

PYSA Recommended Drills for U4 and U6

The goal for this age group is to have fun and get lots of touches on the ball. There doesn't need to be a lot of technical instruction. It's OK to repeat these activity games throughout the season. In fact the kids will likely request their favorite games over and over again (e.g., shark and minnows).

WARM UP (about 5 minutes)

Each practice should start with a short warm up to get the kids moving around and having fun. Warm ups don't need to include the soccer ball and can include almost any activity: skipping, running, stretching, crawling, and jumping. Games like "Tag the Coach", "Freeze Tag", or "Simon Says" work well.

ACTIVITY GAMES (5 to 10 minutes each)

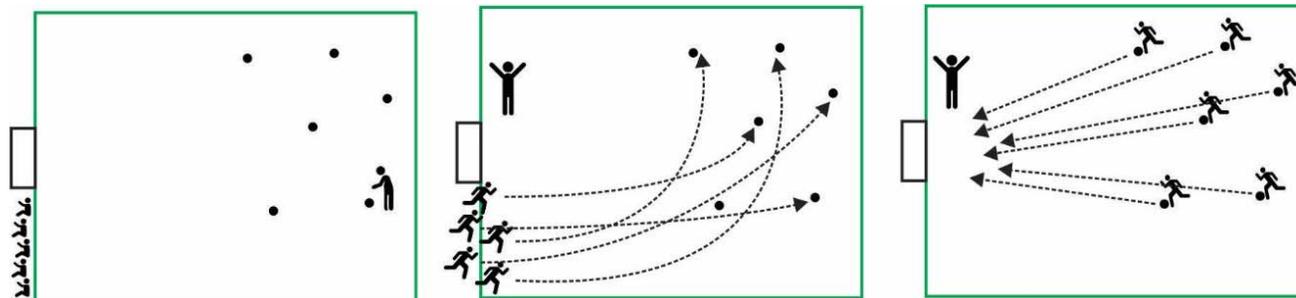
Red Light - Green Light

The coach stands on the opposite end line from the players. When the coach yells "Green Light" and turns their back to the players, the players must dribble toward the opposite end line. When the coach yells "1 - 2 - 3 Red Light" and then turns around, all players must stop their ball with the sole of their foot. Anyone who hasn't stopped their ball when the coach turns around gets sent back to the starting line. Repeat until all players make it to the opposite end line. Tell each player to sit when they cross the end line.



Easter Egg Hunt

Have all the players sit on the end line with their backs to the field. Tell them not to look as you hide (i.e., scatter) their soccer balls all over the field. When you yell "go find your Easter Egg", the players run to find their soccer ball and then dribble it back to score a goal. Play multiple times and change how you hide the eggs: pile them up in a pyramid, make a happy face, put them REALLY far away, etc.



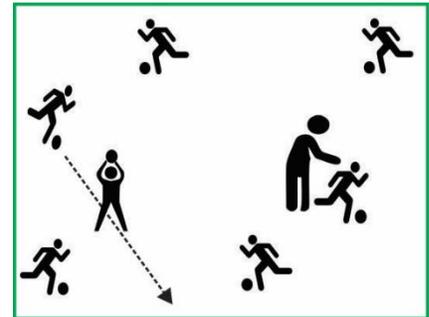
Follow the Leader

Line everyone up and have them follow you and do exactly as you do. To make sure they understand, wave your arms in the air... or act like a monkey... to see if everyone copies. As they follow you, describe each activity out loud because they will mostly be looking down at their ball. Here are some ideas:

- Slow dribble along the field lines
- Stop with your foot/knee/elbow/head
- Dribble around the goal or corner flags
- Fast dribble across the field then stop
- Toe Taps
- Throw in from the sideline
- Dribble through the parents
- Finish with everyone scoring on goal

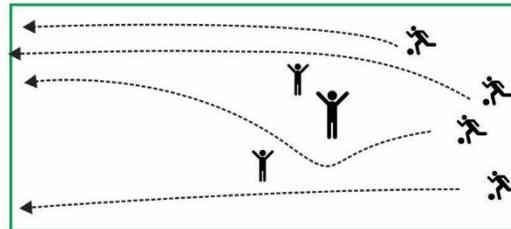
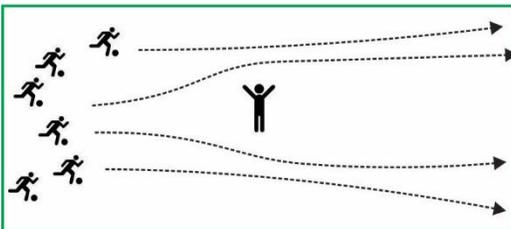
Stuck in the Mud

Mark out a small area with cones or use the field lines. As players dribble around, the coach will try to tag the players. If a player is tagged, they're stuck in the mud and need to hold their soccer ball over their head until someone dribbles between their legs. Show them how to hold the ball above their head and spread their legs wide apart so that another player can dribble through them. Every time you tag a player, say something like "Oh no, [Player Name] is stuck in the mud! Who is going to help them out?"



Sharks and Minnows

Have the players (minnows) line up along the end line. Explain that when you say "go minnows", the players need to dribble to the other end line, while the coach (shark) stands in the middle and tries to steal their ball. If you steal a ball, the minnow becomes a shark and joins you for the next round. Keeping sending the minnows across until there are only 1 or 2 minnows left. During the first couple of crossings, go very easy/slow to make sure everyone is able to dribble around the shark.



Variation: Crabs and Surfers

The surfers (instead of minnows) have to surf across without getting their ball stolen by a crab (instead of a shark). However, the crabs have to do the crab-walk. This is fun and it slows down the defense to encourage more successful dribbling. Coach can start rounds by saying "ready go", or they can be more fun and say something like "crabs are you ready... show me your claws", then "Surfers are you ready... show me your surf pose... alright surfers up dudes!"

Obstacle Course

Ask for 2 or 3 volunteers. Spread the volunteers out like cones in front of the goal and tell them to stand still like statues. Other players line up to take turns dribbling around the statues and then scoring on goal. Give everyone a chance to be a statue. The statues could also stand with their legs wide apart for players to dribble through. Or have two statues hold their hands together high like a bridge for the players to dribble under.

Don't Crash the Car

This is a creative drill that requires some memorization, but the kids love it and it can cover a lot of foot work. Mark out a small area with cones or use the field lines. Explain that everyone must dribble their ball around like a car and they need to be careful not to crash into each other. After a while, start to introduce the following commands:

When I say "Red Light", stop the ball with the sole of your foot.

When I say "Green Light", dribble again.

When I say "Flat Tire", stop the ball with your knee (then do 10 Toe Taps to pump it up).

When I say "Traffic jam", sit on the ball and pretend to honk the horn.

When I say "Windshield Wiper", stop the ball and roll it side to side with the sole of your foot.

When I say "Bad Driver", don't let me kick your ball away (as you do a silly walk across the grid).

When I say "Gas Station", everyone dribble through my legs.

When I say "Car Race", everyone dribble around the square as fast as you can.

You don't need to introduce all the commands on the first day. Save some for next practice or create some of your own.

