



# **Training Program**

## **Under 8: Season Plan**

**Gary Stephenson, Technical Director of Coaching**

**Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer**

4070 Butler Pike, Suite 100  
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

**Phone:** 610-238-9966

**Website:** EPYSA.org

**Email:** gstephenson@epysa.org

## How to Organize Your Intramural Program

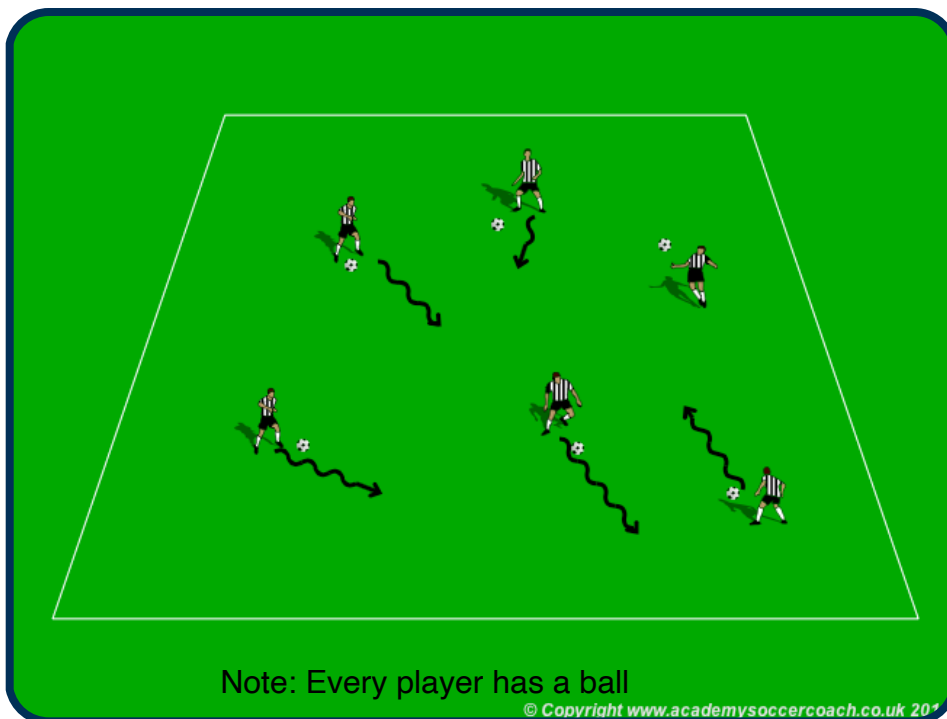
The calendar year should be split into two seasons, a fall season and a spring season (optional). A season should be 8 to 10 weeks in duration and consist of a practice night and a game day. The practice should be no longer than 60-75 minutes in length and game day should be no longer than 1 hour in length. Teams should consist of 8-14 players.

Specific curriculums for practices are detailed later for each specific age, as well as, understanding a session plan.

A couple of key points to remember and avoid at practice include:

- No exercises with lines.
- Warm-ups should include work with the ball.
- No players standing.
- Every player should have a ball, unless involved with passing exercises or games.

Remember this is practice time, not story time, so don't sit your team down for a long, spirit raising, team talk. You are stealing time when your players could be working on their new skills from previous practice or newly introduced technique.



# Intramural Program

By Gary Stephenson



## Game Day

- Players arrive 10 minutes before scheduled game time (20 minutes for the coach)
- Practice (warm up)-10 minutes
- Water break-5 minutes
- First Half-20 minutes
- Water break-5 minutes
- Second Half-20 minutes
- Players shake hands with the other team

## Logistics for Game Day

Start with two adjacent fields with one team on each. Each team warm ups for 10 minutes with their coaches, the team then splits into 2 teams of 4 to 7. They then play the other team on the field beside them; thus, two games are being played at once. Utilize assistant coaches to run the benches on both fields, allowing the head coach to monitor both games.

*Remember no coaches on the field giving direction!*

U8 (7 year olds) should play 4v4\* or 5v5\* with no goal-keepers.

U9 (8 year olds) should play 6v6\* or 7v7\* with no goal-keepers at the start of the season. Goal-keepers are added as the season goes on (around week 5 - 6).

*\* note from U.S. Soccer Curriculum*

Examine and reflect on your team's performance at home and decide what areas to work on in your next training session.

## Objectives from U.S. Soccer

**SCRIMMAGE:** Balance in relation to the ball and teammates during the game.

**TECHNICAL:** Individual and collective basic soccer techniques.

**PHYSICAL:** Develop speed, coordination and basic motor skills with and without the ball.

**PSYCHOSOCIAL:** Interact with teammates during the training session.



## Water break

The major point to remember here is it is water break time; NOT snack time or time for that long coach's speech (they will not listen, opening their drink is the most important thing to them at this time)

## Coaching in the Game

Your role is to be a positive energy and keep the game flowing. (not quarterbacking!!!)

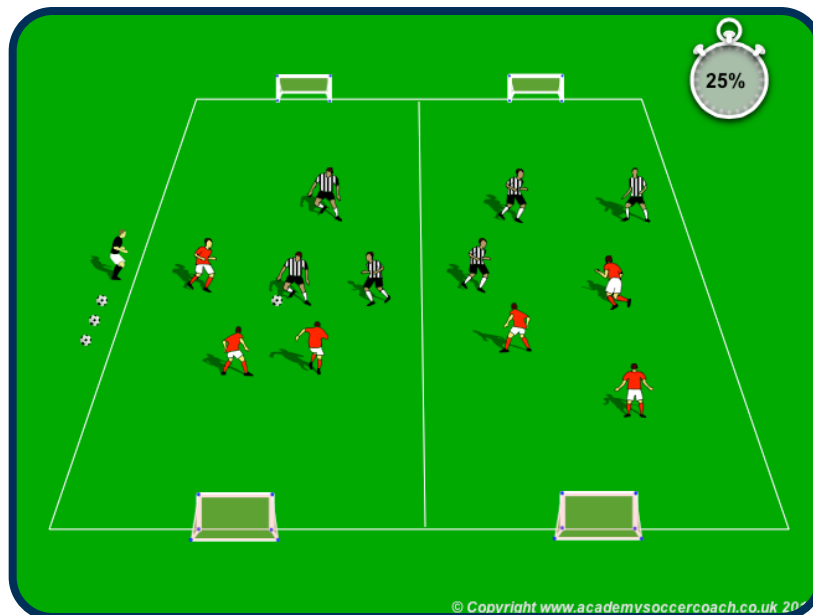
Let your team know who is on the field first. Again, no long explanation on what your formation is. They don't want to know and never get in that formation any way! The kids just want to play, so let them. If you want to give one of your players some information, make it short, clear and directly to that child, one to one.

Avoid shouting; you may be the best coach in the club, but nobody is interested in your expertise. They want to watch and enjoy the kids demonstrate what they know.

Never waiver from your style of play. Do not play to defend a lead. Kids want to score goals.

Remember:

# LET THEM PLAY!



## Goals! Why they are Essential

As a coach you play a very large and positive role in your players and their parent's development. You are often seen as much more than a leader in practices & games. Because of your position you really are a teacher, as well as an individual mentor, to be utilized when needed. To excel in this position you must set yourself goals for each individual. The most important aspect in setting these goals is that they are not driven by game results and are measurable. They should be detailed at the start of any season giving you a realistic picture to strive towards. There has been a lot of research done in the soccer world to put guidelines down as what players at each age group should be able to do. We have taken this data and tailored objectives and lessons for age specific groups. Before you sit down and work on the big picture there are a few factors which need to be taken into account.

Research from Ewing, M. & Seefeldt, V., (1989). *Participation and attrition patterns in American agency-sponsored and interscholastic sports: An executive summary*. Final report Sporting Goods Manufacturer's Association (North Palm Beach, FL: Sporting Goods Manufacturer's Association) as cited from Weinberg & Gould (2007). *Foundations of Sport & Exercise Psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

### Reasons kids drop out of sports:

- Failing to learn or improve skills
- Not having fun
- Not being with their friends
- Lack of excitement, improvisation & creative opportunities
- Lack of exercise, meaningful movement & fitness improvements
- Lack of optimal challenges &/or consistent failure

### Reasons kids play sports:

- To learn & improve their skills
- To have fun
- To be with friends
- To experience the excitement of competition
- To enhance their physical fitness
- To demonstrate their competence

It becomes your role as teacher and mentor to examine your training sessions and see if they are aligned with the reasons kids play and avoid the reasons children search out other activities.



## Coaching Goals for 7 Year Olds and 8 Year Olds

It is important to set goals which are attainable, but also measurable to know your players are improving. There are standards from every soccer association including the US Soccer Federation. Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer has studied and incorporated these standards and tailored it to a club's intramural/house/travel program.

Most players can demonstrate the below tasks but most players can not perform them under pressure (the game).

At this stage of our player development each player should be able to demonstrate (after the season):

- Players should be able to dribble the ball with both feet at different speeds and change direction while keeping the ball at a controllable distance. (mirroring 5 & 6 yrs. old)
- Players should be able to demonstrate three different moves in a game situation. Some examples are: Drag back, Scissors, J Cut, Shoulder drop, Step over, Inside/Outside (These three moves, along with many more will be available at EPYSA.org)
- Should be able to pass the ball (short distances up to 10 yards) with both feet, using the correct technique.

At this age the main focus will be dribbling, but players should also develop passing, control, and ball skills.

As coaches we must NOT get hung up on positioning in the games, but should focus on the goals above.

## Characteristic of the Age Group\*

- Very young players from 5 to 8 years of age love to play. Therefore, all practices should be based on fun games.
- Players must spend the maximum time possible in contact with the ball and experiment by themselves.
- For the first time the player has to build a relationship with other players.
- Give different responsibilities to the players in order to develop a sense of team.
- Basic motor skills like walking, running or jumping have to be combined with ball handling and ball control.

\* from U.S. Soccer Curriculum

# Summary - 7 & 8 year olds

By Gary Stephenson



US  
YOUTH  
SOCCER



## Practice Curriculum

Players this age do not mind repetition and find comfort in familiar exercises. Most exercises within the sessions involve a ball per player. Remember to try and teach the age group goals but most important let them play and have FUN.

Week 1 Red Light, Green Light, reverse (Drag Back)

Ball Toss

Math Dribble

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 2 Red Light, Green Light, reverse (Drag Back)

Body Parts

Balls in the Air

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 3 Red Light, Green Light, (J Cut)

Fox & the Farmer

Hit the Robot Coach

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 4 Red Light, Green Light, (J Cut)

Gate Game

Hit the Robot coach

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 5 Red Light, Green Light, (Scissors)

Body Parts

Pac Man

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 6 Red Light, Green Light, (Scissors)

Avoiding the Collision

Changing Square

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 7 Red Light, Green Light, (recap moves)

Avoiding the Collision

End Zone

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 8 Red Light, Green Light, (recap moves)

Soccer Marbles

Soccer Dodgeball

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 9 Red Light, Green Light, (recap moves)

Changing Square

Gate Game

Scrimmage (small sided games)

Week 10 Red Light, Green Light, (recap moves)

Gate Game

End Zone

Scrimmage (small sided games)

# Week 1 - 7 & 8 year olds - Control

By Gary Stephenson

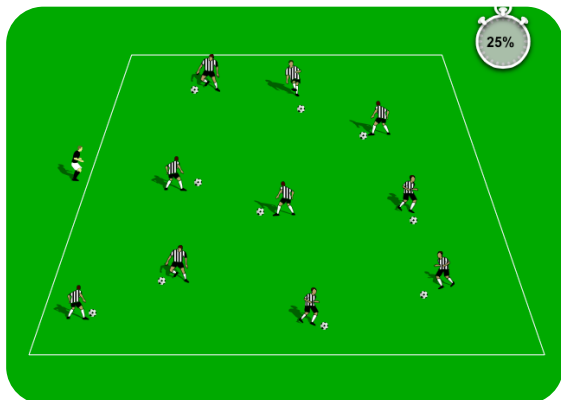


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)

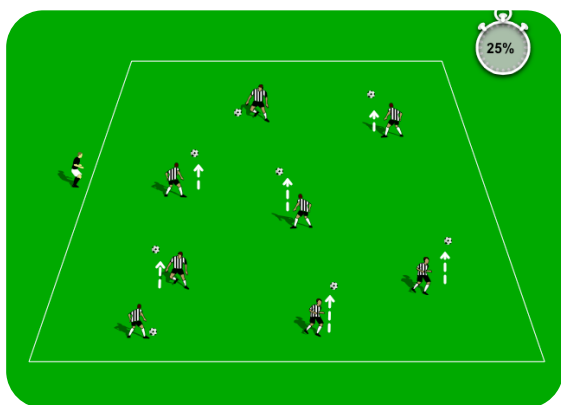
Introduce the Reverse (Drag Back)



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Ball Toss

Each player dribbles around with a ball. On the coach's command they pick up the ball and toss it in the air and touch it before it hits the ground, then they dribble waiting for the coach's command again.



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

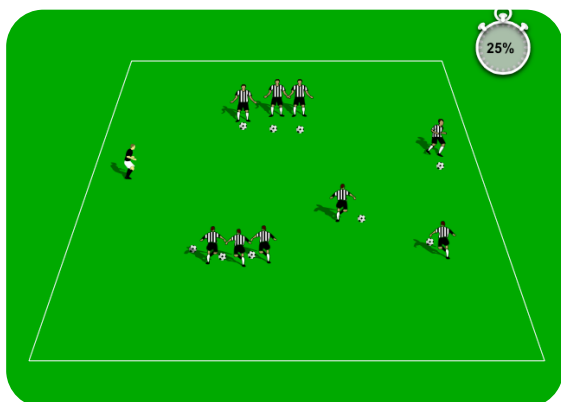
### Math Dribble

Each player has a ball and moves around in side a 20yd x 20yd grid. The players try to avoid contact with each other and try to keep the ball close (love taps\*).

On command from the coach the players with balls form chains; holding hands in groups of the number called or the result of a simple math problem.

For example, the coach shouts "3 + 1" then players must make chains of 4 etc....

\*Note love tap refers to dribbling with a light touch with the inside of the foot, with the process repeated with the other foot – thus keeping the ball close while dribbling.

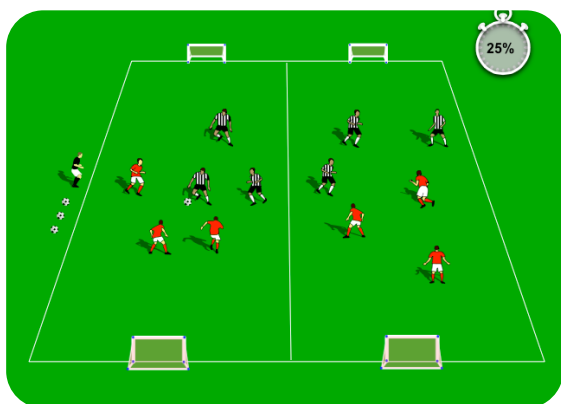


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction





# Week 2 - 7 & 8 year olds - Control

By Gary Stephenson

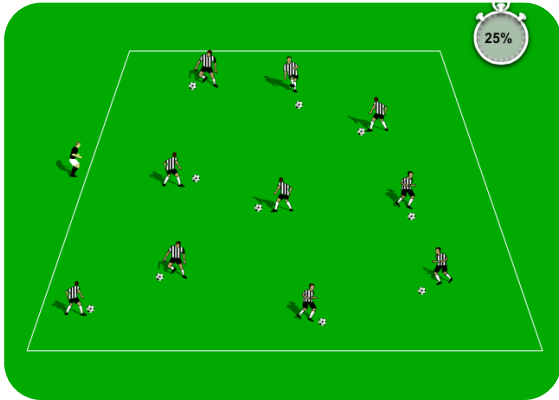


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)

Introduce the Reverse (Drag Back)



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Body Parts

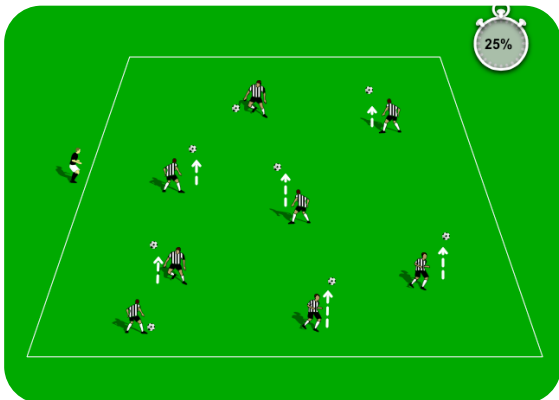
Every player has a ball as they are dribbling around the coach. The coach calls out a body part such as foot, back, belly, knee (right or left), butt etc... The player must stop the ball without using their hands and only using the called body part. On the "go" command from the coach they start to dribble around again.



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Balls in the Air

Each player dribbles around with a ball. On the coach's command they pick up the ball and toss it in the air and touch it before it hits the ground, then they dribble waiting for the coach's command again.

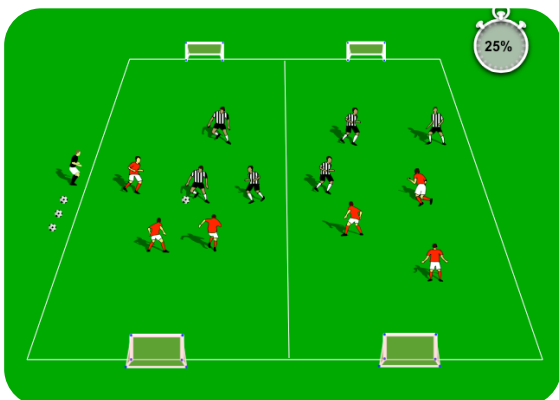


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction



# Week 3 - 7 & 8 year olds - Passing

By Gary Stephenson

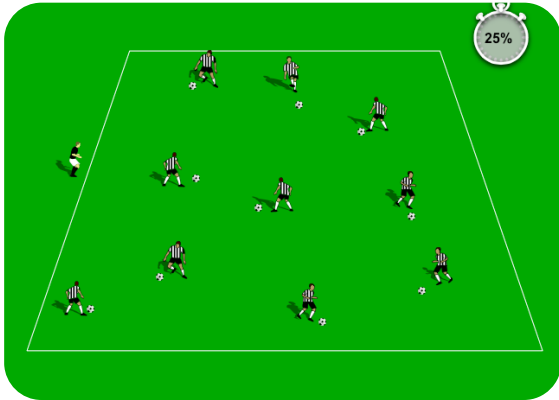


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)

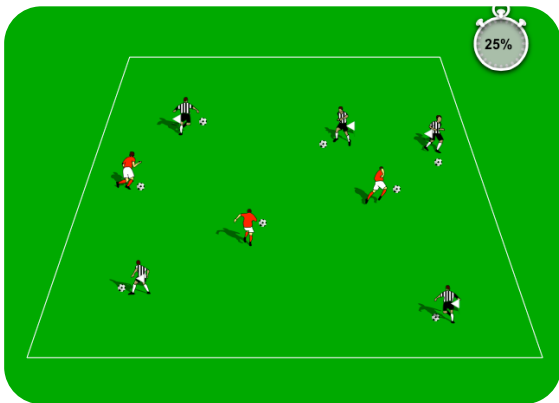
Introduce the J Cut (Cut Back)



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Fox and the Farmer

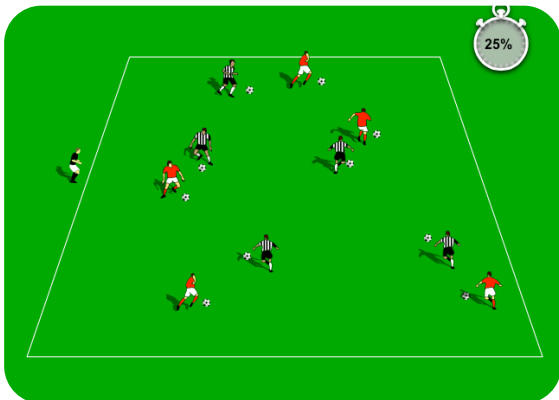
The group is split into 2 teams; the fox and the farmers. Each player has a ball. Each fox has a scrimmage vest tucked into the back of their shorts giving them fox tails. Each fox dribbles around keeping the ball away from the farmers. The farmers must try and pull out the fox tails while dribbling their ball. Once a fox has lost its tail they become a farmer. Play until there is only one fox.



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Hit the Robot Coach

The coach is a robot and walks around the field (like a robot). The players all have a ball and each player tries to hit the coach with the ball below the knee. They can only pass it with the inside of their foot. If their ball goes out of bounds they must complete a move 5 times to get back in. If the coach is hit, he or she loses an arm; if hit again the other arm, then again a leg (so you hop around). Game is done when the coach is hit the fourth time. Get a parent to be the next robot and the coach watches for passing technique.

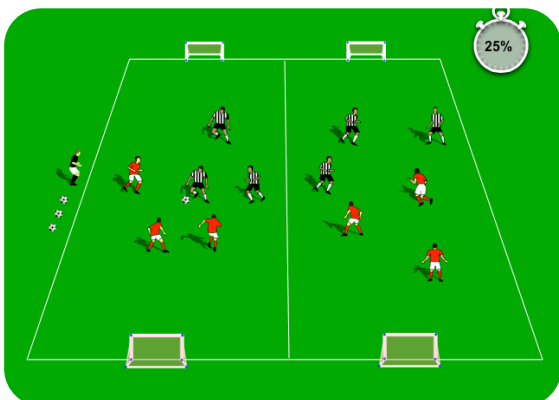


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction



# Week 4 - 7 & 8 year olds - Passing

By Gary Stephenson

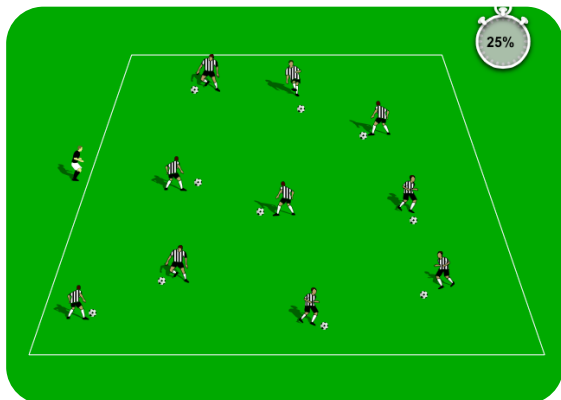


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)  
"Hard Turn" - They perform a J Cut (Cut Back)

J Cut



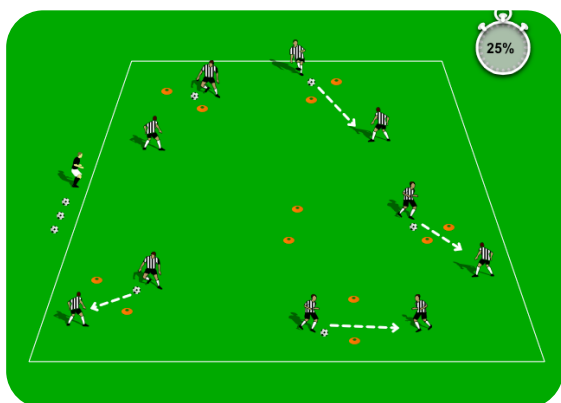
## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Gate game

Set up lots of cones in pairs "gates" 3 feet apart all over the field

Players in pairs with one ball between the two go to a gate and stand 5-10 yds apart then pass to each other between the cones. To score a point they must control the ball and then pass back. Players should use both feet.

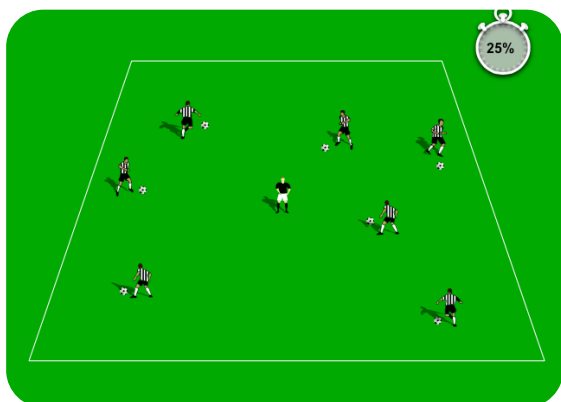
Then next progression is they make one pass each at a gate then go and find a new one as a pair



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Hit the Robot coach

The coach is a robot and walks around the field (like a robot). The players all have a ball and each player tries to hit the coach with the ball below the knee. They can only pass it with the inside of their foot. If their ball goes out of bounds they must complete a move 5 times to get back in. If the coach is hit, he or she loses an arm; if hit again the other arm, then again a leg (so you hop around). Game is done when the coach is hit the fourth time. Get a parent to be the next robot and the coach watches for passing technique.

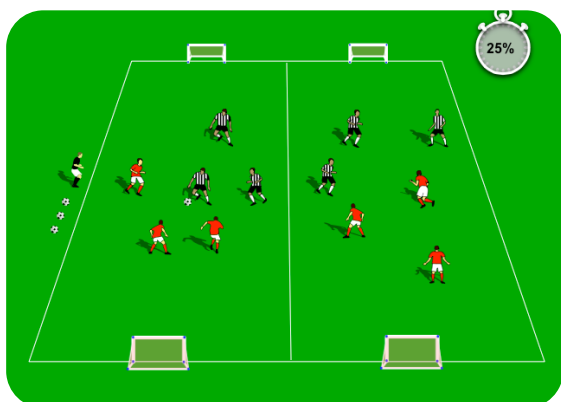


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction



# Week 5 - 7 & 8 year olds - Passing

By Gary Stephenson

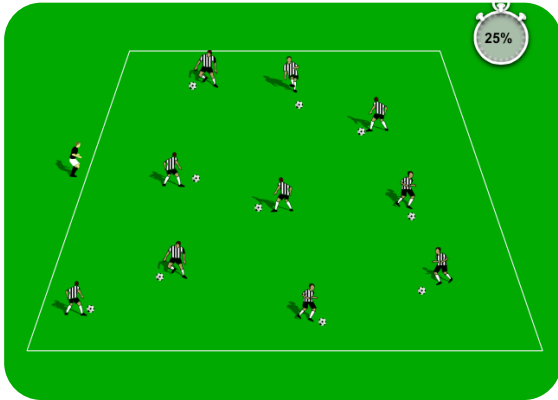


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)  
"Hard Turn" - They perform a J Cut (Cut Back)  
"Cross-roads" - they perform a scissors

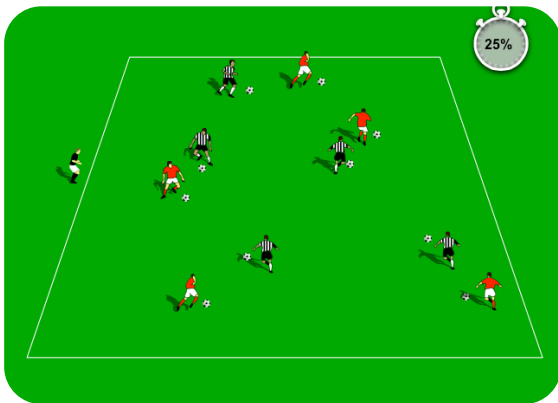
Introduce the Scissors



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Body Parts

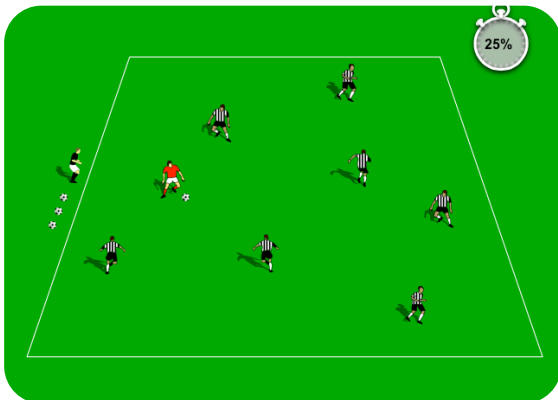
Every player has a ball as they are dribbling around the coach. The coach calls out a body part such as foot, back, belly, knee (right or left), butt etc... The player must stop the ball without using their hands and only using the called body part. On the "go" command from the coach they start to dribble around again.



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Pac Man

In a square one player has a ball and must try and tag the other players with the ball below the knee. If a player is tagged then they go and get a ball and become a Pac Man (Ms Pac Man) too. Game continues until there is one player left. They become Pac Man (Ms Pac man) in the next game at the start.

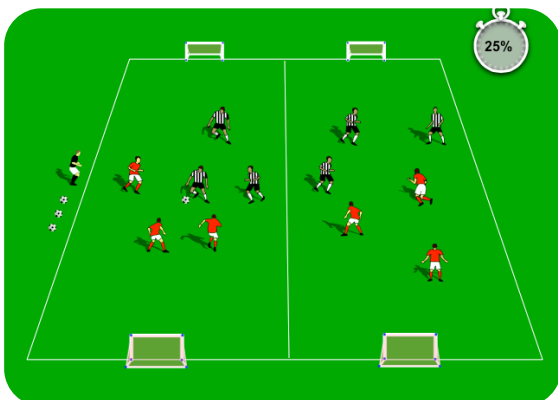


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction.



# Week 6 - 7 & 8 year olds - Dribbling

By Gary Stephenson

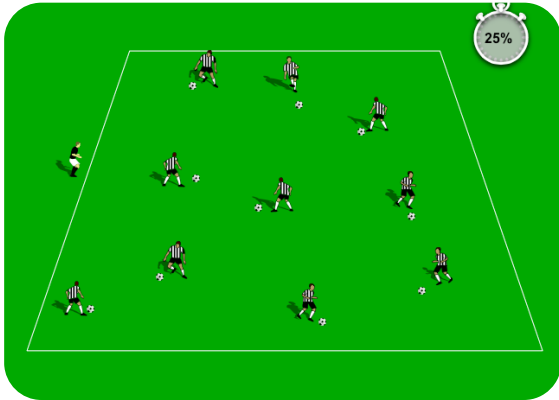


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)  
"Hard Turn" - They perform a J Cut (Cut Back)  
"Cross-roads" - they perform a scissors

Scissors

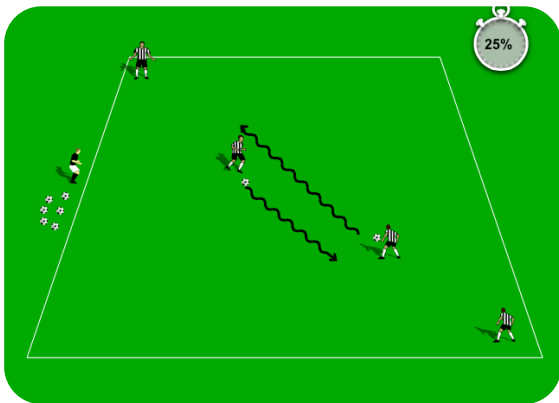


## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Avoiding Collision

Players are placed equally in all the corners of a square. Two balls are used in the exercise. The object is to dribble the ball to the opposite corner (diagonal). Then the player at the corner takes the ball and dribbles the ball back to the corner. This keeps going while the other corners are completing the task too. The idea is to keep the player's heads up so avoid any collision. You can also have a coach put passive pressure in the center of the square.

You may put restrictions such as left or right foot dribbling only or utilizing various surfaces of the foot.

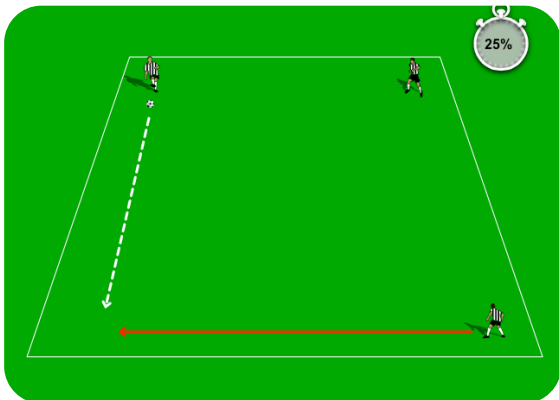


## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Changing Square

Set up two or three squares any place on the field. The team is divided into groups so there is a group in each square. They dribble around in the square trying to keep the ball inside the square and not touch anyone. You come up with a hand signal which means they have to go to a new square (clockwise or counter clockwise). The first team in the new square dribbling around with out hitting anyone gains a point.

The hand signals promote the head up when dribbling and also you will see team work as they tell each other when and where to go.

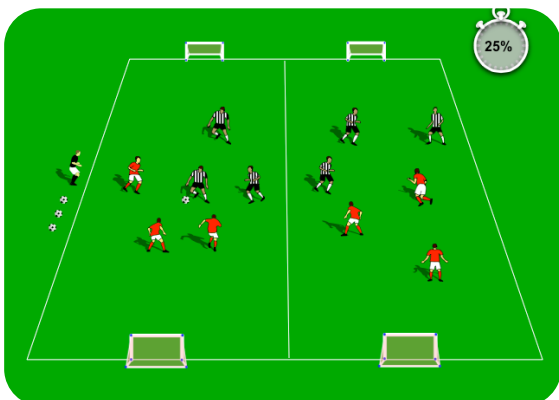


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction



# Week 7 - 7 & 8 year olds - Dribbling

By Gary Stephenson

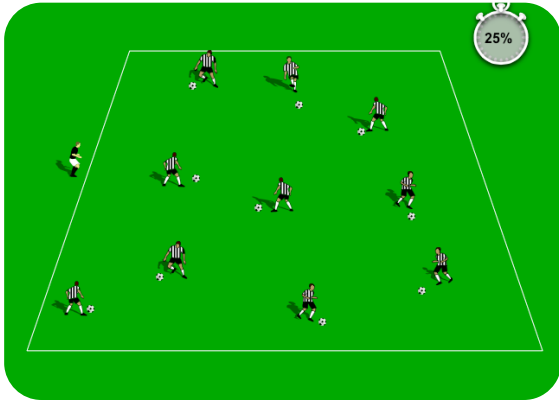


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)  
"Hard Turn" - They perform a J Cut (Cut Back)  
"Cross-roads" - they perform a scissors

Review all 3 moves

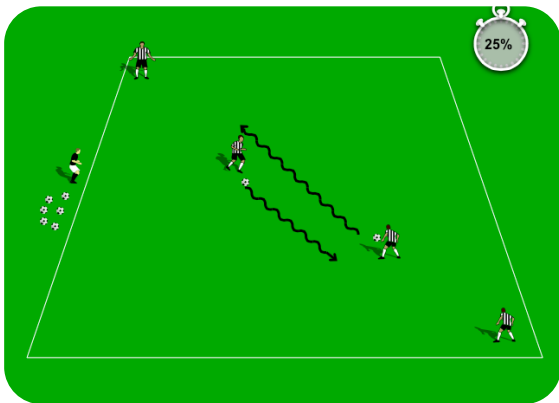


## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Avoid Collision

Players are placed equally in all the corners of a square. Two balls are used in the exercise. The object is to dribble the ball to the opposite corner (diagonal). Then the player at the corner takes the ball and dribbles the ball back to the corner. This keeps going while the other corners are completing the task too. The idea is to keep the player's heads up so avoid any collision. You can also have a coach put passive pressure in the center of the square.

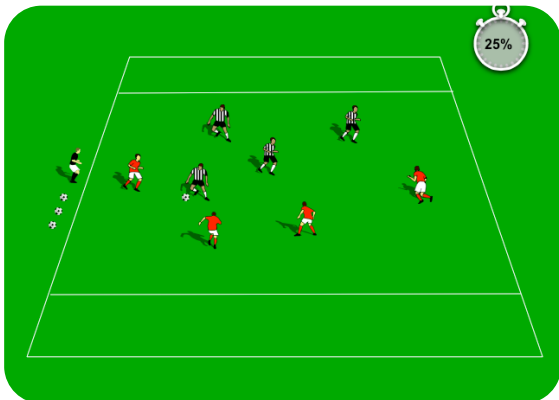
You may put restrictions such as left or right foot dribbling only or utilizing various surfaces of the foot.



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### End Zone

Two end zones are added to the 20 yds x 20 yds grid. Players are split into 2 teams. A team scores by dribbling the ball into the end zone and stopping the ball. Nobody without a ball is allowed into the end zone. If felt needed, add extra balls to increase touches on the ball.

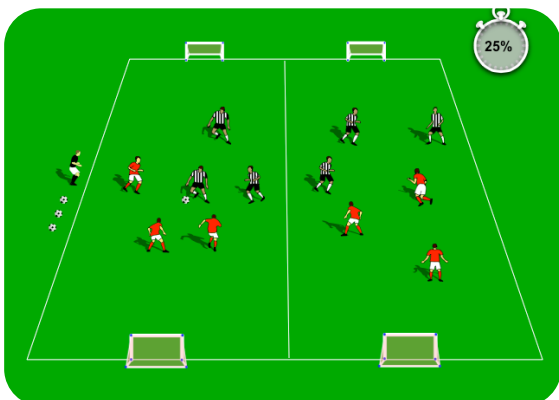


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction



# Week 8 - 7 & 8 year olds - Passing

By Gary Stephenson

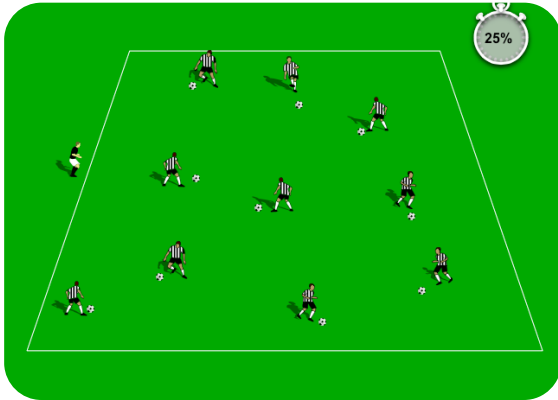


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)  
"Hard Turn" - They perform a J Cut (Cut Back)  
"Cross-roads" - they perform a scissors

Review all 3 moves



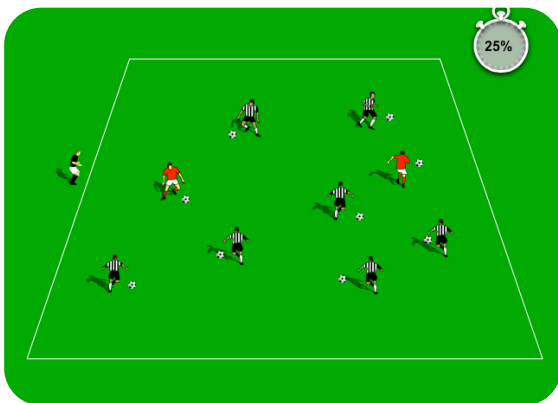
## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Soccer Marbles

Each player has a ball  
Two players who are selected as the kings or queens  
The object is for the king and queen to dribble around inside the grid with their ball not being hit by the other player's balls.  
Everyone else has a ball and tries to hit the king's or queen's ball by passing with the inside of the foot.

Play for timed period.

Everyone gets to be king or queen even the coach.

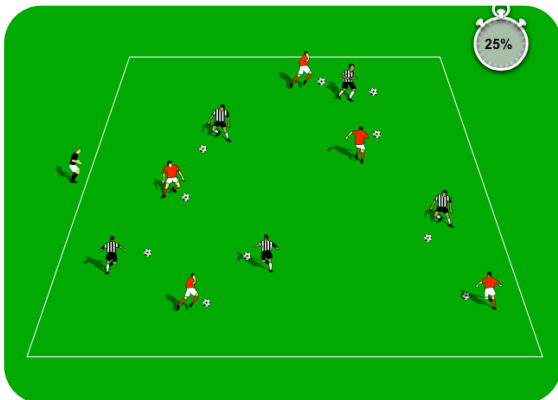


## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Soccer Dodge Ball

Split the players into two teams  
One team has a ball per player

The team with and without the balls are in the square. The team with the balls must try and hit the other team (below the knee). The team gets a point if they hit the other team only if they use an inside of the foot pass. If the player is hit they must run and give the coach a high five and they return to the game. Play for 3 minutes and change team roles.

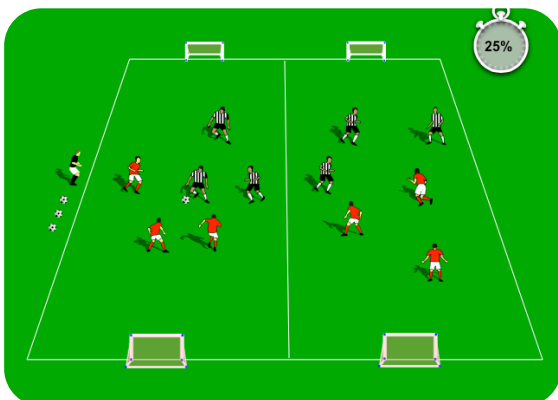


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction





# Week 9 - 7 & 8 year olds - Passing

By Gary Stephenson

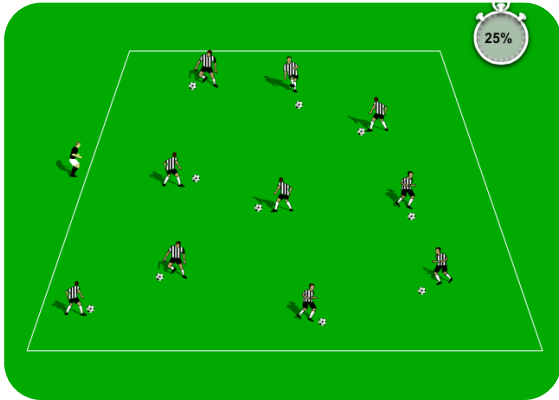


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red Light, Green Light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)  
"Hard Turn" - They perform a J Cut (Cut Back)  
"Cross-roads" - they perform a scissors

Review all 3 moves

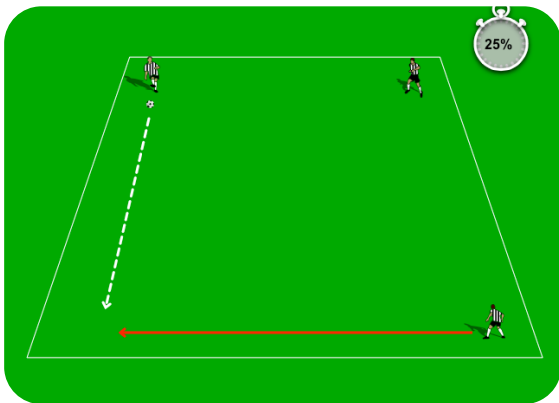


## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Changing Square

Players are placed equally in all the corners of a square. Two balls are used in the exercise. The object is to dribble the ball to the opposite corner (diagonal). Then the player at the corner takes the ball and dribbles the ball back to the corner. This keeps going while the other corners are completing the task too. The idea is to keep the player's heads up so avoid any collision. You can also have a coach put passive pressure in the center of the square.

You may put restrictions such as left or right foot dribbling only or utilizing various surfaces of the foot.



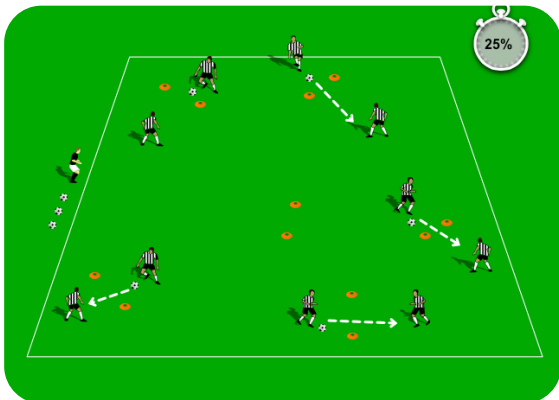
## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Gate Game

Set up lots of cones in pairs "gates" 3 feet apart all over the field

Players in pairs with one ball between the two go to a gate and stand 5-10 yds apart then pass to each other between the cones. To score a point they must control the ball and then pass back. Players should use both feet.

Then next progression is they make one pass each at a gate then go and find a new one as a pair

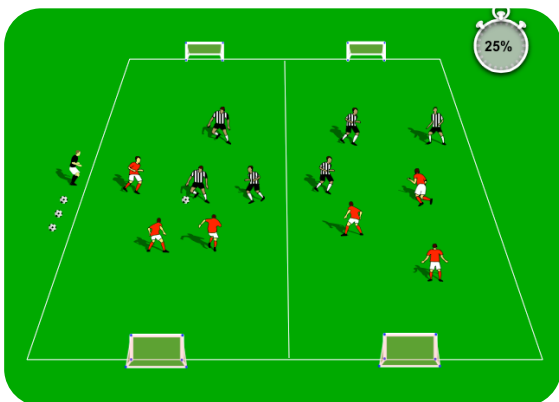


## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction





# Week 10 - 7 & 8 year olds

By Gary Stephenson

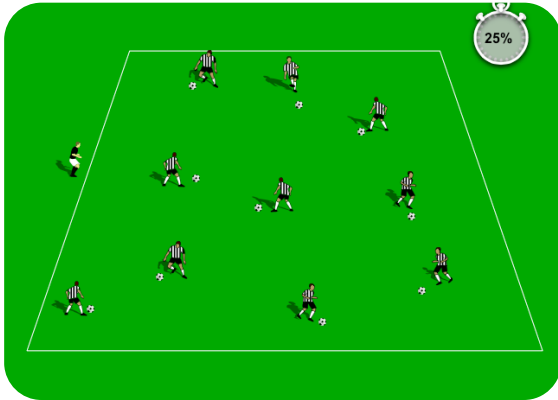


## TECHNICAL WARM-UP

### Red light, Green light

Players are in a 20yd X 20yd grid each player has a ball.  
Coach shouts out:  
"Green light" - Players move around the grid randomly  
"Red light" - They stop the ball and put their foot on top (brake)  
"Yellow light" - They move around slowly  
"Super green" - They move around fast (speed)  
"Reverse" - They make do pull back (drag back)  
"Hard Turn" - They perform a J Cut (Cut Back)  
"Cross-roads" - they perform a scissors

Review all 3 moves



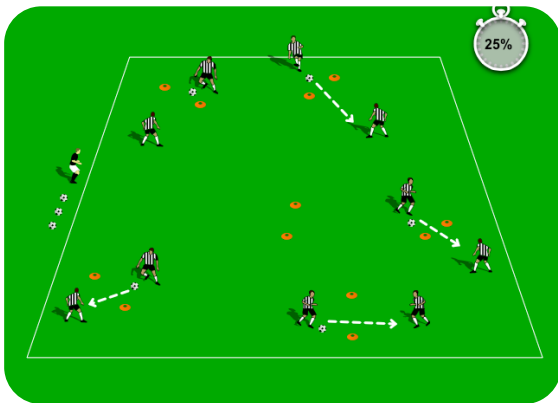
## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### Gate game

Set up lots of cones in pairs "gates" 3 feet apart all over the field

Players in pairs with one ball between the two go to a gate and stand 5-10 yds apart then pass to each other between the cones. To score a point they must control the ball and then pass back. Players should use both feet.

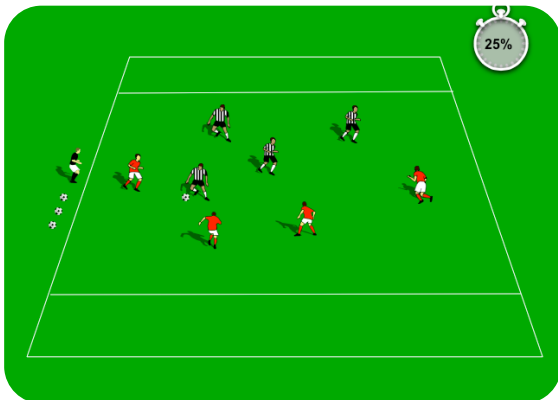
Then next progression is they make one pass each at a gate then go and find a new one as a pair



## SMALL-SIDED ACTIVITY

### End Zone

Two end zones are added to the 20yd x 20yd grid. Players are split into 2 teams. A team scores by dribbling the ball into the end zone and stopping the ball. Nobody without a ball is allowed into the end zone. If felt needed, add extra balls to increase touches on the ball.



## GAME

Split into 4 teams for 2 games

Let them play without any positions.

Let them play without too much direction

