

Reacting to the next ball

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Reacting to the next ball in attacking positions.
- 2 The player that reacts quickest makes the difference to the result.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Work at match pace.
- 2 After the first ball is gone – think – what is your next job?
- 3 React to the next ball more quickly than your opponents.
- 4 Take control of the situation.



what to shout

- "What is your next job"
- "React"
- "Be clever"



what to look for

- Who reacts the quickest?
- Is the play "clever"?
- Choices made in technique used.
- Are they working at a realistic "match" intensity?
- How do players react to their different roles?



what to think about

Does this practice cover the four corners of player development?

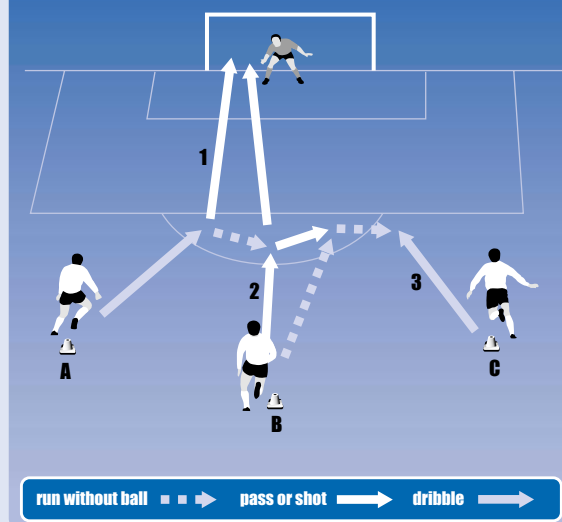
- 1 Technical (skills, passing, dribbling, shooting).
- 2 Physical (power, running, change of direction, strength in 1 v 1).
- 3 Mental (decision making and choices).
- 4 Social (communication, combining with team mate).

After setting up and demonstrating the first attack, you should stand back and let the players control the session. This will give you time to encourage and advise individual players on a 1 to 1 basis.

What you get your players to do:

- Player A – Dribbles and shoots
 Player B – One-two with A and shoots
 Player A – In for the rebound
 Player C – Dribbles in to attack 1 v 1 against B
 Player B – Reacts from shot and defends 1 v 1

Running with the ball to score



Development

Change the roles and responsibilities of the players. You may add extra players or reduce the numbers. Here is an example:

Player A – Dribbles and shoots

Player B – Dribbles to attack 1 v 1 against A

Player C – Has a choice of team mate. Calls team mates name and dribbles to make a 2 v 1 situation

Player A – React to player C's choice

Player B – React to player C's choice

How would I put this into a game situation?

As possession switches in a game, so do the roles and responsibilities of each player, for example from attack to defence. This forces players into making choices and decisions on actions, technique used etc. Therefore these small practices cover what happens in a real match, but on a smaller scale.



How to use smart sessions

Print off the session and take it to training. It should take you less than five minutes to read the instructions, set up the session, and then you are ready to communicate what happens to your players.

Number of players

You only need six players to complete a session, though it can easily be expanded to meet your needs. With lots more players you could have a number of grids working at the same time.

Timings

The timings are for a twenty minute session, but it can be expanded or reduced to meet your needs. It's your call.

As a rule of thumb 10 minutes would be enough time for a well executed first drill, development and feedback. Any shorter and you have not explored the full skill range or asked enough questions of the players. Longer is fine as long as you feel the session is developing. The game related element adds another 10 minutes.

Equipment

The equipment used is simple. A set of cones (or trainers or tops) as markers and a couple of balls.

You can add in other equipment where you feel you need them – we just assume that you don't have them because sometimes the shed is locked or another coach is using them.

Training area

The size of the training area is left for you to decide. Smaller players need a smaller area, but the session will never need more than a 20m x 20m grid for initial drills. The smaller the area the more intense the training.

The standard and age groups

Smart sessions are based on the core skills of soccer. They will challenge any standard because a player can always perform the core better.

The "development" ideas can be used to differentiate between the different standards of your players; the "think about" section can challenge the more advanced; the "game related situations" can change the contact situations the teams face.

Players should wear shin pads in all coaching sessions. They should be suitable to the player's physique and worn correctly with socks pulled up.

Elements of the session

What to tell your players the session is about:

This is your introduction and outlines the objectives of the session. Just read this out. The players then have an objective. Return to this at the end of the session to see if you have achieved your objectives.

What you tell your players to do:

This is how you want your players to achieve the objectives. You can tell the players straight away how to achieve the objectives, or you can tease it out of them as the session goes on.

What you get your players to do:

This shows you how the session is going to work. Depending on what is going to be achieved, it sets out what actions the players are going to take. There are no exact measurements, or complicated patterns – the approach is "simple, stupid, successful". Slow motion the first few patterns – get the drill right and the skill right first before speeding up. Use the "What to shout" prompts to keep the players focused. Use the "What to look for" to keep your eye on why the players might be failing.

Development

No session is worth doing unless there is some form of progression. Normally there will be an increase in pressure, say by adding more defenders, or by restricting the time available. Other areas for you to think about are: Where do I stand as coach? Do I throw the ball into the grid?

How would I put this into a game situation?

All the elements of the session are geared to the game, but this section puts the session one step away from a full game, with attack, defence and a goal line.

What to shout

Have the words handy, because apart from the usual words of encouragement, it is good to shout the key factors to players. Of course you can hold some of these "shouts" back and ask the players to identify how they can improve.

What to look for

You need to keep your eyes open for "best practice". This section helps you identify quickly where players might go wrong so you can quickly put them right.

Think about

Here you have the chance to challenge the players and situation, either by using feedback or just asking yourself the questions. It is a little more advanced and might not be appropriate for your players.

Where does it fit:

To help you file and order our coaching we have given you the core areas of individual and team skills that the session covers.