



COACHING TIPS

Knocking It Around To Develop Confidence

Coaches should encourage players to possess the ball. If you have possession the other team can never score a goal.

When coaching players to effectively possess the ball, you should also reinforce some defensive principals.

The restriction of space is a very important defensive principal. Defenders close the space in front of themselves as they approach the player with the ball.

Too often, players with the ball, who really have no place to go, take a touch or two too many and find that they have done the defender's job. The player with the ball has passed or dribbled right into pressure!

Give yourself a break, and allow some space when passing. The easiest pass to make is the one that is made without pressure.

We need players who have the ability to "hold the ball", which means possess it until help arrives. You don't do that by taking the ball into pressure, but rather taking it into space away from pressure. You can do that with a dribble or a pass.

Player's ability to string together passes comes from knowing how to manage the space in front of them. You don't even need the ball at your feet to do that. There is a wise saying in soccer, "***when not in possession, get into position***".

So if you don't have the ball, get yourself in position where your teammate who has it can easily pass it to you. Passing the ball around makes the defense move. That's a good thing!

If the opportunity arises to take a defender on with a dribble isn't there, playing an early pass still moves the defense. It also avoids putting yourself under pressure.

Stringing passes together is also called, "knocking the ball around". By stringing passes together you keep possession. You keep an organized shape for your team, and you develop a confident attitude that you and your team "are in control".

By knocking it around you continue to move the defense, and when you do, you create openings to attack. That's also a very good thing!