

## **Garrett Youth Soccer's Skill Structure for 2nd - 3rd Grade**

At Garrett Youth Soccer, 2nd - 3rd grade is our second youngest practicing group. At this age, like the previous groups, constant stimulation and repetitive touches on the ball are the most important aspects for improvement. Players that fall into this age range should be continuing their development of their dribbling and how to kick the ball while stationary and moving. However, other important aspects of soccer such as passing, shooting, shielding, and defense should be introduced.

### **Main Focus: Dribbling / Kicking / Passing / Shooting / Defending / Fun**

Comfort in these areas allow for a seamless transition into more advanced play and aspect of soccer.

### **For Dribbling Ball Control:**

Coaches and parents should continue to emphasize the use of all surfaces of the feet to control the ball including the inside, outside, and sole of the foot.

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 encouraged to use a skill move while dribbling to either beat a player or to change direction quickly.

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.

Players should be shown how to "shield" the ball properly, to protect the ball and themselves.

### **For Kicking / Passing / Shooting:**

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.

Players should be instructed on how to shoot with the inside of their foot and their laces.

### **For Defending:**

Players should be encouraged to apply pressure on a ball by running towards an opponent and attempting to take the ball away through means of no contact.

**Other Concepts for this Age Group:**

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.

Players should be encouraged to practice juggling with their feet in their own time.

**Fun:**

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

If your player or team struggles with some of these concepts, we encourage you to check out our skill structure on the Resource tab of our website aimed at the Kindergarten - 1st Grade for some basic dribbling and kicking drills. More information can also be found at the "Additional Resources" link on the Resource tab of our website.

The following pages 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.

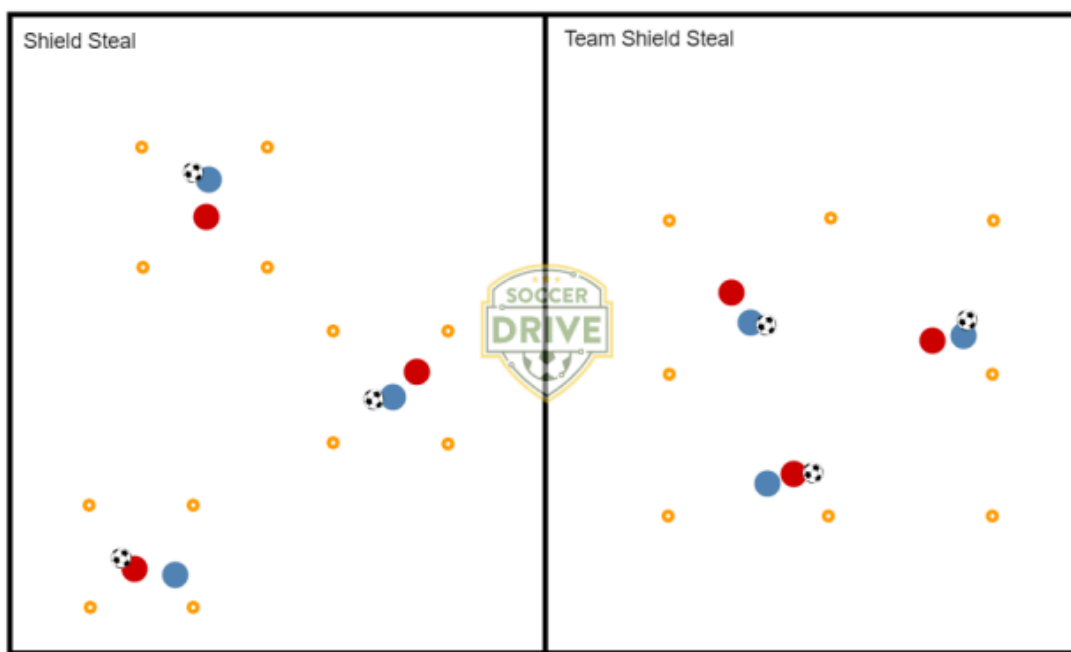
Dribbling and Ball Control:

[“Shield Steal”](#) - Video

[“Team Shield Steal”](#) - Video

## Shield Steal and Team Shield Steal

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### Description

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Shielding the ball is one of the most important ways to retain possession of the ball in soccer. Players are expected to know how to protect the ball properly. Shield Steal and Team Shield Steal are two games that encourage shielding, with Team Shield Steal adding a cooperative aspect to the game.

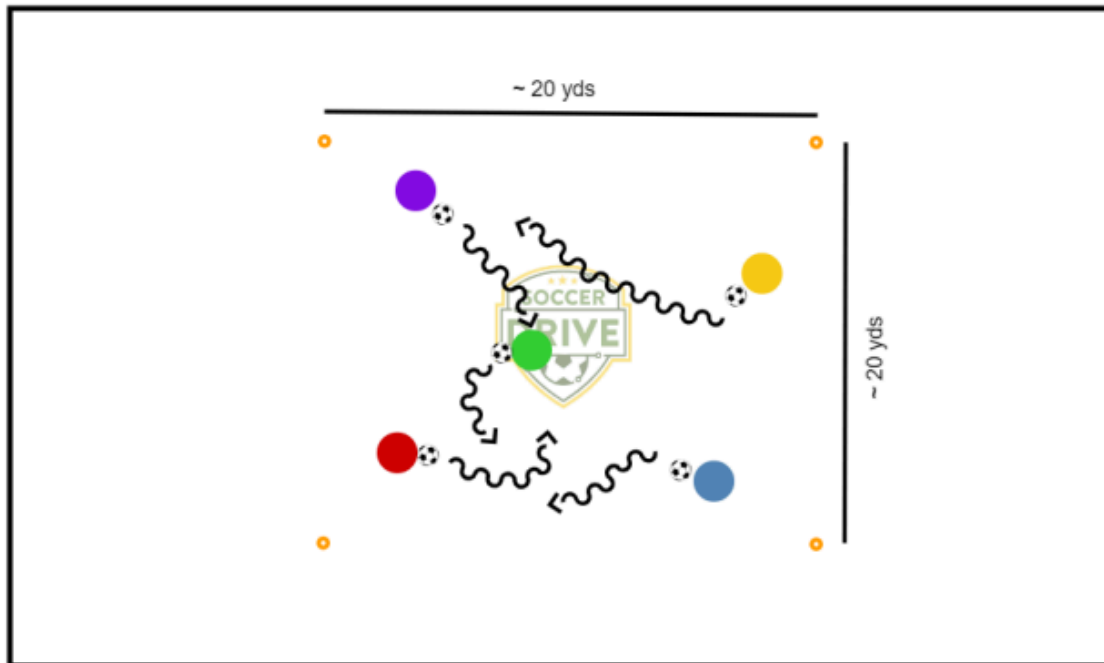
To play Shield Steal, 3 boxes of cones (or half of your total number of players) should be set up. Players should be split into pairs and each pair will need one ball. With one player starting with the ball, players should attempt to move around the square while shielding off the other player from the ball. It's important that proper shielding technique is taught prior to playing this game. If the other player steals the ball, they should attempt to protect the ball. Every 60 seconds, players should switch who has possession of the ball to ensure everyone gets a chance.

In Team Shield Steal, game is played in one larger box and players are free to move in the entire box. Players are not restricted to 60 second intervals or only 1v1s. Multiple players can attempt to take the ball from one player.

["Duck Tails"](#) - Video

## Duck Tails

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## Description

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Dribbling is one of the core fundamental skills in soccer. Players are encouraged to practice dribbling with a ball at various speeds and direction changes. Duck Tails allows players to dribble around and get used to a ball at their feet while running, without the pressure of losing the ball.

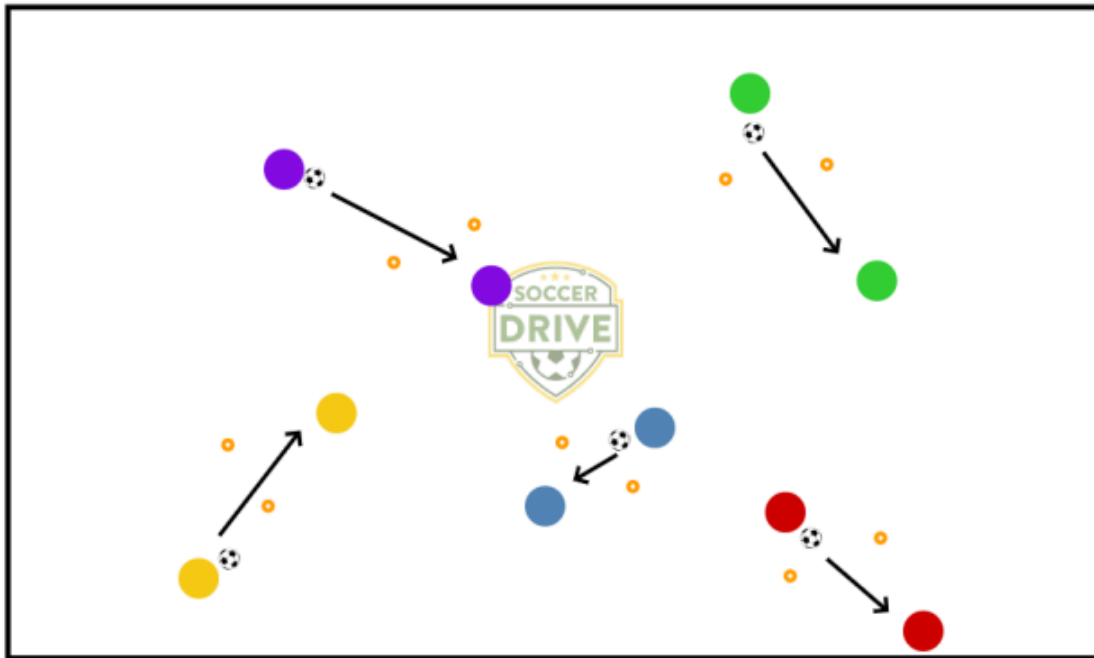
To play Duck Tails, a box that is roughly 20 yards by 20 yards should be set up. Each player should have a ball and should tuck a pinnie in the back of their shorts. The pinnie would serve as their "tail". Players will dribble their ball around the space attempting to steal other player's tails, while protecting their own. You can play multiple rounds that are a minute long each to encourage quick play. A competitive element could be introduced by keeping score of number of tails collected. If a player loses their tail, they are not out and should attempt to steal one back from another player. When they get another tail, they should tuck it back into their shorts and resume play.

Kicking / Passing / Shooting:

["Gate Passing"](#) - Video

## Gate Passing

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## Description

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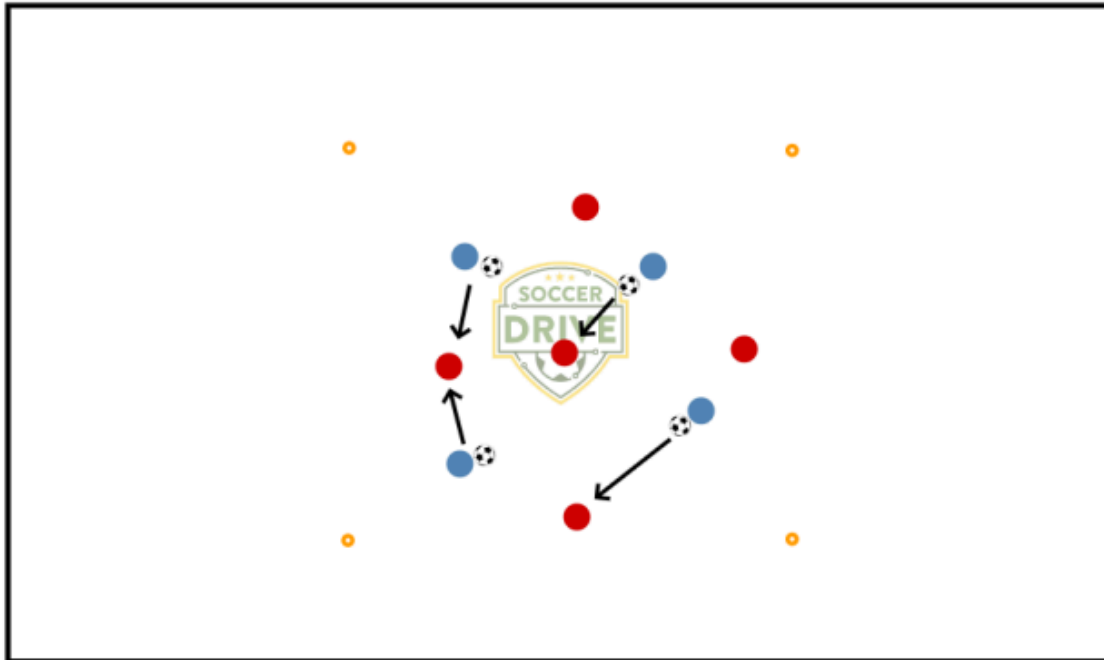
Passing is one of the best ways to retain possession of the ball in soccer. It can be used offensively and defensively. Gate Passing helps players focus on passing to another player, accurately.

To play, set up pairs cones around 5 feet apart. This will be your gate. There should be as many gates as there are pairs of players. Players should split into pairs and each pair of players will need a ball. Players should take turn passing to their partner through a set of gates. Every time a pass is completed through a gate, the passing player should start to move and look for another open gate. Players should try to go through as many gates as possible before the time is up.

["Mosquitoes"](#) - Video

# Mosquitoes

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## Description

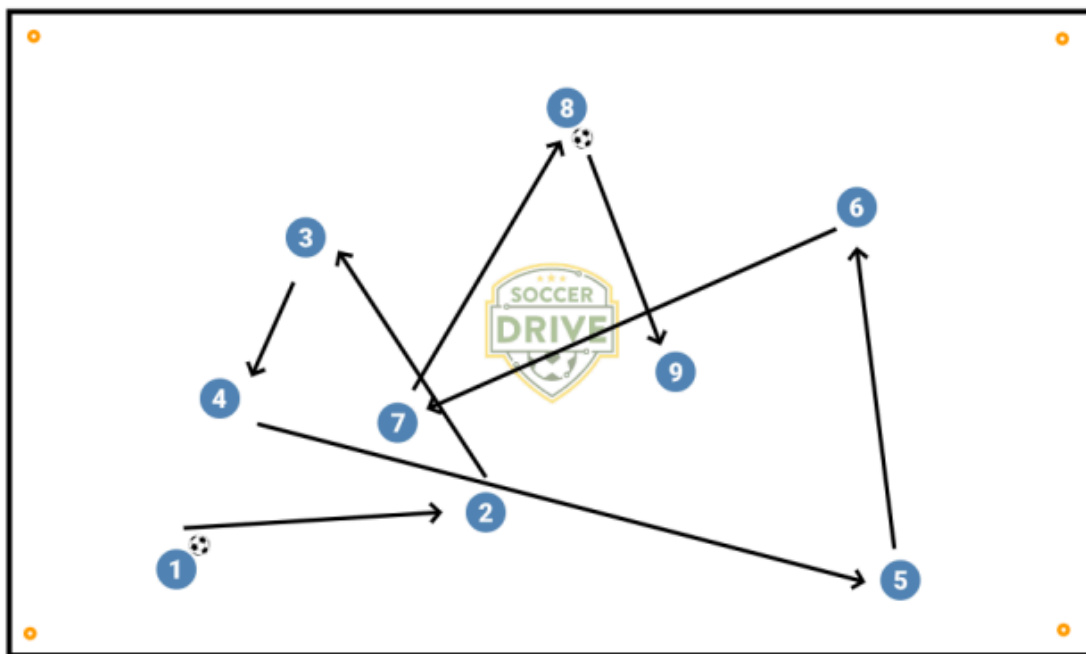
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Passing and shooting are two other fundamentals that are critical to winning in soccer. Mosquitoes is a game that encourages players to stay moving (to avoid being hit) and to focus on their kicking accuracy.

To play, a field that is roughly 20 feet by 20 feet should be set up with cones. Players are then separated into a team of mosquitoes and a team of campers. The campers should attempt to stay moving to avoid getting hit by the mosquitoes. The mosquitoes will dribble their ball around the area and attempt to kick the ball into the campers. To reduce the risk of injury, players are told to kick the ball no higher than the other players knees. When a mosquito hits a camper, the camper takes the ball and becomes a mosquito and vice versa.

## Numbers Passing

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### Description

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Passing, receiving, and communication are regarded as some of the most important skills. Numbers Passing is an easy game that encourages players to communicate to know where they are passing the ball next and as fast as possible.

To play, you need a roughly 20 yds by 30 yds area. Each player is given a number. You'll only need one ball to start. Players should be jogging and moving all over the area. Once you start, player 1 is given the ball. Player 1 then looks for player 2 and passes them the ball. This continues until the last player has received the ball. The better the players receive the ball and communicate, the faster all players get through the ball. A second ball can be added a few passes after the first to increase difficulty.

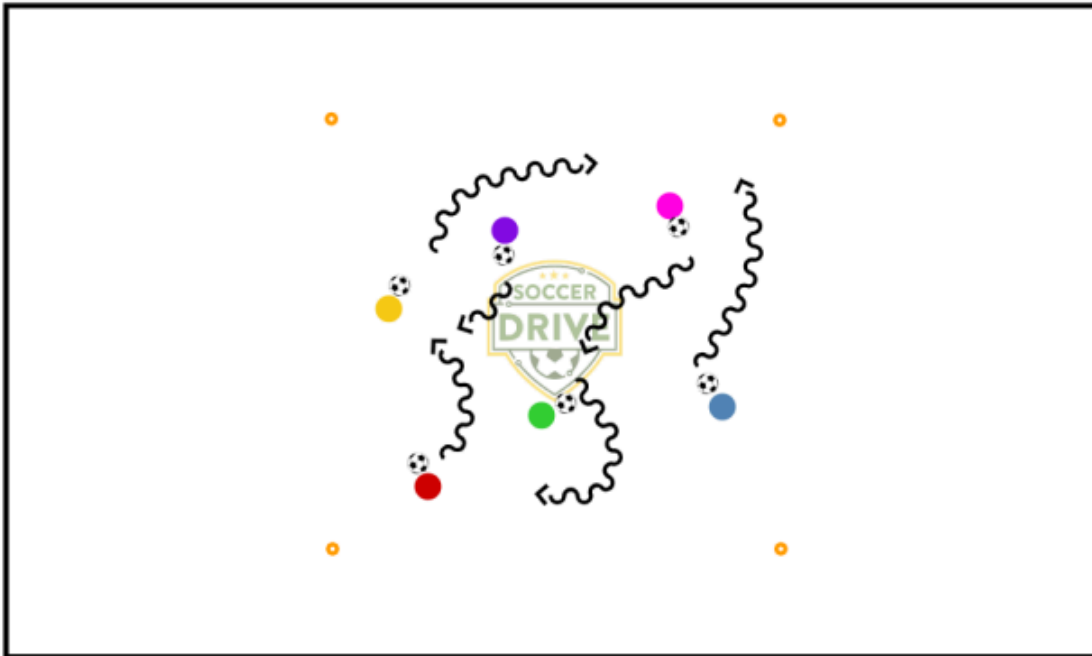
Defense:

Team Shield Steal (above)

["Knockout"](#) - Video

## Knockout

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## Description

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Knockout is a game that teaches a player to protect their ball while challenging others.

To play, you will need a space of around 20 yds by 20 yds. Each player should be given a ball. When play starts, players will attempt to kick other players balls outside of the area, while still protecting theirs. When a player's ball is kicked out of the area, they are to sit out for the remainder of the game. The more players in the area, the tougher it will be.

We highly recommend checking out You Got MOJO's YouTube channel for other fun drills. You can draw your own drills (or create physical versions of other drills like we did here with You Got MOJO) with the free [soccerdrive.com/draw](https://soccerdrive.com/draw) website.