

## RECEIVING THE GIFT

### *An Introduction To Ball Control*

The world's best players possess the skill and confidence to quickly bring under control a soccer ball passed on the ground, in the air or when bouncing. First touch control is the foundation of a skillful performance and must be practiced regularly. The following session will improve the skills of your players and give them the confidence to receive even the most difficult pass with the foot, thigh or chest.

**Phase One**  
**Self-Serve Receiving**



<b>ORGANIZATION</b> 6 Red and 6 Blue-Grey 30x30 Yard Playing Area Everyone In Possession	<b>PROGRESSION</b> 1. Throw and Catch 2. Direction Change 3. Bounce and Catch 4. Possession Game	<b>DURATION</b> Total Time: 10-15 Minutes
---	--	--

### **Throw and Catch**

Everyone will be in possession while moving freely about the playing area. The players will periodically toss the ball into the air and "catch" it with any legal controlling surface, before it hits the ground. With the controlling touch the receiving player will dribble to an open space. The procedure will continue for several minutes as part of the initial warm-up. During this phase, the coach will make suggestions and adjustments of the players' receiving skills.

### **Direction Change**

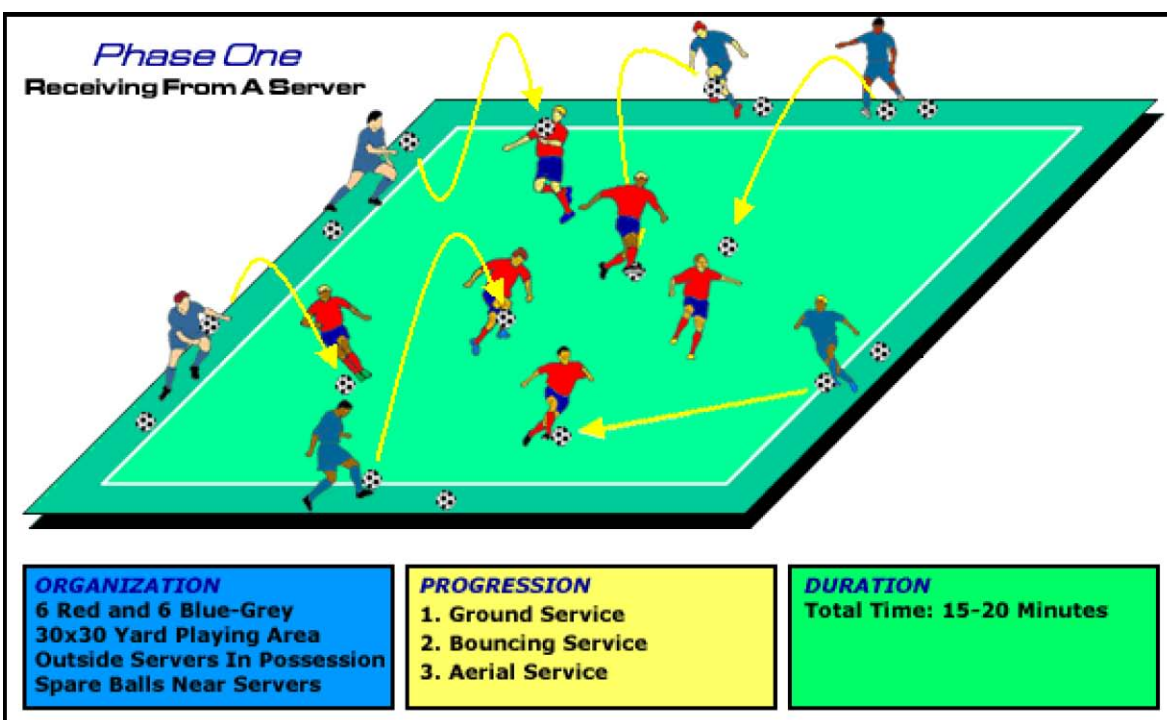
The activity will continue in the same fashion, with one minor change that will impact player development. In this case, the players must change direction when receiving the ball. This will make the players less predictable and more vibrant in attack.

### **Bounce and Catch**

Players need to possess a broad range of controlling skills to deal with ever changing match conditions. This being the case, it is important that players practice receiving passes on the ground, in the air or when bouncing. In this variation, the players will bounce the ball off the ground before controlling with the body. The players must be encouraged to time their movement to coincide with the downward flight of the ball.

### Possession Game

This competitive game will start with the red team on attack and all of its players in possession. The objective of the individual attackers is to serve the ball into the air, receive it and move away to an open area. This issue is complicated by the opposing players who will attempt to snatch the ball. With each successful controlling movement the players will score one point. The individual players are responsible for keeping track of their own point totals, which will be combined with their teammates at the end of each round to compile a team score.



**General Description:** During the next set of activities, six performing players are positioned inside of the playing area and six servers outside. To maintain quality control and these groups of players will change positions every couple of minutes.

### Ground Service

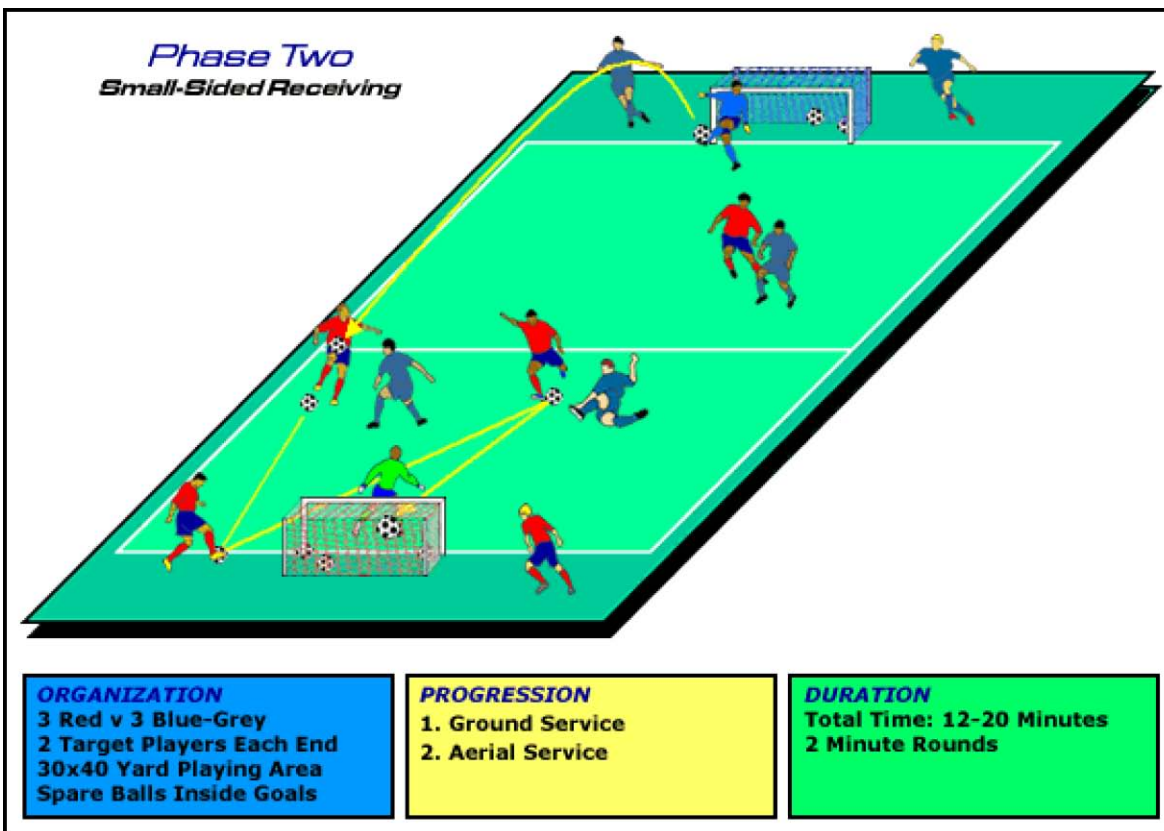
To initiate the activity, the interior players will make a hard sharp run toward one of the servers. In response, the server will pass the ball on the ground toward the onrushing player. The receiving player will control the ball and return it to the one by whom it was passed. As the players become more efficient, the coach will impose a two-touch restriction on the interior players.

### Bouncing Service

The premise is the same as the above, but the server will bounce the ball on the ground in front of the oncoming player. This is best accomplished by using a two-armed throw in technique. The servers must be encouraged to change the speed and angle of their passes. This will expose the receiving players to wider variety of challenges, which must be quickly met to achieve winning results.

## Aerial Service

During the final part of this activity, an aerial service will be provided by the outside players. This service should vary in height, pace and angle of descent. By doing this, the interior players will deal with a wide variety of decisions and selections in a very short period of time. This will translate into more confident decision making in a competitive match.



**General Description:** The following activity is a competitive game played between two groups of three players. The red team will attack one goal and their opponent the other. One like-colored target player will be positioned beyond the end line and to the side of each goal, as diagramed above. The activity will start with a pass from the goalkeeper of the red team.

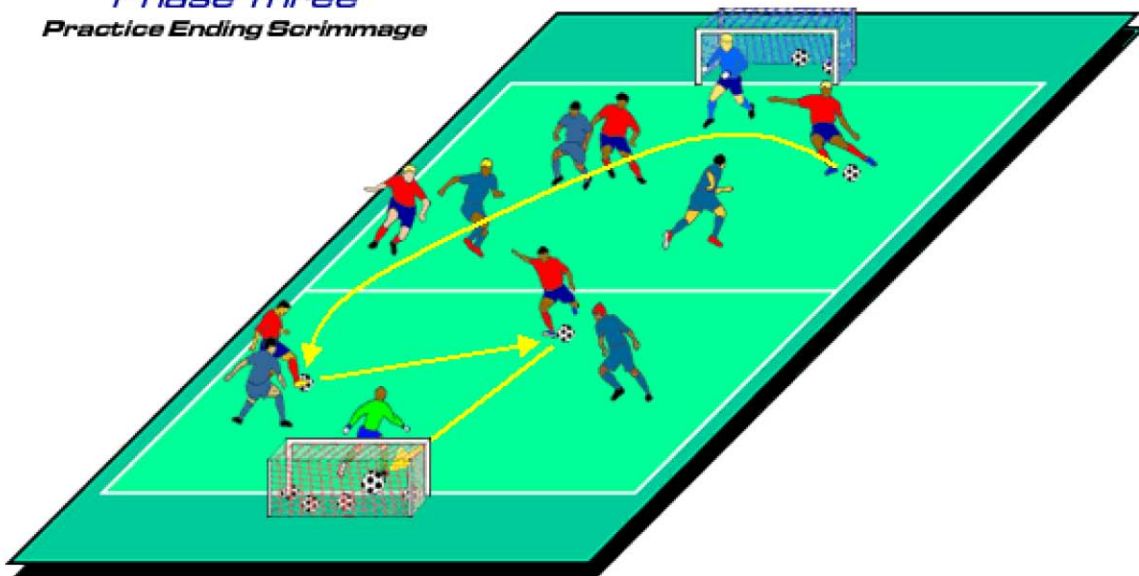
## Ground Service

The interior players may pass or dribble at any point, but they may attack the goal only after a pass has been received from an exterior teammate. During this phase, the pass from the outside player must be delivered on the ground.

## Aerial Service

The organization will remain the same, but the outside players must pass the ball into the air for a teammate to receive, before an attack can be generated.

*Phase Three*  
*Practice Ending Scrimmage*



**ORGANIZATION**  
6 Red v 6 Blue-Grey To Goal  
30x40 Yard Playing Area  
Spare Balls Inside Goals

**PROGRESSION**  
1. Five Pass Game  
2. Variable Point Game  
3. Unrestricted Free Play

**DURATION**  
Total Time: 12-20 Minutes

### **Five Pass Game**

The final phase of play will commence with a conditioned game, which will increase the number of opportunities one has to receive. In this case, the possession team must connect five consecutive passes before an attack is allowed. To reinforce solid technical habits, the receiving player must immediately move the ball to an open area. Failure to do so will result in a loss of possession. As an alternative, a point for every three consecutive passes will spice up the competitive arena.

### **Variable Point Game**

During this game, a team will receive a point for every pass that is received and moved to an open area. In addition, a well-controlled aerial pass will be worth two points for the attacking team. Consequently, a team that is losing can begin to pass more air balls in an attempt to catch up. The defending team must regain possession or touch the ball out of play to break the opposition's string of consecutive passes.

### **Unrestricted Free Play**

In this phase, all restrictions are removed and game is played with few interruptions.