

Vision and Awareness

Activity #1:

Non – Competitive Awareness Numbers Game: Passing in Sequence

Set Up:

8 players are positioned inside a 40x40 yard grid as shown in Diagram (a) below. One ball is needed for the exercise. Players are numbered 1-8. Repeat setup to accommodate rest of team.

Objective:

Players must move constantly around the playing area as shown below. Players must pass in sequence (ie) 1 passes to 2, 2 passes to 3 and so on.

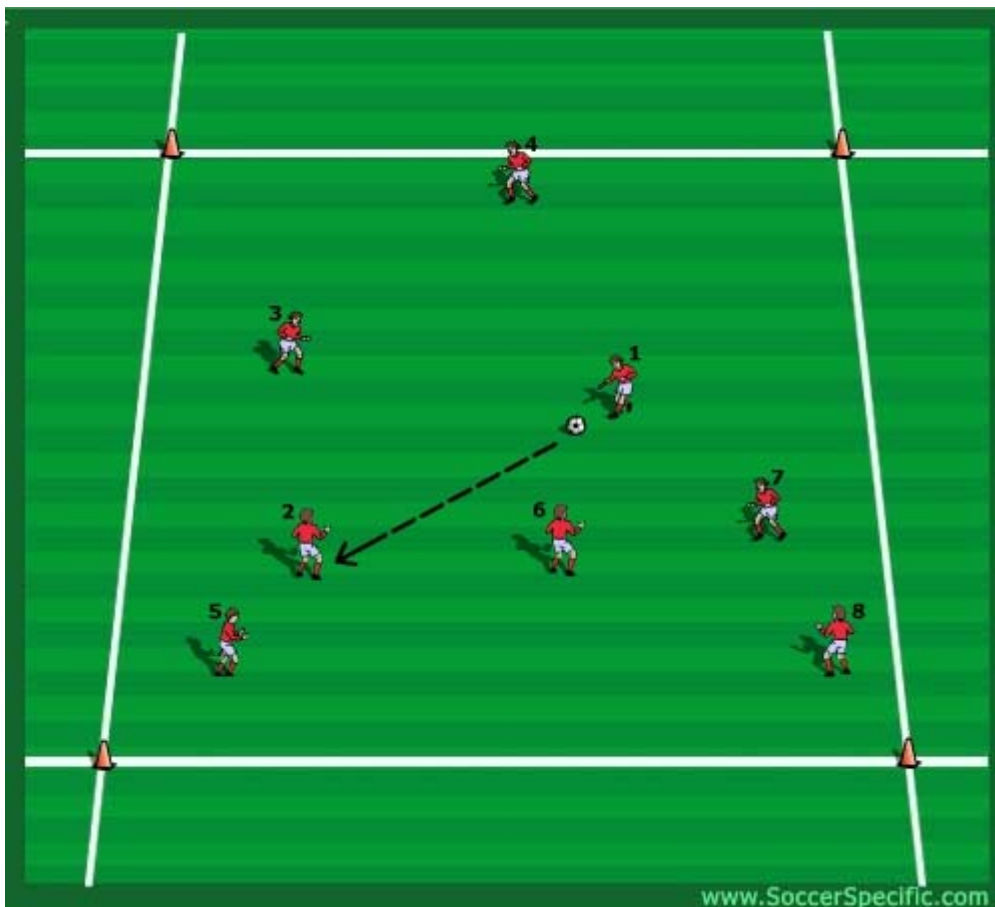


Diagram (a)

Explanation:

This develops great awareness of time, space and player positions. Awareness of: **where** the player you **receive** from is and **where** the player you **pass** to is. Because of this players begin to **anticipate** the pass to them and where it is coming from. Also they must look to where it is going to (where is the player they are passing to?).

We are trying to create a situation where players are looking **two moves** ahead not just one. For instance as (1) is about to pass to (2), (3) should be looking to support (2) for the next pass, looking two moves ahead before the ball leaves (1). Likewise, (2) should already know where (3) is to pass to. **Peripheral Vision Development** results from this. Ask players to make it difficult to find them by lots of movement off the ball to **test** their team-mates vision.

Progressions:

Use **two** balls then **three** balls at the same time. Start with a ball at (1) and (5) then at (1), (4) and (7). To keep the sequence going players must move the balls quickly with few touches hence their peripheral vision development improves dramatically. As soon as they have passed one ball off the next one is arriving so **quick thinking** is needed to make the correct decisions.

Activity #2:

Non-Competitive Awareness Numbers "Game" with Teams: Passing in Sequence

Set Up:

4 teams of 4 players each are positioned inside a 40x40 yard grid as shown below in Diagram (b). Each team is numbered in sequence. Red and Green work together: Yellow and White work together.

Objective:

Players must move constantly around the grid passing in sequence. For example – Red (1) passes to Green (2), Green (2) passes to Red (3) and so on.



Diagram (b)

Explanation:

Again, we are trying to create a situation where players are looking **two moves** ahead not just one. For instance as (1) is about to pass to (2), (3) should be looking to support (2) for the next pass

already, looking two moves ahead before the ball leaves (1). Improved **Peripheral Vision Development** results from this.

Progression:

Reduce the number of touches players are allowed each time they receive a pass, unlimited touches to begin, then three touch, then two touch then one touch if it is on to do so. This speeds up the decision making process and forces them to look earlier as to where they are passing to.

Coaching Points:

- Creating Space
- Quality Passing, Support, Positioning; early movement off the ball. Players look before they receive. Players are looking **two moves** ahead not just one. For instance as (1) is about to pass to (2), (3) should be looking to support (2) for the next pass already, looking two moves ahead before the ball leaves (1).

**Activity #3:
Semi-Competitive Awareness Numbers Game**

Set Up:

Four teams are positioned inside the playing area as shown in Diagram (c) below. Each team is numbered in sequence 1-4. One ball is needed for each group of four players.

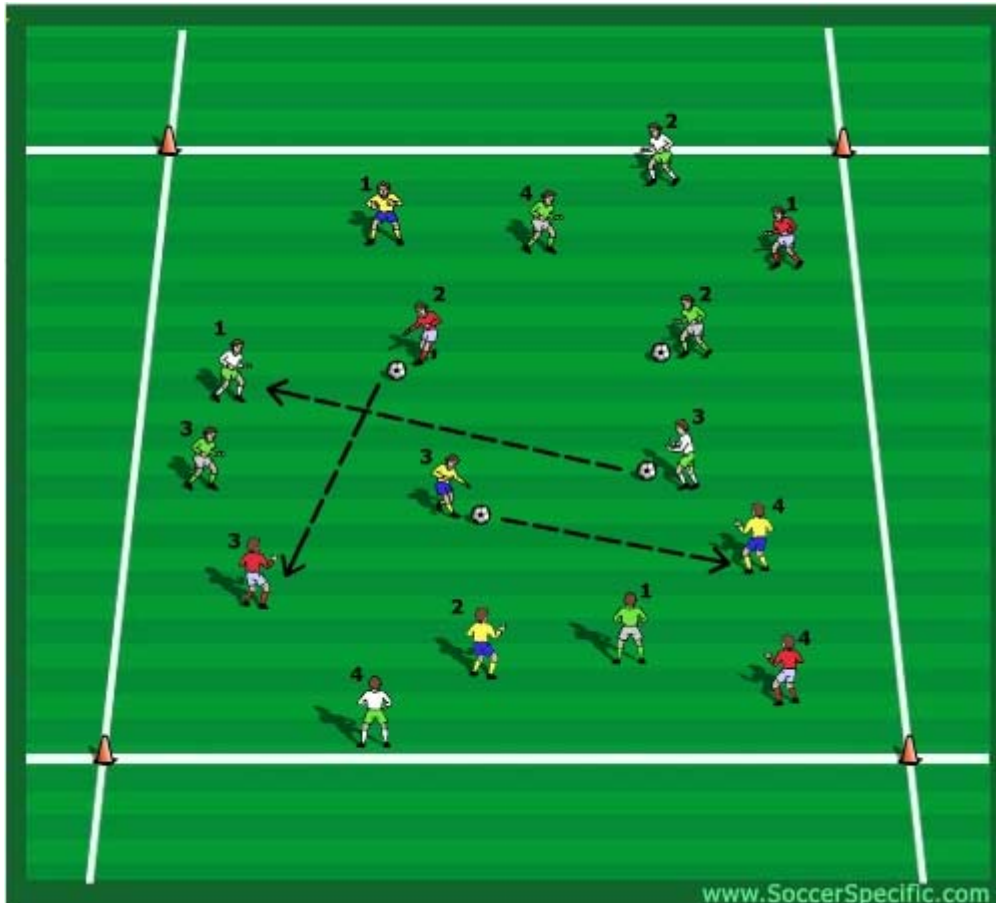


Diagram (c)

Objective:

Players must move constantly inside the playing area passing in sequence for the designated period of time. Each team must count the number of passes in the designated time period. This creates a competitive environment – which team can get the most passes in 45 seconds?

Coaching Points:

- Movement “off” the ball to **open up angles** for passes between other players. Communication verbally between players to help them identify where they are; passing player can call who they are passing to, receiving player can ask for the pass. Ensure players spread out throughout the area to have them playing both long and short passes.

- Encourage fewer touches on the ball at each reception to move it around the field more quickly helping players develop good transitional play.

Progressions:

Now have 3 teams passing separately **1 to 4** in **each team**, with one ball each team as shown below in Diagram (d).

Count the number of passes each team get in a certain time frame adding a competitive element to the game. Who can get the highest number of passes made in a given time frame?



Diagram (d)

Coaching Points:

- Movement “off” the ball to **open up angles** for passes between other players.
- Communication verbally between players to help them identify where they are; passing player can call who they are passing to, receiving player can ask for the pass.
- Ensure players spread out throughout the area to have them playing both long and short passes.
- Encourage fewer touches on the ball at each reception to move it around the field more quickly helping players develop good transitional play.

**Activity #4:
Competitive Non-Directional Three Team Awareness Possession (4v4v4)**

Set Up:

Three teams of 4 players each are positioned inside the 40x40 yard grid as shown in Diagram (e) below.



Diagram (e)

Objective:

Two teams attempt to maintain possession of the ball while the other team defends. This creates an 8v4 situation. If the defending team wins the ball they switch roles with the team that lost possession. In the above Diagram (e) Red and Yellow are keeping the ball away from Green.

Progressions:

1. Increase difficulty for attackers by:
2. Reducing the zone size
3. Decreasing the number of touches on the ball of each player

4. Condition the passing to be only to the other attacking teams players eg (1) only pass to (2) and vice versa therefore only half the number of passes available per player. You can increase the numbers to suit how many players you have, eg 4 v 4 v 4 or 5 v 5 v 5 etc
5. Have two balls to play with so as they pass one ball they are now increasing their awareness and vision by looking for the other ball coming.
6. Ask players to take off their pennies so they really have to look and not be able to use color identification.
7. No talking or pointing, so players have to rely on their own vision.

Further Development:

1. Making it more competitive, have each team be the defending team for a certain time span. If they win the ball they then give it back to the combined attacking teams. Count the number of times they win the ball. The defending team to win the ball the most times wins the game, or alternatively the combined teams which give up the ball the fewest times win the game.
2. Attacking players individually count the number of times they give the ball away as an indication to each and every one of them how well they can maintain possession under pressure.
3. Begin with players able to have as many touches as they like, then break it down to 3 touch, then 2 touch with one touch passing the aim if it is on to do so.

Coaching Points:

- Open body stance to allow a yard or more extra space away from defenders by letting the ball run across the body into preconceived space.
- Looking before receiving to know in advance of the receiving pass; where the defending players are, where the space is, where team mates are free to receive a pass, how many options there are to move the ball on
- Movement OFF the ball is a priority both to receive it and after passing it.

**Activity #5:
Competitive Directional Three Team Awareness Game - Introducing Goals**

Set Up:

Three teams of 4 players each are positioned inside the playing area as shown in Diagram (f) below. Flags are used to create 2 triangle goals inside the playing area as shown.



Diagram (f)

Objective:

Two teams attempt to maintain possession of the ball while the other team defends. The teams in possession score points by successfully passing the ball through either of the triangle goals. If the defensive team wins possession they switch roles with the team that lost possession. Play is continuous for the designated period of time.

Explanation:

The above activity in Diagram (f) is an interesting way to work on awareness training and passing, **movement off the ball**, fitness and looking for the penetrating pass. By adding the triangular goals to score through, the game continues after a goal is scored as the ball must be received and possession maintained by another player on the other side of the triangle to count as a goal. This ensures continuous play.

It is a more directional method of playing and more specific to the game in general. The defenders are **NOT** allowed inside the triangle so they must be constantly working their way around the triangle trying to cut off the penetrating passes.

Team (Green) defends, teams (Yellow) and (Red) work together. The combined attacking teams can attack both goals alternatively. Attacking both goals encourages "Switching the Field".

Ultimately reduce the game to **two equal** number teams for the greatest challenge and begin with as many touches as possible reducing the number of touches each is allowed as they improve and are able to keep possession effectively. **Reducing** the **number** of **touches** allowed inevitably **increases** their **awareness** and **forces** them to **look** for options **earlier** and **improves** and **speeds up** their **decision making**. This should result in them keeping possession more effectively.