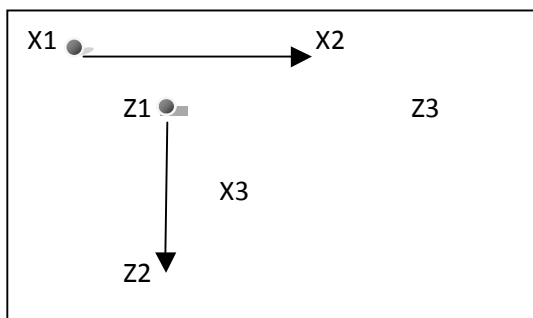


BFSC U9-U10 Training Session #10: Group Play.

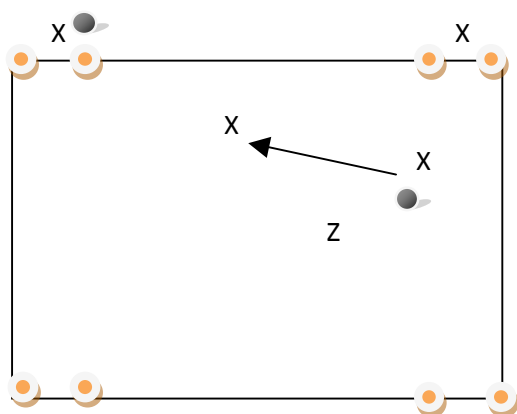
One of the most challenging aspects of coaching U9 and U10 players is the tendency of young players to bunch up. While teaching team shape is an evolutionary process, the following session is designed to begin to give players an understanding of shape and roles in a 6 vs. 6 playing environment.

Exercise                      Environment

Sequenced passing              20x25 yard area



2 vs. 1 to four goals              15x15 yard grid



Description / Coach

Split the team into two groups and number the players in each group 1-4. Each group needs a ball. The groups pass the ball within the area, transferring the ball in sequence 1-2; 2-3; etc.). The players must also be given the following cues:

1. All players must continue to jog throughout the exercise (no standing).
2. After passing, players should run to a new part of the area.
3. Players must get eye contact with their target before passing.
4. Players must call out both the name of their target (when they want to pass) and also the name of the passer (when they want to receive).

Play for three minutes. Reiterate the need to run to open space and then play again, this time limiting the players to two touches. This will require better running off of the ball, communication and the restriction also places mild technical pressure on the players.

This exercise is designed to allow players to begin to deal with decision-making in possession and also to understand the concept of transition. Divide the team into four groups. Each group is placed near one of the four cone goals in the corners of the grid (see diagram). Explain that the two teams on each end of the grid play together in attacking the goals on the other end of the grid. One line on each end has soccer balls.

Key considerations and coaching points:

1. The teams alternate attacking their opponents' goals, with each restart beginning with a player from the line with the balls dribbling a ball into the grid. Players score by dribbling through either of their opponents' goals.
2. The player from the line without balls on each end plays with her partner in attacking their opponents' goals and then plays defense against the pair attacking from the other end when play is restarted. To simplify roles, players return to their lines after their sequence is completed. After three

3. minutes, rotate the roles of each group on each end (the balls are moved to the other line on each end.)
4. The duels end when the ball leaves the area (either when a goal is scored or when the ball is knocked out of the grid). If the defender wins the ball, she should attack her opponents' goals so that players also learn to adjust to transition as well.
5. At this age, the key concept for the attackers is learning to make good decisions regarding utilizing their partner and selecting a goal to attack. The coach should not coach the defenders here, but rather should focus on getting the attackers to adopt proper spacing and angles to create openings to attack either goal. Generally speaking, the player without the ball needs to learn to create space away from the ball and also a passing angle that is not screened by the defender.
6. The coach should encourage the players in possession to recognize opportunities to dribble through an open goal and to play at game speed.

Play 4-goal soccer on  $\frac{1}{2}$  field. Place small cone goals in the corners of the field (see diagram). Each team attacks the two goals on the opposite end of the grid. This game is useful to demonstrate the importance of changing fields and also learning to read the shape of the defense. Because the goals are very small, teams will need to learn to maintain an option and a sense for changing the direction of the attack. The coach can use "freeze!" calls to show the need to expand the team's shape and also to point out options for the attackers.

4-Goal Soccer  $\frac{1}{2}$  Field

