

COACHING SOCCER DRILLS AND TECHNIQUES

West Zone



Soccer



**West Zone Indoor Soccer
Association
&
West Zone Soccer Association**

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Welcome to Soccer Drills and Techniques!

This handbook has been designed to assist the community soccer coach in planning practices and designing drills for individual, unit and team improvement. There are many soccer resources available to assist the coach in planning for their team training activities. Some of these are available at your local library and even more through the Internet. In preparing this handbook, the earlier work of West Zone Soccer and Pancho Bravo was updated to include additional material from the excellent resource, *Soccer Skills and Techniques*. A number of free soccer drills from Internet web sites were reviewed and found to be quite useful for community soccer. Materials from the Coaching Association of Canada were reviewed and incorporated into the handbook.

This handbook can be used for both indoor and outdoor community soccer with minimum modifications for pitch size and rule differences.

Sources of Information

Coaching Drills, techniques and tactics, 1993 by West Zone Soccer and Pancho Bravo.

Soccer Skills and Techniques, 2002 by The Bobby Charlton Soccer School, Bookmart Limited, Abbeydale Press, Leicester, England.

Internet Resources:

Planning age appropriate soccer practices by Footy4kids

http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/planning_age_appropriate_soccer_practices.htm

Football skills tactics and drills for players and coaches by Mastersport Multimedia Ltd.

<http://www.mastersport.co.uk/soccerskills.htm>

Soccer skills drills by Soccer for Parents

<http://www.soccer-for-parents.com/soccer-skills-drills.html>

Soccer drills and Soccer tips by SoccerXpert

<http://www.soccerxpert.com/>

Improve your soccer skills by Elite Soccer Conditioning

<http://www.elitesoccerconditioning.com/>

Skills and Drills by Better Soccer Coaching

<http://www.bettersoccercoaching.com/Keyword-37-Skills#>

How to defend and attack from set pieces by Junior Soccer Coach

<http://www.juniorssoccercoach.com/public/department32.cfm>

Coaching soccer set plays by Ultimate Soccer Coaching

<http://www.ultimatesoccercoaching.com/soccer-coaching/coaching-soccer-set-plays.html>

Set Plays skills and drills by WePlay

<http://www.weplay.com/youth-soccer/drills/skills/set-plays>

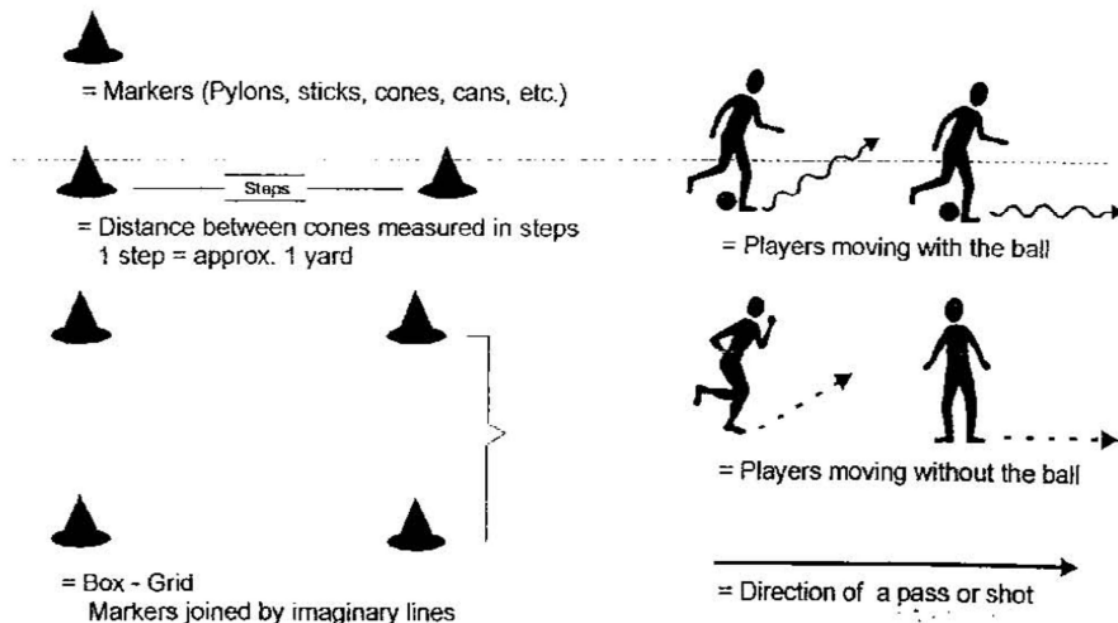
1. Introduction

“Soccer is a simple game, let’s keep it that way!”

Soccer is a game of passion for millions of people in the world. “It is an art for the players; it is a science for the coaches.” It is a game of basics, therefore a game of simple things. The team that executes these basics in the simplest way will always have an advantage.

In a team there are 11 players: goalkeeper, defenders, mid-fielders and forwards. The objective of the game is to place the ball in the other team’s net: to score a goal. If we score more goals than the opposite team, then we win. For this to take place, our team must have possession of the ball because if the other team has possession, then we are in trouble. Therefore we must maintain possession of the ball. We know that one player on their own cannot do that. That is where soccer becomes a team game.

Symbols used throughout the exercises



Other symbols used include:

X – a player
 A – an Attacker
 K – a Keeper

S – a server
 D – a Defender

Player movement \longrightarrow

A Pass -----

2. Planning a Practice

Practice should begin with a five-to-ten minute warm-up followed by proper stretching of muscles. The warm-up should start gently with exercises that move the joints before building to light aerobics. Increase speed of movement and aerobics only after players are warmed-up and “loose”.

Some muscle stretching exercises include:

- Range of motion:
 - Turning the ankles from side to side and in circles
 - Swinging the hips – swing legs side-to-side and back-to-front
 - Stretching the torso by bending side-to-side and back-to-front
- Stretching the groin muscles and ligaments
- Stretching the legs, particularly the hamstrings and thighs; stretching the calf muscles

Some aerobic warm-up exercises include:

- Practice running on the spot with arms moving and knees high
- Moving sideways slowly at first and then with increasing speed
- Sprinting a short distance then jogging a short distance then sprinting again
- Tag sprinting – sprinting and trying to catch another player
- Sprinting a distance, reversing and sprinting back
- Run a set zigzag course

Begin the soccer skill development part of the practice with drills emphasizing:

- Ball control – dribbling
- Running with the ball
- Passing – to players and to spaces
- Intercepting passes
- Tackling and attacking
- Headers
- Crosses, volleys, chips, lobs

Remember to challenge players by strengthening their skills by working on those areas where they are weaker. Work to improve their agility, body control, physical strength and ability to anticipate, through repetition of skills. This builds self-confidence which assists in team skill development. Challenge your players to play different positions and try new skills. Provide lots of encouragement and praise for their efforts and successes.

Shooting drills should be kept to the last third of the practice when the players' legs are fully warmed-up and the muscles are loosened. Practice the keepers in the skills of saving shots, catching balls, diving and reaction saves. Practice the shooters in using stationary and moving kicks.

Remember that **soccer is a team game**. Practices should emphasize communications, teamwork for both offence and defence, the transition between attacking and defending phases, team tactics and special set plays. Some of the most important skill development occurs when players train together as units and as a team.

Try to leave time for players to have a short scrimmage or mini-game where players are divided into teams and, in a fun and friendly environment can practice their skills. Rotate players into various positions and involve everyone.

Every practice should progress from individual skill development through unit and team development. Ensure to plan for small sided games and even mini-games to practice application of individual skills in a team environment.

Always end every practice with a light jog to cool down followed by a good stretching of the muscles.

As coaches, you have the responsibility for organizing the practices:

- Encourage your players to use the entire field and to adopt disciplined positional play. Younger players often play undisciplined “herd ball” where everyone runs after the ball. Coach them to understand the **basics** of ball control, passing, positions, and team play and then move on to shooting, goal keeping and defensive play. Team tactics and special game situations come later.
- Remember to choose **age appropriate** soccer exercises, skills and techniques. Young players do not have the physical or mental abilities to handle complex drills.
- Keep your practices to a maximum of 60 to 90 minutes. Get a number of parents or assistant coaches to help out.
- Players do not like to waste time and they want each of the drills to be **relevant** to their skill and teamwork development. Players learn by being challenged and through repetition.
- You can not learn the game in one practice so **focus your drills** on only a few key areas. For example, if you observed a problem in a game situation, then this is an area to focus on for improvement in the next practice.
- Set up **circuit training** where multiple activities are set up around the pitch or gym and players move through each activity in sequence. This works particularly well for individual skill development. Assistants can be a great help by being in charge of a particular activity.
- Try to keep all players as **active as possible**. This maintains muscle warmth and looseness, player interest, and includes all players as they do not like to be left out or kept on the sidelines.
- Plan for drills that maximize the number of times your players touch the ball. You want your soccer players to have **opportunities to play on both sides of the ball** so ensure you expose them to attacking and defending situations.
- Remember to provide **individual teaching time** with the coach! (Players need to feel worthy and to feel important in order to build self-confidence).
- **Remember to make the practice fun!**

Your attitude as a coach, towards your players, the other team, the game officials, and towards the game of soccer will influence the development of your players. Please read and follow the Code of Conduct at the end of this handbook. Remember you are a role model to your players.

3. Skill Development

A. **Ball Control**

Ball control involves many skill elements including the way players move the ball, stop the ball, or travel with the ball to beat a defender. Ball control is simply the first touch on the ball. It is also about positioning: how players position themselves when the ball is coming towards them whether high, medium or low, and then deciding what they want to do next:

- Gain time to look at the field
- Prepare a run
- Prepare a pass
- Prepare a shot on net
- Prepare to attack a defender
- Prepare to turn and change direction
- Prepare to break the flow of the game

In soccer there are different techniques for kicking the ball. Accurate passing and shooting are very important to the game. Players must know the proper part of the foot to use when striking the ball for both accuracy and preventing injuries. There are different placements of the foot for making a short pass, a long pass or for taking a long, hard shot on net. When both shooting and passing it is important to keep an eye on the ball and to watch the foot striking the ball.

INSTEP



The instep is located on the inside of the foot, beginning at the end of the big toe and ending near the middle of the foot. The instep is used for short passes or short shots.

TOP OF THE FOOT



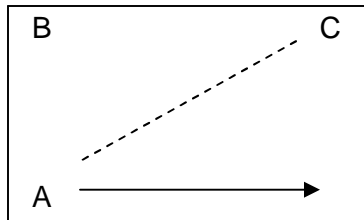
The top of the foot is located between the big toe and the second toe just below the laces. The top of the foot is used for shooting and long passes.

OUTSIDE OF THE FOOT



The outside of the foot is located between the little toe and the second last toe just below the laces. The outside of the foot is used for an outward curving pass or shot.

Ball Control with the Feet



- Set out a 10 X 10 step square
- Three players stand at three corners of the square and pass a ball to each other in turn.
- After passing the ball, each player runs to the empty corner.
- Run the drill for 3 - 5 minutes at a time.

Key Point:

- The players must control the ball quickly to set themselves up to play a comfortable pass.

Ball Control under Pressure



- Set out a 20 X 20 step square.
- Two teams of three play each other with each team having two 1 step wide goals to attack. Each one at a corner of the square.
- The two sides must pass or dribble their way across the square to score.
- As the game is played in a small area, players will have little time “on the ball” before they are challenged. Players must bring the ball under control quickly so that they give themselves time to decide on the next move.

Key Points:

- Make certain players understand that they need to decide quickly what part of the foot they are going to use to control the ball.
- Emphasize the control of the ball so that it does not get caught underneath their feet.
- Encourage players to make their first touch nudge the ball slightly ahead of the player so that they can pass, shoot or move away when under attack.

Running With the Ball

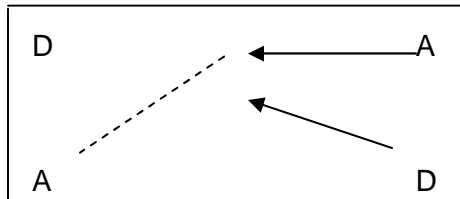
The ability to run with the ball under control is an essential skill for a soccer player. Players that can run with the ball can change the course of a game.

- Have players run 20 steps with the ball under control at their feet.
- Introduce some defenders who can put pressure on the player running with the ball.

Key Points:

- At first players should concentrate on keeping the ball under control.
- Work on increasing their speed while still maintaining good control.

Running With the Ball under Pressure



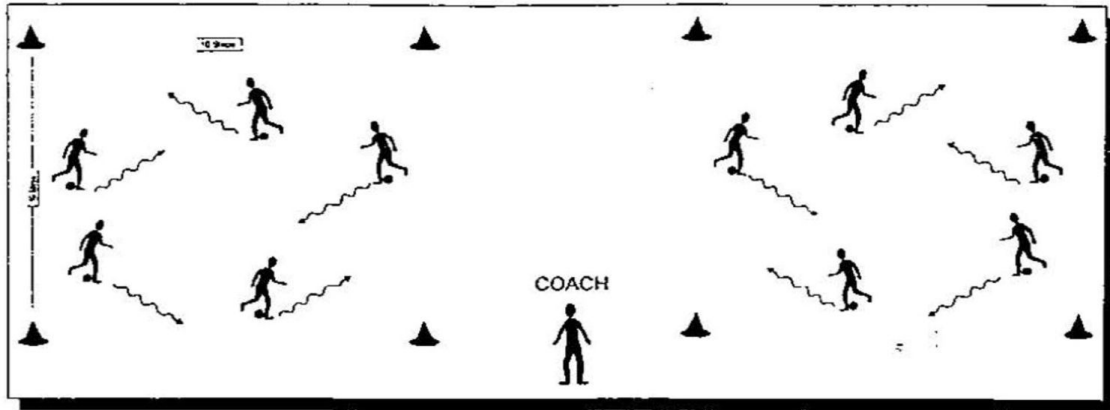
- Set up a 10 X 30 step grid
- Divide the team into two groups: one attacking and one defending.
- Divide the attackers into two groups: one group stands on one corner of the grid, the other on the corner diagonally opposite.
- Divide the defenders into two groups: on corners opposite the defenders
 - i. An attacker (A) runs the ball along the 30 step line chased by a defender (D) from the corner on the left. The first attacker must pass the ball to the second attacker who then runs back along their line chased by the second defender from the opposite corner.
 - ii. Continue until all the attackers have had a chance to play.

Key Points:

- Emphasize that the ball must be kept about a step or so in front of them.
- Keep their arms out wide to maintain their balance.
- Do not let chasing defence player affect the concentration to control the ball and pass.
- Alternate inside, top and outside of the foot, and left and right feet for controlling the ball

Foot Drills

Warm Up



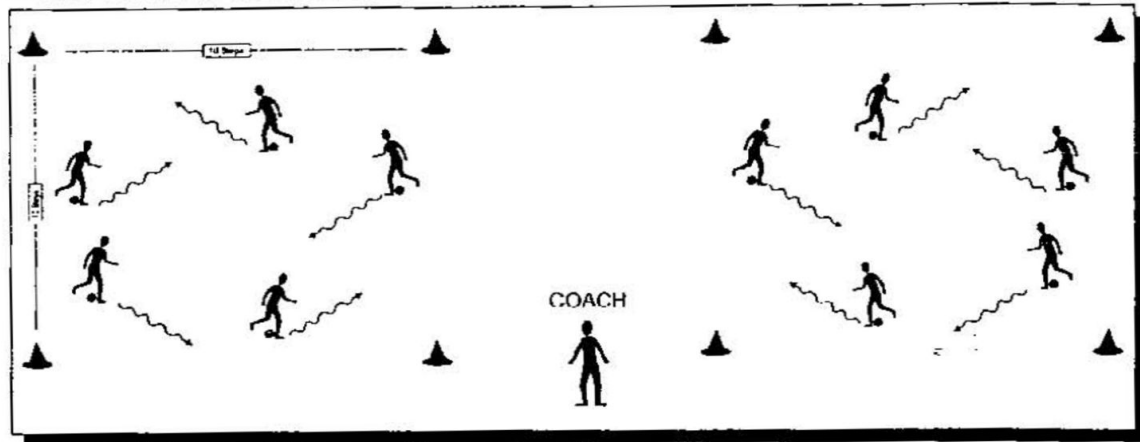
- Set up two boxes, 10 steps by 10 steps square – mark the corners of the square with pylons.
- Separate the players into two groups. Assign one player per ball. (If your team does not have a ball per player, assign two players per ball. The player without the ball should make the same runs as the other by acting as a shadow. These two players should switch positions often during the practice.)
- Within each box, the players practice controlling the ball using their feet. Players are not to cross the imaginary lines between the pylons. The players move the ball diagonally within the boxes. The players can move in different directions, but always diagonally. This allows for several players to move in each box at the same time without making contact with each other.
- The coach will signal what skill is to be practiced in each box. Each box can practice a different speed or set of skills for controlling the ball with the feet. As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice.
 - i. Alternate the use of the inside of the foot and the outside of the foot to control the ball.
 - ii. Alternate the use of left and right feet to control the ball.
 - iii. Turns – players should turn using the inside or the outside of the foot only.
 - iv. Introduce sudden stops of the player while maintaining control of the ball, using the sole of the foot on the top of the ball. Practice using both left and right feet to control the ball.

Key points:

- Players dictate where the ball goes.
- Keep the ball as close to the foot as possible.
- As the player moves the ball, they should focus on looking forward, not at the ball or their feet.

Coordination and Concentration Drills

Coordination and Concentration

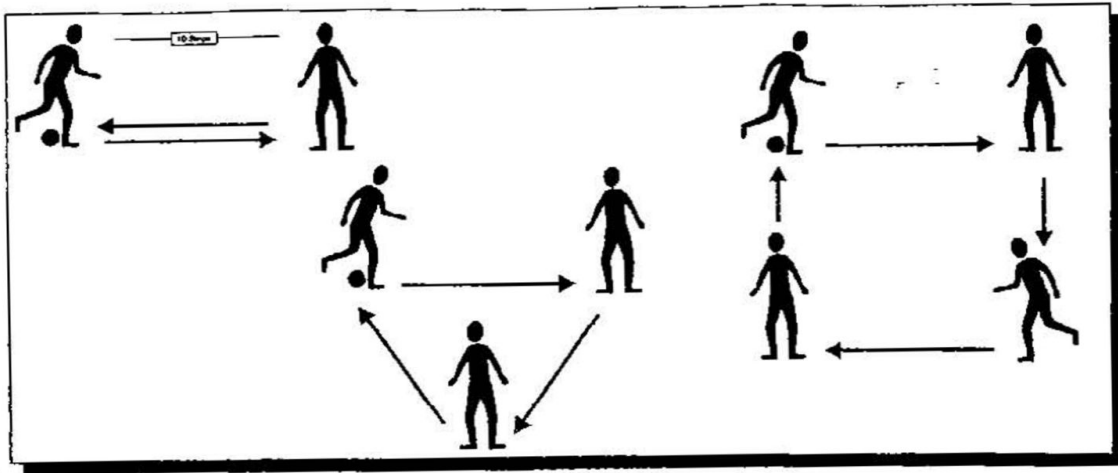


- Set up two boxes, 10 steps by 10 steps square – mark the corners of the square with pylons.
- Separate the players into two groups. Assign one player per ball. (If your team does not have a ball per player, assign two players per ball. The player without the ball should make the same runs as the other by acting as a shadow. These two players should switch positions often during the practice.) Players can not cross the imaginary lines between the pylons.
- Start with the players moving the ball in different directions, emphasizing diagonal runs in relation to the pylons.
- The coach assigns each exercise a number. Players change exercises as the coach calls the numbers. Players must concentrate on controlling the ball and listening to the coach.
 - i. Stop the run, place the right knee on the ball, and then continue moving with the ball.
 - ii. Stop the run, place the left knee on the ball, and then continue moving with the ball.
 - iii. Stop the run, sit on the ball, and then continue moving with the ball.
 - iv. Stop the run, go into a push-up position, touch the ball with the forehead, and then continue moving with the ball.
- As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice for example start with one number for a couple of minutes, then two numbers moving up to all four numbers and even mixing up the sequence of the numbers.

Key Points:

- As the coach signals, players need to focus on stopping as soon as possible, complete the exercise and then quickly continue on.
- Emphasize the use of both feet.
- Always keep the ball under close control.

Ball Control Drills

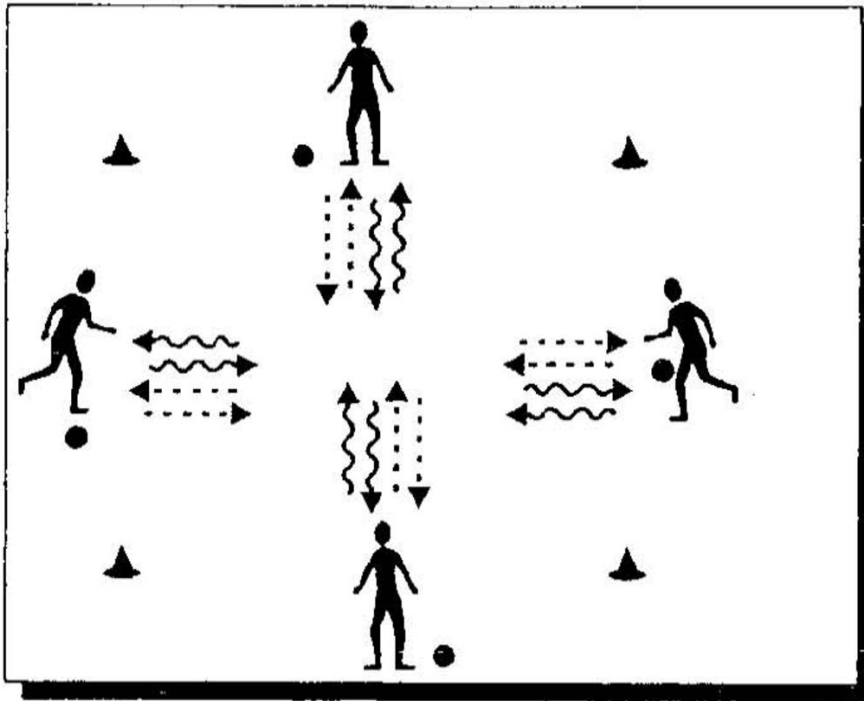


- Line up the players 10 steps apart facing each other. Line-ups can be two, three or four players per ball depending on the number of balls your team has.
 - i. Using the right foot only, the player with the ball passes a low ball to their partner. The partner stops the ball by placing the sole of the foot on the ball. Roll it a bit forward then pass to the other player.
 - ii. Repeat the same activity but using only the left foot.
 - iii. Alternate the use of left and right feet to pass and control the ball.
 - iv. Alternate the use of left and right feet on each pass. For example, receive the ball with the right foot and pass it with the left foot.
 - v. Alternate the use of the inside and outside of either foot on receiving and passing the ball. For example, a player can receive the ball with the outside of either foot then return the pass with the inside of the same foot.
 - vi. Have the receiving player move side-to-side prior to receiving the pass.
- As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice.

Key Points:

- Accuracy on the pass
- Moving towards the ball when receiving the pass
- Players should receive the ball close to the body leaning slightly forward.
- Players should not reach when controlling the ball.

Timing, Change in Speed and Visualization



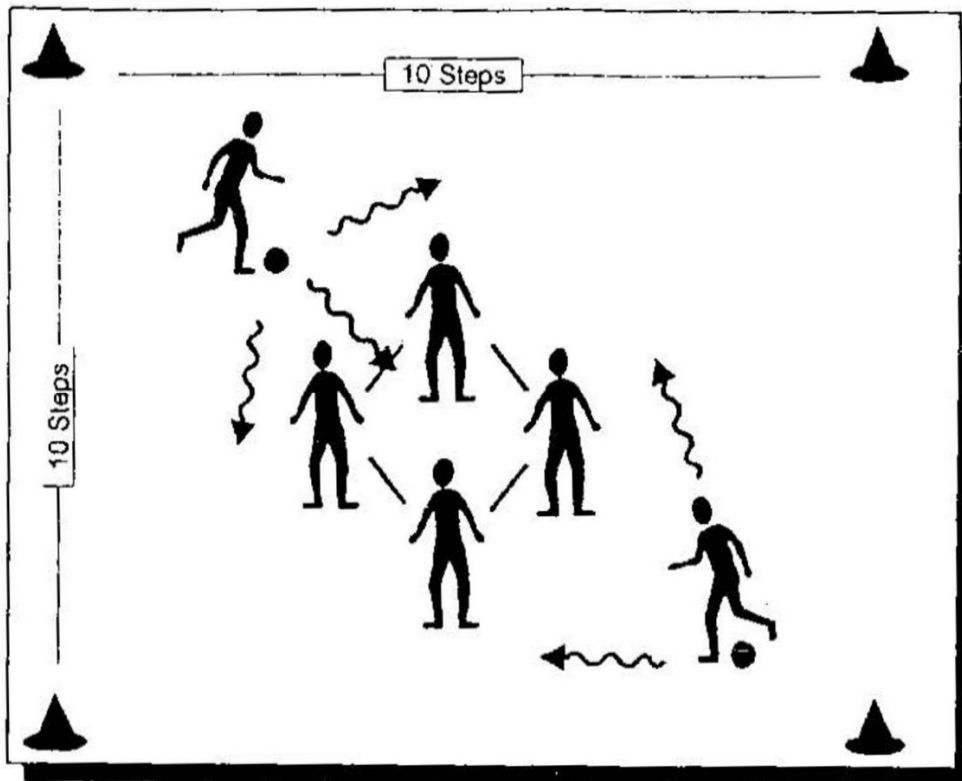
- Set up four players outside a 10 X 10 step square box (there can be several boxes). The players must imagine the centre of the box. Each player has a ball.
 - i. Exercise begins with all four players running to touch the imaginary centre of the box and then return to their starting positions. Try this first without the ball and then with the ball. Do this continuously for one to one and a half minutes going back and forth.
 - ii. As the exercise progresses, add four more players.
 - iii. When running with the ball have the players use the inside of the foot to turn.
 - iv. Now, when running with the ball have the players use the outside of the foot to turn.
 - v. Alternate the inside and outside of the foot to control the ball.
 - vi. Alternate the left and right feet when moving the ball.
 - vii. Alternate inside/outside and left/right at each turn.
- As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice.

Increase complexity: Instead of stopping in the middle of the square, have players run right to the end of the box and make their turn paying special attention to timing so as to not collide with the other three players in the box.

Key Points:

- Encourage players to control the ball, not chase it.
- Encourage the use of both left and right feet to control the ball.
- Encourage the use of the inside and outside positions of the feet to control the ball and have the players make sharp turns.

Tag Game



- Set up a 10 X 10 step square box. Inside the box four (or more) players hold hands in a circle.
- Place two players on either side of the circle of players, each with a ball. The coach will decide who the tagger is and will change the players on the ball every couple of minutes. One player will be "it" while the other tries to get away as they play tag.
- The tagger tries to tag the other player at the same time as each tries to maintain control of their ball.
- The tagger can take short-cuts through the circle of players by ducking under their arms but the other player is not allowed to cut through the circle.

Key Points:

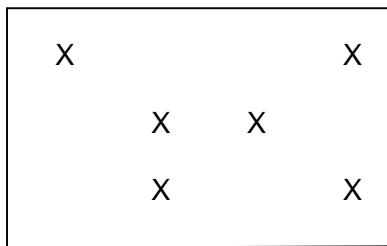
- Encourage the tagger to anticipate the runs of the player being chased.
- Encourage both players to maintain the ball under close control.
- Encourage the use of alternate feet.
- Keep the runs tight around the circle of players.

Dribbling

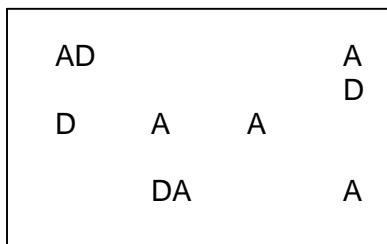
Done well, dribbling can be magical to watch and is a potent attacking weapon. The key is good ball control as well as being comfortable moving off either foot. Good dribblers have complete control of the ball and are able to move in any direction – and at speed. Equally important is the ability to accelerate away from their opponents. Players need to concentrate on developing balance, turning suddenly, making feints, and accelerating off both feet.

Dribbling Drills

Six players each with a ball dribble within a 10 step by 10 step grid. On the coach's call, players use their right or left foot, speed up or slow down. Each player has to react quickly to the calls.

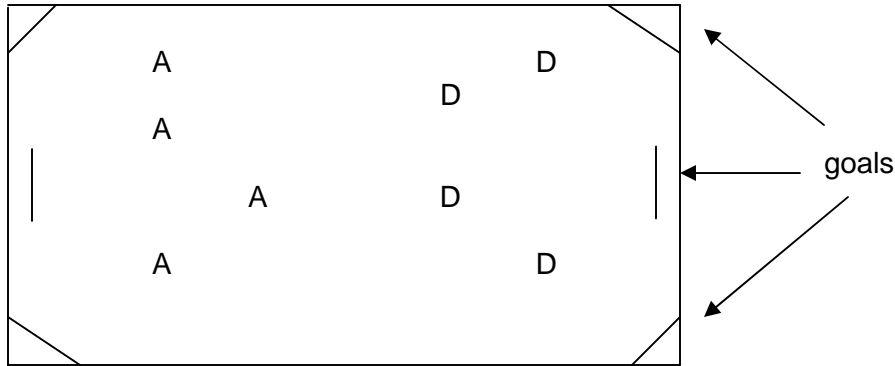


More pressure is added with four defenders, who come in to tackle the dribblers. An attacker whose ball is kicked out is eliminated. The last dribbler in possession wins.



Team Dribbling Drill

A 30 step by 30 step pitch is marked out with three small goals at either end. Four attackers face four defenders. Each team is allowed to score in any of the three opposition goals. This encourages players to change direction and use their dribbling skills to attack any goal or to spot a team-mate better placed to dribble to it.



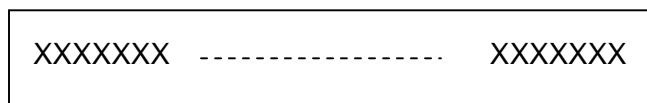
Key Points:

- Encourage players to control with both feet.
- Emphasize effective feinting and disguising of body and ball trick moves.
- Develop in the players the ability to change pace.

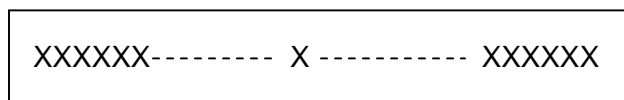
B. Passing Techniques

Passing Drills

- Practice the accuracy of passing the ball.

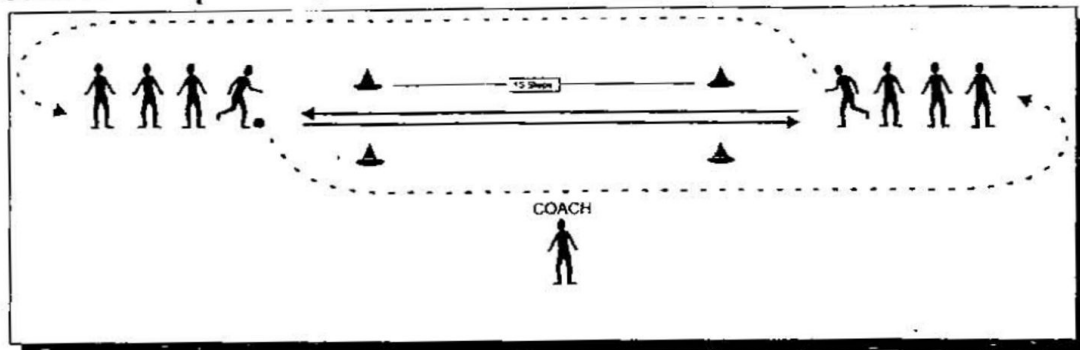


- Line up players in two rows, 10 steps apart, facing each other.
- Focus on accuracy in passing the ball by using the “push pass”.
- First player in line moves to the back of the line after passing.
- Continue until all players have had the opportunity to pass.
- To further hone the passing skills, bring in a third player to stand with their legs apart midway between the two groups. Keep passing the ball to and fro between the legs, with precision.



Control and Prepare a Pass

Control and Prepare a Pass



- Set up a box 15 steps long and 3 to 5 steps wide.
- Divide the team into two groups lined up facing each other on the short ends of the box.
 - i. The first player with the ball sends a pass to the player in the front of the opposite line then sprints outside the pylons to the right to reach the end of the receiving line.
 - ii. The player in front of the opposite line moves forward to receive the ball with the *inside of their left foot* and then the ball is transferred to the *inside of the right foot* to be passed back to the next player of the opposite line. As soon as the pass is made, they sprint outside the pylons to the right to reach the end of the receiving line.
 - iii. Repeat the exercise using the *inside right foot* to receive the ball and the *inside left foot* to pass.
 - iv. Repeat the exercise using the *top of the foot* and alternate feet to pass and receive the ball.

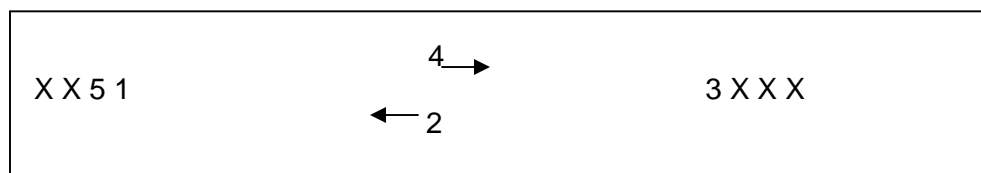
As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice.

1. Increased complexity:

- As players get better in the exercise they can progress to one touch passing (receiving and passing with the same foot).

2. Increased complexity: Players practice passing the ball using inside and top of the foot, left and right feet, making short passes and long passes, sprinting and getting back into position quickly for the next move.

- Same line-up, with pylons, as before.
- This time there are two players in the middle of the two lines, standing side-by-side but facing their own lines:

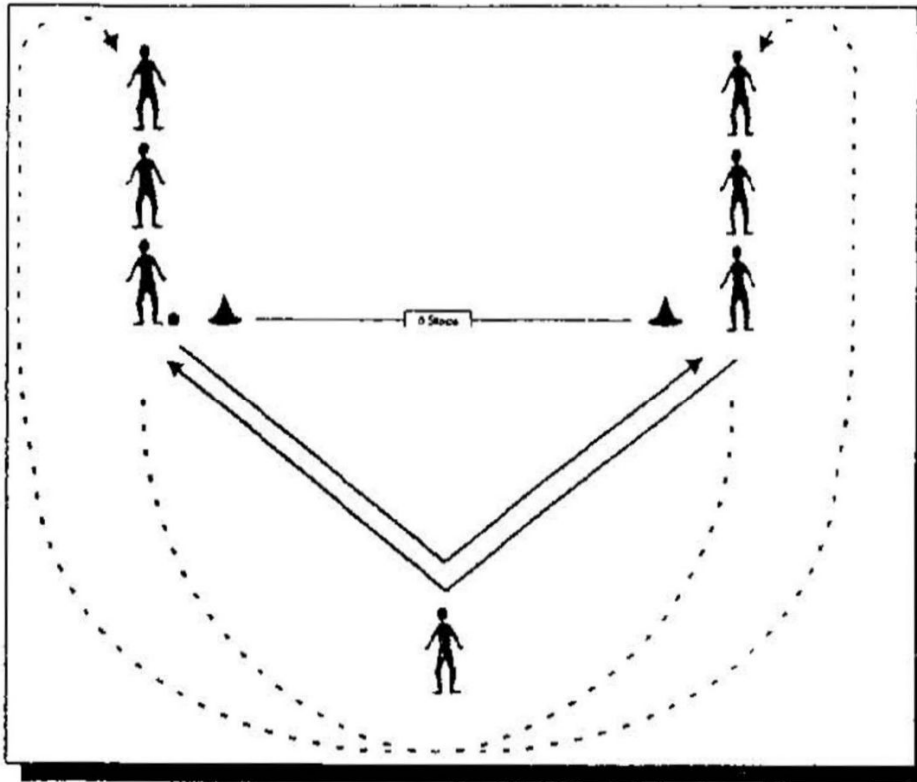


- The player (1) at the front of one line passes the ball to the middle player (2) and begins to run straight toward the opposite line of players. The middle player (2) acts as a wall and receives the pass and returns it to the running player (1) who passes the ball to the front player (3) of the opposite line.
- The receiving player (3) passes the ball to the middle player (4) and begins to run. They pass the ball back to the now running player (3) that passes the ball to the player (5) of the opposite line.
- The remaining players continue this pattern of running and passing until all have participated.

Key Points:

- Keep the passes on the ground.
- When receiving the pass, players must move towards the ball leaning slightly forward.
- Emphasize the importance of the first touch to accommodate the pass.

Target Player



- Divide the team into two lines, one behind the other, 10 steps apart. Between the two lines, 10 steps in front of them, is a target player facing them.
 - i. The first player of one line sends a pass to the target player, and then runs behind the target player to the end of the opposite line.
 - ii. The target player receives the pass with the right foot and with the same foot passes the ball to the first player of the second line.
 - iii. The player in the second line returns the ball to the target player, and runs behind the target player to the end of the first line.
 - iv. The target player receives the ball with the left foot and with the same foot, passes the ball to the first player of the first line.
 - v. Repeat until the target player has made six successful passes with each foot.
 - vi. Switch the target player.

Key Points:

- Accuracy of the passes.
- Returning to position quickly.
- Target player must focus, bouncing from side-to-side, knees slightly bent, leaning slightly forward, and arms out to the side for balance.
- Each pass should be made with the inside of the foot.

C. Heading

Heading the ball incorrectly can cause injury. With proper training, heading the ball can be done with increased safety and confidence.

Coaches must show their players the proper techniques of heading, to reduce or avoid injury:

- Always hit the ball with the forehead.
- Keep the eyes open and the mouth closed.
- The player hits the ball (moving forward); the ball does not hit the player.
- The motion of heading the ball should be with the forward motion of the entire body, not just the head. Do not allow the head to snap back after contact with the ball.

Heading Drill #1

- This must be the first heading drill players do to alleviate their initial fear of heading the ball.
- Players should master this before moving onto other heading drills:
 - i. Players should hold the ball with both hands at head height, bringing the ball towards the forehead. Players then lean forward to make proper contact with the ball.
 - ii. Repeat ten times emphasizing proper techniques.

Heading Drill #2

- Separate the team into small groups. Players should stand 5 steps apart facing each other.
 - i. One player starts with the ball in their hands. They throw the ball up into the air to themselves and head the ball to their partner. The partner catches the ball with their hands and repeats the exercise back to the first player.
 - ii. As players progress in skill, they can try a gentle underhanded toss (lob) of the ball using both hands toward their partner's head. The partner then heads the ball back toward the thrower. Alternate throwers and headers.
 - iii. Have the players head the ball high into the air to their partner to simulate defensive heading.
 - iv. Have the players head the ball low to their partners to simulate offensive heading.

Heading Drill #3

- Separate the players into groups of two.
 - i. One player begins in a forward-leaning crouching position and the other stands at their feet with the ball in their hands as the server.
 - ii. The servers lob the ball toward their partner's head. The partner in the crouching position raises their upper body to meet the ball and heads the ball back to the server.
 - iii. The server catches the ball and the partner returns to the crouching position. Repeat the exercise 10 times then switch.

Key Points:

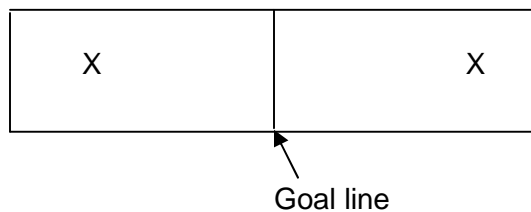
- Emphasis is on the proper technique of using the whole body moving forward to head the ball, not just the head and neck.
- Emphasis is on safety.

D. Shooting

The most important point in shooting is hitting the target. Not controlling the ball, kicking with the wrong body posture, failing to plant the foot correctly, using the wrong part of the foot or any combination of errors will result in a wasted opportunity. It does not matter how hard the ball is kicked if it does not reach the target.

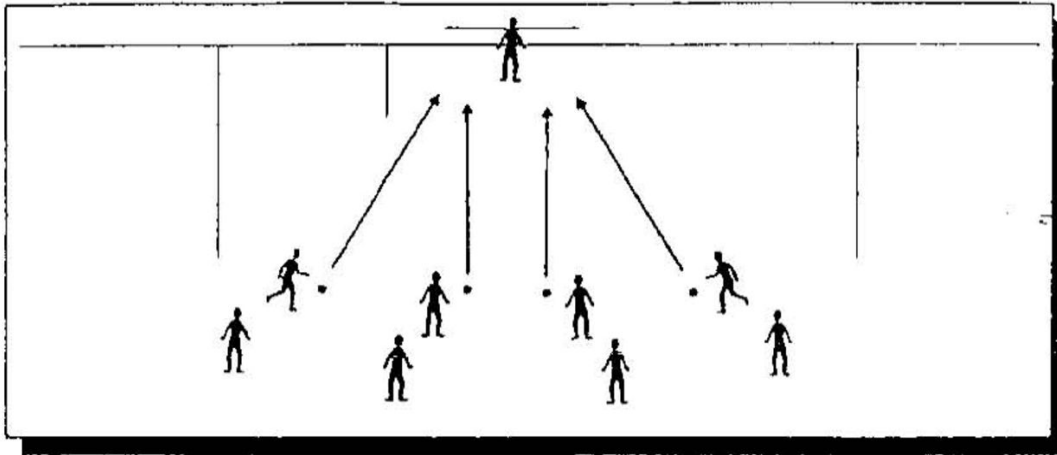
Where and how a player kicks the ball will, in part, determine where the ball will go. Learning to control the ball to make it go where the player wants is a matter of ball control, knowing what part of the foot to use and how to hold the body before kicking.

- If the player leans the shoulders back and hits the ball on the lower part – the ball will always go high.
- If the player leans the shoulders forward and hits the ball in the middle – the ball will always go low.
- When shooting, the motion of the kicking foot should follow through.
- When making contact with the ball, keep the eyes on the ball.
- Point the planting foot in the direction the kick, and the ball, is to go.

Shooting Drills – Stationary Ball

- Set up pylons as goal markers
- Two players stand opposite each other about 15-20 steps on either side of the goal line.
- One player shoots at the goal; the other player retrieves the ball and shoots it back.

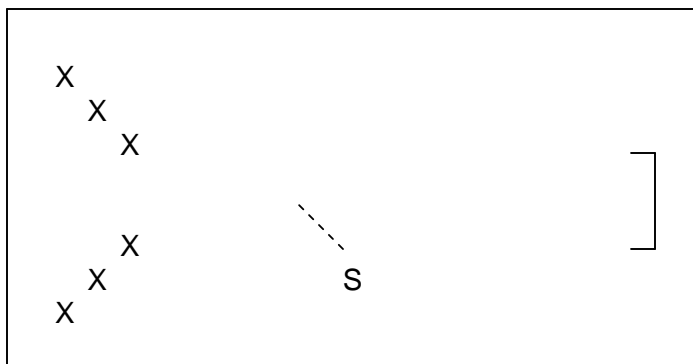
Dead Ball Drill



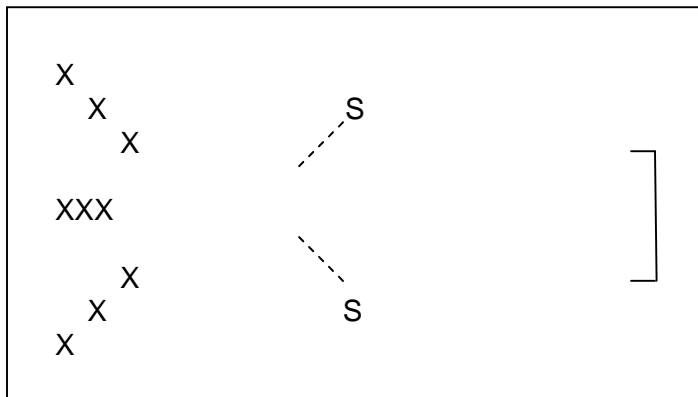
- Balls are lined up on the 18 yard line with the players lined up preparing to each kick a ball toward the net.
- Players make a short, diagonal run before kicking a still (dead) ball sitting in front of them toward the net.
- Coaches determine which foot, left or right and which part of the foot (top, outside or inside of the foot) to use in kicking.
- Coaches should tell players where to aim the ball toward the net: high, low, left or right.
- Practice all positions.

Running and Shooting Drills

- Set up a net on the goal line.
- Line up players in two lines about 20-25 steps from the goal line.
- A server passes a ball out in front of the goal.
- The first player runs to the ball, gains possession and shoots on the net.
- After shooting from the centre of the goal move to shooting from the left and right sides.
- The drill can be completed with or without a Keeper.



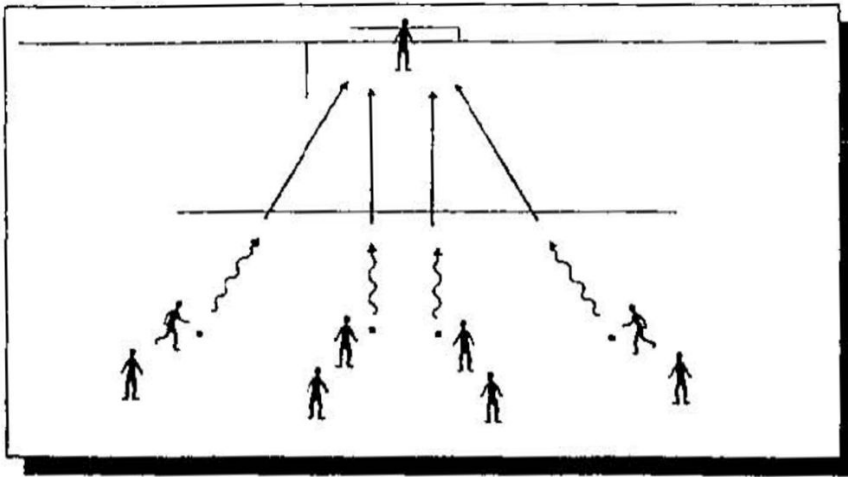
- Once the players have gained confidence in shooting accuracy increase the difficulty and speed by specifying part of the foot to use, the left or right foot only, distance from the goal, and so on.
- Form the players into three lines: left, centre and right of the net. Using two servers, pass a ball out in front of the goal.
- The players take turns shooting or the servers can call out which line should take the shot.



Key Points:

- Emphasize the need to keep composure when a shooting opportunity comes their way. Improved skills will build confidence.
- Accuracy is more important than power. Practice using different parts of the net: low, high, left and right corners.

Ball in Motion



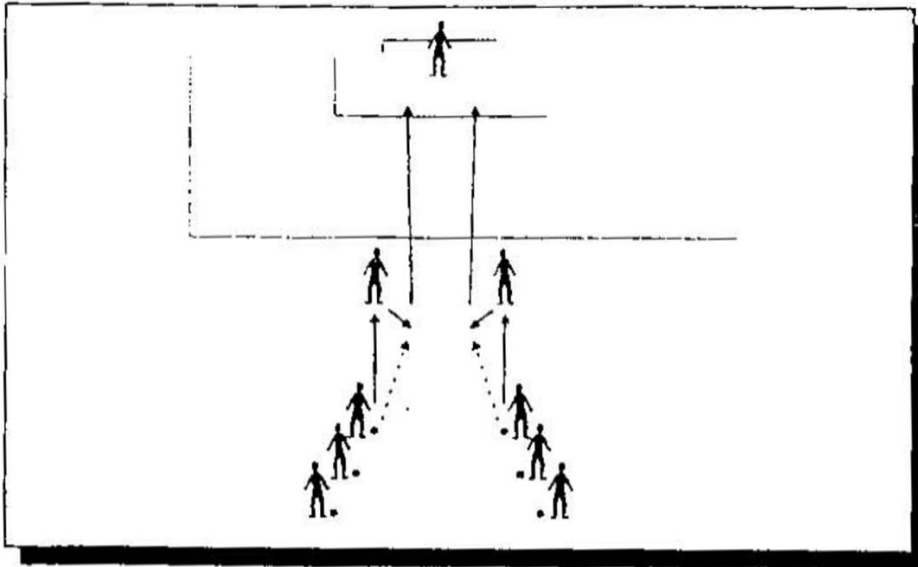
- Players are lined up outside the 18 yard line; one ball per player.
- Players make a short diagonal run, moving the ball forward before kicking the moving ball toward the net.
- Coaches determine which foot, left or right and which part of the foot (top, outside or inside of the foot) to use in kicking.
- Coaches should tell players where to aim the ball toward the net: high, low, left or right.
- Practice all positions.

As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice.

Key Points:

- Emphasize body placement (shoulders forward or back); kick at the bottom or middle of the ball; inside, outside or top of the foot; left and right feet
- Encourage accuracy in kicking the ball.

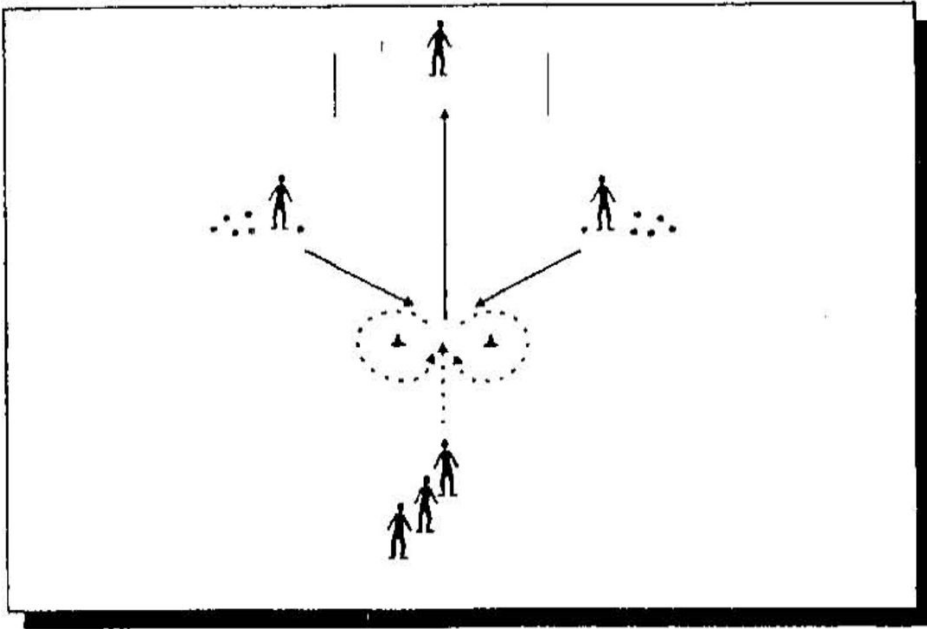
Give and Go



- Line up two target players outside the 18 yard line of the box in line with the goal posts and with their back toward the net.
- Line up the rest of the team in two lines, 10 steps away
- Each player in these lines has a ball.
 - i. The player in the first line passes the ball to the target player standing in front of them. The target players gives a soft touch to the ball and the player who made the initial pass runs forward and shoots the ball on net.
 - ii. The two lines alternate shots on net.
 - iii. Players in the left line shoot with their right foot while players in the right line shoot with their left foot.
 - iv. Alternate the target players often.

- As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice.

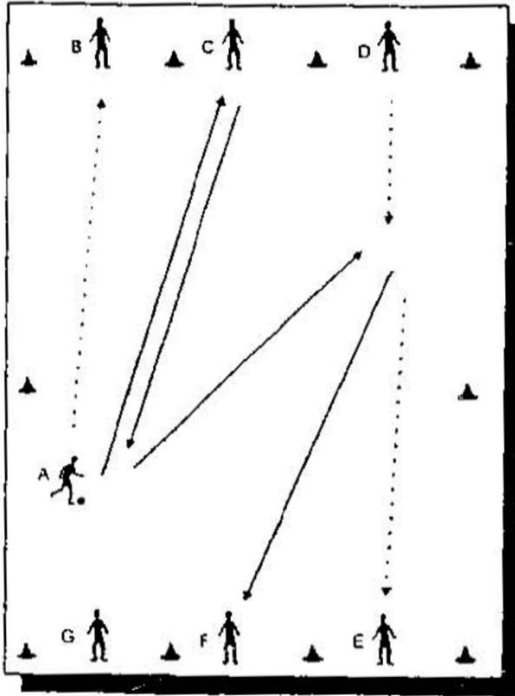
Continuous Shooting



- Set up two servers inside the 18 yard box with several balls.
- Place two pylons 5 steps outside the 18 yard box and five steps apart.
- The remainder of the team lines up 10 steps outside the pylons.

Server one feeds a ball between the two pylons and the first player in line runs forward, kicks the ball toward the net and then runs in a loop around one pylon just in time to meet the second ball fed by the second server. The player kicks the ball toward the net, runs around the second pylon just in time to meet the ball fed by the first server. Repeat until the player has taken five shots on net then switch the shooter.

First Touch, Communications and Diagonal Passing



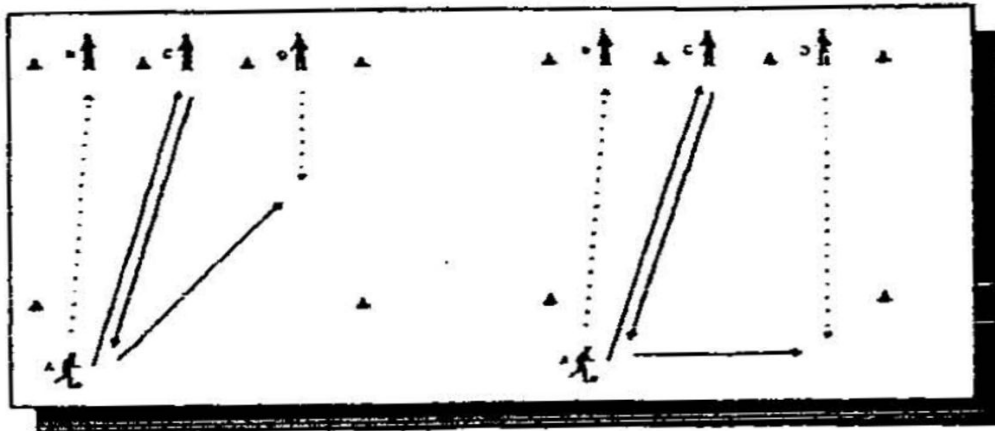
- Set up a field 30 steps by 60 steps.
- Divide each end into 3 by placing pylons 10 steps apart
- Use 7 players: three on each end between the pylons, and one in the middle of the field with a ball.
 - i. Player A, with the ball, makes a long diagonal pass to player C standing between the middle two pylons. Player C passes the ball back to player A.
 - ii. Player D then begins to run up the side line yelling “Man On”, which tells player A that a defender is near and they must play the ball quickly.
 - As player D begins to run forward, player C moves left to fill in the space left by player D between the pylons. Player B then moves left to fill in the space left by player C between the pylons.
 - At the same time, player A shoots a diagonal pass to player D. (It is important that this is a diagonal pass and not a square pass. See below for examples.) This is a kick toward a position rather than toward a person. Player D must run to receive the ball.
 - iii. Player A then finishes by running, without the ball, to fill the space by player B between the first two pylons at the end of the field.
 - iv. Player D passes the ball to player F standing between the two middle pylons, repeating the same pattern taken by player A.
 - v. Play continues until all seven players have moved through all positions.
 - vi. Rotate through all remaining team players.

Key points:

- Players making the pass should yell “man on” which communicates that the player with the ball does not have a lot of time to hold onto the ball.
- Every pass should be diagonal in relation to the length of the field.
- Timing of the runs are vital in order to avoid square passes.
- Each player must focus and move quickly to keep the play in motion.
- Emphasize that passes are made to open spaces not to where players are standing still. The pass receiver must run to the open space to receive the pass.

Diagonal Pass

Square Pass

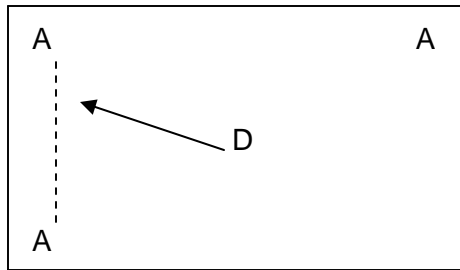


E. Defensive Skills

Intercepting

This is the most effective way of getting the ball from the opposition. If a defender predicts a pass and acts quickly, they can win the ball cleanly and start a counter-attack. Players should be encouraged to look for opportunities to turn defence into attack.

“Piggy in the Middle” Drill



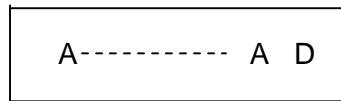
- Three attacking players each stand at one corner of a 10 X 10 step square and pass the ball between them while a “piggy in the middle” defender puts pressure on the players and tries to intercept their passes.

Key Points:

- Emphasize to players to “*pass the ball but do not pass the responsibility*”. Pass to get yourself out of trouble by all means – but not if it puts the receiver in the same situation.
- Tell players to communicate constantly. Team mates should shout or signal so that the player on the ball is aware of the best passing option.
- Emphasize ball control and accuracy of passes.

Advanced Interception Drill

This drill forces the defender to anticipate the ball being played and using maximum effort to get out from behind the opponent to win the ball. This drill also helps the defender to decide when to intercept and when to cover. If they cannot get to the ball first, then the defender has to remain behind the attacker and tackle him later.



- Two attacking players are located 10 to 15 steps apart.
- A defender is located behind one of the players.
- An attacker passes the ball to the other attacker.
- When the ball is played, the defender must get to the ball before it reaches the attacker.
- The attacker attempts to get the ball under control.

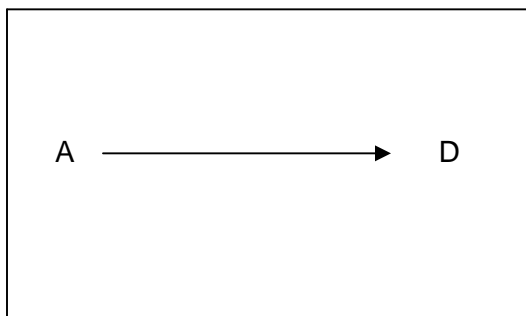
Key Points:

- Players should be encouraged to look for opportunities to intercept at all times.
- Emphasize the transition phase of counter-attack.

Tackling

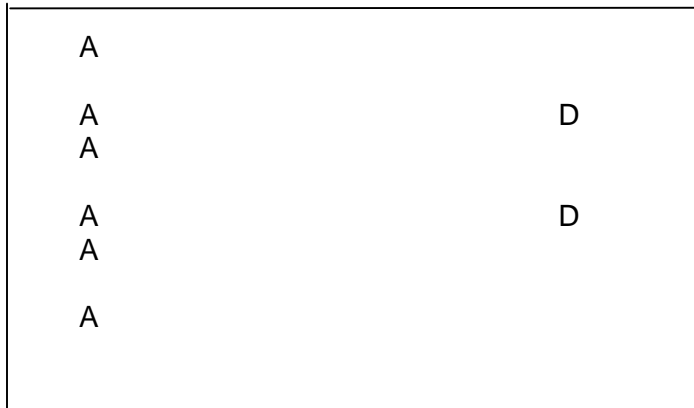
Taking the ball away from the opponent is the primary aim of tackling. If possible, the defender should emerge from the tackle with the ball, but as long as the attacker is prevented from making progress, the defender is successful.

Tackling Drill



- An attacker and a defender stand at opposite sides of a 10 X 10 step square.
- The attacker's aim is to run the ball to the other side of the square.
- The defender's aim is to tackle the ball.
- The defender should run in and jockey the attacker at arm's length to make a quick, clean tackle.

Team Tackling Drill

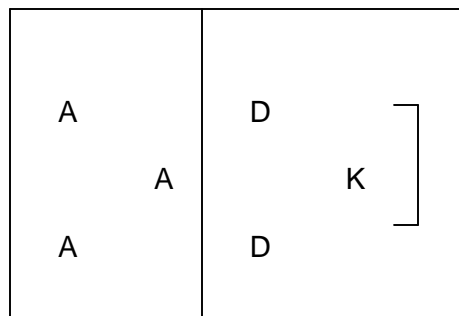


- Set up a 20 X 20 step area.
- Six attackers with a ball are tackled by two defenders.
- The defenders have to take possession of the ball from each attacker in the shortest possible time.
- As each attacker loses the ball, they drop out of play.
- The defenders can work together with one tackling while the other provides cover; if the attacker evades one defender, they may run into the second defender.

Key Points:

- Instruct the defensive players to be patient. Only tackle if they are certain they can win the ball.
- Emphasize that defenders block and harry the attackers. They might force the attackers into making a mistake which will give the defenders a chance to make a tackle and take the ball.

The Cobra's Lair



- Set up a 30 X 30 step area.
- 3 forwards, 2 defenders and a goalie (optional)
- Defenders must stay in the penalty area at all times.
- Attackers must do at least 3 passes touching all players before shot is taken.

The three forwards start their way down towards the goal. At this point the coach needs to decide if he is satisfied with the passing or if there was the proper amounts of passing because at any given time they mess up the coach lets one defender loose from the box if they were real bad (or you have a real good player on the forward line) you let both out. They woke the cobras!

If the coach likes what you see and they are close enough but not in the box then they have earned the right to fire at the goalie.

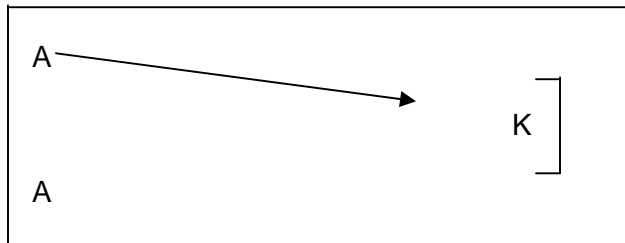
Unit Drills

There is great value in practicing your attacking and defending units against each other. Practice mismatches of 2 attackers against 1 defender, 3 v 2, 1 v 2, and other combinations so that players can utilize their skills in situations that resemble what often happens on the field. Variations of this drill can play an important part in your aim to develop composed, accurate build up play. The numbers might be 5 v 2, 6 v 2 or 6 v 3 as you work on transitions from attacking to defending or defending to attacking.

F. Keeper Drills

The goal keeper has to be able to react quickly to a variety of game situations. At all times the keeper has to know where they are in relation to the goal and to the ball. Keepers need to practice positional play, catching of shots and headers, moving quickly to cover the net for low shots and high shots, and techniques for diving and stopping shots.

Coming off the line to narrow the angle – drill



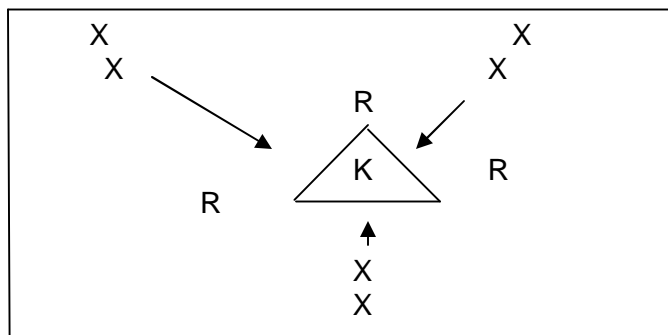
- Two attacking players take turns to move the ball to the penalty area and taking a shot on goal. As each player advances towards the goal, the keeper comes off the line and spreads themselves to narrow the angle. The attacker shoots from a position roughly level with the penalty spot and the keeper tries to keep the ball out of the net.

Key Points:

Emphasize the need for keepers to remain focused on the game at all times. Inattention leads to confusion, being out of position and not being ready for shots. Be prepared for the unexpected. Be ready to make a save from any angle.

The Triangle Drill

- A three-goal triangle of normal full-size goal dimensions is set up on a good diving area.
- Three cones are positioned about 15-20 steps away facing the centre of the goals.
- One player stands at each cone, with at least two balls, while three retrievers stand around the area to get the balls back quickly to those at the cones.



The drill starts with each player firing a shot at goal in strict rotation. The goalkeeper moves quickly from goal to goal to reposition himself for each shot.

The coach should signal to players when they should shoot so that the goalkeeper is kept working hard to save shots. A reasonable time period for the goalkeeper is about one to three minutes, which the coach should monitor since the work is very strenuous.

As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice:

- Create a competition among the goalkeepers to see who can lose the least number of goals in given time periods.
- Some of the players shooting the ball can be asked to play a certain type of shot, to give the goalkeeper practice in that situation, e.g. a player may attempt to chip the ball over the goalkeeper's head.
- The coach can increase the tempo of the practice whereby each player shoots just as the goalkeeper recovers from the last shot, thus putting him under greater pressure.
- Add a cone at the centre of the triangle. The keeper has to make his save, run around the cone and make another save at the next "window".

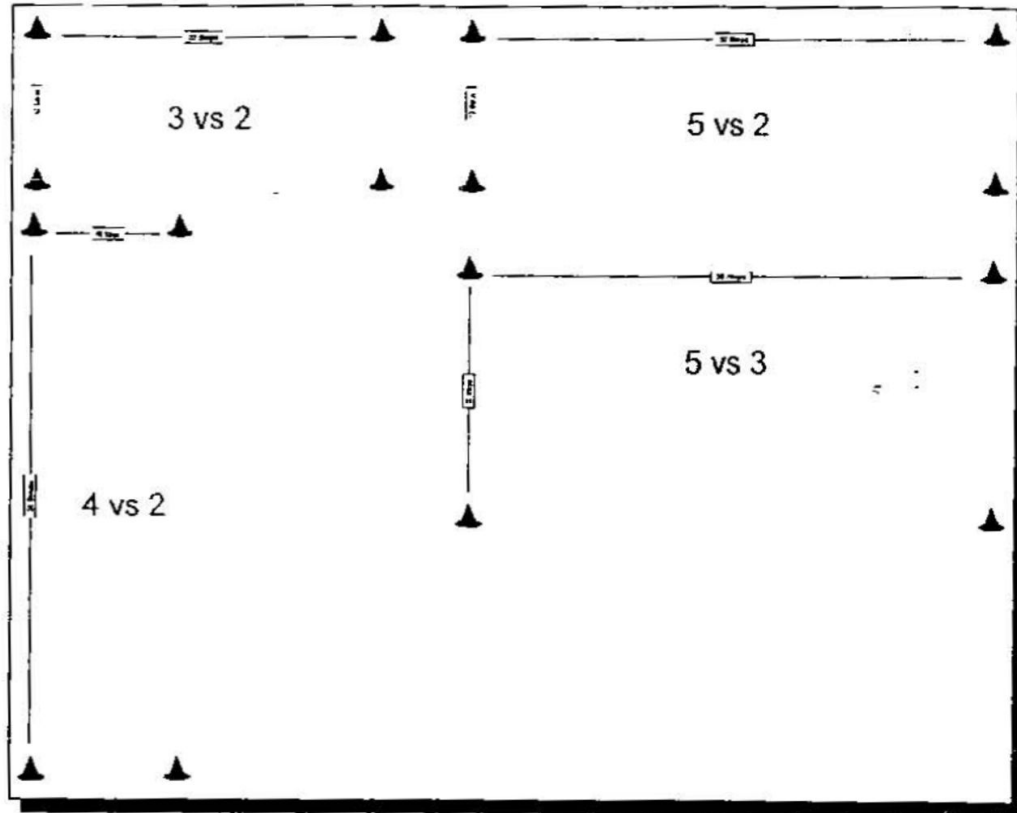
Key Points:

- This drill develops goalkeeper agility, positional sense and shot stopping ability. It is also good for practicing other players' shooting techniques.

4. Team Development

Small Games

Small Games



- Create small boxes varying in size and shape.
- Place two small teams inside each box but give one team a numerical advantage (e.g. 3 vs. 2, 5 vs. 2, etc.). Size of the team depends upon the size of the box.
- Play short “games” to practice team units.
 - i. Emphasize a possession game – trying to “keep the ball”. The team with the greater number of players should attempt to maintain possession and make as many passes as possible.
 - ii. Using small groups allows each player to have many “touches” on the ball, simulating a game situation.
 - iii. The coach can limit the number of touches on the ball per player, for example, players can be limited to two or three touches on the ball.
 - iv. The coach can set up small nets on either end of the box, no wider than 1 step each. No keeper.
 - v. Play can be limited to left foot only or right foot only.
 - vi. The coach can mark areas inside the boxes that are off limits for the players and the ball. This limits the players’ space, forcing them to control the ball, think ahead and become more aware of their space.

As players gain skill, the coach can increase the complexity and speed of the practice.

Key Points:

- Emphasize team possession rather than individual possession.
- Keep the ball on the ground.
- Encourage using the entire space of the box even if it is small.
- Players without the ball should work to be open for a pass.

Team and Positional Drills

Soccer is a team game and to be successful players must work together in various positions. Coaches must practice the players in assigned positions: keeper, defence, midfield, striker, forward, and so on.

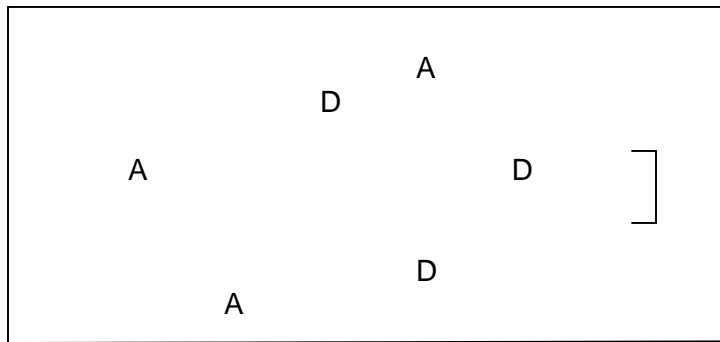
Practice various formations, but remember that there is no ideal formation. What works best for one team depends upon what their strengths are and what players are available. Formations may also depend upon other factors such as facing a strong attacking team, a strong defensive team, playing without all the team, or playing without the strongest members of the team.

Each section of the team needs to work together as a unit. For example, the best defenders are organized and disciplined and the players work together as a unit. They cover for each other and are always communicating. The coach can design practice drills to work these units and then practice them against the attackers. Try drills with two defenders against two or more attackers.

Attacking drills can practice the necessary skills of moving the ball forward. Running with the ball, ball control, passing and shooting are important to emphasize in practices. Attackers need to be organized, disciplined and to communicate with each other to be successful. Design drills that emphasize ball control and moving the ball forward.

Make six passes and shoot - drill

- Set up 2 pylons or a net on the goal line.
- Designate two teams of three players, one group as defenders and the other as attackers. Before each team can shoot on net, they must first put together a string of six passes or more.



Key Points:

- Emphasize communications and ball control.
- Encourage players to pass to a space where another player will move to rather than simply standing still and waiting for the ball to come.
- Emphasize possession play. By constantly passing the ball to other players, they can pull opposing defenders out of position, frustrate them into making rash tackles and create the space for a penetrating pass that may lead to a goal-scoring opportunity.

Transition Play

Moving from attack to defence and back again: transition is an important phase of the game, involving turning defensive play into a counter-attack at a very fast pace. It can be used to catch the opposition out of position.

- Design drills to emphasize rapid changes from defender to attacker, gaining the ball, clearing passes and strong positional play.

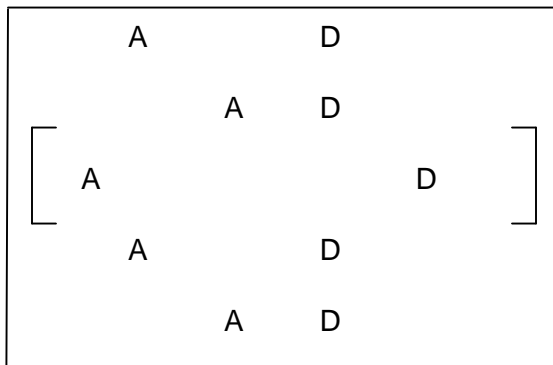
Another aspect of transitional play is to encourage forwards and midfielders to move back quickly to support defensive play.

- Design drills to emphasize moving attacking players rapidly into defensive position to disrupt the attacks of opponents.

The One-Nil Game

The One-Nil game is a possession game, played like a standard 4v4 game but with a twist.

- Pitch Size 40 x 20 – or at the discretion of the coach, but basically a standard 4 v 4 pitch
- Number of teams – 2
- Time limit – 5 minutes
- Team sizes – 4-6 players



- The basic rule of the game is that you can only win by one goal. The game begins as a normal 4 v 4 game with the usual rules.
- When a goal is scored, the team that scored must just try and keep possession and can't score into the goal. If they do, the goal is disallowed and a goal kick ensues.
- If the other team then equalise and make it 1-1, either team can then score to make it 2-1. The team leading then just has to keep possession.

Key Points:

- This is an excellent possession game and also allows a team to play out time by keeping possession, which is why the time is limited to just 5 minutes.
- As well as possession, teams also have to attack with speed when needing to score and the game also focuses on transition.

Special Game Situations

Games can be won or lost by taking advantage of special game situations or by failing to defend against them.

Coaches must design drills to practice the team response to the following restart and special game situations:

- Direct free kicks
- Indirect free kicks
- Corner kicks
- Throw-ins (or Kick-ins)
- Penalty kicks
- Goal kicks
- Playing short handed or with a player advantage
- Drop balls

These drills should emphasize both the offensive and defensive aspects dealing with these situations. Good teams will prepare “set plays” to give themselves an advantage over the undisciplined or underprepared play that often occurs during games.

Statistics show that nearly half of soccer goals scored come directly from set plays off of restarts or when possession is regained right after a set play. Most of the soccer set plays in the attacking third are the result of direct positive play and the pressure that is immediately applied to the defending team.

There are 5 basic advantages in attacking from set plays as opposed to attacking in the normal course of game play:

- The kick or throw is always made with a ball that is still; control problems are therefore eliminated.
- The opponents should be ten yards away from the ball. There is therefore no pressure on the kicker.
- A large number of attackers can move forward in advanced positions without incurring risk.
- Players can be placed in pre-determined positions to maximize the use of individual abilities.
- Practice can produce high levels of timing and coordinated movement.

Coaches should also prepare their players for the tournament games which use overtime and shootouts to determine winning teams. These situations place extra pressure on players and coaches should plan and practice how the team and individual players will respond to the demands of games.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All players, coaches, team officials, parents and spectators must comply with the following code of conduct. Remember the goal of community soccer is to have fun, learn some soccer and team skills, and enjoy the soccer experience. All the coaches, referees and League officials are all volunteers.

We want the children who take part in our League to play soccer in a positive atmosphere free from foul and abusive language, undue pressure, embarrassment, harassment, prejudice and violence.

Please help us to achieve this aim by abiding by this simple code:

- Play Fair.
- Foul or abusive language from players, spectators or officials will not be tolerated.
- Never dispute a referee's decision - they can make mistakes, just like you and me.
- The health and safety of players is paramount. Do not encourage players to continue playing if they are obviously injured or unwell.
- Coaches are strongly advised to give all of their players an equal amount of playing time. It's no fun being on the sideline.
- Coaches, parents and spectators are expected to let all players play without being screamed and shouted at from the sidelines.
- Encourage and applaud all players, not just those on your team.
- Demonstrate respect for all individuals.
- Respect the facilities in which you play.
- Maintain self-control at all times – it is only a game!!
- Always attempt to contribute to the betterment of the soccer experience.

