Chapter 1



INTRODUCTION

This introduction section covers the background of the training guide development, significance of Modern Art football, and limitations in this technical guide.

Background

This guide was written by Ronald Tebandeke, a football skills coach, under the Twenty 1st Century soccer Foundation. The Foundation was found in 2011 with an aim to develop the football sport, through player talent development and specifically their playing skills development.

This book introduces a term known as Modern Art football, which is a form of football game incorporated with modern playing skills, that is intended to reconstitute and out do traditional football. Traditional football is a form of football game played by players to simply compete, but is less skills oriented.

Significance of modern art football

Modern art football is a term used to refer to advanced football, and deliberately draw a line between the new game and the old fashioned traditional game, so as to allow transition in the style of playing the sport at a generic standard.

Modern art football was also created to support in the talent development of the new generation of young players, and help in achieving a new world of well skilled, talented and knowledgeable professional football players, through creating an augmented player skills development baseline to be employed internationally.

Significantly, in Modern Art football as trained in this book, there are new highly effective playing skills and tactics brought forward to allow a more efficient and progressive game played by players, which are fundamentally helpful to be trained to them to foster more of their competiveness in games.

This guide is noticeably helpful to all levels of football players right from a newly starting academy (of kids above 8 years) to the best club in the world of professional football, especially to allow them diversify their playing approaches to fit in the evolutionary model

of playing the game. Effective enough is that the guide does not interfere with established playing strategies of teams, but focuses on basically fortifying strategies of coordination, possession, attacking and scoring tactics.

Limitations

This guide fanatically embraces skills, playing tactics and technical training information in the areas of possession, coordination, attacking, and football scoring tactics which is basically in the offense scheme, but offers limited information and training in the defense section of a team and the goal keeping department, which makes it necessary for the team coach to focus on training these department players with special strategies beyond those provided in this book. However, this doesn't allude that this training package does not focus on the defensive scheme of a team. It does focus on this through tactics of possession, coordination, attacking, and individual defensive tactics.

The other limitation involved in the package is the physical training for player physical conditioning in aspects of strength, endurance, agility and speed. Hence a coach has to focus on these separately because the guide conjointly specializes in equipping players with "playing skills and knowledge."

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature review section, we slightly look at the historical background of football in a unique perspective, the significant trends pertinent to Modern Art football, and the important playing aspects/skills brought forth in Modern Art football in contrast to traditional football.

Historical background of football

Football is one of the most popular sports around the globe with a vivid and interesting history. Early evidence of football being played as a sport finds occurrence in china during the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC, in the Han dynasty where people dribbled leather balls by kicking it in a small net. Recorded facts also support the fact that Romans and Greeks used to play the ball for fun and frolic.

Having a history of over 3000 years shows how the sport is far captivating to human kind. It is said that early growth of modern football is credited to Britain, where the game was revolutionized to modern day football, through the creation of game rules and designing of the pitch dimensions.

The international governing body of the game (FIFA) was established in the year 1904, and by early 1930, different leagues were operating from various countries. FIFA is credited with organizing the first world cup in Uruguay, an international football event which rapidly spread the popularity of the game.

As the game became popular, many unique talents of players came to rise. Edson Arantes do Nascimento (pele), Johan Cruyff (Ajax and Barcelona), Diego Armando Maradona, Marco Van Basten (Ajax, AC Millan), Romario (Brazil), Distefano (Real Madrid), Zinedine Zidane (france) Ronaldinho Gaucho, Jay Jay OKocha, Christiano Ronaldo, and Lionel Messi are some of the greatest iconic talents on a small list that have been manifested in the game, with exceptionally a fair amount of respect in playing the sport.

The above legendary players are pointed out due to their skill and creativity. Such skilled players are recognized to be the teachers of the game and the skills creators. The game we see today has much owe to them whereby many individual players around the world are influenced to play soccer with skills. So this is definitely one way about how players learn/have learnt the game and

playing skills. The other way through which players can learn the game and playing skills is through learning Morden Art Football.

In this regard, Modern Art football was created to improve and guide talents of players through developing their level of playing skills and competitiveness in the game at a generic standard, in this modern era.

Significant trends pertinent to modern Art football

Possession based football

This is a game that involves strategic team and individual ball possession tactics and strategic defensive and offense approaches with the ball. As a trending style, this game is currently used by many teams around the world as part of their overall playing tactics due to its resultant performance and functionality in games. It is used in the attacking and possessive game, for the overall tactics used by some of the best teams around the world, such as Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Arsenal, etc, and using styles like tik tak style and total football.

Better than direct football, possession based football effects more chances for strategic attacking and defensive approach, ball protection, and a team's ability to dominate games and maintain a lead (since if you can't maintain a lead you can't make a win).

What is Modern Art football?

This is a form of playing the football game which involves high level of strategic approach, techniques on ball, playing intelligence, and possession game mechanisms.

What is traditional football?

This is a form of playing the football game largely used around the world (being an old style), which involves direct attacking approach, with commonly long passes on ball, man to man playing approach, and high aggression of play. It was very useful in the old days of playing the sport, with high effect of successfulness especially when it came to scoring quick goals. However, today the competitive landscape of playing the game has changed. Teams now use strong possession tactics to keep the ball away from opponents and also reach an extent of retaining it in the opposition team's playing section and split their defense to score goals in a challenging manner. This is just an example to show that the game has taken a new path of competitiveness, where more art, technique, strategies, playing intelligence, and game comprehension is required in depth.

Key differences between Modern Art football and traditional football.

Modern art football	Traditional football
More tactical	Less tactical
Ball possession is a key composition in the offense and defensive schemes	Direct attacking approach in the offense and defensive schemes.
High technique on ball is used	Less technique on ball is used
Low body contact and aggression is experienced	High body contact and aggression is experienced through the man to man playing approach
High level of playing intelligence and anticipation is used in games	Low level of playing intelligence is used
A wide array of skills and tactics on ball are used	Low level of skills and tactics is required.
Low level of individualism is used	High level of individualism is exercised

Traditional football is a game where commonly losing the ball to the opponents or outside the pitch and making blind passes or blind shots on goal is normal.

Modern Art football is a game where losing the ball to your opponent is restricted and considered a much bigger threat. Losing the ball would be compared to losing breathe, and fighting to repossess it would be like struggling to get out of a stifled room. So it would be like a player's whole life depends on the ball, asserting that there is totally no time to use it poorly. This stipulates that ultimate playing accuracy and ball possession skills are key measures for keeping the necessary playing standard.

Modern Art football clearly eliminates unnecessary common playing aspects which are normalized in traditional football, which include;

- Fighting on ball
- Delaying with the ball by a player
- Frequent loss of the ball possession to opponents
- Frequent unnecessary loss of the ball across the touchline of the pitch perimeter (without any tactical purpose)
- Unnecessary individualism with the ball. So team work is essential
- Poor ball control, which leads to the overall playing standards of a team to be low.

Modern Art football rather brings forth and revamps important playing aspects such as;

- Tactical coordination and team work
- Ball protection and control
- Use of speed
- Body balance with the ball
- Passing and scoring ball techniques
- Quick reaction
- Timing on ball and timing of the opponents
- Ball possession
- Unpredictability
- Playing space awareness
- Playing intelligence
- Playing skills and knowledge to equip to players so as to improve their individual brilliancy in games. etc

Components of the training package

Components of the training package include;

- Skills training (offering training of a wide range of playing skills and tactics)
- Possession based soccer training: A possessive and attacking game which involves high level of skills and speed during play.
- Football intelligence: A new innovative mode of training and perceptual comprehension of the game of football.

Skills Training

Skills in Modern Art football are classified into the major skills categories, and the specific playing skills as used in the game. There are 7 major categories of skills and over 20 specific playing skills that are trained to players. The 7 major skills categories trained with their significance during play include; ball control skills, ball protection skills, tactical coordination skills, tactical passing and receiving skills, scoring skills, dodging skills, and dribbling skills.

The specific playing skills trained to players with their significance include the following below;

- Penetrative passing of the ball
- Close passing of the ball
- The use of power and strength
- The use of trickery
- Self positioning
- Timing on ball
- Long passing of the ball
- Attacking tactics
- Controlling pressure/playing under pressure
- Winning balls in open play
- Making body turns with the ball
- Flexibility on ball
- Creating numerous opportunities for scoring
- Utilizing scoring opportunities
- Unpredictability on ball
- Consistence and continuity during play
- Quick decision making and swift reaction on ball
- Speed of a player's body with the ball
- Timing of the opponents
- Self space awareness
- Body balance with the ball.

CHAPTER 3

The seven major skills categories and their significance during play of the football game

Let's first of all get to learn the major skills categories, and their significance in football. A comprehensive training guide featuring training sessions and basic drills for each will be met in the training mode, lastly in chapter 7 of this book.

In Modern Art football, there are seven major skills categories which are used to play the game. These include; ball control skills, ball protection skills, passing and receiving skills, tactical coordination skills, scoring skills, dodging skills, and dribbling skills. Each of these skills is discussed in this chapter with its significance in the game as provided.

Ball control skills

This is a major category of skills which encompasses all the other skills categories and is integral for achieving them in the game. It is very essential for all team players to practice ball control skills during training with respect to improving the efficiency and level of their skills generally in playing the game. Training ball control skills is not a matter of playing the ball with friends in a training game, but involves a player to individually practice the ball on their body flexibly to perfect the skill.

The skill is very important to a player because it makes it easy to think and play in the game with effective decision making and reaction on ball. This is because the body and mind will have mastered playing the ball, with combinatory ability, mental and physical agility and body coordination. This is what will turn the game to be simpler to play. So players good at ball control skills would be highly talented to play.

Ball control skills are significant in a way that; they are integral skills for achieving all the other skills categories such as ball protection skills, passing and receiving skills, tactical coordination skills, scoring skills, dodging skills, and dribbling skills in the game. This means that if players are poor at ball control skills, they would find it challenging to perform and perfect all other skills on ball.

They further help to improve a player's physical and mental agility on ball, their body coordination and flexibility on the ball, passing accuracy, use of trickery, effective use of

limited playing space, playing consistence, positive decision making and quick reaction during play.

Upgrading one's ball control skills is centrally an individual player's responsibility. Every single player should have a personal ball which they can use to willfully practice ball control skills. These are skills that one can also practice when they are alone during an individual training session, or when they are just two players. Many players have in mind that they should only train when they are with their coaches, forgetting that coaches will mostly handle them as a team, yet there is need for player individual training activities, especially if they are to improve their individual brilliancy in games through training ball control skills and other important skills or physical training. This is very essential, especially if one is playing football as their career. Many coaches, mostly those who are under professional tend to take players through physical trainings, including the making of splint runs, forward runs, passing exercise and match trainings, whereby they do not sufficiently consider practicing of ball control skills as an integral physical training activity which has to be considered regularly throughout a player's football career.

During such an activity, players should play the ball around their bodies with high focus. This involves practicing trapping and dribbling skills like head control skills, chest control, lap control, belly control, and leg ball control skills with a specific cause as to work upon their ball control capabilities.

Improving players' ball control also involves compounding their capabilities to have total control over the ball individually during confrontational circumstances of play. This can be during passing, winning a ball in open play, receiving it, protecting it, retaining it in possession, evading it from crossing outside of "a player's playing circle" or crossing the touchline. A player's playing circle is an imaginary circle ring around a player, used to ensure their effective self space awareness. More information about the playing circle theory is discussed in this book on page (65) in chapter 4 when looking at self space awareness as a skill.

The effect of having poor ball control skills

Having poor ball control affects a player's speed on ball, by either slowing down their game or being too fast, and making unnecessary short random movements with the ball, which attest lack of enough playing stability due to poor ball control. In other words, having ball control skills would enable a player to fully control the pace at which they play in a game with sufficient playing agility and stability.

In Modern Art football, players may improve their ball control skills by learning or analyzing the three levels which they effectively play the ball on their bodies. That is to say; level 1 is measured from the ground to the knees, level 2 from the knee to the belly, and level 3 from the belly to the top of the head, as illustrated below.

ILLUSTRATION



fig 1

Level 1 is the primary level of playing the ball and is the most flexible and efficient body part valid for playing the ball. It is as well the most reciprocative and referential for coordinating and playing the ball around the body to the other body levels. It is very compatible for passing, trapping, ball protection, dribbling, dodging, scoring, using trickery, and controlling the speed of playing the ball. It is measured from the ground to the knee of a player.

Level 2 is the second level of the body. It is measured from the knee to the belly and includes the laps and the belly. It is less flexible as compared to level 1, but very relevant for supporting it when playing the ball above the ground. It is applicatory for receiving or trapping the ball, controlling it, protecting it, and making body turns with it. It is also an immediate alternative for controlling the ball that is received from both level 1 and level 3 of the body.

Level 3 is the upper part of the body, which is measured from the belly to the top of the head. It includes the chest, shoulders, neck, and the head. It is more flexible with the ball than level 2, but slightly less than level 1. It is most efficient for passing, receiving, protecting the ball when above the ground, making body turns with it, ball control, scoring into the goal, dribbling and defending aerial balls. With all these effects, level 3 of playing the ball should effectively be well trained when exercising ball control skills.

The above three levels of playing the ball on the body are not only trenchant for controlling the ball, but are also used as hints for communication during tactical coordination of players with the ball on

the pitch. An example is; if a player passes the ball above the ground, could be an aerial ball or lower ball, the expression may convey a message to the receiver about how they should meet the pass, by either using level 2 or level 3 of the body, depending on the height of the ball from the ground, its momentum, and distance of the receiver from the passer. It may also send information about how to use the ball, i.e. to pass it, protect it, score it into the goal, etc, in a combinatory manner

Therefore in Modern Art football, it is greatly important for players to practice and improve their ball control skills through regular training so as to improve their games and individual brilliancy.

Ball protection skills

This is a major skills category which is very fundamental in playing football. It refers to creative skills used to protect the ball within an individual player's retention or team's possession, and avoid it from being taken into opponents' possession, until a last intended move with it is performed.

Ball protection skills are indispensable for protecting the ball from opponents, improving player's consistence with it, keeping high ball possession, and defending their game throughout a contest. Precisely, we literally have ten radical ball protection skills, as provided in this section.

Ball protection skill # 1

One of the best ways of protecting the ball is to keep it highly in motion under a player's retention or team's tight possession. Ball protection skills are used to keep the ball randomly and unpredictably in motion, in order to play readily against opponents who attempt to attack a player with it. Whenever players keep the ball unpredictably in motion (by maneuvering it using short movements), it enables them to have high protection over it, quick decision making and quick reaction with it.

Ball protection skill # 2

Another effective way for protecting the ball is to keep it very closely around the body (inside a player's playing circle) while in action with it before passing it away. This method as well enables quick decision making and quick reaction of a player, and as well involves playing the ball highly in motion under high unpredictability. A player's playing circle is measured with a radius of two feet around them from their standing point. This may also be known as a ball protection circle.

Illustration of a player keeping the ball close to the body

Fig 2



Categories of ball protection;

In accordance to Modern Art football, ball protection skills are categorized into individual ball protection skills, and team ball protection skills (also cognizant as part of tactical coordination skills).

Individual ball protection skills: These entail a player keeping the ball closely to their body (inside their playing circle), and make short movements with it to keep it highly in motion, and play unpredictably against opponents. In contrast to this, many players rely on other means of protecting the ball, such as shielding, dodging and use of trickery, which do not actually mean protecting it. When a player shields around a ball in the name of protecting it, his/her power and strength will be inclined to the side of the opponent while trying to stop them from getting to the ball. Here, much of a player's energy will be wasted, and the aspect might lead to unnecessary fighting on ball and loss of their body balance and stability which may as a result slow down their speed or result to falling down or perhaps fouling the opponent in response to avoid defeat.

Dodging and use of trickery is as well not necessarily a better means for protecting the ball, since these may engross making direct approach to the opponent(s), which may create risk for losing the ball once the opponents manage to intercept it before it is successfully passed on.

So, the individual ball protection skills trained in this book are significantly used to help players avoid losing the ball through playing poor games as pointed out above.

Ball protection skill # 3

Individual ball protection furthermore integrates protecting the ball on the ground, and above it. It is easier and much safer to protect the ball while playing it on the ground, especially when a player has enough space awareness. This is because it is more flexible to play it on the ground, and can be played at a much higher pace with high ball control. Protecting the ball above the ground is also a very essential skill, but requires a tremendous level of ball control skills and speed in order to protect it during action, and use it effectively.

Illustration of a player protecting the ball above the ground

Fig 3



Ball protection skill # 4

One of the most effectual skills for individual ball protection is to maintain the ball in the middle of the legs whenever an opponent approaches you closely, when not yet set to pass it on. The skill is very effective because it offers the ball sufficient protection against opponents attacking you from all directions, including through back tackle, side tackle and front tackle. It also gives a player more flexibility on ball since its played position allows both legs to maneuver it in any desired direction.

Illustration of a player keeping the ball in the middle of the legs

Fig 4



Team ball protection skills: These are a form of tactical coordination skills used to protect the ball as a team during play. They subsume close passing of the ball (skill # 5), passing of the ball above the ground to reduce chances of the opponents to intercept it (skill # 6), making of quick tactical movements to keep highly in motion with the ball (skill # 7), making exclusive speedy passes on ball (skill # 8), coordinating highly in play (skill # 9), and playing at a high pace (skill # 10). It also incorporates high ball control skills and passing skills of players on ball.

Relevance of team ball protection skills;

Team ball protection skills are suitable for keeping high team ball possession, sharing the attention of the opponents effectively as a team, and playing defensive games. During team ball protection, players maintain fewer touches on ball, because they want to effectively play it among each other and ensure strong team responsibility. The skill is more pertinent to midfielders and strikers of a team, and so it is much crucial for teams with a playing formation that offers more strength in the midfield and striking line.

In the defense section, the skill is relevant for protecting the ball. However, due to the high tension and level of confrontation experienced in the playing section, the skill should not be relied on intensely or always trusted to be used in defending the ball. It may only be reliable with the opportunity of high space availability and awareness.

Fundamental skills for team ball protection

Team ball protection skills require high playing speed of players, their quick decision making, passing accuracy, swift reaction, effective communication, playing desire, coordination balance and very strong players' tactical connectedness.

Having good ball protection skills for a team and individual players would resultantly improve their capacity to dominate play in games and strengthen their winning ability.

Tactical coordination skills

Football as a game is constituted of coordination of players while playing the ball, as the main aspect of playing. Since it is a game of teamwork orientation, effective coordination is very basic. This is where understanding tactical coordination skills as a major skills category is important in Modern Art football.

In traditional football, it is very evident that players understand how to play as a team, but do not know effective coordination skills and the comprehensive role of coordination in playing the game.

Tactical coordination skills can be described as speedy tactical passing and receiving skills on ball and self positioning tactics done by players on the pitch. They require strong passing skills, ball protection skills, trapping skills, and self positioning skills, which are performed at a high level of players' joint composition and comprehension of one another. They also obligate team creativity, and high tactical connectedness of players. They are generally used in generating high team work and creativity of players while playing against opponents, and also help in perfecting swift flowing games during play. They entail making fewer touches on ball by players individually, close and long passing of the ball, high space awareness and coordination balance, high body awareness and balance, and creative moves with the ball.

Tactical coordination skills are ascertainable during attacking, improving coordination balance, and improving a team's ball possession throughout a game, and they involve playing components such as team ball protection, and perfect self positioning tactics prior to receiving the ball during various circumstances of play. Teams trained with tactical coordination skills would have the capacity to prominently play on speed, adapt team work, and excel in the game with notably greater endurance of play.

Coordination balance means the ability of players to pass on the ball in various key positions on the pitch, in order to create and utilize playing space, retain ball possession, and make tactical moves.

In a defensive scheme, tactical coordination skills would be helpful to tightly defend attacking games of opponent, in a team's defense section.

Tactical coordination skills involve moving the ball both on the ground and above it effectively, with practical use of all the 3 levels of playing the ball on a player's body. They are highly positive to a team during very high speedy tactical games, and more relevant in the midfield and forward play.

They can be trained by practicing speedy passing of the ball and ball control skills while players make quick tactical movements under high motion, with spacing themselves into perfect positions to receive the ball and pass it instantaneously with high effect.

Players should frequently check marking of surrounding opponents and make movements to space into positions to receive the ball, in order to utilize space and balance coordination. This has to be done with very speedy reaction and strong tactical connectedness of a receiver with the passer, plus other playing teammates, especially in the attacking aspect.

Note: A reader should not here get confused with the difference between "players' coordination" and "tactical coordination skills." Coordination is the players' ability to readily get into strategic positions on the pitch to receive the ball, pass it, attack, or defend attacking opponents, whereas tactical coordination skills are the specific tactical skills required to outperform coordination on the pitch.

Tactical coordination skills in Modern Art football is a term used to refer to skills used for self positioning, exclusive passing and receiving of the ball, used consciously to intensify the speed of passing it, "the speed and flow of the game," "the functional rate of playing tactics," "the coordination strength of team players," players "team ball protection capabilities," playing consistence, tactical strength and connectedness of players, and lastly strengthen their capacity to compete in the game, and play on speed.

Illustration for tactical coordination of players

Fig 5



The important aspects to consider during tactical coordination

Tactical connectedness of players: This refers to the level of players' anticipation and combinatory ability when playing in the game.
Consistence with the ball: Refers to the players' ability to perform various actions with the ball on the pitch repeatedly with limited interruption.
Speed and flow of the game: Refers to the fast and continuity approach of players' movement with the ball towards the goal, as given impulse from the defense section.
Functional rate of playing tactics: This refers to the efficiency in implementation of playing strategies used by players and their consequence in achieving games.
Coordination strength: This refers to the ability of players to play as a team and closely share roles in all aspects of play.
Team ball protection: This is the ability of team players to protect the ball as a team tactically and sustain it in their possession.

Key words: passing, positioning, receiving

Scoring skills

These are some of the most interesting and fundamental skills on ball. There are many of these that players may train or learn. Many football team coaches enjoy celebrating goals, which are even elusive in the game, but may not fully understand that there is what is called scoring skills on ball, whereby it's not just about shooting the ball into the goal. In fact, there is what is called poor goals, which include own goals, goals out of deflections, and abrupt goals which may technically be as a result of poor and incoherent tactical coordination of players and poor timing on ball. All these will stay considered as goals, and yes they contribute to the players' achievement in the game, but they are different from what is called "smart goals," that are achieved by players equipped with scoring skills. So when it is said that scoring skills are very fundamental skills on ball, this is the reason why they should be considered.

Significantly, they magnify the chances of scoring goals by effectively utilizing scoring opportunities, and lower down the rate of frequent shots off target experienced in many football games, by maximizing the accuracy, creativity and art of shooting the ball into the goal net.

Scoring skills are creative skills on ball, because they demand high level of players' creativity in order to score goals effectively. They are relevant right from the moment of facing the "last defenders," to the moment of shooting the ball into the goal. In the concept of scoring, the goal keeper is also considered as a last defender, but one who keeps the goal. So when timing or shooting the ball towards the goal, there is need to challenge the keeper too, consequently.

Scoring skills are elementally for utilizing created scoring opportunities, increase the rate of scoring goals, augment accuracy and speed of shooting the ball, and broadly increase chances of winning games.

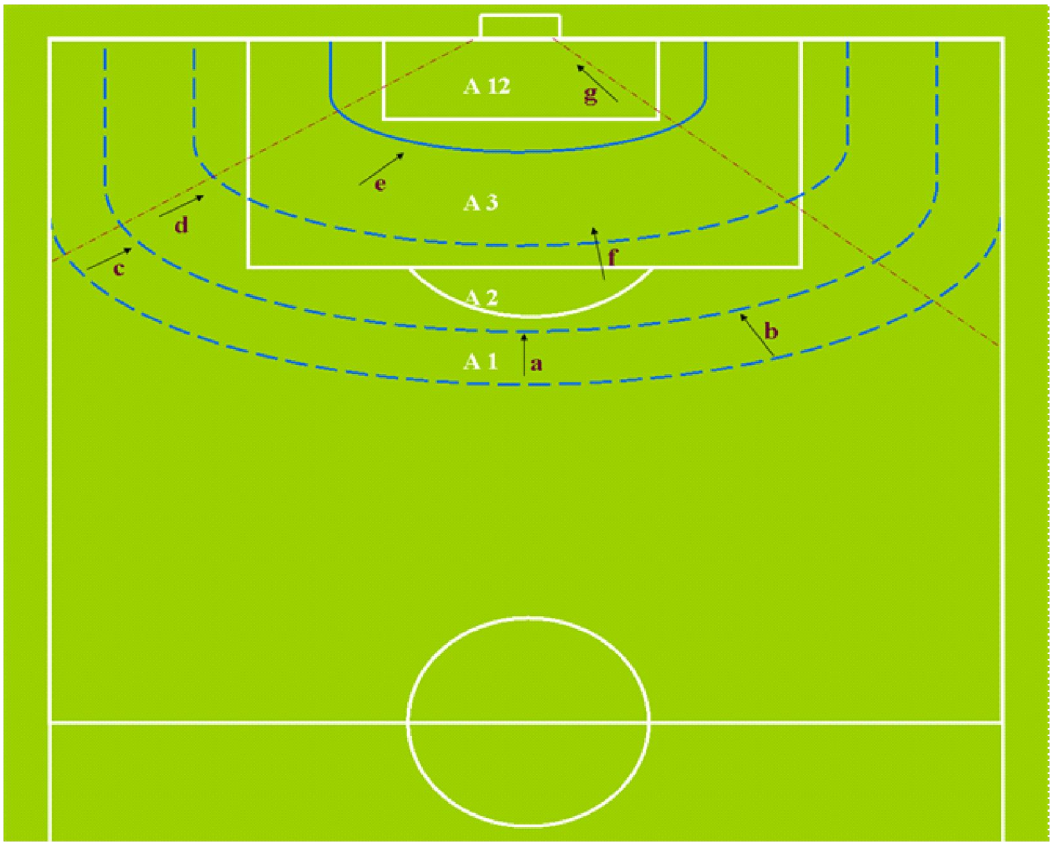
Specific skills required for players prior to achieving scoring of goals include; ball control skills, self space awareness, dodging skills, trickery, dribbling skills, effective body balance with the ball, good self positioning, tactical coordination skills, unpredictability on ball, good timing on ball and timing of the opponents, flexibility on ball, quick decision making and quick reaction on ball. All these skills are necessary for players to consider while in the scoring section, prior to shooting the ball into the goal.

The art of shooting or scoring the ball into the goal

Scoring of the ball varies so much, depending on the position of a player in the attempt to score the ball and their distance from the goal. There is what is referred to as the scoring zones or the relevant areas in different positions and distances from the goal where players are capable of shooting the ball into the goal, depending on their scoring aptitudes and playing positions. An illustration of scoring zones is shown in the figure below.

Illustration of scoring zones for shooting the ball in the scoring section

Fig 6.



The above figure shows an illustration of scoring zones where players can shoot the ball into the goal with higher chances of scoring. They include Area 1 (A1), Area 2 (A2), Area 3 (A3), and Area 12 (A12) which is the most critical area for shooting the ball. These areas indicate various distances from the goal where players may strike the ball. The arrows array different positions from which they may shoot the ball. The different areas and positions shown give different instructions to players in their minds, of how to play the ball and how variously to shoot it into the goal. The strength of the body used and power exerted on ball when shooting in area 1 should be necessarily greater than the speed and power used in area 12. The same thing applies to the level of a player's concentration and focus required in order to ensure shooting accuracy. In area 12, there should be more players' unpredictability on ball, instant touch on ball when scoring, and speed or swift reaction. In area 3 and 12, the defenders and goal keeper of the opposition team tend to be more conscious and on high tension. This testifies that there is need for swiftness in players' reaction and use of tactical coordination skills to pass the ball. There should also be a higher level of unpredictability on ball and more effective use of given spaces (high space awareness of players).

Scoring skills for shooting the ball

When looking at scoring skills, there are two ways of shooting the ball. These include hard shooting, and soft shooting of the ball. They vary depending on the amount of power, speed and level of skills or technique used to kick the ball.

Hard shooting entails kicking of hard balls, which may include screw balls or still balls hit by the outside of the foot. Hard shooting is further classified into long hard shooting and close hard shooting of the ball, which depend on the distances of players from which the ball is shot towards the goal. Hard balls are called so because they are normally powerful and hard to control or divert away by the goal keeper due to the high momentum and speed of the ball. A hard ball is kicked by using the outside or top of the foot.

Soft shooting of the ball involves shooting rolling balls, speedy balls (frontward spinning balls), dropping balls (back spinning balls), still ball, and screw balls or sideward curving balls, hit by the inside or outside of the foot. Soft shooting is called so because it involves more technique than power on the ball to enforce its speed, accuracy, and its other strategic behaviours which make it a challenge for the goal keeper to intercept it.

There are specifically three kinds of balls experienced in the game of football during passing or scoring as kicked by players. These include **a still ball, spinning ball, and rolling ball**. A still ball is one which has little effect of spinning or rolling. A spinning ball is one driven on the ground or passed above it, which spins frontwards, backwards or sideward effectively. A rolling ball is a frontward spinning ball passed on the ground. All these are behaviours of the ball effective in the game, and so that is why they are strongly considered.

When frisking soft shooting of the ball, the skills used to hit the ball should be relevant to its behaviours as passed on the ground or in air, for specific intentions and expectations of a player. It is only the hard ball that is used for hard shooting as a skill. The rest of the other skills for shooting the ball are relevant for soft shooting. These include the following;

Rolling ball: This is more relevant in Area 2 and Area 3 of the scoring section for making direct shots to the goal. The faster the spinning of the ball along the ground, the greater is its speed and momentum towards the goal. This makes it hard for the goal keeper to intercept the ball, due to its very high speed, momentum, and reaction on the ground due to gravitational force.

In the rolling motion of the ball, a ball that is projected forward without spin on a horizontal surface will slide for a short distance before it starts rolling. Sliding friction acts to "decrease" the rotation speed. In a different situation, if the ball is projected forward by hitting it to spin frontwards on a horizontal surface, it's speed in the forward movement will be so fast through a longer distance, depending on the power used to hit it and the speed of the spin. The forward rolling of the ball allows it to gain traction on the ground, which accelerates its speed and momentum. Hitting rolling balls is an effective scoring skill for players with strong shooting power of the leg. A rolling ball or shot on goal which may be in form of an instep drive (hit by the laces up the big toe) is usually the most powerful and accurate of all shots, by being fast, penetrative and leveled into the goal. It can be shot from virtually all areas of the scoring section once a player smartly observes space to shoot the ball. In order to ensure accuracy, the shooting leg should swing towards the direction of literally where the ball is intended to go, inside the goal.

Hitting an instep drive

Fig 7.



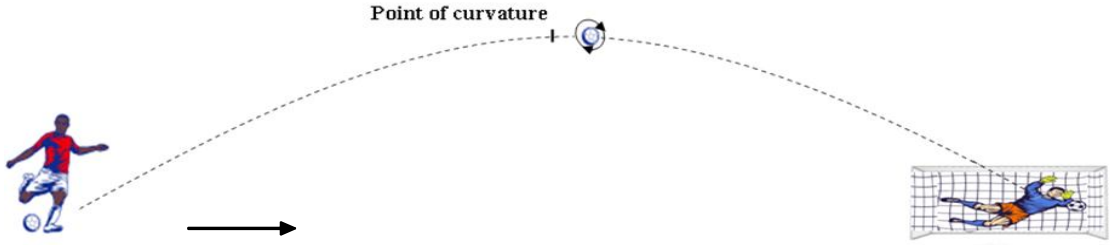
Frontward spinning ball (speedy ball): This is a class of ball under which the rolling ball also falls. The only difference is that here the ball is moved above the ground. The frontward/forward spinning ball is more relevant when shot from Area 1, Area 2, and Area 3 of the scoring section, as a direct shot on goal. A frontward spinning ball is invariably too fast since spinning frontwards allows it to penetrate so fast through air, with less to no opposition. The impact of gravitation force also proposes it's down ward spinning, which enables it to sustain for longer, till the ball drops on the ground.

The greater the power exerted on ball and faster it spins, the greater its speed and momentum through its flight. Curving upwards indicates that there is a slight reduction in the power and speed of the ball which occurs due to opposing forces or pressure against the speed of the ball. It also indicates that the spin of the ball is relatively reduced to allow further penetration of the ball towards the sky.

When there is stronger opposing air experienced, and lower speed and strength of the ball, the ball will likely curve more through its flight due to loss of weight and ability to penetrate through air. Hitting a frontward spinning ball is an effective scoring skill for players with strong shooting power of the leg, and makes it difficult for the goal keeper to intercept the ball due to its high speed, especially if the shot curves towards the corners of the goal, under the cross bar or near post.

Illustration of movement of the frontward spinning ball

Fig 8.



The front ward spinning ball can be hit by using both the outside and inside of the foot, but tends to be easier to be more accurate if the ball is hit by the "inside of the foot."

Dropping ball (back spinning ball): This is a ball kicked off the ground when hit below its bottom by either chipping it or golfing it off the ground. When the ball is hit in this way, it will go as far high, and also spin upwards.

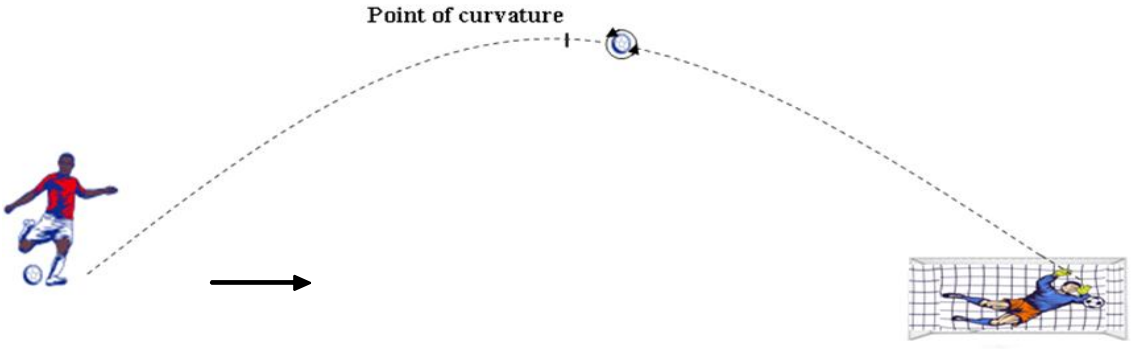
As a scoring skill, a dropping ball may be relevant for free kicks taken from Area 1 and 2, and from position c, d and b of the scoring section. It is also relevant for scoring the ball in Area 1 and 2 when the goal keeper has moved closely away from the goal to cut down the angle of the attacker to successfully shot a lower ball into the goal. It requires high timing of the ball and timing

of the keeper's movements, instant reaction, and relatively little and balanced power used to shoot the ball. The little exertion of power on ball allows it to curve easily, whereas the fast speed of the spin allows it to be fast, curve quickly and drop fast.

An example of a dropping ball is a chip shot on goal which is kick lofted into the air to try to sail the ball over the goal keeper's head or hands and shoot it under the cross bar into the goal.

Illustration of movement of the dropping ball.

Fig 9.



Still ball: A still ball is one with little effect of spinning or rolling. It can be hit as a ground ball or air ball, and as a dropping ball or hard ball. This as a scoring skill is more relevant in Area 12 and relatively Area 3, as the player is closer to the goal. There is limited art engaged for a still ball, and the ball is likely to react differently depending on the strength of opposing air, which would lower its speed or curve it to any direction, or depends on the roughness or thickness of the ground, which would lower its speed in case of a ground pass. A still ball is not a very effective scoring skill on ball as compared to other basic skills of shooting the ball because it involves little art. It is more relevant for shooting or tapping the ball into the goal when closer to it. The ball may be hit using the outside or inside of the foot, or its top in a more direct way.

Screw ball (side spinning ball): This is a ball hit by the inside or outside of the foot, by slightly brushing it in a way that allows it to spin sideward, in a specific direction. A screw ball is the most strategic scoring technique on ball. There is relevantly more art that can be offered to kick a screw ball, depending on the intentions of a player prior to scoring the ball. For instance, it can be shot as a ground ball, air ball, slant spinning screw ball, or a more direct (less curvy) screw ball, which all result to different behaviours of the ball and expectations.
It can be effectively scored from all areas/zones of the scoring section, including A1, A2, A3 or A12, and from all scoring positions.

A speedy ball and dropping ball normally have their point of curvature in the second or third quarter of the trip, but the screw ball normally has its in the last quarter of the trip, which makes it more unique and effective for scoring once mastered. This is because the ball reacts (curves) more as the speed of the spin goes down and also because it experiences more pressure of the opposing air which forces it to curve more in the direction of the spin of the ball, mostly in the last quarter when its speed is slightly reduced. This would make confusion to the goal keeper, thinking that the ball is moving outside of the goal yet it later curves in-wards into the goal, which also makes it hard to instantly dive for.

A screw ball on the ground is as well interesting to score, especially when the ball is shot around corners of the goal or the near post.

Illustration of a screw ball movement

Fig 10.



A slanting screw ball is also great to score. It comes as a half screw ball and half speedy ball, and spins towards secondary directions. It predominantly allows more speed of the ball and curving in the last quarter of the trip. A slanting screw ball is perfect for scoring the ball towards the corners of the goal, either under the cross bar or towards the ground. It is great for stretching the goal keeper especially during the take of a direct free kick. It is also great for taking cross balls and corner kicks, due to its up-ward and outward swinging behavior that is a challenge to the goal keeper to reach the ball at most cases.

Illustration of a slanting screw ball movement



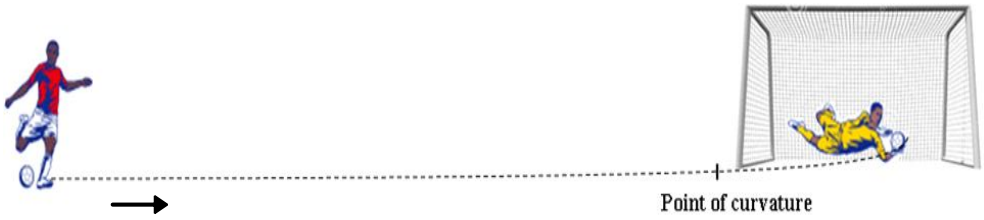
Fig 11.

It can perfectly be hit using the inside of the foot to offer speed and accuracy.
A slanting screw ball passed on the ground is as well very effective for scoring, especially when making a diagonal shot to a far post to challenge a goal keeper who has moved far away from it and is standing close to the goal line. It is a very fast and accurate shot on goal which makes a curve in the last quarter of the trip, and allows the ball to trickily bend directly into the goal.

A more direct screw ball is a side spinning ball which allows little to no curving throughout the trip of the ball. It requires more power on ball when shooting, in order to offer more resistance to the opposing air throughout the trip that would enforce the curving. It is good for making lower shots on goal, and balls moved on the ground. This is because in case of a high ball, the ball can easily go over the cross bar, due to high power and momentum that allows it to keep accelerating in speed and height, which eventually creates high chances for it to go over the cross bar of the goal. A more direct screw ball can be perfectly hit by using the top of the foot (laces) to exert more power on the ball.

Illustration of a player shooting a more direct screw ball

Fig 12



A "more direct slanting screw ball" is one of the most perfect balls that can be scored as lower balls into the goal. It gives much challenge to the keeper since it is fast, powerful, slightly curvy in the last quarter, dropping on the ground, and curves towards the sides. It is good for taking free kicks, and can be scored from long distances and positions in the scoring section. Christiano Ronaldo is one of the great players who are at many times perfect at shooting this kind of ball, especially when you carefully watch his direct free kick shots on goal.

A more direct slanting screw ball can be hit either by the inside of the foot to offer more accuracy or using the top/outside of the foot to exert more power on ball.

Illustration of a player shooting a more direct slanting screw ball

Fig 13



Screw balls need regular practice in order to master. Players should also understand that the ball can be deflected by wind, which may at times limit their accuracy. While smart enough, a player can take advantage of the wind direction to offer accuracy, if they manage to sense its strength and direction.

Other shooting skill on ball

Other skills for shooting the ball into the goal include heading of the ball (normally cross balls, free kicks and corner kicks), flicking of the ball (normally cross balls, short through balls, and lead passes), over head kicks, and volleys. All these are relevant in Area 3 and 12 of the scoring section. They require more skill on ball, stability, high self space awareness, and high body balance with the ball. They also suggest high player's agility and strength, and their perfect self positioning prior to scoring the ball. They all require considerable training in order to perfect. A player good at these scoring skills would be a good finisher or instant scorer in games.

Skills for scoring headers and shooting balls from crosses and through passes will be looked at ahead when looking at receiving skills on ball. Currently, let's converge on shooting skills for scoring volleys and overhead kicks.

When it comes to scoring volleys and overhead kicks, scoring becomes critical. It requires a player to have high body awareness, strength, swiftness in reaction, quick decision making, high timing on ball, self space awareness, body flexibility, and ball control skill, as a combination of necessary skills.

Volleying

Volleying is a tricky skill to master, but it's a great one to have in your locker.

The volley involves striking a ball that is still in the air, which can make accuracy even harder.

But there are few more satisfying moments than connecting cleanly with a volley and seeing it scream into the net.

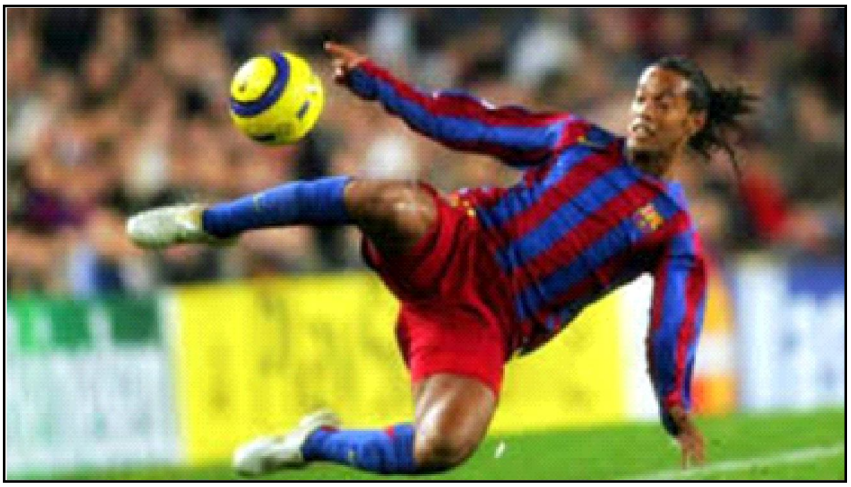
Make your mind up early and keep your eyes focused on the ball as you get into the line of flight use your arms for balance and imagine a strike zone in front of you.

Keep your head still and judge where you think the ball is going to arrive.
Plant your non-kicking foot on the ground, leading the knee, trying the kicking leg through. The legs should be slightly bent, with the toes pointing down and the ankle held firm. Try to keep your non-kicking foot in contact with the ground as it will keep you steady, and aim to make a solid connection with the ball.

If you try to bring your kicking leg through too quickly, you will find it difficult to control the volley. Strike the centre or top half of the ball with instep and keep your head over the ball to keep your volley down.
Follow through in the direction of the target.

1) Full Volley.

Fig. 14



A full volley is the act of kicking the ball straight out of air before the ball hits the ground. This is a difficult football skill to master but is extremely valuable and will, if practiced, become a handy weapon in your shooting arsenal.

Tips & Advice:

- Again concentrate on shooting technique over power. It doesn't take much force to send a full volley into the 10th row of the bleachers.
- Focus on meeting the ball flush, with your laces in the center of the ball. The loweryou hit the ball, the less power it will take to raise the ball.
- Your follow through is very important with this shooting technique. Concentrate on following through to your target.
- Sometimes you'll have to volley the ball on the side of your body (*Side Volley)* focus on getting over the ball and catching it higher, rather than lower. There's nothing wrong with driving the ball into the ground. It's more likely to hit the net that way and it will cause trouble for the goalkeeper.

- Don't get frustrated. It is a hard shooting technique to get the hang of. Keep focused. Practice, Practice. Oh, and don't forget to practice.

2) Half Volley.

Fig 15



The half volley is similar to the full volley, except it happens when the ball is shot on the bounce rather than straight out of the air. Again it is a difficult shooting skill, but easier than the full volley. You may want to start with this technique then move onto practicing your full volleys.

Tips & Advice:

- Most of the full volley advice applies here as well.
  - Shooting technique over power.
  - Follow through to the target.
  - Practice
- Get your body over the ball. The farther over the ball, the lower your shot will be.
- Try to catch the ball at the moment right after the bounce. If the ball is up around your knees, it's a lot harder to shoot.

Overhead kicking

Fig 16



There is nothing more impressive than scoring an overhead kick. It's tough, but once you master it you'll be able to at least get in a shot, even when you have your back to the goal. You'll also be able to clear the ball when you're facing in the wrong direction.

Practice it on soft ground to prevent injuring your back, and don't overdo it.
Get into line with the flight of the ball and keep your eyes on it throughout. This skill is all about timing most of the time, the ball will be coming at you fast from a tricky angle, so a good connection is vital, and don't try to and kick it hard, - just kick it clear – the movement of your body will generate the power. Jump up, leaving your kicking foot on the deck and using the foot that you will not be kicking the ball with to propel you upwards. Begin to fall backwards, keeping your eyes on the ball.

As your body sinks towards the ground, your non-kicking leg will be raised into the air. Your kicking leg may still be on the ground.
When the ball is in the ideal range, whip your kicking leg off the deck into the back of the ball, bringing your other leg back down quickly. At this point, your upper body should be almost horizontal to the ground. If the ball is flying too high, your body is probably too upright. It is the scissor movement of your legs that creates the power.
As you fall, stretch out your hand to steady your impact with the ground.
Twist your body sideways to avoid landing flat on your back.
Use your arms to cushion your landing, but avoid landing on your elbows or your head.

Volleying and overhead kicking of the ball can be trained and perfected, but more specifically require a player's high body awareness and making of quick analysis of the ball during its flight before it is received, i.e. about its speed, momentum, direction, distance from the passer, and its height level from the ground. A player has to make a snap shot of all this analysis in their mind immediately before they strike the ball in order to ensure instant reaction and accuracy. If one has poor body balancing and posture prior to shooting the ball, with poor body flexibility and low speed and body awareness, it will be quite hard to score a goal using either of these scoring techniques.

All scoring skills require practice for one to improve, and all those who improve do practice, with high focus.
As an important note, there is no need for a player to become a perfectionist at scoring the ball, because football is not a game of perfectionism. Once a player becomes a perfectionist, they will likely fail enough times because they will be psychologically bothered in their minds by the few trials which they have failed to score. They will be so much focused on scoring, and yet possible distractions, interruptions or missed chances can make them lose their concentration and also gain anger or depression.

Therefore, scoring skills are good to practice by all players, especially those with good scoring capabilities and capacity to change results on the score board. They should ensure closer utilization of scoring opportunities, and allow more accuracy, style, and speed of the ball. It also contributes a lot to a team's capacity to win games by scoring quick smart goals. Below are some of the important shooting tips as recommended for players to consider while in the shooting exertion.

Football shooting tips:

- Observe the goalkeeper's position. Have they left a gap that you can exploit?
- Select the best technique for your shot. A sidefoot shot will have greater accuracy, but an instep (laces) with good follow-through will have greater power.
- Put your non-kicking foot alongside the ball.
- Keep your head down and your eyes on the ball when striking.
- Keep your body over the ball.
- Make contact with the middle to top half of the ball.
- Maintain your composure.

Tips to improve your chance of scoring:

- Shoot wide rather than high. There's a better chance of getting a deflection that will wrong-foot the goalkeeper.
- Shoot low. It's harder for a keeper to reach shots along the ground because it's further for them to travel. It's easy for them to jump up and save, but much harder to crouch down and get it.
- Shoot across the keeper. It's tougher for them to hold these shots, and means they could divert the ball back into the path of another attacker.

Implement the advice from this and Shooting Skills: Different Shooting Techniques (Tips & Advice) to your football shooting and you will be on your way to becoming better at shooting and will begin to score more goals.
Don't forget to remember, technique first, power second. Then go practice hard.

Passing and receiving skills

These are very important skills on ball. They virtually make up the football game since without them the game would be all about chasing for the ball against the possessing player, fighting on ball, and poorly coordinating with it throughout an entire match, which would during this modern era turn the game to be so boring. They indicate various roles and responsibilities between a passer of the ball and the receiver during the course of exchanging the ball, and also determine the necessary combination of playing skills, tactical connection, and players' mindset required when playing with the ball.

Tactical significance:

Passing and receiving skills are very significant for augmenting the tactical coordination and connectedness of players, improve their ball possession capabilities, and control the pace at which to move or play the ball.

On the next page, we start by looking at passing or the passing skills used on ball, as follows;

Passing

When specifically looking at passing of the ball, there are two types of passing considered. These include:

a. Long passing
b. Close passing.

Under these are three categories of passing that are experienced in the game. These include a **direct pass**, **through pass and cross ball**. There are further three sub categories of passes under these, which include *the aerial ball, lower ball or average ball, and a ground pass,* which depend on the height level of passing the ball from the ground.

Pass categories

Let's make a brief look at the above stated pass categories in order to have a perceptible understanding about them.

Direct pass

A Direct pass is a type of ball kicked by a passer to a receiver who is facing directly towards them during the action of receiving the ball, as illustrated in figure (17) below.

A direct pass can be in form of a long ball, close pass, aerial ball, lower ball or ground pass. Direct passing of the ball is very effectual in the game since it offers more passing accuracy and simplicity to receive the ball, since the receiver is normally well positioned and postured to trap the ball, control it and as well use it effectively.

Illustration of a player receiving a direct passes

Fig 17



Through pass

A through pass is a type of ball passed to a receiver and they receive it while facing the direction of the ball, as illustrated in figure (18) below.

A through pass can be in form of a close pass, long pass, aerial ball, lower ball or ground pass. A wall pass is an example of a short lower through ball, normally passed along the wing play or from the center towards the forward play.

A lead pass is another example of a through pass. It is a pass sent ahead of a moving teammate so that the ball arrives at its target at the same time as the teammate.

A through pass is very apposite for making quick tactical moves with the ball during attacking. It requires high ball control skills for trapping the ball, speed, space awareness and quick reaction of the receiver, as well as passing skill and accuracy of the passer for effective play.

Illustration of a through pass (lead pass)

Fig 18



A Cross ball

A cross ball is a type of ball normally received by the receiver from the sides of their body while making a forward run to receive or meet the ball. Cross balls are typically kicked from the central midfield towards the wing play, and from the wing play towards the striking line/forward play during attacking as illustrated below in fig (19). Cross balls can be in form of a close pass, long pass, aerial ball (lofted pass), lower ball or ground pass. A square pass is an example of a cross ball.

Cross balls are very compelling during attacking games, and coordination balance of players with the ball, which is assertive for space creation on the pitch. They principally crave players to be very fast to meet the ball, play with high ball control skill and good self positioning and body posture in order to trap the ball and utilize it effectively.

An illustration of a cross ball (lofted pass)

Fig 19



Passing skills on ball

These refer to the techniques or ways of kicking or hitting the ball so as to effect art in its behaviours throughout its trip to a destination during passing, for various drifts or assurance as regards to the effects of its behaviours. One should note that there are three kinds of balls or ball behaviours in football while on a trip, as were well talked about precedently when looking at scoring skills. These include the still ball, spinning ball, and rolling ball. These are ball behaviours which connote the kind of skill used to play the ball or hit it during passing of it or scoring into the goal. All these kinds of skills on ball are relevant for margining the speed, momentum, accuracy, timing and distance or height of moving the ball during passing or scoring.

When heeding passing of the ball, indirect free kicks and corner kicks are also regarded as passes of the ball.
Let's dash ahead and pretty look at these kinds of ball behaviours and their relevant effective passing skills.

A. Still ball: This is a ball which has little effect of spinning or rolling on the ground. It is less applicatory in playing the game as compared to other skills for kicking the ball, since it involves little art of playing the ball, which makes it less effective. However, a still ball is acutely relevant for making short distance shots on goal, very close passing and long direct passing of the ball for a push pass. The effect of the ball movements in air or on the ground makes it easy to flick, stop or play immediately, especially if it is not in form of a hard ball. A still ball is slower when passed on the ground or in air, as compared to other kinds of balls or passing skills, literally due to its nature of not matching provided forces which would enhance its speed.

It is performed by hitting the ball around the middle centre of its sphere and kicking it forwards, using the inside of the foot or around the sideway of the big toe or the top of the foot, as illustrated below in fig 9.

Illustration of a player passing a still ball (push pass)

Fig 20



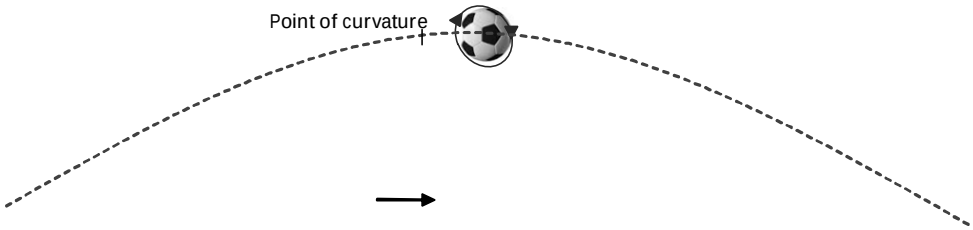
B. Spinning ball: This is a ball which has high effect of spinning when moving in a trip. It can be in form of an aerial ball, lower ball or ground pass. It is classified into a frontward spinning ball (particularly for a pass above the ground), a side spinning ball/screw ball (can be a ground pass or a ball above the ground), and lastly a back spinning ball/dropping ball (for passes above the ground). Note: there should notably be a marked difference between a side spinning ground pass and a rolling ball. This is because a rolling ball spins frontwards and falls into its own category of passing skills.

a. Frontward spinning ball. A frontward spinning ball, also known as a speedy ball is a crisp pass above the ground performed by hitting the ball around the bottom centre of its sphere, using the inside or outside of the foot, while kicking it upwards and forwards to let it spin frontwards. It is known as a speedy ball because it is the fastest, when compared to all other kinds of passing skills on ball. This is due to the frontward/downward fast spinning motion of the ball, proposed by the gravitational force, which allows it to move/spin so fast and penetrate through air. This also allows the ball to become much resistant to opposing air available, due to its high kinetic force. In the same case, because the ball spins downwards, some air is thrown down as the other moves up the ball with less opposition force or pressure, which allows it to penetrate through air and move faster.

The ball doesn't seem to go so high because it spins towards the ground whereby its effected by gravitational force, and in this observance, the curve will not be so bent or dropping, and the ball will curve downwards to the ground in approximately the same distance as it is raised to the point of curvature. Below in fig 10 is an illustration showing a frontward spinning ball.

An illustration of a frontward spinning ball movement

fig 21



A frontward spinning ball is very germane for long direct passing of the ball and passing of a very fast through pass, mostly done during a count attack in a situation where there is an advantage of space at the forward play. However, the ball doesn't seem to be so easily controllable if passed as a close pass or shot through ball, whereby it could be easy to lose its possession by a player in limited space and close confrontation of opponents. So players should note this with strong awareness and decide when to pass a speedy ball.

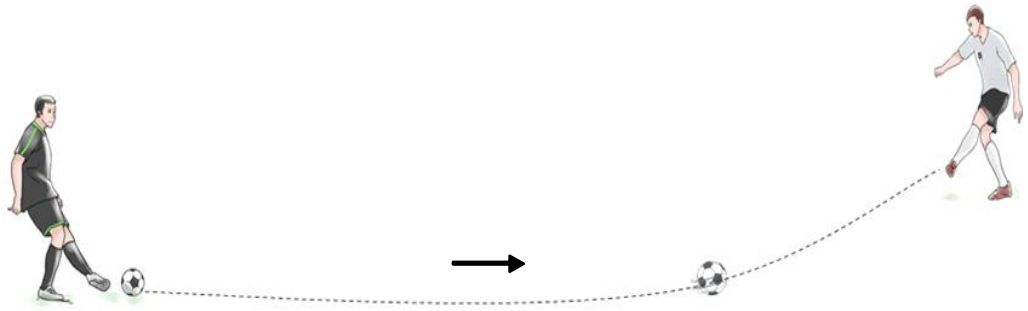
a. Side spinning ball (screw ball): A side spinning ball or screw ball is a pass projected on the ground or above it, depending on how the ball is hit, basing on relevant distinct intentions of the passer. If players want to perfect in the football game, every passing skills that could improve their performance should be practiced carefully.

A ground screw ball

A ground screw ball is one of the best passing skills on ball. A screw ball passed on the ground is performed by hitting the ball around the centre and kicked by brushing it sideward to let it spin in the sideward direction, using the inside or outside of the foot. In order to move the ball on the ground, the player should lean a bit forwards with the planting leg stationary and the ball close to the body and also balance his power of the leg and the strength of his body during action, with the follow-through of the kicking leg kept a bit short.

Illustration of a player hitting a ground screw ball

Fig 22



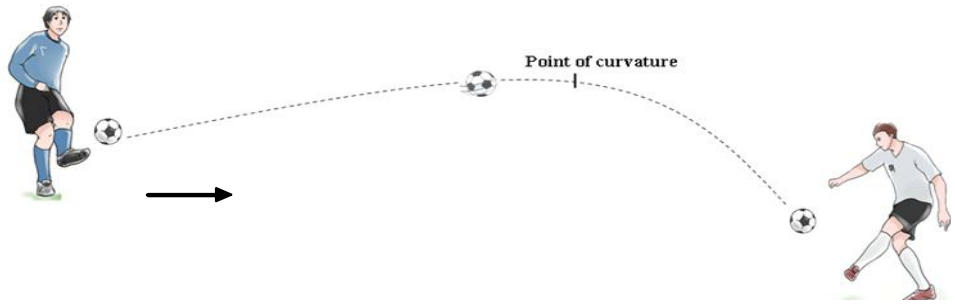
The advantage of a screw ball moved on the ground over a rolling ball is that a screw ball is much easier to trap in one position by a receiver since there is vertical rotation of the ball which is not affected by pressure on the ground that would force it upwards, and also that the speed of the ball is less affected by the spinning of the ball and force of gravity. In other words, the ball will be fast and at the same time easier to control, whereas a rolling ball would be faster and hard to control in one position.

A screw ball passed on the ground is very suitable and perfect for close direct passing of the ball, long passing, through passes and ground cross balls. However, a ball hit by the inside of the foot is more relevant in this case, since the one hit by the outside of the foot may happen to be a hard ball (more powerful) yet hard to control by the receiver, due to the much power exerted to it when kicking.

A screw ball passed in air

A screw ball moved in air is performed by hitting the ball around the bottom centre and kicked by brushing it side wards to let it spin towards the same direction using the inside or outside of the foot. In order to kick the ball high, it should be hit underneath, and the player leans to his shoulders (backwards) during contact, with sufficient lift of the ball. At the same time, the body of the player should be lightly slanted side wards to a relative angle, on the planting side of the body and the ball kept slightly close to the body prior to kicking.

Illustration of a player hitting an air screw ball



A player can create a lot more power and swerve on ball if they hit it with the outside of the foot. However, this makes it a lot harder to be accurate.

A screw ball passed above the ground is very effective and perfect for long passing of the ball, through passes and cross balls, for both lower and aerial passes, due to its easy reaction effect that allows the receiver to trap it easily.

The side spinning ball or screw ball is immensely compatible in games more than the speedy ball, still ball, dropping ball or rolling ball, during close or long passing since it is fast enough and can easily be controlled in one position and /or played immediately by the receiver. It tends to be easier to control because it is opposed by more pressure, and so it experiences

less reactive force along to enhance its movement, especially at the point of curvature of the ball trip. This makes the reason as to why screw balls or side spinning balls do most of their curving in the last quarter of the trip. Or in other words, they curve more where they are opposed by more pressure in a trip.

If players want to curl the ball more side-wards, they should slightly lean side wards on the planting-side of the body, keep the hand on the planting-side out for balance and power, hit the ball to spin faster, and allow the kicking leg to follow through slightly towards the point where the ball has to be destined, with balance of power and strength of a player's body. Below is an illustration showing movements of a side spinning ball;

An illustration showing movements of a side spinning ball



Fig 24

a. Back spinning ball (dropping ball): Well, this is a ball passed above the ground and drops downwards while in a trip, with a more bent flight as if it is projected over a hill. It is performed by hitting the ball at its lower bottom and hitting it below to kick it above the ground using the big toe towards the top of the foot. It may be performed by golfing the ball off the ground using the top of the foot, or chipping it up by hitting it around the bottom. The action should allow the ball to spin backwards and upwards. The faster the ball spins upwards, the more it will penetrate upwards and likely go higher and further, and the more it will as well bend downwards after reaching the point of curvature. The ball will seem to go high because it spins upwards, and in this case, some air towards its front is thrown upwards as the other is thrown downwards right behind it. This motion allows the ball to penetrate upwards, hence becomes opposed by more pressure, including that of the opposing air, and gravitational force. This will commonly cause the ball to curve either in the second or third quarter of the trip, which is approximately in the middle of the flight.

Due to the highly experienced opposing pressure, the speed of the spin of the ball will slow down easily and more quickly, which will lower down the speed of the ball and its penetrative power into the air. As a result, it will drop down-wards with relatively low pressure. And as another result, it will be so bent down wards with a close angle of curvature, and a high speed of deceleration towards the ground, that is due to reaction of gravitational force. This makes the reason as to why it is also known as a dropping ball.

The closeness of the angle of curvature is determined by the "power" used to kick the ball, "angle of elevation" of the ball, and the height from the ground to which it is kicked. These

three at the same time determine the distance of moving the ball. For example, if a player intends to kick the ball far, there has to be more power used to kick the ball and a higher angle of its elevation offered. This also means that the follow through of the leg has to be long enough in order to offer the two dimensions (height and length).
Examples of the dropping ball include a chip pass/lofted ball and an outlet pass (mostly used when taking a goal kick)

A back spinning ball requires exceptional practice by players in order to ensure accuracy in performing the technique on ball. There is critical need to balance power in order to ascertain the distance moved by the ball and its accuracy towards the receiver. The receiver should also be sure with their ball control skills to trap the ball in one position with a quality first touch, since it drops on high speed with more weight of the ball brought about by gravitational force. In other words, a dropping ball should not be regarded by a player as too easy to control because it requires proficient timing, very high focus and concentration of a player, good self positioning at its dropping target, and effective body posture, critical eye coordination to the ball throughout its flight, and good body balancing that would ensure a receiver's traction on the ground. Chest control, lap control, and leg control are all effective if well trained. That is; when the ball is moved so high during a long pass. For body balancing, a player should lean a bit backwards in a slanting angle relevant to that of the ball for easy ball trapping on the lap, chest or leg preferentially.

Illustration of a player controlling a dropping ball.

Fig 25



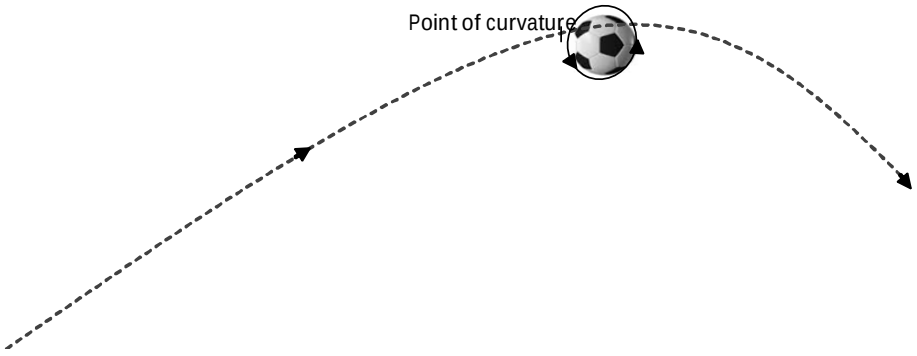
A back spinning ball is relevant for long passing of the ball, since the ball is easier to trap with a single touch, as correlated to other kinds or classifications of passing for a long ball. It is also germane for coordination balance and creation of spaces around the pitch through use of long passes during play. The technique is as well commendable for taking very close direct free kicks into the goal, peculiarly those positioned in areas surrounding the edge of the 18 yards goal box.

The disadvantage is that; a back spinning ball is not well effective for aerial crosses and indirect free kicks which would require a receiver to score the ball punctually by heading it into the goal, notably when they anticipate scoring a ball over the keeper's head into the goal. This is because the downward spinning motion of the ball is highly opposed when the ball touches on the head, which results to its tapping off the head in a wide angle into the sky, whereby the ball goes high off the target. This is why the technique is not relevant for such a playing aspect, unless when the scorer rather intends to head flick the ball towards the ground into the goal by proposing to its spinning motion, is when it is easier to be accurate.
In this case, a screw ball or forward spinning pass would instead be much suitable.

Below is an illustration showing the movement of a back spinning ball or dropping ball.

An illustration showing the movement of a back spinning ball

Fig 26



Rolling ball: Well, football is a game which integrates a lot of skills, and all essential to learn. Now here comes the rolling pass. A highly remarkable passing skill to consider. A rolling ball is the last passing skill to look at, and is specifically a crisp ground pass which has high effect of the ball rolling on the ground in a frontward direction. It is an ultimately speedy ball on the ground, which would predominantly escalate the speed of passing the ball on the ground in a match by a team. It is acutely suitable for close direct passing of the ball, long direct passing, and drive passing (making a long through speedy pass used to split a defense prior to scoring a quick goal). This is because it can quickly and easily be received without being contested by the opposition. A rolling ball requires players in position to receive the ball to be very fast to meet it, with practical ball control and trapping skills.

A rolling ball can be in form of a hard ball or soft ball, depending on how the kicking foot is placed on the ball when hitting it. A hard ball is performed when the ball is hit by the outside of the foot, whereas a soft ball is executed when it is hit by the inside of the foot. A rolling ball hit as a hard ball is temperately faster and more powerful, with very high momentum as analyzed to that hit as a soft ball. The hindrance is that; it is slightly hard for a passer to be accurate with a hard ball, and also hard for a receiver to control the ball in one position with a first touch, due to its very high momentum. This justifies that it is more effective to pass a rolling ball with a soft touch or passing it as a soft ball, while using the inside of the foot. When passing, what is fancied more is the speed and accuracy of the ball, and not necessarily its momentum in this case. Momentum is mostly good to consider when shooting into the goal to create a challenge to the goal keeper.

A rolling ball is commendable for oversighting movements of the opponents on the pitch by easing the expansion and contraction of the passing field of players for close passing and long passing of the ball, since it is effective for both types of passing.

A rolling ball is strongly effective, but has quite a limited tactical importance in the game since it is not relevant for cross balls and short through passing of the ball, which is because the ball is very speedy and rolls towards a less flexible direction for a player to trap it easily during reception.

A cross ball passed in form of a rolling ball is hard to score into the goal by flicking the ball instantly. This is so because the frontward spinning of the ball forces it to go high when hit forwards by the foot whereby it is hard to shoot accurately to the goal. The best ground pass from the passer in this case would rather be a screw ball. The only possibility for scoring a frontward rolling pass accurately is by hitting the ball to allow it spin frontwards to the direction of the goal by striking it at its middle to the top half of its sphere.

Below is an illustration showing the movement of a rolling pass;

An illustration showing the movement of a rolling pass

Fig 27

Conclusion

Passing skills need to be severally practiced everyday by a player in order to master them and perfect accuracy. During small group training sessions, shooting the ball at least five times per skill each day would be helpful to master key techniques to use. During a scrimmage (training game), it is good to analyze and improve one's accuracy on ball of using passing skills, by hitting the ball while a player is under condensed pressure to enable them perfect the techniques at the initial stage of mastering them

Receiving skills on ball

Receiving is a player's ability to trap or control a pass with a first touch on ball. Receiving skills used on ball may be varied depending on the passing skill used to pass the ball, the category of a pass, and the position/standing stance of the receiver and their distance from the passer.
Receiving skills on ball are encompassed under ball control skills. So it is of substance for players to fortify their ball control skills in order to align their receiving ball skills.

When prior to receiving a pass, a player is presumed to have high space awareness, focus and concentration, and should have very critical eye coordination with the ball throughout its trip, with high body awareness and situational awareness in order to control the ball and beat surrounding opponents.

Players should refer to ball control skills taught in this book in chapter 3, to analyze which level of the body for playing the ball may be used for a specific category of a pass variably out of decision, intention and situational awareness of a player receiving the ball. For example, level 1 of the body (which comes from the ground to the knees) is considered to be more flexible for ground balls, high balls and dropping balls. Level 2 (from the knees to the belly) is flexible for high balls, speedy high balls and dropping balls, whereas level 3 (from the chest to the top of the head) is more flexible for aerial balls.

Other portions to look at for receiving skills on ball include a player's body awareness, body balance, self positioning and body posture, and balancing of the body strength during contest, when prior to receiving a ball.

Skills and tips for receiving critical passes of the ball

a. Scoring of a passed ball

Scoring of the ball into the goal also inevitably solicits good player's receiving skills on ball, since there are many manifestations when they should use a single touch on ball, both to receiving it and to score it into the goal at the same time and in a dynamic move. Here, players require both good receive skills and scoring skills on ball in order to flick it well and effectively. The skills in this aspect are relevant for receiving and scoring crossed balls and corner kicks.

Tips for scoring a pass in air

- Study the flight or trip of the ball and move in line with it.
- Allow your head to face the ball directly throughout its trip, with your legs in a "hips open" position
- When about to head flick the ball, make sure your body leans backwards for power and acceleration, with the neck and head more stretched to the back.
- Allow yourself to jump in the direction to flick the ball and raise your feet in order to allow a suspended quick movement of the whole body. However, here players

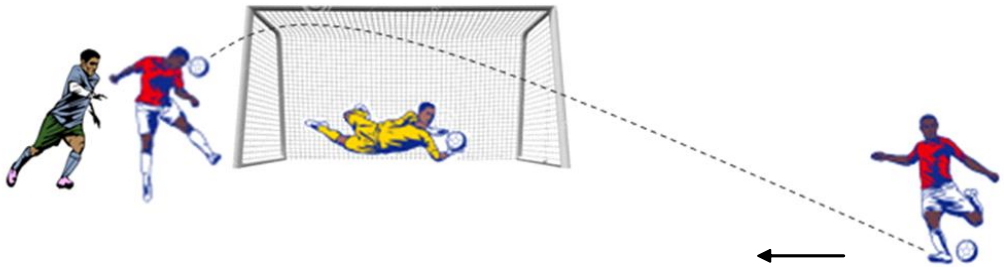
should be cognizant about their landing kinetics to avoid injuring the arms due to poor landing.

- When hitting the ball, a player should allow it to touch on the head first when flicking it to the goal. This is done to allow more shooting accuracy and perfect timing of the ball.

  Lastly, when flicking the ball, allow your head to follow-through in a direction towards the point or position inside the goal where you intend to shoot the ball, so as to offer scoring accuracy.

Illustration for scoring a pass in air

Fig 28



Note: Players should basically understand that when scoring a passed ball, sufficient focus should be put on the ball throughout its trip or flight. This should be done after checking marking of opponents and measuring their movements and speed. For instance, when prior to scoring a ball from a corner kick, the player willing to head the ball in the net should allow themselves to focus intelligibly at the ball flight, and head it with high concentration by being less distracted with defenders' movements. All they should ensure about is some ample space awareness to strike the ball.

a. Receiving a through pass

A through pass is one of the critical passes which should not be estimated to be so easy to trap

When prior to receiving a fast through pass from a teammate, a player is meant to run or move forwards, with their body slightly facing in the sides and their "hips open" to the field in the direction of movement. By moving in this way (especially while attacking) they can easily receive the ball on their back foot without stopping or trapping it thus can be played forward immediately. The "hips open" position also allows the player to see the whole field so they can remain aware of open teammates and defenders. At the same time, the arms have to be raised a bit, slightly facing in the opposite directions (forwards and backwards) to allow body balancing and readiness to play the ball at a quick pace.

Illustration of a player receiving a through pass

Fig 29



a. Receiving a cross ball

Trapping a cross ball is one of the hardest challenges that many players face in the basics of playing the football game. First, there's a specific need for the reader to know what a cross ball is, and how it is different from a square pass. A square pass is a ball passed from the wing towards the centre or from the center towards the wing play or from the wing to the wing, in any distance towards or away from the goal, and is received within a receiver's standing position.

A cross ball is a pass normally sent from the wing towards the goal front during an attack, slightly ahead of a moving player, to meet it at the point as it arrives at its target.

Regardless of the challenge in receiving a cross ball, a player should basically be fast enough to meet the ball, and should use the front leg to receive a lower ball or an average pass, or use the chest and head to meet an aerial pass. Their first touch on ball should certainly allow it to reduce in speed, and their second touch must be to immediately move it in the forward direction into playing space to allow continuity and speed maintenance, or perhaps to score it into the goal.

Tips for receiving a cross ball

- Check marking of opponents as you move forward
- Study the flight or trip of the ball
- Analyze the receiving point and run towards it
- Be fast enough in your reaction
- Allow your head to face the ball as it approaches the receiving point
- Meet it with a soft touch by exerting little force on it towards any direction, to allow it slow down

- If the ball is pretty ahead and out of your reach, it is still necessary to push and stretch your body forward to touch it, since there can be possibility of this being a goal scoring opportunity

Dodging skills

Dodging is the act of a player making tactical movements with the ball through, around, or away from threatening opponents and using high ball protection skills, with the aim to create space, utilize playing space, protect the ball, or move it into a different direction for further gist. So in accordance to the above definition, we find that dodging is relevant for creating space, utilizing playing space, protecting the ball, improving its retention or possession, beating movements of tackling opponents, and moving the ball into different directions of playing it on the pitch by a player.

Here we come to a sparking contradiction between dodging and dribbling

Dodging and dribbling are two different playing aspects. Many writers all over the internet do not grasp a difference between the two, which is absolutely wrong. There is a specific and clear difference between the two playing aspects. Dodging may be a form of dribbling but does not necessarily need to be considered the same as dribbling.

Dodging is the maneuvering of the ball in form of making diversions with it, using trickery and ball control. So it is encompassed by all these during various playing aspects.

Skills relevant for dodging;

Specific skills required for dodging include; ball control skills, ball protection skills, dribbling skills, self space awareness, trickery, flexibility on ball, mental and physical agility, body balance with the ball, timing of the opponents, making body turns with the ball, speed in reaction, and high unpredictability on ball.

Dodging more specifically requires ball protection skills, ball control skills, trickery, and dribbling skills of players. Players should train and practice these ball skills in pursuance of fortifying their dodging capabilities. They should practice both individually and as a team, and ensure to fall in love with the ball by playing and practicing it all the time, to improve their mental agility, playing speed, and body flexibility and awareness with it so as to uphold their playing and dodging capacity.

How to apply the skill in the game;

Dodging is very significant in the football game but shouldn't be relied on anyhow. When after practicing dodging skills, a player should first of all not perceive the game to be all about dodging throughout a contest. No please! This is because sometimes it is not necessary to dodge, whereby there are other playing aspects which would be more effective. These may be such as; passing of

the ball, coordinating, or sharing the ball closely with team mates, shooting into the goal, and so forth.

Secondly, players have to be positive in their movements or reactions with the ball and intentions when playing. There should completely be no intention like dodging for fun, showing off skills, teasing opponents or being too individualistic. Kindly there is no award for that!

For that matter, like all other ball skills, dodging should be done with an affirmative motive and for a positive purpose. On a cautious note, dodging or taking so much time with the ball individually gathers much attention of the surrounding opponents approaching towards the ball. During the course of attacking, they easily analyze a player's movements with the ball, which may lower down his/her unpredictability with it, and hence opponents can use any effectual tackle that can make him/her lose the ball. For instance, in the action of a player being tackled by more opponents, the pressure under which they are playing increases, and as a result, they can lose stability and speed on ball, which may effectuate into losing the ball through poor delivery of a pass, stealing away of the ball or easy interception of their actions. This is why there should be a well formulated limitation about how players should dodge.

One, their intentions in a game should not be to "dodge and dodge" but should be to "dodge and pass on or score the ball immediately."
Two, they should rely on zonal dodging more than direct dodging or dodging while using a direct approach. Zonal dodging refers to dodging with in space, i.e. a player dodging an opponent while still at a distance, with an aim to finagle their movements and stability, to create space for unpredictably passing on the ball to a team mate in position. This is a more effective way of dodging, since it saves time, allows sustenance of team ball possession and allows more player unpredictability at the same time. For example, it is very good during a keeper to beat situation, prior to scoring a goal. However, zonal dodging requires very high playing space awareness of a player, and efficacious speed in reaction.

Illustration of zonal dodging

Fig 30



Direct dodging refers to the act of dodging an opponent while facing them closely and directly with a more direct approach. This form of dodging is only good and necessary to a player in orientations and areas where there is limited playing space or high intercession of opponents, when trying to draw away, or make a penetrative move with the ball. So direct dodging may rather not be necessary during substantial situations for playing the ball. The weak points with this form of dodging include;

- It creates high risk for making fights on ball or losing it to the opponents.
- It creates a situation where there is a potential opportunity for opponents to contest a player aggressively in order to win a ball.
- It creates high risk of cleating, fouls and injury to a player.
- It drags both the attention of the opponents and that of the fellow team mates, since the opponents will attack a player closely to intercept his/her movements with the ball, whereas team mates will be influenced to get closer and intervene to offer support, instead of moving to better tactical positions to receive the ball.

Illustration of direct dodging

Fig 31



However spanking a player is at dodging skills, it is not recommended for them to rely unnecessarily on direct dodging since their advantage of being skilled can easily be turned into a weakness, peculiarly because their level of unpredictability on ball and playing speed will lower in the confrontation. Even when you go to boxing, the closer you attack your opponent, the more shares of punches you will likely receive, due to the same effect.

However, there are good skills and tricks for direct dodging which can be trained and practiced, that would be reliable in relevant situations.

These may include, the inside hook turn, outside hook turn, cruyff turn, step overs, drag back, nutmeg, rainball, fake shot, roulettespin, etc, as where looked at on page (108) in the training mode.

Dribbling skills

Dribbling is the act of a player maneuvering the ball or make a run with it through opponents or away from them, by making continual touches on it, to move it in a desired direction. It may also be defined to as maneuvering of a ball under the control of a single player in a given direction, while avoiding defenders' attempts to prevent this occurring.

Dribbling Illustration

Fig 32



Tactical significance of dribbling the ball;

Well, dribbling is relevant for making attacks, most effectively in the wing play, for instance prior to making a cross ball. It can also be done in the central field when making a direct attacking approach. And this would require high level of unpredictability, speed, and ball protection skills during action, and elementarily making bending runs to avoid attacking opponents, and utilize playing space.

Dribbling in the midfield is relevant for moving the ball forward through given spaces, overloading or hyping an attack, dodging opponents, and changing directions of moving the ball. It is good for controlling movements of the opponents on the pitch, to create opportunities of space in significant attacking positions through making bending runs with the ball lightly towards the wing play, and then cross it to a player in position to receive it in a position closer to the goal.

Relevant tactical skills for dribbling;

Skills required for dribbling of the ball during play include ball protection skills, speed, players' flexibility with the ball in terms of their ability to interchange its directions, dodging skills, body balance with the ball, and high space awareness in terms of distance from attacking opponents and to where they should head with the ball. While dribbling, players are normally in intensified action since they attract close and enormous attention of opponents, who as a result mark spaces tightly, attack them seriously, and impatiently tackle them in a struggle to grab the

ball. This means a player has to be absolutely fast enough, ensure enough ball protection, and react quickly with the ball. As a relevant tactic, they should make quite short and fast footsteps when making runs with the ball and also maintain the ball close to the body in composure to ensure easy protection, speed, unpredictability, quick decision making and quick reaction on ball. At the same time, their speed of the body should match with that of the ball to allow easy control over it and unpredictability through the action.

They should evenly depend on the above mentioned required skills with high combinatory ability to ensure effective utilization of the ball.

Chapter 4

The specific playing skills trained to players with their significance in achieving the game

Football is a game which features many playing skills. Besides the major skills categories discussed in chapter 2, there is a subsidiary class of specific playing skills for various relevant playing aspects experienced in the game, which are essential for players to assimilate and train.
There are over 20 specific playing skills trained to players in the game, and these are precisely explained in this chapter as follows;

I. Winning balls in open play

Winning balls in open play is a great and very essential playing skill for football players. It engrosses winning balls in open play, which are neither in the player's or the opponents' clear possession. It also involves intercepting or winning poor passes from the opponents.

Tactical significance;
Winning balls as a playing skill is very imperative to players because it helps them avoid unnecessary fighting on ball with the opponents. It further augments the playing spirit of players, their competitiveness and winning capacity. It improves their ball possession ability and their disruption into the tactical setups of the opponents. Having good ball winning skills would also enable players to play beyond the opponents' game, with generally an upper hand to keep possession and emerge with a win.

Important skills for winning ball in open play;
Necessary playing skills required to win balls include players' speed to get the ball, trapping skills, ball protection skills, timing on ball and timing of the opponents' actions, shielding, dodging skill, close interaction with close team mates for immediate support, quick reaction, use of instant touches on ball when poking it away or while flick passing, ball control skills, space awareness, body balance, and mounting pressure to the opponents surrounding the ball through a scary and aggressive approach.

Winning balls in open play may not be done by a single player. It should involve the intervention of other close team players to create pressure by attacking and closing up spaces, and also share the ball to uphold its possession and effective utilization.
Winning a ball is a tiresome game, hence requires a strong and conventional spirit of a team and each other's close support. It involves aggressively chasing opponent(s) with the ball, (just as three lions may chase an antelope) to increase chances for them to lose it or miss use it due to created pressure.

Once the ball is lost into open play or to an opponent, the same team spirit is required to win it back into a team's possession and tactical use. Creating pressure against opponents to win a ball

is actually more necessary in their playing section, before the ball crosses the center line. This is because once it crosses to your section as a team, the game is different, since there will be created pressure to you as well. Hence you would oblige to be more careful with your moves against the opponents. This is because, as you run after an opponent with the ball, it is expedient for them to run with the ball into open spaces ahead (towards your goal) once they manage to surpass the defender's marking point, which is a direct and open attack that in most cases can result into a goal scored against you.

Illustration of players winning a ball in open play

Fig 33



As a tactical playing skill directed for ball possessive and attacking games for football teams, players should ensure to improve their ball winning techniques. Winning balls is not only required to keep possession, but also necessary to cut down possible strikes from the opponents so as to avoid being blowed.

Once players understand this; they will know why it is necessary to further practice their ball winning and conjointly their ball possession skills.

I. The use of trickery

Trickery is defined as the practice of performing skills on ball in form of playing tricks against the opponents. Tricks are used by players to dodge opponents, delude them or slip them off the move against a player holding the ball. They are very acute in the game, substantially to create space for playing the ball, create space for team mates in position to play with, create space for passing or scoring the ball and space for making runs with the ball. Examples of commonly performed football tricks include; the inside hook turn, outside hook turn, cruyff turn, step overs, scissor, drag back, nutmeg, rainball, fake shot, roulettespin, etc.

Illustration of a trick (fake shot)

Fig 34



One of the reasons which make football a highly enchanting game to play by players is the wide amplitude afforded to play with tricks on ball against opponents, and the flexibility of the legs to play the ball, which make it stay ahead of many other sports in terms of players' incentive and intentness to play.

Tricks are interesting skills on ball used to play the game, and are created and mostly used by creative skilled players. However, in a professional approach, the way these are used in a proficient, deliberate and operative genre on the pitch determines their measure of valuation in the game. It is good and important for a player to use trickery in the game, but quite sadly, many players cannot modestly depend on them, simply because they use them poorly, or they are not well skilled with them. It takes a player's high level of creativity, ball skills and analysis of the game in order to use trickery on a highly successful notch. So it is therefore important for a football player to first of all conceive the precaurious use of trickery in the game (not just as a style), how they should use them, and under which probable circumstances that they should effectively rely on them especially to overridingly cap in the game.
First, it is a prerequisite for a player to ascertain and master many of these skills. Could it be a striker, midfielder or defender, it is well essential for them to have trickery at finger tips for quick reference during occurrences when needed.

Secondly, tricks will capacitate a player to think widely, and have a wide criterion for making decisions and reactions, through their ability to change the ball in different directions and play creatively with a quick reaction of dexterity, which enhances their mental strength and agility.

Third, tricks are used when facing off opponents, but players should not intend to perform them while too close to an opponent conducive to be effective. This is because if the opponent is aggressive in play, they can pose a foul or injury on you since the little space reserved between you and them will induce them to fight for the ball from you. In other words, it is necessary to

outperform any skill on ball, including trickery with high self space awareness, quick decision making and quick reaction, without hoping for opponents to attack you closely.
Lastly, just as a general order of playing with skills, trickery should be used with positive intentions. For example, it's not right to use them with the intention as to show off a skill with a purpose to attract one's attention, play selfishly with the ball, or counterpoise while moving the ball backwards. That's not being creative. It is also better not to use them where not relevant or otherwise would instead slow down the pace of playing the entire game, that is; if players over depend on them. That's a basic rule.

So it's good to comprehend that, as a tactical importance, tricks are used to dodge or create space for the next action or move with the ball instantly, and not for any other reckless intention that would result to time wastage or lower the consistence of the entire team's game.

In a wind up on the use of trickery, it is right to use tricks, be highly skilled with them but use them deliberately with quick decision making and quick reaction, and also contend to master them (without cramming) until they become part of you, because that's only when one can use them aptly to perform in games, or else will likely use them wrongly due to pressure.

III. Making body turns with the ball

This is the ability of a player to change body directions with the ball during action.
Making body turns with the ball is one principal skill mandatory to learn in the football game. It appears to be a reputable playing skill, but it is very challenging to many players, especially when they have low awareness of space to make a successful turn or have limited control of the ball. It is also due to the fact that players' physiologically tend to become sluggish when making a turn with a ball, and also another fact that they cannot watch their backs. This allows easy obstruction from the attacking opponent(s), interference, pressure, and loss of the ball from a player's possession. The truth is; many players seem to lack this skill in the game. Therefore learning skills for body turning with the ball would be significant to avoid obstructions that may also result to serious injuries, avoid interference on ball, allow consistence and continuity on ball, and effective use of it.

Illustration of a player dribbling with effective body turning

Fig 35



Binding tactical skills for making body turns with the ball;

The skills set necessary for making body turns with the ball include; ball protection skills, ball control skills, dodging skills, self space awareness, direct interaction with close team mates, timing of the surrounding opponents, use of trickery, flexibility on ball, unpredictability, speed, and effective body balance. All these skills are discussed in this chapter of the book as specific playing skills in the football game. So players will get to learn them all. Due to the combinatory nature for the skills used to play in football, it is ideal for players to count on their necessity during various aspects of playing, and their combinatorial application approach.

However here, applying ball protection skills, dodging skills, self space assurance, and interaction with close team mates prior to making a turn would be the most effective skills and most initial decisions to be made by a player in the playing aspect. Another most important thing to be aware of is the movements and reactions of closely converging opponents before one may nail down their decisions to play the ball.

As a skill, it is requisite to make a body turn with the ball kept very close to the body to allow easy protection, quick reaction, and flexibly play it around the body (within a player's playing circle) to ensure one's unpredictability and speed before opponents. (You can see that it is almost similar skills required for various specific playing aspects in the game)

It is important for players to train and learn skills for making body turns with the ball, to improve their playing ability, ensure consistence and avoid possible injury outbreaks in the game course.

It is important to note that having good body turning skills on ball is one of the bearings that actualize a team's effective coordination balance with the ball in a game, which makes it strongly necessary for the skill to be endowed to players.

I. Flexibility on ball

A player's flexibility on ball is one's ability to play the ball on and around their body with speed and simplicity through various directions. Flexibility on ball is a tremendously important playing skill. However, not all players have got it, which makes it necessary to be trained to them.

Players' flexibility on ball unfolds their ability to use the ball, control it, protect it, dodge, effectively utilize small playing spaces and play with more agility, speed and accuracy. It further imperceptibly cultivates their mental agility to make divergent decisions and moves with the ball. Players with high flexibility on ball can play more unpredictably, with high body to ball coordination, as well as coordination with other players.

Flexibility on ball basically necessitates high level of player's fitness, space awareness, body flexibility, strength, speed and skill on ball. A player with high flexibility on ball would be good at ball protection, making body turns with the ball, dodging, and creating space for playing the ball. It is also a general skill requirement for distributive midfielders and

strikers to possess. It is one of the major skills which augment a player's comfort and creativity on ball. Many of the players who happen to make great moves on ball, perform fantastic skills or score fabulous goals use the power of their flexibility on ball. So players should take it intensely as a valuable skill.

For players to refine their flexibility on ball, they must put into effect many skills on ball and practice all the time, work on their strength and speed through physical training, learn the effective utilization of small playing spaces, improve their unpredictability on ball, and work upon their fitness, body flexibility and body balance with the ball.
Flexibility on ball engages making lots of touches on ball and playing it flexibly in several directions.
This means that players should practice many skills on ball, including ball control skills and ball protection skills with regard to conventionally boost their flexibility on ball. Flexibility on ball is not just a style, but it is an essential skill for playing the ball for all players as a generic playing standard.

I. Unpredictability on ball

This is a player's ability to make brisk eccentric movements with the ball in order to keep it in their retention or provide no clear direction of their movement, so as to deny chances for the opponents to interfere their actions with the ball.

It is a virtually important skill on ball in football and the most essential to have in your locker.. However, many players do not seem understand exactly why it is very necessary to play unpredictably on ball.
Football is a game played on a large play ground, with players of a team and their opponents well spaced from each other individually in key positions. The availability of ample space guarantees close opponents to examine movements of a player with a ball through a wide space of time, which gives them opportunity to think, study the player's movements, time their actions, and with more focus predict their next reactions with the ball, which allows them to tackle the player easily with slightly more success to interrupt their actions, due to the low level of immediate action in the game. This is the main contention as to why the ball is easily and recurrently lost to opponents in the game of football virtually throughout all playing aspects. Hence this is why there's great need for unpredictability among players, to deliberately retain the ball and achieve a continuous play.

Significance for players' unpredictability on ball;

Unpredictability on ball is significant for controlling movements of surrounding opponents by a player holding the ball.
It improves their consistence on ball, and lowers down the rate of interruption of their actions in the game.

It improves the tactical connectedness of team players and their tactical coordination. Because many players do not understand the necessity of their unpredictability on ball, and how it should be done successfully, they end up playing inconsistent games, whereby they redundantly lose the ball into the possession of the opponents or make interruptible moves with it.

Necessary skills;

Players should improve their skill on ball, speed in reaction, self space awareness, trickery and flexibility on ball in order to grade their unpredictability.

Unpredictability on ball is required more significantly in aspects of passing of the ball, ball protection, shooting to the goal, dribbling, dodging, attacking, defending and tactical coordination of players with the ball.

Because many players appear to be so predictable on ball, it is easier to interfere or intercept their passes on ball, interrupt their movements with it, win balls from their possession, dodge them on ball or defend them.

It is a matter of fact that most players are ordinarily too direct in their moves and approaches with the ball. Hence there is need for more skill, playing space utilization, and players' unpredictability on ball beneficial to achieve the game of football, before they act more determined to win a game. Poor unpredictability on ball is caused by poor awareness and utilization of playing space by players, and their poor body coordination with the ball during action.

How can a player be more unpredictable on ball?

Firstly, they should keep the ball close to their body while playing. They should make short footsteps in their movements, be fast enough, make quick decisions and reactions, permissively change directions of moving the ball, and maintain steady movements with the ball when surrounded by opponents, in their plot to easily interrupt with their focus.

More importantly, a player should keep highly in motion with the ball to suspend opponents' focus on them, since if they pause in one place or step on the ball, it directly prompts opponents to attack them adjacently. For example, the discernment as to why a fish in water is hard to catch by fixing your hand in the water to get it is because it is always actively in motion with its fins in motion and ever ready to swiftly and unpredictably move in a safe direction, whenever it detects an attack. This is quite the same way that a player will be when they keep in motion and close contact with the ball and react easily in any direction when they become aware of approaching opponents. So addressing the issue of players' unpredictability on ball would achieve many hitches and playing confinements at a go, which impact their games on the pitch. Otherwise, unpredictability on ball is one radical and indispensable playing skill in playing football.

II. Speed of a player's body with the ball

This is the ability of players to coincide with the speed of their body with that of the ball during play, for effective ball control.

Speed of a player's body with the ball is critically an important skill to train to players. Any footballer should have the ability to play fast with the ball, especially when surrounded by opponents. If you are not fast enough on ball as a player, there's a lot of confrontation that you are likely encounter from opponents who attack you. But in that case, how have you got to improve your speed on ball?
First, you need to practice many skills on ball to allow flexibility during action. Secondly, you have to work on your strength too and ball control since they both affect speed. The other question which comes up here is; how has a player's speed of the body got to be in collision with that of the ball during action?

The answer simply is; the player's speed of the body has to match up with that of the ball. Once the speed of the ball becomes more, the ball will move out of a player's containment by moving out of there playing circle, which will predictably prompt close opponents to tackle it immediately. Also once a player is so fast in their movements, but they can't maintain an equivalent fast speed of the ball, they are likely to slug down and get interrupted in their action. In a reversed way, if one is slow but they exert excessive energy on ball or they play it faster, they would be easily interfered by surrounding opponents as well.

So it is therefore very strategic for a player to analyze their speed of the body with that of the ball during action.

Significance of the skill;
Practicing this skill will foster a player's unpredictability on ball, ball protection capabilities, ball control, speed in reaction, quick decision making, and their flexibility with the ball.

Tactical relevance;
Maintaining an exact speed of the player's body with the ball is more relevant during dribbling, dodging, ball control, use of trickery, and ball protection.

Necessary basic skills required;
In contemplation of players to maintain effectual body speed with that of the ball, they should have enough self space awareness, ball control skills, good body balance with the ball, body flexibility on ball, and high level of body fitness. As an esteemed principle, they should lean their shoulders forwards or towards the ball to offer effective body balance, contact with the ball, and speed.

Speed of a player's body with that of the ball may only vary if they are passing the ball away, scoring it into the goal, or when making self placement of it prior to creation of more playing

space during dribbling. Ronaldinho Gaucho is one of the great players observed to have maintained a perfect speed of their body with that of the ball during many playing actions.

So players should understand why it is important to be fast on ball, and when the speed of the ball should exceed that of the body, under which circumstances. This will help improve the consistence of their games, easy decision making and speed in reaction. The skill also enhances a player's body balance on ball when in action with it.

Illustration of a player in action, with speed of the body close to that of the ball

Fig 36



Players who are slow during other playing aspects like splitting, winning balls or attacking should ensure that they are at least fast on ball with respect to achieve this skill, even though they are naturally sluggish during other playing aspects.

VII. Close passing of the ball (close interaction with teammates)

This is a major type of passing of the ball in football which involves passing it on through close distances to close team mates.

Close passing, also known as flick passing of the ball is a very predominant playing tactic and skill for playing in MAF that any skilled team should have.
A team not skilled at close passing of the ball will generally lack capacity in ball possession and tactical coordination ability on the pitch
It's significant for improving the percentage ball possession of a playing team, provision of playing support and close conjoint participation of players, creation of space on the pitch for tactical utilization, and sharing of close attention of the opponents among team players in order to deliberately control their movements and positions on the pitch.

Necessary skills for close passing of the ball;
The skills and playing responsiveness beseeched for players to make close passing of the ball include; high timing on ball and timing of the opponents, tactical passing and receiving ball skills, penetrative passing skills, ball control skills, ball protection skills, speed, tactical coordination skills, high self space awareness, coordination balance of players on the pitch, quick decision making and reaction, and perfect self positioning prior to receiving a ball.

Necessary tactical passing skills for close passing of the ball;
The tactical passing skills relevant for making close passing of the ball include making forward spinning rolling balls and screw balls (for direct passing), back spinning ball or still dropping ball (for direct passing of air balls), and screw ball for cross balls. However, the most effectual passing skill for close direct passing is the rolling ball, specifically for ground level passes during a speedy game.

Notably, as an overall principle, players should maintain the ball very close to their bodies during action, in order to allow unpredictability, easy ball protection, quick decision making and quick reaction. They should have predominantly high space awareness, situational awareness and skills for utilizing limited space or sustain possession in a small passing field. Maximum speed of playing the ball, high level of unpredictability and strong eye coordination between them and team mates in position to get the ball are very essential factors, as well as being critically aware about reactions of the surrounding opponents.

Illustration of a player's awareness on the pitch during close passing

Fig 37



Players of a team should be highly in motion, making tactical movements with intent expression prior to receiving a ball, and also purposely control movements and reactions of opponents. This is on the other hand constitutive to allow close interaction among each other when playing the ball, and for instant provision of support wherever it's needed.

Having the close passing skills and tactics will fortify a team's defensive game through enhanced ball possession, containment of the game and their attacking game through created spaces after drawing opponents closer and controlling their movements on the pitch. The skill on top of that improves the tactical connectedness of players and their coordination, an aspect which maximizes their team work forward adaptation, comprehension among each other, and collective winning ability in games.

VIII. Penetrative passing of the ball

Football involves common circumstances where a player with the ball is obstructed by opponents from passing on the ball to teammates, whether close or distant. This is exactly where penetrative passing skills on ball are distinctive.

Penetrative passing of the ball involves passing the ball through small spaces between or among tight marking opponents, so as to reach it to a team mate in position. Penetrative passing as a skill is very ascertainable in situations of tight marking opponents, very tactical games, close passing of the ball and during very hasty attacking games.

Penetrative passing is categorized into short passing and long passing of the ball. It is relevant for short passing during close passing of the ball and pertinent for long passing during speedy attacking games.

Tactical relevance during play;

Penetrative passing is very relevant for improving the sustainability of players' initiated attacks on the pitch, and determine their coordination balance with the ball, through all sections on the pitch. For speedy attacking games, penetrative passing is key, especially when the attack is made through the central midfield towards the goal.

Necessary skills required;

Well, as a necessary playing skill, penetrative passing of the ball as a skill necessitates high player's passing accuracy, timing on ball, timing of the opponents, and passing skill, where mostly used is the back spinning dropping ball or lofted pass (for a direct long pass) or screw ball (for a through pass and cross ball). The skill essentially requires strong tactical connectedness of players through their movements and reactions on the pitch.

It obliges for a player's high level of unpredictability on ball, speed, quick decision making and quick reaction. For a player to propel their penetrative passing skills, they have to learn the skill and have it in their mindset, have to be well skilled on ball and maintain high focus on the pitch. They also have to balance their eye coordination with the ball, the surrounding opponents, and the team mate intended to pass the ball to, with generally high awareness of space.

Having penetrative passing skills will augment a player's penetrative passing ability and accuracy on ball, hasten their positivity in decision making, allow continuity of their games and cut down the level of interrupted action when passing the ball. The skill is most relevant for all categories of midfielders to adapt.

Illustration of a penetrative pass

Fig 38



IX. The use of power and strength

The skills and tactics trained in this book are all essential when it comes to developing a strong football team. Therefore players should be urged to train them as effectively as necessary. The use of power and strength is our subsequent fundamental skill to look at in this section.

In the football sport, there are four core systems or abilities that a player uses to play in the game. These include mental ability, body coordination, body power, and body strength. Mental ability and body coordination are related under the body coordination system. Body power and strength are energetic forces produced in the body to allow its movement and functioning.

Here, we shall particularly frisk at the use of power and strength of a player in the game as a fundamental playing skill. It is important for a football player to understand his use of power and strength in the game, and how relevant each of the two is for his playing success on the pitch. In this section, we mostly mull over what makes the difference between using power and using strength on the pitch, and how a player should master their relevance in playing the game to allow efficiency and avoid misuse of any of the two playing aspects.

The difference between power and strength

Strength is the amount of force a player's muscles can produce, and power is the ability to use strength quickly. This means that power involves a player's high amount of strength and speed

used in a single movement or action or consistent movements, whereas strength is the amount of force a player's muscles can produce to facilitate various movements or their actions on the pitch. Strength is often measured by how much resistance a player can overcome. Players with good strength can perform frequent tasks efficiently in a game; that is with limited amount of effort.
Power involves both strength and speed. Players with good power will have the ability to make good shots on goal, throw long balls during throw-ins, make bullet headers, make long diagonal passes, shield the ball, head balls in air, win the ball when in open play and take/score distant free kicks, among others.

A player with good strength will have the ability to dodge, control the ball, dribble, pass the ball, make over runs and tactical moves, among others.

Players should understand that working on one's power, and working upon their strength are two different things. Players can work on their strength by attending to gyms and feeding nutritiously on foods good for physical conditioning as may be prescribed by a physician. Players with good strength will have high work rate and are likely to hold up an entire match with great endurance. Since strength affects speed and agility, working on it will improve a player's ability in the two aspects.

Players can work on their power by simply maximizing their "strength" and "speed" in performing particular relevant playing actions.

So players should understand the two aspects of using their energy and train significantly in order to improve in actuating the game, use them efficiently and effectively in the sport.
A player who does not understand this factor will use his/her power unnecessarily in a game, which might affect his/her strength because more body energy will be wasted. For example, a player who is so found of making vigorous fights on ball with opponents will likely lose more energy in a game which might turn their productivity imbalanced throughout the match. This could be in terms of consistence, reaction and interaction in play. So, with maximum focus, players should use their power and strength efficiently, especially where effective. For instance, if a player intends to make a shot on goal, shoot a header, shield the ball or win a ball from the opponent, they should analytically balance their use of power and their strength in the different playing aspects to eliminate unnecessary excessive loss of body energy.

Illustration of a player using power during play

Fig 39



Areas of concentration of speed and strength on the play ground

In football, there are areas on the pitch with more concentrated quality of play, where players should basically play with intensified speed and body strength in the contest against opponents. Such areas include the wing play, defense, midfield, center forward and the scoring section.

However, it should be noted that concentrated speed and body strength is always increasingly necessary as players get into the scoring section towards the opponents' goal. That is; if they are to strike through defenders and achieve a goal.
In the bottom line, understanding the use of power and strength is a great skill for a football player to play smartly against opponents in the game.

X. Timing on ball

Timing on ball is another fundamental skill to look at since it is very necessary to possess for all players on the team. Since passing and receiving of the ball is a major playing aspect which makes up the game, this makes effective timing of the ball indispensable in the football sport.
Timing on ball in football is defined as the ability of a player's body and mind to efficiently coordinate with the ball through its movements in order to play it accurately, through making effective body contact and control with it, during course of action.

It is a great skill on ball that is very significant for all football players to be certified with. It determines their shooting accuracy, passing accuracy of a passer, and the receiving ability of a receiver. It is more fundamentally a relevant skill for passing and receiving of the ball because it determines the

accuracy of a pass to reach a destination through a given time space and within distance from close opponents.

Timing on ball further embraces determining a number of factors which include the speed, momentum/ power, height, accuracy and spinning direction of the ball hit by a player during passing, and involves analyzing the same factors, when receiving it by a receiver in order to successfully trap it with immediate effect and utilization.

Relevance of the skill;

Timing on ball is basically significant in the aspects such as; long passing of the ball, close passing of the ball, during the take of free kicks and corner kicks, heading of the ball into the goal or as a flick pass, taking shots on goal, making instant flick shooting or passing of the ball, scoring of the ball into the net in a way of placing it, taking of long cross balls, receiving of cross balls, and any other mode of passing, receiving or controlling of the ball.

Importantly, there are other parts and parcel which are kept in view when determining a player's ability to time the ball during various playing aspects. One of them is a player's body balance prior to receiving, passing or scoring of a ball. A player's body is meant to be set in the poised position, posture and progression to act on ball through body balancing. One has to examine their hands movements to allow body balancing in the course of action, examine the angle of their shoulders while leaning in air, the space/angle between their legs, and the traction of their feet on the ground to allow body stability. The ball is meant to be on the same line with the planting foot to ensure effective body balance prior to shooting the ball. In other words, poor positioning of the body may result to poorly playing the ball. Additional essential factors considered include; players' ball control, timing of the opponents, self space utilization, level of a player's concentration, tactical connection with teammates, quick decision making, and swift reaction on ball.

Football players should work upon improving their timing on ball as a playing skill in a ball park effort to turn up their playing consistence and flow of a game through effected playing accuracy on ball, and also foster continuity in their game. Common poor games on the pitch such as fighting on ball, frequent off target shots toward the goal, poor headers on goal, frequent fouls, direct shots into the hands of the goal keeper, and poor crosses of the ball can all be as a result of poor timing on ball which makes it necessary for players to train and practice the playing skill.

Illustration of players timing the ball during passing and receiving

Passing **Receiving**

Fig 40

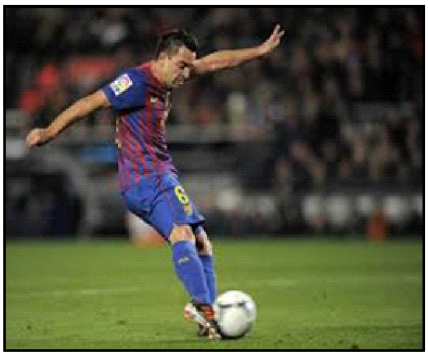




Fig 41

Key words: heading, ball control, self space, hands movement, free kicks, corner kicks, shooting, passing receiving, receiving, accuracy, technique, and body balancing

XI. Body balance with the ball

This is the ability of players to play stably and effectually with the ball, with sufficient body concentration when performing a given playing action on ball.

Body balance with the ball is predominantly another important skill on ball. This is because it affects a player's speed, stability, strength, playing accuracy, flexibility on ball, their timing on ball, and their overall ball control and playing stability, which would awfully affect their performance in the game. A player working on their body fitness, mental agility, strength, speed, and their body flexibility is one way that they may improve their body balance with the ball. Poor body balance with the ball would otherwise result into; inaccurate passing of the ball, off target shots on goal, poor receiving ball control skills, poor headers, unsuccessful dodging attempts and use of trickery, common falls on the pitch by a player during action, poor ball winning capabilities, poor free kick and cross ball takes, poor timing on ball, frequent loss of the ball into the opponents possession, poor ball control, and poor defending skills among others.

During various facets of playing, body balancing may be hypothesized differently. Its essence is to keep the body in progression, readily to play the ball, without loss of stability during action. For example a player's body has to be well stable and balanced, with enough traction on the ground, prior to receiving a ball, depending on the speed, momentum and flight level of the ball from the ground.

It is very common for players to lose stability on ball due to poor body balancing, especially during vigorous struggle for the ball with the opponents, which may result to losing the ball possession.

And of course, once a player loses stability, their speed goes down, and when opponents become faster than them in a confrontation, they then will completely lose stability and at times fall down like a goat. This is an instance which drives some players to make slide tackles against their opponents in order to stop the ball, when they can't match their stability any longer.
Adjusting and maintaining an exact speed of the ball with that of the player's body is another way to allow body stability and body balance during play. Keeping the ball close to the body during action, and keeping high self space awareness by a player reserving ample space from the opponents prior to reacting with the ball, so as to condense tension brought about due to their attacking threat before releasing the ball is also another way to maintain body stability and balance in the game.

So there are many ways that player's body balance with the ball may vary depending on the different aspects of playing. In concise, below are the overall key rules for playing with effective body balancing with the ball that players should always keep in mind.

- There must be critical eye contact and body coordination with the ball first of all
- Keep the ball close to the body when playing it, while it's in air or on the ground
- Maintain an equal speed of your body with the ball, especially when dribbling
- Lean your shoulders towards/over the ball in the aspects of dribbling, shooting, passing or dodging.
- Lean your shoulders slightly backwards in the aspects of receiving a pass (especially for an aerial ball). This also involves keeping one leg open behind the other for keeping traction and stability on the ground.
- Always keep your hands out for balance in all aspects of playing. So never keep them down or pointing in the same direction.
- Shield out opponents where necessary to avoid their interference with your stability on ball.

Illustration of a player keeping effective body balance with the ball

Fig 42



XII. Self space awareness (over ruling skill)

This is the ability of a player to analyze their playing space in which to play the ball individually, or analyze given spaces on the pitch in which to switch into, prior to receiving the ball.

Awareness of space for playing the ball is an extremely valuable and overall playing skill in the game, though still a large number of football players, coaches and game analysts worldwide do not as much seem to sufficiently know about its significance. When you look at the number of times it is mentioned in this guide, it shows how widely important and reliable the skill is in playing football.

Relevance of the skill;

Self space awareness is way too compatible in playing the game, yet simple to master. It is relevant for ball protection, ball control, flexibility on ball, timing of the opponents, decision making, passing and shooting of the ball, making body turns with the ball, dodging, effective dribbling, heading the ball, close passing, receiving of the ball, winning the ball, and use of trickery during contest.

As a tactical significance, it improves players' consistence and flexibility on ball, capacitates them to make effective decisions and efficient/quick reaction on ball.

The theory of the playing circle

Using the theory of the playing circle is one way that players can matriculate and achieve self space awareness throughout a game. The theory states that every player, apart from the goal keeper, has an imaginary playing circle or individual territorial field that they move with, which has a radius of less than a meter, and indicates the closest distance which should be reserved by them from surrounding opponents before releasing the ball. In other words, it cuts down the level of contact between a player and opponents surrounding them during confrontation. However much it is inevitable for an opponent to move in contact into a player's playing circle, it at least creates strong awareness of self space and the movement of opponents in a player's mind, which is the major cause intended to.

Illustration of a playing circle

Fig 43



This concept achieves quick reaction of players, and lowers the rate and level of their body contact with the opponents, which evades unnecessary fights on ball and may also reduce injury threat. As already mentioned, body contact with opponents is inevitable, but there is totally enough space on the large pitch for this concept to work (as one way to adapt playing space on the pitch).

A player's self space awareness should be high both when possessing the ball and prior to receiving it. One way that adequate player's playing space may be sustained is through being fast on ball, keeping it close to the body, maintaining an exact speed of the body with that of the ball, and creation of more space through use of dodging skills and trickery on ball, till it is passed on.
If simply mastered, this is a golden principle for players to play the game.

XIII. Self positioning

Self positioning is an act of a player to move into strategic positions with respect to receive the ball from a passer.
Self positioning as a tactical playing skill is used by a player prior to receiving a ball from a team mate intending to pass it on to them.

Significance of the skill;
As we may know, the game of football has got definitive player tactical player positions on the pitch which they use to play the game. These come from number 1 to 11, including the goal keeper. Their basic significance is to avoid players from cluttering on the pitch, allow them to share roles effectively, and be trail-blazed in their movements during attacking and defense schemes where they strategically offer each other support, cover up spaces, and attack tactically through their positions. The other basic significance of player positions is to invoke adaptation in coordination of players whereby it makes it easy for them to master each other's movements and tactical reactions under various circumstances of play for effective coordination.

Good self positioning of a player is significant because it allows a passer to easily spot a person in better position to receive a ball at a given time. This makes their decision and reaction to pass the ball easy and quick. It also helps the passer to figure out the passing skill that he/she may use on ball to offer accuracy and ensure easy reception and control of the ball by the receiver.

When positioning oneself, each player has to follow the accommodated discipline of playing by using their positions to enforce strategies, playing formations and overall playing tactics inclusive. In other words, they have to be keen about cogent spaces on the pitch to make runs, offer support, create spaces, misdirect defenders, or break away from locked on opponents in order to receive the ball.
Good self positioning also enforces easy interaction and tactical coordination of players with the ball, which improves their consistence in a game.

How can poor self positioning be referred to?

Poor self positioning may refer to a player keeping in the obstruction of the opponents, being too close to them or making no tactical movements prior to receiving a pass with generally poor awareness and tactical connection with the passer. When a player receives the ball out of poor self positioning, they will likely make unnecessary fights on it with attacking opponents, which may not accrue into suitable use of it. Poor self positioning can also result to poor passing of the ball on the side of the passer, so it is necessary to play subjectively. That's why sometimes a passer may fail/ refuse to pass on the ball to a specific receiver when they fail to acquire clear communication from them, in terms of their movements, where they cannot risk to pass it on in a stance where it can go to the opponents' possession.

Self positioning prior to receiving a ball varies, as also the passing skill used may, according to the position of the receiver, and their intention for using the ball. For example, if it is going to be a close pass (let it be a penetrative pass), it is necessary for the receiver to lightly move close and get to the passed ball.

Receiving a close pass

Fig 44



If it is a through pass, it is necessary to move in the direction of the ball for its effective use with a relevant intention.

Receiving a through pass

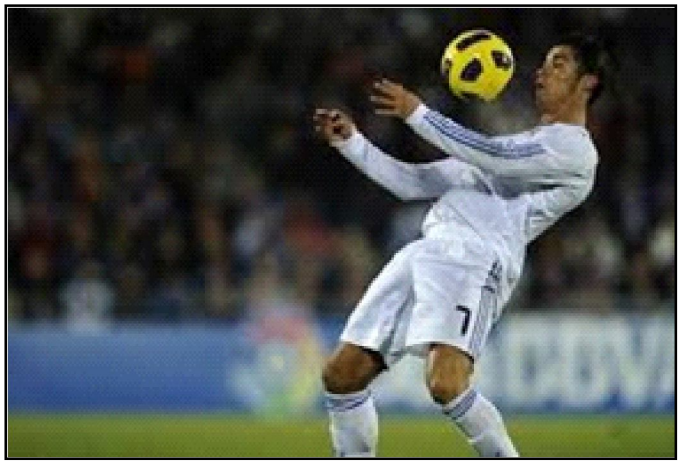
Fig 45



If it is a long aerial ball passed to the wing play, the receiver should position themselves in the landing spot of the ball to control it, or could run into the direction of the ball.

Receiving an aerial pass

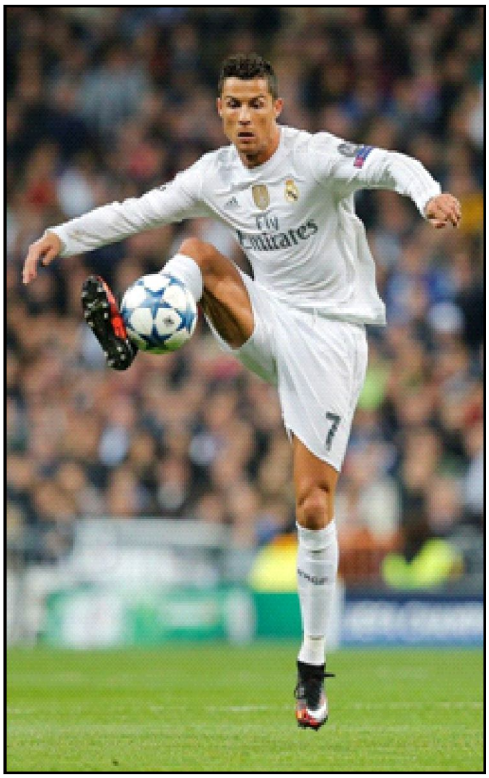
Fig 46



If it is a cross ball, it is necessary for the receiver run from line with the last defender, prior to meeting the ball.

Receiving a cross ball

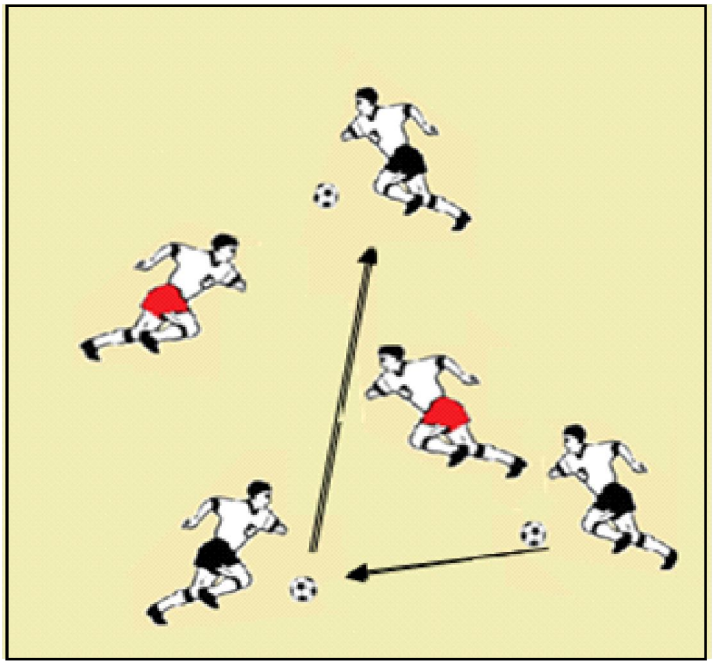
Fig 47



If it is a direct pass, it is necessary for the receiver to face the ball, meet it and may quickly pass it on to a mate who is facing him in an angle at most not more than 90^0 from the angle of receiving the ball. That is; when they have less space awareness of self space, or may as well imply that the initial receiver was not in position to make a forward turn with the ball after sharing a pass from the passer.

Receiving and sharing a direct pass

Fig 48



If it is a back pass, the receiver is meant to face the ball, meet the pass and also reserve a wide space backwards to move into an angle not more than 140^0 from his close team mates in the wing play who are capable of sharing the ball from him; that is if he is close to the goal. It is common to make such a pass on the pitch, essentially to create space by controlling movements of the opponents.

Meeting a ball prior to receiving a pass allows the receiver to distance themselves from close opponents, get quickly on the ball and create space for playing it with less opposition pressure from threatening opponents (ensure space awareness) in case he will want to make a quick turn with it for any intended use.

Lastly, if a player in position to receive the ball is in one position with the opponent, (especially for aerial balls) he is expected to make an instant touch on it to flick pass it to a close team mate in position to share it.

Flick heading a pass

Fig 49



Players should analytically affirm good self positioning prior to receiving a pass, benefical to allow consistence and achieve uninterrupted action during play.
All the above identified self positioning skills have got great tactical importance in the game. So players should practice them to perfection if they want to play consistent games and allow continuity in play by cutting down the level of intercepted attacks, misused attacking opportunities and frequent loss of ball possession.
This is why self positioning as a skill is commendable to be trained to players, and equipped to them as a tactical playing skill.

XIV. Quick decision making and swift reaction

These two are as well very important playing aspects in the game, yet quite easy to learn. All a player needs to understand is how effective their decision making and speed in reaction with the ball should be during various eventualities of play.

Quick decision making and swift reaction are psychological factors which need to be dealt with psychologically. As a human behavior, the way we do many activities in life and how we implement what we think to do in our minds is controlled by our decision making mechanism. Therefore quick decision making and swift reaction are general important factors in many aspects of our lives in terms of controlling our speed of relevant actions.

In football, players need to make quick decisions about to who to pass the ball, which direction to make a run, where to shoot the ball into the goal, clear the ball away from risky play, block a fast attacking opponent, etc, and react quickly at that very moment.
Fundamentally, making quick decisions and swift reaction mostly has to do with a player's movements with the ball, and how he/she plays it around his/her body. For example, keeping the ball closer to the body during action is one way to guarantee quick decision making and

quick reaction with it. Effective timing of the opponents is another issue to prompt quick decision making and reaction of a player on ball, and so on.

Tactical significance;

As a tactical significance, quick decision making and quick reaction on ball basically fortify the tactical connectedness of players, tactical coordination, effective utilization of scoring opportunities, and defending very critical strikes from the opponents that could possibly result into a goal.

Quick decision making and quick reaction also fosters consistence and continuity in a game, so players need to understand that this is a wide analysis which should be considered in mind.

Quick decision making and swift reaction is not only referred to when a player possesses the ball, but is also called to mind when they make tactical movements prior to receiving it, or when attacking opponents.

A player has to act quickly and make up his mind in a splint second about whether to pass on the ball, whom to pass it to, shoot it, protect it, call for a ball, come for it, call for support, attack an opponent possessing it, run to offer support, run to meet a cross ball, dribble, win it in open play, and during many more other playing aspects. Without quick decision making, their playing speed in making the above stated actions could be affected throughout the entire match.

Significantly, it is also one of the aspects which achieve players' unpredictability in games by being fast on ball in any playing aspect.

Players should be equipped in mind that it is unnecessary to waste time by being sluggish on ball or make unnecessary movements with it which reflects slow decision making and slow reaction. It is also not necessary to make slow movements on the pitch to position oneself prior to receiving a ball, or go to offer support.

It is something that has got to do with the body and mind at the same time in the coordination mechanism, to ensure effectiveness.

For effectual action, players should work on their physical and mental agility, speed, strength, flexibility on ball, body to ball coordination, ball control, eye coordination towards team mates, space awareness, game reading, and strong coordination with opponents' movements among others.

XV. Timing of the opponents

A great team cannot be built with a few playing skills. Timing of the opponents is one of the very relevant skills that a potential team should have. In fact, if you have good timing of the opponents as a team, you will likely dominate play in many games that you may come to. It simply involves critically analyzing coordinated movements of the opponents as one intends to implement a playing action. A player should either act faster than the moves of the opponents in line of their action or act lastly after they have performed a move (slipped) out of a given play.

Tactical significance of the skill;

Timing of the opponents allows effective decision making of a player, their accuracy on ball, consistence, timing of the ball, utilization of scoring opportunities, tactical connectedness of players, and evades fouling and unnecessary fighting on ball.
It also allows a player to make an instant assertive touch on ball during passing, scoring, defending of the ball, heading, or winning it into their possession.

Relevance of the skill;
Timing of the opponents is tactically relevant during passing of the ball, scoring, dodging, heading a ball, ball control, use of trickery, and dribbling.
Timing of the opponents is also relevant to a player in position to receive a pass. He has to time actions of his surrounding opponents, break away and run in space in order to ensure effective reception of the ball and its uninterrupted utilization.
It is also relevant during defending. Poor timing and containment of the striking opponents can lead to quick goals against a team. So any worthy defender should have maximum timing of their opponents' coordinated actions by observantly being aware of their runs so as to instantly imped their scoring attempts.

Understanding the playing skill:
A player possessing a ball should always time his opponents before they react against him. It is not right to wait for opponents to tackle you and then think of using your ball protection skills to defend the ball. It's better to react before opponents tackle you or they get readiness to intercept your actions. They should not even predict your subsequent moves, or let it cross into their minds. This is because of the fact that a player's movements with the ball directly influence the movements of their opponents against them, and yet the motive is about playing beyond their game in terms of speed and unpredictability. So there is always obligation to time them. When it comes to dodging, it is better to dodge all opponents while still distant from you (without direct approach). This aspect is called "zonal dodging" or dodging within space. A player will dodge, create space, and react before the opponent(s) directly attack them, making them slip away from their attempts.

In the aspect of defending, zonal defending is another skill which also has to do with timing of the opponents possessing the ball, by analyzing their actions and awareness of space, watch the available space, and close it up to intercept the ball immediately when they start to react through the given space.
When it comes to scoring of the ball into the goal, it is very necessary to time the goal keeper, and shoot instantly in an opposite side of the goal away from them, to increase chances of placing the ball into the net.
So with high confidence, players should develop their skills for timing of the opponents during all actions in order to control their opponents' movements, avoid interrupted action and improve the flow of their games.

XVI. Long passing of the ball

Long passing refers to a player's ability to kick/move the ball through a long distance on the pitch towards a receiver successfully. It has a great tactical importance of moving the ball into the opponents' playing section towards attacking team players, while skipping it above tight marking midfielders.

Long passing of the ball may be in form of passes such as cross balls, through passes, diagonal passes and indirect free kicks.

Significance of the skill;

The skill is principal for teams which play more direct attacking games, where they use it as a tactical approach to reach the ball to the opponents' goal quickly in a miniaturized time. Long passing is a good style, and for players to master it as a skill would be the best way to go about it. It is significant for improving the coordination balance of players with the ball on the pitch and the effective actuation of created spaces of well positioned players.

Skills to consider when making a long pass

First, it involves using huge amount of power on ball when passing, and also requires a passer to have high level of concentration, body balance, timing on ball, quick decision making and effective passing skill on ball. Long passing is practical for mostly defenders, central midfielders, and wingers. It is a good source for goals, through the influence on count attacks and free kicks.

The success and effectiveness of long passing is determined by the passing skill used, receiving skill, space availability and spatial awareness of the receiver, effective communication, and tactical connectedness of the passer and receiver and the speed and accuracy of a pass.

The longer the pass should be kicked, the more the power required to kick the ball, and as well the higher the kicking foot should be raised above the ground in a follow through, to allow more acceleration or elevation of the ball. At the same time, the body posture and distance of the ball should fortify effective body balance, that is; with the hand on the planting side of the body out for balance and power, and leaning the shoulders backwards and the body slightly inclined on the planting side to a relative angle so as to acquire body balance prior to kicking a ball in a vigorous action. The ball should as well be kept close to the body at least on the same line as the planting foot.

If a player intends to kick the ball high above the ground, he should golf it off the ground by kicking it around its bottom center, using the inside of the foot. If it is a straight lower pass, the ball should be hit on its center using the outside or inside of the foot towards the laces, and the pass in form of a speedy ball or dropping ball. During both aspects of kicking the ball, the leg should in a follow through swing to the direction of the pass (towards the position of the receiver) after hitting it, in order to determine passing accuracy.

Illustration of a player's body posture when prior to kicking a long pass

Fig 50



Players should understand the significance of long passing, master the passing skills involved and study circumstances which are necessary for long passing of the ball. They should also work upon their fitness, and power of legs to ensure effective passing, speed of the ball and balance of power.

XVII. Attacking tactics

These are playing strategies and skills used to attack the opponents in their defense, in order to create goal scoring opportunities. Below is a brief discussion about attacking tactics, their significance in the game, and relevant skills/training tactics used to foster attacking in the game.

Attacking as a scheme is very essential in the game because it determines the winning ability of a team. It can be trained both at an individual level and at a team basis. There are mainly three effective overall tactics which can be used during attacking games of a team. These may include; possessive and attacking tactics, wing play attacking tactics, and central count attacks.

Training attacking tactics is highly technical and profoundly practical. It also depends on the playing formation that a team uses to play its game. Some formations are more attacking, others possessive, whereas others are more defensive schemes. Attacking tactics may also be determined basing on the scoring abilities of a team's striking line and other individual potential scorers on the team coming from other playing positions

Relevant training tactics and playing skills for attacking;

When training attacking tactics, players may be trained playing tactics such as; one against one, one against two, two against three, three against four, taking/winning cross balls, playing and scoring within the scoring zones, receiving through passes, and flicking passes on ball with tactical movements towards the goal.

In regard to achieve attacking tactics in a game, players should have playing skills such as high tactical connectedness among them, quick reaction, effective passing and scoring skills, dribbling skill, high space awareness, dodging skill, perfect self positioning and playing speed, with high combinatorial ability and suppleness.

In football, one of the best attacking tactics used is the possessive and attacking game. This is because it allows a team to flexibly strategize and re-strategize attacking schemes, be more defensive by possessing the ball to purposively contain opponents, and create/effectively utilize scoring opportunities.

So when looking at attacking tactics, players should conceive the kind of game to be played, key attacking playing sections, playing format, scoring abilities of key scorers, and the skills used in attacking games, in order to effectively achieve scoring tactics. A well detailed guide about attacking tactics is provided in the training mode (chapter 7 of this book).

XVIII. Consistence and continuity of players during play

Playing consistence and continuity of players in a game are two different things, which are both necessary to vouch for players success in a game.
Consistence refers to the players' ability to perform various actions on the pitch repeatedly with little to no interruption whereas continuity of players in a game is their ability to improve, upgrade their game or reach their intentions to a greater level during a contest, in terms of scorers, or players' movement with the ball towards the opponents' goal.

What makes the consistence of a team in a game?

When considering consistence, we look at player's coherence in possessing the ball, creating scoring opportunities, shooting to the goal, scoring goals, making accurate passes on ball, interacting and coordinating effectively, defending balls, and moving the ball towards the goal without losing it to the opponents, or their management to keep it inbound.
When considering players' continuity during play, we look at their relentless endowment to successfully move the ball towards the goal, improve their scores, and upgrade their overall playing deftness throughout a game.
You'll find that the generic level of consistence and continuity of players in football is contingently low, never the less this can be improved.

The underlying skills required to improve the two playing aspects;

In football, playing consistence and continuity are two playing aspects which are highly fundamental in the game but at the same time elusive to achieve, which is due to the high level of interrupted action, interrupted focus, and confrontation among two playing teams, and also the large size of the playing ground which creates a long process to move the ball to the goal, when compared to sports like basketball. This all makes it hard to score goals repeatedly, which makes the game to be elusive with generally low level of continuity in terms of achieving high game results. However, this doesn't mean that players' consistence and continuity of their game cannot be improved.

These can be improved to enhance players' level of success in the game to a proportionate level, although achievement cannot be taken to a greater level. For example, players of a team can improve their scoring capacity to 3 to 4 goals out of a match, but may consistently not go beyond 5 goals on average, due to the elusory mode of competition in the game contest, as part of the game design.

It is mandatory to improve players' consistence and continuity both at an individual and team level. When we look at the different playing skills, we entail many which would be accordant to skyrocket players' overall consistence and continuity in games. These may include players' high level of unpredictability on ball, close passing of the ball, penetrative passing, perfect self positioning, creation of numerous scoring opportunities, high ball protection skills, timing on ball, tactical coordination skills, scoring skills, effective passing skills, assertive timing of the opponents, quick decision making and quick reaction, high self space awareness, flexibility on ball, and improving of their coordination strength, coordination balance and body balance with the ball. All these would improve players' consistence and continuity on ball if well considered and upgraded. So it is neither a big challenge.

Furthermore, there is also great need for players to uplift their playing spirit in order to improve their consistence and continuity in games and conventionally develop it as part of their team playing tradition.
Another thing to note is that consistence comes with continual practice, while continuity comes with upgrading the spirit of achieving.
Consistence and continuity of players in games is such a big factor, since it will also improve the spirit of fans of a team. For instance, winning a game by 1-0 and winning one by 4-1, which of the two achievements would make a fan scream on top of their voice throughout a match?
Definitely it is the 4-1 win, because it brings more gratification to them that they are supporting a team of achievers.
This is how far working on players' consistence and continuity in games is important, yet it is a factor of simplicity. Improvement of these two aspects among players of a team will further foster the development and maturity of their game throughout competitions.

XIX. Creating numerous opportunities for scoring

Yeah, creating numerous opportunities for scoring is our next issue. This is where the game becomes easy or hard to play.
In football, it is known that scoring a goal is not as easy, that's why in a number of matches, a game would end with only a single goal scored, or even not one goal at all. The rate of scoring goals is truly elusive. It can take about five chances or more on average to score a single goal.
And of course, that's the nature of the game. However, there is seriously one thing that can possibly be done to improve the scoring rate of a team. This is simply compounding or maximizing the creation of opportunities for scoring, whereby if a goal can be scored using four chances, then let

players greatly focus on consistently creating numerous clear opportunities for scoring as a team to improve chances of scoring (instead of simply driving the ball towards the goal with a poor strategy), and also look at the limitations for making a goal in another context.

The department subjective for creating scoring opportunities is the midfield department, which means that players here have to consciously keep high level of ball possession. At the same time, the team department responsible for feeding midfielders with balls is the defense of a team, whereby these are the attack initiators in the mechanism for creating scoring opportunities. They must be able to initiate attacks with high confidence and awareness of opponents' movements, i.e. if opponents are too occupied in their defense section, defenders therefore should have to initiate the attack by passing the ball at the back to influence them to come closer and purposively open play to create chances for successfully attacking through the midfielders. Midfielders may follow the same sequence of passing the ball, to influence movements of opponents and create opportunities of space through which to strike with the ball. Hence possession is key.

Relevant skills for creating numerous opportunities for scoring;
It is simply factual. Before you are determined to score enough goals as a team, you should be more determined to create scoring opportunities.
One of the aspects we can look at in this context is that; in order for a team to create enough opportunities for scoring, they should uphold reputable ball possession, as a first step. This implies that they should have more fear for losing the ball and more fear for using it wrongly, for example in the case of making poor shots on goal unnecessarily, making blind passes, or poorly retaining it into one's possession without a quick reaction. After understanding this, next they should multiply their attacking strategies through the various sections of the pitch.

Other key playing skills required;
Since the practice is initiated in the defense, overall playing skills are required in the aspect of creating numerous opportunities for scoring, i.e. ball protection and possession is key to ensure consistence, playing speed and strategic alteration of attacking games depending on the behaviours of opponents in pursuance of playing beyond their game is also key. Players' creativity in passing the ball towards the scoring section, coordination balance of playing the ball on the pitch, good self positioning, effective passing skills to ensure accuracy, and self space awareness to utilize space opportunities are equally important.

It is good to keep out of mind that football is a game of luck, where you would want to look for one lucky goal and struggle to defend it for the rest of the playing time. It is instead advisable to create numerous opportunities for scoring and utilize them effectively to achieve highly. This is the kind of progressiveness demanded in the game that needs to be developed among players.

XX. Utilizing of scoring opportunities

This is the ability of a team to score goals out of every created clear scoring opportunity.
Scoring in Modern Art football should not come out of chance or luck. It should come out of strategic creation of varied opportunities for scoring, and standing behind their effective utilization. Therefore, effective utilization of scoring opportunities involves putting every ball into the net, whenever there is an open created scoring opportunity. This majorly involves augmenting a team's scoring skills on ball, their level of unpredictability, speed, playing spirit/desire, and strategic approach.

The ultimate goal of any playing team out of a football match is to win the game, which comes as a result of scoring goals and emerge with a goal difference against the opposition team, at the end of a match. This testifies that it may not matter how many opponents you've managed to dodge, how many shots you had on goal, how much ball possession you had in the full match length or any other excuses that is not winning a game. All such nice performances will only be good when the game is still on, but once you concede a win to the opponents after the match ends, these will now all be of less meaning. On this account, a team skilled at utilizing scoring opportunities will always have high capacity to change game standing results even in the last minutes of the playing time. With this distinctive fact, why not train the relevant skills?

Relevant skills for effective utilization of scoring opportunities;
There are various scoring skills which are trained to players, which are applicable in different relevant scoring zones or areas of the scoring section. As players approach different scoring zones with the ball, their minds should cleverly switch on different instructions for coordination on ball and scoring skills as would be required to score the ball.
In the aspect of utilizing scoring opportunities, players should ensure utmost focus and concentration in the scoring section, timing on ball and timing of the opponents, effective use of speed and strength, and technique on ball. They should have more will to play strategically and skillfully in respect to achieve a goal, than the will to just shoot the ball towards the goal, in a way of trying luck. It's not a bad thing to try your luck, but how close are you trying to be successful through effective concentration and technique?
Moving on, when close to the goal, players should mostly rely on simple techniques on ball to place it into the goal net, that are challenging to goal keepers. Sometimes it appears like certain players get a scoring opportunity unexpectedly, they get so nervous on ball and end up miss using the opportunity due to pressure, by making a blind shot. This reflects the lack of concentration and less awareness of what to do during a given scoring circumstance.

How do scoring opportunities arise?
There's barely nothing that can make a team scorer/striker worthy as cunningly having the perceptual ability to recognize scoring opportunities and have the potentiality to make goals out of them. Utilization of scoring opportunities is more widely trained in Football Intelligence, whereby players have to be very intelligent or smart with the ball whenever they are close to the goal. Scoring opportunities arise commonly when players have a sharp eye for goal and strong eye coordination

with the movements of the goal keeper and defenders in order to easily identify space and utilize clear goal scoring opportunities. This should be done with high focus and concentration as trained in Football Psychology, for greater results.
Caution: In the struggle to actuate scoring opportunities as well trained, players should not turn to be perfectionists or have in mind that they are capable of scoring a goal from every single opportunity. This is because in accordance accord to football psychology, football is a game of imperfection, whereby it is hard to utilize all possible scoring chances. As discretion, players should not be frantic by their failure to score goals, because this may easily and highly interfere with their focus and concentration if every decisive chance that comes to their possession is missed. Once an important game is lost, instead of regretting for the rest of your lifetime, it is better to simply understand that football is a game of imperfection.

Therefore augmenting the utilization of scoring opportunities is a basic requirement for all team players, through training them effective scoring skills on ball, speed, unpredictability, focus of the mind, effective use of power and strength, and strategic approach towards the goal, in order to score sufficient goals or make the most out of scoring opportunities. And also they should understand that missing important scoring chances shouldn't be highly regrettable at the end of the game.

XXI. Controlling pressure / playing under pressure

Controlling pressure is the players' ability to manipulate the game to determine the amount of pressure experienced at the particular moment, whereas playing under pressure is referred to as their ability to adapt situations or successfully play in any games where high playing pressure is experienced. This is in form of playing intelligence as used by players to play beyond the opponents' game or adapt play during an intricating situation in a contest against opponents.
Controlling pressure and playing under pressure are two different aspects of playing the game, but may as well be required at the same time.

What causes pressure?

Football is a game where pressure is a major factor which affects players' games. Regardless, pressure is one of the major factors which make up the game. One of the common causes of pressure are the ever existing slight opportunities for a team to lead a game 1-0, get equalized, win the game or get won at the same time by just a mere single goal difference.
Another factor is that goals are generally elusive to score in the game, whereby any team would experience pressure when trying to defend a goal scored by them or at the same time top it with another goal. It is well known that pressure psychologically results to panicking and loss of concentration, leading to common mistakes, and yet any one mistake in the football game can lead to a significant turnover in the entire game standing results.

Another influential factor is that the game is very physical or requires much energy to play. For instance, winning a game by coming two or more goals down would require extra amount of effort of a team, which as well creates more pressure. This is exactly why controlling pressure or adapting it would be a very essential skill for players that play in the game.
There are compellingly transcendent playing tactics which can be used by a team to control pressure or play under it. As a team, you can control pressure by creating it against your opponents or use pressure releaser tactics, that is, if it is created against you. You can also decide to play under it by being resistant in a game in an offense or defensive way. Pressure releaser tactics are also used to cool down a game. One of them involves creating wide spaces on the pitch and making of wide passes on ball to disperse opponents and widely distribute their attention on the ball. It also normally or additionally involves slowing down the speed of the ball. Playing under pressure involves a team to match the speed of the opponents, their tactical play, and strive to play beyond their game to limit their critical intentions.

Football players should assimilate this playing factor in order to determine operativeness of their games at different circumstances of play, and game prospects. It is also necessary for a team coach to conform the pressure of a game conducive to avoid yellow cards and red cards or penalty kicks which may come as a result of fouling the opponents, due to too much pressure in the game. Not only that, even his players may get injured when fouled, or lose concentration.

Chapter 5

BALL POSSESSION

This is the ability of players of a team to protect the ball both as a team and individually, and sustain it in their possession for a big percentage of the playing time, for offense and defensive purposes. It involves using ball protection skills to keep possession, and evading frequent dead balls and off balls on the pitch which would render the opposition team to repossess the ball.

The significance of a team's ball possession capabilities prior to achieving games

Most teams will not know why it's necessary to possess the ball until they understand why they shouldn't lose it. Whenever a team loses ball possession, the opposition team players are rendered an opportunity to create and utilize any chance for scoring a goal, which heralds a lot to any football team to concede a goal. So when a team develops their ball possession capabilities, one of the likely achievements is that players cut down the level of attacking games from opponents, which would cut down pressure to the team. Ball possession is rewardingly significant substantially if achieved by players as a team playing spirit. It allows them to play as a team and improves their individual and team steadfastedness to protect or win the ball.

Ball possession is apposite for oversighting pressure among players of a team, and minimize the level of playing mistakes performed on the pitch. For instance, a player will be highly influenced to authentically protect the ball and closely share it with team mates to evict any possible mistakes of losing it to opponents. In the same motive, pressure among players is contained through high player awareness of close team support and playing spirit, among other essential playing strategies achieved through the ball possession mechanism.

Ball possession allows players to interact, contribute close support and play as a team, which then reinforces their tactical connectedness. More significance includes;

- It allows quick decision making of players with the ball in the game, and allows them to play more strategic and flexible games.
- Improves their playing uniformity and invokes them to easily dominate games.
- Enables players to create more scoring opportunities through team creativity and tactical connection, and utilize them effectively since they play under controlled pressure.
- It is a partly defensive system that can be used by a team to contain the game through team ball protection throughout the match.
- It stimulates players' creativity and tactical coordination in games through giving them an opportunity to collectively plan and conjointly make attacks.
- It saves time that is would be redundantly wasted during unnecessary off balls and dead balls or consistent interrupted action.

Playing aspects which limit players' ball possession capabilities

For a team which experiences limited possession on the pitch, it might be good to read and understand the limiting factors which are explained below;

Low speed of passing the ball (loose balls)
Loose balls may promptly allow opponents to easily intercept the ball before it reaches a receiver to which it is projected to. Here, passing skills such as rolling ball, speedy ball and slanting screw ball may be so effective.

Low level of interaction
A team with low level of interaction and limited provision of support or team work orientation will likely limit their level of ball possession. So the level of interaction should be high, through practicing aspects such as close passing of the ball, effective communication, and elimination of unnecessary individualism on ball.

Fouls against opponents
The only tactical importance of fouling an opponent with the ball is firstly, to intercept their movements during an attacking situation where they can attain a goal. Secondly, to interrupt with the opponent's temperament by threatening them with bad tackles so as to cut down their level of activity on the pitch, or to pose injury to them to reduce their playing contribution towards an on-going game. Otherwise, unnecessary fouls against opponents should be evicted since they render the ball into the opponents' possession where the opportunity can be used to tactically and critically to strike into your defense as a team and gain positivity to achieve a goal

Outlet passing of the ball
Outlet passing of the ball is an act which involves a defender to kick the ball from their goal/ defense section towards the opponents' goal especially while kick starting the ball or starting a count attack. It is a playing practice which should be eliminated in possession based football because it dissolves the intention for possessing the ball by putting it into open play.

The tactical importance of outlet passing in the game is to move the ball as far into the opponents' section as achievable in order for players of a team to grasp the ball while they are within the opponents' defense. Its tactical importance may be similar to punting the ball by a goal keeper, though outlet passing is more effective since it allows the passer to be more accurate to where and to whom they are passing the ball. But here we know, as a limitation to their aim, by the time the ball is kicked, opponents would be readily organized to defend or clear it with a header or win it into their possession.

Outlet passing illustration (goal kick)

Fig 51



In possession based football, instead of outlet passing it would be good to start the ball by passing it to close teammates (defenders) to embrace possession and create a more strategic attacking approach towards the opponents' defense, with the positions of the team players such as defenders and defensive midfielders not widely shifted, but the ball moves ahead in order to allow them readily be in position to attack if its attacking and defend if it's time to defend, with certainly less pressure since defenders do not shift from their positions gratuitously.

The only much reasonable importance of outlet passing would be to create pressure against opponents, by moving the ball in their playing section. That is; if they do not manage to head it back. Since pressure is a major factor constituted in the game, outlet passing would be much more important strategically in the last quarter of the game, in an ill-timed portion of the playing time when a few minutes are left to go, so as to utilize time left, by mounting pressure in the opponents' defense, to create more scoring chances by interfering with their concentration and make advantage of any of their mistakes to achieve a killer goal.
During a turn over or when a player loses the ball to an opponent player, their reaction to retrieve it has to be fast and anticipatory in pursuance of repossessing it. In the course of action, accelerated poke tackling is one of the best ways to steal the ball away from an opponent by toeing it away and grabbing it off.

Playing skills of a team that are required for ball possession
After looking at the aspects which limit ball possession, it's now time to look at the basic skills required to boost a team's ball possession capabilities. A team should have quite a number of skills in order to achieve their ball possession potentiality. These include the following;

Ball protection skills: These may be categorized into individual ball protection skills and team ball protection skills/tactics. They are some of the major skills solicited for ball possession. Team ball protection skills and tactics are also part of players' tactical coordination skills.

Tactical coordination skills: These are exclusive passing, self positioning, and receiving skills on ball which involve high level of players' ball control skills, speed, passing skill, effective communication, and their tactical creative movements when playing the ball. These would as well foster effective ball possession of a team if well mastered.

Tactical ball winning skills: These are skills which capacitate players to conjointly and promptly win the ball from the possession of the opponents once being lost. These involve making team work, attacking on speed, and creation of pressure by marking of surrounding opponents, and tight marking of the space surrounding an opponent possessing the ball while tackling them instantly at the same time to intercept them in the limited time space.
Speed: Playing with speed is another skill required to keep ball possession of a team. Players should be determined to play with high speed, and keep in motion to provide support or move into spaces to ardently receive the ball.
Space awareness: Players should ensure to have high space awareness to influence their decision making during play basing on reactions of opponents, to enforce persistent possession.

Ball control skills: These are also part of the major skills required for ball possession. For instance, if a player has poor ball control skills, they are presumable to miss use the ball or frequently end up losing it into the opponents' possession.
Passing and receiving skills: These are constitutive for keeping ball possession of a team since poor passing of the ball and poor control while trapping it can result to frequent loss of it into the opponent's possession. So practicing passing and receiving skills is vital in this context.

How to improve ball possession capabilities of a team
The best way of improving players' ball possession is always to foster and develop it among them as a playing spirit. Players may possess all the necessary skills for ball possession, but if their playing spirit and team work is low, it won't be easily achieved. They should concentrate on possessing the ball and act like their whole life depends on it, i.e., if it takes more than 5 seconds in the possession of the opponents, it should be like they are all losing out their breaths, not until they find it back. In other words, the time limitations for finding back the ball should be practically 5 seconds, as a principle. This would simply mean that losing the ball would totally be a threat in the interim of playing it.
When dealing with this; it is predominantly necessary to look at all situations under which players commonly lose the ball, either recklessly or not, so that they can be guided well. Some of these aspects include the following;

- Poor passing of the ball

- Unnecessary dodging on ball or dodging without clear tactical intentions
- Players' low trust of each other's ability to effectively use the ball (a consequence of poor team development)
- Poor pass delivery (for example very high balls, loose balls, too powerful passes, or very speedy uncontrollable balls).
- Poor reception of passes or poorly meeting balls onto their effective reception target point
- Slugging players on the pitch during action
- Lack of focus of players
- The making of poor over runs with the ball with generally poor anticipation and tactical coordination with team mates
- Poor coordination balance of team players with the ball
- Unnecessary off balls and dead balls
- Poor concentration of players in the game
- Slow and poor decision making of players
- Poor ball protection skills and high predictability of players' actions on ball
- Poor ball control
- Poor playing intelligence
- Poor space awareness and creation of self space to foster the making of effective decisions among players during play. etc

In addition, close passing of the ball is a very essential tactic to achieve team ball possession, since it improves the focus and concentration of team players, and effectively divides or shares the attention of opponents among the team players passing the ball for efficacious containment. This involves playing the ball at a high speed, with high protection. It also involves high interaction of players and provision of support to each other.

When keeping ball possession, players should not only rely on close passing as a skill to entirely possess the ball, but also should allow expansion and contraction for the passing field of playing the ball, by making both close and long passes on the ball as a mechanism to control behaviours of the opponents, and allow coordination balance.

Ball possession as a tactical playing skill cannot be achieved in a while. This is because it requires high team comprehension, high playing spirit, enormous practice of the style, commitment, and determination of a team. Improvement will always happen gradually with time after a team analyzes the experience.

Chapter 6

FOOTBAll INTELLIGENCE

(One of the most fundamental topics to look at in Modern Art football)

Football intelligence refers to game reading, situational awareness, decision making and reaction capabilities of players during play of a game. It is basically a new mode of approach towards learning and mastering the game of football, which was developed in MAF, under the Twenty 1st century soccer Foundation.

Football intelligence is so important in the sport because it allows players and coaches to analyze game situations and react promptly in response to them in a short time necessarily. Football intelligence is not just about having the adroitness to analyze game situations, but also subsumes a team to have a comprehensive back up plan or guide constituted of playing tactics which can be applied during various game situations, so as to play beyond the opponents' game. This is because Intelligence may be defined as the ability of one to analyze and clearly understand a given situation from a close perspective to a wide perspective, and create a counteractive approach to deal with it utterly.

Football intelligence can be trained to all players, right from academies to professional clubs, to give them an opportunity to conceive the game's possible/common challenges, mistakes, game situations and accordant appropriate tactics and trained skills to apply so as to increase their playing capacity.

Players trained with football intelligence would generally be smart in many occasions of play, especially to utilize possible opportunities or overcome critical challenges instantaneously in the game

The significance of football intelligence prior to winning games

Before going into further details about football intelligence, let's take a look at its significance in playing games.

Football intelligence is a great tool which can be used by both players and coaches to read games, analyze game situations, create a game plan and alternate their playing strategies accordingly in order to contain the game and play beyond the opponents' playing capacity. A given example is; if an opponent team decides to play a very speedy game and using the given tactic to their advantage, players of the opposition team may analyze the game situation shortly and apply relevant tactics to slow down the pace of the game to cut down the opponents' playing capacity and then perhaps initiate ways of dominating play.

Further significance includes;

- It improves players' capability to read games quickly, think widely and quickly, and make wise decisions as may be pre-planned.
- Motivates players to play games with a winning attitude since they would appear to be more prepared and privileged to win.
- Improves players' work rate and utilization of given opportunities since they would have more critical awareness and a wider perception of the game situation and always think faster to react.
- Improves players' talents since they would have a combination of their body and mind well equipped, to perform in games.
- Allows coaches to make more relevant commands during a game, and also allows them to have a more connected comprehension with the players about the game situations.
- It stimulates players to make effective decisions during various aspects of playing the game.
- It also allows them to analyze their mistakes, weaknesses and challenges against opponents more instantly, and act wisely accordingly.
- It improves the functionality rate of players' skills and playing tactics in games.
- It psychologically improves players' self esteem in playing games.
- Allows players of a team to have high dominion over games, and also avoid effectuating possible situations that could result to losing a game.
- It also capacitates them to control various behaviours of the opponents in the game.
- It improves the discipline and punctuality of players to coordinate and team work, by comprehending the scope and essence of doing so.

There are simply so many achievements in games that can be got to through players and coaches learning football intelligence. However, this mostly circulates around on their ability to read games, create a game plan, and have a wide back up of effective creative playing tactics applicatory for various game situations.

Football intelligence is partly a theoretical and partly practical study which can be trained to players to skyrocket the mode of training the game, in a totally new dimension. This is because the game is played on an enclosed pitch, whereby due to static goals in the entire game, all playing activities can be predictable and analyzed to achieve awareness of all game situations, eliminate common mistakes, and improve competitiveness of a team.
Football intelligence can be trained to coaches and to players both individually and as a team. It can simply be done by analyzing various expedient situations in games during different playing aspects, and then set instructions of relevant playing tactics which can be followed alternatively during such game situations. It is done in a way of programming/training players to act in games as instructed by a situational demand, through teaching them various game situations and admissible playing tactics which could invoke them to think widely, quickly and more predominantly in games. And such playing tactics all come to one point of achieving any game that players may come to.

It is also good to understand that game approaches of various teams may differ, and so specific set of instructions and tactics may therefore be applied to specific game situations.
Football intelligence is a very wide concept and a complex mental challenge, but the practicability of the game makes it relevant, and the order of playing brings it closer and makes it easier to master. Secondly, it doesn't have to be used so widely through all games, since in football it is easier to win. For example, it is at many instances possible to win a game by only one goal scored, so high level of competitiveness is not the basis for achieving. At times it may just be a matter of maintaining a lead through overall game dominance.

Let's make headway and delve into some of the accordant situations (in a wide perspective) of playing the game and look at considerable playing tactics too.

As mentioned before, football intelligence is a very wide concept, whereby very many playing situations can be distinguished, but this can more trenchantly be done by looking at the game while using a wider perspective.
First of all, let's look at the five major factors which effectively make up the art of the game, and this is exactly where we shall begin to pinpoint consequential playing tactics which should be taken into account

One of the major factors that make up the game is the act of passing and receiving the ball, from the defense section to the scoring section of a team. This simply means that advanced tactics for passing and receiving the ball are very critical in the game.

The second factor is that football is a game of pressure; whereby there is need to have effective control over it. By passing the ball on the pitch, as a team you would definitely create mounting opposition pressure from opponents and space pressure most critically. Pressure can be created intentionally in the game or can be brought up by associated factors such as time and standing game results. But the issue is, if it is not controlled by players, there would be awful mistakes done and incorporated inefficiency in the game. As a result, Pressure leads to the making of poor shots on target, playing dirty games, and a lot of incoherence in playing. In contemplation of achieving enough games, there should readily be enough reliable tactics in place to control pressure or do away with its effects.

The third factor is defending. After enough pressure is given rise to, there is need to defend your game. Secondly, if you can't consistently defend your game as a team, then you'll invariably need to score many goals in order to win. Defending is also just one of the critical factors that make up the game. If a team has good defensive tactics, it would be easier for them to dominate play in games and also win favourably. Firstly, defending essentially begins by chasing opponents for the ball to win it up, protect it, and then retain it in possession as a team both in your playing section and that of your opponents, before actually fancying much about how to protect the goal from strikes of the opponents. Defensive tactics here begin with an individual player's full potential to protect the ball, to that of a team, and other relevant playing tactics which can be fancied.

The forth factor is scoring goals. This is an imperative factor since it highly determines the results of a game, however much action that can be done during other playing stances. For instance, a team can play very well and defend well too, but if they lack effective scoring tactics in place, they won't have much power to change the standing aftermath of a game. For example, this is a situation where a team will play well, and end a game 0-0, or 1-1 goals scored. And this is literally where the essence of having unlimited effective scoring tactics lies.
The fifth factor and the last one on the list is "Creativity." It is a major factor that makes up the sport of football and the most critical one among all since it encompasses all other factors which can be thought of, that make up the game. Creativity is about thinking critically, being very tactical and calculative in the game, and how far this can be done. It begins by analyzing the game technically and tactically, up to scoring goals and determining the elementary results. The power of creativity makes the game to be more adaptable and easier to play. This implies that creative playing tactics and skills on ball are very underlying in the game, to be applied right from the defensive section to the scoring section of the play. Players have to be creative in circumstances where they need to be more unpredictable towards opponents, and come up with divergent solutions to always turn around the game.
After understanding the major factors which constitute the art of playing the game, we may now come back and proceed into other details about football intelligence.

Looking again at the definition of football intelligence, it refers to game reading, situational awareness, decision making and reaction capabilities of players during play of the game.
Game reading may in detail refer to a player's ability to analyze movements and reactions of the opposition team and predict their tactical playing mode and gist. Situational awareness is a player's ability to resolve movements and reactions of opponents, available playing opportunities or possible challenges available, standing order of the game at a given time, an opponent's playing space, and position on the pitch effectively. Decision making and reaction capabilities refer to a player's ability to make a much relevant decision in a given situation, and react effectively on time to perform a given action.
Intelligence in this context means the ability to understand a situation from a wide perspective to a momentary one and react effectively according to possible opportunities given or available challenges, in a short time space necessary.

After reading a game in the first few minutes, and analyzing tactics being applied by opponents, players may choose to apply their relevant playing tactics in a game, to alternate the game so as to play beyond opponents' capacity, utilize given suitability, or do away with available challenges provided that could lead to possible negative situations. For example, if players of the opposition team decide to play a very attacking game, it may be necessary for the other team to attack them too in order to dissolve their attacking attitude and then alternate the game to reduce their attacking threat.
First point, we shall rationalize game reading and examine some of the possible aspects and significant compatible playing tactics which are effective.

Game reading

This is the perceptual ability of players to read and understand the opponents' game and their specific playing approach used.
While looking at game reading, there are quite many possible situations which can be looked at, and relevant tactics which can be used. A few examples of possible situations are;

- A team playing a very defensive game in order to come up with a tie or slightly win a game, and resist the threat of being scored or lose the game.
- A team making frequent count attacks, with drift to win corner kicks or close free kicks to the goal in order to utilize them effectively to change standing game results.
- A team making wide passes of the ball with an intention to create wide spaces, disperse opponents, and later make quick runs towards their goal during an attack, in order to score quick goals.
- A team playing an open game with regard to ensure flexibility to make penetrative attacks into the opponents' defense.
- A team making diagonal passes and through passes to the wing play in order to make frequent cross balls into critical play of the scoring section, to eventuate scoring opportunities and create pressure in the opponents' defense.

After looking at game reading, next we shall look at situational awareness of a player during play of the game.

Situational awareness

After conceptualizing the major factors which make up the game of football or the art of the sport, and training players to have game reading capabilities as well as equipping them with relevant playing tactics to be applied in response, the third level of resolving the playing intelligence of a team is "situational awareness," or the instant player spatial awareness and orientation.
Situational awareness is the ability of players to analyze playing situations of a game in order to be literally aware of presumable challenges faced or opportunities to utilize so as to achieve in a game.

Training players with situational awareness essentially fortifies them to make effective decisions during various aspects of playing in the game in the shortest time possible.
Situational awareness may be reflected to right from the time before a game starts, by examining ruling factors, and throughout the match, up to the last minute of the playing time. This form of awareness instructs a player to make certain decisions, apply relevant playing tactics and react timely during a subjective playing circumstance. Examples of situations that players may perceive include the following.

When playing in the defense section, a defender may undergo situations such as;

- A very fast opponent who always out looks to run with the ball into the goal box. This may instruct the defender to intercept them always before they get closer to the box, whereby this

may also involve making slide tackles against them to intercept the ball before they cross into the box, whereby if they cross into the box area, the situation will change and necessitate careful tackling yet quick enough.

- A defender avoiding cases which may lead to corner kicks in their section, especially after realizing tall opponents who have high capacity to strike aerial set balls into the goal.

- A defender making tight man marking against the opponent who gets hold of the ball, especially when they enter into fatal positions of the scoring section where they can shoot the ball into the goal or make a deadly square pass into the goal box, which could grievously result into a goal etc.

When playing in the midfield section, a midfielder may experience situations such as;

- An opposition team parking many players in the central midfield with the intendment to dominate play in the section and cut down passes or strikes made through the central midfield, by reducing the flexibility of opponents doing so. After gaining awareness about such an incidence, a distributive midfielder of the opponent team may chose to make diagonal passes and aerial balls to team mates in well spaced positions especially in the wing play, in order to diffuse play in the midfield.
- Making drive passes, after realizing an opportunity of provided spaces in midfield and defense of the opponents, so as to instantly reach the ball to the team strikers.
- Marking spaces through which the ball may be passed to a potential striker of the opponents in order to cut down the supply of lower passes to them which they would be easier to trap and lead off with to strike through defenders.

When playing in the forward play, situations experienced by forwards may include;

- A striker may run smack into a standpoint where it could be a much better appraisal to make an assist, in order to come up with a goal, rather than shooting the ball to the goal where there could be slightly low chances of making a goal as correlated to the aspect where the ball is instead passed on to a team mate in a much better position to score.
- A striker who is in a keeper to beat position making a decision to shoot the ball instantly into the goal, after recognizing the goal keeper coming out of the goal to cut off the angle, with an intent to deny them the scoring opportunity.
- A striker running into the goal box with the ball to create pressure and provoke opponents who tackle him to eventually foul him, especially after recognizing that it is more than one opponent who are after him, whereby proposing for a penalty kick would be a better decision to utilize the scoring opportunity, especially if there are limited chances for scoring the ball, that could be due to aggressive tackling opponents.

  etc

Measuring opponents

Situational awareness in a close perspective involves a player measuring their opponent during play, for example in a man to man system, in order to strategically respond, during an attempt to disrupt their actions against them. For instance, does an opponent always go to his right to shoot? Does he have a favorite move that he uses all the time? Does he try to always tackle or just delay on defense? Does he have a favorite receiver or passer? Or does the goal keeper make moves out of the goal whereby it may be possible to time him/her and shoot the ball into the goal when it's out of his/her reach. Generally this is done in the first portion of the match. Then a player will use that information to gain an advantage during the remainder of the match. For example if you know that your opponent has a weak left foot, you can cleat to his right to tackle away the ball.

These are just some of the factors that are pointed out in this guide, which can hint players to make relevant decisions and reactions during play.
There are other more factors which may not fall in the above categories, but might prompt players to make relevant decisions and react responsively, using creative skills and playing tactics under different aspects of play. They may include; opponents' space awareness, tactical movements of opponents, speed of their game and their playing desire, standing game results and time left to end the match, ball possession difference, game physicality, attacking tactics of opponents, openness of the game, etc. all these can be looked at and taken into account in order to disrupt opponents and loosen their game.

In order for players to benefit from learning football intelligence, they should be equipped with a lot of playing skills and tactics which can be used to alternate games and play responsively against opponents. They should have strongly tactical connectedness to allow easy and effective team work, where they comprehend each other and communicate through understanding each other's decision and capabilities during various aspects of play; as a form of playing intelligence.

Players trained with football intelligence will be mentally programmed to protect the ball where necessary, pass it on, score it, make runs and tactical movements, have high body awareness, make misdirection of opponents, create space, create scoring opportunities, utilize scoring opportunities, dodge, retain the ball, make penetrative killer passes of the ball, oversight games, reinforce their defense, disrupt opponents and so on, where always necessary. Because they are pre-programmed or prepared to perform all these aspects at different circumstances of play, they will always appear to be more determined to win games and stimulate actual play.

They should have a comprehensive back up plan and a guide of skills and playing tactics which they can use to respond to different reactions of opponents, so as to play beyond their game throughout a contest. Because it is about intelligence, there should be constructive coordination of players, and application of relevant skills and divergent tactics. Having a mysterious phenomenon, style or tradition of playing, understood by all players of a team would also be another strategic form of playing intelligence.

This section only provides a brief introduction and a concise overview about football intelligence as a concept. A comprehensive guide about the topic may be got in a separate book about football intelligence, where more situations and tactics are widely and systematically discussed.

Chapter 7
TRAINING MODE

(The recent chapters of this book have been discussing and teaching the various football skills categories, and, it's now time to more practically train the skills through this chapter)

In the training mode for this guide about Modern Art football, players are basically trained through equipping their minds with knowledge and skills about playing the game, augmenting their mindsets, and taking them through suitable effective training drills. Football is a very physical and practical game, but players essentially require knowledge and playing skills in order to analyze the game in a more advanced perspective and improve their level of playing skills and capacity.
In this chapter, we discuss every necessary practical part of learning skills in various training sessions where players will train various playing skills discussed in this book and acquire relevant knowledge and adroitness.

In this section of the training guide, players are mainly trained the major skills categories and the relevant combination of skills required for each. This is done through specific training sessions, which are conducted in a timely manner, where briefing is also provided to players at the starting point of every session, to allow them take in what they are going to train. Here, the team coach should be ready to schedule a special training program to allow players practically learn the fundamental skills trained in this book.

A report is made at the end of the training program to study the general performance of players throughout training sessions, to identify where they have succeeded and where they need to improve. In this case, an assignment should also be provided to take them through relevant training to allow them practice where they necessarily need to improve. In otherwords, effective results must be obtained after completion of the training program or through a specific training period.

The major skills categories as considered in the training mode

These include ball protection skills, ball control skills, dodging and dribbling skills, tactical coordination skills, attacking tactics, and scoring skills respectively.
In the approach of executing training activities, small sided games are mostly used in the training basics as used to equip players with the majority of skills. This is because players are closely and frequently confronted with the ball in a small sided game, which would upgrade the speed of learning and strength their coordination ability.

Ball protection skills

In the training mode, players begin by training ball protection skills, to allow them keep possession and retention of the ball in order to achieve tactical moves within the game.

Ball protection is classified into individual ball protection and team ball protection. This denotes that players ought to be versed on how to protect the ball individually with respect to achieve individual moves with it, and also learn how to protect it as a team in order to achieve relevant tactical moves. So ball protection has a great tactical importance in the game, which makes it very principal.

We shall commence by looking at individual ball protection in the first training session for ball protection.

Individual ball protection

This is the ability of a player to retain the ball in their possession and evict opponents from grabbing it or intercepting it.

Individual ball protection is so important to players since it fosters more player individual brilliancy to cultivate the overall playing capabilities of a team. It begins from the moment a player makes a move to receive a ball to the moment he/she passes it on successfully to a team mate. This means that individual ball protection is considered when a player is receiving the ball, sustaining it in retention, and when they are passing it away. That is how critical players should hypothesize it. An external example that players may refer to in order to understand the theory is the diplomatic protection policy (or protocol observatory policy) of governments of countries. This shows that if a country is expecting a visit of a diplomat from a subjective country, they communicate immediately to the immigration centre of the diplomat's country of departure to confirm about the visit. Once it is confirmed, security and protocol convoys or the police would be ready at the airport to receive the diplomat and provide them with maximum protection throughout their visit in the country, till the moment they are securely set off back to their country of origin. This is the same way that a player should mindfully treat the ball while protecting it, during reception, retention, and passing it away.

Below are the required skills set trained to players with regard to achieve individual ball protection;

- **Quick decision making and quick reaction**

  A player should have quick decision making and quick reaction when prior to positioning themselves in order to receive the ball and during when they pass it away. It has to be a perfect decision taken and quick move and reaction made.

- **Space awareness**

  Players should be trained to be very intelligent about their awareness of space availability. They should have high awareness of space where they are switching to in order to receive a pass. They should also have high self space awareness in terms of how many opponents surrounding them and their tactical moves against them.

The availability of space should give them different instructions about how to make their moves, play the ball or interact with team mates. Small availability of space presupposes that there is higher risk of losing the ball to opponents due to pressure, panic or interception from them; whereas high space availability justifies that there are better chances for playing the ball with more positive tactical moves. So players should be trained to have high space awareness, and also be trained tactics for creating and utilizing space.

- **Speed**

Speed is an important factor used to achieve individual ball protection. If a player is fast enough on ball and also when making tactical moves, they would necessarily offer more ball protection. Players should be trained to react quickly and play on high speed to challenge opponents.

- **Self positioning**

This is a critical factor for players to protect the ball. Poor self positioning can with no strings attached result to losing the ball to opponents. When positioning oneself prior to receiving a ball, a player should ensure to space themselves from surrounding opponents, and should not allow any impediment from them. A player should always ask for the ball when in a relevant position to receive it from a passer. For example, it's not right to ask for a ball when facing the back of a player that you are asking it from. In other words, when you are behind them, you should perceptually ensure that you are in a relevant angle to receive a pass before you ask for one. If you think it is okay to ask for it, first analyze the situation to see if the passer can make a comfortable turn flexibly to pass it to you.

Good self positioning also implies that a player should switch into better positions and get spaced well to receive a pass successfully from a passer without the opponents' interference.

- **Ball control**

This is an ultimate skill for individual ball protection. It is more apposite when trapping a pass, controlling the ball above the ground and playing it against opponents. Players should be trained ball control skills in order to allow them comfortably keep the ball in their retention before they pass it away.

Beneficial to protecting the ball, a player should keep it close to the body while playing, maintain it in-between their legs to offer more protection against opponents attacking from all directions, and play it flexibly with speed with regard to keep it in motion and play unpredictably against opponents.

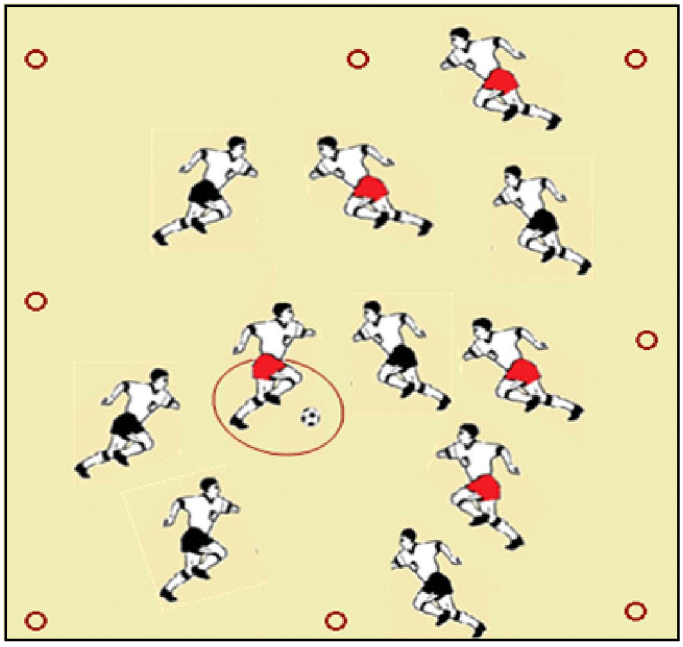
The playing circle and square ring (drill 1)

This is a training drill used to train players with individual ball protection skills and relevant skills. It is done by placing cones on the training ground to form a square ring of 7 meters on each side, and 3 cones used per side (making a total of 12 cones used all together). A playing circle of radius 0.8 meter is drawn close to one side of the square, within it. Inside this circle is where one of the players stands, as their position to play the ball. Two teams of 5 players each of different jerseys are formed to play against each other in the square ring. One of the players belonging to one of the teams is meant to stand in the playing circle to start with the ball. As an instruction, no other player in the square ring is allowed to intersect into the circle. The ball is played normally but this player should play only within the circle. The only circumstances under which he should leave it is when he makes a blind pass to the opponents, pass the ball outside the square ring or when he moves outside the circle while confronted. If he makes a blind pass for example, the opposition player who wins the ball is now the one to play in the playing circle as a replacement and now his team is the one rendered to protect and possess the ball. Players outside the playing circle are meant to make not more than 4 passes on the ball and then pass it to the mate inside the circle. During a possession turnover, the player who wins the ball is rendered to move into the circle, regardless of whether he has won it from an opposition player outside the circle. That is how the drill continues to be played until all players have acquired a chance to play inside the playing circle.

This drill majorly trains players to have self space awareness and also grasp the theory of a playing circle. It teaches them to have enough concentration on ball, flexibility on it within self space and playing speed before passing it away. The same drill also teaches players with ball protection during close passing of the ball.

Illustration

Fig 52



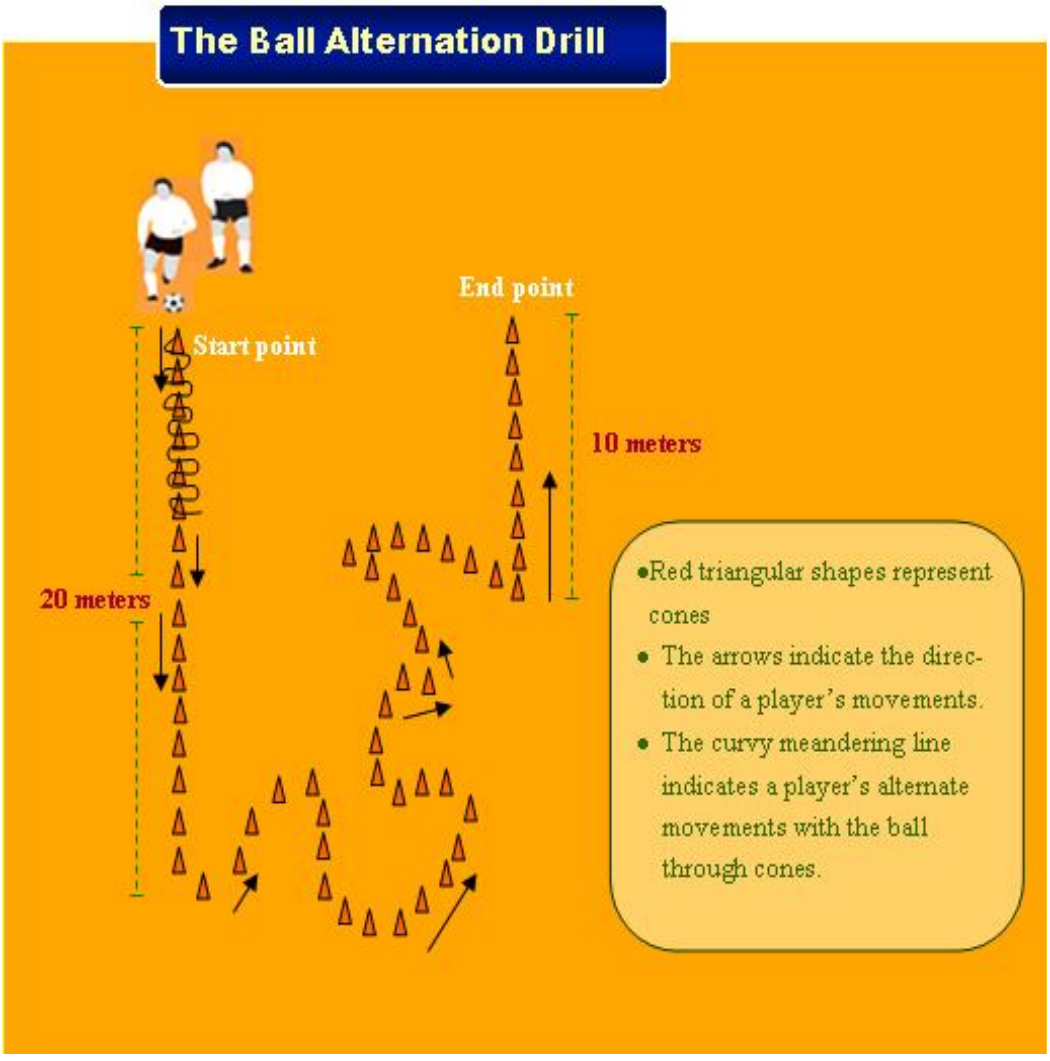
Ball alternation (drill 2)

The ball alternation drill is another transcendent drill for training players with individual ball protection skills. It trains them relevant skills such as; unpredictability on ball, flexibility on ball, making body turns with the ball, dodging skills and speed in reaction.

Equipments required include cones and 3 or 4 balls to be used for playing. It is set up by placing cones in a straight line of 20 meters long, and each spaced from the other through a distance of half a meter. At the next point, the line of cones meanders to form crooked curves with sharp turning points.

A player should get the ball and dribble it by passing it through given spaces between cones in an alternate movement. By doing so, they should pass it in-between their legs using ball protection skills during when they are moving it through the next space between cones. Below is an illustration of the ball alternation drill.

Fig 53



A player simply follows that given order of moving the ball throughout the trip. By moving the ball, they should demonstrate speed in reaction, unpredictability and flexibility on ball, dodging skills, and the making of body turns with the ball which offers it protection, for every time they reach a turning point. They should assume to be closely confronted by imaginary opponents whereby they need to react quickly and play with high level of ball protection skills.

The drill generally trains a player how to protect the ball by maintaining it in between the legs, and use a combination of relevant skills effectively to achieve the skill.

Team ball protection

Team ball protection is highly constitutive in the game. It allows players to have conventional playing intelligence about playing the ball with sufficient protection to it as a team.

During team ball protection, we look at passing skills as used to ensure successful passing of the ball, speed of passing the ball, coordination, and space creation and utilization, as the major determinants considered.

For passing skills relevant; close passing of the ball is very effective for team ball protection. This is because it allows players to make speedy controllable passes on ball, most of which are direct passes, which allow closer interaction and provision of support to one another. Penetrative passing of the ball and accurate passing are also necessary passing skills elementary for team ball protection.

- **The speed of passing the ball**

The speed of passing the ball from one player to another should be generally high in order to effectively ensure team ball protection. An individual player could be slow with the ball, but when it comes to passing it away to a team mate, the ball has to be played fast enough to evict interception from opponents. The passing skills effective for maintaining high speed of passing the ball include the rolling ball and front spinning ball (speedy ball). So players should be trained speedy passing of the ball as part of training for team ball protection.

- **Coordination**

During team ball protection, effective coordination of players is very underlying. This attests that there should be enough flexibility in passing the ball among team players in all key positions, whereby there should be good self positioning of each of them and effective adaptation of playing space. Preferentially, there should be coordination balance of players with the ball on the pitch, and use of tactical coordination skills for more effective passing of the ball.

- **Space creation and utilization**

Space is created when players make close passing fields of the ball to share attention of opponents, and allow creative players to switch to tactical positions in created spaces which can be used to play the ball with more positive and constructive approach against opponents. Space utilization

refers to how given spaces on the pitch can used to play the ball by a team, and protect it in their possession, or play it more operatively. Space utilization can basically be used to protect the ball, for example a back pass to a last defender or a long wing pass to a defensive or attacking winger may be made by a player with intent to utilize a given space as a reliable reference to protect the ball from highly contesting close opponents.

Team ball protection can be trained to players through playing small sided games, where they would be confronted enough times and also effectively practice provided playing skills.
Ball protection can generally be trained to players in three sessions of 2 or 3 hours each, and then given key points to put into account when making further practicing of the skill or when playing in a match.

A summary of sessions for training ball protection skills

Session	Relevant required skills	Drill	Comment
Individual Ball protection	Quick decision making and quick reaction	Playing circle and square ring	
	Space awareness	Playing circle and square ring	
	Speed	Small sided game	
	Flexibility on ball	Ball Alternation drill	
	Unpredictability	Ball Alternation drill	
	Ball control	Small sided game	
Team ball protection	Close passing of the ball	Small sided game	
	Penetrative passing of the ball	Triangular passing drill	
	Speed of passing the ball	Small sided game	
	Coordination skills	Small sided game	
	Space creation and utilization	Small sided game	

Ball control

Ball control is a player's ability to comfortably play the ball with total control over it, or flexibly play it around their body with sufficient skill.

Ball control is considered only at an individual basis. So there is nothing like team ball control, unless one is trying to mean tactical coordination skills on ball. Just as individual ball protection skills, ball control is embraced from the facet of receiving a pass by a player to the demeanor of passing the ball away.

Since ball control is very individualistic, it is basically fundamental for players to develop their ball control skills through responsibly practicing out of their individual concern. In this case, each player should possess a personal ball which they can use during their individual or small group training sessions, with intent to work upon and develop their ball control capabilities by practicing the ball on their bodies, as a fundamental procedure for the skill enhancement.

Developing ball control skills during training craves players to converge on practicing a number of relevant skills necessary for improving the major skill. These include receiving ball control skills, timing of the ball, body flexibility, body balance with the ball, flexibility on ball, space awareness, focus and concentration, and timing of the opponents. Players should be well equipped with these abilities in their body and mind as posited below;

- **Receiving ball control skills**

Receiving a pass is the very initial and crucial scenario for controlling the ball. Receiving ball control skills are prepositioned by a player to receive a pass. A player essentially starts by studying the trip or flight of the ball, the ball's speed and momentum, distance from the passer or the time it takes to reach him, and the passing technique used to hit the ball. They should analyze these factors instantly with high concentration and focus and at the same time study the behaviors of surrounding opponents towards them.

There should be critical eye contact of the player with the ball throughout its trip as they get in line with it, and then determine how to effectively receive it. It is not right for one to make a forward turn towards the direction of a pass before successfully receiving or trapping the ball, especially in situations where there are closely surrounding opponents, most often in the midfield. This is because it would be a little hard to control a ball in the direction once it surpasses them while on high speed, and, additionally creates high risk for losing it to opponents.

Players can use various playing parts of their bodies to trap and control a pass basing on the level of the ball from the ground or the type of a pass being projected. This can all be referred to by looking back at ball control skills and passing/receiving skills in chapter 3 of this book.

The efficiency of successfully receiving a pass is 63% determined by the input of a passer. This is why failure to successfully receive a ball may not be a one party's responsibility. This is why teams with good passers usually make their attackers enjoy doing their job.

- **Timing of the ball**

Timing of the ball is a capaciously over ruling skill of playing the ball. It is specifically the ability of a player's body and mind to efficiently coordinate with the ball through its movements in order to play it accurately through making effective body contact and control with it during course of action. Quite similarly to ball protection and control, it is also considered from the aspect of receiving a ball to the time of passing it accurately to another destination. It requires high level of a player's focus and concentration during play, and enough body strength in order to play flexibly in alignment with the ball's movements to play it with sufficient control. Timing on ball or what may also be called timing of the ball is considered during receiving of the ball, dodging, use of trickery, dribbling, ball control, shooting, and passing it on to a mate. It generally determines the accuracy and achievement of all these playing aspects, by analyzing factors like space, position, speed, technique, and opponents' movement.

- **Body flexibility**

This is the level of fitness of a player's body muscles to stretch while performing various physical actions during play. Players should prominently practice physical fitness and body flexibility in order to outperform their ball control skills.

- **Body balance with the ball**

This has to do with how players make their body posture when playing the ball in order to allow body balancing, stability and traction on the ground while in motion. Body balance with the ball determines players' speed and accuracy on ball, stability, and their effective use of body strength to play the game. Players can improve their body balance with the ball by;

- Always keeping the arms out for balance when in action with the ball
- Always having effective eye contact to the ball movements
- Allowing effective use of body strength
- Playing on a relevant speed
- Having effective timing on ball
- Keeping the ball close to the body and keep an equivalent speed of their body with the ball in order to keep it under control
- Having enough ball control
- Having high self space awareness

- Having enough focus and concentration
- Always leaning towards the ball in aspects of dodging and dribbling

- **Flexibility on ball**

This is the ability of a player to play the ball on and around their body comfortably with simplicity, in a given playing space and speed of action. It allows a player to play the ball comfortably on their body, and change different directions of playing it around them or in their playing circle, at a given speed and given playing space. Flexibility on ball is an ultimate skill for ball control, and may mostly be trained during individual player training sessions, to allow convenient and continuous practicing for effective results.

- **Space awareness**

When looking at space awareness as a necessary skill for ball control, we more particularly and basically consider the self space awareness of a player in this case. A player's self space awareness requisitely determines their ball control deftness. For instance, in occurrences where there is inadequate playing space due to closely marking opponents, a player may experience more pressure and notable chances of interruption from the opponents. This obliges that the ball control of a player playing in limited playing space should be more certain and divergent as compared to other playing situations where there's auspicious playing space. Therefore, players' self space awareness is centrally ideal for improving their ball control capabilities.

- **Focus and concentration (psychological factors)**

Focus determines the player's ability to always know the right decisions, steps, actions and moves to make with the ball in a given playing situation, whereas concentration determines their ability to perform the given actions perfectly and efficiently, i.e. considering the right combination of playing skills in carrying out the action, e.g. speed, space awareness, body balance, flexibility, timing, reaction, unpredictability, divergence, etc

Ball control is one of the playing aspects where sufficient players' focus and concentration is extremely important, whereby without the two, it is quite hard for players to successfully execute ball control actions and actualize in the game. This could be during playing aspects such as passing, receiving, dribbling, ball protection, shooting, dodging, etc. so players should intend to manage their focus and concentration psychologically by circumventing interruption and keep the mind in shape emotionally and through attitude in order to improve their ball control capabilities.

- **Timing of the opponents**

This is a very indispensable playing skill and in every aspect a decent one for ball control. It is very necessary for players to time their opponents prior to reacting with the ball.

This skill is relevant to a player during passing, receiving, ball protection, dodging, shooting, attacking, etc. It is basic for a player to analyze opponents' movements and time them before or when reacting with the ball so as evict their interruption or interception of the ball. In this way, they should also play unpredictably and divergently to exceed opponents' immediate intentions against them

Generally, in contemplation of tremendously improving their ball control, players should work upon upgrading their comfort on ball, their flexibility and creativity. They should do this by practicing on a regular basis in training sessions specialized for practicing ball control. Ball control is not a skill that can be achieved in just a few training sessions because it takes a lot of time and practice to perfect. This is why it is necessary for players to train the skill with much focus throughout their career until they perfect. Also due to the fact that the skill encompasses all the other playing skills in the game, training ball control would be very significant for developing a player's talent and their individual brilliancy in games to a drastic level.

The rotating ovals (drill)

This is a training drill effective for training ball control collectively among team players. Equipments required include cones used to design ovals on the ground, and balls to be used by players. The balls should be comparatively many in number, of at least 9 or 16, where they are all used at the same time. Then players will pass the balls while rotating around the oval, in a circulating line.

Procedures for the drill, as directed to the coach or any person in reference to that position

Step 1

Get small cones which are many in number and use them to form ovals by placing them on the ground in a pecking order. The ovals may be about 6 meters long and 3 meters wide. Two or three ovals may be formed, depending on the number of players around and more particularly the number of balls available. 9 balls are used for two ovals, and 16 balls are used for three ovals

Step 2

Make sure that the ovals are close to each other in a distance of 3.5 meters, and all at the same level as shown below.

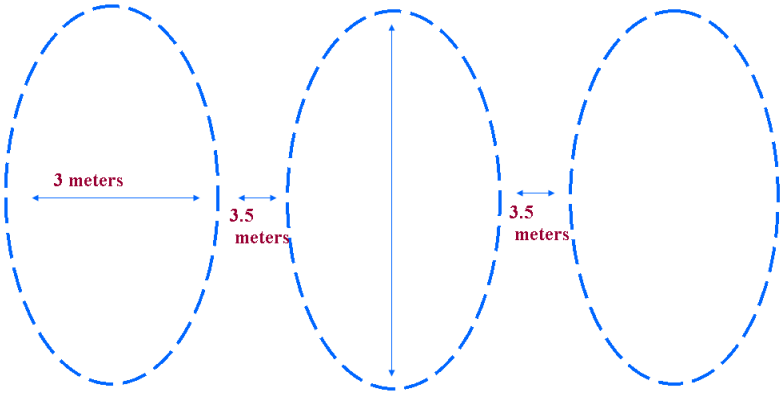


Fig 54

Step 3

Let players form ovals by standing outside the ovals or the cones, in a line whereby they face each other's back. A substantial distance should be reserved among each of them, and this can be created by having each player stretch one of their arms straight, and slightly touch the back of the player infront of him. After a considerable distance is reserved, it's now fine to put down the arms, and let the other players join to form the next oval(s) through the same order. There should be either two or three ovals formed.

Step 4

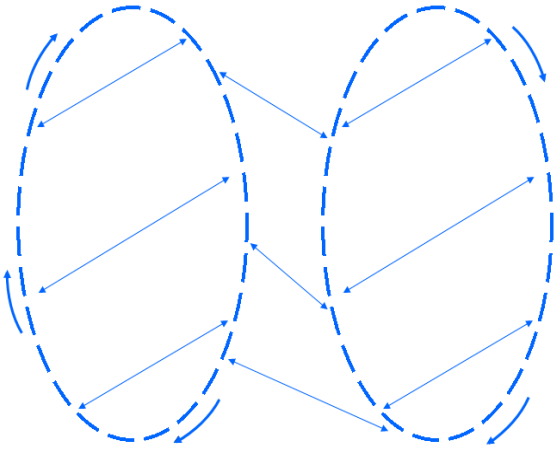
Let the players start rotating around the ovals at a relative pace in a clockwise direction

Step 5

Next they should be given balls to pass on to each other to a player on the opposite side in a slant angle at different static intervals of the oval. So in the case of two rotating ovals, 9 balls are used to pass the ball at 9 different intervals, and in the case of three rotating ovals, 16 balls are used to pass the ball at 16 different intervals.

Next they should be given balls to pass on to each other to a player on the opposite side in a slant angle at different static intervals of the oval. So in the case of two rotating ovals, 9 balls are used to pass the ball at 9 different intervals, and in the case of three rotating ovals, 16 balls are used to pass the ball at 16 different intervals.

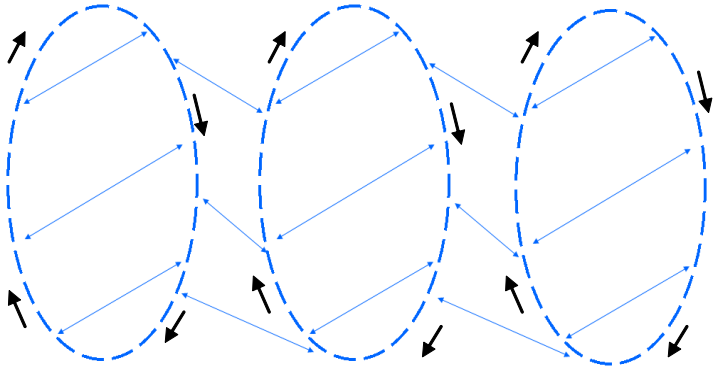
Illustration when two ovals are used



9 balls are used here, and every double pointed arrow represents a ball and its movement at an interval (passing point). Players do change positions since they keep rotating, but balls do not, because a specific ball is used at a specific interval. Balls used in one oval should be used in that oval only, and in the same position ever. The same applies to balls used in-between the two moving ovals.

Fig 55

Illustration when three ovals are used



Here 16 balls are used and 16 passing intervals are considered. Players playing in the oval in the middle will play so actively as compared to the ovals in the sides.

Fig 56

Step 6

Points or intervals where the ball is passed should be well marked by players, to avoid confusion. Players should initially begin passing the ball using hands at a fast pace, while rotating. This would be to enable them set the pace at which to pass the ball in their minds, and also gain the required mental agility.

Step 7

Once mastered, players should then pass the ball on the ground while using legs. They should begin at a relative pace, and then improve it gradually. There should be a uniform movement in terms of pace, and more focus and concentration used, until players perfect the drill. A player should use a specific leg to receive and pass the ball in a relevant direction. This may not be quite easy to do, but has to be practiced to allow flexibility.

Step 8

This is quite a hard step and the last one to consider. It involves passing the ball above the ground without letting it fall down. Players may pass it using laps, legs, the head, shoulders and chest. The action is used to achieve player's high level of comfort on ball, flexibility, focus and concentration, playing speed, mental agility, space utilization and their passing and receiving accuracy on ball. The drill should be practiced hard in order for them to improve their ball control skills, body awareness and their mental/physical agility.

Lastly, the speed of rotation of the ovals may gradually be improved to enhance the players' speed of passing the ball.

The order of passing the ball as directed to players;

The ball is passed to you, as you pass it back to the person behind or next in line to the player who passed it to you. High level of concentration and discipline should be observed. And in the same regard, players should endeavor to adapt the three levels of their body to effectively play the ball as used for ball control.

The drill improves players' speed, focus, concentration, timing on ball, mental agility, flexibility, comfort on ball, and their body awareness, and most willfully teaches them with high ball control skills.

If players want to become professionals, they should dare to practice the drill and develop their ball control, as one of the major and most fundamental playing skills in Modern Art football.

Summary of training sessions for ball control skills

Session	Relevant skills trained	Drill	comment
Individual training session	Juggling Flexibility on ball Comfort on ball Body flexibility Ball control skills		
Small group training session (3-7players)	Speed		
	Receiving ball control skills	Passing and receiving of the ball	
	Body balance with the ball	Rotating ovals	
Large group/Team training sessions	Space awareness	Playing circle and squaring	
	Timing on ball	Small sided game	
	Timing of the opponents	Small sided game	
	Focus and concentration	Rotating ovals	
	Flexibility on ball	Rotating ovals	
	Speed	Rotating ovals	
	Body awareness	Rotating ovals	

Dodging and dribbling

Dodging and dribbling are virtually similar aspects of playing the ball. This is because dodging is a form of dribbling but sometimes they are taken to be the same, whereby there is logically no much difference found between the two.

Dribbling is referred to as maneuvering the ball under the control of a single player in a given direction, while avoiding defenders' attempts to prevent this occurring, whereas dodging is referred to as a player's ability to maneuver the ball away from or against surrounding opponents, while divergently using high ball control, speed, and ball protection skills with an intent to create space, utilize space, protect the ball or move it through a different direction.

Since dodging and dribbling are similar aspects of playing the ball, they are trained under the same training sessions, using the same drills.

As was mentioned before in chapter 3 of this book when referring to the two playing aspects, there are specific intentions for why and when players should dribble and dodge. The two aspects are tactically necessary for creating space, avoid defenders, attack, protect the ball, beat opponent's movements, and utilize playing space.

When training players with dodging and dribbling skills, the outright applicatory skills trained to them so as to intensify their dodging and dribbling ability include; use of trickery, body balance with the ball, speed of a player's body with the ball, timing of the opponents, space awareness, and individual attacking tactics. Dodging and dribbling is mostly done in the midfield and forward play where players are more reactive in play especially during attacking. So players who use the ball in the specified playing space should be trained proficient skills for dodging and dribbling as looked at below.

- **Use of trickery**

Trickery refers to the practice of using ball tricks against opponents, to challenge them during play.

Ball tricks are created by creative skilled players, and may be basically used by them in their playing style, to challenge opponents.

Tricks are naturally created and used by creative skilled players, but can be adopted by other players who are naturally not so talented or creative on ball, and may also be trained to them. However, the difference is; a player's ability to learn or mug up ball tricks doesn't necessarily mean that they can perform them against opponents during a match. This is because cram work might not be helpful, unless players practice the skills and attain physical and mental agility to perform them during a competitive and confrontational situation.

Trickery is used for dodging opponents and beat their movements completely. It improves players' flexibility on ball, effective utilization of limited playing space, their creativity on ball during play, and compounds their ability to make penetrative moves with the ball against opponents.

The use of trickery is not so much directed by coaches for players to rely on in playing games. This is because many players tend to be so confident with their tricks, but in many incidences wontedly fail to dodge opponents, simply because they do not know how and when to rely on them to play in games. It is also a reason as to why players end up fighting on ball or lose it to the opponents. So here comes up a question; how should players use trickery while playing in game?

By addressing this question, we shall look at rules and the order for using trickery as spotlighted below.

- Trickery should always be used with quick reaction and quick decision making
- It should not be used by a player with a motive to either fascinate fans or express a selfish or individualistic interest of any kind on ball. It should instead be used to achieve a continuous and positive play in the game, and then mesmerizing fans or intimidating opponents should be achieved in that context.
- A player should have high space awareness, or preferentially, they should not choose to rely on trickery against opponents in situations where there is very inadequate playing space. So there should always be moderate space to enact the tricks successfully.
- A player may use tricks with a direct approach, but should not wait or hope for the opponent to tackle them to then have the will to perform the trick against them. This is because the opponent could be at times faster in their move to intercept the player's action with the ball.
- A player should always have enough timing on the ball and timing of the opponents to improve playing accuracy.
- They should be always flexible and unpredictable enough on ball by dynamically not expressing the intent to perform a trick, i.e. having the time to think first with the ball can give the opponent time space to read your mind to predict your next move. So playing should be in a continuously unpredictable progress and flexible exertion. Since the use of trickery is contemplated under dodging, the above rules and order of playing also apply to dodging as a playing skill.

Examples of tricks

There are many tricks that can be performed on ball, and many more can be created depending on a player's level of creativity in the game. In this regard, their imagination and talent is always the limit. Common examples of ball tricks which can be trained are illustrated below.



Fig 57

Body balance with the ball

Effective body balance with the ball is so important during dodging and dribbling in football, since poor body balancing affects the speed, stability, traction on ground, and strength of a player during action with the ball.

First, a player should ensure to lean their shoulders towards the ball during play in order to shift the body strength and weight towards it and also offer body stability and traction on the ground in the relevant direction of playing the ball. They should also ensure effective movement of their arms out for balance and strength.

Players should always ensure to keep the ball close to the body (glued to the foot) to allow easy body balancing and ball protection. They should also ensure to maintain a balanced speed of the body with that of the ball so as to allow easy body balancing. Lack of ball control also agitates players' body balancing with the ball. This heralds that they should practice ball control skills and flexibility to achieve easy body balancing.

Speed of a player's body with the ball

This is very trenchant and critical during dodging and dribbling, and is essentially a major required skill for the two playing aspects. The speed of a player's body has to balance with the speed of the ball during reaction. Players are recommended to make very quick short footsteps or movements with the ball in respect to achieve this skill. In fact this is just one of the ways to appear more unpredictable when playing the ball and on top of that easily conform the speed and strength of the body towards it, basically to maintain it in a player's playing circle

Ronaldinho Gaucho is observed to have this skill well performed in many games that he played. Since he is an attacking midfielder, the skill enables him to dodge and dribble the ball against opponents, strike through their defense, be fast enough, and utilize playing space on the pitch to create scoring opportunities. Another player example competent at this skill is Arjen Robben. When he gets hold of the ball, it's hard to make him lose it regardless of his outstanding pace with it while dribbling.

Timing of the opponents

During the aspect of dodging and dibbling, it is very easy to successively draw attention of surrounding opposition players. Also players should know that their movements and actions with the ball directly influence the movements of the opponents against them. So they are meant to be conscious enough about this by having maximum timing of the opponents that are in the attempt to tackle them or interrupt their actions with the ball, and dribble towards space where they might not easily be intercepted. This asserts that they should have high situational awareness, space awareness, quick decision making and quick reaction, and effective coordination with team mates and opponents' movements so as to ensure consistence and continuity of play.

Space awareness

Space awareness is important during dodging and dribbling in two aspects. These include a player's self space awareness, and the awareness of space into which they are moving the ball. Player's space awareness infinitely determines their retention capabilities with the ball and their playing consistence with it. It also goes with their perfect coordination with teammates to further allow consistence and continuity of play. Players should at the same time be trained to switch with the ball into positions with sufficient space to evince easy ball protection and interaction with team mates.

Individual attacking tactics

Dodging and dribbling is used for attacking at an individual approach. Dribbling is mostly used to drive the ball and penetrate into the opposition team's defense section, whereas dodging is used to avoid defenders or make penetrative moves during attacking. Players, most especially midfielders and strikers should learn effective dribbling and dodging skills in order to play penetrative attacking games. By having high space awareness, they should recognize opportunities of space through which to drive the ball with penetration.

Sometimes trying to make penetrative passes on ball may give opponents chances to intercept the ball; hence this is where effective dribbling would serve as an important playing aspect to play penetrative games.

When reviewing dodging, we cogitate tactics like 1 against 1, 1 against 2, and 1 against 3. Under dodging, we have what we call zonal dodging, which refers to dodging within/through space, and direct dodging which refers to dodging while using a direct approach towards an opponent, as where discussed before in chapter 3 of this book when looking at dodging. Direct dodging may be relevant for 1 against 1, where there is limited playing space. Zonal dodging, which is the most effective dodging tactic is relevant for 1 against 1, 1 against 2 and 1 against 3 respectively. This is specifically because here more players' movements can be manipulated using a particular dodging tactic to create space for playing the ball. Importantly, there should be high space awareness and speedy reaction of a player when fancying this style of dodging.

Dribble and dodge (Drill)

This is a training drill practical for training players with dodging and dribbling skills. Equipments required include 2 to 4 balls, and cones in big number. The drill is constrived to teach players with skills such as playing speed, zonal dodging, direct dodging, footwork, penetrative splint dribbling, dribbling to the sideways through curvy movements (avoiding opponents in actual play), ball protection, speed of the player's body with the ball, body balance with the ball, timing of the opponents, speed in reaction, and space awareness including self space awareness. Procedures for setting up the drill include; arranging playing cones in a straight line from a starting point, and spaced from each other by half a meter through a distance of 15 meters. At the next point, the line of cones should meander to form two wide curves forming a letter **S**. At the third point, the line of cones forms a zigzag format where each cone forms a corner of a triangle, through a short distance, and at the end of the zigzag there is a formed curve towards the next point. At the forth point, there is a space of an imaginary line forming a distance of 6 meters to the next point. At the fifth point, cones are placed, to form an in-ward and outward square movement towards the end of the first trip and corner to the left.

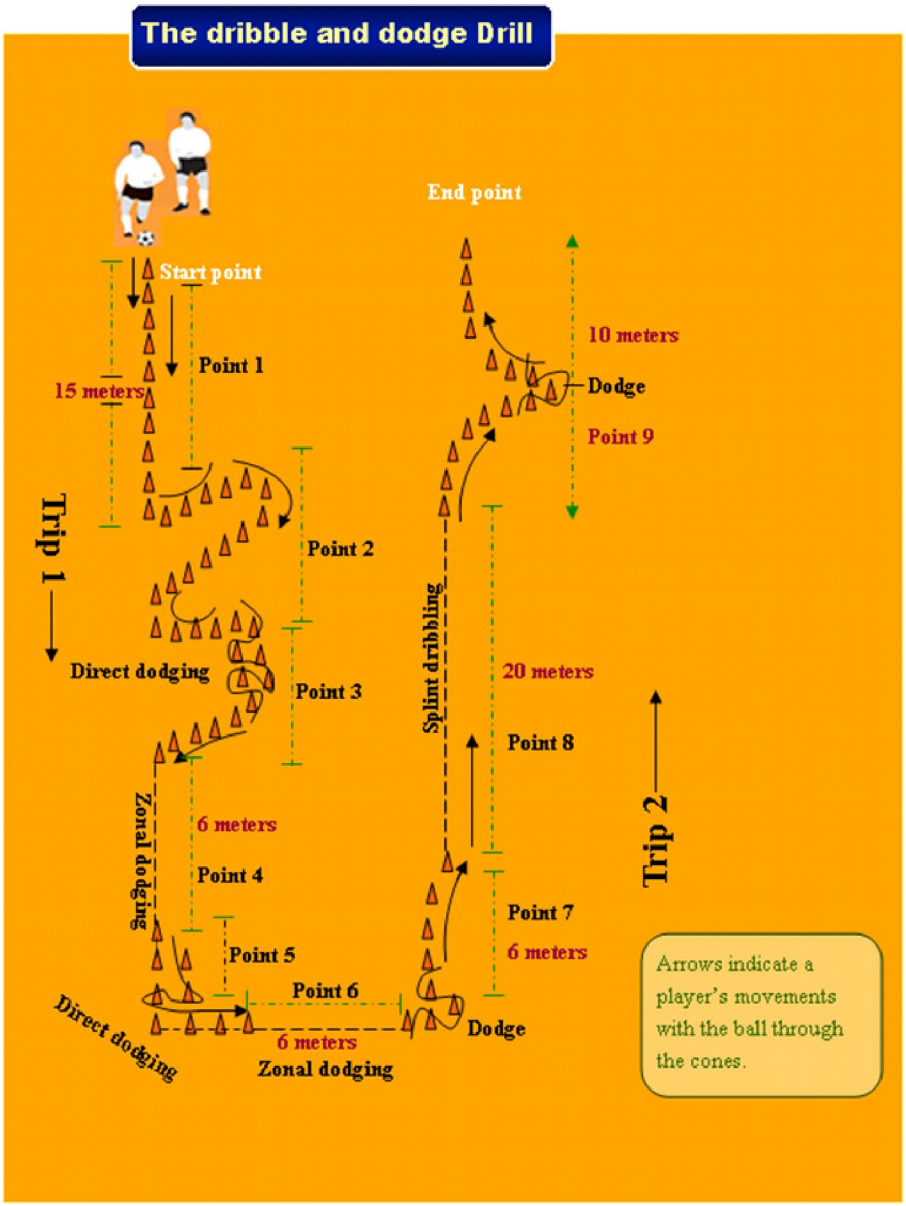
At the 6^{th} point, another space of an imaginary line is left, through a distance of 6 meters to the next point.
At the next point, is another sharp corner to the left, and is particularly a start point of the last trip towards the end point. This is point 7, where cones are placed to form a slightly bent in-ward curve moving through a distance of 6 meters, coming from a pointed corner of the line. The next point (point 8) is a space of a long straight imaginary line through a distance of 20 meters to the next point.
Note: The number of points can be reduced to only six points, from the starting point to the ending point, in case of a situation where cones are not enough or the required space is not available. The

important point out of the drill is to allow players train and practice relevant skills, to have them well equipped in their minds.

At the ninth point, cones are placed to form a wide in-ward curve moving towards the left. And from a pointed position, the line forms another in-ward curve moving towards the right up to the end point of the trip through the last point (point10).
So we completely have points from 1-11 throughout the entire trip. Below is an illustration of the players' movements in the drill.

An illustration of players' movements in the dribble and dodge drill

Fig 58



How to play in the drill in 10 steps

Step 1
All players should form a line which comes to the start point

Step 2
The first player to play (player in front of the line) gets the ball and makes a run with it through point 1. He may choose to move along the right hand side or left hand side of the line of cones as shown by the first two arrows.

In this drill a player should use the specific foot to play which they normally use for dribbling, to dribble the ball where necessary. They should also assume that they have got opponents left behind and attacking them from their back, sides, and others marking space in front. This implies that a player should use speed when moving the ball.

A player's footwork is watched critically to analyze their short footsteps, dodging skills and quick movements with the ball.

Step 3
When the first player reaches point 3 of the trip, the next player holding a ball is allowed to start the trip through the starting point.

Step 4
When a player comes to point 2, they should dribble the ball towards the sides along the curves as indicated by the arrows in the illustration. They should demonstrate tremendous dribbling skill and speed, and assume to have high space awareness and timing of the opponents.

Step 5
When a player reaches point 3, they should express their skills for direct dodging by dodging cones through an alternative movement. Here they should have high self space awareness, speed, timing of the opponents, dodging skill, ball protection skill, trickery, flexibility on ball, and footwork that offers an unpredictable movement towards opponents. They should assume to have more than three imaginary opponents to dodge through their movement with the ball. In the last half of the point, there is a curve through which to move the ball, which indicates a player's accelerated movement into space after dodging with the ball.

Step 6
At point 4 in a spaced area, a player should apply zonal dodging skills to mastermind opponents' movements and actions so as to confuse them or move them out of their line of action, and a player immediately uses the created space to proceed with the ball (or in actual play pass it on).

Step 7

At point 5, a player should again apply direct dodging skills through opponents. They should express the right body balance with the ball, speed, flexibility on ball, use of trickery, self space awareness, ball protection skills, and timing of the opponents. Dodging tricks such as the inside hook turn, outside hook turn, drag back, stepovers, routettspin, or the cryff turn should be demonstrated on ball at the point.

Step 8

At point 6, a player should again do zonal dodging tactics on ball. This time the playing speed of reaction is expected to be at maximum. At the start of the next point, a player has to dodge one or two imaginary opponents before dribbling (driving the ball).

Step 9

At point 7, a player has to dribble the ball through the slightly bent curve (in a way of avoiding certain defenders or turn away from pressure during actual play).

At the next point (point 8), a player should splint dribble the ball with high speed, balance of speed of the player's body with that of the ball should be well observed, space awareness, ball protection skills, and footwork should be trained as well.

Step 10

At point 9, a player dribbles the ball to the right at the same pace, while expressing the appropriate body balance with the ball, body turn, space awareness, footwork, ball protection skills, and speed. Around the turning point to the next point and the last point of the trip, there are about two or three imaginary opponents to dodge, and then quickly dribble the ball through the last point (point 10) towards the end of the trip.

Throughout the two trips, the players' speed should be high and keep on increasing as they reach a next point.

The drill improves players' playing speed, consistence and continuity in play, their dodging skills, dribbling skills, ball protection skills, and teaches them individual attacking tactics with the ball. It teaches players that they should ensure to have high space awareness and effective space utilization when playing against opponents, and also teaches them that their distance from opponents should highly determine their speed of reaction.

Summary of training sessions for dodging and dribbling skills

Session	Relevant skills trained	Drill	Comment
Dribbling and dodging	Use of trickery	Small sided game Dribble and dodge	
	Body balance with the ball	Dribble and dodge	
	Timing of the opponents	Small sided game Dribble and dodge	
	Space awareness	Small sided game Dribble and dodge	
	Individual attacking tactics	Dribble and dodge 1v1, 1v2, 1v3	
	Flexibility on ball	Dribble and dodge	
	Speed in reaction	Dribble and dodge	
	Consistence and continuity	Small sided game Dribble and dodge	

Tactical coordination skills

These are exclusive passing, player self positioning and receiving skills on ball which are used to achieve high coordination of players on the pitch. In football, effective coordination is key. Without effective coordination of players on the pitch, the game would be more sophistical to play, and also players will lack sufficient values of team work. By training players with tactical coordination skills, we are training them the ability to coordinate with the ball during defensive, possessive, and attacking games with great capacity i.e. with maximum playing speed, action, and skills combination.

Tactical coordination skills help to intensify the speed of reaction of team players during play, their tactical connectedness and attacking force. They involve passing the ball both on the ground and above it with high ball control and ball protection skills. They are generally effective for team ball protection and possession, coordination of players, and attacking games in a joint composition.

Training players with tactical coordination skills subsumes training them a number of relevant skills including ball control skills, team ball protection skills, quick decision making and swift reaction, close passing and long passing of the ball, use of trickery, timing on ball, coordination balance, and flexibility on ball. The other specific required skills of players include anticipation, suppleness, their combinatory ability, and sense of movement.

Tactical coordination skills are mostly relevant in the midfield and forward play. They are also very compatible for defending attacking games of opponents in a team's defense. They underscore making fewer touches on the ball by players individually since here more emphasis is put on attacking, speed of reaction of players, and maximizing coordination.

So when training players with tactical coordination skills, they should be versed with high level of knowledge and trained basic skills, including how to apply them, as discussed below.

Ball control skills

When training tactical coordination skills, ball control skills are a major element of playing the ball, mostly required for receiving and making exclusive passing of the ball. Since the game involves playing with high speed in reaction, and making a few individual touches on ball, high players' ball control is required to materialize consistence in play and use opportunities of space to revert promptly with the ball. Players should be trained to have effective passing skill and accuracy, and also trained receiving skills on ball like effective body balancing prior to receiving a pass, eye to ball coordination, and ball control among others, to affirm effective control of the ball during coordination. Ball control embodies all other skills in the game, including passing and receiving skills, which is why it is effective to fancy roundly in any playing aspect.

Ball protection skills

When considering tactical coordination skills, ball protection is so much crucial. Both team ball protection and individual ball protection skills are necessary. Individual ball protection skills are necessary to avoid interception from opponents.

Team ball protection skills such as close passing of the ball, space awareness and utilization, speed, coordination balance, and quick reaction are also necessary to avoid interrupted action. So players of a team should highly have ball protection skills as a primary mode to skyrocket their tactical coordination with the ball.

- **Quick decision making and quick reaction**

Tactical coordination requires speed in reaction with the ball, and therefore quick decision making and quick reaction is an important factor. In order to improve these two, a player needs to have mental and physical agility, body strength, mental toughness, flexibility on ball, effective eye coordination with positions of team mates, creativity, timing of the opponents, situational awareness, and high ball control skills. A player has to have all these abilities and make a snap shot of the situation analysis in order to make splint second decision making and respond effectively with the ball.

As an important key, each player should have enough body strength and mental strength because if they do not possess these, they cannot make quick decisions and reactions with the ball however much they may have other relevant abilities. In other words, this is what fine-tunes their ability to make quick decisions and react hare-footedly.

- **Close passing of the ball**

Close passing of the ball is vital during tactical coordination of players with the ball since it enhances the speed of passing the ball, team ball protection and possession, team work, team creativity, tactical connectedness of players, and anticipatory provision of team support. In this regard effective passing skills for close passing of the ball that are relevant here include unpredictability, speed, self positioning and coordination balance.

Close passing of the ball is very substantial during tactical coordination because it generates team work to a capacity whereby even when the ball is lost into possession of opponents, players are always close enough to tackle and win it back into their possession

- **Use of trickery**

Use of trickery and some kind of dodging is necessary during tactical coordination since players need to avoid defenders and tackling opponents, by dodging them to keep them out of their line of action. Use of trickery thereupon fosters continuity in the game, and improves the functionality rate of coordination tactics by making it easy to effectuate and utilize playing space.

There should be a noted difference between the use of trickery and dodging. A trick on ball is performed in a single instantaneous concise action, while dodging can be a prolonged action in form of maneuvering the ball. Since tactical coordination of players involves making of fewer touches on ball, players need to be certainly unanticipated in their dodging actions, and should ensure to dodge only where necessary. Since there is commonly high speed in reaction during

tactical coordination, the pace of playing the entire game would be relatively high. Players should as well be trained to be keen about critical tackles from opponents against them when performing ball tricks. This would be to avoid injury threat.

- **Timing on ball**

This specifically has to do with passing and receiving of the ball. There has to be exceptional timing of the opponents and timing of the ball during passing, and also possession of the same attitude during reception of the ball, due to the fact that movements of team players on the pitch do directly influence the movements of their opponents. During tactical coordination of players, where there is more speed in reaction and motion of players, the reaction of opponents would be relatively high when attacking and bulwarking spaces. This insinuates that players' timing on ball should be high so as to allow proficient passing accuracy and reception of the ball. By having high timing on ball, they should evenly keep a keen eye on surrounding opponents who are in the attempt to intercept their actions.

Effective timing on ball also agitates playing consistence and speed of reaction of players with the ball. Timing on ball as a skill requires quick decision making and instant reaction of a player prior to passing or receiving a ball. So players have to be well coached with the underlying skills for better performance in the game.

- **Space awareness**

This is another major important aspect to put into account during tactical coordination of players. Players should essentially have high space awareness in order to ensure effective ball protection and switch into strategic positions to receive the ball. This is in form of playing intelligence, so players have to be really conscious about their space awareness. Due to the intense reactions of opponents against their movements and attempts, yet we've observed great fundamentality of space, players should critically think of creating the required space through making wide passes on ball, making very close passing fields of the ball, driving the ball and switching of positions to diffuse opponents/defenders' movements.

- **Self positioning**

While considering tactical coordination of players, their self positioning has to be strategic enough. Firstly, in the order of playing, a player may position oneself basing on different major objectives for receiving a pass. These may include; to provide support, protect the ball, shoot to the goal, change the direction of playing it, attack with the ball, meet a square pass, make a cross, give a wall pass, interact in play or share attention of opponents. The way a player positions oneself may particularize or disclose to a passer about how the receiver could be tactically intending to use the ball, and a self positioned receiver has to anticipate all about this as well.

Secondly, a self positioning receiver has to be aware of the movements of surrounding opponents, and keep in motion by moving into spacious positions to receive the ball, with high speed in

reaction and unpredictable approach, plus interacting with close teammates to adapt playing space and collectively beat opponents' movements and reactions in the course of action.

Thirdly, a player should contain high space awareness, and always ensure to be in a strategic position to ask for the ball. For example, they should not ask for a pass from a player who they are facing their back and have got limited space to make a reflex turn with the ball and at the same time recognize the position of the receiver yelling for the ball. In other words, they should analytically spare themselves or the passer from engaging into confrontation on ball with the tackling opponents for the successful use of the ball.

Lastly, it is not right for a player to ask for a pass when standing in the midst of opponents. It's better for one to always space oneself well and then yup for a pass.

All these are critical self positioning rules during tactical coordination of players and during actual play where there is high speed in reaction. Players should be so observant and think so quick to position themselves and coordinate effectively with the team mates during play.

- **Penetrative passing of the ball**

Penetrative passing of the ball can be defined in two terms. It can be defined in terms of an individual player making a penetrative pass in form of a through pass or lofted pass, and can also be defined in terms of a group of 3 or 4 players making quick penetrative tactical moves and passes with the ball through defenders. Examples include; 3 against 2, 3 against 4, 4 against 5 passing tactics etc.

Penetrative passing of the ball is used by players during attacking and in the same context used to improve their tactical coordination. It entails players to play with high timing on ball, timing of the opponents, speed, passing accuracy, perfect self positioning, strong tactical connectedness, space awareness, quick decision making, and swift reaction during play.

Players should be trained penetrative passing skills on ball, specifically using the triangular passing drill in order to maximize their tactical coordination strength. The triangular passing drill is illustrated in fig 63 of this book while looking at penetrative passing tactics in attacking defenders of the opposition team.

- **Flexibility on ball**

Players' flexibility on ball at an individual level is essential to improve their tactical coordination. It is their ability to make body turns with the ball and play alternatively in various directions, which is helpful when dodging opponents, passing and as well strengthening their coordination balance during play. It predominantly cultivates players' ball control capabilities, passing skill, and their physical and mental agility to pass the ball.

Players can improve their flexibility on ball by training the skill on ball during individual or small group training sessions. This also includes augmenting their self space awareness and playing speed.

At a team level, players should be able to utilize small given spaces to pass the ball through opponents and achieve this in a small time space available, during a highly concentrated play, especially in the midfield and forward play.

Conclusion

Tactical coordination skills are really of great essence in the game of football. They generate team work, improve players' individual brilliancy, build team ball protection skills, coordination, and their ball possession and attacking force, especially during speedy games. So players should go through thorough training for tactical coordination skills to improve their playing speed in reaction, individual brilliancy and team work orientation.

Tactical coordination skills can be more drastically trained to players through using small sided games, and trail blazing them on every correlated skill as seen above, in the interim of the training sessions for the major skill.

Summary of training sessions for training tactical coordination skills

session	Relevant skills trained	Drill	comment
Tactical coordination skills	Ball control skills	Small sided game Rotating ovals	
	Ball protection skills	Small sided game	
	Quick dec ision making and quick reaction	Small sided game	
	Close passing of the ball	Small sided game	
	Use of trickery	Small sided game	
	Timing on ball	Small sided game	
	Space awareness	Small sided game	
	Self positioning	Small sided game	
	Penetrative p assing of the ball	Small sided game Triangular passing drill	
	Flexibility on ball	Small sided game	

Attacking tactics

Attacking tactics are playing strategies used by players of a team to move the ball into the opposition team's playing section towards the goal, in order to create goal scoring opportunities. So in accordance to the above definition for attacking tactics, attacking in Modern Art football is not meant to be a matter of directly spirit up the ball into the opponent's defense towards the goal to try unclear goal scoring chances, but has to involve clear smart strategies for attacking and creating goal scoring opportunities, in order to achieve consistent goals. This specifically means that the standard of a team's attacking mechanisms will arbitrate its goal scoring rate and winning adroitness throughout games.

Attacking tactics may broadly incorporate a team's playing style or tradition of playing the game, their playing formation for offense schemes, overall attacking mechanisms, and individual player skills for attacking, as reasoned below.

The playing styles or traditions of playing the game are at most cases used for long term by a team or club as their original style of play out of definitive choice. Examples of playing styles may include; total football, tik takka style of play, physical football, soft touch style, etc.

The playing formations for offense schemes may be used variously for different games by a team depending on various tactical set ups relative to playing intentions and expectations which they would have in a game. Examples of playing formations for offense schemes may include 4:4:2, 4:5:1, 4:3:3 etc.

The overall attacking procedures can also be used by a team as part of their playing tradition but which may be used variably. Preferentially, these may be changed for specific games. Examples of these may entail, attacking game, possessive and attacking game, possessive and defensive game, etc.

To sum up, the individual player skills for attacking are also profoundly solid and reliant by any team. These are based on individual players' playing capabilities for attacking, making assists, and scoring goals. These may include their abilities to;

- Strike through the opponents' defense
- Creatively think with the ball
- Score quick goals
- Make quick over runs
- Dodge
- Head the ball into the goal
- Play with consistence

- Make aggressive strikes
- Retain the ball in a concentrated play inside the goal box
- Interact strategically during an attack
- Play with a continuous approach to the goal
- Shoot long range goals
- Make fabulous finishing
- Break away from opponents, etc.

These are with great impact part of the mechanisms used to draw offense schemes of a team.

While looking at attacking tactics, we shall majorly heed playing styles and tactics as used in possessive football as currently the most influential trend of playing football internationally. The styles to spotlight about here briefly include total football and the tik takka style of play.

Total football

In today's world of football, many successful styles as used for playing the game should embrace the component of possessing the ball beneficial to increase chances of achieving play. Ball possession playing techniques are plainly superb in playing the game. They vividly increase players' coordination, tactical connectedness, team work spirit, combinatorial ability among each other, comprehension of play during attacking, anticipation and widely strengthen their defensive game.

Total football is one of the playing styles which subsume the adjunct of possessing the ball, and also use high speed during attacking. Its main strategy is to possess the ball as much as possible. Players position themselves far from each other and pass the ball around. While the ball is being distributed, some players move around to get into good scoring positions. In the style, players switch to different positions to confuse the opponents' defense. For this strategy to work, there must be a midfielder who can coordinate both offense and defense.

This football strategy creates a dilemma for the man markers. If they chase an opponent, they would find themselves in the wrong position when it is their team's turn to attack. If they let them go, they are risking the chance of leaving an attacker open.

There are three main objectives in total football's offense; create wide spaces by switching different positions, make quick movements with the ball into the opponent's defense, and coordinate effectively to score quick goals.

In the defense, total footballers work as a unit to keep the ball away from the goal, intercept passes by narrowing down passing lanes and work together aggressively to retrieve the ball as soon as possible, and thirdly mark deadly strikers.

The tik takka style

The **Tiki Taka football** more or less means touch-touch. The tiki taka style of play is characterized by possessing the ball for large portions of the game, moving the ball quickly from one player to the next and in and out of the opponent, breaking them down with short and quick passes. It is a huge game of keep away, with the other team acting as the "piggy in the middle". You want to suck the defenders in and then break out and away when they're in too close.

Essentially, the key idea with tiki taka is to always keep the ball away from your opponent and then to deliever that killer pass to score a goal. Tiki taka is all about passing and moving without the ball and making the game very simple. And then, surprise them with the final goal scoring killer pass in behind the defense.

It also requires that every player has exceptional touch on the ball - which only comes with years of practice and playing. If the players don't have the touch and control, then they can't make those short passes, usually with just one touch, and pull off those quick give and goes to escape from pressure and find space.

The pressing game

This is an attacking technique that allows players to keep high ball possession and also dominate play in the opponents' defense section. It is a football playing technique used commonly in the tik taka style by teams. It involves close passing of the ball by players through passing zones and coordination strongly initially in the midfield to influence opponents to come and interact with more strength in their attempt to retrieve the ball. After winning their attention in the midfield, players make penetrative moves forward with the ball through the opponents,' and then would pass the ball around in the next passing/attacking zone to confuse their movements, as they wait for immediate interaction from their team mates coming in closely to coordinate and create more pressure against defenders. Further intense passing of the ball around the opponents' defense would cause tension among them which would confuse their movements. Any created passage in the defense would encourage players to shoot the ball into the goal net, make a goal scoring pass, or make a penetrative move with it to draw closer to the goal and then use close passing and coordination tactics with the ball to protect it and create space for making a killer pass or shoot to the goal, or ensure that they are able to create & utilize a goal scoring opportunity. Close passing of the ball and strong coordination would be done to protect it and create space for making a killer pass or shoot to the goal. It would also be done to allow players maintain the ball in their possession and respond with team work support and team creativity.

They make curvy movements (curvy zones of passing the ball) to allow flexibility in passing the ball, slightly move it back when necessary, be open to the field so as to be aware of opponents' movements and also make wide passes of the ball to disperse opponents and logically create spaces for striking with it to the goal.

It is a possessive and attacking technique, and the strategy behind its mechanism is for players to strongly pass and possess the ball as they plan, build attacks, make penetrative moves with the

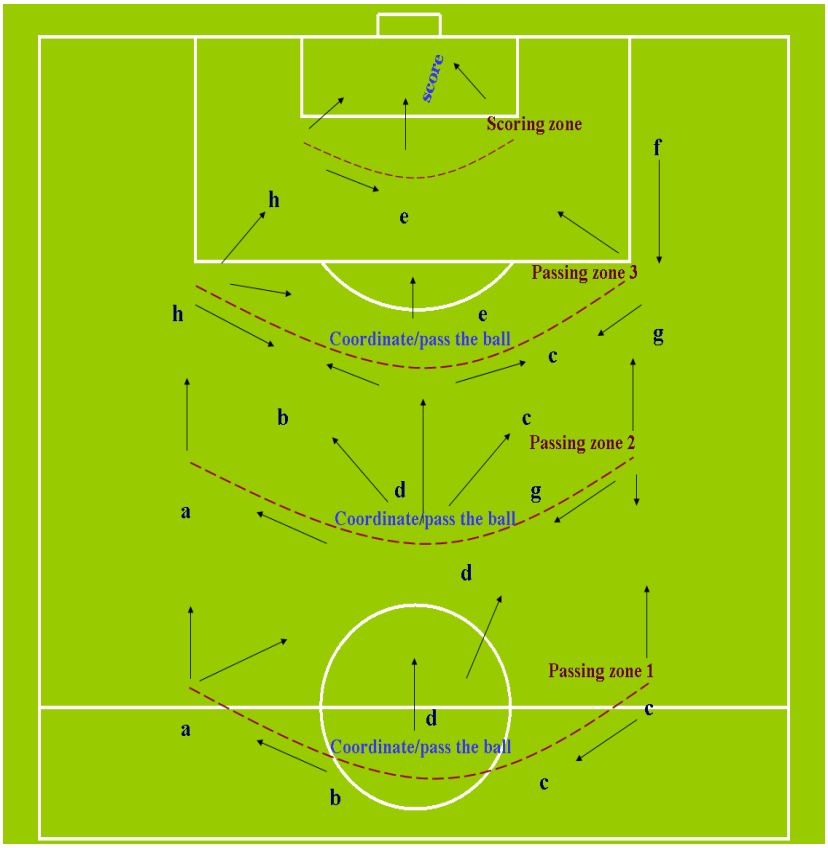
ball, cover up immediately to interact, coordinate to create pressure whenever they meet tight defending from the opponents, frustrate opponents through passing the ball and create/utilize any created spaces as an opportunity to strike to the goal. So they would pass the ball and strike through opponents through a couple of passing zones carefully, to create and effectively utilize any scoring opportunity.

In the sense of movement, there's a specialized distributive midfielder who always coordinates defense and defense, and makes spectacular passes which switch the ball to the different passing zones creatively.

Players specifically use the "close passing and striking techniques" to play a pressing game against opponents, to mount pressure in their defense, as a phenomenon to effectively create and utilize scoring opportunities, or strongly aim to maintain possession successfully in the opponents' defense.

Therefore, while using the pressing game technique, the tendency of a team moving the ball forward into the opponents' section where it is frequently taken by opponents and brought back in the teams' playing section is not tolerated.

Illustration of players' movements with the ball through the midfield while using the pressing game technique



Arrows indicate movements of the ball by players.

The letters a-g represent players and their movements to coordinate and pass the ball with team mates at the various passing zones in the midfield and forward play.

Fig 59

Playing formations for attacking schemes

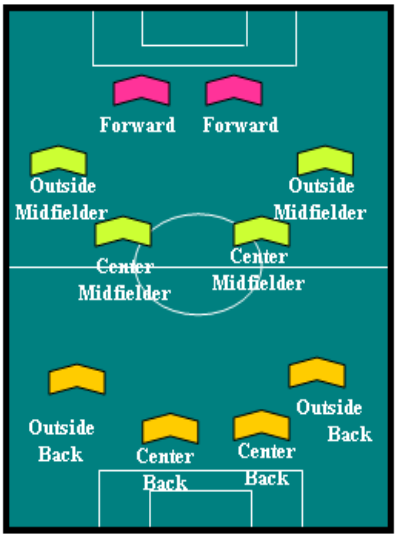
Playing formations for attacking games as discussed in this section include 4-4-2, 3-4-3, 4-3-3, and 3-5-2

4-4-2

The 4-4-2 is the most common and known formation in today's modern game. Depending upon your mentality of play this formation can be an offensive minded or defensive minded formation depending upon certain tactical choices.

Fig 60

4-4-2

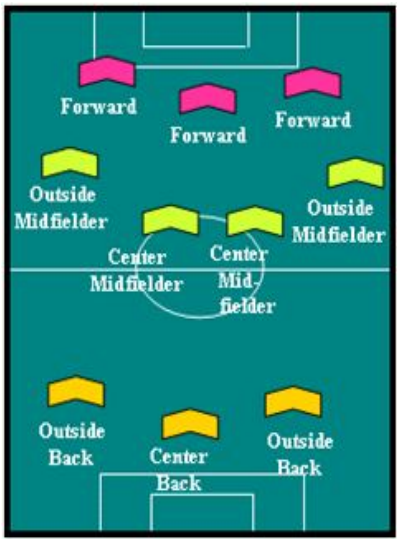


3-4-3

Well, here we come to 3-4-3 Mr. Offense. No risk no reward eh? Attacking minded football, possession oriented play and goals are what football formations like the 3-4-3 are all about. You better capitalize on your chances because you could be exploited in the back if you don't pocket your opportunities with so much committed forward.

Fig 61

3-4-3



4-3-3

As a coach, start with a 4-3-3 if you want to catch your opponent on their heels and apply some early offensive pressure. This formation may be just what you need. Being able to pressure with high line of strikers may get your opponents out of their rhythm early. You need a strong middle of the park if you're planning to use this set

Fig 62

4-3-3



3-5-2

More offense you say? 3-5-2 it is then. Again fairly offensive minded, this time five midfielders which would promote keeping the ball and using your play makers on the park as much as possible throughout the midfield line. The three in the back must have pace to compensate as well. This is one of the stronger offensive oriented football formations used in professional football.

Experiment with several formations and variations of them depending upon what you're working with to find the best football formations suitable for your side.

Fig 63

3-5-2



The individual player and team required skills for attacking in football

These are precisely playing skills required by players to effect attacking playing tactics or uplift their functionality rate in games. They include dodging and dribbling skills, space awareness, self positioning, ball protection skills, passing accuracy, timing of the opponents, speed in reaction, coordination skills, and penetrative passing skills.

Dodging and dribbling skills

Football is a game comprised of many playing skills, and whereby these skills are complementary to each other almost in every aspect of play. One of the most effective individual skills for attacking in football is the dodging and dribbling skills.

Dodging skills are necessary for players to avoid defenders and also make capricious moves during attacking, whereas dribbling skills are obligatory to allow players make penetrative runs with the ball through defenders towards the scoring section. While dodging and dribbling during attacking, players should always ensure to play with high speed to create and effectively utilize opportunities of space so as to achieve quick movements with the ball towards the goal.

Space awareness

High space awareness is another over ruling skill during attacking. It allows players to spot opportunities of space to receive the ball and make penetrative moves into critical positions to strategically strike with it through the opponents' defense, into tactical scoring positions. Players should be keen to eagle eye opportunities of space, coordinate effectively and make quick runs to utilize any given space opportunities in sensitive attacking or scoring positions.

Self position

Perfect self positioning is rewardingly very crucial, especially for players who are fast enough and can react quickly with the ball and as an essence have a sharp eye for goal. They should keep strongly set about unpredictable running into better positions to receive the ball during attacking and also adapt apposite space opportunities to beat the opponents defense.

Ball protection skills

There is no single playing aspect during any eventuality of playing the ball where ball protection is not mandatory. During attacking players should be certain to protect the ball both individually and as a team. Individual ball protection involves a player controlling their movement with the ball in terms of speed and maintain it close to the body in safe positions where it can be protected and played unpredictably, at least wherever its granted that there are closely impending opponents eager to tackle them and intercept their actions. Team ball protection incorporates close passing of the ball, utilization of space on the pitch to balance coordination, effectively share attention of opponents by enhancing tactical coordination and making random tactical moves in attacking positions to perplex opponents or create space during attacking.

Passing Accuracy

There is nothing that can dissolve fast attacking schemes of a team like poor passing accuracy. This is why teams with great passers always have higher capacity to win, through their capability to move the ball to desired target points.

Passing accuracy is utterly vital when attacking. Hence, players should intensively train and practice passing skills and techniques on ball to work upon their passing accuracy. There are instances where players commonly have limited accuracy in passing the ball during attacking, for example when making cross balls, and through passes. This lowers their ability to create clear opportunities for scoring goals, and many chances would easily go wasted in this case. As an important point, during the aspect of attacking, more opposition pressure is created, which lowers the concentration and focus of players, and as an after effect, they would easily fail to guaranty proportionate passing accuracy on ball. This can all be worked upon by training passing skills with sufficient focus on achieving accuracy. Details about training passing skills were provided in chapter 3 of this book while we were looking at passing &receiving.

Timing of the opponents

In the situation of attacking, timing of the opponents has to be extremely high since during this occurrence, opponents are more conscious and quick in their reactions to defend attackers from pursuing their moves with the ball. Players have to be very much aware of sequences of contiguous opponents against them, and their movements or attempts to interfere their passes and actions on ball.

Speed in reaction

When attacking, a concentrated quality of competition is experienced in the opposition team's defense section; hence it implies that there is need for players to use enough speed in reaction specifically to utilize attacking and scoring opportunities.
Players' maximum speed in reaction is achieved by the full capacity of their body strength, fitness, mental toughness and alertness during action.

As a viable advice, they should highly engage in doing physical conditioning trainings and body exercises to improve their body strength, speed and agility in playing the game. They may attend to gyms, do forward splint runs, and practice speed in competitive scrimmages. Secondly, they should keep maximum focus and alertness in their minds, and also ensure not to move flat footed on the pitch, by being on their toes most of the time. This resultantly makes it easy to set off and meet the ball during action when attacking. Health wise, it is recommended that players visit a physician to advise them on how to feed nutritiously as sports athletes in respect to shaping and building their physical condition in the sport.

Coordination skills

Coordination is always a key in playing football. One of the conventional predicaments among many players in the game is that they tend to be reluctant or sluggish to coordinate with each other during attacking. Selfishness and too much individualism of strikers or attacking midfielders with the ball is also a related factor that kills coordination of players amid attacking schemes. Coordination is very ideal precise from the defense of a team to its scoring section. During attacking, it augments players' team work orientation, provision of team support, effective utilization of playing space, and most importantly improves the utilization of scoring opportunities. Players may in this regard rely on using coordination skills such as close passing of the ball and use of team ball protection skills. In the strategy, there must be about three midfielders who can perform the role to coordinate the defense and offense, and in the case of attacking could render suitable sustenance around the scoring section to impact the offense scheme and contend effective exploitation of space and creation of scoring opportunities. Players should in the process have high combinatory ability and sense of movement with the ball.

Penetrative passing skills

When talking about attacking tactics, penetrative passing on the ball is a major topic. Penetrative passing skills include passing techniques and tactics on ball used to pass it through opponents. They could be looked at at an individual level as passing techniques, and at a team level as passing tactics.

At an individual level, we may look at penetrative passing skills such as;

a) Through passing

This is the act of a player passing a ball to a team mate, and they receive it ahead of them while facing or running into the direction of movement of the ball. Through passing of the ball is relevant in the central field, forward play and wing play during attacking. Passing techniques effective for through passing of the ball include the dropping ball and screw ball for long passing, and rolling ball for short passing of the ball. An example of a through pass is a lead drive pass, which is a speedy long ground pass used to split a defense and allow forward team mates to run onto the ball towards the goal.

b) Direct passing

This is the act of a player passing a ball to a team mate, and they receive it while facing the passer. Direct passing of the ball is effective in the central field and wing play during attacking. An example of a direct pass effective during attacking is a diagonal pass. This may be passed from the central field towards the forward wing play, from the wing play to the centre forward,

or from the left hand wing play to the right hand wing play or vise versa, during attacking. A diagonal pass is specifically a long pass which can be in form of a ground pass or aerial ball passed to a player usually depending on space availability on the pitch in relevant positions for attacking. Passing techniques practical for direct passing of the ball include; a dropping ball or a screw ball for aerial balls, and rolling ball or screw ball for a ground pass.

At a team level, we may look at penetrative passing tactics such as;

The triangular passing tactic (wall passing)
This involves players making short passes on ball as they make quick runs into forward positions to receive it, in a triangular passing format during attacking. Further basics of this passing tactic are explained below in the passing drill.

The triangular passing drill (3v2)
This is a drill effective for training players with penetrative attacking passing tactics as used against defenders. The drill demonstrates a combination of 3 players (attackers) with the ball playing against 2 defenders at a time. It illustrates the three roles of the 3 reacting attacking players when making attacking moves. Players do share these roles depending on who happens to be in which position at a time. The roles include passing, spacing, and positioning (P.S.P). It shows that if one player is willing to pass the ball, the second one has to immediately position themselves to receive it, while the third player runs into viable space to receive an immediate flick pass whereby they can probably all be in position to score the ball or make an assist, depending on who runs into position to receive it strategically.

At the same time, there are specific passing skills which are used by players here which include the dropping ball, rolling ball and screw ball. Other player skills necessary include passing unpredictability and the demonstration of unpredictability, in players' runs or switching of positions into spaces to receive the ball.

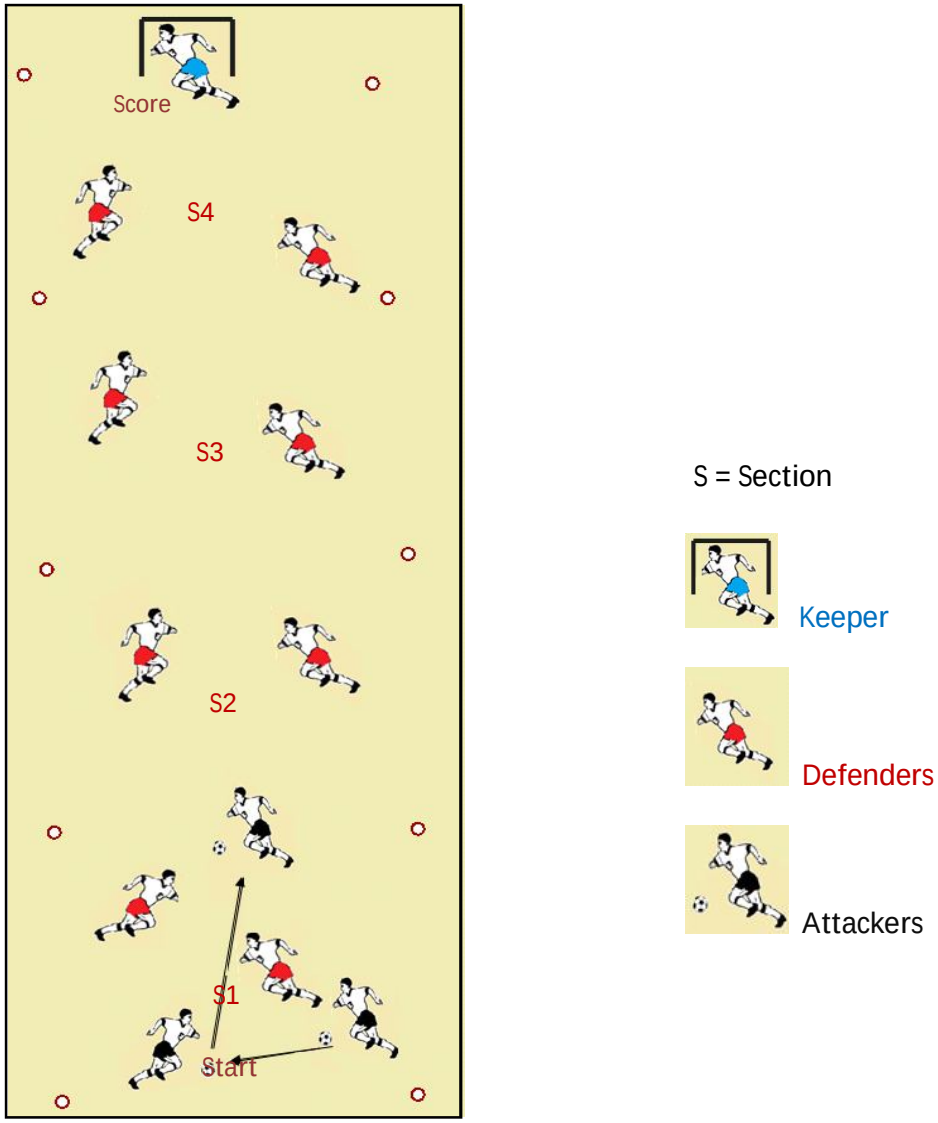
It also indicates that every moment a player is holds the ball prior to passing it, there should always certainly be at least two immediate self positioned receivers who are capably willing and expressing interest to receive a pass and capable to utilize it strategically. It always gives a passer enough options about who to pass the ball to, and manage to make swift decision making and react efficiently to pass the ball and then switch to tactical positions of playing.

Setting up the drill
Setting the drill is very simple. Equipments required include cones, about 14 in number, a ball, and a goal with a goal keeper inside. The cones are used to put a boundary on the playground as used for passing the ball inbounds towards the goal. Using the same perimeters, they are also used to

form the sections of defenders through which attackers are meant to pass the ball, with each side of the section about 5.5 meters long or wide. There are about 4 sections of defenders considered. Every section has two defenders, while they all lead towards the goal. The three attackers have to move with the ball by passing it through the defenders within all attacking sections until they successfully reach the goal and score the ball. Below is an illustration of the drill, indicating players' movements.

An illustration of the triangular passing drill

Fig 64



Rules for playing the drill

Rule #1: Once play starts and attackers succeed to pass the ball through one defensive section, the defenders in that section are not meant to follow them into the next playing section once the attackers manage to cross with the ball. Defenders are instead meant to stay in their section.

Rule #2: Once a specific defender manages to win the ball, he joins in the attacking exercise, and the attacker who lost the ball in the turnover is meant to replace him in his defending position.

When performing the drill, there should be limited dodging since the emphasis has to highly be put on attacking while using speed and penetrative passing of the ball. The drill involves 3 players who are attackers, but during actual play, there may be more players to support in the attacking scheme. Three players (attackers) are used in the drill because the three given positions and roles specified have to be originally maintained during actual play in a match, and should be fitted and enacted in any team's attacking mode.

Categories of passing the ball used in this case include wall passing (give and go), lofted passing, square passing, etc as explained below;

The drill trains players the required level of speed, timing of opponents and skills used for penetrative passing of the ball through close defenders, and the tactical movements they are supposed to make when switching positions to create space and receive the ball in a penetrative and unpredictable passing approach. It also trains them to have team work orientation and coordinate effectively when attacking, while moving through a number of defenders that confront them in their actions with the ball.

Players are further trained to attack and sustain a continuous play while moving through a number of challenging defenders in order to carry through a strike quickly during a given attacking opportunity, basing on space and time available to score the ball before close intersection of other defenders into play.

Conclusion

Attacking in football is a whole broad scheme of playing the game during offense. Players need to be trained with the relevant playing styles, skills, playing mechanisms and tactics used during the game. The roles of players in specific positions relevant during attacking have to be specified to them in accordance to their natural and trained playing abilities, so as to achieve a consistent play.

Further training for attacking skills and tactics that players may undergo include; taking crosses, meeting crosses, taking direct free kicks, attacking through the wing play, moving into different zones of the scoring section, taking corner kicks, and so forth, as the major sources of quick goals. In order to increase the level of attacking, players' mindsets can be psychologically motivated and trained to improve their speed, mental toughness, attitude, focus, and their tactical and combinatory ability during the attacking activity.

Summary of training sessions for attacking tactics

Session	Relevant skills trained	Drill	Comment
Individual relevant attacking skills	Dodging and dribbling skills	Dribble and dodge	
	Space awareness	Triangular passing drill Small sided game	
	Self position	Triangular passing drill	
	Ball protection skills	Small sided game Ball alteration	
	Passing accuracy	Passing and receiving skills	
	Timing of opponents	Triangular passing drill Small sided game	
Team oriented attacking tactics	Speed in reaction	Triangular passing drill Small sided game	
	Coordination skills	Triangular passing drill Small sided game	
	Penetrative passing tactics	Triangular passing drill Small sided game Passing and receiving skills	

Scoring skills

These are skills necessary for shooting or passing the ball into the goal at various fortuities of play and different scoring positions in the scoring section.

Scoring is basically the turning point in the game of football, and justifies the entire game results. Scoring is always a big blow which is essential to turn up the heat at any moment of the game. And

it's such a great feeling to score a goal in the sport. Any person who has played football knows that. You just feel like a temporary messiah (while you catch all eyes on you) after hitting the ball into the goal net.

However, regardless of the scoring significance and fun, scoring in football is elusive, which may be due to very organized difficile defenders and active goal keepers who make strong effort to avoid chances of being scored. Defenders are the main players on the pitch who make the game very hard to play. This is because they are naturally meant to be very aggressive, tough, powerful, watchful, tight, and hard when it comes to shielding an opponent off the ball. Their defensive coordination with the goal keeper who pays heed about all spaces that opponents would use to pass the ball makes the game fractionally hard to play, whereby it's simply difficult to utilize all chances for scoring. However much this is a challenge, challenges are always there for people to think, do research, and come up with suitable solutions, but not to abide with them always. It may not be wrong to think that many of the scoring chances in traditional football go disused due to lack of effective scoring skills by players.

Scoring goals overridingly has great impact in the game. It allows a team to lead a game, win a game, neutralize mistakes such as coming up with a red card or scoring an own goal, or make a comeback in a game where they are being led. A single goal in a contest has much power to change the attitude of players, fans and coaches about the game psychologically regardless of how it has come to be scored. There is also a fact which says that the majority of football people are interested in the results of a game (not the playing style or really anything); and this has much impact to spirit up many decisions taken about games by team coaches especially, hence it needs to be executed carefully and professionally without frustration, if the desired results are always to be achieved. This may be done by resolving and compounding the scoring ability and winning ability of a team.

Categories of scoring goals

When specifically looking at scoring, there are mainly three categories of scoring goals. These include;

- Shooting long range goals by a player (from outside the 6 yards box or 18 yards box).
- Scoring balls in open play, (i.e. flicking balls which come from corner kicks, crosses and free kicks, into the goal).
- Scoring passes. This may include scoring a given pass instantly or shooting after dodging. Scored passes may include a wall pass, lead pass, minus, or square pass. This is also termed as "finishing" in the game.

All categories of scoring fundamentally require specific effective skills for scoring the ball with high situational awareness and players' playing intelligence to utilize given scoring opportunities.

Sources of quick goals

In football, there are playing aspects which normally act as sources for quick goals, that players essentially should make advantage of, to strategically cultivate a team's scoring ability. These include corner kicks, free kicks close to the scoring section, cross balls and through passes in the center forward play. Players, especially those in the passing position should train the relevant passing skills for offering accuracy. Then players in the receiving position have to be trained to break away from opponents (defenders) and hit the ball into the goal net instantly.

Earlier in this book (in chapter 3), we looked at scoring skills and their fundamental approach in the game. We focused on the concept of scoring, the technical skills for scoring in Modern Art football, and what is happening today in contrast that is not so relevant. We looked at the art of scoring, the scoring section, and the skills or techniques for shooting the ball which were classified differently. It might be important for a reader to go back shortly and glance through this information about scoring skills for remembrance, so that we continue with further information and training basics with a similar understanding through the scoring training sessions.

In this section, we shall look at the specific strategic skills and basics required by players in order to improve their "scoring ability" in the game during various playing aspects. Precisely, these include coordination of players, use of trickery, creativity, use of power and strength, focus and concentration, eye to ball to goal coordination, timing of the ball, self space awareness, unpredictability, perfect self positioning, timing of the opponents, body balance with the ball, and quick decision making and speed in reaction with the ball.

Players should be trained with these skills, and have their minds well equipped with relevant knowledge in a way of preparing them for games. Below, the specific required skills for players to improve their scoring ability are explained in detail;

Coordination skills

Coordination as always is of substance strikingly in the forward play. During an attack, strikers and attacking midfielders should watch their runs into given spaces and get into relevant positions to ensure effective utilization of any scoring opportunity through strategic coordination. In various circumstances of play, they should play with specific shared intentions such as;

- To position oneself into an effective scoring position to score the ball
- To interact in a strike to offer assistance to the scorer, score the ball or support to retain its possession.
- To be in position to reconnect the ball into the goal in case a goal keeper or a defender diverts it back into critical play after a given shot.

- To offer support and retain the ball in case of a situation where a scoring opportunity is intercepted.
- To instantly win an intercepted, deflected or cleared ball and continue with the struggle for making a goal.
- To take crosses, lofted passes or square passes into the goal box after attaining space and possession in the wing play.
- To divert movements of defenders in order to create space for scoring, by making bending runs and blind side runs during an attack.
- To ensure ball possession and participate in the act of shooting the ball into the goal after probably catching a given scoring opportunity.
- To win cross balls, or meet missed passes which cross over to the wing.
- To put defenders on tension by making unanticipated penetrative moves with the ball towards the goal with the use of dodging and dribbling skills, so as to hamper their concentration.
- And so forth

Players are required to play all these roles with strong anticipation, suppleness and sense of movement, with maximum focus, in order to create and utilize scoring opportunities. They should be trained to coordinate effectively as a team and keep aware / analyze gaps to cover up and roles to play in the forward play in the game during an attack, or intensely participate in the act for scoring goals as a way to improve their scoring ability.

Use of trickery

During the aspect of scoring, ball tricks are ideally used to dodge defenders and create space for shooting the ball to the goal or space used to place a split pass into the box for a positioned player to score the ball. So training players the best use of trickery in the attempts to score a goal would be greatly helpful to improve their scoring ability.

The quality of play as players get closer to the goal always increasingly becomes concentrated and intensified. Defenders also apply tight man to man marking tactics as attackers get closer to the goal, with high keenness at every move that they make. This alludes that for a good reason, attackers need to be well equipped with ball tricks to allow them dodge defenders and create space through which to shoot the ball or make penetrative moves.

Prior to performing ball tricks during the attempt to score, players should ensure to use high flexibility on ball, unpredictability, space awareness, ball protection, and timing of the defenders during action. In case of a situation where there's tight marking from defenders, players should be directed not to miss use chances by making repeatedly interrupted approaches with the ball. They should rather have more will to coordinate with close team mates so as to effectively utilize scoring opportunities.

As a recommendation, players should practice ball tricks and dodging skills on ball regularly during training. This would purposely augment their flexibility on ball, mental agility, and ball control, which will enhance their ability to play beyond other player's capabilities. During attacking, their creativity will improve in terms of passing the ball, dribbling, or creating scoring chances in the interim of tight marking defenders. If certain players are not well skilled at performing ball tricks, they should practice a lot before they should intend to depend on them in games. This is because poor use of trickery and imperfection would directly affect their games.

Creativity

This is the ability of players to deal with difficult or failed situations in the game by using creative and divergent resolutions to score goals during play.

One of the best ways to fortify players' scoring ability is doctor their level of creativity in games or their ability to think creatively. There are common situations where defenders are so tight and aggressive, whereby they seriously mean to accomplish their roles in the defensive play. These are such situations where players' creativity would significantly matter. They should be able to analyze and measure weak positions and passages around defenders through which to move the ball. They should in addition to that be able to watch movements of the goal keeper and analyze potential spaces through which to instantly score the ball into the goal at a far post (outside the keeper's reach).

So when dealing with hard situations in the game, principal forwards of a team who have ability to create goals should be first of all be prepared in their minds before the start of the game.

In conjunction, they should be curious enough to create goals, by being very observant, fast calculative, and think critically to score goals divergently and unpredictably. They should lastly be skilled enough, intelligent, with willingness to think creatively with the ball, and take long to get frustrated in a midst of playing in a match.

Creativity should not be regarded at an individual level only. It should also be in terms of team creativity. This could be in form of making creative moves with the ball which would split up or confuse the opponents' defense. This would specifically require a team's strong tactical

connectedness, comprehension of each other, effective communication, ball possession tactics, and pre-planning about games logically.

In that case, the level of players' creativity to turn around hard situations in the scoring section matters a lot. It fosters continuity in their progress on the pitch, and deals with their frustration during hard games.

Use of power and strength

If players seriously bother to improve their scoring ability, every detail that could improve their performance should be taken into consideration.

Effective use of power and strength is prime to improve their ability to score goals when done rightly. Firstly, working on players' strength would maximize their ability to play with speed, agility and stability, while working on their power would maximize their ability shield opponents and shoot speedy balls into the goal.

There are common cases in point where players get a little slow on ball and they end up missing remarkable goal scoring opportunities, in cases where defenders or the goal keeper easily manage to predictably intercept their actions on ball. This is caused by lack of enough body strength of a player, whereby they need to work upon it intensively, or it is caused due to poor play, whereby they use irrelevant amount of body energy to act on the ball. Inside the scoring section, players are consistently meant to be as fast as possible, and so they should adjust to use more strength in this area to offer effective playing speed.

At the same time, there are common instances where players are found of shooting loose balls towards the goal and end up scantily utilizing goal scoring opportunities, by the goal keeper simply catching the ball. This may be caused due to lack of enough power in the player's shooting leg hence they need to work upon their power, particularly in the gym. Or, it may probably be caused by the poor use of body strength by the player; hence they should balance their body strength and concentration to adjust their shooting power, after formulating prerequisite factors such as space availability, distance of the goal, the required shooting accuracy and technique to be used to hit the ball.

So if you are a player out there, and you can make a good shot but one which the keeper keeps on waiting to get into their hands, you better go to the gym and work out you leg muscles hard so that next time you would make a fair shot that would strike the keeper's mind.

Focus and concentration

These are psychological factors which would chiefly improve players' performance conceding that they are well trained to them. Focus may be defined as the players' ability to have a stable

understanding and critical awareness about the on-going activities of play of the game with minimum interference. Concentration is the players' ability to play with desire, interest and willingness to perform a given action efficiently in the game.

Coaching players to maintain their focus in games would improve their ability to tactically coordinate among themselves during play, and also improve their ability to anticipate about on-going actions and reactions in the game in order to respond accordingly. Training them to raise enough playing concentration during play would improve their ability to perform actions perfectly and accurately.

During the attempts to score, players need to raise more focus and concentration through counterbalancing their playing attitudes and body composure in order to ensure a positive timely scoring approach and shooting accuracy. The difference between success and failure to score a goal during a goal scoring opportunity is measured in inches. Hence p

layers should be trained to manage their focus and concentration throughout processes in the attempt to score, by training them to deal with the things which would possibly interfere with their focus and concentration. Such things may include pressure, brutality and aggressiveness of opponents, provocative language, teasing from supporters, poor referee's decisions, and frustration among others. These affect a player's technique, emotional stability, anticipation, awareness, and decision making. As a result, they would lower their ability to score goals and have remarkable chances go wasted.

So all such common failures which happen in a blink of an eye due to feelings or thoughts that rises to the surface of players' mind can be dealt with by training them to raise and maintain their playing focus and concentration and have more willingness to perform actions perfectly.

Eye to ball to goal coordination

This is a very essential part to observe for players to improve their scoring ability. It is a matter of players observing a couple of situations momentarily before they intend to shoot the ball towards the goal. These include the behaviours and movement of the ball, reactions of surrounding opponents and the goal keeper, and lastly the distance of the goal from the position of shooting the ball. They have to take a snap shot of these situations in a split second in order to determine other relevant abiding factors before implementing a decision to shoot the ball. Such factors include the required speed, focus, concentration, power, strength, shooting technique, level of unpredictability, body balancing, and combinatorial reaction and coordination of the body and mind mainly in terms of concentration.

For instance, when shooting the ball to the goal, the shooting leg has to follow-through into the direction to the position or target point inside the goal where the player outlooks to shoot the ball

in pursuance of observing accuracy. In case it swings to a different direction, the ball is likely go off target, which would reflect poor body and mind coordination and lack of sufficient focus and concentration of the body and mind during a given action with the ball.

That is the level of perfection and series of playing basics that players should bear in mind. In this sense, they have to be very analytical in play. They should engage the ability of their minds to assess situations and determine their body actions to play the ball, basing on a snapshot situation of the play

Timing of the ball

In the aspect of improving players' scoring ability, timing of the ball is overwhelmingly indispensable in the scoring scenario virtually in every area of the scoring section. It is important in the aspect of scoring long range goals, scoring passes, and balls in open play.

A player has to determine their speed in reaction, power used to hit the ball towards the goal, and the necessary technique to be used to hit it in order place it to the projected position of the goal away from the goal keeper's reach for the ball.

In the interest for players to upgrade their timing of the ball in the scoring aspect, they need to strongly master various techniques discussed in the recent guide about scoring skills (in chapter 3), and they should aim to intensify their speed in reaction and level of unpredictability in play, as an important key.

Self space awareness

This is an aspect of playing intelligence that players should have during a scoring pursuit. They should have high self space awareness so as to utilize various space opportunities to shoot the ball into the goal precipitously without the opponents' anticipatory interruption.

As players move closer towards their opponents' goal, there is more concentrated quality of play experienced and high resistance from defenders, that is; in terms of speed and rigidness. And when players get into position to score the ball, there is hardly any scoring opportunity that can be utilized in a simple way inside the defenders' zone. During all aspects of scoring, players should have high self space awareness to determine their speed in reaction, level of unpredictability, timing on ball and timing of the defenders' activities. This is one of the esteemed determinants that players should have in mind, that would perk up their capacity to utilize scoring opportunities and improve their scoring ability generally.

Unpredictability

In the aspect of scoring, unpredictability is a player's outstanding ability to act quickly on ball in the process to score, in a manner that does not allow it to cross the defenders' mind to immediately

interfere in the player's line of action. Similarly, in direction for a player to uplift their chances for scoring the ball, shooting has to be a "spontaneous action," where a player watches space and shoots the ball out of the blue in a position or manner where no one thought that they would shoot the ball, due to the unpredictable shooting expression. This simply means that a player has to be fast enough in their exertion to score because being sluggish would make it easy for opponents to feast eyes on their movements and act expeditiously to interrupt them. The more a player approaches closely to the goal into concentrated play, the greater the level of their unpredictability that would be beseeched to shoot the ball into the goal. In a way of being more intelligent, some players would run from nowhere through defenders, meet a pass and score the ball immediately in a completely unpredictable approach. This means that there must be high space awareness, high timing on ball and timing of the opponents by a player, with high anticipation and assumption about the defenders' next reactions against their movements with the ball. When closer to the goal, a player should not raise their shooting leg in wide angle in the process to shoot the ball particularly if they are to increase chances for scoring the ball without immediate interception. This is because the action would easily prompt defenders to predict their shooting intention, and impatiently intercept the ball or block it from its movement to the goal.

Self positioning

Playing as a forward is one of the most interesting things that a player can experience in the game of football. The level of playing strategies, sophisticated tactics, speed, attention from defenders, and playing skills used to challenge opponents in the forward area make it inspirational to play as a forward. However, this would be after following the required principles and learning the necessary skills to play in this area. Perfect self positioning is one of the most requisite skills that a forward player should have with respect to improve their scoring ability. It connotes their potential to watch spaces, make tactical runs, break away from opponents, and their enriched capacity to meet passes when in the scoring positions. Players here should work to overstress their space awareness ability, speed, timing of the opponents, unpredictability, focus and anticipation of play, and their tactical connectedness/coordination with team mates, in order to position themselves to play perfectly in the scoring section and increase their scoring adequacy.

Timing of the opponents

This refers to the speed and timing demonstrated in a player's actions with the ball against reactions of opponents in process to interfere his/her will of scoring the ball into the goal. So a player has to be really keen at examining movements of the defenders and available opportunities of space through which to move the ball or shoot into the goal, by always keeping a step ahead of the opponents in order to achieve a quick goal. They have to foresee this together with monitoring the movements or position of the goal keeper, and read their capable immediate reactions, in order to challenge them as well. All this kind of snapshot situational awareness has to be taken in before a

player is determined to shoot the ball towards the goal, because this will contribute to their focus in playing the ball in an intense situation of defenders clutching against them.

This will further eliminate interception of the ball and common clashes with opponents which may not be necessary.

For players to improve their timing of the opponents, they must improve their level of unpredictability in their direct approach to the goal, improve their reaction speed, space awareness, anticipation, eye to ball to goal coordination, and their self positioning into better positions to receive the ball, challenge opponents and shoot to the goal instantly.

Body balance with the ball

A player's body balance with the ball is their ability to position themselves with the ball or set their body posture in a dynamic poise that allows efficiency in playing it in a given playing action. There are common instances where players fail to score a goal during a given opportunity where it could be an after effect of their poor body balancing with the ball.

Basically, while playing the ball, a player should train themselves to receive it, play it, or dribble it while passing at a weaker side of the opponent after measuring them, so as to lower down their capacity to intercept them. In the same regard, they should avoid the mistake of dodging or dribbling and then keep the ball on the side of their weaker leg. This could slow down their pace and allow opponents to intervene and poke away the ball in the challenge.

Subsequent to correcting the above mistakes and now players play on the right side with the ball, next they should allow their body to slightly lean out for power and their arms out for balancing, and also ensure enough stability and traction on the ground through their movements. In the scoring aspect, they should note that widely leaning their body towards the back can lead to shooting the ball over the cross bar, or standing too straight can result to poorly shooting the ball. While jumping to score a flick header, they should ensure enough timing of the ball, focused eye contact with its flight, allow effective movement of the head in the thrust to strike the ball, and jump to a required height to meet it rightly on time; with the head leaning to the back for power and in a perfect angle to strike the ball. In such an aspect, the legs have to be a bit held above to offer the body more balance, power and suspension in the air.

Quick decision making and quick reaction with the ball

This is a much critical point to consider when it comes to scoring in football. Players' mental toughness to make splint second decisions and swift reaction to score the ball is very necessary. They should endeavor to always be fast in all reactions to score the ball if they are to improve their scoring ability. However, this does not mean that they should waste many chances because they want to decide and react quickly.

A combination of necessary scoring skills should be considered in the same process effectively to ensure that a goal is achieved. These mainly include unpredictability, self positioning and timing of the ball.

All scoring skills can essentially be trained and examined through a scrimmage (training game). This time, a small sided game may not be reliable. So players have to train and practice scoring skills on a large pitch, that is; after practicing shooting skills on ball as were taught in chapter 3. All players in the goal scoring department have to comprehensively understand these skills to an extent where they can keep on guiding each other where a mistake is done.

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PREFACE

Modern Art football is a book written by Ronald Tebandeke, a football skills coach and the director of the Twenty 1st century Soccer Foundation. The book comprises of advanced football playing skills and tactics relevant in the modern era of playing the game, which are precisely trained to players and taught to coaches through a comprehensive guide of a full training package.

This book was created to develop and advance the game of football through developing talents of players, by training them leading edge playing skills and tactics that would deliberately improve their individual brilliancy in games and level of their strategic competitiveness, using a new innovative training approach provided in this book.

Modern Art football (MAF) is a form of football game brought forward to advance the generic standard of playing the traditional game internationally, from academy level to club level.

Given that there is a difference between a player being talented and one being skilled and knowledgeable, the training package is doomed to mainly offer advanced tactical skills training and relevant knowledge to players, as a specialized area for their talent development.

One greatly fundamental component of the book is that it covers many important playing skills, and as well provides a comprehensive training mode consisting of training sessions and basic drills used to effectively help players comprehend and learn skills, for the progression and systematic implementation of modern Art football.

Key words: playing skills, playing intelligence, possession, coordination, attacking, scoring, playing techniques.

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Modern Art Football

(MAF)



For Talent Development

A training package for advanced football playing skills

By Ronald Tebandeke