



EAFC Pre-Season Fitness Course – 2010

Coaches Notes:

Introduction

This manual has been designed initially to support the club's pre-season fitness programme. It will also give a basic breakdown of the complex nature of football fitness and assist EAFC coaches in gaining an understanding of football fitness and how to plan and deliver individual sessions and develop those sessions into their coaching programme.

This manual contains a brief background to the different elements of football fitness, a breakdown of the individual sessions for the pre-season fitness course and a comprehensive list of exercises that can be used to develop football fitness.

Purpose

The main purpose of the pre-season course is to provide players with a base level of fitness that can be built on throughout the season. The fitness course will also provide an excellent opportunity for EAFC coaches to gain some knowledge of football fitness and also familiarise themselves with some of the specialised football fitness equipment that we have at the club.

SAQ (Speed – Agility – Quickness)

The fitness course will be predominantly based on the SAQ programme with the added inclusion of various Small Sided Games. The main reasoning for adopting the SAQ programme is that the programme is specifically designed to deal with the complex nature of football fitness.

Players who have completed regular SAQ training have shown specific improvements in the following areas: injury prevention, more high intensity sprints, further distance covered in high intensity activities with a significantly less recovery time, and running, jumping and turning techniques have all been developed. These are all vital components used during the course of a football match.

Stages of SAQ Programme

1. Warm up - Dynamic flex
2. Mechanics of Movement – Technique
3. Innervation – Acceleration
4. Accumulation of Potential AOP (Combination of first 3 stages)
5. Explosion
6. Expression of Potential

Session Structure

It is recommended that an SAQ session be approximately 40 minutes in length. We have added a little extra time during the fitness course to allow the player's to become comfortable with the exercises and the equipment. Once the players are familiar with the exercises you can reduce this time.

Breakdown of Sessions in minutes:

- 0 – 20 Minutes Introduction and Warm-Up
- 20 – 60 Minutes SAQ Programme
- 60 – 80 Minutes Small Sided Games
- 80 – 90 Cool Down and Debrief

How to progress your training programme

The following methods should be used to develop your fitness programme and gradually increase the fitness levels of your players:

Increase

- Frequency of exercises (# of exercises in a given time)
- Intensity of exercises
- Difficulty of exercises
- Length and duration of exercises

Decrease

- Rest & Recovery Times

Periodisation

- Your individual sessions should fit into a systematic long term plan that aims to have the players peaking at the most appropriate stage of the season

Warm-Up (Dynamic Flex)

Dynamic Stretch or Static Stretch?

Traditionally many coaches have used static stretching as part of their warm-up routine. Recently many studies have concluded that static stretching is not only not beneficial (therefore a waste of valuable time) that it is in fact harmful to performance. Alan Pearson states in his SAQ book 'Any static stretching irrespective of the use of dynamic movement is detrimental to performance prior to training or playing'.

It is also worth noting that the warm-up can be a good time to improve the various techniques that are used during the SAQ programme. Warm-ups, like any part of the coaching programme should be developed to include more complex exercises that focus on achieving better training results. It is good to add variety into your warm-ups so that the players are mentally stimulated as well.

What should a warm-up achieve?

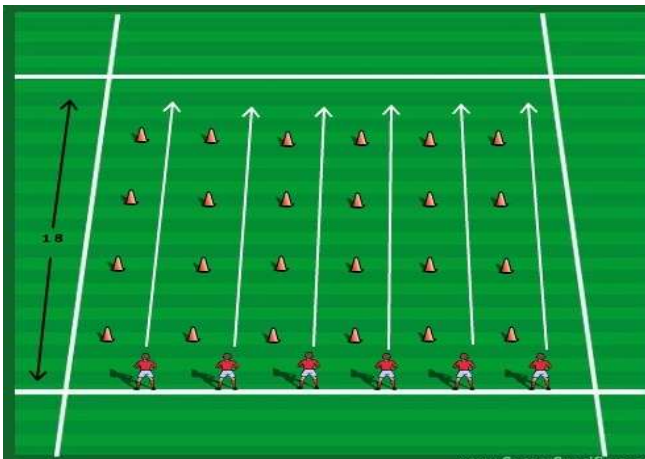
- Increased Body Temperature (Core)
- Increased Heart Rate & Blood Flow
- Increased Breathing
- Active Mental Alertness

Other Key areas that are activated:

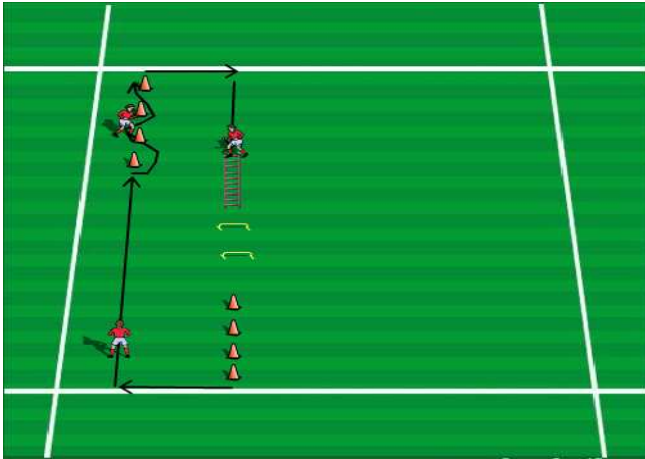
- Increase range of movement (ROM)
- Improve Technique

Grid Ideas for Dynamic flex warm-up

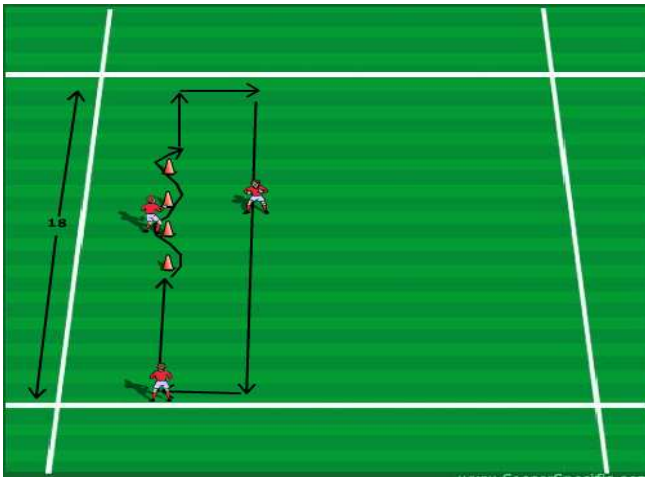
Standard Grid



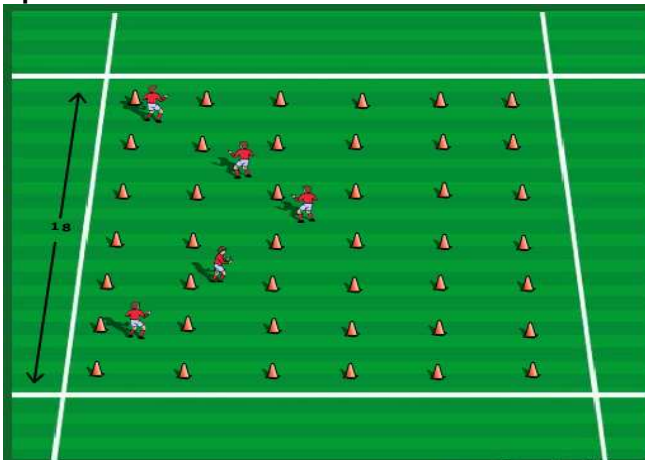
Combination Grid



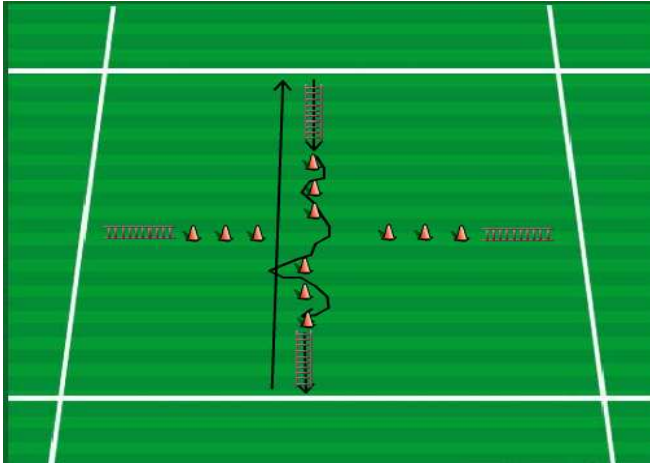
Grid Variation



Split Grid



Multi-Crossover Grid



Dynamic Flex Exercises

1. Arm Roll & Jog

Description

Players cover the length of the grid by jogging forwards & Backwards, rolling their arms forwards so that they move from below the waist to above the head in a rolling motion

Key Teaching Points

- The arms should be slightly bent
- Keep off the heels
- Maintain an upright posture

2. Ankle Flicks

Players cover the length of the grid in a skipping motion where the balls of the feet plant, then flick up towards the shin. The player should move in a rhythmic, bouncing manner. The player then returns to the start by repeating the drill backwards

Key Teaching Points

- Work off the balls of the feet, not the toes
- Practice the first few steps on the spot before moving off
- Maintain correct arm mechanics
- Maintain an upright posture

3. Small Skips

Players cover the length of the grid in a low skipping motion, and then return to the start by repeating the drill backwards

Key Teaching Points

- Raise the knees to an angle of about 45 – 55 degrees
- Work off the balls of the feet
- Maintain, correct arm mechanics, upright posture & a good rhythm

4. Wide Skips

Players cover the length of the grid by skipping. The feet should remain wider than shoulder-width apart and the knees should face outwards at all times. The player then returns to the start by repeating the drill backwards.

Key Teaching Points

- Keep off heels
- Maintain correct arm mechanics and upright posture
- Do not take the thigh above a 90-degree angle

5. Single-Knee Dead Leg Lift

Players cover the length of the grid by quickly bringing the knee of one leg up to a 90 degree angle. The other leg should remain as straight as possible with a very short lift away from the ground throughout the movement. The ratio should be 1:4 one lift to every four steps. Work one leg on the way down the grid and the other on the return

Key Teaching Points

- Do not raise the knee above a 90-degree angle
- Strike the floor with the ball of the foot
- Keep the foot facing forwards
- Maintain correct running mechanics

6. High Knee Lift Skip

Players cover the length of the grid using a high skipping motion, then return to the start by repeating the drill backwards

Key Teaching Points

- The thigh should be taken past 90 degrees
- Work off the balls of the feet
- Maintain a strong core, up right posture and correct arm mechanics
- Control the head by looking forward at all times

7. Knee across Skip

Players cover the length of the grid in a skipping motion where the knee comes across the body, then returns to the start by repeating the drill backwards

Key Teaching Points

- Do not force an increased ROM
- Work off the balls of the feet
- Maintain a strong core and upright posture
- Control the head by looking forwards at all times
- Use the arms primarily for balance

8. Lateral Running

Players cover the length of the grid with short lateral steps, leading with the left shoulder, then return with the opposite shoulder leading

Key Teaching Points

- Keep the hips square

- Work off the balls of the feet
- Do not skip or let the feet cross-over
- Maintain an upright posture
- Do not sink into the hips or fold at the waist
- Do not over-stride-use short sharp steps
- Maintain correct arm mechanics

9. Knee-Out Skip

Players cover the length of the grid in a skipping motion. The knee moves from the centre of the body to a position outside the body before returning to the central position. The player then returns to the start by repeating the drill backwards

Key Teaching Points

- Feet start facing forwards and move outwards as the knee is raised
- Work off the balls of the feet
- The knee should be pushed, not rolled, out and back
- Maintain correct arm mechanics
- The movement should be smooth, not jerky

10. Pre-Turn

Players cover the length of the grid by performing lateral movement. The heel of the back foot is moved to a position almost alongside the lead foot. Just before the feet come together, the lead foot is moved away sideways. Return to the start by repeating the drill, but lead with the opposite foot.

Key Teaching Points

- The back foot must not cross the lead foot
- Work off the balls of the feet
- Maintain an upright posture and correct arm mechanics
- Do not sink into the hips or fold at the waist
- Do not use a high knee lift; the angle should be no more than 45 degrees

11. Russian Walk

Players cover the length of the grid by performing a walking march with extended step. Imagine that the aim is to scrape the sole of shoes down the front of a door or a fence

Key Teaching Points

- Lift the knee before extending the leg
- Work off the balls of the feet
- Try to keep off the heels, particularly on the back foot
- Keep the hips square
- Pull the toes of the extended leg towards the shin so that they are vertical

12. Walking Lunge

Players cover the length of the grid by performing a walking lunge. The front leg should be bent with a 90 degree angle at the knee and the thigh in a horizontal position. The back leg should also be bent at a 90 degree angle, but with the knee touching the ground and thigh in a vertical position. During the lunge the player brings both arms above the head to activate the core muscles. Return to the start by repeating the drill backwards

Key Teaching Points

- Keep the hips square
- Maintain a strong core and keep upright
- Maintain good control
- Persevere with backwards lunges – they are difficult to master
- Keep the trunk in an upright position

13. Side Lunge

Players cover the length of the grid by performing lateral lunges: take a wide step and simultaneously lower the gluteals towards the ground. Return to the start leading with the opposite shoulder

Key Teaching Points

- Do not bend at the waist or lean forwards
- Try to keep off the heels
- Maintain a strong core and keep upright
- Use the arms primarily for balance

14. Hurdle Walk

Players cover the length of the grid by walking in a straight line and lifting alternate legs as if going over high hurdles, then return to the start by repeating the drill backwards

Key Teaching Points

- Try to keep the body square as the hips rotate
- Work off the balls of the feet
- Maintain an upright posture
- Do not sink the hips or bend over at the waist
- Imagine that you are actually stepping over a barrier

15. Walking Hamstring

Players cover the length of the grid by extending the lead leg heel-first onto the ground, rolling onto the ball of the foot and sinking into the hips, keeping the spine upright. Walk forwards and repeat on the opposite leg; continue in this manner, alternating the lead leg. For comfort, cross the arms

Key Teaching Points

- Keep the spine straight
- Do not bend over
- Control the head by looking forwards at all times
- Work at a steady pace; do not rush
- Hamstring Buttock Flicks
- Players cover the length of the grid by moving forwards using alternating leg flicks, where the heel moves up towards the buttocks, then returns to the start by repeating the drill backwards

16. Hamstring Buttock Flicks

Players cover the length of the grid by moving forwards using alternating leg flicks, where the heel moves up towards the buttocks, then returns to the start by repeating the drill backwards

Key Teaching Points

Start slowly and gradually increase the tempo
Work off the balls of the feet

Maintain an upright posture
Do not sink into the hips
Try to develop a rhythm

17. Carioca

Players cover the length of the grid by moving laterally. The rear foot crosses in front of the body and then moves around to the back. Simultaneously, the lead foot does the opposite. The arms also move across the front and back of the body

Key Teaching Points

- Start slowly and gradually increase the tempo
- Work off the balls of the feet
- Keep the shoulders square
- Do not force the ROM
- Use the arms primarily for balance

18. Wall Drills - Leg Out and across the Body

Players face and lean against a wall or a fence at a 20-30 degree angle and swing one leg across the body from one side to the other. Repeat on the other leg. You may also use another player as support

Key Teaching Points

- Do not force an increased ROM
- Work off the ball of the support foot
- Lean with both hands against the wall/fence
- Keep the hips square
- Do not look down
- Gradually increase the speed of the movement

19. Linear Leg Forwards and Back

Players face and lean against a wall or a fence at a 20-30 degree angle or use another player as support, take the leg back and swing it forwards in a linear motion along the same plane. Repeat with the other leg

Key Teaching Points

- Do not force an increased ROM
- Work off the ball of the support foot
- Lean with both hands against the wall/fence
- Do not look down
- Gradually increase the speed of the movement

Sets & Reps

- 7-10 on each leg: Work one leg then the other

20. Knee across the Body

Players face and lean against a wall or a fence at a 20-30 degree angle or use another player as support, and from a standing position, drive one knee upwards and across the body. Repeat with the other leg

Key Teaching Points

- Do not force an increased ROM

- Work off the ball of the support foot
- Lean with both hands against the wall/fence
- Do not look down
- Gradually increase the speed of the movement
- Keep the hips square
- Imagine you are trying to get your knee up and across the body to the opposite hip

Sets & Reps

- 7-10 on each leg: Work one leg then the other

21. Pair Drills – Lateral Pair Runs

Players face each other approximately 1 metre apart and cover the length of the grid by taking short lateral steps. Occasionally, one player can push the other

Key Teaching Points

- Refer to lateral running drills
- When off-balance or being pushed, the focus should be on the reassertion of the correct arm and foot mechanics

Sets & Reps

- 2 X 18 metres: 1 leading with the left leg and 1 leading with the right leg

Progression:

- Introduce the ball: the players pass it hand to hand and then hand to foot

22. Jockeying

Players stand facing each other and cover the grid, working both forwards and backwards. The player moving forwards (attacker) will show the left shoulder and then the right shoulder alternately in a rhythmic motion. The player moving backwards (defender) covers the attacking player by reversing the movements

Key Teaching Points

- Take short steps
- Do not cross the feet
- Maintain a strong core and upright posture
- Do not sink into the hips
- Keep the eyes on the opponent at all times

Sets & Reps

- 2 X 18 metres: 1 leading with the left leg and 1 leading with the right leg

Progression

- Introduce the ball to the attacking player alternatively moving it from right to left leg.

23. Selection of Sprints

Players sprint one way only, and then perform a jog-back recovery back down the grid. Players should start from different angles, e.g. side on, backwards etc... and accelerate into a forward running motion down the grid

Key Teaching Points

- Maintain good running mechanics
- Ensure that the players alternate the lead foot

Sets and reps

- 1 set of 5 sprints

Progressions

- Include swerving
- Include turns in the sprints

Mechanics of Movement

Traditionally it has been thought that players were either fast or not and that players either had it in their genetic make-up to be fast or didn't. However, recent studies have proven that all players no matter how fast or slow they are can in fact develop their running technique and thus improve their overall speed. Alan Pearson states 'All players, whatever their age, can improve their speed and acceleration by using and practising the correct running mechanics'.

Below is a brief outline of the basic mechanics in the different stages of running, followed by a selection of exercises designed to improve those running mechanics.

Technique

- Arm Movement
- Lift Mechanics
- Posture
- We need to be careful that we don't focus on producing sprinters

Key Equipment

- Hurdles

Arm Mechanics

Good running form for football is not all about leg work. Power and balance come from the upper body, so encourage the following techniques in your players:

- Elbows should be bent at a 90-degree angle
- Hands & shoulders should be relaxed
- The inside of the wrist should brush against the hips
- The hands should move from the buttock cheeks to the chest or head

Lift Mechanics

- Football is multi-sprint, stop and start sport, so the first phase of acceleration and re-acceleration is crucial
- Look and listen for the following in a player's initial acceleration strides:
 - 45-degree knee lift
 - Knees coming up in a vertical line
 - Front of the foot staying in a linear (forward facing) position
 - One the lift, the foot will transfer from pointing slightly down to pointing slightly up
 - If the foot or the knee splays in or our out, this means that the power will not be transferred correctly
 - Foot-to-floor contacts with the ball of the foot
 - Keep off the heels
 - Foot-to-floor contact makes a tapping noise, not a thud or a slap

Running Starting Position

Feet Position

- Shoulder width apart
- On the ball of the foot
- Straight, linear

Arms

- Held at 90 degrees at the elbow
- One forwards, one back

- Relaxed
- Hips
- Need to be high or tall and slightly forwards
- Head Position
- Held High
 - Eyes Forward

Running Acceleration Phase

- Hands
- Fingertips gently touching thumb tip
- Arm Action
- Fast
 - 90 degree angle at elbow
 - Hand above shoulder
 - One forwards, one back behind hips
- Arm Drive
- Chin to waist
 - Wrist or hand firm
- Head
- Held High
 - Kept up
 - Eyes forwards
- Body Position
- Tall
 - Strong
- Foot Action
- Active – Plantar flex (toe down); dorsi-flex (toe up)
 - Heels Raised
- Hips
- Tall
 - Square
 - Up/forwards
 - Firm
 - Still
- Knees
- Linear
 - Below waist
 - Foot just off ground
 - Drive forwards

After Acceleration

- Stride Length
- Medium for individual
- Stride Frequency
- Balanced for individual
- Arm Action
- Fast
 - 90 degree angle at elbow
 - Hand goes from above shoulder to behind hips
- Arm Drive
- Chin to waist
 - Head

- Held high, kept up
 - Eyes forward
- Body Position
- Trunk
 - Tall
- Foot Action
- Active Toe down & Toe up
 - Lateral Stepping
- Foot Action
- Work off the balls of the feet
 - Feet shoulder width apart
 - Drive off trailing foot
- Hips
- Firm
 - Controlled
 - Square
 - High
- Arms
- 90 degree arm drive
 - Fast & strong
- Trunk
- Strong & firm
 - Slight lean forward
- Deceleration
- Arms
 - 90 degree angle
 - Increase speed of drive on deceleration
- Feet
- Shorten stride to smaller steps
- Head
- Slightly raised above horizontal plane
 - Eyes up
- Hips
- leant back
- Trunk
- Brought up right
- Heels
- Weight transferred to heel
 - Heel first to hit the ground

Mechanics of Movement Exercises

1. Arm Mechanics

Player stands with a partner behind him. The partner holds the palms of his hands in line with the player's elbows, fingers pointing upwards. The player fires the arms as if sprinting, so that the elbows 'smack' into the partner's palms

Key Teaching Points

- The arms should not move across the body
- The elbows should be at a 90 degree angle
- The hands and shoulders should be relaxed
- The insides of the wrists should brush against the hips

- Ensure that the player performs a full ROM – the hands should move from the buttock cheeks to the chest or head
- Encourage speed of movement to hear the ‘smack’

Sets & Reps

- 3 sets of 16 reps with a 1-minute recovery between each set

2. Buttock Bounces

Player sits on the floor with his legs straight out in front and fires the arms rapidly in short bursts. The power generated should be great enough to raise the buttocks off the floor in a bouncing manner

Key Teaching Points

- The arms should not move across the body
- The elbows should be at a 90 degree angle
- The hands and shoulders should be relaxed
- The insides of the wrists should brush against the hips
- Ensure that the player performs a full ROM – the hands should move from the buttock cheeks to the chest or head
- Encourage speed of movement to hear the ‘smack’

Sets & Reps

3 sets of 6 reps – each rep is 6-8 explosive arm drives- with a 1-minute recovery between each set

Running Form

The following exercises require 8 V Hurdles placed 0.5 metres apart in a straight line

3. Single Dead-Leg Run

Player must keep the outside leg straight in a ‘locked’ position. The inside leg moves over the obstacles in a cycling motion while the outside leg swings along just above the ground.

Key Teaching Points

- Bring the knee of the inside leg up to just below 90 degrees
- Point the toes upwards
- Bring the inside leg back down quickly between the Hurdles
- Increase the speed of the movement once the technique has been mastered
- Maintain correct arm mechanics
- Maintain an upright posture and a strong core
- Keep the hips square and stand tall

Sets & Reps

1 Set of 6 reps, 3 leading off the left leg and 3 leading off the right leg

4. Pre-Turn

Player moves sideways along the line of hurdles, just in front of them (i.e. not travelling over them). The back leg (following leg) is brought over the hurdle to a position slightly in front of the body so that the heel is in line with the toe of the leading foot. As the back foot is planted, the leading foot moves away. Repeat the drill with the opposite leg leading

Key Teaching Points

- Stand tall and do not sink into the hips
- Do not allow the feet to cross over
- Keep the feet shoulder-width apart as much as possible
- The knee lift should be no greater than 45 degrees
- Maintain correct arm mechanics and an upright posture
- Keep the hips and shoulders square
- Work both the left and right sides

Sets & Reps

1 set of 6 reps, 3 leading with the left leg and 3 leading with the right leg

5. Leading Leg Run

Player runs down the line of the hurdles, crossing each one with the same leg. The aim is to just clear the hurdles. Repeat the drill using the opposite leg as a lead

Key Teaching Points

- The knee lift should be no more than 45 degrees
- Use short, sharp steps
- Maintain strong arm mechanics and an upright posture
- Stand tall and do not sink into the hips

Sets & Reps

1 set of 6 reps, 3 leading with the left leg and 3 leading with the right leg

6. Lateral Side Step Development

Player steps over each hurdle, moving sideways

Key Teaching Points

- Bring the knee up to just below 45 degrees
- Do not skip sideways – step!
- Push off from the back foot; do not pull with the lead foot
- Maintain an upright posture
- Keep the hips square
- Do not sink into the hips

Sets & Reps

1 Set of 6 reps, 3 leading with the left shoulder and 3 leading with the right shoulder

7. Lateral Angled Step Development

Place 8 V Hurdles side on 1 metre apart and staggered laterally.

Description

Work in groups of 3. Player 1 works inside the channel created by the hurdles, stepping over each hurdle with one foot as he moves laterally down and across the channel. On stepping over the outside hurdle a ball is passed to him, to be returned to player 2 who is situated on that side of the hurdles. This action is then repeated on the opposite side with player 3. After receiving the ball, players 2 and 3 walk backwards into position, ready for the next time player 1 steps over the outside hurdle

Key Teaching Points

- Bring the knee up to a 45 degree angle over the hurdle
- Do not stride across the hurdles
- Maintain a correct arm mechanics and a strong arm drive
- Keep the hips square
- Do not sink into the hips

Sets & Reps

2 Sets of 6 reps with a walk back recovery between reps and a 2 minute recovery between sets

Jumping

8. Multiple Hops & Jumps

Place 6 – 8 V Hurdles at 0.5 metre intervals in a straight line

Description

Player jumps over each hurdle in quick succession until all the hurdles have been cleared, then walk back to the start and repeat the drill

Key Teaching Points

- Use quick, rhythmic arm mechanics
- Do not sink into the hips at the take off and landing phases
- Land and take off from the balls of the feet
- Stand tall and look straight ahead
- Maintain control Start slowly and gradually built up speed

Sets & Reps

2 sets of 6 reps, with a 1 minute recovery between each set

Variations

1. Perform lateral jumps
2. Perform jumps with a 180 degree twist
3. Perform two jumps forward and one back

Running Form

9. Stride Frequency & Length

Area should be 35 metres in length. Place 12 coloured markers at different intervals on the ground in a straight line (the intervals will be determined by the size and age of the group you are working with)

Description

Starting 18 metres away from the first stick, the player accelerates towards the first marker and, on reaching it, steps just over it. The player then continues with a measured stride frequency and length, as dictated by the sticks. On leaving the last stick or cane the player gradually decelerates. Return to the start and repeat the drill

Key teaching points

- Do not over stride
- Work off the balls of the feet

- Try to develop and maintain a rhythm
- Keep the eyes and head up, as if you are looking over a fence
- Maintain correct running mechanics upright posture
- Stay focused

Sets & Reps

1 set of 4 reps

Innervation

Innervation is the transition stage from warm-up and mechanics to periods of high-intensity work that activate the neural pathways. By using fast foot ladders, dance-like patterns such as twists, jumps and turns are all introduced, increasing the rate of firing in the neuromuscular system

Developing complex sequence of movements

Fast Feet, Agility, Co-Ordination, Dynamic Balance and Control for Football

Key Equipment

- Speed Ladders

Basic Speed Ladder exercises

1. Single Run

Players cover the length of the ladder by placing a foot in each ladder space, then returns to the start by jogging back beside the ladder

Key Teaching Points

- Maintain correct running form/mechanics
- Start slowly and gradually increase the speed
- Maintain an upright posture
- Stress that quality, not quantity, is important

Sets & reps, with a 1-minute recovery between each set

2. Fast Foot Crossover

Place 4 ladders in a cross formation, leaving a clear centre space of approximately 3 square yards

Description

Label the ladders A, B, C, D. Players line up at the start of each ladder. Simultaneously, the players at the head of each line accelerate down the ladder performing a single step drill; on reaching the end of the ladder, they accelerate across the centre square and join the end of the queue. They do not travel down the second ladder

Key Teaching Points

- Maintain correct running form/mechanics
- Keep the head and eyes up and be aware of other players, particularly around the centre area

Sets & Reps

3 sets of 6 reps, with a 1 minute recovery between each set

Variations

1. Can add a ball for the players to pass at the end
2. Will need to make the centre area larger (22 metres between ladders)

3. Move & Pass

Player 1 performs fast foot drills down the ladder either laterally or linearly; player 2, standing 2 metres away from the ladder in a central position, feeds the ball into him at different heights, requiring the first player to perform either a foot, chest or head skill to control and return the ball

Key Teaching Points

- Concentrate on good footwork patterns
- Ensure that correct technical skills are used when controlling and returning the ball
- Ensure that the player performing the drill returns to correct running form/mechanics after returning the ball

Sets & Reps

3 Sets of 6 reps, with a 1-minute recovery between each set

A Selection of Fast Foot Exercises

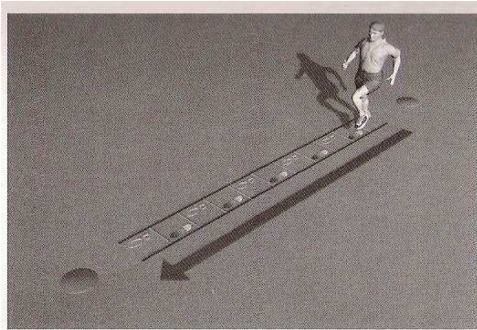


Figure 3.1(a) Fast Foot Ladder – single run

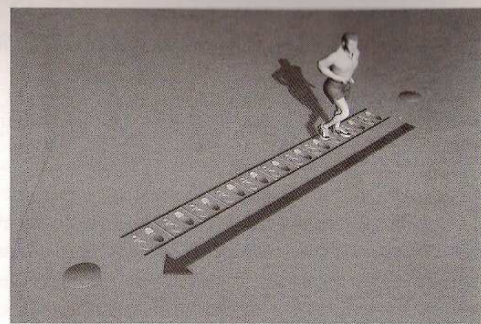


Figure 3.1(b) Fast Foot Ladder – single lateral step

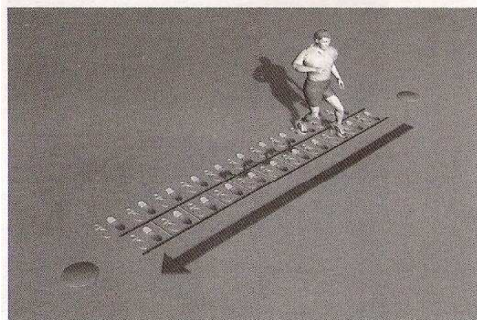


Figure 3.1(c) Fast Foot Ladder – in and out

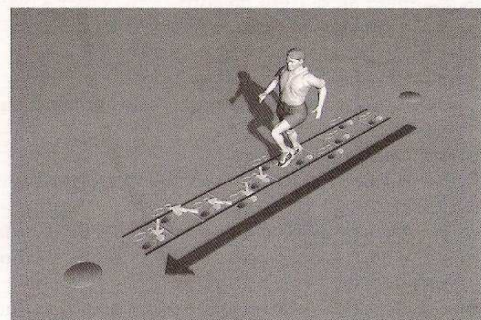


Figure 3.1(d) Fast Foot Ladder – 'icky shuffle'



Figure 3.1(e) Fast Foot Ladder – double run

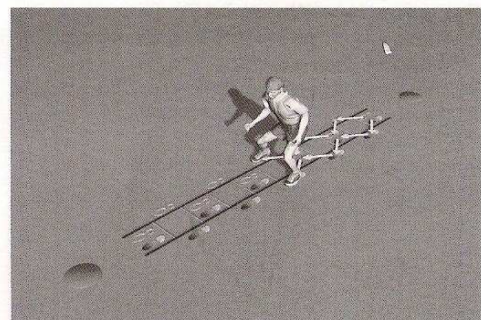


Figure 3.1(f) Fast Foot Ladder – hopscotch

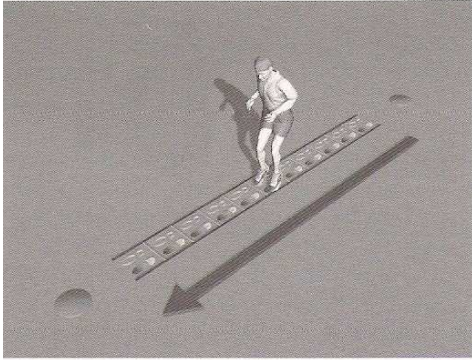


Figure 3.1(g) Fast Foot Ladder – single-space jumps

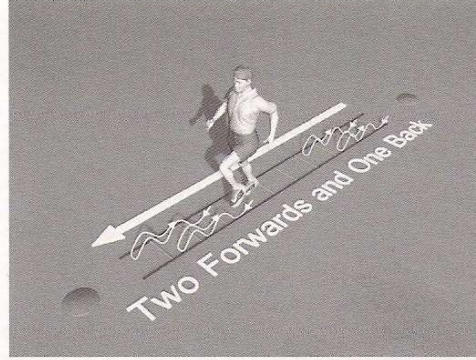


Figure 3.1(h) Fast Foot Ladder – two forwards and one back

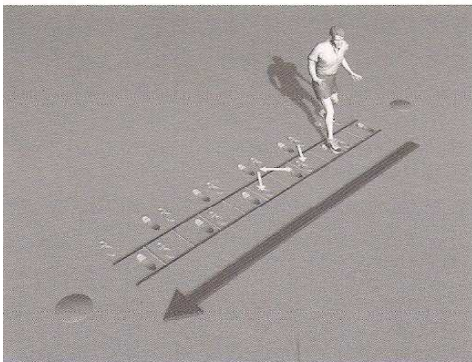


Figure 3.1(i) Fast Foot Ladder – 'spotty dogs'

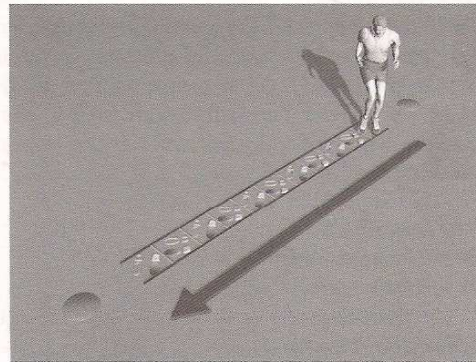


Figure 3.1(j) Fast Foot Ladder – 'twist again'

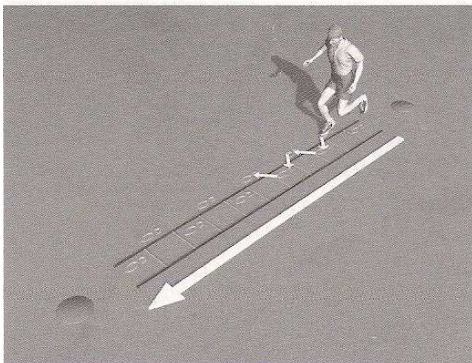


Figure 3.1(k) Fast Foot Ladder – hops in and out

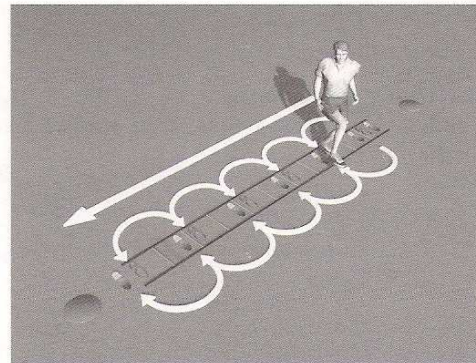


Figure 3.1(l) Fast Foot Ladder – carioca

Accumulation of Potential

This part of the SAQ programme brings together the areas of work (dynamic flex, MOM & Innervation) already practiced. Research has shown that phases of play during a football match usually last for an average of 20 seconds. This indicates that the movements being used are short and very explosive. Ladders, hurdles, mannequins, spiked poles, balls and so on can be used in combination to reproduce specific football activity during this stage.

It is important that this phase should not fatigue players and the specific circuits are designed to last for approx 20 seconds in order to replicate real football activity

1. Swerve Development Run

Set out 8 -12 spiked poles in a zigzag formation. The distance between the spiked poles should be 2 – 4 metres at varying angles. The total length of the run will be 22-25 metres

Description

The player accelerates from the first spiked pole and swerves around the outside of all of the others to complete the course. The player gently jogs back to the starting spiked pole before repeating the drill

Key Teaching Points

- Maintain correct running form
- Work on shortening the steps used in the turn
- Focus on increasing the speed of the arm drive when coming out of the turns
- Ensure that the players take the tightest possible angles around the poles
- Keep the head and eyes up

Sets & Reps

3 sets of 5 reps, with a 30 second recovery between each rep and a 1 minute recovery between each set

Circuits

Each coach should use their knowledge and imagination to design circuits that are specific to the group of players they are working with.

An example of one of these circuits is below:

Combination Runs

Equipment

Place hurdles, fast foot ladders, spiked poles and marker cones in different formations and combinations

Description

Players complete the circuit by performing different drills/skills, e.g. stepping, jumping, swerving etc...

Key Teaching Points

- Maintain correct movement patterns form/mechanics for all activities

Sets & Reps

- 2 sets of 2 reps, with a 1-minute recovery between each set and a 2 minute recovery between each rep
- It is important that each rep does not exceed 30 seconds

Explosion

Explosion is ultimately how quickly you can get your body to move after receiving an outside stimulus. The goal is to boost response time and develop multi-directional, explosive movements.

Programmable and random agility are trained using resisted and assisted plyometrics type exercises. It is important that when using delivering plyometrics exercises level of impact is kept to a minimum especially with young players whose bodies are still growing.

Key Pieces of Equipment

- Chutes, Bungy, Power Speed Resistors, Breakaway Cords

Exercises

1. Seated Forward Get Ups

Player sits on the floor, facing in the direction he is going to run with legs straight out in front. On the coach's signal, the player gets up as quickly as possible, accelerates for 9 metres and then slows down before jogging gently back to the start position

Key Teaching Points

- Try to complete the drill in one smooth action
- Use correct running form
- Do not stop between getting up and starting to run
- Get into an upright position and drive the arms as soon as possible
- Ensure that the initial steps are short and powerful
- Do not over stride

Sets & Reps

3 Sets of 5 reps, with a jog back recovery between each rep and a 2-minute recovery between each set

Variations

- Seated backwards get-ups
- Seated sideways get-ups
- Lying get-ups from the front, back, left and right sides
- Kneeling get-ups
- Work in pairs with one player in front of the other; perform 'tag' get-ups

2. Let-Goes

Player 1 wears the viper belt and attempts to accelerate away in a straight line forwards while being resisted from behind by player 2, who holds the hand leash to provide resistance. Player 2 maintains the resistance for a couple of seconds by shuffling and holding players 1 as they slowly go forwards, before releasing player 1, who explodes away.

Key Teaching Points

- Player 1 should not lean or pull forwards excessively
- Use short steps during the explosion and acceleration phases
- Use a good arm drive
- Player 1 should adopt a good running form as soon as possible after being released

Sets & Reps

3 sets of 5 reps, with a walk back recovery between each rep and a 2 minute recovery between each set

3. Chair Get Ups

Player sits on the chair or portable box and, on the coach's signal, gets up and moves to the nominated marker as quickly as possible. On reaching the marker the player should decelerate and walk back to the start position. N.B If a chair or a box is not available the player may begin in a half squat position with the arms reaching forward

Key Teaching Points

- Use an explosive arm drive when getting up
- Get into a correct running posture as quickly as possible
- Initial steps should be short & and powerful
- Work off the balls of the feet

Sets & Reps

3 Sets of 10 reps with a walk back recovery between each rep and a 2 minute recovery between each set

Variations

- Coach or player stands behind the seated player and throw's the ball over his shoulder. Seated player accelerates out of the chair to retrieve the ball

4. Bungy Runs

Viper Belt with a flexi-cord attached at both ends by 2 anchor points. Place 3 markers spots in a line, 9 metres apart

Description

Working in pairs, Player 1 wears the belt while player 2 stands behind holding the flexi-cord, hands looped in and over the flexi-cord for safety purposes. Player 2 allows resistance to develop as player 1 accelerates forwards, then runs behind maintaining constant resistance over the first 9 metres. Both players need to decelerate over the second 9 metres. Player 1 removes the belt after the required number of reps and completes a solo contrast run. The players then swap roles.

Key Teaching Points

- Player 1 must focus on correct running form
- Player 2 works with player 1 allowing the flexi-cord to provide the resistance
- Always perform the drill once without resistance immediately afterwards

Sets & Reps

1 set of 6 reps, plus 1 contrast run with a 30 second recovery between each rep and a 3 minute recovery before the next drill

5. Out and Back

Viper belt with a flexi-cord attached to 1 anchor point on the belt and a safety belt on the other end of the flexi-cord

Description

Working in pairs, player 1 wears the viper belt; player 2 stands directly behind player 1, holding the flexi-cord and wearing the safety belt. The flexi-cord should be taut at this stage. Player 2

nominates a marker spot for player 1 alternating between the 3 marker spots for the required number of repetitions. Player 1 runs to the nominated marker, and then returns to the start using short sharp steps. Finish with a contrast run before swapping roles

Key Teaching Points

- Focus on short, sharp, explosive steps and a fast powerful arm drive
- Maintain correct running form
- Work off the balls of the feet
- Use short steps while returning back to the start, and keep bodyweight forwards

Sets & Reps

3 sets of 6 reps plus 1 contrast run per set, with a 3 minute recovery between each set. For advanced players depending on the time of the season increase to 10 reps per set

6. Lateral Explosive – First step development

Player 1, wearing the viper belt runs in a zigzag pattern between the markers. Player 2 works along the line between the 2 outside markers, slightly behind player 1 to ensure the flexi-cord does not get in the way of the arm mechanics. Work up and back along the line of markers. On completing the reps, player 1 removes the belt and performs a contrast run

Key Teaching Points

- Maintain a correct running form
- Use Short step when moving backwards
- Keep the hips square
- Player 2 should move along with player 1, concentrating on maintaining the constant distance, angle and resistance
- No skipping
- Push off with the back foot – do not pull with the front foot

Sets & Reps

3 sets of 6 reps (work both the left and right sides; just turn the belt around on the player's waist) plus 1 contrast run per set, with a 3 minute recovery

7. Parachute Running

Mark out a grid 50 yards in length; place 1 marker for the start and 3 further markers at distances of 30, 40 and 50 yards from the start

Description

Wearing the parachute, the player accelerates to the 40-yard marker, then decelerates to the end of the grid

Key Teaching Points

- Maintain correct running form
- Do not worry if the wind and the resistance make it feel as though you are being pulled from side-side; this will in fact improve your balance and co-ordination
- Do not lean in to the run too much
- Quality; not quantity is vital

Sets & Reps

3 sets of 5 reps plus 1 contrast run, with a walk back recovery between each rep and a 3 minute recovery between each set

8. Ball Drops

Working in Pairs, player 1 drops the ball from shoulder height at various distances and angles from his partner. Player 2 explodes forwards immediately and attempts to catch or trap the ball before the second bounce. Distances between players will differ because the height of the bounce will vary depending on the ground surface

Key Teaching Points

- Work Off the balls of the feet, particularly prior to the ball drop
- Use a very explosive arm drive
- The initial steps should be short, fast and explosive
- Do not jump, stutter or hesitate at the take –off
- Work on developing a smooth, one-movement run

Sets & Reps

3 sets of 10 reps with a 2 minute recovery between each set

9. Break Away Mirror

Set a time limit. 2 Players face each other attached by the break-away belt. Player 1 is the proactive player while player 2 is reactive. Player 1 attempts to get away from player 2 by using sideways, forwards or backwards movements. Players are not allowed to turn around and run away. The drill ends if and when the proactive player breaks the belt connection or the time runs out

Key Teaching Points

- Stay focused on your partner
- Do not sink into the hips
- Keep the head tall and the spine straight
- Maintain correct arm mechanics

Sets & Reps

3 sets where 1 set = 30 seconds of each player taking the proactive role, followed by a 1 minute recovery period

Check Booklet for other exercises

10. Assisted Tow Runs

Players 1 and 2 are attached to each other by the viper belt. Player 1 runs away from player 2, who stands still until the resistance is strong, and then is pulled forwards. This acceleration is assisted. Player 1 now decelerates until he feels the resistance from behind diminishes, and then accelerates again under resistance. The process is repeated for the length of the space available

Key Teaching Points

- Maintain correct running form
- Both Players should use a strong arm drive
- Both players should use short steps during the acceleration and deceleration phases

Sets & Reps

2 sets of 6 reps with a 30 second recovery between each rep and a 2 minute recovery between each set

Expression of Potential

This stage is quite short in duration, but very important, as it brings together all the elements of the SAQ programme into highly competitive situations. The key is to get your players to perform fast, explosive, controlled and random movements under competitive pressure.

Many of these games are also excellent warm-up games to use with younger children.

Exercises

1. British Bulldog

One player is nominated and stands in the centre of the grid, while the rest stand at one side behind the start line. On the coach's signal, all of the player's attempt to get to the opposite side of the square without being caught by the player in the middle. When the player in the middle captures another player, he joins them in the middle and helps capture the remaining players.

Key Teaching Points

- Use correct mechanics
- Keep the head and eyes up to avoid collisions with other players

Sets & Reps

Play for approximately 3-4 minutes before moving on to the more technical aspects of the game

2. Robbing the Nest

2 nominated players defend the 'nest' of balls with the rest of players standing outside the outer circle. The game starts when the outside players run in and try to steal the balls from the nest. The 2 defenders try to prevent the robbers from getting the balls to the safe zone by tagging them or getting in their way. For every successful tag and prevention, the ball is returned to the centre circle

Key Teaching Points

- Players should evasion skills (dodge, swerve, weave, side-step)
- Light contact only to used

Sets & Reps

Each pair to defend for approximately 60 seconds

3. Odd One Out

Place a number of balls in the centre area, 1 fewer than the number of players present. The players are situated on the outside of the outer circle. On the coach's signal, they start running round the outer circle; on the coach's second call, they collect a ball from the inner circle as quickly as possible. The player without a ball is out and performs a ball-skill as directed by the coach. The coach then removes another ball and repeats the process until there is only one player left.

Key Teaching Points

- Players should be aware of the other player's around them

Aerobic Endurance

Aerobic endurance is an important element of football as an average player can cover up to 16km in a single game. Improving aerobic endurance is specifically important in the pre-season as this provides the player a platform on which to build other aspects of football fitness.

Traditionally, aerobic endurance has been trained by various types of long distance running. This has either been fartlek, interval, or simply running 10 -20km around a football field. None of which actually include the ball and are very time consuming. While there is no doubt that these types of exercises do improve aerobic endurance, contemporary research shows that they are not necessarily functional to football or simply a good use of limited time.

Conditioned Small Sided Games (S/S/G) are an excellent tool for developing aerobic endurance in football players of all ages. By placing restrictions on the game, the coach can control the level of intensity the players are training (to improve their aerobic endurance players should be working at approximately 80% of Maximum heart rate) and provide the players with situations that give them lots of touches of the ball in real football situations.

The main benefits of SSG's are that the players are actually playing football. They are improving their technique and making split second decisions under intensive game like conditions while developing their aerobic and anaerobic endurance.

Ideas for restrictions on S/S/G

- Lots of balls around the area to prevent long breaks in play
- Dimensions of area
 - Less space can mean the players have to work harder
- Think about how the players can score to keep the game competitive and continuous
 - Number of passes
 - Inside goals – Triangle or standard
 - Pass into a target player
 - Dribble or pass into an end-zone.

Again timing of the games and rest periods is essential if you are to maximise the training.

Think also about the number of players in each team

- 1 V 1, 2 V 2, 3 V 3 and at most 4 V 4
- You can also choose to overload one team in order to force some players to work harder

A ladder system (Winning team/player moves up and the losing team/player moves down) is a great way to include a competitive edge to training thus maintains the intensity in the exercises.

Our training programme below will include plenty of S/S/G's to conclude each session!

Fitness Course – Session Plans

90 Minute Sessions – Tuesday and Thursday 6pm – 7:30pm

Session Plan 1

Warm Up – Dynamic Flex

Time: 20 Minutes

- Choose from one of the warm up grids
- Exercises should move from low intensity/impact to high intensity/impact and should cover all major muscle groups
- Use age appropriate activities

Mechanics of Movement

Time: 20 Minutes

- Partner Drills (3 Sets of 16 reps) 1 Min Recovery
- Buttock Bounces (3 Sets of 6 reps) 1 X Rep = 6-8 arm drives – 1 Min Recovery
- Single Dead – Leg run (1 Set of 6 reps) 3 off each leg
- Leading Leg Run (Same as above)

Innervation

Time: 20 Minutes

- Single Run (3 Sets of 4 reps) 1 Min Recovery between sets
- Choose 3 more exercises from grid (3 Sets of 4 reps) 1 Min Recovery between sets

Small Sided Games

Time: 25 Minutes

- Ball each – various dribbling exercises - 10 Minutes
- 1 V 1 – ladder system – Dribble over end line to score
- 3 Minute games with a 1 minute rest period (can alter time to suit age group)

Cool Down

Time: 5 Minutes

- Dynamic Flex exercises
- Include all major muscle groups
- Move from high intensity to very low intensity

Coaching Points for the Session

- Players familiarising themselves with the equipment & session layout
- Developing basic running technique

Session Plan 2

Warm Up – Dynamic Flex

Time: 20 Minutes

- Choose from one of the warm up grids
- Exercises should move from low intensity/impact to high intensity/impact and should cover all major muscle groups
- Use age appropriate activities

Mechanics of Movement

Time: 20 Minutes

- Single Dead – Leg run (1 Set of 6 reps) 3 off each leg
- Leading Leg Run (Same as above)
- Pre-Turn (1 Sets of 6 Reps) 3 leading with left & 3 leading with right
- Lateral side development (1 set of 6 reps) Same as above
- Quick Side-Step Development (2 sets of 10 reps, 5 to the left & 5 to the right) 1 Min Recovery

Innervation

Time: 20 Minutes

- Choose 3 exercises from the speed ladder grid (3 Sets of 4 reps) 1 Min Recovery
- Crossover (3 sets of 6 reps) 1 Min recovery between each set

Small Sided Games

Time: 20 Minutes

- 2 V 2 Multi-Goals – Dribble through goals to score
- 2 Games on 1 Game off
- 3 Minute Games

Cool Down

Time: 10 Minutes

- Dynamic Flex exercises
- Include all major muscle groups
- Move from high intensity to very low intensity

Coaching Points for the Session

- Continue with developing basic running technique
- Progression should be made to lateral movement technique and more complex exercises in the Innervation stage

Session Plan 3

Warm UP – Dynamic Flex

Time: 20 Minutes

- Choose from one of the warm up grids
- Exercises should move from low intensity/impact to high intensity/impact and should cover all the major muscle groups
- Use age appropriate activities

Mechanics of Movement

Time: 10 Minutes

- 2 X Hurdle Exercises
- 1 Set of 6 reps with a 1 minute rest period in-between sets

Innervation

Time: 10 Minutes

- 2 X Ladder Exercises
- 3 Sets of 4 reps with a 1 minute rest period in-between sets

Accumulation of Potential

Time: 20 Minutes

- Swerve Development Run (3 Sets of 5 Reps) with a 30 second recovery between each rep and a 1 min recovery between sets
- A circuit with 4 different exercises (2 Sets of 2 Reps) with a 1 minute recovery between each set and 2 minute recovery between reps
- Circuit length not to exceed 30 seconds

Small Sided Games

Time: 20 Minutes

- Inside/Outside – each team works for 3 minutes. Both teams go twice
- 2 V 2 – Passing Game – 3 passes = 1 point – first team to 3 points wins
- Alternate number of passes to suit level of players
- Emphasis should be placed on movement off the ball to create passing angles

Cool Down

Time: 10 Minutes

- Dynamic Flex exercises
- Include all major muscle groups
- Move from high intensity to very low intensity

Coaching Points for the Session

- Development should be made from individual exercises to linking a group of different exercises
- Ensure that technique does not drop off as different exercises are linked and length of activity increased

Session Plan 4

Warm Up – Dynamic Flex & MOM

Time: 20 Minutes

- Choose from one of the warm up grids
- Exercises should move from low intensity/impact to high intensity/impact and should cover all major muscle groups
- Age appropriate activities
- Can include hurdles or speed ladders as part of warm-up

Mechanics of Movement

Time: 10 Minutes

- 2 X Hurdle Exercises
- 1 Set of 6 reps with a 1 minute rest period in-between sets

Innervation

Time: 10 Minutes

- 2 X Ladder Exercises
- 3 Sets of 4 reps with a 1 minute rest period in-between sets

AOP

Time: 20 Minutes

- Swerve Development Run (3 Sets of 5 Reps) with a 30 second recovery between each rep and a 1 min recovery between sets
- A circuit with 4 different exercises (2 Sets of 2 Reps, with a minute recovery between each set and 2 minute recovery between reps)

Small Sided Games

- 3 V 3 to target players
- 5 Points wins the game
- 2 Games on – 1 game off

Cool Down

Time: 10 Minutes

- Dynamic Flex exercises
- Include all major muscle groups
- Move from high intensity to very low intensity

Coaching Points for the Session

- Development should be made from individual exercises to linking a group of different exercises
- Ensure that technique does not drop off as different exercises are linked and length of activity increased

Session Plan 5

Warm Up – Dynamic Flex & MOM

Time: 20 Minutes

- Choose from one of the warm up grids
- Exercises should move from low intensity/impact to high intensity/impact and should cover all major muscle groups
- Age appropriate activities
- Can include hurdles or speed ladders as part of warm-up

AOP

Time: 10 Minutes

- A circuit with 4 different exercises
- 2 Sets of 2 Reps, with a minute recovery between each set and 2 minute recovery between reps

Explosion

Time: 20 Minutes

- Seated forward get-ups (3 sets of 5 reps, with a jog back recovery between each rep and a 2 minute recovery between each set)
- Let – Goes (3 Sets of 5 reps) (Timing should be same as above)

Small Sided Games

- 3 V with triangle goals – Pass through goals to score
- 3 Minute games with 1 minute rest between games

Cool Down

Time: 10 Minutes

- Dynamic Flex exercises
- Include all major muscle groups
- Move from high intensity to very low intensity

Coaching Points for the Session

- Ensure technique remains correct as progression is made into explosion
- Look for players to use explosive type movements on and off the ball in the S/S/G's

Session Plan 6

Warm Up – Dynamic Flex – Innervation - MOM

Time: 20 Minutes

- Choose from one of the warm up grids
- Exercises should move from low intensity/impact to high intensity/impact and should cover all major muscle groups
- Age appropriate activities
- Can include hurdles or speed ladders as part of warm-up

AOP

Time: 10 Minutes

- A circuit with 4 exercises
- 2 Sets of 2 Reps, with a minute recovery between each set and 2 minute recovery between reps

Explosion

Time: 20 Minutes

- Ball Drops 3 sets of 10 reps with a 2 minute recovery
- Let Goes (3 sets of 5 reps – walk back recovery between reps & 2 minute recovery between sets)
- Break – Away 3 sets – 1 set = 30 seconds of each player being proactive, followed by 1 min recovery

Small Sided Games

Time: 30 Minutes

- 3 V 3 – End zone – Players score by dribbling into the end zone
- 3 Minute games with a 1 minute rest

Cool Down

Time: 10 Minutes

- Dynamic Flex exercises
- Include all major muscle groups
- Move from high intensity to very low intensity

Coaching Points for the Session

- Look for players using explosive movements laterally as well as forwards & Backwards
- Look for players to use explosive movement when space opens with and without the ball
- Ensure technique is correct in explosion, especially making sure that the upper body is used to drive the players forward

Session Plan 7

Warm Up – Dynamic Flex, MOM & Innervation

Time: 20 Minutes

- Choose from one of the warm up grids
- Exercises should move from low intensity/impact to high intensity/impact and should cover all major muscle groups
- Age appropriate activities
- Can include hurdles or speed ladders as part of warm-up

Explosion

Time: 20 Minutes

- Bungy Runs (1 set of 6 reps, plus 1 contrast run, 30 sec recovery between each rep)
- Parachute Running (3 sets of 5 reps plus 1 contrast run, walk back recovery between each rep and a 3 minute recovery between each set)

EOP

Time: 10 Minutes

1 Group game from EOP section

Small Sided Games

Time: 30 Minutes

- 3 V 3 Game – Can use inside goals, lines, end-zone or outside goals.
- Coach to choose whether to pass, shoot or dribble to score

Cool Down

Time: 10 Minutes

- Dynamic Flex exercises
- Include all major muscle groups
- Move from high intensity to very low intensity

Coaching Points for the Session

- Bring together the various football fitness elements to improve performance in complete games