

Playing With Confidence Under Pressure

This 4 v 4 small-sided game was contributed by Tim Abeln of St. Louis Soccer Club.

Drill/Exercise

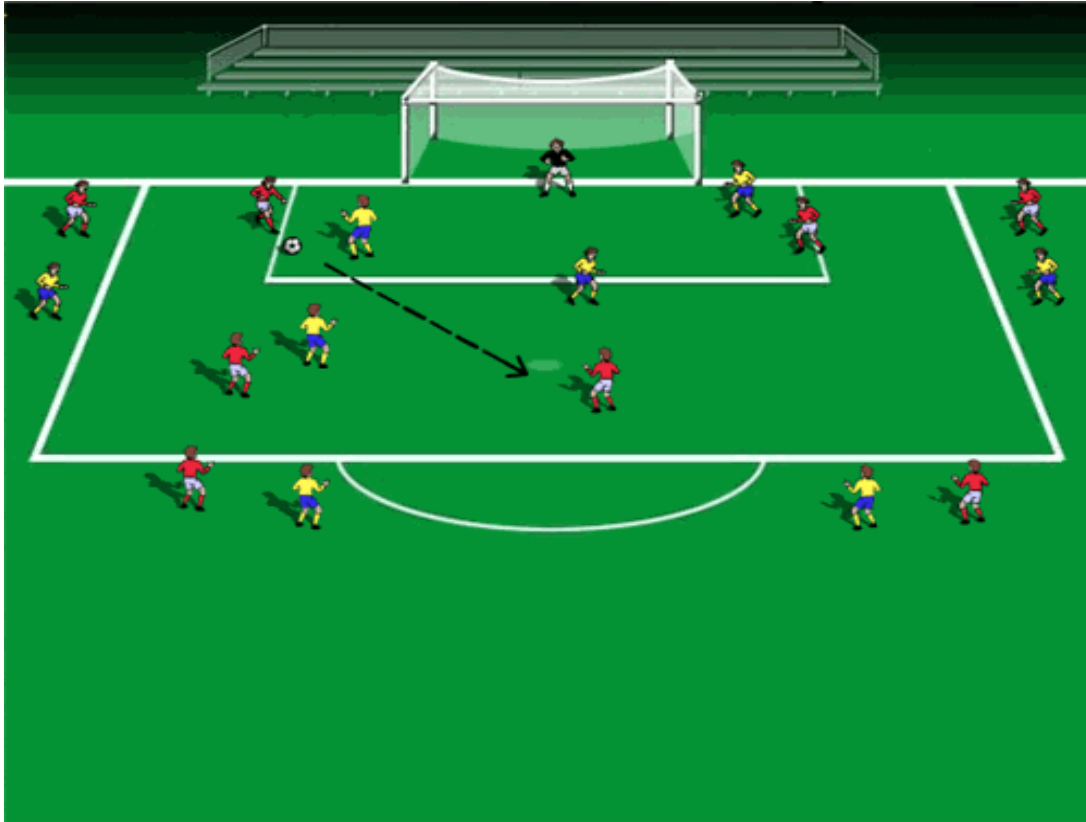
Play 4 v 4 + a goalie in an area at least as large as the penalty area but not more than 25 yards from goal. 4 other players remain on the perimeter. These players are active, but can't play against each other and are to remain outside designated area.

Players play 4 v 4 inside area. The team in possession is trying to score against keeper. The other team is defending. Players can use their teammates on perimeter, although those players are restricted to 2-touch (progression to 1-touch for perimeter players). Defending team can't leave the area nor can opponent perimeter players interfere.

Once a team loses possession (i.e. shot saved by keeper, shot wide, dispossessed, etc), the opposing team that is now in possession must first work and play the ball out of the area to one of their teammates on the perimeter, then get the ball back and are now the attacking team attempting to score. The team that lost possession now defends until they win the ball back, clear the area and come back in attacking. Kind of like ½ court basketball in that you must take the ball 'back' before coming forward again.

Upon a goal being scored, the attacking team stays 'in' while the players who were defending and gave up the goal switch places with their teammates who were on the perimeter.

Can progress to side perimeter players needing to serve the ball upon receiving in order to work on crosses, near/far post runs, heading to goal, as well as goalkeeper decision making and catching/punching crosses in traffic, etc.



Coaching Points

1. Intensity inside the penalty area, both offensively and defensively. This is where games are won or lost.
2. Transition from offense to defending, and vice-versa upon turnovers.
3. Defensive organization and man-marking in the box.
4. 3rd man runs off the ball, be 'active' in the area, get in scoring positions
5. One on one attacking and defending skills
6. Shoot, shoot, shoot when in the area, that is only way to score goals. Follow the shots to goal/rebounds.
7. Get players to near post (ground and low-driven balls) and back post when serves come from sides
8. Focus & concentration for goalkeepers, especially on turnovers close to goal