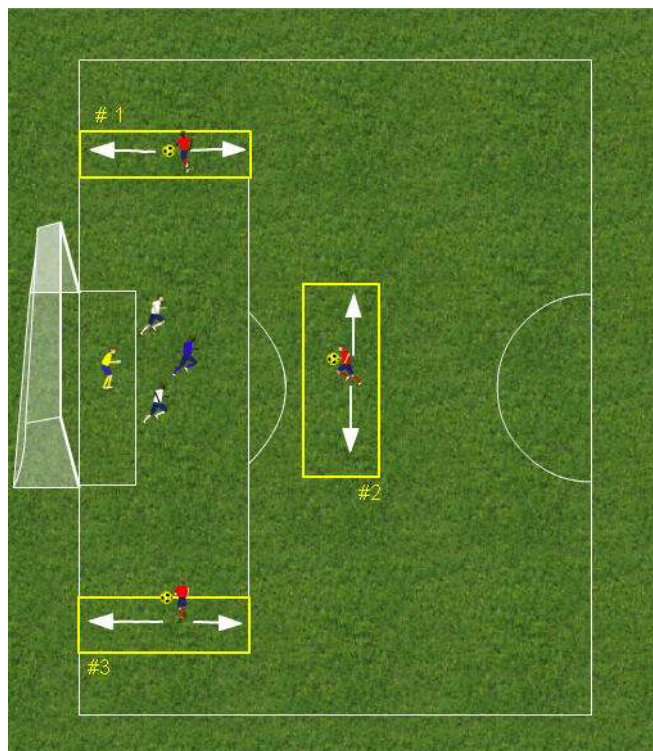


A PRACTICE TO IMPROVE THE SKILL OF DEFENSIVE HEADING

The following practice has been designed using www.grassrootscoaching.com Coaches Chalkboard.



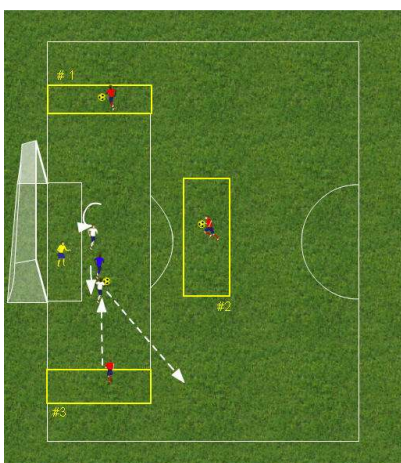
ORGANISATION

Use the penalty area, extending the area to about 25 – 30 yards out. There are a total of 7 players, two defenders, a goalkeeper and one attacker. On the right and left hand side of the 18 yard area are two servers and another server in front of the penalty area, about 25 yards out. The servers are numbered, can move to vary the angle of serve and must serve the ball by throwing it. The coach calls which server will throw the ball to give the defenders and goalkeeper time to set themselves. The defenders and goalkeeper defend the crosses and the attacker tries to score.

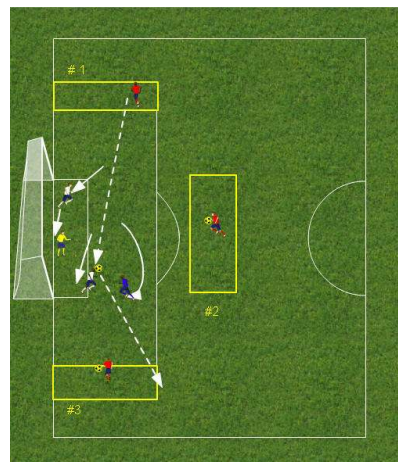
KEY TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Communication between defenders and GK *Defenders work as a pair, one attack the ball, one cover *Start position in relation to where the ball is served from *Get in the line and attack the ball down the line of the cross *Timing of run and jump *Select relevant defensive heading technique *After defensive header, readjust and reorganise *Squeeze up the pitch if possible after the ball has been headed clear

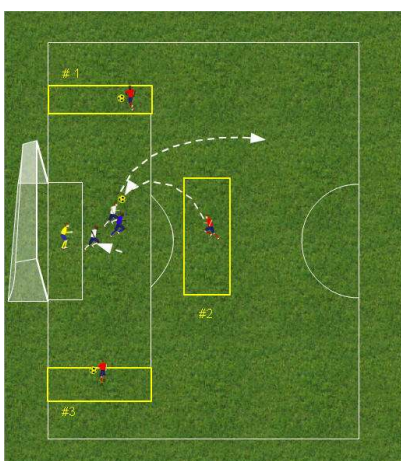
Progression # 1 – In this example, server number 3 serves the ball to the near post area. The first defender attacks the ball and the second defender provides cover. The first defender should look to attack down the line of the ball and head the ball back in the direction it has come from, ideally with height and distance. Communication between the GK and defenders is vital



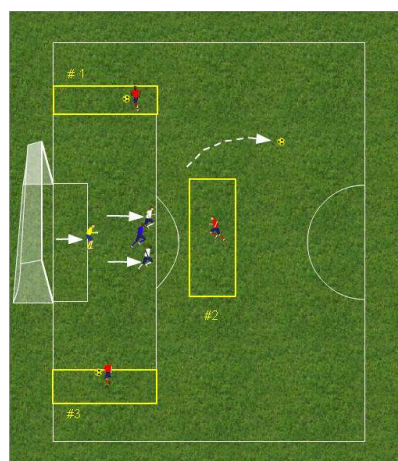
Progression # 2 – The ball is now served to the far post area. The far post defender must adjust to the flight of the ball and in this situation use a flick defensive header to clear to safety. The goalkeeper needs to also adjust their position and the front post defender should spin after the ball has gone over their head to cover any attacking headers back across goal. Again communication between the defenders and GK is very important



Progression # 3 – The central server now serves the ball. One of the defenders should look to attack down the line of the ball, looking for height and distance with the header, the other defender should provide cover. The defenders need to communicate early and clearly as to who attacks the ball and who covers.



Progression # 4 – After a defensive header has been made, it is important that the defenders and goalkeeper react quickly to re organise to defend the next cross. If the ball has been headed clear into space, the defenders should look to push up the pitch



PROGRESSIONS

Introduce a second attacker *Introduce a supporting defensive midfielder on the edge of the box, who can be a target for cushioned headed clearances and an attacking midfielder player positioned on the edge of the box, to attack any weak headed clearances to the edge of the box
*Progress practice a game

www.grassrootscoaching.com is a website dedicated to helping Football Coaches of all levels around the world to improve and advance their coaching skills. For more information and access to our library of 100's of 4D fully interactive coaching drills please visit the website.