

Garrett Youth Soccer's Skill Structure for Kindergarten - 1st Grade

Outside of Little Railroaders, Kindergarten - 1st Grade is the youngest age group at Garrett Youth Soccer. At this age, constant stimulation and repetitive touches on the ball is the most important aspect for improvement. Players that fall into this age range should primarily be learning how to properly dribble a ball and how to kick the ball while stationary and moving.

Main Focus: Dribbling / Kicking / Basic Motor Skills / Fun

Comfort in these areas allow for a seamless transition into the other fundamental aspects of soccer.

For Dribbling Ball Control:

Coaches and parents should emphasize the use of all surfaces of the feet to control the ball.

This includes:

1. Inside of the Foot
2. Outside of the Foot
3. Sole

Players should be encouraged to dribble out of trouble or "pressure". Pressure, in soccer, is any time an opponent is attempting to steal the ball or position themselves in a way that would influence the movement of the ball.

Players should be encouraged to dribble past the other players when trying to score or "penetrate" the defense. At this age, the concept of passing is not always the go-to for players.

Players should be instructed on how to receive the ball with the inside of their foot with emphasis on a "soft touch". Having a soft touch allows the player to control the ball better and retain possession of the ball.

For Kicking:

Coaches and parents should emphasize kicking with the inside of the foot or the laces of the foot. Most players will likely try to kick the ball with their toes. This can lead to injury and should be discouraged by coaches and parents.

Basic Motor Skills:

Players should have adequate exposure to different movements such as running forward, running backward, jumping, and recovering after falling down. Not all drills in this area require the use of a ball, however the addition of a ball can help with foot-eye coordination.

Fun:

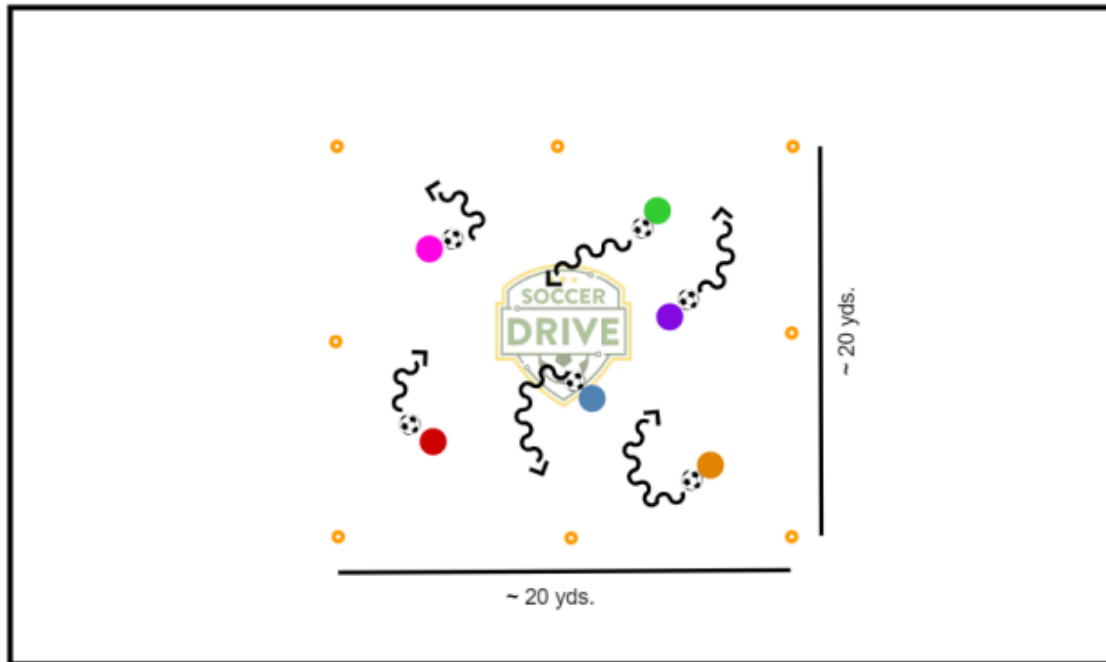
This is a reminder that at this age, having fun is important for the retention of information.

Below are some sample drills that we feel emphasize the skills mentioned in this document. However, feel free to implement/create your own drills that target these various skills.

Dribbling and Ball Control:

["Red Light, Green Light"](#) - Video

Red Light, Green Light



Description

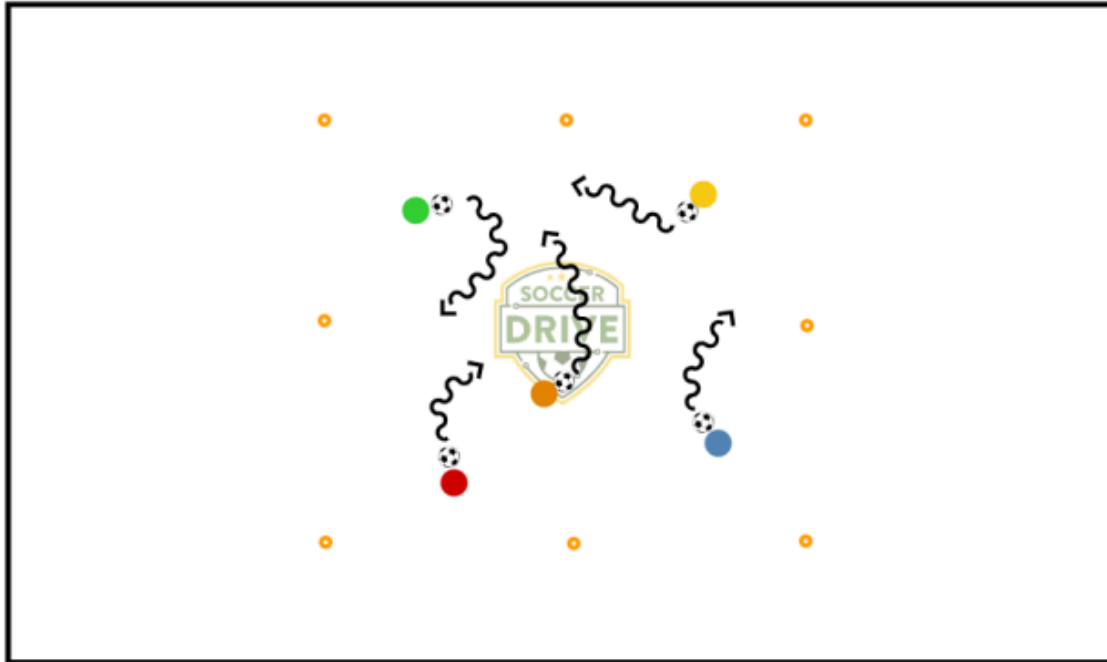
Red Light, Green Light is a simple but effective way of working on player's dribbling at all age groups. While commonly thought of a game for children, it's use in soccer encourages dribbling and ball control.

To play, set up a box that's roughly 20 yds by 20 yds. Each player should be given a ball. When the coach yells "Green Light" players should be dribbling freely around the box. When a coach yells "Yellow Light" players should continue to dribble, but slower and with a softer touch that stays closer to the body. When a coach yells "Red Light" players should bring the ball to a stop and stand with the ball under their foot. Continue to call out the different colors in a random order. Player should aim to stay inside of the cones for the duration of the drill.

Key Coaching Points: Keep the ball close when dribbling.

["Body Part Dribbling"](#) - Video

Body Part Dribbling



Description

Body Part Dribbling is a unique dribbling game that encourages basic motor skills, coordination, and listening all while allowing a player to get more comfortable when dribbling the ball.

To play, set up a box that is roughly 20 yds by 20 yds. Each player should be given a ball. Players will dribble their ball around the box at whatever speed they feel comfortable with, while keeping the ball close. Coaches will call out a random body part, such as left hand or nose. Players must bring the ball to a stop and then touch their ball with the body part that was yelled out. Once all of the players have touched their soccer ball, play resumes and another random body part will be called out shortly after.

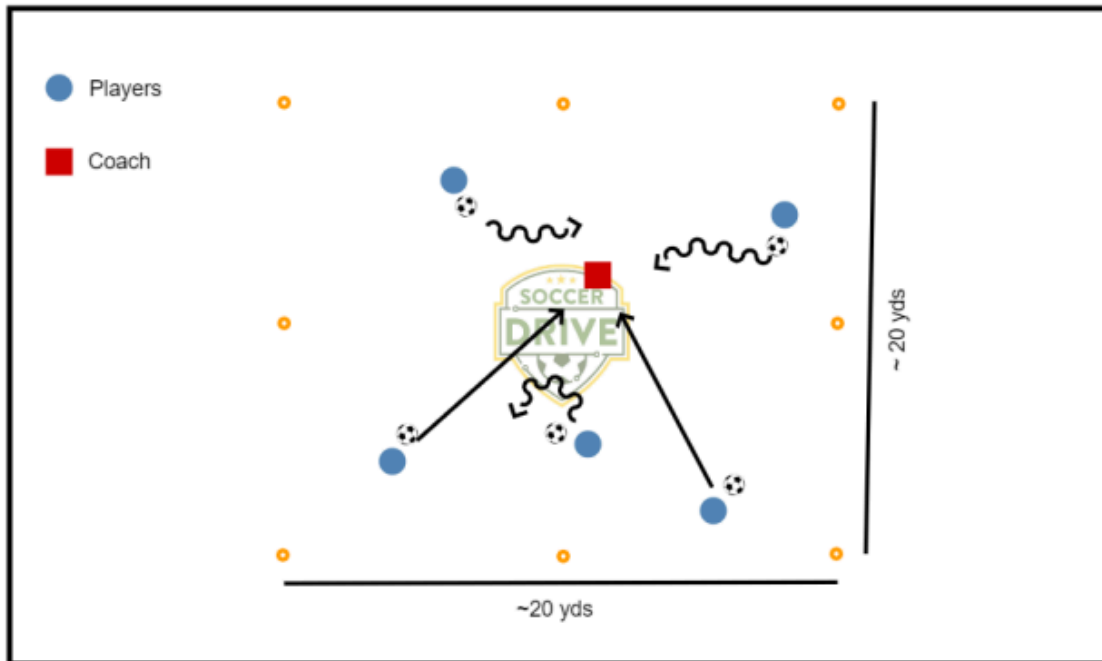
Key Coaching Points: Keep the ball close when dribbling and listen for different commands.

There are countless additional dribbling drills out there, but these are two simple ones that do not require a large amount of space or equipment and are easy for Kindergarten - 1st Graders to understand.

Kicking:

["Space Wars"](#) - Video

Space Wars



Description

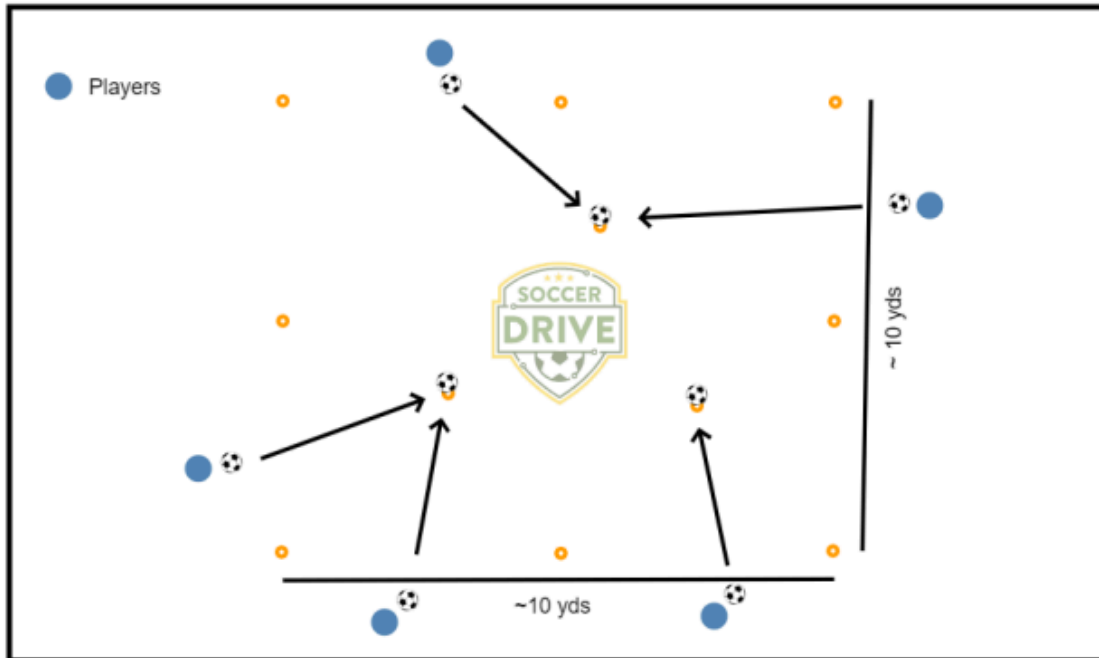
Space Wars (commonly known as "Kick the Coach") is a fun soccer game that encourages dribbling and kicking form and accuracy.

To play, set up an area that is roughly 20 yds by 20 yds. Each player should be given a ball to use. Players will dribble inside of the 20 yd box and attempt to kick their ball and hit their coach or the "bad guy". Coaches should attempt to dodge the balls kicked by the players. Players should be encouraged to dribble closer to the target to get a better chance of hitting the coach. Players should also be encouraged to look up and see where they are kicking to avoid hitting another teammate. Coaches should instruct the players to kick with the inside of their foot and eventually, the laces of the foot.

Key Coaching Points: Kick with the inside of the foot and laces. Look up when kicking to avoid hitting teammates.

Target Practice

Target Practice



Description

Target Practice is a simple game where players are positioned outside of a box and attempt to kick their ball into another ball sitting on a cone. It is a slower paced game that utilizes stationary targets at varied distances.

To play, set up an area that is roughly 10 yds by 10 yds. This size can be increased as children improve their aim. Each player should stand outside of the cones with their ball. Each player will attempt to kick their ball into one of the balls sitting on a cone inside of the box. Players should be focusing on hitting the ball with the inside of their foot. Coaches can have as many target balls inside of the box as they want (or cones if number of soccer balls is limited) and can replace them as they are knocked off or play for a duration of time and replace them all at one point.

Key Coaching Points: Kicking with the inside of the foot.

These are two of many basic kicking drills that exist for youth players at this age level.

We highly recommend checking out You Got MOJO's YouTube channel for other fun drills. You can draw your own drills like we did here with the free soccerdrive.com/draw website.