



GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL COACHING COURSE PART II

AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE ON HOW TO COACH YOUTH FOOTBALL









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OUR VISION

Football for all –
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PREFACE

This coaching course was developed as a cooperative effort between the Sports and International departments of the Football Association of Norway, and is based on the C-licence qualification that we teach in Norway. The course builds on our vision for youth football, which is to give as many youth players as possible access to a safe football environment, characterised by challenge, inclusion and enjoyment for all. We emphasise the social development of youth players on the field, rather than development of elite players only. Football can be a tool to promote positive values such as inclusion, equality, fair play etc. This is why we try to look at football as a part of a bigger picture rather than solely as a sport. With this course we aim to create an arena where the players can feel safe, have fun and develop when playing football.

We want all the participants of this course to be familiar with the goals and guidelines of youth football - the foundation of our philosophy. The participants must understand the importance of football and the different aspects of it. For example, the player's need to belong, their development and sense of achievement are all considered. We want you to acquire knowledge of activities that motivate the players to play football appropriate for their age level. Coaches must be facilitators of the training session. A coach should develop planning, organisation, and leadership skills, so the activity organised has a certain level of quality. We want coaches to behave and communicate in a certain way. The role of a coach is very important and has the ability to set the foundation for a positive learning environment.

The Football Association of Norway wants as many as possible to participate in football, but we are not solely concerned about quantity. We want football sessions with quality. This means fun and varied content during practice, with instructors who are trained in developing the youth players.

Our vision and aims

Our vision

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Our main aim

To give the players an opportunity to play and experience football characterised by safety and well-being, mastery and enjoyment, through practice and matches, as well as participating in the social and confident environment of a team or a club.

After completing the course, you should be able to start and lead sound and customised football activity that stimulates mastery, development, and safety and therefore: enjoyment for all. This will create good prerequisites for learning, both during training and matches.



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MODULE 1

1.0 Core values in youth football

1.1 Core values and goals in youth football

In many ways, youth football has the most challenging target groups when it comes to continuing playing football. This group is also where we find the most

potential in football when it comes to keeping players active for a longer period, regardless of their skills and ambitions.



To give as many youth players as possible access to a safe football environment, characterised by challenge, inclusion and enjoyment.

The players should be given the opportunity to take part in decisions based on their own individual needs and ambitions, in social and safe team and club environments.

Challenges in Youth Football on and off the pitch



1.2 Interaction between coach and player

Mastering everyday life in and around football is closely related to our wellbeing. This goes for both the player and the coach. We as coaches are one of the most important role models for both young and older players. When we plan training sessions and matches, or give feedback and evaluation, we should consider the external factors that influence the players in everyday life. Then you are on your way to a comprehensive understanding of the player as a human being.

Many youth players have both developed good skills, high ambitions and invest a lot of hard work into further developing themselves. On the same team, you may also find players that do not have the best prerequisites, do not have ambitions other than playing for fun and being with friends, wishing to only participate in a few training sessions and matches compared to the more ambitious players.

Puberty hits at different times, amongst girls and boys and amongst individuals. Therefore, coaches for the 13, 14, 15, and 16-year age groups will face challenges related to

the youth's puberty development. This period can be difficult, both for the individual youth and for the surroundings. The coach must strive to act ways that give the children and youth a safe and trustworthy adult figure to rely on during this tricky phase. Clear expectations regarding effort and behaviour must be combined with the ability to see each individual's own challenges.

An early spurt of growth can make a technically able player become suddenly clumsy and slow with the ball. The coach should be a support in such situations, and help them both to see connections and to keep their motivation up.

Youth care about being fair – and rightly so. "Fairness" to youth is not necessarily about everybody having equal playing time, but rather that the rules everyone has agreed on are followed. Many are also more conscious of their role on the pitch, who they cooperate with, and how the team should play. The youth have reached an age in which explanations and reasoning is important.



FAIR PLAY

1.3 Fair play

Fair Play has to do with everything on the football field, both during training and matches. Equally important though, is how we behave *off* the pitch. This requires players, coaches, leaders, captains, parents and guardians to have a conscious relationship towards Fair play: respect it when it applies, and intervene when it is not working. Every club with self-respect develops and carries out active and practical Fair play programmes. This can imply shared rules on and off the pitch – that the children and youth have themselves been part of shaping. Shared rules create solidarity and identity, in the same way that the club uniform does.

Fair Play is based on the golden rule – *Be towards others as you want them to be towards you*. To be specific and to think in football terms, or any other sport for that matter, we have therefore developed a norm, Fair Play, where we distinguish between formal and informal Fair Play. Formal Fair Play: *follow the rules!* Informal Fair Play: *Do your best!* The referee's task is to manage the rules, and follow up on formal Fair Play. This means ensuring players and coaches follow the rules of the game. The rest is up to us. Follow these principles, and it is fairly uncomplicated to resolve controversial situations.



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MODULE 2

2.0 Football fitness, health and nutrition

2.1 Football Fitness

Football fitness encompasses a lot – we have chosen to focus on health and preventing injuries.

Preventing injuries means preparing the body for playing football. That can entail various warm-up exercises with and without a ball, as well as strength and balance exercises that activate the muscles used in football activity. Strength training can also be done after the football session.

2.1.1 Warm up

Getting ready to play - different kinds of exercises done before the football practice starts. This should include:

- Running
- Jumping
- Turning
- Acceleration
- Strength and balance

You should do this as preparation before the training starts. 10 – 15 min.

A good and varied warm-up programme contributes considerably to injury prevention. The programme should be done before every training session, at least twice a week. After a while the exercises should be adjusted, as the players will progress all the time. Parts of the programme should also be done before matches.

2.1.2 Strength, balance and stability

Different kinds of exercises should be done before or after the football practice. This could be part of the warm up or an extra session after the football practice. This will help players to avoid injuries and build up their strength and coordination.

You do not need a lot of equipment. You could work on your core muscles in the lower torso region including the abdominals, obliques and lower back. This gives you more stability and control over your body. For this, you only need your own body or you can do exercises together with one of your teammates. The same goes for balance and strength training. Some examples include squats, lunges, Nordic hamstring, the plank, the side plank etc.



2.2 Health and nutrition

The sports club is a big and important arena where many children and youth spend their time. As a coach, you have a unique opportunity to influence and inspire the youth to choose a healthy lifestyle.

The basis for healthy nutrition starts in early childhood, and young people benefit more out of training/exercising when they show up for practice rested, and on a full stomach. Remember that you are an important role model as a coach – the young look up to you!

A young player needs enough energy for growth, development and physical activity. Eating a good meal at the right time will make it easier to get more out of training sessions, and have better capacity for matches.

Healthy nutrition will give you:

- Increased **physical capacity** so you can practice better
- Faster and better **recovery** after practice and matches so that you can exercise more and be ready for the next match more quickly

- Better **concentration** during practice and matches (matches are often decided towards the end)
- A stronger **immune system** that keeps you healthy and prevents sickness
- Facilitates your body to **handle strenuous training** sessions and recover quickly

If you eat regularly throughout the day, this will allow your muscles to get stronger and for children and youth to grow and develop.

Combined, this will allow you to get more out of training!

As a coach you can make rules and encourage players to always eat before training sessions. You can ask everyone to bring a bottle of water and encourage them to bring an energy booster such as a banana, to eat during or after practice. If the team is playing a Cup with many matches in a row, it is a good idea to have a shared setup for food and drink that is planned in advance. It is wise to have an open dialogue with players about food and nutrition.



Before training and matches

Food and drink before practice and matches has a massive impact on performance. The body's energy storages must be stocked up, and your fluids should be balanced before tying up your football shoes.

The last meal before practice or competitions is the last opportunity to stock up your energy storages.

For most of us it is best to eat a main meal a couple of hours before practice, containing mostly carbohydrates and some protein.

During training and match

There is of course a difference between practice and matches, but as a rule of thumb:

- Always bring a water bottle to training and competitions
- Drink at all sessions.
- It is a good idea to eat fruit or raisins during the break at matches
- Straight after practice, you should make sure to eat and drink enough so that you are ready again for the next practice!

After training and match

Straight after practice, you should make sure to eat and drink enough so that you are ready again for the next practice.

Good recovery depends on three factors:

- 1. Enough sleep and rest
- 2. Balance of fluids
- 3. Smart nutrition

After a training session it is important for the body to be fed the necessary nutrients and fluids so that the restitution process can function optimally. Optimal recovery is important in order to maximise the effect of training. It is important for higher tolerance, not overdoing it, and preventing injuries and illness.

Sleep

An active player needs a lot of sleep and rest in combination with good nutrition.

Sleep and rest is part of the recovery process, bouncing back again after training and matches. Getting enough sleep is important for a player who trains a lot, goes to school and spends a lot of time with friends.



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MODULE 3

3.0 First defender and the rest of the team

3.1 The idea of the game

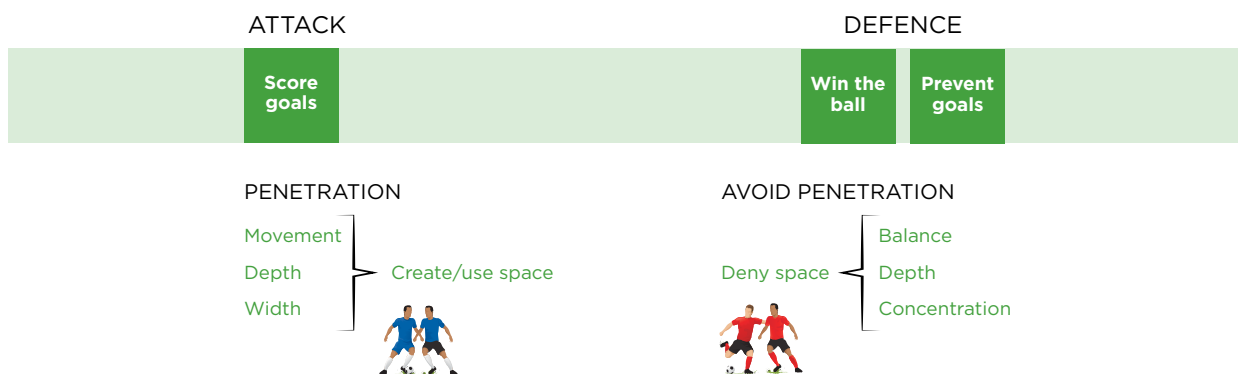
The idea of the game must guide our activity and learning point choices. When it comes to attack, the idea of the game is to score goals through penetration. In **defence**, it is to win the ball and prevent penetration/goals. These main objectives are often explained using the model “Principle of playing”. This model outlines the most important means for achieving or preventing penetration and goals. In defence, the most important principles are balance, depth and, concentration that prevents space. This makes it difficult for the attacking team to break through. The team has control over the dangerous spaces. The Play Principle Model explains the idea of the game in attack and defence.

Some important terms and explanations in defence:

- 1D (first defender) = player closest to the attacking player with the ball.
1D should either win the ball, delay/lead 1A, prevent penetration passes or goals. Playing situations determines priority
- 2D (second defender) = player closest to 1D. Player's task is to secure 1D on the correct side or cover space. The player can also find themselves on the “wrong defence side”. The task will then be to get to the right side as quickly as possible or help 1D to win the ball or prevent goals
- 3D (third defender) = all the other players on the defence team. Their defence task is to cover space and/or “take out” defined attacking players. The playing situations determines priority and positioning. This positioning of players along the field's width and length dimension, often in so-called lines creates what we call the team formation. This is achieved with different combinations in each of the team's lines



PRINCIPLE OF PLAYING



The Principle of playing in defence:

Balance

- Players position themselves so that there are as many or more (numerical balance) between the attacking team's ball player and own goal, whilst at the same time covering dangerous spaces (positional balance).

Concentration

- The distance between the defence players on the width and depth of the pitch should be small in order to prevent space between lines.

Depth

- Distance between players and lines along the pitch width. Must continuously be adjusted in accordance with the conditions around 1A. Prevent the attacking team from using/creating space.
- This is best achieved with good balance, concentration and depth.

The football game consists of an individual, relational and structural dimension. These dimensions of football skills are meant to take advantage of the playing situation.



3.2 Learning points

Learning points are the small details necessary for achieving the overall learning goals. We will first talk about some learning points as a first defender (1D) which is individual learning points. Then we will talk about the relational learning points, which is more tactical learning points for the whole team.

3.2.1 First defender

Before you become and when you become a first defender (1D) you have to think of:

- **Orientation and moving in advance**
Position and body position that enables you to see both the ball and potential new 1A.
Movement at top speed, in advance.

- **Choosing and acting as 1D**

How is the team balanced? Should you attempt to win the ball or obstruct/delay/lead?

- **After the 1D-job:**

Dealing with a new 1A – take out depth and concentration

If the team is balanced, one has the following priorities (degree of success depends on preparation work):
Snap ball, Tackle / win the ball, Stress 1st attacker and force through an imprecise transfer or avoid forward pass or be passed by player on the ball.

If the team is unbalanced, it is important to lead 1st attacker away from dangerous areas (often central), and simultaneously hinder forward passes.

3.2.2 Relational dimension in defence

Concentration in defence (principle)

Learning points:

- Concentration when the attacking player with the ball is centred on the pitch
- Sideways movement towards the ball when the ball is played into a different position
- Speed in transitions/movements

3.2.3 First defender and the rest of the team

It is the team in defence that wishes to win back the ball and/or avoid goals by obstructing forward movement and closing spaces. There are 3 principles that are central to the defence game in order to achieve balance and win the ball.

• Movement

Fast mutual movement related to the ball, opponents and our 1st defender.

• Concentration (stay tight)

Refers to distance between defenders in the width and depth of the pitch. Players should stay close together to avoid space in and between lines.

• Depth

Refers to distance between players and formations in the pitch's depth direction. Players should continuously adjust to the conditions around 1A.

To be successful, especially after losing the ball, it is important to adjust/establish balance as soon as possible, and then ensure good concentration and depth.

All these learning points apply more or less to all playing situations and phases of the game. We should consider this when choosing focus and learning points.

It is vital to work systematically with the learning points – this cannot be emphasised enough.



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MODULE 4

4.0 How to get the best out of each player

4.1 How to reach our own potential

All players have different personality with different needs. Some have great ambitions to become top players, while others just want to have fun. As a coach for young players, you have to adapt to different levels of ambition and try to get the best out of each player. For doing this it is important to establish a good cooperation between coach and player, based on mutual respect and confidence. Here are some important tasks for the coach to remember

The coach:

- Be well prepared with a good plan – adapted to the level/skills of the team and players
- Create a safe environment by seeing each player and giving encouraging feedback
- Use both inquisitive (ask questions) and descriptive approaches.
- Advise on what might happen, instead of what has happened. Look for possibilities
- Facilitate scaled and relevant activity based on themes.
- Challenge players on quality and presence.
- Ensure individual feedback and improvement.
- Create competition mentality at practices

You often have to change your original plan if things do not work, Have a plan B and C in your mind. The level of the players will often vary a lot in youth football.

Some players accept a rather tough and direct message from the coach, others are more vulnerable and take

feedback very personally – and get afraid. Be sure that the player receiving your message knows you talk to them. Sometimes you ask player/or a certain player if they may suggest an answer to your question. Sometimes you simply explain.

Do not let too many words during a session steal time from practical exercise. Do not spend too much time on mistakes a player has done. Ask for choices and possibilities in a certain situation. Then a player hopefully will make a better choice next time they are in a similar situation.

Be accurate and clear what you want to focus on in this particular exercise and be sure that the exercise you want the players to work with reflects your theme.

To improve your skills, you have to be concentrated and focus on details. Patience and concentration related to the themes is decisive to make progress. This often requires active coaching!

Be patience and encourage the player to work on details on their own – in addition to the training sessions with the team.

Competition is always fun and motivating, and it is nothing wrong by winning a game in training when you play against two goals!





Players:

Talent is not static. "You have a talent" should be replaced by "you have a development potential"

Here are five important success criteria that serve as a foundation for those who have become top players as adults;

- An intense desire to be a great player and realize the consequences of this desire.
- Clear developing aims
- Manage pressure, challenges, setbacks and success!
- Become individually good and develop together with others!
- Patience – and have fun

The inner motivation – and dreams - are sometimes clear for players when they are young, whereas others need to become more mature before they get such a feeling and desire. A strong inner motivation is something you really want.

Select some themes you want to work particularly hard on; for instance, 2-3 developing aims you spend time on practising on your own during a season. Practice a lot –

with quality and be patient, often it takes time to achieve such developing aims.

Both players – and parents – often think it will always go upwards and do not realize that there will be setbacks on the way to become a good player. Some players – and parents – sometimes blame coaches and teammates for lack of development with their son/daughter. Be humble and patient also when you are successful and get a lot of praise

In order to develop as a player, you need other players to play with and against. Be positive to your teammates both on practice and matches and be a contributor to the development of your teammates. Everybody in a group - and the team - will benefit from this. Player development is like a marathon run. It takes time. It is nothing wrong by being good when you are a child or a youth. But the most important thing is to be good when you are a grownup a senior player. It takes time to become a great player.



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MODULE 5

5.0 Goalkeeper and the rest of the team

5.1 The role of the goalkeeper

A modern goalkeeper needs to be a good shot stopper and a good football player. When the rule where the goalkeeper could pick up the ball with their hands on a back pass was taken away, the role of the goalkeeper also changed. The goalkeeper went from being mainly a shot stopper to becoming a multifunctional football player. The same conditions in defence apply, but now the goalkeeper is also often used in the offense build up play and act like an extra outfield player.

The main tasks defensively:	Prevent goals
The secondary task:	Win the ball
The main task offensively:	Try to help the team scoring goals

In the modern way to play football, many teams use the goalkeeper in advance to score goals. If the goalkeeper perceives a way to start a counterattack you can beat the opponent in unbalance and start a quick attack. When the team has the ball the goalkeeper can be a good cover and you can use them as an extra outfield player to get out of difficult situations or you can use them to switch the play from one side to another.





5.2 Goalkeeper in defence

The main task for a goalkeeper will always be to prevent goals – 1D. Together with your teammates you should prevent your opponent from scoring goals.

For this you need to work on different kinds of techniques and tasks:

- Grip/handling the ball
- Diving technique
- Dealing with crossers
- Positioning
- Communication

Grip and diving techniques, and dealing with crossers, are typical things goalkeepers work on individually, together with a goalkeeper coach, or another coach. When it comes to dealing with crossers you need to work with more players, in order to take it to the next level. Positioning and communication are something you need to learn by playing together with your team. Therefore it is important for the coach to include the goalkeeper in the practice and give feedback especially in those two areas.

5.3 Goalkeeper in offence

When the goalkeeper has the ball, they become the 1A and start the attack. A modern goalkeeper can be an important part of the build-up play.

- Distribution with both hands and feet
- Positioning
- Orientation
- Communication

Distribution is a big part of the goalkeeper tasks in a game. Therefore, it is important that the goalkeeper can

handle the ball with both feet and hands, both from set pieces and in open play. The goalkeeper can be an important part as a support player and a part of the build-up play as an attacker (2A and 3A).

For helping the team in attack, the goalkeeper has to find a position so that it is easy for the teammates to play a back pass and/or use the goalkeeper for switching the play from one side to the other. Good communication and orientation helps the team and the goalkeeper to solve difficult situations. For the goalkeeper, it is important to exercise early communication, read the game and have a “plan” for when the ball is played to the goalkeeper.

5.4 Goalkeeper and the rest of the team

As a coach it is important that you find time to train your goalkeeper. Try at least two times a week to train your goalkeeper as a specialist. This could be in advance of your team's session or as a part of your team's session. Make it simple – most important is that the goalkeeper feels they are taken care of and that they feel you as a coach sees them.

When you have your team practice, always try to include the goalkeeper in the exercises and give them tasks to work on.

This could be:

- How they play with their feet
- How they communicate
- How they are oriented
- Try to encourage them to go for crosses
- Try to encourage them

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MODULE 6

6.0 First attacker and the rest of the team

6.1 The idea of the game

The idea of the game must guide our activity and learning point choices. When it comes to attack, the idea of the game is to score goals through penetration. In defence, it is to win the ball and prevent penetration/goals. These main objectives are often explained using the model "Principle of playing". This model outlines the most important means for achieving or preventing penetration and goals. In attack, the most important playing principles are movement, width and depth that creates or takes advantage of space. This means the players must move at the same time, in a way that creates several passing opportunities or makes space for the ball player (1A) to penetrate.

To understand the most important playing principles and the game's attack phases, we must first be familiar with a

few words and phrases that explain roles and formations on the pitch.

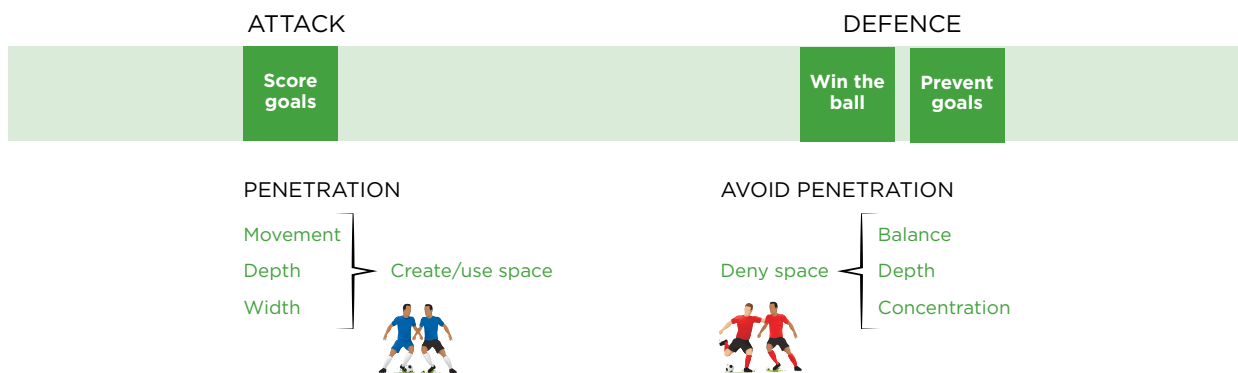
Some important terms and explanations in attack:

- 1A (first attacker) = player with the ball
- 2A (second attacker) = player closest to the player with the ball in your team (1A)
- 3A (third attacker) = all the other players on the attacking team
- First movement = first attacking movement by 2A (close to 1A) to create space for passing opportunities or space for others (3A)
- Second movement = movements by third attackers (3A) to create passing opportunities, often in space created by 2A





PRINCIPLE OF PLAYING



The Principle of playing in attack:

Movement

- Constant position adjustments to make oneself playable (adjustment of distances)
- Good angles in front, behind and in the same dimension as the player with the ball
- Opposite and simultaneous movements

Width

- Distances between players along the width of the field, in each line - creates space in and between opponent's lines

Depth

- Distances between players and components lines along the length of the field
- Distances along the length of the field, between players in the same lines: depth in front/behind ball player
- Take advantage of/create space through movement in behind the lines.

The football game consists of an individual, relational and structural dimension. These dimensions of football skills are meant to take advantage of the playing situation.

6.2 Learning points

Learning points are the small details necessary for achieving the overall learning goals. We will first talk about some learning points as a first attacker (1A) which is individual learning points. Then we will talk about the relational learning points, which is more tactical learning points for the whole team.

6.2.1 First attacker (1A)

The "First Attacker" (1A) is the player with the ball. The First Attacker's job is to "penetrate" (e.g., attack the goal) by passing and dribbling the ball into a space in front of the goal.

Principles for playing and creating space:

Before involvement

Forward orientation on the pitch before getting the ball, and whilst the ball is on its way.

Body position and posture that allows you to see both the ball and the opponent's goal.

Taking advantage of time and space with first touch

Facilitate fast second touch. Play on the first touch. Shield the ball (body between ball and opponent).

Decisions and action with the ball

Use vacant play spots and space ahead in the pitch (leading, dribble, passing).

If no space ahead on the pitch: make new spaces through fast passing into vacant spaces, correct angled passes to a receiving player depending on position and movement.

Decisions and action after passing

New action immediately after passing, to make oneself playable and/or create new spaces.





6.2.2 Relational dimension in attack

The relationship between the playing principles and choice of learning points is the red thread. The importance of the playing principles create the need to make more guidelines for defence and attack. The learning points are the bridge between principles and focus in the learning process. All principles therefore have a set of learning points. The learning points must again be prioritised in a hierarchical way. Here we will go through the concrete relationship between principles and learning points.

Width in attack (principle)

Learning points:

- Play point in front of ball player
- Supporting player behind ball player
- Distance between first attacker and potential new ball player
- Angle between first attacker and potential new ball player
- Attract an opponent to create a two against one situation - and recreate width by movement from behind.

6.2.3 First attacker and the rest of the team

Each player on the team must wish to make themselves playable. This goes both for the once close to the ball player (2A) and the rest of the team (3A).

Effective playability for as many as possible on the team:

- Advantageous distance, including continuous adjustments of distance
- Advantageous angle, including continuous adjustments of angle
- Create your own space!

Good decisions for the team: play passes or "attack" free space yourself

Good decisions related to (2A) skill subsets:

- Sideways position before receiving the ball
- First touch out of tights paces
- First touch using foot farthest away from opponent towards free space
- Turn away or past opponent

Types of movement for 1A when they transit to 2A or 3A again (after the passing):

- Standing still could be advantageous, but rarely
- Playability, angle and distance is decisive again - in relation to:
 - Movement behind
 - Movement past
 - Movement in front
 - Movement from front to back

All these learning points apply more or less to all playing situations and phases of the game. We should consider this when choosing focus and learning points.

It is vital to work systematically with the learning points - this cannot be emphasised enough.







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