



# **Penetration Session (dribbling, passing & shooting)**

*by Laura Ray, Mass Youth Soccer Development Coach*

**Objectives:** To help players recognize when to penetrate by dribbling, passing and/or shooting.

## **1) Gates (15 to 20 minutes):**

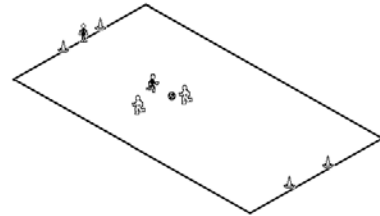
Randomly place many pairs of cones making small goals (1yd) in a large space (30 x 20 yds) and have players dribble their balls through the goals for a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible. Have players count up their total points in the time you provide them. After doing once, ask them to improve their score by 2 and play the game again. Challenge each player individually (can ask for right foot only, left foot only). *Version 2:* Can now ask players to partner up and pass through as many gates as they can. *Version 3:* Add defenders.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce dribbling technique – all parts of foot / keep ball close / on toes / push vs. kick
- Reinforce passing technique – inside of the foot - ankle locked / toe up-heel down / hit middle part of inside of foot / follow through-land on kicking foot / plant foot next to ball and facing where you want the ball to go // outside of the foot – ankle locked / front part on the outside part of foot (not toe and not middle of outside)
- Reinforce shooting technique – ankle of shooting foot locked with toe pointed down (instep)/ plant foot next to the ball / land on kicking foot / head down / lean over ball as you kick / strike through the middle of the ball (encourage players to always keep ball low when using the laces for this activity)

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

In a 12x17 yard grid add two 3 yard goals on each 12-yard side. The attacking team looks to combine (over-lap, take-over or wall pass) or attack on the dribble or shoot (knee height or below). 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, then the player that was in the goal can come out to attack (while the team that just lost possession must send one player back to play in goal).

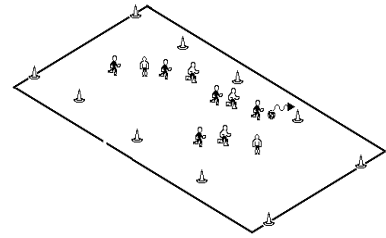


### **Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- Visual cues should determine how the attacking players penetrate into the space behind the opponent...dribble, pass or shoot
- To combine, make defender commit to person with the ball; selection of appropriate combination (wall-pass, take-over, run-around or double pass) is based on the visual cues
- Explode into space on the dribble if defender doesn't commit
- Encourage finding the goal as quickly as possible (whether attacking on the dribble, combining with teammate, or getting a quick shot off)

### 3) 4v4 to 6v6 to end zones (15 minutes):

Set up a 30 yd x 40 yd field with endzones behind the 40 yd lines. Teams comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. The attacking team may dribble into the endzone or combine with a wall pass, take-over or over-lap to get into the end zone (marked with discs). 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 on the dribble. Also, coach can give more points to encourage more dribbling if necessary or more points for passing if necessary. *Variation 2:* Coach can limit touches-3 touch, 2 touch, 1 touch.



#### Coaching Points:

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

### 4) 6v6 to 8v8 Scrimmage (25-30 minutes):

Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

#### Coaching Points:

- Stress that the first look is always to penetrate
- Should the player with the ball penetrate on the dribble, with a pass or a shot?
- Positively reinforce decisions to penetrate...especially to shoot!

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

**Groups of 5 Relay Heading Challenge.** One player stands on the line with the ball in their hands (server); the other 4 players positioned directly across from them (about 3-5 yards away), one behind the other. The server tosses the ball to the first person in line. The first person in line heads the ball back to the server, then goes down on one knee. The server then tries to head it back to the second person in line, who heads it back, goes down on one knee, etc. Give the server multiple chances to get the ball all the way down the line. Switch up players to ensure everyone gets a chance to be the server. Finish cool-down with static stretching of major muscle groups.