

## PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

### **HELPFUL HINTS**

Wee ones (and old ones) love the idea of a "new" game, so it is a good idea to change the rules of the game or change the game every 10 minutes to keep interest.

Instructions have to be broken into little steps and kept very brief. If you can not do it and show it in about 20 seconds, then do it in stages, demo part one, then expand to part two etc. The key to soccer drills for younger players is for every player to have a ball and to incorporate a variety of "games" and drills that include every player.

After playing soccer related games, pick one aspect of the game (dribbling, or shooting, or passing) and build the rest of your practice session around that. Keep team numbers reasonable (avoid long boring lines), for example use two goals for two different groups so lines are half as long.

Always end practice with at least a 10-minute scrimmage session. Players at all age levels prefer "playing" to "practicing". NOTE: Several of the games listed are "knock out" games where the losers are knocked out and the last player left is the winner. Since the first ones knocked out are often the ones who need the most practice, those knocked out should be required to do something to either get back into the game or to keep them working on their ball skills until the game is over. One possibility is to set up a parallel game for those knocked out to participate in.

### Just Plain GAMES!

For warm-ups, play games which are not soccer related, but promote physical activity and are a lot of fun. Remember that the players aren't showing up to play soccer, they're showing up to have fun. Have fun with them. Some of the games listed under the specific categories can also be used at this time.

#### **Battle Field**

Any number of players can be used. All players line up on one end line and try to run to the other end without being hit with a ball kicked by a coach. Those who are hit join the firing squad. The game ends when everyone has been hit.

#### **Camp Town Races**

Line up all the players on one end of the field. They each have a ball. On the whistle, they all dribble to opposite end, shoot ball into goal, get ball out of goal, and run back and finish with a shot on opposite goal. The first one to finish is the winner. Ask them "Who is going to win the race?" They all learn to say "The player who can dribble it the straightest!" A variation is to start half at one end and half on the other. This really teaches them to try to do it fast while maintaining possession. This drill really helps players deal with the balls that pop out of the bunch.

### **Simon Says**

Just like the common children's game, the coach gives instructions like "Simon says dribble with your left foot" or "Simon says switch balls with someone." The players only follow the instructions if they begin with "Simon says..." Anyone following instructions that do not start with "Simon says..." are knocked out. But the knocked out players should be doing something with the ball, not just watching the game continue. Continue the game until one player is left.

### **Ultimate Ball**

Designate a playing area (most likely your entire practice field). Create two teams. Ball can only be moved by throwing to teammate – players cannot run with ball. All passes must be caught before touching ground or ball goes to opposition. Goals scored when throw is headed or volleyed into goal before touching the ground. Interceptions can be made; all players can use their hands. Try it with a Frisbee – works even better! Variation: Players must kick the ball instead of throw it. Ball can touch ground but cannot be advanced by dribbling. No one can use hands.

## DRIBBLING EXERCISES

### **Ball Tag**

Everyone has a ball and dribbles in a confined area. The player who is "it" must pass his ball so that it hits another player's ball. The player whose ball was hit then becomes "it."

### **Blob Tag**

Have players dribble within a specified rectangular area. After a short time, take the ball away from one player who then becomes "it". As players are tagged, they kick their ball out of the game area and join hands with "it" – forming the "blob". The "blob" continues to tag the remaining players until no one is left.

### **Body Part Dribble**

Each player with a ball within a confined area. Players dribble to keep control while avoiding touching others. While they are dribbling, coach or leader calls out a body part, player immediately stops with that body part. You can call "right elbow", "chin", "left knee", etc. Can also play like Simon Says.

### **Cops & Robbers**

Start with a defined area marked, adjusted for size depending on the age of the players. Give every player but one or two a ball (these are the Robbers). The one or two who do not have ball are the Cops. The Robbers start at one end of the area and must dribble across the area and across the opposite goal line without losing possession of their ball. The Cops defend the area (usually start somewhere in the middle of the game area), trying to kick the Robbers' balls out of the defined area. Robbers who retain possession turn around and go back for round two. A

Robber who loses his/her ball joins the Cops for round two. The last successful Robber is the Grand Champion.

### **Variations of Cops & Robbers**

- If a Robber loses his ball to a Cop, he goes to jail (designate a small area off to the side or use a goal structure.) Have the Robbers repeat the crossings until there are only 2 left. Make these guys the new Cops, pull everyone out of jail and start over.
- Instead of eliminating players until only one is left, give points to the Cops for kicking out balls but let everyone stay in the game. Everyone gets a turn as a Cop.
- Cops who take possession of a ball immediately become Robbers; Robbers who lose the ball become Cops.
- Players are not knocked out, but must perform some task before getting back into the game. (Such as ball dance.)
- Set up several zones with a cop in each. Cops must stay in their designate zone. Robbers are forced to go through two or three zones with only one Cop rather than one zone with several Cops.

### **Crab Kick-Out**

This is same as regular kick-out, except now only the crabs (coaches or players crab walking) can kick the other players balls out of the area. If the players ball goes out, he/she joins in & becomes a crab. The last player that is still dribbling will be the winner.

### **Dribbling For Space**

Each player has a ball and dribbles around the field trying to keep control and dribbling away from everyone else. Activities with the ball: stop (stop ball with sole of the foot), knee down (kneel down, touch ball with knee), new ball (stop own ball, then find another and resume), roll (stop ball, lie down, roll over once, then resume), turtle (stop ball, lie on back, kick and scream, get up, and resume), and launch (stop ball, throw it up in the air, then find another ball and resume).

### **Dribble Relay**

Set up an “obstacle course” with cones as “gates”. Team A races team B – they have to go out and back – if they lose control and miss a gate, they have to regain control and go through the gate. A variation is to have a small “square” at the end. They have to stop the ball in the square, then sprint back and high-five the next player before he/she can take off. Another variation is to have several parents positioned at different places along the course and have a different one hold up a number of fingers at random times during the race. Award points to the player that sees it and correctly yells out the number first. This gets the players heads up.

### **Explode**

Every player has a ball. You get them all around you dribbling their balls as close as they can

get. Make sure they begin their dribbling using the insides of both feet...no toe balls at the first practice! Make them keep control of the ball....always within one step....and do not let them run into one another or dribble their ball into another ball or another player. Keep telling them to get their heads up and see the open spaces. Yell "Explode!" at which point they all run away (dribbling their balls) as fast as they can. First one to get to a boundary or cone "wins".

### **Follow the Leader**

Pick a leader and have him dribble anywhere on the field, encouraging him to make lots of turns, changing speed, etc. All other players have to follow the leader and do whatever that player does. Switch leaders often.

**Variation:** Snake – Players are grouped into threes (preferred) or fours. First player is the "head" of the snake and does not have a ball. She's essentially the leader in a follow-the-leader game. Second player has a ball at her feet and must follow the head of the snake, dribbling wherever she goes. Third player is the "rattle". No ball, just following. Emphasize to the "heads" to vary their lead -- some fast, some slow, some sideways, some stopping, etc. I let one lead for about 20 seconds or so. Then, on a whistle from a coach, #2 drops the ball to #3 and becomes the head of the snake. The rattle (#3) becomes the dribbler and the former head circles around to become the rattle.

### **Freeze Tag**

Play freeze tag with the ball. Mr. Freeze (the coach, to start) freezes everyone by kicking their ball. The frozen person can only be frozen when someone passes their ball through their legs.

### **Ice Monster**

Mark off an area for the game to be played and select one player to be the "Ice Monster". Have the rest of the players (each with a ball) dribble around within the area. The "Ice Monster" attempts to touch each player's ball, at which point that player "freezes" with their foot on the ball. If a player's ball goes out of bounds, they also freeze. The last remaining unfrozen player gets to be the new Ice Monster for the next round.

### **Variations of Ice Monster**

- Any player whose ball is touched by an "it" player becomes frozen and has to stop dribbling, spread his legs apart, and hold his ball above his head. He is frozen in this position until another player dribbles his ball between the frozen players legs.
- The Ice Monster player tries to steal a ball from any player and pass it out of the circle - now, the two players are Ice Monsters and go after the others.....then three, then four. Finally only one player is left with a ball. He/she becomes the Ice Monster the next game.

- Bomber. Just like above except the "IT" player has a ball and tries to roll/throw it at the other player's and knock their ball out of the circle.
- NOTE: Due to the number of variations, try to come up with creative names for each game. Example – Pirate, Cowboy, Burglar, etc.

### **Knock-Out**

Everyone dribbles around trying to keep their own ball and kick out everyone else's ball. If a player's ball is kicked out, he must retrieve it, then do 10 touches between the legs before getting back in. A player gets a point for every ball he kicks out (so if you spend time outside doing touches on your ball, you have less time to win points).

### **Last Man Out**

Two players or more needed. All players stand at a cone about 20 feet from a group of balls. There is one less ball than the number of players. On the coach's command, the players run to the balls, get one and begin dribbling. The player who didn't get a ball tries to steal one from the others. The coach keeps time and after a preset period has passed, the coach stops the game. The player who, at that time does not have a ball, is out. Remove one ball from the group and repeat until there is only one person with a ball.

### **Math Dribbling**

Each player with a ball within a confined area. Same as Body Part Dribbler except coach/leader calls out a math problem. The players immediately solve the problem by forming the appropriately sized group. This activity organizes groups without asking players to choose a partner or counting off. For example, if your next activity requires partners, call out 1+1.

### **Musical Chairs**

One less ball than the number of players in the drill. Players run around in goal areas in a scramble until whistle is blown. Players race to get ball from center circle and dribble to score on goal. Player without ball help get balls to center, repeating this until only one player left. Make sure to keep things moving along, don't wait very long to blow the whistle. Once players have concept start adding in defenders. One more that may work for you is using a ball as the goal. Have players match up by ability. Throw one ball out as the goal. Throw a second out that the two players will try and possess and score. First player to ball is attacker, second defends goal (ball) and tries to gain possession of ball. If successful, roles reverse. Only run this for 30-45 sec depending on effort of the players. I usually have 2-3 pairs doing this at once each with their own goal (ball) and playing ball.

### **Red Light/Green**

Light Each player with a ball lines up at one end of the penalty area. A coach stands at the other end and yells, "Green light," and turns his back to the players. The players race across the penalty area to see who can reach the coach first. After a few seconds, the coach yells, "Red

light." At that command, the players must stop and put a foot on top of the ball. The coach turns back around and looks for players whose ball is still moving. Those players must move a certain distance back to the starting line. Repeat calling red light/green light until someone wins the race. This game encourages fast dribbling while keeping the ball close.

### **Shark & Minnows**

Teaches players with the ball to shield it from an opponent and teaches players without the ball how to take it away from an opponent. Use pylons to create a 15-yard square. One player, the shark, starts outside the square without a ball. All other players, the minnows, start inside the square with a ball. When the coach yells, "Shark's getting hungry!" the shark starts running around the outside of the square and the fish start dribbling around inside the square. When the coach yells, "Shark attack!" the shark enters the square and has 30 seconds to send as many balls as possible outside the square. When a ball leaves the square for any reason, the corresponding fish must leave the square and stay out until the coach gives the "Stop!" command at the end of the 30 seconds. A fish has done well if still alive. The shark has done well if few fish survived. Choose a new shark and play another round until every player has been the shark once.

### **Under Pressure**

Get all the players dribbling around in a square area and then remove one, two, or three balls, depending on how much pressure needed. Then announce that whoever has possession of a ball after 1 minute is a winner. If they can chase someone out of bounds they automatically win that ball. Count down the last 10 seconds real loud to increase the activity. Players without a ball have to do some token penance; a couple of pushups, make a weird face for the others, nothing real negative.

## PASSING/SHOOTING

### **Corner Shot**

Players line up in middle of field 15-20 feet from goal. Set up a cone 5-10 feet to the right of the players. Coach stands in opposite corner of cone. When coach yells "go", player circles around cone for shot. Coach rolls ball for shot set-up as player comes around cone. Shooting player retrieves ball and returns to back of line.

**Variation:** Throw-Up --- coach stands next to players and serves ball in a variety of ways: rolled, bounced, high, low, etc. Player must attempt shot immediately without trying to gain control of ball.

### **Doctor, Doctor**

Split into two teams with everyone having ball (at all times, players must keep their own ball), except the doctors (set-up a small office box for doctor), and players try to pass into each other. If a player gets hit by the other team, that player must sit down with their ball until the doctor

tags them. Once the doctor steps out of his/her box, players can try to knock-out the doctor by hitting him/her with the ball. The doctor can't be hit when he/she is inside the office box. The game ends by knocking out the doctor and players.

### **Egg Hunt**

Have more balls than players. Have the players line-up across one end of the field. Take their balls and spread them out around the field, these are the eggs. At the other end of the field is a goal called the "basket." Blow the whistle and turn them loose. The object of the game is to get all the "eggs" in the basket as quickly as possible. They are all on the same team, and aren't allowed to take a ball away from another player. Time them to see how fast they can accomplish the task. The players really like this game. The more balls (eggs) the better. You should see them score, and turn right around and go back for more balls.

### **Get 'Em**

All players must stay within a grid. Player A is "It" and is the only player to start with a ball. Player A dribbles and tries to hit the other players below the waist with the ball. When hit, that player gets a ball and joins player A. The game is over when all of the players have been caught. The last player caught starts with the ball for the next game. If you think the task will be too difficult for the one player to get another at the start of the game, start with 2 players being "It". Encourage quick movements and sudden changes of direction to catch players off guard. Encourage deceptive passing of the ball: look one-way and pass the other; use the outside of the foot. Players not caught should run, jump, and use zigzag movements.

### **Knock Down**

Place several cones inside the center circle (or a designated circle area). Each player has a partner directly on the other side of the circle; one ball between them. Players pass the ball to partners but try to knock over cones. Ball must be passed from outside the circle. Make up your own scoring system.

### **Line-Up & Link-Up**

Two lines of players face each other 10-15 feet apart. Ball is played from one line to the other and players crisscross to go to end of other line. Use "two-touch" first and then change to "one-touch". Allow all players to use hands for first few minutes before switching to feet only.

### **Mack 1**

Coach stands in middle of field 10-15 feet from goal. Players split up into two lines another 5-10 feet back – one to coach's left and one to coach's right. First player on right "throws in" to "face" of coach who sets up ball by rolling it for first-time right-footed shot. Player collects ball then joins back of left line (opposite line). First player on left does same except shoots with left foot.

### **Marbles**

Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble (a #2 ball works well). Have them try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts, don't require them to use their own ball, they are free to use any other ball they can find. At first the players may get really excited and kick the marble. If this happens, call time-out and put it back.

**Variation:** Eliminate the teams and play it in a circle. The game is over when the ball exits the circle.

### **Monkey in the Middle**

All players form a circle and choose someone (the "monkey") to be in its center. The players forming the circle pass one ball among them while the person in the center tries to gain control of the ball. When this happens, the person in the circle who last touched the ball goes to the center. Some level of competitiveness develops but never on an individual basis and the "losers" quickly gets a chance to redeem themselves.

**Variation:** Split team into groups of three (3) players. Each group plays its own game – player in the middle tries to gain control of ball while other two players pass ball back and forth to each other. Player who gives up control of the ball becomes the “monkey.”

### **Name Game**

Four (4) or more players needed. Players stand in a circle and pass the ball to one another, but they must call out the name of the person they are passing to. This is great at the beginning of the season, so they learn everyone's names. If the players are doing well and you have enough players, add additional balls.

### **Who's Open**

Four (4) or five (5) players in circle formation about 15 yards in diameter (adjust for age). All players except one have a ball at their feet. Two players inside circle with one designated as attacker and the other defender. To start, attacking player moves and calls name of player he wants to serve him a ball. He must control ball and return to the open player who did not have a ball at start of exercise (you can't give it back to the player who served it). Attacker then asks for another ball (calling name and making appropriate run) and repeats the exchange. Defender tries to dispossess attacker.

## MATCH PLAY

**NOTE:** These games allow players to work on several skills simultaneously. Coaches may opt to focus on one skill at a time (i.e. dribbling, passing, shooting, etc.) even though other skills will need to be utilized.

### **Big Shot** (for advanced ages only)

Use entire field and both goals. Place goalkeeper at each goal. Two teams – all but one player for each team must stay on “defensive” side of field. Defensive players should try and shoot (or pass) from their half of the field (cannot cross midfield line). The “sniffer” (sole offensive player) must remain on his/her side of the field and look for a pass or rebound. Rotate everyone into sniffer role.

### **Circle Game**

Set up a 20x40 yard grid, make a center circle, and split players into two teams that can be identified by a color. Have all the players dribble their balls in the center circle. Call out a color. That team dribbles toward their goal. The other team leaves their balls and runs to slow the attackers down trying to get them to a sideline and to dribble out-of-bounds, or not get to their goal line before the coach counts to 7 or award 1 point for each out-of-bounds and 1 point for each player "held" for the coach's count. Attackers get 1 point for each "goal". Play to 10 points.

### **Cone Soccer**

Play 1v1 with one player against one player, each has a cone as a goal. This is every player; nobody stands and watches. The object is to hit the cone; there are no boundary lines, etc. This is nothing but 1v1 dribbling with a little bit of long passing/shooting, etc. They figure out very quickly that they have to beat their man and nothing else will do. After about five minutes, everybody switches to somebody they haven't played yet. This way nobody is hopelessly outmatched against the same player for very long. They hate to stop doing this until about forty minutes or so when their tongues are hanging to the ground (it's also a good conditioner). This also teaches individual initiative - nobody else is going to stop the opponent; nobody else is going to score the goal.

### **Four (4) Goal Game**

Normal scrimmage except coach should add two additional goals along sideline to create more scoring opportunities. Players can score in any of the four (4) goals. Try six (6) goals!

### **Numbers**

This exercise is good for 1v1 dribbling skills. Divide the players into two (2) groups. If you have eight players, assign each player a number between one (1) and four (4). So each team has a number one, a number two, etc. Try to make sure the players with the same number are evenly

matched. Set up two very wide "goals" with pylons. Spread the four (4) players on each side across each goal line. Call out one or more numbers, and those players come out to play 1v1, 2v2, etc. and the rest of the players stay spread across the goal line as defenders. Throw a ball from the sideline into the center and let them play it until a goal is scored, the defenders stop it, or it goes out of bounds.

**Variation:** Colors. Use two each of different colored pinnies, armbands, or stickers to place on shirts, as younger players will have trouble remembering numbers. Scrimmage What more needs to be said. Match up 2v2, 3v3, 4v4, etc. Make sure everyone gets ample opportunity to show off the skills they have just learned. Every practice should end with a scrimmage.

### **Striker**

Divide players into two teams. Station each team at a corner post of the goal, standing off, but facing the field. Coach/assistant stands behind the center of the goal with a supply of balls. Coach tosses a ball over the crossbar to about the penalty spot. A player from each team both sprint to the ball and attempt to control it, turn, and get a shot off. The second to the ball defends (if he then wins the ball, then he tries to shoot). When there is a score, save, or ball goes out of play, restart the same way with a different pair of players. May want to limit amount of time each pair has to attempt to score as some players will dribble all over the field if you let them and everyone else gets bored. Limit the area that the combatants can compete in to the penalty area.

### **Strong Sides**

The team concept is best taught with unbalanced drills (i.e., 2v1, 3v2, etc.) -- this is true for players of all ages, but especially with younger players. This will make the benefit of team play obvious and it will "let the game be the teacher". Start with 2v1 drills, then when the players clearly recognize the value of combining to beat one player -- either to beat and score or to maintain possession -- consider a move to 3v2 (vary the amount of space the drills are carried out in -- space is almost another subject).

### **Teach the Parents**

During the last practice of the season have a scrimmage between the parents and the players (with the coaches helping the players). This serves a couple of purposes. The players love this game. They get a chance to show their parents what they can do and they enjoy beating their parents. (The parents never win, the coaches make sure of that....) Also, since many of the parents have never played soccer it shows them how difficult the game really is. The hope is that a parent may now think twice before "yelling" at a child for missing and "easy" shot in a game. Everybody seems to enjoy this scrimmage.

### **Treasure Chest and Trolls**

This is a three-team, three-goal game. Play with 1-3 balls to keep everyone moving and looking

up. Three players on each team play, while a sub is kept locked in "troll prison." Each team has three pieces of gold behind the goal they have to defend. Small disc cones, water jugs, etc. can be used. Whenever a team scores in the opponent's goal, they get to claim a piece of treasure for their treasure chest. The trolls, older players or parents, had their own treasure chest and would occasionally run randomly within the field of play. If you hit the troll with the ball, you could claim a piece of troll treasure OR free a teammate from troll prison. (decision-making!) The grand finale is the "breakout" from troll prison. Let each of the prisoners escape with a ball and head for the goal while the trolls run wild on the field for a final, furious minute of play.

### **Zone Game**

Normal scrimmage except goals/nets are not used. Players score "goals" by dribbling or passing into a specified zone and "touching down" ball with foot. After a score, opposing player re-starts play in own zone by passing or dribbling in. Ball becomes live once outside of zone.

## LINE DRILLS

**NOTE:** Although you should limit the number of line drills, the following are very helpful in teaching younger players important fundamental aspects of the game.

Players rotate positions:

- Simple cut back move: one (1) line. Have players start at midfield and dribble half way down sideline with coach providing minimal pressure. When coach says "cut" the player cuts the ball toward the middle and then finishes with a shot. As season progresses, coach should add more pressure.
- Reverse move (U6s can begin to do this; U7s ought to be able to do it): one (1) line. Players and coach stand on end line next to goal. Coach passes ball ahead. Player has to run and reverse ball, then turn and shoot (or dribble back and shoot).
- Pass to partner: two (2) lines: one along sideline and another toward the center of the field. Same as above, but this time, when coach says pass, the player passes to the wide-open teammate. The teammate must be yelling "pass it to me". The play finishes with a shot. As season progresses, coach should add more pressure. Also, this is the foundation for 2v1 or 3v1. As season progresses, a defender is added and is coached on how to intercept/steal a pass.
- Throw-in play: two (2) lines: one along sideline and another toward the center of the field. The coach (standing on the field 4-5 feet in front of players on the sidelines) has a ball and rolls it out of bounds. He tells the first player in line along the sideline to "go get it and throw it in". The coach points to where it went out of bounds and tells the player to throw it in from there, encouraging the player to hurry and watching for proper technique. The throw in goes to the teammate who is yelling "pass it to me". The throw in is made in front of the waiting teammate. After the throw is made, both players run

to the goal. The play finishes with a shot. As season progresses, coach should add more pressure. This can be done with 3v1. As season progresses, a defender is added and is coached on how to intercept/steal a throw-in.

- Goal kick play: three (3) lines: one taking goal kick and two lines 10 yards ahead of kicker. Kicker kicks to one of the players who, with other teammate, runs and takes a shot. Coach is lightly covering one of the targets. As season progresses, a defender is added and is coached on how to intercept/steal the kick and score an easy goal. This might be done with a dad kicking to another dad. The players are shown how to run and intercept for an easy shot.
- Kick Off – Offense and Defense – Position the players the way they will be in the game. Defenders touch finger tips, offensive players positioned around their half of center circle. Teach center forward to pass at 45 degree angle to partner who starts run as soon as ball is kicked. Emphasize not kicking straight ahead. Teach defenders how to handle kicks straight at them and kicks off to the side.
- Have the players in two lines by the center circle. Have a player from one line start moving towards the net and feed him/her a ball from beside the net. They have to dribble toward the net and shoot. Players should move quickly through the line. You should have lots of parents to help collect balls and keep players moving through the lines.

## JUGGLING

### **Beach Head**

Have players stand in single-file line three (3) feet away from goal line. The coach should stand on the goal line and toss a beach ball (regular ball for older players) underhanded to the first player who heads it to coach's face and runs around marker to back of line. For one team, use a stopwatch to set "record" time to beat. For two or more teams, have them compete against each other.

### **Black Jack (21)**

Play with two or more players. First player juggles as many touches as they can and keeps track of count. Second player goes after first misses. After second player misses, first player goes again starting count where they missed in first turn. For example if player got five touches in first turn, they would start second turn at six. First player to Black Jack (21) wins. This game can also be made more challenging by restricting it to certain body parts.

### **P-E-L-E**

Play with two players. First player juggles one, second player has to match. First player then juggles two and second player matches. First player then juggles three and so on. When a player misses, the other player gets a letter - first P then E then L then E. After awarding a letter, the players start out at one again. The first player to spell PELE is the winner. This can be

played thighs only, feet only, head only or any combination.

### **Timed Juggles**

See how many touches the player can get in a certain amount of time. We do a three minute timed contest. They don't have to be consecutive without a miss. This works great for getting the players focused and working hard for a certain time period and is great for aerobic fitness.

### **Team Juggling**

Contest Have each player juggle and see how many touches they can get. Add the total touches for the whole team and create a team record. If they beat their team record, the coaches run a lap around the field. If they don't beat their record, the players run a lap around the field. When the players are not very good jugglers, it doesn't take very long. I have seen huge improvements in my teams' juggling skills by doing nothing more than this in practice. It's just enough focus to get them working on their own.

**NOTE:** Juggling – how many times a player can bounce the ball in the air using any part of the body except the hands (head, knee, foot, etc.) without the ball touching the ground.

## GOAL KEEPING

### **6-Shot-Stop**

Coach stands 5-6 yards from goal with several balls. Coach simulates shots at goal by rolling to the side, lobbing over head, throwing down to replicate a downward header... always giving the keeper a chance. If the keeper misses the ball, use another. After save, keeper must throw the ball back before doing anything else. Six (6) shots maximum.

### **Keeper Wars**

Using four cones create two goal about 5-10 yards apart (depending on age, ability, etc). The width of the goals should be just beyond the arm span of the keepers. The keepers sit just in front of the cones facing each other. Each attempt to score goals on the other by rolling or throwing the ball through the goal. The ball must be kept below their shoulders.

**Variations:** Have the players stand rather than sit. Extend the goal width and/or the distant the players stand from each other. Have players kneel so they can work on “diving” left/right (the goal when kneeling is not to score but to get player to “dive” and make a successful stop).

*Resources: “Soccer Coach-L Coach’s Manual” – <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dgraham/manual/>;  
“Ace Soccer Coaching Cards” (World of Soccer, 1994)*