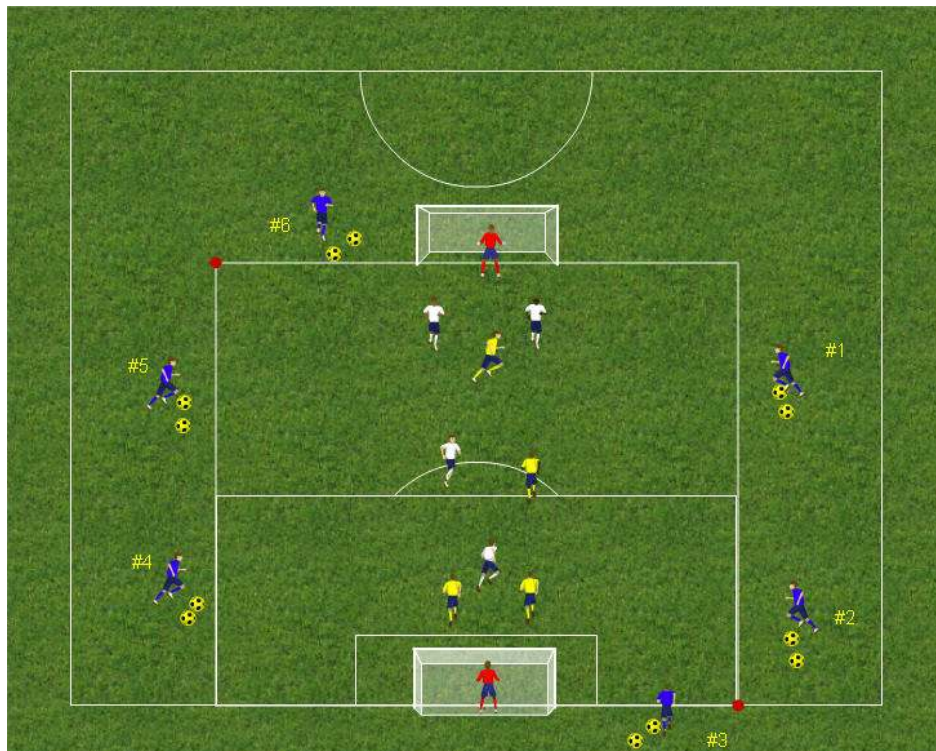


A GAME TO IMPROVE DEFENSIVE HEADING

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



ORGANISATION

Mark out a pitch about 35 x 20 yards, although the size can be adjusted to suit the age and ability of the players. The pitch should have two goals, with goalkeepers. Play a 2 – 1 – 1 formation. It is a free game but the coach should build in some sort of tactical shape to the game but allow the players to rotate where required.

There are six servers with footballs, located around the perimeter of the pitch and numbered. The servers can move up and down their areas to provide different angles and heights of crosses and balls into the defensive area.

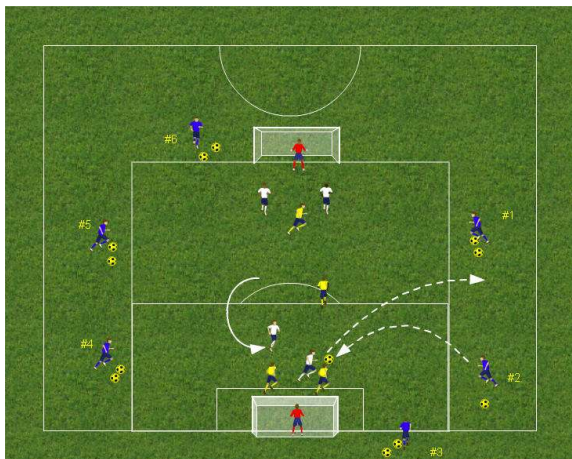
Encourage free play and the team in possession can pass the ball to any of the servers and the defensive team must then adjust and organise for the thrown cross. If the ball goes out of play, the coach can also call the number of a server and an area for the ball to be thrown into. The defensive team then adjusts and organises to the serve into their area.

KEY TECHNICAL ASPECTS

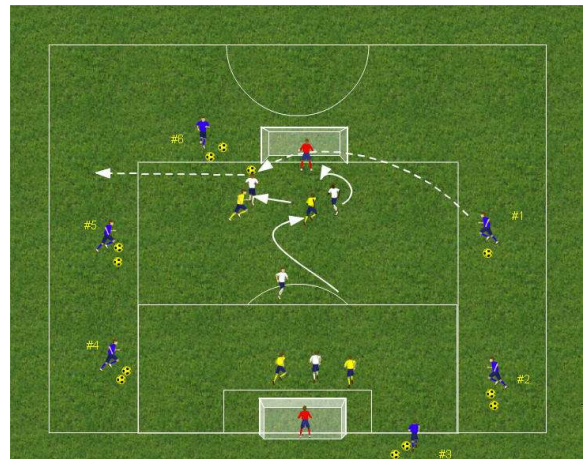
Communication between defenders and GK *Defenders work as a unit, one attacking the ball, the others providing cover *Start position in relation to where the ball is served from *Get in the line and attack the ball down the line of the cross *Timing of run and jump *Select relevant defensive heading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

Progression # 1 –In free play, the ball is passed to server number two. The two defenders and the GK must adjust their position and defend the thrown cross into the area. It is important that the servers serve the ball accurately and throw the ball to the various key defensive areas, near post, far post and the middle of the goal. The attacker tries to score.

In this instance the ball is thrown to the near post and the first defender gets in front of the attacker to head clear

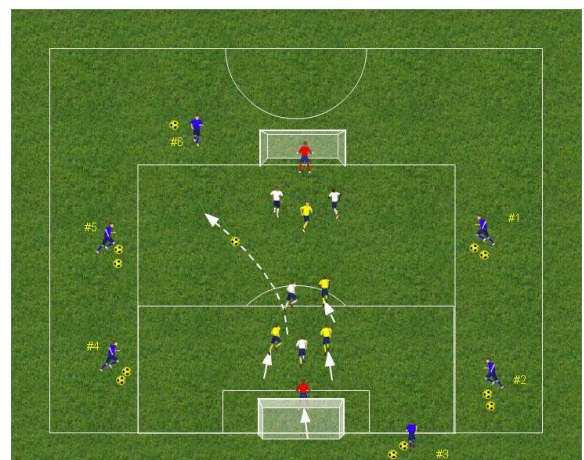
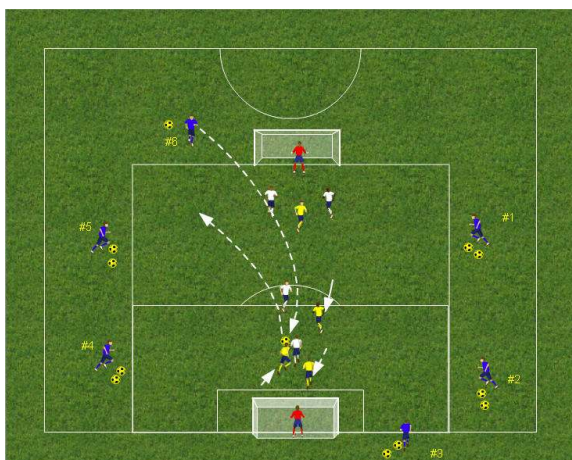


Progression # 2 – This time, the coach calls a number and the service this time is to the far post. The goalkeeper and defenders communicate, the far post player employs a different type of defensive header, flicking the ball to safety and the near post defender has spun when the ball has gone over their head in case the ball is won by the attacker and headed back into their area or towards the far post area



Progression # 3 – The ball is now served from a central area. This time, there is good communication between the defenders, with one attacking the ball, looking for height and distance with the header and the other providing cover. The defending M/F player should also look to drop in, in case it is a weak header to the edge of the area or for the possibility of a cushion header to start a counter attack

Progression # 4 – After the ball has been cleared, the GK and defenders look to push up and clear the area. Encourage free play, with the ball being passed to a server. The servers should look to provide a wide variety of different serves, to different areas.





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