

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING TECHNIQUES

Players must have a solid foundation on which to build before they can reach the next level of development. Teaching proper technique is a must for coaches working with young players. The coach can have the best intentions in the world, but reinforcing bad technique or habits can be counterproductive to the development of our players. Bad habits developed from repetition of bad technique get harder to correct the more entrenched they become.

The adage "practice makes perfect" is slightly off the mark when it comes to technique. In reality, "perfect practice makes perfect". The key is to repeat proper technique. Proper fundamentals are necessary for developing good technique. If we get our players to repeat the technique in the proper way over and over, they will start to form good habits that are fundamentally sound. This is definitely a key to creating good sound habits that will become second nature.

The purpose is to improve the players' technical ability and present them with activities that will provide the repetition necessary to raise the level of individual proficiency and their comfort with the ball. Increased technical ability and better understanding of principles of play will help players reach the next level in their development, but we must remember that this will not happen without a solid foundation. That is why it is so important that coaches know what to look for in teaching technique.

In the following you will find the principles of technique for heading, dribbling, passing, receiving and finishing/ shooting. Utilizing these principles in conjunction with creating a perfect picture for them to see will help in getting the players on the road to creating good habits. I hope this will help the less-experienced coach who might not have played the game in teaching proper technique to our younger players

HEADING PRINCIPLES

- Eyes open
- Chin in, mouth closed, keep neck firm
- Attack the ball - don't let the ball hit you
- Contact the ball just above the eyebrows or forehead
- Arms help to propel the head forward as well as aid in balance
- Use legs and back for power (arch and uncoil)
- Foot action - rocking motion, back foot to front foot
- Timing of the Jump is very important - make contact with ball at the highest possible point

FINISHING PRINCIPLES

- Accuracy is the key - finishing is merely passing the ball into the goal past the goalkeeper
- Power is determined by the speed of the foot at the point of contact and the technique used.
- Body alignment - whenever possible, head and kicking knee over the ball and hips and shoulders square to target . Firm ankle, toe down . non-kicking foot placed comfortably beside the ball, with the toe pointing to the target
- Eyes kept on the ball at the moment of contact - on approach to goal take a quick look up and pick out target, then focus on ball. Many young players try to look at

- the target while making contact with the ball.
- Keep head still throughout the follow through
- Follow through - ankle remains firm, toe down and follow through to the target.
- Do not try to over-hit the ball (many kids swing so hard at the ball that they usually swing around the ball and miss hit it badly)

PASSING PRINCIPLES

- Eyes on the ball at the moment of contact
- Non-kicking foot alongside of the ball and pointed at your target; don't reach for ball. Ankle locked on kicking foot
- Follow through toward target
- Inside-of-the-foot pass, toe pulled up at a 90-degree angle. To keep the ball low, strike the ball at the midline of the ball or above
- Outside-of-the-foot pass, toe pointed down, strike across the ball toward the target.
- Instep drive: For long passes in the air make sure that the player is making contact with the ball below the midline. When trying to drive the ball with less air under it, the player should not follow through up into the air with the kicking foot.
- Practice passing with both feet at all times
- Emphasize the importance of pace and accuracy

RECEIVING PRINCIPLES

- Go to the ball to be in a position to control early
- Position the body directly in line with the flight of the ball and determine the surface to be used for controlling the ball.
- At the moment of contact with the ball, the part of the body contacted is relaxed and gives slightly to kill the momentum of the ball.
- Keep the ball close (don't stop the ball completely) and guide it in the desired direction. The first touch must be constructive to prepare for next move (first-time pass, shot, dribble, etc.). Using the various foot surfaces (inside/ outside/sole) to redirect ball as it strikes foot; ground simultaneously (wedge control). A bad first touch will result in losing possession.
- Before the ball arrives, the player should know the position of opponents and teammates. Be thinking ahead- if you receive a ball and do not know what you are going to do with it then it will be too late.

DRIBBLING PRINCIPLES

- Lean forward and over the ball
- Knees bent, on the balls of feet
- Relax body
- Balance is a must
- Keep ball close
- Use inside/outside and instep of both feet
- Be creative, use imagination - develop your own style
- Use body feints
- Change speed and direction tight control.
- Look up as much as possible
- Use body to shield/protect ball
- Don't be afraid to fail. Take risks in offensive third of the field