

Ball manipulation and familiarity

By Michael Beale

In youth football, you'll always be looking for players to get into their comfort zones, but not at the expense of forgetting to learn new techniques.

This is an extensive warm-up, and one you may wish to perform over two or three training sessions, but it showcases a range of different skills and touches that, if learned properly, will really enhance a player's game.

Communicate the fact that most skills are difficult at first, but they can be perfected over time, and encourage your players to ask for help if they get stuck. They should enjoy trying to master new skills and you'll gain real satisfaction when you see them trying them out for real in a match situation.



How to set it up:

- Cone off a small playing area. Give each player a ball.

Getting started:

- Work your players through the following dribbling exercises.
- The exercises will enable the players to work using various parts of both feet.

- You should be looking for players to swap techniques quickly and smoothly, but don't expect them to master each of the skills straight away. And be willing to offer plenty of practical on-the-spot advice throughout.
- Instruct players to use the ball to showcase the following:

1. Best foot.
2. Weak foot.
3. Inside and outside of best foot.
4. Inside and outside of weak foot.
5. Move around using only the sole of your foot to drag the ball.
6. Dribble around and drop your shoulder and then take the ball in the opposite direction.
7. Inside and outside of best foot followed by inside and outside of weak foot.
8. Inside, outside and then a sole drag with best foot.
9. Inside, outside and then a sole drag with weak foot.
10. Inside, outside and then a sole drag with best foot and then continue with weak foot.
11. Inside, outside, sole drag and then a step-over with best foot.
12. Inside, outside, sole drag and then a step-over with weak foot.
13. Inside, outside, sole drag and then a step-over with best foot, then continue with weak foot.
14. Sole drag x 2 and then a step-over with best foot, then continue with weak foot.
15. Sole and step-over with best foot and then take away with weak foot.
16. Sole and step-over with weak foot and then take away with best foot.
17. Dribble and step across the ball with your best foot, then take away with the outside of your best foot.
Now repeat on your weak foot.
18. Dribble forward and cut the ball with the inside of your best foot behind your weak foot and into space.
Now repeat with your weak foot.
19. Put your best foot on the ball and drag the ball towards your weak foot, now step across the ball, missing it with your weak foot (the Ronaldo move).
20. Dribble the ball with your best foot, make a step-over with your weak foot and immediately step across the ball with your best foot. Now your whole body is the other side of the ball and you take the ball away with the outside of your best foot.