

THE ONLINE COACHING CLINIC

Drill: 2
Theme: Passing
Focus: Inside-of-Foot Passing and Receiving
Age Category: U8 and older

Teaching Inside-of-Foot Passing and Receiving

These are the two (2) most important techniques you can teach; nothing is more fundamental.

To be a good soccer player, you must learn the correct technique for passing the ball. Over 50% of youth soccer players use incorrect technique. The result is passes that are inaccurate, don't have the right pace or don't stay on the ground.

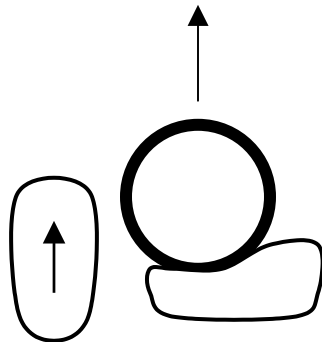
Over 75% of all passes and receptions are made using the inside-of-the-foot.

❖ **Important – teach this skill using both the dominate and non-dominate foot.**

Phase I – Inside-of-the-foot passing

Start by:

- 1) Have the player face the target & “square-up” so he, the ball, and the target are all in a straight line
- 2) Place the “plant foot” about 4” - 6” from the side of the ball, pointing toward the target. The direction the “plant” foot points is important because that is the direction the hips will face.



- 3) Their head should be over the ball, looking down; both knees slightly bent
- 4) To teach the proper motion, first have the player place their striking foot flat against the back of the ball, with the foot about 4” - 5” above the ground. Then have them

push the ball toward the target and follow through with the foot toward the target. Coach point: they should push and follow through, not jab at the ball. The ball should roll with topspin.

- 5) Be sure when he contacts the ball, the toes of the striking foot are pulled up and the ankle is locked or firm. The sole of the striking foot should be parallel to the ground.
- 6) Make contact with the ball at the arch of the foot, below the anklebone.
- 7) Review these check points before moving on to the next Phase II:
 - ✓ Player is facing target
 - ✓ “Plant” foot is pointed at target and about 4” - 6” to the side of the ball
 - ✓ Sole of striking foot is parallel to the ground and about 4” - 5” above the ground
 - ✓ Ankle is locked or firm
 - ✓ Contact is made at the arch below the ankle bone
 - ✓ Push and follow through so the ball rolls with top spin

Phase II – The Two (2) Step – Kick Sequence

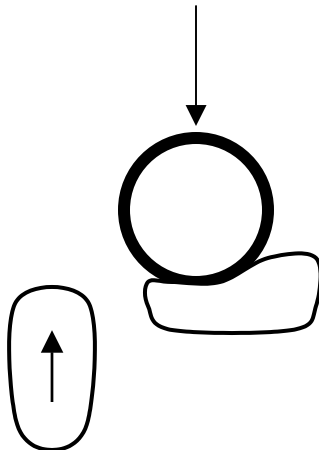
The next phase is to have the player step into the kick. The intent of this phase is not to teach forceful kicking, but to instruct in leg control, proper foot contact and proper body alignment. The player will start about two (2) steps behind the ball and walk up to the ball to execute an inside-of-foot pass:

- 1) Player stands about two (2) steps directly behind the ball with his body facing the target
- 2) The player, the ball, and the target should be in a straight line
- 3) The player steps forward to strike the ball. The step provides power to the pass
- 4) Review the check points in step #7 of Phase I

Phase III – Receiving a Pass using Inside-of-foot

The final phase in this process is to teach receiving a pass using the inside-of-foot.

- 1) Receive the ball even with the toes of the “plant foot” (or a little in front).



- 2) Relax the receiving foot so the ball will rebound off the foot and stop about a step or two away. Coaching hint: tell the players to imagine an egg on the inside of the receiving foot and they can't let the ball break it. By allowing the ball to rebound off the receiving foot it sets the ball up for another pass. If the ball is stopped dead on the receiving foot then the player must do an additional touch on the ball to position it for a pass.
- 3) Be sure the receiving foot is 4" – 5" off the ground. If too low the ball will pop up and be difficult to control.
- 4) Contact with the ball should be made on the back part of the receiving foot, near the anklebone.
- 5) The toes of the receiving foot should be pulled up so that the sole of the foot is parallel to the ground
- 6) As your players become proficient with this skill they can be taught to direct the ball to either side instead of straight in front. Angling the receiving foot in the direction you want the ball to go does this.

Diagnosing & Solving Performance Problems

After the players are able to simulate the movements of the inside-of-foot passing and receiving, a variety of control problems will be evident. The following is a list of frequent performance results and their probable causes and solutions:

➤ **Problem: Inaccurate Passes**

Solution(s):

- ✓ Is the "plant foot" pointed toward the target?
- ✓ Is the foot following through toward the target? Teach an exaggerated follow-through toward the target, like they are "pushing" the ball toward the target. The follow-through should be straight ahead & not off to the side.
- ✓ Is the passer lining up behind the ball so he, the ball & the target are all in a straight line? Some players want to approach a pass from the side. That is incorrect. If they do this they will sweep their foot across the ball at an angle, resulting in a decrease in their passing accuracy.
- ✓ Is the passer striking the ball toward the front of the foot (toes), instead of toward the back of the foot near the anklebone? The front of the foot is not as firm and will tend to bend. Also, there is less surface area to make contact.

➤ **Problem: Passes pop off the ground – "airballs" are difficult for the receiver to control**

Solution(s):

- ✓ Is the passer striking too low on the ball? Have the passer work on striking the ball in the middle or even toward the top.
 - ✓ Are the toes pulled up so the sole of the foot is parallel to the ground?
- **Problem: Passes don't have enough power or don't have the correct amount of pace (sometimes too slow & sometimes too fast).**

Solution(s):

- ✓ Is the passer bending the kicking leg? If it's straight, the only power is from the hip.
- ✓ Is the player striking the ball toward the front of the foot (toes) instead of toward the back of the foot near the anklebone? The front of the foot is not as firm & will tend to give, which will result in a loss of power and cause inconsistency.
- ✓ Is the passer pulling his toes up so the sole of the foot is parallel to the ground & locking his ankle? A loose ankle will cause a loss of power.
- ✓ Is he following through toward the target? A punch or jab at the ball won't generate much power.

Once the players are able to perform inside-of-foot passing and receiving, a variety of independent passing and receiving drills can be incorporated into practice sessions in order to help the players perfect their performance of this skill.

❖ **REMEMBER – Be sure to spend equal time working on the dominant and non-dominant foot.**