

Improving Vision

This practice is designed to improve each player's field vision through a variety of techniques. Consider the following points:

Vision With The Ball

Many coaches instruct players to **"trap the ball"** before passing it. The word **"trap"** suggests stopping the ball. Young players get into a bad habit of trapping the ball using the sole of the foot every time the ball comes to them. Trapping or stopping the ball with the sole of the foot can cause many bad habits for the player and limit the techniques he can use immediately after his first touch on the ball.

The following are **bad habits** as a result of **"trapping the ball"** with the sole of the foot:

- As the ball travels towards the foot the **head will drop and eye's will be fixed on the ball**. The player at this point cannot see his passing options.
- In the attacking third, the player will **not be able to see the position of the goalkeeper if his head is down**, thus limiting his shooting options.
- If the ball is controlled with the sole of the foot on the first touch, the position of the ball will be too close to the players body for the player to pass over a long distance. There needs to be a distance between the player and the ball for the player to strike the ball over a long distance.
- In the attacking third, the player cannot afford to stop the ball with the sole of the foot. The player needs to set up shooting opportunities as soon as possible. If the ball is controlled with the sole of the foot, it will limit the players ability to shoot over a long distance.
- Trapping the ball with the sole of the foot will also affect the time in which a player makes decisions. The player will take one second to trap the ball, another second to push the ball out from the body and yet a third second before the player considers the option of whether to pass, dribble, shoot or run with the ball. During this period the nearest opponent will be closing down the ball and looking to dispossess the player.

Coaches should encourage players to use their first touch on the ball economically and effectively. As opposed to trapping the ball with the sole of the foot, players should look to play their first touch out of their body and into a position that will allow them to perform a variety of techniques on their second touch.

In general, right footed players should look to play their first touch approximately one and a half yards in front and to the right side at a 45 degree angle (left footed players to the left side). By playing the ball out and in front of the body on the first touch, the player will improve in the following:

- **Better all round vision as eye's follow ball out and up** and not focused down at the feet.
- Can **immediately see and evaluate** passing and shooting options.
- Can pass the ball over a long range.
- Can shoot the ball over a long range.
- Less chance of being caught in possession of the ball due to **improved vision**.

During the course of a game it is not always possible to play the ball in the perfect position. However, it is surprising to note that on numerous occasions when players control the ball, they neglect to consider what they are controlling for, to pass, to shoot, to dribble or to run with the ball.

Vision Without The Ball

Consideration must also be given to the players body position when supporting the man on the ball. Whenever possible players should adopt a "side-on" position to see as much of the playing field as possible.

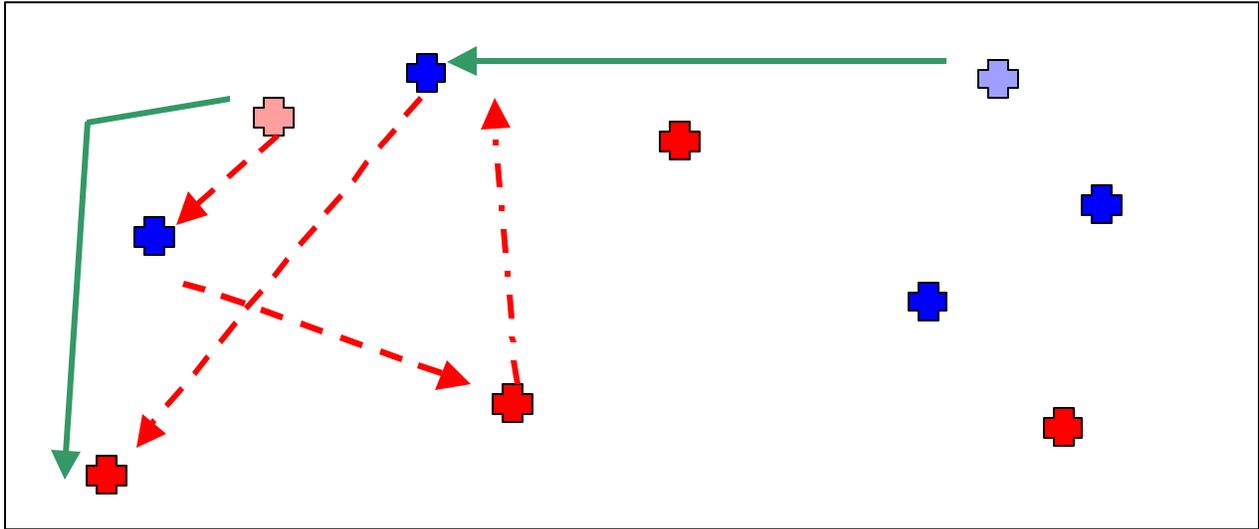
Remember **"You can only pass as quick as you can see"**

Warm Up

- Divide players into 2 groups, identify each team with different colored bibs.
- Have players jog around area 30 x 40 yards. Players alternate stretching and jogging every 60 seconds.
- While the players jog, heads must be up scanning the whole field, glancing behind them, looking far and near. On coaches command players must shout out the color of "John's socks", make of Tom's cleats etc.(forces players to scan all players quickly) Players heads should be like that of a "bird on a fence" always glancing and checking behind.

Fundamental Phase

- Introduce a ball into the area. Players move around grid passing the ball "2 touch". The passes must always be in the sequence of "**Red Player - Yellow Player**"(red can only pass to blue and blue to red). This forces players to scan area before receiving the pass



- Progress to "1 touch" play.
- Encourage players on the ball to pass over a variety of distances, not always a short pass.
- Encourage players off the ball to get into a position in line of the players vision.(don't hide).
- Condition the players "Not to talk or Clap" for the ball. All communication is visual. Then take off this condition.

Fundamental Progression #1

Continue sequence from previous practice and develop to::

- Still " 1 touch". On the coaches command the player in possession must pass to the player named by the coach. When the coach shout's "Johnny" the player in possession must quickly scan the field, locate the player, and pass quickly to the players feet.
- The receiving player "Johnny" is encouraged to receive the ball "side-on" if possible, turn quickly and pass to the most distant player on the opposite color
- The play is continued with the "Red-Blue" sequence until the coach calls another players name.

Match Related

Finish with small side game with goalkeepers

- Reinforce all the main points in your small sided game.

- Look for opportunities to highlight the points.