



MASS YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION



Recommended Backyard Games

Mike Singleton

1. Juggling—a)juggle the ball with all parts of your body (left and right sides). Try not to have more than 5 consecutive juggles with the same body part (i.e. feet, things, head etc.); b) juggle with a friend or friends in a similar fashion to the basketball game “HORSE”, the player who drops the ball gets a letter; c) play 1 touch or 2 touch juggling with your friends earning letters for drops.
2. 1 vs 1---a) only use one foot—the ball cannot touch your other foot; b) have a goal (or a cone) which you can score upon from all sides; c) same as b), but have the same goal for both players; d) have two goals for each player, one on an end line and one on a sideline; e) have three goals for each player, one on an end line and one on each sideline.
3. Wall soccer---Just kick a ball against a wall using both your left foot and right foot. Place hard shots against the wall (with accuracy and force). Trying doing this three touch, then two touch, then one touch. Helps with trapping/receiving, positioning, striking of a ball with both feet, foot speed, being on toes, and concentration. Also will improve your passing/shooting accuracy because of the high number of touches you will get on the ball and the high number of balls you play against the ball. Vary your shots—high, low, left, right, inside foot, outside foot, instep etc. and make yourself work at a high pace to get your body behind the ball before it rolls past you. Get closer to the wall to improve foot quickness and move further away to increase lateral quickness.
4. Own the Ball!—just you competing for possession of one ball (through shielding) with one other person. If you lose possession do whatever you have to do get the ball back as quickly as possible. Correct shielding technique = body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going.
5. Any 2 vs. 2 and 2 vs. 1 drills or games will be extremely useful. The entire game can be broken down into 2 vs. 2 or 2 vs. 1 situations. The more skilled you are at these, the more success you will have in the larger game. Playing combination passes is key!
6. Paired Tag---Pair players up, each pair has 2 balls. One players starts and is given a 2 second lead to get away from his/her partner. The chaser (“it”) dribbles after the first player and tries to tag him/her with his/her hand. If tagged, the roles reverse and the player who was previously “it” has two seconds to get away before their partner tries to tag them. Players must always dribble their soccer ball during this activity.
7. Marbles---Players are in pairs, each with a ball. One player plays out his ball and the partner passes his own ball in an attempt to strike the ball his partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner’s ball. This game should be fast paced because players take turns at trying to hit each other’s ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1’s ball, then player 1 immediately runs to her own ball and tries to hit player 2’s ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1’s ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1’s ball right back. etc. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back.
8. Soccer Tennis---With a partner set up two grids about 10 yards X 10 yards that are separated by a net (or a line, couple of bags, string tied to bags—something serving as a net). Just like in tennis, players play the ball (with their feet in this game) into the other’s grid and the ball must bounce once in that grid. If the receiving player(s) allows the ball to drop twice, the server earns a point. Receiving players can play volleys. Limit your touch count to two or three touch.
9. SLAM---Get a partner or partners and play against a wall or turn over a bench and use one touch to kick the ball against the wall. Turns alternate between partners. Players earn a letter if the ball goes over the bench or goes wide of the bench/wall until they spell “SLAM”. Once they spell “SLAM” they are out of the game.



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by Author Tom Goodman, M.Ed.
MYSA Director of Training and Evaluation

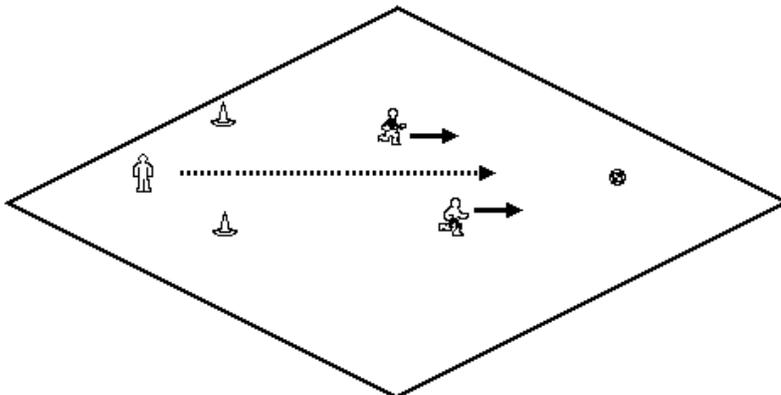
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Combat: Set up a goal with cones about 4 steps wide. You stand behind one of the cones with the ball and your friend stands behind the other cone without a ball. Both of you face the same direction. You must throw or kick the ball about 10-15 yards out into the area that you and your friend are facing. The instant the ball is struck, both of you must attempt to get it (gain possession of the ball) and *dribble it* back through the goal. Play for 20-30 seconds. Alternate the server each time.

If your Mom or Dad is available, they can serve the ball from a position away from the goal and keep time. This is a great 1 versus 1 activity.

Options: - Mom serves (kicks) the ball out into the yard and you and your friend compete to get the ball back to her, instead of going through the goal.

This is a great activity to work on playing with pressure from behind. Thus the players must shield the ball often, escape the pressure of their opponent and create a space large enough to pass the ball back to the coach.





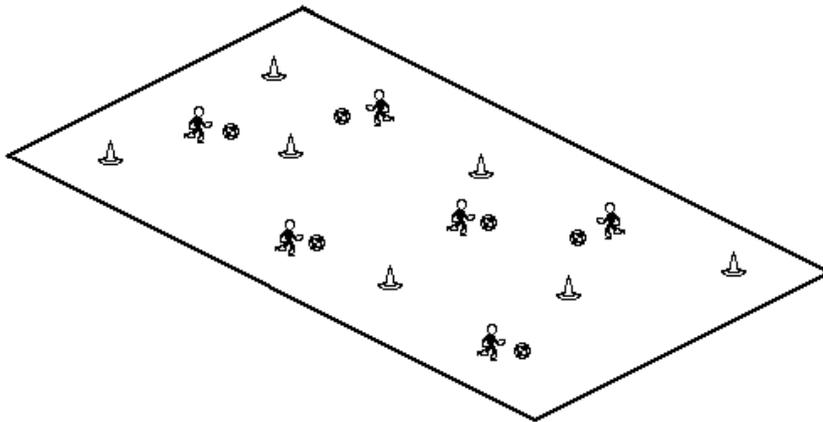
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Cone Dribbling: Throw some cones (or soda cans, etc.) around the yard haphazardly. Dribble your ball around the yard touching it to one of the cones. When you touch a cone with your ball, quickly pull the ball away from the cone with the bottom (sole) of your foot and dribble off to another cone. Continue this activity for 30 seconds. Try it at different speeds. Build your speed up gradually, but always try to perform the skill at top speed...this is referred to as *technical speed*.

Throw some cones around the yard haphazardly. Dribble your ball around the yard in between the cones, but don't allow your ball to touch a cone. Continue this activity for 30 seconds. Try it at different speeds. Build your speed up gradually, but always try to perform the skill at top speed...this is referred to as *technical speed*.



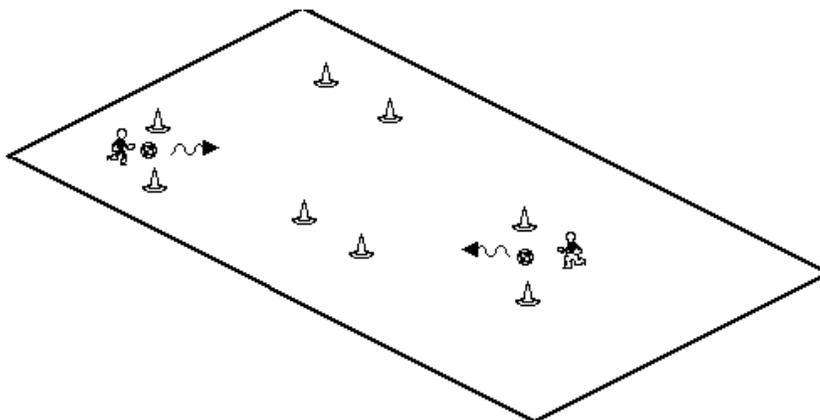


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Gate Dribbling: Set up small goals with cones about 1 or 2 step(s) apart. Place many of these goals around your yard at different angles. Dribble your ball through as many of the goals as you can in 30 seconds (*ask your mom or dad to time you*). The next time you do it, try to increase the number of goals that you dribble through in 30 seconds by at least one.





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Kicking (Wall skills)

If you have access to a wall that you can kick your soccer ball against, consider the following soccer activities:

Straight On: Kick your ball directly against the wall at different speeds (pace or weight) and from different distances. Use different surfaces of the foot. Try to keep the ball on the ground. Receive the rebound with different surfaces of the foot, always trying to keep the first touch within playing distance (about 1 or 2 steps from you). Receive the rebound with a controlling touch or two and then kick it against the wall again. Keep the ball moving and keep your feet moving at all times.

Kicking surfaces: inside of the foot, outside of the foot, instep (laces), heel, toe

Receiving surfaces: inside of foot, outside of foot, sole of foot

Angles: Position yourself about 10 yards away and at one end of the wall. Kick your ball on the ground toward the middle of the wall (about 45 degrees). Immediately after kicking the ball, run to receive it as it rebounds from the wall to the opposite end. Perform a change of direction move and repeat the activity in the opposite direction. Experiment with the pace and the angles of your kicks, as well as your receiving surfaces and number of controlling touches. Always try to keep the ball moving.

Change of Direction Moves: Pull back with sole of one foot and push behind other foot; chop with inside or outside of foot.



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If you have access to a wall that you can kick your soccer ball against, consider the following soccer activities:

Tennis: Volley your ball against the wall with one or two bounces in between each volley. Eventually, keep the ball going with only one bounce in between volleys. Vary your distance from the wall as you play. See how many times you can keep the ball going as you move closer to and farther from the wall. Use different surfaces of your foot and develop a rhythm.

Set up a rectangular court out from the wall and play soccer tennis against the wall with a friend. Set up your own rules with regards to services and bounces, etc.

Squash: This game is played with more than one player. You can set up a rectangular court or play in an open area.

After a kicking order has been determined, the player #1 kicks the ball off the wall. The player #2 must get to the ball before it stops and immediately kick (1-touch) the ball against the wall. If there are more than 2 players, the game proceeds accordingly until all the players have kicked the ball against the wall, at which time the first player is up again. You get a point if the player that follows you allows the ball to stop before she kicks it or if she misses the wall on her kick. Play begins with the next player in the order striking the ball against the wall.

This is a great game for scheming (strategy)...putting the right pace on the ball so that it barely moves after hitting the wall or rebounds off the wall with great speed. Passing angles become a strategic threat in this game as well.

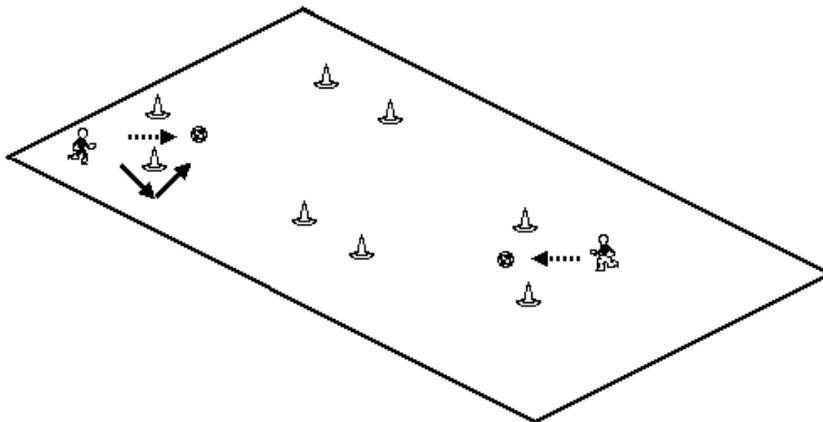


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Nutmeg: Set up small goals with cones about 1 step apart. Place many of these goals around your yard at different angles. Dribble your ball toward a goal and push your ball through the goal. While the ball travels through the goal, you must run around the goal and retrieve the ball on the other side (nutmeg). As soon as you regain control of the ball, dribble at one of the other goals and nutmeg again. Nutmeg as many goals as you can in 30 seconds (*ask your friend, mom or dad to time you*). The next time you do it, try to increase the number of goals that you nutmeg in 30 seconds by at least one.





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Kicking

Trash Can Kicking: Lay a clean, plastic trash can on its side in the back yard. Place a ball 2-3 yards away from the opening of the trash can. Practice kicking stationary balls into the trash can. This can save you from chasing your soccer ball. You can also kick the ball into the side netting of a big soccer goal. The ball will bounce back at you. Work on the technique of kicking (shooting and passing):

- Approach the ball from a slight angle.
- Practice approaches at different speeds (the faster the more power)
- Vary the size of your last step (power step) into the kick (the larger the more power)
- Use the outside of your foot, inside of your foot and the laces (instep)
- Lock your foot when kicking the ball
- Always keep your eyes on the ball when striking it
- Strike the ball on different parts of the ball:
 - lower half will send the ball up
 - midline (equator) will send the ball level to the ground
 - upper half will drive the ball down

Marbles: Put a ball (or cone or soda can) in the middle of the yard. Kick your ball and try to hit the stationary ball. Vary the distance. Have fun competing with your friend or your mom or dad.