

# Coaching at the Grass Roots

## IT'S PRACTICE TIME!

6-7 year olds



### PART VII

## Dribbling

**Objective:** Moving with the ball under control when encountering opposition.

### Key Factors:

1. Maintain close control of the ball – ball is within three metres.
2. Be aware of what is going on around you – look up!
3. Change direction.
4. Change speed.
5. Develop individual stunts and tricks – i.e. screening the ball.  
“Screening” – putting the body sideways on between the defender and the ball – the ball is always on the far foot.

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EQUIPMENT CHECK: Balls, bibs and cones.

## Warm-up (5 minutes)

All players, each with a ball, dribble within 20m x 20m grid.

On command or whistle, the player puts a foot on the ball and then touches the ball with a specific part of the body e.g. nose, knee.

The players continue dribbling before another body-part is called.



## Slow Stretching (5 minutes)

Coach; with the very young player, your job here is to instill the attitude that warm-up and warm-down is important. Make it routine so that it becomes a habit.

## Skill Practice (15 minutes)

All players, each with a ball, are within a 20 m x 20 m grid.  
On signal, the players:

1. Control the ball with different parts of foot (inside, outside, sole).

2. Juggle ball with feet. Player throws ball gently in air in front of him/her so that the ball bounces. Before ball hits the ground again, the player taps it up in the air, lets it bounce, tries to tap it up in the air again. See how many taps in a row he/she can get. ***Five or six would be wonderful!***

Coach; always encourage individuals and the group to get more taps in a row than the time before. Show lots of enthusiasm. “Emily, you got 4! Try for 5!”

3. Juggle ball with head. Player gently tosses the ball up in the air. He/she looks up, tries to tap the ball in the air with his/her forehead, and catches ball. This is repeated. Tell the players that if they have the opportunity to head the ball again without catching it, they may do so.

Coach; players’ feet should be shoulder-width apart, body balanced and knees bent to move up into the ball.  
Do this no more than 3 or 4 minutes!



### **Related game (10 minutes)**

#### **Relay Races:**

Players are in teams of five with one ball for each team.

Three players with ball at cone (A); two players at cone (B) 20 m away.

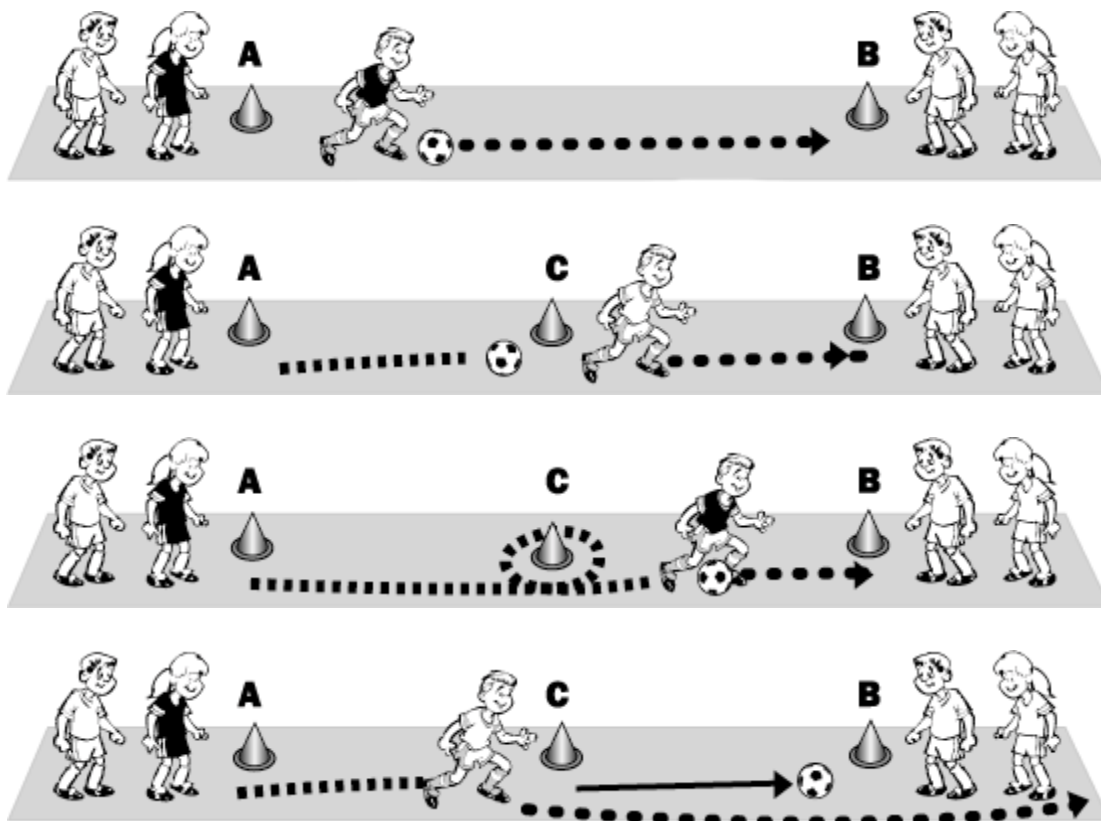
1) On whistle, player with ball at cone (A) dribbles ball to player at cone (B), then player at cone (B) dribbles back to (A) and so on.

2) Player with the ball dribbles to cone (C), leaves ball, sprints and touches teammate at cone (B) who runs and collects ball and dribbles to next player.

3) Player dribbles around cone (C), then dribbles to teammate.

4) Player dribbles to cone (C), then shoots ball to teammate, who repeats. The team, which is first to complete the exercise and sit down, wins.

**Variation:** Have players go through relays with just left foot, or just right foot, or just inside or outside of foot to move the ball.



### Mini-Soccer game (20 minutes)

Coach; during the game, continually encourage the team to have players wide on both side of the field to spread themselves and the other team out. You can especially do this on goal-kicks. Have the goalkeeper kick the ball into the spaces between the players, rather than to the players.

## Warm-Down (5 minutes)

Relaxed running and stretching.

### Game Day Goals:

*Coach, you should now be seeing the players become more comfortable on the ball. Players should start to use the inside and outside of both feet.*

## Practice is over!

Is everyone *still* having fun?

Coach; enthusiasm may fade later in the season.

**It's very important to make practice even more fun now!  
Challenge your players with games that are enjoyable.  
Try some little competitions like 3 v 3 games.**



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## PART VIII

### Passing and Control

**Objective:** Kicking the ball to a teammate so it is easy to control.

**Key Factors:**

1. Accuracy – Partner should not have to move too far to receive the ball.
2. Speed/Pace – Not too difficult to control.  
Not over-hit (will go behind receiver).  
Not under-hit (risks interception).

# LET'S PRACTICE!

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EQUIPMENT CHECK: Balls, bibs, and cones.

## Warm-up (5 minutes)

With cones, make two circles 7m to 10m in diameter. Space cones around the circle so that there is one more space than the number of players.

Divide team into two groups.

Put one player in each space (you will have one empty space).

Give one player in each circle a ball.

Give this player the direction, "Pass to anyone. Then run to the empty space."

The receiver of the ball controls it, passes to any other player, and runs to the space left by the previous player.

Repeat.

Coach; keep reminding the players to run!

\*As a little competition, you can count how many passes each circle makes in a minute.

## Stretching (5 minutes)

Slow stretching

## Technique Practice (10 minutes)

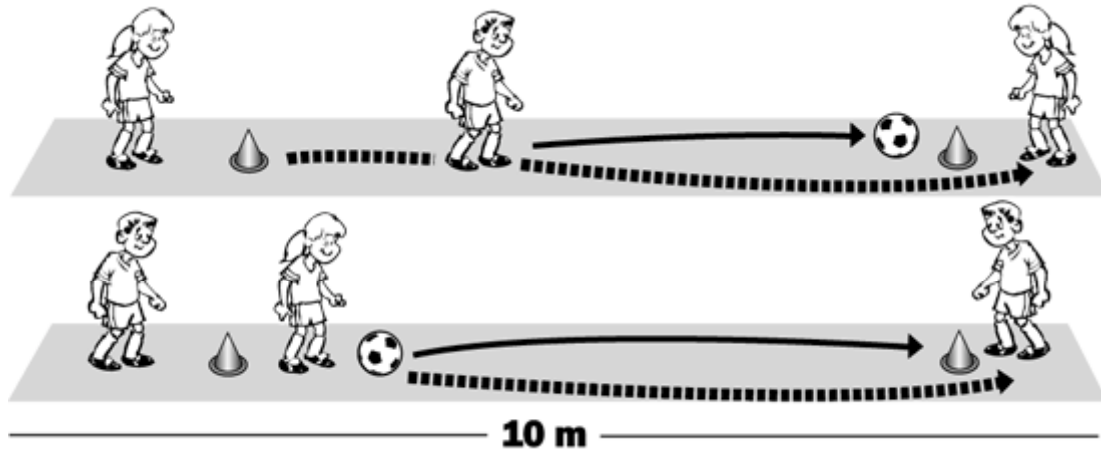
Two lines of players approximately 10 metres apart.

Player with the ball dribbles to centre then passes ball to opposite player and then runs to end of opposite line.

Player receiving ball repeats.

## Variation:

### Control – Pass



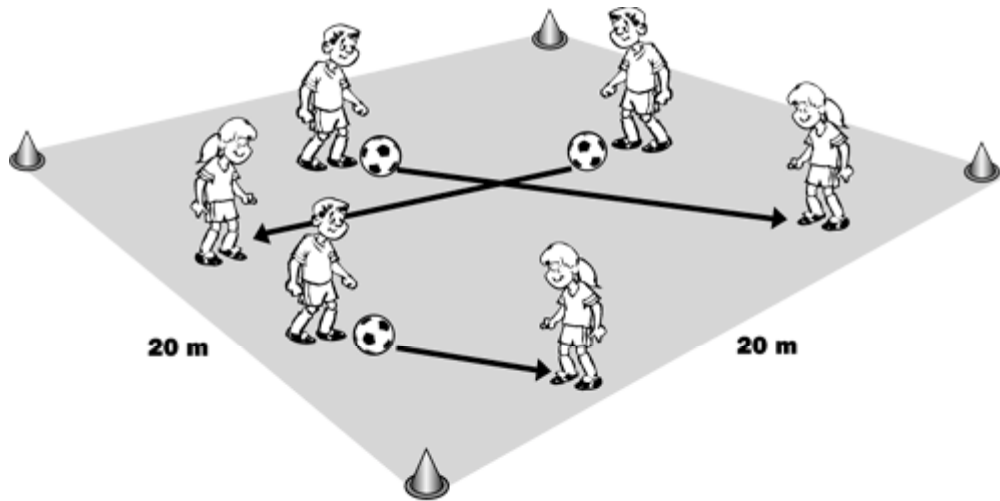
### Skills Practice (10 minutes)

Players in two's within 20 m x 20 m squares.

- 1) Pass using inside of foot. Use left, then right foot.
- 2) Pass into space for partner to move onto.
- 3) Pairs move and pass anywhere within square, keeping 5 or 6 metres apart.
- 4) Pairs move and pass throughout entire grid.

Coach; look for the player with the ball to look up to see where his partner is. Watch what decision he/she makes – to pass to feet or to pass into space. At this age most want to pass to feet. Encourage the pass to space ahead of the runner.



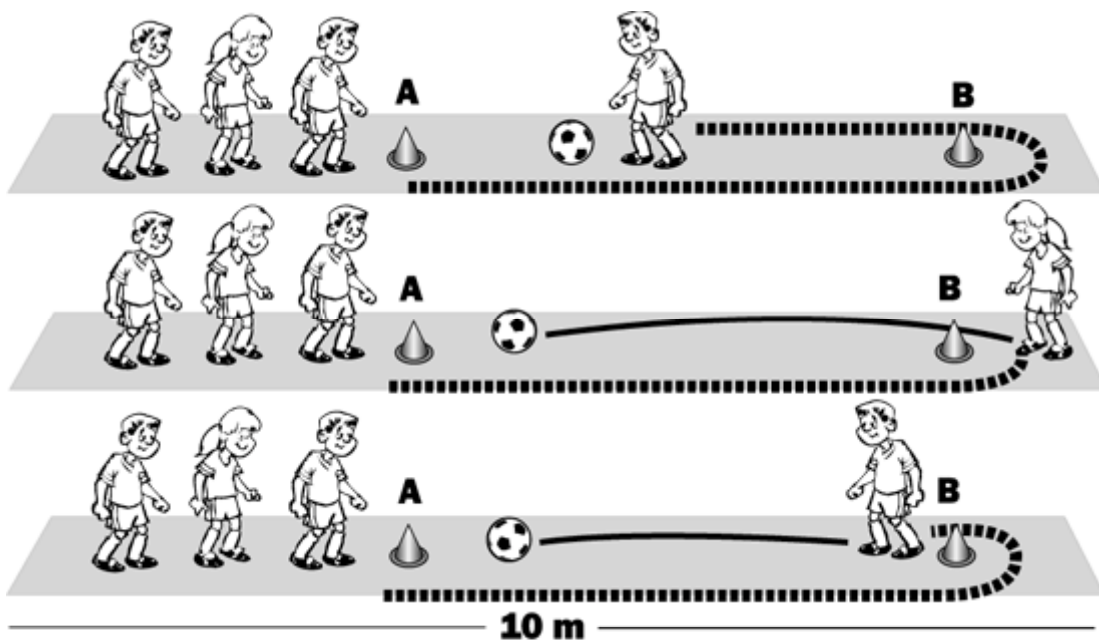


### Related Game (10 minutes)

#### Relay Races:

Players in teams of four with one ball behind cone (A). On whistle, players commence exercise. The first team to finish and sit down, wins.

1. Dribble around cone (B) and return.
2. Dribble to cone (B) and pass back.
3. Dribble to cone (B), go around and pass back.



### **Mini-Game** (10 minutes)

Coach; stress at least one pass before players can shoot on goal. Later encourage more.

### **Warm-Down** (5 minutes)

Relaxed running and stretching.

Coach; your job here is to instill the habit of warm-up and warm-down and the attitude that these activities are important.

#### **Game Day Goals:**

*Coach, you should see the players looking for teammates to pass the ball.  
Two passes should be put together by the players.*

## **Practice is over!**

Is everyone still enthusiastic and having fun?

If not, Coach, you must make the next practice more exciting and challenging! Try some little competitions.

**Remember that late in the season is a good time to reflect on your performance as “Coach”.**

**Ask yourself,**

- **Why am I coaching?  
(Do I want to educate or to win?)**

- **Do I understand the game?  
(Have I kept up with changes?)**

- Can I accept new ideas?
- (Opinions from players and peers)



If you have any questions, comments or feedback about this document, or anything involving the Coaching Centre, please send an email to: [info@soccercan.ca](mailto:info@soccercan.ca)



## Game of the Month: “Cow Pie”

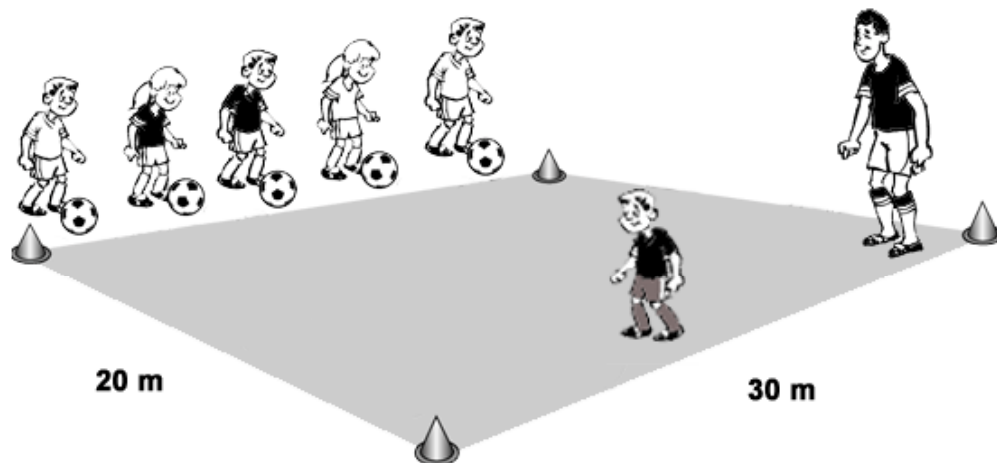
### The Fun Way to Work on Dribbling Skills!

**Each player must have a soccer ball.**

*20m x 30m rectangle (field)*

**Chose a player to be the defender. This player does not need a ball.  
Coach stands with defender in center of rectangle.**

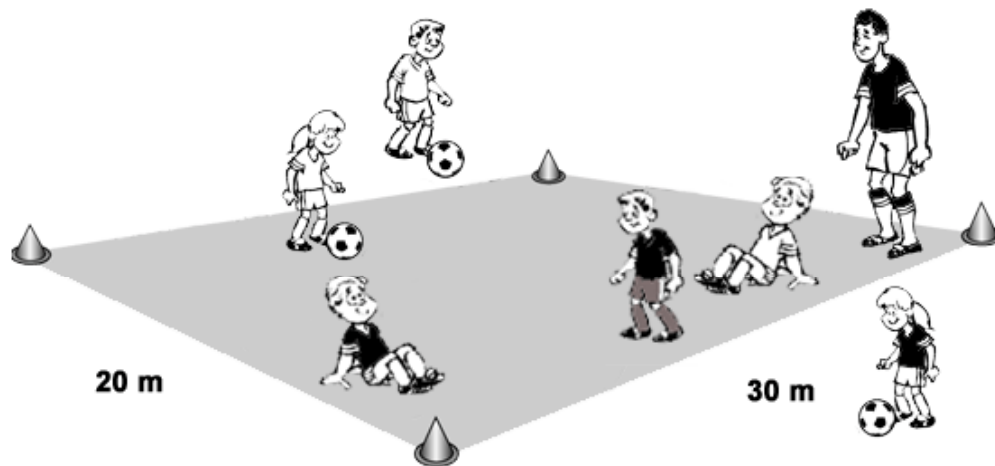
**All the other players stand outside along one of the long sides of the rectangle.**



*(Before game starts)*

Tell the players that the selected player is the *cowherd* and the rest of them are the *cows*. “We are going to play Cow Pie!” Ask, “What’s a cow pie?” You will get surprising answers!

At the word “Go”, cows (the players with the balls) must cross the field. If the cowherd (defender) kicks their ball out of the field, they become a cow pie. Cow pies sit in the field and try to touch other cows’ soccer balls with their hands or feet. If they do, that person also becomes a cow pie.



*(During game)*

Gradually, the field becomes full of cow pies, which the other cows must manoeuvre around as they cross the field while being chased by the cowherd.

### **Suggestions:**

- 1. The coach tells the players when to go from side to side.**
- 2. Cow pies must face the direction the ball is coming from.**
- 3. The coach may occasionally re-arrange the position of the cow pies to prevent straight lines across the field.**
- 4. Players may not kick the ball across the field. They must dribble it.**

This is fun. It may be used with players from 5 to 12 with success.

*Little children love this game.*