



Grades 3-4 Session 5: Pressuring and Covering Defenders

Category: Tactical: Defensive principles
Skill: U10

Pro-Club: Loudoun Soccer Club
Dan Raben, Leesburg, United States of America

dribbling warm-up (10 mins)



Objective: encourage individual dribbling and creativity to challenge defenders later in session

Duration: 10 minutes

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

each player in grid with a ball
dribble around grid, finding space and avoiding collisions

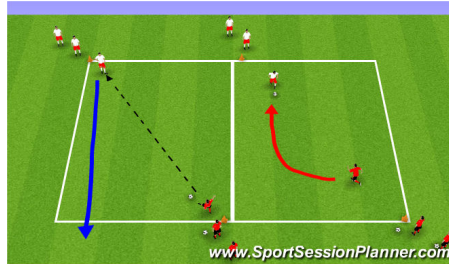
use dribbling rhythms/patterns (soccer box, toe taps, etc.) and encourage attacking moves

Key Points:

*every step is a touch – body low, use front foot to dribble

*head up and on swivel to find and attack space – use pinky toe to push ball in stride with burst of speed

1v1 channels (10 mins)



Objective: introduce key 1v1 defending principles (role of the 1st defender)

Duration: 10 minutes

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

Play starts from defender serving ball to attacker

Objective: dribble over opponent's endline - includes transition if defender wins possession

IMPORTANT: YOU WILL NEED TO DEMONSTRATE THIS

Play ends with goal or ball out of bounds

Players keep track of own points

Key Points:

*Get out fast to pressure ball: big steps to cover ground, little steps to close space but leave "tackling" space (1-1.5 yards)

*Bend run – force player to side

*Stance: feet staggered and "rounded", body weight on front foot, knees bent, arms out for balance and to battle

*Patience – "block their path" and "contain"

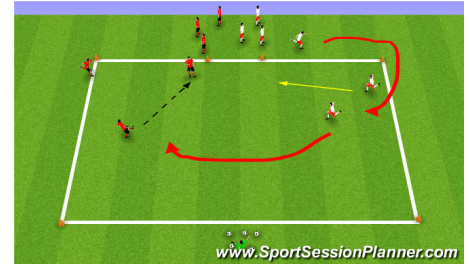
*Separate from the ball from big touch or tight space:

1 Back-foot tackle

2 Step in between ball and player with big touch – shield

3 Shoulder tackle – lean in and bump player off ball

Get Out of There to Endlines (15 mins)



Objective: introduce covering (2nd defender)

Duration: 15 minutes

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

*Coach serves ball into space and calls number ("3"); that number of players enters field.

*Players run down touchline and around corner flag or cone before entering field.

*Objective: dribble over opponent's endline. Play ends with goal or ball out of bounds.

* Progression:

"Plus 1" – in middle of play, call "Plus 1" for each team to add a player – creates delayed pressure and support.

Key Points:

*Communication: "I got ball" from 1st defender, "Delay", "Force in" or "Force out" from 2nd defender

*2nd Defender: mark loose in large space – must defend opponent and space while covering teammate; mark tighter in small space - can't play man-to-man in large space

*Changing roles between 1st and 2nd defenders in flow of game – diagonal movement (drops and pinches in)

*Recovery runs when beat

6v6 game (20 mins)



Objective: apply all previous concepts into game environment

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

full scrimmage - no restrictions

1-2-3 formation with 6v6 game play

Key Points:

*communication: I got ball, drop, shift, step

*compact defensive shape

*quick counter attacks - win ball, attack forward quickly if possible

*recovery runs in transition - diagonal toward own goal

*decision-making in defensive third - capture ball and start possession vs. clearing big and out



Grades 3-4 Session 6: Finishing

Category: Technical: Shooting
Skill: U10

Pro-Club: Loudoun Soccer Club
Dan Raben, Leesburg, United States of America

Description

2v2 games (5 mins)



Objective: activate players from the start by scrimmaging

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

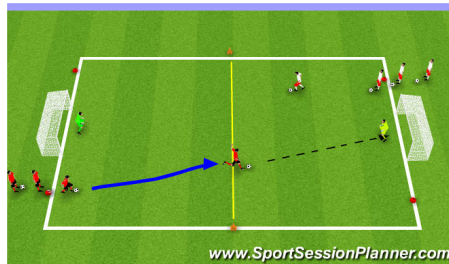
*two small sided fields to play 2v2 or 3v3

*add players to game as they arrive

Key Points:

few if any - get them playing!

shooting off the dribble (10 mins)



Objective: introduce technical points from finishing off the dribble

Duration: 10 minutes (5 mins on right side, then change sides of field to shoot from left side)

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

* 2 goals with goalkeepers on field 2x depth of the penalty area (e.g. 20-28 yards long). 4 cones placed on side of each goal as starting points. Two cones identifying middle of field.

* play begins when first person in each line dribbles toward goal. Must release shot near midfield.

* after shooting, collect ball, and then move to end of opposite line.

* next player starts as player ahead of them is shooting

* Variation/Progression: add an attacking move (scissor, jab step, etc.) before shooting.

Key Points:

* Prep touch (final touch before shooting) – push ball in front and slightly outside of your body

* Head up to find goal, then head down to find ball

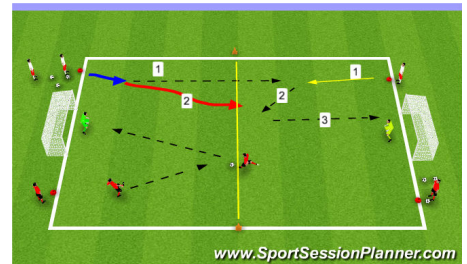
* Final step is a short hop to transfer weight – point placement foot in direction of goal, arm out for balance

* Ball Striking Technique:

1. generate power through short hop;
2. pull leg back from the hip and swing forward;
3. unhinge the knee as leg swings forward;
4. point kicking foot down and lock ankle;
5. strike the ball with the 1st metatarsal (the big toe bone - more specific than striking it with your laces); and
6. follow thru by landing on your kicking foot in direction of goal to ensure power and accuracy

* Surface selection - use of inside foot (foot open, toe up and heel down, ankle locked, knee bent) for close-range shots vs. in-step from distance

1-touch finishing (10 mins)



Objective: introduce 1-touch ball striking technique

Duration: 10 minutes (5 on one side, then switch directions to generate reps with opposite foot)

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

* same field set-up as previous activity but with four lines

* play begins when shooter dribbles forward

* teammate across field checks/shows for ball. Dribbler strikes ball toward teammate.

* teammate lays ball off at angle toward middle of the field (1 or 2 touch depending on ability)

* dribbler then strikes the ball with a 1-touch finish.

* players switch lines.

* after 5 minutes, change direction of the play so that players receive reps with opposite foot

Key Points:

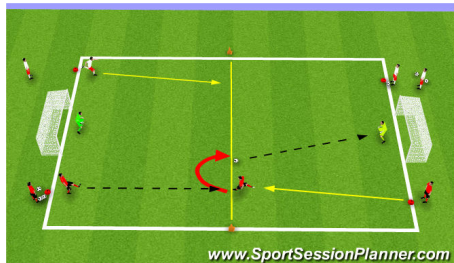
same points as previous exercise but extra emphasis on:

placement foot must touch ground sooner
solid contact more important than generating power (ball already has kinetic energy since it's in motion)

body/chest over ball to keep it low

follow-thru is critical - make sure you land on kicking foot to keep the ball low

back to goal finishing (10 mins)



Objective: generate finishing reps with back to goal

Duration: 10 minutes (5 minutes in one direction, then 5 minutes the opposite)

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

- * same set-up as previous activity
- * play begins when shooter checks toward and teammate at opposite line
- * teammate passes ball to them as they approach midfield
- * shooter turns with 1st touch, then finishes toward goal.
- * players switch lines, and activity repeats.
- * switch directions of play to generate reps with opposite foot.

Key Points:

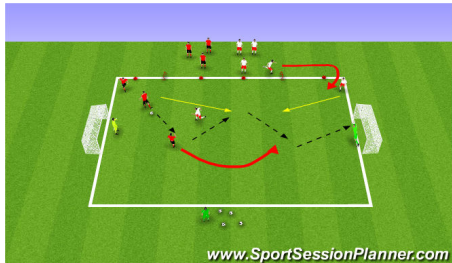
* same as previous activity with extra emphasis on:

showing for the ball - eye contact, calling for it, burst of speed when showing

1st touch - turning with ball using inside or outside of foot

turn inside to produce good shooting angle

Get Out of There! (10 mins)



Objective: generate and finish scoring opportunities against pressure

Duration: 10 mins

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

- * Coach plays ball into space and calls a number ("Two" means 2v2) and players enter field. Add obstacles before entry if desired.
- * Objective: teams attempt to score goal.
- * Play until ball is out of bounds, goal is scored, or coach yells "Get Outta There!"
- * Players return to lines for next play.
- * Variation: coach calls color instead of number for numbers up sequence (Red = 3 for red, 2 for white)

Key Points:

* aggressive mentality - shoot within range and when window opens

* follow through for rebounds

* head up to see window and make best decision (dribble, pass, or shoot)

* surface selection - instep from distance vs. inside of foot vs. toe poke

6v6 game (10 mins)



Objective: apply concepts and techniques from previous activities into full game

Duration: 10 mins

Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):

two teams
full rules (throw-ins, corner kicks, etc.)

Key Points:

team shape - stay connected as the ball moves up and down the field, and to offer supporting options

finishing - crack a shot when the window is open and you're within range