



Drill less, play more!

Part 3: Match-character training for game action speed by Hermann Bomers

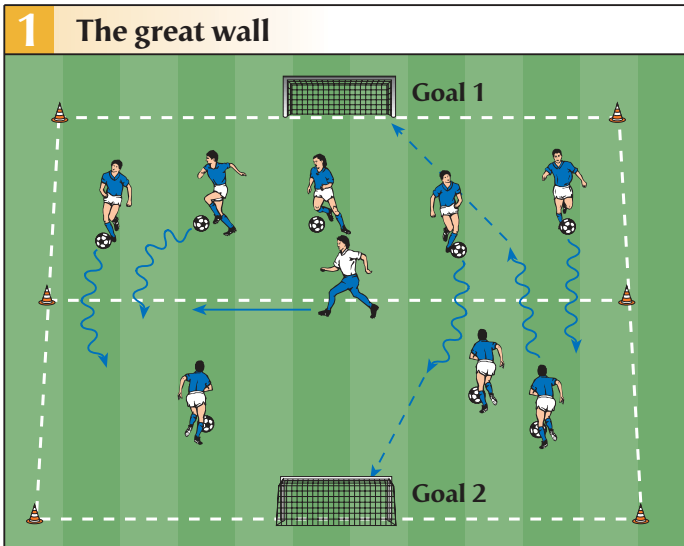
In part three of our series, Hermann Bomers focuses on game action speed and presents two practice games for each age level (basic, intermediate and advanced).

A basic prerequisite for winning soccer is the ability to instantly make decisions that move your team closer to its objective. This ability is known as game action speed.

In today's soccer, defenders try to outnumber their opponents around the ball and put pressure on the ball carrier. With a well-coordinated defense, this wall becomes nearly impossible to crack. There's no point in practicing set movement patterns, as no two game situations are alike. What's needed are fast, appropriate reactions to sudden and unexpected interference. Players must develop a

comprehensive repertoire of skills so they can choose the tool they need to succeed in any situation. Unexpected moves that take opponents by surprise offer the best chance of success. However, these skills are acquired not through drills, but by playing practice games. This is true at every age and ability level.

AGES SIX TO 10



Setup

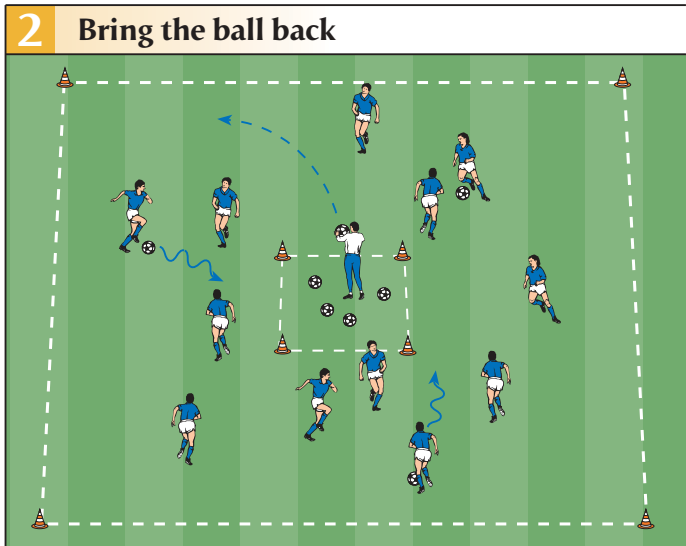
- Mark out a centerline on a 6 x 10-yard field.
- Set up one mini goal on each endline.
- All players take the field with one ball each.
- The coach moves back and forth along the centerline.

Sequence

- Players shoot at alternating goals, which means they must run past the coach between shots.
- If the coach succeeds in touching a ball, the dribbler must run a lap around the field.
- The player who scores the most goals in eight minutes wins.

Note

- Players must learn to recognize when they can safely cross the centerline



2 Bring the ball back

Setup

- The coach stands inside a 2 x 2-yard goal zone in the middle of a 15 x 15-yard field.
- All the balls (two for every three players) are in the goal zone as well.
- Players move about the field.

Sequence

- The coach throws the balls out into the field.
- Players try to win the ball, protect it from the other players and dribble into the goal zone (one point).
- Who can score the most points in six minutes?

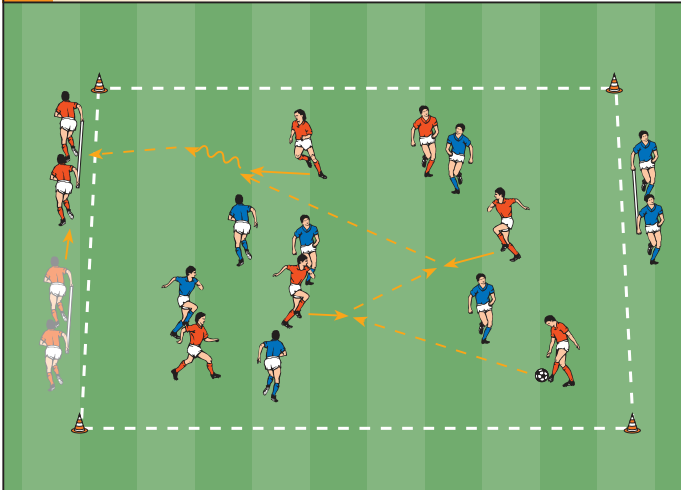
Note

- Adjust the level of difficulty by changing the number of balls (the fewer the balls, the harder the game).



AGES 10 TO 14

1 Moving goals



Setup

- Mark out a 15 x 25-yard field.
- Divide players into two teams.
- Each team chooses two players who form a moving “goal” by holding a pole or rope between them at hip level.
- The “goals” are on opposite endlines.

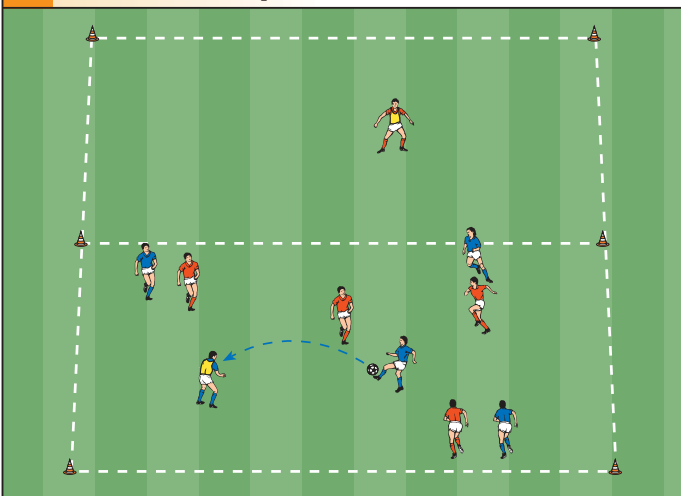
Sequence

- Each team tries to score on its own goal.
- Goal players move back and forth, trying to open up shots for their teammates.
- Which team can score more goals in 10 minutes?

Note

- Attackers and defenders must get used to having goals in different positions.
- Provide extra balls to avoid delays.

2 Pass to the captain



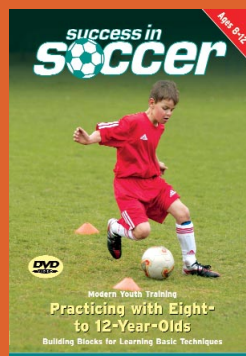
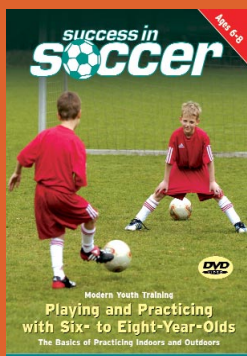
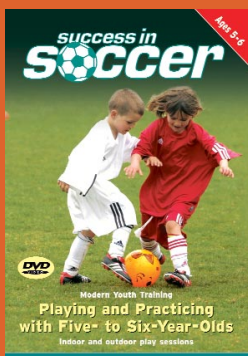
Setup

- Mark out a 20 x 30-yard field divided by a centerline.
- Divide players into two teams. Each team chooses a captain, who wears a third color.
- The captains are in opposite halves.

Sequence

- Players try to play the ball so their captain can catch it. Captains must stay inside their own halves, while their teammates are free to move about the field.
- If a captain catches the ball, he immediately throws it into the other half.
- If the ball goes out, a new ball is rolled in and play continues. The new ball may not be rolled to a captain.
- The first team to complete five passes to the captain scores one point. Then teams pick new captains.

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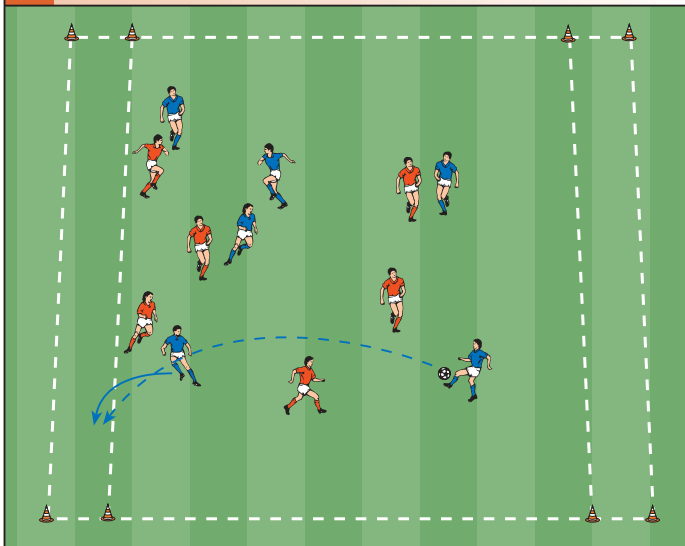
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AGES 14 TO 18

1 Scoring touchdowns



Setup

- Mark out a 20 x 40-yard field.
- Mark a two-yard-long touchdown zone behind each endline.
- Divide players into two teams.

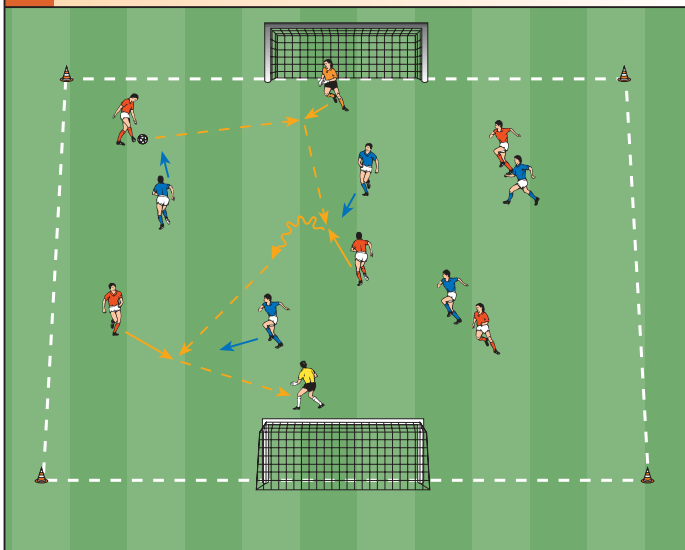
Sequence

- Players try to score by passing so that a teammate can catch the ball and set it down in the touchdown zone.
- Scoring passes must be flighted balls, i.e. the ball may not touch the ground beforehand.
- After the ball is set down, it goes to the other team, which starts a new attack.
- Which team can score more points in 15 minutes?

Note

- Limit the amount of time players can show for passes in the touchdown zones.

2 Attackers v. defenders



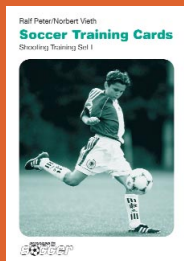
Setup

- Mark out a field (size depends on number of players).
- Set up one goal with goalkeeper on each endline.
- Divide players into two teams (offensive and defensive players, except both goalkeepers are defensive players).

Sequence

- Offensive players try to score on either goal. They score one point for each goal.
- Defensive players try to prevent shots. If they win the ball, they play to maintain possession.
- If the offensive players fail to score within three minutes, their opponents score one point.
- Who can score more points in 15 minutes?

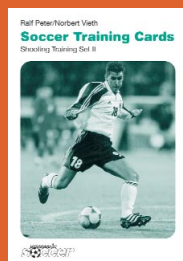
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