



Become a Rec Coach Super Hero!

Learn 10 fun tag games to start any practice with a bang.

www.anytime-soccer.com



A close-up photograph of a person's hands. The left hand holds a white clipboard with a silver clip. The right hand holds a black stopwatch with a black cord. The person is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The background is blurred.

INTRODUCTION

The first ten minutes of soccer practice is so important because what you do sets the tone for the rest of the practice. Does this scenario sound familiar?

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Parents and kids start arriving to practice. The enthusiastic yet inexperienced volunteer coach pulls out the practice sessions he/she printed off the internet the night before. While everyone is waiting, the coach is vigorously trying to read the printout, speak to parents and set-up the field. Precious practice time slips by.

My name is Neil Crawford and I am a soccer dad, Recreational coach and founder of **Anytime Soccer Training**. If any of the above sounds familiar - you're not alone. That describes me during my first year as a recreational coach.

I am writing this ebook to help you avoid the same mistakes and share a proven way to begin every practice with a bang.



THE BENEFITS OF TAG GAMES

There are many reasons that tag games are the perfect activity for starting every soccer practice. Below are just a few:

Tag Games are Fun - There is something about the simple game of tag that brings a smile to every child's (and even adults) face. Tag is also much more exciting than other forms of exercise like running laps. Your team will have a lot of laughs as they madly chase each other around.

Promotes Game-Like Movements - Tag encourages kids to change direction, change speed, stop, start and become aware of their surroundings - all of these moves are essential in an actual soccer game. Compare that to running laps or sprints which almost never ever happens in a game.

Perfect for all Abilities - recreational teams are made up of kids of all abilities and experience. Tag is a great way to incorporate every child into practice regardless of their current skill or experience level.

Easy to Transition to Soccer-specific Activities - At its core, soccer is a simple game of keep-away and movement. I will highlight later in the book how tag games are the perfect segway into any soccer-specific activity.

Always Start Practice on Time With Tag - In recreational practices, parents are notoriously late. With tag, you can start practice with as little as two kids and/or just one kid and the coach. This means that you can always start practice ontime and it's easy for latecomers to join once they arrive. Arriving to see the rest of the team running, playing and laughing encourages everyone to arrive on time so that they don't miss out next time.



PREFERRED METHOD FOR INTRODUCING NEW ACTIVITIES

In a recreational environment, most kids are beginners. Therefore, I recommend recreational coaches use the following methodology when introducing new activities. It saves time explaining the activity and reduces confusion among the kids.

Step 1 - Perform the activity without a soccer ball - The first step is to ensure that all your players understand how the activity works. For example, if I set-up a racing game, I will have the kids first race each other with no soccer ball. This ensures that every child understands the pattern, direction and goal of the game.

Step 2 - Add a soccer ball (no pressure) - Next I introduce the soccer ball, but no pressure. In soccer context, pressure is a defender or opponent. In this example, I may start by asking the kids to dribble only with their right foot and then dribble only with their left foot. For more on dribbling, check out the ebook [The Most Important Skill In Youth Soccer](#) for helpful tips.

Step 3 - Add pressure (from behind) - Now, my goal is to add pressure in a way that doesn't result in the player losing possession. One great way to do this is to set-up the game where teammates, older siblings, parents or coaches chase the player with the ball. This is super fun for the child and gets them moving faster.



PREFERRED METHOD FOR INTRODUCING NEW ACTIVITIES

Step 4 - Add light pressure - Younger players find it difficult to pressure the ball without trying to take it. So in games like this, I typically solicit the help of parents and/or older siblings to apply light pressure. Now it's a situation where the child is being chased from behind and has to avoid the light pressure in front. This is the perfect combination of fun and game-like practice. Alternatively, you can assign one player to apply pressure to multiple players. This gives each player more time and space on the ball.

Step 5 - Add full pressure - How you decide to add pressure will depend a lot on the age and skill level of your team. However, this is where you want players to be able to dispossess their opponents. In the above racing game, for example, the goal could be to race to the other side of the area while not allowing the defenders to take the ball. When a defender takes the ball, they must score at the goal on the opposite side of the field. There are many variations. The main point is that you gradually build up to full pressure.

Once the team gets comfortable with the game, you can skip as many steps as you like.

Tip: By adding a few cones, racing games can easily be turned into obstacle courses with plenty of change of direction and jumping. Also feel free to have players hopping on one foot. This practices balance and gives the other kids more time and space.



10 TAG GAMES TO START ANY PRACTICE

These tag games have been a big hit with my teams and follow a progression that should inspire you to add your own variations. I typically create a box (size depending on the number of players) and play them in 30 second to one minute intervals with a short rest in between.

#1 - Every Player For Themselves Tag

Simple tag game where each player is tagging other teammates and at the same time trying not to get tagged. This is a great icebreaker for the kids, and encourages running and spacial awareness. The kid with the most tags wins. Of course they are keeping their own score - so don't expect an accurate count!

#2 - Every Player For Themselves Tag (Only On the Back)

This is the same simple tag game, but this time players can only tag each other on the back. This game is very relatable to soccer because it encourages kids to look around and never let anyone behind them - much like a defender.

#3 - Cops and Robbers

Split the kids into two groups at the start of the game — “cops” and “robbers”. The cops must pursue the robbers and tag them in order to catch them. Once tagged, a robber must sit in a predefined location that is called the “jail”.

Robbers can release fellow robbers who have been imprisoned in jail by tagging them, as long as they don't get tagged themselves during the prison break. The game is over when the cops have managed to round up all of the robbers. Make the space larger and prevent the robbers from guarding the jail.



10 TAG GAMES TO START ANY PRACTICE

#4 - Zombie Tag

Zombie tag starts with a single player being nominated as a zombie, with the other players being uninfected humans. The zombie can convert humans to zombies by tagging them. As the game progresses, more and more humans are turned into zombies. The game is over when all of the humans have been converted into zombies.

#5 - British bulldogs

This popular version of tag is known by many names including “Red Rover”, “Cats and Mice”, and “Bullrush”. It starts with one player in the middle of a playing area. The other players must attempt to cross the playing area (as many times as possible) without being tagged. If they are tagged, they join the British Bulldog and start tagging.

ADDING THE SOCCER BALL

Each of the above tag games can also be played with the soccer ball. For example, **Every Player For Themselves Tag** becomes **Dribble Tag**.

In dribble tag, the players must tag each other while keeping the ball close. The winner is the player that gets the most tags. Now you are encouraging players to dribble with their heads up, while changing direction and avoiding opponents. This is a fundamental building block of soccer.

Did you know that Anytime Soccer Training has over 50 1v1 Games?



Click the image
to play one today.

Did you know that Anytime Soccer Training has over 50 Soccer-skilled tag games?



Click the image
to play one today.

ADDING THE GOALS

You can also incorporate finishing into the tag games. For example, in **Zombie Tag** with the ball, instruct the Zombie's to steal the ball from the humans and score.

Tip: With the younger ages especially, I recommend that the coach start off as the only tagger. You are able to control the level of pressure giving each player more time on the ball. Also kids love being chased by their coaches and parents.

Did you know that the **Anytime Soccer Training** program has over 101 fun soccer games that are perfect for parents, coaches, and kids? We know that all kids love racing, chasing, tagging, and playing 1v1 against their friends, parents, and teammates.



Click the image to try a sample Anytime Soccer Fun and Games video today.

6 Reasons Why #Anytime-Soccer

The only training app with 101 fun soccer games and over 1,000 training sessions - 100% follow along.



Players Love It

Because it's fun! They earn points, win prizes and climb leaderboards.



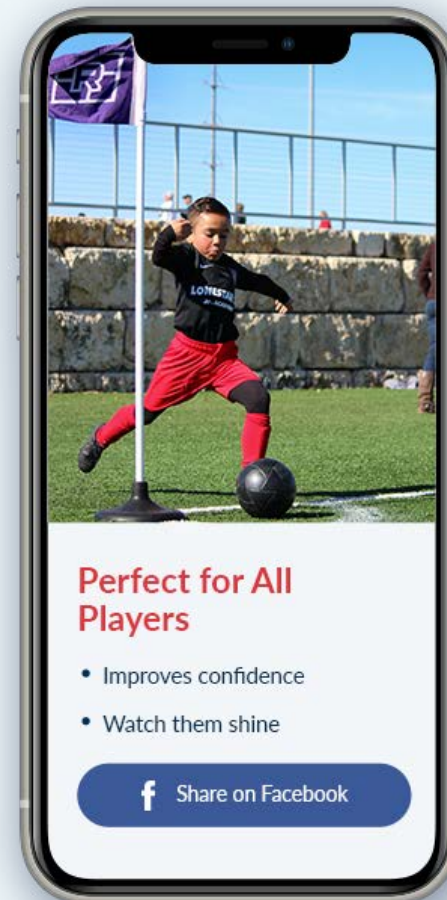
Parents Love It

It's a stress-free solution to in-home training.



Perfect for All Ages

The videos cover the basics for beginners while challenging experienced players with new moves.



Just Hit Play

Step-by-step follow-along videos with slow-motion demonstrations and clear verbal instructions.



Coaches Love It

It motivates kids to practice at home.



We Save Time

Action-packed five to 10-minute videos allow players to seamlessly get thousands of extra touches.

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