

Coach Education Series



SSA Coweta Conditioned Games

Researched, Written and Compiled
by



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Preface

The use of conditioned games as a coaching tool is under utilized by many youth soccer coaches. The NSCAA, US Youth Soccer and the USSF continue to highlight the need to let players play without constant coaching. However, it is a common occurrence that you have just designed and planned a session that concentrated on dribbling moves and turns. You finish your session with a scrimmage and straight away, your players start to pass the ball or kick the ball away when under pressure and do not utilize the practice and training you just gave them. This is when the use of conditioned games is an excellent coaching tool as it enables you to manipulate the players to ensure they focus on the topic or skills you are trying to cover. It allows the players to get into a game environment and directs them to work on a certain skill without the coach constantly reminding players or coaching them to do so.

Conditioned Games can be used to develop:

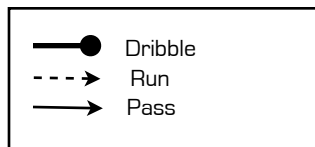
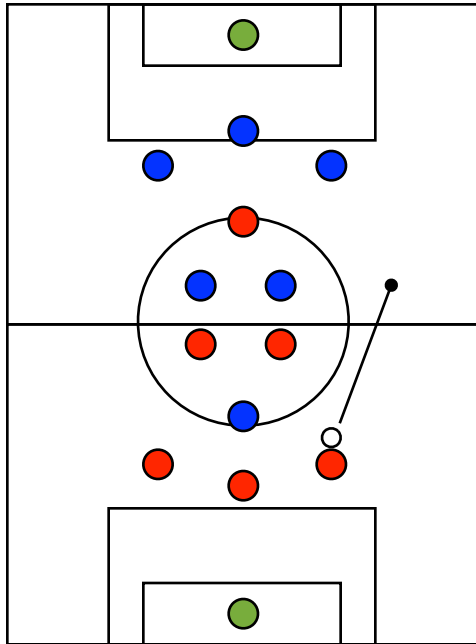
- Turns and moves to beat opponents in 1v1
- Defending 1v1
- Defending man to man
- Passing (technique and under pressure)
- Support (behind and in advance of the ball)
- Quick Play and decision making
- Direct or in-direct styles of play
- Defensive pressure
- First touch
- Finishing
- Fitness

GSS coaches and instructors utilize these games to ensure players work on the right skills whilst playing in a game environment, which is being encouraged more and more by the top instructors and soccer governing bodies around the globe. I hope you enjoy this document and get a new angle or thought process on how to coach players effectively.

Alan Ewing
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Conditioned Games

1. Games to encourage dribbling/ beating players



Conditioned Games

Condition: Players cannot pass forward - they can pass sideways and backwards

Exceptions: Throw-ins, Goal-kicks and free kicks

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/ 30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) A free kick is give to the opposing team if a player passes the ball forward

Coaching Points:

A) Positive mindset - go forward whenever you can

B) First touch into space and attack the opposition

C) Create width and depth to provide space for your self and your team mates to dribble

D) Try to unbalance the defender by using a move or fake

D) Support behind the ball

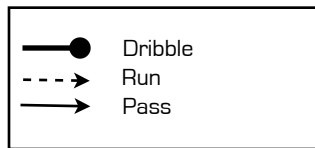
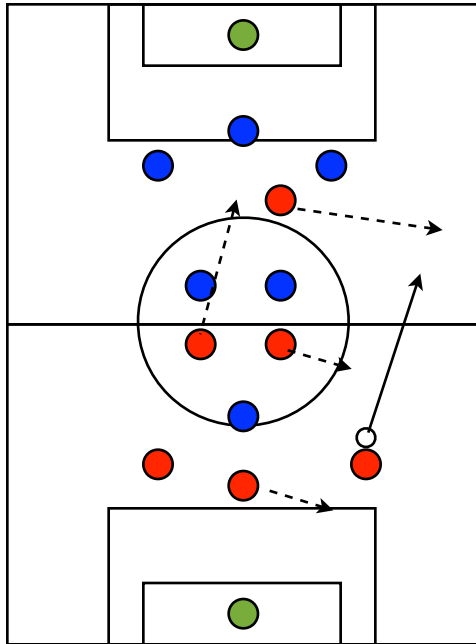
Variations/Add ins:

You can add the condition that a player has to do a move (scissors/step-over etc) as soon as they receive the ball so it encourages quick feet and so moves become second nature.

2. Games to encourage passing

Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages players not to panic and just get rid of the ball and subsequently lose possession
- Develops all 3 types of dribbling:- i) Dribbling for possession ii) Running with the ball & iii) Dribbling to beat players
- Encourage the players to develop their shielding technique
- Encourages the players to become 'attack minded' and develop a positive mindset
- Encourages the players to utilize moves and skills to beat players
- Helps the players identify when to pass and when to dribble
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 attacking Principles of Play
 - Penetration - through dribbling or shooting
 - Width - support and creation of space
 - Depth - support in front of and behind the ball and creation of space
 - Mobility - penetrating runs with and without the ball to unbalance the opposition
 - Creativity/Improvisation



Conditioned Games

3. Games to encourage

Condition 1: Players can not dribble forward - they can dribble sideways and backwards (a dribble is classified as 3 touches forward into space or away from a player) or

Condition 2: Limit the number of touches a player can take to 2 or 3

Organization:

- 1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)
- 2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's
- 3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims
-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc
- 4) A free kick is give to the opposing team if a player dribbles the ball or takes more than the allowed amount of touches

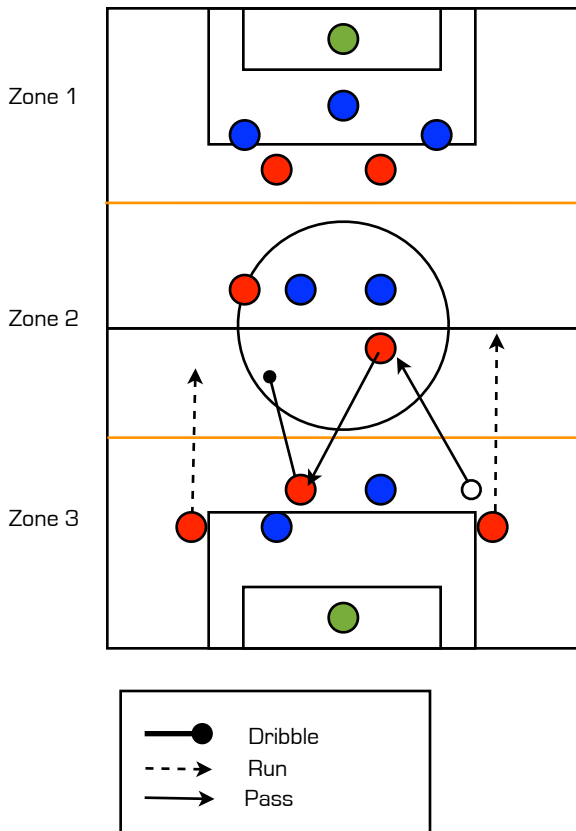
Coaching Points:

- A) Get your head up early - before you receive the ball or immediately after you control it
- B) Support in front and behind the ball
- C) Forward runs
- D) Off the ball movement
- E) Communication - Calling for the ball and putting names on passes
- F) Control the ball quickly

Benefits of this Activity

- Increases the player's awareness and vision
- Encourages players to support in front of and behind the ball
- Encourages attacking runs from the midfielders and forwards
- Encourages 'off the ball', 'blind side' and overlapping runs
- Encourages players to communicate (calling for the ball quickly as the player has limited touches)
- Encourages players to concentrate on their first touch
- Encourages quick play and decision making
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 attacking Principles of Play
 - Penetration - through passing or shooting
 - Width - support and creation of space
 - Depth - support in front of and behind the ball and creation of space
 - Mobility - penetrating runs with and without the ball to unbalance the opposition
 - Creativity/Improvisation

possession and in-direct, patient play



Condition 1: Players can only move between zones if they pass the ball in and then support
and/or

Condition 2: Players can dribble in but if they pass the ball, 2 players can advance

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) 2 or 3 zones marked out by cones

Coaching Points:

A) Get your head up early - before you receive the ball or immediately after you control it

B) Support in front and behind the ball

C) Forward runs

D) Off the ball movement

E) Communication - Calling for the ball and putting names on passes

F) Try to bring as many players into a zone to play numbers up

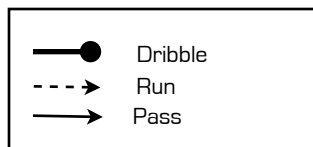
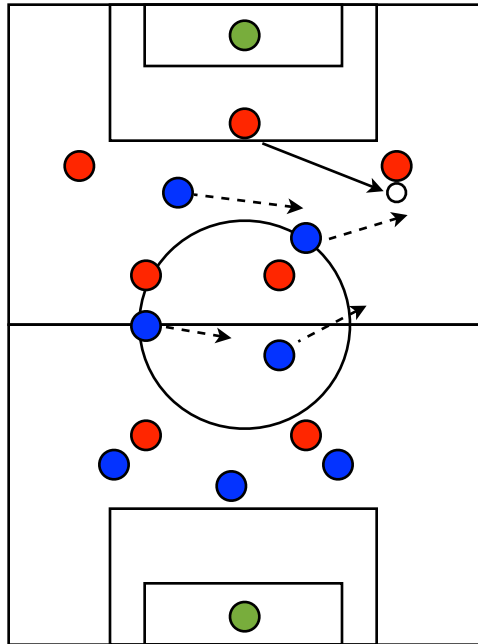
G) Patience in possession and build up play by involving more players

Benefits of this Activity

- Increases the player's awareness and vision
- Encourages players to support in front of and behind the ball
- Encourages attacking runs from the Midfielders and forwards
- Encourages 'off the ball', 'blind side' and overlapping runs
- Encourages players to communicate (so they can become involved in the play and move zones)
- Encourages spreading/ switching the play so players can become involved and utilize the extra player(s) in the zone (normally the furthest from the ball)
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 attacking Principles of Play
 - Penetration - through passing or shooting
 - Width - support and creation of space
 - Depth - support in front of and behind the ball and creation of space
 - Mobility - penetrating runs with and without the ball to unbalance the opposition
 - Creativity/Improvisation

Conditioned Games

4. Games to encourage High Pressure



Condition 1: If the red team makes 5 passes they score a goal (blue team being coached)

and/or

Condition 2: If the red team maintains possession for 15 seconds they score a goal (Blue team being coached)

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) # of passes or time of possession can vary depending on age

Coaching Points:

A) Pressure as high up the field as possible from a 'goal side' position.

B) Pressure as a pair or defensive unit i.e. forwards, midfielders, defenders, wide defenders and wide MF's etc

C) Forwards force play into their supporting players (normally central)

D) Try to get the player in possession to 'get their head down' - put them under pressure so they look down at the ball and not at their team mates

E) Communication - Telling specific players when and where to pressure and where to show them (inside/outside)

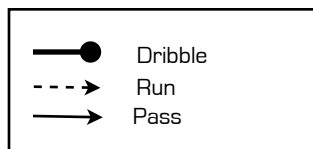
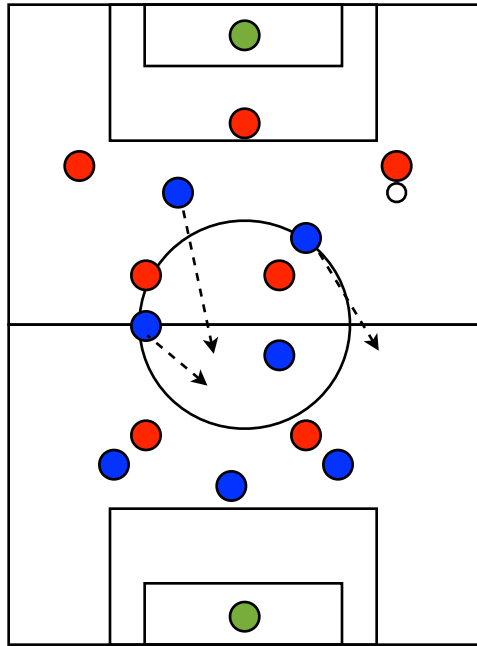
Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages the players to play at a high tempo - great for fitness
- Helps the players understand how quick possession changes and how important it is to win it back
- Helps encourage the work rate of all players, especially the forwards
- Helps players understand when to pressure high up the field depending on the position of the ball, the time and score of the game
- Encourages communication from all of the players
- Helps players recognize that if they make play predictable they can win the ball back easier
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 Defending Principles of Play
 - Pressure
 - Deny
 - Delay
 - Depth

Conditioned Games

5. Games to encourage team depth

Condition: When your team loses possession, all players have to drop back to own half or behind the ball



Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

Coaching Points:

A) Drop back to provide depth

B) Mark all players in advance of the ball

C) Forwards try and make the opposing players play predictable by cutting off their forward passing options

D) Forwards do not try and win the ball but to just not let them advance the ball through dribbling or passing

E) A line of confrontation must be agreed upon by the team and once the the opposition cross it (normally halfway line), the level of pressure changes from low to high.

F) The goalkeeper and defenders must communicate to midfielders and forwards to get back and who to pick up or pressure

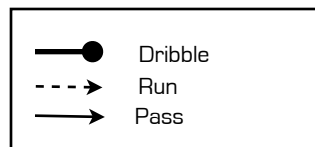
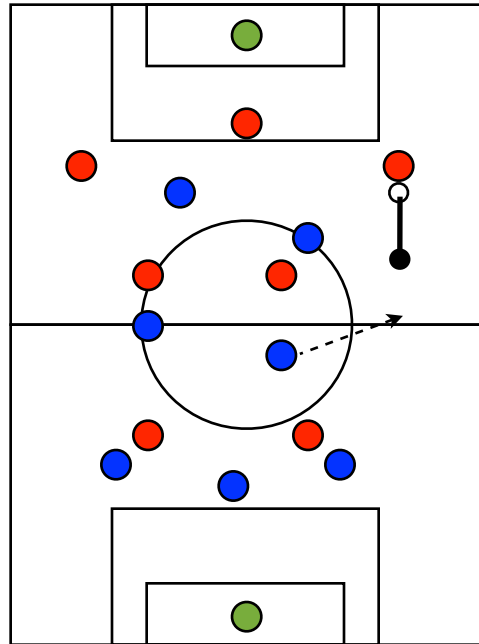
G) If the team stays organized they will be very hard to breakdown and will force the opposition to play long balls

Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages defenders to communicate and organize
- Encourages forwards and midfielders to recover quickly
- Encourages forwards and midfielders to track players
- Helps players understand that you don't have to be to win the ball to be a good defender
- Helps players recognize if they are patient and stand up they will increase their chances of their team winning the ball
- Encourages the defenders to make play predictable by forcing players to play it back
- Helps the players understand when to provide low or high pressure depending on the position of the ball and time in the game
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 defending Principles of Play
 - Pressure
 - Deny
 - Delay
 - Depth
 - Balance

Conditioned Games

6. Games to encourage 1v1 defending



Condition: Players can not pass forward (only dribble forward)- they can pass sideways and backwards

Exceptions: Throw-ins, Goal-kicks and free kicks

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) A free kick is give to the opposing team if a player passes the ball forward

Coaching Points:

A) Pressure the ball

B) Angle your approach to force the attacker onto their weaker foot, away from goal or towards another supporting defender

C) Stand up and do not dive in to win the ball.

D) Keep your eye on the ball

E) Body position should be sideways on. Angle your body to force them where you at them to go and make them predictable. It will also aid your recovery if you are beaten.

F) There are two types of tackle to make when facing an opponent: i) Poke with front foot ii) Block with back foot if they try to beat you

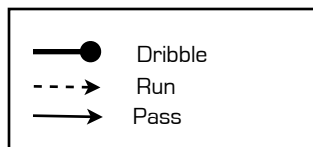
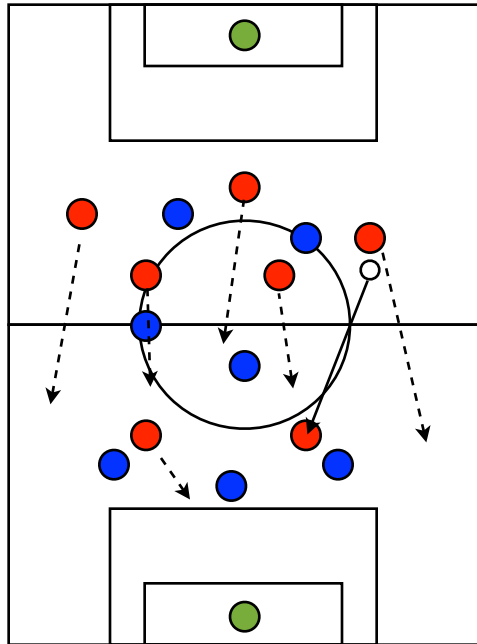
G) Players can try to win the ball and be more aggressive when they have cover

Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages defenders to pressure the ball early
- Encourages defenders to adopt the correct defensive stance
- Helps players understand that you don't have to be to win the ball to be a good defender
- Helps players recognize if they are patient and stand up they will increase their chances of their team winning the ball
- Encourages the defenders to make play predictable by forcing players to play it back or play long
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 defending Principles of Play
 - Pressure
 - Deny
 - Delay
 - Depth
 - Balance

Conditioned Games

7. Games to help defenders and midfielders support the forwards



Condition: In order for a goal to count all players must be in the attacking half (except the GK's)

Organization:

1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)

2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's

3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

4) A goal is not allowed if all of the players were not in the attacking half of the field when the goal was scored

Coaching Points:

A) When the ball is played into the attacking half the defenders should push up to support midfielders.

B) As the defenders push up they must push the MF's to support the forwards.

C) Defenders and MF's should make runs in advance of (overlaps etc) and behind the ball.

D) Defenders and MF's should make runs to try and unbalance the opposition.

E) Communication is vital in ensuring players push up and support. Use specific communication (e.g. "Johnny, push up and get wide").

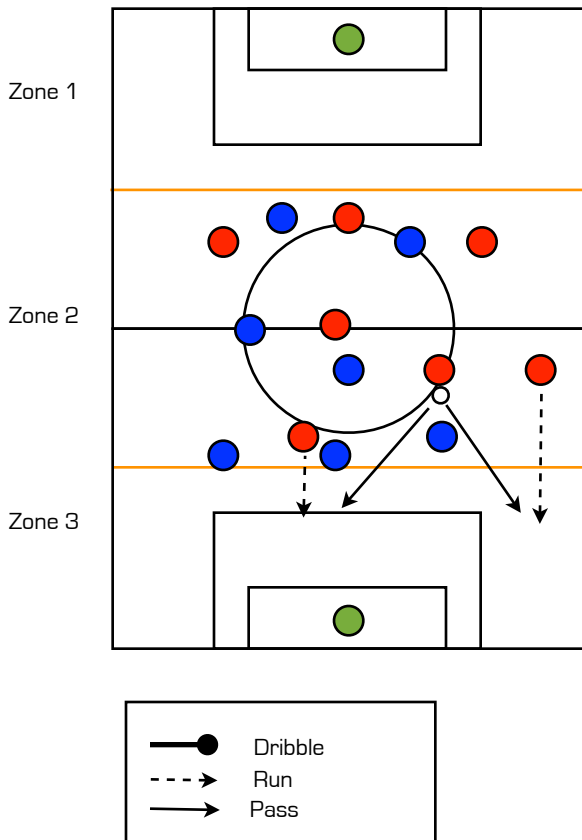
F) Forwards should be ready to combine with quick 1 touch play with attacking MF's

Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages defenders to push up early and support midfielders in possession
- Encourages the midfielders to push up and support the forwards
- Encourages the counter attack and quick combination and 1 touch play
- Encourages overlaps and blind side runs to support the ball
- Encourages the players to communicate
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 attacking Principles of Play
 - Penetration - through dribbling or shooting
 - Width - support and creation of space
 - Depth - support in front of and behind the ball and creation of space
 - Mobility - penetrating runs with and without the ball to unbalance the opposition
 - Creativity/Improvisation

Conditioned Games

8. Games to encourage through balls and forward runs



Condition: when the ball is in the middle third, all players must be in that zone(except the GK's)

Organization:

- 1) 3v3 to 8v8 with or without GK's (to Pugg goals)
- 2) 9v9 to 11v11 with GK's
- 3) Field Size varies depending on the players ability and the session aims

-e.g 20 x 15 - 3v3/30 x 20 - 4v4 etc

- 4) 3 zones marked out by cones

- 5) Offside only in the end zones

Coaching Points:

- A) Forwards should take up wide positions to try and drag the defenders out of position to create space for a through ball
- B) Quality and selection of pass - on ground or in air
- C) General rule is diagonal pass to straight run and straight pass to diagonal run
- D) Time your runs so you are not offside
- E) Midfielders should make a deep run to stay outside
- F) Forwards and advanced MF's at the defensive line should make runs across the line and not be standing still when the through ball is played
- G) Midfielders and forwards can make switching/combining runs to drag defenders out of position to create space

Benefits of this Activity

- Encourages the forwards to work on their type and timing runs
- Encourages the midfielders to make forward runs
- Encourages quick 1 touch play
- Encourages overlaps and blind side runs to support the ball
- Helps the attacking team learn how to beat an offside trap
- Encourages the players to communicate
- Help players recognize and utilize the 5 attacking Principles of Play
 - Penetration - through dribbling or shooting
 - Width - support and creation of space
 - Depth - support in front of and behind the ball and creation of space
 - Mobility - penetrating runs with and without the ball to unbalance the opposition
 - Creativity/Improvisation