

Garrett Youth Soccer's Skill Structure for 4th - 5th Grade

At Garrett Youth Soccer, 4th - 5th grade is our oldest practicing group. At this age, players are old enough to start understanding attacking and defending concepts. Coaches should instruct basic attacking ideas and basic defensive ideas.

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

For Attacking / Defending:

Coaches should introduce players to 1 vs 1 concepts, 2 vs 1 concepts, and 2 vs 2 concepts.

Players should be taught the roles of 1st and 2nd defenders as well as 1st and 2nd attackers. With these concepts in mind, players will learn how to effectively attack and defend against oncoming threats.

The concepts mentioned in the Kindergarten - 1st and 2nd - 3rd grade teams should not be ignored, but should not be the main focus of these practices. Those attributes should be addressed in a more "game-like" scenario at this age.

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 exposed to dribbling at speed in traffic and open space.

Players should be encouraged to dribble past the other players when trying to score or "penetrate" the defense.

Players should be exposed to receiving 1st touch control of ground balls and aerial balls using the inside and outside of the foot, the top of the foot or laces, chest, thighs, and heads.

Cautioned utilization of the head is encouraged as it could result in serious injury. Emphasis of using the forehead over the top or back of the head should be given. At this age, prolonged usage of the head to control the ball should be discouraged.

For Kicking / Shooting / Passing:

Players should work on short range passing with the insides and outsides of their feet with a partner or a set of cones to ensure accuracy.

Players should be shown how to perform long range passing with driven aerial balls and chips.

Players should be encouraged to move off of the ball, either after passing to another player or opening up into space to receive a ball.

Players should be encouraged to shoot with the inside and laces of both feet.

Other Concepts at this Age Group:

Coaches should instruct players on various defending techniques such as how to stand, where to stand, and how to apply pressure to the ball / other players.

Juggling with other parts of the body should be encouraged in conjunction with the use of their feet.

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 and 2nd - 3rd Grades 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.

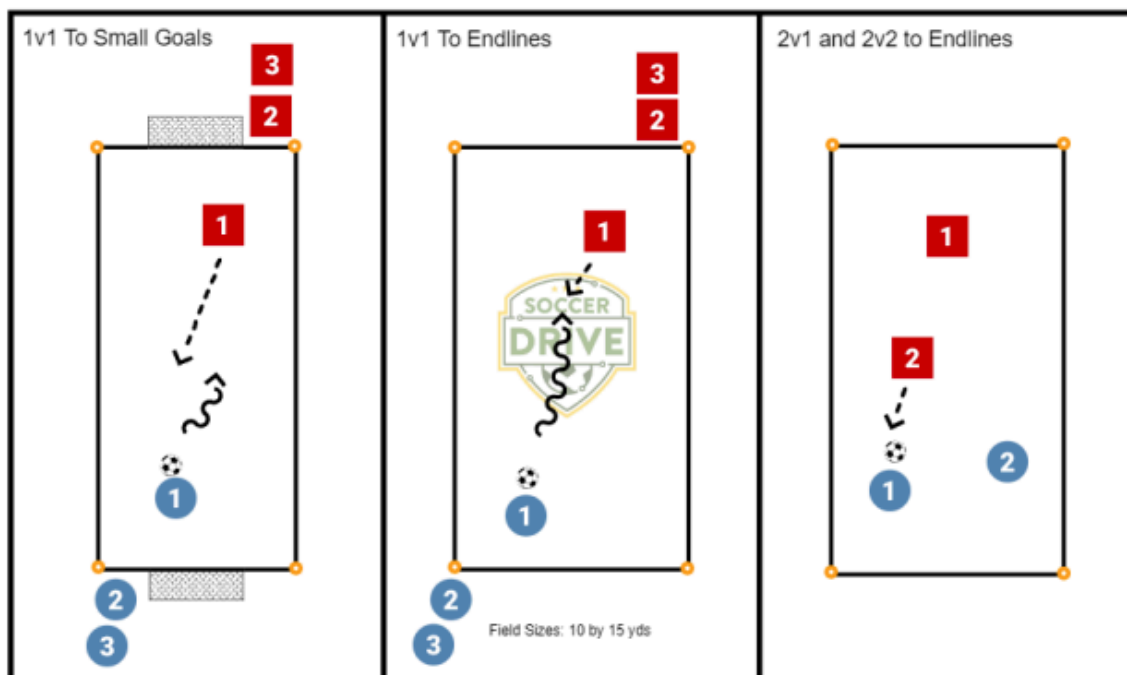
Attacking / Defending

["1v1 To Small Goals"](#) - Video

["1v1 To Endlines"](#) - Video

["2v2 To Endlines"](#) - Video

1v1, 2v1, and 2v2 to Small Goals/End Lines



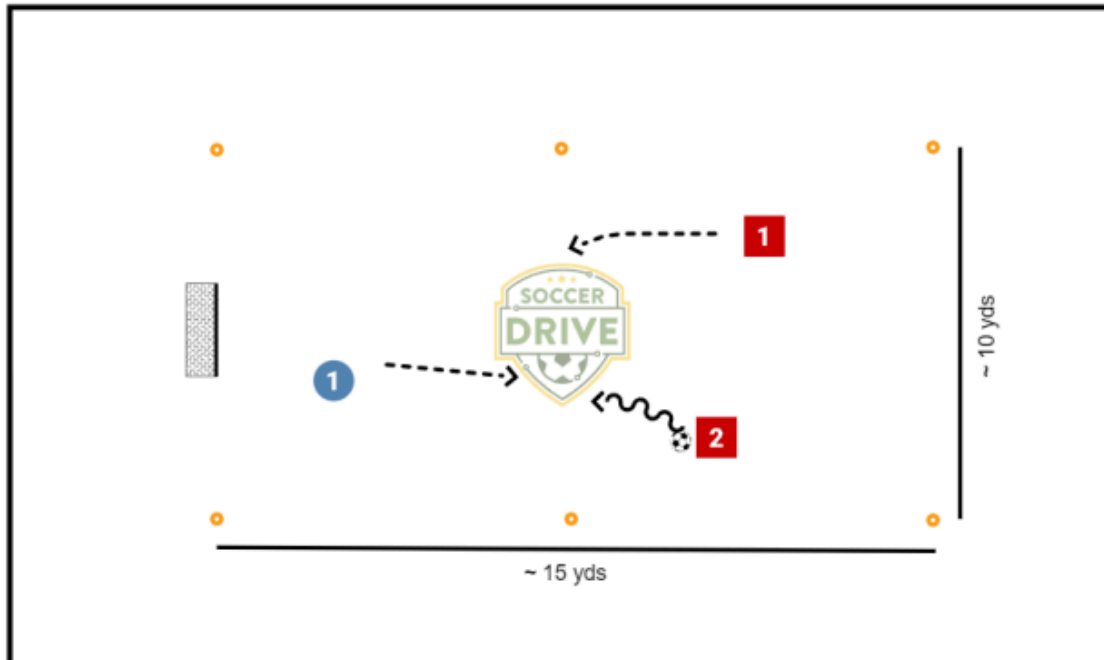
Description

Lots of individual parts of soccer will come down to a 1v1, 2v1, or 2v2 scenario. Players should be taught what to do in these events. We can change the type of drill focus by the addition of small goals or the use of end lines. Small goals encourage shooting, while end lines encourage dribbling to beat the opponent.

In order to run these drills, players should be split into two teams. A field that is roughly 10 yds by 15 yds should be created. If using the small goals method, goals should be placed at each of the narrow ends. Players will play against each other until the ball is out of play. New players should come on any time a goal is scored, the endline is dribbled through, or a ball goes out of bounds. Be sure to vary the drill focus and keep teams as even as possible.

["2v1 to Goal"](#) - Video

2v1 to Goal



Description

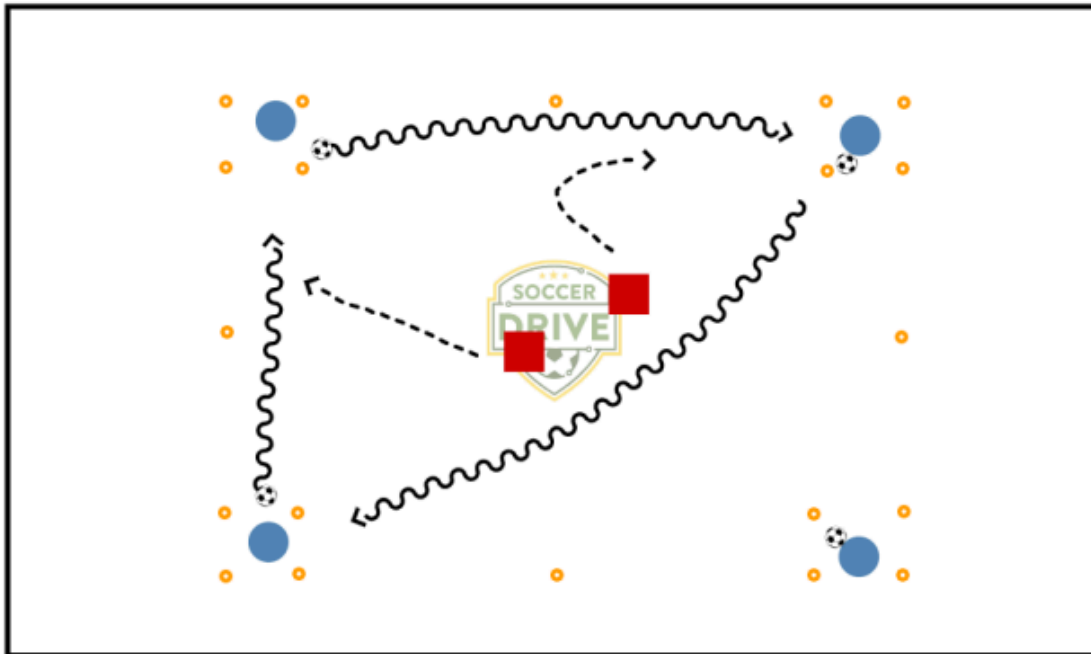
2v1 to Goal is a drill commonly used to show players how to attack with a numbers advantage.

To play, a roughly 10 yds by 15 yds box should be set up. Players should be split into two teams. The attacking end players will line up on the side without the goal but start with the ball. The two players should use a combination of off of the ball movement and passing to beat the solo defender. If they can beat the defender and score into the goal, they win. If the defender can steal the ball and dribble past the endline that the attackers start at, they win. Attacker should be taught to act patiently and force the defender to make mistakes, while the defenders should be instructed to be patient and capitalize on the mistakes of the offense.

Dribbling / Ball Control:

["Island Hopping"](#) - Video

Island Hopping

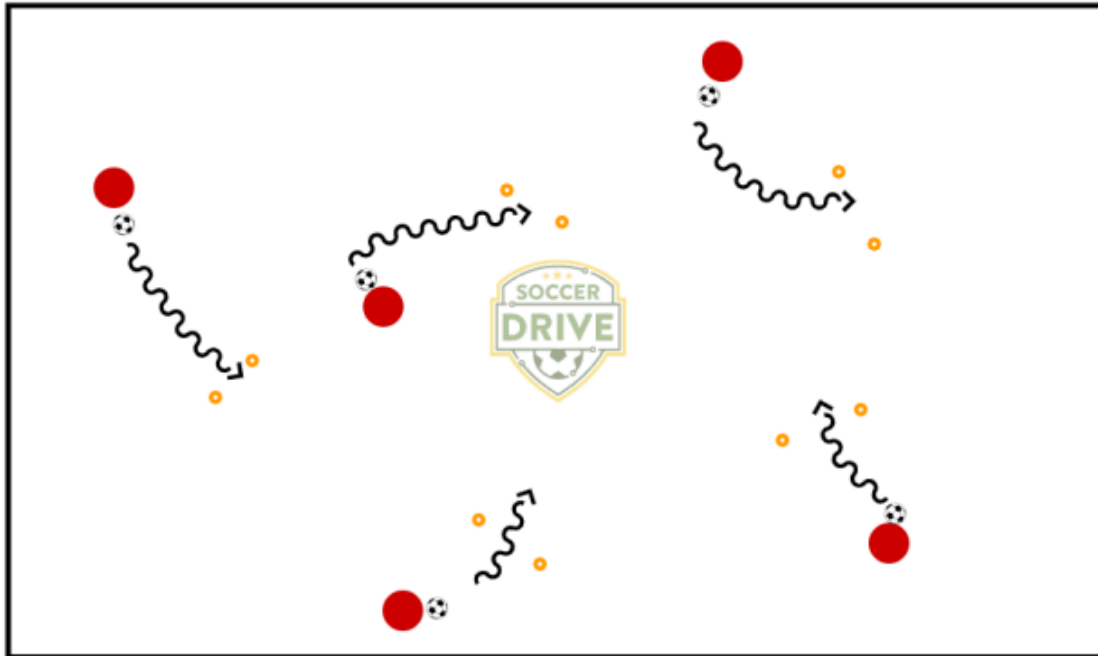


Description

Dribbling into space is an aspect of soccer that can help your team control the field. In Island Hopping, players will attempt to move from island to island without being caught by the pirates, encouraging decision making and getting used to dribbling the ball into free space at a faster pace.

To play, start with a larger area of around 20 yds by 20 yds. Inside of the main area, create four smaller areas in the corners. These smaller areas will serve as the islands. Pick two players to serve as "pirates" first. These players will attempt to catch and steal the ball from the players running from island to island. When a player loses their ball, they become a pirate also. Continue play until everyone is a pirate. Restart play with two new pirates. Each player running will need a ball. Encourage players to time their runs importantly and to get to the open space as quickly as possible. Diagonal runs through the box are allowed.

Gates Dribbling



Description

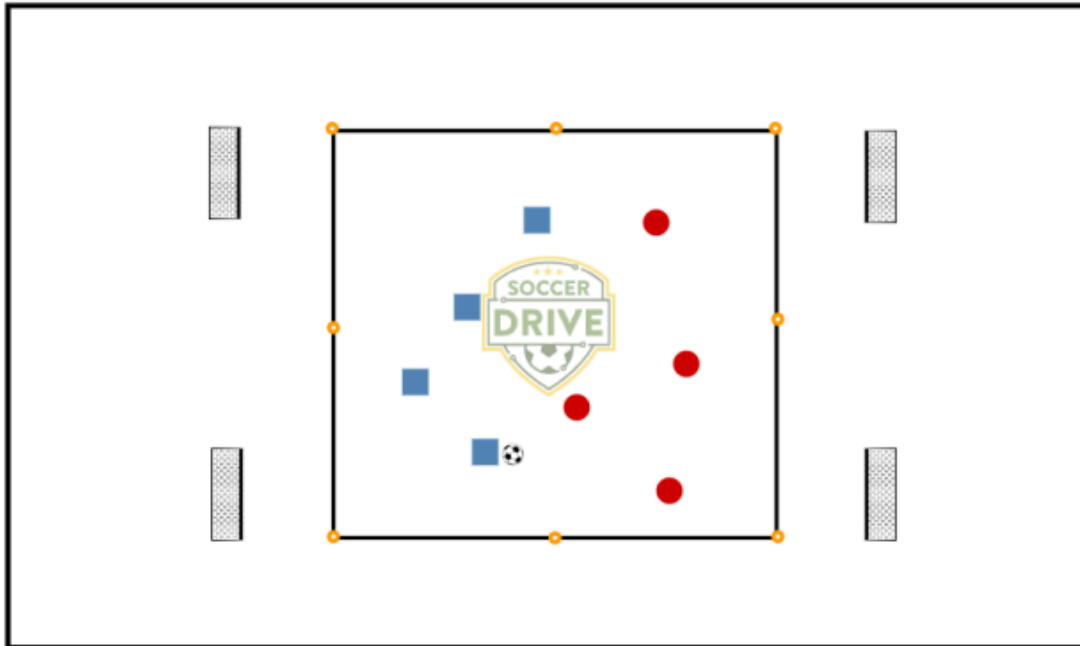
Dribbling in speed and under pressure is a common aspect of soccer. Gates dribbling teaches players to keep the ball close at a quicker pace to navigate through multiple gates. Players are forced to keep their head up to avoid running into other players and to find the gates.

To play, set up small gates comprised of 2 cones. The closer the cones are together, the more difficult it will be to get through. Players should attempt to dribble through as many gates as possible in a certain amount of time, decided by the coach. Encourage players to use both feet by having rounds that are limited to usage of a single foot to make contact with the ball.

For Kicking / Shooting / Passing:

["Hawaii"](#) - Video

Hawaii



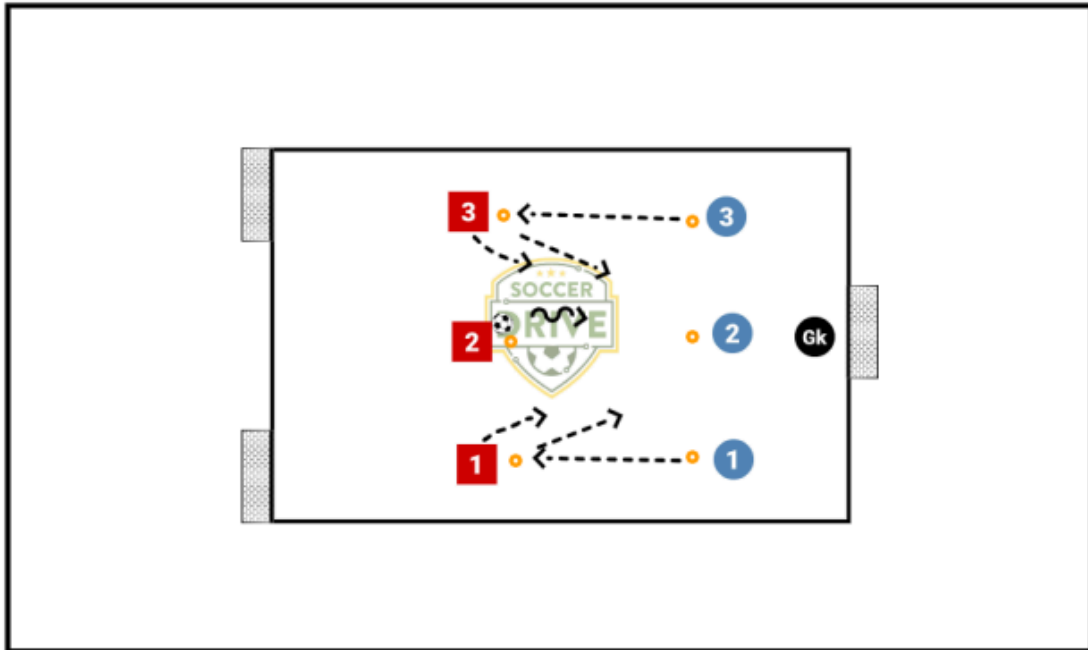
Description

Effective ball movement and shooting can be the difference between winning and losing games. Hawaii is a game that encourages both. Players are put in an area where they are forced to creatively move the ball around the space to create openings to shoot on goal.

To play, start with an area that's roughly 25 yds by 25 yds. Players should be split into two teams with one team starting with the ball. Small goals should be placed outside of the original area made. The further away from the box the goals are, the more difficult it will be to score. The team that scores the most points in 5 minutes will win that round.

["3 v 1"](#) - Video (from 0:00 to 1:17)

3 v 1

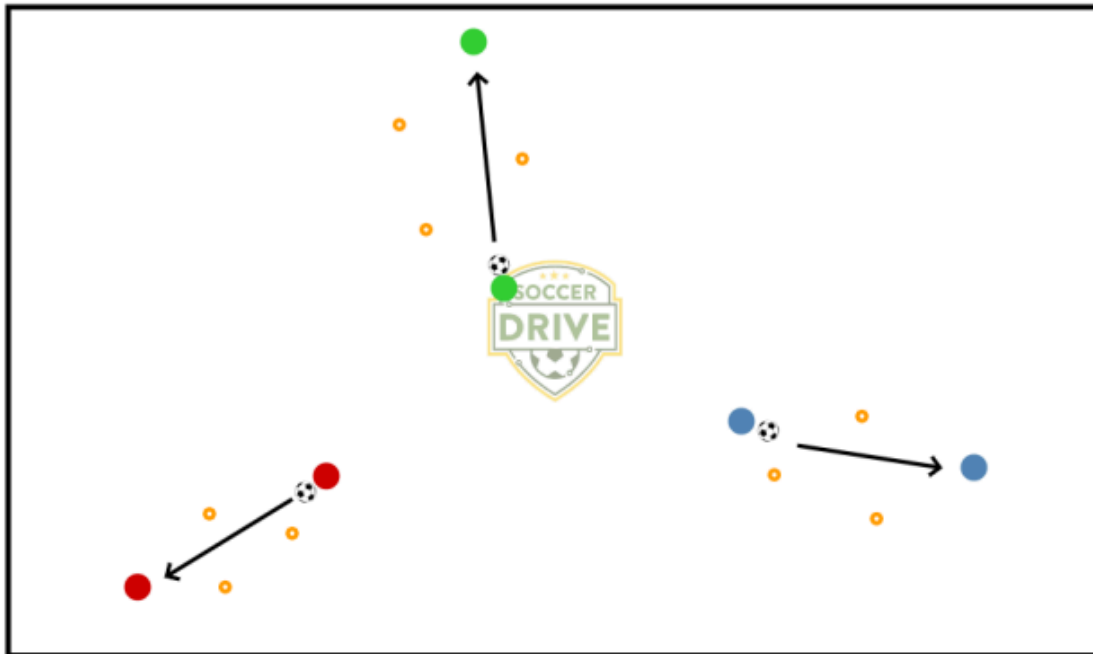


Description

Knowing how to quickly play with a numbers advantage can help your team score more goals. 3 v 1 encourages the attacking team to score quickly. Otherwise, the defending team gets 2 players back and there's no longer an advantage. If the defenders can steal the ball, they attempt to score on two smaller goals.

To play, set up a larger area of around 30 yds by 40 yds. 2 smaller goals should be placed at one end and the other end should have 1 larger goal with a goalkeeper. Teams should be split into two teams, offense and defense. When play starts, defenders 1 and 3 (blue dots above) run to the cone directly in front of them and have to catch back up to the play. The offense (red squares above) attempts to score while only defender 2 is defending. They will not have the numbers advantage long, so quick play is encouraged. If they cannot score in time, defenders 1 and 3 can help defender 2 recover the ball and kick it into one of the two smaller goals to score.

Triangle Goal Game



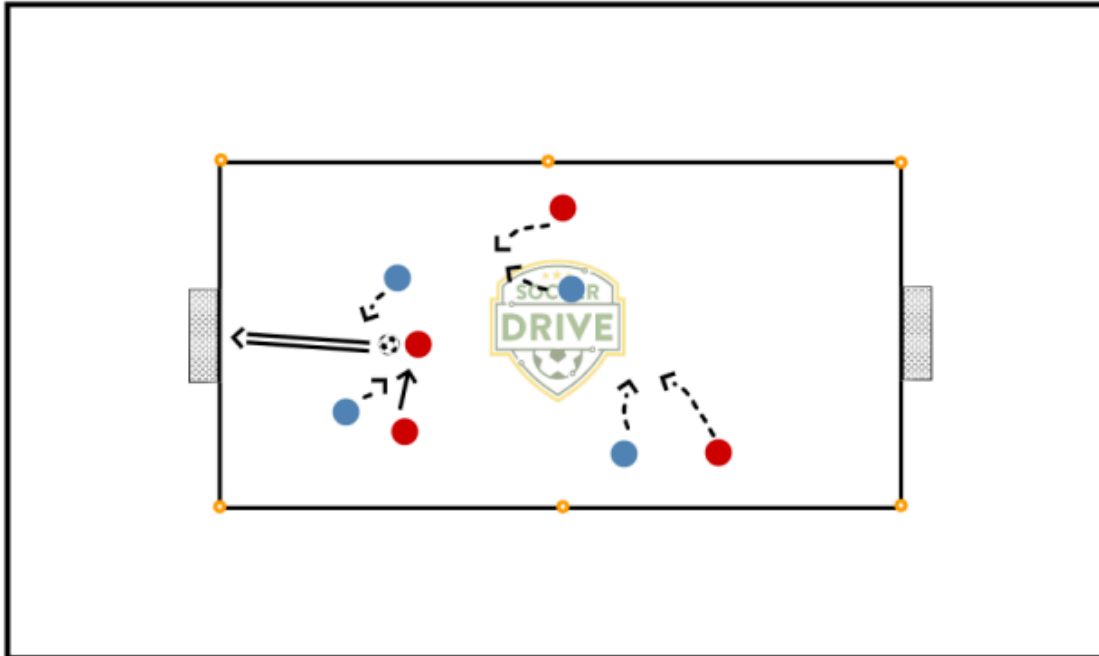
Description

Passing and receiving are two critical skills for any soccer player. Triangle Goal Game requires that players make clean passes into an area, while also being able to easily receive the ball.

To play, set up small triangles randomly throughout an area. There should be at least as many triangles as there are pairs of players. Split players into pairs and give each pair a ball. Players will attempt to make a pass through the triangle that the other player can receive and retain possession. Players will attempt to "score" on as many different triangles as they can in a predetermined amount of time.

["Barcelona"](#) - Video

Barcelona



Description

Possession is the name of the game when it comes to winning in soccer. The other team cannot score if your team possesses the ball. In Barcelona, players are encouraged to pass in an area and retain possession while still trying to score on the other teams goal. However, the more consecutive passes completed will result in a higher amount of points when a goal is scored. Because of this, the defending team is forced to go out and try to steal the ball. Decision making is challenged too as players must decide if they can hit an easy goal for a point or to possess the ball.

To play, set up a larger area of around 30 yds by 40 yds and place a goal at each narrow end. Split the teams into two even teams. A ball is randomly played into the area and play begins. Teams are free to score when they want on the opposing goal, but encourage them to string some passes together and open up the field of play. Perform throw-ins any time the ball goes out of play.

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 website.