

Coaching Special Needs Children

Knowing Your Audience

- Parents
 - Denial
 - Fight the Systems
 - Over Protective
 - Willing to Help
 - Little League Mentality
 - Competitive

Knowing Your Audience

- Players
 - No Two Will be the Same
 - Some Will Need 1 on 1
 - Some Will Have Multiple Disabilities
 - Some Will be Mentally but not Physically Capable and vice versa

Continued...

Knowing Your Audience

- Players
 - Some Needs Will be Physical
 - Some Needs Will be Mental
 - Some Want to Play. Others don't.
 - Most Will Give You 100%

Knowing Your Audience

- Volunteers
 - Most Really Want to Help
 - Need to Specify Their Role
 - Recommended 1- 4, Except for Those Needing 1 on 1 Training

Training the Coach

- Responsibility
 - Be Knowledgeable
 - About the Game
 - About Your Players
 - Be Punctual
 - Be a Role Model
 - Be Organized
 - There is no Down-Time.

Continued...

Training the Coach

- Responsibility
 - Have Excellent Communication Skills
 - Inclement Weather Policy
 - Specified Practice and Game Times
 - Locations of Practice and Games
 - Changes to Posted Schedules
 - Include All Personnel

Continued...

Training The Coach

- Responsibility
 - Safety
 - Players
 - Field
 - Equipment
 - Keep Things Simple - K.I.S.S

Training The Coach

- Helpful Tips
 - Basic First-Aid Training
 - Common Sense
 - Knowledge of Learning and Physical Disabilities
 - Knowledge of Each Player's Medical History
 - Demonstration of Skills to be Taught
 - Keeping Confidentiality

Continued...

Training The Coach

- Helpful Tips
 - Appropriate Touching
 - Never Secretive
 - Personal Space - 18”
 - Areas Covered by Swimwear
 - “High Five”
 - Side Hugs

Continued...

Training The Coach

- Helpful Tips
 - Clean up Area
 - “Backyard” Game
 - Trained Staff and/or Volunteers

Training The Coach

- Coaching Tips
 - Name Tags - Front & Back
 - Spread Equipment Out
 - Colored Stickers
 - Numbers on Jerseys
 - Everyone Coaching in Same Language
 - Volunteer Shirts Different Color
 - Be Part of the Circle

Continued...

Training The Coach

- Coaching Tips
 - Face Sun
 - Big Muscles First
 - Index Cards
 - Sharing Field
 - Instructions - 3 “C’s”
 - Clear
 - Concise
 - Consistent

Continued...

Training The Coach

- Coaching Tips
 - Games
 - Tunnel
 - Simon Says
 - Red Light, Green Light
 - Backyard

Continued...

Training The Coach

Congratulate Yourself !

Training Volunteers

- Soccer Buddies
 - Explain Importance of Their Role
 - What Is Expected of Them?
 - Disclosure Form
 - Commitment
 - What Can They Expect From You?
 - Information
 - Input

Training The Parents

- What Parents Can Expect
 - Child Will Have Fun
 - Activities Geared to Child's Ability
 - 1 on 1 Training If Needed
 - Safe Environment
 - Information on all Activities
 - Building of Child's Self Esteem, Physical Fitness, and Socialization Skills

Continued...

Training The Parents

- What Parents Can Expect
 - Opportunities Provided
 - Individual Skills
 - Small Group Training
 - Large Group Training
 - Unified Soccer
 - Mainstream
 - Camps

Training The Parents

- What is Expected of the Parents?
 - Be Present at All Games and Practices
 - Mark Equipment
 - Provide Adequate Information
 - Get Involved
 - Be Positive
 - Make Equipment Safe
 - Prepare Your Child

The “Routine” In Action

A Typical Practice

The “Routine” In Action

- Be Punctual
 - Arrive Early
 - Have the Field Set Up a and Ready to go Before Players Arrive

The “Routine” In Action

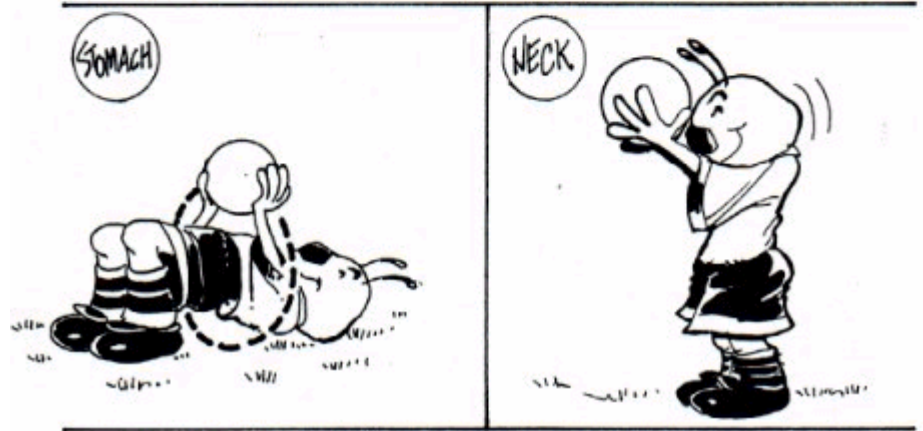
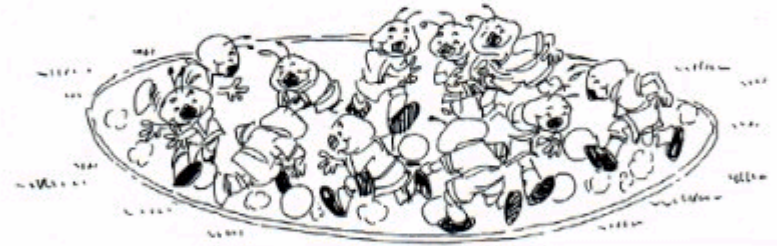
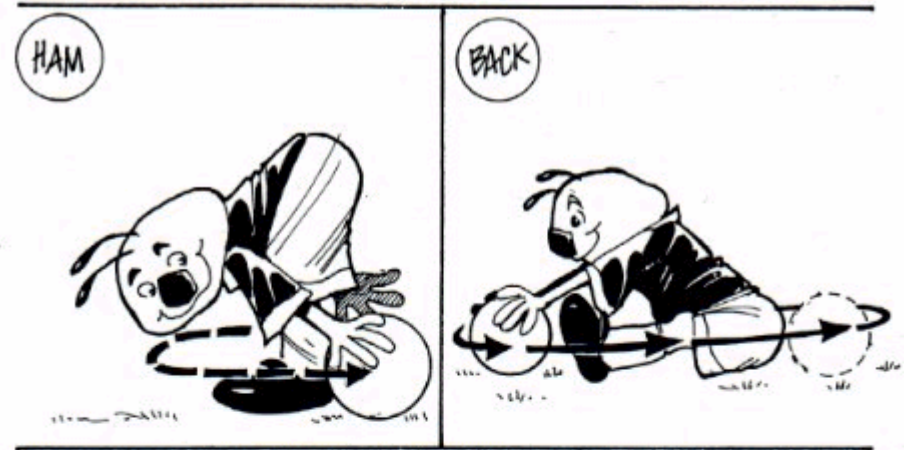
- Field Setup
 - *Circle*: For Warm Up
 - *Small Fields*: For 1+1 and 1 vs. 1
 - *Games Bench*: For halftime Refreshments
 - *Medium Fields*: For “Balanced” Games
 - *Large Field*: For “Free” Games
 - *Coach*: Adjust the field and markings to fit the individual, group, and team needs.

The “Routine” In Action

- Begin The Practice
 - Socialize
 - Tell them what they will learn (Explanation)
 - Show them what they will learn (Demonstration)

Warm Up

- Have players moving around “inside the circle” with their ball
- At appropriate moments, “Show and Tell” them which stretch is next

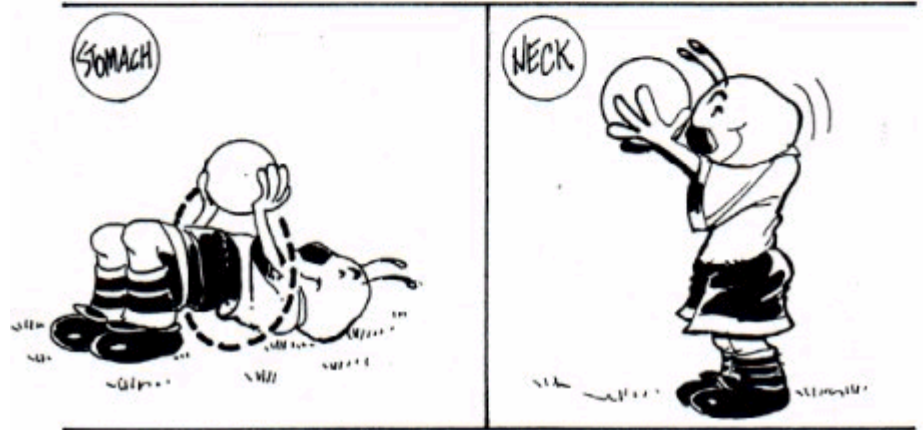
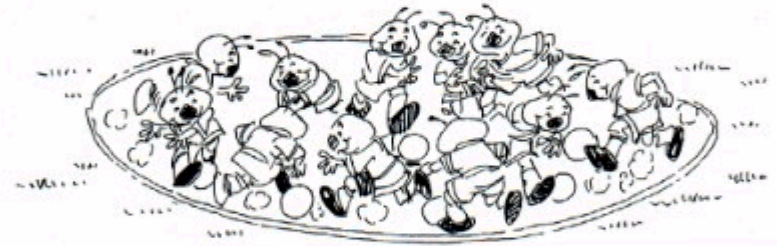
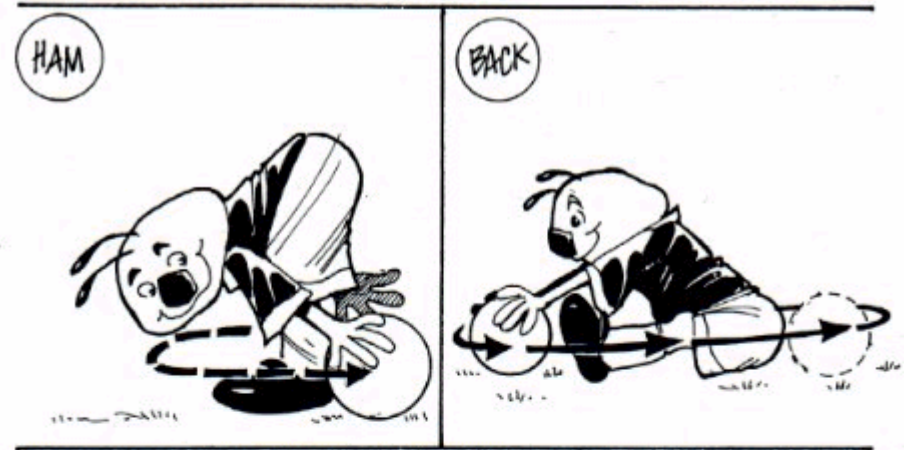


Warm Up

Players are in constant motion dribbling their ball

Stretches:

1. Ham: Feet together, bend forward, and rotate ball around both legs
2. Back: While Seated, using the hands to roll the ball around the body and outstretched legs
3. Stomach: While lying flat on the ground, roll the ball over the stomach and under the hips
4. Neck: Push head against the ball, resisting in front, back and sides



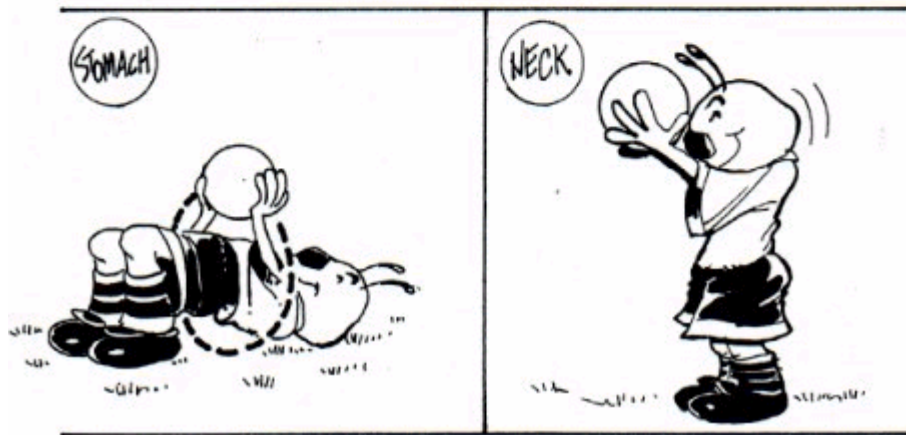
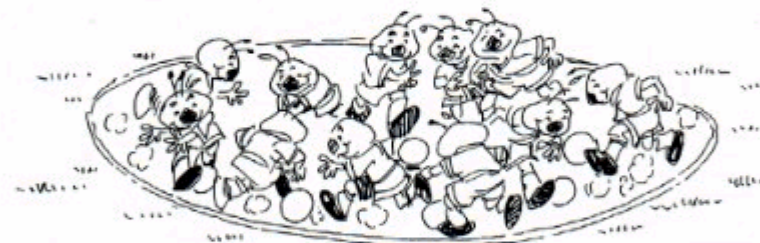
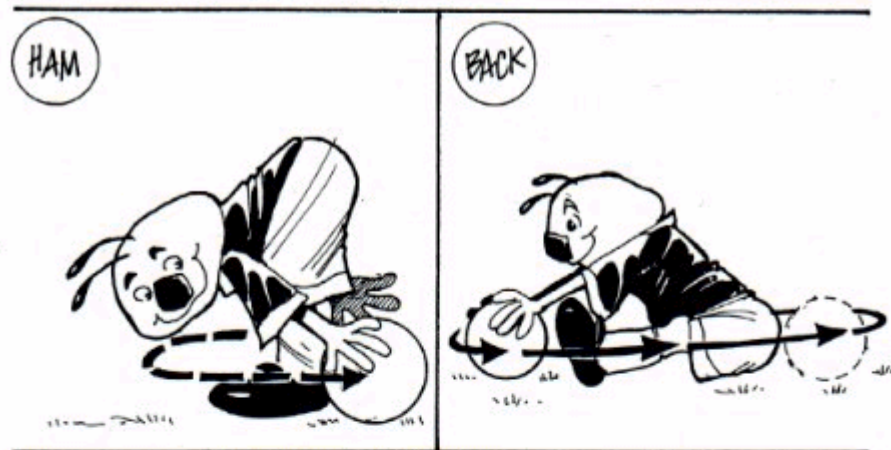
Warm Up

Coach:

- “Show and Tell” Them how each movement and stretch are performed
- Create “Buzz Words” for the movements and stretches
- Objective: Have players perform the movement & stretches on their own

Words of Advice

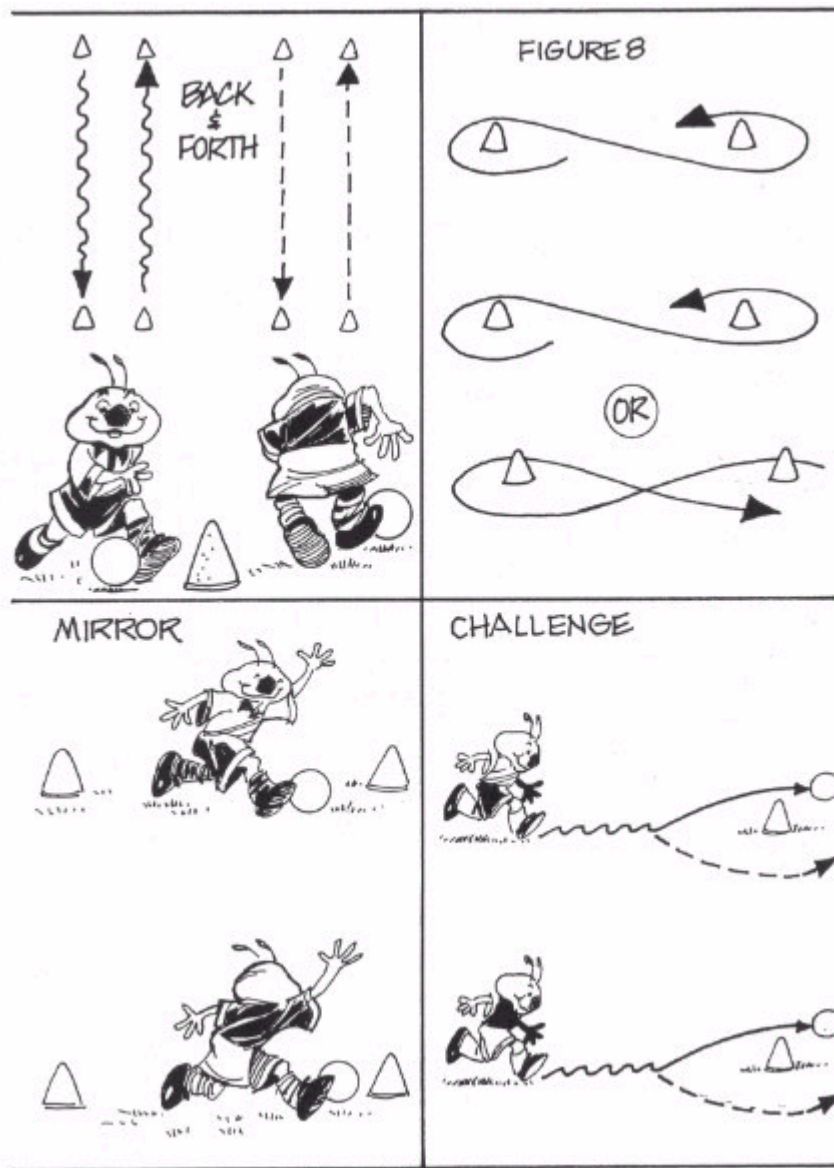
- Adjust the ball movements and stretches so that each individual can participate



Play 1+1

Emphasis on keeping the ball under control

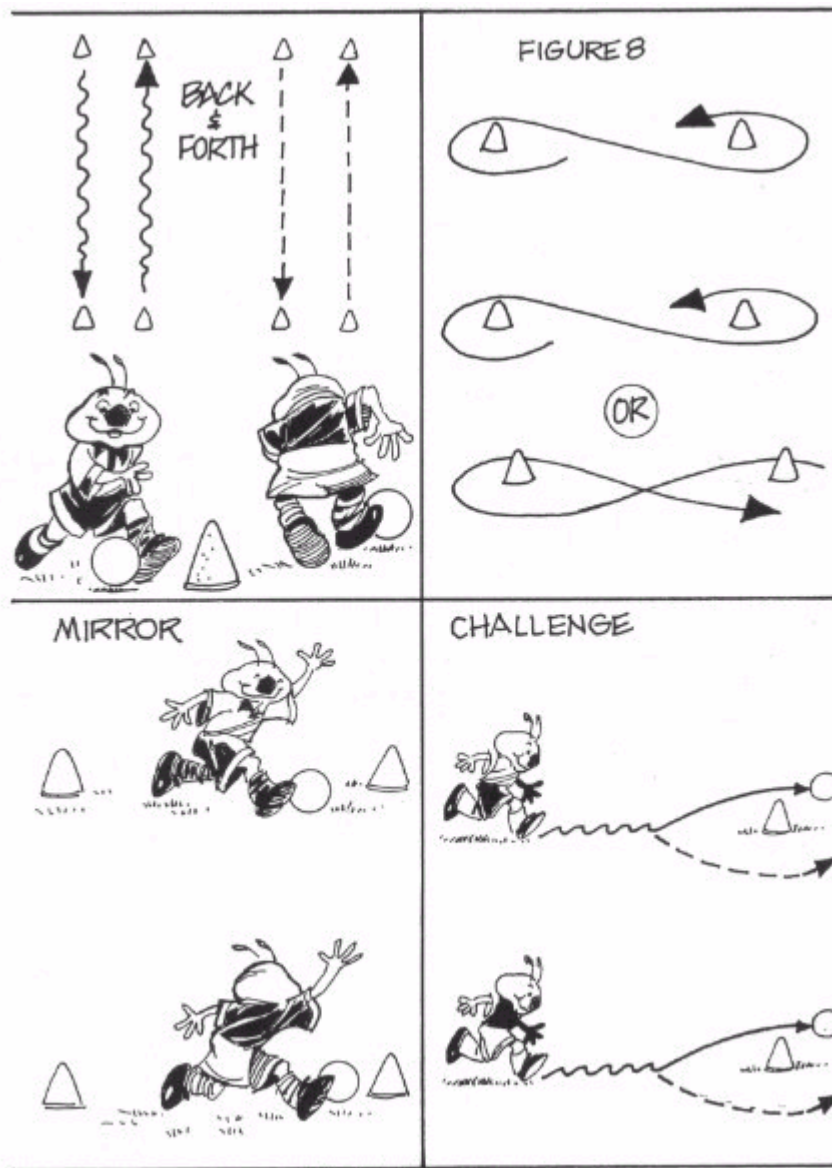
- Divide players into pairs
- Consider size, ability, age, type of special needs, and safety issues
- Each player will “Mirror” partner’s moves



Play 1+1

Emphasis on keeping the ball under control

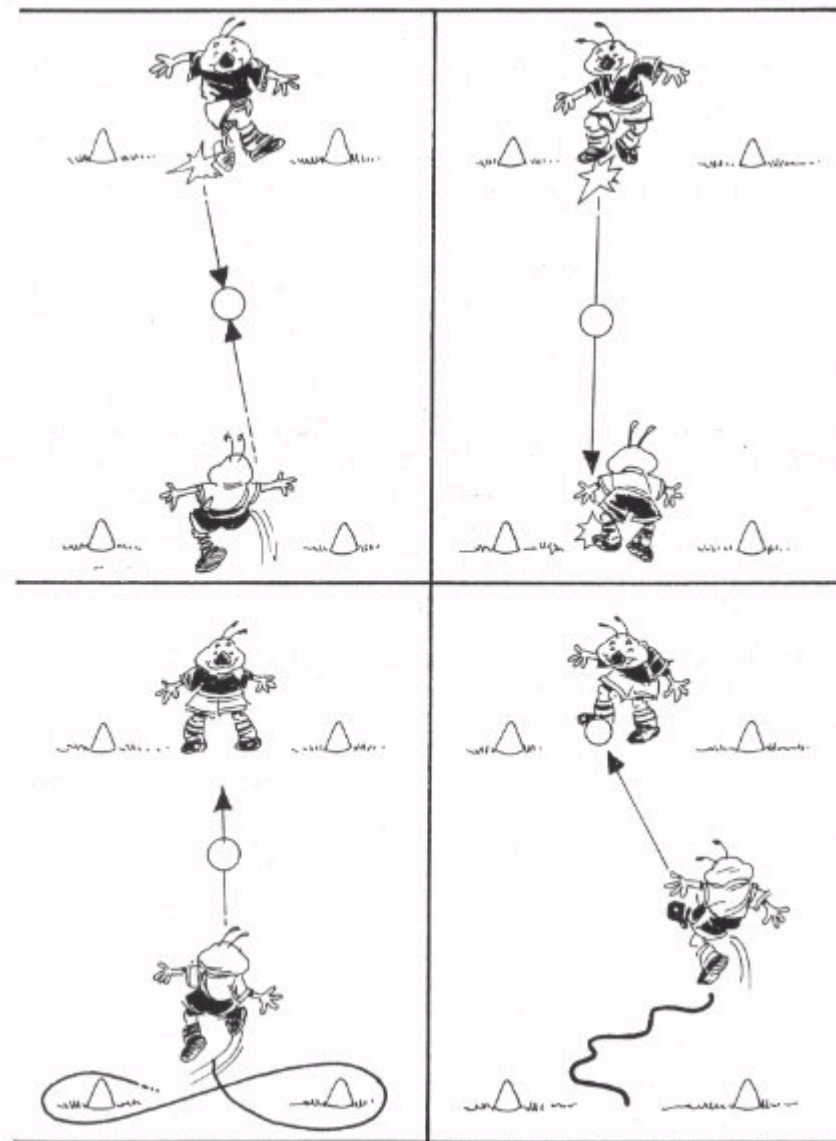
1. Moving the ball back and forth
2. Moving the ball in Figure 8
3. Mirror your partner
4. Challenge your partner



Play 1+1

Emphasis on keeping the ball under control

5. Pass the ball back and forth (no rules)
6. Pass the ball back and forth (with rule, right foot only)
7. Move the ball before passing to partner
8. Let them use their imagination inside this environment



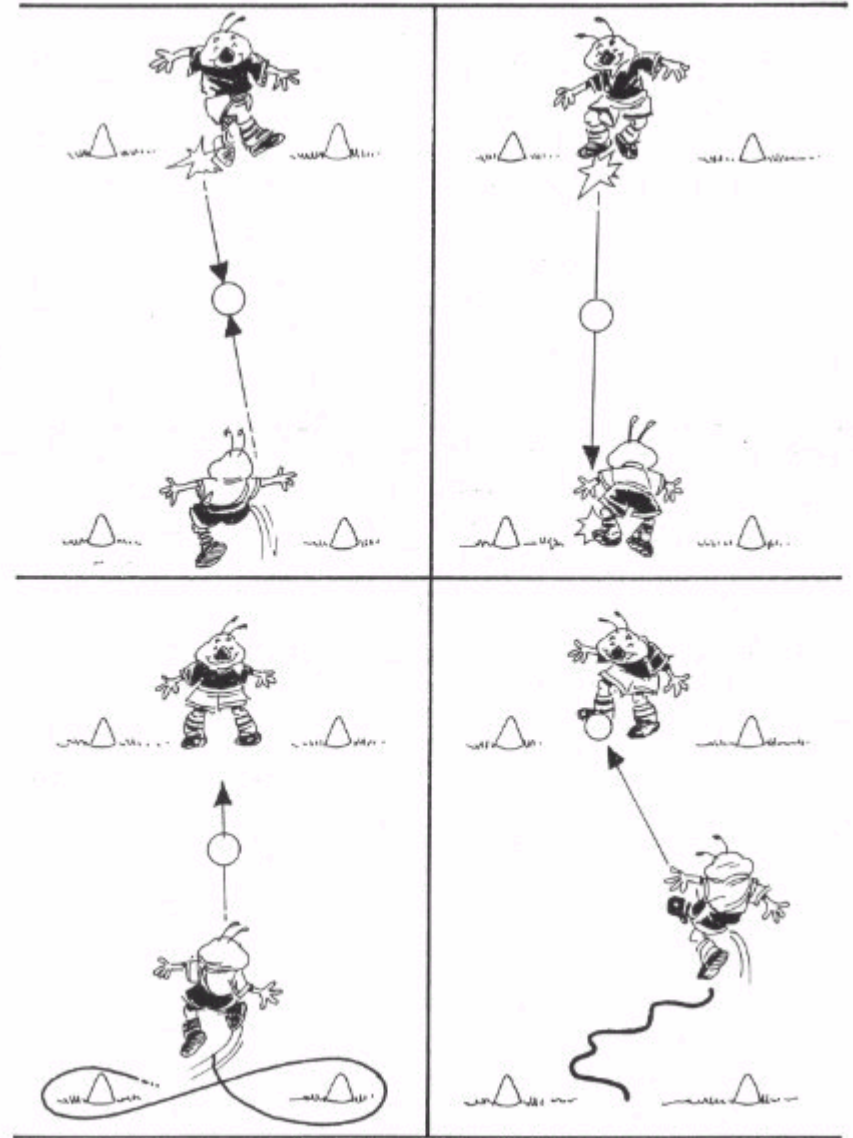
Play 1+1

Coach:

- “Show and Tell” them how a movement can be performed
- Create “Buzz Words” for the movements
- Objective: Have players perform the movement on their own

Words of Advice:

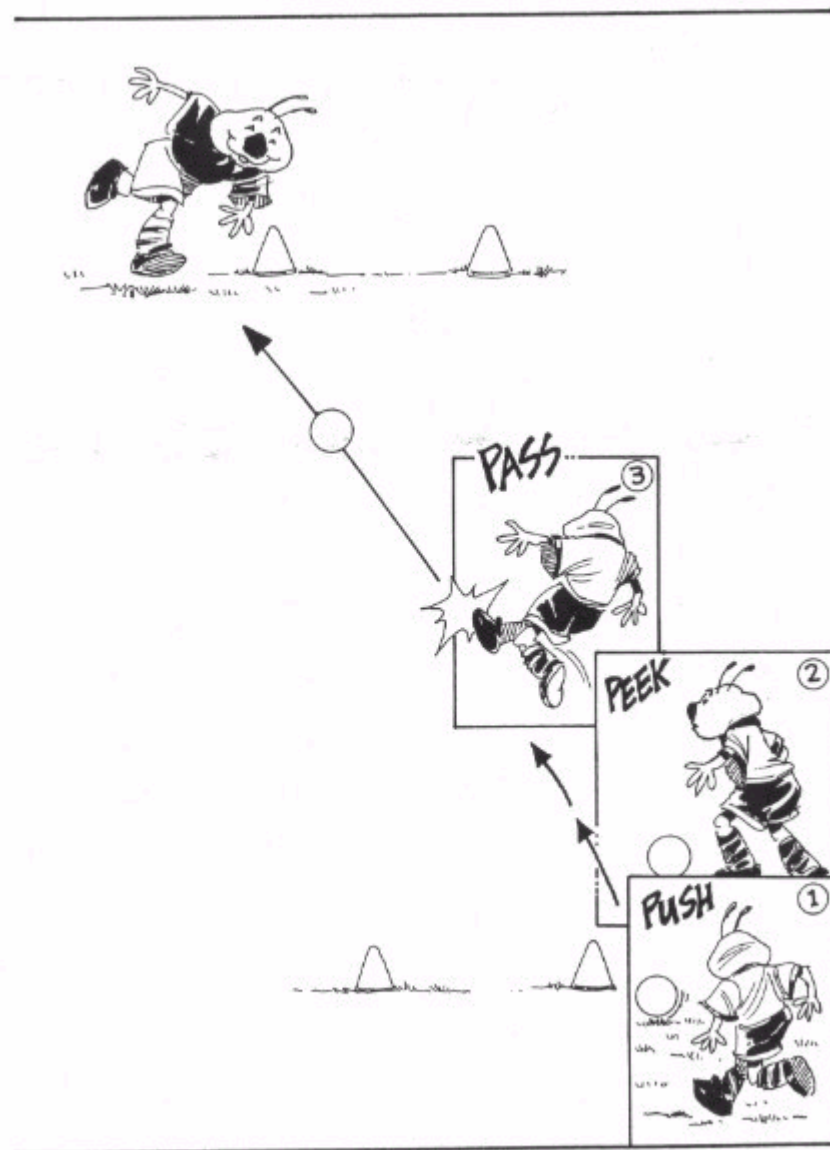
- Adjust the 1+1 activity so that each child is participating with success



Play 1 vs 1

Divide players into pairs

- Consider size, ability, age, type of special needs, and safety issues
- Those capable will play against each other
- Those not capable will continue their 1+1 play!



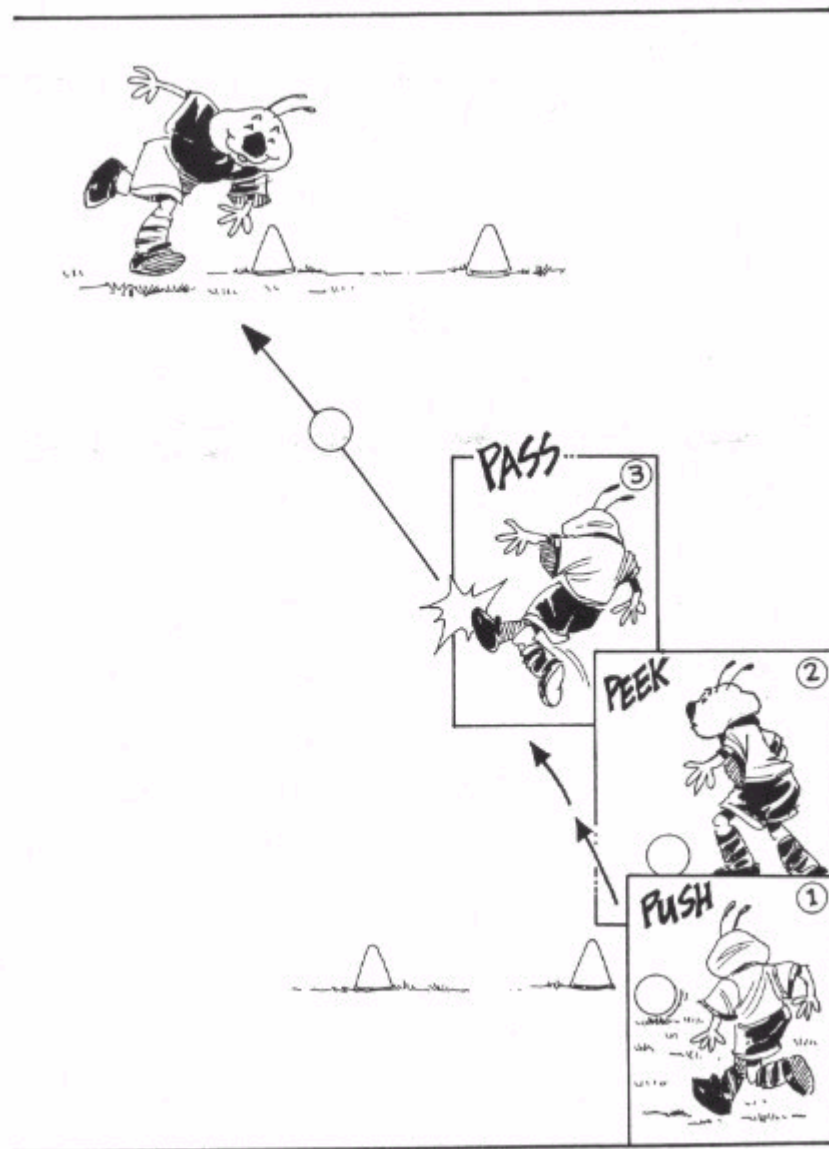
Play 1 vs 1

The Serve (Kickoff)

- Server: Push, Pass, Peek
- Serve to target, opposite goal

Coach:

- “Show and Tell” them how a movement or activity is performed
- Create “Buzz Words” for the movement and activity (*Ball in Flight, Look Left and Right*)
- Objective: Have players perform the movement and do the activity on their own



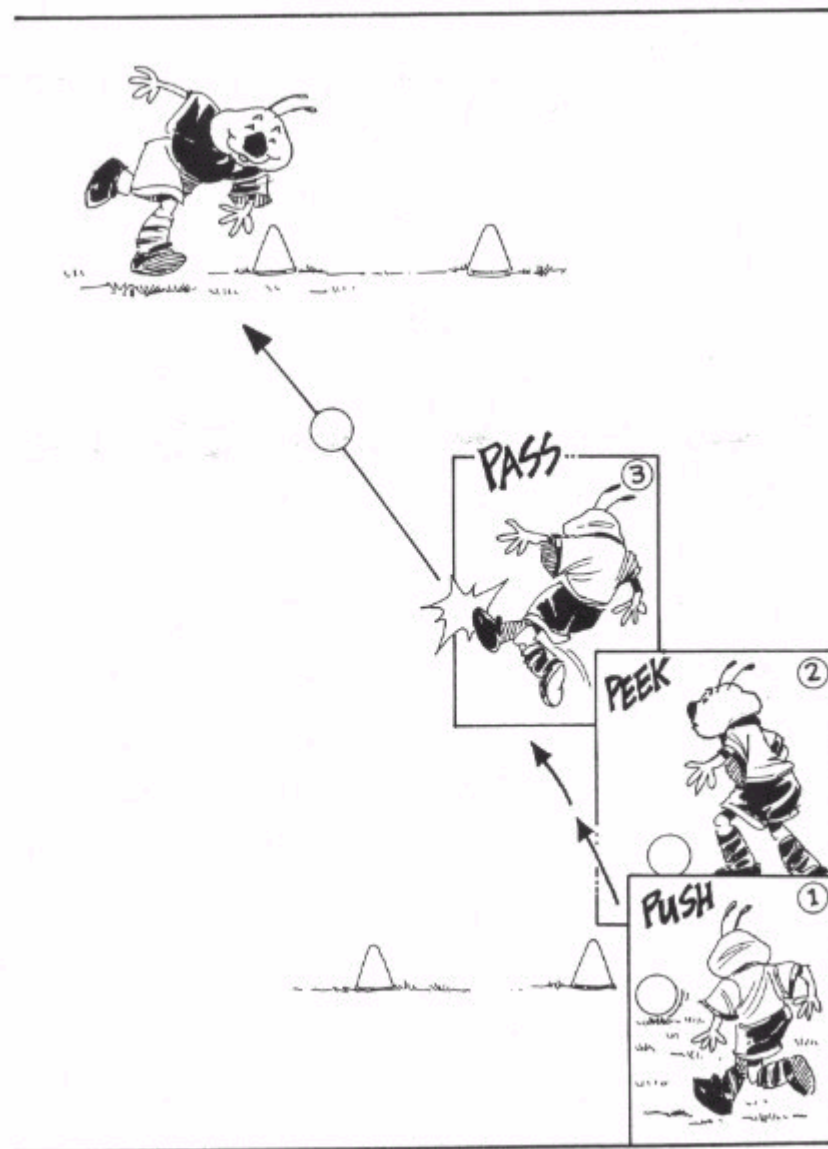
Play 1 vs 1

Attacker LOOK for:

- Opponent's goal
- Opponent's actions
- The ball

Defender Look For

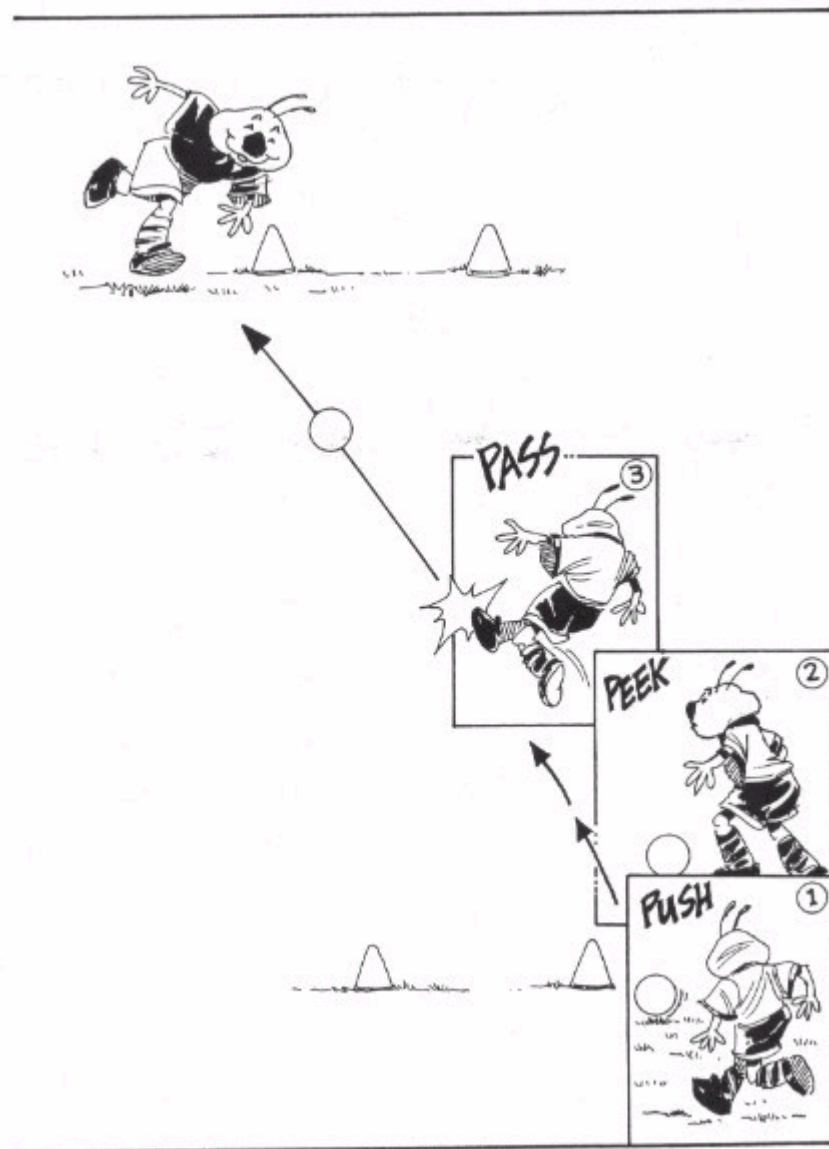
- Your own goal
- Position of the ball
- Opponent's actions



Play 1 vs 1

Coach:

- Encourage players to take their eyes off the ball “momentarily” to read the game
- Using various colored cones to distinguish between goals is highly recommended
- Use of colored stickers on hands to distinguish left and right is also highly recommended



The 1 vs 1 Game

Move

Move as the Attacker:

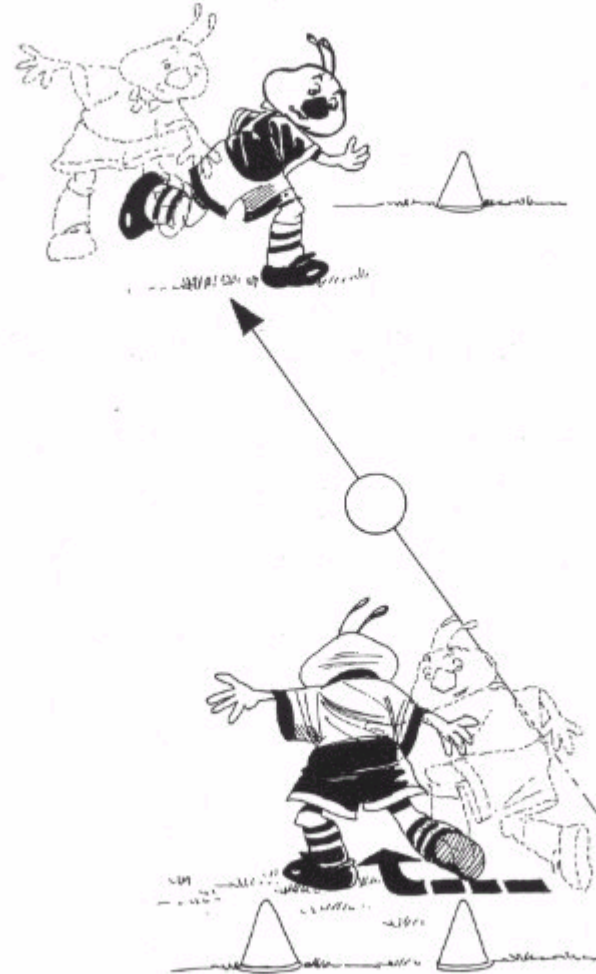
1. Move toward the ball
2. Do not wait for the ball to reach you

Move as the Defender:

1. Move to block your goal
2. Move to get the ball

Coach:

- Teach the players to MOVE as the ball moves



The 1 vs 1 Game

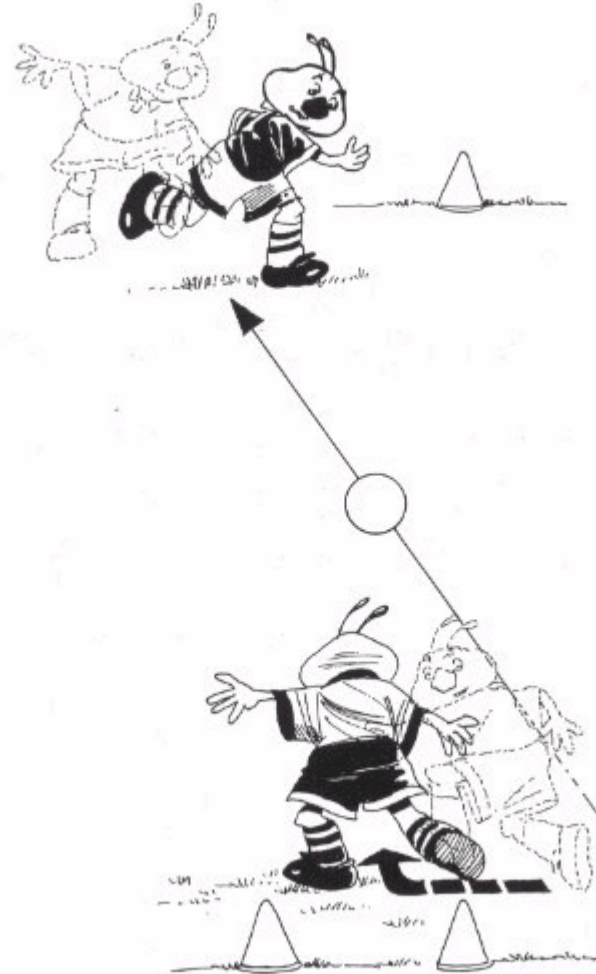
Bring Under Control

As the Attacker:

1. **Meet** the ball by getting into its path
2. **Greet** the ball with a body part
3. **Feet:** Use your feet to control it if possible

As the Defender:

1. **Slow** down your speed when approaching the ball
2. **Low:** Bend your knees and go into the defensive stance
3. **Go:** Stay on the balls of your feet



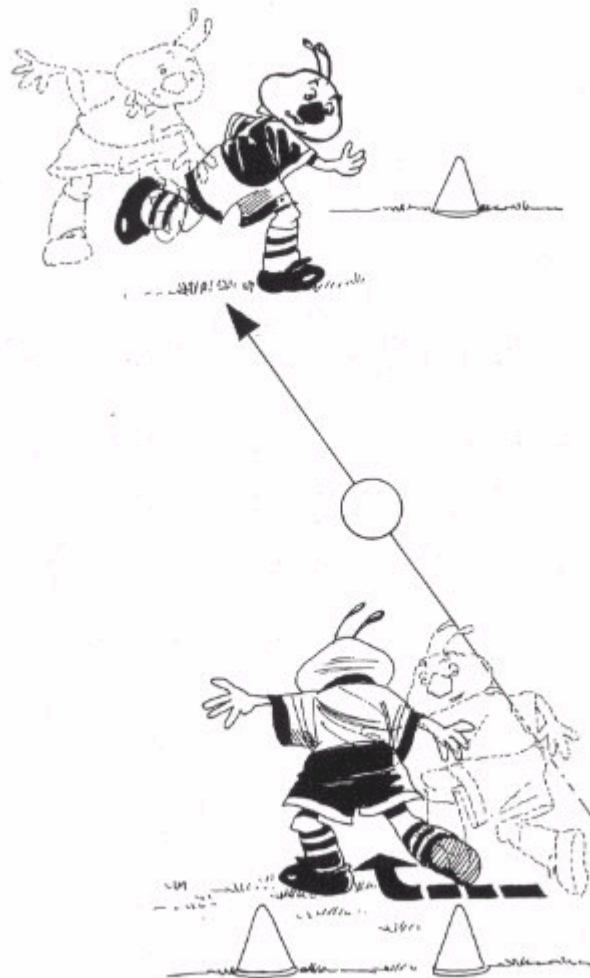
The 1 vs 1 Game

Bring Under Control

Coach:

Some of your players may not be able to bend their knees or stay on the balls of their feet.

Adjust so that each individual can feel successful when either attacking or defending.



The 1 vs 1 Game

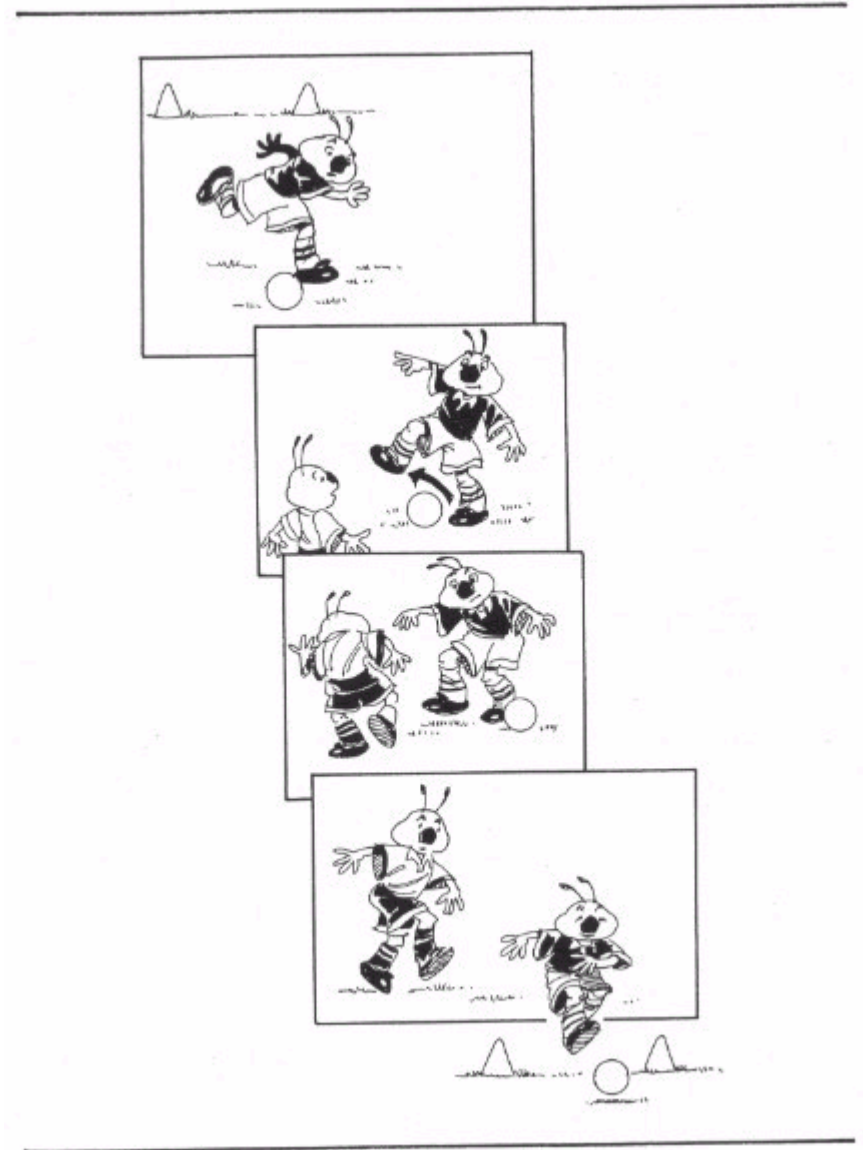
Keep under Control

As Attacker

Meet...your opponent by dribbling straight at them and forcing them to defend

Greet...your opponent by forcing them back on their heels with a sudden move (foot fake or body feint)

Beat...your opponent by exploding past them



The 1 vs 1 Game

Keep under Control

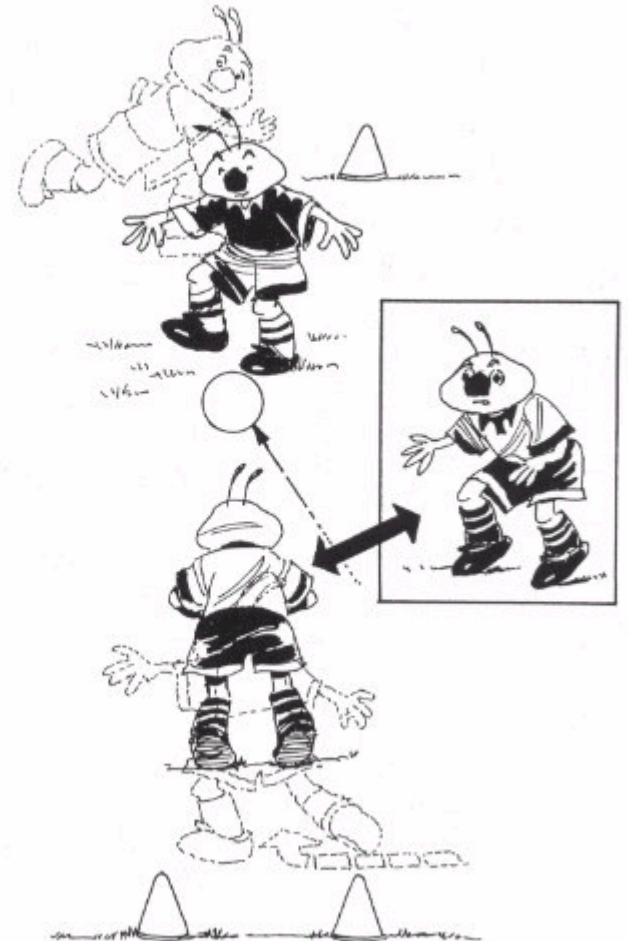
As Defender

Slow...down your opponent by:

1. Getting in front of your goal
2. Going for the ball

Low...Bend your knees to get into the defensive stance

Go...Force the attacker in the direction you want by staying on your feet and shuffling sideways



The 1 vs 1 Game

Rules you can apply:

- Put the ball between opponent's cones
- The ball must ROLL between the cones
- The ball can BOUNCE or FLY between the cones
- You can only score by shooting from a certain distance
- You can score from either side
- Make a specific foot or body fake
- Not losing the ball in a certain time period



Coach:

Use your imagination when giving points to players – just make sure they all score many times!

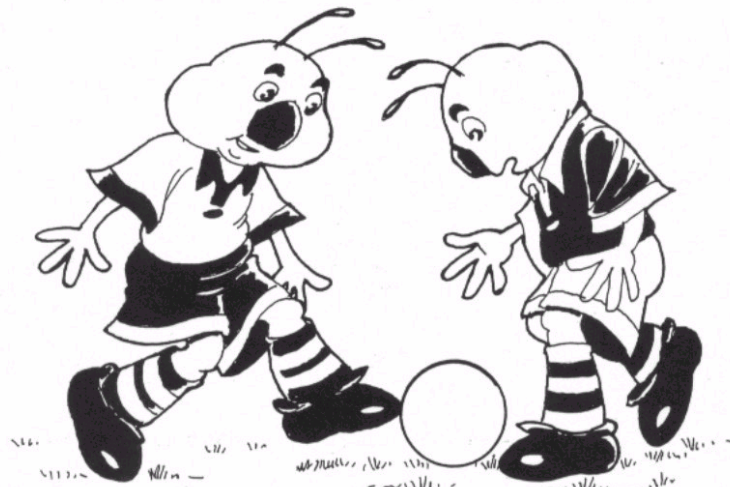
The 1 vs 1 Game

Scoring as a Defender

- Poking the ball away
- Tackling the ball away
- Getting the ball in a certain period of Time
- Putting the ball over the touchline

Coach:

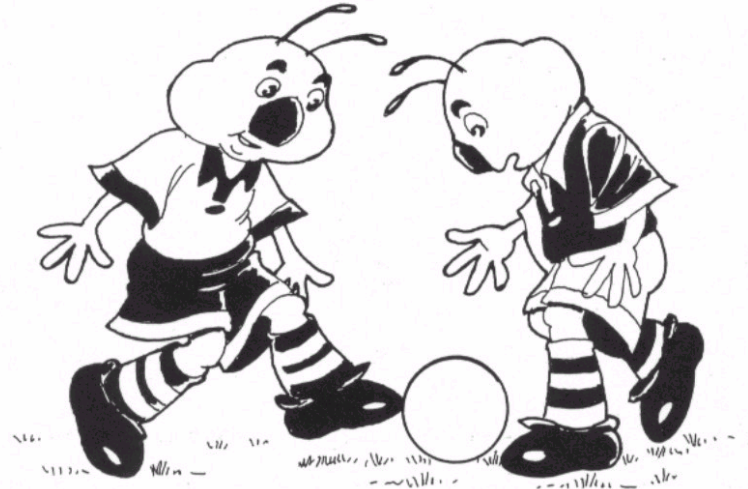
Use your imagination when giving points to player – just make sure they all score many times!



The 1 vs 1 Game

Rotating

- Pair up “new” players to play against each other
- Balance the players by considering size, ability, age, type of special needs, and safety issues
- It is FUN to face “new” opponents

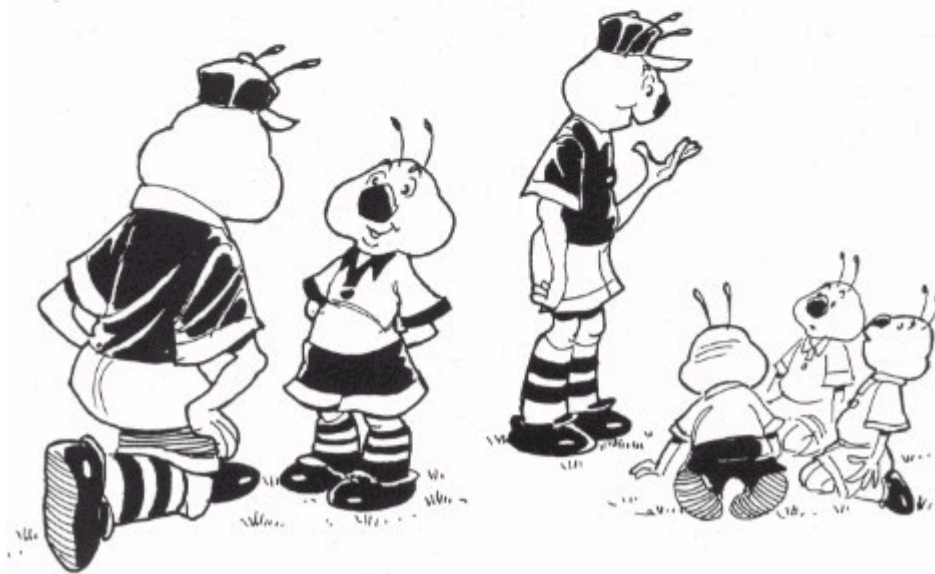
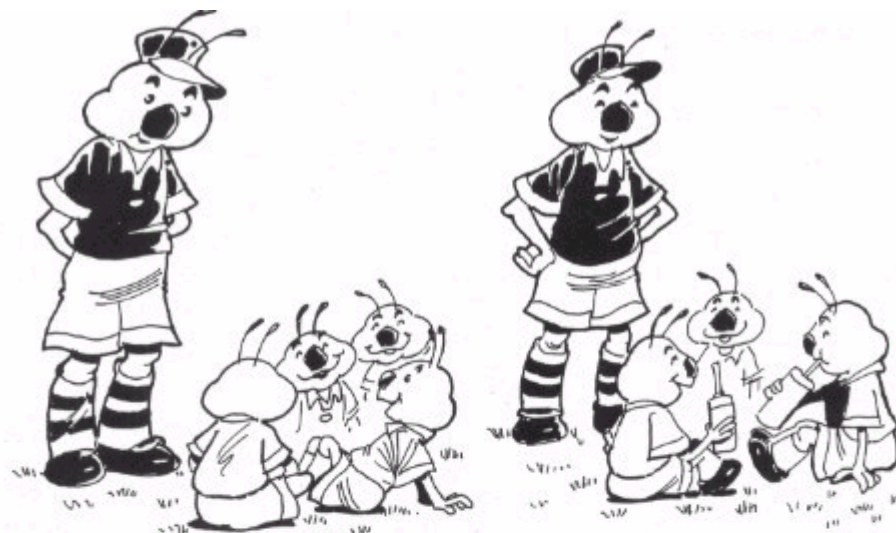


Coach:

Start the 1 vs 1 games with a “Serve” and let them play for an appropriate period of time

Halftime

- Practice your halftime routine
- Get feedback from players, parents, buddies and staff
- Consider & handle the “needs” of each individual player



Halftime

1. Allow your players to relax and talk to each other
2. Have them drink lots and lots of water
3. Talk to them individually – prepare them for the second half
4. Talk to them as a group – prepare them for the second half

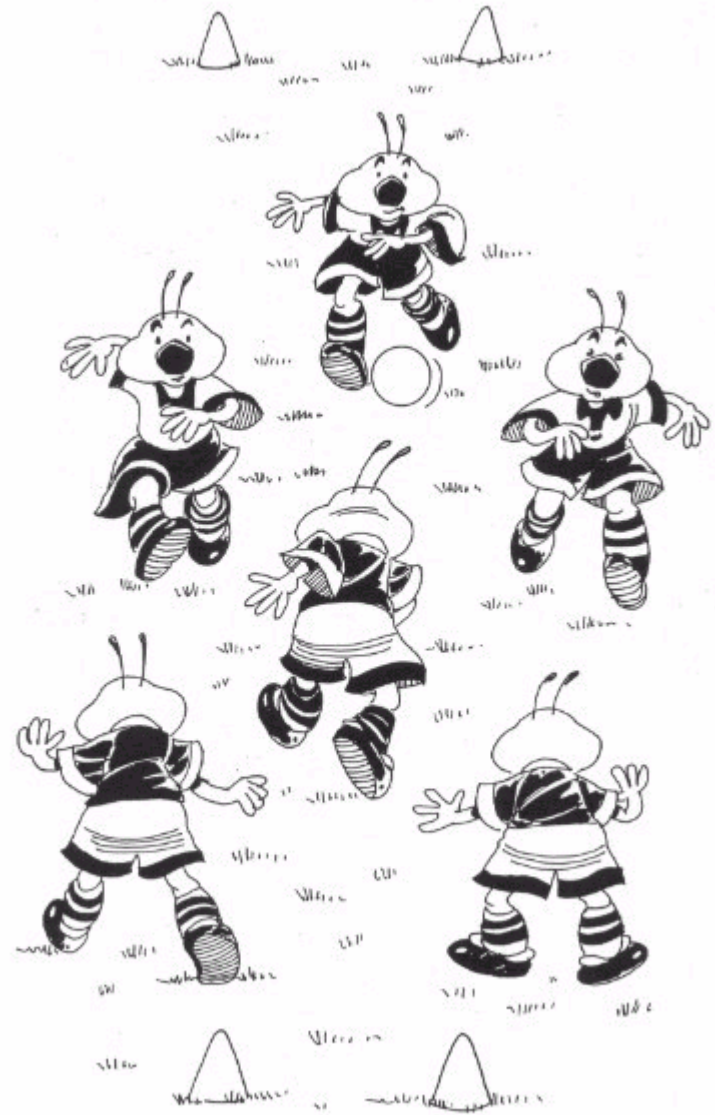


Play

Balanced, small sided games

- Setup small sided game: 3v3, 4v4, etc...
- Balance the teams according to ability, needs, safety and size
- These games can be played with or without a goalkeeper. The choice is yours.

Note: Sometimes the safest place to put one of your players is in the goal.



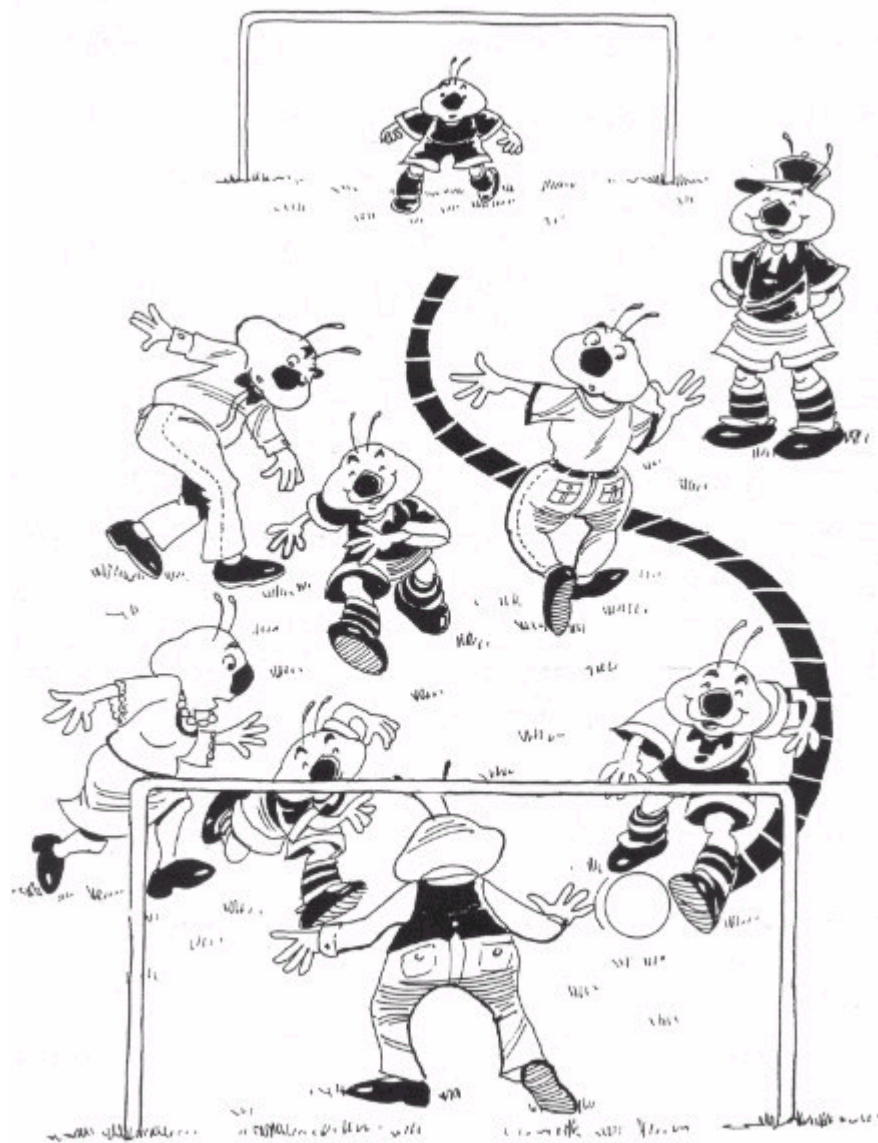
Play

Free Game

- Could be a game involving all the players
- Could be a game against the parents

Coach:

- Make sure to end this game on a positive note: Great move, Great tackle, Tie score, etc...



Cool Down

- Time to clean up the field – have players help!
- Stretch and compliment their participation
- Get feedback from players and staff on the practice
- Assign homework – give information on next practice

**MAKE SURE
EVERYONE GOES
HOME WITH A SMILE
ON THEIR FACE!**



Sample Practice Session

10 Minutes – Socialize:

- Let players talk to each other and to you about what they will be doing
- Cover practice sessions rules
- Tell them what they will learn
- Include parents where appropriate

10 Minutes – Warm Up

- Have players move with a ball
- At appropriate times “Show and Tell” them which stretch is next

10 Minutes – Play 1 + 1

- Divide players into pairs considering size, ability, age, type of special needs, safety issues
- Each player will ‘mirror’ partner’s moves
- Use “buddy” system if necessary

10 Minutes – Play 1 vs 1

- Divide players into pairs considering size, ability, age, type of special needs, safety issues
- Those capable will play against each other. Those not capable will continue the 1 + 1 play
- Use “buddy” system if necessary

10-15 Minutes – Halftime

- Practice your half time routine
- Get feedback from players, parents, and staff

10 Minutes – Balanced Small Sided Games

- Set up small sided games: 3v3, 4v4, etc...
- Balance the teams according to ability, needs, safety and size

10 Minutes – Free Game

- Could be a game involving all the players or against the parents

10 Minutes – Cool Down

- Time to clean up the field – have players help
- Stretch and compliment their participation
- Get feedback from players, parents and staff on the practice – Was it FUN?
- Assign homework – give information on next practice or game to players and parents
- Make sure everyone goes home with a SMILE on their face!!!

Make this a flexible “routine” that will fit your players’ needs and puts a smile on their faces.