



SOCCER COACH
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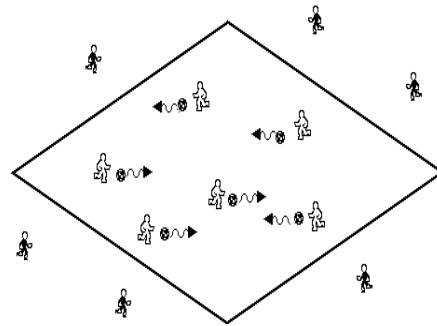


Possession

by Tom Goodman, M.Ed

Objective/Purpose: Possession is the ability to keep the ball individually and collectively in small groups and as a team. The technical aspects of passing and receiving and the tactical aspects of movement and shape are key to our player's success. The possession play of younger players tends to be slow, thus the numbers must be small so that the players can achieve success through multiple repetitions in a less cluttered playing environment. As players get older, play speeds up and they can handle activities with larger numbers.

1) **Inside-Outside (15-20minutes):** One (1) soccer ball per two (2) players. Separate players into two (2) groups. One group of players, without soccer balls, forms a 30 yd x 30 yd grid. These players are the outside players (Outsiders). The other group of players, equipped with balls at their feet, position themselves inside the circle. The players inside the circle (Insiders) dribble about the grid freely looking for an opportunity to pass the ball to a player on the perimeter of the circle (Outsiders). The Outsiders must one (1) or two (2) touch the ball back to the Insider. The Insider then controls the ball and looks for another Outsider to pass to. After approximately two (2) minutes, the Insiders become Outsiders and vice versa.



Variation: The Outsiders start with the ball in their hands. The Insiders move around freely inside the circle without a ball. The Insiders call for a ball from one of the Outsiders. The Outsider serves a ball (on the ground or in the air) to the Insider, who must one (1) or two (2) touch the ball back to the Outsider (server).

Coaching Points:

Technical... Proper receiving technique: good body balance, eyes on ball, body in-line with the path of the ball, movement to ball, appropriate touch on ball (cushion or propel). Proper passing technique: good body balance, placement of non-kicking foot, foot surface, ball surface, eyes on ball when striking, appropriate pace (weight). Tactical...Surveying the area, intelligent movement, looking for target early, anticipation, keeping good body shape, head up, preparing to receive the ball, preparing to pass the ball.

2) **3v3 or 4v4 Gate Game (20 minutes):** One ball. In an open area set up 10 gates (2 cones about 3 yards apart) at many different angles about 10-15 yards apart all over the field space. Organize players into 2 teams. Play keep-away in the field space. Points are awarded each time a team can pass the ball through any gate to a teammate and keep possession. The game is continuous constantly looking for another gate to attack. When the defending team wins possession of the ball they are on the attack. Play games to 5 points or for a certain time period (i.e. 5-10 minutes). **Variation 1:** Add more players to each team. As you add more players to the group, increase the playing space, add more gates and position the gates farther apart. **Variation 2:** Add a second ball if not enough success.

Coaching Points: Fun, passing and dribbling, changing direction, simple decision making (which gate to go through next), timing (when and how hard should I pass the ball to my teammate), anticipation (can I pass my ball through that gate before it is defended).

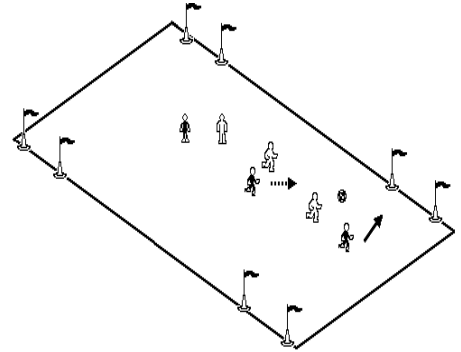


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4) 3v3 or 4v4 To Four Small Goals (20 minutes) - In a grid 30yds x 35yds with small goals near each corner. Teams of three or four attack two goals and defend two goals. The goals are set up along the 35yd lines for extra width in the attack. Each team attacks the two goals opposite them and defends the two goals behind them. The goals are three feet wide and are placed near each corner. With three players, the attacking team should create a triangular shape. With four players, the attacking team should create a rectangular (diamond) shape.

Coaching points: Reinforce the roles & responsibilities of the 1st attacker (ball), 2nd attacker (support) and 3rd attacker (length or width) within the game. Especially, their responsibilities in keeping possession for their team (combination play) and penetrating into dangerous space behind the defense.



5) 6v6 to 8v8 Game (25 minutes) - Play the larger game. If playing 6v6, the field size should be approximately 45 x 60 yards. If playing 8v8, the field size should be approximately 55 x 80 yards. Encourage your goalkeeper to communicate to the team regarding keeping possession for the team. Emphasize the coaching considerations made throughout the training session. ***Stay on topic.***

6) Cool Down (10 minutes) – Controlled juggling (thigh-thigh-foot-foot). Statically stretch the large muscle groups.