

COACHING THE GLOBAL GAME

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COACHING SESSIONS

From Coaches Around the Globe

IN-DEPTH: CENTRE MID

Roles and Responsibilities of Central Midfielders

CONTEST

Details inside....



Dear Readers,

Welcome to our fourth issue of *Coaching the Global Game Magazine*. We hope that you enjoy this issue as much as you enjoyed our previous issues. We have changed the format slightly for this issue so we hope that you find the information useful!

We are pleased to feature fantastic contributors once again. We would like to acknowledge them for the time they take to put together their submissions for *Coaching the Global Game Magazine*.

We hope you have been eagerly anticipating our fourth (April 2014) edition of the magazine.

Enjoy!

Coaching the Global Game Team

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ROLE OF A CENTRAL MIDFIELDER

In this months look at roles and responsibilities we focus on central midfielder. There is lots to look at here so the session looks at playing in a midfield three.

IN POSSESSION

- Support and offer to receive the ball in all circumstances
- Receive secure and protect the ball under pressure
- Aim to play with an 'open body' shape to maximize the opportunity to play forward
- Has the ability and understanding to play one touch in tight areas
- Support the attacks
- Capable of shooting

OUT OF POSSESSION

- Capable of marking and tracking opponents in key areas and at important times of the game
- Recognizes when to mark players and when to mark space
- Understands how to screen play into strikers
- Can cover and support team mates and understand the importance of this process
- Awareness of the importance of recovery runs following support in attacking play (transition)

About Dan Wright:

The breakdown of the player's roles and responsibilities was written by a young and very talented Coach—Dan Wright. Dan has been coaching since 2004. In this time he has worked with a range of players from 4 year olds to adults, from grassroots to football league. He is an UEFA B Licensed coach who has a track record for developing young and talented footballers.

You can follow him on Twitter: @CoachDanWright or read his coaching blog: <http://coachdanwright.blogspot.co.uk>



Practice: Introducing Midfield Rotation

In this practice the area is split into 4 sections, with two teams playing a 3v3 to 2 target players. The purpose of this session is to explain the importance of rotation of midfield. To start I would let the players play free, so 3v3 working the ball to the targets/neutrals.

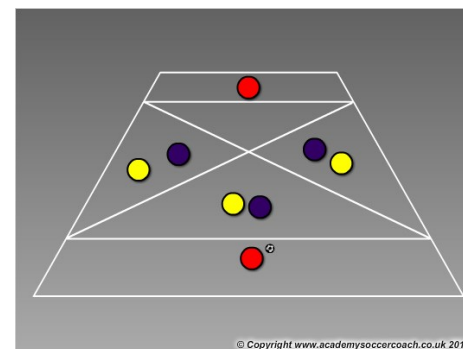
As this develops and the players experience success I would start to introduce the areas marked out in practice.

4 Zones, 3 Players

In possession challenges the players ...

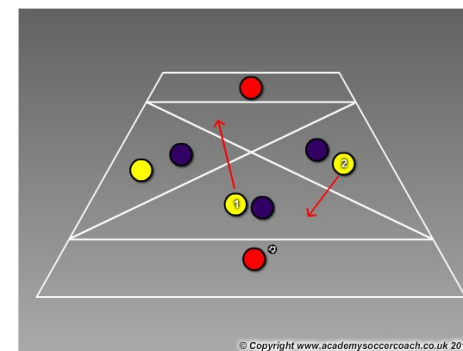
- “Can you try and fill 3 of the 4 boxes”
- Can we start to swap and rotate? Try and fill the gap

Out of possession, which boxes are key? Do you man mark? How do you stop play into the target? Do we press or drop?



Patterns We Are Trying To Develop

- Clear out—as per diagram, player 1 leaves and player 2 can fill
- Can you receive in the empty triangle (individual movement)
- Combination play between midfielders.... 1-2, Jacks/Sids (leave), 3rd man run, overlaps, etc.
- Clear channel so target can play to target, like Central Defender to Central Forwards feet.



PHASE OF PLAY: MIDFIELD ROTATION

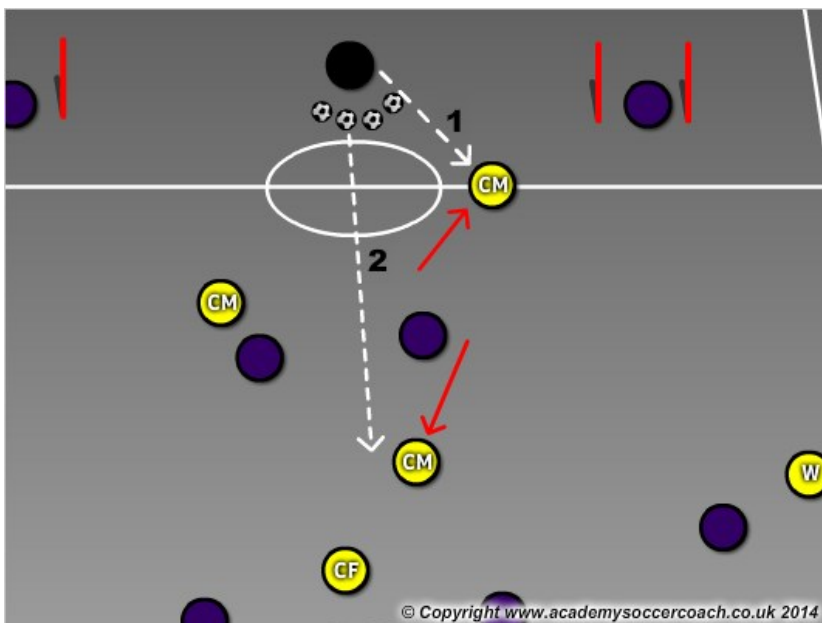
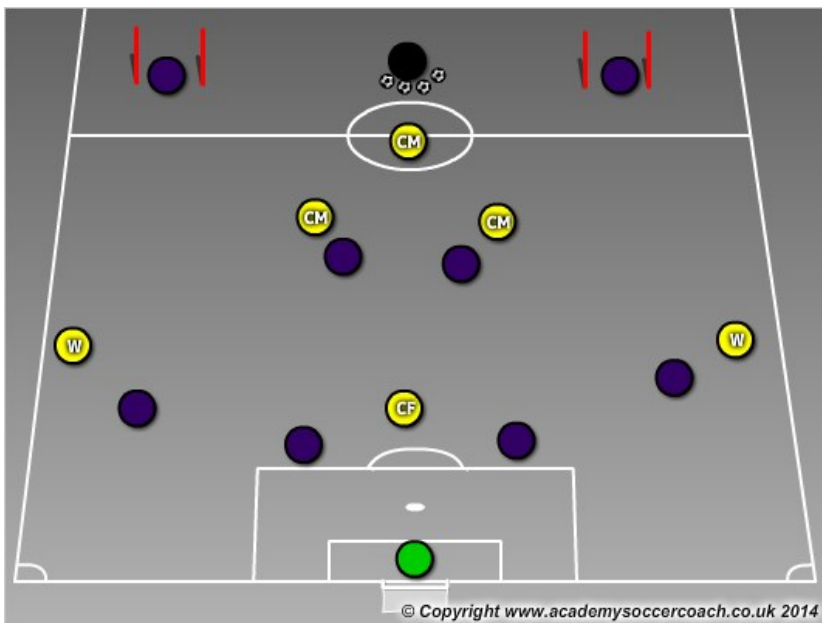
Coach: Dan Wright

Age Group: U14+

Session: Coaching a Midfield 3 to Rotate

Duration: 40 Minutes

Dan has been coaching since 2004. In this time he has worked with a range of players from 4 year olds to adult, from grassroots to football league. He is a UEFA B Licensed coach who has a track record for developing young and talented footballers. You can follow him on Twitter: @CoachDanWright or read his coaching blog: <http://coachingdanwright.blogspot.co.uk>



In this Phase of Play (POP) the coach (black) starts the practice by playing in the midfielder 3 of the yellow side (attackers). Blues (defenders) defend the goal and try and work the ball back to the coach or their wingers in the target areas.

In the diagram I have set the 3 midfielders up against 2 blue defenders, so 4-3-3 against 4-4-2 you might want to alter this but 3v2 gives the attackers more chance of success. Often when I run this session I will add all 4 blue midfielders so the 3 have to out work the 4, as coach you can act as a central defender to restart the attack and support from behind.

Due to the topic the coach always in the midfielders first. Linking the previous session (above) the 3 should now have an understanding of how to get “on the ball”.

Just some ‘session management’ here, make sure the front three stay high and wide, they need to occupy the defensive line so that there is enough space to receive the ball and one of the defenders doesn’t step in to midfield.

So here are 2 pictures, there are obviously hundreds you could run. Firstly the midfielders must have awareness of what their teammate is doing, so in this diagram one has dropped off and one has run on beyond. This gives you a great starting point as 1 of them will now be in a position to receive the ball. Either the coach plays 1 in to the deepest player or ‘breaks the line’ and plays in to the highest midfielder.

This set up will start to give the players and the coach some realistic pictures they will see in the game. It should also help the midfielders understand the distances they are asked to pass and cover in a 90 minute game.



Soccer Coaching and the Web: A Guide for Coaches

Series Number 2: 'Developing a Network or Trusted Colleagues Online'

We have asked Robin Russell of [Sports Path](#) to provide regular content on how coaches can use the internet more effectively to support the development of the players they coach...that is using the web to SUPPORT your coaching not INSTEAD of your coaching!

In this article Robin outlines the importance of developing a Network of Trusted Colleagues:

Why?

It makes sense to use Social Media to discover content which other coaches have found worthwhile. Building up a network of people, therefore, can add to the sources for your own knowledge creation. People with mutual interests share information and discuss deployments. Using a network of Trusted Colleagues can also help you verify information you have obtained from other sources

What are the options?

The research we conducted with over 2,000 coaches last year revealed that the most used online tool used by Soccer Coaches to develop a Network of Colleagues online was Twitter (<https://twitter.com/>) a FREE online social networking and micro blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as 'tweets.' We believe Twitter is an exceptional source of gaining information. Twitter allows coaches to share short messages, linking to more content.

You can use Twitter not only to obtain knowledge and information but also to engage and interact with your players as it's a very popular function on mobile devices.

10 Ways Twitter Can Improve Your Coaching

(1) How Do I Start?

If you have not done so, get a Twitter account now at (<https://twitter.com/signup>). Set up an attractive profile about yourself and if you have a blog or LinkedIn account include this in the profile together with a good photo. Developing a Twitter presence allows you to add to your 'Digital Profile' including your Twitter profile.

(2) Find and Share Content: Develop a Network of Trusted Colleagues By..

Developing a network you can find content which other coaches have found worthwhile. Your trusted network of colleagues will guide you to content and you can do likewise for them.

(3) Follow Trusted Sources and Coaches That You Know

On twitter amongst the groups and people we follow are these: NSCAA, Elite Soccer, UEFA Training Ground and Academy Soccer Coach. You may also want to consider following Robin Russell @Sportspath

(4) Find Others to Follow

You can do this by viewing the people who your trusted sources follow. You can also find other coaches by using the Twitter 'Search' function or use a hashtag (#) in front of a word and you can filter all the tweets on the web to find your topic of interest. So they #soccercoaching. If you type in #soccercoachingonline you will see a theme around online soccer coaching which we have created at Sports Path.

(5) Contribute—don't just lurk

You may decide only to follow colleagues but we do really recommend you *contribute* by asking and answering questions, suggesting links, asking for advice and providing content for other coaches. So be more than a 'lurker' - add your comments and you will receive knowledge in return.

(6) Support For Your Coaching

Find out how many of your players, their parents and your coaching colleagues already have Twitter and how often they use them. Let them know your account and ask them to 'follow' you as a support tool for your coaching. Include coaching colleagues in your club, parents and players in your team (where players under 14 years of age are concerned we recommend with the approval of parents).

(7) Ask Questions of Your Players and Provide Feedback

Twitter is an excellent tool to provide simple reminders to ask questions to test understanding and also to provide immediate feedback on performance in game or practice. Ask them, to search and share for agreed content (ie. Video links from YouTube to support the themes of your coaching).

(8) Reminders

Not just for team administration but also as recaps to consolidate learning. Also by using the simple @ function before each individual you can also send simple individual direct messages to individuals.

(9) Set Up a Poll

You can ask players or parents set questions as part of a poll and ask for replies in a set period. You can provide simple rewards for the first ones to respond.

(10) It's Not About You

Don't tweet about where you are or what you have just had to eat but think of your followers—your players, their parents and your fellow coaches. Tweet and Re-Tweet something to recommend something to help them ie. Web links, articles, blogs.

For Further Details on how to use the web

This article was taken from Sports Path Kindle Publication (Price \$2.59) '**Soccer Coaching and the Web Part 2: Developing a Network of Trusted Colleagues**' Details [here](#)

You can however, obtain this publication for FREE as a PDF if you complete this short 5 minute online survey by clicking [here](#) on which social media sites and how you use them.

Next Article in this series will look at these aspects:

- How to use YouTube effectively including how to start your own YouTube Channel;
- How to keep up to date using blogs, newsletters and notification services;
- Note-taking software;
- Organizing content in preparation to share it: bookmarking and tagging

If you would like to keep up to date on how coaches are using the web please view the FREE Sports Path Newsletter [archives here](#) and [subscribe here](#). Follow us on Twitter: @SportsPath

FUNDamentals (AGES 6-9)

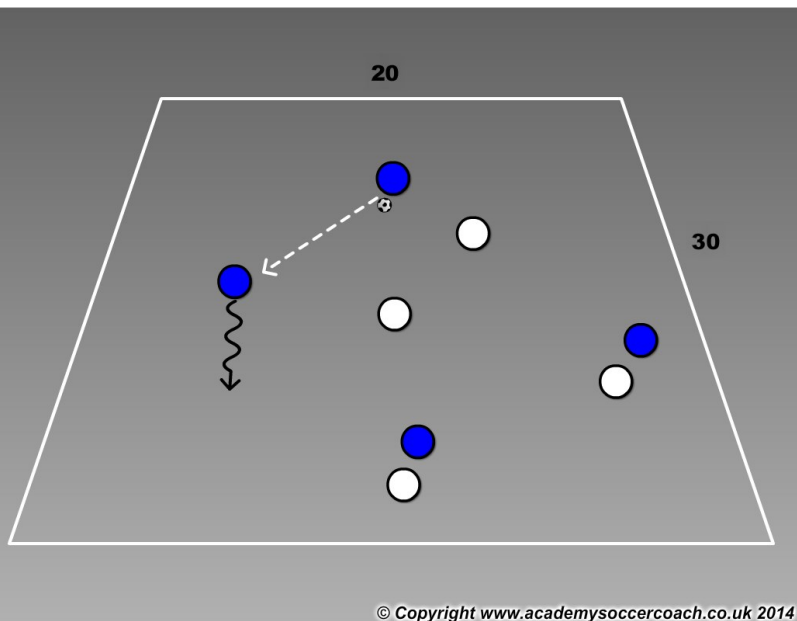
Coach: Ben Trinder

Age Group: U6-U7

Session: Dribbling

Duration: 45-60 Minutes

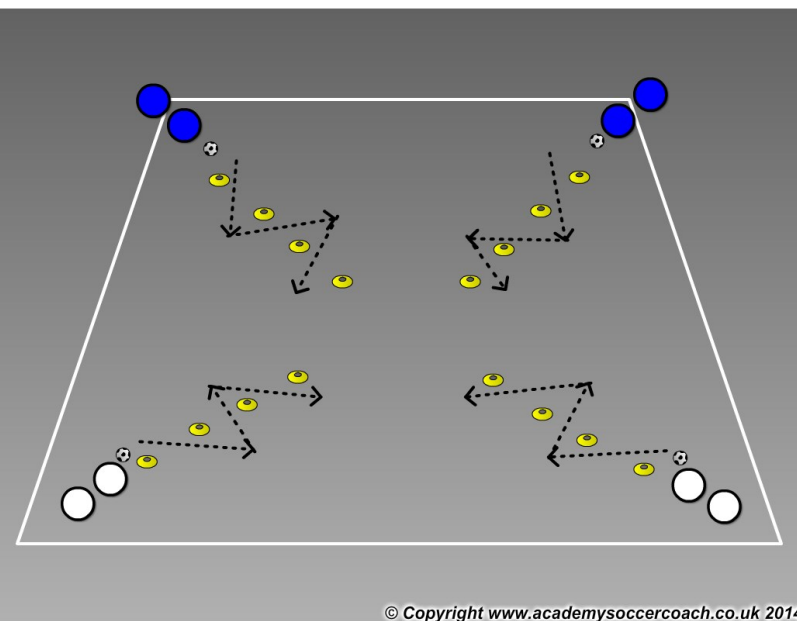
Ben is currently a UEFA B Candidate and recently completed his English FA Youth Module 3 and is awaiting the results of his Youth Award Assessment. He works with the U14s at Ascot United as well as coaching in a premier league clubs pre-academy development centre working with players from 5-7 years of age. Founder of @CoachingFamily twitter account to help coaches across the globe interact and bounce ideas around. You can follow him personally on Twitter @BenTrinds



Start Session with a Small Sided Game. Divide players into two teams. To score, both teams have to dribbling over their end line.

Set pre-planned team and/or individual challenges for the players to try and achieve.

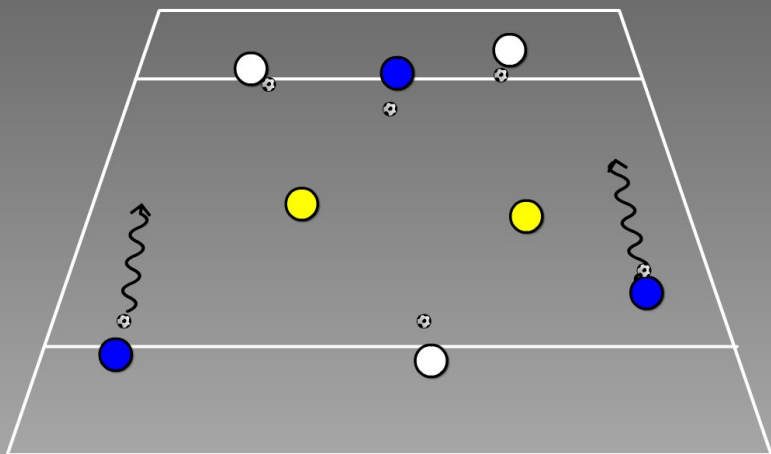
Player for 7-10 minutes. No coaching, just encourage and praise for good effort.



Basic dribbling repetition to work the players on using different surfaces of their feet to move and control the ball.

Work on inside and outside of both feet, sole rolls and gradual build-up of speed.

Add a race or competition to challenge what the players have practiced. (10-15 minutes)

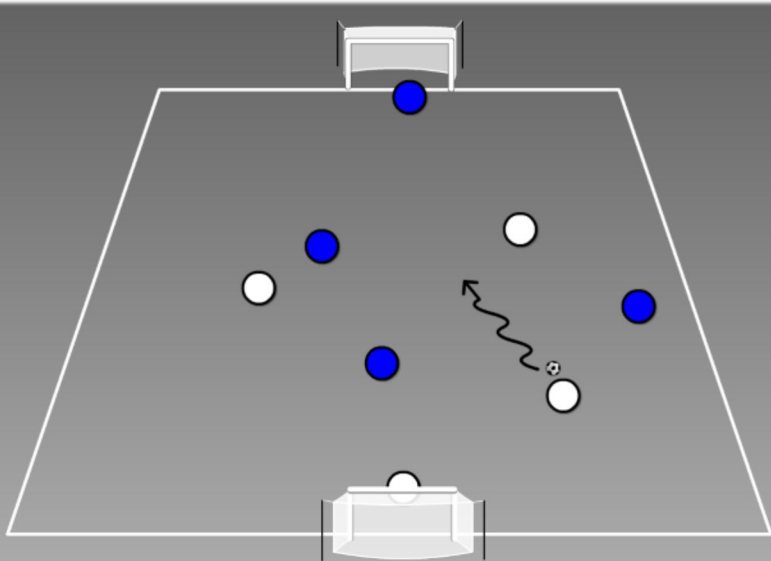


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Opposed practice to challenge the players learning. Coach individuals when necessary, encourage and praise good effort. Players aim to move from safe zone to safe zone without being tagged.

Increase challenge by adding another tagger.

Decrease challenge by giving the two taggers a ball they must control while they play. (10-15 minutes)



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Return to a SSG. 4v4 with goals. Rotate goalkeepers every 2-3 minutes.

Set team and/or individual challenges. For example "When you are 1v1 with a player, try to take him on." Otherwise, normal rules.

After challenges are set, question the players on how/when/why they might do this. Then Play!

Coach in the game to improve performance. Praise good effort, encourage positive play and encourage players to review their performances at the end.

LEARN TO TRAIN (AGES 9-12)

Coach: Bobby Puppione
Age Group: U9-12
Session: Whole Part Whole
Duration: 90 Minutes

Bobby is the CUP Boys and Girls Youth Director of Coaching and has worked at Cincy United for the past 5 years in the DOC role. He is a talented coach who at the age of 30 already holds a USSF 'A' License, NSCAA Premier Diploma, US National Youth License, NSCAA Director of Coaching Diploma, and the NSCAA National GK Diploma. Bobby is also part of the Ohio South and Region 2 ODP Staff. Follow him on Twitter @BobbyPup



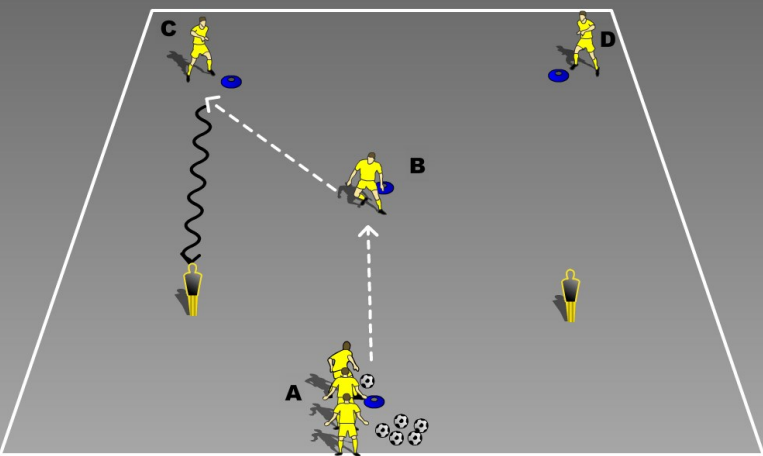
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Whole

Organization:

6v6

Coach in the Game



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Part—Mourinho Y Passing

Organization:

Pattern: (1) A plays to B, (2) B turns and plays to C, (3) C receives and dribbles at the mannequin and performs a move. Follow your pass. Alternate sides.

Progression: (1) A and B play short-short-long to C; (2) B and C perform 1-2/wall pass

Coaching Points: Technique of passing/receiving/dribbling/turning, Play correct foot/receive correct foot, Angles of support, Checking and timing of runs, Work both sides, Communication

Part—Soccer Tennis & 3v1

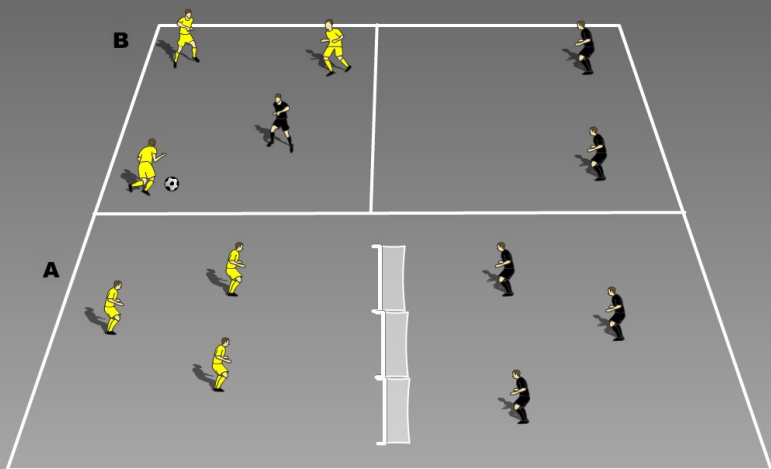
Organization:

A: Soccer Tennis—3v3—adjust size, numbers and rules based on age

B: 3v1—Yellow team receives the ball from coach and one player from the Black team goes over to win the ball back. The player in black tries to play the ball back to his/her teammates on the other side. One from yellow goes over to win it as the player in black that was defending rejoins teammates.

Progression: Limit Touches; Add players

Coaching Points: Technique of passing and receiving, Angles of support, Receiving with correct foot/ playing correct foot, Transition, Keep the ball moving, Communication



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Whole

Organization:

6v6

Coach in the Game



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TRAIN TO TRAIN (AGES 12-16)

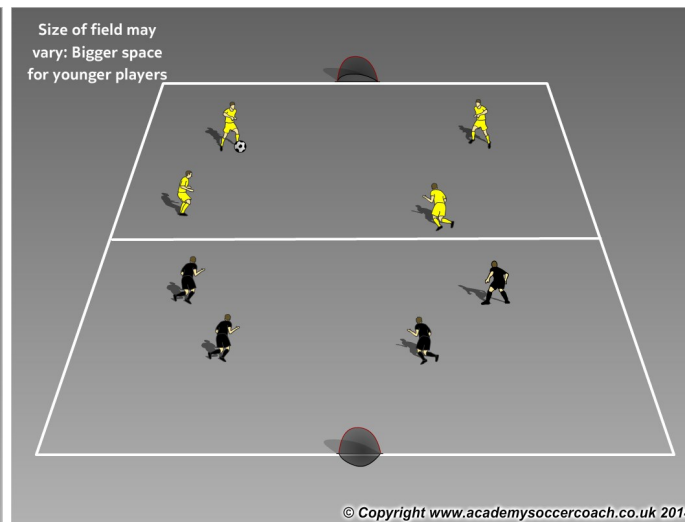
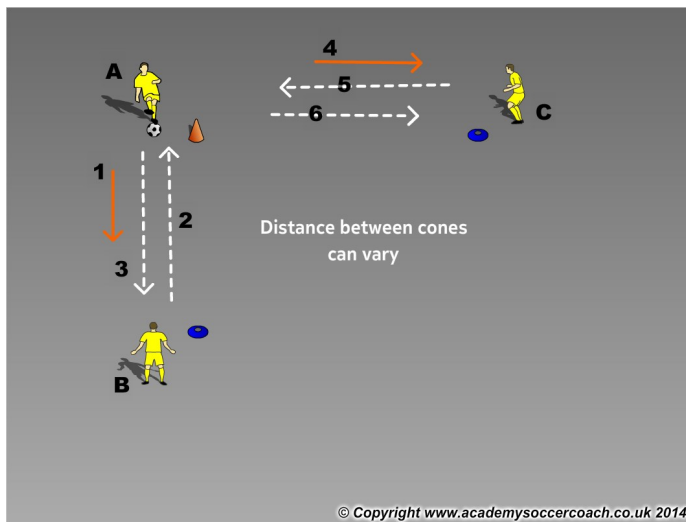
Coach: Michael Litvack

Age Group: U12-14

Session: Final Pass/Runs in Behind Defenses

Duration: 90 Minutes

Michael is a Director of Coaching at Cincinnati United Soccer Club (@cincyunited). He is responsible for the Lakota Monroe site of the club. Prior to moving to Cincinnati, Michael coaches in the Chicago area at some of the top clubs in the US, including Chicago Magic, Eclipse Select, and FC 1974. He played in college at Ohio Wesleyan and also played professional indoor soccer. Follow him on Twitter: @ MichaelLit1106



Technical Work in 3's

Organization:

Arrange 2 smalls cones and one in cone in a triangle. Player A checks (#1) to Player B. Player B passes (#2) to Player A and Player A returns pass (#3) one touch back to Player B. Now, Player A checks (#4) to Player C. Player C passes (#5) to Player A and Player A returns the pass (#6) one touch back to Player C. Players switch after 30 seconds.

Progressions: (1) Players play 2 touch (vary types of touch and return pass; (2) Use one ball and players receive across body and play out to player on other side; (3) Working player can check in front, turn and work on flicks/creativity; (4) Balls out of air (volley, 2 touch, headers); (5) Double pass with servers

Coaching Points: Technique of passing/receiving, Performing at game speed, Work rate, Footwork between cones/servers, Timing of runs/types of runs, Communication, Creativity, Let the ball do the work (when appropriate)

Slip Ball

Organization:

4v4 game to pugg goals on a field that can vary in size depending on age and level of players. Halfway line in middle. Yellow begin with ball in their defensive half. All of white must go into yellow's defensive half to press/win the ball. Yellow is looking to play a ball ('slip ball') in to their attacking half to a teammate running on to it to score in opposite goal. Yellow cannot dribble in to their attacking half. If the Black team wins the ball, they go straight to goal. If they score, it is 'make it, take it.' Black begins with the ball and activity continues.

Progression: (1) Add bumpers on the side; (2) Add more numbers; (3) Must get into the other zone on '3rd man run'; (4) Can make the game going to big goals with GKs; (5) Bumpers can join into game when they are played

Coaching Points: Technique of passing/receiving, Combination play, Movement off the ball, Final pass (weight/type), Runs in behind defense, Spatial awareness, Pressing to win the ball back, Communication

Game

Organization:

8v8. Teams play on appropriate size pitch for age and level. Observe session to see how sessions translates into free play.

TRAIN TO COMPETE (AGES 16+)

Coach: Marco Reda

Age Group: U16+

Session: Improve Penetration in Attack

Duration: 90 Minutes

Marco has had an extensive playing career and made the transition into coaching very successfully. He currently is the Director of Coaching at Power FC Academy and holds an USSF 'A' License. You can follow him on Twitter @MarcoReda34

End Zone Game

Organization:

8v8. Both teams play 3-2-3 and cannot defend beyond the shadow line. Teams score by initially dribbling into end zone

Progressions: (1) Score by passing into end zone (ball and player arrive at same time—use line as offside line); (2) Score by passing or dribbling into the end zone; (4) After scoring on one end zone, team now attacks other end

Coaching Points: Structure (Big in possession, Starting positions, Blind side of defenders), Technical (Quick/Sharp passing, Timing of movement, Body shape when receiving), Communication (Instruction with passes, eye contact, read body language), Insight (High tempo passing, move defenders to find splits or penetrating passes)

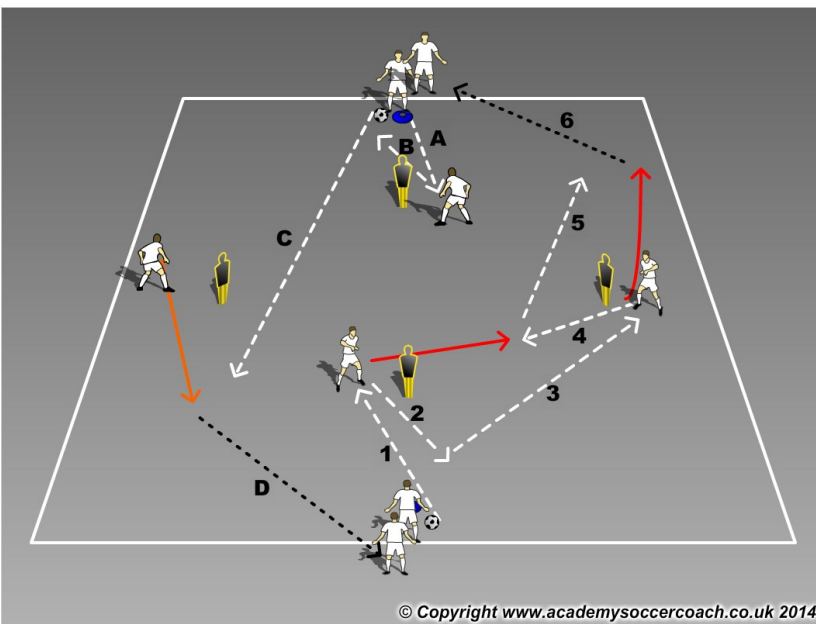
Penetrating the Line

Organization:

8v8. Teams are set up as 3-2-2 vs. 1-3-3-1, and cannot defend beyond the shadow line until the ball is played through, normal play once ball is played past the shadow line. Shadow line acts as an offside line. Players can pass or dribble to penetrate past the line.

Progression: Add players to both teams (CB, MF, etc); Restarts begin with White team; Red starts begin with the Blue/Red team

Coaching Points: Structure (Big in possession, Starting positions, Blind side of defenders); Technical (Quick/Sharp passing, Timing of movement, Body shape when receiving, Support play after penetration, Attacking runs into box, Balance); Communication (Instruction with passes, eye contact, read body language); Insight (high tempo passing, move defenders to find splits (penetrating passes)



Passing Sequence

Organization:

Set up as shown. First sequence are 'give and go's,' second sequence is '3rd man run.' Two balls going at the same time, change direction so players get to work different feet, add 1-2 more balls to challenge them more.

Coaching Points: Structure (blind side of mannequin); Technical (Quick sharp passing, Timing of movement off of defenders, Body shape when receiving); Communication (Information with pass, eye contact, body language of 'winger')



Match Related 9v9

Organization:

Both teams play 3-2-3

Coaching Points: Structure (Big in possession, Starting positions); Technical (Quick passing, Awareness, Timing of Movement, Body Shape, Support Play); Communication (Information with passes, read cues); Insight (Move defenders with quick passes, combination play to find penetrating passes)

TRAIN TO COMPETE (AGES 16+)

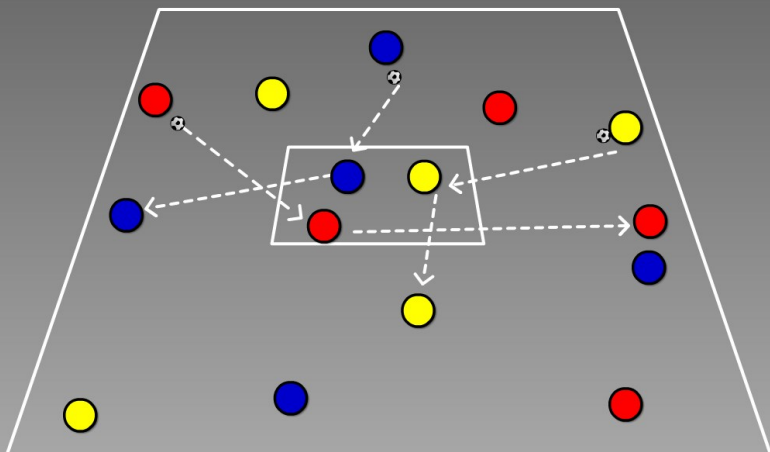
Coach: Rich Fagan

Age Group: U16+

Session: Vision and Awareness in Pockets

Duration: 90 Minutes

Rich Fagan is currently the Head Coach of the Vancouver Whitecaps U16 Academy team. Rich has kindly answered a few questions we had for him, so please make sure to check out the Coaching the Global Game website on May 5, 2014 to see what he had to say. You can follow him on Twitter @RichieFagan



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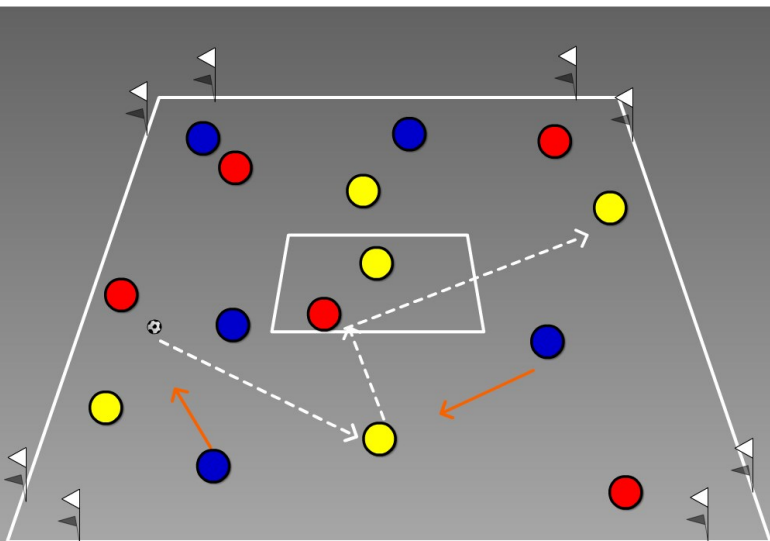
Warm-Up

Organization:

3 Teams of 5 with 1 ball per team. Teams move the ball in the area. Players must pass to own colour. Focus on scanning area and receiving ball side or in pockets of space. Teams must play through middle area (pocket).

Progressions: Middle area becomes a limited touch zone (1 or 2 touches); Teams play different colours (ie. Red to Blue to Yellow)

Coaching Points: Players must be aware of next move, Verbal and visual cues, Accuracy of pass, Weight of pass, Angle and distance of support



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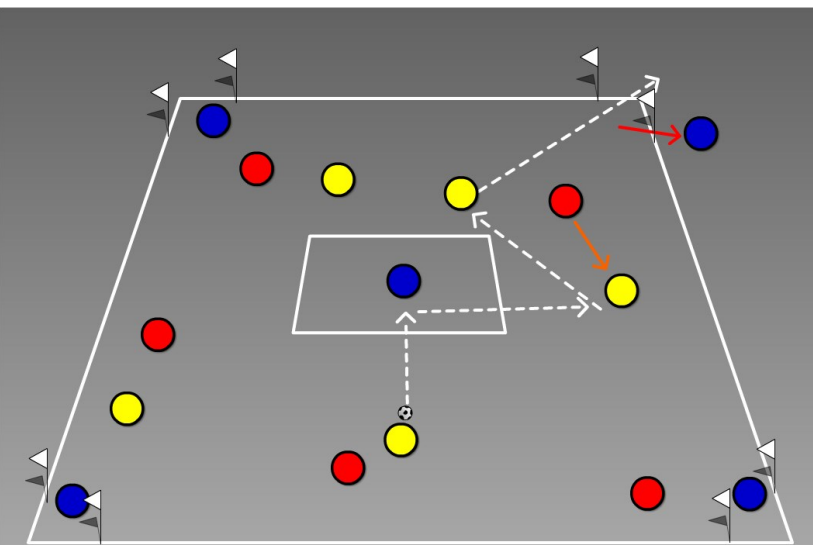
Technical

Organization:

3 Team possession game. 2 Teams keep possession against other team—10v5. Players cannot be marked in middle zone. Encourage playing through pocket (middle zone). If the defending team wins the ball they must score in one of the small corner goals

Progression: Limit touches; Must play other colour in possession

Coaching Points: Players must be aware of next move, Verbal and visual cues, Accuracy of pass, Weight of pass, Angle and distance of support



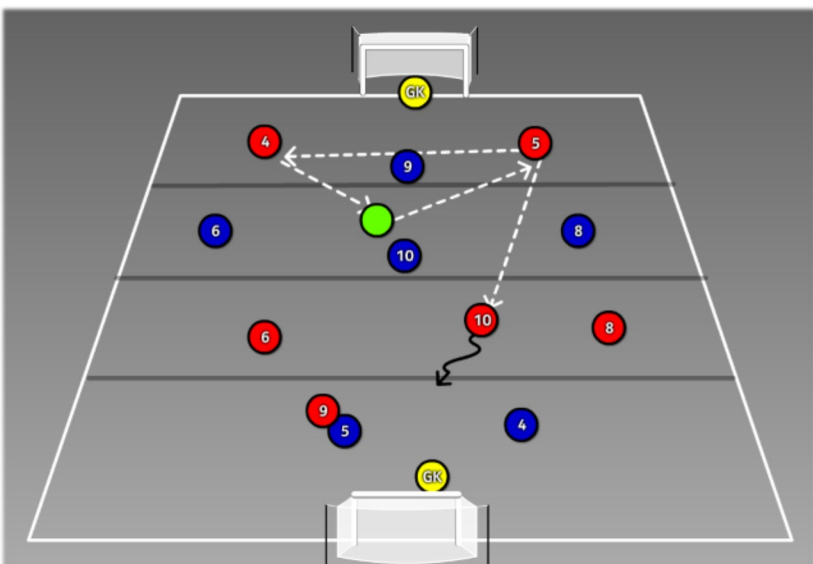
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Technical/Tactical

Organization:

3 Teams and 4 small goals. 2 teams play 5v5 possession with other players standing in front of small goals or in middle square. 5v5 possession game trying to score in one of the small goals. After 5 passes one outside player moves from a goal. Team in possession must recognize this and can attack the goal. Every time team plays through middle square it opens up another goal. Attacking team must be aware of which goals are opening up.

Coaching Points: Players must be aware of next move, Verbal and visual cues, Accuracy of pass, Weight of pass, Angle and distance of support



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Tactical/Game

Organization:

6v6+1 and 2 GKs. 4 Zone game focusing on receiving in midfield area—(Midfield 3). Midfield players must stay in zone behind defending team. Play starts with 2v1 (or 3v1 including GK) in defending area. Ball must be played into midfield zone before attacking—Receive behind lines. Teams can use GK and floating player in build up. Progress to always having different number of players in each midfield zone (rotations). Finish with Free Play.

Coaching Points: Structure (Big in possession, Starting positions); Technical (Quick passing, Awareness, Timing of Movement, Body Shape, Support Play); Communication (Information with passes, read cues); Insight (Move defenders with quick passes, combination play to find penetrating passes)

To find out more about Rich Fagan please check CoachingTheGlobalGame.com on May 5, 2014

GOALKEEPERS

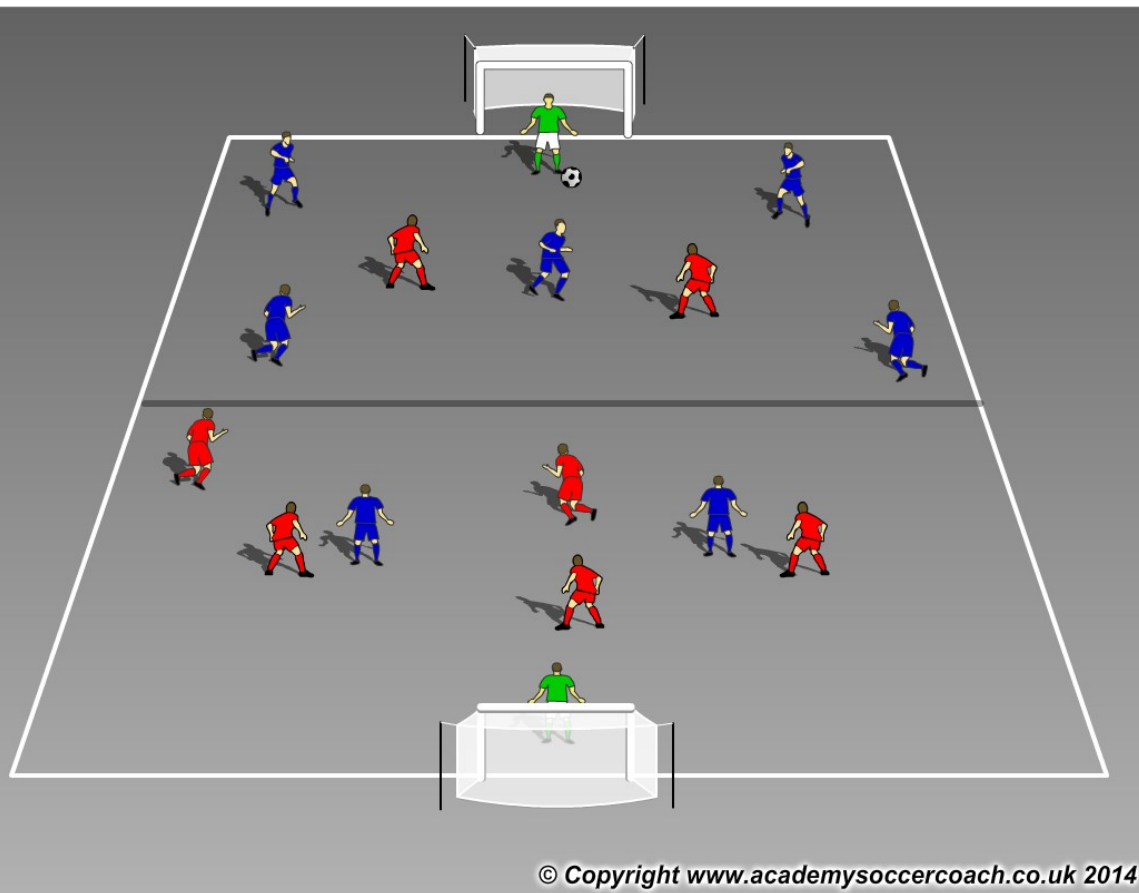
Coach: Rob Parker

Age Group: U12+

Session: SSG Dealing with Long Shots

Duration: 20-30 Minutes

Rob has coached at the collegiate level for 16 years and training goalkeepers for 20 years. Starting at the age of 19 Rob joined the Towson Women's Soccer Coaching Staff and had great success. He is actively coaching with several clubs in the Capital Region and has also served as a mentor of the Eastern NY ODP staff. He is a contributor to keeperstop.com writing articles on goalkeeper development as well as working as a clinician for several coaching clinic and courses. Parker has also contributed to several coaching educational resources, sharing lesson plans and blogs with goalkeepers from around the world. You can follow him on Twitter: @goaliecoach00



SSG: Emphasis on Dealing with Long-Shots

Organization:

2 GKs, each with 7 field players. Two players from each team are positioned in the offensive half while the remainder of the players must play in the defensive half.

Team passes ball to each other looking to play into their target players in the opposite half. Defender tries to win ball. The team can also play into their target who can shoot from the offensive half or the defensive players can take shots from their half (from distance). No more than 5 passes before they shoot at goal. Game should be quick and have a speed of play aspect to it.

Progression: Same as above but now a defensive player who passes into a target can join the targets and move into offensive half. When possession is lost, or a goal is scored that player must return to defensive half or you can have one of the targets go to the defensive half and leave the attacking defender to become a new target player. Players must take chances/calculated risks and quick shots.

COACHING EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

www.apexfootball.ca/coaches



How many times in a game do we hear the coach passing messages on the field?

What is generally the context of these messages?

The motivation factor will always be there. A prime area of the coach's responsibility is to reinforce by positive motivational methods when possible, with the occasional negative comment thrown in to 'keep the player on his toes' I am sure! As for technique in the game, we all understand one cannot coach the individual player's errors in a game; that is for the training ground. If a coach attempts to correct his players' individual mistakes, whilst the game is in motion, he may possibly lose control of the 'big picture' and take that player's eyes and ears (and others around him), from the game. This form of 'micro game management' coaching, from my experience only leads to frustration and loss of confidence, on the part of the player, the coach and the team. Have a look for yourself at how teams can dissolve or solidify via the coach's 'game management.' As a prime example look to the styles of Chelsea and their last three to four coaches. The coaching styles have ranged from active, emotional passive and cognitive to an inclusive style from AVB and back to Mourinho. So this leaves the tactical side of the game, this is where I believe evolving the 'Time Man' into our systems could visually advance the understanding of the game.

Who or What is the "Time Man"?

Look up! Create space! Tuck in! Man on! Pressure the ball! Push him wide Any of these sound familiar? What do they all have in common? They all require time, either the creation or use of this valuable asset. It can be very difficult for an attacking player to create time by himself, when under pressure. If allowed, chances are the defense is channeling him to a 'tackle zone.' He can dribble into space, but what is probably going to be there...pressure His first role as an attacking player according to Alan Wade's principals is to penetrate, but penetration without maintaining possession, unless it is a shot, often leads to the opposition gaining a counter attack; or as we often see at a higher end of the athletic based game, continuous direct play.

Watching today's youth game, it seems to run on an end to end shuttle basis, with very little building or imprinting a style of player, especially at the lower levels. It reads as though the coach's main tactic is just to get the ball to his forwards as

quickly as possible and let them do all the work, missing out the indirect or building of play through the thirds. What happens? The forwards penetrate at speed down the field losing their support (another one of Wade's attacking principals); become isolated and lose possession, setting up the counter for the opposition, and so on. I know this is a generalization: In the modern game there is a need for fast forward play, but without a plan B, predictability is easy to counter! There are teams who work the ball well and who have mastered the ninety-minute counter-attack, but let us focus here on the ones who have not!

How can we change this? By creating the 'Time Man.'

Some of you at the end of this article are going to say, 'That was just indirect play,' you would be right, but how long did it take you as a coach to learn and understand indirect play? Often, we do not have the luxury of 'player education' just 'player instruction' (something that should also be remedied) at the training ground and we are coaching players not coaches. During the game, the coach needs to simplify, a single statement or a visionary buzz word, bringing back the pictures from the training ground, the hours of coaching, that can express the transference of an direct style of player: The creation of time and space, that final frontier, which equals vision and composure, hence allowing the team to mimic their coaches style of player, with numbers up in support. The player with the ball, what is he? Correct, an attacker. What is his first thought? To shoot. If this option is not available, what is his next action...Penetration? At coaching clinics we are taught penetration is gained individually by passing or dribbling the ball forward, but generally there is little or no mention about '**Team Penetration.**' As a central midfielder, for example if there is no shot what is your next action? If you dribble the ball through your midfield, what are you leaving behind you? Space, a possible area for the opposition utilize on a counter attack, if you are tackled or give up possession. If you directly pass the ball to your strikers, they often turn and take on the defense with out support and little foundation. (Unless they utilize the role of 'target men' using the CM as their 'Time Man').

How about this as a thought? The ability to gain individual and team penetration using a 'Time Man.' The CM stops looks up and reads in advance (because this is

Continue on to next page...

THE TIME MAN

the picture he has been shown on the training ground) the above, so often seen tragedy. He/she drops the ball back to her supporting player **who is in space and has time, hence the 'Time Man'** (CM, RM, LM, possible CB depending on the shape) players make the team penetrating runs to width in support of the attack and create a numbers up scenario. Because the CM or CB who now has possession of the ball is in space, has created time, hence the 'Time Man,' for his team to organize, slowing down the game and allow the foundation of the attack to be built on stone and not sand. He/she could now play a penetrating pass to the flank, creating the cross or dribble with support, re-working the ball through the midfield in a numbers up situation. This same model can be used to create time to break out of the defensive third using the outside and center backs.

This can happen all over the field in various positions as long as supporting players position themselves in time and space, communicate and read the pictures from the training ground. As the old adage goes 'There is always space behind you.' Jose Mourinho quotes this as 'resting on the ball.' With your players look at video, create different visual tools to advance the understanding of this concept.

The idea of the time man is not new, it is a variance of building the game indirectly but maybe the thought and direction in which it could be coached is? Bring it into your games and training and see if it works for you.

About Neil Hull:

Neil has coached for the past 26 years in many different countries. Currently, he is an NSCAA National Staff Coach and was awarded the NSCAA Associate Coach of the Year in 2010. Additionally, Neil is also the NSCAA State Director for Texas, educating to date over 4000 coaches at the State, Regional, and National levels in both field and goalkeeping disciplines.

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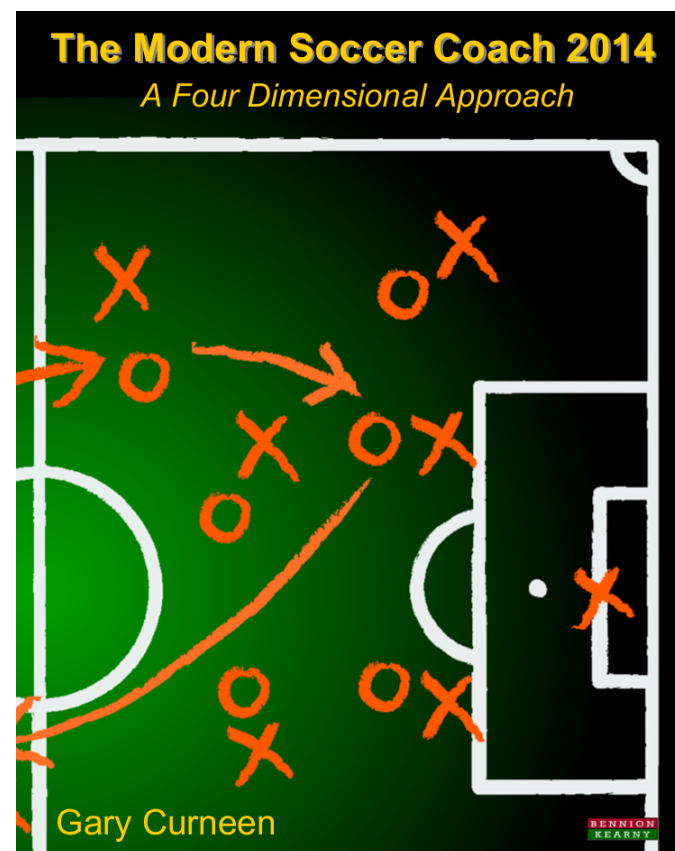
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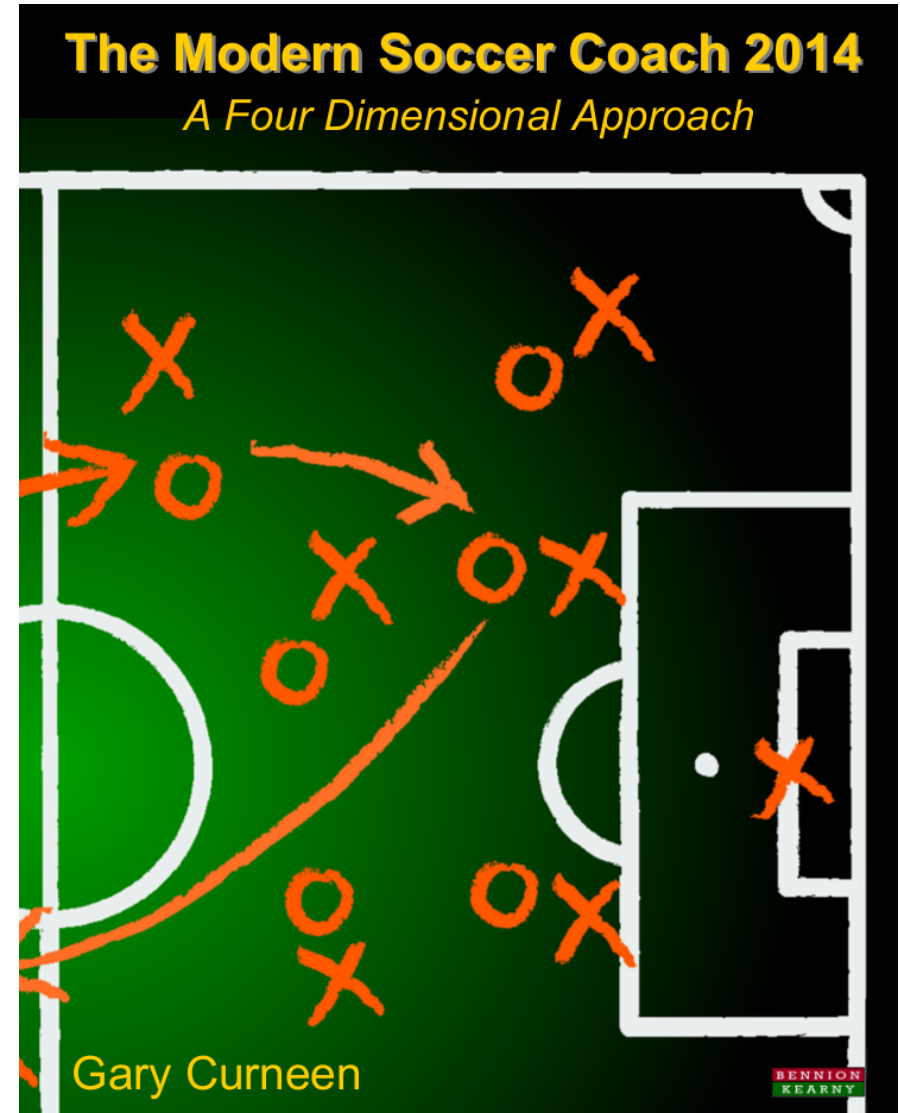


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A REVIEW OF THE MODERN SOCCER
COACH 2014 BY GARY CURNEEN
WILL BE POSTED ON
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ON APRIL 29, 2014



BRAIN BEHIND THE BRAWN

Most recently, through connections developed via Apex IFC, I've been exposed to discussions about brain science and its influence on player development. The work of Michel Bruynincks and Jose Riga, who were integral to the revolution of Belgian Football (www.cogitraining.com), and the work of Kevin McGreskin (www.soccereyeq.com) have made me think about the brain and the science of teaching, learning and achievement as they pertain to football. The fact is coaching is teaching, playing is learning and our brain dictates how we learn best and dictates the best solutions for the problems presented in the game. There must then be a connection between brain development, the way we teach and the way players learn to play.

Over time I've seen people who support unopposed technical repetition, small-sided games, street football, principles-based learning, possession football, technical stations, GAG methodology, technical warm-up/small-sided/expanded small-sided, station based training and any combination of those approaches. It has left me wondering what is the best way to coach young footballers when it comes to possibly the most important muscle in the body – the brain.

To explore the topic I'm going to use my crude, internet-taught knowledge of neuroplasticity, my experience from working in educational technology, my experience as a coach and a few other random thoughts to try to best understand the connection.

My simplified understanding of neuroplasticity indicates a few key things:

- a. Our brain responds to "training" by creating additional neural connections that further deepen the connection to that activity.
- b. Our brain responds to complexity by creating thicker, more elaborate connections that includes our senses.
- c. Your childhood and teen years are times when you are at a heightened level of cognitive development.
- d. New neural connections can be created from cradle to grave. Meaning you can "train" your brain and improve brain function at any time in your life. Read "The Brain that Changes Itself" for more about this.
- e. If you fail to use any cognitive function or shy away from it, you will experience a decline in that cognitive function. In other words, the brain is a

muscle and you better use it or lose it.

- f. Our brain responds to new training quicker than we think.

In addition to brain science, we know that people learn in one of three ways. They are auditory, visual or kinesthetic learners.

- a. Auditory – They learn by hearing.
- b. Visual – They learn by seeing.
- c. Kinesthetic – They learn by doing.

In the upcoming posts I'll try to connect development in education and neuroscience with coaching and player development. If coaching is teaching, playing is learning and all learning is supported by ever deepening neural connections in the brain, then much can be learned from connecting modern science to modern coaching.

Passion and Personal Motivation: The importance of Creating an environment for Learning

The "Hole in the Wall Project" is a study done by Dr. Sugata Mitra. He placed a computer in a hole in the wall in a remote slum in India. Soon the local kids started gathering around the wall and working with the computer – something they have never had or worked with in the past. Within a very short period of time they organized themselves into groups with a learning hierarchy (some leaders and some onlookers) and learned how to operate and use the computer at higher and higher levels. They even began to adopt computer language that is primarily English and introduce it into their own vernacular.

The strength of this self-teaching is that the motivation is internal and each learner is able to learn in the way that suits their learning style and learn at a pace that works for them. The learners challenge themselves along the way and it is completely unguided by adults. Children organize themselves in ways to collaboratively educate themselves in the right environments.

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BRAIN BEHIND THE BRAWN

On the website Dr. Mitra states that *“The acquisition of basic computing skills by any set of children can be achieved through incidental learning provided the learners are given access to a suitable computing facility, with entertaining and motivating content and some minimal (human) guidance.”* In short, motivation and the proper environment are important catalysts for learning in children.

I am a firm believer that the greatest influence on the ability of a player is the player's love for the sport. It's that love for the sport that causes them to kick the ball against the wall until the seams are threadbare, to play endless 1v1 (2v2's 3v3's, etc.), to play soccer tennis, to watch the pros, to take shots on net until well after dark and to play with all of the imagination that coaches sometimes don't allow in structured practice environments. The ability of children to organize themselves and to organize their learning is much greater than most adults understand.

You can run your three practices a week and never accomplish what a motivated and passionate player can achieve in their unstructured practice time at home. Although there are some arguments against the 10,000 hour rule, the fact is that the time spent by players training away from the structured practice will have a significant impact on that player's development, relative to their peers. Virtually every great player grew up with a ball at their feet every day and not just the days when their coach scheduled them to train.

What does it mean?

- Players have the ability to problem solve and understand the game on their own terms and according to their own learning styles.
- As a coach we need to always keep in mind that players want to play. The enjoyment you bring in practice and the enjoyment and passion from their parents and peers helps shape the enjoyment they get from the sport and, subsequently, the time they spend playing at home. Encourage players to play on their own and don't take the enjoyment out of the game by being too overbearing – particularly at younger ages.
- Do as my friend Cyprian says – get to the game. Challenge players through the game. “The Hole in the Wall” study supports the use of street football and SSG's that continue to ask new questions of players, while still promoting their enjoyment. Change the game, dimensions, numbers and ob-

jectives in order to continually challenge players. Give them challenges they can now take onto the playground and play with their friends.

- Don't over-coach. You shouldn't make every decision for players. “Joysticking” players won't empower them to figure it out on their own and doesn't always provide the best solution for the player. Stimulating thinking will stimulate neural connections based on the information in the game as opposed to thinking that is based purely on your instructions. The fact is that there are a lot of coaches who lack the skill and experience to understand all the solutions in the game. Sometimes the player has a solution that the coach isn't aware of or the coach doesn't think the player is capable of. Practice should be the place where players challenge themselves just like they do when they are playing with their friends in the park. Those challenges push limits and create chunks of game-related stimuli that will help players develop more solutions made at a faster rate than we, as coaches, can instruct them.
- When you coach young players, don't be dictatorial or spend your time telling everyone what they **can't** do – inspire them by challenging them to do more difficult tasks. Brain science tells us that challenging the brain with more difficult tasks will cause the brain to adjust to help achieve those tasks. If you stop using elements of the brain, it will slowly shut down those areas.
- Advise players. Offer them ideas, challenge them to think about the game in ways that create “pictures” of the game that they can use to inform their decisions in the future.

** if you're interested in learning about the brain, I suggest you read “The Brain that Changes Itself”. If you'd rather a condensed version, I suggest you follow this link to see an interview with the author of the book, Dr. Norman Doig.*

About Dino Lopez

Dino is the Lead Technical Consultant at Apex IFC, a consultancy group that specializes in the growth and development of youth soccer and their organizations. You can learn more about Dino here and connect with him on twitter at @Breaking_Lines.



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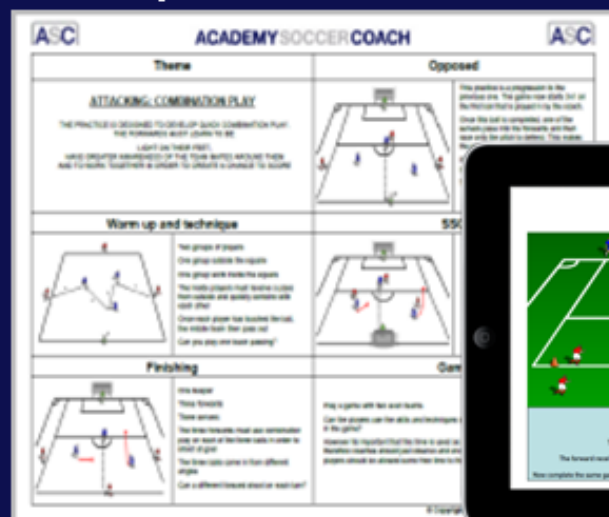
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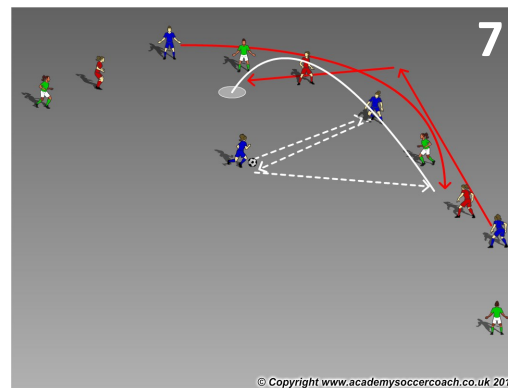
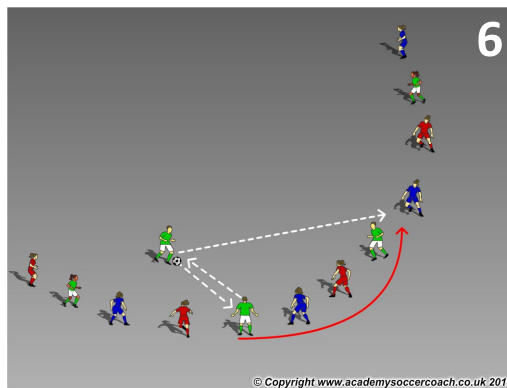
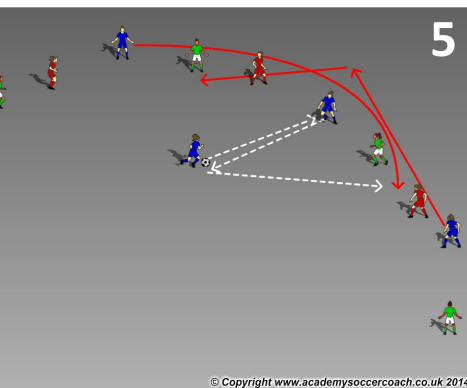
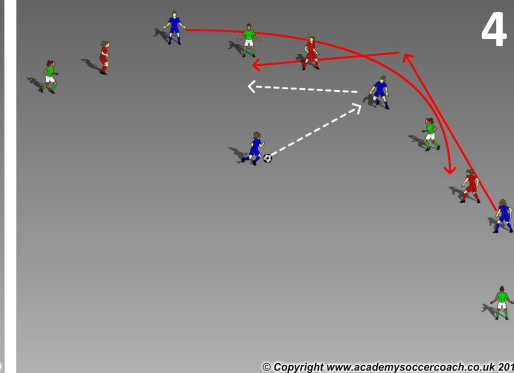
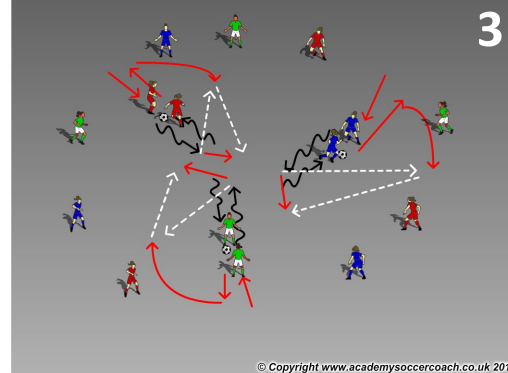
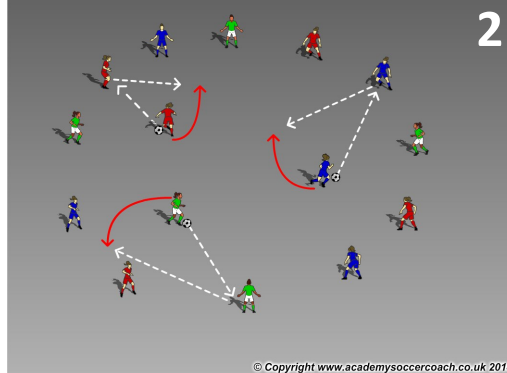
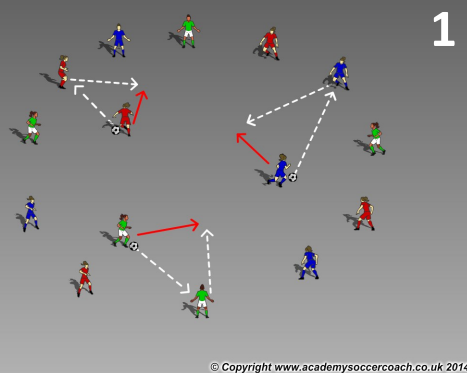
Coach: Keith Scarlett

Age Group: U14+

Session: Combinations and Attacking Work

Duration: 60 Minutes

Keith Scarlett is currently an Assistant Women's Coach with Perth Glory FC in Australia. He holds a USSF "A;" AFC "B;" as well as an NSCAA Advanced National, Youth National and Goalkeeper Level I license. Scarlett spent two years as an Assistant Men's Coach for Throttur FC in Iceland and has over 10 years of collegiate coaching experience in the US, as well as 17 years of experience in the club and HS ranks. Having earned two Bachelor of Science degrees (Sports Medicine and Sports Management) and a Master of Science in Sports Psychology, he is currently pursuing his PhD. You can access his personal blog, AN AMERICAN COACH DOWN UNDER at <http://keithscarlett.blogspot.com/> Follow him on Twitter @keithscarlett



Circle Activity

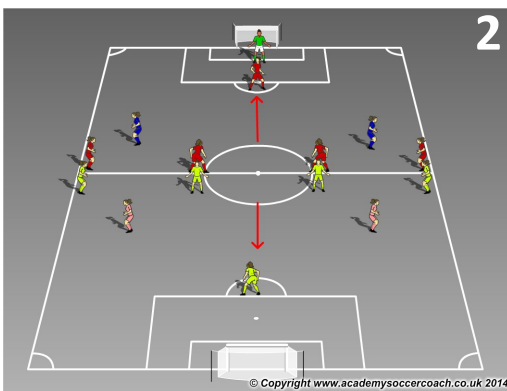
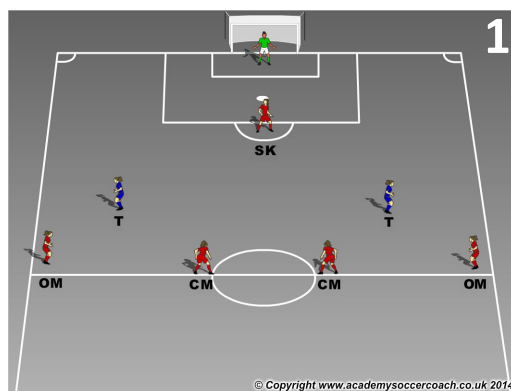
Organization:

Players are broken up into 3 teams and form one large circle. No one in the center circle has a ball. During this ENTIRE activity, a player can NEVER be standing next to another player of the same colour. One player from each team/colour starts in the middle of the circle with a ball. They can only pass to the players in their same colour and the players in the circle can only overlap etc...with players of the same colour. This forces the players to have their heads up before passing the ball (and since most of this is one-touch, it really means before they receive the ball, but also the player on the outside must keep their heads up and constantly be looking around to see that they are spread out evenly to make sure they can overlap a player of the

same colour in either direction. This works on communication and vision. Eventually we want the players to try and start finding second, third, fourth runners.

- (1) Wall-Passes—1 Min x 2
- (2) Inside Peel Off—1 Min x 2
- (3) Take Over/Wall Pass—1 Min
- (4) Simple Overlap—1 Min
- (5) Return Overlap—1 Min
- (6) Outside Peel-Off—1 Min
- (7) Overlapper finds Overlapper—1 Min

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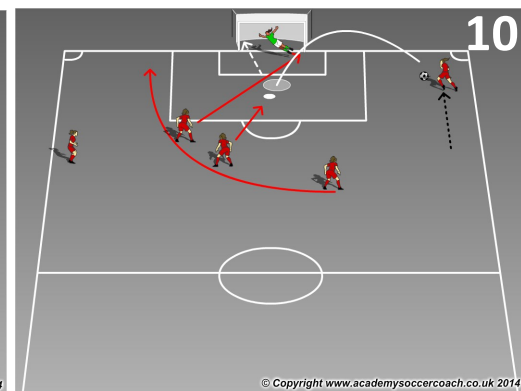
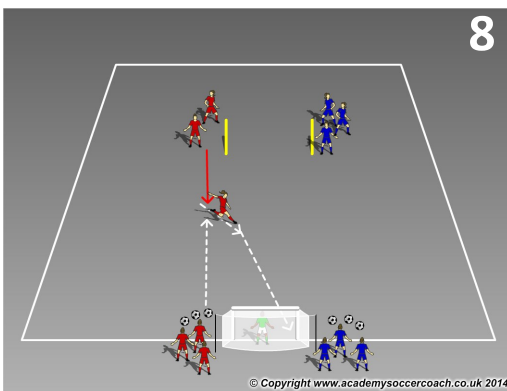
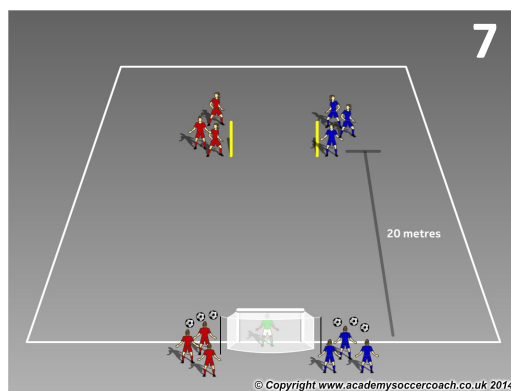
Crossing and Finishing (12 mins) (Pic 1-6)

Organization:

2CM, 2AM, 1 STR, and 2 wide targets are on each half of the field for this activity is being run going to two goals.

4 Defenders placed on each half of the field to defend. One defender always has to attack the two wide players on the flank.

The three attackers go against the 4 defenders to get a shot and as soon as this is done the two wider players go 2v1 against a defender to get a ball served. This will leave three defenders in the box to shut down the scoring opportunity (again maintaining the defending in three mentality). The GKs should really be tested on their footwork on crosses. Once this is done, same thing is repeated down opposite flank. Play then restarts in the middle with the CM's



Efficiency Shooting (Pics 7-8)

Organization:

There is one server on each post and two lines 20 meters out from goal lined up with the posts. Balls are split up between the servers on each post. Server drives a ball on the ground with the laces into the shooter who takes one touch to settle and one touch to strike. Activity is over when 10 goals are scored.

Efficiency Crossing and Finishing (Pics 9-10)

Organization:

Session finishes up with efficiency focused crossing and finishing. Two servers stand out in the flank while there are 3 lines at top of 18. Server takes a few touches towards the end line while a player from each line makes either a near, slot or far post run into the 18. Work both sides. Activity is over when 10 goals are scored.



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Best Wishes for a Prosperous 2014!

- CTGG Team