

Red Light Green Light

Players spread out along one end line of your practice area, each with their own ball. The coach stands at the opposite end line, facing away from the team, and yells "Green Light". Players begin dribbling towards the opposite end line, but as soon as the coach yells "Red Light", they must freeze with control of their ball under their foot. Upon yelling "Red Light", the coach turns around and tries to spot any players who have not yet frozen. Any "caught" players have to go back to the initial end line and start over. Play continues until all players have made it to the finishing end line. Make it fun! I recommend that cones or discs be used to set side boundaries as well also, you might want to play this game first without balls until the players get the hang of it. The speed of dribbling can be mixed up as well.

Hit the Coach

Players begin with a ball and opposite the coach. The object is to dribble around a defined area trying to hit the coach with their ball. Teach "small touches" when dribbling and keeping their heads up to follow the coach and see other players. Each hit on the coach is worth one point - once the players get 3-5 points the coach has to make the sound of the players favorite animal (the more animated you are the more fun the kids will have). Have fun!

Catch the Tail

Set up a defined playing area. I would recommend starting this game without balls first. One player wears a tail (simply a pinnie tucked into their shorts) and tries to keep away from the other players. Perhaps the coach could wear the tail for the first game as some players may never want to wear it. If a player's tail is removed the player that grabs it should wear the tail and continue running to stay away from the other players. Add soccer balls to the players chasing the tails. They now have to dribble their balls under control while trying to grab the tails. This game can be played in squared area or from line to line. Have fun!

Freeze Tag

Set up a defined dribbling area. Each player has their own ball. The game begins with all players dribbling around within the defined area. The coach then chases the players trying to tag them. When a player is tagged, they must freeze, hold the ball high above their heads, and spread their feet apart. The player remains frozen until a teammate dribbles their own ball through the frozen player's legs, after which the player is unfrozen and continues dribbling around. You may want to have a second or even third coach help with the chasing. Older kids can take turns as the chaser as well. This is a great dribbling game that also encourages teammates to help each other out.

Body Parts

Set up a defined dribbling area with cones or discs. Each player has their own ball. The game begins with all players dribbling around within the defined area. The coach then yells out a part of the body, such as "Elbow", and all players must stop dribbling and gain control of the ball with that body part. It sounds kind of silly, but especially younger kids think it's a ton of fun.

Don't hold back with the parts you call. The crazier the better. The ones I usually use include: Foot, Knee, Elbow, Forehead, Ear, Stomach, Back of the Head ("Don't Fall Asleep!"), sit on ball, etc.

Cops and Robbers ("Frogger" - "robber" hop like a frog)

Players spread out along one end line of your practice area, each with their own ball (the "Cops"). Start with one player, without a ball, who is the "Robber". The Robber starts out 25 feet or so in front of the rest of your team. The goal is for your players to dribble from one end line to the other, without getting their ball stolen by the Robber.

I recommend that cones or discs be used to set side boundaries as well. When the Robber steals a ball, that player then becomes the Robber for the next round. As play progresses add a second Robber, third, etc.

Sharks and Minnows

Teaches kids with the ball to shield it from an opponent and teaches kids without the ball how to take it away from an opponent. Create a square with cones as the dribbling area. One player, the shark, starts outside the square without a ball. All other players, the minnows, start inside the square with a ball. When the coach yells, "Shark's getting hungry!" the shark starts running around the outside of the square and the fish start dribbling around inside the square. When the coach yells, "Shark attack!" the shark enters the square and has 30 seconds to send as many balls as possible outside the square. When a ball leaves the square for any reason, the corresponding fish becomes a hungry shark. Play until one minnow remains.

Choose a new shark and start another round.

The Blob

Players spread out along one end line of your practice area, each with their own ball. Start with two players, without balls, standing side-by-side with their inside arms latched to each other, thereby making up "The Blob" (make it sound really creepy!). The Blob starts out 25 feet or so in front of the rest of your team. The goal is for your players to dribble from one end line to the other, without getting tagged by "The Blob". If they do get tagged, they then join The Blob by latching on in the same fashion to an outside end. The Blob continually grows bigger and bigger by repeating this challenge.

I recommend that cones or discs be used to set side boundaries as well. Remind "The Blob" members that their arms must stay latched together! The kids get a big kick out of it when The Blob grows and members unknowingly start to pull in different directions. In the end this also teaches teamwork and working together.

Egg Hunt

This another silly game that young kids love. It works year-round, but especially right around Easter.

Start by making a circle with discs large enough to fit all of your players balls into. Ask your players to tell you what an Egg Hunt is. After everyone understands the idea of finding eggs and collecting them in their basket, explain that the circle of discs is actually a big basket, and that all of the balls in it are eggs.

To start the game, you'll simply throw out all the eggs into your playing area, as fast as you can, and then your players will quickly chase them down and dribble them back to the basket. It sounds basic but with little kids it works.

Find Your Ball

Similar to Egg Hunt, and also basic, but again the young kids find it fun.

The players start at one end line. All the balls are in the middle of the field. At the far end line is a circle of cones or discs.

To start the game, you'll simply call out your players by name. That player runs to the middle of the field, finds their ball, and then dribbles it toward the far end of the field into the circle you set up. This sounds dull, but little kids like the anticipation of having their name called out, and are eager to get to the far circle. It's not good enough to use every day, but the key is variety and this one is fine for at least using once or twice during a season. Good for getting the kids started and active.

Doctor Tag

Set the field up with a defined dribbling area. At one end or corner of the field you'll also need to set up a small square of discs or cones about 10 feet square. This area is the "Hospital".

Introduce the game asking if your players know what germs are and what they do. The likely answer you'll get is "they make you sick". Then, ask who we sometimes have to go see when we get sick, the answer we're looking for of course being the "Doctor".

In this game, players will dribble around with their own ball. One of the players, without a ball, will start off as a "Germ". The germ chases the players as they dribble around, and tries to tag them. If a player gets tagged, they have to dribble to the "Hospital" to see the doctor. Once at the hospital, the player does a small challenge (three toe touches on top of ball, three dropping foot juggles, three circle moves, etc.), and then re-enters the game. For variety, add a second, third germ, etc.

Musical Balls

This game is taken from the popular "Musical Chairs" game.

For young players start each player dribbling within a defined area. When you yell "Switch", the players leave their ball where it lies, and then scramble to find a new ball (one left by another player). Everybody finds a new ball and nobody is knocked out. Play this for a few switches then move on.

Monster Attack

Tell the players that a Monster is coming to try to steal their pet ball and that they must keep it away from the Monster by dribbling it around the field (tell them they must stay inside the field). The Coach is the monster. This game teaches dribbling under pressure, turning with the ball, controlling the ball ("small touches" when dribbling)

Ideas: drag your leg like Frankenstein, make monster noises, make a face, and say things like "Don't let me get your ball!!!" But don't scare them. The idea is just to have them try to get away. Don't catch the players, just have fun.