



Training for Decision Making

According to Success in Soccer there are 56 channels of communication on the field in a 4 v 4 game. In many sports, especially sports that involve large numbers of players, poor decision-making by athletes cause more errors than those caused by poor technique. Soccer is a sport that requires players to analyse situations involving large numbers of players and possibilities such as; do I pass, do I dribble, what type of pass, what type of shot, where do I pass, where do I run, when do I run etc. The possibilities are numerous and coaches must create training situations that require players to make good decisions based on what they see and what skills they possess.

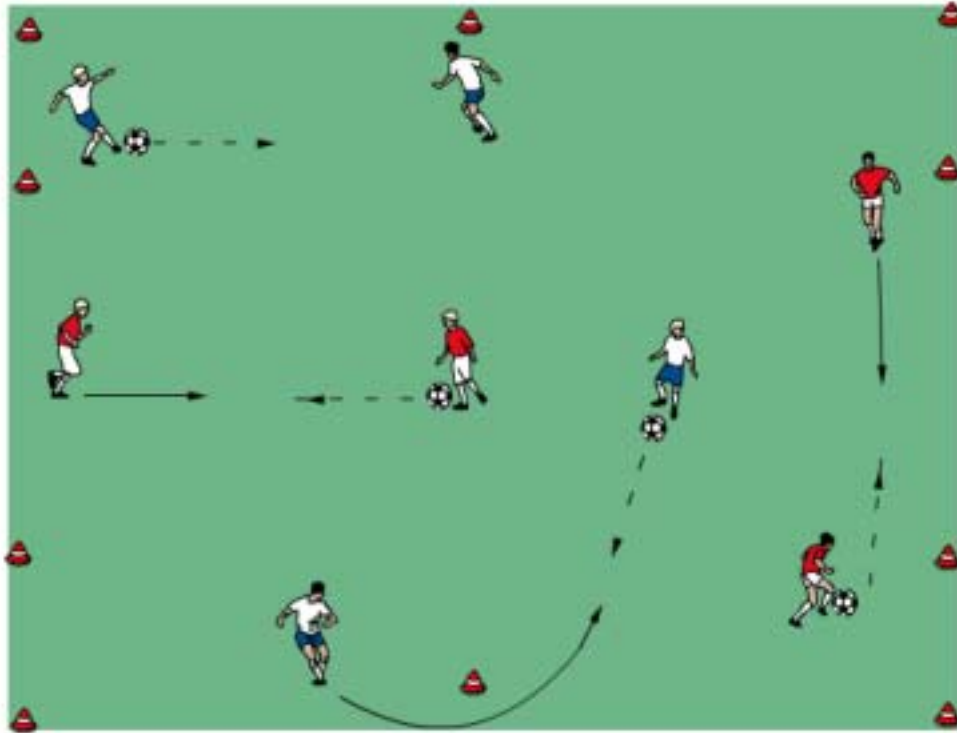
- Start training for vision and decision making as early as possible. Simple decisions will lead to complex decisions as players mature.
- Players must be assisted in practice to make good decisions so that they may do so in game situations without direction.
- Players need to “feel” and “sense” the game.
- Players need to “know” what they are going to do rather than “think about” what they are going to do.
- Every practice must have elements that simulate the game situation where players must make decisions based on what they see – VISION.

Based on these principles players must make good decisions such as:

1. When to run to provide support to the player with the ball.
2. When to run to space to support the ball.
3. How to “open up” when receiving the ball so that the next decision is better and to give the receiver better vision.
4. How to “check” your surroundings by peeking “before” receiving the ball.
5. Passing to the CORRECT foot – dominant foot if there is no pressure and to the foot away from pressure if there is pressure.
6. When to play forward and when to keep possession by playing back or sideways to play forward.

The following activities will assist players make good decisions based on what they see – VISION.

“CHECK OUT” PASSING



Set-Up

- 15 x 15
- 10 sideline cones
- Pairs of players

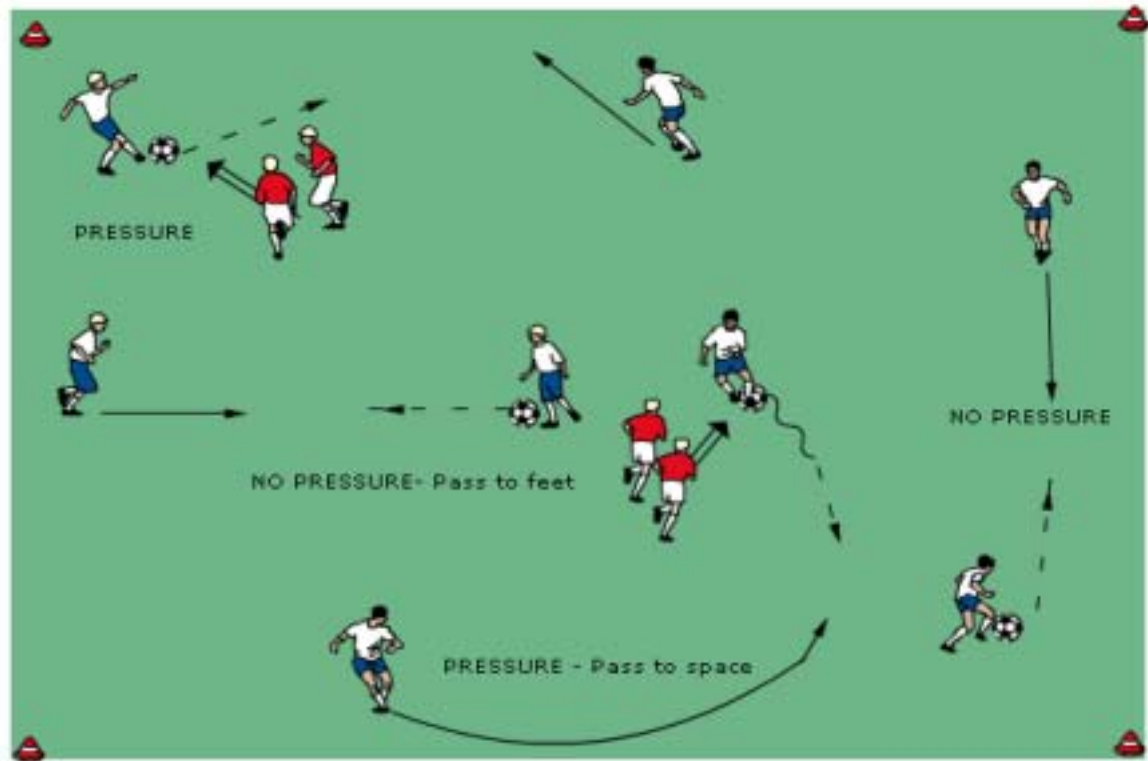
Sequence

- Players pass, dribble & move
- Players run a “Check Out” around the cone after “every” pass

Coaching Focus – Ask Players the Following Questions

- Where do you pass the ball when a player is running toward you?
 - To feet mostly but could be to space
- Where would you pass the ball if a player without the ball is running away from you?
 - To space but it could be passed to feet.
- How can I tell when my teammate is ready to receive a pass?
 - Because there is eye contact and/or he/she calls for the ball.

PARTNER TAG



Set-up

- 15 x 15 grid
- Players in pairs
- Two (2) pairs do not have a ball BUT hold a pinnie (vest) between them

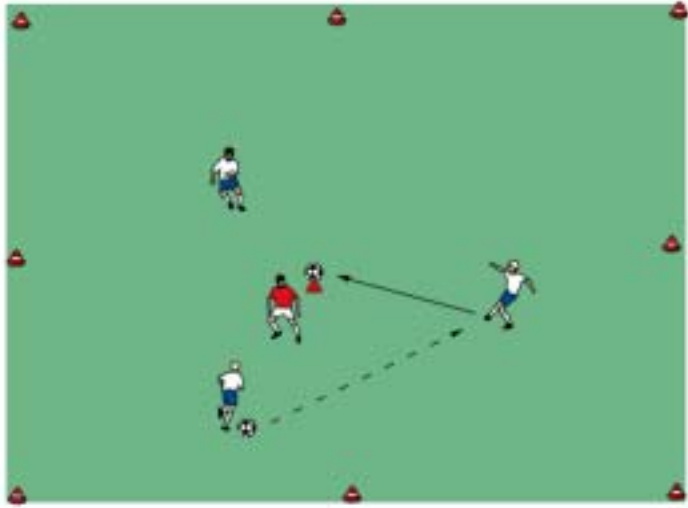
Sequence

- The two partners without a ball try to tag any player who has a ball.
- Partners with a ball can only pass to each other.
- If either one of the pairs with the ball is tagged by a player without the ball the pairs change roles.

Coaching Focus – Ask Players the Following Questions

- If your partner who has the ball is pressured, where do you run – support or space?
 - Support
- If your partner who has the ball is “not” pressured, where do you run – support or space?
 - Space
- Which foot should you pass to?
 - To the dominant foot if the receiver is not under pressure and to the foot “away” from pressure if your receiving teammate is pressured (tightly marked).

3 V 1



Set-up

- 10 x 10 grid
- Place a cone in the middle of the field with a ball on top of it.
- Four players with one ball between them.

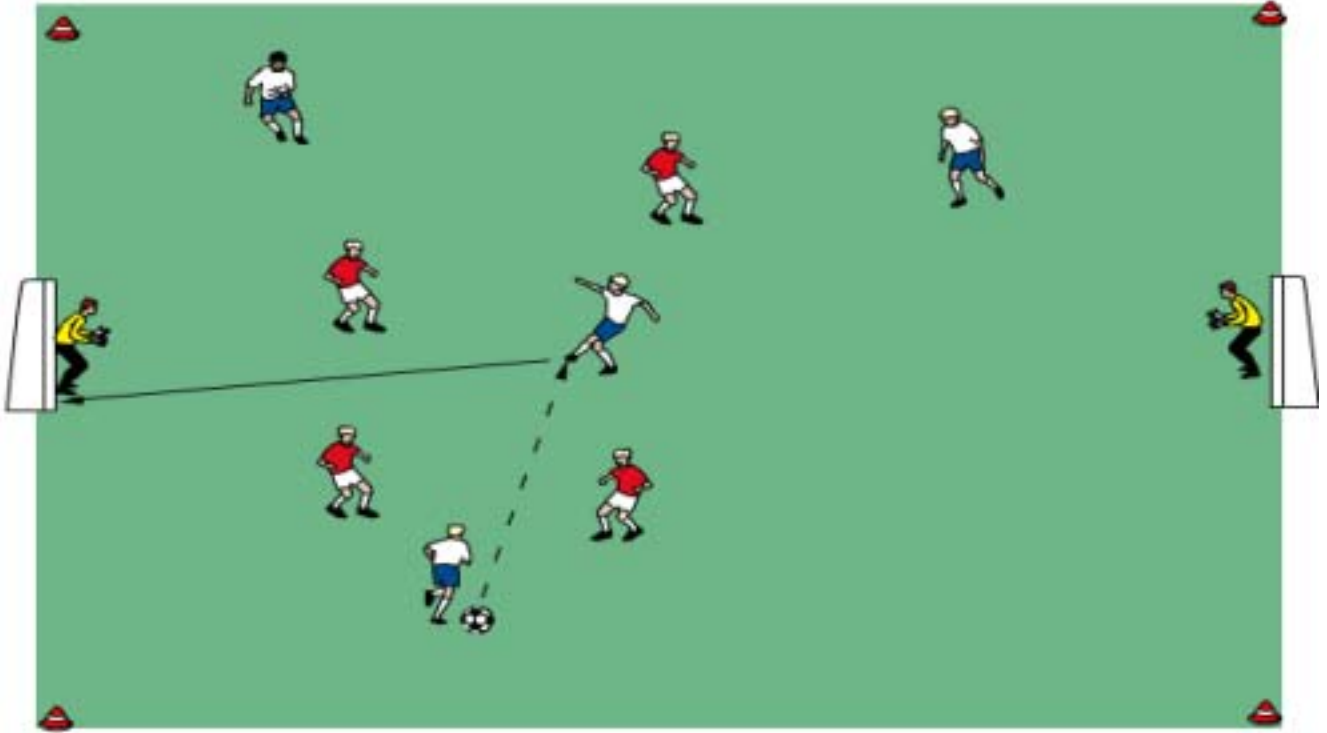
Sequence

- Players play 3 v 1 around the cone.
- The three players with the ball try to knock the ball off the cone.
- The player without the ball must protect the ball on the cone AND try to tag any one of the players that has the ball.
- If the player protecting the cone tags a player of the team without the ball he/she changes places with that player and earns one point.
- If a player with the ball knocks the ball off the cone then he/she changes places with the player protecting the cone and earns 1 point. However, if the ball is knocked off while the player with the ball is being tagged then the player protecting the cone cannot switch places and cannot earn a point.
- The player who has the most points after a set amount of time (e.g. 5 minutes) points wins the game.

Coaching Focus – Ask Players the Following Questions

- How do you get the player protecting the cone to move so that the cone is exposed?
 1. By passing ball quickly and accurately and by adopting an “open” stance upon receiving the ball to have better vision of the field. Orient yourself towards unmarked team mates (open up to receive the ball).
 2. By supporting the player with the ball
- What do you do if you cannot play the ball forward yourself?
 - Pass it to someone who can play forward.

4 v 4 to 6 v 6. PLAY TO GOAL WITH RESTRICTIONS



Set-up

- 20 x 35 yd grid
- Goal with goalkeeper at each end.
- Two teams of four or six

Sequence

- Teams play 4 x 4 or 6 x 6 with some restrictions:
 1. The passer may “not” pass back to the passer.
 2. Play silently (this may not be natural for some players but vision is essential).
 3. Limit play to 2 touches. RECEIVE – LOOK- PASS.

Coaching Focus – Ask Players the Following Questions

- What do you do before receiving the ball?
 - Orient yourself towards unmarked teammates (open up to receive the ball).
- How can you best help your teammate who has the ball?
 - Make runs to get open - Go to space.
- How do you get your teammate who has the ball to see you?
 - Be mobile, make runs and communicate with eye contact.

NOTE! In game situations communicating by voice is critical but playing games where voice communication is not permitted with force players to look (vision) before making decisions.