



Combination Play (2 players combining)

by Laura Ray, Mass Youth Soccer Development Coach

Objectives: To help players to recognize when to combine with teammates and what combination is appropriate (wall-pass, overlap and take-over) considering the changing conditions of the game.

Coaching Points:

Wall pass:

- First attacker runs right at the defender with the ball
- The second attacker sets up level with or slightly ahead of the defender, turned sideways, shoulders pointed to the goals
- When the first attacker is close to-but still out of tackling range of-the defender, he/she must read cues from the defender
- If the defender is jockeying between the two attackers and obviously playing the pass, the first attacker must simply dribble past the defender with speed
- If the defender is attending more to the first attacker, then the first attacker should pass the ball to the wall player's (2nd attacker) front foot
- The 2nd attacker plays the ball with one touch into the space behind the defender and into the running path of the first attacker
- The 1st attacker sprints to receive the ball preferably in the natural flow of her run.

Overlap:

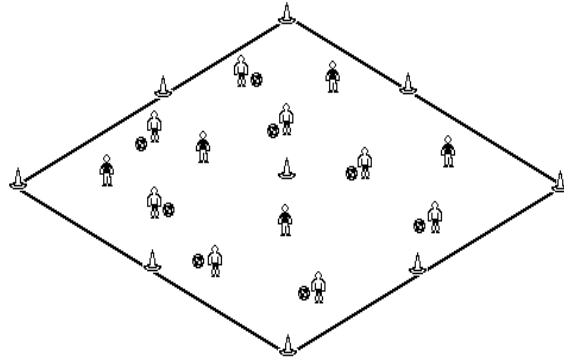
- The 1st attacker runs right at the defender (option 1) or the first attacker plays the ball to the second attacker who dribbles in a direction away from the overlapping space (option 2)
- If the defender shifts over to pick up the 2nd attacker in option 1, the 1st attacker can dribble by the defender. If not, the second attacker's run must be around either shoulder of the first attacker at full speed. After drawing the defender toward the ball (and away from the space intended for the overlapping run), the first attacker may play the ball into the running path of the second attacker
- In option 2, the second attacker dribbles to create overlapping space and the first attacker then becomes the player who overlaps. The ball is played into the running path of the first attacker

Takeover:

- The 2nd attacker runs directly at the 1st attacker from the opposite direction
- The 1st attacker protects the ball from the defender by keeping it on the foot furthest from the defender so that his body is in between the defender and the ball
- If the takeover is on (if the defender does not step into path of second attacker), the first attacker leaves the ball for the second attacker and the second attacker takes the ball using the same foot as the first attacker (right foot to right foot, left to left!)
- Depending on your preference as a coach you may have the first or the second attacker dictate this exchange with simple communication
- If the defender slows down to "pick-up" the 2nd attacker, 1st attacker can call his or her name and continue to dribble.

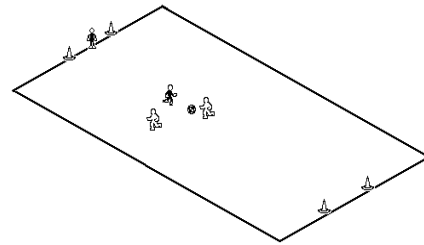
1) Combination Square (15 to 20 minutes):

Make a grid about 30yds x 30yds and break it into quarters. Place 4 or 5 players in vests and have them roam around the entire grid in order to give support to the other players. Players in vests do not have soccer balls, while all other players do. Players with soccer balls look to dribble around the grid and try to connect with the vested players to perform wall-passes. However, in order for this to happen the player on the ball must pass to a vested player in a different quarter than him and the pass back from the vested player must go into a quarter that neither he nor the player who passed the ball is in. The player initiating the wall pass needs to play a firm pass, sprint to an open space in a different quarter, receive the return pass, and look for another player to combine with. The vested player must show themselves to others constantly in order to give support and look to play balls to the front foot of the runner.



2) 2v1+1 to goal (15-20 minutes):

In a 12x17 yard grid add two 3 yard goals on each 12-yard side. If the attacking team combines before they score, they are awarded 2 points. If they don't combine and score, it is worth 1 point. The defending team must have one player in the goal and one on the field. The goalkeeper must stay in the goal until the attacking team loses the ball. (14 minutes)

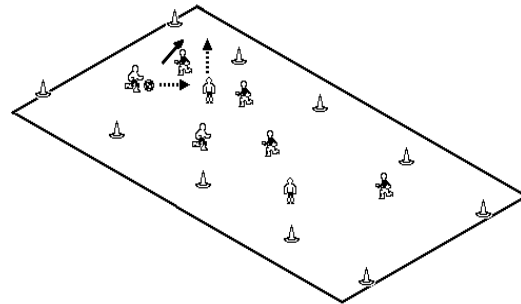


Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Help players recognize when to combine and when to fake the combination to beat the defender
- Assist players in seeing that, when they combine, their ultimate goal is to get their pass in and behind the defender (vs. in front of them).

3) 4v4 to end zones (15 minutes to 20 minutes):

In a field space approximately 30 to 35 yards long by 40 to 50 yards wide, teams comprised of 4 players depending on numbers and space (can increase or decrease from 3v3 to 6v6). Teams receive 5 points if they combine with a teammate before successfully entering the opponent's end zone; they receive only one point if they get in without a combination. Add a "plus" player who always plays for the attacking team, **IF** they can't keep possession long enough to create a combination or opportunity to score.

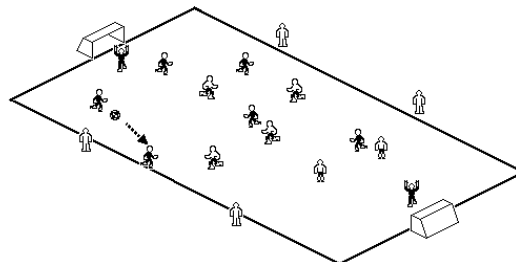


Coaching Points:

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

4) 6v6 plus 4 to Goals (15-20 minutes):

In a field approximately 55 yards long by 40 yards wide, play 6v6 to goals, with goalkeepers, and position 2 neutral players on each sideline (neutral players can move up and down the sidelines). Play a regular game...the 4 neutral players always play with the attacking team (team in possession of the ball). This activity will stimulate combination play.



Coaching Points:

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

5) 8v8 Scrimmage (25-30 minutes):

In a field approximately 75 yards long by 50 yards wide, play a regular game with goalkeepers. Depending upon number of players that you have at training, field size may change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (decision to combine or not, what type of combination, how effective at the time and place on the field, etc.).

6) Cool-down (5-10 minutes):

Individual juggling; challenge the players to see who can juggle the most in a 2 minute period.