

A Few Quick Soccer Tips

Soccer Training Information

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Communicate

When you move into the professional level it becomes even more important to communicate on the field. Simple directions or alerts, such as 'man on' and 'turn' or 'you have time' make playing so much easier and become more important as the game speeds up at higher levels. Give it and get the ball - play the ball quickly with one and two touches. You should also be prepared to receive the ball at all times, and want the ball! This kind of energy, wanting to always be involved in the play, puts the other team that much more on their heels. So play simple soccer, get the ball and play it. Look to go forward.

Try to attack the space when you have the ball. See if you can draw a defender in, and then release the ball just when they're about to close you down or get the ball.

Shielding

A simple and great exercise is to dribble in a small square and have an opponent try to take the ball from you. Use your body to shield the ball from the defender. Always keep your body between you and the defender. Tell your friend or the person who is acting as the defender to fight for the ball with a game like intensity, pushing you and playing so hard they are almost fouling you. You can add more players and if the defender wins the ball you switch roles. This game can eventually build into a possession game that focuses on shielding. You can call out to stop play now and again which ever team doesn't have the ball has to do push-ups or a few sprints.

When you can, carry the ball into the open space - all the while shielding the ball from the defender. Carrying the ball with the inside of your foot, this is the where you will get the most control, kind of dragging the ball along as the defender pushes against you. Make sure to bend your knees and have a strong sense about you that this person is not going to get the ball from you. Then, try to work on cutting the ball back and forth. Practice shielding the ball using all parts of both of your feet.

Try shielding the ball for a few yards with the inside of your right foot and playing it to your left and carrying it in the other direction. Next, you can use the sole of your foot to turn or switch directions. Try to use all the different surfaces of your foot without letting the defender get a touch on the ball. Chop and cut the ball back with the inside and outside of both feet. Keep the defense honest by turning and taking the defender on from time to time.

Freeze the Defender

Fake like you're going to make a long pass or about to take a shot, before receiving the ball – this will freeze the defender who is rushing towards you and give you more time. Simply pull your leg back as if you're going to play the ball down the field, or, get more animated with it, and throw your shoulders and whole body into selling the fake kick. Either way, this simple move will freeze the on rushing defender. Again, just before you receive the ball (and control it), fake like you're going to shoot or make a pass by drawing your leg back in the shooting or kicking motion to momentarily freeze the defender.

Switch Play

As a team keep the game flowing by ball swinging the ball from one side to the other to find the best ratio of numbers and the most space. Release pressure by switching the ball.

The Quick Switch - Blind Pass

Dribble to the right with your right foot and then swing a ball to the left, send almost a blind pass. Do the same for the left. Dribble to the left side of the field and swing a ball back to the right side of the field with your left foot. The defender on the other side will not expect the pass. Hopefully you will catch the opposing team sleeping. You are selling the idea that you're going to the side you're dribbling towards when in fact you are swinging the ball over to the opposite side. Team mates will adjust to the expectation that a switch is always coming.

Sometimes you can dribble a few times in the opposite direction you really want to play the ball - to throw the defense off - then you swing the ball to the other side of the field. It doesn't have to be a long switch, just a quick cut back to the other direction can buy you time.

Get the Cross In

As a rule almost, when you have the opportunity, swing in the cross. Do this the next two or three times. Then the fourth time, or when you see the opening, you can take that player on the dribble, beat him or her down the line and cut the ball back to a teammate. Of course, you can always go to goal yourself if the opening is there.

Play with Older Players

Try to find the best game possible near where you live when you are training. To become a great player you should push yourself, and there is no better way to do this than to play with more experienced players.

You can pick up all of their tricks and skills that they have learned over the years. This kind of mentoring process is a huge part of improving your game and often you won't even realize what subtle skills you'll pick up, just by watching and playing with better and more experienced players.

Challenge yourself by playing with experienced players when you can. It will speed up your play, make you play stronger, and you will learn from their experience - where to play the ball, when, and where to make runs.

Slow Down

Essentially this is making the easy pass to the open player. It doesn't mean necessarily slowing down your speed of play, rather it's letting the ball do the work, and not forcing the play. Keep your mind moving fast and focused. If there is an open player play them the ball. Then when they get closed down they play the ball back to you.

As a young player one of the difficult things to learn is patience. This means things like letting the ball do the work through one and two touch play. Each time you make a pass the defense changes their position and new things open up at different angles on the field - new spaces to run into, dribble, and pass are created when you move the ball.

Quick Decisions

As a professional or collegiate player you won't have time to dribble or think after getting the ball. Try to know what you are going to do with the ball before you get it. Eventually, playing simple soccer will become automatic when you are involved in the rhythm of the game, wanting and always asking for the ball trying to find the player in the most advantageous position. Two or three short simple passes can lead to someone who is open in a position to make that goal scoring pass or score themselves.

You will need to use your body to shield the ball. Play simple give and goes with your teammates to get out of pressure. Be aware of where you can move or how you can position yourself to help out your teammates. Using your body means dribbling with your left when there is a defender on your right and dribbling and shielding the ball with your right foot when there is a defender on your on your left. If you don't know you can turn or have time, keep your body between the ball and the defense and get your head up and take a look around. You should always try to know where you are on the field by taking quick looks before you receive the ball.

Hold the ball for a second while I get open or in a better position where I will have more time and can see the field better. This is one of the greatest aspects of the game of soccer, where you work with your teammates to ping the ball around the other team and through the other team, where they can't even get a touch on the ball before you score a goal.

The Half Turn

When you are in the midfield you should position your body so you can connect with the forwards. You can accomplish this by not having your back to the forwards, that is usually their role, midfielders should try to be half-turned and facing one of the sidelines. This way you can view both the back line, if they are trying to make a pass to you, and the forwards to see where they are making a run.

When you play on the wing or in a position along the touchline you should open yourself to the field - in a position to see the whole field and receive the ball. Again instead of having your back facing the forwards you can turn your shoulder towards the outside touchline in this way you are open to the field.