

USA of Indiana

50 Coaching Soccer Drills



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*** A note about skill levels.**

Each drill is divided into one of three skill levels rather than a specific age group. These skill levels are **Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced**.

These categories should be used by coaches as a general guideline based on the ability of players they have on their team. We realize there are young players who have advanced ability just as there are older players with beginner skills. It's up to the coach to make this assessment. We recommend testing a team's ability at first by underestimating its skill level. If players appear bored with easy drills, then simply introduce drills that might prove more challenging to them. The actual age of a player usually has no bearing on the skills he/she may possess. The idea is to keep them challenged, engaged, and having fun.

Shooting Drills

Shooting 101 (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

Learning how to correctly shoot a soccer ball. Shooting the ball with power and accuracy is an important skill for any soccer player to have. The best way to develop proper technique is by practicing. A good shot includes judging the situation on the field as well as planting your non-kicking foot and driving your leg forward with power.

Instructions

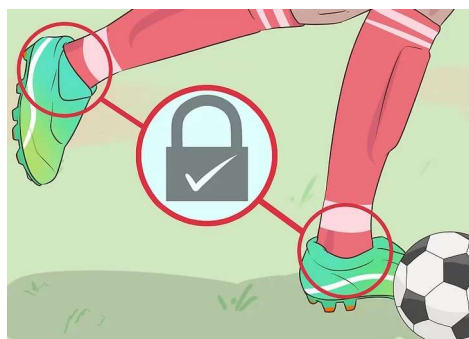
1. **Look up before kicking the ball.** Before shooting, glance up at the field in front of you. Focus as much as possible on where you want the ball to go. Note where the other players are, including the defenders, goalie, and your teammates.
2. **Keep your eye on the ball.** Look back down at the ball and keep looking at it until you kick it. Doing this leads to stronger, more accurate shots.
3. **Run towards the ball with even strides.** Keep the strides you take the same length they would be while running. Avoid stretching forward too far or taking a series of short steps, since this throws off your balance. *When kicking a still ball, stand only far enough back that you can reach the ball in 3 or 4 steps.
4. **Plant your non-kicking foot next to the ball.** Where you place this foot determines where the ball will travel. Place it beside the ball, about shoulder width away from your other foot. A good, medium distance should feel comfortable to you. Keep your toes pointed straight ahead to the goal. *Placing your foot further away from the ball helps when you need to lift the ball more, such as when kicking over a wall of defenders.



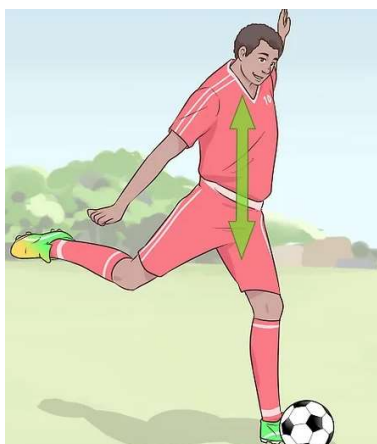
5. **Bring your kicking leg back as far as possible.** The further you can bring your leg back, the more power you'll generate. Bend your leg at the knee and keep your toes pointed downwards. In the perfect kicking position, your leg looks like it's in the shape of a "V."



6. **Hold your ankle in place (shooting foot).** This is also called locking your ankle. Your foot should still be pointed downwards, straight and firm. Your ankle shouldn't wiggle at all as you kick the ball. Any movement weakens your shot. With the younger age groups, I refer to this as a ballerina foot.

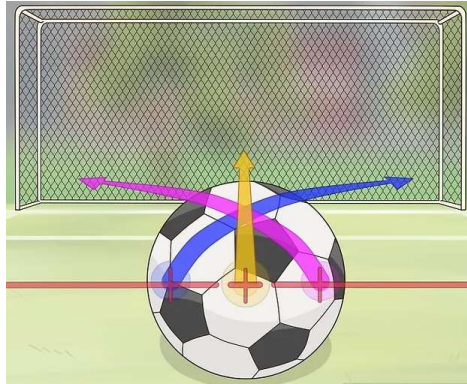


7. **Stand straight as you kick.** Staying in a neutral position gives you maximum control over the ball's flight. Leaning a little, if it feels natural to you, is fine, but don't try to lean more. Instead, focus on turning to face the goal. If the ball often flies over the net, you may be leaning back too much. If it stays lower than you'd like, you may be leaning forward too much.

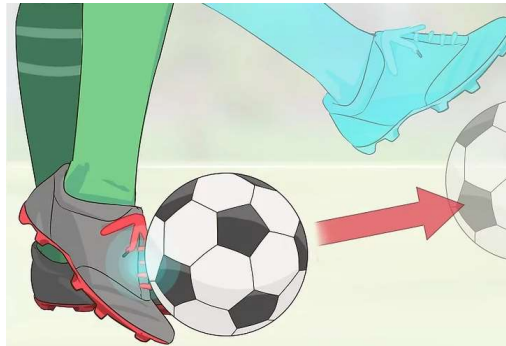


8. Target the middle of the ball. Pick out the spot where your foot will strike the ball. Most of the time, this is the part of the ball closest to you. Kicking it in the center gives you control over your shot while also generating lots of power.

- To raise your shot in the air more, kick the ball a little lower than center.
- To bend the ball, kick left or right of center. Kicking on the left causes the ball to curve to the right. Kicking on the right side causes it to arc to the left.



9. Strike the ball with the laces of your shoe for a more powerful shot. Bring your foot forward. Hit the ball with the top part of your foot to generate powerful but accurate shots. This is the kind of shot you'll need on most occasions.



10. Kick the ball with the side of your foot for a more accurate shot. As you approach the ball, turn your foot to the side. Hit the ball with the inside edge of your foot. Your shot won't be as strong, but the increase in accuracy is good for shots near the goal or when the defense doesn't give you a lot of space.



- 11. Follow through with your kicking leg.** After striking the ball, don't stop moving. Bring your kicking leg through at a medium height. Step through and plant your leg on the ground. A bad follow-through causes your shot to fall short of the target or fly wildly off-course.



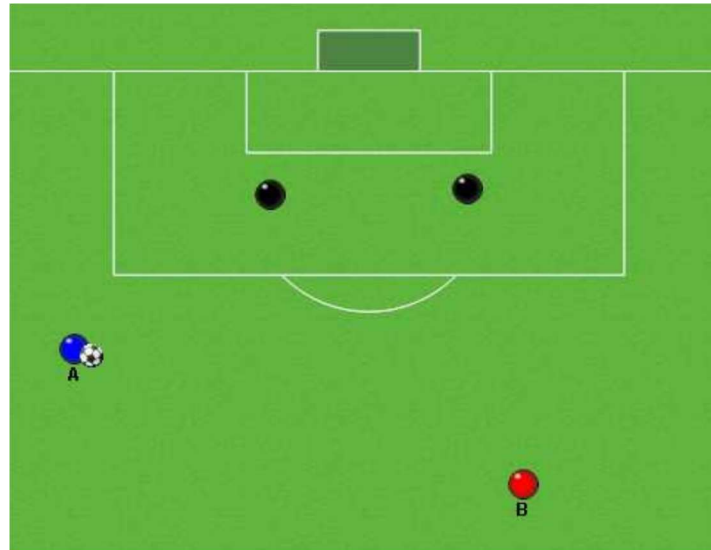
Harassment (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

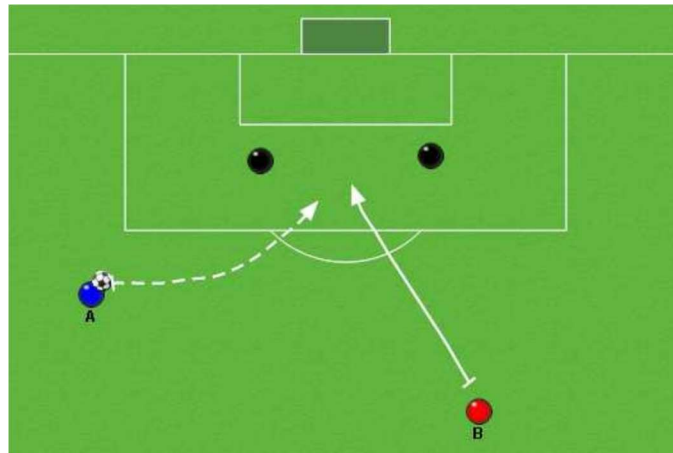
Many beginning players are afraid of making contact with a player from another team. Often a beginner will avoid a ball if it means running into an opposing player. Harassment is a drill that teaches players to concentrate on the ball when being hassled by players from other teams. It's also a drill that develops familiarity with handling a ball in crowded areas.

Instructions

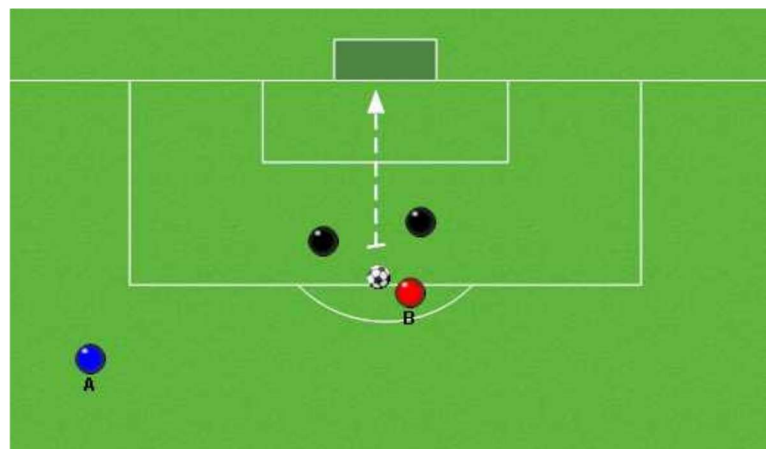
1. Four players compose each drill group. Defensive players are about 5 yards apart. Offensive players line up outside the 18-yard line.



2. A throws a ball between the 2 defensive players. At the same time B runs towards the defensive players.



3. B attempts to shoot the ball at the goal. The defensive player runs in front of the ball or does anything possible to impede player B's attempts to shoot at the goal.



4. Defensive players are not allowed to touch player B or the ball.

Points of Emphasis

Harassment is a simple offensive finishing drill. Players will learn to go after a ball despite being under high pressure. During Harassment, instruct players to...

- (defensive) use attacking “body language” to add pressure to the offensive player.
- (offensive) become fearless when going after the ball.
- (offensive) learn to take an accurate shot and ignore the pressure.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a larger playing area and adding another defender.
2. Allowing defenders to use their bodies, but in a way that won't undermine the essence of the drill.
3. Requiring offensive players to use both feet when taking shots, if possible.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Reward offensive players that score a goal.

Tip #2 – Reiterate to offensive players to be aggressive in congested areas near the goal mouth.

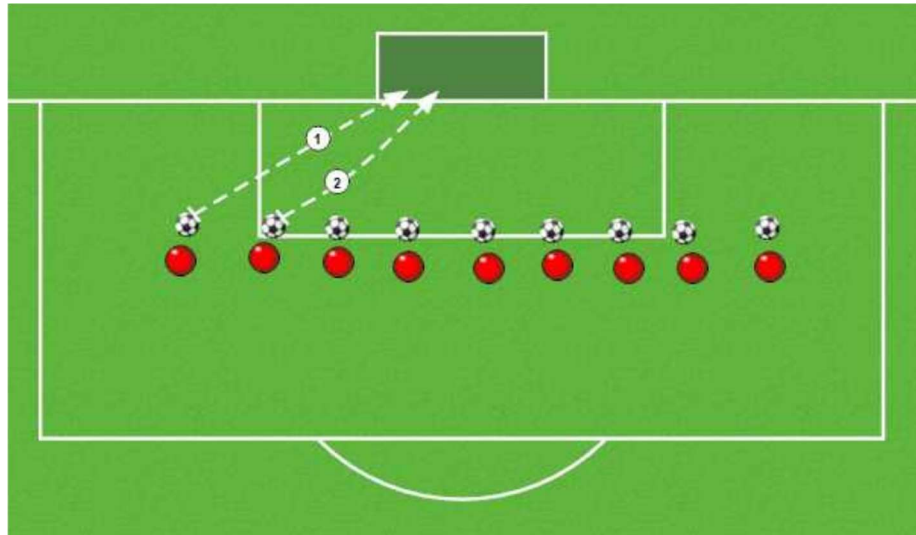
Tip #3 – Encourage all players to play aggressively but also play within the rules.

Kick-Off (Skill Level – Beginner)

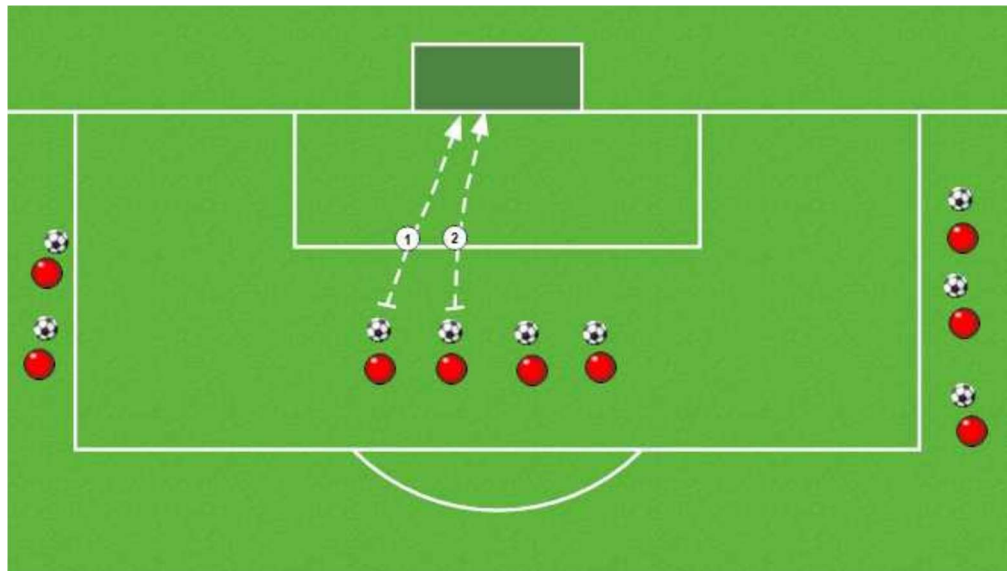
Drill Purpose

Kick-Off is a great end-of-practice drill when players are tired or can be used at any time to slow down the pace of a workout. It's an exercise that develops good penalty shooting, visualization, and builds skills kicking a still ball in set pieces. One aspect of the game that players like is that it gives some of the lesser skilled athletes a chance to win.

1. Instruct each player to line up on the 6 yard line, with a ball, facing the goal. Players will be spaced on the line about several feet apart from one another.
2. On your whistle the first player (you can point to the player on which side the drill begins) takes a shot on goal. Each player then takes one shot and shooting takes place in quick procession. As soon as the shot is taken the player runs around the back of the goal to retrieve the ball and then waits on the sideline as the remaining players take their shots.



3. After each player takes a shot and all have retrieved their balls they may then line up at the distance of a penalty shot, or about 12 yards out. If a player missed the shot from the 6 yard line then that player is eliminated until the next round and waits off to the side. Once a shot is taken from the 12 yard line, the next round is from the 18 and so on.



4. The object of the game is to be the player who's made each of the shots and is the last player standing. After a shot, players can run to gather their ball as play is in progress. Sometimes it's best to wait until all players have taken their shots before retrieving balls so as not to be in the line of fire and risk injury.
5. The process continues until one player remains.

Points of Emphasis

Kick-Off is a game that requires a lot of concentration and proper foot placement on the ball. Players like it because it's simple and relaxing. During Kick-Off instruct players to...

- Use the inside of the foot to take a shot (particularly at longer distances)
- Visualize the ball entering the net before they kick it.
- Become comfortable from all distances – it's not intimidating to shoot from the 6 yard line and it shouldn't be intimidating to take a shot from the 18 yard line either.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Shortening the time players are allowed to prepare for their shot.
2. Using left or right feet only.
3. Using a goalie for added pressure.
4. Trying a round during which players keep their eyes closed.

Motivation/Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This drill can be used as a break from the more tedious aspects of practice and often provides a welcome break.

Tip #2 – Set up a reward system - For example, if a player wins a match, then that player is excused from post practice running.

Tip #3 – Encourage players to try new variations on their shots – sometimes they'll learn something new that works even better for them.

Tip #4 – Set up a make-believe atmosphere to mimic the pressure of a real game situation and have the players learn to keep their composure.

Knock Down The Flags (Skill Level – All)

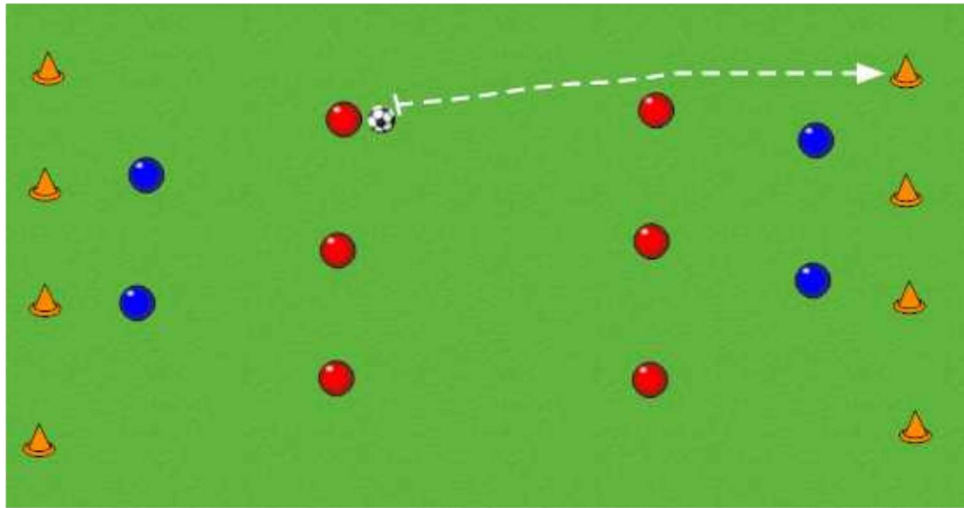
Drill Purpose

Knock Down The Flags is a game that involves full participation from offensive and defensive players. Defensive players practice defensive skills while protecting the flags and also practice supporting the attack. Offensive players practice accurate low shooting.

Instructions

1. On one side of the 50 set up four flags about 3 yards apart on either side of the field. Each "team" consists of 3 offensive players and 2 defensive players.
2. The object of the game is to knock over the opponent's 4 flags (or cones). Each team uses 2 defensive players to protect their flags while the other three players attack the

opposition's flags. When the ball is on the opposing half of the field, the defenders act as support players for the attack.



3. The three offensive players on each team are the only players permitted to knock over the flags.

Points of Emphasis

Knock Down The Flags is a game that requires sharp, accurate passes and good communication amongst the defenders. Players like it because it's simple and goal oriented. During a Knock Down The Flags match, instruct players to...

- Communicate as much as they can to support their teammates.
- Encourage defenders to join the flow of the attack as much as possible.
- Defenders should go after an offender with a ball and not be standing in front of a flag for a long period of time.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Adding more flags which extends a game longer.
2. Using more defenders than offensive players to encourage more communication amongst the attacking players.
3. Adding pressure by setting time limits as to when 1, 2, or 3 flags should be knocked down.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This drill is a great way to develop chemistry amongst teammates and they can quickly learn each other's tendencies

Tip #2 – Slow the game down or speed it up. Stress that varying speeds are a great way to deceive an opponent.

Tip #3 – Encourage players to be creative and use each other for support as much as possible.

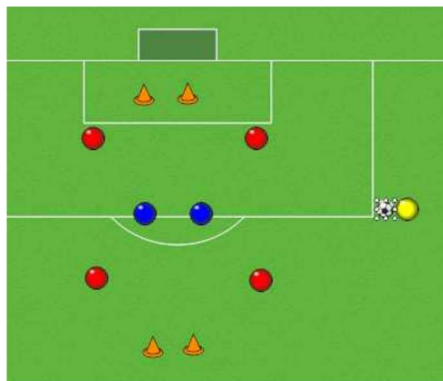
Breathing Room (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

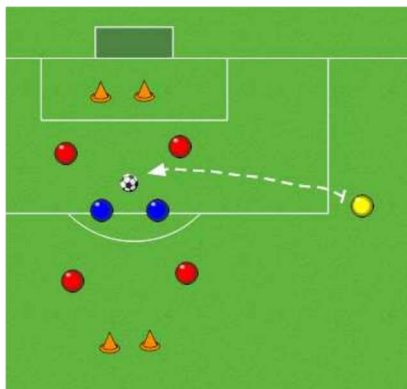
During the course of a game, there will be many situations in which players won't have a lot of space in which to maneuver. Often a pass is received by a player who must then quickly make a decision to shoot or pass to another player. Breathing Room is a great footwork soccer drill that conditions players to become comfortable with quick shooting and ball control in congested areas. Also serving as a defensive drill, it enables defenders to practice containing offensive players and work with teammates in a defensive unit.

Instructions

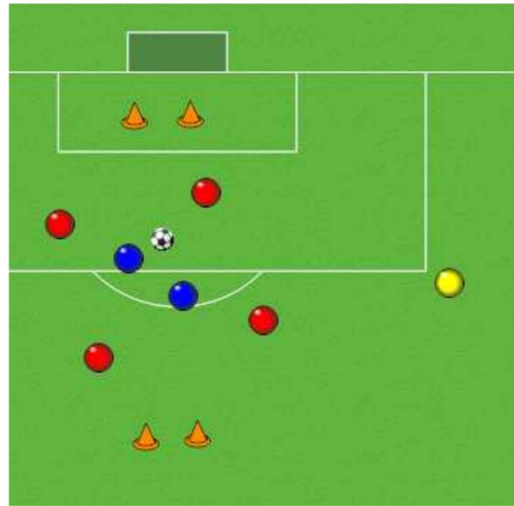
1. Seven players will be used in this drill. Four players will serve as defenders, two as offensive players, and one player will make the throw-ins to the offensive players. The drill will take place in the penalty area. The distance between offensive players is about 3-5 yards. Cones may be used to create goals.



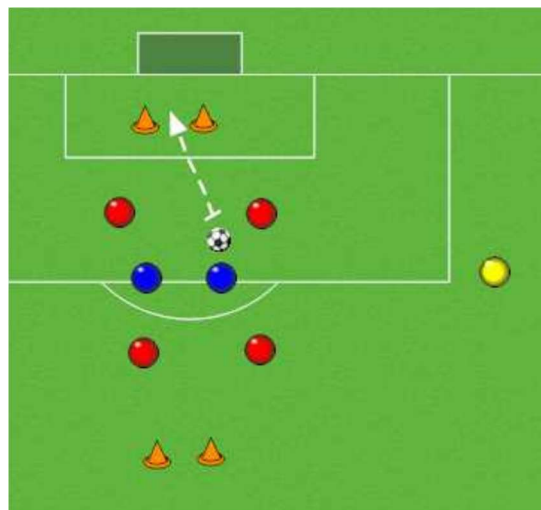
2. Using a proper throw-in, a neutral player throws the ball in the vicinity of the offensive players.



3. Defensive players attempt to keep the offensive players surrounded. Offensive players look for Breathing Room by dribbling to get clear for a shot on goal. Only controlled shots are allowed - no wild kicking is permitted.



4. The job of the defenders is not to kick the ball away but to simply surround and act as a wall and harass the offenders who are positioning for a shot.
5. In order to score, a ball may only enter the goals from one direction, although there are no boundaries to the playing field. Once a team scores, players then line up behind the goals where they started and await a new drill to begin.



Points of Emphasis

Breathing Room is a simple defensive and finishing drill. Players will have their decision making abilities tested in a short amount of time. During a Breathing Room match, instruct players to...

- (defensive) communicate with each other and don't bunch up.

- (offensive) do not hesitate to take a shot when you think one is available.
- start to get a feel for the combinations and possibilities of plays that could happen in a short time period. There are only a few scenarios that could take place in this drill so it's easy to prepare for everything.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a larger playing area such as half of the field to strengthen player conditioning. Using a smaller playing area requires sharper passes.
2. Adding more defenders and/or offensive players.
3. Requiring offensive players to use both feet when taking shots.
4. Having throw-ins to offensive players land at the feet as well as the head and upper torso area.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – There are many variations to this drill. The drill can be structured for defensive players, offensive players, or both at the same time.

Tip #2 – Encourage offensive players who have ball possession to turn their backs to defenders and use their body as a shield to protect the ball.

Tip #3 – Communication amongst players is critical and fellow teammates must do a lot of talking to help a ball carrier under stress.

Shoulder To Shoulder (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

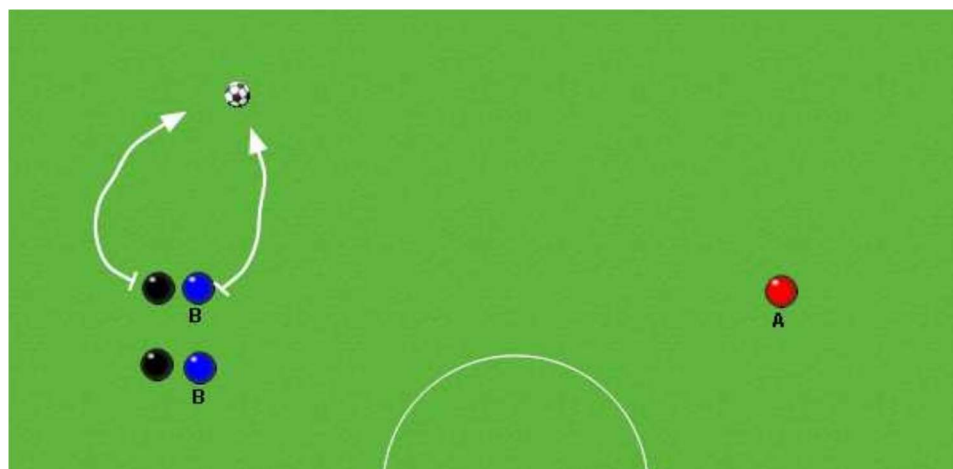
Shoulder To Shoulder is a drill designed for defensive as well as offensive players. The primary purpose of the exercise is for the offensive player to practice quick shooting under pressure while the defensive player practices clearing the ball.

Instructions

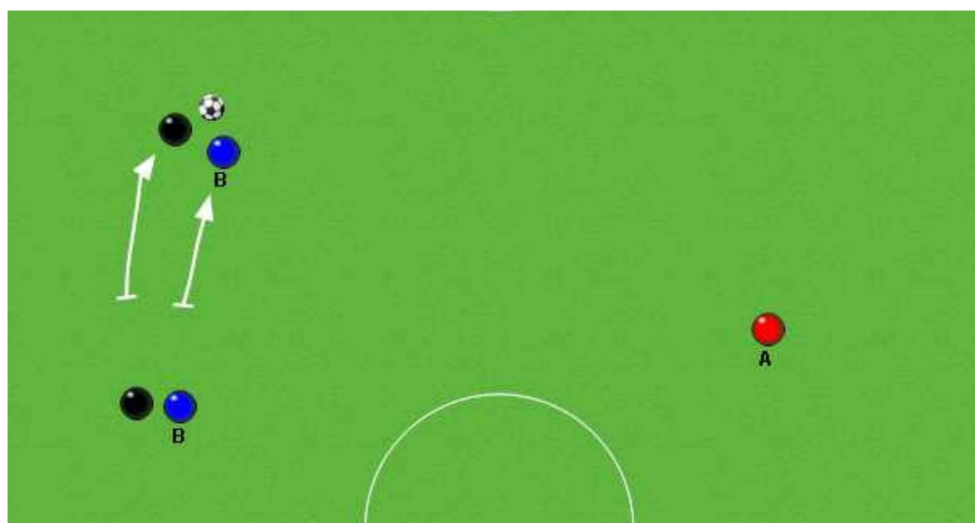
1. Three players per drill group will be used. The distance from A to B is about 10-15 yards. B and the defensive player line up shoulder to shoulder.
2. B and the defensive player, standing right next to each other, face away from the goal on the left side of the field.



3. On your whistle, A throws a ball behind the two players.
4. B and the defensive player turn on the signal and attempt to gain control of the ball.



5. B's objective is to create a shot on goal while the defensive player's objective is to turn with the ball and dribble it over the center line.



Points of Emphasis

Shoulder To Shoulder is a simple contact soccer drill. Players will learn to win a ball despite being under pressure from an opposing player. During Shoulder To Shoulder, instruct players to...

- (defensive) position their body between the goal and B.
- (defensive) turn to the outside with the ball before dribbling over the center line.
- (offensive) once having won possession, take a shot immediately.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Allowing A to place a ball behind the participants rather than throwing it.
2. Delaying the whistle so the ball has a chance to settle before the players turn.
3. Adding a second defender or offender which adds another dimension to the drill.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Reward offensive players that score a goal.

Tip #2 – Have defensive players understand that a ball in possession should be taken outside (towards the wing) before heading up the field.

Tip #3 – Encourage all players to play aggressively and learn to be comfortable with contact.

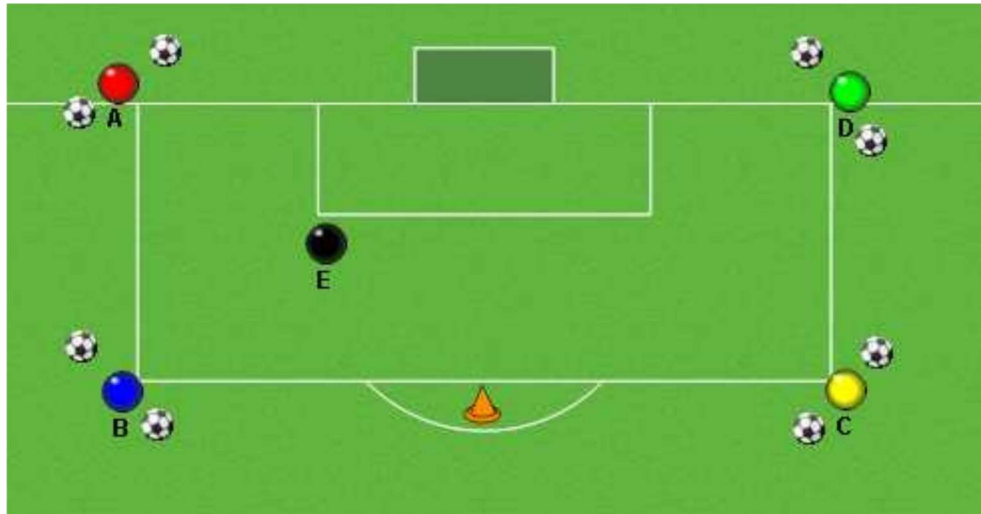
Pressure Shots (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

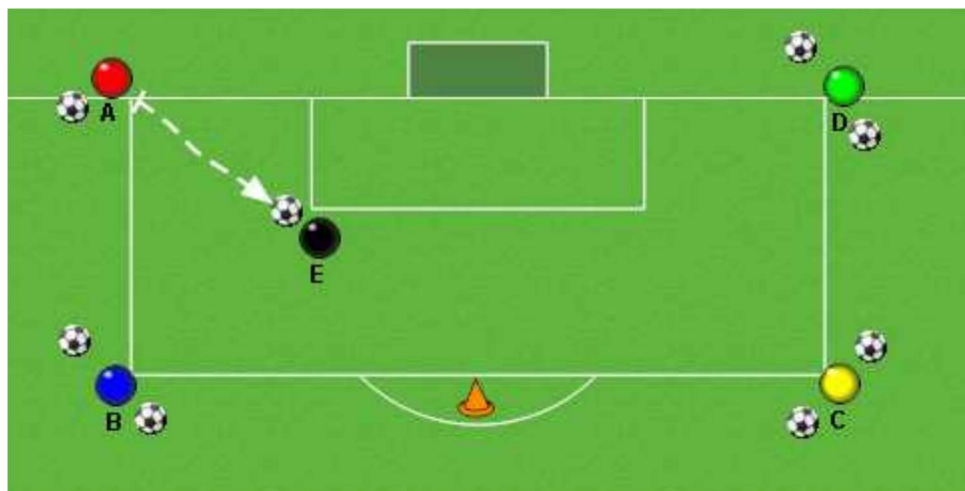
Another soccer shooting drill, Pressure Shots helps players become accustomed to taking a shot on goal quickly. Also, a great soccer fitness drill, players will improve their muscular endurance as well as work on their control skills.

Instructions

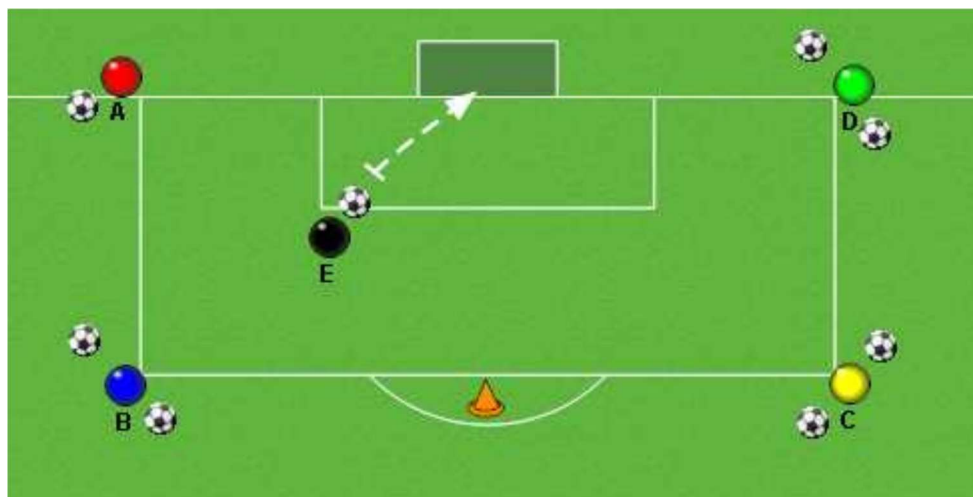
1. Five players per drill group are needed as well as 8 soccer balls and one flag. All play for this drill will take place in the penalty area. The distance from player E to the cone is about 5 yards.

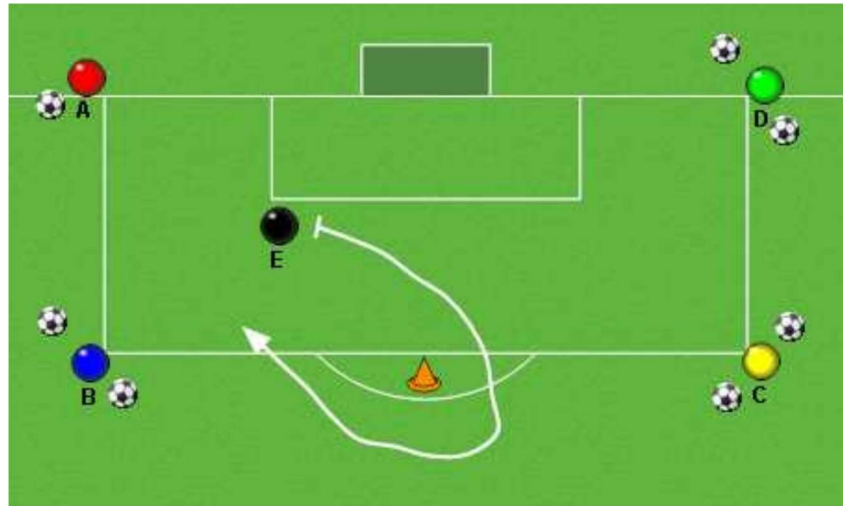


2. On your whistle player A passes to player E.

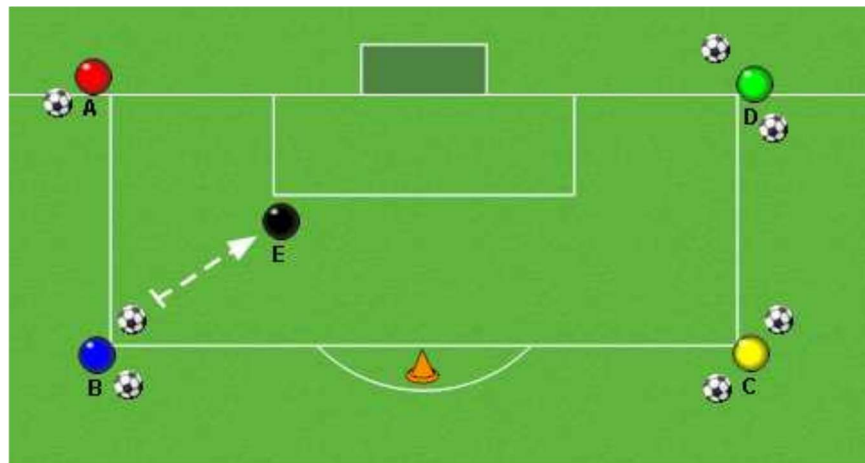


3. Next, E immediately shoots at the goal and runs around the cone.





4. Always in continuous motion, E will then receive a pass from player B and so on.



5. Once player E has repeated the cycle 2 times the drill ends.

Points of Emphasis

Pressure Shots is a finishing soccer drill. Players should become comfortable with receiving a pass and taking a shot quickly. A pass should be received, controlled, and shot in split-second time. Instruct players to...

- (passers) concentrate on giving a sharp, on-grass pass to the shooter in a position in which the shooter can best take a shot.
- (passers) keep their head in the drill – Pressure Shots is as much of a drill for the passers as it is the shooters.
- encourage the ball receiving player, E, to occasionally point to where he/she would like the ball to be passed.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Requiring shooters to take shots with both feet.
2. Adding more than 4 passers - 5 or 6 is possible or even more.
3. Requiring passing players to pass with both feet.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Instruct the shooter to occasionally change running speed when receiving the ball and taking shots.

Tip #2 – Reward a player who makes all of his shots and also reward passers for making passes the receiver can handle.

Tip #3 – Players like competition, so reward a player that scores the highest number of successful goals.

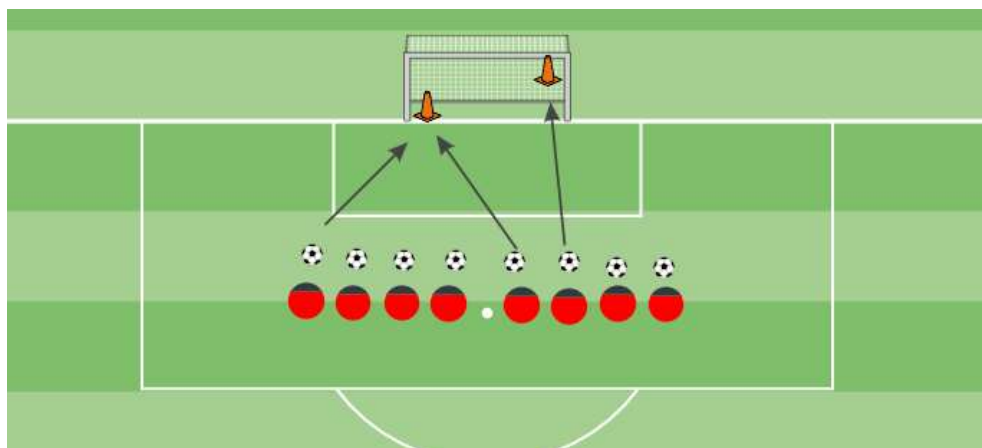
Kick The Can (Skill Level – All Age Levels)

Drill Purpose

This is a fun game that emphasizes ball striking and placement in the goal as opposed to powerful kicks. Kick the Can involves full participation from offensive and defensive players. All players will practice placement shots at the goal in an attempt to strike a Gatorade bottle placed anywhere within the goal by the coach. The last player to strike the bottle/s wins the drill and the Gatorade.

Instructions

1. The coach should place a Gatorade bottle/s in the various corners of the goal.
2. Players line up about 15 yards out in a straight line and take turns taking shots.



3. This continues until each player has had an opportunity to take a predetermined number of shots on goal.

Points of Emphasis

Kick the Can is a game that requires accurate shot placement...as is the case during PK's; placement is key. Players like it because it's simple and goal oriented. During a Kick the Can game, instruct players to...

- Pick a small space in the goal and aim for it (don't stare at it and tip off the goalie)
- Encourage players to use the top of their foot (laces) and instep when shooting (no toes!)
- Plant foot shoot land beside the ball and the players body should be coming over the top of the ball when striking it so their body weight is carried forward for a proper follow through.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Adding more bottles at different locations within the net. (Try hanging a bottle in the upper corners of the net to add a level of difficulty.)
2. Add pressure by adding a goalie. This will benefit the goalie and the strikers.
3. Play a rapid-fire version where the whole team is taking multiple shots within a set time frame (i.e., 60 seconds)
4. If the space gets too crowded split the team half and use multiple goals. Play a Team 1 v Team 2 option...the team with the most bottle strikes win.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This drill is a great way to develop more precise shot placement.

Tip #2 – Slow the game down or speed it up. Stress that varying speeds is a great way to work on focus and concentration in difficult situations.

Passing Drills

Passing 101 (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

Learning how to correctly push pass a soccer ball. Passing a soccer ball is one of the main skills in soccer. Learning how to correctly pass a soccer ball is a vital skill in becoming a soccer player.

Instructions

1. **Place your plant foot even with the ball.** Position your plant foot so it faces your target. The plant foot is the one that will not be kicking and helps keep you steady. Eventually you can practice kicking with each foot to become a balanced player, but for the first time, use whichever foot you are more comfortable with.
2. **Keep your kicking ankle firm and your body over the ball.** Keep your ankle firm, not floppy, during the kicking and follow-through to protect yourself from injury. Hold the toes of your kicking foot slightly higher than the heels. Position your body so it's facing the person you are kicking toward.



3. **Kick using the inside of your foot.** Don't kick using the laces, heel, or outside of the foot when you are first learning. Kick at right angles to the ball at the midline of the ball. Kicking at the middle of the ball helps keep it on the ground.
- It can be hard to stay balanced when you are standing on one foot, so try putting your arms out.



Trapping 101

(Skill Level – Beginner - Advanced)

Drill Purpose

Learning how to correctly trap a soccer ball. Trapping a soccer ball is a way of stopping the ball and gaining control of it quickly. As you gain more experience in soccer, trapping the ball becomes a very necessary skill used to gain an advantage over the other team. There are many types of traps but for the newer/developing player we highly encourage only teaching the inside trap. As players skills advance the step trap, chest trap, thigh trap and head trap (U14+ only) are some additional skills that can be taught.

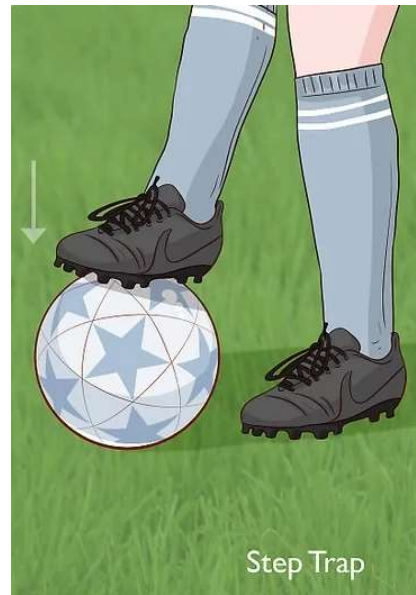
Instructions (Inside Trap)

1. **Use the inside of your foot to stop the ball with an inside trap.** The inside trap is the easiest trap to master and also the most common one in soccer. As the ball moves toward you, rotate your foot toward the ball so that the inside of your foot is facing it. Let the ball hit you and move your foot back slightly, cushioning the blow and keeping the ball close to you.
 - If the ball is coming at you from an angle, you'll need to be able to adjust your footing on the fly. You should always trap the ball with the foot furthest from it, as this will be easier to rotate to face the ball.
 - You shouldn't kick the ball as you go to stop it. The ball should move your foot rather than your foot moving the ball.



Instructions (Step Trap)

1. **Put your foot on the ball to perfect the step trap.** Placing one foot on the ball will stop it completely, allowing you to get your next shot exactly right. As the ball moves toward you, lift up your dominant foot over the ball and let it hit your heel. The ball should bounce forward slightly and stop right in front of you.
 - If you bring your foot down on the ball just as it hits your heel, you can stop it completely. This is great for lining up a new shot to send the ball to the other end of the field!
 - Getting the timing of the step trap perfect is the most difficult part. Keep an eye on the speed of the ball as it comes toward you to make sure you trap it. As always, practice makes perfect!



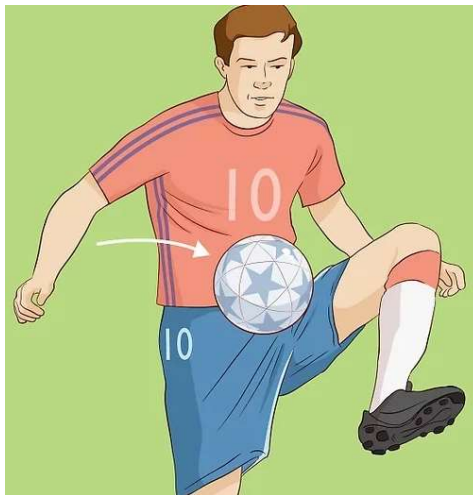
Instructions (Chest Trap)

1. **Practice leaning back slightly for a chest trap.** A chest trap will stop a ball coming toward your torso and drop it down toward your feet. Stay on your toes so you can move around, and keep your knees slightly bent as the ball comes toward you. Lean back slightly as the ball hits your chest, letting it bounce forward and land near your feet.
 - As with any type of trap or drill in soccer, getting the chest trap right will take a lot of practice. Find someone who can throw the ball to you and help you adjust to the movement needed to get the trap perfect.
 - Make sure the ball hits you in the chest rather than in the stomach or abdomen.
 - Don't push back against the ball as it hits you. A trap should keep the ball where it is rather than pushing it away.



Instructions (Thigh Trap)

1. **Lift your dominant leg to catch the ball for a thigh trap.** A thigh trap involves bouncing the ball off the middle of your upper leg to gain control of it quickly. As the ball comes toward you, lift one of your legs so your thigh is slightly diagonal. Let the ball hit the middle of your thigh and begin straightening your legs as it falls toward your feet
 - Make sure the ball hits in the softer part of your thigh near the middle. If it hits your knee it will bounce off at an unpredictable angle, and if it hits too high up on your leg you might catch it in your gut instead.
 - Your thigh should be at an angle of around 110-degrees from your torso. This will help the ball drop in front of you, rather than bouncing straight up or sending it too far away.



Instructions (Head Trap)

1. Stay calm when attempting a head trap. If you can move past your instinct to duck out of the way, trapping the ball with your head can stop more difficult shots. Stay on your toes to move into the path of the ball and let it bounce off of your forehead. The ball should lose momentum against your head and drop down in front of you.
 - This is a different move than heading a soccer ball. You should allow the ball to move your head back slightly, rather than pushing against the ball to move it forward. Heading the ball will send it far away rather than giving you better control of it.



Throw Ins (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

Throw-ins are small but crucial moments in a soccer game: they present an opportunity to maintain possession of the ball, capitalize on a turnover or - unfortunately - lose possession of the ball yourself. As such, the throw-in is one of the most fundamental skills in soccer.

Instructions

1. Pick up the ball with both hands, one on each side of the ball. Your hands should be roughly evenly spaced -- if the ball was a clock, your right hand would be at 3:00 and your left at 9:00. It can help to shift them back a bit, too, so your thumbs are almost touching in the back of the ball. This helps you get a bit more leverage on the throw.
 - Throw-ins only occur when the whole ball completely passes over one of the touchlines. The restart occurs at the point it exited the field of play.
2. Place your feet where the ball exited the field of play into touch. The rules of the game allow part of either foot to be inside the field of play, as long as a portion of the foot is actually on the touchline or behind the touchline. It is a myth that a thrower cannot stand on the touchline.
 - If you want to try a running throw, stand a few feet behind the sideline so that you can run up to the line without completely crossing it. Some players like to keep their feet together, while others put one foot in front and drag their back foot forward as they throw.
3. Arch your back slightly. Many players try to throw exclusively with their arms, but most of the power should come from your back and shoulders, as well as the momentum from your running start. Think of your body like a catapult being pulled back -- your feet are still firmly planted, but your spine becomes a loaded spring. Do this right before you're ready to actually throw the ball.

- For now, just work on arching as much as is comfortable. Work on getting proper form first, then throwing the ball further later. A light bend is enough to start learning with.
- 4. Bring the ball up and over your head. Start with the ball behind your head and throw it over the top of your head. A legal throw in must travel "from behind and over his [or her] head." Referees might be a touch lenient here for a quick throw, but you must, at least, start with the ball held above your head.
 - You will likely get called for an infraction if you start a throw from your forehead, or further forward. This can happen accidentally on quick throws.
- 5. Release the ball with a forward flick of the wrists. Bring your arms up and forward so that your hands and the ball travel directly over your head. At the same time, bring your arched back forward like a spring and (if performing a running throw) drag the toe of your back foot on the ground. Extend your arms fully and release the ball from just behind the head.
 - Remember to keep your head up and facing straight after the ball is released so you don't just throw the ball to the ground.
 - Your release point depends on how far the throw needs to go. For big throws, let go as you pass over your head. For shorter passes, hold onto the ball until you cross your forehead or so.
 - You cannot throw the ball with one hand like a keeper
- 6. Run onto the field to re-enter play, but don't touch the ball until one other player has. You cannot touch your own throw-in until another player (on either team) has touched it. So get back out there to help move the ball into scoring position.
 - If you accidentally threw the ball to your opponent, (who by law must be at least 2 meters back from point of throw), make up for it by running out to try to steal the ball back. If you deliberately, do it make sure it is not in a violent or dangerous manner. You can play the ball off an unsuspecting opponent on a legal throw in.
 - Always follow up your throw by getting back in the game and back in position.

Points of Emphasis

Review the rules to ensure perfect, legal throw-ins.[6] The rules for throws are not super difficult, but you should be mindful of them with every throw. Even the pros sometimes make a mistake, but it is no less embarrassing when you do it in a game. A legal throw-in must have all of the following elements:

- You are facing the field of play
- Both of your feet must be on or behind the touch line. As long as part of each foot is on some part of the 5-inch touchline or behind it and touching the ground at the moment the ball is thrown, the foot position is legal.
- You use two hands
- The ball comes from behind and over your head.
- You cannot score directly off a throw-in.

Zig & Zag **(Skill Level – Beginner)**

Drill Purpose

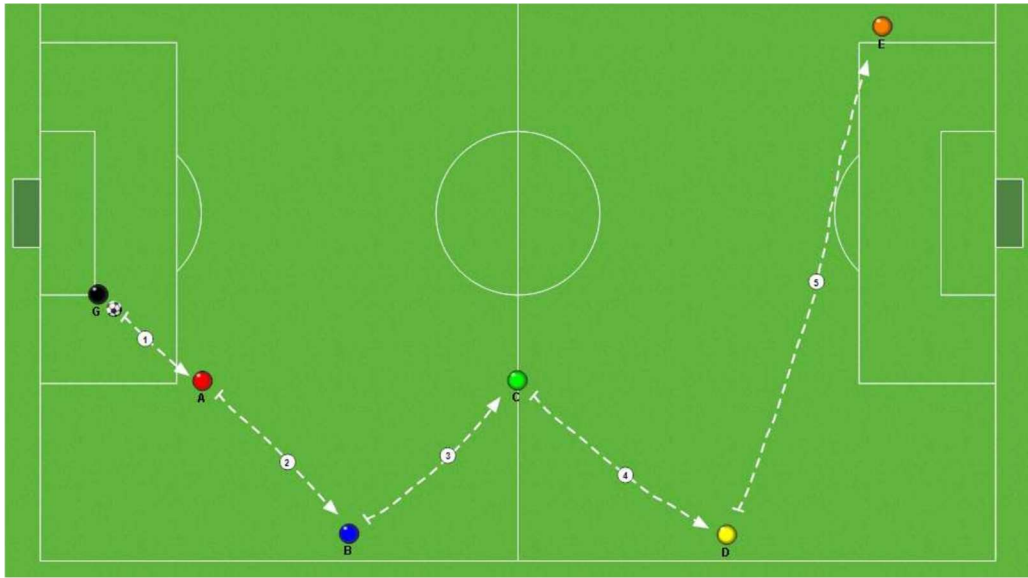
Beginning players often get caught up defending or trying to score in a small area but forget about the big picture and what's happening elsewhere on the field. Zig & Zag is a beginning passing and shooting drill that develops the mindset of moving a ball up the field. At the same time, players practice passing, trapping, and shooting.

Instructions

7. Six players per drill group participate. Players position themselves on the field in a zigzag pattern.
8. A and B represent fullbacks, C is a halfback, D is a wing, and E is a forward.



9. On your whistle, the goalkeeper starts the drill by rolling the ball to player A.
10. Player A then passes to B. B passes to C. C passes to D.
11. Player D crosses the ball over the field to E.



12. E takes a shot at the goal.



Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using defenders whose job it is to add pressure on the passers without trying to actually take the ball away.
2. Adding more offensive players so more passes can be made.
3. Running the drill from both sides of the field at the same time.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Reward successful passes up the field which end with a good shot on goal.

Tip #2 – Encourage beginners to develop an “entire-field” mindset and that play goes on everywhere, not just with the players who have the ball.

Tip #3 – Tell players to communicate and let each other know they’re open to receiving the ball.

Pass Through Traffic (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

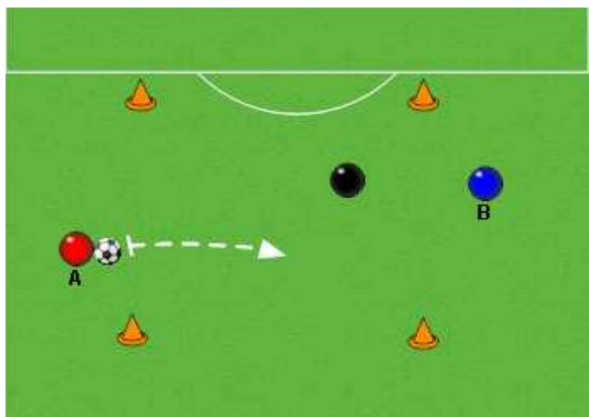
Beginning players often need practice when it comes to ball control. Pass Through Traffic is a way to work on these skills while in the context of a game. During this drill, players practice feinting, dribbling, and freeing themselves in order to receive a pass.

Instructions

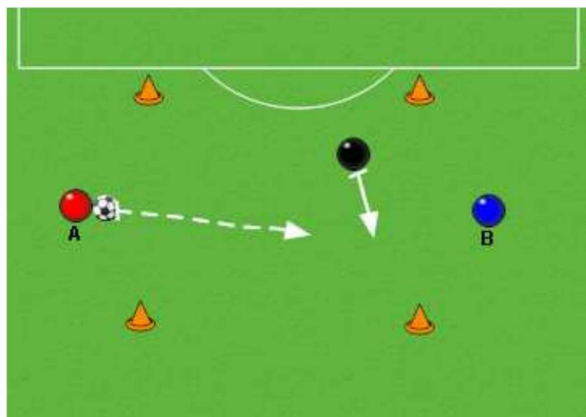
1. Drill groups consist of 3 players each. Four cones mark off a 5-yard wide by 5-yard long defense zone.



2. Player A attempts to pass a ball through the defense zone. Passers are not allowed into the defense zone.



3. The defensive player tries to block the ball from going through. The defender may do anything in his/her power to prevent a successful through-pass.



4. Passer's dribble and feint (fake) in order to create a clear pathway for a pass to the player on the other side of the grid.

Points of Emphasis

Pass Through Traffic is a fun drill for beginners. Players are trying to accomplish a task and at the same time are learning valuable passing, feinting, and ball stopping skills. During Pass Through Traffic, instruct players to...

- (defensive) feel free to slide along the ground to stop a pass.
- (passers) learn to make quick accurate passes when the window of opportunity presents itself.
- (passers) learn to use any kind of fakes that you want!

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a larger playing area and adding a defender.
2. Creating a playing area that is longer to favor passers or shorter to favor success by the defenders.
3. Requiring passers to use both feet and/or keep passes on the ground.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Reward defenders who consistently block passes and passers who consistently pass with success.

Tip #2 – Encourage passers to have fun and become accustomed to using trickery to complete good passes.

Tip #3 – Players should learn to dribble at different speeds and use changing speeds as a weapon when making a pass through a defender.

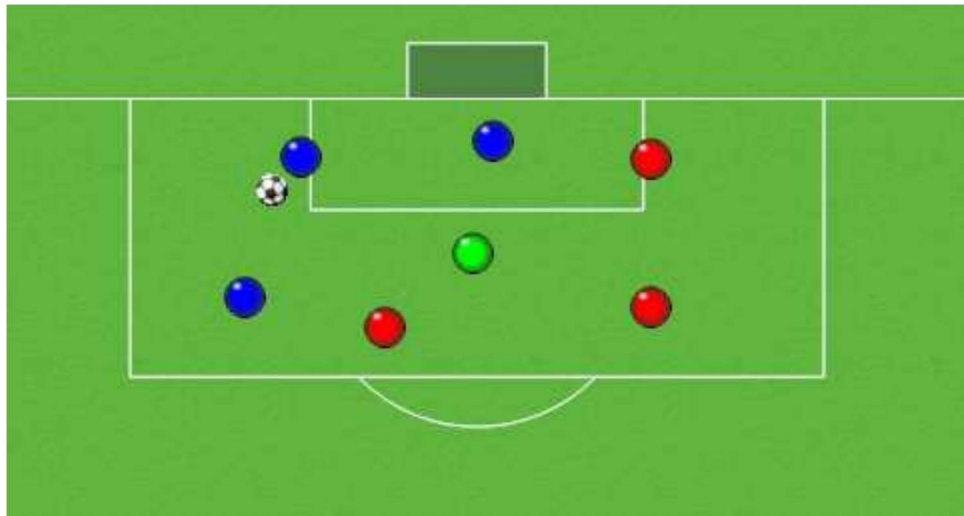
Fox & The Hounds (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

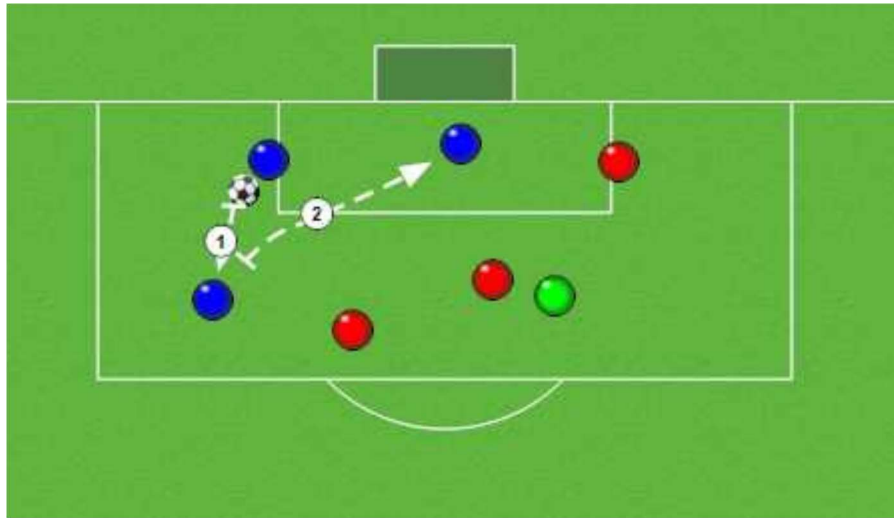
Fox & The Hounds is a fun soccer drill that helps players develop teamwork and sharp passing skills. It's a game that stresses team spirit, awareness, and communication between players as well as helps strengthen running and positioning away from the ball.

Instructions

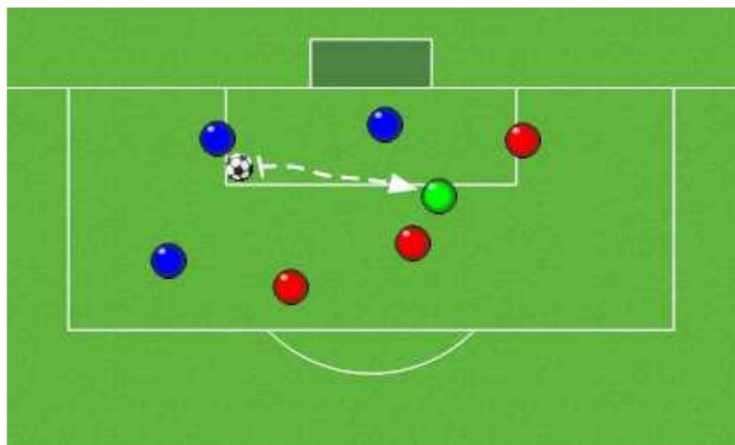
1. Two teams are selected and gather in the penalty area. The number of players on each team is chosen by the coach. Both of these teams represent the Hounds.
2. A neutral player or the coach can serve as the Fox.



3. On your whistle, play begins. The team gaining possession of the ball passes it around basketball-style. The other team tries to take possession of the ball for itself.



4. The object of the game is to strike the Fox with the ball. The Fox moves and hides among the players. The Fox may not attempt to gain possession of the ball.
5. To score a goal, the ball must strike the Fox on the lower half of the body. Each time a goal is scored, the game is restarted by dropping or kicking a ball into the penalty area.



Points of Emphasis

Fox & The Hounds is a simple drill in theory, but it can be very difficult to strike the Fox with the ball. Players will need to work together and plan amongst themselves as they are trying to keep possession of the ball as well as score on a moving target. During Fox & The Hounds instruct players to...

- remember this is a team exercise and communicate to each other often.
- keep in mind that positioning away from the ball is just as important as controlling the ball themselves.
- keep shots and passes low and on target.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Adding two Foxes.
2. Playing in a larger area to work on conditioning.
3. Playing with 2 balls to add pressure and improve player concentration.
4. Having the 2 Hound teams consist only of defenders or offensive players.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This is a simple drill in theory that won't be easy to win. Award teams that consistently score.

Tip #2 – Stress the importance of off-ball running.

Tip #3 – Encourage players to strategize amongst themselves so they can achieve a score.

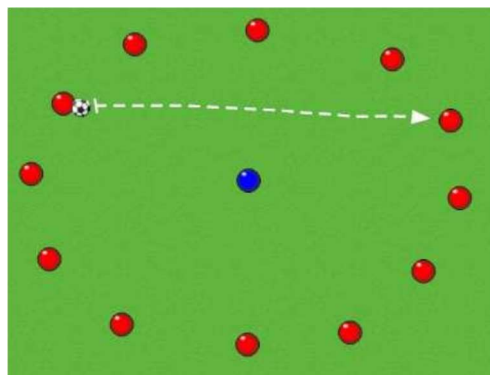
Shark In The Middle (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

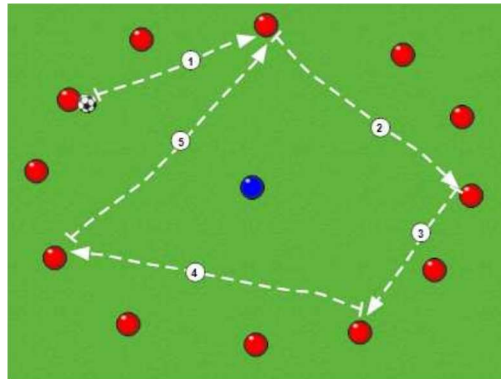
Shark In The Middle is a fun game that can be played at any time during a practice and can be tailored to be as long or short as needed. It's geared towards developing concentration and composure under high pressure situations.

Instructions

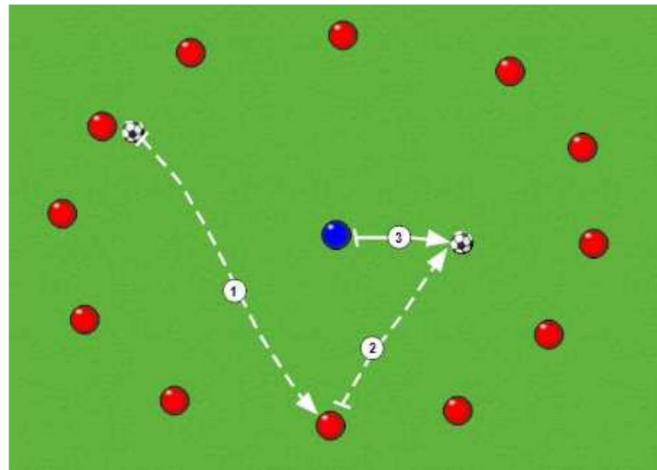
1. Instruct players to stand in a large circle on the field. One player is chosen to be the “shark” and stands in the middle of the circle. One ball is to be used and is given to a random player standing in the circle.
2. On your whistle the player with the ball passes the ball to another player along the circle. Then, the second player passes the ball to a third player of choice and so on. Allow players to pass to each other as a warm-up.



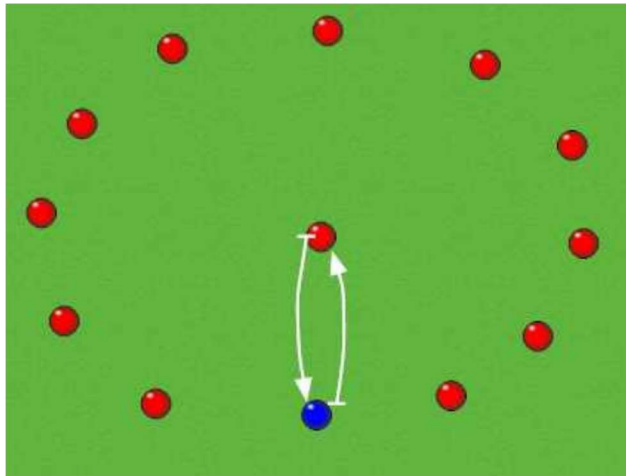
3. The next blow of your whistle signals the beginning of the game. The object of the game is to keep the ball away from the shark who is trying to intercept the passes. Players may pass the ball to anyone along the circle whether it is a teammate right next to them or a teammate farther away. Players try to put together as many passes as possible.



4. This process continues until the shark intercepts the ball.



5. When the ball is intercepted the player that caused the ball to be taken away (sometimes the coach's judgment is needed!) becomes the new shark and the original shark takes a spot along the circle.



Points of Emphasis

Shark In the Middle is a game that requires quick thinking and a feel for the abilities of the attacking shark. Players like it because it's as much fun to be along the circle as it is to be the shark. During a Sudden Death match, instruct players to...

- have a plan with what to do with a ball before it comes their way
- try any foot and passing drills they've been taught
- keep their awareness high and be ready even if they aren't in the immediate play.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. A larger playing circle to build the shark's conditioning.
2. Using left or right feet only.
3. Adding a second shark
4. Using one-touch passes with no trapping in between.

Motivation/Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This is a great drill to build poise handling a ball while under pressure from an oncoming attacker.

Tip #2 – Set up a goal or “record” system such as keeping track of how many passes a team can string together to keep the ball away from an attacker.

Tip #3 – Encourage players to develop confidence with quick, sharp passes that their teammates can handle easily.

Grid Passing Game

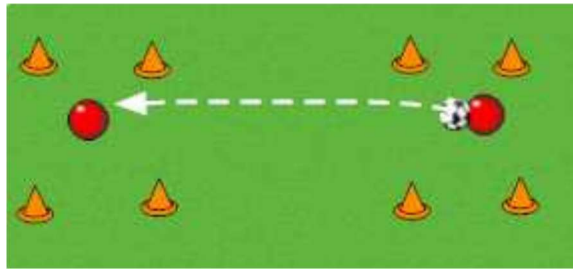
(Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

The Grid Passing Game is a great warm-up drill. As players arrive at practice in one's and two's, they can be added in a tournament format. This is a game that also provides some relief on hot days when players need a break. Short, accurate passing with both feet are skill sets that are developed.

Instructions

1. Set up two small grids across from each other. The grids should be about 3 yards by 3 yards wide and about 10-15 yards apart. The distance between the grids can be adjusted according to the player's age and skill level.
2. To start, one player tries to pass the ball along the ground into the opponent's grid. The receiver has one touch to kill the ball inside of the grid.



3. The receiver then passes the dead ball back into the first player's grid who then is allowed one touch to control it.
4. If the passer misses the grid it's a point to the receiver. If the receiver cannot keep the ball inside of the grid it's a point to the passer. If both the pass and control are good, no points are awarded and they just continue play.
5. The receiver is not required to stand in the grid at all times, but control of the ball must occur within the grid.

Points of Emphasis

The Grid Passing Game is an easy to understand game and younger players enjoy the competition of it. During a game, instruct players to...

- keep passes sharp and quick.
- concentrate on quickly controlling the ball on one touch

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Passing with the opposite foot and/or using the outside of the foot.
2. (Older players) Chipping the ball directly into the grid. The receiver can let the ball bounce before controlling it, but the ball must stay inside the grid.
3. Chipping the ball directly into the grid and the first controlling touch must be in the air. The receiver must get to the ball earlier and the demands on control are much greater.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This is a great drill to build confidence with the weak foot.

Tip #2 – Award players who consistently beat their opponents.

Tip #3 – This is a game in which soft passes are necessary. Stress the importance of passing a ball that a receiver can handle.

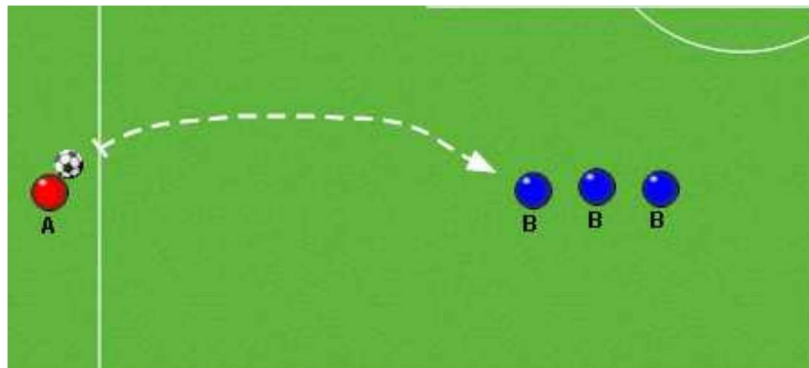
Head Return (Skill Level – Intermediate U14+)

Drill Purpose

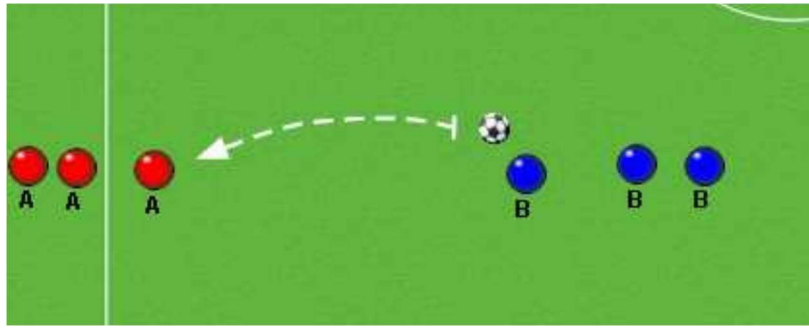
Typically, the defensive team will not guard the player who is attempting a throw-in. For this reason, the thrower is free to receive a return pass under little or no pressure. For the receiver of a throw-in, becoming comfortable with using the forehead accurately is very important during the course of game. In order to return a ball to the thrower, headers are basically the only option in a tight situation.

Instructions

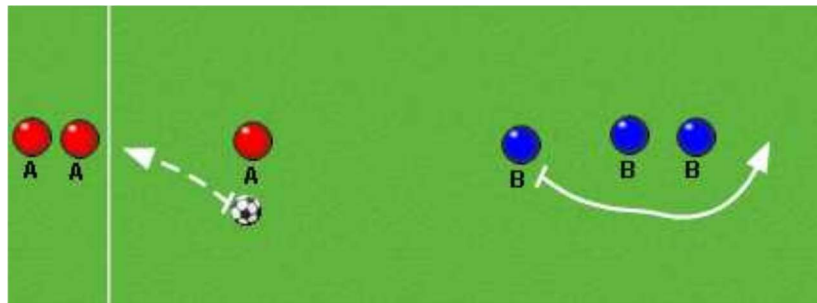
1. On the sideline of the field, player A attempts a throw-in to player B, who is about 20-30 yards away (the distance can be adjusted).



2. Player A then steps into the field of play. Player B heads the ball back to player A and then goes to the end of the line.



3. Player A attempts to control the ball as quickly as possible and then passes to the next thrower in line.



Points of Emphasis

Head Return is a simple beginner soccer drill that emphasizes basic heading skills. Players will become as comfortable using their head as they are their feet. During Head Return, instruct players to...

- make good throw-ins to the target in the air.
- be sure to head the ball on the ground back to the thrower.
- be comfortable receiving a throw-in while facing away from the goal. The throw-in player is there to help as he/she is facing towards the goal and can instruct a receiver after a throw-in is made.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Using smaller throw-in distances.
2. Adding defenders to add pressure to receivers of throw-ins.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – A ball headed back to the throw-in player on the ground is very important and can easily be controlled.

Tip #2 – Throw-ins should occur quickly...no more than 3 seconds should elapse from the time a ball is out of bounds to the time a throw in is made.

Tip #3 – If using a defensive player, have that player close in behind the player receiving the throw-in so as to distract or gain possession of the ball.

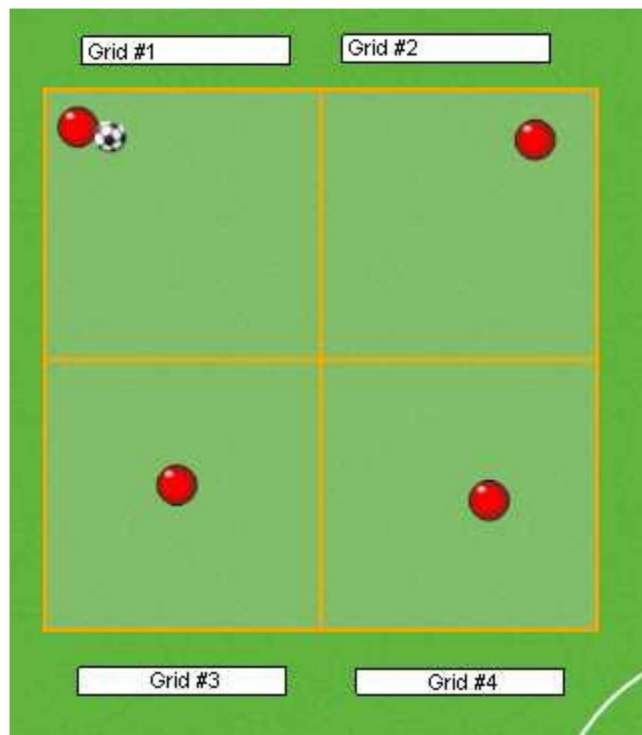
Four Square In The Air (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

Four Square in The Air is a fun drill during which players get to test their juggling skills. The idea of the game is to develop skills working with balls in the air so that in a fast-moving game the need to bring an air ball to a player's feet before distributing it is eliminated. This is also a good example of a consequence rule for younger players - when a point is lost you must sit out and so the better you play the more you play.

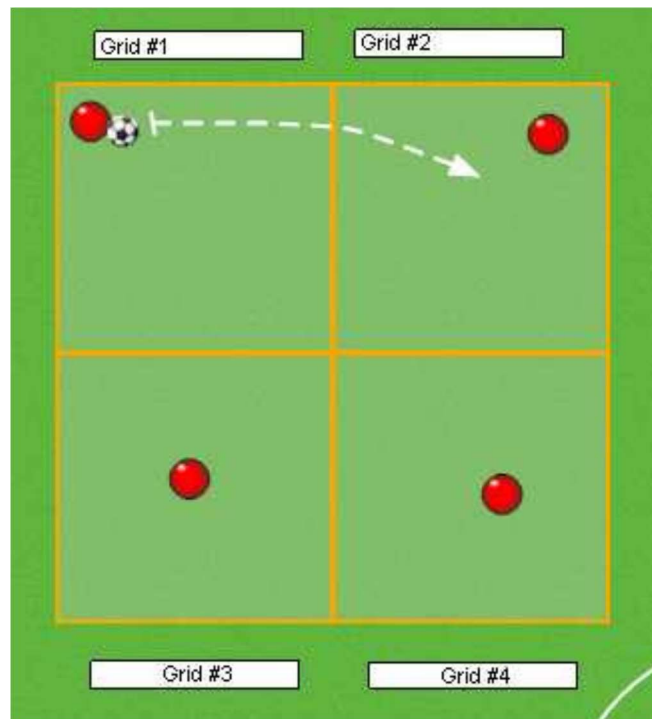
Instructions

1. The field is divided into 4 equal grids numbered 1 to 4. The grids are about 8 yards long by 8 yards wide. One player occupies each grid. The object of the game is to stay in the champion's grid, number 4, as long as possible.

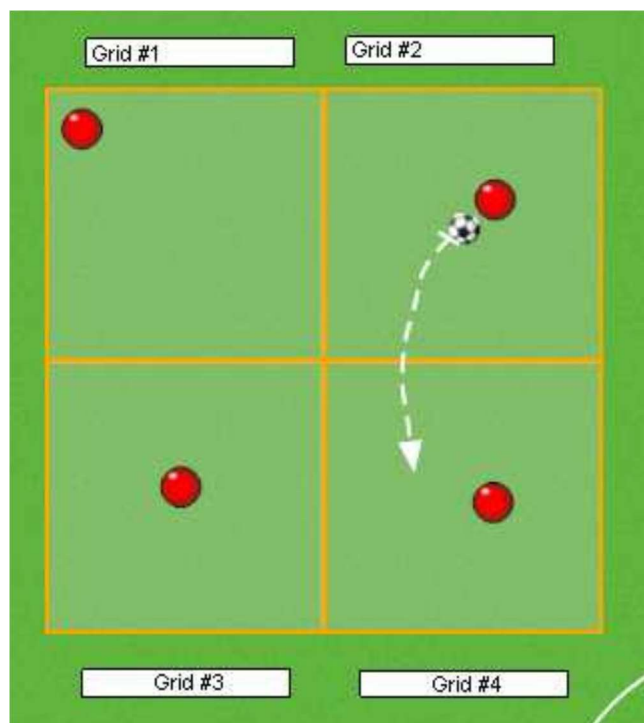


2. To start a round, a player serves the ball (as in a throw-in) from the back of their grid into another player's grid. The serve can be played from the air or allowed to bounce on the

ground once or twice and then juggled. It must be played in the air and land in any other player's grid.



3. Each player is allowed a certain number of bounces and touches before returning the ball to someone else's grid.



4. If a serve lands in grid 2, for example, and then quickly bounces into grid 3 before the player in grid 2 actually touches it, then player 2 is out.
5. A round can end when the ball lands outside of the grid boxes, or a player allows more than the limit of bounces or touches.
6. If a ball lands on an interior line, it belongs to the player in the higher numbered grid and is their responsibility.
7. At the end of a round, the player who lost the point leaves the game and must wait to get back in. The remaining players move up a grid to vacate the spot and a new player is brought in. The player that knocked out the departing player serves next.

Points of Emphasis

Four Square in The Air requires the development of juggling skills which are useful in game situations when playing a ball in the air is necessary. Most players enjoy juggling on their own and like the competition a juggling drill provides. During a match, instruct players to...

- make throw-ins that their teammates can handle.
- learn to softly trap a ball out of the air or on a bounce.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Creating a smaller playing area and allowing only in-air transfers with no bounces.
2. Using a chest-to-foot trap in the air.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Offer rewards for making or staying in the champion's position.

Tip #2 – Stress that in a game situation there often isn't enough time to allow an air ball to land at a player's feet before passing or shooting it.

Tip #3 – Encourage players to be creative with handling a ball in-air and let them play the ball in a way that works best for them.

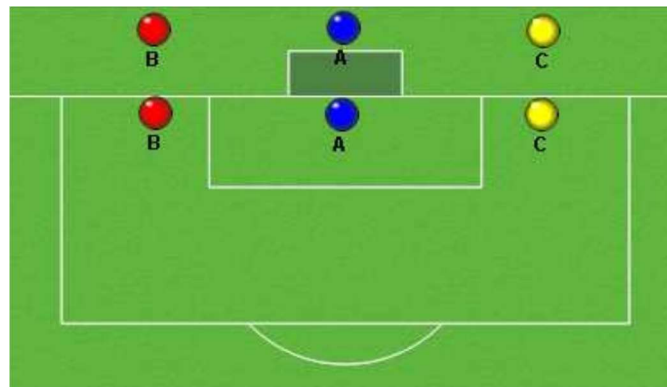
Overlap & Pass (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

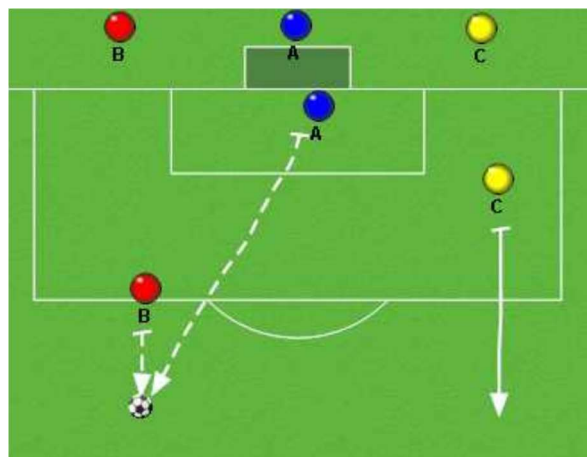
Passing and then running to an open space is a very important off-ball soccer skill and mindset. Overlap & Passing is a soccer passing drill that simulates game situation passing. Players fine-tune their passing and also learn to overlap at high rates of speed during the course of this drill.

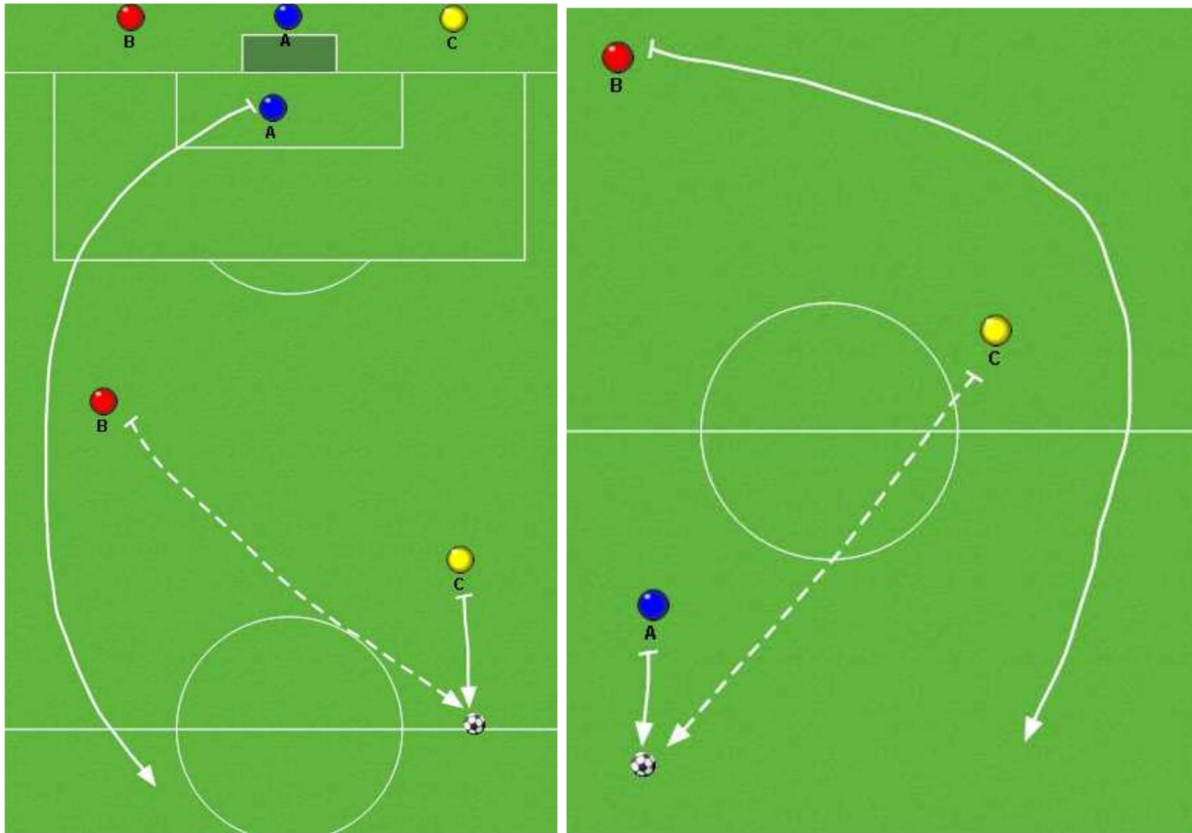
Instructions

1. Nine players (3 groups of 3) will be used in this drill. Three players align themselves near the end line in a triangular formation about 10 yards apart from each other.

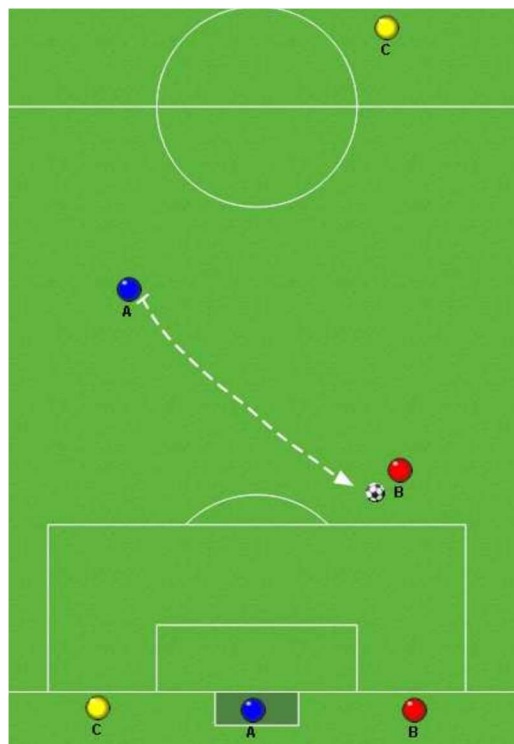


2. On your whistle, player A passes ahead to player B. A then quickly runs ahead and overlaps player B. Player B then passes to C and then overlaps C.





3. Passing and overlapping continues until the first group of 3 players reaches the other end of the field where the second set of 3 players takes over.



4. The second set of players repeats the drill up the field and then passes off to the 3rd set of players. Play ends at the end of the 3rd cycle.

Points of Emphasis

Overlap & Passing is as much of a mental drill as it is physical. This drill begins to teach players to gain a feel for a play as it's unfolding. During Overlap & Passing instruct players to...

- provide sharp clean passes a teammate can handle
- talk or communicate the fact that an overlap is occurring.
- have a direction in mind that you plan to run after the pass is made.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Using teams of 4 to emphasize the importance of good passes and communication
2. Changing the players in each group of 3 every so often so all players can work with each other and learn each other's tendencies.
3. Keeping track of the time it takes players to advance down the field and let players know they're being timed.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Reward teams of 3 if they successfully overlap and pass down the field without losing control of the ball.

Tip #2 – Teamwork is critical and emphasize that a receiver should be passed a ball that's easily handled.

Tip #3 – Have players develop non-verbal communication signals with each other so a teammate knows when and where an overlap will occur.

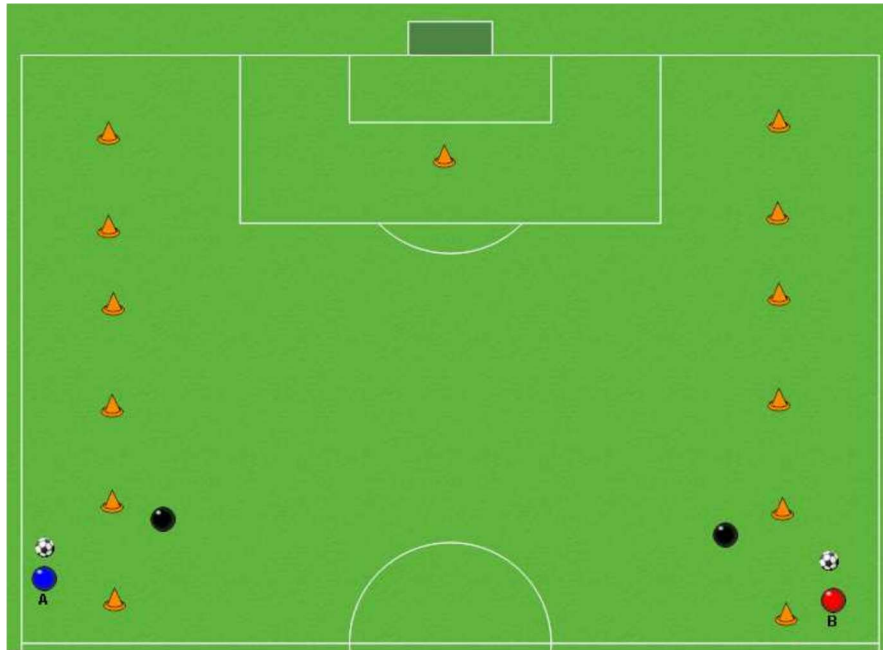
Wing Fake (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

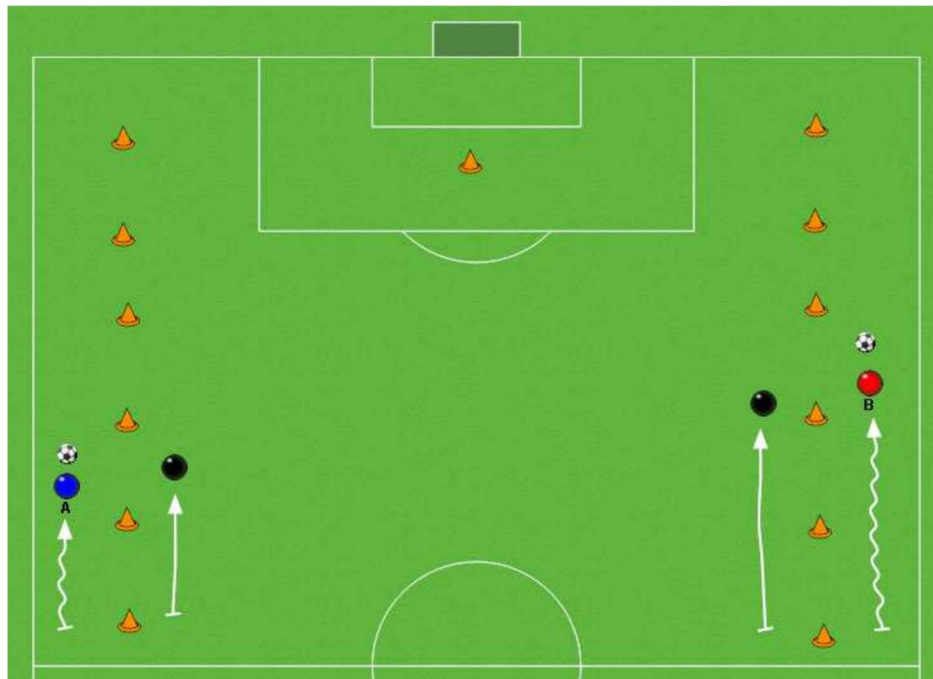
The main emphasis for Wing Fake is to provide a setting for offensive wing players to practice change-of-pace runs and other feigning techniques necessary to get clear to make a cross. Defensive players practice maneuvering into proper position to cut off possible crosses or penetrating passes.

Instructions

1. This drill consists of 2 players per group. The distance of the cones to the side lines are about 2-3 yards. Five or 6 cones can be used to mark off the appropriate areas.

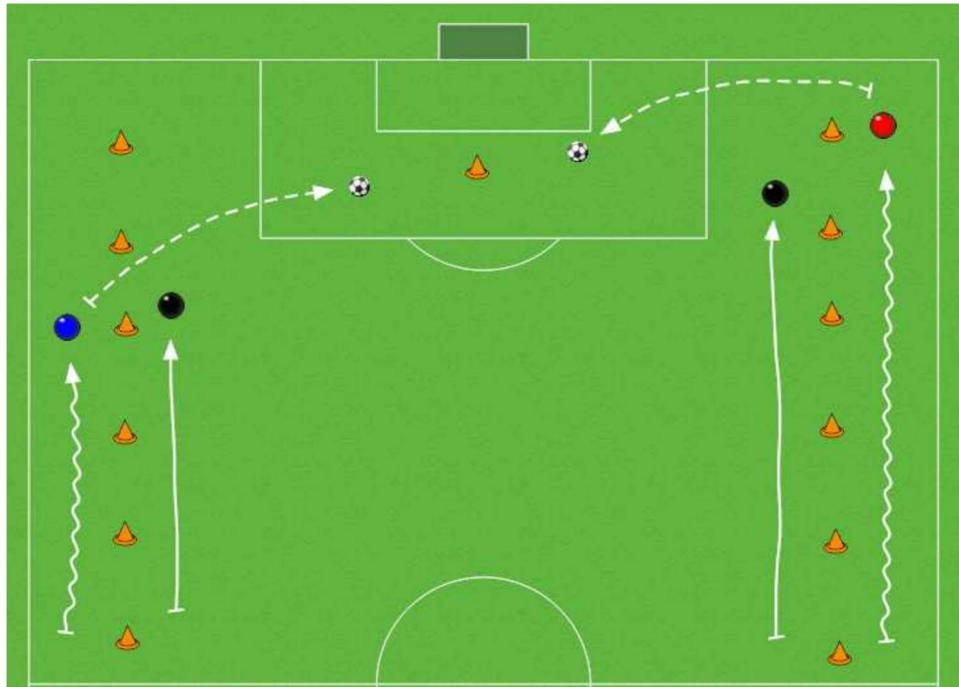


2. Players A and B dribble down the touchlines, A on left and B on the right.



3. A and B must stay in the area marked off by the cones. Defensive players are not permitted inside the area where A and B are located.

4. A and B try to get clear of the defensive players in order to cross the ball to the flag located in the penalty area. A cross can occur not only after the last cone but anywhere during the run.



Points of Emphasis

Wing Fake is a quick dribbling and passing drill. Players like the faking aspect of the drill and enjoy the challenge of trying to kick the ball into the cone located in the penalty area. During Wing Fake, instruct players to...

- (offensive) change speeds often to confuse the defender.
- (defensive) keep an eye on the offensive player's stomach area and not the ball as an indication of where the player intends to go next.
- (offensive) frustrate the defender by using a lot of quick starts and stops.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using 2 defenders to further challenge the offensive player.
2. Allowing the offensive player more space by bringing the cones further in from the end lines.
3. Having each player practice the drill from both sides of the field.
4. Allowing defenders to use their hands to stop a cross.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This drill can be tailored to help build both offensive and/or defensive player skills.

Tip #2 – Reward any offensive player that is able to kick the ball into the cone.

Tip #3 – Encourage the offensive player to use as many feigning skills as possible.

Throw-Ins, Pass, & Score (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

Throw-ins are sometimes awarded more than a hundred times a game, so it's necessary to have a few plays to make them an advantage for the offense instead of relying on chance that they'll up with the ball. Throw-Ins, Pass, & Score is a comprehensive soccer drill in which players practice a wall pass immediately after receiving a ball from a throw-in. Players work on a wide range of skills including throwing, heading, crossing, trapping, and shooting.

Instructions

1. Four players compose each drill team. The distance between players can vary depending on their individual comfort zones.
2. B runs down the field to receive a throw-in from player A.



3. B then passes or heads the ball to C's feet.



4. B continues to run towards the end line and receives a return pass from player C.



5. B dribbles to the corner area and crosses the ball to player D.



6. Player D takes a shot on the goal.



Points of Emphasis

Throw-Ins, Pass, & Score is a complicated drill even without added pressure from another team. Players should understand the structure of the play and at the same time stay loose and have fun with it. During Throw-Ins, Pass, & Score instruct players to...

- remember that this is a team exercise and to provide your teammate with a throw-in, pass, or cross that can be handled easily.
- visualize the play beforehand and then just “do it” without overthinking.
- master their own roles in the play which will make it easier for their teammates to execute their own part of the play.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Adding defenders for added pressure and to simulate a game situation.
2. Having players switch roles often so they understand the need to deliver a great throw-in or pass to a teammate.
3. Working this drill from both sides of the field.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This is a complicated drill that won't work unless the players are staying loose and having fun.

Tip #2 – Reward successful executions of this drill.

Tip #3 – Have the players talk with one another before starting the drill. This will help them build chemistry which will, hopefully, translate into a successful shot on goal.

Three Passers & A Shooter (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

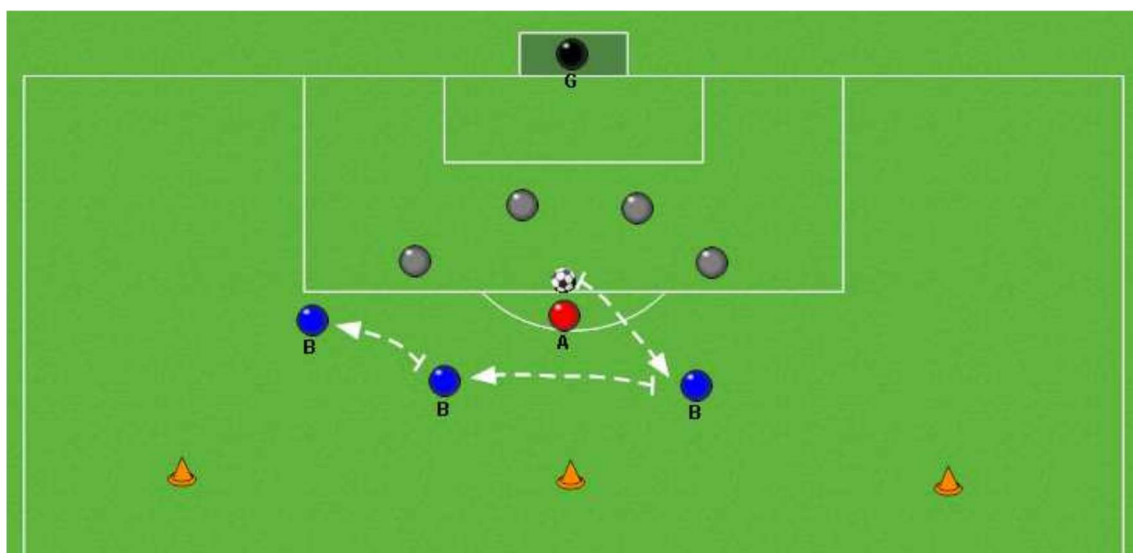
As players mature in ability, they should begin to realize that soccer is as much of a thinking game as it is a skill game. At higher levels soccer is likely more intuition than hard skills. Three Passers & A Shooter is a drill in which an offensive player learns to entice a defensive player to come out after a ball rather than forcing a ball through the defense with muscle.

Instructions

1. Nine players per drill set are used in this drill. Three cones are set aside on one-fourth of the field.
2. One player is designated to be the shooter, A. A is the only offensive player permitted to shoot at the goal. All other offensive players are passers, B.



3. The shooter must gain clearance from the defensive players to achieve a shot on goal. The passers must tease the defenders out of position so that the shooter can position him/herself behind them.



4. Defenders try to take control of the ball and kick it up the field before A takes a shot.



Points of Emphasis

Three Passers & A Shooter is a simple offensive and finishing drill. Players try to develop ways to create a goal through guile. During Three Passers & A Shooter, instruct players to...

- (defensive) defend by marking the passers closely.
- (offensive) be patient and wait for an opportunity. Allow the passers time to draw the defenders away so a good shot can be taken.
- (passers) understand the need to create a shooting lane for a teammate and use any means of feigning to draw a defender away.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a larger playing area and adding or subtracting the number of defenders
2. Adding another shooter.
3. Making a smaller goal-mouth with cones.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Players should be taught that goals can be manufactured through simple “smarts” rather than just muscle or a hard haphazard shot.

Tip #2 – Encourage defensive players to strategize amongst themselves in order to gain possession of the ball.

Tip #3 – Reward successful goals achieved by the offense and up field clearances by the defense.

Start-Up (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

When the game begins or after a goal has been scored, the ball comes back to the center circle and play is restarted on the referee’s whistle. Having a set play prepared for a kickoff can catch an opposing team off guard and can lead to a scoring opportunity. In this drill, players create scoring opportunities from the kickoff by using the following three options: crossing to A, B, or E; D shooting at the goal; or D passing the ball back to C, who shoots at the goal.

Instructions

1. Five players per drill group are used in this drill.



2. A pushes a short pass to B.



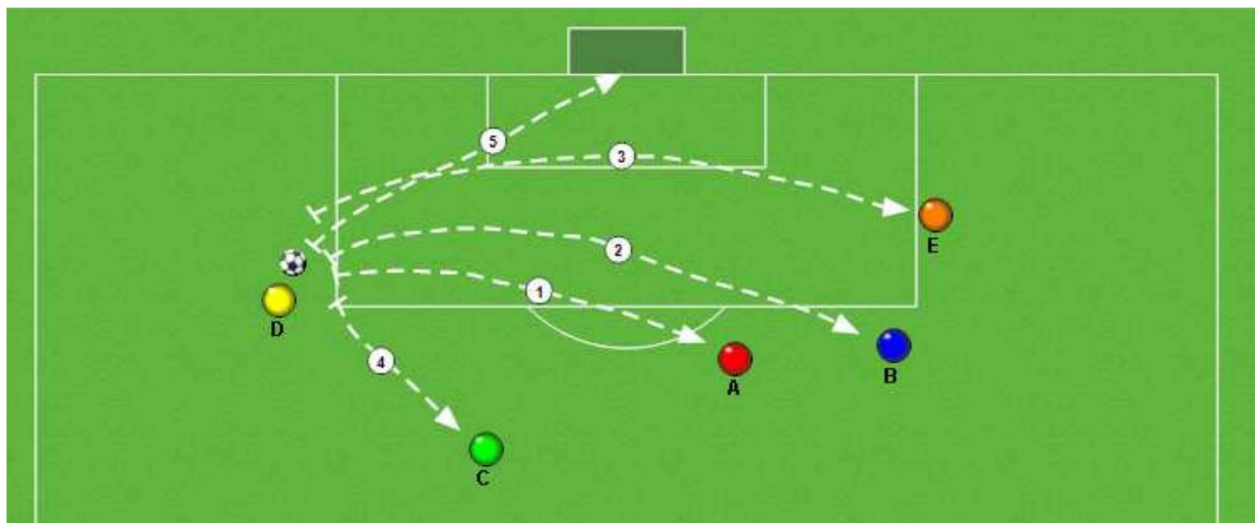
3. B passes across the field to player D. Players A, C, and E run towards the 18 yard line.



4. Player D dribbles down the field toward the corner of the 18-yard line. Player D either crosses to players A, B, and E or shoots at the goal. D can also pass back to player C. Any of these players may then take a shot.



5. Player D either crosses to players A, B, and E or shoots at the goal. D can also pass back to player C. Any of these players may then take a shot.



Points of Emphasis

Start-Up is a tactical drill that can be used at the start of a game. Players enjoy mastering a drill which could potentially put an opposing team “on their heels” during a game. During Start-Up, instruct players to...

- know their roles – this is a complete team drill, and everyone must execute in order for it to succeed.
- stay confident should the play break down and continue to try to work out a way to score.
- attack quickly at the start of a game – opposing teams often take time to warm up and are very vulnerable at this time.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Using defensive players to mimic a game situation.
2. Having D pass back to A in the center circle – A will then distribute to E.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – There are many variations to this drill. Allow players to participate in structuring plays they think will work.

Tip #2 – Encourage offensive players to make a strong attack off of a kickoff because an opposing team may not be ready to defend.

Tip #3 – Communication and chemistry amongst teammates is critical. Reward successful shots on goal whether or not defenders are utilized in this drill.

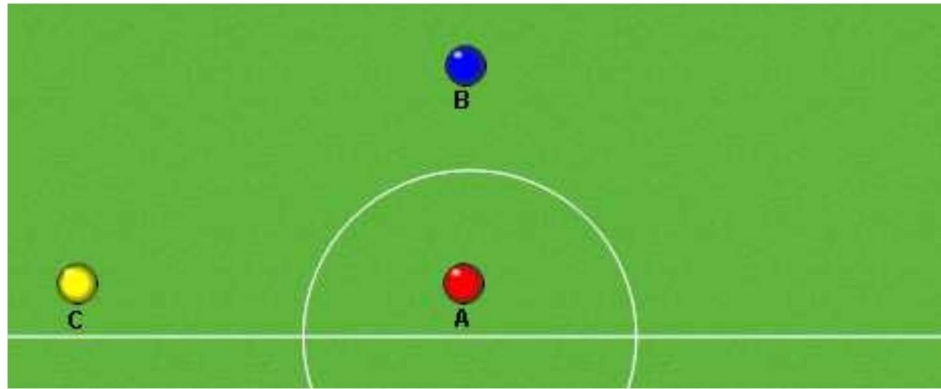
Nutmeg & Shoot (Skill Level – Advanced)

Drill Purpose

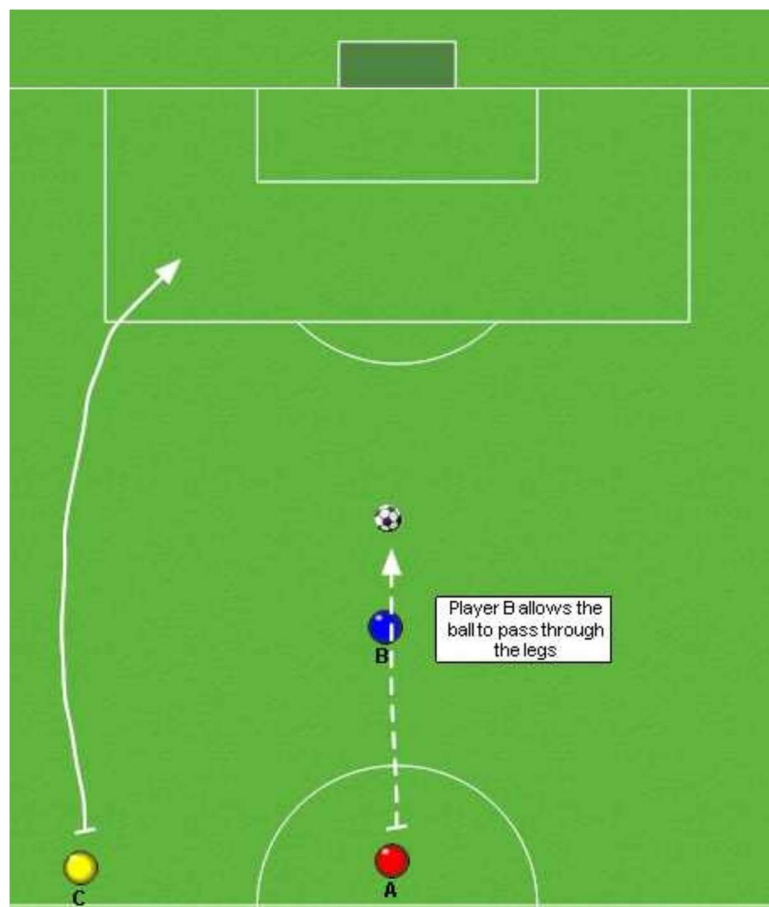
A ball that passes between a defender’s legs is usually unplanned during the course of a game. Nutmeg & Shoot is an advanced soccer passing and shooting drill that stresses ball handling and finishing as well as teaches a player to run with a pass rather than come to meet it.

Instructions

1. Players in groups of 3 assemble on the 50 yard line. Player A is positioned in the center circle and player C is 10-15 yards from player A along the 50 yard line. Player B is in front of player A at a distance of about 5-10 yards.

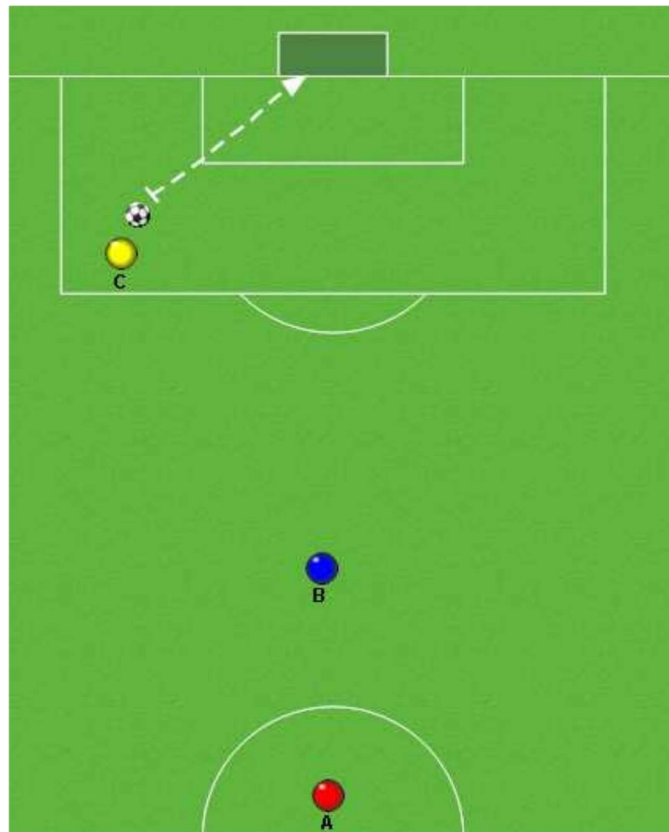


2. On your whistle, A passes to B. Player B lets the ball pass between his/her legs and then quickly turns to make a pass to player C.





3. Player C takes control of the pass and finishes the play with a shot on goal.



Points of Emphasis

Nutmeg & Shoot is an advanced soccer drill that may or may not be used in a game situation but is good for a player to have in his/her personal skill arsenal. During Nutmeg & Shoot, instruct players to...

- make crisp passes under player B's legs.
- let the ball come to them rather than running to meet the ball. It's easier to stay stationary and let the ball pass between the legs rather than run towards it, stop, and time the pass-through correctly.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of Nutmeg & Shoot, further variations include:

1. Allowing player B to let the ball go to either of his/her sides (rather than under the legs) and run with it before passing off to C.
2. Having player B open his/her legs and deflect the ball off the heel to player C.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Have players develop the chemistry with each other so that they know, without talking, that this is a play that they'd like to use in a game.

Tip #2 – If the play fails that's ok – simply recover and play on. This is a difficult play to execute in a high pressure situation.

Tip #3 – Feel free to use deception against the other team, such as turning your head one way and passing the other under a teammate's legs.

Off Limits (Skill Level – Advanced)

Drill Purpose

During a game, it's often necessary to feed a pass to a receiver who's far away. The receiver could be a player in position to take a shot or a player who will help change the direction of the attack. Off Limits is a soccer passing drill stressing long chips over distances. Because accuracy is a requirement, this is considered an advanced drill.

Instructions

1. Only 2 players per drill group are necessary for this drill. Ten cones and 1 soccer ball for each group are utilized.
2. The field, from end line to end line, is divided into 3 sections. From touchline (sideline) to touchline the field is further divided into 4 sections. Section 2, the middle section, is off-limits to players. Sections 1 and 3 are the passing zones.
3. Beginning in Zone 1, players A and B must successfully pass a ball over the off-limits section before moving to the next zone.

4. The ball must be kicked from one passing zone to the other without touching the ground in the off-limits zone. Also, the receiving player must trap and control the ball before it goes out of bounds. Players must meet both of these requirements before moving to the next zone.
5. Both A and B are required to perform both phases of this drill, kicking and receiving, before they move to the next zone where the same procedure is repeated. The drill ends in zone 4 when both A and B complete their tasks.

Points of Emphasis

Off Limits is an advanced passing drill. Players will need to consistently chip for distance as well as trap a ball in designated areas. During Off Limits, instruct players to...

- make good chips that the receiver can handle.
- when trapping, be loose and coddle the ball and don't let it bounce away.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a smaller playing area if players are having difficulty making accurate air passes.
2. Adding more stipulations to trapping – such as only trapping with the chest or only trapping with the legs.
3. Requiring players to use both feet when chipping.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Players should not be intimidated with making longer passes. Teach players that a short pass can be just as difficult to complete as a longer pass.

Tip #2 – Reward successful completions of this drill. Timing the drill adds another layer of urgency.

Tip #3 – Off Limits is a test of concentration in making repetitive long passes so be sure players have their “heads in the game”.

Dribbling Drills

Dribbling 101 (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

Learning how to correctly dribble a soccer ball. Dribbling allows you to move the ball around the field without losing possession. Always instruct players to keep the ball close most of the time when dribbling. Also, encourage them to look at the ball less...good players will look at the field more than the ball.

Instructions

1. **Use your arms.** When you dribble with speed move your arms as you would when you sprint without the ball. Keep your arms out at all times when dribbling around defenders. You can use them to brush past players, improve your balance, and keep players farther away from you.
2. **Stay in an athletic position.** An athletic position will help you remain balanced. Good balance will help you cut quickly in any direction while retaining control of the ball. When dribbling you should feel relaxed and comfortable. Center your position of gravity, bend your knees slightly, and keep your back straight (or lean forward slightly).
3. **Use the front of your feet.** Every good speed and agility trainer will tell you to land on the front of your feet. Landing on your heels will slow you down and reduce your balance. Land on the front of your feet every step, whether you are dribbling forward with your laces or cutting across your body using an inside touch.
4. **Use different parts of your feet.** There are 4 different parts of your feet, the laces, outside, inside, and sole.
 - **(Laces)** Always use your laces to dribble forward with speed. When you use your laces to dribble, touch the ball with each step. This is the key to having the ball “glued” to your feet. When you keep the ball close defenders will have a hard time stealing the ball.
 - **(Outside, inside, and soles)** Use these parts of your feet to cut inside and outside of your body, to use moves, and to turn. Which part of your foot you should use depends on the position of the ball and your body. Experiment to see what works best in different situations.

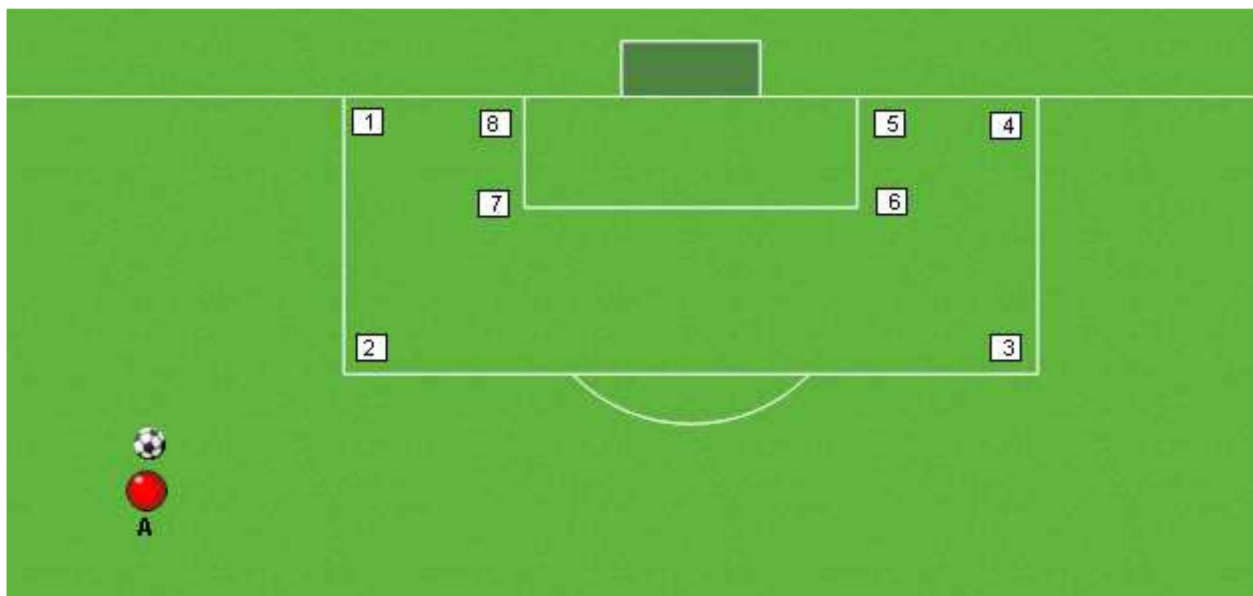
Stop and Go (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

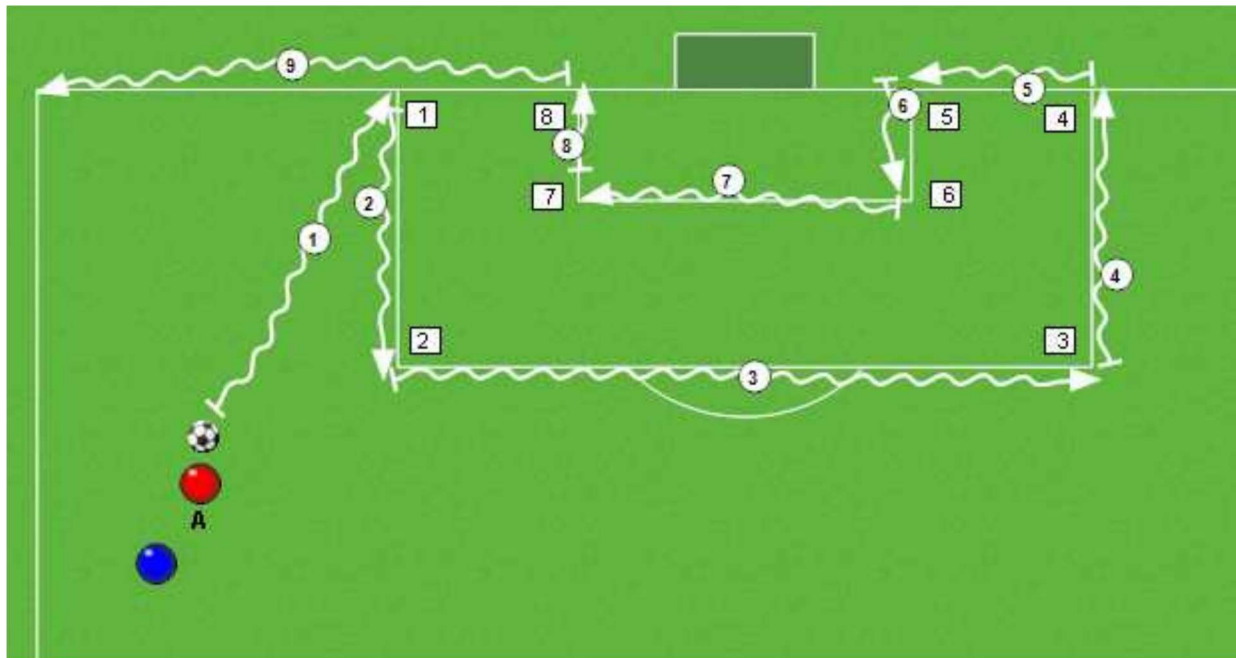
Beginning or very young players often fall into the trap of “wanting to do too much” with the ball all at once or they’re in a rush to distribute or shoot a ball before they have control of it. Stop and Go is a dribbling drill in which players run with the ball and then come to a complete stop. Only after stopping do they proceed. This will develop the mindset that a ball needs to be in full possession before the next step is taken.

Instructions

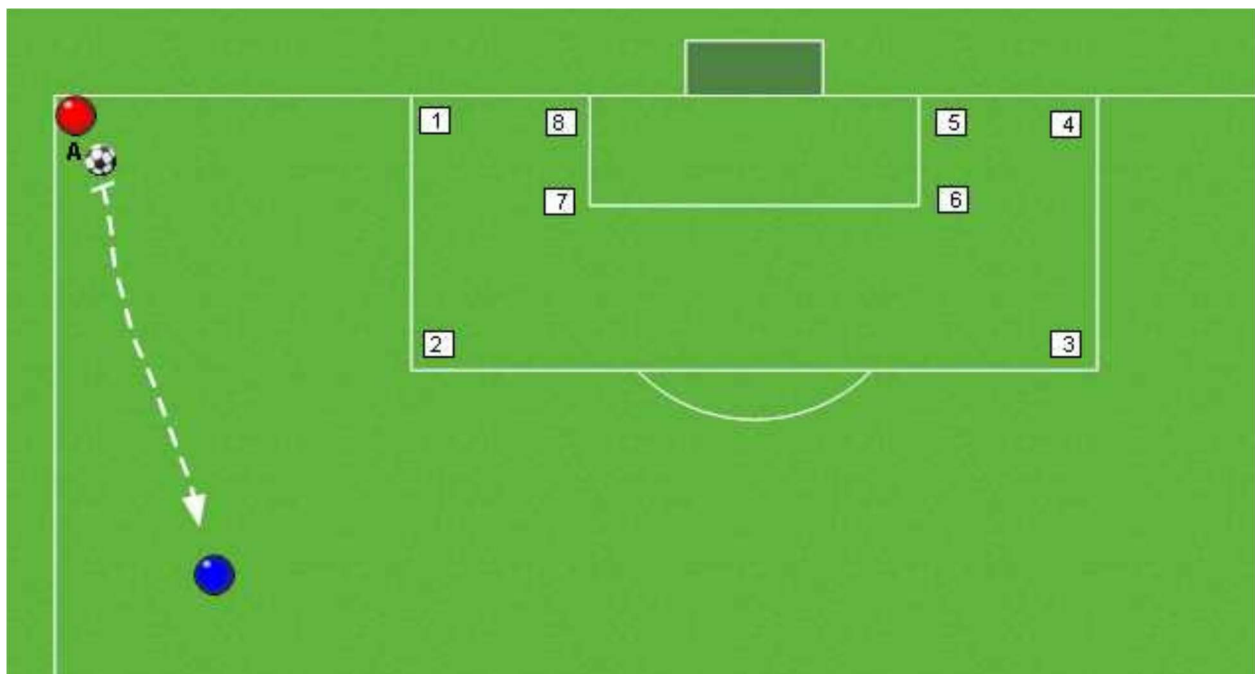
1. Only one player per drill exercise is needed.
2. The distance from A to the end line is about 18-20 yards.



3. Starting with player A, each player dribbles to each corner of the 18- yard line and then to each corner of the goal area.



4. Each player must bring the ball to a complete stop on each number of the corner before continuing to the next number.
5. Finally, A dribbles to the left corner of the field, where he/she then passes the ball to the next player in line. The next player repeats the procedure.



Points of Emphasis

Stop and Go is a simple but very important beginning soccer drill. Players will learn to break plays down and take one step at a time. During Stop and Go, instruct players to...

- not get caught up in dribbling speed to the next corner – the idea is to make a complete stop before proceeding.
- develop the mindset soccer is a game of pieces all “put together”.
- make up imaginary scenarios during this drill such as being chased by a defender, stopping, and then looking for someone to pass to.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Encouraging players to increase their speed without neglecting to come to a complete stop or becoming sloppy with the ball.
2. Adding a tailing player whose job it is to simply run behind the player with the ball to increase a sense of pressure.
3. Developing fitness by using the entire field.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Soccer is a “walk before you run” type of game. High level players make plays look smooth but when observed in slow motion they are indeed coming to a complete stop before passing or moving on.

Tip #2 – Encourage players to keep their heads and eyes off of their feet and look at the entire field while dribbling.

Tip #3 – Reward players that successfully complete this drill. Although it’s an easy drill, it is very important.

Drop-Off (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

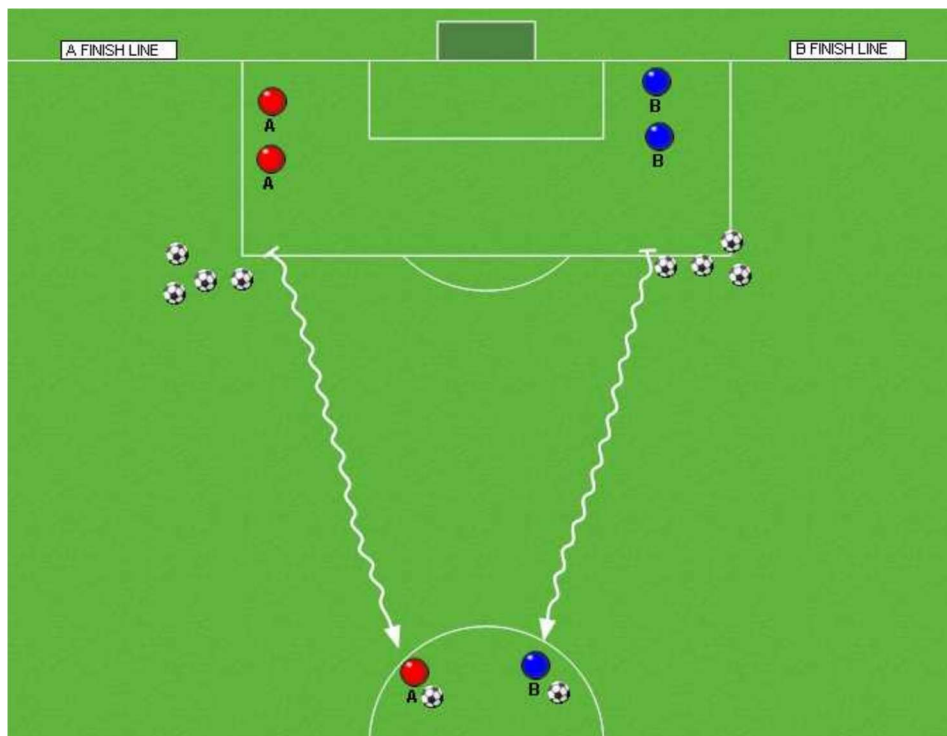
Drop-Off is a beginning soccer drill designed to build conditioning and ball handling skills while dribbling. Each player in this drill will run about 350 yards. Therefore, it’s an excellent drill for improving physical endurance and speed. Fast dribbling is practiced and although geared for beginners, this drill can be useful for players of all skill levels.

Instructions

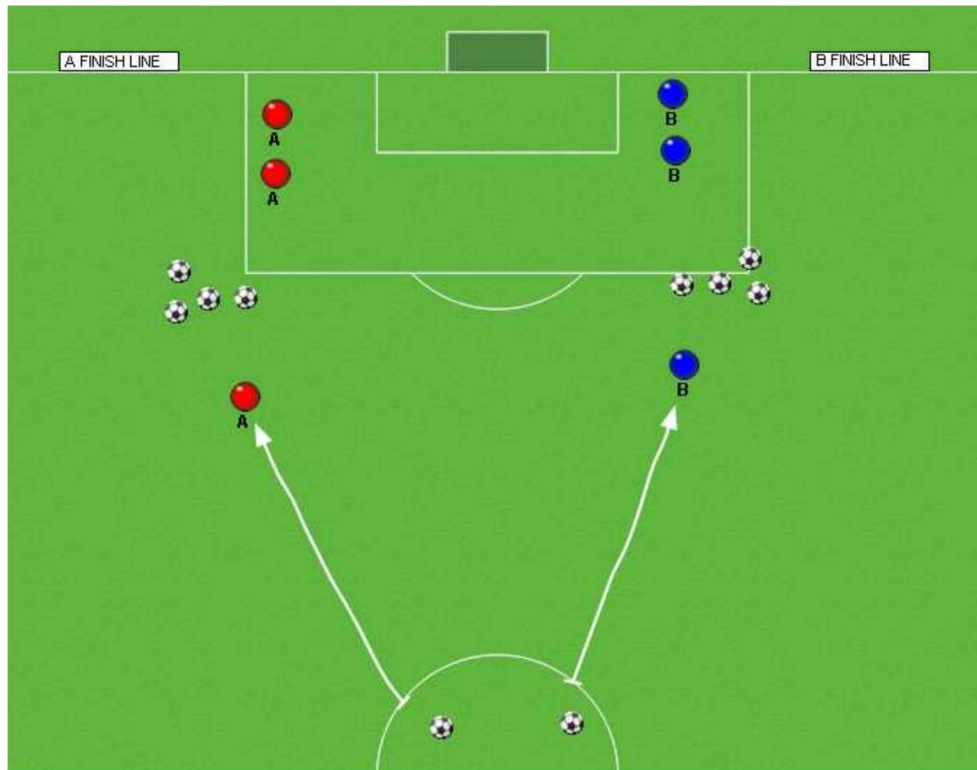
1. Two players per drill, each with 5 soccer balls are used in this exercise.
2. The distance from A to B is about 30-40 yards.



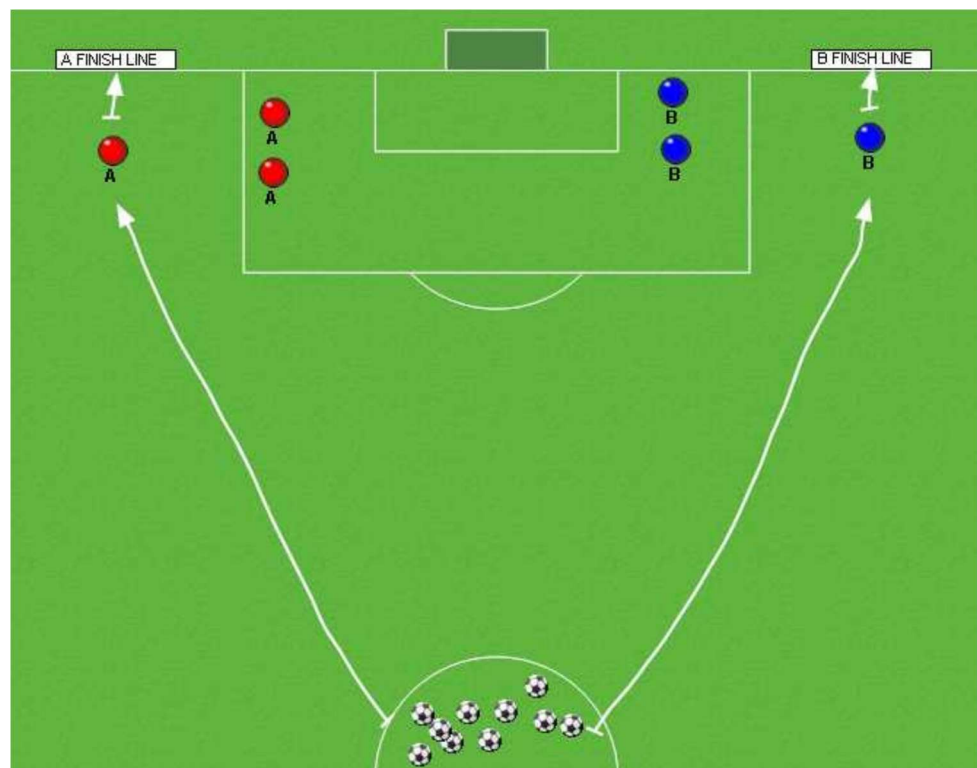
3. Each player begins with 5 balls. On your whistle, players A and B dribble the ball to the center circle and leave the ball.



4. A and B then sprint back for another ball. A and B are not in competition with each other.



5. Play is completed when each player drops off all 5 balls in the drop area and the players involved run past the designated finish line.



Points of Emphasis

Drop-Off is primarily a soccer conditioning drill. It's great for players that need conditioning at the beginning of a season or for those that have shown problems running with the ball. During Drop-Off drill, instruct players to...

- dribble quickly but control movements to save energy.
- run with heads-up while dribbling and avoid staring at your feet.
- make sure the ball is dribbled under control into the center circle and not kicked there.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Having A and B compete against one another.
2. Adding or removing the number of balls depending on the current conditioning level of the players.
3. Creating a drop area that's closer to the start than the center circle.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – There are many variations to this drill. The drill can be used as a practice drill for all players or even a punishment drill if necessary.

Tip #2 – Encourage players to run quickly but never lose control of the ball.

Tip #3 – If using this as a competition drill, reward winners or set up a playoff system.

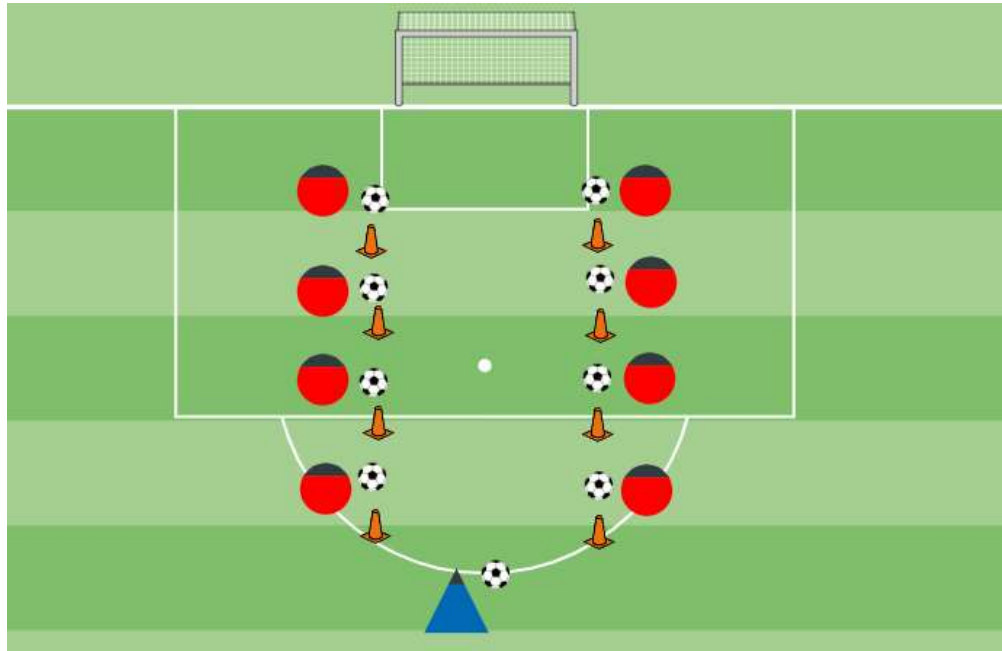
Asteroids (Skill Level – All Age Levels)

Drill Purpose

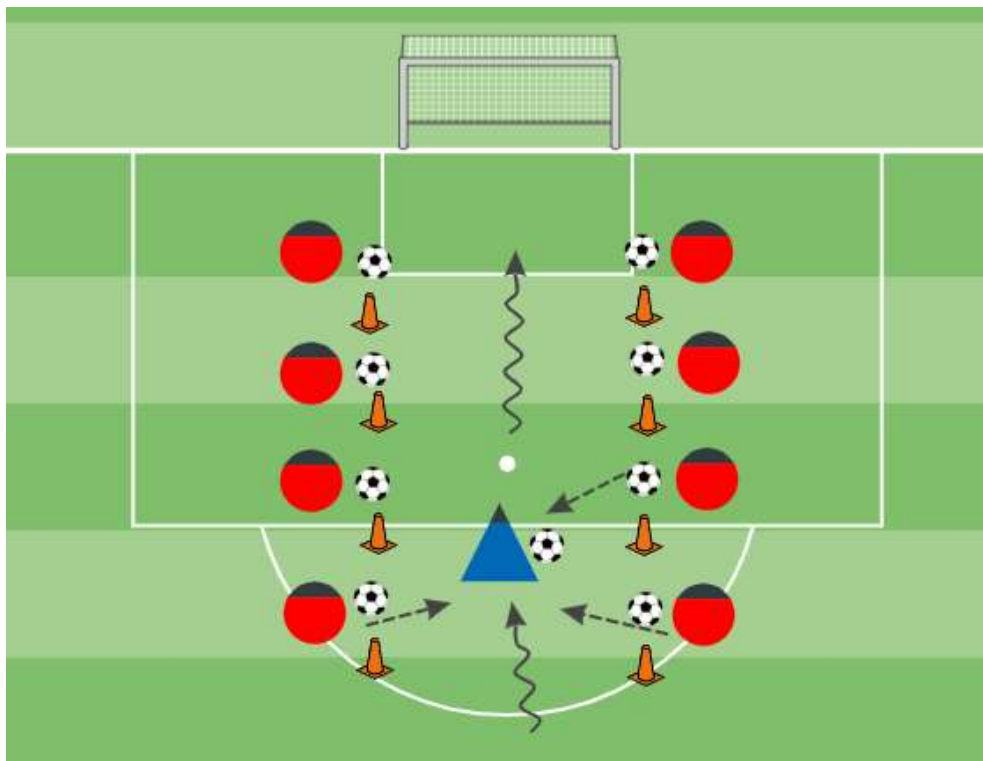
Asteroids is a fun and simple drill...particularly for younger players. Players improve their dribbling ability and learn to protect the ball.

Instructions

1. This drill uses all players with each having their own soccer ball (asteroid) to start. Create a funnel using sets of cones that lead to the goal. The cones should be roughly 5 – 8 yards apart. (This distance can be adjusted for age/ability) Line all the defenders (asteroid shooters) along the outside of each set of cones. The offensive player begins with their ball at the top of the funnel.



2. On the coach's whistle the offensive player must dribble his/her ball through the asteroid field (staying between the cones) and safely dribble their ball into the net (no shots). While dribbling to the goal the defenders will attempt to knock the offensive players ball away with heavily weighted passes at the offensive players' ball. Defenders cannot step into the funnel or past the cones. If a defender knocks an offensive player's ball outside of the funnel that offensive player's turn is over.



3. Rotate all the players through so that each has an opportunity to be the goal scorer. Play as many rounds as the time you've built into practice for this activity will allow. Whichever player scores the most goals is the winner.

Points of Emphasis

Asteroids is a simple ball handling drill that also works in ball defense and passing activities. Players like the simplicity of the game and don't realize all of the skills they are building. During Asteroids, instruct players to...

- Keep the ball close while dribble through the cones
- Use their body to protect/shield the ball from the asteroids/defenders
- Defenders should focus on properly weighted passes using the instep of their foot

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Decreasing the size of the funnel
2. Using half the number of balls therefor requiring defenders to trap the ball/asteroid coming through the funnel before they can make an attempt at the offensive players ball

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Reward players who keep the ball close while dribbling, never lose control and or score goals

Tip #2 – Encourage defenders (if using fewer balls) to team up with one another so their passes stay in the field of play

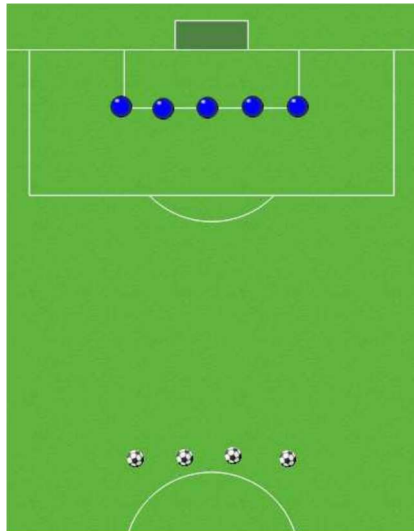
Musical Balls (Skill Level – Beginner)

Drill Purpose

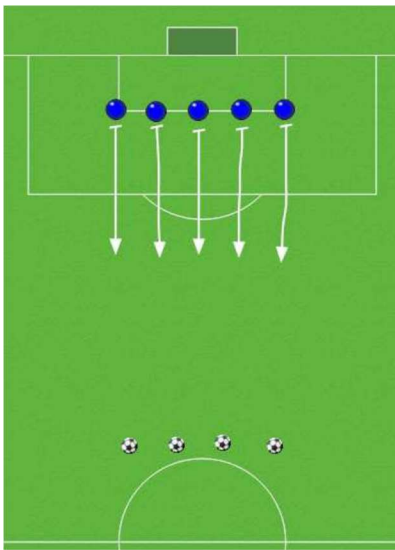
Musical Balls is a drill that's a favorite among players. They improve their speed by trying to beat other players to the ball. They also practice quick control and placement of a ball into a safe area.

Instructions

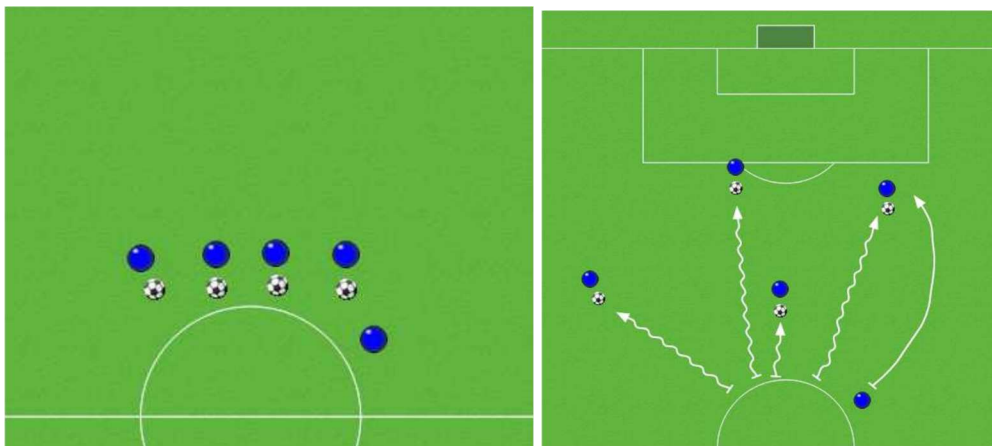
1. This drill uses 5 players per group and 4 soccer balls.
2. Five players line up on the 6-yard line. Four balls are placed in front of the center circle.



3. On the whistle, players race to control one of the balls.



4. The player that does not win a ball attempts to take a ball away from one of the other players who now are permitted to dribble around the field.



5. Play continues for about one minute or when the coach ends the match. Play is confined to one half of the field.

Points of Emphasis

Musical Balls is a simple ball handling and fitness drill. Players like the simplicity of the game and don't realize all of the skills they are building. During Musical Balls, instruct players to...

- win a ball and dribble away from pressure as soon as possible.
- avoid wasting energy on chasing (for the player that doesn't win a ball) and try to contain a dribbler and wait for him/her to make a mistake.
- enjoy the role of being the player without the ball as this is a situation that will show itself in a game.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a smaller playing area which stresses skill sets more than conditioning.
2. Adding more players but keeping the number of balls the same.
3. Requiring ball handlers to dribble in a pre-defined route once they win a ball.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Reward players that always seem to win a ball and never lose control.

Tip #2 – Encourage chasers (if using more than one) to team up with one another in order to take a ball away from another player.

Tip #3 – Dribblers should try to keep their body between the ball and the player trying to take it from them.

Chase Down (Sharks & Minnows) (Skill Level – All)

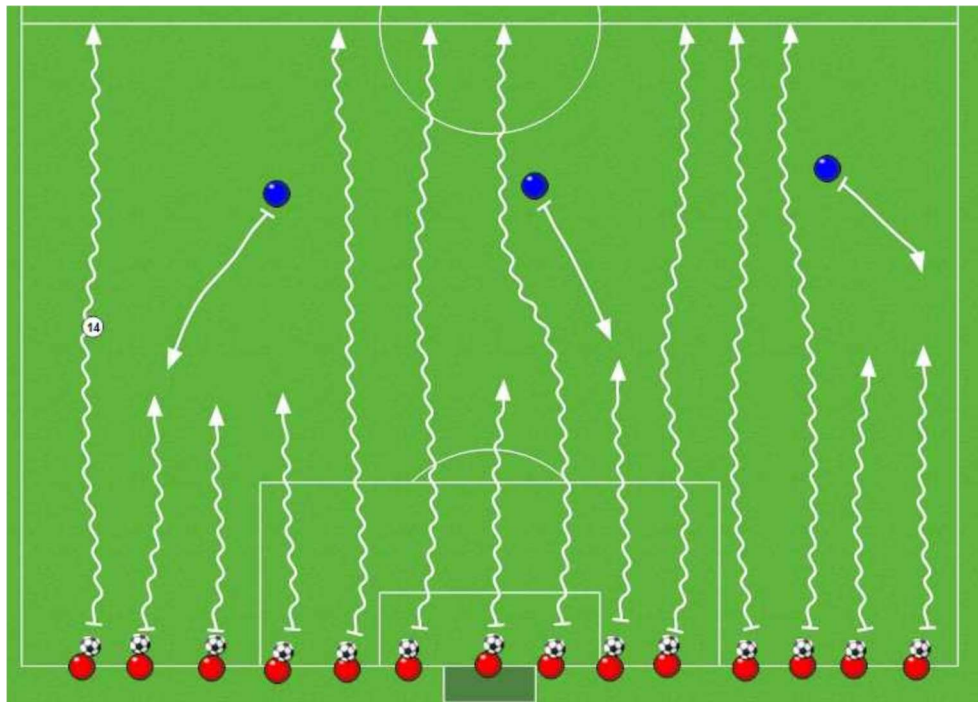
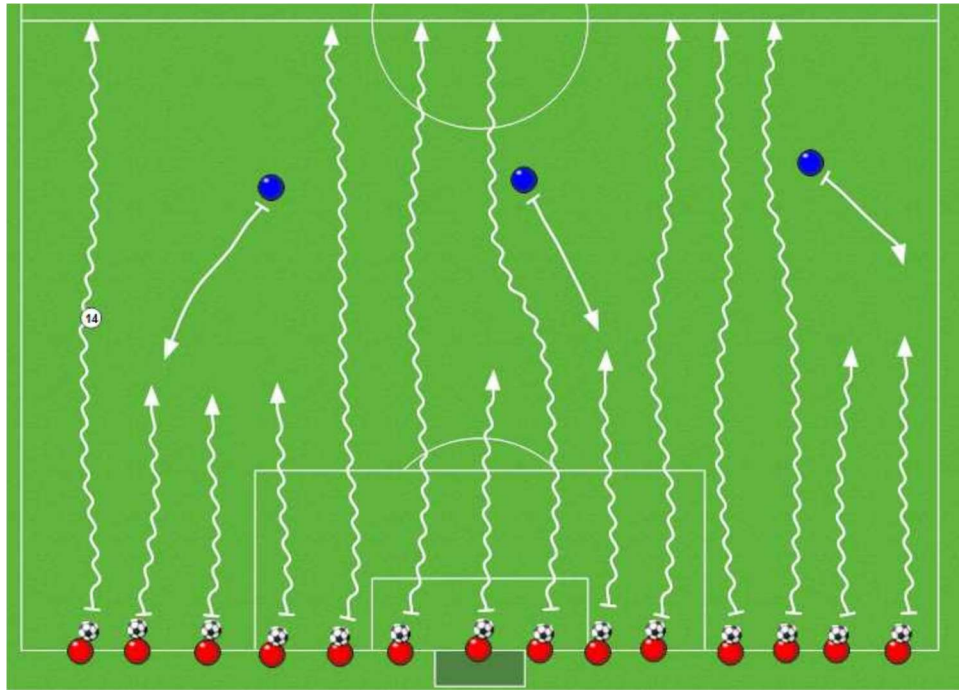
Drill Purpose

Often used to begin a practice, Chase Down starts the players running with the ball and quickly has them progress into the flow of the upcoming practice. Chase Down is a light warm-up drill to get players having fun and thinking about soccer. This drill is great for conditioning and developing skills running longer distances while carrying the ball.

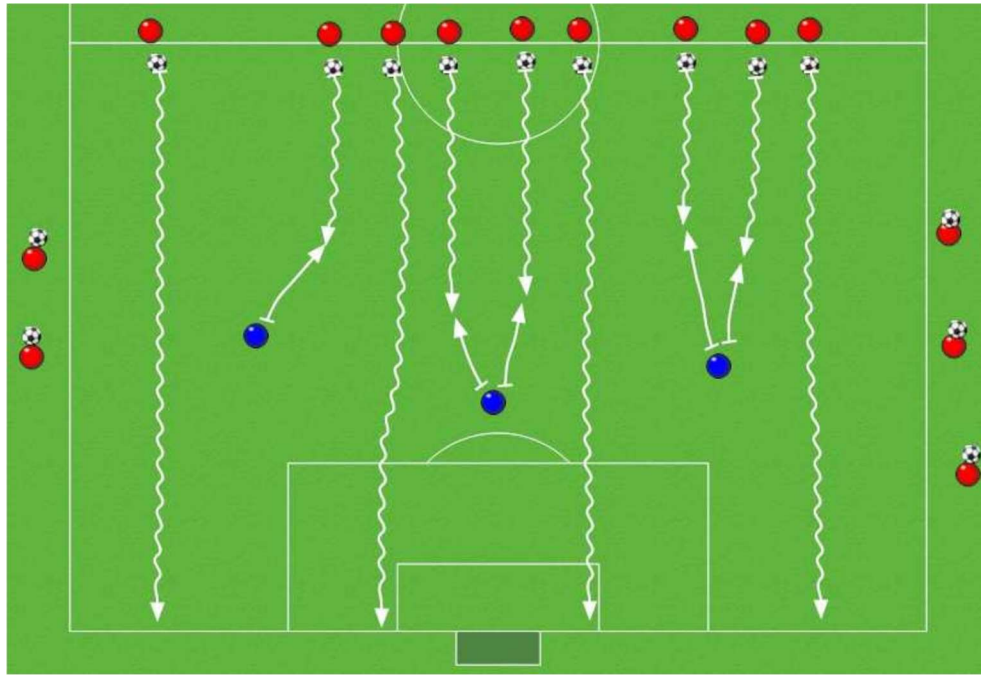
Instructions

1. Instruct each player to find a spot along a short edge of the field with a ball.
2. On your whistle the players begin dribbling with their ball towards the 50 yard line.

3. Several players are chosen to try and stop the dribbling players from reaching the 50 yard line by kicking their ball away. Players chosen to intercept balls are permitted to intercept and kick away as many player's balls as they can.



4. Once a player reaches the 50 yard line, rest is allowed until the next round. Players who have had their ball kicked away must retrieve their ball and wait off to the side. In the next round players repeat the exercise but run in the opposite direction towards the original sideline.



5. The process continues until one player remains.

Points of Emphasis

Chase Down is a game that requires instinct and strategy. Players like it because it's simple, fast, and they enjoy the personal aspect of attacking players of their choice. During a Chase Down match, instruct players to...

- be comfortable looking around the field while running with the ball.
- try new “moves” or foot skills against an oncoming attacker.
- try dribbling with the ball at different speeds.
- keep the ball close to their feet when dribbling.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. A larger playing area such as the entire field to improve player conditioning and open field running.
2. Using more attackers.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This drill is a great way to develop open field running with a ball and players should keep in mind their location on the field while moving forward.

Tip #2 – Instruct players to have a feel for the pace of the game in their head while handling a ball and try not to constantly look at their feet.

Tip #3 – Encourage players to be creative and treat this drill like a real game situation.

Knock Out

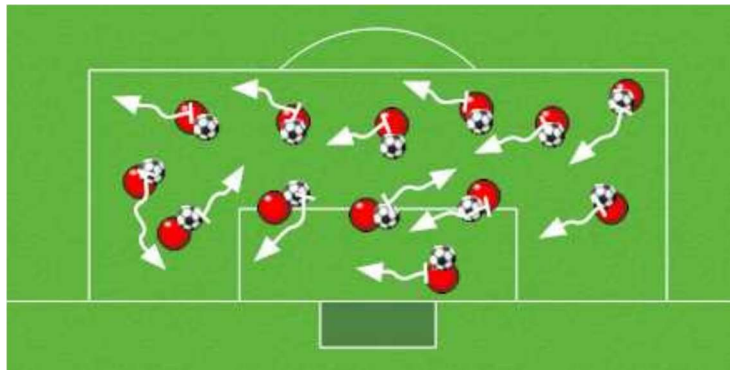
(Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

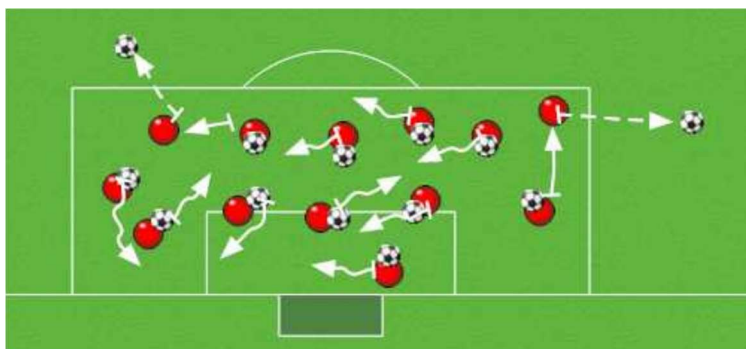
Sudden Death is a drill that players often look forward to. This is a fun game that fits nicely in between more difficult exercises and can be tailored to be as long or short as needed. While playing Sudden Death, players develop ball handling skills in confined areas and are forced to take their eyes off of their feet while traveling with the ball. The last player remaining with his ball is the winner.

Instructions

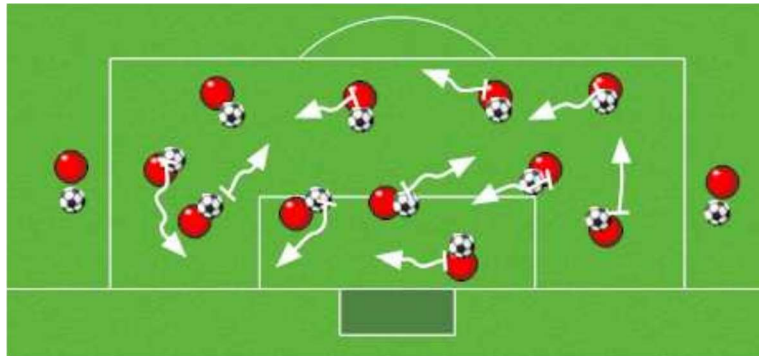
1. Instruct each player to take a ball and find a spot in the 18-yard penalty box. Any place they choose to begin is fine.
2. On your first whistle the players begin dribbling around the penalty box taking care to stay within the confines of the penalty area and trying not to collide with one another.



3. The next blow of your whistle is a signal for the game to begin. The object of the game is to be the last remaining player inside the penalty area with a ball. Any ball kicked out of the penalty box by another player or by simple mishandling is “sudden death” for that player. The player then leaves the penalty area until the next game and the remaining players in the box continue.



4. Players are permitted to leave their ball unoccupied in trying to kick the ball of another player out of bounds, but should someone kick their ball away then they are out of the game. As players are gradually removed from the game the playing area becomes less congested.



5. This process continues until one player remains.

Points of Emphasis

Sudden Death is a game that requires a lot of concentration and strategy. Players like it because it's simple, fast, and they enjoy the personal aspect of attacking players of their choice. During a Sudden Death match, instruct players to...

- keep their eyes off of their feet as much as they can.
- encourage team-work (such as 2 players joining wits to knockout another)
- try any foot drills they've been taught
- keep the ball close to their feet!

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a larger playing area such as half of the field to strengthen a player's conditioning and open field running.
2. Using left or right feet only.
3. Adding pressure by selecting a player who doesn't have a ball to be the "shark" whose job it is to kick as many balls out of bounds as possible.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This drill is a great way to keep your players from getting bored. It can be used as a break from the more tedious aspects of practice.

Tip #2 – Set up a reward system - For example, if a player wins a match (or makes the final 5 or 3) then that player won't run at the end of practice.

Tip #3 – Encourage players to be creative and sneaky – they’ll have a lot of fun and will start to take on this mindset in real game situations.

Center of Town (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

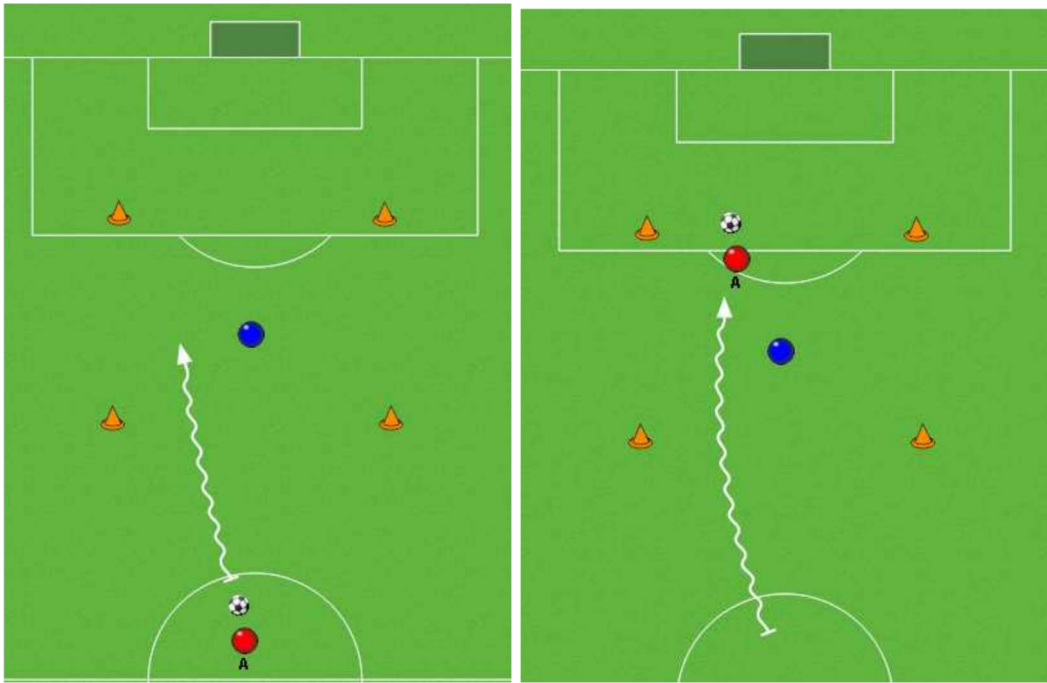
Center of Town is a dribbling, shooting, and defensive drill. Both offensive and defensive players practice important parts of their game. Offensive players practice dribbling and feinting skills in a confined area. Defensive players practice tackling and clearing skills. Players enjoy the pace and competition of this drill.

Instructions

1. Two players compose each drill group.
2. Four cones are placed on the corners of the 20-yard square in front of the goal area.



3. A dribbles between the flags and tries to beat the defensive player through the Center of Town. A must stay within the confines of the flags while dribbling towards the goal.



4. A is allowed to shoot at the goal, but only after passing the last set of flags.



Points of Emphasis

Center of Town is a simple and fast drill that emphasizes many skills. Players will need to act quickly, and they enjoy the high pressure situation. During a Center of Town match, instruct players to...

- (defensive) do not “throw your leg”. In other words, contain the offensive player and don’t reach for the ball unless you’re sure you can touch it, otherwise the offensive player will go around you.
- (offensive) try any one-on-one skills in your arsenal to get past the defender.
- (offensive) try to keep your body between the defensive player and the ball.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Decreasing the size of the square to increase the pressure on A.
2. Adding another defender (which might mean increasing the square size).
3. Changing the shape of the square into a triangle or other shape.
4. Having the square initially set far from the goal which means A will need to take a shot from distance to score.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Instruct the defensive player to watch the offensive players stomach instead of the ball. Watching the stomach is a better indication of where the offensive player intends to go next.

Tip #2 – Encourage defensive players to extend their arms while containing an offensive player to increase the perceived size of the barrier the offensive player needs to go around.

Tip #3 – Reward offensive players that consistently beat the defender and score goals.

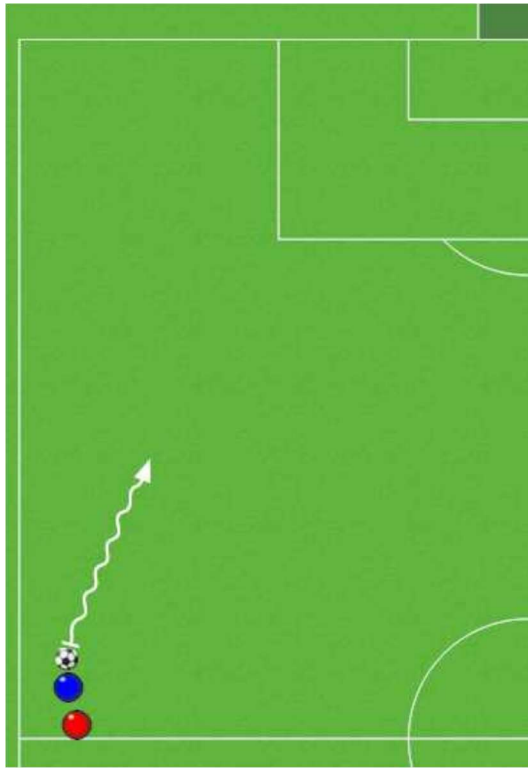
Defensive Run-Down (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

Defensive Run-Down is a drill that tests both offensive and defensive players simultaneously. The offensive player works on speed while dribbling under pressure and at the same time the defensive player practices recovery maneuvers and clearing the ball.

Instructions

1. Two players (one offensive and one defensive) and a ball are to stand close to the 50 yard line. Usually there's enough room on one side of the 50 for 3 sets of players to be involved at once.
2. On your first whistle the offensive player dribbles at high speed towards the goal.



3. Once the offensive player has a several yard head start blow the whistle again. This signals the defensive player to attempt to run down the offensive player and attempt to get ahead and clear the ball to the outside.



4. The offensive player must keep the ball under foot control – no long dribbling is permitted.

5. If the offensive player eludes the defender then a shot may be taken once inside the penalty area but no sooner. Once a defensive player has kicked the offensive player's ball away or the offensive player takes a shot, the drill has ended and players may then line up on the 50 yard line to repeat the exercise.



Points of Emphasis

Defensive Run-Down is a drill that stresses recovery for defenders and control of the ball while dribbling for offensive players. Instruct players to...

- (offensive players) attempt to run at high speed while keeping the ball at their feet.
- (offensive players) attempt to get into scoring position knowing a defender is quickly approaching.
- (defensive players) to run towards the goal and clear the ball to the outside.
- (defensive players) attempt legal slide tackling.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Having two defenders attack from either side.
2. Using left or right sides of the field to work opposing feet.

3. Adding a goalie in the net whose job it is to add a distraction for the oncoming offensive player.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This drill is a great way to teach players defensive skill if an offender breaks through and quickly speeds towards the goal. Let a defensive player know that all is not lost if a line of defense breaks down and an offensive player gains an advantage.

Tip #2 – Allow offensive players to be creative under pressure by performing any moves necessary to achieve a shot on goal or considering passing the ball to another offender.

Tip #3 – As this situation will likely occur in a real game setting, stress the importance for both offensive and defensive players to understand their roles.

Defensive Drills

Defense 101 (Skill Level – Beginner - Advanced)

Drill Purpose

Learning how to play defense in soccer. The ability to read your opponent and the field is invaluable, but even if you lack certain skill, there are techniques you can employ to make yourself a more dependable defender.

Instructions

- 1. Evaluate the opposing player's style.** Knowing as much as you can about your opponent will allow you to determine early on how you'll have to defend them.
 - If the player you are covering prefers quick, agile plays, you'll want to play very aggressive defense and stick with them closely to prevent them from taking advantage of any gaps.
 - If the player you are guarding relies on tricks of footwork you can counter this by careful attention, on your part, to his hips and the ball.
- 2. Cut off attacks on net and passes between players.** First and foremost, the responsibility of a defender is to protect the net. Always keep yourself between the strikers of the other team and the net at all times, but there may be occasions where you need to cut off a dangerous pass to an open player.
 - It's important for you as a defender to keep your awareness sharp and make judgement calls as best you can. If you react slowly to changes on-field, your defense will suffer.
- 3. Limit your stabs at the ball.** Jabbing your foot out to try to haphazardly prod the ball away from your opponent can compromise your balance and give him an opportunity to pass you by. You should leave roughly an arm's length of space between you and your opponent.
 - Wait until the right moment to steal the ball away by back stepping until your opponent makes a mistake.
- 4. Angle your hips and your approach.** It's easy for the opposition to evade a defender that approaches head on, so you should avoid running straight at opposition strikers.

When confronting an offensive player, try to approach at an angle that forces the opposition to use his non-dominant foot.

- You can better ensure the right hip angle by leading with one foot while you cover an offensive player. This way you can turn easily in response to developments on the field.

5. Communicate with fellow defenders. Defenders need to communicate clearly with the keeper, the midfield, and each other. If the defense is playing an offside trap, or if a defender is not in line or not marking a player, he should be informed of this loudly and quickly.

- Defenders that want the keeper to get the ball, or receive a pass back, should vocalize their expectations.
- Get to know your teammates. Communication is easier when the defenders and other players know each other.

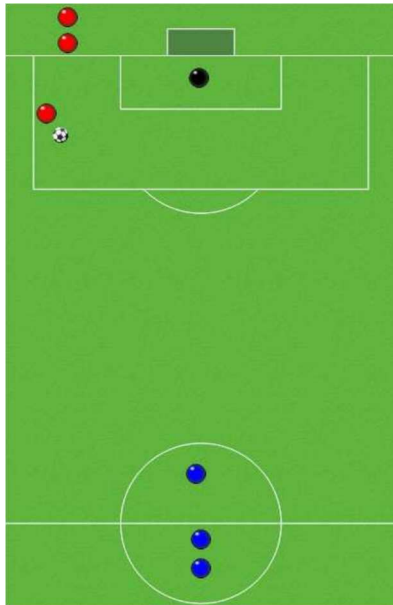
Defensive Stop (Skill Level – U14+)

Drill Purpose

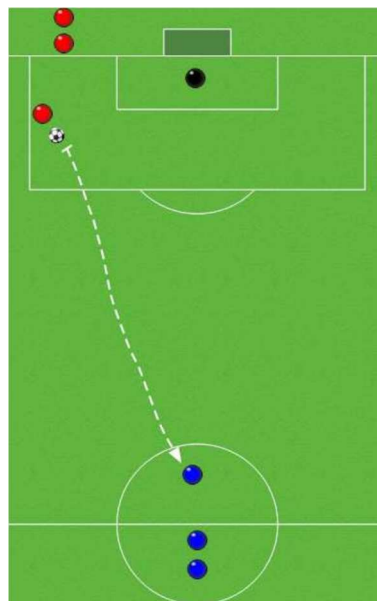
The primary purpose of Defensive Stop is for the defensive player and goalie to practice tackling skills. In addition to being a soccer defensive drill, the offensive player sharpens dribbling skills.

Instructions

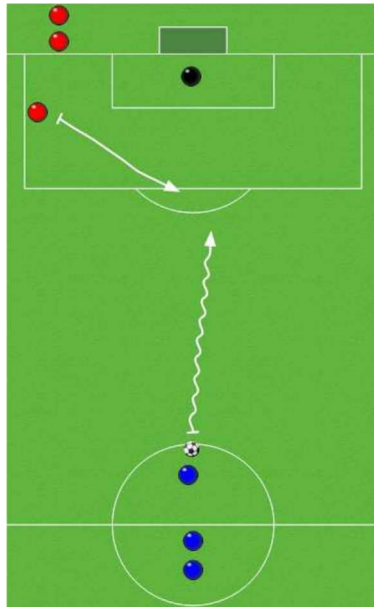
1. Three players per drill group are utilized. The distance from the offensive player to the defensive player is about 30-35 yards. Defensive Stop is a drill utilizing an entire half of the field.



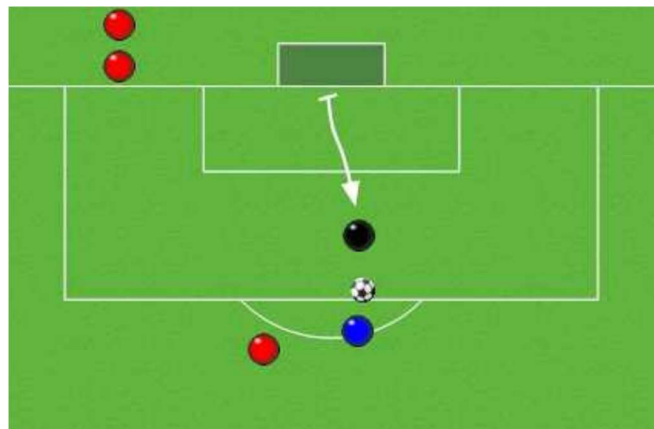
2. On your whistle, the defensive player starts the drill by kicking the ball to the center circle where the offensive player receives the ball.



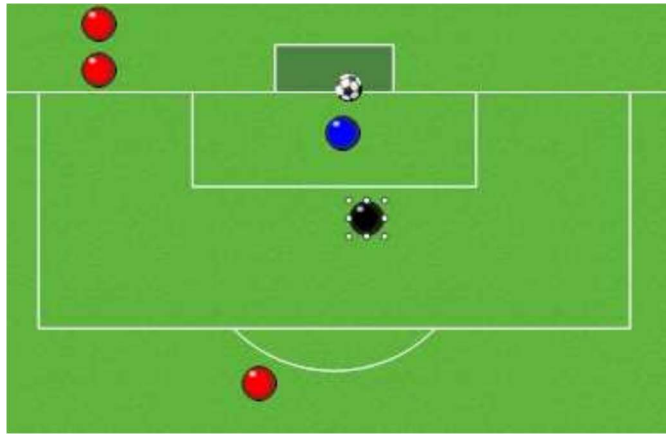
3. The offensive player then dribbles forward towards the 18-yard line. While the offensive player dribbles towards the goal, the defensive player tries to gain possession of the ball, preferably through slide tackling.



4. If the defensive player gains possession of the ball, play is repeated by the next two players in each line.
5. If the offensive player beats the defensive player and is able to maneuver the ball into the penalty area, the goalkeeper comes out and tries to stop the player.



6. No shooting at the goal is permitted by the offensive player. In order to score, the offender must dribble over the goal line with the ball.



Points of Emphasis

Defensive Stop is a soccer defensive drill. Players will have sufficient time to make a decision, whether defensively or offensively. During a Defensive Stop match, instruct players to...

- (defensive) practice slide tackling.
- (defensive) attempt to contain the offensive player and not allow him/her to proceed forward. Only reach for the ball with the leg if you're sure the offensive player won't go around you when you do.
- (offensive) practice any soccer ball drills that have been learned in order to break the defense and close in on the goal.
- (goalie) comes close to the 18-yard line and acts as a 2nd defender if necessary.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using two or more defenders.
2. Using two goalkeepers.
3. Requiring defensive players to only be allowed to stop an offensive player through the use of slide tackling.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Reward any offensive player that scores a goal, as beating two defensive players in this drill is difficult.

Tip #2 – Encourage offensive players be creative and use any fancy soccer ball handling drills they feel comfortable with.

Tip #3 – Have offensive players begin to develop the sixth-sense of knowing where defenders and goalkeepers are on the field who are trying to stop them.

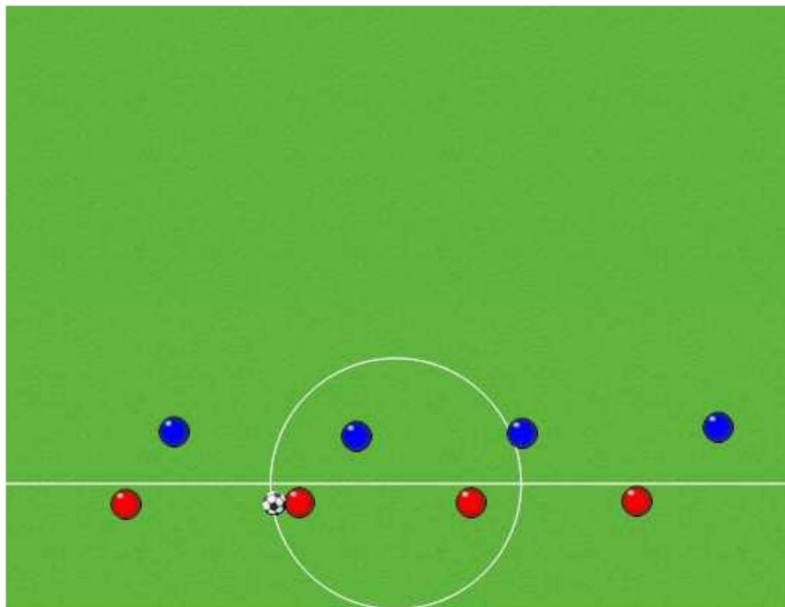
Defensive Adjustment (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

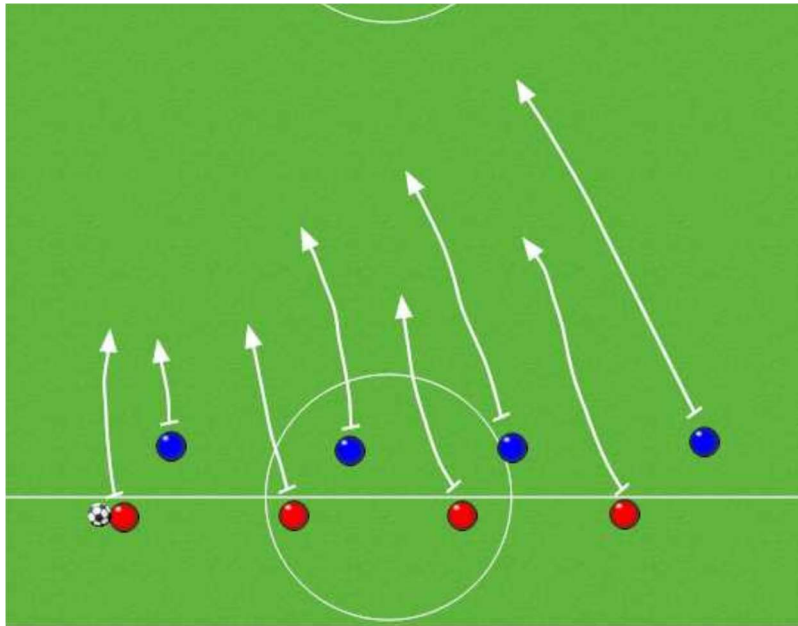
Defensive Adjustment is a defensive soccer drill that will force players to move at high speeds under pressure as in a game situation. Played as a regular scrimmage, players will learn to quickly set up a defense and at the same time slow down an offense.

Instructions

1. Eight players - 4 offensive and 4 defensive, comprise each drill group. Offensive players are to assemble at the 50 yard line across from one another. Defensive players assemble about 2-3 yards in a line in front of the offensive players.



2. The play can begin from any offensive position. The drill is played 4- on-4 and offensive players try to score a goal while defensive players try to gain control of the ball and return it to the other half of the field.
3. On your whistle, play begins. The four defensive players quickly fall back and stagger the defense. As the defensive players fall back they must adjust their positions according to the position of the ball.



4. The defender closest to the offensive player with the ball marks that player while the others move deeper into defensive territory.

Points of Emphasis

Defensive Adjustment is a defensive drill players enjoy because the same play will present itself in a real game situation. Players will start from unorganized positions and must quickly become a cohesive unit. During Defensive Adjustment match, instruct players to...

- (defensive) not fall back one beside the other but rather stagger their positioning.
- (offensive) try to move down the field quickly and take a shot before the defense can organize itself.
- (defensive) communicate with each other often and position themselves according to where they feel most comfortable.
- (defensive) contain the offender and don't reach for the ball with the leg unless you're sure you can recover.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a larger playing area such as the entire field so that conditioning is introduced into the drill.
2. Adding more defenders and/or offensive players.
3. Beginning play with a throw-in.
4. Keeping the ball on the grass at all times to develop sharp, strong passing.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – There are many variations to this drill. The drill can be structured to defensive players, offensive players, or both at the same time.

Tip #2 – Encourage players on both sides to talk to each other often in order to help teammates with positioning.

Tip #3 – Reward the offense for goals and the defense for a certain number of clears to the opposite field.

Quick Clearing (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

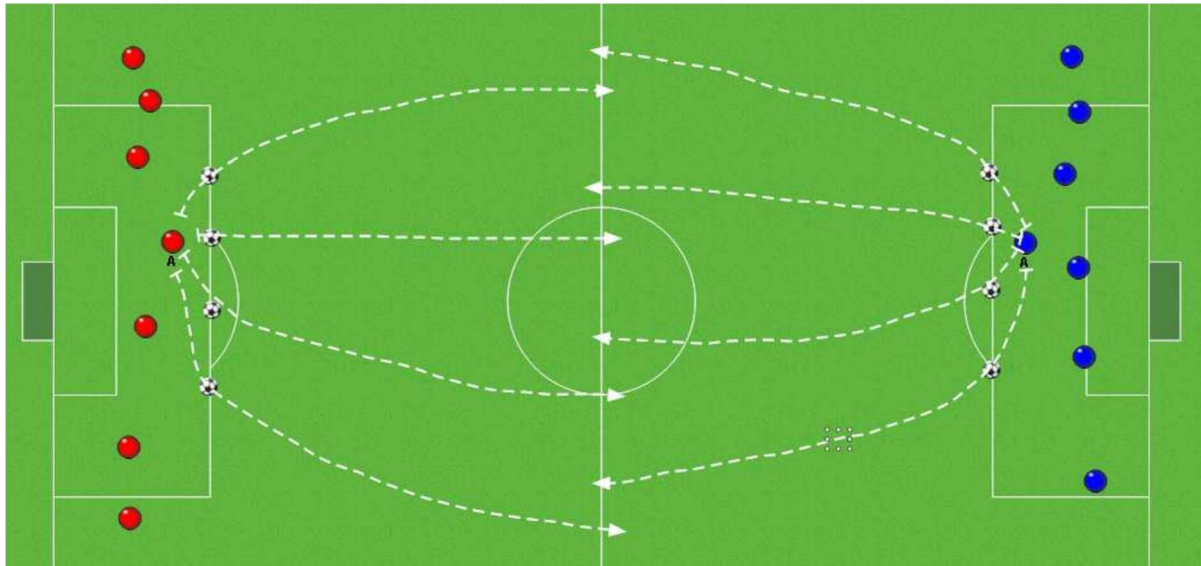
When defenders are under heavy attack in their own side of the field it's sometimes useful to simply kick the ball away and out of potential trouble. During Quick Clearing players will practice clearing the ball out of the defensive zone as well as work on long kicking.

Instructions

1. Fourteen to twenty-two players can participate in this drill.
2. Four soccer balls are set up along the front edge of the penalty area on each side of the field.



3. The objective of this game is to kick all 8 balls onto the other side of the field.
4. Players must kick to the other side of the field without hesitation.
5. Defensive player A and offensive player A start the game by rapidly kicking all four balls to the other side of the field.



Points of Emphasis

Quick Clearing is a simple long kicking soccer drill. Players enjoy this game and, depending on their skill level, the game may last a long time. During a Quick Clearing match, instruct players to...

- kick the ball as far into the opposition's zone as possible.
- don't hold onto the ball long and release it immediately.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a smaller playing area to speed up game intensity.
2. Adding more players to each side.
3. Requiring opposite foot kicking.
4. Requiring that balls be kicked in a specific area of the opposition's field.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Encourage players to trap, contain, and kick the ball away as fast as possible.

Tip #2 – Reward teams that are able to kick all 8 balls to the opposing side of the field.

Tip #3 – Communication amongst teammates will be helpful in this drill and creative strategies are encouraged.

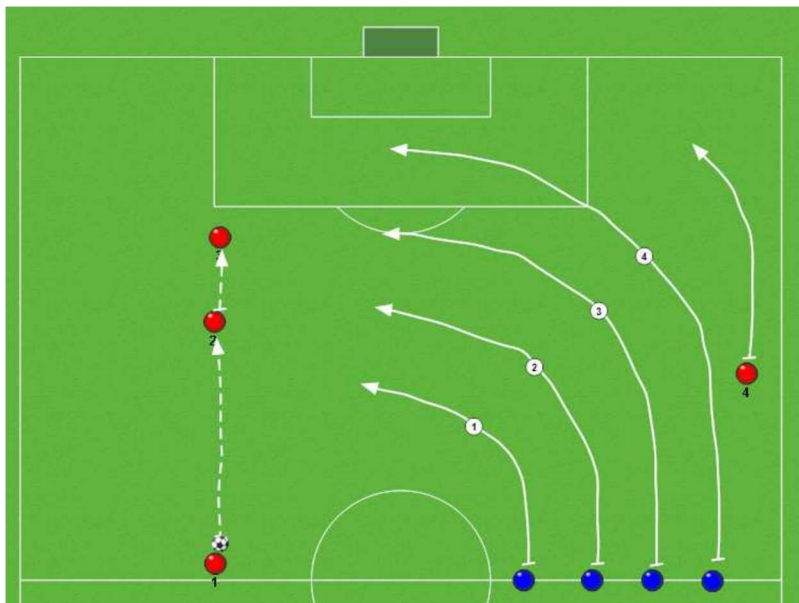
Defensive Recovery (Skill Level – Intermediate)

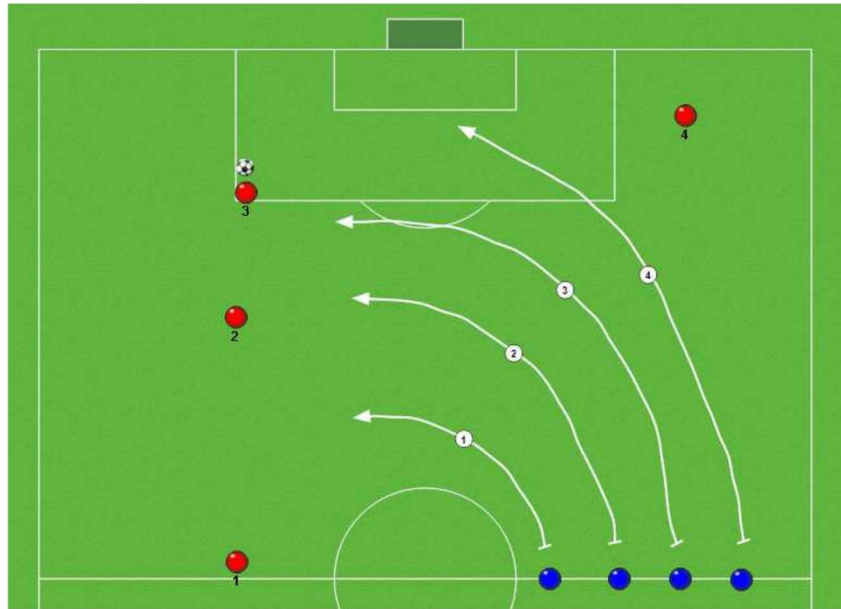
Drill Purpose

Defensive Recovery stresses skills and formations that will be needed in game situations. Breakdowns in the defense will inevitably occur and having a simple plan in place to deal with oncoming wing attackers is critical. This is a drill that mimics a common occurrence in any game and develops a teamwork mindset. Players naturally learn to back each other up.

Instructions

1. A total of eight players will be utilized – 4 offenders and 4 defenders. This drill will encompass one half of the field and defensive players are to line up equidistant on one side of the center circle along the 50 yard line. Three of the offensive players will line up on the other side of the field. The distance between the 1st and 2nd offensive player will be about 20 yards and the distance between the 2nd and 3rd player will be about 5 yards. The 4th offender is on the other side of the field in an attacking wing position.
2. On your whistle, offensive player 1 passes to 2. Offensive player 2 passes to 3. Meanwhile, the defense lines up in a formation in which each is “sweeping” for the next player to his/her left. The last defensive player in the line defends offensive player 3 as well as watches for a sudden crossing pass to the 4th offensive player on the other side of the field.





3. Play ends once a goal is scored by the offense or the ball is taken away by the defense.

Points of Emphasis

Defensive Recovery is a drill that requires team strategy and a lot of communication. Players like it because it resembles a scenario that pops up in every game. During Defensive Recovery instruct players to...

- (defensive) be aware of their teammate's locations.
- (defensive) keep the "big picture" of the defense in mind.
- clear the ball to the outside.
- listen to the goalie who will be viewing the defensive alignments.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Including more offensive players and possible a 5th to support the 4th on the defensive side of the field.
2. Rotating defensive players in and out of the 4 positions. Sometimes a player is more comfortable at one position than another.
3. Switching sides of the field so players are familiar with the build-up of plays no matter where they occur.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This drill instills in players that there is always help and one individual is rarely the last in line to stop an offensive attack. Continual rotation of defenders is the key.

Tip #2 – Award offensive players should they score and defensive players for each stop they create.

Tip #3 – Encourage the goalkeeper to quarterback the defenders and correct their positioning if needed.

Sweeper Clearing (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

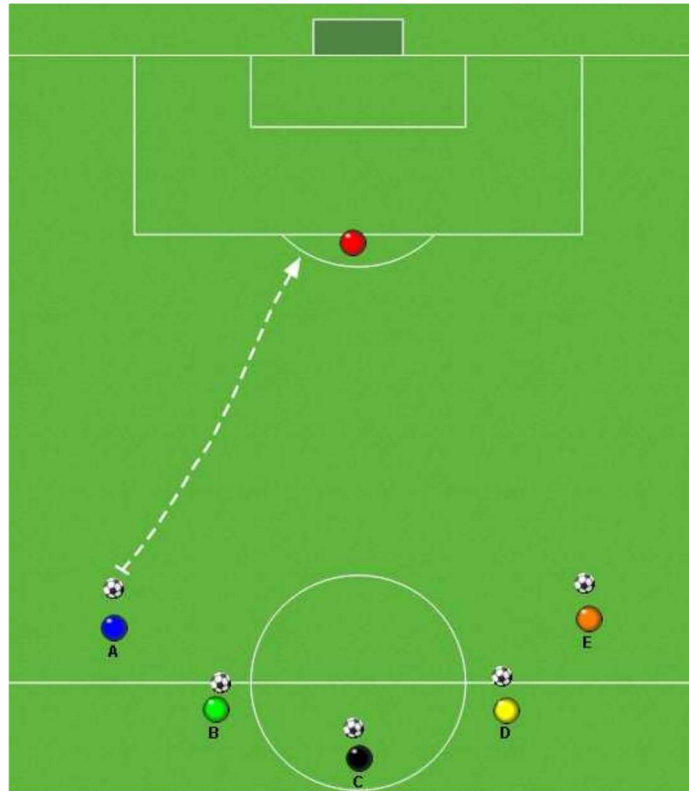
Sweeper Clearing is a defensive soccer drill designed not only for the sweeper position but for any player who finds him/herself in a defensive position that requires the ball be removed quickly from the area. In this drill defenders practice clearing balls while they themselves are under pressure.

Instructions

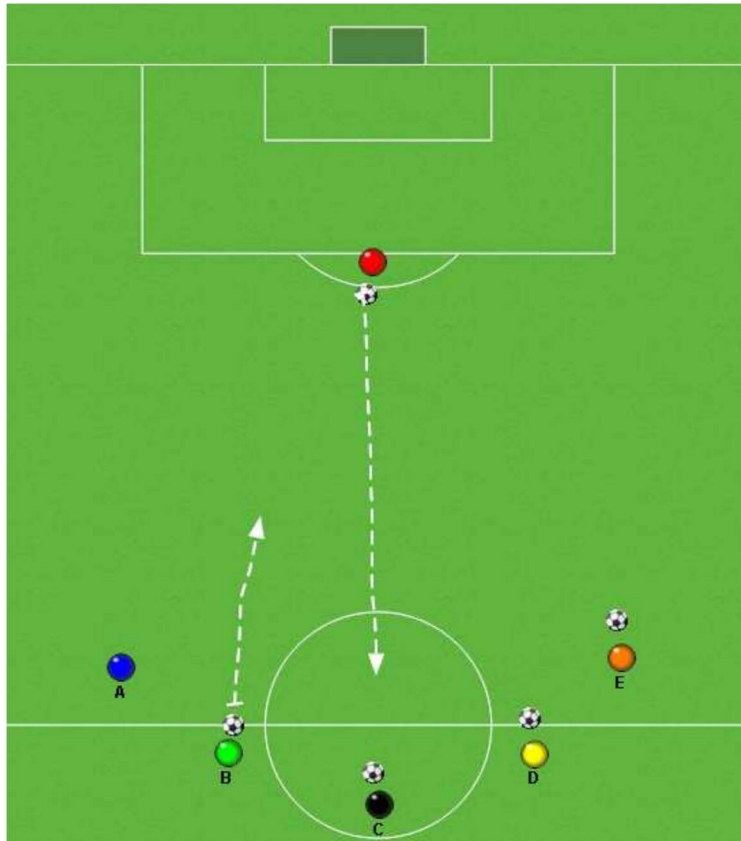
1. Six players per drill group are utilized in this drill
2. A, B, C, D, and E should align themselves, each with a ball, in an arc about 40-50 yards from the defensive player who is positioned at the top of the penalty area.



3. Player A kicks a ball at the goal.



4. The defensive player clears the ball up the field.
5. As soon as the defender clears a ball, the next ball should be on its way in order to keep the pressure high.



6. After 5 balls are cleared, a new defender comes onto the field to perform.

Points of Emphasis

Sweeper Clearing is a simple defensive drill. Players should begin to feel comfortable clearing away a ball when under pressure. During Sweeper Clearing, instruct players to...

- (defensive) try to kick the ball away without trapping it first.
- (offensive) keep an attacking mindset and don't ease up on the defender – kick the ball to the defender as soon as possible.
- (offensive) use many variations of shots. Shoot so that the defender receives balls from the air as well as the ground.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a second defender to back up the first defender.
2. Adding more offenders who will take more shots.
3. Moving the offensive players closer to the defender when taking shots.
4. Having offensive players run towards the goal as the next offensive player takes a shot to increase the pressure on the defender.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – A defender simply needs to get a foot on the ball and kick it away and should avoid trying to do anything fancy, especially if he/she is the last line of defense in front of the goalie.

Tip #2 – Encourage offensive players to make their shots towards the defender/goal be as accurate as possible. This drill works shooting as well as serves as practice for the defender.

Tip #3 – Award a defender who successfully clears all 5 balls into the opposition's zone.

Offensive Drills

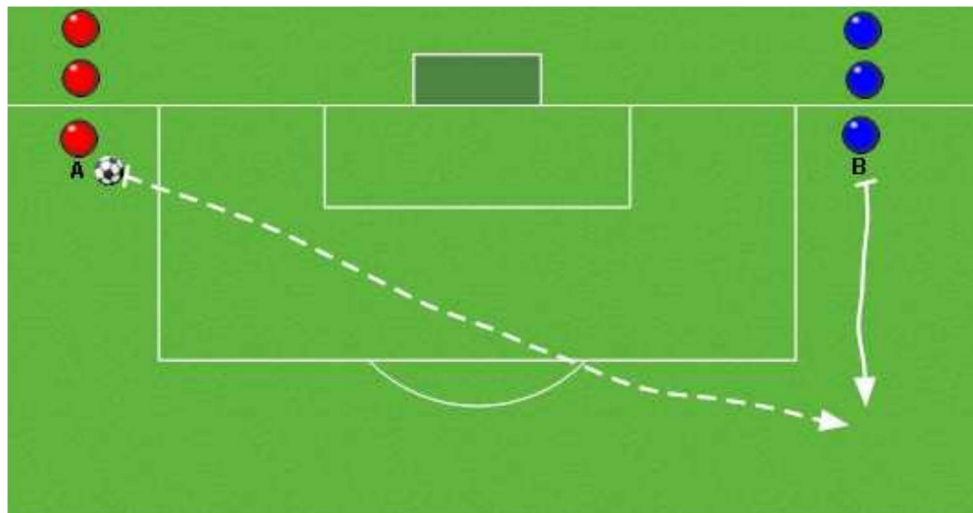
Long Chipping (Skill Level - Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

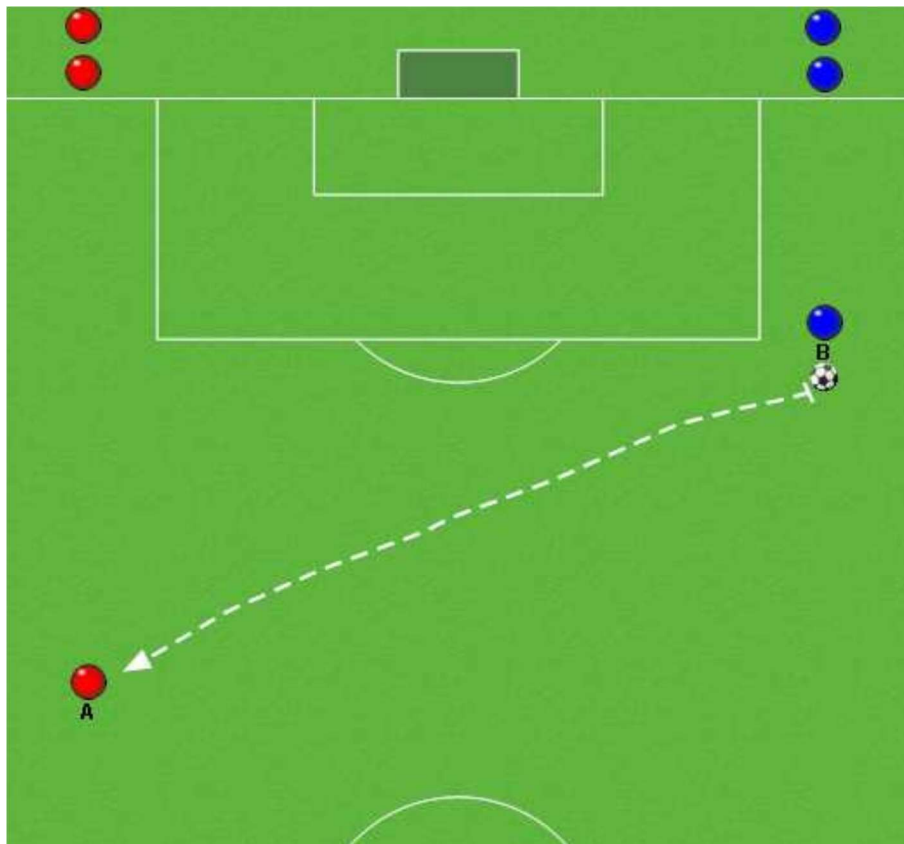
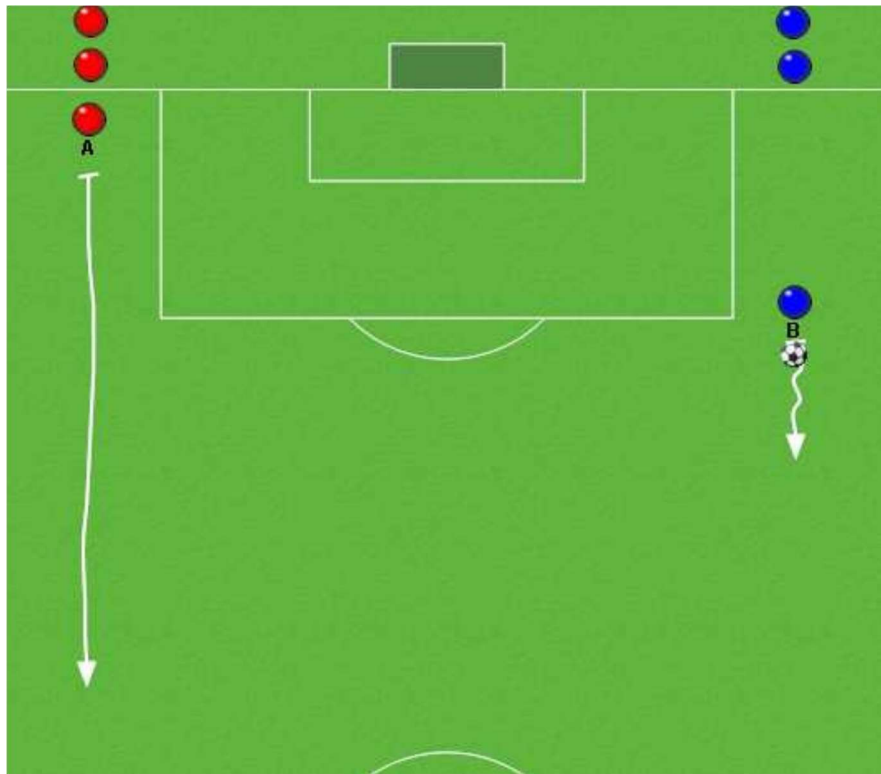
Player congestion in one area of the field is common during the course of play. Offenses and defenses have the tendency to bunch up in a small area. Such bunching is usually beneficial to only one team, who could eventually take a shot or hold the ball defensively to kill time. Long passes, or chips, to clear a ball out of a given area can be a savior for the defense. Offenses benefit by changing the direction of the attack.

Instructions

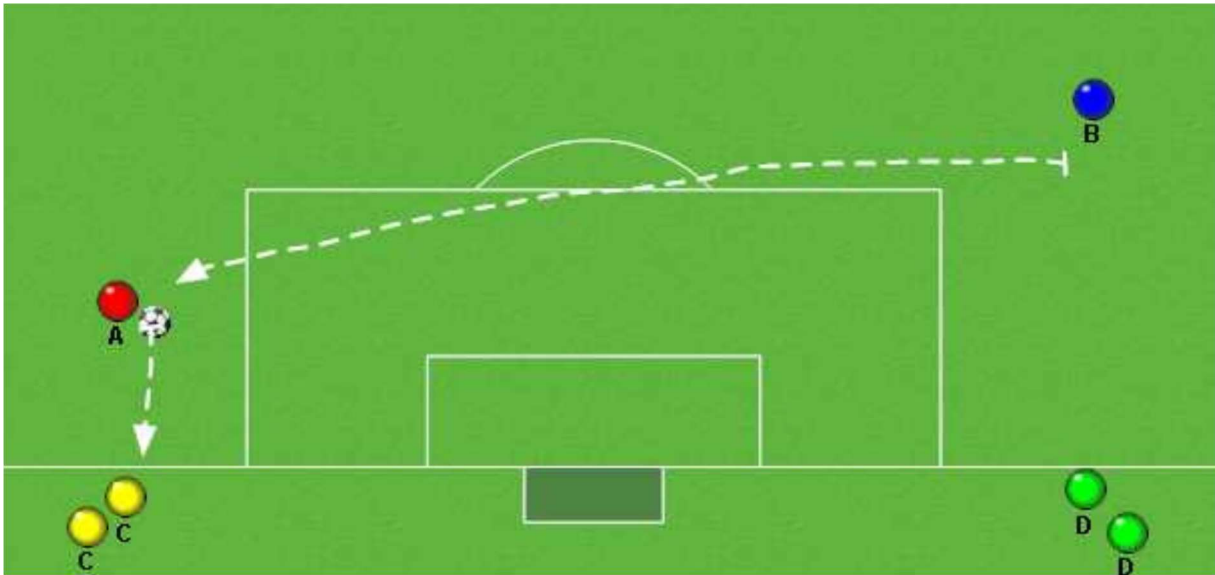
1. Two players form each drill set. They are both to line up on the end line about 30-40 yards apart.
2. Player A chips across the field to player B.



3. Player B dribbles a few yards and passes (or chips) back to A.



4. This procedure is repeated down the field until A or B passes off to C or D at the other end.



5. The same procedure is followed up the field by the next group (C and D).

Points of Emphasis

Long Chipping is a simple passing drill over a longer distance. Players should gain the mindset that when they're in trouble they can chip the ball to a player farther away. During Long Chipping instruct players to...

- communicate to a player under pressure that there is a passing option 30-40 yards (or farther) away.
- use Long Chipping as a way to “shake things up” and change the direction of the attack when other options have been exhausted.
- don't abuse long passes and use them when necessary.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using the opposite foot for making longer passes
2. Having players develop a signaling system amongst themselves when they're open to receiving a long chip.
3. Adding defensive players as a distraction to offensive players making the long passes.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – There are many variations to this drill. The drill can be structured to only defensive players, only offensive players, or both at the same time.

Tip #2 – Encourage offensive players to keep their heads up and get a sense of the entire field and where they could potentially make a long pass.

Tip #3 – Award accurate long passes as these take practice to master.

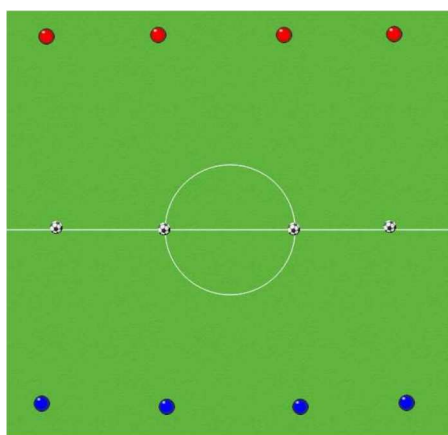
Beat To The Ball (Skill level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

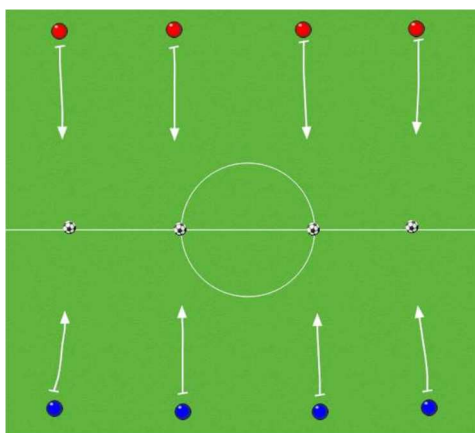
Beat To The Ball is a soccer fitness and conditioning drill that also enables players to practice tackling and beating an opponent to the ball. The mindset of beating an opponent to a ball is critical. This drill instills the killer instinct of running for a ball even if winning the ball might seem impossible.

Instructions

1. Eight players per drill group are used. Four soccer balls are to be placed at mid-field about 15 yards apart.



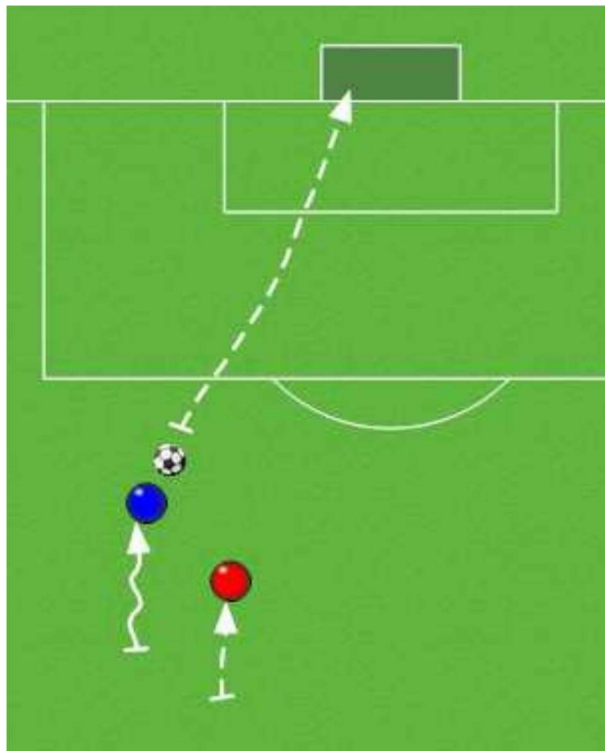
2. On your whistle, players try to beat their opponents to the ball.



3. Players then attempt to score on the goal at the opposite end of the field.



4. When a player scores, he/she may return to help the other players score while the player that was beaten leaves the field.



Points of Emphasis

Beat To The Ball is a drill that encompasses fitness, managing energy, and a variety of other skills such as slide tackling and dribbling. Players will develop a knack for finishing, whether it's finishing with a shot or winning a ball from an opponent. During Beat To The Ball instruct players to...

- contain their opponent if they are beaten to the ball. Try to prevent the player with the ball from moving forward and only go for the ball when he/she makes a mistake or when you're sure you won't be beaten.
- feel free to take a shot from a long distance only if you're sure you can score.
- shield the ball while dribbling so the defender can't take it away.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a smaller playing area to stress skills other than conditioning.
2. Adding more players to each drill group in order to mimic a game situation.
3. Allowing one team to have a head-start.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Encourage offensive players who have ball possession to turn away from defenders and use their body as a shield to protect the ball.

Tip #2 – Allow players to use any means available to dribble around a defender in a one-on-one situation.

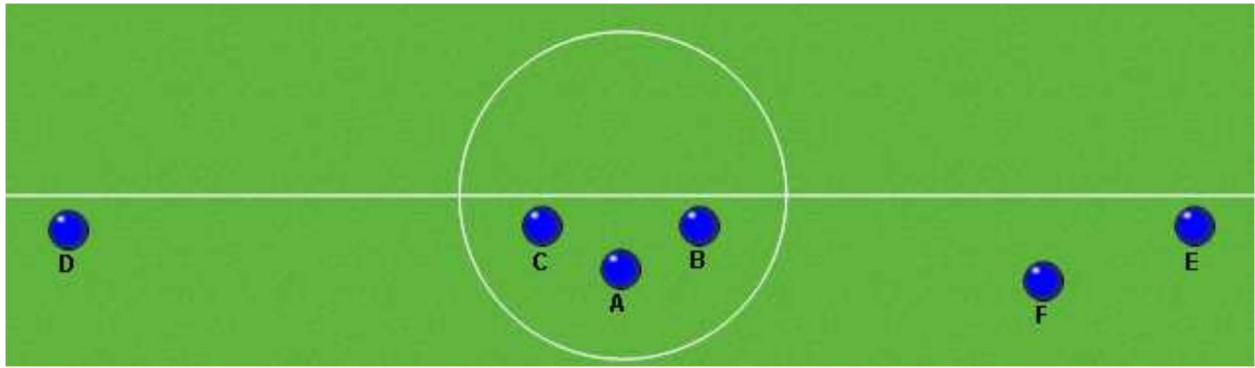
ReStart (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

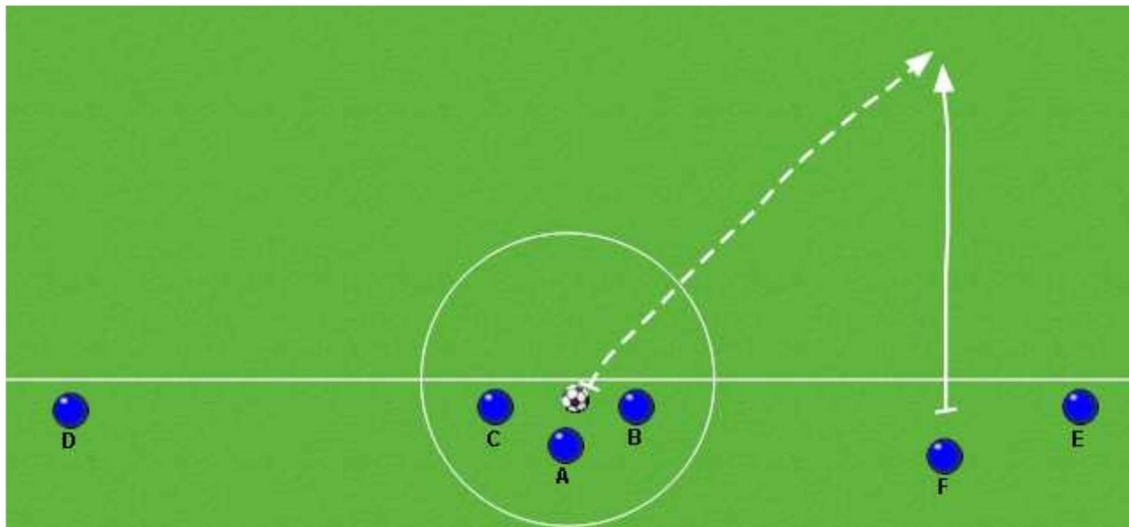
Each restart, or kickoff, is treated in a different manner because the circumstances surrounding each are different. Kickoffs cause the defenders to be drawn towards the ball, making a penetration pass possible in the open space that was vacated by the defenders. In ReStart, players learn to create scoring opportunities from a dead kickoff by drawing players to the right side of the field and quickly switching play to the left side of the field.

Instructions

1. Six players per drill group are utilized.

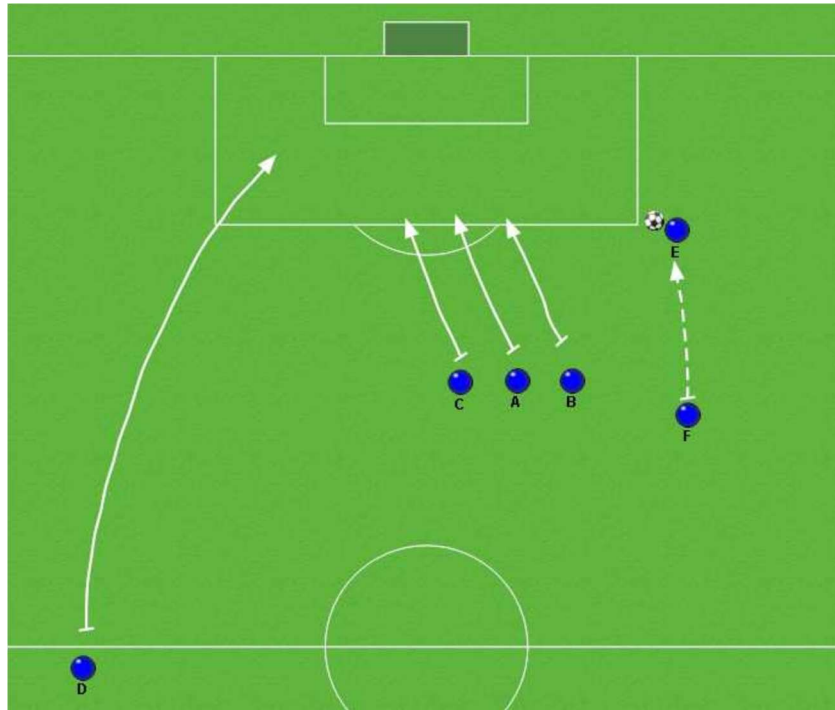


2. A passes diagonally to player F.

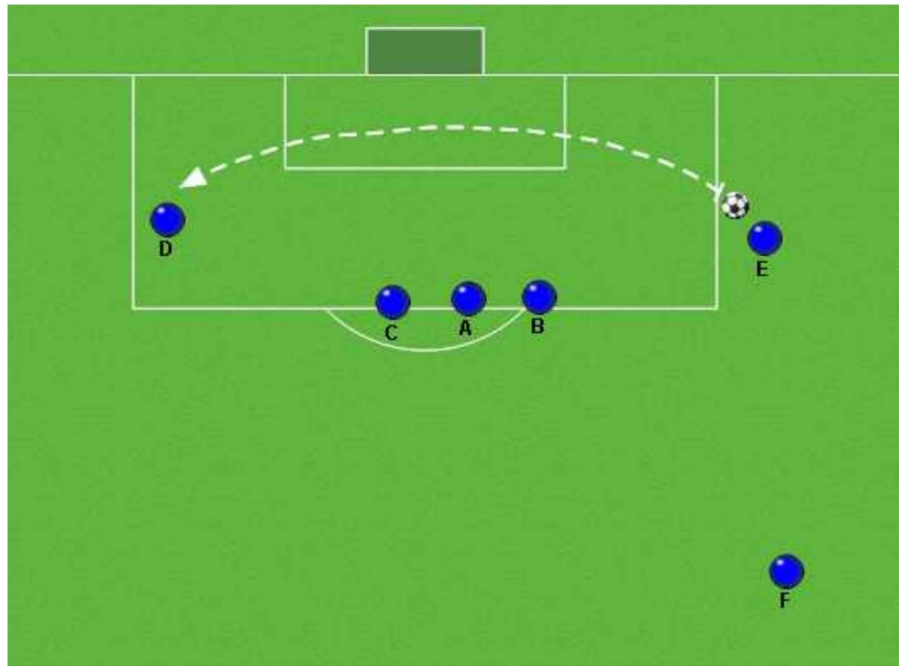


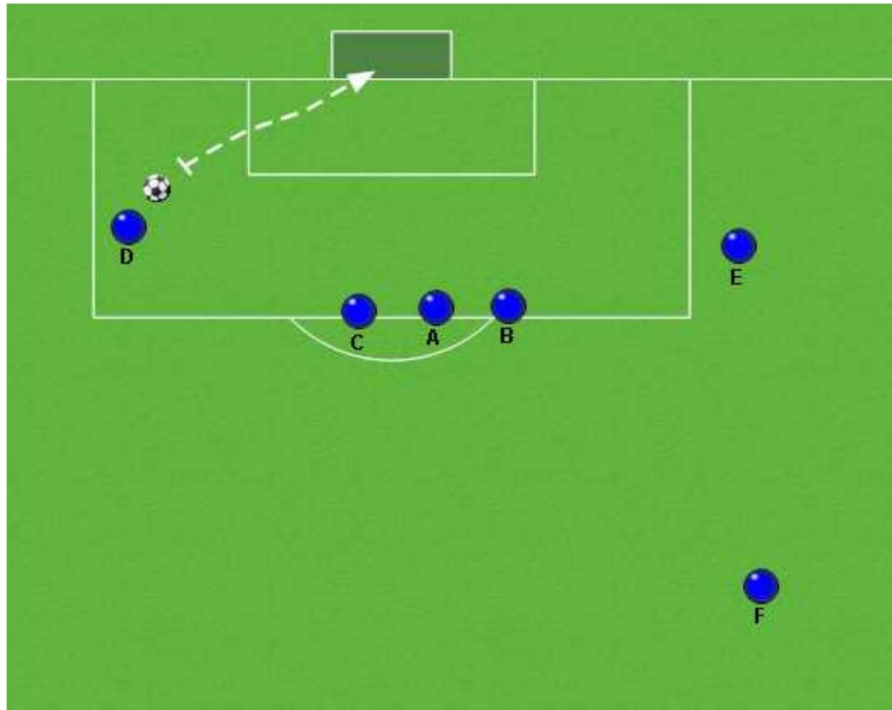
3. Players C, A, and B make diagonal runs to the right. E runs down the right wing to receive a pass from F.





4. E passes across the field to the other wing player, D, who shoots at the goal.





5. If C, A, or B intercept the ball and get a chance to shoot at the goal, then a shot should be attempted

Points of Emphasis

ReStart is a tactical training drill that will teach players a course of action off of a set piece play. Players like the freedom this drill brings as it has the likelihood to break down during a game yet still offers chances to score. During a ReStart drill, instruct players to...

1. get a sense of where the opposing team is most vulnerable.
2. do not hesitate to take a shot when you think one is available.
3. entice defenders to move out of position so that further open space may be created.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Adding defenders to simulate a game situation.
2. Setting up the drill from each side of the field.
3. Adding a goalkeeper to add pressure to an oncoming shooter.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – In defending against a kickoff, most teams stack and protect against an attack down the middle and this permits activity out near the touchlines. For this reason, attackers should use this outside space to achieve penetration by getting the ball out to the wing area.

Tip #2 – Award a successful execution of this complicated drill.

Tip #3 – Stress that set plays don't always go as planned and to regroup if the drill falls apart.

Goalkeeping Drills

Being a goalie in soccer is a unique position and one of the toughest positions to play. As a coach, you must find soccer goalie drills that incorporate the goalkeepers into your training sessions. If you're coaching a young team, chances are that you don't have a specific goalie on the team and instead all players rotate through the position.

Using soccer goalie drills will allow you to determine which of your players is best suited for the role and also which players enjoy filling this role.

Goalie Wars (Skill Level – All – Recommend U10+)

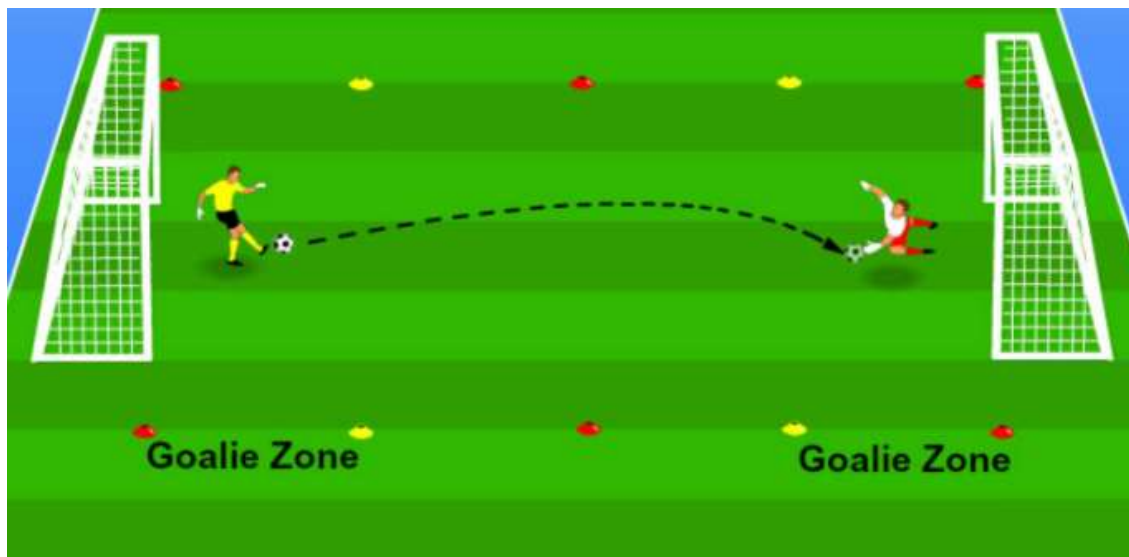
Drill Purpose

Fun and competitive game for goalkeepers that develops their footwork, reflexes, agility, distribution, and confidence. Goalkeepers get to compete against each other in a high intensity game.

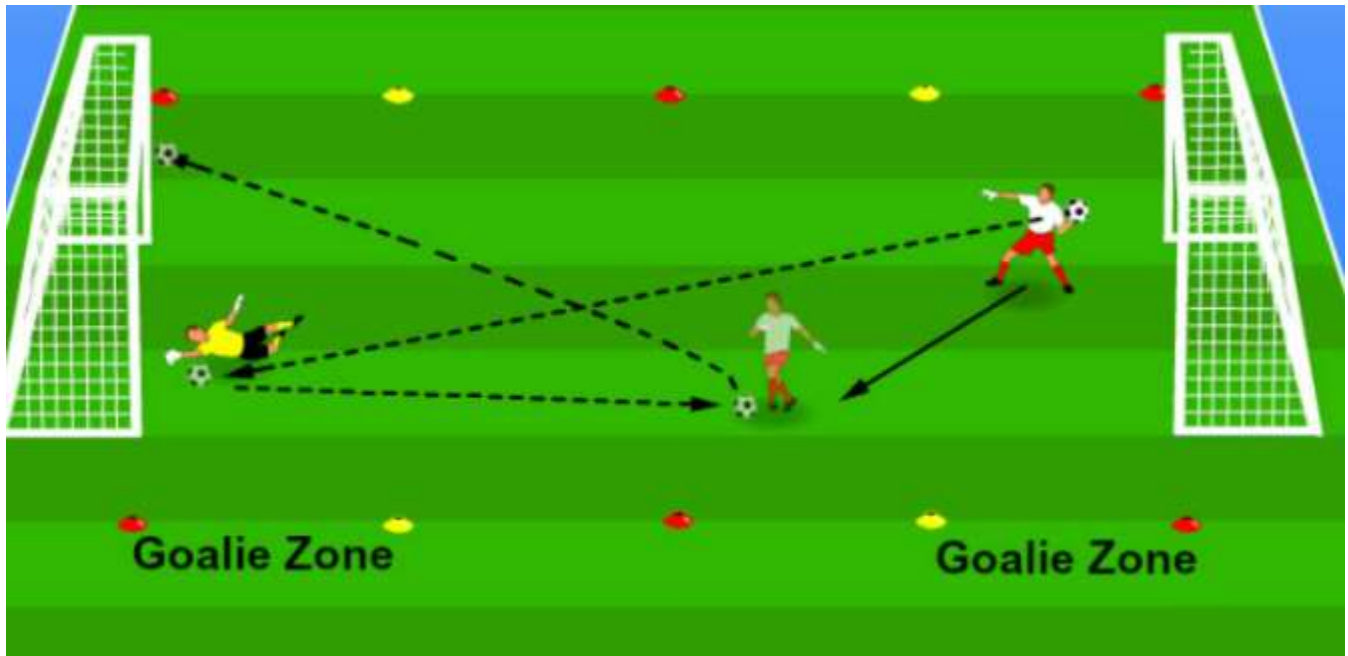
Setup

1. Set up a 20x15 playing grid using cones. Make sure there is one cone on each sideline of the grid that marks the half way point.
2. Set up one full-sized goal on each end line.
3. Use a couple of cones to mark a line 5-yards in front of each goal. These two zones are known as the “goalie zones.” The cones should not be in the way of the play, but should be easily seen for the goalkeepers to be aware of.
4. One goalkeeper is needed in each of the goals. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them stand off to the side and retrieve any soccer balls that miss the goal. Rotate the goalkeepers after each round.
5. A good supply of soccer balls is needed in each of the goals.
6. Decide on a time, or score limit for each round and the number of rounds to be completed. 3-4 minutes per round, or first goalkeeper to score 5 goals is a good starting point. Play for 4-6 rounds.
7. One goalkeeper starts with the soccer ball.

Instructions



1. The goalkeeper starting with the ball stands inside their goalie zone while the other goalkeeper stands inside of theirs. The goalkeeper with the ball attempts to score on the other goalkeeper by throwing, kicking, drop kicking, or volleying the soccer ball towards the other goal. They must make their attempt inside of their goalie zone.
2. The defending goalkeeper attempts to make a save on the shot before getting a chance to score on the other goalkeeper.
3. If a goalkeeper scores, the goalkeeper who just scored gets to start with a new ball from their goal.
4. If a goalkeeper blocks the shot and the ball goes out-of-bounds, the goalkeeper who made the save, starts with a new ball from their goal.
5. If the soccer ball hits off a goal post, or the defending goalkeeper gives up a rebound, and the ball rolls back into the shooting goalkeeper's half, the shooting goalkeeper gets a one-touch shot attempt from anywhere inside their own half.
6. The game continues in this manner for the remainder of the round.
7. After the round is over, goalkeepers rest and collect any balls that missed the goal. If there are more than two goalkeepers, have them rotate in immediately and begin play. If there are only two goalkeepers present, give the goalkeepers 2-3 minutes of rest before starting the next round.



Points of Emphasis

- Encourage the goalkeepers to catch as many balls as possible to decrease the amount of second chances the shooting goalkeeper gets.
 - Challenge the goalkeepers to score as often as possible and to use different scoring techniques.
 - Remind the goalkeepers to stay on their toes to react quickly to the incoming ball and make a save.
8. Make sure the goalkeepers have fun and keep it competitive. Motivate and congratulate goalkeepers to keep them working.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. 2-on-2 – Best for younger goalkeepers. Use the same rules, but have teams of two goalkeepers compete against each other.
2. Scoring techniques – Change the rules to keep the game new. Allow only kicking from the ground, or only throws, or any other scoring technique to make the game more difficult.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Encourage kicking to be performed with both feet.

Tip #2 – Encourage goalies to try and catch as many balls as they can so as to maintain possession

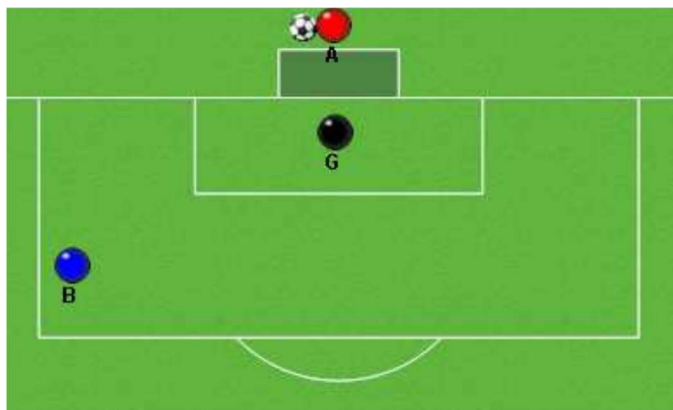
Goalkeeper Volley (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

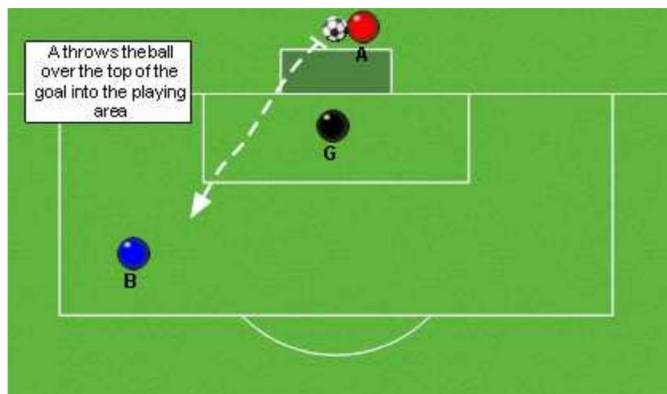
Goalkeeper Volley is a goalkeeper soccer drill during which the goalie practices catching rebounded balls. Field players like it because it gives them a chance to score by volleying the ball out of the air. This is also a great soccer agility drill designed to improve goalkeeper movement and speed.

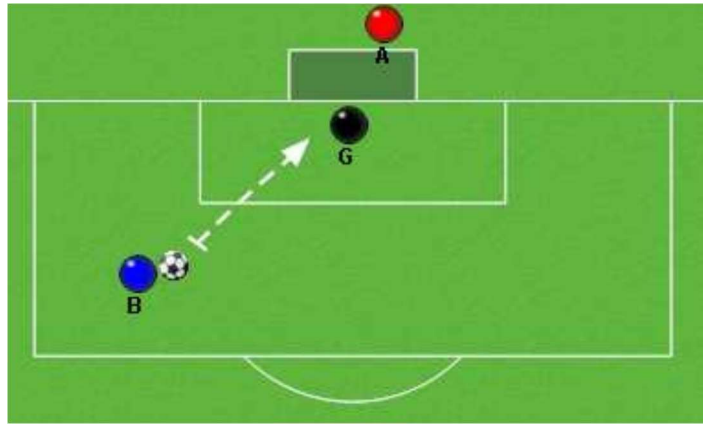
Instructions

1. Three players, including one goaltender, set up near the goal area. Player A stands behind the goal holding a ball.



2. Player A throws the ball over the goal post and player B volley kicks the ball in an attempt to score a goal.





3. The goalkeeper faces player B and is not permitted to turn around to see when or where player A is throwing the ball.

Points of Emphasis

Goalkeeper Volley is a simple goalkeeping and volley finishing drill. A goalkeeper is forced to mentally prepare for all possibilities and the offensive player works on air drills. During Goalkeeper Volley instruct players to...

- (goalkeeper) stays light on his/her feet and prepare for all possibilities.
- (offensive) work on one-touching the ball out of the air in a controlled fashion.
- (offensive) stay quiet behind the net so the goalkeeper can't judge the location of the ball before it reaches the volley kicker.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Using two offensive players to further test the goalkeeper's speed and agility.
2. Requiring the goalkeeper to use only one hand.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – There are many variations to this drill. The drill can be structured as a test for goalkeepers as well as an exercise in offensive volley kicking.

Tip #2 – Encourage offensive players to volley as low into the goal as they can.

Tip #3 – Reward blocks by the goalie and goals scored by the offense.

Agility Hands

(Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

Develops a goalkeeper's footwork and agility while focuses on soft hands and improving their catching abilities. A goalkeeper works through a series of cones and sticks before attempting to catch soccer balls that are kicked at them from short distance.

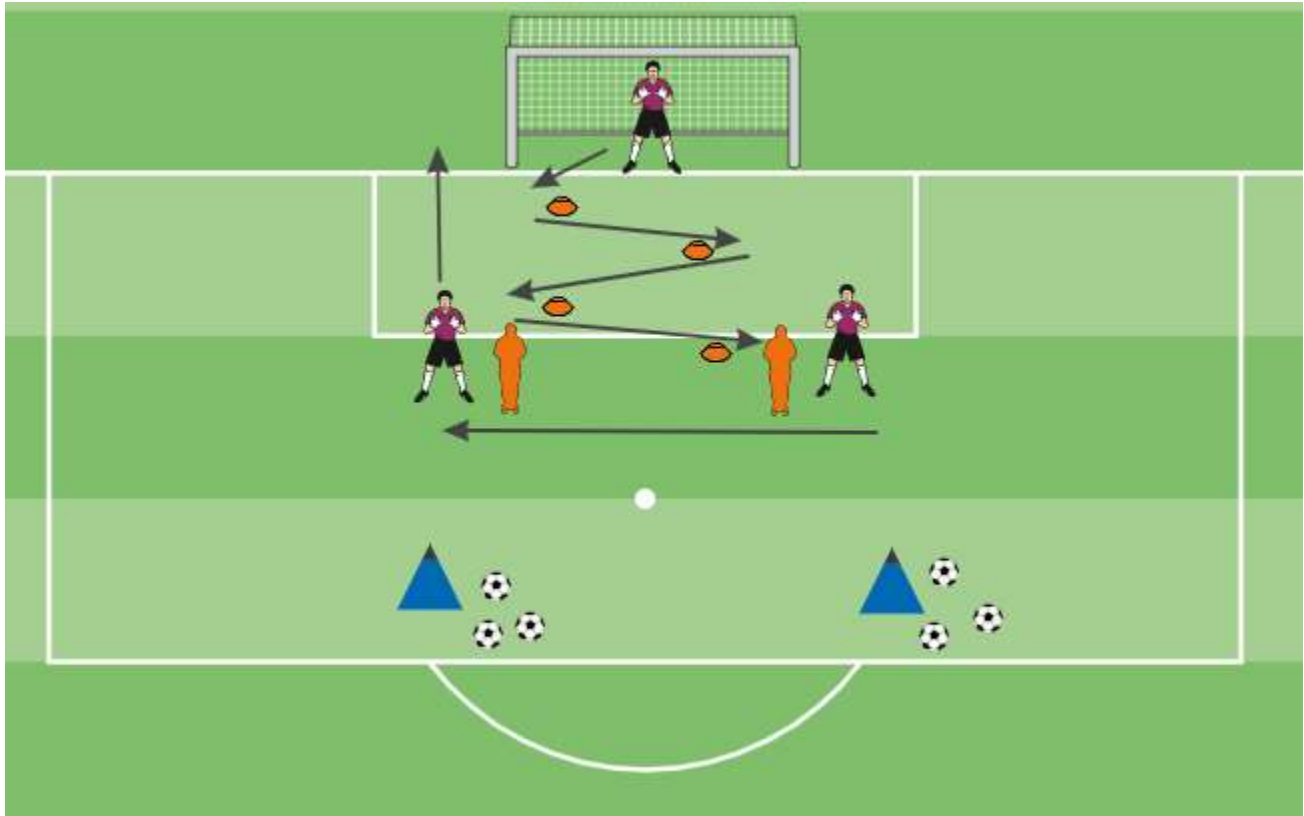
Setup

- It is best to do this in front of a full-size goal for goalkeepers to get more comfortable with their box. Using a goal also keeps the soccer balls close in case a catch is missed. If a goal is unavailable, this drill can be completed without one.
- Set up series of cones in front of the goal. See the diagrams below for different variations.
- Set up two mannequins/poles/cones, about 6-7 yards apart from each other, at the end of the series of cones. If mannequins are not available, cones can also be used.
- One goalkeeper starts on the goal line.
- Two extra goalkeepers, players, or coaches are needed as servers to complete this drill. Have the two servers stand 4-5 yards off each mannequin with a ball in their hands.
- Give each server 3-5 extra soccer balls.

Instructions

1. The goalkeeper in front of the goal begins by quickly moving through the series of cones in front of the goal.
2. After completing the series of cones, the goalkeeper quickly moves to the outside of the nearest mannequin.
3. As soon as the goalkeeper arrives outside the first mannequin, the server standing behind that mannequin drop kicks the ball towards the goalkeeper's chest.
4. The goalkeeper catches the ball and immediately throws it back to the server before quickly shuffling across to the outside of the other mannequin where they will repeat the same process.
5. After throwing the ball back to the second server, the goalkeeper runs backwards, using the proper footwork, to their starting point in front of goal before repeating the same process until they complete 8-12 catches.

6. After the goalkeeper completes their round, rest and recover any lost soccer balls. If there is more than one goalkeeper, rotate them in and continue the activity.
7. Each goalkeeper should complete three rounds. Switch the footwork used through the series of cones after each round. See diagrams for more information.



Points of Emphasis

Agility Hands is a great goalkeeping drill for developing a goalie's footwork and hands. During Agility Hands...

- Challenge the goalkeepers to work as quickly as possible when completing their round.
- Teach the goalkeepers to not cross their feet and to take quick, sharp steps when working through the cones.
- Remind the goalkeepers to get their bodies behind the ball when they catch the ball. Goalkeepers should move their feet quickly to move their bodies in to the proper catching position behind the ball.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Passes instead of catches – Server's pass on the ground and goalkeepers must pass the ball back to the servers in one-touch.
2. Jumping catches – Servers toss the ball high so the goalkeepers must jump up and catch the ball.
3. Dive – Server's toss, or pass, the ball wide outside the mannequins to make the goalkeeper dive and collect the ball.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – There are many variations to this drill. The drill can be structured by moving the placement of the cones and forcing the goalie to use different footwork/shuffling skills

Tip #2 – Encourage goalkeepers to stay on their toes while moving through cones and when catching, passing, blocking the ball

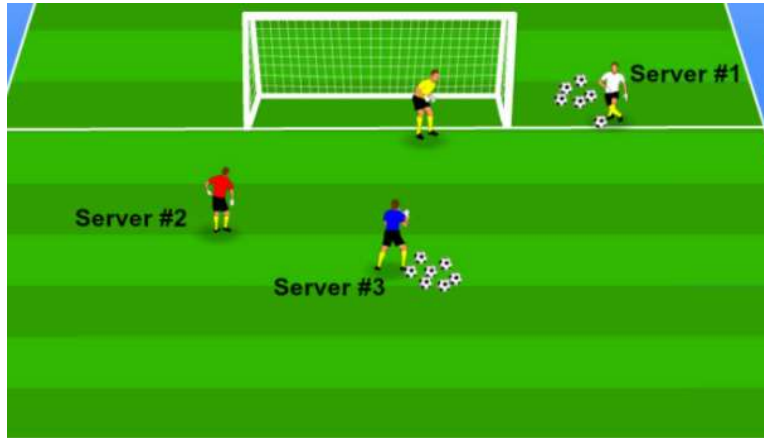
Deflect and Dive (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

Develops goalkeepers' ability to move back and forth across the goal to block shots. Goalkeepers improve their quickness and agility as they attempt to block shots.

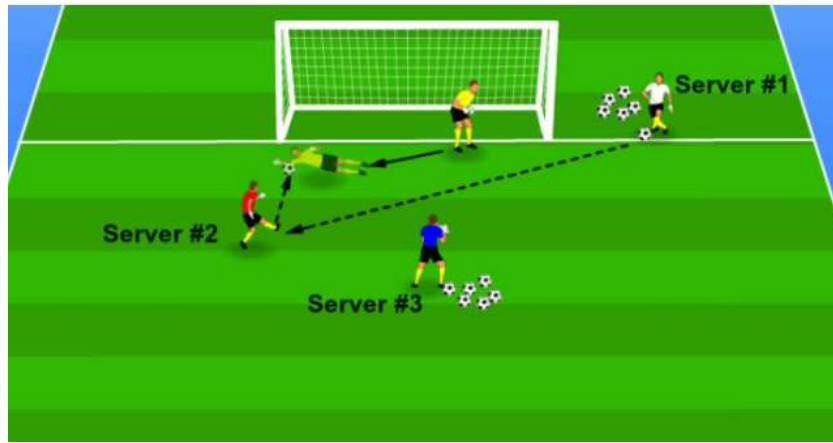
Setup

- One full size goal is needed for the drill.
- One goalkeeper starts on the goal line.
- Three extra players are needed as servers for this activity. If there are not three more goalkeepers, players or coaches can be used to fill in the remaining serving positions.
 - Server #1 will start on the goal end line, 1-2 yards off on of the goal posts.
 - Server #2 will be positioned inside the field, 6-8 yards off the opposite goal post of Server #1.
 - Server #3 will stand inside the field, 8-9 yards away from the center of the goal.
See diagram for more information.
- Servers #1 and #3 must have a good supply of soccer balls.
- Decide on the number of soccer balls the goalkeeper will attempt to save before resting. 4-8 soccer balls are ideal.



Instructions

1. Server #1 starts the drill with a low pass towards server #2.
2. As the ball approaches server #2, the goalkeeper moves towards the receiver to cut off the scoring angles.
3. Server #2 takes a low, one-touch shot while the goalkeeper attempts to block the shot using their hands or feet.
4. Immediately after the low shot, the goalkeeper gets up and quickly moves towards the other post while server #3 throws a ball high to the post the goalkeeper is moving towards. The goalkeeper dives and attempts to block or catch the ball.
5. Depending on the age, fitness level, and number of goalkeepers present, give the working goalkeeper a few seconds to reset before completing the process again for another 2-3 repetitions. If the goalkeepers are fit, give them no time to reset in-between repetitions. If multiple goalkeepers are present, keep the repetitions to 2-3 before quickly rotating in the next goalkeeper.
6. Switch the sides the serves are on after a few rounds so that goalkeepers work on both ways.
7. Each goalkeeper should complete 3-6 rounds. Complete more rounds if desired, or if the number of repetitions per round is short.



Points of Emphasis

Deflect and Dive might be considered a more advanced activity given many goalies...particularly the younger or inexperienced ones lack proper diving technique and the correct angles in which to cut off a shot. If necessary, first discuss and work on these two skills. Once comfortable instruct players to...

- Spend time on the movements and how to properly cut off the scoring angles before beginning this activity. For younger, less experienced goalkeepers, start slow and focus on the steps and angles before focusing on speed and saves.
- Remind the servers that the first shot should be on the ground while the second one should be high up and almost out of the goalkeeper's reach. The shots/tosses should start without too much power. As the goalkeepers improve, increase the power and difficulty of the serves.
- Instruct the goalkeepers to keep their weight forward and react quickly after each ball.
- The goalkeepers should stay square while diving and landing on the ground. The goalkeepers should land on their hip and keep the largest part of their body behind the ball to build good habits.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Instead of throws, or light passes, move the servers further away from the goal and have the servers use their feet to shoot on goal. Same pattern as listed above. Shooters should be aiming to put the ball in the same place as listed above as well. This makes the saves more game-like and forces goalkeepers to be faster and stronger on the blocks.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – The variations within this game are endless. Shot placement can be adjusted to occur anywhere in the goal. Players like the quick action and most like diving (getting dirty) and often forget they're working hard.

Rapid Fire (Skill Level – Intermediate)

How the Drill Works

Eight soccer balls are positioned at the edge of the penalty box. Two players take turns shooting while one goalkeeper attempts to block one shot after another in rapid succession.

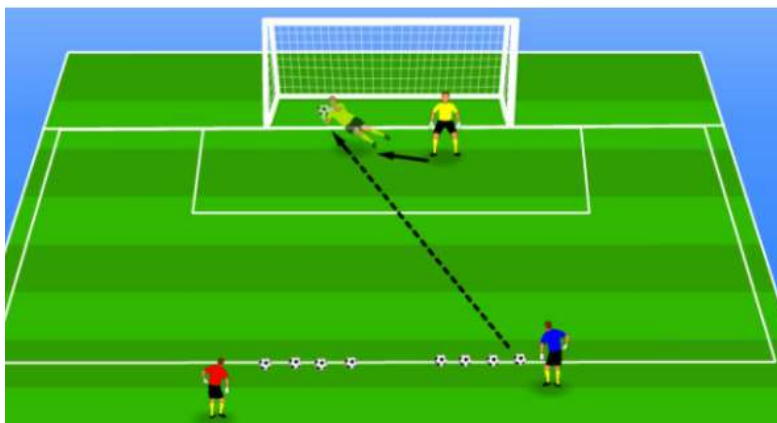
Drill Purpose

Develops a goalkeeper's ability to quickly save one shot and be able to bounce back quickly and react to the next shot. Goalkeepers improve their footwork and reaction time.

Setup

- One full size goal is needed for the drill.
- One goalkeeper positioned in front of the goal.
- Two more goalkeepers, coaches, or players are required to be the shooters. If there are multiple goalkeepers, have them rotate positions after each set of eight soccer balls.
- Place 8 soccer balls on the edge of the penalty box. If a penalty box is not being used, position the soccer balls about 18 yards away from the goal.

Instructions



1. To start the activity, one of the shooters takes a shot on goal while the goalkeeper attempts to make a save.
2. As soon as the first shot is saved, or scored, the second shooters take another shot.

3. The shooters alternate taking shots until there are no more soccer balls left.
4. The goalkeeper in goal must quickly react after each shot and move to attempt to save the next shot.
5. After eight soccer balls have been shot, collect the soccer balls, and reset them on the penalty box line. If there is only one goalkeeper, give them plenty of rest time before repeating the same process for the next round. If there are multiple goalkeepers, have the next goalkeeper rotate in and repeat the process immediately.
6. Repeat until each goalkeeper completes 3-4 rounds.



Points of Emphasis

- Challenge the goalkeeper to get back up on their feet as quickly as possible after each shot. This will give the goalkeeper the best chance of moving and reacting to the next shot.
- Remind the goalkeeper to catch as many shots as possible. This will build good habits to decrease the number of rebound opportunities the goalkeeper gives up in a game.
- Educate the goalkeepers to focus on footwork and balance.
- Instruct the shooters to add more power to their shots as the goalkeeper get more comfortable. Accuracy should be stressed more than power for the shooters. Shooters should give the goalkeeper just enough time to get up and make a save on the next shot, but not enough time that the goalkeeper has time to reset.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Number of shots – Depending on the age and skill level of the goalkeeper, or goalkeepers, increase, or decrease the number of shots per round. More shots per round will demand more fitness and increase the goalkeeper's stamina.

2. Shot angle and distance – Change the angle or distance of the shots to make the goalkeepers work on different saves.

Tip the Ball Over (Skill Level – Intermediate)

How the Drill Works

A goalkeeper starts on the 6-yard line and attempts to back pedal and tip the thrown ball over the crossbar.

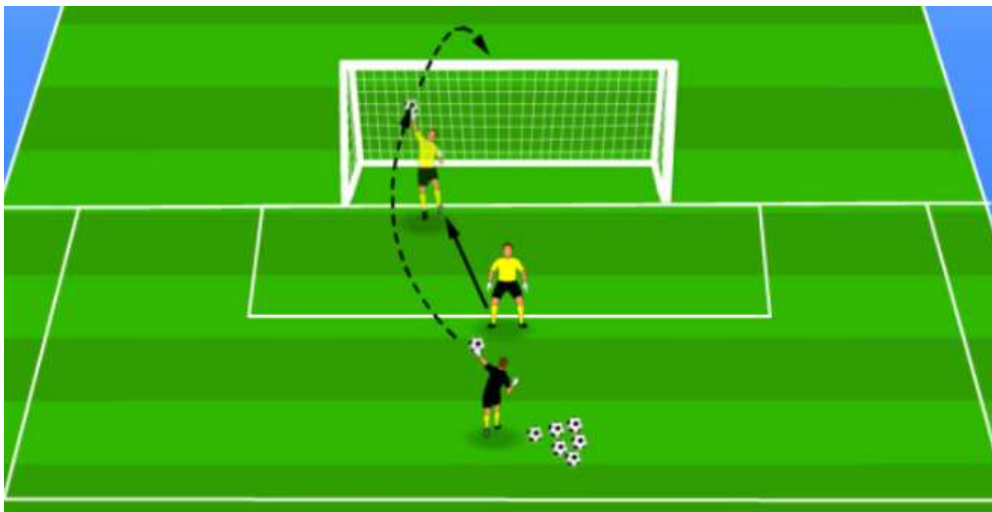
Drill Purpose

Develops a goalkeeper's ability to recover backwards and tip the ball over the crossbar when a catch is not possible. Improves the goalkeeper's jumping and timing skills when recovering from being out of position.

Setup

- A full-sized goal is needed.
- One goalkeeper starts on the 6-yard line facing forward.
- One extra goalkeeper, player, or coach is needed as a server. The server stands about 12-15 yards away from the goal with a good supply of soccer balls.
- The server starts with one ball in their hands.

Instructions



1. The server starts the drill by throwing the ball over the goalkeeper and towards the goal in any direction. The server is aiming to get the ball to drop into the goal just below the crossbar.
2. The goalkeeper must quickly move backwards and time their jump to tip the ball over the crossbar.
3. Immediately after landing, the goalkeeper pops up and returns to the 6-yard line to repeat the process.
4. The server should throw the next ball as soon as the goalkeeper gets to the 6-yard line. The server should vary the location the ball is thrown (center, left, or right).
5. The goalkeeper should complete 6-8 repetitions before resting and collecting the soccer balls.
6. If there is more than one goalkeeper have them rotate and complete the same process.
7. Each goalkeeper should complete 2-3 rounds.

Points of Emphasis

- Teach the goalkeepers to not cross their feet when moving backwards. The proper footwork is the most important skill in this activity.
- Educate the goalkeepers to turn slightly in the direction of the ball as they move backwards. Goalkeepers should turn left slightly if the ball is over their left shoulder and vice-versa for the right side.
- Challenge the goalkeepers to focus on the timing of their jumps and to jump off the foot closest to the goal.
- Teach the goalkeepers to tip the ball with the hand closest to the ball and to use the heel of the palm to tip the ball over the crossbar when possible.
- Instruct the goalkeepers to keep their eyes on the ball even after making contact with the ball.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Distance – Adjust the goalkeeper's starting point depending on the age and skill level of the goalkeepers. The further away from goal, the more difficult the save.

Traffic Crosses

(Skill Level – Beginner to Intermediate)

How the Drill Works

A goalkeeper works around a series of mannequins as a ball is crossed into the penalty area for the goalkeeper to catch, or punch clear.

Drill Purpose

Develop a goalkeeper's ability to move around defenders and catch a crossed ball out of the air. Goalkeepers improve their timing and confidence with balls served into a crowded penalty box.

Setup

- Place 3-4 mannequins (flags, poles or passive players can also be used) around the 6-yard box.
- One full-size goal is needed on the end line of the penalty area.
- One goalkeeper starts inside the 6-yard box in front of the goal. If there are extra goalkeepers, use them as the servers, or have them stand to the side of the goal and rotate in every 4-6 repetitions.
- At least one extra goalkeeper, player, or coach is needed as the server. If there are more servers, have them create a line and rotate services. The server starts outside of the penalty box on one side.
- 5-8 soccer balls work best for this activity. This drill can be completed with just one soccer ball, but having extra helps keep the drill moving in the event of a miss-hit cross.

Instructions



1. The server starts the drill by crossing a ball, in the air, into the penalty box. The crosser should aim to deliver the ball 6-10 yards out from the goal so the goalkeeper must move to get to the ball.
2. Once the cross is hit, the goalkeeper moves around the mannequins and times their jump to catch the ball at the highest point they can reach. The goalkeeper is free to punch the ball away as well, but catching the ball is the performed method.
3. As soon as the goalkeeper catches it, they then throw the ball out as quickly as possible to the server as if they were starting the counter attack. This develops the goalkeeper's distribution.
4. Once the server and goalkeeper as reset positions, the process is repeated for the remaining repetitions.
5. After 4-6 repetitions, the goalkeeper rests and retrieves any extra soccer balls that are not with the server. If there are extra goalkeepers, have them rotate in immediately and begin their turn.
6. Complete at least 3 rounds on one side before switching sides and repeating the process.

Points of Emphasis

- Challenge the goalkeepers to focus on the ball while being aware of the mannequins or players. Goalkeepers should maintain eye contact on the ball and attack the ball.
- The goalkeepers should quickly decide whether they can win the ball with a catch, or punch, or if they need to stay inside the goal. Some crosses will be too far away from the goal for a goalkeeper to commit to. Have goalkeepers find their range.
- Educate the goalkeepers to make a full commitment to their decision so that they do not get stuck in the middle. Goalkeepers need to quickly, and fully commit to a decision.
- Challenge the goalkeepers to attack the ball quickly and decisively.
- Goalkeepers should time their jumps so that they are catching the ball at the top of their jump. The proper jumping technique is jumping off one leg while the other leg bends and uses the knee to protect them from incoming players.
- Teach the goalkeepers to punch the ball as far away as possible whenever they are unsure they can cleanly catch the ball.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Active attackers – Instead of using mannequins, add two active players inside the penalty area who are attempting to score on each cross.

2. Different crosses – Switch up the services and where they are serviced from. Have the crossers drive, loft, or curl crosses in from different angles along the outside of the penalty area.

Turn, Find, Dive (Skill Level – Beginner)

How the Drill Works

On the command, a goalkeeper turns around to locate the target ball in the six soccer balls that are tossed towards them. The goalkeeper must quickly find the target ball and then quickly dive to recover it.

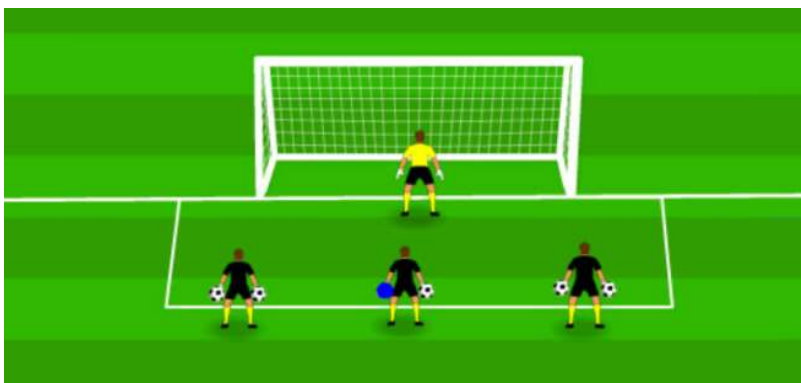
Drill Purpose

Develops a goalkeeper's vision and reaction time. Goalkeepers improve their footwork and agility as well as they move to attack the target ball.

Setup

- Use one full-size goal. This activity can also be completed using cones, or sticks, set up using the same dimensions as a full-size goal.
- One goalkeeper starts in the goal, or in-between the sticks. The goalkeeper starts facing away from the field.
- Six soccer balls are needed. One soccer ball needs to be a different color than the other five soccer balls. This soccer ball will be the target ball.
- Three extra goalkeepers, players, or coaches are needed as servers to complete this activity. The three servers stand on the 6-yard line with one soccer ball in each hand, facing the goalkeeper's backside. One server will have the target soccer ball.

Instructions



1. On the coach's signal, the servers randomly throw/toss their soccer balls into the 6-yard area in front of the goal.
2. The coach then immediately shouts "Go!" and the goalkeeper must quickly turn, find the target ball, and dive to collect the ball.
3. Servers collect the soccer balls and the goalkeeper resets their position by returning to the goal and turning away from the servers.
4. As soon as the players and soccer balls are reset, repeat the process 4-6 more times before resting, or rotating the next goalkeeper in.
5. Each goalkeeper should complete at least 10-12 repetitions, or 2-3 rounds.



Points of Emphasis

- Teach the goalkeepers to stay light on their feet with their weight forward after their turn so they can attack the target ball quickly.
- Goalkeepers should focus on the proper footwork and agility when diving for the ball.
- Educate the goalkeepers to catch the ball first, using a good hand position, and then cushion the ball in when diving for the target ball.
- Remind the goalkeepers to not worry about landing before catching the ball.
- Challenge the goalkeepers to stay square while diving and land on the ground with their stomach behind the ball.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Number of balls – For younger, or less experienced goalkeepers, start with just 3-4 soccer balls. Increase the number of soccer balls as the goalkeepers improve their reaction time.

2. Number of servers – If three servers is not possible, just use two servers with three soccer balls. One soccer ball in each hand, and one soccer ball at their feet.

Under Pressure (Skill Level – Beginner)

How the Drill Works

A goalkeeper starts from a goal kick and attempts to play out the approaching defenders' pressure when possible. The goalkeeper and four extra players attempt to pass out of the back against three defenders.

Drill Purpose

Develops goalkeeper's confidence and feet when placed under pressure. Goalkeepers increase their touch and decision making when completing this activity. Goalkeepers improve their ability to help their defenders play out of the opponent's pressure and keep possession for their team.

Setup

- One half of the field can be used for the drill.
- One full-sized goal should be placed on the end line.
- Set up two cone gates on the half line about 10-15 yards inside of each sideline. The cone gates should 3-4 yards wide.
- Seven extra players are needed. Works best if these players are field players. Four players should be given matching-colored vests and will be on the goalkeeper's team. The other three players will be the defending team and should be given a different jersey color than the attacking team.
- Place a line of cones 15 yards off the edge of the penalty box. This will be the line the three defenders must start behind.
- The four players on the goalkeeper's team should get into a 3-1 formation with three defenders spread across the width of the field and one midfielder just in front of them.
- The goalkeeper starts with the ball inside the 6-yard box. All the extra soccer balls should be kept inside the goalkeeper's goal.

Instructions



1. The goalkeeper starts the drill by passing the ball to one of their teammates outside the penalty box.
2. The receiving player passes the ball directly back to the goalkeeper.
3. As soon as the receiving player touches the ball, the three defenders are free to move in front of their cone line and put the other team under pressure.
4. The goalkeeper receives the ball from their teammate and attempts to pass and move with their teammates to play out of the defender's pressure. The goalkeeper and field players attempt to pass or dribble the ball through the two gates on the half-line.
5. The three defenders move and attempt to steal the ball and score on the other team.
6. If a goal is scored, or the ball goes out-of-bounds, for either team, the players reset and the goalkeeper restarts the activity with a goal kick.
7. The process is repeated for 4-6 repetitions before goalkeepers rest, or rotate positions. Field players should also switch roles every 4-6 repetitions.
8. Each goalkeeper should complete two rounds.



Points of Emphasis

- Instruct the goalkeepers to use their first touch to move the ball away from the approaching defender.
- Remind the goalkeepers to keep their eyes up to see the field and where the ball should be passed.
- Educate the goalkeepers on the right time to play versus the right time to just kick the ball up field and out of danger.
- Encourage the goalkeepers to use the inside of their foot to clear the ball up the field. This part of the foot is bigger than the laces and is a safer decision.
- Teach the goalkeeper's team to constantly move and find good passing angles for each other. There will be spaces to play, but players will need to look around and move into them to help keep possession of the ball and break the defenders high pressure.
- Challenge the field players to compete to win the ball and to not lose the ball.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Add or subtract players – Add more, or less, attackers, or defenders. Switch up the numbers and number advantages.

Distribution

(Skill Level – Beginner)

How the Drill Works

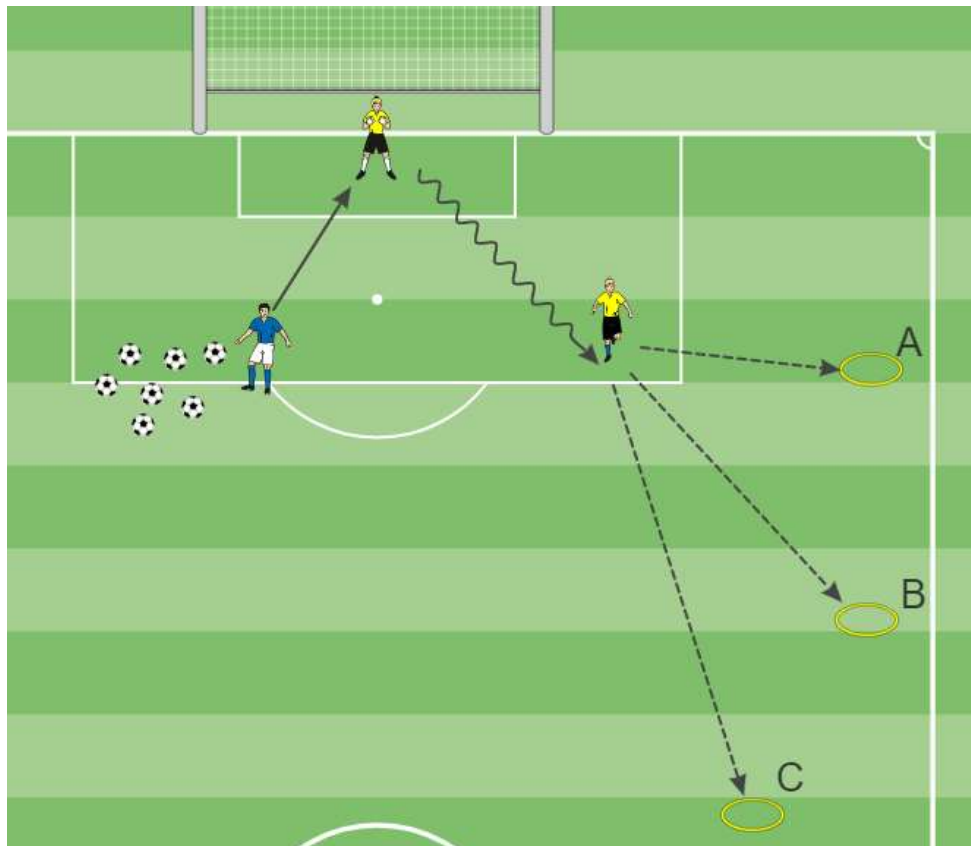
A goalkeeper starts by saving a shot and then attempts to distribute the ball to various points on the field using various distribution methods (Throws/Kicks).

Drill Purpose

Develops goalkeeper's confidence and distribution skills when placed under pressure. Goalkeepers increase their decision making and accuracy when completing this activity.

Setup

- One half of the field can be used for the drill.
- One full-sized goal should be placed on the end line.
- Set up three targets at various distances from the penalty box. (A 10-15 yards, B 15-20 yards, C 25-30 yards)
- Offensive player 1 should have nine (9) soccer balls at their feet.



Instructions

1. The offensive player takes a light shot on goal where the goalkeeper quickly collects the ball and runs to the edge of the penalty box.
2. The goalkeeper then distributes the balls to targets A, B and C being sure to rotate through each target.
3. This process is continued until each of the balls have been distributed.
4. If you have more than one goalie have them rotate from player 1 to goalie after all balls have been distributed.

Points of Emphasis

- Instruct the goalkeepers to quickly scan the field as they're running to the edge of the box to ensure they're distributing to the open target/player.
- Instruct the goalkeeper to run with the ball pressed firmly against their body. If they happen to drop the ball while running it could create a turnover.
- Encourage goalkeepers that when distributing the ball to keep rolls low and smooth so teammates can cleanly field the ball at their feet, throws should be hard and lead their teammates to a spot and not always be thrown right at them. Kicks (U12+) should be angled to the sidelines so as not to produce any turnovers in the middle of the field.
- Encourage receiving defenders/midfielders to get wide for distribution so as to prevent any turnovers in front of the goal.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Change up the distribution method. Round 1 can consist of all rolls, round two throws, three of kicks, etc.
2. The coach can call out various targets as the goalie is running to the edge of the box. This forces the goalie to focus and make a quick decision as the coach is calling out the target.
3. Add in defenders to create a game like feel. Using defenders will help to improve the goalie's decision making and distribution but also ensure the receiving players are moving to open spaces and creating passing lanes.

Team Play Drills

Mass Hysteria (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

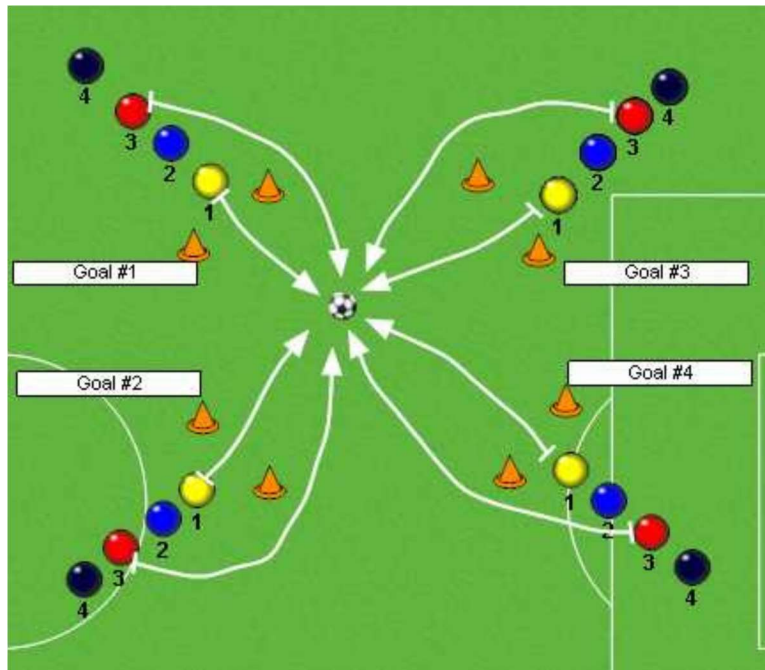
Mass Hysteria is a rapid-fire, exciting drill for all players and simulates a high pressure game situation. It's a fun game that can be used for building stamina, teamwork, and skill sets of all kinds. Players are forced to communicate and think very quickly while executing short passes and controlled sharp shots.

Instructions

1. Using cones, set up 4 small goals a short distance from one another. Number each set of cones 1-4. Each player on the team is given a number from 1 to 4. A player of each number lines up behind one of the cones.



2. Throw the ball into the middle of the playing area and at the same time call out 2 numbers, such as 1 and 3. At this time all players numbered 1 and 3 run onto the field of play.



3. Using teamwork, the idea is to score into the goal of the opposing number that was called. If numbers 1 and 3 are called, then team 1 tries to score into the set of cones numbered 3 and vice versa. Any player that shoots the ball between a set of cones wins a point for his/her team.



4. Because the cones are close together, only shots that go through on the ground count. Guarding a set of goals as if being a goalie is optional but hands are not to be used.



5. In order to score, a ball may only enter the goals from one direction, although there are no boundaries to the playing field. Once a team scores the players then line up behind the goals where they started and await a set of new numbers to be called.

Points of Emphasis

Mass Hysteria is a simple game in theory but one that can become very confusing for players at the moment their numbers are called. They'll be forced to assimilate a lot of information in a short time. During a Sudden Death match, instruct players to...

- organize quickly and communicate.
- encourage short, accurate passing.
- thinking first saves energy – learn not to use running to make up for mistakes.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using a larger playing area such as half of the field to strengthen player conditioning.
Using a smaller playing area requires sharper passes.
2. Calling out 3 numbers for added "hysteria".
3. Calling out 1 number, allow players to organize themselves, then call out a 2nd number a minute later and give team 2 less time to organize.
4. Assigning players new numbers after a given period of time.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – The variations within this game is endless. Players like the quick action and often forget they're working hard.

Tip #2 – Set up a reward system - For example, if a team scores the most points then they are excused from after-practice running.

Tip #3 – In Mass Hysteria communication is critical. This is as much a game of talking and thinking as it is physical skill.

Half Court (Skill Level – All)

Drill Purpose

Half Court is a simulated soccer game using half of the field. It's a great drill for preparing for an upcoming game. Both offensive and defensive players are involved and the goal is for the coach to gain a sense of the team's ability and work on anything that might be an issue. Players enjoy the game atmosphere and also get to work on getting in game shape.

Instructions

1. Using half of the field and cones for a smaller goal mouth, position 4 defenders in front of the goal and 6 offensive players at the 50 yard line.
2. On your whistle allow the offensive players to begin carrying the ball into the defensive zone and set up for a potential shot.



3. Obviously, a goal by the offense is a point. For defenders, stringing together 6 interrupted passes qualifies as a point.
4. All game rules apply.

Points of Emphasis

Half Court is a drill that mimics a real game and allows a coach to uncover potential weaknesses. Players like it because it's half the field and doesn't wear them out as quickly. During Half Court, instruct players to...

- organize, communicate, and work together as much as possible.
- work on foot drills and other activities they might be hesitant to try in a real game situation.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Removing some defenders or increasing the number of offensive players.
2. Shortening or widening the goal mouth depending on what needs the most work.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – This is a drill that resembles a game but is not – so encourage players to try things they are thinking about using in a real game but have been hesitant to try.

Tip #2 – Set up rewards for the offense and defense for good performances.

Tip #3 – Encourage players to try to see the game as an observer while they're in the middle of it. Make sure they get a feel for their place on the field.

Cross & Shoot (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

A common strategy when it comes to setting up goals during the course of a game is to take a ball down the wing and then cross it into the goal area to a teammate who can potentially head or kick the ball into the net. Cross & Shoot is a soccer finishing drill and represents a skill set that will present itself in a game situation. During this drill players practice crossing to a teammate who then takes a shot on goal.

Instructions

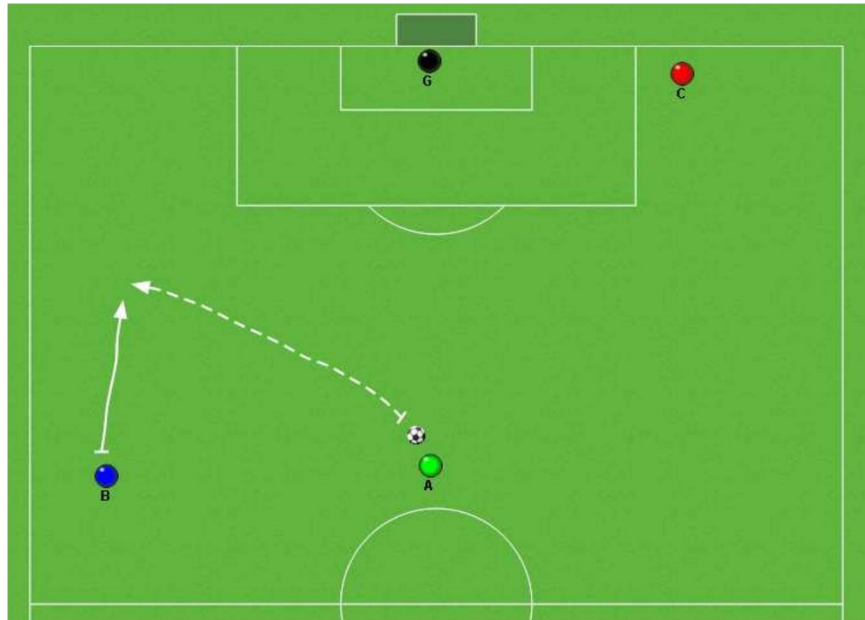
1. Four players per drill group are utilized.
2. The distance from A to B is about 20-30 yards.



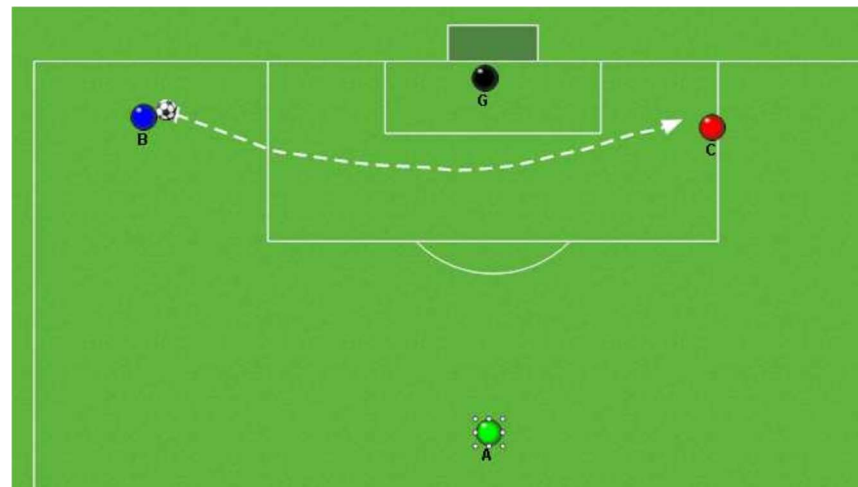
3. The goalkeeper throws the ball to player A.



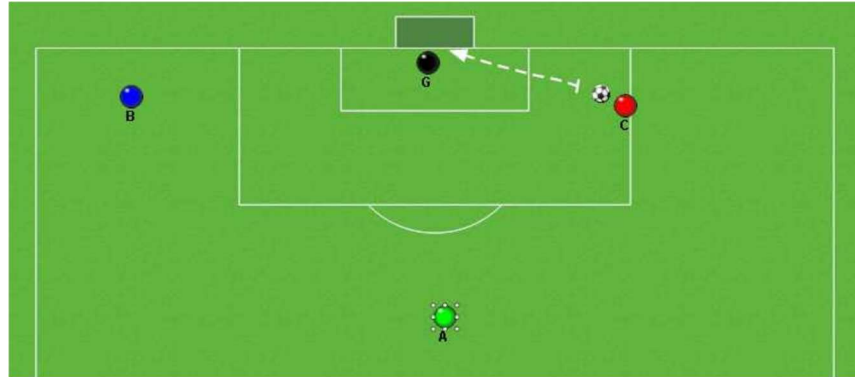
4. A chips the ball to B.



5. B dribbles towards the end line and crosses the ball.



6. C takes a shot on goal.



Points of Emphasis

Cross & Shoot is a crossing and finishing drill. Players enjoy the drill because they know that similar circumstances will present themselves in a real game. During Cross & Shoot, instruct players to...

give easy passes to each other at every point in the drill.

become comfortable with making crossing passes.

understand that off-ball running and getting into a position to receive a ball is extremely important.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the game, further variations include:

1. Using more players as targets for B's crossing attempt.
2. Adding a defender or two to add pressure.
3. Using both sides of the field.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – There are many variations to this drill. A cross under pressure is difficult and players should be encouraged not to get upset with themselves.

Tip #2 – Learn how to kick an accurate cross from distance. Use any part of the foot that feels comfortable.

Tip #3 – Communication amongst players is critical – B should know where C likes to make runs and C should have a feel for B's crossing style.

Position Exchange (Skill Level – Intermediate)

Drill Purpose

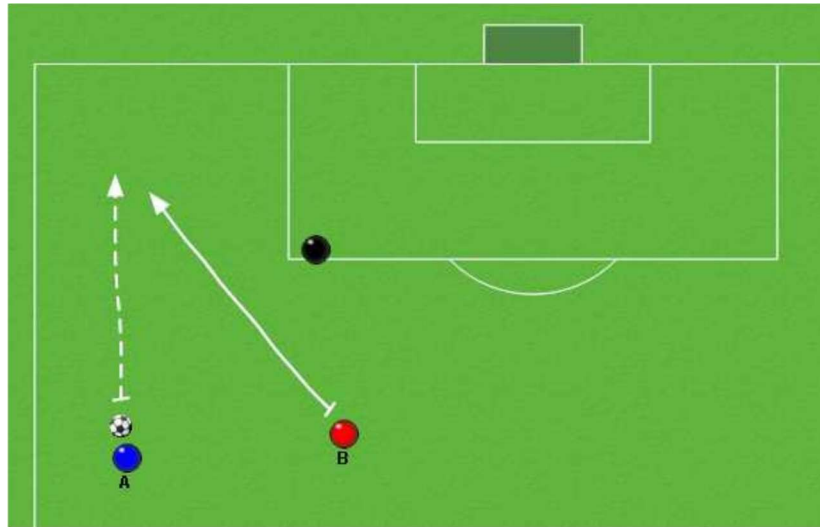
During a game, players should feel free to support another player by taking over that player's position if necessary. For example, an offensive player may need to fall back and take a defensive role if the defender carries a ball forward for a shot or a cross. There are many situations in which players fill in for one another. Beginning players are often hesitant to leave their position, but with experience understand that it's temporary and will help the team. Position Exchange is a drill used to practice building a scoring opportunity by players who exchange positions.

Instructions

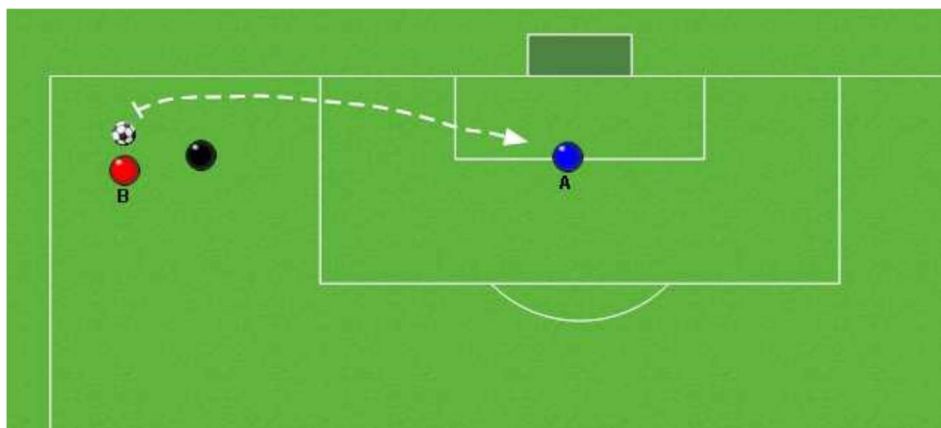
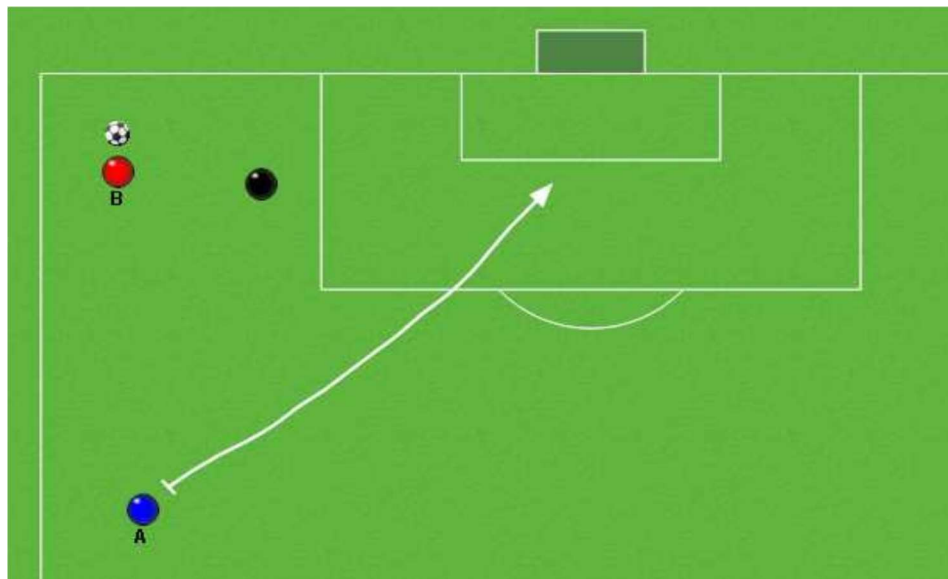
1. Three players make up each drill group. A should be one of the team's current wing forwards and B is a midfielder.
2. The distance from A to B is about 5-10 yards. A to the defensive player is about 5-7 yards.



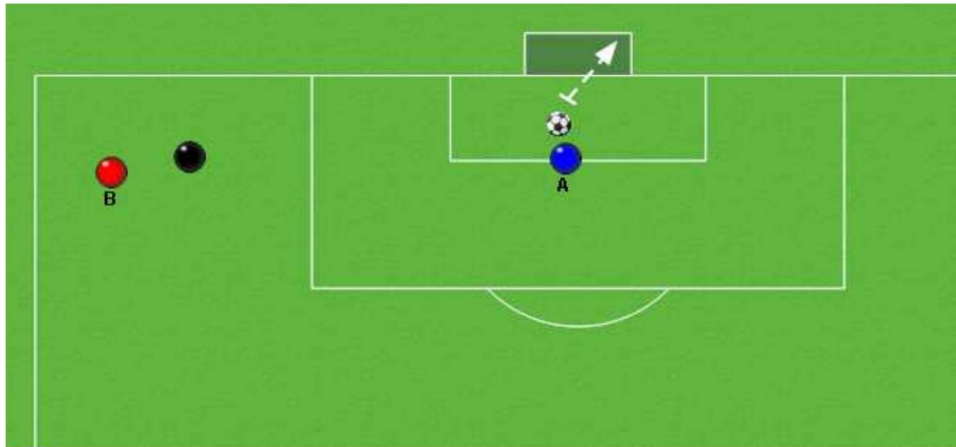
3. B makes a run for the corner while A pushes a pass to the open space in the corner.



4. A breaks towards the goal to receive a crossed ball from B.



5. A then shoots at the goal.



Points of Emphasis

Position Exchange is a tactical soccer drill in which players develop familiarity with leaving a position temporarily to help the team. During Position Exchange instruct players to...

- not feel “chained” to a position at all times – it’s ok to leave a position to help as long as you come back after a play is over.
- communicate to each other that a position is being vacated and the empty position may need to be filled temporarily.

Progression

As players gain an understanding of the drill, further variations include:

1. Running the same drill with 3 other players at the same time on the other side of the field.
2. Adding more defenders to add pressure.
3. Having A return to his/her original position after taking a shot.

Motivation / Teaching Tips

Tip #1 – Encourage players to change positions if necessary but return after the play sequence is over.

Tip #2 – Encourage offensive players to come back on defense if a defender is making a run with a ball.

Tip #3 – Award successful shots on goal.