

Without a doubt dribbling and ball familiarity are *the* fundamentals of the game. The USA philosophy incorporates maximum touches on the ball within a fun environment for younger players. Dribbling develops players confidence and allows players to be more comfortable on the ball. Increased confidence can only lead to greater creativity and a positive attacking attitude. As a coach you should encourage players to use different parts of the foot as well as changes in direction and pace.

Coaching Points:

- Different parts of the foot: inside, outside, sole, laces
- Head up
- Keep ball close to you (small touches)
- Changes in pace (explosive)
- Changes in direction
- Zig zag
- Space
- CREATIVITY

KEY COACHING POINTS

TECHNIQUE: Dribbling

There are 3 types of dribbling:

Possession:

- keep body between ball and defender
- play ball with farthest foot
- keep body at right angle to defender
- use arm to make space
- come away from goal, move laterally

Running with the Ball:

- toe is down
- use instep or outside of foot
- first play of ball is a long first touch with inside of foot
- as space decreases, ball stays closer

Attack Defender:

- change speed and direction
- attack defenders front leg
- get in space behind defender to cut recovery

Indy 500/Traffic Cop/ Red Light, Green Light

Players use their soccer balls as cars and dribble/drive around the area/ Manhattan. Emphasize players keeping their balls/cars under control. Slowly add different commands as the game progresses. Do not over load the players with too much information.

- Coach calls out either 1st, 2nd or 3rd gear to determine players speed.
- “Red light” for stop, “green light” for go.
- Coach becomes traffic cop to patrol the area for cars out of control. If cars are out of control players get a ticket and have to do # of juggles to pay off the fine and get back in the game.
- “Traffic jam” players have to sit on their soccer balls and honk their horns as loud as they can.
- If they crash into someone else they have to go to the garage and do # of juggles to get their car fixed and come back into the game.
- “Bumper cars” players have to try and hit other cars with their own soccer ball (intro to passing).
- “*Low Flying Airplanes*” On seeing a plane anywhere overhead give the command low flying airplane, the players have to place their chests on the ball and pretend to be an airplane.
- “ *Low Bridges*” The players have to make an arch over the ball then continue around the area.

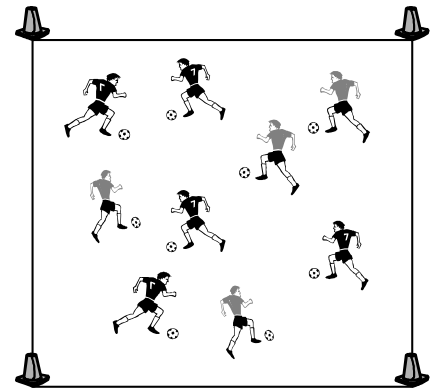
This is not a 5 minute progression. it is up to the ability and imagination of the coach to build up the game. You may play the same game for 5 minutes over a six week program and slowly introduce new tasks for the players. Change aspects of the game if you choose and try to make them soccer specific. E.g. Left flat tyre, therefore players have to use their right foot only etc.

Knock Out

Players dribble around the area whilst designated players without a ball try and kick out the other players ball. Once players have been knocked out they have to do a soccer specific task to get back into the game. With older players you can have an elimination round but players that have been knocked out juggle until the game has finished.

Variations:

- Team knockout: players are placed into teams of 2/3/4 etc. The game is timed, and each team in turn tries to knock out all the other players balls in the shortest time.
- Players are sorted into their teams and differentiated by pinnies. All teams are in together and work as a team to try and knock out the other teams balls.



Kick Out

Whilst players are dribbling their ball around they have to try and kick out other players soccer balls whilst keeping control of their own soccer balls. It is essential that players keep control of their own soccer balls, players only score a point if they kick out another players ball AND they have control of their own ball.

Heads & Tails

Players dribble any where inside the area, upon the coaches command "heads" players must stop and place their head on top of the ball. "Tails" players have to stop and squat on the ball. Do not allow players to use their hands. Players will try and stop the ball with their head and butt.!!

Variation:

- Change the command "heads" to mean "tails" and vice versa.

Body Parts

Similar to heads and tails but the coach calls out a part of the body, which players have to place on the ball (E.g. right knee, left foot, left elbow, left ear, nose etc). You can also use combinations of the above which players have to perform on your command (E.g. Right knee, left knee, head, butt. Right foot, left foot, right foot etc). Avoid using hands.

Pirate Ship

Players dribble anywhere inside your area, freely and creatively. You are now the captain of the ship, and your players are the crew. You need the ship cleaning from top to bottom. The players soccer balls are mops and they must cover every inch of the ship otherwise lazy crew members will have to walk the plank and be fed to the sharks!! Slowly build up the game as if you were telling a story.

Variations:

- Whenever you call out “captain on deck”, players have to stop their soccer ball, keep one foot on the ball whilst saluting you calling out “Aye aye captain”. To which you reply “as you were” or give another order or part of the story
- “Scrub the deck”, players do a drag back turn with the right foot in one direction and then a drag back turn with the left foot travelling in the same direction you were travelling.
- “pirates” players have to retreat to their barracks which is a designated area marked with discs. You also have to play the role of the pirate, unless you have an assistant. If they get caught they have to do # of juggles.
- “Climb the rigging” players have to do toe taps on the ball whilst simulating hoisting a sail with their hands.
- “Hoist the sails” players have to do a scissors move around the ball

Use your imagination once again to make the game/story as fun as possible. Be sure to insist on quality in all that the players do, such as dragbacks, scissors moves, step ups etc.

Mine Field

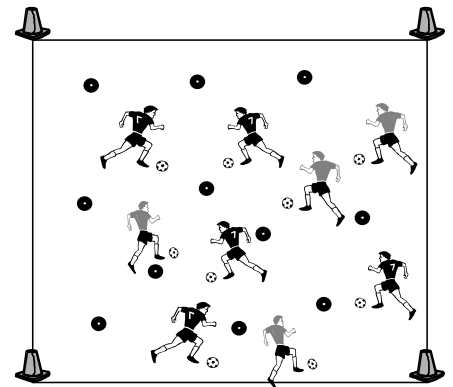
Spread discs anywhere around your area. All the discs are mines, and players have to dribble their soccer balls inside the mine field avoiding the mines. If they dribble into a mine they have to go outside of the square and do # of juggles to get back in.

Variation:

- Players are able to diffuse mines by doing a designated move to get around each mine (scissors, Matthews, drag back push etc.).

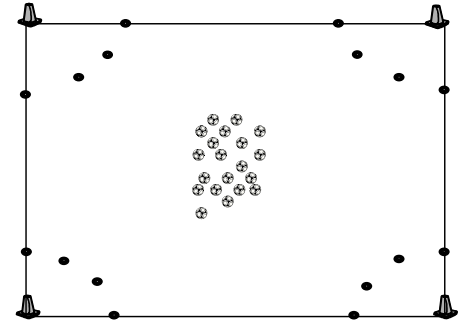
Mozzie Attack

Players dribble around area, upon the coaches command two or more designated mosquitoes/players try and tag the other players. Once players have been tagged they have been bitten and have to hold the body part where they have been bitten whilst dribbling their soccer ball. This continues until you have been bitten twice, if you get bitten a third time (as you only have two hands) you have to go to the outside of the area and do a soccer specific task (e.g. juggles etc) then you are allowed back into the game. Mosquitoes cannot tag a player consecutively. Rotate mosquitoes every few minutes.



Jurassic Park

Organize your players into equal groups of 3, 4 or 5. Place all the soccer balls into the middle of your square and place a group in each corner. Each group is a type of dinosaur e.g. T-Rex, Pterodactyl, Brontosaurus etc. On the coaches command one player from each group runs into the middle to collect a dinosaur egg/ball and dribble it back to their dinosaur den. When they are safely back in their den the next person collects a ball. Only one person is allowed to leave the den at a time. As soon as all the eggs/balls have gone the game is over. Count how many eggs each group has. To get all the eggs back into the middle each dinosaur group holds hands making a circle around their eggs. Players are not allowed to break the circle and use their feet to move the balls back into the middle.



Variations:

- Players have to do # of step-ups on the egg/ball before they can dribble it back to their den.
- Players have to do a drag back turn (left foot/right foot).
- # of side to sides.
- Drag the ball backwards using both feet alternately (step ups) all the way back to their den.
- As soon as all the eggs/balls have gone from the middle players may steal from other dinosaur dens.
- Only one person may leave their den at a time.
- Players are not allowed to protect their eggs, they must let players steal them.

Dribbling Awareness

As players dribble around the coach walks through and around the area raising their hand holding up # of fingers. Players have to call out how many fingers the coach is holding up.

Star Wars

2 or more designated players (Darth Vader, Darth Maul etc) are allowed to hold their soccer ball (thermo nuclear detonator) in their hands. On the coaches command Darth Vader and Darth Maul try to turn all the other players to the dark side by throwing their soccer ball (thermo nuclear detonator) at the players soccer ball. If a players soccer ball is hit they are turned to the dark side and join Darth Vader and Darth Maul in their quest to turn everyone to the dark side. Once all players have been turned to the dark side the coach chooses a new Darth Vader and Darth Maul (maybe the last person to be turned to the dark side).

Players are encouraged to shield the ball away from the two designated players.

Partner Kick Out

In pairs players attempt to kick out their partners ball whilst keeping control of their own ball. (1v1)

Organizational Warm up

Organizing players into groups can be difficult for players that do not have any friends or maybe shy. To avoid any situation where players are upset use this game, it is also a good introduction for players (particularly at camp who may not know anyone). We want to avoid players picking their own teams as it is not nice to be the last one picked. It can be fun.

Players dribble around the area using different parts of the foot. Coach calls out a number, players have to get into groups of that number. Any player(s) who have no one to stand with can be the coaches best friend. Repeat but players are not allowed to stand with any player that they have been with before. Repeat until you get groups of how many you need 2's, 3's, 4's etc.

Partner Tag

In pairs, both players with a ball. One player has to try & tag their partner to score a point, if tagged change over. Repeat with different partners. Tagger must be in control of their own ball to tag partner.

Nutmeg Mania

Players divided into 2 equal teams. Team B stand in 20x20 grid with legs spread apart and do not move. Team A have 3 minutes to dribble around the space. Each player counts how many nutmegs s/he makes, and the coach adds up to find team score. The teams swap over, and Team B tries to outscore Team A.

Circle Tig

Players are put in pairs and stand around a circle (e.g. centre circle) – partner to opposite side of the circle. All players have a ball. Pairs are numbered. Coach calls “Pair #4” and these 2 enter circle, dribbling ball. Coach calls one of the players’ names, and that player is “on” and must chase other player (both players continue to dribble their ball at all times). If tg is successful, the tiggd player is now “on” and immediately starts to chase after the other player. Continue for 1 minute. At the end, the player not “on” gets a point, and coach now calls out a new number.

Variation: call 2 or more numbers at the same time.

Snake Race

Players are put into teams of 4, 5 or 6. Each team stands in line with 2/3 yards between each player. All players have a ball at their feet. On the “GO”, back most player sets off and dribbles to front of group, zig-zagging in between each of the players in his team. Once at the front he must stop approx. 2 or 3 yards in the front, then back player sets off to do the same. The “snake” is thus moving forward, and the aim is to be the first team to designated finish line (whole length of the pitch if there is one available).

Soccer frenzy (Jurassic Park)

All the balls in the middle of area, 4 different teams. Use the game as a speed dribbling competition with the addition of various tasks to increase demands and pressure on players.

Truck and Trailer

In pairs both players with a ball. Player one is a truck the other is a Trailer. Wherever the truck goes Trailer must follow. Start the game and add commands after a few minutes. On the coaches command "change" Truck becomes Trailer and Trailer becomes truck, repeat. Start off slow but quickly encourage players to be creative and lose their tail.

Progress to awarding points. When the coach says "stop", if Trailer can touch truck by both players reaching out, Trailer scores a point. Obviously if Trailer cannot touch Truck, then Sonic scores a point, repeat. Enforce that players stop exactly where they are on your command, and don't cheat.

Variations:

- "Switch" trailer have to find a different trucks/partner to follow (pinnies may help to distinguish players should they have difficulties). Encourages players to keep their head up whilst dribbling.
- Tails does not have a ball, repeat as above. Encourages sharper turns and changes in speed for the player with the ball.
- Also, encourages good defensive play from trailer/shadow. Do not allow tackling for good defensive stance, "switch" encourages players to quickly find a new player to mark/defend.
- 1v1 Good competition. Whoever has the ball when the coach says stop, gets a point/goal.

Additional Coaching Points:

- Shield the ball away from an opponent.
- The ball should be kept as far away from the defender as possible, using the furthest foot.
- Arms should be held and feeling for the defender.
- Knees should be bent and the players head up, looking beyond the ball.

Speed Dribbling

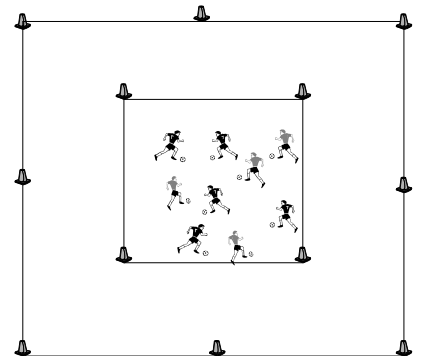
Players dribble around a small area with a larger area 15-20 yards outside. On the coaches command players have to speed dribble to the outer area and back keeping the ball under control. Players have to dribble in a close confined area and then change pace and technique quickly.

3v3/4v4/5v5/6v6 Possession and Penetration

Play possession game to end zone. Players must dribble into the end zone to score. Players cannot wait in zone but must be moving into it. There are off sides.

Variation:

- Make space larger or smaller
- Players must complete # of passes before attempting to score



Small-Sided Games

Play small sided games to a large goal, possible loading the attack to create success, fewer defenders should allow larger gaps in the defense for attackers to make penetrating runs to create shooting opportunities. Condition the scrimmage in various ways to encourage the players to dribble.

Variations:

- Players cannot pass the ball forwards.
- Players have to beat a player before they can score.
- Use a end zone in which to dribble into as opposed to goals as a target.