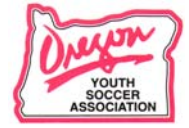




United States Youth Soccer  
National Workshop, San Jose – March 2009



Conditioned Games to Develop Passing for Youth Players  
Mike Smith

### Warm-up

Set up a 20x30 yard field with small goals. This can be utilized for most activities! 14 x U12 players – divide players into even teams of red and yellow

Do some skills activities, ball gymnastics and agility work with ball each to begin warm-up. Introduce passing challenge ☺

### Windows (Passing)

Pair players up and place a number of windows around an area (2 cones close together). 2 players have to pass through the window to score a point. Only rule is not to pass through same window ***twice in a row!*** After letting the players play for 2 minutes the Coach must reiterate the basic techniques for passing.

Given that kids will retain information longer if they are given the opportunity to 'figure things out' for themselves, the coach will need to ask probing questions, like:

What part of the foot is it best to pass with? WHY?

How many of you had to wait to score a pass because other players were in the way?

If player A passes to player B which player should dictate where we are going next?

Advance the game by using left foot pass only, outside of foot passes, or play in groups of three and introduce the wall pass.

### Passing Under Pressure

Pair players up with one ball. Players move in area with partner passing ball between them. Then introduce a tagger (coach) who tries to knock balls out of grid. If knocked out, then both partners have to sprint to the ball, then play it back in. Both pay for the mistake. Progress to making it one harder, splitting one pair and making 2 taggers.

Ask Question:

#### **Do we need short or long passes when we are under pressure?**

Swap taggers, until all have been in middle. Passers must always keep the ball moving. Now if ball is knocked out do 5 toe taps simultaneously.

Ask Questions about **awareness...**

Show angles and distance of support in 2v1 – don't let defender cover both players!

Play again.

### Adding Numbers

Put a group of 4 players in the 20x30 grid. Instruct them to simply pass the ball between them, but to keep the ball moving. See what happens.

Instruct players to get further apart (show how a defender can cover two players standing too close!) and also to keep in a diamond shape.

### **Add Pressure**

Then introduce one tagger who tries to knock the ball out of grid. If team with ball makes 4 passes they score a goal. If the defender wins the ball and knocks it out then he scores a point. If ball is knocked out, coach plays another ball right in. Play for two minutes each team, with one defender. Keep scores. As players get better add a second defender.

Passers must always keep the ball moving – Show angles and distance of support in 4v1 – don't let defender EXCLUDE YOU FROM BEING ABLE TO RECEIVE A PASS! Play again.

### **Triangle Goals**

Play 4v4 with coach feeding ball in. 3 defenders are effectively goalkeepers, so it becomes 4v1. Put a small cone down for the edge of their penalty area (2-3 yards). If ball goes out of bounds, coach shouts 'change' and the 2 teams switch roles. Select captain for each team to keep their own score.

### **4v4v4 Three teams of four (red, yellow, green)**

Progressing game now to 8v4. All red and yellow players in grid with ball each. On command, greens are timed knocking all balls out. If a ball is out it stays out, but then the red and yellow players can pass and support each other to keep remaining balls away from green. Keep green's time. Then play again timing red and then yellow as the attackers. A lot of scheming, helping and double teaming strategy will be evident.

Ask Question: **How can the chasing team make the game easier?**

Keep new winning times/scores.

### **Game Activity**

Gradually building pressure. Play 4v4 (+2) to goals with goalkeepers. Add little on team shape to help passing.

### **Final Activity – The Game!**

Play games – round robin. Play 5 minute games, winner stays on!