

U10 Week 4 - Receiving Balls in the Air

Objective: To improve the technique of receiving soccer balls played in the air. To help players practice using different surfaces when receiving lofted balls (feet, thighs, chest).

Coaching Points (receiving in air):

General:

- be on balls of feet and get body behind ball
- move to the ball (do not wait for it)
- try to drop ball in front of body so it is in your control but not under you

Laces:

- when using laces, lift foot up to meet the ball
- as ball is about to make contact, drop foot down and cushion ball on top of foot (laces) to the ground

Thigh:

- when using thigh (not knee), lift thigh up to meet ball
- once ball touches thigh, drop leg down to cushion the ball
- make sure you push ball slightly in front of you so you can handle it easily
- ball should not pop up as you cushion it
- make sure players use middle of thigh to cushion balls

Chest:

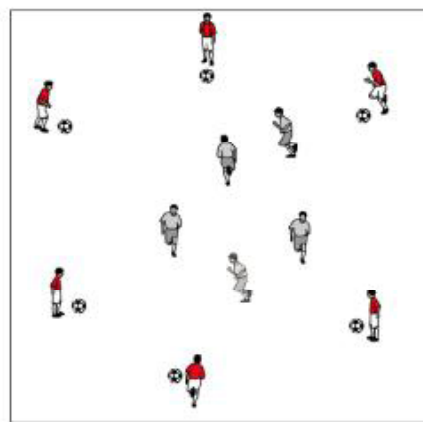
- when using chest, bend knees with feet staggered and slightly arch back while using arms for balance
- cushion ball (collapse chest) as it hits chest and guide it to feet
- do not push out chest to pop the ball out too far in front of you

Dutch Circle: (15 minutes)

Half of the players create a 25-35 yd outer circle and have soccer balls. These players must always be alert and on their toes. The other half of the players are in the middle of this circle and do not have soccer balls. The inner players check to players on the outside to receive a pass from them. The players on the outside toss the ball in the air to the players on the inside. The players on the inside receive with different surfaces and then turn and find another player on the outside.

Variation 2: top of foot, thigh, chest, any of the three.

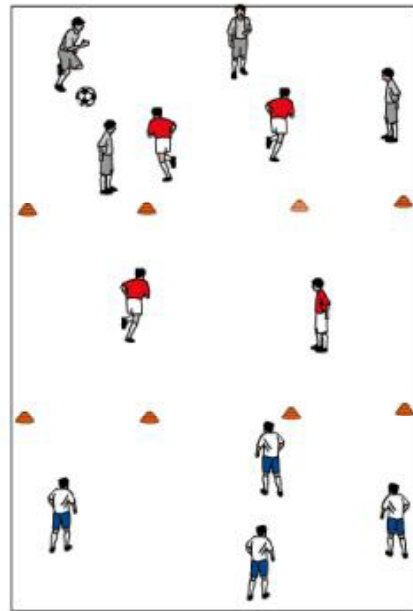
Variation 3: add in a 'dummy' defender to put pressure on player receiving ball in the air. Have one group go for about 1 minute with one surface, then switch players on outside and inside. Repeat until all surfaces are covered and variations completed (if possible). Focus on receiving with the thigh, chest and laces.



Arsenal Drill: (20 minutes)

Split grid into three even zones (zone 1, 2 and 3). Split team into three even teams (can have 3 to 6 players in each zone). If have three teams of 4, then Team in Zone 1 is trying to possess the ball (can ask them to have 2 to 4 passes before they can play the ball down) and then play it in the air to team in Zone 3. Meanwhile, team in Zone 2 sends two defenders into Zone 1 to try and win the ball. If they win the ball, they turn, play it down to Zone 3 and then switch zones with team in Zone 1 (team in Zone 1 then has to then send two defenders into Zone 3 and try to win the ball back). If team in Zone 1 is able to play it down to team in Zone 3, they get a point. That means the other two players waiting in Zone 2 are entering into Zone 3 to win the ball back. Team that gets to 5 points first, wins.

Variation: Make a restriction that the ball played into other zone has to be in the air.



Bumper Game: (25 minutes)

4 v 4 scrimmage to goals. An additional 4 players are placed on the outside of the playing area as bumpers. Each of the 4 “bumpers” are responsible for a quarter of the field. If the ball is passed to a neutral or the ball goes out of bounds in their area, they are to pick it up and toss it underhanded back into the playing area to the team that passed it to them. This way the players on the field playing 4 v 4 will have to receive the ball out of the air.



Self-to-Self Receiving: (20 minutes)

All players are dribbling in a 25x30 yard rectangle grid moving through each other. They try to avoid collisions with other players and their soccer balls. When the coach yells, “Laces,” each player picks up their soccer ball and serves it in the air to themselves. They attempt to receive the ball with their “Laces” before it touches the ground. Once they have cushioned the ball to the ground, they continue to dribble in the area. The coach can also include the commands “Thigh” and “Chest.”

Tennis: (15 minutes)

Organize teams of 2, 3 or 4. Set up multiple tennis courts (size depends on the numbers playing). For a doubles game (2v2), set up a grid 30-35 yards long x 15 yards wide. Include a central 3 yard alleyway across the width of the court, made from cones, to represent the net.

Team A serves the ball from behind their end line with a volley or half-volley kick to **Team B**. The ball must land in **Team B**'s half court to be **GOOD**. However, **Team B** can choose to play the ball before the bounce or after the bounce. Depending on age and ability of the players, the rules can allow 1-2 bounces on a side, with a 3-4 touch limit between teammates (this allows for juggling). Balls can be headed or volleyed to the other **Team**'s side. Points can only be scored by the team that served the ball. If a ball lands in the central alleyway, it is **NO GOOD** (like a tennis ball going into the net). Follow regular tennis rules or adjust accordingly.

Receiving Square

Half the group with balls, half without. Player without ball runs to player on outside of square with a ball. Player with ball tosses ball underhand to player who is running toward them. Inside player receives ball with a designated part of the body and then passes it back. Then they repeat it by receiving a ball from someone new.

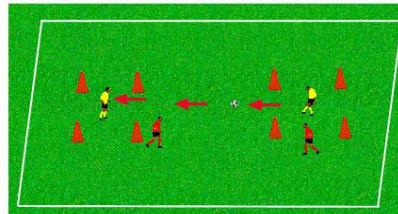


Coaching Points

1. First touch and importance of cushioning ball
2. Get in line with the ball
3. Select controlling surface early
4. Relax body part at impact.

Box to Box

Two players per team. Two boxes are made approximately 20-30 yards apart. There is a player from each team in one box. One team starts the game. When the ball is played to the other box, the attacking team gets the opportunity to get the first touch. Then they have to dribble outside of the box (square) to receive a point. The defending player is outside the box and has to wait until the attacking player gets the first touch. The defending player tries to win the ball after the first touch has been made. If the attacking player is successful in bringing the ball down and dribbling outside of the square then they keep it. If the defending player wins the ball after the first touch, then they become the attacking team. Coach may have to allow serving players to toss ball in air and then strike it to their teammate in opposite box.

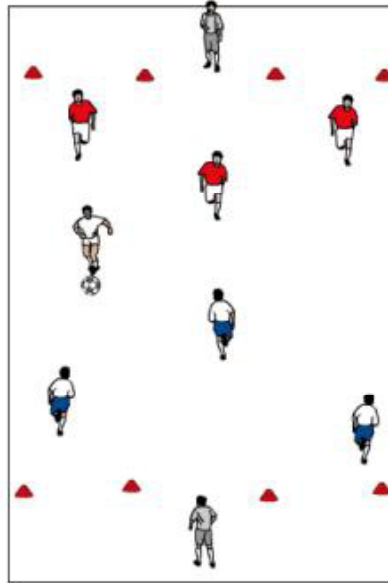


Coaching Points

1. First touch and importance of cushioning ball
2. Get in line with the ball
3. Select controlling surface early
4. Relax body part at impact.
5. Take first touch away from where pressure is coming from.

3v3 +1 to targets: (20 minutes)

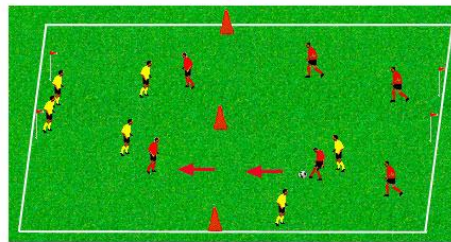
Play a 3v3 (+1 neutral) scrimmage in a 35 yds long x 30 yds wide but the way to score is by playing into a target player who needs to stay centrally on the endline. If the target player can get it under control, Point. The target player will then distribute out to the opposite team who will attack the other target player.



6v6 (4v2 in each half)

Play 4v2 in each half. Field is 50 x 30 yards with no one allowed over half line. Four players from each team go into their defensive half of the field. The other two players go into the attacking half. The defending players can only defend with two. The other two defending players retreat back to their goal until possession is retained or the attacking team scores.

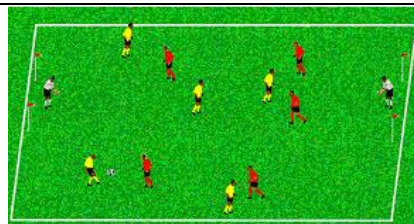
Could make a restriction that the ball played into other half has to be in the air.



1. First touch and importance of cushioning ball
2. Get in line with the ball
3. Select controlling surface early
4. Relax body part at impact.
5. Take first touch away from where pressure is coming from.

6v6 Scrimmage: (30 minutes)

Session should end with a 6v6 match (including goalkeepers) played on a field that is 45 to 60 yards long by 35 to 45 yards wide field size.



Control made easier by early selection, getting in line of flight of the ball, and relaxing body part at impact.