



# **Kensington Little Mountain Soccer Association**

## **KLM Divisional Coaches Manual**

Prepared for:  
**KLM Divisional Team Coaches**

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## *Introduction*

The scope of coaching education in Canada is as large as the country itself. As our society is woven with the threads of many cultures, so is our soccer the product of the styles and experiences of the many diverse communities across the country. While this presents us with a set of challenges that are unique to Canada, this diversity also helps to continually breathe life into our soccer community. It is against this backdrop that Canadian Soccer approaches its responsibility for helping to prepare coaches to bring the game of soccer to our young players.

There is not just “one way” to teach soccer to players, nor is there just one style of coaching. There is a broad spectrum of styles and methods for how each of us experiences the game. Some of this comes from our backgrounds, while some of this also is the product of our own personalities. At the youth and junior levels, however, there is a set of fundamental principles that must be considered by anyone involved with soccer. In general, young soccer players require a certain amount of uninterrupted play. This allows them to experience soccer first hand. They should be allowed the opportunity to experiment, and with that, succeed and fail.

The coach’s long term goal is to prepare the player to successfully recognize and solve the challenges of the game on his or her own. It is vital that the coach approaches soccer with this in mind.

This document is designed to give our youth and junior level coaches a basic set of ideas that can help open up the game of soccer to children in ways that celebrate the spontaneous qualities of soccer.

It is not designed to give the coach the “secrets” of the game. There are no secrets. This is part of soccer’s beauty.

This document represents a series of recommendations that have been compiled and reviewed by various soccer coaches. It presents a compilation of what soccer experts considers being an appropriate, comprehensive and responsible approach to developing sound soccer players.



# *PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY*

## ***KEEP THEM MOVING***

Soccer practice sessions should be designed to engage every participant consistently. Kids don't attend practice to watch others play. Kids enjoy practices when they have fun and they experience an improvement in their overall skills.

## ***EMPHASIZE THE FUNDAMENTALS***

Build a foundation that will never crack by properly teaching the basics. Learning the fundamentals and perfecting the same basics at every level of play is essential to having any chance of success.

If one player does not execute the fundamentals of his position correctly, the most sophisticated drill or play in the world will not work. It is unfair and not fun to focus on running plays that will fail 9 out of 10 times. Kid's practices that focus on Team Play over executing fundamentals are cheating every participant out of the chance to learn the game properly.

Do not attempt to replicate plays you see in the Whitecaps, Premiership, and World Cup or in the junior games. Every scheme that is attempted in a higher level of play or game is supported by years of training in the fundamentals of the game.

## ***INCORPORATE A PROGRESSION OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR EVERY PARTICIPANT***

Regardless of a player's skill level, it is your responsibility as a coach to teach every kid on your team. It is no secret that if kids experience improvement in their skills, no matter what their athletic ability may be, they will continue to participate and return to learn more. Teach the skills in the proper order so you can continue to improve and build on each training session.

## ***CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT***

Following are some general observations of youth sports as stated in the Long Term Athlete Development Plan.

- Young athletes under-train, over-compete; Low training to competition ratios in early years
- Training in early years focuses on outcomes (winning) rather than processes (optimal training)
- Poor training between 6-15 years of age cannot be fully corrected (athletes will never reach genetic potential)
- The best coaches are encouraged to work at elite level;

Basically it takes 10,000 hours or 10,000 repetitions to master a skill. With the ages of 9 - 12 being the most important for skill acquisition it is during this time period that the skills included in the specialty clinics need to be repeated consistently. To that end, the skills were chosen so that a coaching staff can work on these specific skills until a reasonable level of mastery is achieved and then move onto more advanced skills.

The focus of this manual is to provide examples of how to introduce drill progressions focusing on skill development and the use of small-sided games to re-enforce and develop player's skills. These drills force the player to think in a game-like situation, fun, competitive environment.

## *PRACTICE TIPS*

There are 10 key ingredients a coach should mix into each practice. Collectively these lead to enjoyment and learning for both players and coaches

1. Coaches should have a ball for each player.
2. Players must be on time, all the time. Coaches set the standard and lead by example. Parents must be encouraged to buy in.
3. Don't waste time getting your players (U5 to U15) running laps around the field. Save the running for the U15+ ages. With the young players the running they do during the training is satisfactory. It is more important to have young players worm up with a ball, juggling, passing etc. working on their individual skills.
4. The use of stations in practices leads to a dynamic practice. Stations keep participants active enabling them to achieve high levels of repetitions. Have players spend 3 - 8 minutes per station before switching. 2 - 3 stations are recommended. (Must be a coach at each station)
5. Basic Skill Development (dribbling, control, passing, shooting) should comprise 90% of your practice time. Remember you can work skills in game-like drills. Skill Development should not be considered boring.
6. Positive and Specific Feedback are imperative. Consider the Head Coach who always stands at the side lines and runs drills. How often during the practice is this coach able to effectively teach??? Teaching is done in the trenches (*on the field*).
7. Routines in practice are dangerous. Players will pace themselves and become bored very quickly. Routine practices develop great practice players. Strive to change things up, create an element of surprise, utilize variety, and generate enthusiasm. Players also enjoy time on their own. 2 - 5 minutes per practice should be sufficient. This enables players to be creative and try new things.

8. "Tell me and I'll forget, show me and I might remember, involve me and I'll understand."
9. Practice Execution by coaches is of principle importance. Great drills that aren't executed properly by coaches are useless. Execution involves using all team coaches, parents, volunteers, on the field, having balls, cones, etc. spotted in the proper areas, informing players of the whistle sequence (1st whistle begin, 2nd whistle stop, 3rd whistle begins next group) and providing appropriate feedback. To assist in practice execution, name your drills ie. "Killer Bees".
10. Relate what you do in practices to games and vice versa. "Players, we are doing this drill because in our last game we were unable to finish around the net." or This drill will assist you in keeping your toe pointed down and help you be effective when taking a low shot on goal."

## ***SKILL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES***

### **Basic Ideas to Consider When Coaching Youth Soccer**

The most fundamental skill in soccer is individual mastery of the ball and the creativity that comes with it. This should be a priority in training and games, especially in the early years. As this skill is mastered, the rest of the game becomes easier - both to teach and to learn. Practices should be built around facilitating the development of the skills necessary to move and control the ball well. As these individual skills and the creativity to make them come alive in the game are developed to a level of competence, the finer points, first of passing skill and later of team organization can be taught.

The club coaches who work with our youth and junior players on a daily basis play a fundamental role in the development of soccer players at our club. We as a club should strive to place experienced coaches who have a clear understanding of the value of teaching technique at the youth and early junior levels. Equally important is the coach's personality and character. Working with 6- to 14-year-old children requires patience, kindness and respect.

Coaching soccer can be confusing at times because the game changes dramatically as the players improve in both skill and physical ability. When coaching young, developing players, as well as the adolescent players, it is helpful to keep the following ideas at the forefront of your mind:

- 1) Set up situations where the players can learn by playing the game. The game is the best teacher for young players.
- 2) Coaches can often be more helpful to a young player's development by organizing less, saying less and allowing the players to do more. Set up a game and let the kids play. Keep most of your comments for before and after practice and during water breaks. Comments should be kept short and simple. Be comfortable organizing a session that looks like pickup soccer.

- 3) Teaching and learning the game of soccer is a process: make your goals seasonal, as well as daily and weekly. Often, at the younger ages, the developmental efforts of one season are not noticeable in children until sometime in the next season.
- 4) Set age-appropriate goals i.e., know what the child is able to do at that age.
- 5) From a developmental standpoint, the young ages are the best ones for learning skills. Spend the time now encouraging this growth. By the age of 17 the capacity to pick up new motor skills begins to wane, while the ability to conceptualize team organization, tactics and strategy increases. As a coach, work with these strengths, not against them.
- 6) Do not expect games and practices to look like professional soccer. If you want to use high level soccer as a teaching tool, focus on the individual skill level of professional players, not their organization. Give your players opportunities to see what older, more skilled players, i.e., a high school, college player or an older brother or sister, can do with the ball. On occasion, invite some of these players to participate in your practice. Use them to model good soccer qualities. Let your players learn by experiencing the game alongside or against these better players. Older players can also be used as "neutral players." In this case, the neutral player helps whichever team has the ball i.e., he or she never defends. Maybe that neutral player has limited touches and/or can't score, but he or she gives the team with the ball a better chance of keeping the ball. By helping to maintain possession, the neutral player(s) helps the game maintain some rhythm, and gives the kids a clearer picture of the game's possibilities.
- 7) Recognize and understand how the skills learned at each age are connected to preparing the player to move into the next phase of his or her development. Know what the next level of play is, and the general tools that your players should carry with them as they move on. Help them to be prepared.
- 8) Allow your players to develop these requisite skills in an environment where the main goal is to have fun with the ball.
- 9) The value of matches is that they provide youngsters with an opportunity to showcase their newly acquired skill and creativity. It is always nice to win, however that should not be your focus at the younger age groups (through 14 years).
- 10) Have a clear idea of what it is you want to accomplish at practice. Create exercises/games that replicate and repeat the movements and situations that are found in soccer and that allow the player to grow comfortable and confident with the ball at his or her feet. Encourage players to move with the ball at his or her feet and deal with boundaries, opponents, teammates and goals. Keep in mind that soccer is a pretty simple game. If you are involved in soccer for long enough, you begin to realize that all the many little games that work are really just variations on the same basic concepts. As long as the parameters that you have established in your exercises /small-sided games are true to soccer (goals for scoring and defending), creates the problems that you want the kids to solve (protecting the ball while dribbling, etc.), and allows your players to be challenged and find some success, you're on the right track.
- 11) Don't be afraid to experiment to find what works best.

- 12) Remember that the game is the best teacher for the players. Coaches and parents should think of themselves more as facilitators, monitors, guides or even participants, to provide a rich environment for the kids to learn from and enjoy.

## ***PRACTICE PLANNING***

Skill Development can be a straight forward task once you have taken the time to develop a practice or seasonal plan. A practice/seasonal plan is made up of a number of important components that should be given strong consideration each time you develop a plan.

### **1. Practice plan format to record your plan:**

- Meets all your needs for information
- Archive your plans for easy reference at a later date.

### **2. Measurable outcomes for the plan:**

- Players of all ages need to know the goals of each practice
- Record information about the execution of the plan

### **3. Elements of the plan:**

- Practices / drills should be more active than passive
- A well balanced practice contains about 5 activities
- Elements of a plan may include warm up, teaching components, technical skill execution, drills under game like conditions, fun elements, competitive activities, and a cool down

### **1. Assign the coach responsibilities to lead the drill:**

- Ensure that all support people understand the purpose of the drills so they can provide appropriate feedback to guide improvement
- All coaches should be engaged in the delivery of each drill
- Coaches may be required to provide stimuli to start or maintain drill focus

### **2. Clear illustrations:**

- Take pride in illustrating good plans
- Make it a habit to use international symbols

### **3. Descriptions to include:**

- Written descriptions should include details of the drill execution, key teaching points, and key execution points
- Plans should note any extraordinary equipment required

## ***CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT***

### ***PRACTICE VS. GAMES***

One of the biggest issues surrounding the development of soccer players is the number of practices they have compared to the number of games they play. An ideal, realistic ratio is 2 practices for every 1 game played for ages 7 - 13.

Are games really necessary, or are they all cracked up to be? Not when you look at the stats below, especially if you are trying to develop skills.

### ***A PRACTICE BY THE NUMBERS***

The following facts and figures relate to a 60-minute practice session.

- 1 efficient practice will give a player more skill development than 11 games collectively.
- Each player should have a ball on his or her feet for 8 -12 minutes.
- Each player should have a minimum of 30 shots on goal.
- Players will miss the net over 30% of the time in a youth soccer practice.
- Coaches should try to run 4 - 5 different drills / games / activities each practice. More is not better; execution of what you do is development.
- No more than 5 minutes should be spent in front of a teaching board each practice.
- If you have 10 players on the pitch, strive to keep 4-5 players moving at all times.
- If you have 15 players on the pitch, strive to keep 9 - 10 players moving at all times.
- If you have 20 players on the pitch strive to keep 14- 15 players moving at all times.

### ***A GAME BY THE NUMBERS:***

The following statistics were recorded during a 60-minute U13 level soccer *game*:

- Players will have the ball on their feet for an average of 8 seconds per game.
- Players will take an average of 1 - 2 shots per game.
- 99% of the feedback coaches give players is when they have the ball. Ironically players only have the ball on their feet for 0,2% of the game.
- 1 efficient practice will give a player more skill development than 11 games collectively.

If you look at these stats, how can we expect kids to develop when they are playing more games than practicing? Studies show that the better kids are at something, the more they will enjoy it, and the longer they will play. Many kids quit soccer because they get to the

level where they can't compete due to lack of skill - therefore it is no longer fun.

At the ages of 5 - 6 or 5 - 7, the practice to game ratio should be even higher (6: 1) and realistically there is no need for formal games.

# **CONTROL**



## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

During Euro 2000 one of the key issues that separated the better players from the rest was their ability to control the ball (to advantage) however, or whenever it came to them.

That first touch on the ball is crucial; it can mean the difference between keeping the ball and losing it. So we have decided to prioritize this skill in this new series of coaching tips. Some things may look simple – in fact none are!! Work at these practices and your technique should improve, and this will make the game more enjoyable.

So our starting point involves dealing with the ball as it comes to you.

## *INSIDE OF THE FOOT*

- 1 Get into line of flight.
- 2 Select the controlling surface.
- 3 Keep eye on the ball, be relaxed.
- 4 Keep head steady all the time.
- 5 Be aware of positions of your teammates and opponents.

### ***Cushion Control***

On impact; withdraw foot to absorb the pace of ball.

Non-contact foot will invariably be in front of the ball when impact takes place.

### ***Use arms for balance***

Take the ball in the direction you wish to go.

Inside of foot, controlling the ball away from the body

Get into line, go forward on to the ball – be determined.

Weight will be more forward on the non-kicking foot.

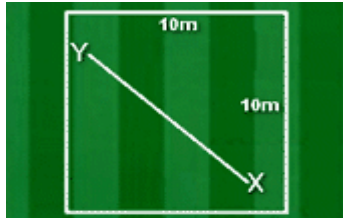
Use the pace of the ball to choose your method and direction. Step forward to control the ball in this instance. Awareness of position and opponents, will determine how much weight your first touch will require. When you have control, look up to see what is required next.

### ***Practice***

(Y to X or X to Y) pass forward, or throw to control with inside of foot.

Firmness and speed of service can progress with practice. Vary positions around the square, after control is achieved, receiver looks up to find the server (who will have moved) and so the practice evolves.

Progress to Y + X in square, pass and control in sequence. Now both continually work around the square. Both become servers and receivers. Remember 1st touch to control the ball is what we are aiming for.



Maintain the right attitude to the practice; it is a good habit and one that will stand you in good stead in the period ahead. We are not looking for a 1st time pass just yet – control the ball first in this practice, make sure you get the "feel" of the ball.

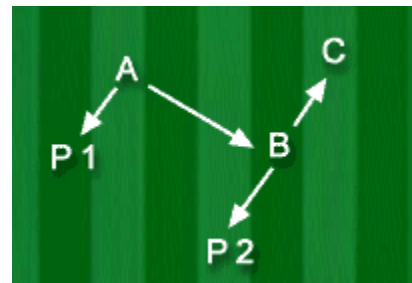
## EXTENDING CONTROL

- // Previously we considered the skill of controlling the ball with the inside of the foot, now we look to extend that skill.
- // Now we should look for a group of three players to try and ensure that players start to become aware of their surroundings - and also be alert to the positions of other positions.
- // So we have one ball, 3 players in an open area (not confined as in the previous practice).
- // If there are 15 players in the squad, this then becomes 5 groups of 3, all playing on the field at the same time.

### The Practice (Players A, B & C) (Around 10 metres apart)

#### Stage 1

- 1 A passes to B then moves to position P1
- 2 B controls the ball with the inside of the Foot, then passes to either C or A, who is in a new position.
- 3 Then C or A would control the ball Before passing to either of the other 2 players, B having moved to position P2.



#### Stage 2

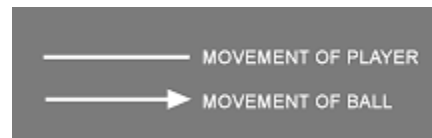
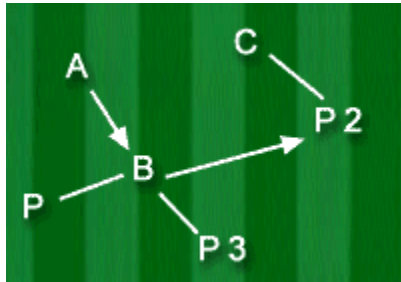
A similar practice only now the receiver has to control the ball with his first contact.

So now

- // A passes to B, the moves to a fresh position and as the ball is moving C is also on the move.

- B has to control the ball (with one touch) then look up before deciding whether to pass to A or C - then B moves once he has passed the ball.
- So the practice evolves. All players moving, controlling, and passing the ball.

**Note** We are not looking for a first time pass. The emphasis is on quick control, movement and accuracy.



## SWIVELLING WITH THE BALL

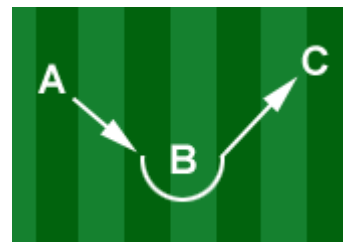
Moving on from last week we now look at control and pass on the move, only this time the receiver has to work at swivelling with the ball after he has controlled it.

### The Practice

In three's, one ball in an open area, the players (A, B and C) starting around ten to fifteen metres apart. Moving around the pitch the three players, control, swivel then pass on to another player.

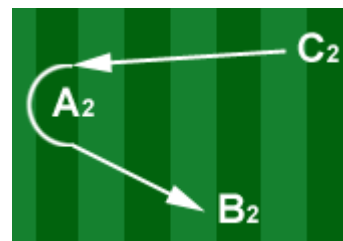
#### Stage (1)

A passes to B who controls the ball, swivels with the ball on his right foot before releasing the ball to C. The 3 players then continue to move forward.



#### Stage (2)

C now in position, C2 controls B's pass, then passes to A, who has moved to A2. Similar to stage 1 control swivels then deliver the pass to B. And so the practice evolves.



- 1 Now we have movement in the practice, passing has to be accurate into the path of the receiver.

- 2 Control must be worked on. The first touch on the ball is crucial, it can mean the difference between retaining and losing possession.
- 3 The change of positions is introduced to try and improve each player's awareness of where they are in the field, in relation to other players.

## ***BALL CONTROL IN TIGHT SITUATIONS***

Good close control of the ball is very important; it is often the basic skill that leads to better things in a player's development.

Over the years famous players admitted they were self taught - street soccer players seem to be of another generation now but kicking a tennis ball around in the street was often the only route open to would be soccer players.

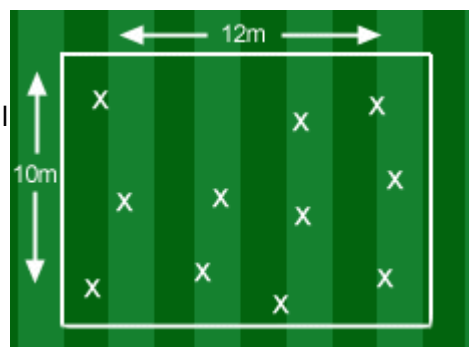
Whatever its limitations, some of Britain's all time greats probably came up through that route - Stanley Matthews, Tom Finney and Wilf Mannion readily spring to mind and their total control of the ball suggested that street practice never did them any harm.

Recreating the situation they grew up in is now out of the question, but there are practices designed to develop ball control.

### **Practice 1**

In practice (1) a team of players x are all given a ball each, and at a given signal they dribble the ball (using both feet) in and out of the other players all inside an area of 10 metres x 12 metres.

The important thing is that each player must avoid all the others, and must ensure that their ball doesn't come into contact with any player or any other ball.

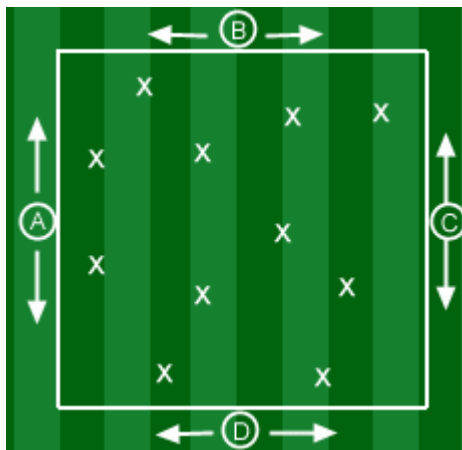


### Practice 2

To progress, the area is slightly increased to a 12 metres square - again with all 11 players with a ball each.

Again they have to avoid contact with the other 10.

To speed up the practice and to work on quicker control the coach should now instruct each player they have 45 seconds to run the ball to each line (marked A, B, C and D) stop it dead on the line before moving to the next line. By adding a time limit it ensures each player has to move quickly to each of the 4 lines and in so doing make it more difficult to exert top quality control. Time limit can vary with the technical ability and the age of the players involved.

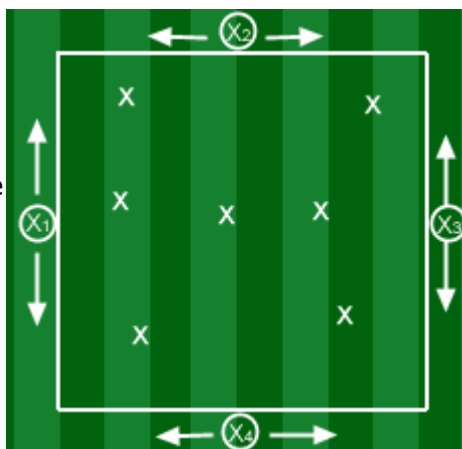


### Practice 3

To progress, 4 of the players now go on to the outside edge of the square leaving 7 in the centre each with a ball.

The 4 on the edge (do not have a ball to start). The X's in the centre run round keeping close control of their ball until at the given signal they have 30 seconds to pass, and get a return pass from each of the 4 outside players (X1 - X4).

Good passing is essential, and players will have to constantly look up to see which of the 4 outside men is available, at the same time avoiding the rest of the players in the centre.

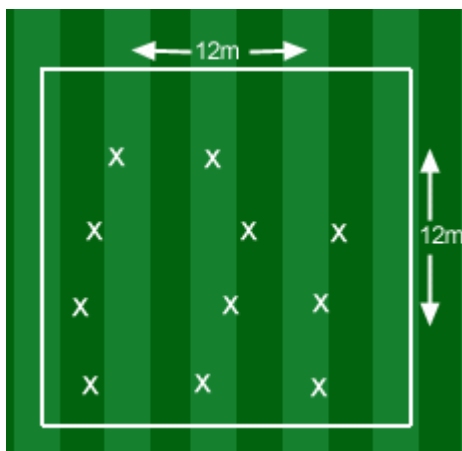


### Practice 4

Now return to each of the 11 in the square with a ball.

The idea now is for each player to try and keep control of his ball, while at the same time attempting to kick one of the other 10 balls outside the square.

As each player's ball goes out of the square so he is illuminated from the practice until there is only 1 player left in possession of a ball within the square,



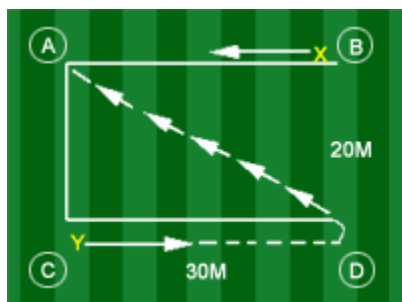
he is the winner. This develops competition and ensures players are taught to look around them while controlling the ball.

## ***RUNNING WITH THE BALL***

Players should learn first to run with the ball keeping it under tight control - this can be done in various ways e.g.

### **Practice 1**

#### **Diagram 1**



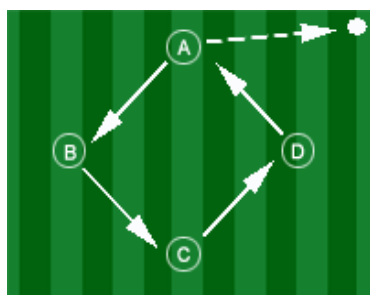
- Player x sets off from point (B) to run round the four sides turning quickly at points (A), (D) and (C) and back to point (B).
- (2) Player Y at the same time sets off from point (D) and runs to point (C) who he cuts back (left) across the diagonal to point (A).

**VARIOUS PLAYERS CAN BE USED (INTERMITTENTLY)** and each one can vary their running route either round or across the rectangle.

**COACHES INSISTING THE BALL IS ALWAYS UNDER CONTROL. WHEN PLAYERS START AND FINISH THE EXERCISE**

### **Practice 2**

4 players, 1 ball; jog around the field, passing between each other - each player no nearer than 5 metres from the next player (as in diagram 2). Players jogging forward all the time while passing



**Diagram 2**

(A) starts passing to (B), on to (C) and back to (D) (they can pass in any order they wish) but when the ball returns to (A) he

sprints forward around 15 metres with the ball before putting the sole of his boot on the ball stopping it dead.

It is then up to the other 3 players (B), (C) and (D) to sprint forward with the practice, and one of them picks up the ball, and so the practice continues; (A) joining in, with another player this time making the.

### Practice 3

- // 3 players, 1 ball
- // (A) and (C) stand together - (B) 20 metres away
- // (A) passes to (B) then sprints after the ball to take up the position (B).
- // On receiving the ball (B) passes back to (C), running after his pass, then (C) passes to (A) and so the practice continues.



**GOOD SHARP PASSING AND MOVEMENT IS REQUIRED**

## *RUNNING WITH THE BALL (CLOSE CONTROL)*

Generally the methods of controlling the ball while running are : -

- // (1) with the inside of the foot
- // (2) with the outside of the foot
- // (3) with the full instep

So in each of the practices involved, coaches should stress the importance of having the ball always under control.

### Practice 1

## Diagram 1



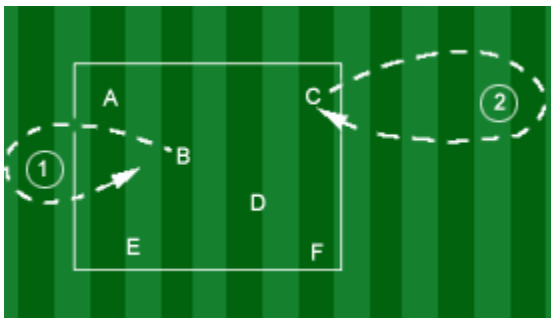
- 5 posts (4 around 2 metres apart) numbered 1-4
- 1 post(s) (around 20 metres away) and at an angle as in diagram 1
- The players line up (as A, B, and C) - one ball with the front player.

## Practice

(A) sets off controlling the ball with the inside and outside of the foot moving as quickly as possible, moving in and out of the first few posts before sprinting off to post 5 - still keeping tight control.

(A) goes round the outside of the post, as in diagram, before running back to the starting point, where (B) will take up the exercise.

**To progress the practice** (increase the number of players to 6 - i.e. A, B, C, D, E and F. Once (A) goes past post 4 and approaches post 5, (B) sets off with another ball to go through the exercise, - and (C) moves up to receive (A's) ball, and so the practice continues.



## Practice 2

### Diagram 2

- Area, 15 metres square, 6 players with a ball each inside the area keeping their ball under control, manoeuvring around the other players (using the inside and outside of both feet).



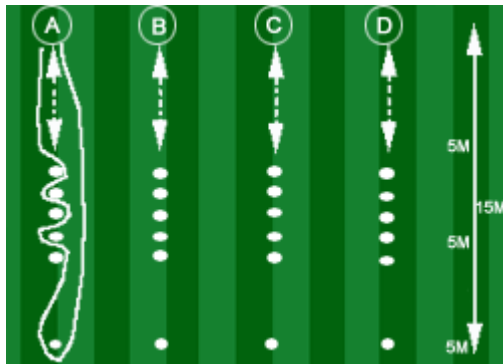
- At a signal from the coach the players set off at speed to go round the posts (1) and (2), keeping control of their ball all the time; before returning to the square.
- So in diagram 2 the posts are at varying distances from the 15 metre square, (1) is 15 metres away (2) is 25 metres, - a variation of distance is important, - so one is a short, sharp run, the other a longer sprint.
- Coaches must keep the practice moving; and players must try to maintain control, even when the exercise becomes physically demanding.
- In practice 2, 'B' gets the signal first, so he runs with his ball around post 1, then back into the square to join the other player who in the meantime continue moving around inside the square keeping their ball under control. Then the coach nominates 'C' who sets off around post 2, and so the practice continues.

## ***RUNNING WITH THE BALL (changing pace)***

Players, during any game, need to change pace and direction whilst in possession of the ball, and in the initial stages particularly the technique of this needs practice and repetition.

### **Practice 1**

#### **Diagram 1**



- 4 players line up A, B, C, D, outside an area 15 metres in length
- The area is divided into 3 sections of 5 metres as in diagram (1)
- 5 cones are placed in the middle section (spaced 1 metre apart)
- 1 cone is placed on the far line 15 metres from the start

The practice is for each player (with a ball) to complete the exercise keeping the ball under full control.

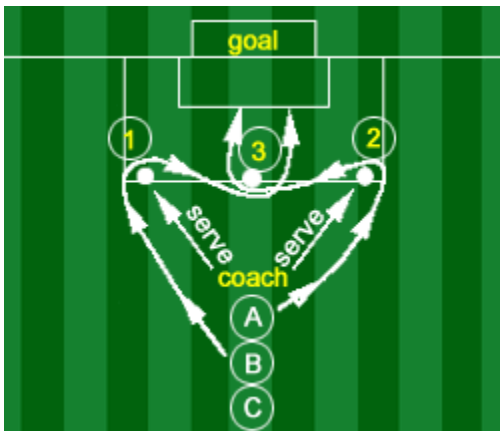
**NB. COACHES SHOULD INSIST ON TECHNICAL ABILITY FIRST, BEFORE SPEED IS CONSIDERED**

## Practice

- (1) A, B, C and D, set off to the 1st 5 metre line, then back sharply and return to the start point
  - (2) On reaching the base line, they turn again up to the centre cones and weave in and out of them using both feet
  - (3) They then proceed to the top line, go round the farthest cone and then return to the start - using both feet - and maintaining control of the ball (within 2 metres of the player.)
- ✔ As players improve coaches can race players against each other to add another competitive element to the practice.

## Practice 2

- ✔ An exercise that starts half way between the penalty area and the half way line, the Coach acting as server to demonstrate the initial pass.
- ✔ The Coach passes towards (but on the outside) one of the outer markers (1) - he plays the ball with sufficient strength that should allow the 1st player (A) to arrive at the marker at the same time as the ball.
- ✔ Taking control of the ball (A) turns round the post (1) comes back to go round the centre post (3), from where he tries a shot at goal, which is covered by a goalkeeper



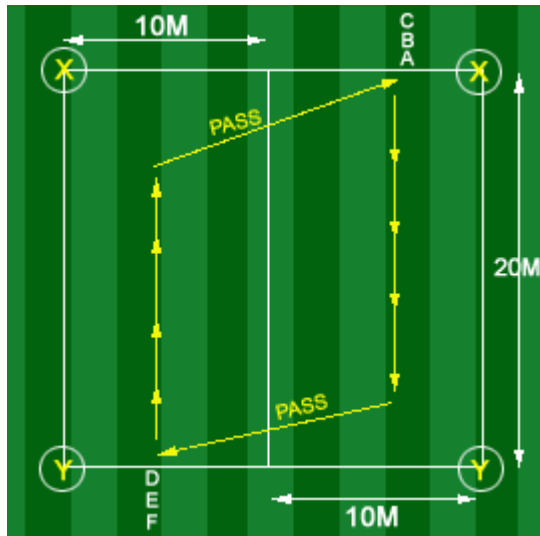
This should work at the techniques of a quick turn, change of pace, and a shot (with the left foot).

- ✔ That completed, the ball is passed towards post (2) for (B) to chase, and after he has gone round the two posts he would probably be shooting with his right foot.
- ✔ The Coach then gives way to a player to provide the initial pass, so as to concentrate more fully on the technique of the players - who will change roles.

# RUNNING WITH THE BALL (control)

## Practice 1

### Diagram 1



\* Area - 20 metres in length x 20 metres in width

- Divided into 2 areas of 10 metres **AS IN DIAGRAM 1**

// Six players (3 in each group lined up at opposite ends of each section. So A, B, C at one end, and facing them at the other end of the section are D, E and F.

Exercise to be attempted as sharply as possible

- // (D) and (A) start off at the same time, each with a ball
- // So they play the ball ahead, set off after it, and take it (under control) until they get within 10 metres of the far line, then using the outside of the foot they pass the ball
- // sharply across to the front man of the other section who continues on with the practice.
- // So in diagram 1, D sets off from line (Y), and at the same time A sets off from line (X)
- // With a 30 metre run ahead of them they need a good firm strike of the ball and then they run after it quickly
- // It is important they don't break their early stride, that they do use the space ahead, and get on to the ball quickly
- // Around 10 metres from the far line they will slow down slightly but then the coach should insist on a firm crisp pass to the next player. So in diagram 1, D will pass to B, and A will pass to E, who will both move up with the practice.

## Progression

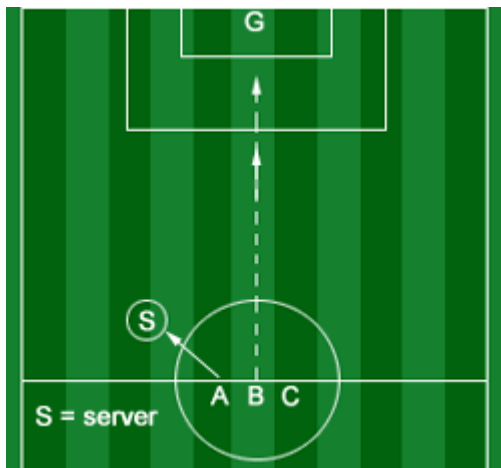
To progress, players can be made to follow their pass so as to put a little pressure on the next man.

So in diagram 1, once D and A have completed their run, they pass the ball, and (D) will run towards B making it crucial that B makes a good early contact and moves off from baseline (X) with some sharpness.

(A) does exactly the same at the other end, putting E under pressure.

## ***RUNNING WITH THE BALL (to score)***

**Diagram 1**



- / In the practice in diagram (1), a number of players A, B and C start behind the half way line each with a ball. They manoeuvre round the half circle keeping their ball under control until they get a call from (S), who will call out "A", "B" or "C".
- / In the diagram (A) is signalled out so he passes his ball quickly to (S) then runs on to collect the return pass, and runs as quickly as he can up to the penalty area, once inside he shoots to try and score past goalkeeper (G).
- / To encourage speed, the coach can put a time limit on A, starting from the first pass to (S) - say 15 seconds - and in that time he must collect the return pass, advance, and get in the shot at goal.

**Diagram 2**



- ✔ To progress, and to put more pressure on the players running with the ball, defenders are brought into the practice i.e. D, E and F.
- ✔ They are placed 15 metres away on the half way line - no nearer to begin with. The distance can be altered according to the ability of the players - although the attacking players must be given enough opportunity.

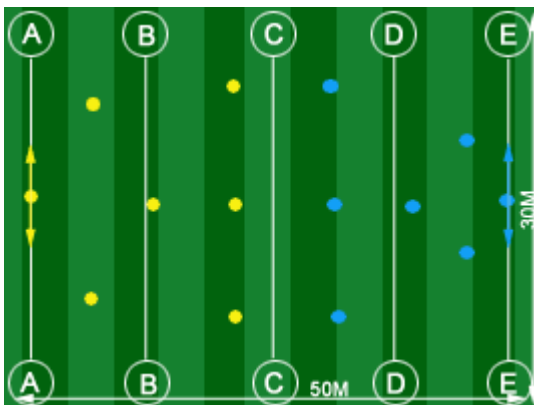
### Practice

- ✔ As in the previous practice (A) serves to (S), and once (A) has made that first pass, defender (D) can set off, and it is up to him to try and prevent (A) from getting in a shot at goal.
- ✔ (D) will have to try and cut off (A's) run for goal
- ✔ It is up to (A) to pass, move, and get the return pass with some urgency.

DEFENDERS CAN BE BROUGHT IN FROM EITHER SIDE OF THE ATTACKERS, OR EVEN FROM BEHIND THE ATTACKERS AT POSITION (F) IN DIAGRAM 2.

## *RUNNING WITH THE BALL (to score continued)*

- ✔ By this stage players should be ready to run with the ball over short and long distances.
- ✔ So, in the best practice, there are two teams, five or six outfield players on each side with a goal line defendant who can manoeuvre only along his own goal line. i.e. in the diagram (below), lines A & E.



✔ The aim of the practice is to be in possession of the ball running over your opponent's goal line.

✔ So, in the diagram the green team must try and get one of the players running in possession with the ball over the line, A. Their opponents team (orange) the same, but over line E. If either achieves this they should be awarded five points.

✔ To retain the competitive element alive throughout, and to prevent any one team just defending on its own goal line:

**a)** One point should be awarded for crossing into the opponents half. So the green team would get one point for crossing line C in possession of the ball, and so would the orange team playing in the opposing direction.

**b)** Two points should be awarded for the green team crossing line B in possession and also two points to the orange team if they cross line D in possession.

✔ This should encourage both teams to defend early and away from their own goal line.

**COACHES** should insist that any player hoping to gain points by crossing any line is in total control of the ball and is moving forward.

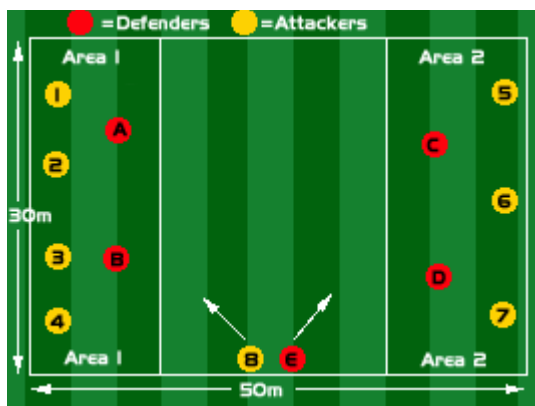
The practice starts from the defending team bringing the ball into play from their own goal line. They can pass the ball about amongst themselves, the opposing team can tackle wherever they wish.

Throw-ins are taken when the ball goes out of play (no corner kicks) otherwise the normal rules of the game apply.

**COACHES KEEP THE SCORE.**

## ***RUNNING WITH THE BALL (Central)***

**Diagram 1**



### **Area**

50 metres x 30 metres, with 2 end sections 10 metres wide x 30 metres at both ends (marked AREA 1 and AREA 2 in the diagram)

To start the practice: -

**In Area 1:** 2 defenders and 4 attackers with 1 ball

**In Area 2:** 2 defenders and 3 attackers

//The exercise is for the 4 attackers in Area 1 to string 5 passes together, and once they have done that ONE of them in possession has to break from the Area 1 to join the group of 3 v 2 in Area 2.

//It is up to the defenders to try and prevent the attackers putting 5 passes together, and also to stop one of the attackers breaking out once the 5 passes are made.

//Once arriving at Area 2, (he joins the 3 attackers there) he makes it 4 v 2 again and so the practice continues.

**THE COACH MUST ENSURE GOOD QUICK PASSING (first time whenever possible), A QUICK BREAK ACROSS THE CENTRAL 30 Metres (3 touches maximum) and a speedy movement of the ball once in the opposite area.**

//To try and achieve this the coach can bring a defender into play as soon as there is a break from Area 1 or Area 2.

//In the diagram, the defender (E) comes in from the touchline to ensure attacker (2) moves quickly across the central area. Defender (E) must not move until the break is made and he must start off from the touchline as in the diagram.

//An extra attacker (8) can be brought on if necessary. He comes on with defender (E) to make a 2 v 1 situation in the central area.

**COACHES SHOULD ENSURE THERE IS GOOD MOVEMENT IN BOTH AREAS ONCE THE PRACTICE HAS STARTED** i.e. defenders should be alert waiting as an attacker is moving across the central zone towards their area. They must try and prevent an easy 5 passes for the attackers. Attackers must manoeuvre across their area making it difficult for the defenders to mark, and get the ball.

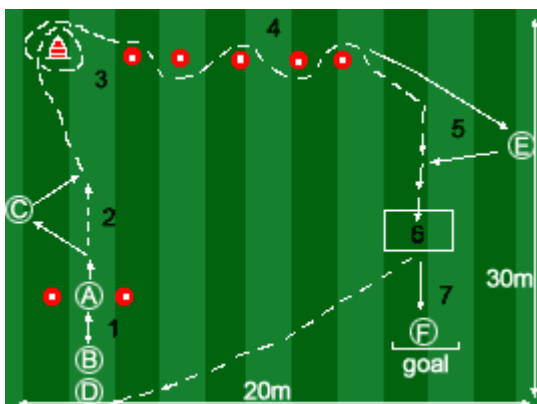
Players can be rotated as necessary, and extra players brought in when necessary.

## ***RUNNING WITH THE BALL (Circuit Training)***

//Coaches can of course set up their own practices, involving various circuits and obstacles to test, not only the player's skill, but also his stamina and concentration levels when under pressure while maintaining control of the ball.

//This practice is an example, and it can be varied by coaches as it involves a form of circuit training with the ball.

//Nevertheless, each player must be made to concentrate on speed and ball control despite the physical demands.



Area: 30m x 20m

/(A) is the player first to compete, facing (B) who is 5 metres away outside the area, as illustrated in the diagram.

/(A) and (B) exchange first time short passes and after 3 / 4 passes, (A) receives the ball, turns quickly and sets off (station 1).

/(After around 10 metres (A) plays a 1 / 2 with (C), who is outside the area (station 2).

/(On reaching the cone/marker at the top of the area (A) dribbles his ball a complete circle around it (station 3) before setting off in and out through 5 posts (station 4).

/(That completed, (A) plays his ball to (E) who returns (first time) as (C) did, (station 5) then (A) goes into the small 2 metre square where he flicks the ball and keeps it up for around 30 seconds - staying inside the area (station 6).

/(He then moves off, and from around 10-12 metres he shoots at a target goal defended by goalkeeper (F). That completed (A) proceeds to join the starting line.

/(The coach must decide when B starts off on the practice, e.g. he could set off when (A) reaches station 5 or 6.

## ***MOVEMENT OFF THE BALL***

**Movement off the ball** (similar to earlier drills, but the coach here is working on movement while not in possession).

/(Players should be encouraged to look for space and not to stand still and wait until the ball comes to them.

/(This alertness, and general movement can become a habit that begins on a training area.

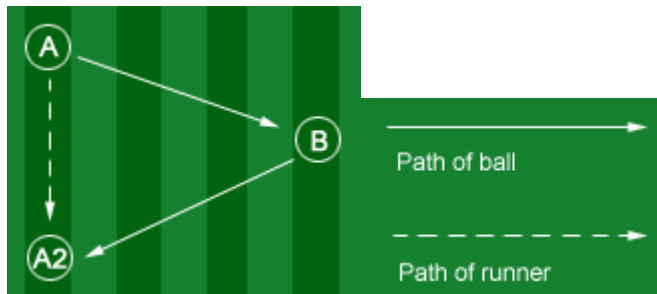
/(Here are some early practices: -



### Practice 1

2 players, 1 ball, in an area 10 metres square. (A) in possession of the ball to start

#### Diagram 1



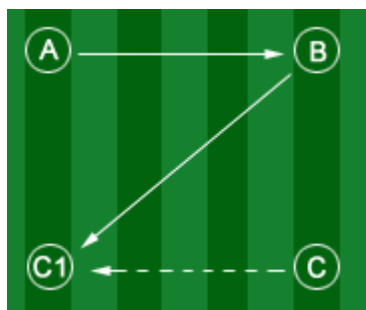
//The practice is (A) passes to (B) and then has to reach position (A2) to receive B's first time pass.

//(A) can pass with the side of the foot or lob the ball to (B) who would then have to volley it back towards (A) at (A2)

### Practice 2 (Third man running)

Similar to practice (1), only now 3 players

#### Diagram 2



//(A) in possession of the ball in the 10 metre square

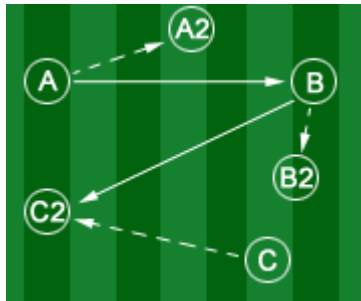
//The practice is (A) serves to (B) who passes 1st time to (C) who moves across to (C2)

//C then becomes the server, to A and it is up to B to move to a new position to receive A's pass.

### Practice 3 (Continual movement) (1st time passing)

Again 10 metre square, (A) in possession to start the practice

#### Diagram 3



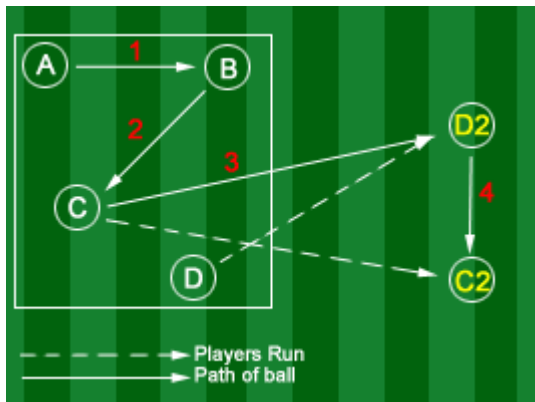
/(A) passes to (B) who 1st time lays off to (C) who has moved to position (C2).

/(C2) now passes 1st time to either (B), who has moved to (B2) OR to (A) who is at (A2).

So the practice continues with continual movement by all 3 players, and first time passing.

## MOVEMENT OFF THE BALL (continued)

#### Diagram 1



/(To progress, a 4th player is introduced into the 10 metre square D.

/(One ball, and the players pass it around inside the area, first time passing when possible.

/(It is then up to one of the players to try and sprint out of the area, as in the diagram 1, D is the player making the run.

/(He aims to reach at least another 10 metres, it is then up to one of the other three (which ever player has the ball) to try and pass the ball to D (in the diagram 1, it is C).

Clearly the player making the pass will have to react quickly, get the ball under control and drive, chip or volley the ball, whichever is appropriate to arrive with D at around point D2.

Once completed D controls the ball, and he now, see C has set off making a run out of the 10-metre area (as in diagram 1). In fact C should be on his way once he has played the initial pass to D.

D passes to C2 around point F and C gets control of the ball.

That completed the players' return to the area, and so the practice continues, players varying roles.

In Practice 2, 5 players, A,B,C,D & E, 1 ball, players around 10 meters apart in formation as in the diagram, B & D facing A, C & E.

### **Practice**

A starts and passes to B and follows his pass to take B's place.

B plays the ball first time to C who has moved sharply to C2, so B's pass is controlled, and moved on to D who has also set off, and the pass should reach him so it does not check his run. (in the diagram as D2).

D collects and plays to E, who collects, turns and goes behind B, to start the practice again.

The key points are:

- Each player follows his pass with a run to replace the player he has passed to.
- Each player must be ready to control the ball, pass accurately and with the correct weight on the ball.
- The practice should be all about passing and movement.

## *MOVEMENT OFF THE BALL (Passing & Moving)*

In this practice 5 players, A,B,C,D & E, 1 ball, players around 10 meters apart in formation as in the diagram, B & D facing A, C & E.

### **Practice:**

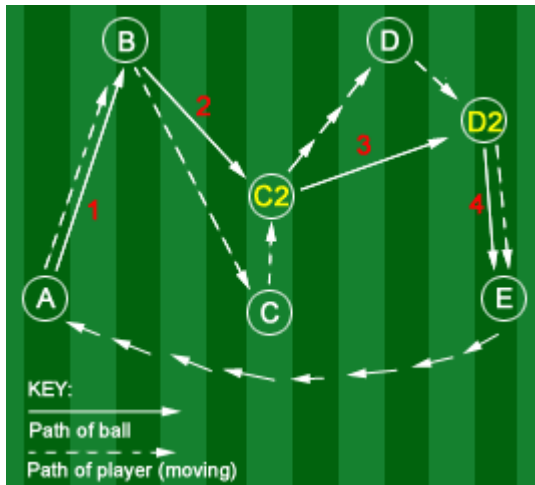
A starts and passes to B and follows his pass to take B's place.

B plays the ball first time to C who has moved sharply to C2, so B's pass is controlled, and moved on to D who has also set off, and the pass should reach him so it does not check his run. (in the diagram as D2).

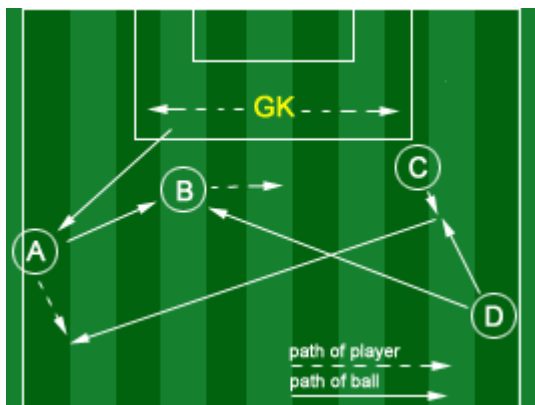
➤ D collects and plays to E, who collects, turns and goes behind B, to start the practice again.

➤ **The key points are:**

- Each player follows his pass with a run to replace the player he has passed to.
- Each player must be ready to control the ball, pass accurately and with the correct weight on the ball, first time pass if possible.
- The practice should be all about passing and movement.



### *MOVEMENT OFF THE BALL (Switching Play in Defence)*



This practice is a continuation, but with the emphasis on defenders actually working in a game situation i.e. switching play and retaining possession.

**Practice**

➤ Goalkeeper (GK) using his area, throws out to the right side defender (A), who (still facing his own goal) plays for safety by laying the ball back to centre defender (B), who adjusts his

position slightly.

➤ On taking control (B) plays a long diagonal pass to (D) (the left sided defender), - (B) then moves round to cover (as in diagram).

➤ (D) collects and lays the ball back to (C), who then hits a long pass ahead of (A) who controls and sets up an attack.

### **There are several key factors**

- (1) The weight on the passes back by (A) and (D) must be accurate;
- (2) First time passes whenever possible, if not collect, control, then pass as swiftly as possible
- (3) (A) and (D) must try and give width to the practice, and move up-field when possible; so the diagonal passes from (B) and (C) must be accurate, and should be ahead of the target player whenever possible
- (4) It is crucial to maintain the correct shape of the back four, - cover at all times, and support play when needed

### **To progress**

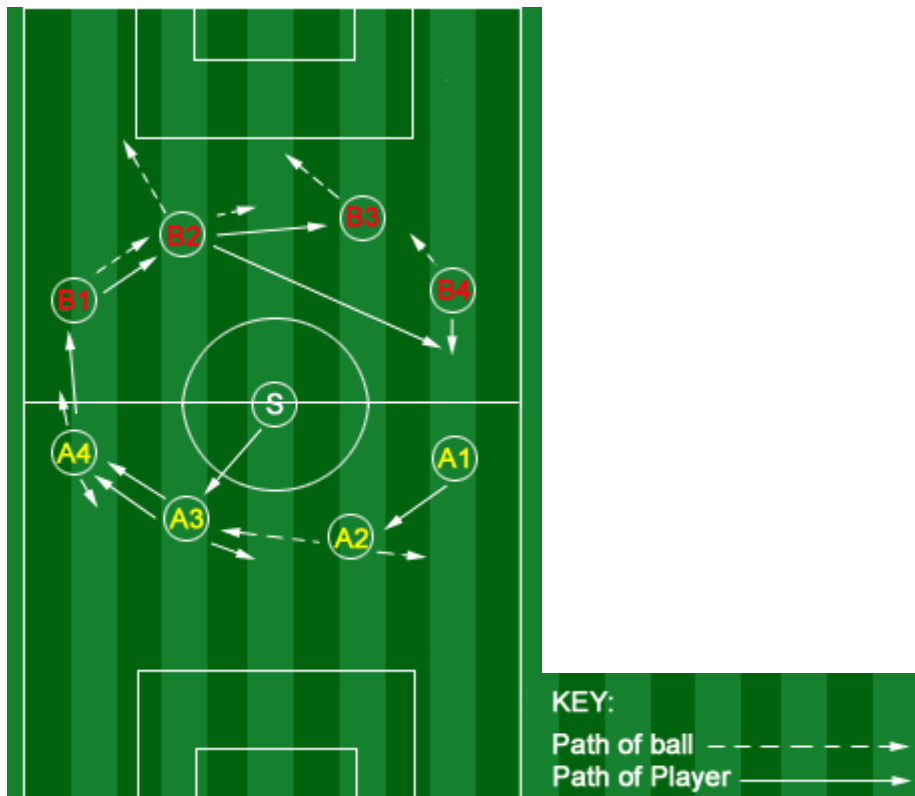
➤ At a given signal the ball must be played back to the goalkeeper, who would get control and set up the play as quickly as possible. The goalkeeper must manoeuvre himself across the penalty area at all times to maintain his participation in the practice. He is part of the practice all the time, offering cover and a back pass target if needed.

The goalkeeper should use both feet for clearances, and should work at his quality of passing. He should play one touch whenever possible, only using his hands on the odd occasion.

## SWITCHING PLAY IN DEFENCE (progression)

To move on from the last practice, another set of defenders can be brought in to face the current 4 players involved in the exercise i.e. in diagram 4 x (A), 4 x (B); no other players on a full sized pitch except server (S).

**Diagram (1)**



In this practice (A3) receives the ball from a server (S) who starts in the central area

/(A3) transfers the ball (first time when possible to (A4), who moves forward slightly before transferring the ball to (B1) - the opposing flank defender

/(NB As (A4) is progressing, (B1) will tend to back away and this will mean (B2), (B3) and (B4) readjusting their positions as well e.g. (B2) may consider a position where he can cover (B1) or simply retreat slightly in the central area. The other two will react accordingly, much depends on the speed of (A4)'s control, move and pass to (B1)

/(On receiving the ball (B1) transfers it to (B2) who then can either play it on to (B3) or pass directly to the opposite wing to (B4) who is moving forward

/(Once (B4) receives and controls the ball he plays it back across to (A1) OR (A2) to begin again in the (A's) defence line.

### POINTS TO NOTE

(1) Players on both lines must keep their distance from each other and their shape/balance in defence

(2) Pass quickly (first time when possible) switching the passing in defence - not always a

pass to the next nearest defender

(3) Be aware of positional play, moving around to support and cover, particularly those passing or receiving the ball. Retain a width and depth in defence, even when in possession i.e. players taking positions off other team mates

(4) Work on quality of passing, accuracy and correct weight on the pass

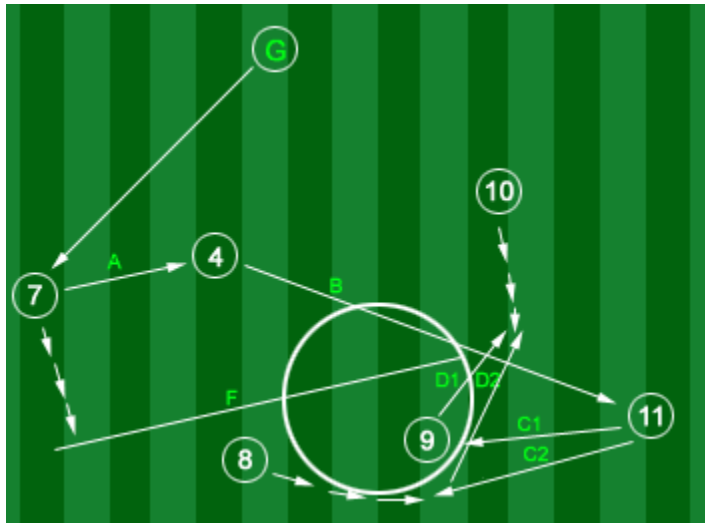
(5) React defensively to the movement of the ball on the other side. Positional play is crucial e.g. as (B1) plays to (B2), the (A) line defence should be preparing for eventualities. So should (B2) play a long diagonal pass to (B4), then (A1) will be positioned favourably, while (A2) will have moved as cover to (A1).

## SWITCHING PLAY IN CENTRE FIELD

// This is similar to the previous practice, except midfield and forward players are brought into the exercise.

// Now, as opposed to just switching play, the players involved are developing a technique to manoeuvre routes through opposition midfielders and so setting up threats at goal.

### Diagram (1)



// In practice 1, goalkeeper (G) starts by throwing the ball out to (7) who, if possible, lays it back first time to (4) (pass A)

// (4) takes control, and switches play into the opponents half with a cross-field pass to (11) (pass B)

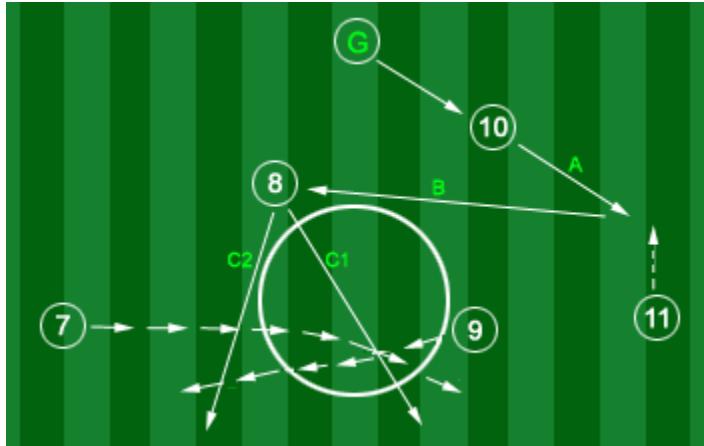
// If two strikers are used i.e. (8) + (9), then (11) has two options. He can lay it off to the deeper lying (9) (pass C1) or find (8) who is moving to a new position as in diagram (1) (pass C2)

// Whichever receives the, then plays it back to (10) who has moved forward, ( passes D1 and D2) he controls then switches the play back to the right flank where (7) has advanced

to a more attacking position (pass F)

**THIS PASS AND MOVE PRACTICE IS ONLY ONE EXERCISE. COACHES CAN DEVISE OTHERS TO SUIT EACH TEAMS NEEDS. BUT BASICALLY, THEY MUST BE REALISTIC, WITH NO DEFENDERS YET INVOLVED.**

### Diagram (2)



✓ In practice (2), (10) receives from the goalkeeper (G)

✓ (11) moves back quickly to receive the ball from (10) (pass A), and, when possible, transfers it first time to (8) (pass B). Accuracy essential here

✓ On receiving the ball (8) sees two options ahead, as both (7) and (9) are on the move

✓ (7) leaves the flank to move into centre field, (8) would find him with pass (C1)

✓ (9) sprints from the central area out to the flank, (a cross over run with (7)), and (8) looks to play the ball ahead of him (pass C2).

## **SWITCHING PLAY IN THE ATTACKING THIRD OF THE FIELD**

✓ Preparing players to play the ball and then move OR simply make space for themselves by making runs off the ball when their team is in possession is important as it makes it more difficult for opponents to mark them.

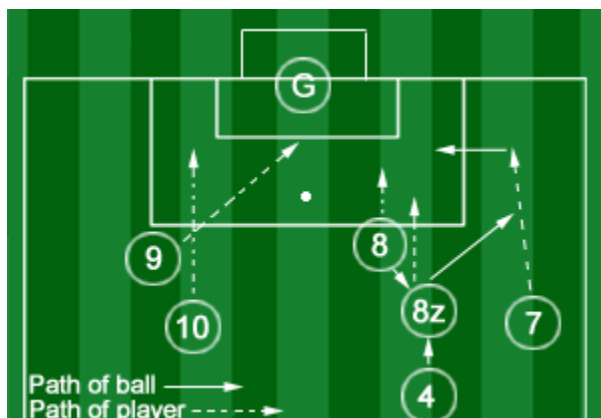
✓ This applies particularly when the team is attacking and is nearing the opponents goal.



Sharpness of movement, (whether they get the ball or not) is a key item in attack, as it makes space either for the player making the run OR a colleague.

Practice (1) is a simple practice for strikers in the opposing penalty area (see diagram 1)

### Diagram (1)



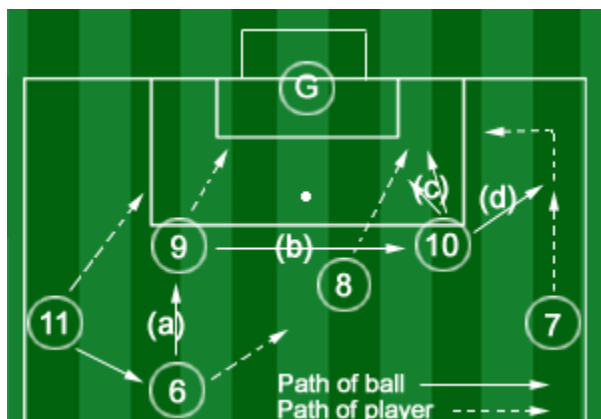
(4) starts in possession, he feeds (8) who comes back simply to position (8z) as if to shake off a marker, and he lays it off (first time) to (7) who is advancing down the right flank.

(7) moves quickly forward, preparing to cross the ball into the penalty area, and as he does this, (8) turns round quickly, to take up an attacking position for any near post attempt at goal.

Meanwhile (9) and (10) cross over (again as if to shake off a marker) and they will cover any cross that is in the centre of the six yard box, or the far post.

### Practice (2)

#### Diagram (2)



/(11) starts in possession feeding the ball back to (6), who has various options, but in diagram (2) he passes to (9) (pass (a))

/(9) first time if possible, passes to (10) (pass (b)), who plays it on to (8) who has made a run from a deeper position (pass c)

/(10) turns and makes for the penalty area, where (9) is already positioned with (11) coming in behind the back post they move quickly should (8) decide to shoot for goal and move in, or if his goal attempt is only parried away by the goalkeeper.

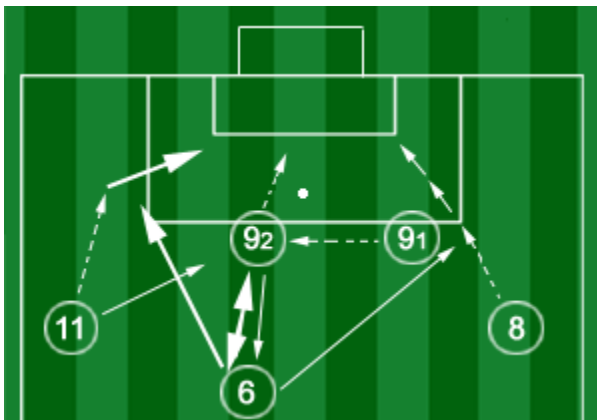
The practice is to try and get 3 or 4 attackers in the box, and they should finish with a shot at goal whenever possible.

/(7) is also in the practice (as in practice 1) and (10) may decide to again feed him the ball in the run (pass (c)) and (7) can then cross from the flank with (10), (8), (9) and (11) all racing into score.

## ***SWITCHING PLAY (IN ATTACK) CONTINUED - AROUND THE PENALTY AREA***

There are various kinds of manoeuvre around the opponent's penalty area but in all practices coaches should insist on alertness', good touch on the ball, and slick movement off it.

### **Diagram (1)**



### **Practice (1)**

/(In this practice (11) starts in possession, he passes to (9), who has moved across the box from (91) to position (92).

/(9) plays it back for (6) who is up in support, and he then attempts to slide it (first time when possible) to (8) who has started on a run and he shoots at goal.

## Practice (2)

Using the same players, this time (6) starts in possession, he feeds to (9) (who is at (92 in diagram 1), and (9) returns it first time to (6) who then plays the ball into the space where (11) has run

It is up to (11) to cross, when (9) and (8) (who have turned quickly and are ready to make an attempt on goal) are in position.

This should involve 4 first time passes before (9) or (8) makes a strike or head at goal. Accuracy of passing, is essential here and coaches should work at sharp movement both on and off the ball.

## SWITCHING PLAY IN ATTACK AROUND THE PENALTY AREA (CONTINUED)

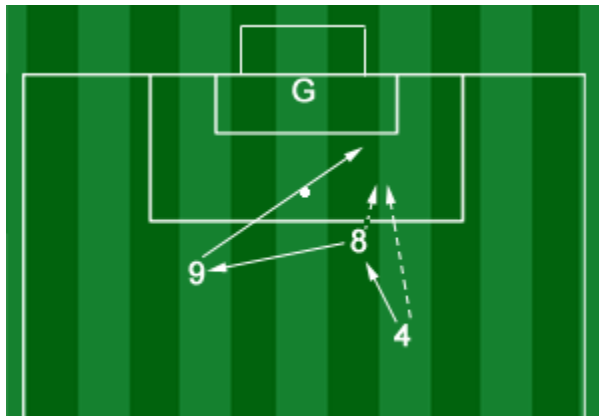
### Practice (1)

This practice is direct and involves getting the midfield player (4) into the box once he has fed the ball forward.

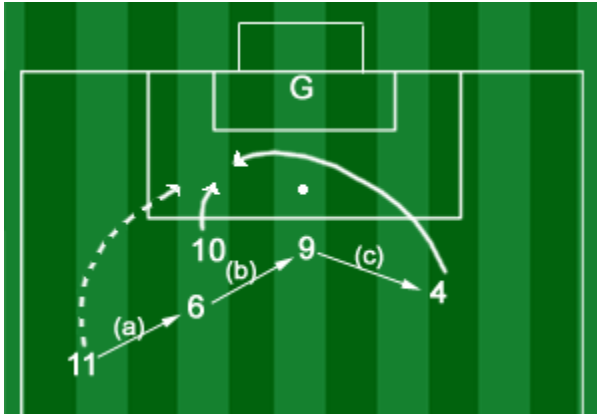
In diagram (1), (4) passes to (8) who lays off (first time) to (9), and as soon as he passes (8) turns quickly and sets off for a return through pass.

Meanwhile (4) has continued on his run and both he and (8) are in position to get a strike at goal, if (9) returns the through pass accurately.

### Diagram (1)



## Diagram (2)



## Practice (2)

### Getting a Flank Player into the Box

// This practice starts with (11) advancing down the left flank in possession of the ball

// When within about 10 metres of (6) he passes quickly to him (pass a)

// (6) receives the ball, turns, and plays it on to (9) - positioned round the edge of the penalty area (pass b)

// (9) switches the direction of the play, by playing the ball back to (4) - as in diagram 2 (pass c)

// (4) then 1st time chips the ball forward and back left into the penalty area where (10) is moving and where (11) has continued with his long run and both try to score with either a header or a drive past (G).

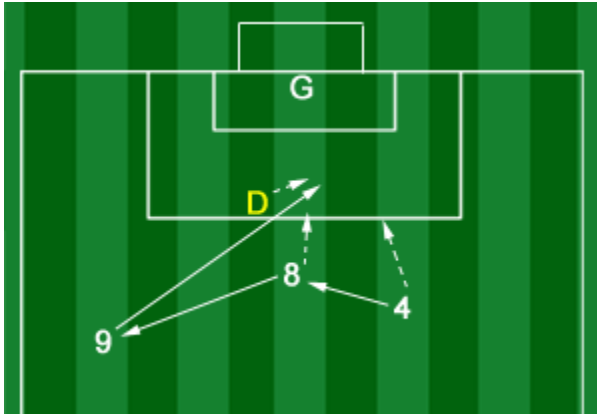
## *ADDING DEFENDERS: SWITCHING PLAY (CONTINUED)*

The earlier practices are used initially to promote ideas to the players. Clearly they should experience a measure of success as with no obstacles to pass, they simply have to concentrate on the control of the ball, accurate passing and timed movement.

Once the players have progressed, coaches should introduce defenders to make the practices more realistic.

In diagram (1) a defender is placed around the edge of the box as the players try to prise a route through to goal.

### Diagram (1)

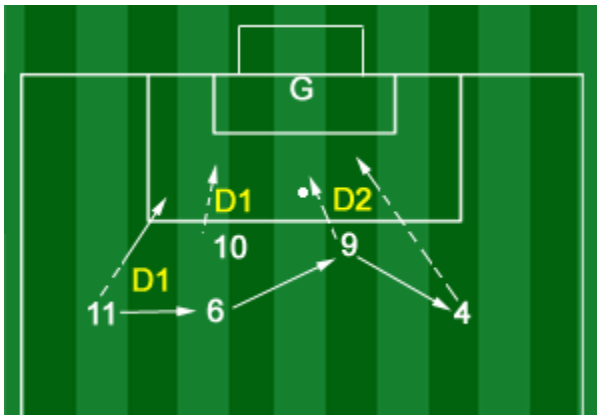


So as (4) passes to (8), back to (9) who provides the through ball for (8) and (4) to run on to (as described in a previous practice) they now have to by pass defender (D) who positions himself where he could (a) cut out the through ball from (9), and (b) make it difficult for (8) or (4) should they get possession of the ball - as in diagram (1).

(D) must try and win the ball if he can.

In practice (2), another defender is added, as the 4 attackers try to perfect a move described earlier.

### Diagram (2)



/(11) in possession plays to (6), on to (9) who lays the ball back to (4)

/(11) continues a run into the box, (9) and (10) turn and make for the penalty area, as (4) tries to switch play from the right across the area towards the 3 attackers moving in on goal

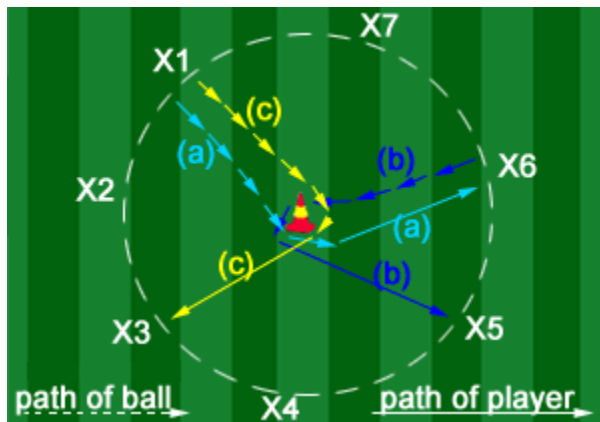
/(The 2 defenders (D1) and (D2) (initially marking (9) and (10) must weigh up the points of danger to their goal, concentrating on (a) cutting out (4's) cross field pass into the box and (b) marking the players moving into the area on to (4's) pass

//The goalkeeper (G) must cut out the cross if he can, and the attackers must concentrate on not running offside - particularly if (D1) and (D2) hold their positions.

The introduction of the defenders makes the practices more realistic and if need be coaches can introduce other e.g. (D3) acting as a midfield/defender chasing around as (11), (6), (9) and (4) try to combine play.

## DEVELOPING THE REVERSE PASS

### Diagram (1)



//In diagram (1), a circle (diameter around 20 metres), with 6 or 7 players on the perimeter

//A cone is placed in the centre of the area, one ball, X1 in possession.

//The player X1 moves with the ball, quickly as his control will allow, to go round the cone, and then plays a reverse pass (a pass at right angles) to a colleague on the edge of the area - in the diagram to X6 marked (a)

//Coaches should insist that X1's non kicking foot stays behind the ball, while his kicking foot turns towards the ball from the ankle joint and smartly whips the ball back at the right angle; he then follows the pass to replace X6

//The ball must keep moving all the time and X6 now takes the ball round the cone and he plays a reverse pass to X5- marked (b) - and so the practice continues.

### Practice (2)

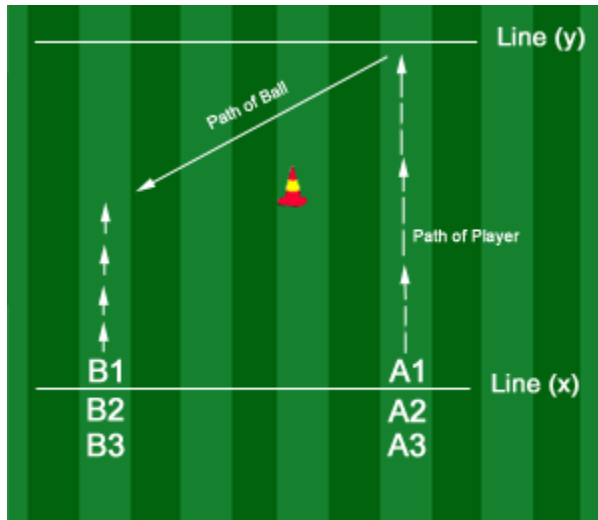
//To progress, players should be encouraged to use their weaker foot i.e. in the diagram (1) X1 would go round the cone to the left, and reverse pass to X3 using his left foot.

## Reverse Pass (continued)

### Practice (3)

Two lines X and Y, 30 metres apart

Two sets of players A's and B's, behind line X, (A's) with a ball



/(A1) sets off running with the ball

/(Once he reaches the cone ?near to the half way mark, (B1) sets off

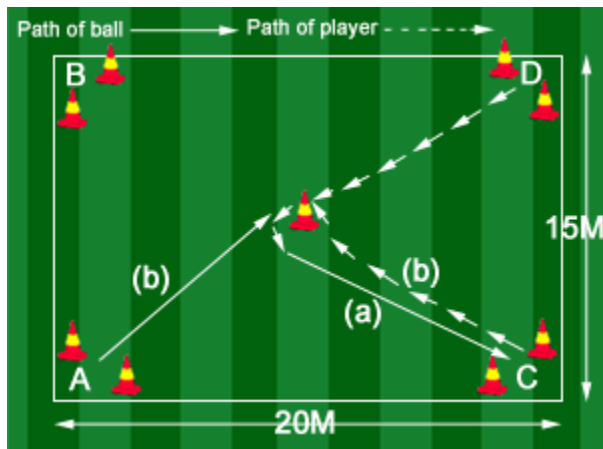
/(A1) continues his run and as he reaches line Y, he reserve passes to (B1) (as in diagram)  
- and they both continue on behind line Y and stay there

/(A2) and (B3) repeat the practice

/(When all players are beyond line Y, they turn about and it is (B's) turn to have possession, and reverse pass. Players should again use both feet in the practice.

## Reverse Pass (continued)

Diagram (1)



✓ In this practice there are 5 players in an area 20 metres x 15 metres, each player behind a pair of cones (as in diagram 1).

✓ (D) starts in possession of the ball and he goes on the outside of the cone placed in the centre of the area, and then cuts the ball back between the cones where (C) is waiting (pass a). On completion (D) takes (C's) place.

✓ (C) takes the ball, first time, and he will bypass (D) on his run, move to the outside of the centre cone and then reverse pass to (A) pass (b) and so the practice continues, with as few stops as possible.

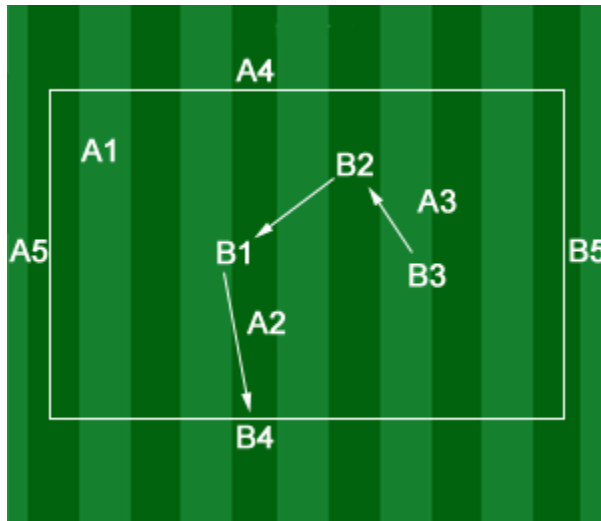
### COACHES SHOULD INSIST ON: -

- (1) Accurate passing
- (2) Quick movement, and good control after receiving the ball
- (3) THIS PRACTICE NEEDS TO BE QUICK AND DECISIVE. PLAYERS MUST REACT QUICKLY ON RECEIVING THE BALL, AND SHOULD NOT OVERRUN THE CENTRE CONE - SO THE FIRST TOUCH IS IMPORTANT.
- (4) THE REVERSE PASS SHOULD BE WORKED ON TILL PERFECTED



## Reverse Pass (continued)

Diagram (2)



✔ In this practice, the area is 20 metres x 15 metres; one ball.

✔ In the area 3 v 3 (A's + B's) with both sides having a player on the outside of one of the sides i.e. (A5) and (A4) (B5) and (B4).

✔ The practice is to retain possession and scoring by playing a reverse pass to a player (of the same side) on the outer edge of the area.

✔ So in diagram 2, (B's) interpass, and they score with a reverse pass from (B1) to (B4).

To make the practice competitive, the coach can award a point to the team that successfully plays a reverse pass during the activity.

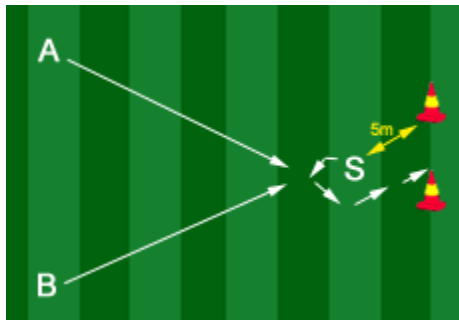
## *Playing back to goal (turning)*

Forward players need to be encouraged to turn, and not always take the easier option of laying the ball back.

Turning with the ball requires practice - as much as possible so that a player can take a pass and turn with total confidence knowing his initial touch on the ball will be good enough.

### **Practice (1)**

In this practice, stage one, a player receives the ball, turns to his left (particularly if he is right footed) and then moves towards a target as in diagram (1).



So (A) and (B) (10 metres apart) serve to (S) who comes forward collects and turns to his left and then sprints between two cones (5 metres away).

The two cones should be no more than 2 metres apart.

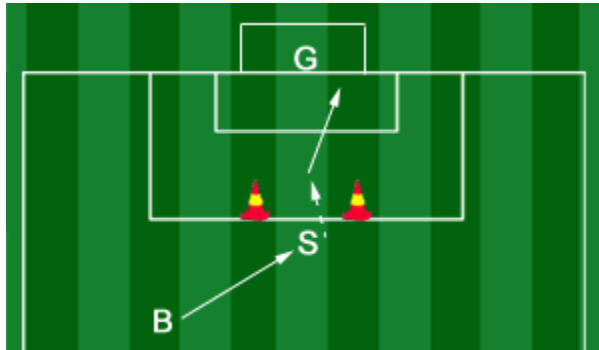
### **Practice (2)**

Exactly the same as practice (1) only this time (S) turns to his right, using either the outside of his right foot, or more ideally his left foot (if it is his weaker foot) to control turn and sprint through the two cones.

**COACHES SHOULD AIM FOR A SHARP TURN (NOT A WIDE ARC) SO THAT PLAYERS ARE UNDER PRESSURE TO TAKE GOOD CONTROL OF THE BALL. THE BALL SHOULD BE CLOSE TO THE ATTACKING PLAYER FROM THE MOMENT HE HAS HIS FIRST TOUCH.**

## Turning & Finishing (Striker)I

**Diagram 1**



**Diagram 2**



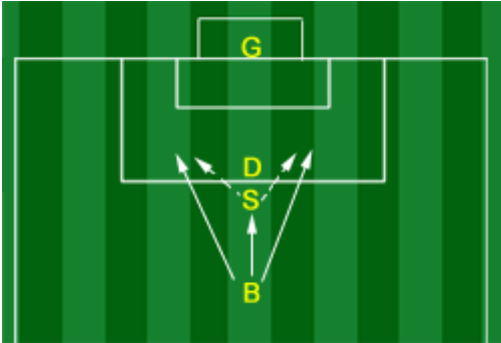
✓ A similar practice only this time the striker (S) has to turn quickly and attempt to score.

✓ In diagram (1), (B) serves to (S) who turns quickly and goes through the two cones which are no more than 2 metres apart in control of the ball, and then shoots at goal if (G) goalkeeper stays on his line.

✓ Should (G) come forward (as in diagram (2)) then (S) should try and dribble past him before slotting the ball into the goal.

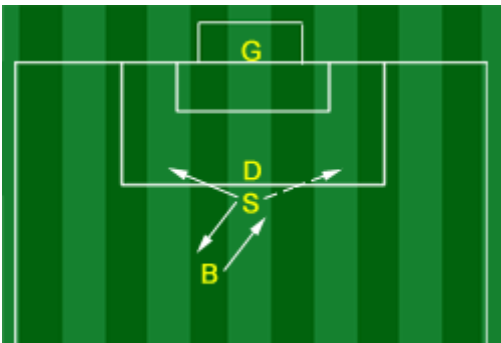
✓ So in these practices (S), must get a good first touch good quick control and turn, and then assess his attempt to score on whether goalkeeper (G) advances or not.

## Turning & Finishing (continued)II



- ✓ To progress and to ask more questions of the striker (S) a defender (D) is introduced into the practice.
- ✓ (D's) role is to stop the attack on goal once (B) has served the ball to (S).
- ✓ (D) can vary his service so as to ensure the practice is not too predictable i.e. either directly to (S), who has then to control, and use his skill to turn, try and bear (D) and get a shot at goal. OR feed the ball alongside (D) for (S) to run on to and once again try and finish with a shot at the goal.
- ✓ If (D) holds up (S) and prevents him turning, then (S) has the alternative of playing the ball back to (B) and then taking up a fresh position, this creating a 2 against 1 situation as in

**Diagram 2.**



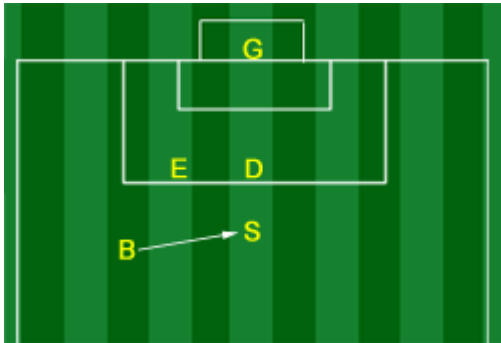
This is not the real point of the practice, but can occur rather than let the exercise fizzle out.

**COACHES SHOULD ENCOURAGE** (S) to work at his control with his back to goal when under pressure from a defender.

(S) should always try and shield the ball from (D) keeping himself between the defender and the ball - until he senses an opportunity to progress.

## *Turning and Finishing (continued An Extra Defender)III*

### **Practice (1)**



### **N.B.**

// Before proceeding to this practice, coaches need to ensure that the target player (S) is proving he is capable of handling the previous exercise.

// In practice (1) (above), (B) serves and (S) target man repeats the exercise.

// Now defender (D) is supported by another defender (E) so it becomes 2 v 2.

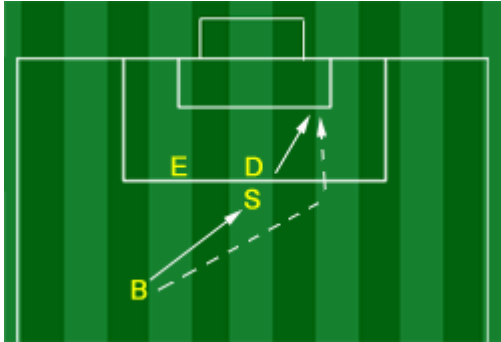
// (B) serves to (S) who has once again to control, and/or find a route through to try and get a shot at goal.

// (B) joins as a supporting attacker right away, (E's) job is to defend, cover and mark (B).

## SUGGESTED MOVES

*(B) and (S) have to work at finding a possible route to goal.*

### Diagram (1)



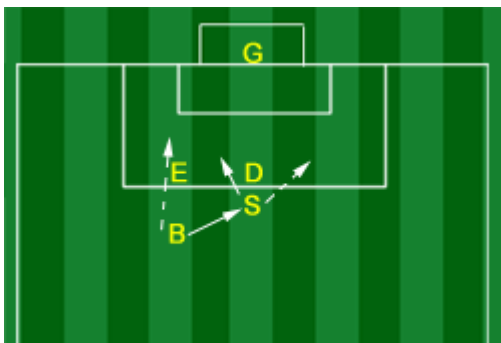
*/(B) serves then as soon as he has played the ball sets off to the opposite side to where (E) is marking.*

*/(S), once the ball arrives, controls and holds up (D) who now has a problem if (E) has not spotted (B's) run quickly enough.*

*/(Any hesitancy by the defenders gives (B) a possible shot at goal. Once again (S's) control is vital, as is his lay off pass to (B).*

**NB.** *If (D) gets too tight, (S) might decide to just let (B's) pass run on, and so (B) could be running on to his own service.*

### Diagram (2)



*/(This time (B) serves and sets off round the outside of (E), who now has to hold his position, as (S) could play the ball first time between him and defender (D) to connect with (B's) run.*

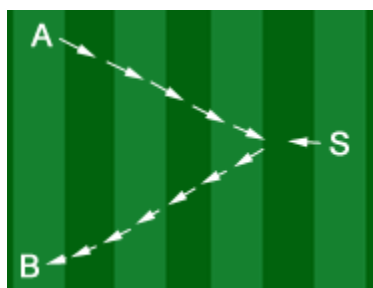
Alternatively (B's) run prevents (E) covering, and so (S) takes the ball on the left side of (D) and tries to score.

## Playing with back to goal I

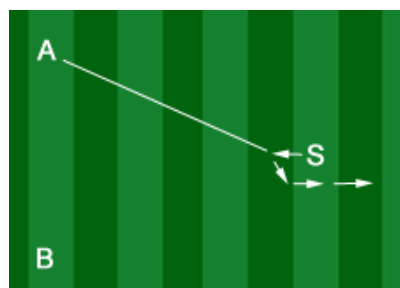
Forward players, particularly the central strikers, have to often face their own players when receiving the ball.

So with their backs to their opponents goal it is vital they learn to receive the ball, often when under pressure from behind and anticipate a defensive challenge.

This requires practice, and players should first begin with a simple exercise.



**Diagram 1**



**Diagram 2**

In practice (1), 3 players (A), (B), and (S) and one ball, lining up as in diagram (1) with (S) facing (A) and (B) about 10 metres away.

(A) serves to the feet of (S), who comes forward about 1 metre, controls the ball, then with the next touch lays it off to (B).

To progress the distance between (A) and (B) can be lengthened to around 20 metres, but when this occurs the serve pass must carry more power behind it to keep the practice realistic.

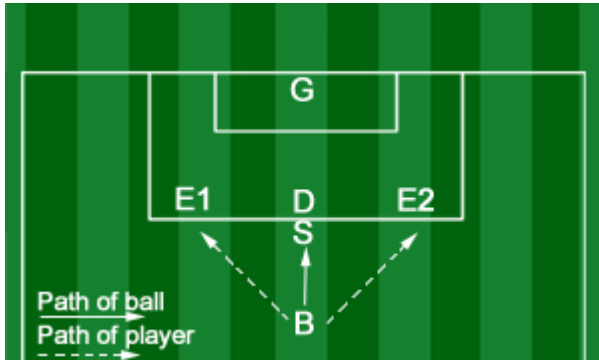
Once this has been mastered, (S) must then learn to play the ball off first time, with a firm pass.

As an alternative (S) can turn with the ball.

So (A) serves (S) controls, turns and sprints off around 10 metres with the ball towards the opponents goal as in diagram (2). Good control (first touch) is essential in doing this. Players can alternate roles.

## Playing with back to goal (continued) (The layoff pass)II

**Diagram (1)**



✔(B) can adjust his position to a more central area as in diagram (1)

✔As before, (D) marks (S), while defender (E), can be on either side of (D) i.e. in position (E1) or (E2).

✔It is up to (B) to see where the best opportunity lies to get the shot at goal.

✔So (B) plays to (S), and then immediately sets off to try and catch (E) on the wrong side.

✔Now S's lay-off is crucial. First time lay-off is obviously going to be more beneficial and the pass from (S) to (B) must be at the right speed and ideally placed for (B) to run on to

✔N.B. As the ball is first played from (B) to (S) - it is up to (S) to ease back towards (D) so as to make it more difficult for (D) to get the foot in tackle.

✔(S) should use his body to screen the ball from (D) and he can hold his arms not only for balance, but also to hold back any challenge from (B).

✔(B) should aim at a good first touch after receiving the lay-off pass from (S), and then finish with an accurate and sharp shot at the goal defended by goalkeeper (G).



## *Playing with back to goal (continued) (chest and head control)III*

- ✓ The 'target man' S must also be able to handle any type of service.
- ✓ The pass to him, (when he has his back to goal) can arise at any height, and he has to learn to deal with it.
- ✓ The practices to deal with improving these skills are not dissimilar to those in the previous practices.

### **Practice 1**

A good starting point is S marked by D as in diagram 1, facing server B

### **Diagram (1)**



### **Exercise 1**

B lobs the ball (by hand) to aim at S around chest height, and with D trying to pressurize him, S has to control the ball on his chest and as it drops lay the ball back to B.

### **Exercise 2**

B lobs the ball again only this time S advances, leaps and heads the ball back to the server.

### **Diagram 2**



D once again tries to pressurize S, while S must try and be accurate with his header, e.g. down to the feet of B as in diagram 2.

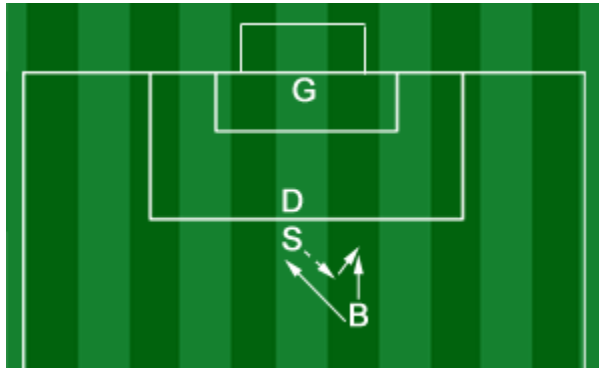
### **Playing with back to goal (dropping off the defender)**

If striker S is being tightly marked and is having little success against his marker/defender, then he has the alternative of moving towards the ball, and either enticing the defender to follow **OR** he can pick up the ball in space.

**Practice (1)**

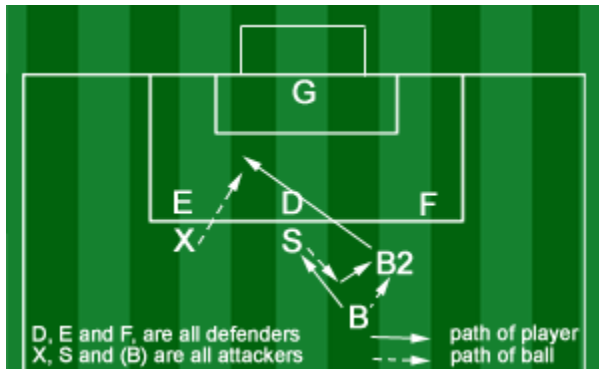
In this practice, (B) serves, S advances, collects and turns to face the defense.

**Diagram (1)**



N.B. If defender D does follow and marks tight, then S can lay the ball off into (B's) path who then attacks the goal as in diagram (1).

**Practice (2)**

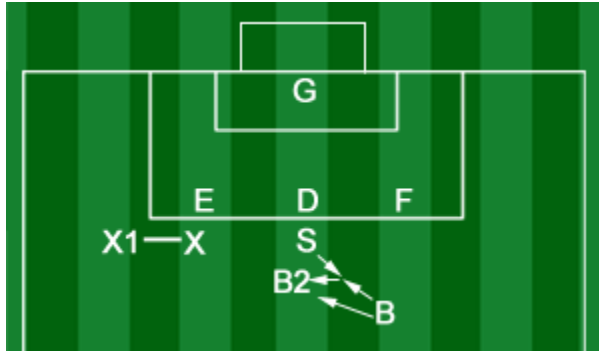


**D, E and F, are all defenders**  
**X, S and (B) are all attackers**

Once again if D moves close to S then (B), can receive a lay-off pass, only this time he has another alternative. On reaching position (B2) he can play a first time pass between E and F for X to try and run on to.

If D stays in line with E and F, then S will come to the pass from (B), collect, turn and with (B) joining the attack set up a 3 against 3 situation.

### Practice (3)



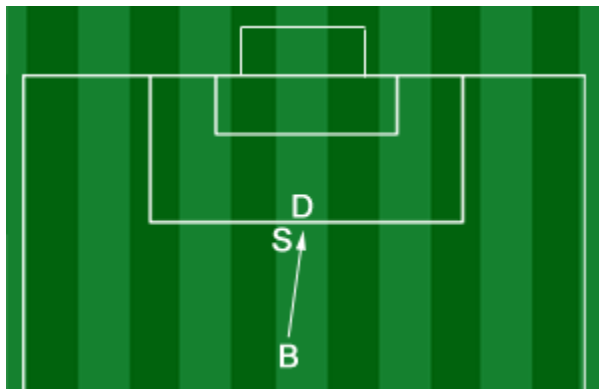
Should D follow S, then B can also move from the right side of the attack to receive a lay-off pass from S on the left side, at position B2 thus creating a 2 against 1 situation, with B taking S's pass to join up with (X) against E.

(X) can then go wide to X2 OR drive to a more central position to put more pressure on the goal

## *Playing with back to goal (continued)IV*

### Practice (1)

#### Diagram (1)

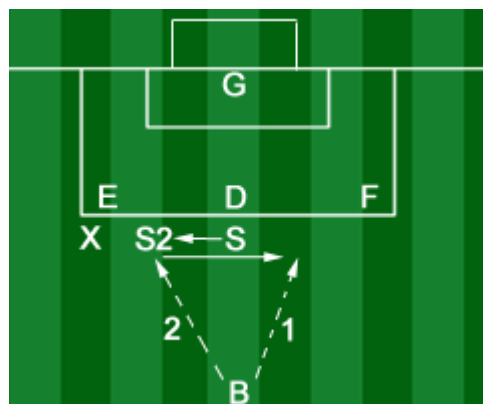


In this practice Striker (S) has to learn to withstand physical pressure from behind by defender (D), so when (B) serves to (S) (instead of escaping (D's) attention) actually moves back towards (D).

THIS TIME, HOWEVER, (B) serves just to the left side of (S), who then dips his left shoulder and/with his arms outstretched slightly for balance) makes it difficult for (D) to get to the ball.

At the moment of the ball arrival, (S) turns to his left (shielding the ball letting it run or just nudging it further to the left slightly) and then tries to shoot at goal. This turn and spin using his body takes practice, and can be done at walking pace to begin, getting the spin and control correct.

N.B. (S) must learn to withstand physical contact from (D) – in fact he can use the bodily contact to make it difficult for (D) to get to the ball.



Once again (B) serves, this time, as he is about to do so (S) makes a sharp move to the side. In the diagram he moves to (S2) (his right) taking him away from defender (D).

(S) must try and catch (D) unawares. He has to make a quick break (about 2-3 metres), and at the same time (B) has to be prepared to be ready for 2 possible eventualities.

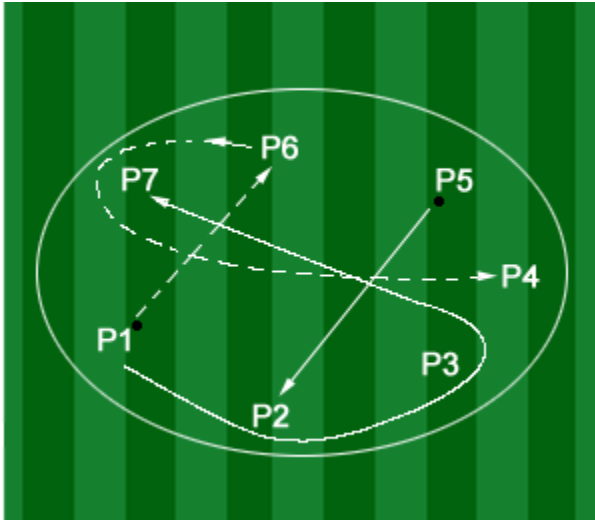
1. If (D) moves quickly and goes with (S), then (B) may ignore (S) progress quickly into the space, retaining possession and then after attempting a shot at goal before (F) gets in a challenge.
2. (B) plays the ball to (S), at S2 who (with (D) caught out) tries to play a 2 against 1 situation with (X) against (E). OR (S) gains possession and as (D) moves across he lays it back into the space they have both left for B to run on to, and (B) tries an attempt at goal.

### Players learning to make decisions

It is important for all players to be able to evaluate the play, have real vision and see what options are open.

This requires some experience, but the earlier (in age) players start the better. All the skills and techniques described in earlier practices have to be used in the context of the game, and there are practices that help develop players to take in the whole picture and make decisions.

## Practice (1)



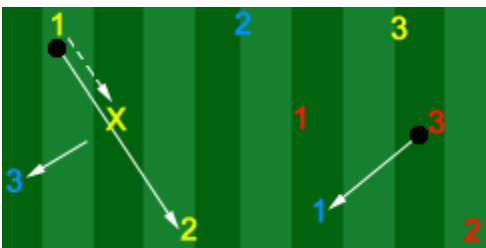
- ✓ The players (P's) line up approximately 20 meters around the area as in diagram (1), two soccer balls
- ✓ The practice is for players to run with their ball across the area and then pass to a free player
- ✓ On receiving the ball the free player, runs round the outside of one of the players next to him before running across the circle. In diagram (1) (P1) runs across and replaces (P6), who collects the ball runs round the back of (P7) before running across to deliver to (P4).
- ✓ While this is going on (P5) runs across to (P2), who runs round (P3) then goes across to (P7).

### COACHES SHOULD INSIST ON: -

- ✓ Quality of running with the ball
- ✓ A good collect and first touch
- ✓ Good quality of delivery when passing the ball on
- ✓ Correct body position when receiving
- ✓ Players looking up and around to see available options

## *Players learning to make decisions (continued)V*

### Using Colours



//In this practice there are 3 sets of 3, i.e. 3 yellow, 3 blue, 3 red all within an area, no smaller than 20m square.

//Two players, in the diagram, yellow 1 and red 3 start in possession.

//All players keep moving around the area all the time

### Practice 1

//To begin, players pass to any colour other than their own. So in the diagram red 3 passes to blue 1, yellow 1 will select either a red or a blue player.

### Practice 2

//To progress, players pass to their own colour, get a return pass and then first time lay off to another colour.

So in the diagram yellow 1 passes to yellow 2, runs forward to position X for a return pass before laying off (first time) to blue 3.

### OTHER ALTERNATIVES

#### Practice 3

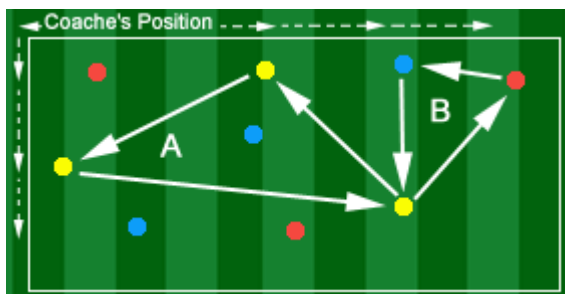
//Players pass to the nearest/or furthest player who is not their colour

#### Practice 4

//Players must run or dribble past one of their own colours before passing to another colour

COACHES CAN UTILISE OTHER VARIATIONS, BUT SHOULD INSIST ON THE OBJECTIVES LISTED AT THE END OF THE LAST EXERCISES.

## *Making decisions (using colours continued)I*



The coach can stand either on the touchline, or can move about between the players – but he must try to steer clear of the players as they pass the balls around the area.

//To begin 3 balls, 1 each between the reds, the yellows and the blues – each team inter-passing, manoeuvring between the two other teams.

//In the diagram 3 yellows pass the ball between them (marked A) blue and reds do the same.

//On the coaches instruction (he can shout/whistle), three players all from different groups immediately join up and start inter-passing. So each group will consist of a red, a yellow and a blue player as marked (B) in the diagram

//It is up to the players to move quickly into these groups, finishing with a ball in each group – the ball always remaining under control by one player as the change comes about.

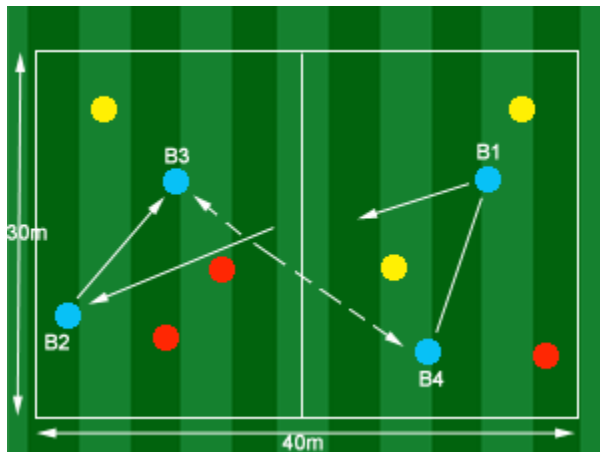
//To progress on the coaches instruction (shout/whistle) – the players revert to their original groups (yellows, blues and reds)

//The coach can also variate by shouting "2 + 1", so the players (while keeping the ball under control) get into 3 groups (e.g. 2 yellows, 1 red/or 1 blue) or 2 reds, 1 blue/1 yellow and so on)

The purpose being for the players to concentrate on the passing and control yet being aware of what comes next – once again looking at the whole picture of the area.

**NB. COACHES SHOULDN'T 'CHANGE' THE PRACTICE TOO OFTEN OR TOO QUICKLY, OR THEY WILL LOSE THE INITIAL PASSING/CONTROL SECTION OF THE EXERCISE.**

## *Making decisions (continued)II*



//Similar to earlier practices but this time an area approximately 40 metres x 30 metres, divided in half as in the diagram.

//The players, 3 reds, 3 yellows, 3 blues – divided 2 in one half the 3 rd player in the other (1 ball with each set)

## Practice

// Is to pass the ball to a colleague in the opposite half – so with 3 soccer balls moving across, good concentration is needed.

// When a player has passed the ball across he must move to a different position; on receiving the ball (when there are 2 players in the half) a player may pass to a colleague.

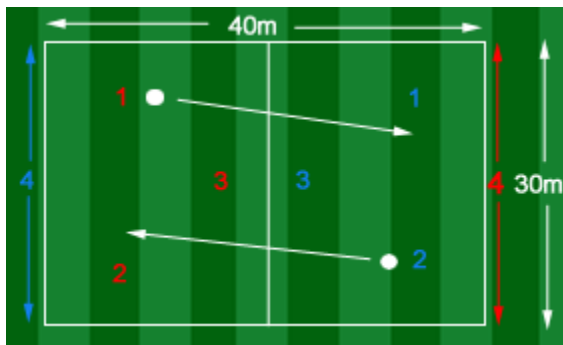
In the diagram: -

(B1) plays across to (B2), who lays the ball off to (B3), who controls and plays the ball back to (B1) who has moved to position (B4).

N.B.

1. Players can play the ball first time when they so wish
2. Players must change sides in turn, so that constant pressure is not put on one player
3. Players must move around continually so that the man in possession has to look up.

## Progression III



- // Area 40m x 30m, divided in half
- // 3 reds in one area, 3 blues in the other, numbered (1) – (3)
- // One ball with each group as in diagram
- // One red (4) on the touchline behind the blue players
- // One blue (4) on the touchline behind the red players

Red (4) and blue (4) can move anywhere along the line – but not on to the central area.

**PRACTICE** (which must be competitive)

In the beginning 3 reds and 3 blues pass the ball amongst themselves, moving around their area and as they do this they are trying to create an opening to deliver a pass to their



number (4), who in turn moves up and down the line trying to free himself from any marker  
– **ONE POINT IF THE 4 TH PLAYER IS REACHED SUCCESSFULLY**

✓Coaches must insist on one or two touch passing as blues and reds inter-pass – no player dwelling too long on the ball, with all players moving around their 20m x 30m area.

✓Also no.4's must stay close to the line, and to score a point, they must receive the ball **ON** or **NEAR TO** the line itself.

✓So the ball can be passed along the ground, driven, or chipped to the no.4 player.

**TO PROGRESS** No.4 comes on to the line, and the other players play 3 v 3 (one touch or two touch) around the entire area – the idea again being to get the ball to their own no. 4 who has to be in control of the ball to score the point.

**N.B.** No.4 must stay on the line

## *Shadow Play (an introduction)I*

'Shadow play' is simply a title to a practice that is performed against very little or no opposition.

✓As a follow-on from our last practices this is all about players being inventive in their movement off the ball as well as being technically adept when in possession.

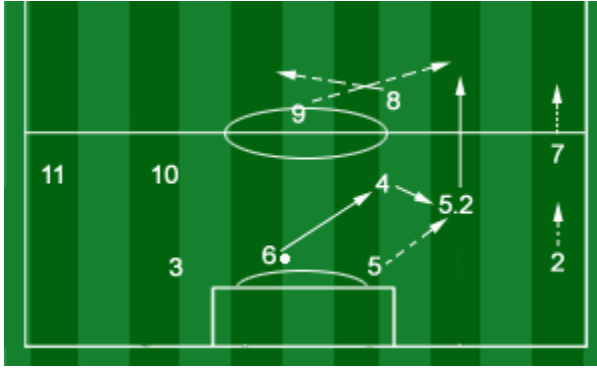
✓It is mainly about players accepting 'possibilities' in movement – no matter which position they find themselves in.

✓It also concerns players adapting themselves and producing a pattern of movement on the field – no matter which role they started the match.

Basically though it is about freedom of expression – yet at the same time accepting the realism of their position in the field of play:

At first coaches won't find it easy to motivate players, especially in terms of speed or movement when there is no opposition to add to the urgency. But once players accept the intention of the practice they will work with greater enthusiasm and conviction.

A good practice for starters is with the ball in the back four – players, i.e. the defence, offering alternatives for the player in possession.



In the diagram – 6 in possession just outside his own penalty area

- // 6 plays to 4, while 5 moving to position 5. 2 receives a first time pass from 4
- // 5 advances with the ball for a few paces only, while 7 moves wide to add width to the right side of the attack
- // Meanwhile 8 and 9 make crossover runs (as if to lose their markers) and 5 plays the ball into the path of 9 to chase after and collect.
- // The idea is that 8 and 7 (moving wide) will attract opposing defenders giving 9 the chance to gain possession in space.

The attack can continue with a shot at goal – coaches must just not let the practice fade away.

\* All other players' move forward as they would in a match once 5 has delivered the ball to 9.

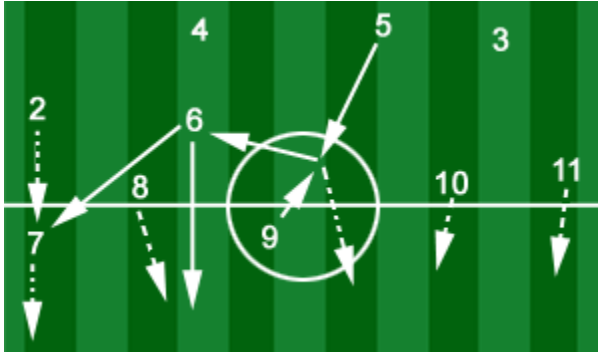
## *Shadow Play (Progression)II*

// There are any number of developments any imaginative coach can use.

// Concentration on a particular aspect of play has the benefit of constant repetition, until the pass, control and movement are near perfect – the coach, however, ensuring that every player in the team (including those not on the ball) are working at and considering their positions in relation to the shape of the team.

// To make the practice more realistic, if there are 22 players, then the two teams pass the ball and manoeuvre around in opposite directions. So you have two teams playing 11 against 11 utilising 'shadow practice', - it increases the tempo and can be a little more difficult if the two soccer balls travelling in opposite directions do get anywhere near each other.

// The problem for the coach in this practice is to be able to concentrate fully on both teams.



Setting up the play : There are various options, here are some.

✔ In the diagram (5) coming out from defence, plays the ball to (9), who drops deep from his forward position (as if to lose a marker).

✔ (9) plays the ball (first time) back to (6) who then has several options open.

E.G. (8) and (10) can make forward runs, (9) can swivel and join the attack in support, and (11) can add width on the left.

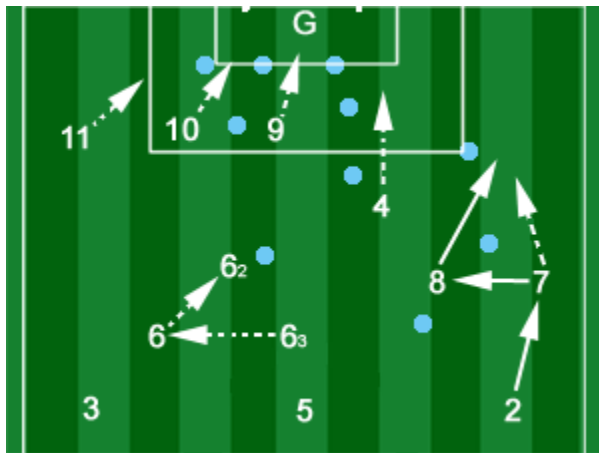
✔ (7) given the width on the right sprinting forward which may allow (2) to come into the play as the next player to touch the ball receiving the pass from (6).

## Shadow Play (continued)III

As players become more accustomed to 'shadow' practices coaches will discover that there is a greater 'visualisation' in the exercises.

Players, although not actually on the ball, can manoeuvre themselves using their soccer sense which may eventually get them involved on the ball.

E.g. Midfield players supporting attacks may play 'off' each other, - i.e. are running forward to add support to the front line, while another may act as a holding player in case the attack breaks down and he might have to become the first line of defence.



In the diagram the Blue team (although not in the practice) have been positioned to demonstrate roughly which defensive positions they would take up.

The 'Shadow' team (numbered 2-10) too have to imagine how an opposing team would react as they attack in the last third of the field.

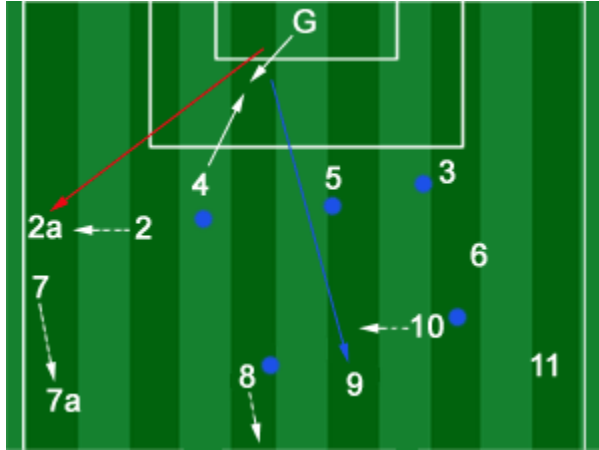
So in the practice (2) plays to (7) who plays a quick 'one-two' with (8) then (7) will attempt to pick out a team mate to try and score.

In the diagram, as (7) hits the line (9), (10) and (11) move in as does (4) who on a longer run attacks the near post.

As he does this (6) has two options, he can either add depth to the attack and take up a position as at (6<sub>2</sub>), OR he can add weight to the defence by moving in front of the back where players at position (6<sub>3</sub>) – much will depend on the state of the game and the numbers the blues are willing to risk in attack.

## Shadow Play (continued)IV

A good practice for defenders and attackers comes when the ball is played back to the goalkeeper – By a member of his own team.



✓ In the diagram (4) running back plays the ball back to his goalkeeper (G).

✓ (G) advances and he has three real options after he arrives at the ball.

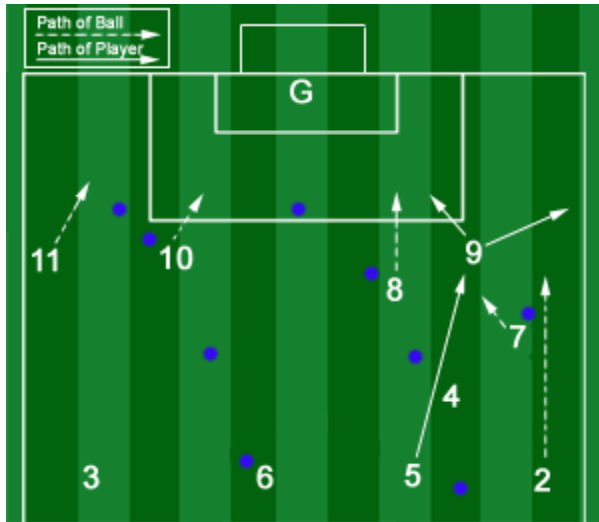
(i)(G) can side foot pass it to (2) who has gone wide and made an angle to receive a pass at position (2a)

(ii) (G) can kick it first time for distance towards the half way line where (9) is the most forward player. As the ball is on it's way (8) runs forward to support (9), as does (7) in a wider position, while (10) drops just behind to add depth to the attack and to receive any lay-back passes from the front players in his team.

(iii)(G) can control the ball, and as if under no pressure he dribbles it around the penalty area until his team are all in position – then he clears for distance.

ONCE AGAIN ITS ALL ABOUT PLAYERS REACTING, THE BLUE (OPPOSITION) FIGURES ARE ON THE DIAGRAM BUT ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE PRACTICE.

## Shadow Play (continued)V



✔ In the diagram (4) running back plays the ball back to his goalkeeper (G).

✔ Coaches can use shadow practices to develop players ability to run off the ball (to attract defenders) and allow team mates time and space to spring into attack.

✔ In this practice (5) in possession comes forward to near the half way line, before playing the ball to (9) who comes forward slightly to receive the pass.

✔ As (5) delivers the ball, (2) out wide sprints forward, while (7) who normally would be tightly marked moves in field quickly to create space for (2) by taking a possible marker with him.

✔ (9) then lays the ball into (2's) path

✔ (2) progresses and looks for (8), (9) and (10) who have moved toward and into the penalty area in an attempt to score.

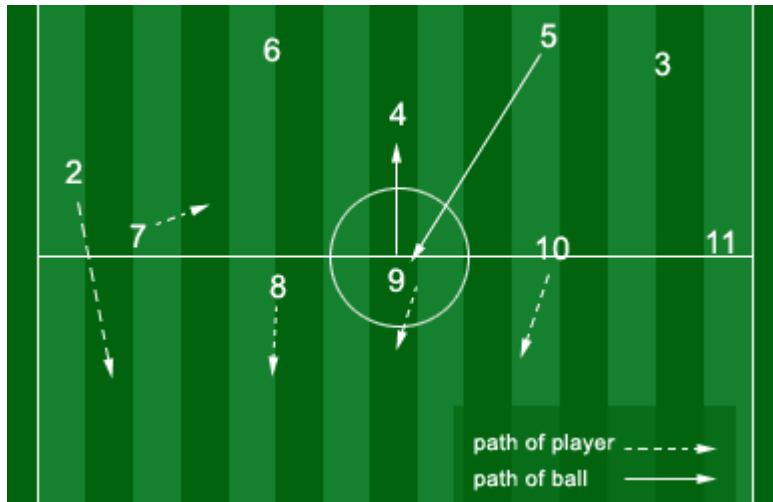
**NB.**

**COACHES MUST INSIST ON SHARP MOVEMENT, GOOD BALL DELIVERY BY (5) AND (9), AND AN ACCURATE CENTRE BY (2) WHEN HE GETS INTO POSSESSION AND POSITION.**

**(8), (9) AND (10) MUST TRY AND SCORE TO COMPLETE THE PRACTICE**

## Shadow Play (continued)VI

In this practice we are looking at setting up play for midfielders giving them various options.



✔ In the diagram, the yellows breaking out of defence have (5) in possession of the ball.

✔ (5) passes to (9) who comes to meet the ball, then laying it back first time to (4).

✔ (4) has several options open to him once he has control of the ball:

a) (4) can play the ball ahead to (8) and (10) who are racing into forward positions

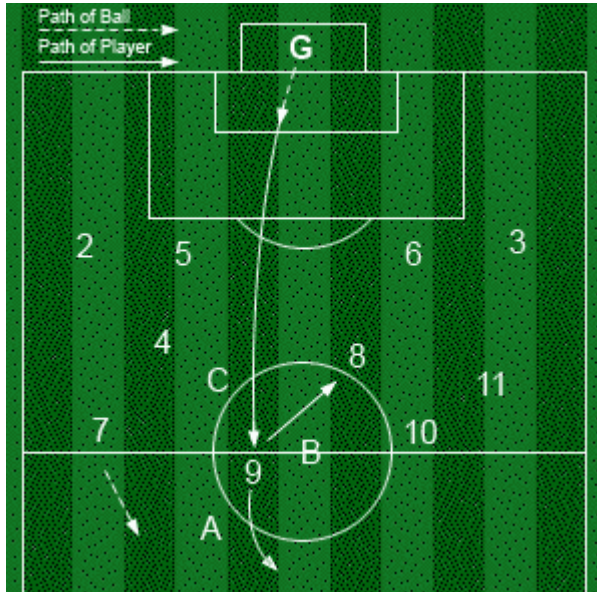
b) (4) can play it wide, switching the play to the left side where (11) is operating

c) (4) can play it wide right. On the diagram (7) moves infield, as if to take a marker with him leaving (2) to come into play to receive (4's) pass OR

d) (4) can, if he has space, advance on his own sprinting into possession into the opponents half.

## Shadow Play (continued)VII

This exercise is all about players being positionally alert when their goalkeeper kicks a long ball from his hands.



✔ In the diagram goalkeeper (G) advances and volleys a long ball towards the target man (9).

✔ Good delivery from (G) (as opposed to a very high kick which would normally give the opposing defenders a better chance of winning the ball) is important - aimed at (9).

✔ WITH NO OPPOSITION THIS SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT AND GIVES PRACTICE TO (G)

✔ As the ball arrives at (9): - if head height he could

a) Flick the ball on, so (7) and (10) should be ready to run on to that (as in diagram). If head or chest height he could

b) lay the ball back short to (8) who would collect and continue the practice setting up the play as in previous exercises.

c) Play it first time wider towards (4) who would control then set up a right flank attack

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL OTHER PLAYERS REACT;- e.g.

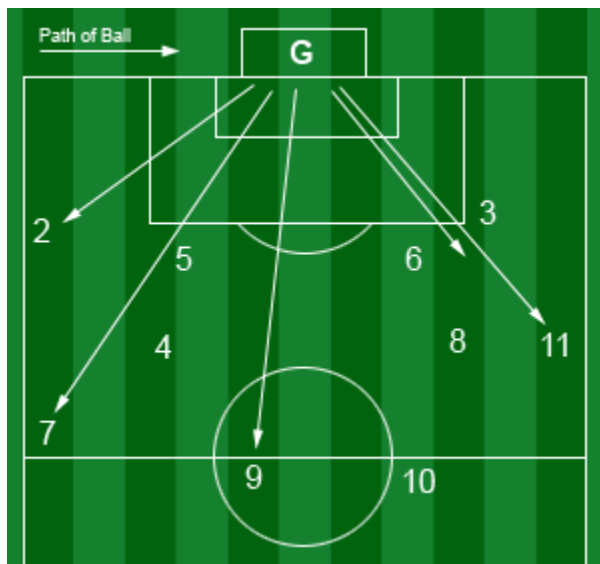
1) The defence moves forward quickly, so that the team moves forward as a unit.

2) The midfield players (4) and (8) are alert to support the attackers (9), (7), and (10).



3) Wide players (11) and (7), could come into play quite easily once (4) and (8) receive the ball.

### *Shadow Play (continued) Players reacting to the Goalkeeper VIII*



This is a simple exercise but one which is important to all players in the team.

// The practice starts with the ball being played back to the goalkeeper - probably by the coach, - this allows the goalkeeper to pick up the ball if he so wishes.

// Once the ball is with the goalkeeper there are several options

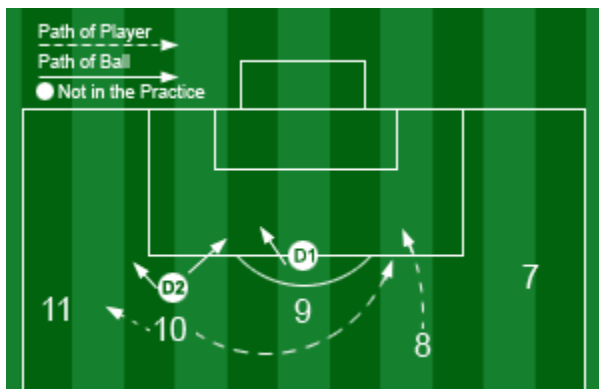
1. Depending on the state of the game the goalkeeper may hold the ball till his defenders have moved forward and then simply punt the ball for distance towards (9) and (10) as the previous practice.
2. As (G) collects the ball (2) sprints wide to the right touchline and (G) throws out to him setting up a right wing move.
3. (G) collects and seeing (3) in space, he simply rolls the ball out in front of him to set up a left flank move. (1) and (10) alter positions accordingly.
4. (G) collects and throws a long pass to (7) or (11) who are both just short of the half way line in wide positions.

// WHICH EVER SELCTION IS MADE THE TEAM CONTINUES ON BUILDING UP TOWARDS A SHOT AT GOAL

// THE COACH SHOULD INSIST ON SHARP REACTIONS FROM EVERY PLAYER ONCE THE BALL IS WITH THE GOALKEEPER.

THE TEAM SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE MOVING AS ONE UNIT THROUGHOUT THE PRACTICE.

## Shadow Play (continued) Playing off the Central Striker IX



In the diagram a long ball is fed up to the central striker (9) who has his back to goal – and would normally be tightly marked by a defender (solid circle).

(9) can control the ball first if he wishes so as to give his colleagues time to run into attacking positions.

In the diagram (10) has three options (a) he can pull away to take (solid circle) with him (b) he can look for a flick on from (9) into the box OR (c) he can run across in front of (9) and take the ball with him.

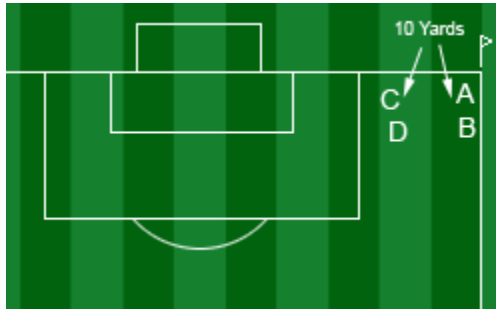
If (10) checks away from (9) to the left, then (9) can try and turn quickly retaining possession, and try a shot at goal himself.

OR he can play the ball through to his left for (8) who has made a forward run (as in the diagram)

If (9) gets into the box in possession, then the ball laid into the path of (8) could bring a first time shot from (8) from around 20 yards.

THE WHOLE PURPOSE IS FOR MOVEMENT AROUND THE BOX IN AN ATTACKING POSITION, TO PUT DEFENDERS UNDER PRESSURE, AND PROVIDE OPTIONS IN THE MINDS OF FORWARD PLAYERS.

## The Short Corner 1



Taken by the attacking team, looking for a variation of tactics when they win a corner kick.

✓ In the above diagram (A) taking the corner kick has (B) a metre or so away (in field).

✓ Initially this will draw one or two defenders out from the danger area, so in the diagram (C) and (D) get ready to face (A) and (B) should (A) play the ball to (B).

✓ But if (A) decides to play the ball straight into the opposing penalty area then, at least, (B)'s position has lured 2 players out from the defence.

✓ Should the defence only send out ONE defender then (A) could play to (B) and they could set up a two against one situation.

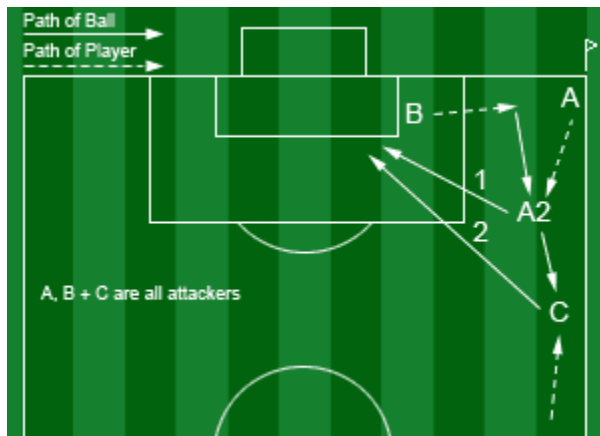
THE WHOLE POINT OF THE EXERCISE IS TO BE ALERT AND TO TRY AND CATCH OUT THE DEFENCE.

USUALLY DEFENDERS SET UP STRONGLY TO PROTECT THE GOAL AT A CORNER KICK; UNVARIABLY EXPECTING A CROSS INTO THE DANGER AREA. THEY MARK MAN TO MAN, AND IT IS WHEN THEY DO THIS THAT A QUICKLY TAKEN SHORT CORNER CAN BE FRUITFUL.

## Attacking at a corner kick - the short corner 2

In earlier practices we have dealt with defending against various types of corner kick, now we need to look at the role of the attacking side.

The short corner is played to try and create an opening for a delivery into the danger area and at the same time to try and catch out defenders in their role as markers. It also changes the angle of the attack.



✔ In the diagram (A) (taking the corner) is alert as (B) moves quickly out of the penalty area to receive a pass played along the ground.

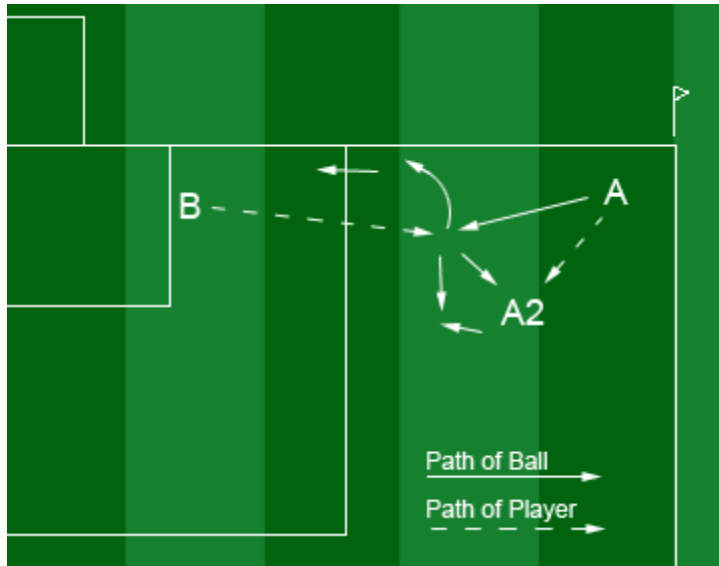
✔ First time (B) lays the ball along the ground to (A) who has now moved out to position (A2).

✔ (B) having already enticed one defender out of the box may now wish to get back towards his first position or may simply wait to see what materialises.

✔ (A) can cross into the box as marked (1) OR can lay the ball back even further to (C) (probably the right side defender) just inside the touchline, and (C) should aim to get the ball into the danger area with a first time cross- marked 2

✔ Should (C) wish he could run with the ball and set up a possible 2 against 1 situation, involving (A) down the right flank. Much will depend on the position the defenders takes up.

## The short corner 3



Here is a move at a short corner, which can be very effective.

It is simple and will catch out defenders if they are not doing their job

Once again as in the diagram (B) runs out from his position just outside the 6 yard box – but this time he runs out angling his run slightly away from the touchline as in the diagram.

(A) plays the corner kick along the ground to (B's) feet, and (B) then has two options

1. (A) will communicate to him whether he is tightly marked. If he is he can lay the ball back to (A) at (A2).

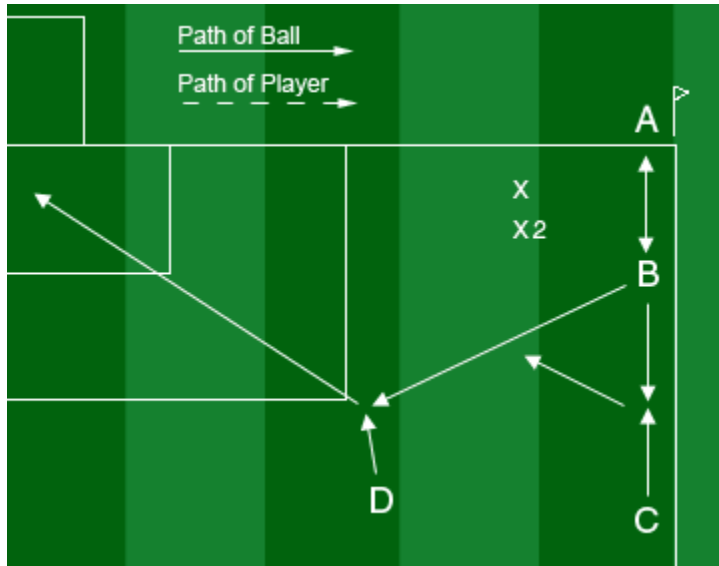
He can do that in two ways: -

(a) A simple lay back pass first time OR

(b) (B) can turn towards the goal line quickly as shown in the diagram and then back heel the ball into (A's) path – so taking (A) clear of any nearby defender.

2. If (B) is not tightly marked he can turn with the ball (see diagram) and cross when he is ready into the danger area.

## The short corner 4

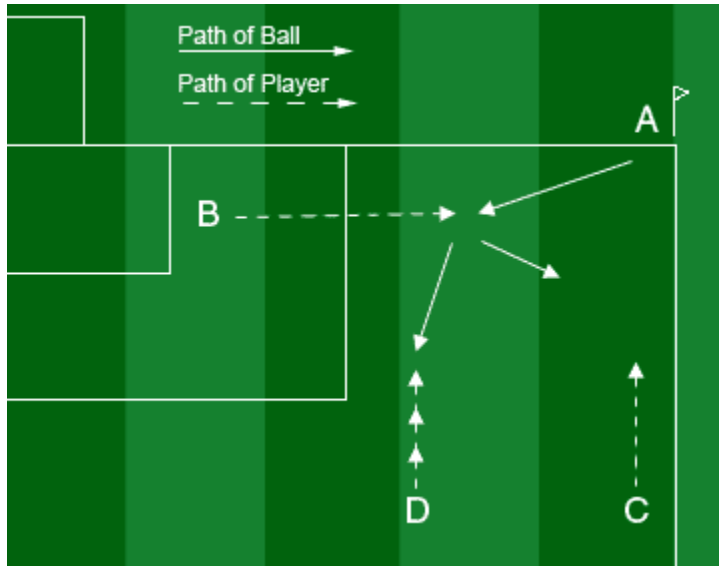


- ✓ Another play at the short corner involves the introduction of a 4th player – (D) in the diagram.
- ✓ Here as (A) and (B) go out to take a short corner, they are checked as the defending team get 2 defenders (X) and (X2) out quickly to prevent any quick move.
- ✓ But the arrival of the 2 defenders open 2 other options: -
  1. (A) will communicate to him whether he is tightly marked. If he is he can lay the ball back to (A) at (A2).

He can do that in two ways: -

    - (a) A simple lay back pass first time OR
    - (b) (B) can turn towards the goal line quickly as shown in the diagram and then back heel the ball into (A's) path – so taking (A) clear of any nearby defender.
  2. If (B) is not tightly marked he can turn with the ball (see diagram) and cross when he is ready into the danger area.

## The short corner 5



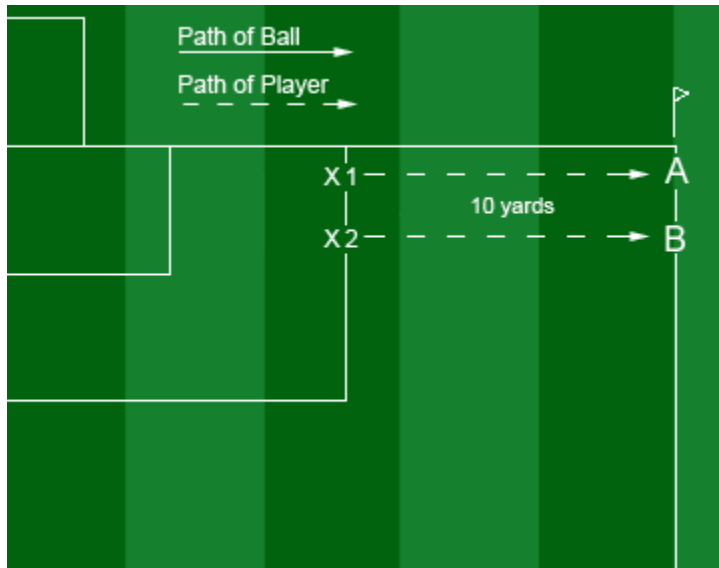
A more difficult play involves quick movement and technical ability, but if performed well can cause the defenders real problems.

- ✓ (A) taking the short corner waits until (B) begins a sharp run almost along the goal line towards him (see diagram).
- ✓ (B), once he loses his marker, plays the ball back at the angle to (D), who (as in the last practice) is moving forward from a deep position. If (B) can play the ball first time all the better.
- ✓ If (B) is tightly marked, or has a difficulty playing to (D), then he can play the ball back to (A), OR can lay the ball back to (C) making a forward run down the right flank.
- ✓ The practice is to get all four attacking players alert to the possibility of a varying threat on goal.

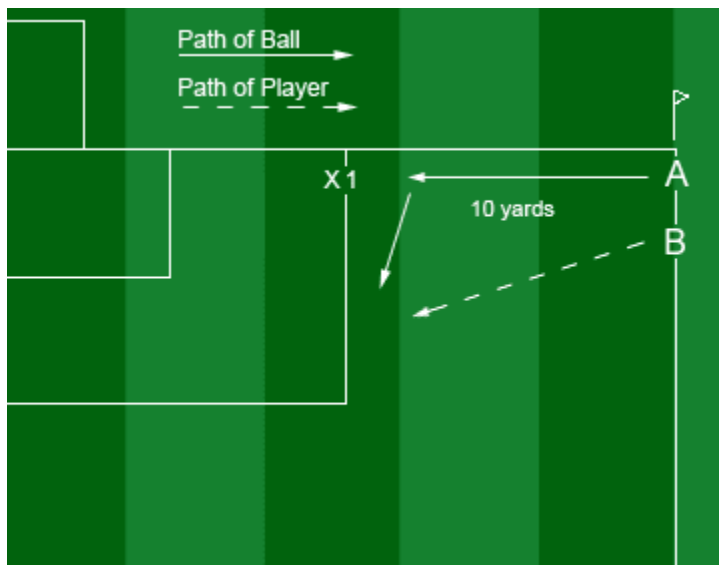
## Defending against a short corner (1)

- At any corner kick, being alert is crucial for defenders as forward or attacking players manoeuvre around – as we have suggested in the previous exercises.
- Each defender has to be ready to spot the danger or nearest threat to goal.

So initially if two attacking players are set to play a quick short pass or a corner kick then two defenders should be ready to block the route to goal (as in figure 1)



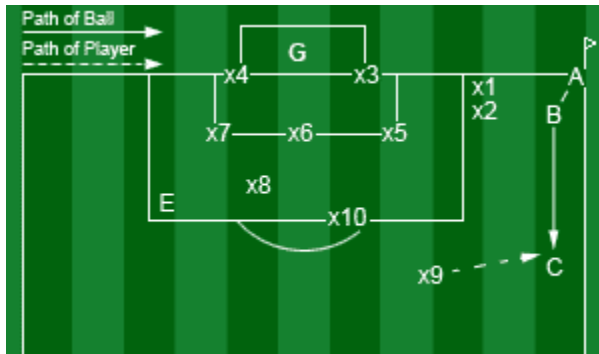
- So as (A) and (B) take the short corner, (X1) and (X2) (defenders) (starting 10 yards away) move in to tackle.
- If only ONE defender (X1) goes out then (A) can pass to (B), who touches it back to (A), then makes an angle away from the defender (X1)
- (A) then runs the ball at (X1), who has to commit himself, then the easy pass puts (B) clear to cause a threat a goal as in figure 2.



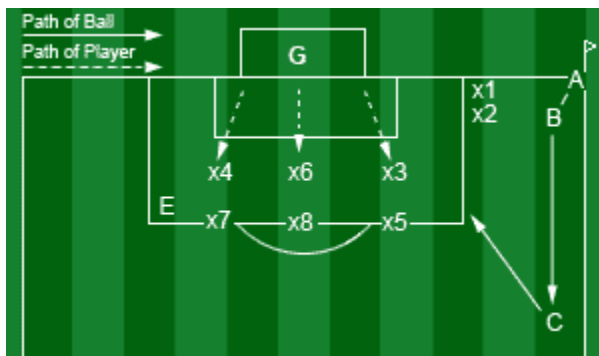


## Defending against a short corner (2)

Diagram (1)



- // In the same situation as before, if (B) goes close to (A) at the corner kick, then defenders (X1) and (X2) go to within 10 yards. The other defenders line up as at a normal corner kick marking attacking players.
- // But if (C) joins the attack down the right flank then the defenders must try and prevent an easy cross into the box from (C) and so (X9) must track back to check (C's) move.
- // But if (C) gets clear then the defenders, especially (X4) and (X3) must move out of the goal area quickly, so as to not play all the attackers inside.
- // So as the ball reaches (B) and is played back to (C) the defender (X4) and (X3) move out and they will push (X5), (X6) and (X7) out as well.
- // This ensures that the attackers must try and keep outside and it also gives goalkeeper (G) a clear view and space to try and deal with any angled crosses from (C).

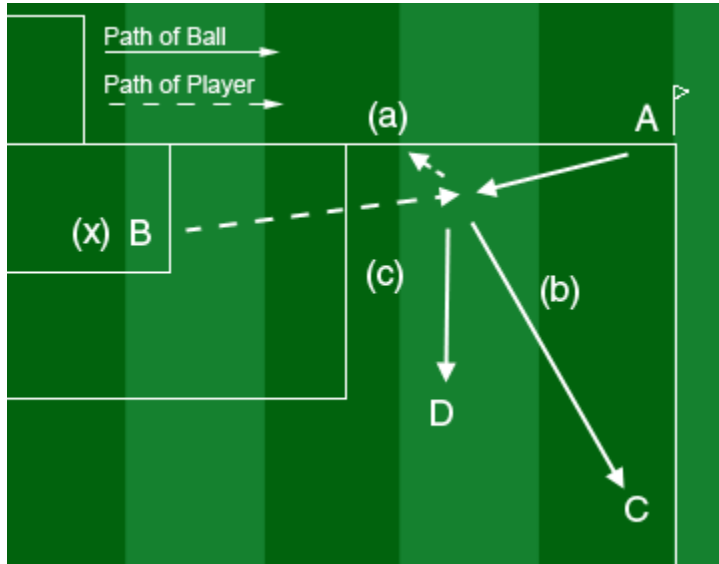


So keeping formation (see diagram 2) (X4), (X6) and (X3), (X5), (X7), (X8) holding their positions round the edge of the box) move out smartly - keeping aware of attackers positions - particularly the wide position (E) should (C's) centre sail over every defender.

N.B. DEFENDERS SHOULD PRACTICE AS A UNIT, MOVING IN AND OUT TOGETHER, - COACHES CONSTANTLY MAKING THEM AWARE OF THE DISCIPLINE OF MOVING TOGETHER.

## Defending against a short corner (3)

In the short corner (attacking) see previous short corner exercises, 3 and 5 (B) raced out towards the corner taker (A) to receive a quickly taken short corner (see diagram 1)

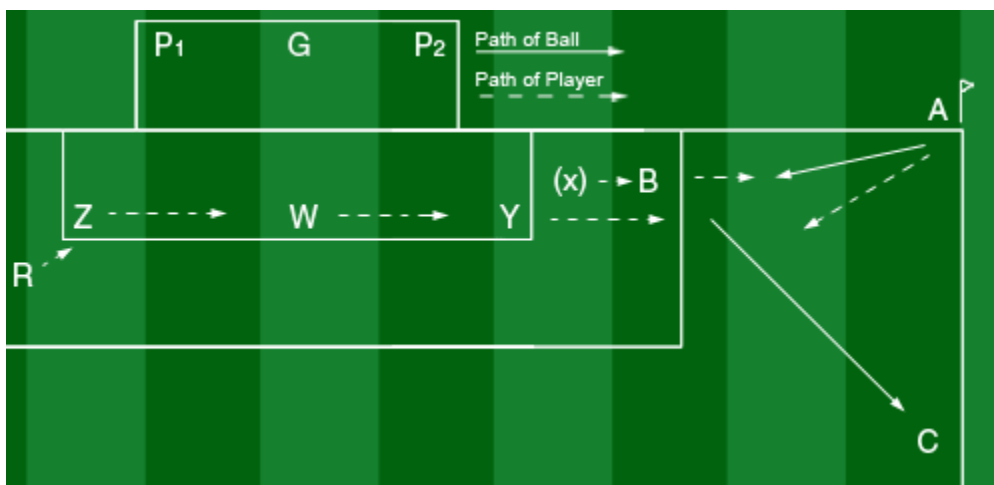


On receiving the ball (B) has 3 options;

- /// Turn to the left to then try and attack the goal move (a)
- /// Play the ball back to (A) or to (C) who has moved up move (b)
- /// Turn quickly to the right and play the ball to move (D)

So defenders have to be ready for all eventualities –

- /// As (B) sets off a defender (X) sets off after him to try and prevent the quick turn and centre; defender (Y) also moves out to cover (X) and also to be ready to make a 2 against 2 challenge if (B) plays the ball back to (A).



Other defenders adjust if this happens, (W) and (Z) move across slightly, (R) drops into replace (2), but (P1) and (P2) remain on the posts.

If (B) plays the ball back to (C) then players adjust, and a forward player (as in the last exercise) drops back to try and prevent (C) having a comfortable time to control the ball before crossing.

ALL OTHERS MOVE OUT AS IN THE LAST EXERCISE

## Defending against a short corner (4)

Defenders also need to be aware of players being used as decoys.

In diagram below (E) is the attacking player setting off from inside the 6 yard area, while (B) is stood alongside (A) taking the corner kick.

With (A) and (B) together, as mentioned in earlier practices 2 defenders (marked x) stand 10 yards away, ready if (A) plays the ball to (B).

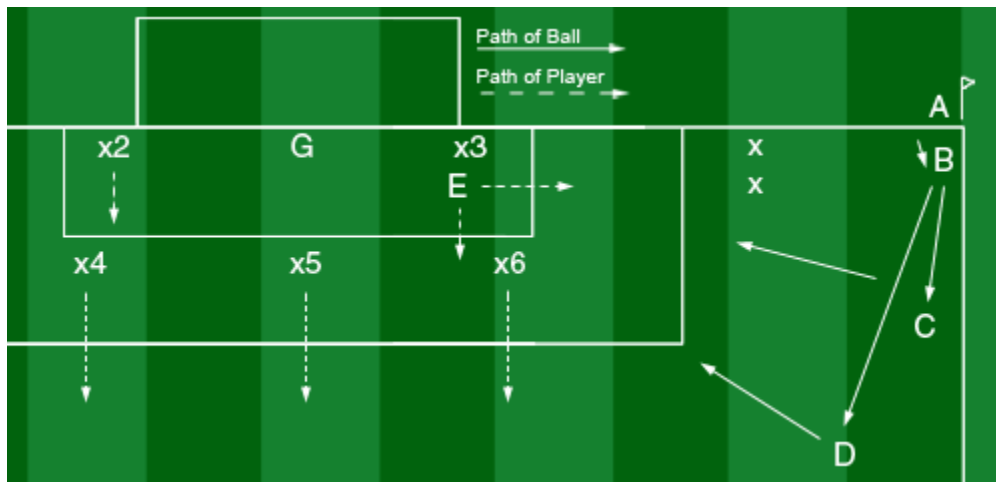
With (E) also moving towards the corner flag, another defender also is committed.

The danger here is should (A) completely ignore (B) and (E), and instead play the ball direct from the corner to either (C) or (D) moving forward. Both would be in a position to change the angle of attack by centring the ball.

Defenders on the posts (X2 and X3) and in the 6-yard area should move out giving the goalkeepers space to view any cross near to goal.

As in diagram 2 in the previous practice a disciplined move out is essential – all must move in line as one – always remembering to ensure the central area is covered.

Forwards should not be allowed free headers at goal! All marked man to man.



**SHOOTING**

## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

- ✓ The skill of shooting can be described as "passing the ball past the goalkeeper and into the net".
- ✓ Therefore, the techniques of shooting are simply an extension of good passing techniques.
- ✓ However, whatever technique is used in shooting the principal points always remain the same.

### **They are:**

- 1 Decide on which technique to use
- 2 Concentrate on accuracy – "hit the target"
- 3 Keep the head down and steady
- 4 Strike through the ball
- 5 Observe the position of the goalkeeper
- 6 Identify the area of the goal which is most vulnerable

- ✓ One important element not covered in the above technical points is that of the "attitude" of the player to practice.
- ✓ Resisting the "opportunity to shoot" is a common problem amongst players and so, before working on technique, the coach must affect the "attitude" of the players. This will bring about the quickest improvement in performance.
- ✓ Shooting techniques can be improved through correct, unopposed practice, but these practices must be developed to incorporate opposition.
- ✓ The inclusion of opposition provides the element of "realism" into the practice and therefore creates "game situations" for the player.
- ✓ The coach must then observe whether the player has elected the correct technique for the given situation.

### **Practice**

- 1 Server (S) rolls the ball gently towards forward (F) who runs forward and tries to score by shooting first time. Repeated on both sides!

### **Points to note**

- 1 Younger players may feel "safer" by using the side of the foot. This lacks power (although often more accurate) so the coach should suggest a strike with the instep to increase the power in the shot.

### **Shooting techniques**

- 1 Head down, looking at the ball at the moment of contact.
- 2 Body over the ball to keep the shot under the crossbar.
- 3 To drive it low, place the non-kicking foot alongside the ball.
- 4 For power – follow through with the kicking foot after the ball has been struck.

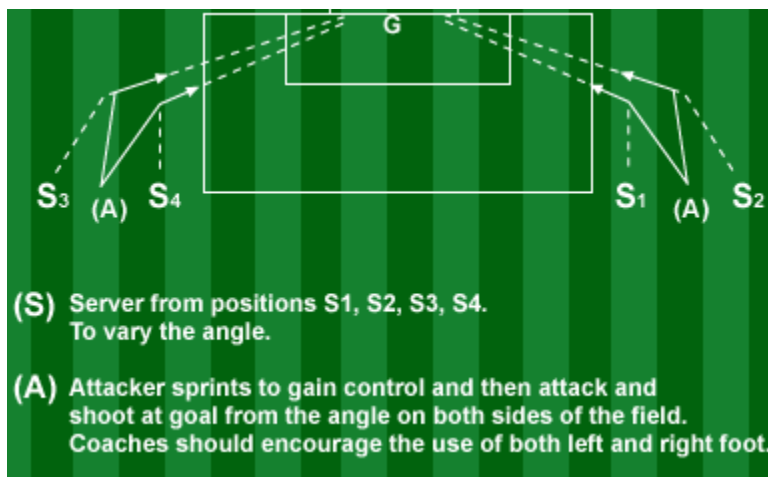
## SHOOTING PROGRESSION

Following on from the initial practice players should now look at attempting to hit the target from various angles, - and/or striking the ball from different heights. The technical principles are no different from those mentioned in the opening lessons on shooting - coaches still insisting to players the importance of the right attitude to the practice at all times.

### Remember when shooting;

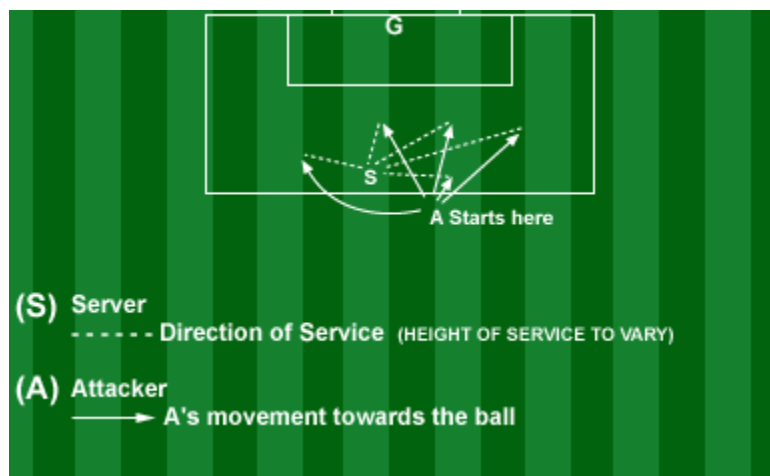
- 1 Eyes on the ball at the moment of strike.
- 2 Body over the ball to keep the shot down.
- 3 Look up before the moment of strike to see where opponents are.
- 4 Place the non-kicking foot alongside the ball if you want a low drive.

### Practice 1



- Coming in from the angle.
- Server (S) varies the delivery - from positions 1, 2, 3 & 4.
- Attacker (A) controls the ball as quickly as possible before striking at goal (COACHES SHOULD STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRST TOUCH CONTROL - CONTROLLING THE BALL TO ADVANTAGE AS OPPOSED TO SIMPLY STOPPING THE BALL WHEN IT ARRIVES AT A PLAYERS FEET).
- A1 should note the position of the goalkeeper (G) - has he covered his angles? Are there any spaces?
- Whenever possible attackers should go for power shooting, as the speed of the ball alone may be enough to beat the goalkeeper.

## Practice 2



This time the SERVER (S) throws the ball up (about 2 metres from the ground, attacker (A) has to either

- a) control the ball, and then strike at goal or
- b) volley it first time at the target.

The server can vary the angle of the serve, occasionally throwing it to left or right which necessitates the striker moving quickly from his starting position, gaining quick control before finishing with a strike or goal.

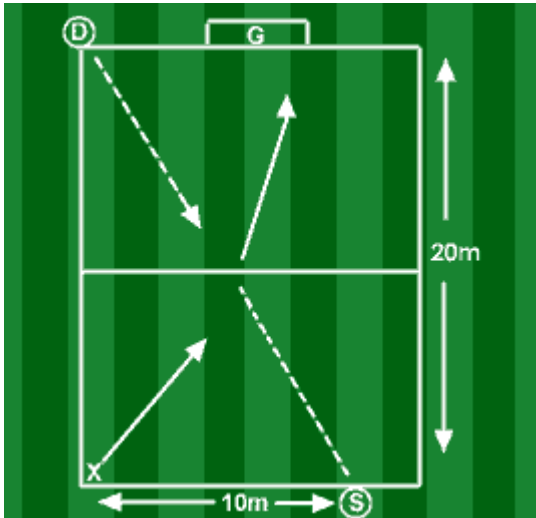
### **AT THIS STAGE, WE ARE SIMPLY DEALING WITH THE TECHNIQUE OF SHOOTING.**

- ✓ Players should learn to be aware of their own positions, and that of the goalkeeper.
- ✓ To ensure the required speed in the practice coaches should set time limits on attackers. eg From the moment the ball is served, attacker (A) has 5 seconds to gain control and then get a shot in on goal. This brings a more urgent ingredient into the practice and necessitates the attacker aiming for quick control and an early shot at goal – a technique required in match situations.

## SHOOTING ON THE RUN

There are various techniques required in shooting and we can look at them in turn, starting with a basic practice of shooting on run.

### Practice 1



i) Ball moving from the striker

Organisation area 20 M x 10 M (half way line)  
1 goal with goalkeeper  
1 striker X  
1 server S  
6 balls (approx)

### Practice

Server S stands behind the striker. He serves down the side (the right side in practice 1) and it is up to striker X to move to the ball quickly, get it under control, and after assessing the position of the goalkeeper decide which technique he needs to try and score.

Eg If the ball is rolled he will want to drive the ball (head down, non-kicking foot alongside the ball using the arms for balance) hoping to beat the goalkeeper for pace.

Conversely if the service is a bouncing ball, then X will probably choose to volley or half volley his hot at goal.

NB The half way line (10 metres) can be used to determine that the striker X does not get too close to the goal before shooting. The coach insisting all shots must be 10m out - or even more!

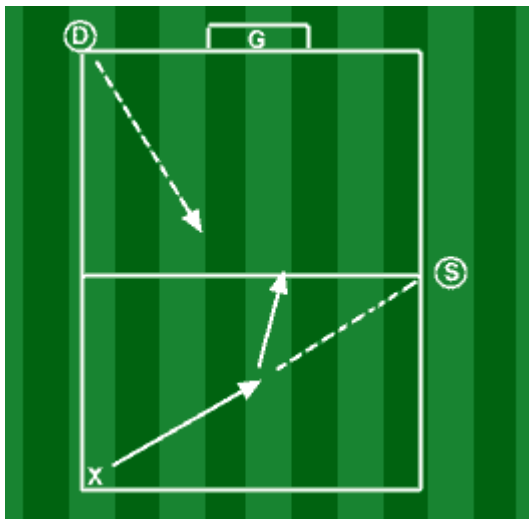
TO PROGRESS THIS PRACTICE A DEFENDER (D) can be brought in. He could have a start position on the goal line (as in practice 1 diagram) and as soon as S serves he should be ready to sprint across to try and block X's shot, or if not try and get in a tackle. This should serve to speed up X's control and shot at goal.



## Practice 2

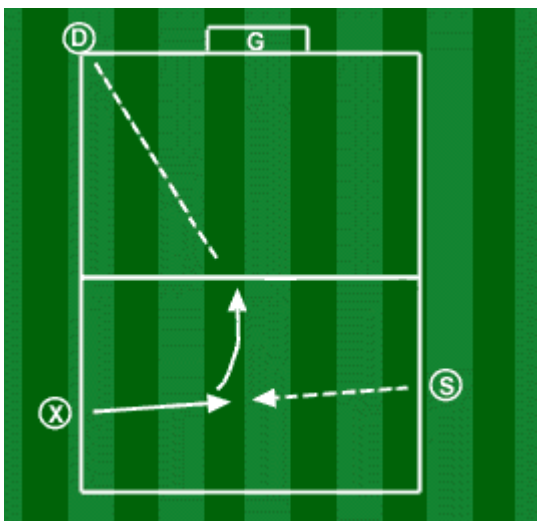
Balls moving towards the striker (same area 20m x 10m). This is similar in organisation to Practice 1 but the position of the server S has now changed.

S now serves from the side, 12m ahead of X who has to move quickly, take control of the ball before shooting at goal. The same principles apply as in Practice 1 and once again defender D can be brought in to progress the practice. If need be X may wish to strike S's serve first time. If so, then the striker should be allowed to do so.



## Practice 3

Balls moving across the striker



The position of the server S can be changed and this will alter the shooting technique required by X.

In practice (3) S1 stands opposite striker X and passes the ball towards him.

- ▲ X now needs to move quickly towards the ball, control the ball and then assess the position of the goalkeeper before shooting.
- ▲ If need be X can shoot first time, the type of technique required will depend on the height and weight of the service.
- ▲ Again D can be used as a defender when needed - IF NOT S may be used to follow his pass and act as a defender, or at least put some pressure in the striker X to get

in his slot as quickly as possible.

To progress, EXTEND THE AREA TO 30m X 20m and use 8 players (4 X's and 4 O's) lining up as figure 4.

#### Practice 4

Now X serves diagonally, to O who moves to control and get in a shot at goalkeeper B as quickly as possible.

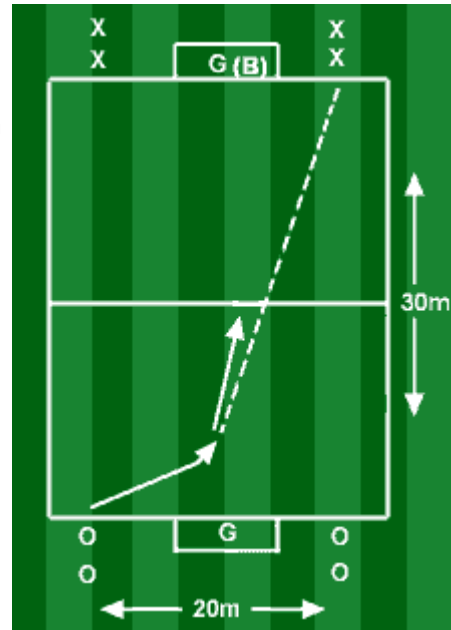
After shooting O rejoins the back of the opposite group.

X can either run on to join the opposite group or can follow his pass to X and become a defender between O and the goal B.

X must get his shot in quickly insist on accuracy and X must also follow up his shot in case the ball rebounds from the post or the goalkeeper.

The same practice and principles can apply from the other end with X providing the service and O taking on the role of striker, and so the practice rotates.

All previous coaching points apply in this practice. Service should be varied - driven, chipped, or even punted high in the air for X to control before shooting.



## *SHOOTING - Free Kick*

### **TECHNICAL PRACTICE FOR YOUNG PLAYERS - SHOOTING AT A FREE KICK (DEAD BALL)**

//Television has highlighted the skill of "bending the ball" to try and beat a wall of defenders and the goalkeeper.

//David Beckham has perfected it, to such an extent that he has the confidence to try and score from free kicks at any angle and at distances up to 30 metres. French star Zinedine Zidane is another equally adept.

//So how have they managed to achieve such expertise?

//Simple, - practice, practice and practice until they get it right.

//So listed below are the basic principles and practices that can help any youngster wishing to emulate the Beckhams's and Zidane's of this of this world.

#### **FIRST THE TECHNIQUE** (for a right footed player):

Approach the ball from the left - experiment with the angle until you feel comfortable.

Kicking Foot

- a) Use the inside of the right foot.
- b) The foot on contacting the ball comes across the ball from inside to outside, and makes contact with the right side of the ball.
- c) It is almost like kicking across the base of the ball, and it enables the ball to swerve from right to left.
- d) To lift the ball (say above a wall of defenders) contact must be made below the mid area of the ball. .

#### **Non-Kicking Foot**

To the left side of the ball, slightly behind the ball - the position depending on what sort of elevation is required. The nearer the ball, the more difficult it is to lift the ball.

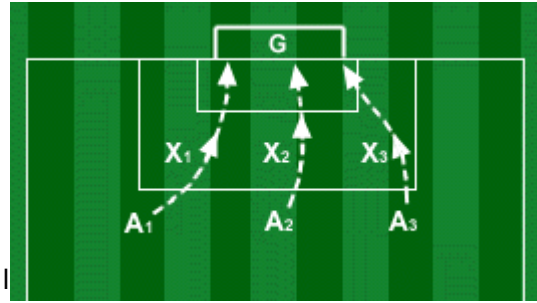
#### **Position of the Body**

- a) The head should remain steady - eyes looking down at the ball until after the contact is made.
- b) Arms used for balance, the rest of the body slightly leaning backwards.

## Practice 1

### Organisation

1 goal (goalkeeper), supply of balls  
Place the ball just outside the penalty area (as in A1)  
X1 - a post (or if one is unavailable a player can be used)



✔ To begin with A1 tries to bend the ball around X1 (who remains stationary if it is a player. \* Hitting the target is important but not crucial to begin with.

✔ A1 can then re-adjust his position to A2 (X1 moves to X2), then to A3 (X2 to X3) so as to vary the angle.

✔ The Goalkeeper must try and save every ball that comes his way, making it a real incentive for A to score at all.

✔ As well as angle, distance can also be altered depending on the success rate of A's efforts.

✔ **This practice in itself is often enough for young players who first have to master the technique. It is literally a case of practice, often a player on his own kicking (bending) the ball at whatever target he wishes.**

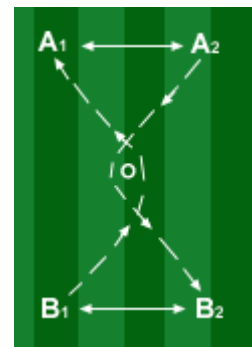
For example 2 players could work on "bending" the ball, around any sort of post so that there is a continual practice for both of them.

They could manoeuvre their own positions to make more difficult or easier targets, and they could have a competition to see who could swerve the ball most effectively - totting up the successful attempts.

**Practice 2** (In an area 30 metres square) 1 ball, 1 post

B1 swerves the ball round the post to A1, who After receiving moves to position A2.

B1 then moves to position B2, A2 now tries to swerve the ball round the post to B2.



As players improve at the skill, then a second post (a metre away) can be added to add to the difficulty.

But the practice can develop by introducing more defenders - and walls of 2, then 3 and finally 4 players although this will come later.

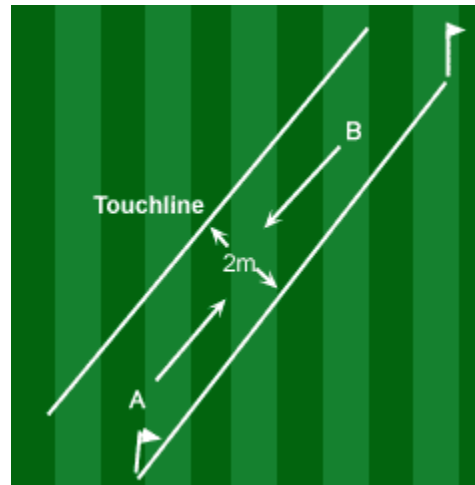
## IMPROVE ACCURACY

Practices to improve accuracy in shooting · These practices are aimed at accuracy as opposed to the power in shooting - nevertheless players should be encouraged to strike the ball firmly and with the instep. · In these practices the coach can decide whether the ball should be kicked from a stationary position, or when it is rolling.

### Simple practices for starters

#### Practice 1

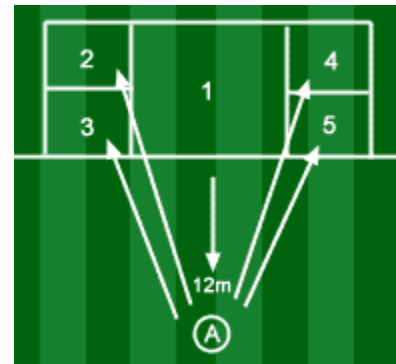
In practice 1, A & B, two players 15 metres apart, one ball. 3 corner flags placed 2 metres from the touchline (as in fig 1) and A tries to shoot past B - keeping the ball inside the area.



#### Practice 2

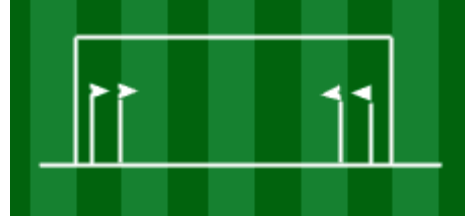
In figure 2, the goal is either a shooting board or wall, with sections drawn on it.

- Player shooting 12 metres from goal.
- Player A, now has to score points by hitting the different sections marked 1 - 5.
- The coach can improve the competition by scoring points for difficult targets, like 2 & 4, and using various players to see who can score the most. · Should a player miss the goal the coach should deduct points - this encouraging accuracy from the players.
- At a later stage the practice difficulty can be increased by (a) putting a goalkeeper in and (b) making the striker hit different types of service at the target, ie volley, rolling ball, half volley etc.



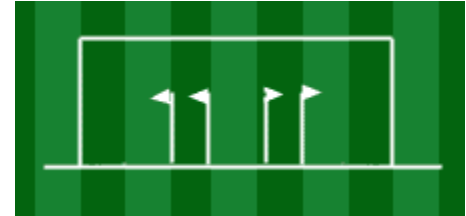
### Practice 3

A variation on this practice can be brought about by placing 4 corner flags on the goal line, ie between regulation goal posts. They can be spread as in figure 3 or placed altogether in the centre of the goal as in figure 4



### Practice 4

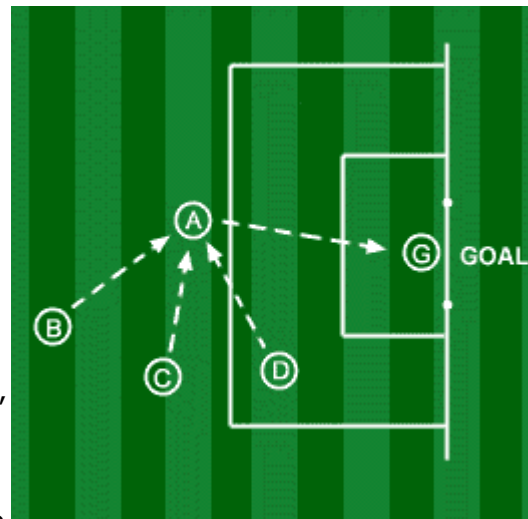
- ▄ The distance, and type of service to the striker can vary according to individual skill levels.
- ▄ The main purpose in figures 3 & 4 is for a player 15 metres from goal to score into the goal without patting any of the corner flags.



### Practice 5

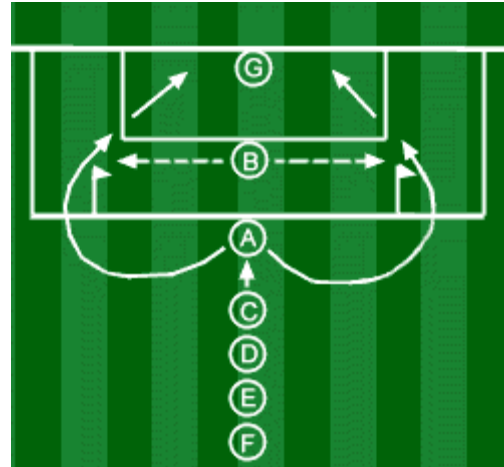
Now we move ahead to striking the ball from the side or angle at the goal guarded by a goalkeeper (G) as in figure 5.

- ▄ A is the striker
- ▄ B, C & D servers, all serving varying types of service to A, who must try and hit the ball first time into the goal.
- ▄ NB The different angles of service and also there must be different types of service - lob (to volley), pass (to shoot first time) OR control and Shoot.
- ▄ Chest high serve, to control and hit as quickly as possible at the target.
- ▄ A must be made to work quickly, even if he has to control the ball, with one or two touches, before shooting G must be encouraged to try and save all shots, A, B, C & D can change positions so that each one in turn appreciates the practice.



## Practice 6

- // In figure 6 two corner flags are placed 5 metres in from the edge of the penalty area. A is the striker, B the server, G goalkeeper.
- // B serves to the right and left, A sprints from his position in the D - round the outside of the flag and shoots first time at the goal.
- // B can vary the service and can also widen the angle of the shot from A. After A has fired at goal, C replaces him, then D follows C and so on, to maintain the continuity of the practice.



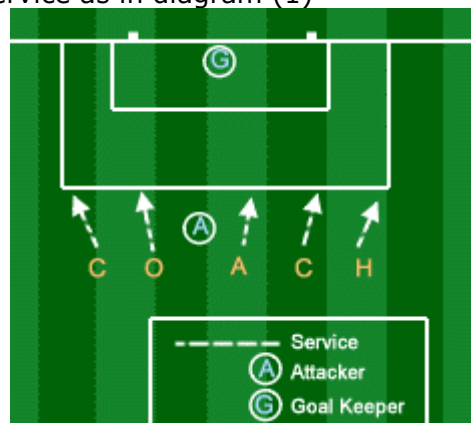
## DEVELOPING SHOOTING FROM A DISTANCE

Rather than just setting up an attacking player and a goalkeeper there are often practices to make distance shooting more realistic.

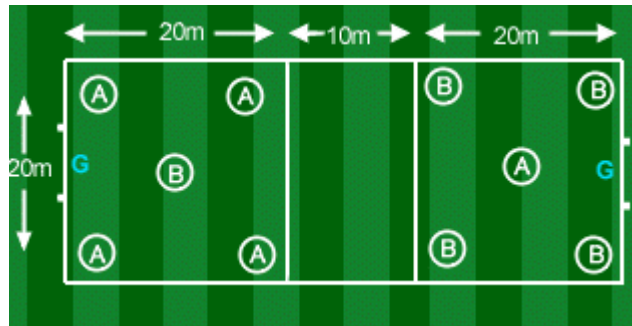
But a good starting point is a pass, or rolled ball by the coach to an attacking player on the edge of the penalty area (18 yards out) and he has to shoot first time - putting the emphasis on hitting the target first and then greater power.

- // The coach can vary the service as in diagram (1)
- // So that (A) the attacker has to shoot at goal from different angles. The coach moves around and also varies the type of service - ground pass, lob, etc.

- // To progress the coach then sets out an area 20 metres x 50 metres and the 12 players set up as in diagram (2) leaving the central 10 metre area vacant.



- // So that (A) the attacker has to shoot at goal from different angles. The coach moves around and also varies the type of service - ground pass, lob, etc.
- // To progress the coach then sets out an area 20 metres x 50 metres and the 12 players set up as in diagram (2) leaving the central 10 metre area vacant.



So the players are confronted with a 4 against 1 situation in each 20-metre square - with a goalkeeper at each end guarding the goal (4 metres wide).

✓ The idea is that there is one ball, and so the four (A's) have to pass or dribble past the lone (B) in their area, progress to the vacated central area before shooting at the goal guarded by (BG).

✓ If the goalkeeper saves the shot, he then rolls the ball out to one of his own players and then they combine to get in a shot at the opposing goal and so the practice goes on.

✓ The lone player in either section should follow up once the shot from one of his colleagues has been fired in on goal - just in case the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper or even one of the four defenders.

✓ To progress, the ratio of defenders to attackers can be altered to 3 against 2, or if the coach wishes 4 against 2 so as to ensure greater awareness, and better passing skills.

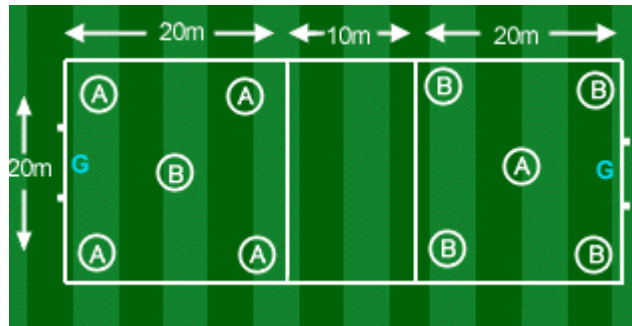
✓ THE COACH SHOULD INSIST THAT WHICHEVER SIDE HAS THE BALL THEY SHOULD PROGRESS TO THE MIDFIELD AREA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO GET A SHOT IN ON GOAL.

✓ THE COACH SHOULD INSIST ON GOOD TECHNICAL ABILITY FROM THE PLAYERS SHOOTING.

✓ EYES ON THE BALL, NON-KICKING FOOT ALONGSIDE THE BALL TO ENSURE THE BALL STAYS DOWN, PLUS GOOD BALANCE FROM THE STRIKER. ACCURACY IS CRUCIAL AND THE COACH SHOULD NOT ACCEPT CARELESS ATTITUDE FROM THE PLAYER TRYING TO SCORE.

In diagram (3), the same area, only now it is 2 x 1 in each 20 metre square - WITH FULL SIZE GOALS AT EITHER END.





As before the 2 (A's) try to pass or dribble past the lone (B) in their square, and in reaching the vacated central area they have to shoot at the goal.

✔ To encourage a shot at the earliest opportunity either of the two (B's) can come out and challenge the (A) player looking for a shot at goal ONCE HE HAS CROSSED THE LINE INTO THE 10 METRE (CENTRAL) AREA.

✔ The coach should ensure the (B's) do not challenge BEFORE THE ATTACKING (A) player has crossed into the shooting zone.

✔ THE FULL SIZE GOAL SHOULD ENCOURAGE MORE CONFIDENCE

**PASSING**

## *SIDEFoot PASS*



Passing with the inside of either foot, keeping the ball on the ground.

### **Advantages**

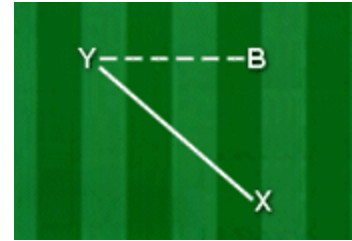
Use the greatest area of the foot is safest, and usually the easiest to perform. The weight of pass is easier to control with this method, and usually more accurate.

### **Points to note**

- // The position of non-kicking foot is invariably alongside the ball when passing.
- // Look at the ball, and keep your head steady
- // Good balance is important, weight of body over the ball, use the arms to steady the body position
- // Use both feet in the practice
- // This always looks simple but practice is needed – remember good habits begin early.
- // Practice Y + X (2 players in square 10 metres x 10 metres)

1 Y passes to X, who stops (controls) the ball before passing back to Y.

2 Y to X, (then Y moves to position B) so X controls the ball, looks up and passes to Y at the new position.



### **Progression**

3 One touch only Y to X who does not stop the ball, but returns it to Y first time with the inside of the foot.

4 1st touch passing, with both players moving round the square. Both Y & X move whenever they make a pass.

5 Pass with both left and right foot.

### **Points to note as practice progresses**

✓Quality must be retained throughout – accuracy.

✓The weight of pass is important for the control of the receiver.

✓Try to use both feet in all stages of the practice.

✓Eventually the 2 players will increase the tempo as the practice progresses and as they become more confident.

✓Coaches can increase the size of the squares to 15 metres or even 20 metres – always demanding accuracy from the players.

## ***PROGRESSION***

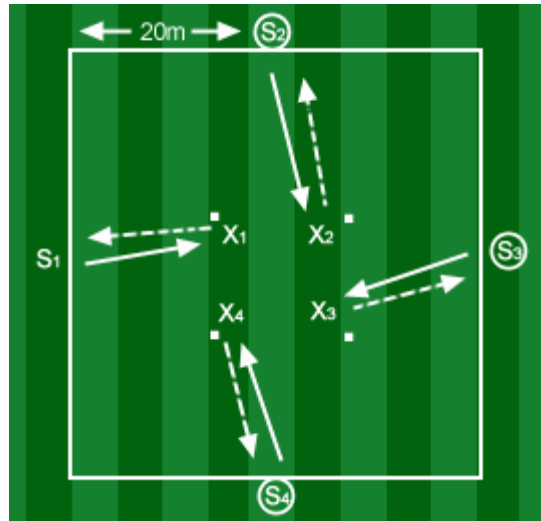
Players must learn quickly how to control, look up, and pass the ball, in the modern game it is the speed of movement and control that separates the quality from the ordinary player. Here are two practices to deal with the improvement of players in these basic skills.

### In practice 1

AREA 20 metres square with 4 cones (6 metres apart) in the centre of the square.

//S1, S2, S3, S4 are the servers and they stand on each side of the square with a ball each.

//The servers all have a partner X1 - X4 whose starting positions are on the inside area of the 4 cones.



### Practice 1

//The servers all serve to their partners who move forward to control as soon as possible and return pass back to the original server.

//The players X1 - X4 all then return back inside the coned area, and move up one.

//So now X1 after dealing with the serve from S1, now returns to the coned area and now receives from S2. X2, moves to S3, X3 to S4 etc.

//The servers all serve simultaneously and the X's must move quickly all the time, looking to avoid other X's and also other balls being served into the central area. S's and X's can rotate roles.

### In Practice 2

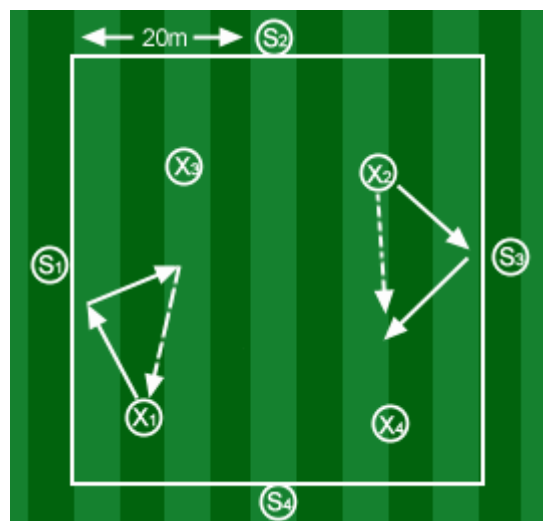
A similar area to Practice 1, this time no cones required.

#### Organisation

//4 players on the sides of the 20 metre square (S's).

//They can move up and down their side of the square.

//In the centre X's, with a ball each.



## Practice

// X's jog with the ball and then suddenly sprint releasing a pass to one of the S's on the edge of the square. S must return the ball first time to X who continues his sprint controlling the ball as he does so from S's return pass.

// X1 - X4 can pass to any of the S's they wish, and from any distance.

// Coaches should insist on variations in the distance of the passing, the quality of the passing (from both X and S) and also the control (with both the inside and outside of the foot).

## Practice 3

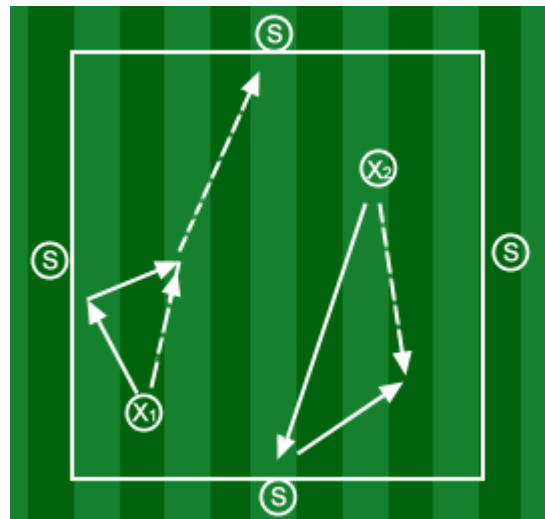
In Practice 3 we have now tightened the area to 10 metres square.

// Still with 4 players (S) on each side of the square.

// The players X1, X2 in the centre with a ball each.

## Practice

// X's pass to any of the S's, take a return pass, control and turn and play out to another S. The passes need to be sharp, the S's must return the ball first time, and they can also move along their side of the square.



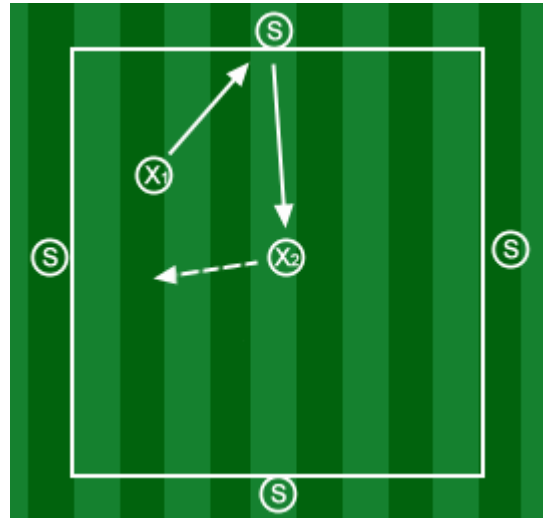
#### Practice 4

Alternatively the X's can work as a pair (with only one ball in the practice).

So in this progression X1 passes to S1, who returns the ball first time to X2.

In the meantime X1 races to a new position, and X2 can then either (a) pass the ball to X1, or (b) to another of the S's on the edge of the square.

Whenever possible players should try and play the ball first time - and the coach should insist on firm, quality passing from both S's and X's.



## PASSING AND MOVING IN TIGHT AREAS

With the game moving faster than ever before it is crucial for any player to be able to pass and move quickly in tight areas.

Some exercises can be used as a "warm-up", but nevertheless for both senior and junior players they should be treated total concentration and respect.

These practices may look simple but they are not - particularly if the passing and movement is carried out at some speed.

#### Practice 1

Passing between 2 groups of 3 players, facing each other. X1 & Y1 should be around 6 metres apart, with X1 in possession of the ball. X1 passes (along the ground) to Y1 after passing the ball X1 races alongside the opposing column of players and joins the near end of it. Y1 when he receives the ball, plays it first time back to X2 and then in turns joins the back

And so the practice continues,

- To advance this practice the next player to receive the ball can move out to the side (and so alter the angle of the next pass to him), which will require his opposite number to look up and gauge the weight of the pass.

Players in these practices must play the ball first time whenever possible and they should be encouraged to use both feet.

Junior players can be allowed to control the ball first, if necessary then pass with the second

touch of the ball. After passing they must sprint to the rear of the opposing column.



## Practice 2

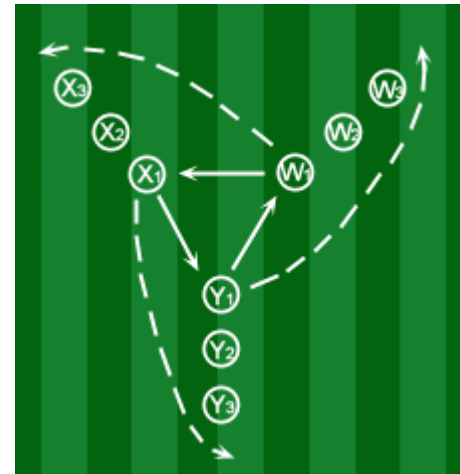
Now passing 3 colours with the players again sprinting behind the opposing column after they have delivered the pass.

### Organisation

X1, Y1 & W1 around 6 metres apart, with 2 players in each column behind them. ONE BALL.

So X1 passes to Y1 who passes it first time to W1, who passes it first time to X2 and so on.

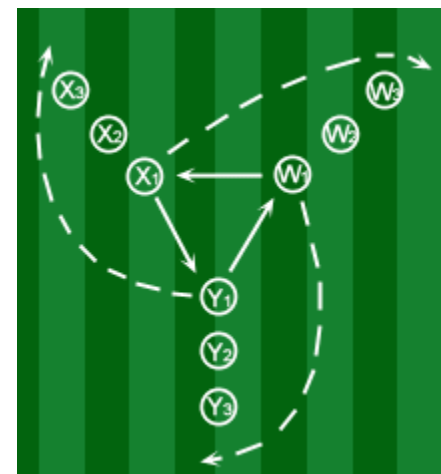
After passing the ball X1 joins the rear of the Y column, - similarly Y1 joins the rear of the W column and so the practice progresses.



## Practice 3

Same organisation as practice 2, but this time after passing the ball from X1 to Y1 - instead of joining the Y column, X1 joins the rear of the W column. Similarly Y1, after passing to W1 joins the rear of the X column - and so the practice progresses.

**IN ALL THESE PRACTICES THE COACH SHOULD DEMAND GOOD TECHNIQUE, SPEED AND TOTAL CONCENTRATION FROM ALL.**



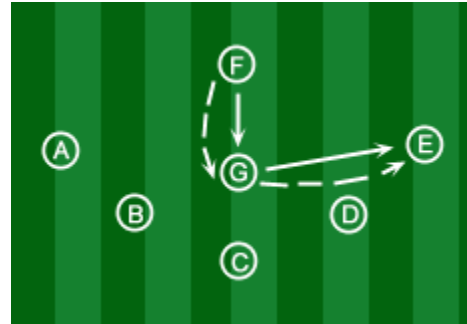


## Practice 4

In practice 4, there are 7 players (this number can be varied between 5 & 8) with the players pairing and changing places.

**ONCE AGAIN THIS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT AT PACE.**

F (from G) passes to G and then runs to the centre to replace him. G, first time plays F's pass on to E and then runs to replace him with E returning to the centre - and so the practice goes on.



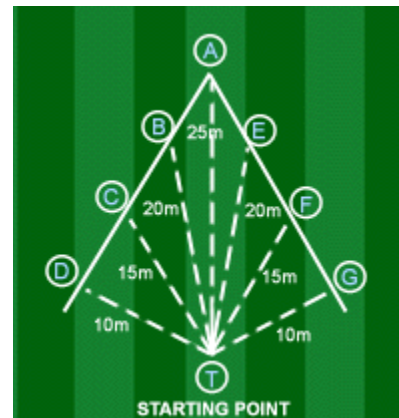
## PRACTICES VARYING DISTANCES

In earlier practices we have discussed ways of improving passing techniques, so now as a progression we can look at something slightly more advanced.

### Organisation

**7** players with a ball each plus target man (T). The 7 players A - G line up as in the diagram 1 varying the angle and the distance between themselves and target (T).

So (D)+(G) - could be 10 metres away from (T)  
(C)+(F) - 15 metres  
(B)+(E) - 20 metres  
(A) - 25 metres



### Phase 1

(D) passes to (T) who returns the ball back to (D). Immediately © passes to (T) who returns the ball back to (D) and so the practice continues around all 7 players.

Points to note

- (T) returns to his starting point after each return of service
- (T) must be accurate with his passing - and should be encouraged to play the ball first time whenever possible.
- The coach must ensure the service from players A - G must be accurate.
- (T) should be moving on his toes whilst waiting for the service so there is a continuity of

movement from (T) throughout.

e. When returning the service to D, C + B, - target man (T) should be encouraged to use the right foot, when passing to E, F + G then the left foot should be used. So the outside foot is the one that would deliver the pass.

//ALL ROLES CAN BE EXCHANGED SO THAT ALL PLAYERS SO THAT ALL PLAYERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADOPT THE TARGET POSITION.

## Phase 2

Similar starting positions to phase 1, only now only ONE ball is used.

(T) starts with the ball, he passes to (D) who returns to (T), who plays on to ©, who returns to (T) and so on around the 7 players until it reaches (G) who then changes to become target man.

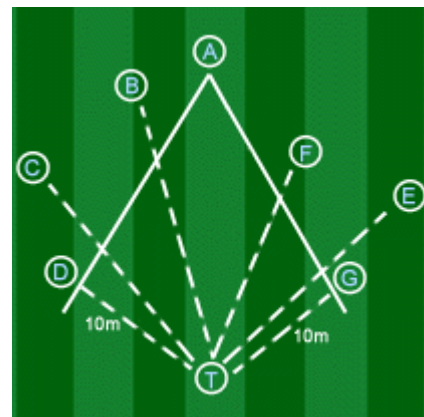
(T) going to (A) and all the players move up one position.

//ONCE AGAIN ACCURACY IS IMPORTANT from all players passing the ball, as is the weight and height ON the ball as it moves on to the next player.

## Phase 3

Distances can be varied, as can the type of delivery needed.

//It doesn't always have to be a side of the foot pass along the ground - although in phases 1 and 2 players will tend to favour this method.



**Diagram 2**

## Phase 4

//In this phase players (D) + (G) have returned in their original positions, as has (A) 25 metres away. But now (C) and (B) have moved wider, (C) to 25 metres (D) to 30 metres.

//On the opposite side (F) is now 20 metres away while (E) has moved back 40 metres from (T).

- To start, each player has a ball, serves to (T) who controls and returns the ball to the server. Whenever possible (T) should try and return the pass first time.
- To progress again only ONE ball is used. To start (D) passes to (T) who plays it on to © who returns, and so on round the group.
- To progress further (D) serves to (T) who can then choose to whom he will pass the ball. Once he has decided, he should nominate his intention. So (D)

serves, (T) shouts out the name "A" and then using his left foot delivers the pass to (A), - who in turn controls and plays it back to (T). (T) then could shout "B" - and so the practice continues.

- d. Before delivering the ball (T) should shout the intended recipient of his next pass OR the coach could shout the name, and it would then be up to (T) to try and carry out the coaches demands.

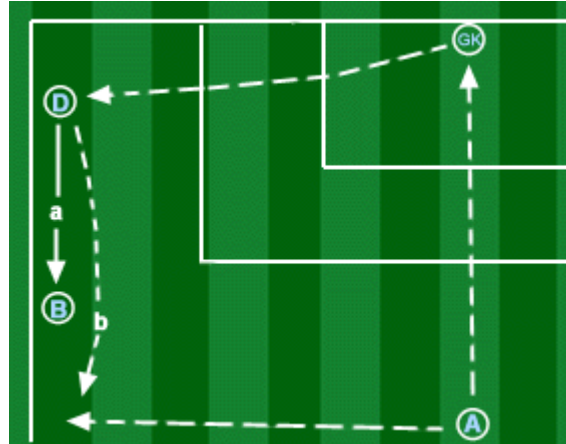
## PLAYING AGAINST THE TOUCHLINE

Playing against the touchline (Defenders in possession of the ball)

▀ Players on the flank often have more space than those in the central areas of the field - but they face the task of limited scope because of the proximity of the touchline.

▀ To familiarise themselves with this (young players in particular) need to practice, receiving the ball first, and then passing it on progressing forward.

▀ The control of the ball (the first touch) is very important, and cannot be stressed enough. A good control (to advantage) sets up the next phase in play. Poor control, and the defender will end up clearing for distance or even for safety as opponents move in to take advantage.



### Practice 1

In practice (1) player (A), inside the centre circle, serves a long ball to goalkeeper (GK) who collects and immediately rolls or throws out to his defender (D) - who is placed 3 metres in from the touchline.

(D) controls the ball quickly, then has two options: -

(a) A sharp pass along the ground with the inside of the foot (right or left alternate) to (B) who is practically on the touchline - positioned there to ensure that there is little room for error in D's pass (B) controls and passes on to (A) to repeat the practice.

**OR**

(b) As soon as (GK) delivers the ball to (D), (A) moves quickly to the flank, and (D) lifts the ball over (B) to (A) who has to control the ball and then (preferably first time) lay it back to (B). (A) then returns to his central position and (B) feeds the ball to him to resume the practice.

N.B. The key points are: -

- (1) D's good first control
- (2) The accuracy of his pass to (B) or (A)

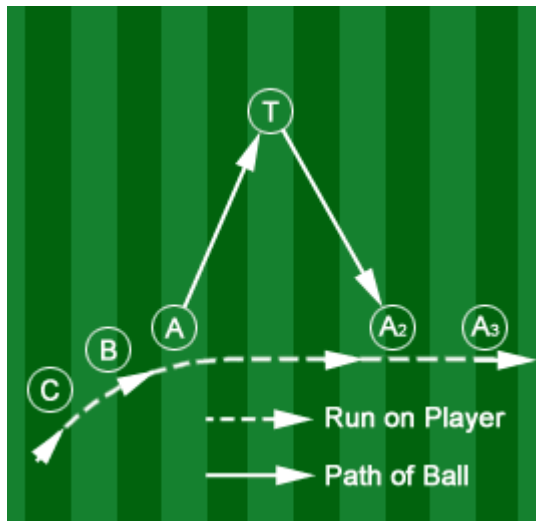
Until (D) is totally confident in the technique required then this practice should be repeated until he is adapt at playing the long and short pass required from that position.

✔ To progress and to require a little more urgency from (D) an attacker (F) can be introduced. He is positioned on the edge of the arc of the penalty area. He remains there until (GK) serves the ball to (D) then he moves in quickly to challenge D.

This will ensure (D) will have to control quickly and then serves on to (B) or (A) before (F) can get in a tackle or a challenge.

## *PASSING ON THE RUN*

### **Practice 1**



✔ This practice is all about accuracy and correct with weight on the pass, and the ability to pass to a player on the move.

//A, B & C all line up with a ball each, and take it in turns to sue the practice.

//A goes first, initially, (for about 2/3 metres) running towards T who is on his toes, never moving far from his starting position.

//A (with the inside of the right foot in the above diagram) serves the ball along the ground then sets off towards a new position at A2.

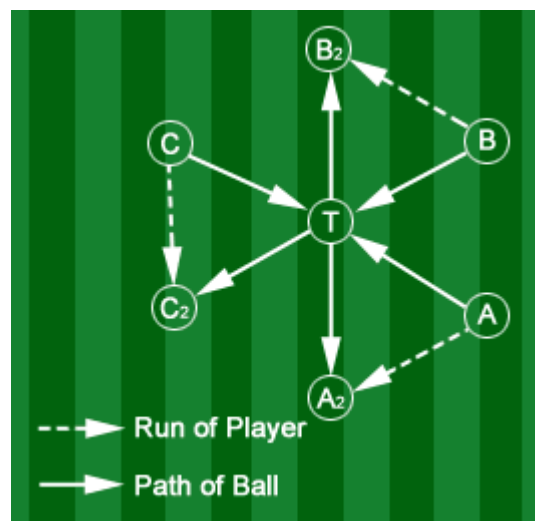
//Once the ball arrives to T, he should play it (first time) into the path of A's run and towards A2.

//THIS IS CALLED A "WALL PASS", SIMPLY BECAUSE T ACTS IN THE SAME MANNER AS WOULD A PASS PLAYED FROM A AT A WALL – with the angle of both passes being important.

//B & C follow A in turn and all finish in an area marked A3 in the diagram 1. Then they turn this time using the left foot, passing to T and getting a return pass somewhere around the position occupied by C in the diagram.

USING BOTH FEET IS IMPORTANT, AND COACHES SHOULD NOT BE EAGER TO PROGRESS UNTIL A REASONABLE TECHNICAL LEVEL HAS BEEN ATTAINED BY THE GROUP.

## Practice 2



//The same players used again in an area measuring 12 metres square, but in this practice T can move around the square facing A, B & C whenever he wants.

//A, B & C all have a ball each, and in turn (moving round the grid) they play the ball at target man T, who plays it back (first time) to adhere they are running. So A plays to T who returns it to position A2 to where A has sprinted.

//While this is going on B & C jog, (with their ball under control) around the square, and only when T faces them should they make the initial pass.

//T shouts 'B', so B then knows and he springs to life passing firmly on the ground to T who returns the ball to B2 – a position to which B has sprinted.

THESE ARE THE BASIC PRACTICES OF THE WALL PASS AND SHOULD BE MASTERED BEFORE MAKING ANY FURTHER PROGRESS.

## *PASSING WITH OPPOSITION INVOLVED*

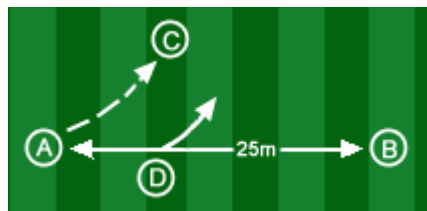
Various practices can be used, using just three or four players ie simple 2 v 1 situations, and these can help develop technique, movement off the ball, and defensive strategy.

Simply skills apply - but should be worked on until they are perfected.

### **Practice 1**

Can develop as a continuous 2 v 1 practice using 4 players A, B, C & D.

A & B start about 25 metres apart, with C & D in between them as in diagram 1.



// A with the ball starts the practice by passing to either C or D, whichever one he passes to the other becomes an opponent.

// So in diagram, A passes to C, so D immediately acts as a defender.

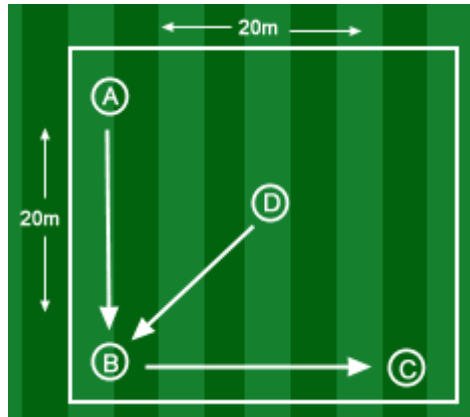
// B is the target, so A & C can interpass until one feels he can play the ball direct to B.

// Once this has been achieved then the practice is reversed with B starting in possession and he passes to either C or D, with A becoming the target man.

// All four players can exchange their roles to maintain full value of the practice.

### **Practice 2**

Now all 4 players move into a 20-metre square, with one ball.



// A, B & C try and retain possession with D acting as the opponent trying to win the ball.

// Once D either wins the ball, or clears it out of the area, then one of the other 3 players takes his place, and so the practice rotates.

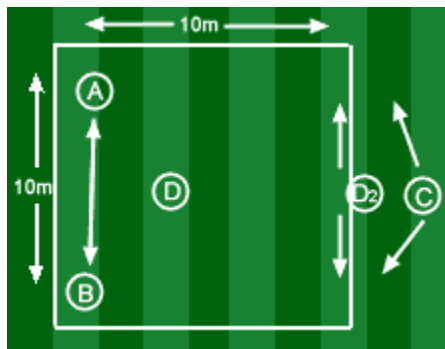
// The practice can be made more difficult for the players in possession by either

// a) tightening the size of the square - down to 10 metres or

// b) making A, B & C play the ball 1st time, or with younger players allowing one touch to control before being made to pass with the next contact of the ball.

### Practice 3

This can be altered slightly again, this time using a 10-metre square.



// A & B are the players in possession D is the opponent, trying to win the ball as A & B interpass.

// C is the target, and he can manoeuvre across (but outside) the square to try and receive a pass from either A or B.

THE COACH COULD INSIST THAT A & B make 3, 4 or 5 passes before passing to C, so as to make them work at passing and movement.

// C should be encouraged to be on the move all the time.

Once again the players can rotate.

To progress D2 can be introduced, and he must remain on the (marked X)

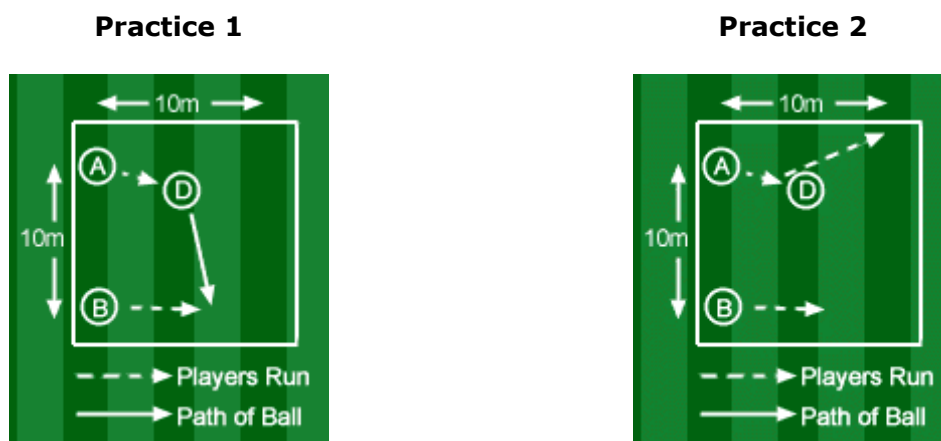
He can move anywhere along that line so as to try and intercept any pass from A or B intended for C.

This makes C manoeuvre around and also puts pressure on A & B trying to deliver the right timing and weight on to their pass as well.

D2 must work off D, and must try and prevent the ball reaching C.

## 2 v 1

Simple practices can provide a number of coaching points for both attackers and defenders, and the 2 against 1 situation is one of them.



Working in a 10 metre square, 2 attackers (A) and (B) against defender (D) ONE BALL WITH (A) IN POSSESSION.

### Practice 1

In this (A) runs towards (D) and as the tackle is about to come in, (A) plays it on to (B) who collects and by-passes (D).

In this situation (A) running directly at (D) commits (D) and so allows (B) space to receive a pass (providing he doesn't move forward too quickly and so cuts off the angle of (A)'s pass.

### Practice 2

(D) is slightly more cautious here, holding off (perhaps back pedalling a little) and moving

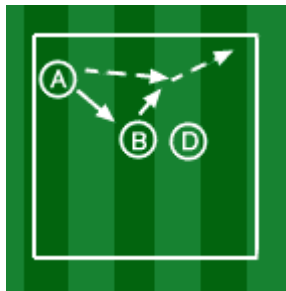


slightly nearer to (B).

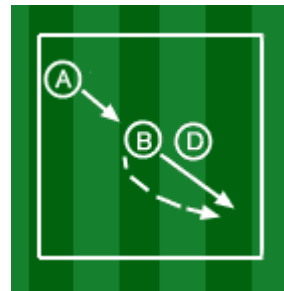
//So (A) spots this and instead of running directly at (D), suddenly changes direction and sprints on the airside of (D) who has over committed himself towards the possible pass towards (B).

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IN ALL PRACTICES DEFENDER (D) SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO TACKLE AND WIN THE BALL. BY ENSURING THAT ATTACKERS DO NOT RUN 'OFFSIDE' THE COACH CAN ASSIST (D) IN HIS DEFENSIVE ROLE.

**Practice 3**



**Practice 4**



//If (A) and (B) are not having much success as they try to by pass (D) then the coach should recommend ways of assisting them.

//Look at practice (3)

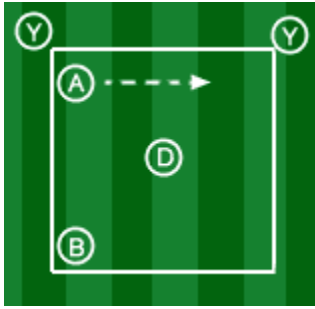
//(B) now instead of standing wide of (D) moves directly in front of him, as though he is making it easier for (D) to mark him.

//In point of fact it is now more difficult for (D), as (A) moves towards (B) and plays the ball to him.

//The moment it is arriving at (B)'s feet (D) is unsure whether (D) will hold the ball, play it back to (A) who has run forward (as in practice (1) OR let it run, using (A) as a decoy and so leave (D) stranded (as in practice (2)).

BY TAKING UP THIS POSITION (B) HAS ALSO RESTRICTED (D'S) VIEW OF THE BALL, AND THE CLOSER (B) IS TO (D) THE MORE DIFFICULT IT OFTEN IS FOR (D) TO WIN THE BALL.

## Practice 5



▀ In practice (5), both (A) and (B) use the full width of the 10 metre square. By doing this (D) has to work his angles, and try and force (A) down the line marked (Y).

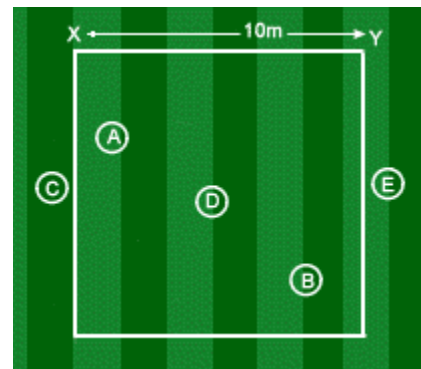
▀ If (D) stands sideways on to (A) he is almost asking him to race him down the line. The key issue here is for the defender to ensure he has the pace to deal with it should (A) sprint with the ball directly forward. Given too much space in any of these practices (A) should always take the option of the direct thrust past (D) to maintain the attack.

## FURTHER 2 v 1 PRACTICES

As a continuation to 2 against 1 practices consider diagram (1).

Here 5 players are used (A) in possession of the ball (B) his team mate in the 10 metre square, and (D) is an opponent trying to take the ball away from them.

(C) and (E) are on the outside of the square and are allowed to move up and down their lines marked X and Y.



### Practice (a)

▀ (A) and (B) manoeuvre around the square, interpassing, and even dribbling past (D) if needed. Their aim is to keep the ball in the area. (D) simply has to take it from them.

▀ If (D) finds it difficult, then the coach should encourage him to try and, at least, get a touch on the ball. Once he does that then the players interchange roles.

### Practice (b)

Similarly to practice (a), (A) and (B) can bring (E) and (C) into the game. As (E) and (C) move up and down their line, (A) and (B) can pass to them - BUT (E) and (C) must return it to either player FIRST TIME - ENSURING a good pass from (A) and (B) and also movement off the ball, which gives (D) a chance of intercepting.

(D) should try and open a possible route to (E) and (C) and could then "close down" very quickly anticipating the next pass.

### Practice (c)

Again just using three players only this time (A) and (B) are only allowed two touches of the ball when in possession.

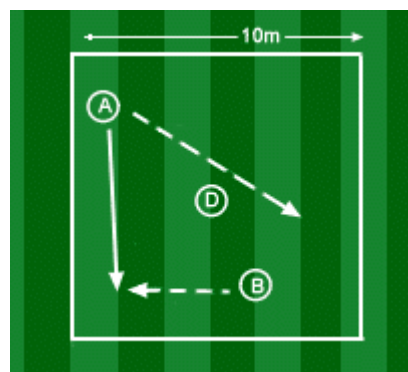


Diagram 2

This means once (B) receives from (A) he must control with one touch and pass with the next.

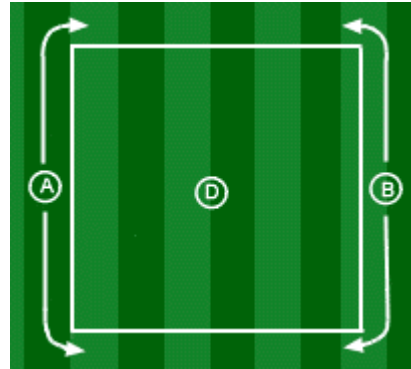
To make it even more difficult, if (A) and (B) can master the "two touch practice, then there should be a stipulation of "one touch" soccer.

So once (A) passes to (B), (B) must return it to (A) first time.

It makes it easier for (D) to get in a challenge - although once (A) and (B) improve in the technique then (D)'s physical stamina could be tested.

BOTH ONE TOUCH AND TWO TOUCH NECESSIATE NOT ONLY GOOD TECHNIQUE, BUT ALSO INTELLIGENT MOVEMENT OFF THE BALL. IT IS A GOOD STARTING POINT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PASS AND MOVE IN ANY PLAYER OR TEAM.

In diagram (3), (A) and (B) are now on the outside of the 10 metre square with one ball in their possession, and the aim is to get the ball past (D) (who must stay inside the square) to the colleague on the other side of the square.



**Diagram 3**

This necessitates 10 metre passes across the square, and movement up and down the line for both (A) and (B).

// (D) should try and intercept passes, and also try and force errors in passing from (A) and (B). If (D) does win the ball then players can exchange roles.

// To progress (A) and (B) can move round the square - but both obviously cannot be on the same time together.

// THEY DO NOT HAVE to be on opposite sides, - they can change the angle of passing by moving to a line adjacent to the one occupied by the colleague.

ONCE AGAIN TO MAKE THE PRACTICE MORE DIFFICULT "ONE TOUCH" AND "TWO TOUCH" CAN BE INTRODUCED.

## *PASSING IN TIGHT AREAS (finishing with a shot at goal)*

This is a progression on the last topic, two attackers against one defender, but now consideration has to be given to a setting up pass for a shot at a target.

Here the area (width) is 12 metres by 25 metres (length) clearly marked out.

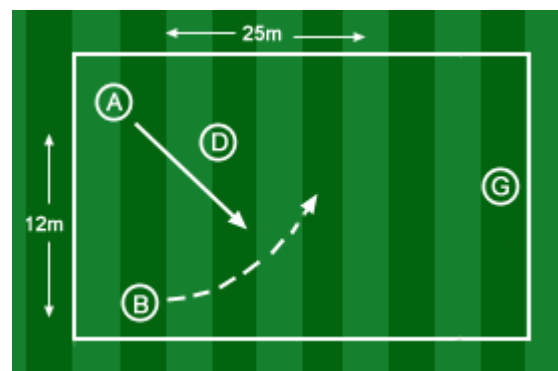
Two attackers (A) and (B), defender (D) and a goalkeeper in goal (G).

// The idea is simply to score - keeping the ball within the area

// Players (A) and (B) should not go offside

// (D) must win the ball if he can, using his judgement when to tackle

// (G) plays as a normal goalkeeper.



**Diagram 1**

So in diagram (1) (A) passes ahead of (B), who runs on to the ball and shoots (first time) at the goal.

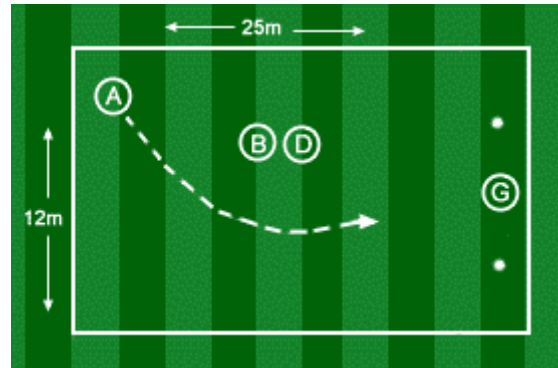
## Diagram 2

In diagram (2), (A) in possession, (B) stands directly in front of (D),

/(A) plays the ball to (B) who fakes to go to his right - taking (D) with him - but then lays the ball to the left where (A) will pick it up and shoot at goal.

/(Should (D) not follow (B) then, (B) might well collect (A's) pass, turn quickly with the ball under control before shooting himself at the goal.

These practices should not be laboured, they should all be over in a few seconds, as this type of drill is all about moving quickly, sharp control, and a first time shot at goal before any other defender can come into the play.



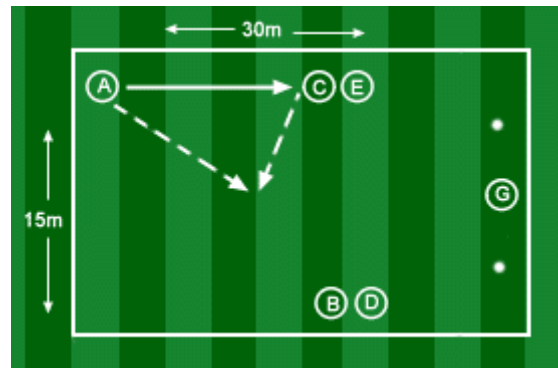
## Diagram 3

To develop this two more players are introduced, one attacker (C) and one defender (E)

/(So now we have three against two and a larger area of 15 metres (width) and 30 metres (length), in essence we have 3 v 3 as the goalkeeper supports the defenders.

Once again to the attackers there is one instruction initially - try and score.

(E) and (D) will mark (B) and (C), (A) is possession starts by either playing to either (C) and (B), OR moving forward with the ball, until challenged.

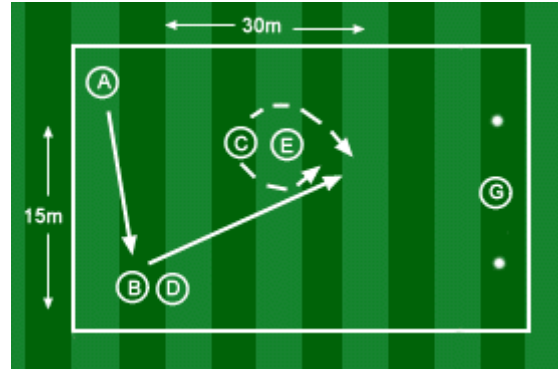


There are various options: -

#### Diagram 4

In diagram (4), (B) draws (D) forward, leaving (A) and (C) to face (E).

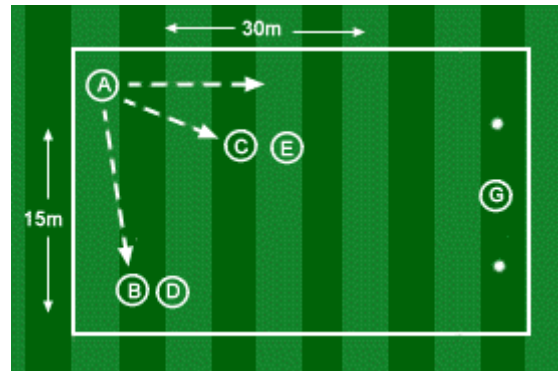
(C) moves to his left leaving a space to his right for (A) to receive a return pass and get a shot at goal.



#### Diagram 5

In diagram (5) (C) and (B) draw (D) and (E) to the edge of the area.

(A) (starting wide) plays to (C) who returns the ball to the centre where (A) then shoots at goal.



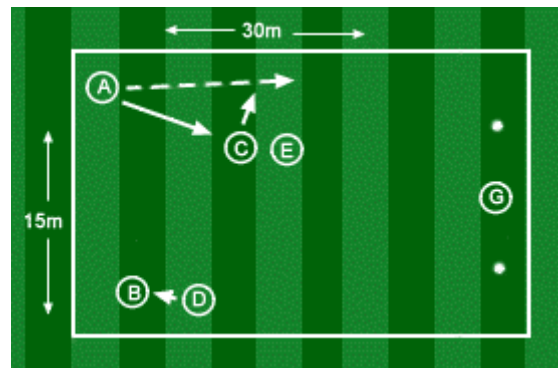
#### Diagram 6

In diagram (6) - (A) in possession (B) and (C) move more central and closer to (A), drawing markers (D) and (E) forward.

(A) plays to (B) who plays the ball between (E) and (D) to where (C) spins off to try and get a shot at goal.

The weight of both (A) and (B)'s passes is crucial to the success of this practice.

(C) must turn quickly - either swivel to the right, inwards or outwards, on how he sees the possibilities.



#### Diagram 7

In diagram (7) (C) and (D) move closer together drawing in (E) and (D).

(A) in possession runs straight at (B), who can either: -

1. Let (A) continue on with his run and shoot at goal OR
2. (B) should faint to go left to try to get (D) to do the same, but then use (A) as a decoy and shoot himself at the goal.

## *KICKING THE BALL*

Most people can kick a soccer ball, but kicking it with accuracy, and arriving at its destination at the right speed and height is a slightly different thing.

Different techniques are required for passes, shots at goal, centres from the flank, and volleyed clearances, yet each require many of the same techniques e.g. good balance, eyes on the ball, and the position of the non-kicking foot.

Good technique is crucial, so each type of kick needs careful consideration.

### **Inside of the Foot**

The inside of the foot implies the area marked in red, figure (1) from the base of the big toe to the central area of the heel, i.e. under the ankle bone on the inside of the foot.

This is one of the 'safest' ways to make contact with the ball and one that players use to try and ensure accuracy - rather than power.

### **Technique**

1. Body over the ball, eyes looking at the ball
2. Non kicking foot alongside the ball at the moment of contact
3. The kicking foot turned outwards from hip height exposing the inside of the foot to the ball
4. No great backlift is needed
5. Aim out to the side (just above the hip height) to give balance
6. At the moment of contact the knee and ankle joints are held firm so as to give more strength and accuracy to the kick.



**Figure 1**

Players can work at the technique themselves by: -

✓ Playing the ball against the wall at varying distances and using the inside of BOTH FEET. To begin, players can be allowed to control with one touch before playing the ball against the wall. To progress players should play continuously back to the wall so there is sharp repetitive practice.

**THIS LOOKS EASIER THAN IT ACTUALLY IS, AND COACHES SHOULD INSIST ON GOOD PRACTICE, USING BOTH FEET, AND AT VARYING DISTANCES.**



**Figure 2**

If difficulties are experienced coaches can: -

1. Make players go through the kicking movement on its own - without the ball
2. Start the practice with players kicking a stationary ball - with the player standing over the ball
3. Progressing he takes one pace before kicking, then moving back to 3-4-5 metres, approaching at varying speeds to the stationary ball
4. Progressing to a ball rolling slowly and the player adjusting his body position before kicking the ball

## ***PROGRESSION***

Kicking the ball with the inside of the foot when the ball is off the ground requires a moderate change of technique.

Moderate though that change is, it still requires a great deal of practice as maintaining accuracy is more difficult than side footing the ball on the ground.

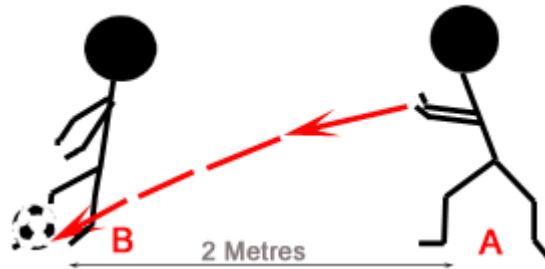
✓ The following technical points should be considered: -

- (1) There is a far greater bend of the knee on the kicking foot when the ball is in the air.
- (2) Generally the back lift and follow through are shorter, with emphasis placed on keeping the knee joint locked to give accuracy and added strength.
- (3) Full concentration is required, eyes on the ball all the time, for real success.
- (4) Quite often the body is leaning slightly backwards, arms out sideways giving balance.



### Practice 1

To begin, players should be given a simple exercise of getting the technique right.



Player (A) 2 metres away from player (B) (NO FURTHER). (A) lobs the ball, and (B) volleys it back with the inside of the foot (before it touches the ground) and into A's hands.

Players can reserve roles, and they should be encouraged to use both feet.

### Practice 2

The distance can be increased to 10 metres again with all the above points mentioned in place. N.B. The accuracy of the throw is important and coaches should insist on (B's) return being accurate to (A).

### Practice 3

For continual practice to improve the technique a suspended ball can be used



A soccer ball can be tied to a cord or string, suspended from a high beam. The coach swings the ball gently then player (A) comes in to continually use the inside of the foot, playing it as many times as possible first time. Players can allow the ball to swing past occasionally, but coaches should look for repetitive practice.

## PROGRESSION II

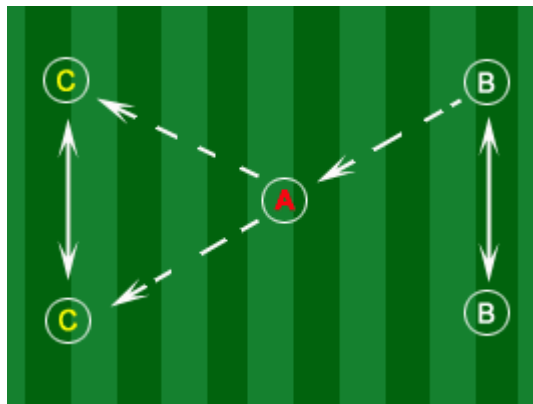
Clearly practice is needed and there are various stages to progress with kicking with the inside of the foot, when the ball is in the air.

### Practice 1

Player (A) stands 10 metres away from player (B) (server). (B) throws, and the ball has to bounce twice before (A) plays it with the inside of the foot back to (B).

### Practice 2

Three players (A), (B) and (C) around 6 metres apart



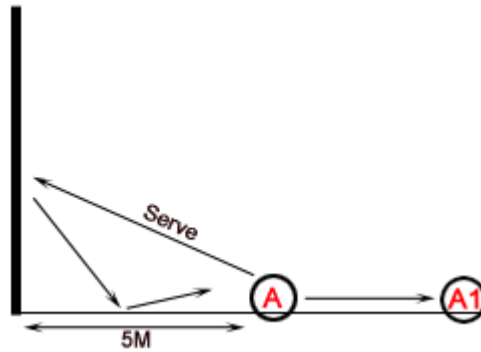
**Diagram 1**

/(B) serves (direct) to (A), and before the ball bounces he plays it with the inside of the foot to (C).

/(C) can alter his position, so (A) has practice at laying the ball off at different angles. (B) too can adjust his position to serve)

/(A) must be on his toes waiting for service, and coaches should ensure the player waiting to receive is not flat-footed.

### Practice 3



**Diagram 2**

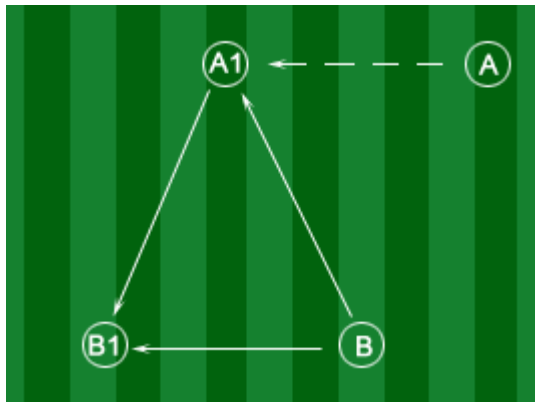
/(A) initially stands 5 metres away from the wall (or board)

/(A) has to throw the ball against the wall and allowing it to bounce once before playing it back with the inside of the foot, and so the practice goes on, with (A) playing continuously the ball back to the wall - USING BOTH FEET

After a while, (A) can increase the distance from the wall to 10 metres - back to (A2) in diagram (2).

## *PASSING WITH THE INSIDE OF THE FOOT*

### Passing on the move (two players)



**Diagram 1**

/(B) starts in possession of the ball, (A) slightly behind him (around 10 metres as in diagram (1))

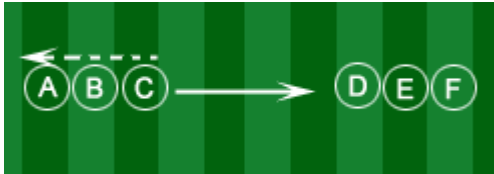
/(A) sets off to begin the practice, and (B) using the outside foot (i.e. kicking the ball with the inside of the foot) plays it ahead towards position (A1) where (A) will take the ball in his

stride before returning it to position (B1) where (B) will be waiting.

//The rhythm of the practice should not be broken. It needs to be continuous, to develop a "pass and move" scenario, across the field.

**PLAYERS ALWAYS USING THE OUTER FOOT, FIRST TIME WHEN POSSIBLE**

### Passing with two groups facing each other



**Diagram 2**

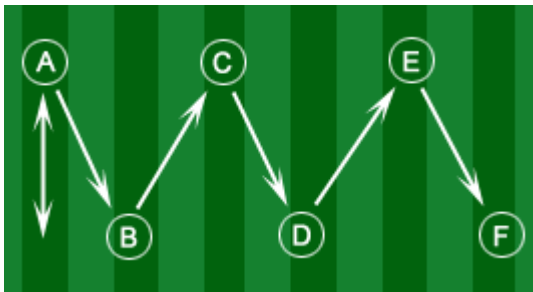
\* This practice has already been described earlier, but it can be used solely as an exercise for kicking with the inside of the foot.

//The two columns face each other (C) with the ball passes using the inside of the foot to (D) who is 5 metres away.

//(C) after passing the ball runs to the rear of his own group. (D) then returns the ball (with the inside of the foot) to (B) who has moved up and so the practice continues.

**NB. COACHES SHOULD INSIST ON FIRST TIME PASSING, AND ENSURING THAT PLAYERS USE BOTH FEET.**

**USING BOTH FEET MUST BE PRIORITISED, AND IT CAN BE DEVELOPED BY THIS NEXT PRACTICE.**



**Diagram 3**

//2 lines of players (A), (C) and (E) facing (B), (D) and (F) approx 5 metres away

//Note (B), (D) and (F) stand between the opposing players - i.e. not facing them (see diagram 3)

//(A) passes to (B) on to (C) and so on to (F) - players using the inside of the foot and passing first time

Once the ball reaches (F) it is returned back to (E) to (D) and so on back to (A)

THIS ENCOURAGES PLAYERS TO USE BOTH FEET, i.e. USING THE LEFT FOOT WHEN THE BALL IS TRAVELLING FROM (A) TO (F) AND USING THE RIGHT FOOT WHEN MOVING FROM (F) BACK TO (A).

## PASSING WITH THE INSIDE OF THE FOOT II

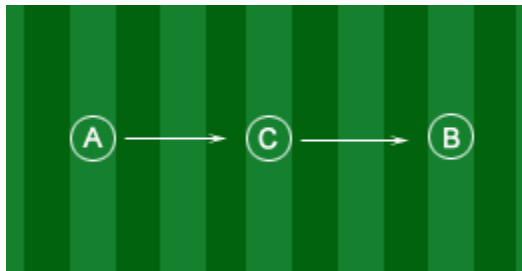
### Practice 1

Three players, one ball

(A) and (B) around 10 metres apart, (C) between them.

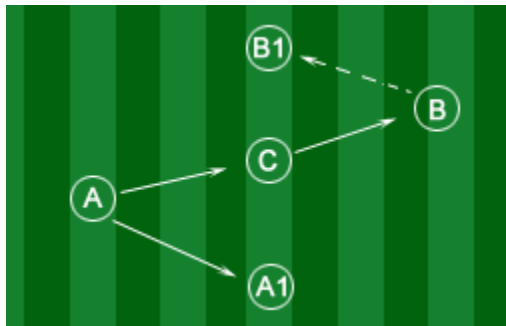
The practice is for (A) to pass to (B) initially through the legs of (C) (see diagram 1). (B) controls and passes it back through the legs of (C) back to (A).

### Diagram 1



Once this has been mastered (A) and (B) must move around (keeping the same distance) from each other, still continuing with the practice. (See diagram 2) (C) keeps in the middle facing whichever player has the ball. So if (A) moves to (A1) then (B) moves to (B1) as in diagram (2).

### Diagram 2

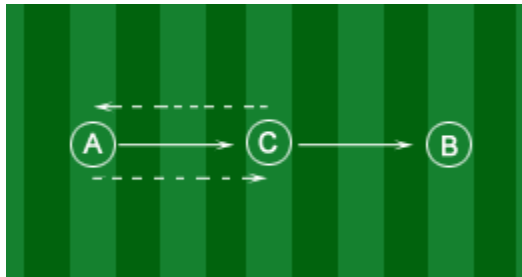


## Practice 2

✔ To progress this, players pass then move, and alternate places with each other, with (C) (or which ever player is in the middle) always on the move. (See diagram 3).

✔ So (A) passes through (C) to (B), and as soon as he delivers the ball, (A) and (C) change places; (B) takes one touch to control the ball then passes back through (A) to (C) (B) then immediately changes places with (A), and so on.

## Diagram 3

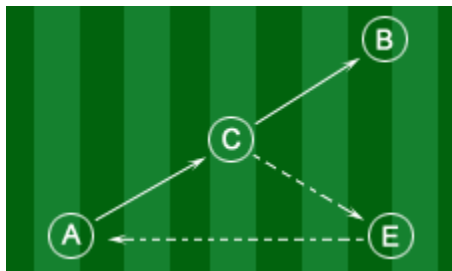


## Practice 3

To progress more players can be used, again working on the practice of playing the ball through the legs of the centre man to another player.

But this time the players have to move sharply as the centre man will head towards one of the other players once the ball has passed through him.

✔ So in diagram (4): (A) plays through (C) to (B). It is then up to (C) to select who to replace (in diagram 4 he replaces (E)).



It is then up to (E) to move to replace the original passer of the ball (in this case (A)).

✔ (B) after taking one touch then continues the practice by passing through (A) to (E) and so there is progression with all 5 passing and moving.

## *PROGRESSION III (passing side of the foot)*

### **Practice 1**

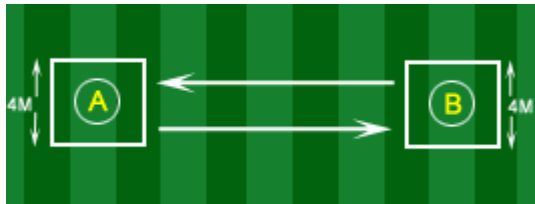
Two players, two soccer balls.

The players have a ball each, and stand around 10 metres apart, and both pass simultaneously, - one to the other, and both must make sure that the balls do not collide.

The exercise is for both players to use both feet and begins with allowing a "control touch" before the actual pass.

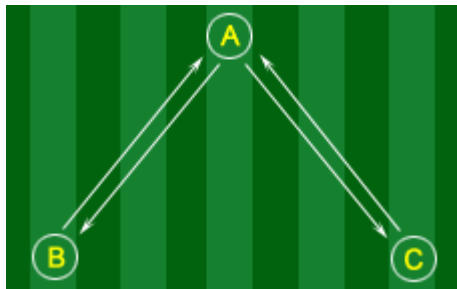
But once this has been done, the real practice is for continuous passing, first time passing, - using both feet without too much wandering around the area (see diagram 1) regulated by the 4 metre square.

### **Diagram 1**



### **Practice 2**

#### **Passing between 3 players using 2 balls**



### **Diagram 2**

(A), (B) and (C) around 10 metres between each of them; (B) and (C) in possession of a ball each. (B) serves to (A) who returns first time back to (B).

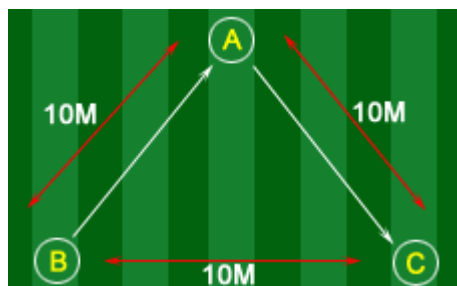
Immediately (A) plays the ball (C) plays his ball to (A) who has to readjust his possession to face (C's) pass.

The practice has to be in quick succession, (B) and (C) keeping (A) active.

Roles can be changed, the coach always ensuring that the player receiving the ball (and the servers) are maintaining an accuracy with their passing.

### Practice 3

A similar practice only using one ball between the three players - who can move around the ground while the practice is in motion.



In this practice (B) plays to (A) who (first time) passes on to (C). (C) can then decide whether to pass to (A) or (B) and so on, with the three players trying to maintain a 10 metre gap between each of them.

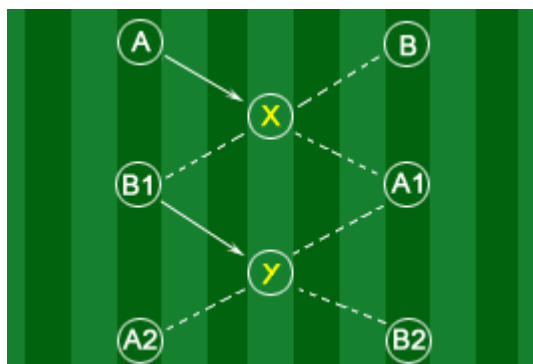
**THIS IS IMPORTANT AS IS THE USE OF BOTH FEET AND COACHES SHOULD INSIST OF THIS THROUGHOUT THE EXERCISE.**

## PASSING (WITH PLACE CHANGING)

### Practice 1

Two players A and B, one ball (diagram 1)

#### Diagram 1



/(A) starts in possession, then plays the ball ahead of (B) who runs forward to collect the ball at point (X)

/(B) continues his run on to position (B1), (A) meanwhile runs diagonally across to (A1)

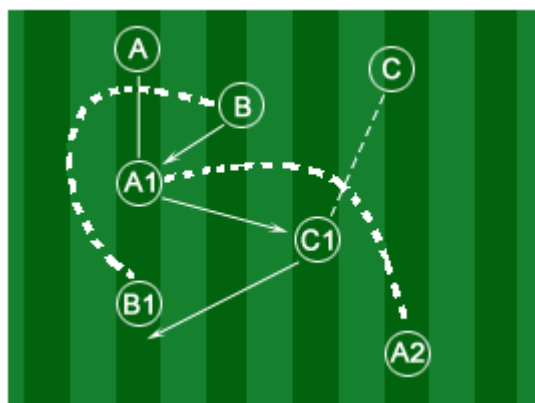


(running behind (B)) then checks back to collect the pass from (B1) or point (Y) and so the practice progresses.

## Practice 2

This can progress to three players being used (A), (B) and (C) (diagram 2)

### Diagram 2



/(B) starts ahead of the other two (in possession)

/(A) and (C) move forward

/(B) rolls the ball ahead to (A) at (A1), (C) meanwhile moves forward to (C1), while (B) runs round the back of (A) to (B1) ready to receive the next pass from (C1)

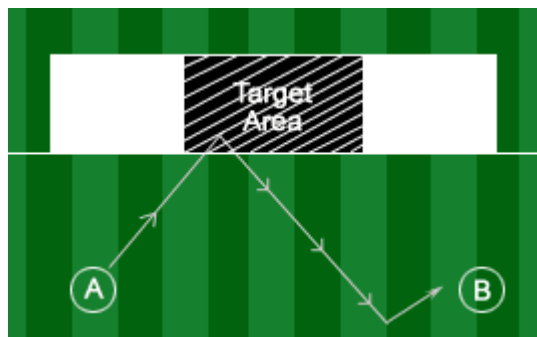
/(A1) passes to (C1), (A1) then runs round the back of (C1) to position (A2) and so the practice continues with the three players moving around the field, interchanging positions and passing.

## *PASSING FOR ACCURACY*

Setting up a target or target area is a good way for players to practice individually or in pairs to try and improve accuracy.

Marked areas at a shooting board is one way as in diagram 1.

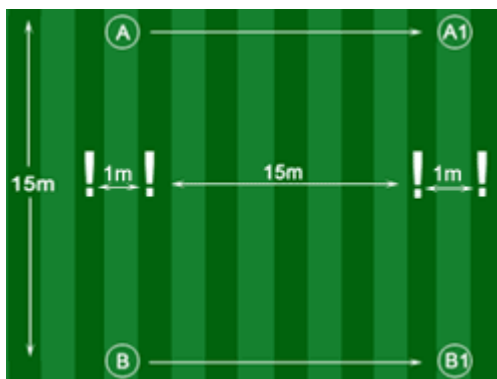
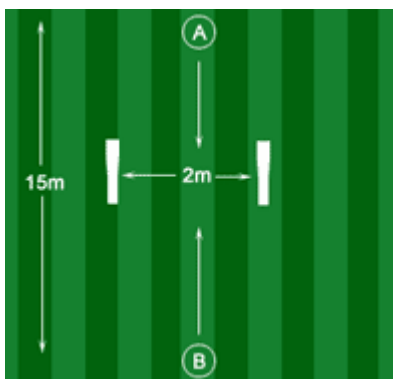
### Practice 1



**Diagram 1**

(A) and (B) around 4 metres from the SHOOTING BOARD - 1 ball. Using the inside of the foot (A) lobbs the ball towards the target area on the shooting board, from where it rebounds to (B) who can allow it to bounce once before returning it by the same method and route back to (A).

### Practice 2



#### **In diagram 2**

/(A) and (B) 15 metres apart, with a target area replaced by two posts, equidistant from each player. The posts in diagram 2 are 2 metres apart, so (A) and (B) should be encouraged to pass first time to each other whenever possible

/(In diagram 3, the posts are only 1 metre apart, but this time there are two sets of posts, and the players should be encouraged to use both sets in the practice

/(First time passing whenever possible, keeping the ball below the post level

/(A) passes to (B), (B) returns, and so the practice continues, until at a given signal one of the players holds on to the ball moves across to a second position ((A) to (A1), (B) to (B1)) and then the practice continues.

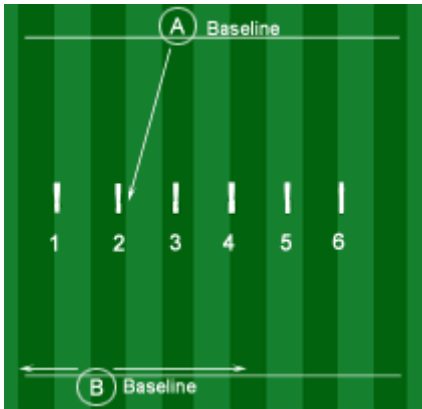
The two sets of posts should be around 15 metres apart.

**DISTANCES FOR BOTH THE ABOVE PRACTICES CAN BE VARIED ACCORDING TO SKILL LEVELS OF THE PLAYERS**

### **Practice 3**

The coach can bring a competitive element to the practices by introducing a point for every correct pass in practice 1 and a point for every 'goal' in practice 2.

### **Practice 4**



2 players, 1 ball, six posts placed two metres apart (A) and (B) around 10-15 metres from the posts (see diagram 4)

The aim is to hit the posts and knock them over

So if (A) aims at post 2, then (B) has to move across adjusting his position to receive (A's) effort, then B attempts from his side.

The player who knocks over the most posts wins

Coaches should aim for first time play whenever possible and that (A) and (B) move across their base line.

## VOLLEYING THE BALL (*passing*)

When volleying, the ball is met with the full instep (see diagram 1) (shaded in yellow)  
Diagram (1) Players use the volley to lift the ball, or power it in any chosen direction:

### Diagram 1

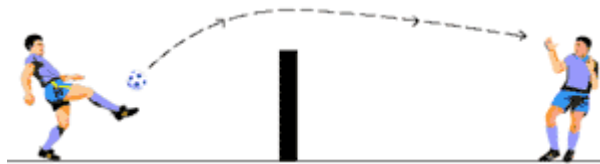


✓ Coaches should ensure accuracy when practising, and encourage players to act confidently when volleying.

✓ Regular practices are needed, and here are 3 to work at.

### Practice 1

(1) Lifting the ball over an object to another player (diagram 2)



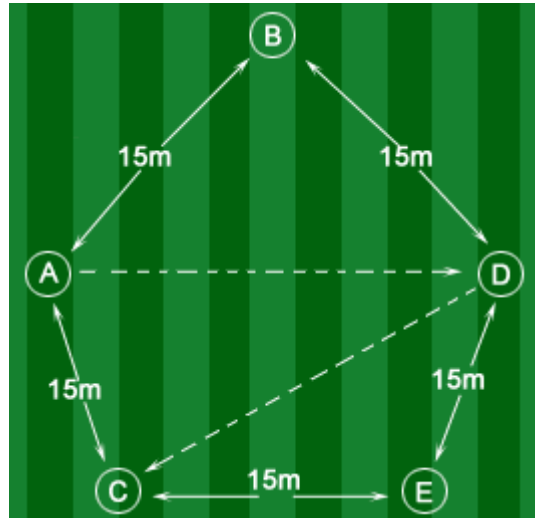
Volleying for accuracy in this practice. Player (A) using the full instep to lift the ball over the obstacle to ensure it drops exactly into the hands of the player (B) who then reserves the practice.

**N.B. Coaches should stress - NOT TOO MUCH HEIGHT ON THE VOLLEY PASS**

### Practice 2

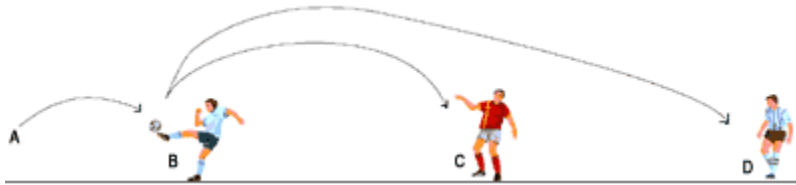
(2) Using a much larger area, players spread around the field volleying the ball to each other to catch (diagram 2). Players maintain a distance of at least 15 metres between each player.

## Diagram 2



In diagram 2 (A) volleys to (D) who catches, then from his hands he volleys it to (C) and so the practice continues. Progressing to no hands. Players controlling the ball by foot, head, chest or thigh before volleying on to the next player.

## Practice 3 Overhead volley pass



Player (A) throws the ball (around 5 metres away from B) towards (B) around chest height.

(B) leans backward, keeping one foot on the ground and, using the arms for balance, then volleys the ball over his head to player (C) standing around 10 metres behind him OR on to (D) who is further away.

Coaches should stress, good balance, eyes on the ball all the time and good leg control by the volleyer.

Players can turn around and reverse the practice so that D would become the server and C would attempt the overhead volley.

## *KICKING THE BALL with the outside & inside of the instep*

Learning to kick the ball with this technique is important for all players and it requires total concentration and much practice.

### **Diagram 1**



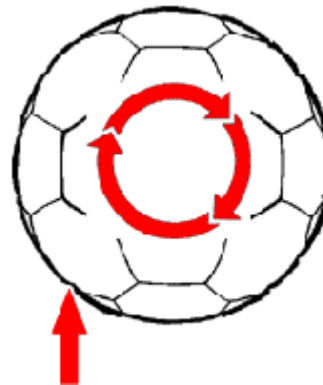
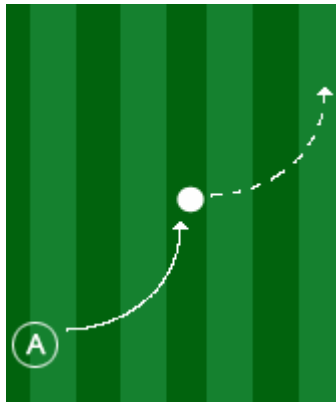
Diagram 1 illustrates the part of the foot used by a player who wants to swerve the ball to his RIGHT.

The outside of the instep is used by the right foot  
The inside of the instep is used by the left foot

### **Practice 1** (using the right foot) the outside of the instep

The player approaches a stationary ball from the left hand side of the ball, and runs at a slightly curved angle towards the ball (see diagram 2). Non kicking foot behind the ball at the point of contact.

### **Diagram 2**



**Kick the ball just to the left of centre and the ball will spin to the right.**

Player (A) from around 5 metres runs at the ball and using the outside of the right foot he strikes the ball just to the left of centre; but importantly after making contact with the ball the right foot is swung directly across the front of the body from the hip giving maximum strength to the kick, and giving the ball a spin which assists the 'bend'.

**LEARNING TO STRIKE THE BALL PROPERLY SHOULD BE MASTERED FIRST BEFORE CONCENTRATING ON 'BENDING' THE BALL, AS THIS CAN BE A DIFFICULT SKILL**

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PLAYERS.

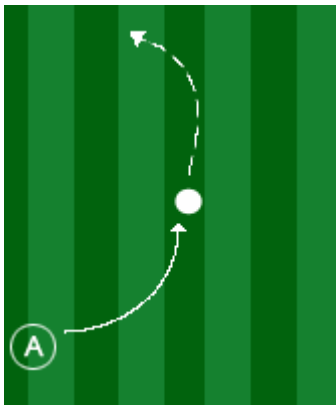
COACHES SHOULD INSIST AT THIS EARLY STAGE OF PLAYERS USING BOTH FEET WHILE KICKING A STATIONARY BALL

**Practice 2** (using the inside of the instep)

Conversely using this technique players can vary their approach to the ball, although once again at the point of contact the non kicking foot is behind the ball, and the body is leaning slightly backwards.

So as (A) approaches the ball he now (using his right foot) strikes the ball slightly to its right side of centre (see diagram 2)

**Diagram 3**



**Kick to right of centre and the ball will spin to the left.**

As (A) strikes the ball to right of centre, the ball will spin to its left. After making contact with the ball, the leg follows straight through, and the ball should curve to the left as in diagram 3.

# **DRIBBLING**



## A BASIC INTRODUCTION

Dribbling is an important part of attacking play and by its nature is very exciting to watch. It is the ability to go past an opponent using a number of elements that make up good dribbling technique.

These elements are:-

- // Close control
- // Ability to unbalance or 'wrong-foot' an opponent
- // Change of direction
- // Change of pace

The best dribblers combine these elements with a positive attitude and a good understanding of 'when' and 'where' to dribble. Invariably this is in the attacking half of the pitch where the rewards are the greatest as opposed to the defensive half where the risk of losing the ball can have greater consequences.

To become a good dribbler it is important to be able to 'wrong-foot' the opponent using close control and body movement. The 'Matthews Move,' named after Sir Stanley Matthews, is a simple but effective technique

### Organisation

Area - 10 x 10

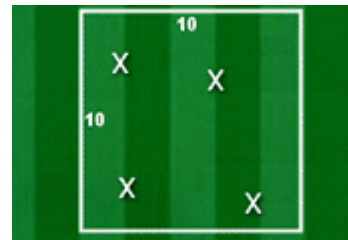
Equipment - 4 balls

Players - 4 players

// All 4 players in the 10 x 10 area with a ball each.

// The players dribble around the area keeping close control of their ball, making sure they do not collide with another player and at all times staying within the confines of the square.

// On the command of the coach the players attempt the 'Matthews Move'.



### Technique

- // Move the ball across your body with the inside of your right foot.
- // Lean to your left, dropping your left shoulder, bending your left knee and taking all of your weight on your left foot.
- // Lean to your left, dropping your left shoulder, bending your left knee and taking all of your weight on your left foot.
- // Move your right foot quickly behind the ball and with the outside of this foot play the ball diagonally to the right.
- // As you play the ball with the right foot, push off with the left foot and accelerate

away.

- Repeat this exercise using your left foot.

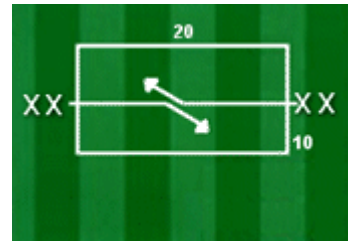
### Progression

Area - 10 x 20

Equipment - 2 Balls

Players - 4 Players

- 2 players at each end of the area.
- The front player at each end has a ball.
- Both front players dribble towards the middle of the area at the same time.
- Before they reach the middle, they perform the 'Matthews Move', making sure they do not bump into the on-coming player.
- Both players then accelerate away to the opposite end of the area where they pass the ball to the next player.
- Repeat this exercise using either foot.



## ***RUNNING WITH THE BALL***

- Running with the ball, at pace, is an important skill particularly in terms of setting up attacks at opponents goal.

How many times have you seen players like Ryan Giggs picking up the ball in his own half and then sprint forward 30 metres or so to suddenly spring an attack that carries a real threat.

- That ability to run at speed only comes with practice. Any player may be a quick mover - but moving at speed with the ball is a different matter.

- First consideration is to how the ball is to be controlled whilst running.

- Both the inside and the outside of the foot should be used. Starting at a jog, the speed can be built up as technique improves.
- Players should run with the ball, varying their length of stride, and also their direction. Once reaching a certain point, they should be ready to turn quickly making sure they retain good control of the ball.
- At all times the head needs to be steady, looking down at the ball, with the occasional glance up to see exactly the position in the field.

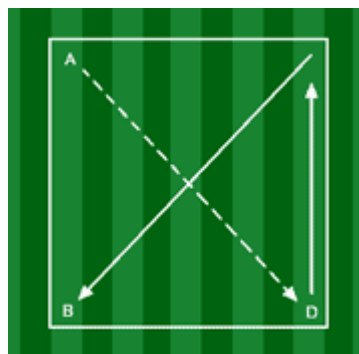
d. When running, players should ensure the ball is not too far ahead all the time. Some times fairly close, others (in longer runs) it can be as far as five metres ahead when there are no opponents nearby.

Here are some practices to assist progression in running with the ball.

### Practice 1

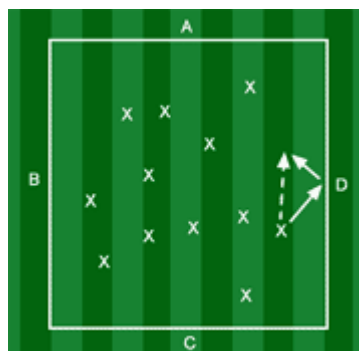
4 players, 1 ball, square 20 metres Player A passes to D, who controls the ball then runs with it to either C or D in the diagram to C who in turn will run diagonally with the ball to B.

The exercise is repeated, all players being presented with the opportunity to run with the ball.



### Practice 2

To try and improve control whilst moving with the ball. Put 12 players in the 20 metre square (each with a ball) and let them move around the area, varying speed and direction - making sure they do not run into other players or other balls.



As a variation 4 players A, B, C and D can stand on the edge of the square, and any of the 12 inside can use them for a wall pass.

NB When possible A, B, C and D must return the ball first time.

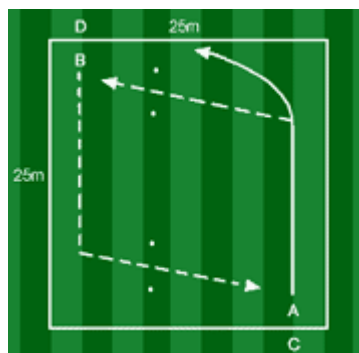
### Practice 3 Speed Running

As the players progress, now consideration should be given to increasing the speed of each player with the ball.

In Practice 3: 4 players, 1 ball, 4 markers inside a 25 metre square.

A runs with the ball, and plays a pass through the markers to B, who collects moves forward with pace and passes to C who, by now, has taken A's place.

To ensure the practice moves forward A replaces D, while B after completing replaces



C.

- Coaches should ensure all players are given the opportunity to improve their running with the ball technique.

Here is a practice that every player in the squad can join in.

#### Practice 4

Any number of players - in sixes and in threes facing each other 20 metres apart.



Here 4 X's face 4 O's 20 metres away while 4 Y's face 4 B's

The front player of the X's runs with the ball towards the front player of the O's who without stopping the ball takes it from X and sprints back in possession to X2, who similarly collects before running it across to O2 and so on.

Each time the player running with the ball joins the back of the opposing group i.e. when X has passed the ball on to O, he will immediately get into line behind O2.

And so the practice evolves, coaches can use this as many professional clubs do as a 'warm up' exercise as well.

## EARLY PRACTICES

- Much of dribbling skills relates to the technique of controlling the ball whilst running.

It also involves being able to run, stop, check, or turn off in another direction, and so initially players should be given a ball to practice: -

- Use of the inside and the outside of the foot
- Using the inside of both feet while running, - passing the ball from one foot to the other
- Using the body to faint left, and then using the outside of the right foot to move quickly right (and vice versa)
- Dragging the ball using the sole of the foot

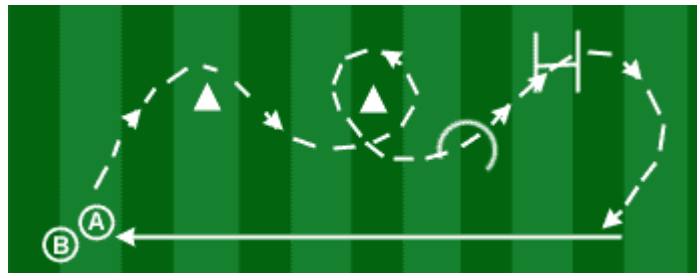
5. Running, then using a hook turn (outside of foot) or the inside of either foot, then back in the opposite direction
6. Running with the ball, then stopped dead - sprint forward 5 metres then return picking up the ball again to repeat
7. Running with the ball, then kick it 10 metres ahead (straight) then set off after it (repeat)
8. Juggle with the ball keeping it up in the air, off the ground, using both feet, head, chest and thigh. This gives the player a "feel" of the ball and improves his touch.

**ALL THESE PRACTICES ARE STARTING POINTS, BUT DESPITE THEIR SIMPLICITY ARE IMPORTANT, - THEY ALL INSIST IN THE PROGRESSION THAT LEADS TO MATCH PLAY.**

Each player should first work with a ball on his own perfecting control and the skills numbered 1-8 above.

Once this is done players can work at the above in pairs i.e. a ball between two, in a way competing to see which player produces the best technique.

To progress players can use skills to get round obstacles placed on the pitch (diagram 1).



Player (A) sets off running with the ball and keeping control goes round the 2 cones taking a complete circle around the second cone.

(A) then plays the ball under the arch, and progresses to a bar (approx 1 metre high) and on reaching it he must get the ball over the bar and between the posts that support it. He may need to stop the ball and lift it with the toecap area of the boot, but that is up to each player - but clearly he can't be allowed to just kick it over and then set off say 25 metres to retrieve it. That is not the point of the practice - this is all about CLOSE CONTROL.

On completing the last obstacle (A) then plays the ball to (B) who sets off round the course.

**COACHES CAN SET THE LIMITS OF THEIR DEPENDING ON THE SKILL LEVEL OF THE PLAYERS, - OTHER OBSTACLES CAN BE ADDED.**

In diagram 2



/(A) has to take the ball around the 7 cones (which are placed at a steep angle) and pass the ball on to (C) who then proceeds from the other end (A) going behind (D) to continue the practice.

COACHES MUST INSIST ON QUICK TURNS, THIS USE OF BOTH FEET, AND TIGHT CONTROL - PLAYERS CAN ALSO BE TIMED TO TRY AND INCREASE THEIR RATE OF COMPLETING THE COURSE. THIS SHOULD IMPROVE WITH PRACTICE AND REPITITION.

## CONTROL AND MOVEMENT

This is something of a progression to other sections that dealt with control and running off the ball - only here we are now looking at something more akin to a game situation.

This is a build up which the coach can use to progress the techniques of the players.

### Practice 1

10 metre square, 3 attackers (X), 1 defender (O), with players alternating roles.

The practice is simply 3 against 1, with three X's trying to put say 10 passes together without O touching the ball.

NB The coach should encourage O, as he is outnumbered but by regulating the space to a 10 metre square that does give the defender a chance to work at his angles in trying to win the ball.



/(The X's must be made to work off the ball as well as on it. Their control should be good and the coach can make them play "one or two touch only", to give O a better chance and also to make them work at finding angles.

THE COACH MUST INSIST ON GOOD MOVEMENT AS WELL AS CONTROL BEFORE ALLOWING A PROGRESSION.

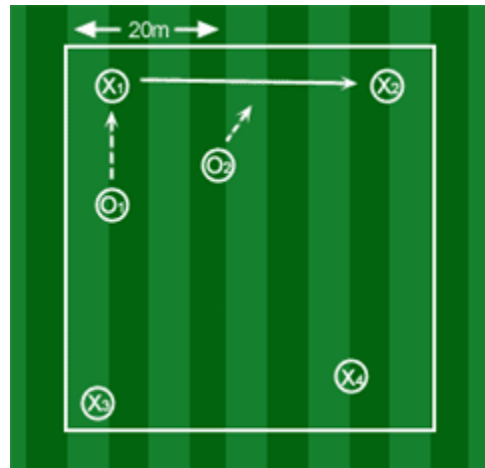
### Practice 2

Now an enlarged area 20 metres square 1 ball - 4 against 2

4 attackers (X) 2 defenders (O) trying to win the ball.

#### Points to note

1 The 2 defenders can work in tandem, forcing any of the X's into difficult areas and forcing them to play in a certain direction eg in diagram A X1 is in possession of the ball and O1 & O2 have cut out any chance of passing to X4 & X3. X1 will have the option of a pass to X2 - UNLESS X3, X4 move.



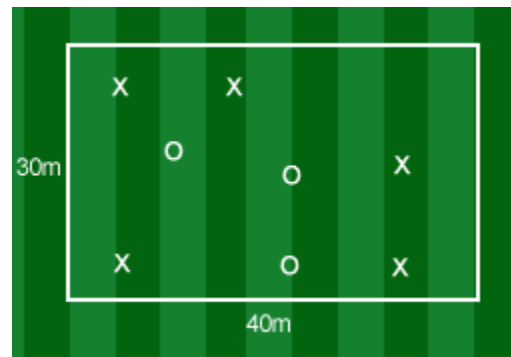
**NB THIS IS WHERE CONTROL AND MOVEMENT COMES IN.** The X's should be encouraged to use both feet, use both the inside and the outside of the foot for control and passing and above all pass quickly and accurately when possible.

### Practice 3

This can be built up to use numbers that the coach considers applicable to the group of players - and with consideration to their ages.

In diagram (B) the competition now is 5 attackers (X) v 3 defenders (O) in an area 30M x 40M.

The same principles apply here only the greater numbers and larger area mean more energy required and a greater scope for dribbling, running off the ball and even longer passing.



**THE COACH MUST ENSURE X'S WORK HARD OFF THE BALL, MAKING THE O'S THINK ABOUT THEIR NEXT MOVE. O'S MUST BE ENCOURAGED TO TACKLE, AND IF THEY DO WIN THE BALL THEY COULD REPLACE ONE OF THE X'S - WHO IN TURN BECOMES A DEFENDER.**

## Points to note

### for X's

- a) Make O's work by making fresh angles on the field.
- b) Ensure the first touch control is exact.
- c) Make sure the weight on each pass is correct.
- d) Use the inside and the outside of the foot, and use 'one touch' when possible.

### For O's

- a) Try to intercept X's passes by 'reading' the game.
- b) Be patient, watch the ball and the movement of the opposition.
- c) Work as a 'team' with your two colleagues, by forcing the X's onto 'ONE ROUTE ONLY' scenarios.
- d) Tackle when the chance comes, remembering the angle of approach, the timing involved, and the physical intervention needed.

## *CLOSE CONTROL*

✓ Players need to develop good technique and close control if they hope to dribble past opponents on the field.

✓ So one introduction (especially for young players) is for each player to have possession of a ball, and move around the playing area keeping good control.

- (1) Each one should try and flick the ball up, then keep it up for a number of counts.
- (2) Each player should try and stop the ball using the sole of the foot, then drag it backwards and so set off in a different direction.
- (3) Each player should pick up the ball, throw it to the air then control it with either foot or thigh, then set off running with the ball in a quick movement.
- (4) Each player should run with the ball using the inside and outside of both the left foot and the right foot.
- (5) Each player should move in a line to his left with the ball using the inside of the right foot, then to the right using the inside of the left foot.
- (6) Each player should move to the side above using ONLY the outside of both the left and right foot.

**THESE SIX EXERCISES SHOULD FIRST BE PRACTISED BY THE PLAYERS IN AN OPEN AREA, BEFORE THEY MOVE TO THE NEXT STAGE.**



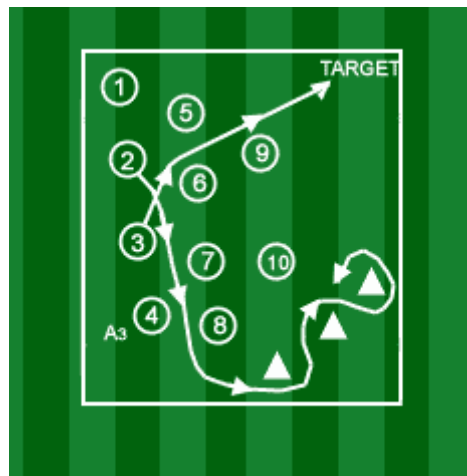
### Diagram 1

In stage 2 around 10 players can practice the 6 skills in an area 20 metres square, so there is less room for area, and also that players become more aware of the confined space and other players (who each also have a ball).

To progress (see diagram (1))

20 metres square, 3 cones, plus Target Area as marked, 10 players - with a ball each.

Players dribble (keeping good control) around the area, and the coach will shout out commands,



such as: -

- (a) "Drag" - THEN EACH PLAYER will stop, and then drag the ball backwards using the sole of the foot.
- (b) "3 Target" - so number (3) player will race his ball to the target area, avoiding all the other players (this must be done with some pace) SEE DIAGRAM
- (c) "2 Cones" - so (2) will race off towards the cones, on reaching them he will dribble in and out of the 3 cones until the coach tells him to stop (SEE DIAGRAM)
- (d) "Change" then all players must leave their ball and go and get another one from one of the other players.

## PROGRESSION

Earlier practices need to be perfected before coaches should consider moving on to more difficult skills.

Control of the ball whilst running, is very important, as is stopping quickly, changing direction, and controlled use of both feet.

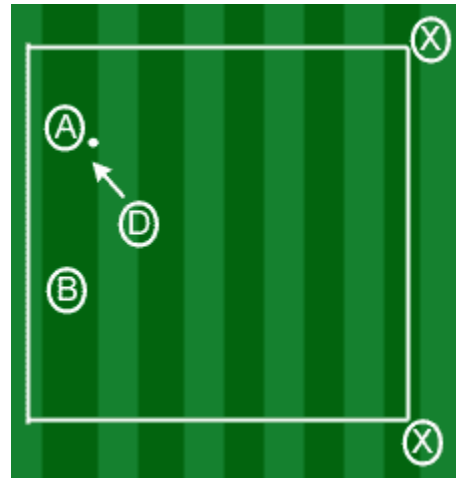
But once these skills are improving clearly the next progressive step is to try and beat an opponent and return possession of the ball.

So in practice 1, players can work in threes, (A) and (B) trying to beat a defender (D) in a limited area.

In diagram 1, the area is 10 metres square, (A) has possession, and the aim is to keep the ball between himself and (B). (A) can pass to (B) OR can feint to pass and then try and dribble past (D). When (B) has the ball he attempts exactly the same.

///The key to the practice is that (A) and (B) must try and retain possession to cross the line marked (X). (D) must try and tackle or intercept and prevent this happening.

Should (D) make contact with the ball he should then take over from (A) OR (B).



**THIS ACTS AS HIS INCENTIVE**

### Practice 2

To progress players can be made to work out at the skill of dribbling and control in a confined area while under pressure.

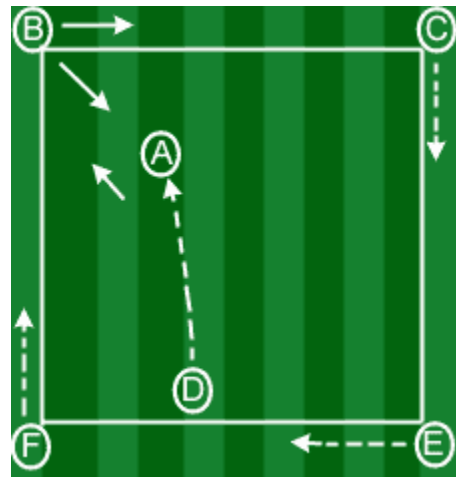
///(A) attacker, (D) defender

///Area - 10 metre square

///1 ball, with (B), (C), (E), (F) all positioned on the 4 corners of the square

All 4 can move along ONE line only (see diagram 2), they can not venture on to another line.

So (E) moves along to (F) but cannot go back to (C)'s line



### Practice

///(B) plays the ball to (A) who must control the ball, turn and face (D)

///(D) must START from any one of the outer lines, but once the ball is passed to (A) he should sprint forward and try and win the ball.

///(A) has to try and dribble past (D) and feed either (C), (E) or (F) - they in turn, pass the ball back to (A)

///(A) can use any of the 4 (B), (C), (E) or (F) to play the ball to at any time, but coaches should

only allow a limited number of passes before (A) attempts to dribble past (D).

✔ TO ADD TO THE COMPETITIVE ELEMENT (A) should try and get the ball to all (4) perimeter players, this alerts (D) and then ensures that (A) will have to try and dribble past him.

## *DRIBBLING AND SHOOTING*

✔ Following previous practises now we can consider putting an end product on to dribbling skill - in other words to give it some extra purpose for the players taking part.

✔ So now involve the players dribbling around objects and finishing with a shot at goal.

### **Practice 1**

✔ In practice 1, players A, B & C line up 5 metres outside the penalty area. They run forward with the ball (under close control) and as the goalkeeper (G) comes out to narrow the angle they must take the ball wide of him before shooting into goal.

✔ This can be difficult for goalkeepers, as clearly the forwards are favourites to score, so coaches should use 2 goalkeepers (one competing with the other to see who can present the most goals scored).

**THE ATTACKERS MUST WORK AT CLOSE CONTROL, FEINTING, AND THE USE OF BOTH FEET - BEING ASKED TO CONSIDER GOING TO BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT WIDE OF THE ADVANCING GOALKEEPER.**



## Practice 2

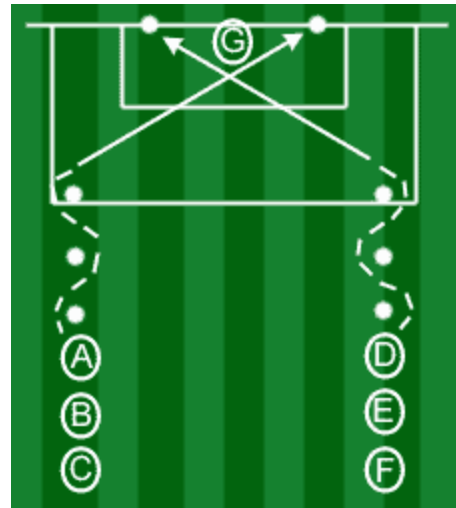
✔ In practice 2, six players form 2 groups (A, B & C) (D, E & F) and one player from each section (in turn) takes the ball, around 3 obstacles placed in front of them before shooting at goal.

THE COACH SHOULD INSIST THAT THEY TRAVEL WIDE AROUND THE LAST OBJECT SO AS TO NARROW THE ANGLE OF THE SHOT AT GOAL. ALSO THIS MEANS, WHEN THE TWO GROUPS SWITCH POSITIONS THEY WILL BE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO SHOOT, AND DRIBBLE, USING BOTH FEET.

COACHES SHOULD ENSURE GOOD TIGHT BALL CONTROL FROM EACH PLAYER, - DRIBBLING SKILL ONLY COMES THROUGH THE RIGHT STANDARD OF PRACTICE.

✔ Also after rounding the last object the players should be encouraged to aim their shot at either (a) far post or (b) near post

✔ whatever angle suits best considering the position of the goalkeeper.



## Practice 3

✔ To progress, a defender X is added, so as A attacks he now has to round X before shooting at goal.

✔ It is up to A to make the right angle, using control and speed to get wide of X before shooting.

✔ Once A has shot at goal, X returns to his position to face B, then C and so on.

✔ Coaches must interchange defenders, so X is rested. While attackers must be made to concentrate at working with close control and pace.

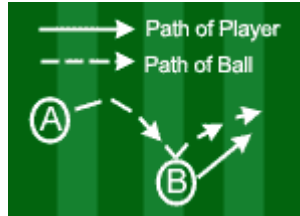
ATTACKERS WHO FINISH WITH A SHOT AT GOAL COULD JOIN THE BACK OF THEIR LINE, THOSE WHO MISS THE TARGET COULD TAKE THE PLACE OF THE DEFENDER - THIS ACTS AS AN EXTRA COMPETITIVE ELEMENT TO THE PRACTICE

## FEINTING AND DRIBBLING (practices in pairs)

The following practices can be used to improve control and dribbling techniques.

### Practice 1

Player (A) takes control of the ball, and then sends a lofted pass to (B) who takes it with the outside of the foot, making a turn to place the ball in front of him. (B) then moves on 10 metres before reversing the practice.



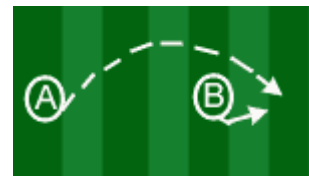
### Practice 2

- /(A) and (B) stand facing each other about 2 metres apart
- /(A) in control of the ball, (B) facing him with his legs apart
- /(A) passes the ball with the side of the foot, through the legs of (B), who has to turn quickly and set off after the pace
- /(Once he has recovered the ball, he stops it, using the sole of the foot, then turns, and reverses the practice (diagram 2)
- /(A) now has his legs apart, and (B) passes the ball through them.



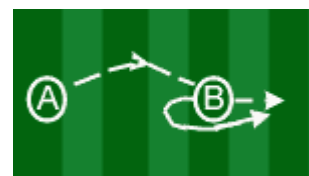
### Practice 3

- /(A) and (B) face each other 2 metres apart
- /(A) throws the ball over the head of (B) who has to turn quickly and gain control of the ball as quickly as possible
- /(Once (A) has thrown the ball over (B)'s head, he can set off to try and challenge (B). This adds a more competitive attitude to the practice. (Diagram 3)



### Practice 4

- /(A) throws the ball at (B), who attacks the ball as though he is about to trap it.
- /(But at the last moment he lets the ball run, so he then turns quickly and races after the ball to gain control - or have a shot at a given target as in diagram (4).



## Practice 5



(A) dribbles through the posts backwards and forwards using both feet before transferring the ball to (B) who continues the practice. Players must use both feet, and coaches can set time limits to speed up the skill rate. (Diagram 5)

## *DRIBBLING PRACTICES FOR INDIVIDUALS*

✓ Dribbling practice is mainly about ball control, speed of movement, balance and confidence and as a result players can practice on their own with a ball.

✓ Juggling a ball (keeping it off the ground) using head, thigh, and both feet, and learning to run with the ball under close control are obvious starting points.

So here are a few more practices that can be used by players on their own. A key issue is sensible practice, working to the best of ones ability, fully committed, and serious. Casual practice will prove unhelpful.

1. Run with the ball (forward) at pace, using the inside and the outside of one foot, then changing using the other foot - ensuring the ball does not go out of control.
2. Running forward at pace, keeping the ball under close control, stopping quickly, then moving on, varying the pace of the run.  
So it's, run - stop - run - varying speed.
3. Run forward, keeping the ball on the inside of both feet, then step forward with one foot and use the other to drag the ball bringing it into line again.
4. Run forward moving the ball with the inside then the outside of the right foot. Then suddenly make a sharp pivot turn, using the outside of the right foot - almost returning in the opposite direction.
5. Introduce 'feint plays'  
By dipping the left shoulder, - then drag the ball with the inside of the right foot, moving to the right - at pace.

Then alternate by dipping the left shoulder - initially suggesting a move to the left, but instead make a quick 'flick' movement, using the outside of the right foot to take the ball to the right. In both these practices, coaches should insist on tight control and the use of both feet, moving in both directions.

6. Use the sole of the foot to move the ball backwards, forwards, and sideways.

Balance is important here, use of the arms, and the standing foot is a key.

This can be alternated by 'Hopping' on the standing foot, whilst controlling the ball with the sole of the other foot.

7. Run forward with the ball stopping dead on a given line. Then backheel the ball a short distance, the player swivels round and repeats the skill in the opposite direction.

8. Jog forward with the ball, then overstep it with the right foot, leaving the ball level with the left foot. The body is then directly over the ball. Then use the inside of the left foot to move the ball half forward moving the player and ball slightly to the right but still progressing.

# **TURNING**



## *INSIDE HOOK*

**Turning with the ball allows the player in possession to:**

- // Create space for himself
- // Change the direction of play
- // Lose a close marker

There are various ways of turning when in possession of the ball. First we deal with the twist, using the inside of the foot. We call it the 'inside hook.'

### **Key Points**

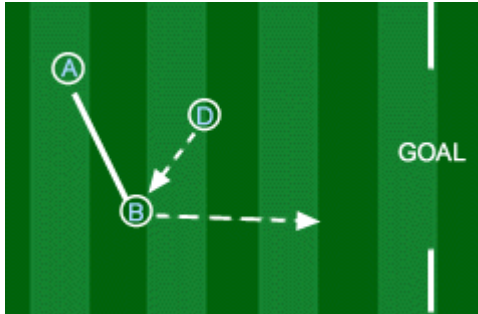
- // Position the ball out in front.
- // Move forward, feinting as if to kick the ball.
- // Take a long stride forward, reach for and 'hook' the ball with the inside of the front foot.
- // Pivot on the back foot.
- // Turn the body in the same way as the ball has been 'hooked', transferring the body weight on to the 'hooking' foot as you take the first stride.
- // Accelerate out of the turn.
- // Repeat, using short ten- yard runs

## *TURNING & CONTROL*

The importance of good control with the first touch on the ball has been stressed in previous practices, and this applies particularly when a player has to change direction when the ball is passed to him.

Consider the following situation in diagram 1.

### Diagram 1



//Attacker (B) with his back to goal is receiving the ball from his team mate (A) - with defender (D) closing in to tackle.

//(B) needs to collect the ball with the inside of his left foot, and cushion it just enough to take off the weight on the pass.

At the same time he should control the ball and turn to his left, swinging the body round ready to take route 1 towards the goal i.e. away from (D) who cannot make a challenge if the control and turn is made skilfully enough.

//This pass, control, and turn should be made slowly at first (with no defender involved at all) so that (B) knows exactly what he is trying to achieve.

**IF POSSIBLE THE COACH SHOULD ILLUSTRATE THE TECHNIQUE, DEMONSTRATING THE "CUSHION" TOUCH REQUIRED BY THE LEFT FOOT IN THIS CASE AND THE SWIVEL MOVEMENT OF THE BODY SO AS TO KEEP THE BALL CLOSE, AND AT THE SAME TIME ROTATE SHARPLY ENOUGH TO PREPARE TO SHOOT AT GOAL.**

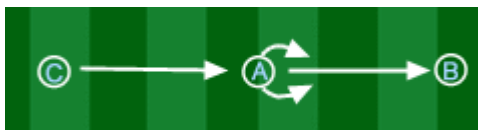
//It should be stressed defender (D) comes into the practice once B has perfected the control and turn movement.

//Once D is involved (B) should be allowed to go on and shoot at goal.

### Turning and Passing in Threes

To develop the technique three players in a line can be used in a practice as in diagram 2 - one ball.

### Diagram 2



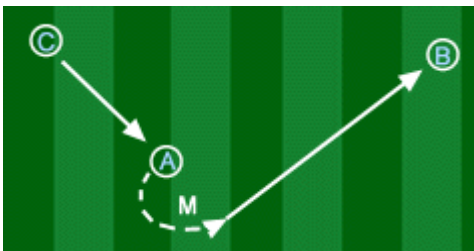
//(C) passes to (A) who is facing him, (A) now has to control the pass, turn quickly before passing on to (B).

//The type of pass from (C) can vary, but accuracy from both (C) and (A) should be a priority. Another point to be stressed is A's cushion control, and turn.

//To vary, players can exchange roles, until (C) and (B) can alter their positions and their distances from (A).

### Turning on the Run

**Diagram 3**



In the next practice (C) 10 metres away from (A) passes to him along the ground but firmly.

(A) has to control the ball turn and take the ball round the marker (M) before delivering an accurate pass to (B).

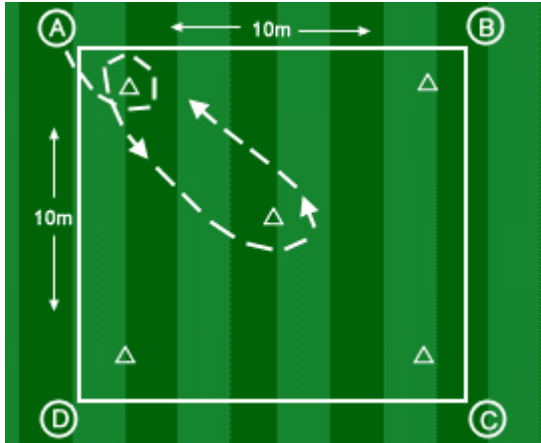
//Alternatively (B) can make the pass which means (A) will have to turn to his left to get round the marker (M) and so he will then have the opportunity to practice control and turn with both feet.

//Once again roles can be reversed.

# TURNING PRACTICE FOR JUNIOR PLAYERS

Aim to develop a player's ability to turn with the ball and keep the ball under close control all the time.

**Diagram 1**



## Organisation

4 players with a ball each A, B, C & D, all standing at the corners of an area 10 metres square.

Each player starts with a ball behind a cone as in diagram 1, with one other cone in the centre.

## Practice

Each player, in turn, dribbles the ball round his own cone then moves quickly to the centre cone, which he then circles (as in diagram 1 with A starting) before sprinting with his ball back to his place.

Once A has reached the start of his turn around the centre cone then B begins a similar route from his own corner ensuring good control all the time, this goes on through C and D.

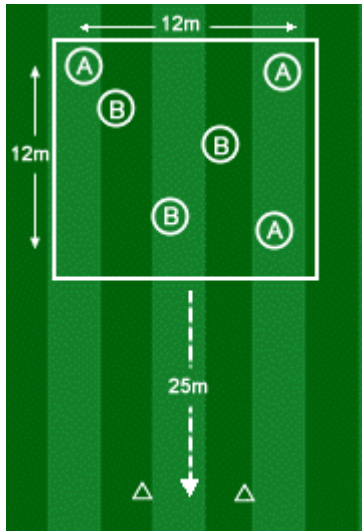
## To progress

As soon as A reaches the centre B sets off, as A will return (not to his own corner) but to B's corner, B will move up to C, and so on.

Coaches should ensure use of the inside and outside of the feet, ball under close

control, and that players develop good technique before speeding up the exercise.

**Diagram 2**



### **Organisation**

6 players, 2 teams, A's & B's each player with a ball in possession, working in an area 12 metres square as in diagram 2.

### **Aim**

Is for both teams to be the last in possession of a ball within the square.

So each player has to attempt to not only keep control of his own ball but also to try and kick one of the oppositions ball out of the area. So any ball that goes outside the square is considered out.

To get back into the game any player must chase his ball, collect it, and take it around 2 cones positioned 25 metres away and then sprint with his ball back to the square where hopefully his 2 other teammates will still be in possession.

### **Key points**

- // Players should be encouraged to use their bodies to shield the ball from opponents.
- // Work at turns away from opponents.
- // Always look around to find available space.

### **To progress**

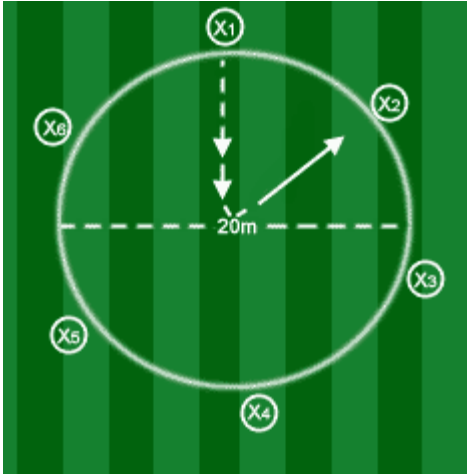
Retain 6 players in the square, no teams, 5 balls - one player without a ball, and he has to try and clear all five balls out of the area. Each player in turn can have a go at the ball chasing - and coaches can time each one to introduce competition and encourage the defender.

## TURNING AND RUNNING WITH THE BALL

Key issues for all players involved are: -

1. Tight control of the ball
2. Each touch (particularly the first) on the ball must count
3. A quality in terms of speed and balance.

### Practice 1



✔ Circle 20 metres in diameter (or use the centre circle)

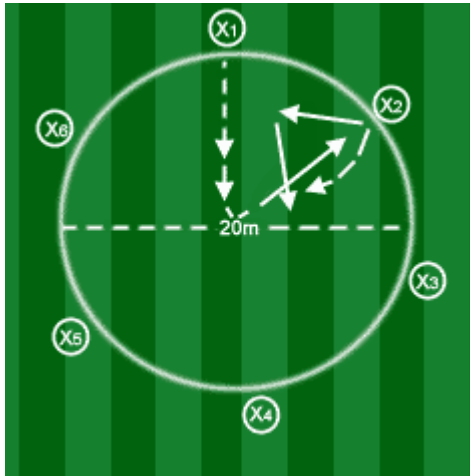
✔ 6 players spread at regular intervals around the perimeter of the circle ((X1) - (X6))

✔ The practice is to run to the centre with the ball (using both feet) then after reaching the centre he turns and passes it to another player.

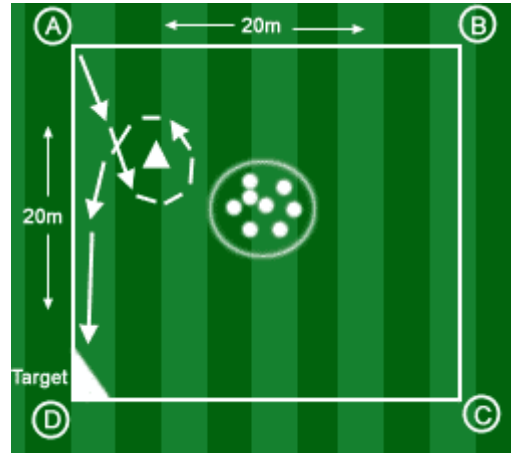
In diagram 1 (X1) runs to the centre, turns quickly and from the centre plays a good firm pass to (X2).

The pass must be accurate, and after delivering the ball, (X1) runs to take (X2's) place on the perimeter, - (X2) takes up the ball and continues with the practice, selecting another perimeter player once reaching the centre.

### To progress



**Diagram 2**



**Diagram 3**

**N.B. COACHES MUST INSIST ON GOOD QUALITY CONTROL, PASSING AND MOVEMENT.**

## Practice 2

### Wall pass

Once (X2) receives the ball from (X1), he plays a "wall pass" (i.e. play and return) with (X1) while (X1) is still within the circle. (X2) then continues to run to the centre to continue with the practice (as in diagram 2)

// 4 players at each point of a 20 metre square (A), (B), (C) and (D)

// 8 balls placed in a small circle in the middle of the square

// 3 marker cones placed between the players and the centre. (In diagram 3 they are marked ? 5 metres from the centre).

// A target area in the corner with (D) standing behind to collect the passes.

// The practice is for each player in turn to run from his corner, collect one of the balls, turn quickly, run back to the cone, manoeuvre round it (keeping good control of the ball) before passing it firmly into the target area.

// Once that is completed he runs back to his point (A), before heading back to the centre for a second ball, and so on till all 8 balls have been played towards the target area.

// That over, (D) places all 8 balls back in the centre circle area and it becomes (B's) turn to practice the running, turning and passing, - and so on.

// Each player faces a 'pressurised' practice but then has a rest period until it is his

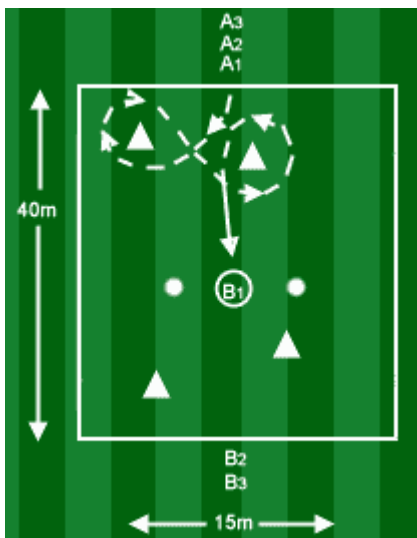
turn again.

TO INTRODUCE A COMPETITIVE ELEMENT THE COACH CAN GIVE EACH PLAYER 60 OR 90 SECONDS TO SEE HOW MANY BALLS HE CAN OUT INTO THE TARGET AREA.

## *TURNING AND SHOOTING ON THE TURN*

✔ To bring a competitive element into turning practice, players can be encouraged to shoot at a target - offering them an incentive for good close control.

### **Practice 1 (Diagram 1)**



✔ A group of 6 players 3 A's and 3 B's. The A's have 3 men lined up as in diagram 1, off the pitch but the leading player in possession of the ball.

✔ The B's have 2 players at the opposite end, with the third player acting as goalkeeper in between the posts in the centre of the area.

Area is 40 metres long, 15 metres wide

2 cones placed in both halves of the pitch around 5 metres from the end line certainly no more than 10 metres.

THIS ENSURES A REASONABLE SHOOTING DISTANCE FOR EACH PLAYER, AND ALSO MAKES HIM AWARE OF A SHORT TURNING SPACE AS HE SETS OFF FROM THE STARTING POINT.

### **Practice**

✔ (B1) moves into goal



/(A1) has to set off and turn (maintaining a tight control of the ball) around a cone in one direction, and then on to the other cone turning in the opposite direction. So if he turns clockwise round the first cone he must turn anticlockwise around the second cone.

**THIS GIVES THE PRACTICE OF THE USE OF BOTH THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE FOOT, AND COACHES SHOULD TRY AND MAKE PLAYERS USE BOTH FEET.**

/(After completing the turn around the second cone (A1) must then shoot at the goal where (B1) will try and save.

/(That completed, (A1) becomes the goalkeeper, (B1) joins the back of the line of his team, and (B2) will then continue with the practice from the opposite end, turning round the cones and then shooting at the goal now occupied by (A1).

A key issue is - **AS SOON AS A PLAYER SHOOTS THEN THE NEXT PLAYER AT THE OPPOSITE END CAN SET OFF.**

**THIS ENSURES THE PRACTICE MOVES QUICKLY AND THAT AS SOON AS HE SHOOTS A PLAYER MUST REACT QUICKLY AND GET INTO GOAL.**

**COACHES CAN MAKE IT COMPETITIVE, ONCE THE PLAYERS ARE ACCUSTOMED TO THE PRACTICE.**

/(i.e. the first team to score 6 goals wins

### **Other points to note**

/(Good control of the ball at all times

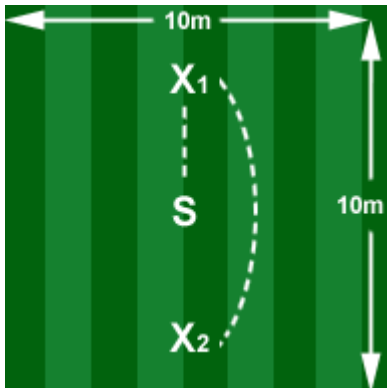
/(Use of both feet

/(Shooting players must follow up their goal attempts, in case the goalkeeper parries the ball - if so they get a second chance

/(Coaches must ensure good practice - performed at the sharpest level by the players involved.

# HEADING

## PROGRESSION I



Practice to improve on heading for distance (10 metre square)

S (server) throws the ball to X1, who then has to head the ball over S to X.

X2 then controls the ball with either foot, chest, or head, then returns it to S to repeat the practice.

All 3 players in the practice can rotate duties so that all players get the opportunity to work at heading.

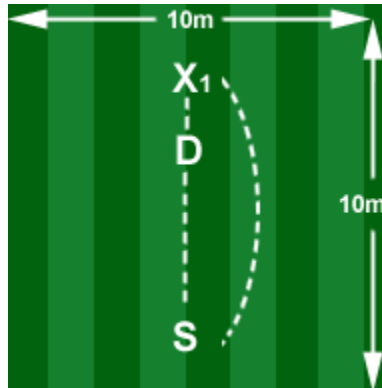
As players improve, this practice can be performed in a larger area, although the organiser/coach of the session must insist on accuracy whenever possible.

### Coaching points for the player heading

- 1 Eyes on the ball all the time
- 2 Move into the line of the service (by using the fee)
- 3 Head the ball with the forehead
- 4 Almost side-on with the body when heading
- 5 Go for power, by stressing the use of the neck muscles
- 6 Try and increase the distance of the headed clearance

### Practice 2

To teach players about the awareness and competition from other players here is a practice, one used by many professional clubs, particularly at junior level.



### Organisation

Again, using a 10 metre square, but starting this time with the server (S) being no more than 5 metres away from X1 (who will head the ball). This time defender (D) is introduced he stands 1 metre in front of X1 and to start he remains static.

- 1 S lobs the ball above D (who is stationary) and X1 jumps and heads the ball back to S – again insisting on the coaching points made in the previous practice.
- 2 This is repeated several times and the players S, D, + X, can rotate duties.
- 3 To progress D can take a step backward to make it more difficult for X1 to head the ball.
- 4 To progress even further D can jump to try and head the ball himself- although the server should still lob the ball more favourably towards X1.

### Coaching points

- 1 The service must be accurate.
- 2 Ensure all the technical points from practice 1 are still followed.
- 3 The player X1, must assess the flight of the ball, and then attack it when he goes to head the ball.
- 4 He should be encouraged to put power into his header, and this will (as the practice progresses) involve body contact with D.

## *PROGRESSION II*

### Organisation

- // 2 players in each side
- // 1 ball
- // Cones placed 8 yards apart creating a goal of match size.

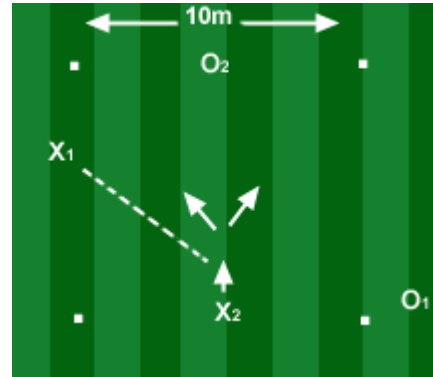
## Aim

To score into opponents goal.

## Practice

X1

Throw the ball slightly ahead of X2 who runs forward before trying to head past O2, who acts as goalkeeper.



If X2 scores or his effort is saved, then it becomes O's turn to repeat the practice.

O1 would serve to O2 who also becomes an outfield player and he tries to head past X2.

As the practice progresses X1 can change roles with X2 as does O1 with O2, so that all four players have the chance to practice heading for goal.

The service must be varied, from balls lobbed in the air, to a serve of lower trajectory, - if need be players can actually dive to head for more power. Coaching Points

Players should try and head the ball with the forehead, and should be encouraged to use the neck muscles to gain more power.

They should also try to head towards the corners of the goal to make saving difficult.

A competition to keep the score of X's and O's often adds to the practice, once the technique is perfected.

## PROGRESSION III

The practice in progression 2 can be stepped up

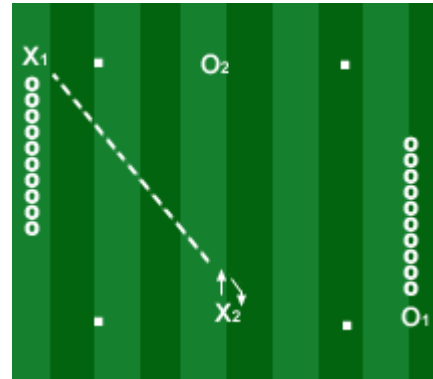
### Organisation

// 2 players each side X1 with X2, O1 with O2.

// X1 (server) has 10 balls in a line down one side of the 10m square.

// O1 (server) has 10 balls in a line down the opposite side of the 10m square.

(Having the balls in a line ensures variation in the angle of serve, as the service will come from where the ball is positioned).



### Aim

For X2 and O2 to score as many goals as possible from the ten served.

### Practice

// X1 has a time limit (say 45 seconds to serve all 10 balls).

// X2 has to try and head the ball past O2, - but before each service he has to first retreat to his own goal line before the next ball is served.

// This makes it more taxing physically, but ensures constant movement, and does create a situation where players have to try and add power to heading even though they may be tiring.

// After X2 has completed, X2 then rests and it is O's turn to try and score, and X1 then becomes the goalkeeper.

// After O2 has had 10 headers, X2 serves and X1 now becomes the attacker and the practice progresses with O1 completing so that all 4 players have acted as servers, goalkeepers and headers.

// Coaches should ensure the competitive element remains throughout.

## *PROGRESSION IV*

### **Conditioned Game**

- // For the first time, we introduce the conditioned game
- // A game or practice can be conditioned to emphasise a particular skill - and in this case it would be heading.
- // It allows players to work repeatedly on a skill, in a game regulated specifically for it.
- // This conditioned game is 6 v 6, both teams have a goalkeeper.

It is titled **HEAD, CATCH, THROW**.

### **Organisation**

Area - 40 x 25 metres  
Normal size goals (secured)

### **Aim**

To score by heading the ball into opponents goal.

### **Practice**

The sequence is head, catch, throw.

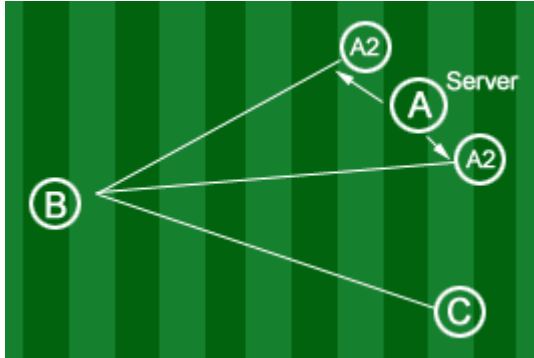
- // If there are two "catches" together, - the ball is handed to the opposing side.
- // Players can move all over the pitch in an attempt to score.
- // The throw can be over any distance - once thrown then "heading" is next and defenders can try and "out head" opponents.
- // Giving support, by moving quickly around the pitch, becomes important. This movement helps players to "look for" space on the field.
- // Coaches must insist on any player getting the opportunity near to goal does try to score.

**ALSO THE SEQUENCE MUST BE OBSERVED THROUGHOUT.**

- // The competitive element will present itself, and all players will enjoy this conditioned game.

## GOING FOR ACCURACY

### Practice 1



**Diagram 1**

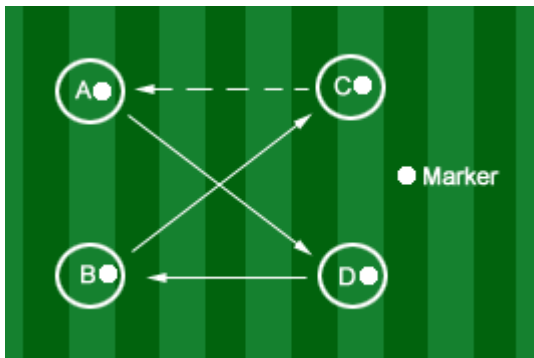
In three's, players (A), (B) and (C) with one ball, players around 10-12 metres apart.

/(A) throws to (B) (who should be made to leap), then (B) heads back to (C) or to (A) who has changed his position to (A2)

- /( Players rotate duties, and occasionally the server can throw just wide of the target man, so that he has to readjust his position quickly before heading the ball.

**NB. COACHES CAN VARY DISTANCES, AND ALTER THE HEIGHT OF THE SERVICE**

### Practice 2



**Diagram 2**

4 players, one ball, players start 10 metres apart.

/(In diagram (2) (C) (server) throws to (A) who heads on to (D) who heads to (B) who heads to (C) and so the practice goes on until the ball hits the ground.



✓ Players do not have to follow a regimented routine and coaches should insist on movement from the 3 players not waiting to head the ball

✓ So (A) could head back to (C) who could head to anyone of the other three

✓ Coaches should alter distances between players. **AS A VARIATION, A MARKER IS PLACED** 5 metres away so that every player after heading the ball has to run round the marker before rejoining the group (perhaps in a new position).

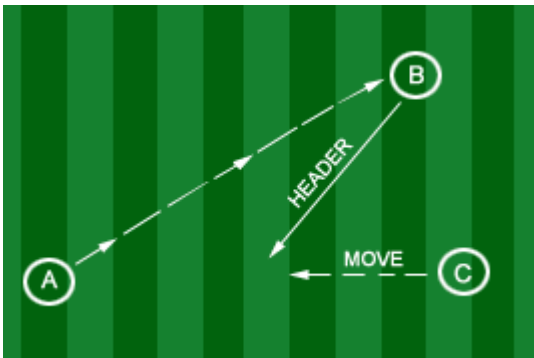
**THIS GETS PLAYERS INTO THE HABIT, NOT ONLY OF HEADING ACCURATELY, BUT ALSO TO MOVE INTO A NEW POSITION ONCE THEY HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH THE BALL.**

At all times players should be encouraged to work at improving the basics of heading technique on their own or with a partner.

- (1) Heading continuously a ball between two players
- (2) One player heading a ball continuously against a wall
- (3) Balancing the ball on the forehead, or continually bouncing the ball on the head

To progress (players spread over half the field, in three's, with a ball in each trio)

So in group (A), (B) and (C), (A) serves by kicking the ball, (at least over 25 metres) to (B) who heads down to a moving target (C)



With various sets over an area of approx 50 metres square, players have to accustom themselves to heading while other players and balls are moving around.

Sometimes it can be crowded, so accurate service and heading is called for.

## AGAINST OPPOSITION

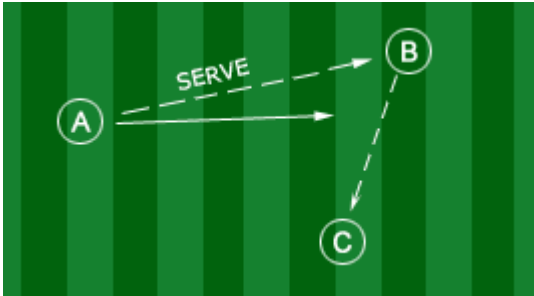
Players have to become accustomed to the competitive element when jumping to head the ball. In match conditions they invariably have to leap either above opponents or with opponents and providing early practice is essential.

Here are some practices: -

### Practice 1

Three players (A), (B), and (C), one ball, all moving around an area something similar in size to the penalty area.

#### Diagram 1

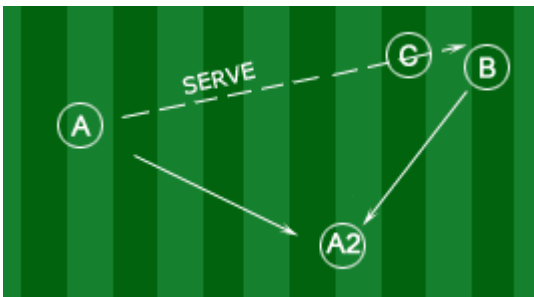


In diagram (1), (A) throws to (B) who heads the ball to (C). (A) after serving moves quickly and attempts to intercept (B)'s header.

(C) has to try and control the ball and make a return pass to (B) without (A) gaining possession.

### Practice 2

The same three players standing as in diagram 2

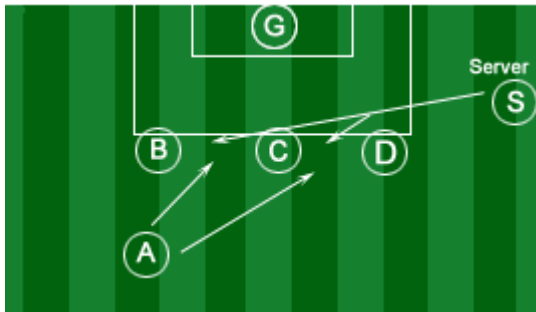


(A) throws to (B), but this time (C) is in front of (B).

(A)'s serve has to be aimed at (B), nevertheless (C) has to jump and at least make it more difficult for (B). (C) should try and head the ball if possible. Should (B) head the ball then he has to try and aim his header to (A) who has moved quickly to (A2).

### Practice 3

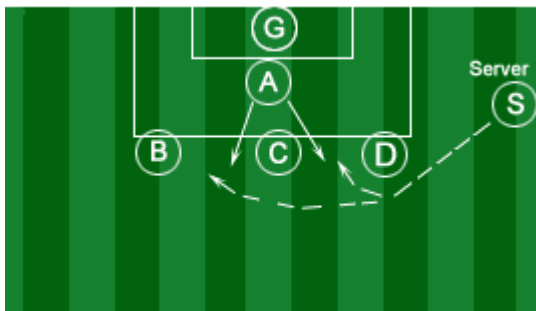
5 players, and one server with balls.



Conversely (A) can move to the goal side of (B), (C) and (D) and so become a defender. In this instance he must be encouraged to head for distance - once again the other 3 players remain stationary.

### Practice 4

3 attackers (1 serving) 1 defender, 1 goalkeeper.



(S) serves to either (A) who runs in late on the far post or (B) who operates in the near post area.

(D) the defender has to mark both to try and prevent a header at goal.

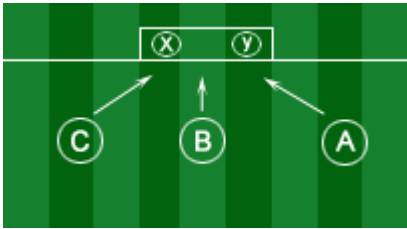
The accuracy of the service is important, and (A) must start his run at the right distance to at least occupy (D)'s attention (B) operates anywhere in the near post area keeping (D) aware of his threat.

## PROGRESSION (IN DEFENCE)

There are various tests of heading technique, and players should be practised in all of them.

Accuracy in heading is important but there are occasions (mainly defending) when players just have to put their head to the ball i.e. when they are the last line of defence - on the goal line.

### Practice 1 (Diagram 1)



/(X) and (Y) defenders position themselves on the goal line.

/(A), (B) and (C) are forwards attempting to score - they take it in turns as they chip the ball at the target, varying the angle.

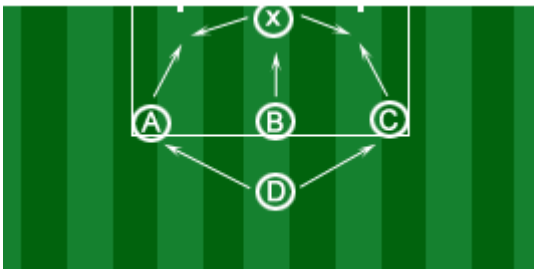
N.B. Coaches should ensure the forward players chip the ball at the goal initially, increasing the power of the shots when necessary.

/(X) and (Y) must clear the ball, (using head whenever possible) and they should try and clear for distance.

### Practice 2 (Diagram 2)

/(One player (X) stands two metres out from the goal line - he has to head the ball out as three servers (A), (B) and (C) lob the ball towards the goal

/(The servers should try and bring the best leap out of (X), who in turn should try and head the ball over the servers to (D) who acts as target.



/(The servers should make (X) move around the goal area, and they should lob the ball high enough to always give (X) the chance of heading the ball.

/(D) can move around to try and assist (X's) clearance - and (D) should also attempt to read the direction of the header once the service has been thrown.

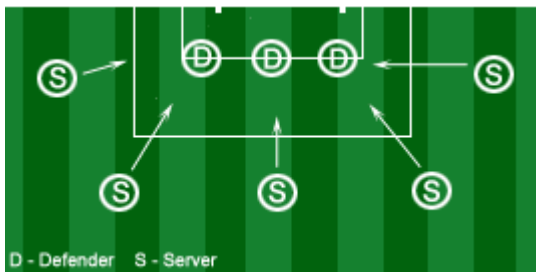
/(Players can exchange roles.

### Practice 3

To bring all four or three defenders into the practice, they should all be positioned just in front of the 6-yard area, with outfield players all serving from various distances - NO GOALKEEPER (diagram 3).

The servers should all attempt to score, and it is up to the defenders to try and clear for distance.

### Diagram 3



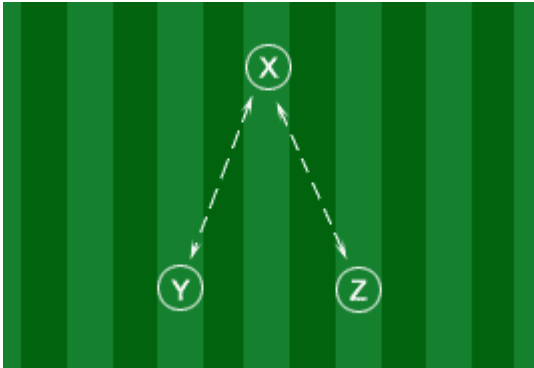
Positional play, and decision making by the defenders is important.

## CONTROL

For many players continually heading the ball, in itself, is important.

Repetitive practice should bring improvement, and for young players familiarity in heading technique.

For example: **Practice 1**



3 players, X, Y and Z

Y and Z (servers) with a ball each

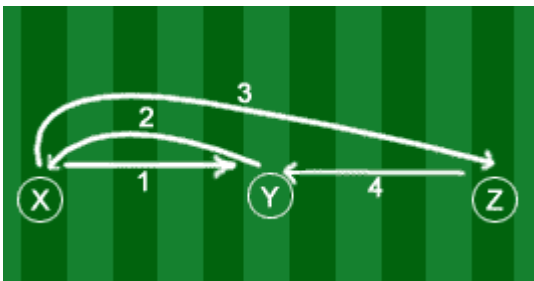
X faces Y who serves (throws), then X heads the ball back to Z, and immediately turns to face Y, who serves, and so on.

Servers must react quickly and also vary the type of serve to X

### Practice 2

Three players around 5 metres apart, with one ball.

(Y) the central player is the one under pressure to turn and face each of the other players as the practice progresses



/(X) throws the ball up, then heads it to (Y), who heads it back to (X)

/(X) then has to head over (Y) all the way to (Z) who then heads it to (Y) who has turned to face him.

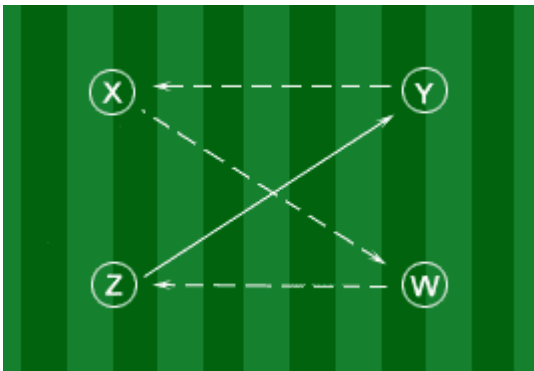
/(Y) then heads back to (Z) and so the practice goes on. All three players take it in turns at being the player in the middle.

### Practice 3

/(A similar practice but involving greater distance heading and players on the move around the pitch.

/(Four players (W), (X), (Y) and (Z) positioned around 10-15 metres apart.

### Diagram 3



/(Z) serves by kicking the ball to (Y) who heads to one of the other players. In the diagram 3, (Y) heads to (X) who heads on to (W) who heads to (Z), who can continue heading to one of the other three players.

/(Players should concentrate on accuracy, whilst moving around the pitch, and coaches can add a competitive element by counting the numbers of continuous headers made by the quartet.

### NB

/(For young players coaches should reduce distances and start the practice with a ball THROWN to one player.

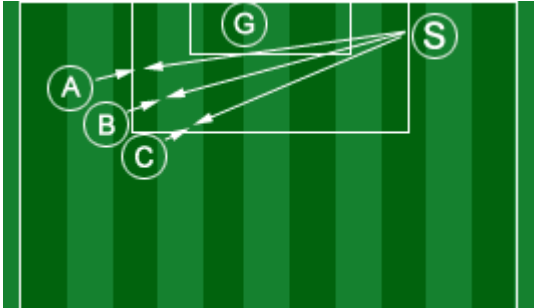
/(Players should be around 5 metres apart, and coaches should insist on good technique, and accuracy.

/(As an alternative for young players, one player could be put under pressure, each one in turn continually heading the ball back to him for a set period of time (one minute) and then players could interchange roles.

# HEADING FOR GOAL

## Practice 1

Players line up as in diagram 1, Goalkeeper, 3 attackers and 1 server (S)



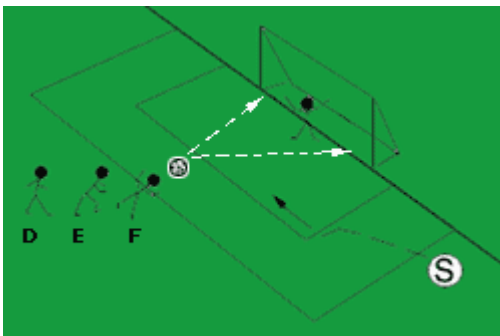
**Diagram 1**

/(S) serves from near to the touchline, all 3 attackers A, B & C all trying to get a header at goal.

/(The height delivery and speed of service will decide which one of the 3 gets the header at goal, but the players should call out to each other as the cross comes in so as to avoid confusion.

/(But no matter who gets in the header - there has to be a direct head at goal to try and score. So if it is a low cross then a diving header would be called for as in diagram 2).

Attacker moving through from position D to E to F diving at the ball.



**Diagram 2**

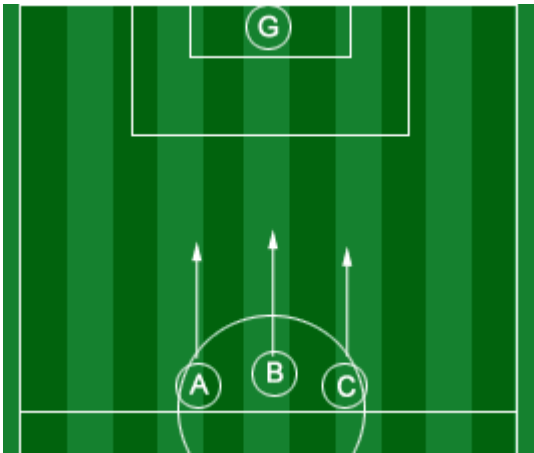


## Practice 2

3 players stand in the centre circle with one ball between them. They head the ball to each other, and must keep the ball off the ground at all times, so good technique and accuracy is needed.

Having completed around six headers they move forward to the nearest goal (around 50 yards away) where a goalkeeper is positioned.

They keep heading as they work/jog towards the goal and the practice is to try and score.



**Diagram 3**

Diagram 3, A, B & C are the players positioned ready to move as a group, keeping the ball off the ground, heading only to each other until one of them feels he has the chance to score with a header.

Goalkeeper G MUST stay in his 6-yard area, but if he can intercept he does. Should A, B or C allow the ball to drop to the ground, then they must start again in the centre circle.

Players tend to become more efficient with practice, and they soon learn to set each other up for a head at goal.

## *PRACTICES FOR HEADING I*

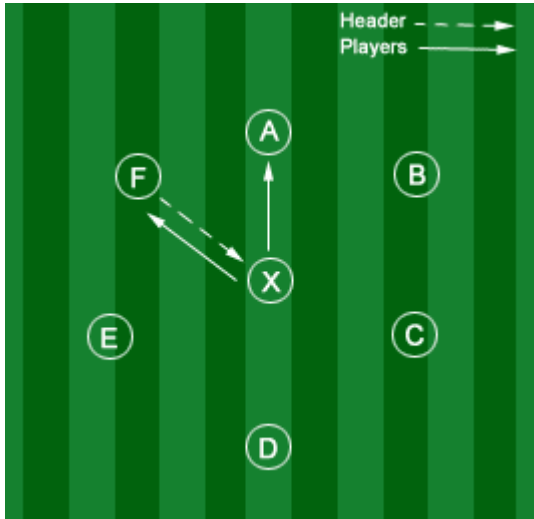
Heading skill only comes with practice, and coaches can make it more entertaining for the players by introducing practice games, or competitions. Here are some: -

### **Players in a circle (diagram 1)**

Six players form a circle about 8 metres in diameter, with one other player in the middle.

The centre player throws the ball up and heads it to one of the players forming the circle, who heads it back, the centre man then heads it back to another player, and so it goes on.

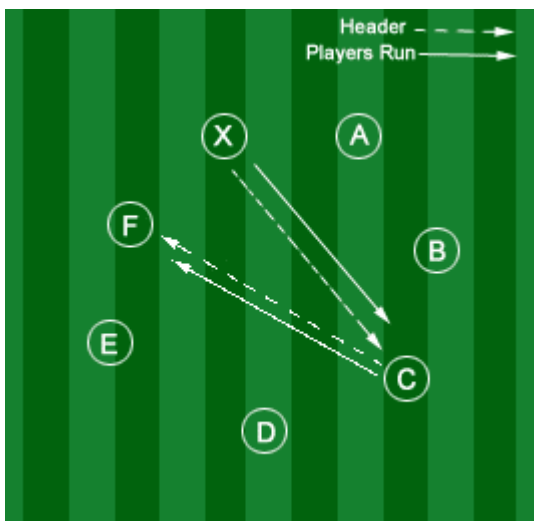
**Diagram 1**



**N.B.** Once the full circle of headers is completed (each player heading back first time) then (X) is replaced by another player - preferably without stopping the practice. So in diagram (1), as (X) heads to the last man (F), then (A) moves quickly to replace (X) and continues round the circle.

**N.B.** The players should aim, at each one taking a turn in the middle without the ball touching the ground.

**Changing places (diagram 2)**

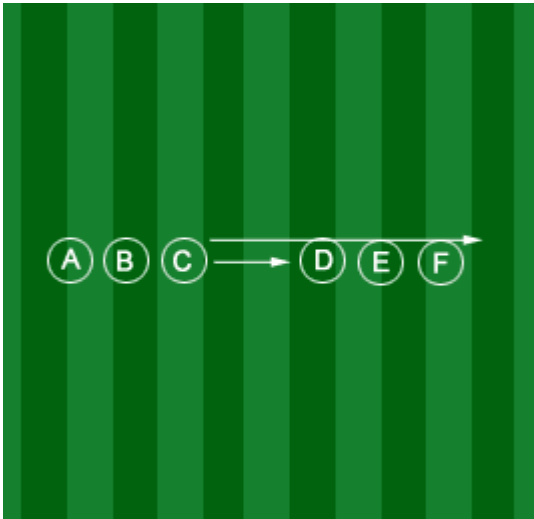


**✓** The players this time form a circle, with (X) joining the other six. The diameter of the circle is again around 8 metres.

/(X) starts by heading to (C) on the opposite side of the circle, and immediately he heads the ball. (X) sets off to take (C)'s place.

/(C) in turn heads to (F) then sets off to replace him, and so on. The purpose is for accuracy in heading - then getting the players in the habit of moving quickly as soon as they have played the ball.

### Heading in lines facing each other (diagram 3)

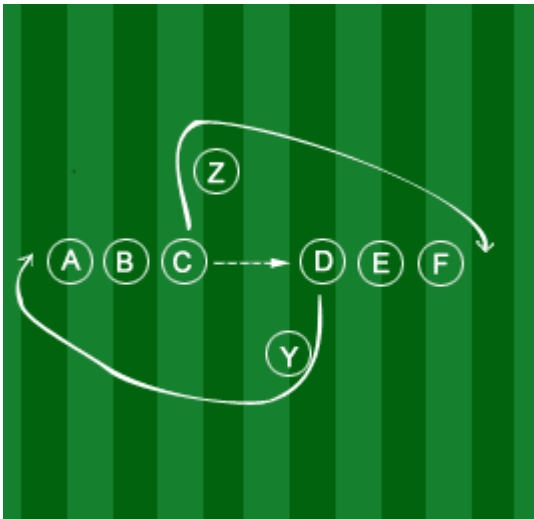


/(Two groups of 3 or 4 facing each other, the two front men at least 5 metres apart. (Distances can be varied to capability).

/(In this practice (C) throws the ball up then heads to (D), after heading (C) sprints round to the back of the opposing column.

/(D) heads back to (B) (who is now the front man) and then sprints to the back of the opposite column i.e. behind (A) and so the practice goes on.

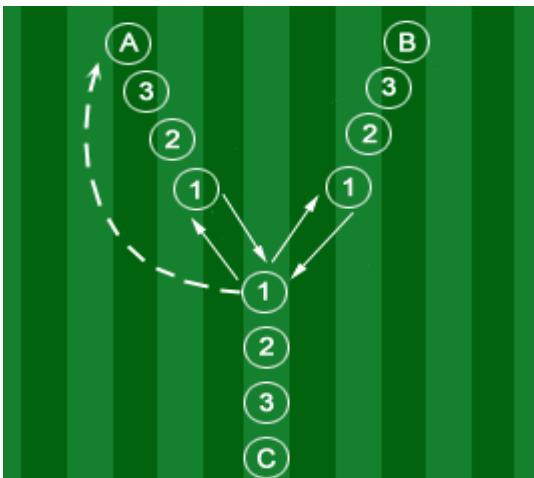
/(As a variation the coach can place in a marker (Z for the A, B and C group) Y for the D, E, F group.



✓ In this, (C) heads to (D) then has to sprint round the marker, before joining the back of the opposing column, while (D) after heading does exactly the same running round (Y) before lining up behind (A).

## *PRACTICES FOR HEADING II*

**Diagram 1**



In this practice 9 players ONE ball. The players in groups of 3 as in diagram 1. The distance between (A1) to (C1) and (B1) to (C1) is around 4 metres. The practice is to head, move and change places.

✓ So (C1), the player at the front of the rank of three, throws the ball up and heads to (A), then (C1) sprints to the rear of line A.

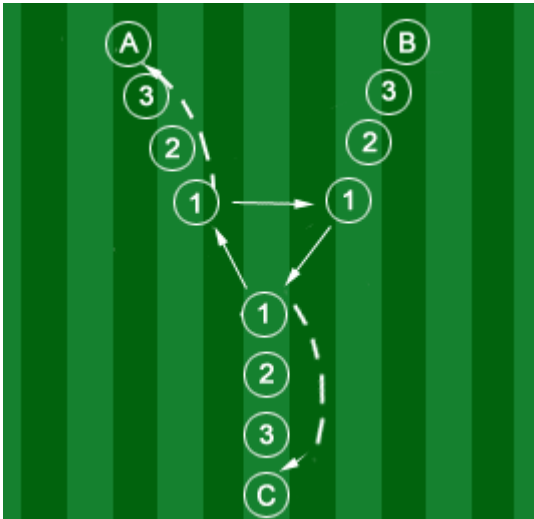
✓ (A1), first time, heads the ball back to (C2) who has moved to replace (C1), then (A1) runs

to the back of line C.

Now (C2) heads to (B1), bringing all three lines into the practice, and so the practice moves on.

**AS AN ALTERNATIVE** while they are positioned in three's the practice can change, with the players heading, then running to the rear of his own column.

**Diagram 2**



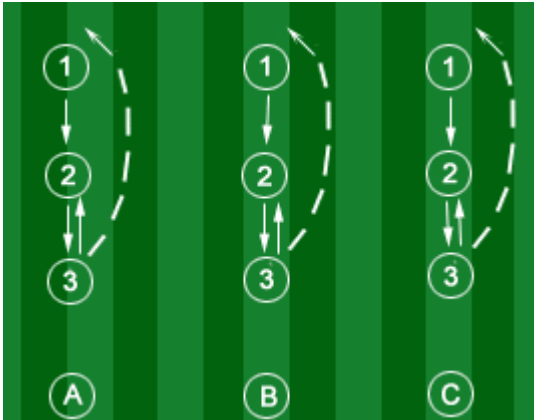
In diagram (2), (C1) throws the ball up, heads to (A1) then sprints to the back of line (C).

(A1) heads to (B1) then runs to the back of his column and so the practice progresses.

The coach can bring variation to the session by shouting the word 'CHANGE' while the ball is in the air. Then instead of heading in a clockwise direction, the next player must reverse the session by heading back to where the ball had come from i.e. in an anticlockwise direction.

## Backward Heading

Diagram 3



//The 3 groups now break into 3 lines as in diagram 3, with around 3 metres between players 1,2 and 3, **ONE BALL TO EACH GROUP.**

//Player (1) in each group faces player 2, and player 3.

//So (A1) throws the ball up, and heads to (A2)

//(A2) heads to (A3) who is behind him

From this point there are two variations in the practice.

(a) (A3) can head back over (A2) to (A1), who then heads back to (A2) and so the practice continues.

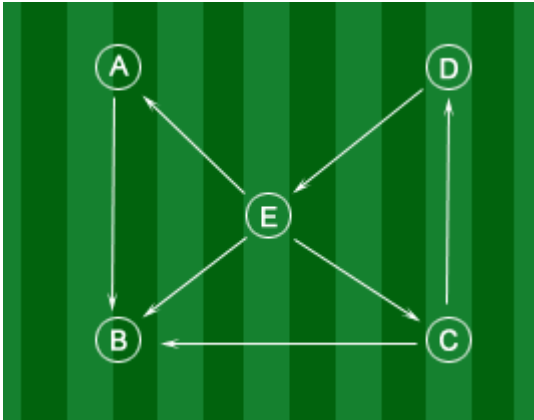
**OR**

(b) Once (A2) has headed backwards to (A3) he turns round to face (A3) who heads back to him.

(A2) then heads backwards to (A1), and so the practice continues.

**COACHES SHOULD ENSURE ACCURACY, particularly with the backward heading.**

**Diagram 4**



In this practice (E) stands in the centre of 5 players, with a diameter of around 10 metres, **ONE BALL**. (D) throws it up and heads to (E).

// (E) then decides who to head to, but in his session in the middle he should practice heading backwards, forwards and sideways.

// In turn the players on the outside should use (E) wherever possible although to keep the ball up off the ground they may have to head to each other on occasions. Players exchange roles.

**COACHES SHOULD AIM FOR ACCURATE HEADING FROM ALL 5 PLAYERS** and should set competitive targets e.g. 50 consecutive headers.

## *CONDITIONED GAMES (Control)*

### **Head Teams**

Two teams of 4 on either side of a net (height at least **ONE METRE** preferably two metres). Both teams in a 10 metre square, one ball. To start a player throws the ball up and heads either across the net, or to a colleague.

// (A1) serves - from the back line - to (A3) who heads to (A4) who heads over the net

// It is then up to one of the opposing (B) team to prevent the ball from hitting the ground

**COACHES CAN ALLOW ONE TOUCH FROM THE FOOT TO ASSIST A TEAM IN GETTING THE BALL UP IN THE AIR AGAIN - but only once during any service game!**

✓ Players taking the service can pass between themselves (by heading) until they are ready to head back over the net again.

✓ Clearly balls that go out of court are a point lost to opponents as are - serves into the net, and when the ball drops to the ground in a players own court.

✓ Competitive game - 21 points up - only the team serving can score points. Teams gain service by forcing the serving team into an error.

Players should take turns at serving and should rotate around the court. This (A1) moves to (A2) who moves to (A3) who moves to (A4) - and similar for their opponents.

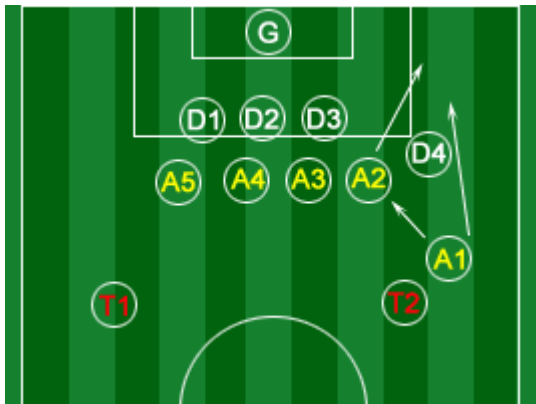
**ALL SERVES FROM THE BACK LINE**

## *ATTACK V DEFENCE*

To bring practice to match conditions players need to face physical contact from opponents.

They also have to manoeuvre around to get into the right positions, and then finally head the ball in the direction they intend.

**Diagram 1**



✓ In this practice (diagram 1) there are 5 attackers (A) against 4 defenders (B) plus goalkeeper (G)

✓ (A1) has possession of the ball in the right flank attacking towards (D4)

✓ (A2) tries to assist by making a 2 v 1 situation against (D4) so as to work an opening for a cross from the right into the danger area

✓ It is then up to (A3), (A4) and (A5) to move towards the six yard box to try and get a header at goal, with (D1), (D2) and (D3) at the same time working to stay goal-

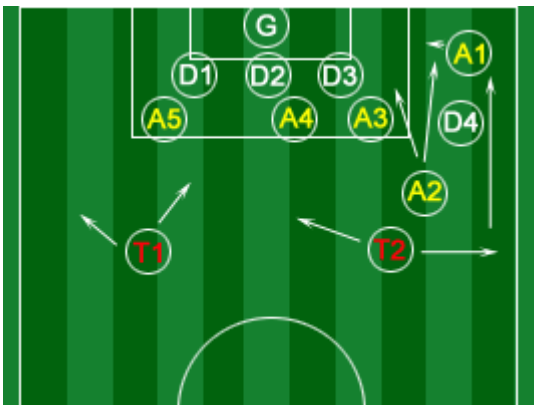


side of the attackers and then get in a defence (clearing) header when (A1) or (A2) crosses the ball.

**THE QUALITY OF CROSS BALL IS ESSENTIAL, AND COACHES SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE CENTRES FROM THE FLANK ARE "HUNG UP" SO THAT THERE IS GENUINE COMPETITION FOR THE BALL BETWEEN ATTACKERS AND DEFENDERS.**

Should any defender win the ball then they should be given a target for any intended clearance. So 2 players (T1) and (T2) are positioned just behind the centre circle for defenders to try and find with accurate clearances.

**Diagram 2**

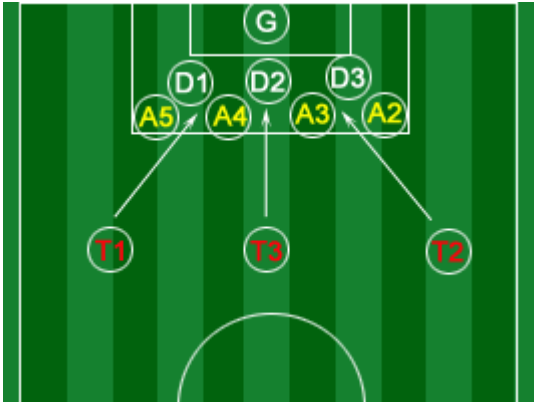


In diagram 2, (A2) has put (A1) in possession on the goal line, so (D1), (D2) and (D3) have adjusted accordingly, with (A3), (A4) and (A5) waiting to move in for the header at goal. (A2) can also move forward if required.

Should goalkeeper (G) or any defender get the ball, target players (T1) and (T2) can move about to make themselves available for a pass.

**COACHES SHOULD ENSURE DEFENDERS DO HAVE A PROPER TARGET T1 AND T2 SHOULD WORK TO FIND SPACE.**

**Diagram 3**



In diagram (3), (T1), (T2), (T3) become servers as well as target players for defenders winning the ball.

// In this practice 3 defenders (D) marking 4 attackers (A) across the edge of the penalty area.

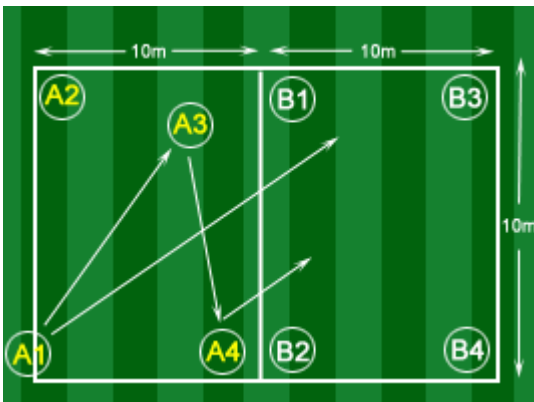
// (T's) serve lofting the ball so there is a competition for the first header initially, as (A's) (with their backs to goal) contend with (D's) who are trying to win the first header - and then get the ball back to one of the (T's)

// (A's) are trying to score and once the serve has gone then normal soccer rules apply until the ball goes dead.

## *CONDITIONED GAMES II*

### **Head Tennis**

**Diagram 1**



In this practice there are two teams of 4 on either side of a net (height at least ONE METRE up to two metres). Both teams in a 10 metre square, one ball. To start a player throws the ball up and heads either across the net, or to a colleague.

/(A1) serves over the net into the other court for B's to deal with OR

/(A1) serves - from the back line - to (A3) who heads to (A4) who heads over the net

/(It is then up to one of the opposing (B) team to prevent the ball from hitting the ground

**COACHES CAN ALLOW ONE TOUCH FROM THE FOOT TO ASSIST A TEAM IN GETTING THE BALL UP IN THE AIR AGAIN - but only once during any service game!**

/(Players taking the service can pass between themselves (by heading) until they are ready to head back over the net again.

/(Clearly balls that go out of court are a point lost to opponents as are - serves into the net, and when the ball drops to the ground in a players own court

/(Competitive game - 21 points up - only the team serving can score points. The other team win the right to serve by forcing the serving team into an error. Players should take turns at serving and should rotate around the court. This (A1) moves to (A2) who moves to (A3) who moves to (A4) - and similar for their opponents.

**ALL SERVES FROM THE BACK LINE**

/(Coaches can vary the numbers involved e.g. as many as six-a-side - or as few as two-a-side. Obviously the fewer involved the more touches each player is likely to make.

/(The size of the court can be altered by the coach depending on the number of players involved.

# HEADING FOR DISTANCE

## Stage 1

When heading for distance the player has to 'attack' the ball and has to have the correct movement if he is to be successful.

Usually a starting position is for the player to remain unchallenged as he gets his co-ordination of movement into place as he makes his approach to the ball.

### Diagram 1

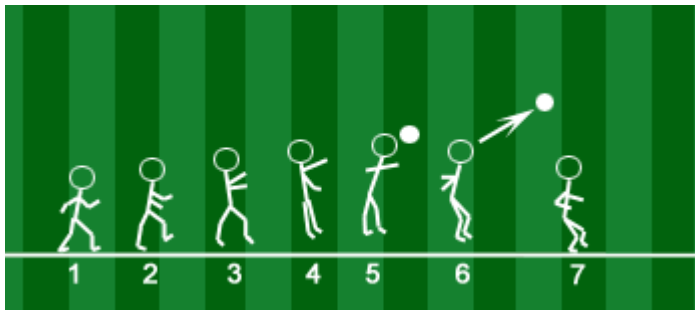


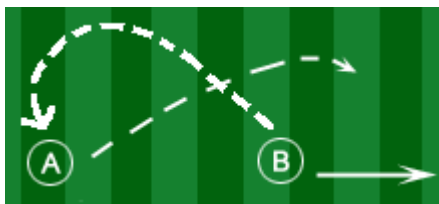
Diagram 1 shows the seven phases in the technique needed to head the ball forward with some power.

- (1) Run approach - crucial, weighing up the height and pace on the ball
- (2 & 3) The take off, off one foot, using the arms for elevation
- (4) Leap up, body arched back ready to give power to the neck
- (5) Neck powered forward to allow the forehead to strike the ball
- (6 & 7) After making contact with the ball, the player tries to land on both feet

**GETTING THIS TECHNIQUE CORRECT IS A KEY ISSUE FOR COACHES, AND ALL PLAYERS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO HEAD THE BALL AT THE HIGHEST POINT OF THE JUMP.**

There are various practices from earlier sessions that can be used but there are others that are solely for improving heading for distance.

### Diagram 2



### Practice 1

// In pairs (A) and (B) 10 metres apart, ONE BALL (diagram 2)

// (B) throws the ball up as high as he wants, (A) has to judge the pace and the height and then power heads it over (B)

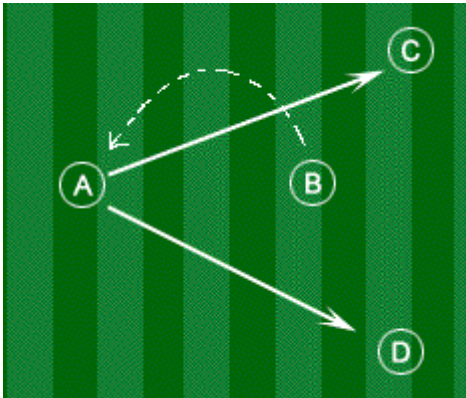
// As soon as he throws the ball (B) has to back pedal to try and prevent (A's) header going over him

// When (B) succeeds, the players change roles.

### Practice 2

// In pairs (A) and (B) with 2 target men (C) and (D) at least 20 metres away from (B)

#### Diagram 3



// Once again (B) throws the ball up, and (A) has to head, at least, the distance to either (C) or (D) before the ball touches the ground (diagram 3).

So senior players could be heading 30 metres. **COACHES SHOULD ADJUST DISTANCES FOR JUNIOR PLAYERS.**

This practice aims for accuracy as well as distance heading.

## SKILLED TOUCHES

There are occasions when a downward header, or a glancing header is required and players should be practised from basic stage one to acquire a technical expertise.

### Practice 1

Two players (A) and (B), one ball.

(A) stands 5 metres away from (B).

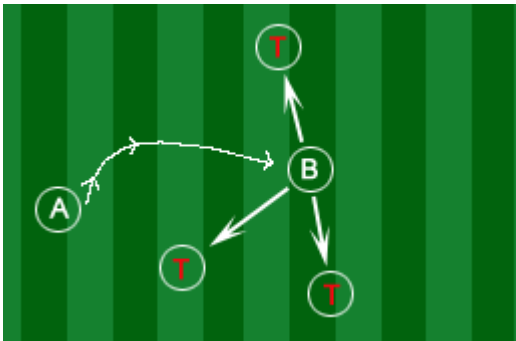
(A) lobs the ball at (B's) head; (A) then decides whether (B) should head downwards or sideways by calling out 'down' or 'side'.

(B) keeps his feet on the ground in the early stages - and (A) should serve at (B's) head to ensure this.

After a while (A) can throw the ball up so that (B) has to jump before making contact with the ball.

**CIRCLES CAN BE USED AS TARGET AREAS FOR** (B) to aim at with his headers. Target areas should be no more than 5 metres away.

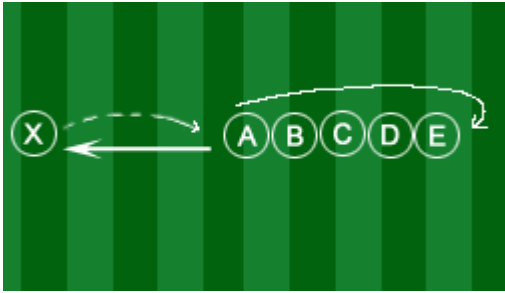
### Diagram 1



### Practice 1

Players line up as in diagram (2) with one man 5 metres ahead of the column.

## Diagram 2



/(X) throws the ball to (A) who heads downwards but straight into (X's) hands, then immediately runs to the back of the column behind (E).

/(X) then throws to (B) who does exactly the same and so on till all the team have completed, then (A) takes (X's) place and so the practice goes on.

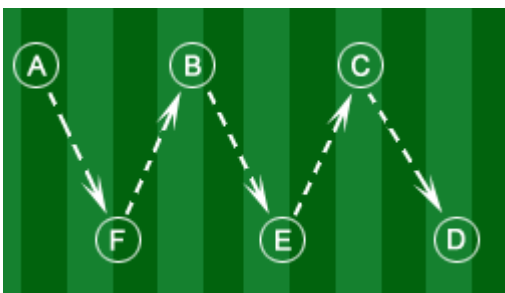
**NB. TWO OR THREE TEAMS CAN PERFORM THIS PRACTICE, COMPETING AIMING TO BE THE FIRST TEAM TO COMPLETE THE RUN THROUGH**

## Practice 2

/(To progress players line up exactly as in practice (2), only this time (X) throws the ball at (A), who heads back to (X), who then heads to (B) (as (A) has run to the back of the group), who returns to (X) and so on. Each player trying to keep the ball up right through the practice.

/(Each header needs to be exact, and coaches should not aim at too long a distance to start with.

## Diagram 3



## Practice 1

/(6 players, one ball, two lines of 3 - not directly facing each other (see diagram 2).  
**PLAYERS NO MORE THAN 5 METRES APART**

/(A) throws the ball up heads to (F) who heads to (B) and so on, till it reaches (D), who heads directly back to (C) and so the ball returns towards (A) at the start.

THE COACH CAN PROGRESS THE PRACTICE BY CALLING OUT THE NAME OF THE NEXT RECIPIENT, SO FOR EXAMPLE WHEN (A) IS ABOUT TO RECEIVE, THE COACH CAN SHOUT "(B)" OR "(C)" SO THAT VARYING SKILL HEADING TECHNIQUES AT REQUIRED.



# **CREATING SPACE**

## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

When playing against individuals or teams who are strong defensively, it is important for the attacking side to know how to create space. This can be achieved by the player in possession using individual techniques such as turning, dribbling or good control. Space can also be created by players running off the ball. It is this movement off the ball that will be the focus of this section.

## *CROSS-OVER RUNS*

The 'Cross-Over' is a simple but effective method of creating space that is used by attacking players when the play becomes tight. The idea is to draw defenders together in order to create space either side of them. The attackers then have the option of exploiting space either side.

### **Organisation**

#### **Area Players**

20 x 25  
2 Attackers  
2 Defenders  
1 Goalkeeper

#### **Equipment**

Balls  
Bibs  
Markers  
Full size goal

#### **Practice**

X runs the ball across the area towards X1  
X1 comes to meet X  
Both players are marked by O and O1 respectively  
When they meet, X has the option of continuing on with the ball or allowing X1 to take the ball from him  
Space has been created on both sides by pulling the defenders together  
The space must then be exploited by the X players with a shot at goal

#### **Key Points**

- ✓ The player on the ball should keep it on the foot that is furthest from the defender thereby using his body as a screen.
- ✓ Communication is essential. Both players must know who is going to take the ball.



As the players perform the cross-over, they must change pace and accelerate into the space that has been created.

✓ Players must remain relaxed and composed in order to finish off the move with a shot on target.

## THE OVERLAP

✓ This is a continuation of the earlier section which dealt with the movement of the ball i.e. a player moving into a fresh position to receive the ball, invariably to avoid marking by an opponent.

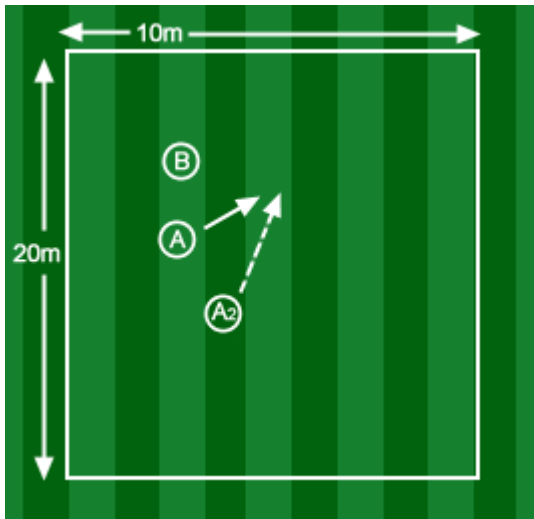
✓ In the overlap we are considering a player moving on the outside of a colleague to spring into an attack.

✓ Consider this first practice, which will help demonstrate the movement and the intention of it.

### Practice 1

✓ Here the attacker A is in possession of the ball, the defender B confronts A. A2 is the player ready to overlap.

**Initial Organisation:** 3 players, 1 ball, area 10 metres x 20 metres



✓ A has possession, A2 sets off with pace to run on the outside of A and B;

✓ A has to time the pass so that A2 is not beyond B when the ball arrives.

✓ This is to ensure A2 is not offside, and also for A to practice delivering the correct weight of the pass.

The coach should ensure that A passes with (on this occasion) the outside of the right foot, and with the correct weight and direction on the delivery.

This sets up the progression from a starting point, as it will be noted that B will immediately consider the run of A2.

**N.B.** Should B set off toward A2 before the ball is delivered by A then A should

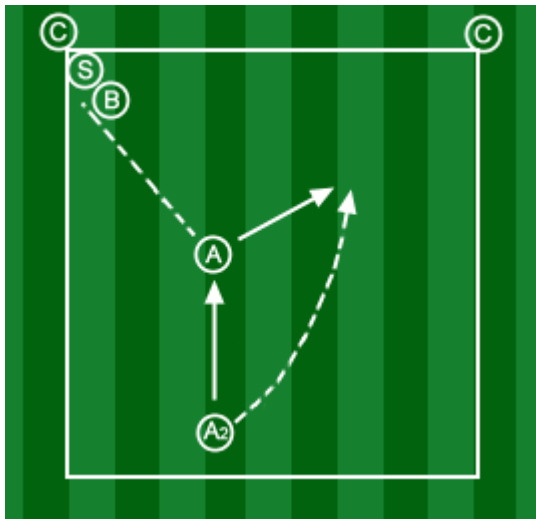
dribble on and let A2 act as a decoy.

It should be noted, too, that A has to decide when and whether to pass to A2. This is an important part of the practice.

## Practice 2

A progression from practice 1.

This time A2 plays the ball to A, who has to control, turn to attack where he will be confronted by B (who moves from a starting position S).



! B must try and win the ball A2's pass must be sharp, A must control, turn quickly and face B.

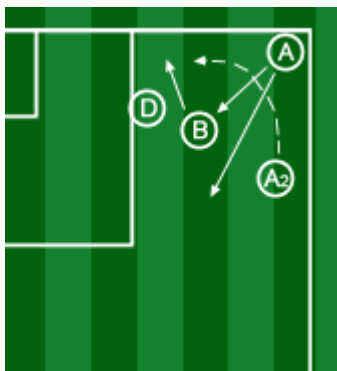
! At that point A2 can set off, and his aim is to be in control of the ball when he runs over the end line marked C.

N.B. The coach again must insist in the accuracy, weight and timing of A2's pass, and the timing of A2's run.

## Practice 3

! This practice makes a much more demanding run from A2, - also a more demanding role for A.

! This involves a move close to their opponents goal line.



! A takes a short corner and passes to B, who controls the ball and prepares to face a defender D.

! A moves away into the field, but A2 comes from his position near the touch line and overlaps down the outside of B who delivers the ball putting A2 in a dangerous attacking position coming along the goal line.

! In the process A and A2 will cross over runs.

Once again the timing and movement is important. B moving as much as possible in

field to allow A2's run at least, he is rewarded with some space.

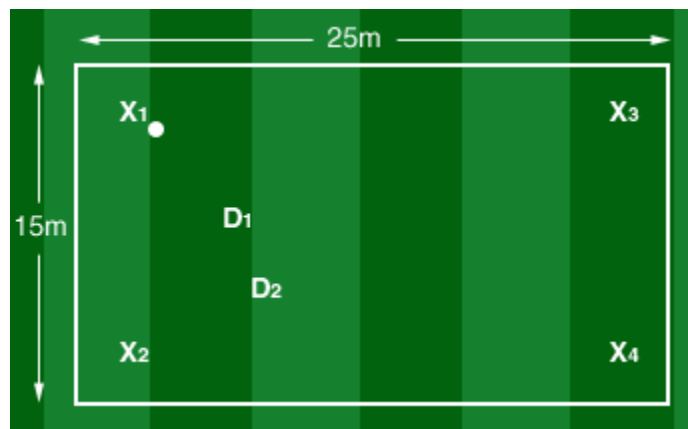
## *CREATING SPACE 1*

This is one of the key areas for coaches in terms of understanding TEAM PLAY.

This is particularly true when dealing with young players who need to learn the concept of movement off the ball.

Generally young players tend to want to be on the ball whenever possible – but there comes a time when they must appreciate what is right for the team – as well as their own game appreciation.

So in the first practice players are simply asked to work on control, movement, and offering angles of support to colleagues



// In the diagram X's are attackers in possession, defenders trying to win the ball are D1 and D2.

// It is simply 4 against 2 in an area 15m x 25m

// X1 starts in possession, then at the signal all players in the area become mobile moving around the area.

// The X's try to keep possession as long as possible, D's try to intercept or win the ball by tackling.

NB: Players in possession should work looking for angles and coaches should stress this in the initial start of the practice.

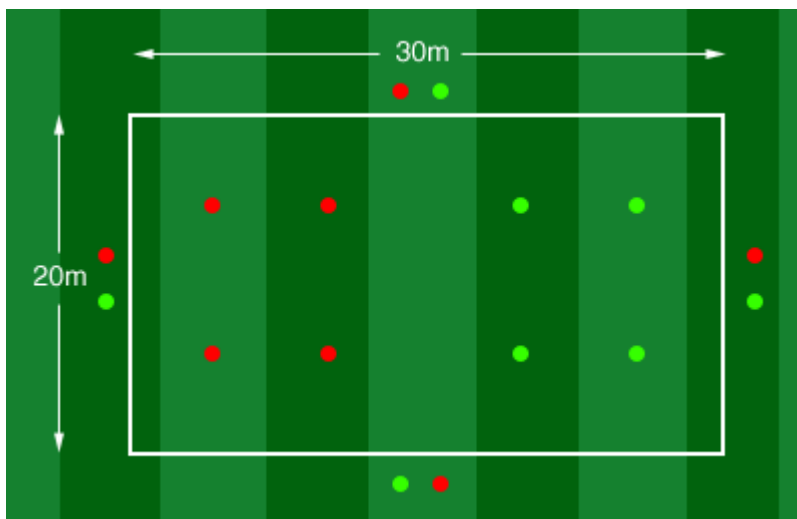
Also, coaches should look for a good first touch on the ball, accurate passing and players moving around the area looking to create space away from the defenders.

## CREATING SPACE 2

In the previous practice the coach has to consider:

- (a) Are the players getting the best out of the exercise and  
(b) What should he/she do if they are not.
1. If the team in possession cannot get the continuity into their play then the coach could remove ONE defender and make it 4 against 1, and then re-introduce the second defender when necessary.
  2. The coach can conversely make it more difficult for the team in possession by insisting that they play two touch soccer! i.e. they can play the ball first time to a colleague, OR they can control the ball with the first touch, but then must pass it with the second. Playing two touch should increase the movement of the players around the area as the attackers realise the urgency to get into position, and also because the defenders expect they may have a better chance of winning the ball.
  3. The coach can, if the players improve, decrease the size of the area to 20m x 10m, this will mean shorter, sharper passing, with the first touch on the ball being crucial as defenders will often be closer. Players will have to move around the area quicker and often will have to play the ball off first time.
  4. To encourage the two defenders, the coach can have one or two waiting on the outside of the area ready to come on if the coach feels the two chasing around in the area are starting to show some fatigue.

## CREATING SPACE 3



## Practice

// The area 30 metres x 20 metres: 4 players per team with 4 players from each team on the outside of the area with one player on each line as in the diagram

// The players on the outside of the field are allowed to move anywhere they wish along their own sideline.

## Target

For each team to get 6 consecutive passes together without their opponents touching the ball

## Exercise

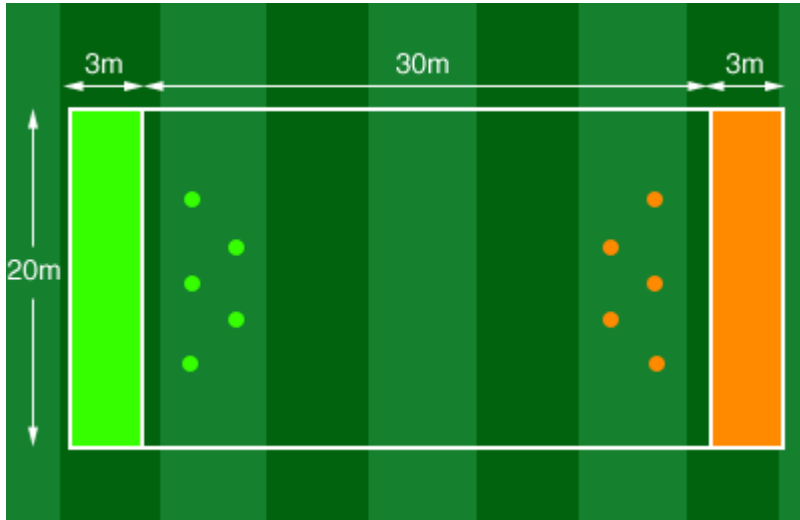
**As soon as the ball moves into play the team without the ball must try and win it.**

The team in possession can use any of the support players on the outside of the field should they so wish. The support players must play the ball back as quickly as possible (one touch or two touch – no more). Support players are not allowed to tackle – they only act as outlets and coaches can switch players around to give all of them a chance in the middle area.

## Players should look to

- a. play one-two's around the area,
- b. look to make fresh angles to receive the ball from a colleague,
- c. look to shield the ball when under pressure,
- d. dribble past an opponent if possible or necessary,
- e. pass to advantage.

## CREATING SPACE 4



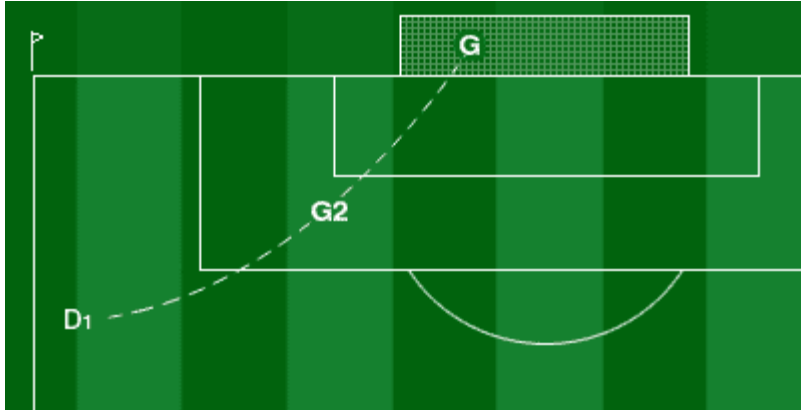
### Practice

- // Area 30m x 20m plus two shaded areas 3m x 20m as in the diagram
- // Five players in each team, one ball, and the target is for the green team to run the ball (under control) or dribble it into the orange shaded area.
- // The orange team, when they have possession try to achieve the same target playing into the green shaded area.
- // If the green team start in possession they have to play a passing, support game trying to reach the orange zone, - the orange team try to disposes them and then set up their own attack.
- // Coaches can award a point when an attacking player has his foot on the ball in the opposing zone.
- // Coaches should look for good movement off the ball (especially as this is a reasonably tight area), accurate passing, good skill in dribbling and running with the ball plus sensible defending.



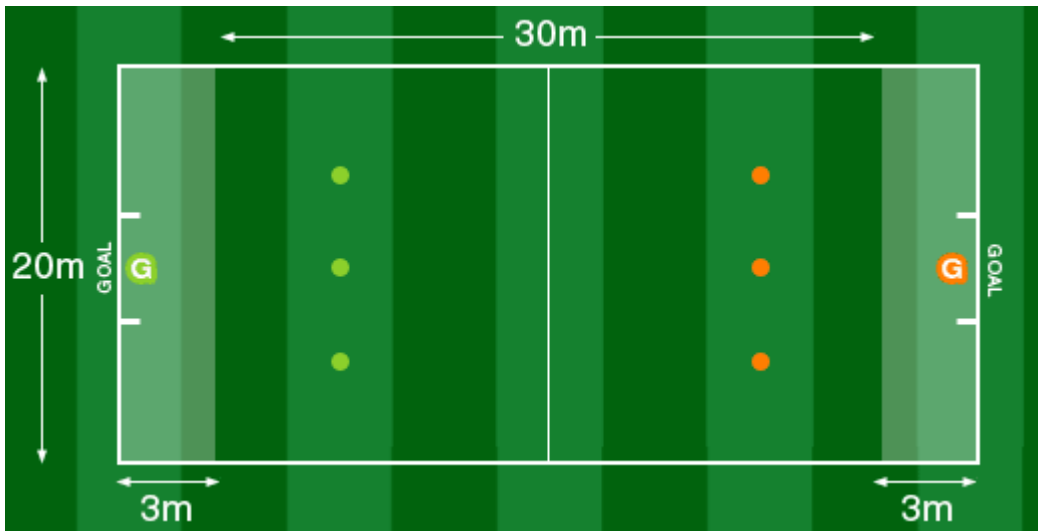
## CREATING SPACE 5

Players have to learn to create space all over the field and that includes starting out from the goalkeeper at the back.



✓ In diagram I, Goalkeeper (G) races out to collect the ball fed by the coach to position (G2), and then looks to start an attack by feeding (D1) who has moved out to the right flank. This is a common occurrence in soccer as a team tries to turn defence into attack.

✓ To practice their quick thinking and movement, coaches can try the following practice.



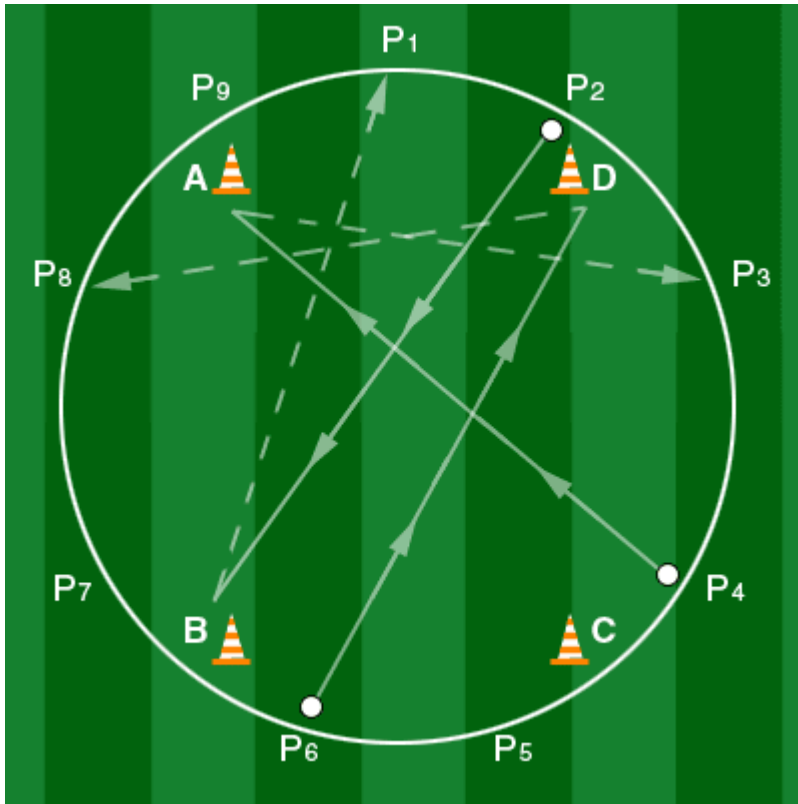
✓ Area 30m x 20m. A Goalkeeper in each goal, who can only handle the ball in the shaded areas i.e. 20m x 3m

✓ Three out-field players on each team, who cannot enter the shaded areas.

✓ They must try and score past the goalkeeper – but they cannot shoot from their own half of the field. Players must try and create openings, goalkeepers looking to

use the ball well at every opportunity. In defensive positions (under pressure) players can pass back to the goalkeeper then move to a fresh position.

## CREATING SPACE 6



### Practice

- // A circle diameter approx 20 metres
- // 4 players inside the circle close to the 4 cones as in diagram A, B, C and D
- // 8 or 9 players on the edge of the circle (i.e. P1 – P9) – there can be any number above 6
- // 3 balls with three of the players on the edge of the circle marked (P2, P4 and P6)
- // In the diagram P2 passes to (B) who makes space for himself in front of the cone, controls the ball and then lays it off to a spare man on the edge of the circle P1.
- // While this is going on P4 plays to (A) who controls and lays off to P3.
- // P6, the same, to (D) who lays back to P8.

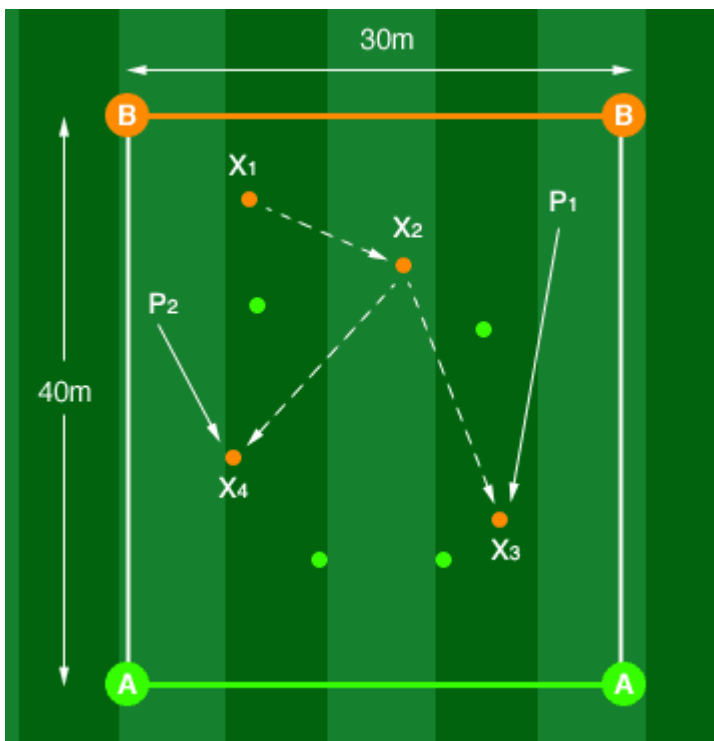
// **N.B.** To maintain the practice as soon as P1, P3 and P8 receive the ball, they then lay off to a player from A, B, C and D and so the whole thing is continuous.

**N.B. (for coaches)**

// A, B, C and D must manoeuvre around their cones, create space to receive and lay off passes.

// P1 – P9 must put in sharp, incisive passes along the ground.

## CREATING SPACE 7



Area – 40 metres x 30 metres, 1 soccer ball, 4 players on each side trying to run over the end line (A and B) IN TOTAL POSSESSION/CONTROL OF THE BALL.

### Practice

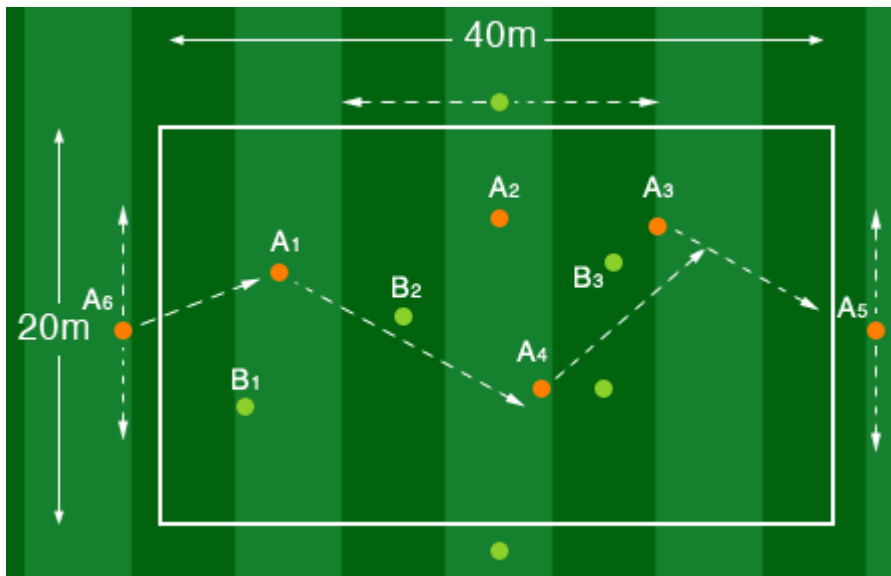
2 short passes MUST be followed by a long pass – if not the ball is given to the opposing team who start in possession on their own end line.

In the diagram (X2) passes to (X1), gets a return pass then must look long so (X4) and (X3) go on forward runs from their starting positions at (P1) and (P2) to give (X2) a chance of passing to them. Clearly then (X1) and (X2) will need to readjust their positions according to the outcome.

With green team trying to win the ball this is a physically demanding practice as well as a technical one, but it encourages movement and the search for space on the field. COACHES CAN WORK ON (a) SIZE OF AREA (b) LENGTH OF PRACTICE according to the age and ability of the players involved.

Coaches must insist on two short passes followed by a long pass. Failure to do this means the ball being handed to the opposing side. Coaches decide on what distance constitutes a long pass.

## CREATING SPACE 8



Area: 20 metres x 40 metres, this can be altered according to the group.

In this practice 12 players (6 v 6) – one ball in play

### Practice

The teams must keep possession

The A team i.e. A1 – A6 must try and play across the area (from A6 to A5 who are used as target players and they stay outside the area behind the end line).

So in the diagram A6 plays to A1 to A4 to A3 and then on to A5 – trying to do so without B's touching the ball.

To score a point/goal the ball must go from end to end, and back i.e. A6 plays to the A's and they play to A5 and then return the ball to A6 without the B's getting a touch.

Once A5 or A6 receive the ball they go into the area changing places with the last player to play the ball (in diagram A3 B's playing across the area, when they gain possession, try and play from B5 to B6 with A's doing the defending)

To try and assist his team the target players (A6 and A5) and (B6 and B5) can move up and down their line – staying on the outside all the time.

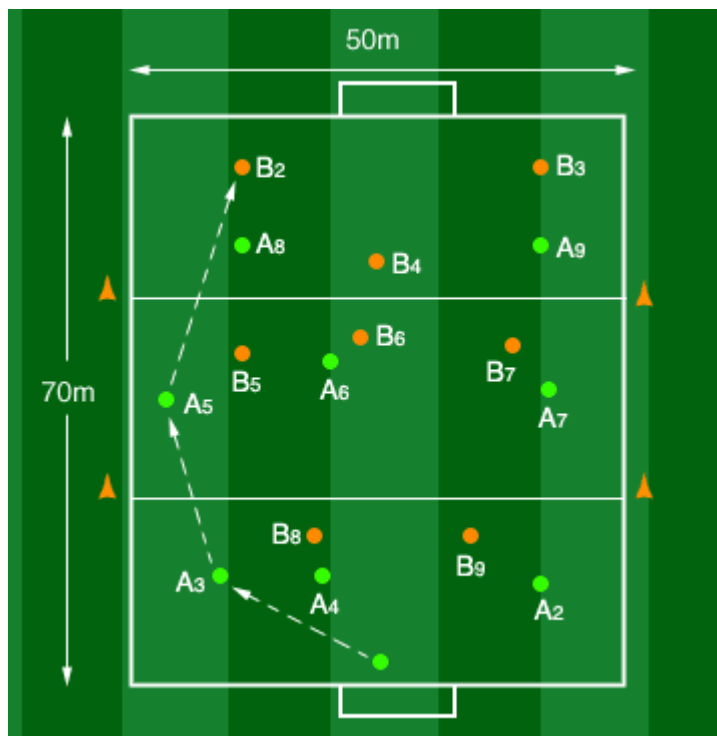
- /// Coaches should insist the team not in possession do try and win the ball so that they can set up their own play.
- /// B's have only 20 metres to make up, so they must be encouraged to go for tight accurate passing (1-2's) with A's marking tight.
- /// Coaches should insist on players using the space available – demanding the target players work up and down the line.
- /// Players should try and create space as individuals, and together as a team by combining with the ball on movement, support and accurate passing.

## CREATING SPACE 9

Organisation: 70m x 50m split into three areas marked by lines or cones (see diagram)

18 players taking part – 9 m each side (including goalkeeper)

Practice: The teams must play through the three sections to try and score.



- Goalkeeper must play out to defenders in the final third. In the diagram GK plays out to A3, who plays on to A5, and then follows his pass into the middle section to make 4 against 3.

- A5 then passes on to A8 and again follows the pass to make 3 against 3, A's then try to score.

Should the ball go into the goal, OR is saved by the goalkeeper OR goes wide, then the practice starts again from the goalkeeper.

# **DEFENDING SET PLAYS**

## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

FREE KICKS, including corners and throw-ins are match winning situations, so defending at set-plays needs informed planning if you do not want to concede goals.

Consider the games dead ball specialists: David Beckham, Roberto Carlos, Zola and Dennis Bergkamp. All these players and many more practice for hours perfecting their technique but as defenders how often do you practice defending against them? Very little I expect.

What I will attempt to do is highlight with diagrams, areas for defenders to stand when defending set-plays. As defenders, you will need to organise quickly and stay concentrated from the moment the free-kick/corner is awarded.

✔ You should try to read the type of free-kick/corner about to be delivered: in/out swinger.

✔ You should be brave and keep your eyes on the ball at all times.

✔ You should attempt to get to the ball first.

✔ The wall should stay big and together (runners to close down should not be part of the wall).

## *CORNERS*

### **Defending at corners - Zonal marking**

Zonal marking is when defenders take up a pre-determined position at corner kicks. The areas as shown in the diagram highlight the danger zones at corner kicks. My one concern with zonal marking relates to the fact that defenders are normally jumping and attacking the ball from a standing position. Zonal marking does allow defenders to organise quickly as their role is clearly defined.

The alternative would be to go man to man with your attacker – this would highlight the following problems:-

✔ Defenders get moved all over the penalty area

✔ Attacks will attempt to block you off

✔ Danger of taking your eyes off your attacker and the ball during the movement  
Whatever method you adopt at set-plays, remember to organise quickly, be to the ball first at corners and be brave at all times.





## *CLOSING DOWN THE SPACE TO ATTACKERS*

// All players (no matter what their position) should work at the technique of denying space to opponents.

// It is a fact that defenders, who allow opponents time and space to control the ball, can find themselves out of the game, as they are simply bypassed.

// There is a technique in "closing down" opponents.

a) defenders who rush in too quickly can easily be beaten if they slightly miss-time their challenge.

b) They can also be penalised for rash challenges.

c) Timing and anticipating is everything, and it enables the defender to stay on his feet.

d) The knack is for the defender to be able to see the ball and any possible movement by the opponent - and then make the challenge when the opportunity presents itself.

### **SO DEFENDERS SHOULD**

1 Try and anticipate, while the ball is moving.

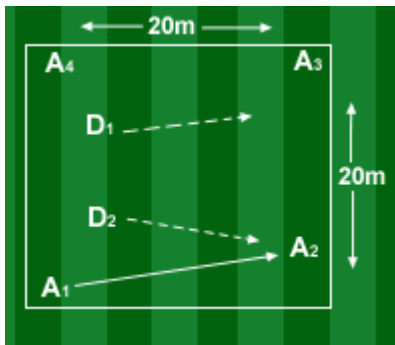
2 Concentrate on the opponents around the ball.

3 Wait until the right moment presents itself before making a tackle - observe, too, where your own teammates are.

4 Try and stay on you feet at all times. .

Here are some practices that can be used to assist in improving the techniques of closing down opponents.

## Practice 1



Area of 20 metres square, one ball,  
attackers (A's) and 2 defenders (D's)  
—→ ball movement  
- - -→ movement of player

The practice is for A's to pass the ball about inside the square and for the two defenders to try and either win the ball or simply clear the ball out of the square.

### Points to note

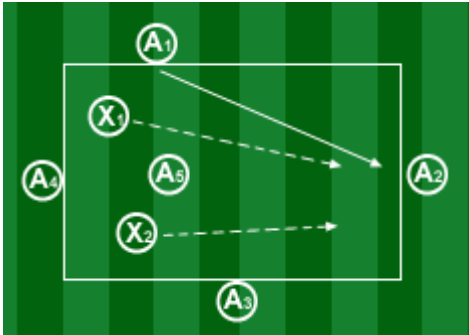
- 1 The 2 defenders (D) must work together Eg As A1 passes to A2, then D2 closes in on A2, at the same D1 must anticipate which pass (from A2) will come next, so he may opt to wait before closing down on A3, or even try and intercept any pass from A2.
- 2 D1 and D2 must tackle when they get the chance.
- 3 D1 and D2 must work at angles. So that as A1 passes to A2, D2 can manoeuvre himself in such a position that A2 cannot pass back to A1, which will in turn allow D1 to concentrate on A4 and A3.

The coach can vary this practice by allowing the attackers only 2 touches of the ball. They must either pass it first time on to a colleague, or control the ball, then pass it on with next touch on the ball.

This makes it more difficult for the attackers, but improves their commitment in the practice, and indeed speeds up the practice.

If attackers are adept enough the coach can make the practice one touch only. So as the ball arrives by any of the A's, they must immediately pass it on to a colleague.

## Practice 2 – This is progression



Area 25m x 10m attackers (A) in possession of the ball, four on each side of the area, one inside along with 2 defenders X1 and X2

A's have to retain possession of the ball, and they can pass to any other A, including the player inside the area A5. X1 and X2 have to try and win the ball. The same principles apply as in practice 1, with the defender working in tandem, trying to force errors from the A's (who can move up and down the edges of the area to make themselves more available).

To progress the coach can;

- 1 Add another defender, so that there are 3 X's in the area.
- 2 Insist on two or one touch from the attackers (A's).

## *DEFENDERS FORCING THE PLAY*

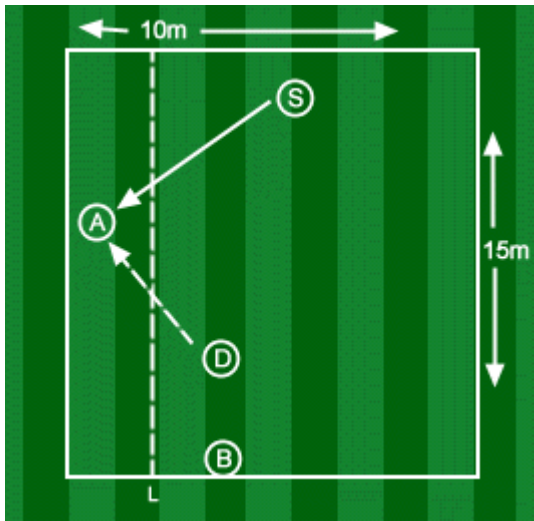
Defenders first priority is to win back the ball, of course there will be times when that isn't a simple task, and it is on these occasions that defenders have to try and force attacking play into areas that are going to offer the least threat to goal.

Defenders can either:

- a) try and force attackers into wide positions or
- b) simply make the play across the field.

Here are some practices that will assist defenders in their development of these skills.

## Practice 1



### Organisation

Area: 10 metres x 15 metres

1 ball

4 players

✓ S serves the ball to A who is close to the Touchline. A needs to control the ball and pass it onto B who is on the far touchline - positioned centrally.

✓ D is a defender who moves towards A as soon as S passes the ball.

✓ D should position himself, to force A down the touchline roughly on the touchline side illustrated by the line L.

✓ D must reduce A's options, and make his play predictable - above all cutting out the pass to B.

✓ D should tackle when the opportunity presents itself

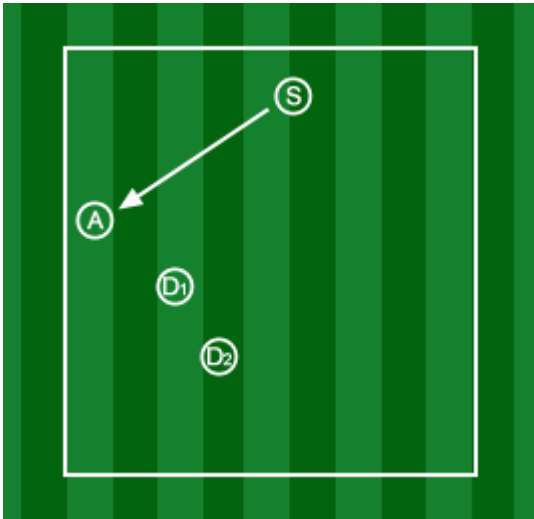
✓ D must prevent A cutting inside.

**NB the coach should encourage A to control quickly, attempt to either dribble past D or at least make an angle to open a route to B to make the practice worthwhile.**

The players can rotate positions to enable each player to have the opportunity to develop his defensive capability.

## Practice 2

To assist the defender D1 a second defender D2 can be brought into the practice to accentuate the note of forcing attackers into wide positions.



✓ S passes to A, who controls the ball, and his aim is to get the ball to B position and on the opposite touchline.

✓ D as in practice 1 moves in and again tries to force A down the line. This time a second defender D2 is positioning himself in support of D1 and should be ready to tackle if D1 is beat.

✓ D2's position is important - **MUCH DEPENDS ON THE POSITION ON THE FIELD**

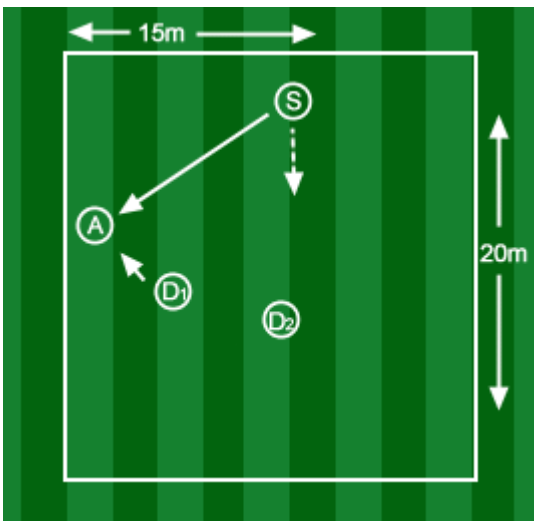
a) D2 should not be too close to D1 - or he will lose his effectiveness, particularly if the play is in the middle of the field - a speedy opponent could sprint past them both and put them out of the game.

b) In a tighter area (near to the penalty area) clearly D2 needs to be closer to D1 as A may beat D1 and get a shot on goal before D2 can get in a challenge.

The coach should insist again on a good service by S, quick control by A, who must be encouraged to try everything he know to get the ball to B.

Players can again rotate duties, the coach manoeuvring the defenders into the correct areas, positions and instructing them on when to tackle.

### Practice 3



✓ To develop widen the area to 15m x 20m, exactly the same players only this time as soon as S plays the ball to A he joins in the play so creating a 2 v 2 situation - S & A against D1 and D2.

✓ S & A trying to get the ball to B on the opposing touchline.

✓ S passes to A and D1 again tries to force A down the line who now has the option of playing the ball to S who moves forward.

✓ D2 now has to decide his position, and so the 2 defenders have to work in tandem.

✓ D2 deciding whether to cover, should D1 be beaten down the touchline (his first

priority) or whether to hold his position should A look to bring S into the play and so open a wider angle to B.

// Communication between the 2 defenders (as well as the 2 attackers) is important. The covering player giving information to the challenging defender.

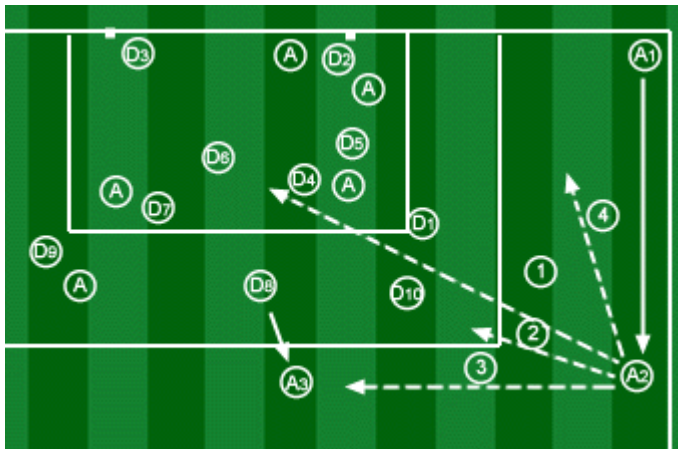
// In an area of this size, one defender would always be in a tight challenging position to the attacker who has the ball - so as not to make it an easy option to pass to B.

#### Practice 4

To develop further the area can be enlarged again, to 20m x 30m. Two goals with goalkeepers introduced, and so it becomes 2 v 2, on the field trying to score in the opponent's goal.

This gives a competitive edge to the practice, and it is better if full sized goals are used.

### *DEFENDING THE CORNER KICK PLAYED BACK TO A SUPPORTING PLAYER*



// A1 plays the ball back (almost level with the touchline) to A2 who has moved forward quickly.

// This often happens when teams aren't having success in aerial duels, and so they look to take a quick dead ball kick. The whole point being that: -

1. A2 can centre the ball changing the angle of attack.
2. A2 can hold the ball and try and get within a position to drive at goal.
3. A2 can move forward before playing a pass ball to A3 moving up for a shot at goal.

With attackers moving around - defenders must keep their discipline. To defend against this, as

// Soon as A1 plays the ball back to A2 - defenders should be on their way out of the 6 yard area, clearing the space for the goalkeeper to see and hopefully control should a cross ball arrive in from A2.

**THIS ENSURES ATTACKERS HAVE TO MOVE OUT AS WELL OR THEY WILL BE CAUGHT OFFSIDE.**

// D10 sets off immediately to challenge A2 - to try and stop the early cross into the penalty area. D10 should try to 'hold up' the pace of the attack.

// D7 should move to check any move by A2 down the flank - or by A2 if he tries to move towards the penalty area.

// D8 should be ready if A2 plays to A3 running up for a shot at goal - D8 must react to the situation, holding his ground if A2 goes down the flank.

// Defenders 2-7 should clear the 6-yard area ensuring they mark attackers all the time. No attacker should be left free as A2 may simply knock the ball into the danger area first time.

// If one of the defenders does manage to clear the ball out of the penalty area then all defenders should move out together.

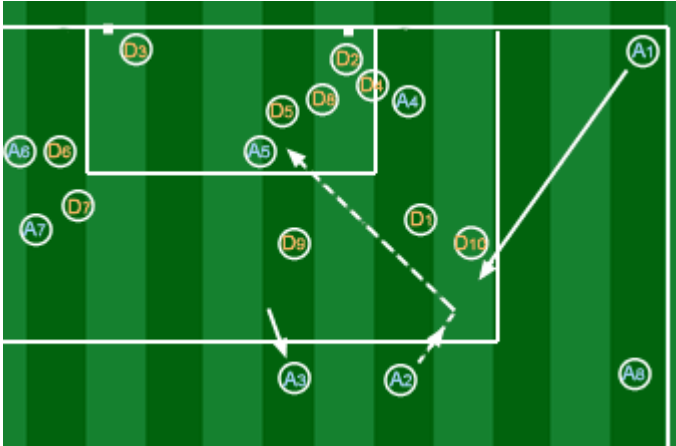
**ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES FOR DEFENDERS IS TO WORK AS A UNIT.**

// A2 has options but invariably he will try and catch the defenders moving out together. As a result the defenders must be alert to any eventuality - it is a disciplined reaction that is needed, stressing the importance of picking up any opponent in the penalty area.

**THE GOALKEEPER IS A KEY PLAYER - HE HAS THE BEST VIEW OF ALL THE DEFENDERS (ESPECIALLY IF THE 6-YARD AREA IS CLEARED) SO HE SHOULD INSTRUCT, (BY SHOUTING), TO HIS TEAM-MATES WHERE THE DANGER POINT IS - AND WHEN TO CLEAR THE AREA.**

# DEFENDING AT A CORNER KICK PLAYED TO THE EDGE OF THE PENALTY AREA

## Practice 1



This is a corner kick used by good technical teams, who possess the quality of player to deliver accurate passes, e.g. Manchester United's use of David Beckham as (A1) and Teddy Sheringham as (A2).

The ploy is for (A1) to deliver the corner towards (A2) who moves forward of his starting position and then either volleys it first time into the danger zone as shown in the diagram OR sends in a glancing header direct from the corner towards the direction of the six yard area.

// This changing the angle of attack will force defenders to alter their positions, in relation to the attackers and it can be successful as the volley (in particular) from (A2) will be difficult to defend and with (A5) in the vicinity for a possible deflection on the ball, and (A6) and (A7) running this there is a real threat to the goal.

So all defenders have to be alert so soon as they realise the ball is being played wide to the edge of the penalty area.

### **Each defender has responsibilities: -**

// (D9) tries to get to (A2) as soon as possible to try and block any corner kick towards the danger area.

// (D6) and (D7) should stay close to (A6) and (A7) until the danger is cleared.

// (D3) and (D2) should stay in their positions on the goal line, until the danger goes. They should not worry about playing attackers on side, their aim is to block the goal area, moving out quickly once the initial threat goes.



/(D5) and (D4) stay with (A5) and (A4) - all the time and whenever they move in the area - always, too, whenever possible on the goal side of the attackers.

/(D8) - his first role to 'double' mark at the unswinging corner disappears when the corner is played towards (A2). So he should move more central towards the edge of the six-yard area to try and block any ball delivered by (A2).

### Points to Note

/(If (A2) makes a good contact on the ball with either volley or header all defenders must be alert to the change of angle of the attack - and must keep their discipline.

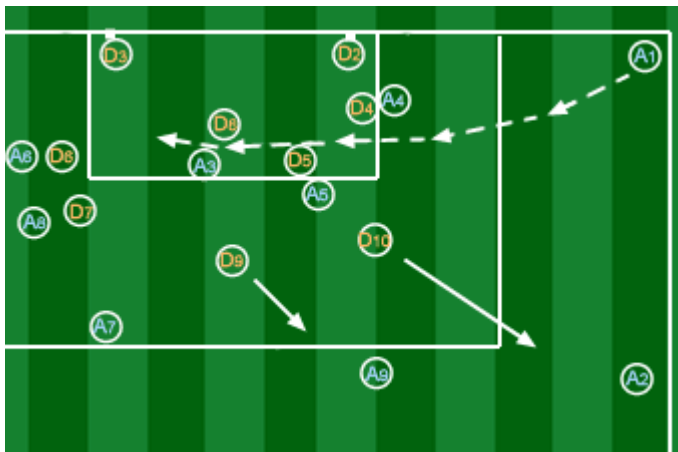
/(Defenders must mark all the other attackers (goal side) until the ball is cleared.

/(The goalkeeper, who should have the best view, will instruct (by shouting) to all defenders to get out of the area as soon as the danger goes.

/(D3) and (D2) act as good minders until the ball is cleared - staying on the line should they be needed.

**ONCE AGAIN DEFENDERS MUST BE READY TO RE-ADJUST THEIR ROLES AT THE ANGLE OF ATTACK CHANGES.**

## *DEFENDING THE CORNER KICK DELIVERED TO AND BEYOND THE FAR POST*



No defence can ever be totally sure what the attacking side has in mind when they win a corner kick, and so they have to line up preparing for any eventuality.

/(The near post has to be covered, as in diagram (i) by (D2), (D4) and (D5).

//They must be ready to check a ball played back to an attacking defender a long the touchline (A2) - Hence the position of (D10).

//While (D9) has to be ready should (A1) direct the corner to the edge of the penalty area and or (A9).

So with (D3) committed to guarding the goal line on the far post eight players already have set tasks.

So what about the corner kick played long towards the far point of the 6 yard area with attackers (A6) and (A8) coming in hoping to get a header or goal?

**CLEARLY THEY MUST BE MARKED - GOAL SIDE BY (D6) AND (D7).**

1. These two defenders must be strong in the air ready to challenge in any aerial duel.
2. Both must man for man mark their attacker i.e. (D6) with (A6), (D7) with (A8) until the ball is cleared.
3. (D8) must mark (A3) (on the edge of the 6 yard area) should there be any knock down into the danger area.
4. (D3) and (D2) should stay on the line either side of the goalkeeper (G) to protect the goal, acting as a last line of defence should (A6) or (A8) get in a header.
5. Similarly (D5) stays with (A5), and (D4) with (A4) - until the threat is cleared.

#### **POINTS TO NOTE**

1. Once again all defenders must keep their discipline and be ready to attack should the angle of attack change, i.e. once the ball has passed over them (D4), (D5) and (D8) should all be ready to readjust to more central positions - keeping goal side of the attacker they are marking.
2. (D6) and (D7) are key players they must be strong, forceful and good in the air totally committed to winning any aerial battle. - TRYING IF POSSIBLE (Should they win the heading duel) **NOT TO HEAD THE BALL TOWARDS THE CENTRAL SECTION OF THE PENALTY AREA.**
3. Once the danger is cleared (G) should encourage all defenders especially (D3) and (D2) to clear the area quickly.

## SWITCHING PLAY IN DEFENCE

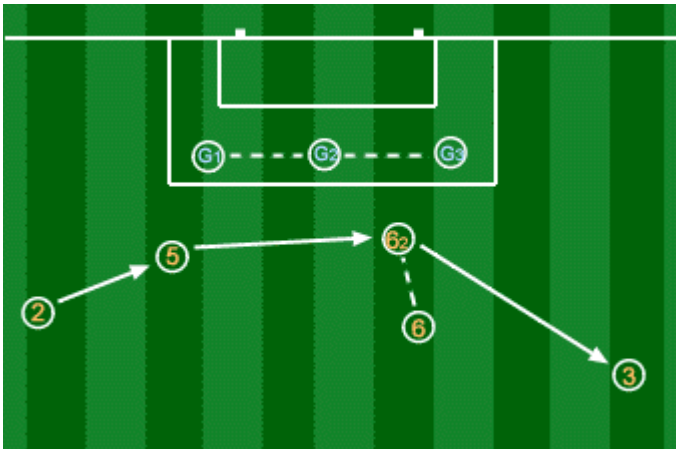
In the modern game defenders have to be skilful. They have to be able to control the ball with one touch and they also need the ability to be able to pass both long and short.

Of course it makes life simpler for any defender if he can pass with either foot. It saves a lot of time adjusting the body and also being adept with both feet does give any player confidence.

### Stage One

To begin, the back four players can start the day by passing the ball around in an area with real concentration placed on quick control, and accurate passing. No limits should be put on the players, - the coach however insisting they change positions on the field. It is a sort of warm-up for the next practice.

### Stage Two



The four defenders and a goalkeeper go on to the full size pitch, into their positions with the goalkeeper somewhere close to the penalty spot in his own penalty area (see diagram 1).

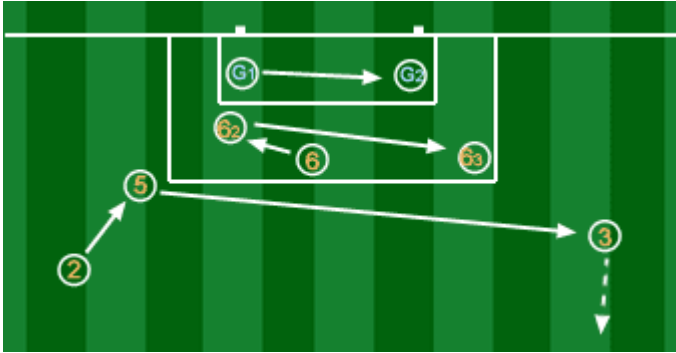
(a) (2) has possession, he plays to (5), (6) covers (dropping deeper) slightly before he receives the ball from (5) at (62).

Once in control he passes forward to (3) who sets up an attack on the left flank.

**N.B.** While the ball is being transferred across the four defenders, the goalkeeper (G) alters his position across the penalty area. Starting at (G1), but as the ball moves from (5) to (62), so the goalkeeper moves to corner at (G2), and finally on to (G3) once the ball has reached (3). By doing this (G1) is always available for a back pass should any emergency arise.

The whole basis of switching the play in defence revolves around each defender, passing with the right weight on the ball, good control, accurate distribution, and always being aware of the cover should any error occur.

### Stage Three

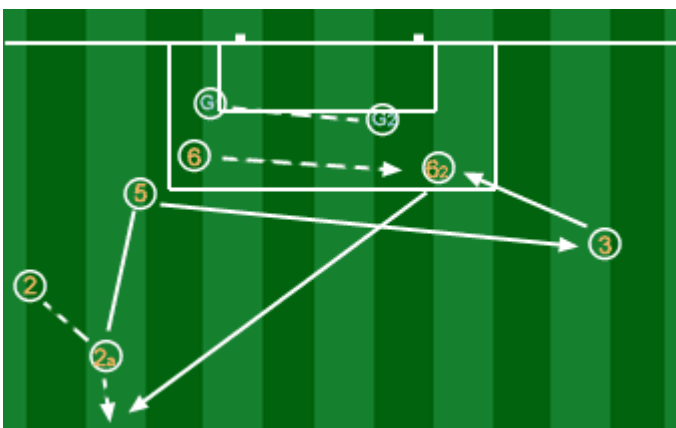


In diagram (2), the man in possession of the ball to start is (2), this time slightly closer to his own penalty area.

He lays it back to (5), who plays a long diagonal pass (first time if possible) to (3), who then sets up an attack.

(6) moves back again to (62) to act as cover to (5), but the long pass to (3) cuts him out of the move. Once (3) starts to progress, the other three defenders all move forward. Once (5) passes to (3) - (6) moves across to (63) Goalkeeper (G) again moves across to (G2) once the ball is on its way from (5) to (3).

### Stage Four



There are various permutations of the passing around defenders, but once confidence has grown then more difficult practices can be adopted.

For example (see diagram 3). (2) moves forward slightly to (2a), before timing the ball back to (5), who hits it across the field to (3), again cutting out (6) who initially covers (5).

But (3) on receiving the ball decides to play the ball back to (6) who has moved across to (62) - mainly to act as a covering defender.

But as the ball comes back to him he then hits a long diagonal pass to (2) who then sets up a right wing attack.

There are several coaching points to watch out for: -

- (a) The timing and weight of every pass is important
- (b) The first touch is crucial for any player receiving the ball
- (c) Players should appreciate when to pass first time, and when to add an extra touch on the ball
- (d) The passing player has to show he knows when to pass to a colleague's feet, or in front of him
- (e) There should always be some form of cover, the balance of the defence is crucial
- (f) The goalkeeper may not get many touches on the ball but he is still a key player in the practice moving across his area and making himself available whenever needed for a back pass.

# **SUPPORT PLAY**

## A BASIC INTRODUCTION

The closer an attacking team gets to the opposition goal the more pressure the defenders will exert on the man in possession in order to prevent him from playing the ball forward. This means that the player on the ball needs support from his team - mates. It is important that the supporting players take up their positions early so that the tightly marked man in possession has the option of passing the ball with his first touch.

## SUPPORT BEHIND THE BALL

The supporting players have to determine two things;

- (i) the correct angle of support
- (ii) the correct distance of support

By taking up the correct angle and distance the supporting player will achieve;

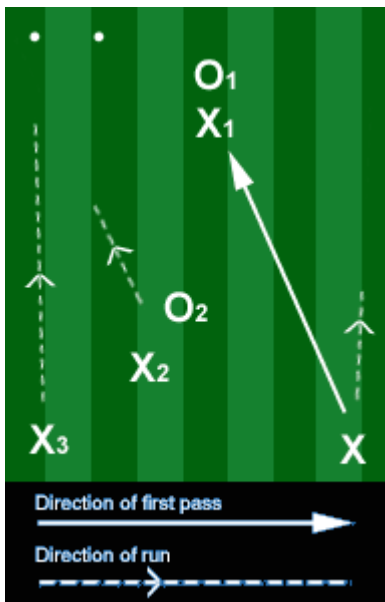
- ✓ a position in which he has a full range of forward vision
- ✓ a position in which he receives the ball comfortably
- ✓ a position in which he can switch the play
- ✓ a position in which he can play the ball forward without being under pressure

### Organisation

**Area:** 30x40

**Players:** 4 Attackers, 3 Defenders

**Equipment:** Balls, Bibs, Markers



### Practice

X plays the ball into X1 who is tightly marked by O1

X follows his pass and supports X1

X2 must lose his marker O2 and provide support for X1

X1 lays the ball off to either of the supporting players X or X2

X3 makes a forward run and provides the outlet for the through pass from X or X2

O3 is the recovering defender who tracks the run of X3

X's must run the ball through the markers to score

## Key Points

Assess the angle and distance of the support positions offered by X and X2  
Assess the timing of the forward run made by X3  
Assess the accuracy, timing and weight of pass played by either X or X2 into the path of X3  
Ensure that O's defend properly

## SUPPORT PLAY - PROGRESSION

The development of the first practice takes place in area 30m x20m with target player's (T) positioned at either end.

### Organisation

**Area:** 30m x 20m

**Players:** 4 Attackers (X), 2 Defenders (O), 2 Targets (T)

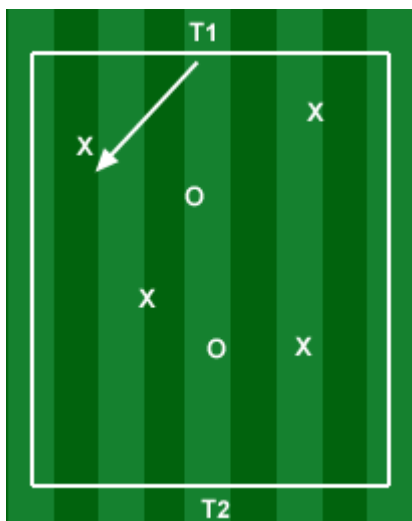
**Equipment:** Balls, Bibs, Markers.

### Practice

T1 plays the ball into any member of team X.

Team X combine, through good passing and support, in order to pass the ball to T2.

T2 then plays into team X and they now combine to pass the ball to T1.



The practice can be conditioned in order to achieve improved performance.

- /// Ball played below head height
- /// Team X cannot pass the ball back to either target player
- /// Off-side applies in the last two squares at either end

Other conditions can be added depending on the competence of the players.

- /// Team X must play two - touch
- /// Team X must play one - touch
- /// Team X have no restrictions in their play

## Key Points

Assess the angle and distance of the support positions offered by Team X.

Assess the awareness of X players with regard to;



- // Team mates
- // Opposition
- // Targets Assess the accuracy, timing and weight of pass.

Assess the ability of Team X to switch from playing in one direction to playing in another direction.

The key to effective support play is the ability of the supporting players to be in the right place at the right time. They must be in a position to receive passes at the correct time, in the maximum space available and then take advantage of the situation to advance the play when possible.

# **GOALKEEPING**

## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

The position of goalkeeper is that of a 'specialist technician' and, therefore, a great deal of work on individual technique is required to reach a competent standard.

### **Practice 1**

#### **Handling**

Two players 10 yards apart throw the ball to each other

#### **Key Points**

Starting position - weight should be on the balls of the feet

- // feet should be shoulder-width apart
- // hands should be at waist height, outside the line of the body
- // palms of the hands open
- // head should be slightly forward and steady at all times

#### **Catching the ball 'above head height'**

Hands in front of the body  
Fingers spread into what we call the 'W' shape  
Take the ball early  
Catch behind the ball

#### **Catching a ball at 'chest height'**

Hands in front of the body  
Palms facing outward  
Fingers spread in the 'W' shape  
Catch behind the ball

**or**

Allow the ball to go into the chest  
'Cup' the ball - wrap hands and forearms around the ball  
Clutch the ball into the chest

## *THROWING THE BALL*

The change of rule which allows goalkeepers once they have possession to run with the ball across the penalty area has speeded up the game quite noticeably.

Furthermore, it has also meant that goalkeepers can set up counter attacks very quickly - so they need to be accurate with their distribution.

In this section we will deal with throwing the ball - As a generality it should be an accurate method of distribution and also a quicker method.

Distance of course will vary - young players obviously possessing less physical strength will not throw very far - but they should not be discouraged from delivering the ball by hand.

### **The main methods of release are:**

#### **✓Rolling the ball out** (short distance)

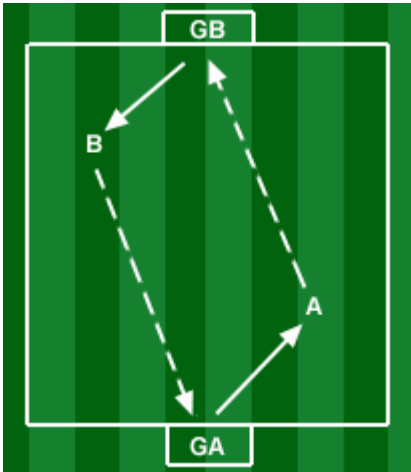
In practice very similar to bowling on a bowling green, the ball being released from an open palmed hand along the floor - generally in front of a team mate ensuring the pace of the roll is exactly right for the player to set up the play. Accuracy shouldn't be a problem here as this method is only used for short distances - under 15 metres. Practice, to gauge the right weight of the rolled out ball, is needed. Inaccuracy or a poor delivery can leave the goalkeeper and other defenders stranded should their opponents gain possession.

#### **✓The overarm throw** (long distance)

Body sideways on, legs generally apart the front arm pointing towards the direction of the throw, the other arm straight behind the head and shoulders. This time the ball is delivered with an action that is similar to a cricketer bowling, and it does allow throws from the penalty area to reach the halfway line. It isn't as easy to remain accurate, - so practice is needed.

#### **✓Throwing from mid body height**

This time the ball is held just below shoulder height, in the palm of the hand. The throwing hand comes back before a swift delivery, projecting the ball forward. The real strength of this method is the speed of delivery and also the accuracy up to 20 metres, so that attack can be set up quickly. Goalkeepers should remember.



**Practice 1 and 2**

**Organisation**

An area 20 metres square -

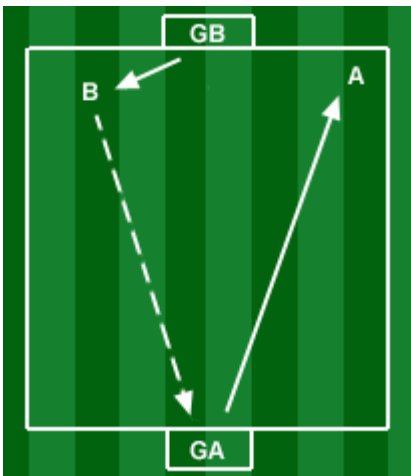
- 2 goalkeepers
- 2 outfield players
- 1 ball

**Practice 1**

Goalkeeper GB rolls the ball out to team-mate B who shoots at Goalkeeper GA (1st time shot if possible). GA then must try and save the shot (catching the ball if possible) and then roll it out quickly to A who repeats the process by shooting at GB.

✔ To ensure a tidy practice the coach should insist on accuracy of shooting. Both B & A should be made to fetch the ball if they miss the target - the coach also can award points to B and A (who would compete against each other) each time they hit the target.

The coach must insist on accuracy in the roll outs at every single opportunity.



Similar organisation to practice 1.

This time goalkeeper GB (who begins the practice) rolls out accurately to B who shoots at the goal defended by goalkeeper GA.

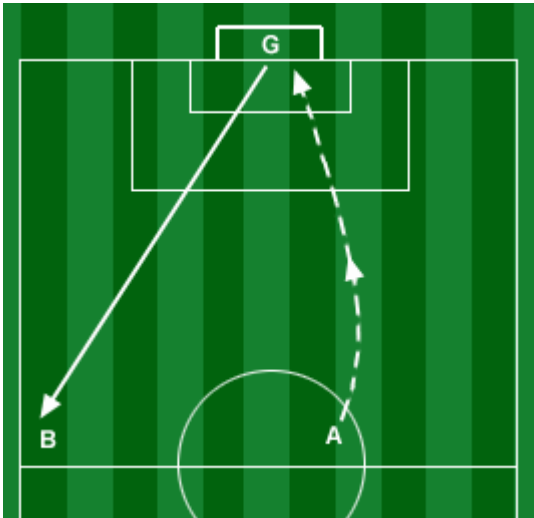
GA must try and hold the shot and then deliver the ball by throwing it to A who is

almost 20 metres away.

He must use the throw from just above waist height practising the sharp movement projecting the ball forward quickly (palm of hand open behind the ball, and the shoulder muscles used to deliver some pace on the ball).

The ball should retain its waist high trajectory until it arrives just in front of A (who controls and passes it to GB).

Players can be rotated in both practices.



### Practice 3

3 players,  
goalkeeper G & 2  
outfield men A and B.

A punts the ball into G's penalty area. G races out catches the ball and throws it overarm to B who moves around the half way line.

G must be made to react quickly once he has caught the ball and despite the length of throw he must still work at accuracy. B can manoeuvre his position so as to vary the distance required in the throw out by G.

B and A can reverse roles, and they can also vary the type of service into G's penalty area.

Goalkeepers will appreciate they need good arm and shoulder muscles to improve distance and speed of any throw and they should look at special exercises to develop these muscles.

# SAVING

Goalkeepers and would be goalkeepers need to get the "feel" of the ball.

There's an old story of a young lad who wanted to play in goal and his first advice came from a former professional keeper who told him:

"Get into bed at night and hold a ball firmly and then loosely using both hands. Get the feel of the ball, and then before going to sleep put the ball down at the side of the bed. In the morning the first thing you do is pick up the ball, and go through the handling process again".

It may seem a bit strange, but the old professional was trying to make the youngster understand the meaning of feeling comfortable at handling a ball.

Being able to catch and hold on to the ball is the key point, and any goalkeeper will tell you that it's a case of practice, practice, practice to improve both technique and co-ordination.

In earlier sessions we have discussed various aspects of the goalkeeping art, so now we turn to the actual saving of shots, headers at goal.

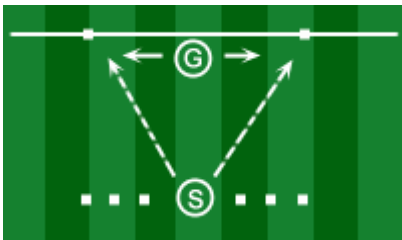
Primarily a goalkeeper needs to be agile, focussed, courageous and alert, so here along with handling techniques are a few opening practices to begin life as the last line of defence.

## Practice 1

Goalkeeper (G) between two sticks (S), a server with a number of fooballs. S serves (by hand), varying the service, full lob in the air and on the ground. G has to save, then return the ball to S, who will immediately serve again. S stands around 5 metres away from the goal. The extra balls are needed, should the service pass the goalkeeper. This can be tiring for G, so he should be encouraged by the coach (even by S if need be) who should ensure that G does have a chance of serving any service.

The practice must be realistic and G should note

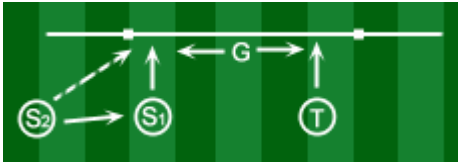
- a) that he holds on to the ball whenever possible
- b) tries to get his body behind the ball when he saves
- c) keeps on his toes all the time, being ready to dive, or throw himself to save when the need arises.



THIS SHOULD GO ON FOR AROUND ONE MINUTE AS BY THEN G WILL START TO FEEL THE PHYSICAL PRESSURE.

## Practice 2

Another exacting practice this time using 2 servers S and T. Goalkeeper G saving alternatively from the 2 servers, who are again around 5 metres away from the goal. Here again the type of service should be varied - both servers giving G a possible chance of saving.

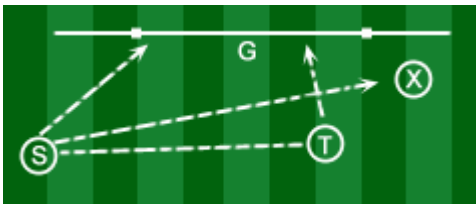


**NB** \* To progress the 2 servers can move backwards (or change their angle of service eg S moves to S2 where he can throw the ball with more force or can serve to make it bounce immediately in front of G who has to serve.

From distances over 10 metres, S & T can drop volley the ball at the goal so as to put some power into the service - G must be required to hold on to the ball.

## Practice 3

Concerns G having to move quickly and so change his angles while trying to save.

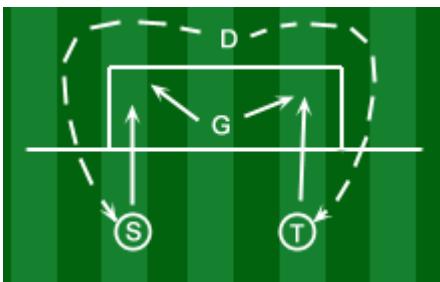


In this practice S who starts with the ball In his hands can either;

- Drop volley at the goal forcing G to save at his near post
- Throw the ball at the goal (varying the service) so that G has to be mobile to save.
- Throw or pass the ball to T who can deflect the ball goal wards, or simply stop the pass before throwing or playing the ball by foot (or head) at the goal.
- Throw or lob the ball across the goal (eg towards X) and G has to come out and catch the ball.

## Practice 4

Dealing with the ball in the air is important for any goalkeepers, so a similar practice can be employed, - only this time, in a set of standard goalposts with servers S and T on the 6 yard line lobbing the ball up for G to catch, or tip over the crossbar.



In this practice to increase G's alertness and speed off the mark T must be ready to serve once G has dealt with S's service.



Each time G catches the ball he returns it to the server, D stands behind the goal to deal with balls turned over the bar by G and for serves that go past him. D keeps the service going to S and T by returning the balls - **OUTSIDE THE PRACTICE AREA.**

## *CLEARING THE BACK PASS I*

### **Change of Role**

Since the change of rule that states that goalkeepers cannot handle the ball from a back pass by a team mate - then the role of the player who is the last line of defence has changed.

Today a goalkeeper has to be better equipped with his feet than ever before, and in fact it has been noticeable (particularly in the Premiership) that some have become very skilful.

Barthez (Manchester United) Westeriield (Liverpool) and Martyn (Leeds) readily spring to mind as good kickers of the ball, - and to develop that expertise they have had to work on the training ground.

In many clubs goalkeepers are encouraged to play outfield roles in 5-a-side games, and to also work at skill practices with the other members of the squad.

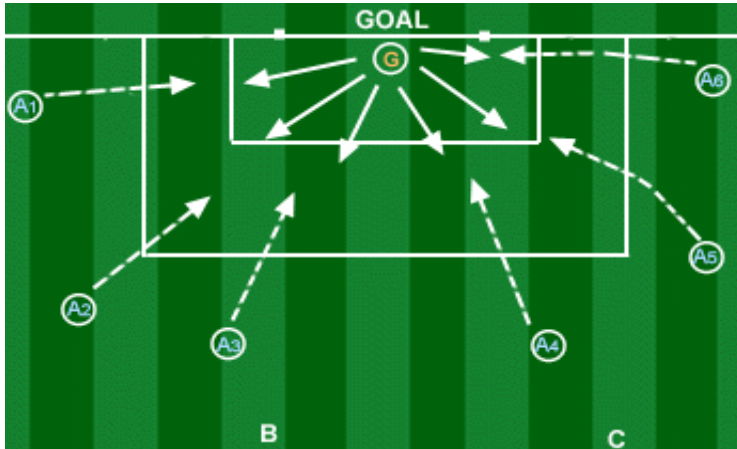
But what about the specialised practices that are needed to develop the first time clearance for distance - the one that they are regularly called on to use in matches?

### **CLEARLY PRACTICE AND REPITITION IS IMPORTANT**

#### **Practice 1**

In practice 1 the ball is served towards the 6-yard box by a server (A).

1. He starts by playing the ball along the ground and goalkeeper (G) has to come out and clear for distance and if possible aim towards (B) and (C) who act as markers for the clearance.
2. If (G) is right footed he should feel more comfortable clearing the service from (A1) to (A2) and (A3).
3. From (A4) and (A5)'s serve he will have to move his feet quickly to adjust his position if he intends using his right foot. **BUT IT IS BETTER IF HE CAN USE HIS LEFT FOOT** - and practice is for improving, so (G) should be made to use his left foot in practice sessions.
4. Similarly for the serve from (A6) - although if he is uncertain (G) should clear over the touchline (marked 1) for safety.

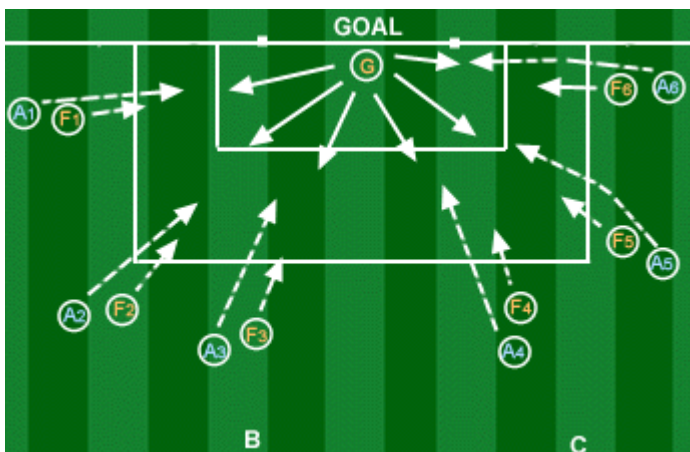


**G** = Goalkeeper  
**A** = Server  
**B + C** = Markers for (G)

### Practice 2

Practice 2 is exactly the same set up as practice 1 only now (G) is put under more pressure by an onrushing forward player (F).

1. So as (A1) releases the ball back (F1) chases in to make (G) speed up his clearance.
2. Each server must try to get the correct weight on the back pass to favour the goalkeeper - although the forwards (F) must try and block the clearance when possible.
3. A key issue in both practices is that the goalkeeper should keep his eye on the ball until he has made contact. This is an important point, as clearing the ball from the danger area is his first concern. Dealing with the accuracy develops with the practice.



## CLEARING THE BACK PASS II

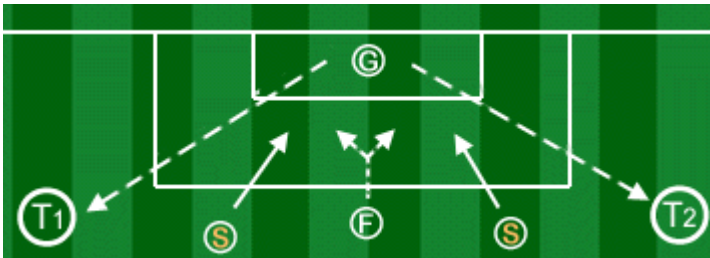
**To progress the goalkeeper needs to be put under more pressure than in the previous two practices.**

The type of service back to the goalkeeper can vary eg

- 1 The striker can lob the ball back, the goalkeeper then has to control it, with either foot or chest, and then clear the ball downfield.
- 2 The server can throw the ball to the goalkeeper to ensure the type of ball control needed. In this practice the server stands on the edge of the penalty area, the goalkeeper on his goal line. The goalkeeper should be encouraged to use both feet, clear the ball first time whenever possible and go for both distance and accuracy.
- 3 As mentioned in earlier practices, the goalkeeper must be allowed to play as an outfield player in 5-a-side games. This will speed up his control and his game appreciation.

Other practices to consider

### PRACTICE A



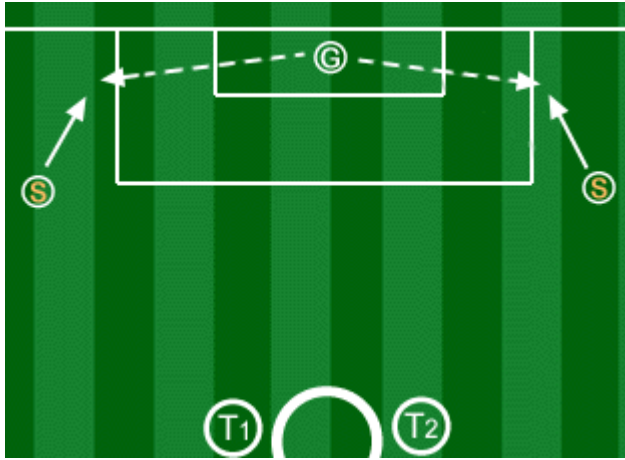
Goalkeeper - **G**  
Server - **S**  
Target - **T1** and **T2**

### Diagram A

// In practice A, the server S plays the ball along the ground towards the edge of the penalty area (as in diagram A).

// Goalkeeper G has to move quickly from his goal line out wide, control the ball with one touch and then has to clear into one of the target areas marked T1 and T2. In the target areas is a player who controls the ball and plays it back to the server to continue the practice.

## PRACTICE B



**Diagram B**

✓ In this practice the server moves more centre field about 5 metres outside the penalty area.

✓ This time he plays the ball back to G who has to now find a wide target (T1 and T2) - preferably with an accurate pass along the ground.

✓ To progress introduce a forward player F who will move in after the service to G and try and make it more difficult for G's clearance.

✓ At first F can offer "passive" resistance, but then must be encouraged to try and win the ball.

✓ G all the time must aim for good control, accuracy of pass and be aware of F's challenge, - if necessary taking the ball wider still, before making the pass.

## POSITIONAL PLAY

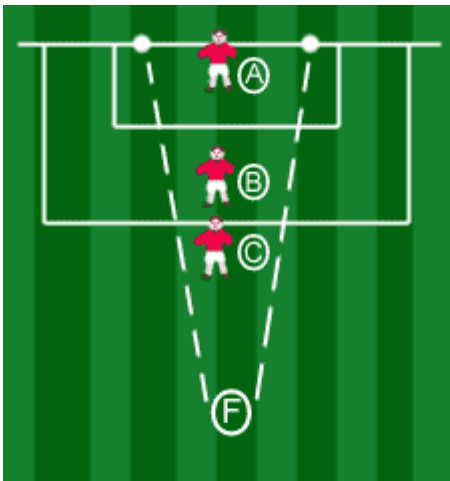
**In the modern game and particularly since the change in the back pass rule, positional understanding for goalkeepers is vital. Much, of course, depends on the state of play, but whatever every goalkeeper should know where to position himself during the game.**

And that means not only when his team are defending.

For example, when his team are attacking he should still remain alert in case a quick break from the opposition or even a possible long back pass from one of his own team.

But in this section we will deal with a goalkeeper 'narrowing the angle' so as to ensure an opponent (in possession of the ball) does not see all of the goal.

### Consider diagram 1 practice 1



(A) Attacker through on goal with only the goalkeeper to beat.

If the goalkeeper retains a position near to goal (position A) then (F) can advance and have the full target area facing him.

But if the goalkeeper moves forward to position (B), he cuts down the area he has to cover, and similarly again to position (C) when, if he is closes quickly enough he can block any shot with some part of his body.

**N.B.** A goalkeeper should not rush out too far, too quick - if he does, he will give the attacker the option of lofting the ball over him into the unguarded goal.

It is knowing when to come out that is just as important as knowing how to come out.

For example if the shot is likely to come from over 20 metres then the keeper should consider staying closer to his line.

Conversely if an attacker is running through hoping to get closer to the target - then the goalkeeper must be ready to leave his goal and narrow the angle.

## Practice 2



In diagram 2, attacker (F) has broke through the defence coming in from the right flank at the angle.

If the goalkeeper stays close to his goal line (position G1) then (F) has the option of shooting from close range, or running in to get even closer to the target.

So clearly the goalkeeper has to adjust his position to (G2) forward of the near post - but ensuring he leaves no space to be beaten on his left (the near post).

By advancing, he puts a question to the attacking player - do I shoot, or do I try and go round the keeper? Whatever it makes the target more difficult to hit, and puts pressure on the attacker.

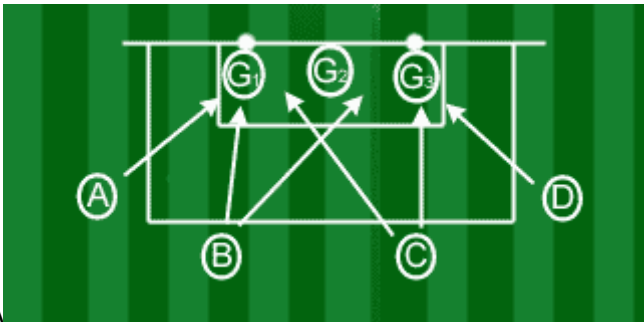
**COACHES SHOULD BEGIN BY HAVING AN ATTACKER MOVING IN ON GOAL FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES AND THEN THE GOALKEEPER SHOULD BE ASKED TO TAKE UP VARYING POSITIONS TO NARROW THE ANGLE EACH TIME.**

## PROGRESSION ON POSITIONAL PLAY

**N.B. FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES A GOOD POSITION FOR THE COACH IS IMMEDIATELY BEHIND THE GOAL, HAVING A CLEAR VIEW OF THE ANGLES.**

**Goalkeepers are the last line of defence in any team, and consequently positional play is crucial.**

His job is to react to the play and to the players (on both sides) as they manoeuvre around the field.



practice for early experience is shown in diagram (1)

Four players (A), (B), (C) and (D) are placed on the edge of the area, and they shoot at the goal when instructed by the coach.

As each one is ready to shoot the goalkeeper should take up a position (in the diagram (G1), (G2) and (G3)) guarding the goal and, advancing slightly to narrow the angle.

**COACHES CAN VARY THE TIME BETWEEN EACH SHOT DEPENDING ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PLAYERS AND THE GOALKEEPER. INITIALLY THE POSITION OF THE GOALKEEPER IS THE MAIN ISSUE AND NEEDS TO BE CHECKED.**

To progress the players (A), (B), (C) and (D) can be allowed to move around both outside and inside the area keeping their balls under control.

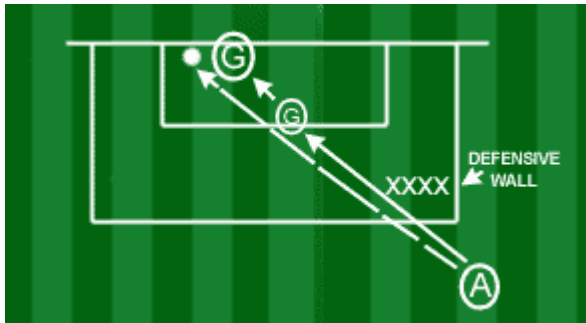
The goalkeeper has to remain alert, while the four outfield players wait for a signal/whistle/call from the coach to shoot.

So if the coach shouts "C" then (C) should get a shot at goal as quickly as he can and the goalkeeper has to adjust his position and prepare to save the shot.

The other three - (A), (B) and (D) carry on jogging round the area keeping their ball under control, until they get the call from the coach to shoot.

A more static practice comes at a free-kick, with a line of defenders making a wall in

front of the goalkeeper.



(A) taking the free-kick, four defenders (X) in the wall, and the goalkeeper(G) standing as close to the line at the end of the wall marked (Y) as possible.

The wall should block the route to the near side of the goal, so the role of the goalkeeper should be to try and cover the rest of the goal.

Initially asking the goalkeeper to take up a standing position just to ensure he reads the angles correctly.

It is also advisable to get him to stand just forward of the goal line, to narrow the angle and so to slightly reduce the area he has to cover.

**THE WALL SHOULD BE MOVED AROUND TO TEST THE GOALKEEPER'S ABILITY TO SAVE SHOTS FROM ALL ANGLES.**

**PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS WILL TRY AND CURVE THE BALL OVER THE WALL, SO THE GOALKEEPER HAS TO BE READY FOR THAT AS WELL. SO HE NEVER POSITIONS HIMSELF TOO NEAR ONE POST.**

**THE GOALKEEPER HAS TO BE ALERT, BUT AT THIS STAGE, GETTING THE CORRECT POSITION IS THE MAIN POINT TO PUT OVER.**

## ***ATTRIBUTES NEEDED FOR GOALKEEPERS***

**A goalkeeper is employed to act as last line of defence i.e. to keep the ball out of goal, and it is essential in any team hoping for success to possess a player who knows how to handle the job.**

In the modern game a keeper has to be something of an outfield player as well, reading the play, leaving the penalty area when he has to, and then leaving or passing to a colleague.

But the basics haven't changed that much, and being the back player he can direct his defence in front of him from a good vantage position.



**But there are other items that need to be considered: -**

- (1) He has to be physically strong, someone who can withstand a strong challenge when going for a ball. He needs body and arm strength to deal with fierce shots at goal, and he needs to be (fully grown adult) 5' 10" at least to help when reaching high balls.
- (2) A goalkeeper needs quick reactions, as he has to make quick judgements quite often e.g. deflected shots at goal, racing out 20 metres to clear, or keeping out close-in efforts at goal.
- (3) Agility is important, some of the world's best keepers have trained at gymnastics to help their dexterity. Leaping high, diving sideways or springing out occurs during most matches. So agility with skill is an important requisite.
- (4) A good fitness level is important. Stamina training is essential, as goalkeepers are sometimes asked to withstand pressure on the goal for long periods, - and then there are always goal kicks to take as well. In the modern game, keepers should possess some skill at playing with the feet, and so he should train as an outfield player, at times, in training sessions.
- (5) A goalkeeper must have courage, to dive at an oncoming players feet when he has to, and to leap in the middle of bodies to deal with crosses into his danger zone.
- (6) He must concentrate at all times - even when the ball is in the other penalty area, so that he can quickly readjust his position when the ball is coming towards his goal. That includes watching his own team mates as well as the opposition.
- (7) He needs a good temperament, and is able to re-focus even when a goal is scored against his team. His unaffected approach will assist his team mates, and he should try as often as possible to be released, so as to weigh up the play and not look flustered. His power of concentration is vital - a high level of this will help him assess all possibilities.
- (8) Above all he needs to be confident, and to get that confidence he needs to practice, practice, practice, at handling, catching, throwing and kicking the ball. Good ability will help build confidence, uncertainty can be disastrous to the team.

As a result a keepers training programme needs to be scheduled properly - quite often away from the rest of the team, with the coach paying special attention to the mental side of the position which affects confidence.

Basic practices for handling should be repeated over and over again, with the coach ensuring the goalkeeper is trying, whenever possible, to get both hands and some point of the body behind the ball when saving.

# CATCHING HIGH BALLS

**Goalkeepers must develop the art of catching high balls, it is an integral part of the position.**

Being accomplished at taking crosses (for example) can take a lot of work and weight off the defence and a confident reliable catcher, in the last line of defence, can boost the confidence of the entire team.

To develop good technique, all goalkeepers need to look at the basic techniques, i.e. two hands on the ball whenever possible, eyes on the ball all the time (and not on opponents coming in to challenge), and making the catch at the highest possible height.

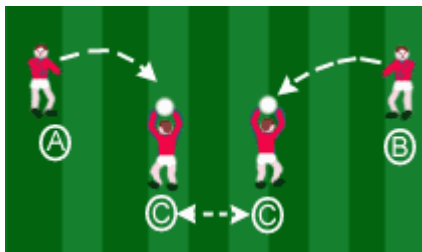
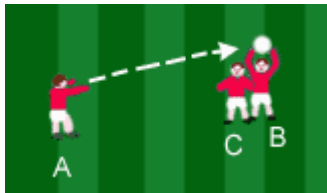
## Simple practices for starters: -

Three players (A), (B) and (C) (one ball), players around 5 metres apart.

### Practice 1

(A) throws above (C), and (B) reaches high to make the catch. N.B. (C) remains stationary and does not challenge for the ball; as in diagram (1)

(All 3 roles are exchanged)



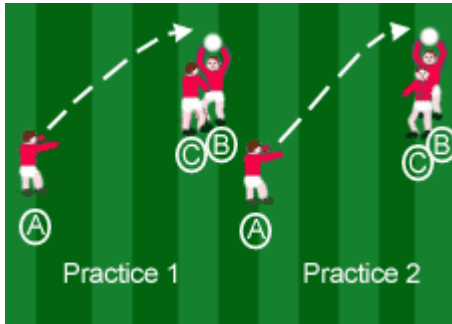
To progress the players spread slightly to around 10 metres apart. (A) and (B) each with a ball (C) is the keeper taking the catching practice (diagram 2).

(A) lobs the ball (C) catches at the highest point, and returns it to (A). To put him under pressure (B) immediately throws the ball up and (C) catches again before returning the ball to (B).

The speed of service can be altered to increase the pressure on (C). Serves can also be served slightly to either side of (C) who has to manoeuvre himself before catching.

All roles again are interchanged to ensure all receive practice at catching.

Once techniques improve the goalkeepers must be put under some sort of competition when attempting to catch, so in practice 3, an attacker is brought in. (Diagram 3)



- ✓ In the first practice (A) lobs the ball up (using two hands) and (C) moves in to try and put goalkeeper (B) under pressure as he attempts to catch. Once (B) catches he should grab the ball into his midriff and shield it away from (C) who moves in facing (B).
- ✓ In the second practice, (C) starts facing (A) and with his back to (B). Once (A) throws the ball (C) immediately starts backing into (B) to try and make catching difficult.
- ✓ (C) can jump up and try and head the ball, (B) must attempt to catch once again at the highest point. This practice will invariably bring physical contact with (C) but will assist in dealing with pressurising while catching.
- ✓ Once again all roles reversed, coaches ensuring an accurate serving - with goalkeepers catching 2 hands and eyes on the ball at all times.

## ***DIVING (EARLY STAGES)***

✔ Teaching diving skills (to young goalkeepers especially) is all about confidence -i.e.

✔ Confidence to hit the floor while holding on to the ball.

✔ Youngsters (8 years - 12 years) particularly are reluctant to throw themselves around and to the ground, so it is up to the coach to install some confidence, by routine practices.

### **Practice 1**

Assemble the group of would-be goalkeepers in a line each with a ball in hand then work in stages.

(1) The 1st instruction is "hold on to the ball - don't let go"

(2) Secondly, the group starts jogging (holding on to the ball) and when the coach shouts "jump" they all leap in the air holding the ball above their head, and each goalkeeper shouts "keepers".

Coaches must insist they all shout "keepers" - this is to develop an outgoing style, remove any shyness and assist in working in a group together.

(3) To progress, the group jog on the spot, each goalkeeper still holding the ball, about 5 metres apart from the next. On the call from the coach "down", each keeper 'collapses' to the ground, retaining possession of the ball. He does not dive sideways, forwards or backwards - he just falls to the ground - keeping his chest forward and he looks forward as well.

The purpose of this is to get each player used to the physical sensation of falling to the ground and discovering it doesn't hurt.

### **Practice 2**

Continuing with all players in a line holding a ball each - about 5 metres apart - jogging on the spot!

On the call from the coach "dive left" each player diving to the left, chest forward, holding on the ball, that completed, all jog again - diving left or right on instruction.

### **Practice 3**

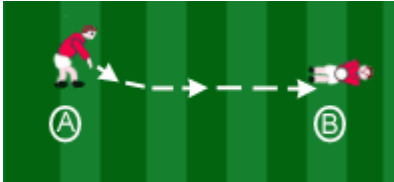
That completed, they are asked to dive twice to the left or right.

So each one, on the call "dive left", dives once to the left gets up then immediately

dives left again.

Repetition assists confidence, so each keeper, particularly if young should repeat diving while holding the ball.

#### Practice 4



Players in pairs 10 metres apart.

// (A) (serving) (B) - goalkeeper (diving to save)

// (A) rolls the ball to the left of (B) who falls on his left side to prevent the ball passing.

// (B) should try and get in body behind the ball and use both hands to save.

// (A) should role the ball (not too quickly) the practice is for (B) to get used to the idea of diving, timing the dive, and holding on to the ball.

// (B) should be "on his toes" while waiting for the serve from (A), eyes on the ball at all times.

## DEALING WITH HIGH BALLS

Having concentrated on the technique of catching earlier, now the goalkeeper needs to learn to deal with high balls.

### Practice 1



/(G) Goalkeeper, (A) and (B) serves on opposite ends of the 6-yard area with a number of balls. (C) acts as a fielder to retrieve balls and re-supply (A) and (B).

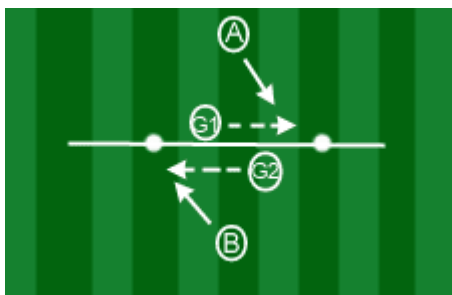
/(A) using both hands lobs the ball just under the bar and (G) has to leap and either CATCH or TIP OVER THE BAR.

/(As soon as he has recovered (B) serves and it is up to (G) to move quickly across the goal to deal with it.

/(The serves must come regularly to keep (G) moving, leaping and catching.

JUST HOW MUCH PRESSURE IS PUT ON HIM DEPENDS ON THE COACH AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES INVOLVED.

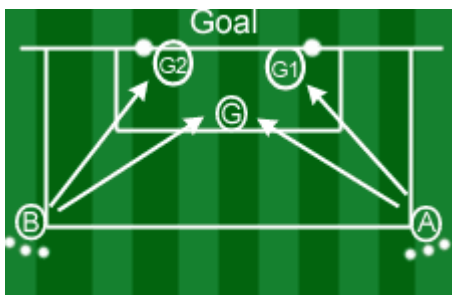
### Practice 2



A practice similar to practice 1 only in this (A) and (B) are on opposite sides of the goal.

/(A) lobs the ball under the bar (G) or (G1) jumps and catches or saves any way he can. The he turns immediately and (B) serves - G moves quickly to G2 and tries to save.

### Practice 3

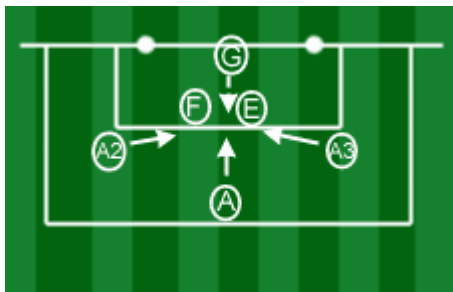


/(A) holds the ball in his hands, and after releasing, he volleys towards the top angle of the goal. (G) moves to G1 to catch, or tip away (A)'s serve. After saving he returns to face a serve from (B), who again aims for the angle (opposite sides of goal) and (G) moves to (G2) to save.

/(Once the servers are practised enough they can volley the ball high, (G) out to (G3) to leap and catch - he must try and catch at the highest

point - not waiting for it to come down.

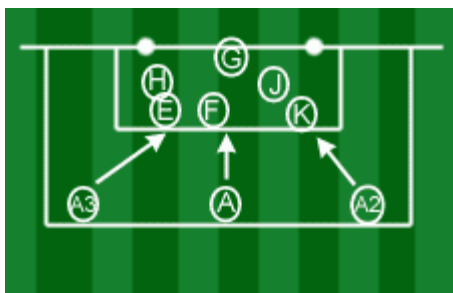
#### Practice 4



// To progress (G) is given passive resistance while catching. To begin, (A) lobs up and (G) jumps between (F) and (E) to catch. (F) and (E) just stand 1 metre apart. (A) can move to (A2) and (A3) to serve.

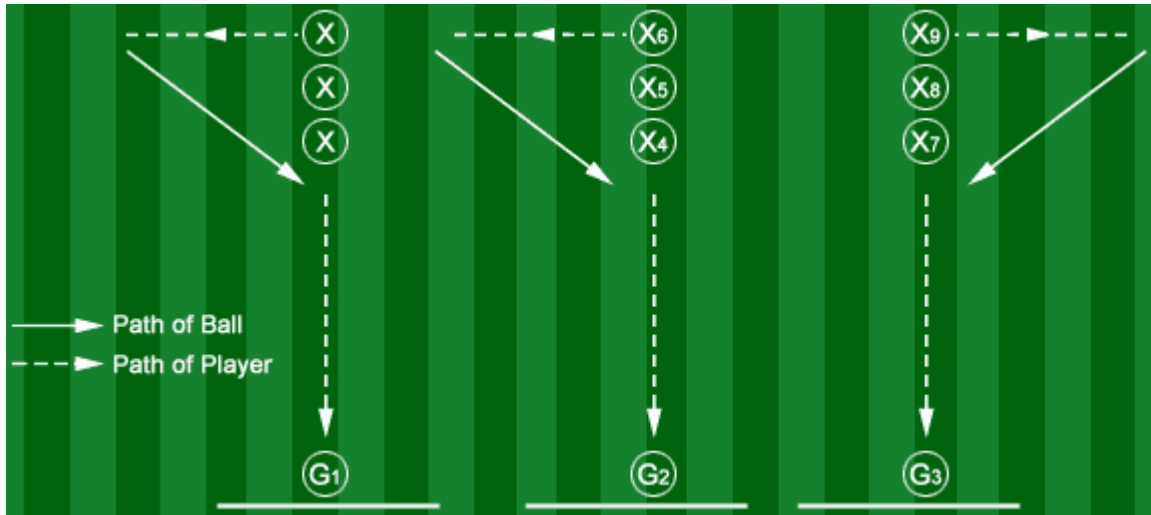
// Then (G) is given more players to deal with. As well as (F) and (E), now (H), (J) and (K) are added - all inside the 6-yard area.

// (A) again serves, from the 3 positions (A), (A2) and (A3) and with 5 players standing in the box (G) has to leap and catch the ball. (A)'s serve must be high enough to cause (G) the problems of keeping one eye on the ball and the other on the 5 players he has to avoid (see diagram 5 below).



# FINISHING SKILLS

**Diagram 1**



Practice 1, is set up as in diagram (1), with 3 sets of 3 (x's) in line facing a goal defended by a goalkeeper (G)

The lead player starts about 20 metres from the target, and so X1, X4 and X7, will try and score past (G1), (G2) and (G3) - who should defend full sized goals if possible

## **Practice (in group 1)**

The ball is served to X1 by X3 (who has moved slightly to the side of the line) X1 faces X3, then with a touch and turn he runs to face G1 and tries to score. X4 and X7 do exactly the same in their group.

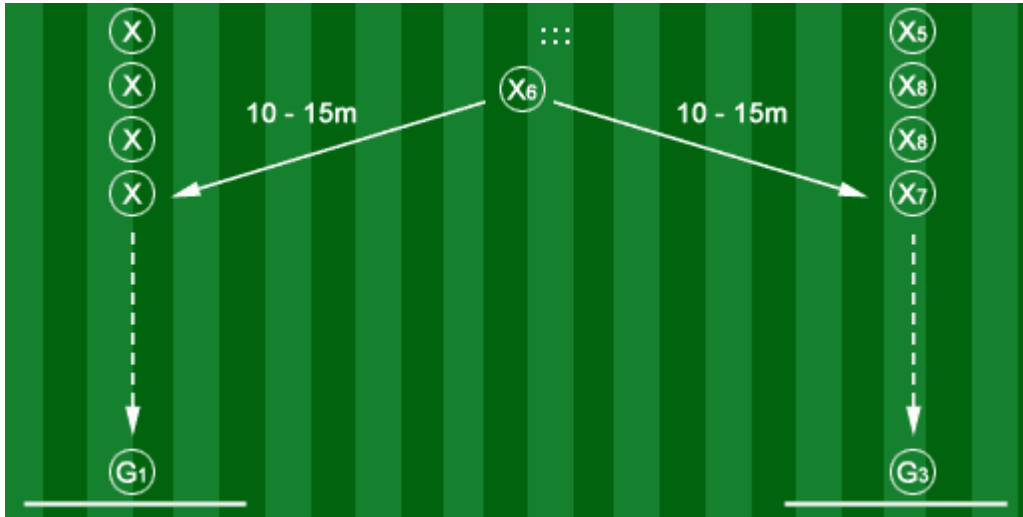
## **Coaches should insist on: -**

- (a) A good first touch and turn - carried out as quickly as possible by X1, X4 and X7
- (b) Speed, once control is assured by X
- (c) A strike that hits the target, using varying techniques e.g. sliding the ball under the goalkeeper, or taking the ball wide of the goalkeeper if he advances, or simply striking the ball firmly if the chance presents itself.
- (d) There should be variations in the methods of the attacking player, and the coach should try and assist the players to be inventive.

**NB. SHOULD THE GOALKEEPER SAVE AND GET HOLD OF THE BALL, HE SHOULD THEN HAVE A TARGET TO AIM AT WITH A THROW OR VOLLEY FROM HANDS e.g. SERVE DIRECT BACK TO X3 AT THE BACK OF THE LINE ENSURING IT CLEARS X2.**

Once X1 has completed he goes to the back of the line and X2 moves up to take a serve from X1.





- // To progress (in diagram 2) the players line up exactly as in practice 1, only this time in 2 groups with X4 joining to the back of group 1, and X5 joining group 3.
- // X6 stays central and acts as server to both groups; 1 serving first to X1

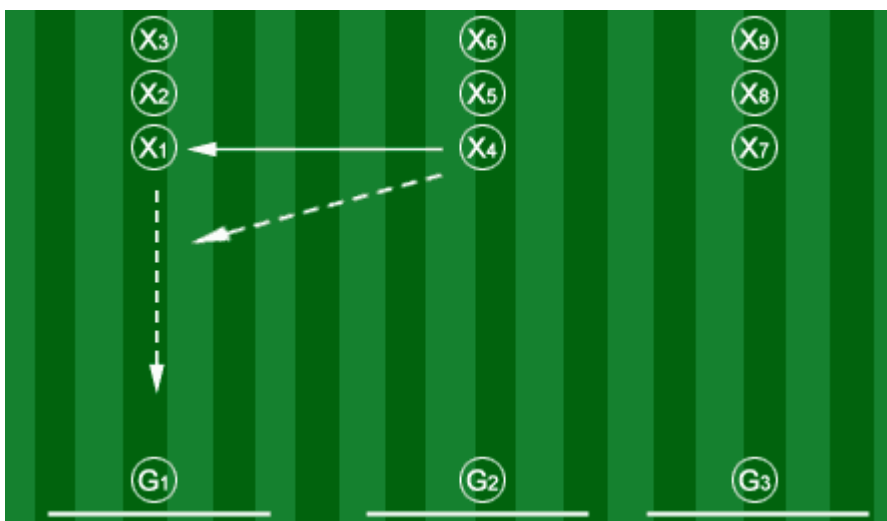
**Practice**

//X6 serves X1 controls the ball, turns quickly, and moving at speed tries to score past G1.

//As X1 shoots for goal, X6 serves to X7 who repeats the procedure at G3's goal.

**Progression**

Return to the original 3 groups as in diagram 3



## **Group 2 acting as servers**

✓ X4 serves to X1, who collects and tries to score, only this time as X1 touches the ball X4 follows the serve and tries to prevent X1 from scoring.

✓ This ensures a speedy control, move, and shot from X1, but the coach must ensure that X4 does not move until X1 has made contact with the serve.

✓ After the exercise X1, and X4 return to the back of their lines and then X5 serves to X7 repeats the practice.

**GROUPS CAN EXCHANGE DUTIES, AND GOALKEEPER 2 CAN BE USED TO FIELD BALLS UNTIL HE TAKES UP POSITION REPLACING G1 OR G3.**

## *DEALING WITH KICKED CLEARANCES*

In an earlier session we dealt with goalkeepers clearing the ball from a back pass, and practices were set to assist the goalkeeper in becoming better equipped in using his feet to clear his lines.

But there are other occasions (goal kicks) which need to be practised both from the ground, - and volleyed or half-volleyed from the hands.

Generally, distance kicking is involved and this requires leg strength (particularly in the thigh muscles) and this needs to be developed before too much intensive practice is carried out.

### **Exercises for this are: -**

(a) A player to carry another player (of similar weight) in the fireman's lift for around 30 metres

(b) Jumping (on the spot) with knees raised high on to the chest every alternative jump

(c) Step-ups on to a chair, or bench, (ideally) repetitive for around 90 seconds

(d) Feet apart (slightly) arms above head holding a manageable weight (coaches can adjust depending on age and strength of the players. Their knees half bent slowly (not completely) then straighten slowly. Usually 10 repeats, before putting weight down.

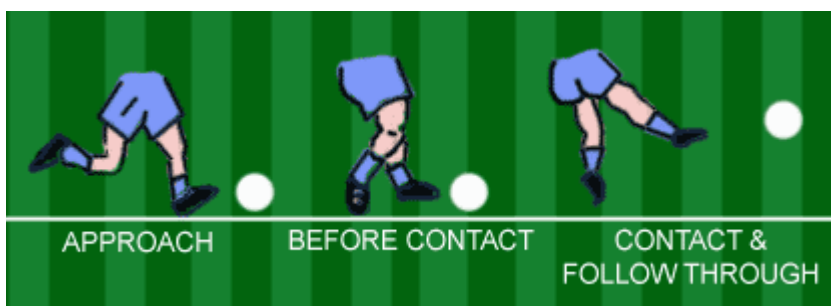
**THERE ARE OTHER EXERCISES BUT THESE GIVE AN INTRODUCTION WHICH WILL HELP DEVELOP THIGH MUSCLES WHICH** (with the right technique will improve kicking, - especially from a dead ball kick)

**Practice 1** - (Clearing a stationary ball - dead ball kick)

Straightforward, the goalkeeper places the ball on the 6-yard line and clears to a target area.

Distance will depend on the age of the player involved but coaches should insist on a few basic points.

- (1) As the goalkeeper runs to the ball he is comfortable with the angle of approach. Clearly this is important in the direction he is trying to achieve.
- (2) Once he nears the ball he must keep his eyes fixed finally on the ball not on the target!!
- (3) On reaching the ball the non-kicking foot is placed around 6 inches from the ball pointing in the direction the kick is aimed. To keep the ball low in trajectory the non-kicking foot is placed in a further forward position, conversely if the kick is to be lofted then the non-kicking foot is slightly withdrawn behind the ball.
- (4) In the kicking foot, the swing is full from the hip with the knee bent, and then projected forward to contact the ball keeping the foot downwards so that the front of the foot contacts the ball (diagram 1)



**NB.** At the point of contact the touch leans slightly backward, the area of the side of the non-kicking foot is swung forward, while the other is held slightly behind the body so as to balance.

**CONCENTRATION IS IMPORTANT, COACHES INSISTING ON THE RIGHT ANGLE OF APPROACH, EYES ON THE BALL AND A GOOD FOLLOW THROUGH ONCE CONTACT WITH THE BALL HAS BEEN MADE.**

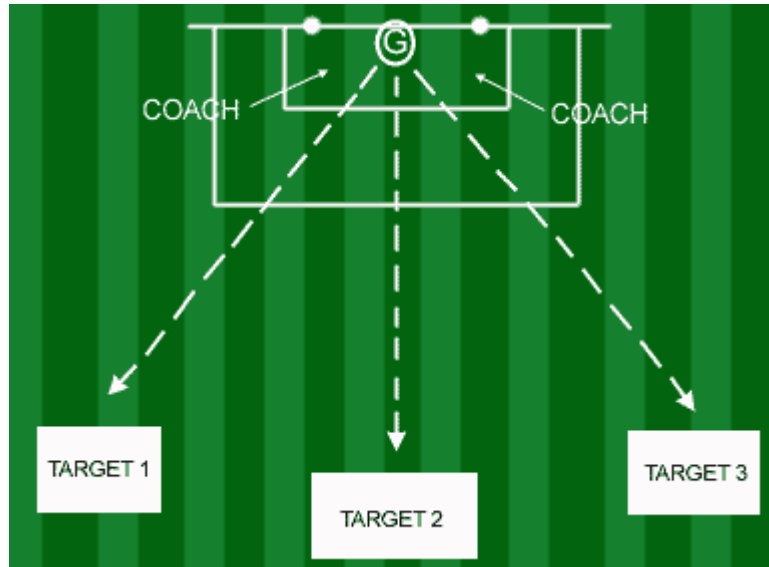
### **Practice 2 - (Clearing from the hands - a dropped ball volleyed for distance)**

When clearing from the hands i.e. a dropped ball, the goalkeeper should start by letting the ball bounce once, before clearing - to a colleague or against a wall.

To progress he drops the ball from around midriff then volleys the ball forward to a short distance to get the technique of eyes on the ball, contact with the front of the foot, and a good follow through exactly right.

**GETTING THIS TECHNIQUE IS ESSENTIAL (OVER A SHORT DISTANCE) BEFORE ANY PROGRESSION IS ATTEMPTED.**

Once this has been attained then coaches could work on accuracy and distance using the practice in diagram 2.



Coaches (or players) feed the ball in, goalkeeper (G) catches the ball runs out and volleys into one of the target areas - designated by the coach.

Short of the halfway line, the goalkeeper should be volleying for real accuracy - in target areas 1, 2 and 3.

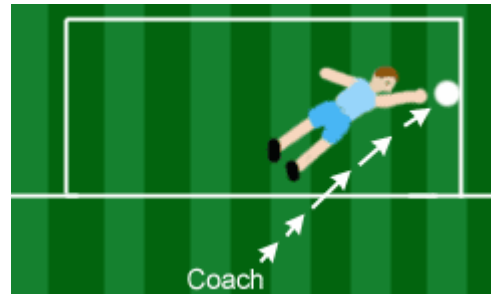
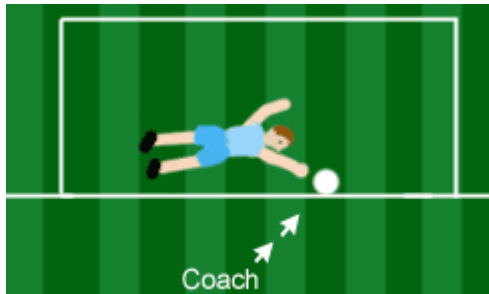
Anything beyond that the coach should insist on height and distance clearing, sometimes aiming for a speed of clearance - so that when the goalkeeper has caught the service he is given 5 seconds to clear from his hands.

## *PUNCHING/PALMING ONE HANDED*

There are times when a goalkeeper comes out to deal with a centre of shot and he simply can't get two hands to the ball because he is at full stretch.

Quite often when diving to either side (as in figure 1), he can only palm the ball away, and this needs practice.

### **Practice 1**



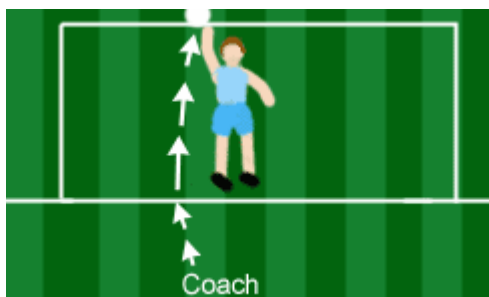
The coach (C) throws the ball (varying the direction and speed of service). Normally, the coach is between 6-10 metres from the goal line.

The goalkeeper stands on the line and has to dive to stop the ball, the coach ensuring he has the player at full stretch.

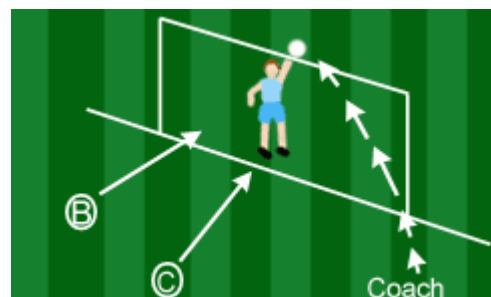
In this practice the goalkeeper will normally palm the ball or finger tip it away - depending on the contact he can make.

### **Practice 2**

The coach should also ensure the goalkeeper can react to balls just under the bar which need tipping over to safety.



**FIGURE 2**



**FIGURE 3**

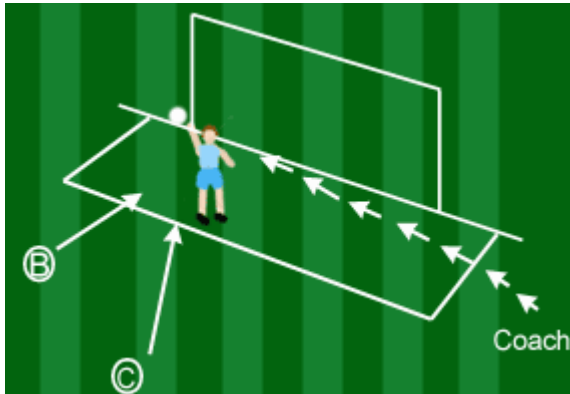
Here the coach can stand either in front (as in figure 2) or to the side (as in figure 3)

In practice 2 - opposition can be brought in to put extra pressure on the goalkeeper,

so in figure 3 (B) and (C) can take turns at trying to get a lead to the ball.

Contact with the goalkeeper will be made in this, but that is something to which he has to get accustomed.

The goalkeeper must be aware of (B) and (C), but he has to keep his eyes on the ball all the time, ensuring he makes the right sort of contact.



Opposition can be brought in once the coach is satisfied the correct technique has been achieved by the goalkeeper. In figure 5 the coach (C) lobs the ball into the area (B) and (A) are attackers and they try and lead the ball into goal.

(G) goalkeeper has to punch the ball away for safety - not dropping in the danger area - and coaches can set target points.

**Figure 4**

In practice 3, goalkeeper (G) has to react to the ball being lobbed into his 6- yard area, with (B) and (C) surging in trying to head the ball into goal.

The coach starts by throwing the ball to the edge of the 6-yard area from around 15 yards out on either flank.

(G) has to judge when to come out to try and punch the ball away, or whether he can't get there and so must stay on his line at (G1) to try and save any headed goal attempt.

If possible he must make a good contact with the punch on the ball, using the knuckles at the back of a hand.

Young goalkeepers can begin by making a fist, and with a partner (one throwing, the other punching) practice at punching technique.

Starting with arm slightly bent, stretching to full extension as the fist makes contact with the ball.

**NB** The goalkeeper must also practice quick movement off his line and only going to punch when he is sure he can make contact.

## CONDITIONED GAMES - FOR GOALKEEPERS

Conditioned games or practices are devised in order to emphasise the use of a particular skill or phase of play.

First introduced by the late Sir Walter Winterbottom (the FA's former Director of Coaching) they give players the opportunity to concentrate on a relevant skill in their role, while under game conditions and pressure.

It is up to the coach to instruct the players on the way he wants the game regulated, so that players can concentrate on a particular aspect of the game.

Once the conditioned game has started the normal rules of soccer apply with the players repeatedly trying to improve and gaining confidence in a particular skill.

There are many examples of the way a game can be conditioned and they will be dealt with in the days ahead, but in this session we will look to work goalkeepers.

**TEAMS MUST BE ORGANISED EITHER** in a full sized game or in a small side game e.g. 5 against 5 with a goalkeeper in both teams (defending a full sized goal)



**COACHES CAN ALTER THE SIZE OF THE PITCH TO THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS AVAILABLE.** E.g. with 12 players (6 v 6) the area can be lengthened to 45 metres x 25 metres, OR with 8 players to 30m x 15m.

So for goalkeepers conditioned games can be: -

- (1) Goalkeeper has to kick the ball out on all clearances OR
- (2) Goalkeeper has to throw the ball out on all clearances OR
- (3) Goalkeepers must clear to the farthest player OR
- (4) Goalkeepers must clear to the nearest player

(5) Once in possession the goalkeeper has only 5 seconds to clear the ball

(6) Goalkeepers when saving should try and catch/hold on to the ball.

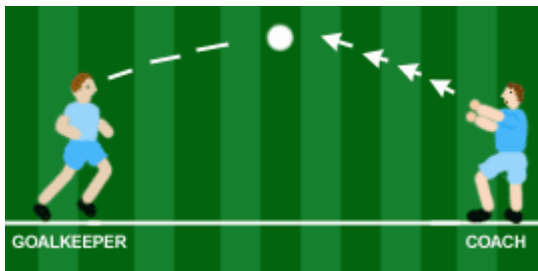
## ***PUNCHING THE BALL***

There are times, especially in a crowded area, when a goalkeeper is under so much pressure, he simply cannot catch the ball.

In certain circumstances he therefore has to punch the ball with his fist - even though there could be distinct disadvantages once he has made contact with his fist.

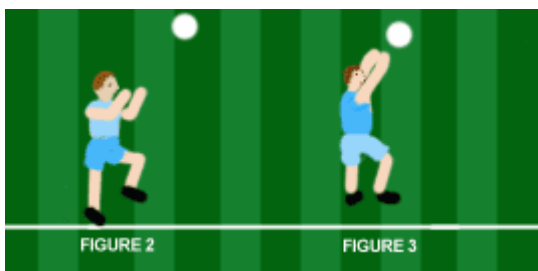
But under pressure he often has to clear the best way he can and so punching the ball, like catching, needs practice.

The technique requires a jump off one foot and for starters the 1st practice requires careful instruction.



The coach lobs the ball into the air around 6 - 10 metres away from the goalkeeper. (a) The goalkeeper, keeps his eyes on the ball all the time as he approaches the ball (figure 1)

The goalkeeper approaches the ball taking off the front foot and using the other leg to achieve the required height.

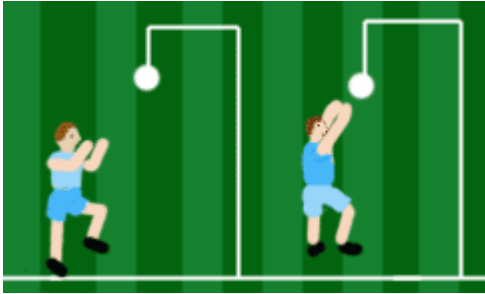


On reaching the ball the two arms and clenched fists come together elbows slightly bent (figure 2), and then straighten out to put strength into the punch once contact is made with the ball (figure 3).

**FOR YOUNG PLAYERS THE TECHNIQUE OF THE JUMP AND PUNCH CAN BE PRACTISED FIRST WITHOUT THE BALL, PLAYERS DEVELOPING THE LEAP AND ARM MOVEMENTS UNTIL THEY ARE CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO PROGRESS.**

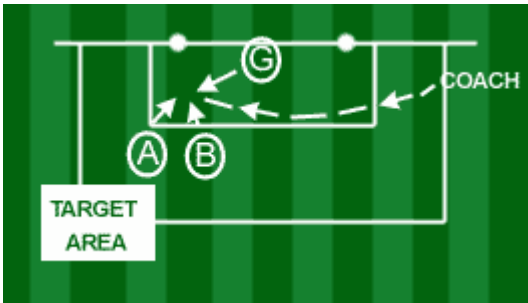
When the ball is introduced they can work in pairs or three's taking it in turn to serve and punch - coaches instructing in their direction the ball should be fisted.





Another early route is for goalkeepers to start using a ball suspended from a stanchion (see figure 4).

The key issues are to develop the timing of the jump. In figure 4 the ball will be swinging and it is up to the goalkeeper to time the jump to ensure he can punch the ball, preferably at his highest point!



Opposition can be brought in once the coach is satisfied the correct technique has been achieved by the goalkeeper. In figure 5 the coach (C) lobs the ball into the area (B) and (A) are attackers and they try and lead the ball into goal.

(G) goalkeeper has to punch the ball away for safety - not dropping in the danger area - and coaches can set target points.

## SHARPENING PRACTICES FOR GOALKEEPERS

### Practice 1

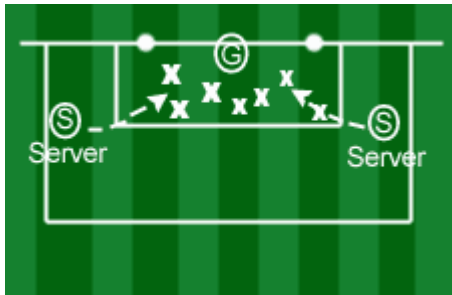


Goalkeeper (G) stands between 2 posts, with (A) and (B) on one side of the posts and (C) and (D) on the other (see diagram 1). Each pair has possession of a ball (6 metres from the target).

(B) starts by either passing to (A) who shoots at the goal, - as he is close in, strong side footed shots are all that should be required - to give (G) a reasonable chance of saving. The practice is to get (G) to dive and keep the ball out. Ideally to catch the ball and roll it back to (A) and (B).

After completing (G) turns round to face (C) and (D) (who have in the meantime been passing their ball between themselves) and they in turn force (G) to save.

## Practice 2



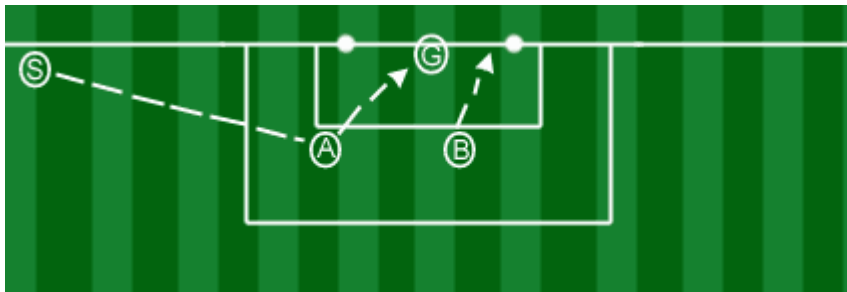
Goalkeeper (G) on his line, 7 markers (or players) stationary in the six yard box all markers must remain still.

Server (S) on either side of the area, or in front (near the penalty spot) can either throw the ball high into the 6 yard area, or roll it in.

(G) has to move quickly, in and out of the markers to collect, catch, the ball as quickly as possible once he has hold of the ball he returns it to the server and then returns to the goal line.

Coaches must insist (G) is on his toes and moves as quickly as possible, ensuring he avoids every marker.

## Practice 3



In this practice the goalkeeper has to deal with the quick change in direction of the goal attempt.

(S) serves either high or low towards (A) who can either (a) head for the goal OR (b) shoot for the goal depending on the service.

(A) can also let the ball run to (B) following up who will turn to try to score.

(G) will start in the near post area, but will have to adjust depending on the service and (A's) reaction to it. The serve can come from either flank.

## Practice 4



Area 20m x 30m - full size goals with a goalkeeper in each. Outfield 3 players each side (A's) and (B's) with a simple instruction try to score. Rules of soccer apply. Because of the small area, players will shoot readily and should be encouraged to do so.

✓ Goalkeepers must try and read the positional play of the outfield players and must adjust accordingly.

✓ Coaches must demand good handling technique and good footwork from (G1) and (G2).

## *PROGRESSION I*

In the first session the methods of handling and catching were considered and now to progress here are some practices for goalkeepers to use to improve their skills - practices that can be performed away from other outfield players.

In the modern game mobility around the penalty area is an important consideration for any goalkeeper. The change in the back pass rule and the recent alteration that allows keepers to run with the ball across the box has meant that goalkeepers have to be more alert and mobile than ever before.

For starters try these practices - 2 goalkeepers (A & B), one ball

### **Practice 1**

A & B running around the field, throwing and catching. A throws to B who catches the ball, when possible using a single foot take off. B uses both hands to catch keeps his eyes on the ball all the time.

On catching, B moves to a new position, then returns the service to A who now becomes the catcher. Both players should be on the move all the time and should vary the distance between 15 - 25 metres.

### **Practice 2**

Practice one can be progressed, by varying the type of service, and demanding more from the goalkeepers A & B.

A can lob, bounce, roll, or throw it high to B - he can also increase the speed of the delivery. But just as in practice 1, both players should move once the throw/catch is completed.

The players should be encouraged to try and catch the ball while actually moving at some speed, - this is to increase the concentration level, skill requirement, and co-ordination of the goalkeepers in the practice.

### **Practice 3**

The two keepers A & B now stand around 10 metres apart, facing each other (if required goalposts can be used). A throws to B who has to dive to try and grab hold of the ball, if possible getting his body behind the ball.

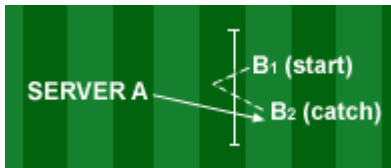
If he is at full stretch B should try to reach for the ball, making every effort to get his hands on the ball.

Again the type of service can vary and the roles can be reversed.

### **Practice 4**

To improve foot work and mobility a simple hurdle/obstacle can be introduced.

The hurdle should be no more than a foot from the ground and placed between the 2 players.



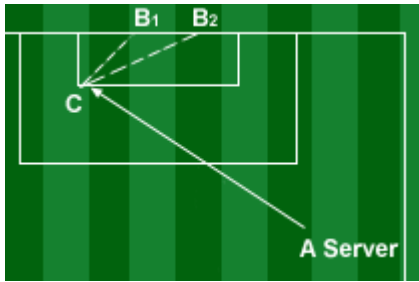
A serves high to B who has to jump over the hurdle and back again before catching the ball.

B will start close to the hurdle but he will have to concentrate on clearing the hurdle and catching the ball - before it touches the ground. Again roles can be reversed. This practice necessitates nimble footwork.

### **Practice 5**

Again looking to improve footwork and mobility, this time the keeper starts on the goal line.

A crosses from the flank, B has to race out, catch the ball, throw in back to A, and then sprint back to his goal.



A's serve should be high and as accurate as possible - aiming for a spot just outside the 6 yard area so that B has to move quickly, catch and then immediately throw back to A before sprinting back to the goal line.

### **Practice 6**

Moving from side to side, but facing each other 5 metres apart. A serving, rolls the ball wide of B (on the goal line) who has to dive to keep the ball out of goal.

A serves underhand, varying the speed, the direction, but always giving B a chance to make a save.

With B constantly on the move this practice can be taxing physically, so the roles need to be reversed - remembering we are dealing with goalkeeping technique rather than physical stamina training.

### **Practice 7**

Finally both players 20-30 metres apart. A kicks the ball high, between himself and B. It is now up to B to catch the ball - at the highest point possible. Should A's kick make it impossible to catch before the ball hits the ground B should still chase and retrieve the ball as quickly as possible securing it in both hands. Once he has done that he serves, kicking the ball high and it is now A's turn to try and retrieve the ball.

🔴 All these practices are simple, but can be effective if the 2 players involved are totally committed.

## PROGRESSION II

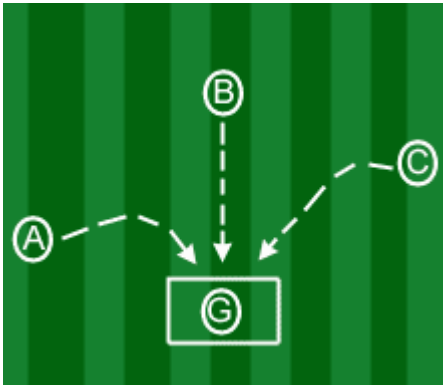
Repetitive practice is important especially for young goalkeepers. Getting accustomed to diving, saving and holding on to the ball, under pressure, is all part of the role and so needs practice.

### Catching



The art of catching, using two hands, needs to be perfected - coaches insisting on thumbs behind the ball, hands slightly behind centre of ball (see diagram 1), and eyes always on the ball.

Coaches should work at this technique regularly - players need reminding of the basic skills of catching a ball in all conditions.



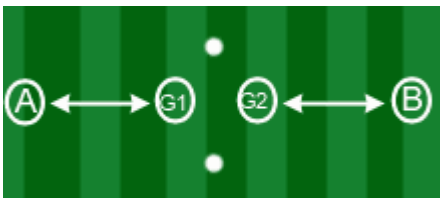
Goalkeepers can be pressurised by using 3 servers A, B and C who continually throw, or kick, balls at the keeper who has to catch, and return them to the server.

The types of service should be varied, and the servers should come in quick succession.

So A serves, G catches, throws back to A, then B immediately serves to G, so there is no rest between serves.

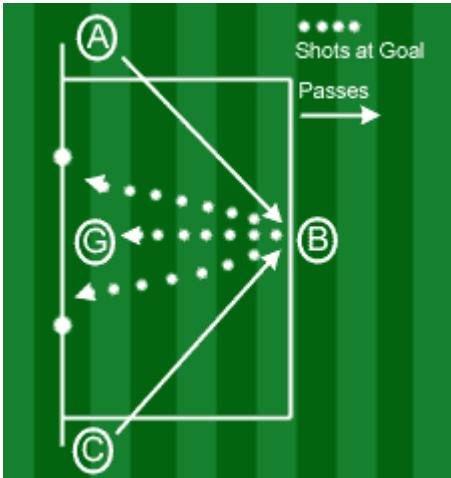
G must be alert, on his toes, and operating in a fixed area (see diagram 2)

To vary G stands between 2 posts, A and B serve, - both on opposite sides of the goal.



A serves, G saves - then returns to A; G then turns about quickly and faces a serve from B (see diagram 3) moving to G2. G is kept under pressure.

To handle quickly, and slow quick reactions A, B, and C take up positions as in diagram 4.



✓ G in goal, (A) and (C) serves close to the goal line

✓ (A) serves, (B) first time strikes at goal for (G) to save

✓ (B) then faces (C) who saves and (B) then repeats by hitting the ball first time at (G's) goal.

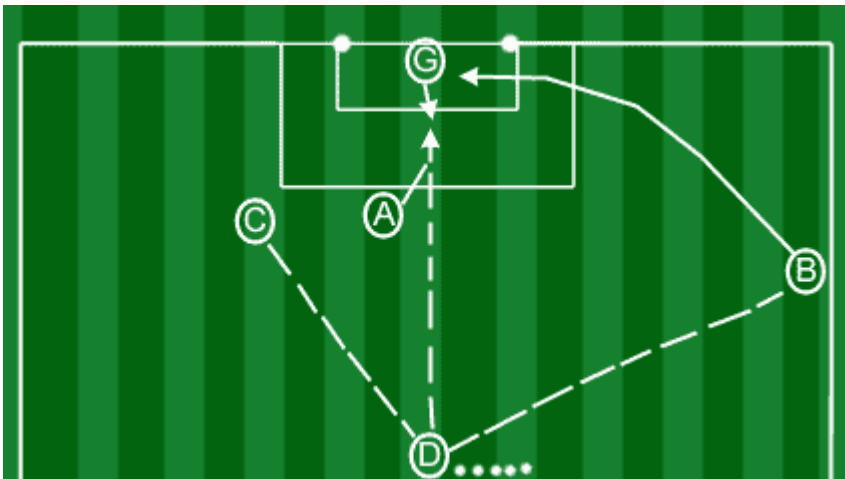
The goal should be about 5 yards in width - (B) about 10 yards out from the target, and trying to vary the height, power, and direction of his shots giving (G) various types of save to make.

Whenever possible (G) should try and catch the ball, coaches insisting that he doesn't spill it - possibly into the path of oncoming attacking players.

If he can't catch it he should always attempt to block or deflect it from the goal using hand, foot or whatever. His speed of reactions in getting behind the ball must be tested.

## PROGRESSION III

### Practice 1



In this practice (1), the goalkeeper (G) is asked to deal with varying forms of attack on his goal.

(D) acts as server to (A), (B) and (C).

(i) (D) passes to (C) who controls with one touch and then shoots from the edge of

the penalty area. (G) has to save and then immediately prepare for the next serve from (D).

(ii) (D) plays the ball, low alongside (A) who runs on and tries to score with a first time shot.

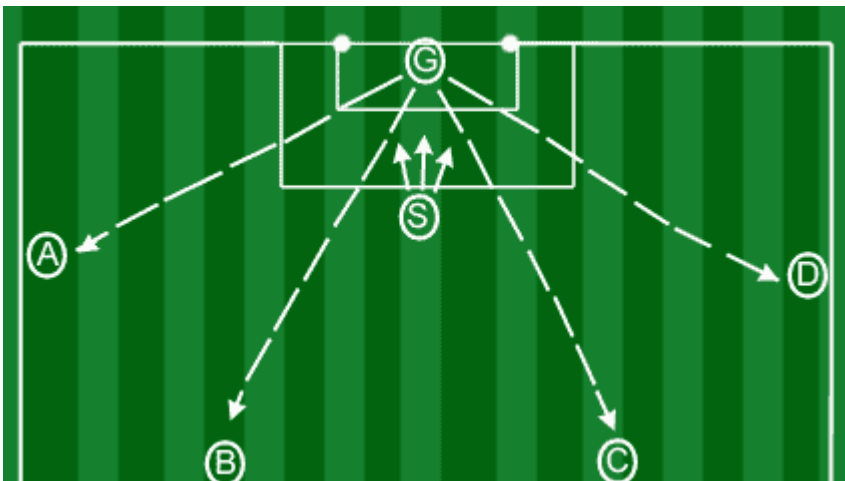
(G) has to decide how far he can come out to cut off the angle, and whether he can anticipate and beat (A) to the ball and so smother any goal attempt.

(iii) (D) passes wide to (B) who crosses (high) into the box and (G) has to come out and catch the ball.

➤ To add pressure, when (B) crosses, - (A) rushes in to try and head the ball into the goal, so (G) has to decide whether to come out for the cross OR stay on his goal line to save any goal attempt from (A).

\* THIS PRACTICE NEEDS TO BE SHARP, (D) CONTINUALLY READY WITH A SUPPLY OF BALLS SO THAT THERE IS SOME CONTINUITY - PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE GOALKEEPER.

## Practice 2



In the modern game goalkeepers have to learn to deal with back passes, and this means playing as an outfield player i.e. no use of hands!

COACHES SHOULD ENCOURAGE GOALKEEPERS TO PRACTICE AS OUTFIELD PLAYERS IN 5-A-SIDE GAMES - or in functional practices just to develop a reasonable touch on the ball.

But in the role as the last line of defence, every keeper must be practised at the back pass.

➤ In diagram 2, (S) is the server passing back to (G) goalkeeper. (G) has to (in turn) pass the ball short to (A) and (D), and then first time to (B) and (C) who are on the



half way line.

✔ To add pressure (S) (once he has served) can follow his pass to try and put pressure on the goalkeeper.

✔ (S) can run in to either side to cut off one route from (G), and he can force (G) on to his weaker foot should he wish.

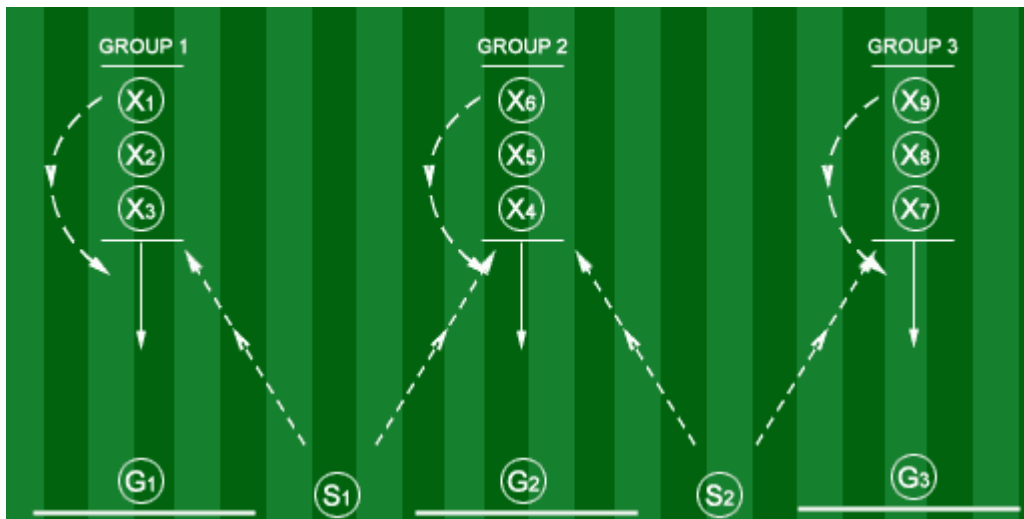
✔ Another progression is for (S) to serve and then the coach standing behind the goal instruct (G) where he wants the clearance to go by shouting "(A)", "(B)", "(C)" or "(D)".

✔ Passes to (A) and (D) must be accurate and coaches need to insist on the quality of the passes nearer to the goal.

## PROGRESSION IV

The practice can be built up using all the players and three goals with a goalkeeper in each (as in diagram 1).

**Diagram 1**



The players line up in three's or four's (depending on numbers) behind a line or marker.

The goalkeeper in each section can act as server OR a server can be placed between the goal areas to pass the ball to the front player in each group (server's marked (S1) and (S2)).

✔ So, (G1) or (S1) would pass the ball to (X3), (the front player in group 1). X3 has

to control the ball, but as soon as he makes his first contact with the ball, then (X1) chases from the back of the group to try and either tackle (X3) or if not to at least pressurise him before he gets in a shot at goal. (G1) tries to save.

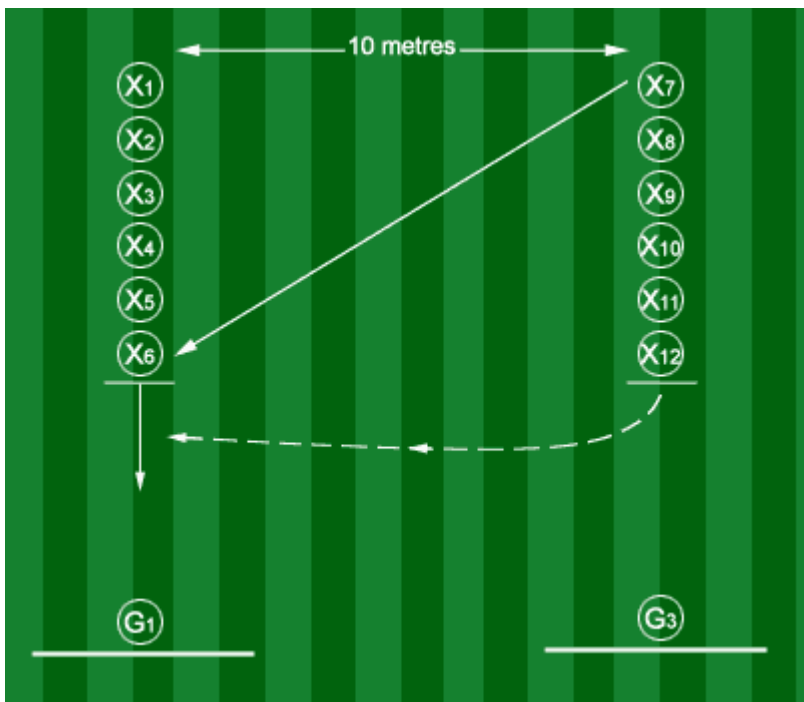
That completed they go back to the rear of their group, and the practice continues with group 2. (X4) receives a pass either from (S1), (S2) or (G2) and he tries to score while (X6) attempts to prevent him from getting in a shot at goal.

The practice continues to group 3 using (S2) and (G3) as servers, and that completed group 1 starts off again.

### Coaches should insist on: -

- (1) A good first touch from the front man in each group i.e. (X3), (X4) and (X7) in the first round.
- (2) Speed is essential, and all players should attempt to go through the practice as quickly as they can.
- (3) The fewest number of touches on the ball by the attackers before they get in a shot at goal
- (4) The attacker should try and run across the run of the man attempting to defend, so as to make it difficult for him to make a challenge for the ball.

### Practice 2



In practice (2) the players form two groups of six, (10 metres apart) with 2 goals defended by (G1) and (G2).

This can be played on a competitive basis to encourage defenders and attackers to act with some urgency.

/(X7) at the back of group 2 passes the ball with some purpose to (X6) the front man of group 1.

/(X6) has to control the ball quickly and try and score past (G1)

/(But in this exercise he will face a challenge from (X12) the front man of group (2), (X12) sets off as soon as (X7) kicks the ball

/(Clearly (X7) must be made to pass with some pace otherwise the ball would not reach (X6)

**Coaches should insist on: -**

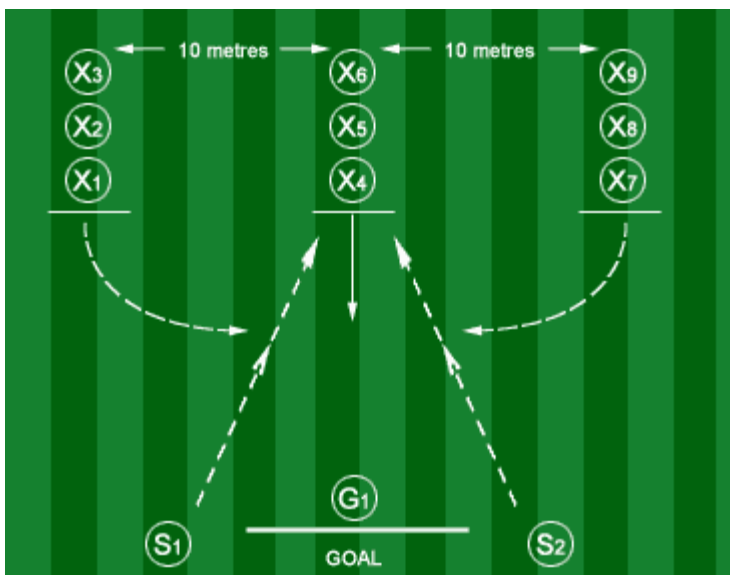
- (a) Good first touch from the attacking player
- (b) Real effort and energy from the chasing opponent
- (c) Attackers looking to get in a goalbound effort before defenders manage to get in contact.

## *PROGRESSION V*

The players line up in similar fashion.

Three groups again, - but this time with only one target goal as in diagram (1)

**Diagram 1**



Servers in positions (S1) and (S2) alongside the goal.

Practice (S1) or (S2) serves to (X4) the front man in the centre rank, who has to control the ball, and then move forward and try and score.

The moment he touches the ball (X1) and (X7) the two front men in the outside groups set off and try and make it difficult for (X1) by trying either to get alongside (X1) OR better still get in a tackle to clear the ball.

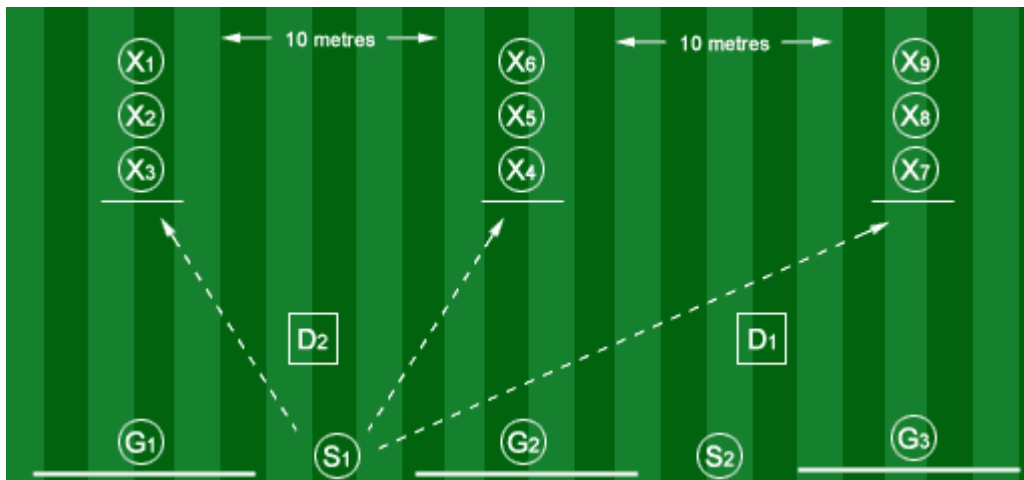
After (X1's) effort at goal, all 3 players involved go to the back of their groups, and the next three i.e. (X5) trying to score, and (X2) and (X8) attempting to stop him scoring.

The practice continues, through twice, and then groups exchange roles i.e. the centre group (X4), (X5) and (X6) change places with one of the other groups, who then move in to take their place as the group trying to score from the centre.

## Practice 2

Three groups as in practice (1) - but this time confronted by two defenders (see diagram) marked D1 and D2.

### Diagram 2



3 goals, with 3 goalkeepers

10 metres distance between the groups

Defenders positioned between the 3 groups (as in diagram)

Servers (S1) positioned as in practice (1)

### Practice (To score in any of the three goals)

(S1) can serve to any of the front men he chooses i.e. (X1), (X4) OR (X7)

✓ Once contact has been made by one of them the defenders can start manoeuvring to try and win the ball.

✓ The forwards can switch the ball about and try and create a space to score past (G1), (G2) or (G3)

**NB COACHES MUST LOOK FOR INCENTIVE PLAY AMONG THE FORWARDS - A GOOD FIRST TOUCH - AND (WHEN ON) A CLINICAL FINISH.**

**FORWARDS SHOULD TRY AND LOOK FOR SPACE, WORK HARD OFF THE BALL, AND AFTER A GOOD FIRST TOUCH THEY SHOULD BE COMMITTED TO GOOD PASSING AND ACCURATE FINISHING.**

# **CROSSING**

## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

One of the most effective passes in soccer is the 'accurate cross' delivered early behind the defence. It is normally delivered from a wide position, outside the line of the 18- yard box, and from an area anywhere between 'just inside the attacking third' to 'in line with the 6-yard box.'

There are three elements to consider when crossing the ball:

### **Observation**

- //space available
- //position of goalkeeper
- //position of defenders
- //position of strikers

### **Decision**

- //early cross or dribble
- //which area to hit
- //which technique to use

### **Execution**

- //cross to the back of the defence
- //keep the ball away from the goalkeeper
- //cross below head height
- //cross with paceThe type of cross that is delivered into the danger area depends on which technique is used.

**Technique** – Swerve pass using the inside of the foot

- //non-kicking foot should be slightly behind, and to the side of the ball
- //strike the outside of the ball with the inside of the foot
- //follow through away from the body
- //keep the head steady, eyes looking at the ball at the moment of contact
- //body position, slightly forward (this keeps the ball low)

### **Practice 1**

Organisation

Area Attacking - 1/3 of pitch

Player s- 1 Goalkeeper

1 Defender

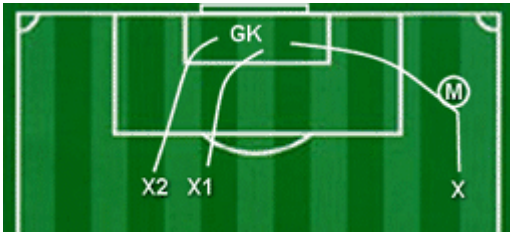
1 Crosser

2 Strikers

Equipment - 1 Goal- Balls- Bibs

Markers (mark out a 2nd six-yard box)

Winger X runs the ball forward and then delivers a cross into the danger area without having to go past marker M. Strikers X1 and X2 attempt to connect with the cross and score.





# **TACKLING**

## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

Tackling in the modern game is more of an art than it ever was in the past. The basic principles are still the same but, with more and more protection for the attacking players, the slightest mistimed tackle could result in a sending off.

Those who watched Euro 2000 will appreciate how adept foreign players are at this art and that more and more of their defenders are confident in 1v2 situations. This also has the added effect that you can release an extra player into attack, safe in the knowledge that you have an accomplished tackler in your last line of defence.

### **SO WHAT IS THE ART OF TACKLING? HOW DO I GO ABOUT LEARNING THE CORRECT PRACTICE?**

#### **KEY POINTS**

1. A tackle should never be attempted 'out of range'. This is because it is difficult to get any strength into the challenge and also because it is easy for the man in possession to side-step an opponent.
2. The tackler needs to get in close to the man on the ball, be patient and look for the right time to tackle. ie: when he can get all his strength and weight behind the ball in his attempt to win it.
3. When tackling from the front, it is important to remember not to allow your foot to make contact with the top of the ball. This is because it is impossible to get any force behind the challenge and also because if you miss the ball you risk fouling your opponent and getting cautioned. Plus, a serious injury may result.
4. Ideally the foot should make contact with the middle of the ball (similar to a side-foot pass), with the knee and ankle locked solidly to maintain strength, and to avoid injury.
5. If you find yourself in a position where you have to make a last ditch tackle, it is important that when you perform the slide tackle, that you do it from the side with a hooked foot and that you avoid contact with the man until you have played the ball. It is important to remember that it should be used as a last resort only, because if you miss the ball then you are out of the game and your opponent could go on to score.

## PROGRESSION

To progress and develop a sound tackling technique, here are a few practices which should assist in the development of any outfield player.

### The Block Tackle

This is used when a player is confronting an opponent from the front and to practice it A + B (2 opposing players) should stand one metre from a ball which is equidistant between the 2 players.

At a given signal both players will attempt to win the ball. Their movement should see one foot alongside the ball, and with the inside of the other foot (played forcibly) try to win the ball from the opponent.

So if tackling with the right foot, the left foot should be alongside the ball and the body over the ball to try and add weight to the tackle.

As stressed before, try to make contact with the middle of the ball, with the knee and ankle joints locked solidly to give strength and avoid injury.

### Practice 1 (in area 10 metre square)

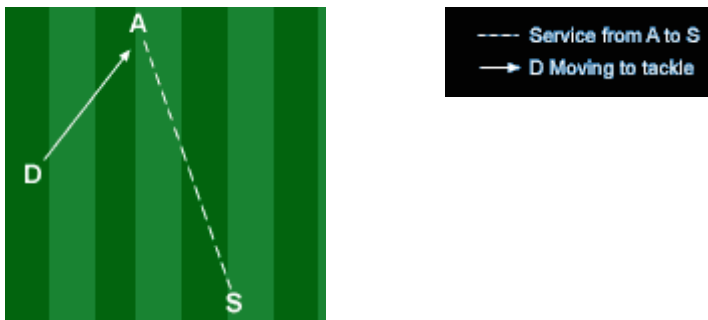
Server S passes to A, and as the ball is travelling defender D closes in and tries to get to the ball quickly if possible as the ball arrives at A's feet.

If A gains control quickly it is then up to him to try and dribble past D and return the ball to S.

D has to "jockey" for position and try to get in a tackle before A can pass to S (who remains in his starting position).

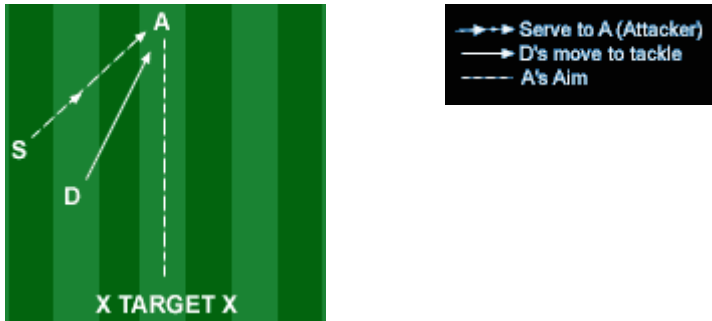
D will learn to be patient, considering how to get A on to his weaker foot, and challenging as soon as he gets the opportunity.

### Diagram 1



### Knowing When to Tackle

Three players S, A and D, in a 10 metre square with target points 2 metres wide. This time S is the server, and he moves around the square until he is ready to pass to A (attacker)



S is the server only

A gains control as quickly as possible and it is now up to D to move in and try and confront A as he tries to get the ball through the target area.

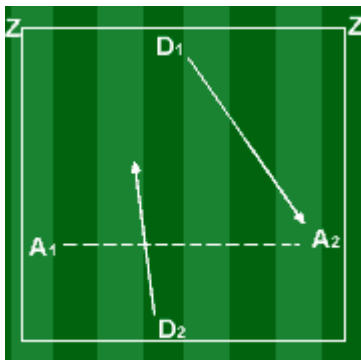
D, if he moves sharply should be able to check any swap effort by A to hit the target, and then will have to hold up A's attack, and judge exactly when to tackle.

This practice teaches a defender to isolate a player with the ball, create a 1 against a situation, and then make a successful challenge.

### Defending 2 against 2, with recovery runs

Extend the area of the previous practice if needed to 12 metres by 12 metres, but preferably stick to the 10 metre square.

This time the defender D1 is now gaining some assistance from D2.

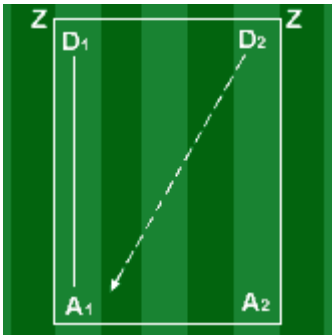


A1 passes to A2, to start an attack towards the line Z.

D1 will close in on A2 and try and hold him up long enough to allow D2 to sprint back (and so create a 2 against 2 situation).

A1 and A2 can continue, D1 and D2 challenge when they consider the time is right.

**Defending 2 against 3** (in larger area - 20 metres x 10 metres)



D1 passes to A1

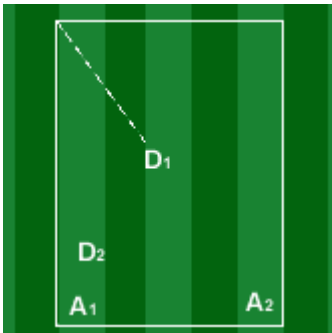
D2's move to challenge A1

D1 passes to A1, and it is up to A1 to control quickly and set up an attack towards the line Z with A2.

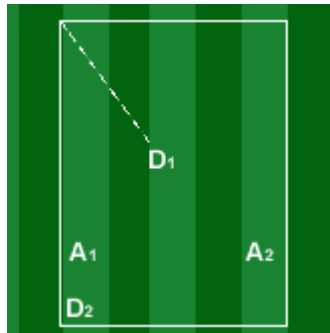
D2 sprints to challenge A1, considering when to tackle, whether to force A1 for the direction of D1 who, once he has passed the ball, plus on the role of defending the line Z.

D1 too must consider what he should do if A dribbles past D2.

D1 must also be aware of A2's position. They could find themselves as in diagram 5 or diagram 6.



**Diagram 5**



**Diagram 6**

## THE CHALLENGE

Following on, you should now appreciate that it is every bit as vital to judge when to tackle as is the challenge itself.

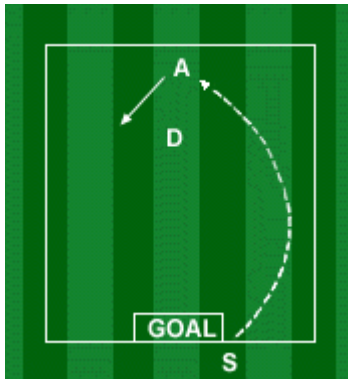
Spotting danger that is closing down the area between the goal and the attacker should be uppermost in the thought of any defenders.

### KEY POINTS

- /// Always be close enough to possibly intercept or be in a position to make a challenge, yet at the same time remember not to mark too tightly or the pass could be played behind you.
- /// Be ready to make a challenge should the attacker receiving a pass fail to make perfect control with their first touch on the ball.
- /// If the attacker shows perfect control the defender has to be patient, pressurising the attacker in the direction he wants him to go - once that is achieved then there could be a possibility of a challenge for the ball.
- /// If that opportunity presents itself you just remember the basic skills and techniques of tackling, discussed in our earlier practices.
- /// Once they have been achieved it is time to progress, here are some more demanding practices to test tackling and defensive skills in general.

### Practice 1

(Area 10 to 15 metres Square)



### 3 players

server = **S**  
attacker = **A**  
defender = **D**

server (S) throws the ball over defender (D) to attacker (A)

- /// A must control the ball quickly and try and score in the target area (goal)
- /// S once he has served can become the goalkeeper
- /// D's job is to challenge A and win the ball
- /// D must prevent A getting a slot at the goal, so he has to judge when to make his move, and when to tackle.
- /// A will clearly try to take the ball to his strongest side - D must be ready for this, and must try and help himself between the ball and the goal.
- /// If he can't get in a tackle D must, at least, try to block A's shot at the goal.

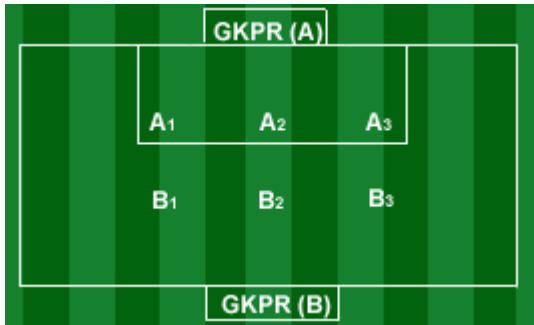
## Practice 2

Defending 4 x 4 (inside penalty - area)

1 goalkeeper, 3 outfield players on each side.

Full goalposts - **AIM IS TO SCORE IN OPPONENTS GOAL**

Area of field - inside the penalty area - throw in when the ball goes over the sideline



✔ Goalkeepers can use their hands, and they throw (roll) the ball out when they have possession.

✔ In such a tight area players will be looking to shoot whenever possible at the target area of full size goals looks inviting.

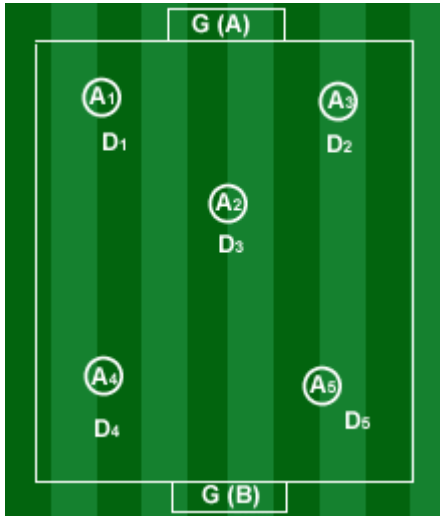
✔ If A's have the ball, it is up to B's to close down quickly and tackle whenever possible. If B's win the ball it is then up to them to counter attack quickly. A's then have to do the defending.

✔ This practice sets up a number of issues

- a) against 1 situations - tackling technique becomes important
- b) being aware of where the danger point is to any defence
- c) defenders learning to close down quickly
- d) balance in defence becomes important. So if B1 makes a challenge to A1, B2 should be ready to cover should A1 progress beyond B1.
- e) Learning to counter attack as soon as the ball is worn
- f) Goalkeepers should react to the defender in front of them and set up the play quickly when they have possession of the ball.

### Practice 3

Defending in a small sided game (area 60 x 40)



#### Aim to score in opponent's goal

- Start of play GK (A) throws out to his team mate eg A1
- D1 will automatically close down on A1 so as not to allow him time and space to set up an attack.
- D3 will stay close to A2, D4 and D5 will mark tight to A4 and A5 .

#### Coaching Points

- Defenders should try and force opposition to the outside of the area - away from the centre and the goal.
- Defenders should be ready to balance and above all ready to cover if a colleague is beaten.
- Defenders (when possible) should try and challenge in the opponents half of the field - at least as far away from their own goal as possible.
- Should A1 pass D1, then D3 would move across while D2 should move back quickly to cover A2. This type of cover will be continuous in this practice.
- All defenders should try and condense the space for the attackers. They should move the opposition towards their strengths so as to deny the setting up of scoring chances.

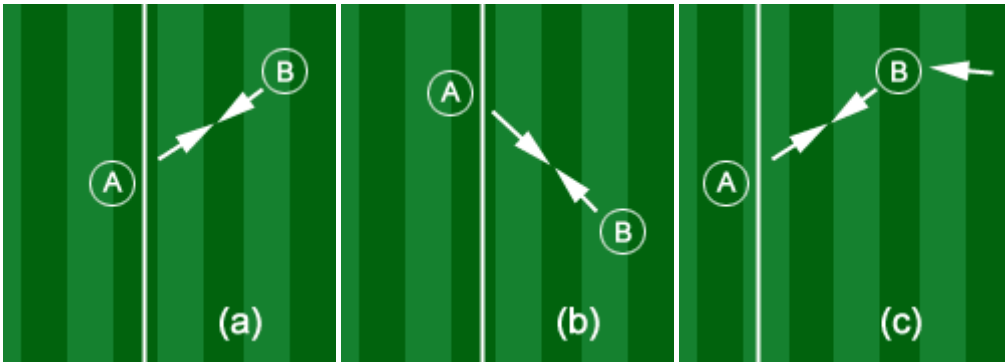


# **THE THROW-IN**

## BASIC PRACTICES AT THE THROW-IN

For younger players consideration should be given to instruction on the method required for throw-in techniques, e.g. the position of the hands gripping firmly on the side of the ball, the position of the feet for the type of throw-in required, and how the body, as a whole, should be used to propel the ball any distance.

The best starting point is to practice in pairs as in practice (1)



a. (A) throws to (B) who plays the ball back to (A) with the inside of the right foot – before the ball touches the ground.

b. Similarly with (B) this time using the left foot – again playing the ball from the throw-in before it touches the ground.

c. (B) now retires around 10 metres to (B1), he then runs in to (B2) and while he is moving (A) throw-in and (B) once again returns it to (A) – preferably before the ball touches the ground.

### **N.B.**

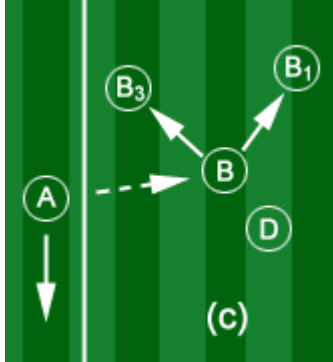
/(A)'s throw should always be to (B)'s advantage, demanding an expertise in dropping the ball in the right spot, at the right height, and importantly at the right pace.

/(A) should concentrate fully on this as aiming the ball in the "general direction" of (B) is not enough.

/( Throwing the ball at chest or head height to (B) will only require greater pressure for (B), as defenders will have a chance of intercepting, or at least getting in a challenge as (B) tries to control the ball.

To progress, 3 players can be used, with a defender (D) coming into the practice (2).

## Practice 2

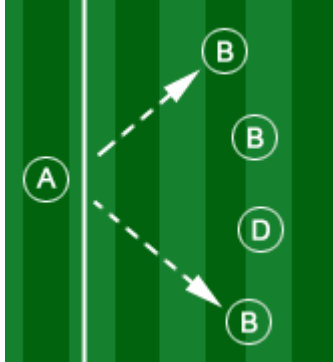


✓ This time (B) is marked by (D) who marks on the defensive side of (B).

✓ As (A) is about to throw the ball in, (B) then makes his decisive move. He could run to position (B2) to break away from (D), and (A) would then throw to him, and the play would continue with (D) now confronting (B) in possession and (A) who joins into the attack.

✓ OR (B) could run away from (D) to (B1), - (D) should follow quickly, (B) checks runs back to his former position and (A) throws the ball, (B) returns it and so the game progresses.

## Practice 3



In practice (3), another pair forward (E) and defender (F) are brought in, so now (A) has (B) and (E) to select from his throw-in. It is up to (B) and (E) to check, faint and sprint to lose their markers and up to (A) to throw-in accurately.

(B) and (E) can either play the ball back to (A) and set up an attack, or simply retain possession, and still set up a 3 versus 2 situation.

**THIS SHOULD NOT BE TOO DIFFICULT, BUT AS A BASIS IT IS IMPORTANT.**

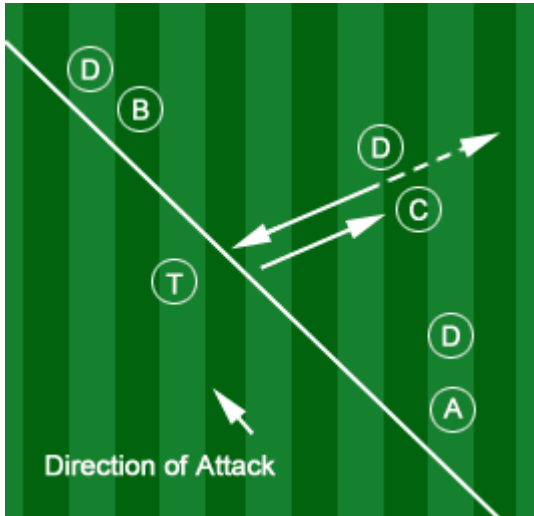
## PROGRESSION (PRACTICES FROM A THROW-IN)

### In possession

The player taking the throw-in must ensure he gets back to the field and into the play as quickly as possible.

Quite often he is unmarked and can therefore receive a return pass directly from the player to whom he has thrown the ball (practice 1).

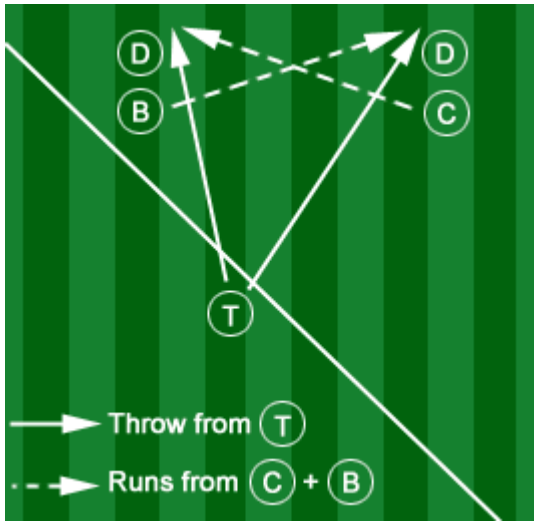
## Practice 1



- ✓ In practice (1) the thrower (T) has 3 colleagues (A), (B) and (C) – all are marked by defenders (D).
- ✓ (B) stands against the touchline with (D) behind him, as does (A) on the defensive side of the thrower (A) – also marked by an opponent (D).
- ✓ (C) stands well away from (T) but maintains his defending markers attention, and as (T) is about to throw-in, (C) moves in quickly (so freeing himself from his marker), (T) throws and (C) volleys it back smartly to (T) so retaining possession.
- ✓ If (C's) marker anticipates this throw; and so moves in quickly, (C) should check his run, and (T) must throw the ball over (D's) head to where (C) will turn and so move away in possession.

**THIS PRACTICE CAN BE ALTERNATED USING (B) AND (A) IN A SIMILAR WAY TO (C's) MOVEMENT IN PRACTICE (1).**

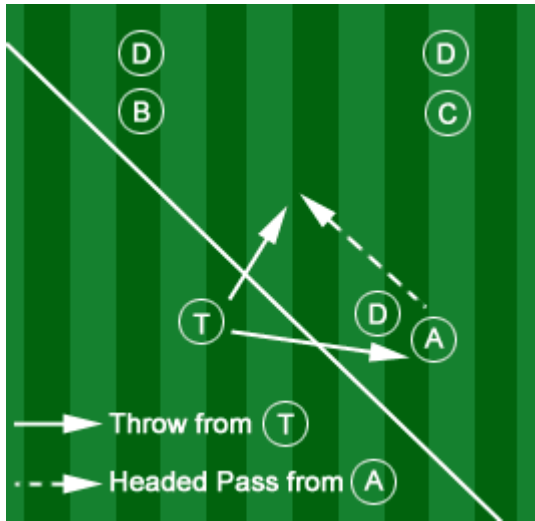
## Practice 2 The cross over



This movement requires good timing and an accurate throw. (T) the thrower, with (B) and (C) both marked by defenders (D).

- // (B) sets off to his left spinning behind the defender marking (C).
- // As soon as (B's) marker starts his move to mark (B's) run, then (C) sets off running behind the line of (B's) run, towards the touchline, hoping to catch out his marker, and (T) then throws the ball down the touchline to (C) to set up an attack.
- // Alternatively (T) can use (B) running into centre field.
- // When doing this (C) sets off first taking his marker with him. At the point when he is half way towards (B's) position, (B) then sets off on the cross over run and (T) throws the ball in front of him, as he should have freed his marker; (C) can run towards (B's) marker, which will make it even more difficult for (B's) marker to deliver (B's) run in field.

### Practice 3



- // As an alternative, (B) and (C) can stand at least 15 metres ahead of the thrower (T), this is to ensure there is plenty of space for (T) to run on to.
- // (A) comes relatively close (about 6 metres away from (T) and his marker should stand on the goal side of (A) – between (A) and (T).
- // (A) then throws the ball over (D) to (A's) head, (D) will turn to face (A), who will then head it back over his marker down the touchline where (T) will set up an attack.
- // Clearly (B) and (C) occupying their markers is important, and as (T) throws to (A) they should move even further away so as to give (A) and (T) more space in which to carry out the move.
- // (T's) throw to (A) should be accurate, well away from (D) (A's marker) then (A) should propel his header ahead of (T) who should have freedom in which to play.

## *The throw in (1)*

- ✓ All players (especially the young) should be given instruction on how to take a throw-in. For too often it is a skill taken for granted as simply being a way of getting the ball back into play, - it is anything but that.
- ✓ Items like the positioning of the feet, - and the development of the long and short throw are important – and every outfield player should be given instruction so that the best way of making the most of a throw-in is used.
- ✓ To begin, players should practice in groups of 2, 3, or 4, - first judging the height and speed as the ball is thrown to a colleague.

In pairs:

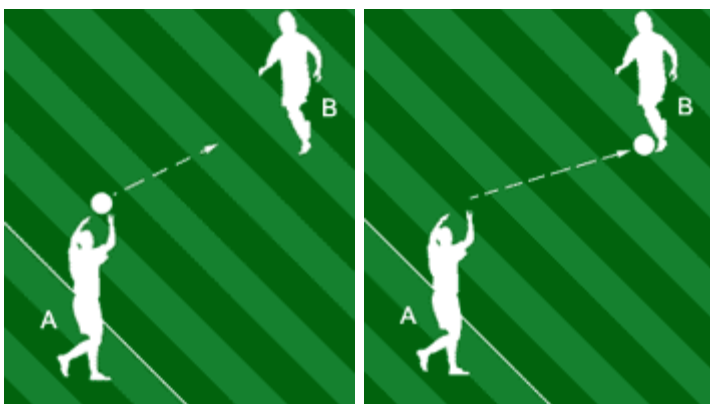


Fig (1)

Fig (2)

In diagram (1) A prepares to throw (B) is ready In diagram (2) A throws in and down at (B's) feet who moves forward and controls the ball.

(B) then picks the ball up and throws-in back to (A) who has to control

THIS CAN BE VARIED – BY THROWING THE BALL IN TO BE CONTROLLED ON THE CHEST, OR HEADED STRAIGHT BACK TO (A).

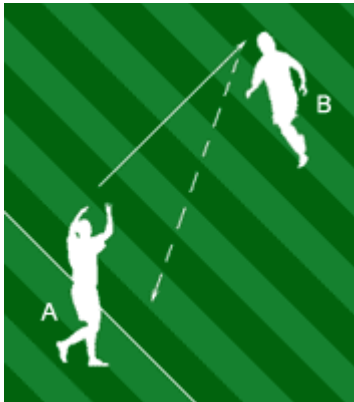


Fig (3)

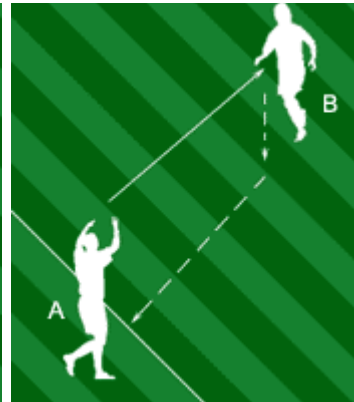


Fig (4)

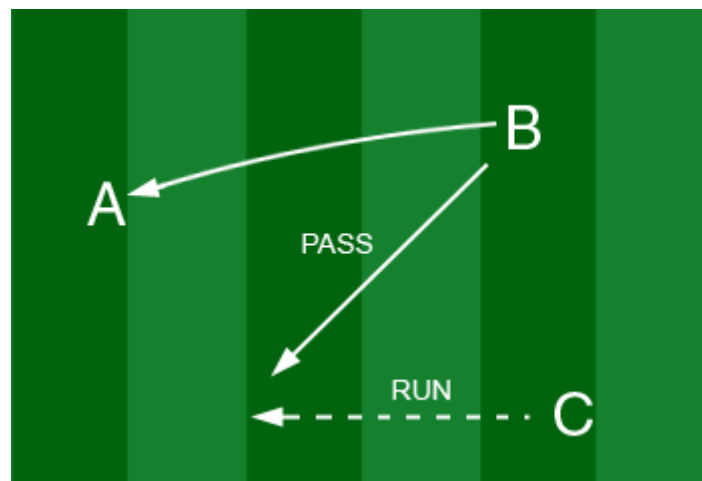
In diagram (3) (A) throws to (B's) head. (B) heads the ball back to (A's) feet.

In diagram (4) (A) throws to (B's) chest. (B) controls then lays it back to (A).

The purpose of these simple practices is to get ACCURACY with the throw – distances and speed of throw can be altered by the coach.

## *Defending at a throw in (2)*

Players can progress by practicing in three's, using one ball, maneuvering round the field, preferably in and out of other groups of three's. With one throwing, one receiving and passing, with a third player running.:



So in diagram (1) (A) throws to (B) who either plays it first time (preferably on the volley) to (C) who sets off to a new position once (A) has thrown the ball.



So importantly

- // A's throw has to be accurate for (B) to be able to volley it first time to (C)
- // (A) can throw it at chest or head height if he wishes, so (B) could then head it on for C's run, or chest it down before passing.

### **To progress the three's practice**

C would then, after controlling the ball, pick it up and would then become the thrower. So (C) throws now to (A) who volleys or heads to (B) who has become the runner; and so on, each player taking on the different roles.

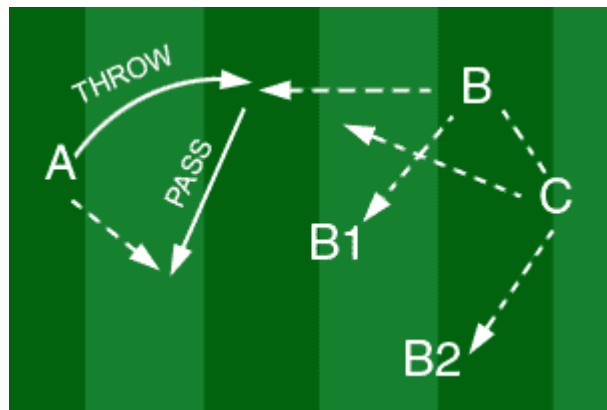
### **COACHES**

insist on correct throw-ins i.e. both feet on the ground, ball coming from behind the head, and accuracy.

Also coaches should demand good control by the receiver followed by sharp, accurate, correctly weighted passes.

## *The throw-in (3) Weight and timing of the throw-in*

- // When taking the throw-in, the weight (or speed) on the throw, and the timing of the delivery are both important.
- // So to assist with this, the players remain in groups of three, only this time one of them becomes a defender.
- // So if (A) retains the role as thrower, (B) becomes his team-mate while (C) is the defender, starting initially on the goal side of (B) (as in diagram).



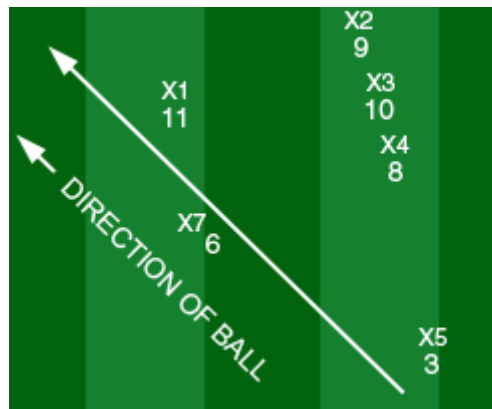
- // So in the practice (A) gets ready to throw, but (B) does not make his run until he is sure (A) is prepared, ball behind his head.
- // (B) then makes his run to get away from (C), (A) throws-in and (B) should then have time and space to play the ball into (A's) path.

- ✓ (C) will always be second favourite in this practice, but he should nevertheless try and cut off the pass or throw.
- ✓ (B) can vary his run behind or in front of (C) as in the diagram to reach (B1) or (B2) – (C) always trying to make it difficult for him.

COACHES SHOULD INSIST ON TOTAL QUALITY OF THROW-IN, ACCURACY SO THAT (B) CAN MOVE TO ADVANTAGE.

## *Defending at a throw-in*

When defending, particularly in your own half of the field, every attacking player should be covered – so every player no matter what his position becomes a defender when the opposing team have the throw-in.

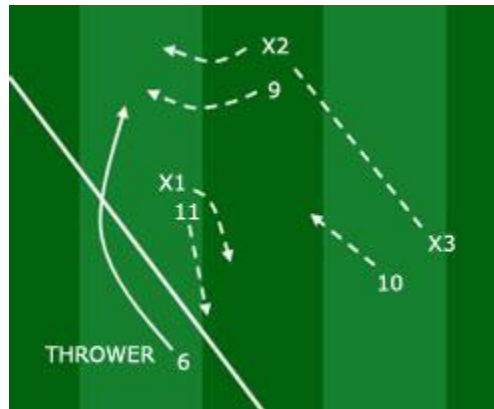


- ✓ In the diagram (6) takes the throw in, so (11), (10), (9), (8) and (3) are all marked by defenders (marked X).
- ✓ Defenders always mark on the goal side of the opponent i.e. the side nearest to their own goal – always trying to win the ball or if not, at least, trying to make control and movement difficult for the attacking side.
- ✓ Even full back (3) is marked so that he hasn't an easy option of getting control to set up an attack.
- ✓ Depending on circumstances even (6) should receive attention once he has thrown the ball in, and then enters the field of play.

## Defending at a throw-in (2)

Basically all players (within reach of the thrower) should be marked, and all defenders should stay man-to-man marking their own opponent until the play moves on.

So for example in the diagram 1, defenders (X1), X2) and (X3) stay with attackers (9), (10) and (11), while (11) remains goal side of thrower (6).



To illustrate the point:

In the diagram (6) takes the throw-in (11) moves towards (6) so X1 follows. (6) then throws the ball above and beyond both of them, where attacker (9) has already set-off anticipating the move. (X2) must follow (9), while (X3) will backtrack keeping tabs on (10) while at the same time adapting a more defensive position.

## Defending at a throw-in (3) Points to Note

- Clearly all attacking players should be marked at a throw-in
- Defenders should keep their concentration at all times, always being ready for any sudden movement or switch by attackers
- As soon as the ball goes out of play all defenders should react quickly to start marking up as a unit
- All attackers should not be allowed to control the ball and turn after receiving a throw-in. Defenders should mark tight, not allowing the attackers any leeway.

Small Sided Games (e.g. 5-aside played on an area 25 metres square) should be used by the coach for practice at throw-ins.

Every time the ball goes out of play all defenders should make a habit of quick reaction, total concentration, and spotting danger from the resulting throw-in.

- Coaches should ensure that attackers try to take quick throw-ins to sustain the practice.

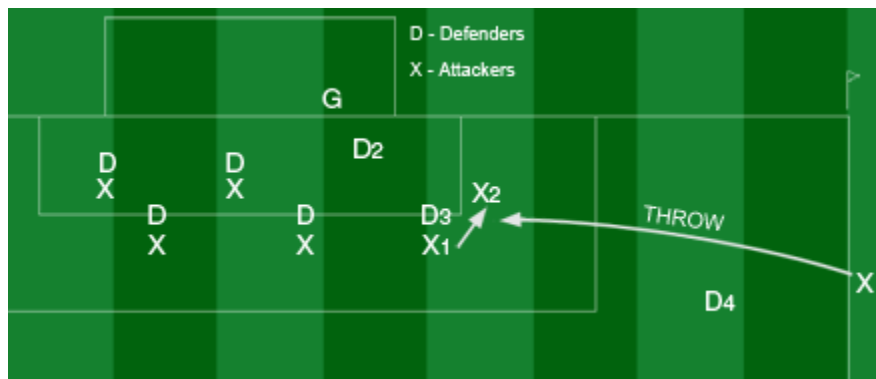
## The Long-Throw (defending)

- The throw-in occurs more often in a game than any other set-play, so consequently attacking teams will work on various moves or ploys to try and catch out defenders.
- As stated earlier, the main principles for a defender are to retain total concentration and discipline in marking.
- However, the long throw does warrant consideration – particularly when the throw is taken by the attacking team in the final third of the field.

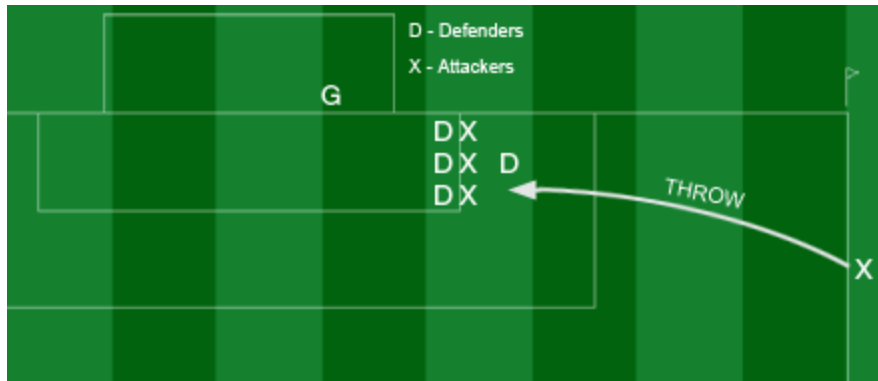
HERE WE ARE CONSIDERING A THROW THAT HAS THE HEIGHT AND LENGTH TO REACH RELATIVELY CLOSE TO THE FRONT OF THE SIX YARD AREA

- From a defenders point of view, they can usually tell by the throwers body language whether or not there is to be an attempt at a long throw.

That being the case defenders should line up as in diagram 1.



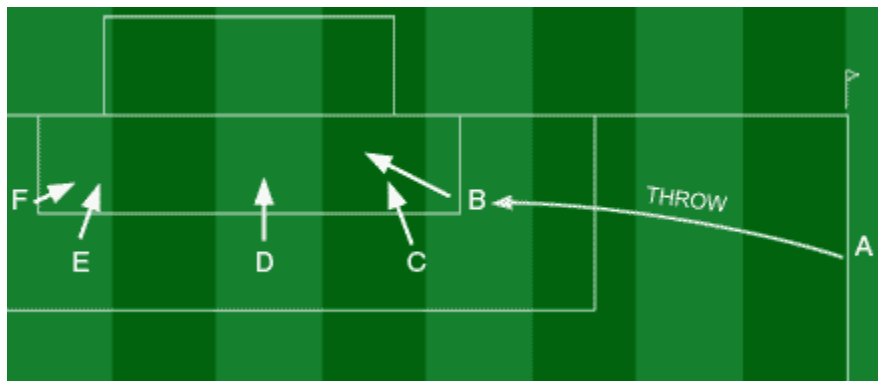
- Goalkeeper (G) close to the near post, on the goal line
- Each attacker (X) marked goal side by a defender (D)
- Should any attacker make a short run, then the defender should stay with him till the danger is cleared (D3) follows (X1) to position (X2), challenging the header.
- The area to the front of the six yard box should be defended – with a spare man just ahead of the near goal post (D2)
- Another defender (D4) should stay midway between the thrower and the penalty area – as quite often headers after the throw do come back in that direction
- Should the attacking side place 2 or 3 players at the front of the 6 yard area then apart from marking man to man the defending side should also place another player in front of the attackers as in diagram (2)



## *The Long Throw (attacking) With Supporting Players*

- ✓ The long throw can be especially dangerous when it comes with a not too high trajectory: - i.e. opposed to a looped throw.
- ✓ It can be even more effective when the attacking side have a player who is a good header of the ball, and can head or flick on the ball across the opposing penalty area for other members of the attacking side to run on to (see diagram 1)

### **Diagram (1)**



Attacker (B) moves to meet the throw-in from (A), and his job is to move the ball on across the front of the goal where (C), (D), (E) and (F) are ready to pounce. The timing of their movement is crucial and it is the combination of the long throw and the supporting attackers that will bring any success.

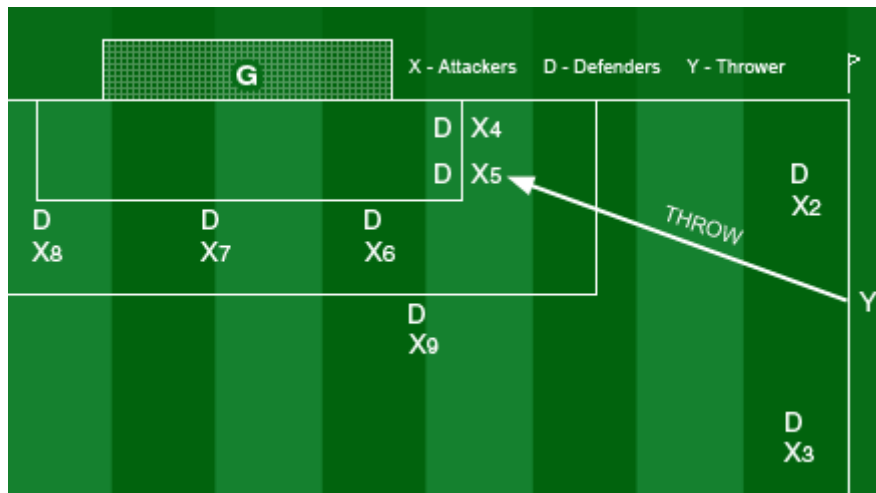
## Long Throw (attacking)

After the last practice, players should realize that it is the combination of the long throw-in, the header (from the throw-in) and the support of the other attackers that will bring success.

Once the positional play is firmly established (i.e. all the attackers and the thrower) then defenders should be brought into the practice, allowing them to position themselves where they wish.

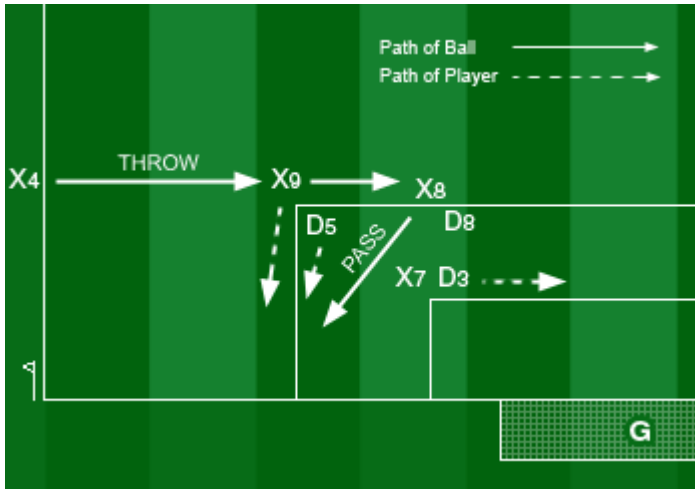
The practice is in the final third of the field and all players are instructed to commence an attack once the throw-in has been taken.

To keep the practice as near to game situation as possible – the thrower should be allowed to take a long throw or a short throw.



- /// In the diagram (Y) is the thrower.
- /// Nearby are (X3), (X2) and (X9) for short throws (all marked by a defender)
- /// (X4) and (X5) are ready for the long throw at the front of the six yard area, with (X6), (X7) and (X8) ready to move in should (X4) or (X5) win the first header
- /// There are 8 defenders plus goalkeeper (G), all trying to win the ball
- /// Once again a lower trajectory throw will give (X4) and (X5) the better chance to win the first header

## Set Plays at a Throw-in (attacking) I



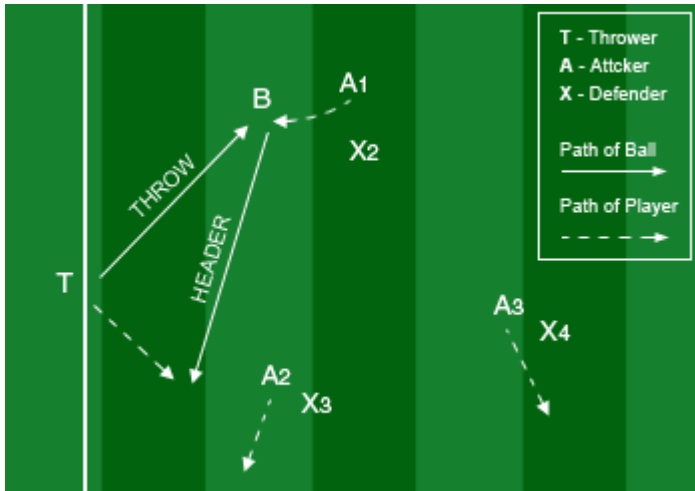
In the diagram the (X's) are the attacking side with (X4) taking the throw-in.

- // (X4) throws the ball towards (X9) who is marked by (D5)
- // But as the ball approaches him (X9) sets off to his left as in the diagram expecting that (D5) will (in view of the proximity to goal) follow him. This leaves the ball going on to (X8) who is directly behind him in line as in the diagram.
- // To add to the movement, and to maintain the pressure on the defence (X7) sets off into the penalty area, with (D3) in pursuit.
- // This creates a space on the right flank which (X9) will run into.
- // So when the ball arrives at (X8) he plays it first time into the space in front of (X9) who will then be in a dangerous attacking position.

The success depends on: -

1. The accuracy of the throw-in, also the right pace on the throw into (X8)
2. The timing of (X9)'s run; and that of (X7)

## Set Plays at Throw-In (attacking) II



- /// A simple but effective move, much depending on the movement OFF the ball by the attacking players.
- /// THE PRINCIPLE IS TO GET THE THROWER T IN POSSESSION OF THE BALL GOING FORWARD.

### Practice (with T ready to throw-in)

- /// (A1) marked by X2 darts quickly as if to move infield. But he checks quickly and moves back to a position (B) where he is free, as X2 cannot react as quickly.
- /// T throws the ball at the head of (A1), who then heads the ball down the touchline for T to run on to.
- /// To assist attacker (A2) comes close at first but as T is about to throw, he turns and sets off down the line, and X3 will follow – this then creates the space for (A1) to head the ball forward to meet T's run.
- /// Other attackers such as (A3) turn away also taking defenders with them.

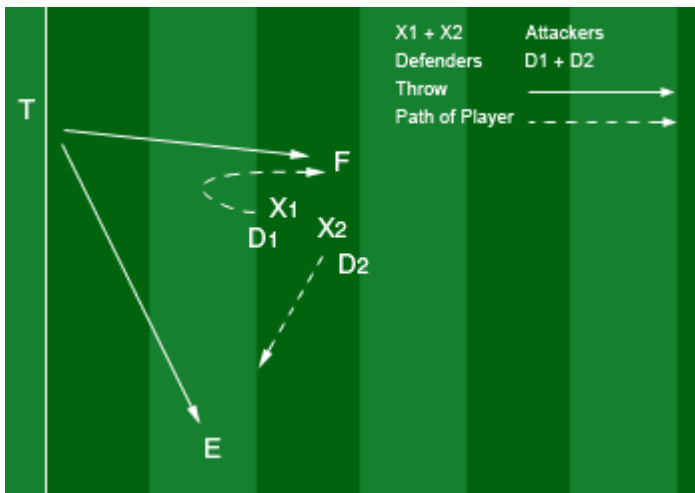


## Set Plays at a Throw-In (attacking) III

Attackers do not have to start in space to create problems for defenders at a throw in. Attackers who stand next to each other can give defenders a problem as to who marks who.

For example: -

X1 and X2 = Attackers, with Thrower T  
D1 and D2 = Defenders



In the diagram X1 and X2 stand close together marked by defenders D1 + D2. So X1 can faint to go down the right flank taking D1 with him – but he then checks backs and collects a throw in from T, on the inside of the field (marked F) Alternatively, X1 can go through this manoeuvre, but then only acts as a decoy as X2 runs across the front of D2 and collects the throw from T down the right flank (marked E). Running across the front of defenders gives the attackers that vital metre start.



# **ATTACKING SET PLAYS**

## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

Set-plays in the attacking third provide teams with the opportunity to create a goal-scoring situation.

Free kicks, throw-ins, corner kicks and penalty kicks enable teams to put into practice the rehearsed moves that they have spent hours practicing on the training ground.

It is no coincidence that set-plays are a major factor in scoring goals and, therefore, effect the results of many games.

### **Set-plays are a source of goals because:**

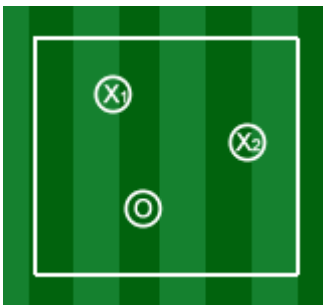
- (i) The most competent deliverer is able to take the set-play
- (ii) Delivery is made easier because the ball is 'dead'
- (iii) There is limited pressure on the player taking the set-play
- (iv) Teams can put their key players in key positions
- (v) Teams will have practiced these set moves

**NOTE:** Practice is the most important aspect of successful set-plays!

## *POSSESSION SOCCER*

There are several practices which encourage players to retain possession of the ball for their team.

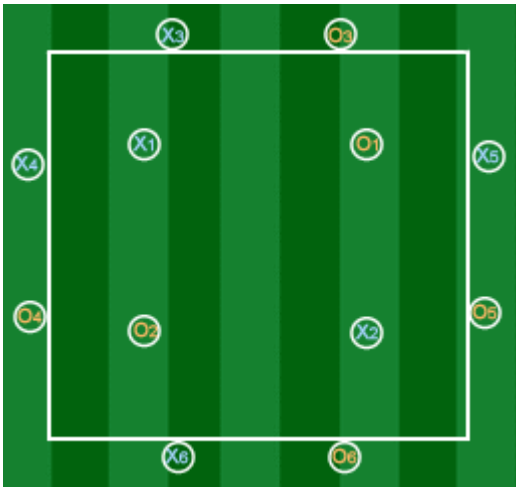
E.g. 2 v 1 in a 10 metre square as in diagram 1



X's pass and moves around the square (O) has to try and win the ball. If (O) wins the ball he replaces one of the X's and so the practice rotates.

## Practice 1

- ✓ This practice can be conditioned to permit the X's only 2 touches on the ball before they must pass.
- ✓ The practice can be extended to 3 v 2, 4 v 2 and so on until we come to a possession game of 6 v 6 as in Diagram 2



4 players on the edge of each line of the square, with 2 from each side in the central area of 20 metres square.

The practice is for the X's + O's on the inside of the square to win the ball and then retain possession as long as possible

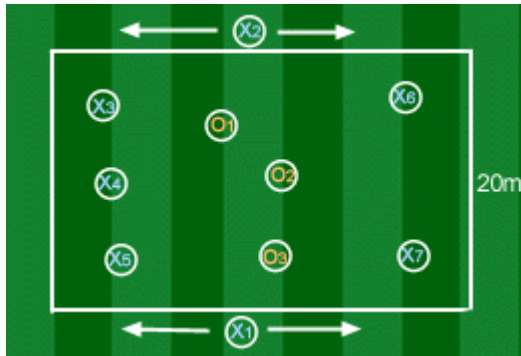
## Practice 2

They can use their team mates on the edge of the square passing to them and either receiving a return pass or simply switching positions with the player passed to on the edge of the square.

So if (X1) passes to (X4), then (X4) can return the ball to either (X1) or (X2), or he can simply run into the square with the ball and (X1) would take his place in the edge of the area.

It is up to (O1) and (O2) to win the ball, the four O's on the edge of the area do not tackle in their practice.

### Practice 3



12 players are used in an area 20 metres x 30 metres

5 attackers in possession of the ball (X3) - (X7) with 3 defenders (O1) - (O3) inside the area trying to win the ball back.

The X's also have (X1) + (X2) in the 30 metre side of each touchline and they can move along the line and can be used for wall passes.

5 attackers in possession of the ball (X3) - (X7) with 3 defenders (O1) - (O3) inside the area trying to win the ball back.

The X's also have (X1) + (X2) in the 30 metre side of each touchline and they can move along the line and can be used for wall passes.

O's must be encouraged to win the ball, when they have done so twice then one of their number changes places with one of the X's and so the practice rotates. The (X's) must be made to pass and move and in all these practices the key points are: -

1. Insist in good first touch on the ball when receiving.
2. Play the ball first time whenever possible.
3. Ensure the side in possession work on finding space to receive a pass.
4. Ensure all players stay committed, including the defenders who must be given a "rest break" if they fail to win the ball.
5. Keep the practice competitive, by counting the number of passes by the X's.
6. Encourage the use of both feet in passing, also the use of both the inside and outside of the foot.
7. Encourage "fainting" and full use of the area.

## PROGRESSION

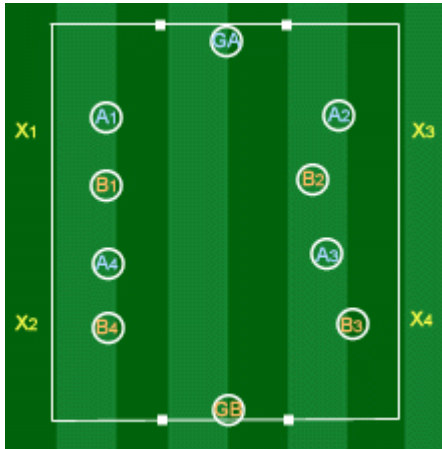
This all-important factor of retaining possession of the ball can't be emphasised enough to either young or experienced players.

Key issues to be developed are:-

1. Players learning to create space for themselves.
2. Accurate passing not only to feet but top the advantage of the receiving player.
3. Good control with the first touch of the ball by the receiver.
4. Correct weight on the ball by the player making the pass.
5. Weighing up the positions of players on both teams while the game is progressing.

So the progress here are two other practices.

### Practice 1



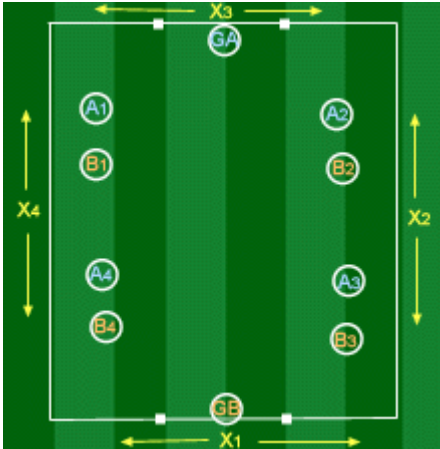
### 3 teams

- 1 4 v 4 on the field which is 40 metres x 30 metres.
- 2 1 team on the sidelines - 2 on either side of the field
- 3 Two goals - with goalkeepers
- 4 The practice is for the outfield players to score in opponent's goal - the coach stressing the points raised in key issues.
- 5 The outfield players can use the players on the perimeter X1 - X4, who will return the ball to which side passes to them.
- 6 So if A's are in possession, they will try and score past G (B) - the B's must try and win the ball, and they in turn will try and score past G (A).
- 7 The game should last for 5 - 10 minutes, the players rotate. X's come into the playing area, with either A's or B's replacing them on the perimeter.

This is good practice, one to be recommended as a whole team can be used with the coach working at weaknesses.

**THE COACH MUST STRESS ALL THE KEY ISSUES THROUGHOUT.**

## Practice 2



Similar to practice 1.

Pitch same dimensions. 2 goals, with the teams having the same objectives 5 against 5 (A's and B's) with X's on the perimeter.

This time 2 X's on the touchline and 2 on the goal line. Each one can manoeuvre up and down the line to receive the ball, and must return it as quickly as possible to A's or B's - **ONE TOUCH ONLY IF POSSIBLE.**

To start practices 1 and 2 - all players in the area are allowed unlimited touches. Then to tighten up the practice they should be allowed only 2 touches on the ball, ie one to control the ball, the other to pass to a colleague. Players on the perimeter similarly can first be allowed to consider situations, and then must be progressed to return the ball immediately after receiving.

## *WIDE FREE KICK*

### **Organization**

Area - Pitch

Players - 11 v 11

Equipment - Balls - Bibs

### **Key Points**

Simplicity – Do not over complicate the set-play

Precision – Identify the target area for the kicker to hit and the technique to use (near post, in-swing)

Timing – Work on the timing of the runs of the men in the box



Courage – To score goals the men in the box will have to be brave

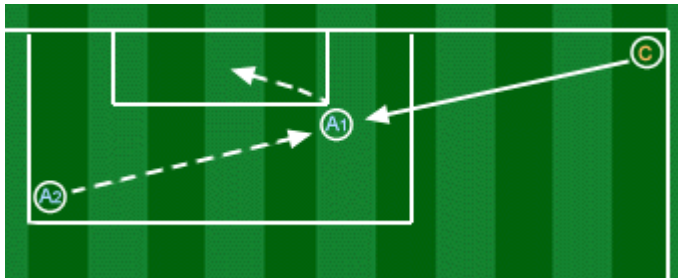
- // **Practice** (go through the practice in stages)
- // Work on the delivery into the danger area.
- // Add the attackers in the box – work on the angle and timing of runs.
- // Introduce opposition defenders.
- // Add the attacking midfield players on the edge of the box.
- // Introduce opposition midfield players.
- // Add remaining members of both attacking and defending teams.

## *SET PIECES ATTACKING CORNERS*

Flick on to a corner kick (attacking)

- // Increasingly in a professional game these days corner kicks are aimed towards the near post i.e. from the right flank driven in with the right foot, or an inswinging corner kick with the left foot.
- // One of the attackers tries to get to the ball first and with a flick-on try to wrong-foot defenders, but it requires a great deal of practice to become efficient.

**Diagram 1**



a. In diagram 1, (C) the corner kicker drives the ball towards (A1) who tries to deflect the ball across the 6-yard box. The delivery in itself requires practice.

Putting the corner kick in exactly the right place, at the right height and speed, doesn't come easy to any player. So having (A1) standing on the angle of the 6-yard box, with (C) aiming to drive the ball towards him is the first stage which has to be developed correctly.

**WITHOUT AN ACCURATE CORNER KICK THE WHOLE THING FALLS DOWN, THIS MUST BE STRESSED.**

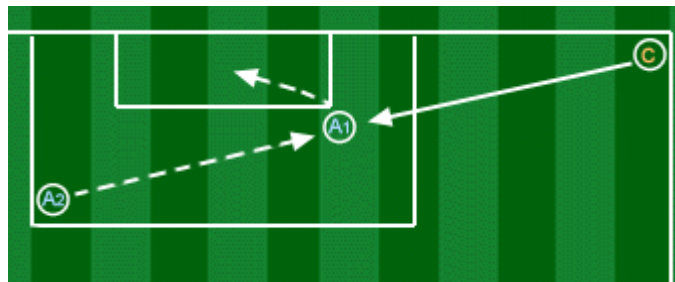
b. Once the corner kick is perfected then the next step is to get (A1) set to perform his technique.

Clearly in any game if he simply stood at the angle of the 6-yard box he would be marked (back and front) by defenders - so he has to learn to reach that position at the right time so as to catch out his markers.

So as in diagram 1, he is made to start in position (A2) - approximately 2 metres wide and out from the 6-yard box on the far side of the area.

He now has to set off towards position (A1), as (C) drives the ball in. The timing of the run by (A) and the delivery by (C) have to coincide perfectly - and this comes only with repetitive practice.

c. When this is starting to happen then the coach can introduce defenders to put some pressure on both (A) and (C).



To begin with, (D1) is placed to stand in front of the edge of the 6-yard box (about 2 metres clear) this ensures that (C) has to clear him to reach (A's) run.

At the same time (D2) comes into the practice and he starts on the edge of the far side of the penalty area, and is ready to challenge (A2).

To start (D2) cannot move until (C) has made contact with the ball, but as the practice progresses he can be brought in closer and offer a realistic challenge to (A1).

d. To balance this another attacker can be brought in (A3), who is looking for a "flick-on" by (A1) to try and score a goal.

(A3) starts between (A2) and (D2) and moves in towards goal as he sees what develops.

(D2) has to be aware of (A3), and to assist him (D1) is now allowed to move wherever he wants, once (C) has taken the corner kick.

**THIS IS THE EARLY (YET CRUCIAL) STAGE OF THIS TECHNIQUE WHICH HAS TO BE DEVELOPED BEFORE ANY CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN TO PROGRESSION.**

# **DEFENDING SET PLAYS**

## *A BASIC INTRODUCTION*

FREE KICKS, including corners and throw-ins are match winning situations, so defending at set-plays needs informed planning if you do not want to concede goals.

Consider the games dead ball specialists: David Beckham, Roberto Carlos, Zola and Dennis Bergkamp. All these players and many more practice for hours perfecting their technique but as defenders how often do you practice defending against them? Very little I expect.

What I will attempt to do is highlight with diagrams, area for defenders to stand when defending set-plays. As defenders, you will need to organize quickly and stay concentrated from the moment the free-kick/corner is awarded.

- // You should try to read the type of free-kick/corner about to be delivered: in/out swinger.
- // You should be brave and keep your eyes on the ball at all times.
- // You should attempt to get to the ball first.
- // The wall should stay big and together (runners to close down should not be part of the wall).

## *CORNERS*

### **Defending at corners - Zonal marking**

Zonal marking is when defenders take up a pre-determined position at corner kicks. The areas as shown in the diagram highlight the danger zones at corner kicks. My one concern with zonal marking relates to the fact that defenders are normally jumping and attacking the ball from a standing position. Zonal marking does allow defenders to organise quickly as their role is clearly defined.

The alternative would be to go man to man with your attacker – this would highlight the following problems:-

- //Defenders get moved all over the penalty area
- //Attacks will attempt to block you off
- //Danger of taking your eyes off your attacker and the ball during the movement

Whatever method you adopt at set-plays, remember to organise quickly, be to the ball first at corners and be brave at all times.



## *CLOSING DOWN THE SPACE TO ATTACKERS*

✓ All players (no matter what their position) should work at the technique of denying space to opponents.

✓ It is a fact that defenders, who allow opponents time and space to control the ball, can find themselves out of the game, as they are simply bypassed.

✓ There is a technique in "closing down" opponents.

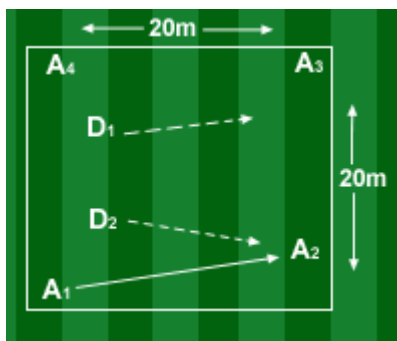
- a) defenders who rush in too quickly can easily be beaten if they slightly miss-time their challenge.
- b) They can also be penalised for rash challenges.
- c) Timing and anticipating is everything, and it enables the defender to stay on his feet.
- d) The knack is for the defender to be able to see the ball and any possible movement by the opponent - and then make the challenge when the opportunity presents itself.

### **SO DEFENDERS SHOULD**

- 1 Try and anticipate, while the ball is moving.
- 2 Concentrate on the opponents around the ball.
- 3 Wait until the right moment presents itself before making a tackle - observe, too, where your own teammates are.
- 4 Try and stay on you feet at all times.

Here are some practices that can be used to assist in improving the techniques of closing down opponents.

## Practice 1



Area of 20 metres square, one ball, attackers (A's) and 2 defenders (D's)  
———→ ball movement  
- - - - -→ movement of player

The practice is for A's to pass the ball about inside the square and for the two defenders to try and either win the ball or simply clear the ball out of the square.

### Points to note

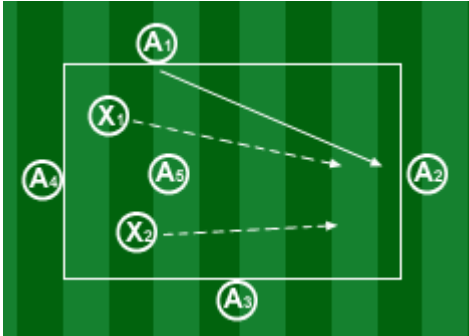
1. The 2 defenders (D) must work together Eg As A1 passes to A2, then D2 closes in on A2, at the same D1 must anticipate which pass (from A2) will come next, so he may opt to wait before closing down on A3, or even try and intercept any pass from A2.
2. D1 and D2 must tackle when they get the chance.
3. D1 and D2 must work at angles. So that as A1 passes to A2, D2 can manoeuvre himself in such a position that A2 cannot pass back to A1, which will in turn allow D1 to concentrate on A4 and A3.

The coach can vary this practice by allowing the attackers only 2 touches of the ball. They must either pass it first time on to a colleague, or control the ball, then pass it on with next touch on the ball.

This makes it more difficult for the attackers, but improves their commitment in the practice, and indeed speeds up the practice

If attackers are adept enough the coach can make the practice one touch only. So as the ball arrives by any of the A's, they must immediately pass it on to a colleague.

**Practice 2** - This is a progression



Area 25m x 10m attackers (A) in possession of the ball, four on each side of the area, one inside along with 2 defenders X1 and X2

A's have to retain possession of the ball, and they can pass to any other A, including the player inside the area A5. X1 and X2 have to try and win the ball. The same principles apply as in practice 1, with the defender working in tandem, trying to force errors from the A's (who can move up and down the edges of the area to make themselves more available).

**To progress the coach can;**

- 1 Add another defender, so that there are 3 X's in the area.
- 2 Insist on two or one touch from the attackers (A's).

## *DEFENDERS FORCING THE PLAY*

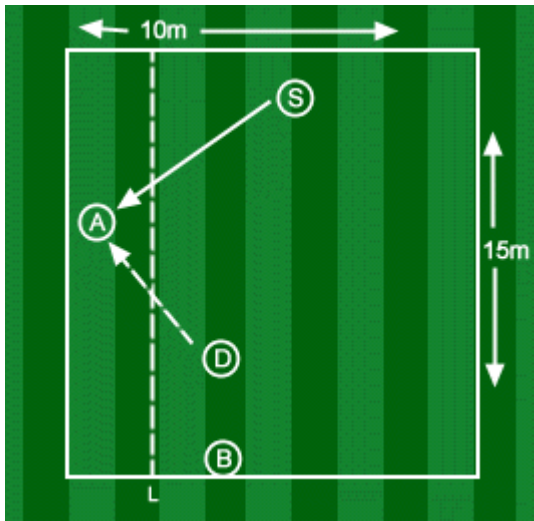
Defenders first priority is to win back the ball, of course there will be times when that isn't a simple task, and it is on these occasions that defenders have to try and force attacking play into areas that are going to offer the least threat to goal.

Defenders can either

- a) try and force attackers into wide positions or
- b) simply make the play across the field.

Here are some practices that will assist defenders in their development of these skills.

## Practice 1



### Organization

Area: 10 metres x 15 metres

1 ball,

4 players

✔ S serves the ball to A who is close to the Touchline. A needs to control the ball and pass it onto B who is on the far touchline - positioned centrally.

✔ D is a defender who moves towards A as soon as S passes the ball.

✔ D should position himself, to force A down the touchline roughly on the touchline side illustrated by the line L.

✔ D must reduce A's options, and make his play predictable - above all cutting out the pass to B.

✔ D should tackle when the opportunity presents itself

✔ D must prevent A cutting inside.

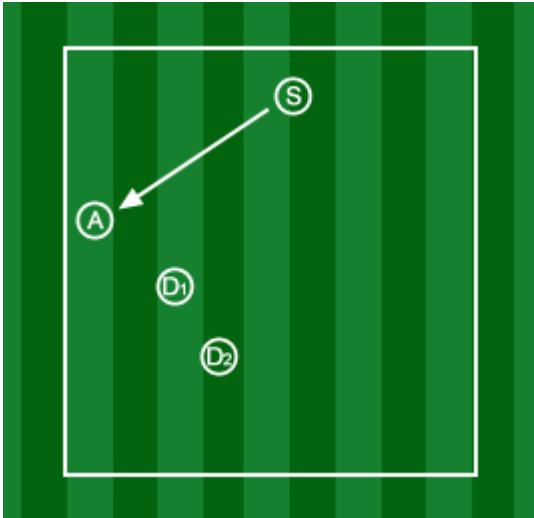
**NB** the coach should encourage A to control quickly, attempt to either dribble past D or at least make an angle to open a route to B to make the practice worthwhile.

The players can rotate positions to enable each player to have the opportunity to develop his defensive capability.



## Practice 2

To assist the defender D1 a second defender D2 can be brought into the practice to accentuate the note of forcing attackers into wide positions.



✓ S passes to A, who controls the ball, and his aim is to get the ball to B position and on the opposite touchline.

✓ D as in practice 1 moves in and again tries to force A down the line. This time a second defender D2 is positioning himself in support of D1 and should be ready to tackle if D1 is beat.

✓ D2's position is important - **MUCH DEPENDS ON THE POSITION ON THE FIELD**

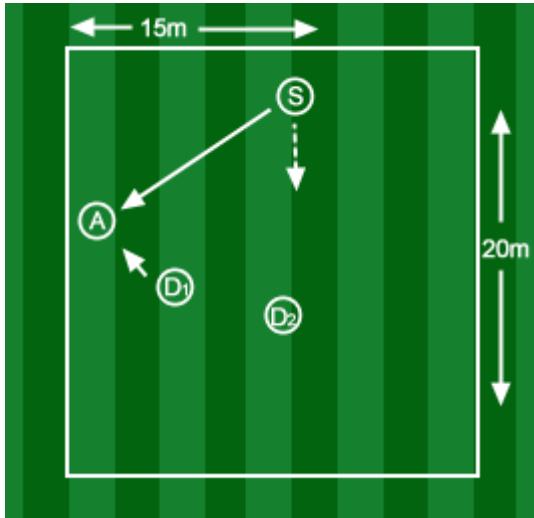
a) D2 should not be too close to D1 - or he will lose his effectiveness, particularly if the play is in the middle of the field - a speedy opponent could sprint past them both and put them out of the game.

b) In a tighter area (near to the penalty area) clearly D2 needs to be closer to D1 as A may beat D1 and get a shot on goal before D2 can get in a challenge.

The coach should insist again on a good service by S, quick control by A, who must be encouraged to try everything he know to get the ball to B.

Players can again rotate duties, the coach manoeuvring the defenders into the correct areas, positions and instructing them on when to tackle.

### Practice 3



✔ To develop widen the area to 15m x 20m, exactly the same players only this time as soon as S plays the ball to A he joins in the play so creating a 2 v 2 situation - S & A against D1 and D2.

✔ S & A trying to get the ball to B on the opposing touchline.

✔ S passes to A and D1 again tries to force A down the line who now has the option of playing the ball to S who moves forward.

✔ D2 now has to decide his position, and so the 2 defenders have to work in tandem.

✔ D2 deciding whether to cover, should D1 be beaten down the touchline (his first priority) or whether to hold his position should A look to bring S into the play and so open a wider angle to B.

✔ Communication between the 2 defenders (as well as the 2 attackers) is important. The covering player giving information to the challenging defender.

✔ In an area of this size, one defender would always be in a tight challenging position to the attacker who has the ball - so as not to make it an easy option to pass to B.

### Practice 4

To develop further the area can be enlarged again, to 20m x 30m. Two goals with goalkeepers introduced, and so it becomes 2 v 2, on the field trying to score in the opponent's goal.

This gives a competitive edge to the practice, and it is better if full sized goals are used.

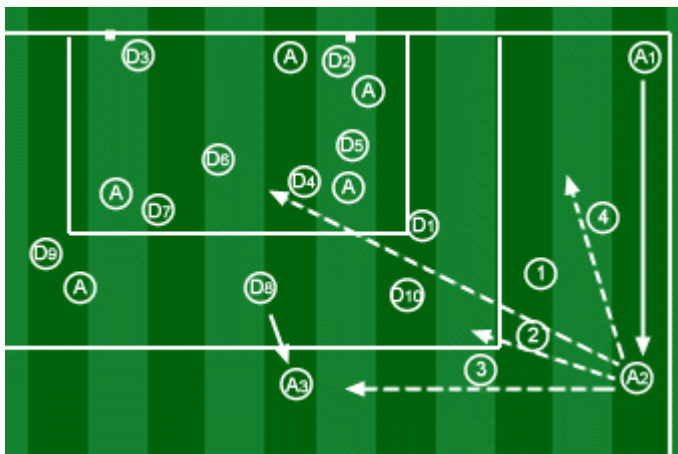
✔ This time S serves to A and D1 must try and force A towards the touchline.

✔ But just as in practice 3, defenders D2 weights up his covering position - particularly considering A's pace.

✓ D2 must also watch S who moves up to join A in the attack.

1. A & S try to score in the goal occupied by GD.
2. Should D's win the ball then it will be A & S's turn to take up the defensive roles, with D1 and D2 trying to score in the goal GA.

## *DEFENDING THE CORNER KICK PLAYED BACK TO A SUPPORTING PLAYER*



A1 plays the ball back (almost level with the touchline) to A2 who has moved forward quickly.

This often happens when teams aren't having success in aerial duels, and so they look to take a quick dead ball kick. The whole point being that: -

1. A2 can centre the ball changing the angle of attack.
2. A2 can hold the ball and try and get within a position to drive at goal.
3. A2 can move forward before playing a pass ball to A3 moving up for a shot at goal.

With attackers moving around - defenders must keep their discipline. To defend against this, as

Soon as A1 plays the ball back to A2 - defenders should be on their way out of the 6 yard area, clearing the space for the goalkeeper to see and hopefully control should a cross ball arrive in from A2.

**THIS ENSURES ATTACKERS HAVE TO MOVE OUT AS WELL OR THEY WILL BE CAUGHT OFFSIDE.**

D10 sets off immediately to challenge A2 - to try and stop the early cross into the penalty area. D10 should try to 'hold up' the pace of the attack.

D7 should move to check any move by A2 down the flank - or by A2 if he tries to move towards the penalty area.

D8 should be ready if A2 plays to A3 running up for a shot at goal - D8 must react to the situation, holding his ground if A2 goes down the flank.

Defenders 2-7 should clear the 6-yard area ensuring they mark attackers all the time. No attacker should be left free as A2 may simply knock the ball into the danger area first time.

If one of the defenders does manage to clear the ball out of the penalty area then all defenders should move out together.

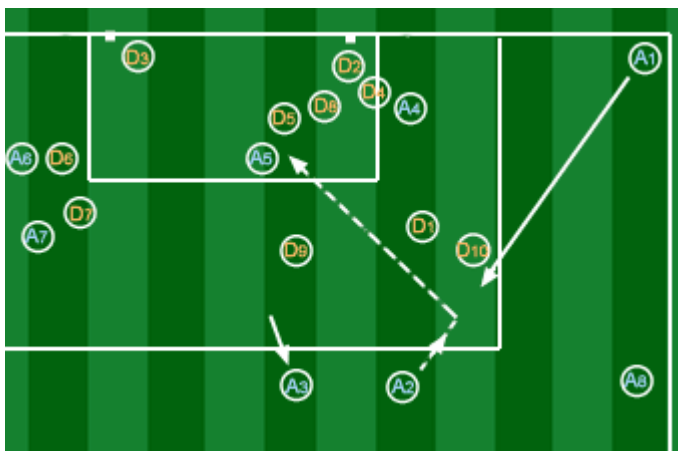
**ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES FOR DEFENDERS IS TO WORK AS A UNIT.**

A2 has options but invariably he will try and catch the defenders moving out together. As a result the defenders must be alert to any eventuality - it is a disciplined reaction that is needed, stressing the importance of picking up any opponent in the penalty area.

**THE GOALKEEPER IS A KEY PLAYER - HE HAS THE BEST VIEW OF ALL THE DEFENDERS (ESPECIALLY IF THE 6-YARD AREA IS CLEARED) SO HE SHOULD INSTRUCT, (BY SHOUTING), TO HIS TEAM-MATES WHERE THE DANGER POINT IS - AND WHEN TO CLEAR THE AREA.**

## *DEFENDING AT A CORNER KICK PLAYED TO THE EDGE OF THE PENALTY AREA*

### **Practice 1**



This is a corner kick used by good technical teams, who possess the quality of player to deliver accurate passes, e.g. Manchester United's use of David Beckham as (A1) and Teddy Sheringham as (A2).

The ploy is for (A1) to deliver the corner towards (A2) who moves forward of his starting position and then either volleys it first time into the danger zone as shown in the diagram OR sends in a glancing header direct from the corner towards the direction of the six yard area.

// This changing the angle of attack will force defenders to alter their positions, in relation to the attackers and it can be successful as the volley (in particular) from (A2) will be difficult to defend and with (A5) in the vicinity for a possible deflection on the ball, and (A6) and (A7) running this there is a real threat to the goal.

So all defenders have to be alert so soon as they realise the ball is being played wide to the edge of the penalty area.

Each defender has responsibilities: -

//(D9) tries to get to (A2) as soon as possible to try and block any corner kick towards the danger area.

//(D6) and (D7) should stay close to (A6) and (A7) until the danger is cleared.

//(D3) and (D2) should stay in their positions on the goal line, until the danger goes. They should not worry about playing attackers on side, their aim is to block the goal area, moving out quickly once the initial threat goes.

//(D5) and (D4) stay with (A5) and (A4) - all the time and whenever they move in the area - always, too, whenever possible on the goal side of the attackers.

//(D8) - his first role to 'double' mark at the unswinging corner disappears when the corner is played towards (A2). So he should move more central towards the edge of the six-yard area to try and block any ball delivered by (A2).

### **Points to Note**

// If (A2) makes a good contact on the ball with either volley or header all defenders must be alert to the change of angle of the attack - and must keep their discipline.

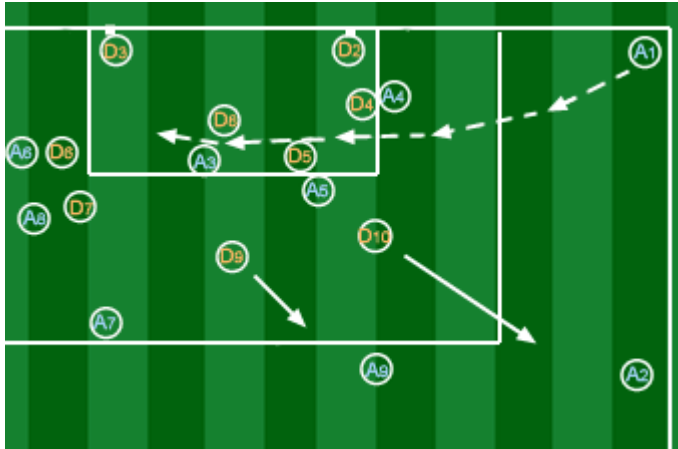
// Defenders must mark all the other attackers (goal side) until the ball is cleared.

// The goalkeeper, who should have the best view, will instruct (by shouting) to all defenders to get out of the area as soon as the danger goes.

// (D3) and (D2) act as good minders until the ball is cleared - staying on the line should they be needed.

ONCE AGAIN DEFENDERS MUST BE READY TO RE-ADJUST THEIR ROLES AT THE ANGLE OF ATTACK CHANGES.

## *DEFENDING THE CORNER KICK DELIVERED TO AND BEYOND THE FAR POST*



No defence can ever be totally sure what the attacking side has in mind when they win a corner kick, and so they have to line up preparing for any eventuality.

✔ The near post has to be covered, as in diagram (i) by (D2), (D4) and (D5).

✔ They must be ready to check a ball played back to an attacking defender a long the touchline (A2) - Hence the position of (D10).

✔ While (D9) has to be ready should (A1) direct the corner to the edge of the penalty area and or (A9).

So with (D3) committed to guarding the goal line on the far post eight players already have set tasks.

So what about the corner kick played long towards the far point of the 6 yard area with attackers (A6) and (A8) coming in hoping to get a header or goal?

**CLEARLY THEY MUST BE MARKED - GOAL SIDE BY (D6) AND (D7).**

1. These two defenders must be strong in the air ready to challenge in any aerial duel.
2. Both must man for man mark their attacker i.e. (D6) with (A6), (D7) with (A8) until the ball is cleared.
3. (D8) must mark (A3) (on the edge of the 6 yard area) should there be any knock down into the danger area.

4. (D3) and (D2) should stay on the line either side of the goalkeeper (G) to protect the goal, acting as a last line of defence should (A6) or (A8) get in a header.

5. Similarly (D5) stays with (A5), and (D4) with (A4) - until the threat is cleared.

#### POINTS TO NOTE

1. Once again all defenders must keep their discipline and be ready to attack should the angle of attack change, i.e. once the ball has passed over them (D4), (D5) and (D8) should all be ready to readjust to more central positions - keeping goal side of the attacker they are marking.

2. (D6) and (D7) are key players they must be strong, forceful and good in the air totally committed to winning any aerial battle. - **TRYING IF POSSIBLE** (Should they win the heading duel) **NOT TO HEAD THE BALL TOWARDS THE CENTRAL SECTION OF THE PENALTY AREA.**

3. Once the danger is cleared (G) should encourage all defenders especially (D3) and (D2) to clear the area quickly.

## SWITCHING PLAY IN DEFENCE

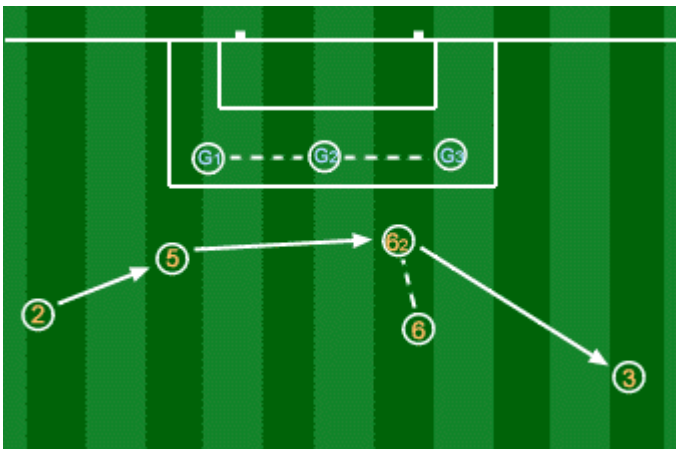
In the modern game defenders have to be skilful. They have to be able to control the ball with one touch and they also need the ability to be able to pass both long and short.

Of course it makes life simpler for any defender if he can pass with either foot. It saves a lot of time adjusting the body and also being adept with both feet does give any player confidence.

### Stage One

To begin, the back four players can start the day by passing the ball around in an area with real concentration placed on quick control, and accurate passing. No limits should be put on the players, - the coach however insisting they change positions on the field. It is a sort of warm-up for the next practice.

### Stage Two



The four defenders and a goalkeeper go on to the full size pitch, into their positions with the goalkeeper somewhere close to the penalty spot in his own penalty area (see diagram 1).

(a) (2) has possession, he plays to (5), (6) covers (dropping deeper) slightly before he receives the ball from (5) at (62).

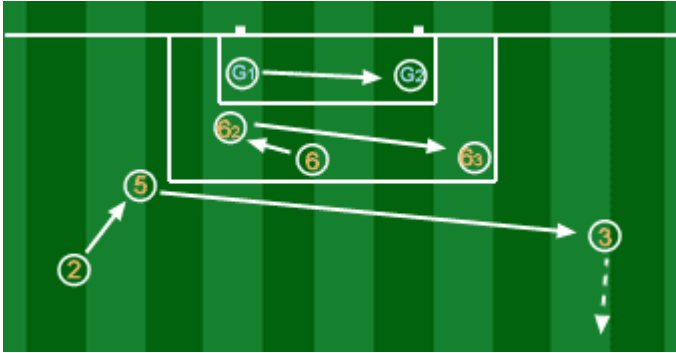
Once in control he passes forward to (3) who sets up an attack on the left flank.

**N.B.** While the ball is being transferred across the four defenders, the goalkeeper (G) alters his position across the penalty area. Starting at (G1), but as the ball moves from (5) to (62), so the goalkeeper moves to corner at (G2), and finally on to (G3) once the ball has reached (3). By doing this (G1) is always available for a back pass should any emergency arise.



The whole basis of switching the play in defence revolves around each defender, passing with the right weight on the ball, good control, accurate distribution, and always being aware of the cover should any error occur.

### Stage Three

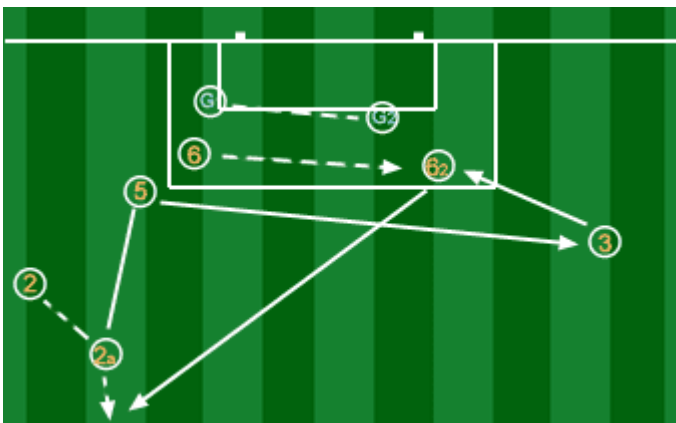


In diagram (2), the man in possession of the ball to start is (2), this time slightly closer to his own penalty area.

He lays it back to (5), who plays a long diagonal pass (first time if possible) to (3), who then sets up an attack.

(6) moves back again to (62) to act as cover to (5), but the long pass to (3) cuts him out of the move. Once (3) starts to progress, the other three defenders all move forward. Once (5) passes to (3) - (6) moves across to (63) Goalkeeper (G) again moves across to (G2) once the ball is on its way from (5) to (3).

### Stage Four



There are various permutations of the passing around defenders, but once confidence has grown then more difficult practices can be adopted.

For example (see diagram 3). (2) moves forward slightly to (2a), before timing the ball back to (5), who hits it across the field to (3), again cutting out (6) who initially covers (5).

But (3) on receiving the ball decides to play the ball back to (6) who has moved across to (62) - mainly to act as a covering defender.

But as the ball comes back to him he then hits a long diagonal pass to (2) who then sets up a right wing attack.

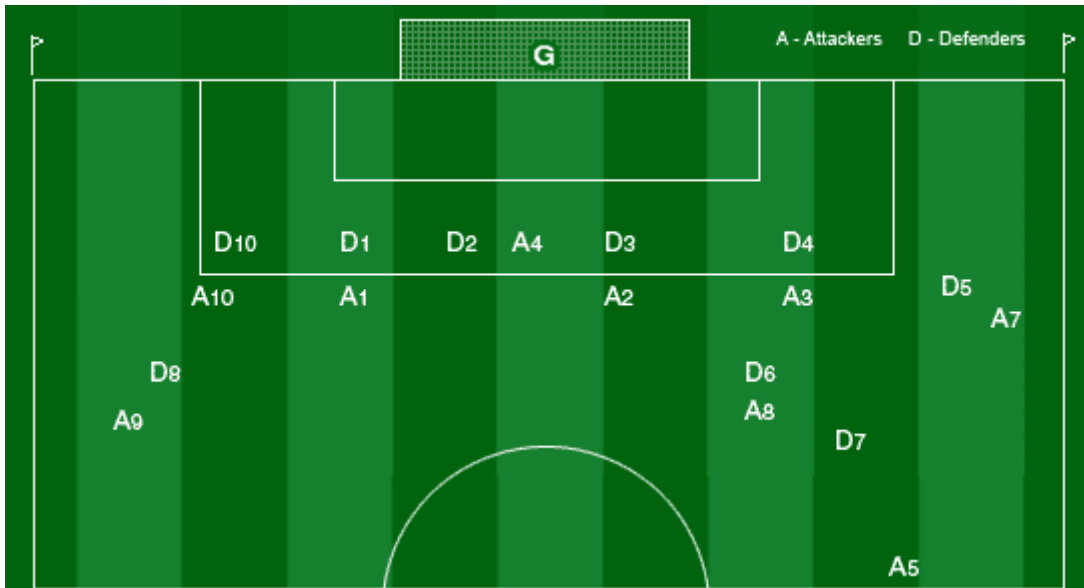
There are several coaching points to watch out for: -

- (a) The timing and weight of every pass is important
- (b) The first touch is crucial for any player receiving the ball
- (c) Players should appreciate when to pass first time, and when to add an extra touch on the ball
- (d) The passing player has to show he knows when to pass to a colleague's feet, or in front of him
- (e) There should always be some form of cover, the balance of the defence is crucial
- (f) The goalkeeper may not get many touches on the ball but he is still a key player in the practice moving across his area and making himself available whenever needed for a back pass.

# **THE FREE KICK**

## Free Kicks (Long) Defending I

- // Defenders facing a free kick 50 yards from goal should always maintain a discipline of (a) being alert and (b) always facing the ball.
- // In the diagram (A5) is about to take the free kick, so (D7) is positioned the regulations 10 yards away in case (A5) is looking for a quick free kick and follow up.
- // (A7) is wide right – so (D5) stands goal side of him.
- // (A9) is wide left – so (D8) stands goal side of him.
- // (A8) has come short – (D6) stays in attendance.
- // This leaves the other attackers on the edge of the penalty area – all marked (goal side) by defenders.
- // (A4) may try to push the defenders closer to the goal area
- // BUT THE DEFENDERS MUST STAY DISCIPLINED, RETAINING THEIR LINE AND ALLOWING A SPACE BETWEEN THEM AND GOALKEEPER G – encouraging (A4) to go offside.
- // Obviously they may have to move once the ball has been kicked by (A5) and aimed high into the area, and if (A4) is clever enough not to move until the ball has been kicked – they must while moving retain their marking duties on their opposing attacker.

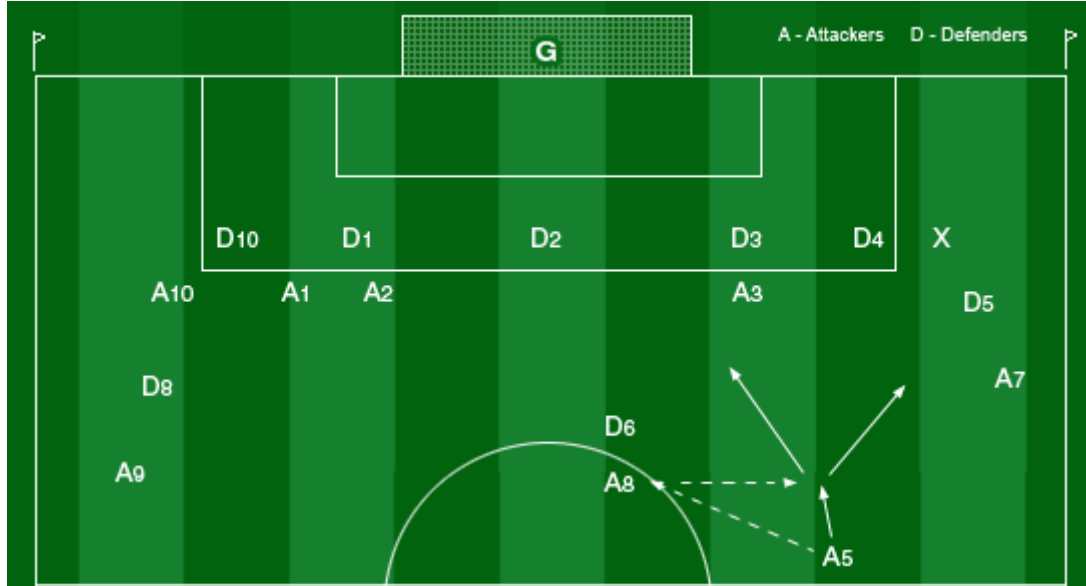


## Free Kicks Long Defending II

- // All players lined up in the diagram as in the previous exercise only this time the player taking the Free Kick is unmarked and so decides to play a quick 1-2 with A8 and so finds himself in possession going forward about 40 yards from goal.
- // Defenders now have to be careful as slack marking up the field has left the team under threat as A5 advances.
- // (A5) could look to play a 2 against 1 using (A7) as they confront (D5). Should this happen then (D4) needs to come out and offer support taking up position (X). The other defenders (D1), (D2), (D3) and (D10) make up the 4 attackers balancing accordingly.

- Should (A5) run at the defence then it will be (D4) or (D3) who will need to look to block any shot on goal should (A5) get close enough to attempt a shot.
- The other alternative may be for (A5) to advance 10 or 15 yards then look to cross the ball across the defence, trying to catch them off balance as in diagram 2

DIAGRAM 1



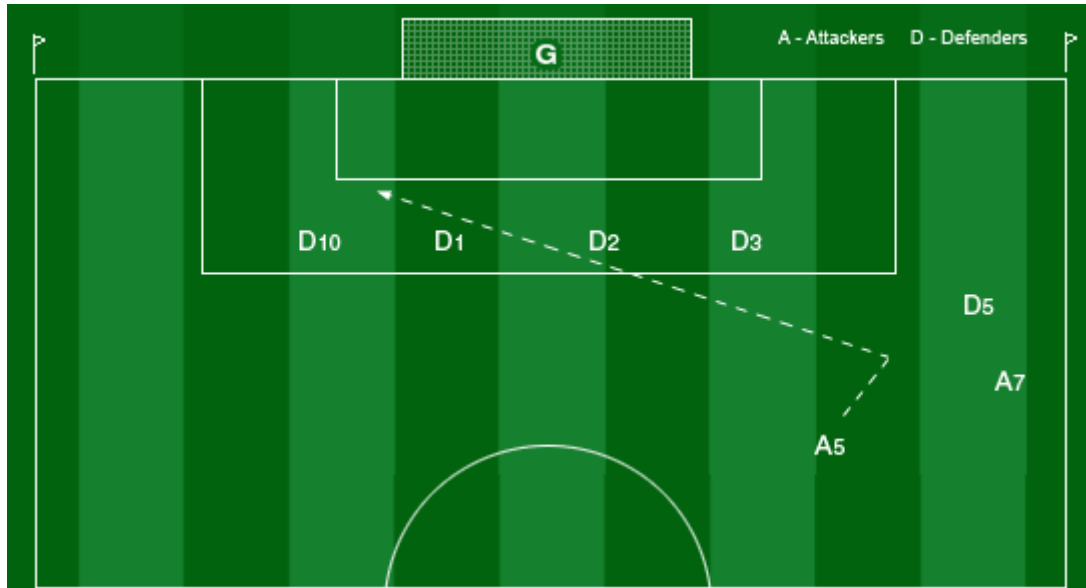
- In diagram (2) (A5) has advanced and the defenders although they have retreated a little have still more or less “held the line” – ensuring that the Goalkeeper has space and vision in front of him. Also they keep the attackers away from the 6-yard area.
- But should (A5) advance another few yards then automatically defenders will have to react accordingly.

i.e. (a) 1 man closing down a shot or a cross/pass to another attacker

- All attackers marked man to man until the last possible moment

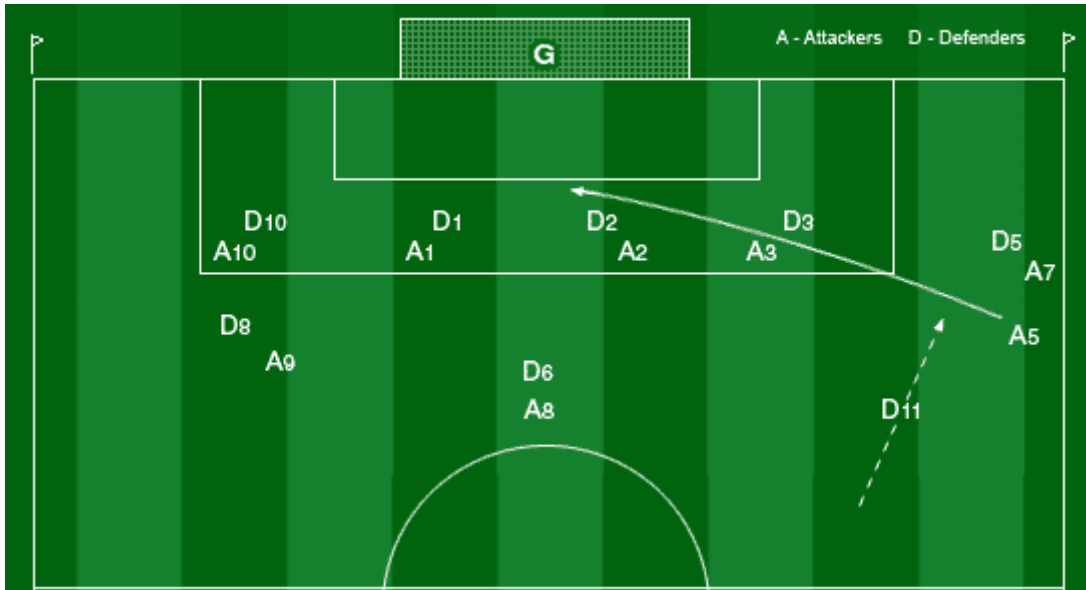
N.B. Remember defenders ‘holding the line’ does give attackers the opportunity to run offside.

DIAGRAM 2

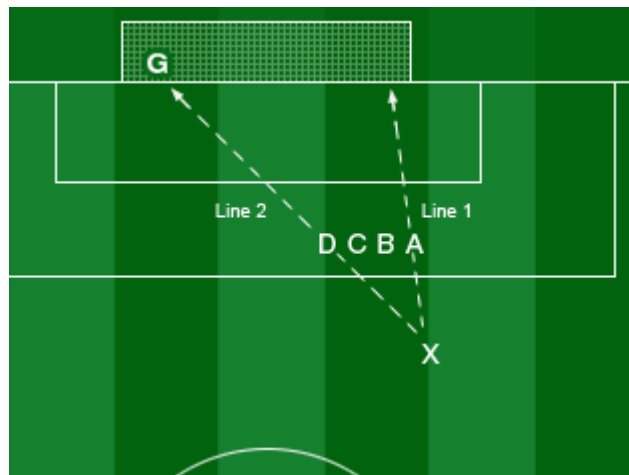


### *Free Kicks Long Defending III*

- // On this occasion the free kick is from the right flank with (A5) again the player taking the free kick.
- // Defenders will mark up as before, only first they need to ensure there is no “quick” free kick taken from A5 to A7, and so set up a 2 against 1 situation on the right wing against defender D5.
- // So (D11) runs back to stop this happening
- // This leaves (A5) with the other alternative of floating a cross into the box aimed towards (A1), (A2), (A3) and (A10).
- // IT IS IMPORTANT THE DEFENDERS ONCE AGAIN HOLD THE LINE, LEAVING SPACE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE GOALKEEPER (G). THEY MUST NOT GET TOO CLOSE TO THE GOAL.
- // NEVERTHELESS DEFENDERS MARK MAN TO MAN WITH ONE SPARE IN THE CENTRAL DANGER AREA – HIS POSITION DEPENDING ON THE ANGLE OF THE CROSS.
- // D6 and D8 mark outside the box, for second phase balls should the free kick be headed out, and so that (A8) and (A9) do not have a free shot at goal.
- // IF THE BALL IS CLEARED FROM THE FREE KICK THEN ALL DEFENDERS AT THE BACK SHOULD MOVE OUT (IN LINE) AS ONE, FORCING ATTACKERS OUT THE DANGER ZONE.



### Free Kicks Defending (4) – The Wall (a)

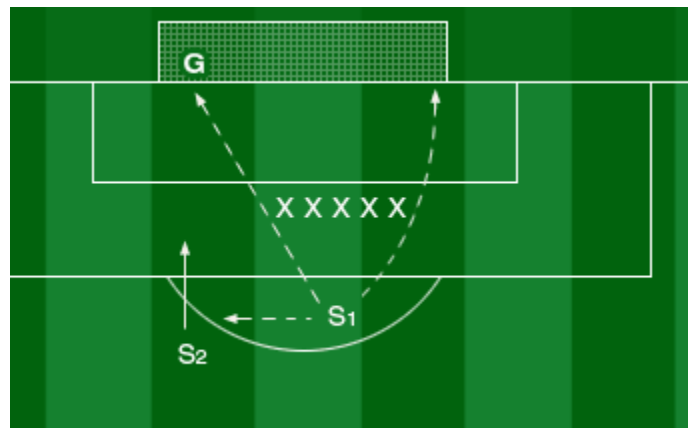


- / Most students/players of the game will have their ideas on how to line up a wall of players when the free kick awarded against a defending side is within shooting distance of the goal.
- / But basically the wall is there to prevent the kicker getting a clear sight of goal for a powerful shot. It also means the striker of the free kick has to lift the ball over the wall if he intends to score directly.
- / So in the diagram the wall made up of 4 defenders A, B, C and D faces a free kick from the position marked x – 5 yards outside the penalty area. (Marked Line 1)

- ✓ N.B. 'A' lines up just outside the line between the post and the ball – this is to try and prevent a swerved shot round the outside of the wall.
- ✓ B, C and D line up tight (shoulder to shoulder) standing alongside A.
- ✓ This allows goalkeeper G to stand right of the wall (as he views it) and yet not stranded on one post – but he needs to see the kicker at point x. (Marked Line 2)
- ✓ As the free kick is taken, the 4 players A, B, C and D must either stand still and prepare for a confrontation with the ball OR if they are prepared they could all jump at the same time to add some height to the wall. The danger is the ball could then go under the wall, if the free kick is driven.
- ✓ The main thing is to stand together facing the kicker, no breaks in the wall, each player doing his job to prevent a shot at goal.

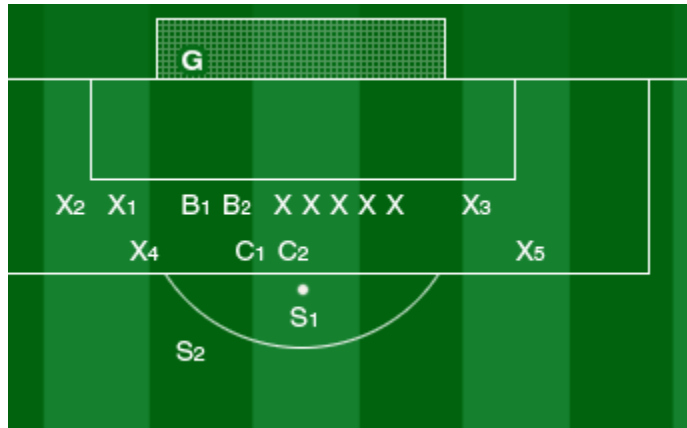
## *Free Kicks Defending (5) – The Wall (b)*

The position of the wall, and the numbers in it depend on the placing of the free kick and the distance of it from the goal.



- ✓ In the diagram the free-kick is in the 'D' so clearly there is a definite threat to goal – so the wall lines up protecting part of the goal.
- ✓ The goalkeeper G stands where he can see the ball, yet always being alert for a ball from the free kick chipped over the wall (marked A).
- ✓ Because of the dangerous position of the free kick, a 5 man wall is required with goalkeeper G still wishing to get a clear sight of the ball as he has to consider that the player on the ball (S1) may elect to nudge the ball to his left where (S2) is running in with a greater sight of the goal.





Of course attackers may give G an extra problem if they decide to put two of their own team on the end of the wall – to obstruct G’s view; -marked B1, B2.  
 OR the two attackers could move even further forward to position C1, C2 ensuring that G cannot see the ball at the point of contact – nevertheless the wall stands firm, so it is essential that the rest of the defence X1, X2, X3 and X5 stay alert, with X4 ready to charge down any shot from S2.