

5 SIMPLE RULES

for

young strikers

SoccerCoach 

...and their coaches

strikers' rule no. 1

**SHOOT WELL
BUT SHOOT OFTEN**

SCORING ISN'T THE MAIN THING

IT'S EVERYTHING

Coaches' Notes



what to say to your players

- “Keeping possession is critical for defenders and midfielders”
- “Yet most strikers don't lose possession enough. You've got to let the ball go....”
- “Go where? From your feet into the back of their goal”
- “Stop trying to walk the ball into their net. Just send the ball on its way”
- “With a smoke trail of speed, swerve and power”



what to think about

- All of the build-up in the world is useless if your strikers don't shoot.
- It's your job to encourage them to shoot from short range, from long range – wherever and whenever they can.
- It's their job to have a go – to have as many attempts as they can muster at getting the ball on target.
- The more often your players have a shot, the better and more finely tuned their radar becomes – allowing them to get attempts on goal from every angle.

strikers' rule no. 2

**80% OF GOALS ARE
SCORED IN THE
18-YARD BOX
MAKE IT YOUR HOME**

Coaches' Notes



what to say to your players

- “If shooting is your first priority, getting into the box is your second priority”
- “Without straying offside, get into that 18-yard area whenever you can. Just being there raises the anxiety level of their defenders and goalkeeper”
- “Defenders get worried because they know anything might happen: the ball may cannon in off your knee, they might rush their tackle and give away a penalty”
- “Their 18-yard area is your home. Don't wait for an invitation”



what to think about

- Location. Location. Location.
- Too many strikers wander around the fringes of the action, instead of being drawn – automatically – to the area where they pose the greatest threat – the 18-yard box.
- They need to get in the game. Strikers need to worry the defence – even when they haven't got the ball. That can't be done from the halfway line or from the corner flag.
- So keep encouraging your strikers to step “over the line” and into the penalty area – whenever they can.

strikers' rule no. 3

**SPREAD OUT
DEFENDERS LOVE
CONGESTION
THEY HATE ONE-ON-ONE**

Coaches' Notes



what to say to your players

- "Go where you need in search of goals"
- "You need to develop the ability to work on your own"
- "Scoring goals can often be a do-it-yourself project"
- "That's because you won't usually have the support that your fellow players have, in the more crowded areas of midfield and defence"
- "As a striker you need to quickly earn the permission to go where you like"



what to think about

- While it's great to have a striking partnership in say, a 4-2-2 formation, your strikers also have to learn to operate as lone wolves, far away from the pack.
- Often, strikers will be feeding off scraps of possession, so when they do get the ball, they need to be ruthless and show no hesitation.
- That means, taking on and beating the defender – before the defender has time to react.
- It also means that they have the full confidence and backing of their coach.

Strikers' rule no. 4

BE UNPREDICTABLE

DRIFT

**PROBE FOR
WEAKNESSES**

THEN EXPLOIT THEM

Coaches' Notes



what to say to your players

- “Defenders hate uncertainty”
- “They like to be able to see the opposition strikers. They often like to be against the same striker for the whole game. “Which is exactly why you should be unpredictable”
- “Go narrow. Then go wide. Swap wings”
- “The possibilities are endless”
- “Keep the defence off-balance to the very end of the game”



what to think about

- There is no doubt that a controlled and tight structure is best for your defence and even for the midfield.
- But strikers should be given your full permission to dart here and there, to continually pull the opposition defence out of shape.
- Don't let your strikers simply stand and wait as if they're in a bus queue.
- A static target is an easy target for a defender.
- A moving target, and a mobile striker, is a lot harder to deal with.

strikers' rule no. 5

**RUN THE FIRST TWO
YARDS IN YOUR HEAD
SPEED OF THOUGHT
AND SPEED OF FOOT
ARE UNBEATABLE**

Coaches' Notes



what to say to your players



what to think about

- “Most sprints in soccer are short – somewhere between 5 and 15 yards. A “head-start” of two yards over such distances, is often an overwhelming advantage”
- “Anticipate where the pass is going to go – before it happens”
- “ “See” your run into the box – before it happens”
- “Know where you are going to push the ball past that defender – before it happens”
- “It’s this approach that will give you that “head-start” – but you need to be awake and alert to the opportunity”
- Strikers who have pace to burn often rely on that pace too much.
- This means that they have no time left to get the ball under control, and their shot balloons into space.
- Get their thinking to be as quick as their feet, and they will score a lot more goals.
- For strikers with average pace, anticipation is even more crucial.
- Never stop working on their pace, but get them to compensate for any lack of speed with an abundance of forward thinking.