

WEEK TWO

RECEIVING THE BALL – FROM THE AIR

Space is at a premium in soccer – whatever the age group. Receiving (controlling) the ball properly – successfully sets each player up for their next activity while *creating space* to help them effectively and easily execute their next activity.

Receiving - Instep Receiving: Instep receiving is useful when you're trying to control a long ball falling in at a steep angle, or when you're trying to ground a loose ball in the air.

Tips to players: It's important that your players look at the ball and quickly determine its trajectory, so they can move in to position to *cushion it down with the upper part of their foot* (or laces). Try to move your feet towards the ball and then stretch your locked ankle to the place where the ball will fall and at then at the exact moment when it makes contact with your foot, pull your ankle backwards (drop it or soften it) a bit, reducing the force the ball hits the ground.

Suggestion: Encouraging the players to practice juggling is a good way to train this kind of soccer receiving technique.

Receiving -Receiving a Ball with the Thighs: This is an alternative way to receive high balls and many players like it as they can cushion the ball easier with their thigh than they would with their foot. The tip to players is the same as the Instep Receiving, except that the player receives the ball with their thigh.

Coaching Observation: The main disadvantage for the player receiving the ball on his/her thigh is that the ball will still not be on the ground after receiving it, so that a player still has to make an additional move in order to make full use of it. This makes the player more static, thus more vulnerable to a defender's pressure and it also closes down the receiving player's options. Another disadvantage is that the player cannot redirect the ball sideways with his/her thighs for the next move, as opposed to your foot or chest, although it does allow a player to receive the ball and then pass or shoot with a volley before it hits the ground.

Receiving - Receiving a Ball with the Chest: In some cases controlling the ball with the chest will be a player's only option, for example when the ball is high and you don't have the time or space to position yourself to control it with their foot so the chest may be the only option.

Tips to players: When using your chest to control an incoming soccer ball, you have to arch your back slightly and flex your chest muscles by extending your arms forward (make sure you don't commit handball) and drop back slightly (cushioning) as the ball hits your chest.

Just like Week One - Things that make it difficult to effectively receive (control) the ball

- **Positioning:** The way a player positions their body when receiving a ball is extremely important, if they want to excel in ball control. This means that they will have to position themselves in such a way that gives the first defender NO chance of touching the ball, but

also making sure that you can continue to follow-up the game flow with a pass, dribble or shot, ie., use your ball control to set yourself for your next move to give you the best opportunity to create space while passing, shooting or dribbling.

- **Vision:** If your player is static when receiving the ball, they have no chance of developing the next play other than passing the ball back to the initial passer, or an open (free) defender. Before moving in to receive the ball, they have to quickly scan the field around you for the best way to move (direct the ball) after receiving the ball, so that you can open yourself up to position for a pass, a dribble or even a shot!

Similar things to week one, to watch for in practices (games) with your team are:

1. Players receiving the ball and not using that reception (control) of the ball to set themselves up for their next move or activity
 - a. Players positioning
 - b. Players vision – do not recognize what is going on around them
 - c. Players not moving to the ball
2. Players not relaxing their foot/thigh/chest as they receive the ball so that it ends up bouncing off their respective body part

Practice plans:

Starting with u10 on the following link you will find numerous practice receiving plans

http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coach's_corner.aspx