



28 July, 2010 issue 170
Under 4s - Under 16s

The Suarez factor

On July 2 Uruguay were playing Ghana in the quarter-final of the World Cup. In the last minute Uruguay's attacker Luis Suarez saved a goal bound shot with his hands. Ghana missed the resulting penalty and Uruguay went on to win the game. Okay, Suarez was cheating, but at least he was in the right place covering the goalkeeper by being on the line, says David Clarke

A tactic to defend the goal

Having players in the right place when you are playing matches is not a matter of luck. Players should always be thinking about covering each other when they are under attack or they have lost the ball.

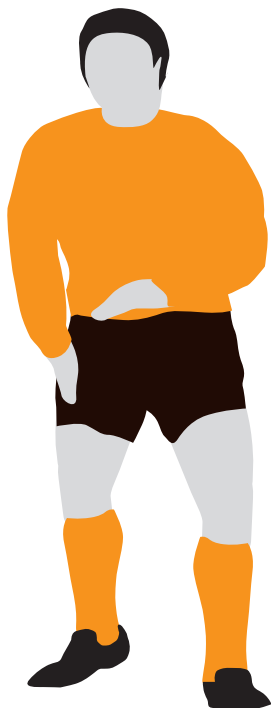
It is a tactic that you need to cover with your team. The most obvious example is when the opposition get a corner you put a player on each post to cover the corners of the goal.

No need to handle the ball

Of course you don't want them to save the ball with their hands like Suarez did, they need to use part of their body other than fouling with their hands – chest, head, thigh or foot.

How to do it

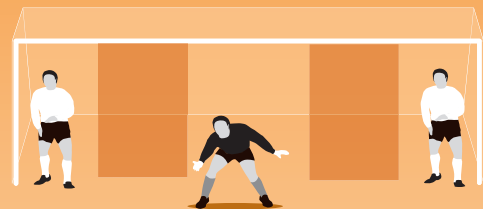
- Players need to have their hands close to their body so any hard hit shot that is fired at them cannot be given as a deliberate handball.
- One arm should be by the side and the other arm can be across the stomach to protect that area.
- Players need to be alert and on their toes ready to react to the ball coming to them.
- Once the ball has been cleared they must be ready to move quickly out of the penalty area



Players blocking on the line



When the corner comes in any shot that goes towards the corner of the goal can be cleared by the player on the line.



When you set up correctly for a corner you will have two players protecting the parts of the goal that cannot be reached by a goalkeeper. This makes it much harder to score.

direction of corner kick ■ ■ ■ ► direction of shot →

so that they can make themselves available to their team mates to pass to, or for the goalkeeper to play the ball to and to stop them playing attackers inside.

Pick out players for the role

- Players should be chosen to cover the posts at the beginning of the season and keep that role for the season.
- As soon as the referee calls a corner the players should know they have to cover the posts.

“Failure happens all the time. It happens every day in practice. What makes you better is how you react to it” Mia Hamm, former USA soccer player, leading international goal scorer



Skills School

Skill 20: Overhead kick (U11s – U16s)

How to score with an overhead kick



Throw the ball up quite high so you have time to jump



Jump up leaving kicking foot on floor arms open wide for balance



Whip your kicking leg off the floor into the ball, cushion fall with arms



Twist body so there is no danger of landing on your back

This skill is all about balance and technique. Get those right and you may have a chance of kicking the ball cleanly. It's not an easy skill to perfect but your players will have a great deal of fun trying to do it. Practice it on soft ground to prevent your players injuring their backs, but don't let them overdo it.

- Players throw a ball in the air.
- Jump up using the kicking foot as a spring.
- Then bring the kicking foot up and hands down to break fall.
- Twist your body so you don't land on your back and use your arms to cushion your landing.



David Clarke's touchline tales

When you coach children it can give you great satisfaction

I've been working with a young group this week on the transition stage between non-opposed and opposed training. You need to spend a lot of time getting players to practice their skills unopposed before they have to do it in competition.

It's always interesting to see which ones can do the same skill they easily do without opponents when they are put under pressure by an opponent. It's not easy for the players because they suddenly have an extra element in their play.

This is your coaching developing the players that are in your team. Without this transition you are relying on your players to do it themselves. Unfortunately this is often a very steep learning curve ending up with them losing matches heavily.

When I first started coaching I didn't understand the develop-

ment phase in coaching children. I didn't coach them to use the skills we had practiced in unopposed play, in games at the end of the session. What I now like seeing in this transition is the effect it has on the players.

Last week we practiced the stop turn and this week I told my players I wanted to see them use it in an opposed game – I wanted them to beat their opponents using the skill they had learned.

It made my day when one of the boys used the stop turn and beat his man. He stopped in amazement and shouted: "Dave, it works!" Coaching doesn't get much better than that.

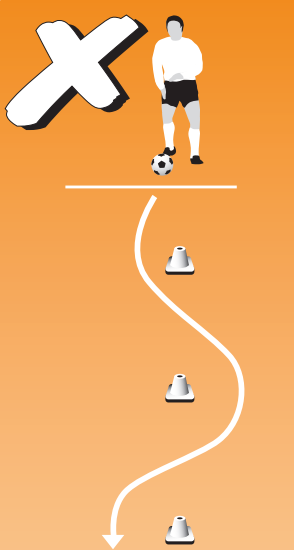
That is what your coaching should be about, making it work for the players in your charge.



Technique

Make it soccer-like

When you're planning sessions for your players take into account their age and ability and make sure even at U6 that you are not boring them with sessions that are not soccer-like, says Steve Watson



Make sure your sessions have more to them than running through cones

The activities you plan to use with your players need to be developmentally appropriate for the age of your children, and it is important that they are 'soccer-like'. In soccer matches players are constantly moving and your activities must reflect that.

Drills that involve players standing in lines or games that involve dribbling around stationary objects are not 'soccer-like' and you should try not to use them. There are plenty of other ways to teach skills.

The wrong way to practice dribbling

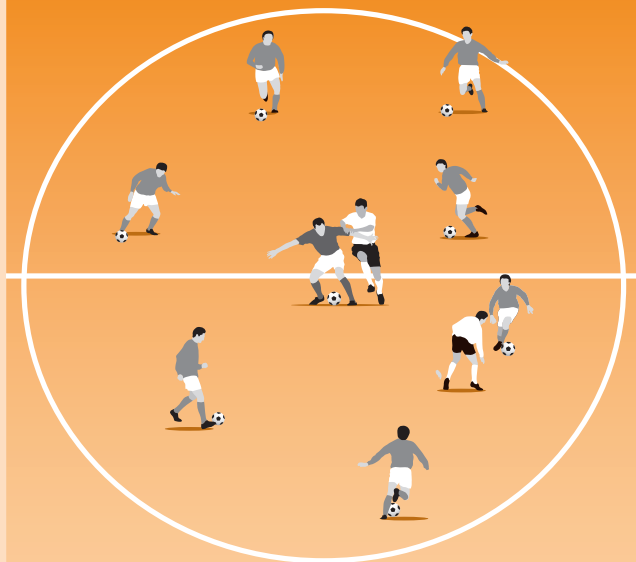
Cone Races

Split your players into two teams and line each team up behind a cone. Place a line of cones stretching about 20 yards in front of them and tell them to take it in turns to dribble round the cones and return to their team. It's boring (standing in lines, yawn...) and not 'soccer-like' (when did you last see a line of cones on a soccer pitch?) Instead use the soccer-like practice King of the ring (right).

Tips on age related exercises

Children up to age of ten may not be able to lock their ankle so it's unreasonable to expect them to kick the ball long distances. Also, very young children (up to the age of about six) lack the cognitive ability to see what is about to happen on the soccer pitch. This is obviously a limiting factor when it comes to teaching young children things like how to

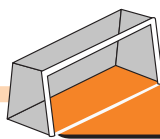
King of the ring



King of the ring

Give all your players a ball apart from two players who are 'it'. Put them in a large grid and tell them to dribble around. The players who are 'it' try to kick the balls out of the grid. Players may retrieve their ball and rejoin the game. It's simple, fun and 'soccer-like'. And remember that not all your players come to soccer practice to learn, some don't want to work hard and some really aren't bothered about competing. But they all want to have fun. So relax, let your children be childish and play lots of games!

attack or defend a corner. You mustn't make the activities too difficult or too easy for them. If you do, your players will get frustrated or bored, and you are likely to have problems with discipline.



Small-sided game

Four goal game

Players in this game have two goals to defend and attack so they have to think about all areas of the pitch and how they can exploit them and stop their opponents doing the same.

Set up

- Mark out a pitch 30 x 20 yards.
- Two teams of four players.
- No Keepers.
- Four mini target goals.
- If the ball leaves play, you or a helper must feed a new ball in immediately.

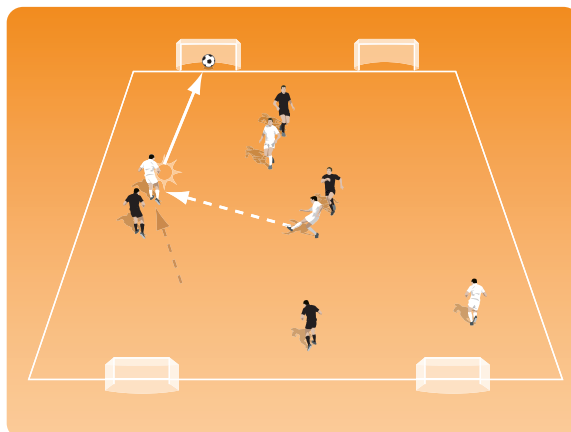
Rules

- The game is played as a normal 4v4 without keepers, but each team must defend two goals and attack two goals.
- The game is played for a set time period.

THE MATCH DAY PLANNER IS AVAILABLE TO
DOWNLOAD AT:
www.bettersoccercoaching.com/MDP.pdf



1. Play 4v4 without keepers, at high tempo with two goals each.



2. Here, the white team pass their way through to score, but...



3. ...can they regroup to defend the quick break?