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Fall 2020**

Coaching Plan #1 – week of August 30th



The practice plan focuses on evaluating the team on an individual and group basis. Initial drills/exercises are designed to measure players' ability to perform fundamental skills of passing, receiving, and dribbling. The larger group “**rondo**” exercises that follow replicate more game-like situations and should provide you with an idea of how the players might fit into the team and what role they might play.

**** **For new coaches** not familiar with the term, a “**rondo**” is a training situation where one group of players has the ball while in **numerical superiority** (3v1, 5v2, 6v4, etc...) over another group of players within a designated area. The group with a numerical superiority (**attackers**) attempt to maintain possession of the ball from the group in numerical inferiority (**defenders**).

NOTE: *Rondos are excellent training situations, even for higher level players, as they provide opportunities for learning, decision-making, and improvement. Players are required to execute skills under game-simulated pressures of limited time, restricted space, and the challenge of opponents. They must also make decisions as to when and where to pass, dribble, or shoot. These requirements replicate actual game conditions.*

SUGGESTED PRACTICE PLAN (90-minute session)

Warm-up: (15 minutes)

All players, each with a ball, dribble within a 20 x 30-yard area. Dribblers attempt to avoid contact with other players as they move throughout the space with the ball close to their feet. Encourage players to use various surfaces of the foot (inside, outside, sole, etc.) to control the ball. Every few moments, on the coach command, players change speed, direction, or both while keeping the ball under close control.

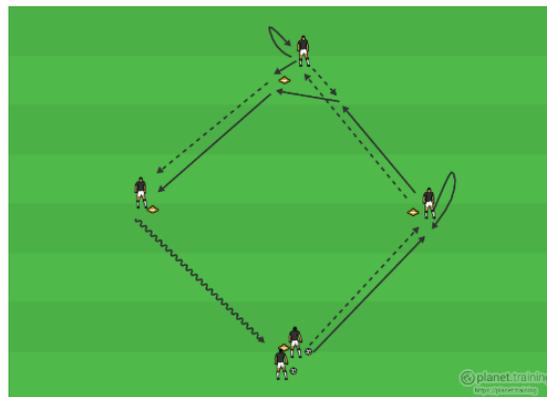
After 8-10 minutes progress to....

Same set-up except this portion of warm-up requires 1 ball for every 2 or 3 players. All players begin moving throughout the area – those with a ball dribble, those without a ball move into open spaces to receive a passed ball from a teammate who is dribbling a ball. Encourage players to verbally communicate with one another. Emphasize that the ball should be received and controlled into the space of next intended movement –*the ball should not be stopped completely when receiving it.*

***** NOTE: All players, with or without a ball, continuously move, pass, and receive passes for this portion of warm-up.**

Individual Skill Training (20-25 minutes)

Exercise #1. Diamond Passing & Receiving - (10 min)



Use 4 discs or small cones to mark out a diamond shape approximately 15 yards wide and 15 yards deep. To begin, position a player (without a ball) at each of 3 markers. Position 2-3 players, each with a ball, at the 4th marker (bottom of the diamond). The first player at marker #4 passes to the teammate at the next marker (to the right), and then follows his/her pass to that marker. The player receiving the ball turns with it and passes to the player at the next marker, and likewise follows the pass to that spot. Players continuously receive, pass, and follow their pass as they move around the circuit. Include 2 or 3 balls in the exercise, so players are constantly passing, moving, and receiving the ball.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage players to turn with the ball as they receive it in preparation of passing to the next teammate in the circuit. Their 1st touch when receiving the ball should set up the 2nd touch – the pass
- All passes should be firm and played along the ground
- Increase speed of play as players become more adept at passing

progress to...

Exercise #2. Diamond Dribbling - Passing - Receiving (10 min)

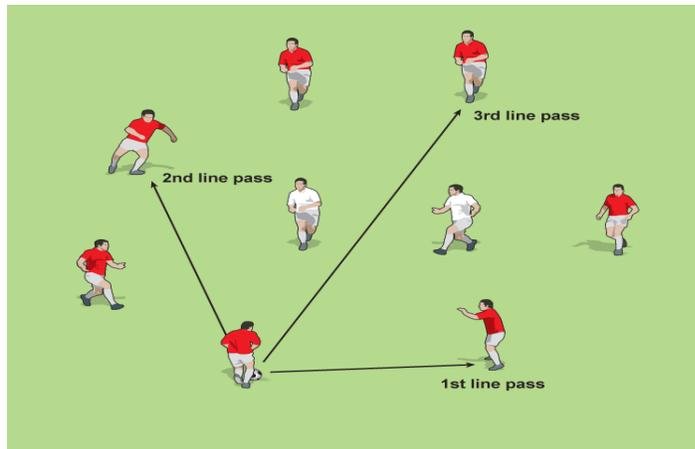
Same set-up as Exercise #1 except the diamond is larger – 20 yards deep by 20 yards wide. Players dribble half-way to the next marker, then release a pass to the teammate stationed there, and then follow the pass to that marker. Player receiving the pass does the same to the next marker. Include 2 or 3 balls in the exercise so that players are constantly moving from one marker to the next.

progress to Team/Group Exercises...

Group Rondo Exercises (30-40 minutes)

(adding the pressure of opponents)

Rondo #1: Possession within 15 x 20-yard area (15 minutes)



Seven (7) or 8 players attempt to maintain possession of the ball from 2 defenders within the area.

Depending upon the age and ability of your players, you may want to limit attacking players to 3 touches or fewer to receive and pass the ball. Place a supply of balls nearby in case the ball is kicked away from the area and coach can immediately enter another ball. **Keep players active!** Award the attacking players 1 point for 6 or more consecutive passes without loss of possession. Play for 4-5 minutes and then rotate 2 new defenders into the game and repeat. Continue until all players have served as defenders.

Coaching Points: There are 3 basic passing options for attackers in effort to maintain possession of the ball from defenders (*see illustration above*)

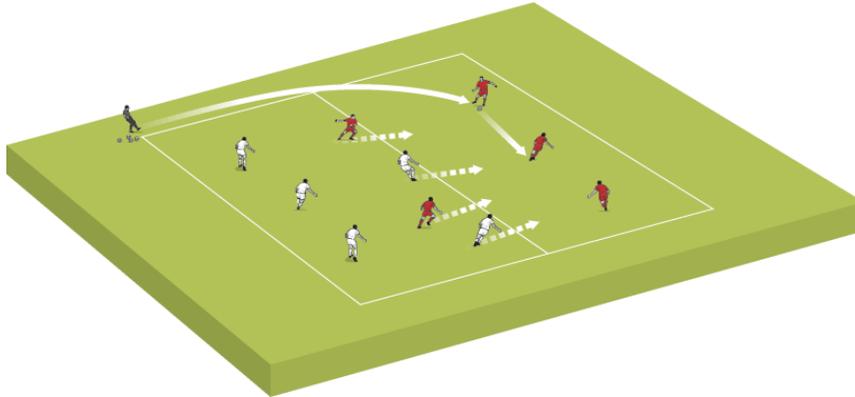
- **First Line Pass.** Short pass to teammate nearby. This is the easiest pass and ensures possession.
- **Second Line Pass.** This pass bypasses the teammate next to the passer but does not split defenders. It requires defenders to readjust positions and helps to maintain possession.
- **Third Line Pass.** This is the pass that splits the defenders (*see illustration*) – the “killer” pass that penetrates the defense and creates goal scoring opportunities in actual game play.

To make the exercise more difficult for the attacking players

- Reduce size of playing area
- Limit attackers to 3 or fewer touches to pass and receive the ball

Progress to Rondo #2 - a game-like situation where defenders must reposition to close down (limit) attacking space.....

Rondo #2: 5 vs 2 to 2 vs 5 Possession (15-20 min)



Set-up: Outline a 30×30-yard area divided by a midline. Split the group into 2 teams of equal numbers. I've used 10 players in this rondo, but you can use 12 or 14 if you have that many players. The coach positions beside the field with a supply of balls and acts as a server.

Teams station in opposite halves of the field. The game starts with a pass from the server (coach) into one of the teams. Two players from the opposing (defending) team print across the midline to try to win the ball. When a defending player gains possession of the ball he/she passes it to a teammate stationed in his/her teams' half of the field and immediately rejoins the team.

The team losing possession sends 2 players into the opponent's half to win the ball back. Players can use dribbling and/or passing skills to maintain possession of the ball – there are no restrictions on the attackers. If the ball goes out of play the coach immediately passes a new ball to the opposite team and the game continues....

To make the game more difficult

- Reduce size of playing areas
- Limit attackers to 3 or fewer touches to pass and receive the ball

Concluding Game:

6 v 6 (+ 2 (neutrals) to full goals (20 minutes)

Include the entire team in this game. Play on a 30-yard wide by 40-yard long field with a full-size goal on each end line. Station a goalkeeper in each goal. Organize teams of equal numbers. Designate 2 additional players as “neutrals” who always play with the team in possession to create a numerical player advantage for the team with the ball (**coaches who wish to be involved in the exercise can play as neutrals**). Neutrals are restricted to 3 or fewer touches to receive and pass the ball, and they are not permitted to score goals. Use colored vests to differentiate teams and the neutral players. Regular soccer rules apply.

COOL DOWN: Jog, stretch, review important points of the session.