

Learn the Skills



Learn the Skills

"Practice does not make perfect "rather" practice makes permanent."

Introduction



The most important factor in winning games are not tactics or formations, it is the quality of individual "technique". Team tactics are totally dependent upon each player's ability to execute the technical components of those tactics. For tactics to succeed you must have players who can pass the ball diagonally behind a defense, control the ball in tight areas, dribble past an opponent, or win head balls in set-plays.

Without players who possess good technique, your time invested in team organization and principles of play will be fruitless. With players of high technical ability, the foundation will be strong to apply those techniques in skillful and tactical situations.

It is of paramount importance that coaches understand how quality technique is developed and implement a coaching regimen to challenge players to a level of technical excellence. "Practice does not make perfect" rather " practice makes permanent."

To teach technique, coaches must be able to break down each component and relay that information to their players. The technique must be isolated and performed until it becomes habit.

This section covers the skills in Passing, Ball Control, Shooting, Heading, Dribbling and Defending and Goalkeeping. Each skill is explained in detail and features an introductory chapter describing the tactical considerations for the topic you select.

Passing Introduction



A smooth soft silky pass, that skims the surface of the grass"

Passing is the most frequent of techniques used in the game of soccer. It lays the foundation from which all tactical plans will be designed. Without quality passing, possession and dictating the course of the game is impossible. Good teams can keep the ball because they have players with a wide range of passing techniques and understand when and where to effectively apply their skills.

A soccer players foot must be like a golf club, changing from a driver to a putter in a split second. Hitting long balls accurately and stroking short range passes with finesse.

There are twelve surface's on the feet in which a player can pass a ball, six surface's on the right foot and six on the left foot.

These surfaces are:

- The inside of the foot
- The outside of the foot
- The instep of the foot
- The toe
- The heel of the foot
- The sole of the foot

Moreover, a player can also opt to pass a ball:

- Over a short distance
- Over a long distance
- On the ground
- In the air

There are several components that will affect the quality and success of each pass, in sequence, these are:

- Selection of passing technique
- Disguising the intentions of the pass
- Timing of the pass
- Speed or weight of the pass
- Accuracy of the pass

There are 16 types of passing techniques to master:

- The Push Pass
- The Low Driven Pass
- The Lofted Pass
- The Chip Pass
- The Bent Pass
- The Volley Pass
- The Half Volley Pass
- The Toe Poke Pass
- The Heel Pass
- The Sole of the Foot
- The Flick Pass
- The Stab Pass
- Pass using the Head
- Pass using the Chest
- Pass using the Thigh
- Throw-ins

PASSING

The Push Pass



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at a slight angle. Place your non-kicking foot along side the ball, not too close that it will prevent the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The ankle of the kicking foot must be firm. Use a slight drawback of the kicking foot.

Step Two: Strike the ball with the inside of the kicking foot through the horizontal mid-line of the ball. The head should be kept steady and eye's fixed firmly on the ball. The head weighs approximately 10 pounds, so any unnecessary tilting of the head will affect the whole balance of the body.

Step Three: The follow through is in the direction of the intended target.

PASSING

The Bent Pass



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at a slight angle. This will assist the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. Plant the non-kicking foot approximately 10 inches away to the side of the ball.

Step Two: Contact with the kicking foot is made with the instep. The point of contact on the ball should be slightly below the horizontal mid-line and to the side of the ball. If contact is made too close to the center of the ball, then the ball will not spin. Too little contact on the ball will result in the ball being sliced.

Step Three: Unlike other passing techniques, the follow through of the kicking foot travels away from the direction of the ball. The above mechanics also apply to bending the ball with the outside of the foot.

PASSING

The Chip Pass



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at a slight angle. This will assist the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady with eyes fixed firmly on the ball.

Step Two: Plant the non-kicking foot along side and slightly in front of the ball. The head and upper body should be over the ball. Withdrawal with the kicking leg is predominantly from the knee and not the hip. Contact on the ball should be made through the underside and center of the ball. Using a stabbing action from the knee and not the hip, strike down onto the underside of the ball, as to impart a vicious backspin on the ball. The more powerful the stabbing action of the kicking foot down onto the ball, the more rapidly the ball will climb with a quality backspin.

Step Three: The backspin of the ball is necessary to allow the ball to stop within a short distance, on making contact with the ground.

PASSING

The Heel Pass



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball straight on. This will assist in the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. Plant the non-kicking foot along side and parallel with the ball. Do not position the non-kicking foot too close to the ball as to interfere with the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. Raise the kicking foot over the top of the ball to disguise your intentions. Continue over the ball and make contact on the front of the ball with the heel.

Step Two: The ball should be struck through the center and on the horizontal mid-line of the ball. Withdrawal from the kicking leg comes from the hip as well as the knee.

Step Three: The follow through is short and continues slightly through the ball into the direction of the intended target.

PASSING

The Lofted Pass



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at an angle. This will assist in the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The last stride on the approach to the ball should be the longest. This will increase the length of the back swing from the kicking leg. Plant the non-kicking foot along side and slightly behind the ball. Do not position the non-kicking foot too close to the ball as to interfere with the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg.

Step Two: Contact with the kicking foot on the ball is made with the instep. The ball should be struck through the center and on the under side of the ball, where the ball rests on the surface of the ground. Withdrawal from the kicking leg comes from the hip as well as the knee for extra power and distance.

Step Three: The follow through is long and continues through the ball into the direction of the intended target. There is hardly any backspin on the ball, thus allowing the ball to roll as it makes contact with the ground.

PASSING

The Low Driven Pass



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at a slight angle. This will assist the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The head weighs approximately 10 pounds, so any unnecessary tilting of the head will affect the whole balance of the body. The non-kicking foot should be placed along side and slightly in front of the ball.

Step Two: Contact on the ball with the kicking foot should be made through the horizontal mid-line of the ball. The kicking foot should be fully extended down and the ball should be struck with the laces of the boot.

Step Three: The follow through should be made through the center of the ball and continue in the direction of the intended target.

PASSING

The Stab Pass



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball straight on. Keep the head steady and eye's fixed firmly on the ball. Plant the non-kicking foot to the side of the ball. Withdrawal from the kicking leg is made from the knee and not from the hip.

Step Two: Contact with the kicking foot is made with the outside front of the shoe. Contact on the ball is made through the horizontal mid-line of the ball. Withdraw the foot and with a quick stab of the foot and contact through the center of the ball.

Step Three: The follow through is short and in the direction of the intended target.

Ball Control Introduction



Coaches should encourage players to use their first touch on the ball economically and effectively.

Players must understand that ball control is not a means in itself, but a means to an end. At the end of each control a player will have four options to act on:

- Most often the player will control to pass the ball.
- In the attacking third players will control to set up shots.
- The player may control the ball to dribble.
- The player may control to run with the ball.

With this in mind, the player should decide as the ball is in flight what they intend to do after controlling the ball, are they going to pass, shoot, dribble or run with the ball. The quality of the player's first touch on the ball will often determine the quality of the action that follows.



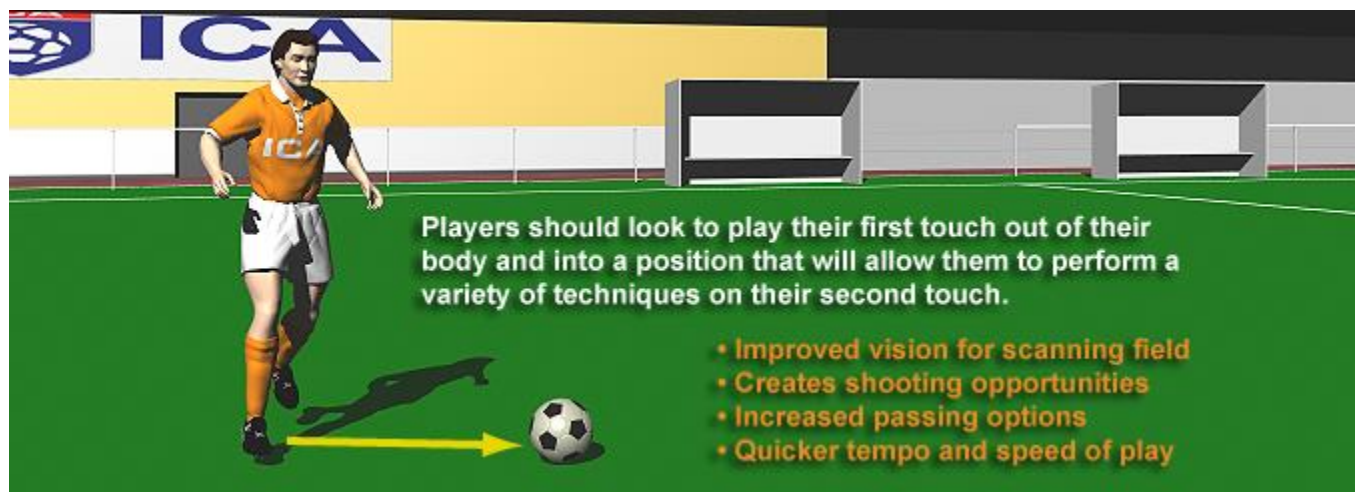
Many coaches instruct players to "trap the ball" first. The word "trap" suggests stopping the ball. Young players get into a bad habit of trapping the ball using the sole of the foot every time the ball comes to them.

Trapping or stopping the ball with the sole of the foot can cause many bad habits for the player and limit the techniques he can use immediately after his first touch on the ball.

The following are bad habits as a result of "trapping the ball" with the sole of the foot:

- As the ball travels towards the foot the head will drop and eyes will be fixed on the ball. The player at this point cannot see his passing options.
- In the attacking third, the player will not be able to see the position of the goalkeeper if his head is down, thus limiting his shooting options.
- If the ball is controlled with the sole of the foot on the first touch, the position of the ball will be too close to the player's body for the player to pass over a long distance. There needs to be a distance between the player and the ball for the player to strike the ball over a long distance.
- In the attacking third, the player cannot afford to stop the ball with the sole of the foot. The player needs to set up shooting opportunities as soon as possible. If the ball is controlled with the sole of the foot, it will limit the player's ability to shoot over a long distance.
- Trapping the ball with the sole of the foot will also effect the time in which a player makes decisions. The player will take one second to trap the ball, another second to push the ball out from the body and yet a third second before the player considers the option of whether to pass, dribble, shoot or run with the ball. During this period the nearest opponent will be closing down the ball and looking to dispossess the player.

Coaches should encourage players to use their first touch on the ball economically and effectively. Instead of trapping the ball with the sole of the foot, players should look to play their first touch out of their body and into a position that will allow them to perform a variety of techniques on their second touch.



In general, right-footed players should look to play their first touch approximately one and a half yards in front and to the right side at a 45-degree angle (left footed players to the left side).

By playing the ball out and in front of the body on the first touch, the player will improve in the following:

- Better all round vision as eyes follow ball out and up and not focused down at the feet.
- Can immediately evaluate passing and shooting options.
- Can pass the ball over a long range.
- Can shoot the ball over a long range.
- Less chance of being caught in possession of the ball due to improved vision.

During the course of a game it is not always possible to play the ball in the perfect position. However, it is surprising to note that on numerous occasions when players control the ball, they neglect to consider what they are controlling for, to pass, to shoot, to dribble or to run with the ball. Players should play their first touch out and in front at a 45-degree angle.

There are four main controlling surfaces of the body, these are:

1. The Head.
2. The Chest.
3. The Thighs.
4. The Feet.

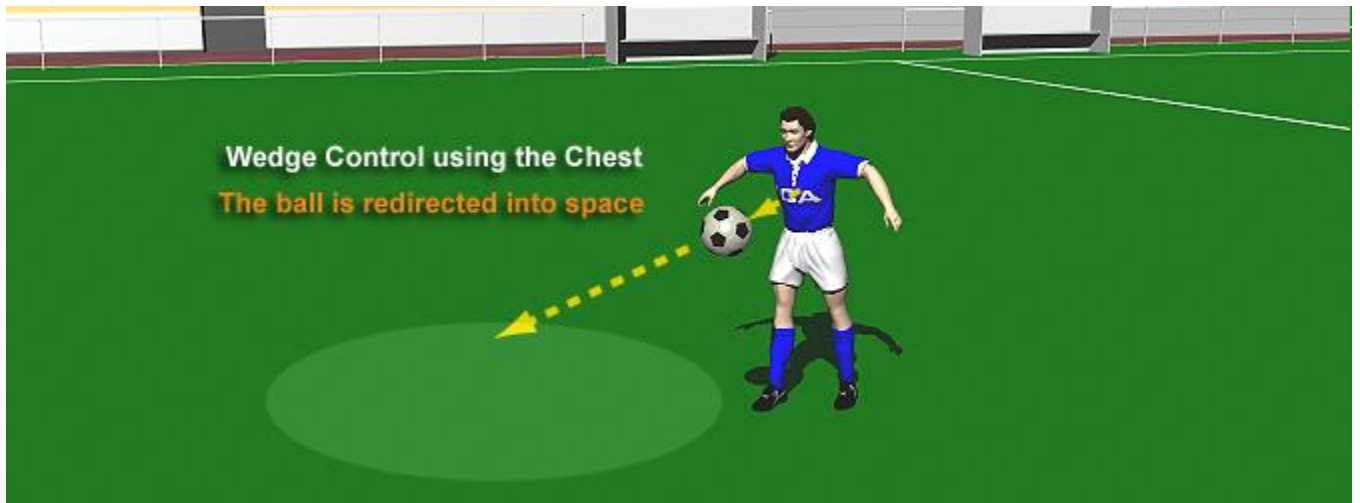
There are two types of ball control. These are the cushion control and the wedge control. Both of these can be performed on the head, chest, thighs or feet. The main differences between the cushion and the wedge control are:

The Cushion Control



A player will normally select to use the cushion control when time and space are available. On making contact with the ball, the player will immediately withdraw the controlling surface of the head, chest, thigh or feet. This will take away from the power of the ball and act as a cushioning effect. The muscles in the body should be relaxed, thus making them soft for better surface to cushion the ball

The Wedge Control:



A player should select the wedge control when time and space is limited. On making contact with the ball, the player will immediately push out and redirect the ball using the head, chest, thighs or feet. The muscles in the controlling surface should be tense and hard, thus making a better surface for the ball to redirect from.

Note:

It is recommended that a little air be taken out of the ball, to make the ball softer and easier to control. Young players will be less reluctant to control a soft ball than a hard ball. Try to use a hand-stitched ball and not plastic molded balls. Plastic balls are very difficult to control, especially on the chest, head and thigh.

BALL CONTROL

Cushion Control using the Foot



What you need to know

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will lead to good composure and balance for receiving the ball instead of reaching out and being caught off balance. Decide by the flight of the ball which foot should be used. Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The head weighs approximately 10 pounds, so any unnecessary tilting of the head will affect the whole balance of the body.

Step Two: Offer the controlling surface of the foot to the ball (laces or the inside of the foot). Immediately withdraw the foot on impact of the ball. This will have a cushioning effect and kill the power of the ball. If the foot is not withdrawn quickly enough, the ball will bounce away from the player.

Step Three: In a well-executed cushion control the ball should lie close to the controlling surface.

BALL CONTROL

Cushion Control using the Inside of the Foot _____



What you need to know _____

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will lead to good composure and balance for receiving the ball instead of reaching out and being caught off balance. Decide by the flight of the ball which foot should be used. Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The head weighs approximately 10 pounds, so any unnecessary tilting of the head will affect the whole balance of the body.

Step Two: Offer the controlling surface of the inside of the foot to the ball. Immediately withdraw the foot on impact of the ball. This will have a cushioning effect and kill the power of the ball. If the foot is not withdrawn quickly enough, the ball will bounce away from the player.

Step Three: In a well-executed cushion control the ball should lie close to the controlling surface.

BALL CONTROL

Cushion Control using the Thigh _____



What you need to know _____

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will lead to good composure and balance for receiving the ball instead of reaching out and being caught off balance. Decide by the flight of the ball which thigh should be used to control the ball. Offer the controlling surface of the thigh to the ball.

Step Two: Immediately withdraw the thigh on impact of the ball. This will have a cushioning effect and kill the power of the ball. If the thigh is not withdrawn quickly enough, the ball will bounce away from the player. When controlling the ball, try to position the thigh in front of the upper body and not extended out to the side of the body. This will block the ball should it bounce up off the thigh. If the thigh is extended to the side, then the ball may skim off the thigh and possession will be lost.

Step Three: Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. In a well-executed cushion control the ball should lie close to the body.

BALL CONTROL

Cushion Control using the Chest



What you need to know

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. Offer the surface of the chest to the ball. Off center of the chest will provide the best surface for the cushion control, due to the softness of the chest muscles.

Step Two: Immediately withdraw the chest on impact of the ball. This will have a cushioning effect and kill the power of the ball. If the chest is not withdrawn quickly enough, the ball will bounce away from the player. The chest should be slightly tilted back, so when the ball contacts the chest, it will bounce up fractionally before dropping to the player's feet.

Step Three: The knees should also be bent and withdrawn as soon as contact is made with the ball. In a well-executed cushion control the ball should lie close to the body.

BALL CONTROL

Cushion Control using the Head



What you need to know

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will lead to good composure and balance for receiving the ball instead of reaching out and being caught off balance. Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. Slightly lift up the chin and tilt back the surface of the forehead. Offer the surface of the forehead to the ball. The chest should be slightly tilted back and knees should be bent.

Step Two: Immediately withdraw the head and bend the knees on impact of the ball. This will have a cushioning effect on the ball and kill the power of the ball. If the head and knees are not withdrawn quickly enough, the ball will bounce away from the player.

Step Three: Do not tilt the head too far back or the ball will skim off the forehead and away from the player. In a well-executed cushion control the ball should lie close to the body.

BALL CONTROL

Wedge Control using the Feet _____



What you need to know _____

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will lead to good composure and balance for receiving the ball instead of reaching out and being caught off balance. Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. Decide by the flight of the ball which surface of the foot is to be used in the wedge control (inside or outside of the foot).

Step Two: The ankle of the controlling foot should be firm and not relaxed. Offer the controlling surface of the foot to the ball. Immediately on impact, redirect the ball away from the body and into available space. Do not withdraw the ball into the body. The ball should be redirected, not cushioned.

Step Three: As the player is redirecting the ball on impact, the head and upper body should be over the ball.

BALL CONTROL

Wedge Control using the Thigh _____



What you need to know _____

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will lead to good composure and balance for receiving the ball instead of reaching out and being caught off balance. Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The head weighs approximately 10 pounds, so any unnecessary tilting of the head will affect the whole balance of the body.

Step Two: Decide by the flight of the ball which thigh is to be used to control the ball. The thigh muscle should be tight to provide a hard surface for redirecting the ball. Offer the controlling surface of the thigh to the ball.

Step Three: Immediately on impact, push out with the thigh and redirect the ball into available space. Do not withdraw the thigh on impact, as this will cushion the ball. As the player is redirecting the ball on impact, the head and upper body should be over the ball.

BALL CONTROL

Wedge Control using the Chest



What you need to know

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will lead to good composure and balance for receiving the ball instead of reaching out and being caught off balance. Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The head weighs approximately 10 pounds, so any unnecessary tilting of the head will affect the whole balance of the body.

Step Two: The chest should be tight with the shoulders pulled back. The player should also lean backwards slightly. Contact on the ball should be made with the center of the chest, as the sternum will provide a harder surface for the ball to rebound from.

Step Three: Immediately on impact, quickly push the ball out from the chest and into available space. Do not withdraw the chest on impact, as this will cushion the ball. As the player is redirecting the ball on impact, the upper body should be forward with shoulders pinned back.

BALL CONTROL

Wedge Control using the Head



What you need to know

Step One: Position the body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will lead to good composure and balance for receiving the ball instead of reaching out and being caught off balance. Remember to keep the head steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball.

Step Two: The player should lean forward with the head straight and the neck muscles tight. Contact on the ball should be made with the forehead. The forehead is the flattest and hardest part of the skull. This will assist in redirecting the ball.

Step Three: Immediately on impact, the player should swing the upper body forward quickly and make contact on the ball with the center of the forehead. The player should redirect the ball into available space. Do not withdraw on impact, or this will cushion the ball. Do not tilt the head too far back or the ball will skim from the head and possession may be lost. As the player is redirecting the ball on impact, the upper body and head should be moving forward.

Defending Introduction



40% of Goals are conceded from Set Plays

Competitive soccer is quick and physical and tactics can change from game to game, from high pressure defending to man for man marking. Even the most technically gifted of players have to be able to defend and handle themselves during games. No longer are fullbacks and midfield players the only ones required to defend, demands on forwards to close down opponents is also part of today's game. Regardless of position, every player should display absolute determination and offer the strongest possible opposition when they are defending.

Here are the main reasons why teams concede goals:

- Lack of pressure on the man with the ball: failing to close down forward passing and shooting angles, allowing the opponent to play with their head up.
- Lack of support for the challenging player: allowing one v one situations without good cover, playing too flat and with no depth.
- Failure to follow players: letting opponents get goal-side of their markers.
- Giving the ball away: lack of concentration, carelessness, and poor technique.
- Set plays and restarts: conceding goals from corners, free kicks, throw-in's, 40% of goals are scored from set plays.

DEFENDING

The Block Tackle



What you need to know

Step One: The Non-kicking foot should be placed alongside the ball (approximately 10" to the side). The ankle joint of the tackling foot must be firm and locked. The knees should be bent to lower the center of gravity of the player. This will produce a compact and more powerful shape.

Step Two: The head and upper body should be over the ball. The hands should be closed (make a fist). This will tighten the upper body.

Step Three: Contact is made with the inside of the foot. Contact on the ball should be made through the horizontal mid-line and center of the ball. Quality tackling is as much an attitude as it is technique. Players must develop an aggressive attitude towards winning the ball.

DEFENDING

The Slide Tackle



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball from a "Side-On" position. Keep the head steady and eye's fixed firmly on the ball. While turning sideways into the tackle, extend the closest arm to the ball and reach for the ground. This will help take the weight off the upper body as you slide to the ground. At the same time the player should collapse the leg closest to the ball to get to the ground quickly.

Step Two: When the player is on the ground alongside the ball, the player should then extend the upper leg and using a sweeping action, attempt to win the ball.

Step Three: If you cannot keep possession of the ball, then all attempts should be made to redirect the ball away from the player. The slide tackle should only be used as a last resort to dispossess a player. As you will be lying on the ground it will be a disadvantage should the tackle not be successful.

DEFENDING

Psychology of Tackling



What you need to know

The psychological aspect of tackling plays a vital role in the outcome of any competitive soccer game. A successful tackle in the game can install confidence not only for the challenging player, but to the team as a whole. It is estimated that each player will face approximately forty individual confrontations per game. The more these individual battles are won the greater success the team has.

Tips to Consider:

Make your first tackle count, this will give you confidence and impose authority over the player you are marking. Be aggressive and focus on the ball. Blank out any distractions and don't be intimidated by the fans. Don't get involved in "trash talking", this will only take away from your concentration. Don't be half hearted in the tackle. Go 100% for the ball or don't go at all.

DEFENDING

Restraint when Defending



What you need to know

Knowing "When" and "When" not to tackle is a very important quality for smart defending. Good defenders will pick the right time to win the ball, knowing that the pressure is on the attacker to beat his man. Experienced defenders will look to slow down the attacker and eliminate the momentum the attacker may have. This allows time for teammates to recover back goal side of the ball.

Tips to Consider:

Approach the attacker cautiously if he has good possession of the ball. Slow down your approach speed on your last few steps. Don't stop too close to the defender. This is when you are at your most vulnerable, because the exact moment you plant your feet to transfer your weight, good forwards will play the ball past you. You can compensate by stopping approximately 2 yards away from the attacker, then slowly edge in for the tackle. Watch the ball. Cunning forwards will use a variety of body and head feints to throw you off balance. Players lie, but the ball does not.

DEFENDING

Timing of the Tackle



What you need to know

Timing a tackle is an art in itself. You must assess the flight of the ball quickly. Does your opponent have good control over the ball or are they still trying to get the ball under control? If their eyes are fixed on the ball and still trying to secure it, this is a perfect time to catch your opponent unexpectedly. Should your opponent have the ball under good control, caution is your best option.

Tips to consider:

Watch your opponent's head. Is their head down and looking at the ball or up and scanning the field of play? If it's down, go for the ball, if it's up, be patient. Wait until the attacker pushes the ball out of their feet to make your tackle. This is the point where the ball is furthest away from the body and harder to control. The longer you delay the attack, the more time it gives your teammate to recover goal-side of the ball. Don't dive into the tackle if you are the last defender. Stay on your feet. Use a slide tackle as a last resort.

Dribbling Introduction



When Dribbling, open the wrists to loosen the upper body.

Where should players Dribble?

The Attacking Third: This is the arena for dribbling. In the attacking third of the field players must be encourage to run at defenders with the ball. Creativity will pay big dividends if successful.

The Mid-field Third: Mid-field players are often required to dribble to shake off tight markers or run with the ball on quick attacks. Each mid- fielder should posses at least one trick. Dribbling in the mid-field should only be used when good passing options are not available.

The Defensive Third: On occasions defenders are also required to dribble to escape from tight situations. Dribbling in the defensive third should be kept to a minimum and executed with caution.

When should players Dribble?

As a rule, players should only consider dribbling when there is a lack of quality support from his team mates. If good support play is available, then passing should take priority.

Why should players Dribble?

Explosive dribbling upsets the balance of the opponent's defensive structure. The unpredictability of dribbling often creates passing and shooting opportunities. If performed well and with discipline, dribbling can be the most entertaining of all soccer skills.

DRIBBLING

The Beardsley



What you need to know

Step One: Place the non-kicking foot slightly behind and to the side of the ball. Bend the knee of the kicking foot. With the lace of the shoe facing the ball, fake to play the ball past the non-kicking foot.

Step Two: Quickly reverse the direction of the kicking foot and move the ball in the opposite direction of the standing foot. The head should be kept steady and eye's fixed firmly on the ball.

Step Three: Play the ball in the direction you want to travel.

DRIBBLING

The Chop



What you need to know

Step One: Move alongside the ball and approach the ball with a "Side-On" position. Plant the non-kicking foot alongside the ball, with the toe pointing towards the ball.

Step Two: Bring the kicking over the top of the ball with the lace of the shoe facing the outside of the ball. Chop down on the outside of the ball, using the laces only. Only slight contact is made with the outside of the ball.

Step Three: Spin on the non-kicking foot towards the direction of the ball. The head should be kept steady and eye's fixed firmly on the ball.

DRIBBLING

The Fake Stop and Go



What you need to know

Step One: Move alongside the ball. Fake over the ball pretending to back heel the ball and pull the foot back behind the ball.

Step Two: Push the ball forward using the laces of the same foot.

Step Three: Keep the toe pointing down all the way through the follow-through. Lean forward slightly when executing the move and accelerate explosively in the opposite direction.

DRIBBLING

The Half Turn



What you need to know

Step One: Place the sole of the foot on the ball. Drag the ball back behind you using the sole of the foot. Spin quickly on the standing foot (like an ice-skater on ice) turning 180 degrees towards the ball.

Step Two: Push the ball far enough (approximately 1 yard) out of your feet to enable you to turn without taking a second touch.

Step Three: The second touch should be to set up a pass, shot or dribble.

DRIBBLING

The Quarter Turn



What you need to know

Step One: The player should place the sole of the foot on the ball, toe turned inward and heel facing outward.

Step Two: The player then drags the ball away from the standing foot and removes the foot off the ball.

Step Three: Spinning quickly on the standing foot (like an ice-skater on ice) the player turns towards the ball as he redirects the ball at a 90 degree angle using the inside of the foot. Play the ball in the direction you want to travel.

DRIBBLING

The Step Over



What you need to know

Step One: Move alongside the ball and approach the ball straight on. Plant the non-kicking foot alongside and parallel to the ball. Transfer your body weight onto the standing foot.

Step Two: Bring the kicking foot over the top of the ball and plant the foot to the side of the ball.

Step Three: Transferring your weight onto the foot and spin in the direction of the ball. Play the ball out of the feet in the direction you want to travel. The head should be kept steady and eye's fixed firmly on the ball.

DRIBBLING

The Stop and Go



What you need to know

Step One: Move alongside the ball. As the ball is traveling, stop the ball with the sole of the foot. Withdraw the kicking foot behind the ball.

Step Two: Push the ball forward using the laces of the same foot. Keep the toe pointing down all the way through the follow-through.

Step Three: Lean forward slightly when executing the move and accelerate explosively.

Heading Introduction



If in Doubt. Head it Out!

As defending has become more organized in modern soccer, the ground route for passing the ball has been reduced. With reduced passing space, high balls into the penalty area increases. During the course of a game the situations in which a player has to head the ball either for defensive or attacking purposes, will be numerous.

Careful attention should be given to train players to deal with the physical and mental aspects of heading the ball. In fact early experiences in heading the ball can be painful if careful progression in building up confidence is not applied. Young players fear heading the ball because they feel it will harm them. Confidence has to be built slowly through correct repetition and encouragement. With this in mind we should examine the basic techniques involved in successful heading.

Heading is divided into two categories. "**Defensive**" and "**Attacking**".

It is important in both defending and attacking that the player is first to the ball and prepared to attack it. The movement of the trunk backward and forwards, along with the neck muscles provide the power. The forehead is used because it is the flattest and thickest area of the head and gives a more accurate striking surface. On contact with the ball it is important that the player must head through the ball in the direction of the intended target.

For Defensive Heading, follow three rules:

Head the ball High:

Heading the ball high favors the defense as it allows them time to re-adjust their defensive positions and reorganize.

Head the ball Long:

Heading the ball long will assist from keeping the ball away from immediate danger.

Head the ball Wide:

Heading the ball wide will play the ball into a safe angle from goal.

To execute these principals it is important to head the ball beneath the mid-line of the ball. For attacking heading that the key factor is keeping the ball low. Heading through the horizontal mid-line or top half of the ball enables you to head down towards the goal line, making it as difficult as possible for the goalkeeper. In both aspects of defensive and attacking heading aggression and timing is of paramount importance.

HEADING

Attacking Heading



What you need to know

Step One: Get behind the flight of the ball. The player's eyes should be fixed on the flight of the ball. On the approach to the ball, the player must slightly arch the back and tighten the neck muscles.

Step Two: Immediately on making contact with the ball, the player should quickly swing the upper body and make contact on the ball with the center of the forehead. Further power can be achieved by pulling the arms back when making contact with the ball. Contact should be made above the horizontal mid-line of the ball. This will direct the ball downwards.

Step Three: When heading for goal, the ball should be headed down towards the goal line. The timing of the run must be late, fast and aggressive.

HEADING

Defensive Heading



What you need to know

Step One: The player should position his body behind the flight of the ball as early as possible. This will provide good composure and balance to attack the ball. The eyes should be fixed on the flight of the ball the back should be arched and neck muscle's tightened. The legs should be slightly bent, ready to extend when contact is made with the ball.

Step Two: Contact is made with the center of the forehead and contact should be made through the center and below the horizontal mid-line of the ball. Immediately on making contact with the ball, the player should quickly swing the upper body forward. The legs should be positioned one behind the other for extra balance. By pulling the arms back when making contact, more power can be achieved.

Step Three: When heading the ball defensively, the player should aim for distance, width and height. It is important for the player to develop an aggressive attitude towards defensive heading to win air balls consistently.

HEADING

Diving Header



What you need to know

Step One: Get inline with the flight of the ball. The knees should be bent with hands extended. Lean forward into the direction of the ball. The forehead should be tilted back to enable the player to see the ball and to ensure contact with the forehead and the center of the ball.

Step Two: Contact is made with the center of the forehead and should be made through the horizontal mid-line of the ball. This will direct the ball forward.

Step Three: Power in a diving header is achieved by the timing and speed of the player's run into the flight of the ball. It is important that the player develop a brave and aggressive attitude towards diving headers to become a consistent opportunist.

HEADING

Flick On Header



What you need to know

Step One: The player's eyes should be fixed on the flight of the ball. Get behind the flight of the ball. On the approach to the ball, the player must slightly arch the back and tighten the neck muscles.

Step Two: Contact is made with the top part of the forehead and below the horizontal mid-line of the ball. The ball should be redirected with just a small part of the ball glancing off the forehead.

Step Three: Immediately on making contact with the ball, the player should quickly swing the upper body and make contact on the ball with the center of the forehead. The Flick On header is most commonly used to redirect near post corner kicks and free kicks. It is also used in the midfield and frontline when competing for headers from goal kicks.

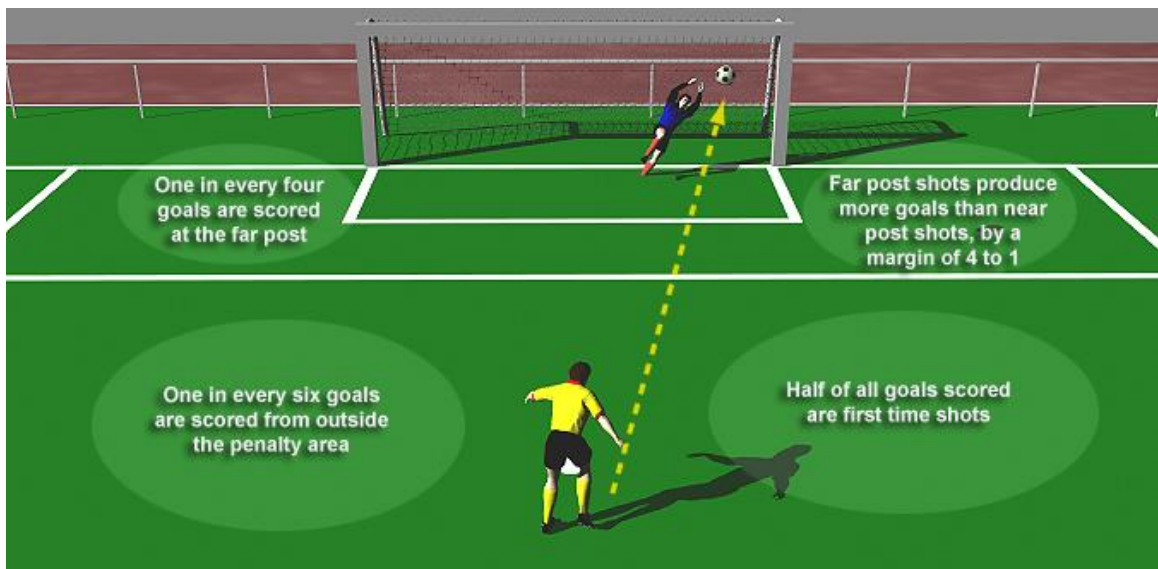
Shooting Introduction



Statistically, 10 shots on target give an 86% chance of winning the game.

There can be no doubt that shooting is the most important aspect of attacking play. Everything you do as an individual and as a team is a means to the end, that is, scoring goals. No matter how well you play, if your players cannot shoot, the road to success will be a long one. Players must develop a positive attitude towards taking shots, with the knowledge that they will invariably miss more times than succeed. Encourage players using constructive criticism when they fail and implement a realistic training program to improve their abilities.

The Facts



How to achieve your GOALS!

- Players should possess a wide range of shooting techniques regardless of position.
- Sufficient time and effort should be given in practice for the improvement of finishing.
- Often players lack responsibility for shooting, either they will pass to a teammate or not shoot at all. Accepting personal responsibilities for goal scoring, as well as missing, is fundamental to becoming a consistent and confident goal scorer.
- Between passing, dribbling or shooting - shooting will bring the highest level of success in and around the penalty area. You should discourage yourself from making inter-passing movements in the attacking third when a shooting possibility arises.
- It is an obvious fact that there will be more occasions when we will miss the goal when shooting rather than score. It is estimated that only one out of every five shots will be converted.
- It is a lesser sin to shoot wide than high. A shot going wide may have some chance of a deflection, a shot going high merely gives the opposition a goal kick.
- A low shot has far more potential than a shot struck high at goal. In going for a high shot you are offering the goalkeeper a greater chance of stopping the ball. Moreover, shots along the ground may be deflected by another player, or it may stick, bump or skip depending upon the playing surface.
- Shots going away from the goalkeeper to the far post are usually more difficult to save than shots to the near post. Not only are they difficult for the goalkeeper to hold, but the possibility of a deflection into a teammate's path is encouraging.
- We can define that goals are scored from three types of shots. These are balls moving towards the body, balls moving away from the body and balls moving across the body.

SHOOTING

Shooting using the Inside of the Foot _____



What you need to know _____

Step One: Approach the ball at a slight angle. Place your non-kicking foot along side the ball, not too close that it will prevent the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The ankle of the kicking foot must be firm. Use a slight drawback of the kicking foot.

Step Two: Strike the ball with the inside of the kicking foot through the horizontal mid-line of the ball. The head should be kept steady and eye's fixed firmly on the ball. The head weighs approximately 10 pounds, so any unnecessary tilting of the head will affect the whole balance of the body.

Step Three: The follow through is in the direction of the goal.

SHOOTING

The Bent Shot



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at a slight angle. This will assist the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. Plant the non-kicking foot approximately 10 inches away to the side of the ball.

Step Two: Contact with the kicking foot is made with the instep. The point of contact on the ball should be slightly below the horizontal mid-line and to the side of the ball. If contact is made too close to the center of the ball, then the ball will not spin. Too little contact on the ball will result in the ball being sliced.

Step Three: Unlike other shots, the follow through of the kicking foot travels away from the direction of the ball. The above mechanics also apply to bending the ball with the outside of the foot.

SHOOTING

The Chip Shot



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at a slight angle. This will assist the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady with eye's fixed firmly on the ball. Plant the non-kicking foot along side and slightly in front of the ball. The head and upper body should be over the ball. Withdrawal with the kicking leg is predominantly from the knee and not the hip.

Step Two: Contact on the ball should be made through the underside and center of the ball. Using a stabbing action from the knee and not the hip, strike down onto the underside of the ball, as to impart a vicious backspin on the ball. The more powerful the stabbing action of the kicking foot down onto the ball, the more rapidly the ball will climb with a quality backspin.

Step Three: The backspin of the ball is necessary to allow the ball to stop within a short distance, on making contact with the ground.

SHOOTING

The Full Volley Shot



What you need to know

Step One: Players must always be alert to strike aerial balls in and around the penalty area. When using the front volley shot, the player should allow the ball to drop to a height slightly below the knee. If the player tries to strike the ball too high, this will undoubtedly result in a missed shot. On the approach, the player must step into the ball with the non-kicking foot. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball.

Step Two: As the ball drops, contact with the kicking foot is made with the laces, and the foot should be fully extended down. Contact on the ball should be made slightly above the horizontal mid-line of the ball.

Step Three: The power of the shot comes from a stabbing action from the knee and not the hip.

SHOOTING

The Half Volley Shot



What you need to know

Step One: Watch the flight of the ball carefully. On the approach, the player must step into the ball with the non-kicking foot. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. When using the half volley shot, the player should allow the ball to hit the ground for a fraction of a second.

Step Two: As the ball rises from the ground, approximately 4 inches, the ball is struck through the horizontal mid-line. Contact with the kicking foot is made with the laces and the foot should be fully extended down.

Step Three: The power of the shot comes from a stabbing action from the knee and not the hip.

SHOOTING

The Lofted Shot



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at an angle. This will assist in the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The last stride on the approach to the ball should be the longest. This will increase the length of the back swing from the kicking leg. Plant the non-kicking foot along side and slightly behind the ball. Do not position the non-kicking foot too close to the ball as to interfere with the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg.

Step Two: Contact with the kicking foot on the ball is made with the instep. The ball should be struck through the center and on the under side of the ball, where the ball rests on the surface of the ground. Withdrawal from the kicking leg comes from the hip as well as the knee for extra power and distance.

Step Three: The follow through is long and continues through the ball into the direction of the goal. There is hardly any backspin on the ball, thus allowing the ball to roll as it makes contact with the ground.

SHOOTING

The Low Driven Shot



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at a slight angle. This will assist the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The head weighs approximately 10 pounds, so any unnecessary tilting of the head will affect the whole balance of the body. The non-kicking foot should be placed along side and slightly in front of the ball.

Step Two: Contact on the ball with the kicking foot should be made through the horizontal mid-line of the ball. The kicking foot should be fully extended down and the ball should be struck with the laces of the boot.

Step Three: The follow through should be made through the center of the ball and continue in the direction of the goal.

GOALKEEPING

Goalkeeping Introduction



There are three types of people who work with their hands.

People who build and move things using their hands, people who use their hands and minds to create things and people who use their hands, minds, and hearts. These people are called **goalkeepers**. They use their *hands* to control the ball and to communicate, their *minds* to make challenging decisions, and their *hearts* to express their passion for the art of goalkeeping! Goalkeepers are not better than anyone else, but they are very special and unique people.

The goalkeeper is arguably the most important position on the field. A goalkeeper can win a game with one brilliant save or become the villain with a mistimed dive. The nature of the position requires agility, speed, athleticism, confidence, bravery and good communication skills.

For decades, goalkeepers were expected to train alone or were often simply blended into the regular practice sessions with very little attention being provided to the goalkeepers specific needs. Goalkeepers are different from outfield players and must be trained accordingly. Specialized training is needed for specialized positions. The role of the goalkeeper has changed more than any other position in recent years. With the introduction of the back-pass rule, goalkeepers are required to be as comfortable as outfield players with the ball at their feet.

Goalkeepers are the last line of defense. They should think like sweeper backs and use the full range of the defensive third of the field. Goalkeepers are the first line of attack. Quality distribution is vital for counter-attacking. Keepers must possess a wide range of distribution skills in the area of kicking and throwing.

Good hands are unusable without quick feet. Footwork is the key to all good shot stopping and

catching.

Communication between a goalkeeper and the team is critical for good organization. Whether it be setting up a defensive wall or calling for a high ball, the goalkeeper must be commanding, confident and clear. Bravery is a pre-requisite to play in goal at any level. Unlike outfield players, there are rarely second chances to win the ball in a one v one situation.

Your goalkeepers should be challenged at each practice session. With good planning and organization you can easily implement a specific training regimen. Your goal should be to challenge them to a level of technical excellence.



It is also of paramount importance that you understand how quality technique is developed. "Practice does not make perfect" rather "practice makes permanent." This holds true for both good and bad training. The quantity of practices must never be more important than the quality of practices.

Keep your sessions simple, intense and short. To reach a level of technical perfection, the technique must be isolated and performed until it becomes habit.

Three important components should be applied when training your keepers.

1. Repetition:

Repetition is important in developing the motor memory patterns to enable the goalkeeper to execute each technique automatically, without thinking, so this becomes an ingrained habit. The practices should be designed to ensure that goalkeeper is getting as many touches on the ball as possible.

2. Consistent Quality:

Repetition can be a dangerous thing if the skill is being rehearsed incorrectly. The mechanics involved in each execution of the technique must be accurate and consistent. Aim for an 80% success rate. The coach must be the facilitator in ensuring that poor technique is detected early and precise information is provided to the goalkeeper to correct the problem. The coach must know the mechanical movements involved in each goalkeeping technique to be able to correct those techniques.

3. Explosive Movements:

As soon as possible the goalkeeper must practice the technique at a speed that simulates match play. Slow practices will develop slow goalkeepers and up-tempo practices will develop fast and

explosive goalkeepers. Never sacrifice quality for speed when practicing technique.

This section has been designed to provide coaches with a variety of specific goalkeeping drills and games. The practices in this section are used by top professional goalkeeper coaches and they can be modified and applied to any age level. Inside you will find challenging and fun practices in the areas of Diving, Ball Handling, Shot Stopping, Footwork and Fitness.

Waist Height Saves



What you need to know

Step One: Get the body directly in line with the flight of the ball. Feet shoulder width, knees slightly bent, body weight forward. Head held steady, eyes focused on the ball.

Step Two: Trunk bends forward from the waist. Arms extended out towards the ball with slight bend in the elbows. Forearms are parallel with the elbows tucked in. Palms of the hands face upward. Once the ball contacts the hands and forearms it will be absorbed deep into the pocket of the chest and stomach.

Step Three: Upon impact the body will relax slightly by getting slightly on the toes to absorb the impact of the ball. Body must be square to the ball at all times.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

Head Height Saves



What you need to know

Step One: Head and eyes should be focused on the ball, ignore other players. Arms extended above but slightly in front of the head. Hands are held even with finger's spread to receive the ball.

Step Two: Once the ball is caught, it should be drawn smoothly back into the chest.

Step Three: The keeper's intentions to win the ball should be clearly communicated with fellow defenders in the form of a loud, commanding and early keeper call.

Factors to be taken into account:

- The distance from which the ball is traveling.
- The pace of the ball.
- The weather conditions such as wind, rain, sun, etc.
- Presence of opposition strikers.
- Last couple of strides should be exact.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

Above Head Height Saves



What you need to know

Step One: Head and eyes should be focused on the ball, ignore other players. Arms extended above but slightly in front of the head. Hands are held even with fingers spread to receive the ball.

Step Two: Once the ball is caught, it should be drawn smoothly back into the chest.

Step Three: The keepers intentions to win the ball should be clearly communicated with fellow defenders in the form of a loud, commanding and early keeper call.

Factors to be taken into account:

- The distance from which the ball is traveling.
- The pace of the ball.
- The weather conditions such as wind, rain, sun, etc.
- Presence of opposition strikers.
- Last couple of strides should be exact.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

Dealing with Crosses



What you need to know

The high ball or cross can not be successfully negotiated unless one understands the mechanics of the one footed take off.

Factors to be taken into account:

- The distance from which the ball is traveling.
- The height and trajectory of the ball.
- The pace of the ball.
- The weather conditions such as wind, rain, sun, etc.
- Presence of opposition strikers.
- Last couple of strides should be exact.
- Last stride should be the longest. Non jumping leg/knee is driven upward to provide upward momentum. It is also but incidentally used for protection.
- Arm swing and knee lift should take place simultaneously.
- Head and eyes should be focused on the ball, ignore other players.
- Arms extended above but slightly in front of the head.
- Hands are held even with fingers spread to receive the ball.
- Once the ball is caught, it should be drawn smoothly back into the chest.
- The keepers intentions to win the ball should be clearly communicated with fellow defenders in the form of a loud, commanding and early keeper call.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

Diving Saves



What you need to know

There are 3 main types of breakaway saves:

1. The keeper may save before a shot is taken. In this instance the attacker is not in control of the ball, misplays the ball or the through ball or pass which is intended for him is over hit. This situation clearly favors the keeper and is usually 60/40 in his/her favors.
2. The keepers save at the foot of the striker just as the shot is taken. Commonly referred to as the smother save. This is 50/50 ball.
3. Saving after the shot is taken, here the keeper attempts to delay the striker by advancing from goal, closing the angle, staying big as long as possible and forcing the player to shoot. This type of save is reactionary and the feet are often used when the shot is low hard and very close to the body.

Elements Common to All 3 Types of Saves:

- Keepers must make their minds up quickly.
- Must judge their rate of advance and attempt to narrow the angle - thus reducing the amount of goal the attacker can see.
- Must be in control of their bodies by keeping footwork and balance right.
- Shoulders and head are forward.
- Go low into the ball - get lower as you approach the ball.
- Present large and long barrier as possible.
- Be courageous - have no fear.
- Concentrate on the ball.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

Parrying the Ball



What you need to know

Step One: Eyes should be focused on the ball. If the ball comes from the right side, use the right hand. If the ball comes from the left, use the left hand.

Step Two: Contact the ball through the middle. Do not swing wildly at the ball. The save should be a short sharp stabbing action.

Step Three: The Goalkeeper should communicate effectively with the defenders by calling for the ball.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

The Drop Kick



What you need to know

Step One: The ball can be held in either one or two hands. Drop the ball from waist height in front of kicking leg. Swing kicking leg forward from the hip.

Step Two: The knee is flexed on back swing and extended on follow through. Toes are pointed down and ankle is locked.

Step Three: Contact is made through the bottom half of the ball with the laces. Contact is made when the ball rises approximately 6 inches off the ground. Follow through by continuing the upward swing of the leg.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

The Full Volley



What you need to know

Step One: The ball can be held in either one or two hands. Drop the ball from waist height in front of kicking leg. Swing kicking leg forward from the hip.

Step Two: The knee is flexed on back swing and extended on followed through. Toes are pointed down and ankle is locked.

Step Three: Contact is made through the bottom half of the balls with the laces. Follow through by continuing the upward swing of the legs.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

The Goal Kick



What you need to know

Step One: Approach the ball at an angle. This will assist in the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. The head should be kept steady and eyes fixed firmly on the ball. The last stride on the approach to the ball should be the longest. This will increase the length of the back swing from the kicking leg.

Step Two: Plant the non-kicking foot along side and slightly behind the ball. Do not position the non-kicking foot too close to the ball as to interfere with the natural swinging motion of the kicking leg. Contact with the kicking foot on the ball is made with the instep. The ball should be struck through the center and on the under side of the ball, where the ball rests on the surface of the ground.

Step Three: Withdrawal from the kicking leg comes from the hip as well as the knee for extra power and distance. The follow through is long and continues through the ball into the direction of the intended target. There is hardly any backspin on the ball, thus allowing the ball to roll as it makes contact with the ground.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

The Javelin Throw



What you need to know

Step One: Ball is held in the palm and cupped against the wrist with the fingers. Step with the opposite leg bending at the knee.

Step Two: Take the ball back in arc until it is by the side. Ball is swept back over shoulder and released on the follow through.

Step Three: Ball should have a head over tail spin as it leaves the hand. This will help it roll once it hits the ground.

Copyright, TheICA.com All Rights Reserved

GOALKEEPING

The Under Hand Roll



What you need to know

Step One: Ball is held in the palm of the hand and cupped against the wrist. Step with the opposite leg and bend at the knee.

Step Two: Take the ball back and release on the follow through. Release the ball low in a smooth controlled manner.

Step Three: The rolled pass should have the correct pace and accuracy to get it to it's intended target. This technique is used when you wish to play the ball quickly and accurately over distances between 20 to 50 yards.