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Practice 6: Passing and Receiving



Receiving the ball is as important as passing the ball because it keeps your team in possession. A player must be able to handle a pass before he can make one.

First 15 Minutes (Warm-up)

As you have learned, one of the better warm-ups is Follow the Leader around a square area: Have the players line up side-by-side. You lead. Start by sliding to your left. Each player will mimic your movement without passing a teammate. You slide side-to-side, jog when moving backward and jog with knees up high when moving forward.

Here's another warm-up:

Stand straight, bend a leg behind the body, grab the ankle and pull the heel toward the backside. Hold for a 10 count. Mimic with the other leg. This stretches the quad muscles.

Play a quick game of TAG followed by the ONE-MINUTE DRILL. This time, instead of having two players passing to each other, have the players get into triangles and two-touch pass the ball around as many times as possible in one minute. The emphasis here is for the players to get the ball off their foot as quickly as possible. Make special emphasis on the players striking the ball cleanly, balancing their feet and getting a soft touch.

More advanced players should be taught to control the ball and pass it with the outside of the foot.

Next 2 Minutes (Water Break)

Keep your players hydrated with a water break. But have them hustle back to the field.

Next 20 Minutes (Keep Away)

Your team is ready for KEEP AWAY. Inside a confined area, the players will play a 3 v. 3 or 4 v. 4 game of KEEP AWAY. There are no goals. Players try to keep possession of the ball and away from the other team. The coach or a senior player should be present to be a neutral player in order to keep the flow of the game going. This drill develops passing skills.

Coaching Points

- *The space should not be too large so that the game is too easy or too small and the players cannot get any flow going. A good coach will recognize what the practice session needs and make adjustments.*
- *Emphasize that players keep their heads up and pay attention so that there are not a lot of attention lapses.*
- *This game is a very important step in player development. If you think about the steps to becoming a good player:*
 - *Step 1 in player development is just THE PLAYER AND THE BALL.*
 - *Step 2 is PLAYING ALONG WITH ANOTHER PLAYER.*
 - *Step 3 is PLAYING WITH MORE THAN ONE PLAYER.*

Do not be so quick to add in more than four players on a team because it is very tough for young players to be able to combine and play with other players.

Next 2 Minutes (Water Break)

Keep your players hydrated with a water break. But have them hustle back to the field.

Next 15 Minutes (Return to Keep Away)

Return to KEEP AWAY and (if the players are ready for it) try to count the number of passes the players (along with the neutral player) can connect in a row.

Establish that a set number of passes (say four) count as one goal. You also can set a stipulation that if one team makes four passes in a row the other team must do push-ups. That will get everybody trying hard.

Coaching Point

- *Tell players to play the ball simple and early.*

Ending Practice

After the players get some water, end practice with a team huddle. Congratulate the players for their hustle and make it a fun conversation.

Today's homework assignment: Pass the ball with a partner (or parent) doing the ONE-MINUTE DRILL or practice using correct technique getting repetitions against a wall.

Establish the next practice time with the players and parents. Follow up with an email to the parents.