

As a coach, you have a major influence on your athletes. Not only will you affect the development of their skills and long-term enjoyment of the sport, you will also play a role in their development as individuals. It is important that you have effective resources to help you.

The Coaching Association of Canada, in partnership with the national sport organizations, compiled the following coaching tips.

Crosses Galore



Use this practice for crossing, timing runs, attacking crosses, heading and finishing, switching play, and spreading play.

Divide the players into 4 teams of 3 players each, plus 2 goalkeepers and play in an area 60 m x 40 m, including two 10 m wing channels.

- Two teams play 3 versus 3 in the central playing area, while each remaining team act as wingers in each wing channel as shown.
- The game begins when a goalkeeper serves the ball to a team-mate who may inter-pass with other members of his team or play to a winger.
- The winger may cross the ball early, run and cross, or play to another winger in the channel to cross the ball for the attacking team. Wingers can only pass to members of the team which gives them the ball. If the goalkeeper saves or the opposing players win possession, then the procedure is repeated in the opposite direction.
- Goals can only be scored from crosses. Wingers must remain in the wing channels. No other players are allowed in the wing channels.
- Play is always restarted by the nearest goalkeeper serving the ball to a team-mate.
- After 3 to 5 minutes and on command from the coach, wingers change places with the 2 competing teams and the game continues as before.

Progressions can be made by restricting players and wingers to 2 touches or less each. Allowing wingers to play passes to infield players for a wall pass or to switch play, etc. Allow infield players to shoot after receiving a short pass from a winger.

The coach should encourage the players to drift away from a winger in possession of the ball and drag defenders into poor defensive positions; clear space in order to attack crosses; start runs as the winger's head looks down at ball prior to cross; change pace sharply to attack the ball; work with other attackers by clearing space for each other; try various types of crosses - low, driven, curved and floated; and hit target areas at the near post, mid goal, far post.

