Basic Skills -kick with instep

Posted by STLCoach - 07 Apr 2009 03:43

The following is from Jeff Pill of the US Soccer National Coaching School. "*Start way back with the basics;*
Take off your shoe and sock. Sit on the floor, with both feet on the floor -knees inside your arms- start by
kicking the ball out of your hands (like a punt). But, just do it lightly so that the ball only goes up about 2 feet or so. Make sure that your toe is pointed and that you keep your ankle locked.
Strike the ball with the laces part of the foot. If your ball goes up without any spin or with a little top spin then you are doing it correctly. If the ball comes back towards your face then try again. Keep doing this over and over it will develop a good feel for what it is like to hit the ball with your laces.
After you have managed that try hitting the ball twice with the foot. But, make sure that there is still a proper spin ankle locked toe pointed.

When you get good control it is time to stand up.

Now, do the same thing.. kick the ball out of your hands (like a punt) but have the ball only go up in the air about 6-7 feet high. Look for the ball going up with no spin again. Keep your foot in that good position. Your knee needs to be slightly bent as well. Kick the ball straight up in the air. Again, you are just
trying to get a good feel for the ball. The ball's spin tells you if you are doing it correctly.

Then, try to do it with a bounce between each kick. But, still only have the ball go up about 6-7 feet high. It is important that you do this with control instead of power. This is almost like juggling, but, let the ball bounce each time. Then, can you do two touches (each one going up without backspin) between each bounce?

Now progress where you are letting the ball bounce on the ground, then kick it to a friend or against some wall. Still with bare feet! Make sure that you strike the ball when it is on the way down. Hit it with your laces . Toe pointed, ankle locked. Now, the ball should have top spin and should not go higher than your head. Keep working on this for MANY times. See if you can now work on accuracy and some power. Again, you should be getting a real feel for the ball with your laces.
After you do this it is time to put your shoes back on and try from the ground again. See if there is any improvement there should be. You should have a real feel for the ball by now! One warning this takes time!!! Some players that I have worked with on this need a whole season to work things out. Practice correctly!!! It is more important to practice perfectly than to kill yourself working frantically and too hard. Take your time.
My last suggestion is to watch high level games. Watch how the real good players strike the ball. Watch them, then try to copy them!"
After they have mastered this skill have them focus on striking a still ball by
1. getting their instep thru the middle of the ball
2. follow thru with a low foot and come across in front of the other foot.
3. the support foot is up even with ball but aside from ball not right next to it.
CP: The instep is a part of the top of the foot where the inside lace holes are, usually the last 2-3 holes on the inside row.

==========

Basic Skills -SEQUENTIAL PASSING -SPACE

Posted by STLCoach - 05 Nov 2009 06:26

Sequential Passing
Objective: Sequential passing exercises are a great training tool to teach players some important playing habits including decision making, speed of thought and 'vision'.

Age group: U10s upwards

Number of players: Whole team in groups of six or seven.

Equipment: Flat cones to mark a grid, four footballs per group.

Set up: Play in a 30x30 yard grid.

How to play:

Divide your players into groups of six or seven.

Each group plays in a separate grid.

Assign each player a number and tell them that:

No player is allowed to stand still.

No pass may be less than 5 yards.

The players must pass the ball sequentially, receiving the ball from the number before them and passing the ball to the number after them. For example, number 2 receives the ball from number 1 and passes the ball to number 3.
Let them play without any conditions for a few minutes.

Then up the pace by placing the following conditions:

Two-touch, one to receive it and one to pass it.

This encourages the players to:

Look where their next pass will be before they receive it

Prepare the ball in the direction the pass will go

Measure the weight and accuracy of the pass to their teammate.
One-touch passing

This will:

Further reinforce the need to look where they will pass the ball before they receive it

Put the onus on the next sequential player to call for the ball early and move into space early to help the passing player execute an effective pass

Put maximum emphasis on the speed of the pass knowing that the teammate also has only one touch.
Introduction of a second, third or fourth ball

This will force the players to pass the ball quickly as they do not want the two balls to arrive at a single player at the same time.

==========

BASIC SKILLS, THROW INS

Posted by STLCoach - 10 Feb 2010 03:21

_____

Start with players in groups of 2's with one ball per group. The players are 15 yards apart (distance would vary depending upon age). One player in each group starts with a ball in their hands

The ball gets thrown (using proper soccer technique) to the partner who must receive the ball and have it under control. The player then picks up the ball and does the same thing back.

This activity is working on throwing to feet and also receiving with the feet.

Next, the receiving player starts 30 yards away and checks to the ball. The ball is thrown to feet and the receiving player must receive the ball and keep possession

All of a sudden, this becomes much more difficult when the movement is added.

Next, do the same thing but now the receiving player must one touch the ball back to the thrower (who takes one step forward to enter the field of play)

This is a very easy activity to set up and do and if you do it for an extended period of time, the players will get very bored. My recommendation is to do it for a short period of time but do it frequently because too many possessions are lost because of players inability to receive a throw-in.

==========

Basic Skills Dribbling and Turning

Posted by STLCoach - 08 Jun 2010 04:43

Dribbling and Turning

SET UP
Area – Cones are 20 yards apart. Add 4 sets of players on each cone. There are two soccer balls. Two teams work together. North to south, east to west.

* Players with the ball dribble to the center.
* They perform a turn, then another turn, then pass to their opposite team mate. They now follow their pass.
* Receiving player repeats this process.

FOCUS ON:
Close control. The quality, creativity of the turn. Passing.

VARIATION:
When a player performs their 1st turn, they pass the ball back. They then create an angle to receive the ball again. They then receive the pass and then pass to the opposite group.

==========

Re:Basic Skills -Dribbling and Turning

Posted by STLCoach - 28 Jun 2010 02:43

Dribbling and Turning

Area – 60 x 40 with four 8 x 8 squares in each corner. Two teams. Each team attacks two squares, designated by the coach.

* Normal soccer rules apply.
* To score a player has to dribble in either of the two squares they are attacking.
* You can only enter a square if you have the soccer ball.
* Once a goal is scored, the scoring team attacks the opposite 2 squares.

FOCUS ON:
Attacking the boxes. Dribbling. Passing. Taking the 1 v 1. Communicating.

==========

Re:Basic Skills -Simple Turns

Posted by STLCoach - 23 Jul 2010 02:03

Stay in control with these simple turns
Teaching children how to play soccer is, metaphorically, a bit like teaching a person how to drive.

It's not difficult to show them how to use the gas pedal - kick the ball in front and run after it. Or even how to drive in traffic - keep the ball close. But you also need to teach your players how to use their brakes and steering - how to slow down and turn.

This is basic but important. Young soccer players who can use a variety of different turns will be better able to keep the ball and more willing to get their head up and pass, instead of running into the proverbial 'brick wall' of defenders.

Start with the easiest turns - the drag back and the inside hook.

The drag back
Get your players to stop or slow the ball by stepping on it with the sole of their foot. The ball might roll back as the player's momentum takes them slightly past it. The player should then pivot on one foot, turn quickly and run back the way they came, collecting the ball as they go.

The inside hook
As your players are running with the ball, tell them to cut their dominant foot hard across their body and the outside of the ball. They should then lean back and turn quickly to run in the opposite direction with the ball.

TIP: Don't try to teach both of these turns in one session. They might look simple, but to do them properly (and quickly) needs practice. Time spent embedding the skills will be well rewarded.

Once you've demonstrated these turns and your players have practised them on their own, play one of the following games.

For very young players (four- to six-year-olds), play Follow the leader:

Pair your players in a large grid with one ball between each pair. One player dribbles around the grid practising the drag back or inside hook turn. The other player follows as closely as they can. After a couple of minutes, swap the players.

For older players (seven- to ten-year-olds), play Cone Races:

Split your players into four teams with a ball each. Place each team at the corner of a 20 yards by 20 yards grid that has four cones in the middle. Space the cones out so they make a small square.

The first player in each team runs with the ball towards the centre cones. When they reach the cones, they perform a turn of their choice and run back to their team with the ball. The ball is passed to the next player in line who repeats the exercise. The first team to get every player back is the winner.

TIP: Ask your players to practice these turns at home and show you how much they've improved at the next training session.

==========

Basic Skills -TEACHING HEADING
Posted by STLCoach - 13 Sep 2010 08:04

_____

Making heading safe and fun
Heading the ball is an integral part of soccer but some clubs and associations discourage their coaches from teaching players how to head the ball until they are at least ten years old.

Some even recommend that no child under the age of 14 should head the ball (Dr Lyle Micheli, Director of Sports Medicine at Children's Hospital in Boston, US) and some organisations even require children to wear padded helmets.

This is partly a reaction to studies that suggest heading a soccer can cause long-term damage to a player's attention, concentration and memory. It is also based on the fact that a child's head is disproportionately heavy and large relative to their body weight – a six-year-old's brain has reached 80% of its full, adult size but their body is only 30% of the size. [3] [4]

But banning children from heading the ball won't stop them doing it and deliberately not teaching the correct technique is foolish.

The best way to avoid injuries caused by heading the ball is to teach the correct technique from an early age and ensure that your players always use an appropriate size ball.

What size ball should I use? Four- to six-year-olds use a size one or two, seven and eights use size three; nine- to 12-year-olds use a size four and 13 and up use a size five (the official international-size soccer).

But don't start heading practice too early. Most young children (up to the age of seven or eight), won't try to head the ball. They'll duck out of the way!

So there's no need to start coaching heading until:

A) You see your players trying to head the ball without being encouraged to do so.

They get to the age of nine or ten.

Even then, don't force any of your players to head the ball if they don't want to. If they don't want to head the ball in practice they certainly won't do it in a match so why make them?

How to teach children to head the ball safely

Main coaching points
Contact with the ball should always be made with the forehead.
The eyes should always be open (at least until impact) and fixed on the ball and the body positioned in line.
The player's mouth should be CLOSED.
Arms should be used for balance.
How to teach the technique

A) Each player holds a small or under-inflated ball in their hands. Ask them to move their head to the ball and touch it with their forehead. Progress to knocking the ball out of their hands with their head. This helps to embed the idea that the head always moves to the ball when heading.

Each player tosses the ball up in the air and heads it back into their hands. Make sure they keep their eyes open and their mouth closed. In addition, the neck should be rigid, not flexed, as the head strikes the ball. The whole upper body moves to the ball and there should be no 'nodding' of the head.

How to practise

Throw, head, catch
Divide your players into groups of three. One ball per group. One player tosses the ball to another who then heads it to the third player to catch. Every time the group complete the sequence successfully, they get a point. First group to five points wins.

Bowling with headers
Divide your players into teams of three or four. Each team stands a few feet away from a line of three balls balancing on three flat cones. You or an assistant (or older players who can toss a ball accurately) stand a few feet on the other side of the cones facing each team.

A ball is thrown to the first player in each team who tries to head it at the balls balancing on the cones. Serve to each team simultaneously.

The first team to knock all three balls off the cones wins.

Conclusion

While it is right that we should consider the risks associated with all soccer activities, banning heading or neglecting to teach the correct technique does not remove the risk.

The most practical solution is to teach the correct technique, use the proper equipment and exercise common sense.

References

[1] AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS, Injuries in Youth Soccer: A Subject Review, PEDIATRICS Vol. 105 No. 3 March 2000, pp. 659-661.

[2] National Soccer Coaches Association of America, Proper Heading is Safe, www.nscaa.com/subpages/200906010952441017.php

[3] Sonawane, B. and R. Beliles, "The Susceptibility of Children to Immunotoxic and Neurotoxic Agents," Poster Abstract, Ist National Research Conference on Children's Environmental Health, Children's Environmental Health Network, February 21-23, 1997, Washington, D.C.

[4] Tysvaer AT, Head and neck injuries in soccer, Sports Med. 1992 Sep;14(3):200-13

==========