

LEVEL: Intermediate or Advanced
TOPIC: First Touch Under Pressure

DESCRIPTION

24x24 yard grid with a series of cones down the middle, two yards apart. Players work in twos to move along the line of cones passing between them. Start with players facing each other and passing to a stationary receiver. You can advance this is several ways:

- 1) ask them to play the pass to a moving receiver
- 2) ask them to trap and move the ball to the next gate in 2 touches
- 3) ask them to zig-zag to the end with as few touches as possible
- 4) ask them to receive the ball aerially (one partner throws, the other traps, moves then picks up the ball to throw it back)
- 5) ask them to team-juggle the ball all the way to the end

Make it easier - make the cones farther apart (3 yards)
Make it harder - use any of the progressions from above

24x24 yard grid with an 8x8 yard grid in the center - Spread your players around the outside of the large square, half with a ball and half without. Select two players to go inside the central square. One fo them will be an attacker, one will be a defender. The attacker will try to check-out to get a ball from the outside and connect a pass to a new outside player. After each rep they must check back to the middle square. They will do this as many times as they can within sixty seconds. The defenders job is to try to intercept the balls coming in. Rotate through all players in the center. You can also have the outside players serve the ball aerially or as throw-ins to make the game more challenging.

Make it easier - put two attackers and only one defender in the middle Make it harder - ask players to complete the pass with only two touches

24x24 yard field with a small goal in each corner - 8 attackers v 4 defenders with one ball- four players from the attacking team space out around the outside of the square - that will leave a 4v4 in the center. The job of the attacking team is to receive a ball from the outside, trap it and score in either of the goals on the opposite end (we suggest using throw-ins to make the game realistic). The defenders are trying to intercept the ball and can score in any of the small goals.

Make it easier - allow the attacking team to score in any goal

Make it harder - ask the attacking team to connect a minimum number of passes before scoring

Small-sided game, we suggest 5v5 but try to keep all players engaged. We suggest no goalkeepers and the use of small goals to encourage accuracy. In order to create plenty of coaching moments we suggest setting your formations to have equal attackers and defenders on each team, for example: 2-1-2. We always advise that you should allow time for players to enjoy the scrimmage without any conditions.

Make it real -

- 1) Assign positions
- 2) Set a formation
- 3) Help players understand their role

FIRST COACHING POINT - PREPARATION

COACHING POINTS

Does the receiving player prepare themself by being on their toes, knees bent and ready to reach?

SECOND COACHING POINT - TRACKING THE TRAJECTORY OF THE BALL

Ask players how they might track a ball they think they will trap (should be in line with the body) vs a ball they may choose to play first touch (should track outside of their hips towards the back foot)

## FIRST COACHING POINT - DECISION MAKING

The attackers should be checking out to receive a ball with an idea of their next move - their body position and approach should take them in their chosen direction while also keeping their body in-between the ball and the defender. They may also have to decide whether to hold the ball or release based on the defenders actions

## FIRST COACHING POINT - DECISION

Players in the center will not have much time - they must act quickly and try to connect with the outside players efficiently. Central players should be looking in all directions for ways to connect passes.

## COACHING SUMMARY

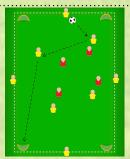
Try to find instances in the game to freeze the play when your coaching points are relevant. Keep your freeze short and concise - try to find opportunities when a defending player is beaten and nobody is there to cover. Some examples:

- A player gets caught in possession of the ball when they had some passing options
  available
- 2) A player takes their first touch but doesn't take the ball in either direction

DIAGRAM









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TACTICAL