

FSA have put together a few simple guidelines for developing coaching exercises. Books and manuals devoted to soccer skills, rarely satisfy the needs of the coach trying to look to better the development of the soccer player. Some of the best and most effective skills for the players may be those you create, and be more specific to the needs of your team. I would like to present a few rules to help you coach in this process.

### <u>Rule # 1</u>

## Make it Work

No exercise should be presented if it is too difficult and make it easy to understand. Give the clear concise statements of what is to be done, then provide objectives and a purpose to proceed in small steps. As an Example, walk through the skill instead of running, so the movement is clearly and visually understood. Another solution is to, pass the ball with the hands, not the feet, to show accurately how the ball is to travel within the exercise. If the skill is not working right, increase the space between the players to allow more time for them to react in term of controlling a moving ball.

## <u>Rule # 2</u>

## Make it Better

The exercises can be made more challenging when put across well and understood. Limit the amount of touches; go from unlimited touches to three, then two, and finally to one-touch passing which is good to progress onto and develop and challenge the players. If this fails, go back to two touch, and work down again. Remember that the demands on the players must be increased in terms of intensity in order for it to be realistic and player improvement realized. Reduce the space of the session. As the space gets smaller in a game- like situation, the players must concentrate more on the accuracy of their passes and their movement off the ball. So begin in a large space and then gradually make it smaller. This can be done simply by walking around and moving the cones closer together. Don't even mention to the players what is being done, and look for their response and react accordingly. If you add more players in a given space which will increase the demands of players in terms of vision and movement, this is what makes the game more realistic.

## <u>Rule # 3</u>

## **Introduce Opposition**

It would appear to be obvious that things would go better without opposition in the beginning, but we constantly see practice sessions where there is an exercise with opposition from the beginning, with this it will enhance the player's game. Introduce wall passing and then add an opponent. Coach a takeover dribble and add an opponent. Go back to Rule # 1. You might also play your attacking players together as well as your defenders together in exercises, on familiarity with each other.

# <u>The Golden Rule</u>

The Golden Rule is to help develop attacking success, overload on the side of the attacking team, perhaps in a two to one ratio. That is, two attackers for every defender. Again, go back to Rule # 1. If attacking success does not occur, add more attackers. If attacking success does occur, increase defenders. Realistically we know that match conditions mean that defenders outnumber attackers. But, always make things work. There are basic physical activities considered when creating exercises for your team.

Consider these factors when deciding what you want to accomplish with a specific training exercise. Try and build your exercises around these factors, but keep it simple.

### Time:

How many times in a minute do you want exercise to be done? How long do you want it done? **Velocity:** 

How hard do you want the ball hit? The harder it is struck, the harder it is to control by the receiving player. How fast do you want a player to run? The faster a players runs, harder it is to receive the ball.

### **Direction:**

Where do you want the ball past? To the feet of a player? In front of the running player? In the general direction of the running player? Each pass has different difficulties.

### **Height:**

Do you want the ball passed on the ground? In the air? It is much harder for the player to receive a ball out of the air.

### **Distance:**

Distance that a ball travels is crucial to the game. Short passes need to be more accurate, as the distance is short, the time for the player to get into position to receive the passed ball. Longer passes allow the player receiving the ball, more time to get into the balls path. Short passes can pass on pressure from one player to the next.

The exercises work best when they are constructed to work right from the beginning. They become more challenging when new restrictions are added. Limited touches of the ball, reducing the working space of the group or adjusting the number of players to the allotted space, all have a role to play in player development through coaching exercises. Finally, the factors of **Time, Velocity, Direction** and **Height** can change a session to make the exercise more challenging and realistic for the players.

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