

## TECHNIQUE(S) – THE BASICS

Coaches often overlook the basic techniques of soccer and instead like to move straight into more complex practices and activities. It is FAR more important for coaches to have a good understanding of these basics and to teach them to their players.

### SHORT PASSING

#### *Inside of the Foot*

- Look towards target
- Support foot planted alongside the ball pointing towards the target
- Toe pointed up slightly
- Lock the ankle
- Strike the center of the ball
- Look at the ball when contact is made
- Kicking foot follows through towards target

#### *Outside of the Foot*

- Support foot placed behind the ball slightly
- Toe pointed slightly down
- Strike the middle or side of the ball
- Look at the ball when contact is made
- Little follow through

### LONG PASSING

#### *Lofted*

- Prepare the ball out from the body/feet
- Approach the ball from an angle
- Support foot should be slightly behind the ball pointing forward
- Lean back
- Toe pointed down to get underneath the ball

#### *Driven*

- Prepare the ball out from the body/feet
- Slight angle of approach
- Support foot alongside the ball pointing forward
- Toe pointed down
- Strike through the center of the ball with the laces
- Stay down over the ball (low kicking leg / knee)
- Follow through towards the target

### DRIBBLING

#### *Running with the ball at speed*

- Toe pointed down
- Use the outside of the foot or the instep
- First touch should be out (away) from the body
- As the defender approaches keep the ball closer to the feet by using more touches

#### *Attacking the defender*

- Change speed and direction
- Attack the defenders most forward leg
- Explosion of speed once past the defender

- Once behind play across the defender to cut off recovery run

## **SHOOTING**

### ***Placing the shot***

- Early decision of where you want to play the shot
- Shoot before the keeper is set or stops moving towards you
- Hips and support foot aiming at target when you strike the ball

### ***Going for Power***

- Compact over the ball
- Strike through the center of the ball with the laces of the cleat
- Look at the ball on contact and stay down over the ball
- Land on the shooting foot

## **HEADING**

### ***Attacking the goal***

- Attack the cross at speed
- One foot take-off from your run
- Jump before the defender
- Head through the top half of the ball
- Try to head the ball down into the goal

### ***Defensive***

- One take off from your run
- Jump before the opposition
- Head through the lower half of the ball
- Emphasis on distance, width and height

## **RECEIVING THE BALL**

### ***On the ground***

- Get in the line and flight of the ball
  - Have a low center of gravity
  - Receiving the ball with the inside of the foot – toe pointing up slightly
  - Receiving the ball with the outside of the foot – toe pointing down slightly
  - Look at the ball at the point of contact
  - Bring the foot back slightly to cushion the ball
- Always receive on the back foot (foot furthest away from where the ball is coming from)

### ***In the air***

- Get in the line and flight of the ball
- Have a low center of gravity
- Decide which part of the body to use to receive the ball
- Look at the ball at the point of contact
- Relax the body part back slightly to cushion the ball

## **TACKLING**

- Close down the space between you and the opponent quickly
- As you get closer begin to slow down and steady yourself
- Focus on the ball
- Have a low center of gravity
- Stand sideways on and force the attacker into an angle

- Be on the toes and move back as the opponent comes forward
- Tackle as soon as the opponent takes a bad touch or loses control of the ball
- Tackle with the front foot, stay balanced and able to recover

The first job of the first defender is to DELAY – the opposition player and makes them think about progressing forward any further! The first defender is the player on our team who is nearest to the ball!

## First touch (controlling a soccer ball)

As you will see from the previous pages I highlighted the basic technique of **receiving the ball** – This is because I place this technique – as the highest priority for ANY would be soccer player – once a player masters this technique, confidence overflows, and all the other techniques and skills fall into place – If there is one thing I could add to ALL of my practices it would be this. Here is some more information on this technique.

Broadly defined, control is the ability to manipulate the ball and prepare it for a following touch. It is clearly one of the most essential skills in football. A bad first touch and the play is usually over for the attacking team.

### How to control the ball

There are two types of control, receiving and trapping. Receiving means directing the ball into space away from the body and preparing for your next move - Trapping is stopping the ball right at your feet.

#### **Receiving**

Receiving is useful when running into space. Try to make contact with the middle or top part of the ball. Tap it lightly in the direction that you want to go. Good footballers can settle the ball into open space, even when under pressure. This often provides an extra step over the defender.

#### **Trapping**

Trapping is typically used when the ball is going too fast to redirect with your first touch. The most important part here is staying loose and on your toes. You can't adjust to the ball when you're stiff or flat-footed. Try keeping your hips open, facing the direction from where the ball is coming. Put your foot in the path of the ball and cushion it. To cushion the ball, gently withdraw your foot just before the time of contact.

### How to practice control

The easiest way to practice control is with a partner. Your partner throws you the ball with his hands. After controlling the ball with a single, clean touch you pass it back to him.

If you lack a partner, you can use a wall. Simply stand at about 3-5 meters (10-15 feet) away from the wall and knock the ball against it. You then trap or receive the ball as it comes back to you. This exercise gives you the chance to work on both your kicking and control. As you get comfortable, start applying both feet. Eventually, try lofting the ball and incorporate speed by running to meet the oncoming ball.

## **Different methods of control to practice.**

### ***Inside of the foot***

Your supporting foot must be planted 45-90 degrees in relation to the path of the ball. Don't plant it flat, instead keep your weight on your toes. You should intercept the ball with the arch of your free foot. At the time of contact, cushion the ball by moving your foot along the ball's original path. Instead of trapping the ball you may wish to redirect it. To do so, simply turn your receiving foot in the desired direction. **Please coach the players to receive a pass on their back foot (the foot furthest away from the ball)**

### ***Outside of the foot***

This technique is useful when the ball is coming in from the side. Rather than turning your body into its path, you can control it using the outside of the foot. Simply reach forward into the ball's path and intercept it with the outside of your instep. That should settle it nicely considering that the outside of your foot provides a lot of contact surface.

### ***Sole of the foot***

Simply put your foot on the ball with your toes raised slightly above your heel. Because of the modern game's speed, trapping with the sole of the foot is rarely applied to control passes. It can be useful in dribbling. Some players use it to stop right before changing direction or incorporate it in more elaborate combos.

### ***Instep***

This technique is useful when the ball is falling from a steep angle. Don't just wait for the ball to arrive, stay on your toes and lock your eyes on it. Quickly adjust to its trajectory so that you don't have to reach out too far. Before the ball arrives, stretch the ankle of your controlling foot. Try to cushion the ball using the area around your shoelaces. At the moment of contact, withdraw your controlling foot by bending the knee and ankle. This should settle the ball right in front of you.

### ***Thigh***

The thigh is especially useful in football when you want to trap the ball. Redirecting it into space is somewhat harder when you're using the thigh. Cushioning the ball with the thigh can be done for both rising and dropping balls. Make sure you position yourself properly, before you try to trap the ball. Once you have aligned yourself well, put your thigh in the path of the ball and angle it so that it's redirected downward. If you don't retract, the ball will just bounce off of you. The contact surface you should use is the area above the knee, about halfway on your thigh. The inside of your thigh is good for stopping balls that are flying straight at you.

### ***Chest***

The chest provides the largest surface area for trapping or receiving the ball. When using it for control, stretch out your arms and flex your muscles. To cushion the ball, you'll need to arch your back slightly. You may also have to

bend your knees or jump in order to align your chest with the height of the ball.

### **Head**

Set up your body just as if you're about to head the ball. Instead of heading it, simply intercept its path using the surface area on your forehead, just below the hairline. Just before making contact, turn your head in whatever direction you want the ball to go (receiving).

If you just want to bring the ball to your feet (trapping) do not turn your head, instead bend your knees and lean forward with your upper body.

## **Other resources**

ABYS has started a library containing videos, DVD and books – the library will run on a trust basis and is available to all registered ABYS coaches – Please check with the DOC prior to taking any material from the library. The library will be available from the Spring season 2010.

The Internet as most of us are aware is an amazing source of information here are just a few links from the many hundreds that could help you.

- **Official Sites**

<http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/>

(US youth soccer official site)

<http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/>

(Massachusetts Youth Soccer)

<http://www.fifa.com/>

(World governing body)

<http://www.nscaa.com/>

(National soccer coaches association)

- **Great help for technical sessions and drills.**

<http://www.eteamz.com/soccer/pills/jpill.htm>

(Online practice sessions)

<http://www.soccerpark.com/lasher/lasher.htm>

(Online practice sessions)