



Wheathampstead Wanderers FC

Mini – Soccer Awards Scheme: Coaches Guide



COACHES GUIDE – AWARDS SCHEME SUPPORTING MANUAL

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@DanAbrahams77: A coach's voice travels with a player...always!



FOREWORD

As a true community club, we aim to develop and deliver a quality youth football program, in a positive, fun and family oriented environment.

On the pitch, aside from our children’s welfare and enjoyment, our main concern is player development – whilst we take great pride in our winning teams, results are certainly not the “be all and end all”. We believe that the most fundamental skill in football is individual mastery of the ball and the creativity that comes with it. This should be a priority in training and games, especially in the early years. As these core techniques and skills are mastered, the rest of the game becomes easier - both to teach and to learn.

Our Mini-Soccer Awards Scheme is an Age-Appropriate learning path which we hope will support coaches in developing talent. The format is intended to allow the coach to apply their own coaching style and approach, while fitting in with FA Level 2 Coaching Standards and creating a consistency of learning within the club. We feel this award scheme is a great way for young players to try to do the best that they can do, regardless of personal ability, and will go some way towards taking pressure off a mini-soccer manager who may feel that he or she is going to be judged solely on the winning of matches.

“Don’t get obsessed by the RESULT it is the way they play that matters – It is for the kids, not an adult’s ego. You and they learn less from winning than losing .” (U11 Manager)

“We don’t teach the boys some of the basics well that then show up later on I also think that we may be better off focussing as a club on certain skills at certain ages rather than leaving it to the volunteers to work it out for themselves” (U14 Manager)

“... learning together with the team is a bonding experience” (U14 Manager)

The drills in this manual are intended as recommendations from our experienced coaches, but they are not mandatory, and they are not a ‘complete set’. As a club we value our coaches’ individuality, and their understanding of each teams specific development requirements. The awards progression should be used to supplement and support the coaches sessions, rather than dictate them.

From US Soccer Federation Best Practice - CONSIDER THIS: At the younger ages (6 to about 10), soccer is not a team sport. On the contrary, it is a time for children to develop their individual relationship with the ball

OUR GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

We would like all our teams to play a high tempo style of football, based on a controlled use of possession and an intelligent, effective movement of play through all areas of the pitch. For this to be achieved we will need to nurture an assured and varied technical foundation in all our young players. Solid, basic technique is fundamental to the success of any player development program. We expect all our teams to learn to be comfortable playing the ball out from the back, and we recognise that all adults present (coaches and parents) need to understand and support this approach.



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ATTACKING PRINCIPLES

For all attacking topics the following basic principles apply:

- POSSESSION – We can't score without the ball
- DISPERSION – We need depth, width and penetration to maintain possession
- MOVEMENT – We need to move away from defenders to create space for ourselves and others
- CREATIVITY – One moment of genius can win a game!

DEFENDING PRINCIPLES

For all defending topics the following basic principles apply:

- DENY – Can we get the ball?
- DELAY – Can we delay the attack?
- DEFLECT – Can we deflect the attack away from goal?
- DEFEND – Can we defend patiently and compactly?

BASIC PRACTICE DEFINITIONS

TECHNIQUE – Unopposed practice with the emphasis on developing technique.

SKILL – Opposed practice with the emphasis on developing the bond between technique and decision making.

As a general principle, players should be able to understand and demonstrate the correct technique, before applying it in a practice to develop good skill



COACHES NOTES

Under 8

U8s are very self-centred and 'greedy' with the ball (don't worry, it's not just your lot!). This is no bad thing, U8s have a fantastic capacity to develop coordination and motor skills, but limited understanding of group play and spatial awareness. The U8 award is focussed on simple games and sessions to build a very strong foundation of basic technique and coordination.

You will be in your first season of regular matches, so the awards will just be one part of what you are doing with your team. Most of the Bronze Award curriculum is just focus on fundamentals which you can cover alongside the other specific sessions you will want to do with your squad. Repetition is likely to be key, since what the kids can do in training will not sink in straight away on the pitch. If you are happy that your kids are grasping these things quickly, feel free to try out some Silver Award stuff in advance!

Consider setting some ground rules. Examples that our Football Development Officer has used in the past are asking the keeper not to kick it long (so we learn to build from the back), and asking defenders to not kick the ball out of play (so they learn how to hold, turn and play the ball). This will prove difficult in the short term, but the aim is to challenge the kids to use technique, skill and awareness for a solution, rather than look for short-cuts or 'safety first'

Under 9

U9s will start to develop more of a capacity to understand basic individual tactics (when to pass vs when to dribble, when to tackle vs when to delay), but still struggle with many team dynamics. Many of the U9 sessions build on the U8 basics into more advanced techniques requiring finer motor skills. At the same time, we introduce simple tactical awareness and teamwork concepts which do not require complex decision making on the part of the player.

The skills and tricks should prove very popular, most of the kids will be able to do these things in slow-mo and unopposed, but not all will do them on the pitch. The main key here is just to get the players thinking about different ways to use the ball, and challenging them to use different parts of the foot or body. Let them make mistakes and feed off each other, acknowledge that this approach may cost you a few goals and maybe a few games over the season. If they are enjoying the skills and learning them quickly, try some Gold or Advanced skills too.

Under 10

Some U10 players will be physically and mentally mature enough to work on more advanced techniques and tactics, and most will be able to pace themselves and plan ahead. Players are starting to understand support play, group dynamics, and develop strategies for items such as finishing which are simply instinctive for the younger age groups. Practice sessions become more focussed on tactics and skills, and players are encouraged to find their own solutions to match-play problems.

In terms of technique development, the main focus is to revisit all of the skills work in Bronze and Silver, and try it out on the weaker foot. Hopefully this will just be a 5-10 minute recap and attempt at the start of each session. Be patient, the players may find this more difficult than they think!



BODY BASICS

Some games or activities for the younger age groups.

Agility (with or without the ball):

- Actions - jog around and call header, shot, goal and kids simply have to pretend (or player names e.g Terry for a header, Cruyff for a turn, Walcott for a sprint, Drogba for a dive etc. or similarly favourite goal celebrations!)
- British Bulldog (there is another version of this where bibs are used as tails and the idea is to keep your tail)
- Stuck In The Mud (can play this with balls when they get older)
- 'Knee-slap' – see the 'Defensive Techniques' Section (good drill to improve tackling/defence).
- Soccer Sumo. Two players in a small coned square (2mx2m). The aim is to knock your opponent out of the square using only your shoulder. Start off with shoulders touching, and ensure that it doesn't get out of hand!
- Run The Gauntlet - run to the other side avoiding footballs being passed across the pitch

Agility Games (with the ball):

- Follow My Leader - break into groups of, say, 6, each child has a ball and seeks to follow their nominated leader
- Shadows - players work in twos, one ball between 2, player with the ball is shadowed by their partner
- Parts Of The Body - each child has a ball and is asked to dribble with the ball until you ask them to put a part of the body on the ball
- Obstacles - one ball each dribbling from one side of the pitch to the other add more obstacles each time (suggest parents to get them involved) and you can have one group working up and down the pitch and another across to increase the interference
- Keep Ball - all the kids have a ball and try to keep it in a playing area whilst someone is trying to kick it out (player gets their ball and comes back but loses a life - don't want kids standing around doing nothing)

Head Up/Awareness:

- Moving Target - idea is to simply dribble round the coach, who will change his position each time (divide the kids into two groups – one setting off as the last player in other finishes)
- Traffic Lights - important game from FA Level 1 Manual teaching kids to get their heads up while dribbling - different coloured cones are held up by the coach requiring different actions

Other Suitable Games from the FA Level 1 Manual:

- Alamo (shooting practice)
- Hot Potato (get balls from one end to a target at the other by throwing them along a line)
- Pass The Buck (two teams playing against each other to have as many balls as possible in opponents area at end of given amount of time)
- Robin Hood (say 4 teams - all balls in the middle - kids in a team take it in turns to get balls - winners teams with most balls when no left in middle)
- On Guard (1 v 1 with small goal at either end)
- Two Pots And In (1 v 1 with a goalkeeper)



SHORT PASSING

Key technique aspects

- Non-kicking foot close to the ball, pointing towards the target
- Head still and over the ball
- Kick with inside of foot, following through on line of target
- Keep ball low, striking through middle of the ball

Key technical aspects:

- Picture the target
- Decision to pass first time or control
- Accuracy, weight and timing of pass (preferably to "safe side" of receiver)
- Awareness of where to pass if the recipient is moving (i.e., ahead of the player)
- Movement after the pass

Receiving The Ball:

Try to encourage the kids to get into the habit of receiving the ball cleanly on the furthest foot – ie if the ball is coming from the left, let it run across your body and take it on the inside of the right foot. If it is coming from the right, take it on the inside of the left foot. This opens up the body naturally, keeps great balance, and is a very simple way to start kids using both feet without having to think about it too much.

Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>) : “For Kids”: “With Friends”: “How to Pass & Receive”

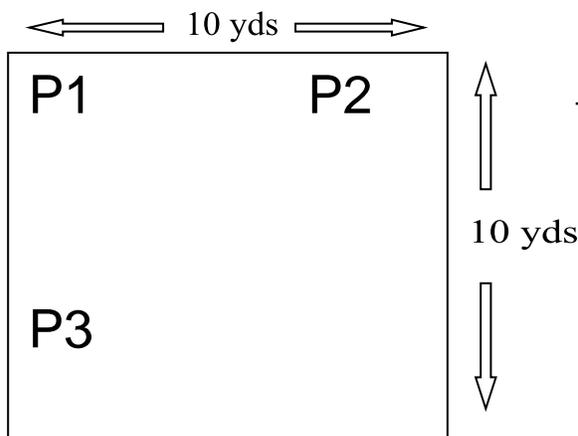
You Tube: “How To Pass a Soccer Ball” (livestrong)

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>) : Skills: “Guide To Short Passing”

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>) : Skills: Basic Ball Control”

Technique Drills

1.



Three players - P1, P2 & P3 inside a 10 yard square.
 One ball.
 Each player passes the ball and runs into the gap between the other two players.
 Try to keep the ball moving.



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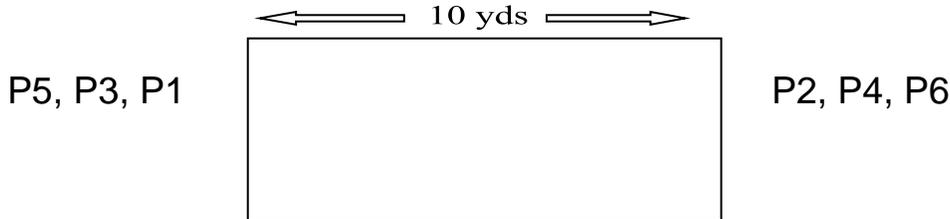
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2. Follow The Pass

Six or more players – P1, P2, P3 etc. One ball.

P1 passes to P2, follows the pass and joins the line behind P2. P2 passes to P3, follows the pass and joins the line behind P3 and so on. Try to keep the ball moving.



3. Through The Gate (Younger Players)

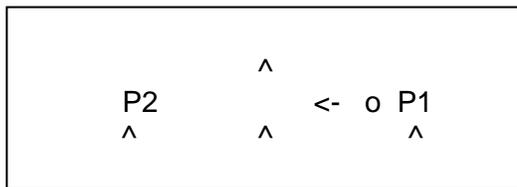
Two Players, stood 5 yards apart with a narrow 'Gate' of 2 marker cones in between them

P1 passes to P2, ball has to go through the gate and reach the other player. If successful, P1 scores a point and takes 1 step back (thus making the next pass harder)

P2 passes back through the gate, again scoring a point and moving back if successful

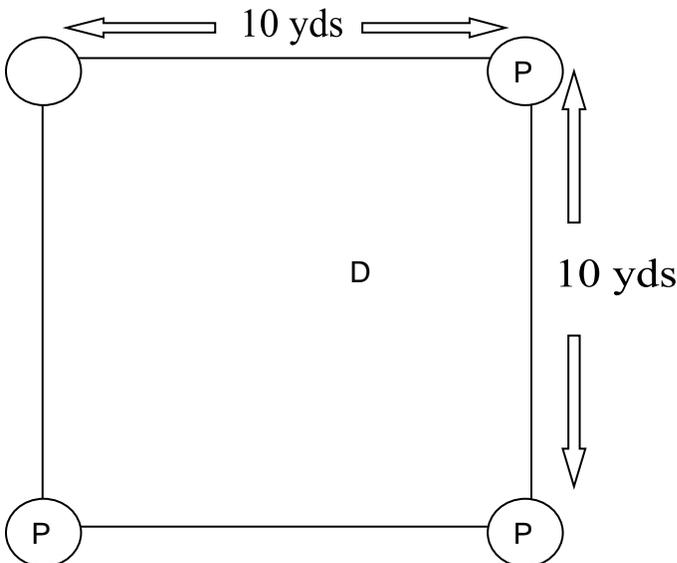
Play continues until one player reaches 10 points (successful passes)

Each player has a cone next to their current position to prevent 'creeping'!



Skill Practice

1.



Four players – P1, P2 & P3 each on a corner of a 10 yard square and a defender (D). One ball.

P1, P2 and P3 pass the ball to each other.

All passes must be along a side of the square

i.e. no diagonal passes.

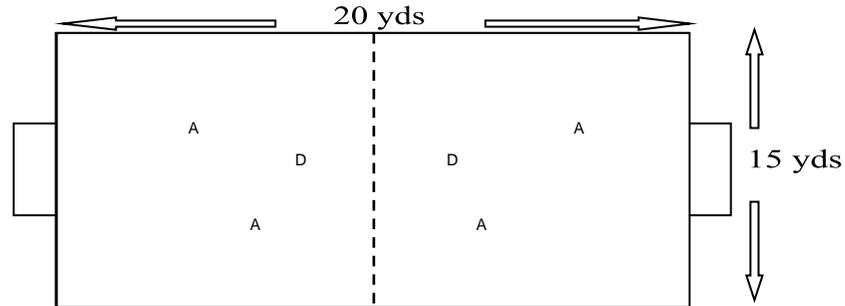
One player must move to support possession.

This drill is also good to reinforce good support angles and general support play.

2. Halves

Six or more players. Pitch divided into two halves with more attackers than defenders in each half. Players stay in the half pitch to which they have been assigned. Goalkeepers can be used.

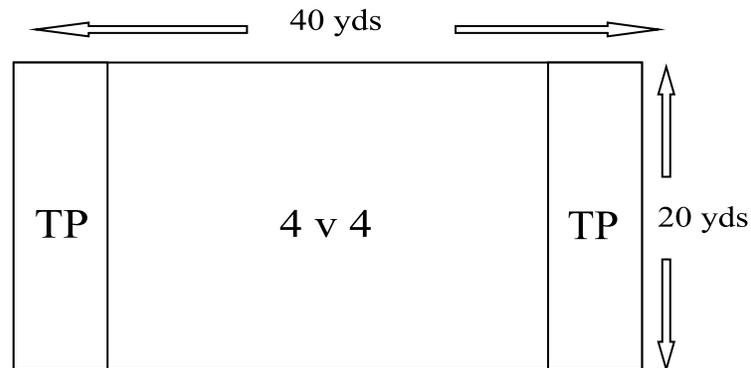
The attackers try to use their numerical advantage by passing and supporting the ball. The defenders can score if they win the ball. If the ball goes out of play or is secured by a goalkeeper it is transferred to the other half of the pitch.



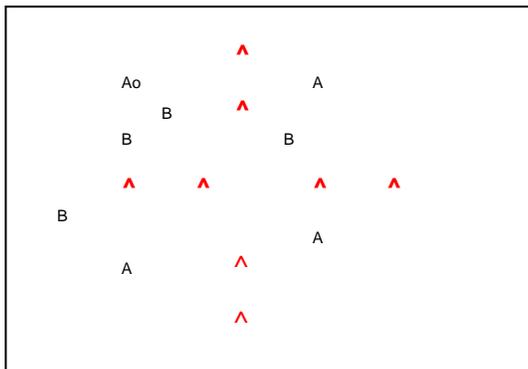
Game Practice

1. Four v four game with a target player (TP) at either end.

Aim is to pass the ball to the target player. Can be played as a one directional game, or possession can be retained following a successful pass to a target player with direction of game changing.



2. Four Gates



Minimum 6 players (3 a side). Layout 4 cone 'gates' in a cross shape (gates approx 1 yard wide).

The aim of the game is for either team to score a point by passing the ball through any of the gates to one of their team mates. Ball must go cleanly through the cones, and can't be touched by an opposition player before it reaches their team-mate. Play is continuous, no stopping after a point is scored, and no 'out of bounds'. Opposition try to tackle and win the ball back as per normal football rules.



BALL HOLDING / SHIELDING

Key technique aspects

- Sideways on, body between the ball and the opponent
- Foot on top of ball, making small movements
- Bum sticking out, knees flexed
- Arms down, but away from body to keep opponent away (make your body a large barrier)
- Keep making small adjustments as opponent moves (ball stays fairly stationary, your body position moves around it)
- Basic awareness of which direction to turn to keep away from opponent and towards 'safe side'

Useful Resources

You Tube: "Soccer Tips: Shield the Ball from the Defender" (playsportstv)

You Tube: "Match – FA Skills – Shield The Ball" (matchymovie)

You Tube: "Match – FA Skills – Shield The Ball Like Essien" (matchymovie)

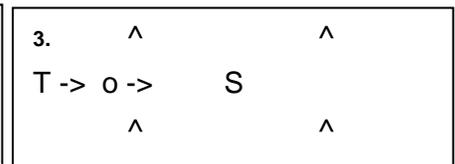
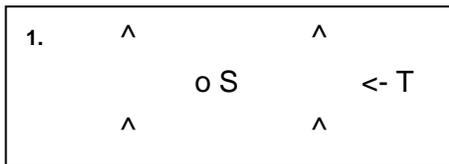
UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>): Skills: "Shielding The Ball 1"

Once kids have some tricks/skills too, try playing Panna (see appendix) to develop ball holding also.

Skill Practice

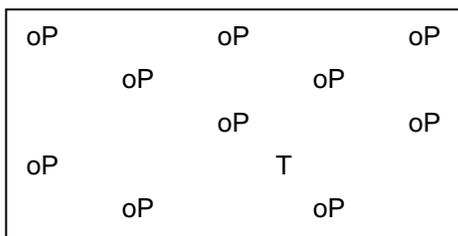
1: 1v1 Shielding

- 1 v 1 in a small marked square (2 or 3 yards). 'Shielder' has to use shielding technique to keep the ball in the square as long as possible. 'Tackler' simply trying to get the ball out of the square
 1. Start with ball at feet and Shielder positioned ready with the ball before Tackler can enter the square from behind
 2. 1st progression – ball passed in (by 3rd player or coach), Tackler stood behind Shielder, and can only move into the square once the ball is touched (i.e. Shielder now has to control the ball, and shield immediately)
 3. 2nd progression – ball passed in by the Tackler, (who is outside the square, facing front of defender. Tackler can only move into square once the Shielder touches the ball (i.e., Shielder now has to control & turn before shielding)



2: Beware The Tigers

- Mark out a large square. Every player except one has a ball. The player without a ball is the Tiger. If the Tiger kicks your ball out of the square, you become a Tiger too. Last one left with a ball is the winner



RUNNING WITH THE BALL

Key technique aspects:

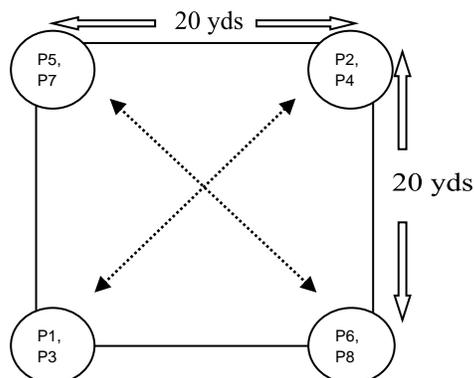
- The knee of the dribbling leg is bent and the toes are pointed downwards and slightly inwards, so that the front of the foot comes into contact with the ball.
- Contact with the ball is made with the laces of the shoe
- The knee should be over the ball when contact is made, so that the gait itself is very similar to prancing.
- As contact is made with the ball, the ball is dragged/pulled along by the dribbling foot, so that it comes to rest beside the dribbling foot when you step down again.
- Short steps are used, and the ball stays in front of the torso at all times
- To stop, press down on the top of the ball with the bottom of the foot (studs)

Key technical aspects:

- Get in line with the pass
- Positive first touch out of feet
- Use laces (not side of foot)
- Head up
- Cover ground quickly i.e. long strides
- Execute good weight of pass

Technique Drills

1. Corners



Eight or more players on corners of a 20 yard square.
Two balls.
Shuttle relays across the box, with P1 passing to P2, P2 passing to P3 and P3 passing to P4.
The players running on the other diagonal line will provide some interference and encourage awareness.

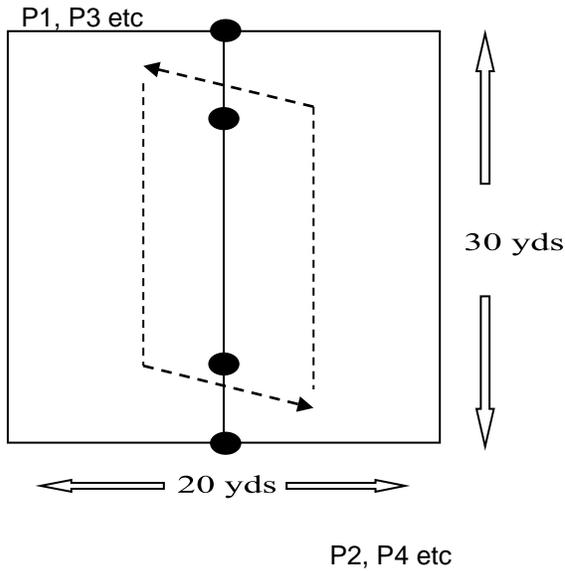
2. Minefield

Lay out a full set of small marker cones in a tight random pattern, covering a square approx 10 x 10 yards, players have a ball each, and must dribble round the minefield without their ball hitting a mine (marker cone). 3 lives and you're out. Encourage players to use all parts of the foot when dribbling/turning/stopping, and move at increasing speed

- 1st Progression, players can kick each others ball if they get close enough

Shuttle/Relay races through the minefield are also a good alternative to dribbling in and out of a line of cones

3. Diagonal Passes



Six or more players divided into two groups starting diagonally opposite each other. One ball.

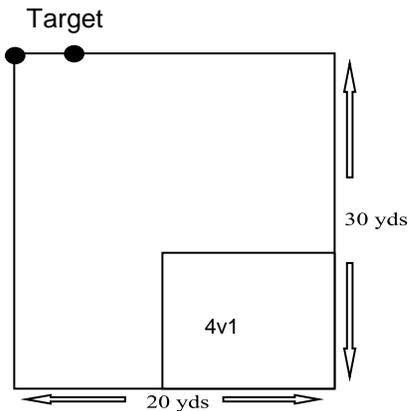
Player P1 runs with the ball in a straight line and passes across through cones in front of P2. P2 then runs with the ball in a straight line and passes

across through the cones in front of P3 and so on.

Progressions: Have two balls on the go, or Introduce defenders who start 5 yards behind P1 etc. Swap roles regularly.

Skill Practice

1.



Nine or more players. Three or more balls.

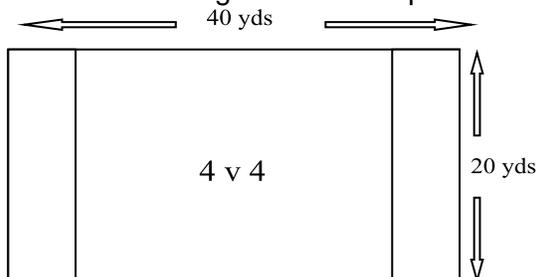
Four attackers v one defender in a 10 yard square. After a series of four or more passes an attacker can be released out of the square. He tries to run the ball through the target whilst being chased by the defender.

The breaking attacker and defender will need to be to catch their breath so swap in other players.

Game Practice

2. Four v four game.

Aim is to run with the ball into the end zone. Can be played as a one directional game, or possession can be retained following a successful pass to a target player with direction of game changing.



Consider introducing a floating player, who always plays with the team in possession, to increase the opportunities to run with the ball.



DRIBBLING

Key technical aspects:

- Head up to assess options
- Receive ball out of feet and facing opponent - if the ball is delivered from behind try to receive in an open stance (i.e. side on) with foot nearest the goal
- Isolate defender 1v1
- Collect defender i.e. the point at which the defender becomes engaged
- Use a dribbling trick e.g. big toe, then little toe to manipulate the ball, step over and then outside of the foot etc – tricks that keep the attacker's body between the ball and the opponent or generally preferred)
- Change of pace and/or direction. To stop, press down on the top of the ball with the bottom of the foot
- Positive end result e.g. effective cross
- Other players to help create space for dribbling

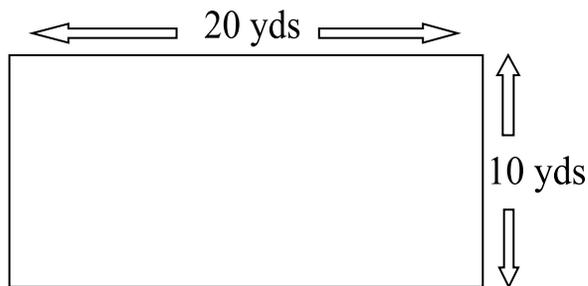
Useful Resources

UEFA Training Ground (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>) Skills – “Guide To Basic Dribbling”

BBC Skills (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/skills/default.stm>)

Technique Drills

1. Manipulating the ball

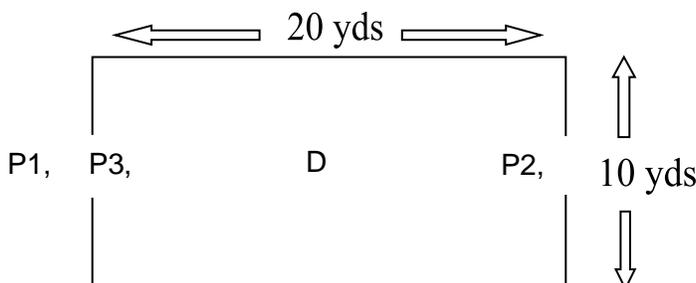


Minimum of one player, one ball.

Players work up and down the pitch using the inside and then the outside of their foot ("big toe, little toe").

Challenge players to try this with their weaker foot.

2. Collecting the defender

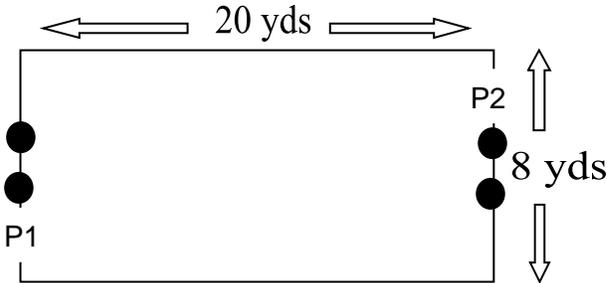


Minimum of six players, one ball.

Player P1 dribbles towards passive defender D (i.e. D not to tackle). P1 tries to "collect" D (i.e. get to the point at which D is engaged) before changing pace and direction to beat him. P1 then passes to

player P2 who tries to beat D and then passes to player P3 etc.

3. Change of pace/direction



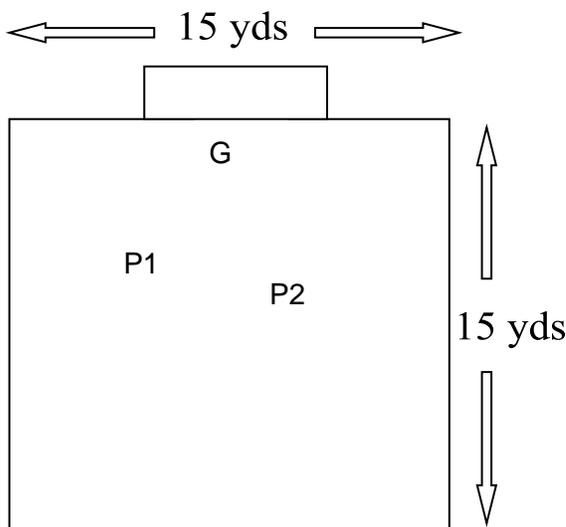
Minimum of two players, one ball.

A one versus one directional game which starts with Player P2 passing the ball to player P1.

P1 then tries to beat P2 and score through the target at the right hand end. When the ball goes off, the roles are reversed and P1 passes the ball to P2 who tries to beat P1 and score through the target at the left end etc.

(Game sometimes called "On guard".)

4. Dribbling tricks



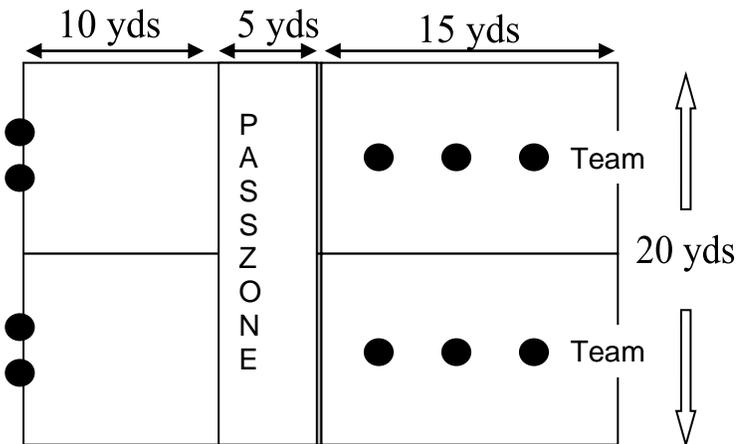
Minimum of three players, one ball.

A one versus one game, which starts with the goalkeeper GK throwing the ball out for P1 and P2. The first player to reach the ball will act as attacker and the other as defender. If the defender successfully tackles he will become the attacker.

The players attempt to beat each other and score past the goalkeeper. Once a player scores three goals they become goalkeeper and the game begins again.

(Game sometimes called "Three pots and in".)

5. End product

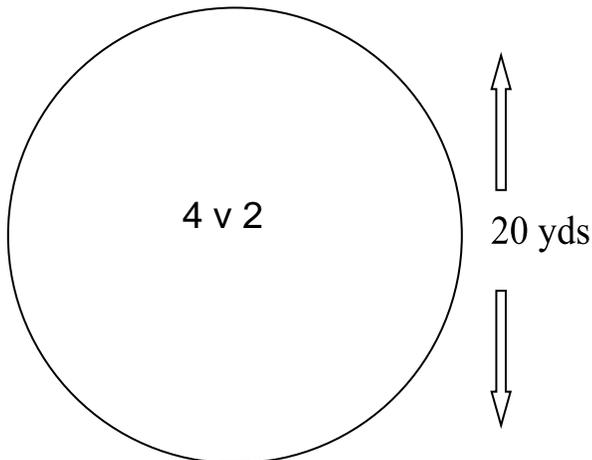


Two teams, two balls.

This is a race against the clock. Each team dribbles through their cones into the pass zone, and once there will try and pass the ball through their cones at the end. Five seconds should be added for each inaccurate pass. (Note that each team will need to have someone behind the cones to collect and return their ball.)

Skill Practice

1a.

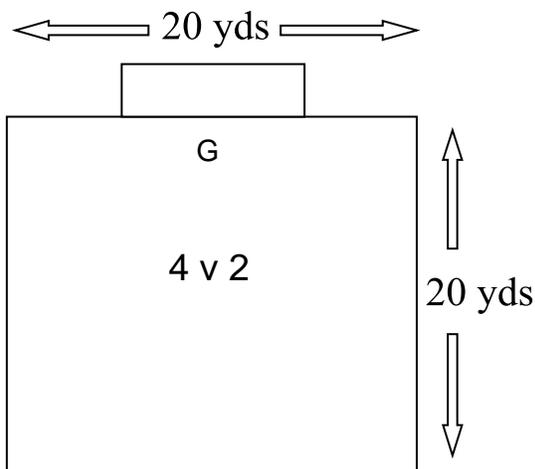


Six or more players, one ball.

This is a possession game where four players try to retain the ball against two defenders (or six versus three etc.). Try to give the defenders a target e.g. if they get the ball three times they no longer have to defend. The game should help players understand when it is a good time to dribble and when it is a good time to pass.

(Game sometimes called "See it, do it".)

1b.



A variation on "See it, do it" introduces a goal and a goalkeeper GK.

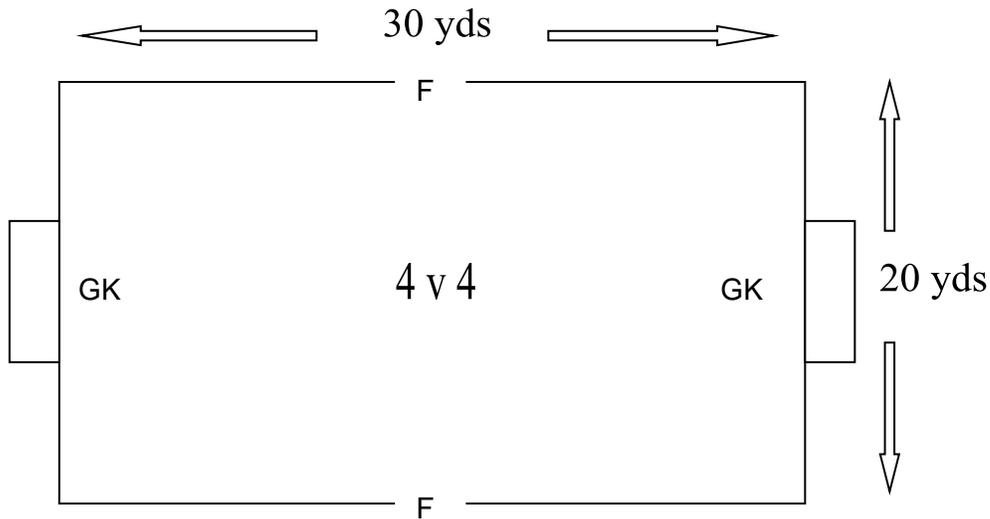
In this version, if the two defenders manage to win the ball their target is now to try and score a goal. Swap the roles regularly. See who scores the most goals and who is best at retaining possession.



Game Practice

1. Four v four game with two floating players supporting the team in possession.

This is a normal game where there will be plenty of opportunities to dribble. Try to emphasise those situations where it is suitable to dribble e.g. when the attacker is in an advanced position and has isolated the defender one versus one.





TURNING

Key technique aspects:

- Outside Hook
 - Dribbling with the ball under control
 - Let the outside edge of one foot guide the ball outwards at right angles to the direction of travel (i.e., right foot to turn right, left foot to turn left)
 - As you're doing this, turn your body so it's following your foot and be on your way
 - Your marker should be on your opposite side the whole time, so you're turning away and shielding the ball with your body.
- Inside Hook
 - Dribbling with the ball under control
 - Let the inside edge of one foot guide the ball sideways at right angles to your direction of travel (i.e., left foot to turn right, right foot to turn left)
 - As you're doing this, turn your body so it's following your foot and then be on your way.
 - Your marker should be on your opposite side the whole time, so you're turning away and shielding the ball with your body.
- Drag Back
 - Stop the ball with your foot on top of it
 - Drag the ball back using the sole of the foot
 - Turn 180 degrees and exit – keep your body between the ball and the marker at all times
- Dummy & Turn
 - Check that there is space behind you
 - As the ball is passed in to you from the front, step forward putting weight on the front foot
 - Allow the ball to run through your legs
 - Push off the front foot and turn 180 degrees to follow the ball
- Cruyff Turn
 - See the '1v1 Attacking Strategies' section (if you feel your kids are ready!)
- Feints
 - Use a basic Shoulder Feint to fool your opponent before you turn

Key technical aspects:

- Create space to turn into prior to receiving pass
- Recognition of space, and position of defenders and team mates
- Communication from support players letting the receiver know if they have time to turn
- Using an appropriate turning technique (e.g. hook, drag back, Cruyff etc.) to keep your body between you and the defender
- Head up to assess whether to shoot, pass or dribble

Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Dummy & Turn"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Drag The Ball Back"

You Tube: "turning passing and control drill" (STRskillSchool)

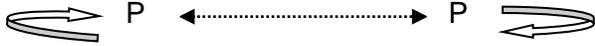
UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>): Skills: "The Stop Turn"

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>): Skills: "Inside Hook"

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>): Skills: "Outside Hook"

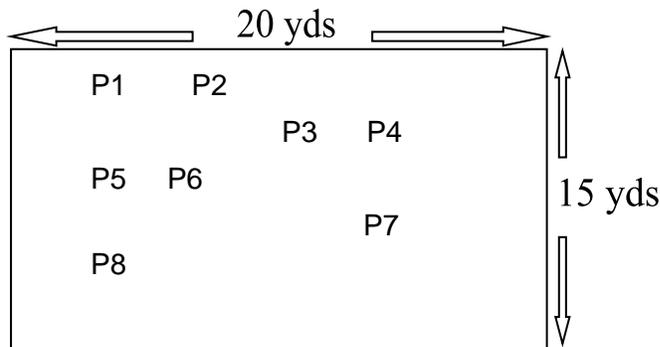
Technique Drills

1. Two players, one ball.



P1 passes the ball to P2 who turns and then turns back and passes to P1 who turns, then turns back and passes to P2 etc.

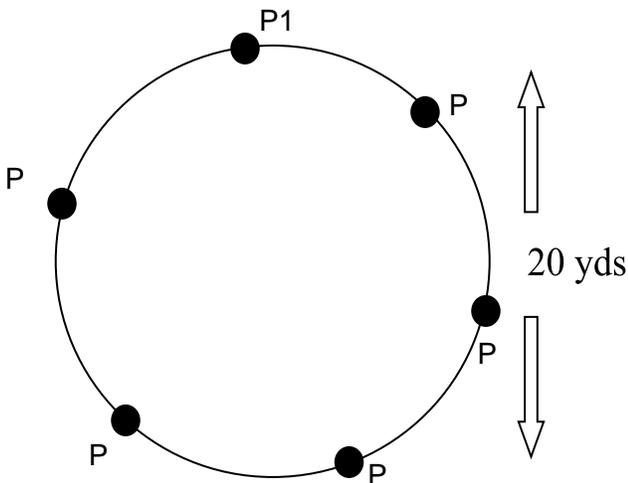
2.



Minimum of eight players, with about one ball for every two players.

Players start facing a partner, one ball between two. The player with the ball passes to their partner who then turns and looks to pass to any player without a ball who turns and passes to any player without a ball etc.

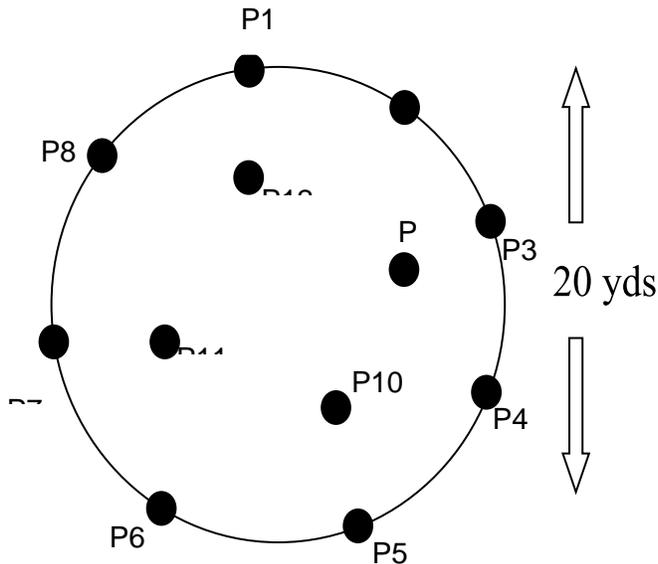
3.



Any number of players, one ball each.

Players start on the outer circle and are asked to dribble in towards a smaller circle. On reaching the smaller circle they should employ a suitable turning technique e.g. inside hook, outside hook or a Cruyff turn.

4.

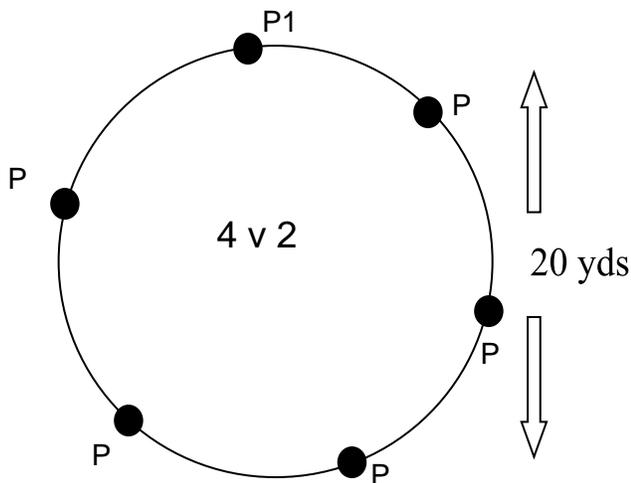


Minimum of eight players. At least one ball for each player inside the circle.

Assuming 12 players – start with 5 balls divided between the 8 players stationed on the outside of the circle. Players on the inside of the circle would look to receive a pass, turn and play the ball to another player on the outside of the circle who does not have a ball e.g. P9 would demand a pass from P3 turn and then lay it off to P5. P9 would then look for another pass from, say from P6, turn and then lay it off to P8. (The receiving player on the outside can do a turn before delivering the ball to a different player on the inside of the circle.)

Skill Practice

1.



Minimum of eight players, one ball with each player on the outside of the circle.

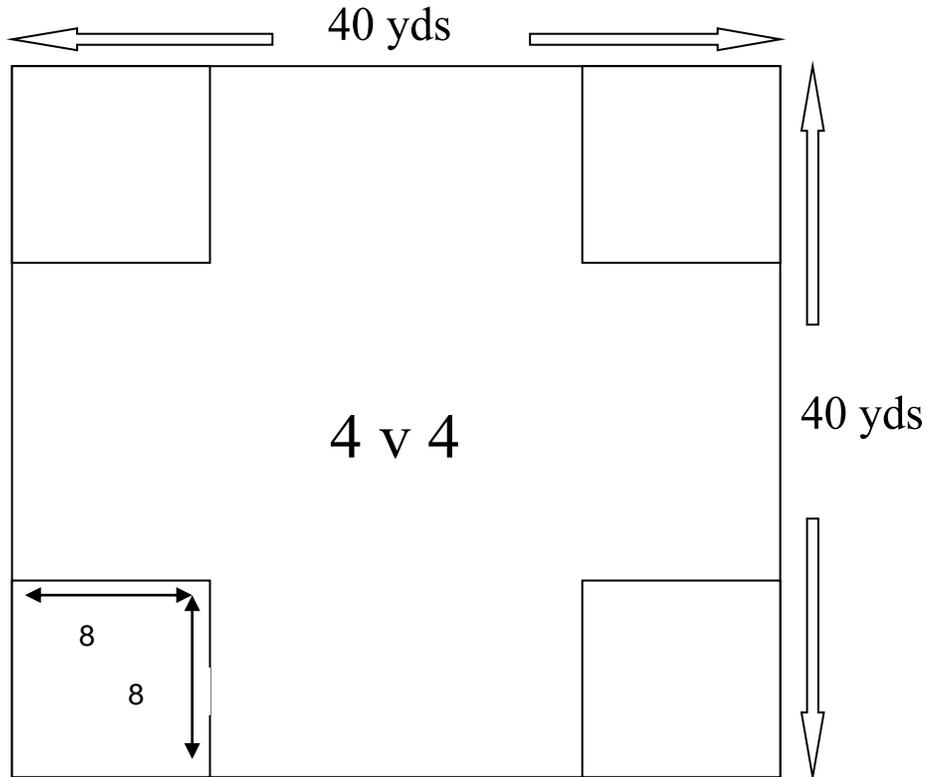
The four attackers and two defenders on the inside of the circle. The four attackers demand a ball from a player on the outside and, if possible, turn (away from the two defenders) and pass to another player on the outside of the circle. The defenders can be actively looking to steal the ball or act more passively.



Game Practice

1. Four v four game with four target players.

The aim of the game is to get the ball from one target player and deliver it to another target player. Target players must deliver the ball back to the team that passed to them. A pass cannot be made back to the target player that the ball came from thus encouraging turning.





FINISHING

Key technique aspects: (instep shot)

- head down
- standing foot alongside the ball pointed at target
- knee over ball
- lock ankle
- left arm out for balance (right footed player)
- strike the ball with the 'laces' of the boot - follow through the ball

(Note that this is identical to volleying technique)

Practice this technique initially with ball raised on a marker cone. Work in slow motion initially to ensure good poise and balance

Key technical aspects:

- Positive attitude
- Early shot
- Use an appropriate finishing technique
- Accuracy
- Shot across the goalkeeper from an angle
- Following in for rebounds
- Head up to assess whether to shoot, pass or dribble

Useful Resources

You Tube: "How To Kick A Soccer Ball: How To Shoot a Soccer Ball with Power" (ExpertVillage)

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Shift & Shoot"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Control And Shoot"

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>) : Skills: "Shooting From Angles"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Score Half Volleys"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Fake The Keeper"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Score Rocket Shots"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Take The Perfect Penalty"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Volley"

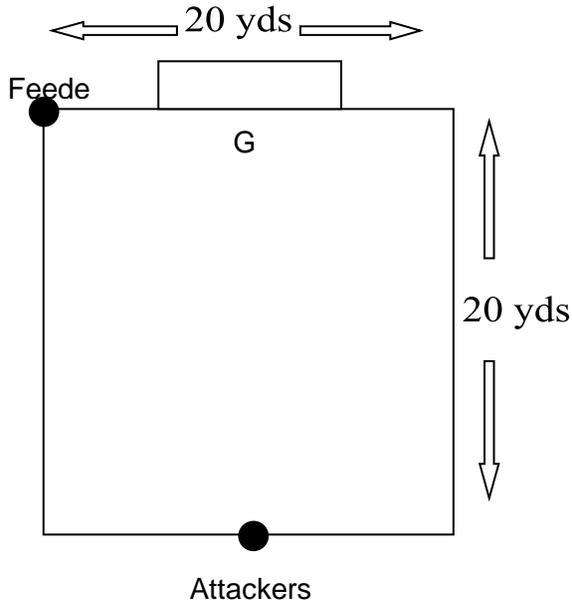
You Tube: "Learn to chip the ball" (STRskillSchool)

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>) : Skills: "The Art Of Chipping"

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>) : Skills: "Guide To Curling Shots"

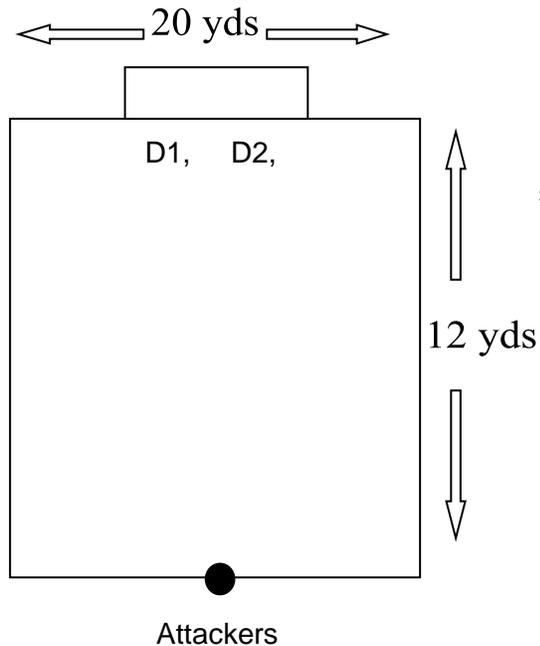
Technique Drills

1. Finishing technique



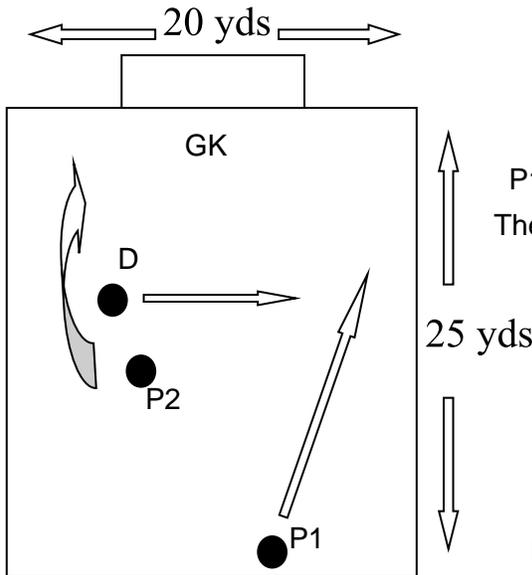
Minimum of three players, lots of balls.
The feeder serves the ball in front of the attacker, mimicking a cut back from the goal line. The attacker runs on to the ball and tries to score past the goalkeeper.
The attacker will need to employ a good technique to keep the ball down.

2. Accuracy



Minimum of four players, lots of balls.
Form a defensive wall of three players, D1, D2 & D3 on the goal line. The attackers can now shoot to score but will have a much reduced target area to aim at. (Alternatively use cones in the corner of the goal with points only scored if the cones are knocked over.)
A similar exercise can be done with a moving ball where the attackers run from 20 yards and take their shot once they reach the 12 yard line.

3. Shot across the keeper/rebounds

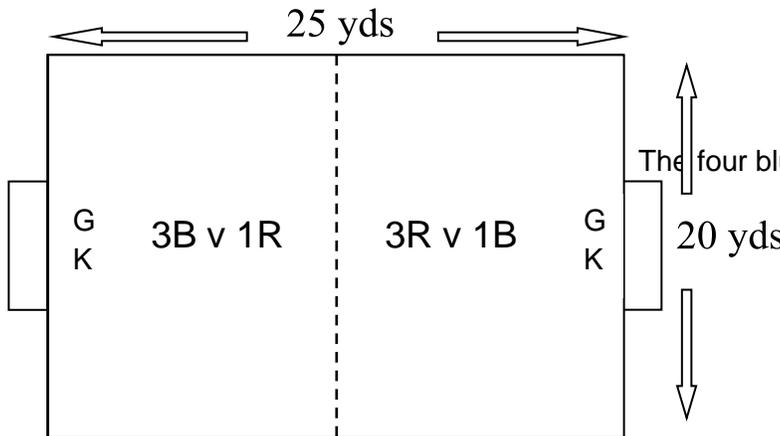


Minimum of four players, lots of balls.
 Two attackers, P1 and P2, versus one defender D and a goalkeeper GK.

P1 starts with the ball and looks to play a one-two with P2.
 The defender becomes active as soon as the ball is played.
 P1 should attack the return pass and look to take an early shot before the defender can get across to him.
 P2 should make his way to the back post to look for any rebounds (particularly if P1 shoots across the goalkeeper).
 (Alternatively P1 drives forward with the ball and P2 spins away from D to create space for himself or P1.)

Skill Practice

1.



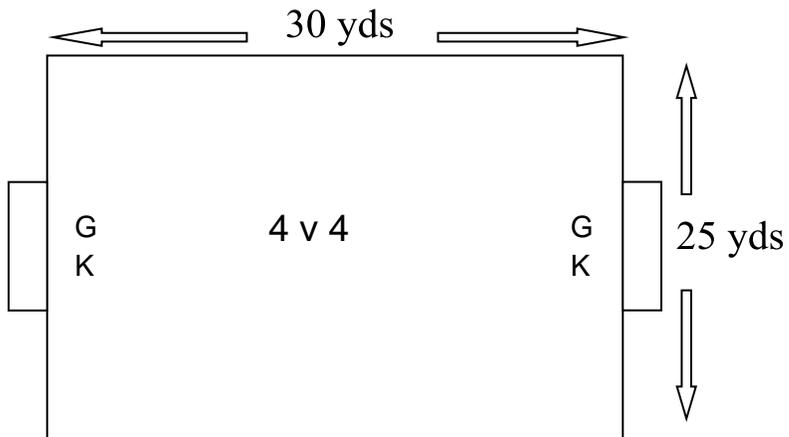
Minimum of ten players, lots of balls.
 Three attackers versus one defender stationed in each half of the pitch.
 The four blues (3B + 1B) pass the ball and try and create a shooting opportunity in the goal on the right.
 The one blue, 1B, in the right half can lay the ball back and should look for any rebounds.
 Once possession is lost the blues become defenders and the reds (3R + 1R) try and score in the goal on the left.



Game Practice

1. Four v four game with two floating players supporting the team in possession.

The aim of the game is to score. Using the floating players to create an overload in favour of the attacking team should increase the opportunities to shoot.



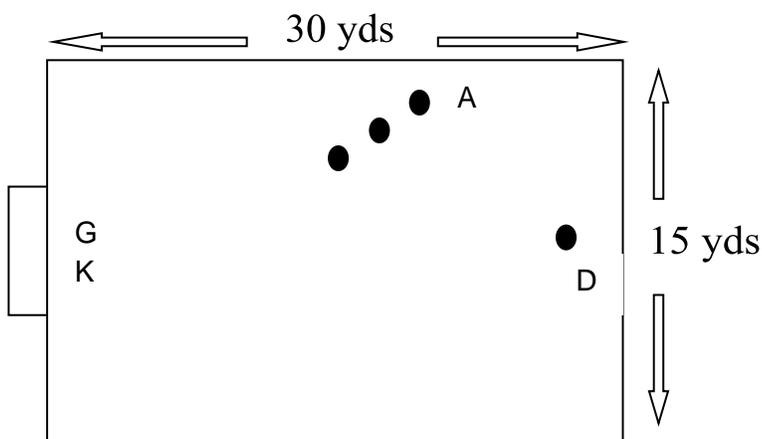
RECOVERY RUNS

Key technical aspects:

- Recovering player should run as quickly as possible
- Recovering player usually to run in a straight line towards goal – central players towards the middle of the goal, wide players towards the nearest goalpost – rather than following the ball (as a covering defender will generally have come across to delay the attack)
- Recovering player to get "goal side" – it is difficult to effect play from behind the ball but there may be occasions when a free attacker should be marked

Technique Drills

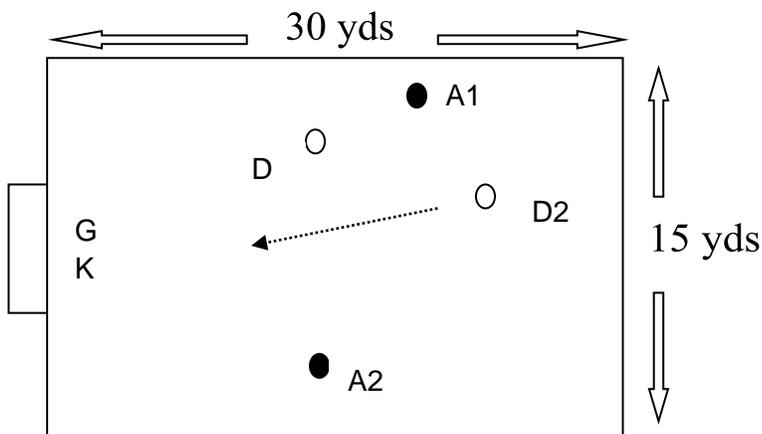
1.



Minimum of three players, one ball.

Attacker A starts ahead of defender D but has to dribble around three cones before getting to shoot at goal. The defender must make an appropriate recovery run before trying to prevent the attacker from scoring. (It is important that the defender does not simply follow the ball.)

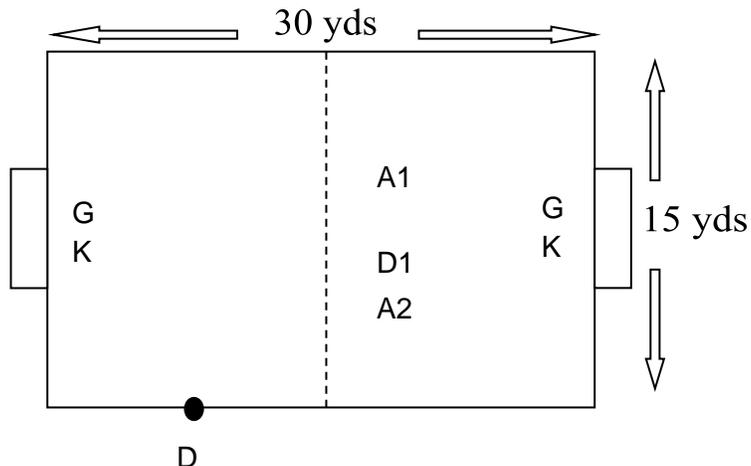
2. Where's the danger?



In order to aid understanding not to follow the ball it may be helpful to set up this position on the pitch and ask defender D2 "where's the danger?" (Attacker A1 has just beaten D2, and defender D1 has come across to cover. D1 must be trusted to "do his job" and at least delay A1.)

Skill Practice

1.



Minimum of six players, one ball.

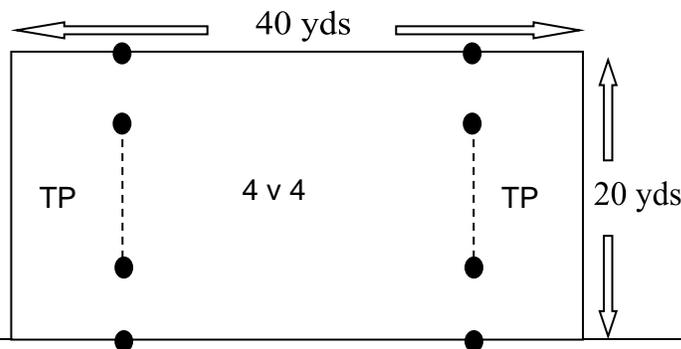
Two attackers, A1 and A2, versus one defender D1. Once the ball crosses the halfway line defender D2 can join in play, making a recovery run to try and prevent the attackers from scoring.

(Can be played as a two directional game with one attacker stepping off the pitch as they become the defenders.)

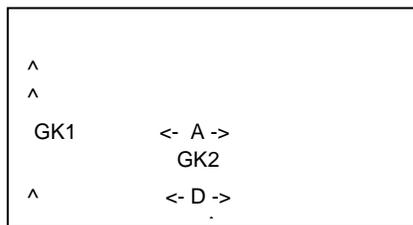
Game Practice

1. Four v four game with four target players.

The aim of the game is to run with the ball through one of the two sets of cones at the left end or right end of the pitch (depending which way your team is playing). If this is achieved the scorer must pass to the target player TP at that end who will quickly release the ball to the other team forcing the scorer to make a recovery run.



2. Always Outnumbered



Lay out a small pitch, with Goals and Keepers at each end. Assign players as Attackers or Defenders (more attackers than defenders)

Attackers start by attacking left hand goal (GK1). When the attack finishes, the same attackers now get the ball back and attack the right hand goal (GK2)... then GK1 again... then GK2 again

The defenders are always having to recover back to behind the ball during each attack. Swap defenders regularly because it is very hard work!



1 v 1 ATTACKING STRATEGIES

Key technique aspects:

There are 2 parts to the technique – A Trick, followed by A Get-Away

- The Getaway is always similar, regardless of the Trick
 - Use the outside or instep (laces) of the kicking foot to move the ball away
 - At the same time, push off against the standing leg for a burst of speed

Some Basic Tricks

- The Feint
 - Move the body to one side of the ball, to suggest a change of direction
 - Quickly use the get-away to burst in the opposite direction
- The Step Over
 - Move the right foot over the ball in a big “C” shape
 - Move the left foot over the ball in a big “Reverse – C” shape
 - Use the standard get-away to burst in the opposite direction
 - Practice a variety of 1 and 2 step-over moves, with exit in different directions
- The Fake Shot
 - Perform the ‘back swing’ of a shot/cross
 - Use the get-away to burst away instead of hitting the ball
- The Stop-Go
 - Stop the ball using the sole of the foot on the top of the ball
 - Quickly perform the get-away to burst away, using the same foot to move the ball (once the defender is off balanced)
- Cruyff Turn
 - As you approach your opponent with the ball, position your body to feign a cross or shot.
 - Then hook the ball with the inside of your kicking foot, behind your standing leg.
 - Turn and move off in the opposition direction while the opponent is left wrong-footed.

Key technical aspects:

- Using the technique will only gain a small time advantage – once performed the player must exit cleanly and quickly
- Practice a variety of tricks, and exit to both sides
- Tricks should always be exaggerated and performed with confidence
- Players must initially have the ball in control, moving using good technique, to be able to perform any of these moves

Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): “For Kids”: “Just Me”: “How to Beat Defenders”

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): “For Kids”: “With Friends”: “How to Beat Defenders”

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): “For Kids”: “Just Me”: “How to Fake The Keeper” (same skill)

You Tube: “Robinho Ronaldinho Step Over/Scissors Turn” (STRskillSchool)

You Tube: “Learn the Pull Push skill” (STRskillSchool)

You Tube: “Learn to do the Cruyff turn – Football Soccer skills” (STRskillSchool)

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>): Skills: “The Cruyff Turn”



Technique Drills

1: Unopposed Practice

1. Start with players practicing the trick in isolation
 - a. Using a stationery ball first
 - b. Moving on to dribbling slowly while performing the technique
2. Have the players attack an isolated cone acting as a defender, and performing the trick/getaway
3. Progress to the players going 1 v 1 round the coach (still unchallenged), and shooting immediately they are past

Skills Drills

1: Skills To Score

Play a standard small sided practice match, with points scoring as follows

- 3 points for a goal
- 1 point for any of the skills performed anywhere on the pitch (even if unopposed)
 - Consider allowing points for other good techniques – Cruyff Turns, Outside Hooks etc

(This quickly encourages players to find and move towards space, in order to score easy points)

For added focus, consider adding 2 points for a skill followed immediately by a pass or shot

2: Feint to the cone

2 Players stand facing each other, midway between 2 cones (spaced 10-15 yards apart). Place the cones on a line if possible, to divide P1 and P2

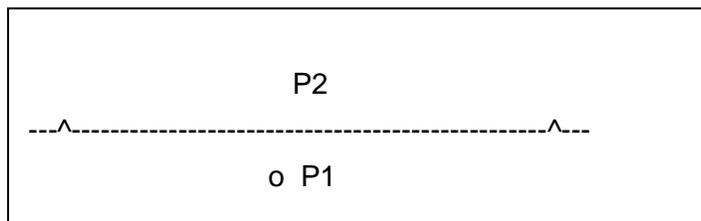
One Player has the ball (P1).

P1 has to reach either cone, still in possession and control, before the player without the ball (P2)

Player without the ball (P2) cannot tackle, but can 'block' one side by reaching the cone first and putting his foot on it

P2 cannot move towards P1 (ie cross the line if there is one), and cannot tackle or block his run

Player with the ball should use a feint or trick to dummy the opponent before moving in the other direction





PASSING TO RETAIN POSSESSION

Key technical aspects:

- Movement into space
- Working the ball out of danger areas (as opposed to long clearances)
- Understanding of sideways/backwards movement as well as just going forward

Skills Drills

1. Football Netball

Small sided football game, using Netball style rules

- Players cannot travel with the ball – no dribbling
- Players cannot tackle, the ball is won by interception or by claiming possession after poor control
- Players claim possession of the ball by stopping it with their foot on top
 - Once the ball is claimed, the player in possession cannot be tackled, and must look to progress by passing
 - No defensive players within 1 yard of the player in possession
- Play with small goals and no goalkeepers
 - If play is crowded, consider setting up 4 goals (one in each corner) and allow the team to score in either of the goals at the end they are attacking

This is a good game for coaches to join in and encourage movement/passing without any need to tackling or contact.



DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES (DEFENDING 1v1)

Key technique aspects

- 'Ready Position' stance - Good Posture and Balance is vital
 - Maintain balance at all times – feet apart, weight centred and on the balls of your feet
 - Chest leaning over the toes, low centre of gravity
 - knees flexed to allow quick reactions
 - arms down but away from the body – form a big barrier
- Sideways on while jockeying/delaying
- Encourage your players to always adopt this position whenever the ball is near, and they will start to make more tackles

Key technical aspects:

- SHUT DOWN i.e. quickly make up ground to the attacker – otherwise known as "pressing" the ball – preferably making up as much ground as possible before the ball has reached the attacker (if defender can get close he may be able to get in a tackle, particularly if the attacker miscontrols the ball) getting body between ball and goal/target
- SLOW DOWN i.e. must be able to react to the attacker's first and subsequent touch
- SIT DOWN AND STAY DOWN i.e. be in a hunched low and balanced (and possibly touch tight) position in order to react to any change of pace or direction
- SHOW i.e. be slightly side on, rather than square on to the attacker, with defender showing the attacker where he wants him to go – outside along the touchline and away from goal (or, where there are other players, perhaps inside towards covering players)
- Watch the ball, keep body between ball and goal/target, be patient and don't dive in
- Stopping the turn – get "touch tight" (i.e. the defender should be able to hold out his arm and touch the attacker) and adopt a body position parallel to that of the attacker

Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Block Shots"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Defend 1 on 1"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Close Down"

Technique Drills

Soccer Sumo (see 'Body Basics') is a good game to get players comfortable with physical contact.

1 Knee Slap

This is a good game to get used to the posture/balance required for good defending, and works well with the younger age groups.

Put players into pairs, facing each other. Both players take up the defensive posture as described above. Each player can score a point by slapping/touching the other players knees, and can use their hands to deflect/defend attempts. First to 5 points. Take care that it doesn't get out of hand!

2 Touch The Cone

Another simple game to get used to the correct posture. Put 3 or 4 players each in their own small square of marker cones (different colour at each corner). The players adopt the 'ready' position. When the coach calls out a colour, the players have to touch that colour cone as quickly as possible – one point for the winner.

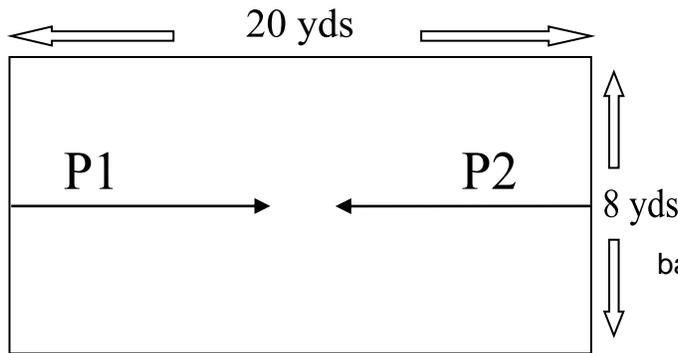


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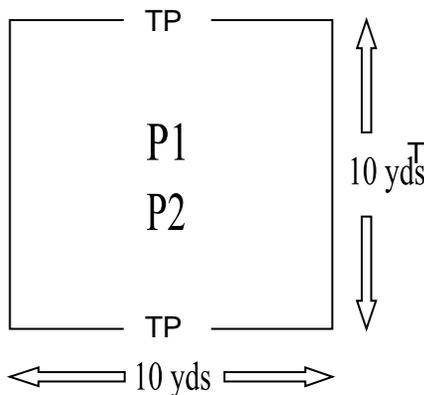
3. Shut down, slow down, sit down, show



Minimum of two players, one ball.
 Player P2, acting as a defender, and P1, acting as an attacker, start 20 yards apart. P2 passes the ball to P1. P1 will aim to beat the P2 and stop the ball on the line from which P2 started. Swap roles.

(It is worth doing the same exercise without the ball with the defender trying to hold up the progress of the attacker to the line he is defending by getting his body in the way.)

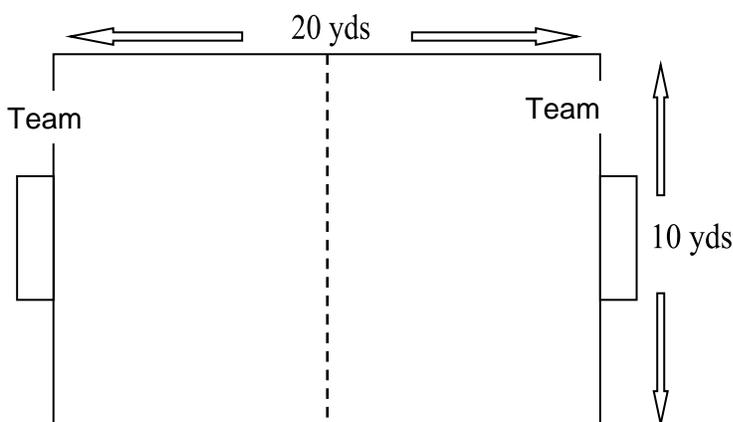
4. Stopping the turn



Minimum of four players, one ball.
 The aim is to get the ball from target player TP1 to target player TP2. TP1 will pass the ball to player P1 who will receive the ball with his back to TP2. Player P2 will try to prevent P1 from turning and getting the ball to TP2. Swap roles.

Skill Practice

1.



Minimum of four players, one ball.
 Divide the players into two teams. Number the players in each team from 1 upwards. One team will stand behind the right hand goal line, one behind the left. The coach will call out a number and roll the ball onto the pitch. The first player to reach the ball will act as the attacker and try to score whilst the other player will defend.
 (The coach can call out two numbers for a 2 v 2 game etc.)



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4. Through The Goal

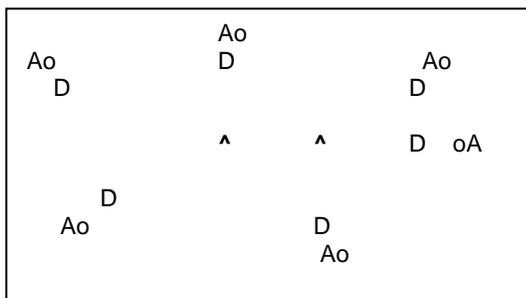
Place 2 cones in the centre of the pitch, approx 5 yards wide to form a 'goal'.

Divide players into pairs, each with a ball – one will be the attacker, one will be the defender

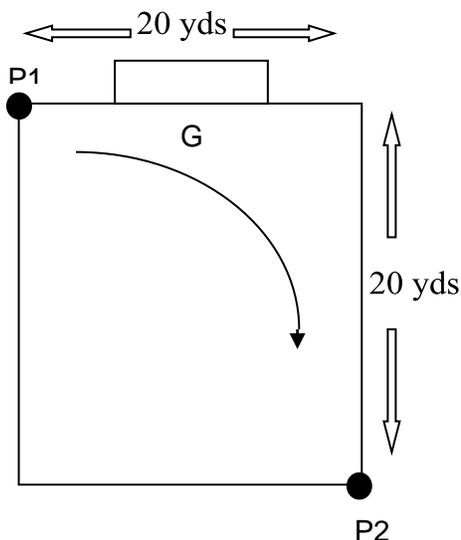
- The attacker is trying to dribble the ball through the goal to score a point
- The defender is trying to stop the attacker, and can block but cannot tackle him, i.e. the defender must stay goal side and delay/jockey/guide the attacker away from the goal

Play can continue on any side on the goal (360 degrees), and attacker can dribble through to score from any side

Allow all pairs to play into the same goal, this creates a fair degree of confusion and chaos, but encourages players to keep aware of what is going on around them



3.



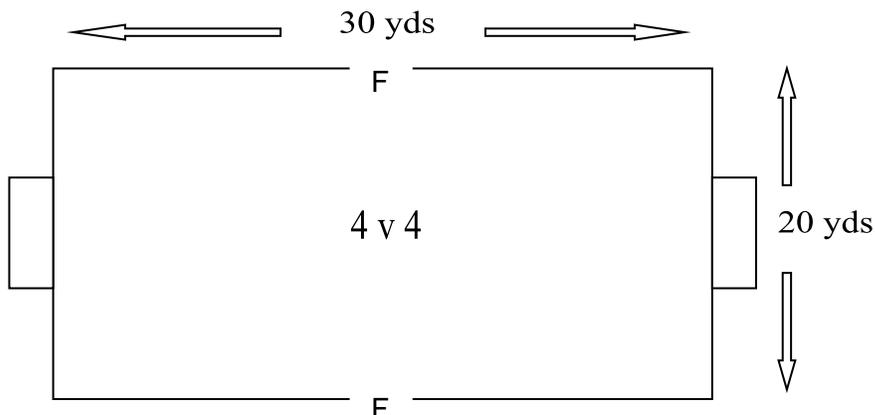
Minimum of three players, one ball.
 Player P1 feeds the ball to player P2 who will try and score. Player P1 will defend the goal with the goalkeeper GK. In pressing the ball P1 may need to arc his run to get between P2 and the goal as quickly as possible. The sooner he changes the picture P2 sees, the less likely it is that P2 will get an early shot in.

Game Practice

1. Floating Players

Four v four game with two floating players, F1 and F2, working up and down the touchlines. The floating players will support the team in possession.

(Goalkeepers are not required. This will reinforce that the nearest player must press the ball quickly to prevent a shot at goal.)





TACKLING TECHNIQUE

Key Techniques Aspects

- Block Tackle
 - Weight Over the ball, upper body leaning forward
 - Non-Tackling foot placed firmly
 - Strike through the ball with the inside of the foot, keeping the leg firm.
 - Aim a small distance behind the ball to assist 'follow through'
- Poke Tackle
 - Very simply, this is just taking the opportunity to poke the ball away from the attacker
 - Timing is important – don't commit unless the ball is winnable, since you'll be off balance after you attempt to win the ball
- Slide Tackle
 - Always approach from the side – never behind
 - Slide on the side of the leg/thigh (left side if tackling with the right foot)
 - Tacklers should keep their sliding leg unlocked with a slight bend.
 - Extend your tackling leg through the ball. Make sure you get the ball right on your shoelaces and swing your leg through it.
 - Get back up as quickly as possible

Key technical Aspects

- Understanding the priorities
 - Attempt to delay/jockey first (don't tackle unless it is necessary)
 - Poke or Block Tackle if delaying is not possible
 - Slide Tackle only as a last resort

Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Do A Slide Tackle"
You Tube: "How To Tackle In Soccer" (livestrong)

BASIC GOALKEEPING

Key technical aspects:

- Preparation – weight forward & balanced on the balls of the feet, legs shoulder width apart, hands at waist height with palms open
- If possible get in line with the ball
- If in line either scoop or adopt "K" position to gather (no big gaps for ball to go through)
- Catching – "W" technique if ball is head height, "M" shape clasp if into the body
- Diving for low shot – collapse legs, if ball is close one hand behind and one on top otherwise strong hands to push away (should always land on side and shoulder)
- Narrow the angle
- Communicate and be assertive
- Understanding of distribution to initiate the build-up of play

Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Make Great Saves"

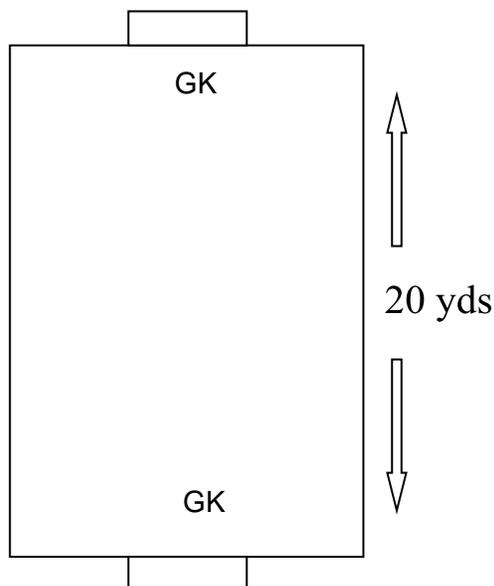
FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Make a 1 on 1 Save"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Rush Off The Line"

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Save Penalties"

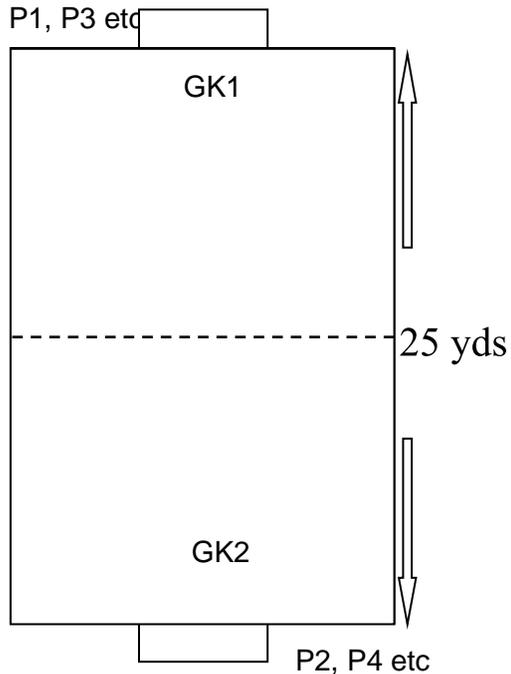
Technique Drills & Skill Practice

1. Moving in line with the ball



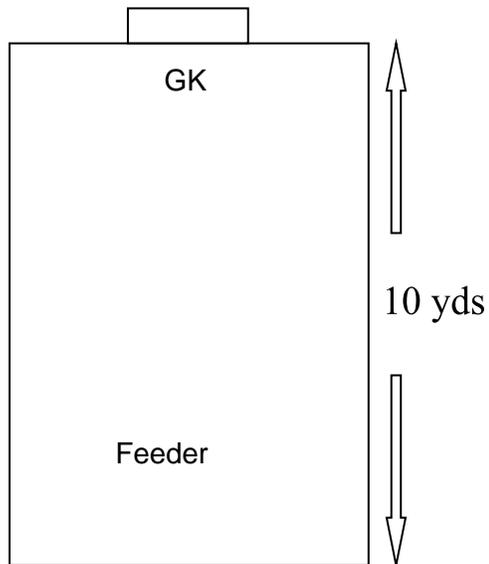
Two goalkeepers kick the ball along the ground towards each other, moving in line with the ball and adopting a scoop or "K" technique to gather the ball.

2. Shot stopping



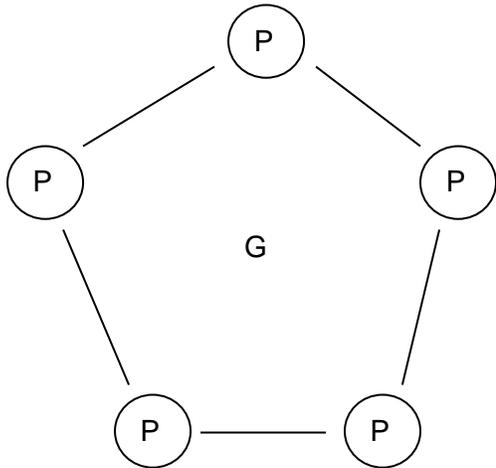
Goalkeeper GK1 rolls the ball in front of player P1, who shoots from around half way at the goal defended by GK2. GK2 seeks to prevent P1 from scoring. GK2 then rolls the ball in front of player P2, who shoots from around half way at the goal defended by GK1. GK1 seeks to prevent P2 from scoring. GK1 then rolls the ball out to P3 and so on.

3. Catching



Feeder throws or volleys the ball at head or waist height allowing the goalkeeper GK to practice a "W" technique or "M" shape clasp.

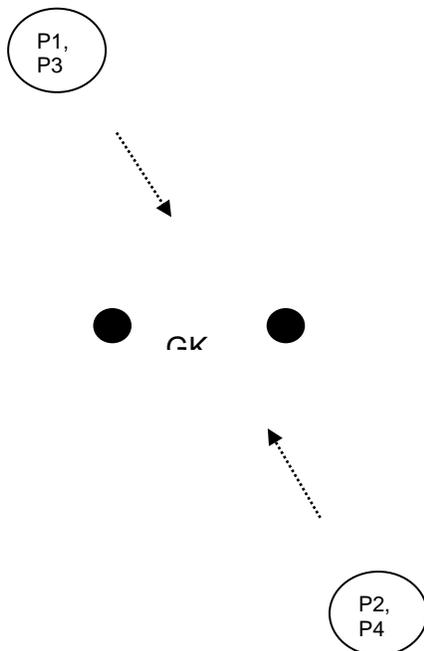
4. Diving



Six players, P1,P2, P3, P4, P5 and a goalkeeper GK. One ball.

Players P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5, on the outside of a pentagon, pass the ball around and across the pentagon. The goalkeeper GK tries to cut out any pass across. This involves GK adjusting his position and practicing his diving technique.

5. Narrowing the angle

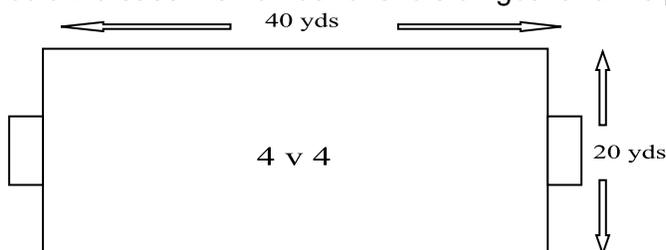


Five or more players including one goalkeeper GK. One ball for each player other than GK.

Player P1 attacks the goal and tries to score. The goalkeeper GK is encouraged to come off his line to narrow the angle to prevent the attacker from scoring. (It can be a good idea to let the goalkeeper see how the target reduces when the angle is narrowed.) Player P2 then attempts to score and so on.

Game Practice

1. Four v four game with two floating players who always plays with the team in possession. This should increase the number of shots on goal and the practice for the goalkeepers.



Encourage the keepers to think about how and where they distribute the ball, and what effect this has on the subsequent play.

LONG PASSING

Key technique aspects:

- Head still and over the ball
- Kicking foot to follow through on line of the target
- Drive pass by striking centrally through the middle of the ball
- Loft pass by striking centrally below the middle of the ball
- Curl pass by striking at the side of the ball

Key technical aspects:

- Picture the target
- Decision to pass first time or control
- Non kicking foot slightly further from the ball (than with a short pass)
- Accuracy, weight and timing of the pass (preferably to "safe side" of receiver)
- Movement after pass

Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "Just Me": "How to Make A Long Pass"

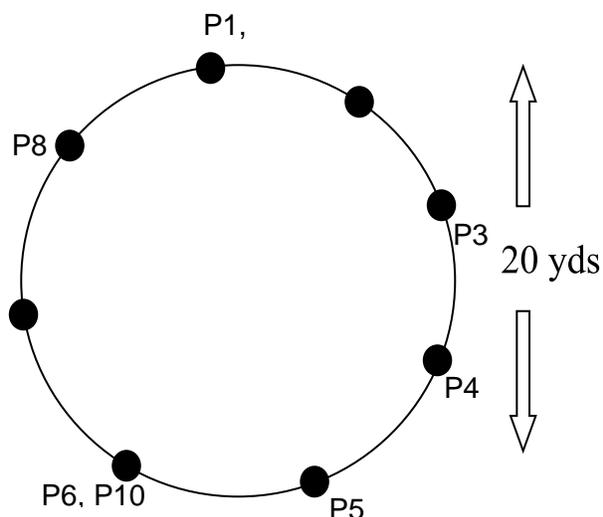
FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): "For Kids": "With Friends": "How to Make a Killer Pass"

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>): Skills: "Guide To The Drive Pass"

UEFA Training Ground: (<http://www.uefa.com/trainingground/training/skill>): Skills: "Guide To The Lofted Pass"

Technique Drills

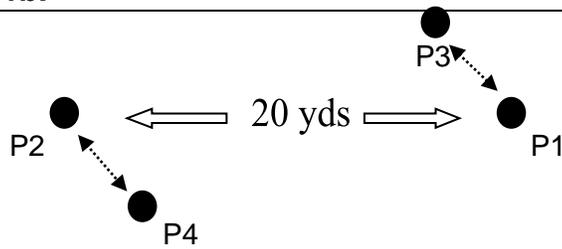
1a. Minimum of ten players, two balls.



P1 and P6 have a ball each. P1 and P6 drive a pass to another player on the outside of the circle, and follow their passes. The receiving players will play a one-two with the player they received the ball from to set them up for a long pass to another player on the outside of the circle and so on.

Then try a lofted pass. (Also a good opportunity to practice corners!)

1b.



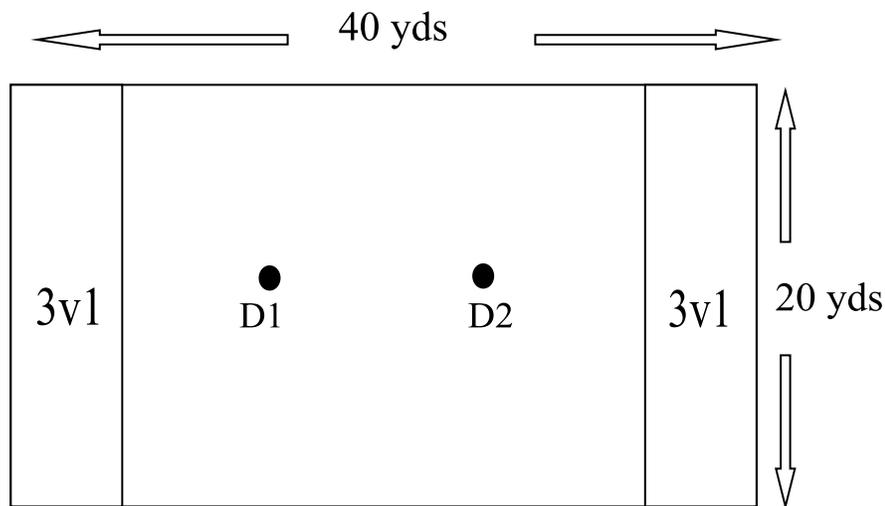
A similar exercise using four players.

P1 passes long to P2. P1 swaps places with P3. P2 plays a one-two with P4 before a long pass to P3. P2 and P4 now swap places. P3 plays a one-two with P1 then drives a long pass to P4 and so on.

Skill Practice

1. Minimum of 10 players, one ball.

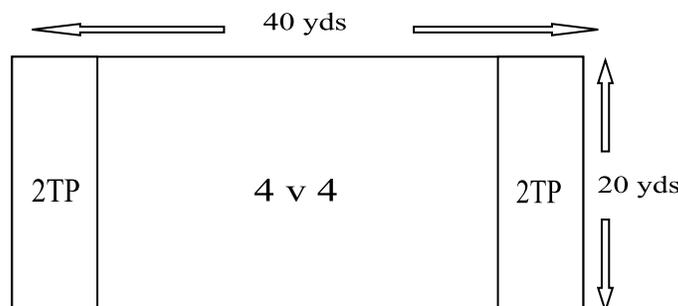
Three players versus one in each end zone. The three players will work the ball between them trying to set up a long pass to the other end zone while the one tries to intercept. The defenders in the middle will try and cut out any pass. Hence, an appropriate passing technique will need to be employed.



Game Practice

1: Four v four game with two target players at either end.

The aim of the game is to hit a long pass to the target players at the far end. The target players cannot play a long pass but can help create opportunities for the team in possession.





RECEIVING PRIORITIES

Key technical aspects:

- Can player receive pass running into space heading towards goal
 - If not, can player allow the ball to run across his body into space towards goal
 - If not, can player meet pass and turn towards goal
 - If not, can player control ball into space away from defender (and turn)
- Otherwise player to receive ball, protect and pass
- Awareness
- Communication

General

Try to encourage the kids to get into the habit of receiving the ball cleanly on the furthest foot – ie if the ball is coming from the left, let it run across your body and take it on the inside of the right foot. If it is coming from the right, take it on the inside of the left foot. This opens up the body naturally, keeps great balance, and is a very simple way to start kids using both feet without having to think about it too much.

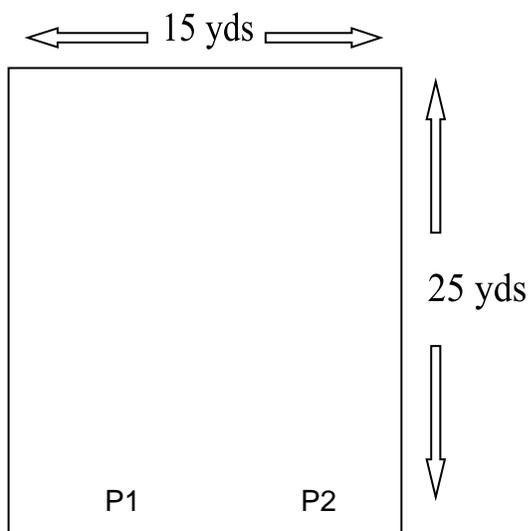
Useful Resources

You Tube: [“Learn to improve your first touch and awareness” \(STRskillSchool\)](#)

You Tube: [“Learn to control the ball in the air” \(STRskillSchool\)](#)

Technique Drills

1. Receiving pass in front, heading towards goal

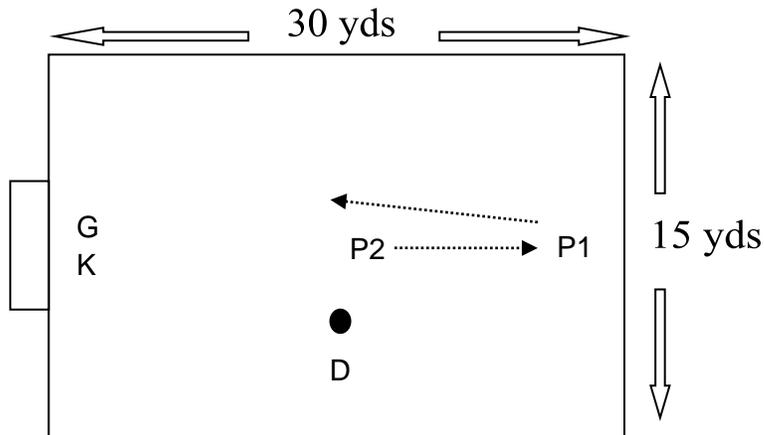


Three players, one ball.

Players work in threes up and down the pitch. Start with P2 on the ball passing out to P1. P1 drives forward into the middle space previously occupied by P2. P2 runs behind P1 to occupy the space previously occupied by P1. Once in the middle P1 passes out to P3. P3 then drives forward into the middle space previously occupied by P1. P1 runs behind P3 to occupy the space previously occupied by P3. Once in the middle P3 passes out to P2 etc.

Game sometimes called "Waves".

2. Allowing the ball to run across the body

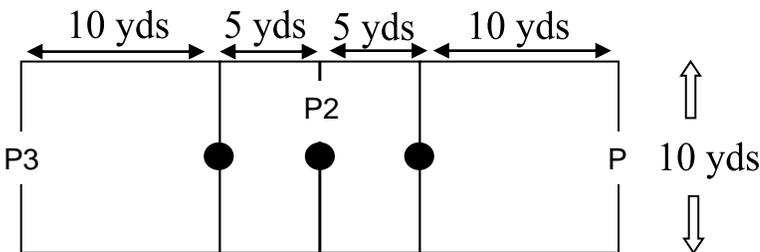


Minimum three players, one ball.

Player P2 passes the ball to player P1, before opening up his body position to receive a return pass. P1 delivers a suitably weighted pass at a slight angle allowing P2 to let the ball run across his body before trying to score past the goalkeeper GK.

A passive (i.e. non-tackling) defender D may be introduced to pressure P2.

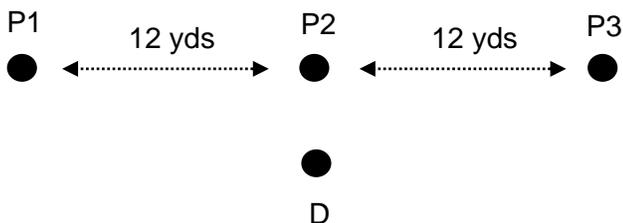
3. Meet pass and turn (to face goal)



Minimum three players, one ball.

Player P2 passes the ball to player P1 from the centre cone, runs forward and meets the return pass at the far right cone. P2 then turns and passes the ball to player P3 from the centre cone, then runs forward to meet the return pass at the far left cone and so on.

4. Control the ball into space



Minimum four players, one ball.

Player P1 passes the ball to player P2, who collects, turns and tries to pass to player P3. P3 then passes to P2, who collects, turns and tries to pass to P1 and so on. Passive defender D becomes active once P1 or P3 have played a pass. The presence of D will require P2 to control the ball away from danger. (D will return to his starting position when the ball is with P1 or P3.)



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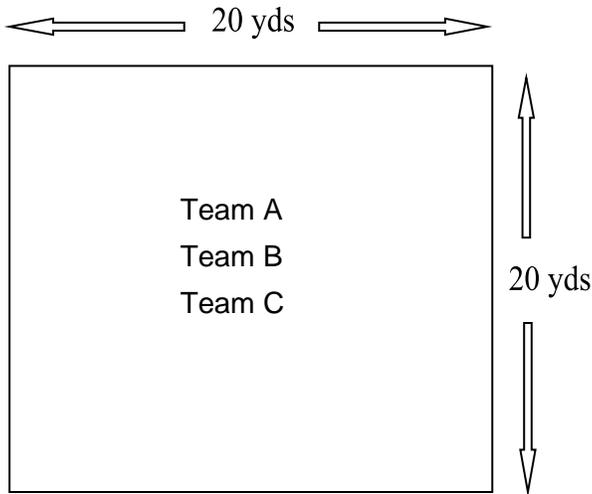
5. Receive, protect and pass

Minimum three players, one ball.



The ball is played from player P1 to player P2 to player P3 and back. However, P1 and P3 may sneak up behind P2 so he has to protect the ball and pass back rather than turning.

6. Priorities practice

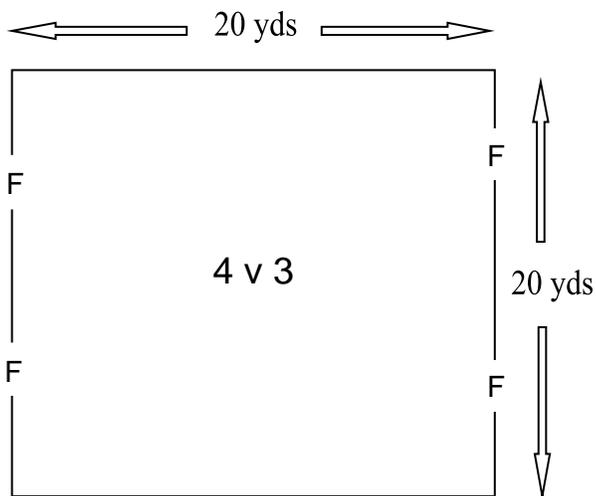


Minimum nine players, one ball.

Nine or more players divided into three teams. The teams will spread out within the twenty yard square and then pass the ball to another team mate. The presence of the other teams will create interference and this will affect the way in which the ball can be received. (Players should be encouraged to take the ball using the appropriate receiving priority.)

Skill Practice

1. Minimum seven players plus feeders , one ball.



The aim is for the four attackers to get the ball from one side of the square to the other, whilst the three defenders try to stop them. The game starts with a feeder F passing the ball to an attacker.

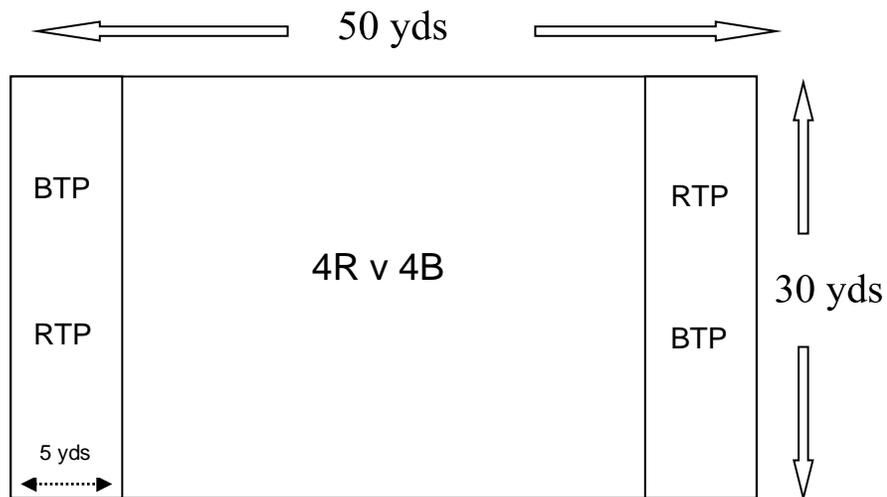
(The feeders on the left side can pass to each other, as can those on the right side, to create a better angle for a pass.)



Game Practice

1. Four v four directional game with one target player for each team in each end zone.

The aim of the game is for the teams, four reds 4R versus four blues 4B, to get the ball from one end zone to the other. The four reds play from right to left and the four blues from left to right. If the red team succeed in getting the ball to their target player RPT in the left hand end zone, the red target player will pass the ball to the blue target player BPT in the same end zone and the game will continue with the blues now in possession. And if the blue team succeed in getting the ball to their target player BPT in the right hand end zone, the blue target player will pass the ball to the red target player RPT in the same end zone and the game will continue with the reds now in possession.





FORWARD RUNS WITHOUT THE BALL

Key technical aspects:

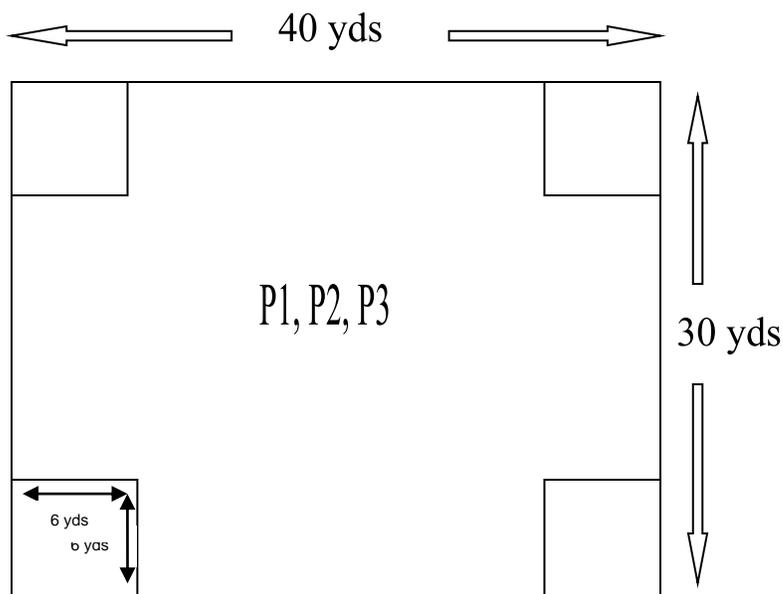
- Hardest to defend a straight pass for a diagonal run, a diagonal pass for a straight run
- Any positive forward run creates space for others
- Support for player in possession of the ball who must get head up to assess options
- Timing of run
- Communication
- Accuracy, timing and weight of pass
- Imagination with runs and passing

Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): “For Kids”: “With Friends”: “How to do Overlapping Runs”

Technique Drills

1.



Minimum of three players, one ball.

Working in teams of three or four, each group will move around the playing area passing the ball between them until one tries to deliver a pass into a corner square which a team mate can run onto. (The receiving team mate should not be static when receiving the ball.)

(If P3 makes his run when P1 passes to P2 this is an example of "third man running".)

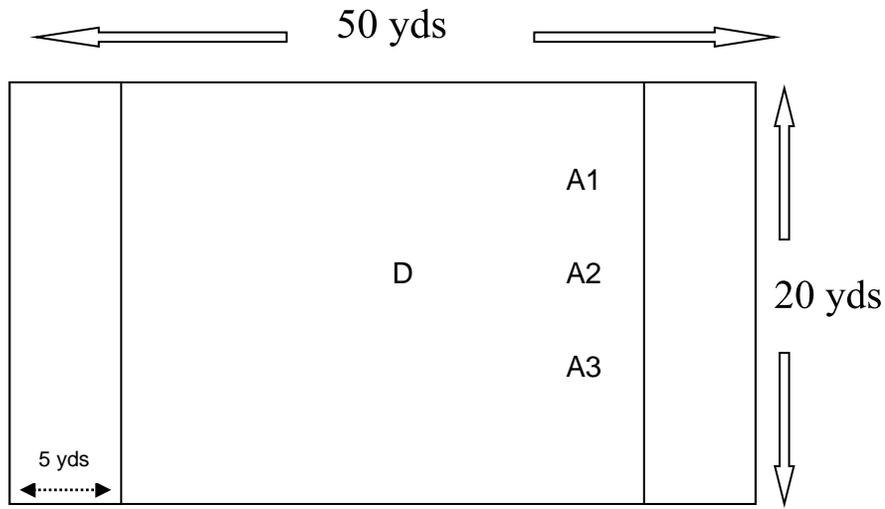


Skill Practice

1.

Minimum of 4 players, one ball.

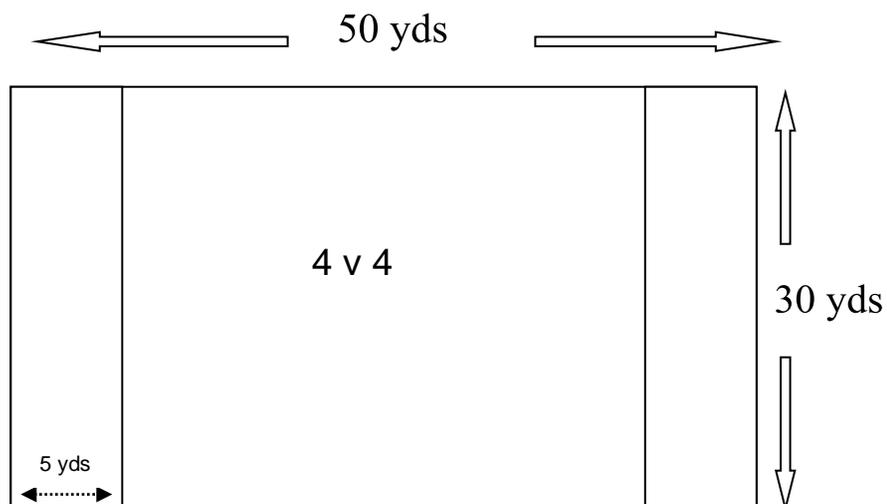
The three attacking players A1, A2 and A3 will work the ball from one end zone to the other, whilst the defender D tries to prevent them from doing so. The aim for the attackers is to deliver a pass into the end zone which a team mate runs onto. If the team mate is static when he receives the ball it is not a "goal". (Use the offside rule to keep it realistic.)



Game Practice

1. Four v four game with two floating players in the middle and one on each touchline supporting the team in possession.

The aim of the game is to deliver a pass into the end zone which a team mate runs onto. If the team mate is static when he receives the ball it is not a "goal".



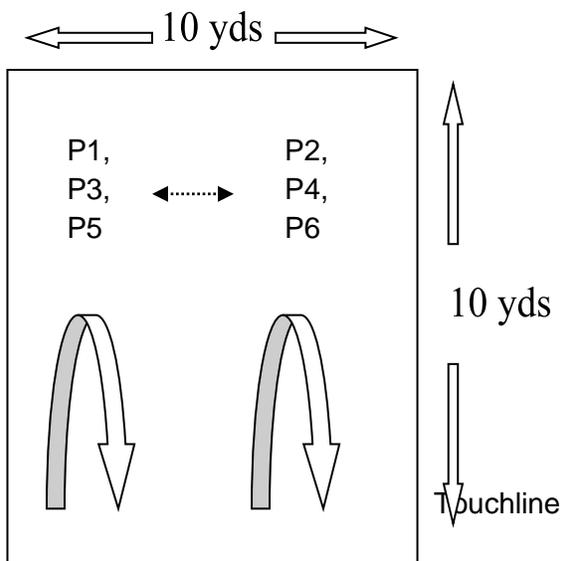
SUPPORT PLAY

Key technical aspects:

- Communication with player in possession
- Constant movement to find space and a better supporting angle (often somewhere a player can be readily seen)
- Create space for player in possession, to receive a pass and for others to receive
- Timing of runs
- Distance of support – normally about 10 yards but closer when nearer to opponent's goal
- Awareness of space

Technique Drills

1.



Six or more players arranged in two columns in a ten yard square. One ball.

The ball is passed first time from P1 in the first column to P2 in the second column, and first time from P2 to P3 in the first column and so on. After passing the ball each player must go and touch the touchline. The ball should be in constant motion.

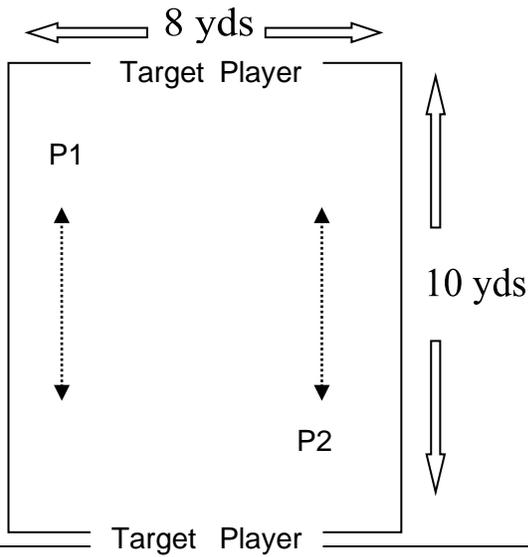


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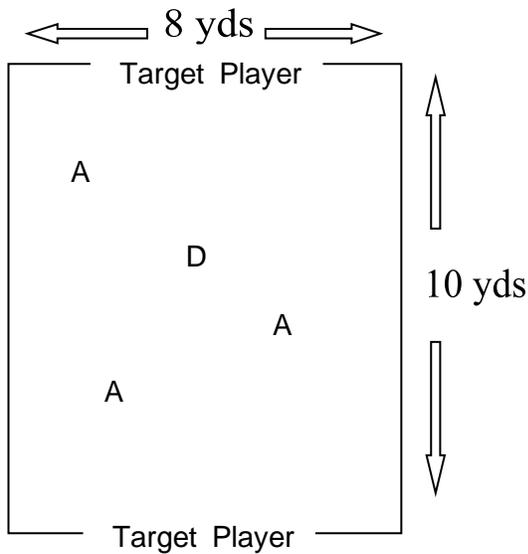


2. Four players, one ball.



Player P1 runs away from Target Player TP1 to receive a pass. P2 drops back to create a better passing angle. P1 passes first time to P2, who then passes first time to TP2. P1 then runs away from TP2. TP2 passes first time to P1. P2 drops back to create a better passing angle. P1 passes first time to P2, who then passes first time to TP1 and so on.

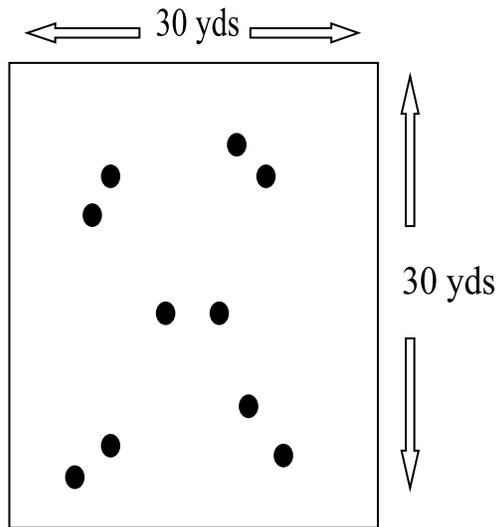
3.



Six players, one ball.

Three attackers, one defender. The attackers must get the ball from target player 1 to target player 2 and back again. Remember to swap roles.

4.



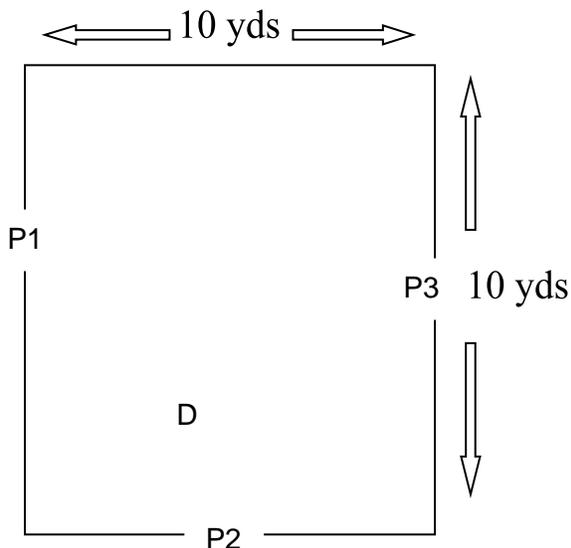
Players work in teams of three, with one ball between them.

The players are challenged to pass to one of their supporting team mates through each of the gates.

This drill can be performed as a race to complete all the gates, or teams can be challenged to pass through as many gates as possible in a set time period.

Skill Practice

1.



Four players working in a 10 yard square, one ball.

Three players on the outside of the square work as a team to retain possession of the ball. A player can only pass to a support player on an adjacent side of the square from the one he is on. The defender D will try and steal the ball. (Try and give the defender a target e.g. how many times can you touch the ball, touch it and you can swap with a player on the outside of the square etc.)

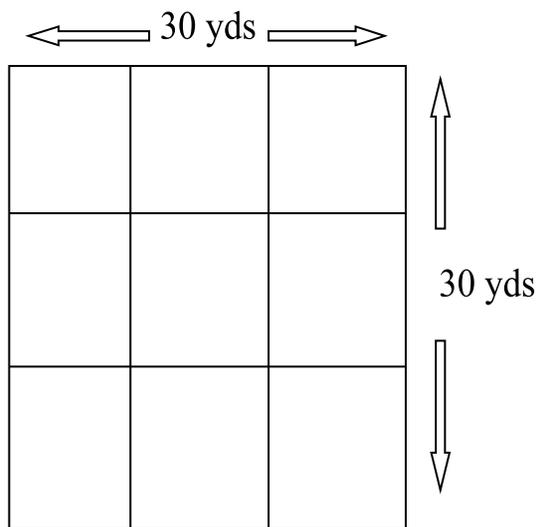


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2.



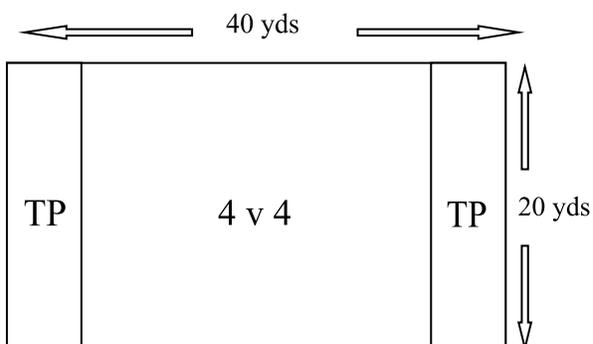
Eight players divided into two teams of four, working in 30 yard square itself divided into smaller 10 yard squares, one ball.

The aim of the game is to retain possession. Players can move around anywhere but cannot pass to another player in the same square. If they do then possession is lost.

Game Practice

1. Four v four game with two floating players who always plays with the team in possession.

The aim of the game is to get the ball to a target player TP in the end zone. It can be played as a one directional or two directional game. See which team can get the ball to the target players the most.





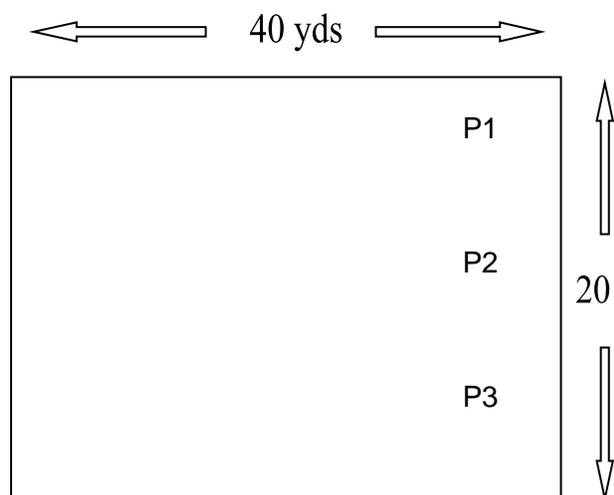
SWITCHING PLAY

Key technical aspects:

- Create space e.g. the central player sitting slightly behind the wide players
- Create good angles for a pass
- Head up
- Accuracy, weight and timing of pass
- Keep ball low striking through middle of the ball
- Movement after the pass
- Central player to adopt an open body position for receiving the ball
- Communication

Technique Drills

1.

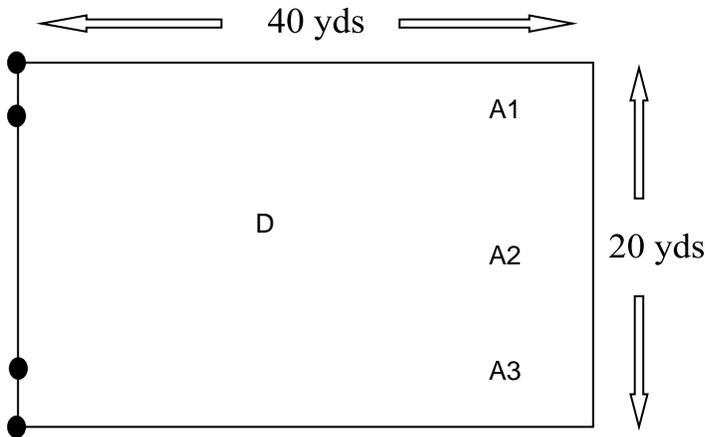


Minimum of three players, one ball.
 Three players P1, P2 and P3 to work from one end of the pitch to the other. P1 will play a one-two with P2 before switching the ball across to P3. P3 will then play a one-two with P2 before switching the ball across to P1. (This will work best if P2 is sitting slightly behind the wide players.)



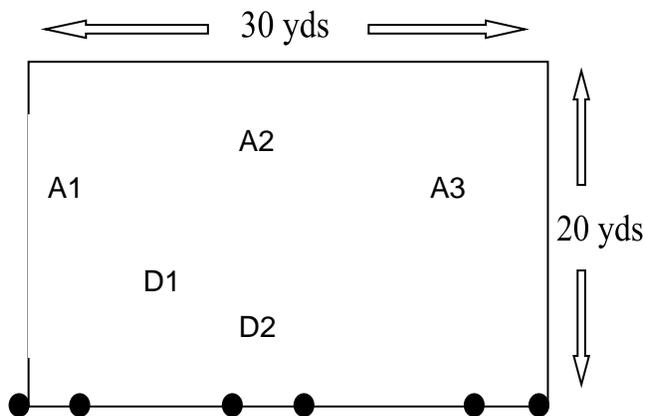
Skill Practice

1.



Minimum of four players, one ball.
 The three attackers A1, A2 and A3 should try and score in one of the two goals at the end of the pitch.
 The defender D will try and prevent the attackers from scoring.

2.

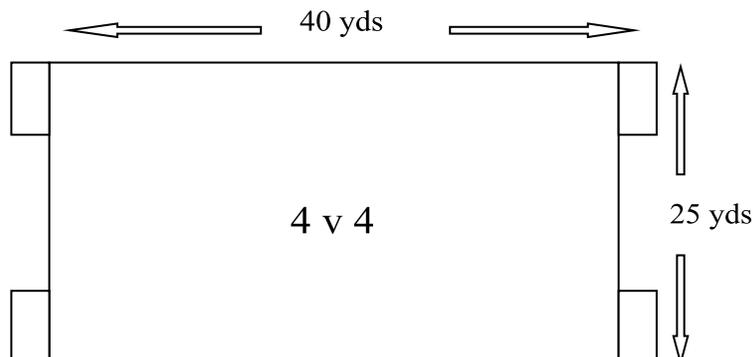


Minimum of five players, one ball.
 The three attackers A1, A2 and A3 should try and score in one of the three goals at the end of the pitch.
 The defenders D1 and D2 will try and prevent the attackers from scoring. (This is also a good exercise for the two defenders who should "slide across" to deal with the threat as play is switched from one side of the pitch to the other.)

Game Practice

1. Four v four directional game with two goals at either end.

The team attacking from left to right will try and score in either of the goals on the right and the team attacking from right to left will try and score in either of the goals on the left.





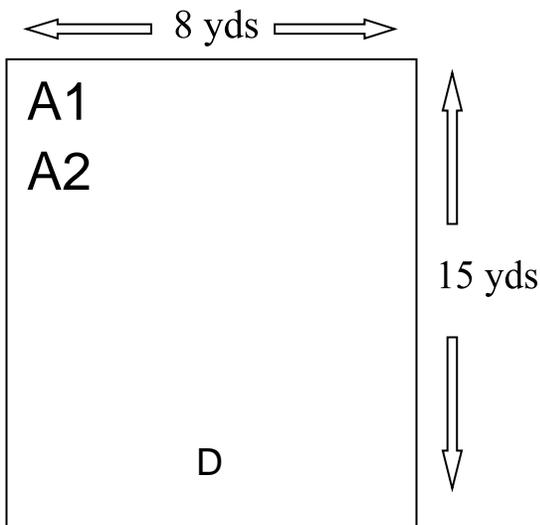
DEFENDING OUTNUMBERED

Key technical aspects:

- DENY – if possible, get the ball
- DELAY – get body between ball and goal/target, back off to buy time whilst a long way from goal
- Stay on toes, sharp and alert
- Aware of other attackers with defender potentially positioning himself to prevent an easy pass
- If pass is made quickly recover goal side i.e. getting body between ball and goal/target
- DEFLECT using body position to force attacker down the line
- Get tighter as the attacker nears goal

Technique Drills

1.



Three players, one ball.

The defender D delivers the ball to one of the attackers, A1 and A2. A1 and A2 pass the ball between themselves with D adjusting his body position to cover the immediate threat.

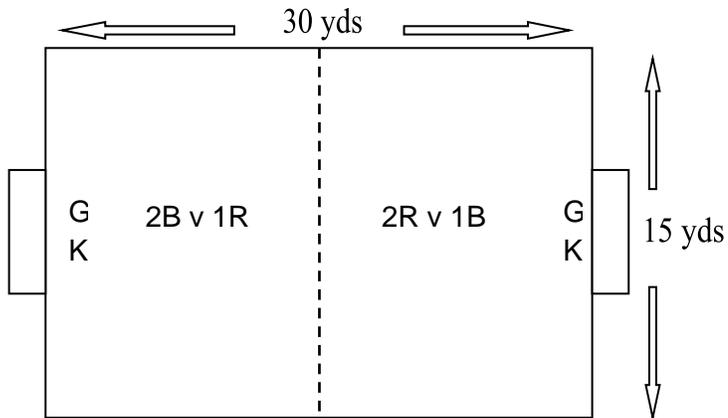
Once D understands his role play 2v1 with the attackers trying to cross over the line behind the defender.

Divide the players into



Skill Practice

1.



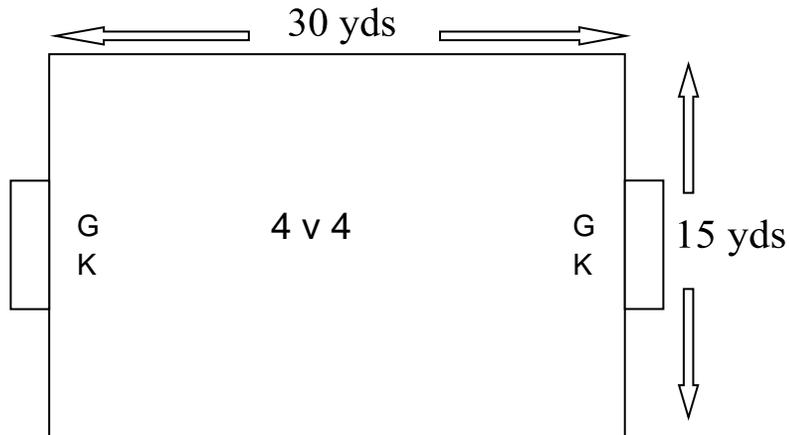
Ten players, one ball.

Two attackers versus one defender stationed in each half of the pitch. The two blues (2B) will try and beat the one red defender (1R) and score in the goal on the left. The two reds (2R) in the right half will try and beat the one blue defender (1B) and score in the goal on the right. If the ball goes out, or is with the goalkeeper, allow a pass to be delivered unhindered to the other half.

Game Practice

1: Four v four game with two floating players supporting the team in possession.

This will create outnumbered situations.





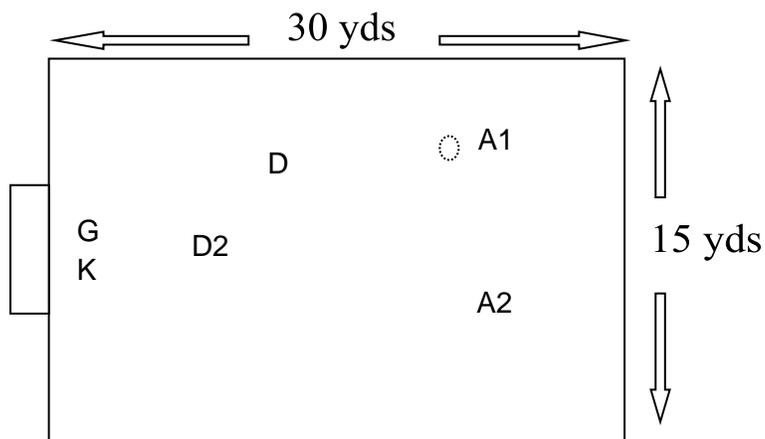
DEFENDING 2V2

Key technical aspects:

- Nearest player presses the ball
- See 1v1 defending for technique (possible to show inside to covering player)
- Second defender covers behind, between first defender and goal/target, in case the first defender is beaten
- If the ball is passed across the goal to a second attacker the covering player is then nearest to the attacker and must come and press the ball with the other defender dropping off and adopting a covering position (if the first defender follows the ball it is easy for the attackers to make a penetrative pass) – a series of passes across the goal will have the defenders acting like pistons

Technique Drills

1.



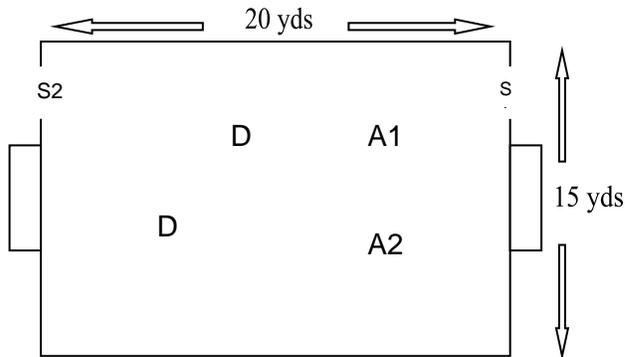
Five players, one ball.

The attackers A1 and A2 stay in their set positions passing the ball to each other. The defenders A1 and A2 take it in turns to press and cover (or "one goes, one drops"). When this basic movement of the defenders is understood, the session can be developed with the attackers now trying to score.



Skill Practice

1.



Six players, one ball.

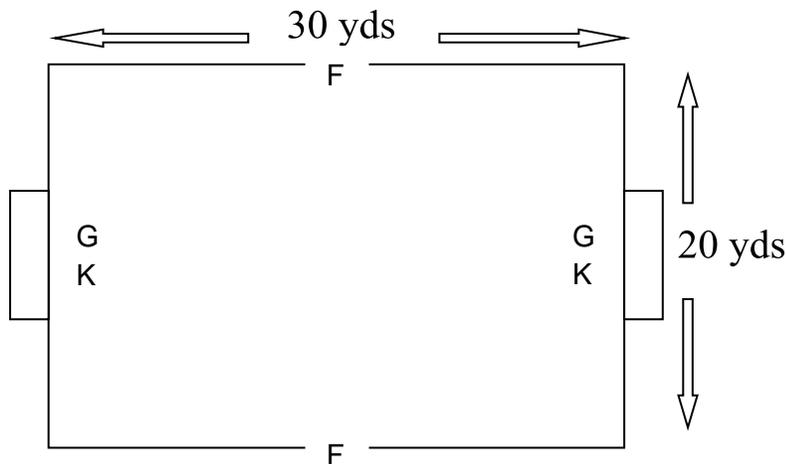
Server S1 feeds the ball to one of the attackers A1 and A2. (The servers can move anywhere along their goal line.) If the defenders D1 and D2 are too busy "man-marking" the attackers and fail to cover the goal then the server can pass the ball straight into the goal. Take it in turns to be attackers and defenders, so server S2 will feed the next ball.

(May need to introduce the offside rule.)

Game Practice

1: Four v four game

With two floating players moving up and down the touchlines supporting the team in possession.





HEADING

Key technical aspects:

- Timing of run and jump to meet the ball at the highest point
- Angle of the run – with defender approaching along the line of the ball if possible
- Extend neck and contact top or middle of ball to head down (attacking) or bottom to middle of ball for distance (if defending)
- Head the ball back where it came from if defending
- Use pace of the ball if possible when attacking
- If defender can't get to a header, drop off the attacker and provide cover for any knock down

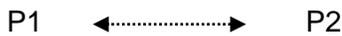
Useful Resources

FA Tesco Skills (<http://tescoskills.thefa.com>): “For Kids”: “With Friends”: “How to Score Power Headers”

You Tube: “Match – FA Skills – Win Headers Like Cahill” (matchymovie)

Technique Drills

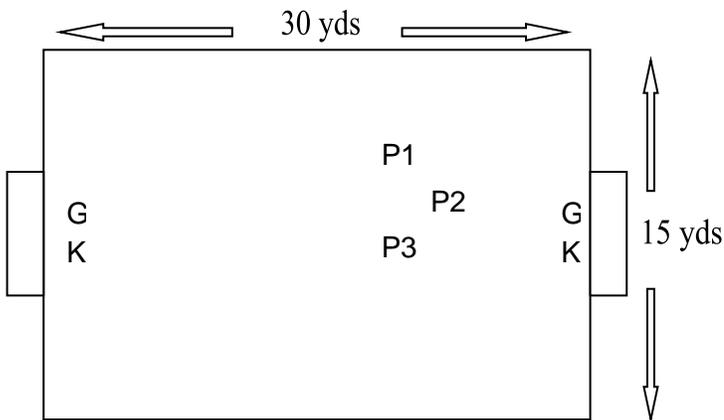
1. Extending the neck



Minimum of two players, one ball.

Player P2 lies on his back. Player P1 throws the ball for P2 to head. P2 then kneels and again P1 throws the ball for P2 to head. Take turns.

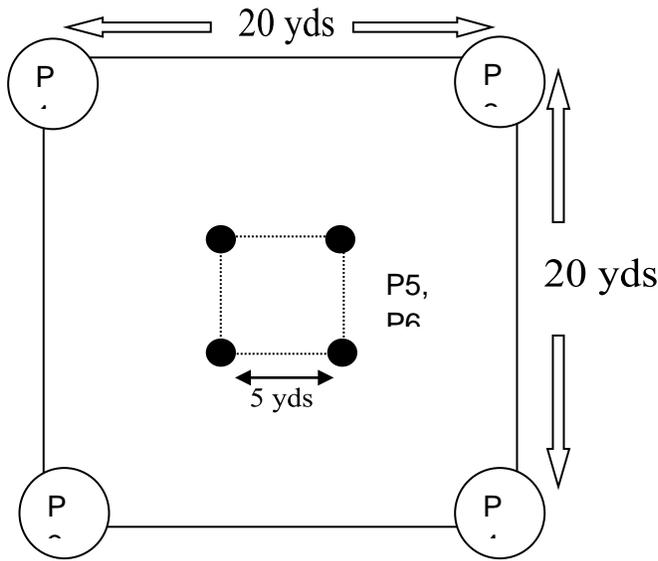
2. Timing and angle of run



Minimum of three players, preferably plus two goalkeepers, one ball.

Teams of three work up and down the pitch taking it in turns to throw, head and catch. Once within range, one of the players may try to beat the goalkeeper with a header.

3. Attacking and defensive headers

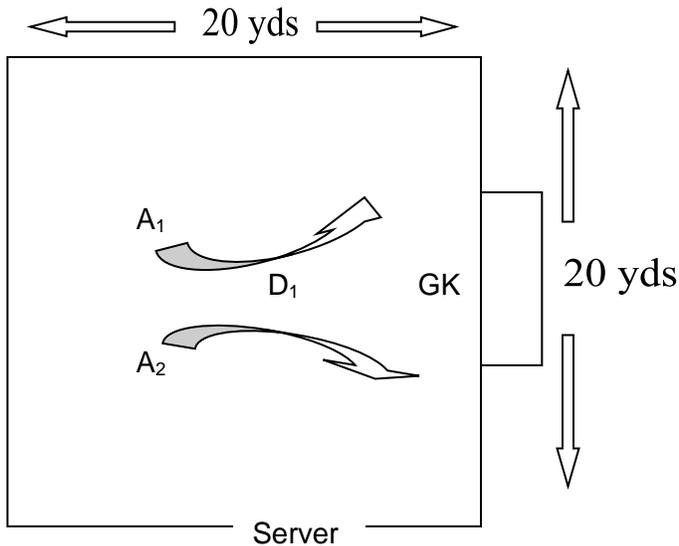


Minimum of six players, four balls.

Players P1, P2, P3 and P4 act as servers for players P5 and P6. P5 and P6 take it in turns to communicate with a server to deliver a suitable ball for heading. P5 and P6 will check back and then approach using a suitable heading technique e.g. clearing header, a cushioned header, a glancing header etc. Swap roles.

Skill Practice

1.



Minimum of five players, one ball.

The server feeds a suitable ball for heading by the attackers A1 and A2. One attacker should attack the front post area whilst the other the back post. The defender D1 and goalkeeper GK will try and prevent the attackers from scoring.

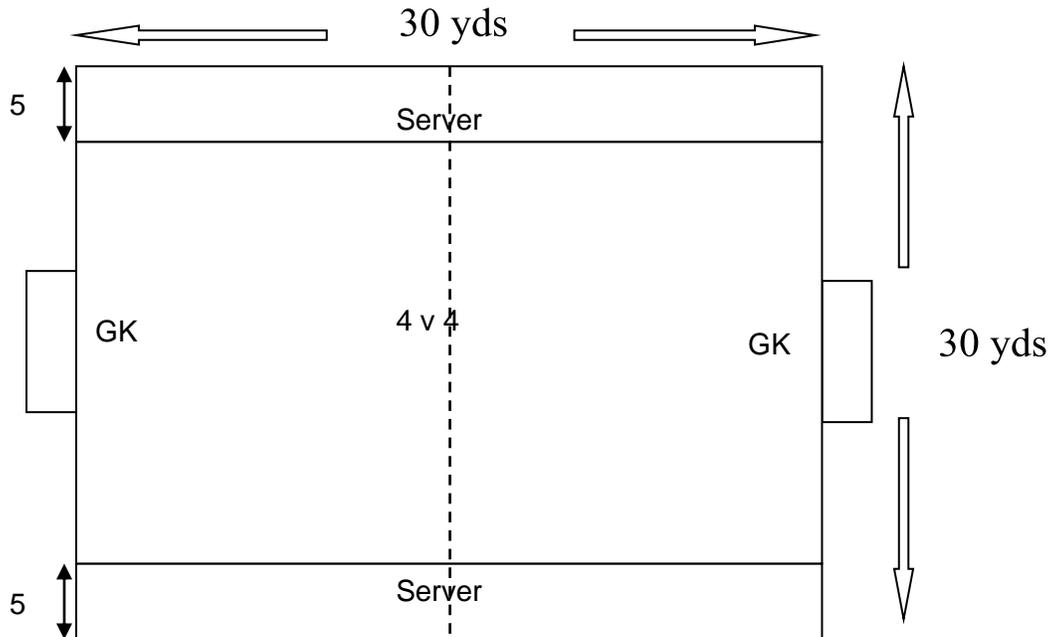
(To practice defensive headers, use two defenders and one attacker. Note that the defender not header the ball should get into a covering position.)



Game Practice

1. Four v four directional game with two servers moving up and down the channels on either side of the pitch in support of the team in possession.

Once in the opponents half the ball may be delivered to a server, who can run down his channel and deliver a cross unopposed.



(Alternatively, a directional four v four game of throw, head, catch could be played with the aim being for the team playing from left to right to head the ball to target players stationed at the two corners on the left of the pitch, and for the team playing from right to left to head the ball to target players stationed at the two corners on the right of the pitch.)

Appendix: Tricks & Ball-Skills

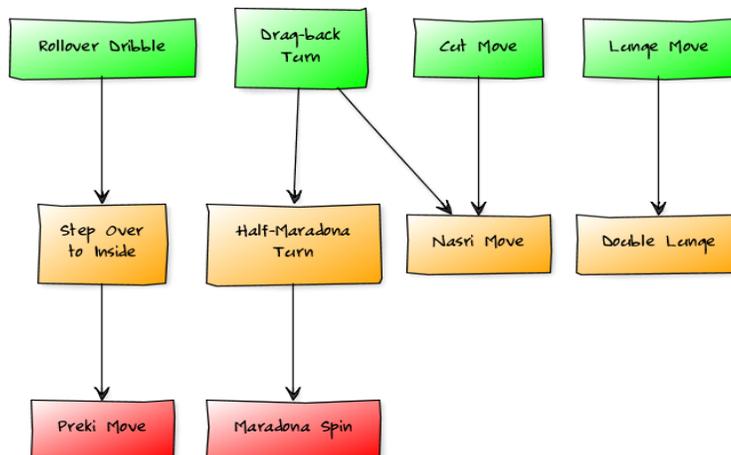
It can be a good idea to spend 5 minutes at the start of a session introducing and practicing some basic tricks. Once you get the kids used to trying these things out, you'll find they practice at home and get proficient remarkably quickly. Confidence and ball play improve as a result.

There are lots of different tricks, most can be found with short videos on YouTube or via Google. Some good ones to get started on are..

- Rollover Dribble
- The Ronaldo 'Chop'
- V Turn (Puskas or Pull Turn)
- The Mathews Move ("big toe / little toe")
- Cut Behind (Drag-Back & Turn behind standing leg). Aka 'L Turn' or 'Del Piero'
- The Benzema Lift
- The Rabona
- Hocus Pocus
- Pull/Push
- Roll & Scissors
- The Maradona Turn

Some basic tricks can be attempted from U8 onwards – the more complicated ones may be more suited to older age groups. Have a look at <http://ballskills.wikispaces.com/> for some inspiration!

A Good Basic Skills Progression (from the Ballskills site)



Keepy-Uppys (U9s +)

Keepy-Uppys help develop first touch and ball control skills. A good practice plan over the course of a few weeks is..

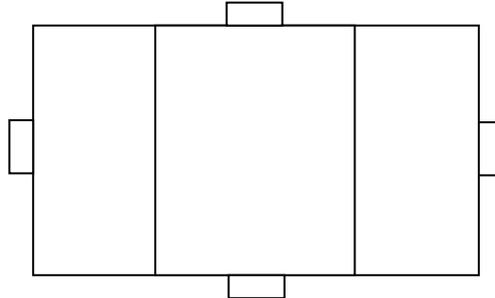
- Start on a hard, flat surface. Drop the ball from chest height, allow it to bounce, then try to kick the ball back into your hands using the top of the foot (drop-bounce-kick-catch). Keep practicing this until you can regularly get the ball back into your hands at chest height without reaching or stretching for it.
- Introduce another bounce/kick – i.e., drop-bounce-kick-bounce-kick-catch
- Keep introducing another bounce/kick until you can keep going comfortably for 5 or more times while staying in a 5x5 yard area
- Now attempt one juggle without the bounce (i.e., drop-kick-catch)
- Just introduce more kicks – and you're off!



APPENDIX: Informal / Street Football & Panna

Informal football can help significantly with a player's football development. The reason for this is that it presents players with different challenges and allows them to find their own solutions to football problems. Remember all the best players developed their own way of playing and achieving success. At a time when the exposure to informal football is reducing there is now a case for providing similar opportunities within youth football.

One suggestion to replicate the street football experience would be to set up a pitch as below:



Then try some of the following:

- Playing up and down in the central area;
- Playing across in the larger space;
- Using a different size ball;
- Playing without bibs;
- Mixing up different age groups;
- Having one match playing across and another up and down the pitch;
- Use all four targets and requiring that a goal is scored in each before a fifth goal can be scored;
- Playing a dribbling team against a team that can only take, say, 3 touches on the ball; or
- If a player does not move after passing possession is lost.

Ideas to get weaker players more involved:

- Using more than one ball;
- Telling the teams to "go home" (i.e. back to their goal) when the ball goes off and restart by feeding the weaker players the ball; or
- Don't let a player score again until each player on that team has scored.

Other ideas may include giving the players a mission e.g. one team is losing 1-0 in the cup final with 3 minutes to go. Ask each team to determine their strategy, play it out and review what happened.

Watch as the players make their own decisions and learn to adapt to the different circumstances!

Panna

Panna is the Dutch word for 'nutmegs'. It is essentially a street game which is great for kids who have some basic tricks and skills and will benefit from trying them out in a fun but more pressurised situation. It also helps encourage physical contact, shielding and ball holding.



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Some Variants of Panna are..

- 'Classic' Panna is 1v1 – Just two kids and a ball. The objective is simply to Panna (nutmeg) your opponent before they Panna you.
- 2v2 or 3v3 – Layout a tight/small pitch with small goals at each end. Play with no keepers. You can play either
 - Goals count 1 point and Pannas count 3 points
 - Play for a fixed short time – Goals score 1 point, or a Panna is an immediate 'win' and the game ends early

Encourage the kids to look at some of the Panna videos on YouTube for ideas!

APPENDIX: Quotes and Nuggets

@nlevett: **Grassroots football is not about the amount of trophies you win. It is about the difference you make to young people.**

@nlevett: **Adults telling kids what to do during games is similar to parents doing their kids homework. Might get 100% tomorrow but limited long-term.**

@Samanthagriff17: **Intresting quote from Ray Lewington "we teach our players if in doubt stay on the ball" who does this with grassroots kids? @CoachingFamily**

@DanAbrahams77: **The brain is like velcro for negatives but like teflon for positives - footballers must learn how to manage this mindset challenge**

@DanAbrahams77: **A coach must teach a footballer to stay in the present. Your team should never lose, they should only run out of time**

@nlevett: **Note to coaches/parents. Defeat isn't the same as failure. Defeat is an inevitable outcome at some stage and a healthy part of growing up.**

@YouthFitnessGuy: **The sound of children playing is the sound of children learning.**

@VictorSatei: **Yelling from sideline = nervous players = more mistakes = more yelling from sideline = a vicious cycle! Ahhhh! @coaches_ont @CoachingFamily**

@DanAbrahams77: **If you want to create a winning team then avoid the word 'win' in your team talk. The processes take care of winning**

@DanAbrahams77: **A coach should teach a young player how to speak to herself during the game. His inner voice mediates his confidence, focus & intensity**

@DrDickB: **i once wrote 3 KEY LAWS OF CHILD DEV. 1) ch is not a mini adult; 2) ch. is not a mini adult; 3) ch is not a mini adult**

@DanAbrahams77: **Referee's have always made decisions people don't like...deal with it in the moment and move on quickly. That's a winner's mindset**

@Sports_Greats: **It is better to be defeated on principle than to win on lies. -Arthur Calwell**



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@DanAbrahams77: The brain's propensity to dwell on mistakes can be a tougher enemy to overcome than the footballer's opponent

@Sports_Greats: My responsibility is leadership, and the minute I get negative, that is going to have an influence on my team. -Don Shula

@DanAbrahams77: A footballer's focus during a game easily wanders. It's the way the brain is designed. She must have small targets during the game to focus

@LegendaryCoach: The BEST dribblers become the BEST passers when they are older, this is well known amongst program/curriculum builders...

@LegendaryCoach: Coaches please, if you coach in the young ages, please encourage the dribble... Be aware that they will fail, don't chastise them for it..

@LegendaryCoach: Think about what YOU wanted in a coach, be that inspirational figure for your players... Be funny, challenging, supportive, upbeat..

@DanAbrahams77: Pele didn't play perfectly. Nor did Maradona. Lionel Messi doesn't play with perfection. Perfectionism kills footballers. Play with freedom...

@Sports_Greats: You are never really playing an opponent. You are playing yourself... and when you reach your limits, that is real joy. -Arthur Ashe

@Sports_Greats: You're never as good as everyone tells you when you win, and you're never as bad as they say when you lose. -Lou Holtz

@SoccerstarzLtd: Junior coaches over the weekend remember its only a game! Remember the enthusiasm that u had as a kid going 2 play and share in it with them

@DanAbrahams77: Perfectionism slows speed of thought on the pitch. A coach must send the message that 'mistakes happen' to a young player. Play with freedom

@LegendaryCoach: Create a fun, positive, environment, that is intense for the players, go after teams when you play them, attack, give the players freedom...

@LegendaryCoach: Secure coaches know that they don't have total control of the results, only THE PROCESS, but make that process the best it can be...

@antmccool7: The same people moaning about England not having technical ability r the same 1s shouting at little kids to WIN! #changeyourthchangeengland

@DanAbrahams77: A winning mentality requires an exact look at the process of winning. Process first, outcome second...or...form follows function

@WheatoFC: "The problem is, in England you teach children to win the game. In Spain, we teach children to play the game" - Jose Mourinho, 2010.

@DanAbrahams77: A footballer will play as well as his self-image allows him to

@PavIW: a) Messi has most unsuccessful dribbles in La Liga for 3rd year running. b) 21 goals in 19 games and won 3 ballon d'or. Risk vs Reward!

@DanAbrahams77: A coach's voice travels with a player...always!