses his own flag from the back of his shorts, he keeps playing. The player with the most flags at the end is the winner.

Progression: Who is the last person to have their flag taken? Each player has a ball to dribble. Each player dribbles a ball in specified way.

Comments: A fun game that kids love.

Moving Target (In Pairs).

Organization: Players are in pairs and share a ball. The coach and a chosen assistant are holding a bib/vest between them above waist height. The coach and assistant represent the uprights of a goal and the bib they are holding is the crossbar. The goal does not stand stationary, but moves about at a walking pace. The players try to strike their ball through the goal to their partner. Obviously they will try to “gang” about the goal so the goal must go to open space in order to spread out the playing area. Add a second goal after the players get some success or as needed.

Progressions: Specify how the ball has to be passed through the goal.



Freeze tag.

Organization: Divide the players into three groups. Designate one group as the “taggers” and upon a signal have them run around the soccer field trying to tag the other players. When they tag someone, perhaps on the top of the head or on the back, the person who has been tagged is frozen. The only way he can get free is for one of his teammates to crawl through his legs and release him. Time how long the “taggers” take to get all the players frozen. Each group has a turn as the “taggers.” The winners are the quickest group to tag everyone.

Progressions: Everybody has a ball and players are unfrozen if the ball is passed through their legs.

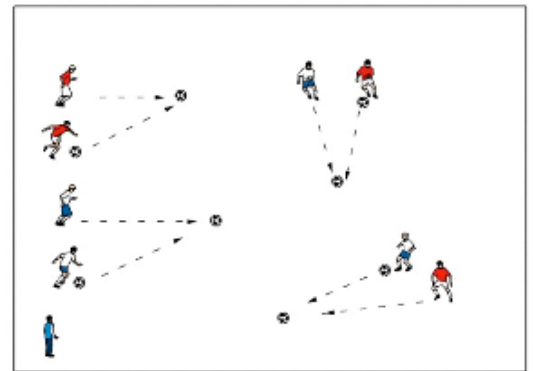
Comments: When playing with soccer ball “taggers” could have a ball too...adjust to the level of play.

Marbles.

Organization: One ball per person with players in pairs. Players take turns trying to hit each others ball through passing. The exercise begins with players together when one player plays his/her ball away 5 – 10 yards. The second player then attempts to pass his/her ball to hit their partner’s ball with one kick. For a hit, score one point (see restart below). For a miss, the moment the passed ball moves completely passed the other ball, the other player’s turn begins. They now try to hit their partner’s ball.

Progressions: Specify how the ball has to be kicked.

Comments: There is an advantage to immediately chasing your ball after passing so that in the event your partner misses you can be right there to strike your ball. There is also a fairness component, after a player scores a point and their ball is now only inches away from the other one, the player who just scored restarts the game with a new pass away from the area. This activity develops the tendency to follow your pass



Tag in Pairs.

Organization: Players are in pairs and everybody has a ball in an unlimited space. One player is “it” and has to catch their partner and tag them (tag with hand below shoulder height). If the player is tagged, they become “it” and now must tag their partner. Players must keep their ball with them at all times.

Progressions: Don’t run away but be brave and see how close you can let “it” get to you before getting away, don’t turn and run away again but go around “it” to the side, lean one way and go another way to get away, etc. Can be played by varying the tagging method... “it” has to hit their ball against their partners.

Comments: Use your coaching points as the rules for the next round. Even matching of pairs is needed for this game.

Duck Hunt.

Organization: The players are in pairs. Each player has a ball. One person is in front of the other as in “partner exercises.” The person in front dribbles anywhere, but cannot lose his/her partner who is following right behind with a ball. When the coach says “pull”, the person in front passes their ball to the side and the person behind has to pass immediately and try and hit the ball that was just passed. If a ball is hit then a point is scored. Players switch roles after three times.

Progressions: Specify which foot is used, what technique is used, etc. Allow players in front to decide themselves when they pass a ball out instead of listening to the coach yell.

Final activity

Scrimmage 3 v 3 or 4 v 4