



Ocean State Soccer School

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Speed of Play : Receiving

As players grow, the game becomes more involved, techniques improve, tactics are employed, physical strength and players ability to understand situations all take on greater importance. Players ability to dribble at speed, pass accurately and with the right pace is important to keeping possession and creating opportunities.

This makes receiving the ball correctly extremely important as the ball moves through the team. Upon receiving the ball this touch is the first touch setting up everything that follows. The first touch must be played away from pressure (into space), maintaining possession and at speed. Some of our players slow the ball down or stop it allowing the defense to recover resulting in loss of possession or a missed opportunity. When receiving, the ball should maintain the speed (pace) of the pass using this to help beat the opponent.

As coaches we need to know that there are two aspects to performing anything with the ball : the *physical* and the *mental*. We all see the physical : relax the body, move to the ball, and position yourself between defender and ball. Mentally what we are asking them to do is *think faster* by taking in information from the game ; examples would be player positions, space. Processing that knowledge quickly and turning it into a movement sequence is not an easy task. We must encourage our players to think about the mental portion sooner as the ball is traveling and not when the player receives it. If the player can establish mentally were they are going to go with the ball, what direction, keep it or pass it based on the examples above. This allows them to concentrate on receiving technique/physical part of the body, balance and touch. Ultimately what we are trying to do as a player is *create more time*, in turn allowing us to make better decisions. If each player can generate some time, possession is better, more opportunities are created instilling confidence in the individual and improving the team as a whole.

Looking Forward to the Outdoor Season !!

Coach Murph