



## Soccer Games for Practice

### **Most Recommended:**

**Red Light/Green Light I.** All players with ball. Players dribble within the grid and respond to the coach's direction. With Green Light, players are to dribble at a slow pace. With Red Light, players are to stop the ball immediately with the sole of their foot and "make an airplane."

**Red Light/Green Light II.** All players with ball. Line the players up on one side of the square. On "green light," players dribble to opposite side. On "red light," they must stop. First player to other side "wins." (Players coached to dribble properly with little kicks and control)

**Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light.** All players with ball. Similar to "Red Light, Green Light," players start in a Red Light position with the ball stopped at their feet. With Green Light, players are to dribble at a fast pace. With Yellow Light, players are to dribble at a slow pace.

**Freeze Tag.** All players with ball dribbling in the field. When tagged by the coach, players freeze with their legs apart. Frozen players can resume dribbling when a teammate kicks a ball between their legs.

**Cats and Dogs.** All players, the "cats", have a ball and line-up on the same side line. The Coach, the "dogs" is in the middle of the field. The "cats" try to dribble their soccer ball to the opposite side of the field, avoiding the coach, and stopping on the other sideline. If the Coach can catch a cat, then that player can become a dog and catch other cats.

**Coach "Simon" Says.** All players have a soccer ball and dribble in the field. When the coach says "Coach Says", then the players have to perform the action the coach calls out. Examples: put your foot on the ball, dribble with your right foot, score a goal, toe taps, tick tocks, etc. The more fun the better!

### **More Games Continued...**

**Ball Master.** Coach throws one or more balls into the grid in different directions and gives commands to bring the ball back or take it to a designated area. Repeat with players working in pairs.

**Blob I.** Two players, without ball, holding hands are “the blob.” All other players with ball. Players dribble away from the blob. When a ball is kicked away by the blob, the player must join hands with the blob.

**Blob II.** Two pairs of players without ball, holding hands, start as blobs. All other players with ball. Players dribble to avoid being tagged by blob. If tagged, they must put ball away and join blob. Either blob must split into two pairs of two when it reaches four players. Last player with ball “wins.”

**Body Parts I.** All players with ball. Players dribble until directed to stop the ball with a particular body part, upon the coach’s command. For example, when the coach yells “knee,” the players are to all stop the ball with their knee and then, upon the coach’s command, resume dribbling. Other examples include the sole of the foot, ankle, shin, thigh, chest, arm, head, and the rear end. Command “right” or “left” parts as appropriate.

**Body Parts II.** All players with ball. The coach establishes a number for each body part to be used to stop the ball. Examples: 1 – right foot; 2 – left foot; 3 – rear end (sit); 4 – elbow; 5 – ear. Players dribble. When the coach calls out a number, the players must stop the ball with the associated body part. Start with a limited set of numbers and then build up.

**Bop the Adult.** All players with ball. Divide the team into at least two groups assigned to a coach or a parent. Ensure that the groups are spaced away from each other. Players start by facing the coach or parent, who should be about 10 feet away. On command, the coach and parents move away from the players, who are to dribble and chase and try to hit the adult with the ball by shooting at them. Players can count a point for each hit. Even with a hit, players collect their ball and continue. This can be a timed event.

**Bowling.** Set up cones as pins and have players kick their ball toward the pins to see how many they can knock over.

**Bumper Cars-** All players dribble a ball around in an area. Each player tries to kick his or her ball and have it hit another player’s ball. If they hit someone else’s ball they get a point. Progressions: Specify how players must kick the ball (laces, inside of foot)

**Cartoon Network-** Players are inside a giant TV set and coach has the remote. Each side of the grid represents a different channel with a different show. Coach shouts out name of show and players must race to that side. Coach invents a dance to do at each

side for each show e.g. jumping jacks. Progression: Players dribble. Coach can keep changing the channel to force players to turn with ball.

**Cattle Grazing.** All players with ball. Down on hands and knees, all players move their ball around only with their heads.

**Coach Freeze Tag.** All players with ball dribbling in the grid. When tagged by the coach, players freeze with their legs apart. Frozen players can resume dribbling when a teammate kicks a ball between their legs.

**Cone Soccer.** All players in pairs. One ball per pair. Each player has one cone or disc each for a goal. Play one player against the other player for a limited time, then switch pairs so that no one player sees the same opponent twice.

**Cops and Robbers.** Use discs to establish a “jail” in a corner of the grid. All players except two with ball. Players with ball line up on one side of the grid. These players are the robbers. The two players without ball are the “cops.” They are to start from the other side. The object is for the robbers to dribble across the grid without having a cop take the ball away. If a robber loses his ball to a cop, he or she goes to the jail. Repeat the crossings until there are two players remaining. These two may become the new cops for successive iterations.

**Crab Soccer.** Designate players as crabs to “walk” around on their hands and feet. Other players with ball try to dribble from one side of the grid to the other without getting caught by the crabs.

**Dribbling Relay.** All players with ball. Dribble from line to line or to cone and back – two or more teams. Make sure the number of players on each team is low and even.

**Driving Test.** All players with ball. After demonstrating the commands, the coach calls out: Go, Stop, Slow, Speed Up, Right Turn, Left Turn, and “U”-Turn, as appropriate. Players must know their right from their left.

**Egg Hunt.** Use discs to define a “basket” in a corner of the grid. This activity requires more balls than players. This may be done by using extra balls from the coach or by dividing the team in half. Spread the balls around the grid. Line the (first set) of players up on one end of the grid. The object is for the players to collect all the balls (eggs) and put them in the basket as quickly as possible and return to the starting line. Coach defines whether this is to be done with hands or by dribbling. Everyone is on the same team; no one is to take a ball away from a teammate. The event can be timed against themselves or against the other group. A goal can be used as the “basket.”

**Every Step-** Players dribble a football slowly in a defined area. Then tell them to try to touch the football with every step they take – (not as easy as it sounds!). On the command 'Go', the players must leave their ball and find another. Let them try this a few

times then take one or two balls away. The players who end up without a ball have to run a lap of the activity area.

**Fetch.** Pairs with one ball. One coach or parent per pair. The coach or parent tosses the ball into the grid and the pair must bring it back in the manner directed by the coach. For example, the coach will yell “four hands” and the pair must return the ball to the coach with all four hands in contact with the ball. Others may include (at least) three hands and a thigh, or two heads.

**Fox Tails.** Cut up an old sheet into strips approximately 4" wide and 24" long. These are the “tails.” Each player sticks one tail in the back of their shorts. All players with ball. All players dribble while simultaneously trying to grab others’ tails while protecting their own.

**Freeze Tag.** All players with ball except for designated “tagger.” Players dribble within the grid while avoiding the tagger. The tagger runs around and touches any players to freeze them. Players can unfreeze themselves by performing the “Irish Jig” for ten touches. Continue briefly and then switch taggers. (Variations: Taggers can also be dribblers. Can use two taggers. Can separate team into two groups.)

**Gates.** Split the team in half, one half with ball and one without. The group without a ball is to spread out randomly within the grid and stand with their legs spread a little more than shoulder-width apart. These are the “gates.” Each player with a ball dribbles around the grid trying to put their ball through as many gates as possible. Time the event for two minutes. Players should count the number of gates they split. The teams then switch roles. “Score” may be kept by individuals or teams.

**Identifiers-** All the players run around in a rectangle at random. The coach calls out the identifier or a group of players or individual players, who then become hunters. The hunters see who can tag the most players within one minute. The identifiers could be: color of the players’ vests, hair color, T-shirt color, first letter of the players’ names, etc. Progressions: Everyone has a ball.

**Keep-away.** Also known as 1 v. 1 without goals. Players in pairs with one ball. One player starts in possession of the ball and the other tries to take it away. Play for approximately one minute. Player in possession at end may be declared “winner.” May switch player starting in possession, then switch partners.

**Knock Off.** Divide the team in half. One group each has balls. Place several discs randomly spread out in the grid. Place a ball on each disc. One group goes at a time. The objective is to knock all the balls off the discs by kicking a ball into them. Each team gets a turn and the team that knocks off all the balls in the quickest time wins. Have the group that knocked the balls off re-set them and return their ball to a player in the other group.

**Knockout.** All players with ball. Have players kick other player's balls out of the grid while retaining possession of their own. Have players count the number of times they knocked out a ball. When a ball is kicked out, it is to be retrieved and play resumed.

After a certain amount of time, stop and ask for the number of knockouts. (Variations: Don't ask for the number of knockouts. Vary the size of the grid. Have the players who are knocked out go to a side activity until only one or two players are left.)

**Marbles I.** Each player with ball. Divide the team into two groups and set them on opposite sides of the grid. Place a distinctly-colored or different-sized ball in the middle of the grid. This is the marble. Have each team try to move the marble to the other team's line by striking it with a ball. Tell the players that after the game starts, they can kick at the marble with anyone's ball. If a player kicks the marble directly, stop play and remind all players of the requirement to hit it only with a ball. (Variation: Everyone works to get the marble out of the grid.)

**Marbles II.** Each player with ball. Players in pairs. Players alternate using a single push pass to try to strike the other player's ball.

**Mud Monster.** Two or three players start as the monsters. They then chase the rest of the players and try to tag them. Once they are tagged, they must spread their legs wide, put their hands or hold their ball over their head, and stay stuck in the mud. They can be freed if another child crawls or kicks a ball through their legs.

**Musical Balls-** Everyone has a ball and is dribbling. The coach should sing or play music. When the music stops everyone stops dribbling and goes to find another ball. After a while, the coach can take a ball away each time. Whoever does not get to a ball must go report to the coach. The player should have to do some sort of task (Tick tock, tap dance, something with the ball) before they can get back in. Comments: Tell them they will get their ball back at the end.

**Not in My Yard.** Set up a "fence" of cones or discs dividing the grid in half in order to establish two "yards." All players with ball. Divide the team into two equal groups and place each group in a yard. This is a timed event. Upon command, players are to kick their ball into the other team's yard. The objective is to keep each yard free of balls. Parents should be used around the perimeter of the grid to keep the balls in play. At the end of time, the group with the least number of balls in their yard wins. (Variation: As players kicks get stronger, the fence can be modified with a second set of parallel cones or discs to create a "no player zone," and the size of the yards increased.)

**Numbers I.** Set up a goal at each end, marked by cones. Divide the team into two groups, with approximately five players per group. Assign each player a number from one to five. Try to ensure that players with the same number are evenly matched. Have the players of each group spread out on opposite sidelines. Tell each group which goal they are to attack and which to defend. Put a ball in the center. Call out one or more numbers, and those players are to run out and play. Re-set when a goal is scored or if

the ball goes out of bounds. (Variations: Have players start from the end lines. Throw the ball into the center.)

**Numbers II.** All players with ball. While dribbling, coach calls out random numbers 1 through 5 and players must form groups of that number.

**Nutmeg.** Two players with one ball. One player stands with legs spread. During time limit, see how many nutmegs a player can get. Switch.

**Passing Count.** Players in pairs with one ball, approximately three yards apart. Inside of foot pass and trap, using “two-touch” passing. The pairs can count the number of passes made in one minute. (Variation: Older may be asked to move and pass.)

**Pirates.** Define a circle with discs inside the grid. All players with ball except one, who is the first pirate. Players dribble to retain possession while the pirate tries to steal a ball and kick it out of the circle. As players lose their ball, they also become pirates until one player with a ball is left. This player can become the starting pirate for the next iteration.

**Pumpkin Patch.** Coach spreads out all soccer balls on the half way line. These are the pumpkins in the patch. Players are lined up by the goal line. When coach says “Go”, all players run to the middle of the field, get a soccer ball and dribble to the goal to shoot using their laces. Repeat several times.

**Receive/Dribble/Shoot.** Use cones to define at least two goals and set a disc approximately ten yards in front of both to define a starting point. Divide the team into groups for each set of goals and place the groups at the starting point, without balls. A coach and at least one parent should have the balls next to the goal. The coach should feed a ball to the first player, using “bowling.” The player should come to meet the ball, receive (trap) it properly, dribble and shoot. The player should retrieve the ball and return it to the coach. You should increase the number of groups if players aren’t moving quickly through the drill. A parent may also be used at the starting point for assistance. (Variation: Players start on the other side of the goal with the coach or server. The coach bowls the ball out into the field and the player runs to it, turns it back, dribbles and shoots.)

**Red Light/Green Light I.** All players with ball. Players dribble within the grid and respond to the coach’s direction. With Green Light, players are to dribble at a slow pace. With Red Light, players are to stop the ball immediately with the sole of their foot and “make an airplane.”

**Red Light/Green Light II.** All players with ball. Line the players up on one side of the square. On “green light,” players dribble to opposite side. On “red light,” they must stop. First player to other side “wins.” (Players must be cautioned that they must dribble properly; no kicking and running to the ball is allowed.)

**Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light.** All players with ball. Similar to “Red Light, Green Light,” players start in a Red Light position with the ball stopped at their feet. With Green Light, players are to dribble at a fast pace. With Yellow Light, players are to dribble at a slow pace.

**Relay Race.** Divide the team into three or four groups, with no more than four players per group. Set up identical courses where players must dribble between discs, around cones, perform the Irish Jig, stop the ball on a spot, or other activities. Practice, then race where first group to finish wins.

**Roll.** All players with ball. Players will start spread out shoulder-to-shoulder on a line. Each player is to “roll” the ball with the sole of their foot for approximately 10 yards, turn, and repeat back to original line. This may be done with from the inside or outside of both feet.

**Shadow.** Players in pairs. All players with ball. Similar to “Dribble Snake,” the first player dribbles around and their partner must duplicate, or “shadow,” their every move from behind. The leaders should change direction and speed throughout. Have players switch positions at least once and usually three times, to create four sets.

**Sharks and Minnows I.** One player starts with a ball as the first shark. Other players run in a confined space while the player with the ball tries to kick the ball at the other players’ feet. Once hit, they get their ball and become another shark.

**Sharks and Minnows II.** Two or three players are “sharks” and the rest are “minnows.” Sharks have soccer balls and the minnows don’t. The sharks chase after the minnows and try to tag them on the leg with the ball. If a minnow gets hit, he or she becomes a shark and goes and gets their ball and becomes a shark.

**Shooting 1 v. 1.** Groups of four in two pairs. One pair with a ball. One pair serves as “goals,” standing with their legs spread shoulder-width apart. The other pair is to play 1 v. 1 to score at their goal by shooting only on the ground. After approximately one minute, pairs switch positions. Modify pairs, if necessary to equalize the skill level. (Variation: use parents as goals.)

**Star Wars.** All players with ball. Players with ball try to kick at other players’ balls. Once a player connects three times, they move to a designated “safe” area.

**Steal.** Divide the team into two groups. One group with ball. Tell players without a ball to try to take one away from a player with a ball. Tell players with a ball to retain possession for as long as possible. Players who lose a ball then try to get one back. Play for approximately one minute cycles. Players with a ball at the end of each cycle may be declared “winners.”

**Steal the Bacon.** All players with ball, except for one player who is “it.” All players dribbling except one who is “it.” Designated player kicks balls out of the grid. Change

designated player every 30 seconds. Players whose balls are kicked out retrieve them and wait at edge of grid until next 30 second-period starts.

**Stuck in the Mud.** One player without ball is “it.” All other players have ball. On signal, all players dribble until tagged. Once tagged, they must hold their ball over their head and spread their legs. They are stuck, but can be freed by another player with a nutmeg. Rotate “it.”

**Switch.** All players with ball. On command, have players switch soccer balls.

**Target Shooting.** Two players, each with ball and one cone. See how many times each player can hit the cone.

**Turkey Shoot.** Set up random cones. All players with ball. In a time limit, players count how many cones they can knock over with the ball. Each cone knocked over must be re-set by the player who knocked it down.

**Tunnel.** Divide the team into small groups. Start with three players as the “tunnel,” and then you may add more players as success is achieved. Have each group line up in a straight line, front to back, and spread their legs apart, to form the tunnel. You may practice first, and then this can become a race between groups. To start, the first player in each line must turn and face the tunnel and pass a ball through the tunnel and then get back in the front of the line. The last player in the line collects the ball, dribbles it to the front and repeats the process. (As a race, the first group to complete a full cycle wins.) (Variation: The player at the back of the line may pass the ball through the tunnel from behind. The player at the front collects the ball, dribbles it to the back, passes it through the tunnel and remains at the back.)