

"Inside/Outside Figure 8 Dribbling Race" (for ages U-8 & up)

- Summary: Players simultaneously race around 2 cones in a "Figure 8" pattern using only the inside and outside of one foot (so they turn around one cone using the outside of the foot and around the other cone using the inside of the same foot). The first to complete 5 trips around the cones and back to the start is the winner. Allow them to use the bottom of the foot to stop the ball. Play the first game with every player using his or her "strong" foot, and then play again with everyone using only their "weak" foot. Play 4 games (2 with each foot). Play this Game occasionally to teach this skill, not every practice.
- Why play this Practice Game? If you watch a lot of soccer, as we do, you will notice that good players can control the ball using the inside and outside of the same foot. Being able to do so is very useful in dribbling and shielding the ball. In fact, George Best, one of the greatest dribblers to ever play soccer, used only his right foot to dribble a great deal of the time (even when playing on the left side of the field), and on one of his most famous goals (for San Jose in 1980) he dribbled thru 5 defenders using only the inside and outside of his right foot to control the ball (we have it on tape). We believe the best way to teach dribbling is to play Practice Games that require players to try using various dribbling styles at young ages so each player can develop the style that works the best for him or her. This Game forces players to use both the inside and outside of the same foot to control the ball. We believe this is an important skill to teach and to occasionally practice.
- Teaches: Using the inside and outside of the same foot to dribble and turn.
- Set-up: You will need 2 disk cones (or cloth markers) per player, or if you don't have enough cones split your players into 2 groups and let one group play while the other watches. Use disk cones to make 2 rows (like shown below), putting the cones opposite each other 3 or 4 steps apart (depending on age) and place the cones in each row also 3 or 4 steps apart so players will have enough room to turn around the cones without running into each other. Players will all start behind a cone and dribble around the opposite cone in a "Figure 8" pattern. The set-up is shown below:

x x x x x x
c 3 c 3 c 3 c 3 c 3 c

3 to 4

c 3 c 3 c 3 c 3 c 3 c

x=players

c=disk cones

3 to 4=steps between cones

3 to 4=steps between rows

- The Game:
 1. Each player has a ball.

2. The players all start by standing behind a cone in the same row (as shown in the diagram above).
3. Players must only use one foot to dribble the ball. Show them how they can use the inside and outside of their foot to control the ball and make turns. Show them how they can use a "Hook Turn" to turn around the cone. Demonstrate how to dribble around the cones in a Figure 8 pattern (so they turn around one cone using the outside of the foot and around the other cone using the inside of the same foot). Allow players to use the bottom of their foot to help control the ball if they need to.
4. Let the players all practice for a minute while you watch to be sure they understand what to do.
5. Tell them to use their preferred foot to dribble in the first game. This is so they are all competing using their strongest foot in the first game and their weaker foot in the second game. (Otherwise, it won't be as competitive).
6. On "Go" the players dribble in a "Figure 8" pattern around the other cone and back, until they have done it 5 times. Each time across and back is one trip. Tell players to yell "Done" when they have made 5 trips across and back. The first to make 5 trips across and back is the winner.
7. Then, play another game requiring each player to use the opposite foot.
8. Play 4 games (2 with each foot).