



ASA Practice Plan Top Sheet – SKL03 (U10/U12/U14)

Field Set Up:

See Session sheet. Set up one large 30 yd x 45 yd area with cones (the Grid). For SSA create “end zones” about 3 yards deep. Relocate these cones after SSA to divide the field into thirds (as shown), and the field is ready for ESSA activity.

Topic: Decision to Pass or Dribble

Soccer is a fluid game, and requires players to constantly think about their actions with and without the ball. One of the more challenging moments in the game for any player is when they receive a pass or loose ball because it calls for immediate decision-making AND precise action. For a player to be successful on the ball they will need to process a lot of information and act accordingly: where they are on the field, location and movement of defenders, location and movement of supporting players (teammates), communication from teammates, etc. All this needs to be processed quickly and accurately, and while settling the ball and dealing with defensive pressure. It’s a challenge the game presents at all levels of play.

Coaches will need to “see what the player sees” in order to coach this session effectively. One of the benefits coaches who have experience playing the game have is that this is (usually) instinctive. Try and observe where the ball carrier is looking while receiving, deciding his or her next action, and when playing the ball. This is one session where the “freeze” method can be very effective.

Remember that when using the freeze method to introduce a coaching point that you are addressing the whole squad – not just the player who made the play you are commenting on. This method should only be used for general topics and not to correct a technical error. Review the point you are making, rehearse the “correct” action, then restart play with the ball at the player’s foot.

Technical Warm Up: Numbers Passing

As always, please reinforce good technique. Adjust grid size as needed to accommodate player age, size and ability. We are working on short to medium distance passing – here are the key coaching points:

- Passing player is balanced and has knees bent. Make eye contact with the target player, step and plant opposite foot beside the ball with shoulders square to target player. (Can work toward saying the target player’s name BEFORE passing the ball)
- Lock ankle and strike through the center of the ball with inside of foot, then follow through by landing on the kicking foot. Eyes should be focused on the ball when striking, and the ball should remain on the ground. Instruct players to strike through the center of the ball.

- After pass is made, move to space to receive pass (this is “support”). For these activities emphasize that the passing players needs at least two open target players to pass to (“passing options”).
- Receiving player is on balls of feet, knees bent, ready to receive. Move to path of ball and receive with inside of the foot. Soft, controlled first touch.

Common passing/receiving mistakes to watch for:

- Not moving to receive the ball correctly – reaching with legs instead of moving entire body
- Using outside of foot to pass instead of adjusting body position and using inside of foot. Outside of the foot passing is fine, but that’s not what we’re working on in this session. This technique will be introduced later.
- Planting the stepping foot too far behind ball then lunging to strike the ball.
- Weight of pass is too hard to receive cleanly or too soft to get to target.
- Heavy, uncontrolled first touch indicates that the player is not in proper position or is moving feet toward ball to receive.

Small Sided Activity: 3 v 3 to End Zones

One additional coaching point for this activity – illustrate the importance of body shape when receiving a pass. The player should (if relatively unmarked) “open up” his/her body to face the direction he/she want to play the ball. The ball should be received across the centerline of the body using the inside of the “upfield” foot to control. They will then be able to quickly see what is in front of them and identify their options.

You may add a neutral player to assist the offense if needed.

Expanded Small Sided Activity: 3 Zone Game

Objective is to present the players with many decision-making opportunities. Allow the players to dribble into adjacent “zone”, but only if a teammate from that zone replaces him in his original zone. This will take a while to grasp, but it will force the players to pay attention to the actions of the ball carrier and move accordingly. This is a good opportunity to point out that the movement of a supporting player influences the movement of the defenders, and can open up space for the ball carrier or other supporting players (this is an advanced concept that will be covered in future sessions, so introduce the topic if the opportunity presents, but do not focus on it).

You may add a neutral player to assist the offense **in the center zone only** if needed. The neutral player cannot carry the ball into an adjacent zone.

Scrimmage > Reinforce coaching points from session.