

Air traffic control

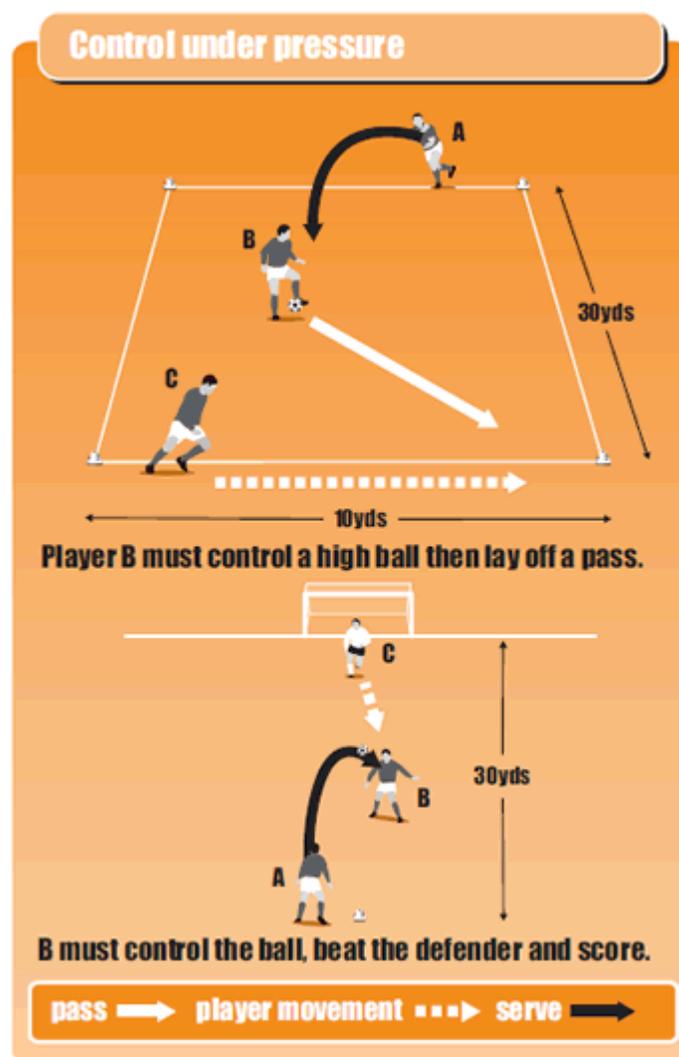
By David Clarke

We've had an unusually wet spring in England and this has made the pitches very soft with long grass and the ball will not roll very well. So the best way to link up play is through the air.

One of the consequences of this is that control needs to be applied before the ball has thumped into the soggy pitch, which kills it dead and gives the opposition a chance to steal it.

If players can control and play the ball first time when it hits the ground, they have more chance of getting the pass away.

Use this simple session with your players to help them control balls coming to them in the air.



Warm-up

Two players throw a ball back and forth controlling it with different parts of their bodies by varying the height they throw it to each other.

Exercise one

- You want to see players taking the ball early without waiting for it to bounce.
- Player A throws or kicks the ball from their hands in the air to player B.
- Player B controls and passes to C who starts in a corner and must run to the opposite corner to receive the ball.
- Player C then controls the ball and picks it up so it can pass a high ball back to B.
- Player B controls the ball and passes to the left corner for A to run on to, and so on.
- When they have done this for six passes (three to A and three to C) A goes to B, B to C and C to A.

Exercise two

- In this game, the player controls the ball with the added pressure of a defender. He must beat the defender and try to score in the small goal.
- Player A throws or kicks the ball from his hands to player B.
- As A kicks the ball, player C starts running to pressure B.
- Player B must control the ball, beat C and score in the goal.
- The exercise restarts with A once the ball has gone in the goal or out of play.
- Change after six passes – A to B, B to C, C to A.