# NSCAA Advanced National Diploma

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General Introduction

On January 11, 1941, the organization known as the National Soccer Coaches Association had its first meeting. From a small group of college coaches who met at that time, the NSCAA has grown to include all levels of men's and women's soccer, including youth, high school, junior college, college and professional coaches, as well as referees, administrators and other individuals interested in the growth of soccer in the United States. With more than 30,000 active members, the NSCAA is currently the largest single-sport coaching association in the world.

The nature and purpose of the Association is to educate, provide services, and promote and stimulate interest in the game of soccer. With this in mind, the NSCAA Coaching Academy Program was established to further these ideas and to meet the growing needs of our membership to learn more about the game of soccer. The philosophical foundation for all levels is to improve the development of soccer by creating a learning environment which will enhance the individual’s experience and enjoyment of the game.

The Coaching Academy Program is a comprehensive educational program. We hope to reach coaches on all different levels from youth recreational to advanced and professional coaches. We anticipate that the different programs we offer will evolve as the needs of coaches change and evolve.

Any individual completing a diploma course through the NSCAA Coaching Academy will become a more effective coach by understanding the need to organize appropriate material and information for the various ability, experience and age levels of the individuals they coach.

-- The NSCAA Education Committee
Preface

Welcome to the NSCAA Coaching Academy and more specifically, the Advanced National Diploma course. The Advanced National Diploma is designed for the experienced coach working with the advanced player.

The emphasis of the Advanced National Diploma course is on training groups, or blocks, of players and successfully linking those blocks together. The 8 vs. 8 training model is utilized in this course. The curriculum includes team organization and training, advanced methodology, analysis and understanding systems of play, a focus on tactics within thirds of the field, technical position overviews, match analysis, and a session on developing players mental skills.

This NSCAA Coaching Academy course will be a highly intensive week of instruction dedicated to fulfilling the important NSCAA mission of education. The NSCAA Coaching Academy Staff is appointed by the NSCAA Board of Directors and the instructors represent some of the most experienced and qualified teachers of the game in this country.

Course Objectives
1. Raise awareness in the coaching community that the NSCAA exists for the development and support of its members. We are an Association of coaches whose mission is to help our members achieve their professional goals.
2. Analyze the game of soccer from a teacher’s perspective. The Coaching Academy’s focus is on teaching the game.
3. Improve the skills of the coaches who attend in the use of modern coaching methodology.
4. Help coaches recognize and improve the play of groups within the team in the thirds of the field.
5. Improve coach’s ability to analyze the full match.
6. Help preserve soccer as a “players’ game” first and foremost.
7. Help develop a soccer culture and provide an education network to spread the highest ethical and professional standards throughout the coaching profession.

The NSCAA welcomes your comments relative to course curriculum, administration and staff. We hope your participation in this academy is both enjoyable and beneficial to you.
The NSCAA Coaching Academy

The NSCAA Coaching Academy offers courses for coaches across all levels of the game of soccer. Totaling more than 320+ hours of coaching education, including specialized courses geared toward Goalkeeping, Directors of Coaching and High School coaches, the NSCAA Coaching Academy offers a comprehensive program for continuous self-improvement.

- The Level 1 Diploma is a 4 hour course that deals with coaching young players 6-8 years of age. The Diploma is designed to help coaches implement developmentally appropriate training games to improve skill levels in a fun and safe environment. The Diploma has three parts, classroom with theory of coaching U6-U8, field work with coaches and field work with U6-U8 players. Coaches not working at this age group would benefit greatly from an appreciation of the developmental abilities and needs of this important age group.

- The Level 2 Diploma is a 6 hour course that deals with coaching players 8-10 years of age. This Diploma develops on the ideas in Level 1 and is designed to help coaches implement developmentally appropriate training games to improve skill levels in a fun, safe and challenging environment. The Diploma has three parts, classroom with theory of coaching U8-U10, field work with coaches and field work with U8-U10 players. Coaches not working at this age group would benefit greatly from an appreciation of the developmental abilities and needs of this important age group.

- The Level 3 Diploma is a 9 hour course directed at the “novice team coach”. This Diploma is valuable and necessary one for many coaches. The material in this course is designed to assist the coach who has been asked to step up for the first time to coach a team in competition. The course is, in part, conducted in the classroom covering the role of the coach, methodology and player development. The field portions of the course cover a variety of helpful training ideas primarily designed to improve technical ability. The field work also shows coaches a variety of small sided games to use and features a sample session conducted by the instructor.

- The Level 4 Diploma is a 12 hour course that deals with technique (and tactics). This Diploma is strongly partnered with Level 5. The primary focus of the Level 4 Diploma is to assist coaches in their teaching of technique as it is applied in the game. The course includes coaches designing a lesson plan, participating in practical field work and observing a model session. Level 4 concludes with the presentation of small group activities that teach technique.

- The Level 5 Diploma is a 12 hour course that deals with tactics (and technique). This Diploma is strongly partnered with Level 4. The primary focus of the Level 5 Diploma is to assist coaches in their teaching of tactics as applied in small groups. The course discusses the principles of play and the roles of players. Coaches spend time designing a lesson plan. Coaches also see tactics taught in small games and are exposed to a series of different teaching methodologies.

- The Level 6 Diploma is an 18 hour course that deals with technique and tactics with a practice coaching segment. This Diploma is an excellent preparatory course for coaches going onto the National Diploma. One third of the course is dedicated to candidates presenting on assigned topics and enjoying feedback on their performance in both methods and content. Participation in all sessions of these courses is mandatory (unless a physical condition prohibits) but the playing ability of coaches is not assessed and has no bearing on one’s final evaluation.

- The High School Diploma addresses leadership and managerial issues as well as coaching methodologies specific to coaches of boys’ and girls’ high school teams.

- The Director of Coaching Diploma is designed to address the issues confronting the Director of an American soccer club. The curriculum is rich in application and theory and will focus on organizational structure, methods of coaching, leadership theory, evaluation and development of coaches and players and fiscal, legal and ethical responsibilities.

- The Goalkeeping Academy consists of four courses: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Advanced National Diplomas. The Goalkeeping Level 1 Diploma is six hours and deals with introduction to teaching goalkeeping. The Goalkeeping Level 2 Diploma is twelve hours and deals with integrating the goalkeeper into team training and the eighteen-hour Goalkeeping Level 3 Diploma analyses tactical decision making in goalkeeping. The Advanced National Goalkeeping Diploma is a 50-hour course that deals with position, communication, goalkeeper psychology, goalkeeper fitness and the methodology of training goalkeepers.

- The Master Coach Diploma is the pinnacle of the NSCAA educational program. The Master Coach Diploma is a 18-month-long mentorship program formulated along the lines of the UEFA “A” license. Only holders of the Premier Diploma with a “Distinguished” or “Good Pass” are allowed into the Master Coach program. Candidates who do not have a “good pass” may be considered if the committee determines that the applicant can make a “significant contribution” to the course.

- The Coaching Academy program is progressive. The National Diploma Course is a prerequisite for the Advanced National, unless the candidate has received a “C” license from the United States Soccer Federation. The Premier Diploma Course requires the Advanced National, and/or the USSF “A” or “B” license or the UEFA “A” or “B” with an application requiring additional support material.
Examination Procedures
Examination Procedures

Coaches attending an NSCAA Academy course are divided into squads. Each squad is assigned an instructor who monitors the progress of the squad and evaluates the squad members in several different testing formats.

1. Match Analysis – Unit of Players within the Team

The instructor assigns a group of players (backs and goalkeepers, midfielders, or forwards) to be analyzed at either a real game or on a video. The coach’s observations are recorded on the “NSCAA Advanced National Course Match Analysis” sheet in the curriculum. See example enclosed in curriculum. Included in the match analysis assignment is a section entitled “Half Time Talk.” The coach is asked to delineate three key analytical observations about the play of the entire team and records the observations in ascending level of importance (i.e. with the most important last). See example enclosed in curriculum.

2. Match Analysis – Group Practice Sessions

The coach designs two practice sessions to improve the play of the group. The practice sessions are designed to conclude with an 8 vs. 8 game. One of the two sessions uses Shadow Play methodology. The other session uses either Phase Play methodology or Functional Training methodology, whichever methodology the individual coach does not utilize in his or her field sessions. The sessions are written on the “Coaching Outline” and given to the instructor at the appropriate time. See example enclosed in curriculum.

3. Practical Field Session and Final Field Test

The coach is given a coaching topic and specifically given a method of coaching to use to teach the coaching topic. The method of coaching will be one of the following: Functional Training, Phase Play or Coaching in the Game (CIG).

The session will be structured as follows:

**Warm-Up (5 minutes)**

Regardless of the type of methodology assigned, the coach shall design an appropriate warm-up. Only the first coaching session of the morning or the afternoon shall physically require a warm-up.

**Functional Training,**

All functional training session outlines shall include two stages of opposed play in just one third of the field. Those stages shall be followed by a stage of phase play that builds on the first two stages and includes opposed play in two thirds of the field. See the sample outline in the curriculum for additional guidance in constructing the session. Each stage of the session shall be more challenging to players, and closer to the reality of the game, than the preceding stage.

**Phase of Play and Shadow Training**

All phase play session outlines shall include at least two stages with opposed play in two thirds of the field. A third stage is optional. See the sample outline in the curriculum for additional guidance in constructing the session. Each stage of the session shall be more challenging to the players, and closer to the reality of the game, than the preceding stage. If the coach uses just two stages in his or her session, there will need to be a significant increase in level of challenge between the first and second stage.

**Final Game**

The final stage of both functional training and phase play sessions is an 8 vs. 8 game. The coach should draw the alignment of players to be used onto the coaching outline.

**Evaluation Process for Functional Training and Phase Play Methodologies**

In both functional training and phase play methodologies, each coach will have approximately 10-12 minutes to coach in two stages of the practice session that he or she has designed. The coach will consult with his or her evaluating Staff Coach in regard to which two stages will be conducted on the field.

At the close of the two stages, each coach will select 8 players (7 field players and a goalkeeper) to play in an 8 vs. 8 match against players selected by the other coach being evaluated at the same time. The two coaches will position themselves at the half-field line, on the touchline, during the match. Each coach will then make one more coaching
point, on his or her assigned topic, during that final game.

If the functional training or phase play session is in the practice coaching round of sessions, the Staff Coach will conclude the session with five minutes of verbal feedback with the coach and all other members of the squad. The Staff Coach will also provide the coach with a copy of a written evaluation. No verbal feedback will be provided after the final field test, but the coach will receive a written evaluation, along with his or her diploma, by mail following the course.

NSCAA Statement on Grading

4. Question and Answer (CIG)

The Question and Answer (Q&A) session is an additional testing component of the Advanced National Diploma course and involves a brief discussion between each coach and his or her Staff Coach. The Staff Coach will use the functional training or phase play practice session developed by the coach in the match analysis assignment as the starting point for questions on coaching methodology and practice session development.

NSCAA Statement on Grading

Course Grade

Whereas the final field test is the most important part of one’s grade for an NSCAA National, Advanced National, or Premier Diploma course, a coach may not receive a grade for any of those courses that is higher than the grade he/she receives on his/her final field test. Exceptions to this policy may be recommended by the evaluating NSCAA staff coach.

The overall impression gained by the evaluating staff coach during the course of the week remains as the definitive guide to a final grade in any particular course. The grade assigned to that overall impression will usually correspond to the grade earned by the coach on his/her final field test, and the evaluating staff coach is under no obligation to raise a coach’s grade above that of the final field test.

Future Course Enrollment and NSCAA Instructor Status

Coaches who receive a grade of “Good Pass” or better in either the Advanced National or Premier Diploma courses may be considered to receive an invitation to become an NSCAA Associate Staff Coach.

Coaches who receive a grade of “Distinguished Pass” in the Advanced National Diploma gain automatic entry onto the Premier Diploma course.

Coaches are advised to wait a period of one year from completion of a course before enrolling in the next higher level course.

Coaches who receive a grade of “Qualified Pass” or a Certificate of Participation must take the Advanced National Diploma course again prior to being considered for admission in to the Premier Diploma course.
NSCAA Advanced National Diploma Grading Guidelines

1. Distinguished Pass
   This is a grade that indicates that the coach has demonstrated mastery in all categories of the Coaching Course. The demonstrated work is of sufficient quality to be of the highest possible standard and meets all the criteria of the NSCAA instructional staff. A Distinguished Pass indicates that the coach is ready, immediately, for the next level.

2. Good Pass
   This grade indicates that the coach has a very good understanding of the material presented in the course and is highly recommended to move on to the next level after a period of one year. The instructor believes that the coach is of a high standard and will, with experience, make an excellent coach.

3. Pass
   A Passing grade indicates that the coach has a solid understanding of the material and has demonstrated competence in the practical sessions and written exams. The instructor does, however, believe that there are some areas which could be improved with experience. This coach is encouraged to coach one year or more before moving on to the next level.

4. Qualified Pass
   The Qualified Pass indicates some weaknesses in the coach’s grasp of the subject matter and practical coaching ability. The coach needs a significant amount of experience to be suitable to move on to the next level.
   Qualified Pass coaches may ask for their paperwork to be forwarded to them from the National Office where they shall receive a detailed account of the areas of weakness. Candidates receiving a Qualified Pass in the Advanced National Diploma must retake the course prior to applying for the Premier Diploma.

5. Certificate of Participation
   A Certificate of Participation is awarded to coaches who have attended the entire course but who have not successfully completed the evaluation component of the course. A coach who receives a certificate will have to take the Advanced National Diploma course again before moving on to the Premier Diploma.
   All candidates will receive their final field session paper work from the national office.

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Explanation of Practical Assessment Form

Outline
Session outline is appropriate to the player, reflects the topic, is neat and clean, and shows the start of the exercise and the position of players and the movement of the ball and players.

Impression
The coach presented a professional appearance and approach to the session. The coach exhibited enthusiasm for coaching, projected voice well and took a positive approach towards players.

Organization
Equipment to be used in the session was organized and players prepared prior to the session. The coach had correct sizing for the exercises. The coach transitioned smoothly between exercises.

Effectiveness
The coach began play in a timely manner, clearly providing accurate explanations/demonstrations. The coach implemented the assigned methodology and balanced play and stopping effectively. The coach identified moments for correction and affirmation and demonstrated and articulated coaching points specifically and accurately.

Stoppages
The coach used correct methodology: identifying the coachable moment and stopping play immediately, correcting the fault, rehearsing the correction with success and restarting play using “on” or “when”.

Session Highlights
Areas of the session that were successful.

Improvement Suggestions
Elements that would have helped the session’s effectiveness and to be considered for future sessions.

Grading
Session grade reflects the staff’s overall impression of the content and quality of instruction and is not an averaging of the numbers on the assessment form.
ADVANCED NATIONAL DIPLOMA ASSESSMENT FORM

Name: _____________________________ Site: _____________________________
Date: _____________________________ Course Designation: _______________________
Topic: ____________________________________________________________________

Key: 1 - Excellent; 2 - Very Good; 3 - Partially Achieved; 4 - Needs Improvement; NA - Not Applicable

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<td>______ Reflects Topic and is Concise; _____ Diagrams Clean; _____ Show Ball Start</td>
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<td>______ Position and Movement; _____ Exercises Appropriate to Player Level</td>
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<td>_____ Professional Appearance; _____ Voice Projection Clear;</td>
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<td>_____ Positive Approach; _____ Enthusiasm for Teaching Process</td>
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<td>_____ Communicates Coaching Points Clearly and Concisely;</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ Identifies Moments for Corrections; _____ Balances Playing and Stopping Play;</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ Identifies Moments for Affirmations; _____ Implements Assigned Methodology;</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ Teaches Key Points of Technical Execution; _____ Demonstrates Clearly;</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ Recognizes Key Visual Clues for Tactical Choices</td>
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<td>_____ Game Stop</td>
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SESSION HIGHLIGHTS
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IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS
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GRADE: DP GP P QP C
Signed ____________________________________________ Attest ____________________________ Date ___________

Examination Procedures 13
Match Analysis - Team Unit

Team - System of Play

Group: MF

Team Colors:

A. Candidate

Name

2013-2014

Date

NSCAA Coaching Academy

Site

Observations - Attacking
* Made a lot of square passes and did not get forward enough
* Too individualistic and not dynamic enough getting forward.

Observations - Defending
* Defended zonally. I would like to see more double-teaming.
* Sometimes too spread across field and allowed penetrating passes.

Individual Player Characteristics
RM - Quick, good dribbler and crosses ball well. Tall and skinny.
CM1 - Sits deep in midfield. Good at changing point of attack. Small.
CM2 - Gets forward in towards corner flags. Shoots well.
LM - All left foot. Rarely defends, but does come inside with the ball.

Practice Session Recommendations
1. Combining with forwards to get into final third.
2. Double teaming when ball goes behind him.
3. Lateral compactness to intercept through passes.

Halftime Talk
1. Midfielders need to commit themselves to the attack more often, and we need forwards to check back to create opportunities for combination play.
2. Need to take advantage of opportunities to double team.
3. Must move as a unit when defending. Outside midfielders must pull inside closer to center midfielders.
Systems of Play

The NSCAA does not recommend any one system of play but recognizes that certain playing frameworks bring out the best in the players on the squad. The Coaching Academy does, however, want all coaches to consider seriously the consequences of both the shape of the team and the number of players in it. For purposes of teaching methodology we recommend that coaches choose one of the following systems for 8 vs. 8 play, utilizing a system that best helps them elucidate the coaching points of their assigned topics.

1-3-3-1
1-2-3-2
1-3-2-2
1-2-4-1

Please refer to the systems diagrams on the pages following the field session topics if you have any questions. All other questions should be directed to the Staff Coach leading your squad.
Systems of Play – 8 Players

1-3-2-2

1-2-4-1
Field Session Topics

Functional Training
F1 - Teach forwards to combine and create scoring opportunities
F2 - Teach center backs to pressure and cover
F3 - Teach midfielders proper shape, support, and runs in the back
F4 - Teach center midfielders to pressure and cover
F5 - Teach midfielders to defend zonally
F6 - Teach forwards when and where to check for ball
F7 - Teach backs to attack from the defensive third to the middle third of the field

Phase Play
P1 - Teach midfielders and forwards to defend zonally in their attacking and middle thirds of the field
P2 - Teach backs to combine with midfielders in attack in their defensive and middle third of the field
P3 - Teach backs to defend zonally
P4 - Teach attacking movement when flank players bring the ball across the field
P5 - Teach forwards to combine with each other and create scoring opportunities
P6 - Teach midfield players to utilize a forward target player in attack
P7 - Teach midfielders to combine with forwards and create scoring opportunities
P8 - Teach midfielders and forwards to force opponents into the middle of the field in defending
P9 - Teach backs when to pass and when to run ball into middle third of the field in attack

Coaching in the Game
C1 - Teach backs when to pass and when to run the ball from the back third into the midfield
C2 - Teach midfielders proper defensive shape
C3 - Teach forwards to combine with each other and create scoring opportunities
C4 - Teach forwards to defend to make play predictable
C5 - Teach backs to defend zonally
C6 - Teach midfielders to combine with forwards in attack and create scoring opportunities
C7 - Teach outside midfielders when and where to force the ball inside defensively
C8 - Teach center backs to pressure and cover
C9 - Teach backs to overlap and join in attacking play
C10 - Teach runs in the penalty area in attacking play
C11 - Teach defensive positioning when opponents have the ball in wide positions in attack
C12 - Teach tactical decisions related to crossing the ball in attack
C13 - Teach backs to defend zonally
C14 - Teach team to play directly in attack
C15 - Teach goalkeeper to coordinate with backs to deal with crosses
C16 - Teach flank players mobility and when and where to make unbalancing runs in attack
### Advanced National Field Session Topics: Assignments

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Name: Hope Diamond  Topic: Train Midfielders in Attacking Tactical Decisions

**Coaching Methodology**
- [ ] Technical Progressive
- [ ] Tactical Progressive
- [x] Functional Training
- [ ] Phase Play
- [ ] Shadow Play

**Warm Up Exercise**
- Pattern passing: Server – Wide MF – Attacking CMF – Holding CMF – Opposite wide MF – Either Target
- Pattern passing (2): Server – Wide MF – Attacking CMF – Holding CMF – Attacking CMF – Either Target

**Organization/Instructions**
- Pattern passing: Server – Wide MF – Attacking CMF – Holding CMF – Opposite wide MF – Either Target
- Pattern passing (2): Server – Wide MF – Attacking CMF – Holding CMF – Attacking CMF – Either Target

**Main Theme Exercise 1**

**Organization Exercise 1**
- Servers alternate; play balls to white MFs who play 4v3 in middle 1/3 v black MFs
- Stop ball in end zone to score (ball in first); black MFs play to S to score

**Organization Exercise 2**
- Server plays white MFs, who score by playing white in end zone, getting ball back
- White MFs play S to score
- S neutral color, supports white MFs from behind

**Main Theme Exercise 2**

**Coaching Points**

**Include Visual Cues**
- Recognize tactical choices based on principles of play: penetration/infiltration; width; depth; mobility; creativity
- If unable to penetrate, change point of attack
- If clear path to end zone or target, penetrate immediately
- Provide depth ahead of, and behind, ball at angles
- Move ball quickly when numbers up in attack
Main Theme Exercise 3

**Organization**
- S neutral, supports behind white MFs; target for black MFs
- S plays ball to white MFs, who score by passing to white players in end zone, then getting ball back
- 2 white players in end zone defended by 1 black, then 2 black players
- Next stage: add full third of field with goal and goalkeeper

**Coaching Points**
- Recognize penetration to targets
- Play ball to proper side of target players
- Visual cues for penetration are open path to target and target free from marking opponent
Teach backs and midfielders to defend zonally in back, middle thirds

**Coaching Methodology**

- Technical Progressive
- Tactical Progressive
- Functional Training
- Phase Play
- Shadow Play

**Organization/Instructions**

- S plays ball in to team on their end of the field
- Teams attempt to play to S to score
- Players focus on defending in groups of 3; reinforce pressure, cover, balance

**Main Theme Exercise 1**

- S plays ball to black MFs, who attempt to play to black F and score
- All players restricted to zones, except one black MF who joins black F on pass
- S supports black team; T for white team

**Main Theme Exercise 2**

- Add second black F
- All players restricted to zones until black MFs play ball across into final third of the field

**Coaching Points**

- Coach black players in zonal defending
- Deny penetration to target player(s) if possible; deny penetration to goal
- Reinforce principles of defending: pressure/deny penetration; cover; balance; concentration/compactness
- Track vertical runners; pass on horizontal runners
**Main Theme Exercise 3**

**Organization**
- Play to two large goals with GK’s
- Black GK serves two backs as start position
- Players restricted to own zones until ball is played by black into middle zone

**Coaching Points**
- Defending group reads level of pressure on ball and drops or squeezes space accordingly
- Be certain not to allow black players to “sit” in “pockets” between lines of defending players
- Stay compact as group, deny penetration, drop when no pressure on ball

**Diagram Team Shape**

**Provide Field Dimensions**

80 x 55
Coaching Outline – Coaching in the Game Methodology

Name: _Luke Warm_______________________________ Topic: Coach Midfielders and Forwards to Combine in Attacking, Middle 1/3 to Final 1/3

Warm Up Exercise:

Diagram your preferred system and shape for this teaching topic:

Coaching Points you will make in this session:

1) Midfielders look to play ball to forwards when there is clear path to do so, and when forwards are unmarked or when pass puts one or more opponents out of play

2) Forwards look to check at angles when passes from midfielders are potentially “on,” stretch opponents “long” to create space

3) Look for opportunities for:
   - Overlaps: space between 1st attacker, 1st defender; space on flanks
   - 1-2 Passes: support player in advance of ball; space behind defender
   - Double Pass: defender tight on support player; space behind defender
   - Combination play: 3v2 situations with 3rd attacker bending run to receive through ball

Description/Organization

- Server plays ball into either team
- N is neutral; always on attack
- Play 3v3+1 in main area
- Score by playing to target in end zone, getting ball back
- Both teams always go same direction

System and Shape Rationale

- 1-2-3-2
- 5 players involved in teachable moments
- Simulates portions of many 11v11 systems
- 2 forwards allow opportunities for penetrating passes
- 3 midfielders encourages overlaps, 3 player combinations
Diagram two scenarios that may occur right before the teachable moment.

- Midfielder fails to recognize penetrating pass to checking forward
- Midfielder fails to recognize visual cues for overlapping run

Diagram two start positions you may need, showing the initial path of ball movement for each start position.

(1) GK serves any back or midfielder
(2) Throw-in near half-field line for Δ team
Methods of Coaching
Methods of Coaching

The NSCAA Advanced National Diploma is an opportunity for colleagues within the Association to train good coaches of senior players to be better coaches of senior players. The course focuses almost exclusively on the improvement of training. Its context is the coaching school, a cooperative group context. It is “advanced” in the sense that it builds on concepts covered in other coaching courses, particularly the NSCAA National Diploma.

Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to provide written support for what is primarily a hands-on opportunity to train players in a supervised environment. It is not a manual prescribing how to coach in general. It is a manual which outlines a curriculum that is designed to utilize the coaching school format to the fullest. The essence of this format is live involvement and live observation in a group which is similar in some respects to a team.

Challenge

The challenge we’ve set for ourselves can be described hypothetically. Imagine that two opposing coaches have teams that are identical in all respects, and that they have identical training facilities. Imagine further that they each have two training sessions to prepare their teams to play one another and that the training sessions will be two hours long.

After 240 minutes of training one team will be better prepared. One coach will make better use of those 240 minutes. One coach will waste minutes that the other coach uses effectively.

Our challenge is to understand the differences between these two preparations and then to train ourselves to win this pregame preparation.

The Role of the NSCAA Staff Coach

The NSCAA Staff Coach has two roles. The first is to help candidates think clearly about soccer in a way that will support their ability to train advanced players. The second is to guide the candidates to an improved coaching performance. The instructor does this during the candidate’s practice coaching session and during squad tutorial opportunities in advance of those sessions.

During instructional periods the instructor will choose one aspect of the broad target area that can be addressed comfortably and thoroughly. For example, in a session titled “Attacking Tactics in the Front Third” the instructor might focus only on the recognition and development of scoring chances from the flanks. The main benefit to be derived by the candidate is participation in a reasonable, consistent, and concrete examination of one area of soccer performance with a trained expert who is familiar with both the area under examination and with the method of analyzing it. It is vastly more important that the way the instructor analyzes something is clear and useful than it is for that analysis to be straight out of the manual. One function of the manual is to provide an example of one way to analyze the game in a clear, concrete, and realistic way. It should not be viewed as the official doctrine, nor does it claim to be.

The instructor’s other role is to guide candidates to an improvement in their coaching abilities. The instructor performs this role during both of the candidate’s practice coaching sessions. The instructor will observe the candidate’s performance and then offer a tactful, expert opinion on both the candidate’s methodology and, if appropriate, the content.

Assessing Candidates’ Performances

Staff Coaches will pay close attention to two main aspects of the candidate’s performance: the organization of the exercises and the candidate’s interventions in the exercises. This course does not endorse any method as the “correct” method for training players. Whatever method a candidate uses will be judged on five standards. If the organization falls short on one standard the instructor will try to demonstrate or describe a way to improve it.

1. Realism
   A realistic setting in which to practice the targeted skill.

2. Frequency
   Frequent opportunity to practice the targeted skill.

3. Training
   Opportunity for the coach to observe and
Methods of Coaching

Intervene with a minimum of interference.

4. Usefulness
   The efficacy of this training session, in terms of its flow, intensity and atmosphere, for the development of senior players.

5. Accuracy
   In the instructor’s opinion the session hit the training target with an acceptable degree of accuracy.

Intervention/Coaching Points. The instructor should assist the candidate to be able to give advice that is:

- Consistent
- Concrete
- Realistic

Goals for the Week

- To create a useful training environment in a brief time. To react positively and skillfully to events in plain sight.
- To impose realistically high standards. To affect positively the level of performance through guidance, motivation and instruction.
- To observe and practice various methods of coaching.
- To feed helpful information back to other coaches on their coaching performance.
- To grasp a systematic approach to soccer tactics, the main thrust of which is to help players to read the game.
- To understand the technical challenges implicated by various phases of high level play and to be able to train advanced players to meet those challenges.
- To convince colleagues that you have, under the circumstances, achieved a sufficient standard of advanced coaching.

Final Note

The NSCAA is an association of coaches. One of its goals is to encourage coaches to associate with one another. Our Coaching Academy courses help to achieve that goal. We hope the bonds that candidates form during this week will be strengthened by the humor, both intentional and inadvertent, that sweetens high achievement under challenging circumstances.

This is a training methods course. Our goal is to examine the ingredients of excellent training sessions, determine which of those ingredients the coach provides, and then cultivate the habit of providing those ingredients consistently. We can sort them into two categories: organization and leadership.

The easy part is organization. Advanced training takes place in a sequence of artificial environments designed by the coach. “Organization” refers to all the design details of these artificial environments. For example, the size of the area, the number of players, where the balls will be placed, and so forth are the design details to which the term organization refers. At the advanced level the purpose of the organization is passive. It serves only as a stage for the activity of the players and the coach.

The players and the coach form a partnership during training. In “Advanced” training both partners play active roles; each partner challenges the other; each partner must respond to the other’s challenge. The primary needs which the training environment must meet are for the players to perform realistically and for the coach to influence that performance. Advanced training is not, therefore, a sequence of “drills,” the purpose of which is to cause an improvement while the coach plays the passive role of drill organizer.

The difficult part is leadership. There are two differences between a good training session and a great training session. The minor difference is in organizational details like a better coaching position, better placement of balls, better definition of targets. The major difference is in the level of performance. During a great training session the players typically perform close to their limits; they are motivated. The coach plays a crucial, though not necessarily decisive, role in achieving high levels of performance during training. The ability to motivate players is the essence of leadership. The difference between good coaching and great coaching is mainly the ability to lead, coupled with the ability to recognize the most effective “teachable moments” in training.
We will address both aspects of training, leadership and organization, in the manual, on the field, and in the classroom.

This section of the manual is a summary in outline form of the key factors and substance of Advanced methodology.

**Key Factors in Advanced Methodology**

1. **Purpose**
   Good coaches have a clear idea of the team’s purpose: recreational, developmental, competitive, etc.

2. **Objectives**
   What is the final picture? Good coaches have a clear image of the satisfactory conclusion of training. What will it look like when we’re done? What standards must be met to make it “good enough”?
   a. Match analysis - A thorough understanding of your team’s performance capacity is not easy to acquire. The advanced coach will seek it from several sources. The best evidence is found during competition with other teams.
   b. Team, group, individual awareness - The advanced coach completes the understanding of the team’s strengths and weaknesses from observing the performance of individuals, groups of players, and the team as a whole during training. This may include a dialogue with individuals concerning their strengths and weaknesses.

3. **Priority and sequence**
   a. Prioritizing the key factors - What one factor must occur before anything else can go right? Having the key factors, expressed in terms of coaching points, in priority order before each session will be a key to the success of the session.
   b. Sequence of activities - The road to success passes through progressive levels of challenges.

4. **Planning and organization**
   Practice time and players’ efforts are precious resources. Neither one is to be wasted in advanced training. How will the coach spend practice time and effort? What activities will set the stage for the coach-player partnership?
   a. Area of the field - Where does the targeted action occur? Put the players in realistic positions giving them realistic amounts of space.
   b. Players involved
      - How many targeted players? The whole team? A group within the team? An individual player?
      - How many opponents?
      - Who typically supplies the ball?
   c. Realism - The players will develop the capacity to overcome the challenge posed by the training environment. The design of the training environment must ensure the usefulness of that capacity during the next game.
     For example, developing the capacity to string passes together may not be as useful as developing the ability to use the ball cautiously to manage risk, together with the judgement of when to risk possession to gain an advantage.
   d. Starting and re-starting the exercise - For the sake of frequency the good coach will take charge of how an exercise is to start, how it should be stopped and how it is to re-start.
   e. Clarity - The purpose of the exercise must be clear. A combination of an exercise’s organization and the theme underlying the coach’s interventions should come together to form a clear concept.
   f. Simplicity - Excessively complex organization is the enemy of players and coaches, especially coaching school candidates. The game itself plays the dominant role in the design of advanced training. It imposes narrow constraints that master coaches have learned to respect without viewing it as a sacrifice. Simplicity is therefore the watchword for much of advanced coaching. Advanced training may be simple in form, but it is sophisticated in content; the content of the coach’s interventions is what makes it sophisticated, not the complexity of activities. Organize simply. Lead confidently.
   g. Flow - A high quality training session can be as exhilarating as a game. “Flow” is an attempt to describe the feel, the intensity, the focus of excellent training. The sense of flow that characterizes high quality training is vital and fragile. It is also an important training target. The coach who stands in the way of flow does a great
disservice to players. The most common problem is preventing players from getting into action by talking excessively to them. The common features of “flow experiences” that apply to soccer training are:

- Ability to complete the task. Players feel that the task demands things of them that they can, with effort and focus, provide. They also feel that they can accomplish the task. The coach that challenges a team to score twenty goals in a five-a-side is not setting the sort of challenge that encourages flow. On the other hand, the coach that challenges players to complete two passes at the back may be under-challenging the team. The advanced coach will carefully design training to challenge the players at their level.
- Ability to concentrate on the challenge: freedom from distractions. Good coaches take charge of the environment. Players should not have to split their attention between meeting the challenge and, say, not tripping over stray practice vests or balls left in the playing area.
- Clear goals. Make the goal as concrete as possible. Often the goal is physically visible. For example, passing the ball through a gate or dribbling across a line. If the goal is performance based it must not be too abstract.
- Immediate feedback. Feedback doesn’t always have to come from the coach. If the challenge is to score against a numbers up defense then the attacking team gets immediate feedback when they see the ball hit the net.
- Players feel a sense of control over their own actions. A good coach is a facilitator, not a puppeteer.

5. Control of the Environment
The advanced coach takes complete command of the training environment. The laying out and collection of equipment should be done efficiently. Training time can sometimes be saved by having players help set up a new organization.

a. Starting - After very brief introductory remarks, advanced coaches put the players immediately into action. Strive to have the first ball rolling within 60 seconds. You are not required (though it’s your choice) to tell the players what your training objective is. Their frame of mind should be that of players, not assistant coaches. Describe or demonstrate the first activity and get going!

b. Action - The advanced training session is characterized by action punctuated by occasional interventions. It is nothing like a coaching school, which is characterized by analysis and discussion punctuated by action.

c. Intervention - The act of intervening in a training session is the quintessence of coaching. The advanced coach intervenes judiciously, choosing moments with care. The simplest method of intervening is called “freezing play.” It involves four steps. With practice the entire process can be completed in less than two minutes.

- Stop - The coach stops the action the instant a coaching point “needs” to be made. This is a judgment call. The coach must be certain that at that exact moment one clear, simple point can assist the players to reach a higher standard of performance. The coach must ensure that the players will practically freeze in their tracks in order to preserve the picture which will form the basis of the coach’s point.
- Review - The coach picks one single coaching point to make. The coach then communicates that point to the player, group of players or team: whoever needs to understand it. The clearest and most effective form of communication in most cases is a physical demonstration. The coach’s verbal communication must be simple, clear and concrete. The good coach speaks in a way that the players will recognize as genuine.
- Rehearse - The coach takes training time to allow the players to try out the proposed solution to the problem.
- Restart - The coach then restarts the exercise in exactly the manner and circumstances that led to the problem. This allows the players the chance to confirm the effectiveness of the correction.

6. Observation
Observational skill is an important part of coaching skill. After setting up a practice activity the coach will check:
a. Organization correct? Do the players understand the organization? Is the organization working for or against the players? Is the space too large, too small, etc.?
b. Attitudes. The advanced coach sets high standards for playing and training habits.
   • Enthusiasm.
   • Aggression.
   • Composure.
   • Concentration.
   • Competitive maturity.
   • Pride.
c. General performance of the group.
   • Leadership
   • Proper balance between discipline and freedom. (Unique to each team)
d. Specific performance of the individual. A catch phrase that expresses this aspect of advanced coaching is “Coach only what you see.” A good coach reacts positively to events in plain sight. The coach does not “react” to a problem that was anticipated while designing the practice, but hasn’t happened yet. If a player, or a group of players is having a problem, the coach reacts to that specific problem. For the sake of clarity and the continuity of training, coaches will try to mentally fit the problem into one of three main categories of performance (technical, tactical or fitness). This will help the coach decide whether or not to intervene. The coach must resist the temptation to correct every problem. Stick to the theme.

7. Communication

Communication is at the heart of each coach-player partnership. The advanced coach approaches communication in a variety of manners:

a. Visually - Visual communication is an invaluable tool for the advanced coach. Two main ways to communicate visually are:
   • Demonstration - Demonstrations are an essential component of any successful coaching session. Coaches use demonstrations to communicate three things: the organization of the session (what is going to occur, what ought to be occurring), technique and tactical behavior.

Demonstrations should be:
   • Relevant to both the theme and the specific problem which prompted the coach’s intervention.
   • Short.
      • Analysis using available technology
         • Successful coaches have used video to inspire, to communicate training objectives, as well as to feed important information back to players on their performance.
         • The upside of video is that it is extremely concrete and precise.
         • The downside of video is that it, like all forms of communication, is easily abused.

b. Verbally. Verbal communication is the stock-in-trade of the master coach. The following briefly characterizes that communication.
   • Sincerity. Players, like all people, attend to words spoken “from the heart.” The respected coach speaks the honest truth.
   • Mixture of positive and negative feedback. The master coach compliments that which ought to be complimented. When that is done well the coach’s compliments become earned rewards. The great training environments are characterized by a combination of rewards and risks. The master coach can stimulate performance by adding the appropriate amount of risk. The risk can take the form of an honest expression of disapproval for a specific performance (not a person) which is unacceptably sub-standard.
   • Simplicity. Short declarative sentences are best. If you make your point narrow enough you won’t need to use long qualifying clauses.
   • Clarity. Know exactly what you want to say and say that exact thing. If a player missed the opportunity to tackle then tell the player exactly what to look for, show the player how it looks and then give the player a chance to try it. Use simple terms. Use vivid imagery. Avoid jargon.
   • Concrete. The dividing line between coaches who can convey deep insights
into the game and those who can only urge players to do better might lie right here. If the perfect far post cross goes sailing over the head of the far post target the advanced coach can react with advice that refers to something the player can see, touch or hear. For example, “John, if you’re in too early stop and hold your position wider than the far corner of the six yard box until after he’s struck the ball, then judge it and attack it.” The “far corner of the six yard box...” is concrete.

- Brevity. The shorter the better.
- Persuasion. To be convincing the coach must be convinced, not just repeating the catch phrases of the day. Persuasive coaches speak with honest conviction. They restrict their comments to things they truly understand. They study the game to understand more.

### Choosing The Right Tool For The Job

This section outlines each of the four main organizations which will serve as platforms for the training of both technique and tactics. Each organization has its strengths and weaknesses. Each demands different things from the coach as it is demanding different things from the players.

#### 1. Technical & Tactical Functional Training

Technical and tactical functional training isolates one aspect of an individual or small group’s function within the team. Functional training often begins in the simplest form of any training: a single player performing. From an organizational point of view, however, the details of managing functional training sessions are numerous. Ball placement, artificial targets and objectives, sources of service, not to mention inspiration and leadership are a few of the challenges which face coaches in functional training sessions. Functional training occurs in the area(s) of the field in which an individual or group usually operates. For the Advanced National Diploma course, the focus of functional training will be on groups of players.

### Designing a Functional Training Session

1. **Targets.** What are the targets of the session? Don’t try to do too much. Pick two, at most three targets. Be Concrete and Specific! The clearer you can define your goal the clearer it will be to your players.

2. **Key Factors.** What key factors are involved? How does it happen?

3. **Location.** Where does it occur on the field?

4. **Players.** What players are involved?
   a. What players from your team?
   b. What opposing players?

5. **Progression.** You want to develop the practice from easier to harder. You will need a sequence of environments that will change the demands on the player in a realistic way. The coach needs to design a starting point, the sequence and the ending points with three things in mind.
   a. Players. The expertise of the players: the more accomplished the players the more realistic the starting exercise.
   b. Realism. The final step must look like a section of a real game.
   c. Target. The type of target sought: technical training follows a different progression than tactical training.

6. **Type of Target.** Technical or Tactical.
   a. Technical. The usual progression is from “fundamental” to “match conditions.”
   b. Tactical. The progression gradually makes the environment visually more complex.

7. **Organization.**
   a. Coaching position. Must be able to see clearly and yet not interfere. Most of the time the best position ranges from the side of the field into the field depending on where the ball
is. This is not automatically the best position, however.
b. Warm-up. What sort of warm-up will lead smoothly into the session?
c. Starting and re-starting the exercise. The coach will take charge of stopping and re-starting the exercise to achieve frequency. The means chosen to re-start the exercise must highlight the targeted skill, action, tactic.
d. Ball supply. There must be an adequate supply of balls. The means of re-starting the exercise will probably determine where to place the balls.
e. Defining the area. Will you use cones, corner flags or lines of field? Determining the size of the area is a tuning process. The coach defines the area at the start and then fine tunes it after the exercise begins.
f. Distinguishing the teams. Practice vests should be used. The clearer the distinction between teams the clearer the session is to both players and coach. The more game-like the conditions, the more game-like the performance.
g. “Goals” for each team. Each player taking part must be competing, not just providing “opposition.” The organization must include something to play to, as well as something to stop the opponent from getting to.

8. In the Advanced National Diploma course, each functional training session should include two exercises with opposed play in one third of the field and a third exercise with opposed play in two thirds of the field.

2. Phase of Play

- A competition, often uneven-sided, between members of groups that typically oppose one another during a game.

- A session designed to improve and coordinate individual functions within a group during one phase of play. For example, defending against a team that is building from back third to middle third. It is also an ideal way to help players to recognize vulnerable areas within a single group that are revealed by its shape or the movement of groups of players.

- The organization itself helps achieve clarity in the teaching-learning process. Fewer players means that important visual cues are more prominent. The coach may still have to structure the attacking or defending group artificially during early stages of phase of play training.

- Freezing play is the most challenging and perhaps the clearest form of intervention in this coaching methodology. The Advanced National Diploma will focus on this skill to the exclusion of other means of intervening.

Designing a Phase of Play Training Session

- Targets. What are the targets of your session? Don’t try to do too much. Pick two, at most three, targets. Be Concrete and Specific! The clearer you can define your goal the clearer it will be to your players.

- Key Factors. What key factors are involved? How will you recognize and teach these factors?

- Location. Where does this phase occur on the field?

- Groups. What groups are involved?
  1. What group(s) of players from your team?
  2. What group(s) of opposing players?

- Progression

  You want to develop the practice from simple to complex. You will need a sequence of environments that will change the demands on the group in a realistic yet controlled way. The coach needs to design the starting point, the sequence and the ending points with two things in mind.
  1. Players. The expertise of the players: the more accomplished the players the more realistic the starting exercise.
  2. Realism. The final step must look like a section of the real game.

- Organization

  1. Coaching position. Must be able to see clearly and yet not interfere. Most of the time the best position ranges from the side of the field into the field depending on where the ball is at any given moment. The coach will usually be better able to determine coachable moments when able to see clearly the tactical choices of his/her players.
  2. Warm-up. What sort of warm-up will lead smoothly into the session?
  3. Starting and re-starting the exercise. The coach
will take charge of stopping and re-starting the exercise to achieve frequency. The means chosen to re-start it must highlight the targeted skill, action, tactic.

4. Ball supply. There must be an adequate supply of balls. The means chosen to re-start the exercise will often determine where to place the balls.

5. Defining the area. Will you use cones, corner flags or lines of the field? Determining the size of the area is a tuning process. The coach defines the area at the start and then fine tunes it after the exercise begins.

6. Distinguishing the teams. Practice vests should be used. The clearer the distinction between teams the clearer the session is to both players and coach. The more game-like the conditions, the more game-like the performance.

7. “Goals” for each team. Each player taking part must be competing, not just providing “opposition.” The organization must include something to play to and something to stop the opponent from getting to. The size and type of goal should enhance the training objective and reinforce realism in the training event.

3. Shadow Play

Shadow play is a coaching technique used by an instructor to reinforce some general patterns of play by groups within the team or to coordinate the movements of the whole team. The coach may give the players certain specific movements and combinations, or may allow the team freedom to express themselves with no set pattern. The ideal time to practice shadow play is the day before a game, or when introducing a system of play. This method normally is conducted with no opposition or sometimes partial or passive opposition, e.g. passive opposing forwards, midfielders but live defenders. Shadow play frequently concludes with a shot on goal.

- Used to imprint a style of play (direct or indirect).
- Method used the day before a game to rehearse patterns of play with guaranteed success and eliminating the danger of injury.
- Good for choreographing functional movements (e.g. Fullback plays ball to winger and overlaps, winger dribbles inside and reverses to fullback – who crosses ball to center forward – who heads to goal.)

- Establishing a passing rhythm in attacking play.

**Advantages**

1. Good warm-up.
2. Good refresher in patterns of play.
3. Players achieve success easily.
4. A good ‘hurry up’ technique when time is limited.

**Disadvantages**

1. Sometimes little transfer to competitive match.
2. Players get complacent.
3. Can create bad habits.

4. **Coaching in the Game**

In Coaching in the Game (CIG) methodology, the coach will fill out a specifically designed practice plan. See the curriculum for a sample. The coach will be assigned a topic to instruct in the midst of a free-flowing, realistic, 8 vs. 8 game. Each coach will select 8 players from his or her squad to play against 8 players from the opposing squad.

The coach will place his or her 8 players in a system of play designed to draw out coaching points for the assigned teaching topic. The coach may manipulate the shape of the opposing team, but may only instruct members of his or her own squad.

The coach will have approximately 8-10 minutes to coach the assigned topic. The coach may stand on the field or on the perimeter of the field, wherever he or she feels best situated to instruct upon the assigned topic. The ideal is to make several coaching points in the run of free-flowing play. If those coaching points are not emerging easily from the run of play, the coach may use a start position, or “trigger,” to help draw out the topic in question.

When the first coach has had 8-10 minutes to instruct, the coach of the other team will then have 8-10 minutes of instructional time. Upon the conclusion of each practice coaching session, Staff Coaches will provide verbal feedback to the coach and other members of the squads. There will be no verbal feedback provided after the final field test sessions. Written evaluations will be provided to
coaches after their practice coaching sessions. Written evaluations of final field tests will be sent to coaches along with their diplomas, in the weeks following the conclusion of the course.

**Advantages**
1. Very realistic.
2. Players like it.
3. Facilitates team work and tactical understanding.

**Disadvantages**
1. Demanding on coach’s knowledge.
2. Poor technique can impede tactical teaching.
3. Too much emphasis on competitive aspect may diminish learning.
4. Inexperienced coaches may have difficulty finding crucial coaching points in a complex, fast-paced match.

**8 vs. 8 – Imprinting a Style of Play using Coaching in the Game Methodology.**

One objective of the 8 vs. 8 is to imprint a style of attacking and style of defending. This is the beginning of team tactics: preparation of a style of play and movement through thirds of the field characterize team tactics.

**A. Imprinting a style of defending.**
1. One team of eight is asked to play a high-pressure style of defending.
   a. Objective of high-pressure defending is to win ball back as quickly as possible.
   b. Ask that this team mark man-to-man over the entire field.
2. Other team of eight is asked to play a low-pressure style of defending.
   a. Objective of low-pressure defending is to ensure that all attacking spaces are occupied by defenders.
   b. Allow opponent to have half to two thirds of the field.
   c. Ask that this team back-up and organize defense at edge of middle and back third.
   d. Because defending team is very compact, play in zones and pass people on.
3. 1 and 2 above are the diametrically opposite styles of defending.
4. Experiment with many variations of 1 and 2 above.

**B. Imprinting a style of attacking.**
1. One team of eight is asked to play directly.
   a. Objective of playing directly is to put as many defenders out of the game with long, direct to goal passing.
   b. Bypass midfield area and build-up play.
   c. Need a player to stay as far advanced as possible. He/she acts as a target for long, direct pass.
   d. Target man needs player lurking nearby to play with or must hold ball until attacking teammates can reach him to support.
2. Other team of eight is asked to play indirectly.
   a. Objective is to move forward as a team putting defenders out of the game one or two at a time.
   b. Ball possession is a dominant characteristic of this style of play.
   c. Combination passing is a characteristic of this style of play.
   d. Width and depth of the field is constantly being probed.
   e. Utilize different role (e.g., one center striker or two, two wings and one center striker, three or two in midfield, withdrawn wing, etc.)

**C. Organization**
8 vs. 8. Field size 80 yards long x 55 yards wide.
Qualities of the Advanced Coach

Leadership Worth Following

Each advanced coach is a leader. The following list catalogs the leadership qualities of a good soccer coach.

- Enthusiasm.
- Integrity.
- Common sense.
- Persistence.
- Patience.
- Good standards. The advanced coach insists and assists: insists on high standards and assists players to achieve them.

- An open and inquiring mind.
- A logical and analytical mind.
- Knowledge.
- Ability to inspire.
- Pride in your team and your work. Reflected in your manner and your dress.

Common Problems in Methodology

Communication Problems

- The coach failing to spot flaws in the practice and subsequently neglecting to make appropriate corrections.
- The coach boring the group with long-winded speeches.
- The coach complicating the exercise by offering too much information and by elaborating on the chosen theme by involving too many phases of play.
- The coach failing to demonstrate.
- The coach offering instruction while running.
- The coach failing to communicate the purpose and organization clearly to every player.

- The coach speaking in generalizations.
- The coach offering a running commentary.
- The coach demonstrating something that the coach cannot demonstrate.
- The coach demonstrating a difficult skill when it is known that someone in the squad can demonstrate it more efficiently.

Organization for Success

Organization for Success

- Keep spectators and other players from encroaching on the field.
- Be aware of the space required for each exercise.
- Organize the soccer balls in advance of the session.
- Choose a neutral color for coaching attire.
- Don’t let technique training becoming endurance work.

- Observe play from a detached position rather than allowing eyes to follow the ball continuously.
- Focus on observing, finding stoppages, and teaching, rather than becoming a server or ball retriever.
Crossing and Finishing Runs in the Penalty Area
Crossing and Finishing Runs

Crosses result from flank play. Flank play is a necessity in the modern game due to the massing of defenses in central areas. **THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITY OF A CROSS IS THAT IT ELIMINATES THE GOALKEEPER.**

The Academy deals with two kinds of crosses:

1. The Early Cross (Diagram 1)

   This cross is executed from approximately the top of the penalty box 18-25 yards out from goal. It is most effective when hooked in behind a retreating defense. It is especially effective against flat defenses. The cross is bent away from the goalkeeper, generally about waist height, and arrives in the “Second six yard box.”

   The technique used is as follows:
   
   a. Hips face forward.
   b. Ball is “hooked” by striking around the outside with the big toe pointing up.
   c. To keep the ball low the player’s chest is slightly over the ball.

2. The Goal Line Cross (Diagram 2)

   This cross is different than the early cross in both the tactical and technical cues. As the name suggests this cross occurs when the flank player can actually get to the goal line and pull the ball back into the field. The emphasis, again, is on eliminating the goalkeeper but the areas the player is trying to hit the ball to are slightly different.

   The flank player is looking to hit 3 main areas:
   
   - The space at the top of the goal area in line with the near post.
   - The space beyond the back post at the back corner of the goal area.
   - The space at the top of the penalty area where the penalty area and “D” intersect.

   The technique involved is quite different than that of the early cross. A key element in the success of this cross is to make sure the hips are turned in toward the field and some special technical movements must be achieved to make this happen.

   a. The player’s last preparation touch is “in” on a diagonal so the player can start turning the hips infield.
   b. The player’s step before the planting step is outside and away from the ball.
   c. This enables the player’s planting foot to face into the field of play and hips swivel around.
   d. The player can elect to drive the ball to the near post space like a shot.
   e. The player can flight the ball to the far post-leaning back and striking through the bottom half of the ball with enough power to eliminate the goalie.
   f. The player can pull the ball back to the top of the box with a firm inside of the foot or instep pass.

Suggested Practice Sequence 1 (Diagram 3)

To one goal:
- 9 central “runners” in 3 lines of 3
- 2 or 3 left-footed players on left flank
- 2 or 3 right-footed players on right flank
- Second six-yard box marked out with cones

Flank players roll ball to coach who slowly rolls back to player. Flank follows ball and hooks into second six. 3 central players make prescribed runs into near, far and mid goal areas. They then return to original position. Alternate sides.

To two goals:
- 8 vs. 8 (seven plus keeper)
- Field is 80 yards long and 75 wide
- Two flank corridors with two opposing flank players
- Center line divides field in half. 2 defenders and 3 attackers in each half. Nobody in central area allowed over half line. Flags at the half line. Pinnie or small cone on ground 30 yards out from each goal.

Defenders in flank corridor given various instructions to increase pressure on attacking flank player, e.g., idle, push up when opponent wins it, then defend, etc.

Central defenders are instructed to push up to the pinnie when their team has ball. Cannot retreat until opposing flank attacker goes past halfway flag.

To two goals:
- 3 vs. 3 in each half plus flank players on both flanks in restricted corridor. Backs still must push up to
cone and cannot retreat until opposing flank goes past flag. No central players allowed over half line.

Final game – no restrictions

Suggested Practice Sequence 2 (Diagram 4)

Field is 80 yards long by 75 wide. Use midfield line as top of one penalty box. Left and right corridors are 15 yards wide.
- 3 vs. 3 in defending and attacking halves.
- 1 vs. 1 in flank corridors
- Balls in goals.

The following progression of conditions is suggested:
- Everybody stays in their zones.
- Goals can only be scored from a cross.
- To allow backs to play ball out of the back half, forwards cannot defend.
- No defending in flanks, then defensive flank does push up when opponent touches ball, then defensive flank defends but one attacker allowed in zone for 2v1.
- Allow movement between zones (e.g. One midfielder untracked into final zone.)
- Remove zones.

Attacking Spaces In The Penalty Area

This topic is frequently associated with crossing. It should be remembered that the reward to a forward for simply being 1 inch ahead of the defender is enormous. The spaces an attacker needs in the penalty area to score are, sometimes, miniscule.

The same sequence of exercises can be used to teach attacking spaces in the penalty area. The three optimum spaces we look for players to attack when the ball comes in from flank positions are:

a. Near post space at the top of the goal area. The attacking player should arrive in this space at the same time as the ball arrives. The attacker frequently makes a run from the back part of the goal to get into this space and “redirects” the cross with a part of the body.

b. Far post space roughly at the back corner of the goal area. Many goals are scored at this space. It is vital that the coach must always stress the importance of having this space covered by one of the players. The player must resist the urge to get into this space too early but must leave the space open and read the trajectory of the cross and the distribution of the players.

c. Space at the intersection of the penalty area and the D. This space is frequently open as defensive players are drawn toward a ball which is at the goal line exposing the space at the top of the box. Attacking players must not get into this space too early but, once again, leave it open. Shots from this area are effective but, frequently, go over the cross bar as a ball rolling to a player is hard to keep down. The players should be instructed to punch through the ball with a shortened follow through.

These spaces should be left open by attacking players so that the ball and the attacking player arrive at the same time. If a player runs into the space too soon the defender will be able to recover and get ball side before the ball arrives. Attacking players should be able to use a number of alternative methods to create and exploit space in the penalty box.

Split Runs

Attacking players create space for themselves by split runs. In a split run the attacker who is closest to the flank where the ball is bends away from that space toward the back of the goal. The marking defender must decide whether to go with the attacker or stay in the dangerous central space. The defender cannot do both. This player will wait at the back post for a shot or header.

The player who is farthest away from the flank where the ball is will make the run at the near post space from the back of the goal. It is vital that the timing of this run is good so that the player arrives at speed at the time the ball arrives. It is generally conceded that this run should begin when the flank player’s head goes up to see the options available prior to striking the ball although this frequently is not possible to do. If the ball happens to go past the near post this player should turn and “frame” the goal.
Reading the Defender’s Head Movement
Sometimes a forward can sprint into a space past the defender when the defender’s head turns to look at the ball.

Deceptive Running
An attacking player may sometimes use a deception to get away from the marker. The attacker can, initially, pull away from the space, draw the defender out from a central position and sprint back in before the defender can recover. Conversely, the attack can motion into a space, pull the defender in and then pull away to the back of the goal to create space from the defender.

Using a Pick
Although setting a pick purposely is not allowed in soccer, sometimes an attacking player can use the presence of, either an attacker or a defender to pick off the marker to get freed up for space. This happens, frequently, at a high level on restarts.
Crossing, and Finishing Runs In The Penalty Area
Attacking Tactics
Attacking Tactics – Theory

1. Organization of Attack
There has been a shift, over the last twenty years, from the stopper – sweeper system, commonly a feature of man to man marking, to the double or three man center back system. This is a system normally associated with zonal defending.

A. Tactical Functions – Backs

1. Goalkeeper
   a. Intercept shot or cross and kick ball to team mates to begin counter attack.
   b. Intercept shot or cross and throw ball to team mates to begin counter attack.
   c. Be available for back passes from team mates.

2. Center backs
   Sweeper (Man-to-man system)
   a. Function as a free player at back of team.
      Intercepts passes, picks up loose attackers, covers for markers, commands defense, begins counter attacks.
   b. Support player – plays behind building attacks.
      Looks to give depth behind ball and be available to receive back passes and then change point of attack.
   c. Penetrating player
      • Without ball – when space is available for sweeper to move forward and create numbers in the midfield, he/she will make runs into the midfield area.
      • With ball – can dribble into midfield area if space is available or play wall passes past defenders into midfield and forward areas.

   Stopper (Man-to-man system)
   a. Usually not an involved attacking function.
      Stopper asked to stay close to the central striker he is marking.
   b. Win ball and play it away quickly.
   c. Act as wall for sweeper when the sweeper is in possession of the ball and the situation is right for him/her to attack.
   d. Stopper usually is a tall player and good header of ball that is used as a target on attacking restarts.

   Central backs. (Zonal system)
   a. Intercept passes and look to play ball forward into space behind the opposing defenders for a counter attack or into the feet of the forwards.
   b. Intercept passes and play ball into central midfielders.
   c. Intercept passes and play ball to wide players. Ball could be passed to feet or to space depending upon the disposition of the opponents.
   d. Receive ball from teammates in flank areas and change point of attack.
   e. Be available for back passes from midfielders or other players.
   f. Carry ball forward into midfield in certain situations.
   g. In some cases make themselves available for passes from the goalkeeper when goalkeeper under pressure.

3. Flank backs
   a. Look to play ball forward immediately if a counter attack is possible.
   b. Establish width to the attack in back.
   c. Implement style of attack when ball is received.
      • Play ball forward early in direct style. Objective to hit advanced player with a long ball usually in the air by passing the midfield.
      • Look for shorter balls in indirect style. Possession is a major objective. Back will look to find organizing midfielder player or play himself forward with wall passes off midfield player on his/her flank.
      • Overlap into advanced areas as space permits.
         - Available when wing on same side drags his/her marker infield.
         - Available when space is on flanks because team does not play with wing on his/her flank.
         - Back will go when space is free and teammate prepared to serve ball.
         - Act as wing – dribble and serve or shoot.
      • Maintain compactness by pushing up from behind as attack moves forward.

B. Tactical Functions – Midfield Players

1. Central Midfield Players
   a. Can have role as organizing midfielder or attacking midfielder.
2. Organizing Midfield Players
   a. Responsible to be available to receive balls from back players in possession.
   b. Dictate rhythm of attack.
      • Open game up with long balls into advanced spaces.
      • Keep possession play balls, follow the pass and get it back.
   c. May penetrate with the ball.
3. Attacking Midfield Players
   a. Will be in advanced areas.
      • In close support of forwards.
      • May make runs in advance of forwards to receive passes to shoot at goal or serve ball.
   b. Constantly looks to run ball at defense.
      • To commit defenders.
      • Dribble past defenders and shoot at goal.
      • Play wall passes with forwards and go through to shoot.
   c. Be available to receive balls from goalkeeper and backs to start counter-attacks.
   d. Shoot from deep positions.
4. Flank Midfield Players
   a. Able to go up and down entire flank.
   b. When playing with wing on same flank he/she should support wing behind or square and look to play with the wing to defeat the outside back.
      • Through balls played behind outside back.
      • Play 1-2 movements to defeat the outside back.
      • Play ball for wing to turn & attack with the ball.
      • Plays to wing and overlaps him/her allowing wing the option to dribble inside or on play reverse pass.
   c. Supports central midfield player and forwards.
      • To keep possession.
      • To play them forward.
   d. To reestablish width to attack when wing comes infield.
   e. Act as wing when team is playing without one on his/her flank.
      • Dribble and beat defenders.
      • Serve to attacking spaces in penalty box.
      • Dribble at goal and shoot.

C. Tactical Function – Forwards
1. Center Striker
   a. Two basic ways to play in the middle.
      • Compact central covering system.
      - Center striker will attempt to constantly push up against the sweeper.
      - He/she attempts to stretch the opponents in as far as possible to allow room for play in on-side space.
      - If stopper stays with center striker, there is room to play between center of defense and midfield player.
      - If stopper pushes up, striker is 1 vs. 1 with sweeper and/or can act as wall pass for players going through.
      • Pull apart central covering systems.
      - Center striker with strong, aggressive running capabilities makes diagonal run into spaces behind a wing who drops back. Stopper will follow and pull apart central covering systems.
      - Withdraw to meet oncoming midfield players. Stopper will close mark and team reads the sweeper.
   b. Sweeper plays deep – use space between stopper and sweeper.
   c. Sweeper follows in close support of stopper – defense will flatten out & be susceptible to through ball (use of off-side space).
   d. Show for wingers in possession or bend away.
      • Center striker will bend away from wing who is good at beating defenders in 1 vs. 1 duels. Bending to opposite side of field drags stopper away to make more space for wing to dribble.
      • Center striker will show to for a 1-2 pass to help wing go past opposing outside back.
   e. Dribble past opponents.
   f. Score by many and varied means (e.g. shooting: long distance power shooting, composed slotting past goalkeeper, shooting with swerve, full volley, half-volley, on turn, toe poke, etc.)
2. Wing (common in 1-4-3-3)
   a. Orthodox wing
      • Plays in wide, advanced position, off flank fullbacks’ outside shoulder.
   ii. Receive ball and attack flank of defense.
      - Dribble at outside back early before cover arrives.
      - Dribble outside and serve into box.
- Dribble inside and go to the goal, combine or slip pass between defenders.
  • Play with center striker to wall pass or dribble.

3. Withdrawn Wing (common in 1-4-4-2)
   a. Plays on flank in deeper positions than advanced or orthodox wing.
   b. Withdraws deep flank to pick up balls from backs.
   c. Becomes part of midfield build-up.
   d. Plays more with center midfield player and center striker.
   e. Will move in wide, advanced positions and act as Orthodox Wing.

D. Style of Attack
1. Direct Style
   a. Direct style of attacking dictates that when ball is won it is played forward at the earliest possible moment.
      • Target player is usually a tall, strong player who stays as advanced as defenders will allow.
      • Target player will try to hold ball by winning and screening from defenders while teammates move to take up supporting positions.
      • Target player may have one teammate to play to as ball arrives. They will try to combine and go to goal.
   b. Rhythm is very fast.
   c. High risk of loss of possession because distance of pass and time of flight. Loss of possession not a major consideration as almost whole team is behind ball if target man loses possession.
   d. Direct style wants to put as many defenders “out of game” (play ball past and behind defenders) as possible with one pass. The more defenders out of the game, the more attacking space to play into.
   e. Factors affecting decision to play direct style.
      • Environmental Factors.
        - Climate – can use in cool climate.
        - Use in rainy climate when mud or water accumulates.
      • Field Factors.
        - Size of field – narrow, long field.
        - Condition of playing surface – direct style indicated for bumpy or muddy field.
      • Player Factors.

- Younger players strong enough to implement direct style.
- Limited technical ability difficult to play out of back or maintain possession in middle third.
- Against superior opponent or opponent playing high pressure.

3. Indirect Style
   a. Indirect style of play indicates that when ball is won, if the counterattack is not possible, then, we want to keep possession.
      • Indirect style looks to put defenders out of the game, a small number at a time.
      • Indirect style attempts to take advantage of typical number situation (i.e. numbers up in back).
        - Because of the numbers up situation in back, the indirect style wants to put a back player forward to create favorable numbers situation.
        - Indirect style allows team to build number situations on flank to get around and behind massed defenses.
      • Shorter passes involved in indirect style enables more accurate passing so ball is not given away and possession is insured.
   b. Factors affecting decision to play indirect style.
      • Many factors antipodal to rationales for direct style of play.
      • In general, decision to play indirect style of play must have:
        - Acceptable playing conditions, climate, size and condition of playing surface must be suitable for indirect play.
        - Technical and tactical abilities of players must be of a high level.

E. Attacking Relative to Third of Field
1. Back Third
   a. Objective to get ball forward into middle or final third with possession maintained.
      • Use of goalkeeper as attacking player.
      • Area of no risk.
        - No passes played that have any chance of interception.
        - Passes should go forward vertically or backward. Only square under safest of situations.
Attacking Tactics 1 –
The Back Third

Direct Attacks

1. Opportunities

The attacking team “creates” its opportunities by positioning and moving in a way that keeps at least two options open at all times, for example, direct attacks into offside space and indirect attack through onside space. The defending team may or may not react to the attacking team’s positioning and movement. The attacking team then “reads” which option the defending team has chosen to deny. The attacking team then recognizes the other option as its opportunity (until the situation changes). The first visual cue to recognize, therefore, on the team level is the defending team’s shape. The first opportunity that all good attackers must recognize is the opportunity to play an attacker, either themselves or a teammate, in behind the entire defense, where the only thing standing in the way of a scoring chance is a foot race through empty space.

A. Shallow - A shallow defense offers an opportunity to play the ball directly into the space behind the defense. Other features indicating an opportunity to play directly behind the defense:

1. Ball close to the back of the defense.
2. An advancing defense.
3. A slow defense. Physically slow or tactically slow.

B. Deep - A deep defense offers an opportunity to

- Shorter balls played to feet – balls into space risk interception unless to vertical runs on flanks.

b. When ball is transferred to middle or final third.

- Maintain correct number situation in back.
- Usually one more than opponents leave up.
- Maintain compactness from behind by pushing up as ball is transferred forward.
- To be in good supporting positions behind ball.
- To be able to pressure and organize quickly if possession is lost.

2. Middle Third

a. Objective to get ball forward into final third with possession maintained.

- Middle third preparation area for thrust into final third.
  - Keep possession.
  - How to penetrate into final third: dribbling by wing, combinations with wing, overlap-ball side, overlap-opposite side, use of central striker-refer to tactical functions, improvisation.

b. When ball is transferred to final third.

- Whole team maintains compactness behind ball.
- Must insure that depth maintained by one midfielder.
  - Depth to receive ball back and change point of attack.
  - Depth to deal with change of possession and delay of opponents attack to allow teammates time to work back between ball and own goal.

3. Final Third

a. Objective to create scoring chance on goal and finish it.

- Players will take risks to create a scoring chance.
  - Dribbling in confined spaces against defenders in numbers up situations.
  - Risky passes over and around legs of defenders to teammates, short rushes into small gaps for teammates to shoot.
  - Flick passes in air to teammate and run to get return.

- Shoot from any reasonable position with any reasonable chance by technical possibility toe poke, instep, volley, head, etc.

b. Most scoring chances will come off balls served in from flanks.

- Massed defenses in center leave space on flanks.
- Most chances to shoot will be from balls that are coming from flank to middle and dropping toward ground.
- Coach must encourage and train aggressive mentality towards taking risks and shooting in final third.
build the attack through the space in front of the defense. Other factors signaling an opportunity to build the attack indirectly through onside space:
1. A retreating defense.
2. Highly skilled attackers.

2. Risks
Recognizing the risks presented by the defending team's depth.
A. Shallow - A shallow defense increases the risk of losing possession in the midfield.
   1. Minimizing the risk. Can be done individually, by small group actions, or by large group actions.
      a. Individually: highly skillful midfielders, moving the ball with the first touch, ability to dribble away from double team, etc.
      b. Small group: “fast play” through midfield, combinations, early support, quick (often first touch) passing leading to a player with enough space to penetrate.
      c. Large group: big change in the point of attack, frequent changes in the point of attack (but this can also increase the risk that the attack will stall).
   2. Avoiding the risk: by-passing midfield. Play directly into offside space behind the defense for forwards (including other players who have run forward) who are running into that space. Play directly to forwards who then relay the ball behind the defense.
B. Deep - A deep defense increases the risk of losing possession after long penetrating passes.
   1. Minimizing the risk: very fast forward targets, perfect accuracy and weight of a long pass, forcing the opponent to be running too fast to intercept the ball, forcing opponent to concede re-starts, regaining possession in the front third.
   2. Avoiding the risk: playing through midfield. Use the onside space that the defense is conceding. See Part 2 of Tactics 4A.
C. First attacker unable to play the ball behind the defense - Either the first attacker is technically unable to keep this option open or the first attacker is under pressure. In either case, once supporting defenders sense that the first attacker only has one option, to play the ball short, they are free to deny space at the point of attack.

3. Defense too Shallow
Individual, group and team responses to a shallow defense.
A. First Attacker: Recognition - The first attacker will always be alert to opportunities to play the ball behind defenders no matter where the first attacker is on the field.
   1. Counter-attack. This is the most common situation creating an opportunity to play directly behind the defense. At the instant the ball turns over the opposing team is organized to attack, not defend. This often means that opposing backs are at, or beyond, the halfway line, facing away from their goal.
   2. First attacker’s position. Goalkeeper, back, midfielder and forward influence the assessment of the opportunity and the risks. A flat, shallow defense looks different from the goalkeeper’s position than from a forward’s position near the halfway line.
   3. Selecting the means of penetration. It is critical that the first attacker recognize the risks and opportunities in the circumstances when choosing a means of penetrating.
      a. Running with the ball. Reducing control difficulties but increasing the risk that defenders will recover good defending positions.
      b. Dribbling.
      c. Pass. The most frequently used means to exploit a shallow defense in back third circumstances. Is a teammate prepared to receive the ball behind the defense? Recognizing the risk posed by the opposing goalkeeper.
B. Second Attacker: Angle and Distance of Support - Positioning to keep short/long options open. The second attacker reads the situation the same regardless of the possession of the ball.
   1. Pressure on the ball: First attacker’s need for close support. Is the ball safe? Can the first attacker play the ball behind the defense? Hips facing forward when possible.
   2. Distance from the offside line.
   3. The depth of the defense.
C. Third Attackers: Positioning to Keep Long Options Available

1. Center forwards. Beginning with posture: hips facing forward, looking for a ball to space, not looking for balls to feet, taking the advantage created by defenders who are facing away from offside space.
   a. Angle of runs. One forward attacking strong side space behind the defense. Other forward attacking weak side space.
   b. Timing of runs. Depends on how far away the first attacker is. If first attacker is far away, then forwards can initiate the runs, criss-crossing: so as not to arrive in offside space too early. If first attacker is close, initiating run as the first attacker goes into approach step. If first attacker is very close, angle of run flattens, or forward waits at edge of offside space, hips facing forward, the pass initiates the move.
2. Flank players. Flank players are in good positions to run onto balls played deep into offside space because the defending goalkeeper is less likely to cover those spaces.
3. Midfielders. At least one, but not all, midfielders prepared to support the initial penetration. At least one maintaining depth in the midfield line.
4. Back players. Moving forward to stay in contact with the midfield; to move into forward positions if needed; available if needed to play ball behind opposing defense.
5. Goalkeeper. Moving forward to control space behind the back players. Available as a supporting attacker to play the ball behind opposing defense if necessary.

D. Technical Implications - Keeping direct, or long, options available at all times implies a mastery of specific techniques in addition to the tactical awareness to recognize when it’s on.

1. Ability to play long forward passes (30+ yards) with proper accuracy and weight. Ability to affect the trajectory of these passes, swerved, in the air, driven, etc.
2. Ability to play these passes with one touch.
3. Ability to bring long passes under control at pace, sometimes from awkward angles.
4. Ability to run forward with the ball through space.
5. Ability to dribble past isolated defenders at the back of the defense.
6. Ability to play fast, early, crosses.
7. Goalkeeper’s ability to play balls accurately and quickly beyond the halfway line: punting, half volleying, throwing.

Indirect Attacks

Review

Part of the tactical training is showing players how to position and move to keep at least two options available. The defense’s response, or lack of response, to that positioning and motion is what attackers “read” when they read the game. If the options are diverse enough the defense will be forced to concede one of the options if it tries to deny the other. The task for the coach is to train the team to keep its options open through sensible positioning and mobility, to recognize opportunities inherent in the defense’s positioning and motion, to recognize risks, and to manage those risks in ways that do not inhibit the team’s ability to seize its opportunities.

The chart on the next page reviews the highlights of each of the three phases of an attack that has to be built through on-side space.
## Indirect Attacks, Back Third

**1. Opportunities**

By denying offside space the defense is conceding onside space. This presents the opportunity to approach the offside line by building the attack through onside space.

**2. Risks**

By denying offside space the defense puts any attempt to penetrate directly behind it at risk. The further risk is to an attack that starts to build through onside space and is caught unprepared by a defense that suddenly pushes forward to become compact at the point of attack.

**3. First Attacker: Recognition**

A shallow defense can be read as if it were only two lines deep. A deep defense looks like at least three players of field players with a goalkeeper behind. The process of building the attack through a deep defense involves piercing through each of these layers, sometimes one layer at a time. Attacking players will seek their opportunities by reading three things:

1) the spaces between defenders inside each layer  
2) the space beside the layer  
3) the spaces between the layers.

A. Defense: how deep is “too deep?” - The first thing to read is whether the defense has, by choice or by necessity, been stretched end to end far enough so, if the attack acts quickly enough, at lest the first line of defenders can be penetrated in isolation.

B. Opposing forwards not compact - Opportunity to penetrate between them: running with the ball or passing.

C. Opposing forwards compact but not balanced - Opportunity to change point of attack and penetrate into middle third.
D. Opposing forwards trapping the first attacker - First attacker must recognize this early. Usually not allowing opposing defenders to get within 5 yards of the ball before deciding to change the point of attack.

E. Opposing midfielders encroaching - Midfielders may try to take away the safety of the attacking team's numerical superiority by committing a midfielder to defend against the group of backs. By doing this they are forced to concede either:
1. A free, “unmarked” midfielder; at least fewer defending midfielders to deal with the attacking midfielders, or
2. No cover at the back.

4. Second Attacker: Positioning to Keep Ball Safe
Helping to keep short options available while minimizing risks. Transferring ball into midfield, to forwards. The second attacker’s supporting position will depend on the risks which need to be minimized. Supporting attackers manage risks by keeping possession of the ball at all costs. Supporting positions are therefore deep, distant and early. The attacking group is willing to trade both the point of attack and territory for safety.

5. Third Attackers: Positioning to Keep Defense Long and Offer Targets
A. Forwards: lengthening the defense - At least one forward prepared to run behind the defense to receive a long pass. This option must be preserved at all times of the defense will be free to push forward and close down the midfield. Prepared to come back into midfield to swerve as a wall when midfielders start to get closed down. Prepared to come back into midfield as a target for a pass from back players or goalkeeper. Both these runs can be straight toward ball if necessary; but best if angled to give the forward better vision of defenders and easier control.
B. Midfielders - Depth becomes very important in the midfield line when it is ahead of the ball. If the ball is behind the midfields then at least on midfielder positions deep as a target for a pass to feet. Best if the deep target midfielder is “sideways on,” moving across the field rather than running straight back toward the ball. Midfielders and backs provide the width as the ball enters the middle third. As the ball enters the middle third the midfield plays flatter to maintain progress through middle third and not concede too much territory. During that phase of the attack, whatever depth is needed for safety can be provided by back players.
C. Backs - Prepared to move into midfield. Weak side fullback not staying too wide; moving wide as the point of attack moves in that direction.
D. Goalkeeper - Supporting the attack in the back third. Helping to deny space behind back players as attack moves out of back third.

6. Technical Implications
A. Ability to play passes over 20 yards at a fast pace.
B. Ability to turn quickly when not under pressure.
C. Ability to run with the ball.

Suggested Session Organization
The objectives of the session are to give attackers sufficient opportunities to recognize deep defenses, shallow defenses and to refine their judgment of the in-between cases. A simple and practical way to begin is with a team-level exercise. The first part of this session will examine attacking against shallow defenses. The second part will examine attacks against deep defenses.

Part 1. Shallow Defenses
The first activity is a team level exercise like 8v8. The field has been reduced in size proportionate to the number of players. If one dimension were going to be exaggerated out of proportion at the start it should be length. The field must straddle the halfway line because the offside law will play an important part in the practice.

1. Recognizing Artificially Shallow Defense
Coach asks the player in charge of one team’s defense to play artificially shallow as soon as they lose the ball, and to hold the defense high for as long as possible.
Coaching points:
- a. Recognize it. Especially the instant the ball turns over! Keep the ball moving forward ahead of recovering defenders, especially during a counter-attack.
b. Exploit it. Forwards look for ball behind defenders. At least one midfielder support the initial breakthrough. Backs and goalkeeper keep team compact.

2. Recognizing Depth
Coach asks player in charge of one team’s defense to play shallow when it makes sense.
Coaching points:
a. Recognize it. Recognize the cues indicating that the defense is about to change its depth.
b. Position to threaten the back of the defense. Always keep the long option open. At least one forward pushed up, looking for it over the top.
c. Exploit it. Take what they give you. If they’re dropping deep, play in front of them. If they’ve pushed up, drop it behind them. Attack faster than they can defend.

Part 2. Deep Defense, Back Third
In Part 2 we stay with a deep defense, or at least a defense that will allow itself to be stretched, thus lengthening the midfield enough to present an opportunity to build the attack through the midfield. We will follow a hypothetical attack that begins with possession being won in the back third. We will divide this hypothetical attack into three phases. In Tactics I we examined the phase in which the attacking team transfers possession out of the back third. For this part of the session we will use a phase of play organization.

1. Stage One - Phase of Play: 4 vs. 2.
Three backs and the goalkeeper play from back third to small goals in the middle third against two opposing forwards.
a. Starting and re-starting. Server lofts a ball like a clearance behind the back four. They must be first to it and pass it through the gates. This must be done while avoiding unacceptable risks.
b. Recognition.
• Opportunity to end the attack by playing safely through one of the goals.
• Pressure on the ball. Don’t allow it to happen. Keep ball away from opponents. If it does happen spin away and play to support.
• Compactness (or lack of it) of opposing forwards. If they’re separated, play between them.

• Balance (or lack of it) of opposing forwards. If they’re all over to one side play out the other side.
c. Support. Early, deep and as distant as pressure on the ball allows. Very important for supporting players to be thinking ahead, preparing to attack another part of the defense by their posture and by quickly and often surveying the entire field.
d. Note. “Back third” refers to a situation in which this team wants to treat the ball with the greatest caution. This practice enables them to improve their ability to treat the ball with greatest caution without interfering too much with their ability to move the ball forward.

2. Stage Two: Phase of Play: 7 vs. 6
Gradually add numbers up to a point where the goalkeeper, the back three and a midfield of three play against two opposing forwards, three midfielders and a fullback. The backs and goalkeeper read the same cues from the first line of defenders. In addition they can read the depth of the opposing midfield, they must recognize passing targets that are moving.
a. Starting and re-starting. Go for frequency at the start: opposing goalkeeper serves the ball beyond the back four. Then give the ball to the team attacking the full goal.
b. Recognition.
c. Support.
d. Third attackers. Looking at how the midfielders link with back players. Look at the shape of the midfield group. At least one midfielder deep and central, available for a shorter option to feet. Others threatening space forward and on the flanks.

3. Stage Three. 8 vs. 8:
Attacking Team 3-3-1, Defending Team 2-3-2
Technical/Tactical Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>TECHNIQUES</th>
<th>TACTICAL VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FORWARDS</strong></td>
<td>Attacking – Ensuring three front third options: 1) the ability to turn an “isolated” defender; 2) the ability to play back to unmarked midfielders if defending midfielders try to prevent the turn; 3) the ability to attack an exposed flank if flank defenders try to deny space in the middle.</td>
<td>Attacking – Receiving balls under varying degrees of pressure and penetrating; either by shooting, dribbling or passing. Passing techniques including disguised passes, lifted passes and passes to set up a teammate’s shot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MIDFIELDERS</strong></td>
<td>Attacking. Middle third techniques: receiving balls under varying degrees of pressure; passing techniques, including disguised passes, reversing the direction of the attack, etc. Front third techniques: long range shooting, early crossing techniques.</td>
<td>Attacking. Ensuring two middle third options: 1) the ability to play through a midfield that is not compact enough; and 2) the ability to play around a midfield that is too compact. Ensuring two front third options: 1) the ability to shoot from long range if defending midfielders try to prevent forwards from turning; 2) the ability to cross from deep positions if defending midfielders double team flank players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRONT THIRD</strong></td>
<td>Defending. Clearing techniques including heading, volleying, etc.; ball-winning techniques. Attacking. Long passing, swerved passes, in the air balls, driven balls; receiving long passes.</td>
<td>Defending. Minimizing the risks of conceding a goal by keeping the ball away from the vital area; maximizing the opportunity to regain possession. Attacking. Ensuring two back third options: 1) the ability to play the ball behind a defense that is too shallow before it can adjust; 2) the ability to play the ball in front of a defense that is too deep before it can adjust.</td>
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</table>

**Attacking Tactics 2 – The Middle Third**

1. **Opportunities**
   Good midfielders can recognize an opportunity to do one of two things. First, they are experts at seeing an opportunity to create a scoring chance. If that’s not possible, they can find an opportunity to get the ball into a position from which it will be possible to create a scoring chance. The simplest way to do that is to transfer possession into the final third. Coaches will be alert to the ability of their players to seize opportunities to:
   - a. Create a scoring chance with or without the ball.
   - b. Gain territory: to get the ball forward.
   - c. Get the ball to a teammate who is in enough space to gain territory.
   - d. Make possession more secure.

2. **Risks**
   The two main risks facing attacking players in the middle third directly conflict with each other. Nowhere is the good judgement needed to master the situation harder for coaches to describe concretely. Good midfielders need to develop their sense of which risk should be given more importance through experience and case-by-case guidance. The means of managing one risk can inhibit the team’s ability to avoid the other risk. An effective midfield group can recognize the following risks:
   - a. Risk of conceding a goal through a loss of possession. This risk diminishes as the ball gets farther from the team’s own goal.
   - b. Risk of the attack not progressing to a scoring chance. This risk increases the closer the ball gets to the other goal.

3. **Defense Not Compact Enough: Maintain the Point of Attack**
   Gaps between the first defender and supporting defenders are too large. The first attacker may or may not be under pressure. The key is how much space exists around the first attacker. If the space is large enough then the attacking midfield will be able to relieve the pressure on the ball either individually or by a small group action like a take-over, 1-2, etc.
   - a. First Attacker: Penetrating. In a midfield that is not compact enough.
   - Receiving ball so the ball can be played forward.
   - Playing through gaps to forwards.
• Running with ball through gaps.
• Turning and dribbling the ball through gaps.
• Playing through gap to midfielder.
• Combinations.

b. First Attacker: Relieving pressure on the ball. The first thing a player receiving the ball will do is try to relieve any pressure on it. Two considerations influence how that will be done. Don’t concede the point of attack. Don’t concede too much territory.
• If the pressuring defender is in the process of closing down on the player receiving the ball the most frequently used method is to move the ball with the first touch with supporting players staying flat or even moving forward. More often than not this is the case in midfield.
• If the pressuring defender is already in a good pressuring position then at least one supporting player positions to relieve the pressure and the first attacker chooses.

4. Defense Compact Enough
The gaps between the first defender and supporting defenders are small, but the defense is not attempting to double team the ball. Implications for the skill of certain midfielders. Implications for players on the flanks to unbalance the midfield. Opportunities to penetrate:

b. Changing the point of attack.
c. Reversing the attack.
d. Bypassing the midfield.

5. Midfield Defense Too Thin
The gap between forward and back defenders is too small. Opposing forwards or backs can encroach into the midfield.

a. Opposing backs encroaching: play long.
b. Opposing forwards encroaching: backs exchange roles with midfielders.

6. Technical Implications
Ability to:
a. Turn quickly under no immediate pressure.
b. Play first touch passes.
c. Dribble out of pressure: spin turns.
d. Dribble out of approaching pressure: move the ball rapidly with the first touch.
e. Play long passes from tight spaces.
f. Run with the ball.
g. Dribble isolated defenders.

Suggested Session Organization
The organization of this session should give the attacking team’s midfielders a realistic chance to judge the compactness and balance of the opposing midfield, give the coach a chance to observe, and give the coach the opportunity to intervene when necessary.

1. Phase of Play: Middle Third
In a simple 4 vs. 4 group context the attacking midfielders have an opportunity to read the defending midfield’s compactness and balance.

Coaching points:
a. Shape of midfield. Adding enough depth and width so there will be space to receive balls from the servers.
• At least one midfielder deep.
• Lateral runs from deep positions preferred over runs straight back toward ball from high positions.
b. First Attacker: Recognition. If defense not compact, turn and run with ball through a gap. If defense is compact, play around them.
• Know what you’re going to do before receiving the ball. (Coach observes players’ posture away from the ball)
• Move the ball with the first touch. Keep it moving if first defender is close.
• Be aggressive with the ball.
• Play square and run diagonally.
c. Second Attacker. Supporting position.
• Does first attacker need support? If yes, look to support as close to square as possible – don’t concede too much territory. If no, clear out and get forward.
• Is possession of the ball in trouble? If yes, then supporting position should be deeper
• Look to combine, but don’t allow ball to get trapped on one touchline.
d. Third Attacker. Shape of the midfield. Keeping maximum options available.
• Depth in the midfield.
• Flank play. Looking for cues that point of attack needs to be changed: lack of pressure on the ball, strong side too crowded, eye contact. Pulling wide and deeper or attacking space behind the weak side.
• Chance to penetrate. Look for chance to get forward.

2. Phase of Play: Two Thirds
Four midfielders, two back players and the goalkeeper defend five attackers over two thirds of the field. In this context attacking midfielders have more realistic targets to play to. They can also begin to judge the “thinness” of the defending midfield: are opposing back players pushing up and encroaching into the midfield defense? They can take up more realistic positions, getting forward or running behind the defense.

Coaching points:
a. Shape of the midfield.
b. First Attacker Recognition. All of the above with the addition of looking to get the ball to forwards (including midfielders who have run forward) who can score. Reading the depth of the midfield defense.
c. Third Attackers. When to get all the way forward. Looking for opportunities to get into scoring positions.
  • Flank play.
  • Depth in midfield.
  • Playmaking central midfielder.
d. Numbers. The defense has more players. The defense will only be at risk if attackers play with enough aggression and risk.

3. 8 vs. 8
The coach allows midfielders the opportunity to read both edges of the “thinness” of the midfield by adding the opposing forwards. If opposing forwards are encroaching into midfield then a supporting back player can run forward to receive a pass. Midfielders can practice getting into good attacking positions from realistic defending positions.
a. Starting and re-starting the exercise. One way to add focus and repetitions would be to re-start the exercise artificially with a throw-in in the middle third.
b. The coach can get more repetitions by artificially creating turnover situations where the ball quickly changes hands. One way of doing this is with the way goals are scored in the game. e.g. “The red team scores a goal when they can hit the ball in the air to the blue GK.”

Attacking Tactics 3 – The Front Third
Teams that dominate the front third in attack and the back third in defense have the best chance of winning. The question leading us to the heart of this and other sections of tactics is: what do the best players recognize and how do they recognize it? We can split this question into two parts. First, what opportunities do they see? For example, the outstanding attacking midfielder who takes the ball to the left and suddenly flicks it into space to the right just as the center forward is spinning into that space: both the midfielder and the forward saw a critical opportunity in that situation. The coach’s task is to be clear about what specific things they saw that gave them the sense “opportunity to finish this attack right now with this little move.” Another example, the outstanding central defender who starts moving into the path of a pass before the ball has been struck and intercepts it cleanly: What specifically did that player see that gave the sense “opportunity to intercept?” Players who are good at sensing/recognizing these opportunities are a key factor in a team’s ability to dominate these areas of the field.

Another key factor in a team’s ability to dominate is the ability of players to see risks and avoid them before they become trouble. For example. The forward who sees an opposing back player making a run to the far post should have a sense of when that back player’s run is a risk that must be dealt with immediately and when it can sensibly by handled by other defenders. Having players who have developed that sense can be the difference between an average yet vulnerable defense and a team that can dominate its back third without sacrificing its ability to get out of its own half. Furthermore, the forward who sees an easy and obvious square pass to a midfielder should have the sense of when that pass increases the risk that the final attack will deteriorate into a possession game and when it will lead directly to a scoring chance. Players who can see this sort of risk and avoid it are often the difference between a team that dominates the front third in attack (i.e. consistently threatens the opponent’s
goal), and a team that just keeps the ball away from its opponent.

Tactical training requires the coach to be clear about what specific things signal an opportunity as well as what specific things warn of trouble. Telling players at half time to “shoot more often” is a poor substitute for realistic practices during which the coach trains players to recognize, and to practice taking shooting opportunities they hadn’t been able to see before. The tactical sections in this manual will begin with an outline of the main opportunities and the main risks present in each phase of play.

From the attacking point of view we want to be able to gain a physical position from which we can score. That means the attackers must win a battle for the use of vital space near goal. These battles are won in the usual way: by forcing the defending team to deny more vital space in less time than they are physically capable of doing, thus forcing them to choose, and thereby concede the space and time needed to score. The technical implications in this part of the field are enormous. The demands for performance that can deliver the ball into the net from smaller spaces, with greater accuracy, at higher velocities, from longer ranges, in less time, with more disguise are never-ending.

Methods.

We will begin with another phase of play organization which allows our forwards to read and understand the risks and opportunities presented by back defenders who have retreated to the edge of the cital area. Our progression will be to stress clarity at the start by reducing numbers and then gradually add realism by adding numbers while enlarging the area.

1. Opportunities
   Coaching in this part of the field has historically focused on helping players to recognize the Mother of All Opportunities: a scoring chance.
   a. To Score. The most important opportunity to recognize. Scoring opportunities are difficult to recognize. The most disguised are described as “half chances.”
   b. To Setup a Teammate to Score. Important to recognize when this is a genuine opportunity and not a threat to the development of a goal.
   c. To Penetrate. Further penetration can be a needless continuation of an attack that has done its job. The opportunity is rarely one the best attackers will choose.
   d. An Unexpected Advantage: Framing the Goal. Play in this part of the field can be hectic, forced and unpredictable. Shots ricochet off defenders, attackers, the referee and goal posts. Attackers position in areas where the unexpected can be turned into a goal by “framing the goal.”

2. Risks
   The risks so totally favor the attacking team in its front third that the means of avoiding them practically coincide with the means of seizing the opportunities. There is a need to be dangerous with the ball in the front third.
   a. Not Developing a Scoring Chance. This is the main risk to avoid: that the attack will stall; that it won’t develop a scoring chance; that it will hang on to possession.
   b. Retreating Unnecessarily to Midfield. Regrouping in the middle third may be an appropriate way of regaining the initiative. It also increases risks while diminishing opportunities.

3. First Attacker: Aggression
   Aggression with the ball leads to scoring success in the Final Third and Vital Area. The first attacker is looking to score or to maintain initiative by “accelerating” the attack: pick up the pace of action so the defense is constantly adjusting and never able to take back the initiative. This involves seeking any gap or opening between defenders, between defenders’ legs, through which the ball can be shot, passed or dribbled.

4. Second Attackers: Positioning to Maintain Progress
   Supporting positions flatter and closer.

5. Third Attackers: Positioning to Score
   a. Center Forward. Center forwards try to attain a starting position well inside the vital area. That gives them the options to get the ball and shoot by running in any direction for it. They will be looking for opportunities to get the ball facing forward or at least sideways. They will often be in the business of gambling against the odds with
their runs.

- Diagonal runs. Center forwards look for gaps between zonal defenders, or space beside a marking defender, for diagonal runs. There will always be space between defenders. The key is to pick out the space that’s big enough and attack at the moment the midfielder can play into it.
- Runs behind the defense. This requires a delicately weighted ball.
- Withdrawing for a ball to feet.

b. Attacking Midfielders. As the attack enters the front third attacking midfielders tend to take positions behind the forward most attackers. Once the attack is in the front third attacking midfielders perform the same striking functions as center forwards.

- Shooting from long range.
- Combining with forwards.
- Attacking at crosses.
- Runs behind the defense.

c. Flank Players. Less width is necessary during the last phase of the attack than is necessary crossing midfield. It’s less important to have wide options on both flanks at all times.

- Positioning to attack the flank. Flank players adjust their position as the point of attack swings in their direction: pulling wider and deeper.
- Positioning to attack crosses from the opposite flank. As the point of attack stays in the middle or moves to the other side, weakside flank players get into positions for crosses or knockdowns.

d. Central Midfielders. It’s difficult to be specific in a manual like this as so much depends on the unique talents of the center midfielder. This position has been exploited by highly mobile players as well as players who stay put, support and distribute.

- Long range shooting.
- Seizing an opportunity to get forward or get behind the defense; to accelerate the attack.
- Maintaining depth in the attack.
- Maintaining depth at crosses; providing an option for a ball pushed back.

e. Back players. Keeping the team compact from behind. Maximum depth is the halfway line. Some teams play with their back line of defenders even farther forward, at the height of the center circle.

- Offside trap. If the attack needs to retreat back into the middle third, back players are often the best positioned to serve a ball over the top of the ensuing offside trap. If they start far enough forward they can also be in good positions to run behind a line of advancing defenders.
- Long range shooting. Talented back players should stay alert to opportunities to land the ball behind a goalkeeper who has strayed too far off the goal line.

f. Goalkeeper. Beyond the penalty area. Looking for haphazard long clearances. Supporting back players in attack and defense.

Entering the Final Third: Central or Flank Attack

Reading the defense from the middle third. Two options: attack centrally through a defense that is not laterally compact; or attack around a defense that is compact.

1. Not Compact Enough.

Seeing large spaces in the final stage of the defense is an invitation to take “route one” to goal.

a. During a counter-attack. There are not enough defenders to defend the vital area. The opportunity continues as long as the pace of the attack can keep the ball ahead of recovering defenders.

b. During a direct attack. Just like a counter-attack: There are not enough defenders. The pace of the attack must keep recovering defenders behind the ball.

c. A static defense. There are enough defenders but there are flaws in their positioning or in their ability to change positions (flexibility).

- Gaps too large: defense is a collection of isolated individuals, unable to combine in groups. Opportunity to penetrate between defenders by means of any individual or small group action (dribbling, passing, combination).

- Gaps not too large. Defenders are close enough, but supporting defenders don’t react quickly enough (e.g. marking too close despite threat of dribbling, covering too deep despite threat of passing, etc.)

d. A moving defense. Movement is the enemy of body control. The faster defenders have to run
the more passive they become. Attacking centrally through small spaces against the flow, especially if they are moving across the field.

2. Too compact.
If the defense is too compact to penetrate centrally then they must be conceding space on the flanks. This leads to a cross.
   a. Too compact laterally. Flank defenders too close to center of field. Attack space left empty on the flanks.
   b. Too compact vertically. Midfield defenders too close to back players. Long range shooting, crosses from deep positions.

3. Combination: Accelerating the Attack.
Many large groups of defenders are not uniformly positioned. Some are close together, others are too far apart. Defenses can lose their integrity when the pace of the attack is too fast for them or the direction of the attack has suddenly changed. Accelerating the attack can expose spaces by making defenders temporarily passive, unable to actively contact the ball. The keys to accelerating an attack are runs and balls that go behind defenders, then shooting or delivering the ball into the vital area or second six yard box while defenders are still facing their own goal. This forces a choice on defenders: either keep pace with the attack or allow penetration (or try to catch them offside and hope the assistant referee is equal to it). By keeping pace they are forced to use both feet to propel themselves, to pivot, to accelerate, to run close to sprint pace. This can render them passive. A sprinting defender’s only chance to contact the ball is as a moving obstacle. If the ball isn’t played squarely into the defender’s body it will pass by or be deflected unpredictably, a result that nearly always favors attackers.

Entering the Vital Area: Developing a Scoring Chance

1. Centrally.
Midfielders in possession will read back defenders’ positions and motions. First choice will be the direct route to goal.
   a. Not compact laterally.
      • Dribbling. Ball to forward’s feet. Turn into gap between back defenders.
      • Combinations. Two forwards combine before flank
   b. Not compact vertically. Gap between defending midfield and back four too large.
      • Dribbling from midfield. Midfielder may be able to dribble into vital area past an unsupported midfield defender.
      • Combinations from midfield. Combinations using the space in front of the backs.
      • Passes to forwards’ feet.
         - Turn using the space in front of individual defenders.
         - Combinations with other forwards. Forwards can stagger their positions, adding depth to the forward line, thus exposing space beside defenders.

2. From the Flank.
When the direct route to goal is unavailable. There is much disagreement about what players are reading and what decisions they are taking. Some prefer the crosser to deliver the ball to prearranged areas and have central players reading the crosser’s progress, timing their runs to arrive at different times along the path of the cross. Others prefer that the central players find their best positions as the crosser is preparing the ball and have the crosser read which central attacker has achieved the best position. It will be up to the coach to help players decide when the crosser has the ability to make the choice, when central players must call out the choice, and when both groups can read each other. The areas discussed below change depending on the position of the ball.
   a. Far post. The far post is the position which gives the shooter the most advantages: the central defender and the goalkeeper will be turning and moving as the ball arrives. The disadvantage is the length of the cross can cause accuracy problems. Also, if the time of flight is more than two seconds the far post option can end up being a 50-50 situation requiring physical domination to win. Players usually position outside the far post target area well before the cross is
delivered, moving to attack the ball after judging the line of flight.

b. Near post. The area described as “near post” is very large. It can extend will beyond the post itself, up to the near side of the six yard box. Against man-to-man defenses attackers will often start their runs towards the far post. If the marking is too tight they’ll bend the run and accelerate toward the near post. The timing depends on the distance to the ball. If the ball has been served from 30-40 yards the attacker may have time to make the move to the near post after the ball has been crossed. If the ball is closer the run usually precedes the cross. Scoring from the near post requires very little space. The time of flight of the ball is usually so short that defenders can’t move quickly enough to make contact on the ball. Even a sweeper positioned to cut out driven balls to the near post can be bypassed.

c. Mid-goal. Teams that can commit attackers to the far post and the near post may find that the opponent’s central defenders have spread wide enough to leave a gap roughly in the middle of the goal. The run into this space often arrives slightly after the near and far post runs.

d. Top of the vital area. Defending against accurate, heavy crosses with a short time of flight sometimes requires that the defending midfield do double duty with their back four denying space in the second six yard box. This can leave space at the top of the vital area, usually near the “D” for an attacker to receive a cross. Shooting from that position is a technical challenge and crossers are encouraged to deliver the ball on the ground. Attacking teams will find that their midfield opponents retreating into the penalty area will wait outside the target area so they can move toward the ball in as natural an approach to a shot as they can manage in the circumstances.

e. Combinations. By far the most effective teams at crosses can get a minimum of two or three attackers in positions to receive a cross consistently. This requires that every attacker in the front third be very alert to the possibility of a cross. When a cross looks likely the other attackers move quickly into a sort of “staging area” near the penalty area. From here they can time their final runs, challenging the defense at the far post and near post almost simultaneously. Attackers must also be quick to move away from the staging area if the flank attack breaks down.

3. Technical Implications.
   a. Turning. The faster a forward can turn with the ball the greater the demand on supporting defenders.
   b. Shielding ability.
   c. Crossing pace and accuracy.
   d. Long range shooting.
   e. Ability to pass forward from midfield despite pressure from an individual defender.

Suggested Session Organization

The idea behind front third organization is to give forwards a chance to read and react to defenders in realistic positions in the vital area. Clarity will be our beginning value. We will achieve it by removing numbers, starting with one or two strikers receiving passes from a single midfielder, opposed by one or two live defenders. We will make a nod to realism by restricting the area.

1. Phase of play: 2 vs. 2 +1
   An opportunity for forwards to read the position and motion of a central defender or man-marker. Also an opportunity for midfielders to judge whether passes should go to feet or space based on the relationship of forward and defender.

Coaching points:
   a. Aggression without the ball. Try to receive balls in spaces from which to shoot. Sprint behind or beside defender. The forward’s posture on reception is critical: slightly turned if possible, back to goal if defender is touching.
   b. Aggression with the ball. Turn if there is space. Roll if the defender is touching you, back into the defender. Pull away from defender if in between. Play ball first time behind the other defender.
   c. Combine. Simplicity works best. Combination play is unavoidable, however, in the tight spaces in the vital area.
   d. Note. Recall that the opportunity we are trying to exploit is threatened only by the risk that the attack will stall, not that we will give the ball away. The coach will observe carefully the level of aggression and risk-taking present in each decision to see if it falls into an acceptable range.
3. Phase of Play: 5 vs. 7
The coach needs to add several factors missing from stage one.

a. Pressure on Service: Reading When to Show. First, with the source of service unopposed the forwards cannot refine their sense of timing. Gradually increasing the pressure on the service will give forwards the opportunity to read when to make a run.

b. Reading the Opposing Midfield. Second, the time and space needed to turn and shoot needs to be quick and small enough so defending midfielders cannot interfere by tackling back. If the defending midfielders are tackling back to prevent forwards from turning the attacking midfielders will be left free. Forwards will need to develop a sense of when to turn and when to lay the ball back.

c. Reading Flank Defenders. Third, central attacks can be stopped by the lateral compactness of the defense. All elements of the attack, forwards, central midfielders and flank players, need to be alert to this so they can unbalance the defense around either flank. For the purpose of giving players an opportunity to practice reading these cues the coach will expand the practice.

d. Coaching Points. Same as above. Make the ball dangerous.

e. Note. In this exercise the coach needs to artificially structure the midfield, at first, by telling attacking midfielders to keep some depth.

4. 8 vs. 8 through 11 vs. 11
Although the coach will insist that all players make realistic transitions to and from defending, it will not be possible for any attacker to get a realistic picture of the front third they will enter during a real game. The distances, angles and supporting players need to be realistically arranged. The only way to do this is in an 11 vs. 11 context. The trade off is more realism at the expense of repetition.

a. Organization. The organization of full field or small-sided games involves coaching position, starting and stopping the exercise and placement of balls. A lot of thought should be put into a way to start and stop the exercise to increase repetitions. One way might be to award a throw in at the half way line for the team being coached every time play has clearly moved away from the front third.

b. Variations: 7 vs. 7, 8 vs. 8, 9 vs. 9. Squads that don’t have 22 fit players can achieve many of the same goals with reduced numbers on a reduced field with one goal on the goal line.
Counter Attacking
Counter Attacking

1. Counter-attack

A. Go straight to goal at instant ball is won

B. Opponents have been in an attacking posture (pushed up into our half & spread over the width of the field), therefore opponent’s defense is not organized and there is space behind and within opponents to attack

C. Optimal times to counter

1. When a pass is intercepted.
   a. The opponent is moving forward.
   b. Mentality on attacking.
   c. Defender who intercepted pass is not pressured by an opponent so he/she can play ball forward through any angle.
   d. Players in advance of ball now seek to run into a space where a pass will put them straight to goal.
   e. Player on side of field away from ball bends away to further pull apart the few defenders left back and then bends toward goal to:
      • Receive through ball.
      • Combine with player in possession.
      • Get into box to receive serve.
      • Be ready for knockdown from goalkeeper.

2. When ball is won from first attacker or in a 50-50 duel.
   a. Again, defender who won ball is not pressured by an opponent and can play ball forward through any angle.
   b. a. and b. under 1 apply.

3. Off defending at corner kicks or restarts.

D. If ball cannot be played directly forward with a long pass in spaces behind or beside last defenders.

1. Ball played quickly to a midfield player breaking out.
2. He runs ball at speed toward goal.
3. Any attackers in advance of ball bend away to take defenders away & allow midfielder to continue dribbling or play ball into space ahead of bending attackers.
4. If defender advances to confront midfielder with ball, attacker comes back to show for wall pass.

E. Organization

1. In defending half of field begin with defenders & midfield players with balls to serve to 2 vs. 1 at halfway line.

2. Build to 2 vs. 2 at halfway line.
3. Build to 2 vs. 3 at halfway line.
4. In back third play five defenders win ball-counter.
5. Add a midfield player to run ball if it cannot be served directly.
6. Build with more numbers.

2. Playing out of the back

A. If team has won ball, but cannot counter and does not want to risk losing possession, they play out of back.

B. Can effectively play out of back because the number situation in a game dictates that there are numbers up in the back.

1. The opponent will have two or three front players, team with ball will have four back players.
2. Goalkeeper becomes a fifth attacker in the back third.

C. Must stretch opponent by outside backs going wide, stopper and sweeper pushing apart.

1. Outside back must make instant transition to an attacking posture.
   a. Bend out and turn early to get vision forward.
   b. Get wide to touch line.
2. Outside back receives ball & first priority is to see if ball can be prepared forward on first contact & unbalance the front players.
3. If back cannot unbalance front players immediately, he/she seeks to play ball forward on first contact & unbalance the front players.
4. If back closed down early he looks to see if a wall pass is possible off the midfield player.
5. If nothing forward on, back player back to a central defender or goalkeeper who can them change point of attack or play forward.

D. Central defenders separate with one holding near goalkeeper.

1. If center striker retreats, central defender with ball runs ball at him/her and looks to play other backs out.
2. If center striker attempts to split the two central defenders, the player with the ball has an open
angle to play off a midfield player and continue or play off the midfield player to the other central defender who is a third man.

E. Organization
1. In back third begin with four back players plus goalkeeper vs. two front runners.
   a. Have a goal for back players to dribble through.
   b. Give a further task to a player coming out of back.
2. Add a midfield player for backs to play off.
3. Build to three front runners; two wings and a center striker.
4. Add another midfield player to play off.
5. Add a defending midfield player.
6. Keep adding numbers to complicate environment.
Defending Tactics
Defending Tactics – Theory

Organization of Defense

There has been a shift, over the last twenty years, from the stopper – sweeper system, commonly a feature of man to man marking, to the double or three man center back system. This is a system normally associated with zonal defending.

The Academy understands that some American teams and clubs still use the stopper – sweeper system and recognize that by including it in this curriculum.

1. Tactical Functions by Unit

A. Tactical Functions – Backs

1. Goalkeeper
   a. Organization of back four and other defenders when opposition has ball in central and wide positions.
   b. Organization of team on defensive restarts.
   c. Positioning to deal with the space between the back four and penalty box.
   d. Ability to make a variety of standing and diving saves.
   e. Ability to technically and tactically deal with crosses

2. Center Backs
   Sweeper (Man-to-man system)
   a. Commander of defense
      • Verbally communicates with teammates in front.
      • Set rate of receding.
      • Establish & control last line of retreat.
   b. Cut out through balls
      • In general, plays behind ball when ball is centrally located.
      • Will move out to inner line when ball on flank.
   c. Provides cover (second defender) for marking defenders as needed.
   d. Pick-up free players coming through with and without ball.
      • When an attacking player has broken through and nears a shooting position, the sweeper will go through the tactic of “stepping up.”
      • May have marking responsibility.

Stopper (Man-to-man system)
   a. Detailed to mark opposing center striker.
   • When marking from central areas stopper plays on ball side of center striker.
   • Must not be touching center striker when marking.

Center backs (Zonal system.)
   a. Occupies the dangerous central space in the middle of the “back line” of defenders.
   b. Commands movement of back line players. Verbally communicates with other back line and defending players.
   c. Determines the receding rate of back line players.
   d. Determines the offside line if it is to be used.
   e. Shares defensive responsibilities of pressuring and covering most forward opponents with other center back(s).
   f. Covers for outside backs when necessary.
   g. Cuts through balls.
   h. Deals with crosses and high balls into dangerous central areas.

3. Flank backs

a. Mark wing
   • Defenders on flank should mark on goal side and ball side.
   • Tightness of marking depends on distance of wing to ball.
   • Track wing according to design of collective defending philosophy (zone, man-to-man, etc.)

b. Will have covering responsibilities. Whenever the ball and opponents are close to outside back he will come off his/her mark some extent to cover a teammate and squeeze some space of attackers.

c. Balance of defense.
   • When ball is on far side of the field in our final third or middle third (the defenders begin to flatten in back third) the outside defender must balance (the work of the third defender) the defense.
   • Will be the deepest defender and have best vision of field.
   • Will go in only as far as his near post. Not farther unless to cut out a through ball.

B. Tactical Functions – Midfield Players

1. Get goal side of ball
   a. At instant of transition, all midfielders make
attempt to work their way back goal side of ball.
• Recovery run from flank is toward own near post.
• Recovery run from middle is toward own penalty spot.
• Squeeze toward ball.

2. Midfield player must delay progress of attacking team in direction of their goal.
a. Will implement one of two basic philosophies
• Pressure points.
• Pressure pockets.
b. The midfielders as a group give ground.
• Keep ball in front of them.
• Screen the back four.
  a) Midfielders want to prevent opponents from penetrating them by passing, dribbling, etc., thus exposing back four.
  b) Want to force everything square and back.
• Marking responsibilities.
  a) Nominated defensive midfielder.
     1) Usually must mark the attacking midfielder of opponents.
     2) Willing to play a very reduced role in attack.
  b) Other members of midfield group will mark opponent opposites or defend appropriate spaces depending on the collective defending philosophy.
• Win ball – whenever possible the midfield player should win the ball. He/she must choose appropriate time (when covered, opponents locked in, ball misdribbled, etc.)

C. Tactical Functions – Forwards
1. Transition to defending.
a. Forward must be part of collective defending action.
b. Must be psychologically conditioned to instantaneous transition to become part of defending action.
c. Will have two roles
  • “Steer” opponents attack – usually when playing with two forwards of low pressure defending.
    a) At instant of transition the forwards attempt to force or “steer” the opponent attack in a certain direction.

b) If the collective defending action is to funnel opponent attacks down the middle, each forward will move wide to prevent any attack down a flank; the attack will be “steered” down middle.
c) Both forwards used to steer attack down one flank by shutting off back passes to goalkeeper or central players.

• Mark opponents – usually when playing with these forwards and high pressure defending.
  a) Three must mark four.
  b) Each wing marks an outside back, will track back on any vertical runs.
c) The center striker will split the two central defenders. Whichever of the two central defenders might attempt to penetrate, with or without the ball, must be tracked by the center striker.

2. Collective Defending
A. The defending team must decide where to confront the opponent – all over the field or closer to its goal.
1. High pressure defending
   confront the attackers all over the field, attempt to win the ball back as soon as possible.
   a. Defending team pushes up onto opponent and leaves offside space behind it.
   b. Force opponent into playing faster then ability allows.
   c. Disrupt the rhythm or tempo of the opponents attack.
   d. Keep opponent as far from goal as possible.
e. Factors affecting decision to high pressure.
   • Size of field – may dictate high pressure.
   • Condition of surface – a ball control team on a rough surface may mean a high pressure.
   • Environmental conditions.
      a) Playing on rain soaked or muddy field may mean high pressure.
      b) A strong wind at back may mean to push up and high pressure.
      c) Temperature.
   • Fitness of players – a very fit team may high pressure.
   • Age of players playing against an older team with good technical ability out of its rhythm.
   • Many other variables.
a) e.g., if opponents tall and like to play in air, high pressure to shut off source of service.
b) e.g., if opponents have a very weak player or players, mark everyone else tight and leave the weak player(s) free.

2. Delayed pressure defending
Most concerned about limiting space near to own goal, let other team have half or two-thirds of field. Confront attackers when defenders are compact and tightly organized.
   a. Defending team recedes into own half or defending third of field, not concerned about winning ball back immediately.
   b. Will not allow opponent any off-side space.
   c. Defending team wants maximal number of defenders between ball and own goal.
   d. No concern over what opponent does in its own back and middle third because it cannot score from there.
   e. Factors affecting decisions to delaying pressure.
      • Time remaining and score line.
      • In general, playing against a superior opponent is an indicator for playing delayed pressure defense.

B. The defending team must decide whether to mark man or mark space.

1. Man to mark marking
The defending team will have individual opponents to follow when their team is defending.
   a. At the instant of transition the defenders will find an attacking player to mark.
   b. It may be the nearest attacker or it may be a specific player.
   c. Under strict man-to-man marking, the defender will follow his/her man all over the field.
   d. Even man-to-man marking must be accomplished within the principles of pressure, cover and balance.
   e. Factors affecting decision to mark man-to-man.
      • Easiest method to teach.
      • Easiest method for players to understand.
      • Environmental conditions.
         a) A cool climate is conducive to man-to-man marking.
         b) A cloudy, cool day might dictate a change to man-to-man marking.
      • Physical qualities of players – a strong, fit team can mark man-to-man.
      • A younger team playing an older team may dictate man-to-man marking.

2. Zonal Marking
The defending team will have areas of space which they must defend.
   a. At the instant of transition the defenders will pull back into these areas.
   b. When an attacker arrives in a defenders space, the defender is responsible for the attacker.
   c. The defender will follow the attacker to the edge of his “zone” and then pass the attacker on to the defender in the next zone, whether horizontal or vertical.
   d. If the defender in the next zone is clearly occupied, the defender will continue to move into the next zone.
   e. Should be a series of interlocking triangles of defenders.
   f. Factors affecting decision to mark space or zones.
      • Best method to conserve energy – demand less running.
      • Defenders do not get stretched out.
      • Always cover nearby.
      • Effective when other team has good dribblers, there are always numbers behind the defender pressuring the dribbler.
      • Older aged teams can keep defense compact and be effective in zones.

C. Defending relative to third of field

1. Final Third
   a. Objective to win back ball if possible or to delay the forward progress of the opponent into the middle third.
      • Take risks to win ball back immediately in final third.
         a) If ball won back, player in position to score or make final pass.
         b) If player misses, the team still has 100 yards to recover.
   ii. Forwards will work to prevent forward progress so that midfield players and backs have time to recover goal side and organize the collective defending action.
• Forwards will steer the attack into a certain area.
  a) Down middle.
  b) To flanks.
  c) To a weak opponent.

b. Forwards continue to defend by tracking and harassing back players.

2. Middle Third
a. Objective to win ball back if possible or to delay forward progress of the opponent.
• Midfield players will attempt to win the ball if situation is good.
  a) Bad pass.
  b) Loss of dribble.
  c) Pressuring player supported.
  d) Locked against touch-line.
• Collective defending action should be implemented and working.

b. If ball is played past the midfield, all midfielders must track opponents that run into advanced attacking positions.

3. Back Third
a. Objective to prevent shot at goal and win ball back when situation dictates.
• No risk.
  a) All balls played into the final third should be cleared first-time unless absolutely safe to receive.
  b) Defenders will not dive in for tackle.
    1) Stay on feet.
    2) Mentally composed.
    3) Player pressuring ball must be supported closely.
    4) Make attacker play ball back.
• Defenders stop at last line of retreat.
  a) Last line of retreat generally at the top of box.
  b) The goal line and goalkeeper become balancing defenders.
  c) Leave offside space.
  d) Goalkeeper deals with balls played into box.
• Shallow depth.
  a) In both end thirds depth is shallower than the rest of the field.

b) In back third depth shallow because all defending players need to be positioned to block shots if ball transferred from one attacker to another. Also, in back third all supporting defenders must be shallow to close down first attacker if he beats first defender (before he can shoot or play a final pass).

b. Coach must encourage and train aggressive, yet composed mentality needed to defend in back third.

Defending Tactics 1 – The Back Third

1. Opportunities
As the opposing team enters the back third defenders can be in their most compact shape. Attacking teams can run out of space quickly. Defenders will always be looking for opportunities to win the ball.
A. Interception. The hallmark of the excellent defender.
B. Tackling. A combination of precision and force.
C. Clearing the ball.
D. To hurry the attack. The other side of the coin from accelerating the attack. Defenders have the initiative. Attackers are not pressing the attack they are reacting to defenders just to stay in possession. Usually starts at the first sign of hesitation or ball control difficulties.

2. Risks
Conceding a Goal. Defenders are closer together during this phase of play than in any other. Often two, sometimes even three defenders will commit to blocking a shot.

3. First Defender: Pressure
A. Preventing a shot.
B. Slowing the pace of the attack.
C. Making the attack predictable.
D. Dealing with combination play.
   A. Pressure on the ball.
   B. No pressure on the ball.
   C. Double teaming.
   D. Dealing with combination play.

5 Third Defenders: Balance
   Nowhere is the tension between man-to-man and zonal defending strategies more acutely felt than in the back third.
   Flank defenders need to be aware when space in the center of the defense is being threatened and prepared to move in quickly to deny that space, mark opposing attackers and deal with unsettled situations.

6 Central Defenders
   If the problems of back third defending had one single focal point it would be the center of the defense. The issue of marking attackers vs. covering space is at its sharpest. Whatever defending system has been chosen, the players in the middle of the defense have to develop flawless judgment about when to mark, how to mark, when to cover, how to cover.

   A. Sweeper
      • Covering space centrally
      • Covering space behind, between, in front of markers
      • Covering space at near post on crosses.
      • Supporting pressuring defenders.
         - At the back.
         - In midfield.
      • Stepping up to pressure attackers with the ball.
      • Marking attackers who have run free from midfield.
      • Commanding the defense, determining depth.

   B. Twin Center Backs
      • Covering space centrally.
      • Marking or passing on center forwards.
      • Dealing with crosses.
      • Supporting the rest of the defense.
         - Other back players.
         - Midfield defense.
      • Commanding the defense.

Suggested Session Organization
   The organizational goal here is to give defenders a chance to read an attack as it attempts to penetrate into the vital area, as well as to react to an attack that has made it to the vital area and is trying to develop scoring chances. The goal of clarity will be achieved by reducing numbers and restricting the playing area. The goal of realism will be achieved by reversing that: adding numbers and expanding the playing area.

1. Phase of Play: Goalkeeper + 2 Defenders vs. 2 Forwards + Midfielder
   The same organization as suggested for the first stage of Tactics 1A. Here the coach focuses on the marking and covering decisions of two central defenders playing against two strikers. In this sort of exercise the coach must artificially structure the attack by asking the server to stay deep.
   **Coaching Points:**
   a. Marking and Covering. Marking position, pressuring position, recognizing the cues indicating combinations. Recognizing when to cover and when to mark.
   b. Blocking Shots.

2. Phase of Play: Goalkeeper + 3 Defenders + 3 Midfielders v. 2 Forwards + 3 Midfielders = 7 vs. 5
   It’s difficult for defenders to practice intercepting passes into the forwards they are marking unless the source of the pass is under pressure. By putting the midfield under pressure it enables the back defenders to practice their positioning and the timing of any attempts to intercept balls to feet. It also allows them to read the cues indicating a pass to feet or a pass to space. All three back defenders can practice reading how compact to get, if the attacking team is organizing to try a combination like a 1-2, etc.
   **Coaching Points:**
   a. Interception.
   b. Positioning on crosses.
   c. Transition to and from attacking.

3. 8 vs. 8
   Finally the team being coached needs a chance to read an attack as it might develop during a real game. They also need practice getting into good defending positions from realistic attacking
Defending Tactics 2 – The Middle Third

1. Opportunities
   To dispossess the opposing team. To stop their progress forward: to keep play in front of the midfield.

2. Risks
   Conceding an easy scoring chance. One way to deal with that risk is to keep play in front of the midfield. That can lead to the other risk: chasing an endless game of keep away.

3. First Defender: Attack Predictable
   The first defender’s work to make play predictable is invaluable in all phases of defending. If the attack is predictable and it appears that the attacking team must keep their play near the point of attack then the defending midfield is free to deny space at the point of attack without fear of becoming unbalanced.
   A. Pressure on the ball.
   B. An attack that has stalled.
   C. Predictable pass down the flank: double teaming.

4. Second Defender
   The following judgments are based on the second defender’s ability to read the attack, i.e., to sense what the first attacker’s next move will be. Deciding how compact to make the defense:
   A. First attacker only has short options: dribbling or a tight combination. Denying space near the point of attack.
   B. First attacker shaped to pass: Marking support attackers.
   C. First attacker slowed or stopped due to good first defender pressure, first attacker’s confused hesitation, control problems, or delaying to let a teammate get back onside: aggressively taking the initiative which the attack has let slip away by double teaming or swarming. Not to be confused with an attacker in good control who has slowed to invite an unsupported challenge: move in under control.

5. Third Defenders: The Defending Shape of the Midfield
   The question for coaches deciding to what degree strategic decisions like “man-to-man” or zone should influence midfield defending is: To what extent will the shape of the midfield be determined by the positions/motions of opposing players? From a tactical point of view the answer is simple: When there is no pressure on the ball most midfield groups orient themselves goal side of individual attackers, even midfields adhering to a zonal defending strategy. Laterally, third defenders in all defending systems make the same judgment call when deciding how closely they should “mark” weak side attackers: how far can this first attacker play the ball? Which is part of the larger question: How dangerous is this third attacker right now?
   Once the ball is under pressure the shape of the midfield defense can change dramatically. Outstanding midfield defenses are lightning fast, flexible and pose multiple threats to an attack using the middle third to prepare its way to goal. Good tactical training reveals the opportunities inherent in this flexibility and mobility. Good tactical training helps players refine their judgment of when the ball is under pressure, when the attack has become predictable.
   A. Anticipating a change in the point of attack.
   B. Reading when the attack can’t change the point of attack.
   C. Reading when the ball gets played back to depth.
   D. Defending as a back:
      1. Tracking players that run forward.
      2. Covering space on the weak side of the back line of defenders.
   E. Defending as a forward:
      1. Pressuring opposing back players.

Suggested Session Organization
   The objective will be to give players a chance to recognize the risks and opportunities presented...
by an attacking team building its attack through the middle third. We will do that with a phase of play organization and gradually add numbers to it.

1. Phase of Play: 4 vs. 4. Across the Middle Third
The midfield unit gets a chance to practice the small-group tactics of balance vs. compactness. They will have the same physical setting as they’ll have in a game.

Coaching Points:
a. Balance: determining how large the group zone should be. The farthest defender from the ball will judge the width of the space available to the first attacker, or the first attacker with whatever close support is present. The judgment will be based in part on the first defender’s pressuring position. For example, if the angle of approach exposes only the flank then the weakside defender can be narrower without unbalancing the defense. If the pressuring defender’s position exposes the full width of the field then the weakside defender may have to position wider. This judgment may also be influenced, but not determined by the presence of an attacker who is positioning wide on the flank.
b. Compactness: Determining how large individual zones should be. Midfield defenders near the point of attack will judge their supporting positions, as well as whether or not it’s necessary to mark a supporting attacker, based on the ball control of the first attacker, pressuring defender, and the presence of close attacking support. They will assess whether the first attacker is going to dribble, pass, withdraw or combine in some way.

2. Phase of Play: 6 vs. 7
In the second stage of the session the midfield defenders link with their back defenders to form a 6-man zone. In this stage midfield defenders get a chance to react to two important situations: a pass from the midfield to a forward, and an attack over a flank. In both cases midfielders have to decide how closely they will support the pressuring defender. Leaving too large a gap between the back defenders and the midfield defenders allows the forwards to act as a group, adding depth to the group by withdrawing one forward, perhaps pulling a central defender out of position. If the midfield defenders play too close to the back defenders they may allow some midfield attackers to shoot from long range. Flank midfielders will also have to cover space on the weak side of the back four. As the weak-side fullback collapses toward the center of the field, either to mark or to cover central defenders, the weak-side flank player will have to judge how deep and how wide to position. These judgements are all based on the same visual cues as in the midfield with the addition of the part of the field.

3. 8 vs. 8
In the last stage of the session the coach adds the remaining players from both teams, using the entire field. The training target at this point is to give midfielders the opportunity to practice getting into good defending positions from more realistic starting positions; to judge how deep to play in the team (how close to their own back four, how close to their own forwards); to practice intercepting balls played into the midfield from opposing back players who are under pressure from the defending team’s forwards. The themes of compactness and balance remain the same, however. The coach achieves a measure of frequency by re-starting the exercise with a throw-in to the attacking team at the halfway line, or some other artificial means of increasing frequency. The coach’s position is along one touchline near the halfway line, moving into the field as play moves to the opposite side.

Defending Tactics 3 – The Front Third

1. Opportunities
The main opportunity is to regain possession in the front third.

A. Interception. Opportunities to intercept are easier to recognize, but physically harder to seize. Attackers use less deception in their back third because it increases the risk of deceiving their own teammates.

B. Tackling. The opportunities to tackle are fewer and farther between in the front third.

C. Forced error. An opportunity to force an error is more difficult to recognize because attackers generally have more space around them. But attackers need to be precise with longer passes.
and forcing them to hurry their preparation and delivery can result in inaccurate or poorly weighted passes. These hurried passes are opportunities for other parts of the defense. Forcing a small error in the front third may start a chain of errors which grows more serious under constant defensive pressure.

D. Unforced error. Defenders need to be very alert to unforced errors. Bumpy field conditions, careless passing techniques, sloppy control, sluggish turns all present defenders with opportunities to regain possession or force further errors.

2. Risks

The risks in this part of the field are completely lopsided in favor of the defending team. There is very little risk of conceding a goal. The two main risks that defenders must be aware of are:

A. Allowing the opponent to launch an attack that puts all ten defenders “out of the game” with little chance of recovery.

B. Allowing the opponent to enter the middle third unpredictably.

3. First Defender

A. Deny penetration.

B. Make play predictable.

C. Win back possession.

D. Speed of approach. The risks are so slight and the opportunity of regaining possession by forced error is so great that many pressuring defenders approach at a very high speed. Although good defenders are very aggressive in this part of the field, they are careful not to let the opponent get out “the easy way” by giving away free kicks.

E. Angle of approach. Ideally, separate first attacker from support. Expose one flank. Steer the ball away from their most dangerous or effective player. Realistically, get any angle you can, just get to the ball.

4. Second Defenders

A. Make play predictable. A good marking or supporting position can make play easier to predict.

B. Maintain minimum compactness. Supporting defenders can be flatter and farther apart than in other areas of the field. Positioning should be close enough to make the quick and simple route between defenders seem unattractive.

C. Balance. Especially if just two forwards are defending against four back players. It depends on what their function is. If their function is to keep the back four from penetrating then the defending pair of forwards may have to retreat to stay balanced. If their function is to make play predictable, then it isn’t as much of a problem if they get unbalanced, as long as it’s predictable and a midfielder can step up into the exposed space. The situation, the energy, the intensity and commitment of the forwards determines which role they’ll play. Midfielders are in a position to choose their role based on what the forwards are achieving.
Man-to-Man and Zonal Defending
Man-to-Man/One-to-One Defending

A strategy of man-to-man or one-to-one defending can be described in fairly simple terms. Mark every opposing player forward of the ball. Every opposing player near the ball is marked tightly, denying them the opportunity to receive the ball. Opposing players away from the ball are marked loosely, with the defenders sliding toward the ball to provide defensive depth and cover (the distance that the defender slides away from a mark is directly related to: 1. how far away the ball is, and 2. the probability of the mark receiving the ball).

1. Pressure on the ball: speed and angle of approach
   Pressure on the ball is a key to successful man-to-man defending. The greater the pressure, the less time the attacker has to find a playable option. A defensive decision must be made as to the amount of pressure to be put on the ball. If the attacking player is under control and in clear possession of the ball, a more cautious approach of pressure should be applied. If attacking player is not under control and does not have clear possession of the ball, the pressure should be immediate and with urgency.

   A. Front Third
      Force attacker to focus solely on the ball. Angle of approach should: shut off attackers immediate passing lane, force attacker towards defensive support or force attacker to sidelines. If possible, make available options to the attacker limited and predictable.

   B. Middle Third
      High speed of approach. Limiting the attackers time and space with the ball is a priority. Again, the angle of approach should do one of three things: shut off attackers immediate passing lane(s), force attacker into defensive support or force attacker to flank areas of the field. The speed and angle of pressure on the ball should assist the defense in keeping the area around the ball as compact as possible. If the ball is already on one flank then the pressure is angled to keep the ball on that flank. Don’t allow attackers to change the point of attack.

   C. Back Third
      Standard, cautious speed of approach. Don’t expose vital areas. Again the pressure on the ball should do one of three things: shut off passing lane(s) to most dangerous player, force the attacker into supporting defender or force attacker to flanks away from goal.

2. Support for the pressuring defender
   A very important key to the success of man-to-man defending is the defensive principles of the first, second and third defenders. The support of the second defender provides cover for the first defender putting immediate pressure on the ball. The second defender allows the first defender freedom to pressure the ball without fear of being beaten by the attacker. The third defender will then provide depth and balance.

   A. Angle of supporting positions – Supporting positions are dictated by the following:
      1. Area of field where the attacker is
      2. Position of attacking penetrating options
      3. Directing first defender for possible double-teaming opportunities.

   B. Distance of supporting positions – The support of the second defender must be close enough to be able to step-up and tackle if the attacker beats the first defender with the dribble. The distance of the second defender must not be so close that the attacker can beat both defenders with the dribble.

3. Shape of the Team
   The size and shape of the area occupied by the entire team is managed very carefully to reduce the amount of space the attacking team is allowed to play in. The smaller the area, the greater the pressure is on the ball to: deny penetration and change the point of attack.

   Weakside help is a critical component in man-to-man defending. Midfield and defenders weakside positioning can help to keep the attackers playing area compact. Weakside help also provides depth and balance. Weakside help is also responsible for attacking penetrating runs on the backside of the defense.
Zonal Defending

A strategy of man-to-man defending can be described fairly easily in terms of rules. For example, mark every player forward of the ball, mark every player near the ball tightly, mark players away from the ball loosely, etc. Zonal defending strategies, on the other hand, do not lend themselves easily to rules-based descriptions. The word “zonal” is deceiving. The best zonal defenses behave like a highly mobile crowd. The 10 field players have assigned starting positions within the crowd rather than assigned parts of the field. The best zones can make the field “crowded” at the point of attack yet still make it difficult to get around them or over them.

They rely on weakside flank defenders who can read when to compress the team laterally, sometimes sliding 35 yards in toward the center of the field, and when to sprint back out toward the touchline in anticipation of a long change in the point of attack.

They rely on back players who can read when to compress the team vertically, sometimes to a depth of only 30 yards from front to back, and when to sprint back in anticipation of a successful run forward. Most of all, like any defense, they rely on pressure and the bread and butter basics of good group defending near the ball.

1. Pressure on the ball: speed and angle of approach
Zones can destroy attacks with a variety of threats. Whereas man-to-man strategies tend to eliminate attacking options by making the options themselves less attractive, zonal strategies are more likely to leave the options and eliminate the first attacker’s ability to exploit them by overwhelming the first attacker. This is truest in the middle third.

A. Front Third
Very high speed of approach. Any angle will do. If possible make attack predictable. If possible steer away from strengths. If possible steer onto a flank.

B. Middle Third
There are two situations.
1. First attacker under control. A controlled but urgent speed of approach. Then look for any hesitation, uncertainty or loss of control.
2. Defense in control. Pace of play too fast for the attackers or attackers just reacting to defenders. High speed of approach.

3. Angle of approach. Limiting the first attacker’s time and space with the ball is generally a much higher priority than limiting the first attacker’s options. Therefore angles of approach tend to be less important than speed of approach. Good midfield defenders in a zone tend to focus more on getting to the ball quickly than adjusting their route to the ball. It is more important to approach from the goal side than it is in the front third. If the ball is already on one flank then the pressure is angled to keep the ball on that flank. Don’t allow attackers to change point of attack. This enables the zone to be more compact at point of attack.

C. Back Third
Standard, cautious speed of approach. Angle of approach blocks the vital area.

2. Support for the pressuring defender
One key to a zone’s success is its ability to deny space at the point of attack; space that could be used either to escape the high speed approach of the first defender, or to push the attack forward. Supporting defenders cut out passes, crowd near the first defender if the attack has slowed or there’s pressure on the ball. If pressure has been relieved then supporting defenders are forced back into more man-marking positions.

A. Angle of supporting positions
One big advantage of the zone is the ability of supporting players to face more toward the ball and to be more balanced and stationary (not moving quickly chasing supporting attackers).
1. Front third: flat
2. Middle third: at least two defenders support the first attacker from both angles on either side. Can be flat, can be “enveloping” (pressure pockets) can both be goal side (pressure points).

B. Distance of supporting positions
- Depends on how much pressure is on the ball, how fast the ball is moving, the threat of passes to close
supporting attackers, part of field.

3. **Shape of the Team**

The size and shape of the area occupied by the entire team needs to be managed carefully in order to keep pressure on the ball without conceding too much offside or weakside space. The shape of the team is the foundation supporting the zone’s ability to eliminate options at the point of attack through pressure and support for the pressure.

Maintaining closeness among all defenders is key. Never allowing large gaps to open up between players or between “lines” of players (e.g. between the back four and the midfield). Not allowing the position or runs of weakside attackers to open up these gaps by judging when to pass players on. This is one of the zone’s defining characteristics. It has misled some people to believe that zone defenses don’t mark attackers.
Goalkeeping
Goalkeeping

The Advanced National Diploma provides exercises for the coach to include tactical functional training for goalkeepers within the team training session. (Technical functional training covered in National Diploma)

A. Defending

Objective
To make decision to come off line & cut out cross. Decision to catch or box. Also, coordination with defending teammates.

Exercise 1
a. Goalkeeper vs. two attackers stationed in box.
b. 2 vs. 1 on either flank – progress to cross into box for goalkeeper to cut out, hold his line, catch or box.
c. Alternate flanks.
d. Increase numbers in box.
e. Goalkeepers decision to come off line based on:
   • Distance to ball – how far out in box is ball and how deep. Is ball bending toward goal or away from goal.
   • Path to ball – how many teammates and opponents are in the way between goalkeeper & where he must catch ball.

Exercise 2
a. In half of field with two full goals, one in regular position, one at halfway line.
b. A goalkeeper and one defender vs. two attackers at each goal.
c. 2 vs. 1 on each flank.
d. Same exercise as above except when one goalkeeper catches the ball, he/she throws to opposite flank for 2 vs. 1 to attack other goal.
e. Add more attackers and defenders.

Objective
Goalkeeper deal with space between goal and back four, also coordination with defending teammates.

Exercise 3
a. One attacker & one defender standing side-by-side 35 yards from goal.
b. Server stands behind and slightly to side of attacker and defender.
c. Server hits through ball between the goalkeeper and on rushing attacker and defender.
d. Goalkeeper makes decision to come out & collect ball before attacker can reach it or decides to let defender deal with situation.
   • Restrict defender to kneeling, standing back-to-back with attacker to achieve time frame coach desires.
   • Change angle of defender so his recovery run comes from side and behind.
e. Add more attackers and defenders.

Exercise 4
a. Two teams of eight play full-field with offside tactics.
b. Goalkeeper must deal with space between his goal & offside line.
c. Goalkeeper becomes sweeper to cut-out through balls, etc.
d. When ball played back & defenders move up, goalkeeper will watch for:
   • Long diagonal pass to side away from ball for player coming from behind.
   • Beginning of 1-2 movement past offside line.
   • Attacker who plays ball for himself or dribbles past on rushing offside line.

Exercise 5
a. 3 vs. 3 in box with goalkeeper, one wing with ball wide on flank and one midfield player supporting wing.
b. Goalkeeper must deal with space between goal & last line of retreat when it is pushed out to top of box.
c. Wing dribbles down flank into corner.
d. Wing gets pressured by a defender and plays ball back past top of box to supporting midfield player.
   • Sweeper will be pushing all defenders out to last line of retreat at top of box.
   • As players in box are moving out, midfield player serves ball into center of box.
   • Goalkeeper must catch cross.
e. Add attacking midfield players behind box to time runs onside and challenge goalkeeper for crosses.
f. Add numbers or play 6 vs. 4, 6 vs. 5, 6 vs. 6, etc. Condition exercise to allow ball played back to midfielder who will then serve into
B. Attacking

Once the goalkeeper has made a save or has the ball played back to him/her, he/she must be capable or instant and correct attacking decisions & be able to implement them technically. The goalkeeper is a soccer player who has the privilege of using his/her hands in the penalty box.

Objective
At the instant of transition the goalkeeper must:

a. Counter attack if it is on.

b. Keep possession for his/her team if counter not on.

c. Implement attacking style.

Exercise

a. For long kick to counter attack.
   • On full field a goalkeeper in each goal.
   • Narrow middle third with three attackers on each side of half-way line still in middle third. Two defenders in back third, but close to the narrow middle third.
   • Keeper kicks (preferably drop kicks) to his three attackers on opposite side of halfway line. They attack the two defenders waiting in back third.

b. On all exercises where goalkeepers catch crosses or shots, if the emphasis is tactical play, the goalkeepers should be required to throw first to targets, then add defenders for goalkeeper to decide which target to play to. Increase the number of targets and defenders to simulate game conditions. If keeper has special techniques (long kick, long and very accurate throw) utilize in tactical plan of attack.
Appendices
Are you interested in bringing NSCAA Coaching Education to Your Community?

IT’S AS EASY AS 1 - 2 - 3!

1. Contact your NSCAA State Director or Regional Director (contact information is available online at NSCAA.com/education).

2. Secure a location appropriate for the course you’d like to host (your SD/RD can help with specifics, but you should plan on having classroom space and space for field sessions).

3. Promote your course! Visit NSCAA’s Course Marketing Toolkit Page at NSCAA.com/education-toolkit to download your promotional materials or call 913-362-1747 for more information.

SITE COORDINATORS AND COURSE HOSTS CAN BENEFIT!

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National Soccer Coaches Association of America
NSCAA Membership

NSCAA Membership Categories

- Regular Membership: $95 (U.S. and Canada Only)
- European Membership: $125
- Other Foreign Membership: $135
- Active/Retired: $65

The National Soccer Coaches Association of America is the largest single-sport coaches association in the world with more than 30,000 members. Founded in 1941, the NSCAA is dedicated to the education of coaches at every level of the game including youth, high school, college and professional.

Benefits of Membership in the NSCAA

- Soccer Journal Magazine - Printed eight times each year, this official publication of the NSCAA is the only magazine dedicated specifically to soccer coaches.

- Annual Convention - Held each January in a U.S. city, the NSCAA Convention is the largest soccer show in the world with clinics, lectures, exhibits, meal and social functions.

- Awards and Recognition - The NSCAA sponsors numerous award and recognition programs including Coach of the Year, All-American, national team rankings and various service awards including commendations, the Hall of Fame and the Honor Award, the NSCAA’s highest award.

- Coaching Academy Program - The coaching academy program includes the coaching certification courses (both residential and non-residential), clinics, forums, symposiums and various educational offerings.

- Product Discounts - Members save on books, videotapes and soccer-related products with their NSCAA membership. Special offers are made through direct mail and the Soccer Journal.

- Apparel and Equipment - Through sponsors like adidas, members are offered various discounts on team products and exclusive licensed coaching apparel.

- Insurance - Dues also provide members with $1 million in liability insurance which covers almost all soccer-related coaching activities.

- If you’ve never held an NSCAA membership, you will receive a free introductory membership with your academy enrollment. Maybe you know another coach who could benefit from membership in the NSCAA? Write or call for a membership brochure at:
  NSCAA
  800 Ann Ave
  Kansas City, KS 66101
  Phone: 913-362-1747
Recommended By The NSCAA Coaching Academy

Ages 12 +

Bauer, Gerhard; Soccer Techniques, Tactics and Teamwork.
Bisanz, Gero & Norbert Vieth; Success in Soccer.
Bonfanti, Mario and Angelo Pereni; The Complete Book of Soccer Restart Plays.
Caitlin, Mark; The Art of Soccer.
Caruso, Andrew; Soccer Coaching Development and Tactics.
Caruso, Andrew; The Great Game.
Coerver, Wiel; Score.
Critchell, Mick; Warm Ups for Soccer: A Dynamic Approach.
Detchon, Jack; Zonal Defending.
DiCicco, Tony; Catch Them Being Good.
DiCicco, Tony; The Goalkeeper Training Manual.
Dorrance, Anson; Training Soccer Champions.
Errickson, Sven; The England Coach.
Gregg, Lauren; The Champion Within.
Goncalves, Jose. The Principles of Brazilian Soccer.
Gorman, Barry with Lawrence Fine; The Full Season.
Howe, Bobby; Coaching the Player.
Hughes, Charles; The Football Association Coaching Book of Soccer- Tactics and Skills.
Kentweel, Richard; Dutch Soccer Drills Volume 1: Individual Skills.
Kentwell, Richard; Dutch Soccer Drills Volume 2: Game Action Drills.
Marziali, Floriano and Vincenzo Mora. Coaching the 4-4-2.
NSCAA, The Soccer Coaching Bible.
Pererni, Angelo and Michele Di Cesare; Zone Play.
Pronk, Nico & Gorman, Barry; Soccer Everyone.
Schreiner, Peter; Coordination, Agility and Speed Training For Soccer.
Schum, Tim; Coaching Soccer. (Masters Press)
Simon; Practice Games for Winning Soccer.
Simon & Reeves; Soccer Restart Plays.
Success in Soccer; the Magazine.
Verheijen, Dr. Raymond; Conditioning for Soccer.
Wade, Alan; Soccer Strategies.
Wade, Allen; Positional Play.
Waiters, Tony; Coaching the Team.
Waiters, Tony; Coaching Set Plays.
World Class Coaching; The Magazine.
Wrzos, Jerry; The International Training Guide.

U-12

Dewazien, Karl; Practice for Champions.
Dewazien, Karl; Tactics for Champions.
Dewazien, Karl; Fundamental Soccer.
Quinn, Ron; The Peak Performance.
Waiters, Tony and Bobby Howe; Coaching 6, 7 and 8 Year Olds.
Waiters, Tony and Bobby Howe; Coaching 9, 10 and 11 Year Olds.

The Indoor Game

De Boer, Klaas; Indoor Soccer.
Leight, Wes; Indoor Soccer Tactics and Skill.

Goalkeeping

Luxbacher, Joe; The Soccer Goalkeeper.
Machnik, Joe; The Skills of Goalkeeping.
Machnik, Joe; Goalkeeping Fitness and Tactics.
Machnik, Joe; Goalkeeping- The Next Dimension.
Waiters, Tony; Coaching the Goalkeeper.

Psychology and Management

Beswick, Bill; Focus on Soccer.
Goleman, Daniel; Primal Leadership.
Gorman, Barry; The Personality Pyramid.
Martens, Rainer; The Coaches Guide to Sport Psychology.
Useem, Michael; The Leadership Moment.
Walton, Gary M.; Beyond Winning: The Timeless Wisdom of Great Philosopher Coaches.

Videos

NSCAA; Club Tactical Development
NSCAA; Futbol Moderno
NSCAA; Player Development
NSCAA; Soccer Coaches Guide - For Young Players 5-7 Years Old
NSCAA; Soccer Coaches Guide - For Youth Players 9-12 Years Old
NSCAA; Soccer Tactics - On the Attack
NSCAA; Soccer Tactics - Defending to Win
NSCAA; Technical Training - Critical Coaching Points
DiCicco, Tony; Soccer Fun!
DiCicco, Tony; The Champions Soccer Series with Brandi Chastain (Tapes 1-3)
DiCicco, Tony; Goalkeeping, The DiCicco Method (Tapes 1-3)
Heinrichs, April; Training Girls and Women to Win
Appendix B – Additional Resources

International Tactics Limited (Jape Shattuck); Individual Attacking
International Tactics Limited (Jape Shattuck); Individual Defending
International Tactics Limited (Jape Shattuck); Group Attacking
International Tactics Limited (Jape Shattuck); Group Defending

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- Reedswain Books & Videos
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- Soccer Learning Systems
  www.soccervideos.com
  800-762-2376

Top Soccer Websites
- National Soccer Coaches Association of America
  www.NSCAA.com
- American Youth Soccer Organization
  www.ayso.org
- Down the Line
  www.down-the-line.com
- Eurosport
  www.soccer.com
- ESPN Soccer
  www.soccernet.espn.com
- FIFA
  www.fifa.com
- Major League Soccer
  www.mlsnet.com
- National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials of America
  www.nisoa.com
- National Women’s Soccer League
  www.nwlsoccer.com
- SAY Soccer
  www.saysooccer.org
- Soccer 365
  www.soccer365.com
- Soccer America
  www.socceramerica.com
- Soccer Association for Youth
  www.saysooccer.org
- Soccer Buzz Magazine
  www.soccerbuzz.com

Soccer Plus
www.soccerpluscamps.com
Soccer Times
www.soccertimes.com
United Soccer Leagues
www.uslsoccer.com
United States Soccer Federation
www.ussooccer.com
United States Soccer Players
www.ussoccerplayers.com
United States Youth Soccer Association
www.usyouthsoccer.org
US Club Soccer
www.usclubsoccer.org
World of Soccer
www.worldofsoccer.com
NSCAA Code of Ethics

1. Soccer is the player’s game. The paramount concern of coaches is the holistic development, welfare, enjoyment and safety of their players.

2. Coaches bear the responsibility for teaching players to strive for success while playing fairly, observing the laws of the game and the highest levels of sportsmanship.

3. Coaches shall treat officials with respect and dignity, and shall teach their players to do the same.

4. Our opponents are worthy of being treated with respect. Coaches will model such respect for opponents and expect their players to do likewise.

5. In both victory and defeat, the behavior of the coach shall model grace, dignity and composure.

6. Coaches shall adhere to the highest standards and the regulations of the institutions they represent: clubs, schools, sponsoring organizations and sports governing bodies.

7. Coaches have a responsibility to promote the interests of soccer, including treating the media with courtesy, honesty and respect.

8. Coaches shall model inclusive behavior, actively supporting cultural diversity while opposing all types of discrimination, including but not limited to, racism and sexism, at all levels of the game.

9. Coaches are responsible for taking an active role in education about, and prevention and treatment of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse, both in their lives and in the lives of their players.

10. Coaches shall refrain from all manner of personal abuse and harassment of others, whether verbal, physical, emotional or sexual, and shall oppose such abuse and harassment at all levels of the game.

11. Coaches shall respect the declared affiliations of all players, and shall adhere to all guidelines and regulations on recruiting established by the governing bodies having oversight of their teams and leagues.

12. Coaches shall seek to honor those who uphold the highest standards and principles of soccer and shall use appropriate protocol to oppose and eliminate all behavior that brings disrepute to the sport – violence, abuse, dishonesty, disrespect and violations of the laws of the game and rules governing competition.
Communication Skills

Communication is the process through which coaching occurs. Our communication skills are central to our ability to exercise leadership, motivate players and create the optimal training environment.

A study of communication reveals that a tremendous disparity can exist between the message sent and the message received. One simple way that this fact has been expressed is the following:

We hear half 50.00%
We listen to half 25.00%
We understand half 12.50%
We believe half 6.25%
We remember half 3.75%

Coaching communication is not primarily verbal. How you say your verbal message and what you do with your body when you say it are both physical signs which convey powerful messages. The relative importance of the three media is as follows:

Verbal 7%
Paralanguage 35% (Pitch, resonance, “not what you’re saying, but how you’re saying it”) Body language 55%

Guidelines for Effective Communication

1. Be Consistent – Communicate with all team members in a similar manner.
2. Be Sensitive to Personal Needs – Show concern for the athlete as a person.
3. Be Credible – Demonstrate honesty and sincerity with all team members.
4. Be Empathetic – Empathy is the skill of being able to put yourself in the athlete’s shoes.
5. Don’t be Sarcastic – Sarcasm destroys trust and loyalty.
6. Have a Sense of Humor – The key is timing.
7. Use Positive Non-Verbal cues – Non-verbal clues can send a stronger message than the spoken word.
8. Teach Skills – Effective coaching means, among other things, quality skill instruction.
9. Praise and Criticize Performance, not Character – Be immediate, be specific; praise–critique–praise.
10. Be a Desirable Model – Who you are speaks louder than what you say.

Guidelines for Sending Effective Messages

1. Your message should be direct.
2. You should own your messages.
3. Your message should be complete and specific.
4. Your message should be clear and consistent. Avoid double messages.
5. Your message should clearly state your needs and feelings.
6. Your message should separate fact from opinion.
7. Focus your message on one thing at a time.
8. Deliver your message immediately.
9. Your message should contain no hidden agendas.
10. Your message should be supportive.
11. Your verbal and non-verbal messages should be congruent.
12. Your messages should be redundant.
13. Make your message appropriate to the receiver’s frame of reference.
14. Obtain feedback that your message was accurately interpreted.

Feedback

Feedback is a special type of message. As coaches we strive to limit the time we spend describing and explaining. Our primary form of communication should be the feedback that occurs naturally as a part of the training activity. It is during this time that our abilities to assess, analyze, choose and intervene are put to their greatest test.

According to Martens (1990, p. 53), there are three types of feedback.

1. Objective Descriptive feedback is a message that describes clearly and specifically the behaviors observed.
2. Direct Descriptive feedback provides a “picture of behavior” that describes a behavior and includes your reaction to it.
3. Direct Evaluative feedback is less desirable. It is characterized by evaluating another person’s behavior without describing what led to the evaluation. For example, “that’s stupid.”

As coaches, our motivation to provide feedback should be:

1. To reward and support the person receiving the
feedback;
2. To help someone improve their performance; or
3. To improve your relationship with that person.

**Guidelines for Feedback**

1. Use the “feedback sandwich”: praise-critique-praise. The first and last statements enclose the triad of information that states:
   a. What the athlete did,
   b. What the athlete should do,
   c. How the athlete can accomplish it. (Hacker, 1994, p. 42)
2. Feedback should be immediate and specific.
3. Young or unskilled athletes may need more frequent feedback, especially when learning new skills.
4. If a player is having several problems, correct one problem at a time.
5. Give sample and precise information about how performance can be improved.
6. Focus on the process and performance.
7. Use feedback to reinforce effort.
8. Focus on what the player can control.
9. Avoid common feedback errors:
   a. High praise for simple tasks.
   b. Ignoring errors.
   c. High praise for simple tasks.
   d. Delayed feedback.
   e. Generalizations as feedback.
   f. Drawing a connection between performance and personality or self worth.

Timing is critical. It can salvage a training session that is going poorly or destroy the flow of one that is just getting started.

Leadership, motivation and communication are key elements of excellent training. Self evaluation plays an important role in improving those qualities.

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**Feedback: The Breakfast of Champions**

**Prepared by**

Dr. Colleen M. Hacker
Professor, Sports Psychology; Pacific Lutheran University WA
NSCAA Academy Staff

**Remember:**

- “You don’t have to blow out others’ candles to make yours shine brighter.”
- “People don’t care what you know until they know you care.”

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<td>- You figure out why</td>
<td>- KISS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tell what, but not how</td>
<td>- Specific and informational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “Dead person’s instructions”</td>
<td>- Shout praise and whisper criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ben Franklin says...</td>
<td>- Best friend communications</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Principles of Feedback**

1. Decide why feedback (FB) is being offered.
   a. to reinforce behavior
   b. to motivate the player
   c. to provide information (spatial and temporal information)
2. Match FB to skill being practiced
   a. open (flow of the game)
   b. closed (pk’s, set pieces)
3. Observe and provide FB to every athlete each training session.
4. Select FB modes to match learning styles.
5. Allow several performance and/or practice opportunities prior to FB.

---

Prepared with contributions from Dr. Colleen M. Hacker, NSCAA National Staff Coach; Professor of Sports Psychology at Pacific Lutheran University.
a. improvements may be delayed initially
b. offer FB between skill attempts

6. Reinforce successive approximations through optimal challenges.
7. Limit FB to critical elements and to correction at a time.
8. Use picture cues and utilize “show and tell” coaching.
9. Give immediate, specific FB, and both individual and group FB.
10. Be aware of the Pygmalion Effect on the field (effects of coaching expectations on player performance and behavior).
   
   a. **Expectations by coach** – differential behavior – behavior influences self-concept, achievement motivation, level of aspirations, self-efficacy beliefs. If expectations are consistent over time, behavior and beliefs will conform to original expectations.
   
   b. **Climate** - (more: smiles, pats, friendliness, support) Feedback (more: differentiated, attention, active coaching) Input (more: material and higher difficulty) Output (more: opportunities to respond, demands, call to perform) = self-fulfilling prophecy. (Be careful what you expect because you just might get it!)

11. Avoid common FB errors
   a. High praise for mediocre performance
   b. Ignoring errors
   c. High praise for simple tasks
   d. Delaying or generalizing FB
   e. Connecting performance to personality and self-worth

**FEEDBACK**
- increases the rate of learning
- enhances performance
- provides greater player satisfaction
- guides and directs future behavior

**Further Reading**

**Practical Suggestions for Coaches**
1. Provide feed forward information, not just feedback.
2. Find the good and praise it.
3. What you do speaks so loudly no one can hear
DON'T MISS
A SINGLE GAME!

LIVE ON

ESPN HD | NBC Sports Network

Download the Full Schedule at
MLSsoccer.com/calendar
College Credit For NSCAA Coaching Academy Courses

As a participant in a NSCAA Residential, Non-Residential or Special Topics course, you are eligible to apply for college credit through the University of Colorado. Information about credit hours and tuition cost is listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSCAA Course</th>
<th>Semester Hour Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Level 2 Diploma *</td>
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<td>Premier Diploma</td>
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<td>$200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goalkeeping Level 1 Diploma *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced National Goalkeeping Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Coach Diploma **</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master Coach Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Topics: Algarve Cup Symposium</td>
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<td>Special Topics: Women’s Championship Clinics</td>
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<td>Special Topics: Champions Coaches Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports Safety: PREPARE (online course)</td>
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<td>$65</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSCAA Annual Convention Clinic Sessions ***</td>
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</table>

* Credit for the Level 2 Diploma and the Goalkeeping Level 1 Diploma courses require submission of a short paper to meet college requirements for receiving credit. Details listed below in #4.

** For the Master Coach Diploma, register for college credit with UCCS after completion of all of the course requirements.

*** Course requirements for the NSCAA Annual Convention Clinic Sessions are listed in the materials provided for attendees at the convention.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS for COLLEGE CREDIT

1. Attend all the sessions and complete all course requirements for the NSCAA course or courses you are using to apply for college credit.
2. Download and complete the University of Colorado - Faculty Course Questionnaire. Return of this form is required.
3. Mail the completed Faculty Course Questionnaire to: Jay Engeln, 1724 Wood Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80907.
4. If taking the Level 2 Diploma or the Goalkeeping Level 1 Diploma you will need to complete a one-page paper describing how you will use the information learned in the course in your coaching career. Mail your paper along with the Faculty Course Questionnaire to the address listed in #3 above. Paper should be postmarked within two weeks of the conclusion of the course.
5. Complete the credit registration process with the University of Colorado (see the Credit Registration Process section on the reverse of this page). Credit registration must be completed within two weeks of the completion of the NSCAA course.
6. Please allow 6-8 weeks for processing of grades through the University of Colorado and verification of course completion with the NSCAA.
CREDIT REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Go to http://www.tinyurl.com/nscaa-college-credit or visit the College Credit link at www.NSCAA.com.

2. Scan the list of courses for the specific NSCAA course you took and for which you wish to receive University credit. Each course listing will indicate the deadline to register in the University of Colorado online system, the number of credit hours available, and the tuition.

3. Make a note of the appropriate 5-digit call number above and the term designation (right-hand column), and then proceed to the LAS Extended Studies Registration page. The registration instructions will guide you through registration and payment. Note: online registration through UCCS can take up to two business days, so please do not wait until the last day to register.

4. Any questions regarding registration should be directed to the LAS Office of Extended Studies.
The National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) is pleased to offer the option of credit in the form of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to coaches who have completed the following courses:

- National Diploma
- Advanced National Diploma
- Premier Diploma

The CEUs will be awarded by the United States Sports Academy. As a CEU provider for NSCAA, the United States Sports Academy will award five CEUs upon successful completion of the National Diploma, Advanced National Diploma, and Premier Diploma courses to those coaches who wish such credit as an option.

CEUs are awarded based upon the Carnegie Educational System at the successful conclusion of a continuing education course, seminar, or workshop. One CEU is equivalent to ten clock hours of participation in a recognized continuing education program. CEUs are widely used in the sports and fitness industry by coaches, teachers, administrators, and other professionals to help determine salary increments, promotions, and maintenance of certifications.

### How to Obtain your CEU Certificate from the United States Sports Academy

**NSCAA Certification Number**
Coaches successfully completing an NSCAA Residential Course will receive their Certification Number with their diploma and can also contact the NSCAA National Office at 800-458-0678 to receive that number if lost. NSCAA Certification Number is needed to apply for CEUs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>CEUs</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced National Diploma</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier Diploma</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$187.50</td>
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</table>

**Phone:**
Coaches may call the United States Sports Academy's Department of Continuing Education at 251-626-3303 to pay by credit card and register for CEUs. The NSCAA Certification Number (provided on your grade summary sheet) is required for verification.

Individuals who successfully complete any one of the above courses have up to one year from the date of completion to apply for CEUs.

Student CEU records are maintained in the United States Sports Academy Office of Student Services. Requests for transcripts may be obtained by visiting the following page: [http://media.ussa.edu/files/documents/forms/request_transcript.pdf](http://media.ussa.edu/files/documents/forms/request_transcript.pdf). The cost per transcript is $10.

### About the United States Sports Academy

The United States Sports Academy, America’s Sports University, is an independent, non-profit, accredited, special mission sports university created to serve the nation and the world with programs in instruction, research, and service. Visit us online at [www.ussa.edu](http://www.ussa.edu).

The Academy features the world’s largest academic program in sports and offers degrees at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral levels. Additionally, over 70 courses and certifications are offered through the Academy’s Department of Continuing Education.

The United States Sports Academy is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call (404) 679-4501 for questions about the accreditation of the United States Sports Academy.

The United States Sports Academy accepts students regardless of race, religion, gender, age, disability or national origin.
### Sample Schedule - Weeklong

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
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**Course director will confirm final schedule, including any changes, at opening session. Weather may dictate some changes during the week.**
## NSCAA Advanced National Diploma
### Two Weekends - Spring/Summer 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRIDAY</td>
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<td>SUNDAY</td>
<td>FRIDAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>75 min</td>
<td>Shadow Play</td>
<td>Restarts</td>
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<td>Practice Coaching</td>
<td>Field Tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>75 min.</td>
<td>Coaching in the Game</td>
<td>Attacking Tactics I, II, III</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Coaching</td>
<td>Field Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 min.</td>
<td>Counterattacking</td>
<td>Model Teaching: Coaching in the Game</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Coaching</td>
<td>Field Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75 min.</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Defending Tactics I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75 min.</td>
<td>Functional Training and Phase Play</td>
<td>Defending Tactics II and III</td>
<td>Crossing and Heading 70 min.</td>
<td>Practice Coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 min. Methods</td>
<td>Model Teaching: Functional and Phase</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goalkeeping 70 min.</td>
<td>Practice Coaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>45 min. Theory of Tactics I</td>
<td>60 min. Squad Tutorials</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Squad Tutorials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>75 min.</td>
<td>Pizza Dinner Social, Courtesy NSCAA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zonal and Man-to-Man Defending 70 min.</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 min. Theory of Tactics II</td>
<td>90 min. Match Analysis Game</td>
<td>Systems of Play 75 min.</td>
<td>Training Session Q&amp;A</td>
<td>White Blocks = Field</td>
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<td></td>
<td>60 min. Match Analysis</td>
<td>30 min. Match Analysis Review w/Squad @ Field</td>
<td>Final Topics; Exam Review</td>
<td>Training Session Q&amp;A</td>
<td>Updated 4/30/13</td>
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</table>
Match Analysis - Team Unit

Team - System of Play

Name

Date

Site

Observations - Attacking

Observations - Defending

Group: ____________________

Team Colors: _____________

Individual Player Characteristics

Practice Session Recommendations

Halftime Talk
Match Analysis - Team Unit

Team - System of Play

Name

Date

Site

Observations - Attacking

Observations - Defending

Group: _________________

Team Colors: _________________

Individual Player Characteristics

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Practice Session Recommendations

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Halftime Talk

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Appendix H - Coaching Templates
# Match Analysis - Team Unit

**Team - System of Play**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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**Observations - Attacking**

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**Observations - Defending**

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**Individual Player Characteristics**

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**Practice Session Recommendations**

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**Halftime Talk**

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Name: _________________________________________________  Topic: ____________________________________________

### Coaching Methodology
- [ ] Technical Progressive
- [ ] Tactical Progressive
- [ ] Functional Training
- [ ] Phase Play
- [ ] Shadow Play

### Warm Up Exercise

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### Main Theme Exercise 1

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### Coaching Points
- Include Visual Cues

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## Coaching Points

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## Diagram Team Shape

*Provide Field Dimensions*
Name: ____________________________  Topic: ____________________________  

### Coaching Methodology
- Technical Progressive
- Tactical Progressive
- Functional Training
- Phase Play
- Shadow Play

### Warm Up Exercise

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### Coaching Points
- Include Visual Cues

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**Appendix H - Coaching Templates**

105
Main Theme Exercise 3

Diagram Team Shape
Provide Field Dimensions

Organization

Coaching Points

Organization
Name: _______________________________  Topic: _______________________________

**Coaching Methodology**
- [ ] Technical Progressive
- [ ] Tactical Progressive
- [ ] Functional Training
- [ ] Phase Play
- [ ] Shadow Play

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**Coaching Points**

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Appendix H - Coaching Templates
## Main Theme Exercise 3

### Coaching Points

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## Diagram Team Shape

### Diagram Team Shape

Provide Field Dimensions

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**Warm Up Exercise**

**Organization Exercise 1**

**Organization Exercise 2**

**Main Theme Exercise 1**

**Main Theme Exercise 2**

**Coaching Points**

Include Visual Cues

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**Appendix H - Coaching Templates**

109
## Main Theme Exercise 3

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## Diagram Team Shape

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Coaching Outline – Coaching in the Game Methodology

Name: ___________________________________________  Topic: ____________________________________________

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Coaching Points you will make in this session:

1) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
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   _____________________________________________________________________________________________

2) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________

3) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________

Diagram your preferred system and shape for teaching this topic:

System and Shape Rationale
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
Diagram two scenarios that may occur right before the teachable moment.

Diagram two start positions you may need, showing the initial path of ball movement for each start position.
Coaching Outline – Coaching in the Game Methodology

Name: _______________________________________________  Topic: ____________________________________________

Warm Up: ____________________________________________  Description/Organization

Coaching Points you will make in this session:

1) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________
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2) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
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3) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
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Diagram your preferred system and shape for teaching this topic:

System and Shape Rationale

__________________________________
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Appendix H - Coaching Templates 113
Diagram two scenarios that may occur right before the teachable moment.

Diagram two start positions you may need, showing the initial path of ball movement for each start position.
Coaching Outline – Coaching in the Game Methodology

Name: _______________________________________________ Topic: ____________________________________________

Warm Up:                     Description/Organization

Coaching Points you will make in this session:

1) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
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2) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
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3) _____________________________________________________________________________________________
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Diagram your preferred system and shape for teaching this topic:

System and Shape Rationale
________________________________________________________________________________________________
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Appendix H - Coaching Templates
Diagram two scenarios that may occur right before the teachable moment.

Diagram two start positions you may need, showing the initial path of ball movement for each start position.
Coaching Outline – Coaching in the Game Methodology

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Coaching Points you will make in this session:

1) ____________________________________________________________________
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2) ____________________________________________________________________
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3) ____________________________________________________________________
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Diagram your preferred system and shape for teaching this topic:

System and Shape Rationale

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
Diagram two scenarios that may occur right before the teachable moment.

Diagram two start positions you may need, showing the initial path of ball movement for each start position.
RESIDENTIAL COURSE EVALUATION

Thank you for your participation in this NSCAA Coach Academy course. Please assist us in our commitment to the quality of the NSCAA Coaching Academy by completing this questionnaire. Your evaluation is valuable as we continue to strive to improve our courses.

Please evaluate each of the following by circling your choice; please add any comments you would like to add in the space following each question:

1. Pre Course:
   a. The registration process was timely and helpful.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   b. The pre-Academy information packet was informative and helpful in preparing for the course.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree

2. Site
   a. Lodging accommodations were sufficient and adequately close to lecture, meal and field sites.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   b. The quality of the food met my expectations for a coaching course.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   c. The quality of field facilities was sufficient for the course.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   d. The quality of the audio in the lecture facilities was sufficient.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   e. The quality of the visual presentations in the lecture facilities was sufficient.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree

3. Schedule
   a. The course schedule provided a good balance between learning and evaluation.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   b. The course schedule provided adequate time for preparation and planning.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree

4. Curriculum
   a. The curriculum provided for the course was helpful in providing structure and focus to the course.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   b. The curriculum content will provide an effective benefit to me in my coaching environment.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree

5. Field Sessions
   a. Staff coaches provided clear, logical progressions.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   b. Provided information that I can use in my coaching environment.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   c. Coaching methodologies presented provided insight and ideas.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
   d. Assisted me in preparing for my field coaching sessions.
      - Strongly Agree
      - Agree
      - Neither Agree or Disagree
      - Disagree
      - Strongly Disagree
6. Lectures
   a. Presentations were organized, informative and information was clearly presented.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree
   b. Assisted me in preparing for my field coaching sessions.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree

7. The staff coach(es)
   a. Communicated clearly and effectively.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree
   b. Exhibited thorough understanding of the curriculum.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree
   c. Helped me prepare to use the course information with my team(s).
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree
   d. Created a spirit of collegiality during the course.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree
   e. Was engaged, receptive to and a good resource within the squad. Questions.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree

8. Overview
   a. This course will enhance my knowledge and effectiveness as a coach.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree
   b. The course was interesting and enjoyable.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree
   c. I will recommend this course to coaching colleagues.
      - [ ] Strongly Agree   [ ] Agree   [ ] Neither Agree or Disagree   [ ] Disagree   [ ] Strongly Disagree

9. What components of the course did you consider most beneficial?

10. What changes or additions would you recommend for the course?

Feel free to share any additional information about your participation in this course in the space below.
The NSCAA Foundation Endowment Campaign

About the National Soccer Coaches Association of America

The NSCAA is the largest coaches’ organization in the United States. Founded in 1941, the NSCAA represents more than 26,000 members. Core to its mission is advancing soccer through coaching education. This is pursued through a nationwide program of clinics and week-long courses, teaching more than 4,000 coaches each year.

The NSCAA is also firmly committed to fostering diversity. The NSCAA strives to accomplish this by nurturing a learning environment that respects differences in culture, age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, religious affiliation and socioeconomic status.

About the NSCAA Foundation

More recently, the NSCAA established the NSCAA Foundation. Its mission is to provide soccer coaching educational opportunities to underserved socioeconomic communities, geographic areas, and ethnic groups throughout the United States.

The Foundation firmly believes in the broader societal benefits of soccer as a recreational activity, an avenue for health and fitness, a means of building leadership skills, and a competitive sport. We believe we can provide these benefits through soccer coaching education. The Foundation’s primary program activity is direct financial support through grants and through scholarships to coaching education programs.

Why We Need an Endowment—The Case for Support

Several minority groups, most notably Hispanics, are the fastest growing population segments of the United States, yet often they face financial and social barriers. Other underserved groups, such as African Americans in urban communities and Native Americans in rural areas, face the same barriers.

The NSCAA Foundation began awarding grants four years ago. Grantees include the Special Olympics, organizations serving Hispanic youth and Native American youth, inner city groups in the District of Columbia, Atlanta, and Philadelphia, and flood victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Because the Foundation does not have an endowment, each year we grant only what we receive in annual contributions. And because we have never undertaken a comprehensive fundraising initiative, funds available for grants have been inconsistent. We award an average of about $15,000 in grants each year.

To keep pace with the growth of these underserved groups, and to reach largely overlooked urban communities, the Foundation must be financially positioned to support the increasing demand for coaching education.

If we have the ability to increase support for these underserved groups, we will be able to provide them a never-before-offered opportunity to join the American youth soccer experience that today is predominantly a suburban experience.

Therefore, the NSCAA Foundation has launched a campaign to establish a significant permanent endowment that will bring coaching education opportunities to underserved communities and groups throughout the United States. Our initial goal is $1,000,000. Each year a draw of 4% on this principal will enable the Foundation to make grants of approximately $40,000—nearly three times what we currently award.

A gift to the NSCAA Foundation endowment will ensure that we are able to provide financial support to many more underserved groups than at present, and that these educational outreach initiatives will continue well into the future.

The NSCAA Foundation Endowment Campaign

800 Ann Avenue, Kansas City, KS 66101 phone: 800.458.0678 www.nscaa.com
## 2013 NSCAA Coaching Academies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE OFFERED</th>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced National Goalkeeping Diploma</td>
<td>Macalester College St. Paul, Min.</td>
<td>June 3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Diploma</td>
<td>San Francisco State Univ. San Francisco, Calif.</td>
<td>June 10-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Diploma</td>
<td>Bloomsburg Univ. Bloomsburg, Pa.</td>
<td>July 8-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced National Diploma</td>
<td>Elmhurst College Elmhurst, Ill.</td>
<td>July 15-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Diploma</td>
<td>Regis University Regis, Colo.</td>
<td>July 15-21</td>
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</tbody>
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Space in the Summer Coaching Academies is limited and fills quickly. Visit the master course schedule at [NSCAA.com/education](http://NSCAA.com/education), find the course you are interested in and register!