



Northville Soccer Association

U9 & U10

Recreational Coaches Manual

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Introduction

The Northville Soccer Association would like to thank you for volunteering to coach a soccer team. We usually have two kinds of volunteer coaches, the first is the coach who volunteered when they signed their child up to play, the second is the reluctant volunteer who received the famous soccer club phone call, which usually goes "Mrs. Jones, we have 9 players, including your son, who will not be able to play unless we find a coach. Do you know anyone who might be interested?" Rest assured that we are not the only soccer club in the United States who make this call. We realize that not every volunteer coach has had any experience of playing or coaching soccer, but we believe that with a little help you can do a great job and make a difference in every one of your players soccer development.

In order to make your coaching experience a positive one, and help you in the areas required to develop your players, we have put this coach's booklet together. This booklet will cover every facet of coaching a U9 & U10 soccer team from how to put a practice plan together, activities to include in your practice plans and how to coaching in a game situation. It will also cover other aspects of coaching at the club such as holding a parent meeting and answering some frequently asked questions.

As we mentioned above we hope this manual covers every aspect of coaching but if you do have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact Northville Soccer Association for further help.

Coaching a U9 & U10 team starts to move away from constant fun games and reaches into the realm of actual coaching! Of course soccer should be fun for your players BUT it should also be educational. These age groups are very important; the techniques learned will stay with your players for the remainder of their playing career. Make sure that the techniques you are teaching your players are correct! For help, coaches should sign up for the NSA coaching badge system. Please see the appropriate section.

Northville Soccer Association Philosophy

The Northville Soccer Association strives to make every member's soccer experience positive. We are here for the children and their development as soccer players. Every team member must play at least 50% of every game. We also stress to U9 & U10 coaches that they try to make everything educational as well as fun.

Success: At these ages do not try to measure your success on the results of your games but how many of your players return to play soccer the following season. In fact, at Northville we are not concerned with results and no score or record should be taken at this age group. If your team is dominating another please try to rotate players to stop your team running up a large score.

We recommend that this philosophy, as well as your personal coaching philosophy is emphasized to your parents before the season starts. We recommend that before your first practice session, hold a team meeting and explain to parents your goals for the season as well as the soccer clubs beliefs.

Practice should take place twice a week and last for one hour. This should be enough time to hold practice; it will enable you to keep the concentration of your players and focus on a specific activity. If you plan correctly the time allotted should allow for a warm up, at least two technical activities and small-sided games (see coach's organization).

Players at this age are very different from U8 players; they are more capable of learning soccer specific techniques both physically and mentally. The 'goals for a coach' and 'understanding your players' section have changed and should be read through. This will enable you to meet your players and NSA's needs at these age groups.

Understanding Your Players

The first important aspect of coaching any team is to understand your players. In order to maximize a player's learning experience and performance we need to understand our players. Why are they playing soccer? What are the physical differences between players? What are their physical boundaries? What are their psychological differences? What are their cognitive limits?

Why a U9 & U10 child plays soccer?

There are usually a few reasons why a child plays soccer at these ages. The reasons to why a child plays from a U8 player to a U9 or U10 player start to become very different. The reasons are as follows:

1. Soccer is fun – same as U8.
2. An older sibling plays – same as U8.
3. They want to play on the same team.
4. Soccer has become a hobby, they want to play.
5. They like the coach.

Players at this age are looking for more than just fun! They still want to have fun but it is not the sole reason for enjoying soccer. Players want to become part of a team, learn more about the skills involved in soccer, form friendships and build a relationship with the coach. Their soccer experience needs to be more encompassing. A coach needs to challenge the players, while still keeping all the fun elements involved!

Psychomotor Characteristics

The physical differences between a U8 player and a U9 or U10 player are becoming more apparent. Look at the points below for differences and similarities.

1. Ever growing Skeletal System – same as U8.

2. Genders are no longer similar in size and weight. Genders are now split at the U9 & U10 age groups.
3. Greater diversity between players in maturity & ability.
4. Improved co-ordination in fine motor skills. Players should be challenged with more difficult techniques.
5. Prone to heat loss and related injuries. Players should be given longer breaks so they can fully recover.

Cognitive Characteristics

1. Beginning to understand the concept of team.
2. Becoming more well rounded; they have a sense of 'me' and 'team'.
3. They now understand the concept of space and time.
4. They begin to think ahead. This allows for limited tactical instruction.
5. They have an ability to recall specific information. This also allows for an introduction to basic tactics.
6. Parents are no longer the player's biggest influence!

Taking these characteristics and referring them to soccer, there is finally a good relationship to the actual game! Coaches can begin to incorporate more and more soccer related skills, and even tactics into practice. A coach's focus begins to move away from just fun based activities. Coaches should increase their focus to the incorporation of soccer specific techniques and tactics through activities and small-sided games.

Psycho Emotional Characteristics

Players are becoming more intense and serious about playing soccer at these ages. It is no longer the push of the parents that is the biggest influence over their recreational activities. Characteristics of players at these age groups are:

1. They identify with the team.
2. They enjoy the company of their friends.
3. They will begin to blame others for mistakes!
4. Teachers & coaches are becoming more influential, maybe even more than parents!
5. They still need lots of positive reinforcement – same as at U8.
6. They are hurt very easily with negative comments.
7. Players begin to show confidence when problem solving.

As mentioned briefly above players at these ages can finally begin to play soccer! They should be exposed to more soccer like activities during practice. Instruction given should also become more complex, with simple soccer tactics and advanced technical skills introduced. Begin to include and build competition into your practices, in activities and in your small-sided games. For help with what tactics and techniques to teach please refer to the coaches goals section of the manual.

Soccer Parents

Parents have the biggest influence on whether players play soccer or not. Communication is key. Always keep parents updated about practice and game times, changes to schedules, NSA philosophy for these ages as well as your personal coaching philosophy.

Remembering that parents have a huge influence on their child's development we must make sure that the feedback parents give to players, referees and coaches during and after the game is positive. To ensure this is the case, please share these thoughts with your parents at your first coaches meeting:

1. **Support your child:** Remember to encourage your child and the whole team. Encourage your children to work hard in order to improve skills as well as emphasizing good sportsmanship. Implement a philosophy that hard work & enjoyment is important, not victory.
2. **Always be positive:** It is important to become not only just a role model but a positive role model. Always try to applaud good play from both teams.
3. **Remember children just want to have fun:** It is your child that is playing soccer and not you. Encourage your child to create their own goals and support them throughout. Try not to impose your own standards and goals on them, let them play the game for themselves. Did you know that 72% of children would rather play for a losing team than ride the bench for a winning team.
4. **Reinforce positive behavior:** Nobody likes to make mistakes and if your child does remember it is all part of learning. Always encourage your child's efforts and only point out the good things that your child has accomplished.
5. **Don't be a sideline coach or referee:** Coaches and referees are usually parents like you or children like your son or daughter. Coaches at the club are volunteers who take time out of their busy schedules to help make your children's soccer experience a positive one. Most of the referees at the club are boys and girls that play or have played at the club; they need as much support as children. Therefore we ask you to refrain from coaching or refereeing from the sidelines.

Coaching Topics @ U9 & U10

The club is striving to create continuity throughout the Recreational program. A great way to start this procedure is to make sure that all our players are receiving good coaching on topics that are age appropriate. Below are the areas we have identified as topics that are appropriate to your age groups, given the physiological and psychological state of the players:

Technical Coaching Topics

- Ball Mastery
- Dribbling
- Running with the Ball
- Turning
- Hesitation Moves
- 1 v 1 Moves
- Passing & Receiving
- Finishing

Tactical Coaching Topics

- Pressure Defending
- Cover Defending (U10 age group only)
- Role of the First Attacker
- Role of the Second Attacker

These techniques and tactics were identified because they are the next step in a player's development. Without mastering these fundamentals more advanced soccer skills, such as advanced techniques and tactics, cannot be learned properly. In order to introduce, and indirectly teach, these fundamentals we have enclosed a number of educational activities and fun games that you can incorporate into your practices. Please see the specific activity sections for more information.

Preparation & Organization

Game day and practice organization is one of the most important attributes of a successful coach. This aspect can make or break a season in the eyes of a player and a parent.

Practice Preparation & Organization

A coach's ability to move through well thought out activities without players standing around is a very important attribute to every coach. It reduces the amount of time young players have to misbehave or lose focus. Follow the suggested progression below to get the best results. As you become more experienced this aspect of coaching will become easier and easier.

Session Topic

Every training session should have a theme, for instance, Dribbling & Turning. This should be your first decision when planning a training session. Focusing every practice on a specific theme is a great habit to get into and this aspect will become more and more important as your children get older. Try to change the focus of your sessions weekly, it will keep practice fresh and your players will get more from the season if they are challenged (indirectly) with new skills.

Choosing Activities

- Choose activities that will focus on your session's theme. Well thought out activities will indirectly teach your players the session's theme.
- Choose activities that will allow for the ratio 1 player to 1 ball or 2 players to 1 ball. These types of activities will make sure that your players get a lot of touches on the ball. **NO LINE DRILLS!!!**
- Activities: Please refer to the activity sections of this manual when planning your sessions.

Session Plan

Once you have the topic and your chosen activities you need to place them into a practice plan (see practice plan example section). When placing your activities in your plan make sure that

they follow each other in a smooth progression, from easy to most difficult, starting with a warm up and ending in a scrimmage.

WARM UP

Every practice should start with a fun warm up consisting of walking, jogging, sprinting and stretching (the stretching element will become more important as your children get older). For instance, play a game of tag within a confined area; this activity will prepare your players for the movements required to play soccer, such as jogging, sprinting and changing direction. NO LAPS! Since when did you run in a circle while playing soccer!!

MAIN BODY

Make sure this part of your session is the focus of the days training. Try not to deviate between different skills in one session; this will only lead to confusion among your players. For instance: dribbling, every activity you choose to do should focus on the technique of dribbling. You are not intensely focusing on dribbling and teaching the technique but the activities you choose should require all players to dribble the ball and have close control.

SMALL SIDED GAME

Always include a small-sided game into your practice. Why? This is soccer, games and activities are fine but your players signed up to play soccer, don't forget this concept. Try to keep these games to small numbers, for instance 3 v 3. Playing small number scrimmages allows players more touches and interaction with the ball, which can only aid their development. If you notice that some players are not touching the ball don't be afraid to throw another ball into the activity, maybe even two!

COOL DOWN & DE-BREIF

Every training session should finish with a cool down. Take the players from a running state, then to jogging and finally walking. Again, this concept will become more important as you move into

the older age groups but it is a great habit to start. While you are cooling down your players run over the coaching points you made at the session.

Training Session

- Be at the training field at least 10 minutes early.
- Set up your activities. This aspect is especially important at these age groups so you can move from activity to activity with very little rest time in between. It is vital that you keep your players attention throughout the session; this will make coaching during your session much easier.
- Be sure to take your practice plan to the training session. This will help remind you of the progression and the activities chosen.
- Cheat Sheet: Always take a list of the activities you are planning to run through to practice, as well as some backup activities. Some of the activities you plan will not work, players will get bored of them quickly or they just do not enjoy them, so you must have a back up activities to fall back on just in case.

Game Day Preparation & Organization

Being prepared for game day is the final aspect of a coach's organization at these age groups. Your responsibilities on game day should include:

Arriving at the field

Be there first! Being the first person at the field sets a great example to your parents and players. Be there to welcome them to the game. Arriving early will also allow you to survey the field to look for potential health and safety risks.

Warm Up

As with your practice sessions have a well thought out warm up for your players, it is my recommendation that you use at least two activities. Use activities that you have done recently in practice, this will ensure that all your players will know how to play the games you choose. A

good warm up activity must include jogging, sprinting, jumping, changing direction and includes all your players. A bad warm up activity is one where players are stood in line waiting to touch a ball.

Player Rotation

At the U9 and U10 age group players should be exposed to all positions on the field including Goalkeeper. This allows for players to learn every position on the field and gain a better understanding of the game. Be very careful when exposing your players to the goalkeeper position, it has very serious repercussions in that games can be won or lost by the goalkeeper. Because of this fact some players may not want to play in goal, do not force players to playing this position.

After the game

Make sure you congratulate your players after every game, win or lose. Do not sit players down and run the game play by play. Players are too young for this type of game evaluation. Keep your comments brief and allow them to leave.

Coaching Styles & Guidelines

Coaching style refers to the philosophy that a coach uses in game situations and during practice. Coaches very rarely think about the style they use to coach, let alone the impact this has on the players they are coaching. Whatever style you chose or feel comfortable with it is important to remember that the needs of the players are what we are here to serve and not our own agenda. We believe that the coach should adopt and implement a coaching style, both in games and during practice that is player centered.

Read through this section and evaluate your own coaching style. Identify if in fact you are coaching in the correct manner and fulfilling the emotional needs of the players.

Practice Coaching

When coaching during practice there are certain guidelines you can follow to ensure you have a successful practice:

Introducing Activities

This aspect is very important. Introducing activities should be done through explanation and demonstration. Explanation of activities should be done as quickly as possible. Bring your players in and talk quietly; players will be more attentive in this environment. When your players are huddled in explain the general rules of the game and then let players play. Activity guidelines and how to play should also be explained through demonstration, most players at this age learn better by doing rather than listening. Place players in their start positions for the activity then actually demonstrate the movements, actions or rules of the game. After the demonstration let the players try the activity, if they are doing the activity incorrectly stop them and explain the activity again while demonstrating what you want them to do.

Making Coaching Points.

At this age it is important that the activity you are playing do most of the teaching, indirect learning. When stopping players to make coaching points do it in the form of instruction mixed

with question & answers. Give the players brief instruction and then follow up with questions. The beauty of asking questions is that it involves players in the learning process and will distract them from getting bored while you talk.

When giving instruction asking questions, be sure to keep them simple and short. Also, make sure that all players know the answer. I suggest making all the players scream the answer together.

Positive Reinforcement

Keep everything you say to players positive. Make sure to praise everything that the player's do related to soccer, encourage good passing, dribbling, turning, stopping, etc.

Crowd Control

Always try to have an assistant with you when you practice. This way one person can be coaching and the other can be controlling players who are having difficulty with the activities or boundaries.

Water Breaks

Players at this age are still very explosive; they have high energy levels but only for short periods of time. Give players short water breaks throughout you training sessions. Also take into consideration the weather, hot days take more breaks and cold days try to keep players moving for longer periods.

Final Remarks

At the ends of every practice finish with your final words. Have all the players sit down and answer questions on the day's activities as a group. While they answer the questions you demonstrate the technique. For example, when we pass the ball which part of the foot should we use? A: Inside, and demonstrate with a player.

Game Day Coaching

This aspect of the game is different from coaching at U8; games will be officiated by a referee. A coach's role on game day at U9 & U10 age groups is very important. Below are some guidelines on the common failures of coaches, how to effectively coach during a game and self evaluation steps.

Common Failures

Screaming at players:

- This discourages creative play and player innovations.
- This is a trait of an inexperienced coach. It usually means that the coach hasn't trained his / her team properly or prepared them for a competitive game situation.
- Yelling usually has the opposite effect that the coach intends. Many players do not respond well to this type of stimuli. Most of the time players cannot hear or understand the coach. Even if they can, they often choose to ignore the information.

Trying to micro-managing or instructing players on the field:

- Discourages innovative play and learning.
- Remember that soccer is a fluid game; ever changing and moving. It is impossible for players to take on board what a coach is trying to say, implement the information, and play soccer simultaneously. Micro-management typically results in a player making a mistake and turning the ball over.

Continuously arguing with the referee:

- Distracting for players and teaches them bad habits.
- Could change a referee's outlook on the game and sway them in favor of the opposition.

Asking rhetorical questions and whining: Such as, where are my defenders? Or, when are we going to learn how to keep our shots down?

- Remember players are only human and will make mistakes.
- Not saying anything is more beneficial than making a negative comment.

Wanting to be the center of attention: Demanding the focus of players, spectators and referees by:

- Screaming at the referee.
- Screaming at players.
- Talking to parents during the game.

Paying no attention during the game:

- Don't talk to parents, referees, players or assistant coaches during the game. Be attentive to what is happening in the game.

How to coach effectively during a game

First Half Observation:

- By the end of the first five minutes you know what system and style of play the opposition is playing, who their dangerous players are and what you need to change, if anything.
- Make substitutions: Recognize who on your team is not performing and needs replacing, make a tactical change or leave as is.
- Make notes of the positives and negatives from the first half and relay them during the half time team talk.

Second Half Observation:

- Recognize any changes the opposition has made and make tactical changes if needed.
- Make substitutions if necessary.
- Complete a Match Analysis.

Limit Coaching:

- Don't give excessive commentary and instruction.

- Let players play. Remember, the game is the best teacher.

Give Positive Instruction:

- If you do have to give instruction, convey it in a positive manner. For instance, don't say "why can't we defend", say "mark up closer" or "don't allow players to turn".
- Never act annoyed or angry when giving instruction to players. If you have to reprimand a player, do it in private, never in front of teammates, friends or family.

Find the Moment:

- Don't scream instruction during the game, this is very distracting for players.
- Wait for the ball to go out of play or another quiet moment to give instruction. Even in this situation make sure instruction is positive, simple and specific.

Speak Clearly:

- When you do give instruction to players make sure you use basic wording and show a positive and confident demeanor.

Applaud and Recognize Good Play:

- Be the first to encourage good play.

The Last Resort:

- A player maybe making the same mistake constantly and is not listening to instruction from the bench, expressed in the correct manner. The best way to handle this situation is to bring the player off the field, talk them through the situation, tell them the correct action and then let them re-enter the field. If this does not work, then the topic of trouble may become an outline for the next training session.

After reading this, be honest with yourself. Are you a screamer or a coach who gives constant instruction? Change is hard, particularly if you have behaved the same way your entire coaching career. Below are a few steps to help you overcome your habits:

1. Sit down during the game. When you feel the urge to yell, sit down and force yourself to observe and analyze instead.
2. Bring a clipboard, a pad of paper (or match analysis sheet) and a pen. When you feel the need to yell, sit down and make a note to yourself instead. At an opportune moment (preferable half time) let your players know what you wanted to express.
3. Learn from the Pros. Watch a professional game and see how much yelling and screaming the coaches do compared to just watching and observing the game itself. Less is more.
4. Make a pre-game resolution to say less. For instance cut down on what you would normally say by 50%. You will soon see that you will be far more effective as a coach.
5. Take a deep breath and remind yourself it is only a game that is purely and simply for the kids. Your days of serious competition are over. Have some fun with the game, enjoy yourself a little more and stress yourself less.

Practice & Game Tips

PROBLEM: 'Billy' seems like he does not want to play, he picks daisies during practice & games.

SOLUTION: During practice activities there is a simple solution, only do activities where every player has a ball. During your scrimmage at the end of practice throw two or three soccer balls in, this way all players have a better chance of touching the ball. Games at the weekend, this is a little trickier, try to have 'Billy' take throw-ins or dead ball kicks, or just try some extra encouragement.

PROBLEM: You do not have enough soccer balls at practice.

SOLUTION: This is a difficult situation but one that can be easily resolved. When working on dribbling activities use pairs, these players take it in turn to use the soccer ball. Good for relay races and / or tagging games. If you only have 1 or 2 soccer balls, use small-sided games for practice. It is not the best situation for practice but it solves the problem.

PROBLEM: How do I pick teams for scrimmages at practice?

SOLUTION: In this situation I would use your knowledge of the players within your team, so that teams are evenly matched to play. Another way is to have a player give out numbers, you turn your back and then choose the numbers. Yet another way is to line the players up and give them a number 1 or 2, you then have two equal teams.

PROBLEM: When we play elimination games at practice the weaker players, who need the most practice get knocked out first!

SOLUTION: Simple, do not play elimination games. Rather than scoring by eliminating players, have players score by the number of successes within a time period. This allows players to stay in the game for the duration.

PROBLEM: Stronger players are not being challenged and my weaker players cannot complete with the strong players.

SOLUTION: At the recreational level you are always going to find that you have huge disparity between your players soccer ability. Ideas on how to get around this problem are as follows:

1. If there is one exceptional player that is too good for your team and on game day recommend to the parents that this player move up a year or even to the academy / premier level. In the mean time match that player against an assistant coach, older sibling, etc.
2. When playing in pairs, match players by talent and experience.
3. Reduce the space for stronger players.
4. Make passing target smaller or bigger depending on ability.
5. 9 players for practice, scrimmage 6 v 3, 5 v 4, etc in favor of the weaker players.

PROBLEM: How to pick who starts the game.

SOLUTION: At these ages you should not always look to field your best team, players should get an equal amount of playing time and should have a chance to start the game. Keep a record of which players you have started and make sure all players are given this opportunity.

PROBLEM: How do you make a small-sided game easier so players gain success?

SOLUTION: Increasing the size of the area and / or adding more attacking players will make a game easier for your players. Add defenders and reducing the size of the area will have the reverse effect. Another idea for making games easier is to add neutral players. Neutral players play for the team that has possession, this increases the amount of attackers thus creating numbers up against defenders. Add more neutrals to gain more success.

PROBLEM: Some of my weaker players never touch the ball in our Small-Sided Games & Scrimmages?

SOLUTION: If this occurs don't be afraid to play with more than one soccer ball. The more soccer balls involved in the game, the more touches your players will have, including the weaker players.

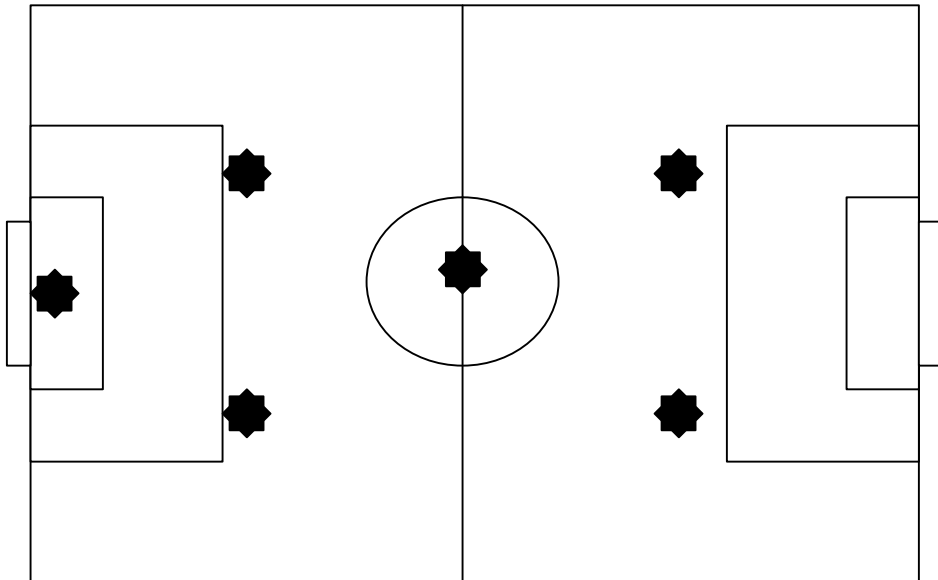
FORMATIONS

The most frustrating aspect of watching any soccer game is when players have been told to stand on the edge of the penalty box, as supposed defenders, and told not to move, even if the ball is in the oppositions half. Is this soccer? NO. This type of coaching can spoil a player's soccer experience, children at these ages want to be kicking the ball and having fun, let them!

As a coach at a U9 or U10 age group you should be more concerned with the formation your team plays. Remember, players are psychologically ready to accept the concept of 'TEAM' and thus can handle instruction on what shape they are playing. With any formation you should make sure that it includes these three basic concepts; Width, Depth and Length. Below are a few different formations that you could incorporate.

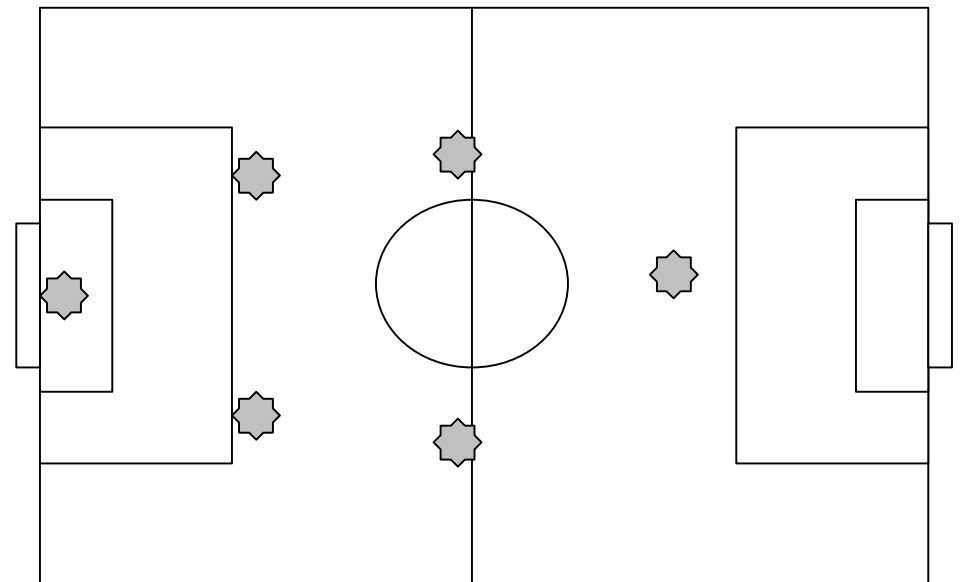
1 - 2 - 1 - 2 Formation

A 1 - 2 - 1 - 2 formation, in my opinion, is the best shape for player development. Why?



- It includes all three areas essential for a soccer formation; a goalkeeper, defenders, a midfielder and forwards.
- It includes all aspects essential for good shape; the defenders provide depth & width, the midfielder can provide depth in the center of the field and the forwards can provide length and width.
- If you look at the formation overleaf you can see that the formation is basically three triangles. This is an advantage when in possession of the ball. When a player has possession they should always have a passing option. NOTE: Given that players have maintained their shape.

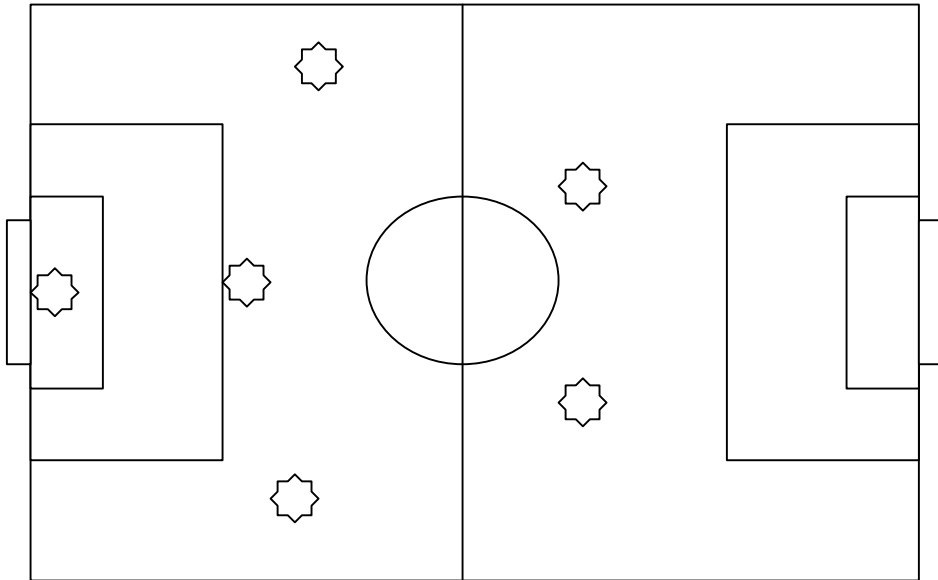
1 - 2 - 2 - 1 Formation



This formation has all the concepts label above BUT is it ideal for player development? In my opinion, NO. Why? There is no real benefit to the shape when your team has possession of the ball! Your players will have to move a great deal in transition from defense to attacker in order to maintain possession.

Are there any benefits to playing with this shape? YES, this formation will probably help you team do a better job of defending because you will have more players behind the ball upon losing possession.

1 – 3 – 2 Formation

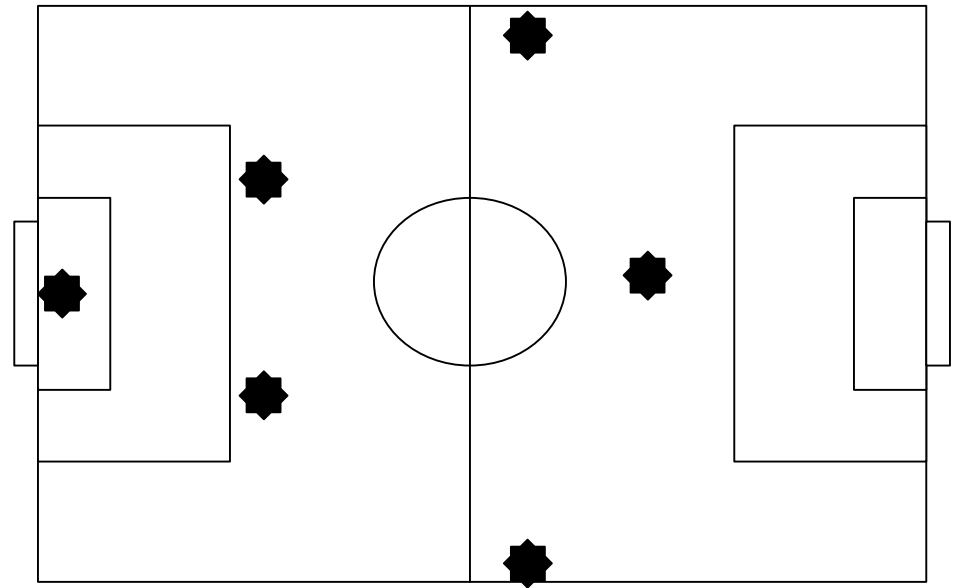


It could be argued that this formation is set up to best develop your players. This argument has some validity BUT I personally do not like this formation.

POSITIVES: This formation will help you when defending because you have three designated defenders. From an attacking point of view, you have 2 designated forwards which are great for when you gain possession of the ball. The formation is also set into two triangles side by side, so a good attacking shape is already in place when you win possession of the ball.

NEGATIVES: I personally do not like this formation because it has no concept of midfield play and thus is not true to the game of soccer. Soccer is played with a goalkeeper, defenders, midfielders and forwards. Playing with a midfielder teaches your players the true game of soccer.

1 – 2 – 3 Formation



This formation is very similar to the shape of the 1 – 3 – 2 BUT turned upside down. This shape has great attacking benefits because you are playing with three forwards. But what you gain when attacking you lose when defending. This shape has the same positives and negatives as overleaf.

NOTE: this formation could be used when you are chasing the game. A good scenario is that your team is losing 1 – 0 with 10 minutes remaining in the game. You could change to this shape and gain more attacking options in order to try and score a goal.

Summary

When choosing any formation you have to take into think, what are my goals for the team? At this age your sole purpose should be to develop your players. So what formation should you choose? Also, as mentioned briefly above what ever formation you play you will gain aspects and lose aspects. For instance, if you play with three defenders, you will lose some attacking power but gain some defensive security!

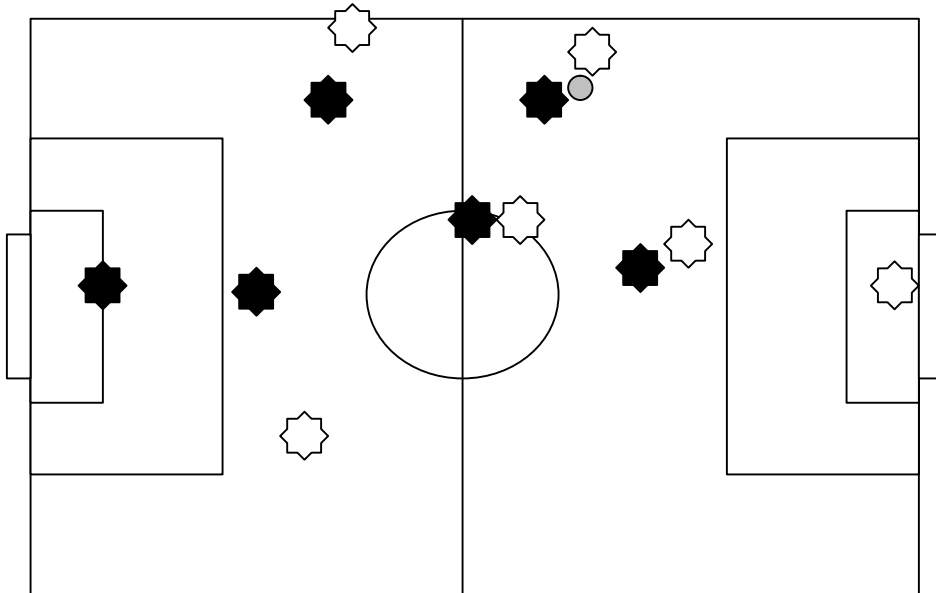
Tactical Implications of team shape / formation played

Defending

Basically a team needs defenders to stop goals being scored, midfield players to help defend and attack and forwards score goals.

Team shape is always important. For instance, when a team defends one player should always put pressure on the attacking player with the ball, the other players on the defending team should look to support that player by restricting space around the attacker with the ball to prevent passing, dribbling or shooting options.

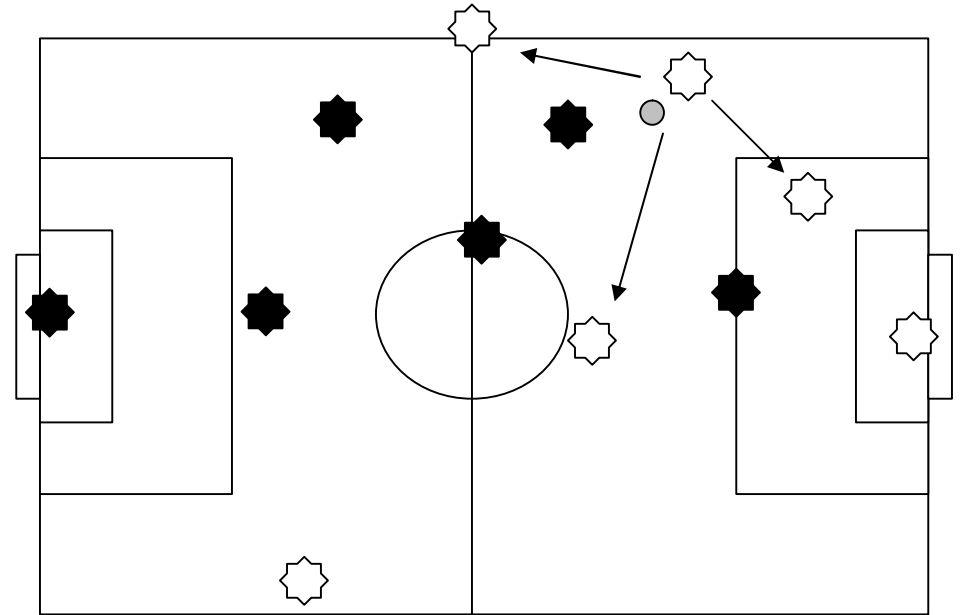
Diagram 1; the white team has the ball; the black team is pressuring the ball and taking away the attacking players options by marking players and space.



Attacking

Oppositely when attacking players should spread the field as wide and as long as possible in order to stretch the defense and provide options to the player with the ball.

Diagram 2; the light team is attacking, their forwards and providing length and width, their midfielder is trying to provide a passing option and the other defender is dropping deep to provide a backward passing option.



This explanation is very general and basic but should give you a good foundation on which to base your team's knowledge.

From this section take these two key concepts:

1. The concepts of shape when attacking and defending. Your team should get big and stretch the field when attacking but when defending they should get compact and reduce space around the attacking player.
2. Freedom of your players: allow your players to move freely on the field, do not restrict them to specific zones or areas. Young players enjoy being around and touching the soccer ball, let them, and give them the freedom to move while playing in games and scrimmages.

ACTIVITES



SECTION

In this section of the manual you will find a variety of fun games, technical activities and small-sided games that you can use to build your practice around. These activities will help you teach the coaching topics set by the Northville Soccer Association. When implementing these into a session plan you should be sure to incorporate all three different aspects. WHY?

Fun Games

There is still a need to implement fun games into your sessions. These will help indirectly teach the topic you are working on, through restrictions and rules incorporated into the games. At a U9 practice lasting for an hour I would look to incorporate at least two fun games. At U10, depending on the topic, I would incorporate just one.

Technical Activities

These activities are designed to teach the technical aspects of the game through restrictions and repetition. These activities are great for teaching players but some can be dull and repetitive. I would recommend incorporating these in between fun games and your small-sided games.

Small-Sided Games

Small Sided Games are very important in a player's development; they will indirectly teach your players a specific topic through restrictions and rules while exposing them to a game environment.

Small-side games, for example 3 v 3, are better than large side games for player development because players will receive more touches on the ball. The more touches, the more comfortable players will become! It is my recommendation that wherever possible keep your small-sided games too 3 v 3. If you have more than 6 players at practice have two games running at the same time, this will mean more touches on the ball for your players and no players standing around. It is important at this age that players are being supervised and I recommend enrolling a parent and / or an assistant coach to help you with this.




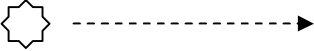
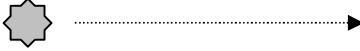
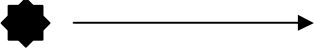


NOTE: Do not replace a scrimmage with small-sided games. A small-sided game should precede a scrimmage. A scrimmage has all the same rules and it is as close to the game day

environment as you can get. I would recommend playing a scrimmage for at least 10 minutes at the end of each practice.

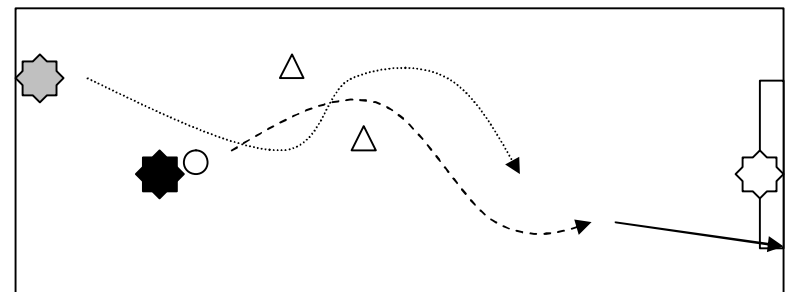
For more information on how these activities and games should fit into a session please refer to the session plan examples section of the manual.

Although the section provides a great variety of activities, do not limit yourself to this booklet. This booklet and in particular this section is a great starting point for a recreational coach but there are many other resources at your disposal through NSA and the internet. At our web site www.northvillesoccer.org, under the recreational coaches' education page there are session plans built by our own coaching staff as well as links to other web sites that will provide you with a plethora session plans, activities, articles, etc. Another recourse provide by NSA is in the Northville Public Library; here NSA has donated many books, DVD's and videos that can be rented out. Please if you do borough a book or video please return as soon as possible as there are other coaches who would also like to use the recourse. Thanks!

Diagram Key

Area 	Goal 
Players 	Player moving with the ball 
Player moving without the ball 	Player passing the ball 
Cones 	Soccer Ball 

Example: A player is dribbling with soccer ball, through a coned gate, towards goal, with a defender chasing him / her and finishes with a shot on goal.



Dribbling Section



Dribbling is the technique used by players to maneuver the ball through tight areas where defenders could, and are trying to steal the ball. When players are dribbling they need to keep the

ball close so they can stop the ball, change direction or do a move. Without total control players cannot execute any of these actions. When working on dribbling technique you should also teach the following aspects; turning with the ball, how to do a move to beat a defender, how to stop with the soccer ball and ball mastery. The aim of a coach is not to overload their players with information but to teach techniques that players can get to know very well and feel comfortable using in a game.

Turning with the ball and completing moves and fakes are very important when playing soccer; they enable you to keep possession of the ball under varying pressures and / or create attacker opportunities for the individual or teammates. Teaching your players a variety of moves and turns enables them to experience different techniques and find the correct turn or move for them; a move or turn that is easy for the individual player to do. You will find that your players will choose and feel comfortable with different moves or turns, groups of players very rarely find the same move or turn to their liking.

The technical aspects included in this section include

- Dribbling
- Running with the ball
- Shielding the ball
- Turning
- Moves & fakes
- Hesitation moves

The tactical aspects included in this section include

- Dribbling to penetrate
- Dribbling to keep possession

In this section of the manual you will find fun based activities, skills / technical based activities and small-sided games. In order to put your session plans together please refer to the session planning section of the manual.

Dribbling Technique

Technique

- Dribble with all surfaces of both feet: inside, laces, outside and sole.
 - Inside of the foot is used to change direction; ball moves across the player's body.
 - Outside of the foot is used to change direction; ball moves away from the player's body.
 - Sole of the foot is used to change direction; ball can move in any direction.
 - The laces are used to dribble in a straight line.
- Rhythm; Every stride you take; take a touch on the soccer ball.
- Close control: players should be able to take just one step in between touches on the ball. Rhythm should be touch, step, touch, step, etc.....
- Bend your knees; Every time your foot strikes the ball your knee should be directly over the ball.
- Lean slightly over the ball and stay as low as possible.
- Head up: when dribbling players should have their heads up looking for options. Players should take a look up in between touches on the ball.

Best Used

- To gain ground.
- Go past an opponent.
- Set yourself for a shot on goal.
- Relieve pressure.
- Keep possession.
- Attack space.

Possible areas

- Ball is not under control, it is too far away from foot.
- Player looks down too much.
- Legs are too straight.

Running with the Ball Technique

When running the with the ball players should either have space in front of them or space at the side of a defender that they can attack.

Technique

- Use your strongest foot.
- Player should be facing the direction they intend to go, hips and shoulders facing forward.
- Point the toes of kicking foot down and slightly inward.
- Use the outside of your laces to strike the ball. No Toes!
- Strike the equator / middle of the soccer ball.
- Knee of your striking foot should be over the ball as you connect with it.
- Body weight is forward with knees bent as you run.
- Players should still have control of the ball. The ball should be pushed 2 to 3 feet in front of the player.
- Cover ground in between touches as quickly as possible.
- Try to get your head up in between touches on the ball to look around and weight up options.

Best Used

- To cover ground quickly.
- When there is a lot of space in front of you.
- Relieve pressure.
- Attack space.

Possible areas

- Ball is too close and doesn't allow player to move at full speed.
- Ball is not under control, it is too far away from foot.
- Player looks down too much.
- Legs are too straight.

Turning Techniques

Turns are used to change direction and / or turn away from an opponent. Below are 6 basic turns, which should be practice and learned. The second section of the activities listed below are dedicated to teaching turning techniques.

Inside Hook

Use the inside of your foot to hook the ball directly behind you and across your body. As you hook the ball you turn 180 degrees. If you use your right foot to hook the ball turn to your left and vise versa.

Outside Hook

Use the outside of your foot to hook the ball directly behind you. As you strike the ball behind you turn 180 degrees. If you use your right foot turn to your're right and vise versa.

Drag Back:

Stop the ball with the sole of your foot, role the ball directly behind you and turn 180 degrees. If you are right footed you should turn left and if you are left footed you should turn right.

Cryuff Turn

Place your non-kicking foot next to the ball, approximately 8 – 10 cm away. Fake like you are going to strike the ball. As your foot approaches bring it around the outside of the ball, then lightly strike it through your legs and behind you using the inside of your foot. If you use your right foot to strike the ball then turn to your left and vise versa.

Step Over

As the ball is still in motion act like you are going to strike the ball, as your foot approaches the ball step over it. Once you have stepped over the ball turn 180 and push the ball out using the outside of your strongest foot.

Stop Turn

As the ball is moving stop the ball with the sole of your strongest foot. As you stop the ball, take a first step over it using the same foot you used to stop it and then take another step. Turn 180 and push the ball out using the your strongest foot. If you stop the ball with your right foot, turn right and vise versa.

General Coaching Points

- Look at the ball when executing a turn.
- Bend your knees during every turn.
- Accelerate out of turns.
- Close control: Ball has to be under control to turn effectively.
- Over exaggerate every turn.

Problem Areas

- Ball is not under control when dribbling: players cannot turn effectively.
- Legs are straight making it hard for players to accelerate out of turns.
- Players do not push the ball out far enough to accelerate onto.
- Ball gets stuck under a players feet when trying to do a turn.
- Ball is not pushed directly behind a player allowing defenders to steal.
- Players turn the wrong way while doing a turn.

Moves and Fakes

Move and fakes are techniques used off the dribble to beat a defender 1 v 1, fake out defenders in 2 v 1 situations, change direction and set up shots on goal. Below are moves and fakes that range from basic (Matthews) to very difficult (Ronaldo).

Matthews

Step to the side of the ball using your weakest foot, shift your body weight onto that leg, drop your shoulder and bend your knee. Then come out of the move in the opposite direction by using the outside of your strongest foot to knock the ball away.

Scissors

Step around the ball with one foot (foot should go inside across your body, out and back around), shift your body weight to that side, drop your shoulder and bend your knee. Come out of the move in the opposite direction by using the outside of your other foot to knock the ball out.

Hodde

While dribbling use the sole of your strongest foot to role the ball directly across your body (not forward) and then come out of the move using the inside of your other foot.

Double Scissors

Step around the ball with one foot and bend your knee. Then step around the ball using the other foot and bend your knee. Come out of the move using the outside of the foot, you used to step around the ball first, to knock the ball out.

Denilson

Triple Scissors: Step around the ball three times and then come out the move using the outside of the foot.

Ronaldo

While dribbling use the sole of your strongest foot to role the ball across your body (same as Hodde). As the ball comes across your body step over it using your other foot and then continue to dribble away.

General Coaching Points

- Over exaggerate every fake and move.
- Make sure to look at the ball while executing a move.
- Bend your knees so you can accelerate out of every move.
- Close control when dribbling.
- Game speed.

Problem Areas

- Ball is not under control when dribbling and so move is not executed successfully.
- Move is done either too close or too far away from defenders.
- Players do not accelerate out of a move.
- Players come out of a move too straight and directly into defenders.
- Players push the ball too wide out of a move and allow defenders to recover.

Hesitation Moves

Hesitation moves are best used when a defender is running along side the attacker. This move is used to fake the defender into thinking that the attacker is going to stop the ball and thus making the defender slow down. After the attacker has made the defender hesitate they burst forward at pace into the space and lose the defender.

Overmars

While dribbling fake as if you are going to stop the ball (do this by bringing your foot directly over the ball) and then continue to dribble by push the ball forward with the inside of the foot.

Henry

While dribbling stop the ball using your strongest foot, in the same action knock the ball out again using the inside of your other foot.

General Coaching Points

- Over exaggerate stopping the ball. The defender needs to think that the ball is going to stop.
- Make sure to look at the ball while executing a move.
- Bend your knees so you can accelerate out of every move.
- Close control when dribbling.
- Game speed.

Problem Areas

- Ball is not under control when dribbling and so move is not executed successfully.
- Move is done either too close or too far away from defenders.
- Players do not accelerate out of a move. No change of pace!
- Players come out of a move too straight and directly into defenders.
- Players push the ball too wide out of a move and allow defenders to recover.

Shielding the Ball Technique

Shielding the ball is a technique used by a player to keep possession of the ball when under extreme pressure

Technique

- Use the furthest foot, from defender, to move the ball.
- Use the sole of the foot to move the ball.
- Use your non-kicking foot for balance.
- Put your body in between the ball and the defender.
- Keep your body at a right angle.
- Keep your arm out, making sure not to push, but to feel the defender.
- Use this arm to keep space in between ball and defender.
- Move away from the defender laterally or backward.
- Decision-Making: If the defender stays behind and apply pressure, shield the ball. If the defender tries to steal the ball, use a fake and try to turn them.

Best Used

- To keep possession.
- Waist time.
- Relieve pressure.

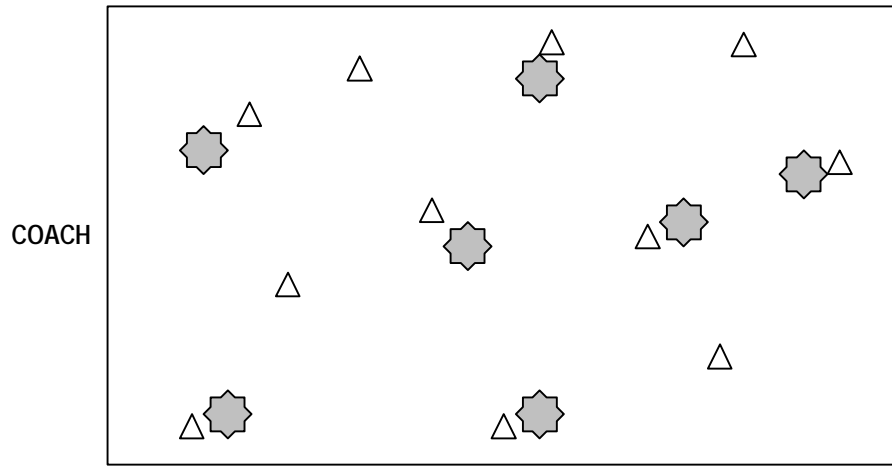
Possible areas

- Ball is too close to your body and allows the defender to steal.
- Body is not at a right angle and allows defender to steal.
- Arm is not fully extended and allows defender to steal.
- Player is not balanced and loses possession.
- Player doesn't feel the defender and turns into pressure.

Activity 1: Zen Master – Technique Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with cones placed randomly around the area. Add more cones than players.
- Each player needs a soccer ball.



Activity

Players dribble around freely inside the area, when the coach shouts 'ZEN' all the players dribble to a cone and complete the move the coach is demonstrating on the side. When the coach shouts 'GO' they continue to dribble freely around the area.

NOTE: Add some fun activities in between skills and techniques.

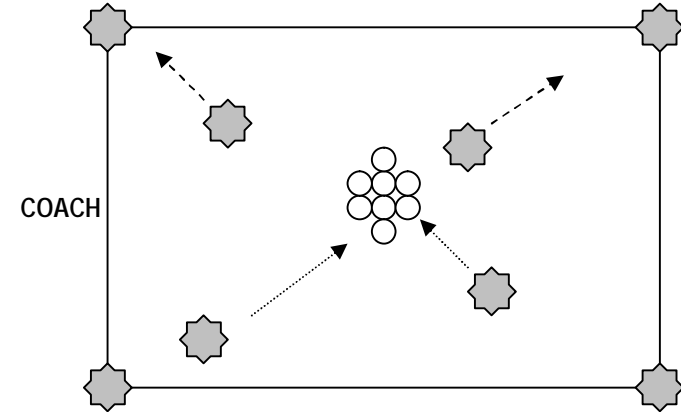
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Single Fake Technique.
- Turning Technique.
- Ball Mastery Techniques

Activity 2: Bedrock Barbeque - Dribbling & Turning Fun Game

Organization

- 20 x 20-yards.
- Split players into 4 groups; place a group on each corner.
- Each player needs a soccer ball. Players start by placing their balls in the center of the area.



Activity

The aim of the game is for teams to retrieve as many soccer balls as possible as quickly as possible. Only one player can go from each team at one time. The next person cannot go until tagged. Players must retrieve the ball and dribble back to their corner not pass back!

1. One ball per player. First team with all their soccer balls back wins.
2. Teams try to get as many ball back as possible. Team with the most balls wins.
3. Once all the soccer balls are gone from the middle, teams can steal each others soccer balls. Players cannot protect their soccer balls they must allow players to steal. Only one player per team can go at one time! Game stops when coach shouts time.

NOTE: Make sure the groups are even. Also, make sure there is never only one winner.

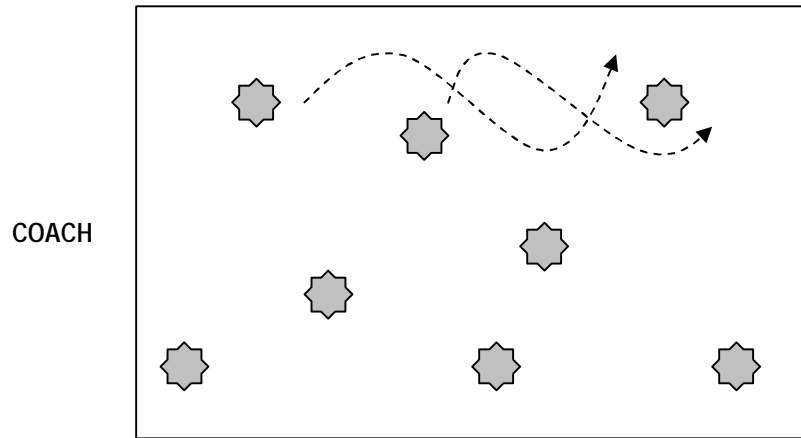
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique: Emphasis on speed and close control.
- Turning Technique: Quicker to do a Sole Turn to retrieve a ball.

Activity 3: Knockout – Dribbling & Turning Fun Game

Organization

- 20 x 20-yards.
- Each player needs a soccer ball.
- All players start inside the area.



Activity

Aim of the game is for players to knock each others soccer balls out of the area. For every ball that a player knocks out they get a point. When a player has their ball knocked out they must do a fun punishment before re-entering the game. Play for 1 minute.

NOTE: When the game is over the coach should ask a general question like 'how many players got more than 5 points'. Then restart the game.

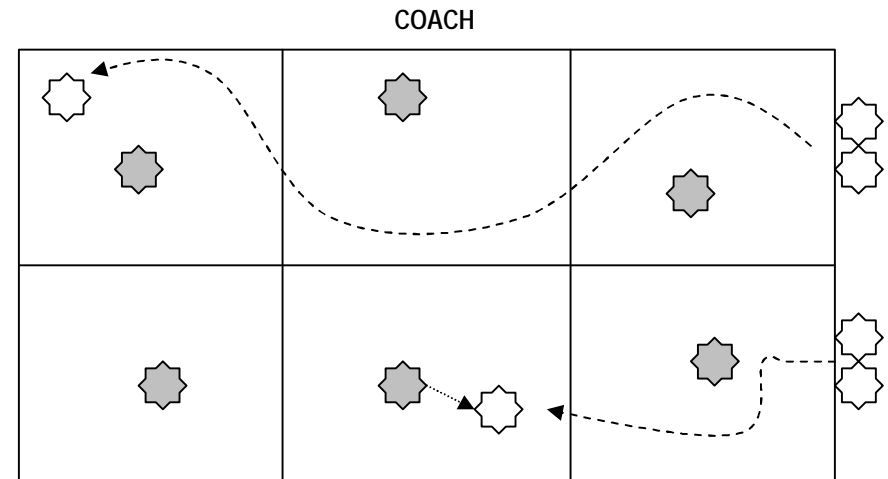
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique: Keep the ball close so it is hard to steal.
- Turning Technique: Turn away from pressure.

Activity 4: Crab Soccer – Dribbling & Moves Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 10 x 30 split into 3 equal areas.
- 6 players per area; split these players into two teams of 3.
- Place one team inside the area without soccer balls, one player each area third.
- Place the other team on the end line with soccer balls.



Activity

- CRAB TEAM: Players inside the areas should take up a crab position: leaning backward on their hands & feet. Their job is to steal a player's soccer ball and kick it out of the area.
- NON CRAB TEAM: Players on the end line go one at a time; they are trying to dribble through the area and past the opposite end line without their ball being stolen.
- After all players have been switched, the team's roles.
- Team who gets the most players through the area without their ball being stolen wins.

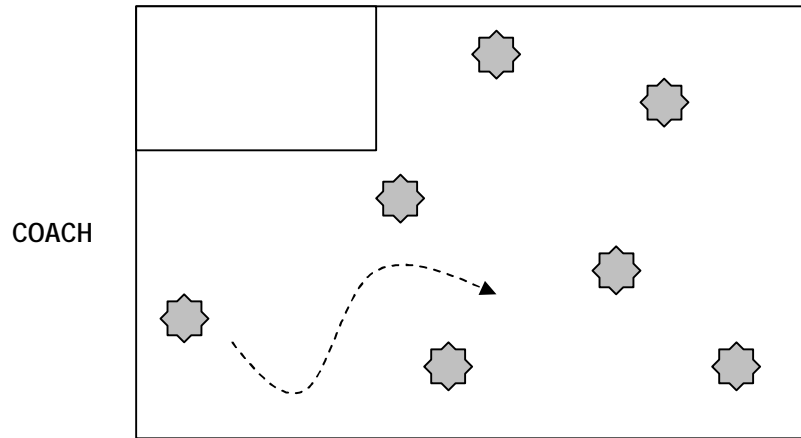
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique: keep the ball close so the crab cannot steal it.
- Moves: use moves to fake crabs out.

Activity 5: Hospital Tag – Dribbling Fun Game

Organization

- 20 x 20-yards with a 5 x 5 yard Hospital.
- Each player needs a soccer ball.
- All players start inside the area.



Activity

Every player has a ball and is dribbling randomly inside the area. The aim of the game is for each player to try and tag each other as they dribble around the area. When a player is tagged they must hold that body part while continuing to dribble. The second time a player gets tagged they must also hold that part as they dribble around the area. When a player is tagged for the third time, they must dribble into the area, complete a fun punishment and re-enter the game. Continue.....

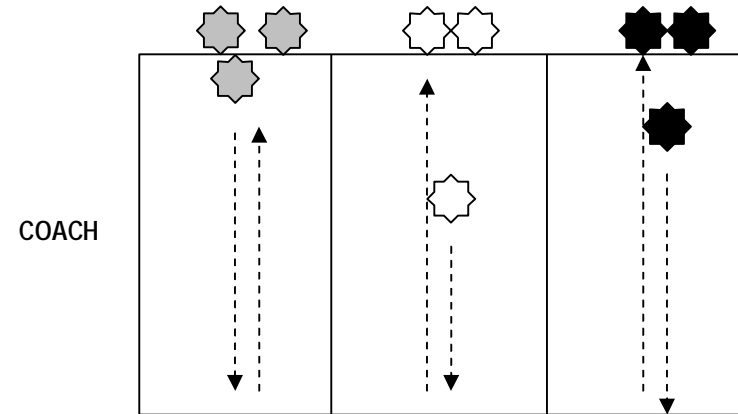
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique: Keep the ball close so it is hard to steal.
- Turning Technique: Turn away from pressure.

Activity 6: Treasure Hunt - Running with the Ball Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 5 x 20 yards per group.
- Split players into groups of three. Players all start at one end of the area.
- Each player must have a soccer ball.
- Coach should place treasure at one end of a team's area; cones, water bottles, bags, etc.



Activity

- Players can only dribble when the coach shouts 'GO'.
- Upon the shout of 'GO' one player from each team should race to the end line and collect some treasure. As soon as they have treasure they should dribble back and tag their partner. Continue until all the treasure is gone.
- At the end of the game the players should wear the treasure. The team with the most creative dress code wins the game.

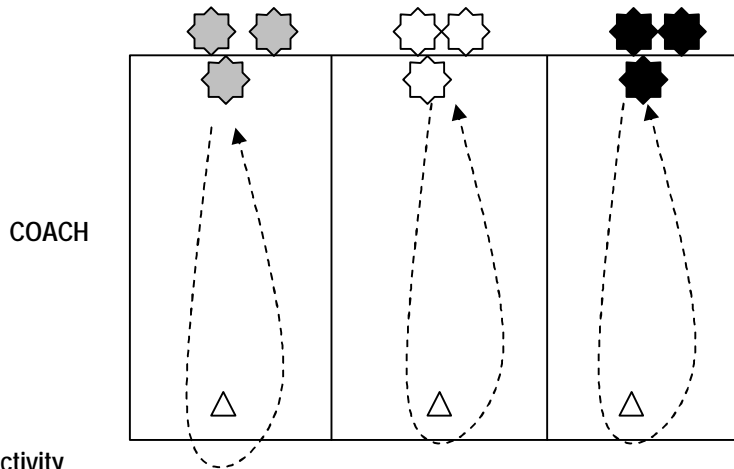
Coaching Points

- Close Control: keep the ball within 2 – 3 feet in front.
- Running with the Ball Technique: Use the outside of laces to strike the ball, NO TOES!

Activity 7: Don't Lose Your Hat - Running with the Ball Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 5 x 20 yards per group.
- Split players into groups of three. Players all start at one end of the area.
- Each player must have a soccer ball.
- Each group is given a cone: flat discs are best.



Activity

- Players can only dribble when the coach shouts 'GO'.
- Upon the shout of 'GO' one player from each team, WITH THE CONE ON THEIR HEADS, should race down towards the cone, dribble around the cone and back to their ground.
- They tag their partner, pass them the cone and they do the same.
- Continue until all the team is back.
- Start with allowing players to use their hands to keep the cone on their heads. Progress to no hands!

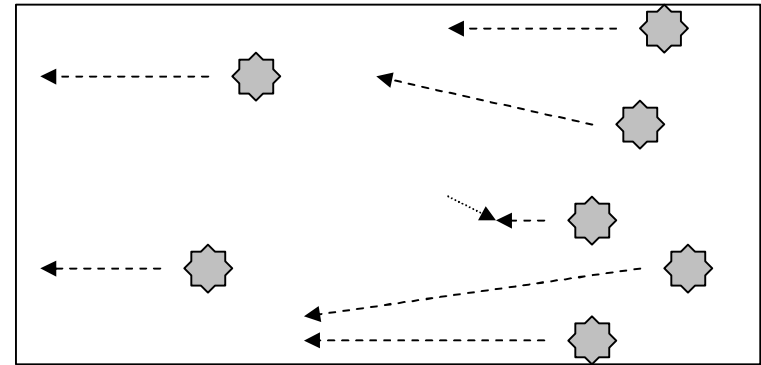
Coaching Points

- Close Control: keep the ball within 2 – 3 feet in front.
- Running with the Ball Technique: Use the outside of laces to strike the ball, NO TOES!

Activity 8: British Bulldog – Running with the Ball Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards.
- Each player needs a soccer ball.
- Place players on one end line with the coach in the center.



Activity

The coach is the bulldog and is trying to stop the postmen from getting to his house. The players job (postmen) is to get to the opposite side of the area without the coach (bulldog) stealing the soccer ball. If the coach steals a soccer ball and kicks it out of the area, that player becomes a bulldog and helps steal player's soccer balls. Continue until there are no postmen left.

NOTE: Allow players through the first couple of times. Just apply pressure so player's dribble away from you and into the open space.

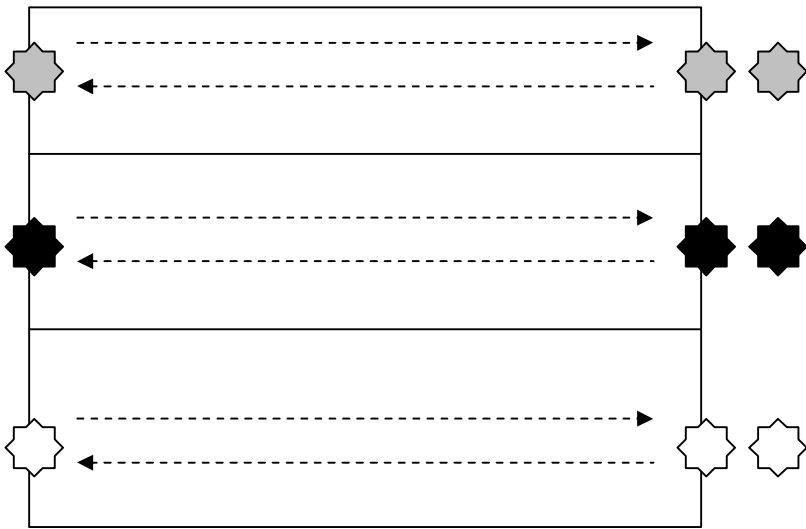
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique: keep the ball close so the bulldog cannot steal it.
- Cover ground as quickly as possible.
- Dribble into open space away from the bulldog.
- Use the single fake move to beat the bulldog.

Activity 11: Dribbling and Running with the Ball

Organization

- Area: 5 x 20-yards per group.
- Each player needs a ball.
- Place players into groups of three. Place players as shown.
- ACTIVITY:
 1. Players dribble back across the area to their teammate who takes over and dribbles back. Continue.
 2. Players make zigzags while dribbling across the area.
 3. Make into a relay race and add competition.



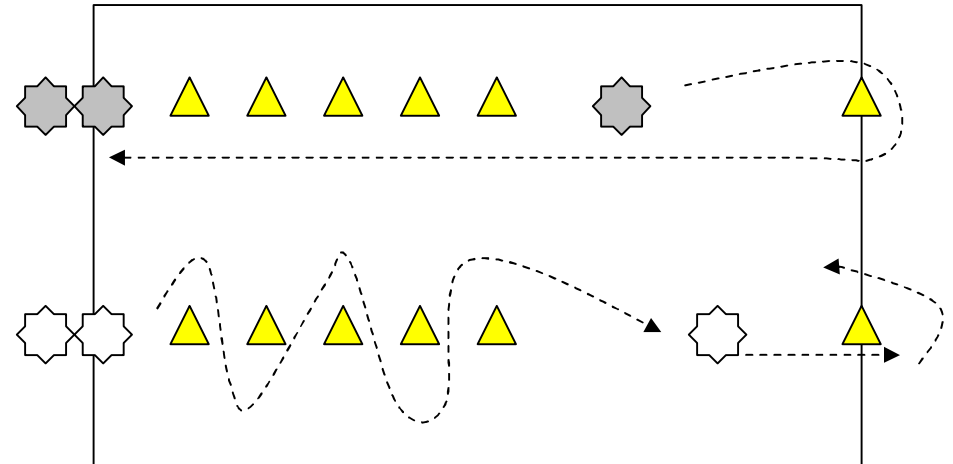
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Running with the Ball Technique.

Activity 12: Dribbling and Running with the Ball

Organization

- Area: Place 5 Cones 1-yard apart and 1 cone 10-yards.
- Split players into groups of 3 or 4. Each player needs a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Treat as a relay race. First player dribbles in and out of the cones then around the far cone and back to the group. The next player receives the ball and does the same. Continue until all players are finished.



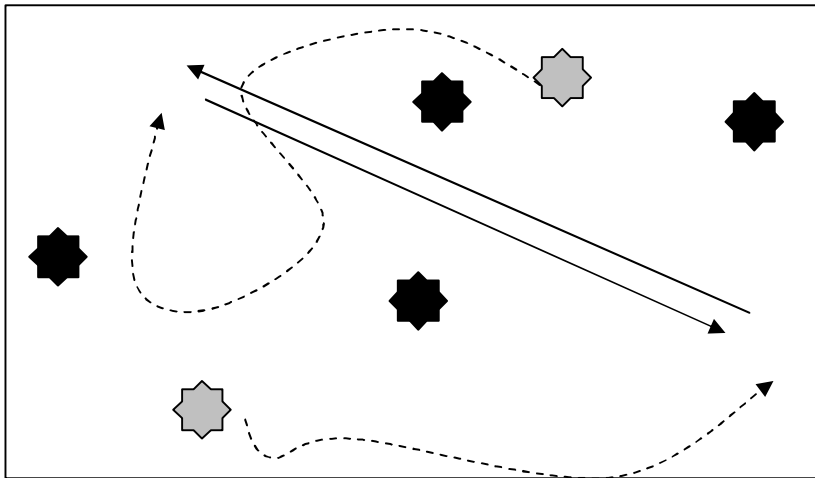
Coaching Points

- Dribbling technique.
- Use the inside and outside of the foot to dribble in and out of the cones.
- Running with the ball technique when in space.
- Accelerate out of the cones.
- Dribble at game speed.

Activity 13: Dribbling Technique

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards.
- Place players into pairs. Each player has a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Players have to dribble around the area, not in a circle, and try to stay as far away from their partner as possible. When the coach shouts 'SWITCH' players must stop their ball and go to retrieve their partners ball. As soon as they get their partner's ball they continue to dribble.
- VARIATION: Coach should try to trick players by shout 'SWITCH' in quick succession.



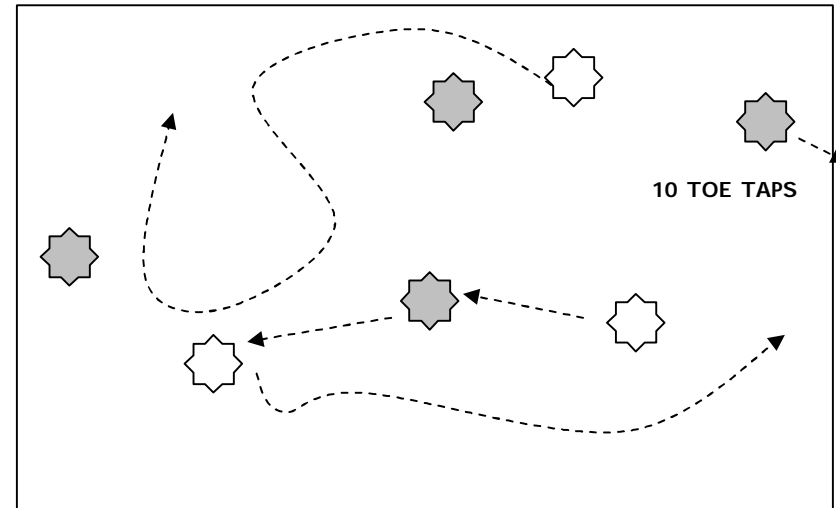
Coaching Points

- Dribble Technique. Dribble at game speed.
- Head Up: Keep your eyes on your partner when dribbling.
- Keep the ball close at all times.
- React to the coaches' direction as quickly as possible.
- Cover ground as quick as possible.

Activity 14: Dribbling and Running with the Ball Technique

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards.
- Each player has a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Basically a game of TAG. Players dribble around the area and try to tag other players. If a player is tagged three times they must dribble to the sideline and complete ten toe taps on the ball.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition. Players must count how many times they are tagged. Player with the least amount wins!



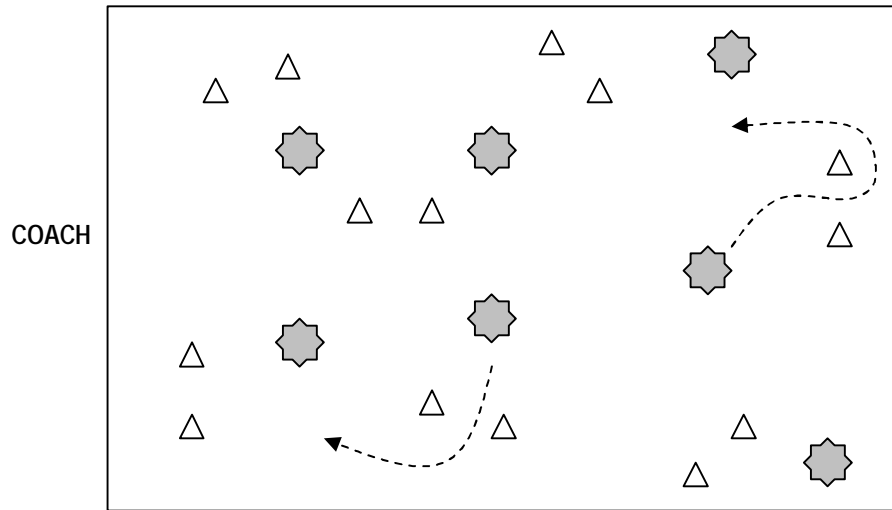
Coaching Points

- Dribble Technique in tight areas.
- Running with the ball technique to attack the space.
- Head Up: to avoid other players.
- Keep the ball close at all times.
- Cover ground as quick as possible.

Activity 15: Dribbling & Turning Techniques

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with multiple gates placed randomly around the area.
- Each player needs a soccer ball.



Activity

1. Players dribble around freely inside the area. When a player gets to a gate they must accelerate through.
2. Players go for 30 seconds and count how many gates they can dribble through.
3. When a player gets to a gate they turn and dribble away.

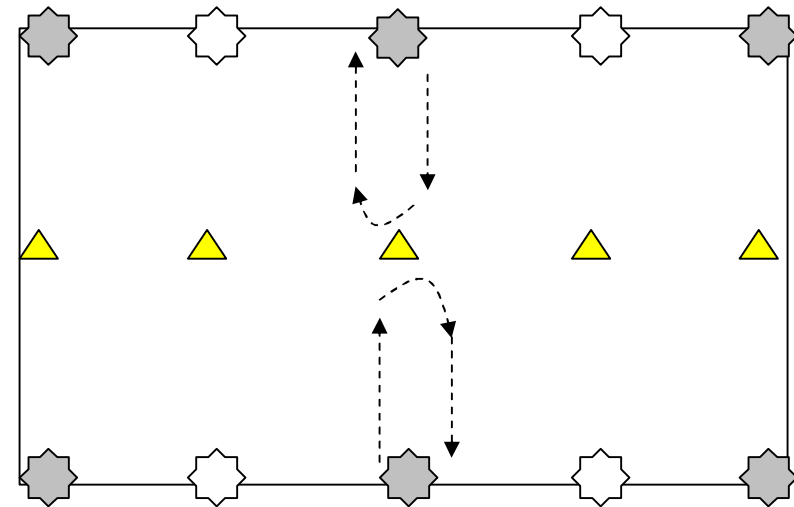
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Turning Technique: You can designate either the Inside Hook or the Sole Turn.
- Emphasis is on close control so players can turn once they get to the gate.
- Acceleration either through the gate or out of the turn.

Activity 16: Dribbling and Turning

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yards with a line of cones down the center.
- Group players into pairs. Each player has a ball.
- Place players on opposite lines.
- ACTIVITY: Players dribble into the center cone, as they reach the cone they execute a turn and dribble back to the line.
- VARIATIONS: Players begin by walking through the Activity, then progress to a jog and finally at full speed. Add different turns.



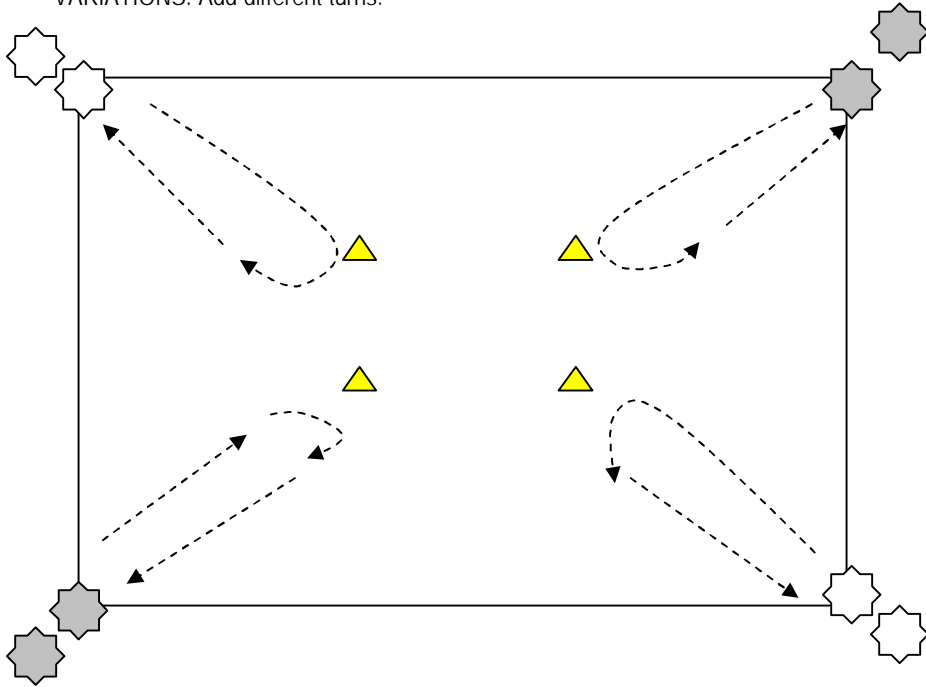
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Turning Techniques.
- Players must keep the ball close when dribbling in order to execute turns successfully.
- Look at the ball when executing a turn.

Activity 17: Dribbling and Turning Techniques

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards with a 5 x 5-yard area in the center.
- Place players into four groups. One ball per group.
- Place a group in each corner of the area.
- ACTIVITY: Players must dribble towards a cone, turn and then pass back to their corner. Continue.
- VARIATIONS: Add different turns.



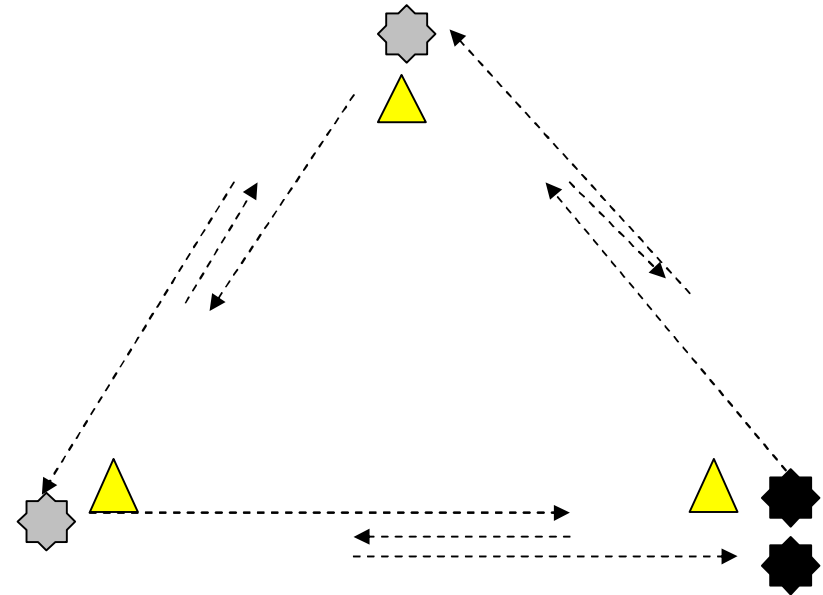
Coaching Points

- Dribbling and Turning Technique.
- Dribble at game speed.
- Turn sharply and at game speed.
- Accelerate out of turns.

Activity 18: Dribbling and Turning Techniques

Organization

- Area: 15 x 15-yard triangle.
- Place players into groups of four.
- One ball per group.
- Station players as shown.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts at the cone with two players. The first player dribbles to the center of the cones, executes two turns and dribbles to the next cone. The player on the cone takes the ball and does the same. Continue.



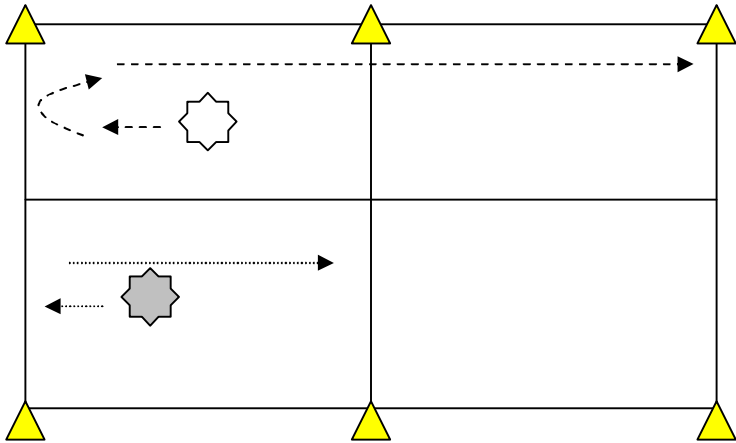
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Turning Technique.
- Turn Sharply.

Activity 19: Dribbling and Turning Techniques

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards split into two.
- Group players into pairs, one ball between two.
- ACTIVITY: Players stay in their own lane and cannot leave that during the game. The player with the ball must try to lose their partner and stop the ball on one of the three lines to score a point. Players go for one minute, take a brake, switch the ball and then go again. Treat as a competition between the two players.



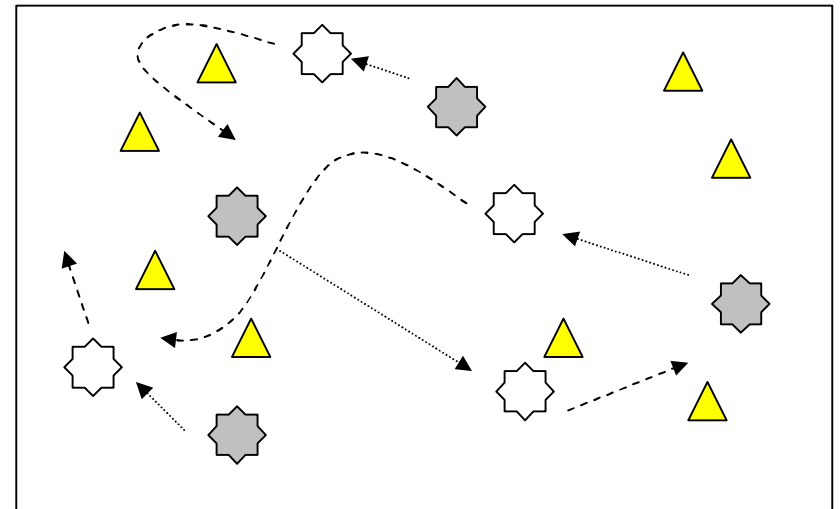
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique and Turning Technique.
- Ball must be kept under control in order to execute turns effectively.
- Players should use a combination of turns to lose their partner.
- Turn sharply.
- If in front of a defender don't stop and turn, speed beats defenders!
- Accelerate out of turns.

Activity 20: 1 v 1 Turning under Pressure

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards.
- Station small goals around the area randomly.
- Goals should be 2-yards apart.
- Place players into pairs, one ball between two.
- ACTIVITY: Players start back to back. Aim of the game is for the player with the ball to dribble through as many goals as possible. The defender cannot steal the ball but can block the goals.



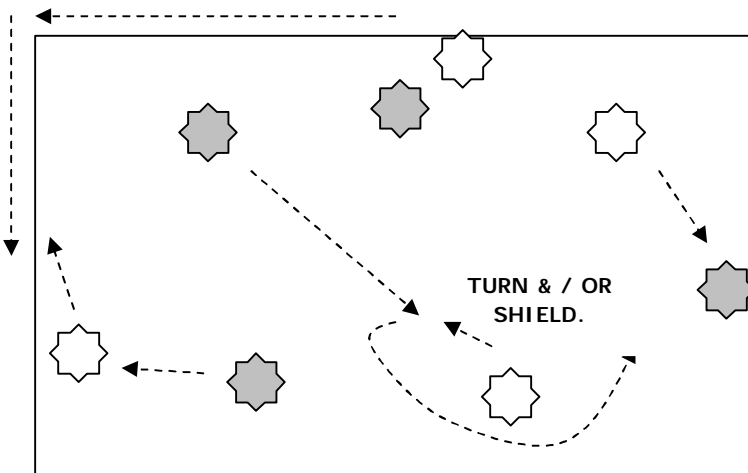
Coaching Points

- Dribbling and Turning Technique at game speed.
- Cover ground as quickly as possible.
- Use turns to change direction and lose players.
- Use a combination of turns to lose players.
- Turn sharply.

Activity 21: Turning Under Pressure and Shielding Technique

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards.
- Every player needs a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Players start by finding a space inside the area. Aim of the game is to dribble around the area and knock other players soccer balls out of the area. If your ball is knocked out, you must retrieve it and dribble around the area until the game is over. The last player with the ball wins.
- VARIATIONS: Split players into two teams. Make a competition between teams. Which every team has the ball the longest wins.



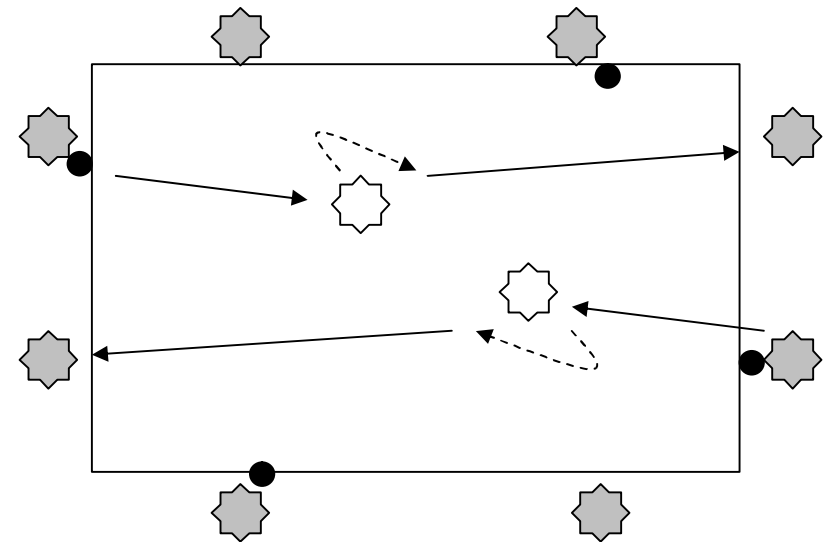
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Turning technique at game speed.
- Use turns to change direction and lose players.
- Use a combination of turns to lose players.
- Shielding Technique.

Activity 22: Receiving, Dribbling and Turning

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yards.
- Station 2 players on each side of the square, servers, and 2 players inside.
- Every other server has a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the players in the center calling to receive a pass. They must then take a touch to receive, turn and then pass to an open server.
- After one minute switch the players in the center.



Progression

1. Add a defender. Players have two options; one is to turn and pass (when no pressure is there), two is to pass back to the server (when under pressure).

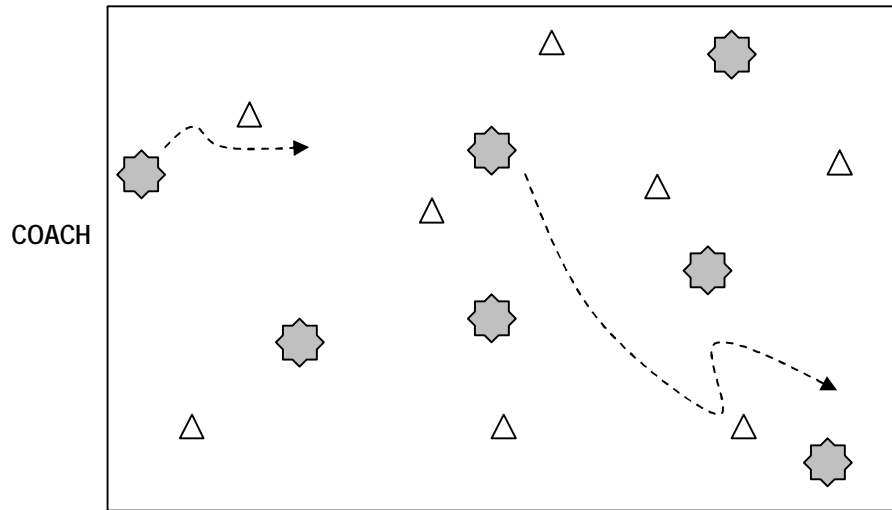
Coaching Points

- Receiving the ball technique.
- Turning Technique / at game speed.
- Decision-Making: When to turn and when to pass back.

Activity 23: Dribbling & Moves Techniques

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with cones placed randomly around the area.
- Each player needs a soccer ball.



Activity

1. Players dribble around freely inside the area, when the coach shouts 'STOP' all the players must stop the ball. If a player doesn't have control they must do a fun punishment.
2. Players dribble around the area, when they get to a cone they stop the ball do a single fake move and dribble away.
3. Progress to a player not stopping. They just do a move when they get to the cone.

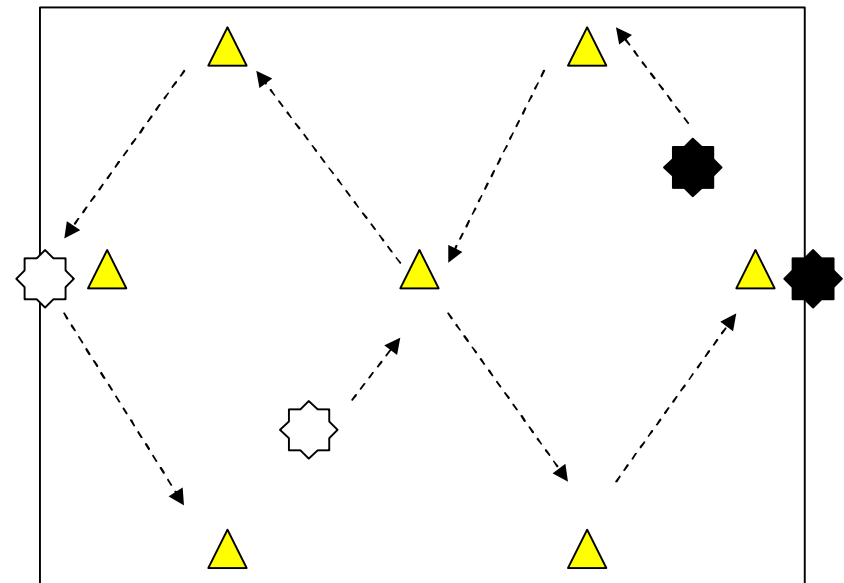
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Single Fake Technique.
- Emphasis on close control so players can stop the ball or do a move when they get to a cone.

Activity 24: Dribbling and Moves

Organization

- Area: Station cones 20-yards apart in the pattern shown below.
- Station a group of players at either end. Every player needs a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Players must dribble towards a cone do a move and then dribble to the next cone. Players should continue through the whole course and back to the start.
- VARIATIONS: Players should start by walking through the Activity, progress to jogging and finally full speed. Change the move / fake to be executed after the players are comfortable.



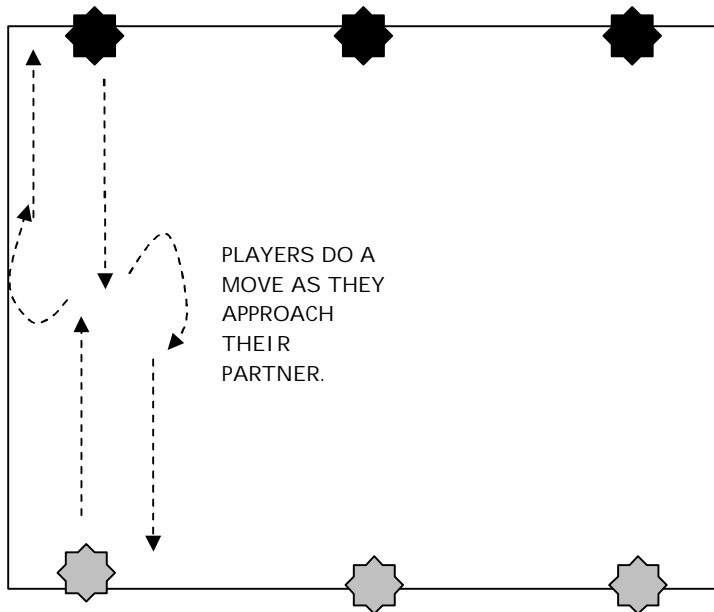
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Moves and Fakes.
- Keep the ball close when dribbling in order to execute moves correctly.

Activity 25: Dribbling and Moves

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yards.
- Group players into pairs.
- Place players on opposite lines. Each player must have a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Players dribble into the center, as they reach their partner they execute a move and dribble to the opposite line. Continue.
- VARIATIONS: Players should walk through the Activity, then progress to jogging and finally full speed.



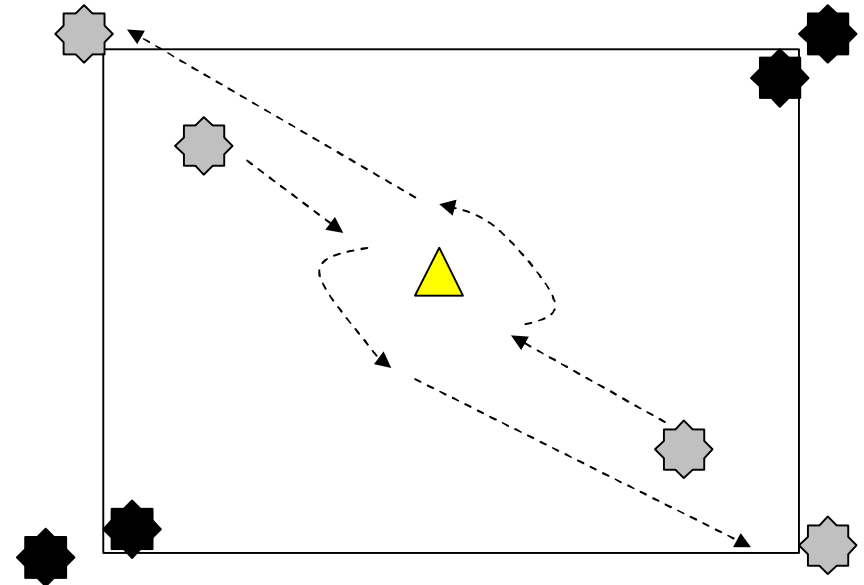
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Moves and Fakes.
- Execute the move roughly 2-yards away from partner.
- Keep the ball close when dribbling in order to execute moves correctly.

Activity 26: Dribbling and Moves

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yard with a cone in the center.
- Split players into groups of four.
- Place two players from each group in opposite corners of the area.
- ACTIVITY: Players should dribble into each other do a move and then dribble to the opposite corner.
- VARIATIONS: Progress players from walking to full speed. Continue through all moves.



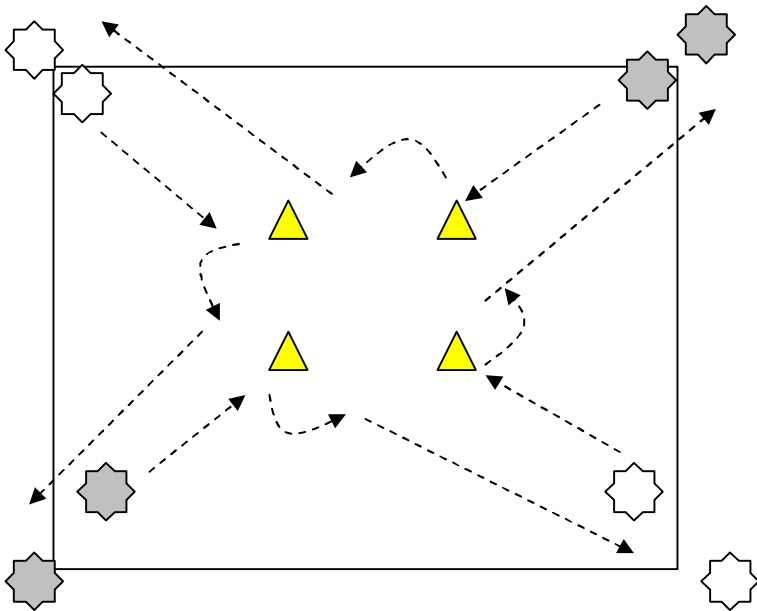
Coaching Points

- Dribbling technique.
- Moves and fakes.
- Players should keep the ball close when dribbling in order to execute moves correctly.

Activity 27: Dribbling and Moves

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards with a 5 x 5-yard area in the center.
- Place players into four groups.
- Each player needs a ball.
- Place a group in each corner of the area.
- ACTIVITY: Players must dribble towards a cone, do a move, and come out of the move to the right then dribble to the next station.
- VARIATIONS: Players do a move and come out to the left. Continue adding different moves.



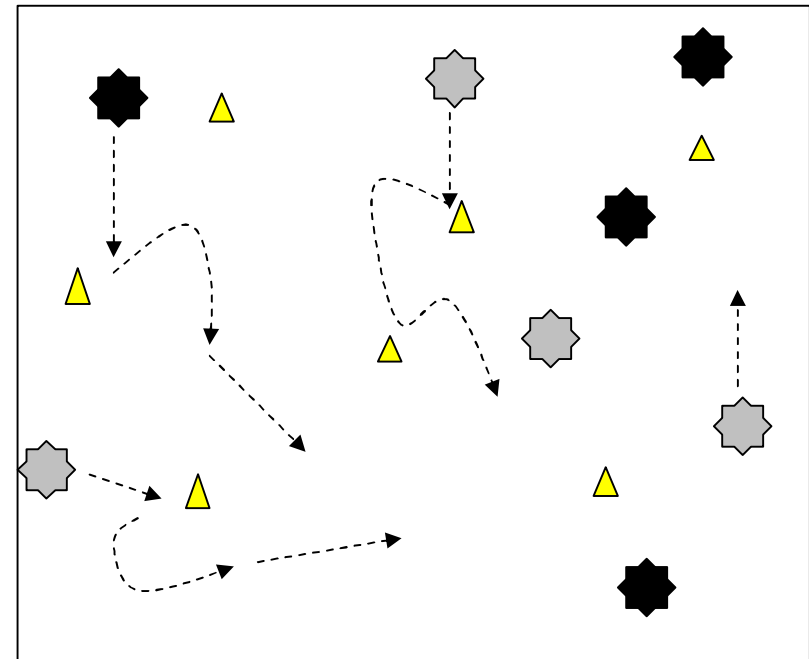
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Moves and Fakes Technique.
- Dribble at game speed and Accelerate out of turns.

Activity 28: Dribbling and Moves

Organization

- Area: 40 x 40-yard. Place cones randomly throughout the area.
- Each player needs a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Players dribble around the area, when they approach a cone they do a move and accelerate out into space. Continue.
- VARIATIONS: Run through all moves and fakes.



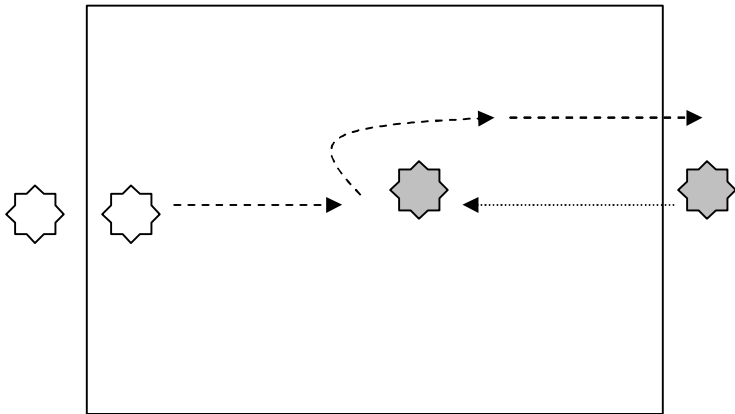
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Moves and fakes.
- Combinations of moves.
- Acceleration out of moves.

Activity 29: 1 v 1: Dribbling and Moves Under Pressure

Organization

- Area: 10 x 15-yards.
- Place players on either side of the area. One player acts as a defender and the other an attacker.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the defender passing into the attacker. The defender cannot enter the area until the attacker has touched the ball. To score the attacker must beat the defender and get the end line. Defenders score by winning possession and dribbling past the opposite end line. Players change sides once the ball is dead. Continue.



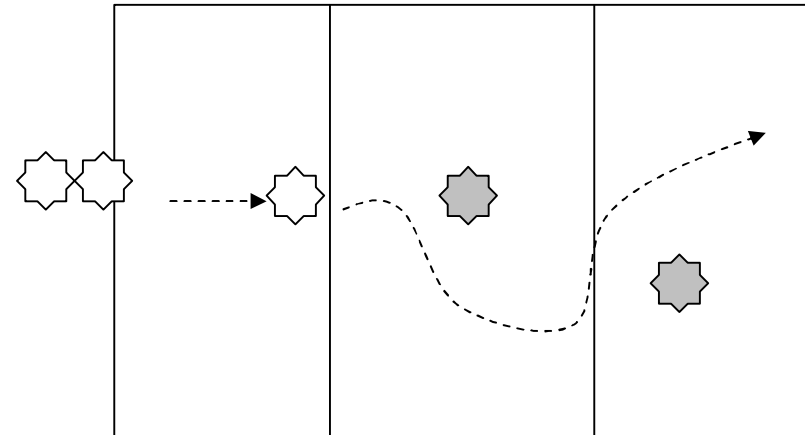
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Moves and fakes. Over exaggerate each move.
- Attack the defender at speed.
- Move forward to receive the ball.
- Move should be done roughly two yards away from the defender.
- Always keep the ball moving. If ball stops it allows defenders to steal.

Activity 30: 1 v 1 v 1: Dribbling and Moves Under Pressure

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards, split into three.
- Station a defender in the last two areas.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the attacker dribbling into the first area. To score an attacker must beat both the defenders and get to the end line. Once a defender is beaten they are not allowed to recover.



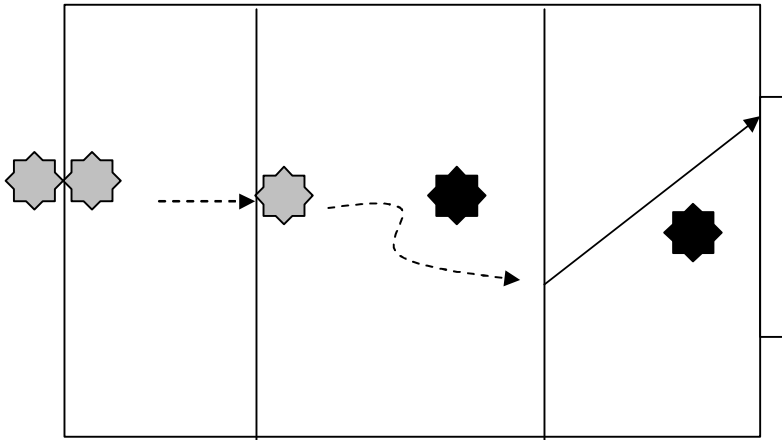
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Moves and fakes.
- Attackers should dribble at speed to beat the defenders.
- Use moves to beat defenders. Fake defenders by over exaggerating moves.
- Once you have beaten the first defender get your head up and look for the second.
- Do the moves roughly 2-yards in front of defenders.
- Accelerate out of moves.

Activity 31: 1 v 1 v GK: Dribbling, Moves and Shooting

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yard split into three with a goal at the end.
- Station a defender in the second area and GK in the goal.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the attacker dribbling into the first area. To score an attacker must beat the defender and shoot past the GK.



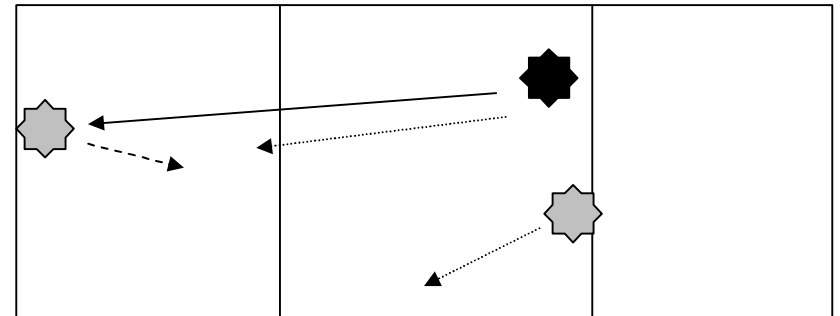
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Moves and fakes.
- Attackers should dribble at speed to beat the defenders.
- Use moves to beat defenders. Fake defenders by over exaggerating moves.
- Once you have beaten the first defender get your head up and look for the GK position.
- Do the moves roughly 2-yards in front of defenders.
- Pass the ball into the corners of the goal past the GK.

Activity 32: 2 v 1 Dribbling to Penetrate

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yard, split into 3 areas.
- Split players into groups of 3, 2 attackers and 1 defender.
- 1 attacker starts on the end line, the other attacker and the defender start on the second line (as shown).
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the defender passing into the attacker. Attackers score by getting the ball past the defender and being in control past the opposite end line.



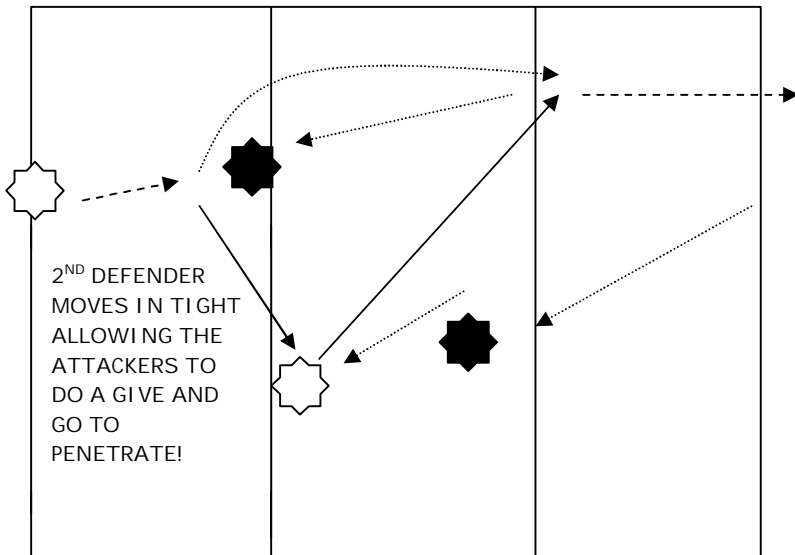
Coaching Points

1. Individual Penetrating Run: 1st attacker uses 2nd attacker as a decoy.
2. Overlap: 2nd attacker makes an overlapping run around 1st attacker.
3. 1 – 2 / give and go passing combination between the two attackers.
4. Penetrating Through Pass: 2nd attacker makes a run forward / behind the defender and receives a pass from the 1st attacker.
5. Take Over: Player without the ball makes a run towards their teammate who stops the ball and runs over it. 2nd player picks up the ball and dribbles.
6. Double Pass: Players pass back and forth twice. On the last pass one player makes a forward run and is found with a penetrating through pass.

Activity 33: 2 v 2: Dribbling to Penetrate

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yard, split into 3 areas.
- Split players into groups of 4, 2 attackers and 2 defenders.
- 1 attacker starts on the end line, 1 defender starts on the opposite end line and the other attacker and defender start on the second line.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the defender on the second line passing into the attacker opposite. Attackers score by moving the ball past the end line, must be in control. Defenders score by winning the ball and moving it past the opposite end line.



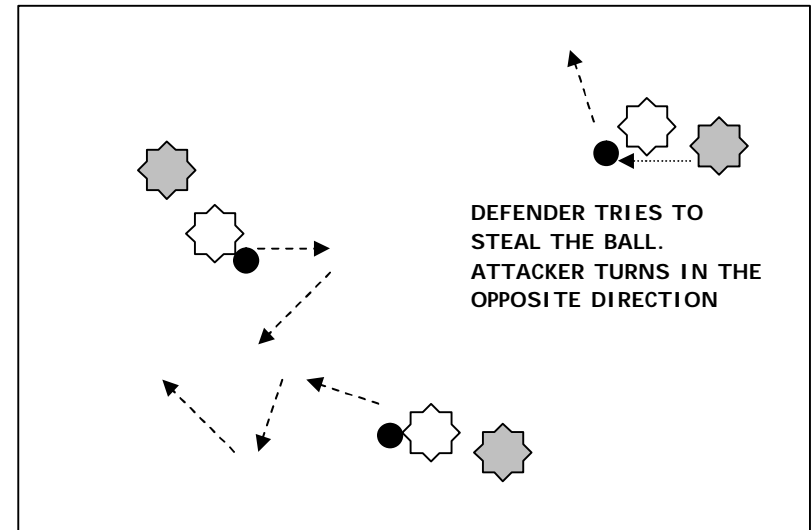
Coaching Points

- Attack at speed.
- Communication between the two attackers.
- All attacking options from Activity 14.

Activity 34: Shielding the Ball Technique

Organization

- Area: Unrestricted.
- Place players into pairs.
- One ball between two.
- ACTIVITY: Players start back to back, one player with a ball, the other without. When the coach starts the Activity, the player with the ball has to keep possession for as long as possible by shielding. Switch roles when all players have lost possession.
- VARIATIONS: Use as a team game. The team that keeps possession of the balls the longest wins.



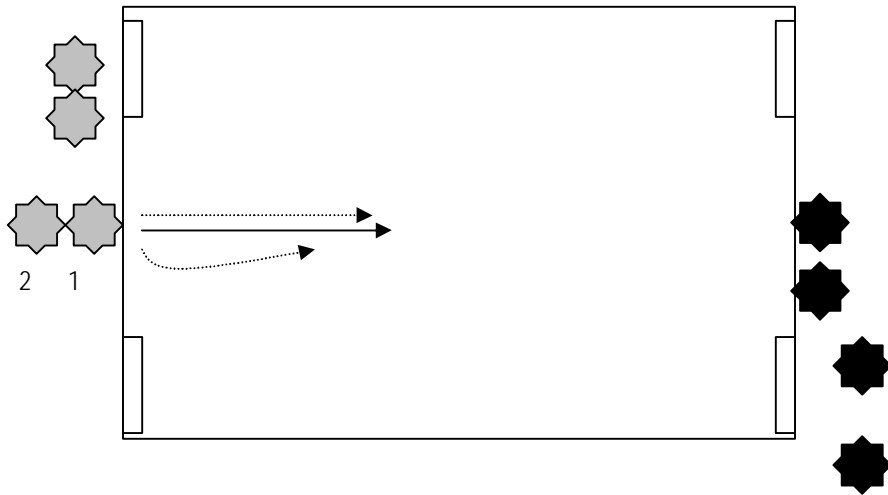
Coaching Points

- Shielding the Ball Technique.

Activity 35: 1 v 1 Shielding the Ball and Turning Defenders

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with small goals in each corner.
- Place players into pairs, one ball between two.
- Place two groups at either end of the grid (as shown).
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with player 2 standing behind player 1. Player 2 passes the ball through player 1's legs and into the area. Player 1 has to score in the goals at the end they started. Player 2 must try to win the ball and score in the opposite goals. Once the ball is dead the opposite group goes.



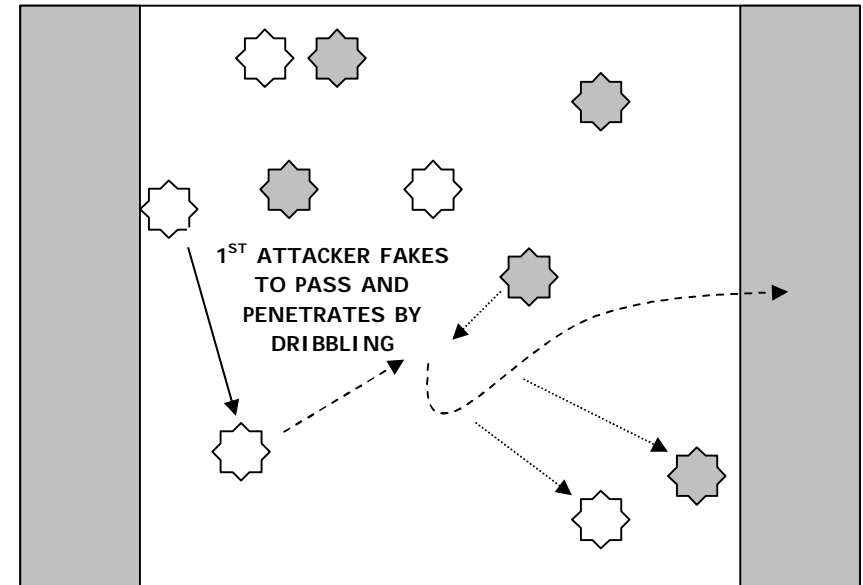
Coaching Points

- Shielding the Ball Technique. Use your body to shield the ball (side on) and use the sole of your foot to move and keep the ball away from the defender.
- Use fakes and turns to get around turn the defender. Use a Step Over or Drag Back to fake the defender then use your body to shield the ball as you turn.

Small Sided Game 36: Dribbling to Penetrate

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with a 5 x 20-yard area at each end.
- Split players into two teams.
- ACTIVITY: Teams score by dribbling and stopping the ball in the opposing team's area. Players cannot enter their own end zone. If a team scores they keep possession and attack in the opposite direction.
- VARIATION: Once a team scores the opposing team gets the ball.



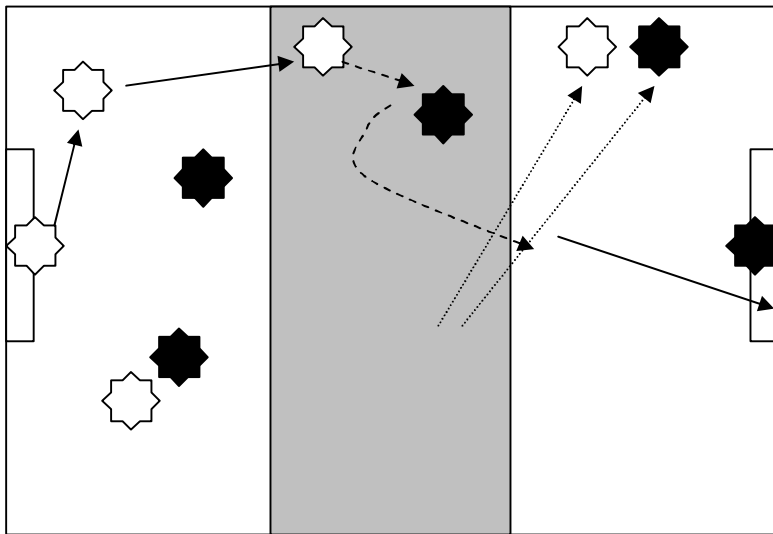
Coaching Points

- Dribbling and Moves Techniques.
- Encourage penetrating with the dribble.
- Running with the ball technique into open space.
- Head up when dribbling to see options, open teammates or shooting opportunities.

Small Sided Game 37: Dribbling to Penetrate

Organization

- 20 x 30-yard area with a 10 x 20-yard area in the center.
- Split players into two teams with goalkeepers.
- ACTIVITY: Regular scrimmage BUT when players are inside the center area they cannot pass and must dribble their way out. Players can pass into the area and over the area.



Progression

- Take away the center area but still encourage dribbling whenever possible.

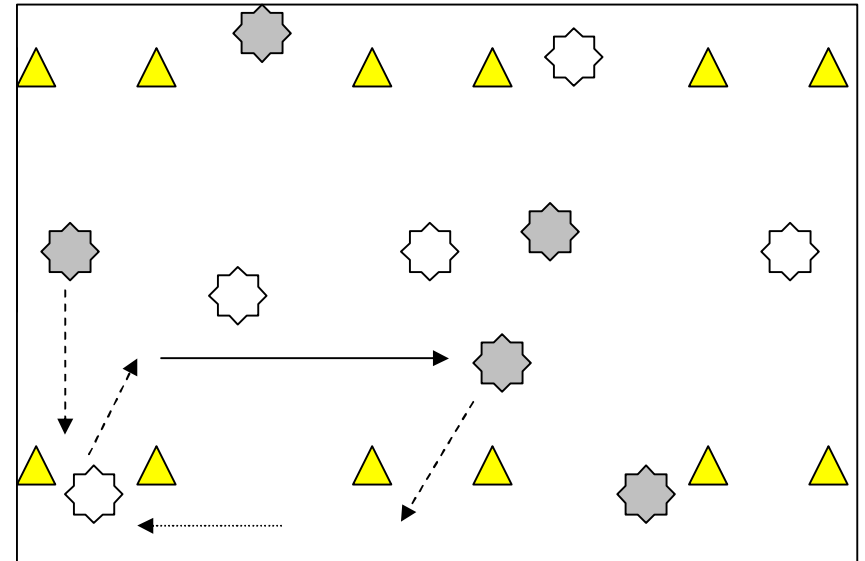
Coaching Points

- Dribbling and Moves Techniques.
- Encourage attacking play, encourage players to run at and beat defenders.
- Dribble into open space.
- Head up when dribbling to see options, open teammates or shooting opportunities.
- Give support behind the line of the ball.

Small Sided Game 38: Dribbling to Keep Possession

Organization

- Area: 40 x 40-yards with six 5-yard goals, as shown.
- Place players into two teams.
- ACTIVITY: To score players have to dribble through any goal. Not the same goal consecutively.



Progression

1. Teams can only score in one set of goals, on one side of the area.

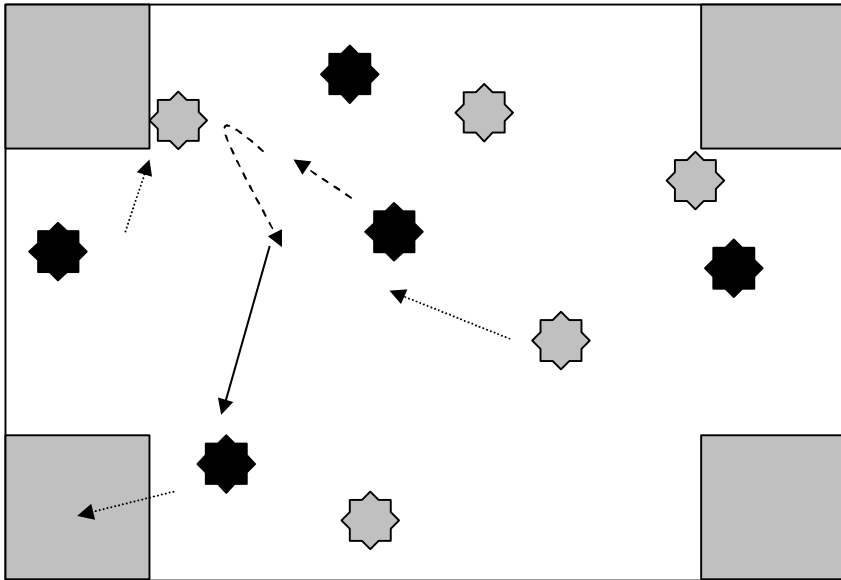
Coaching Points

- Dribbling Technique.
- Turning Technique.
- Encourage players to spread out when in possession.
- Running with the ball technique to attack the open space.
- Use turns to change point of attack and keep possession.

Small Sided Game 39: Dribbling to Keep Possession

Organization

- Area: 40 x 40-yards. Place four 5 x 5-yard areas in each corner.
- Place players into two teams.
- ACTIVITY: Players score by dribbling into a corner area and stopping the ball. You cannot score in the same area consecutively.



Progression

1. Designate two goal areas in opposite corners for each team.

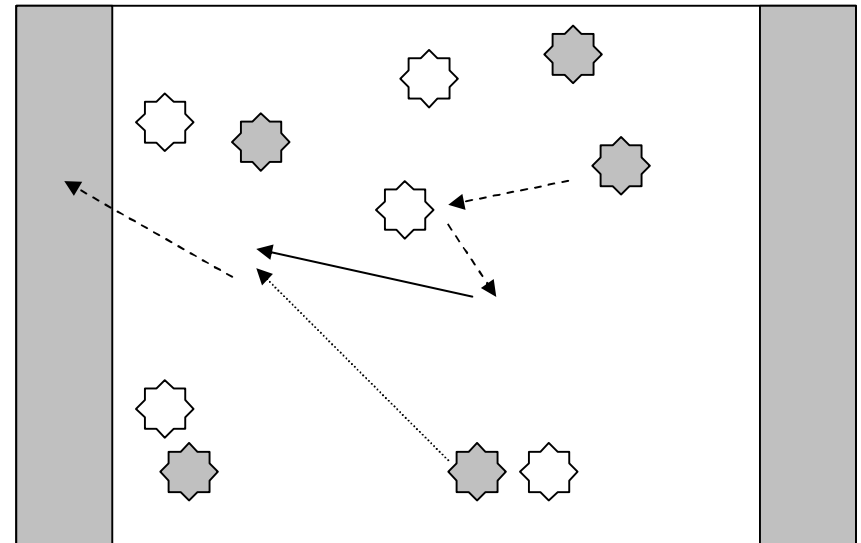
Coaching Points

- Use turns to change direction and change point of attack.
- Use moves to beat defenders.
- Dribble into open space.
- Encourage players to beat defenders and attack at speed.

Small Sided Game 40: Dribbling to Keep Possession

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with a 5 x 20-yard area at each end.
- Split players into two teams.
- ACTIVITY: Players from opposing team are not allowed inside each other's areas. To score a player must dribble across the line and stop the ball. Once a team has scored they attack the other line.



Progression

1. Only allow teams to score in one direction.

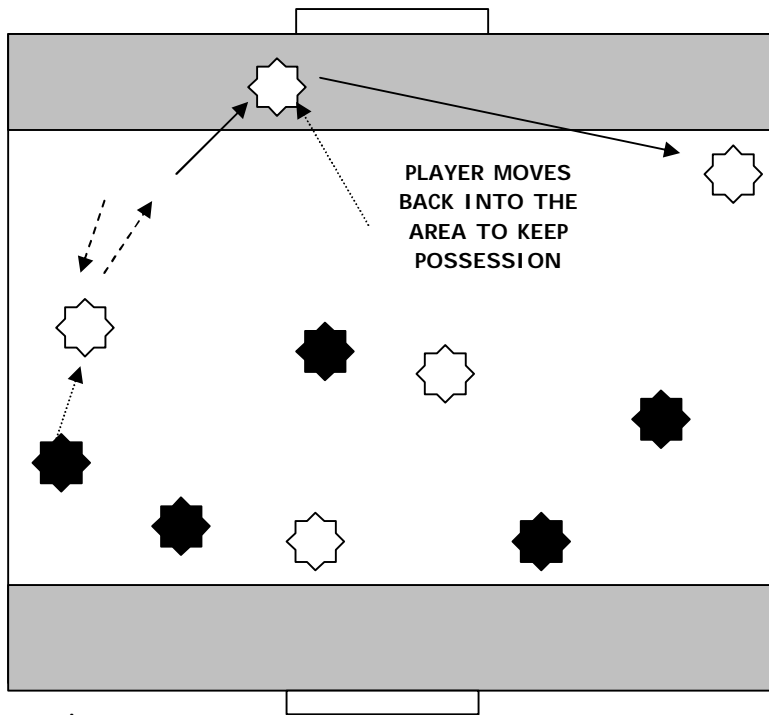
Coaching Points

- Dribbling and Turning Techniques.
- Use TURNS to keep possession
- Running with the ball technique to attack the open space.

Small Sided Game 41: Dribbling to Keep Possession

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with two 5 x 20-yard areas at each end and small goals.
- Split players into two teams.
- ACTIVITY: Players from opposing team are not allowed inside each other's areas. To score players must pass through the small goals.



Progression

1. Remove end zones.

Coaching Points

- Dribbling and Turning Techniques.
- Use TURNS to keep possession.

Passing & Receiving



Section

Players at this age have the body structure and mechanics to be able to pass and receiving the ball with the correct technique. Exposure and mastery of these techniques is very important for players at these ages. Without a good technical base, players will not be able to move onto the next layer of soccer; possession tactics, combination play, etc.

The technical aspects included in this section include

- Inside of the foot passing
- Outside of the foot passing
- Receiving the ball with the inside of the foot
- Receiving the ball with the outside of the foot
- Striking the ball with the laces
- Curling the ball
- Chipping the ball
- Receiving the ball out of the air with the thigh
- Receiving the ball out of the air with the chest

The tactical aspects included in this section include

- Role of the first attacker
- Role of the second attacker

The technical and tactical aspects mentioned above can be and should be taught in a fun activity, technical activity and game environments. In the section below you will find fun activities, technical activities, and small-sided games. When planning a session you should incorporate all these environments in a progression of easy to hard.

Inside of the Foot Passing Technique

Technique

- Look at the target.
- Approach the ball slight side on.
- Non-kicking foot should be placed next to the ball (roughly 8 – 10 cm away).
- Toes of the non-kicking foot should be pointing directly at the target.
- Knees bent.
- Kicking Foot: Ankle locked with toes pointing slightly up.
- Strike through the center of the ball.
- Follow through towards the target.
- Look at the ball as you strike it.
- Body leaning slightly forward (keeps the ball low).
- Hips and shoulders should be facing the target after passing the ball.

Best Used

- Accurate passing over the most distances.
- Shooting over short distances.
- Combined group play.
- Quick restarts.

Problem Areas

- Kicking foot is not straight.
- Toes of kicking foot are not pointed slightly up.
- Ankle is not locked.
- Non kicking foot is too close or too far away from the ball.
- Follow through is across the body instead of towards target.
- Ball is not struck through the center of the ball.
- Shoulders not facing the target.

Outside of the Foot Passing Technique

Technique

- Look at the target.
- Approach the ball straight on.
- Non-kicking foot should be placed next to the ball (roughly 8 – 10 cm away).
- Knees bent.
- Knee over the ball as you strike.
- Kicking Foot; Toes pointing down and slightly in with ankle locked.
- Strike through the center of the ball.
- Follow through towards the target.
- Look at the ball as you strike it.
- Body leaning slightly forward (keeps the ball low).

Best Used

- Best surface choice when passing off the dribble.
- Accurate passing over short distances.
- Guiding the ball into the goal from close range.
- Combined group play; releasing the ball for a give and go , and overlap.
- One touch passing when under pressure.

Problem Areas

- Player is reaching for the ball. Non-kicking foot is not placed close enough to the ball.
- Ankle is not locked when striking the ball.
- Non-kicking foot is too close to the ball.
- Ball is not struck through in the center.
- Shoulders not facing the target.
- Follow through of kicking foot is not to the target.

Receiving Ground Passes with Inside of the Foot

Technique

- Players should always be ready to receive the ball – ‘on your toes’.
- Players should be facing / square to where the ball is coming from.
- As the ball travels move into position.
- Judge pace of the ball.
- Non-kicking foot is used for balance and should be set as you receive the ball.
- Toes of the receiving foot should be slightly pointed up with a locked ankle.
- Receiving foot should first move towards the ball, then as the ball arrives cushion it by moving your receiving foot backwards, thus taking the pace of it.

Best Used

- Bring the ball under control from a low driven pass or a ground pass.
- Preparing the ball for passing, dribbling or shooting.
- Beating an oncoming / rushing defender.
- Taking you away from pressure / defender.
- Taking you into space.
- Laying the ball off for another player.

Problem Areas

- Player doesn't move into position to receive the ball quickly enough.
- Player does not cushion the ball and it bounces off too far.
- Player is flat footed and is not ready to receive the ball.
- Pace of the ball is under estimated.
- Non-kicking foot does not balance a player when receiving the ball.
- Player reaches for the ball with receiving foot and is off balance when receiving.

Receiving Ground Passes with Outside of the Foot

Technique

- Players should always be ready to receive the ball – ‘on your toes’.
- Players should be side ways on when receiving the ball with the outside of the foot. Shoulder on the side of receiving foot should be pointing at the player passing the ball.
- Judge pace of the ball.
- Non-kicking foot is used for balance and should be set as you receive the ball.
- Toes should be slightly pointed up on receiving foot.
- Receiving foot should be slightly of the ground.
- As the ball gets close point the toe of the receiving foot inwards, then as the ball strikes the foot guide it into the desired area.
- Pivot off the non-kicking foot.

Best Used

- Turning a defender who is closely marking.
- Shielding the ball from a defender who is marking closely.
- Setting a player for a pass and / or dribbling after turning.
- Prep touch for shooting.
- Taking you away from pressure / defender.
- Taking you into space.
- Laying the ball off for another player.

Problem Areas

- A player shoulders are square to the passing player and not side on.
- Player does not cushion the ball and it bounces off too far.
- Player is flat footed and is not ready to receive the ball.
- Pace of the ball is under estimated.
- Non-kicking foot does not balance a player when receiving the ball.

Passing Over Distance / Striking the Ball with Laces

Technique

- Approach to the ball, roughly 45%.
- Non-kicking foot should be placed at the side of the ball, roughly a foot away.
- Point the toes of your non-kicking foot at your target.
- Bend the knee of your non-kicking foot.
- Lean slightly over the ball.
- Strike the ball using the inside of your laces.
- Point your toes down and slightly with a locked ankle.
- Strike through the midline of the ball.
- Striking foot follows through the ball and lands slightly across your body.

Best Used

- Passing over distance.
- Shooting.
- Clearing the ball from defense.
- Switching Play.
- Free Kicks.

Problem Areas

- Non-kicking foot is placed too wide / result slicing the ball.
- Non-kicking foot is placed too close / dragging the ball wide.
- Non-kicking foot is placed behind / ball rises.
- Follow through is not towards target.
- Shoulders not facing the target.
- Player strikes the wrong part of the ball.

Chipping Technique

Technique

- Start with no run up / just swing your foot back and chip / progress to a run up.
- Angle of approach is almost straight.
- As you approach the ball slow your feet down.
- Step to the side and slightly behind the ball. Result – player slightly reaches for the ball and thus strikes the bottom panel of the ball.
- Don't strike the ball using your toes but use the front part of your laces.
- Strike the lowest part of the ball / should be able to hear the grass move as you strike the ball.
- Leg should follow through with your knee finishing high.
- Lean back slightly as you strike the ball.
- Cleats should finish facing down.
- Look for height over power.
- Eye on the ball as you strike it.

Best Used

- Shooting if goalkeeper is off his / her line.
- Through passes to forwards if defenders are in the way.
- General passes over defending team.

Problem Areas

- No follow through.
- Players use their toes / ball goes straight instead of up.
- Players lean over the ball.
- Don't strike the lowest part of the ball.
- Run up is too wide and players slice the ball.

Curling the Ball / Banana Pass

Technique

- Angle of approach = 45° angle.
- Use the inside of your big toe / inside of the foot to strike the ball.
- Non-kicking foot should be placed near to the ball 2 –3 inches
- Strike the ball off center.
- Lock your ankle with your toes pointing up when striking the ball.
- Bend Knee / especially non-kicking foot.
- Follow through should be high and across your body.
- Players should end facing their target.
- To make the ball rise, lean back slightly and strike the ball at its lowest point.

Best Used

- Passing over all distances.
- Shooting.
- Free Kicks.
- Passing around defenders

Problem Areas

- Players use wrong part of foot.
- Players strike the wrong part of the ball.
- Non-kicking foot too far away.
- No follow through.
- Approach is too straight.

Receiving Air Balls with the Thigh

Technique

- Be ready to receive the ball.
- Players should be facing / square to where the ball is coming from.
- Judge the pace and flight of the ball.
- Non-receiving foot is used for balance and should be set as you receive the ball.
- Thigh should start in the air.
- As the ball comes into contact with the thigh cushion it by moving the thigh back, thus taking the pace off the ball.

Best Used

- Bring down a driven or lofted pass.
- Setting yourself for a pass.
- Setting yourself for a volley or shot on goal.
- Taking you away from a pressuring defender.
- Taking you into space.

Problem Areas

- Player is not square when receiving and the ball bounces off the thigh and past the player.
- Pace of the ball is underestimated.
- Selection of controlling surface is incorrect due to misjudging the flight of the ball.
- Non-kicking foot does not balance a player when receiving the ball.
- Ball is not cushioned and it is miss-controlled.

Receiving Air Balls with the Chest

Technique

- Be ready to receive the ball.
- Face the direction where the ball is coming from.
- Judge pace and flight.
- Both feet are used for balance and should be set as you receive the ball.
- Receive the ball with the top of your chest.
- To direct the ball down: As the ball comes in contact with the chest, depress your chest and direct it to the floor.
- To set yourself for a volley: As the ball comes in push your chest out and arch your back punching the ball in the air ready to be struck.

Best Used

- Bring down a lofted pass.
- Setting yourself for a pass, shot or to dribble.
- Beating a defender.
- Taking you away from a defender.
- Taking you into space.
- Lay off for another player.

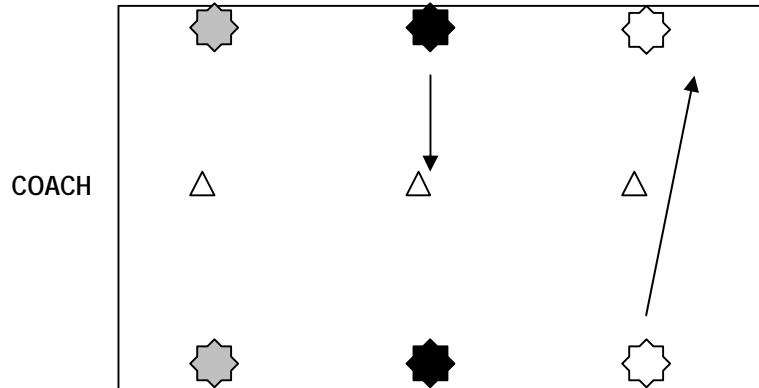
Problem Areas

- Ball bounces off too far.
- Pace of the ball is under estimated.
- Selection of controlling surface is incorrect; misjudge the flight of the ball.
- Player is not balanced when receiving the ball.
- Ball is not cushioned.

Activity 1: Passing Technique Fun Game

Organization

- 10 x 20 yard area with a cone in the center. Place a ball on the center cone.
- Place players into pairs, one ball between two.



Activity

- Aim of the game is for each player to try and knock the ball off the cone.
- Each pair should take it in turns to have a go.

Progressions

1. Increase the distance between the players and the cone.
2. Have players try with their weaker foot.

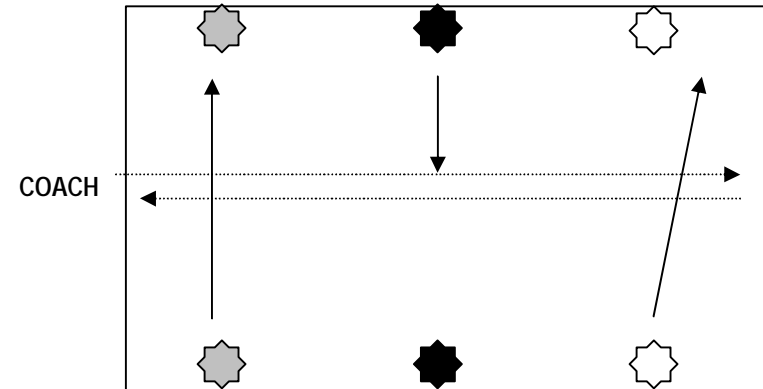
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Looking up before passing.
- Keep the ball on the ground.

Activity 2: Hit the Coach - Passing Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 10 x 20-yards.
- Place players into pairs, one ball between two.
- Space players roughly 10 yards apart.



Activity

- Object of the game is to hit the coach below the knee as he walks past.
- When the coach is not walking in past you continue to pass back and forth

Progression

- This time instead of hitting the coach, the coach is going to try and steal your soccer ball. If the coach steals your ball he has to through it as far as possible for the players to retrieve.

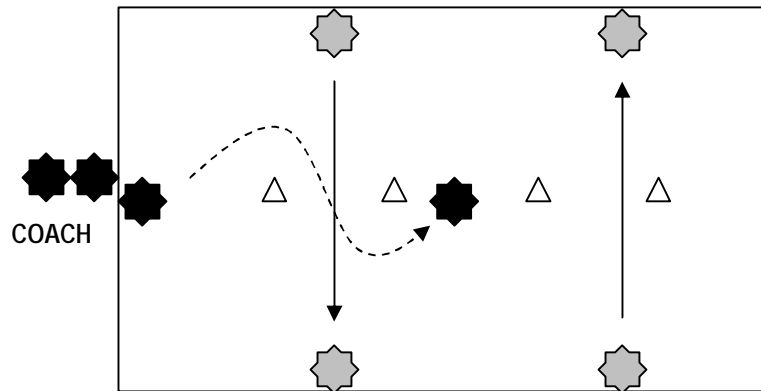
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Looking up before passing.
- Keep the ball on the ground you must hit the coach below the knee.
- Controlling the Ball Technique.

Activity 3: Hit & Miss – Your Teammates! Passing Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 30 x 20 yards. Stagger cones between the start and finish, as shown.
- Station players along either side of the area, at staggered points as shown.
- Each player needs a ball.
- Place two players at the start as shown.



Activity

- The two players who are stationed at the start have to dribble around the cones and get to the finish.
- Progress to players just running through the area, players are now harder to hit as they are moving faster through the area.
- The players stationed on the outside of the area have to try and hit the players dribbling below the knee, with the soccer ball, before they get to the finish.
- If they hit a player dribbling those player switch.

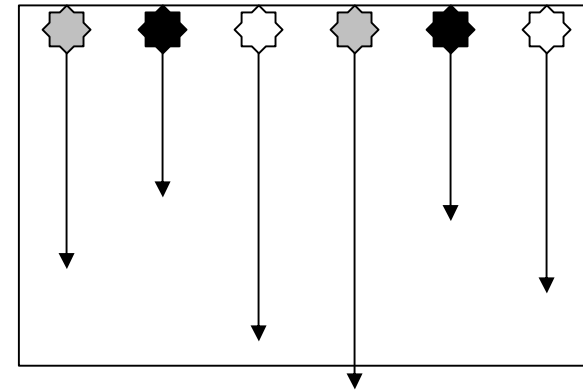
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Dribbling Technique.

Activity 4: Edge of the World - Passing Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 10 x 20-yards.
- Each player needs a ball.
- Place players on one end line.



Activity

Players start on their end line and pass the ball to the other end line. The players must run after their own ball and control it before it gets to the other line. Players can only strike the ball once when passing it. The challenge for the players is to get their ball as close to the line without going over it. Why not try it with a partner? The partners run to control the ball.

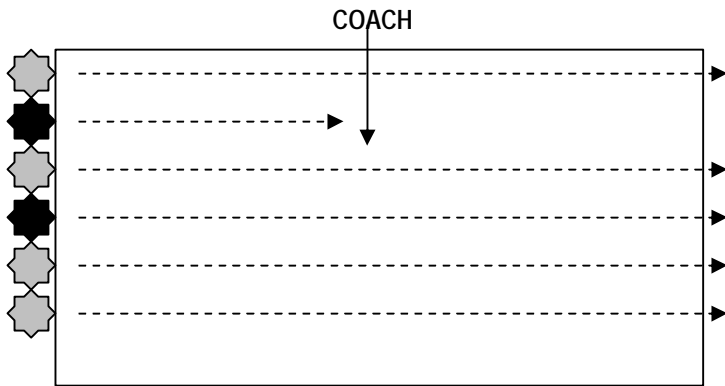
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Weight of the pass.
- Controlling the Ball Technique – Stop the ball with the sole of the foot.
- Cover ground as quickly as possible.

Activity 5: Cowboys & Indians

Organization

- Area: 10 x 20 yards.
- Station players on end line with soccer balls – Indians!
- Coach stands on one side line with a soccer ball – Cowboy!



Activity

- Upon the shout from the coach 'Indians are you ready' – players shout 'YES'
- As soon as the players have shouted 'YES' they begin dribbling, their goal is to get to the opposite end line without being hit.
- The 'Cowboys' job is to hit the 'Indians' with the soccer ball below the knee by passing the ball.
- If an 'Indian' is hit with the ball they become a 'Cowboy' and help the coach.
- Continue until only one player remains.

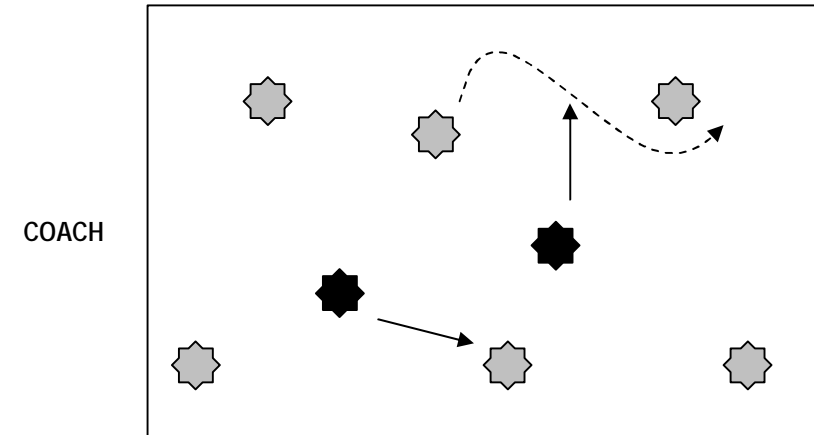
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Dribbling Technique.

Activity 6: It's a Knockout – Passing Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20 yards.
- Choose two players to be boxers.
- The rest of the players must spread out in the area.
- Every player needs a ball.



Activity

- Players must start by dribbling around the area.
- When coach shouts 'GO' the boxers are allowed to start.
- Boxers have to pass the ball onto player's legs (below the knee) to knock them out.
- Once a player has been knocked out they become a boxer and help knockout other players.
- Game is over when one player remains.

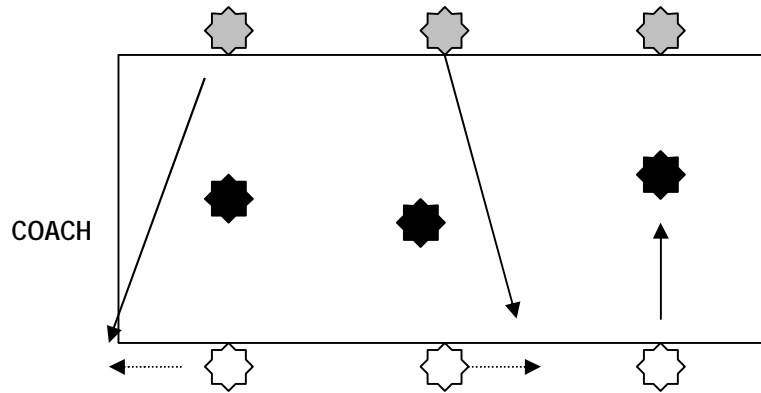
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Dribbling Technique.
- Boxers must dribble as close to players as possible before try to hit them with a pass.

Activity 7: Over the River - Passing Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 7 x 20 yards.
- Place players into 3 teams. Place a team in the center of the area and the other teams on opposite end lines.
- 1 ball per 3 players.



Activity

Object of the game is for the team in the center of the area to intercept as many soccer balls as possible. Reversely, the teams on the outside are trying to pass the ball successful across the river. Play 1 minute games. The team with the most successful passes wins. Rotate teams into the center of the area.

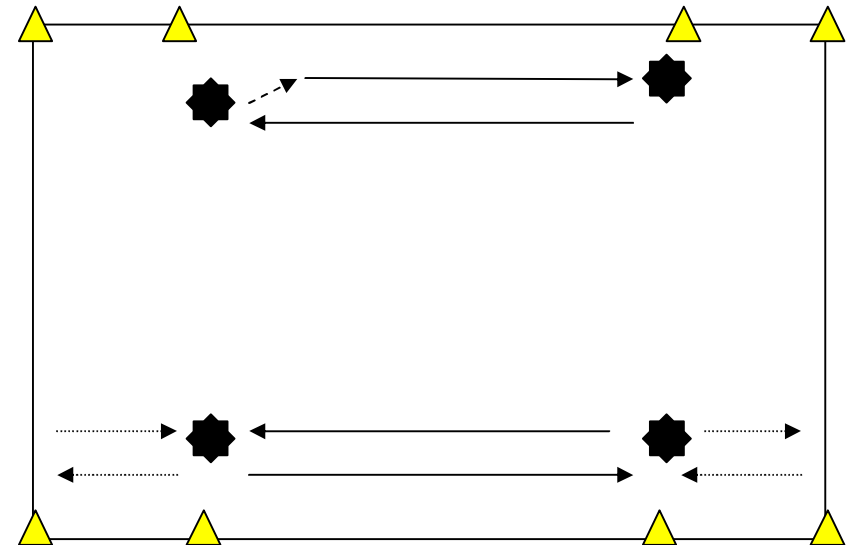
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Players should call for the ball.
- Players should pass the ball along their line before passing it across, creates space a channel for the ball to travel across the area.

Activity 8: Passing and Receiving the ball

Organization

- Area: 2 cones 10 yards apart with another 2 cones 2-yards behind.
- Place players into pairs. One ball between two.
- Place players on opposite cones.
- ACTIVITY: Players must pass back and forth. Each player must take at least two touches, one to control and one to pass.
- VARIATION: After players have passed they back up to the cone behind and move forward to receive the ball.



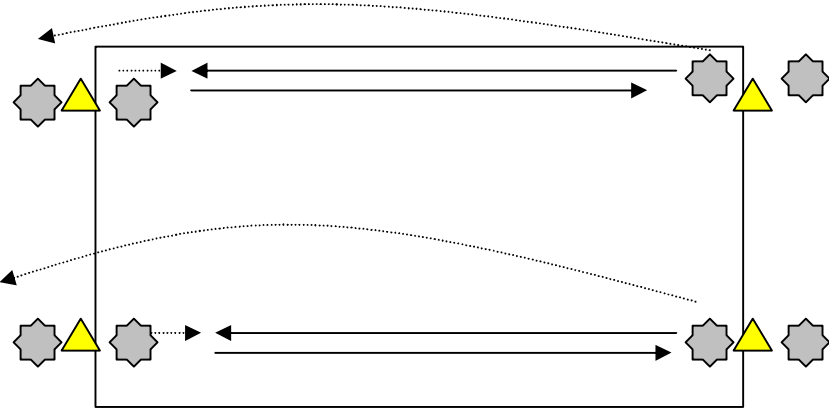
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Communication between players.
- Movement off the ball, backing up towards cone.
- Movement towards the ball isn't too fast.

Activity 9: Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: 2 cones 10 yards apart.
- Place players into groups of four.
- Place two players on each cone.
- One ball per group.
- ACTIVITY: Players pass across the area to a teammate and then follow their pass to the back of the opposite lines. Players must take at least two touches, one to receive and one to pass.
- VARIATIONS: Change the passing distance. 20-yards for greater passing distance. 5-yards for one touch passing.



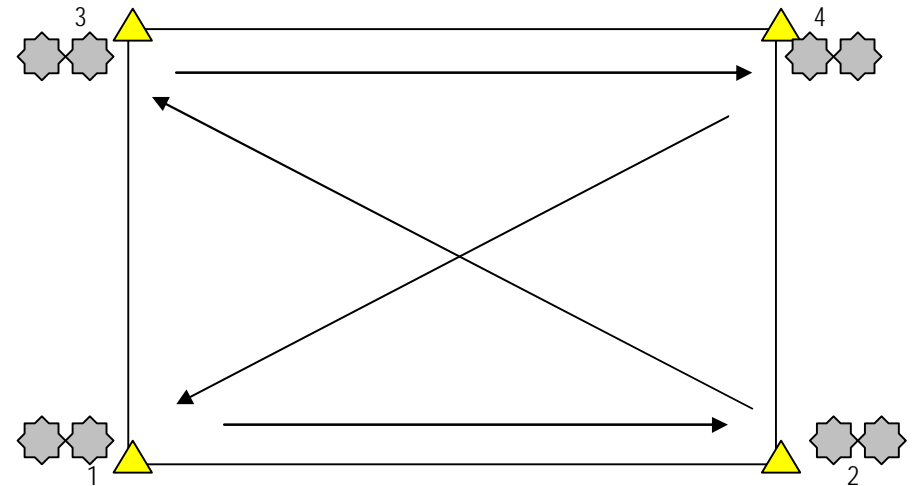
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Communication between players.
- Movement towards the ball to receive it, not at full speed.
- Movement off the ball is quick.

Activity 10: Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: 10 x 10-yards
- Number cones 1 through 4.
- One ball per group.
- Split players into four groups.
- Place two players on each cone.
- ACTIVITY: Passing Combination: Player 1 passes to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4 and 4 back to 1. Players should follow their pass to the back of the next line. Players should take at least two touches.
- VARIATION: Add a second ball.



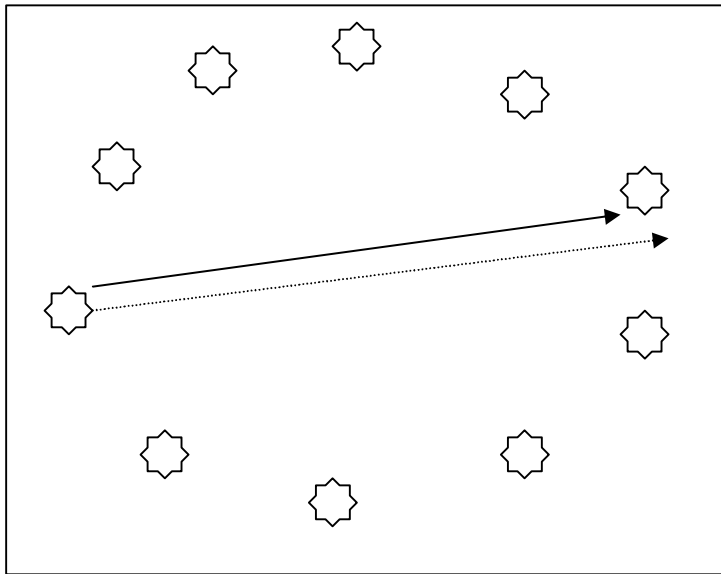
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving Technique. Take the ball in the direction you want to pass.
- Movement to receive the ball.
- Communication between players.

Activity 11: Circle Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: Players in a circle.
- Start with one ball.
- Players can pass to whom ever they want.
- ACTIVITY: Once a player has passed to another player they must follow their pass and take that position. Limit players to two touches.
- VARIATIONS: Add more soccer balls. Add a defender, it now becomes keep away.



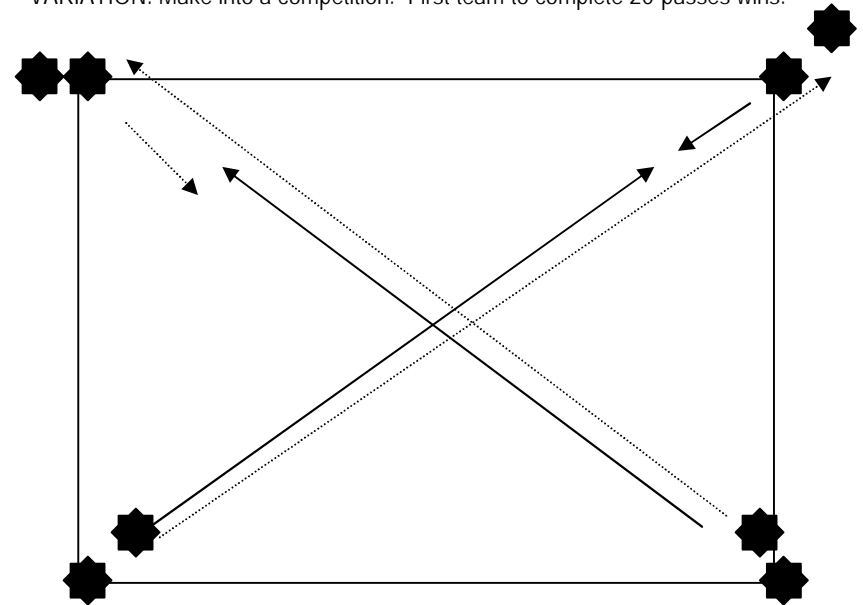
Coaching Points

- Passing and Receiving Technique.
- Good first touch into space.
- Communication between players.
- Good movement towards the ball.
- Good movement off the ball.

Activity 12: Passing and Receiving Under Pressure

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yard diamond.
- Place players into two groups.
- Place groups opposite each other.
- One ball per group.
- ACTIVITY: Players pass across the area to their teammate and follow their pass. If a pass hits a player or a ball, both groups must do a punishment.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition. First team to complete 20 passes wins.



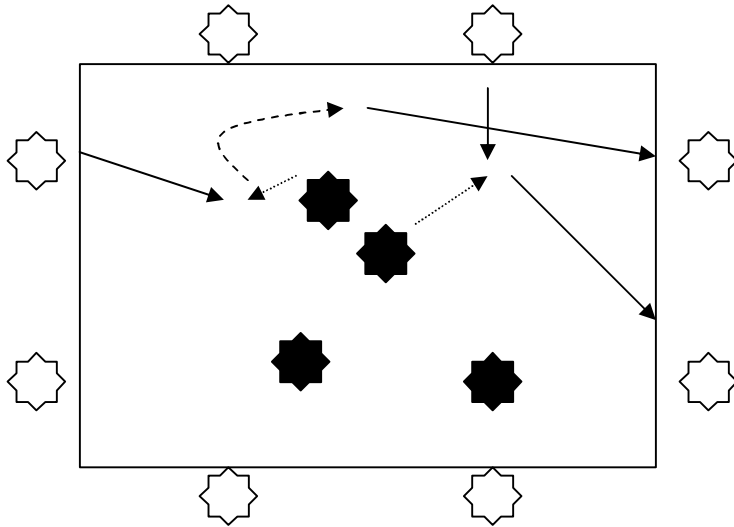
Coaching Points

- Passing and Receiving Technique.
- Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Good Movement towards the ball and after the pass.

Activity 13: Windows Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards
- Place 4 players in the center without balls.
- Players on the outside act as servers.
- Every other server has a ball.
- ACTIVITY: Players in the center must go to a server to receive the ball, take a touch and pass to a server without a ball.



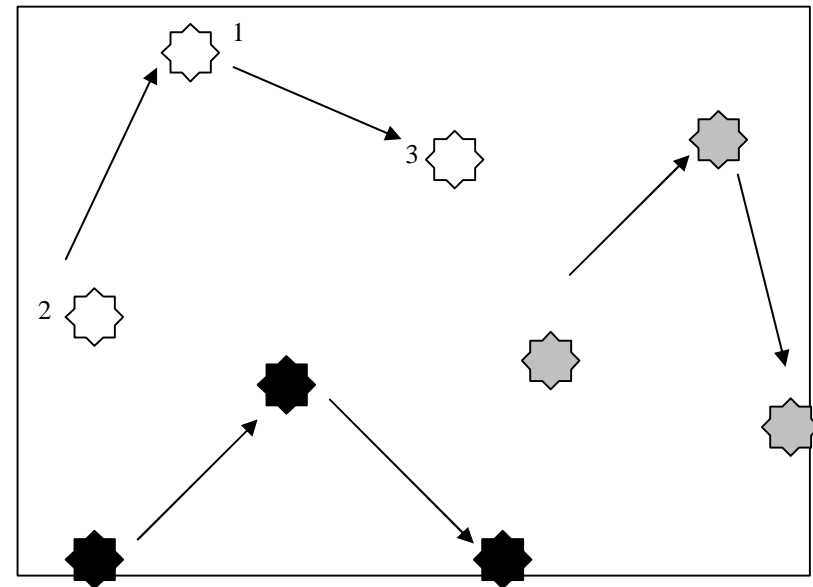
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving Technique.
- Use both feet to pass and control the ball.
- Receive the ball with your back foot.
- Good first touch should set you for your next pass.
- Players on the outside should be ready to receive the ball.
- Communication: Verbal and Visual.

Activity 14: Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: Unrestricted.
- Split players into groups of three and place in a triangle.
- One ball per group.
- ACTIVITY: Number players 1 to 3. Player 1 constantly receives and passes the ball. Players 2 and 3 only pass to player 1. Rotate players in position 1.
- VARIATION: Players 2 and 3 are limited to one touch.



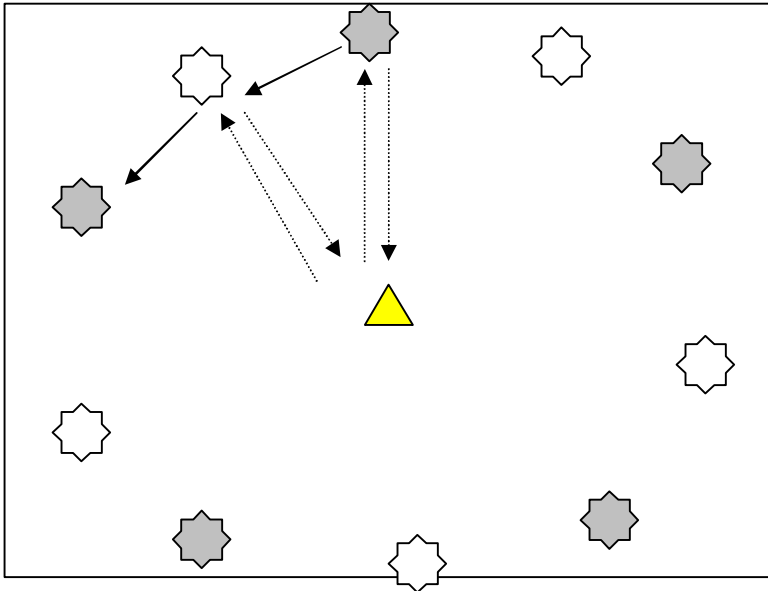
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique (inside of both feet).
- Receiving the Ball / Control Technique (inside of both feet).
- Receive the ball using your back foot.
- Use both feet, for instance receive the ball with your right foot and pass with your left.

Activity 15: Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yards with a cone in the center.
- Place players into a large circle around the center cone.
- One ball per group.
- ACTIVITY: Players must pass to the person next to them, then make a run to the cone and back. Players only have two touches on the ball and must keep the ball moving during the drill. Add another soccer ball.
- VARIATIONS: Go in the other direction. Competition.



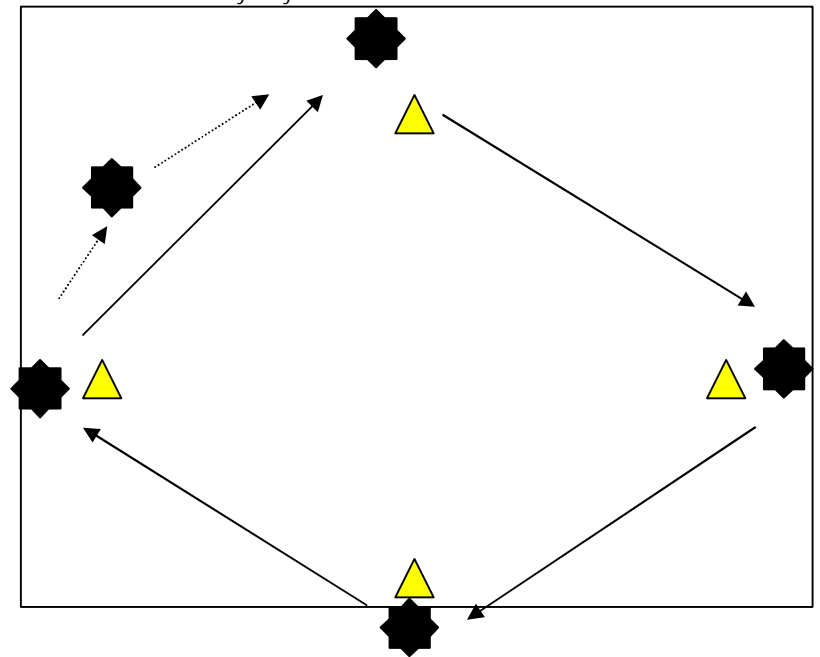
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Receive the ball with your back foot, across your body.
- Receive the ball with one foot and pass with the other.

Activity 16: Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: 15 x 15-yards diamond.
- Split players into groups of 5.
- Place a player on each cone and two on one cone.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts from the cone with two players. Players pass around the diamond and follow their pass to the next cone. Start passing clockwise and then anti-clockwise.
- VARIATIONS: Players can pass anywhere in the diamond, 2 touch limit. When players pass across the diamond they only have one touch.



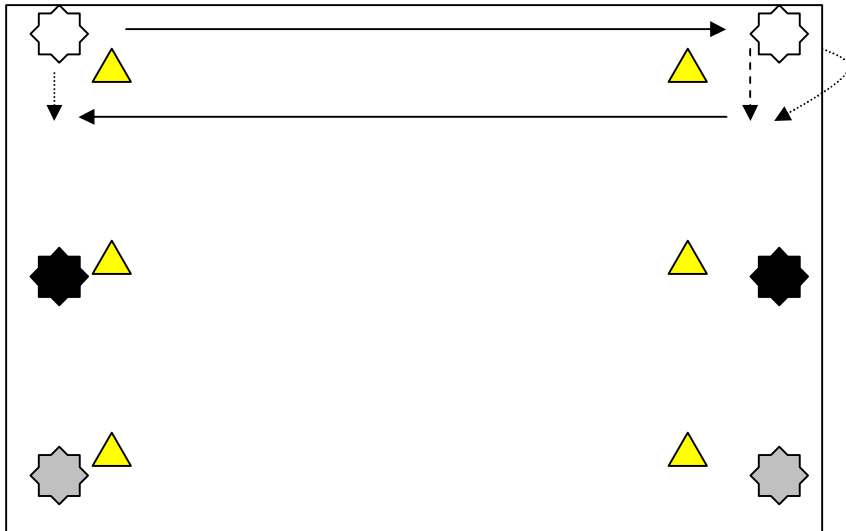
Coaching Points

- Passing technique.
- Receiving the Ball / Control Technique.
- Receive the ball with one foot and pass with the other.
- Decision-Making: When / and when not to pass with one touch?

Activity 17: Outside of Foot Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: Place two cones 15-yards apart for each pair.
- Place players into pairs, one ball per group.
- Place players behind the cones
- ACTIVITY: Players pass the ball back and forth with the outside of the foot. Players receive the ball across the cone and then pass back with the outside of the foot.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition. First pair to complete 10 passes.



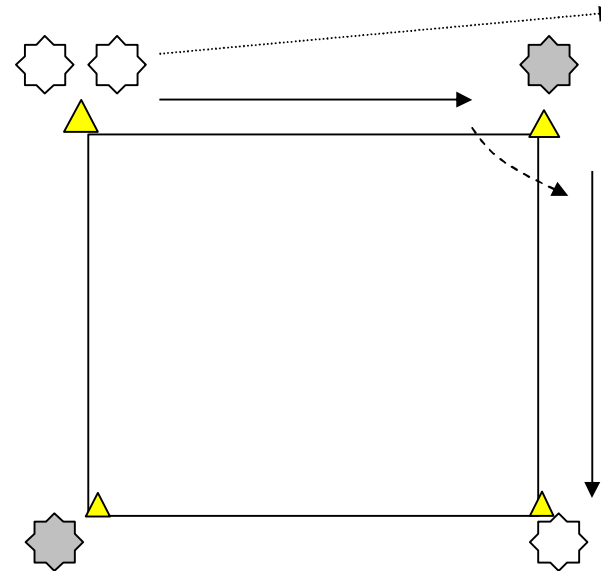
Coaching Points

- Outside of the Foot Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball with the inside of the front foot and across your body.
- Angle of approach to the ball.
- Weight of pass.
- Back up when receiving the ball – gives time and space.

Activity 18: Outside of Foot Passing and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yards.
- Place players into groups of five.
- One ball per group.
- ACTIVITY: Start the ball with the cone that has two players. Players must pass directly to their partner's feet; the player receiving must use their first touch to set them up to make a pass. Players must keep the ball moving during the drill.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition.



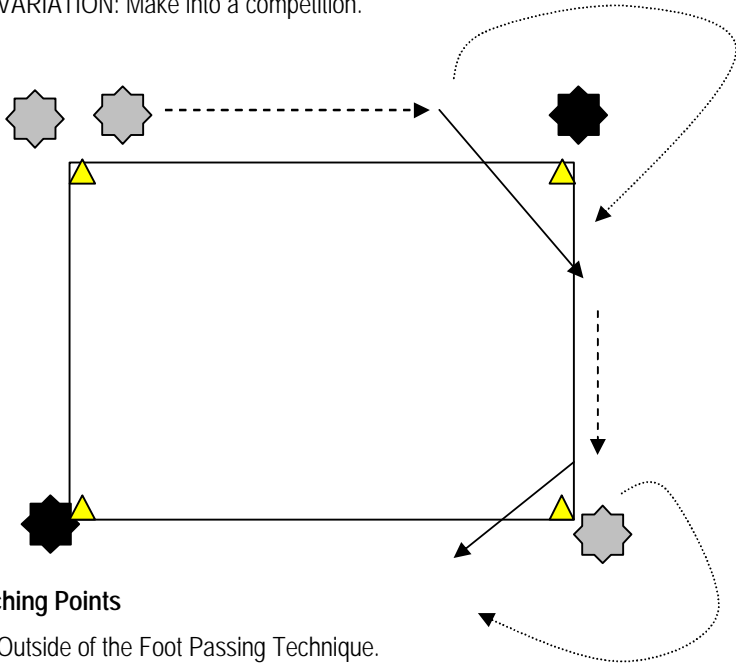
Coaching Points

- Outside of the Foot Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball with the inside of the front foot.
- Angle of approach to the ball.
- Back up when receiving the ball – gives time and space.

Activity 19: Outside of Foot Passing and Passing off Dribble

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yards.
- Place players into groups of five.
- One ball per group.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the cone that has two players. Players dribble along the line, when they get close the player facing spins around the cone, when they do this, the player with the ball passes into that player's path. Continue. Players must keep the ball moving during the drill.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition.



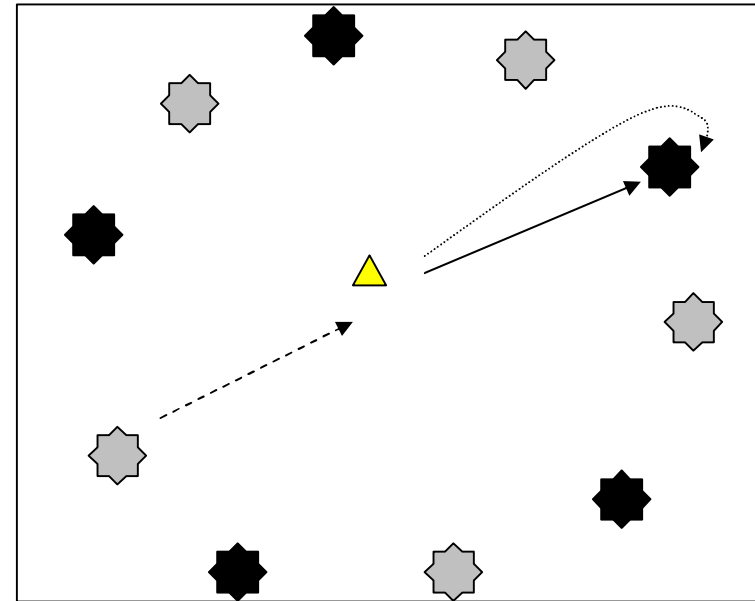
Coaching Points

- Outside of the Foot Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Dribbling Technique.
- Weight of pass.
- Good Movement off the cone, spin out and around the cone.

Activity 20: Passing off the Dribble

Organization

- Area: Circle of players with a cone in the center.
- ACTIVITY: Players can pass to anyone. Players dribble towards the cone and pass to a player of their choice. Players must take the position of the player they pass to.
- VARIATIONS: Add more soccer balls.



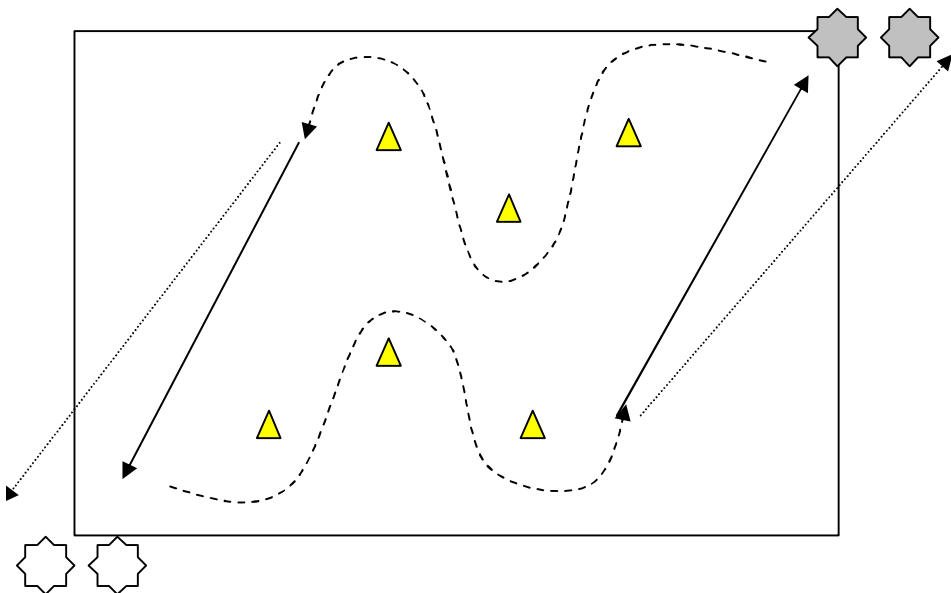
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Dribbling Technique.
- Communication between players.
- Passing on the move.

Activity 21: Passing off the Dribble

Organization

- Area: 30 x 20-yard with three cones in a line 2-yards apart, as shown.
- Split players into two teams.
- ACTIVITY: Players must dribble through the cones at speed and when they reach the end pass into the next player and join the back of the line. Each team has a ball.
- VARIATION: Competition between teams. First team to get all players to the opposite cone wins.



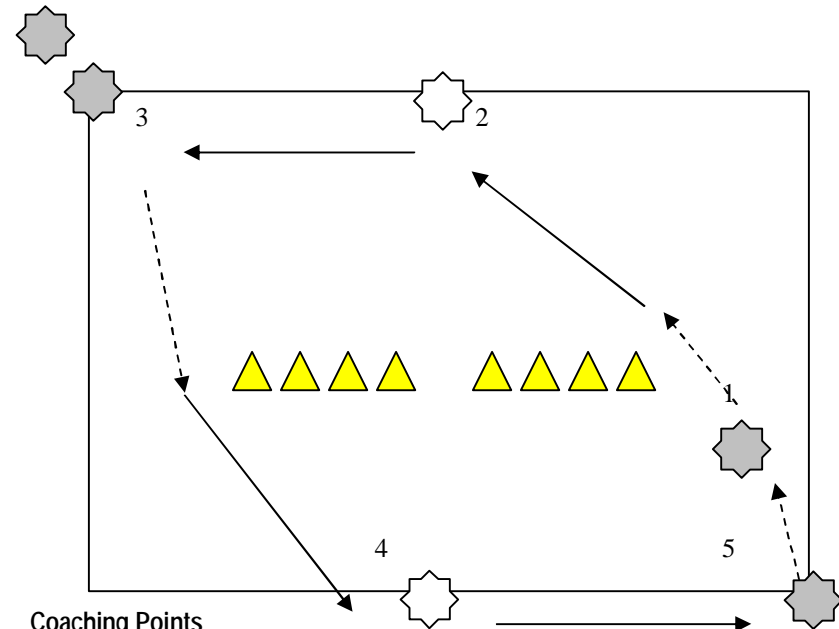
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Passing off the dribble.
- Accuracy of pass.
- Weight of pass.

Activity 22: Passing of the Dribble and Receiving the Ball

Organization

- Area: 40 x 20-yards.
- Place two lines of cones in the area as shown.
- Place groups of players in opposite corners.
- Place two players on opposite lines as shown.
- ACTIVITY: Player 1 dribbles to the cones and passes to player 2. Player 2 receives the ball and passes to player 3. Player 3 dribbles to the cones and passes to player 4. Player 4 then passes to 5. Continue.



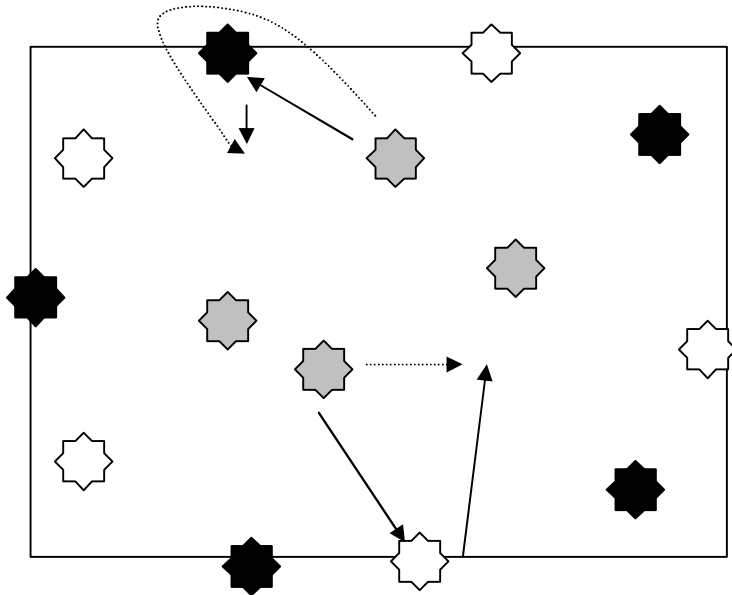
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Passing on the move.
- Cover ground as quickly as possible.
- Receive the ball with back foot / opening up your body.
- Receive the ball with one foot and pass with the other.

Activity 23: Combination Passing

Organization

- Area: Circle of Players with 4 players in the center with soccer balls.
- ACTIVITY: Players in the center pass to the outside players and give them a command. Different Commands:
 - GIVE AND GO: Server and player do a give and go combination.
 - HOLD: Outside player holds the ball, passer runs around them and then receives it back.
 - MEGS: Outside player holds the ball, passer runs to them, stops and opens their legs. Outside player passes through their legs they turn and retrieve.
 - DOUBLE: Players play a double wall pass.



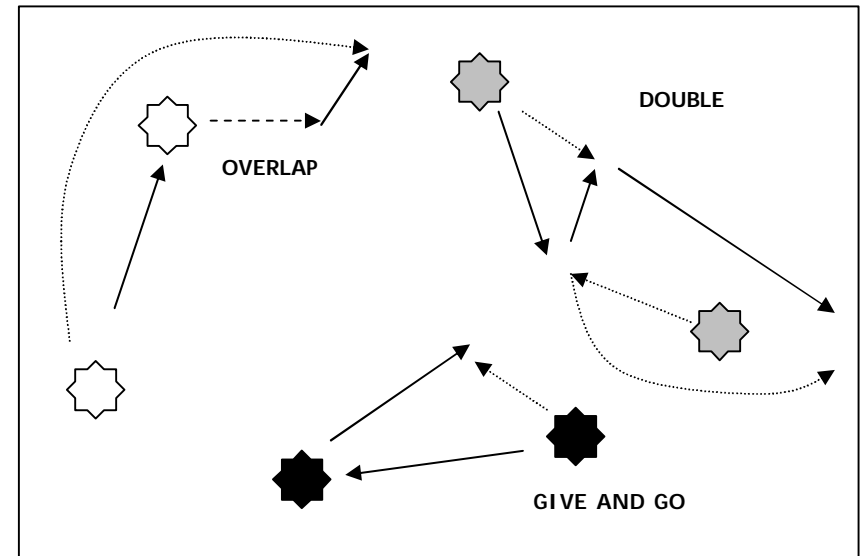
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Movement: Speed with and without the ball. Change of pace after the ball is released.
- Players on the outside should be ready to receive the ball.
- Communication: Verbal and Visual.

Activity 24: Combination Passing and Movement

Organization

- Area: Unrestricted.
- Place players into pairs. One ball per pair.
- ACTIVITY: Players move around the area using different passing combinations:
 - GIVE AND GO: One player passes into the other, makes a run and receives the ball back.
 - OVERLAP: One player passes into the other, this player turns and dribbles. The passer makes a run around them, calls for the ball and receives it back.
 - DOUBLE: Players play a double wall pass.
- VARIATION: Add defenders. Players must keep the ball away from them.



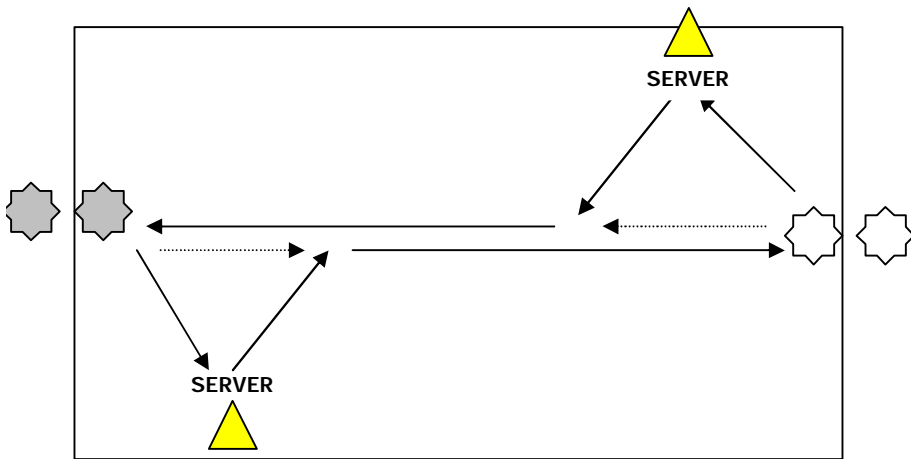
Coaching Points

- Passing and Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Communication between players.
- Movement off the ball: Move into a space where you can see your partner & receive the ball.
- Don't stand still after passing, pass and move.

Activity 25: Give and Go Passing Combinations

Organization

- Area: Station 2 cones 30-yards apart with 2 cones to the side of these.
- Place a server on the side cones.
- Place two groups of players on the cones 30-yards apart.
- Every player has a ball except server.
- ACTIVITY: Players do a short give and go with the server and then makes a long pass to the opposite group of players. Continue.



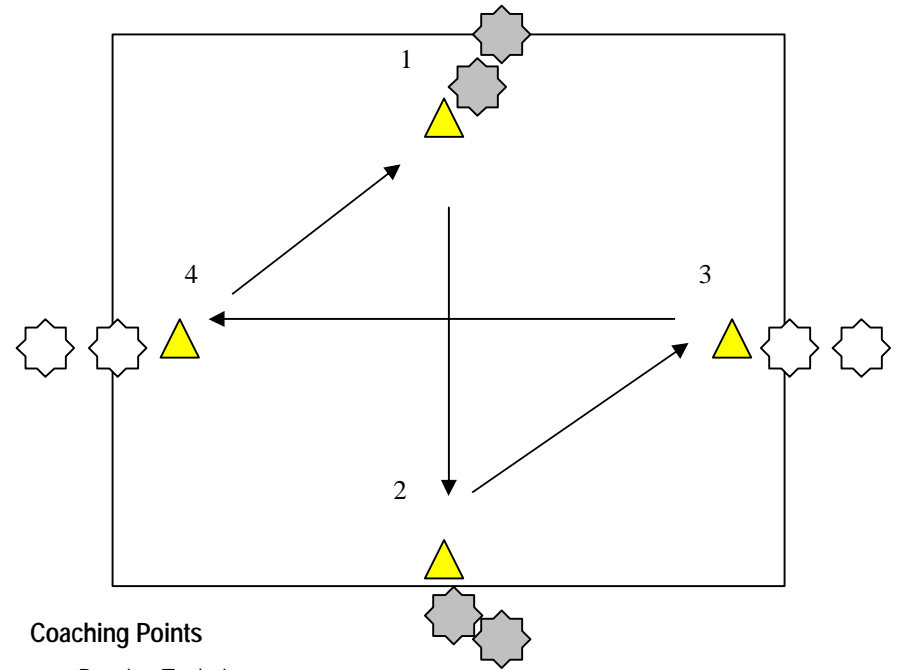
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Speed of passing.
- Keep the ball on the ground.
- Receive the ball with your foot.
- Good first touch.
- Wherever possible make a first time pass.
- Good movement off the ball and onto the ball.

Activity 26: Playing Simple - Playing the Way You Face

Organization

- Area: 15-yard diamond.
- Number cones 1 to 4.
- Split players into four groups.
- ACTIVITY: Players on cone 1 pass to cone 2, cone 2 then passes to cone 3, cone 3 passes to 4 and 4 passes back to 1. Players should follow their pass to the next station.
- VARIATION: Add a second ball.



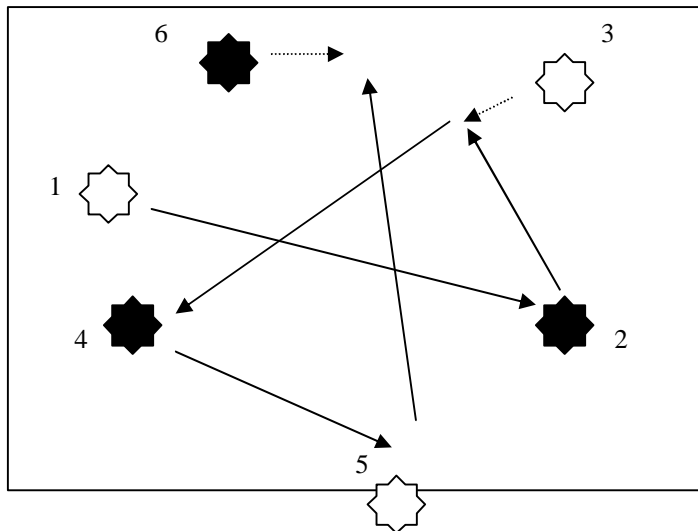
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball / Control Technique.
- Receive the ball with your back foot.
- Use both feet, receive the ball with one foot and pass with the other.
- Communication between players.
- Always be ready to receive the next pass.

Activity 27: Passing, Receiving and Movement

Organization

- Area: 15 x 15-yard.
- Place players into groups of six.
- One ball per group.
- Number players 1 through 6.
- ACTIVITY: Passing combination: player 1 passes to 2, 2 to 3, etc and then 6 back to 1. Continue. Players must be constantly moving and changing direction inside the area.
- VARIATIONS: Change the passing combination.



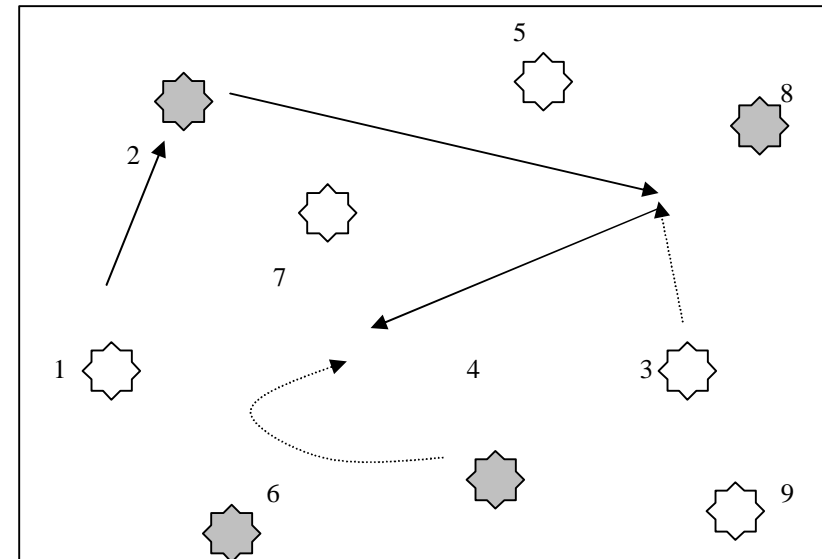
Coaching Points

- Passing and Receiving Technique.
- Movement off the ball: Shouldn't be round in a circle, but constantly changing direction.
- Movement towards the ball should be short and sharp.
- Communication between players.

Activity 28: Passing, Receiving and Movement

Organization

- Area: 60 x 40-yard.
- Include all your players into this drill.
- Number players.
- ACTIVITY: All players must be constantly moving and changing direction. Player 1 passes to player 2, player 2 to 3, etc. Start with one ball.
- VARIATIONS: Add more soccer balls. Introduce a short, short, long passing combination.



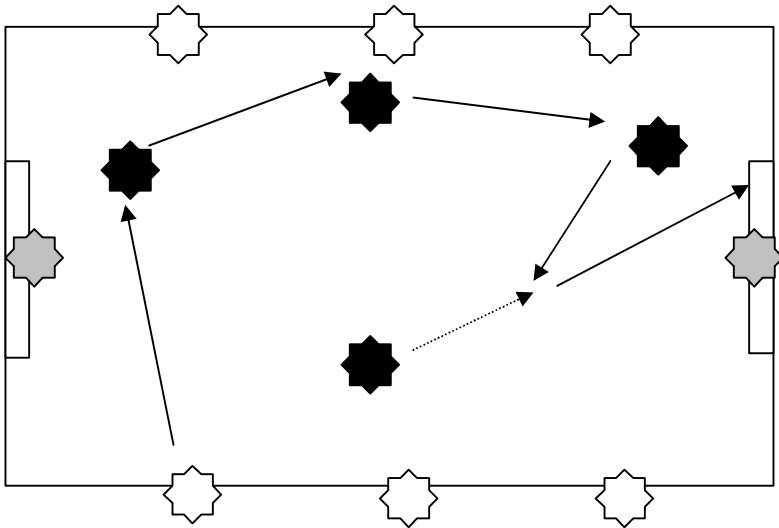
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball / Control Technique.
- 1 touch passes if available.
- Before receiving the ball take a look around and find your next pass.

Activity 29: Combination Passing, Receiving and Moving

Organization

- Area: 30 x 40-yards with two goals.
- Play with 2 goalkeepers, 6 servers and 4 players.
- ACTIVITY: Servers take urns playing a pass into a player inside the area. They must then pass around themselves until all the players inside the area have touched the ball. The last player to touch the ball should then attack one of the goals. Limit players to two touches. Rotate positions after every 5 attempts on goal.
- VARIATION: Add two defenders. Once a ball has been played in, two servers move into the area and act as defenders.



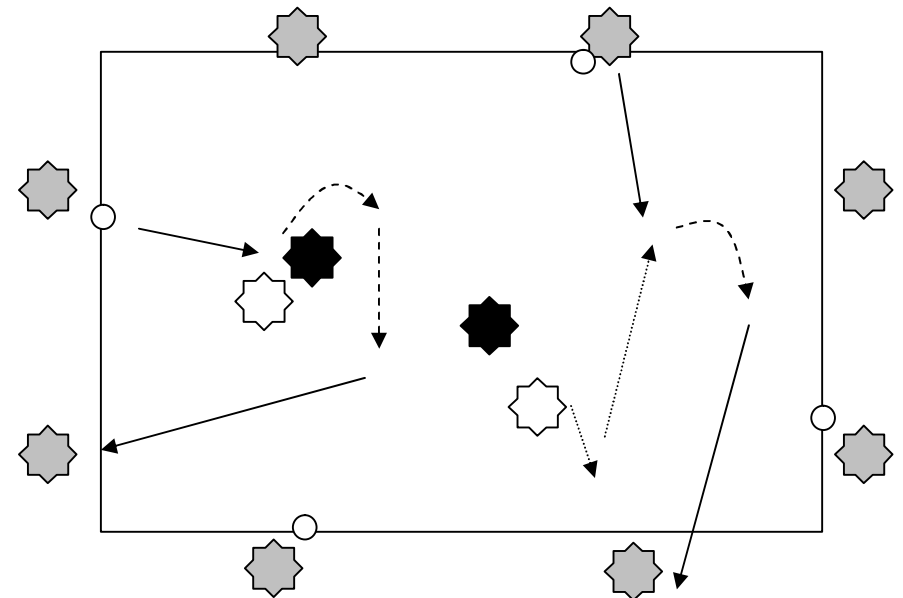
Coaching Points

- Receiving the Ball / Control Technique.
- Communication.
- When in possession look to spread out and create options.
- Don't just move into space, move into an area where you can receive a pass.

Activity 30: 1 v 1: Passing and Receiving Under Pressure

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20 yards.
- Place players into pairs.
- Place 2 pairs in the center of the area and the other players on the outside.
- Every other player on the outside has a ball.
- ACTIVITY: One player from each pair is an attacker and the other is a defender. The attacker must receive a pass from a server and pass to an open server. The defender is trying to steal the ball; if they do they play a simple pass to a server. Players work hard for 1 minute and the switch out. Continue.



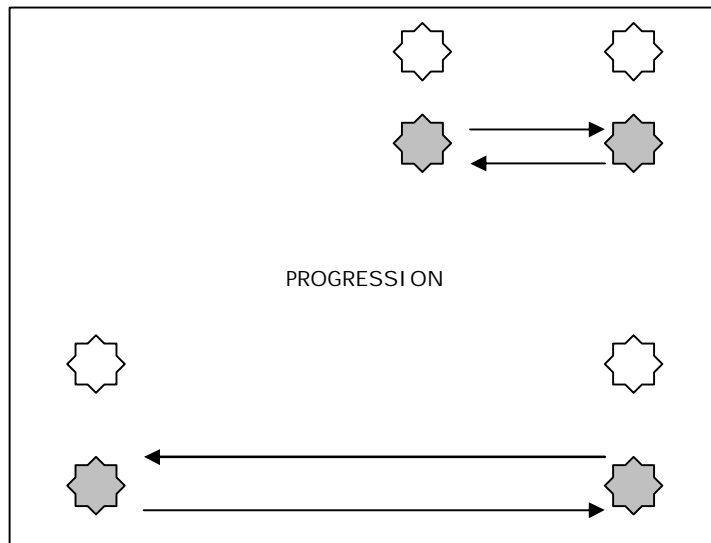
Coaching Points

- Receive the ball with the inside or outside of the foot.
- Receive the ball with a turn.
- Feel where the defender is and take in the opposite direction.
- Good movement off the ball, fake in one direction and go the other way.

Activity 31: Passing Over Distance Technique

Organization

- Area: Unrestricted.
- Place players into pairs.
- One ball between two.
- Place players 10-yards away from each other.
- ACTIVITY: Players pass the ball back and forth with laces (soft).



Progression

1. One passes soft and the other passes hard (drives the ball low and to feet).
2. Increase the distance to 20-yards, players must now drive the ball below hip height.

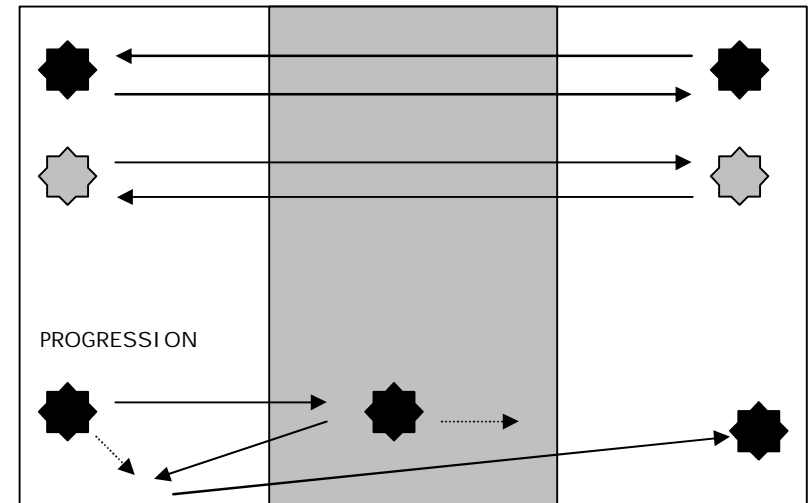
Coaching Points

- Driving the ball technique.
- Players should be on their toes ready to receive the ball.

Activity 32: Passing Over Distance

Organization

- Area: Width of the 18-yard box with a 10-yard runway in the center.
- Place players into pairs.
- One ball between two.
- ACTIVITY: Players pass over the runway.



Progression

1. Place players into groups of 3. Keep two people on the outside and one player in the middle. Players on the outside play a pass into the center player, receive a soft pass back and play a long pass to player across from them. Continue.

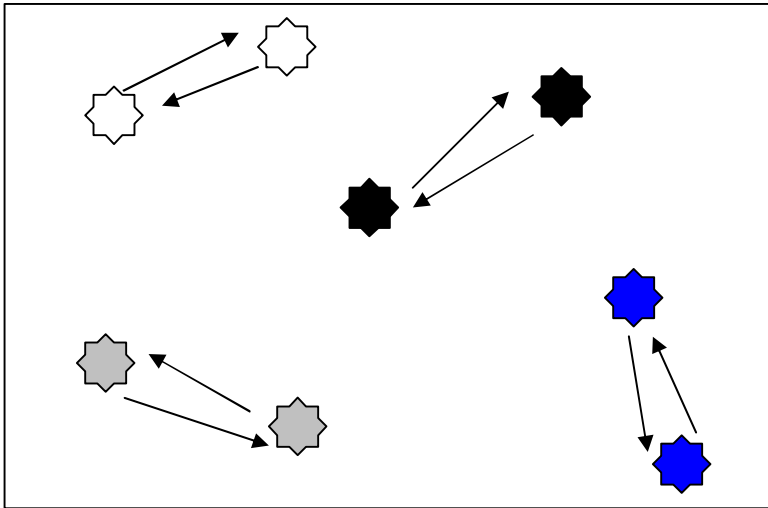
Coaching Points

- Driven Pass.
- Curled Pass.
- Chipped Pass.
- Receiving the ball with different surfaces.

Activity 33: Receiving Air Balls

Organization

- Area: Unrestricted.
- Place players into pairs.
- One ball per pair. One player acts as a server.
- Ask players to stand roughly 5-yards apart.
- ACTIVITY: Server must throw the ball to their partner at requested height. Each player has 10 goes and then switch. Continue through all techniques.
- VARIATIONS: After the server throws they move, player receiving the ball must take the ball in that direction before passing.



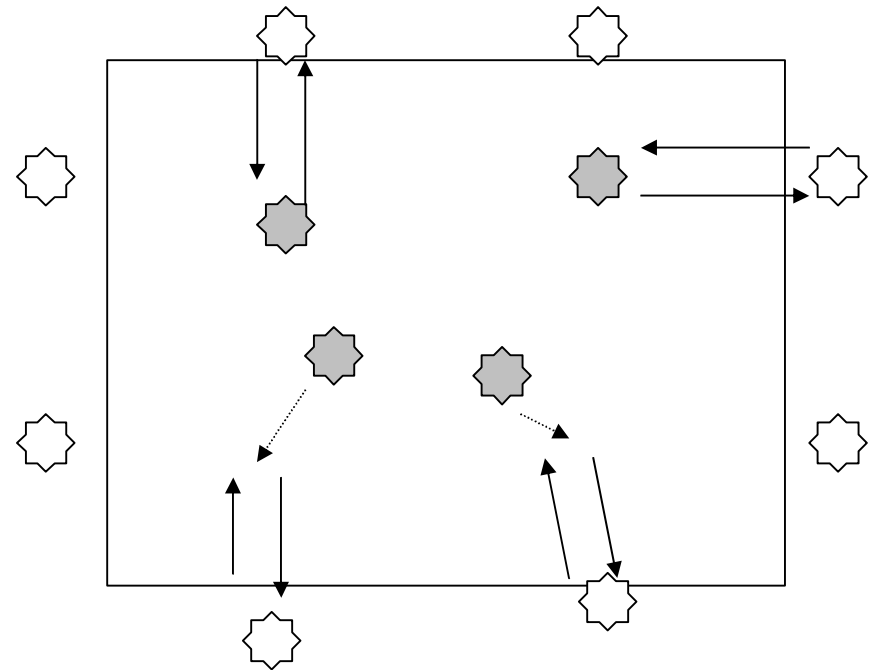
Coaching Points

- Receiving the ball with inside of foot.
- Receiving the ball with the thigh.
- Receiving the ball with the chest.
- As the ball travels in choose the correct surface to bring the ball down.

Activity 34: Receiving Air Balls

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards
- Place 4 players inside the circle and the rest on the outside.
- Each player on the outside of the circle has a ball and act as servers.
- DRILL: Players on the inside must run to a server, request the ball and then pass it them back. Players on the inside must work hard for one minute. Start with players controlling an air ball and passing back (2 touches).



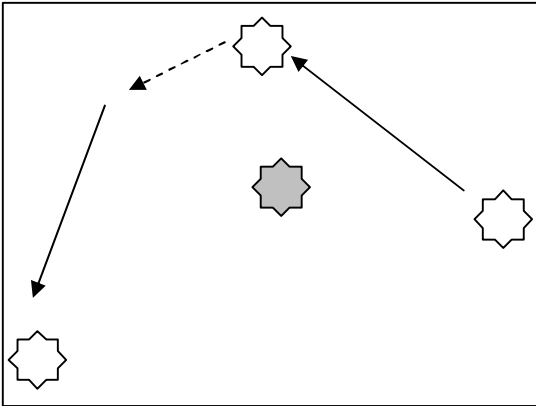
Coaching Points

- Receiving the ball with inside of foot.
- Receiving the ball with the thigh.
- Receiving the ball with the chest.
- As the ball travels in choose the correct surface to bring the ball down.

Activity 35: 3 v 1 Keep Away

Organization

- Area: 10 x 10-yards.
- Split players into groups of four.
- Place all players inside the area.
- ACTIVITY: Three attacking players must try to keep the ball away from the defender. The defender must win the ball three times, after this they swap with an attacker. Attackers score a point by making seven consecutive passes.



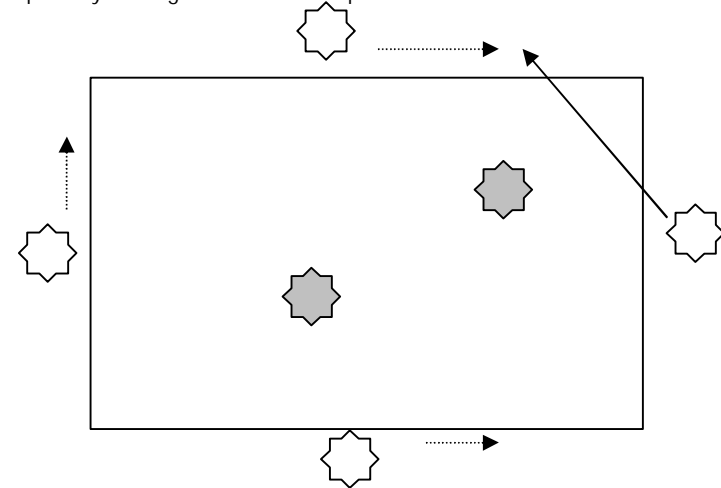
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving Technique.
- Good communication between players.
- Good Movement: Get into position early in order to receive the ball.
- Move the ball quickly, 1 and 2 touch passes.

Activity 36: 4 v 2 Keep Away

Organization

- Area: 15 x 15-yards.
- Split players into groups of six.
- Place one player in the center of the square (defender) and the others on each side of the square (attackers).
- ACTIVITY: Players on the outside must try to keep the ball away from the defender. The defender must win the ball three times, after this they swap with an attacker. Attackers score a point by making five consecutive passes.



Progression

- Players can only score by splitting the defenders with a pass.

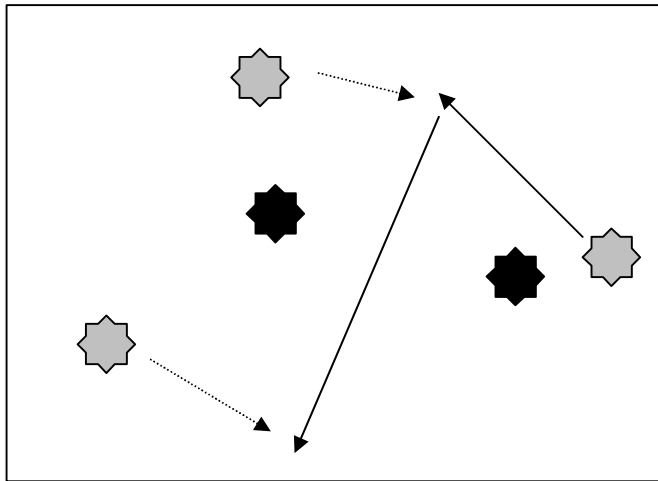
Coaching Points

- Passing and Receiving Technique.
- Good movement along the lines to get available to receive a pass.
- Look for penetrating pass but don't force it!

Activity 37: 3 v 2 Keep Away

Organization

- Area: 15 x 15-yards.
- Split players into groups of five.
- Place all players inside the area.
- ACTIVITY: Three attacking players must try to keep the ball away from two defenders. The defenders must win the ball three times, after this they swap with an attacker. Attackers score a point by splitting the two attackers.



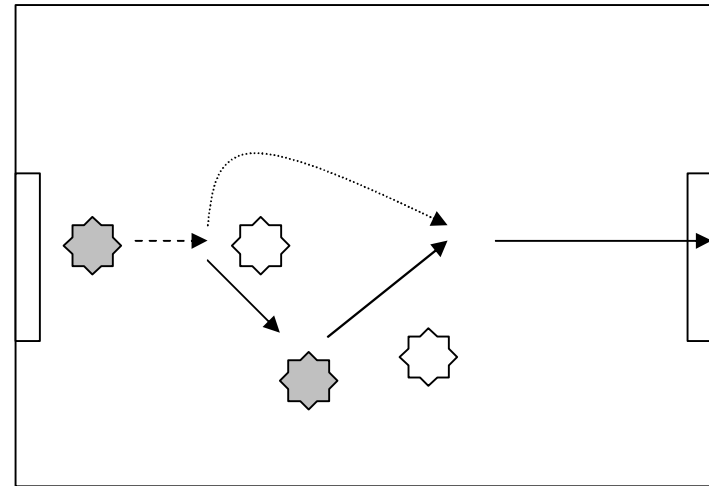
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving Technique.
- Good communication between players.
- Good Movement: Get into position early to receive the ball.
- Look to use combination passing to unbalance the defense.
- Use 1 and 2 touches to move the ball quickly.

Activity 38: 2 v 2 to Goal

Organization

- Area: 20 x 15-yards with two small goals.
- Use small goals 2-yards in width.
- Split players into small teams of 2, no goalkeepers.
- ACTIVITY: A team can only score by passing through a small goal with a first time pass.



Progression

1. Limit players to 2 touches.

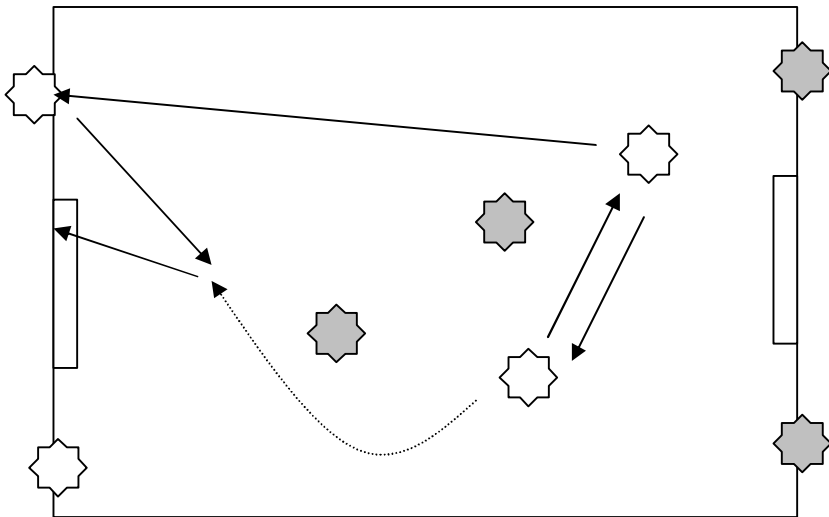
Coaching Points

- Passing Technique.
- Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Look for passing combinations to unbalance defense: Give and Go, Overlap or Double Pass.
- Communication between players.
- Look for penetrating pass first, if not on look to keep possession.

Activity 39: 2 v 2 with Target Players

Organization

- Area: 20 x 15-yard area with two small goals.
- Use small goals 2-yards in width.
- Split players into two teams of 4. Play 2 v 2 in the center and place two players either side of the goal the team is attacking.
- ACTIVITY: Play 2 v 2 in the center. To score a team must play into one of their target players; receive the ball back (does not have to be the same player) and score in the goal.
- VARIATION: Limit players to 2 touches.



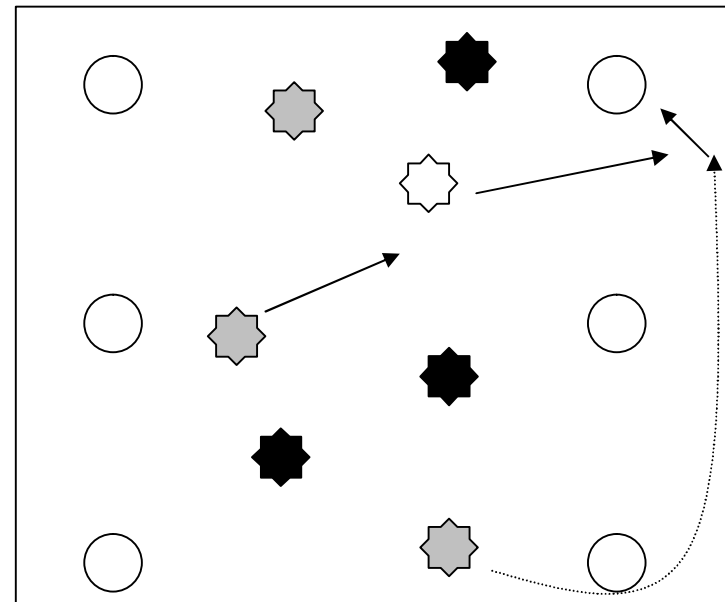
Coaching Points

- Passing and Receiving the Ball Technique.
- Look for passing combinations to unbalance defense.
- Communication between players.
- Look for penetrating pass (into target players) first, if not look to keep possession.

Activity 40: 3 v 3 + 1: Possession with Direction

Organization

- Area: 40 x 30-yards.
- Place three balls on cones at the end of each area.
- Each team defends one set of soccer balls.
- ACTIVITY: Players can move anywhere in the zone, behind the balls, etc. Play 3 v 3 in the center with the 1 Neutral Player. To score a team must knock a ball off the cone with a pass.



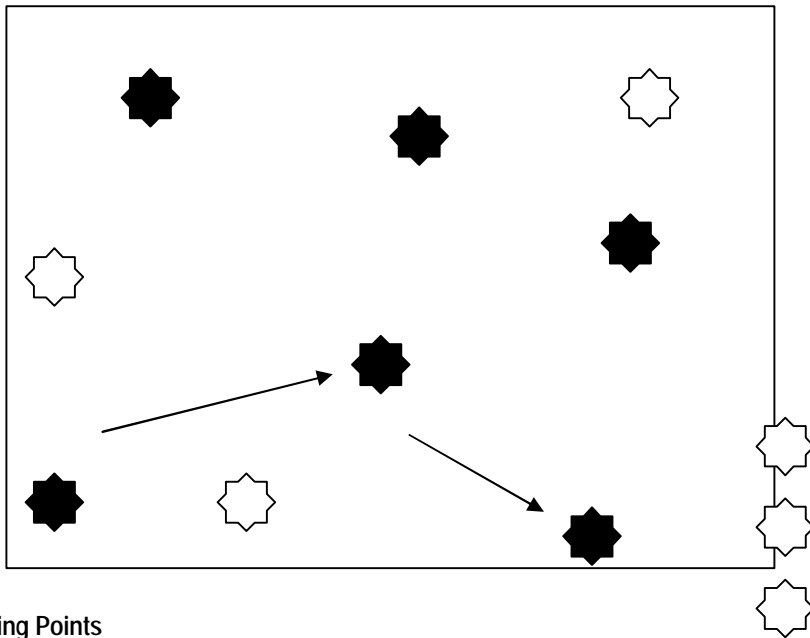
Coaching Points

- Look to keep possession.
- Good movement off the ball. Look to make runs behind defenders and behind the balls in order to unbalance the defense.
- Through passes into space and feet.
- Move the ball quickly with short passing combinations.

Activity 41: 6 v 3: Possession

Organization

- Area: 40 x 40-yards.
- Split players into two teams.
- ACTIVITY: When your team is in possession the opposing team has 3 players sit down. Teams score a goal by making 10 passes. Play the best of 5.



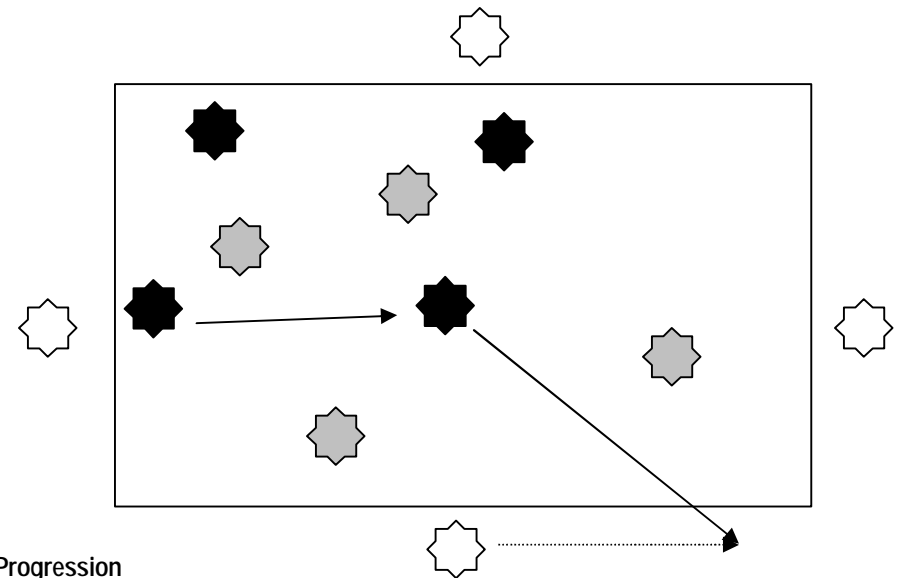
Coaching Points

- Decision-Making: When to pass and when to dribble to keep possession?
- Take a look around before you receive the ball.
- Look for give and goes.
- Move the ball quickly whenever possible, 1 and 2 touches on the ball.
- Receive the ball with your back foot / open your body to the whole field.

Activity 42: 4 v 4 + 4: Possession

Organization

- Area: 40 x 40-yards.
- Split players into three teams of four.
- Place two teams in the center and one team on the outside as shown.
- ACTIVITY: When in possession you can use the outside players to keep possession. 5 passes score a goal. First team to 3 goals wins. Switch teams.



Progression

1. Add small goals and place the team not playing on the sides without goals.

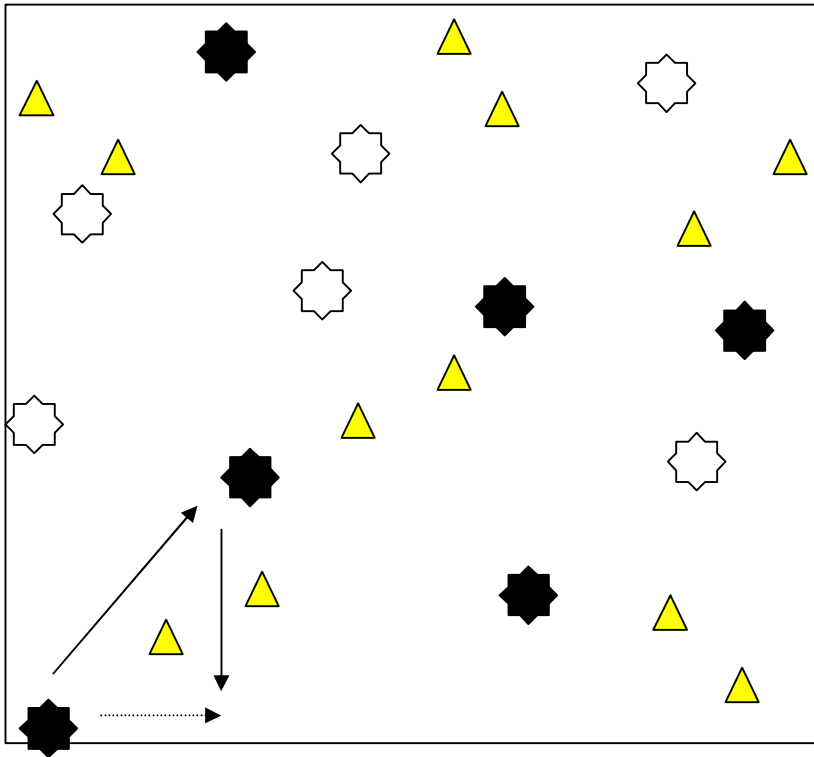
Coaching Points

- Decision-Making: When to pass and when to dribble to keep possession?
- Take a look around before you receive the ball.
- Look for passing combinations to keep possession.
- Move the ball quickly whenever possible, 1 and 2 touches on the ball.
- Receive the ball with your back foot / open your body to the whole field.

Activity 43: Possession with Combination Passing

Organization

- Area: 60 x 40-yards with at least six small goals placed inside the area.
- Split players into two teams. If you have an extra player have that player play permanent offense.
- ACTIVITY: Teams score by completing a pass through a small goal to a teammate.



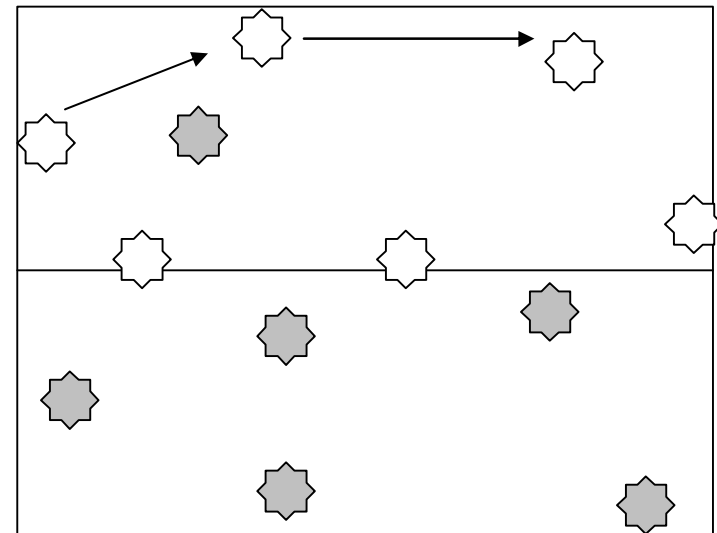
Coaching Points

- Decision-Making: When to pass and when to dribble to keep possession?
- Take a look around before you receive the ball.
- Move the ball quickly whenever possible, 1 and 2 touches on the ball.
- Look for combination passing: Give and Go, Double and Overlap.

Activity 44: 6 v 6: Possession with Transition

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards split into two.
- Split players into two teams.
- Place a team in each half of the area.
- ACTIVITY: To score a team must complete 5 consecutive passes. If the white team has the ball the black team can send across one defender. If the white team gets five passes the black team can send in another defender, ten passes another defender and so on. If the defender wins the ball he must pass it back into his / her teams area. If the ball goes out of the area play starts again with a pass in. If the ball goes out three times the opposition gets the ball.



Coaching Points

- Use all the space inside the area.
- Move the ball quickly with one and two touches.
- Receive the ball with your back foot / opening your body up.
- Always be ready to receive the ball.

Finishing Section



Finishing in soccer is the most difficult aspect of the game. Not necessarily the technical aspect of shooting the ball BUT the ability to put the ball in goal with all of the pressures involved. The pressures I am referring to include both physical and psychological! For instance, you have the physical pressures from the goalkeeper and defenders, as well as the psychological pressures, which include the result of the game, time gone in the game, adrenaline, etc. The best finishers in the world are not necessarily the best strikers of the ball technical but they can deal with the pressures of the game and still have the presence of mind to put the ball in the goal!

Coaching Points

What surfaces can be used to finish the ball?

As a general rule, a player should use the inside of their foot for accuracy when shooting from close range, and the instep (top of the laces) for power when shooting from distance. If you watch premier, high school, college or professional soccer you will recognize that players will use all different surfaces to put the ball in the goal. When teaching younger players it is best to focus on the general technical aspects first. This will give your players a good building block.

Finishing for Power – Instructional Coaching Points

- Eyes should be on the ball when striking, head down and locked firmly onto the ball.
- Approach the ball slightly side on.
- Place your non-kicking foot next to the ball with the toes of this foot aiming at your target.
- Bend your knees, get low to the ball.
- Body weight should be slightly over the ball.
- Use the instep (top of the laces) to strike the center of the ball.
How does a player get the top of their laces to strike the center of the ball?
Players should point their toes straight down and slightly out. This will enable them to get their laces onto the ball.
- Ankle of your kicking foot should be locked with your toes pointing down. Loose ankle = no power!
- The knee of a player's kicking leg should be over the ball when they strike.
- After connecting with the center of the ball, follow through with your whole body and land on the foot that struck the ball. This puts the power into the ball.
- After striking the ball the player's shoulders and hips should be facing the target. Controlling these body mechanics will help with accuracy.

Finishing for Accuracy – Instructional Coaching Points

When teaching players to finish with the inside of the foot you are basically teaching them how to pass with the inside of the foot, there is very little difference! Please refer to passing technique for details.

Question and Answer Coaching Points

- Q: Which part of the foot should we use when shooting from distance and for power?
A: Instep.
- Q: Which part of the foot should we use when we are shooting from close range and for accuracy?
A: Inside.
- Q: Should we get low to the ball or have straight legs when we shoot?
A: Knees bent.
- Q: Locked or loose ankle when we strike the ball?
A: Locked.
- Q: Head down on the ball or looking up?
A: Head down.
- Q: Where should we follow through to after we struck the ball?
A: Target.

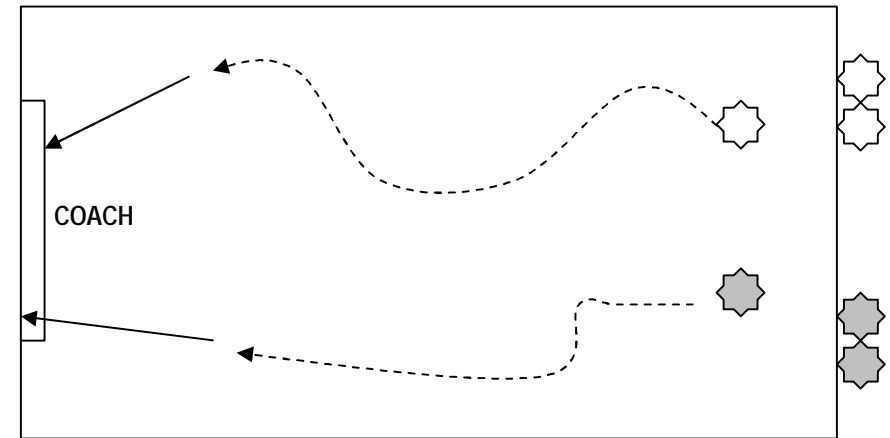
Teaching Guidelines

Give brief instruction about the technique but don't overwhelm your players with a lot of specifics. Keep most of your coaching points to questions and answer. Keep this aspect fun.

Activity 1: Beat the coach! Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 10 x 20-yards with a goal.
- Players should line up in two lines.
- Each player needs a soccer ball.



Activity

When the coach shouts 'GO', two players dribble down towards the goal. Whenever they want they take a shot on goal. Coach should act confused and allow most of the players shots to go in!

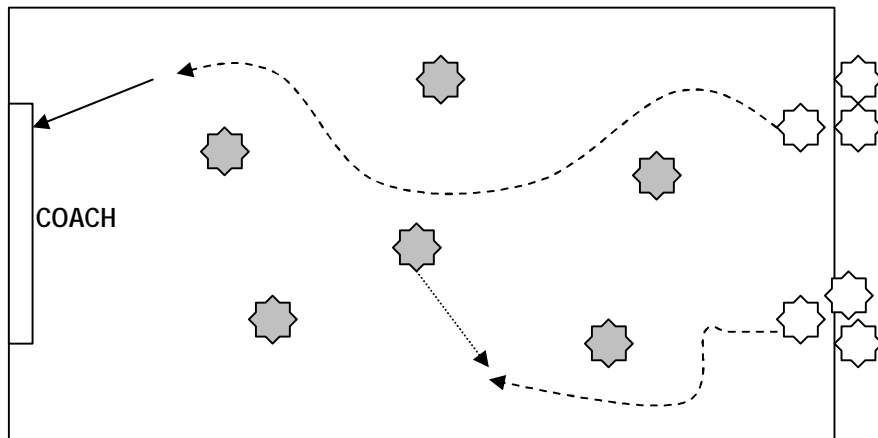
Coaching Points

- Finishing techniques in question form!

Activity 2: Crab Shooting – Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 10 x 30 with a goal on one end line.
- Split players into two teams.
- Place one team inside the area without soccer balls. These players form a Crab Position.
- Place the other team on the end line with soccer balls.



Activity

- CRAB TEAM: Players inside the areas should take up a crab position: leaning backward on their hands & feet. Their job is to steal a player's soccer ball and kick it out of the area.
- NON CRAB TEAM: Players on the end line go two at a time; they are trying to dribble through the area, past the CRABS and finish past the coach who is in goal, without their ball being stolen.
- After all players have been switched, the team's roles.
- Team who gets the most players through the area without their ball being stolen wins.

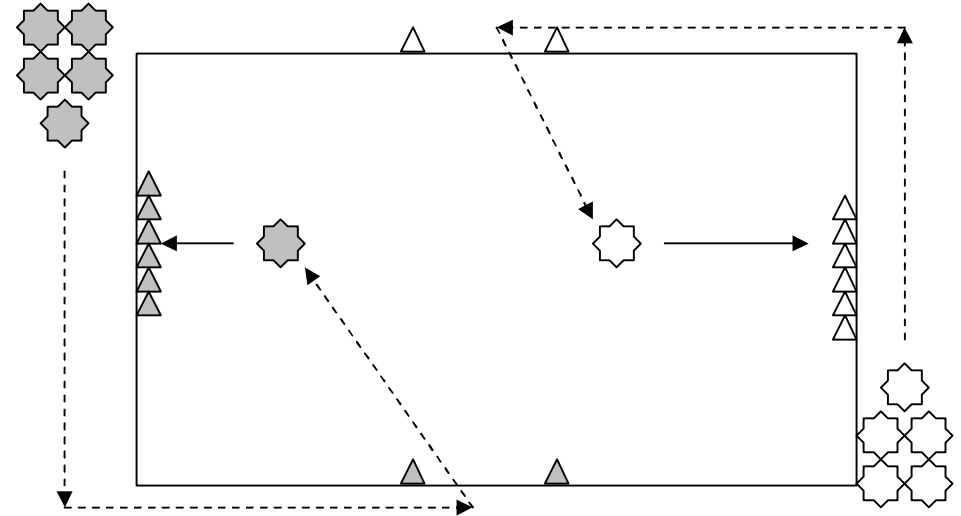
Coaching Points

- Finishing Techniques.

Activity 3: MLS Cup Final – Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20 with cones acting as goals and a coned gate for each team, as shown
- Split players into two teams, number players in each team 1 to 6.
- Place a team on opposite corners, as shown, with soccer balls.



Activity

- Coach calls out a number 1 to 6.
- The player representing that number dribbles around the outside of the area and enters the grid through the gate, as shown above.
- The first player to knock a cone down by shooting the ball scores a point for their team.
- Continue.....

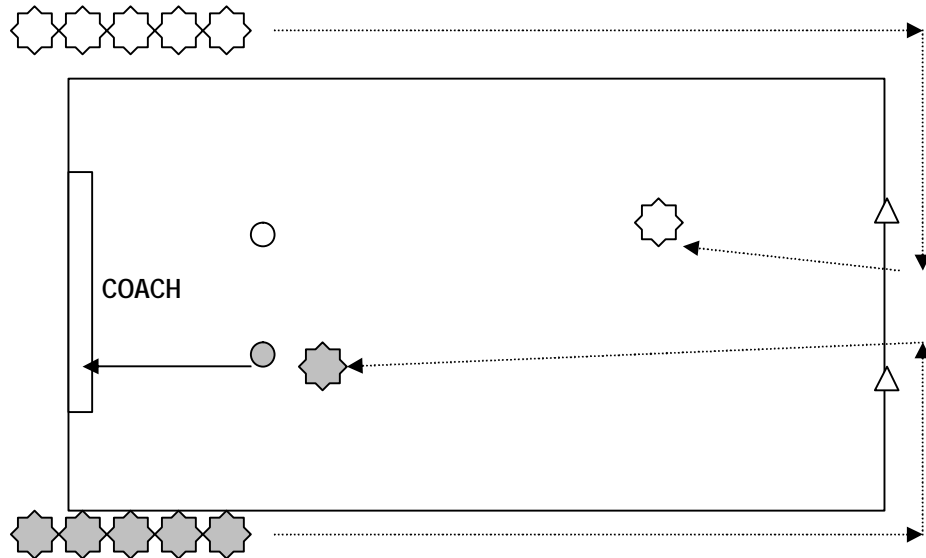
Coaching Points

- Finishing Techniques.
- Dribbling vs. Running with the Ball. Cover ground as quickly as possible.

Activity 4: World Cup Shootout – Fun Game

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yards with a large goal on one end line and a gate on the other.
- Split players into two groups and number them 1 to 6. Each player needs a soccer ball.
- Place them on the same end line but in opposite corners.



Activity

1. First to Shoot. The coach places two soccer balls inside the area. When the coach shouts a number, the representing player from each team runs around the area in into the grid through the gate. The first to shoot the ball into the goal scores a point for their team!
2. Relay Race. Same as above but this time the players have to dribble into the area and shoot.
3. 1 v 1. Same as above but the coach throws one ball into the area. Player who scores wins.

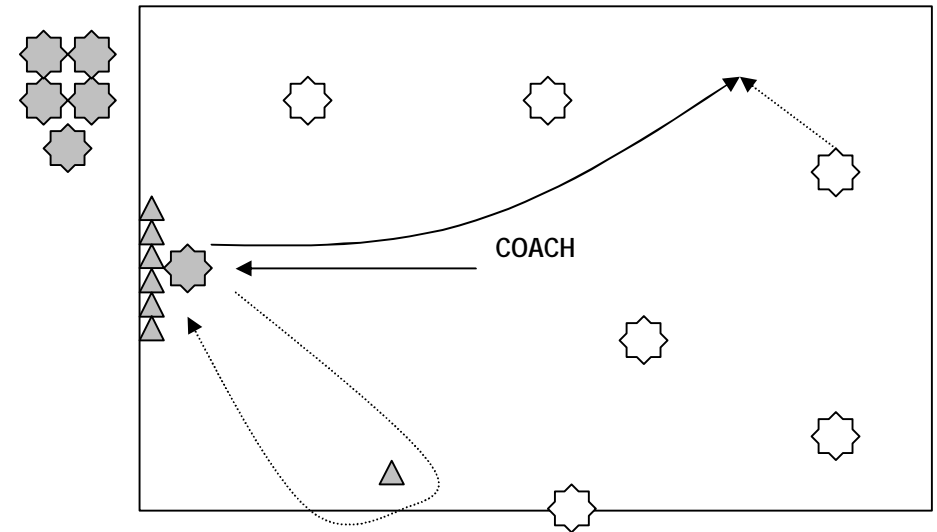
Coaching Points

- Finishing techniques in question form!

Activity 5: Soccer Cricket! Fun Gam

Organization

- Area: Unrestricted with a line cones acting as a wicket and another cone 10-yards away, as shown.
- Split players into two teams.



Activity

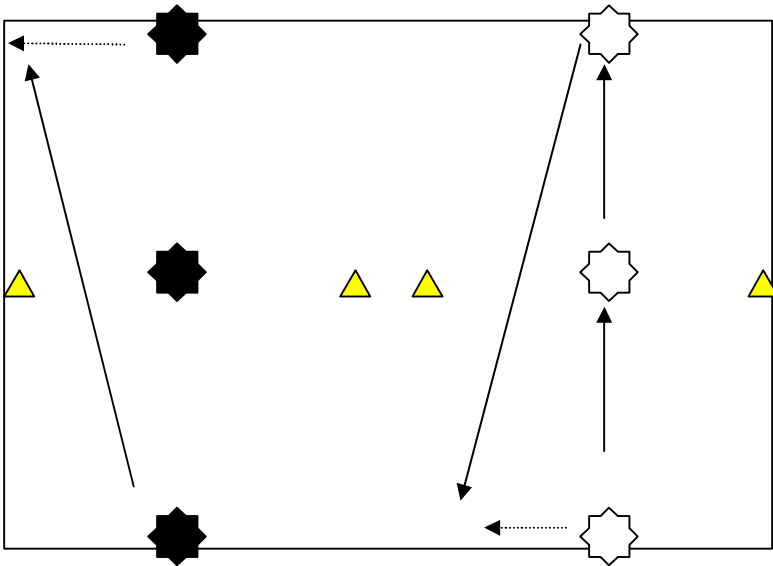
- Batting teams sends one player into bat. Coach is the pitcher. Coach roles the ball towards the batter, who kicks the ball. As soon as a player has kicked the ball they must try to run around the cone, as shown, without getting out. For every time a player runs around the cone they get a point.
- How do we get a batting player out? A player is considered out if:
 - A fielder from the opposite team catches the ball without it bouncing.
 - The wicket (cone) is knocked over before the player can get back to the area after running.
 - Pitcher can directly knock the wicket (cone) over from the pitch.

Coaching Points – HAVE FUN!

Activity 6: Shooting Technique

Organization

- Area: One 5 –yard goal per group.
- Split players into groups of three.
- One ball per group.
- Place two players either side of the goal, 30-yards apart and one inside the goal (GK).
- Activity: Players take it in turn to shoot on goal. Each player has 10 shots, then change the Goalkeepers.



Progression

1. Increase distances between players shooting.

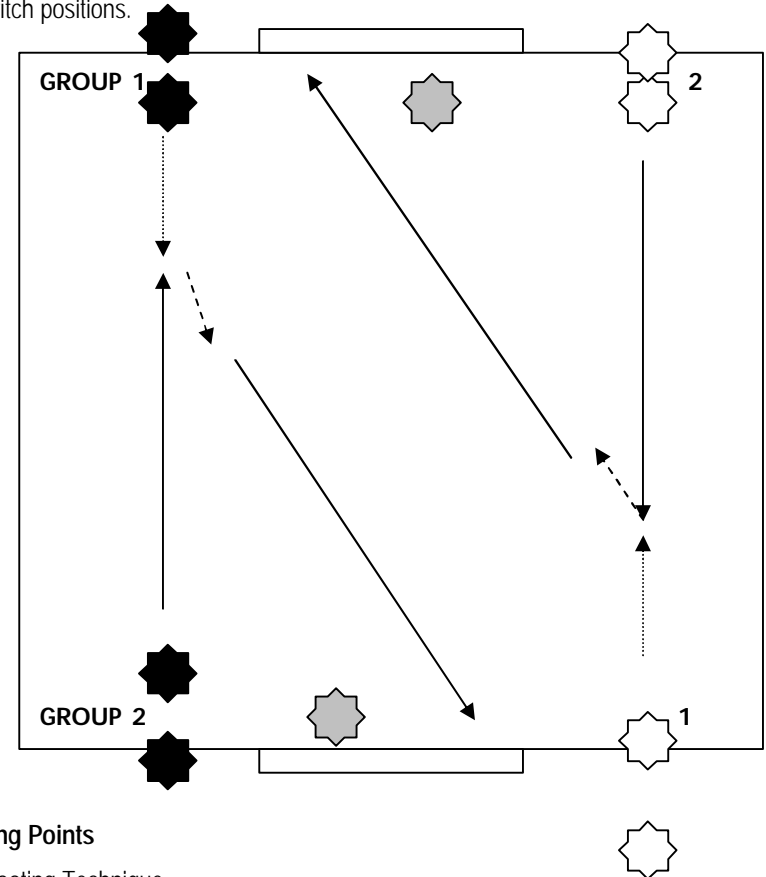
Coaching Points

- Shooting Technique.
- Take two touches, one to prepare for a shot and then shoot.
- Shoot across the goalkeeper.

Activity 7: Shooting Technique

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yard with two goals.
- Place 4 groups of players onto each post.
- Activity: Players work with their opposite groups. Play starts with players from group 2 passing into players' in-group 1. That player takes one touch to set them and shoot on goal. Switch positions.



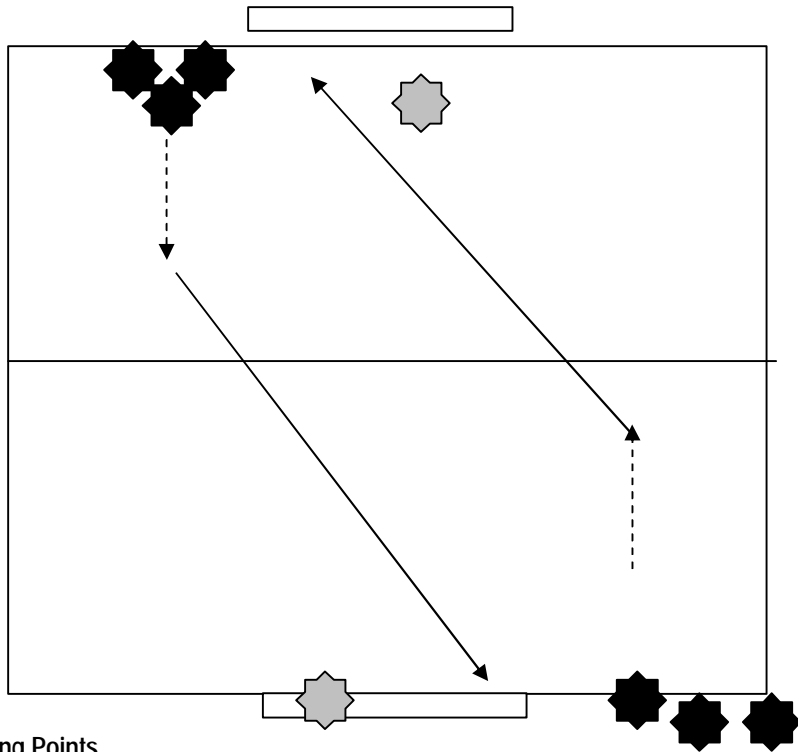
Coaching Points

- Shooting Technique.
- Use laces for power and inside of foot for accuracy.
- Good preparation touch.

Activity 8: Shooting off the Dribble

Organization

- Area: Two 18-yard boxes with two large goals.
- Split players into two teams with two goalkeepers.
- Place a team at both ends of the area.
- Activity: Players dribble towards the goal and shoot before they reach the centerline. Make into a competition after players are used to the Activity. First team to score three goals wins.



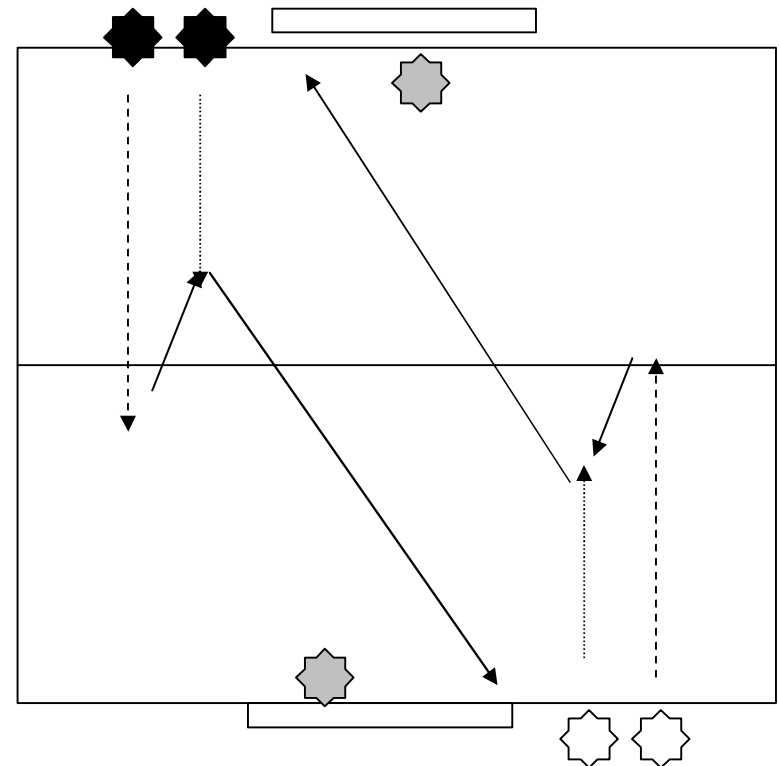
Coaching Points

- Shooting Technique.
- Good preparation touch of the dribble before shooting.
- Shoot across the GK.

Activity 8: Shooting from a Negative Pass

Organization

- Area: Two 18-yard boxes with two large goals.
- Split players into two teams with two goalkeepers.
- Place a team at both ends of the area.
- ACTIVITY: Two players go one behind the other, the first person dribbles the ball and back heels it for the second player to run onto and shoot. Make into a competition after players are used to the Activity. First team to score three goals wins.



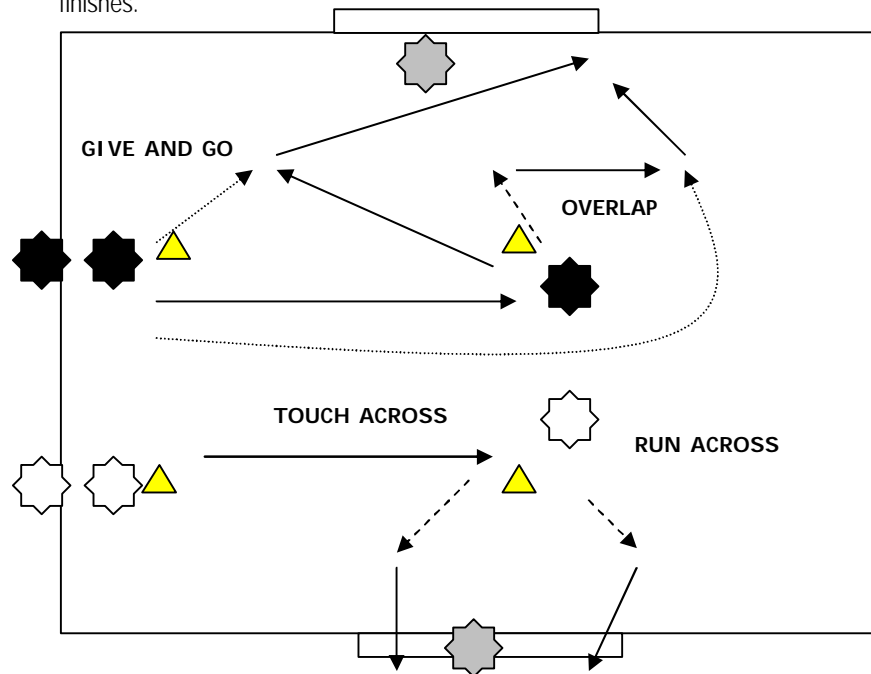
Coaching Points

- Angle of approach to the ball.
- Shooting Technique.

Activity 10: Shooting from Passing Combinations

Organization

- Area: 44 x 40-yards with two goals.
- Place players into 2 groups. Place a team on each cone as shown.
- ACTIVITY: One player makes a run to the cone turns and receives a pass.
- FINISHING VARIATION:
 1. Receiving player takes a touch across the cone and finishes.
 2. Receiving player lets the ball run across their body touches around the cone and finishes.
 3. Receiving player plays a give and go with the server who finishes.
 4. Receiving player dribbles back towards server, server overlaps, receives the ball and finishes.



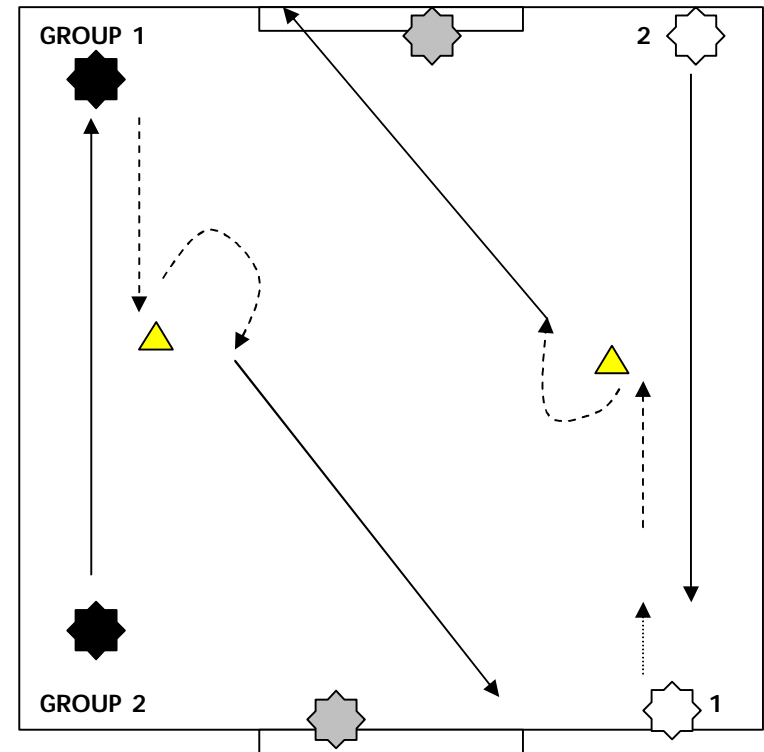
Coaching Points

- Shooting Technique.

Activity 11: Finishing out of a Move

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yard with two goals.
- Place 4 groups of players onto each post. Players work with opposite group.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with players from group 1 passing into players in group 2. That player receives the ball, dribbles to the center cone, does a move and finishes into the goal. Players then switch positions.



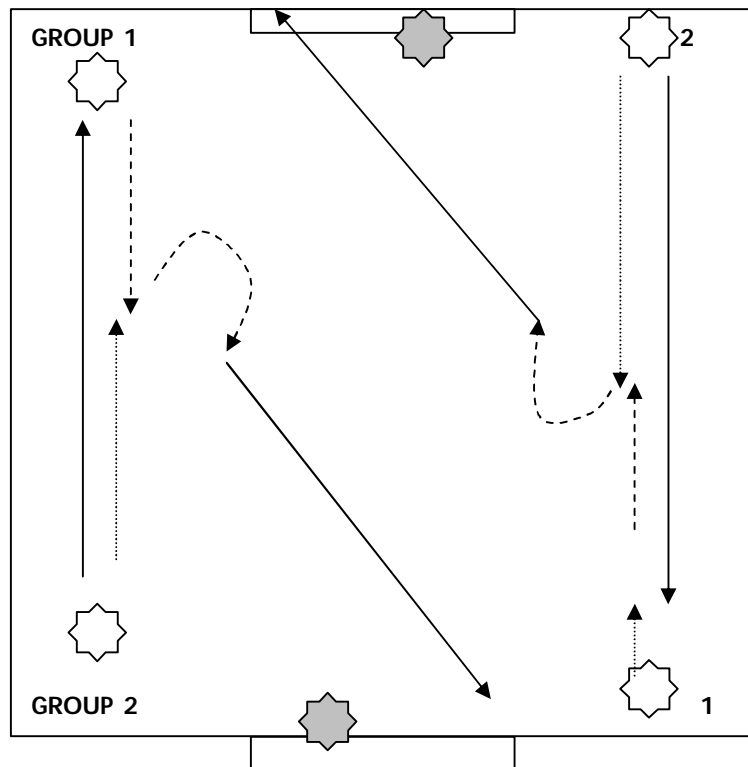
Coaching Points

- Shooting Technique.
- Dribble and do your move at speed.
- Good preparation touch out of your move.

Activity 12: 1 v 1 Finishing

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yard with two goals.
- Place 4 groups of players onto each post. Players work with opposite group.
- ACTIVITY: Players from group 1 pass into players in group 2 and defend. The receiving player then attacks. Play stops after a shot or the ball is won by the defender. Players then switch positions.



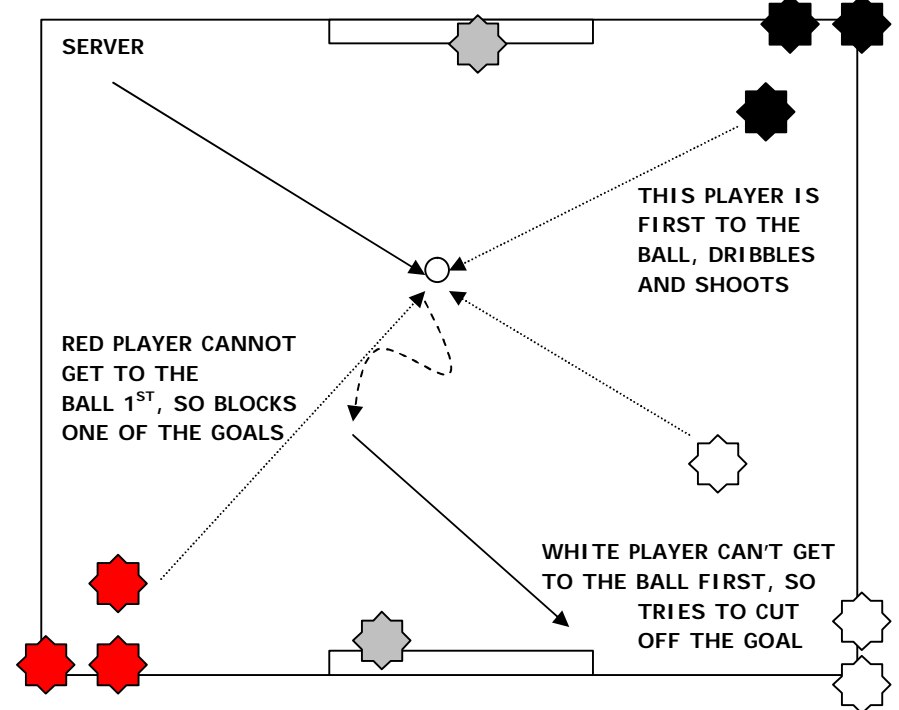
Coaching Points

- Shooting Technique.
- Dribble and do your move at speed.
- Good preparation touch out of your move.

Activity 13: 1 v 1 v 1 Finishing Under Pressure

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards with two goals.
- Place players into 3 teams.
- Place a team in each corner and a server in the last corner.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the server passing the ball into the area. As soon as the ball is passed the first player from each team enters the area. Players can score in any goal. Play does not stop until the ball leaves the area or a goal is scored.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition between teams. Highest score wins.



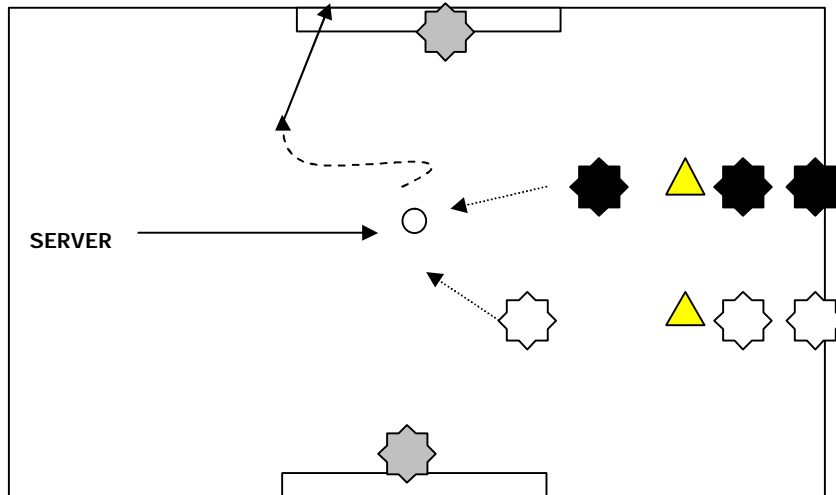
Coaching Points

- Shooting Technique. Good pre touch for shot.
- Cover ground as quickly as possible.

Activity 14: 1 v 1 Finishing Under Pressure

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with two goals.
- Place players into 2 teams.
- Place both teams in the center of the area on an sideline.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the server passing the ball into the area. As soon as the ball is passed the first player from each team enters the area. Players can score in any goal. Play does not stop until the ball leaves the area or a goal is scored.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition between teams. Highest score wins.



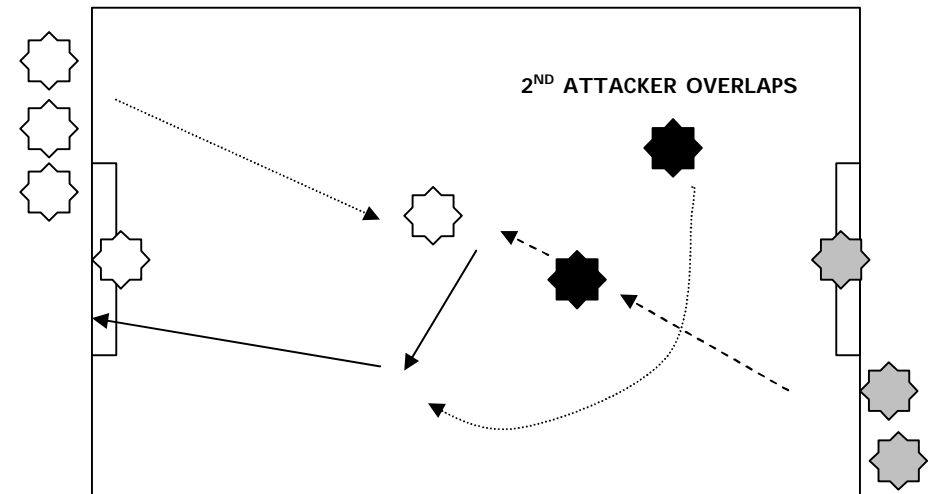
Coaching Points

- Shooting Technique.
- Cover ground as quickly as possible.
- Good pre touch for shot.
- First time shot if possible.

Activity 15: 2 v 1 Finishing

Organization

- Area: 30 x 30-yards with goals.
- Split players into two teams with goalkeepers.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the attacking team playing a passing combination. As soon as the ball is in play a defender from the opposing team can enter the area. Attackers must try to score in the opposing goal and if the defender wins the ball they can counter attack to the other goal. The ball is dead when the ball leaves the area or a goal is scored. Teams then switch attacking and defending roles.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition. First team to score 3 goals wins.



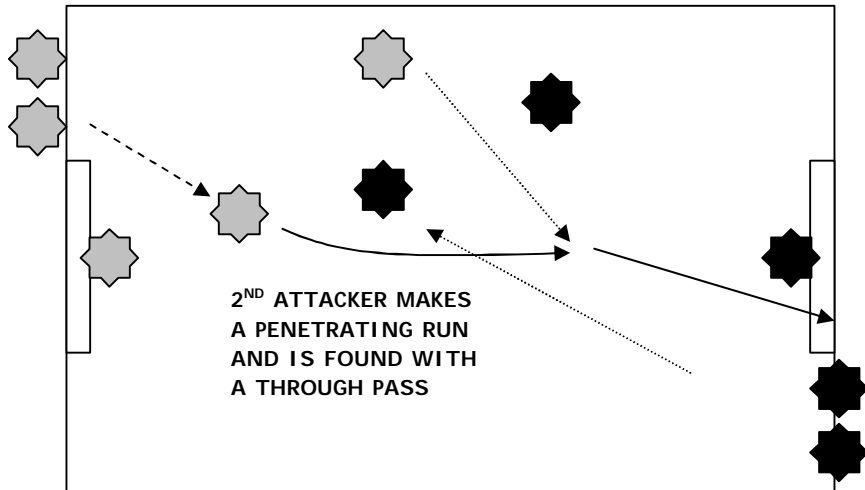
Coaching Points

- Role of 1st Attacker: When to penetrate or keep possession?
- Role of 2nd Attacker: Support in front, behind or to the side.
- Attacking Options: Penetrate by pass, dribble or shot, Give and Go, Take Over and Overlap.

Activity 16: 2 v 2 Finishing

Organization

- Area: 36 x 44-yards with goals.
- Split players into two teams with goalkeepers.
- ACTIVITY: Play starts with the attacking team playing a passing combination. As soon as the ball is in play two defenders from the opposing team can enter the area. Attackers must try to score in the opposing goal and if the defender wins the ball they can counter attack to the other goal. The ball is dead when the ball leaves the area or a goal is scored. Teams then switch attacking and defending roles.
- VARIATION: Make into a competition. First team to score 3 goals wins.



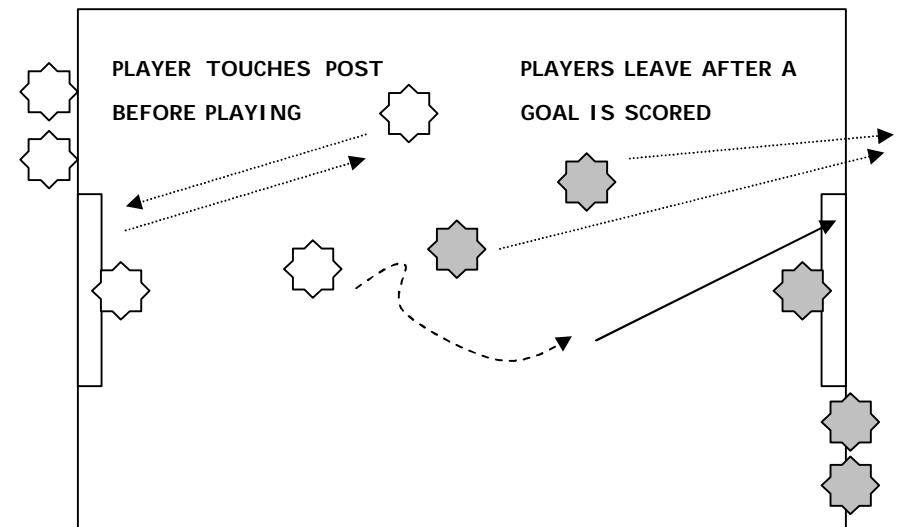
Coaching Points

- Role of 1st Attacker: When to penetrate or keep possession?
- Role of 2nd Attacker: Support in front, behind or to the side.
- Attacking Options: Penetrate by pass, dribble or shot, Give and Go, Take Over and Overlap

Activity 17: 2 v 2 Transition and Finishing

Organization

- Area: 36 x 44-yards with goals.
- Split players into two teams with goalkeepers.
- ACTIVITY: Activity starts with 2 players from each team in the area. Players are trying to score goals. If a team scores a goal they defend and the two losing players leave the area while two new players from the same team enter the area with a ball and try to score.
- VARIATION: A player from the scoring team must touch a post before being allowed to play.



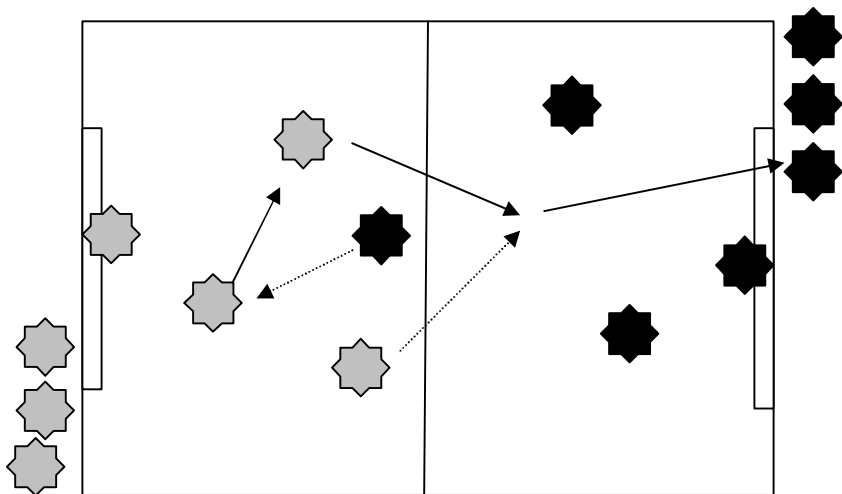
Coaching Points

- Role of 1st Attacker: When to penetrate or keep possession?
- Role of 2nd Attacker: Support in front, behind or to the side.
- Attacking Options: Penetrate by pass, dribble or shot, Give and Go, Take Over and Overlap.

Activity 18: 3 v 3 Transition and Finishing

Organization

- Area: 36 x 44-yards
- Split players into two teams with goalkeepers.
- ACTIVITY: Activity starts with 3 players from each team in the area. Players are trying to score goals. If a team scores a goal they defend and the three losing players leave the area while three new players from the same team enter the area with a ball and try to score.
- **VARIATIONS:**
 1. Players can only shoot from in their half.
 2. Players can only shoot in the oppositions half.
 3. Teams must have 3 passes before they can score.



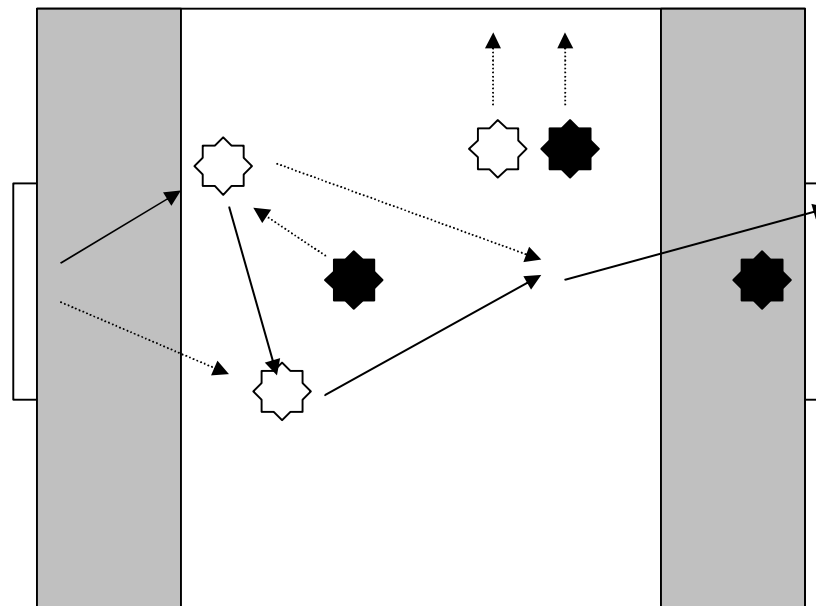
Coaching Points

- Role of 1st and 2nd attacker.
- Attacking Options: Penetrate by pass, dribble or shot, Give and Go, Take Over and Overlap.

Activity 19: 3 v 3 Finishing

Organization

- Area: 36 x 44 –yards with a 5 x 44-yard area at each end.
- Place players into teams of three. Each team can select a goalkeeper who can use their hands in their defensive zone.
- ACTIVITY: When a team is in possession the attacking teams goalkeeper can join in the attack while the defending team goalkeeper must drop back into goal, this will create a 3 v 2 advantages.



Coaching Points

- Role of 1st Attacker: When to penetrate or keep possession?
- Role of 2nd Attacker: Support in front, behind or to the side.
- Attacking Options: Penetrate by pass, dribble or shot, Give and Go, Take Over and Overlap.
- Finishing Technique. Laces for distance, inside of foot for accuracy.

DEFENDING SECTION



At the U9 & U10 age groups a coach should start to introduce the principles of defense to their players. What aspects of defense should a coach begin to teach? A coach at the U9 age group should begin to teach the principles of immediate pressure and delay. At the U10 age group we should start to master the aspects label above as well as introduce the concept of cover.

Principles of Defending

Immediate Pressure

The player closest to the ball applies immediate pressure. This player must determine whether they can immediately win on the ball, force the attacker into a mistake, or just delay the opponent. Often times the player losing possession may not directly recover the ball, but force the opponent to lose possession. Players applying immediate pressure can help delay an attack by making a recover run that denies the opponent the opportunity to play the ball forward.

Delay

Delaying the opponent's ability to play forward by applying pressure helps the defending team recover and organize. Delaying the opponent is the primary task of the pressuring defender closest to the ball. When delaying the opponent, defenders must be controlled in their approach and patient by not making a rash challenge, so that they are not beaten easily. During this time of delay, the pressuring defender may also attempt to dictate the direction that the attacker may go, through their positioning.

Cover

While the pressuring defender is attempting to delay the attack, all other players should be recovering into defensive positions. Most important are all those players giving cover to the pressuring defender. Covering players must take positions so that a pass, shot or dribbling opponent cannot easily penetrate them, should the pressuring defender be beaten. We refer to the role and function of these players as providing defensive cover.

Balance

As a team concentrates their defense in the area of the ball, defenders away from the ball (opposite side of the field) must position themselves to cover vital spaces (central areas), in order to prevent attackers from making penetrating runs into these spaces in which to receive the ball

for an attempt at goal. All players who are on the opposite side of the field must seek positions in which to provide balance to the defense.

Concentration

As players recover toward their own goal and organize their defense, the objective is to limit the time and space for the opponent by defenders concentrating their defense in the area of the ball. Defenders also recover centrally towards their goal in order to limit the opponent's ability to directly attack the goal. When teams concentrate their defense to the flank we refer to that as SQUEEZING. When stepping forward to meet the opponent we refer to that as PUSHING UP.

Control and Restraint

Players must be disciplined and play 'under control' when challenging for the ball. Too often players make poorly timed, off-balanced attempts to win the ball. Players should restrain from tackling until they are confident they will win the ball. Those players who rush in to challenge or over-commit to intercept a pass leave themselves and their teammates exposed. Recognizing when to challenge requires players to be in the correct defensive position and ready to act.

Roles and Responsibilities of Defenders

Pressure

- Players closest to the ball.
- Closest player applies pressure to the ball to regain possession if possible.
- Deny penetration of any kind.
- Select proper angle of challenge, depends on area of the field.
- Control speed of challenge.

Cover

- Can be several players.
- Provide cover for pressuring defender.
- Select proper angle of cover.
- Maintain proper distance of cover: should provide the opportunity to close down immediately / challenge for the ball if pressuring defender is beaten.
- Responsible for tracking attacking players making forward runs.

Balance

- Remaining players.
- Squeeze towards center of the field to 'lock up' vital areas.
- Track attacking players away from the area of the ball.
- Maintain balance (shape) of team defensively.

Depth

- Collective play of all players.
- Pressure, cover and balance together provide depth in defense.
- Organization of defending between the various lines (defending / midfield).

How and when to tackle

When the pressuring defender does try to win the ball from an attacker, there are three main ways they can tackle. These are the Poke Tackle, the Block Tackle and the Slide Tackle.

Poke Tackle

When is the Poke Tackle used?

A defender uses the poke tackle when an attacker is dribbling directly at them. The defender waits until the correct moment, usually when the attacker pushes the ball out a little too far, and then uses their front foot to poke the ball out of the path of the attacker and into space. Experienced and highly skilled defenders can use the poke tackle to pass the ball to a teammate.

Coaching Points

- Use the front foot to poke at the ball.
- Weight should be on the back leg.
- Use the back foot for balance.
- Never put weight on the front foot when tackling! If the defender misses the ball, he / she will be off balance and unable to recover quickly.

Problem Areas

- Player dives in and puts all weight onto the front foot – defender is now off-balance and unable to recover.
- Challenge is miss timed – defender becomes impatient, does not wait for a mistake and dives in.

Block Tackle

When is a Block Tackle used?

A block tackle can be used in two situations. One: In a 50 – 50 challenge. Two: When an attacker is dribbling and has pushed the ball out too far. In both situations, the defender must time their challenge and must connect with the ball at the same moment as the attacker.

Coaching Points

- Timing of the challenge.
- Defender can block with either foot depending on the side of the ball.
- Blocking Leg:
 - Muscles in the leg must be tensed.
 - Toes pointing slightly up.
 - Ankle locked.
- Foot should be slightly off the ground and hit the middle of the ball.
- Player should power through the ball.

Problem Areas

- Toes are not pointed up and ankle is not locked. Attacking player is able to push through the ball and come out with it.
- Tackling foot is on the ground when challenging. Attacker strikes through the middle of the ball, the ball goes over the defenders foot and the attacker comes out with the ball.
- Miss-timed challenge! Going too late into a challenge results in a free kick.

Slide Tackle

When is a Slide Tackle used?

The slide tackle is a pressuring defender's last resort! The attacking player has usually beaten the defender on the dribble or got to the ball first in a chase. The defender must now recover, try

to challenge in a way that will win the ball, and not result in a free kick. The defender recovers to the side or just behind the defender, he /she dives to the ground (feet first), slides onto the side of the thigh, reaches forward with the correct foot and knocks the ball out of the attacker's path. Experienced and highly skilled defenders can time a slide challenge to connect with the ball the same time as the attacker (like a block tackle), stand up and come away with the ball.

Coaching Points

- Slide to the side of the attacker.
- Slide sideways onto the side of the thigh.
- Make yourself as long as possible to get your challenging foot in front of the attacker.
- Which foot to challenge with? If the attacker is on the defender's right hand side, the player should look to slide onto their right thigh and win the ball with their left foot.

Problem Areas

- Defender slides straight into the attacker resulting in a free kick.
- Defender doesn't get full extension when sliding.
- Defender miss-times the challenge again resulting in a free kick!

Decision to Tackle

This is probably the most difficult part of defending, especially for young players, knowing when to challenge an attacker and making the correct decision. Although difficult, there are many visual cues that attackers give as well as verbal cues that teammates can give to aid this decision. Below are cues that defenders should act upon and try to win the ball:

1. Attacker misplays the ball, either controlling touch or when dribbling.
2. Attackers attempted pass, long or short, does not have enough pace to get to its target. Defenders in this situation should look to either make a challenge as the ball gets to its target or look to intercept.
3. Defender has forced the attacker to get their head down and look at the ball. Great time to make a challenge.
4. Attacker is within shooting distance. Defender should be looking to put a challenge in to stop the shot on goal.
5. There is a covering defender in a good position and has communicated to the pressuring defender to challenge the ball.

Again the above situations can come at any point during the game. The coach's role is to teach defenders how to recognize these situations and use the correct challenge to win the ball.

PRESSURE DEFENDING

The concepts of pressure defending are covered in this section of the manual. These principles are age appropriate for U9's and U10's. How many defending training sessions should I hold at each age group? I would gradually introduce defending, 1 session per season at U9 and 2 sessions at U10.

Coaching Points

- Speed of approach, cover ground quickly and slower as you get close.
- Angle of approach.
- Body shape, force attacker in one direction, making play predictable, either into the covering defenders or towards the sideline.
- Foot position.
- Never flat footed, feet should always be moving.
- DELAY the attacker, do not commit or dive in.
- Deny turn.
- Decision to tackle: Poke, Block or Slide (see appropriate coaching points)!
- Recovery Run: move into the space in front of the attacker before applying pressure.
- Decision-Making: When to tackle / when to delay. Depends on surroundings.

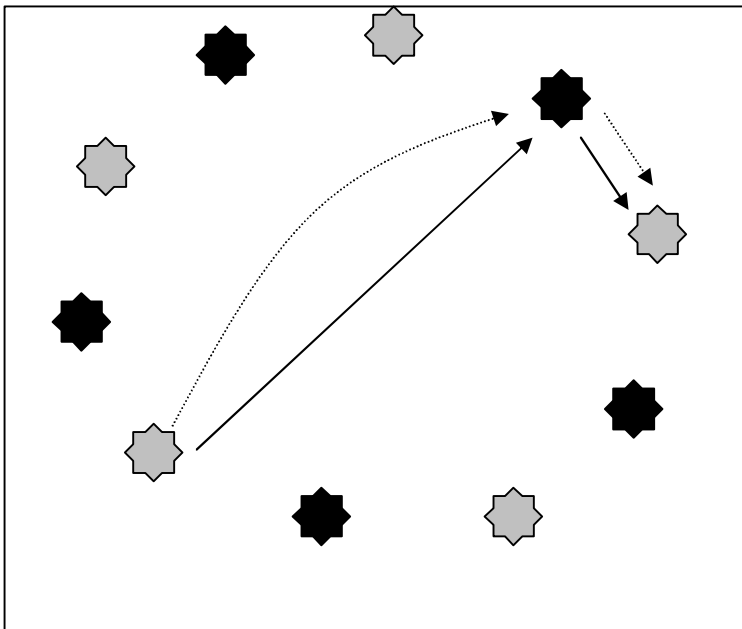
Problem Areas

- Approach is too straight, defender gives attacker two options.
- Speed of approach is too fast and the defender cannot adjust to any change of direction made by the attacker.
- Defender becomes flat-footed and cannot adjust to attackers movements.
- Recovery Run is towards attacker instead of into space in front. This allows the attacker to move his / her body in between the ball and the defender.
- Bad Decision-Making: Player tries to win the ball in the wrong area or when he/she has no covering defenders.

Activity 1: Pressuring Technique

Organization

- Area: Place players into a large circle.
- Start with one ball.
- Activity: Player with the ball passes to anyone in the circle, once they have passed they make a curved run (as if to close that player down defensively) and force the player to pass to a person next to them. The player who receives the second pass continues the drill. Players follow their passes.
- VARIATION: Once players are used to the drill add another ball.



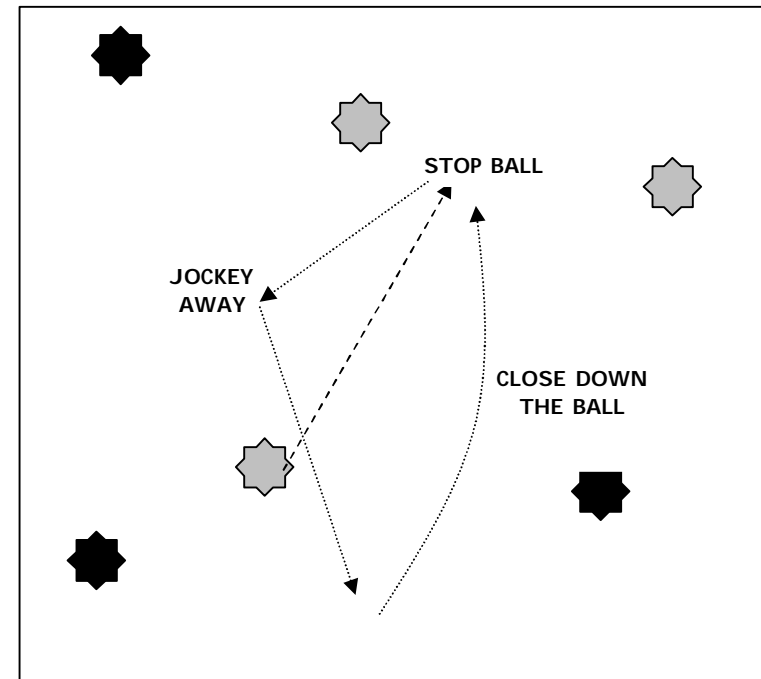
Coaching Points

- Pressuring Defender Technique.
- Execution at full speed.
- Angle of approach.

Activity 2: Pressuring Technique / Jockeying Technique

Organization

- Area: Unrestricted.
- Each player needs a ball.
- Activity: Players start by dribbling around the area. After 3 or 4 touches on the ball the player stops the ball, jockeys away from it one way and then the other, stops, closes down their own ball, stops at the ball and then continues to dribble. Continue.



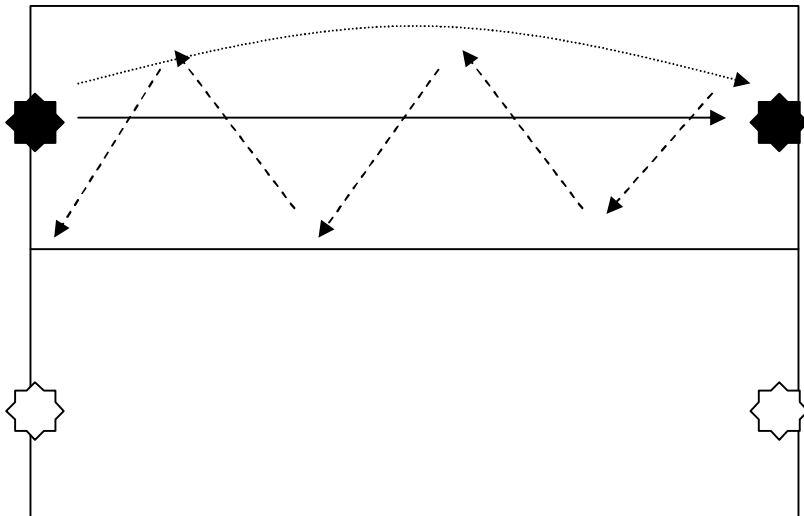
Coaching Points

- Pressuring Defender Technique.
- Jockeying Technique.

Activity 3: Defensive Stance / Jockeying Technique

Organization

- Area: 20 x 5-yard lanes per pair.
- Split players into pairs, one ball between two.
- Place players opposite each other.
- Activity: Player 1 passes into 2 and closes down. Player 2 dribbles in a zigzag while player 1 takes a defensive stance and jockeys all the way back to the end line. Players switch roles and continue.
- VARIATION: Attackers are trying to get past the defender. Defenders cannot challenge and must try to force attackers to make a mistake.



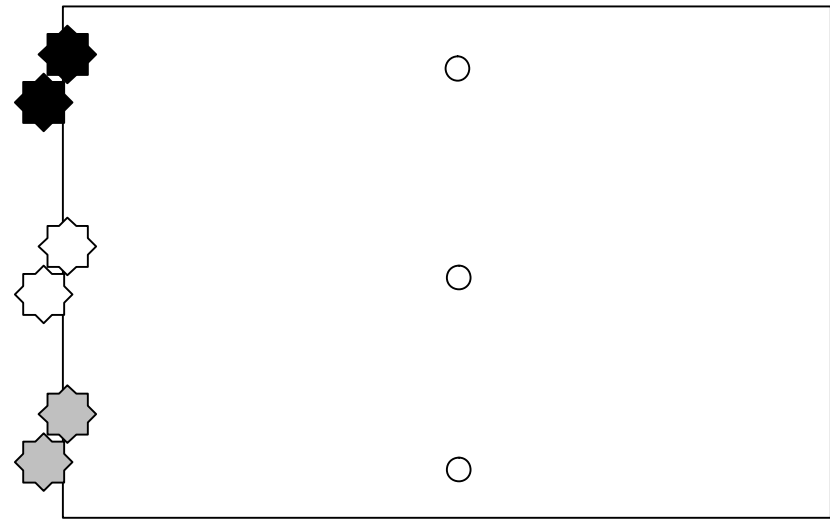
Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique.
- Jockeying Technique.
- Touch Tight. Close enough to the attacker that you can just touch them.
- Fake to steal ball with front foot. Try to force mistakes.

Activity 4: Defensive Stance / Jockeying Technique

Organization

- Area: 20 x 10 yards.
- Split players into pairs, one ball between two.
- Place players on the same line and the ball in the center of the grid.
- Activity: Upon the coaches shout of 'GO' both players sprint to the ball. Players play for one minute. Players are trying to keep possession of the ball. Player with the ball at the end of one minute wins.



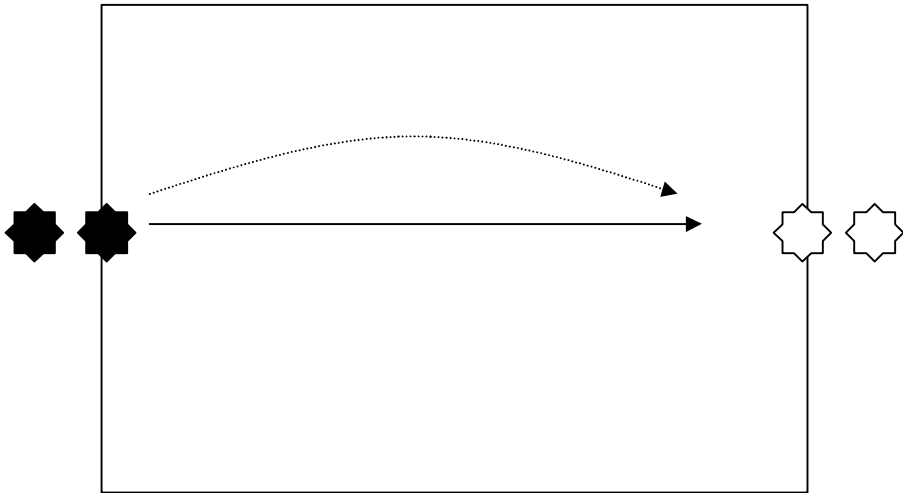
Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique from behind. Same stance etc as defending from front.
- Defender must be able to see the ball at all times.
- Jockeying Technique.
- Touch Tight. Close enough to the attacker that you can just touch them.
- Fake to steal ball with front foot. Try to force mistakes.

Activity 5: 1 v 1 Pressure Defending Technique

Organization

- Area: 10 x 15-yard.
- Four players per area.
- Place players opposite each other.
- Activity: Defender starts with the ball. Play starts with the defender passing into the attacker. The attacker must try and get past the defender and across his / her end line in control of the ball. The defender has to win the ball and dribble across the attacker's end line. Players switch positions when the ball is dead. Continue.



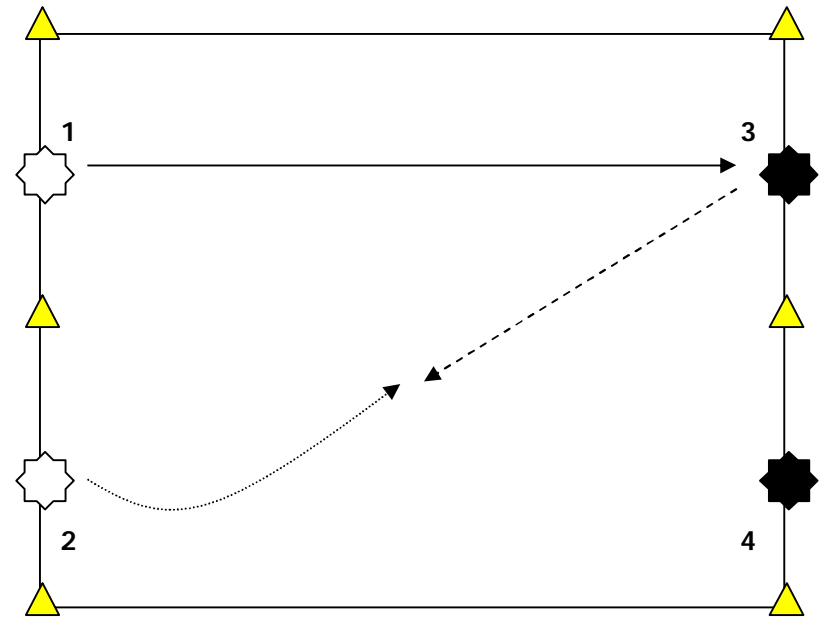
Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique.
- Jockeying Technique.
- Touch Tight.
- Fake to steal ball with front foot. Try to force mistakes.

Activity 6: 1 v 1: Making Play Predictable

Organization

- Area: 20 x 10-yards, divide the end line into two.
- Four players per area.
- Place players in between the cones on each end line.
- Activity: Player 1 plays a pass to 3. As soon as the ball is passed Player 2 closes down player 3. Player 3's objective is to get past player 2 towards their side of the grid. When the ball is dead player 2 and 3 switch positions. Player 3 then plays a pass to player 4 who attacks player 1's position. Continue.



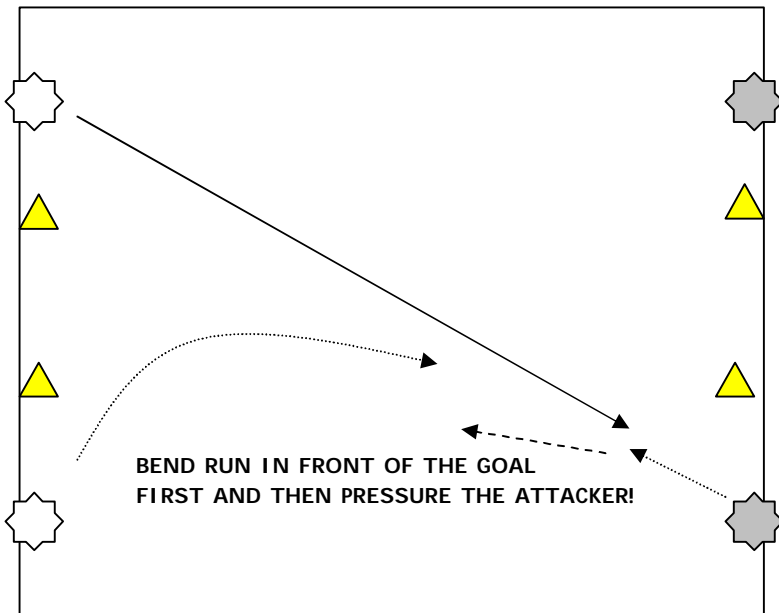
Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique.
- Apply pressure (don't dive in) and fake to steal the ball (force mistakes).

Activity 7: 1 v 1: Pressuring away from goal

Organization

- Area: 20 x 10-yards, with two small goals.
- Four players per area.
- Activity: Play starts with a player from one side of the area passing to a player on the opposite side. The player receiving the ball is the attacker; the player opposite is the defender. To score the attacker must shoot into the small goal. If the defender wins the ball, they can counter attack and score in the opposite goal.



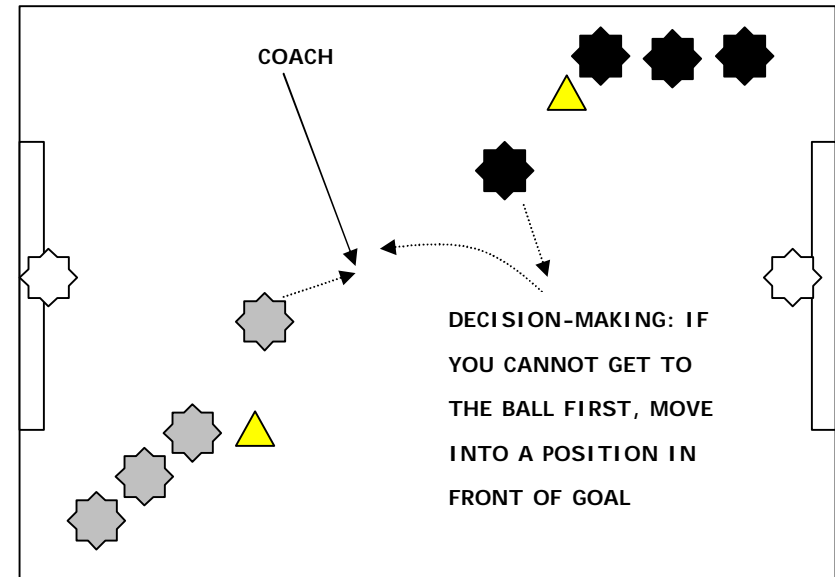
Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique.
- Apply pressure (don't dive in) and fake to steal the ball (force mistakes).
- Curve your run into the attacker but make sure to cover the goal.

Activity 8: 1 v 1 with a GK: Pressuring away from goal

Organization

- Area: 18-yard box with two small counter attack goals.
- Station the defenders on the edge of the 6-yard box.
- Station attackers on the edge of the 18-yard area.
- Activity: Attackers start with the ball. Play starts with the attacker dribbling into the area. As soon as the attacker enters the area the defender can apply pressure. To score attackers must shoot into the goal. If the defender wins the ball they attack the other goal. Continue.



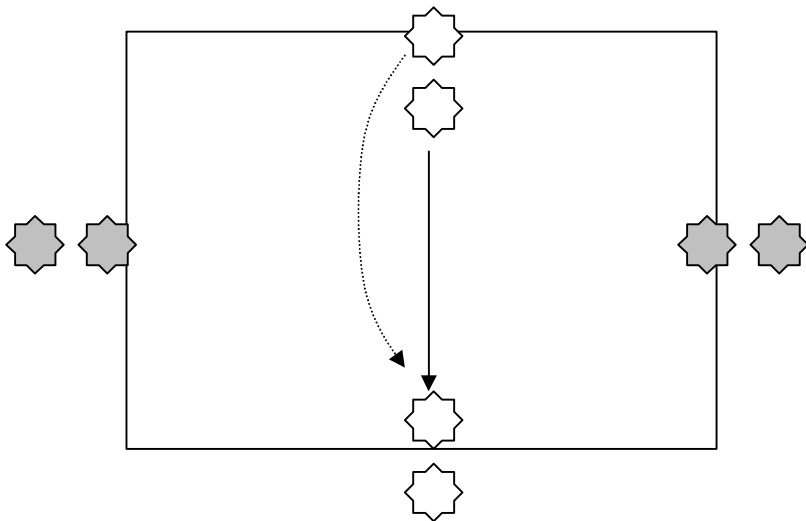
Coaching Points

- Apply pressure (don't dive in) and fake to steal the ball (force mistakes).
- Cover the goal when applying pressure don't allow any shots on goal.
- Force the attacker away from goal.

Activity 9: Closing Down and Defending from Behind

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yard.
- Split players into four groups and place a group on each end line.
- Activity 1: Basic 1 v 1. Players facing each other are working together. The player with the ball is the defender and the player opposite is the attacker. The defender passes to the attacker and the ball is live. The attacker is trying to get to the opposite end line. The defender is trying to win the ball. One group goes then the other. Continue.
- Activity 2: The defender stands behind the attacker. The defender passes through the attacker's legs and the ball is live. The attacker is trying to turn and get back to their line. The defender is trying to win the ball and move across the opposite line. Both players move across the opposite line when the ball is dead. Continue.



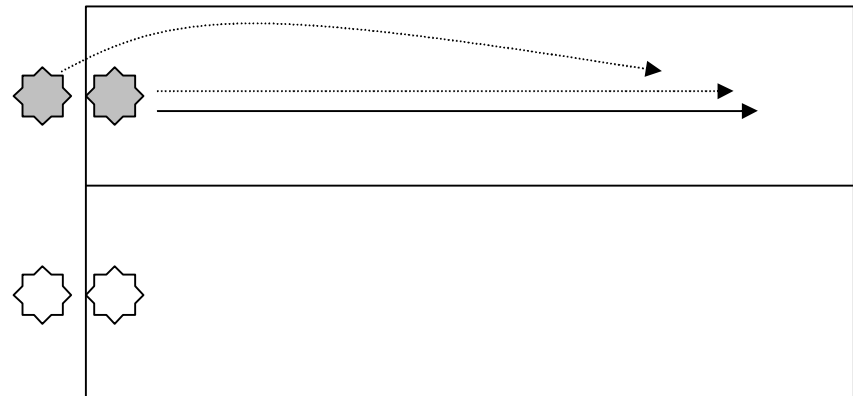
Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique.
- Closing Down from Behind Technique.

Activity 10: Closing Down and Defending from Behind

Organization

- Area: 20 x 5-yard lanes per pair.
- Split players into pairs, one ball between two.
- Place both players on the same end line.
- Activity: Player 1 stands directly in front of player 2, both players facing forward. Player 2 passes the ball through player 1's legs and into the area. Player 1 runs to retrieve the ball while player 2 closes them down from behind. Player 2 then forces player 1 to dribble back to the opposite end line. Player 1 starts by playing passive. Switch roles and continue.
- VARIATION: Attackers are now trying to turn and get back to the starting position with the ball. Defenders cannot challenge and must try and force mistakes.



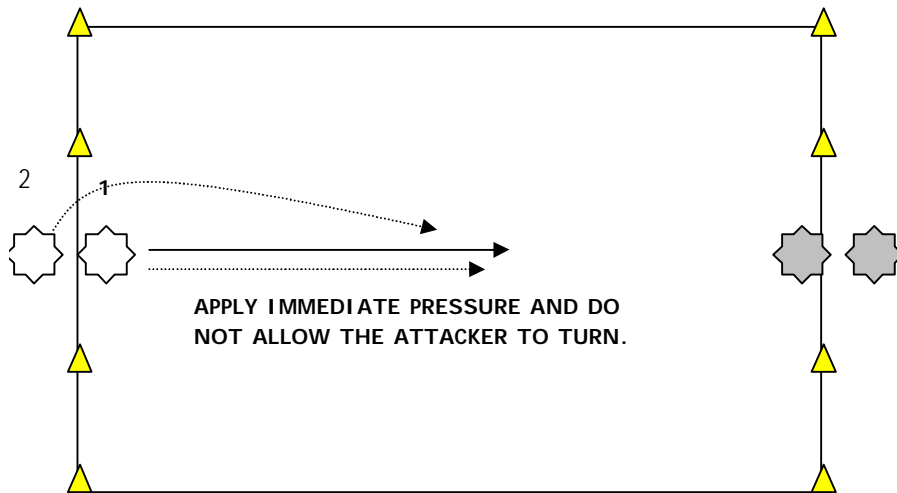
Coaching Points

- Apply pressure quickly.
- Get touch tight to the attacker. Arms length away from the attacker.
- Don't allow the attacker to turn. Force them backwards by apply pressure.
- Get low, you should be able to see the ball at all times.

Activity 11: 1 v 1 Closing Down and Defending from behind

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards, with small goals in each corner.
- Place players into pairs. Place two groups at either end of the grid.
- One ball between two.
- Activity: Player 1 stands directly in front of player 2, both players facing forward. Player 2 passes the ball through player 1 legs and into the area. Player 1 runs to retrieve the ball while player 2 closes them down from behind. Player 1 has to try and score into one of the goals behind them. Player 2 has to steal the ball and score in one of the goals in front of them. When the ball is dead the players from the opposite side of the area go.



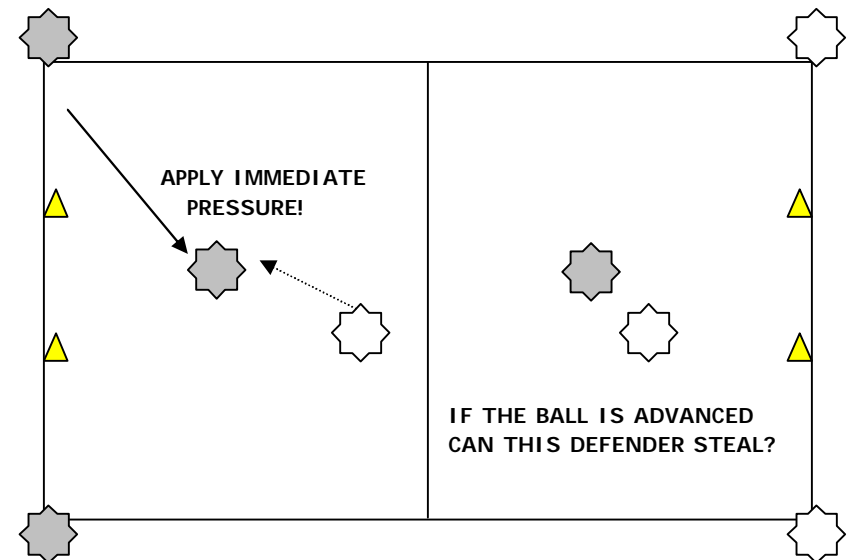
Coaching Points

- Apply pressure quickly.
- Get touch tight to the attacker. Arms length away from the attacker.
- Don't allow the attacker to turn. Force them backwards.
- Get low, you should be able to see the ball at all times.

Activity 12: 1 v 1 + 1 v 1: All pressuring aspects

Organization

- Area: 40 x 20-yards split into two with two small goals as shown.
- Eight players per grid. Split into two teams.
- Place a player from each team in each half of the grid. Players are not allowed to leave their areas. Place the two other players from each team in the corners behind the goal they are defending, these players are servers.
- DRILL: Play starts with a server passing into a teammate. The player receiving has to advance the ball into the next area and into their teammate who has to try and score in the small goal. If the defending team wins the ball they attack the opposite goal. Continue. Rotate player roles.



Coaching Points

- Pressure Defender Technique.
- Jockeying Technique.
- Defending from behind.
- Keep all attackers in view.

COVER DEFENDING

It is my belief that at the recreational level cover defending should only be introduced at the U10 age group. Do not expect your players to master the role of cover defending. At this level be prepared to just introduce the concept of defensive cover and the correct terminology.

Coaching Points

- Angle of cover, staggered behind pressure defender.
- Distance of support, should be in a position that if the pressure defender is beaten, they can transition over and become the pressure defender.
- Can the covering defender intercept the pass?
- Track runs of attackers off the ball.
- Share workload / exchange roles. Defenders should move as the ball moves and not once the pass has been completed.
- Communication: Recognize visual cues from 1st defender as well as providing verbal information.
- Defensive Triangle: Ball, yourself, and attacking player off the ball.

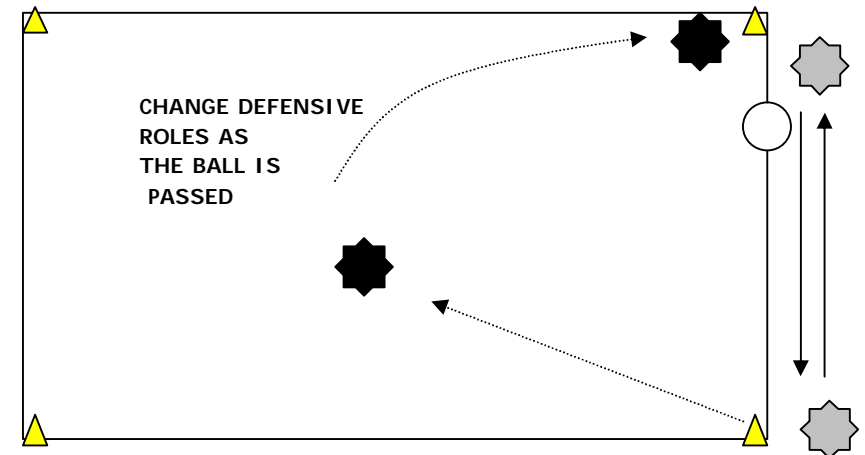
Problem Areas

- Distance of support is too close / both defenders can be easily beaten by a penetrating pass, dribble or shot!
- No communication between defenders: pressure defender forces attacker into open space instead of into covering defender.
- Defenders do not work as a team: one defender is constantly chasing the ball and allows attackers to pull defenders out of position.
- Defenders do not change roles quickly enough and allow attackers to penetrate.

Activity 1: Painting a Picture! Pressure and Cover Defending

Organization

- Area: 10 x 10-yards.
- Four players per area.
- Place two players inside the area (defenders) and two players on the outside (attackers) as shown.
- Activity: Players on the outside pass back and forth to each other, they must take at least two touches. The defenders inside the area must apply pressure and cover as shown. After 10 passes the two attackers jog to the cones opposite and enter the area as defenders. The defenders take the attackers positions and begin to pass. Continue.



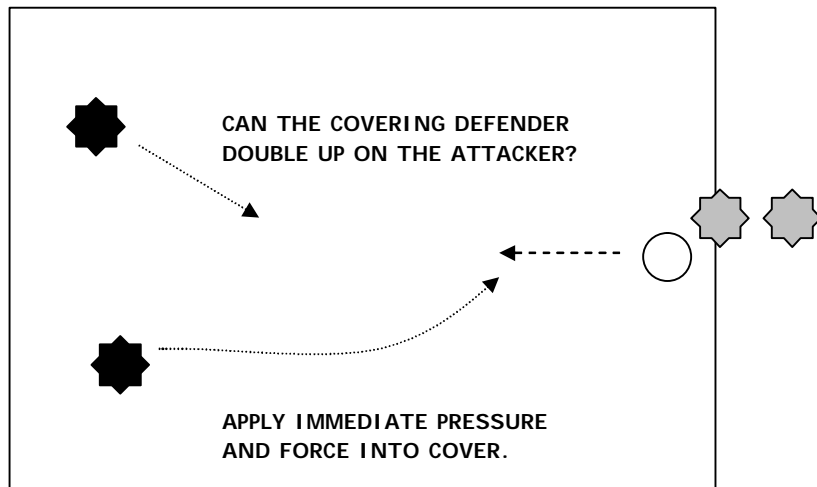
Coaching Points

- Pressure and Covering Defender Technique.
- Pressure defender must force the attacker inside.
- Covering defender must position themselves so they cannot be beaten by a penetrating pass, dribble or shot.
- Switch roles and the ball moves.

Activity 2: Pressure and Cover Defending

Organization

- Area: 20 x 20-yards.
- Place players into two teams and place a team on opposite sides of the area. Players on one side are defenders and the other side are attackers.
- Activity: Play starts with the attacker dribbling into the area. To score the attacker must beat the defenders and get to their end line in control of the ball. Defenders score by winning the ball and dribbling across the attacker's end line. First team to score 3 goals wins. Rotate player roles and continue.



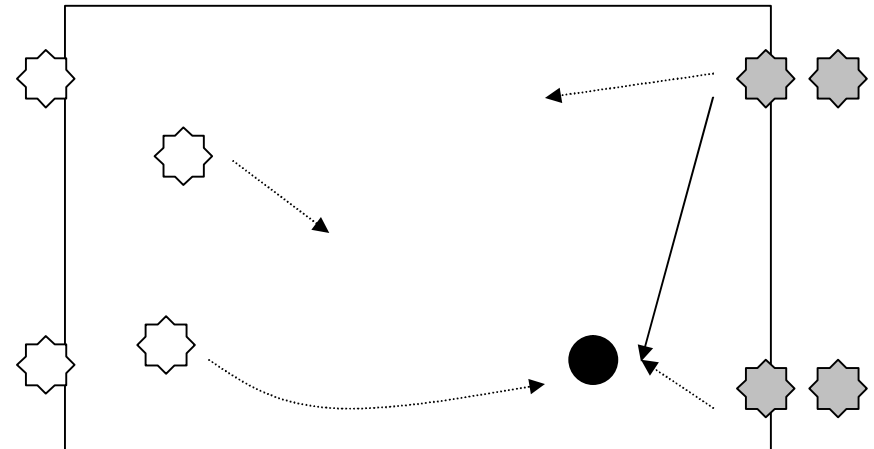
Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique and Covering Defender Technique.
- Pressure defender must force the attacker inside and into the covering defender.
- When the attacker has their head down and the ball is stopped the covering defender should look to double up on the attacker.

Activity 3: 2 v 2: Pressure and Cover Defending

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards.
- Place players into two teams and place a team on opposite sides of the area. Players on one side are defenders and the other side are attackers.
- Activity: Play starts with the attackers playing a passing combination. As soon as the ball is passed the defenders can enter the area and apply pressure. Attackers score by advancing the ball across the end line and the ball must be under control to score. Defenders score by winning the ball and dribbling across the attacker's end line. First team to score 3 goals wins. Rotate player roles and continue.



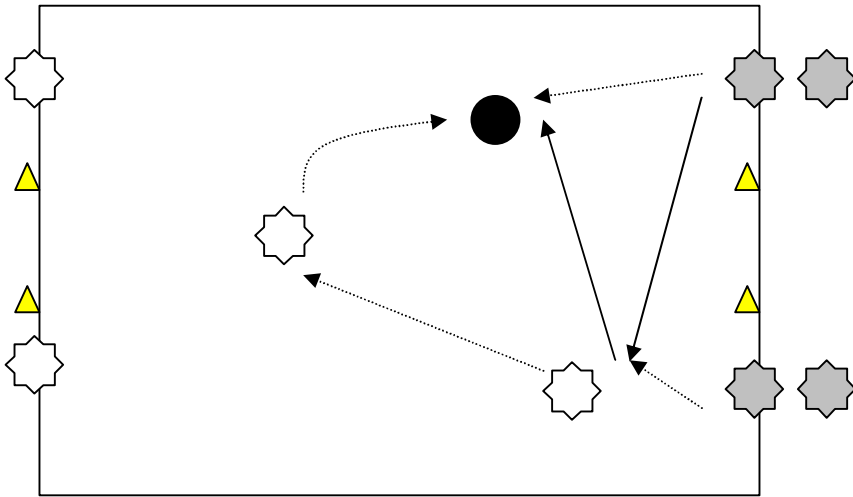
Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique.
- Covering Defender Technique.
- Pressure defender must force the attacker inside and into cover.
- Covering defender must position themselves so they cannot be beaten by a penetrating pass or the attacker dribbling.

Activity 4: 2 v 2: Pressure and Cover Defending to Goal

Organization

- Area: 20 x 30-yards with two small goals.
- Place players into two teams and place a team on opposite sides of the area. Players on one side are defenders and the other side are attackers.
- Activity: Play starts with the attackers playing a passing combination. As soon as the ball is passed the defenders can enter the area and apply pressure. Attackers score by shooting into the small goal. Defenders score by winning the ball and scoring in the opposite small goal. First team to score 3 goals wins. Rotate player roles and continue.



Coaching Points

- Pressure Defending Technique.
- Covering Defender Technique.
- Pressure defender must force the attacker inside and into cover.
- Covering defender must position themselves so they cannot be beaten by a penetrating pass or the attacker dribbling.

Example's Section

Example Goal Setting Form

When completing this form I referenced the advice given in the Coaching Topics section. From there I chose the aspects of the game I thought my players could cope with and placed them into the goals section. The next step was to put a time line on the skills. I did this by thinking about the difficulty of the skill.

COACH: Paul Thomas	
TEAM: U9 NORTHVILLE STING	
DATE: 01.01.2006	
GOALS	TIME FRAME
Teach players to pass the ball over short distances with the inside of the foot.	6.1.2006
Teach players to receive the ball on the ground with the inside of the foot	6.1.2006
Teach players the difference between dribbling & running with the ball	6.1.2006
Teach my players the two fakes	6.1.2006
Teach my players how to shield the ball	6.1.2006
Teach my players two turns	6.1.2006

This should be a flexible document that changes with your players. You may go to your first session and realize that your players are to advance for the skills or not advanced enough to complete the skills. Change the goals accordingly.

Example Season Plan

When making a season plan you should make sure that you work off the goals you have set for your players. Plan the season so you and your players can gain success with learning the skills outlined. The example given below is based on the goals I set for my team, written above.

WEEK NUMBER	PRACTICE TOPIC
1	Dribbling Technique
2	Dribbling & Turning Technique
3	Dribbling & Turning Technique
4	Dribbling & Turning Technique
5	Dribbling & Moves
6	Dribbling & Moves
7	Running with the Ball
8	Running with the Ball
9	Passing Technique
10	Running with the Ball
11	Finishing Session

As with goal setting this plan should be a flexible document and should be adapted to any changes you make to the goals set for your team.

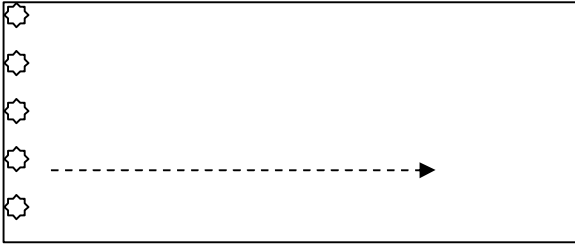
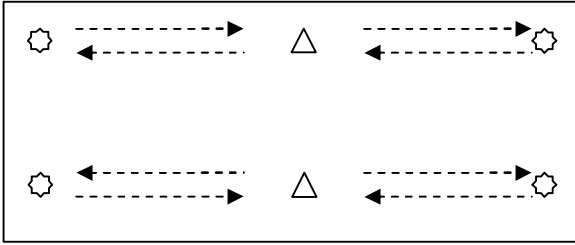
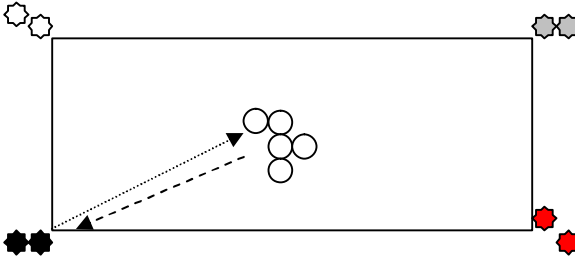
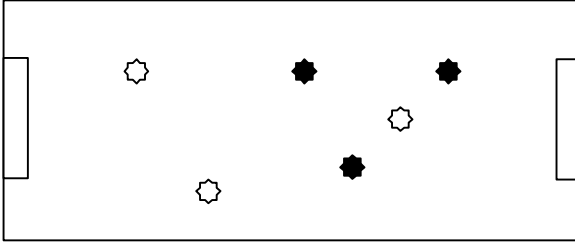
Session Plan Examples

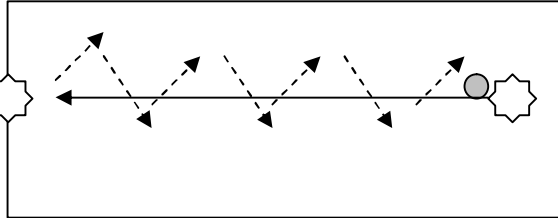

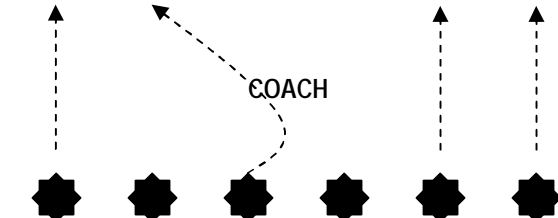
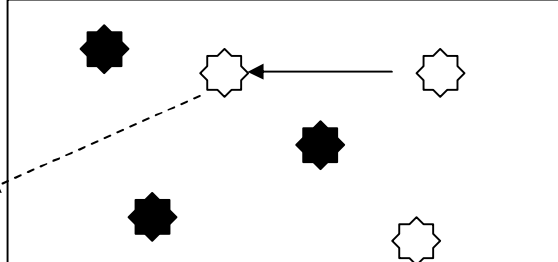
The session plans included in this section give you good examples of what different sessions should look like for these age groups. Step by Step Instructions on how to plan a session are:

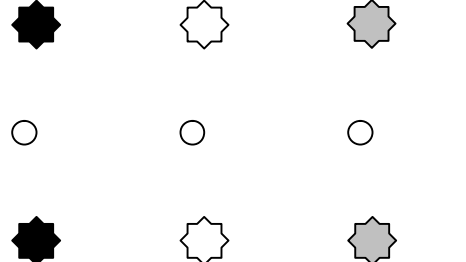
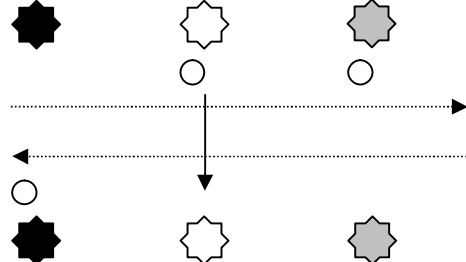
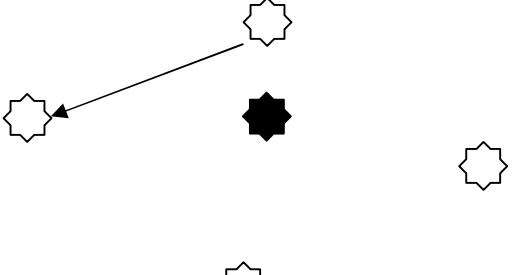
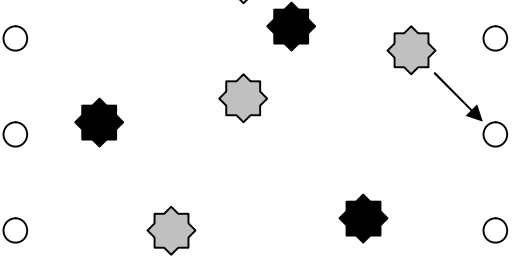
1. Topic: Chose a topic that fits the age group. Look at the 'goals for a coach' section.
2. Activities: Look through the activities given in the booklet that fit the topic you have chosen.
3. Activity Progression: Move from easy to hard in your progression. Look at the activity descriptions and place the activities into the session plan.

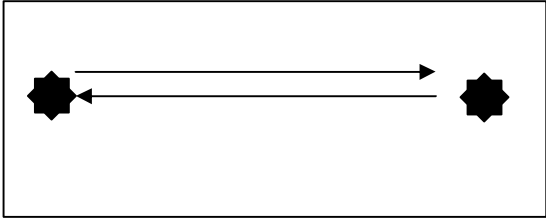
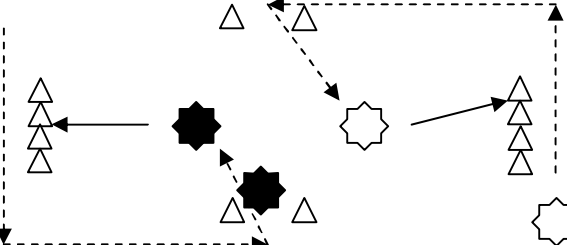
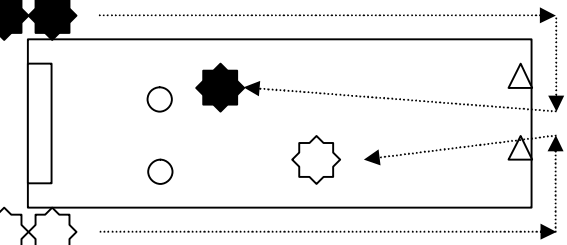
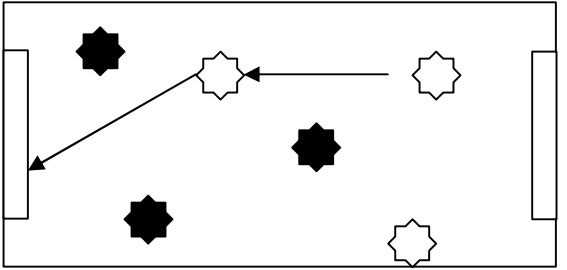
Remember always take a copy of your practice plan to the training session and read through it before the start of the session. This will refresh your memory before you hold the session. Also, don't be afraid to deviate from the planned session if it is not running smoothly or the children are not enjoying the activities.

NOTE: The details on how to plan a training session is in the coach's organization section of the manual. This section is to give you an idea of what a practice plan should look like. It also gives you a simple way of filling out you log book.

Organization	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>Dribbling Technique Area: 20 x 20-yards. Place players on an end line with soccer balls.</p> <p>Activity: 1. When the coach shouts 'GO' players should dribble to the opposite end line and stop the ball on the line. 2. Race to opposite end. Players still have to stop the ball on the line.</p>		<p>Dribbling Technique:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use laces to dribble; point toes down and slightly inward. Players should keep the ball close: touch, step, touch, step, rhythm. Knees bent, get low to the ball. Cover ground as quickly as possible.
<p>Turning Technique Area: 10 x 20 yards per pair with a cone in the center Place players into groups of 2, each player needs a ball</p> <p>Activity: Players dribble into the center cone at the same time, complete a turn and dribble back. Continue</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Above. Sole Turn Technique Inside Cut Outside Cut
<p>Bedrock Barbeque Area: 20 x 20-yards Place players into 4 groups. Place a group in each corner. Place all the soccer balls in the center of the grid.</p> <p>Activity: 2. Players retrieve ball and dribble back to area. Team with all their balls back first wins. One player at a time goes. 3. Same as above but when all balls have gone they can steal from different groups. No challenging allowed.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Above. Complete a turn when retrieving the ball.
<p>3 v 3 to two small goals Area: 20 x 25 yards with two small goals. Split players into two teams.</p> <p>Activity: Play 3 v 3 to small goals with no goalkeepers. All soccer rules apply.</p> <p>NOTE: if players are not getting enough touches through another ball in.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Above.

Organization	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>Running with the Ball Technique Area: 5 x 10 yards per group. Place players into pairs, 1 ball between two. Activity: Pass to attacker, attacker dribbles and defender jockeys back to the line. Switch. Players do not tackle each other! Everything is done passive.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressure Defender Technique.
<p>1 v 1 Area: 10 x 10 Place players into groups of 2, 1 ball per pair. Activity: 1 player is the defender and 1 is the attacker. Attacker is trying to dribble past the defender to the end line. Defender is trying to steal the ball. Continue until ball is dead and then switch roles.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Above. Delay. Speed and angle of approach. When to tackle.
<p>British Bulldog Area: 20 x 30 yards. Each player needs a ball Activity: Players start on one end line, coach starts in the center as the bulldog. Players must get to the opposite end line without the bulldog stealing the ball. If a player has their ball stolen or they dribble out of bounds they become a bulldog. Continue.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressure Defender Technique
<p>3 v 3 to end lines Area: 20 x 40 yards. Increase the length of the area to encourage running with the ball. Activity: Players score by dribbling across an end line. Progression: add two goals without GK's and play 3 v 3 to goal.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Above.

Organization	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>Passing Technique Area: Place players 10 yards apart with soccer ball on a cone in the center of them. Place players into pairs, one ball between.</p> <p>Activity: Players take it in turns to try and knock the ball off the cone by passing the ball. Increase distance if it's too easy and vise versa.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approach the ball slightly side on. ▪ Place non-kicking foot next to the ball w/the toes aiming at the target. ▪ Bend your knees, get low to the ball. ▪ Use the inside of the foot to strike the center of the ball. ▪ Ankle of kicking foot locked with your toes pointing upward. ▪ Follow through with your foot towards your target. ▪ Players should remain balanced on their non-kicking foot. ▪ After passing the shoulders & hips facing the target.
<p>Hit the Coach Area: Same as above. Players are in pairs, one ball between two.</p> <p>Activity: The coach walks up and down the center of the players. The players are trying to hit the coach below the knee with the ball. Players should continue to pass when the coach is not there.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All Above.
<p>4 v 1 Keep Away Area: 15 x 15. Split players into groups of 5, 1 ball per group.</p> <p>Activity: Players get a point for making 7 consecutive passes. Defenders get a point for stealing the ball. First to 3 points wins.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All Above. ▪ Movement off the ball. ▪ Always be in a position to be able to receive the ball.
<p>Target Game Area: 30 x 30 yards, place six soccer balls on cones as shown. Split players into two teams and play 3 v 3.</p> <p>Activity: 1. Play a regular game but players must knock a ball off a cone to score. Teams can knock any ball off. 2. Add direction. Players defend one side of the balls and attack the other.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All Above.

Organization	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>Shooting Technique Area: 10 x 20 with a large goal on one end line. Place players into pairs, 1 ball between two.</p> <p>Activity: strike the ball back and forth to each other.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Striking Technique.
<p>MLS Cup Final Area: 20 x 20 yards, with two gates and coned goals, as shown. Place players into two teams, number players. Place a team in opposite corners.</p> <p>Activity: When the coach calls a number, that player from each team dribbles around the outside of the area and in the grid through the gate. First player to knock a cone down wins. Continue.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Above.
<p>World Cup Shootout Area: 20 x 20 yards area, with a large goal and a gate opposite. Place players into two teams, number players. Place players in opposite corners on the same side of the grid. Activity: The coach places two balls in front of the goal and calls two numbers. Those players run around the area, into the grid through the gate and shoot on goal. The first ball in the net wins. Progression: Players dribble around the outside of the area. Progression 2: Players play 1 v 1 to goal.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Above.
<p>3 v 3 to two large goals Area: 20 x 20 yards with two large goals. Split players into two teams and play 3 v 3 with no goalkeepers. Regular rules.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Above.