



**COACHING
SOCCER
WEEKLY** WITH
TOM MURA



Four Favorite Possession Games



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I continue to enjoy my summer break from the field. The summer doesn't start for me until the team meetings are completed and that happened last weekend.

I'm using the extra free time to work on the Fall Technical Training Curriculum for our U8 through U12 teams. Talked about that back in episode [18 Creating a Technical Training Plan](#). If you want to know why we do this and how it's put together you can listen to that episode.



I've been interested in the Confederations Cup since it's the only international soccer that I've been able to see. The use of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) is something new that's being tried in this competition. I talk about the positives and negatives as well as my opinion on the use of this kind of technology in our game.



This week's question is from Joe. He's asking about selecting players.

Joe says,

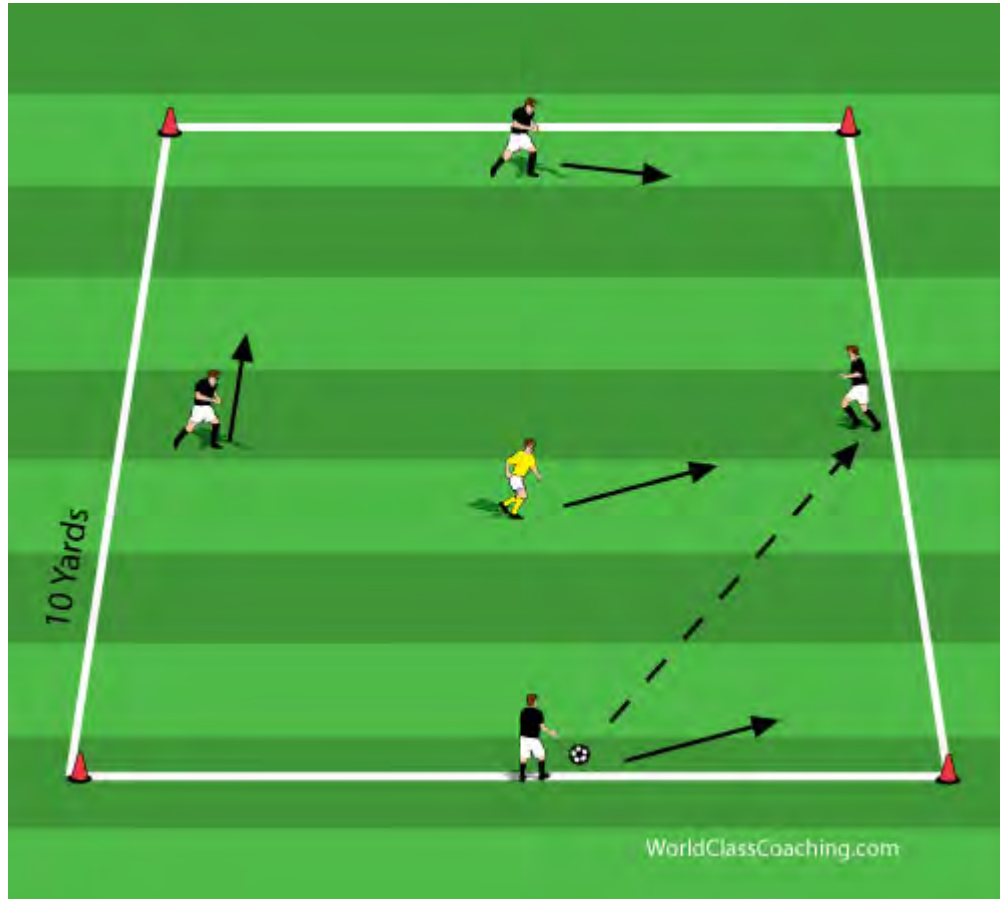
"Over the last few months I have noticed some coaches select players for what they are doing now, and not so much on what they are capable of. Players that are technical, smart, spatially aware and dedicated are getting passed up for players who are larger and faster at the time of Try-outs. What is your take on natural speed and size vs a smaller, maybe slower technical player. And do you think speed can be improved?"

Thanks for the question Joe.

This is the classic debate between athleticism and skill. It's such a complicated subject. I share my thoughts but I have to apologize for rambling a bit. There's just no clear cut answer and so many things to consider.

In This Episode

Today I'll share my four favorite possession activities. I'll also tell you why there are only four as well as why these are often the only possession activities I'll use with my teams.

Foundational Exercise**4 v 1 or 4 v 2**

Use this format to train your players to support the ball on the right, left and with a splitting option.

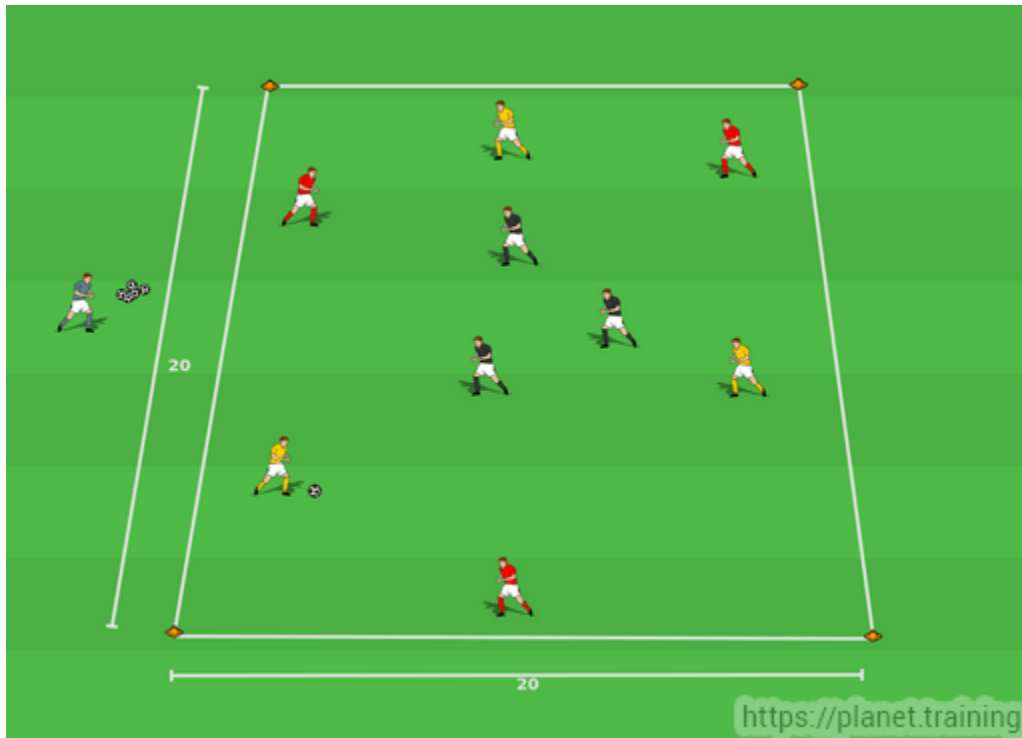
The players should also maintain an 'Open' body position so that they can receive the ball with the farthest foot and play in either direction.

Non Directional Games



Transitional Possession Game

- How the Game Works
 - One team begins with the ball
 - The other team sends over two defenders
 - Five passes equals one point
 - Have the players count the passes and points out loud so everyone is aware of the score
 - I have the players do this because 'I'm coaching not counting'
 - I want to be free to give tips and make corrections as the game is being played without worrying what the score is
 - Another defender moves after each point is scored
 - Defenders try to win the ball and move it back to their side of the field
 - If they do, the other team sends over two defenders
 - The teams organize who goes over as defenders
 - When the ball goes out of play
 - Coach plays a new ball



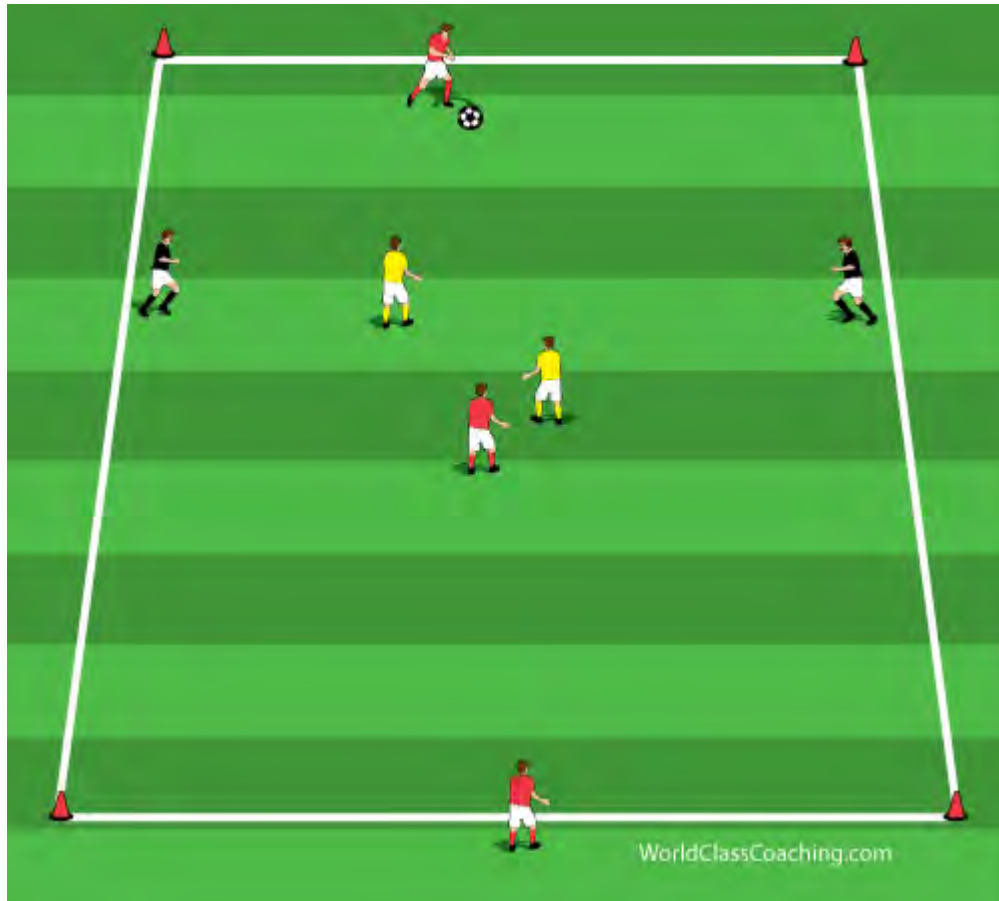
Three Team Possession

Two teams attempt to keep possession away from the third team. In the example above the Black team is the defending team. If they win the ball then the team that lost possession become the defenders.

This is a more challenging game because the transitions from defense to attack are quicker and reshaping the support for the ball is not as straight forward.

Here's a link to a [YouTube video](#) I did for our channel that explains this game.

Directional Possession Games

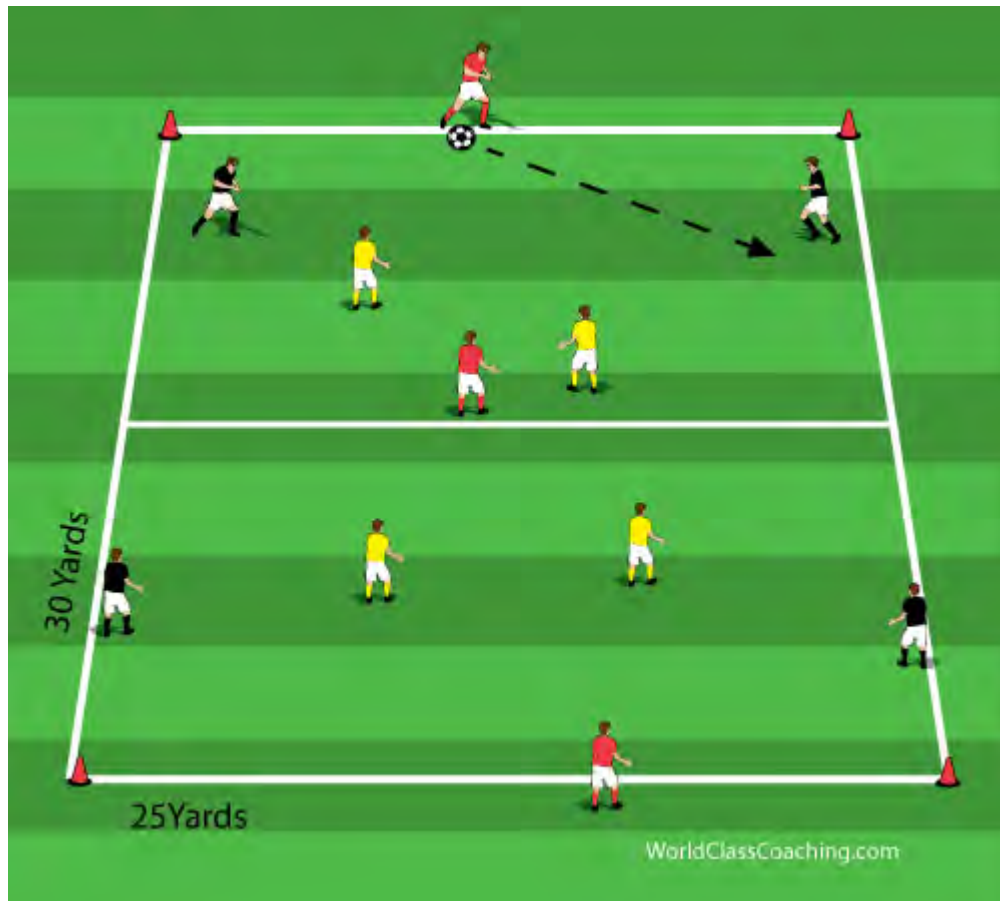


2 v 2 + 3

This is basically a 5 v 2 game. The team in possession attempts to move the ball from the neutral player on one end to the neutral on the far side.

The neutral player in the middle provides a splitting option like the one a center midfielder would.

All of the principles of possession can be trained in this game but making it a directional game creates a more functional activity.



4 v 4 + 3

This is a progress of the previous game. Adding two players to each team creates more complexity and adds more penetrating options.

This format is very popular at the moment because it's a functional and position specific.