

Passing

Passing is essential in any team sport. The combination of good passing with good communication is a recipe for success. Promote the use of names and directional assistance (see common soccer terms) when moving the ball in the warm-up game as well as in drills. This good habit will pay big dividends. Think about the give and go. Passing and moving will keep a defense on it's heels. Lastly, when forward progress is halted there should always be help from behind by supporting players. This will help a team keep possession of the ball.

Introduction

Soccer is a team game and the most important thing in soccer is.....the ball. We want to keep the ball as much as possible. Let's talk to each other, pass the ball and keep possession. Keeping the ball on the ground, accurately playing ball to teammates and controlling the ball when it comes to you are all very important and will require much practice. These skills will also make the game more fun AND the team that has the ball more usually wins.

Warm-up

Today's warm-up is a game called 'team handball'. The object is to reach 5 consecutive passes (10 for more advanced) without losing or dropping ball. Every 5 consecutive passes counts as one goal. Only 2 steps can be taken with ball in hands. Look to quickly pass and move. Talk to teammates. Offer help when open. Players must stay within specified 15yd. X 25yd. area. Then add endzone and play for forward advancement

Skill

Today's skill is the 'pass and trap'. Passing technique is simple. 1. Step next to ball with non-kicking foot pointed toward target. 2. Lean head forward over ball which lifts kicking leg into position. 3. As leg moves forward to strike ball be sure that ankle is locked with toe up and out providing large flat surface to strike ball. 4. Strike center of ball (not bottom or top) and follow through toward partner. 5. Receiving players should stay on toes to react quickly and attempt to get in front of every pass. Use the 'wedge' or 'sole' trap to control ball. This is performed by holding one leg out, heel down and toe up, and letting ball roll into the wedge or sole of the foot. Very simple and effective. If ball comes to left side use left foot, right side use right foot. Use the wedge when ball is directly at player or otherwise use inside of right or left foot.

Game

'Goal Post' is played by dividing into two teams. Each team starts in a line 5-10 yds directly in front of one goal post (or mini goal). Two cones are set up as a 'gate' for players to approach ball. Players hold ball in hands, throw ball to coach or teammate (setter) who sets ball up in 'gate'. Then player steps, leans and strikes ball passing properly on the ground with inside of the foot moving toward the target. First team to reach ten hits wins. Team is penalized one point for any toe ball that is taken. Alternate games, right foot then left foot. 20-30 minutes.

'Sideline soccer' from Training day #1 can be added as a second game. Play 2 versus 2 to promote passing.

Wrap-up

Remember technique. Step, lean, balance swing and follow through center of ball. The leading step should be next to ball pointing toward target. The follow through should also be toward target(up not around) and followed up with a step in that direction. Practice at home using a number of targets from a number of different distances. Try to get close to target working on touch. Set up a soccer golf course and keep track of 'strokes'.