

PILLARS OF THE GAME

1. Technique

Fundamental -Stationary to moving, no pressure

Match related-Moving to full speed, limited pressure from opponent

Match conditions-Full speed, full pressure from opponent

2. Fitness

Components of fitness:

*Speed

*Agility

*Strength

*Endurance

3. Tactics

Limited Area

To Goal

Counter Attack

*Restrictions-Time, Touches, etc., simple to more complex

4. Psychological

Players make up

*Attitude

*Work Rate

*Playing Under Adverse Conditions

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Once a player has a feel for the ball so that he can dribble, collect, shoot, and use a variety of passes including long and short balls, it is time to learn the basic principles of soccer. Generally, this is clarified using 6 players, with details of 3 offensive and 3 defensive players used to illustrate the basic roles. Once these fundamental roles are somewhat understood, we can move to team tactics, team arrangements and functional roles. Even players as young as 10-12 can understand the rudiments of 1st and 2nd attacker and defender. Soon after players can learn the 3rd attacker and 3rd defenders' responsibilities, though more learning can continue for the entire playing career of a professional soccer player, or even the entire time one coaches. Without an understanding of these basic roles, team tactics are ludicrous, or at the very least, a low level. Players, of course, need not know the names or the roles, nor need they explain the roles, but they need to use the concepts (though their knowledge may only be intuitive). Knowing the names and responsibilities will not detract, but as far as the quality of play is concerned, only implementation of the concepts is important.

Basic Player Roles of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Attackers

A₁ = First Attacker

(Player about to receive or in possession of ball)

PENETRATION

(Main responsibility is to get behind defenders)

- * Score if possible
- * Forward movement preferred
- * Shoot, dribble, pass, shield
- * Get ball to most dangerous location possible
- * Take chances to score
- * Becomes much more dangerous when a 2nd attacker offers quality support and 3rd attacker truly provides mobility

A₂ = Second Attacker

(Try to ensure protection)

SUPPORT

(Focus on possession)

- * Generally behind the ball, but if permitted quality support in front of first attacker, this even better, as long as situation does not present great danger if ball is lost
- * Confuse second defender; do not allow him to cover and mark
- * Always ready to receive - at feet or in space
- * Be ready to be first defender if ball is lost

A₃ = Third Attacker

(Disturb defense through positioning)

MOBILITY

(Width and depth)

- * Draw defenders attention
- * Work with other 3rd attackers
- * Get behind and spread defense
- * Maintain eye contact and accelerate to receive
- * There can be several third attackers
- * Diagonal runs, overloads, occupy dangerous locations, etc.

Basic Player Roles of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Defenders

D₁ = First Defender
(Covers first attacker)

DELAY

(Pressure on ball carrier)

- * Be patient, once there is cover, more aggressive moves to win ball are made
- * Attempt to steer player to sideline or a helping teammate
- * Protect goal, stay goalside
- * Force square or back passes
- * Win ball, go for ball, or tackle when you have cover
- * Keep attacker from turning & looking up

D₂ = Second Defender
(Helping first defender)

COVER

(Focus on double coverage)

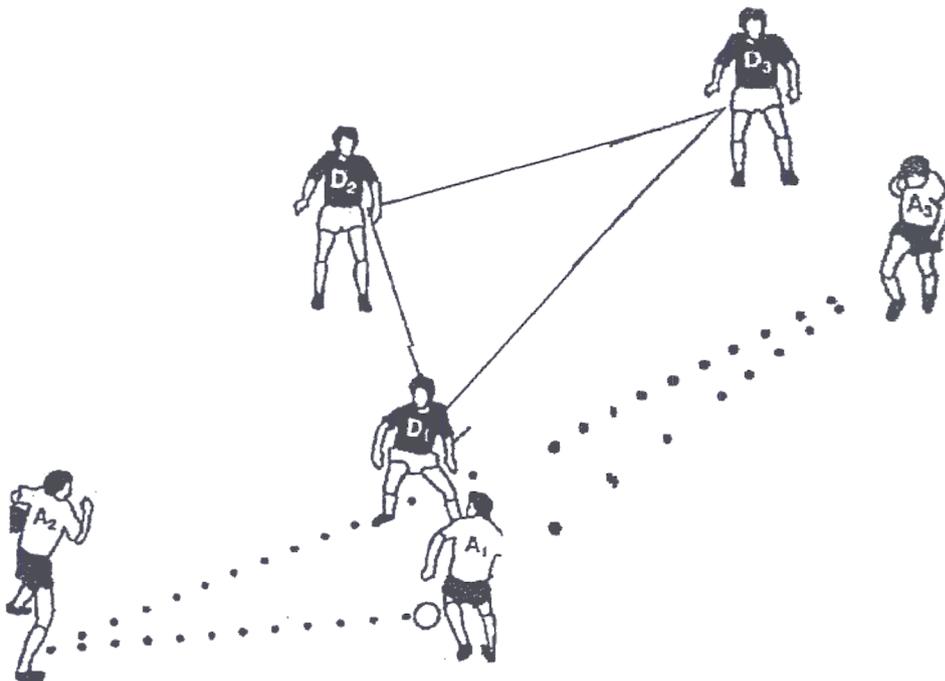
- * Cover precedes man coverage, do both as best as possible, but cover is first priority
- * Provide DEPTH
- * Attempt to cut out passes
- * Be ready to be first defender, stop shots and dangerous passes
- * Maintain vision, see ball and man

D₃ = Third Defender

BALANCE

(Concentration)

- * Restrict space; squeeze attacking space
- * Cut out passes when attempt is safe
- * Stay goalside and talk (communicate)
- * Always recover to the penalty spot unless behind it
- * Always attempt to see ball and man
- * There can be several third defenders



PRINCIPLES OF ATTACK & DEFENSE

Attack:

1. Mobility

Support

Width

4. Improvisation

Penetration

6. Finishing

Defense:

1. Immediate Chase & Numbers Back Goal Side

Support Center

Delay & Containment

4. Concentration

Balance

6. Control and Restrain

SYSTEMS OF PLAY

I would recommend that when your team is playing with 4 players, the shape should be a 3-1. With 5 players, the shape should be a 3-1-1. With 6 players, the shape should be a 3-1-2. With 7 players the shape should be a 3-3-1. With 8 players the shape should be a 3-3-2.

As your teams progress to 11v11 there are many formations that you can use (4-4-2, 3-4-3, 4-3-3, 3-5-2, 4-5-1, etc.). The most important thing to remember is that whatever formation you use, all of your players should attack and all of your players should defend while keeping the correct shape (width and depth in attack, pressure/cover/balance/compactness on defense). As the players get older (15+) you can decide which system you use based on the qualities of the players (ex: a lack of “defenders” may dictate that you use a system with 4 backs).

Player development is paramount! We should not focus our attention on “systems” to the point that we are taking away from the individual progression of our players (especially at the younger age groups). Our young players should not be limited because they are afraid to leave an “area” or a “position” during a game.

Warming Up

1. Shadow Boxing - 30, 45 sec. - 3 bouts (boxing with an imaginary partner).
2. Brisk Walking - confined area, add vigorous arm movement.
3. Slow Running - forward, backward, sideward; add raising the knees high from time to time; raising the heels high.
4. Skipping high and low; slow and fast; changing direction.
5. Running at different speeds; many direction changes.
6. "EVERYBODY'S IT" - tag other team members without getting touched, last player tagged wins - start another game.
7. "HOP TAG" - Same as above but player's must hop.
8. "FOOT TAG" - partners try to touch other player's foot with the sole of their own foot (light touches, quick feet) .
9. Leap Frog and Under - crawl through the legs of partner and hop over ball with both feet.
10. Ball Taps - touch the top of the ball with one foot then other; increase speed; go around the ball.
11. "Two Player Back Tag" - Two players stand facing each other, each player tries to get behind the other to tap them on the back. Variation: "Entire Team Back Tag".

Ball Gymnastics: Individual

1. Pinch the ball between ankles, lift it to your hands by jumping, and then bend to place it on the ground.
2. While sitting, throw the ball up under hand. Get up, jump and catch it over your head. Sit. Repeat.
3. Stand with your legs straight and the ball at your feet. With your hands roll it around your feet. Repeat. variation: Figure eight around legs.
4. Sitting with the ball pinched between ankles, lie back with arms stretched behind head, bring the ball over your head to your hands.
5. Sit straight-legged with the ball at your hands, roll it around behind your back and again. Repeat.
6. Any surface juggling (add a catch if necessary, or a bounce).

Ball Gymnastics: Partners

1. Two players stand back to back, feet together, twist upper body and hand the ball to their partner, who in turn twists and returns to the ball. Repeat. Increase speed, change direction.
2. Two players stand back to back, one player passes the ball with their hands under their legs to partner, who stands and passes the ball over their head. Over the head under the legs. Repeat. Increase speed.
3. Two players start with balls (2) held on their left side. Both throw at the same time to the other's right side. Each returns the ball to his left side to throw again.
4. Two players face one another, 2-3 yds. apart - 1 ball. Players volley (pass the ball in the air) the ball to one another. All surfaces of the foot. Volley- catch -volley.
5. Two players face one another, 2-3 yds. apart - 1 ball. Player rolls the ball under the legs of their partner. Partner must turn and retrieve ball before it stops rolling. Process is repeated by each player.
6. Two players stand facing away from each other, 5-10 yds. apart. Each holds a ball. One player throws the ball through their legs; the other throws their ball over their head. Each turns. to catch the pass. Repeat, switching roles.

STRETCHING

1. Quadriceps:

Lean backwards for a deeper stretch.



2. Hamstring/Lower Back:

Try to keep the back straight while pushing the chest forward and reach as far forward as you can.

3. Groin:

Stretch is accentuated by getting the knees as close to the ground as possible while keeping the back straight and pushing the chest forward.



4. Lower Back:

Pull one knee or both knees simultaneously towards the chest while keeping your head and shoulders on the ground.

5. Calf/Achilles Tendon:

Keep the back foot flat on the ground while leaning against a teammate or a wall. A straight back leg stretches the calf while a slightly bent knee stretches the Achilles.



6. Hip Flexor:

Bend the rear leg/knee so it is near the ground while extending the front legs and hands forward.

7. Quadriceps:

Pull back the ankle and hold with the upper leg parallel to the ground.

