

BFSC U9-U10 Training Session #3: Passing and receiving.

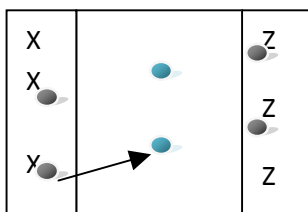
Exercise

Environment

Description / Coach

Cue ball

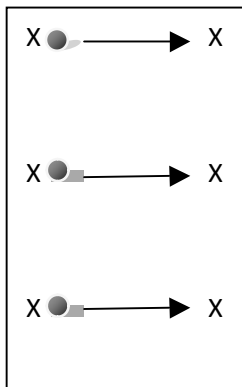
22x20 yard area



Place two distinctively-colored balls in the middle of the central grid. Divide the players into two teams and put each team in an end grid. Each player has a ball. Explain that the goal of the game is to pass one's soccer ball in an attempt to hit the target balls, knocking them into the opponents' end grid. Players must pass from their own zone and may only leave their zone to retrieve a ball. Players may use any ball. Players may use their pass defensively to strike a ball that is rolling toward their zone. If a target ball rolls into their zone, the defending team picks up the ball and runs it back to the middle of the central grid and play continues. Play for five minutes, using the time to assess players' passing ability.

Pairs passing and receiving

20x20 yard area



Line players up in pairs with one soccer ball along a line on the field. One player stands on the line while her partner stands four yards away and facing her. First, review the key technical points for short passing:

1. Find a comfortable, yet locked position for the knee and ankle of the passing foot before striking the ball (i.e. use the hip as the point of rotation). This creates both power and consistency.
2. The plant foot should face the target. This allows for more fluid motion and also more accurate passing.
3. The striking surface is the long inside of the foot. The toes should be slightly elevated and the heel is lowered. This posture creates a better controlling surface.
4. The striking point on the ball is the center back. Players should diagnose the missed strikes by watching the path and spin of the ball. If the ball hops off the ground, the striking point is too low. If the ball skids unevenly along the ground, then the player topped the ball, striking too high. Similarly, side spin on the ball indicates that the player struck inside or outside of center on the back of the ball.
5. The follow-through is a critical component of accurate passing. Players must learn in this isolated technical work to "hold" their foot at the very end of the strike on the follow through. This hold reinforces a proper striking form and also the idea of following through with an eye toward pointing the striking foot at the target.

Players pass and receive with a focus on proper striking of the ball. Insist that players alternate the foot they use to pass the ball. Play for one minute. At this early point in the progression, encourage the players to stop the ball as they receive so that they are striking a standing ball.

Now review the key technical cues for receiving. It is useful to look at receiving as being the reverse of passing.

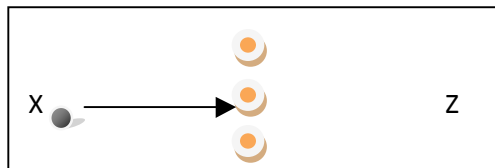
1. As in passing, the ankle and knee are locked, although suppleness in receiving requires a softer posture than striking. The hips and shoulders must be “open” (facing) the ball as it arrives.
2. Begin with the follow-through used to strike the ball in passing. Here, one presents one’s foot in front of the body to “welcome” the ball.
3. Once again, the receiving foot must be presented as a low heel and elevated toes to allow for a surface that will prevent the ball from bouncing.
4. As the ball is received, players must learn to cushion it and take speed out of the ball without actually stopping it (see cue #5).
5. In good soccer, it is said, the ball never stops. Ideally, the ball must be prepared for release in a single touch. If players stop the ball between their feet, they will need two more touches to release the ball, allowing defenders time to close and tackle. Therefore, players must learn to use their first touch to push the ball forward and outside of their hips and shoulders so that the next touch can be a pass if needed. This is done by sharply turning the hips in particular at the moment of reception. This change of angle allows players to avoid pressure and eventually prepare the ball in the direction they are planning to play.

Players return to passing with their partner. Observe their ability to maintain good technical form in both passing and receiving. Play for two minutes, emphasizing that all players need to alternate the foot they use both for passing and receiving.

Players work in pairs with one soccer ball. This activity is a very useful way to get players to focus on accuracy and quality in their passing. Place three tall cones at the center of each grid (“alley”). Players stand on either end of the alley. They alternate passing the ball to each other, attempting to knock down the cones. If one player knocks down two cones, they win the game and they stand up the cones and play resumes. Adjust the length of the alley to be both challenging and also to assure success for each pair. Play for three minutes and then compel the players to play with their off foot. After playing one round, players change partners and play again.

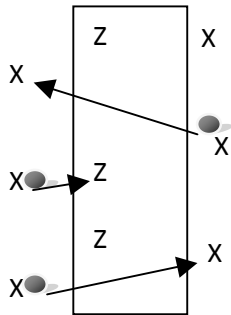
Bowling!

5x14 yard grids



Alligator Alley I

5x20 yard area



3 vs. 3 scrimmages

20x20 yard areas

Select 2-3 players to serve as “alligators.” These players stand (without soccer balls) in the long, narrow grid. Explain that the alligators may not leave the “alley” during the game, and they each earn a point for each pass they intercept in the course of play. Give $\frac{1}{2}$ of the remaining players soccer balls and place half of the players outside of each of the long sides of the alley. The players on the outside attempt to pass the ball across the alley to any player on the other side. They earn a point for every successful pass they make across the alley. There is no penalty for a pass intercepted by the alligators. When the alligators pick off a pass, they step on the ball to verify possession and then return the ball to any player on the outside. Play for three minutes and then rotate the alligators, playing sufficient rounds of the game to allow all players to serve in the alley. Players keep their score throughout the games. Compare scores at the end of the exercise.

Play a standard 3 vs. 3 scrimmage to small cone goals. Require a pass each time a team gains possession before a goal can be scored. After five minutes, remove the restriction and allow open play, still complimenting the players when they make a good pass.