



U-8 Session 1

Objective: To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

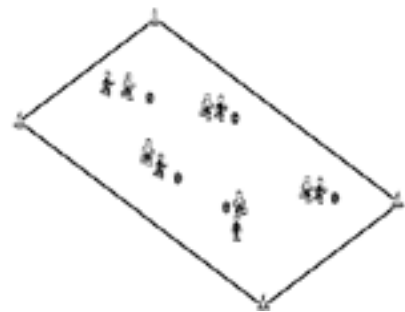
1) Tag---Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game. *Version 2:* Players must tag other players on their knees. (10 minutes)

2) Free Dribble---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction (“spin in” with inside of foot and “spin out” with outside of foot), and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids 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. (10 minutes)

3) Knock Out---In same space as previous activity, have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player’s balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 sole of the foot touches or juggling 5 times). (10 minutes)



4) Shield-Steal---Two players (partners) with one ball. One player starts with the ball and, on the coach’s command, her partner tries to steal the ball from her. Play 30-45 second matches. Whoever has the ball at the end of the time allotment, receives a point. Play many matches. If ball goes out of bounds, one of the players must get it back into play quickly. ***Coaching points:*** Show shielding technique with body sideways on to opponent, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (8 minutes)



6) 4v4 Game---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

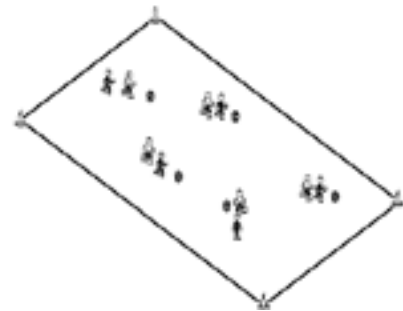


U-8 Session 2

Objective: To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

1) Shadow Dribble---One player with a ball and another player behind them with a ball as well. The player in front can go anywhere in the 20x20 yard box and the player behind must try to keep as close to them as possible and follow where they are going and what they are doing. The leader determines where they are going and the player who is the shadow tries to keep up with them. Then reverse the roles. Players can use both feet to start, then can choose to use one foot, then the other. *Version 2:* Now the leader adds in moves while they are dribbling and the shadow player must do the same. (10 minutes)

2) Snake---In an appropriate space, have all players dribble their soccer balls, except for 2-3 players (the snake). The snake players hold hands or lock arms and work together to tag the other players. The players dribbling the balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands or lock arms with the snake. The snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must work together and stay connected...they cannot break into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss. (8 minutes)

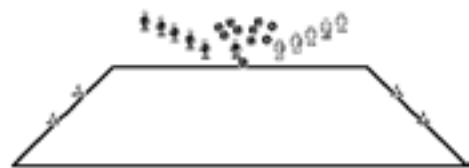


3) Gates---Set up many pairs of cones (with roughly 2 yards in between pairs) all around the playing area. These pairs serve as gates or small mini-goals. Players each have a ball and must dribble through the gate in order to score. Players must count how many goals they score; when playing a second time, ask them if they can beat their score by one goal. Coaches can vary this by asking players to dribble with left foot or right foot. If players end up dribbling back and forth through only one goal, introduce a rule to protect against this. (8 minutes)



4) Gates with Bandits---Same game as above, but add 2 or more bandits (without soccer balls) who try to steal soccer balls from the other players. If bandits are successful and steal soccer balls, they are no longer bandits. Players who lose their soccer balls become bandits! Play multiple 1-2 minute games. Play is continuous for the 1-2 minute period. Players who have possession of a soccer ball at the end of time are awarded a point. (10 minutes)

5) Get Outta' There with Numbers--- Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. The players on each team are assigned numbers (1-4 or 1-5, depending on the total number of players) The coach then calls out a number, kicks a ball onto the field and the player assigned that number on each team enters the field to play 1v1. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there", calls out a new number and plays the next ball into the field immediately for the next 1v1 dual. *Version 2:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 3:* Coach can set up particular match-ups and call out more than one number at a time for 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3 competition. (10 minutes)



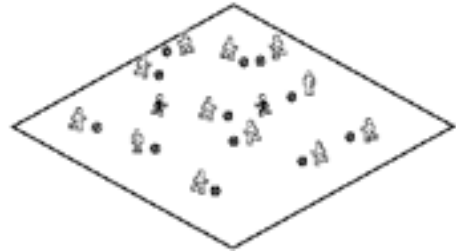
6) 4v4 Game---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)



U-8 Session 3

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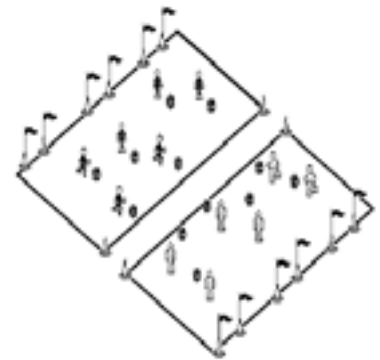
1) Ball Tag---Similar to other tag games except players try to tag others with their soccer ball, by kicking it at another player's feet or ball. Have them keep count of how many times they kick their soccer ball and tag another person. **Options:** If the players tag the coach, they are awarded 10 or 20 points. If the players tag other selected players, they can be awarded 50 or 100 points etc. (8 minutes)



2) Team Ball Tag---Split into two teams. One team (*the Taggers*) is trying to tag the players on the other team by kicking their soccer ball at them below their knee or on their soccer ball. They keep track of how many times they tag the other team; after each game the coach can help them add up their numbers. Then the other team gets a chance to do the same thing. In each game, only one team is designated as the *Taggers*. The other team is trying to keep away and shield their soccer balls. **Version 2:** Can only have the teams tag the other team's soccer balls. (10 minutes)

3) Soccer Marbles---Players are in pairs, each with a ball. One player plays out their ball (using the inside of the foot) and the partner passes their own ball in an attempt to strike the ball their partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball. **Version 2:** Once players understand this game, make it fast paced by having the players take turn at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to their own ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1's ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1's ball right back. etc. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back. **Version 3:** Three players start the game in a triangle, ten giant steps apart. They take turns trying to hit another player's ball. Number one goes first and so on. They keep score, and the first to ten points wins. If they hit two balls with one shot, they get two points. (10 minutes)

3) Clean Your Backyard---Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at the other team's goals in an attempt to score through any one of the 3 small goals (below knee height). Players can only enter the buffer zone to retrieve a ball that has stopped inside. Otherwise they cannot enter the buffer zone or go into the other team's half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense, though no hands allowed. Options: Shots with laces are awarded 2 points. **Version 2:** Allow teams to defend with hands as well. **Version 3:** Take out the buffer zone and play a normal game except with 3 goals at each end. (10 minutes)



6) 4v4 Game---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)



U-8 Session 4

Objective: To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

1) Freeze Tag---Break up the group into two teams. Everyone must dribble their soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they do tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. Another player on their team must kick his/her ball through the frozen player's legs to unfreeze the teammate. If all players are frozen, game ends and the frozen team becomes the **Taggers**. Otherwise, stop game after a few minutes and have teams reverse roles. *Version 2:* Coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players; players continue to unfreeze each other. (8 minutes)

2) Gates Passing---Using cones, set up many small goals (gates) approximately 2 yards wide all around the playing area. Players are now paired up with one ball and must successfully pass the ball through the gates to their teammate to earn a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Coach can manipulate the game by requiring the players to pass only with their left foot, right foot, or the outside of their foot. (10 minutes)



3) 4 vs. 1 keepaway---In a grid 15yds x 15yds, five players play 4 vs. 1 timed keepaway. Four attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. The four attackers are awarded a point each time they complete 3 consecutive passes without losing possession. If the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately attempts to dribble out of the grid for a point. The four attackers try to prevent this from occurring by trying to win possession of the ball back immediately. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed into the grid by one of the attackers. Play multiple 1 minute games, changing the defender each game. (10 minutes)

4) Capture the Balls---Set up three or four "home bases" (squares) with cones roughly 2-3 yards apart. Organize the players into 3-4 teams and have each team get together in their home base. Place all the balls in the center of the space between the home bases. On the coach's command the teams are free to gather as many soccer balls as they can into their home base. Players cannot use hands and there is no pushing each other or sitting/laying on the balls. Teams try to gather as many balls as possible into their home bases. Teams can steal balls from each others' home bases. Play multiple 2 minute games. When time is up, the Coach counts the number of soccer balls in each base to determine a winner. Coach allows each team 1 minute to make up a new team strategy before playing again. (10 minutes)



6) 4v4 Game---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)



U-8 Session 5

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1) Juggling---Everyone with a ball. Hold hands out with ball in between, drop ball directly down and kick back up to hands, etc. Players practice keeping the ball in the air with feet, thighs, and head. Players count how many times they touch the ball before it drops to the ground. *Version 2:* Controlled juggling...juggle on one thigh, then add other thigh, then add one foot, then add the other foot...thigh-thigh-foot-foot (10 minutes)

2) Free Dribble---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, kids 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. (10 minutes)

3) 1 vs. 1 to Endlines---In a space that is wider than long (15 x 20 yds) each player defends one endline and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball in control over the opposing player's endline. *Note: Coaches should make multiple 1v1 fields and have 1 or 2 players on deck at each field.* (10 minutes)

5) Get "Outta" There---Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. When the coach kicks a ball onto the field, the first player in each line runs out and tries to score on their opponent's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there" and plays a new ball into the field immediately for the next two players. *Version 2:* Coach can stop yelling "get outta there" and see if the 1st players in each line recognize that they should begin play when a new ball is kicked into the field. *Version 3:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 4:* If the Coach calls out the number "TWO" before he/she kicks a ball on the field, the first 2 players in each line enter the field and play as a team of 2 against each other. (10 minutes)



6) 4v4 Game---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)



U-8 Session 6

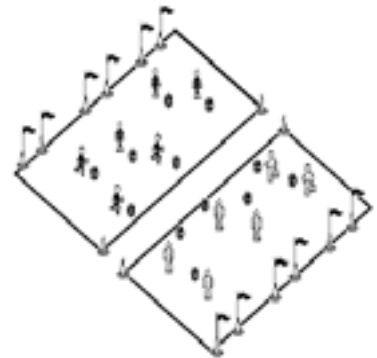
Objective: To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

1) Paint the Field---In pairs, players move around the grid and pass their ball back and forth in the area defined. At first have each pair in their own grid. You explain to them that their ball is actually a paintbrush and wherever it rolls on the ground, it paints that area. The task is to paint as much of the area as possible in the time allotted by passing (kicking) their soccer balls all over the grid. Progressively build this so that players go from moving slowly in their own grid to having multiple pairs in the same grid moving at a faster pace. *Version 2:* Have players use opposite foot. (10 minutes)

2) Doctor-Doctor---Break team into 2 groups. Send each team into their own hospital (at opposite corners of the grid). Select a doctor for each team. The doctor will be able to unfreeze (cure) their own players if they are frozen (injured) by the other team. Each team tries to freeze the other team by kicking their own soccer balls and hitting either the other team's soccer balls or someone on the other team below the knee. If a player gets frozen, they must stay where they are, hold their soccer ball above their head and yell out "Doctor-Doctor". The doctors do not have a ball and their role is to rush to the aid of their teammates to unfreeze them, by simply touching them, so they can continue playing. The Doctor is always safe (cannot be frozen) if standing in their hospital, but once they leave the hospital and enter the open grid, they can be frozen by the other team. When a Doctor is frozen, the game is over. (10 minutes)



3) Clean Your Backyard---Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at the other team's goals in an attempt to score through any one of the 3 small goals (below knee height). Players can only enter the buffer zone to retrieve a ball that has stopped inside. Otherwise they cannot enter the buffer zone or go into the other team's half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense, though no hands allowed. Options: Shots with laces are awarded 2 points. *Version 2:* Allow teams to defend with hands as well. *Version 3:* Take out the buffer zone and play a normal game except with 3 goals at each end. (10 minutes)



6) 4v4 Game---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)

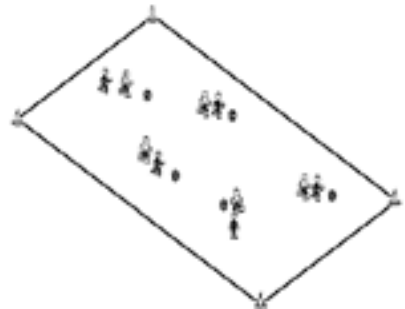


U-8 Session 7

Objective: To provide fun, active, age appropriate activities that foster comfort with the ball for each player. At this age we introduce activities that foster dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving. *(Sessions, including the 4v4 game, should be about 60-70 minutes in duration.)*

1) **Tag**---Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game. *Version 2:* Players must tag other players on their knees. (8 minutes)

2) **Shield-Steal**---Two players (partners) with one ball. One player starts with the ball and, on the coach's command, her partner tries to steal the ball from her. Play 30-45 second matches. Whoever has the ball at the end of the time allotment, receives a point. Play many matches. If ball goes out of bounds, one of the players must get it back into play quickly. **Coaching points:** Show shielding technique with body sideways on to opponent, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (8 minutes)



3) **2 vs. 2 to Endlines**---In a space that is wider than long (20 x 25 yds) each team defends one endline and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball, under control, over the opposing team's endline. *Note: Coaches should make multiple 2v2 fields and have 1 team on deck at each field.* (10 minutes)

4) **Team Gates**--- Using cones, set up many small goals (gates) approximately 2 yards wide all around the playing area. Players are split into two teams and each team has a ball and must pass the ball through the gates in order to score. Players must count how many goals their team scores in 45 seconds. After the two teams get comfortable moving and passing through the gates with their own soccer ball, play a competitive game with only one ball. (10 minutes)

5) **Get "Outta" There**---Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. When the coach kicks a ball onto the field, the first player in each line runs out and tries to score on their opponent's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there" and plays a new ball into the field immediately for the next two players. *Version 2:* Coach can stop yelling "get outta there" and see if the 1st players in each line recognize that they should begin play when a new ball is kicked into the field. *Version 3:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 4:* If the Coach calls out the number "TWO" before he/she kicks a ball on the field, the first 2 players in each line enter the field and play as a team of 2 against each other. (10 minutes)



6) **4v4 Game**---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)



U-8 Session 8

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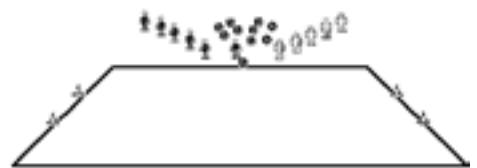
1) Soccer Marbles---Players are in pairs, each with a ball. One player plays out their ball (using the inside of the foot) and the partner passes their own ball in an attempt to strike the ball their partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball. *Version 2:* Once players understand this game, make it fast paced by having the players take turn at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to their own ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1's ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1's ball right back. etc. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back. *Version 3:* Three players start the game in a triangle, ten giant steps apart. They take turns trying to hit another player's ball. Number one goes first and so on. They keep score, and the first to ten points wins. If they hit two balls with one shot, they get two points. (10 minutes)

2) Gates Passing---Using cones, set up many small goals (gates) approximately 2 yards wide all around the playing area. Players are now paired up with one ball and must successfully pass the ball through the gates to their teammate to earn a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Coach can manipulate the game by requiring the players to pass only with their left foot, right foot, or the outside of their foot. (10 minutes)



3) Freeze Tag---Break up the group into two teams. Everyone must dribble their soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they do tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. Another player on their team must kick his/her ball through the frozen player's legs to unfreeze the teammate. If all players are frozen, game ends and the frozen team becomes the **Taggers**. Otherwise, stop game after a few minutes and have teams reverse roles. *Version 2:* Coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players; players continue to unfreeze each other. (10 minutes)

4) Get Outta' There with Numbers--- Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. The coach stands at the halfway line with all of the soccer balls. Half of the players are lined up on his left side and half of the players are lined up on his right side in different colored bibs. The players on each team are assigned numbers (1-4 or 1-5, depending on the total number of players) The coach then calls out a number, kicks a ball onto the field and the player assigned that number on each team enters the field to play 1v1. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta there", calls out a new number and plays the next ball into the field immediately for the next 1v1 dual. *Version 2:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 3:* Coach can set up particular match-ups and call out more than one number at a time for 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3 competition. (10 minutes)



6) 4v4 Game---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)



U-8 Session 9

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1) Paired Tag---Pair players up, each pair has 2 balls. One player starts and is given a 2 second lead to get away from his/her partner. The chaser ("it") dribbles after the first player and tries to tag him/her with his/her hand. If tagged, the roles reverse and the player who was previously "it" has two seconds to get away before their partner tries to tag them. Players must always dribble their soccer ball during this activity. (8 minutes)

2) Paint the Field---15 yds x 20 yds rectangular grid. In pairs, players move around the grid and pass their ball back and forth in the area defined. At first have each pair in their own grid. You explain to them that their ball is actually a paintbrush and wherever it rolls on the ground, it paints that area. The task is to paint as much of the area as possible in the time allotted by passing (kicking) their soccer balls all over the grid. Progressively build this so that players go from moving slowly in their own grid to having multiple pairs in the same grid moving at a faster pace. *Version 2:* Have players use opposite foot. (8 minutes)

3) Shield-Steal---Two players (partners) with one ball. One player starts with the ball and, on the coach's command, her partner tries to steal the ball from her. Play 30-45 second matches. Whoever has the ball at the end of the time allotment, receives a point. Play many matches. If ball goes out of bounds, one of the players must get it back into play quickly. **Coaching points:** Show shielding technique with body sideways on to opponent, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (8 minutes)



4) Clean Your Backyard---Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at the other team's goals in an attempt to score through any one of the 3 small goals (below knee height). Players can only enter the buffer zone to retrieve a ball that has stopped inside. Otherwise they cannot enter the buffer zone or go into the other team's half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense, though no hands allowed. Options: Shots with laces are awarded 2 points. *Version 2:* Allow teams to defend with hands as well. *Version 3:* Take out the buffer zone and play a normal game except with 3 goals at each end. (10 minutes)



6) 4v4 Game---Separate players into two teams and play a game of 3 against 3 or 4 against 4 without goalkeepers. Let the players play and give plenty of positive feedback to them as they compete. **REINFORCE TECHNIQUE!** (20 minutes)