

Physical Education Lesson plans

Soccer Drills for five to seven year old students (adapt for older students)

At a very young age when children begin to get interested in games like soccer, demonstration and practice are the best ways for students to learn the basic skills of the game. The objective for the teacher, therefore, should be to identify the most basic skills of the game and give students as much time as possible to practice those skills. None of the students will gain these skills from teacher talk. In soccer, dribbling, which is running with the ball, and kicking or passing the ball are two of the most basic skills. There are three aspects of dribbling that should be stressed at this age level.

- good control with the ball
- eyes up to see the field, opponents and team players
- the ability to vary the speed dribbling, and introduction to using both their feet.

Young children respond well to gimmicks. Using a twelve to twenty inch stuffed toy like Big Bird, Bert or any animal that can be strapped on the back of a student as a mascot will keep the students interested and trying the skills rather than drifting off or getting in the way of others, if they think the mascot is involved in the game. Keeping the practice in a game format at this level is important.

Lesson One – 30 minutes

Going Hunting for Bert – Objective: to practice dribbling and passing/kicking the ball.

1. Demonstrate dribbling in a straight line keeping the ball close to the feet, keeping the eyes up and using both feet while running slowly in a straight line.
2. Strap the stuffed toy, Bert, on one child and tell the students that Bert will dribble the ball around the play area. All other students should have a ball and stand at the sideline. Their job will be to dribble after Bert at the sound of a whistle or other sign, and try to hit him with their ball by passing the ball into his/her feet. Once a child has succeeded, that child can become Bert. All children will want to have a chance to become Bert and should be given that chance.

The students will try hard to keep the ball close to them. They will need to look up frequently to know where Bert is and to get around the other players, and they will try to be accurate with their pass. I have also found that student will want to be Bert and so will keep on trying without getting discouraged. A child who does not succeed to hit Bert in the lesson will welcome the teacher going after Bert on their behalf while doing so themselves at the same time.

3. After about 20 minutes, if all students had at least once been Bert, call the class to the sideline and ask the children one at a time to demonstrate dribbling in a straight line and passing the ball into a net or between two cones about three feet apart. This is a good time to make evaluation notes.

Lesson Two – 30 minutes

Follow Bert – Objective: to practice turning while dribbling.

1. Demonstrate dribbling around five or six cones placed about three meters apart. Dribble slowly around the cones and point out that you are using both feet, and that you're keeping the ball quite close to your feet. Ideally, point out that you can use the outside of the right foot to turn right and the inside of the left foot; and the outside of the left foot and the inside of the right foot to turn left. Although this skill will be quite difficult for most of the students at this age. A few, however, may learn it even at this early age.
2. A student with Bert or another stuffed character will start out to dribble around the cones. Ask the rest of the children to follow Bert. You will need to give the children, who should be lined up, a signal when to follow one at a time. Gauge this by the skill of the child ahead of them. Ideally no child should be passed by a student following. Switch to another leader.
3. After three or four trips around the cones play "**Go Hunting for Bert**". See lesson one.

Lesson Three – 30 minutes

Beat Bert the goalie – Objective: to practice dribbling with head up, watching out for other players.

1. Hang or stand Bert in a goal. **No, there is no student attached to Bert.** From the opposite end demonstrate dribbling toward the goal and kicking the ball past Bert by getting the ball to the left or right of Bert. The idea is not to hit Bert.
2. Ask all players to line up with a ball each from where you started on the opposite end of the goal. At a signal all players should advance toward the goal and score on Bert. Repeat this about three times. If you find that there are too many students going at once, ask half or a third of the class to go at once rather than all. But remember the objective is to dribble with head up and shoot with eyes on the goal not on the ball at the feet.
3. Review turning while dribbling with the game of "**Follow Bert**". See lesson two.
4. If there is time, play a short game to reinforce dribbling and passing with "**Go Hunting for Bert**". See lesson one.

A couple final notes

How quickly students learn these skills will vary greatly. It is important to give students plenty of time with the ball to become comfortable with it at their feet. Teacher talk will not lead to even the quicker students to pick up the skill. Demonstration and most of the time in practice for the student will show results, however. Encourage students for trying hard. It is also unlikely that all students will master these skills. Most may not, but they have been introduced to these basic skill and they will master them given

the time. So don't be afraid to move on to other P.E. activities, after repeating these lessons a few times to review these skills.

These lessons are easily adapted to older children. Moving the cones closer together, for instance when practicing turning with the ball. Bert and fellows like him, however, may lose their appeal after age eight or nine.