

# Maple Leaf - Cavan Football Club

House League Coach Manual  
U4, U6, & U8



# Welcome & Thank You!

**MLCFC would like to thank you for volunteering to coach in our recreational program and we appreciate your dedication and commitment to making our program a huge success season after season. Without each and every one of our coaches, we would not be able to do what we do. It is a testament to you that our numbers continue to grow year after year!**

***Ask your players to bring a ball to each game!***



# General Information

- Please suggest that all your players join MLCFC on Facebook (those who have FB). The link is [www.facebook.com/MLCFC](http://www.facebook.com/MLCFC) and/or follow us on Twitter @MLCFC1. We will update the Facebook/Twitter pages and our website [www.mlcfc.com](http://www.mlcfc.com) in cases where the fields are closed, etc.
- Double check your equipment bag to ensure all uniforms, balls, etc. are present **before** handing them out to your team.
- Do not allow any players to join your team after the season has started, without first being approved by the MLCFC Executive. If they are not on your roster or do not tell you that they have cleared it with us please ask them to check with us. We will be at the park the first week.
- Hand out all player uniforms at least a ½ hour before the first game at the field you are scheduled on. This will help eliminate mass confusion by meeting on your scheduled field, as opposed to setting up somewhere else within the park.
- Photo packages and camp brochures are included in your equipment bag. Hand these out to all parents and make them aware of your scheduled photo times.
- Have a parent arrange a **snack schedule** for half time of your games and make other parents aware of their scheduled nights (Please note the Healthy Soccer Snack information posted on [www.mlcfc.com](http://www.mlcfc.com) > recreational > resources).
- You can refer to the resource section of the website to review any rules in the Simple Soccer booklet, as well as several soccer activities.
- Please try to arrive at the field well before your games start time and be ready to play at the designated start time. Some coaches organize mini team practices/activities on the side lines ½ hour before game time – it's your team – have fun!
- Hopefully you will never need it but if you do – there is **ice available for injuries at the snack bar**.
- The pizza party organization will be slightly different this year - pizza will be handed out to individual teams – details of your party date are on your schedule. Please hand in your equipment bag at the end of the year pizza party.

# Coaching Approach

- All players are to receive **equal playing time** throughout the season. This is probably the number one complaint we hear through the season. Please ensure that you do everything possible to make it as fair as possible for all players.
- No scores or statistics are to be kept. Make it about the fun of the game.
- Encourage **FUN, fair play, respect, and team work.**
- Recreational referees are often first year refs. They might not always make the right call but they are trying/learning. Please respect the referees and their calls and ask your parents to do the same.
- Coaches are allowed on the field in the U4 and U6 divisions.
- With the U4 division, in some instances, the parent can accompany the player on the field.
- Encourage all players to remain with their team when not on the field. Some coaches find it helpful to bring a blanket for the players to sit on while they wait for their turn.
- **Have fun and enjoy the experience!**

# Game Overview

## **I. U4 game structure**

- i. Two 20 min halves and one 15 min activity (during halftime)**
- ii. 5v5 with goalie**
- iii. No hands (except goalie)**
- iv. Kick off (begining of each half)... optional**
- v. Kick ins from the side (ball goes out the side line)**
- vi. Goal kicks (optional)**
- vii. Corner kicks (optional)**

**First Half**

**20 min**

**Halftime**

**Activity** (10-15 min)

**& Snack** (5-10 min)

## **2. U6 & U8 game structure**

- i. Two 20 min halves and one 15 min activity (during halftime)**
- ii. 7v7 with goalie**
- iii. No hands (exception of goalie in the box)**
- iv. Kick off (begining of each half & after a goal)**
- v. Through ins (ball goes out the side line)**
- vi. Goal kicks**
- vii. Corner kicks**

**Second Half**

**20 min**

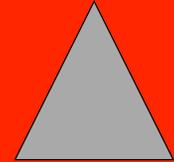
# List of Symbols

**X** Player group x

**Y** Player group y

**Z** Player group z

Coach/Parent/Pylon



Ball



Kick/pass 

Dribble 

Run 

# U4 Activities

- 1. Kick the ball under the bridge**
- 2. A) Hands in... Spread out! B) Kick with the laces.**
- 3. Kick the ball and dribble it back**
- 4. What time is it Mr./Mrs. Wolf?**
- 5. Red light/green light**
- 6. Monkey in the middle**
- 7. Shadow your friend and don't lose them**
- 8. "Get'em"... the coaches**
- 9. Mirror the coach... Forward, backwards, to the side!**
- 10. Explode**

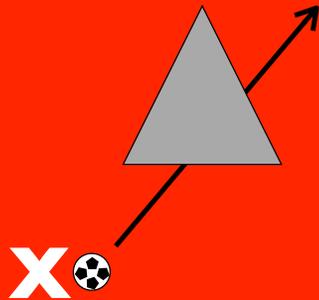
# U4 - Activity I

## Kick the ball under the bridge

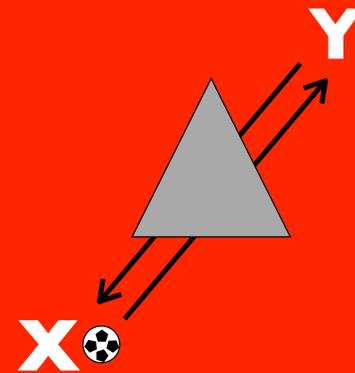
### **Description:**

- The player sends the ball between legs of a parent
- Short distance (1-2 m) pass/kick with the inside of the foot
- The coach walks around giving feedback

**A)**



**B)**



### **Objective:**

- Increase comfort with coaches and other players
- Kicking the ball with the inside of the foot or laces

### **Variations:**

- Follow the ball under the legs
- Pass between two players

# U4 - Activity 2

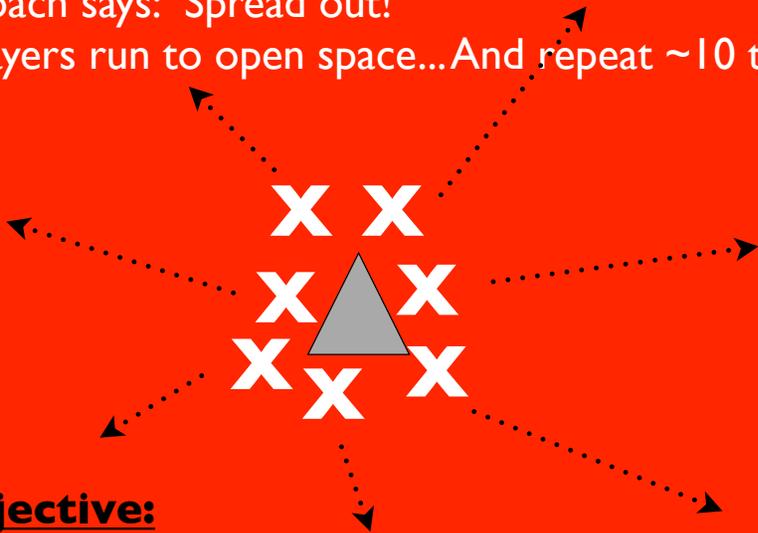
## Hands in... Spread out!

### Kick with laces

**A)**

**Description:**

- Players put their hand in with the coach's hand
- Coach says: "Spread out!"
- Players run to open space... And repeat ~10 times



**Objective:**

- Introduces the concept of space
- Becomes an ideal saying to start game play (e.g., kick off or corners)

**Variations:**

- Can be done with a ball and dribbling

**B)**

**Description:**

- Place a sticker on the laces or a piece of grass in their laces
- Players must make the sticker (grass) contact the ball
- Make sure that the planted foot is next to the ball before kicking
- Repeat 10-15 times



**Objective:**

- Introduces the proper kick with locked ankle
- NO toes!

**Variations:**

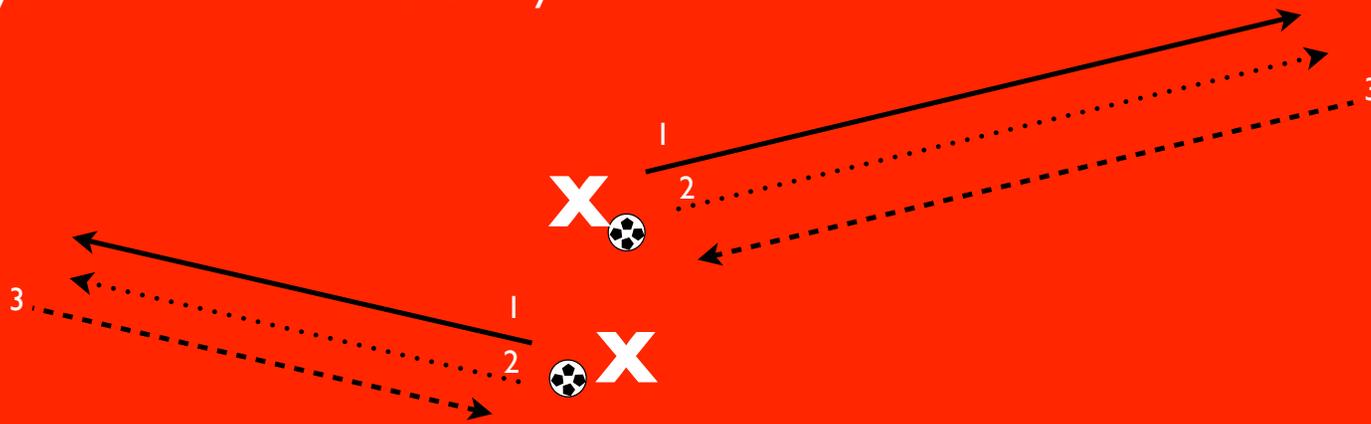
- Change the approach from static to walking, and/or running
- Change strength of kick

# U4 - Activity 3

## Kick the ball and dribble it back

### **Description:**

1. Players need to kick the ball as far as they can
  2. Run to it quickly
  3. Dribble it back (keeping it at their feet just in front of them)
- Repeat 10-15 times
  - All players can do this simultaneously



### **Objective:**

- Developing a hard kick (laces)
- Encourage going to the ball hard (fast)
- Develop dribbling skills

### **Variations:**

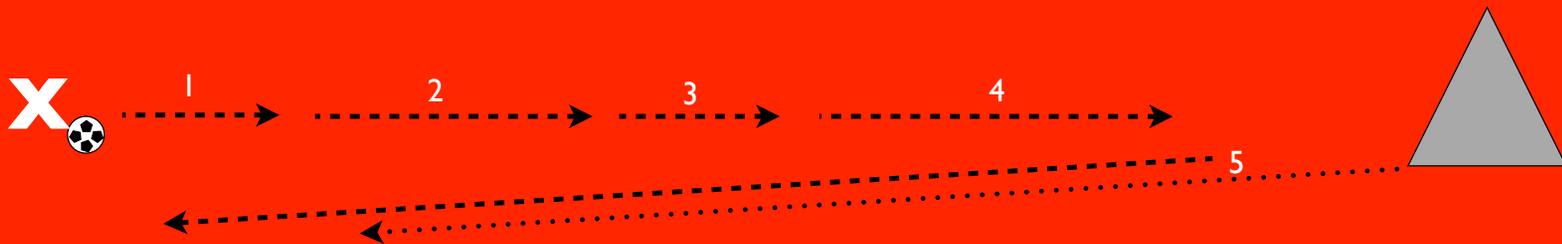
- Make it a game of “Simon says”
- Allow ball stealing
- Play “freeze” to get them to stop the ball while dribbling

# U4 - Activity 4

## What time is it Mr./Mrs. Wolf

### **Description:**

- Players ask: “What time is it Mr./Mrs. Wolf?”
- Wolf (coach) provides the time (e.g., 3 o’clock)
- Players need to dribble the ball (keep at feet!) towards Wolf according to the number of steps/time instructed
- Player and Wolf repeat until Wolf says: “It’s lunch time”
- Players need to dribble away very quickly to not get caught by Mr./Mrs. Wolf
- Repeat the game 5-8 times
- All players can do this simultaneously



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Dribbling at running speed
- Develop listening skills

### **Variations:**

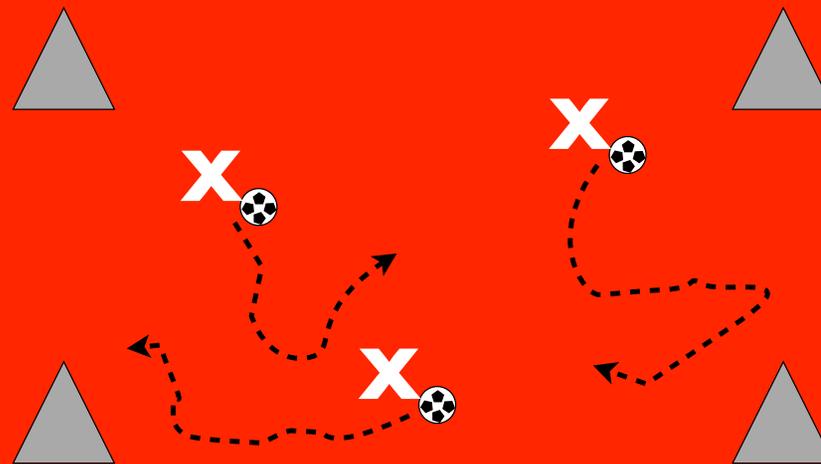
- Player caught can join the Wolf family
- Ball needs to be stolen to be caught

# U4 - Activity 5

## Red light/Green light

### **Description:**

- All players dribble in a small area (5m X 5m) delineated by four parents/pylons
- When coach says “red light” all players must stop the ball immediately
- When coach says “green light” dribbling resumes
- Repeat and become unpredictable



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Dribbling and changing directions
- Dribbling and using different sides of the feet
- Develop listening skills

### **Variations:**

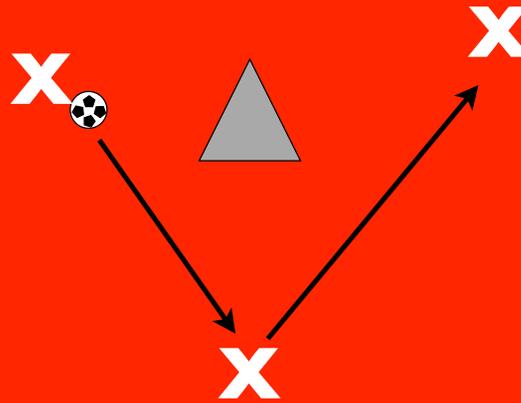
- Instruct them to use one foot only while dribbling, change speed, etc.
- Give them commands once the ball is stopped (e.g., foot on ball, knee on ball, change foot)

# U4 - Activity 6

## Monkey in the Middle

### **Description:**

- Three players form a triangle and pass the ball amongst each other
- Make sure that the players are stopping the ball with their foot (1st touch) and then passing it (2nd touch)
- Once the passing is more consistent, a parent can become a monkey in the middle of the triangle putting pressure to get the passing going faster



### **Objective:**

- Developing two touches (stop ball & pass)
- Passing with the inside of the foot
- Using both feet
- Looking for the open player
- Responding to pressure

### **Variations:**

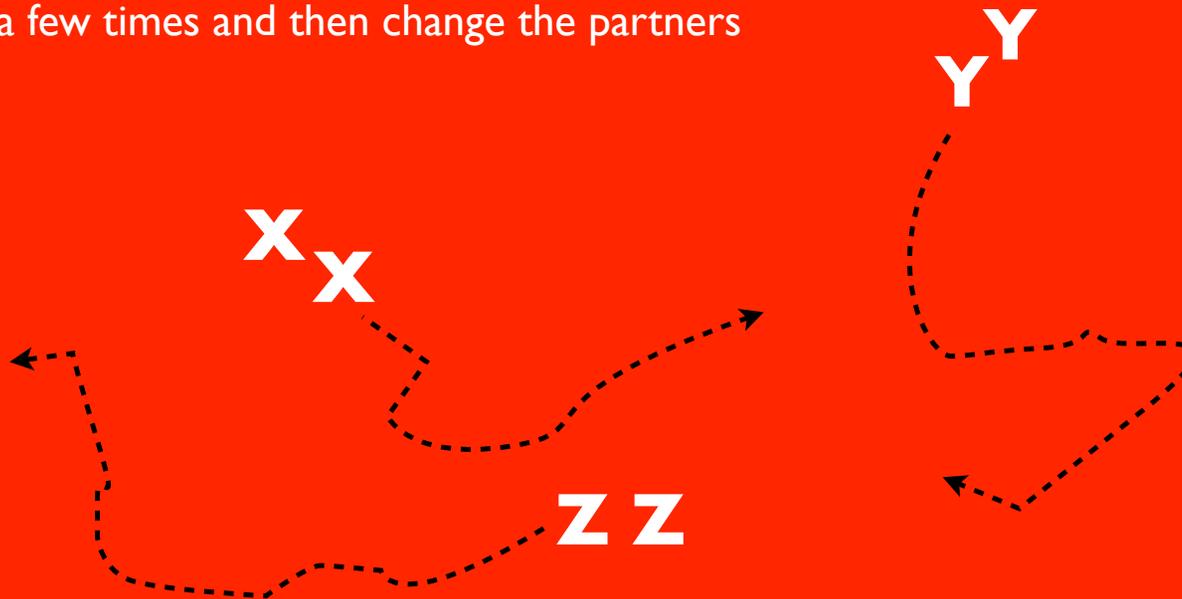
- Force changes in direction
- Vary the number of touches
- Monkey can steal the ball
- Player that loses the ball becomes the monkey

# U4 - Activity 7

## Shadow your friend

### **Description:**

- Players are in pairs and play follow the leader
- The player in front must try to “lose” their shadow/marker
- Switch the roles a few times and then change the partners



### **Objective:**

- Introduce the concept of marking a player
- Running while keeping the head up
- Changing running speed
- Changing directions abruptly (cutting)

### **Variations:**

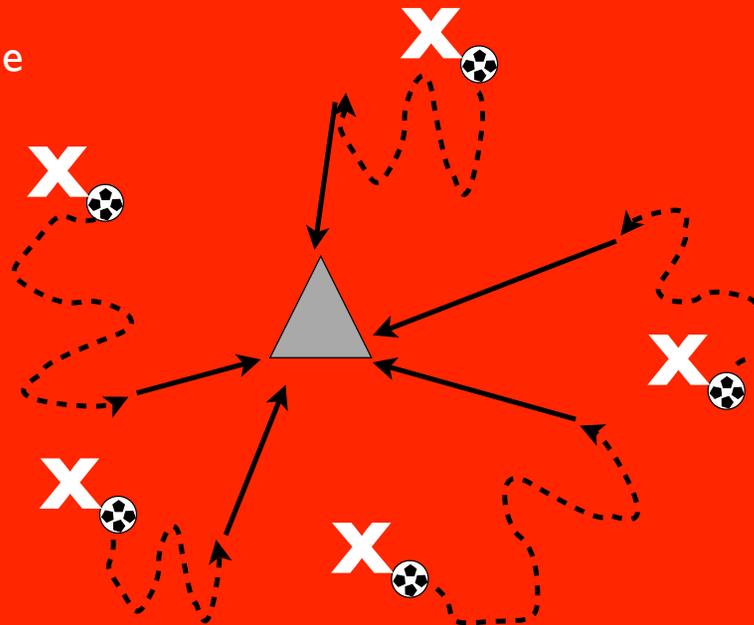
- Players can do it while dribbling a ball
- Introduce obstacles parents/pylons
- Get them to change directions frequently

# U4 - Activity 8

## Get'em... The coaches

### **Description:**

- Five or 6 players dribble around a coach/parent in a medium to large circle
- When coach says “Shoot” all players must kick the ball towards the coach (as hard as they can!)
- 1 point for hitting the “target”
- Repeat and become unpredictable



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Kicking with precision (target)
- Head up to look for the target
- Develop listening skills

### **Variations:**

- Move around while they are dribbling
- Try to get them to keep their shape and distance
- Change direction of the dribbling (clockwise)

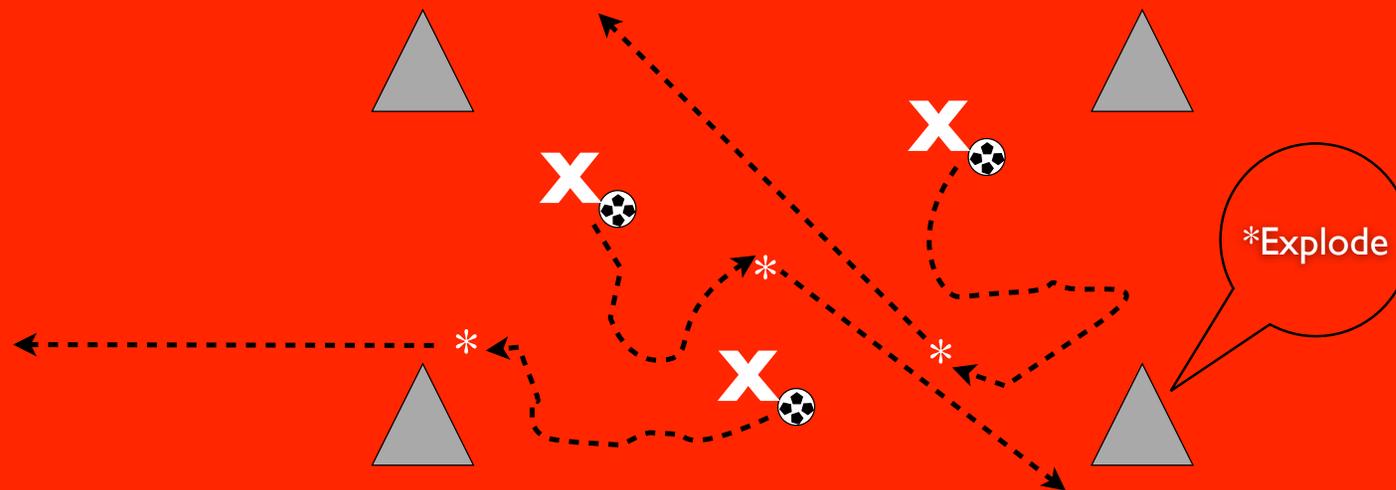


# U4 - Activity 10

## Explode

### **Description:**

- All players slowly dribble in a small area (4m X 4m) delineated by four parents/ pylons, similar to the situation in “Red light/Green light”
- When coach says “Explode!” all players must quickly dribble out of the area
- Repeat and become unpredictable



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Dribbling and changing directions
- Dribbling with head up to avoid collisions
- Dribbling at high speed
- Develop listening skills

### **Variations:**

- Dribble backwards before the explode (need to use the sole of the foot to roll the ball back)
- Introduce obstacles (parents/pylons) in the dribbling area

# U6 Activities

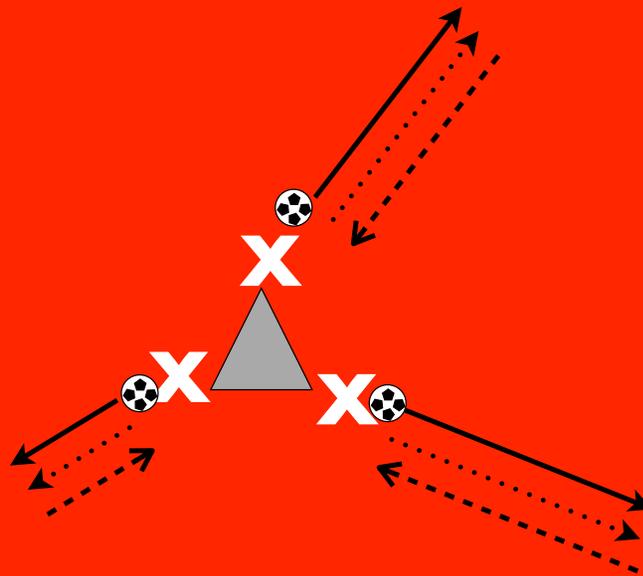
1. **Kick the ball and dribble it back**
2. **What time is it Mr./Mrs. Wolf?**
3. **Red light/green light - Explode**
4. **Monkey in the middle**
5. **Shark vs. Minnows**
6. **Juggling... How high can we get?**
7. **Trap the ball and pass it back**
8. **Win the ball and pass it back**
9. **Soccer croquet**
10. **Hot potato**
11. **“Get'em”... the coaches**

# U6 - Activity I

## Kick & Dribble back

### **Description:**

- Players are around the coach
- Coach says “Kick!” and the players need to kick as hard as they can, run to it and dribble it back



### **Objective:**

- Kicking hard with laces
- Running hard to get possession of the ball
- Increase dribbling skills

### **Variations:**

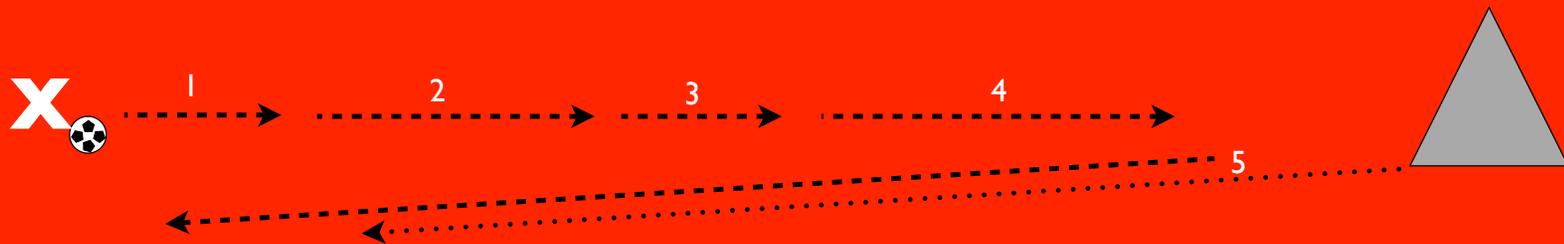
- You can make it a competition by putting the players on a line: distance kick, first one back, etc.

# U6 - Activity 2

## What time is it Mr./Mrs. Wolf

### **Description:**

- Players ask: “What time is it Mr./Mrs. Wolf?”
- Wolf (coach) provides the time (e.g., 3 o’clock)
- Players need to dribble the ball (keep at feet!) towards Wolf according to the number of steps/time instructed
- Player and Wolf repeat until Wolf says: “It’s lunch time”
- Players need to dribble away very quickly to not get caught by Mr./Mrs. Wolf
- Repeat the game 5-8 times
- All players can do this simultaneously



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Dribbling at running speed
- Develop listening skills

### **Variations:**

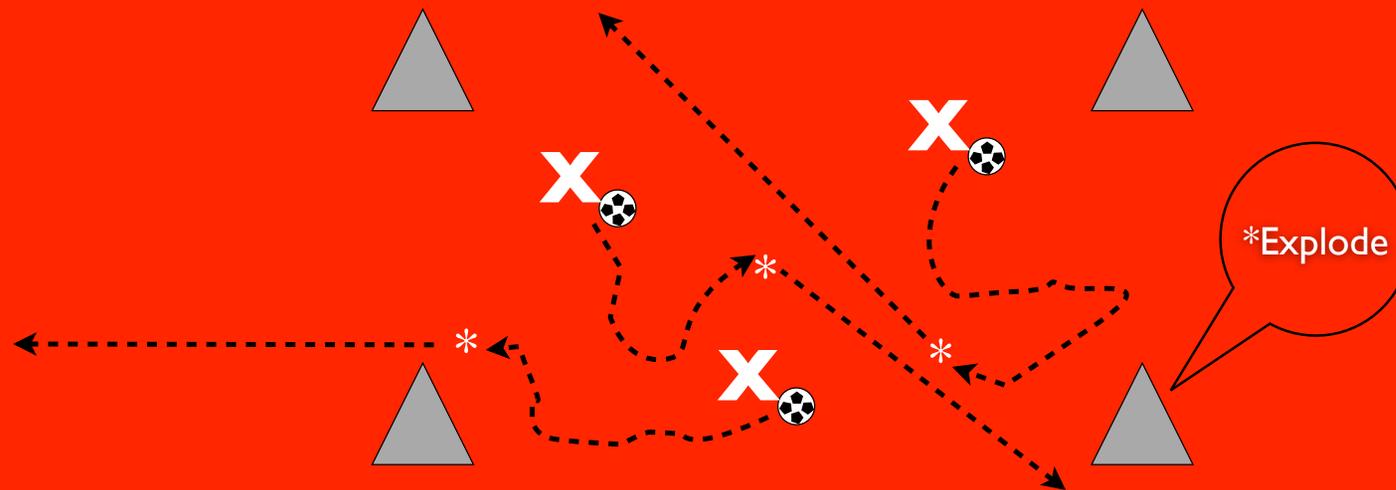
- Player caught can join the Wolf family
- Ball needs to be stolen to be caught

# U6 - Activity 3

## Red light/Green light & Explode

### **Description:**

- All players dribble in a small area (5m X 5m) delineated by four parents/pylons
- When coach says “red light” all players must stop the ball immediately
- When coach says “green light” dribbling resumes
- When coach says “Explode” players must quickly dribble out of the area
- Repeat and become unpredictable



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Dribbling and changing directions
- Dribbling and using different sides of the feet

### **Variations:**

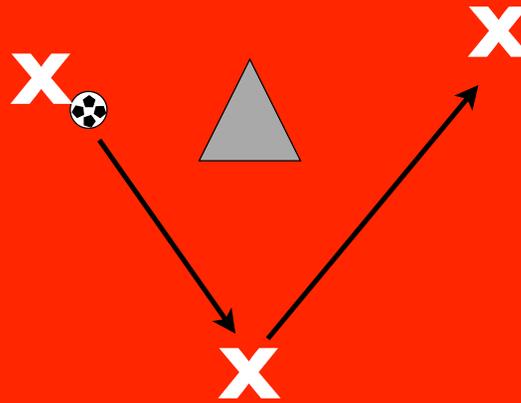
- Instruct them to use one foot only while dribbling, change speed, etc.
- Give them commands once the ball is stopped (e.g., foot on ball, knee on ball, change foot)

# U6 - Activity 4

## Monkey in the Middle

### **Description:**

- Three players form a triangle and pass the ball amongst each other
- Make sure that players are stopping the ball with their foot (1st touch) and then passing it (2nd touch)
- Once the passing is more consistent, a parent can become a monkey in the middle of the triangle putting pressure to get the passing going faster



### **Objective:**

- Developing two touches (stop ball & pass)
- Passing with the inside of the foot
- Using both feet
- Looking for the open player
- Responding to pressure

### **Variations:**

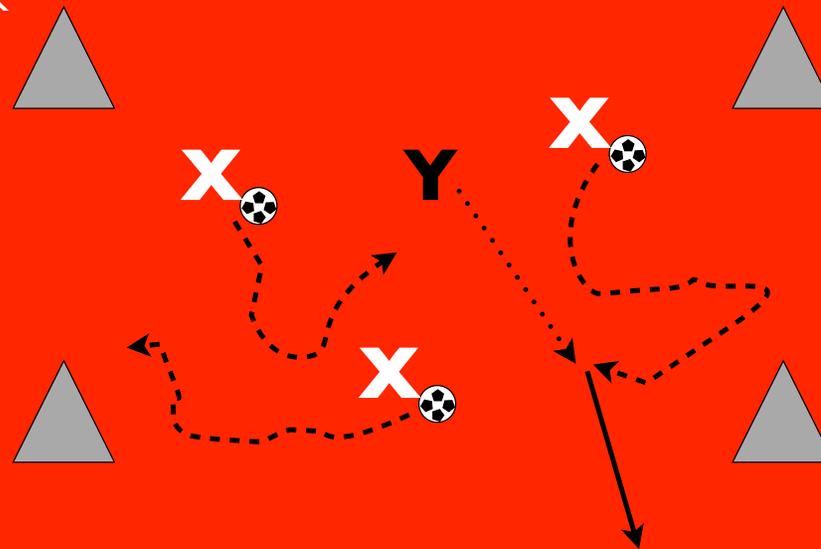
- Force changes in direction
- Vary the number of touches
- Monkey can steal the ball
- Player that loses the ball becomes the monkey

# U6 - Activity 5

## Shark vs. Minnows

### **Description:**

- All players, except one, dribble in a small area (5m X 5m) delineated by four parents/pylons - These are the minnows
- The player without the ball is the shark and must kick all the balls out of the area
- Minnows must remain outside the area once they've lost to the shark
- Repeat and change shark



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Dribbling and changing directions
- Shielding the ball (minnows)
- Tackling (shark)

### **Variations:**

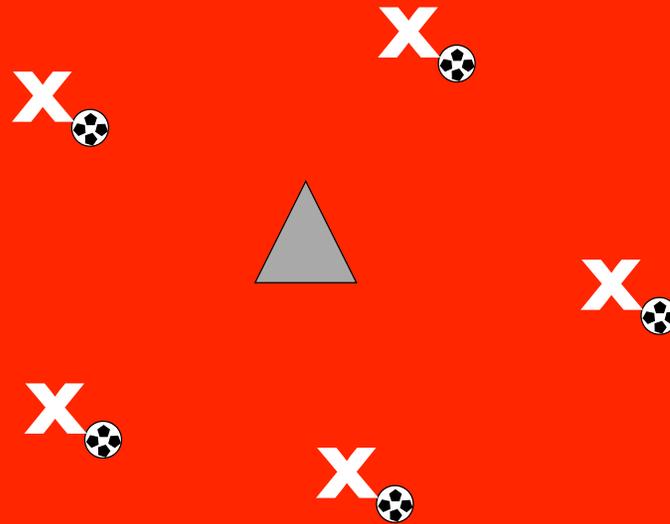
- Change the size of the area (bigger is more difficult for the shark)
- Make it a competition by calculating the time it takes the sharks to get all minnows

# U6 - Activity 6

## Juggling... How high can we get?

### **Description:**

- Five or 6 players are around the coach/parent
- One after the other, the coach/parent asks the players to juggle the ball with their feet, thighs, head... No hands or arms!
- Start with one touch, then increase to two, etc.



\* Great for a warm day

### **Objective:**

- Improving touches
- Controlling “air balls”

### **Variations:**

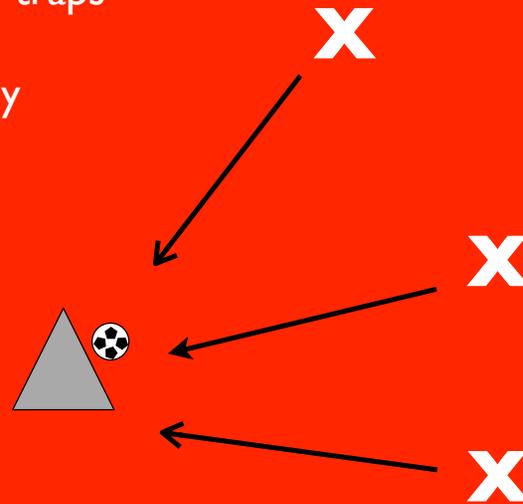
- Introduce constraints (e.g., feet only)
- Make it a competition by getting the players that miss to sit down and increase the number of touches until you get a winner

# U6 - Activity 7

## Trap the ball and pass it back

### **Description:**

- Approximately three players are spread out in front of the coach/parent
- Coach/parent rolls the ball to a player, who traps (stops) it, and then quickly passes it back
- Rotate through the three players repeatedly



### **Variations:**

- Move from left to right so that they do not always pass back to the same location
- Vary the speed of the ball
- Bounce the ball to them rather than rolling it

### **Objective:**

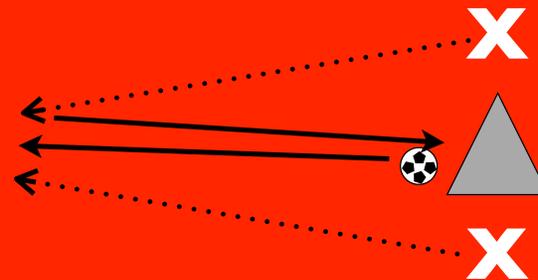
- Improving the first touch (trapping)
- Passing quickly and precisely

# U6 - Activity 8

## Win the ball and pass it back

### **Description:**

- One player on each side of the coach/parent
- Coach/parent kicks the ball and the two players must rush to the ball and “fight” for it
- The winner is the one that succeeds in passing it back to the coach/parent
- Repeat
- Player pairs should be matched for strength



### **Objective:**

- Going for the ball
- Shielding
- Tackling
- Passing

### **Variations:**

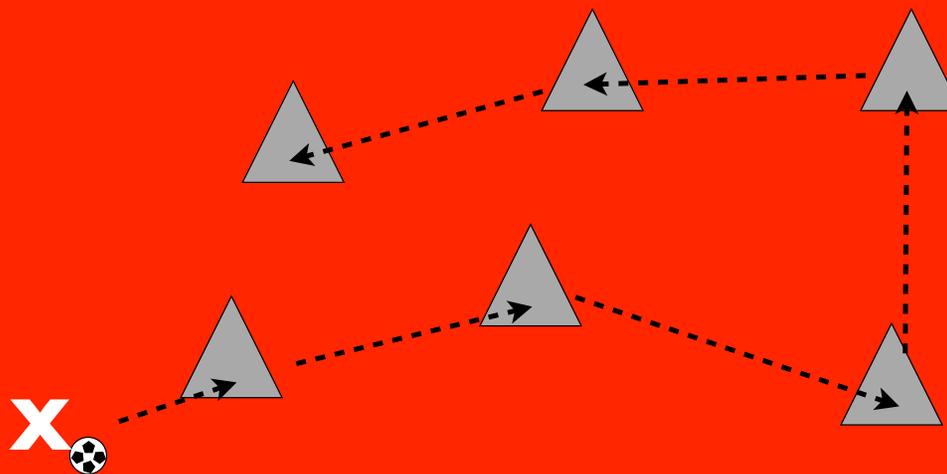
- Move left or right after your kick so that they do not always pass back to the same location
- Vary the distance of the initial kick
- Bounce the ball rather than kicking it

# U6 - Activity 9

## Soccer Croquet

### **Description:**

- Make a layout of standing parents that keep their legs spread open
- Players must dribble the ball and send it through their legs
- They need to complete the entire course



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Head up to look for the target

### **Variations:**

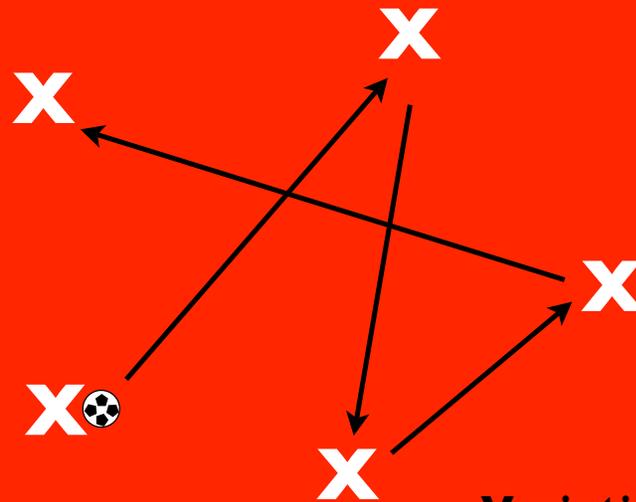
- Change the layout
- Make two layouts and get player pairs to race

# U6 - Activity 10

## Hot Potato!

### **Description:**

- Five or 6 players are in a circle
- One player starts with the potato (ball) and passes to another, who needs to quickly pass it to another, and so forth
- Remind them that the ball is a hot potato and that they need to move it quickly



### **Objective:**

- Improving touches
- Precise passes
- Looking for player to pass to

### **Variations:**

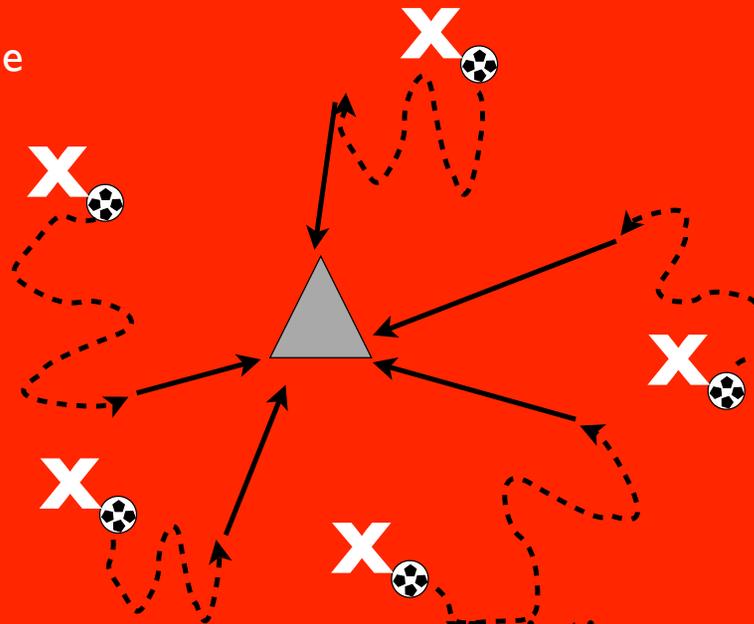
- Players that miss the ball or make a bad pass need to do 2 jumping jacks
- Increase or decrease the distance between the players
- Add a monkey in the middle

# U6 - Activity 11

## Get'em... The coaches

### **Description:**

- Five or 6 players dribble around a coach/parent in a medium to large circle
- When coach says “Shoot” all players must kick the ball onto the coach (as hard as they can!)
- 1 point for hitting the “target”
- Repeat and become unpredictable



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Kicking with precision (target)
- Head up to look for target
- Develop listening skills

### **Variations:**

- Move around while they are dribbling
- Try to get them to keep their shape and distance
- Ask them to change direction (clockwise, then counter clockwise)

# U8 Activities

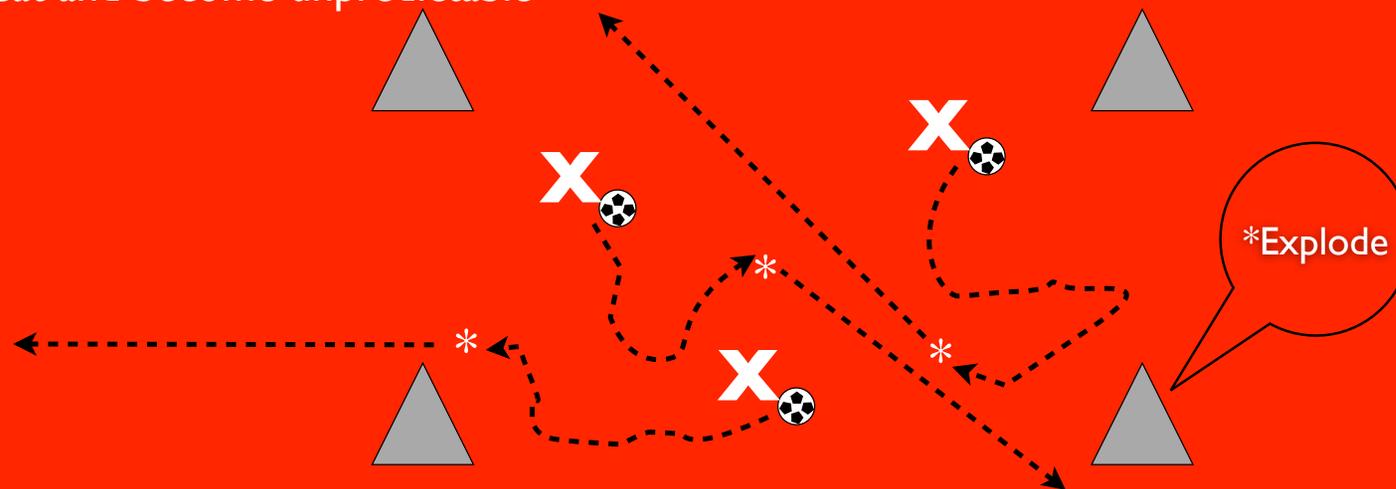
- 1. Red light green light... But with hand not voice!/Explode**
- 2. Monkey in the middle**
- 3. Shark vs. Minnows**
- 4. Juggling... How high can we get?**
- 5. Trap the ball and pass it back**
- 6. Dribble across the square**
- 7. Win the ball and pass it back**
- 8. Freeze tag... While dribbling**
- 9. Criss cross**
- 10. Ball tag**

# U8 - Activity I

## Red light/Green light & Explode

### **Description:**

- All players dribble in a small area (5m X 5m) delineated by four parents/pylons
- The coach signals “red light” by putting hand up and all players must stop the ball immediately (no verbal instruction)
- The coach lowers the arm (green light) and dribbling resumes
- When the coach says “Explode” players must quickly dribble out of the area
- Repeat and become unpredictable



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Dribbling and changing directions
- Looking up

### **Variations:**

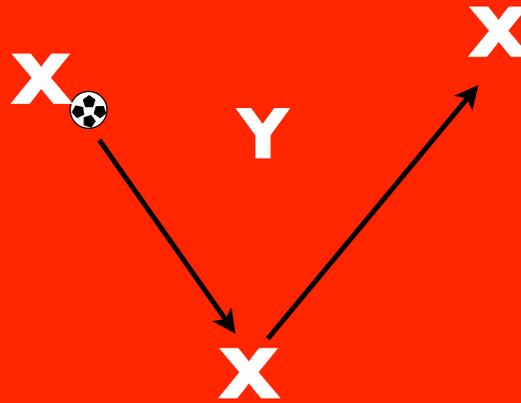
- Instruct them to use one foot only while dribbling, change speed, etc.
- The coach should change location regularly making looking up more difficult
- Make it a competition - last one to stop is “out”

# U8 - Activity 2

## Monkey in the Middle

### **Description:**

- Three players form a triangle and pass the ball amongst each other
- Make sure that the players are stopping the ball (1st touch) and then passing it (2nd touch)
- A fourth player (monkey) is in the middle and trying to steal the ball
- The player that loses the ball becomes the monkey



### **Objective:**

- Developing two touches (stop ball & pass)
- Passing with the inside of the foot
- Using both feet
- Looking for the open player
- Responding to pressure

### **Variations:**

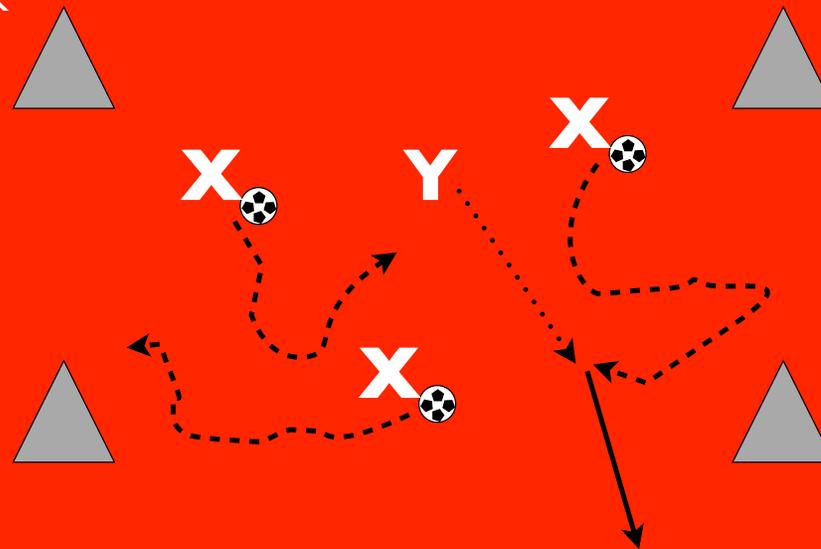
- Force changes in direction
- Vary the number of touches

# U8 - Activity 3

## Shark vs. Minnows

### **Description:**

- All players, except one, dribble in a small area (5m X 5m) delineated by four parents/pylons - These are the minnows
- The player without the ball is the shark and must kick all the balls out of the area
- Minnows must remain outside the area once they've lost to the shark
- Repeat and change shark



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with ball at feet
- Dribbling and changing directions
- Shielding the ball (minnows)
- Tackling (shark)

### **Variations:**

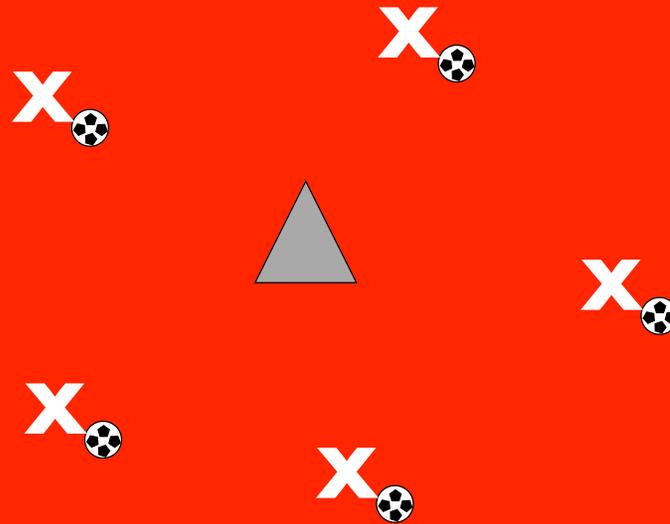
- Change the size of the area (bigger is more difficult for the shark)
- Make it a competition by calculating the time it takes the sharks to get all minnows

# U8 - Activity 4

## Juggling... How high can we get?

### **Description:**

- Five or 6 players are around the coach/parent
- One after the other, the coach/parent asks the players to juggle the ball with their feet, thighs, head... No hands or arms!
- Start with one touch, then increase to two, etc.



\* Great for a warm day

### **Objective:**

- Improving touches
- Controlling “air balls”

### **Variations:**

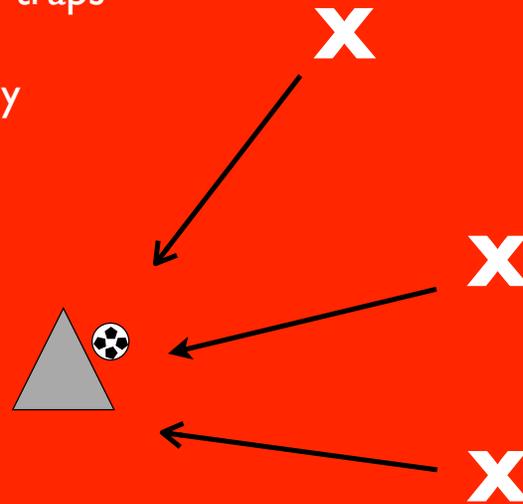
- Introduce constraints (e.g., feet only)
- Make it a competition by getting the players that miss to sit down and increase the number of touches until you get a winner

# U8 - Activity 5

## Trap the ball and pass it back

### Description:

- Approximately three players are spread out in front of the coach/parent
- Coach/parent rolls the ball to a player, who traps (stops) it, and then quickly passes it back
- Rotate through the three players repeatedly



### Variations:

- Move from left to right so that they do not always pass back to the same location
- Vary the speed of the ball
- **Bounce** the ball to them rather than rolling it

### Objective:

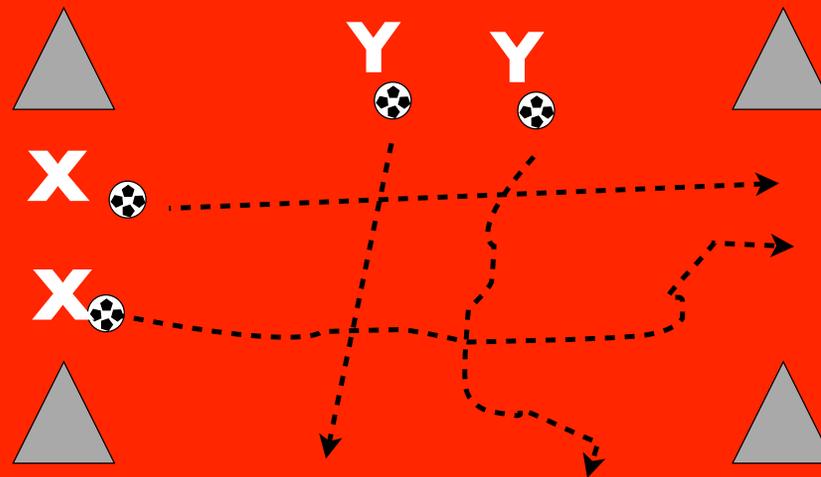
- Improving the first touch (trapping)
- Passing quickly and precisely

# U8 - Activity 6

## Dribble across the square

### **Description:**

- Make a small square area (5m X 5m) delineated by four parents/pylons
- One team need to cross back in forth from one side
- The other team crosses back and fort from the other side



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling with head up
- Dribbling and changing directions
- Looking for open space

### **Variations:**

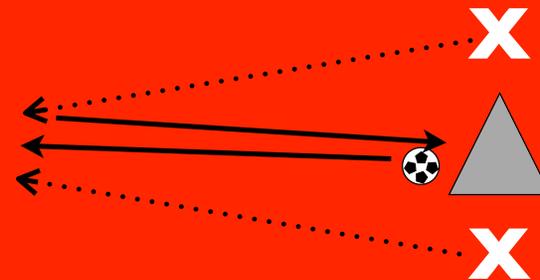
- Make it a competition by counting how many times each team crosses one side
- Change the size of the area - smaller is more difficult

# U8 - Activity 7

## Win the ball and pass it back

### **Description:**

- One player on each side of the coach/parent
- Coach/parent kicks the ball and the two players must rush to the ball and “fight” for it
- The winner is the one that succeeds in passing it back to the coach/parent
- Repeat
- Player pairs should be matched for strength



### **Objective:**

- Going for the ball
- Shielding
- Tackling
- Passing

### **Variations:**

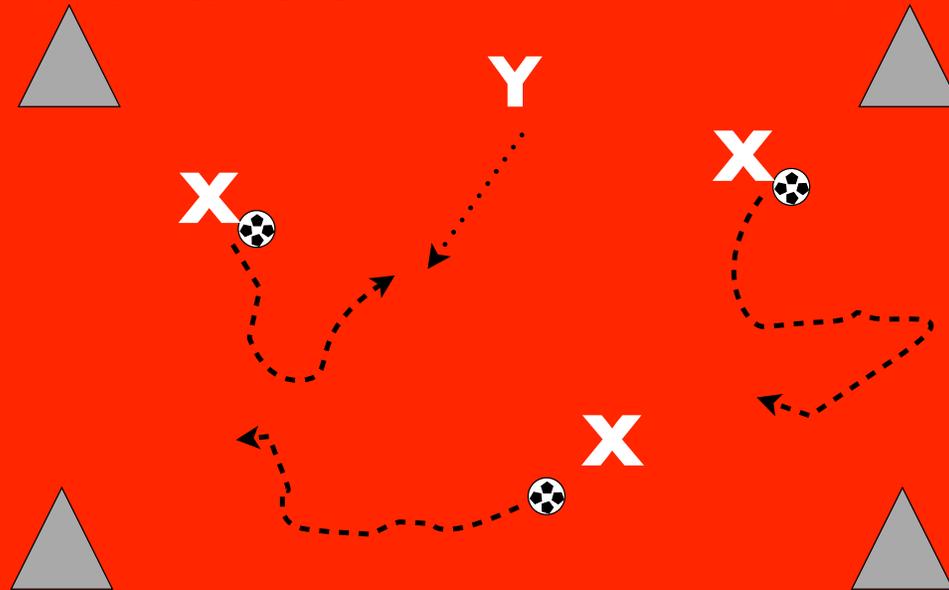
- Move left or right after your kick so that they do not always pass back to the same location
- Vary the distance of the initial kick
- Bounce the ball rather than kicking it

# U8 - Activity 8

## Freeze tag

### **Description:**

- Players are in a large area (e.g., 10m X10m) delineated by parents/pylons
- One player is it (tag; Y) and all others dribble
- The palyer that is it must touch all the other players to freeze them
- A frozen player can be released if touched by a player that is dribbling
- Last one dribbling wins and becomes the next “it” to start the next round



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling at a fast pace
- Looking up
- Team work

### **Variations:**

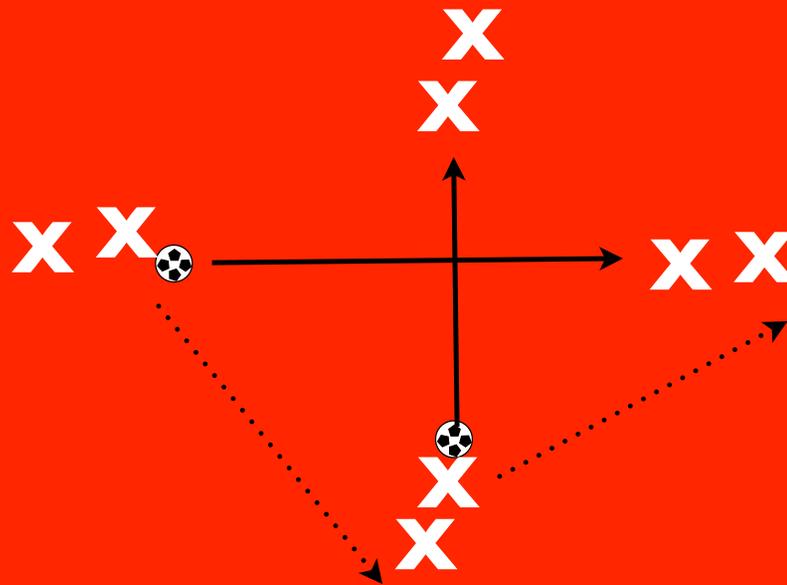
- Two players can be “it”
- The player that is it must also dribble the ball
- Change the size of the area

# U8 - Activity 9

## Criss Cross

### **Description:**

- Players line up in a cross pattern
- Two adjacent lines have a ball
- Players with the ball pass across and run to the back of the line on their right
- Use two touches (stop ball and pass)



### **Objective:**

- Short passes
- Receiving
- Moving after passing

### **Variations:**

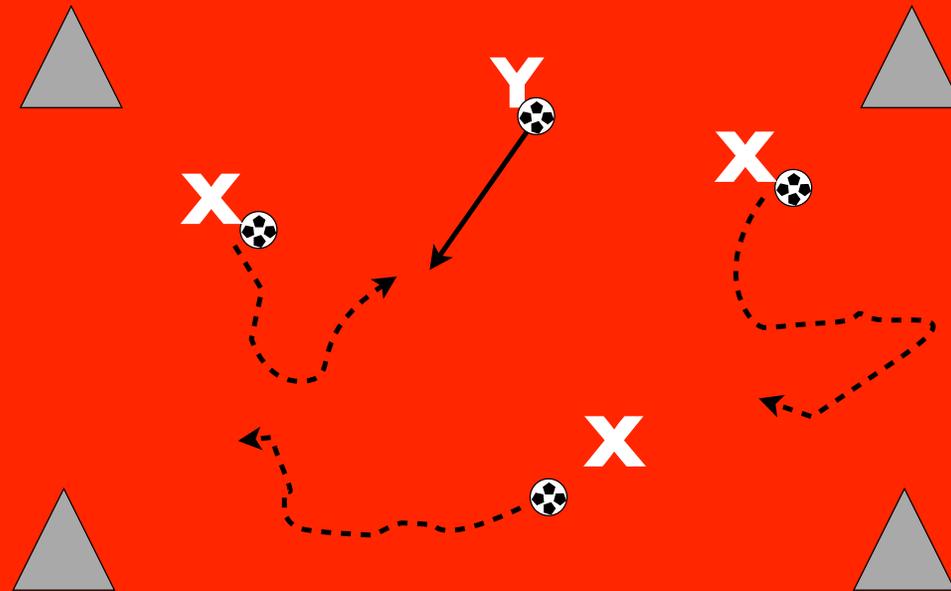
- Change the running direction
- Allow one touches only
- Change the size of the cross

# U8 - Activity 10

## Ball tag

### **Description:**

- Players are in a large area (e.g., 10m X10m) delineated by parents/pylons
- One player is it (tag;Y) and all others dribble
- The player that is it must kick their ball onto another player's ball (they can dribble around to find the best option)
- The one that gets touched by the ball becomes it



### **Objective:**

- Dribbling at a fast pace
- Looking up
- Passing and kicking with precision

### **Variations:**

- Two players can be "it"
- Change the size of the area

# Useful Websites

- [http://www.mlcfc.com/hl\\_resources.php](http://www.mlcfc.com/hl_resources.php)
- <http://www.coachingsoccer101.com/drills.htm>
- <http://www.wecoachkids.com/soccer.html>
- <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dgraham/manual/Pages/Resources/games.html>