

## Session Summary

<b>Session:</b>	<b>RUNNING WITH THE BALL PRACTICE</b>		
<b>Date:</b>	-	<b>Coach:</b>	Ian Knapp (ianknappuk@googlemail.com)
<b>Duration:</b>	20 - 30 mins	<b>Equipment:</b>	Balls, cones
<b>#Players:</b>	10	<b>Age Group:</b>	U8 - U17+

## Introduction

This practice gives players a chance to work on the skill of running with the ball, knocking it out of their feet into space and using their pace to progress down the pitch. We start simple, with a focus on the basic technique, then introduce some pressure from a recovering defender to give the players the chance to see how they handle that.

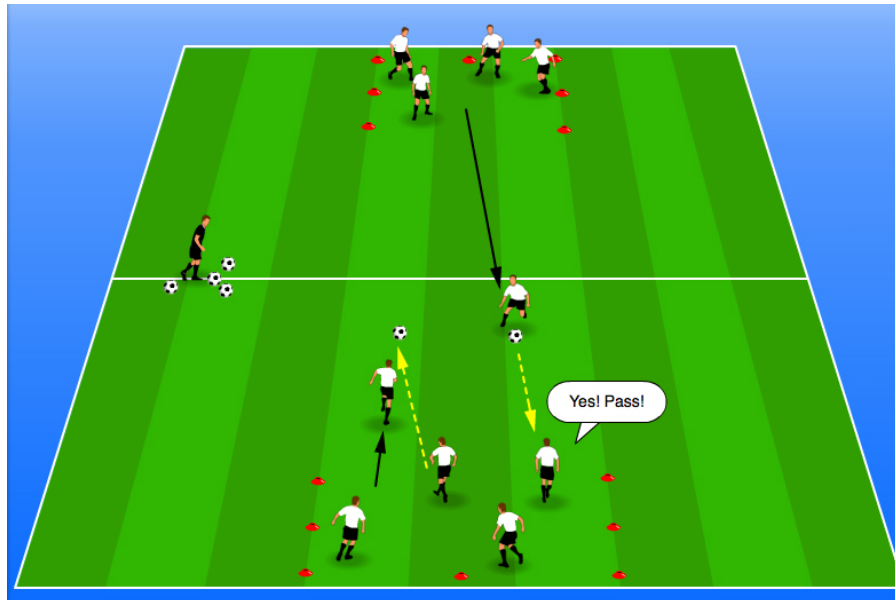
## Setup

- A long, thin area, that allows your players enough length to really practice running with the ball. Vary the length and width depending on the age of your players.
- A coned square at each end of the area. Exact size dependent on number of players. Each square needs to allow half the group space to pass a ball around in.
- Split the group in two - one half in each end square.
- One ball per end square. Coach with more balls at the side.



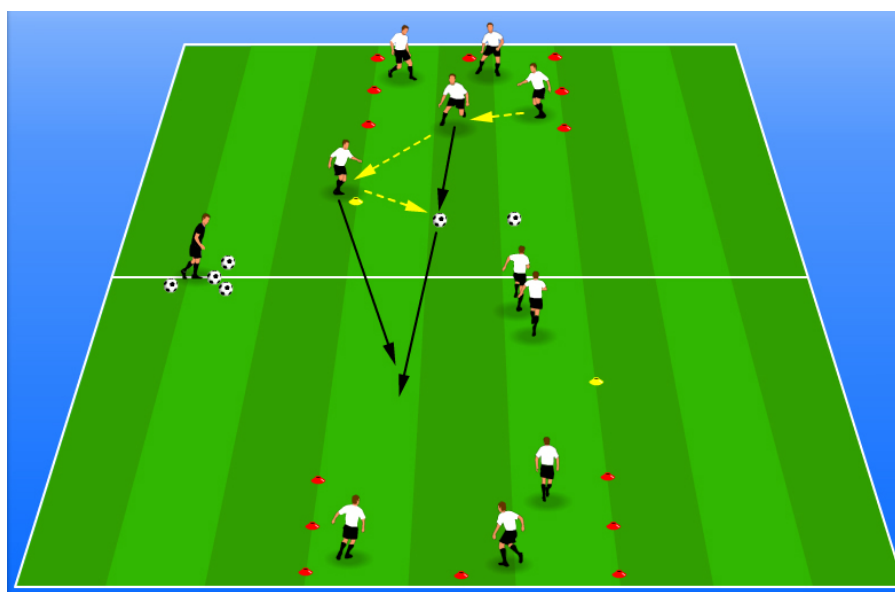
## Rules

- Each group of players passes the ball around their end square.
- When the coach shouts "GO", the player with the ball bursts out of their square, knocking the ball into space ahead of them and using the technique of "running with the ball" (not dribbling - that is a different skill), head for the other square.
- When they get near the other square, the player passes the ball to one of the waiting players and joins them to continue passing the ball around.



## Progression to Add Defensive Pressure

- To add some defensive pressure, we take one player out of each group and start them off to the side of the area just outside the end square (one at each end square). See below for where the defenders start.
- Players pass the ball round as usual.
- When the coach shouts "GO", the player in possession plays a one-two with the "Defender", receives the ball back and runs with the ball toward the other end square as normal.
- The defender chases the runner down from behind and tries to win the ball.
- The ball is passed in to the group in the end square whether it's won by the defender or not and that group continue to pass the ball round, awaiting the next turn.
- The defender joins the group passing round and the runner becomes the new defender at the other end.



## 5 Key Coaching Points / Challenges

- Use your laces to knock the ball out of your feet in front of you and run on to it. Using the laces rather than the instep means you don't have to change your natural running style to control the ball.
- Don't knock the ball too far ahead - if you do that in a match you risk losing it or having it run out of play.
- Don't confuse running with the ball with dribbling. They're different skills that you use in different situations. Dribbling when there is open space to run into may keep the ball but it's slower and allows defenders to catch up with you more easily.
- If a defender is chasing you, cut across their path with the ball. It blocks off their ability to get back and win the ball without fouling you.
- Keep your head up so you can pick that final pass into your team mates accurately.

## Key Coaching Points (FA's 4 Corners)

### Technical

- Use your **laces** to **knock the ball out of your feet** so you can keep running without slowing down.
- Distance between you and the ball depends on **how much space you have to run into** and where the opposition is. Don't knock it too far or you risk losing it.
- **Head up** so you can see where you're going, glancing down to check where the ball is when necessary.
- **Accurate passing** and receiving when starting and ending your run.
- **First touch** when receiving to knock the ball into space and start running.
- **Accelerate** into the run and keep your speed up.
- **Cut in front** of the recovering defender to stop them tackling you.

### Physical

- **Speed** - when running with the ball we want to keep our speed up.
- **Strength** to hold off the recovering defender.
- Change of **pace** and **direction** to beat a player
- **Fitness** - this is hard work!

### Psychological

- **Decision making** - when do we run with the ball in a match? Ask the players - why and when do we do this?
- **Awareness** of what's around you? Where is the bounce player / the defender / your team mates to pass to?
- **Confidence** - try things without fear of failure. Be positive and back yourself.
- **Determination** - if things don't go right, try to understand why and have the confidence to have another try.

### Social

- **Encouraging** others - be positive!
- **Teamwork.**
- **Have fun!**