

Teaching Possession Play – Phase 1

Objective: To provide coaches with a developmental process for teaching possession focused play.

Discussion:

Possessing the ball in soccer is a choice. Developing this skill in a player and a team takes time, patience, and the technical ability to receive from – and play a ball to a moving teammate in a small space. Development of this described technical ability is not necessarily a prerequisite...as it can be furthered through this training.

Players need to understand their movement in a space must change in relation to the constantly changing location of the ball. Successful angles need to be created to each player possessing the ball, so that multiple options always exist for the player with the ball.

Further training can teach the players to play the ball to the receiving player in the direction they are moving, only to pass the ball to those that are calling for it, and to move the ball away from pressure....finding the best place for the ball...via the simplest option available.

The activities below represent the first phase of a development process for teaching possession play. The first lessons are in a non-directional format. This later progresses into a directional format, so that the players understand how to implement this in the game itself.

Exercise 1: 5 players in a space, passing and moving

Setup

Set up a square, about 18x18 for every 5 players in the training session. If multiple squares, then set them up adjacent to each other

Action

~ The Players pass and move about in the space, always changing their position in the space and their relationship to each other. Players only play the ball to a player that is calling for the ball. Players also pass the ball into the space that the receiver is moving...as shown by the receiver with a movement of their hand.

~ The next progression has the 5 players continuing in the same space, but given numbers. They must then pass the ball in numerical order. After they succeed at this, then challenge the next player in order to call for the ball as the player before them is receiving it...so that they can plan ahead. For example, 1 passes to 2...as the ball is in transit, 3 is calling for the ball and moving to a space to receive it from 2.

Tips

~ Teach players to show for the ball, to constantly move to create successful angles for the ball.

~ Teach players to be vocal....this is a loud drill. Players should call for the ball, and show the passer the direction that they are moving to. This will allow the passer to play the ball into the space that the receiver is moving. The pass should not be made if the player is not calling for it.

~ Remind players that it's important to give a good pass so it is easier for their teammates to receive the ball and control it away with their first touch.

~ If they get good at it, consider limiting the number of touches allowed.

~ Focus on the body positioning that the receiving player is showing for the ball. Are they showing a wide angle, or are they showing a narrow angle.

Take aways:

Coaches should understand the importance of possession play. There is no age that is too young to start these activities, and every age can benefit from further development.

Coaches should emphasize the players moving in space when they do not have the ball, creating angles to the ball.

Players should grow to understand that positioning is always being adjusted.

Players should start to think of where the ball can go next, even as they are just receiving it.