

Running to score

What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Moving quickly with the ball over longer distances.
- 2 What to do when clear of the defence and in on goal.

What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Take as few touches as possible.
- 2 Run quickly.
- 3 End the run with a shot.



what to shout

- "Take a good first touch", "Be positive"
- "Head up", "Pick your spot"



what to look for

- Pushing the ball well out in front with the first touch.
- Moving the ball with the laces.
- Smooth, unbroken running stride.
- Running in a straight line.
- Composed finish.
- Good technique – sidefoot or laces.
- Observing the keeper's position.
- Head down, eyes on the ball when taking the shot.
- Body over the ball and non-kicking foot alongside to keep the shot under the bar.
- If going for power, use of the instep and follow through with the kicking foot after striking the ball.



what to think about

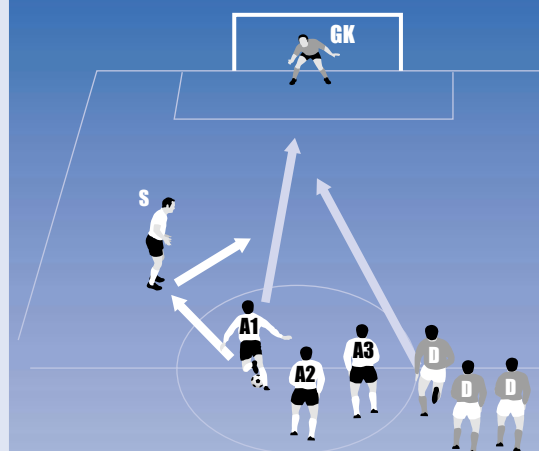
Players should take about three touches over a 30 metre distance. However, if defenders are close by the attacker should keep the ball under closer control to avoid being tackled.

What you get your players to do:

Stage 1: Several players, each with a ball, start behind the half way line. When their number is called, they pass their ball to the server then run to receive the return pass. They then run as quickly as possible to the penalty area, where they try to shoot past the goalkeeper before returning to the semi-circle.

Stage 2: Set a time limit – say 15 seconds – starting from the pass to the server, to getting a shot in at goal.

Running with the ball to score



direction of pass → direction of run →
A = attacker D = defender S = server GK = goalkeeper

Development

Add several defenders on the half way line. A defender can give chase to stop the attacker getting a shot in at goal once the attacker makes the first pass to the server. The defenders start approx 15 metres away. There must be enough distance to give the attackers a good chance of being successful. Defenders can be brought in from either side of the attackers, or even from behind.

How would I put this into a game situation?

Play three attackers versus two defenders. Attackers get points for scoring goals, defenders get points for passing or dribbling the balls behind the attackers. An attacker can only break out behind the defenders to score when the ball is passed behind the defenders. When this happens defenders are allowed to give chase and try to prevent a shot on goal, while a second attacker can look to score from rebounds off the goalkeeper.



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.