

Heading - How and at What Age

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Striking the ball with your head in the game of soccer in order to pass, clear, control or score is a skill that is refined over time and something that you as a coach can introduce at the U10 level of play. The **basic coaching points in heading** are as follows:

- Strike the ball with the forehead
- Keep your eyes open and mouth closed
- Move your head to strike the ball and not wait for the ball to strike your head
- Create good body position by having your arms out for balance, upper body rigid so that you can create power to strike the ball and have a good base for support

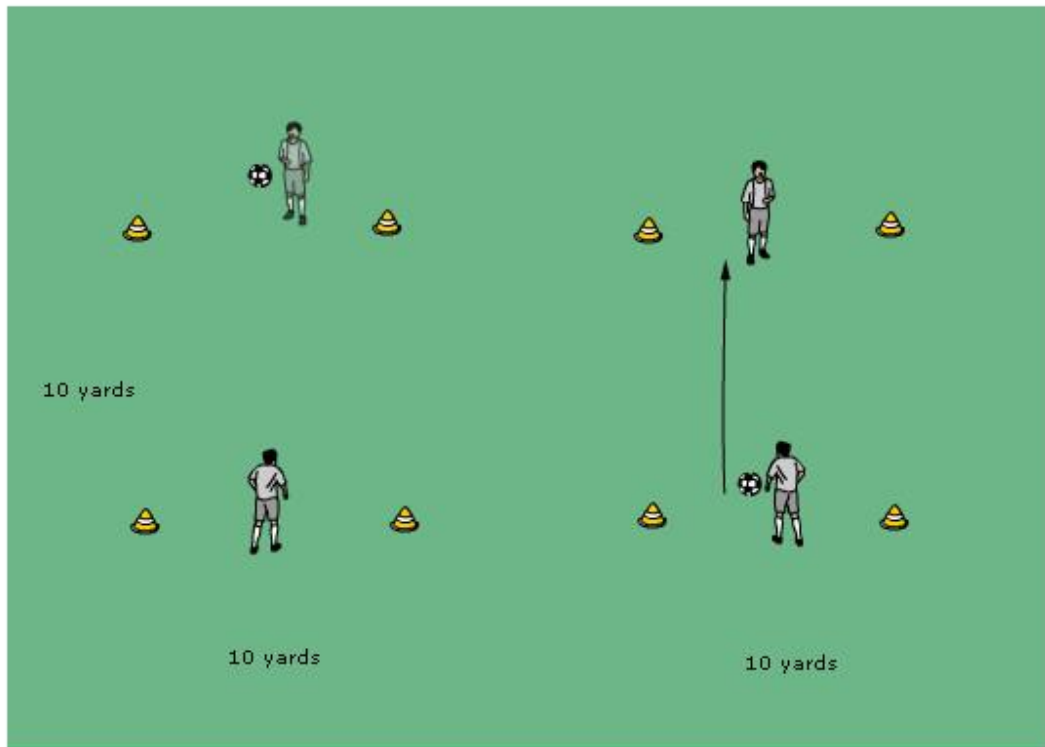
The following are gradual steps when introducing heading to your players:

Key Coaching Points: as stated above but also you can use a ball that is under-inflated or nerf soccer ball to give the players success

1. Roll the ball across their forehead with their eyes open
2. Once they have accomplished that have them gently toss the ball against their forehead and catch the ball in their hands
3. After they have accomplished this have them see if they can juggle the ball using their head (trying to increase their personal best each time)
4. Working with a partner, toss the ball up in the air(to themselves) and head the ball towards their partner who does the same
5. Once they feel comfortable working with a partner toss the ball under-hand and have them head the ball back and forth between the partner
6. The last step would be to partner juggle using the head seeing how many they can get back and forth before the ball hits the ground

The following is a sample lesson plan incorporating some of the above:

Heading Warm-up



Set Up

10 x 10

2 players in each box

Players throw the ball to their partner and they head it back

Note:

U10 to U12 - partners are 5 yards apart

U14 to U19 - partners are 10 yards apart

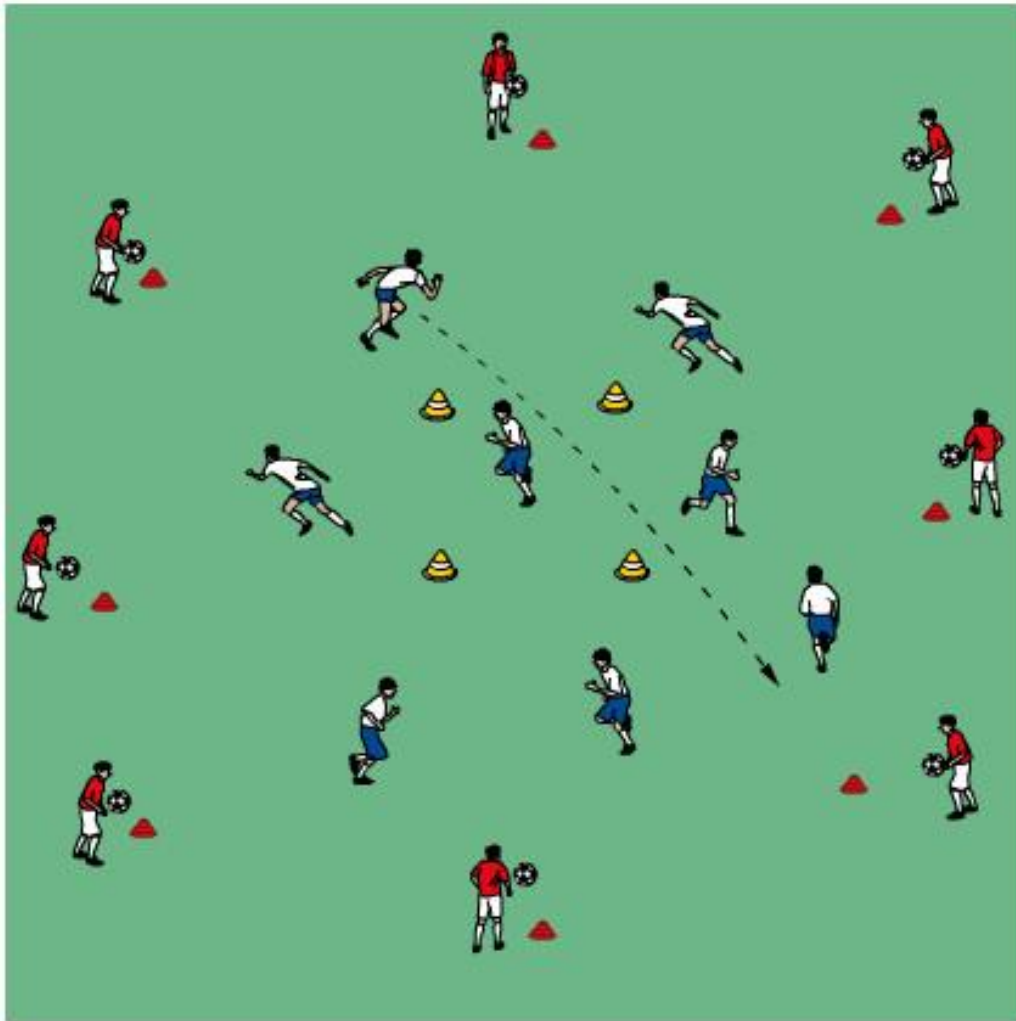
Coaching Points

Part of the head (forehead)

Eyes open

Body position when heading (standing square to your partner)

Heading in a Circle



Set Up

Circle of cones with a gate in the middle (size depending upon number of players)

8 inside and 8 outside

Players on the outside have the ball and throw the ball to the players on the inside
Once they head it back the players in the middle have to go through the gate and then
receive the ball from another outside player

Players work for 5-10 minutes and then switch

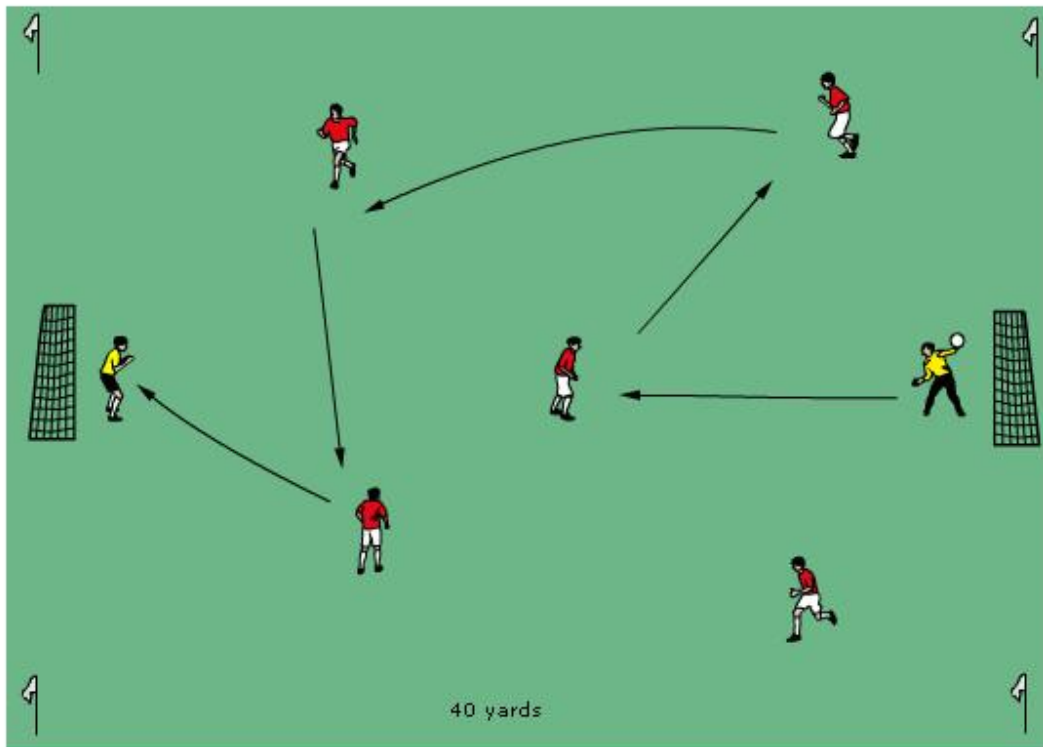
Coaching Points

Part of the head (forehead)

Eyes open

Body position when heading may now be sideways on or facing

Headball Game



Set Up

40 x 40 yards

6v6 players

Start the game from the keepers

First pass has to be thrown, from the throw you have to head it to a teammate who catches the ball or to the goal in order to score

If the ball hits the ground the opposing team gets the ball

The passing progression is throw, head and catch, repeat.

You are not allowed to throw the ball into the goal

Coaching Points

Part of the head (forehead)

Eyes open

Body position when heading may now be sideways on or facing

Attacking headers (down) and defensive headers (up and out)

Movement

Final Game



Set Up

60 x 40 yards

6v6 players

First play with a restriction that if you score with the head then you will receive 2 points and 1 point for a goal scored any other way. (10 minutes)

Then remove restriction and play.

Coaching Points

Part of the head (forehead)

Eyes open

Body position when heading may now be sideways on or facing

Attacking headers (down) and defensive headers (up and out)

Movement

Cool Down

Light jog width of the field with stretching at each line (2-3 minutes)