



SOCCER COACH
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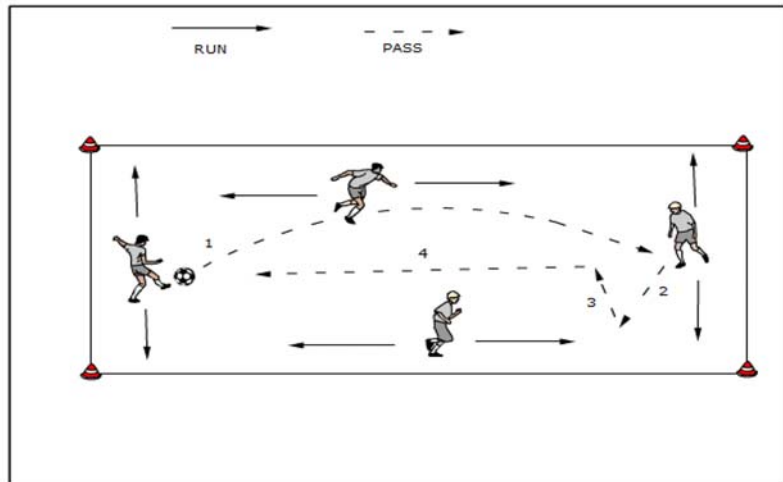


Speed of Play

by Tom Goodman, M.Ed.

Objective/Purpose: This session will help players to recognize their own shape and the shape of the team as it relates to speed of play (playing the game faster). This takes into account field awareness and vision, as well as physical speed, technical speed and tactical speed.

- 1) **Inter-passing in 4's (15-20 minutes):** Players pass the ball within their group. Three of the players position themselves about 10-15 yards apart, forming a triangle shape (one central player and two outside players). They pass the ball back and forth to each other (short passes), while the fourth player (long player) positions himself/herself centrally about 25-30 yards away. After 4-5 short passes, the long player calls for the ball. The ball is played into the long player. The two outside players move quickly to support the long player, forming the triangle shape at the other end of the grid. The deepest central player stays home. The same passing sequence continues at the opposite end of the grid. The activity continues in this manner for 3-4 minutes to develop a smooth rhythm in the passing sequence. Players consistently keep themselves and the ball moving. **Version 2:** Only 2-3 passes prior to the long pass.



Coaching Points:

Clean up technique of passing and receiving. Intelligent movement, head up, preparing to receive the ball, surveying the area, looking for their target early, anticipation, passing accuracy and pace, keeping appropriate individual and group shape, playing in the direction that you are facing.

- 2) **4v0 and 4v0 (15-20 minutes):** Same activity as in #1 above, but with two groups of 4 playing on the same field and playing through each other (red and yellow groups). Each group has its own ball and only concentrates on moving up and down the grid possessing their ball **only**. No defending. **Variation:** Add 1 or 2 bandits (in blue) to try to steal the balls.

Coaching Points:

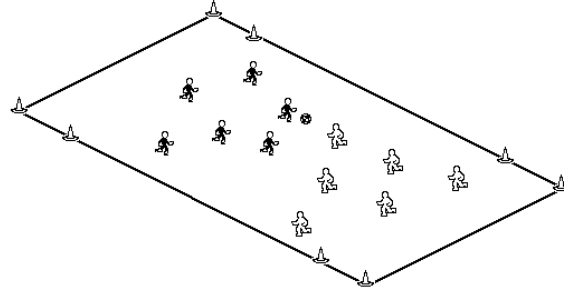
Reinforce coaching points above as they play in traffic. When bandits are added, players must make better and **faster decisions** to eliminate pressure and successfully possess the ball. Proper individual and group shape is crucial to this success.



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3) 6v6 Zone Game (20-25 minutes): Play a 6v6 game on a field 40 yards wide x 60 yards long. Create zones with cones at each end approximately 10 yards deep and the full width of the field. Each team defends the zone behind them and attacks the zone opposite them. A team *cannot enter* the zone it is defending. A team *can enter* the zone it is attacking. A point is awarded to a team that successfully dribbles the ball into the zone or makes a well-timed pass into the zone as a teammate arrives to receive it.



Version 2: Describe a scenario and put time limits on the game to speed up play...i.e. It is a tie game with 2 minutes remaining. The red team must win the game to advance into the play-offs.

Coaching Points:

Maintain the integrity of individual/group/team attacking shape while playing under the pressure of even numbers. Talk about the tactical speed of the attacking players...speed of the 1st attacker to find forward options, if they are on; speed of the 2nd attackers to provide supporting options to the 1st attacker; overall speed of play of the group. Reinforce coaching points made throughout the session.

4) 6v6, 7v7 or 8v8 Match (25-30 minutes): Field size appropriate to age and numbers. Play the game with goalkeepers. As in Version 2 of Activity 3 above, describe a scenario that will put the pressure of time on one of the teams...i.e. With 5 minutes remaining in the game, the red team is winning by a goal; the yellow team needs a draw to advance into the championship round of the tournament.

Coaching Points:

Maintain the integrity of individual/group/team attacking shape while playing under the pressure of the Game. Coach their attacking shape as it relates to the thirds or halves of the field. Teach the goalkeeper to coach the team shape from his/her vantage point.

Cool-Down...3-Player Juggling (10 minutes) A can only juggle with his feet, B can only juggle with her thighs and C can only juggle with his head. Each player in the group has a max of 5 consecutive juggles. A, B and C must try to juggle as many times as possible as a group. If they drop the ball, they can start again. After a few minutes, change the juggling surfaces within each group.