

5 - Running with the Ball

Young players who lack confidence often kick the ball away anxiously or make a negative pass when better options were available to them. Similarly players may be heard shouting for a pass when the player on the ball has space in front of them to attack. Occasionally we will even see players standing in the way of their team-mates who are attempting to make the run. By coaching when and how to run with the ball and showing the team how to move to support the player on the ball we will produce teams that attack more effectively.

Once the basic techniques are understood, add defensive pressure and look for players to be able to use both feet to keep the ball away from defenders who may be tracking them. When playing small sided games commend players who have the awareness to carry the ball at the right time.

Running with the ball is a skill than lends itself well to measuring progress by occasionally timing players over a set course.

Coaching Points - Observe the following details:

- ✓ Observe that players are playing with their head up, they can't attack a space if they haven't seen it
- ✓ Are players making good decisions - don't be making a square pass if there is space ahead to attack
- ✓ The first touch should be big so the ball gets well out from feet to allow acceleration
- ✓ First touch may be with inside of foot (big push pass) for initial accuracy on the run
- ✓ Look at the sprint mechanics - come up through the gears with shorter steps leading into longer ones
- ✓ Are they making effective use of the arms? Straight movements - "*pocket to jaw*" not across body
- ✓ Contact with the ball needs to be off the instep so it is not necessary to break stride
- ✓ Look for firm contact with the ball depending on space available. Make sure ball travels straight.
- ✓ The player needs to be looking up after every contact with the ball to observe the changing picture
- ✓ Are other players moving off the ball to create space for the runner and moving defenders away?
- ✓ If it is a defender who is making the run are other players are providing balance behind the ball?
- ✓ Is the ball being played on foot furthest from any defender? Shield the ball and defend the space
- ✓ Look for end product, the run should finish with an effective shot or pass
- ✓ Does the runner track back quickly into position once possession is lost?

Useful Drills

35	Relay	70	End Zone
36	Half Way		
37	Forfeit		
49	Tractor Trailer		
51	Bill's Gates		
53	Take a Turn		
57	Three-Two-One		
63	Man Marking		