

The major coaching points that I will be looking into for my sport (football) are the attacking and defending skills, which are essential to the game.

I am first of all going to start with the attacking side of football and what players skills will involve in this area of the game are as follows:

ATTACKING

- Shooting for goal. This comprises of many demands, which I will be going into Detail about.
- . Dribbling.
- . Beating your opponent. This co-insides with dribbling.
- . Heading the ball.

SHOOTING

The great saying here for strikers or any attacking player is if you do not shoot to often enough you will never score. The key issue of an attacking game is being able to score if given the chance; the best way in doing so is to place the ball into the net with great power. The way in which you do this is by pointing the non-striking foot towards the target and draw back the other foot. To then get the greater accuracy use the wide area of your foot, which is in the inner side and is called, the instep. Then finally with a good firm contact try to steer the ball as far away from the keeper as possible. But at times the passing shot is not available due to where you are on the pitch, and the keepers position. This is where you must be able to adapt your shooting technique to these conditions. It also gives you an element of surprise so the keeper cannot read where or how you are going to shoot.

Instead of going for the pass into the net you can bend it around the keeper, which is a very good skill to have in your locker when shooting. To bend the ball strike it with the lower instep just on the side of the ball. In this action you have to almost wrap your foot around it to get it spinning through the air, but the results can be great. With striking the ball with the outside of the foot, near the toes it will make the ball bend away. To create more power with this shot you hit it harder at the rim of the sole of the boot.

As a striker you must always be aware of the keepers position as it you have a chance to shoot when the keeper is out of position it can be easier for you to score. A good example of this is when the keeper drifts of his goal line. With good technique and vision the attacker can exploit this by using the chip shot, which is where you lift the ball over the keepers head with a short sharp stab at the bottom of the ball. Another type of a shot like this is called the lob. This is when the ball is in the air instead of being situated on the ground. The idea is the same with you wanting to put the ball over the keeper's head, but the technique varies. Here the attacker keeps his eye on the ball and uses his arm for balance and with using the laces of the boot he shoots with his leg following through.

Another shot that can be used to catch the keeper out is the long shot; this again is for element of surprise. For this shot to be successful it needs to have power as well as accuracy. For this to happen good composure and connection is needed. Normally when hitting a long shot you will either hit it hard in the middle to drill it low along the ground, or go straight underneath the ball to make it shoot through the air, which with power can produce swerve and bend.

Volleying is a powerful weapon with the right technique, as usually when they are on target the power makes them virtually unstoppable. There are basically two types of volleying, front on volley and side on volley.

The technique of a front volley is to connect with the laces and let your leg extend through from the ankle. Make sure you are hitting the middle or bottom of the ball to keep the shot under control.

For the side volley draw back your kicking leg as the ball drops to around hip height, you position your body so it is slightly leaning away, and then keeping eyes on the ball have your arms outstretched for balance and make contact with the widest part of your boot (instep). The follow through is crucial and for the volley to be successful you must kick parallel to the ground and rotate your hips for maximum power. As if the body is leaning to far back the contact with the ball is less meaning the shot is less controllable and can fly of uncontrollably. For a volley to go down just make sure the ball drops below waist height and keep a low follow through. So the key issues for this skill is good timing, balance, body positioning and agility.

Obviously the defending team will always be trying to decrease your time to shoot and opportunity to get a shot in. At times the only way in getting a shot in is to shoot on the turn. This is a shot, which must be executed in a very short space of time. For the shot you must first of all get in a good position to hold the defender off and keep them guessing to what you are going to do next. As the ball comes into you, lean your body slightly against the defender and turn your body against his in a rolling action doing so rolling the ball with you with the outside of the foot with the arms used for leverage. Now you have your body between the ball and defender and now you have a crucial yard in which to unleash before the defender gets himself between the goal and you. Another shot used when your back is to the goal is the overhead kick an action, which again will surprise the opposition. With this shot you must remember to put your hands out, for when you land on you're back on the floor to protect yourself from injury. The technique is to either kick from side to side or straight depending on where the ball is in the air and your foot should be at full stretch. The non-shooting foots, knee should be bent and you then should lean backwards helping to launch yourself into the air. Your shooting foot then follows through with your toe on top of the ball connecting with the ball.

The final shooting technique I will look at is the, one on one with the keeper. The can be daunting if not in the right frame of mind. All you have to do is remember. The keeper will be trying to stand up as long as possible and will want you to make the first move. All you have to do is to keep him guessing as long as possible and make him make the first move and the task of scoring is made so much easier.

- 1. One way this can be achieved is by making a feint to shoot then shooting the other way, making the keeper make a move in the wrong direction so he has not got good balance to go back the other way.
- 2. Another way is by dribbling with the ball close to feinting to shoot but instead of then hitting it past the other way dragging your foot over the ball to take it round him and then shooting into an empty net.
 - 3. When the keeper comes rushing he is trying to narrow the angle as much as possible but his weakness is then in the air and the chip can be used to loft the over his head.
 - 4. From an angle it is usually best to shoot across the keeper as if he does spill the a team mate will be able to follow up, but if there is enough space at near post have a go as it might catch the keeper out.
 - 5. All that is needed to be remembered is follow every shot up. Low shots are more difficult to save. Accuracy is usually more important than power and finally once you make your mind up where you are going to shoot follow through with confidence.

DRIBBLING:

The next skill involved in attacking is dribbling. This is a real difficulty for defenders when a forward comes running at them. As it usually puts the defenders in an unsure mind of how they are going to tackle them and they know if they miss-time their tackle it can result in a booking or free kicks.

So what is the general technique of dribbling?

Basically trying to keep the ball close to your feet as possible and running with the ball at speed. Make sure you can use both instep and outside of the foot to keep the ball under control. The balance of dribbling is another issue as it is the platform from which your body can change direction in an instant and leave the defenders standing. Beating the defender this is basically dribbling the ball and using body feints to catch the defender of balance and to keep the defender guessing, so they cannot make a tackle successfully.

HEADING THE BALL:

Three types of heading techniques that are used when attacking are:

- 1. Diving header this is used to get on front of the defender, and when it is going to be the able way you can reach the ball to make contact. To do a diving header you must keep your eye on the ball when leaping in the air, and with your forehead direct the ball where you want it to go.
- 2. Flick on header this is used as a surprise attack and is used to pass onto an attacker behind you, usually. The technique is for the person heading the ball to come towards the ball and angle his head slightly backwards while flicking the ball with his forehead.

3. Attacking heading – this s used when aiming to score. But the other two-heading techniques I have mentioned may also be used. The techniques of an attacking header is to keep your eyes on the ball, put power into the header by thrusting your forehead in the direction you want it to go. The shooting technique is usually to make the ball do downwards as the keeper will find it harder to get his whole body down to stop the ball than if it was in the air, where he just has to move side ways.

Practice for developing attacking skills.

Drills for shooting for goal:

A practice that can be used to help develop shooting will start off with a feeder rolling the ball in front of the attacker on the edge of the 18 yard box and the attacker shooting first time. The drill will then be repeated 15 times. The same action will happen again with the ball being rolled but this time the attacker can take a touch before shooting to change the angle. This will again be repeated 15 times. This activity is to get the attacker confident of shooting first time, and with just one touch to bring the ball under control before shooting. This is important to feel confident under as when there is little space to shoot the attacker must hit the ball first time before the shot gets blocked off. The drill should then be practiced on the right side of the 18-yard box and on the left side of the 18-yard box, changing the angle and situation for how the attacking player must shoot.

The drill is repeated over again but this time with the ball being rolled at the side of the attacking player to shoot first time, and then taking one touch, with the attacker serving the ball in following up any rebound. The drill is finally completed with the ball being rolled back to the attacker to shoot first time. This is getting the attacker used to the ball coming at him at different directions and putting the ball away from these different situations first time.

The next drill to develop the attackers shooting skills even more is by putting a defender into the drill. The ball will be rolled in front of the attacker still, but as soon as the ball is rolled in, the attacker must shoot before the defender makes the 5 yards up from behind him.

The final drill is to put into a game situation this is done by playing a 3v3 match with goalkeepers in proper sized goals. The pitch is only 35 yards long and so shots are plenty for both sets of 3 players. This drill is first done with players only being able to have two touches, and after they have developed the instinct to shoot in only two touches and little time. The game can then be progressed to all in with attacking players having as many touches as they want, but with the knowledge they can score with few touches more confidently.

A drill to practice bending the ball can be set up by placing the ball outside the 18 yard box and having a set of 4 players or stands in front of you and the goal. Then practice wrapping your foot around the ball and getting the ball to where you want it to go. The more you practice curling the ball, the more confident you will become executing the move and with it coming off more successfully. To advance the drill put the keeper into the net so the attacking player will have to work out where he wants the ball to go in correlation to where the keeper is standing. This makes the player

think about placing the ball where he wants it to go and with the practice of repeating the same action he will eventually become more and more successful at it.

The next drill that can be done to help shooting for goal, is by practicing the chip and lob shots. First of all with a partner practice dropping the ball in front of your kicking foot as it rises with your laces connect with the ball to make it go to your partner. This is to get used to volleying the ball at a closer pace. Once you feel confident enough of reproducing the lob shot time and time again, put it into a match situation. This drill involve a partner throwing the ball just outside the 18 yard box and the attacking player as the ball bounces back up lobbing it over the keeper as he comes onto the 6 yard line. This will help the attacker to get used to not just finishing low but gives him the option if the keeper comes out to meet him with a bouncing ball to lob it over the top of him.

The chip shot is a variation of the lob as when you practice the shot the ball, is on the floor. The chip shot can be hard to do when running with the ball so first of all start off with the ball stationary, and just chipping it (by stabbing the bottom of the ball) to your partner 12 yards away. Next stage is to take a touch to bring the ball out of your feet and chip the ball to your partner 12 yards away while it is slightly rolling. Then the next stage of the drill is to run at pace and practice stabbing the ball to make it come of the ground. The final stage will then be to run at the goal with a keeper in the nets and as he comes out practice chipping the keeper. But the chip does not always go high in the air and over the keepers head, sometimes it is when the keeper rushes out and you wait as long as possible for him to go down before you dink a little chip over him as he goes to the floor.

The practice of the long shot can only be achieved through practicing striking through the ball with power, which is controlled. The player should try pushing the ball out of his feet and keeping his body over the ball and striking through the middle of the ball. If the player leans back when striking the ball with power it will not be under control and will usually end up flying high then wide of the target. If the player keeps practising his technique of striking the ball with power from a distance he will feel more at ease and positive at having a go from a distance to catch the keeper unawares.

A drill for volleying is built up from the basics or letting the ball drop in front of you and on the way back up hitting it to your partner who is 12 yards away. This is getting used to the technique at slow a pace and under your own control. The next step is to practice throwing the ball high in the air and as it drops volleying it back to your partner. After confidence is built up with the technique then the next stage is to hit a volley that comes in at more pace. This can be first off done with your partner throwing the ball into you from around 18 yards and you practising volleying back. Then finally a player crossing balls into you from the wings and you practising to hit the target with no keeper and developing it by putting a keeper into the goal to beat.

The practice of turning and shooting can be developed by getting a partner to roll the ball into your feet with a defender tightly marking you. Then as the ball comes towards you, the attacking player can practice rolling off the defender either way taking the ball with him. The next step is then to have the ball coming into the attacker on the edge of the area and practice turning the defender, and shooting past the keeper in a spilt second. This will help improve finishing on the turn.





DRIBBLING:

To help improve dribbling technique the player should start with the ball on the sideline and practice running across the pitch at speed with the ball close to your feet. The next time the payer goes across the pitch he should start practice stepping over the ball and body swerving to help disguise which way he is going with the ball. The player should repeat the practice at least 3 or 4 times to get used to dribbling at speed and disguising which way he is going. Then cones can be used so the player can practice running in and out with the ball. The final stage is to put a defender between the attacker and goal and to score you must run at the defender ad get by him and finish shooting in the 6 yard box. If you were to put a keeper in the attacker would have to beat the defender and than dribble round the keeper to practice rounding the keeper as well as getting past the defender. This will build confidence in taking on defenders and having confidence to round the keeper in the right situation.



HEADING:

The diving header can be practiced by a partner throwing the ball up in the air letting it bounce in front with the player attacking the ball by leaping forward to get the ball back to his teammate.

The flick on header can be practiced by a ball being thrown up in the air and the attacking player jumping in the air to head the ball down. The next stage to the drill can be the player throwing the ball inside the 18-yard box in the air and the attacking player trying to head past the keeper. The final drill that can be used is a team mate crossing the ball into the danger area and the attacking player meeting the ball and heading past the goalkeeper.



I am now going to talk to you through the defending skills that are involved in football which are as follows:

- Defending headers
- Slide tackle
- Hook tackle
- Block tackle
- Jockeying
- Intercepting
- Stab tackle
- Shot stopping

Defending headers:

The main aim of the defending header is to get the ball out the danger area, this usually means getting height and length on the ball out wide unless a header to a team mate is viable. As a defender you must be careful when challenging to head the ball away as if you push your opponent or climb on his back you can give away a free kick in a dangerous situation. But when the ball is in the air the defenders aim is to win the ball, as it is more dangerous if the ball goes behind them or it bounces. This is because the striker can get in behind the defence and cause problems; and with the ball being able to reach the floor it gives the attacking player a better chance of bringing the ball under control. For a defensive header the defender must be aware of where he is on the pitch, as if he pushes up to high the ball can be put back over him and he will be out of position.

The technique is to head the ball full on the forehead to get as much height on it as possible with eyes being fixed on the ball at all times. If the ball is not there to head the defender must get another legal part of body connected to with the ball to make sure the attacking opposition cannot get on the end of it. This could mean the defender bringing the ball down on chest, or volleying it back up the field and away from the danger area.

Slide tackle:

The slide tackle, done efficiently will bring the oppistion player to a halt. The slide tackle is usually a last resort. Defenders should usually stay on their feet as if they miss this tackle they will be out of the game, or commit a foul, which is usually

bookable. This tackle is normally done down the line, this is because the tackle is from the side with the defending player having to make up ground (getting back) to make the challenge. Timing is all-important with this challenge it is especially important with the consequences of bad timing. This as I have already said can be free kicks or letting your opponent go by you. But even more important would be a tackle from behind and not from the side. As referees nowadays give players a straight booking for this challenge or even a sending off depending on the intensity of the challenge. If however the timing is perfect and you are clever with it, you can force the ball off your opponent's legs and win a throw in for your team. The technique of a slide tackle is firstly to keep your eyes on the ball. As you slide in you must try to keep your body as low as possible and try to make clean contact with the ball. The low body position will make it easier for you to get back off the floor quicker. You should slide on your nearest leg to the ball while taking the ball with your leg that is the furthest away.

Hook tackle:

This is similar to the slide tackle as the same technique is applied. But the difference is instead of losing possession you scoop the ball away from your opponent. As you win the ball you get to your feet as quickly as possible with the ball under control and you then counter attack the space behind this player. The key issue is using speed to get up once tackling the opponent and getting away from them. In this tackle you must try and hook your foot more around the ball to win control of it.

Block tackle:

This tackle is the most commonly used tackle be defenders. This is most common because it brings most effect in the end result. This is because you are tackling with the widest part of your foot in the inside of your boot. But with this tackle it can bring risks also, this is because if you do not put your full weight behind the challenge it can cause injury to knee and ankle joints. As the defender you have to withstand the full force of your opponent, who will be trying to run past you or trying to clear the ball. The technique is to put your non-tackling foot alongside the ball to meet it inside your other foot, while leaning forwards slightly so your body weight is behind the challenge. A must not with this challenge is to pull out, as being injured is possible.

Jockeying:

This skill is used to wait for the right opportunity to make the challenge. The defender keeps on his toes and watches the ball all the time. In defending all you want to do is win the ball so when the player runs at you, the concentration must be on the ball. If you start looking at the players feet he will make you go the wrong way with him feinting to go one way or the other. The idea is to keep your eyes on the ball and either jockey the opponent so he has to pass the ball, or to wait for the opponent to get enough of the ball to make a successful challenge.



Intercepting:

This is getting to the ball before the attacker has time to control the ball. The defender to do this must be on his toes, and when the ball is played nip in to take the ball of the attacker. The first touch in doing so must be good so the ball is under control and the defender can accelerate out of defence with the ball. If the defender has any doubt that he will not be able to intercept the ball, he must stay goal side of the attacking player and watch the ball. The idea of intercepting is to break up an attack so it cannot develop and be more threatening and also for the defending team to counter attack. The defending team must communicate with one another so they will not get dragged out of position when challenging for the ball.

Practice for developing defender skills:

Defending headers, the main drill that can be applied to develop defending headers is by first of all getting a team mate to throw the ball in the air and your aim is to get it as far over him as possible. This is just to get the defender practicing getting distance on the header. The drill that can be used, is putting an attacker in front of the defender so he has to get up for the ball win it and get distance on the ball. This is good pressure not only winning the ball the air but also getting distance on the ball under pressure. The advance drill will then be a player crossing a ball into the danger area and the defender getting above the attacker and heading it with distance, and out of the danger zone. The ball out the keeper's hands is also good practice for the defender to win a ball that is in the air a long time.



Slide tackle practice can be done first of all with out an opponent running with the ball. This defender can practice knocking the ball ahead of him catching it up and sliding along side it, knocking out of play. An attacker can then be put in, the attacker runs down the line with the ball with the defender allowed to catch him up to practice the side tackle. The advance drill is letting the attacker go at full pace so the defender has to work harder to gat side by side to produce the slide tackle correctly. The hook tackle can use the same drill as it is the same technique being used, but instead of

knocking the ball out the defender hooks more of his foot around the ball so he can come out with the ball and counter attack.



Block tackling, the practice drill for achieving the block tackle is by practicing at walking pace getting your body behind the ball as the attacker comes towards you. The faster the block tackle the more chance of injury so it will normally be left to the game to avoid any unnecessary injury. To progress practice the players can break into a gentle jog following the same drill at walking pace.

Doing a drill that involved two cones, which are 20 metres apart, can practice jockeying. The attacking player stays on the line but moves up and down it while the defender must keep in line with what he is doing. So the defender must jockey the players movements. The ball can be added into the drill with the attacker on the line trying to make the defender go the wrong way, the defenders job is to jockey the player so he does not get space to move off the line. The game situation can be used in this drill is when the attacker gets the ball down the line the defender must make the player go down the line and jockey the player till the ball is their to be won.

A drill that can be used for intercepting is by getting a player to roll the ball into the attackers feet while the defender must get ahead of the attacker before he can control it: and come away with the ball. This can also be practised with the ball being thrown in the air and the defender bringing the ball down ahead of the attacker. To progress the defender must stay further behind the attacker to make more ground up to intercept the pass.

Letting a player run with the ball and the defender coming in from the side and getting a foot in to stab the ball away can practice stab tackle.

Shot stopping can be practised with attacking player having shots from the left and right of goal, so the keeper has to keep going side to side to get his angles right and get into position early. Another practice can be the keeper in between two cones which are goals and have a player shooting on both sides so the keeper has to get back up quickly and react to every shot coming in.

Stab tackle

This tackle is used when your body cannot be used to challenge. So instead as you approach your opponent at the side, you nip in front of him and stab the ball away from him with you out stretched foot. This tackle can be used to start your own attacking moves as well. As if you can see a team mate unmarked as you stab the ball away you can aim for your team mate and then look for the reply while your opponent is out of position.

Shot stopping:



The key to shot stopping is knowing your angles of the goal. As the smaller the goal looks to the attacking team the more pressure they have of finding the back of the net. A good shot stopper will have to be agile in the goalmouth. He must have a good strong hand to force the ball away from the danger are. But more importantly a shot stopping keeper must have a good pair of hands so he can keep hold of the ball when shot at. To be good at shot stopping you must keep your eye on the ball at all times when it is coming towards you and hold onto the ball tightly. A keeper must have bravery, as there are times when the ball is bouncing about and he must get his body in the way even with the attackers coming in hard. The keeper must also have a good judgement, in knowing when to come out of his goal and when not to, as making just one mistake can cost the team (conceding a goal) so the keeper has a vital role to play with decision making.

