

Coaching Points

Technical Coaching Points

Dribbling

Low, balanced body position.

Agile lateral (left-to-right) movement for dribbling in tight spaces, change of direction and faking out opponents.

Proper use of insides and outsides of the feet and the toe to propel ball an appropriate distance.

Proper use of soles of the feet to pull, push and roll the ball.

Eyes up enough to survey the situation and to have good peripheral vision.

Keep the ball close when under pressure (lots of touches).

Propel the ball away from feet when dribbling into space away from pressure.

Receiving

Coaching Points (common to all surfaces)

Keep body relaxed.

Eyes on the ball while it is traveling and as you receive it.

Position body in-line with the in-coming ball.

Present a surface to receive the ball with.

Cushion the ball if it arrives with velocity.

Propel the ball away if it arrives slowly or if under pressure or in open field.

Coaching Points (unique to specific receiving surfaces)

Sole of the Foot

Ground Ball

Comfortable body position.

One foot on the ground.

Present the sole of the foot at about a 45 degree angle to the ground as the ball arrives.

Wedge the in-coming ball between the sole and the ground.

Flighted Ball (Angled/vertical arrival)

Comfortable body position.

One foot on the ground.

Allow the ball to hit the ground.

Just as the ball hits the ground, present the sole of the foot over the ball (wedge the ball between the sole of the foot and the ground).

Inside of the Foot

Ground Ball

Comfortable body position.

One foot on the ground.

Present the inside of the foot to the in-coming ball.

Pull the receiving foot back or propel it forward depending on the velocity of the ball.

Flighted Ball (Angled/vertical arrival)

Comfortable body position.

One foot on the ground.

Allow the ball to hit the ground.

Just as the ball hits the ground, present the inside of foot over the ball and drag the ball away from pressure.

Line-Drive Ball (Horizontal arrival)

Comfortable body position.

One foot on the ground.

Present the inside of the foot to the in-coming ball.

Pull the receiving foot back or propel it forward depending on the velocity of the ball.

Outside of the Foot

Ground Ball

Comfortable body position.

One foot on the ground.

Present the outside of the foot to the in-coming ball.

Pull the receiving foot back or propel it forward depending on the velocity of the ball.

Flighted Ball (Angled/vertical arrival)

Comfortable body position.

One foot on the ground.

Allow the ball to hit the ground.

Just as the ball hits the ground, present the outside of foot over the ball and drag the ball away from pressure.

Laces (In-step)

Flighted Ball (Angled/vertical arrival)

Comfortable body position.
One foot on the ground.
Present the laces to the in-coming ball.
Lower foot (give with the foot) as ball is received.

Thigh

Flighted Ball (Angled/vertical arrival)

Comfortable body position.
Straight back.
One foot on the ground.
Present the mid/upper thigh (horizontal to the ground) to the in-coming ball.
Lower thigh (give with the thigh) as ball is received.

Line-Drive Ball (Horizontal arrival)

Comfortable body position.
One foot on the ground.
Present the mid/upper thigh (perpendicular to the ground) to the in-coming ball.
Pull the receiving thigh or propel it forward depending on the velocity of the ball.

Chest

Flighted Ball (Angled/vertical arrival)

Comfortable body position.
Arch back (limbo dance position).
Arms out.
Both feet on the ground or both feet off ground (if jumping).
Present the chest (45-60 degree angle to the ground) to the in-coming ball.
Bend the knees to absorb the ball (cushion) as it is received.

Line-Drive Ball (Horizontal arrival)

Comfortable body position.
Straight back.
Arms out.
Both feet on the ground or both feet off ground (if jumping).
Present the chest (perpendicular to the ground) to the in-coming ball.
Jump back to absorb the ball (cushion) as it is received.

Kicking (Passing and Shooting)

Coaching Points (common to kicking low/ground balls)

Low/Ground Balls

Non-kicking foot placed comfortably next to the ball.
Non-kicking foot pointed in the direction of the target.
Body slightly over the ball.
Knee of kicking leg slightly over the ball.
Eyes on ball.
Land on the kicking foot.

Coaching Points (unique to specific kicking surfaces)

Inside of foot

Lock ankle with toe pointed up on kicking foot.
Straight kick... Strike through the center (equator) or slightly above the center of the ball with the ankle surface of the foot.
Bent kick...Strike/Slice the outside center (or slightly below center) of the ball with the inside of the foot.

Instep (laces)

Lock ankle with toe pointed down on kicking foot.
Strike ball with instep surface of the foot.

Outside of the foot (for deceptive passes and shots)

Non-kicking foot placed slightly farther away from the ball than normal.

Lock ankle with toe pointed down and turned in.

Straight kick...Strike (punch) the inside center (or slightly above center) of the ball with the outside of the foot.
Bent kick...Strike/Slice the inside center (or slightly below center) of the ball with the outside of the foot.

Coaching Points (common to kicking flighted/air balls)

Flighted/Air Balls

Approach ball from slight angle.
Non-kicking foot placed comfortably next to and slightly behind the ball.
Non-kicking foot pointed in the direction of the target.
Body upright and slightly leaning back..
Eyes on ball.
Strike with laces or upper inside surface of the foot.
Strike through the bottom/center of the ball.
Land on the kicking foot.

Coaching Points (unique to specific types of kicks)

Chip

Lock ankle with toe pointed up on kicking foot.
Sharply cut the grass below the ball with the kicking foot (like a 9-iron or wedge shot in golf).
The ball should travel with backspin.

Long/Driven ball

Big power step (step right before the kick is taken).
Lock ankle with toe pointed down on kicking foot.
Strike ball with instep surface of the foot.

Outside of the foot (for deceptive passes and shots)

Non-kicking foot placed slightly farther away from the ball than normal.
Lock ankle with toe pointed down and turned in.

Bent kick...Strike/Slice the ball below the inside center with the outside of the foot.

Heading

Square the body to the ball (body in line with the in-coming ball).
Eyes on ball.
Time the jump if one is necessary.
Tighten the neck muscles.
Arch the back.
Arms out and forward for balance.
Thrust upper body forward.
Contact the ball with the top of the forehead.
The head strikes the ball! (like the hammer hits the nail)

*To drive the ball down...*strike the upper half of the ball.
*To drive the ball up...*strike the lower half of the ball.

Tackling

Block tackle

Maintain a comfortable playing distance from the opponent.
Do not telegraph your intent.
Shepard the opponent to one side or the other.
Do not commit yourself too early (do not dive in)...time your execution.
Throw stabbing fakes at the opponent to force mistakes.
Keep your eyes on the ball.
Keep a low center of gravity.
One foot slightly angled in front of the other with bent knees; back foot is the tackling foot; front foot is the plant/balancing foot.
When tackling, place the front foot to the side of the ball (as if to make an inside of the foot pass).
Use the inside of the back foot to drag through the ball keeping the ankle locked, toe up and knee bent.
Lower same side shoulder (as tackling foot) thrusting it forward to provide the necessary forward momentum and velocity to handle the impact of the opponent's force.
Drag the ball through and into the space behind the opponent and start the attack!

Toe Poke

Use the toe of the front foot to poke the ball away!

Tactical Coaching Points (Considerations)

There are three (3) moments in the game of soccer:

- When your team has possession of the ball (attacking)...**
- When your team does not have possession of the ball (defending)...**
- When your team is changing from one to the other (transition)...**

Therefore, coaches must understand the Principles of the game:

- Attacking Principles**
- Defending Principles**
- Transition**

Important player terminology:

- 1st Attacker...player in possession of the ball; responsible for penetration.**
- 2nd Attackers...players near the 1st attacker; responsible for support .**
- 3rd Attackers...players away from the 1st attacker; responsible for mobility and providing width and length.**

- 1st Defender(s)...player(s) pressuring the ball.**
- 2nd Defenders...players near the 1st defender; responsible for defensive support/cover .**
- 3rd Defenders...players away from the 1st defender; responsible for tracking 3rd attackers (attacking players away from the ball) and squeezing space centrally.**

Attacking Principles

Penetration

Advancing the ball forward into the space behind the defending team.
Responsibility of the **1st attacker** (player in possession of the ball).

This is accomplished by dribbling, passing or shooting the ball:

Recognize that there is space behind the defending team to exploit.

Dribble by an opponent(s) using deceptive moves, change of speed and direction.

Passing to a teammate in a forward position or running into the space behind the defending team.

Shooting at the opponents goal.

Support

Providing help to the 1st attacker in the area around the ball.
Responsibility of the **2nd attackers** (attacking players in close proximity to the ball).

This is accomplished by:

Recognizing that the 1st attacker needs help.

Communicating with the 1st attacker...alerting the 1st attacker that you are available and where you are or will be.

Timing your runs...moving to a supporting position at the right time...not too early-not too late.

Being at the right angle and distance to support the 1st attacker...behind, square or in advance of the ball.

Providing good body shape...positioning your body so that you can keep the attack moving in a positive direction (forward toward the opposing goal).

Mobility

Team movement provided by the attacking players close to the ball (2nd attackers) and away from the ball (**3rd attackers**).

This is accomplished with:

Short, explosive runs (angled and lateral).

Checking runs...away from the ball, then quickly back to the ball.

Deceptive, long runs out of the back.

Overlapping runs.

Shape

The attacking look or make-up of the team at any point in time with regards to positioning. Determined by where the ball is and where & how pressure is being applied by the defending team.

The attacking team must provide width, length and connection:

Width...players moving into positions that widen the field. Players moving into positions that allow them to use as much of the field as possible. Opening the field up laterally (from East to West).

Length...players moving into positions that lengthen the field. Players moving into positions that allow them to use as much of the field as possible. Opening the field up vertically (from North to South).

Connection...players in positions to link or connect players from East to West and North to South. Usually midfield players.

Improvisation

The innate ability by a player or players to solve a soccer problem with flair and creativity.

Defending Principles

Pressure

The action of the **1st defender** (defender closest to the ball).

The responsibilities include:

To intercept the ball and win possession for his/her team.

To tackle the opponent and win possession for his/her team.

To delay the forward progress by the 1st attacker and thus for the attacking team.

Cover

Providing help to the **1st defender** in the area around the ball.

Responsibility of the **2nd defenders** (defending players in close proximity to the ball).

This is accomplished by:

Taking a position at an appropriate angle and distance behind the 1st defender to:

Prevent penetration by the 1st attacker with the pass (prevent splitting the 1st and 2nd defenders).

Become the pressuring defender if the 1st defender gets beat.

Match up with (track and/or mark) the 2nd attacker.

The tighter the pressure being applied by the **1st defender**...the tighter (closer) the cover by the **2nd defender**.

The looser the pressure being applied by the **1st defender**...the looser (farther away) the cover by the **2nd defender**.

Balance

Providing defensive help and safety at a distance away from the ball.

This is the responsibility of the **3rd defenders** (players away from the ball). They must:

*Track (keep an eye on) attackers away from the ball.
Position themselves so that they can squeeze space centrally, making the field smaller for the attacking team.
Position themselves so that they can become the 1st or 2nd defender immediately if a pass is made by the attacking team.*

Shape

The defensive look or make-up of the team at any point in time with regards to positioning. Determined by where the ball is and how the attacking shape is organized.

The defending team must be compact (concentrated) between the ball and their goal. This will help to prevent penetration by the attacking team.

Transition

This is the moment in the game when a team has to change their mentality (their roles) from attacking to defending or defending to attacking. Teams that can accomplish this with speed and organization are successful.