

U10/U12/U14 CLINIC

MARCH 25, 2006

The following material summarizes comments and games employed in the Region 418 U10 through U14 coach clinic offered March 25.

The primary trainers for this clinic were:

- Dave Stoneback, National Coach and Coach Instructor, Section 6 Coach Trainer.
- Jonathan Utley, National Coach and Coach Instructor, Region 418 Coach Trainer.

Part I – The Coach’s Craft

Keep the Mission In Sight

To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs, which promote a fun, family environment based on the AYSO Philosophies.

Quality Fun Family

What Does It Take to Be a Good Youth Coach?

The Staff of the U.S. Women’s National Team created a curriculum for four stages of youth soccer, U12, U14, U16, U19. Here is how they defined the coach in the U12 bracket which they called “The Romance” stage.

“A sensitive teacher, enthusiastic, possess soccer awareness, ability to demonstrate or utilize someone who can paint a good picture, knowledge of the key factors of basic skills, give encouragement.”

At U14 the coach must be **“a strong personality with some soccer knowledge. The coach should be enthusiastic and patient but demanding.”**

If we can demonstrate skills, set up practice games, and understand how the game is played it will not make any difference unless we can establish a positive relationship with our players.

Five Fundamental Principles – Applied

AYSO operates under five fundamental principles. The key to good coaching is how we apply these principles at every practice and match. Often abbreviated BEPOS, here are some suggestions on how coaches might apply these principles. For a more in depth discussion of the practical application of these principles go to www.aysohelp.org and click on section meeting and then on the lesson plan for Applying AYSO Principles.

B – Balanced Teams

Meaning: We spread kids around so no team has all the impact players.

Coaches Challenge: Balancing depends on accurate and timely evaluations of players. Coaches need to take this most seriously.

E – Everyone Plays

Meaning: In Region 418, no one gets to play four quarters until everyone has played three.

Coaches Challenge: It is more than playing time. We need to make sure every player has an opportunity to make an impact on the game:

- Every player gets several chances to start and end a match during the season.
- Every player gets to play in every position (but not in one game).
- Every player gets to take a restart (throw-in, GK, FK, etc.)
- Players allow teammates to play the game rather than stepping in to intercept a pass.

P – Positive Coaching

Meaning: We build up our players.

Coaches Challenge: To go beyond not yelling at players.

1. Catch them being good! Don't worry about their mistakes.

Adults do not enjoy going to work and having a boss catch them making a mistake. Does anyone think kids really enjoy being told they are making a mistake? Catch them being good, compliment them, point it out and the other kids will see what they should do.

2. Let them play. Let them learn.

Nothing shows confidence in a player more than letting them play rather than micromanaging their every move. We cheer for them and can make a coaching point to a substitute about to enter the game. We should NOT try to tell a player on the field what to do. It is their game to play, mistakes and all.

O – Open Registration

Meaning: Anyone who wants to play gets to play.

Coaches Challenge: To embrace, not just tolerate, the least skilled or motivated player equally with the impact player.

S – Sportsmanship

Meaning: We play by the letter and spirit of the rules and respect opponents, officials, and teammates.

Coaches Challenge: Make it clear to players and parents alike that on your team everyone practices good sportsmanship all the time, no exceptions. Be proactive; don't wait until there is an incident.

Part II – Designing Games to Teach Specific Skills/Tactics

Transition Play

The problem is that players do not naturally switch from active attacking to active defending. This can be seen in a simple keep away game. Players play 4 on the circle and 2 in the middle. When a player makes a bad pass and a defender intercepts the defender usually walks to the circle and the circle player walks to the middle and when everyone is set play resumes.

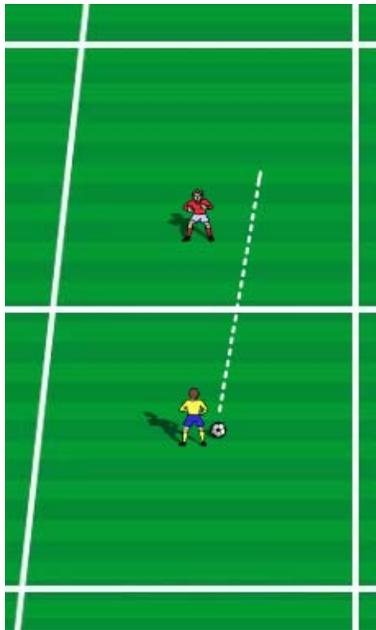
During a match, no one waits for a player to get set before they play. If a player makes a bad pass and it is intercepted, she should immediately pressure the player with the ball – not walk to a new position or stand and watch.

The following games are designed to help develop the ability to immediately transition from attacking to defending and back.

1v1 in a Gauntlet

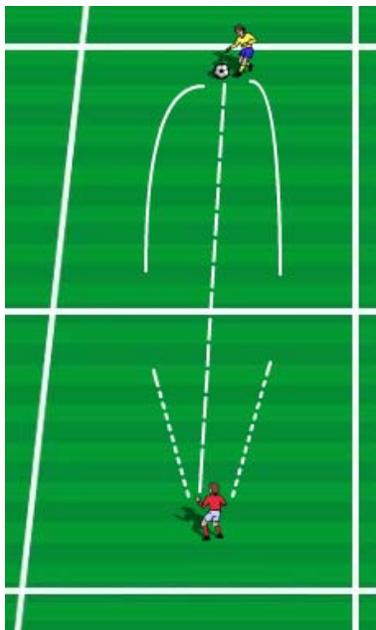
Here are three versions of the same game with the third version truly developing transition play.

Game A: Player starts in middle of 10x20 yard grid. Attacker attempts to dribble past while defender delays.



Coaching Point: Okay for attacking and defending but encourages players to stand rather than react.

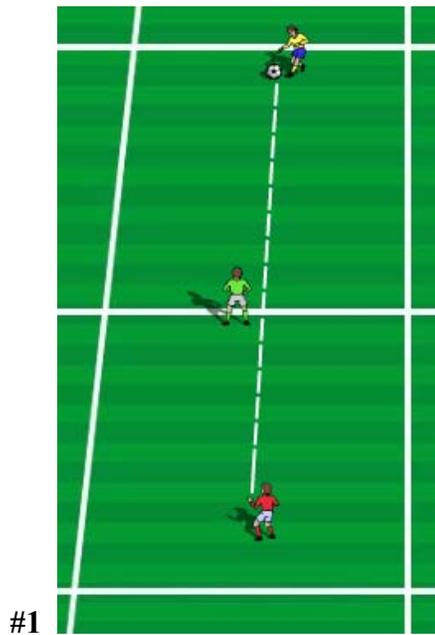
Game B: Player starts at end of grid and passes to player at far end of grid. Once ball has been passed, passer advances to delay attacker.



Coaching Point: Some movement here but far from a situation the player will see in a match.

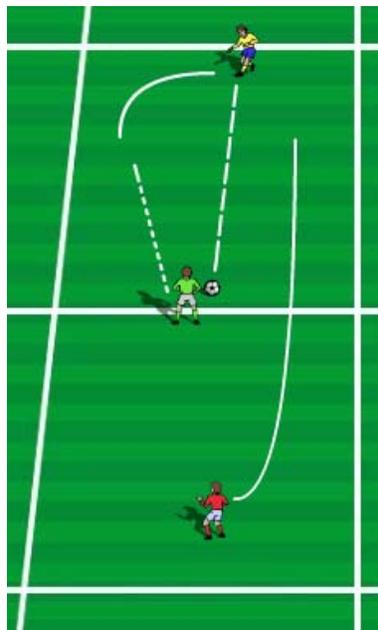
Game C: Players at opposite ends of the grid pass to each other while a defender in the middle of the grid attempts to intercept (#1). When she does, she

dribbles as quickly as possible back to the end where the pass originated (#2).



Coaching Point #1: Server must quickly move to delay while her teammate at far end of the grid recovers to create a 2v1 situation.

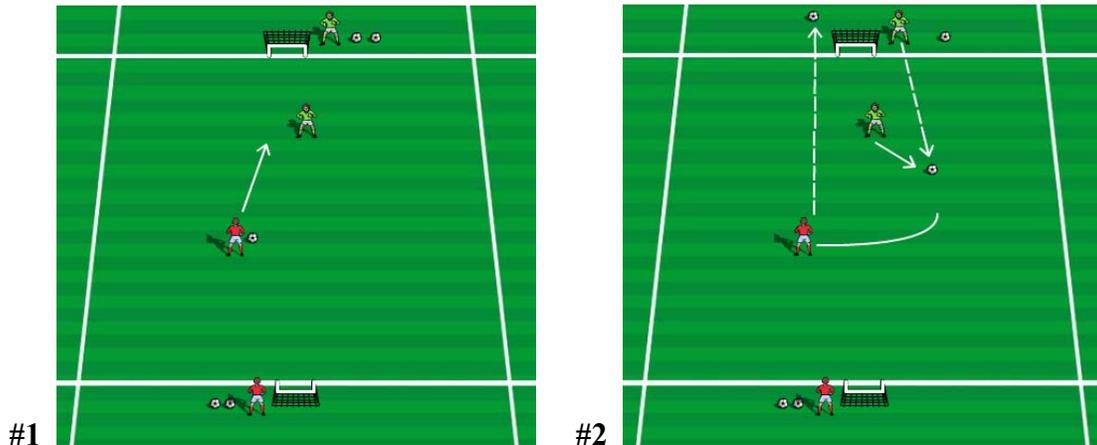
Coaching Point #2: Player at far end of grid must recover to create 2 defenders vs. single attacker before the attacker gets to her goal. Time is critical here.



Coaching Point #3: The dribbler knows she has only a few seconds to get to her objective before defender behind her arrives so she must attack without hesitation.

1 plus 1 vs. 1 plus 1

Set Up: Grid about 10 x 25 yards depending on age of players. Small goal at end of each grid. Two opponents inside grid play 1v1. Red player attacks the North goal. Behind the North goal is a Green player. Green attacks south goal and behind the south goal is a Red player (#1). As soon as the ball crosses the end line whether through the goal or not, the player behind the goal line makes a quick outlet pass to his teammate (#2).



Coaching Point #1: The player who just took the shot must immediately transition to defense.

Coaching Point #2: As the shot is being taken, the defender must immediately move to an attacking position in anticipation of the outlet pass coming.

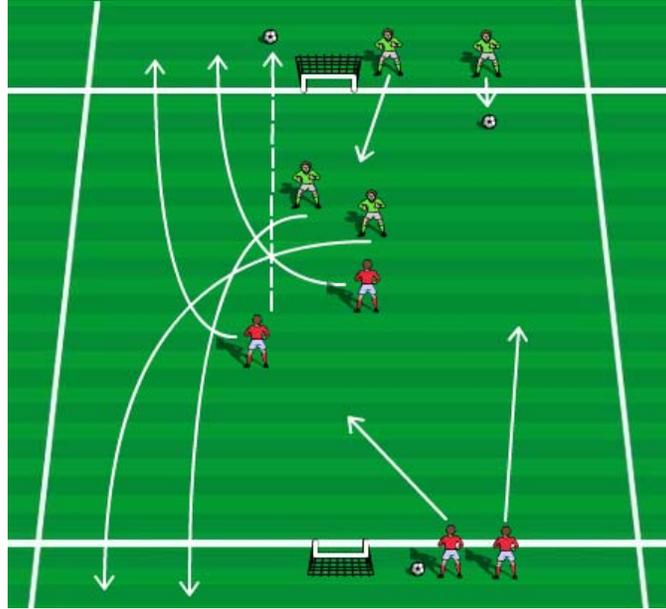
Coaching Point #3: The game continues at a very high pace without any hesitation from end to end. Very physically demanding. Change players as soon as fatigue becomes a problem.

Coaching Point #4: Look for the plus one player to make the best penetrating pass. Good dribblers will ask for a short pass so they can dribble through a defender who is in good defending position. That slows down the transition.

Coaching Point #5: With one player behind each goal line there is a 1:1 work to rest ratio. With two players behind each goal line there is a 1:2 work to rest ratio.

Variation: 2v2 with Immediate Substitutes.

Play 2v2 in grid with small goals (or large with keepers). Once shot crosses goal line, a team of 2 is waiting behind the goal line with a ball and they launch an immediate attack. Shooters become defenders and defenders leave field for next transition.



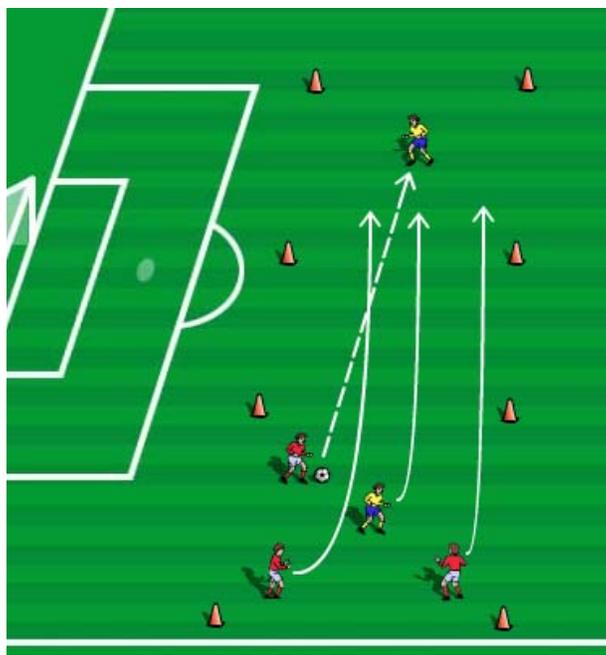
3v1 in Two Grids

Three players play keep away against one defender in East grid 15x15 or larger.

West grid is placed 10 yards or more away (depending on size of players). One player is waiting in that grid.

Player who receives the 4th pass switches the ball to the single player in the East Grid.

The passer remains in the East Grid and the other three players immediately transition to the West Grid.



The attackers in the West grid are now made up of the original target player waiting there, the defender from the East Grid, and the FIRST of the other two players to get into the East Grid.

Play it all over again in the new grid.

Coaching Point #1: The player receiving the 4th pass must be in position to make the crossing pass to the new grid – mental alertness.

Coaching Point #2: At least two players must be prepared to be the recipient of the 4th pass or the defender can just mark the obvious player and stifle the play.

Coaching Point #3: The non-passing attackers must anticipate the passes and make a quick transition. Make it a competition to see who gets to the other grid first but do not allow them to leave the grid until the pass is struck.

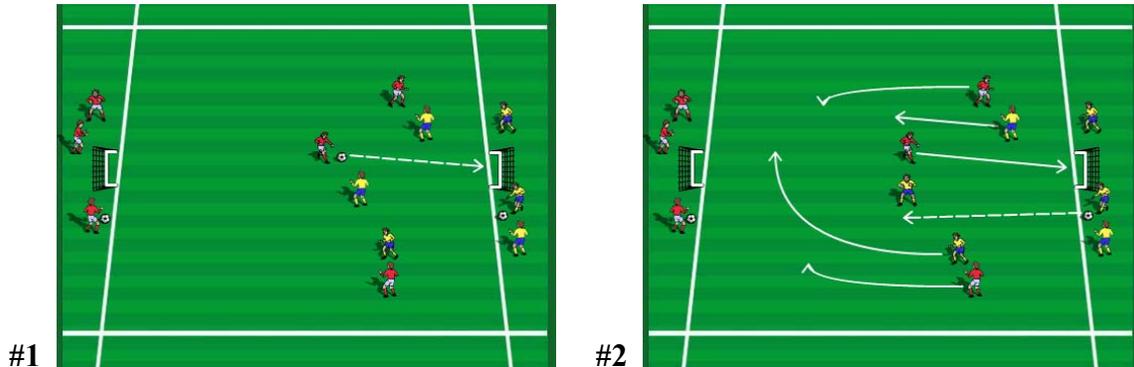
Coaching Point #4: If the defender dispossesses the ball, she immediately makes a cross pass to the other grid and remains behind while the three attackers race to the other grid.

Coaching Point #5: The single player needs to be alert to when and from where the cross will be coming.

Coaching Point #6: Raise the level of difficulty by asking that the cross be a chip in the air.

Match Like Conditions – 3v3 with Goal Touch

In a small field appropriate for 3v3, play a game of soccer with substitution teams behind each goal. You may play with full size goals and keepers or small goals. As soon as an attacker sends the ball out of play (presumably across the goal line) (#1), a sub behind the goal line makes the most available penetrating pass to the other team (#2). Meanwhile (and this is the key) the player who took the shot must run and touch the goal before rejoining the game (#2). This gives the attackers a few seconds of numbers up, 3v2.



Coaching Point #1: Numbers down defenders must stop thinking attack and start thinking defense as soon as the shot is taken, not after the new ball is put into play.

Coaching Point #2: The new attackers must immediately move to the most penetrating positions to receive the outlet pass.

Coaching Point #3: The subs must stay very alert. They can rest their bodies but not their brains.

Coaching Point #4: The game must go from one end to another with no stoppage until the substitute teams are sent in.

Coaching Point #5: If playing with keepers, work with keeper to quickly find and execute the best outlet pass, which will rarely be a long punt down field.

Topics:

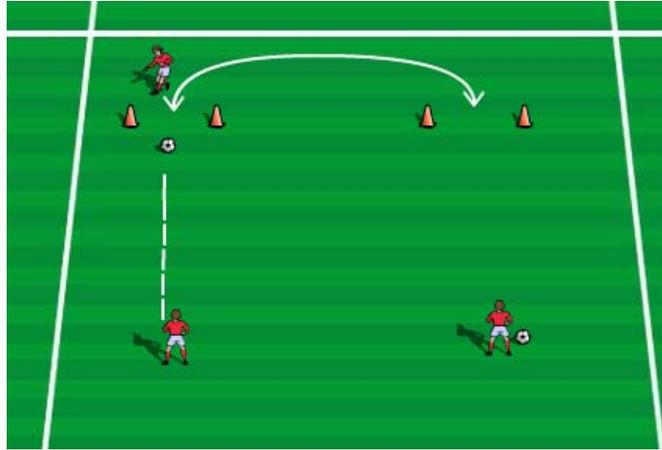
Passing to the Back of the Defense – Mobility

We train passing accuracy and pace from the youngest age. We now need to introduce timing so the ball and the player arrive at the same time. This is so players can learn to make a through pass into space behind the defenders where a teammate will run on to the ball and go to goal.

Rather than have passing exercises that call for passing to the feet of a teammate, warm them up with passing to space in front of a running player. Here are several warm up games.

Alternate Windows

Set up two windows a few yards apart. Server is about 10 yards away. Target player runs from window to window while server passes through the window so the ball and target player arrive at the same time.



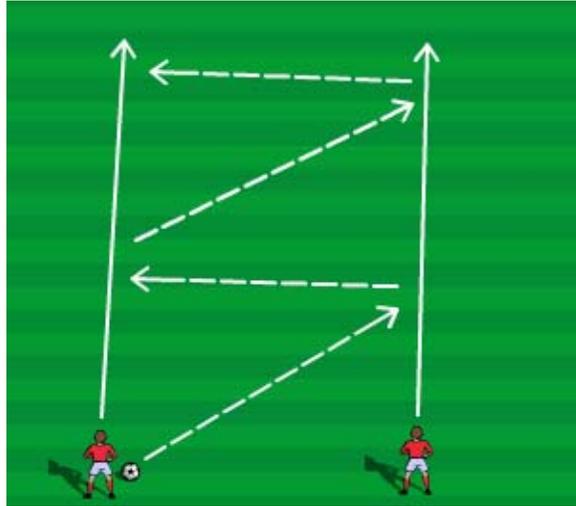
Target player passes ball back to server.

Coaching Point: Note that the target makes curved runs; so she is facing the ball and the server when receiving the ball.

Lead Passes, Through and Square

Players, in pairs move down field making alternate lead pass, square pass, lead pass, square pass.

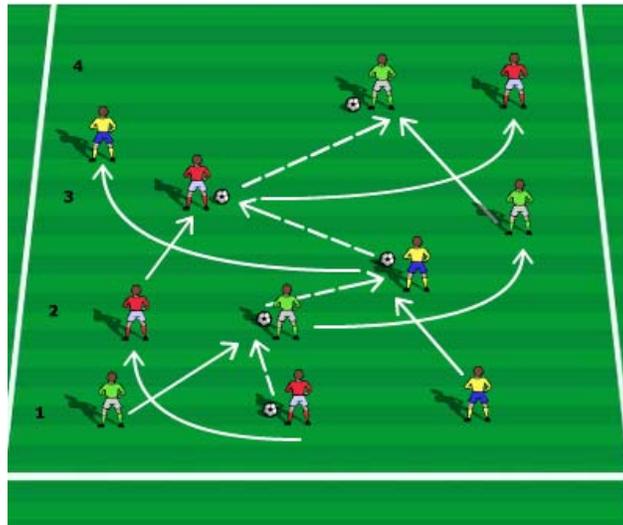
As end of field, switch roles and come back.



Coaching Point: Note that the square pass is slightly ahead of a 90 degree angle. This allows the passer to recover in case the pass is intercepted.

Pass the Weave

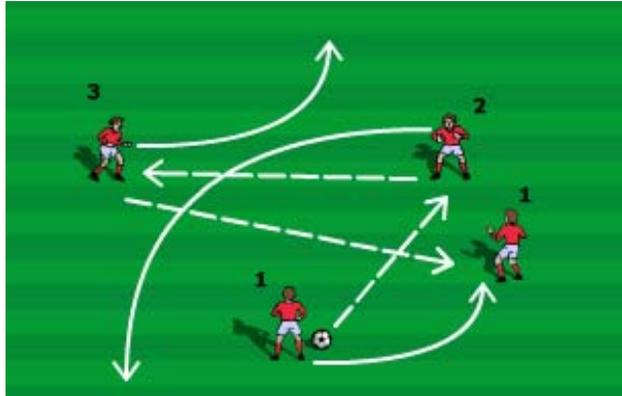
Players in threes run a weave passing into space in front of each other as they move across the field.



Pass by the Numbers

This is a standard passing game adapted for the penetrating pass. Best here if you use 3 players but 4 will work. Number players 1, 2, 3. 1 passes to 2 who passes to 3 who passes to 1.

Require players to be in constant motion. Require all passes to be made ahead of a running player who runs on to the pass.



Coaching Point #1: Best if passes are made from some distance, at least 10 yards.

Coaching Point #2: Create a more cluttered field if this is not enough of a challenge. Do this by having two groups of 3 play in the same area.

Progression: Put two groups of 3 into the same place. Now players must pick out their target from a bunch of players running around.

Progression: Play with a group of six. Start with one ball, proceed to two balls being passed at the same time, for a really good group try to keep three balls going for 30 seconds.

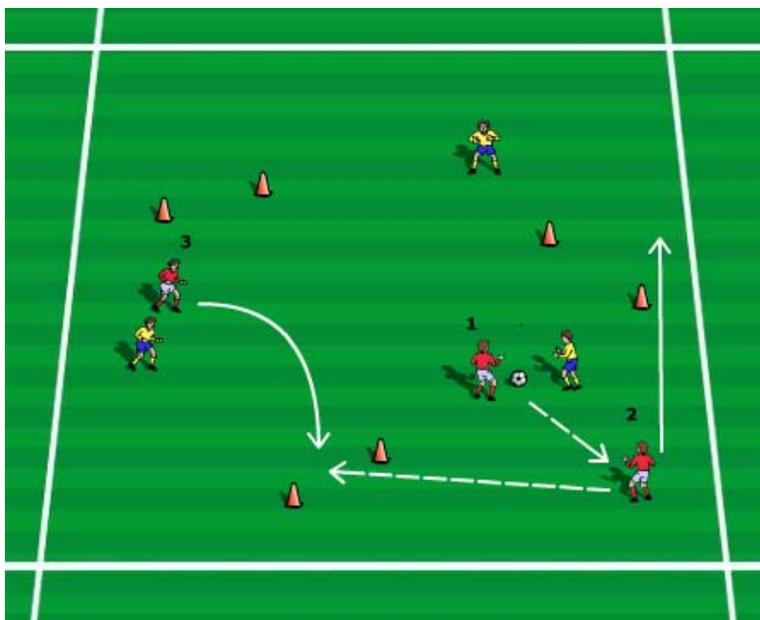
Multiple Windows

Set up three or more small cone goals, somewhat randomly placed. Play 3v2 or 4v2. Object is to complete a pass through a goal to a teammate. Pass may go through in either direction.



Coaching Point: Defenders will make it hard to complete a pass to a target player camped out behind one of the goals. But if a target player makes a run into space behind a goal while the server passes through the goal, the connection will be hard to defend against.

At U14 level we can begin to teach them to play in combination of three players. Player 1 has the ball and passes to Player 2 who is not waiting behind a goal and is thus usually unmarked. As soon as the ball is passed to Player 2, Player 3 makes a run behind a goal and Player 2 completes the pass through the goal. Player 2's pass must be taken promptly before the defenders recognize that Player 3 is the target.

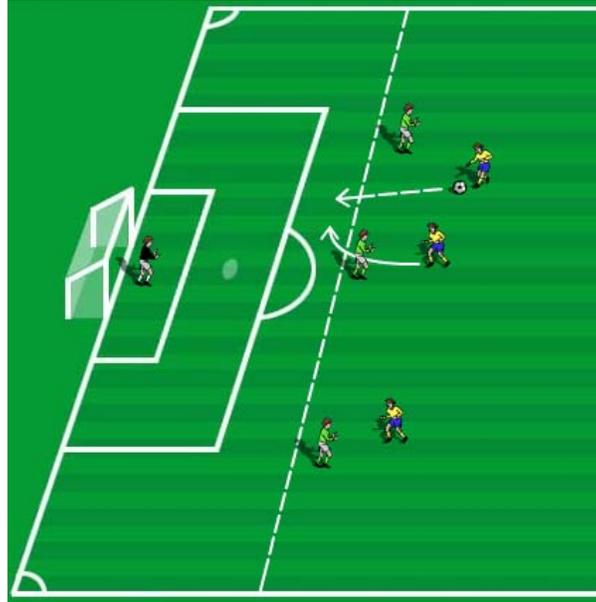


Scrimmage – Score Off a Penetrating Pass

Set up a scrimmage field with an offside line marked 18-25 yards out from the goal. Play with or without keepers.

Restrictions: Neither defenders nor attackers may cross the offside line until a penetrating pass has been struck. A penetrating pass is one that is struck from an onside position and crosses the offside line. Attackers may only shoot if they are in an “on side position” at the moment the penetrating pass is struck but receive the ball goal side of the offside line.

Player 1 makes a pass into space ahead of Player 2 while Player 2 is in an inside position but already running to the target area.



Coaching Point #1: We judge an offside infraction by where Player 2 is at the moment Player 1 passes the ball. Given the distances, Player 2 should be onside when the pass is made and across the Offside Line before the ball reaches the line.

Coaching Point #2: As players become comfortable with the penetrating pass, remove the artificial line and allow the defenders to set the offside line by their positioning. Coach, assistant coach, or parent is positioned on the offside line (which is constantly moving as the defenders move) and whistle the offside infraction if it occurs.

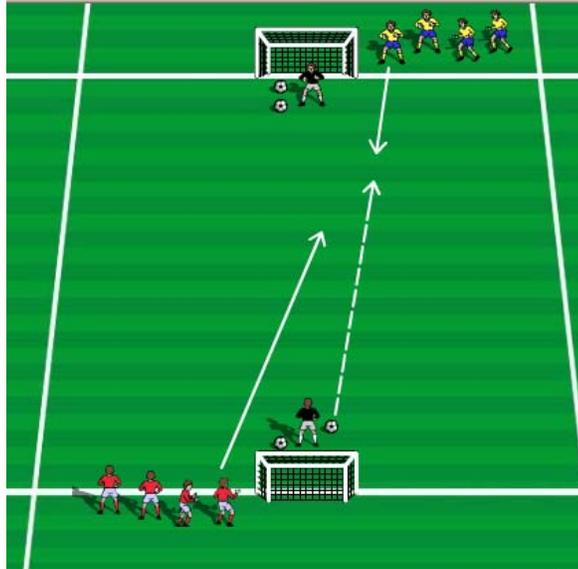
Coaching Point #3: If not using keepers, pretend there is a keeper so the last field player sets the offside line.

Involving Keepers in Field Training

Any game that involves shooting is a keeper training game. The key is for the coach to stand with the keeper not the field players. The best keeper training games are those that call for large numbers of shots on goal.

1v1 with Full-Sized Goals

Very short field (20 yards or so) with full sized goals and keepers at either end. Half of the team lines up at each goal's right or left goal post. Keeper in South goal plays ball on ground to first player at North goal. South defender immediately rushes to defend while North attacker attempts a shot on goal (#1)



#1

Immediately after a shot is taken on South goal the South keeper plays a ball to the South player who had been defending but who now attacks. The North player must remember to play defense. Those two players move to end of line at the goal they were shooting on and game is repeated with the next two players.



This is a transition game that requires players to play attack/defend quickly. But here we're focusing on the keeper.

Coach pays no attention to the field players but works exclusively with the keepers.

Coaching Point #1: Keeper must know when and from where the shot is going to be taken.

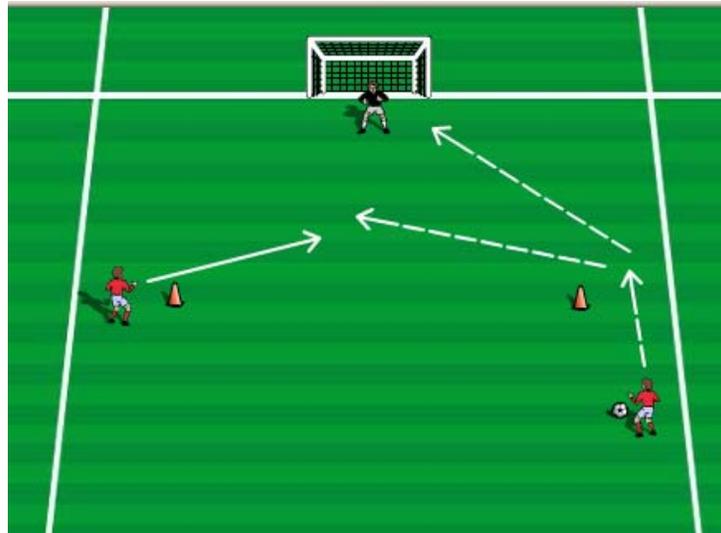
Coaching Point #2: Keeper constantly adjusts position until shot is taken at which instant keeper is not moving right or left.

Coaching Point #3: Look at keeper's hands on shots for proper technique.

Coaching Point #4: Game requires keeper to make instant and well designed outlet pass to teammate. No hesitation. If keeper does not make save, have a ball ready in goalmouth, grab it and distribute instantly.

Hunter/Sniffer

Attacker (the hunter) playing very wide, touches ball past cone or flag serving as a defender and either shoots on goal or crosses to second attacker (the sniffer) who is making run on to goal at far post.



Coaching Point #1: Keeper must respond to ball and not anticipate a cross. If the keeper moves from the near post anticipating the cross encourage the wide attacker to shoot on the near post. Getting scored on is the best way to teach a keeper not to anticipate but to respond to the ball.

Coaching Point #2: In the case of a cross, keeper must decide whether to go out and intercept the cross or move across the goalmouth and try to block the shot by the sniffer. Only way to learn this is to do it.

Coaching Point #3: Keeper needs to side shuffle across or use power step to move to far post, always keeping shoulders square to the ball.

Coming Out for Through Balls

A player serves a through ball into penalty area ahead of a single attacker making a run.

Keeper must decide if he can get to the ball before the attacker arrives.

Keeper must calculate his speed going out, speed of attacker coming in, speed of ball coming in all in a second. The human brain, amazingly, can do this but only with practice.



Coaching Point #1: The keeper slides horizontally with feet toward center of goal and head and arms to outside.

Coaching Point #2: Use Cobra position of hands and arms in front of chest and face. Aim to have ball hit that target not the stomach.

Coaching Point #3: Whenever the keeper goes to the ground and receives the ball, she must not role over the ball. The body always stays between the ball and the goal. And the keeper should never be on her stomach but always on her side with her shoulders square to the ball even as she is on the ground.

Making Best Use of Laws of the Game

All it takes to understand the laws of the game is a little time to read them you can download a copy of the Laws of the Game as well as several other publications you may find useful by going to www.avsohelp.org and click on referee manuals. Once we know what the laws allow we can help our players play smarter. For example:

Offside Position and Infraction

The offside infraction requires a player to be in an offside position and become actively involved in the play. A player who sees she is in an offside position can take herself out of the play by turning away, stepping out of bounds, or even taking a knee to show the referee she is not actively involved in the play.

Turning Indirect Free Kick (IFK) in Direct Free Kick (DFK)

The old law required the ball to travel its circumference before it was in play. The new law only requires that the ball be kicked and that it move. This is interpreted to mean that any time the foot touches the ball it is being kicked and it must move even if only a little bit.

So, all that is needed to turn an IFK into what amounts to a DFK is for one player to stand next to the ball. As the kicker runs to take the kick, the player standing next to the ball taps it gently on the top of the ball a split second before the ball is kicked. The power kick is, therefore, the second kick and the ball may go directly into the goal.

Kicked Pass to Keeper

If a teammate deliberately kicks the ball to the keeper and the keeper picks up the ball with his hands, it is an infraction penalized by an indirect free kick. But suppose the keeper picks up the ball three yards in front of his goal? Where is the ball spotted for the IFK, three yards from the goal? And where must the defenders be, 10 yards away? No, to both answers.

Any infraction occurring in the goal area is restarted with the ball moved to the top of the goal area directly opposite from the point of the infraction. But this is still six yards from the goal line. Defenders may line up on the goal line between the goal posts or at least ten yards from the ball. Obviously, most or all of your team should be on the goal line.

And here is a perfect opportunity for two smart players to turn the IFK into a direct kick with a quick tap and kick described above.

Handling vs. Hand ball

Handball is not an infraction. Deliberately handling the ball is. If the ball strikes the hand (defined as the arm and hand) and the player could not get it out of the way in time it is not an infraction. If the player struck, propelled, or directed the ball with her hand or arm, it is an infraction. This is a judgment call and the older the player the more referees will assume they can get their hands out of the way.

Ceremonial Restarts vs. Quick Kicks

A player needs to wait for the referee's signal on a kick off, a penalty kick, and when referee says so. Otherwise they can take it as quickly as they want.

If your team wants to take kicks as quickly as possible, it wouldn't hurt to give a heads up to the referee: "The kids have been working on a play where they place the ball, hesitate for a second or two as teammates run into space and then kick the ball. If it doesn't work and they want the 10 yards, they know to ask for it."

Defenders must yield 10 yards immediately whether or not anyone asks for it. Coaching players to stand in front of the ball to prevent a quick kick is to deliberately violate the

laws of the game in order to gain an advantage otherwise known as cheating. If the referee steps in to move the defenders back 10 yards she should clearly tell the kicking team to wait for her signal. The kick has now become a “ceremonial” restart and the kick may not be taken until the referee signals it usually with a whistle.

If your team takes a kick quickly and it strikes a defender who is not yet 10 yards away, you don’t get a chance to take it again.

Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunities

A player with the ball, heading toward the goal, with only the keeper to beat has an obvious goal scoring opportunity. If a defender fouls an attacker in this situation the referee is required to send off the player (red card), the team plays down one player for the remainder of the match, and the offending player may not play in the next match.

The same severe penalty is to be imposed if a field player (not the keeper) uses her hands to stop a ball from going into the goal.

Occasionally a coach who is ignorant of the Laws of the Game and mindful of the “good foul” of NBA play will teach players to stop the goal even if it means giving up a penalty kick. Justice would be the referee sending that coach home. But the laws do not permit that. Instead the player must leave the match, often in tears. The coach will surely feel badly when he sees the consequence of his ignorance of the laws. But it is too late.

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