






U6-U8 Striking the Ball Activities
Rob Herringer

Activity, Description, and Progression	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>FUNDAMENTAL STRIKING OF THE BALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each player with a ball begins learning how to properly strike the ball with the instep/laces by sitting on the ground and kicking the ball from their hands. - Players are to practice striking the ball with both feet. <p>Progression</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have the players attempt to juggle while sitting down (using the instep/laces). 2. Players are on their feet and throw ball down to the laces of each foot. Strike and collect ball. Repeat using both feet. 3. Challenge the players by having them see how many strikes they can get in 30 seconds. 4. See if they can beat their previous score by at least two! 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Toe pointed. 2. Ankle locked. 3. Snap of the knee. 4. Hips facing forward. 5. Controlled follow-through. <p><i>The coach can walk around and give individual attention to each player.</i></p> <p><i>Coaches must take the time to carefully teach this technique and make sure players are using the proper mechanics.</i></p>

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<p>PAC MAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- One player is designated the “Pac Man” and attempts to strike their ball into the balls of the other players in the grid.- If a player’s ball is struck with the Pac Man’s ball, then they become a Pac Man.- The coach should keep extra balls available so players aren’t chasing balls the entire time. <p>Progression</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Add more Pac Men to start the activity.		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Encourage the players to use different surfaces of the foot for different strikes of the ball.2. Inside of the foot (heel down; toe up) or even toe for short range strikes.3. Laces/instep for longer and more powerful strikes.4. Hips and toe of plant foot pointed in the direction of the target.
<p>SHIPS AND SUBS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- One team is designated the “Ships,” and they shield their balls from the other team which is designated the “Subs.”- The “Subs” attempt to strike their balls into the “Ships” balls.- Each “Sub” keeps track of the number of balls they hit in 1 minute.- Switch roles and see which team makes the most “direct hits.”		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Same as above!

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<p>SEE ‘YA LATER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 v 2 to two goals.- The coach plays the ball into the grid to trigger each battle.- Players on the field must leave the grid as soon as a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds.- A designated player for each team keeps track of the number of goals their team scores.		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Encourage the players to shoot early and often!2. Keep all comments on shooting very positive.3. Allow the players to find creative ways to finish on goal.4. If the shot is not on, then encourage them to beat opponents off of the dribble to find an opening for a shot.
<p>3 v 3 + BUMPERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 3 v 3 to two goals (no goalkeepers).- “Bumpers” or neutral players help the team in possession of the ball.- The coach can also place these players on each endline. <p>Progression</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 4 v 4 with two “bumpers.”2. 5 v 5 (4 outfield players and a goalkeeper).		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use extra players as “bumpers” or neutral players who are always available to help the team in possession in order to keep them active and involved in the activity.2. Allow the players to have fun and practice striking the ball as much as possible.3. Reinforce coaching points if necessary.