



## ***Improving First-Touch and Composure on the Ball***

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### **Warm-Up**

***Set-Up*** – players 12 yards apart in two groups of 3-4 players. See Figure #1.

***Explanation*** – Players pass and follow their pass (See Figure #2). After passing, players must decisively pick a side, left or right, to run back to the opposite group. It is now the responsibility of the player receiving the ball to recognize which side the player is running to, and subsequently take their first touch to the opposite side. Players should use two touches, one to receive – two to pass. Suggest the following variations:

- Inside of one foot – inside of the other
- Outside of one foot – inside of the same
- Outside of one foot – outside of the other

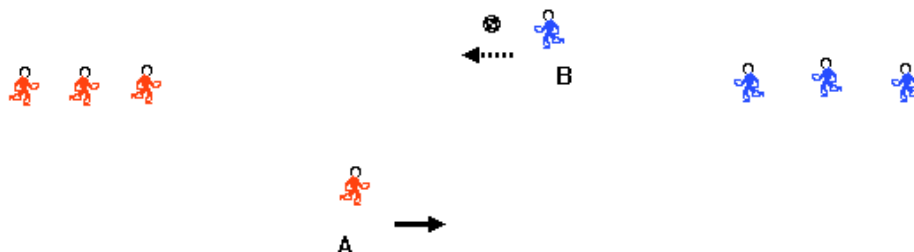
### ***Coaching Points***

- Good first touch both technically and tactically – the first touch is a “thinking touch”
- Head up – field vision
- Don’t force a particular foot or surface of foot – use the appropriate foot and surface for the situation

**Figure #1**



**Figure #2**





### **Low-Pressure Activity**

**Set-Up**- two teams of 3 in a space 20 x 15 (See Figure #3).

**Explanation** – one team (blues) play 3 vs. 1 against one defender (red). Blues MUST take 3 touches before passing the ball (they may take more). The current defender is replaced by one of his teammates when one of the following things happen:

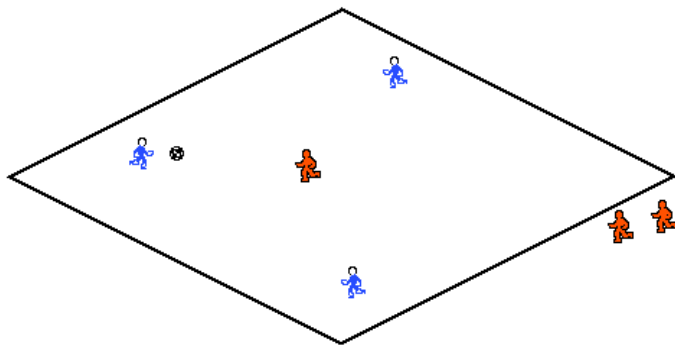
1. The defender wins the ball and touches the ball 3 times
2. The ball goes out of bounds
3. A blue player takes less than 3 touches before passing

Once all 3 red defenders have had a chance to defend, the red team now becomes the attacking team and the blues become the defending team.

### ***Coaching Points***

- In this activity, players can experience minimal pressure while being forced to hold the ball.
- Players must solve the space and pressure issues in order to achieve their 3 touches before passing
- First touch must be a receiving and thinking touch

**Figure #3**





### **Small Sided Game With Restrictions**

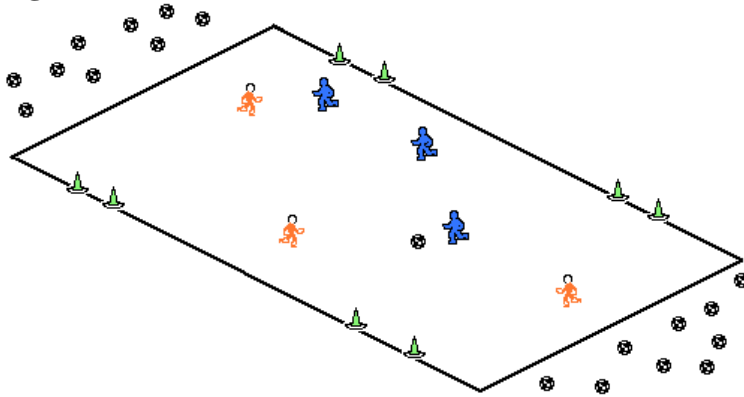
**Set-Up** – two equal teams of 3 or 4 play on a field 35 x 30. Supply of balls on each of the side-lines (See Figure #4).

**Explanation** – each team defends two goals and attacks two goals. Goal is scored when ball crosses either small goal. Players must take a mandatory amount of 3 touches before passing. Ball is always restarted on opposite side of the one that went out.

#### ***Coaching Points***

- This activity is a progression from the previous one as the numbers are now even and there is direction.
- Players can experience full pressure while being forced to hold the ball.
- Players must solve the space and pressure issues in order to achieve their 3 touches before passing
- First touch must be a receiving and thinking touch
- The activity encourages player to think multidimensional (left, right, back, forward)

**Figure #4**





### **Final Activity – 3rds of the Field**

**Set-Up** – divide field into equal 3rds(See Figure #5). The total number of available players should determine the size of the field.

**Explanation** – use all available players and goalkeepers. Players ARE NOT restricted to a particular third, they are free to move about as they wish. Players may not, however, pass to another player in a different 3<sup>rd</sup>; if they chose to pass, they must do so to a player in the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the field they are in. The ball may ONLY advance between thirds on the dribble.

#### ***Coaching Points***

- Existing restrictions require players solve space and pressure issues with a dribble
- Existing restrictions do not allow for players to “boom” or “randomly whack” the ball forward
- Existing restrictions encourage players to think about a “receiving” first touch vs. a clearing one
- Existing restrictions encourage mobility among teammates

**Figure #5**

