

# *SOCCER DRILLS*

*"Compiled through years of coaching with contributions by many great coaches and players"*



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## Credo

*We understand that we can only win by playing as a team and we can only lose by playing as individuals*

*We understand that games are more often won by the quantity and quality of the movement of the 10 players without the ball than the movement of the one player with the ball*

*We understand that defense begins the instant that we lose the ball*

*We understand that our opponents cannot score if we do not allow them to shoot*

*We understand that we must play with our vision up while keeping our opponent's vision down*

*We understand that the fastest way to move the ball from one point to another is by passing it*

*We understand that after making a pass, we must either create a supporting angle or make an angled run*

*We understand that the purpose of dribbling is not to move the ball but to create time and space*

## Communication on the Field

### Encouragement

Unlucky	The idea was right, even if the outcome was not what we wanted (e.g. teammate's shot hit the post or keeper was forced to make a spectacular save)
Well done	Recognizes good effort
Good in	Recognizes a strong challenge
Good up	Recognizes a strong effort in the air

### Defensive

Away	Used by GK to instruct teammates to clear the ball immediately without attempting to control it
Clear	See " <a href="#">away</a> "; not recommended by some coaches because it can be confused with a shout of " <a href="#">keeper</a> "
Close down	Asks 1st defender to reduce the pressurizing distance to force the 1st attacker's eyes down on the ball
Contain	See " <a href="#">jockey</a> "
Double [up]	Tells teammate to assist in double-teaming the first attacker (i.e. defenders combine to win the ball)
Drop off	Retreat toward
Goal side	Get between the opponent and our goal
Got you	You can go forward; I'll cover your position
Help [him/her/N]	Asks teammates to provide defensive support for an unsupported 1st defender
Hold [him/her]	See " <a href="#">jockey</a> "
Into touch	Tells recovering defender to play the ball into touch if possible rather than trying to control it
• Jockey	Tells teammate to delay the attacker until defensive support arrives so he can tackle
Lock in	See " <a href="#">double</a> "
Lock on	See " <a href="#">mark</a> "
Make a wall	Used by GK to tell teammates to line up between a dead ball and the goal before a free kick; see also " <a href="#"># in the wall</a> "
• Mark "#"	Used to tell teammate to mark a particular opponent
Mark up	Used to tell teammates to be sure they have taken responsibility for marking an opponent man-to-man, especially on free kicks and corners

No foul	Used when opponent is shielding in a field position where we do not want to give up a free kick, i.e. in our defending third
No turn	Get tight to the opponent to keep him facing his own goal
Pressure	See " <a href="#">close down</a> "
Shift (right or left)	Moves the defensive formation to mirror the movement of the ball
Squeeze in	See " <a href="#">tuck in</a> "
Stay	Don't leave your mark
Stick	See " <a href="#">tackle</a> "
Switch off	Used to exchange marking assignments as opponents criss-cross (exchange positions)
Tackle	You have support now and can attempt to tackle the opponent in order to win the ball
Take ball	Used to ask teammate to take 1st defender role so you can track your mark
Track [him/her/#]	Follow (continue to mark) the designated opponent as he or she makes a run toward our goal
Tuck in	1. Asks weak side defenders to take up a position closer to the middle of the field; 2. Asks teammate to provide support to 1st defender
Two here	Advises teammates that you are marking two players, and requests assistance
Wall [# in the wall]	Used by GK to specify the number of players he wants in the defensive wall on free kicks

## Attacking

"N's on"	He or she is open for a pass
All the way	1. You can take the ball all the way to the opponents' goal; 2. It's a 50/50 ball, but you can win it if you go in hard
Bring it	See " <a href="#">carry</a> "
Byline	Tells teammate to carry the ball to the goal line before playing it back
Carry	You have room to dribble forward; stay composed don't play a low-percentage pass
Check	Come back toward the teammate with the ball
Corner	Play the ball toward the corner
Cross	Play the ball across the field toward the opponents' goal
Far & wide	See " <a href="#">spread out</a> "
Far post	1. Tells teammate to go there for a cross; 2. Tells 1st attacker where to direct the cross
Have it	Take a shot rather than looking to pass



Home	See " <a href="#">keeper's on</a> "
If you like/want/need (me)	See " <a href="#">support</a> " (2)
Keeper's on	Play back to the keeper
Leave it	See " <a href="#">let it run</a> "
Let it run/go	Tells teammate to "dummy" a pass, i.e. let the ball continue on to a more distant player rather than receiving it himself
Look at N	He's open to receive the ball
Man coming	You will be under pressure very soon
• Man on [hard]	Warns of immediate pressure from a blind side
N's gone	He is making a run to space behind the defense
Near Post	1. Tells teammate to make a run to the near post; 2. Tells teammate to cross the ball to the near post
• Open up	Tells receiving teammate to take "open" body position so as to be able to see as much of the field of play as possible; normally suggests that ball should be received across body to the far foot.
Right away	Play the ball as soon as possible
Send [it]	1. Instruction by overlapping teammate to tell player on the ball to release it; 2. Suggestion to play "over the top" to a teammate making a run behind the opponents' defense
Shoot	Take a shot now
• Spread [out]	Spread out so as to ensure maximum depth and width on attack and stretch the opponents' defense ("use the whole field")
Switch	Play the ball to the far side of the pitch in order to switch the point of attack to the "weak side"; see also " <a href="#">switch off</a> "
Switch field	See " <a href="#">switch</a> "
Stretch out	See " <a href="#">spread out</a> "
• Support	You can take on your defender; if you lose the ball, I'm here to win it back; if you want to play back, I'm here
Take it down/in	You have time to control the ball (normally used as player is about to receive a difficult or high pass)
[Put it] through	Look to split the defenders with a pass into space for a teammate making a run off the ball
• Time	You are not under pressure; get your head up and assess your options
Turn	Used to tell a teammate receiving ball with back to opponents' goal that he can turn and go forward
What you see	You are not under pressure from your blind side
Wing	Look to play the ball wide
Yes	You can play to me now: I'm ready to receive



## Combination Play

1-2	Suggests a wall pass or give-and-go
Drop	Asks for a drop or heel pass, i.e. a pass made directly behind the player on the ball
Feed me	Used by a player making a run into space behind defenders to request a through or lead pass so he can catch up to it and continue his run to goal
Flick	Requests that the ball be "flicked" on by the receiver to a running teammate, either with the front foot (in the case of a pass played on the ground) or with the head (typically on a throw-in)
• Go	Tells teammate to sprint forward and look for a return pass
Give-'n'-go	See " <a href="#">1-2</a> "
Heel	See " <a href="#">drop</a> "
Hold or hold it	Used by overlapping teammate to tell player on the ball not to release it until he has passed him
Line	Play the ball to me down the touchline
Set me up	Play the ball back to me on my preferred foot so I can play a long ball forward
Square	Indicates support in a position to one side of the player on the ball
Touch [me/N]	Play the ball to me (or to a named teammate) with your first touch
Wall pass	Asks for a pass on the ground which will be returned with the first touch as the teammate who made the first pass makes a run past a defender

## Warnings and Announcements

"M's ball"	Used by field players to call for the ball to teammates will get out of their way; use in preference to "Mine!" which some referees will penalize as unsporting conduct
"M's up"	Used by field players to warn off teammates as they go up for a header
Cover	1. Used by 2nd defender to tell 1st defender he has support; 2. Used to tell teammate to become 2nd defender
Easy	Stay composed; don't panic; don't boot the ball away
• I got ball	I will take the 1st defender role
• Keeper	GK uses this to call for the ball so teammates will get out of his way
Mine	See " <a href="#">M's ball</a> "
Move	Keep your feet moving; don't get caught ball-watching
No	Don't play the ball to me, because I'm too tightly marked and the pass would be

	intercepted
Out	See " <a href="#">push up</a> "
Pull up	See " <a href="#">push up</a> "
• Push up	Asks fullbacks to move up the field to leave opponent in an off-side position and/or support our attack
Step out/up	See " <a href="#">push up</a> "
Trap	1. See " <a href="#">push up</a> "; 2. See " <a href="#">double</a> "
You	Tells teammate he or she is in a better position to play the ball than you are (used when two teammates are converging on a ball); NB: rather than asking teammates to take responsibility, it is better for one player to take responsibility by calling for the ball

## Communication/passing

Form a large circle of players about 5 yards apart. Every player is given a number that is exclusive to him/her. Start with the ball at player # 1. Player # 1 passes to player # 2 passes to player # 3 passes to player # 4 and so on. At this stage the ball simply travels around the circle until it reaches the last player who then passes the ball back to player # 1. Keep the ball moving around the circle, this is important.

The coach calls out 2 numbers, the players with the 2 numbers concerned must sprint clockwise around the outside of the circle and arrive in their opposite numbers position, i.e. If the 2 numbers called are 1 and 5, # 1 must sprint into the # 5 position and # 5 must sprint into the # 1 position. In this example # 1 will have a short journey, only having to run 4 spaces, but # 5 will have further to run to get to the # 1 position that has been left vacant. All the other players keep passing the ball to their next number. At all times the ball must be kept moving and the players in the circle must encourage the runners to get into position to receive the ball.

When player # 1 receives the ball from the last player he will now receive the ball at position # 5 because that is where he is now positioned. Player # 1 must still pass the ball back across the circle to player # 2 who then continues to player # 3 and so on. After a few different numbered calls from the coach all the players should be in different positions from where they originally started, and the ball should now be passed across the circle at different angles.

As a final part of the exercise ask the players to get themselves back to where they were positioned originally so that eventually the ball ends up being passed back around the circle. This should be done with care, let # 1 start the call and get himself back first, whoever is in his original position will have to communicate with him to let him back, and then player # 2 gets back and so on. Remember that as the players get themselves back the ball begins to speed up as the passing goes from across the circle to eventually going around the circle in short passes.

Harder Variations: Odd numbered players run clockwise, Even numbered players anti - clockwise. Start the session with 2 balls, say 1 ball with # 1 and the second ball with the player situated around the halfway mark.

Coaching Points: Encourage the players to keep the ball moving at all times, never kill the ball. The players must COMMUNICATE with each other across the circle as to the timing of when to run so as to keep the ball moving. Remember one important rule: The ball will always be passed

to the same numbered player: #1 passes to # 2 passes to # 3 passes to # 4 and so on irrelevant of where they are positioned in the circle.

## Basics

### Player Characteristics by Age

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF U - 10 PLAYERS:**

- Gross and small motor skills becoming more refined and reliable. " Boys and girls begin to develop separately.
- Ability to stay on task is lengthened. They have the ability to sequence thought and actions.
- Greater diversity in playing ability and physical maturity. •Skills are emerging. Becoming more predictable and recognizable.
- Some children begin moving from concrete thinking to abstract thinking.
- Able to pace themselves, to plan ahead.
- Increased self-responsibility. They remember to bring their own equipment.
- Starting to recognize basic tactical concepts, but not exactly sure why certain decisions are better.
- Repetition of technique is very important, but it must be dynamic, not static.
- Continued positive reinforcement needed.
- Explanations must be brief, concise, and mention "why".
- Becoming more "serious". Openly, intensively competitive, without intention of fouling.
- Still mostly intrinsically motivated. " Peer pressure starting to be a factor.
- Adult outside of the family may take on added significance.
- Prefer identification with a team. Like to have good uniforms, equipment, balls.
- More inclined towards wanting to play instead of being told to play. Will initiate play more.

## INVOLVING THE PARENTS:

It is imperative that coaches get the parents involved. Not only are they a major resource for your team, but the U-10 player still views their parents as the most significant people in their lives. A pre-season meeting should be held with the parents so that objectives and team policies can be addressed. Some topics that you may want to address at this meeting are:

- A means of contacting everyone without one person doing all of the calling. (Phone chains)
- Choosing a team administrator, someone to handle all of the details.
- Complete all paperwork required by your league or club. •Discuss the laws of the game.
- Carpool needs.
- Training and game schedules. How you feel about starting and ending on time, what your attendance expectations are, what you think is a good excuse to miss training.
- What each player should bring to training: inflated ball, filled water bottle, soccer attire, shin guards cleats or sneakers.
- Most importantly, your philosophy about coaching U-10 players. Let them know that everyone plays; that the game does not look like the older player's games; that you are there to ensure that their player is safe and has a good time, as well as learn about soccer.
- What your expectations for them is during game time. How do you want them to cheer? Do they know that they should not coach from the sidelines?
- Above all, try to enjoy yourself. If you do they probably will too.

## THINGS YOU CAN EXPECT:

Some coaches say that the 9 and 10 year-old players are beginning to "turn the corner" and starting to look like real soccer players. However, games are still frantically paced and unpredictable for the most part. These players are starting to find out how much fun it is to play the game skillfully, but they will still stop and laugh if the referee gets hit in the backside with the ball during a game. Some other things that we can expect when working with this aged player are:

- They start to understand offside, but still forget themselves when the goal is in front of them.
- They will really beat up on each other during practice... especially boy's

teams.

- During a game, the parents will scream out "HAND BALL" or "COME ON REF, CALL IT BOTH WAYS" at least fifteen times.
- They might cry after the game if they loose, but will forget it if you ask them if you want to go out for burgers and fries.
- You might actually catch them practicing on their own without you telling them to do so.
- Their parents are telling them to do one thing during the game, you are telling them another thing, but what they end up doing might be what their friend is telling them to do.
- You will see a pass that is deliberate. You might even see a "back pass".
- You will see your first \$100 pair of cleats during practice. They will call the other team bad names... really bad names.

#### COACHING RATIONAL:

Some of the players that are playing as U - 10's are seasoned veterans of the youth soccer scene. Some of them may have already been involved in traveling to play in tournaments. As a result, some of them might be very nervous about the whole process. It is our job to keep things in perspective for these young, developing players. True, some of them are becoming quite skillful and are seeing how fun it is to play the game when they can really control the ball. However, many of them are still learning the ropes. Even the more experienced players need to have the game be fun!!!

Emphasis is still placed on having players learn how to control the ball with his/her body, but now, they need to find themselves in more game-like situations. Training is more dynamic and starting to have players make simple, basic decisions such as "Which way is there more space?" or "Who should I pass to?"

Following are some more items that a coach of U-10 players should consider:

- Use small-sided games as the main teaching vehicle. Not only will they get more touches on the ball, but also the full 11-a-side game is still too complicated for them to understand.
- How we group players during training takes on even added significance because of the wide margins of ability levels. We need to mix players up often.
- Stretching is becoming more important, along with a good warm-up. Since the game is faster, make sure that they also have good shin guards. Safety and preventive measures take on added significance.

- Training twice a week is plenty. Sessions need not go longer than one hour, fifteen minutes.
- They should all come with their own size #4 ball. In fact, they still need to be encouraged to play with it by themselves.
- Put them into competitive environments as much as possible. This will not only keep them focused, but it will allow the game itself to teach them. It will also keep things fun for them, and allow you to deal with issues such as 'winning' and 'loosing' which is now a very big concern for them.
- Now it is possible to teach them positional play with the expectation that they will get it some of the time. However, it is absolutely necessary that you do not allow players to specialize in any one position. They need to learn basic principles of the game, first. Having them play all of the positions is best for their individual development. Remember, our first responsibility is to develop players and let them have fun.
- Whenever possible, allow them to solve their own puzzles. Don't immediately give them solutions on how they can play better.

#### TYPICAL TRAINING SESSION:

Here are some items that should be included in a U-10 training session:

##### WARM-UP:

A brief warm-up is appropriate in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically for the time ahead. This should involve individual body activities that involve the ball. Since there can be one theme to the session, hopefully, the warm-up will lead into the theme of the day. Static stretching is also appropriate at this time after the players have broken a sweat, again, hopefully done with the ball. Again, the warm-up should get the players ready to play. It should be lively, fun, and engaging as well as instructional. There is nothing like a good, fast paced activity to grab the player's attention and make them glad that they came to practice.

##### INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES:

Follow the warm-up with some kind of individual activity, not necessarily a real 1v.1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals or cooperate in small groups in a game environment. An example would be a kind of tag game, or a keep-away game. Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait on lines. Play games of "inclusion" instead of games where the "looser sits". Be creative. These players like "crazy" games with a lot of action.

##### PLAY THE GAME:

Small sided soccer can be used to heighten intensity and create some good competition. Play 4 v.4 up to 8 v.8. Be creative. Play with 4 goals, or 2 balls. Play with or without boundaries. Perhaps play to emphasize a particular skill (can only dribble the ball over a goal line in order to get a point). Use cones if you don't have real goals. Keep players involved. Have more than one game going on

at a time if necessary. Switch teams often, give everyone a chance to win. Also, it is important that every player has a chance to shoot on goal as often as possible.

#### WARM-DOWN & HOMEWORK:

Finish the session with a warm down. Give them some more stretches to do with the ball. You may want to review what you started the session with. Also, give them some homework so that they practice on their own. Think of some ball trick that you would like to see them try to do, like, bounce it off their head, then thigh, then foot, and then catch it. Can one player kick a ball to a partner and then back without it hitting the ground? Can they do that with their heads? It is important to finish on time. This is especially essential if the players are really into it. Stop at this point and you will get an enthusiastic return.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF U - 12 PLAYERS:

- They begin to develop the abilities to sustain complex, coordinated skill sequences.
- Some of the players have reached puberty. Girls, in general, arrive earlier than boys.
- Most players are able to think abstractly and are thus able to understand some team concepts that are foundational to the game.
- They are beginning to be able to address hypothetical situations, and to solve problems systematically.
- They are spending more time with friends and less time with their parents. They are susceptible to conformity to peer pressure.
- They are developing a conscience, morality and scale of values.
- Players tend to be highly self-critical. Instruction needs to be enabling. Show them what can be done instead of telling them what not to do.
- Although they are more serious with their play, they are still mainly involved because it is fun.
- They are openly competitive. A few may foul on purpose.
- They are looking towards their role models and heroes in order to know how to act.
- They have a more complex and developed sense of humor.

### INVOLVING THE PARENTS



It is imperative that coaches get the parents involved. Not only are they a major resource for your team, but the U-12 player still relies on their parents for support and encouragement. A pre-season meeting should be held with the parents so that objectives and team policies can be addressed. Some topics that you may want to address at this meeting are:

- A means of contacting everyone without one person doing all of the calling. (phone chains)
- Choosing a team administrator, someone to handle all of the details.
- Complete all paperwork required by your league or club. " Discuss the laws of the game.
- Carpool needs.
- Training and game schedules. How you feel about starting and ending on time, what your attendance expectations are, what you think is a good excuse to miss training.
- What each player should bring to training: inflated ball, filled water bottle, soccer attire, shin guards cleats or sneakers.
- Most importantly, your philosophy about coaching U-12 players. Let them know that everyone plays; that the game does not look like the older player's games; that you are there to ensure that their player is safe and has a good time, as well as learn about soccer.
- What your expectations for them is during game time. How do you want them to cheer? Do they know that they should not coach from the sidelines?
- Above all, try to enjoy yourself. If you do, they probably will too.

### THINGS YOU CAN EXPECT

Some coaches say that the 10 and 12 year-old players have "turned the corner" and are looking like real soccer players. However, games are still frantically paced and a bit unpredictable for the most part. These players know how much fun it is to play the game skillfully. As a result, we begin to see some the players drop out who recognize the importance of skill and become discouraged with their lack of it. Some other things that we can expect when working with this aged player are:

- They will yell at their teammates when they make a mistake.
- They will openly question the referee's decisions.
- Players will encourage each other.

- They will pass the ball even when they know that they will not get it back.
- Team cooperation is emerging. They will run to a spot, away from the play, even when they know that they might not get the ball.
- They will point out inconsistencies between what you say and what you do. They are "moral watchdogs".
- The difference in skill levels between the players is very pronounced.
- Some players might be as big as you are, some might be half your size.
- Not only will some of the players come to training with expensive cleats, but some will also come with matching uniforms, sweat suits, and bag.
- Parents, during games, can be brutal. Some will yell at the referee at almost every call.
- They will get together with their friends and be able to set up and play their own game.

## COACHING RATIONAL

Coaching at this age level is a challenge because many of the players view themselves as real soccer players; while others are at the point where it is not as much fun as it used to be because they feel that their lack of skill development does not enable them to have an impact on the game. They see their skillful friends able to do magical things with the ball and since they cannot do these themselves, they start to drop out. Our challenges then, if the players are willing, is to keep all of the players engaged, involved, and make them feel important. (as though they are improving.) Skills still need to be the primary focus of training and players need to be put into environments where they are under pressure so that they learn how to use their skills in a variety of contexts. Here are a few other considerations as we think about working with this aged youngster:

- Our goal is to develop players in a fun, engaging environment. Winning has its place but must be balanced with the other goals of teaching them to play properly. Some decisions will need to be made that might not necessarily lead to wins (i.e.: having players play different positions, or asking players to try to play the ball "out of the back".)
- Smaller, skilled players cannot be ignored. Although it may be tempting to "win" by playing only the bigger players in key positions, the smaller, skilled players must be put into areas of responsibility.
- Small-sided games are still the preferred method of teaching the game. This makes learning fun and more efficient.
- Flexibility training is essential. Have them stretch after they have broken a

sweat, and, perhaps most importantly, at the end of the workout at a "warm-down".

- Overuse injuries, burnout and high attrition rates are associated with programs that do not emphasize skill development and learning enjoyment.
- Playing 11-a-side games is now appropriate.
- Single sexed teams are appropriate.
- Train for one and one-half hours, two to three times a week. Training pace needs to replicate the demands of the game itself.
- They are ready to have a preferred position, but, it is essential for their development for them to occasionally play out of their preferred spot, in training, as well as during games.
- Training is now best if it focuses on one, perhaps two topics a session. Activities should be geared to progressing from fundamental activities that have little or no pressure from an opponent to activities that are game like in their intensity and pressure.

### TYPICAL TRAINING SESSION

Here are some items that should be included in a U-12 training session:

#### WARM-UP:

A brief warm-up is appropriate in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically for the time ahead. This should involve individual or small group activities that involve the ball. Since there can be one theme to the session, hopefully, the warm-up will lead into the theme of the day. Static stretching is also appropriate at this time, after the players have broken a sweat, again, hopefully done with the ball. The warm-up should get the players ready to play. It should be lively, fun, and engaging as well as instructional. There is nothing like a good, fast-paced activity to grab the player's attention and make them glad that they came to practice.

#### INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES:

Follow the warm-up with some kind of individual activity, not necessarily a real 1v.1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals or cooperate in small groups in a game environment. An example would be a kind of keep-away game, or small-sided games that bring out or emphasize a specific skill or topic. Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait on lines. Play games of "inclusion" instead of games where the "looser sits". Be creative. These players like "crazy" games with a lot of action.

#### PLAY THE GAME:

Small sided soccer can be used to heighten intensity and create some good

competition. Play 4v.4 up to 8v.8. Be creative. Play with 4 goals, or 2 balls. Play with or without boundaries. Perhaps play to emphasize a particular skill (can only dribble the ball over a goal line in order to get a point). Use cones if you don't have real goals. Keep players involved. Have more than one game going on at a time if necessary. Switch teams often, give everyone a chance to win. Also, it is important that every player has a chance to shoot on goal as often as possible. Finish this stage with a real game with regular rules. Players need to apply their newly learned abilities to the real game.

#### WARM-DOWN & HOMEWORK:

Finish the session with a warm down. Give them some more stretches to do with the ball. You may want to review what you started the session with. Also, give them some homework so that they practice on their own. Challenge them with some ball trick. Can they complete a juggling pattern? Can one player kick a ball to a partner and then back without it hitting the ground? Can they do that with their heads? How many times can they do it back and forth? It is important to finish on time. This is especially essential if the players are really into it. Stop at this point and you will get an enthusiastic return.

## U-14 TRAINING PRIORITIES

U-13 and U-14: DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL SKILLS, INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP TACTICS.

#### HIGH PRIORITY:

The importance of possession: DO NOT GIVE THE BALL AWAY!!!

Development of individual skill.

All practices must challenge the player in competition.

Understanding of combination play:

1. Support
2. Takeovers
3. Wall pass

Individual and small group defending.

One session in three devoted to 1v1's, 2v2's, 3v3's.

Develop an understanding of:

1. Delay
2. Tracking back
3. Depth
4. Balance

#### LOWER EMPHASIS:

Functional play, Team play, Set Plays.

All activities should be challenging, motivating and involve TRANSITION!!!

## **U-16 TRAINING PRIORITIES**

U-15 and U-16: DEVELOPMENT OF GROUP SKILL / TACTICS.

HIGH PRIORITY:

Development of individual skill should be covered in the warm-up.

Understanding of combination play:

1. Support
2. Takeovers
3. Wall pass
4. Third man running
5. Overlap

DO NOT GIVE THE BALL AWAY!!!

One session in three devoted to 3v3's, 4v4's, 5v5's.

Develop an understanding of:

1. Depth -- role of strong side defenders.
2. Balance -- role of weak side defenders
3. Compactness
4. Communication -- who, what, when.

LOWER EMPHASIS:

Functional play, team play, set plays.

All activities should be challenging, motivating, and involve TRANSITION!!!

## **U-17 TRAINING PRIORITIES**

U-17: DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIONAL PLAY.

HIGH PRIORITY:

Individual and group skill should be covered in the warm-up.

Functional Play:

Attacking roles and responsibilities  
Defending roles and responsibilities.  
One in three practices devoted to defending principles of play.  
Match - related practice: offense vs. defense.

Crossing:  
Develop a complete understanding of:

1. Crossing angle.
2. Overlaps.
3. near and far post runs.

Set Plays:  
Develop a complete understanding of:

1. Attacking and defending responsibilities at corner kicks and all other restarts.
2. The importance of possession from throw-ins in defensive and midfield third of field versus possession and creativity in the final third
3. All activities should be challenging, motivating, and involve TRANSITION!!!

## **U-18 TRAINING PRIORITIES**

U-18: DEVELOPMENT OF TEAM PLAY.

HIGH PRIORITY:

Individual and group skill should be covered in the warm - up.  
Functional play. Training players for specific positions and roles.

Team Play:

1. Match - related practice ; offense vs. defense
2. Match conditioned. One in three practices devoted to the defensive aspects of the game.

Players should have a complete understanding of the principles of team play.

## Conditioning

### Speed & Coordination

Using the speed and agility ladder each footwork movement is followed by a short 5 yard sprint after leaving the ladder. Coaches are evaluating speed of footwork, softness of footwork and proper body positioning.

Forward two step in and Forward single step in  
Backward two step in and backward single step in  
Sideward two step in and sideward single step in  
Sideward double step  
Forward shuffle  
Forward and backward half carioca  
Slalom and Shuffle

---

#### Running Mechanics

Three hoops should be spaced to encourage short compact stride length from the players. Players must hit each hoop with the correct foot. A short 5 yard sprint should follow leaving the hoops. Coaches are looking for the body going in the proper direction, proper triple extension and shin angle; proper positioning and steadiness of the head; proper coordination between arms and legs. Coaches also watch that the player always continues in the proper direction without any excess movements.

Standing start, right and left foot forward  
Walking start hit first hoop with right and left foot  
Skipping start hit first hoop with right and left foot  
Jogging start hit first hoop with right and left foot

---

#### Ball Exercises

The coaching staff tries to get each player to make 1000-1500 quality touches on the ball each practice session. It is important that both feet are worked equally. Different size balls are used to perform all of the footwork exercises (e.g. tennis balls, grapefruits). We are looking for the boys to develop mastery of the ball and vision up control.

Inside/outside touch right and left foot  
Four touches forward alternating feet using sole of foot followed by four touches  
Backward alternating feet using sole of foot  
Double touch leading with the right then the left foot  
Left/right foot turns (Cruyff, step over, pull, inside foot, outside  
Outside/inside touch with right and left foot  
Single & double scissors  
Left and right foot side strokes  
Left and right foot "V" pulls, "L" turns and "U" turns  
Left and right foot stop and go  
Double heel shuffle

---

#### Additional ball control Exercises

As time permits many of the following juggles are added into the practice to fill down time while players are getting drinks or field adjustments are being made. Each of these exercises are also part the players homework assignments.

Outside of foot juggling using right and left foot  
Slap juggling using bottom of right and left foot  
Shin juggling  
Head-shoulder-thigh-foot juggling combination  
Alternate foot one bounce juggling

---



### Dribbling Exercises

We wish to teach our boys to play a very aggressive style of attacking play. We also want to teach our boys to play the game on the opponent's half of the field. This style of play requires our team members to be able to dribble the ball in very tight space and consistently win 1v1 and 1v2 situations. We work consistently on the following exercises to increase each player's individual skill with the ball one step one touch straight ahead dribble

zigzag dribble

circle dribble

stop and go dribble

heel and go dribble

double touch dribble

various dribbles that incorporate drags

### Circuit Training

1. Jump to head a thrown ball back to thrower. Thrower should make the jumper jump as high as possible. Time throws so that jumper is continuously jumping as high as s/he can.
2. Continuous shuttle run between two cones set 20 yards apart.
3. Shoot against a wall, retrieve own shot, dribble at a sprint to a cone & shoot again.  
Continuous
4. Lunge jumps, player lunges forward with one leg, jumps as high as possible, switches front legs in midair, repeats continuously. Athletes should go no lower than 90 degree bend at front knee.
5. 3-man drill-Two servers stand 40 yards apart. Player in the middle with a ball passes to a server, following at a sprint. Server 1 touches the ball back, middle player turns with the ball and passes to the other server. Continuous
6. Same as #5, but servers pickup the ball and throw it so that it can be chested. Middle player chests and turns, then passes to the other server, following at a sprint. Continuous
7. 3-man drill with 2 balls-Servers throw the ball to middle player who sprints to the ball, jumps to head it back to the server, turns, sprints to the other server. Servers should throw to allow middle player to sprint 15-20 yards between each header. Continuous
8. Same as #7, but throwers throw the ball to be chested, then volleyed back to the server.  
Continuous
9. Same as #7, but throwers send the ball knee high to be volleyed back to server. Continuous
10. Same as #2, shuffle sideways left, sideways right, then run backwards. Change at each cone.  
Continuous

This circuit is useful for training and testing. For training, begin with 15 seconds work, 45 seconds rest, for a 1/3 work to rest ratio. Progress to 30 second work intervals. By putting

players in groups of four, which work sequentially, you will get the desired work/rest intervals. All groups do the same exercise. When all four athletes have done the exercise once, move all groups to the next exercise. A long rest between work intervals is critical for keeping the intensity high. If this amount of rest is insufficient, you should shorten work intervals, not lower the intensity. In the 3-man drill, the 4th player is out for one interval, then rotated in.

## Other

### Sprinting

-- 20-40 yard 60% speed sprints, watching for technique breakdowns. The key emphasis is on the arms. I tell my players to pull their legs through with their arms. Gradually raise the percentage up. Don't tire them out before technical deficiencies can be identified and addressed. A trainer can't look at all players, so run them in small viewable groups.

### Pivoting

-- start with 60% 15 yard sprints to a point (line) and have players make 90 degrees cuts; key point is the plant foot should be at 90 degrees to run direction  
\* plant right foot, cut to the right, power cross-over with the left leg; watch for double stepping; change directions and plant foot  
\* plant left foot, cut to the right; square off the cuts as they tend to be rounded; change plant foot and direction

### Turning

-- same as above two exercises, except make full 180 degree turns and run back  
\* Increase initial sprint speed as skills develops  
\* Set up an eight point star with cones or some other marking devices; player runs to center and cuts at speed to coach directed star point

### Power cross-over exercise

as a prelude to crossing drills. Players must be able to angle the plant of their supporting foot in the direction of the cross. Often this is at 90 degrees or more to the direction they are running.

### Controlling the Air

Separate the team in half. Single file lines with the first in each line facing each other. The coach has a supply of balls. Serve the ball into the air. Each player must fight for and get control of the ball. The player that does not get control has to do some type of penalty-sit ups, pushups. Stay away from running since this is a fast paced drill.

Variation: The ball can be served on the ground so that each player has to run diagonally to the ball.

#### 1. Protect the BALL

In this drill, players work one on one. One player stands next to a ball, feet shoulder width apart. Another player stands on the outside shoulder of the first player. The object is to have player 2 get her foot on the ball "by any means necessary". Player 1 is forced to keep balance, protect the ball, and respond to open aggressiveness by a defender.

## 2. I'm CLOSER

Setup for this drill is the same as the "Protect drill". The difference is that the player furthest from the ball has to try to wedge her body between the inside player and the ball "any way she can".

## 3. Push & Drag

In this drill 2 players stand facing each other. They are instructed to grab the other player's jersey up by the shoulders. This puts them face to face in a "strong" position. The coach stands ~10 yards away from the players with a ball at his feet. On "GO!" the players must try to get the ball away from the coach. If the girls are working hard and being aggressive then the first to the ball wins. If they are not being aggressive, then I begin to dribble away from the fighting players, forcing them to follow me in their tussling position. If aggression is moderate, then I just kick the ball away about 10 extra yards in a position favorable to one of the players.

## 4. Wall Pass Ladder

stagger 6-8 players in zigzag; one takes a ball down the middle, passing and receiving wall from each side alternately

## 5. Pass relay race

one group at corners of box or pentagon; pass around perimeter to beat a runner from the other team; keep score by teams

## 6. Team relays:

set in team alignment; pass F LM CM RM RS LS LD CD RD W G; a runner goes the same path & tries to beat the ball; when runner is done, replaces a field player; from goalie, work back up in opposite sequence

## 7. Pair Pass Challenge

series of connected boxes (appx. 10x10x6 boxes); D at back of each box; cannot leave back line until someone enters box; pairs try to go thru all boxes; who can go farthest?

## 8. Dribble w/ front challenge

Dribble w/ front challenge: in pairs, one in front is passive defender; each time D changes stance to adjust, A moves dribble to other side

## 9. Dribble w/ rear challenge

A must dribble away & shield ball; change sides by touching with inside of foot closest to defender, then outside of foot away from defender; each time passive D changes sides.

#### 10. 5-ball

set 5 balls in a row on the 18 yd box top line, spread within the edges of the circle; 2 girls start from opposite intersections of the 18 yd box and the restraining circle; at GO, they race diagonally to circle around a cone at the intersection of the end line and the goal box, loop around and straight back up to the intersection where their challenger started, and around to shoot the nearest ball. Back down the diagonal, around, and straight up, to shoot the second ball. Back down around and up to see who can get to the remaining ball and shoot it first. Great conditioning, tight turns, and shooting.

#### 11. BALL!

Coach with lots of balls stands in goal; two kids stand out between goal and 18 yd box. One teammate is assigned to count shots on goal for one player, another counts the second player; other teammates shag loose balls; for 2 minutes the coach feeds balls and shouts 'BALL!' as he does; kids fight to shoot the live ball; if they go too far or take too long, just feed another ball! Begin by working them out away from the goal, gradually make the feeds closer to the goal until they are hitting headers, volleys, etc in the goal mouth. Manipulate the throws to keep things fairly close. This is easier with a count-down timer on your watch.

#### 12. 2v2v2

Use the penalty area as a boundary. 3 teams of 2; i.e. 2 reds, 2 blues, 2 yellows. GK in goal. Teammates line the 18 yd. box with balls. Coach puts ball in play. It's always 2 attackers vs. 4 defenders. The ball and players may travel within the goal box, but shots must be taken outside of it. If a ball leaves playing area, nearest player on touch tosses another up, then shags. All balls caught by GK are restarted by GK. When one team scores, the other 2 swap out. LOTS of action, emphasis on shooting at the 1st chance, partner moving open in front of the goal.

Turn'n'go: from front of goal, A faces goal with ball in front; D behind facing away & touching; when A goes, D turns to chase down before shoots

3v2+G: 1D in front, 1D behind; pass to space & overlap

3v1, 4v2, 5v3: keep-away

3v3: with extras divided into 3's; whenever one team scores, the replacement team from the other end starts immediately with their own ball; they should try to 'fast break' against the team that just scored.

Progressive sprints: jog in line; last one sprints to front, then slows down; as soon as you are last, you start your sprint, so a sequence are sprinting

Dribble sprints: 1 min. Back/forth across goal box, then penalty box, then penalty to midline, then goal to midline, back down; who can do the most lengths in each 1 min. period?

## Zigzag Speed work

- Purpose: to improve player mobility, quickness and speed
- Equipment: 5-7 marking objects to mark the zigzag course, such as rings, cones, flex-sticks, flags, balls, or even 60-90 feet of cord. Also, 4 cones to mark the starting and ending lines.
- Setup: the course is a 5 yard sprint from the starting line (or gate) to the first ring (marking object); the next 4 to 6 rings are symmetrically zigzagged at 5 yard intervals; at the last ring, the ending line/gate is 5 yards away.

x P1 P2 x (start)



x x (finish)

- Procedure: the players sprint to each marking object and place their near foot into or beside the object and continue their sprint to the next object. Players should rerun course, on the other side. In the above example, P1's near foot will always be his left as P2's right foot will be the near foot.
- Options:
  - \* players race
  - \* time players for statistical review
  - \* flatten out (widen) marks where cuts are more acute or make marks more narrower

- \* change shape and distance of marks--remove competition as course is different for each player
  - \* lengthen/shorten distance between gates and markers; this allows player to get into a longer stride, before he has to shorten it
  - \* dribble ball--player must still place near foot in or near marker
  - \* change starting foot positions for another coaching consideration
- Coaching Points and Considerations:  
The ability to sprint for short distances then cut into a different direction quickly is a very important attribute of a soccer player. Players need to be able to adjust the strides to compensate for the specific foot placement. Areas a coach should watch for is a stride length that is too long, especially at each point of direction change. Plants and cuts should be as quick as possible. Players need to learn to shorten strides, without lessening their speed. "One-footedness" shows up when a player is not as fast on one side as he is on the other. By changing the starting footwork position, this offers the player a chance to train on minimizing steps to get up to full speed. Players need to be encouraged to get to each mark as if it is a 50-50 ball.

## Lateral Speed

Soccer-quick starts and stops. Most injuries occur with stops.

Balance analysis (10 seconds per rep)

- Single leg squat
- Leg in front
- Leg out wide
- Bent to the side
- Roll ball back and forth; to the side
- One touch passing while balancing on one foot
- Walk and stop and balance on one foot

Recognition/reaction/change of direction/obstacle avoidance/footwork

Ball drop and roll recognition drills; server holds two balls out and drops one or rolls a ball to one side or the other, player must react.

- Time run and dribble weave through flags; change flags to staggered setup.
- Plant and cut at each flag, feed ball in random direction at last flag to ensure balance
- Plant and shuffle at each flag
- Plant and turn at each flag

Hurdles 4 feet apart, with double steps between hurdles; widen distance between hurdles; 2 hurdles with rings staggered laterally, step in ring with both feet.

Broad jump may equate to standing jump; i.e., either one will show power.  
Land on balance

3 meter circle wheel drill-12" high cones at N, NNE, E, SSE, S, etc. and in center; start on center cone, touch each cone, returning to center each time; timed.

Shuttle test-2-3 minute rest between. First run 10-20-30-40-50, then run 50-40-30-20-10. Coach calls out times.

10 meter acceleration test-10 meter triangle, start at cone A and run around cone B and past cone C; time when player crosses cone C; repeat test running around cone C first. Add ball and stop time when ball stops.

## Speed Training with the Ball

### Activities:

1. **Fast footwork**, should be trained in three ways:

**A. Within the comfort zone** (slow and smooth).

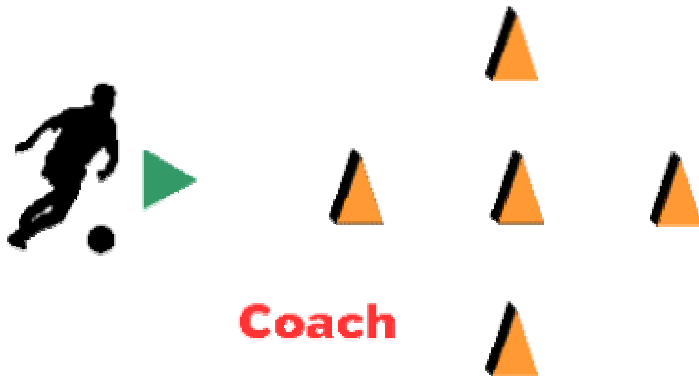
**B. Fast as can be done.** On the cutting edge of losing control!

**C. With penetration.** This means pushing the ball 5-10 yards out and sprinting after it.

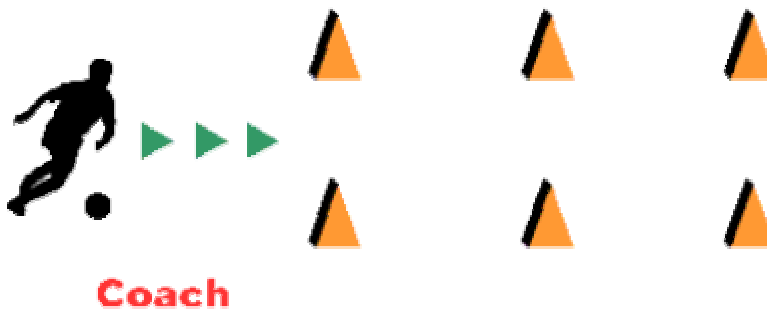
A good method of teaching penetration is to put the players in a series of five-yard grids. On the command, they must execute the desired technique, push the ball out of their grid into another and sprint to regain possession, without contacting another player (also increases their awareness of space).

2. **Speed Wheel with the ball:**

On the coaches' command, the player begins dribbling the ball toward cones, stopping at the first cone, second cone, third cone, turning and repeating coming back. The emphasis is not only on acceleration but also on deceleration. The coach can give the player directions on how to navigate the course, emphasizing stopping, feinting and going to a side cone, acceleration, twisting, turning, and what techniques to use. Here the Three- point flexion is crucial. **Cones should be 8-10 yards apart.**



3. **Technique on Demand:**



**Twenty yards in length between cones.** Player starts build-up run, attaining full speed by first cone. Coach serves ball into player's path, player must control without losing speed, sprinting to



designated cone. Coach should give each player a few chances to perform new exercise within their comfort zone. Start service on ground, demanding player takes ball with left foot, right foot, etc. Build up to bouncing balls, air balls for thigh, foot, chest, and head.

Coach observes speed, technique, and the proper distance that the ball is played away from receiver on first touch. It will be normal for players to lose control at beginning of activity. The coach is looking for quality, not quantity in this type of training activity. In order to maximize effectiveness; allow the proper work-to-rest ratio. By arranging the activity with ten players in each line (two-three areas might be necessary), and allowing each player to walk slowly back to the end of the line after a full-out sprint with the ball, this should be accomplished. Each player completes 10-12 repetitions. Distance between cones should be varied weekly.

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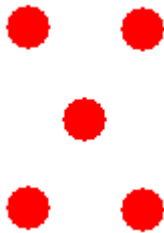
### SUMMARY:

The coach will notice that the players tend to lose control of the ball when first attempting these activities. This is normal. They also will show a great deal of frustration. This will lessen, as they become more proficient in speed training with the ball.

As the players return to training activities (small sided games), they will normally revert back into their comfort zone. Here the coach must constantly be on the outlook for that moment to reinforce their ability to play at top speed.

### Plyometrics

□ --o--Mark the ground with 5 dots



--o--See the drawings below

--o--KEY:



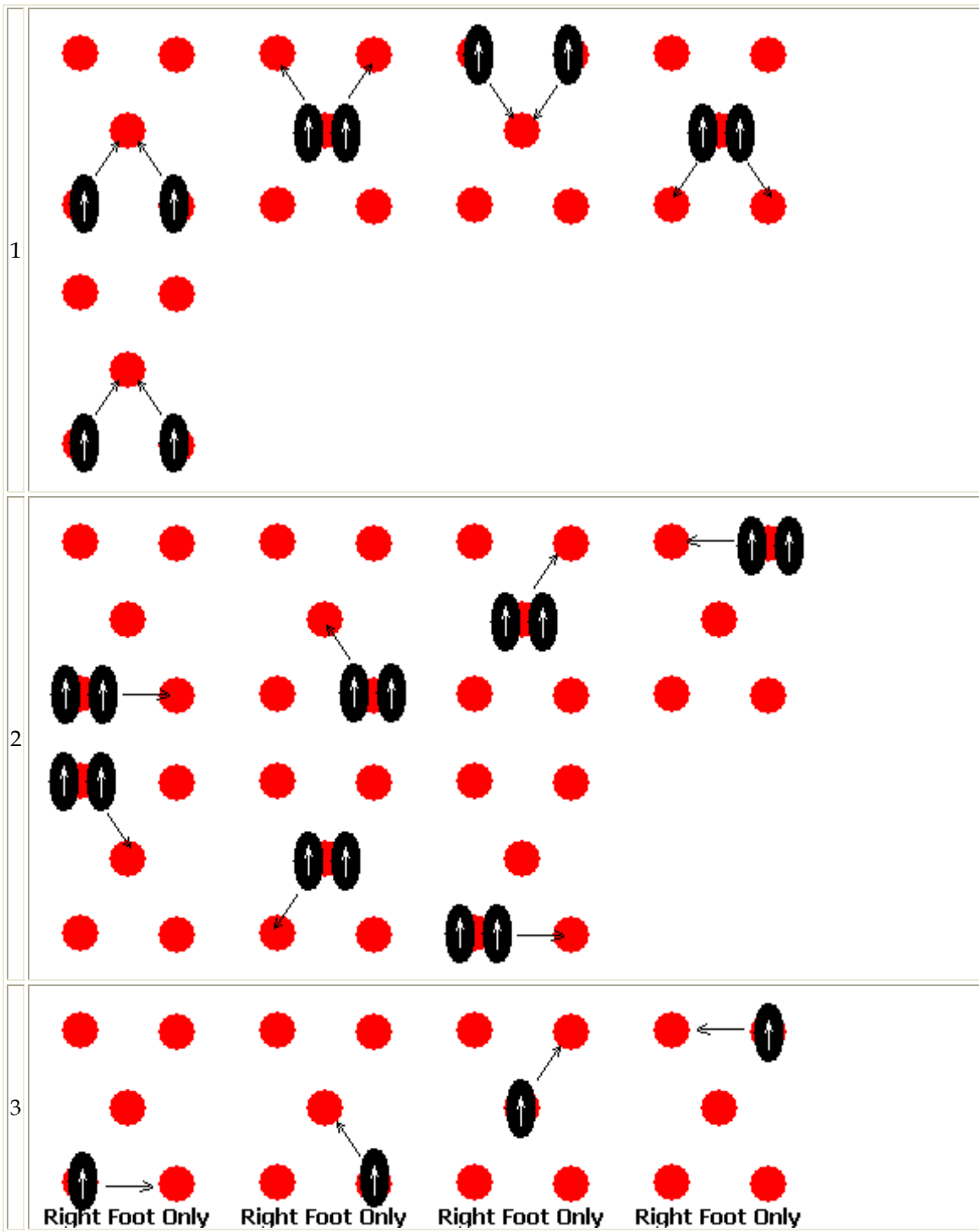
----o-- This is your feet. The WHITE ARROWS represent which direction you are FACING.

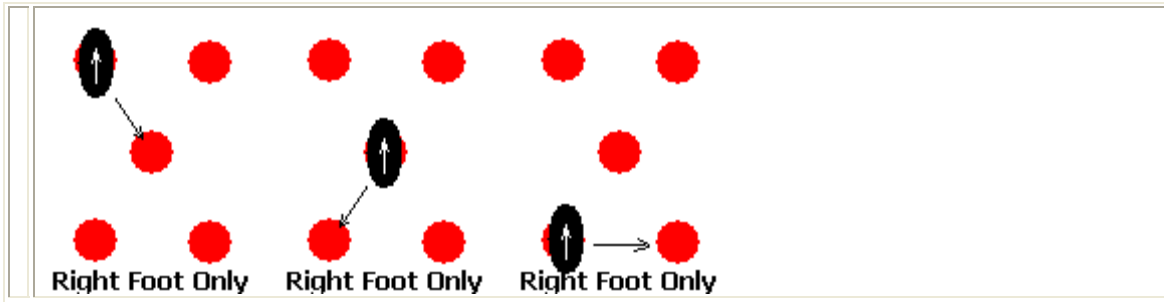
----o--The BLACK ARROWS in the drawings tell you where you are moving your feet NEXT.

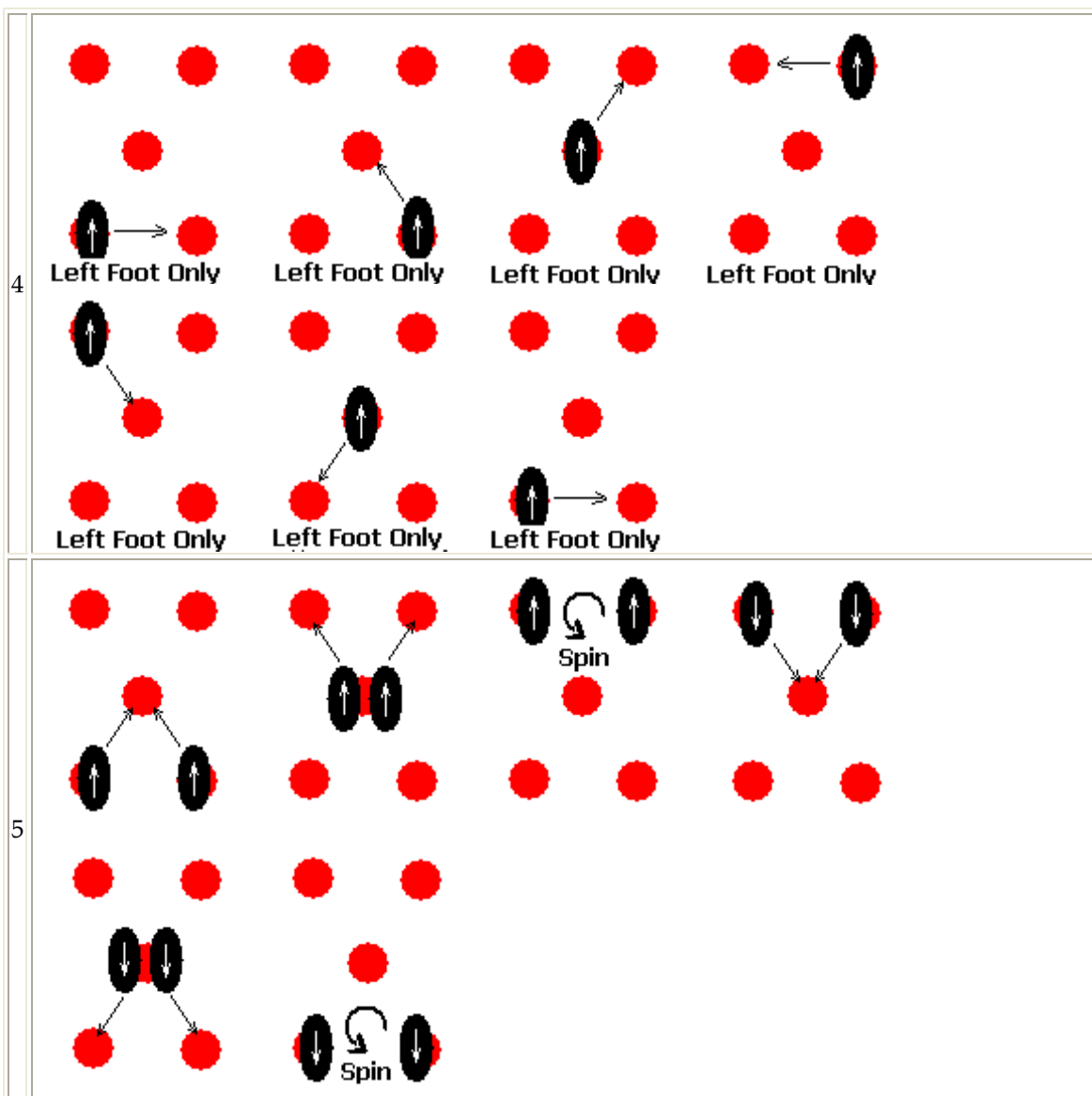
--o--EXCERCISE:

----o--Repeat each step 5 times in a row, no resting in between each step.

----o--Try to get through all 5 steps, 5 repetitions each, in LESS than 1 minute.







DONE! How fast did you do it?

Repeat and try to get faster. Do this every day and you are sure to improve your foot speed!

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"DOGGIES"

- ☐ --o--Place cones 5 yards apart from 0 to 25 yards
- ☐ --o--Sprint to the first cone and back to start
- ☐ --o--Sprint to the second cone and back to start
- ☐ --o--Continue until you have sprinted to each of the cones separately
- ☐ --o--Time yourself for keeping track of your progress
- ☐ --o--Rest for 1 minute
- ☐ --o--Repeat the "doggies"
- ☐ --o--Begin with a regimen of 5 repetitions, then work your way up to more repetitions. Time

yourself each time--strive to improve

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### Jumping over cones

- ☐ --o-- Set 10 cones in a row; jump two footed over each cone
- ☐ --o-- Repeat with one foot: jump with left foot only over each cone. Use idle leg to thrust your body upwards.
- ☐ --o-- Repeat with other foot: jump with right foot only over each cone. Use idle leg to thrust your body upwards.
- ☐ --o-- Set 10 cones in a row; jump two footed over two cones. Then jump back (facing forward) over one cone. Then jump forward over two cones. Then jump back over one cone. Complete to the end of the cones.

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### "Russian Hat Dance"

- ☐ --o-- Set the ball in front of you; stand with one foot resting on the ball; jump and switch feet (kind of like a Russian hat dance on the ball); have them touch each foot 25 times
- ☐ --o-- Set the ball beside you; jump with both feet sideways over the ball, then jump back; bounce back and forth like a pogo stick (don't stop between each jump); jump 25 times

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### Dribble

- ☐ --o-- Set 10 cones in a row; dribble through the cones with the right foot only; repeat with the left foot only

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### "Frog Jumps"

- ☐ --o-- Frog jumps: Line all the boys up on the line; have them squat down as low as they can go, their butt to the ground if possible (like a baseball catcher); have them jump up as far and high as possible (kind of like a standing long jump); You can have them race to a certain distance, or see who can go a certain distance in the least amount of jumps

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### 3 Partner Plyometrics

- ☐ --o-- 3 partners, 2 with a ball;
- ☐ --o-- The 2 with the ball stand side by side, 5 yards apart;
- ☐ --o-- The 3rd "runner" faces the 2 with the ball;
- ☐ --o-- Server 1 plays the ball straight forward on the ground with his feet, the "runner" passes it right back to him on the ground;
- ☐ --o-- The "runner" then shuffles over to Server 2;
- ☐ --o-- Server 2 tosses the ball up for the "runner" to head back to him;
- ☐ --o-- The runner then returns to Server 1 to play the ball with his feet again.

You can repeat this 10 times then rotate players.

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## 2 Partner Plyometrics

- ☐ --o--2 partners, 1 with a ball;
- ☐ --o--The server 1 tosses the ball up for a header;
- ☐ --o--Player 2 heads it back;
- ☐ --o--Player 2 then drops down in a push up position, touching his chest to the ground;
- ☐ --o--Player 2 then pops back up to do another header.

Repeat 10 times.

## Example of an off season Fitness Schedule

This example is based on 15/16 year olds. The reps should be adjusted down according to age.

400 = 1 lap around a standard track

Week 1 – Rest in between reps 1 ½ times the amount of time it took to complete the prior rep. (i.e. if it takes 1 minute to run a 400, then rest 1 ½ minutes before beginning the next one)

- Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
- 10 Min Stretch
- 10 Min. Agility's using 10yrd. Distance up and back (high knees, grapevine, backward run, etc.) Also include a quick feet drill where you see how many quick steps you can take in 5 yards, then repeating back to where you began, staying on the balls of your feet, stepping as quickly as you can and pumping your arms like you are sprinting. Bring a ball with you and do some to touches on the top of the ball and side to side touches between your feet as well, at least 1 minute each, being sure to touch the ball with each step.
- 20 long lunge steps, hands on your hips. These should be slow and precise, touching your back knee to the ground with each step.
- 800 jog warm-up
- 4 x 200 half speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet (concentrate on form)
- 6 x 100 half speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet (concentrate on form)
- 6 x 40 ¾ speed (3 running forward, 3 running backward)
- 400 warm down
- 6 x sets of 10 pushups
- 150 sit-ups
- 10 minute Stretch
- Tuesday, Thursday
- 25 Minute Run (should be slightly more 2 miles)

Week 2 – Rest in between reps 1 ½ times the amount of time it took to complete the prior rep. (i.e. if it takes 1 minute to run a 400, then rest 1 ½ minutes before beginning the next one)

- Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
  - 10 Min Stretch
  - 10 Min. Agility's using 10yrd. Distance up and back (high knees, grapevine, backward run, quick feet, etc.) and ball touches
  - 20 long lunge steps, hands on your hips. These should be slow and precise, touching your back knee to the ground with each step.
  - 800 jog warm-up
  - 4 x 200 build up speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet (concentrate on form, start slow, finish fast)
  - 6 x 100 ¾ speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet
  - 8 x 40 ¾ speed (4 forward, 4 backward)
  - 400 warm down
  - 6 x sets of 10 pushups
  - 150 sit-ups
  - 10 minute Stretch
- 
- Tuesday, Thursday
  - 25 Minute Run (should be slightly less than 3 miles)

Week 3 – Rest in between reps 1 ½ times the amount of time it took to complete the prior rep. (i.e. if it takes 1 minute to run a 400, then rest 1 ½ minutes before beginning the next one)

- Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
  - 10 Min Stretch
  - 10 Min. Agility's using 10yrd. Distance up and back (high knees, grapevine, backward run, quick feet, etc.) and ball touches
  - 20 long lunge steps, hands on your hips. These should be slow and precise, touching your back knee to the ground with each step.
  - 800 jog warm-up
  - 2 x 400 ¾ speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet (concentrate on form).
  - 4 x 200 Build up speed (Increase pace each 50 yds. So that the final 50 of each 200 you are sprinting)
  - 4 x 100 build up speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet (2 forward, 2 backward)
  - 8 x 40 full speed (4 forward, 4 backward)
  - 400 easy warm down
  - 6 x sets of 15 pushups
  - 150 sit-ups
  - 10 minute Stretch
- 
- Tuesday, Thursday
  - 30 Minute Run (should be at least 3 miles)



Week 4 – Rest in between reps 1 ½ times the amount of time it took to complete the prior rep. (i.e. if it takes 1 minute to run a 400, then rest 1 ½ minutes before beginning the next one)

- Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
  - 10 Min Stretch
  - 10 Min. Agility's using 10yrd. Distance up and back (high knees, grapevine, backward run, quick feet, etc.) and ball touches
  - 20 long lunge steps, hands on your hips. These should be slow and precise, touching your back knee to the ground with each step.
  - 800 jog warm-up
  - 4 x 400 Build up speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet (concentrate on form). Increase speed each 100 yds. So that last 100 is a full sprint.
  - 4 x 200 build down speed (start fast, finish slow)
  - 6 x 100 build up speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet (3 forward, 3 backward) – backward one's are full speed.
  - 8 x 40 full speed (6 backward, 2 forward)
  - 400 warm down
  - 6 x sets of 10 pushups
  - 120 sit-ups
  - 10 minute Stretch
- 
- Tuesday, Thursday
  - 35-Minute Run (should be more then 3 miles)

Week 5 – Rest in between reps 1 ½ times the amount of time it took to complete the prior rep. (i.e. if it takes 1 minute to run a 400, then rest 1 ½ minutes before beginning the next one)

- Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
  - 10 Min Stretch
  - 10 Min. Agility's using 10yrd. Distance up and back (high knees, grapevine, backward run, quick feet, etc.) and ball touches
  - 20 long lunge steps, hands on your hips. These should be slow and precise, touching your back knee to the ground with each step.
  - 800 jog warm-up
  - Build up – ¾ speed 100, walk 100, ¾ speed 200, walk 100, ¾ speed 300, walk 100, ¾ speed 400, walk 400
  - Build down ¾ speed 400, walk 100, ¾ speed 200, walk 100, ¾ speed 100, walk 100.
  - 6 x 100 full speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet
  - 8 x 40 build up slow start to a sprint finish (6 forward, 2 backward)
  - 400 warm down
  - 6 x sets of 15 pushups
  - 150 sit-ups
  - 10 minute Stretch
- 
- Tuesday, Thursday
  - 40-Minute Run (should be at least 4 miles)

Week 6 – Rest in between reps 1 ½ times the amount of time it took to complete the prior rep. (i.e. if it takes 1 minute to run a 400, then rest 1 ½ minutes before beginning the next one)

- Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
- 10 Min Stretch
- 10 Min. Agility's using 10yrd. Distance up and back (high knees, grapevine, backward run, quick feet, etc.) and ball touches
- 20 long lunge steps, hands on your hips. These should be slow and precise, touching your back knee to the ground with each step.
- 800 jog warm-up
- Build up – full speed 100, walk 100, full speed 200, walk 100, half speed 300, walk 100, half speed 400, walk 400
- Build down full speed 400, walk 100, full speed 300, walk 100, full speed 200, walk 100, full speed 100, walk 100
- 4 x 100 full speed with long strides using your arms and running on the balls of your feet
- 8 x 40 build down sprint start to a ¼ speed finish
- 400 warm down
- 6 x sets of 15 pushups
- 150 sit-ups
- 10 minute Stretch
  
- Tuesday, Thursday
- 40-Minute Run (should be at least 4 miles)

## Ball Mastery - Footwork and Dribbling Basics

### Seven Minute Drill

- 2 Rolls (4 each foot)
- 1) **Inside Roll** - Roll the ball across your body from outside to inside with the inside and sole of the foot and stop the ball with the inside of the other foot.  
2) **Outside roll** - Roll the ball across your body from inside to outside with the outside and sole of the foot and stop the ball with the inside of the same foot.  
3) **Foundation** - Touch ball rapidly between inside of feet – 20 touches
- 1) Side to Side Push-Pull  
2) Side to Side Step-On  
3) Side to Side Front Roll  
4) Pull back and go.  
Do sequence with one foot then switch (4 times each foot )
- 1) **Pull, Instep Push** - push ball forward and pull it back with the sole, then tap ball forward with the instep of the same foot.  
2) **Pull a Vee** - push the ball forward and pull it back the sole of the foot while turning and then take the ball with the inside of the same foot.  
3) **Pull & Take with Outside of foot** - push the ball forward and pull the ball back with the sole then push the ball diagonally forward with the outside of the foot.  
4) **Pull & Roll Behind** - push the ball forward and pull the ball back with the sole

of the foot then pass the ball behind the standing leg with the inside of the foot. Control the ball with the sole of the other foot.

5) **Turns:** Travel 10 feet turn 180 degrees use 3 touches between turns (4 times each foot)

- 1) **Pull Turn** - push ball forward with one foot and pull it back with the other while turning toward ball and take the ball in the opposite direction with the inside of the first foot.
- 2) **Inside of foot turn** - push ball forward, move past ball and turn toward ball and take it with the inside of the foot in the opposite direction.
- 3) **Outside of foot turn** - Push ball forward, move past ball and turn toward ball while taking it with the outside of the foot in the opposite direction.
- 4) **Cruyff** - Push the ball forward, fake kick with inside of foot, but instead pull ball behind the standing leg and change directions.
- 5) **Stepover Turn** - Push ball forward, step over ball with one foot, turn toward ball and take it in the opposite direction.
- 6) **Change of direction** with fakes, 3 touches between turns (4 times each foot)
- 1) **Hip Swivel** - Fake with inside of one foot by swiveling hips toward ball, then reverse direction and take the ball with the inside of the other foot.
- 2) **Mathews** - Fake with inside of foot nudging ball by dipping shoulder, then take ball in the opposite direction with the outside of same foot. (explode)
- 3) **Cap** - Cut ball with inside of foot slightly backward and take ball ahead with the inside of the opposite foot.
- 4) **Stepover** - With ball moving, stepover ball so ball is outside of stepover foot, turn and take the ball with the other foot.
- 5) **Scissors** - Step behind ball as if preparing to take it with the outside of one foot, then step over the ball and take it with the outside of the other foot.
- 6) **Rivolino** - Same as stepover, but take the ball with outside of stepover foot
- Spend ten minutes juggling the ball trying to get 50 consecutive juggles.
- Do 50 to 100 sit-ups, then stretch.
- Try to do complete workout every day. This workout can be done anywhere that there is little danger of breaking things, for instance in a basement, playroom or outside.

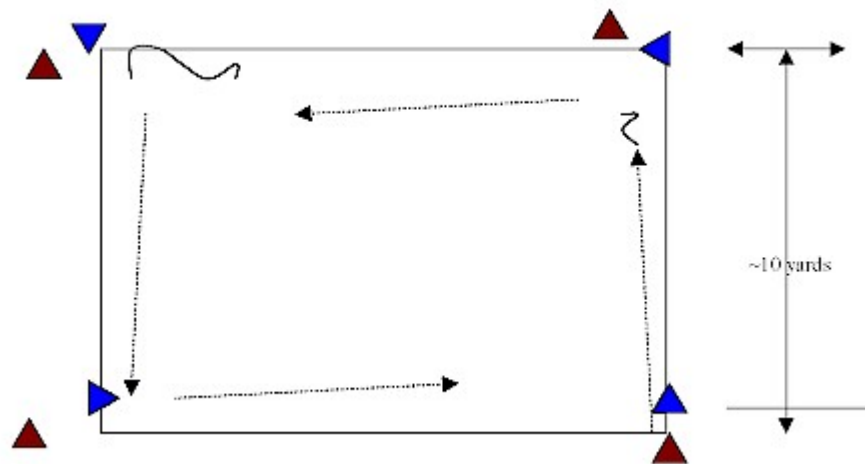
## Moves to beat an opponent

- 1 *Hip Swivel* -- Fake with inside of one foot by swiveling hips toward ball, then reverse direction and take the ball with the inside of the other foot.
- 2 *Mathews* -- Fake with inside of foot nudging ball by dipping shoulder, then take ball in the opposite direction with the outside of same foot. (explode)
- 3 *Cap* -- Cut ball with inside of foot slightly backward and take ball ahead with the inside of the opposite foot.
- 4 *Stepover* -- With ball moving, stepover ball so ball is outside of stepover foot, turn and take the ball with the other foot.

- 5 *Scissors over ball* -- Step behind ball as if preparing to take it with the outside of one foot, then step over the ball and take it with the outside of the other foot.
- 6 *Rivolino* -- Same as stepover, but take the ball with outside of stepover foot.
- 7 *Vee* -- Fake pass with instep (across body), pull ball back with sole and take in opposite direction with the inside of the same foot.
- 8 *Cruyff* -- Fake kick with inside of foot, but instead pull ball behind the standing leg and change directions.
- 9 *Inside of foot cut* -- Cut the ball across body with inside of foot while simultaneously stepping over it and take with outside of opposite foot.
- 10 *3/4 Inside of foot turn* -- Cut ball back with inside of foot, continue turning 3/4 of the way around and take the ball with the inside of the same foot
- 11 *3/4 Outside of foot turn* -- Cut ball back with outside of foot, continue turning 3/4 of the way around and take the ball with the outside of the same foot
- 12 *Scissors behind ball* -- Step behind ball as if preparing to take it with outside of one foot, fake, then take it with the outside of the opposite foot. (easy to learn)
- 13 *Scissors in front of ball* -- Step behind ball as if preparing to take it with outside of one foot, then step around front of ball and take it with outside of the other foot.
- 14 *Double Scissors* -- Push ball forward, make alternate scissors steps and take with outside of first foot. (Ineffective close to opponent)
- 15 *Reverse Mathews* -- Fake with outside of one foot, step behind and take with outside of opposite foot. (Also called body swerve or Touch'n go)
- 16 *Stepover - Scissors* -- Ball rolling. Stepover followed by scissors with same foot and take with outside of other foot
- 17 *Front Roll* -- While moving forward, pull ball across body with sole and take with outside of opposite foot.

## More Advanced Foot Skill Drills

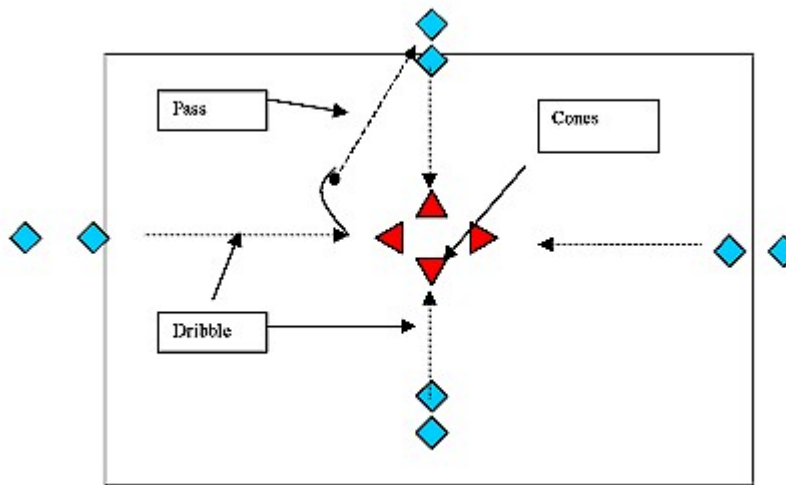
- An example of a more advanced foot skill drill is shown below. This type of drill is good for the second phase of any practice warm up.
- Place your players in groups of four. Drill number 1 has four players on the inside of a grid of cones about ten yards apart and a second group on the outside of the grid.



- Players on the inside of the grid have a ball. Players on the outside are doing static stretching. This is a high intensity drill for the players on the inside. It is important to have the correct work-rest intervals, hence the players on the outside, spelling the players on the inside.
- Each inside player dribbles towards a cone ahead of them and at the cone executes a move pre-determined by the coach. Start it off simple, make the first round a move such as brush (left or right).
- Have the player then accelerate to the next cone and execute the same move. When the inside player gets to their starting position have the outside player take his/her place and do the same series of moves.
- This type of warm-up can use a progression just like any other aspect of practice:
- An example progression could be:
  - Brush

- Brush Tap
- Tap-Tap-Brush
- Pull a vee and accelerate at right angles
- Pull the ball back – sweep behind and accelerate to the next cone by pushing the ball ahead with the outside of the plant (non-sweeping) foot.

Another easy warm up drill is to have four lines facing a set of cones located in the center.



Players all dribble towards the center cones. As they reach the cones they pull a move towards the left. (Important that all players move in the same direction or collisions will occur.). After the move has been performed the player passes the ball to the next player in the line to their left. This is also a drill where you can use progression of moves from easier to more difficult. One of the types of moves that can really be worked here are ones that use the outside of the foot. A simple one is to stop the ball with the sole and then pull it back out of danger by turning the foot over the ball, swiveling the hips and using the outside of the foot to move to the left (or right) and AWAY from pressure, in this case a set of cones.

Conventional wisdom indicates that a child has to perform a skill a minimum of 75 times before they actually begin to learn it. Mastery comes much later. That is why it is so important for the children to get multiple touches on the ball.

The above skills can be the Warm Up and FUNDAMENTALS portion of your dribbling/ foot skills practice session

## Dribbling

### Freeze Tag

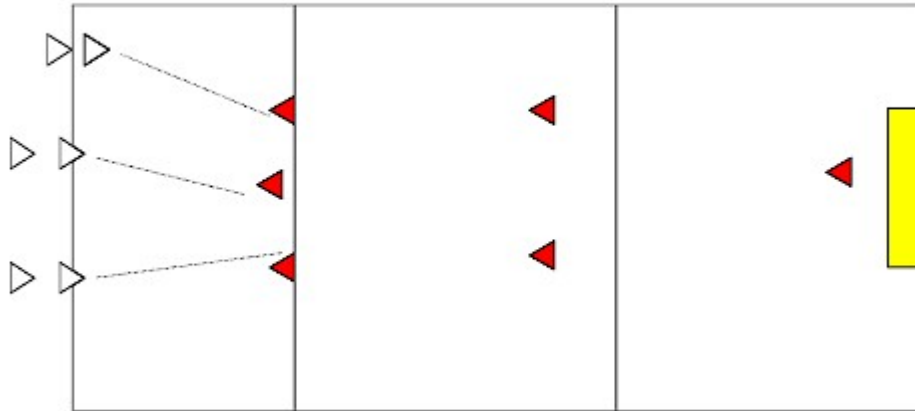
- Freeze tag is played in a rectangular grid. One person (or two if you like) is (are) IT. All players must dribble and stay in control of their ball. If they lose it out of bounds they must freeze in place. If the IT player tags them with their ball they are also frozen.
- Teammates of the freeze's can unfreeze them by passing their ball between legs and picking it up on the other side.
- Change the IT often.

### Four Corners

- Set up a grid field with a square in each corner. This square is the goal.
- Have players aligned along the sideline with a ball at their feet.
- Call out two names and throw a ball into the field. Players have to dribble the ball into any one of the four goals, under control, and stop the ball within the square with the sole of their foot. Let the players play for 30 seconds at a time.
- If the ball goes out of bounds call a player quickly to put their ball into play. Encourage quick changes of direction and make them aware that there are goals at both ends of the field. This should encourage them to pull the ball back out of trouble and head in a different direction rather than just hammering the ball one way.
- As the players get better you can move on to War.

## War

### WAR



### The Game

1. Dribblers' (light triangles) try to dribble through the three zones occupied by the dark triangle defenders.
2. Defenders must stay in their zones, and try to kick any ball that is dribbled through out of bounds.
3. Dribblers' go three at a time. If the dribbler ahead of you in your line gets their ball knocked out, the next dribbler in line may go right away.
4. As soon as the 'dribbler' in front of you leaves the zone, the next 'dribbler' can also go.
5. After beating the last defender, the 'dribbler' must shoot the ball into the goal to get a point for their team.

### Coaching Points

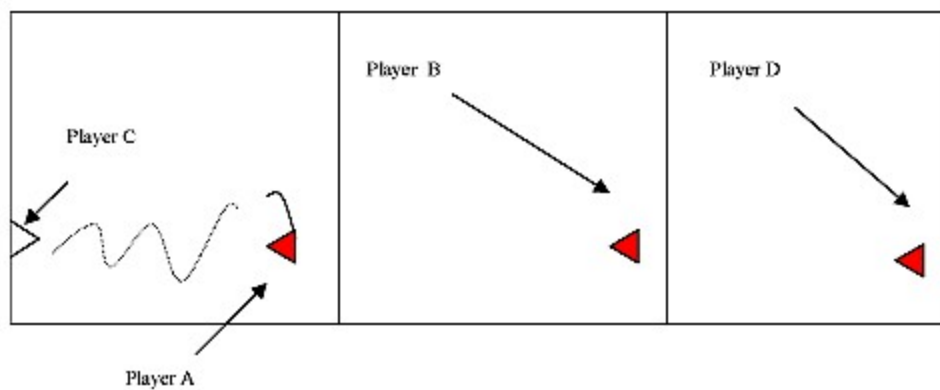
- Good dribbling technique.
- Look for an opening... perhaps sending a teammate in early to act as a decoy, then when the defense opens up take that clue to penetrate.

### Variations on the Game



- Put a 'FREE ZONE' between each zone shown. The free zone can be 5 yds. wide.
- Once the dribbler gets in the free zone, they can rest before they take on the next defender.
- You can also have people that make it into the free zone, leave their ball and assist the next person to try to get past the defender by passing.

### One v One v One



### The Game

- Player "C" starts on the end line and dribbles into Zone 1, trying to get past Defender "A".
- If "A" steals the ball, "A" tries to dribble past "C" and over the end line.
- If "C" manages to get past "A", "C" continues through Zone 2 and tries to beat "B" over the end line.
- If "B" steals the ball, he takes on Player "A" who has been waiting in Zone 1.
- If Player C beats player B he then takes on Player D. If player D wins he reverses field, takes on, player C. If he beats Player C he then takes on B, etc. etc.

### Coaching Points of 1 v 1 v 1

- Individual Attack and Defense
- Attack: Try to unbalance defender, attack at pace, try to face

the defender as much as possible, change pace and direction.

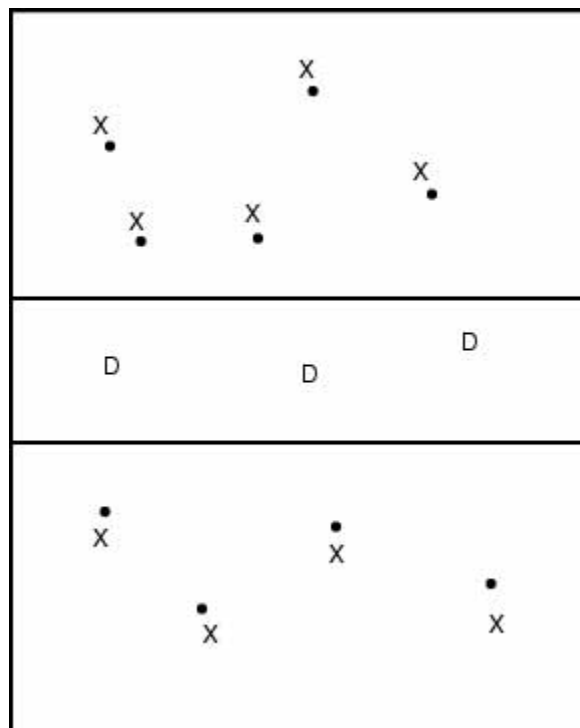
- Defense: Try to channel the attacker towards the sideline, use sideline as a second defender.

#### Variations of 1 v 1 v 1

- Allow defender "A" to chase "C" into Zone 2 if beaten. "C" must then hold "A" off while at the same time moving towards player "B". This also makes "C" not give up on the ball after being beaten.
- Start off with the defender as a passive player then let the defender become semi-active, then fully active.

#### Sharks and Minnows

Start with 3 Defenders in the middle zone and the other 9 players spread out in the two outside zones. The 9 players have soccer balls at their feet. See diagram below for set up



There are four 2-minute periods with a 30 second break between periods. The objective is for the X's to go from one outside zone, through the middle zone to the other outside zone without losing possession of the ball. Each time an X makes it all the way through the center zone with the ball, they get a point. At the end of the 2 minute period, the coach adds up all points scored by the X's and then subtracts the

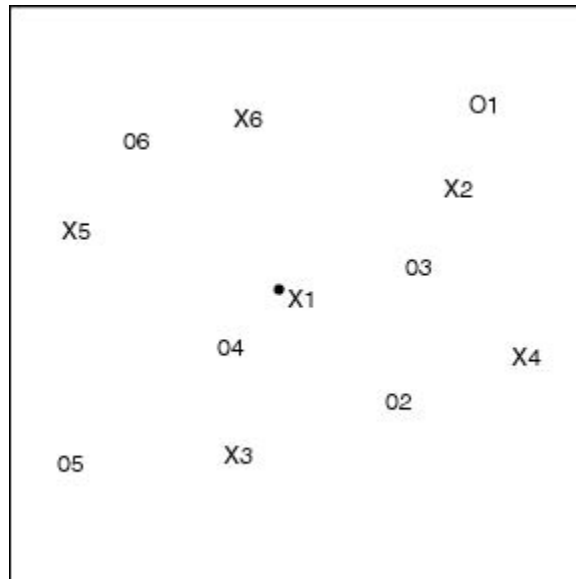
number of times when the defenders won a ball and knock it back to the zone it came from. This combined total is the number of points for the defensive team (the fewer points the better for the defense). For each period, there are 3 new defenders. At the end of game, the defensive group that allowed the fewest number of points wins.

This is a great game (especially for young players) as they work hard, have to make decisions (should they go across or wait for a better opportunity?) and defensively have to communicate and work together in order to be most effective. Plus, it allows the players to engage in 1 v 1 play and learn how to deal with it both offensively and defensively.

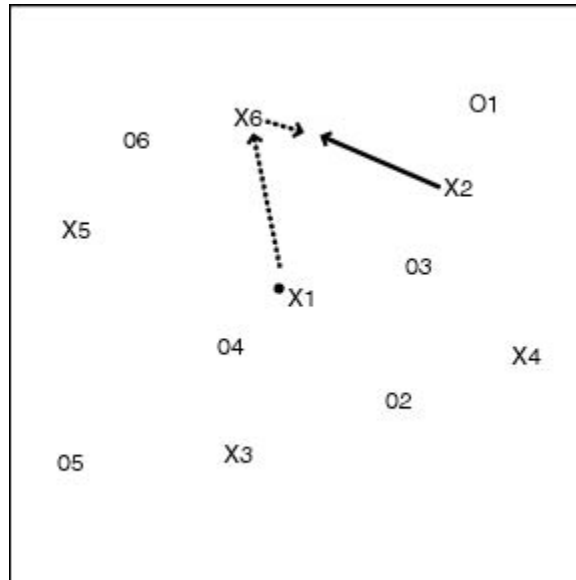
## Heading

### Heading Game

12 players are broken into two teams (X's and O's) and are in a 40 x 40 grid (the numbers and size of the grid can vary) See diagram below for setup



X1 starts with the ball in her hands (the players aren't actually numbered but this is just for demonstration purposes). She throws the ball (proper soccer throw in) to any of her teammates who will then head the ball to a third teammate who receives the ball with using the normal laws of soccer (no hands). Any time there is a successful throw, head and reception under control, it's a point for the team. The definition of a successful reception should be defined ahead of time but might be a ball that is controlled at the feet and then dribbled two times. To see an example, in the diagram below X1 throws the ball to X6 who heads the ball down to X2 who receives the ball. This would result in a point for the X's

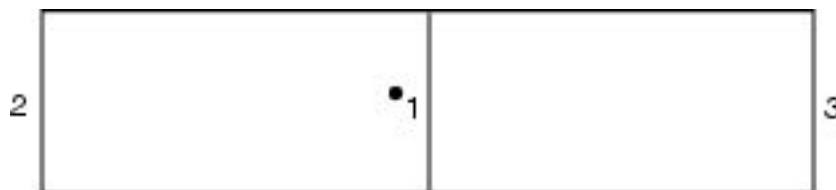


If the ball hits the ground after the ball is thrown and before it's headed, the ball automatically goes to the opposing team. If the third player gets possession of the ball and takes two touches under control, she is allowed to pick the ball up uncontested (otherwise you are risking injury of players trying to pick the ball up while defenders are trying to kick it away).

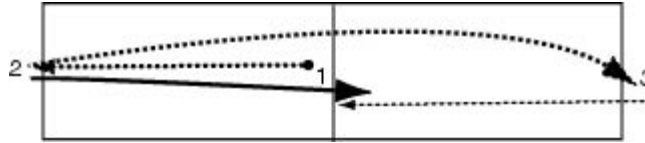
While this might seem like a game geared primarily toward younger players, you would be surprised at how effective it is for more experienced players as well. With the younger players it works on proper throw ins and not being too afraid to head the ball etc. For the more experienced players, it works on the above as well as proper spacing and support (it doesn't do you any good to be open by yourself so the players are working together and communicating etc) as well as learning how to not just head the ball but also head the ball down to feet for a teammate to handle when it's appropriate. For older players, you can also allow double headers which, if then controlled, would count as two points.

### Offensive and Defensive Heading Game

Start with groups of three with one ball per group in a 20 x 5 area. One player is in the middle with the ball and the other two are on the ends of the grid. See diagram below for an example.



Player one has the ball and throws the ball to player 2's head (using a proper throw in). Player 2 has to head the ball up and over Player 1's head who is running right at her and tries to head the ball to Player 3. Player 2 has to sprint to the center line because Player 3 is trying to head the ball down and across the center line before Player 2 can get their and make the save (the player in the middle gets to take on the role of the goal keeper so she can use her hands to make the save. See diagram below for an idea of the movement.



This activity works on defensive headers (up and over oncoming players), attacking headers (heading down to make it difficult to make the save), throw ins and defending (you can choose to allow the defender to use their hands or not).

Not only does this work on some invaluable skills, but the players will have fun while doing so. Turn this into a competition and you will see some great results.

## Aggressiveness and Misc. Games

### Push & Shove

Pair up players. Each pair has a ball. One player is in 'possession' of the ball. Actually the ball is not touched by this player. This player in 'possession' prevents the other player from getting the ball using a shoulder and arm in T position.

Option: as players get more advanced (older) you can introduce the player protecting the ball to using near foot to move the ball

Emphasize: Develops screening technique. The player protecting the ball needs a wide base, use a side on position, and stay low.

### Wrestlemania

Have all team members choose a partner. use markers to define a playing area about the size of a center circle or smaller if you have few players. One of each pair sits on ground, randomly placed in the area. those remaining standing are to dribble around in the area, keeping the ball away from seated players. Those seated can grab any ball that comes within their reach. If seated player gets a ball then they play keep away with other seated players - throw ball from seated player to next. The standing player who lost the ball must retrieve the ball with their hands and resume dribbling. Encourage them to physically wrestle the ball from the seated player. Cheer them on! When your most prissy player losses the ball, let her know you won't stop drill until she gets her ball back. Switch seated with dribblers after about 2 minutes.

Options: Have the dribblers only use only one foot. Or have dribblers dribble at a seated player and cut the ball in with either the inside or the outside of their foot. Or have dribblers dribble at a seated player and use the sole of their foot pull the ball back and make a 180 degree turn.

Emphasize: Dribblers use soft touches so the ball stays close to them at all times and under control.

### Basic Possession – Shielding

#### Shielding Warm Up

Break the players into two groups about 15 yards apart. Players each have a ball and face each other. Each player picks out a shadow partner.

Each pair of players then dribbles the ball to the center of the field. As the players approach they prepare to shield the ball from the on coming player. At first start with a simple swivel of the hips so that as the players pass each other, the body of the player shields the ball from the body of the opponent. When they pass each other they swivel back the other way and complete their run to the far end of the field.

In essence you have 2, 90o swivels and the players pass each other back-to-back.

The next progression is the to use a spin move as they approach. The first spin move is to make a 360o turn using four (4) small chopping steps with the inside of the foot. Make sure both players turn the same way and use the same foot or there will be collisions.

After several runs like this progress to an outside of the foot turn again using four (4) very light touches on the ball to make the move.

## Shielding Fundamentals

Start with two (2) players; a shielder and a person trying to get the ball. Player #1 is the shielder. The shielding player has the ball to the outside of their body. A common mistake is to have the ball between their legs. You want the entire body between the defender and the ball.

The shielder gets LOW, almost as if they were sitting in a chair. A common mistake is to stand almost straight up. The problem with this is very easy to demonstrate. Have a player stand straight up with a ball at their outside leg. A defender trying to steal the ball is allowed to get as close to the ball carrier as they want and try to poke the ball away. They should be able to easily reach the ball. Now have the attacker "sit in their chair". Again have the defender get as close as they want to and try to poke the ball away. You'll see that they can't do it. By sitting in the chair, i.e. getting low, the attacker has created their own space denying it to the defender.

After proper stance has been demonstrated you need to show them how to hold their arms. Players must play with their arms up and away from their bodies. There must be a space between the arm and the body of the player.

What is described above is a perfectly legal play. You can shield with your arms as long as you do not push your opponent away with them. That is the common mistake that players make and refs call.

Now put the ball aside for a moment and just have two players assume the roles of shielder and defender. Have the defender try to encroach on the shielder's space by leaning into their shield arm. In a proper stance and with proper arm placement, a 60 pound 8 year old can hold off a 190 adult! Have the players switch positions with each other and let them go at it for a while. They'll have a lot of fun with this. It teaches aggressiveness (within the rules) and breed's confidence.

## Shielding Fundamentals – Progression #1

The next step is to introduce the ball. Set the players up as described above but this time let the shielder hold the defender off by moving the ball around with the outside of their foot (if the player tries to cut in front) and the inside of the foot, (if the player tries to come from behind). Do not let the ball handler move from their spot on the field. This isn't a drill to see who can out run the other. Switch positions after every 'win'. Stress stance and arm position.

## Shielding Fundamentals – Progression #2

The purpose of this next progression is to instill the concept of "the ball is mine." In order to do that we are going to let the defender play outside the rules by first allowing them to push the attacker with both hands to try to dislodge them from the ball. After that let them try to pull the player off the ball with both hands and finally let them do what ever they have to do, short of dangerous behavior, to try and get the ball.

*Let us stress here that we aren't trying to teach the players to cheat. We are trying to instill aggressiveness and confidence in our ball handlers.*

## Shielding Drill with a Support Player

The next progression is to add a support player for the ball handler. Start with the same set-up, i.e. a player shielding the ball and a defender trying to take it away. Shielder holds off defender as long as she can and then plays the ball to the support player.

The defender then has to break off away from the shielder. In order to ensure this step you may want to make a rule that after the pass is made the defender has to run to a cone, touch it and come back.

The support player must immediately play the ball back to the original ball handler and the shielding drill starts over again.

After several passes switch everyone up.

## Shielding Drill with a Support Player – Progression #1

Continue this drill by adding a second shielder and a second defender. The support player now has to "service" two (2) sets of players. Shielder's now have to hold the defender off longer, make decisions on when to pass and when not to. The support player has to hustle more and make decisions on who to support and how.

Again the defender has to break off once the pass is made and come back to defend once the ball is returned to the original ball carrier.

## Basic Possession – 50/50 Ball

The following is a simple drill that continues the concept of teaching aggressiveness and "The Ball is Mine."

Put two (2) players shoulder to shoulder. Then place a ball in front of them. Start this drill at about half-speed. Player on the left gently taps the ball in front with their inside leg and then goes for it. Player on the right steps across the player on the left with their inside leg shielding the ball from their "partner".

Note the player doing the shielding has to use their whole leg to step across and shield. They are not going for the ball in this part of the drill. Switch places often.

### Basic Possession – 50/50 Ball – Progression #1

Same initial set up. One player taps ball out in front. Both players go for the ball. The player who did not tap the ball:

- Drops her inside shoulder

- Gets low

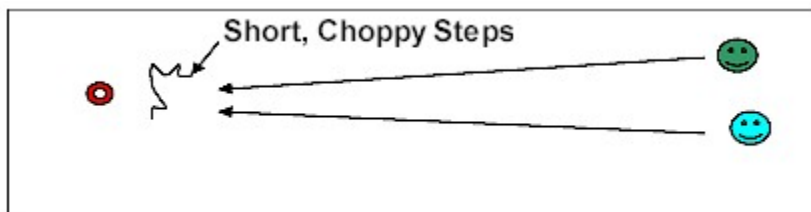
- Moves across in front of his partner

Gets the ball and returns to the start point with an inside of the foot turn.

Players then switch places and run again. Make sure that they also switch sides so that they are dropping both shoulders. Look for weak points and work extra on those points. For example if a player favors their right shoulder, make them work harder on their left.

### Basic Possession – 50/50 Ball – Progression #2

The following is a two-man drill that teaches, "Cushioning" and turning away from pressure. Set it up as shown below:



Both players race for the ball. The player that gets there first must now control their speed by taking short choppy steps as they approach the ball. They then cut in front of their partner and "cushion" them with their backside preventing them from getting to the ball.

You can make this drill even by either giving one player an advantage so that they reach the ball first or by simply telling them that the player on the right is the "cushioner" and the player on the left is the "cushioneer."

Switch sides often so that each player does both and they do it from both sides.

### Basic Possession – 50/50 Ball – Progression #3

The basic progression of the drill above is to not only get to the ball but to control it and turn it away from pressure.

Have the player reaching the ball do a pre-arranged turn away from pressure. I.E. have them turn right outside with the outside of their foot. In this case, where the turn is pre-arranged, make sure that the cushionee is trying to get the ball by coming from the opposite side.

Coaching Points:

- Get low



## Short Choppy Steps

Cushion the player

Turn outside

After several turns at this progression let the players work at it freeform. That is do not pre-arrange the turn, let the player with the ball react to the pressure that they feel on their back and make a decision.

Praise good decision making even if the defender dispossess the ball.

## 50/50 Ball and a Fair Charge

A fair charge is defined as a shoulder-to-shoulder hit. Referees, in general will look at the player carrying the ball as if they were standing at the center of a clock face. The player is facing 12 o'clock. Opposing players coming at the ball handler from 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock and 12 o'clock to 3 o'clock are generally not going to be called for an illegal charge unless you literally just run the player over. At 3 and 9 exactly you are essentially shoulder-to-shoulder. A ref will start to look closely if you approach at 8 and 4, and generally, if contact is made between 4 and 8 it will be a foul.

One of the ways to help teach aggressiveness using the tactic of a shoulder charge is to gather the group for a team run. Give 3-4 players balls, and tell them that the runners without the ball are to shoulder charge to gain the ball. No tackling of the ball is allowed. They **MUST** stay in a tight group. This stresses close ball control in traffic while being bumped (sometimes **HARD**).

## Coaching Points

You will find that there are some players who will not ever challenge hard for the ball. Designate a more aggressive player to get the ball with a shoulder charge, and pass it to the meek player.

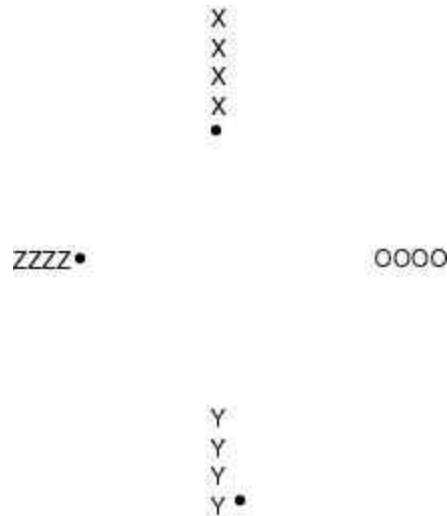
Have the meek player get the ball from a more aggressive player on your signal.

Watch the more aggressive players; they can **FLATTEN** the smaller or meeker players.

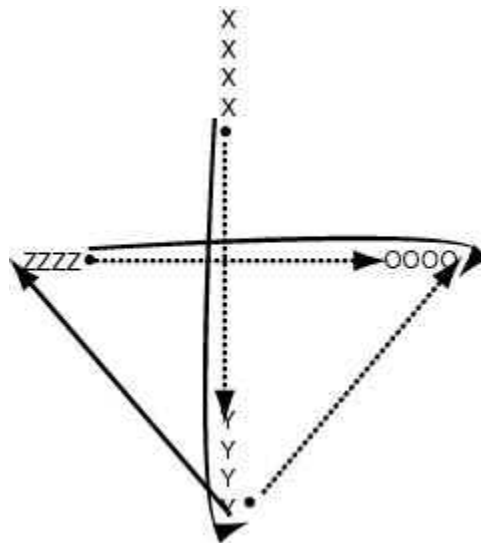
## Passing and Communication

Here is an activity that works on passing, receiving, movement after passing and communication. Before even describing it, I should warn you that when you first try it, you might see mass confusion. Let the players work it out and it will force them to think.

Start with four lines of 3-4 set up as shown below



There are three balls (one in the front of line Z, one in the front of line X and one in the back of line Y. The first player in line X passes the ball to the first person in line Y and then sprints to the back of line Y. At the same time, the first person in line Z passes to the first person in line O and sprints to the back of line O. The important thing for them to work on is getting a good sprint in after the pass. Everyone will have to keep their head up to make sure they don't run into each other or get hit by a ball. At the same time this is taking place, the last player in line Y passes the ball to the last player in line O and then sprints to the back of line Z. In other words, the pass is made counter clockwise and the run is made clockwise. See the diagram below to get a better understanding of all of the movement.



The balls played from the front players keep going back and forth between the two lines and the ball being played in back goes around in a circle.

There will be three balls moving at all times (the two that are going back and forth should be one touch and the one that is going in a circle can be two touch) as well as at least three players running at all times. Players will have to constantly be communicating to know who to pass to and where to go next.

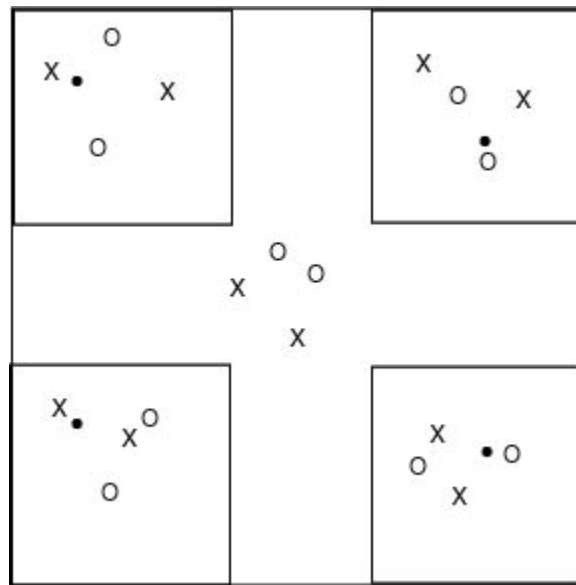
This is a fun warm up activity that includes the whole team (anywhere from 12-20 players can keep active in this activity) and can be used for various age groups.

### Progression of 50/50 – BANG

Set up a scrimmage in what we affectionately call the "pressure cooker". This is a small field (really little more than 2 penalty areas) with full-sized end. Play a "game" called Bang. This "game" is just like a regular scrimmage, but with some important and drastic restrictions. First, when a player receives a ball, they cannot carry it. They have to shield the ball until they can pass it to a teammate. The only way to advance the ball is to pass it. Only 1 defender can challenge for the ball, and the only way the ball can be won is to push the ball holder off the ball with a shoulder charge. This really becomes a physical game.

### 4 Grid Possession

Start with 4, 10 x 10 grids with some space between each grid. There should be two X's versus two O's possession games going on in each grid. There are also two extra X's and O's in the middle. See diagram below for the set up



The objective in this game is for a team to have possession in all four grids at the same time. To help accomplish this, the four players in the middle (two X's and two O's) can go into any grid that they want to help their teammates. If one of the X floaters sees that her teammates are losing their battle in one of the grids, she can go in and turn it into a 3 v 2 instead of 2 v 2. Or, she can join a grid to help her teammates maintain possession if they are down a player in a 2 v 3 type situation.

Not only does this work on possession in the 2 v 2 games, but the 2 teammates who are floating will be working on communicating to decide who goes where (or maybe they would decide to both go to the same place). Players in the grid would also be working on communicating (if they need help, they should communicate with the floaters to get help).

## Teaching Aggressiveness – Steal the Bacon

This is a good game to play at almost any age below U12. It is a simple 1 v 1 game where players are divided into two teams. Each player is given a number. The coach calls out a number (or sometimes two) and then throws a ball into the air that the players have to gain control of.

Since we are teaching aggressiveness and shoulder charging, use the same restriction that we had above in BANG, i.e. no tackling. The player must be relieved of the ball with a shoulder charge.

If you have a meek player that never challenges, handicap the better player by either restricting her run at the ball so the meeker player gets there first or by playing the air ball closer to the meeker player so the more aggressive player has further to run.

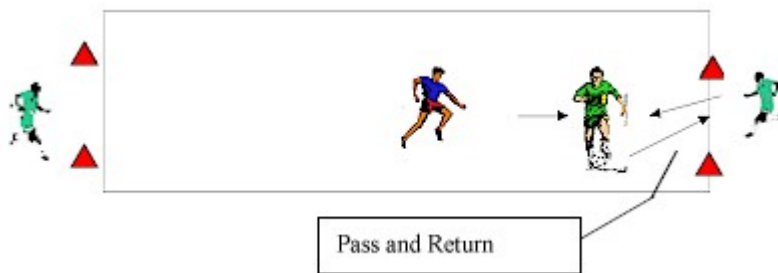
## Basic Possession – 1 v 1 Game

The following game incorporates the shielding, cushioning and change of direction aspects of possession detailed above.

Start by making a field about 20 yards long and 15v wide. Goals are placed at each end. Players are placed in each goal. These players cannot leave the goal. Two players and one ball are on the field.

The object of the drill is for the field players to complete 2 successive passes to either goalkeeper. They need to shield the ball from the defender and then cushion the defender away from the area where the pass is coming from. If the defender beats the cushion and enters the area they need to change direction quickly and head for the other side of the field.

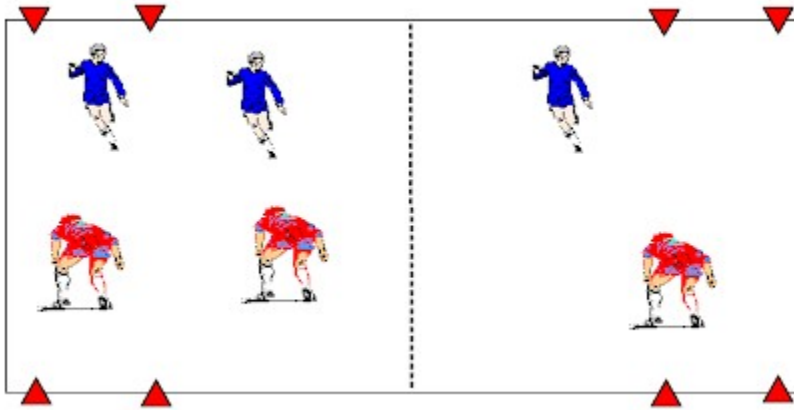
Two complete passes = 1 point and every additional pass beyond 2 in a row is another point.



## Basic Possession – Keep Away

The next game also incorporates all of the shielding, cushioning and spin away moves described above. The field in this case is short but very wide. This helps to teach the concept of width.

The game can either be played with four goals that the players have to dribble through or can be played strictly as keep-away where points are given for proper shielding and spin away moves.



Divide the field in half and play 3 on 3. Allow only 2 players from any team within any half of the field. This discourages bunching up. Take the ball away when they forget.

Coaching Points:

Defenders get low and stay low

Defenders do not dive in

Shield the ball, attacker is low and arms are away from the body.

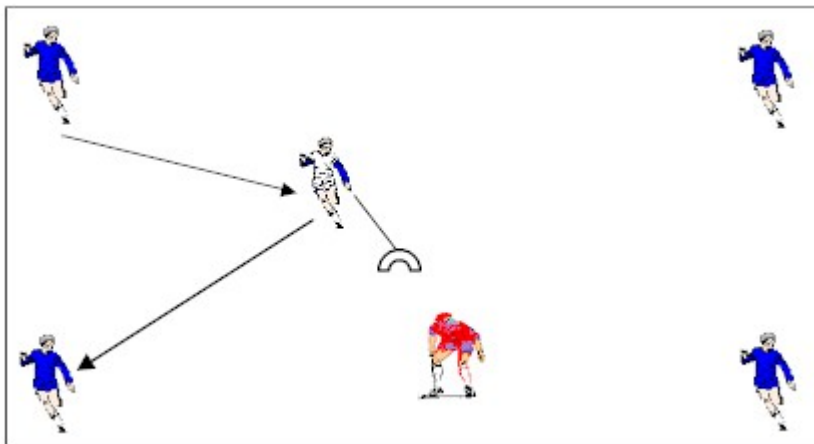
Support player close but not right on top of the player.

Switch the field often

Discourage just kicking the ball away. If players do this continually, penalize the team by having them perform an exercise like 5 pull back Vees before they can rejoin the play.

### Shielding - 4 Corners - Match Related

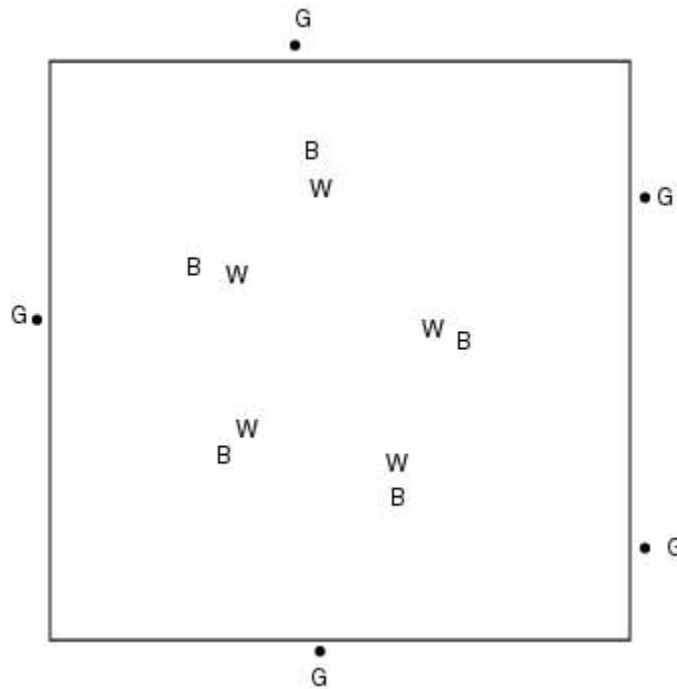
This exercise teaches shielding, checking back, blind side runs and aggressiveness



Set up the field as shown with a player at each of the four corners. One player at one corner has a ball. Two players are in the middle, one is the attacker, one is the defender.

### Receiving Balls under pressure

Let's assume there are 15 players in the training group. Break them into 3 groups of 5's with different color bibs. Use a grid that is 40 x 40 (size can vary depending on space available as well as age of the players). Have one group spread out on the outside of the grid and the other two groups are in the middle. The two middle groups match up 1 v 1. See diagram below for an example of the setup



In the diagram below the Blue team (B) is on offense and the White team (W) is on defense. For a 2 minute period the Green players (G) on the outside try to pass the ball into a B player who then one touches the ball back to the G. After the 2 minute period is over the B's go to the outside, the W's become the offensive group and the G's become the defensive group. After a 2 minute period they switch again and the G's become the offensive group, the W's go to the outside and the B's become the defending group.

After the first rotation you can change the rules so that the offensive players in the middle must receive the ball and take 3 touches on the ball before playing the ball back to the player on the outside. This allows them to work on receiving the ball with pressure and maintaining possession. This is the type of things that a forward might have to do when receiving the ball while checking back to the ball.

The next rotation might have the offensive player in the middle receiving the ball and then having to play the ball to a different player on the outside. This will work on receiving the ball and turning with a player on the back. The outside players are working on playing the ball in a way that allows the offensive players to receive the ball and turn. If the defending player is on the attacking player's right shoulder, the ball would be played in toward the left side of the attacking player so she can turn away from the defending player. Also, the players are working

on communication as the players in the middle should be calling for the ball and the players on the outside should be letting the players on the inside know which way to turn and who is open for the return pass.

### Playing Shielding Four Corners

Pass comes from the corner man to the attacker. The attacker has to make a run, or a check to the ball to shake the defender. She then has to control the ball, under pressure, and shield the ball from the defender.

The attacker then has to get the ball to another corner person. She is not allowed to give the ball back to the original passer.

Count how many passes are made before the defender wins the ball. If the defender wins, she passes the ball back to a corner player immediately and the game restarts.

Switch players often. This is an exhausting drill.

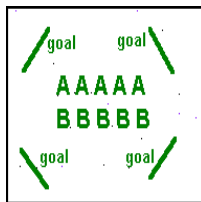
### Progression of 4 Corners

Put two balls at different corners. Again the player who gives the pass may not receive it back, but now additionally the other player who has the ball in the corner cannot receive a pass. The options are now down to 2 for passes from the center.

However the center offensive player, after they have passed the ball to a corner now has two options to receive.

This creates more opportunities for a blind side run and encourages creativity.

### Field Vision Game



Field between 30 X 30 yard and 50 X 50. Split team/group in half (preferred) or thirds. Use 4 goals about 10 yds from the corner.

Scoring:

- Team scores by passing through the goals to a teammate. Any goal. There is no our and their goal. A team can't score consecutively at the same goal. Scores can go through the goal from either direction, just make sure the pass is received and controlled to count. Possession changes if ball goes out of bounds or stolen.

Variations:

- Allow goals for dribbling through

- Use 2 balls

#### Coaching Points:

- Encourage communications and using the whole field -- remember you can score by going backward towards an unguarded goal.
- Everyone is always in the game as an offensive and defensive player. Players must make quick transitions very often, because the ball is always in scoring position.

#### Another View of This Drill

The drill or I call a functional practice is actually called the "Four Goal Game". The main purpose is switching play from one side of the field to the other. If a player with the ball is prevented from moving forward, then he / she should turn with the ball with the objective of passing back to supporting players or by finding players who are in a better position to penetrate weaker areas of the field (preferably 2 v 1 situations). Remember, the game is about decisions and turning with the ball. The earlier the decision and the quicker the turning, the better the player.

Key coaching points include ability to switch play either through a series of passes or long accurate passes; communication between supporting players and player with the ball; patience of players who must be in position at all times, this means players on either side of the field waiting for the right time; ability of players to turn on the ball, turn with head up; and finally your point; the ability of players to see the field.

This is a great drill and should be encouraged a lot.

Once the basic skills have been mastered for control and passing one skill that is difficult to teach is "vision" and to read the game. Depending on the age group normally U-11 or older one drill is to place 3 chairs at the near side of the room. Then choose 3 defenders and 3 forwards. The 3 forwards start by the center chair, a ball is thrown towards the far wall. First the forwards must communicate who will go to the ball and who will take other positions.

At the halfway stage up the hall 2 defenders choose and sit on a chair while the third gives chase to the forwards. Now the forwards must warn of the incoming defender (talk to each other) and they must also look up to identify which chair is the goal. After "x" seconds a second defender can give chase opening up 2 goals (chairs).

The objective of the game is to encourage talking, looking up to view the field of play and quick break passing to avoid the second defender becoming involved. The best part is most times the kids don't see this as a drill since they compete in an actual game. Use old chairs, the thrill of "killing" the chair can result in the chair taking a beating.

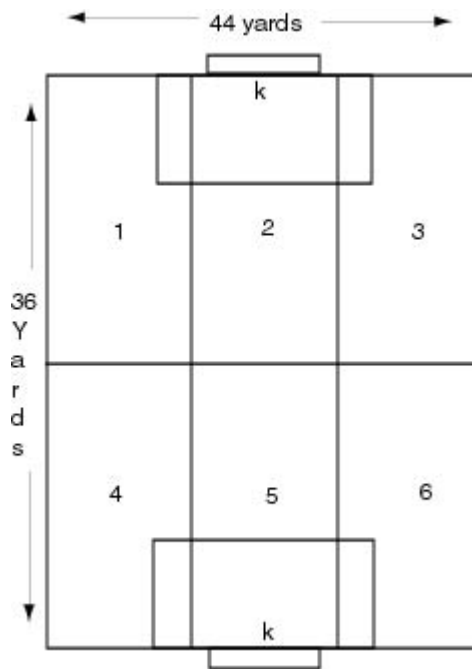
By the way. The one defender normally wins about 70+% of the time. If it gets too easy then change the ratio of defenders to forwards.



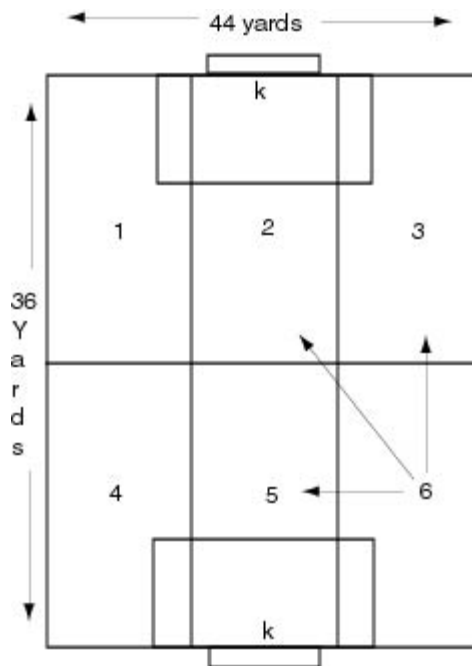
## Shape and Balance

Here is an activity to work with younger players on maintaining some shape and balance to discourage them from just "chasing the ball"

Start with a field that is 36 yards long and 44 yards long wide with two full sized goals (this would be two 18 yard boxes). Then break the field into 6 even grids inside of the field. The game will be a 3 v 3 game plus keepers. Each field player is assigned a grid. See diagram below for the set up



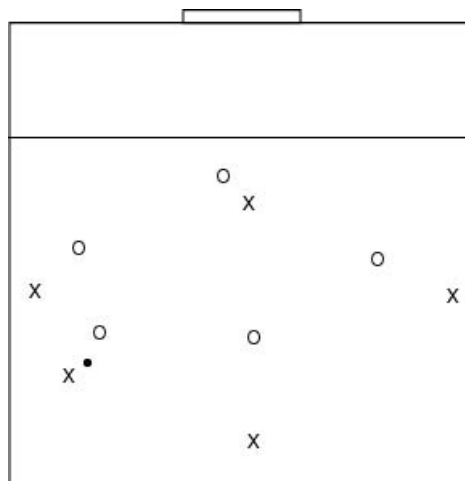
The game is very simple. Players 1,2 and 3 are playing against 4,5 and 6. The main rule is a player can only go into another grid that touches their original grid. For example, Player 6 can stay within her own grid and can go into the grids where 2,3 and 5 start but can't go into the grids of 1 or 4. See diagram below for allowed movement



This activity allows movement and support but also emphasizes some discipline and balance.

### Shooting from Distance – Looking for the shot early/closing down early on defense

Start with an area that is 40 x 50 with a goal on the end line and a 15 yard area closest to the goal. The 10 players are in the main part of the grid. See diagram below for set up



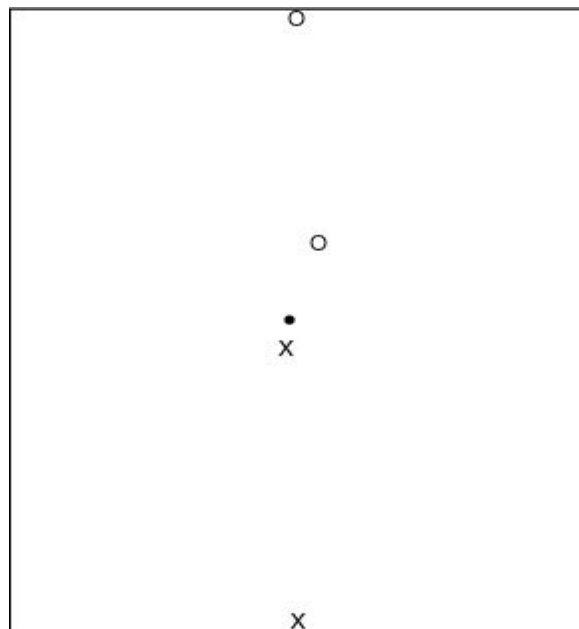
The rules are that the X's need to get 3 passes before they can go to goal. Once they have their three passes, they can go to goal. No one is allowed in the 15 yard area closest to the goal. All the X's have to do is get open enough to get a shot hit and since there is no keeper, if they can do this, they will most likely score. The defense is working on putting immediate pressure on the ball which will force the attacking player to put the head down making it more difficult to get a shot hit. If the O's win the ball, they need 3 passes in order to go to goal.

This game is great at emphasizing the important of getting the early pressure on the ball and also on providing a second defender for coverage. It also works on getting midfielders and forwards to look for early shots from a distance.

## Attacking

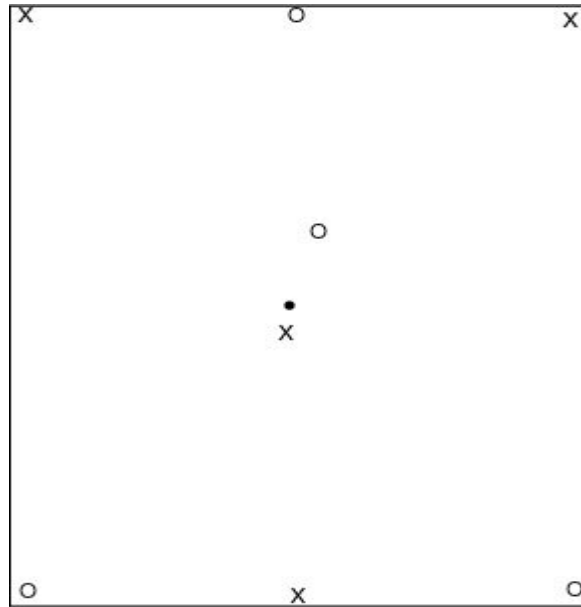
### 1v1 and 2v2 Attacking

Start with a small grid (20 x 10 is a good size for most) and 4 players per grid with one ball per grid. The players split into two groups. One player from each group stands on the center of the end line and is the goal and the other player starts in the middle. To score, the center player must pass the ball through the legs of the other players "goal". The players who represent the goal do NOT try to defend and do NOT try to move to prevent a goal from being scored. The "goals" must stand with their feet far apart to make it easy for the players to score. The game lasts for 1 minute and then the players switch. See diagram below for the set up



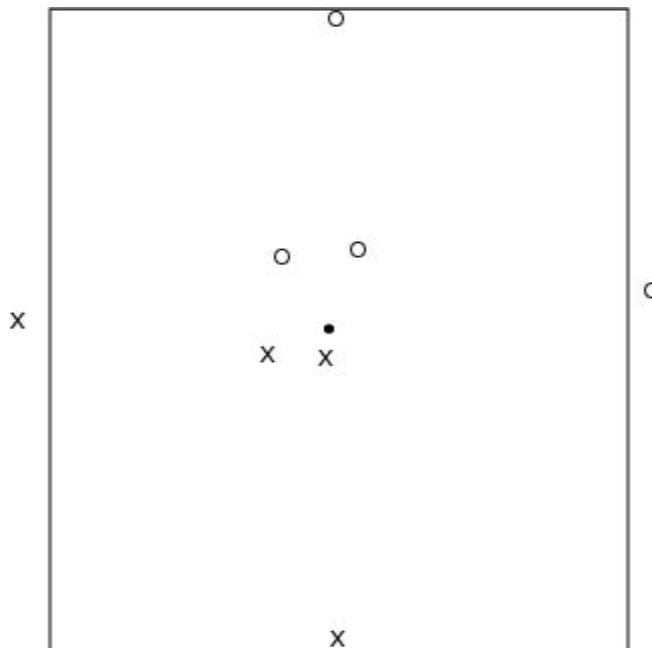
As soon as the one minute period is up, the players switch roles and the two players who were goals now are in the middle and the two who were working are now goals. They should play 4 times each (the players can rotate opponents). If there are 16 players to a team, there would be 4 fields going at one time.

The next step in the progression is to combine now into two groups of 8 using just two fields. Now you have the same set up as before but now there are also players in the four corners who can be used as teammates for the attacking player. See the diagram below for set up.



The players in the middle can pass the ball to any of the four players in the corners and the four players are restricted to one touch passes. The middle players do NOT have to use a player on the outside before going to goal. Play for a one minute period and then rotate. This should be done for a total of 8 times

Next there are two players in the middle, a player on each end for goals and a player on each sideline providing support for the attacking team. Again, the outside players are restricted to one touch and now it's much more of a combination type game. See diagram below for set up



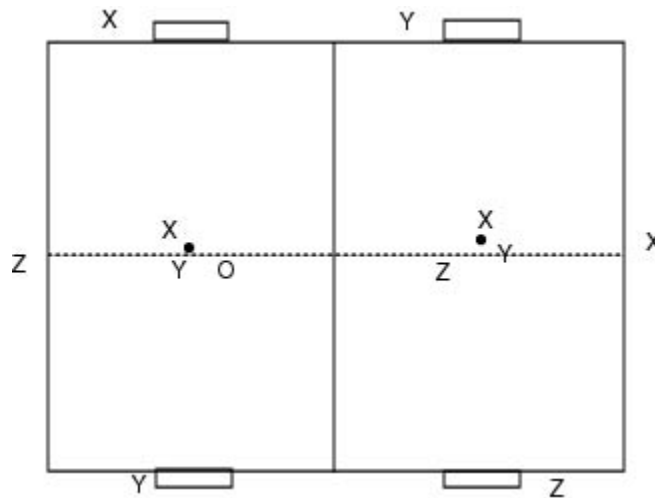
Each player would get 4 turns in the middle for a total of 8 minutes of total play.

The key to this type of progression is that absolutely no time needs to be built in for rotation of players within the games. when the coach says switch, the players on the outside should already

know who goes where and when. So, in a matter of 24 minutes, each player would have played for 10 minutes at a very high rate of intensity and also acted in a supporting role for a few more minutes. It's extremely important that the coach explain the proper rotation and everyone knows

### Attacking – Numbers Down

The game is basically 1 v 1 v 1 going from one sideline to the other with small goals. There are three players on the field and whichever player has the ball attacks and the other two players defend. If a player wins the ball, then she must attack the furthest goal. If there are 12 players involved in training, you would have two groups playing and two resting for 90 second periods and then they would switch. The resting players would be in charge of making sure there is always a ball in play. See diagram below for an example of the set up



By going sideline to sideline for 90 seconds, the players get a tremendous amount of conditioning in while also working on many other aspects of the game.

Other variations that can include allowing the player with the ball to attack either goal or allowing them to use the players on the outside who would be restricted to one touch. Also, instead of three players playing at a time, there can be 4 so it's always 1 v 4.

This is a great way to work on fitness while maintaining the soccer feel. If each group gets 5 turns and the transitions between games can be held to 30 seconds, in a 20 minute period, you can accomplish many things.

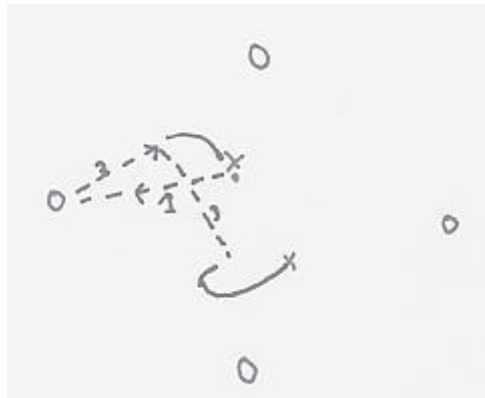
### Combination Play

Here is a simple warm up activity to work on pairs of players (primarily midfielders and forwards) working together.

Start with 4 players on the outside and 2 groups of 2's in the middle (the diagram is only going to show 1 group of 2 in the middle to make it easier to understand.



The X with the ball plays the ball to an outside O and then moves to make herself available for the return pass. The second X must move with the first X to receive this second pass. Everything is done one touch. See diagram below



This forces each of the players to play the ball with the correct pace as well as the correct direction because each the ball must be played to the proper foot in order for it to be successful with one touch passes.

Next we start with the same set up but with a different pattern. Now the first X plays the ball to an O and the ball gets played to the second X who then finds the first X. The keys here are for the two X's to support each other in a way that they are close enough together for support but not too close to make it easy to mark both with one player. Also they must support each other on the correct side and the balls must be played with the correct pace and accuracy for this to work. With two groups in the middle, the players must keep their heads up at all time and communicate effectively to avoid running into each other. See diagram below



## Attacking the Near Post

### SETUP:

(A)Attacker, (S)Server, (NP)Near post, (FP) Far Post, (GK)Goalkeeper

- A runs hard diagonal to NP
- S passes from about the 6 on the goal line (try to hit A at the NP about 2-4 yards from goal line)
- A shoots 1-touch
  - technique--redirect ball to FP with laces, toes down--chop laces across the ball and continue thru
- S returns to A line, creating congestion in goal mouth as next A makes run; A to S line
- GK in goal mouth, rotate from FP on each shot; no attacking the serve; more for window dressing
- after initial run though, run this setup from both sides (criss-cross the goal mouth)

### VARIATIONS:

- S delivers bouncing ball, A starts slow, later move at full speed, don't slow up; S waits till GK recovers.
- S delivers higher bounce, then full volley serve (as if driven ball)
- A continues to use the laces
- S serves for flick header to FP
- A to use goal side leg for FP flick (when A must reach around D to get ball first).
- A1 dummies serve, A2 following finishes; A2 will run as A1 next time; A1 & S switch lines.
- GK go live; allow NP shot if they cheat
- S serves for diving headers (I generally save this for a wet day or when I want to get their emotions high)

### GAMES:

- Slot game--Two attackers and a wing server (W); A1 times run to NP off W's dribble; A2 shoots any crossed ball that gets thru A1; run with 2nd W; A's must regroup each time, be creative with runs; add defensive back that gives offensive W a head start.  
-- 2 M outside penalty area, 2 W on touches (can't go offside), 4 v 4 in penalty area, 1 goal; if defense wins ball, back to keeper or wings, then to M; M can switch to opposite wing or play back to same wing for next cross to team that last won ball; add drop to M for a 1-touch shot.

### INDIVIDUAL SHOOTING WARMUP/EXERCISES

- GK passes to A coming straight on goal for power shot; technique review--eyes to check GK then look at ball, low on strike (bent support leg), low on landing (bent shooting leg), use instep.
- GK passes to A coming straight on goal for accuracy, use inside of foot to post; be prepared for rebound
- S serves bouncing ball to side, A facing away from goal turns and 1 touches

- S serves to A's chest, who traps, turns and shoots
- S serves for volley in front of goal (why chase balls all day)

One of the keys elements of finishing is accuracy. Power is nice, but it's a distant second in priority. In the past, I have always stressed the need for shooting with the instep. Though, I don't want to downgrade the importance of this technique, I am starting to believe it is more meaningful to emphasize first and foremost accuracy by "passing" the ball into the goal. Power can be trained later after the player understands a slow roller into the goal is worth more than a rocket shot not on frame.

Warm-up:

Set up two lines (of 1 to 2 players), six to eight yards apart (goal post width); these two lines are directly across from two other lines of players; the distance between the sets of two lines are ten to fifteen yards (coach should adjust to player age and ability).

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A2  C2
A1  C1
| ^ ^ |
| \ / |
| / \ |
| \ / |
V    V
B1  D1
B2  D2

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A1 passes straight across to B1 and follows the pass to the B line; B1 receives, makes an angled pass to C1 and follows pass to C line; C1 receives, makes a straight ahead pass to D1 and follows pass to D line; D1 makes an angled pass to A2, etc.

Warm-up Progression:

Ask players to pass with specified foot

Restrict number of touches to control ball before making next pass

Switch to an instep pass, if accuracy can be maintained

At some point, have the team envision that each line is a goal post; the straight ahead passes are to the near post, the angled passes are to the far post

Ask the players to pass to the inside foot of the receiving player (i.e., inside the post)

Warm-up Coaching Points:

Ensure the inside of the foot is used to pass (as this normally is the most accurate type of pass for a player)

Play should be continuous, have extra balls ready between groups A & C and groups B & D. Bad passes can be chased down by the passer while the next player puts a new ball back into play

Make sure receptions are toward the target

Shooting Drill:

Setup -- Structure the drill exactly like the warm-up, except with a goal between groups A and C. When A passes to B, B finishes with an angled pass to the far post; when C passes to D, D finishes with an angled pass to his/her far post

Drill Progression:

Change drill so that A passes across to D who finishes (to the near post) with a straight on pass; C passes across to D who finishes with a straight on pass



Restrict number of touches before shot

Use instep (if accuracy can be maintained)

Add a GK; initially position the GK away from the post the players will be shooting; that is, the GK should be shaded toward the side that makes the initial pass

Let the GK be active and allow the attacker to finish to the appropriate post and appropriate part of foot

Drill Coaching Points:

Stress accuracy, not power, constantly

The position of body and support foot should be towards the finishing point

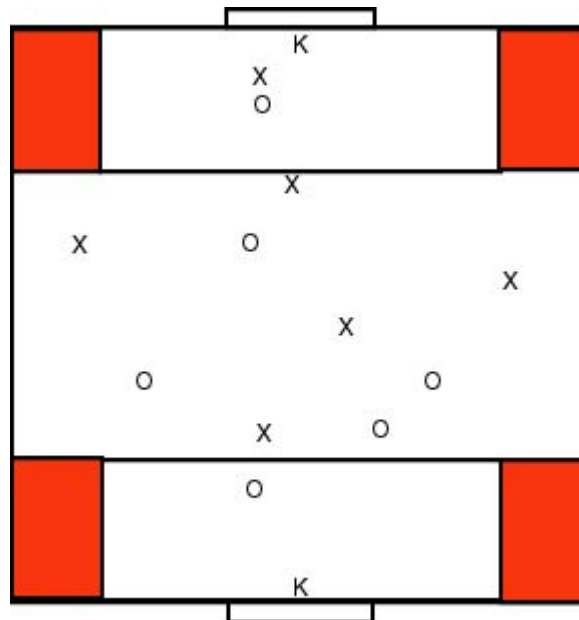
Have player look up to side of goal they are finishing; when GK added, player should look to near post, if not covered shoot there, else go to far post (do not look at or try to find the GK)

Make sure player is looking at the ball at the point when the shot is taken

Team and coaches should reinforce every made goal with some kind of positive exaltation; save the loudest for the accurate goal as the power shot will get its fair share of "oohs" and "aaahs."

## Attacking from the Flanks

Start with a 6 v 6 or 8 v 8 game on half a field with two full goals and keepers. The areas from the end line to the 18 extended outside of the penalty area are designated as safe areas (the safe areas are represented by the red areas in the diagram below). This means that the team defending in their defensive half, can not go into safe area. The purpose of the game is to encourage the attacking team to get the ball wide into the safe area and then make the appropriate runs in the box to create scoring opportunities



One thing to consider in this type of set up would be to not allow the attacking player in the safe area to play too slowly which would create too much of an artificial situation. This can be done either by limiting the touches in the safe area or limiting the time allowed in the area.

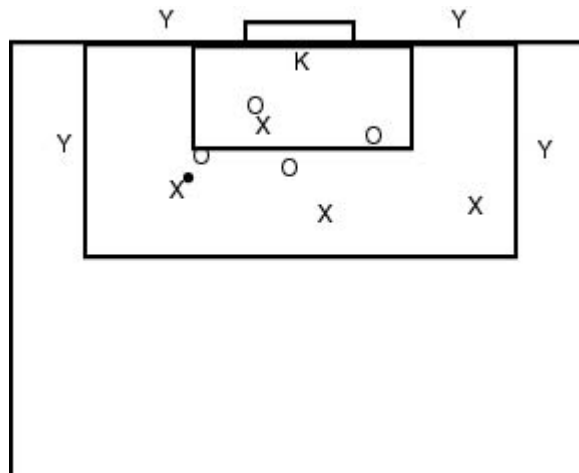
Some rules that can be put in are that a goal that is scored from a cross from the safe area counts as 2 points and a goal from any other area counts as 1 point. Or you can put in the rule that a

certain type of goal can count as more than others (for example, if there has been an emphasis on near post runs, a goal coming from a near post run gets a bonus point).

For younger ages who don't always see the importance of attacking from the flanks, a team can be awarded a point simply for getting the ball into the safe area and getting a cross him.

### Runs in the Box

This works best with 12 field players and 1 keeper although it certainly can be adapted for other numbers. Break the field players into 3 teams (X's, O's and Y's). The X's and O's start inside the 18 with a keeper in goal. The Y's are on the outside of the 18 as shown in the diagram below.



The X's start on offense and attack the goal with the O's defending. The X's can either go straight to goal or play a ball to any of the Y's who are restricted to one touch. The Y's can either play back to the X's or to another Y who then can find the X's making a run. If the O's win the ball they must take the ball over the top of the 18 at which point they turn and become the attacking team. If the keeper wins the ball (either by making a save or intercepting a pass) she plays the ball to the team that was on defense

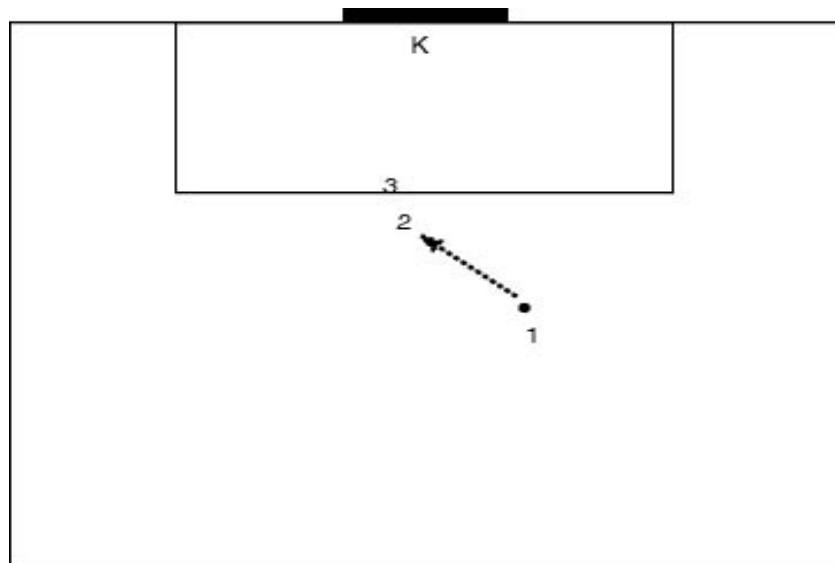
Play a 5 minute game and then rotate so either the X's or O's go on the outside and the Y's play in the middle.

There are numerous variations in this type of game such as requiring some type of combination play in order to score a goal or an extra point is awarded for goals off of headers etc.

This exercise is a great way to work on runs in the box and not only is it a fun game to play but there are a lot of coachable moments being created regarding runs in the box in a short period of time.

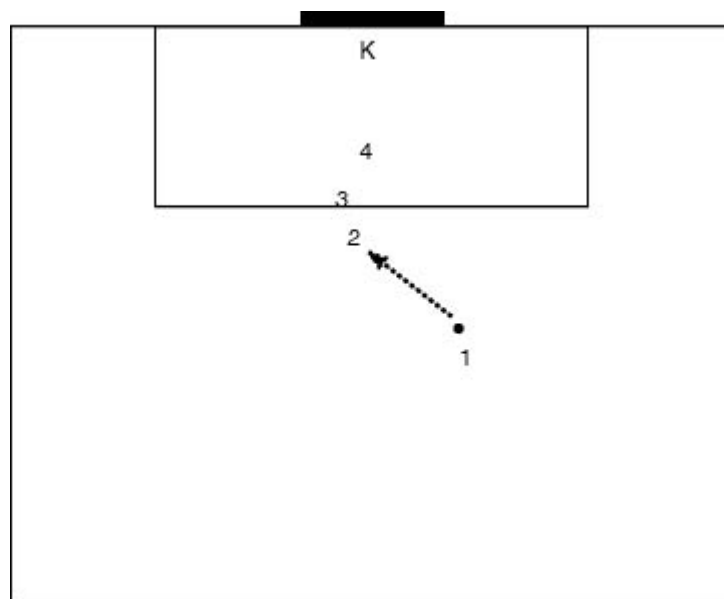
### Turning and Shooting

Start with three players in an area including the goal to 30 yards out. Player 1 starts with the ball and plays the ball into Player 2 who is working to create a little bit of space to receive the ball and turn and shoot. Player 3 tries to prevent the turn and shot. See diagram below for basic set up



If Player 2 can turn and shoot she does so, if not, she can play the ball back to Player 1 and start over. However, the big emphasis is on trying to create the small space that is all that is needed to get the shot hit.

The next step up is to add a second defender behind Player 3. As you can see in the diagram below, she represents the second defender who provides the coverage/support and if she sees the opportunity, she can step up into a double team.



Player 2 still has the opportunity to play the ball back to Player 1 and start over.

Next, once Player 1 plays the ball into Player 2, Player 1 is live and can make runs to try to off balance the defense.

## Breakaway/Closing

Warm-up up with 2 or 3 man passing. Use the inside of the foot, instep and front foot to work on accuracy. The weight of the pass should be gradually increased to the point where accuracy is maintained.

Set up cones, goal width apart. Put one player between the cones (\*) to act as a quasi-active goalkeeper (no diving or angle cutting movements), while the other two players (A and B) take shots from 10-18 yards away from opposite sides of the goal mouth (see figure below). The shots should be low and a yard inside the target cone. I would recommend that the players make at least one dribble touch before shooting. Accuracy is key. Switch the players at intervals or the shooter could switch with the GK after each shot.



Move the GK out from the goal mouth 2-5 yards to cut down the shooters angle (see figure below). Still the GK should not make diving or angle cutting movements (we are still trying to reinforce positive results at this point). Increase the dribbling distance and speed of the shooter. Gradually have the goalkeeper close down the shooter. The shooter must shoot before the GK closes him down. The GK is still not totally active, other than making a foot save.



Move the team to real goals (if available). Start with a speed dribble and shot to an unattended goal (they must be within a yard of either post). Accuracy is still the focus. Decrease the speed of the player until they are accurate. Watch for over-kicking and over-striding.

Add defensive presence (not pressure) from the side. The player must shoot with the foot opposite the defender. Change the presence to come from behind. Gradually add GK presence (no diving). The GK's can work on their timing of going out to the ball and getting their hands low (they can focus on their technique without worrying about stopping the shot). Increase the pressure from behind enough to make the shooter dribble at full speed. Increase the GK presence and pressure until everything is full speed. Remember to decrease the pressure if the shooter is not able to consistently get the shot off. If the defensive pressure is still too much, then go to timing the attacker (as in the MSL shootout). Make the shooter get the shot off within so many seconds.

For an added shooting variation, send in a second attacker for cleanup of any GK deflections. This can be done with a 2v1 setup. Play the ball behind the defender with the attacker running on to start the breakaway.

Of course the other breakaway weapon for an attacker is the chip over a GK that has come off his line too soon, or not far enough. In later practices, you can run the same progression as above, but work on the chipping technique. The GK will have to come off his line sooner in the progression. I would not work on this technique in the initial practice(s).

Coaching thoughts on breakaways--the GK is most vulnerable on close-in shots when they are low and within 2 feet of either leg. It is often easier for a GK to save shots further away from his body in this situation. The attacker must be trained to recognize this fact. All too often, shots are missed wide because the attacker tries too hard to stay away from a GK that is cutting down the angle. GK's that are moving at the time of the shot are extremely vulnerable, as they are not able to react as well.

Attackers often try to dribble too close, swing their kicking leg too hard on the shot or try to shoot at full speed and maximum leg stride. They must have tight dribble control of the ball by the 18, their stride length must be shorten and they should look for the earliest opportunity to shoot. If the first or second touch on the ball after they get inside the penalty area is not a shot, they probably have waited too long.

Players must learn to play with both feet. Generally, the inside of the foot or front foot are more effective than the instep (big leg swings are often a prelim to instep shots). Toe balls may be very effective on breakaways as the toe ball produces the low hard shot we are looking for. Also, by the very nature of the breakaway, the ball may be too far in front of the body at the moment of truth for the use of any other part of the foot. However, I would never teach this to any player that frequently uses toe ball passing.

### Attacking Inside the 18

- Use the area defined by the penalty area, bringing a goal to sit right upon the D at the top of the area. Now the 2 goals are facing each other only 18 yards apart, with a goalie in each one.
- No more than 4 forwards occupy the area. They can be broken down into 2 teams or each left to fend for themselves. One ball in use at a time.
- Team/player with the ball is on offense, the rest are on defense. It changes very quickly. Coaches neutrally re-serve any ball leaving the area.
- Forwards are encouraged to go to goal quickly, using a minimum of touches or passes (limitations on both can be instituted to accommodate coach's philosophy). Goals are what count.

Lessons:

Highly competitive, rough play (within reason) is also encouraged, helping the forwards opposing the ball create a more realistic defensive environment and getting the forwards with the ball accustomed to the physical contact and pressure that they'll often have to overcome when shooting on goal. Without this physical element, the drill deteriorates into a close range duck shoot that benefits neither the forwards or the keepers.

Goalkeepers are held accountable for their goals against, either tied in with one of the pairs of forwards or simply a competition between the keepers themselves.

This drill teaches forwards to win the ball and shoot quickly under pressure. This is effective in elevating a forward's confidence in his/her "nose" for the goal within 18 yards, particularly in those inclined to "over-pass" the ball into the net. When teams are not used, it teaches the forward with the ball to deal with being outnumbered in the area (often the case in live games). It was always a favorite amongst the forwards that I played with, allowing each of us to let it all hang out in close quarters and also

to assume an aggressive, contact-initiating, defensive role not normally required as a forward.

#### 4 Corners - Dribbling

Have players form 4 lines each at one corner of a 30x30 or 40x40 square. The first player in each line has a ball. On the coach's signal the first player dribbles diagonally across the square to the other side. Ideally, players will meet somewhere in the middle of the square and if they don't keep their eyes up, they will run into each other. After passing the middle players continue on to the opposite corner where they give a short pass to the next player. Then all 4 of those players go. If run continually this can be a pretty good workout, because it goes pretty fast.

Variations:

Have players do a "move" somewhere in the middle.

Have players change speed as they go across square.

Have players use different parts of their foot or their weak foot.

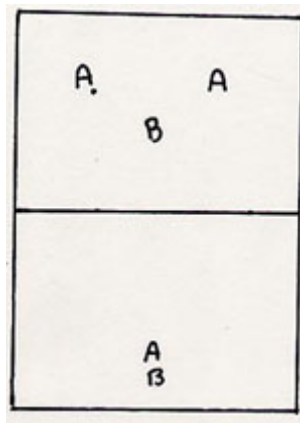
Have each group try to "pass" the person in front of them. (This messes up the timing of the meeting in the middle, but encourages speedier dribbling and accurate passes.

Just for fun, have them try to dribble across with their eyes closed and teammates must direct them, or they can try to juggle their way across.

#### Penetration Passing

This is a great exercise that works on both possession and penetration.

Start with a 10 x 20 grid with a midway line. Have two players from Team A in one section along with one player from Team B. In the other section, have one player from each team (see diagram below for setup).



The two players from Team A play keep away while the player from Team B tries to win the ball. After X Number of passes (X can be anything from 3-5 depending on level of play) the two players from Team A try to find their teammate in the other section who is making runs to get open while the player from Team B tries to prevent this pass from being played in successfully. When the ball is played into the player from Team A, one of her teammates may join her in that section and they then begin playing 2 v 1 in that section until X number of passes are completed at which point they try to play the ball back into the original starting section.

Some of the things you want to emphasize to the two players trying to maintain possession of the ball are:

1. Get a look up to the person in the other section every time.
2. Try to receive the ball with the body opened up to the field whenever possible.
3. Play the ball to the correct foot in order for the player to receive the ball opened up.
4. Communicate every time to make sure someone goes over into the other section upon successful penetration.

The player from Team A in the section should be looking to time her runs to get open when her teammates can get her the ball. She also is working on being able to hold the ball under pressure to allow her teammate to join her in that section upon a successful penetrating pass.

Defensively, the player defending the lone attacker should start goal side to make it more game realistic. Also, make sure this defensive player (and the offensive player as well) realizes that this is a situation on the field (defending a target player) where there is a lot of physical contact and while it should be done within the rules, if it's not practiced in a situation like this, it will never be handled well in a real game.

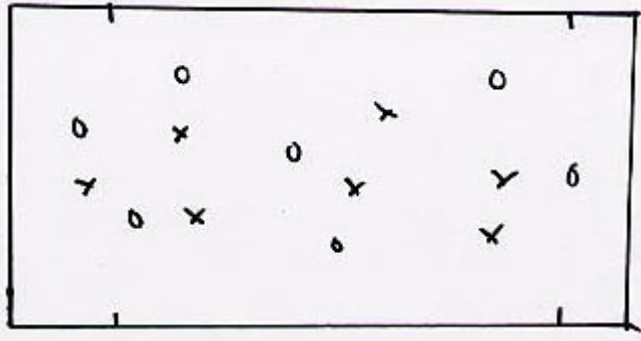
Do this for two minutes and then rotate the players so everyone gets to play offense and defense. To get more success, you can start with a 3 v 1 in one section and 1 v 1 in the other or even 3 v 1 and 2 v 1.

There are numerous options that can be added so give this a try and adapt it to meet the needs of your players.

## Possession, penetration, finding a target

Many people play various types of 4 goals games but this one has a couple a couple of different twists to it.

This is best as a 7 v 7 game. Set up the field to go across the entire width of a soccer field. The length of the field is from the 18 yard box to the midfield line. The goals are from the corner of the 18 to the side line (this is assuming it's a full sized field of at least 68 yards wide) See diagram below for the set up



In this diagram, the O's are attacking the two lower goals and the X's are attacking the two upper goals. In order to score a goal, the teams must dribble through one of the goals they are attacking.

So far there is not much difference with the way that most teams play their four goal games. However, one of the differences is going to be that each player on each team is numbered from 1-7. The first time X's are on defense, the player assigned to number 1 must take a knee (meaning assuming a kneeling position) while her team defends. This forces the defense to be more organized since they are a player down. They will be forced to try to keep the play on one side of the field in order to avoid constantly chasing the ball and the open players, which is one of the purposes of the activity. Then, when the X's win the ball, they must get the ball to the Player who had been kneeling before they can get to goal (this player might represent a target player up front or possibly a central midfielder who has most of the attack go through him). While they are doing this, O's number 1 must take a knee. All of a sudden, you can see where this will force a great deal communication to make sure the right players are marking up, the right players are getting into the attack and the right players are being found early in the attack. The next time the X's lose the ball, player number 2 takes a knee and so on.

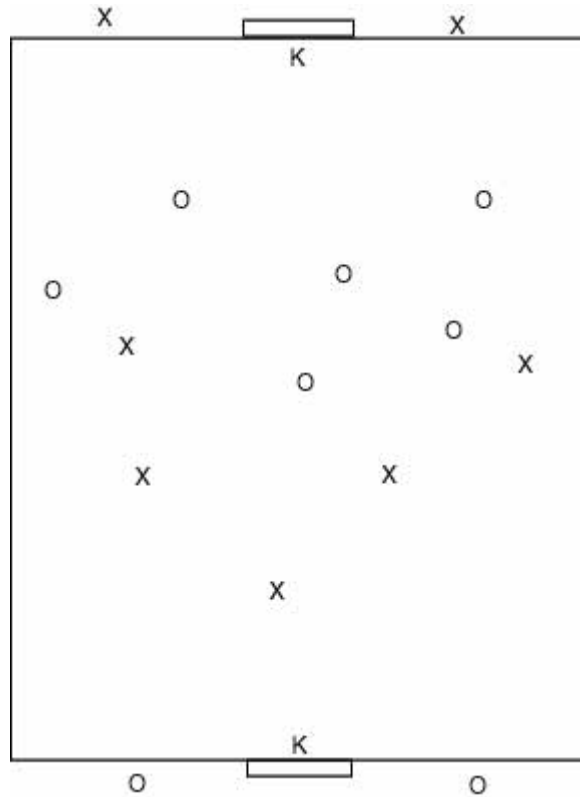
Other options you can throw into this would include having a neutral player who is full time offense. This means that whichever team has the ball the neutral player is on that team and they will then be up two players. Since the attacking team always is numbers up they should be able to maintain possession and also look to penetrate on almost every touch.

Other options include putting a rectangle in the middle of the playing area to limit the touches in the middle of the field to either one or two touches. By doing this, you encourage better spacing offensively.

### Penetrating Runs off of Passes

With a team of 16 players (including two keepers) set up a field that is full width and half the length of a regular field with two full sized goals. Have a keeper in each goal and two players on each end line. The rest of the players are on the field. See diagram below for basic set up





The O's will be attacking the bottom goal and the X's will attack the top goal. Goals can be scored through regular flow of play or the ball can be played to either of the players on the end line that the team is attacking. The players on the outside are limited to one touch.

When teams first use this activity, they will frequently try to pass the ball to a player on the end line from close in looking for a wall pass. Or they will pass it to the end line player and then run right at the player to get it back. As they continue to play, they will start to play smarter by doing things like playing an early ball to a player on the end (making a penetrating pass) and then making near/far/12 yard runs for the first time cross. The harder the run, the more likely they are to be successful (just like in a game!).

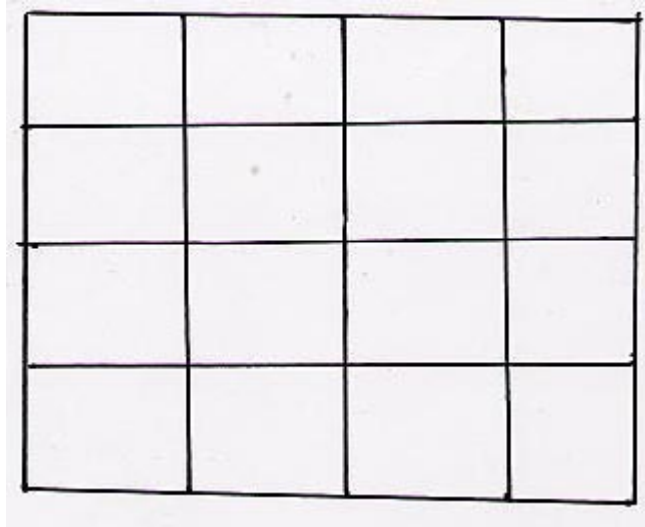
The players on the end line can move from the sideline to the goal but they have to realize that the keeper will intercept weak passes so they are encouraged to keep moving and for the passes into the end line players to be hit with good pace.

Players should keep rotating so no one gets "stuck" on the end line for an extended period of time.

## Grid Possession

This activity is designed to get players to look beyond the closest player on the field.

Take an area 40 x 40 (or a little but more or less depending upon what you have available), and break it into smaller 10 x 10 grids. See diagram below



With a team of 16 players break them into 2 teams of 7 and then have two neutral players who are always on offense. The game is a simple game of keep away so that if the X's have the ball, they try to keep the ball away from the O's. The rules are as follow:

- A pass can't be made to a person in the same grid as the passer
- A pass to a person in a bordering grid counts as one point
- A pass to a person in a grid two away is worth two points
- A pass to a person in a grid three away is worth three points
- A one touch pass doubles the passes value (which means a one touch pass to a person two grids away is worth 4 points)
- A loss of possession results in a loss of one point
- When a team loses possession, if they can win the ball back in the same grid, it's worth one point.
- First team to 100 points (or whatever you choose) wins.

This game encourages players to maintain possession of the ball, look further than the closest player and spread the field. It also works on defensive transition (winning the ball back as soon as possible).

The hardest part of this game is keeping score. It's MUCH easier if you have two scorekeepers (one for each team). If you have a couple of injured players this is a great way to keep them involved.

There are a number of variations you can add in including points for combinations, having to play the ball in the direction the player is facing when they receive the ball and much, much more.

## Receiving the Ball Under Pressure - Back to Goal

### Purpose

To improve player's ability to receive the ball under intense pressure and to turn hips and the ball to goal, ready to take on the opponent. This includes receiving the ball from a pass, from a goal-kick, a punt, or from a throw-in.

### Introduction

At the 1996 USYSA Nationals, we noticed that one of the most important demands of the game was for the player to be able to receive the ball, back to goal, while checking to the ball at full pace under intense pressure, and to control the ball first time very closely. In addition it was crucial that the player be able to turn the ball against this pressure and to be able to take on the pressuring opponent immediately after turning.

### Coaching Points for the Attacker

- Coming to ball at full pace is crucial. Training at a slower pace is a waste of time.
- Look over the shoulder to find opponent before receiving ball.
- Call for the ball and show, with hands and eyes, where it is wanted.
- Checking back at an angle helps open an angle that allows the passer to join in with a wall pass off a drop from the attacker
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### Coaching Points for the Passer

- Passer should interpret attacker's glance over the shoulder as a visual cue to pass.
- Pass early so attacker gets ball before negative space is killed.
- Passer should pass absolutely as hard as possible.
- Passes should be direct to the center of the attacker if the pursuing defender is directly behind. Passes should go to the attacker's foot on the side away from the pursuing defender if the defender is on the attacker's side.

### Notes for the Coach

- Adjust the space for each exercised to the age and skill level you are teaching.
- In a longer session, attacking moves can be added after turning moves, including body swerve, swivel, scissors, cap, step over, and change of pace. In a 90 minute session, there is not enough time to include these.

### Technical Warm-Up

Receiving the Ball Partners with ball at 30 yards distance. Using kills, traps, and settles, for 60 seconds (then change roles), check away from ball, check back hard to ball, receive ball from:

- punt
- goal-kick
- throw-in to chest
- throw-in to feet
- driven pass on ground
- lofted pass

### Coaching points

- Full pace to ball every time, OK to loaf on the recovery run to create space.
- Accurate, hard service required to allow attacker to receive at full pace.
- Attacker must call for ball.
- Attacker must play slightly beyond limit of ability to make progress.

Turning the Ball For 60 seconds, then change technique, partners with ball, server and receiver, work to turn ball, changing roles after each pass. Server plays ball into space 5 yards beyond receiver and pursues to apply light pressure. Receiver chases ball and turns ball, then passes for partner, who now becomes receiver.

- Step over with inside cut
- Body swerve with outside cut
- Zero space turn (step over and across ball, pull and turn with inside of other foot.)

Coaching points:

- Play continuously, push the pace.
- OK to cut to 30 seconds at high pace.
- Ensure that player turning ball collects balance and is fully prepared to play forward and attack before making next pass.

Technical Progression

1 v 1 + Server in 10 x 20 Space Attacker receives from server, turns, and beats defender to goal-line.

Rules:

- Defender applies full pressure, varies pressure, back , left side, right side.
- Change server after 60 seconds.

Coaching points :

- Attacker should come to ball at full pace.
- If defender is on attacker's back, attacker can nick ball with outside of foot to turn and get past in one motion. Attacker has to look to find defender.

2 v 1 to Target in 10 x 20 Space Attacker receives from server, turns, combines with server to pass ball to target player.

Rules:

- Server outside near end, attacker and defender inside far end of space, target player outside far end.
- Defender pursues attacker, tries to stop attacker and server from playing ball to target player.
- Attacker and defender alternate roles each ball.
- After 60 seconds, server and target player change roles with attacker and defender.
- Attacker not permitted to drop ball back to server, must turn instead.

Coaching points :

- Encourage attacker to check back at angle to open up wall pass.
- Enforce checking back at full pace.
- Ensure that server passes hard.
- Ensure that server moves to support directly from server's pass.

4 v 4 to Goal Lines in 30 x 40 Space with 3 Zones 2v2 in final zones, no one starts in middle zone.

Rules:

- Team maintains possession in first zone until player from their team checks back into middle third to receive ball.
- One defender can pursue attacker checking to ball into middle zone.
- Attacker has to beat defender or get pass to partner in final third in order to get ball across goal-line.
- If opponents win possession of ball before attackers with ball can play to player checking back, then they try to score in the same way, by passing to one of their players checking back into space.
- Possession changes on any score.

Coaching points :

Attacking players should work continuously to be available to ball.

7 v 7 to full-size goals with goalies on a 40 x 50 field.

Rules:

- Play for real, including throw-ins, goal-kicks, and punts. Call fouls that occur and award free-kicks.

Coaching points :

- Encourage checking back to the ball at full pace to receive the ball.

Summary

Playing at the best levels requires great speed of play and the ability to receive the ball under intense pressure, regardless of the quality of the service. When comfortable checking back to the ball and receiving at pace, the players must be encouraged to use this ability as a tool to get free from pressure and to create space to turn hips to goal in order to attack.

## Another Related Warm-Up Progression

- Player A is at the near post and drops the ball to a player (B) about 30 yards out. Player A then checks to the ball and receives a return pass from B. Player A then turns and shoots. (Key coaching points are the reception touch, footwork into the shot and a quick look behind before reception to see the location of the defender and GK .)

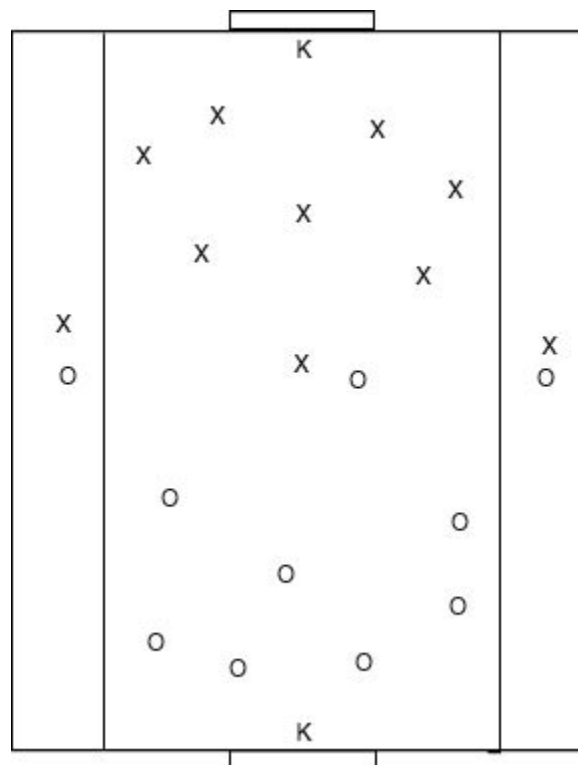
- In the next step, player B overlaps to the far post after the pass to A. Player A, flicks the return pass back to B and spins towards goal. B one-times the shot. (Key coaching points are the quality of the flick, the quality of B's run, the readiness of B to shoot, the quality of the spin away from ball--note, if the shot is delayed, player A may move into an offside position.)
- In the final step, a defender (C) is added at the far post. The defender closes down A on the initial drop to B. A must decide whether to turn and shoot or to flick on to B. (Key coaching points are the decision making of A and the quality of B's run based somewhat on the defense's reaction.)

At a later time, a defensive focus can be applied to this activity. Also, vary the GK's position, especially in the early stage, so player A can practice near post, as well as far post shooting.

### Playing balls wide (numbers up)

Here is a good way to work on preparing for utilizing numerical superiority out wide.

This game can be anything ranging from 11 v 11 to 6 v 6 and the size of the field would be adapted accordingly. If you are playing 11 v 11, you could go with a field that is 60 yards long and 70 yards wide with side lanes built into the field (with cones) that are 8 yards wide. See diagram below



One player from each team is designated to stay in each of the outside lanes at all times. When a ball gets played out wide to one of these designated players, the designated player from the opposing team is the only one allowed to defend BUT another offensive player is then allowed in to create a 2 v 1 situation. This is a great way to work on overlapping runs (either by a back or a center midfielder) and while it might seem somewhat artificial, if you pay attention to this type of

situation, if more teams would send their backs forward on overlapping runs, you would see this very situation happening on a regular basis.

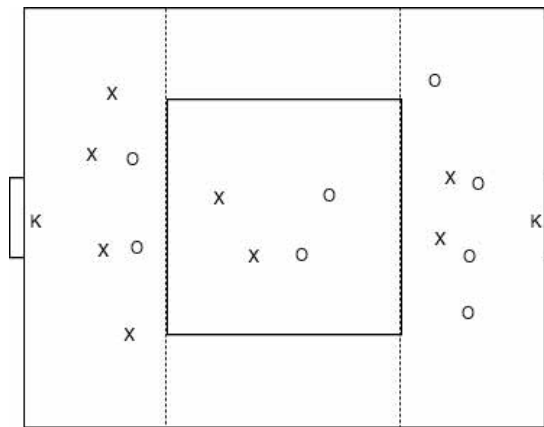
Not only does this work on making these types of runs but also, it forces the players in back to make sure there is coverage for the back or midfielder making this run.

Other variations would include making bigger lanes out wide and having 2 v 2 situations with an added player for whichever team has the ball.

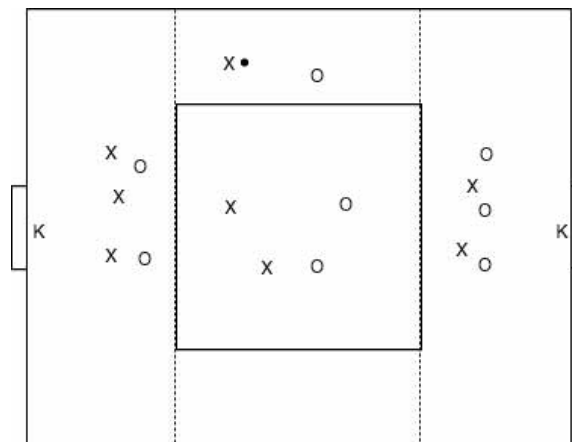
So many different situations can be created and different aspects of the game can be worked on by making different alterations to this game that it can be used over and over again without seeming too repetitive.

### Attacking with Marking Backs

This activity is best using half a 1/2 of a full sized field (60 x 72) with the field broken into thirds and a square in the middle. Have 3 players in the back 1/3, 2 in the middle square and 3 in the attacking 1/3 for each team. See diagram below for set up



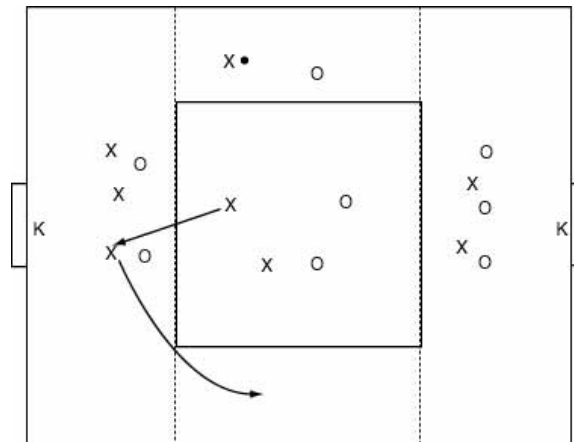
The rules in this game are simple. No one other than the 4 midfielders can go into the middle square. If the X's have the ball, one of the backs for the X's may attack down the side and one of the backs for O's can defend down the side. The diagram below shows how the players will shift in this situation



There will be a tendency for the other outside back to want to go forward also since there is so much space to attack on the opposite side but the first part of this activity works on always making sure there are numbers back on defense (since there are 2 attacking O's there has to be 2 defending X's). If the outside back on the other side decides to attack as well, the X's are left with a 2 v 1 situation in their back 1/3 and that is not acceptable.

This simple game encourages the outside backs to get forward into the attack while always being aware of the numbers in back.

The next step of this would be to allow 2 of the X's to attack out of the back provided either one of the front O's defends or a central midfielder gets back and covers. See diagram below for how this could work

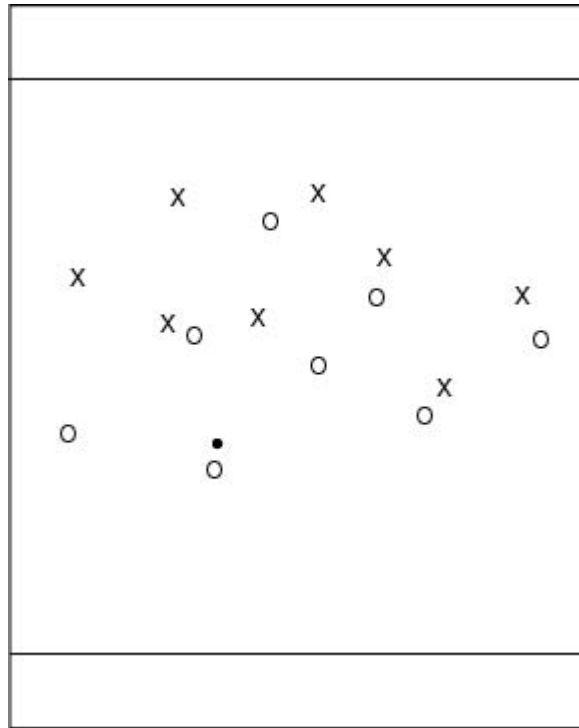


There are numerous other things you could add in to this activity including outside midfielders so that when an outside back goes forward, she is creating a 2 v 1 situation on the outside. You can also allow any player to switch with any other player so that a central midfielder could go forward and front player covers for her in the midfield. These types of games are a great way to work on attacking, defending and team shape.

### Compressed field runs and flat defending

A field of approximately 80 x 60 although the dimensions can vary based on what is available. There are two 10 yard "end zones" on each side of the field. See diagram below for set up





It's an 8 v 8 game and each team is going toward one of the "end zones". To score, a team must have possession of the ball in the end zone they are attacking. The only real condition is that there is offside being called all over the field. This means that offensively, a team can really push up far because the further they push up, the less space the opponent can work with if they win the ball.

Since the defense can compress the field, it forces the attacking team to look to spread the field with width as well as to send players from behind through on three person combinations. It also encourages players to be willing to take players on with the dribble since if they beat a defender on the dribble, they can go straight to the end zone for a goal or, they can draw the defense to her which will create space for players from behind to overlap and receive the through ball to go to the end zone.

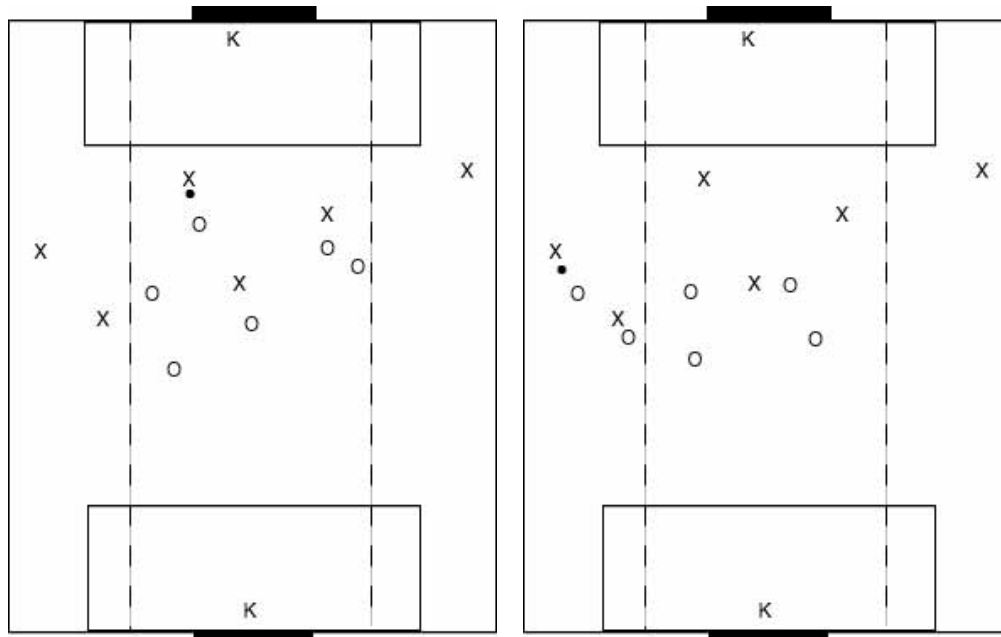
This is also a good way to work on using and defeating offside traps as it can be done all over the field and not just in the defensive half of the field.

It's VITAL that for this game to work, a coach (or injured player) take the role of ref very seriously as it defeats the whole purpose of the game if the offside calls are not made consistently.

### Balance - Offensive Spread and Defensive Compression

The basic rule is that the offensive team must have at least one player in all three sections of the field at all times. It's not a case of a designated player staying wide but rather players must be aware at all times to see if there is a player wide on each side and if not, than they must cover the space. At the same time that the offensive team must be spread out, the defensive team must stay compact. The rule for the defense is that when the ball is in the middle zone, all defenders must

be in the middle zone. If the ball is in a wide zone, defenders can be in the middle zone and that wide zone. See the two diagrams below for examples (X's have the ball)



There has to be a short period of time for players to shift properly and as an example of a coach wanting the players to play the game rather than do a drill, if an outside player makes a run to get to a cross and in doing so scores a goal BUT leaves the outside zone open, the goal counts because you want them to understand the benefits of doing things the right way.

This game is an excellent way to teach spacing and balance both offensively and defensively

## Finishing

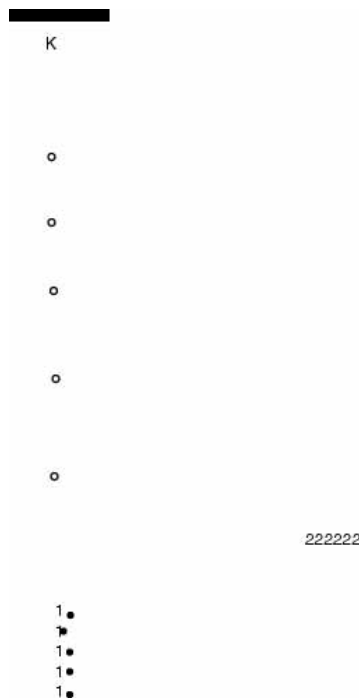
The field should be approximately 30 yards long and the width of the 18-yard box (44 yards wide). A full sized goal is on each end line with a keeper in each goal. There are two teams on the field. A server starts out wide and serves balls into the playing area in the air. Whichever team wins the ball tries to score by shooting into EITHER goal. This means you have two teams trying to win the ball in the air, and get a shot hit as quickly as possible. If the first team that wins the ball then loses it to the second team the second team then tries to score in either goal.

This game works on winning the ball in the air (if a team doesn't like to win balls in the air you can put in a requirement that if the ball hits the ground from the initial serve without a player touching it first, it is a "dead ball" and a new ball gets served in it's place) and getting to goal quickly. While there is some passing in this game, it's more about the willingness to take a chance and shoot rather than passing the ball around till the perfect opportunity arises for a shot. This game is more about finishing than it is about shooting (when you work on shooting you frequently work on proper technique and placement of the plant foot etc but when you work on finishing it's frequently a case of being willing to put any part of the body on the ball to get it on goal).

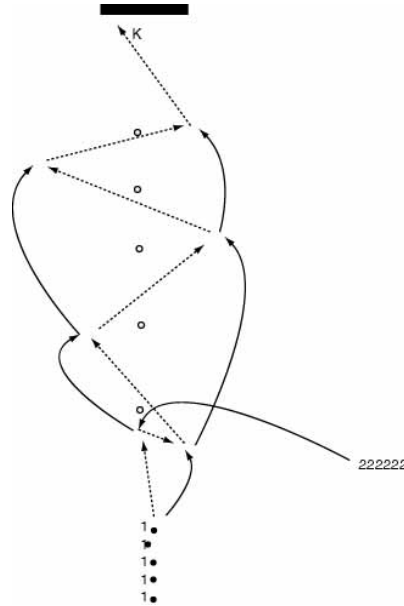
First team to score 10 goals in Animal Ball wins the game.

## Finding a Target Player/Combination Passing

Start with 5 cones in a line each 5 yards apart 22 yards from goal. There will be two lines of players. See diagram below for set up



The first player in line 2 sprints to the first cone. Player 1 passes it to him. Player 2 plays the ball back on an angle and then spins in the opposite direction. Player 1 passes the ball through the first set of cones to 2. Player 2 goes wider and receives a pass from 1 through the 2nd and third cones. They work their way down the line and once they get through the last set of cones whoever has the ball shoots. See diagram below



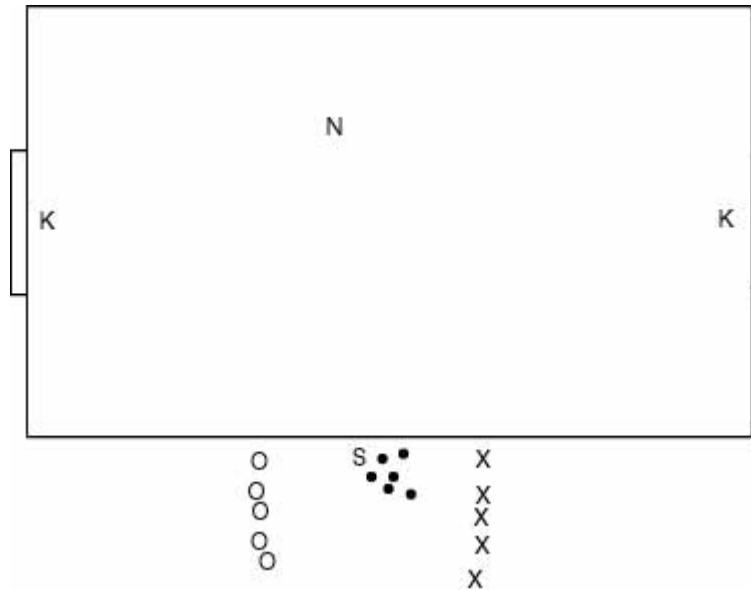
Some of the keys here are that neither player runs in straight lines. Instead, they bend each run to get their body positioned properly in order to receive the ball. Also, the players in line 2 must spin in the opposite direction that she passes with her first pass. This means that since she is receiving the first pass with her back toward the goal and she lays the ball off softly to her left in the diagram above, she would spin to her right which will make it harder on the defender in a real game. Also ALL passes have to be hit one touch with NO exceptions.

If the players do everything correctly they get to shoot the ball. If they make a mistake (ball doesn't go through the cones, the player in line 2 spins the wrong way, 2 touches etc) they don't get to shoot. Players frequently don't think it's fair that if they make a mistake they don't get to shoot but the reality is that is the way the game works as well. Accurate pass to players with good movement off of the ball results in goal scoring opportunities; bad passes or bad movement results in loss of opportunities.

As soon as the players are through the first set of cones the next two players go so even though it looks like only 2 players are working at a time, 2,3 or even 4 groups can be going at one time.

## Going to Goal and Defensive Recovery

Start with a field that is 40 x 30 with two full size goals (the size of the field can vary depending upon what you want to emphasize). A keeper is in each goal and the team is split into 2 teams and 1 neutral player. The two teams start on the side and the neutral player is in the middle. A server is at midfield with soccer balls. See diagram below for basic setup



The server plays a ball to the middle of the field and then the first two players from each team sprint on the field and play 2 v 2 + 1 to goal. The neutral player is always on offense. Using the diagram above as an example, the X's start off attacking the goal to the left and the O's start off attacking the goal to the right. To score a goal, the shot must be hit first time. This means that one of the X's can get the ball, dribble and then pass the ball to the other X or the N who would have to shoot first time for the goal to count. If the X's score, they get the ball out of the goal and then attack the other goal. If the O's are the team that let up the goal, the two O's sprint off the field and the next 2 O's take their place. In other words, if you score, you stay on and attack the other direction. If you let up a goal you leave the field and two of your teammates take your place. If the ball goes over the sideline, all 4 players leave the field and 4 new players take their place. If the ball goes over the end line, play continues with either a goal kick or a corner kick. The reason for this is we want to encourage players to shoot so we don't want to penalize them if they shoot a ball that isn't on goal.

This is a very fast moving game and players learn that if they score and transition quickly they can try to get to goal before the other team makes their switch. This forces the players on the side to pay attention at all times because they constantly have to be thinking which direction they might be attacking next depending upon what is happening on the field. You might also set a time limit of 2 minutes to any game so that if a goal isn't scored within 2 minutes all 4 players leave the field. This will prevent anyone sitting out too long.

Depending upon the numbers you have available, you might have two neutral players on the field or you could have 2 neutral players but only one on the field at any time and they rotate any time a goal is scored.

Also depending upon your numbers situation, you could next progress to 3 v 3 + 1 with the same rules or you could go 3 v 3 without the neutral player

### Possession and going to goal

This activity is best with 14-17 players including two keepers. Start with big goals (or even U10 goals will work) and use the basketball court as boundaries. Break the group into 3 teams (a red,

white and blue team for our example) and have a keeper in each goal. Assuming you are playing with 17 players, you have 5 v 5 plus keepers. Pick a duration for the game (20 minutes is a good time period) and start with red v white with blue on the side. The rules are very simply. It's regular soccer but anytime a ball goes over a sideline the team that it went out off of, gets off the field and the team that is resting plays. So, using our red v white example, the two teams play and if the ball goes over the sideline off of white, it's red ball and they are now attacking BLUE. Red does NOT have to wait for blue to get on the field or set up. This is a game that encourages quick transition as well as possession and shooting (if the ball goes over the end line, it's a loss of possession but the team who knocked it over the end line does get to stay on the field).

The other way to get the opponent off the field is to score a goal. The team that gets scored upon has to leave the field and the team that scored the goal stays on, gets the ball and attacks the opposing goal.

When you start playing this game, it will seem to be quite chaotic but as the players get used to it, you will see them really adding a great deal of thought to their play. Instead of just getting the ball and kicking it (which will frequently result in them having to get off the field) they must try to maintain possession. Also, in the beginning, the team that is off the field will stand together at midfield waiting for their turn. Real quickly they will learn to spread out because they have to be prepared to defend either goal at any time. You will find that this drill will increase a team's communication dramatically.

Some of the things that this game works on are possession (teams don't want to have to sit out so they will work on possessing the ball in order to get to play more), shooting (it's in a teams best interest to hit a lot of shots because if they score, they get a point and the opponent has to sit out, plus if it goes over the end line they still stay on, as a bonus, if the shot is blocked by an opponent and it goes over the sideline, the opponent has to sit out), communication, defense, organization and most of the other things that are used in a regular soccer game.

Not only is this game something that works on all of the above aspects of the game, it's also a great deal of fun for the players. To watch a player get caught in a corner with the ball and one or two opponents and see her realize that she can kick the ball off of the opponent so that it goes over the sideline for which knocks the opponent off the field is both fun to watch as well as very gratifying from a coaches perspective in that it encourages a player to really think on the field instead of just kicking or simply doing what they are told.

## Defense

### Defensive Commandments

#### As soon as the ball is lost...

- Thou shall get behind the ball (recovery into a defensive position is the first priority)
- Thou shall pressure ball but not get beaten by the attacker with ball - slow down or stop the attacker with ball and force into a more predictable and controllable situation
- Thou shall support the player pressuring ball or other supporting defenders - depending upon defensive positioning in relation to ball and teammates; spacing is critical
- Thou shall not allow any through balls to get behind the defense by taking away passing angles, this is the key to off-ball defending
- Thou shall identify and mark (ball side) the most dangerously positioned off-ball attackers
- Thou shall look to apply double-team pressure to the ball when available
- Thou shall compress the attackers away from the goal when possible by moving towards ball while still maintaining defensive depth behind ball
- Thou shall follow the **PLAYER** and **NOT** the ball after a pass has been made...no ball chasing!!

### Defensive expectations by Age:

#### U11

- 1v1 marking
- Individual defending skills - no get, no turn, no move, no shoot
- Basic defending at restarts
- Introduction to team shape in defense
- Introduction to transition

#### U12-U13

- Second and third defender play
- 1v1 marking near ball with zone coverage away from ball
- Shape - getting it, keeping it, changing it quickly
- Transition basic counterattack (choreographed)

- Defenders overlapping to give numbers up and width in attack
- Working with keeper
- Sweeper play - angles, communication, basic visual cues
- Playing ball out of the back
- Defending at restarts
- Recovery and defending against breakaways
- Reinforce U11 topics

#### U14-U15

- Low pressure defense with high pressure attack
- High pressure defense with low pressure attack
- Reading opponent's shape to decide when and where to go forward
- Counterattack - reading visual cues (not choreographed)
- Marking out dangerous player
- Recognizing and adjusting defending tactics to match conditions
- Reinforce all U11, U12-U13 topics, especially shape and transition

#### U15-U19

- Restraining lines
- Doubling up on the ball
- Gamesmanship in defense
- Alternative systems of play
- Advanced change of tactics during match
- Playing short sided
- Reinforce U11-U14 topics

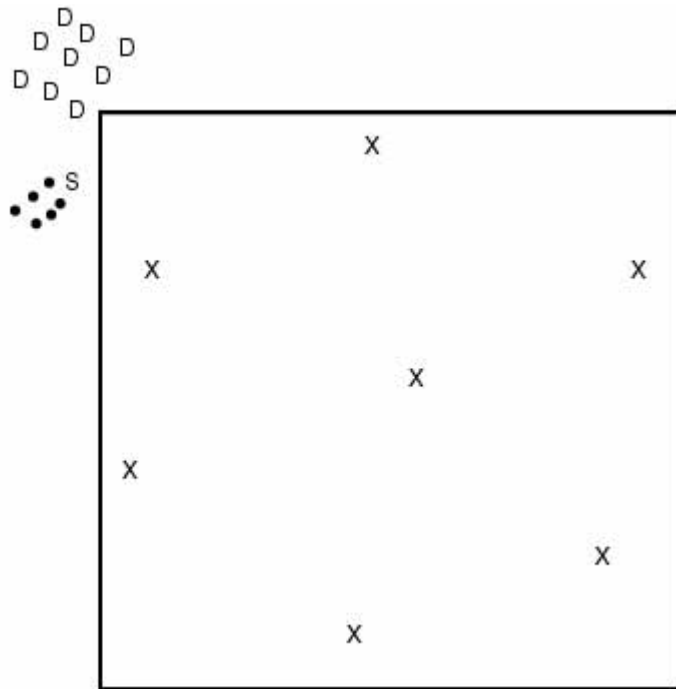
### Warm Up – High Pressure Defense

### **6+3+1 – High Pressure Possession**



These are two activities demonstrated by Anson Dorrance (head women's soccer coach at the University of North Carolina) that were shown as a "warm up" for getting the level of defensive intensity up in order to play a 3-4-3 (or as he put it a 1-3-4-3) which is a high pressure defense. The great thing with these two activities is that while the defensive players are working on raising the pressure defensively, these activities also provide a great way for the players on offense to get accustomed to dealing with high pressure.

The first activity is a 6 v 3 +1 activity in a 20 x 20 grid. The way this works is 6 offensive players are spread out inside of the 20 x 20 grid with one additional offensive player in the middle of the grid (this would most likely be a center midfielder). The rest of the team (9 players) are split into groups of 3s and are on the outside by the coach/server. See diagram below for set up

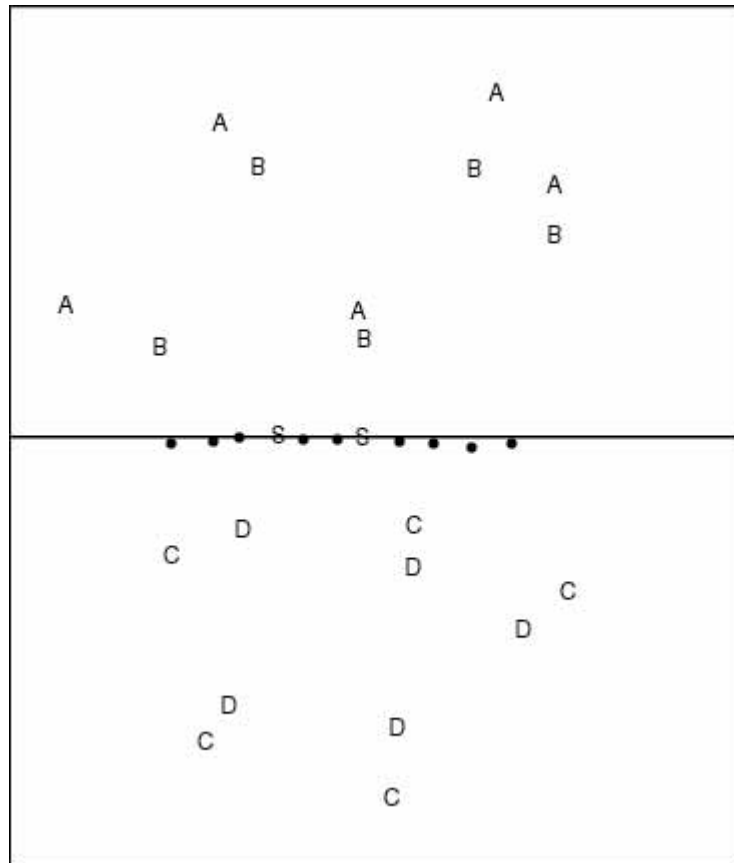


This is a timed activity. The server starts his watch and sends the first ball into the grid. The X's try to maintain possession of the ball while the first 3 D's try to win the ball. As soon as the D's win the ball, the server sends in a second ball and the second group of D's go in to defend as the 1st group of D's leaves the grid. A total of 6 balls are sent in (so each group of defenders go twice) and the objective of the X's is to see how long they can make the 6 possessions last. If a ball is knocked out of bounds by a D a new ball gets sent in against the same D's since it isn't good enough to just knock the ball away but rather the D's want to actually win possession. The number of turns by the D's can vary. After the 6 turns are up, the two teams change roles and the D's are in the grid and the X's are defending. The defensive team that wins the 6 balls the fastest wins. NOTE: very little "coaching" is needed; no emphasis on pressure, coverage, balance or anything like that. Simply tell the defenders to go at full speed and win the ball.

### 5 v. 5 – High Pressured Passing and Possession

The next activity was a 5 v 5 game in a grid that was 75 yards wide and 42 yards long (this is the area of the width of the field and from the 18 to the center line on a 120 x 75 field). One team is on offense for a 3 minute period. The server/coach starts at midfield with balls and plays a ball to the offensive team. The offensive team gets one point for each 5 consecutive passes. The

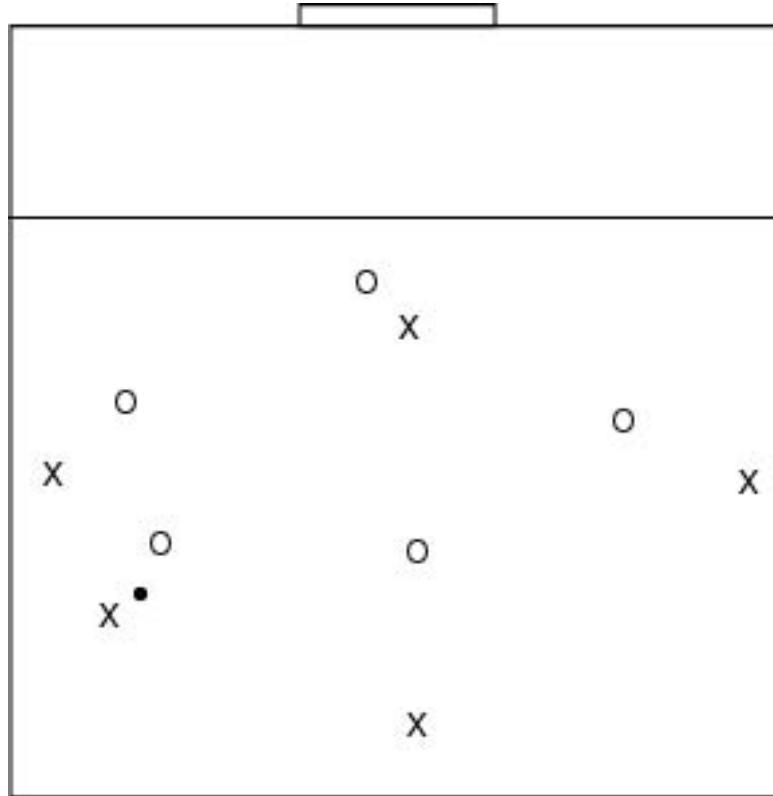
defensive team gets one point every time they win a ball from the offense. Every time there is a loss of possession by the offense, a new ball gets sent in by the coach (this activity, like the previous one works on dispossessing defensively). After the 3 minute period is up, the teams switch roles and the team that was on offense is now on defense and the team that was on defense is now on offense. The defensive team plays man to man high pressure defense. The team with the most points after the 6 minutes is up wins. If there is a team of 20 players, there could be two games going on at the same time to keep everyone going. See diagram below for setup for 2 games



The great thing about both of these activities is they are very short, intense games that work on offense, defense and lots of fitness in a very short period of time.

## Defensive Pressure – Shutting down early shots

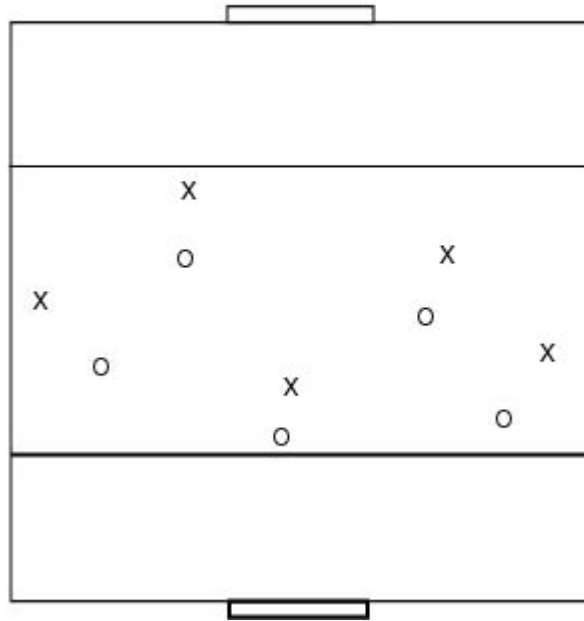
Start with an area that is 40 x 50 with a goal on the end line and a 15 yard area closest to the goal. The 10 players are in the main part of the grid. See diagram below for set up



The rules are that the X's need to get 3 passes before they can go to goal. Once they have their three passes, they can go to goal. No one is allowed in the 15 yard area closest to the goal. All the X's have to do is get open enough to get a shot hit and since there is no keeper, if they can do this, they will most likely score. The defense is working on putting immediate pressure on the ball which will force the attacking player to put the head down making it more difficult to get a shot hit. If the O's win the ball, they need 3 passes in order to go to goal.

This game is great at emphasizing the important of getting the early pressure on the ball and also on providing a second defender for coverage. It also works on getting midfielders and forwards to look for early shots from a distance.

The next step is to add a second goal. Everything stays the same except one team goes toward one goal and the other team goes toward the other goal. See diagram below



This works on the same things as the previous activity but now simply adds a direction to make it more soccer related.

## Rules for First Defender

Following are "my" RULES for the first defender in the order of importance:

- Do not allow dribbler to get behind or past the first defender
- Stop or slow down dribbler
- Take away shooting or passing behind the defense options
- Force dribbler sideways or backwards
- Force dribbler to a certain area determined by these factors:
  - Field position of the dribbler
  - Ability of the dribbler (uni-footed, fast, etc.)
  - Location of supporting defender(s) or boundary
  - Location of supporting attacker (passing options)
  - Keep dribbler's eyes on ball, not allowing the dribbler to look around
  - Look for and take advantage of opportunities to tackle the ball
  - Maintain defensive presence with dribbler that goes forward after releasing the ball
  - Recover quickly into second defender support position when dribbler releases the ball

## First and Second Defender Drill

- Requires four players and one ball. Lay out a grid about twenty (20) yards wide by fifty (50) yards long. Have two players with one ball be the attackers and two players be the defenders. The two attackers are about ten yards apart and are facing the two defenders. The defenders are defending man-to-man. When one attacker has the ball the defender that is defending him (the "first defender") must move up and mark him tightly. The other defender (the "second defender") backs off of his man and provides defensive depth and a back-up to the first defender in case the first defender gets beat. If the attacker with the ball passes the ball to the other attacker the roles reverse. The "first defender" quickly backs off his man and becomes the "second defender". The "second defender" comes up and marks his man (who now has the ball) tightly and becomes the "first defender". Neither defender actually tries to tackle the ball. The attackers dribble forward and pass the ball back and forth. Each time the ball is passed the defenders shift. When they reach the end of the 50 yard grid the attackers become defenders and vice versa and they come back down the grid. This can be a very aerobic drill. Care should be taken to instruct the defenders that they must change positions quickly and should never turn their backs to the attackers. Attackers should press the attack.
- Once they have done this drill several times the instructor should request that the second defender be verbal and always let the first defender know which way to take his man. In game situations this allows the defenders to move the attacker away from shots at goal and into position to be double-teamed and tackled. This is an extremely good drill for players at all skill levels. It teaches that delaying is often more valuable than tackling. This drill should be done at full or 3/4 speed. If the players are too tired after a few minutes swap out for four new players.

## Second Defender

First drill: Put all of your players in a big circle, except for 2 players (who go in the center). Have the circle players pass the ball around or across the circle. The 1st defender (i.e., the one who is closest to the ball) goes to the player who has the ball and tries to set an angle which restricts the passing opportunities of that player.

The second defender then sets up to intercept a pass to the remaining passing options; or to further restrict the options to a player who is very close to the player with the ball. Because the second defender must make his choices based upon the choice of angle made by the first defender, he will have to watch carefully to see the probable angle to be set so that he has time to move in as support. Generally, he will want to play within 4-5 steps or so of the 1st defender so that he can get to his support position quickly. Rotate players in and out of the defender positions as they get tired, or as you want to let others get exposed to this supporting role.

Second drill: Put 4 players in a grid about 30 feet long by 15 feet wide:

Put one attacker and one defender in the middle, with the other two on the ends (long-ways) of the grid. The ball goes to one of the end players, who will become the 2nd defender. Have the 1st defender closely mark the attacker. The ball is passed in by the end player, the 1st defender sets his angle to try to restrict the passing chances of the

attacker to the other end player, by moving him towards a sideline; and the 2nd defender moves in quickly to support and further cut off passing chances and/or help to steal the ball.

The main thing to teach defenders is PATIENCE. Our general rule was that the 1st Defender was the shark, and his job was to slow the attacker down and block his forward progress. The 2nd attacker was the barracuda, and his job was the finish the "kill". It is very important to get this concept drilled into their heads to avoid premature attempts to get the ball before there is good support available, because the premature attack allows the attacker to beat the defender and then have a free run towards goal or his target player. You want to wait for the attacker to make a mistake under pressure and keep dropping back with him and keep slowing him down until help can arrive.

## Sheparding

- Attacker dribbles ball at defender, in a zig-zag pattern. Though defensively we don't want to allow the cutback, the defenders allow it in the warm-up to practice moving backwards in a side-on stance (one foot is forward) and switching lead feet on the cutback. No tackling allowed and the attacker does not go full speed at first (change of pace is definitely recommended, however). We often run this touch to touch, but a 25 to 30 yard distance is probably more appropriate.

Coaching Point--lead foot of the defender must be OUTSIDE of attacker's foot, in order to force the attacker in one direction. Dribblers are taught to go at a defender's lead foot and try to make them turn.

- Defender at far post, plays ball to attacker 30 to 40 yards out; attacker tries to shoot off dribble as defender closes down and shepherds the attacker away from the goal (Restriction--NO TACKLING, the defender can only block the shot attempt).

## Defensive Recovery Angle

Purpose: To teach defensive recovery angle, delay and support

Setup: Initially serve a through ball to an attacker near the touch about 30 yards from the goal line. The defender is about 10 yards inside the touch. 10-15 yards from the touch near the goal line is a set of cones parallel to the touch about 3 yards apart. The attacker receives the pass and attempts to cut the ball to the inside or dribble the ball to the goal line and deliver a pass through the cones. The defender must try to keep the attacker wide and block any pass through the cones.

Progression: Start with the attacker at the halfway near the touch and a defender about 20 yards from the attacker, also on the halfway. A through ball is served down the touch for the attacker to run onto and attack goal (with keeper). The defender is to recover, then close down and delay the attacker.

- \* add second defender near the center mark of the halfway
- \* add second attacker outside of the second attacker
- \* add third defender (near opposite touch)

#### Coaching Points:

Recovery - run should initially be towards the near post. The first priority is to get between the attacker and the goal, keeping him/her taking the ball to the middle. Defenders often make the mistake of running at the ball too soon, allowing the attacker to cut to the inside.

Close down - as the defender gets closer to the goal line than the attacker, s/he can start angling towards the ball. Closing down the ball from a position that is not between the attacker and goal may allow the attacker to beat the defender to the near post. Closing down the ball is the defender's second priority.

Delay - once the defender has recovered, then closed down the ball, s/he must slow down the attack until support arrives. The attacker should be shepherded to the outside and kept from cutting to the middle.

Support - normally, support needs between defender and goal and far enough away, that the attacker cannot beat both defenders on one dribble touch and sprint (5-10 yards?!) Support must be able to close down second attacker if pass is made.

Off ball marking - second and third defenders must recover to support first defender and maintain awareness of second attacker.

Comments: The direction and weight of the serve can offset some physical mismatches between attacker and defenders. Make fast defenders recover properly, else they will feel they can run at the ball from any angle because of their speed. The defender's run can be delayed by the coach if necessary

### Transitional Play

The thought processes and training methods involved with transitional play all revolve around a central theme - "TEAM SHAPE" We refer to team shape when we are talking about positioning of players in relation to the ball - either in attack or on defense. It is easier to conceptualize team shape if we begin with the very young in their attempt to play the game. One can easily recognize the shape of a 5-6 year olds - It's merely a congested "blob" of players. As players mature, ages 8-10, the shape of players around the ball become more spread out - away from the ball - and the game begins to flow better. Finally, we begin to see the real shape of the game with players fourteen and up - where team concepts of attack and defense become the one of the major focuses in training sessions.

Transition in the game requires a thorough understanding of the "roles" that must be filled on the field. The theory is very simple - as is the game - it is the practical implementation of that theory that separates the best teams, players, and coaches.

#### I. POINTS TO ADDRESS

##### A. Transition to Attack

- Look to penetrate
- Run to Space
- Run to Support

## B. Transition to Defense (Players off ball)

- Immediate pressure on the ball
- Space behind
- Space between
- Be in position to help if pressure is beat

## II. DEFENDING TO ATTACKING

### A. COACHING POINTS

1. Find target player as quickly as possible
2. Quality balls to target
3. Angle of entry pass
4. Preparation of target area
5. How does target receive balls
6. Reading where to support after initial ball to target
7. Attaining attacking shape
8. Teach players from simple to complex
9. Speed of thought
10. Imprinting patterns of thought

### B. THOUGHT PROCESS

1. Look to go straight to goal at instant ball is won
2. Play the deepest pass available
3. Find players breaking wide
4. Recognize space to carry ball forward
5. Look for support from behind

### C. OPTIONS

1. Look to play balls to feet of forwards centrally
2. Play to space wide behind or between backs
3. Run ball at defense
4. Play quickly to midfield breaking out
5. Maintain possession by playing back to depth

## III. ATTACKING TO DEFEND

### A. COACHING POINTS

1. Speed of transition
2. Pressure on the ball
3. Recovery runs should be to compact defense (Back and to the center of field)
4. Channel options of attack by angle of approach
5. Be aware of the space behind the defense
6. Close pressure as soon as possible
7. As pressure becomes tighter close space between defenders
8. Squeeze space centrally



9. Be aware of free players and runs through and behind defense

#### B. THOUGHT PROCESS

1. Can I get the ball back - NOW!
2. Look to delay/deny penetration
3. Keep play in front of you
4. Be aware of attacking support players
5. Limit space for attack to play through

#### C. OPTIONS

1. Win ball back immediately via tackle
2. Move to create angle to pressure
3. Give ground
4. Close space between pressuring teammate and your self

***\*\* PLAYERS MUST CONSTANTLY THINK AHEAD \*\****

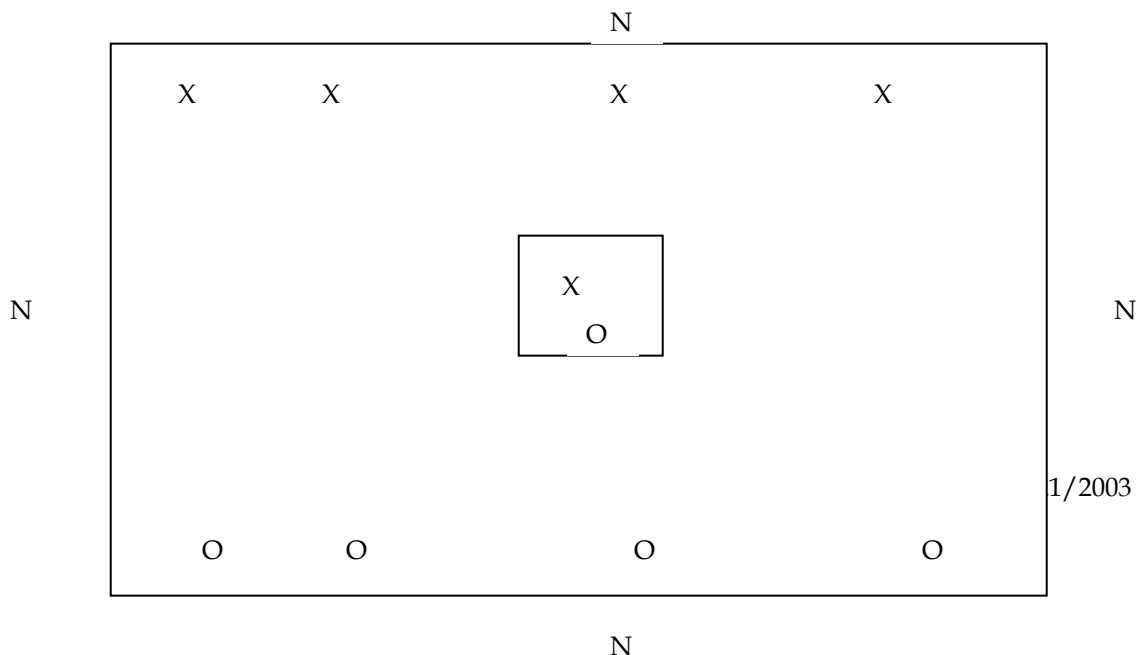
***TEACH THEM TO RUN THEIR MINDS BEFORE THEY RUN THEIR LEGS!***

#### Marking/Transition

Make a large box about 60 yds by 20 yds, then make a smaller 3 yd. X 3 yd. box in the center of the larger box. Select teams of 5. Place a player from each team in the small box, and then place 4 neutral players inside each sideline of the larger box. Also put the other 4 members of each team in the big box.

To score: A team must pass the ball between all 4 outside players and then make a successful pass/receive to the player in the center. The neutral players can be passed to, but they don't count towards your total passes to receive a point AND the passing team needs to get open to receive the next pass to keep the string alive.

The center is "The Death Zone" and players may not run through it. Five points make a winner, then move the losers to neutrals.



## The Cage Game

Set up: 30 X 30 yard field with 2 goals -- goal size (i.e., a pylon) and using keepers, optional 3 v 3 on field with all the other players surrounding the field. Outside players have extra balls. It could be 4v4 or 2v2, but never more than 4.

Basic game: Coach serves ball in and players try to score. If ball is going out of bounds the outside players keep it in by playing it to an open space. This makes the game players work hard to gain control before it goes out. Outside players should have an extra ball in case they can't play the game ball (goes out too high) they toss in their ball. NO playing it to buddies. Must win to get out of the cage, so the losing team keeps playing. Make games quick - 5 minutes. And have the next team ready to rotate in.

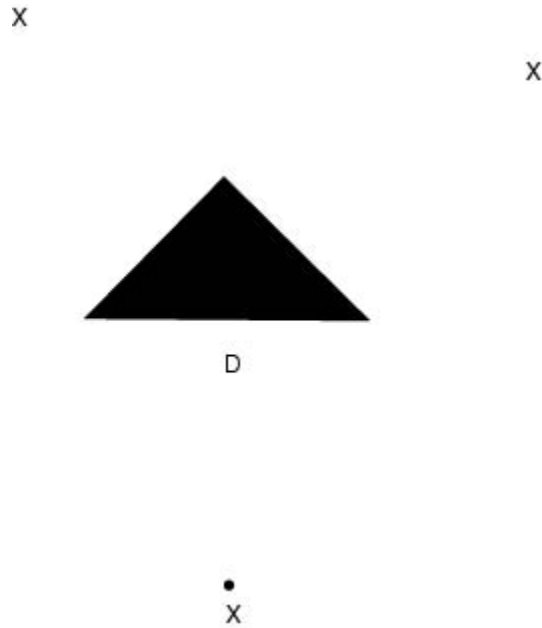
## Steal the Bacon

Instead of having the players too close to the ball in the normal version of this game, I construct a field and have the players line up at opposite corner flags of a field about 10 yds x 25 yds. On the whistle a player at opposite corner flags race down the sideline and come through their own goal to attack the ball on the half way line. Because they have to run about 40 yds to get to the ball, differences in speed ensures that one player gets to the ball sooner so there isn't the usual collision. The player getting to the ball controls it and heads towards the opposite goal. The slower player then has to initially defend the goal, rather than simply attacking the player with the ball. Of course, some players attack the ball anyway and usually get beaten by the player with the ball.

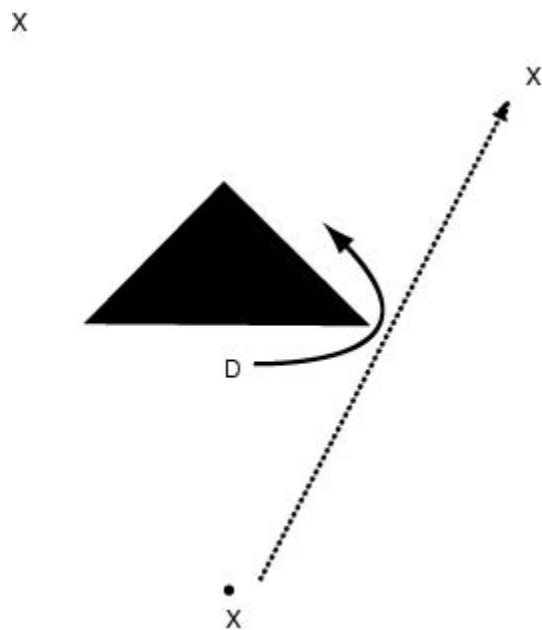
After running them through this a couple of times we demonstrate shepherding the player away from the goal, and try to reinforce not simply dive into the ball when they are the only player between the attacker and the goal. Another variation is to blow the whistle once, wait about 5 seconds and blow the whistle again to get a 2v2 situation in the small field. Of course, one still gets two equally quick players who end up almost simultaneously at the ball and crash into one another. Actually it is good to have an unequal number of players at each corner flag, say 6 v 7, so that the players are ensured a different opponent at each cycle. I know there's a lot of standing around, but the girls enjoy it and it is competitive.

## Defensive Footwork and Conditioning

Start with 3 coaching sticks (or cones) in an equilateral triangle with the sides being 4 yards long. There are 3 players around the triangle (10 yards from the triangle) and one defender who is trying to protect the triangle. The players on the outside are trying to pass the ball through any of the sides of the triangle. See the diagram below for set up



The defender can NOT run through the triangle so she will have to work extremely hard in order to get around the triangle when a ball is passed. See diagram below



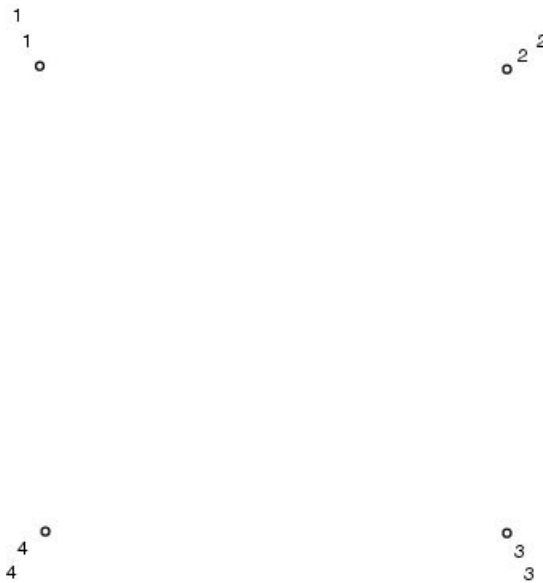
For a "goal" to count it has to be on the ground as the objective here is not to turn it into a shooting contest but rather to force the players on the outside to play quick passes and for the player in the middle to have to keep moving his feet. Each player is the defender for a one minute period and then they rotate. If each player gets 4 turns in the middle, this game could take 18 minutes including time to switch and all of the players get a lot of touches on the ball, work on footwork and conditioning.

## Movement off the Ball

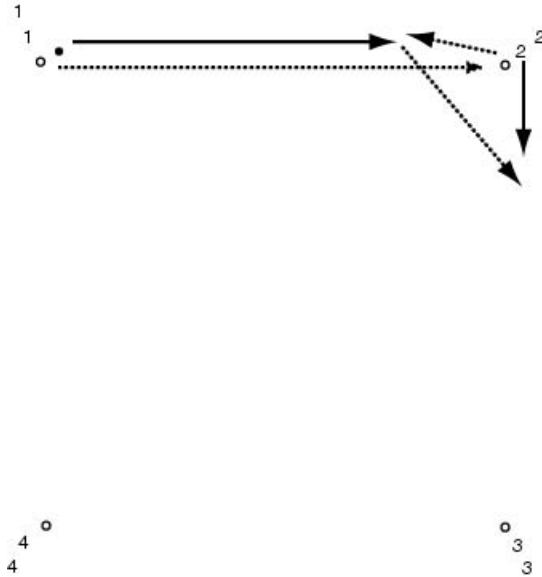
### Passing Combination – Warm up

Here is a simple passing combination activity that is a great warm-up.

This can be done with as few as 8 players and as many as 12 players per group. Start with a 15 yard square (this size can be altered depending upon the needs of the players). There should be 2-3 players in each corner of the square. See diagram below for set up

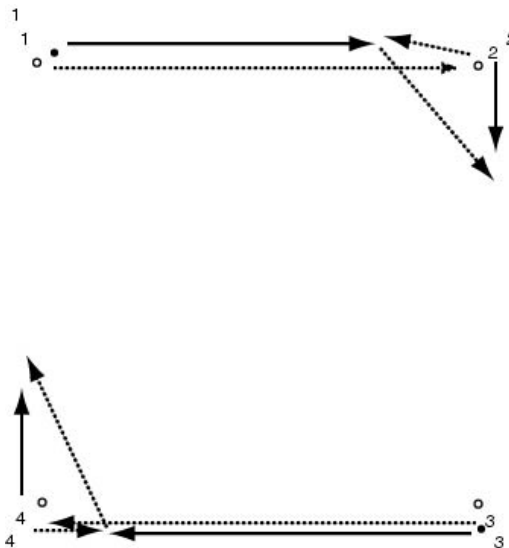


Player 1 starts with the ball and passes the ball to Player 2. Player 1 then runs toward Player 2 who one touches the ball back to Player 1. Player 1 then passes the ball to Player 2 who is running down the line toward Player 3. See diagram below



This activity works on double passes, and wall passes. As soon as Player 2 receives the second pass from Player 1 she starts this sequence over again by passing to Player 3 and they do the exact same thing.

Once the pattern is understood by all, a second ball gets added so that at the same time Player 1 is passing the ball to Player 2, Player 3 is passing the ball to Player 4. See diagram below



This activity will get everyone moving and having to time and pace their passes and runs properly and is a great way to start up a training session working on passing, movement and combinations.

## Tag – Team passing warm-up

Assuming a group of 12 players use a 30 x 30 grid (size can vary depending on numbers and skill level). There are 4 teams of 3 players each (teams will need different colored bibs). One of the team's starts off as "it" and each of the other three teams have 2 balls.

The simple rules are that the team that is "it" tries to tag a player on one of the other teams. However, a player cannot be tagged if they have possession of the ball. A player can avoid being tagged by either running away or having possession of the ball. If a player without a ball gets tagged, her whole team becomes "it". This game becomes a great way to work on teamwork since if you have the ball and you see one of your teammates about to get tagged, you can pass her the ball which will save her (and your team). Players who are "it" can steal a pass to prevent a player from getting "saved".

This game takes a little bit of time for the players to really understand how to play it. Young players will be unwilling to pass the ball to a teammate to save her because they will be afraid to put themselves at risk but gradually, they will get a better understanding and work within their teams to not get tagged.

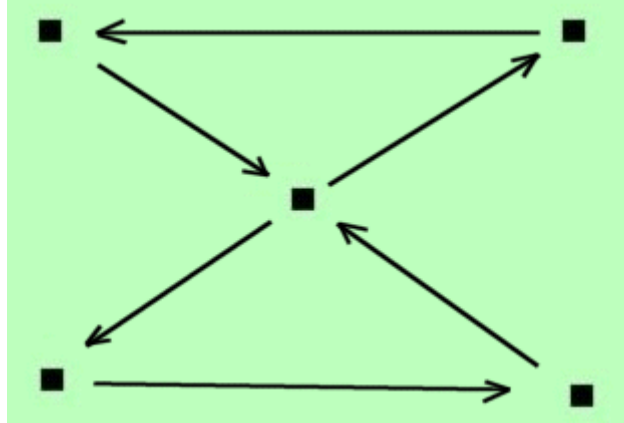
## The Quad Tris (1/4)

It is called the Quad Tri because when you look at the finished diagram you will see four (4) (Quad ) triangles (Tri)

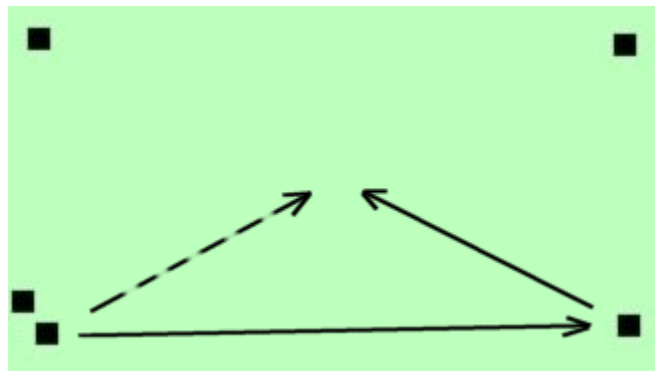
### Set Up and Execution

Set up a rectangular field, 20 x 15 yards (larger or smaller dependent on the age and skill level of your team). This exercise can be done effectively with children as young as 9 years old. Initially play with a single ball and no defenders.

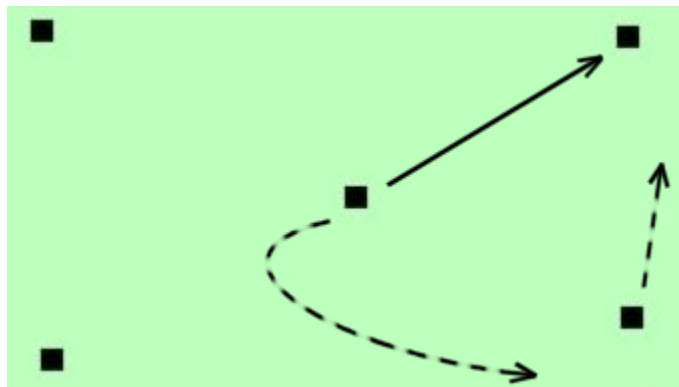
Initially, for the younger players, start the drill off statically, that is, with no movement of the players. This will illustrate the movement of the ball and the concept of the 4 triangles. You need 5 players to illustrate, one at each corner and one in the middle. This player plays both ways, facing where the ball is coming from, switching the attack, then turning around and doing it again.



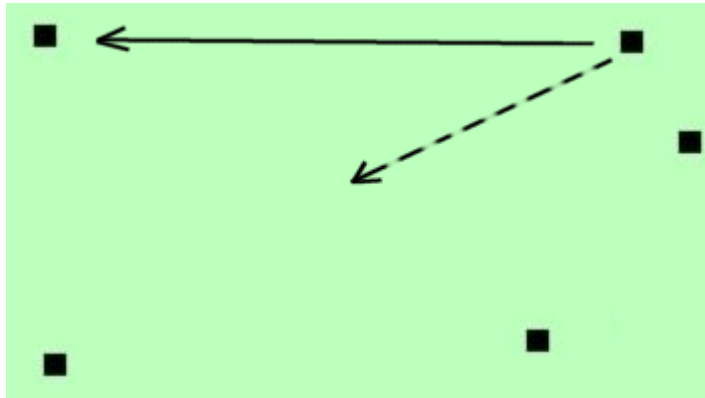
Now we're ready to put in player movement. The first pass is down the long side of the field. Explain to your team that the first man passing the ball is a forward playing the ball the way she is facing back to a defender (or Mid). The forward then checks back on a slant and receives a pass back from the midfielder.



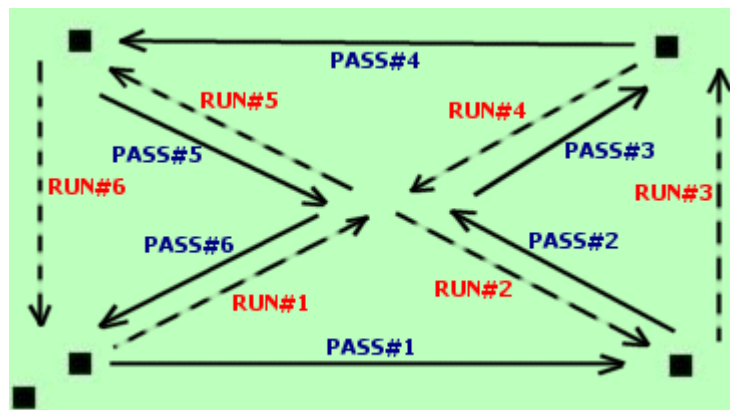
The forward then quickly switches the point of attack by playing the ball on a slant to a second defender. The player who has checked spins away from the pass and joins the line as shown.



That second defender then hits the target player downfield, checks to the middle and re-starts the sequence in the opposite direction.



The sequence is shown below in its entirety



#### Coaching Points

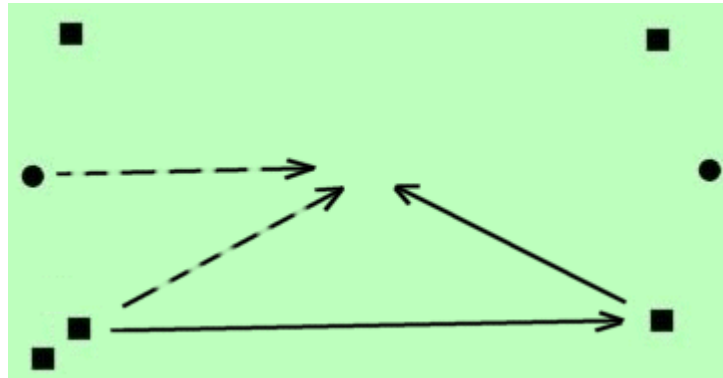
- Heads up at all times. Know where you are going with the ball and where you are running in advance.
- Take ball open to the field at all times
- Prepare the ball for the next pass by playing outside of your footprints.
- Stress technical excellence, especially on the long passes since there is no pressure.



- Work this drill with at least 8 players so that there is always someone at each corner
- Work for 10 minutes at high intensity for good anaerobic/aerobic conditioning mix.
- Can make this more complicated by adding a second ball at the diagonally opposite corner

#### Progression # 1 - Adding a Defender

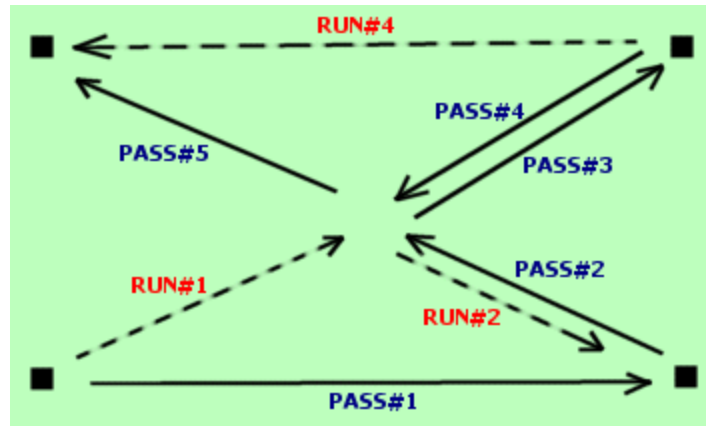
Add a line of defenders midway between the short side of the field as shown. Handicap them sufficiently so, to start, they cannot arrive at the midpoint of the field before the person checking back. The player checking back now has to shield the ball and play it more quickly under some pressure.



Repeat from the opposite direction. Gradually remove the restriction and/or handicap so that it becomes more game-like.

#### The Quad Tris (2/4)

Basically what we have done with this progression is remove one player and added in a give and go sequence.



The sequence is as follows:

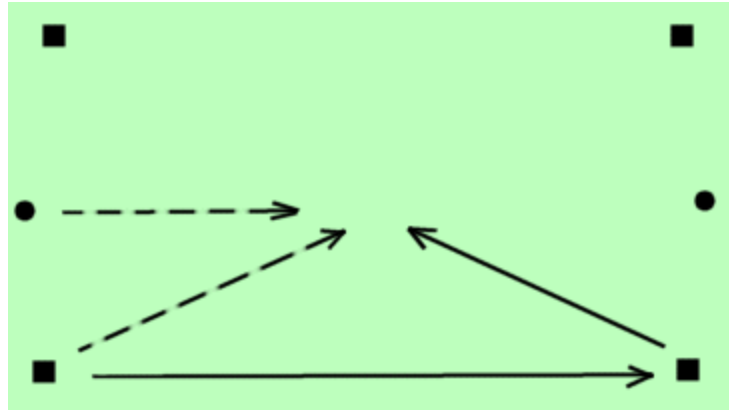
1. Pass # 1 is a long pass. Player number one runs to open space, again, in the center of the grid.
2. Player # 2 passes to player number 1 and follows his pass to the center.
3. Player #1 passes to player 3 and spins away to Player #2's original position. Player # 1 and Player #2 have to be heads up or they'll collide.
4. Player #2 is now in the middle of the field and is the "wall" for the give and go.
5. Player #3 passes to player #2 and makes the long give and go run. He receives the ball at Position marked 4 on the grid.
6. Player #2 checks to players 3's starting position.

You can now either have Player #3 with the ball dribble to the original starting position (recommended to start) and then re-start the sequence

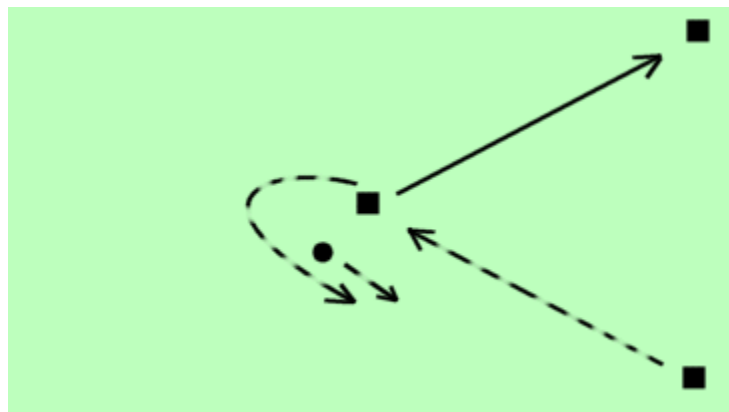
Or You could re-start the sequence from position #4 and do it in reverse. The latter is harder of course because now the players have to re-think what they were originally doing.

### Progression # 3 - Quad-Tris Give and Go - Add the Defender

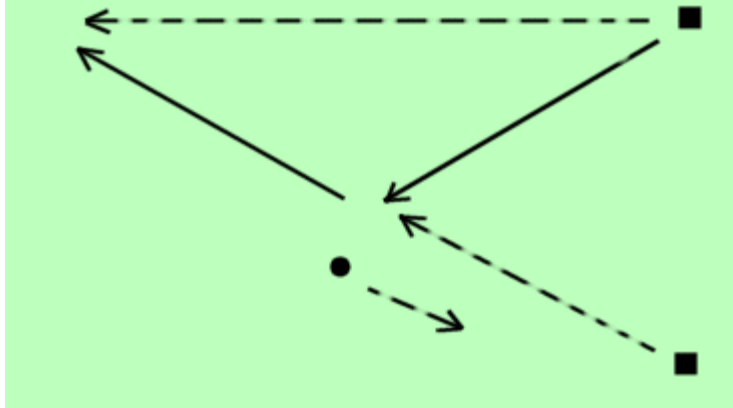
As before add defenders in the middle of the short side of the field. Play the ball in the same starting sequence, long, then diagonally back to the checking player



Now the ball is with the player in the center of the field and the defender is on her back providing pressure. When the checking player drops the ball off and spins away, the defender should follow illustrating how the middle of the field opens up again for the next run off the ball.



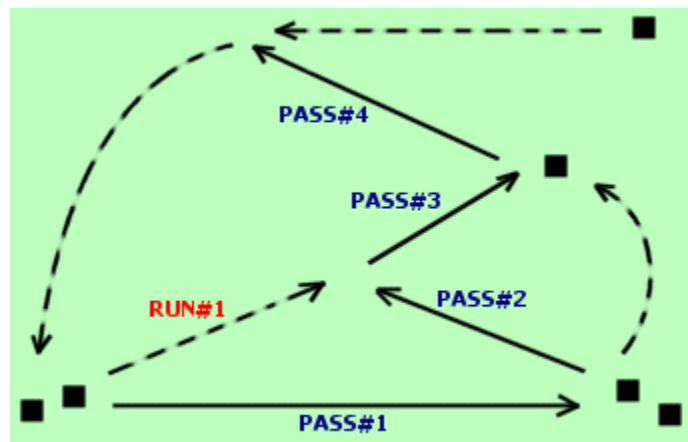
The ball is then played back to the player making the run to the center. The player making the pass also takes off, again running off the ball, for a give and go.



## The Quad Tris (3/4)

### Progression # 4 - Quad-Tris Third Man Run

The following is a progression of the Quad-Tris where we have a third man running off the ball



The sequence is as follows:

1. Pass # 1 is a long pass to player #2. Player number one runs to open space, again, in the center of the grid. This is your forward checking back to the midfield.
2. Player # 2 returns the pass to player # 1.
3. Player #1 passes to player #3 and breaks off away from his pass forcing a defender to either follow him or let him go free for a return pass (in a game situation)
4. Player #4 makes the off-the-ball run based on the pass from Player #1 to Player #3
5. Player #3 passes to player #4 .

6. Player #4 checks to players 1's starting position.

7. Re-Start the sequence.

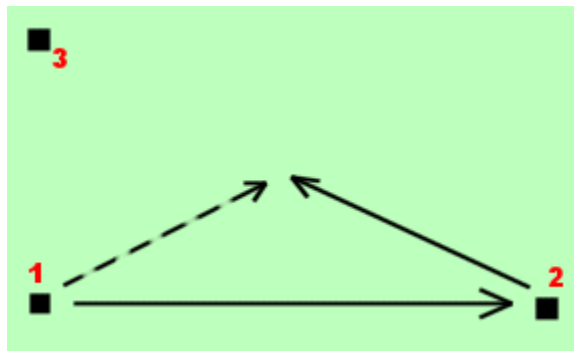
#### Coaching Points

- If you have progressed to this point in your practice it is time to start stressing one touch passes out of the middle.
- The midfielders should still be able to two-touch. Stress this so that they take that extra second to look up and put the ball where the checking forward needs it to go. In the above diagram that would be across his body so that his left foot takes the ball and re-directs it.
- Do not let the checking forward try to chop the ball right-footed across his body on the fly. Passing accuracy is a must.
- Run this drill full speed on the check back. This forward is creating negative space for himself so that he has the time to make his pass
- Stress the clearing run by the checking forward to draw a defender and give the mid a little more time to hit the 3rd man running.
- Stress the timing of the 3rd man running and leading this player into space
- Reverse the sequence of these steps so that both feet are used

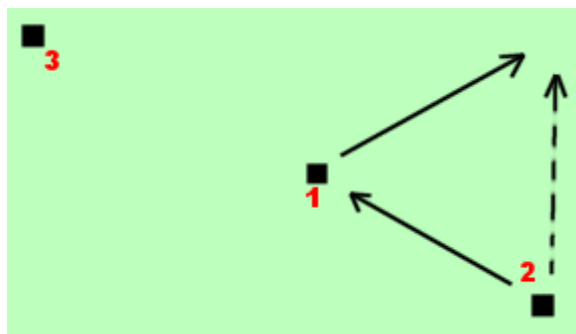
#### The Quad Tris (4/4)

##### Quad Tri - Give and Go 3 Players Only

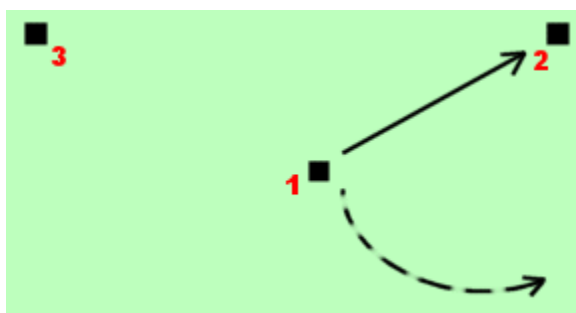
Set up a 25 x 25 to 30 x 30 yard field depending upon the age and skill level of your players. This Quad Tri starts off with the basic long pass and check.



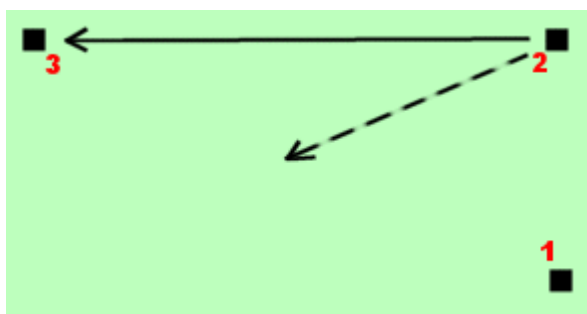
Now here is where the difference comes in...Player #2 makes a give and go run with player #1 who is in the center of the field.



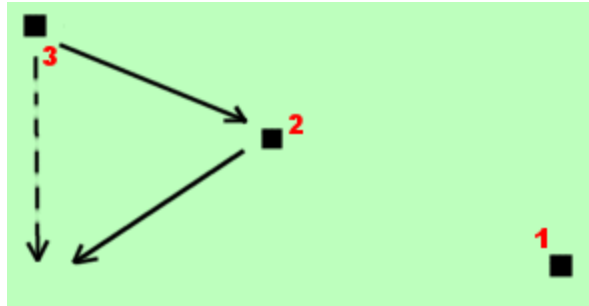
Player #1 now spins from the middle of the field to player#2's original position.



Player #2 now plays the long ball to player #3 and checks to the middle



Player # 3 now plays the ball to the middle and does the give and go with Player #2.

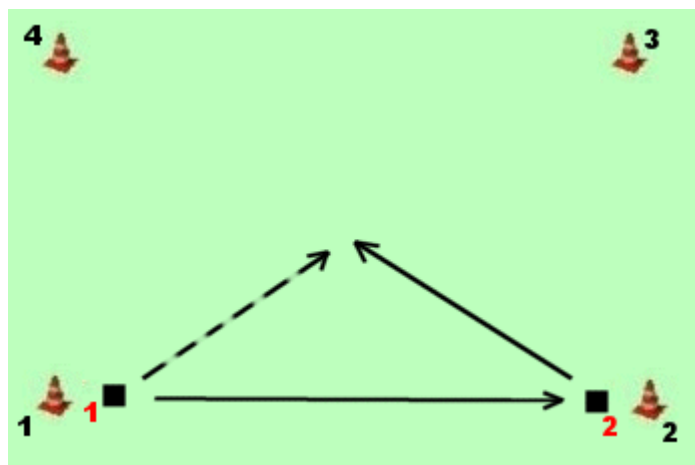


And there you have it a Quad Tri with three players, movement off the ball, checking back, give and go's and the ball and players end up in the same starting positions, albeit, not where they started.

#### Quad Tris - Two Men Only

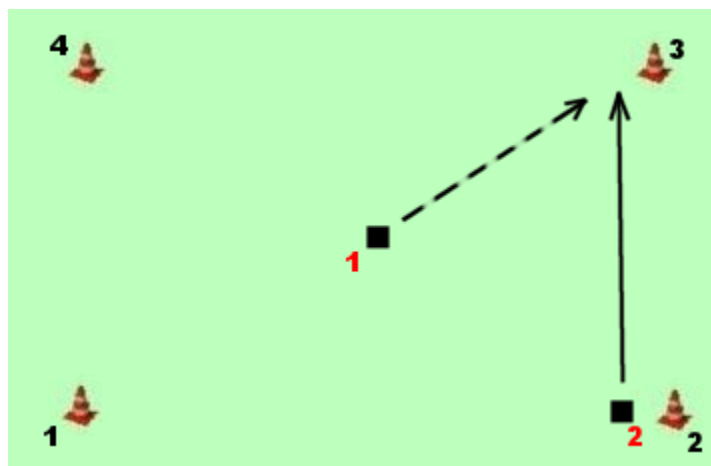
Set up a smaller field say about 10 yards x 5 yards. Number the positions 1, 2, 3 and 4 as shown and the players #1 and #2 as shown





Player 1 plays long ball (about 10 yards her) to Player # 2 and checks to the middle. Player # 2 plays the ball to the middle. So far this is just like a normal Quad Tri.

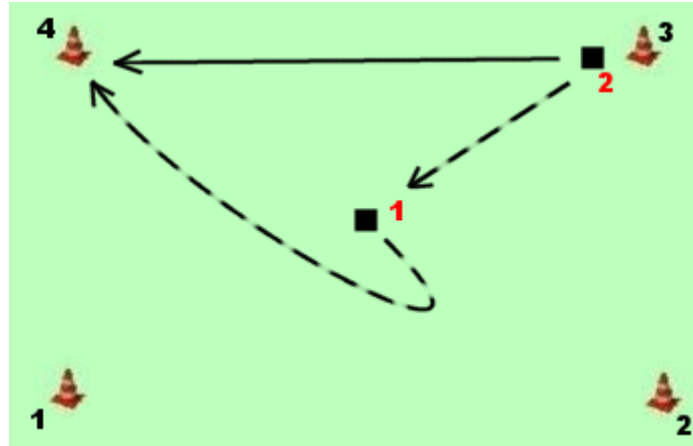
The next move is the same as the 3 man give and go described above..Player # 2 makes the short run and receives the ball back from Player #1.



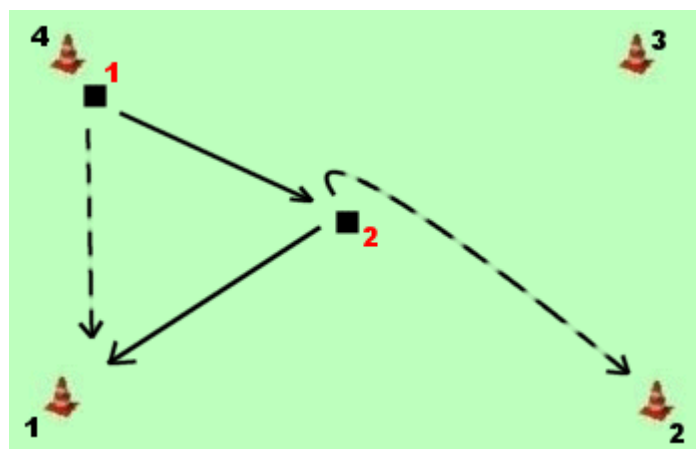
Now Player #1 in the middle of the field, spins away from the ball and heads to position #4 to receive the long pas back again from Player #2.

Make sure to emphasize the spin away from the ball.





Player # 2 now checks to the middle, receives the ball back from Player 3!, executes the give and go and then spins away to his starting position.



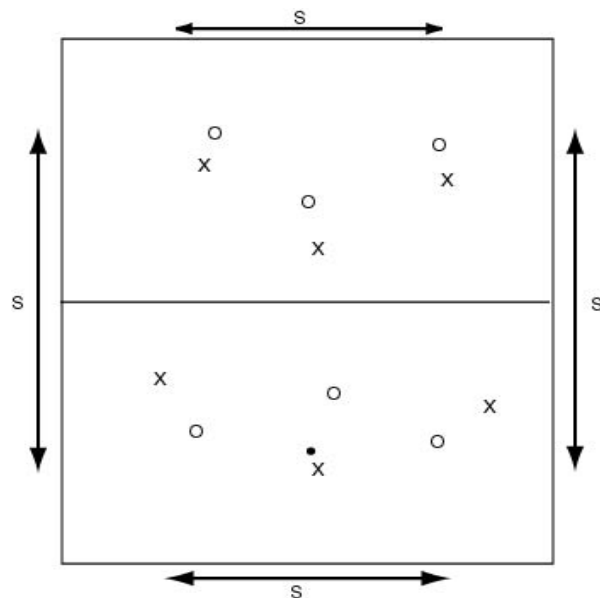
So that's it, a high intensity, two man Quad Tri., 6 runs and 6 passes.

Coaching Points:

- Walk through the drill slowly the first time so that the players see the direction of the runs and passes
- Passes and runs must be timed correctly.
- Emphasize the spins away from the ball and the runs to space
- Make sure that they open up to the field with the correct foot

## Possession, Penetration and training outside midfielders

It's a 50 x 30 area with a midfield line. 3 X's and 3 O's are on each side and there is a server on each of the four sides. See diagram below for set up



If the X's on the bottom start with the ball, they try to maintain possession in their half of the field for 5 passes (this number can vary as well). It's 3 v 3 in the middle but they can use any of the S's on their side. If the side S's move properly, this should turn into a 6 v 3 with plenty of width and depth. The players in the middle are limited to 2 touches and the S's are limited to one touch. Once 5 passes have been made successfully, they try to find one of the X's on the other side (or they can find the S on the far end line or a side S who has moved down the line. If this is done successfully, the X's get a point. If it's not successful, then the O's get the ball and try to do the same thing (whichever side wins the ball gets to start with it).

Not only does this activity work on possession, penetration and movement but it does a great job of training outside midfielders on when to go forward to get down the line and went to come back into support. If you have a keeper in this session, she could be one of the S's on the end lines which would recreate some of the movement and vision situations she will see in a game. It also works on defensive shape as well as forwards working hard to get open for the penetrating pass (and the defense trying to prevent this).

### Finding a target "featured" player

Teams frequently have one or two "featured players". These are the players that they want to have the ball as much as possible and who make each player and the team as a whole better. Since these types of featured players work best with the ball, it's important to train them to find the ball and also to train the rest of the team to try to find these featured players in the course of a game.

One way to train these featured players is to play keep away games with the featured player or players in a different color. Whichever team has the ball has a number up situation with the

featured players on that team. Play a 5 v 5 keep away game with 2 featured players in a 25 x 25 grid.

Teams get a point for 5 consecutive passes plus they get a point every time one of the featured players gets the ball. When there is a change in possession of the ball, the featured players change teams so they are always on offense.

The featured players will have to learn to find space to receive passes and the offensive players will have to learn to keep possession of the ball while also looking to find the featured players whenever possible WITHOUT forcing the ball and losing possession.

Defensively, the players will learn to try to keep an eye on the featured player and force the ball away from the featured player while also having to try to win the ball.

The next step in this progression is to assign one of the featured players to each team so now it's an even number game and each team only has one featured player. This makes the featured players work even harder to find the ball. The scoring stays the same.

The next step is to add goals. Each team still has a featured player (depending upon the numbers there might be 2 per team) and they get a point each time the featured player gets the ball and 5 points for a goal.

If you think this whole idea of a "featured player" doesn't apply to you, think about how many times you have seen a team with a top player on it that you try to shut down. The problem with trying to shut down a top player is that most teams don't practice how to do this. If you don't practice it with your team, how can you expect them to be able to do this? Also, if you have a forward who is a goal scorer, if you don't train this forward to find the ball when being specially marked, how can you expect this forward to know how to do this?

## Methods of Play

### Flat Back Four Training Part I

Divide the field into 4 vertical zones, A-B-C-D respectively. Zones B and C are narrower (about 16 yards wide) since they are the central zones. Number the backs, starting with 1 as the left wing back, through 4, the right wing back. I recommend drawing the following out or use some checkers or chess pieces.

Start with the defenders in their zones, each facing an attacker in their zone, about 10 yards up field. The ball is to move from each stationary attacker and stop as the defense shifts.

When the ball is in the lateral zone A (close to zone B), 1 has closed down ball, backs 2 and 3 are in B, with 4 being in C, near zone D. Back 2 is good 2nd defender support depth (about 5 yards), with 3 and 4 on a horizontal line, about 6 to 7 yards deeper than 1. Note, there are two horizontal lines of covering, one where back 2 is and the other where backs 3 and 4 are, 1 or 2 yards deeper.

When the ball is in the central zone B, back 2 closes down the ball, 1 retreats to about 5 yards deep, near or on the vertical line between A and B. 1 supports 2 and maintains contact with his mark in his zone. Back 3 supports 2 at about 5 yards, near or on the vertical line between B and C. Back 4 has moved over into zone C, on the same 5 yard deep horizontal line of backs 1 and 3. The ball continues to zone C and D with the defensive rotation the mirror image of the prior two.

Once the defenders understand their roles, the setup is made a little more dynamic with the ball being passed between any of the attackers without adhering to a sequence. There is still no vertical movement by the attackers, though they may move laterally a little within the irrelative zones.

## Flat Back Four Training Part 2

To continue with the basic zone play of a 4-4-2 formation, the 4 midfielders are now added with the static attackers in front of them. The same rules of movement detailed for the 4 backs in the prior post, apply to the 4 midfielders. When the ball is in the lateral zone, the wing midfielder closes down the ball with the near side center midfielder in support and the other two midfielders a shade deeper and even across. The back 4 mirror this setup, maintaining the same distance from their companion midfielder, 10-15 yards apart.

The midfielders' shape is the same as described for the backs when the ball is in one central zone, with the center midfielder closes the ball and the other backs at a supporting distance. The backs, however, go flat, except for the back in the opposite central zone as the ball, which drops about 2-3 yards deeper. The backs compact towards the center as before.

An overlap in a lateral zone is then addressed, starting with the ball in front of the wing midfielder with a player overlapping the ball. The back four shift slightly more toward the side and slightly back, still maintaining their shape. This is extended to stopping the ball in a lateral zone and marking a forward player in the same zone.

Exercises are then done to practice the interchange of marking a forward attacker between the two central backs, when the ball is in a central zone. To do this, the forward moves laterally from one central zone to the other, as one center back drops back from a goal side/ball side marking position into support of the other center back who moves forward on to a goal side/ball side marking position.

This exercise is later extended by the attacker moving into the lateral zone. The wingback picks up the attacker and marks in advance of the attacker; i.e., the wingback is either to the side or slightly in front of the attacker.

When the ball is in a lateral zone, the zone definitions are changed to match the location of the 4 players with respect to forward players moving laterally. That is the four zones are defined evenly between the touchline of the ball zone and the far post, leaving the area wide of the far post as a dead space. Attackers in this dead space need to be watched, but not marked by the off ball wing back. The defenders practice passing marking responsibilities in this setup. Another forward attacker is added to setup.

## Flat Back - Individual - Close Down

At most times the ball must be put under some kind of pressure. Low pressure is where the defender is a short but definitive distance from the ball. In low pressure situations, the defender and the defensive system wants to guide the ball into preferred areas or the defense just wants to prevent penetration by the attack. Low pressure defenses only want to give up low percentage chances to the attack, putting many players around the ball and staying compact in the central defensive end.

With high pressure defenses, the ball is closed down quickly and tightly. This requires a high work rate by the defender, but the pressure is likely to cause mistakes and loss of possession by the attack.

In either case, the first defender or the one most responsible for the man with the ball must know how to close down on the ball. The close down is a method that brings the defender to proper distance from the attacker, be it 5 yards or one foot.

The close down starts when a ball is passed to an attacker. When the ball is in flight, the defender uses this time to sprint towards the receiving attacker. This is the critical time in a close down as it is the best time to gobble up ground between the defender and the attacker. All too often, the defender does not react soon enough and gives the attacker great space to receive and decide what the next play will be.

Just before the receiver is to touch the ball, the defender must stop the sprint and go into a balanced

state, being ready to react in any direction. The closer to the attacker, the more critical being on balance becomes. It is when the defender is in motion that the attacker can use the defender's momentum to beat him. The defender must first stop, then change directions. Often in a directional change, the player is again off balance and can be beat again. An on balanced player can react quickly the first time in such a manner that he is still on balance for the next reaction.

To go on balance requires the player to suspend movement, with feet a comfortable distance apart. The body may be turned slightly facing the ball and the direction the player wants the attacker to go.

After the touch is made, the defender uses the time before the next touch to close down more space. If the touch stays close to the attacker, the defender should go into a sideways-on (or side-on) stance and take short steps or hops to get closer to the attacker. The defender should stay as balanced as possible with any leanings away from attacker back towards the defended goal. The defender must not allow the attacker to get past or behind him, and that is why the defender should be ready to react quickly going backwards as he shuffles forward towards the ball. The reason he needs to be side-on is to be in a better position to go back.

1v1 exercises are best for teaching close down. Either the defender serves the ball to an attacker and closes down or a third player serves the ball. It is critical that the ball is served from different angles and from different distances to train the defender properly. The defender should start from different distances from the attacker as well.

Defenders that are beat by the attacker on the first or second touch are not on balance. Defenders that are not tight enough initially may not be working hard enough on the initial pass. Defenders that stay well off the attacker after reception are not closing down properly.

## Flat Back Four - Individual - Support

Foregoing any discussion on containment, shepherding and tackling, more emphasis on support, double teaming and recovery is important as we inch our way towards more flat back development.

We will keep the defensive support comments in this section to positions that are near and "behind" the ball and the first defender, as there are support positions on the attacking side of the ball and behind, but off the ball.

One of the first mandates of a coach to his players in a flat back defense (any defense really) is to "get behind the ball." Defensive support has three main functions:

- \* support the first defender on ball
- \* mark or be able to close down the support attacker(s)
- \* stop the through ball behind the defense

The supporting position on the ball should be the first priority. The defender must be positioned to take over as the first defender if the attacker gets past the initial defender. This positioning should not be too close, as the attacker will probably be moving at speed if he beat the first defender. On the other hand, the support defender should not be too far from the ball and give the attacker too much space and time before he comes under pressure again. The closer the ball is to the goal, the closer the defender should be in support; however, the more angled the ball is to the goal (i.e., wide of the goal, but close to the goal line), the more distance (vertical) and the flatter (horizontal) the supporting defender can be in relation to the ball.

3-7 yards can be used as a base vertical distance (also called depth). If the skill and speed of attacking players is considered greater than that of the defenders, the more depth a supporting defender may need. The depth could be extended to as much as 10 yards, the closer the ball is to the halfway. If the ball is being marked and supported by the midfielders, the backs may want to be 10-15 yards in support of the supporting defenders. This is another element in support defense that we will skip over for the time being.

A good starting point rule of thumb on support angle and depth for the closest support defender may be to draw a line from the far post to the ball. The support defender should be somewhere along this line. This line puts the defender in good position to deter or prevent through balls. The problem with this method is when the ball is in the center of the field. The horizontal support angle of the far post line may be a little too

vertical for a supporting defender.

The support position is next dictated by the support attacker. The wider the attacker, the further away laterally, the support defender may want to play. The further away from the ball the attacker is, the further away from the support attacker the supporting defender can play (if the attacker is outside of the penalty area). The more dangerous position an attacker is in (such as a run on goal), the support defender must provide more attention, both visually and physically.

A distance halfway between the two attackers is a good starting point if the attackers are square. If the second attacker is forward, the defender must give him attention and play tighter. Here the through ball between the defenders is a real concern as the defender will not have a distance advantage on the attacker if there is a run on goal.

There are several ways to train supporting defense.

- Setup: 2v2 no defense; Attacker one (1A) has the ball, Defender one (1D) closes down and 2D moves into a supporting position between 1A and 2A. 1A passes to 2A who is square, 2D immediately closes down and 1D drops back into support. Vary the exercise by the two attackers jogging down the field with the two defender going back with them. To liven up the exercise, have the receiving attacker try to beat the defender closing down or deliver a through pass to the other attacker making a run behind the recovering defender.
- Coaching points: watch for a too vertical drop position on the supporting defender; be sure the close down is proper. The coach can either have the first defender force the ball wide or take a defense stance that forces the ball towards his support.
- Setup: 1v1+1; in a 10x20 yard grid, attacker is on the top of the grid, two defenders are on the bottom line; 2D plays a ball to the attacker as 1D closes down; if the attacker beats 1D, then 2D moves immediately into the first defender role. Vary the exercise to encourage more 2D participation by restricting 1D to no tackling and no participation past the halfway line.
- Setup: in a 30x20 grid, 2D plays the ball to A well wide of the attacker, varying the depth; 2D must now recover from a wide starting position to get into a good supporting position. Add a goal and other restrictions on 1D's defense or when 2D can recover.
- Other small sided unrestricted games with small goals are 1v2 2v2, 3v2 are good environments to work on supporting defense.
- Support may be the key element to flat back systems. We discussed the near ball support. Later on, we will talk about the off-ball support positioning, which actually is where the flat back gets it's name.

## Flat Back - Individual - Recovery

Adequate pressure on the ball and recovery of supporting defenders is a key to any defensive system, especially in a flat back. It is important that the recovery is with urgency and situation awareness. A recovering defender must get back to stop the ball, support the defender on ball, mark attackers in dangerous positions or support another supporting defender.

In the following description, assume the scenario of the ball penetration being down the side. Later, penetration down the middle will be discussed briefly.



The initial steps of a recovery run in many cases should be towards to the goal post nearest the player. As the defender recovers near post, he assesses the situation and starts to curve his run out when he feels he can get between the attacker and the goal. If he starts his run towards the attacker, the attacker may be able to angle towards the near post before the defender can get there. By starting towards the near post first, the defender should be able to keep the attacker wide of the goal (assuming the attacker is breaking down the center). The key time where a defender can start moving out off the near post run is when the defender is even or past the attacker. Here, speed of the attacker plays a role. A slower defender will want to continue recovering towards the near post until he is sure he can get between the attacker and the goal.

Central defenders that are not recovering to ball want to recover towards the middle of the goal. They want to move out towards the ball and the first defender as they go past the first defender. It is important the recovering second defender look for other attackers that are moving into dangerous positions. The second defender should look for a position that will give support to the first attacker and a marking presence on the other attacker(s).

The third recovering defender moves into support position to support the second defender. At this point the third defender could take on the marking responsibilities of the second defender and allow the second defender to be in better (closer) position to support the first defender. This third defender may have recovered to the middle of the goal or to the far post, depending upon how quickly the second defender recovered or where the off-ball attackers were going.

In a flat back, the third and fourth back defenders shift towards the ball align themselves with the depth of the second attacker. Their key roles are to keep the defense compressed by not getting deeper than the second defender, provide near ball coverage by shifting over towards ball, stopping any balls played behind the second defender and marking or staying aware of any off ball attackers.

Attackers that penetrate down the middle require the defenders to recover towards the center of the goal. It is very important for second defenders (one on each side of the ball) to stay fairly compact (3-5 yards wide of and behind the first defender). Again, this compactness may have to be compromised to mark a near attacker. The defenders wide of the second defenders need to be compact as well and to pick up the marking responsibilities on attackers. The defense wants to provide a barrier across the danger zone in front of the goal, not allowing the ball to penetrate any gaps and force the ball to be played square and wide.

Recovery of the first defender can be practiced by setting up a 10 yard channel near a touch line from the goal line out. A ball is played down the touchline for a wide attacker to run onto. A defender is positioned near but inside the attacker. The defender must recover and keep the attacker wide as the attacker tries to take the ball across the inside channel line. The defender's initial recovery angle and then the angle of closing down the ball are watched. If the defender does not recover to the inside, the attacker may be able to get in front. If the defender does not close down at a good angle or is still running, the attacker may be able to cut back behind the defender. The defender should be in a balanced close down position (see prior post on close down) to contain the attacker.

A gate near the goal line can be created on the inner channel line for attackers that can get the goal line and cross the ball. The defender now must stop the attacker from cutting to the center, but stop the cross of any attacker that can get to the goal line. The starting position of the defender can be changed to get the desired results. Defenders with great speed will need to be shown the need to recover to the inside first, as their tendency is to run down the ball.

The exercise can then be changed by removing the channel and letting the first attacker try to go on goal against a recovering defender, starting from the halfway. A second defender is added near the center circle to provide recovering support. A second attacker is added for the second defender to mark. A third defender is added and later a third attacker. A fourth defender could be added if the exercise is allowed to progress this far. When the third defender is added, the coach may want to start developing at this time the positioning of the defenders in the flat back system.

## Flat Back - Individual - Double Team

Without question, the double team is one of the least trained of the defensive techniques; however, it can easily be incorporated into warm-up or individual defensive exercises. The double team is a key element that takes a defensive system, especially zone or a flat back to the next level. The problem with the double team is that to do it correctly requires teamwork and timing.

There are a couple of ways to effect a double team. One is for a defender to close down and pressure the ball, as the second defender comes in late, usually from behind. In this method, the first defender usually dictates the opportunity by stopping and containing the ball. The second defender moves in and is often the aggressor in trying to strip the ball from the attacker as the first defender continues to contain.

The second method is the timed concurrent close down of both defenders. Often, this type of double team occurs close to the touch line where the attacker can be lured into a false sense of space and time as the defenders are some distance away. The close down is performed quickly and at the same time by both defenders. Almost always the other defender comes from the side or "square" of the attacker.

The first order of business in the timed double team is to make sure the attacker cannot split the defenders or go forward. The "downfield" defender must take away the touchline drive as the "square" defender ensures the attacker cannot go between the defenders. The defenders should be less concerned about winning the ball and focus on their defensive positioning.

When next to the touchline (or goal line), the defenders should "allow" the attacker to lose the ball instead of the defender taking the ball. It does no good to kick the ball out of play and give the possession back to the attacker.

Communication is important, but with training and experience, defenders can recognize and react without verbal or visual signals. In the delayed double team, once the defender feels he has the attacker under control, he can raise a hand or say "Double!" This would be a signal for the closest square of trailing defender to move in for the double team.

In the case of a timed double team, the "in charge" defender should be the one that controls the penetration paths the attacker can take. He is the one that dictates when the close down takes places. Generally, he is the one that calls for his partner to get closer. Communication talk could be something like this, "Take square! With me! With me! Close! Close!"

As added defensive protection, especially in a timed double team, a third defender should move into the path between the double teaming defenders. A good support distance would be 10-15 yards depending upon the positioning of the support attackers. The third defender should look to intercept any passes played between the double team.

The timed double team can be trained in the warm-up dribbling game of Knock-out. The setup is a rectangle marked area such as 20x12, depending upon number of players, age and skill level. 8 to 15 players could work in this area. Two defensive players are identified and the other players dribble. Have the dribblers score points by dribbling from one goal line to the other. The defenders are to identify a dribbler, force the dribbler to a side line and "steal" the ball via a double team. Attackers can retrieve balls knocked out of play by the defense and start again. The defenders can compete for the quickest "knock-out" of all players or for the lowest attacker score.

The coach should watch for and discourage "individual" defensive play, as the defenders should work together to "lock" an attacker in. Identify the players that take a lead role or work well together--this could help in establishing player positions in games.

A good exercise to develop the delayed double team is a 1v1+1 setup. Practice along and close to a touchline. D1 plays a ball to A1 and closes down. D2 who starts 10 yards behind A1 and doesn't move until A1 touches the ball or until D1 communicates control.

The coach should look for a good recovery angle to come in from the side



to keep A1 from cutting into the middle.

Often, the defense will have the extra numbers around the ball to make double teaming a possibility and can provide their team with the opportunity for great counter attack situations.

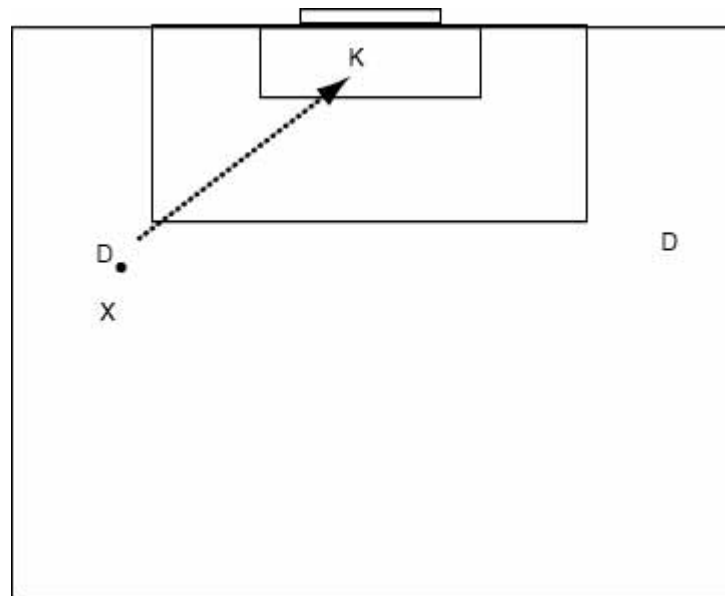
## Goalies

### Becoming the 11th Field Player

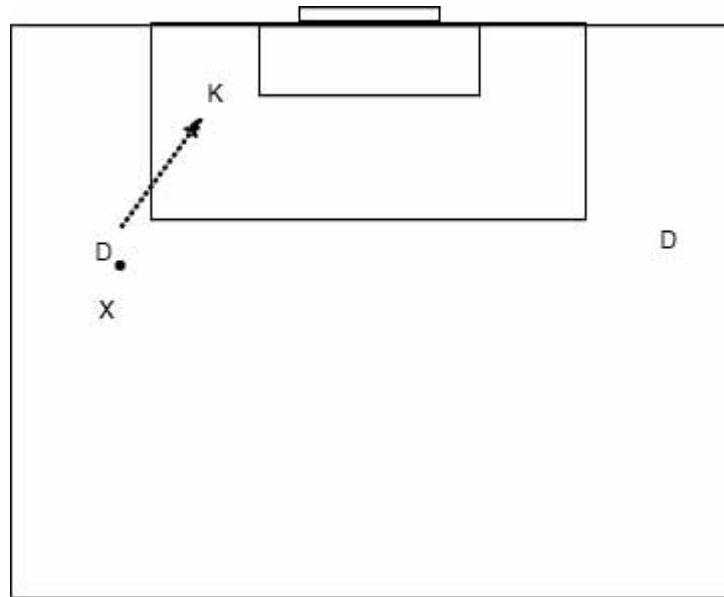
When a teams backs have the ball (or the midfielders for that matter), it's important for the keeper to provide support. This is when the team changes from 10 field players plus one keeper to 11 field players. If the keeper just stands in her goal and doesn't provide this support, it puts her teammates at a tremendous disadvantage.

One of the risks in passing the ball back to the keeper is that, since she can't use her hands if the ball is an intentional pass back with the feet from a teammate, she must be able to play as a field player and be comfortable on the ball. If the keeper is not comfortable with the ball at her feet (and other parts of her body) she becomes a liability.

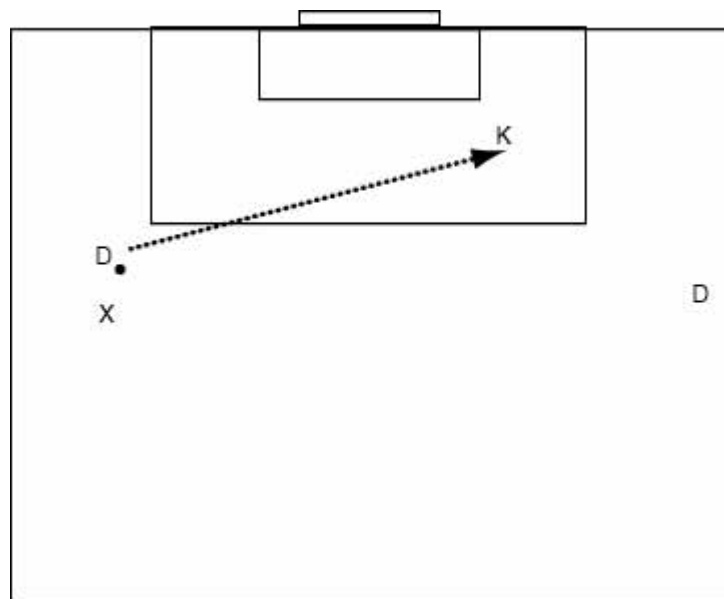
Another risk in passing the ball back to the keeper is if it's a bad pass, or if it takes a bad bounce, there is always the chance of the ball going in the goal. The way to significantly minimize this risk is for the keeper to make herself available at angles that do not involve passing the ball back directly in front of the goal. The diagram below shows a keeper putting herself in a risky position by being right in front of the goal (and inside the 6 yard box) when the ball is passed back



There are two better options for the keeper to position herself to be more available for a pass back. If the back (D) is under a lot of pressure, the keeper should go wider to the near side to offer support. See diagram below



If there isn't a lot of pressure on the back, but it's still in her best interests to play the ball back to the keeper, the keeper could go wider to the far side which will make it easier to quickly change the point of attack. See diagram below



The advantage of this last option of going wide to the far side is that it allows for the changing of the point of attack very easily. It's slightly riskier IF the back is under pressure and that is why it's in the best interests of all, for the keeper to read the pressure and react accordingly.

This is one of the many parts of goalkeeping that keepers do NOT pick up by being sent off with a coach to have shots hit at her. This comes from training with the team and understanding the roles and responsibilities of all of the players.

## Footwork and Technique

The exercise I am going to describe requires one keeper, and three servers (the servers could be a coach and two other keepers or field players or any combination of them). Also it requires anywhere from 6-12 soccer balls.

The keeper starts in goal and one server is approximately 40 yards out with a couple of balls. The other two servers are near the corners of the top of the 18. Each player has 3-4 balls. There should also be two targets set up approximately 35 yards out and near the sidelines. These targets could be two cones set up 4 yards apart

The keeper starts by sprinting from the goal line to the top of the 6 at which point the server who is 40 yards out will chip the ball toward the cross bar. The keeper then uses proper footwork to get back and make the save. As soon as she catches the ball, she should take a couple of quick steps and throw the ball out to one of the two wide targets. As soon as the throw is made, the server on the opposite side will drive a ball near post and the keeper will have to scramble to make the save. A keeper would do four sets of these (a set is comprised of this being done with a chip and then a shot from the right and then a chip and a shot from the left) and then rotate with another keeper. Done at full speed, this is a great way to work on footwork to get back for chips, distribution, shot blocking, positioning and conditioning.

Next, the server 40 yards out would chip the balls to the corners of the 6 which will make the keeper really scramble to get to the ball and then the server on the near side would hit a far post shot. Everything else stays the same.

If you have an extra person around, this person could fight with the keeper for the high balls and then be around the goal to finish any rebounds off of the shots. This adds a little bit more game realism to the activity and makes it even harder on the keeper.

By making any number of minor adjustments to this activity you could work on things like crosses, breakaways, punting and many more things. It just takes a little bit of creativity.

## Parrying Drill

A coach or other GK, who will be the "thrower", must stand at the 18, alternating from the center, left and right of the "D"

The GK in the net must sprint from the goal line to the ball, and touch it with one hand, then shuffle back towards center goal line.

The option is then left to the thrower to choose a side to lob the ball to AND whether or not to inform the GK of which side the ball will be lobbed to (depending on the abilities of your keepers).

Obviously, the next step is for the GK to shuffle toward the side of the net that the ball is lobbed to.

Keepers should remember, when parrying, not to break form.

Coaches should emphasize correct body angle on the shuffle back to the net, as well as using the correct hand on the parry.

### Quick Turn Drill

The GK stands on the goal line, but looking inside the goal; back to the playing field. A teammate (can be another GK) has to be halfway between the goal line and halfway in the central mark with several balls. At the same time the teammate shoots the ball to the goal line, the coach can shout "NOW" or can whistle and the GK in the goal line has to turn around and look for the ball. That will give him/her a fast reaction and control when seeing and going to the ball.

### Meeting the Ball Drill

Start with 4 cones making a rectangle that is 5 x 10. The two sides that are 5 yards wide represent goals. Two servers start 10 yards outside of the goals, each with a ball. The keeper starts in the middle of the rectangle.

The keeper starts by sprinting outside of one of the goals and the server volleys the ball to the keeper. The keeper gets and in order to catch the ball when hit hard, she must relax. If the keeper doesn't relax, she will struggle with catching the ball on a regular basis. She catches the ball, and throws it back to the server and then turns and sprints to the other goal, gets her feet set, relaxes and catches the ball. This goes on for one minute and then the keeper would rotate with one of the servers.

The next step would be to play rolling balls to really force the keeper to come forward and get it in front of the cones. Other things that can be done would be lofted balls, balls to the side for collapse dives etc.

### Triangle drills

1. This drill requires 4 people, which is best if it's one coach or trainer and 3 keepers. Make an equilateral triangle with each side being 8 yards. This essentially makes 3 full sized goals. The first keeper starts in the middle of the triangle and the other three people are on the outside of the triangle lined up 10 yards from the middle of each goal. Each of these servers has a ball in her hands. The keeper will run to the outside of each goal and save a simple serve with a collapse dive. As soon as the save has been made, the keeper runs through the triangle to the next ball being served. Each save must be made outside the triangle. This will go on for a one-minute period. As soon as the minute is up, the next keeper will start. If the makeup of the group is 3 keepers and one trainer, each keeper will go hard for one minute and then rest for the next two minutes. After each keeper has gone through this process, the next step would be extended dives. It's important for the servers to make sure that each one is not serving to the same side each time. Try to get the servers to alternate each serve. There are many options for sets to do in this series including running through balls, forward dives, high balls, backward tips, and parrying. Then you could build in forward rolls, knees to chest jumps or burpees between each save and this becomes a wonderful drill for conditioning, agility and technique. This is a high intensity drill that requires a lot of concentration. While the conditioning in this drill is incredible, the technique used in each set is what needs to be emphasized. One of the reasons for the rolls and jumps is to tire out the keepers to force them to really concentrate on the technique. This drill will show how fundamentally sound a keeper really is

2. This equilateral triangle should be between 3-4 yards. You also need at least 4 people although the more the better. Field players can be used, as there is a benefit to them as well. In this drill the working keeper must stay outside the triangle at each time. The players on the outside would stay around 10 yards back surrounding the triangle. They would pass the ball around the triangle trying to create an angle to pass the ball through the triangle. The working keeper must stay outside the triangle and use their footwork to navigate their way around the triangle trying to keep everything outside of the triangle. This can be turned into a competition between keepers to see who can be scored upon the least in a one-minute period. Each time the ball goes through the triangle it's a point and each time the keeper runs through the goal it's also a goal. The keeper who has let up the fewest number of points wins.

3. Front of a goal with two servers and one keeper. The servers stand approximately 10 yards from the goal even with the posts. They will pass the ball back and forth either with one or two touches and the keeper must move with the ball in order to cut off the angle. Any time the servers feel the keeper has not gotten there quickly enough, the ball can be shot into the goal (either near post or far post). This requires a great deal of movement and conditioning. The keeper, while going back and forth between the posts does not really run in straight lines but rather almost makes a U in their movements going back to the line in the middle and then attacking the ball when it's at the feet of the servers. The advantage of this drill is the servers can be keepers, coaches or just bystanders and it only requires one ball.

Each of these drills is high intensity and should last for one-minute periods. Emphasize the fundamentals and realize these are extremely simple but intense drills.

## Set Play Drills

Equipment: regular goal, 6 red bibs

Objectives: organize defense to IMMEDIATELY get set for direct kicks, corner kicks, other team's goal kicks

## Defending corner kicks

This is one of the times when the keeper must be in total control of the situation. The first thing she will want to do is make sure the near post is covered. It's not good enough to simply have a player on the near post, they must be close enough so that no ball can get between her and the post. I recommend that the player be on the goal line with the shoulder touching the post (if the corner kick is being taken from the keepers left side, then the players left shoulder should be on the post). The rest of her body should be along the goal line. I then like to get a player on the far post in the same position (her right shoulder would be on the post this time). The next area the keeper must be concerned with is a short corner or a low driven ball to the near post. Placing a player on the end line, 10 yards from the ball, can negate both of these kicks. The next area to worry about is the area between the 12-yard spot and the top of the D. This is the area where most goals are scored on corners so get a player in that area as well. The keepers next concern is to make sure that the 6-yard box is cleared. You can't prevent opponents from coming into that area but you certainly can make sure you don't have to fight teammates as well. You must know your range as a keeper and take full responsibility for any ball played into that space. The rest of the players can either mark up man to man or be placed in a zone.

The keeper should position herself in the middle of the goalmouth, approximately 1 yard off her line. Have your lower body facing out toward the middle of the field. Your upper body (primarily your head) should be turned facing the ball. This position will allow you to see the

ball as well as the rest of the field without having to turn all the way around. When the ball is played, make a quick decision whether it is within your range and if so, and there is nothing impeding your path, call for the ball and win it. If you elect not to go get it, yell "away" and prepare for the header or deflection. If you leave your line for the ball, your post players should tuck in toward the middle to back you up. If you elect to stay back, then the post players should stay where they are until you tell them to leave. I am very specific in telling the players on the post that they should not step out unless they are 100% sure they will win the ball, or the keeper tells them to get out. No other reason is acceptable. It is the keeper's job to make this decision, and to be quick and loud in letting them know what you want them to do.

Once the ball is cleared (or in your hands) look into the possibility of the quick throw or punt for a counter attack. Many teams relax when the keeper gets the ball and an aware team will capitalize upon this by attacking quickly.

#### Corner kicks:

Demonstration: set 4D + G at proper spots (near post, far post, on 6 yd line at near post, on touch line as close as ref will allow to corner); direct all remaining players but one fwd to mark up; if too many A's, sacrifice set spots to mark in this order: close to kicker, far post, 6yd corner

Teaching Progression: set 4D + G; practice "KEEPER! AWAY!" against corner kicks, w/ clears to targets at corners of 18yd box; gradually add attackers until have 4D+G vs. 6A

#### Direct Kicks:

Demonstration: show change in # in wall as go from side angle & 1 in wall, to center with 5 in wall, to center/close with all on goal line, goalie in front; show goalie how to line up wall to cover one side, set self to cover remainder; Sweeper to cover 6yd corner, remainder to mark up; wall MUST NOT break up until ball is kicked

Teaching Progression: 1st practice picking # & setting the wall; then add attackers and practice defending

#### Summary:

In all cases, must organize FAST! On corner kicks, must cover 4 spots & mark up; clear to safety zones; On direct kicks, must set and hold wall at goalie's direction FAST, hold wall until kick, keep concentration.

#### Defending Crossed Balls:

Equipment: 100' rope, lots of flat discs, 2 tall cones + 1 goal; 5 red bibs; balls.

Objectives: Teach proper ball handling fundamentals, positioning and angles, vocabulary and tactical direction of defense, distribution technique and judgment

Warm Up: single with ball; roll between legs, turn & scoop; 2. pairs toss ball high and leap to receive at highest point;

#### Handling:

Demonstration: ground scoop, low ball in air, high ball in air, shuffle, fast to side

Teaching Progression: two lines - one line rolls hard to other, who scoops, then throws hard to other line; switch each time

Diving:

Demonstration: from knees, bottom hand behind ball, top hand on top of ball, ball hits ground 1st, NOT elbow; land in OPEN position; kick ball in hands as lay on ground

Teaching progression: pairs on knees, then squat, then step & dive; step foot points up field to keep side open position

Positioning and Angles; Vocabulary, Distribution:

Demonstration: rope around goal posts; show change in position as shooting point moves; should be able to dive and reach either rope; move from one yd in front of goal line to position just outside post as point moves. 'KEEPER!' or 'AWAY!'

Teaching progression: start just with goalie, and throw crosses; then add one A, then add near/far post A's then add one D; then add second goal with allies for wings, 3v3 in front of each goal; ALTERNATE: set 6-8 discs on arc around 18 yd box. Position shooters behind each cone; in turn, each takes one touch then shoots at goalie, who fields ball and distributes to one of two outlet targets beyond corners of 18yd box; in all drills, have two distribution targets for goalies to roll, throw, or boot to.

Tactics and Directing Defense:

Demonstration: goalie should be vocal in directing the defense, adjusting coverage, timing of attack on 1st attacker. Show this in 5v5 + G drill

Teaching progression: beyond 'KEEPER!' or 'AWAY!' goalie must direct fullbacks especially to cover far-side runs, support each other, etc. Use near game-condition drills such as 4v4 or 5v5 to coach this responsibility

Summary:

Teach proper ball handling fundamentals, positioning and angles, vocabulary and tactical direction of defense, distribution technique and judgment; goalie must be vocal in directing the defense.

## Angles

Here is a goalkeeping activity that works on deflections, conditioning, shot blocking, angles and footwork. It does require a minimum of two keepers and two servers but optimally, you would have 3 keepers and 1 server.

Start with a full sized goal and then two other goals made up of cones or flags. These two other goals (goals 1 and 2 in the diagram below) are on angles. A server is stationed 10 yards from Goals 1 and 2 with six balls each (if there are three keepers one of the servers should be the resting keeper).



Keeper A is responsible for shots on Goal 1 and Keeper B is responsible for shots on Goal 3. When the server is shooting on Goal 1, Keeper A tries to save those shots while Keeper B is trying to keep any deflections out of Goal 3 (the full goal). As soon as this shot is done, the other server gets ready to shoot and now Keeper B is responsible for Goal 2 while Keeper A slides back into the big goal. This goes on till all 12 shots have been hit. If there are three keepers, Keeper B would go shoot and the resting Keeper (Keeper C) would go where Keeper A has been and Keeper A would replace Keeper B.

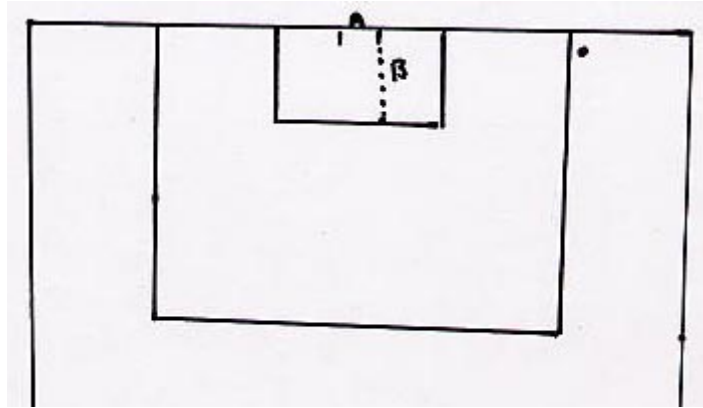
Not only is this an excellent activity for working on shot blocking and deflections, but it's a good conditioning exercise and also is working on developing good footwork even though the keepers don't necessarily realize this. When they are cutting off an angle similar to what they are doing from the server in this activity and then all of a sudden the ball gets played across, there is a tendency for keepers to sprint straight across but the truth is that this is the wrong approach. Instead they need to bend their runs back to the goal (in a U shape almost) and this exercise gets the keeper in the habit of going back towards the goal before trying to cut off the angle on a ball that has been switched.

This is also a good way for field players to work on hitting free kicks because they can try to bend balls around the first goal and into the second goal. Or they can work on shooting low and trying to score in both goals on the same shot.

### 3 Goals

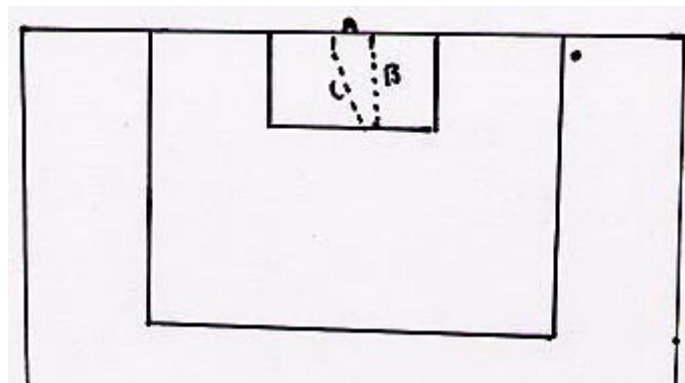
The primary goal that the keeper has to protect is the one that everyone is aware of, and is the one that if the ball goes into, it's an automatic goal. However, there are two other goals that a keeper must be aware of when the ball is out wide and the player on the ball starts to take a touch in towards the goal. When this happens, the keeper must become extremely aware of the second goal, which is from the near post to an imaginary post on the 6-yard box (see diagram below, A is the normal goal and the dotted line where B is located is the second goal when the ball is out wide).





If a player on the ball takes another touch in, the keeper must not only keep the ball out of Goal (A) but also must deal with any driven ball into Goal (B). The reason for this is that against a good team, a driven ball through Goal (B) will usually find a runner who will score into Goal (A) (the real goal) so, once the ball is brought inside of the penalty area the keeper must step to the ball and deal with both goals. The way to do this is for the keeper to start coming out to the player with the ball and get far enough out to get to the ball before it can be chipped over the keeper's head. The initial objective is to smother the ball and if that can't be done, the hope is to force the ball to be played far enough back away from the goal that it minimizes the possibility of a goal. Again, I can't emphasize enough that against a good team, if the player on the end line is coming toward the goal and is inside the 18, if the ball is a driven ball through Goal (B), it is major trouble for the keeper.

The third goal the keeper has to be concerned about is if the ball gets chipped to the far post. If this happens, the third goal is from the near post (which WAS the far post) to the center of the 6-yard line. (see diagram below)



If the ball gets lofted over Goal (B) to a player outside of the far post, the keeper now has to start being concerned with not only Goal (A) but also has to protect the imaginary Goal (C) because anything that is headed back through Goal (C) will most likely either find the goal or will find a player at the new far post.

The best way to train for this situation is to actually put cones down so the keepers can see the goals and then have a server out wide with balls and another player out beyond the far post to work on Goal (C) balls. Obviously, the primary responsibility is Goal (A) but if a keeper is NOT aware of Goals (B) and (C), she will be at a disadvantage in this type of situation.

## Keeper Drills – Keeper and Server

### Drill #1 -- Toss up and save

- 1) Keeper and Server - 2 balls, 1goal
    - a) Server at the penalty spot with one ball
    - b) Keeper at the left post with one ball in hand.
    - c) Similar to the drill above, the Keeper tosses the ball straight up as high as possible.
    - d) The server then serves a ball to the opposite side of the goal.
    - e) The keeper must make the save and still return to catch the first ball before 2 bounces.
    - f) Repeat this drill until the keeper successfully saves the server's shot and catches his own ball before the 2nd bounce.
- After a rest, switch sides and repeat.

### Drill #2 -- Shuffle and Save

- 2) Keeper and Server - 1 ball, 1 cone, 1 goal
  - a) Place a cone on the six yard box, lined up 2-3 yards inside the left post.
  - b) Server stands at approximately the penalty spot.
  - c) Keeper stands at the left post.
  - d) Keeper shuffles sideways across the goal-line to the right post.
  - e) Once the Keeper touches the right post, the server serves a soft ball to the left corner of the goal on the ground.
  - f) The Keeper must try to make a low-dive save of the ball BEFORE it gets to the cone.
  - g) The server must serve the ball on the ground and time it so the keeper can actually save it before the cone. Start slow then stretch the keeper as he gets warmed up.
  - h) As soon as the save is made, the keeper returns to the left post and repeats.
  - i) After 1 minute, take a 30-second break and switch sides-Repeat the drill.
  - j) The idea behind this drill is to make the save before the cone. The keeper should always dive forward at an angle. If the ball is deflected, it will curve around the post. If a keeper dives sideways along the goal-line and deflects the ball, it will be pushed into the goal.

### Drill #3 -- Reaction Save

- 3) Keeper and Server - 1 ball (more balls are good if possible), 1 goal
  - a) Server at the penalty spot with the ball.
  - b) Keeper on the goal line, facing the goal.
  - c) Server shouts "Go!" then shoots the ball.
  - d) The Keeper spins around and must make the save.
  - e) The server should serve the ball right to the keeper to begin with. As the drill progresses, the services should become more and more to the side. The server should also begin to decrease the delay between the time he shouts "Go!" and the time he serves the ball. To increase the difficulty of the drill, the server can simply have the keeper turn around on the sound of the ball striking the server's foot. (HARD DRILL!)

## Drill #4 -- Get up and Save!

- 4) Keeper and Server - 1 ball, 1 goal
- a) Similar to above, the server is at the penalty spot with the ball.
- b) The Keeper is on the goal line sitting down, legs out straight, facing the server.
- c) Server shouts "Go!" then shoots the ball.
- d) The Keeper must jump up and make the save.
- e) Repeat until the Keeper makes 10 saves. The server can alternate sides and shooting right at the keeper and even over his head. As soon as a save is made, the keeper should drop to the ground again.

This drill is very tiring but great fitness!

## Drill #5 -- Catch at Highest Point

- 5) Keeper and Server - 1 ball, 1 goal (real goal with a crossbar)
- a) Server stands at the outer edge of the 6 yard box on the left side of the goal.
- b) Keeper stands at the right post.
- c) Server serves the ball high in the air, near the left front of the goal.
- d) Keeper must sprint from the right post to catch the ball above the crossbar. The catch MUST be made higher than the crossbar.
- e) Once the catch is made, the keeper returns to the right post. Once he touches it, the server tosses the ball again - repeat the save above the crossbar.
- f) Server should toss the ball high in the beginning so the keeper can actually make the save. Then increase the difficulty by shortening the toss. Keeper should always try to catch the ball at its highest point and yell "Keeper!"

## Drill #6 -- Jump over ball and save

- 6) Keeper and Server - 2 balls
- a) Keeper stands next to ball, feet together with the ball on his right.
- b) Server stands facing the keeper 5 yards away and 3-4 steps to the right side of the ball.
- c) Using the left leg to drive the keeper upwards, jump over the ball to the right using the right leg to jump and the left leg to drive. The keeper should land on his right leg on the right side of the ball.
- d) Repeat this to the left - using the right leg to drive the keeper upward and the left leg to jump off of. The keeper should land on his left leg on the left side of the ball.
- e) Repeat again to the right, but this time, the server tosses the ball.
- i) The service should be easy at first where the keeper can catch the ball without diving.
- ii) Once the keeper has repeated this action a few times and gotten comfortable with it, make the service a little further away.
- iii) Keep increasing the distance until the keeper has to make a complete side dive to save the ball.
- f) The drill should be performed for 1 minute straight with no resting between saves. Once the minute is up, take a 30-second break. Then repeat the drill, making saves to the other side.

## Drill #7 -- Over-the-head save

- 7) Keeper and Server - Many balls, 1 goal
- a) Server stands at the 18-yard line with ball in hand.

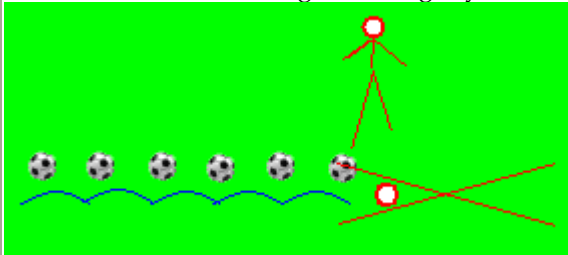
- b) Keeper stands on the goal-line.
- c) Keeper sprints from goal-line to the server and touches the ball with his hand.
- d) As soon as the Keeper touches the ball, he should begin to retreat to the goal.
- e) The server then serves a high ball that should be headed towards goal over the Keeper's head.
- f) Keeper retreats to make the save by either catching the ball or parrying the ball over the crossbar.
- g) The Keeper's retreat should be by cross-over stepping, NOT back-pedaling. While running back, the Keeper does not know which direction the service will come and should be prepared to switch directions. (i.e. he is running back to his left, looking over his right shoulder and the service goes back to the right-the Keeper must switch his steps to run back to his right, looking over his left shoulder to make the save.)
- h) Repeat this drill for 1 minute or until the keeper makes 10 successful saves.
- i) This drill is designed to teach the Keeper how to get back if he makes a bad pass, or is caught out of position, etc.

## Drill #8 -- Low and High

- 8) Keeper and Server - 2 balls
- a) Keeper and server stand 5 yards apart facing each other.
- b) Server has both balls.
- c) Server serves first ball on the ground to the Keeper's left.
- d) Depending on the server's desired difficulty, the Keeper either scoops the ball up or makes a side dive save.
- e) Once the Keeper has made the save, the server tosses the second ball in the air to the Keeper's right.
- f) The Keeper must return the first ball to the server and save the second ball in the air, at its highest point, yelling "Keeper!".
- g) Repeat the process for 1 minute. Rest for 30 seconds, then switch sides.

## Drill #9 -- Firing Squad

- 9) Keeper and Server - 6 balls
  - a) Place balls on the ground in a row, 1 yard apart from the next.
  - b) Keeper lays on the ground at the end of the row as if to be saving the first ball.
  - c) Server kicks the first ball right into the keeper's hands.
  - d) The keeper jumps to the next ball without getting up.
  - e) The server kicks the next ball.
  - f) Repeat as the keeper jumps for each ball.
  - g) This should be high paced and the server should kick the balls hard enough for the keeper to actually have to save the ball. The keeper should not try to catch the balls--just block them.
- This drill is difficult, but good for agility, endurance, and strength.



## Keeper Drills – Solo

### Drill #1

#### 1) Keeper - 1 ball

Roll ball between your legs from front to back

Turn and collapse dive on the ball

Use the "3 hands" technique to hold the ball firmly

Lift yourself back up without using your hands or the ball

(Kick your drive-leg to rock yourself back up)

Repeat, collapse dive on your other side

Continue the process for 1 minute.

### Drill #2

#### 2) Keeper - 1 ball

Sit on the ground with your legs spread wide. Take the ball in both hands and bounce it on the ground between your legs. Bounce the ball as hard and high as you can. As soon as the ball bounces, jump to your feet and catch the ball at its highest point. Try to catch the ball above your head every time. Of course this means bouncing the ball very hard and getting up very quickly.

Remember when catching a ball above your head:

Kick your drive knee up in order to jump higher

Yell "Keeper!"

Extend your arms and grab the ball at its highest point

Use the "W" and always have "Soft Hands"!

Once you have caught the ball, drop to the ground again and repeat the drill.

Continue the process for 1 minute as quickly as possible.

### Drill #3

#### 3) Keeper - 1 ball

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Hold the ball in both hands. Throw the ball down onto your right foot. The ball should bounce off and shoot out to the side. Dive onto the ball to make the save. Get up as fast as possible.

Now bounce the ball down onto your left foot. The ball should bounce off and shoot out to the side. Dive onto the ball to make the save. Get up as fast as possible.

Repeat for 1 minute as quickly as possible.

When doing this drill, remember to use the "3-hands" Technique to save the ball on the ground. (See Skills)

As you progress, throw the ball harder onto your foot so it shoots further out. Also try to hit it more on the side of the foot to get a more difficult ball. Always Yell "Keeper!" before you make the save!

### Drill #4

#### 4) Keeper - 1 ball

a) Stand shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent.

b) Turn the torso of your body to the left.

- c) Hold the ball in between your legs with your right arm in front of your body and your left arm behind your body.
- d) Release the ball and quickly spin your torso to the right, catching the ball again between your legs, but now with your left arm in front of your body and your right arm behind your body. Catch the ball before it hits the ground.
- e) Repeat switching sides for 1 minute. Try to increase the speed with which you spin.
- f) This drill is for quickness and touch.

## Drill #5

- 5) Keeper - 1 ball
- a) Feet should be shoulder width apart. Squat down to the point where your hamstrings are parallel with the ground.
  - b) Hold the ball between your knees with your arms behind your legs. Your forearms should be touching the under-side of your hamstrings and the outside of your hands or wrists touching the inside of your calves.
  - c) Release the ball and quickly catch it again with your hands in front of your legs.
  - d) Repeat switching your hands from front to back quickly for 1 minute. Try to increase the speed with which you switch.
  - e) This drill is also designed to increase your quickness and touch.

## Drill #6

- 9) Keeper - 1 ball, 1 goal
- a) Keeper stands at the left post with the ball in his hands.
  - b) Toss the ball as high as possible.
  - c) Sprint to the other post, touch it, and sprint back to catch the ball before it bounces.
  - d) Attempt to catch the ball at its highest point. At all costs, do not let the ball touch the ground before catching.
  - e) Do not cheat! Make sure the toss stays outside of the goal!
  - f) Repeat this drill until the keeper has successfully saved the ball without it hitting the ground 10 times.
  - g) After a rest, switch sides and repeat.
  - h) Keys: Toss the ball high and straight; Sprint to the other post and back; Forward dive if necessary to prevent the ball from landing.

## Drill #7

- 10) Soft Ladder - Improving quickness  
Keeper - nylon "rope ladder"  
Lay a nylon rope ladder on the ground, anchored on the ends and in the middle.
- a)- use a quick in/out with both feet (e.g. right in, left in) going through one rung @ a time.
  - b)- along the outside, do an "Ali shuffle" into one rung, then back out, and down the ladder.
  - c)- do a "slalom hop", putting one leg inside the rung, while the other is on the outside of the ladder. Switch which foot goes inside @ each rung.

d)- make things up, just focus on eventually going through these drills smooth (without catching the rope), and with your eyes up (not staring @ your feet).

## Drill #8

10) Using a "Toss Back"

Keeper - Cones - "Toss Back" apparatus (you can throw the ball against it and it will bounce it back to you).

a) Place two sets of cones down... One set @ about 2 feet in front of the "pitch-back", but 1 yard off to each side. The second set @ the point where I am tossing the ball (2-3 yards away, and 1 yard off to each side).

b) Throw the ball at the "Toss-Back" and dive to save the rebound.

c) My focus is a "progressive step" towards the on coming shot. I try and pin the ball to the ground somewhere ahead of the line I began my dive. This progression gets you to the ball sooner, and the advancement forward continues to make the goal "smaller".

(TOSS-BACK)

(cone) O O (cone)

(catch ball here)

(catch ball here)

(cone) O O (cone)

(start) (start)