

Game: Get your heads up

Action

I played this game with my U8s over the weekend. It is particularly good for that age group but will work for any age of players, from five upwards.

What will they learn?

Younger players will learn why they should keep their heads up when they have the ball. At the end of the game they will also have practiced turning with the ball and will understand when to push the ball ahead of them and run after it and when to keep it close to their feet.

Set up

This is a very simple game to organise and to play.

All you need to do is cone off a grid about 20 yards square.

Your players line up along two sides of the grid with a ball each.

How to play

On your command, your players dribble across the grid to the opposite side, turn and dribble back. Then stop with their foot on the ball.

Coaching points

To begin with, watch your players dribble across and back without any instruction or guidance from you. Note which players keep their head up to avoid collisions. And how do they move the ball - do they keep it close or push it ahead and run after it?

After a minute or two ask the children why they need to keep their heads up while they dribble across the grid.

Then ask them to have another go.

Next, demonstrate the difference between keeping the ball close and pushing it ahead and running after it. Which is the quickest way to get across the grid?

Now make it competitive. See who can get across the grid and back five times in the shortest time.

Progression

Use this game to practice the different ways to turn with the ball. For young ones, a simple drag back turn is probably the easiest.