

Ball Control and Dribbling

by

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1. FOREWORD TO SERIES

The series on individual training will show how we can improve our players' skills during additional work outside from the team's training sessions. During such sessions, we can separate technical and tactical elements and therefore work better on those. Over long period that will allow us to work more closely and plan better the education of the player. By watching this series, a coach can get to understand better the possibilities of improving individual skills in soccer.

In development years, especially for young players, it is crucial to help those most talented. If it is impossible to fit that during team trainings, coach can organize specific sessions that would suit individual players. All drills and games which we will present in those series should be treated as recommendations and inspirations to use them as they are or to create own versions. What is important in every drill we wanted to create possibly similar environment to the one present in the match, with elements of decision-making and perception of the situation around. Those elements are not easy to recreate and will never be just like in-game situations, because of the presence of just one player. However, recreating it even in a slightest mode, would bear fruits in the match.

During such training, we have just usual equipment and the figure of a coach or coaches. Because of that we must be creative with how using cones and other elements we can create specific environment. If you are interested in how to develop soccer skills and how to create individual drills those series are for you.

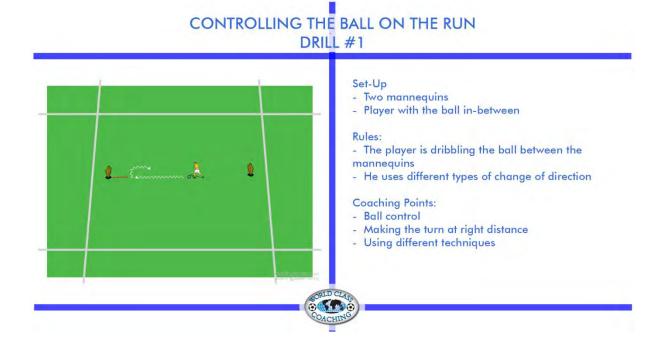
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2. INTRODUCTION

In this part, we will present a series of drills, to work on the player's ball control, especially on the ability to make quick turns with the ball. You can see many examples of drills to work on moves with the ball, but many of it are done in small area and focused only on player developing his feeling of the ball. Those are very good drills and it is surely a worthwhile addition in individual training, but it is also important to create a stepping stone for the player, so he can move from mastering his ball touches to using that in the game. So in our drills we wanted to present exercises, where the player has to use those skills to move from one point to another, but to perform it at speed and also look for external factors influencing his actions, like mannequins or movement of the coach. We wanted to create an environment for the player, where he has to perform his moves in partly-dynamic situations.

Therefore, with those drills, while we still should try to correct player's technique, but it is more important for him to be efficient in using that in dynamic action. Therefore, we should give him more freedom him, so the player can find his own specific moves, that he will be most efficient in performing. When we will encounter difficulties, when performing a specific action, we should guide the player, first to specify the problem and then, to look for a solution from there. Let's say, that the player has problems with performing a turn in front of the manneguin and he can clash to it. Then we can look for a reason for that. If the player's control of the ball is poor? Does he perform it at too high speed? Is he starting the move too late? If the player can name a problem he is facing, we can guide him to looking for solving it. Let's say, that the player clashes into the mannequin, because he performs the move too late. We can look for a hint for him, by asking questions like: do you control the distance to the mannequin, while running towards it? Are you looking at it? How long does the turning move should last? By asking those question and letting the player find those answers, we let the player create an understanding of how such move should look like. We don't give him an instruction of performing Point A, B and C from the "Instruction of performing a soccer turn". We just want him, to be aware of the elements crucial for being efficient on the field, finding the reasons for doing specific actions and then, looking for own ideal solution. That is something we want to stimulate in our drills and the environment we were trying to create. We hope you'll find it useful too.

3. RILL 1.



ANALYSIS



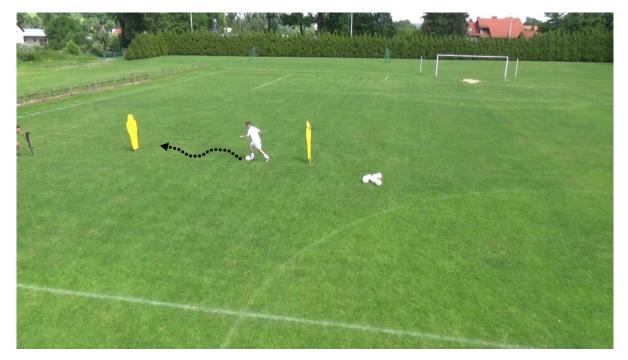
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In this simple drill, the player will be working in the area between two mannequins. His task will require mainly to improve his feeling of the ball and the ability to control it various parts of his feet.



The player will be running between the two mannequins, controlling the ball using various techniques, but also performing different changes of direction. We should also ask him to keep his head up and to try and change the speed of run as well.

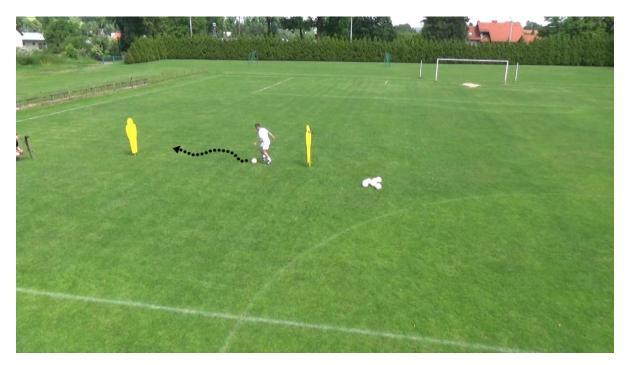


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When turning back, he learns not only to perform the move from technical point of view, but also to do it in relation to the mannequin. It doesn't allow to teach the player to do it under pressure or to try to react to opponents' actions, but it teaches him to feel the distance and to try and observe the space in front, to have the information. We should coach the player, to perform the turn at the right distance. Not too early and not to close to the mannequin. Importantly, it's the player, who has to feel that distance himself.



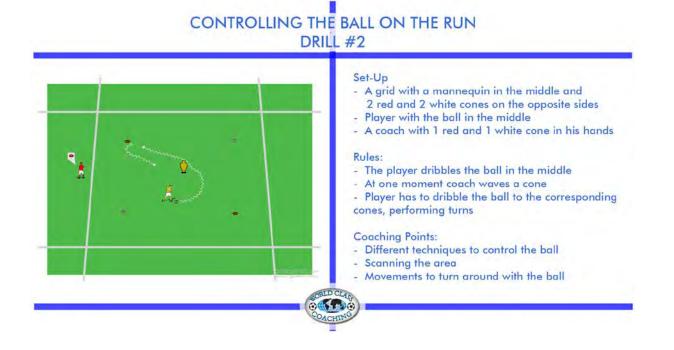
When running with the ball, the player should also use that time. So, he shouldn't just push the ball forward and be focused only on those turn moves, but he should be working on improving his ball control. We can add him special tasks, by varying the types of feet part he should be using.



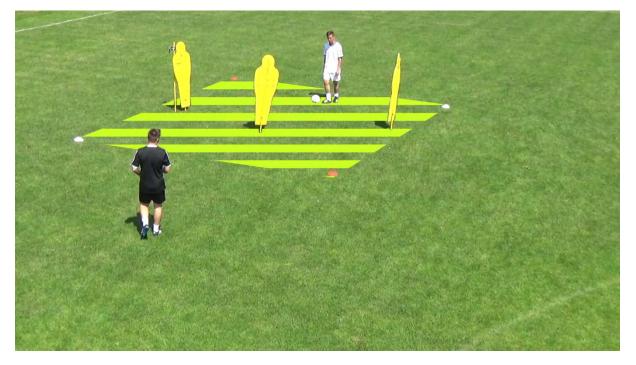
The move of turning back, as we can see here is performed just in front of the mannequin and the player is showing he can perform it at the right moment and, what is important, good coordination, by executing it very smoothly. The turn he is performing here, using the outside of his foot, allows for good protection of the ball from the opponent.

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4. DRILL 2.



ANALYSIS



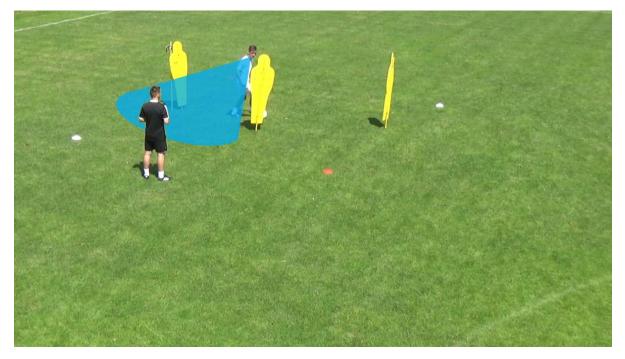
Here the grid is marked out by 4 cones on the outside. There is also 1 mannequin inside and the player will be having 1 ball. The coach stays just outside the grid.

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The cones used to mark the area are of 2 colours. Two red cones are in the opposite corners. In two remaining corners, we also have 2 white cones. The coach has 1 cone of each colour in his hands.



The player will be dribbling the ball inside the grid freeily, while looking at the coach, looking for his signals.

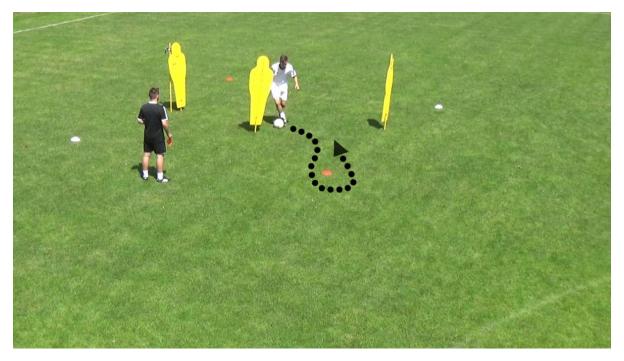


At one point, the coach raises one of the cones and the player seeing that, has a signal to perform designated task.

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By seeing a red cone raised up, the player has to dribble the ball quickly towards both red cones. On both sides he performs quick turns with the ball as well. He has to vary those moves as well, just as we'll see in this example.

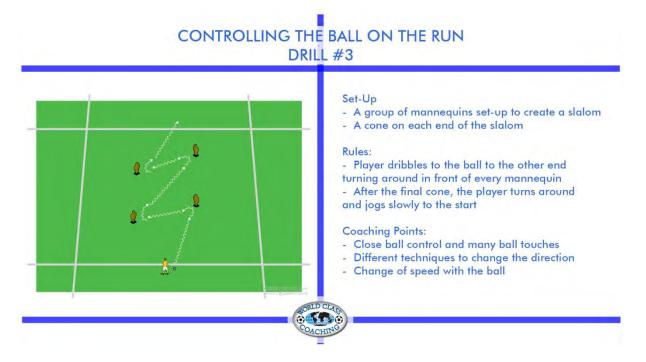


After getting back inside the grid, he gets back to slow run with the ball, while coach gives him few seconds to recuperate and then to perform the drill again.

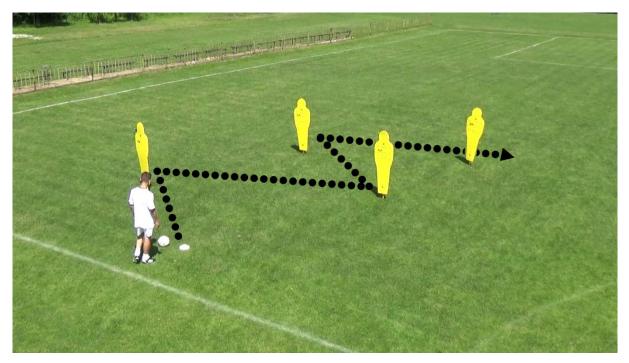
5. DRILL 3.

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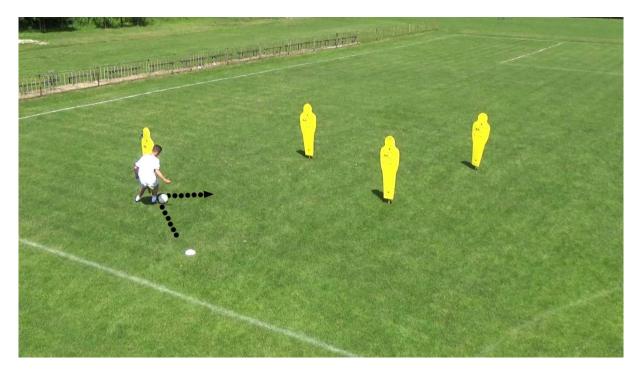


ANALYSIS:

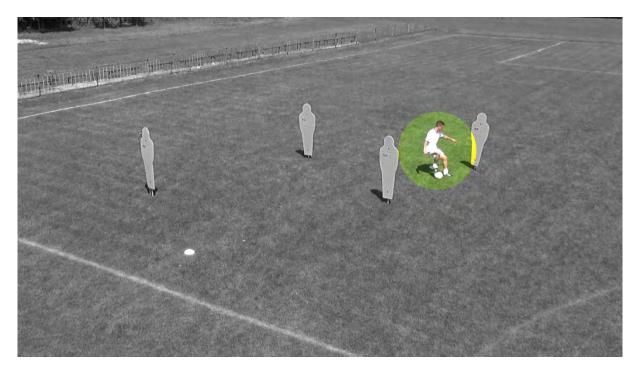


We have a simple slalom here, with 4 mannequins set up on the route. What is important, it is good if we vary the distance between the specific mannequins. That will force the player to observe the field and focus on every single action. He wouldn't be able to do just automatic moves.

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What is important here, though, are the turning moves. Here, the player performs them on a diagonal route. While previous drills were forcing him to turn back with the ball, here he changes direction towards the right and left.

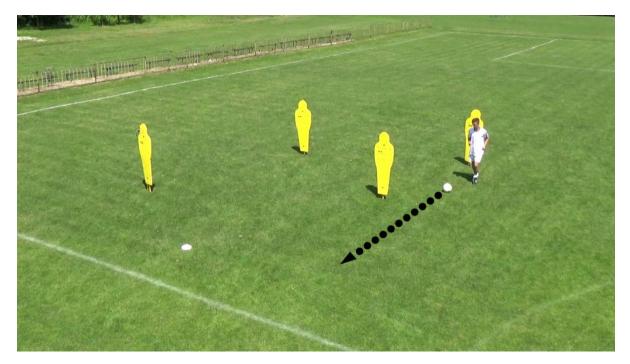


As we want the player to be creative with the moves he performs, we should also ask him to add the change of speed behind the last mannequin. What we want, is for the player to mix

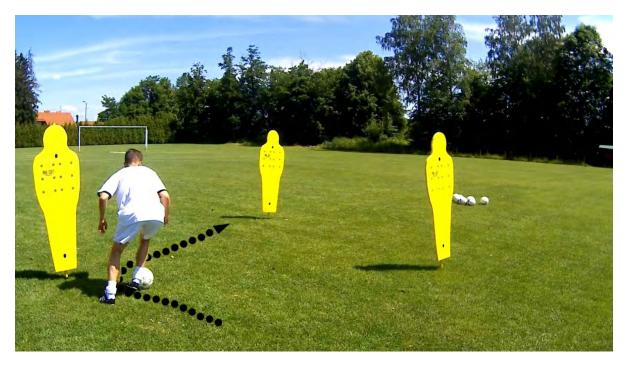
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many possible actions, instead of a longer series of repeated moves. Also adding that short sprint at the end, forces the player to be focused during the performance. Even if that will be just 3-4 steps of quicker run.

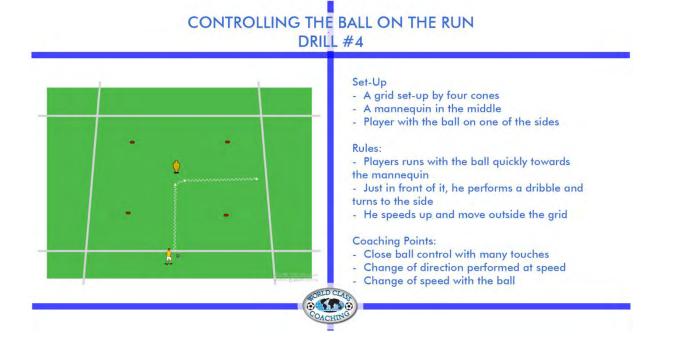


On the way back, the player should be moving slowly, but he should also make few contacts with the ball there. Although that part is supposed to be a moment of rest, we don't want him to switch off totally.

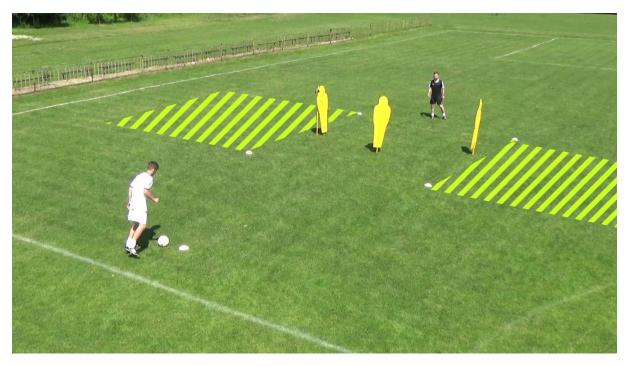


The player should perform smooth turns executed at right distance from the mannequin. The tactical element of the action is also important. By using outside of the foot or keeping right distance, the player also learns to control those elements and to protect the ball from the rival in the game better.

6. DRILL 4.



ANALYSIS:



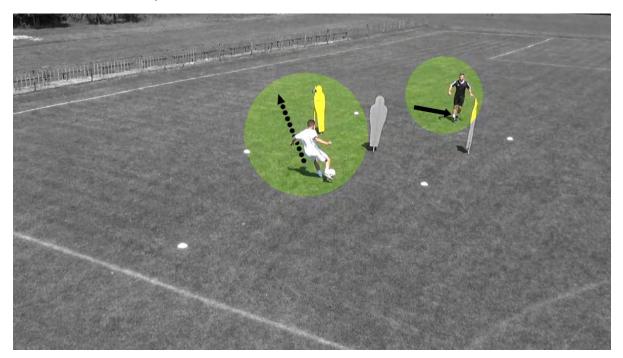
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The working area in this drill includes few sectors. In the center of everything, we see a grid marked out with 4 cones and 3 mannequins set up in a triangle. The players starts in front of it, while just behind that area we see a coach. Additionally, we will also be using space on the sides of grid, that are highlighted here in yellow.



The player runs with the ball towards the central mannequin. While he control the ball and the distance to that mannequin, he also observes the coach's moves.

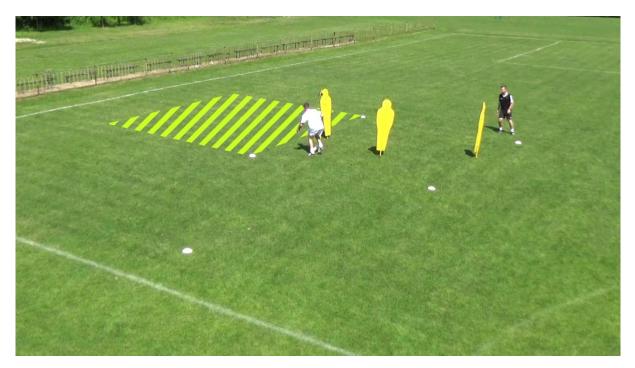


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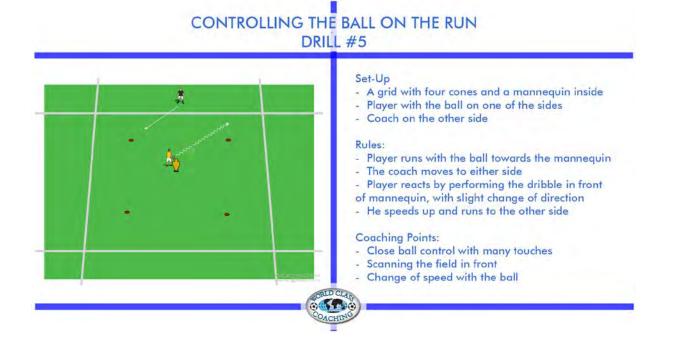
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As the coach moves to one of those sides, he has to perform a turn to the other side possibly quickly. While it forces the player to control the action in front of him, the fact that he has to do it at speed, requires a lot of him technically as well.

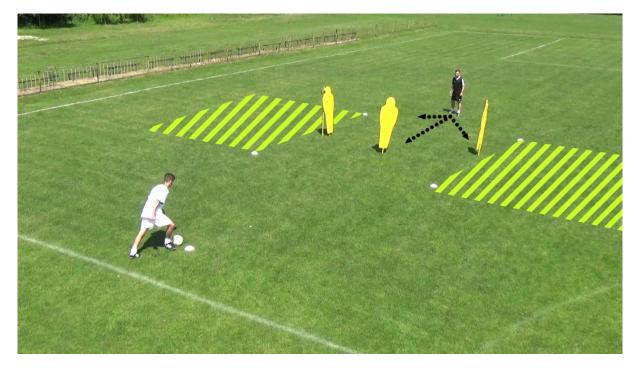


The player has to dribble the ball to the side of the grid with a quick run, as he would do attacking free space in the match.

7. DRILL 5.



ANALYSIS:



As we can see, the set up is exactly the same as before, as now will have a progression of the previous drill. The main difference now, will be the moves from the coach. He will not be moving just to the sides, but he can also step up, towards the player.

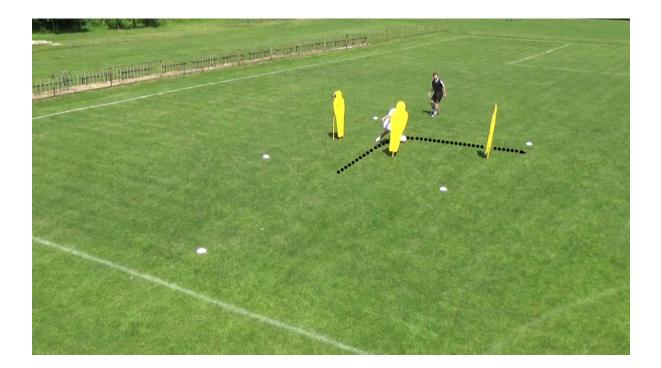
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Just as before, the player runs towards the mannequin and observes the coach. This time, the coach should start slightly deeper, some 2-3 steps behind the endline of the area.

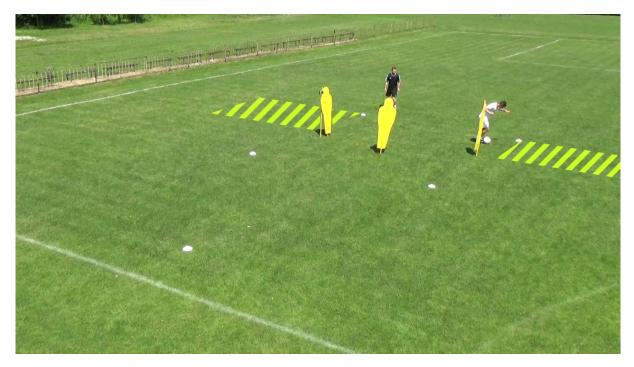


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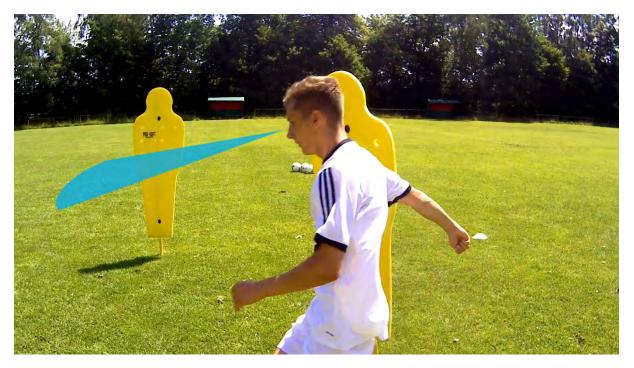
If the coach does not step up, but moves horizontally to one of the sides, the player performs the turn behind the mannequin. He has to change the direction to the other side, but he performs it at a smaller angle. Therefore, it is even more difficult technically.



We can see now, how smaller the space gets for the player. We still want him to do it quickly, although first few repetitions can be slightly slower, so he can get the feel for it.



When the coach steps up, the player has to react earlier, and perform the turn before the mannequin.

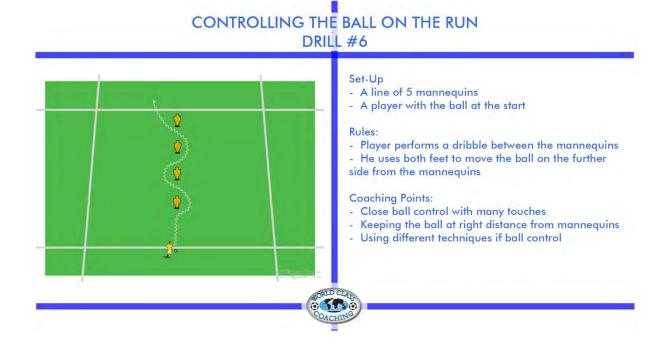


To be able to perform the turn, while reacting to the actions of other player, he needs to control the ball well, so he do it, while observing the field in front of him.

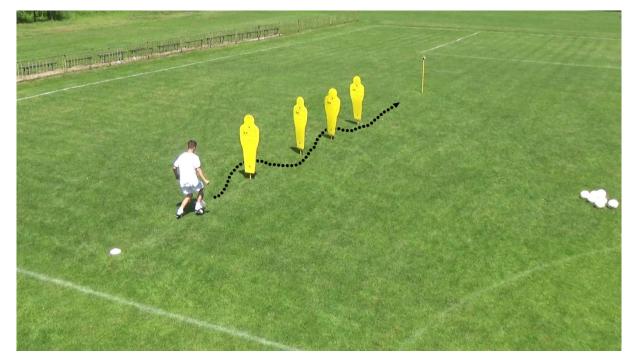
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8. DRILL 6.



ANALYSIS:



Now, we will see a simple slalom again. In this example though, all will be performed at smaller distance though. Mannequins are close to each other and all stands in one line.

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Still, our main focus in controlling the ball and being able to change direction quickly and using different techniques. That is what we want to see here. The player should use various techniques to control the ball and to change directions.



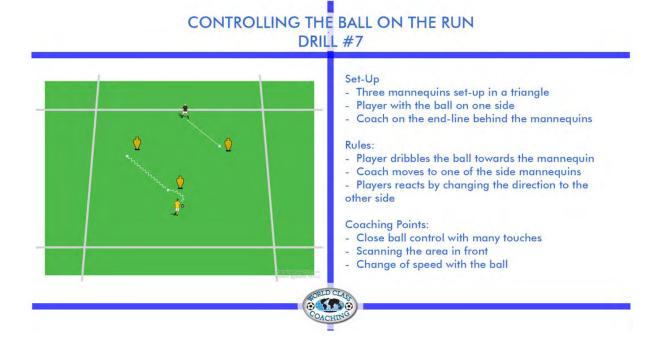
We can see how the player is not looking for shortest or quickest path, but he is moving with the ball from one side to another. The ball is not getting away from him and is able to change the side again quickly, though.

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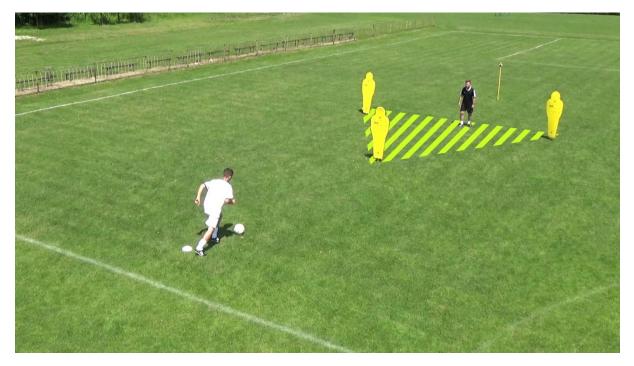
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9. DRILL 7.



ANALYSIS:

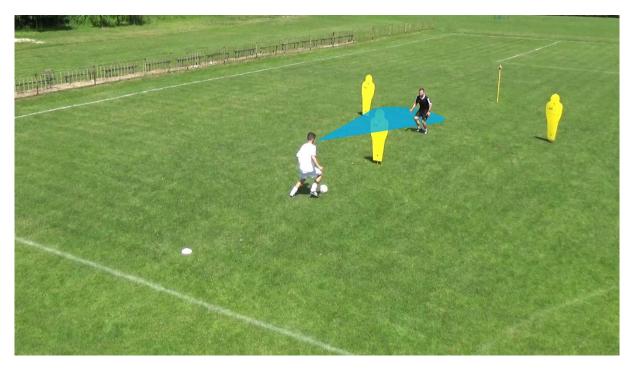


We can see three mannequins set up in a triangle again and the coach behind them.

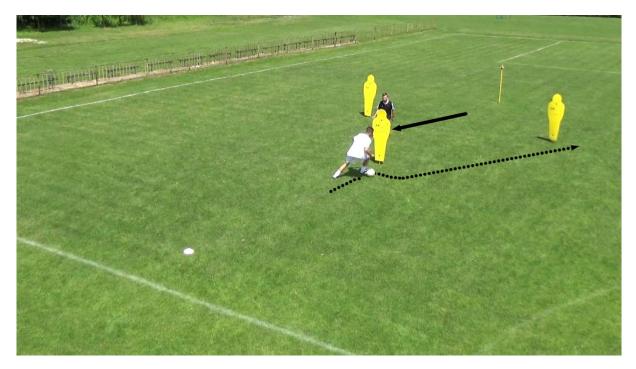
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The player runs with the ball towards the mannequin, with the task to perform a dribble just in front of it and to change direction to one of the sides.



Just as he is getting close to that mannequin, the coach steps up, offering cover for the mannequin to one of the sides. The player has to observe that and react quickly.

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Additionally, the player should be able to perform some dribble in front of another mannequin. By adding such task, we force the player to keep the ball close, when changing the side. That is important in offensive actions, as the space is limited closer to the goal and even the best dribble is not useful, when the player pushes the ball far away, allowing the opponent to recover.

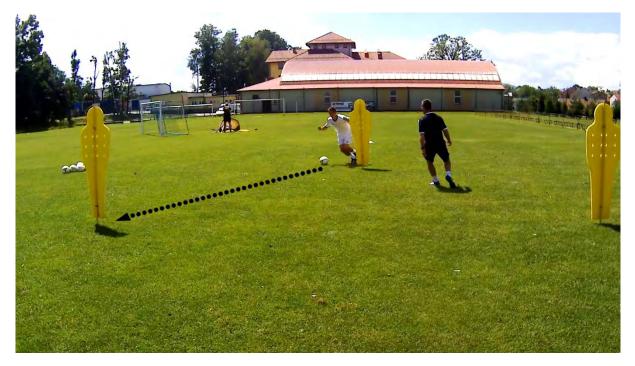


By moving to one of the sides, the coach gives cover, protecting one part, but he opens up the other one. That is the space, the player has to exploit.

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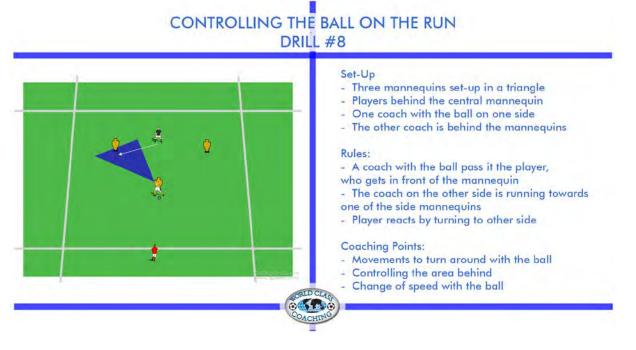
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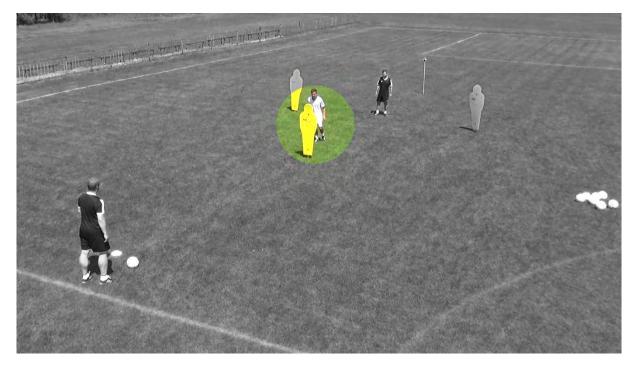


The player has some space in front of him, but he is not alone yet and the ball has to be controlled, for the player to be prepared for another duel.

10. DRILL 8.



ANALYSIS:

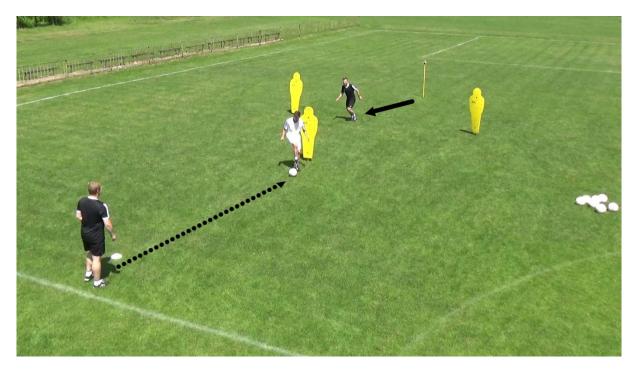


Now, the general set up is the same, with three mannequins in a triangle, but the player stays behind the front one and with the second coach standing with the ball on other end.

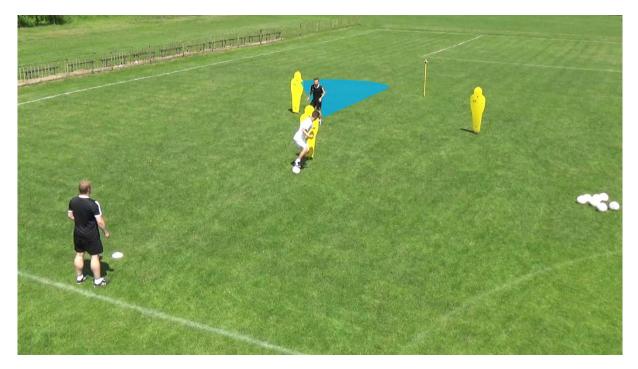
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The player gets in front of the mannequin, dropping for the ball and receiving the pass to feet. Especially with the first repetitions, he can control it, while also learning to protect it with his body.

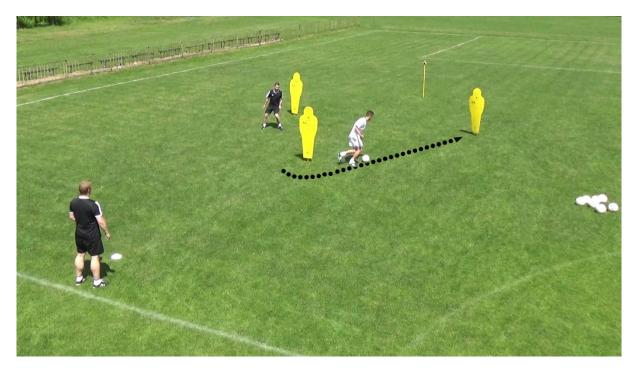


At the same time, the other coach moves to one of the sides. The player has to turn his head possibly quickly, to check the positioning of that coach.

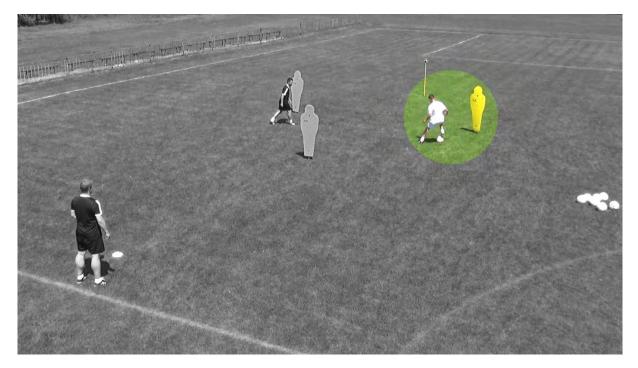
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When he spots which side is free, he turns there and attacks that space, running towards another mannequin.



Here, we want the player to make another dribble and again, that way he makes more actions with the ball, but also has to keep it close and under control.

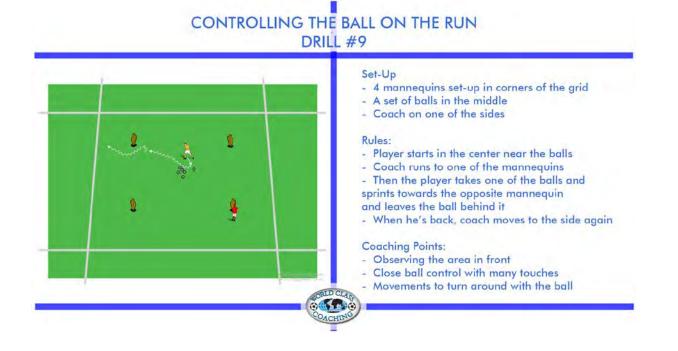
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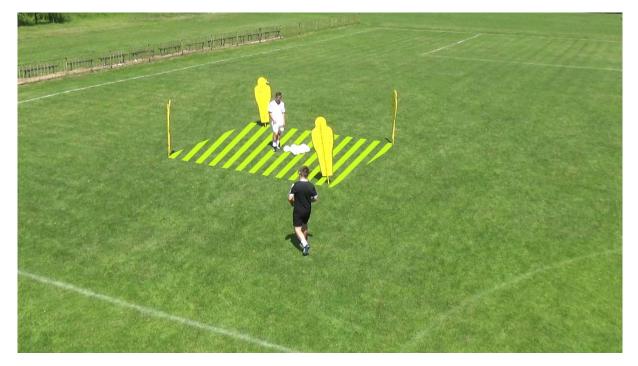


With every repetition, the coach without the ball may make the move earlier. Forcing the player coordinate controlling the space and receiving the pass. If that is too difficult, we should increase the distance between the starting point of a pass and the player.

11. DRILL 9.



ANALYSIS:



The player is starting inside the grid, with a set of balls in the very center and four mannequins set up in the corners of the area.

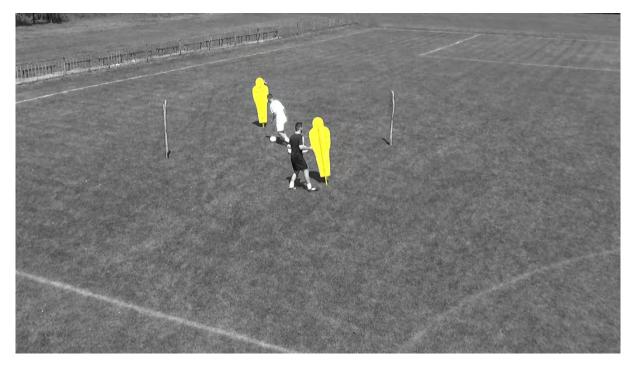
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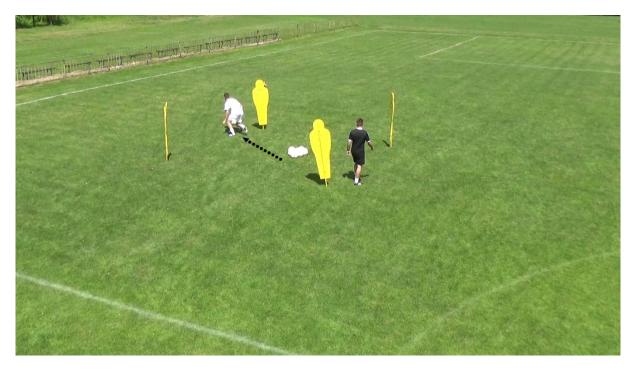
The coach will be operating on the sides of the area and moving to one of the corners.



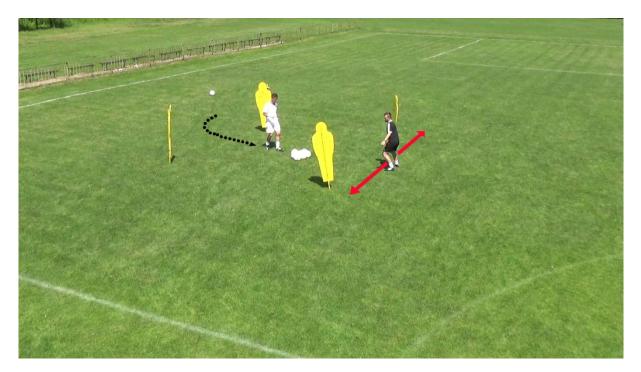
Just when the player is ready, the coach shifts to either of the sides, at that moment the player has to take the ball and dribble it behind the opposing mannequin. What is important, the player does not only run at speed, but he also performs a dribble in front of that mannequin.

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The player then leaves the ball outside, joggs slowly back inside, while the coach goes to one of the sides of where he ended up.



When the player is inside, the coach moves to one of the sides again, while player has to take the ball quickly and run towards the opposite corner again.

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12. ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Mariusz Kondak – Tactical Analyst at Wisła Kraków. Former analyst at Chojniczanka (Polish 1st Division) or Sandecja Nowy Sącz. UEFA B license holder, InStatFootball scout and the founder of CzytamGre Soccer Services..

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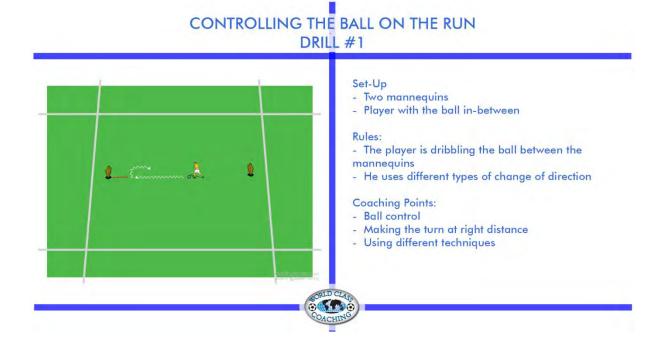
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2. INTRODUCTION

In this part, we will present a series of drills, to work on the player's ball control, especially on the ability to make quick turns with the ball. You can see many examples of drills to work on moves with the ball, but many of it are done in small area and focused only on player developing his feeling of the ball. Those are very good drills and it is surely a worthwhile addition in individual training, but it is also important to create a stepping stone for the player, so he can move from mastering his ball touches to using that in the game. So in our drills we wanted to present exercises, where the player has to use those skills to move from one point to another, but to perform it at speed and also look for external factors influencing his actions, like mannequins or movement of the coach. We wanted to create an environment for the player, where he has to perform his moves in partly-dynamic situations.

Therefore, with those drills, while we still should try to correct player's technique, but it is more important for him to be efficient in using that in dynamic action. Therefore, we should give him more freedom him, so the player can find his own specific moves, that he will be most efficient in performing. When we will encounter difficulties, when performing a specific action, we should guide the player, first to specify the problem and then, to look for a solution from there. Let's say, that the player has problems with performing a turn in front of the manneguin and he can clash to it. Then we can look for a reason for that. If the player's control of the ball is poor? Does he perform it at too high speed? Is he starting the move too late? If the player can name a problem he is facing, we can guide him to looking for solving it. Let's say, that the player clashes into the mannequin, because he performs the move too late. We can look for a hint for him, by asking questions like: do you control the distance to the mannequin, while running towards it? Are you looking at it? How long does the turning move should last? By asking those question and letting the player find those answers, we let the player create an understanding of how such move should look like. We don't give him an instruction of performing Point A, B and C from the "Instruction of performing a soccer turn". We just want him, to be aware of the elements crucial for being efficient on the field, finding the reasons for doing specific actions and then, looking for own ideal solution. That is something we want to stimulate in our drills and the environment we were trying to create. We hope you'll find it useful too.

3. RILL 1.



ANALYSIS



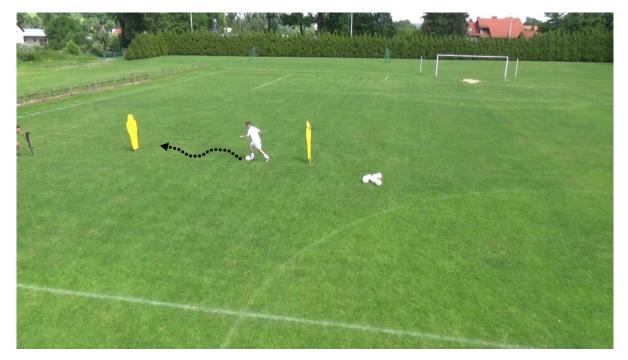
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In this simple drill, the player will be working in the area between two mannequins. His task will require mainly to improve his feeling of the ball and the ability to control it various parts of his feet.



The player will be running between the two mannequins, controlling the ball using various techniques, but also performing different changes of direction. We should also ask him to keep his head up and to try and change the speed of run as well.

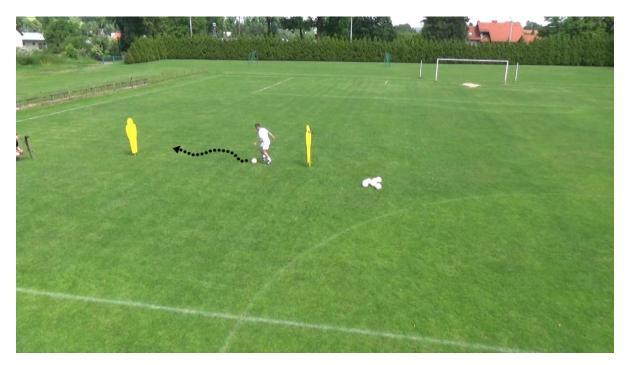


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When turning back, he learns not only to perform the move from technical point of view, but also to do it in relation to the mannequin. It doesn't allow to teach the player to do it under pressure or to try to react to opponents' actions, but it teaches him to feel the distance and to try and observe the space in front, to have the information. We should coach the player, to perform the turn at the right distance. Not too early and not to close to the mannequin. Importantly, it's the player, who has to feel that distance himself.



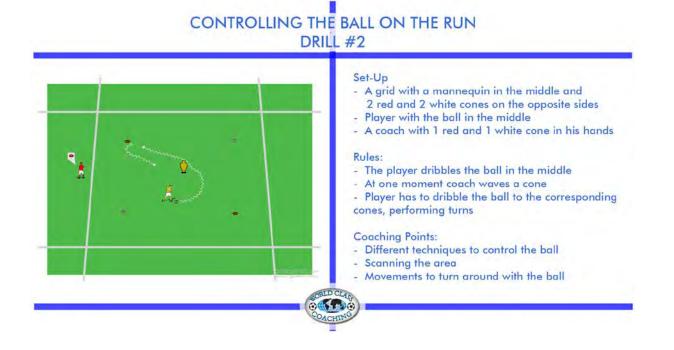
When running with the ball, the player should also use that time. So, he shouldn't just push the ball forward and be focused only on those turn moves, but he should be working on improving his ball control. We can add him special tasks, by varying the types of feet part he should be using.



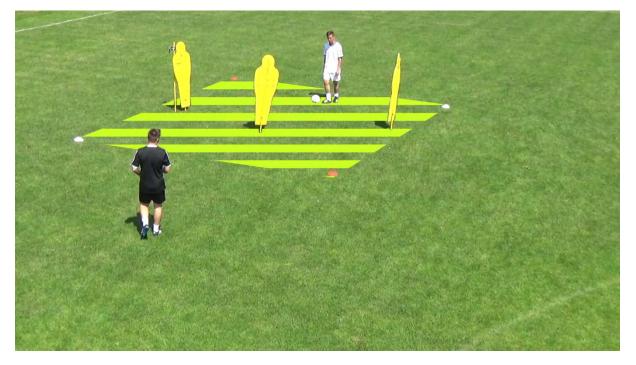
The move of turning back, as we can see here is performed just in front of the mannequin and the player is showing he can perform it at the right moment and, what is important, good coordination, by executing it very smoothly. The turn he is performing here, using the outside of his foot, allows for good protection of the ball from the opponent.

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4. DRILL 2.



ANALYSIS



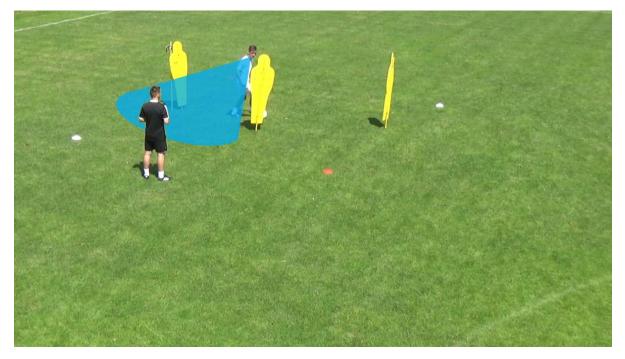
Here the grid is marked out by 4 cones on the outside. There is also 1 mannequin inside and the player will be having 1 ball. The coach stays just outside the grid.

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The cones used to mark the area are of 2 colours. Two red cones are in the opposite corners. In two remaining corners, we also have 2 white cones. The coach has 1 cone of each colour in his hands.



The player will be dribbling the ball inside the grid freeily, while looking at the coach, looking for his signals.

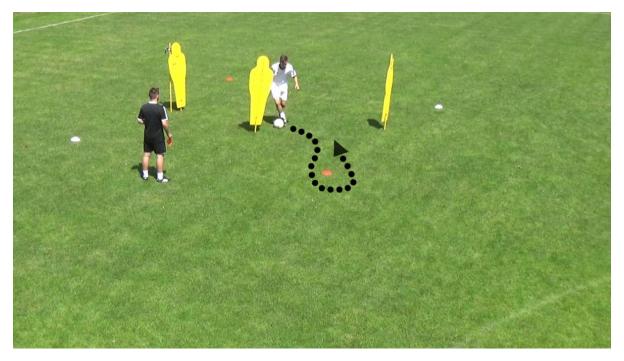


At one point, the coach raises one of the cones and the player seeing that, has a signal to perform designated task.

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By seeing a red cone raised up, the player has to dribble the ball quickly towards both red cones. On both sides he performs quick turns with the ball as well. He has to vary those moves as well, just as we'll see in this example.

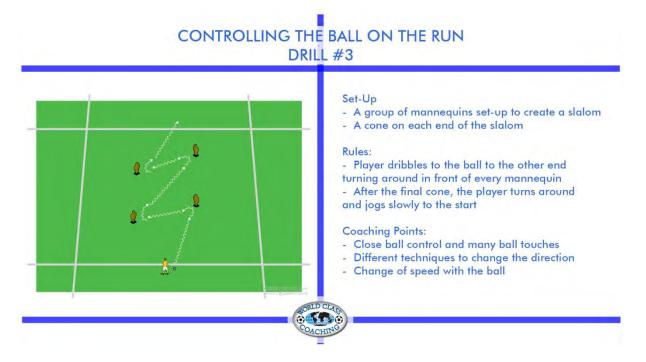


After getting back inside the grid, he gets back to slow run with the ball, while coach gives him few seconds to recuperate and then to perform the drill again.

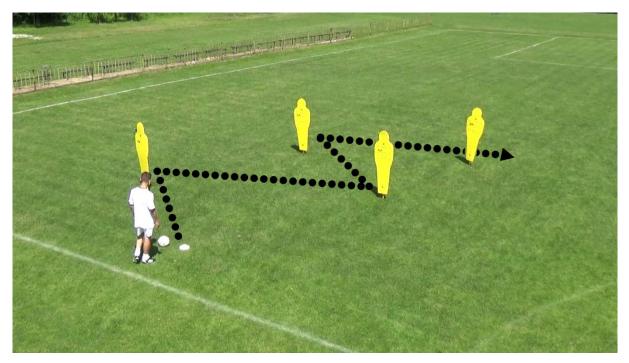
5. DRILL 3.

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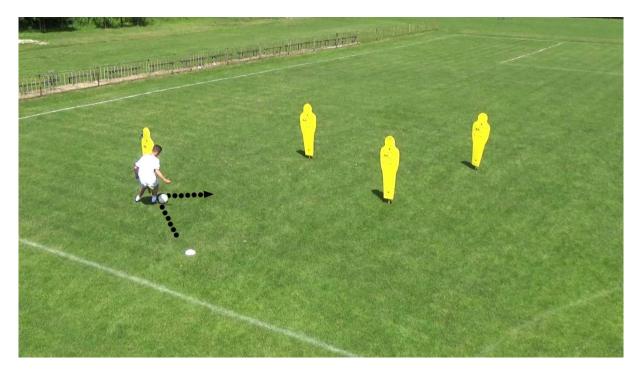


ANALYSIS:

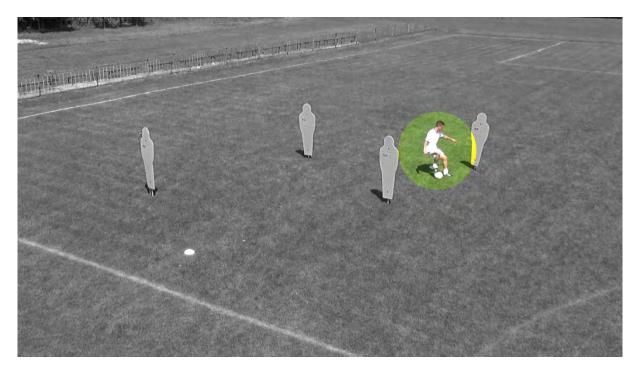


We have a simple slalom here, with 4 mannequins set up on the route. What is important, it is good if we vary the distance between the specific mannequins. That will force the player to observe the field and focus on every single action. He wouldn't be able to do just automatic moves.

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What is important here, though, are the turning moves. Here, the player performs them on a diagonal route. While previous drills were forcing him to turn back with the ball, here he changes direction towards the right and left.

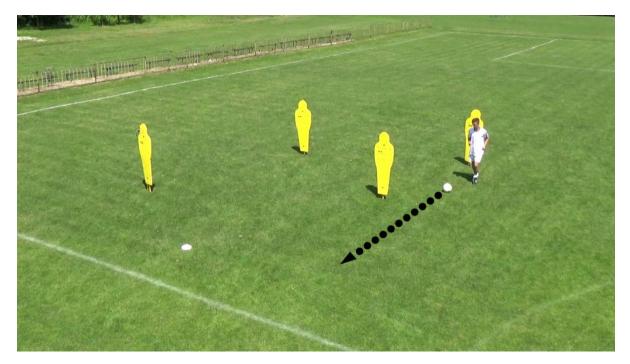


As we want the player to be creative with the moves he performs, we should also ask him to add the change of speed behind the last mannequin. What we want, is for the player to mix

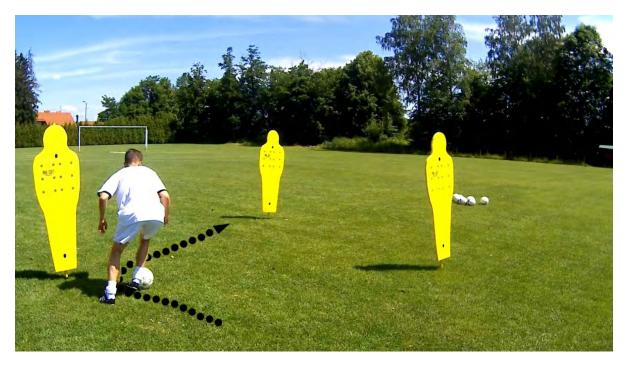
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many possible actions, instead of a longer series of repeated moves. Also adding that short sprint at the end, forces the player to be focused during the performance. Even if that will be just 3-4 steps of quicker run.

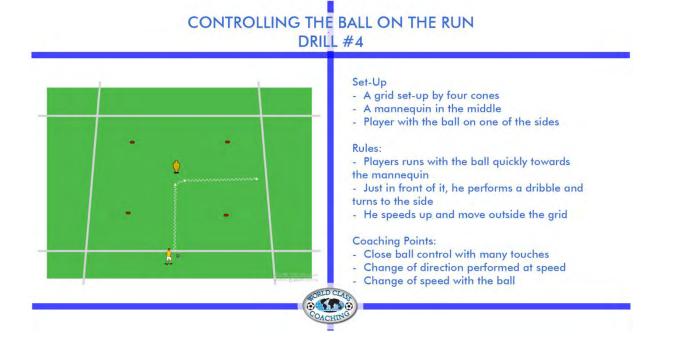


On the way back, the player should be moving slowly, but he should also make few contacts with the ball there. Although that part is supposed to be a moment of rest, we don't want him to switch off totally.

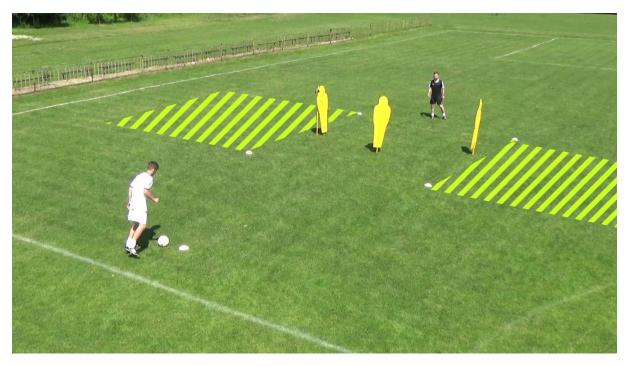


The player should perform smooth turns executed at right distance from the mannequin. The tactical element of the action is also important. By using outside of the foot or keeping right distance, the player also learns to control those elements and to protect the ball from the rival in the game better.

6. DRILL 4.



ANALYSIS:



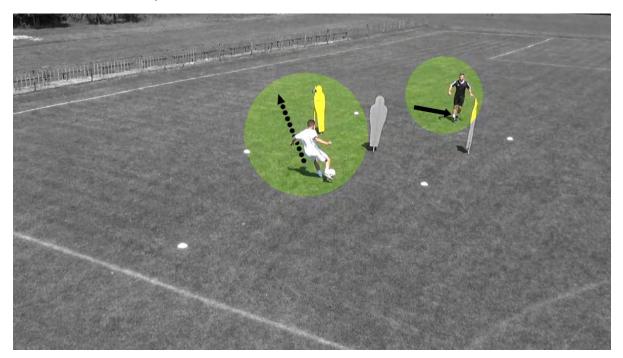
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The working area in this drill includes few sectors. In the center of everything, we see a grid marked out with 4 cones and 3 mannequins set up in a triangle. The players starts in front of it, while just behind that area we see a coach. Additionally, we will also be using space on the sides of grid, that are highlighted here in yellow.



The player runs with the ball towards the central mannequin. While he control the ball and the distance to that mannequin, he also observes the coach's moves.

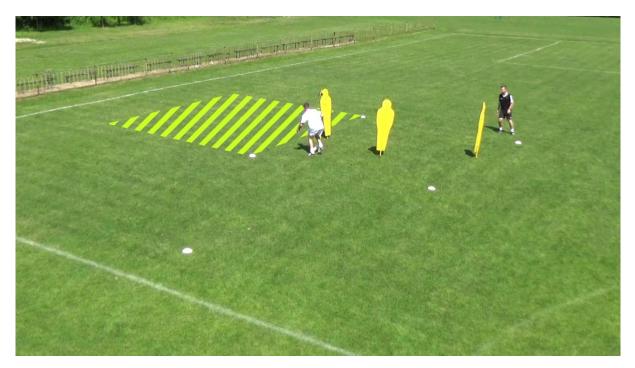


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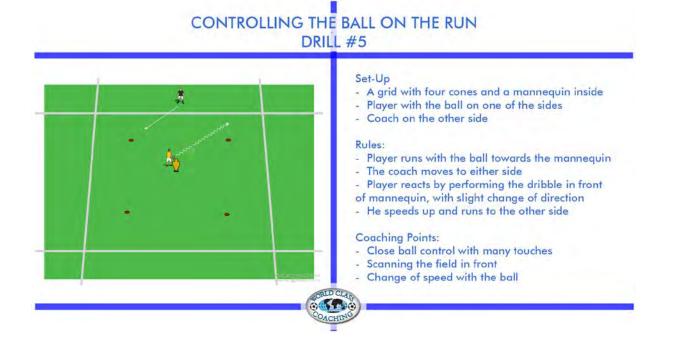
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As the coach moves to one of those sides, he has to perform a turn to the other side possibly quickly. While it forces the player to control the action in front of him, the fact that he has to do it at speed, requires a lot of him technically as well.

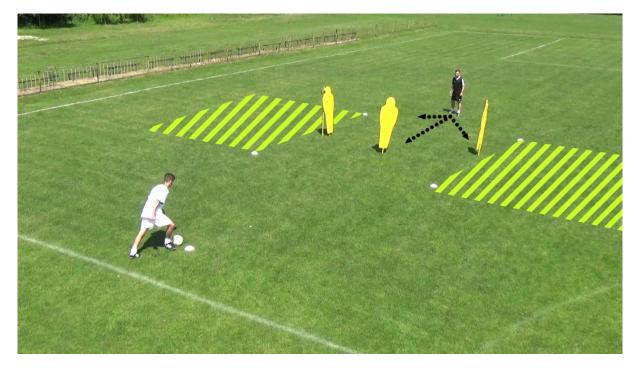


The player has to dribble the ball to the side of the grid with a quick run, as he would do attacking free space in the match.

7. DRILL 5.



ANALYSIS:



As we can see, the set up is exactly the same as before, as now will have a progression of the previous drill. The main difference now, will be the moves from the coach. He will not be moving just to the sides, but he can also step up, towards the player.

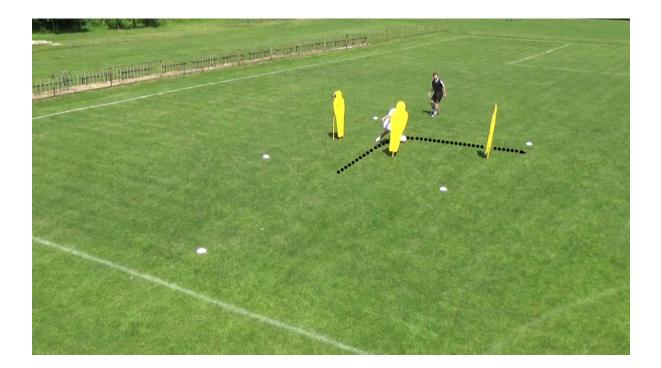
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Just as before, the player runs towards the mannequin and observes the coach. This time, the coach should start slightly deeper, some 2-3 steps behind the endline of the area.

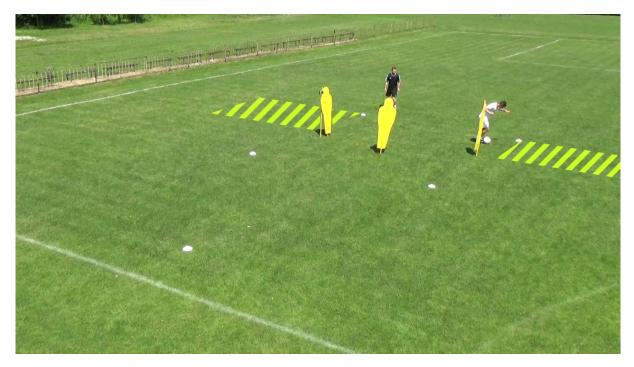


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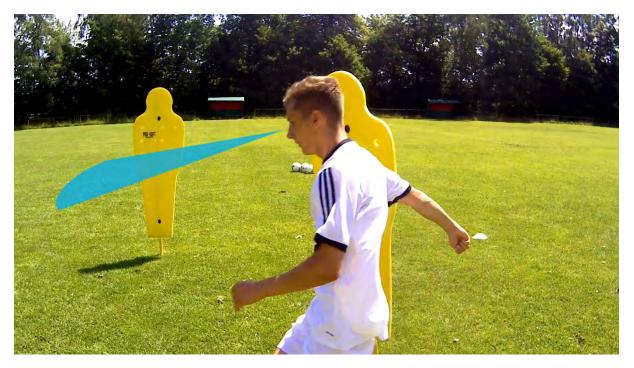
If the coach does not step up, but moves horizontally to one of the sides, the player performs the turn behind the mannequin. He has to change the direction to the other side, but he performs it at a smaller angle. Therefore, it is even more difficult technically.



We can see now, how smaller the space gets for the player. We still want him to do it quickly, although first few repetitions can be slightly slower, so he can get the feel for it.



When the coach steps up, the player has to react earlier, and perform the turn before the mannequin.

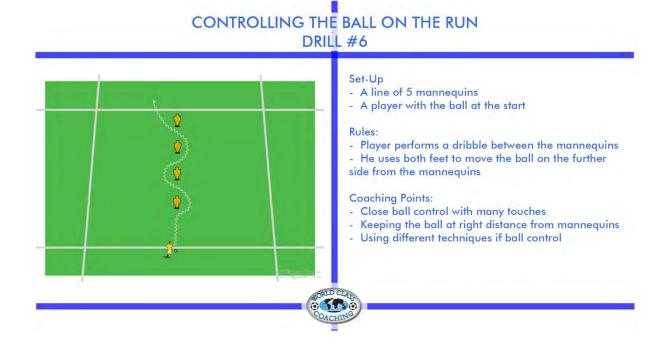


To be able to perform the turn, while reacting to the actions of other player, he needs to control the ball well, so he do it, while observing the field in front of him.

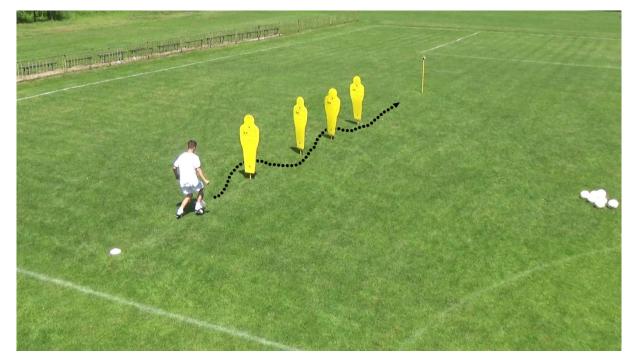
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8. DRILL 6.



ANALYSIS:



Now, we will see a simple slalom again. In this example though, all will be performed at smaller distance though. Mannequins are close to each other and all stands in one line.

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Still, our main focus in controlling the ball and being able to change direction quickly and using different techniques. That is what we want to see here. The player should use various techniques to control the ball and to change directions.



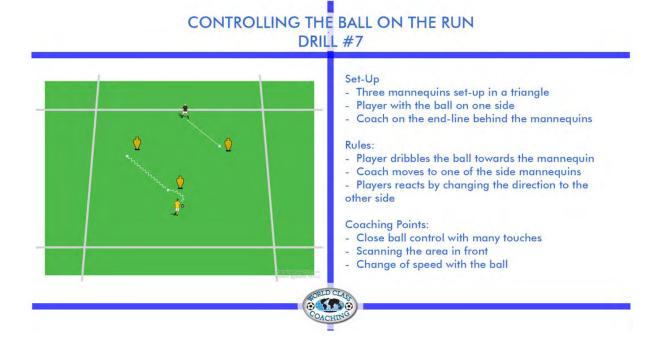
We can see how the player is not looking for shortest or quickest path, but he is moving with the ball from one side to another. The ball is not getting away from him and is able to change the side again quickly, though.

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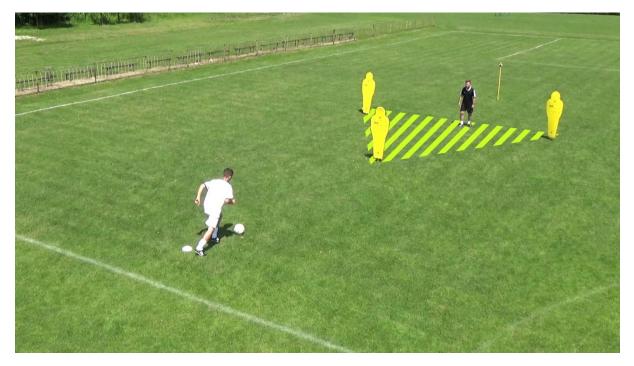
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9. DRILL 7.



ANALYSIS:

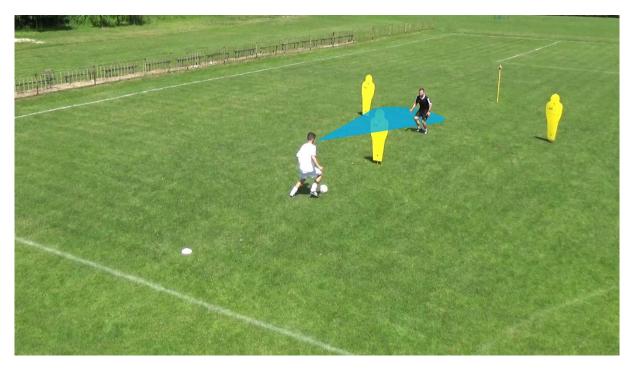


We can see three mannequins set up in a triangle again and the coach behind them.

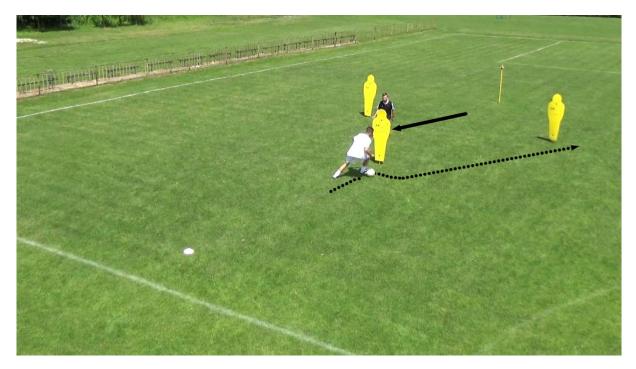
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The player runs with the ball towards the mannequin, with the task to perform a dribble just in front of it and to change direction to one of the sides.



Just as he is getting close to that mannequin, the coach steps up, offering cover for the mannequin to one of the sides. The player has to observe that and react quickly.

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Additionally, the player should be able to perform some dribble in front of another mannequin. By adding such task, we force the player to keep the ball close, when changing the side. That is important in offensive actions, as the space is limited closer to the goal and even the best dribble is not useful, when the player pushes the ball far away, allowing the opponent to recover.

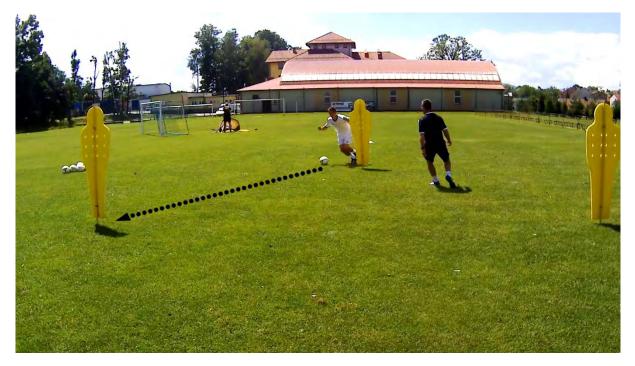


By moving to one of the sides, the coach gives cover, protecting one part, but he opens up the other one. That is the space, the player has to exploit.

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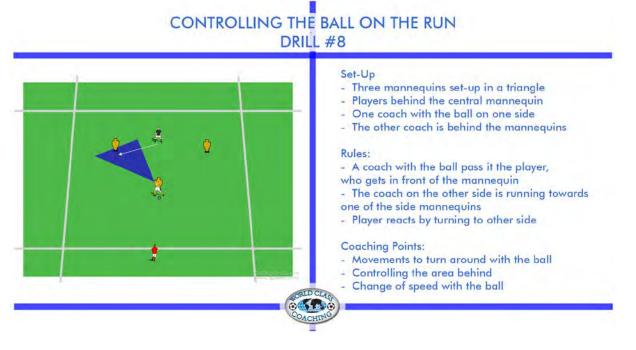
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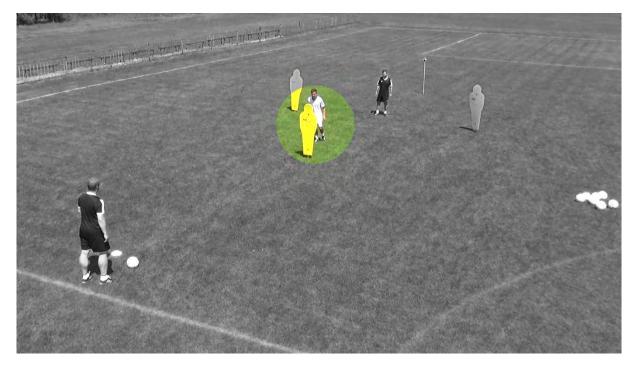


The player has some space in front of him, but he is not alone yet and the ball has to be controlled, for the player to be prepared for another duel.

10. DRILL 8.



ANALYSIS:

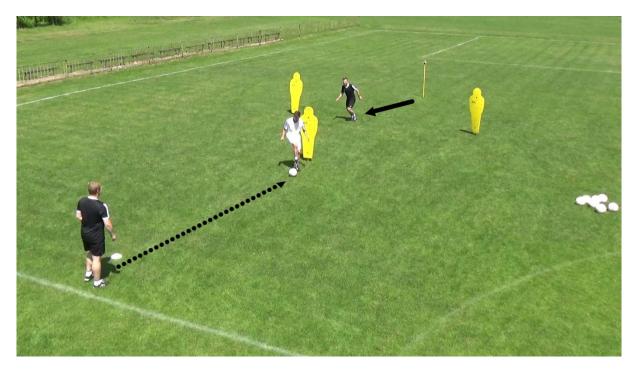


Now, the general set up is the same, with three mannequins in a triangle, but the player stays behind the front one and with the second coach standing with the ball on other end.

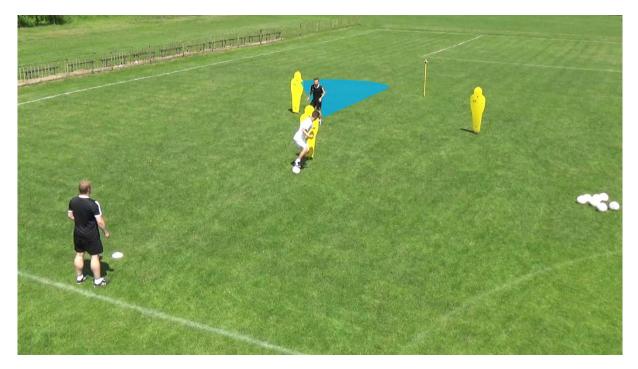
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The player gets in front of the mannequin, dropping for the ball and receiving the pass to feet. Especially with the first repetitions, he can control it, while also learning to protect it with his body.

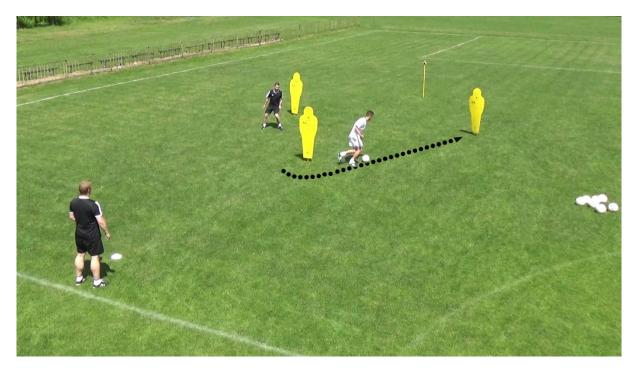


At the same time, the other coach moves to one of the sides. The player has to turn his head possibly quickly, to check the positioning of that coach.

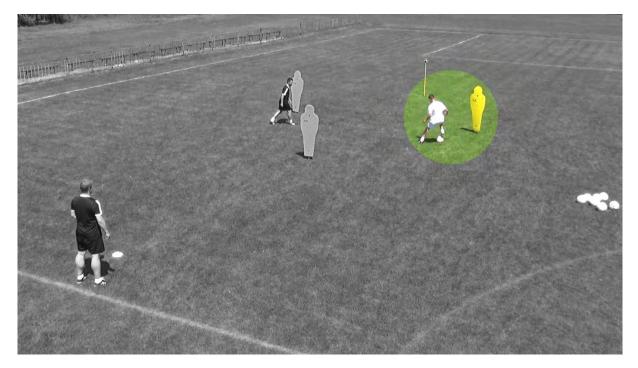
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When he spots which side is free, he turns there and attacks that space, running towards another mannequin.



Here, we want the player to make another dribble and again, that way he makes more actions with the ball, but also has to keep it close and under control.

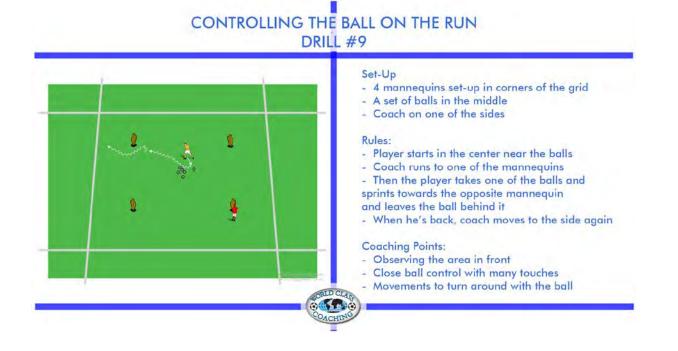
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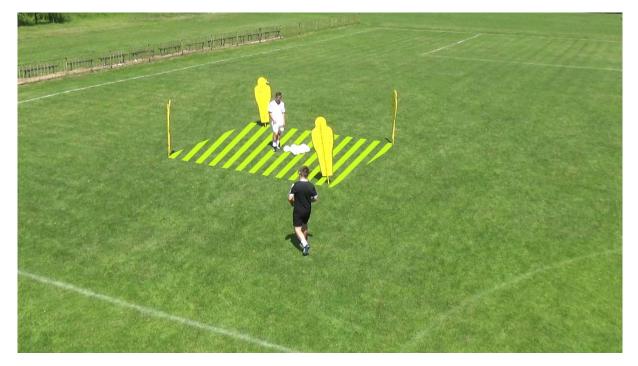


With every repetition, the coach without the ball may make the move earlier. Forcing the player coordinate controlling the space and receiving the pass. If that is too difficult, we should increase the distance between the starting point of a pass and the player.

11. DRILL 9.



ANALYSIS:



The player is starting inside the grid, with a set of balls in the very center and four mannequins set up in the corners of the area.

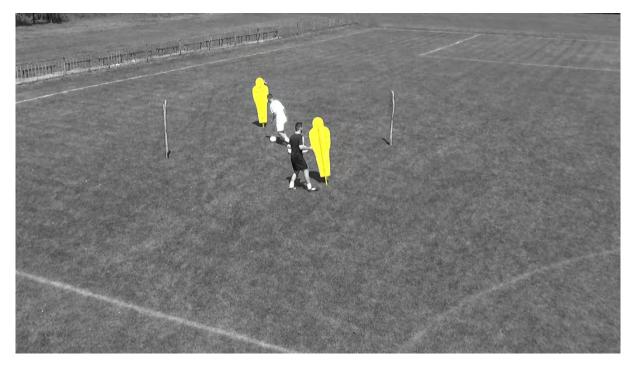
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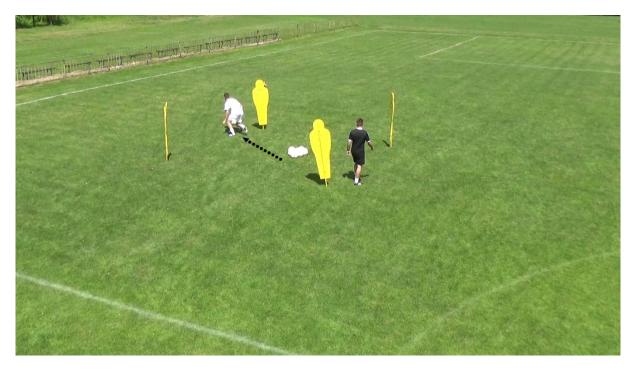
The coach will be operating on the sides of the area and moving to one of the corners.



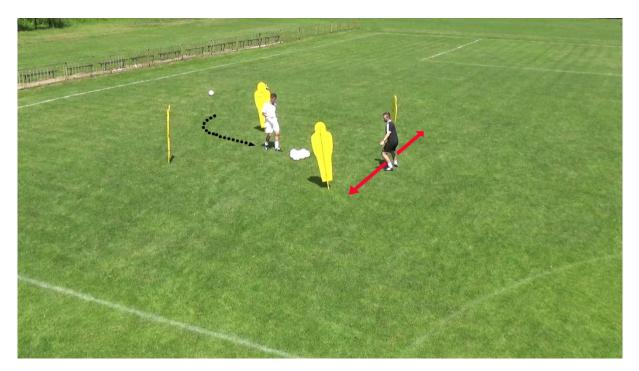
Just when the player is ready, the coach shifts to either of the sides, at that moment the player has to take the ball and dribble it behind the opposing mannequin. What is important, the player does not only run at speed, but he also performs a dribble in front of that mannequin.

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The player then leaves the ball outside, joggs slowly back inside, while the coach goes to one of the sides of where he ended up.



When the player is inside, the coach moves to one of the sides again, while player has to take the ball quickly and run towards the opposite corner again.

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