Basic Skills & Techniques

Focus your attention on the listed points for each technique as you observe your players. It is important for your players to learn to practice techniques properly, but remember that this may take some time - more for some techniques than others, and more for some players than others. Again, be patient and be encouraging!

Practice all foot skills with both right and left feet.

**Dribbling**
- Small controlled steps.
- Ball should be kept close (approximately 2-3 feet) in front of you.
- Strike the ball with either the instep - toes pointed down, the inside of the foot - toes pointed up, contact ball midway in foot or outside of the foot - toes pointed down.
- Look up frequently to establish eye contact.
- Change speed and direction.

**Dribbling to Beat an Opponent**
- Keep the ball close and dribble straight at the opponent.
- Use sudden movements of shoulders or fakes of body to get opponent to lean to one side.
- Immediately take the ball in the other direction and sprint past.
- Once past, look up to take a shot or pass.

**Inside of the Foot Pass**
- Ankle locked.
- Foot slightly up at the toe.
- Thigh turned outward.
- Look up to establish eye contact.
- Connect with the middle of the ball just before the instep.
- Follow through (contributes to direction and pace of the pass).

**Controlling a Pass**
- Move toward the ball (don't wait for it to come to you).
- Inside or outside of the foot used most often.
- Foot surface first touching the ball should be withdrawn slightly on contact to take the momentum out of the ball ("cushioning").
- Ball should not be stopped completely, but under close control.
- Redirect ball in front or to the side in anticipation of moving in that direction to pass or dribble.

Coaching Points (next page)
**Coaching Points**

**Dribbling**
- Keep on toes all the time.
- Touch ball after every step (keep ball close).
- Look up after every touch (vision).
- Find space.
- Contact (inside, laces, outside) will depend on the direction player wants to go.
- Concentrate on balance.
- Change speed.
- Change direction. Accelerate after change of direction.
- Work on different types of deception (feints).
- Keep body between ball and opponent.

**Receiving**
Receiving a ball on the ground is different than receiving a ball in the air. When receiving a ball on the ground, the following points should be considered:
- Keep your eye on the ball.
- Choose which foot to receive the ball with (this may depend on the location of the defender).
- Receive the ball with one foot with the toe pointed up (ankle locked).
- Don’t stop the ball. Instead, prepare it for the next action: shot, dribble, pass or to play away from pressure.

Receiving the ball in the air is a skill that involves six major phases:
- Keeping your eye on the ball.
- Reading the flight, speed and direction of the ball.
- Deciding which body part will control the ball (foot, thigh, chest or head).
- Getting the body in line with the direction of the ball.
- Preparing to receive the ball by presenting the body part to the ball.
- Cushioning the ball with the body part to slow it down and preparing for the next touch.

**Passing**
Because passing involves giving the ball to a teammate, it is important that players are taught to know where their teammates are by constantly looking. A second important ingredient is verbal communication, or talking. Coaches should teach players to provide intelligent verbal cues to help with decision-making in passing.

The technical elements of passing vary based on the kind of pass being made. The key elements of any pass (both short and long) include:
- See the target.
- Approach the ball.
- Plant and position of support, or non-kicking foot (the toe of the non-kicking foot should be pointed in the direction the player wants the ball to go).
- Look at the ball, holding the head steady.
- Contact the correct area of the ball with locked ankle.
- For instep and outside of foot pass, the toes are pointed down and contact is on the top of the foot.
- For inside of the foot pass, toes are pointed up.
- Follow-through: kick “through the ball,” following through toward the target.
- Transfer the weight forward.

**Shooting**
Shooting uses the same technical elements as passing, with the important difference being that the goal is to pass the ball beyond the goalkeeper.
- If possible, the player should look up to see the position of the goalkeeper, choosing a side to shoot the ball.
- Approach the ball.
- Plant the support foot beside or slightly ahead of the ball, which helps to keep the shot low.
- Keep the head steady and eyes on the ball.
- Make proper contact with the ball.
  - Ankle of kicking foot is locked and the toe is pointed down if shooting with instep.
  - Hips and knee of kicking foot are pointed in the direction of the shot.
- Follow through to keep the ball low (weight going forward, landing on the kicking foot).