

# Coaching at the Grass Roots

## IT'S PRACTICE TIME!

6-7 year olds



### PART V

## Ball Control

**Objective:** To receive a moving ball from any direction and bring it under personal control.

### Key Factors:

1. Get in line with the ball.
2. Select the controlling surface. (Decide the part of the body you are going to control the ball with – inside of foot, outside of foot, thigh, chest, head)
3. Wedge or cushion to control the ball.

# LET'S PRACTICE!

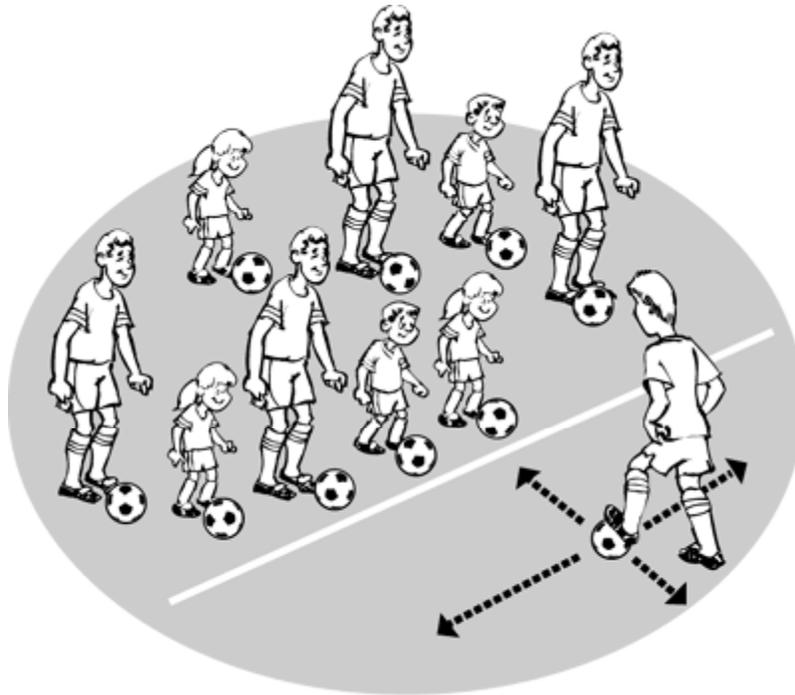
6-7 year olds

**EQUIPMENT CHECK:** Balls, cones and bibs.

## **Warm-Up** (5 minutes)

The players and parents each have a ball. With everyone facing the coach in lines straight across, they begin to play “Mirror Man”. “Mirror Man” – as the coach moves, so must the players and parents move, as if they were looking in a mirror. For example, coach moves slowly to the right, left, forward, backward – players mirror this movement with the ball at their feet. As they get used to the movements coach can move faster.

The coach is teaching the players to look up when moving with the ball.



## **Stretching** (5 minutes)

Slow Stretching.

## Skills (10 minutes)

3 vs 1 in a 10m x 20m grid.

Three players keep ball away from one defender. Defender is told to walk, not run, to put pressure on the players. To set up a pass, defender in middle starts off as passive. As passing improves, you can increase his/her speed.

Rotate the defender every 2/3 minutes.

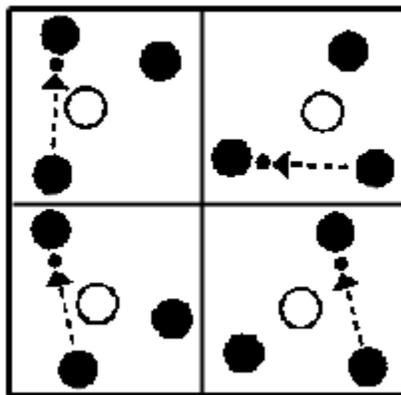
To begin the sequence, one player throws the ball underhand, using two hands, to another player either:

- in air
- bouncing

The receiving player controls the ball, without being challenged. He then passes to one of the other two players on his team and the defender walks to try to take possession of the ball. If he does, or if the ball goes out of the box, restart as above.

The coach is looking to see if the players without the ball move into positions to receive the ball.

Emphasize OPEN body position when receiving the ball.  
Emphasize good quality FIRST TOUCH.



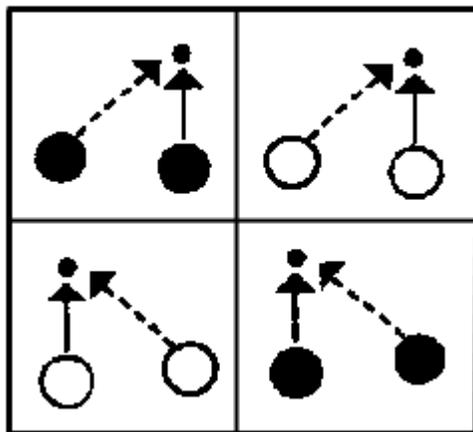
## Technique (10 minutes)

Work in pairs with one ball between two. Each pair is in a 10m x 10m grid.

Receiver:

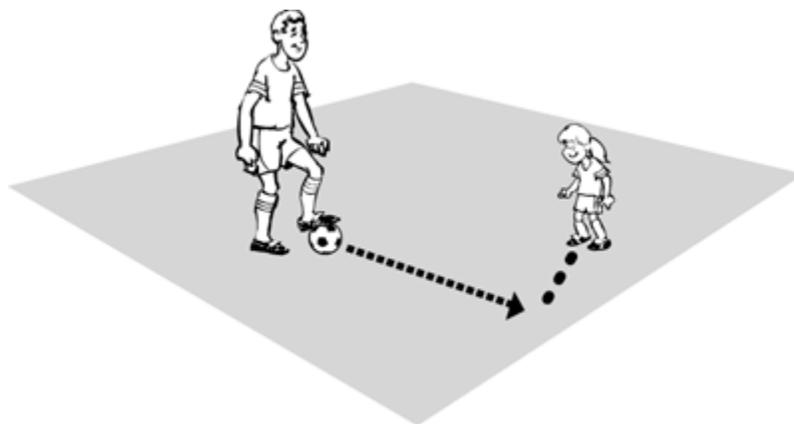
1. Gets behind the ball.
2. Uses WEDGE (sole of foot) or CUSHION (inside/outside of foot).
3. Controls on first touch (low pass, therefore, foot control).
4. He/she then passes ball back to his partner. Repeat.
5. Alternate feet when controlling the ball.

The coach looks for the first touch to be away from the player so that one step will allow a pass back.



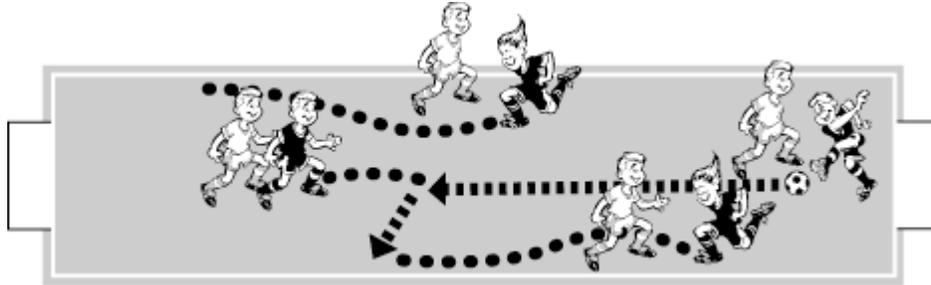
### Controlling the Ball (5 minutes)

The player stands opposite the parent. They should stand about 8 metres apart. The player passes the ball to the parent using the instep of the foot. The parent controls the ball and passes the ball back to the player using the instep of the foot.



## Mini-Game (15 minutes)

4 players versus 4 players with no goalkeepers.



### Game Day Goals:

*Coach, you should start to see the players relax more when they must stop the ball. They should be trying to use more parts of the body for control of the ball.*

## Practice is over!

**Coach, did everyone have fun?  
Early experiences in the game must be positive:  
praise successes with great enthusiasm!**



## PART VI

# Heading



**Objective:** Attempting to score by heading the ball towards an opponent's goal.

### Key Factors:

1. Watch the ball (Keep eyes open!)
2. Head on the hair line.
3. Attack the ball.
4. Use a small or soft ball for young players.

## LET'S PRACTICE!

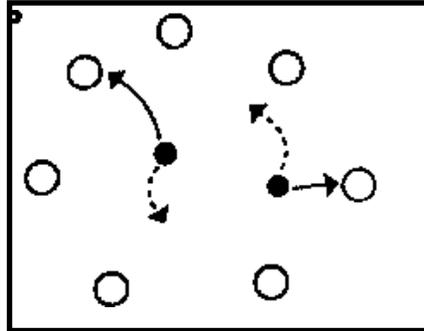
6-7 year olds

**EQUIPMENT CHECK:** Balls, cones and bibs

### Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Play a game of "Throw-Head-Catch". Two teams of five players play in a 30m x 20m grid with mini-goals. The team in possession links up by players throwing the ball to teammates who return the pass with a header. The receiving player catches the ball with his/her hands and throws it to another teammate. It proceeds with throw-head-catch. Opponents are not allowed to tackle or to stop the ball with their hands. Possession of the ball is lost if the ball hits the ground or a player fails to head the ball. Opponents are allowed to intercept

passes with their heads, but the header must then be caught. Goals are scored by heading the ball into the goal. **(Challenging for younger players – be patient!)**



### **Stretching** (5 minutes)

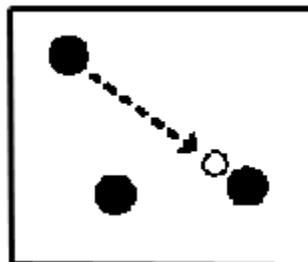
Slow Stretching

### **Skills** (10 minutes)

1. Heading the ball out of hands to partner.
2. Have partner throw ball underhand to player who is heading.
3. Keep the ball up between the partners.

Work in pairs with one ball between two. Two pairs per 10m x 10m grid.

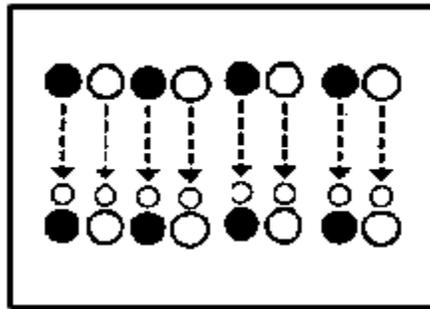
Bring ball towards forehead with hands. Head ball on forehead, keeping eyes open, mouth shut. Stiffen neck and head through ball. Step towards partner as ball is contacted.



## Technique (5 minutes)

1. Throw, head, catch.
2. Keep the ball up between partners.

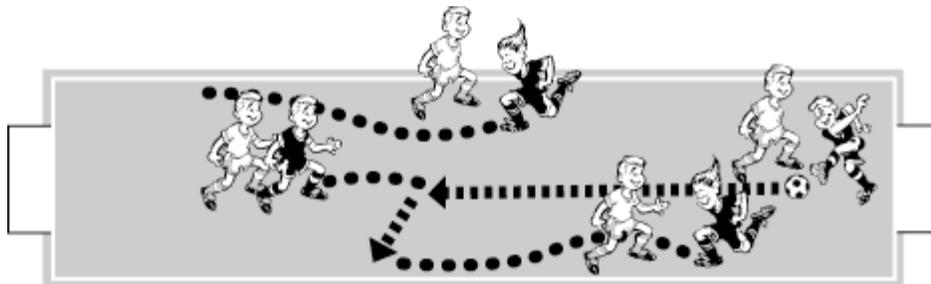
Work in groups of three with one ball in a 10m x 10m grid.  
Check proper heading technique. Contact ball on forehead and turn to face partner.



## Mini-Game (10 minutes)

Small-sided game (condition to three or two touch).

5 vs 5 plus goalkeepers on a 40m x 30m field.



Stress good control:

1. Body position to receive the ball.
2. Quality of first touch.
3. Control into available space.

## **Warm-Down (5 minutes)**

Light run.

Slow stretching.

### **Game Day Goals:**

*The coach should start to see the players feel more comfortable about heading the ball with their foreheads.*

## **Practice is over!**

**Coach, remember to create an environment of fun.**

**Praise accomplishments and improvements – even little ones!**

**Compare each child only to himself/herself.**

***The very young player's early experience is the experience that will last a lifetime!***



If you have any questions, comments or feedback about this document, or anything involving the Coaching Centre, please send an email to: [info@soccercan.ca](mailto:info@soccercan.ca)