

HOW TO IMPROVE BALL CONTROL: SHOOTING by Diane O'Dwyer, SIRC

DEVELOPING SHOOTING SKILLS

Shooting is rarely a skill that a coach needs to encourage the players to practice. Shooting the ball in soccer is the most favorite and most often practiced activity. Yet scoring goals by shooting into the net is the most difficult task in soccer. The ability to shoot powerfully, accurately and with speed with either foot is essential.

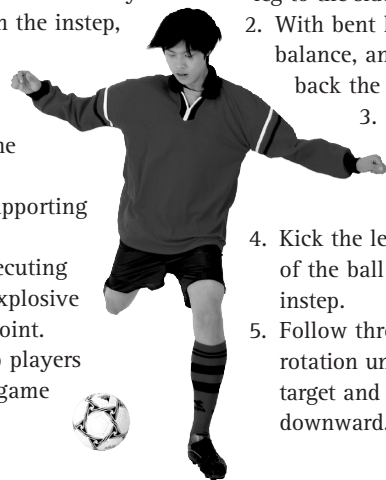
FOR THE PLAYER:

- Approach the ball at a slight angle from behind.
- Lean forward with knees bent and arms at side providing balance.
- Place supporting foot beside the ball, keeping your eyes on the ball and body square to the target.
- Kick the ball hard with the foot pointing down and the leg fully extended.
- The supporting foot will leave the ground and the follow-through motion is toward the target.
- Practice with both feet.

FOR THE COACH:

Practice:

- Ensure players strike the ball cleanly as hard as possible with the instep, keeping the trajectory parallel to the ground.
- Ankle joint muscles must be tight to take the hit.
- A longer hop on the supporting foot increases power.
- Focus should be on executing the shot with a more explosive extension of the knee joint.
- Use drills that will help players transfer these skills to game conditions.



During a game shooting skills are called upon in situations that require a quick and skillful response. Be sure to practice the basic shooting technique in the following situations:

- Shots on the ground
- Shots in the air
- Side-volley shots

TECHNIQUE: THE SIDE-VOLLEY SHOT

FOR THE PLAYER:

1. Face the oncoming ball, lift the kicking leg to the side and parallel to the ground.
2. With bent knees, arms to the side for balance, and eyes on the ball draw back the kicking leg.
 3. Rotate a half turn on the supporting leg, point the front shoulder towards the ball.
4. Kick the leg straight at the top half of the ball and strike it with the instep.
5. Follow through by continuing the rotation until the body is square to the target and the foot moving slightly downward.

FOR THE COACH

Practice scoring from a side-volley drill:

1. Set up a playing area 6-8 yards front and center of a regulation goal.
2. One player holds the ball at waist level.
3. A server stands crossing and tossing a ball to a hitter to side-volley into the goal.
4. Players should practice both the left and right sides.
5. To increase difficulty, increase the shooting distance.
6. If the ball travels over the goal, indicate that the leg must be on an even plane with or above the ball as it is kicked.
7. If the ball is wide of the goal, demonstrate that the rotation of the body should be toward the target.



For more information on coaching and injury prevention visit the SIRC Sport Library at www.sirc.ca



Resources:

- Lennox, James W. (2006) *Soccer skills & drills*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
Luxbacher, Joseph A. (2005) *Soccer: steps to success*, 3rd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
Rees, R., & van der Meer, C. (2003) *Coaching Soccer Successfully*, 2nd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.