

# HOW TO IMPROVE BALL CONTROL: DRIBBLING

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## DEVELOPING DRIBBLING SKILLS

Dribbling is not simply an activity to get the ball down the field, it is used to play out of a sticky spot, create space and time for the player or his teammates, and to create scoring opportunities. It means running with the ball either away from an opponent hopefully towards the goal requiring speed and control or at an opponent requiring close control, change of speed and direction and using fakes.

### FOR THE PLAYER:

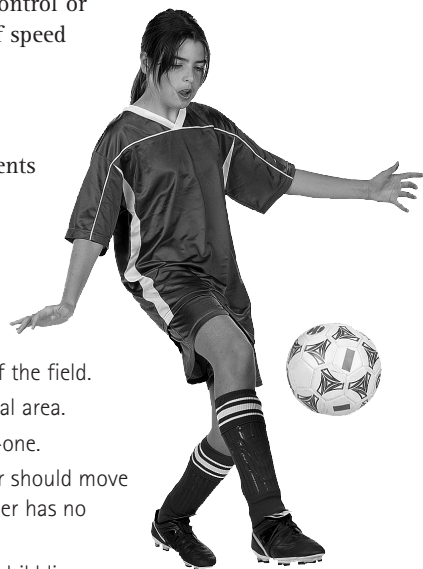
Be aware of other players, teammates and opponents

- Keep the ball close.
- Change your speed.
- Change your direction.
- Fake them out.

### FOR THE COACH:

Practice:

- Reserving dribbling for the attacking third section of the field.
- Avoiding dribbling in the front third of your own goal area.
- Include drills designed to beat an opponent one-on-one.
- Demonstrate that once a dribble is successful, player should move quickly into the space opened up so that the defender has no chance to recover.
- Include drills that develop fakes, feints and tricks in dribbling.
- Include drills to develop shielding skills that will help the player to protect or hide the ball from attacking opponents.



## SHIELDING DRILLS: THE DEFENSIVE SIDE OF DRIBBLING FOR THE PLAYER:

Sometimes your dribbling skill simply does not shake off your opponent or you are caught in an area with little space to move and you must maintain possession of the ball until you can effectively pass it. This requires the ability to shield the ball requiring you to position your body between the ball and the opponent.

How do you shield the ball?

1. Position yourself sideways to the opponent with a wide base of foot support and keep your head up.
2. Keep your body crouched, knees bent, and an arm extended towards the defender to create space
3. Control the ball closely with the foot farthest from the opponent, manipulating the ball with outside, inside, and sole of your foot.
4. Respond to the opponent's pressure using body feints to unbalance them.
5. If you mistakenly expose the ball, quickly get back in the above position, hiding the ball with your body

### FOR THE COACH Practice shielding drill:

1. Set up a 12 X 12 yard area
2. Set up players with a partner (attacker/defender)
3. Players attempt to shield the ball using the above technique within the allotted space for 90 seconds.
4. Players are penalized one point if the ball moves out of the area or control of the ball is lost or the defender pokes it away.
5. Play 5 rounds and switch.
6. Increase difficulty by increasing playing time or decrease playing area.
7. Correct instances of faulty technique by demonstrating proper technique.



For more information on coaching and injury prevention visit the SIRC Sport Library at [www.sirc.ca](http://www.sirc.ca)

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### Resources:

Rees, R., & van der Meer, C. (2003) *Coaching Soccer Successfully*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.  
Luxbacher, Joseph A. (2005) *Soccer: steps to success*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.