U8 Dribbling Exercises

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| Free Dribbling | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | All players are dribbling a soccer ball in a 20x25 yard grid using their inside, outside, and the sole of their foot.  **Coach:** Have players change direction and accelerate away. Have players demonstrate a move and accelerate away.  **Version 2:** Coach can put pressure on players dribbling.  **Version 3:** Players can dribble at each other and perform a move and accelerate away. | * Keep the ball close * Use your shoelaces, inside, and outside of feet. Don’t use your toes * Touch the ball, then look up * Don’t run into anyone * Challenge players to use different surfaces of foot * Players must dribble with their head up * Encourage the players to try a new move |
| Sharks & Minnows | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | In a 2x25 yard grid have 3-4 players acting as the sharks. The minnows are in one end of the grid with their soccer balls. When the coach say **“GO”** the minnows try to dribble to the other end of the grid and the sharks are trying to kick the ball out. When the dribbler’s ball goes out, he/she becomes a shark. If the minnows reach the other end, they will wait for the coach’s command to play again. The game continues until all players turn into sharks. | * Keep the ball close * Use your shoelaces, inside, and outside of feet. Don’t use your toes * Touch the ball, then look up * Touch/keep the ball away from the “sharks” * Changing speed and direction * Run with the ball * Defending – 1v1 |
| Snake | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | All players are dribbling a soccer ball in a 20x25 yard grid with the exception of at least 2 players. The 2 players hold hands or lock arms to create a snake. The snake works together to tag the dribbling players who then become a part of the snake. The snake must try to stay connected and not break into little parts.  **Coach:** Encourage the snake players to hiss. | * Keep the ball close * Use your shoelaces, inside, and outside of feet. Don’t use your toes * Touch the ball, then look up * Look up so you know where the kangaroos and dribblers are * Change direction and speed to get away |
| Tag | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | All players dribbling a soccer ball will try to tag each other with their hands. Players cannot abandon their own ball to tag.  **Coach:** Have players keep count of their own tags. If playing more than one game, have players improve their tags by 1, 2 or 3 more than before. | * Keep the ball close * Use your shoelaces, inside, and outside of feet. Don’t use your toes * Touch the ball, then look up |
| Gate Dribbling | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | In a 20x25 yard grid set up as many gates (two cones about 2 yards apart). All players with a ball must dribble through the gate in order to score a point.  **Coach:** Have players keep count of how many points they scored in 30 seconds or a minute. Repeat asking the players to beat the score by one or more points. You can also ask them to dribble with the left or right foot only. | * Keep the ball close * Use your shoelaces, inside, and outside of feet. Don’t use your toes * Touch the ball, then look up * Don’t run into anyone, look for open gates * Acceleration after going through a gate |

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| Dribbling Gates with Bandits | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | Same as Gate Dribbling but, select 2-3 players to be the **“Bandits”**; they will try to dispossess the players with trying to score points by dribbling through the gates. When the bandit steals the soccer ball, the player that lost the ball becomes the bandit.  **Coach:** Play multiple 1-2 minute games. Award a point to all players who have a soccer ball at the end of each game. | * Same as above * Decision Making * 1v1 Defending/Attacking |
| 2v2 to End Zones | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | Divide the 20x25 yard grid into two equal grids of 12x20 yards, with a one yard buffer zone in between. Make a one yard wide End Zone along each end line. Players will score by dribbling and stopping the soccer ball in the End Zone. Defenders can’t defend in the End Zone. | * Application of dribbling, and passing-receiving technique under pressure * 1v1 defending * Decision making |
| Steal & Shield (Gladiators) | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | Pair up the players with one ball. One player starts with the ball and at coach’s command his/her partner tries to steal the ball away. Play 30-45 second matches. The player who ends with the ball gets a point. If the ball goes out of bounds, one of the players must get it back in play very quickly.  **Coach:** Show proper shielding technique during the demonstration. Fix technical shielding errors throughout the activity to assure that the group is doing it properly. | * Body sideways on to opponent * Use arm to protect and know where defender is going * Knees bent * Turn as defender attacks or reaches for the ball |
| British Bulldog | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | All players are dribbling a soccer ball from one end to the other end of a 20x25 yard grid. The coach begins as the “bulldog” and tries to kick the dribbling players’ soccer balls out of the grid. Once a player’s soccer ball is kicked out of the grid, he/she becomes a “bulldog”.  **Coach:** Have players change direction and accelerate away. Have players demonstrate a move and accelerate away.  **Version 2:** Players who dribble the soccer ball close to their feet do not get attacked by the bulldog. | * Shield the ball when necessary * Changing speed and direction * Running with the ball * Keep the ball close * 1v1 defending |
| Capture the Balls | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | Players should be divided into equal teams to play in a grid with each team’s home in the corners. Soccer balls are in the middle of the grid, with all players starting inside their home bases. On the coach’s command, the players each get one ball. They try to dribble or pass it into their home base. Players can steal soccer balls from their opponent’s home bases.  **Coach:** Call time and each team counts the balls they have collected. | * How to get the balls from the center or other home bases * How to defend their home base * Decision making: pass or dribble—if a defender is in front of you and a teammate is in good position to help or is stationed in the base, pass. If you see an open lane to the base, dribble. |

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| 1v1 to Cross Goals | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | In a 12x12yd grid, set up a two yard goal (two red and blue goals) on each side of the grid. Divide the team into two groups. One attacker starts with a soccer ball, trying to score by dribbling through any of the two further goals. The defender is trying to defend the goals closest to them, If the defender gets the ball, he/she tries to score in the opponent’s goal.  The game ends when one player scores or the ball rolls out. Two new players go. | * Keep soccer ball close to feet * Sudden change of direction * Burst of speed * Defending – tackling * Shielding * Decision making |
| Knock Out | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | All players are dibbling in a 20x25 yard grid and are trying to knock other dribblers’ balls outside the grid. Players must retrieve the ball quickly and get back in the game.  **Coach:** Have your players perform a skill task before re-entering the grid. i.e.: juggling 3-5 times, ball taps.  Shrink down space if they are avoiding each other | * Work on Shielding * Use different surface of the foot * Do not leave your ball * Use balance and use your arms to jockey for position |
| 3v3 to End Zones | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | In a 20x25 yard grid, place an End Zone of one yard wide along each end line. Players will score by dribbling and stopping the soccer ball in the End Zone. Defenders can’t defend in the End zone. | * Application of dribbling, and passing-receiving technique under pressure * 1v1 defending * Decision making |
| 1v1 to End Lines | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | Divide a 20x25 yard grid into two even grids. Make two groups, one with the balls and the other without the balls at opposite ends of the grid. At coach’s command, the 1v1 game begins. The game ends when the player with the ball scores by dribbling under control over the opposing players’ line. If the defender gets the ball, he/she tries to score.  **Coaches:** After each 1v1 bout, players switch sides. | * Keep soccer ball close to feet * Sudden change of direction * Burst of speed * Defending – tackling * Shielding * Decision making |
| Paired Tag | Description | Coaching Points |
|  | In a 20x25 yard gird, pair players up (**Tagger and Dribbler**) each with soccer balls. The Dribblers are given a 2 second start to get away from the taggers. The tagger dribbling his/her soccer ball tries to tag the dribbler. Once the dribbler is tagged, the roles reverse and the chase starts again. | * Keep ball close * Changing directions * Dribbling using different surfaces of the foot |