Soccer: Coaching Logbook

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Push Pass

The push pass is the most commonly used pass in soccer and it is used for passing for distances 10 meters or under. When executing a push pass, the player uses the inside of the foot to push the ball to the intended target.

Key Coaching Points

1. Contact the ball with the side of the foot (foot should be perpendicular to the ball’s direction)
2. Toes of plant foot should be facing the target
3. Hold arms out for balance
4. Lock ankle, knee and hip
5. Look to the target then look back at the ball before pass
6. Make contact with the center of the ball
7. Ensure a full-follow through with hips swinging through in the direction of the target

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault is the pass not going to its intended target. An inaccurate pass can mean that the player’s ankle is not locked, the plant foot is not pointing towards the target or the follow-through is not towards the target. To correct these things the player must ensure that the ankle is locked and not wobbly, the player must alter the position of the plant foot so it is pointing towards the target, and the player must ensure that the body is not twisting during the follow through so the passing leg follows through in the direction of the target.
2. A second fault commonly seen is the ball coming off the ground when passed. This means that the player is contacting the ball too far below its center, causing the ball to be lifted upwards. To correct for this the player needs to make contact with the ball higher (closer to its center point); coaches would instruct players to lift the kicking leg slightly higher, ensuring the knee is at a 90 degree angle.
3. A third fault seen with the push pass is a pass that does not have enough power to be completed. This could mean that the player’s ankle is loose when contacting the ball, the plant leg may not be providing enough stability or the player is not following through with the entire leg. To correct for this and enhance the power behind the pass, the player must maintain a locked ankle, a bent plant leg, and a full follow-through with hip swing. To help correct this, coaches could have players practice follow-throughs without a ball.

Practice Drills

*Partner Passing:* For this drill, players are put into pairs with one ball and will stand roughly five meters apart. Players will pass back and forth between partners while remaining in the designated spots, using the push pass. The drill will begin with players being allowed unlimited touches to control the ball.

*Progression One:* Players are allowed a maximum of two touches to control the ball.

*Progression Two:* Players will shorten the distance between them to roughly two meters apart and are allowed to use only one touch to pass the ball to the partner.

*Continuous Relay Passing:* For this drill, players will be sectioned into teams of six with only one ball. They will be put into two lines of three, facing each other. The ball will start in line one and the first player in line one will give a push pass to the first player of line two. After receiving the ball, the player will control the pass and give a push pass to the next player. After passing, the player will then follow the pass and go to the back of the other line. The drill will begin with players being allowed unlimited touches to control the ball.

*Progression One:* Players are allowed a maximum of two touches on the ball.

*Progression Two:* Players begin one-touch passing.

*Progression Three:* Competition is introduced as the teams will compete against one another to be the first to complete 30 passes in a row with one-touch passing. Counting must be done out loud and the team must sit down once they have reached 30 passes. A team is not allowed to count a pass if the player uses more than one touch.

*Progression Four:* Teams will compete against one another to be the first to complete 30 passes again, but this time the two lines are allowed different touches. Line one is only allowed one touch and line two is allowed two touches. A team is not allowed to count a pass if a player in line one uses more than one touch or if a player in line two uses more than two touches.

Lofted Pass

The lofted pass is an airborne pass used for passing over long distances. It is often used in the “kick and run” situation, as a player can loft the pass over opponents for another player to run onto. The lofted pass can be utilized both defensively and offensively when a player is clearing the ball out of their end or when a player is crossing the ball into the box.

Key Coaching Points

1. Take a big step when approaching the ball
2. Plant foot should be roughly 12 inches behind the ball
3. Plant foot pointing towards target
4. Plant leg bent
5. Arms out for balance
6. Lean back slightly
7. Look up at target then back at the ball while kicking
8. Contact the ball between the big toe and the laces
9. Get under the ball with foot
10. Maintain a full follow-through towards the target

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault associated with the lofted pass is not lifting the ball into the air. This happens when a player contacts the ball above its center. This also means that the player is most likely not contacting the ball with the proper part of the foot. To correct for this, a player needs to ensure that contact with the ball is with the top of their foot between the big toe and the laces. Players need to get the foot underneath the ball instead of contacting the back of the ball otherwise the pass will turn into an instep drive. Coaches should show players the ideal place to be contacting the ball.
2. Another common fault is players leaning too far back when executing a lofted pass. When a player leans too far back, the pass loses power and depth and the ball will go very high. To correct for this, a player needs to make sure a slight lean is maintained. Coaches could demonstrate the proper amount of lean while executing the lofted pass. They could also stand with the players in a pre-kicking stance demonstrating the proper amount of lean while players are imitating the coach’s stance.

Practice Drills

*Partner Passing*: Players will need a partner and a ball. Players will stand roughly 50 yards apart and will practice lofted passes back and forth. Players must use both feet and should try to control the ball with as few touches as possible.

*Golf*: For this drill, players will need a group of four. Within that group of four, players will make teams of two. There will be two cones set up roughly 50 yards apart, and partners will stand behind opposite cones with a member of the opposing team. A player from the team going first will execute a lofted pass to his or her partner, the partner will have to trap the ball and get it as close to the cone as possible. The receiving player is only allowed two touches. A player from the second team will then execute a lofted pass to his or her partner, and the partner will have to trap the ball and try to get it closer to the cone than the opposing team. Whoever’s ball is closest to the cone wins a point. After that round is done, partners switch roles and the receiving partners become the passers and vice versa.

Chip Pass

The chip pass is another airborne pass that is commonly used for lifting or *chipping* the ball over an opponent. It is also used both defensively and offensively. It can be used to chip the ball over a forward to clear the ball and it can also be used to score by chipping the ball over top the goalie or chipping the ball over an opponent for a teammate to run onto. Unlike the lofted pass, the chip is a quicker pass used for shorter distances.

Key Coaching Points

1. Plant foot should be beside the ball
2. Plant foot pointing toward target
3. Plant leg bent
4. Arms out for balance
5. Look up at the target then back at the ball while kicking
6. Get under the ball with foot
7. Contact the ball directly in the middle
8. Contact should be made with the top of the foot by the big toe
9. The majority of the motion should be made by the knee not the hip
10. Minimal follow through but the kicking leg should still be in line with the target

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A very common fault when trying to execute a chip pass is toe punting the ball instead. A toe punt means the player is contacting the ball straight on with the toes of the kicking foot. This often results in an inaccurate pass that does not lift off the ground. To correct for this, the player needs to plantar flex the foot more before contact. A coach could physically move the player’s foot so the player can feel the proper position.
2. Often an intended chip pass does not lift off the ground even if it is not a toe punt. When this happens, the player is not getting the kicking foot underneath the ball. Much like with the lofted pass, a coach should demonstrate the proper place to contact the ball and show the player where she should be feeling contact on the foot.
3. Another common fault in chipping is kicking the ground instead of the ball. If this happens, the player is most likely too far behind the ball and is not lifting the kicking leg enough. To correct for this, the player should always make sure that the plant foot is nearly parallel with the ball and a coach could demonstrate the proper height the foot should be at.

Practice Drills

*Lone Chipping*: For this drill, every player will need a ball. Players will line up on the side line and spread out. Players will execute a small chip pass directly ahead of them and jog onto it. Players will continue to do this until reaching the opposite sideline and then players will turn around and go back to the first sideline.

*Progression One*: Players will need a partner and a ball between them. Players will stand roughly 10 yards apart and will practice chipping the ball to a target (the partner).

*Progression Two*: Players will get in two lines on the 18 yard box. One player or a coach will act as a passive defender in the middle of the box. One line will start with the ball and the first player in line will dribble a few steps and then try to chip it over the passive defender so the first player in the second line can run onto the ball and shoot. After either chipping or shooting, players will switch lines.

*Progression Three*: The passive defender turns into an active defender.

Instep Drive – Passing & Shooting

The instep drive is a powerful strike in soccer and it can be used for both passing and shooting. The instep drive pass is a more powerful pass than the push pass and it is used for passing over longer distances, but it can be utilized for hard passes over shorter distances too. The instep drive is commonly used for shooting as well because it produces a very forceful and accurate shot if executed correctly.

Key Coaching Points

1. Plant foot should be beside the ball
2. Plant foot pointing towards the target
3. Plant leg bent
4. Arms out for balance
5. Look up at the target then back at the ball while kicking
6. Maintain a slight forward lean over the ball
7. Kicking foot should be plantar flexed
8. Ankle locked
9. Contact should be made on the instep of the top of the foot
10. Maintain a full follow-through towards the target

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A very common fault with the instep drive is not leaning over the ball. If a player leans too far back the ball will lift and go much higher than the player intended. When executing an instep drive shot, leaning back too far often causes the shot to go over the net. To correct for this, a player needs maintain a slight forward lean over the ball. A player also needs to ensure that the plant foot is beside the ball because if it is too far behind then the player will be reaching for the ball, which could contribute to a backward lean. A coach should demonstrate the proper lean and should also demonstrate a shot while leaning too far backwards to show players the difference in accuracy and height.
2. Another common fault is the toe punt. Instead of contacting the ball with the instep, a player will contact the ball with the toes, causing accuracy and power to decrease. To correct for this, a player needs to ensure the kicking foot is plantar flexed. To help a player correct this fault the coach could physically move the player’s foot to the proper position. The coach could also reinforce proper technique by telling the player to contact the ball with the laces of the cleat.
3. Yet another common fault is a follow-through that does not point towards the target. Instead of having a straight follow-through a player will swing the kicking leg across the body, which causes the ball to not go to the intended target. To correct for this, a player needs to maintain a straight follow-through. A coach could have players practice full follow-throughs without the ball to get the feel for it.

Practice Drills

*Partner Passing*: For this drill, players will need to partner up with one ball between the pair. Partners will stand about 20-30 yards apart and will begin passing the ball back and forth using the instep drive.

*Continuous Shooting:* For this drill, two nets about fifty yards apart are needed. There will be two lines of students; the lines will be set up on the right sides of the opposite nets. Two coaches or two players (if coaches are not available) will be set up in the middle of the field at cones, acting as passers. The first player in each line will pass to their designated passer, the passer will then feed the ball forward for the player to run onto and shoot using the instep drive. Once the player shoots, they will move to the next line. This is a continuous drill, as both lines will be moving and shooting on opposite nets at once.

*Progression One*: This drill requires the same set up as mentioned above. The only change is that the players’ shots need to be one-timers off the designated passer’s pass.

*Progression Two*: Instead of having designated passers, the first player of each line will start at the cones facing the line. The second player in each line will pass to the first player, who will then turn with the ball and shoot using the instep drive. Players may utilize whichever turn they like.

Wedge Trap

The wedge trap is a commonly used method of controlling the ball in a soccer game. It involves trapping the ball with the side arch of the foot, and it is commonly used for controlling the ball when it has been raised slightly in the air. It is an important skill to have as a player’s first touch is critical in game situations.

Key Coaching Points

1. Plant leg bent
2. Receiving foot comes off the ground (roughly the height of the ball)
3. Receiving leg is bent as it comes up and foot is turned out
4. Contact is made just below the top of the ball
5. Cushion the ball on contact with the side arch of the foot

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault is that the receiving foot is not turned out, so the player traps the ball with the bottom of the foot. To correct this, the player must turn the heel inwards and turn the toes outwards, making a flat surface for the ball. Coaches could physically turn a player’s foot outwards so the player could feel how turned out the foot should be.
2. Another common fault is the player will lift the receiving foot up too high so the ball bounces underneath the foot. To correct for this, the player should aim to lift the foot no higher than the height of the soccer ball. Coaches could have their players practice lifting their kicking legs continuously to the proper height if players are having trouble with this fault.
3. A third common fault is that the player does not cushion the ball enough so the ball bounces too far ahead of the player. The player needs to let the ball come to them more instead of swinging the receiving leg too far forward; the player wants a softer contact.

Practice Drills

*Partner Tossing*: For this drill, players will need a partner and will need one ball between the pair. Partners will stand about two yards away from each other. One partner will be the “tosser” and one will be the “trapper.” The tosser will give a light, underhand toss to the trapper and the trapper will use the wedge trap to control the ball. The trapper will complete 10 wedge traps with both the left and right feet, and then the partners will switch roles.

*Progression One*: Partners can progress from stationary trapping. One partner will still be the tosser and the other will be the trapper. Instead of standing still this time, after each toss the passer will jog backwards a few feet. The trapper will control the toss with a wedge trap and then pass the ball back to the tosser; the trapper will follow the tosser, moving forward as the tosser moves backwards.

*Progression Two:* Partners will spread out to approximately 30-40 yards. One partner will start with the ball and they will make a lofted pass to the other partner. The partner receiving the pass will try to control the ball using the wedge trap. Players will continue passing back and forth using the wedge trap to control the lofted passes.

Thigh Trap

The thigh trap is another common way for players to control the ball in a soccer game. The middle of the thigh is used to cushion the ball as it comes out of the air, allowing a player to control an airborne ball while keeping the ball in front of them.

Key Coaching Points

1. Plant leg bent
2. Bring receiving leg up with bent knee
3. Cushion the ball with the mid-thigh
4. Drop the ball ahead of feet
5. Arms out for balance

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault is contacting the ball with the knee. This causes the ball to be uncontrollable as it will usually bounce off the receiving leg too far in front of the player. To correct this, the player needs to ensure that they are bringing the receiving leg up at the appropriate time to trap the ball. Players should be receiving the ball with the receiving leg at an angle between 45-90 degrees. To get players used to what this should feel like, a coach could get players to stand with the receiving leg at an approximate angle of 60 degrees and toss the ball to the player’s mid-thigh.
2. Another common fault is bringing the receiving leg up too far and pushing the ball with the thigh instead of cushioning it. This can also cause the ball to bounce too far ahead of the player. To correct for this, the player should not bring the receiving leg up so forcefully, aiming for a softer contact.

Practice Drills

*Partner Tossing*: For this drill, players will need a partner and will need one ball between the pair. Partners will stand about two yards away from each other. One partner will be the “tosser” and one will be the “trapper.” The tosser will give a light, underhand toss to the trapper and the trapper will use the thigh trap to control the ball. After trapping the ball with the thigh, the trapper will then volley the ball back to the tosser. The trapper will complete 10 thigh traps with both the left and right legs, and then the partners will switch roles.

*Progression One*: Partners can progress from stationary trapping. One partner will still be the tosser and the other will be the trapper. Instead of standing still this time, after each toss the passer will jog backwards a few feet. The trapper will control the toss with a thigh trap and then volley the ball back to the tosser; the trapper will follow the tosser, moving forward as the tosser moves backwards.

*Progression Two:* Partners will spread out to approximately 30-40 yards. One partner will start with the ball and they will make a lofted pass to the other partner. The partner receiving the pass will try to control the ball using the thigh trap. Players will continue passing back and forth using the thigh trap to control the lofted passes.

Chest Trap

The chest trap is another way to control the ball in a soccer game. The chest trap is usually used to control and airborne ball that is too high for the thigh trap but is too low for a header. It can also be used to control a high bouncing ball. The chest trap allows players to keep the ball in front of them.

Key Coaching Points

1. Body should be square to the ball
2. Knees should be slightly bent
3. Bend back slightly to absorb the ball on contact
4. Arms out for balance
5. Contact the ball below the collar bone
6. Lean forward at contact to send the ball to feet

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault associated with the chest trap is trapping the ball too low (in the stomach) or too high (near the neck), both of which can cause injury. Trapping a ball in the stomach can knock the wind out of the player, and trapping a ball up near the neck can cause damage to the wind pipe or whiplash. A player needs to time a chest trap right and decide if another trap is necessary (either a thigh trap or a header). To help correct this, coaches could act as the tosser for the player. The coach could toss the ball up at various different heights, calling out which trap the player should utilize. Once the player seemed more comfortable, the coach could stop calling out the trap and let the player decide.
2. Another common fault is a player’s body is not square to the ball. When this happens, the player will often not be able to effectively chest trap the ball because the ball will either go past the player or it will bounce off the player’s chest at an odd angle. To correct this, a player needs to get the full body behind the ball. Coaches could have players toss a ball up high for themselves to chest trap it. This would force players to keep their bodies square and get underneath the ball.

Practice Drills

*Partner Tossing*: For this drill, players will need a partner and will need one ball between the pair. Partners will stand about two yards away from each other. One partner will be the “tosser” and one will be the “trapper.” The tosser will give a light, underhand toss to the trapper and the trapper will use the chest trap to control the ball and then the trapper will volley the ball back to the tosser. The trapper will complete 10 wedge traps with both the left and right feet, and then the partners will switch roles.

*Progression One*: Partners can progress from stationary trapping. One partner will still be the tosser and the other will be the trapper. Instead of standing still this time, after each toss the passer will jog backwards a few feet. The trapper will control the toss with a chest trap and then volley the ball back to the tosser; the trapper will follow the tosser, moving forward as the tosser moves backwards.

*Progression Two:* Partners will spread out to approximately 30-40 yards. One partner will start with the ball and they will make a lofted pass to the other partner. The partner receiving the pass will try to control the ball using the chest trap. Players will continue passing back and forth using the chest trap to control the lofted passes.

Heading

Heading is a technique used in soccer where a player is using the head to manipulate the soccer ball in a game and it can be utilized for a variety of things. For example, it can be used for controlling an airborne ball, intercepting an airborne pass, heading the ball into the net, passing a ball to a teammate, or flicking the ball over an opponent for a teammate to run onto.

Key Coaching Points

1. Contact the ball with the forehead
2. Move to the ball
3. Keep eyes open and on the ball
4. Try to keep the mouth closed
5. Staggered feet can help increase power
6. Initiate movement with torso
7. Hold hands out for balance
8. Start with arms forward and then swing arms backward for more power
9. Follow through towards the target

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault in heading is contacting the ball with the top of the head instead of the forehead. This can hurt a player’s head and it decreases the accuracy. To combat this fault, the player needs to be ready for the ball and ensure that the torso is driving forward rather than upward. If players are initiating the movement with the torso then the body should be driving forward rather than the player jumping up to meet the ball.
2. Another common fault in heading is when a player just lets the ball hit the head instead of moving toward the ball. If someone is scared of heading the ball the player will often close their eyes in anticipation and just let the ball come. This will result in decreased power and accuracy and increased risk of injury. To correct for this fault, the player needs to be ready for the ball, ensuring that eyes are open and following the ball. Instead of waiting for the ball to come to them, the player should be ready to meet the ball, moving towards it. A drill that will help correct this fault is the Bounce and Head drill because the player must move towards the ball because it is not being tossed directly to them.

Practice Drills

*Bounce and Head*: For this drill, players will each need one ball. Players will spread out among the field and they will start by bouncing the ball hard on the field and then trying to head the ball on its first bounce. The bounce will need to be hard and directly in front of the player. Players will need to get under the ball to properly head the ball. Players will continuously do this for 5 minutes.

*Progression One*: Players will partner up with one ball between the pair. Players will stand a couple yards apart and one player will be the passer and one will be the receiver. The passer will give a light, underhand toss to the receiver, and the receiver will head the ball back to the passer. The receiver will head ten balls and then the partners will switch roles.

*Progression Two*: Players will stay in their pairs and still will only need one ball. They will start by standing a couple yards apart, but instead of being stationary the passer will be moving backwards after each header and the receiver will head the ball back to the passer while moving with them. Players will want to maintain a couple yards between them. They will do this from the center line to the goal line, and then the partners will switch roles and travel back to the center line.

*Continuous Partner Headers*: Players will partner up with one ball between the pair. Partners will need to stand a couple yards apart. The partner holding the ball will lightly toss it to the other partner who will then head the ball back. The partners will try to head the ball back and forth continuously without letting the ball hit the ground. They can move however much they need to in order to keep the ball “alive.” Players will keep a header count, recording the numbers of headers in a row they can achieve. If a player fails to head the ball, the ball is “dead,” the header count goes back to zero and they start again.

Dribbling

Dribbling is an essential skill in soccer as it allows players to control and move with the ball; it allows players to move around opponents, create space and make plays. It can be done in a variety of ways: with the insides of both feet, with the outsides of both feet, with one foot alternating inside and outside, with one foot with only the inside of the foot, with one foot with only the outside of the foot, or with the soles of the feet.

Key Coaching Points

1. Keep the ball close
2. Look up as much as possible – do not stare at feet
3. Stay on the balls of the feet to be ready for a change in direction or speed
4. Shield the ball with the body
5. For speed dribbling: use the outside of the foot to push the ball ahead so normal running gait is available

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault with dribbling is constantly looking down at the ball. This makes a player an easy target for a defender because it will cause the dribbler to be slower and to be unable to effectively move around opponents. To correct for this, a player should try to look up at all times while dribbling; however, that is not always easy so a player should start by trying to look up at least every third step. Coaches can help players lose this dependency by getting players to first start by “stationary dribbling.” A player would pass a ball back and forth between their feet while standing in one spot and looking straight ahead, allowing them to get used to the feel of the ball in their feet. Once a player started getting the hang of it, they would continue to increase the speed.
2. Another common fault is dribbling too far away from the body. Players will push the ball too far away from them and have to run after it. To correct this, players should be touching the ball with each step when dribbling. Coaches could have their players start off by walking with the ball, ensuring that players are touching the ball with every step.

Practice Drills

*Cone Dribbling*: For this drill, players will be in groups of four standing behind a cone. There will be another cone set up about five yards away from the line of four and each player will need a ball. The first player will dribble to the cone using the inside of their dominant foot, dribble around the cone and dribble to the back of the line. Once the first player is back, the second player will start dribbling and so on. Players will dribble to the cone five times each and then players will switch to dribbling with their non-dominant foot.

*Progression One*: Players will dribble around the cone using the outside of the foot.

*Slalom Dribbling:* Players will be in groups of four standing behind a cone. 10 cones will be set up, in a straight line and a few feet apart from each other. The first player will slalom between the cones using one foot, and once the first player gets to the tenth cone they will turn around and slalom back. Once the first player is back, the second player will go and so on.

*Progression One:* Players must use both feet.

*King/Queen of the Hill*: For this drill, a large, square grid will be set up and all players will need a ball. All players will be inside the grid, and they will be playing keep away from every other player. Players must constantly be dribbling around the grid, while trying to knock other players’ balls out of the grid. Players are encouraged to shield their balls. If a player’s ball is knocked out of the grid, they are out for this round and will be instructed to practice slalom dribbling. As players are knocked out, the coach will start to decrease the grid size and the last player in the grid with a ball is the King or Queen of the hill.

Defending Principles – First Defender Pressure

The first defender directly pressures the attacking opponent with the ball. The first defender’s job is to stop the opponent’s attack and force the opponent away from the net.

Key Coaching Points

1. Communicate with teammates – call for the ball
2. Pressure the ball quickly
3. Jockey the attacker – angled body, staggered feet, keep body low, stay on the balls of the feet
4. Direct the attacker to either the left or right
5. Step into the ball with the back foot when attacking – step in with the side of the foot and a locked ankle
6. If beat, first defender becomes the covering defender

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault of the first defender is being too slow to pressure the ball. By not pressuring the ball quickly, the defender gives the opponent time to shoot, pass or beat them. To correct for this, a player needs to run to the opponent. A drill that would help correct this is the third progression of the 1 V 1 drills mentioned below.
2. Another common fault of the first defender is stepping in with the front foot. While in a jockeying position, the front foot is the weaker foot and attacking with it will cause the defender to be off balance. A drill that would help correct this is Standing 1 V 1.
3. A third fault of the first defender is a square jockeying position. The player needs to be in a staggered, angled stance to be able to easily move backwards otherwise the player will be beaten easily. To correct for this, a player needs to practice jockeying backward. A drill that coaches could use to help this is passive 1 V 1 jockeying.

Practice Drills

*Standing 1 V1:* For this drill, players will need to find a partner and will need one ball between them. Players will stand an arm’s length away from each other, holding onto each other’s shoulders. Players will count down “3, 2, 1” and then both contact the ball as if they were stepping in to take the ball away from an opponent. They will contact the ball with the side of the foot, with locked ankles. The players’ attacking foot should be off the ground and they should contact the ball directly in the middle. Players will complete 10 with the right foot and 10 with the left foot.

*1 V 1*: For this drill, players will need to find a partner and will need one ball between them. One ball acts as the attacker and the other acts as the defender. The attacker will start on the half line with the ball and will dribble towards the top of the 18 yard box. The defender will start by passively jockeying the attacker all the way to the top of the 18 yard box. When they reach the 18 yard box, partners will do one touch passing until everyone is ready to dribble back to the half line. Partners will switch roles before dribbling back to the half line.

*Progression One*: Instead of the attacker dribbling in a straight line, the attacker will try to take the defender side to side, so the defender can work on changing directions. Defenders are still passively defending.

*Progression Two*: The attacker is now trying get past the defender and the defender is trying to get the ball from the attacker. Defenders will keep track of how many times they take the ball away from the attacker.

*Progression Three*: For this drill, players will need to be in groups of six. A rectangle field will be made, approximately 15 yards long, with two small goals at each end. Three players will start on each side and one ball is needed. One player will start by passing the ball to a player on the other side. The receiving player becomes the attacker and the passer becomes the defender. The attacker tries to beat the defender and score on the goal, and if the defender stops the attacker they will proceed to try to score on the attacker’s goal. After the play has ended, another attacker and defender will play.

Defending Principles – Covering: 2nd Defender

The second player in a defense situation is the covering defender. The second defender acts as the first defender’s back-up as they step in to attack if the first defender gets beat.

Key Coaching Points

1. Keep distance behind the first defender
2. Angle at approximately a 45 degree angle from the first defender
3. Cover goal side of the first defender
4. Communicate with the first defender – direct them left or right
5. Step in immediately after the first defender is beat

Common Faults and Corrections

1. A common fault of the second defender is not keeping enough distance behind the first defender. If the second defender is too close to the first, it will be easier for the attacker to beat both defenders. The second defender needs to ensure they are at least a couple yards back from the first defender, allowing some leeway room if the first defender is beat.
2. Another common fault the second defender can make is waiting for the attacker to come to them instead of stepping in immediately after the first defender is beat. If that happens, there is a better chance that the second defender will be caught flat footed and will be easier to beat. To correct for this, the second defender needs to remain on the balls of their feet, allowing them to react quicker. The second defender needs to move with the first defender, maintaining a 45 degree angle position behind the first defender and the attacker.

Practice Drills

*2 V 1*: For this drill, players will need to be in groups of six. A rectangle field will be made, approximately 15 yards long, with two small goals at each end. Three players will start on each side and one ball is needed. One player will start by passing the ball to a player on the other side. The receiving player becomes the attacker and the passer and the next player in line become the defenders. The attacker tries to beat the defenders and score on the goal, while the two defenders are playing out the first and second defender roles. If the defenders stop the attacker they will proceed to try to score on the attacker’s goal. After the play has ended, another attacker and two defenders will play.

*2 V 2*: For this drill, a goal will be set up on the end line and a goal will be set up on the 18 yard box line. There will be two teams and four lines of players in total (one line by each goal post), the two lines on the same line will be a team. Each team will need a goal tender. One team will act as defenders for two minutes and the other attackers. After two minutes the teams will switch roles. The defenders will pass one ball to the attackers and a two-on-two game will ensue. The defenders will be applying first and second defender pressures while the attackers are trying to score. If the attackers score their team gets one point and the same attackers stay on for another round and a new pair of defenders come on. If the defenders score their team gets two points and a new set of attackers and defenders come on. If the ball is kicked out of play or the goal tender makes a save, no one gets a point and a new set of attackers and defenders come on.

*3 V 3*: This drill will be the same as the 2 V 2 drill, except that a third defender and a third attacker will join the grid.