

Topic: Developing Attacking Play. By Greg Maas, State Technical Director, Utah Youth Soccer Association.

Activity #1:

Set Up:

8 players are positioned inside a 40x40 yard grid as shown in Diagram (a) below. One ball is needed for the exercise. Players are numbered 1-8. Repeat setup to accommodate rest of team.

Objective:

Players must move constantly around the playing area as shown below. Players must pass in sequence (i.e., numerical order, reverse order, odds then even, etc.) to increase the demand.

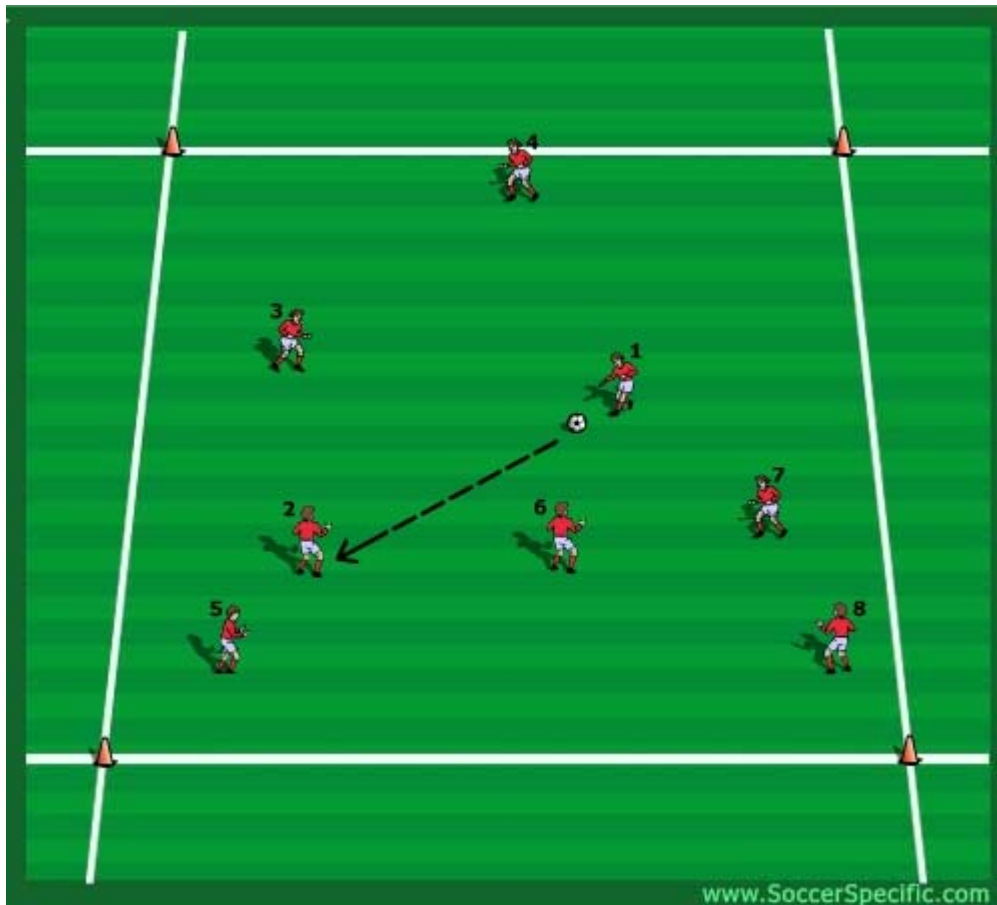


Diagram (a)

Explanation:

This develops great awareness of time, space, and player positions. Awareness of where the player you receive from is and where the player you pass to is. Because of this, players begin to anticipate the pass to them and where it is coming from.

We are trying to create a situation where players are looking two moves ahead not just one. For instance as #1 is about to pass to #2, #3 should be looking to support #2 for the next pass, looking two moves ahead before the ball leaves #1. Likewise, #2 should already know where #3 is to pass to.

Progressions:

Use two balls then three balls at the same time. Start with a ball at #1 and #5 then at #1, #4 and #7. To keep the sequence going players must move the balls quickly with few touches hence their over-all vision development improves dramatically. As soon as they have passed one ball off the next one is arriving so speed of thought is needed to make the correct decisions.

Activity #2:**Set Up:**

4 teams of 4 players each are positioned inside a 40x40 yard grid as shown below in Diagram (b). Each team is numbered in sequence. Red and Green work together: Yellow and White work together.

Objective:

Players must move constantly around the grid passing in sequence. For example – Red #1 passes to Green #2, Green #2 passes to Red #3 and so on.

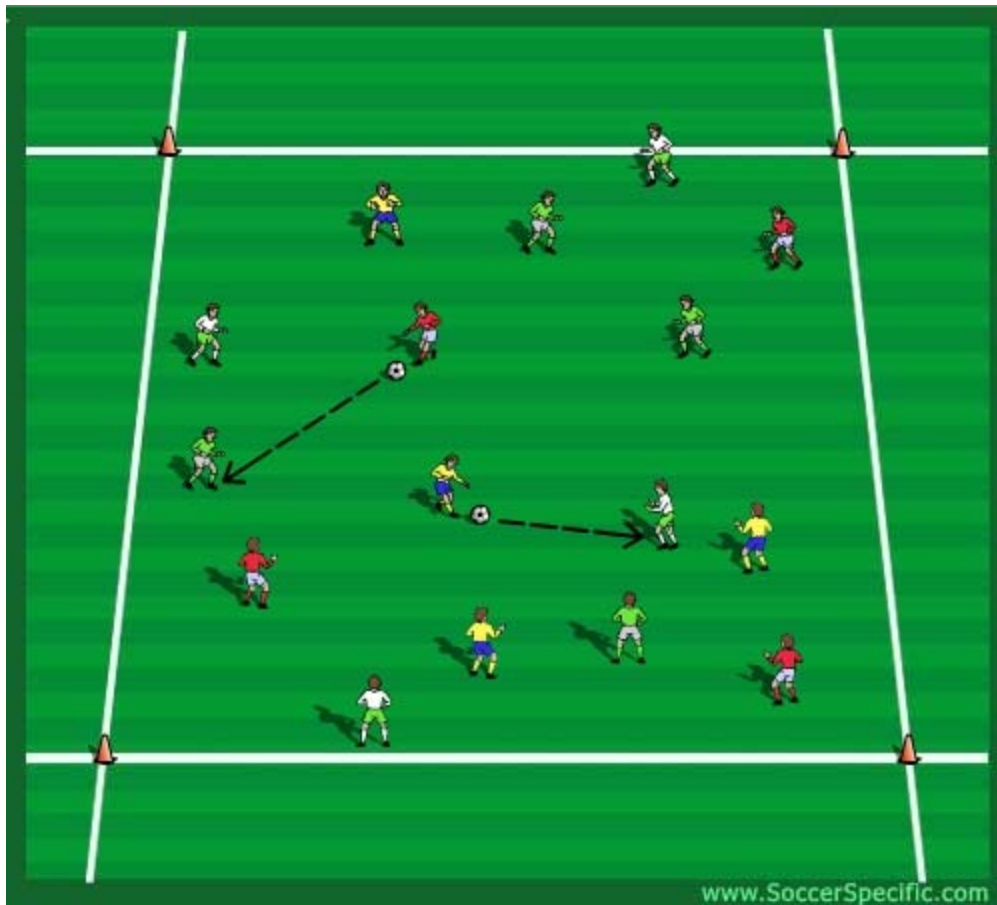


Diagram (b)

Progression:

Reduce the number of touches players are allowed each time they receive a pass, unlimited touches to begin, then three touch, then two touch, then one touch age appropriate. This speeds up the decision making process and forces them to look earlier as to where they are passing to.

Coaching Points:

- Accuracy, weight, and timing of the pass
- Creating space off of the ball and improving supporting angles
- Group shape and balance in possession
- Speed of thought and play

Activity #3:

Set Up:

7v7 in a 70x40 and flags or cones are used to create 3 mini-goals at each end of the playing area as shown below in Diagram (c).

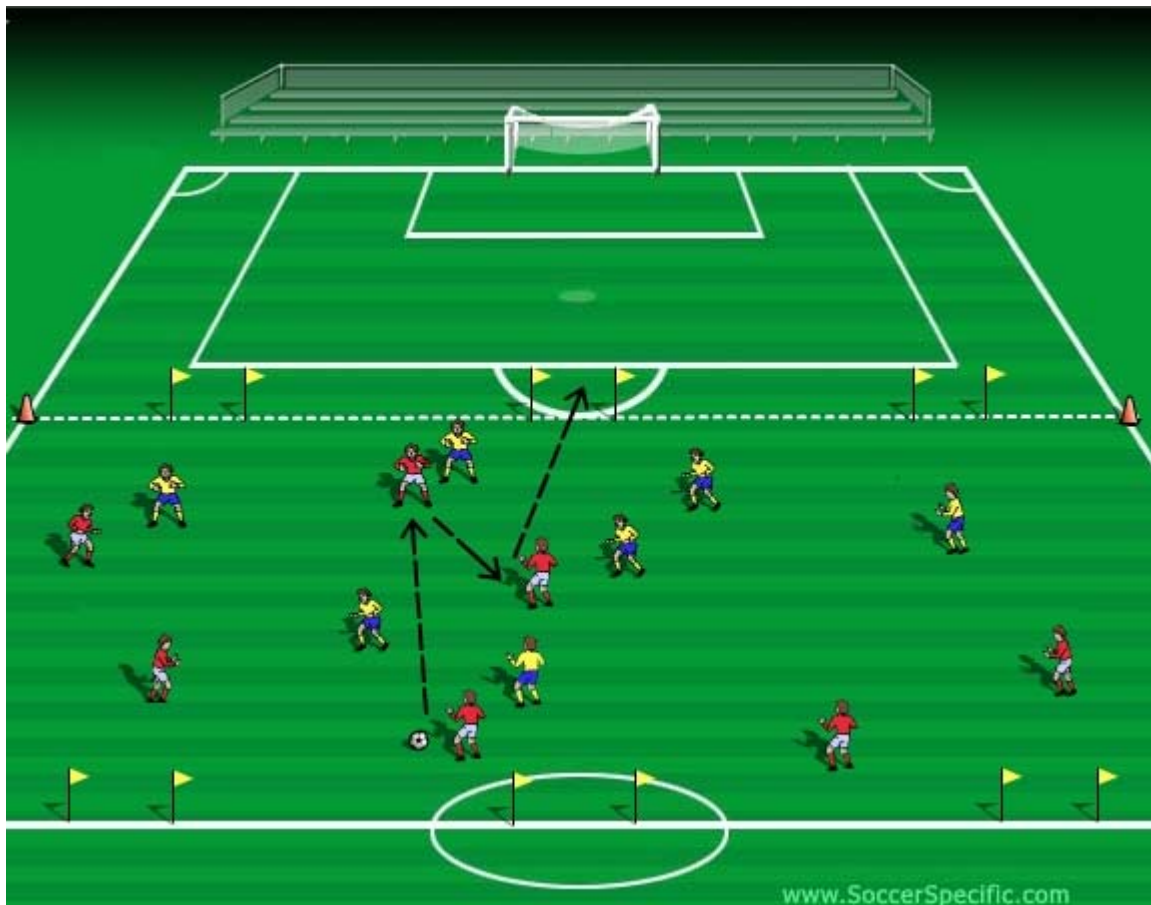


Diagram (c)

Objective:

Both teams compete for possession of the ball and attempt to score points by penetrating through their opponents mini-goals. Game is continuous for a designated period of time or for a predetermined number of goals. Players are encouraged to look for combination play to penetrate. Players may also dribble through the mini-goals to score points. Touch restrictions can be added based on the level of play.

Coaching Points:

- Supporting shape and balance for team in possession
- Change of rhythm to exploit opportunities to penetrate
- Decision making and speed of play
- Movement and timing of 2nd and 3rd man runs

Activity #4:**Set Up:**

A 7v7 plus goalkeepers is organized on a half pitch as shown below in Diagram (d). Goalkeepers are in each goal. Formations are – Red 1:3:3:2 and Yellow 1:2:3:3.



Diagram (d)

Objective:

Both teams compete for possession of the ball and attempt to score in their opponents goal. Teams are encouraged to be creative in the attack and utilize key ideas in terms of developing attacking play.

Coaching Points:

- Find the most efficient way possible to score
- All of the above