

Clinic – An Introduction to Finishing

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“Finishing”, due to the difficulty of recreating the intensity of the “game moment” in a practice is without doubt one of the most difficult topics to teach. If we are to create suitable learning environments for youth players to learn to “finish” within, we must endeavor to ensure that sessions, which examine finishing, are performed with game like intensity.

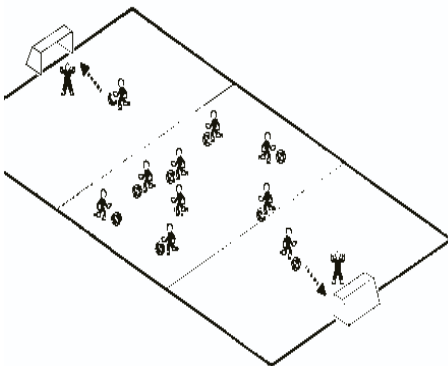
Line based practices, which lead to a casual, staged environment in which to go to goal produce the exact opposite of the finishing moment in a game. The “finishing moment” in the game is one where the adrenalin is flowing, the crowd is screaming and the psychological pressure is at its height.

Finishing is essentially about problem solving in an intense situation. Youth players need to be educated to the fact that there are several ways to finish. The “technique” a player chooses to finish with is dependant upon the position of the goalkeeper, the speed of the trailing sweeper etc.

Most youth players believe that scoring goals is simply about being able to strike the ball with power. Often they choose “power”, when it is the worst possible solution to the problem that the goalkeeper is posing. The following body of work introduces youth players to the many “finishing solutions that are available and them examines these solutions in different pressure situations.

WARM UP & INTRODUCTION

All players with a ball dribble around in a section equidistant between two goals. All players are given a number, (for example, 1 through 14). Instruct the players that they are to act in unison with their next number. Numbers 1 and 2 work at the same time, 3 and 4 at the same time, 5 and 6 at the same time and so on. Even numbers attack one goal and odd numbers attack the opposite goal. As the players dribble around in the area, practicing their turns, the coach randomly calls out numbers. If number 1 is called, player 1 attacks one goal and simultaneously player 2 attacks the opposite goal. The coach should ensure that as soon as these two players have completed their finishing opportunity another number is called and two more players go to goal. Players stretch at the coach’s discretion.



Coaching points

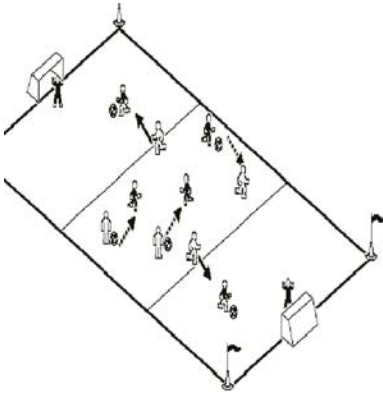
1. Analyze and introduce the different ways they choose to score – pass the ball in, chip the ball in, curl the ball in, power strike or dribble in.
2. Technical perfection of chosen technique?
3. Have the players mentally record how many goals they score.

WARM UP 2

As above with the explanation that they should focus their attention upon selecting the best possible solution to the problem that has been presented. The scenario is they are a player with great pace who has been set free from the slow sweeper, 10,000 fans are screaming their name and they are going to goal.

Coaching Points

1. Percentage wise the most effective method to finish with is to take the keeper on and create a pass in or dribble in opportunity.
2. All players should have all the goals they score recorded.

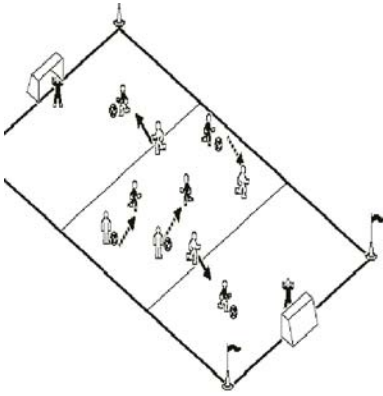


PROGRESSION 1

Using the same organization as above but this time each player has a partner and each pair have a number and one ball. Players work in pairs passing and moving in area between goals. Encourage all players to make quick one or two touch passes. As they pass and move, when the coach calls a number whoever has the ball from that pair may attack the appropriate goal. The partner not in possession, “after kneeling”, tracks the attacking player as a defender

Coaching Points

1. Make this an intense competition -attempt to replicate the intensity of a goal scoring opportunity in a game.
2. Assess the methods with which they try to score.
3. Encourage the players to analyze the problem the goalkeeper and the defender present? Are they quicker than the trailing defender? Can they keep their body between the defender and the ball?
4. By having the trailing defender kneel, the coach can introduce pressure in a staggered fashion. This should lead to a high level of success.



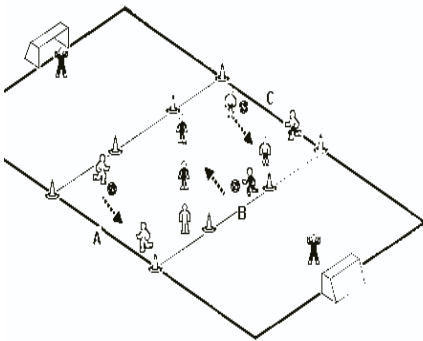
PROGRESSION 2

Using the same organization as above but change the pairs so that each player competes against a different athlete. Remove the kneeling restriction so that the defender can go straight after the attacker.

By changing the athlete that they will compete with, it becomes much more difficult to choose the best solution to the problem presented.

Coaching Points:

1. Concentrate on coaching the attackers.
2. Insist on high intensity
3. Problems for the attacker to consider –
4. a. Are they quicker than the defender?
b. What problem is the goalkeeper presenting?
5. These two factors affect the manner in which the attacker chooses to try and score. For example if the attacker is quicker than the trailing defender they can attempt to dribble the ball to goal beating the goalkeeper with a one on one move.
6. If the attacker is slower than the trailing defender and the goalkeeper comes off their line quickly, the best tool to use in attempting to score is probably the chip.
7. Players must recognize that the manner in which they attempt to score i.e. the tool they choose to “finish” with is dependant upon the situation they are placed in.



PROGRESSION 2V1 TO GOAL

Set out the area as shown and place players into groups of three with one ball per group. Each group is numbered 1,2 3, 4, and so on. Each player within each group is also given a letter A, B or C. When the coach calls a number followed by a letter that group become active. The player whose letter has been called retreats and becomes a central defender. Once the defender is set in a position on top of the 18-yard box the two players’ attack and attempt to score. Odd numbers attack one goal even numbers the opposite goal and groups work at the same time, for example if the coach calls 1, A at the same time group 2 work and A becomes the defender.

Coaching points:

1. Utilizing two goals have two groups go to goal at the same time
2. Run the practice at a fast pace always attempting to elevate the intensity with which the players work.
3. Show the players different ways in which they could combine and runs they could make.
4. Teach the players to frame the goal – effectively following in all attempts to score.
5. Encourage them to tempt the defender to concede either the pass or the dribble.

6. *Limit the time in which they have to score.*
7. *Disallow goals for any pair that wander blatantly offside.*

NEXT PROGRESSION

Depending upon the level of your group and their success in the above work, you will now have to decide whether to continue with the above work, examining all types of pressure situations and numbers going to goal OR focus your efforts on fixing a finishing technique. (the instep strike obviously being the most popular to choose)

NB All of the above can obviously be done with one goal. If you only have access to one goal make sure, your session has a fast rhythm.

PROGRESSION 2V1 TO GOAL OR ATTACKING THE BOX IN THREES

Add two wide players to the organization above as shown. Explain to the players that if the coach simply calls a group number and no letter that group (*and it's counterpart e.g. 1&2, 3&4 etc*) play the ball wide and attack the box as a group of three. The first number called get to choose which wide player they play to and therefore which penalty area they attack.

Coaching points:

1. *Timing of the runs into the box, reading the visual clues given by the wide player and arriving at the same time at the ball.*
2. *Making intelligent, angled runs into near post, through the penalty spot and far post areas.*

GAME SITUATION

Play 6v6 with Gk with the following restrictions:

1. Once possession is gained, team only has 30 seconds to attempt to finish within.
2. Once one player in the team has scored, they cannot score again until all team members have scored.
3. No restrictions.

Coaching points:

1. *Any goal scored in the final game is worth double points.*
2. *Have the record keeper or each player announce the total number of goals they have scored throughout the practice. (They should be reminded throughout the session that this will happen- this will help put more stress on the finishing environment)*