

CHAPTER 6

Strategies

The emphasis on team strategies should be reserved for the more advanced players. If the coach can foster healthy team spirit and help the less experienced players to become skilful, thinking team members who understand their role on the court, the coach is giving them an excellent basis for the development of their game.

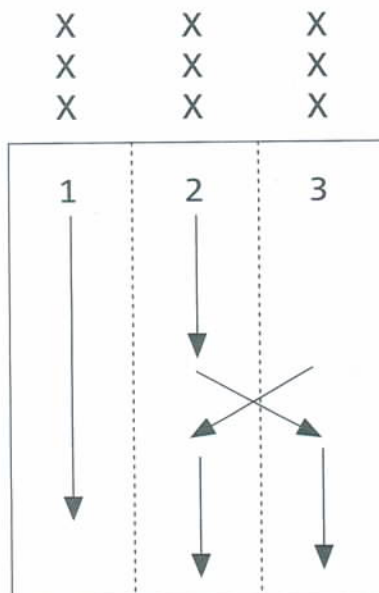
When taking a junior group you should feel you have accomplished a great deal if the players love playing and are eager to continue playing at club level. If, because of their alertness, they discover a good tactical move, the coach should respond to their enthusiasm, but guard against instructed moves where there is a risk of producing a team of non-thinking puppets. The coach's task is to improve the skill performance and help all juniors to contribute to team play.

Court Balance

Players' movements down court should ideally be into space showing an awareness of other players. Movements should be definite so that teammates are able to read, react and adjust.

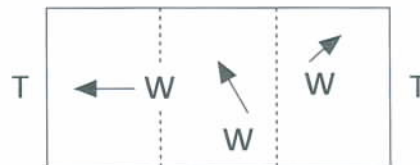
Width Balance

1. Divide the court into three imaginary channels. Players line up behind each channel. One player from each group moves down the court, one in each channel. The coach calls a channel number and the player in this channel must move quickly to another channel, someone then must move into the empty channel. Continue to call numbers with players moving quickly to balance the court. The next group can start when the players in front have crossed into the centre third.
2. Add a ball being passed as players move down the court.
3. Add defenders as required.



Depth Balance

1. Divide a third into three. One player to stand in each third with a thrower either end. The ball is passed to each player in turn to the opposite end. Players should find different places in their area to start their move and receive the pass e.g. stand deep and drive forward to receive the ball, stand to side of the grid and drive to middle.
2. Players must make two moves to get the ball.
3. Players to start in another area but receive in their own area.
4. Players to start in their own area but receive in another area.
5. Add defence.



Width and Depth Balance

1. Use the entire court with six players and a thrower either end. The ball is passed from one end to the other keeping the court balanced in width (channels) and depth.
2. Call number of passes that must be made before the ball reaches the opposite end.
3. If a player's name is called they miss out on a pass, but must balance the court and be available for back-up if required. The coach can call "back-up" and that player is then used.
4. Position players on court and move the ball from a centre pass, or throw-in (from any area) to a shot using the idea of width and balance.

THROW-INS

Teams can have differing strategies regarding which player takes the throw-in but generally:

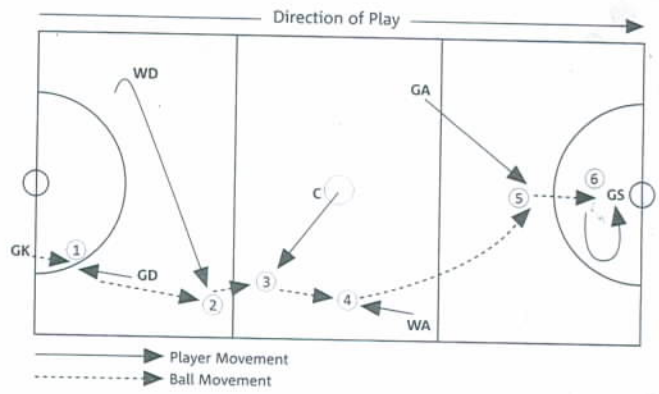
- Defence third throw-ins
 - Base line throw-ins are usually taken by the GK. The C is normally encouraged to clear the defence third and begin in the centre third to give space to WD and GD to position for a pass.
 - Sideline throw-ins are usually taken by the GK unless the ball is close to the transverse line when it is often taken by the GD or WD to ensure the GK is able to cover the GS if ball is intercepted.
- Centre third throw-ins are usually taken by the WD or GD.
- Goal third throw-ins
 - Base line throw-ins inside the circle are taken by either the GS or GA with the aim to pass directly to the other shooter or to a centre court player and back to a shooter.
 - Sideline throw-ins can be taken by either the C or the WA; it is often taken by the WA so the C is able to cover the opposition C if the ball is intercepted.

Systems

Systems are used at training to provide a framework on which to build team strategies and cohesion. Constantly bringing the ball down court from a defensive throw-in enables players to gain knowledge of spaces available to them and an appreciation of fellow players' movements, as well as a structure to fall back on in pressurised situations.

One approach is to allow each player to receive a pass in turn, right from the defence end to the goal shooter; this ensures that it remains a team game. Encourage players to 'read-off' the leads and movement of their attacking teammates and to consider where their next move would be if the first lead isn't used and is mistimed.

A few plans for throw-ins, centre passes and full court play are only useful if they do not prevent the juniors from experimenting and learning from experience.



CENTRE PASSES

Begin initially with the C, WA, GA and GS to highlight the attacking variations available from the centre pass, and then add WD and GD options. Irrespective of which combination is played, the centre pass must be received in the centre third. Extend the centre pass set-up to include opposition players. Begin initially with the WD and then progressively add players to further increase difficulty (GD, C, and GK). If the defensive team gains possession of the ball they should play it back over the transverse line.

