

Coaching Clinic

Individual & Team Skills - Attacking

The most lacking single skill in US Soccer today is attacking. The art of scoring goals is a talent few and far between. A team cannot win a game if they don't put the ball in the back of the net! Attacking combines both technical (body position and striking of the ball) as well as tactical application (where to shoot/pass/dribble and having the mentality to go for goal).

Coaches need to get their players to think in terms of attacking in a triangular shape, providing penetration, support, depth and mobility.

1. Attacking 1v1

- ✍ Warm-up passing and moving, change of pace on receiving ball
- ✍ Must look to penetrate space behind imaginary defender
- ✍ Demonstrate and practice basic fakes / discuss theory

2. Combination Play

- ✍ Warm-up in groups of 3 in unrestricted area
- ✍ Practice combinations: wall-pass, overlap and take-over

3. Attacking 2v1, 2v2 Tactics (in 10x15 grid)

- ✍ Add targets. Create angle for shot or forward pass
- ✍ Supporting player take defender away then check back to ball at angle
- ✍ Use of fakes, turns to create space – good use of first touch!

4. Small Group Tactics 3v3 to goal

- ✍ First attacker's first priority is to penetrate (get behind) the defense, either by shooting, passing or dribbling (in order of priority!)
- ✍ The second attacker, provides support and depth to the attack, being available for a forward pass, so team can maintain possession and penetrate
- ✍ The third attacker (in triangle) tries to unbalance the defense with penetrating running, provide mobility and width

The Tactics of Attacking

Individual Tactics (1 v 1)

- Recognize the situation
- Aim to attack space behind the opponent
- Create angle for shot or forward pass

Small Group Tactics (2 v 1), (2 v 2), (3 v 3)

- Attacking space in front of ball
- Combination play (begin with 2 v 1. Coach for success!)
 - Wall pass
 - Overlap
 - Through pass
 - Takeovers
- Coach the 1st, 2nd & 3rd attackers (keep players in a triangular shape)
 - 1st Penetration, priorities: 1. Shoot, 2. Pass 3. Dribble
 - 2nd Support & depth
 - 3rd Unbalance defense, mobility & width

Team Tactics (5 v 5), (8 v 8)

- Specific role responsibilities by thirds of the field
- Restarts - priorities change in different areas of the field
- Coach locally (player on ball)
- Coach globally (team shape/movement off ball)

Fun games to encourage Attacking play

Jurassic Park

30x20 or 30x30 yard grid, with 6 mini goals around border. Start with 5 orange players inside grid with balls, blue players are outside. On command they have to come in and steal the balls to score. When scored the ball is dead. Time how long it takes to kill all 5 balls. Swap roles.

Numbers up

Encourage players to shoot or take players on by providing numbers up for the attacking team. Give them the opportunity to find someone in space to go for goal. When you move to the 'match condition' phase of practice, players will have the mentality to take people on and go for goal. Award double points for a pass that splits the defence and leads to a goal!

Other interesting alternatives for this game include, making each defender responsible for one attacker (so they cannot tackle anybody else). They get absorbed by the even sided game and often lose the player they are responsible for, thus providing the opportunity to penetrate with the ball.

Model practice to encourage Attacking Play

Warm Up

Working in two's, passing and preparing the ball. Working on 1st touch, stretching the quads and hamstrings. Keep the warm up tidy.

Fundamental

Show correct technique in driving the ball with laces, inside and outside of both feet. To keep ball low, toe down, keeping head still looking at ball, heel up, play the middle of the ball, follow through if possible, body over the ball. When bending balls, strike ball more to outside and inside of feet. Control of body is very important. Also, address volleys, breakaways, accuracy and power.

Match Related

Activity #1: Circle of Fire! 1v1

Have 6 whites and 6 reds, with 4 small goals in a circle of approximately 15 yards diameter. In turn play 1v1, with the object being to maintain possession and dribble through one of the 4 goals to score. If a goal is scored, play on, maintain possession and try and score again! If ball goes over cone, change possession. Keep body between ball and opponent and utilize turns to beat player. Turn to outside.

Most U-14 players lose ball because they:

- 1. Turn inside, or**
- 2. Want to use their strongest foot.**

Then can send out two pairs at a time.

Activity #2: Numbers Up

Going to one goal. Add pressure - (i.e. 2v1, 3v2). Provide target for defender if they win the ball. Looking to shoot as quickly as possible, by having body in correct position, showing good 1st touch when receiving ball. 1st touch should be away from pressure. Disguise your shots. Introduce wall-pass and overlap.

Activity #3: Triangular Goals

Create Triangular goals (3 flags 2 yards apart in a triangle shape) in the middle of the penalty area. Play 4v4 in penalty box. One team has 4 attackers, the other 3 keepers and 1 defender. If ball goes out of box, or keepers / defender makes a save, switch. Let each team captain keep scores.

Match Conditions (no restrictions)

Neutral Attacking Players

Play 4v4 with 2 neutral players and two goalkeepers. The two neutral players are always with the attacking team (the team which has the ball!). There should be plenty of shooting/attacking opportunities with 6v4!

Then even teams out and go to 2 goals. 3v3 or 4v4 goals close together, providing plenty of shots - looking for players to penetrate and shoot by dribbling or passing. Coach within the game.

Summary

Good technical ability will enable players to get shots at goal. But remember, lots of goals are scored by finishing with toes, heels, knees, back of the head, etc.

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Please view our website at www.oregonyouthsoccer.org for other good coaching information!