



Ball Control: Receiving and the First Touch

Observation sheet, error patterns and 3 steps to playing under pressure

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TEAM

AGE GROUP

COACH

Observation sheet: the first touch

Tick what you see for each player in training.

Player	bounces off	rolls over foot	killed dead	to defender	eyes on ball

The 5 error patterns and how to fix them

Left what you see, right what you say.

- ☐ Ball bounces off the foot: give with the contact, lift the toes slightly
- ☐ Ball rolls over the foot: lift the toes, lock the ankle
- ☐ Ball lies dead under the foot: ban one-touch finishes, demand a take in one direction
- ☐ Ball is taken towards the defender: scan before the ball comes, take it away from the defender
- ☐ Eyes glued to the ball: after the touch, lift the eyes and look for the next route

Step 1: ball-control square, 3 x 3 m

No opponent. Learn the movement cleanly.

- ☐ Set two starting cones facing each other, a 3 by 3 metre square in between
- ☐ Let the player run into the square and call for the pass
- ☐ Take the pass forward to the opposite cone in one movement
- ☐ Make eye contact with the passer before the ball arrives
- ☐ After the touch, lift the eyes off the ball and avoid the oncoming player

Step 2: double square and finishing

Space and time get tight, still no opponent.

- ☐ Double square: outer square 20 x 20 m, inner square 10 x 10 m
- ☐ Pass anticlockwise inside, then call for a ball from the outer cone at once
- ☐ To make it easier, start with only one ball in the inner square
- ☐ Receive and finish: pitch 35 x 20 m, run around the two inner cones
- ☐ Play the pass diagonally into the run, towards goal
- ☐ Ban one-touch finishes, always demand a take

Step 3: rondo 4v2

Only now does a real opponent interfere.

- ☐ Four players on the outside, two defenders in the middle
- ☐ Keep the overload deliberately, so the technique does not collapse
- ☐ The first touch decides whether the next pass is possible
- ☐ Only afterwards move into the free game form

What to train at which age

Pressure from an opponent comes earlier than most think.

- ☐ U7 and U9: one ball per child, many touches, the ground pass
- ☐ U11: receive and take with a target, first lofted balls, first duels
- ☐ U13: passing sequences, ball control under time pressure, clean repetition
- ☐ U15: one-touch play banned, force a take, high tempo

Coaching and measuring progress

Talk less, watch more.

- ☐ Show instead of explaining, especially on the first touch
- ☐ Freeze the situation: the player explains, not you
- ☐ Do not over-correct, one point per drill is enough
- ☐ Count the head turns: how often he looks in the 10 seconds before the ball
- ☐ Count the touches up to the next action: three are a turnover in slow motion
- ☐ Note the balls lost straight after the reception, six weeks apart

