



Dribbling Session (penetration)

By Laura Ray, Mass Youth Soccer Development Coach

Objectives: To improve the technique of dribbling, help with confidence to take players on and allowing players to recognize when to take players on versus using other options (passing, shooting, shielding).

1) Technical Box (Warm-up - 15-20 minutes including dynamic stretching):

Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session; players carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. *Version 3:* Make the game a knockout game in which players try to knock each other's balls out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own. Note: You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times. You do not want players sitting out.

Coaching Points:

- Keep ball within 1 giant step and maintain balance at all times, use arms to help maintain balance
- Try to keep your head up (once comfortable with ball at feet)
- Keep both knees bent and lean over the ball, do not stand upright with ball
- Slow down to change direction
- After making a move, dribbling into an open space or changing direction, you need a burst of speed
- Stress movement of body and burst of speed when doing moves
- Use outside of foot or laces when dribbling for speed
- Use all parts of your feet
- Try new things and be creative

2) 1v1 to lines (15 minutes):

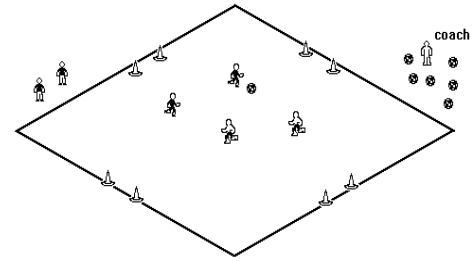
In a 15x10 yard grid, two players play 1v1 and try to score by beating the defender and dribbling over the line opposite them. They play toward the ten-yard lines and use their favorite feints. When the ball goes out of bounds it is dribbled in. Switch partners between grids every 2-3 minutes. Keep score.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- When taking on the defender the attacker will have bent knees, the ball close to his or her dribbling foot and be balanced
- He or she will execute a feint or combination of feints to unbalance the defender and dribble behind him or her
- Players should look to attack the defenders front foot to off balance the defender
- Players who are dribbling past an opponent should dribble past them with the foot furthest from the defender

3) **2v2 to Four Cross Goals (15-20 minutes):**

Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three goals; you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 10yd X 10yd. Have one team of 2 on deck; they come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately.

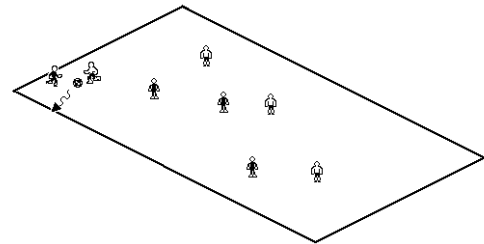


Coaching Points:

- Help players to recognize where the open space is and when to attack it on the dribble
- Assist players in recognizing when to dribble at speed (there is open space ahead), and when to slow down (they need to make decisions, combine with 2nd attacker, or are getting closer to opponents)
- The first attacker (player with the ball) needs to make a decision on whether to combine with the second attacker or attack the space themselves
- This decision is based on where the first defender is in relation to the field, the goal, the first attacker, and the second attacker

4) **4v4 to lines (15-20 minutes):**

In a 25x30 yard grid, two teams play to the opposite 30 yard lines. They score by dribbling the ball over end-line in control. When the ball goes out of bounds it can be passed or dribbled in to play.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in #1, #2 and #3
- Stress attacking the open space on the dribble and recognition of one versus one opportunities.

5) **6v6 scrimmage (25-30 minutes):**

Depending upon numbers, space will change and numbers will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in #3
- Highlight the technique of dribbling
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (recognizing opportunities to take players on, how they attack –get in and behind for a shot / attack endline and get cross off, etc.).

6) **Cool-down (5-10 minutes):**

Groups of 5 heading challenge. One player in the middle, four players circle around them. Player in the middle tosses ball to player on the outside who heads in back to player in the middle. Player in the middle then heads to next player on the outside, who then heads it back to player in the middle and so on. Give player in the middle multiple chances to get the ball all the way around the circle, and then switch up players to ensure everyone gets a chance to be the middle player.