

LWYSA

Training Program

Book 2

Individual Soccer Training



Written by Jimmy Gabriel

**Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association
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Individual Training Program

It is extremely important that young players take the opportunity to practice their technical skills and improve their mobility when not practicing with their team. As a young player in my native Scotland I practiced individually whenever and wherever I could because I realized that the corner stone of my soccer playing ability lay in the technical and athletic areas of my game.

In Dundee where I was born the streets and tenement entrances were my training areas and although there were several parks with grass fields to practice on the kids appeared to prefer to play soccer in the streets. It must be said that at that time there were few people in our neighborhood that owned a car and the busses and tramcars were routed through the busy main roads making it less dangerous to play soccer in the side streets.

Another thing that attracted us to the side streets were the gaslights that were lit by the local lamplighter in Dundee. He was called a Leary, and as kids we would wait for him to light our chosen playing area on dark winter nights. Playing under gaslights might not have been the best thing for our eyesight but it kept us playing soccer and that kept us interested and warm on the cold Scottish winter nights.

Here in America it would be suicidal to attempt to play soccer in streets that are almost always busy with traffic and there are enough floodlit parks, school gymnasiums and playgrounds to accommodate any parties interested in playing a game or practicing their soccer skills. Also, whereas I was more comfortable playing in the streets, American players even with the schoolyard, garage and gymnasium availability appear to be more comfortable playing in the parks.

With this in mind I will combine a larger amount of practices for open spaces like half a soccer field with a few for tight spaces such as garages, gymnasiums or back yards.

My intentions in designing this program are not aimed at contradicting any of the methods used by personal team coaches because a huge part of a player's soccer education is developed in the playing of games whether they be full scale tournament games

or conditioned practice games. What I intend is to give the players a method of individual training that will allow them to polish their technical skills while making them fitter, faster and more explosive. Like everyone who coaches soccer most of my drills have come from personal experiences either in doing the drill as a player or in learning about the drill from a coaching buddy while discussing methods of training. Jimmy Ryan who coached the Man Utd reserve team gave me the information on the Manchester United run and the Southampton and Everton runs came from the personal experience of playing in their programs and coaching in the Everton program.

Many of the other training runs with and without the ball come from coaches attempts to give their players an inside route to success by providing them with an advantage over their opponents. Some of them I've invented myself or I've tinkered with someone else's ideas to get the desired effect from their drills. I say this openly so that people will understand that there are no secrets in soccer coaching and coaches should be encouraged to spread their knowledge of this great game to other coaches.

Soccer Runs Without the Ball

The Manchester United Soccer Run

I learned of this run from an old friend Jimmy Ryan who coached the Man Utd reserve team at the same time as I was coaching the Everton reserves. I knew Jimmy Ryan as a very fast and elusive winger who, like me, had left his native Scotland to pursue a career in the English Premier division. He had also played in the North American Soccer League in the 1970's so we had a lot in common having traveled similar roads in our playing careers. I have to believe that we had both benefited from the instruction given to us in the early development of our careers by the older players because we talked openly about our coaching experiences in an attempt to pass on any knowledge we had acquired. At this particular meeting Jimmy and I were discussing the differences between the training at both clubs in an attempt on both our parts to pick up some new ideas and I liked this run as soon as Jimmy mentioned it.

The run is easy to set up and should take 6 seconds or less to do however there is a couple of key points that the participant must be aware of.

The run must be done at full speed

The cuts, stops and starts must be made as explosively as possible

The player starts with six cones or markers and places them in this order

Two cones are placed 20 yds apart with a third being placed in the middle some 5 yds outside the line of the first two cones to form a triangle

The same triangular shape is formed using the other three cones with the two triangles ending up some 5 yds apart and the apex of each triangle 15 yds apart as shown in the diagram

The runner uses only one triangle at a time

The run starts with a sprint to the middle cone, a quick cut and sprint to the end cone a stop and turn and another sprint back to the first cone.

After a 30-second recovery period the player executes the same type of run using the second triangle

After the player completes six runs they should rest for five minutes in order to recover before attempting to do more.

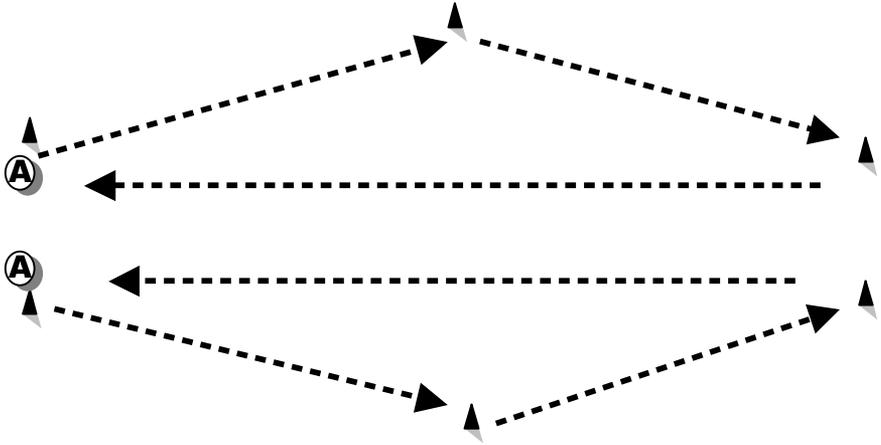


Diagram Manchester United

The Southampton Shuttle Runs

Shuttle runs have been a part of soccer training in England for many years because of the quick and explosive stop and start demands of the exercise. It is widely believed in England that a coach of Chelsea FC who set the runs up on the dog-racing track that surrounded the soccer field first invented these runs. The Chelsea players' knick named the runs as "Doggies" and as the popularity of these runs grew in the English form of training the name stuck. Today any type of shuttle run in English training is called a "Doggie Run" however I decided to refer to these runs as shuttle runs as this booklet is aimed at improving American players.

I was first exposed to these runs when I played for Southampton Soccer Club in the late 60's and early 70's. Every Tuesday morning we had an exercise session that included a number of different shuttle runs. The one I wish to show you is by far the most realistic and soccer related.

This shuttle run differs from most other shuttle runs because it mixes some half turns in with the full turns and because of this is more realistic to the turns required in playing the game. Also the half turns require the player to go at times right and at other times left so they cannot turn only on their favorite foot or to their favorite side.

The run is set up so that every three cones has a starter cone, a full turn cone some 10yds apart and a half turn cone in the middle

The half turn cone should be marked differently from the other cones so that the players know that they must use a half turn at that cone

Once the runner executes the half turn that cone is the starter cone for the next set

The runs require the player to use pace on the ten-yard runs and quick feet, stutter steps, upper and lower body control and explosive movement on the turns.

Like the Man Utd run these runs should be done in sets of six with a 30 second break in between each run and a five minute break in between each set.

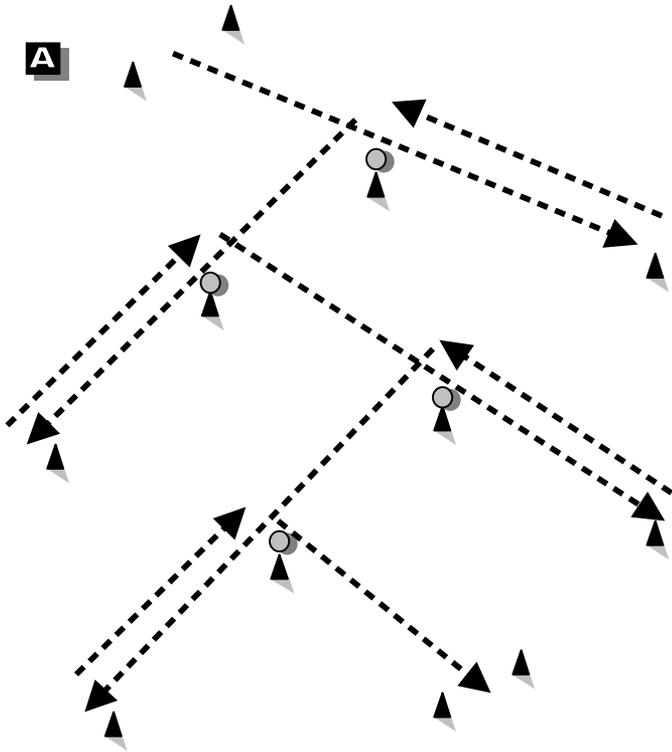


Diagram Southampton Shuttle Runs

The Everton Run

The Everton run is a combination of four runs of different distances and different repetitions. The runs should follow each other with a rest time of approximately two rest periods for every work period.

The players should be grouped into three separate teams to help establish the rest-work process.

The runs can be made on a track or around a soccer field as long as the soccer field is marked with cones to establish the correct distances.

The first run is a double lap of the field and there is only one of these runs.

The second run consists of two one lap runs with a break in between each run to allow the other two teams to complete their run.

The third run consists of four half laps with the second team starting their run as the first team finishes and the third team doing likewise.

The runners continue in this manner until all three teams have completed their four runs.

The final set of runs consists of eight one hundred yards runs.

Again these runs are made in the two rests for one work mode.

To do this the coach should have two teams at one end of the field and the other team at the opposite end.

The first team starts from the end that has the two teams and the team at the other end sets off when the first team completes the run.

All three teams complete the eight runs in the established two rests for one work ratio.

I have used these runs as a way to get players super fit and also to establish some mental toughness in the players.

To play soccer at any level you must be as fit or fitter than your opponents or you give them an edge and the same can be said for the mental toughness aspect of the game.

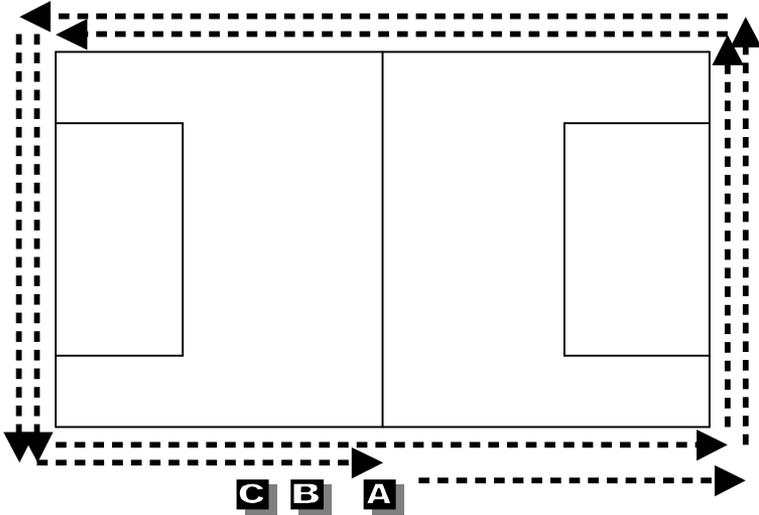
These runs will get you fit and by doing them to the best of your ability you will establish the mental toughness you'll need to take your skills to the highest level of play.

Stage one

Two laps around the playing field run at three-quarter pace.

Three teams, A, B and C take part in the exercise.

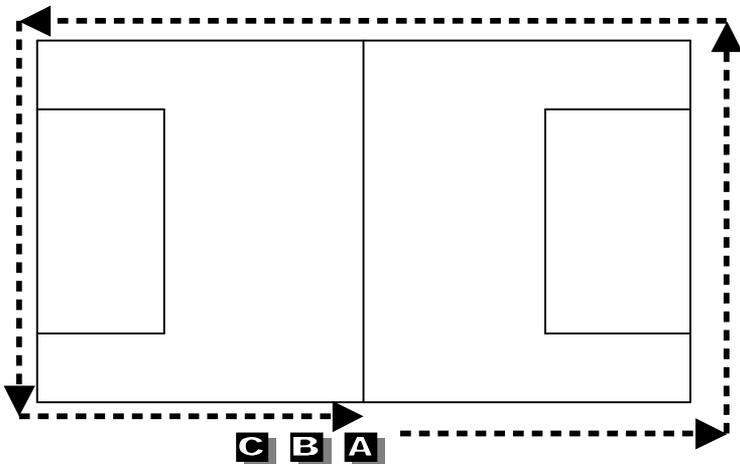
Each team sets off at 10 second intervals.



Stage two

Again the players split into three teams that set off at different times.

This time each team runs around the field once and resting for two minutes before running around the field a second time.



The Agility Test Run

Athletes of many sporting backgrounds have performed this run in order to test their agility. I came in contact with the run when the University of Washington coach Dean Wurzberger decided to test the agility level of the Husky men's soccer players.

Having worked with Dean for some three years now I've learned to respect the attention to detail he puts into his players preparation and this drill is another example of Dean moving outside the soccer exercise circle to find an advantage for his players.

The run is easy to set up and can be designed using large or small markers but if possible I would use corner flags. My preference for the flags is based on the runners need to shift their upper body to get around the flags rather than using only their feet to get around the cones.

The drill is set up in an area measuring ten yards wide by ten yards long. The design of the course is as follows, four markers or corner flags are placed at the corners of the ten yard square area while in the center of the square four markers or flags are lined up. Two of these markers are placed on the edges of the square while the other two are placed in line with them in the center of the square so that all four markers are ten feet apart.

The runner starts the run by lying face down at the starting gate situated on the outer edge of the square. On a given signal they rise and sprints to the marker some ten yards away, rounds that marker and runs back towards the middle of the square before rounding the first of the four central markers. They proceed to run in and out of the four markers and when they reach the last marker they repeat the in and out run back to the first middle marker. Once they complete this run they sprint towards the marker placed at the far end of the square and after rounding it they head towards the finish, which is the last marker in the square.

A coach or teammate should time this run so that the player can keep a record of their agility performance.

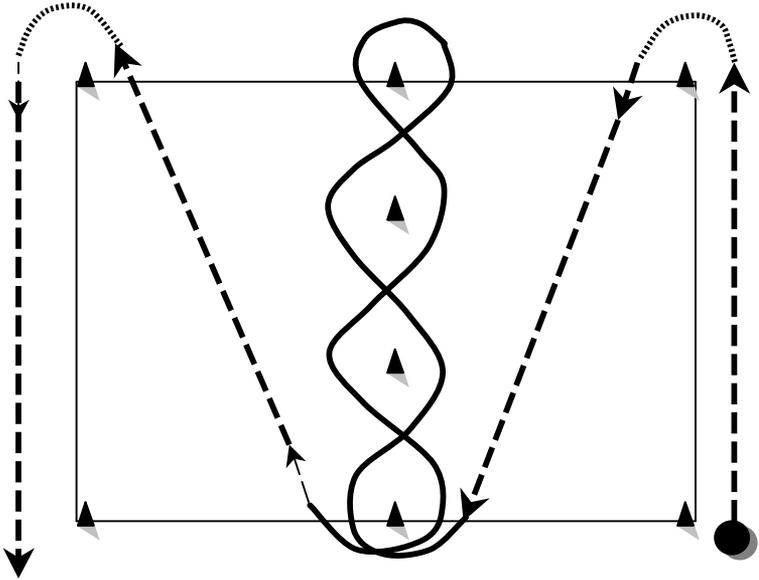


Diagram The Agility Test Run

The Twenty-Yard Sprint with a Running Start

There are people in soccer who will tell you that speed of movement is not hugely important as part of the soccer players make-up but that's not true. Certainly there have been players who have become huge stars in soccer without possessing running speed but their stardom was based on the quickness of their tactical awareness and their quick feet in the technical department of the game. However the systems of play that are being developed today and the tactics they involve are putting more demand on speedy players on the perimeter of the team shape. That leaves only the central midfield area for the ones with no foot speed and that area can accommodate only three or four players at the most.

If we look at the best teams in the World we will find that even the central midfield areas are being filled with players who possess great foot speed and I believe that will continue to be the case. The message from the game to the players seems clear enough to me, "Speed up".

Dean Wurzeberger introduced me to the twenty-yard sprint with a running start during our spell as coaches to the U'16 national team and I found it to be a quick and easy way to check the foot speed of each player.

Remember this run is done to check the "forward" running speed of the player.

We both found the results a great help in identifying the potential positioning role of each player. As I stated previously, in today's soccer the outer edges of each system are better served by players who are fleet of foot, especially in the central areas of attack and defense and of course the wing areas. Players with exceptional running speed are even populating the central midfield areas, which was once the domain of the intelligent playmakers who had quick feet but lacked running pace or the slow but powerful ball winners.

If this trend continues it would appear exceedingly helpful for each player to find a way to build up their forward running speed and this drill will help them to do that.

Placing three pairs of cones as gates sets up the run.

The first gate is set ten yards behind the second gate.

The third gate is set up twenty yards ahead of the second gate. The runner is required to start their run at the first gate and to build up their speed so that they are at full speed when they reach the second gate. Once they break through the second gate they continue on at full speed until passing through the third gate. After the player has rested for a few minutes they can try the run again. It would be helpful if the run could be timed by a friend or even by the runner using a stopwatch



Diagram The Twenty-Yard Sprint with a
Dunning Start

Soccer Runs With the Ball

The Forty-Yard Run With the Ball

The first thing a kid does when introduced to a soccer ball is to swing their foot at it in an attempt to kick it. The second thing they do is to run with it or to be more accurate, knock it forward and chase after it.

Running at speed with the ball is a kid's natural reaction to the demands of the game and as they become a more skillful soccer player the game will demand more ball control and speed from him in this particular area.

Therefore this run has been created that, with the correct number of repetitions, will help to prepare a player to run forward into open space at top speed with the ball under their control.

During a game the direction of play may be changed from the strong side to the weak side by means of a long cross-field type of pass. When this situation presents itself the recipient of the pass will almost certainly have the time and space to control the ball first and then to run forward with it. The faster the runner advances and the more ball control they show is the combination that will enable them to advance the attack deeper into enemy territory. Also the quality of their ball control while advancing will allow him to raise their head to survey the field of play without any reduction of forward speed. This will enable him to make a decision on whether to continue their forward run or to pass to a teammate in a more advantageous position.

Therefore this practice run must combine forward running speed with clean dribbling technique.

The Forty-Yard Dribble

This run requires a starting gate some two yards wide and four more gates of the same size spaced out at ten-yard intervals

The runner must dribble the ball through each of the gates

The ball passing through the last gate ends the run

If the runner misses a gate he/she can rerun

This run should be timed at least once a week to check the rate of improvement



Diagram The Forty-Yard Run with

Running and Turning with the Ball

Being able to execute quick tight turns during a game has become an essential part of playing soccer. In today's soccer atmosphere players are encouraged to put defensive pressure on the ball carrier and their closest supporting teammates and that means that the area around the ball will be crowded. Finding your way through this crowded area involves quick tight turns from the ball carrier to allow him to escape the attention of their opponent and create time and space to make a play.

Over the years players have used their imagination to invent different types of turns the most famous of these being the Cryuff turn named after the famous Dutch International player, however in my experience the most simple turns work the best.

When I coach turns to players I always introduce them to the inside of the foot turn first because it contains all of the basic ingredients for quick tight turning. The second turn I teach is the outside of the foot stop and turn because they also contain basic ingredients for good turning. Once the players have mastered these turns I will teach them some of the more complicated turns that look quite fanciful but are more or less a complication of the basic turns.

I would encourage players to practice the basic turns at each individual session to ensure that their turns are tight and explosive when they need to execute them in a real soccer game.

This drill is a simulation of a player attempting to get himself some space in a heavily defended area of the field.

The drill will sharpen the players turning while protecting the ball technique and should also improve their explosiveness while turning with the ball.

The drill requires three gates made up of cones with each gate being five yards apart

The player starts with a ten-yard forward run with the ball through the first two gates then turns at the third gate

The player dribbles the ball back to the second gate and turns again

The player dribbles the ball once again to the third gate and turns for the last time before sprinting back to the first gate.

The player should time himself or have a friend time him while making the runs

The player should make the same turn three times each drill changing the turns on each subsequent run

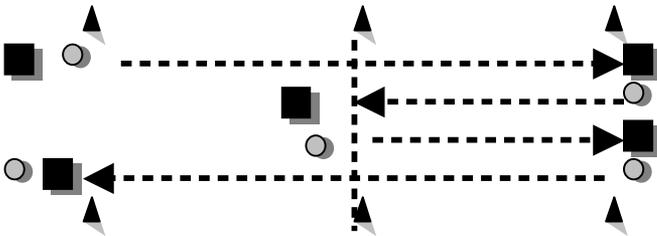


Diagram Running and Turning with the Ball

The Twenty-Yard Slalom Run

This run is called a Slalom run because the diagonal cutting movement of the ball carrier resembles that of a skier moving in and out of the slalom poles.

During any soccer game a player who likes to dribble the ball forward will need to reroute their run by cutting sharply to their right or left to avoid an opponent.

These cuts can be made by using the outside or inside of the players dribbling foot or they can change their feet to make each cut with the inside or outside of their feet depending on their preference.

Being able to cut while dribbling at speed is a key move in wrong footing the opposing defender who in most cases will be running backwards to retain a goal-side position on the ball carrier. All that is needed to wrong foot the defender is a quick diagonal cut by the ball carrier and the defender can be left floundering in the ball carrier's wake.

This run is used to teach the player how to dribble at speed with the ball while changing direction by cutting diagonally.

The faster they can do this while retaining control of the ball the better their chances are of keeping their attacking forward thrust going.

The drill set up consists of two 2-yard gates made up of cones and three single cones placed strategically in the middle

Gates 1 and 2 are placed in a straight line with 20 yards separating each gate

Cone 2 is placed ten yards ahead of gate 1 in a straight line between gate 1 and gate 2

Cone 1 is placed five yards ahead of gate 1 and three yards to the side of the two gates and the central cone

Cone 3 is placed five yards short of gate 2 in a straight line with cone 1

The runner starts by dribbling the ball through gate 1, they then round cones 1, 2 and 3 before dribbling the ball through gate 2 to end the run

The runner should time himself or have a friend time him

If the player misses a gate the drill should be rerun

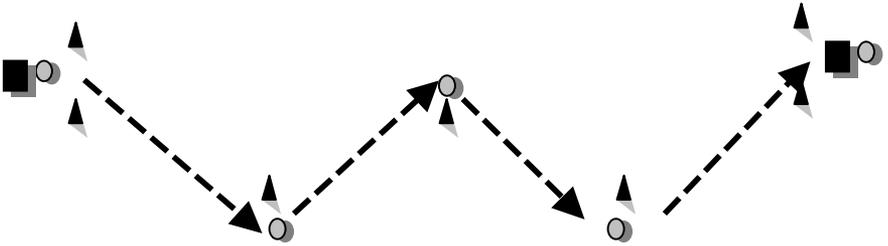


Diagram The Twenty-Yard Slalom

Ball Control Training Drills

Dribble Through Gates and Obstacles

Successful dribbling is a combination of many soccer skills. The player who can retain control of the ball while out maneuvering an opponent needs a soft touch on the ball, upper body flexibility and explosive diagonal forward movement.

To combine these three skills so that they gel into one technique called penetration dribbling takes lots of practice. Ideally it would be great to have a daily 5-a-side game with some equally accomplished teammates so that everyone could polish their dribbling skills in a competitive atmosphere but that is difficult to arrange. Therefore the player must take it upon them self to organize training that will improve their dribbling skills and most times that means practicing on their own.

This drill has been constructed specifically to help players learn to dribble past opponents while retaining tight control of the ball.

One of the main advantages to performing this drill is that it is especially good for developing players' quick foot skills.

Having quick feet while maneuvering the ball is one of the most important skills in soccer and every player has to develop quick feet skills if they are to reach the highest levels in the game.

The fastest brain counts for nothing if the feet are slow so the development of quick foot skills should be a priority in every player's personal practice program.

This drill will help

This run with the ball is 25 yards long and contains two obstacles for the player to negotiate

These obstacles consist of an entry gate, a four-cone obstacle and an exit gate

The entry and exit gates are 3 feet wide and the obstacle is slightly less wide

The total size of each obstacle is 5 yards long by 1 yard wide

The distance separating the starting gate from the first obstacle is 5 yards

Then it's 5 yards between obstacles 1 and 2 and another 5 yards to the finish line

The player should time their runs or have a friend time them for them

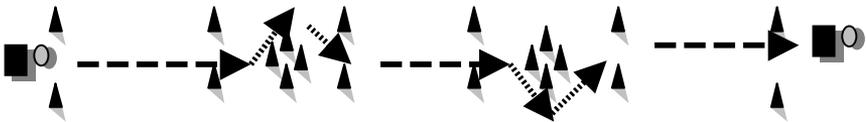


Diagram Dribble Through Gates and

Dribble the Ball and Cross into Target Area

This is a drill for all players who may find themselves in position to cross the ball from the wing area into the penalty area. The drill requires the player to run ten yards with the ball before crossing it in the air into a marked target area.

This drill is a traditional winger crossing drill dating back to the time when only wingers crossed the ball. This service was so important to the goal-scoring central and inside forwards that it became a daily practice session for the wingers so that they could retain their touch and accuracy when crossing the ball.

Today players whose team roles allow them the freedom of movement to explore the wing spaces use the drill and apart from the two center backs and the goalkeeper that includes everybody.

Because of this, crossing the ball has become one of the most important techniques for soccer players to practice.

This drill should be practiced on a marked soccer field

Two cones 5 yards apart form a starting gate at the top right hand edge of the penalty area

A similar sized gate will be placed 10 yards closer to the end line

Markers into a second six-yard area will form a general target area

The back half of the target area is the area to hit the crosses into

The players ten-yard run and cross release should be timed to improve dribbling and crossing speed

This drill can be marked out to accommodate crossing from the right or the left wing area.

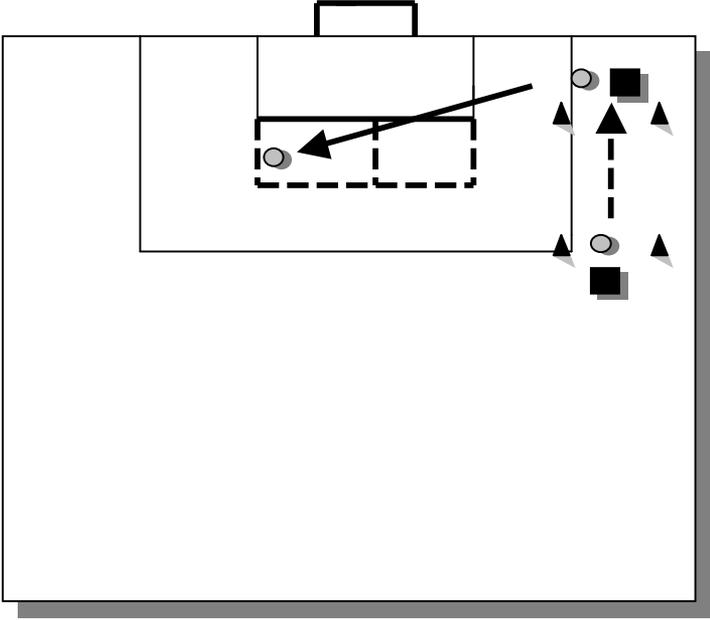


Diagram Dribble the Ball Ten Yards and Cross into Target Area

Practice Shooting on Goal

Scoring a goal for your team is one of the big moments in a soccer player’s life. Everyone remembers the exact moment that they took the opportunity to score the winning goal for their team. However, it is also easy to recall the time that we missed an opportunity to score the winning goal and how badly we felt about that, so it pays to practice our shooting techniques.

The basic technique of shooting requires the shooter to choose an area of the goal to hit, then by striking the ball cleanly project it accurately towards the targeted area.

As most shots are taken from a right or left angle to the goal and most goal scoring shots are the ones directed towards the far side of

the goal the drill I will use requires the shooter to hit accurate shots to the far side of the goal.

The drill starts with the marking of the drill area.

A six-yard wide dribbling and shooting lane is marked with flat cones from the edge of the six-yard area to the edge of the penalty area.

Two stand up marker cones form a starting gate for the dribble and shot.

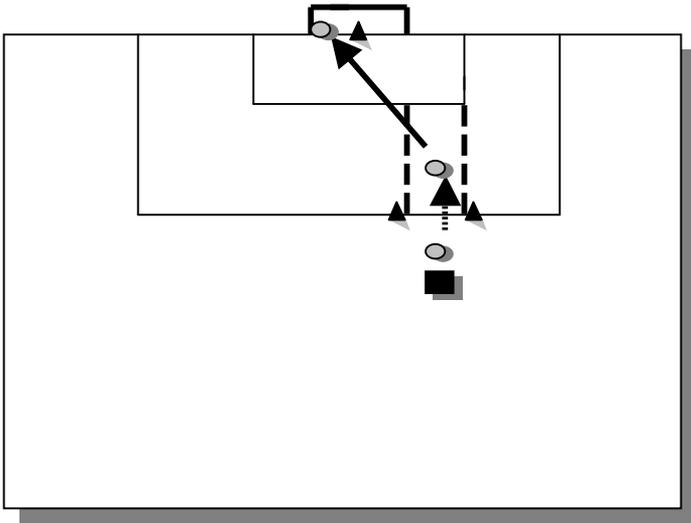
One stand up marker cone is placed on the goal line 3 yards from the far post.

The player is required to dribble the ball through the starting gate and down the lane before shooting it towards the far post target area.

Each player should advance down the lane as far as they feel comfortable then shoot from that area.

As the player gains confidence in their shooting ability they can further test their shooting accuracy by releasing their shot from further out.

This drill can be set up to accommodate both right and left footed players or players who want to shoot accurately with both feet.



A Ball and a Wall

When I was a young lad I would spend a large part of my playtime developing my soccer techniques by using a wall as a partner. This arrangement worked well for me because the return pass from the wall would mirror the quality of my original pass. This resulted in a more concentrated effort on my part to provide quality passes to the wall in order to receive the same quality in return. It was at this time that I realized that quality play encourages quality returns and that sloppy play encourages sloppy returns. As the years went by and I rose through the lower divisions to reach the top this type of quality return for quality service proved to be a huge part of the high game standards required and expected from top players.

Whenever I won a major trophy or played in an International game for my country I would think back to the time I had invested in technique practice when I was a lad and how that practice had allowed me to reach this stage. Then I secretly thanked that little lad for all the hours he had worked to make my success possible.

Getting back to the exercises, I found it better to practice with a medium sized rubber ball probably about as big as a size three-soccer ball when working on my skills. However these types of balls were hard to find so I would usually end up practicing with a tennis ball or what was left of the tennis ball once the fluffy outside cover wore away. The smaller type of ball was also easier to carry around because it fit nicely into my pocket so I spent most of my practice time using it.

I learned so much from that little ball, it taught me how to head, control, pass and dribble and all the time I was learning I felt challenged to the max.

Today's soccer practice areas have changed quite dramatically for the ambitious soccer player. For any number of reasons it is no longer safe to practice on the streets but we do have some soccer practice sanctuaries remaining. First there's the schoolyards that have lots of wall practice space in their play grounds and gymnasiums, then there's the garage walls or the side of the house that would allow many of the ball and wall drills to be performed with no damage to the home. If players are eager to practice there

are places to accommodate them but the enthusiasm to become better soccer players must come from the players themselves. With this sort of drive force behind them the players will invent their own games so that they can truly test their natural talents to the limit. Here are just a few of the games that helped me to achieve my goal of becoming a professional soccer player.

Glasgow Headers

This exercise was named after the city in Scotland that claimed to have invented it or perhaps where the exercise was first witnessed by a Dundee man who brought the idea back to Dundee and introduced it to the City's soccer players. All I know is that it was introduced to me as Glasgow Headers and I'm passing it on as the same.

Glasgow Headers can be practiced with almost any size and type of ball but I preferred to use a small plastic or rubber ball so that I could practice as long as I wanted and my head wouldn't hurt at the end.

This exercise taught me how to head the ball properly and that proved invaluable to me as a soccer player. Many of my greatest memories are those of aerial duels won both offensively and defensively against some of the best headers of the ball in England. I must admit that some of the greatest thrills I had came from rising into the air to meet a cross with my head to power the ball past the keeper and into the net. It was equally rewarding to rise above one of the giant center forwards that roamed the English soccer fields and to power a header high and long to clear the ball from the danger area.

These thrills were made available to me because I practiced Glasgow Headers every day as part of my routine and they will be available to you if you do what I did.

The really neat thing about this exercise is that you can do it in so many different places. For example, as a young lad I would practice this exercise on the walls of my bedroom and as I got older

I took to practicing it in the entrances of the tenement that I lived in. Still later I would practice it on the walls in our school playground. I always found this exercise challenging because I was always trying to beat my best ever score and when I did I felt that I had established a New World record.

The exercise is reasonably easy to follow although it does take a certain amount of touch, timing and concentration to be able to master it.

The Heading Exercise

All you need is a ball and a wall

Stand some three feet from the wall then throw the ball against the wall and head the return back against the wall

Keep heading the ball back against the wall until you miscue it and it bounces to the ground

Keep a count of the number of repetitions you made and start the drill over again

Always attempt to beat your best previous score during the session

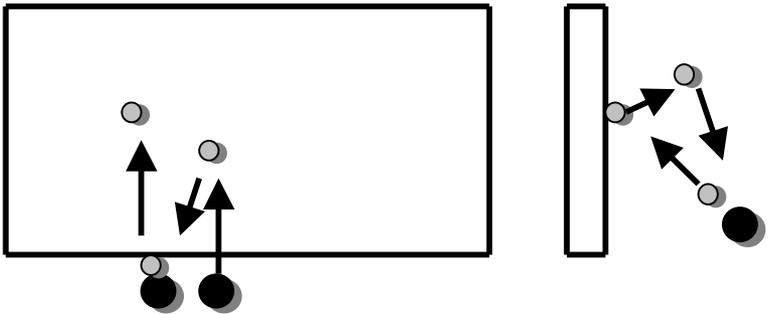


Diagram Glasgow Headers

Bounce and Volley Practice Drill

The higher the standard you reach in soccer the quicker your decision making has to be and the more control a player needs in the technical area of their game. In this high-speed atmosphere the player's ability to pass the ball accurately with their first touch gives them a huge advantage over players who require a control touch before passing.

Knowing this, players seek to perfect their first touch passing technique regardless of the type of delivery pass received from their teammate. All too often in a fast pace game the receiver of the pass can expect the incoming pass to arrive in the air or even worse on the bounce and they will still be required to pass with their first touch if they are to make a successful play.

The amount of times I found myself in this type of situation as a professional soccer player are too many to count, yet time and again I was able to make the play instinctively and almost always successfully.

The reason I could do this stretches back to my practices as a young lad in Dundee when I would work for hours at a time perfecting bounce pass technique.

As a young budding soccer player I would use this drill to sharpen my eye to foot coordination. Also I found the drill to be challenging especially when limiting myself to playing the ball with either my right or left foot only. The drill was tailor made for the narrow openings of the tenement buildings and the small size of the tennis ball made for a perfect challenge.

Once again this drill consists of a ball, a wall and a player

The player bounces the ball and using the side of their foot kicks it against the wall

The rebound must be allowed to bounce before the player can once more kick the ball against the wall

The player counts the number of repetitions before the drill breaks down remembering only their best ever score because that's the one to beat.

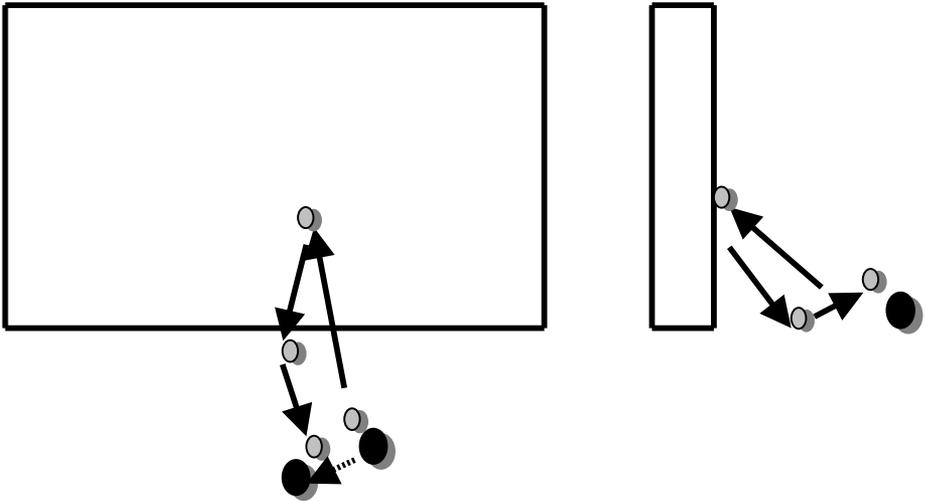


Diagram Bounce and Volley Practice

Bounce and Volley Using Two Walls

Every once in a while a player will come across a corner where two walls are joined together something that didn't happen too often in the Dundee Tenements but I have seen adjoining walls in the playgrounds of many schools. Adjoining walls are also featured in school gymnasiums and the luxury of these covered enclosures allows us to experiment with balls of different sizes and bounce capacity.

Obviously a full size soccer ball may not be ideal for gym practice but a tennis ball or small rubber ball would provide the practicing player with some unique challenges.

The corner wall also presents an ideal opportunity for the player to work on some right foot and left foot combinations.

Once again the player starts the drill by bouncing the ball on the ground before volleying it against one of the walls

The player allows the return to bounce once before volleying the ball against the other wall

The drill continues in this manner until a mistake occurs

The thing I liked about the two wall drills was the opportunity to use the inside of my right foot to pass to one wall and the outside of my right foot to pass to the other.

The drill could also work using only my left foot or I could use the inside of my right foot to pass to one wall then the inside of my left foot to pass to the other.

As you can see there are lots of ways to change the drill but it is important to your eye-foot coordination development that you allow the ball to bounce off the wall and the ground before playing it again.

As with all the other drills count the number of repetitions you achieve with each drill and try to beat your best score.

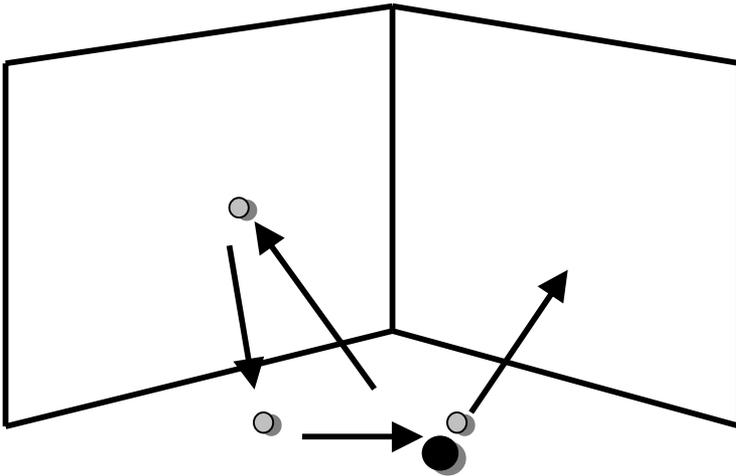


Diagram Bounce and Volley using Two Walls

Learning to Kill the Bounce

Every soccer player who hopes to reach a reasonably high level of play must spend time learning how to control the ball or as they say in Scotland “Learn to kill the bounce of the ball”. Urged on by my Father I was encouraged to spend at least some of my “Ball and Wall” time learning to do just that.

The trick to killing the bounce is to get your foot over the ball just as it hits the ground and this causes your foot to act like a wedge to stop the ball from bouncing.

Perhaps a better word to describe this technique would be trapping the ball because the ball is trapped between the ground and the foot. Some players perform this trapping method using the sole of their foot but I would suggest that the players perform this drill using the inside or the outside of their foot only.

My reasoning is this, the sole of the foot method of trapping stops the ball dead forcing the player to step back from the ball in order to pass or shoot it or even to maneuver it to one side or the other. This extra movement takes time, which is something that a player under defensive pressure might not have. However, if the player uses the inside or outside of their foot, they can control and maneuver the ball with the same touch. What the player wants to do is to control the ball and pass it to the area they want to gather it to, with the one move.

The best bounce control player I ever saw was the great Irish legend George Best. George could control any type of incoming pass to perfection but the way he could tame the most awkwardly bouncing balls was, to me, some advanced form of art.

Of course to perfect this type of technique takes some natural ability in the areas of touch and timing but constant practice will allow the player to reach that level.

The drill itself is simple enough; the player throws the ball against the wall and then puts them self in a position to enable them to control the ball as it bounces.

The drill is repeated using the inside and outside of the foot until the player is comfortable with the progress they has made.

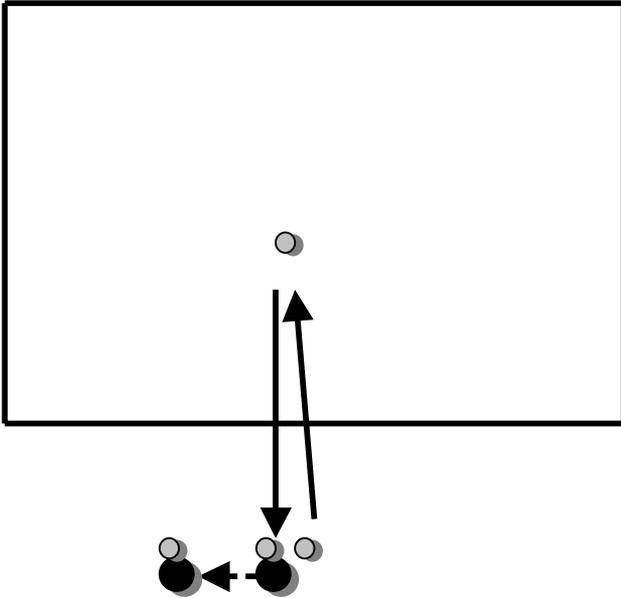


Diagram Learning to Kill the Bounce