Little Soccer Stars Drills

The Name Game (Passing)
Players stand in a circle and pass the ball to one another, but they must call out the name of the person they are passing to. This is great at the beginning of the season, so they (and you!) learn everyone's names. If the players are doing well and you have enough players, add additional balls.

Numbers (Defense/Dribbling)
The exercise is good for 1 vs. 1 dribbling skills. It is especially good on a hot day as the kids defending can rest a bit. Divide the kids into 2 groups. If you have ten kids, assign each kid a number between one and five. So each team has a number one, a number two, etc. Try to make sure the kids with the same number are evenly matched. Set up two very wide "goals" with tall cones. Spread the five kids on each side across each goal line. Call out one or more numbers, and those kids come out to play 1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 2, etc. and the rest of the kids stay spread across the goal line as defenders. Throw a ball from the sideline into the center and let them play it until a goal is scored, the defenders stop it, or it goes out of bounds.

Variation: Colors. Use pinnies on one group and team shirts for the other group.

Monkey in the Middle (Passing)
All players form a circle and choose someone (the "Monkey") to be in its center. The players forming the circle pass one ball among them while the person in the center tries to gain control of the ball. When this happens, the person in the circle who last touched the ball goes to the center. Some level of competitiveness develops but never on an individual basis and the "losers" quickly gets a chance to redeem themselves.

Teach the Parents (Game scenario)
During the last practice of the season have a scrimmage between the parents and the players (with the coaches helping the players). This serves a couple of purposes. The kids love this game. They get a chance to show their parents what they can do and they enjoy beating their parents. (The parents never win, the coaches make sure of that....) Also, since many of the parents have never played soccer it shows them how difficult the game really is. The hope is that a parent may now think twice before yelling at a child for missing an "easy" shot in a game. Everybody seems to enjoy this scrimmage.

Give and Go (Passing/Moving to Open Space)
This one is good for getting the kids to move after they make a pass. It is appropriate for kids a little older, who pass the ball but like to stop and really admire their better passes. Everyone spaces themselves around the centre circle. Give the ball to one person and they call out someone's name and pass to them. They then run to the receiver's position in the circle. The receiver upon hearing their name called steps forward to receive the pass and yells "I got it!"
The sequence is then repeated. Several things are accomplished besides getting them used to movement. The "I got it!" yell addresses the problem of nobody playing the ball in a game because they thought the other was going to play it. We all learn each other's names quickly.

Invariably, someone is always left out so start a countdown from 10 to 0 and they have to figure out who has been left out (the left out person should be quiet). They start yelling among themselves to figure out who it is and this fosters communication on the field. (It's pretty humorous too).

After a few practices, they get it down so they look pretty sharp. Then you toss in another ball. They love it! Now they have to think a bit because people are moving and two are busy with the other ball.

**Marbles (Passing)**

Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble (a tiny ball works well). Have them try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts, don't require them to use their own ball, they are free to use any other ball they can find.

At first the players may get really excited and kick the marble. If this happens, call time-out and put it back.

**Camp Town Races (Dribbling/Shooting)**

Line up all the players on one end of the field. They each have a ball. On the whistle, they all dribble to opposite end, shoot ball into goal, get ball out of goal, and run back and finish with a shot on opposite goal. The first one to finish is the winner. Ask them "Who is going to win the race?" They all learn to say "The player who can dribble it the straightest!" A variation is to start half at one end and half on the other. This really teaches them to try to do it fast while maintaining possession. This drill really helps players deal with the balls that pop out of the bunch.

**Run and Shoot (Passing/Shooting)**

Have the players in two lines by the center circle. Have a player from one line start moving towards the net and feed him/her a football from beside the net. They have to dribble toward the net and shoot. Normally avoid any drills with line-ups, however this one works because the kids move quickly through the line. You should have lots of parents to help collect balls and keep kids moving through the lines.