



COACHING TIPS

IMPROVE THE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT

ACTIVITY SET-UP AND ORGANIZATION TO MAXIMIZE DEVELOPMENT

This first diagram is an example of a poor field set-up and approach to working on shooting/finishing from crosses (USSF Grassroots would call this topic 'Improve Scoring Goals').

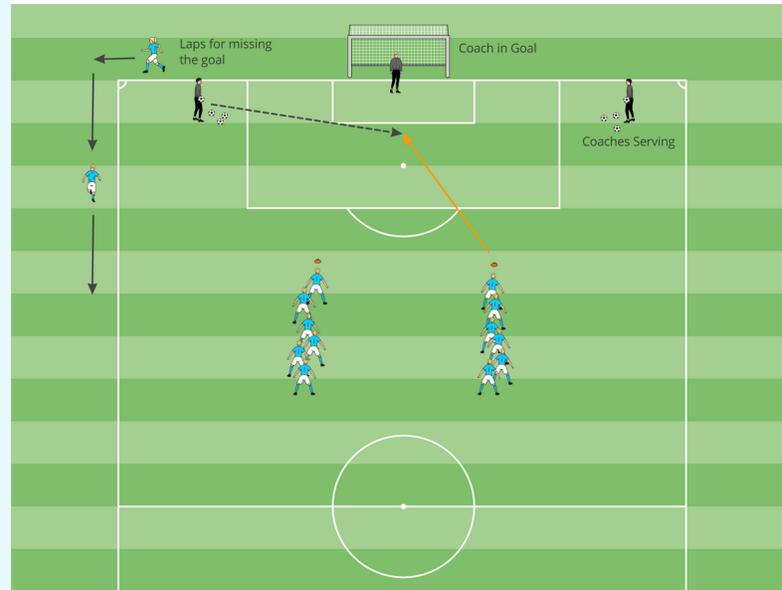
Firstly, there are two long lines of players - this results in not enough repetition for the players of the technique of finishing as well as promotes disengagement and even poor behavior. Secondly coaches are serving balls out of their hands and a coach is in goal - this doesn't create a realistic game-like situation and doesn't give our wide players and goalkeepers chance to practice in their positions. Coaches won't be on the field at the weekend to serve balls or make saves. Finally, when a player misses the ball or a shot on target, they are made to run a lap around the field. This doesn't promote confidence in-front of goal, it teaches that the consequence for missing a goal is to made an example of and while they are running around field, how much better at shooting / scoring goals are the players getting? (Answer: They are not)

The second diagram is a much better field set-up for this crossing and finishing exercise. Firstly, splitting the group in half and repeating the activity on two goals reduces the number of players standing. Adding the teams actual goalkeepers and wide players to the activity, keeps more players involved in this phase of play and gives them practice in their respective roles / positions. Having two attackers attack the cross instead of one, again creates a more game-like situation and keeps more players involved in play. This free's up the coaches to take-up a better coaching position and observe the players execution of technique / goals of the session and make adjustments or ask guided questions when necessary.

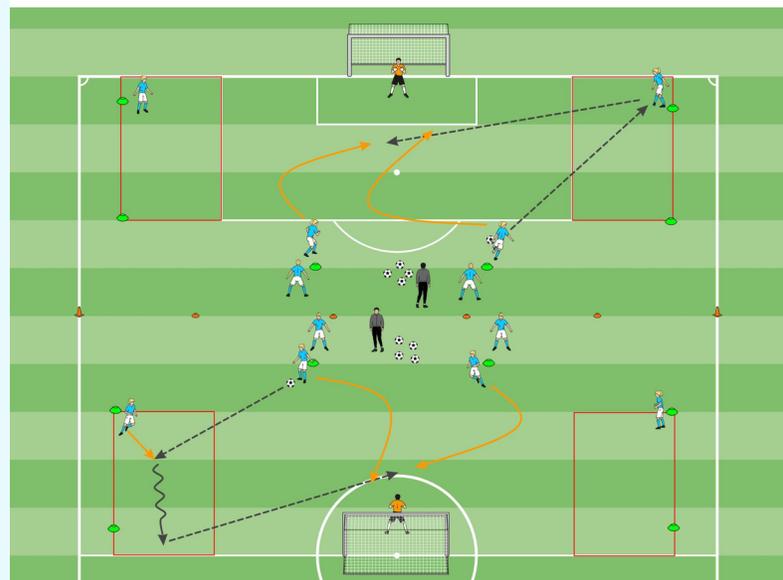
Adjustments we could add depending on the age group are:

1. Start with the wide players just crossing the ball from the wide areas and work on quality and accuracy of the cross, what space to we want to cross the ball into and the timing and shape of the runs from the forwards.
2. Then have the balls start with the central players and pass out to the wide players to start the phase of play.
3. Then have the wide players start from the other cone in the wide boxes (shown on the bottom half of the diagram). The central players pass into the space for the wide players to run onto, allowing them to practice dribbling and crossing (more game-like) for the forwards attacking the box.
4. We could then add a defender or two in the box (ensure the defenders have a target / purpose for if they win possession like passing to the coach as a target player or to small goals).

POOR ORGANIZATION & FIELD SET-UP



BETTER ORGANIZATION & FIELD SET-UP



There are so many teaching moments of both technique and tactical awareness that can be incorporated into this activity, but the purpose of sharing this was to show the difference between a poorly organized crossing and finishing exercise and a more organized and efficient version. We hope this example resource helps you in improving the organization and structure of your practice activities and assists you in creating the best possible environment for your players.