



IRISH FA
SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

5 - 6 YEARS

(WEEK 1 - WEEK 6)

THE COACHING STANDARD



Start and end the practice with fun

Ensure you have a ball to each player when possible or relevant

Simple organisation and lay out of the session

Simple communication/rules of the practice

No “bus queue” of players waiting to play/shoot etc

Develop individuals, not teams

Inspire players with the session, your personality, energy and enthusiasm

Don't over coach, give the players “free” playing time in the session

Give the players questions to answer and choices in technique and decision making

Encourage attacking football

Encourage players to work hard

Smile and have fun!

WARM UP ACTIVITY - BUBBLE (SPATIAL AWARENESS)



Aims

To develop head up, eyes forward and look for space

To develop combination of movements by using good balance, co-ordination, range of movement, strength and speed

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

10 - 20 players can be accommodated in this drill.

LAYOUT

Players are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other players.

RULES

Players will move around inside the area trying to find personal space (an area in which no one else is present).

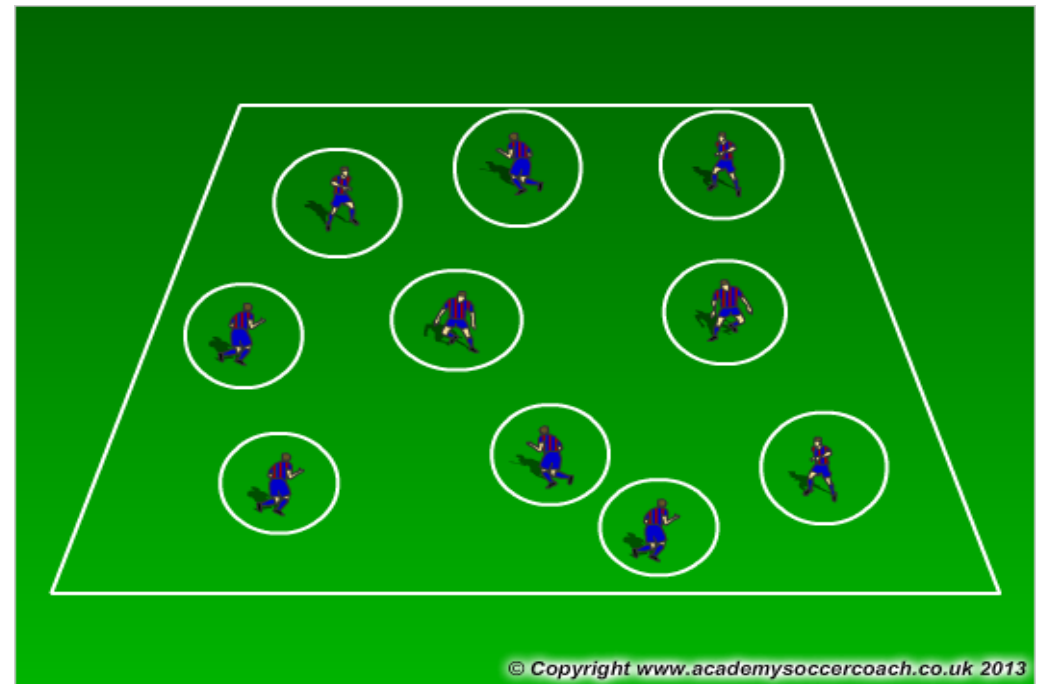
Players should protect the imaginary bubble that surrounds and protects them. If other players get to close the bubble may burst. Players should therefore move around the area with their head up and eye forward and change direction to find the best possible space at all times.

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed by limiting the space to make it more difficult for players to protect their bubble. Cones or poles can also be added to create more obstacles in the playing area which the players must avoid to prevent their bubble from bursting. Once all players have achieved a degree of success they can be given a ball to dribble through the area whilst maintaining space between the other players.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Focus on how participants change direction, encourage them to push off the outside foot and change direction in one movement. Watch their body balance and general movement patterns, ability to dodge/change direction - ensure the base is not too wide to assist with the push off. Pay attention also to the participants head movement and ability to assess what is going on around them.



BALL WORK - MASTERY (TOE TAPS)



Aims

To develop confidence, touch and coordination on the ball with both feet
To develop an instinctive ability to move the ball in relation to stimulus

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards depending on size of numbers.

NUMBERS

10 - 20 players can be accommodated in this drill.

LAYOUT

Coloured cones are spread out evenly inside the grid and the players are asked to stand at a cone. There should be more cones than players. The variety of coloured cones is determined by the coach but 2-3 different colours should be sufficient.

RULES

Players are encouraged to dribble through the grid moving from free cone to free cone. Players are not allowed to queue waiting for a cone but instead should keep on the move with their head up and move to nearest free cone.

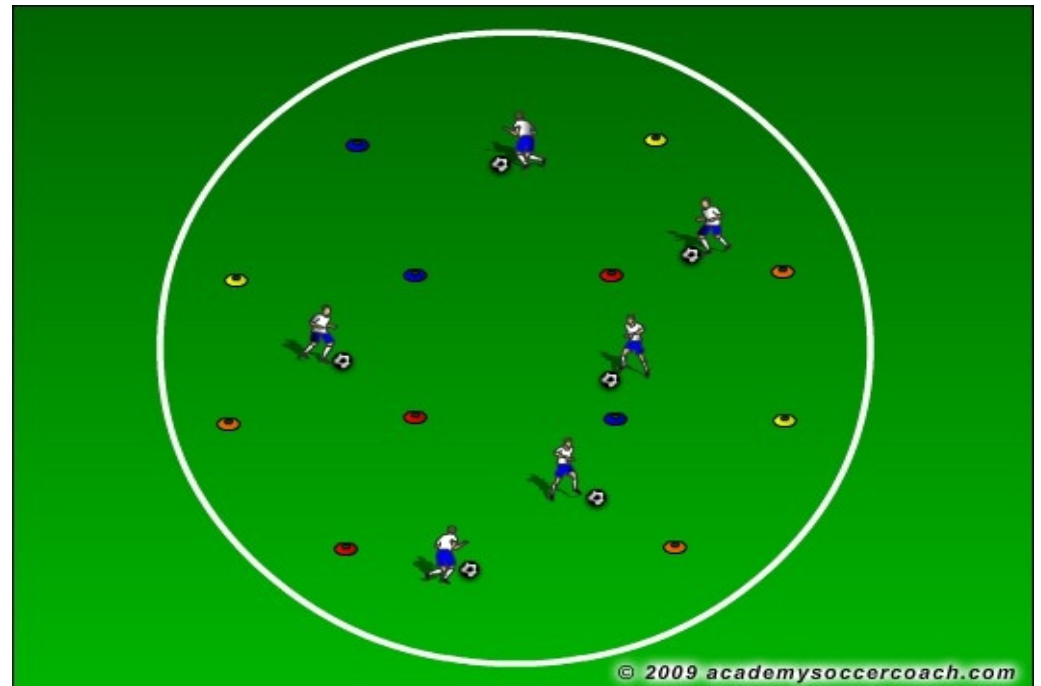
DEVELOPMENT

The drill can be progressed so that players are moving to cones in a sequence. For example blue - red - yellow - blue. Coaches can also look for players to perform a different task from cone to cone. For example toe taps from the blue cone, right foot only from red cone and left foot only from yellow cone.

COACHING POINTS

Toe Taps

Tap the ball with the inside of your right foot so that the ball rolls slightly across your body. Tap the ball with the inside of your left foot so that the ball rolls back to the starting position and repeat the action. Encourage players to keep their weight on the balls of their feet and to move with knees slightly bent.



SKILL PRACTICE - DRIBBLING & RUNNING WITH THE BALL



Aims

To develop correct dribbling and running with the ball technique and execute the correct strength of touch according to the space
To develop coordination of dynamic body movements

AREA

20/30 yards x 20/30 yards.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate 10 to 20 players. If there are greater numbers then the area should either be increased in size or a second grid should be created.

LAYOUT

Players are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other players. All players will have a ball.

RULES

The players will dribble around the area and must keep close control of their ball. If they use their hands to control the ball or if the ball leaves the area then they lose a life. After 60 seconds the coach will stop the game and check with the group what lives they have left. The coach can choose to award lives for good control of the ball.

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed by increasing the level of difficulty. Difficulty can be increased by adding cones to the playing area and players will lose a life if they touch a cone. The coach can also introduce a foam ball that they can use to try to make contact with players or they can encourage players to go after each others ball. If they lose their ball or are hit by a ball they lose a life.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Players will have to execute the correct strength of touch on the ball according to the availability of space i.e. dribbling or running with the ball. Player should be encouraged to use both feet and keep their arms out for balance.



SKILL PRACTICE - DRIBBLING & RUNNING WITH THE BALL



Aims

To develop correct dribbling and running with the ball technique and execute the correct strength of touch according to the space
To develop coordination of dynamic body movements

AREA

20/30 yards x 20/30 yards.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate 10 to 20 players. If there are greater numbers then the area should either be increased in size or a second grid should be created.

LAYOUT

Players are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other players. All players will have a ball.

RULES

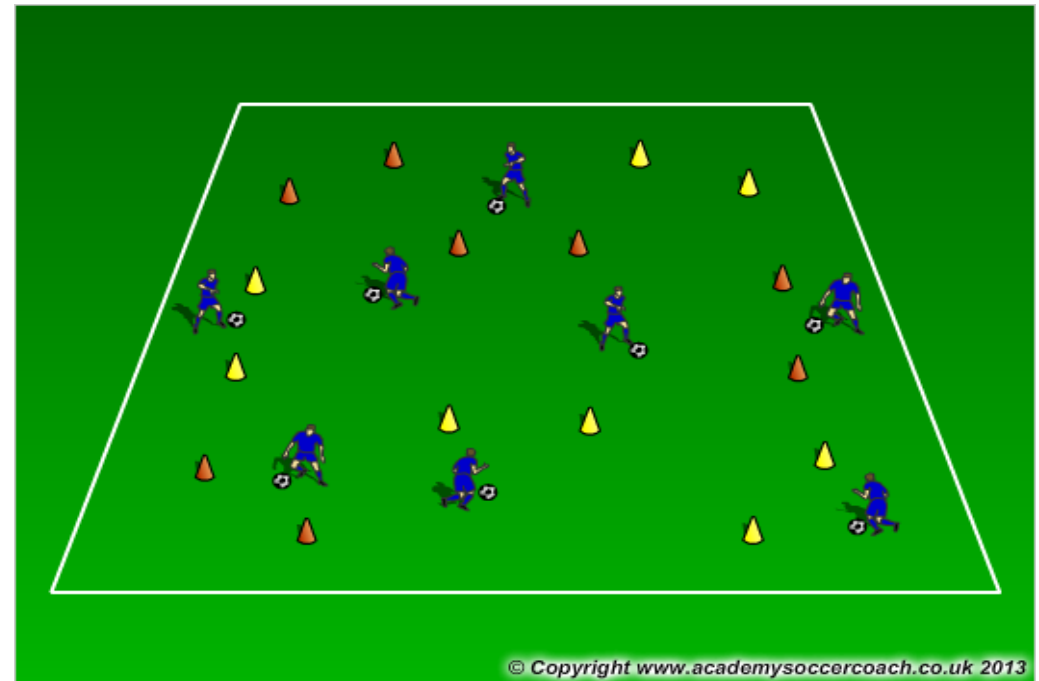
Players will dribble around the area and will be instructed which gates are open and which ones are closed. For example yellow (open) and red (closed). The players will keep count of how many gates they have dribbled through. The players are encouraged to change direction when they move towards a closed gate.

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed with the coach changing the open and closed gates throughout the activity. Players can also be encouraged to increase their speed of movement to test their ability to find space and avoid coming into contact with other players.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Players will have to execute the correct strength of touch on the ball according to the availability of space i.e. dribbling or running with the ball. Player should be encouraged to use both feet and keep their arms out for balance.



WARM UP ACTIVITY - CAR HORN (SPATIAL AWARENESS)



Aims

To develop head up, eyes forward and look for space

To develop combination of movements by using good balance, co-ordination, range of movement, strength and speed

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30 yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 10 to 20.

LAYOUT

Players are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other players.

RULES

Players will move around inside the area trying to find personal space (an area in which no one else is present).

Players pretend they are driving cars and use a cone as their steering wheel. If other drivers get too close the players will make the sound of a horn. If the coach does not hear the sound of the horn then all players must be driving well. Players should therefore move around the area with their head up and eye forward and change direction to find the best possible space at all times.

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed by limiting the space to make it more difficult for players to avoid other cars. Cones or poles can also be added to create more obstacles in the playing area which the players must avoid. Players can also be encouraged to increase their speed of movement to test their ability to find space and avoid coming into contact with other drivers. Once all players have achieved a degree of success they can be given a ball to dribble through the area whilst maintaining space between the other players.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Focus on how participants change direction, encourage them to push off the outside foot and change direction in one movement. Watch their body balance and general movement patterns, ability to dodge/change direction - ensure the base is not too wide to assist with the push off. Pay attention also to the participants head movement and ability to assess what is going on around them.



BALL WORK - MASTERY (SOLE ROLL)



Aims

To develop confidence, touch and coordination on the ball with both feet
To develop an instinctive ability to move the ball in relation to stimulus

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards depending on size of numbers.

NUMBERS

10 - 20 players can be accommodated in this drill.

LAYOUT

Coloured cones are spread out evenly inside the grid and the players are asked to stand at a cone. There should be more cones than players. The variety of coloured cones is determined by the coach but 2-3 different colours should be sufficient.

RULES

Players are encouraged to dribble through the grid moving from free cone to free cone. Players are not allowed to queue waiting for a cone but instead should keep on the move with their head up and move to nearest free cone.

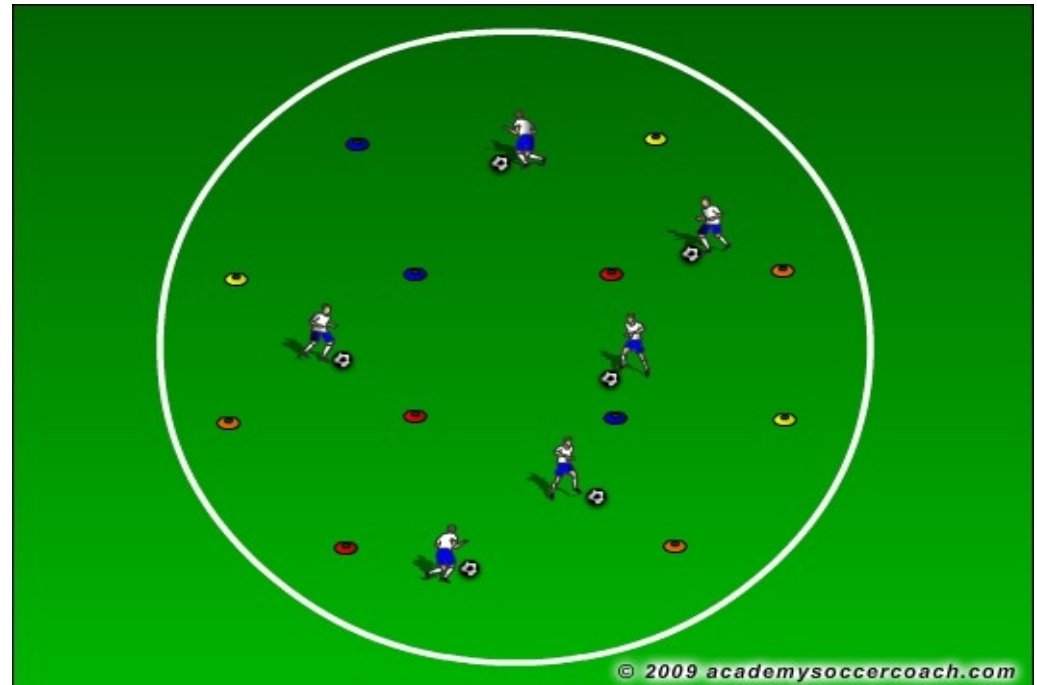
DEVELOPMENT

The drill can be progressed so that players are moving to cones in a sequence. For example blue - red - yellow - blue. Coaches can also look for players to perform a different task from cone to cone. For example right foot from the blue cone, left foot from red cone and both from yellow cone.

COACHING POINTS

Sole Roll

Roll your right foot over the ball so it moves across your body towards your left foot. Repeat the action but start with the left foot so that the left foot will perform the roll element of the skill. Encourage players to keep their weight on the balls of their feet and to move with knees slightly bent.



SKILL PRACTICE - DRIBBLING & RUNNING WITH THE BALL



Aims

To develop correct dribbling and running with the ball technique and execute the correct strength of touch according to the space
To develop coordination of dynamic body movements

AREA

20/30 yards x 20/30 yards.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate 10 to 20 players. If there are greater numbers then the area should either be increased in size or a second grid should be created.

LAYOUT

Players are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other players. All players will have a ball.

RULES

The players will dribble around the area and respond to the coaches number calls. The following numbers and actions can be used in this game:

1. On the Run (dribble)
2. Sole of the Shoe (move the ball with the sole)
3. Take a Knee (touch ball with knee)
4. On the Floor (touch ball with head on floor)
5. Stay Alive (tackles)
6. Show your Tricks (players show their skills)
7. Up to Heaven (head the ball)
8. Find a Mate (pair up)

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed by limiting the space to make it more difficult for players to avoid other players. Cones or poles can also be added to create more obstacles in the playing area which the players must avoid. Players can also be encouraged to increase their speed of movement to test their ability to find space and avoid coming into contact with other players.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Players will have to execute the correct strength of touch on the ball according to the availability of space i.e. dribbling or running with the ball. Player should be encouraged to use both feet and keep their arms out for balance.



SKILL PRACTICE - DRIBBLING & RUNNING WITH THE BALL



Aims

To develop correct dribbling and running with the ball technique and execute the correct strength of touch according to the space
To develop coordination of dynamic body movements

AREA

20/30 yards x 20/30 yards.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate 12 to 20 players.

LAYOUT

Players are organised into three or four even groups and spread around the outside of the playing area as shown in the diagram. A selection of footballs are placed in the middle of the playing area (preferable one ball per player).

RULES

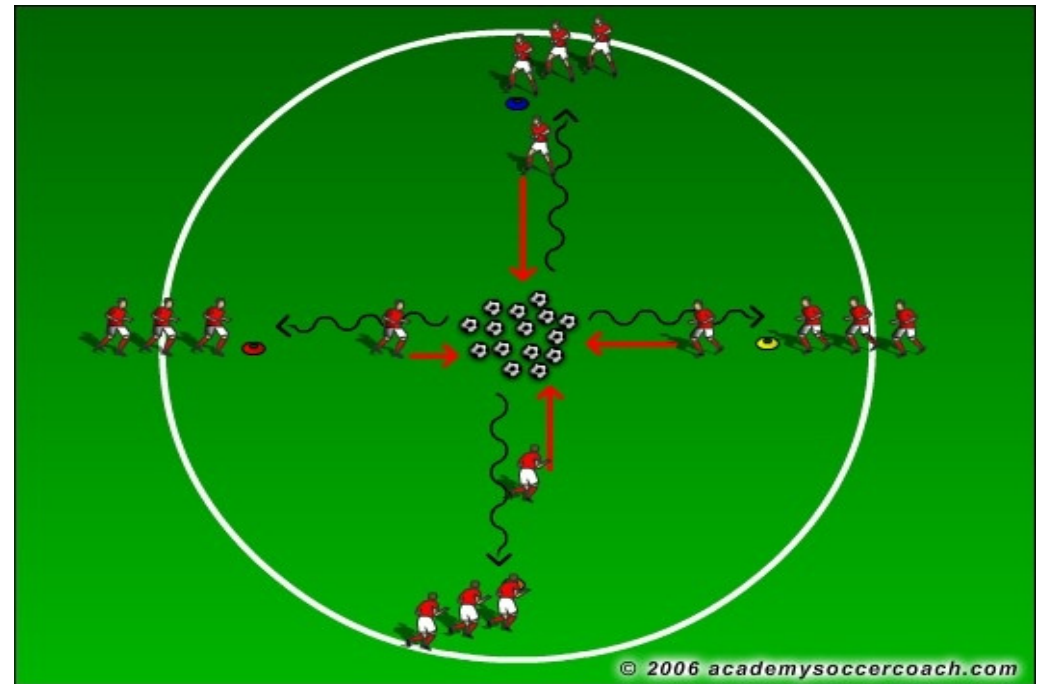
Players from each group will move one at a time into the middle of the playing area, take a ball and dribble back to their group. The next player in the group can only leave once their teammate has returned to group.

DEVELOPMENT

The coach can encourage different ball mastery, turn and feint elements to the practice. To add competition, once all the balls are out of the middle, player can move to other groups and steal a ball and dribble it back to their group. They therefore “steal from the rich to give to the poor”.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Players will have to execute the correct strength of touch on the ball according to the availability of space i.e. dribbling or running with the ball. Player should be encouraged to use both feet and keep their arms out for balance.



WARM UP ACTIVITY - SHRINKING SPACE (SPATIAL AWARENESS)



Aims

To develop head up, eyes forward and look for space

To develop combination of movements by using good balance, co-ordination, range of movement, strength and speed

AREA

15 yards wide x 15 yards long.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 8 to 12.

LAYOUT

Players are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other players.

RULES

Players will move around inside the area trying to find personal space (an area in which no one else is present).

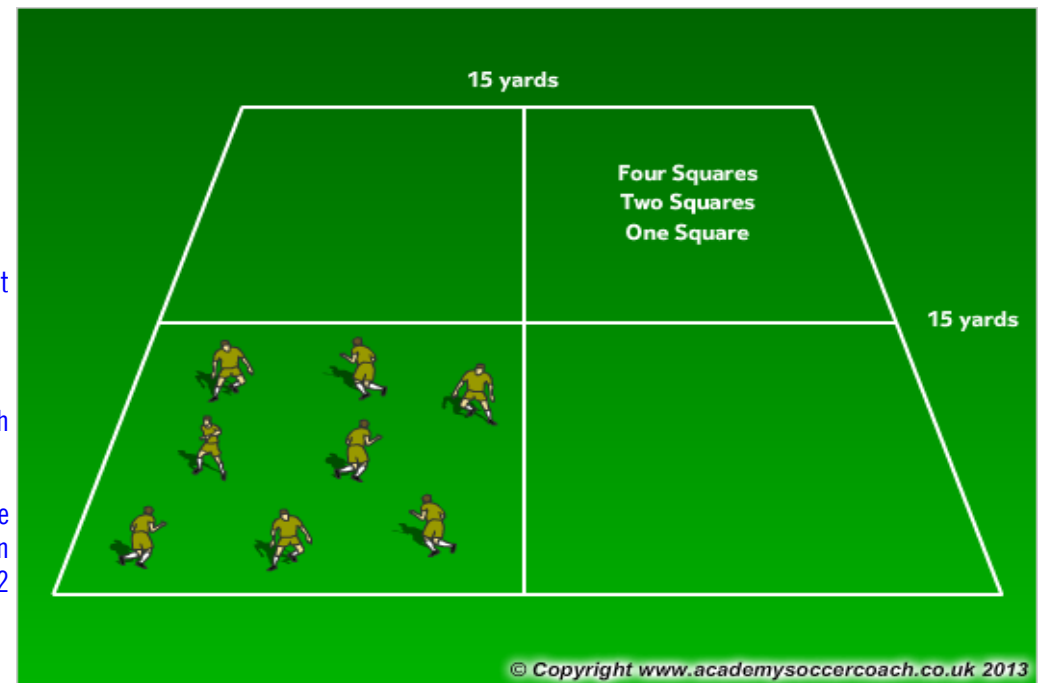
When the coach believes the players are successfully moving and maintaining space they then can cut the playing area in half (4 squares to 2 squares). If the players can maintain space in this area then the coach can cut the playing area in half again (2 squares to 1 square).

DEVELOPMENT

The game is obviously progressed by limiting the space in which that players can move (4 squares to 1 square). Players can also be encouraged to increase their speed of movement to test their ability to find space and avoid coming into contact with other players. The coach can also introduce different movement techniques to challenge the players. Once all players have achieved a degree of success they can be given a ball to dribble through the area whilst maintaining space between the other players.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Focus on how participants change direction, encourage them to push off the outside foot and change direction in one movement. Watch their body balance and general movement patterns, ability to dodge/change direction - ensure the base is not too wide to assist with the push off. Pay attention also to the participants head movement and ability to assess what is going on around them.



BALL WORK - MASTERY (INSIDE, OUTSIDE)



Aims

To develop confidence, touch and coordination on the ball with both feet
To develop an instinctive ability to move the ball in relation to stimulus

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards depending on size of numbers.

NUMBERS

10 - 20 players can be accommodated in this drill.

LAYOUT

Coloured cones are spread out evenly inside the grid and the players are asked to stand at a cone. There should be more cones than players. The variety of coloured cones is determined by the coach but 2-3 different colours should be sufficient.

RULES

Players are encouraged to dribble through the grid moving from free cone to free cone. Players are not allowed to queue waiting for a cone but instead should keep on the move with their head up and move to nearest free cone.

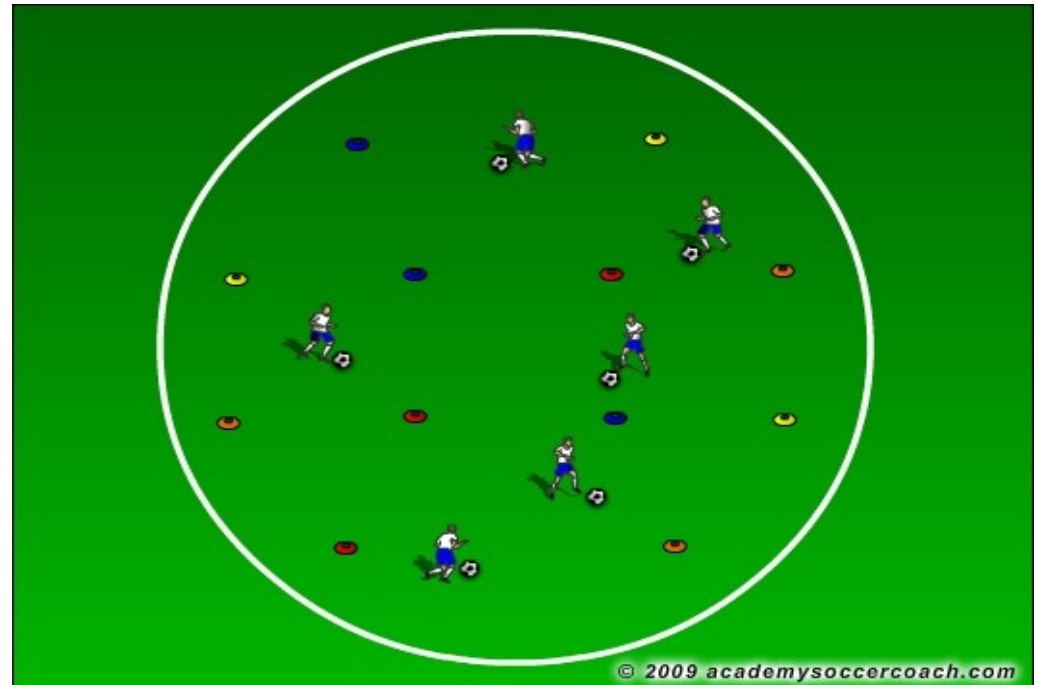
DEVELOPMENT

The drill can be progressed so that players are moving to cones in a sequence. For example blue - red - yellow - blue. Coaches can also look for players to perform a different task from cone to cone. For example right foot from the blue cone, left foot from red cone and both from yellow cone.

COACHING POINTS

Inside, Outside

Tap the ball with the inside of your right foot so that the ball rolls across your body. Use the outside of your left foot to move the ball away from your body. Shift your feet sideways so the ball is between them. Tap the ball with the inside of your left foot so that the ball rolls back across your body. Use the outside of your right foot to move the ball away from your body. Shift your feet sideways so the ball is between them and repeat.



SKILL PRACTICE - DRIBBLING & RUNNING WITH THE BALL



Aims

To develop correct dribbling and running with the ball technique and execute the correct strength of touch according to the space
To develop correct decision making from assessing situations and capitalising on opportunities

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30 yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 10 to 20.

LAYOUT

The players are organised into pairs with one ball per pair. The pairs are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other pairs.

RULES

One player in the pair will dribble the ball around the playing area with the other player in the pair following behind them.

When the coach calls “change” the player with the ball will pass the ball to their follower and the roles are reversed.

DEVELOPMENT

To add difficulty the following player can be tasked with having to tap the leader on the back. The leader will therefore look to lose their follower so to limit the number of back taps. Difficulty can also be increased by giving the following player a ball.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space and free pairs of legs. Focus on how participants change direction, encourage them to push off the outside foot and change direction in one movement. Watch their body balance and general movement patterns, ability to dodge/change direction - ensure the base is not too wide to assist with the push off. Pay attention also to the participants head movement and ability to assess what is going on around them.



SKILL PRACTICE - DRIBBLING & RUNNING WITH THE BALL



Aims

To develop correct dribbling and running with the ball technique and execute the correct strength of touch according to the space
To develop correct decision making from assessing situations and capitalising on opportunities

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30 yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 10 to 20.

LAYOUT

The players are split into two teams. One team will find space in the area and stand still with their legs apart. The other players will have a ball each.

RULES

In this example the red team will dribble around the area and when they come to a blue player they must pass the ball through their legs. Players will pass their ball through as many pairs of legs as possible in the time allowed. Once this time has been completed the teams will swap roles.

Players will be encouraged to not pass through the same pair on legs twice but instead move around the area and attempt to pass through all the stationary players. Player should also be encouraged to not stand and wait/queue for a pair of legs but instead should lift their head to find a free pair of legs.

DEVELOPMENT

Players can also be encouraged to increase their speed of movement to test their ability to find space and avoid coming into contact with other players.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space and free pairs of legs. Focus on how participants change direction, encourage them to push off the outside foot and change direction in one movement. Watch their body balance and general movement patterns, ability to dodge/change direction - ensure the base is not too wide to assist with the push off. Pay attention also to the participants head movement and ability to assess what is going on around them.



WARM UP ACTIVITY - TRAFFIC LIGHTS (SPATIAL AWARENESS)



Aims

To develop head up, eyes forward and look for space

To develop combination of movements by using good balance, co-ordination, range of movement, strength and speed

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30 yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 10 to 20.

LAYOUT

Players are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other players.

RULES

Players will move around inside the area trying to find personal space (an area in which no one else is present).

When the coach holds up a red cone the players must stop but continue to look for a new space. When the coach holds up a green cone the players will move around the area and look for new spaces. When the coach holds up a yellow cone the players will change direction.

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed by encouraging players to increase their speed of movement to test their ability to find space and avoid coming into contact with other players. The coach can also introduce different movement techniques to challenge the players. Once all players have achieved a degree of success they can be given a ball to dribble through the area whilst maintaining space between the other players.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Focus on how participants change direction, encourage them to push off the outside foot and change direction in one movement. Watch their body balance and general movement patterns, ability to dodge/change direction - ensure the base is not too wide to assist with the push off. Pay attention also to the participants head movement and ability to assess what is going on around them.



BALL WORK - TURNS (INSIDE HOOK)



Aims

To develop the ability to change direction (180°) whilst protecting the ball
To develop an instinctive ability to move the ball in relation to stimulus

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 8 to 20.

LAYOUT

Players are organised in pairs and are positioned inside a 5 yard x 5 yard area.

RULES

Players will take it in turns to dribble to the end of their grid, perform the turn and dribble back to the start line.

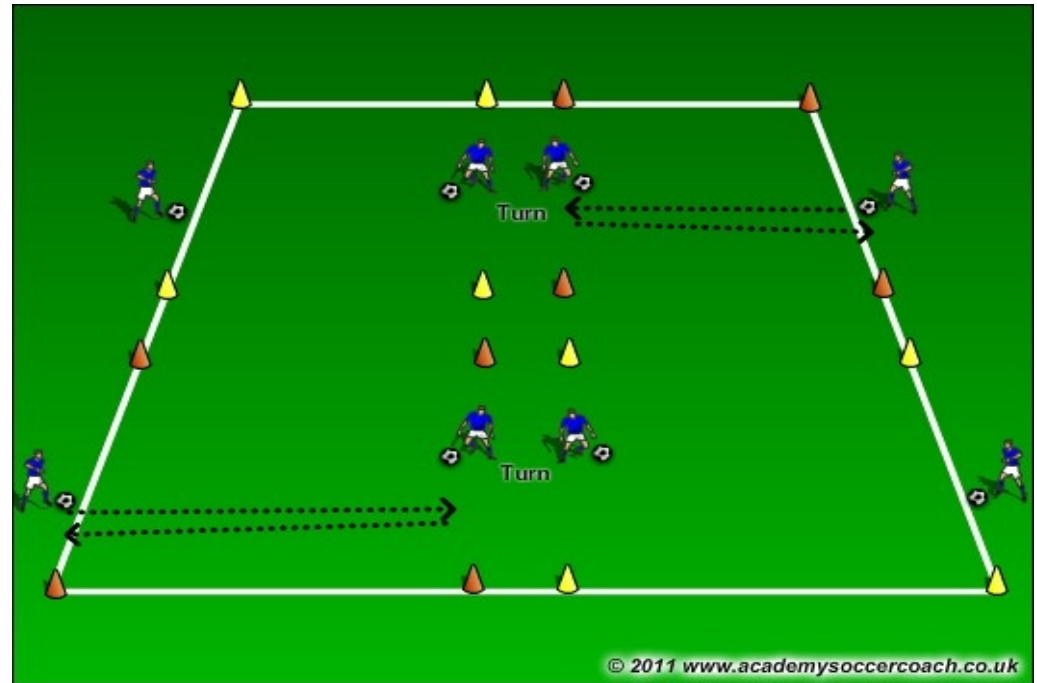
DEVELOPMENT

The drill can be progressed so that one of the pair acts as a defender. The players will start at opposite sides of the grid and will meet in the middle. The attacking player will turn, protect the ball and return to their line. The roles are reverse after a determined number of attempts.

COACHING POINTS

Inside Hook

Hook your foot around the back of the ball coming around the outside of the ball. Use your instep to stop and turn the ball 180 degrees. Push the ball in front of you using the same foot and accelerate away from your opponent. This is a great turn to master so once you have perfected it learn how to perform it with your other foot.



SKILL PRACTICE - PASSING & RECEIVING



Aims

To coach passing accuracy over 5/10 yards

To develop positive movement into space after playing a pass

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 8 to 20.

LAYOUT

Players are organised in pairs and are positioned in their pairs either side of the gate. Each pair has one ball.

RULES

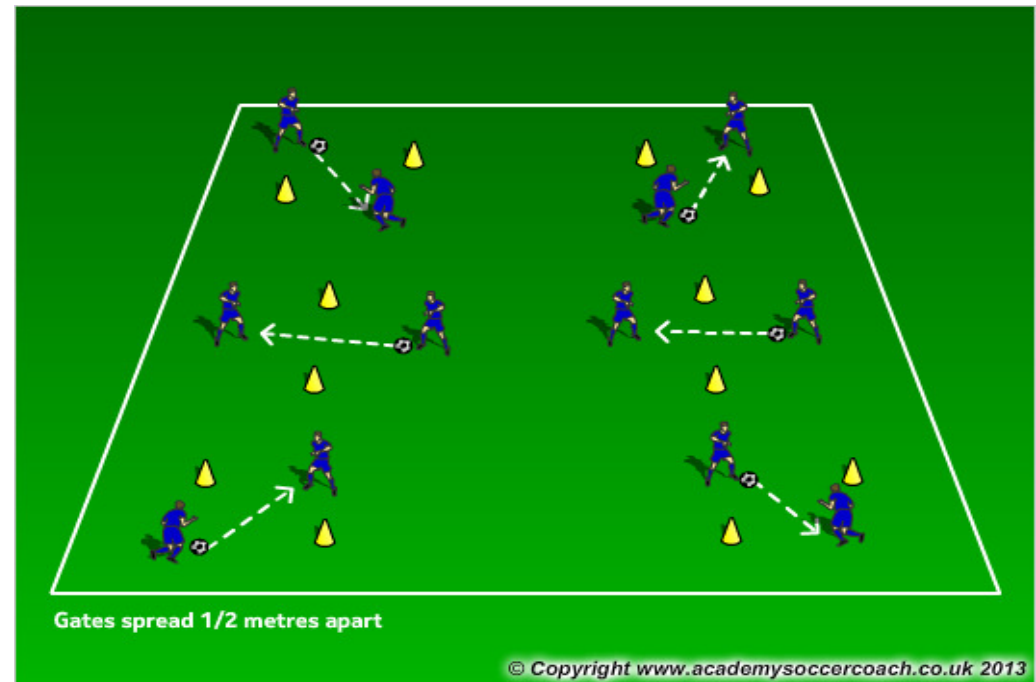
Players will work in their pairs to pass the ball in a straight line through the gate to each other. Once they have complete a pass through the gate they must move as a pair to another gate and complete another success pass. The pairs will look to complete successful passes through as many different gates within a coach determined time limit.

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed by limiting the size of the gates to encourage a higher degree of passing accuracy. The coach can also encourage players to use their least preferred foot to complete passes. The time can also be reduced to put more pressure on the pass and encourage greater speed between gates.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage short passing through the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot, keeping a strong ankle. The standing foot is beside the ball of just behind, head should be steady and arms out for balance. Encourage a high tempo of passing throughout the activity.



SKILL PRACTICE - PASSING & RECEIVING



Aims

To coach passing accuracy over 5/10 yards

To develop positive movement into space after playing a pass

AREA

10/15 yards x 10/15 yards.

NUMBERS

This drill accommodates two players per area.

LAYOUT

Players are organised in pairs with a ball between them. The players play on opposite sides of the grid to each other. Four gates (2 metres in width) are positioned as shown in the diagram.

RULES

The players will receive the ball at the red gates, dribble towards their yellow gates and pass through these gates to the red gates on the opposite side of the playing area. The player will then move back to their red gates to receive the pass from the other player who will complete the same process.

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed so the players receive the ball at the yellow gates and pass through the red gates. This will ensure that players are encouraged to play passes with both feet or pass with the inside and outside of the foot. The drill can also be progressed by increasing the distance between passes.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage short passing through the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot, keeping a strong ankle. The standing foot is beside the ball of just behind, head should be steady and arms out for balance. Encourage a high tempo of passing throughout the activity.



WARM UP ACTIVITY - CHAIN TIG (SPATIAL AWARENESS)



Aims

To develop head up, eyes forward and look for space

To develop combination of movements by using good balance, co-ordination, range of movement, strength and speed

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30 yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 10 to 20.

LAYOUT

Players are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other players. One or two players are selected as catchers.

RULES

Players will move around inside the area trying to avoid the catchers. If caught the player will join the chain. The chain must work together to catch all the players in the playing area. If a number of catchers are selected they can play in opposition to see how many players they can catch.

DEVELOPMENT

The coach can set the condition that the chain must split when it becomes bigger than four players. The coach can also introduce different movement techniques to challenge the players.

COACHING POINTS

This is a great fun warm up which encourages the evading players to move in different ways (backwards, side to side etc) and vary their speed to ensure they are not caught by the chain. Encourage all players to move around the area with their head up and their eyes forward. Also encourage the players to move their head to see what is around them and therefore look for the best possible space. Focus on how participants change direction, encourage them to push off the outside foot and change direction in one movement. Watch their body balance and general movement patterns, ability to dodge/change direction - ensure the base is not too wide to assist with the push off. Play attention also to the participants head movement and ability to assess what is going on around them.



BALL WORK - TURNS (OUTSIDE HOOK)



Aims

To develop the ability to change direction (180°) whilst protecting the ball
To develop an instinctive ability to move the ball in relation to stimulus

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 8 to 20.

LAYOUT

Players are organised in pairs and are positioned inside a 5 yard x 5 yard area.

RULES

Players will take it in turns to dribble to the end of their grid, perform the turn and dribble back to the start line.

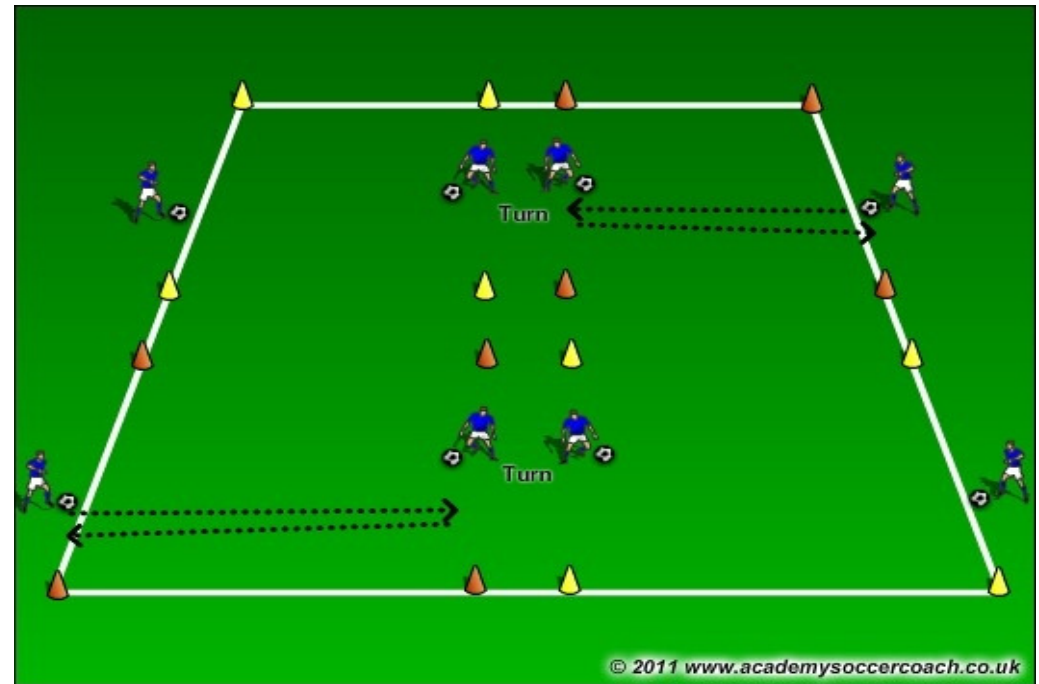
DEVELOPMENT

The drill can be progressed so that one of the pair acts as a defender. The players will start at opposite sides of the grid and will meet in the middle. The attacking player will turn, protect the ball and return to their line. The roles are reverse after a determined number of attempts.

COACHING POINTS

Inside Hook

Hook your foot around the back of the ball coming around the outside of the ball. Use your instep to stop and turn the ball 180 degrees. Push the ball in front of you using the same foot and accelerate away from your opponent. This is a great turn to master so once you have perfected it learn how to perform it with your other foot.



SKILL PRACTICE - PASSING & RECEIVING



Aims

To coach passing accuracy over 5/10 yards

To develop positive movement into space after playing a pass to maintain passing options (triangles)

AREA

10/15 yards x 10/15 yards.

NUMBERS

3 players can work in each spare. More players can be accommodated by duplicating the practice.

LAYOUT

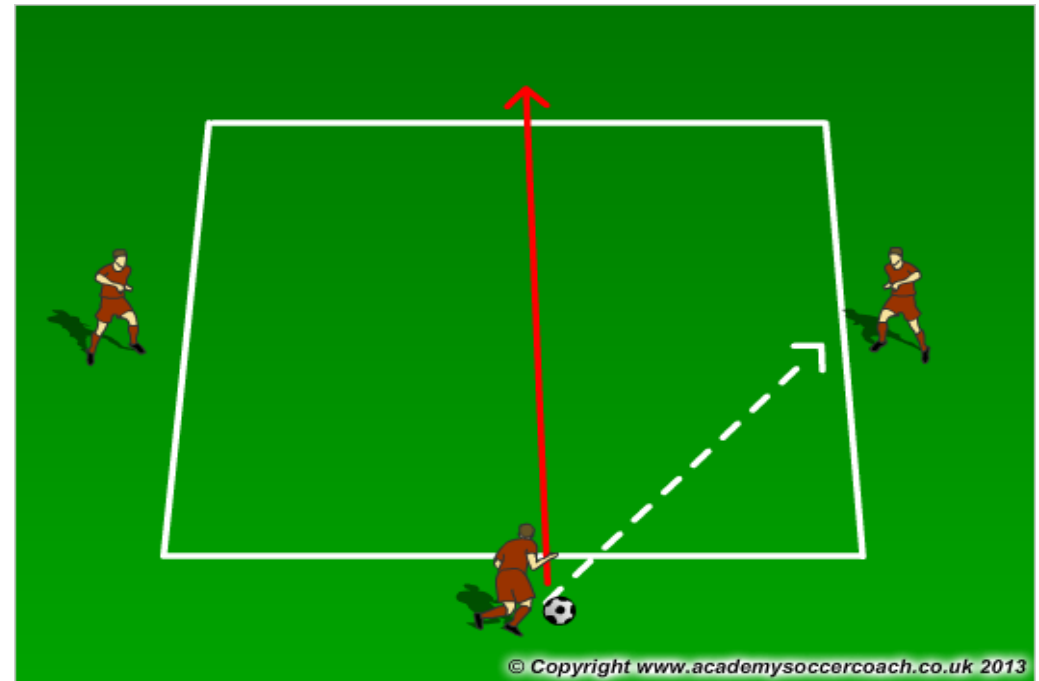
Players are positioned on the outside of the square with each player in the middle of one side of the square. One side of the square should remain free.

RULES

The player with the ball can pass to either of the other two players. Once they have played their pass they must move to the free side of the square and be available to receive a pass from the player on the ball.

DEVELOPMENT

The practice can be developed so that the player receiving the ball cannot pass back to the player that has just passed. This will encourage all three players to be involved in each sequence.



The practice can be further developed with two touch and one touch passing to develop quick decision making and a high tempo of passing.

Finally, the practice can be adapted to introduce a defender to create a 3v1 situation. This will increase the pressure on each pass and will ensure the supporting players offer good angles of support to the player on the ball. If the defender wins the ball they will swap positions with the player that lost possession.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage short passing through the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot, keeping a strong ankle. The standing foot is beside the ball of just behind, head should be steady and arms out for balance. Look at the players ability to receive the pass on the back foot and on the half turn to open their body correctly to limit the amount of touches on the ball.

SKILL PRACTICE - PASSING & RECEIVING



Aims

To coach passing accuracy over 5/10 yards

To develop an understanding of angles of support in order to retain possession

AREA

15 metres x 15 metres.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 4 to 6 players in each 15 metre x 15 metre squares.

LAYOUT

The players are split into an even number across the two grids and numbered. There should be a distance of at least 5 to 10 metres between each grid.

RULES

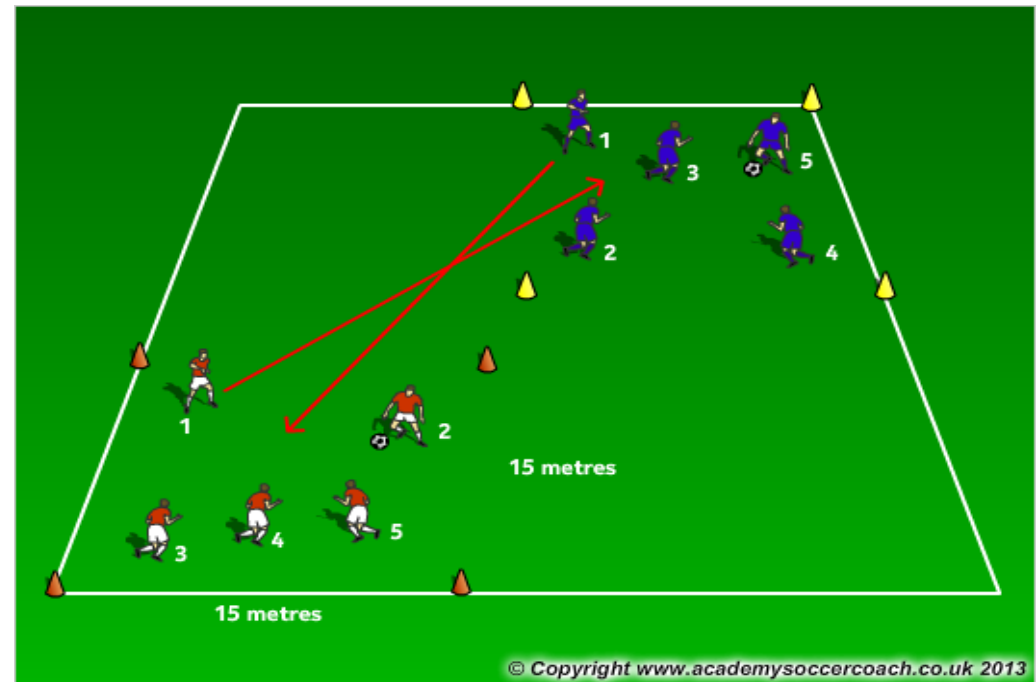
Players are numbered one to five and are encouraged to pass and move inside their grid. When the coach calls a number e.g. "1" this player should run into the opposite grid and act as a defender in a 4v1 situation. The defender that wins the ball first will gain a point for their team.

DEVELOPMENT

The activity can be progressed by encouraging the players to pass in number sequence i.e. 1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4 etc. The activity can also be progressed by limiting the size of the area to encourage a higher degree of passing accuracy. The number of defenders can also be increased to make a 3v2 situation. This should only be introduced if there is a high pass completion rate.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage short passing through the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot, keeping a strong ankle. The standing foot is beside the ball or just behind, head should be steady and arms out for balance. Encourage a high tempo of passing throughout the activity.



WARM UP ACTIVITY - FLUSH THE TOILET (SPATIAL AWARENESS)



Aims

To develop head up, eyes forward and look for space

To develop combination of movements by using good balance, co-ordination, range of movement, strength and speed

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

10 - 20 players can be accommodated in this drill.

LAYOUT

Two to four players are nominated to be catchers.

RULES

The catchers must tag as many of the other players as possible. If a player is tagged they must stand still with their arm out. If players run outside the grid they should stand still with their arm out inside the grid.

The other players can free them by pushing down on their arm to 'flush the toilet'. The catching players should be changed every few minutes.

DEVELOPMENT

The grid can also be split to create two halves with a number of catchers in each half.

COACHING POINTS

Focus on how participants change direction, encourage them to push off the outside foot and change direction in one movement. Watch their body balance and general movement patterns, ability to dodge/change direction - ensure the base is not too wide to assist with the push off. Pay attention also to the participants head movement and ability to assess what is going on around them.



BALL WORK - TURNS (DRAG BACK)



Aims

To develop the ability to change direction (180°) whilst protecting the ball
To develop an instinctive ability to move the ball in relation to stimulus

AREA

30 yards x 30 yards or large circle.

NUMBERS

The diagram shows 8 players working in a safe area. To include more players a second area can be created or the current area increased.

LAYOUT

Players are spaced out 5 yards apart (or a safe distance) with a centre cone placed 10/15 yards away.

RULES

The players are placed equal distances apart around the circle. On the coaches command, all the players run with the ball towards the centre before changing direction and doubling back towards the next cone in a clockwise direction.

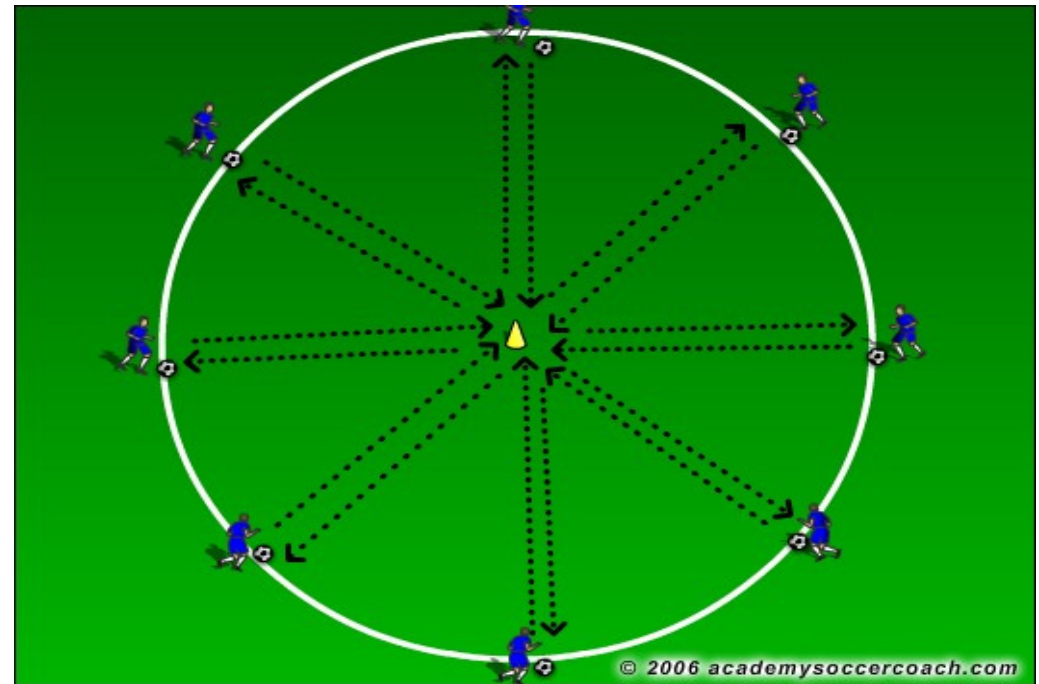
DEVELOPMENT

To increase the difficulty the coach can ensure the players move in both directions, use both feet, increase the tempo and practice a number of different turns.

COACHING POINTS

Drag Back

Put your foot on the top of the ball to stop it. Drag the ball backwards with the same foot whilst turning your body 180 degrees. Push the ball in front of you and accelerate away from your opponent. Add an additional element to this turn after Step 2. Do not turn 180 degrees, instead, flick the ball with the inside of your foot behind your standing leg. This will move then ball 90 degrees. Encourage the players to use their upper body to create a physical barrier between them and the rest of the players that will meet them in the centre of the grid.



SKILL PRACTICE - PASSING & RECEIVING



Aims

To coach passing accuracy over 5/10 yards

To develop an understanding of angles of support in order to retain possession

AREA

20 yards x 20 yards or 30yards x 30 yards depending on numbers.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate numbers ranging from 8 to 16.

LAYOUT

Players are organised in pairs and are spread even around the inside of the area and are encouraged to stand at least arms reach away from the other pairs. Each pair has one ball. Cones are scattered randomly around the playing area.

RULES

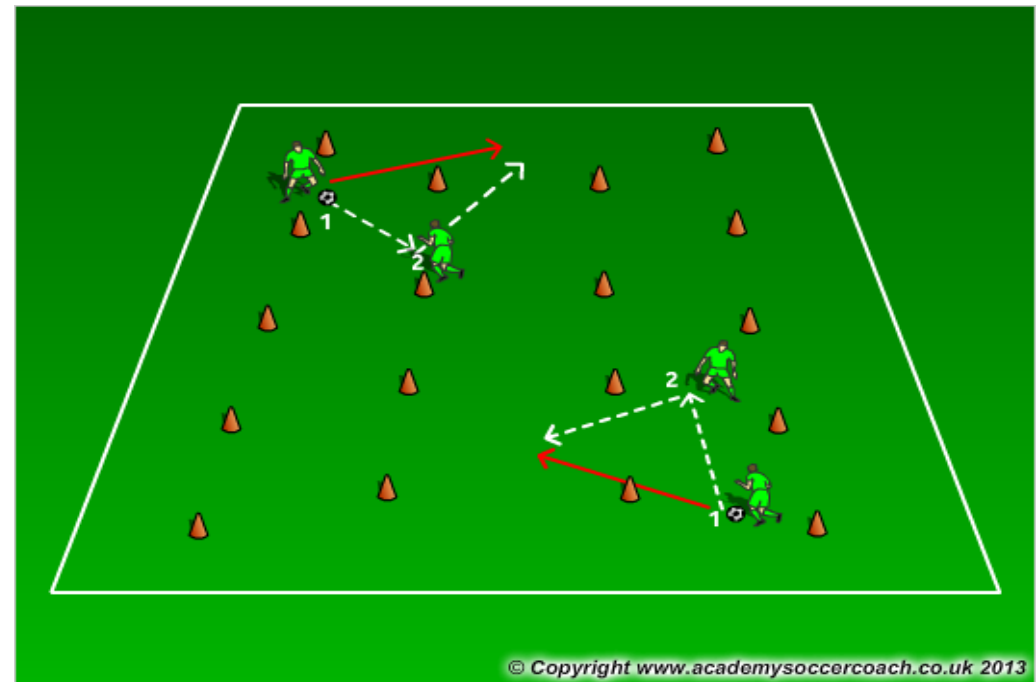
Each pair must attempt to move from one end of the grid to the other by passing the ball and then moving but make sure they avoid the cones (landmines). Dribbling is not allowed so player are encouraged to move after they have completed a pass so to help the player on the ball.

DEVELOPMENT

The game can be progressed by limiting the size of the area to encourage a higher degree of passing accuracy. The number of landmines can also be increased to create more obstacles in the playing area. The coach can also encourage players to use their least preferred foot to complete passes. The time can also be reduced to put more pressure on the pass and encourage greater speed.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage short passing through the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot, keeping a strong ankle. The standing foot is beside the ball of just behind, head should be steady and arms out for balance. Encourage a high tempo of passing throughout the activity.



SKILL PRACTICE - PASSING & RECEIVING



Aims

To develop passing accuracy over 10/15 yards

To develop an awareness of opposition and an understanding of angles of support in order to retain possession

AREA

20 yards wide x 30 yards long.

NUMBERS

This game can accommodate 8 to 10 players. If there are greater numbers then a second playing area should be created.

LAYOUT

Players are organised into two even teams. One player from each team will take up position in the safe zone.

RULES

Players in the middle of the playing area must pass the ball between themselves and keep it away from the other team. To score a point the team in possession must attempt to pass to their teammate in the safe zone. Dribbling into the safe zone is not allowed and there can only ever be one player in the safe zone at any one time.

DEVELOPMENT

The activity can be made more difficult by decreasing the size of the middle zone and also the width of the safe zone. Additional players can also be added into the middle zone to limit the time and space on the ball. Gates can be placed in front of the safe zone through which the pass must be completed. This will develop greater accuracy of passing but significantly increase the difficulty of the activity.

COACHING POINTS

Encourage short passing through the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot, keeping a strong ankle. The standing foot is beside the ball of just behind, head should be steady and arms out for balance. Encourage a high tempo of passing throughout the activity.



