



Receiving - Low Balls

by Laura Ray, Mass Youth Soccer Development Coach

Objectives: To improve the technique of receiving soccer balls played on the ground. To help players see different methods of receiving ground balls (inside of foot, outside of foot, across body, through legs, etc.).

1) Dutch Circle (Warm-up – 15 minutes):

Half of the players create a 25-35 yd outer circle and have soccer balls at their feet. These players must always be alert and on their toes. The other half of the players are in the middle of this circle and do not have soccer balls. The inner players check to players on the outside to receive a pass from them. They receive the pass and then play to any player on the outer circle who does not have a ball (except player who passed to them). They then check to another person on the outside that has a ball and repeat this process for about 2-3 minutes until coach switches players on outside and inside. Focus on both front foot and back foot receptions and add in feints (i.e. ball runs through legs, ball runs across body, or take ball early). Work on receiving with both feet and receiving sideways-on.

Coaching Points:

- get body behind the ball and be on toes
- go to the ball, do not wait for it
- keep ankle of receiving foot locked
- cushion ball as it arrives (as you would catching an egg)
- point of contact is the middle of the ball
- keep feet moving before ball arrives
- make your first touch active by pushing the ball in the direction in which you want to go (typically away from pressure)
- get head up before and after receiving
- always try to receive the ball facing the way you want to play

2) Numbers Passing (15 minutes):

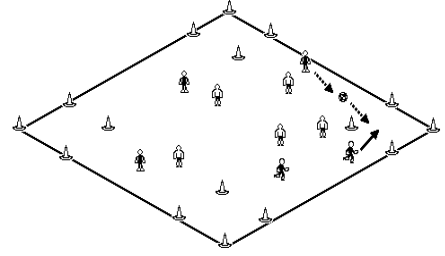
Split the team into groups of 4-5 players. Give every player a number. Have them spread out and pass the ball from number 1 to 2, from 2 to 3, etc. through the whole group. The highest numbered player simply passes back to number 1 and the activity continues. Tell all the players that the ball cannot stop moving, and they cannot stop moving. As they become proficient at the activity, introduce another ball to the group; they now have to pay attention to where they are receiving the ball from as well as where they need to play the ball next. **Version 2:** Have the whole team as one group and follow the same information above (but can add more than one soccer ball to group).

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Player receiving must have head up to know what they are going to do with the ball before they get it

3) Four Square Passing (15 minutes):

Form a grid 35yds x 35yds with squares roughly 4 yds across in each corner. Two teams of 4 to 6 players try to score by passing the ball to a teammate who makes a run into one of the four squares. Only players from the attacking team can enter a corner square. Once a player in the square receives a ball, they can pass to a teammate or dribble the ball out for a point. Balls out of play can be passed or dribbled back into play.

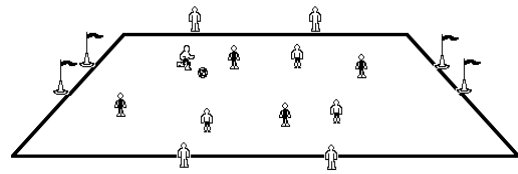


Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2

4) Bread and Butter (15 minutes):

Typical 4 vs. 4 but with an additional 4 players who stand on outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets (can limit the touches of these players if they have the ability (ie: two touches)). If a team gets scored upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yd area. May restrict the players to 2 or 3 touches to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- when receiving balls with back to goal or in midfield, try to receive sideways on (with body sideways to the length of the field) and look over shoulder before receiving the ball

5) 6v6 Scrimmage (25-30 minutes)

Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- Highlight the technique of receiving
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (how they receive the ball in relation to where they are on the field and the options they have)

6) Cool-down (10 minutes):

Top cross bar chip. All players, each with a soccer ball on the penalty mark try to chip the ball to hit the crossbar. Can have them then try from the edge of the penalty area (and farther if they need to be challenged more). Coach can make a competition out of it – when team hits top crossbar certain number of times, they can go home, etc.