



CUSC Winter Coaching Clinics
Striking the ball
November 11th, 2009



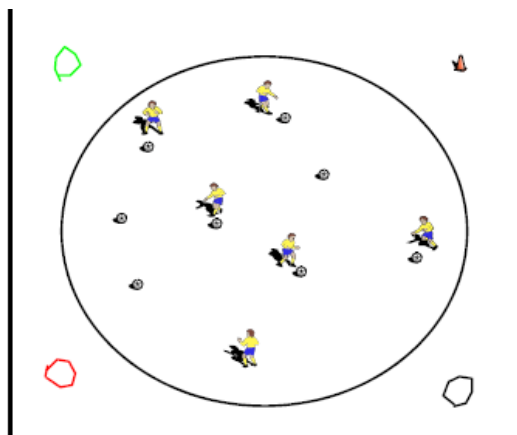
This session focuses on the basics of finishing for individuals. While the session builds towards some simple combination play between a few players and ends with a finishing based scrimmage, the focus remains on the individual players. Later sessions will focus more on the decision making involved in various finishing scenarios, but for now what we are looking at is the technique of striking the ball.

Review of striking the ball:

- Key components: Approaching the ball with pace and smaller steps, striking the center of the ball with the laces (keeping the ankle locked and toe pointed down), staying over the ball and stepping through the shot.
- Common corrections include:
 - Keeping the ankle locked and toe pointed down while striking.
 - Plant foot is the correct distance from the ball, with toe pointing at target – some players will plant consistently too close or too far from the ball causing them to shank the ball one way or the other consistently.
 - Players strike “through” the ball and continue their run to force power. By forcing young players to continue their run after the shot, you will help them avoid stabbing at the ball.

Striking Session:

Warm-up: Shadow Striking with Reaction (5-10mins)



Set up: Balls are scattered at random in a small grid or the center circle

Instructions: Players jog around looking to strike all of the balls scattered in the square, but stop just short of the ball each time.

Go through:

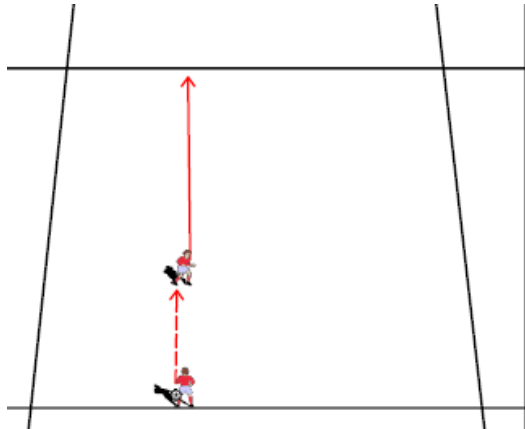
- striking with laces
- inside of the foot
- swiping next to the ball

To make the warm-up more exciting and interesting you can add a different color in each corner and when the coach yells one of the colors, the players must race to touch that color and return to the grid to continue.

Coaching Points: Correct players to have proper striking technique through the various alternatives. You can progress the racing portion of the drill to have the players pick up a ball and dribble it around the color that's been yelled out before returning the ball to the square.

This warm-up is great for younger players to learn and be corrected by coaches. For older players it can still be used to remind players of how they're striking a ball. With older players, progress very quickly, and eventually have them dribbling the ball and performing various other drills and skills for the warm-up. This portion will last 5-10 minutes.

Extended Technical warm-up (10-15 mins): Continue the warm-up with a technical progression similar to the 1v1 defending session, where players focus purely on the techniques of striking various balls with various parts of the foot:



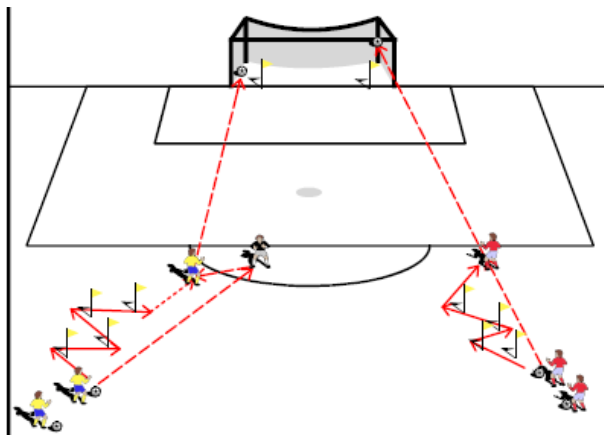
Set up: in pairs, facing each other 10 yards apart, a ball between two.

Instructions: One player jogs forwards while performing the skill while the other player back-pedals to the opposite side of the field where the two reverse roles. Rotations:

- pass forward, lay off with inside of foot
- strike forward with laces, lay off with inside
- strike forward with laces, lay off with laces
- volley with laces into hands
- half volley with laces into hands (ball is served straight up in the air to allow attacking player to run through the ball)

Coaching Points: Have the players repeat the striking ones several times to get many repetitions in.

Individual Finishing with simple agility (15-20):



Set up: 4-6 flags (on an angle to force getting low). Each player with a ball. Each line in a different color.

Instructions: First progression: Players pass the ball into the coach and then get through the flags as quickly as possible. The coach plays the ball back to them when they come out of the flags, where they take a touch and finish on net where two targets are made using flags.

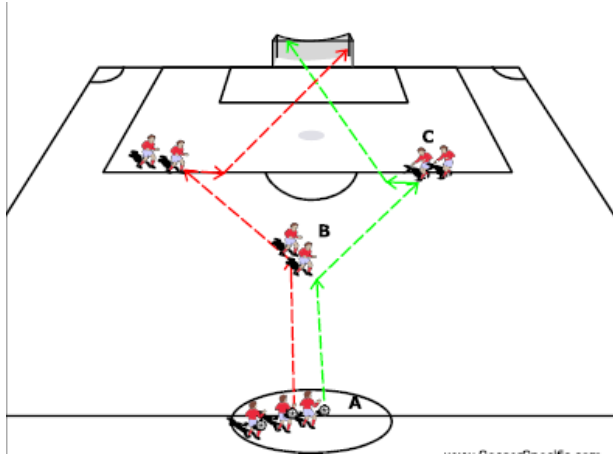
Progression 2: Players weight their touch so they can get through the flags and still take a touch and finish before the 18 (for U10's it we made it 15 yards, instead of 18)

Coaching Points: Force players to run through the ball after striking to force them to stay over the ball. Ask them to practice by striking beside the ball a few times and continuing on to take a few steps. Take smaller quicker steps as you approach the ball. Plant foot should be the proper distance away from the ball.

Use various obstacles at your disposal to try to get the players to take a final touch that is "out of their feet". Large hurdles or thera-bands can be used to force players to take a big touch out of their feet before attacking the ball to strike it.

Again, it is important to emphasize that players attack the ball with speed, and follow through their shot by taking at least 3 steps afterwards. This will force them to use their momentum to gain power and to avoid stabbing at their shot without following through.

Passing and finishing combinations (15-20 mins)



Set up: a large Y shape is setup with at least 10 yards between each cone. 2 players are at each cone with excess players at the bottom of the Y with a ball each

Instructions: Several Progressions are done, ending with a shot on goal.

- 1- A to B who turns and plays C, who turns and finishes (everyone follows pass)
- 2- A to B who turns and plays C, laid off for B to finish (everyone follows pass except for shooter who becomes C)
- 3 - A to B back to A to C
- 4 - all of the previous progressions with some of the passes played in the air
- 5 - A starts the play with a throw in instead of an easy pass.

Coaching Points: Proper passing and solid touches through the progressions. Proper finishing technique at end. Force players to attack the shot at full speed instead of waiting for the perfect bounce.

Depending on the skill of players you can build a grid out of cones or other obstacles around B to force closer touches and better technique. This drill is great for any age group because there is a wide range of skills involved and progressions can be added to either keep it very simple or make it very difficult.

Scrimmage: End with one of two types of scrimmages (20 mins):

- 1- 3 points are given for a shot with the laces outside the penalty area (or a line that is defined using cones)
- 2- Goals can only be scored from outside of the box or predetermined area (to force long shots with laces).