



Attacking In the Middle Third

Objective: To train your players in the middle third of the field. To provide your players with the opportunity to solve the many problems that the game presents when connecting from the back.. Players must recognize when and how to hold (possess) the ball and when to go forward (penetrate) with speed. Recognizing and responding to the varying changes in the rhythm of the game is crucial to successful play in the middle third.

1. 5v2 Possession Game (15 minutes):

In a 10x10 yard grid, five players (attackers) keep the ball away from the two (defenders). If the two defenders win the ball, they are awarded a point if they successfully dribble out of the grid. The attackers are awarded a point if they successfully make 5 consecutive passes without losing possession to the defenders or out of bounds. Change the defenders every 2-3 minutes. Stress that players must always be moving and on the balls of their feet to support play.



Coaching Points:

- Stress proper passing & receiving techniques.
- As the players get warm, talk to the them about speeding up their play (technical & tactical speed)

2. 7 vs. 7 + 1 To 3 Goals (20 minutes):

Using half the field and 50 yards wide, each team has 4 players in the defensive half and 3 in the attacking half. There is also a neutral player that only plays with the team in possession of the ball. The ball can only be passed (not dribbled) to a teammate in the attacking half of the field. **Version 1:** Both the neutral player and the passer can join in the attacking half to create a 5 v. 4 situation. **Version 2:** Both the the neutral player and any one member of the team in possession can join in the attacking half of the field. Upon loss of possession, the player must quickly return to his defensive half of the field to avoid a quick counterattack.



Coaching Points:

- Movement off the ball and away from markers by players in the attacking half.
- Accurate passing into the attacking half to players showing for the ball.
- Quick decision making by the player deciding to run into the attacking half.
- Point out moments when to change the point of attack and attack a different goal.
- Recognizing time to possess the ball and slow play down versus possession to penetrate and speed play up
- Encourage appropriate combination play to help with possession and penetration
- Recognize when to quickly penetrate the attacking half of the field with passes and supporting runs in order to create quick counter attacking opportunities.

- **7 v. 7 + 1 to Goals with Goalkeepers (10-15 minutes):** Same conditions as above but now teams are attacking a regular goal. Make sure to start with Version 1 and then go to Version 2.

3. **Game to two goals with GKs (45 minutes):** Play- 8v8 or 11v11 with 2GK'S.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.

4. **Cool Down (5-10 minutes):** Juggling in groups of four. First group that juggles the ball 20 times (3-touch maximum per player) is the winner. Statically stretch the large muscle groups.

