

# To Soccer Drill or Not To Soccer Drill (That is the question)

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**Drills** — How often have your youth soccer players come to you during a practice session and asked, "Coach, can we please do a soccer drill?" vs. coming to you asking, "Coach, can we please play a soccer game?"

When you were a child (if you can remember that far back), did you get together with your friends and say, "Hey, how about we do a soccer drill?"

Name the sport (baseball, basketball, football) and try to remember which "drill" you asked your friends to participate in... Or did you just get together, chose teams, and begin playing that particular game — maybe with a few modifications due to the number of players, facility, etc. available?

Can you imagine a group of kids in Brazil / Argentina / Germany / Holland / US getting together and saying, "I think we should do the following soccer drill!"

Isn't it more likely they choose teams and start *playing soccer*?

I hope you're seeing a trend here. Children don't get together to play *drills* — they get together to play **games**. That tells us something about the words we should be using as soccer coaches. But do words really make that much difference?

Let's take a look at the dictionary and see which words have a more appealing definition:

**"Drill"** - Instruct by repetition. Strict training and instruction."

Do you really think your players come to you to be "Instructed by Repetition"? Only if you love the word "boring."

Do you think your players come to you because they want "Strict training and instruction?" Only if you believe that the love of the game can be taught through strict instruction - and it can't.

If we combine the word *soccer* with *drill* we come up with the common term, *soccer drill*. Our soccer dictionary would then result in the following definition: "Strict, repetitious instructions to develop youth soccer players!"

"Strict" often results in players, standing in lines, waiting for their turn to touch the ball, and being under the coach's scrutiny.

"Repetitious" often results in players, standing in lines, waiting for their turn to touch the ball, and being under the coaches scrutiny.

"Instructions" often results in players having to listen to the coaches' verbiage...while standing in lines, waiting for scrutiny.

Let's check the dictionary again and see what we have for the word *game*:

**"Game"** - Playing activity. Competition according to rules.

Could it be that your soccer players come to you so that they can be part of lively, vigorous and energetic action game which causes change? Absolutely! That's the meaning of the word "fun."

The same goes for "Competition according to rules." Soccer is, after all, a game, and every game has specific rules that distinguish it from other games. The way I see it, the only way to teach the love of the game is by playing soccer within the "Laws of the Game."

If we combine the word *soccer* with *game* we come up with the words "soccer game." Our soccer dictionary would then result in the following definition. "Playing Actively With Rules."

"Playing" results in players having to move around the field as the ball moves, touching the ball when they are on Attack, touching the ball when they regain possession in Defense, and being observed by the coach who helps when necessary.

"Actively" results in players meeting the demands of the game, learning while playing soccer and receiving help from the coach when necessary.

"With Rules" results in players playing in a safe environment, while learning the game and receiving help from the coach when necessary.

It may seem and sound silly to ask for a change from the word **drill** to using the word **game**. But thousands of skeptical youth soccer coaches who made the change have come back to praise the positive changes that occurred in their own personal attitude toward practices. And they have written about the noticeable change in their player's attitudes also.