



WASHINGTON PREMIER F.C. JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

SESSION NO. 5 BALL MASTERY, FINISHING AT GOAL

Tonight we are going to emphasize scoring goals. What this really means at the youngest ages is simply being composed and balanced enough to kick a ball past a goalkeeper. The process of creating an opportunity to score a goal involves so many other skills we cannot work on one without also incorporating many of the others, so there will be a mixture of passing, control, dribbling and shooting. Not every player scores lots of goals, but it is important that all players have the necessary skills to take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves.

Dribbling at goal with intent to score (40 minutes)

1) Form the players into five or six lines. Have them go through a series of movement routines (twisting hips, high knees, stepping over the gate, side-shuffling) to help them warm up.

As scoring goals often involves dribbling past a defender and dribbling fast, the next series of exercises will give them an opportunity to do those things.

2) Set up a two-yard wide goal with cones approximately 15 yards away from each line and another cone 15 yards further than that. Each player should have a ball. The first player in each line should begin dribbling toward the goal. After a touch or two, they should accelerate so that they pass between the cones going as fast as they comfortably can. The technique for speed dribbling should be emphasized, primarily touching the ball at the extent of the reach of their leg (not kicking the ball as they are standing over it). After passing through the goal, they should continue to the cone 15 yards further away and wait until the players in their line have all finished.

- Repeat the other direction
- As we want players to be comfortable with both feet, ask them to use the other foot when returning to their original line
- Continue the exercise for 3-5 minutes

3) Repeating the process, the first player in the line should dribble towards the goal. After a touch or two, they should dip their shoulder one way, push the ball the other and accelerate away from the imaginary defender. Again, they should maintain their speed through the goal and go to the cone at the other side, waiting for the rest of their group to finish.

- Repeat the other direction
- As we want players to be comfortable with both feet, ask them to use the other foot when returning to their original line
- Continue the exercise for 3-5 minutes

4) Repeating the process, the first player in the line should dribble towards the goal. After a touch or two, they should scissor their left foot around the ball, push the ball to the right and accelerate away



from the imaginary defender. Again, they should maintain their speed through the goal and go to the cone at the other side, waiting for the rest of their group to finish.

- Repeat the other direction
- As we want players to be comfortable with both feet, ask them to use the other foot when returning to their original line
- Continue the exercise for 3-5 minutes

5) Repeating the process, the first player in the line should dribble towards the goal. After a touch or two, they should step over the ball with their right foot, push the ball with the outside of the same foot and accelerate away from the imaginary defender. Again, they should maintain their speed through the goal and go to the cone at the other side, waiting for the rest of their group to finish.

- Repeat the other direction
- As we want players to be comfortable with both feet, ask them to use the other foot when returning to their original line
- Continue the exercise for 3-5 minutes

Now we are ready for players to strike the ball through the goal rather than dribble through it. We will repeat some of the same steps, but are going to emphasize getting the ball in a good position to strike it and focus on sound technique for low, firm shots.

6) The first player in the line should dribble towards the goal. After a touch or two, they should push the ball with the outside of their right foot away from their body at a slight angle. This touch should create enough space to step into a shot. Their next touch should be a shot. Emphasize a locked ankle, pointed toe, and making contact with the ball with the proper part of the foot.

- Repeat the other direction
- As we want players to be comfortable with both feet, ask them to use the other foot when returning to their original line
- Continue the exercise for 3-5 minutes

7) The first player in the line should dribble towards the goal. After a touch or two, they should dip their shoulder and push the ball with the outside of their right foot in the manner they did in #6. Again, their next touch should be a shot using sound technique.

- Repeat the other direction
- As we want players to be comfortable with both feet, ask them to use the other foot when returning to their original line
- Continue the exercise for 3-5 minutes

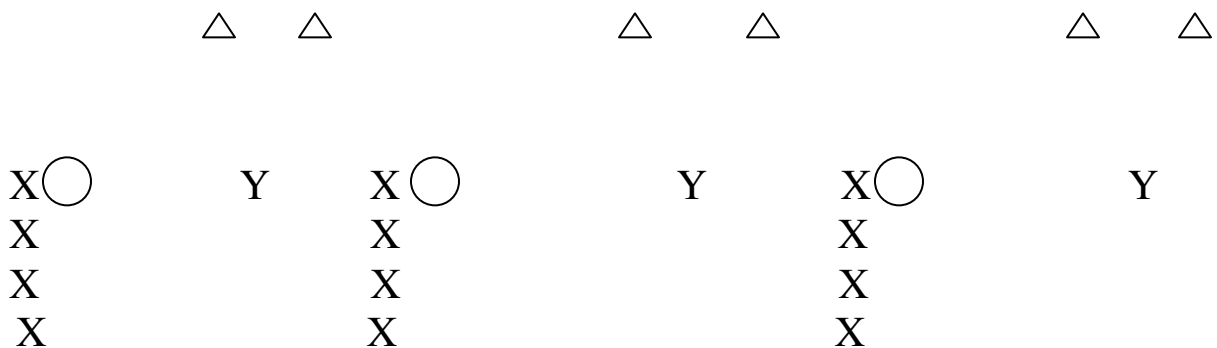


8) The first player in the line should dribble towards the goal. After a touch or two, they should scissor around the ball with their left foot, then push the ball in the manner they did in #6. Again, this touch needs to create space for them to step into a shot. Their next touch should be a shot.

- Repeat the other direction
- As we want players to be comfortable with both feet, ask them to use the other foot when returning to their original line
- Continue the exercise for 3-5 minutes

Controlling and finishing (15 minutes)

1) Divide the players into three groups and, using three of the two-yard wide goals (make sure they are at least 10 yards from each other), have one player stand five yards away from their goal and face their teammate, who has a ball. It should look like this:



Player X passes the ball to Player Y, who controls the ball to their right so they are facing the goal. Their next touch must be a shot. Emphasize to Y that their objective when controlling a pass in this position is to get the ball out from under their feet and in a position to shoot as quickly as possible, but as calmly as possible. Too often, players “hurry” their control and never get the ball in a good position to shoot. This greatly reduces their chances of being successful in these situations. Being composed enough to control the ball properly in order to set up their shot is often just as important as the shot itself. After the shot, Y retrieves the ball and dribbles to the back of the line (taking care not to interfere with the other groups as they shoot), X moves to take Y’s spot, and the process is repeated. After several minutes (it would be good to give each player 7 – 10 opportunities with their right foot), flip the grid around so that everyone must do the same skill with their left foot.



Review of moves from earlier weeks (until 6:45)

We need to continue emphasizing the simplest of ball manipulation exercises with this age. Step-overs, scissors, pulling the ball back, turning with the inside and outside of the feet and all of the other things we've done should be rehearsed again. The more they do these using the proper technique, the better they will be for the experience.

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