

3 Tips For Teaching Players to Finish

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Have you ever been in a situation where you control the whole game, out-shoot your opponents and end up losing by one goal? Opportunities to score may have been handed to your team for easy goals when the keeper spilled the ball but your team failed to capitalize on this because they never followed up their shots.

As coach's we conduct shooting session's focusing on the technique, but how often do we focus on the tactical and psychological part of finishing

Many times our players believe the harder they hit the ball the better the chance they have of scoring, when a majority of goals could be scored by simply slotting the ball in and finishing with finesse.

No matter how good a shooter you are you have to practice finishing not just shooting. There will be games when the opponent's keeper is just too good or lucky for you to rely only on your shooting skills.

Below are some good practice tips that can be used with most shooting activities/games to improve a player's ability to finish

Tip #1: Taking the Opportunity

A striker's confidence will be high when they are scoring goals, but it will be very low when they are missing the opportunities, this may result in them even refusing to take shots. If they are creating chances we need to keep encouraging this, from there the minimal request I have for them is to make the goalkeeper work, the maximum I can demand of a player is to score.

When conducting finishing and attacking practice sessions, during the warm-up have the players play into the keeper, this will help them hit the target, warm-up both sets of players and they will be reaching your minimal request.

As in every other practice session we then add pressure and make the activity a little more complex, so as well as adding defenders, raise your demands to request that the players score.

Tip #2: Terminology

When I observe coach's conducting shooting sessions I will often hear them instruct their players to shoot. As long as the player gets the shot off, no matter of the end result, the coach will often be satisfied. If the shot misses the target, a coach will tell the player that they are unlucky.

This could make the player believe that the coach is satisfied with any kind of shot. Instead of shouting shoot, encourage the players to finish.

Tip #3: Following up the Rebound

Lazy attackers have a bad tendency of watching their shots when they "know" that the shot is going in. They then miss the opportunity to score when the ball hits the posts or bar or is batted down by the keeper, and either one of the strikers fail to follow in.

Adding special requirements to a practice can help solve this problem. On any shot that an attacker takes, that attacker has three seconds after shooting to enter the goal and touch the net or the goal is disallowed. This ingrains the habit of going to the goal every time they shoot.

Great shots, no matter how pretty, only count once the ball enters the goal. There are no style points in soccer. Ruud Van Nistelrooy of Manchester United and Holland may be one of the world's best strikers but he scores majority of those goals with toe poke or tap in from inside the six yard box and those goals count the same number as that beautiful 30 yard scorcher that hits the top corner of the net.



Some information derived from an article by Ken Gamble on Decatur Sports, "Teaching Your Team to Finish, not Shoot!"