

Keep your head up when running with the ball

By David Clarke

Coaching young players to look up when they are dribbling the ball is not easy. However many times you tell them to do it they will keep looking at the ball so I use this game to make them look up.

It's great for every age group, especially very young players who are learning how to control the ball when they are running with it.

Using this game will encourage your players to use both feet, dribble at speed and stop the ball. You can add to the basic three movements depending on the age of your players so they have to turn with the ball or keep the ball in a tackling move.

Use an area 30 yards by 20 yards. You need a ball for each player and you need coloured cues – red, yellow and green – traffic lights.

Red = Stop the ball (cars stop at a red light)

Yellow = Toe taps on top of the ball

Green = Use green after the other two colours so players know they can now start running with the ball again.

How it works

- Tell your players they are going to be driving a car on the road, which is the space inside the coned-off square and they have to spot the traffic lights and do what the colours represent.
- You can ask them what would happen if the car left the road – it would crash – and ask them what happens at a green light, yellow light and red light. Tell them what you want them to do when they see the colour of the light change – when you change the coloured marker.
- Players must keep looking up to see when you change it to another colour then react accordingly.
- When playing the game you can encourage your young players to try out a few different ways to control the ball, such as using the inside and outside of their feet.

Once they can do it you can call the commands quicker so they have to adjust at match speed to your call.

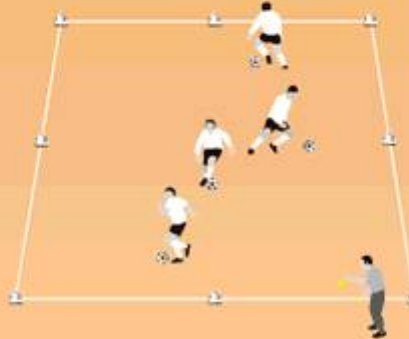
Get your young guns on the road



When the players see a red marker they must stop the ball. They must keep looking up to see what the next colour is.



When the green marker is held up players should 'go' and start dribbling their ball within the square.



While they are dribbling they must keep looking to see when the yellow marker is shown then perform toe taps. Then they again look for the red 'stop' marker