

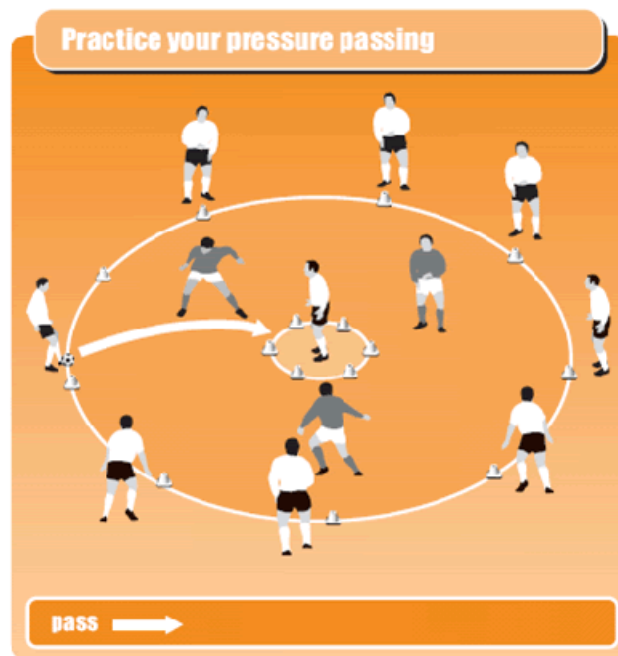
If your players can pass well under pressure they will be able to pass well all the time By David Clarke

When I coach very young teams one of the things I've noticed that they do - which of course they shouldn't! - is to run at, and shout loudly at, the player with the ball. It seems to be a natural reaction because so many of them do it. What they are trying to do, of course, is put pressure on the player with the ball and 'scare' him into a bad pass.

As they learn how to pressure, they no longer shout 'YAH!', they use their body and ability to tackle to pressure. So the player on the ball must be strong enough, and be able to pass the ball to a teammate, when an opponent is bearing down on him.

Crucial passes occur throughout matches when either your defence is under pressure, or your attackers are advancing on goal needing a good pass to beat the defenders.

In both cases the player under pressure can help his team with a good pass. If the pressing player forces a mistake, your team is either in danger of losing a goal from a defensive error, or your goal scoring opportunity is wasted.



Circles can help pressure passing

This exercise is a good one for passing under pressure and it gives you a chance to show your defenders how to force the passing player into a mistake.

1. Mark out two circles as in the diagram. Place a target player in the small centre circle and three defenders inside the bigger circle.
2. Arrange the rest of your players as attackers around the outside of the bigger circle.
3. The attackers start with the ball and they have to pass the ball to the player in the centre without the defenders getting it. This player cannot move outside his circle.
4. The defenders must try to intercept the ball. They have to pressure the passer.