

# Speed Training With The Ball

One of the major differences the young player will find frustrating as they attempt to make the jump from high school to college and beyond is in the area of speed with the ball. We have all seen the youth player who at 12 years old kicks the ball far down the field and simply outruns opponents to kick it in the goal. That same player is frequently overlooked at the next level because suddenly everyone has caught up in terms of speed, strength, and power.

Most players fail to get out of their comfort zone during training sessions with the ball. Therefore, few develop the ability to run with, dribble, and receive a ball at top speed. Most players need to slow or stop their runs in order to receive a ball that their foreign counterpart at the same age naturally takes at speed. Training in the following activities daily will improve this deficiency quickly. While the directions have a coach helping you perform these activities, you may use a friend, teammate, or parent to achieve the desired results.

## Change of Direction and Acceleration

The most important element in changing direction during fast footwork is to lower your hips (**Flexion**). The head, shoulders, hips move at the same time. As the players turn, they should do a "Paw" step under their hips. Most players will exhibit a "false" step, moving backwards before exploding forward, usually caused by being too upright in their stance. This negative step can be either backward or by extending out too much forward. In changing direction while dribbling, "A lower body is a faster body". Triple Flexion (the proper bending of the hips, knees, and ankles) benefits dribbling with fast footwork.

## Activities:

### 1. Fast Footwork:

This should be trained in three ways:

- Within the comfort zone (slow and smooth).
- Fast as can be done. On the cutting edge of losing control!
- With penetration. This means pushing the ball 5-10 yards out and sprinting after it. A good method of teaching penetration is to put the players in a series of five-yard grids. On the command, they must execute the desired technique, push the ball out of their grid into another and sprint to regain possession, without contacting another player (also increases their awareness of space).

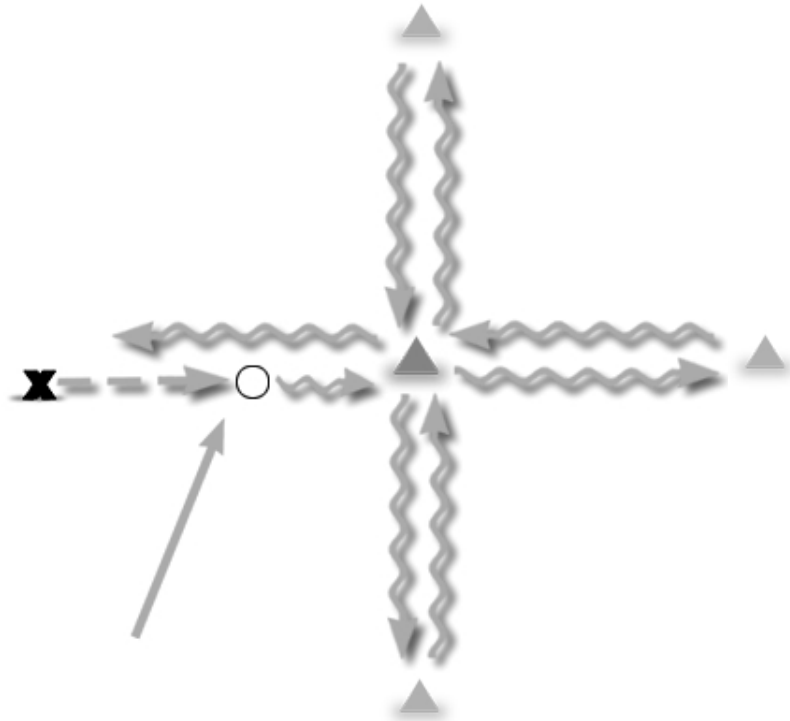
### 2. Speed Wheel with the Ball:

On the coaches' command, the player begins dribbling the ball toward cones, completely stopping at the first cone, second cone, third cone, turning and repeating coming back. The emphasis here is not only on acceleration but also on deceleration. The coach can give the player directions on how to navigate the course, emphasizing stopping, feinting and going to a side cone, acceleration, twisting, turning, and what techniques to use. Here the Three-point flexion is crucial.

A.

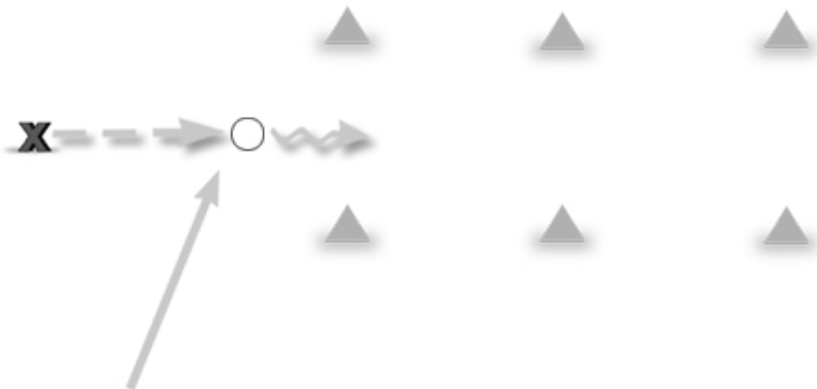


B.

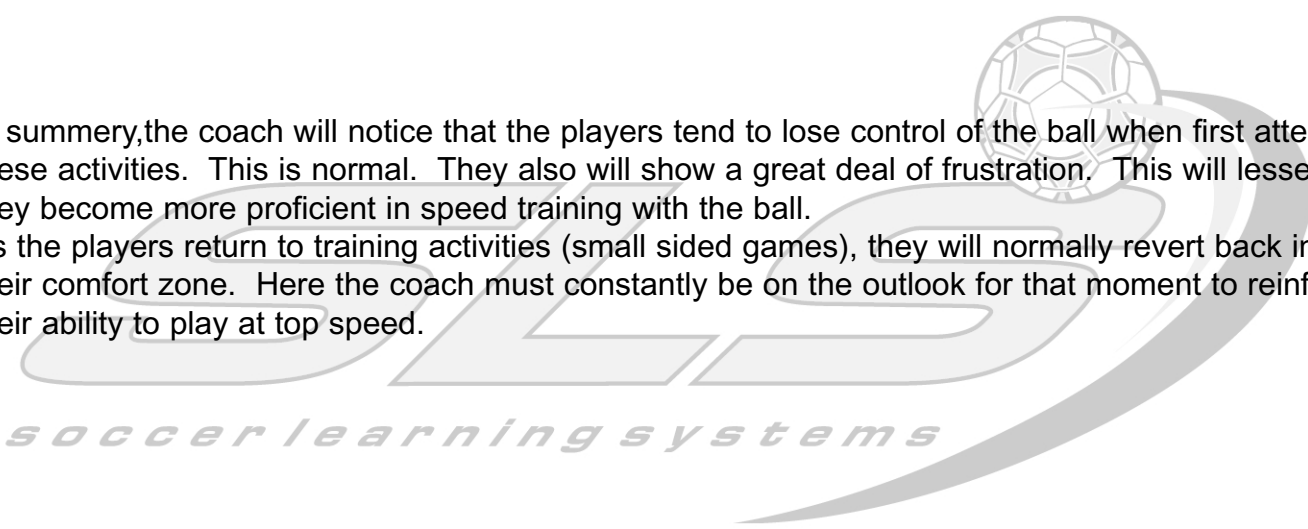


3. **Technique on Demand:**

C.



The course is twenty yards in length between cones for total of 40 yards. The player starts his build-up run, attaining full speed by the first cone. The coach serves a ball into the player's path, the player must control without losing speed and sprint through the designated cones. The coach should give each player a few chances to perform new exercises within their comfort zone. Start with service on ground, demanding each player takes the ball with the left foot, right foot, etc. The activity builds up to bouncing balls and air balls for the thigh, foot, chest, and the head. The coach observes speed, technique, and the proper distance that the ball is played away from receiver on first touch. It will be normal for players to lose control at beginning of activity. The coach is looking for quality, not quantity in this type of training activity. In order to maximize effectiveness; allow the proper work-to-rest ratio. Allow the player to walk slowly back to the starting point after a full-out sprint with the ball. The player completes 10-12 repetitions. Distances between cones should be varied weekly.



In summery,the coach will notice that the players tend to lose control of the ball when first attempting these activities. This is normal. They also will show a great deal of frustration. This will lessen, as they become more proficient in speed training with the ball.

As the players return to training activities (small sided games), they will normally revert back into their comfort zone. Here the coach must constantly be on the outlook for that moment to reinforce their ability to play at top speed.

*s o c c e r l e a r n i n g s y s t e m s*