

Attacking volleys at different heights

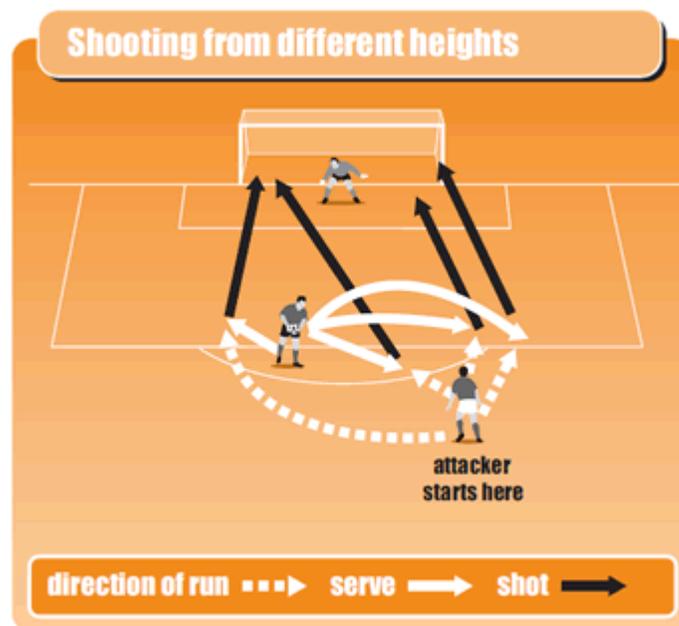
By David Clarke

While watching the Euros Championships group stage match between France and Sweden, I couldn't help but marvel at the winning goal scored by Zlatan Ibrahimovic for Sweden.

Ibrahimovic's volley was hit directly from a corner and was a difficult ball to strike correctly. I went straight out to the training ground and got my players to try doing it.

When an attacker is running into the penalty area, they can receive passes from corners or crosses at different heights. These might demand a first-time volley at goal.

If players wait for the ball to come down to be controlled, it gives the defenders time to cover and block the shot. However, a first-time volley will be more likely to surprise the goalkeeper and defenders, giving them little time to stop it.



In this exercise, you throw a ball in the air for the attacker to run on to and volley when the ball is between waist and knee height (you can vary the height to make it easier (lower) or more difficult (higher)).

You can see four different areas to throw towards in the diagram above, but you can use more or fewer. When players first start, a simple throw at an easy height is best.

The attacker has to either:

- Take a touch then strike at goal.
- Volley the ball first time.

What you are looking for

You should vary the angle of your throw so the ball is arriving from the left or right. This means your attacker must move quickly from their position before gaining control and finishing with a shot.

You need to make your players aware of their own position in relation to the goal and where the goalkeeper is standing.

Key coaching points

- Players must look up to see the position of the goalkeeper.
- They must watch the moving ball closely.
- Their head must be over the ball to keep the volley down.
- They must be alert to any rebounds off the goalkeeper.