

Topic: Improving Possession. By Greg Maas, State Technical Director, Utah Youth Soccer Association and www.SoccerSpecific.com.

Activity #1:

Set Up: 4 v 1 (15 x 15 area or as needed). Using corner flags or cone discs, create a 4-yard triangle in the middle of the area as shown below.



Objective: The 4 players try to maintain possession while also looking to score goals by playing the ball through the triangle to their teammates. The defender is NOT allowed inside the triangle and must work their way around the triangle trying to cut off the penetrating passes.

Variation: Limit the number of touches by the 4 players in possession. If the defender wins the ball, they score by dribbling outside of the area. Rotate defenders after time or with the player who gives possession away.

Coaching Points: Body mechanics and general technique; Accuracy and weight of pass; Passes to feet versus passes to space; Movement off of the ball and correct supporting angles.

Activity #2:

Set Up: 8 v 4 (25 x 25 area or as needed). On the perimeter of the area, create 8 small goals as shown below.

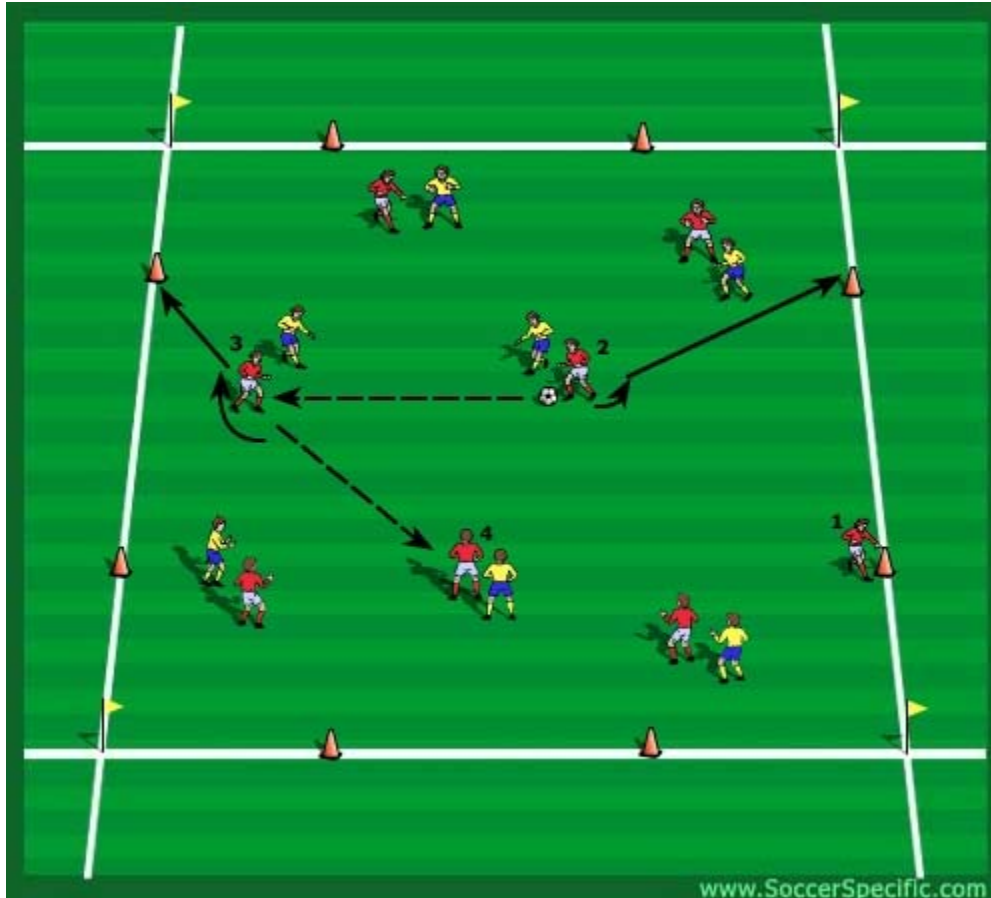


Objective: 8 v 4 possession in the middle. The 8 players in possession try to keep the ball as long as possible and are awarded a point for keeping possession of the ball for 8-10 consecutive passes. The 4 defending players attempt to win the ball and quickly pass the ball through any of the small goals outside of the grid and are awarded a point for doing so. Play for time or points, and then rotate roles accordingly.

Coaching Points: Team shape and balance; Change of rhythm in possession (i.e., short, short, long); Be patient in possession – don't panic; Defenders – when you will the ball, look for opportunities to penetrate immediately.

Activity #3:

Set Up: 8 v 8 (40 x 40 area or as needed). Equally distribute 8 small cones on the perimeter of the area as shown below.



Objective: 8 v 8 possession in the middle. After players have made a play on the ball they must immediately turn and find the nearest cone and touch it before getting involved in the next play. Example as shown above: Player #1 has already passed the ball and is bending down to touch a cone. Player #2 is playing the ball to player #3. As he passes the ball to player number #3 he must turn and sprint to find a cone. Player #3 then finds the next open player and so on.

Variation: Points can be awarded for a determined number of consecutive passes for the team in possession. The same exercise can be used while playing to two full sized goals and with goalkeepers. Play for points or time.

Coaching Points: Improve verbal and non-verbal communication between teammates; Correct decision making and speed of play; Recognition to create space for other teammates (i.e., timing of 2nd and 3rd man runs).

Activity #4:

Set Up: 8 v 8 with goalkeepers to two large goals (half field or as needed). Possible formation 1:3:3:2 versus a 1:3:2:3.



Objective: Both teams compete for possession of the ball and attempt to score in their opponent's goal. Players are encouraged in possession to quickly look for attacking options at the moment of winning the ball – quickly attack! Example as shown above, [Red] player (A) has won possession from [Yellow] player (A) and quickly played a penetrating pass inside the defender for player (B). Player's (C) and (D) have spun to get in the box for a cross from player (B) and score.

Coaching Points: All of the above. Review session.

Cool Down: Players are paired off and perform various light jogging activities. Static stretching exercises are performed.