

# SOCCER PRACTICE GAMES

## "Driving School" (U-10 & younger)

- Comment: This is a great game & teaches many basic skills. Easy set-up & everyone has a ball.
- Teaches: Control dribbling, using bottom of foot to stop, pullbacks, using outside of right foot & left foot.
- Set-up: Use disk cones to outline a 20-yard x 20-yard "field". (Smaller or larger, depending on age & numbers of players, but not too small or they will collide. Better for this game to be on the larger size at first).
- The Game:
- "This is Driving School & I'm your Instructor. I'm going to teach you how to drive but you must listen carefully & do exactly what I say."
  - Each player has a ball & must stay inside the cones.
  - Coach uses a ball to demonstrate what each of the instructions means:
    - a. **"Go"** - Start dribbling ("Keep the ball near your feet & look up while you dribble so you don't run into someone").
    - b. **"Stop"** - Put foot on top of ball to stop it
    - c. **"Slow"** - Dribble slow
    - d. **"Speed Up"** - Dribble faster but keep looking up & don't "wreck".
    - e. **"Turn right"** - Use the outside of the right foot to push the ball to the right & then dribble in that direction. (This teaches them to stop & turn the ball using the outside of the foot). Be sure they know which is the right foot.
    - f. **"Turn left"** - Use the outside of the left foot to push the ball to the left & then dribble in that direction. (If U-6 get confused about which is right & left, it's okay. Don't stop the game).
    - g. **"Pull back & go the other way"** - Use the bottom of foot to pull the ball back (i.e., flick it backward) & then turn around & go the other way.
    - h. For U-10 & up, include "Steparound" when the ball is stopped or going slow. (See "Steparound" game for how to do it).
  - Tell them to be careful & not have a "wreck". As they dribble they must look up to see where they are going. If they intentionally have a wreck or have too many wrecks, they

may have to go to Jail (i.e., make them go outside the cones & dribble a lap around the outside of the cone field to practice dribbling; tell them to look up while they dribble this lap & go slow & keep the ball close to their feet).

Time:

- Do this for 2 minutes & then evaluate & give any driving "tips" needed. Then continue the class for 2 or 3 more minutes & then stop, give "tips" & encouragement (tell them they are really improving & they can all become great drivers), & then another round of 2 - 5 minutes.

At The End:

- Tell everyone they did great & if they keep coming to class they will become a good driver.

Comments: Whether children continue to play soccer will have a lot to do with whether it is fun at early ages. Soccer Help Practice Games are designed to be fun, to teach important skills and concepts, and to keep players active. We don't use "knock-out" or elimination games which leave kids standing on the sideline and we don't use games such as "Crab Soccer" which are fun but have many kids crawling on the ground instead of learning to play soccer. There are thousands of drills on the Internet, but most are not well thought out, efficient, effective or fun. Most drills and games do not provide enough touches on the ball or the activity level is too low (i.e., there is too much standing around) to meet Soccer Help standards. Soccer Help Practice Games are selected from hundreds we have tried and less than 5% of the games we evaluate are selected for Soccer Help Premium. We believe in positive motivation and don't believe in punishing a child who has tried their best but lost a Practice Game. Thus, we do not recommend punishing the losers or making the losers leave the game.

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