

SOCCER COACHING

The complete soccer coaching experience

International



FINISHING EXERCISES

E-BOOK



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Introduction to finishing



In order to win a soccer match you have to make sure you score more goals than your opponent. Scoring is therefore an important component for every age category. Training on scoring is often associated with shooting on goal from distance. However, scoring actually involves a lot of aspects of play, because often scoring a goal means being at the right place at the right time. This is often a gut feeling that players develop and is therefore hard to teach.

Finishing is the act of intentionally placing the ball in the opposite goal by the use of physical techniques. It is often referred to as scoring or shooting. The former word refers to a successful finish. The latter can be somewhat confusing as the term is associated with kicking yet finishing can be done with the head or virtually any body part other than the hands.

General principles: Accuracy, Power and Surprise

The option to shoot is available whenever a player has control over the ball. Selecting the method and time to do this is not always that simple. The most important factor to consider is the player's skill level in relation to the situation. Shooting from your own half will have little change of resulting in a goal and is therefore (in most cases) pointless. The same applies to finishing technique, if volleying isn't one of the player's strong skills, his odds of scoring from a cross would improve if he would set the ball up first, rather than shoot it right away.

By "programming" the body with technical exercises, the solution comes more naturally. Trusting your instincts is the best way to make decisions, baring in mind proper technique and timing. Another rule of thumb is to make the decision quickly and go through with it, rather than to hesitate or "over-think" an available opportunity.

Accuracy

When a player is close to the opponent's goal or when the goalkeeper is out of position, the emphasis should be on placement. Finishing by means of accuracy is directing the ball so that the goalkeeper cannot reach it. Chipping over, curving, or simply taking a shot out of his reach are all examples of precise finishing.

Placement is based on observation. Before actually taking a shot, the attacker should know where the goalkeeper is. You can do this by taking a sneak peek at the goal right before shooting the ball, or better yet, before receiving the ball. When the ball is moved laterally, the keeper readjusts as to cover the shooting angles. In such cases, one should aim his shot in the direction where the keeper is coming from. It is harder for him to dive in the direction from which he is retrieving from. However, you do not always have time to look, in those cases a player should trust his instincts.

Power

Power is a great tool when shooting from a distance. Goalkeepers who are out of position or unprepared can often be punished by hard-hit balls. Predictability caused by a long approach is the downside of powerful shooting. While powerful shots are harder to direct and easier to track in trajectory once launched, they are difficult to block unless the goalkeeper is prepared.

Surprise factor

When a player is close to the opponent's goal, finishing becomes harder to prevent and predict for a goalkeeper since it requires less power, a shorter approach, and therefore less time for execution. To take advantage of this, an attacker must shoot suddenly using his foot that is closer to the ball. Poke shots like this may not look pretty, but they can be very effective and unpredictable when executed near the goal.





Finishing Methods

As a coach you should train all possible situations that create scoring opportunities. A good tip is to keep track of all scoring opportunities that your team creates during the next five matches. Divide these into categories and you will find out which situations lead to scoring opportunities and you should be coaching those with your team. After your evaluation you will see that goals are scored from long distance shots, 1v1 situations against the goalkeeper, simple tap-ins and once in a while a goal will be scored with a header. We will obviously be unable to outline all scoring situations in this e-book by means of presented training session, but below is a quick outline of the various finishing methods.

Breakaways

On close encounters, such as breakaways, a finisher is facing the opponent's goalkeeper in a 1v1 confrontation. In these situations, it's all about finishing efficiently, instead of trying to tear the net. An accurate kick in the corner or a surprising sudden tap will beat any goalkeeper from upclose. The element of surprise should overshadow power. Trying to kick too hard, hesitation and over-complication are the main reasons why most breakaway are squandered.

Going around

Going around means making an extra dribble sideways as to avoid the keeper who must be diving in or has positioned himself in an unbalanced stance. At the moment he

initiates a tackle or rearranges footing, he'll become vulnerable for a brief period of time. Faking a kick is an effective way of disbalancing (or freezing) goalkeepers, which allows you to "go around".





Nutmeg

When facing a well-positioned goalkeeper, who is covering his left and right side evenly, may mean he is susceptible to a nutmeg. Checking the positioning of his feet (by taking a quick glance) might reveal that he has a "hole" between his legs. Exploiting this weakness requires a sudden, quick touch and a lot of confidence. Attempting a

nutmeg is not a good idea if you are not close enough to the opponents goalkeeper or if you are uncertain that you can pull it off.

Chipping



When a goalkeeper comes out and gets close to the attacker, he'll be nearly covering the entire goal. As soon as the goalkeeper initiates his diving sequence, you can chip (lift) the ball over him.

Distant attempts

Generally, shots taken from long distance need to be more powerful, otherwise the keeper will intercept them. Most goalkeepers have a weaker diving side that can be exploited.



Angled attempts

Which side should you pick? Aiming at the near-post may force the goalkeeper to punch the ball out-of-bounds while a far-post shot would be much harder for the goalie to handle.



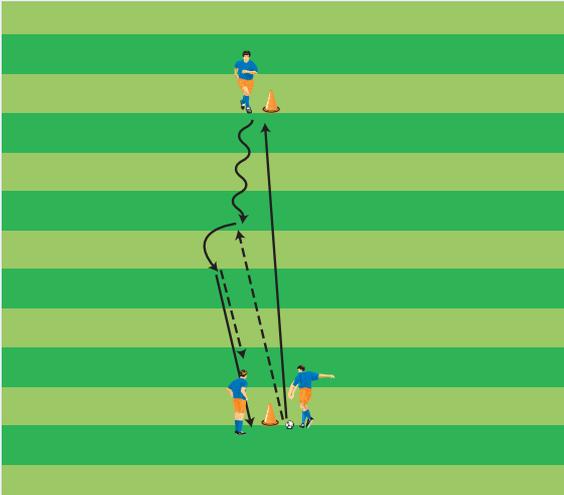
Finishing crosses

When the ball is served from outside into the danger zone, it is up to the attackers to finish it off. There are numerous types of crosses, but a general set of principles applies to the methods used in finishing them. Getting the ball past the keeper should be the one and only concern of the finisher. Good ball contact is in the core of success. Composed and balanced body posture is therefore essential.



Training 1 U13 Finishing

Warm-up with passing and beating your opponent



Organization:

- In 3s
- 2 players with 1 ball are positioned at 1 cone, the third player at the other cone

Progression:

- Player 1 passes to player 2 and follows his ball
- Player 2 beats player 1, who provides passive resistance
- Player 2 passes to player 3 and follows his ball, etc.

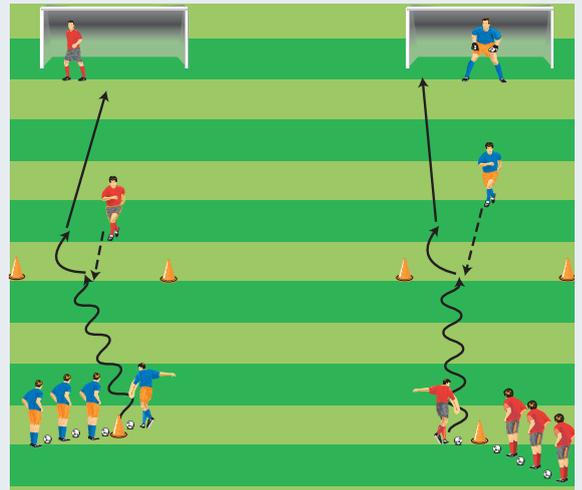
Finishing after a action

Organization:

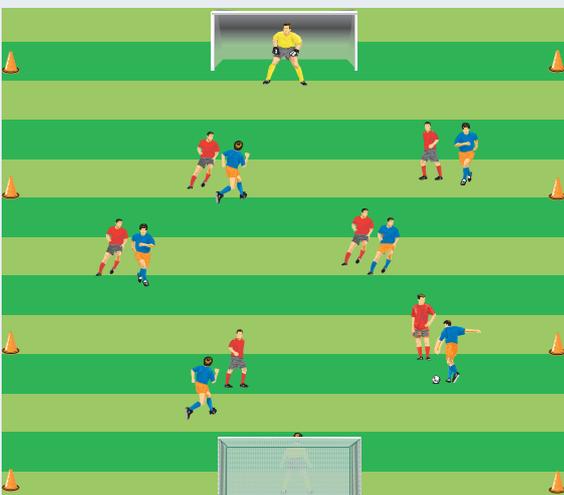
- 2 sets ups
- On both sides a large goal and 2 cones at 12-14 meters from the goal and a third at about 40 meters
- A goalkeeper (from the defending team) on goal, a defender (from the defending team) at the 2 cones and a queue with players from the attacking team at the last cone (each with their own ball)

Progression:

- For 3 minutes the attacking team tries to beat the defender and score
- The next player starts when the player in front of him has shot on goal or the defender has intercepted the ball
- Which team scores the most goals in 3 minutes. Keep score out loud



6v6

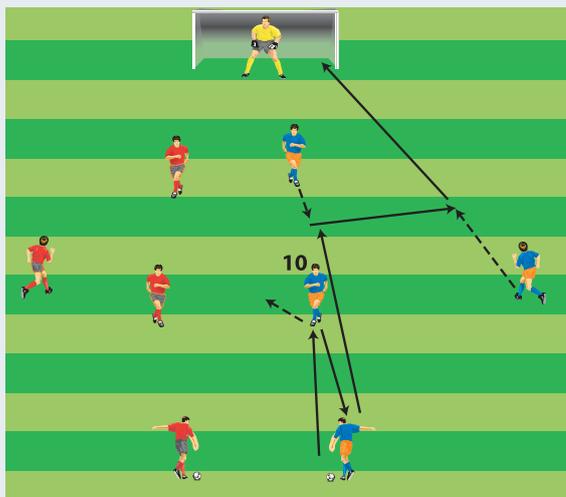


Organization:

- Regular game of 6v6 with goalkeepers
- Keep track of the score

Training 2 Flank play

Attack from the flanks



Organization:

- Half a field, 10 or 12 players and a goalkeeper
- The positions on the flanks have 2 or 3 players each
- The defenders passes to the midfielder (10)
- Midfielder passes back to the defender, defender opens to the striker
- Striker passes wide to the incoming midfielder, midfielder finishes on goal
- Everyone remain in their positions
- Work in 2 colors
- Which color scores the most goals?

Coaching:

- Midfielder (10) creates spaces for the pass to the striker
- Pass to correct foot
- Striker and midfielder execute the pre-move
- Passing along the field (no high passes)

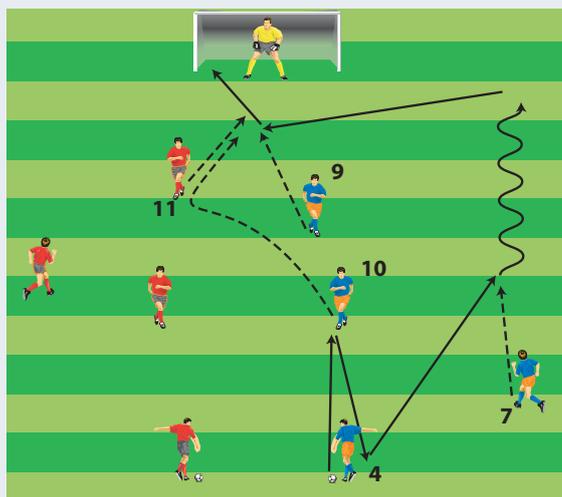
Attacking along the flanks resulting in a cross

Organization:

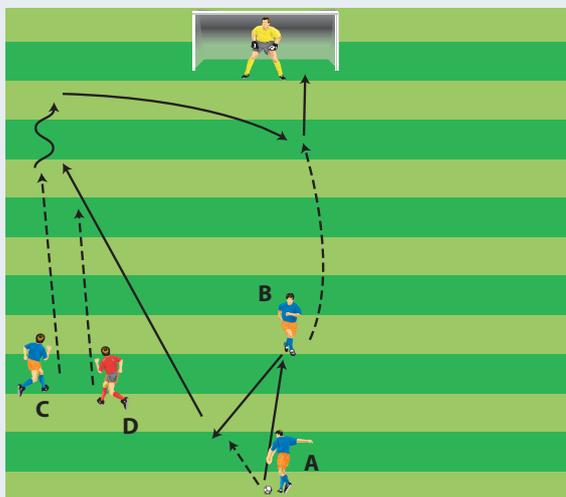
- Half a field, 10 or 12 players and a goalkeeper
- The defender (4) passes to the midfielder (10)
- Midfielder passes back to the defender, defender (4) opens to the incoming midfielder (7)
- Midfielder (7) dribbles along the flanks to the end line and crosses
- Striker (9) and midfielder (10) take position in front of the goal in order to finish from the cross. Striker (11) provides resistance
- Execute on both flanks
- Which color scores the most goals?

Coaching:

- Good communication
- First 2 passes straight across the field on the correct foot
- Timing midfielder (7) – start run
- (Fake) running action from both strikers



Attacking along the flank with resistance from a defender



Organization:

- Half a field, 10 or 12 players and a goalkeeper
- A passes to B, B wall passes
- B opens on C under resistance from D
- C crosses and B finishes on goal
- The players at positions A and B rotate through, the players at B and D remain in their positions

Coaching:

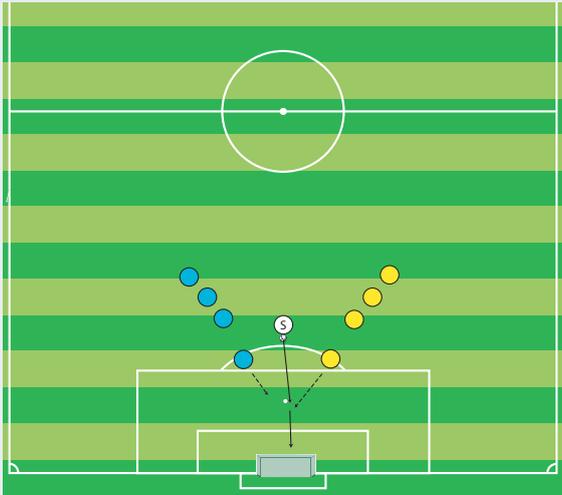
- Passing to correct foot
- Ball into the run
- B chooses the correct position

Variation:

- Along other flank
- With 1 additional striker
- With 1 additional defender

Training 3 One touch finishing

Serving 1-touch finish



Organization:

- Two players are facing the goal
- Server (S) uses a number of service variations:
 - on the ground between the two players
 - on the ground down the side of the players, biased toward one player
- Players finish on goal with 1-touch

Heading and volleying

Organization:

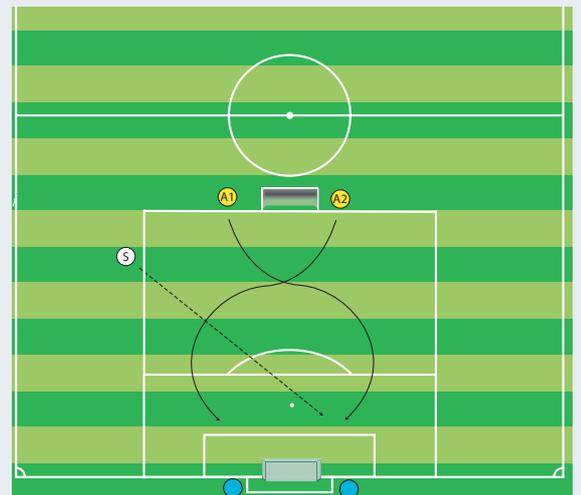
- Server at sideline
- 2 queue of players at cones
- Server (S) floats long diagonal passes to runner (A1), into the area at the far post.
- Attacker (A1) practices volleys across his body, bicycle and overhead kicks

Progression:

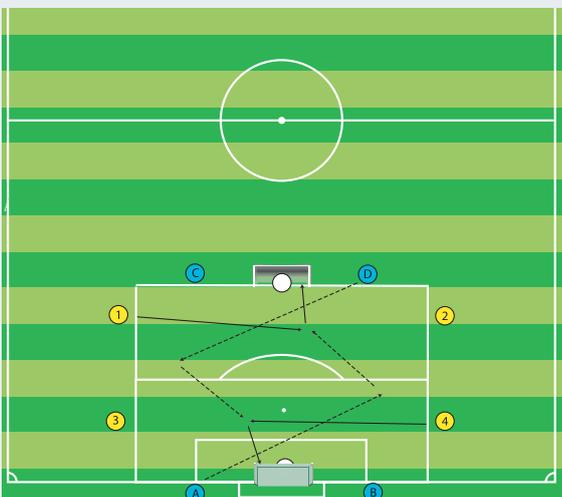
- Attacker (A1) is joined by another attacker (A2). A1 heads for A2 to finish early as possible with one touch.

Coaching points:

- Angle of attacking run and body position should set the player up to hit the ball with the foot farthest from goal.
- Adjust body position to ensure ball is struck through its top half. If the ball is high, the player is required to perform an overhead or bicycle kick.



One Touch Finishing under pressure



Organization:

- Field size: 2 penalty areas
- 4 strikers and 4 servers
- 1 striker attacks from each end simultaneously
- Server 1 to striker A, server 4 to striker D
- Strikers then join diagonally opposite line
- Then server 2 to striker B and server 3 to striker C

Progression:

- Attack in pairs with players working as a unit, combination play, one touch shooting with rebound positioning

Coaching:

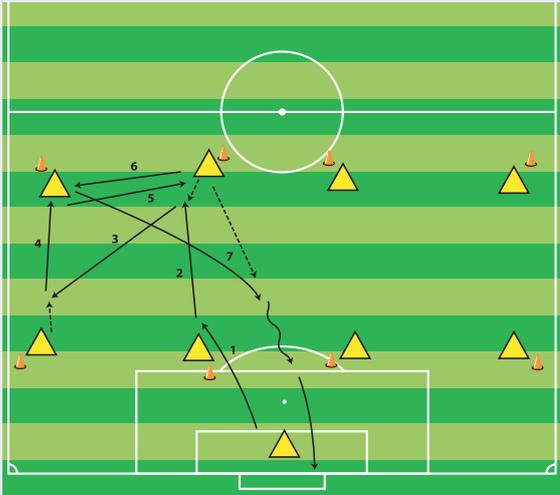
- Timing of the runs
- One touch finishing
- Accuracy
- Rebounds

Variations:

- You can use different service like; low drive, chip for header, different angles

Training 4 Passing and Finishing

Build up from behind with finishing on goal



Organization:

- Goalkeeper A passes to player B
- Player B receives the ball (turned open) and passes to C, who drops the ball to D
- Player D passes to E, who passes to C
- C initiates a give-and-go with player E and finishes on goal
- Execute on both sides

Progression:

- Limited amount of time
- Passive defense in penalty area

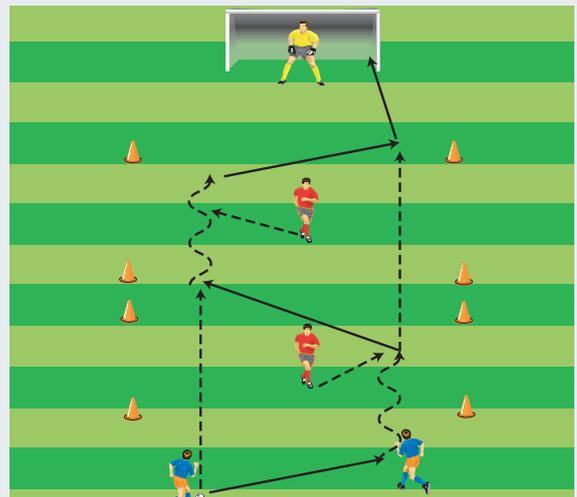
2v2 finishing exercise

Organization:

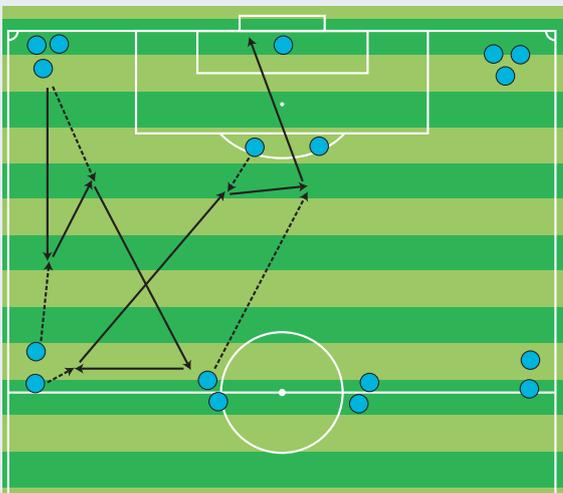
- 2 attacking against 2 defenders who each defend their own area behind each other. They are not allowed to leave this area
- Defenders score by stealing the ball or by kicking the ball outside of their area
- Attackers score by finishing on goal

Coaching:

- Free yourself from defender and be available to receive the pass
- Dare to pass
- Come to a shot as quickly as possible



Passing and shooting with a finish on goal



Organization:

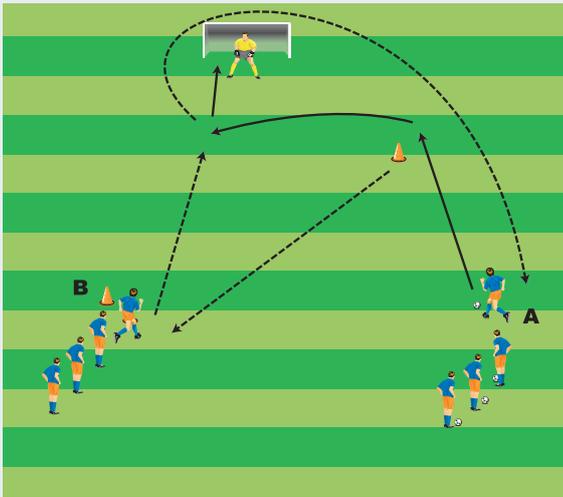
- Half a field, 16 players and 10 balls
- The ball is being passed from the corner into the playing area, wall pass to the incoming player.
- This player opens to the half-way line, striker receives a pass and after a wall pass the attacking finishes with a shot on goal
- Execute on both sides

Coaching:

- Ask for the ball at the right time
- Correct ball speed
- Clean finishing on goal

Training 5 Finishing training...

Dribble-cross-shoot



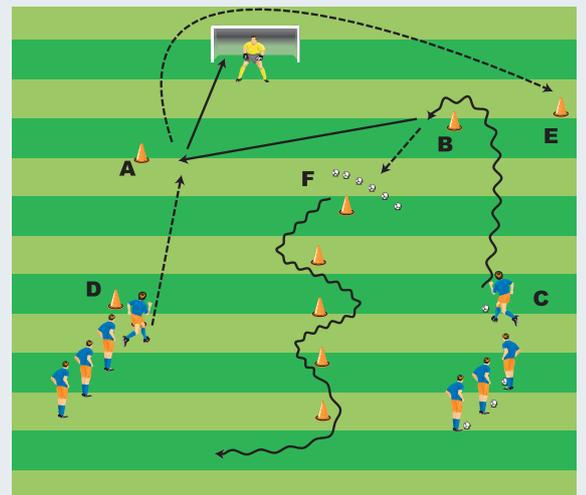
Organization:

- Player A dribbles the ball towards the cone at the end line, goes around the cone and passes to incoming player B, who finishes on goal.
- Meanwhile player A sprints towards the groups of other player B's and joins them
- The player B who just finished on goal get his ball and dribbles to the other group (player A's) and joins them
- Execute clockwise and counter clockwise

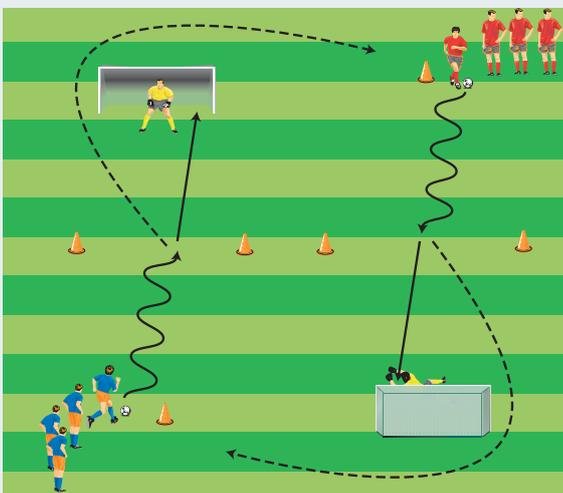
Dribble-cross-control-shoot

Organization:

- Player C dribbles to cone B, cuts at the cone and crosses towards cone A
- Player D runs in without a ball, controls and finishes on goal. He gets his ball, dribbles behind the goal to E and passes to the last player in group C
- Player C who crossed the ball, gets the ball at F and dribbles in through the cone to group D



Finishing with 2 goals (1)



Organization:

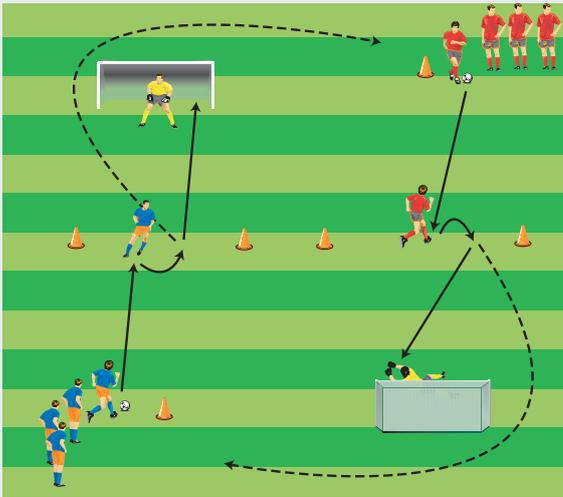
- Two big goals diagonally across from each other (approx. 40 meter apart)
- Every player has a ball
- The players are divided amongst two cones
- The players dribble towards the goal and shoot before reaching the imaginary line between the two cones (at 15 meters from the goal)

Variation:

- They have to execute a fake and the shoot

...Finishing training

Finishing with 2 goals (2)



Organization:

- Two big goals diagonally across from each other (approx. 40 meter apart)
- Every player has a ball
- The players are divided amongst two cones
- The players pass to the wall passer, who turns short and shoots on goal
- Every player rotates 1 position

Variation:

- Execute both clockwise and counter clockwise
- They receive the pass at medium height in the air

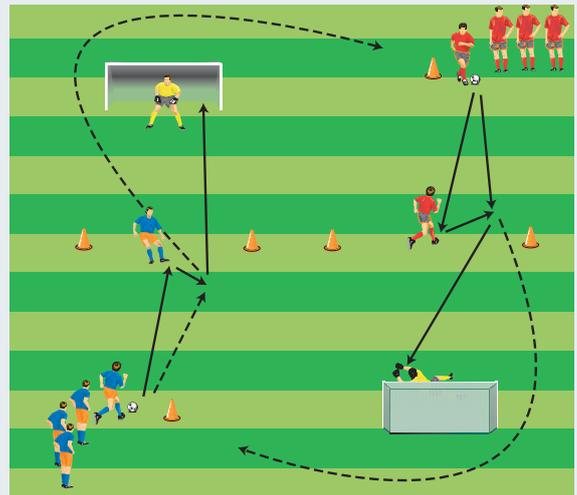
Finishing with 2 goals (3)

Organization:

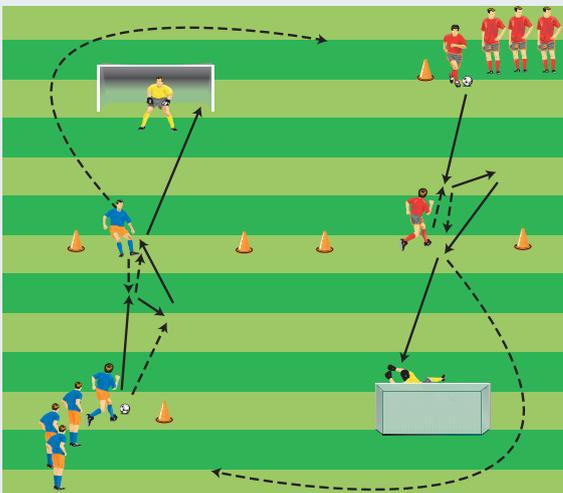
- Two big goals diagonally across from each other (approx. 40 meter apart)
- Every player has a ball
- The players are divided between two cones
- The players pass to the wall passer, who passes back immediately and the ball is finished on goal

Variation:

- Finish with left and right foot



Finishing with 2 goals (4)



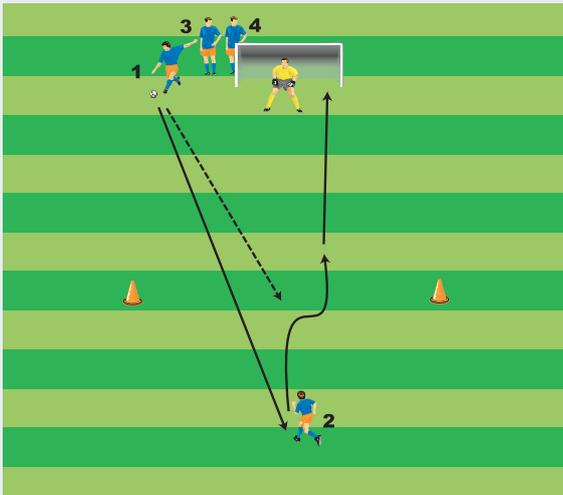
Organization:

- Two big goals diagonally across from each other (approx. 40 meter apart)
- Every player has a ball
- The players are divided between two cones
- The players pass to the wall passer, who asks for the ball toe
- The wall passer passes the ball back, initiates a run towards the goal right after the pass and receives the ball back in his run
- He directly finishes on goal (without controlling the ball)

Variation:

- Execute both clockwise and counter clockwise

1 against 1 with passive defense



Organization:

- Player 1 passes to player 2, 1 becomes the passive defender, 2 beats 1 and finishes high on goal

Coaching:

- Attacker: Beat opponent left, shoot left; beat opponent right, shoot right; threat dribbling; after beating the opponent shoot as quickly as possible; shoot hard and aim high
- Passer: first a short dribble; straight pass with instep
- Defender: bend knees, play along with attacker

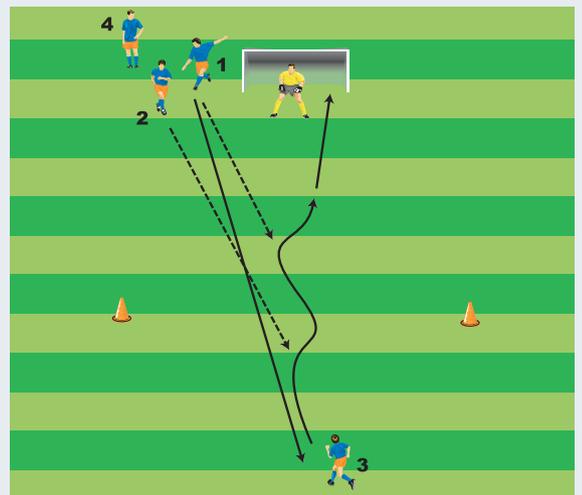
1 against 1 with 2 defenders

Organization:

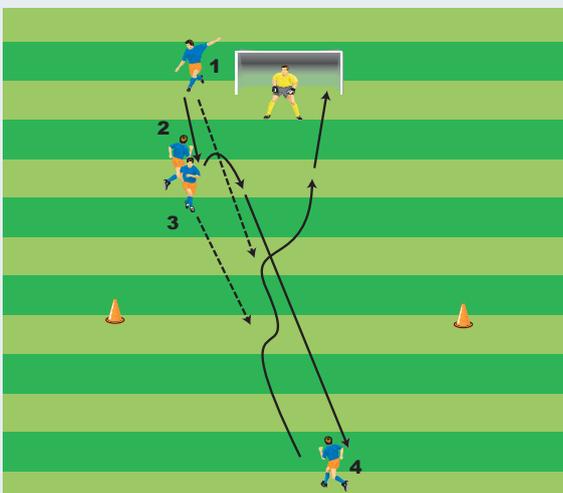
- Player 1 passes to player 3, 3 beat 2 and 1 finishes on goal

Coaching:

- Attacker: Beat opponent left, shoot left; beat opponent right, shoot right; threat dribbling; after beating the opponent shoot as quickly as possible; shoot hard and aim high
- Passer: first a short dribble; straight pass with instep
- Defender: bend knees, play along with attacker



1 against 1 with 2 defenders after turning



Organization:

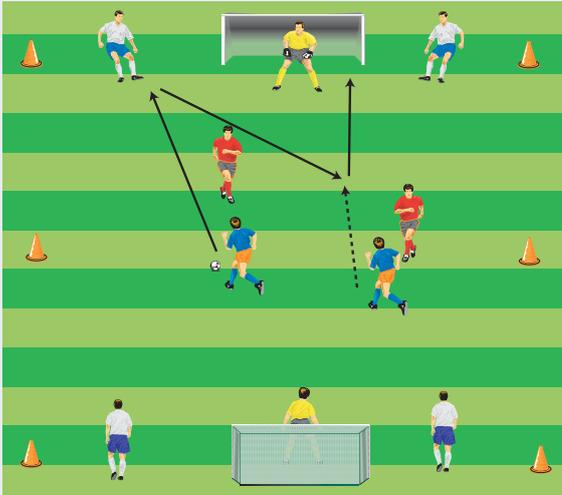
- Player 1 passes to player 2, Player 2 turns away from player 3 and passes to player 4. Player 4 looks for players 2 and 3, beats them and finishes on goal

Coaching:

- Attacker: Beat opponent left, shoot left; beat opponent right, shoot right; threat dribbling; after beating the opponent shoot as quickly as possible; shoot hard and aim high
- Passer: first a short dribble; straight pass with instep
- Defender: bend knees, play along with attacker
- Turning/cutting: body between the opponent and the ball; fake shooting as pre-move

Training 7 Club Brugge U11 Finishing

Finishing after a passing move



Organization:

- The players next to the goal execute a give and go and pass deep
- Control the ball
- The finishing player passes a cone by means of a passing move and tries to score
- The players rotate through (one position) and the other start the exercise

Coaching:

- Coach on passing and shooting technique
- Keep the ball close to your body while dribbling
- Speed up after the passing move and then shoot

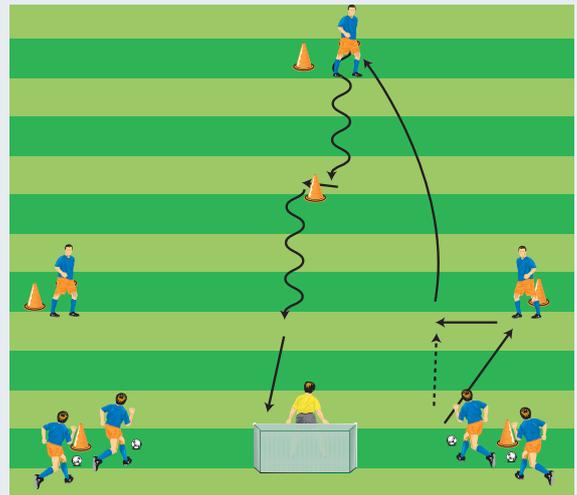
1 against 1 with two goals

Organization:

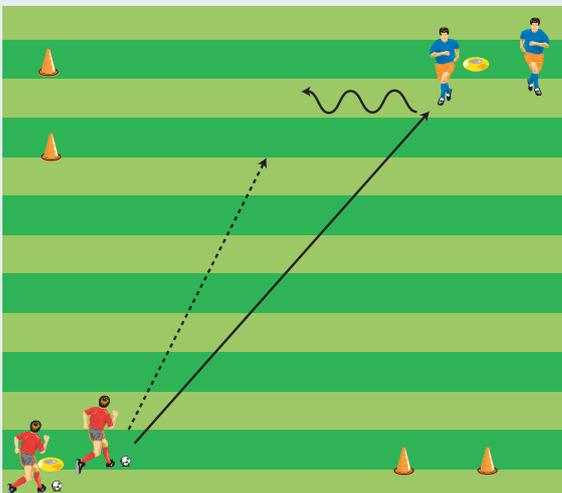
- The defender starts with a pass to the forward
- The forward controls the ball and may score in either goal by dribbling across the goal line
- The defender has to execute pressure on the forward straight away

Coaching:

- Receiving
- Changing direction and surprising the defender by cutting and turning
- Defender has to direct the forward into a certain direction
- Move onto the front of your feet and bend the knees in order to anticipate play



Small sided game 2 against 2 with 4 neutrals



Organization:

- 2 against 2 on the field
- The neutral players next to the goal can be used in the build up or to create scoring opportunities
- A goal scored after a wall pass with a neutral is double the points
- After a few minutes the neutral players will become field players and vice versa

Coaching:

- Coach on passing, shooting and dribbling technique
- Pass deep at the right moment

Training 8 Dutch Finishing...

Dutch Finishing (1)



Organization:

- Player B passes to player A
- Player A receives the pass and dribbles around the cone to the other side of the penalty area and shoots on goal
- The players then rotate position: B becomes A, C becomes B and A joins the back of the line
- Execute on left side and right side (therefore using both feet)

Dutch Finishing (2)

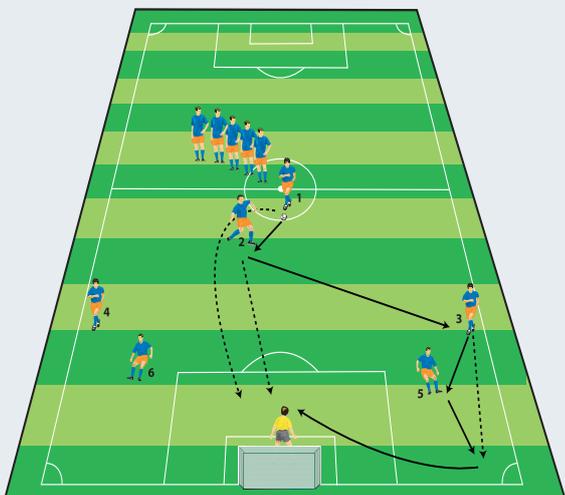
Organization:

- 2 players are positioned in the center circle (1 and 2)
- 2 players are positioned on the left flank (4 and 6)
- 2 players are positioned on the right flank (3 and 5)
- P1 passes to P2, and runs around P2 and towards the penalty area
- P2 receives the pass and passes to either P3 or P4, P2 runs towards the penalty area
- P3 or P4 control the ball and cross it into the penalty area towards P1 and P2
- P1 and P2 finish on goal
- Goalkeeper tries to save
- P1 and P2 join the back of the line in the center circle and next two players take their positions and execute the same exercise across the opposite flank
- P6 takes P4 position
- P5 takes P3 position



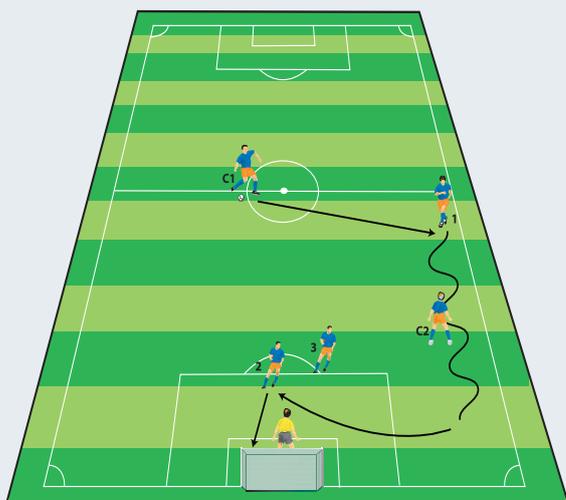
Variation:

- Same setup
- P1 passes to P2, and runs around P2 and towards the penalty area
- P2 receives the pass and passes to either P3 or P4, P2 runs towards the penalty area
- P3 or P4 control the ball, pass it to P5 or P6 (respectively), run to the end line, receives the pass back from P5 or P6 and cross it into the penalty area where P1 or P2 try to finish on goal



...Dutch Finishing

Winger finishing exercise with resistance



Organization:

- Coach 1 (C1) passes to winger 1
- Winger 1 dribble down the flank towards the end line. He is defended along the way by coach 2 (C2) and needs to beat the coach on the dribble
- Once he reaches the end line he crosses into the penalty area, where players 2 and 3 try to finish on goal with goalkeeper

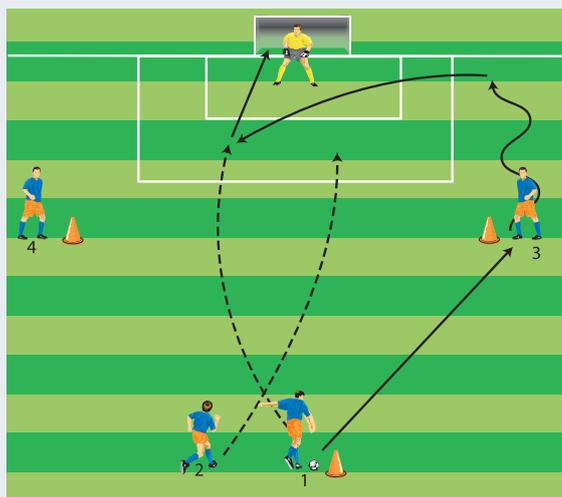
Cross & Finish

Organization:

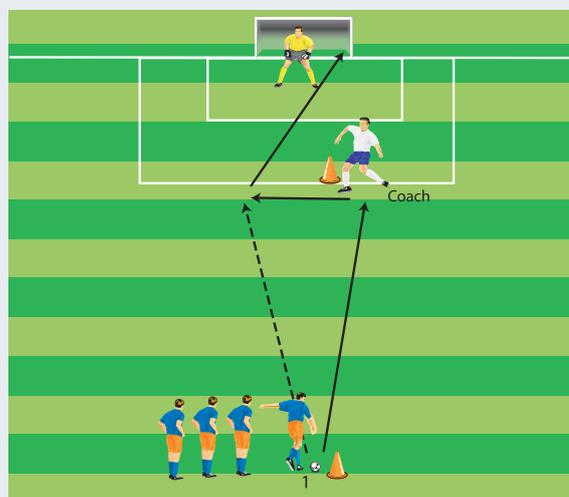
- 2 players are positioned half way down their own half
- 1 player on each flank (as illustrated)
- 1 goalkeeper
- Half a field

Progression:

- Player 1 starts by passing to player 3
- While Players 1 and 2 cross one another in their run into the penalty area, player 3 receives the ball, dribbles to the end line and crosses the ball into the penalty area
- Players 1 and 2 finish on goal
- Next two players repeat only now they pass to player 4 on the other flank



Pass & Finish



Organization:

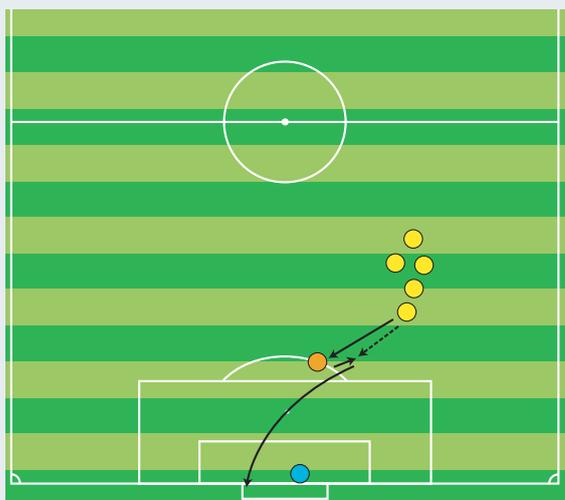
- Players line up just outside the centre circle, each with a ball
- Coach is positioned just outside the penalty area
- Goalkeeper in goal

Progression:

- Player 1 passes to the coach and runs toward the penalty area
- Coach passes short to his right
- Player finishes on goal from just outside the penalty area

...Guus Hiddink's Finishing drills

Finishing in the far corner



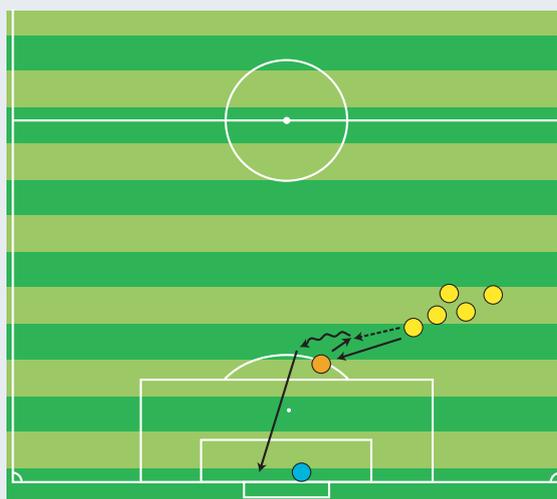
Organization:

- The forwards pass to the coach and receive it back (straight pass)
- They finish straight on goal in the far corner
- Executed both on the left and right side

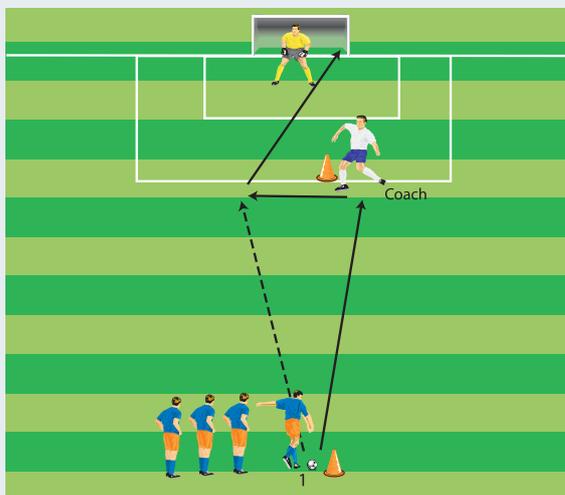
Finishing after a dribble around the wall passer

Organization:

- The forwards pass to the coach and receive the pass back
- They receive the ball on their wrong side, so they dribble around Arnold and finish on goal
- Executed both on the left and right side



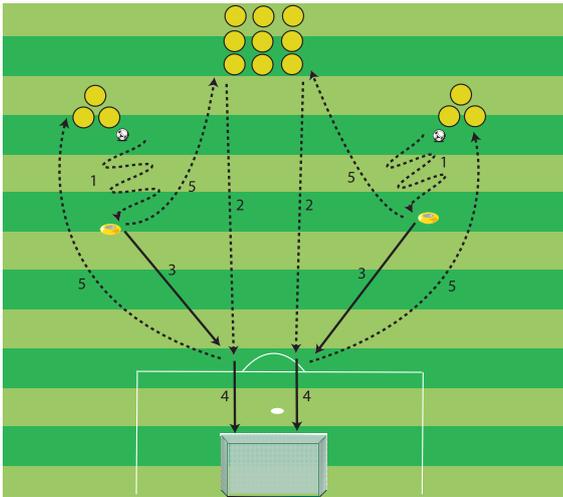
Finishing after a bad wall pass



Organization:

- The forwards pass to the coach
- He passes back too hard, so that the players receive the ball at shin height, knee height or stomach height
- Regardless of the bad pass the forwards try to control the ball, and immediately try to finish on goal

Cross & Finish



Organization:

1. Winger dribbles with the ball up to the disc
 2. Forward stays behind the ball and jogs towards his next position
 3. Winger cross just before the penalty area
 4. Forward finishes on goal
 5. Forward gets his own ball and joins the back of the line at the winger's old position, the winger joins the back of the line at the forward's old position
- Duration: 20 minutes

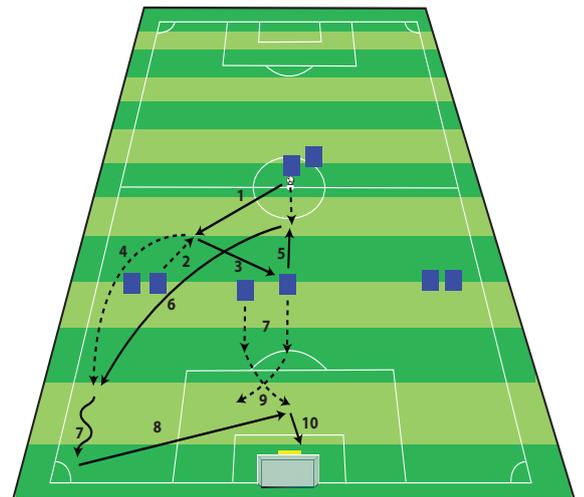
Spanish Attack

Organization:

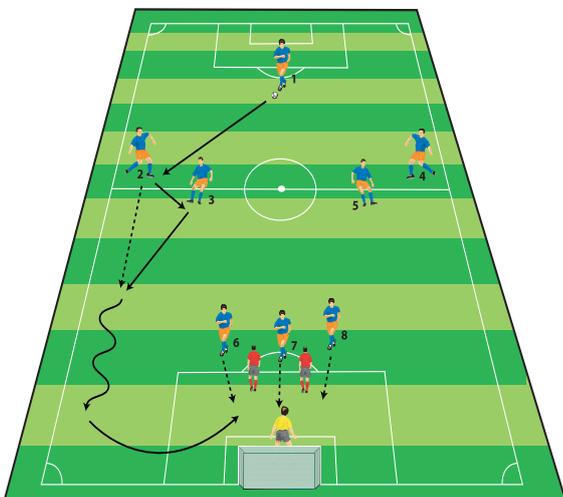
- 8 players and 1 goalkeeper
- 6/8 positions are occupied by two players to ensure continuity
- Half field
- Duration: approx. 20 minutes

Progression:

1. Midfielder passes to left or right winger (the exercise shows the exercise executed along the right side)
2. Winger asks and comes to the ball
3. Winger receives pass and passes to one of the 2 strikers
4. Winger goes deep
5. Forward passes to midfielder
6. Midfielder passes deep (high) to the winger
7. Winger dribbles to end line and at the same time the strikers run towards the penalty area
8. Winger crosses into the penalty area
9. Strikers cross one another and enter the penalty area
10. One of the strikers finishes on goal



Technical finishing



Organization:

- 8 v 2 with 1 goalkeeper
- Full field
- 8 players set up a quick attack starting from the back
- 2 defenders only defend penalty area
- Player 1 is positioned just in front of his own penalty area
- Players 2 and 3 are positioned on the right side (at the half way line)
- Players 4 and 5 are positioned on the left side (at the half way line)
- Players 6, 7 and 8 are positioned just outside the opponents penalty area

Progression:

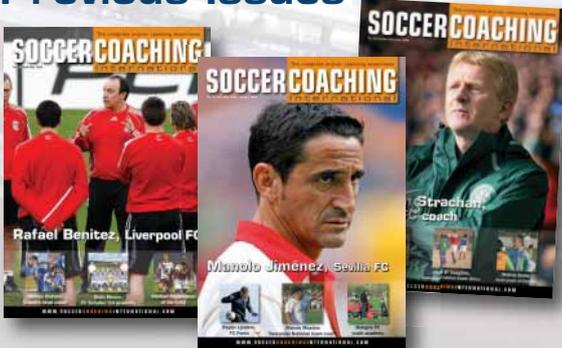
- Player 1 passes to player 2 or 3
- Player 2 initiates a give and go with player 3 (or player 4 with player 5)
- Player 3 back passes in the run of player 2
- Player 2 dribbles to the end line and crosses into the penalty area
- Players 6, 7 and 8 move into the opponents penalty area when the cross is given and try to finish on goal
- Defenders (red) distract, guard and defend

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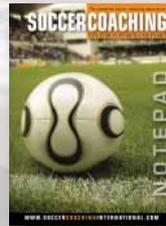
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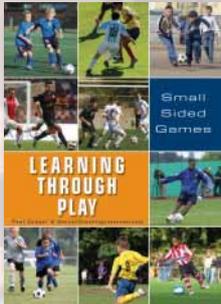
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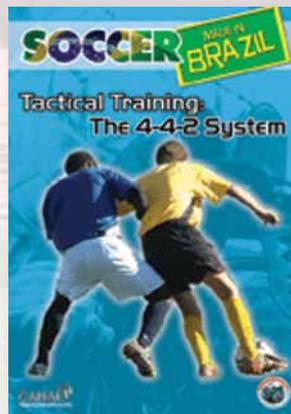
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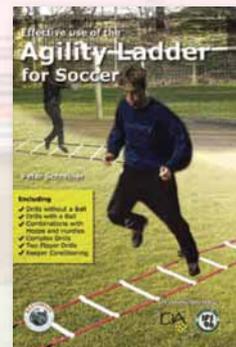
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Training a Goal scorer:

“Not an impossible task”

It is not uncommon to hear coaches at every level complaining that their team is lacking only one thing in order to be successful—a true goal scorer. The next sentence usually then goes something like “but goal scorers are born, not made.” While it does seem to be true that certain individuals are born with a gift for being in the right place at the right time, or with a certain amount of innate calm in front of goal, developing significantly better finishers is not an impossible task. Like anything else in sport, it requires applying the right training program over time—using the right equipment and field dimensions, creating a game realistic, training environment, and focused coaching in certain key areas.

By: Christian Lavers

Equipment and Field Setup:

In youth soccer, perhaps the biggest impediment to creating better forwards is, surprisingly, a lack of proper equipment. As simple as it sounds, many teams and clubs do not have enough portable goals or balls to properly train finishing: with too few balls

the training activity gets bogged down while players wait for errant shots to be retrieved (and repetitions are cut substantially), and with only one full-sized goal it is impossible to replicate game situations effectively. Both ways, the training environment is significantly compromised.

Finishing, perhaps more than any other technique is about realistic game repetition. Because the penalty boxes are usually where players will be moving fastest, where they will find the smallest amount of space, and where they will be provided the least amount of time to make decisions, it is the hardest area of the field to cleanly execute technique. The increased psychological pressure that comes with goal scoring opportunities further compounds the problem. The only way to improve execution in these circumstances is by increasing game realistic repetitions in training.

As a guideline, properly training finishing requires 1.5 balls for every player at a minimum (assuming 8 players or more are involved) to insure that players are rarely

waiting for a ball and that the pace of the activity is consistent. Similarly, the ideal space to train finishing is on a field approximately 36 yards long and 40-50 yards wide with full-size goals on either end. At these dimensions, the field is long enough to provide opportunities for both short and long-range finishing, and is short enough so that there are almost always opportunities to finish. The length of the field can then be adjusted to focus on one type of finishing, or to increase or decrease pressure of time and space. The width of the field can be narrowed (to force more vertical combinations and direct shots) or expanded (to allow more finishing from crosses).

Methodology and Environment:

It is impossible to be a goal scorer without a sound technical foundation, and in order to learn any new skill, a player must first perform the technique slowly and without opposition. This allows the player to learn the subtleties of the technique and to do so without distraction. However, after the basic techniques are learned, it is essential that finishing is trained with pressure and opposition. Because of the heightened pressures in the penalty box discussed earlier, players will rarely find the opportunity to finish in a calm and comfortable environment. Instead, most often they will be trying to finish while moving at top speed, while off balance, while physically fighting for position, at the end of a long run, or in a thousand other difficult or uncomfortable positions. In order to learn how to execute in these circumstances, the training environment must replicate the game environment. Because of this, the most efficient way to improve finishing (assuming players can execute the basic techniques) is through small-sided (3 vs. 3 to 6 vs. 6) competition.

It is also important to train finishing in an environment where “winning matters”. For example, allowing the winning team to “keep the field” provides an incentive to scoring that places small psychological pressure on the players. Similarly, providing small physical punishments for losing teams, or small rewards for winning teams, will also increase pressure and intensity and thus replicate the game environment more realistically. The incentive itself does not need to be substantial—its existence alone will be effective to improve the training environment.



Because a small field size requires players to react quicker, be more creative in their movement, and otherwise perform faster with more physical contact, the field dimensions are also important in creating a game realistic finishing environment.

Coaching Points:

Telling players to “keep a shot low” or to “hit the target” is, after a certain point, not helpful in developing better finishers. These types of comments are obvious and therefore usually don’t need to be spoken, and they are often used more by a coach to vent frustration than they are to teach players. To improve finishing ability, coaching points should be focused in a few specific areas:

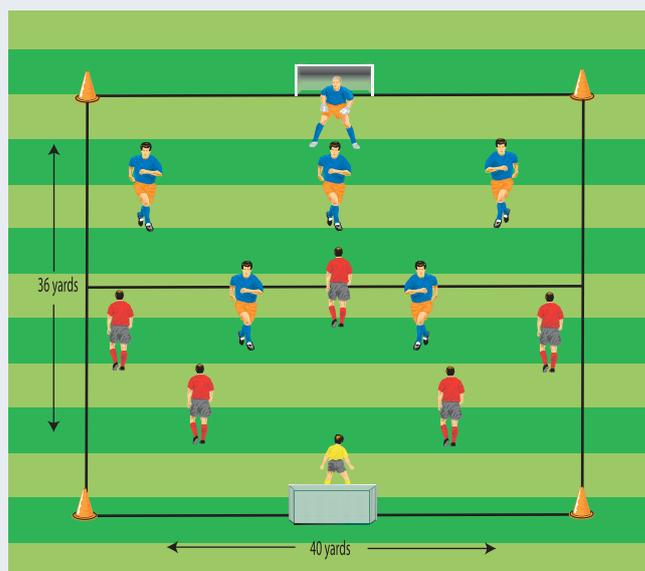
- **Confidence:** The best goal scorers never doubt their ability to score in almost any circumstance. Confident players move and react faster (because they don’t doubt their actions), are more courageous in physical challenges, and are more creative in their decision-making.



- **Vision:** Goal scorers must have vision for spaces to attack and vision for when a shot is “open”. They must read the body language of defenders to know when they are off-balance and where they can be quickly beaten, and they must know when defensive pressure is inadequate and will allow a shot to get past a defender. They must see spaces that will open up as play develops and position themselves to take advantage of them when they occur. Perhaps most importantly, they must see when goalkeepers are poorly positioned or are not prepared for a shot, and what areas of the goal are open.
- **Technical Subtleties:** A coach is most valuable to goal scorers when coaching points are focused on technical subtleties that often the player may be unaware of in the excitement of the situation. Tiny changes in balance and body position affect both placement and power. The length of a player’s “backswing” affects the likelihood of the shot being blocked and the amount of time the goalkeeper has to get set. The control and stability of a player’s upper body drastically affects accuracy.

Within these general guidelines, it is very simple to create training environments that more closely replicate the finishing opportunities in a game and, over time, to improve the finishing abilities of every player. The following two exercises provide simple examples.

High Pressure Finishing

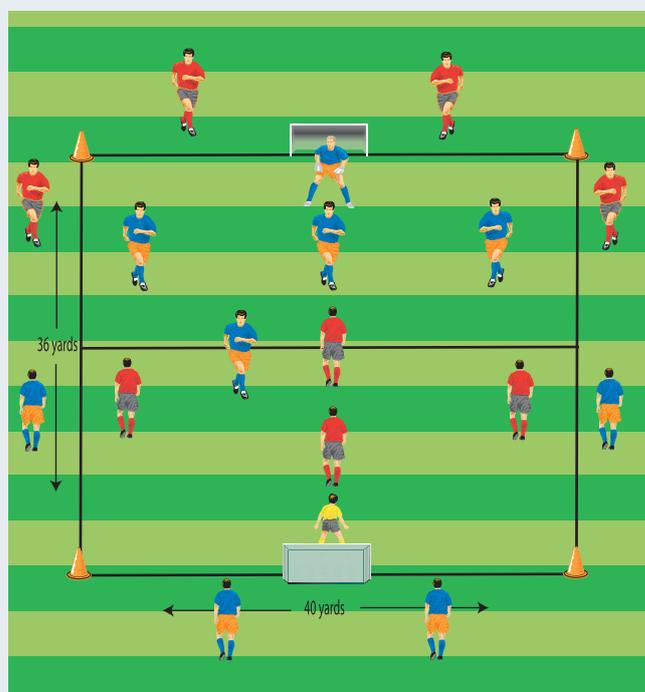


Setup: 5 vs. 5.

Field: 36 yards long and 40 yards wide. Offsides line at midfield.

Restrictions: Goalkeepers can only distribute the ball with their hands in their own half of the field. (When the ball is at their feet they can serve anywhere). The defending team should look to press in the attacking half as often as possible, using offsides to compact space.

Combination Finishing



Setup: 4 vs. 4 with 4 “bumpers” for each team.

Field: 36 yards long and 40 yards wide. No offsides

Restrictions: Bumpers should be on the endline and sideline of the goal their team is attacking. Bumpers are 1 touch.

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Sample Exercise: 5 against 5 with 5 substitutes

Focus:

Fast runs due to the field format and rules

Phase:

Small sided game

Age:

Adult, U19, U17, U15, U13



Theme:

Combination play

Number of players:

17

Organization:

- 5 against 5 with two goalkeepers
- Field is about 40m long and the width of the penalty area (16m)
- After a minute and a half the third team on the sidelines switches with one of the playing teams

Progression:

- Small sided game with 2 touch maximum
- Small sided game with 2 touch maximum on own half and scoring team maintain possession
- Small sided game with free play, the ball has to remain in motion

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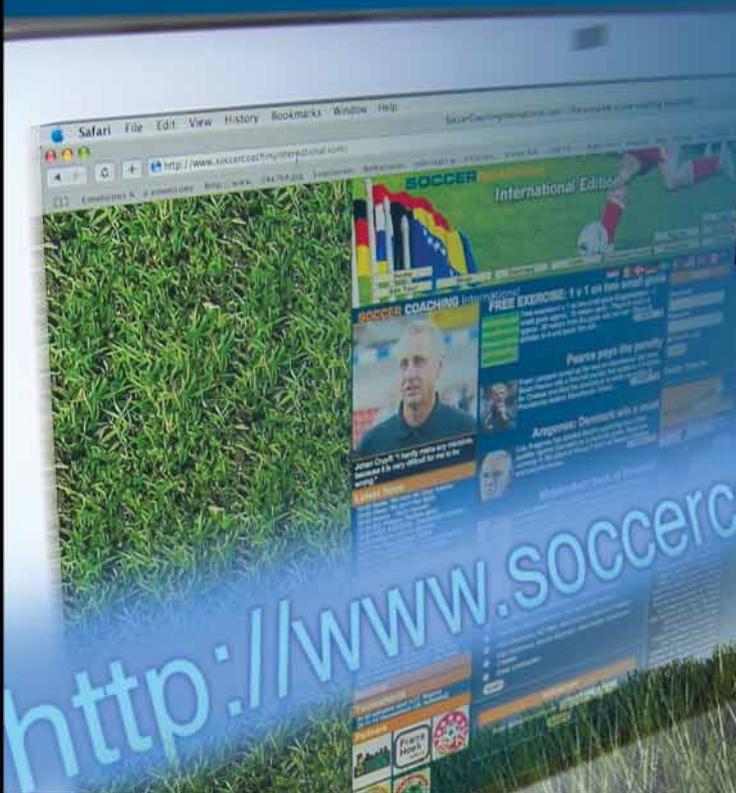
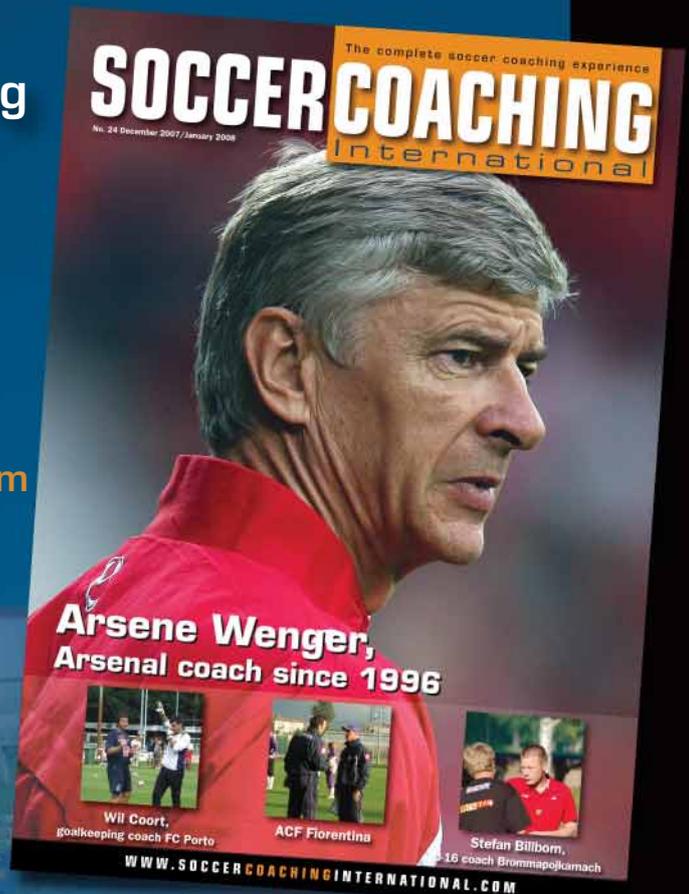
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