

TURNING

Teaching players to turn with the ball is an area that I don't see covered very often by coaches working with players from eight to 12. I'm not sure if it is because the coaches think the topic is difficult to teach young players or because they don't want to take time away from areas they consider more important.

I teach it because I think there are a lot of different skills that can be worked on in one set of exercises. Passing, first touch, awareness of space and pressure, balance and coordination. With the youngest players I keep it very simple and focus on three types of turns: inside of the foot, outside of the foot and Cruyff turns. The pressure is limited to cones. With older or more advanced players the pressure is increased and I become more picky about every aspect from the pass to the side the players turn to.

This is the progression that I like to use:

Dribble Inside a 15×15-yard Grid

Each player has a ball and dribbles freely at first. Then with their favorite foot only using the inside and outside of the foot. Next, using only the other foot. After that I demonstrate and inside of the foot turn (or chop), then an outside of the foot turn (or hook) and finally a Cruyff turn where the ball goes between their legs.

This is all done to prepare for the turns that will be used when they receive the ball from a pass.

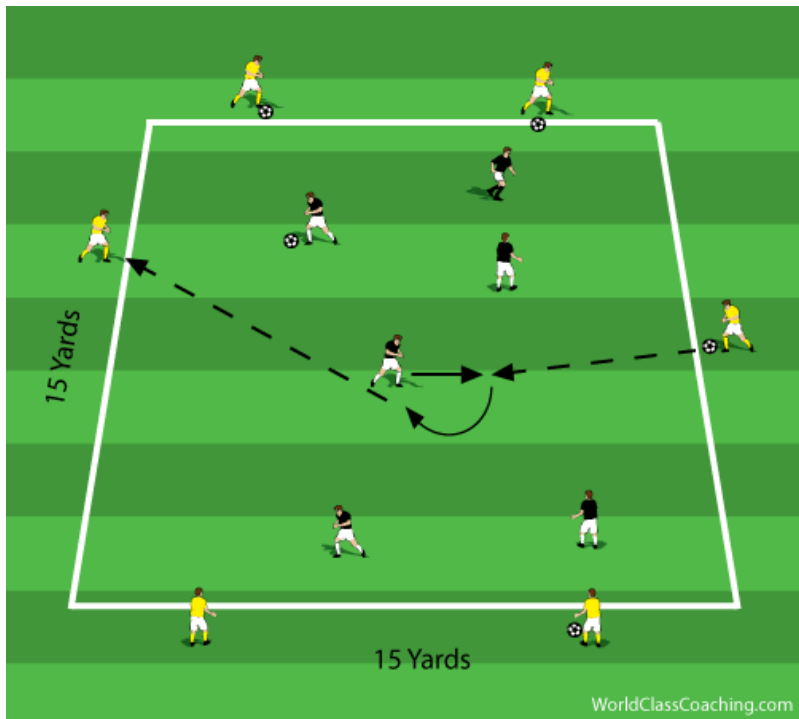


Players Inside and Out

Half of the players are on the inside of the 15×15-yard grid without a ball and the other half are on the outside with a ball at their feet.

The players on the inside check toward a player with the ball, ask for it, take a touch to control the ball and then turn with one of the three techniques worked on in the warm-up. Next, they dribble away and

pass to one of the outside players who doesn't have a ball. Once each group has a couple of chances to try this, the players use only one touch to turn.



Turn Around a Cone

Four to six players are the perfect number for each group in this exercise. The player in the front of one line has a ball. The front player in the other line checks in front of a cone in the center that represents a defender. The pass is made when the checking player asks for the ball. He then turns around the cone to one side or the other, passes the ball to the next person in the line he came from and runs to the end of the line. The first passer then runs in front of the defender and the pattern continues.

There is so much to coach here and it is only limited by the experience level of the players. You can keep it as simple or complex as you like.

