

YOUTH U10–U14

Motivational shooting training

A sample practice session for ages U10–U14

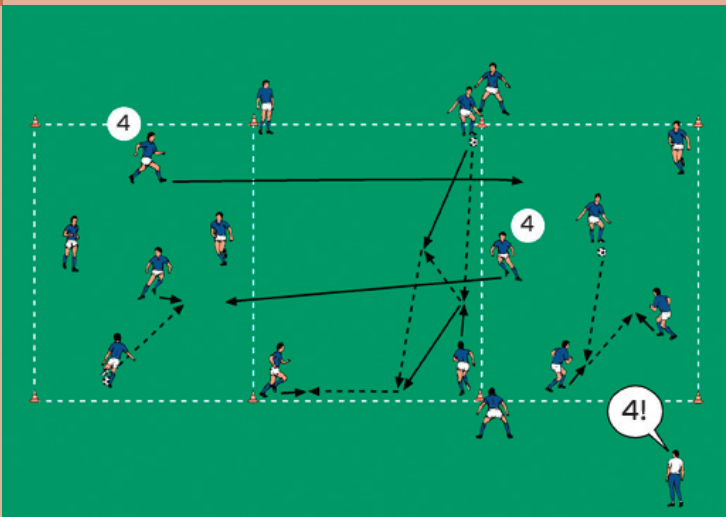
by Horst Hrubesch, head coach, German U18 boys' national team

Winter break is drawing to a close, and soon practice will be in full swing again. What better way to motivate your players for cold-weather training than shooting contests? Taking shots at the goal is always fun for kids, and when it's combined with small competitions, the motivational effect is even bigger.

The U14 level is the main focus of the DFB's youth development program, for good reason: Kids between 12 and 14 are at an ideal age for learning. With a proper schedule of age-appropriate training, even complicated techniques are easy for them to pick up. Youth coaches at this age level have a duty to help their players make as much progress as possible during the “golden age of learning!”

WARM-UP

Warm-up 1: Double grid switch



Setup

- Using cones, mark out three grids.
- Divide players into three teams, one for each grid.
- Number the players in each of the end grids.

Sequence

- The players in the end grids pass to each other in any order, each taking two touches.
- The players in the middle grid take positions as shown and pass according to a set sequence.
- The coach calls out a number, and the two players who have that number each switch to the other end, being careful not to disrupt the passes in the middle grid as they cross it.

Variations

- The players in the end grids pass according to a set sequence as well.
- Players alternate between two-touch and one-touch passing.
- Change the pass sequence in the middle grid.
- Turn the grid switch into a race: The first player to reach the other end scores a point for his team.

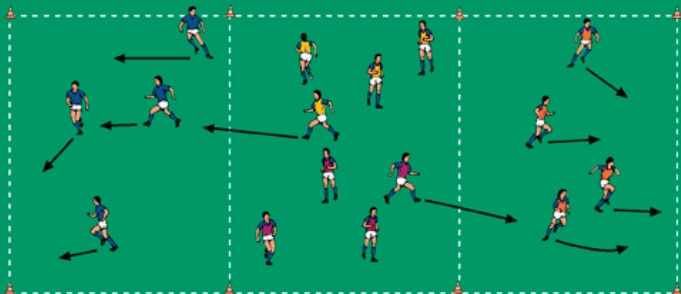
Tips and corrections

- In this session, the two warm-up exercises share the same setup.
- Rotate players out of the middle grid every two or three minutes.

Motivational shooting training

WARM-UP

Warm-up 2: Tag tournament



Setup

- Grids are the same as in the first warm-up exercise.
- Divide players into four teams.
- Position one team of runners in each of the end grids and two teams of taggers in the middle grid.
- Assign an end grid to each team of taggers.

Sequence

- One tagger from each team runs into his assigned grid and tries to tag a runner.
- Afterwards, he runs back into the middle grid and tags a teammate.
- Playing time is two minutes.
- Which team can tag more runners?

Variations

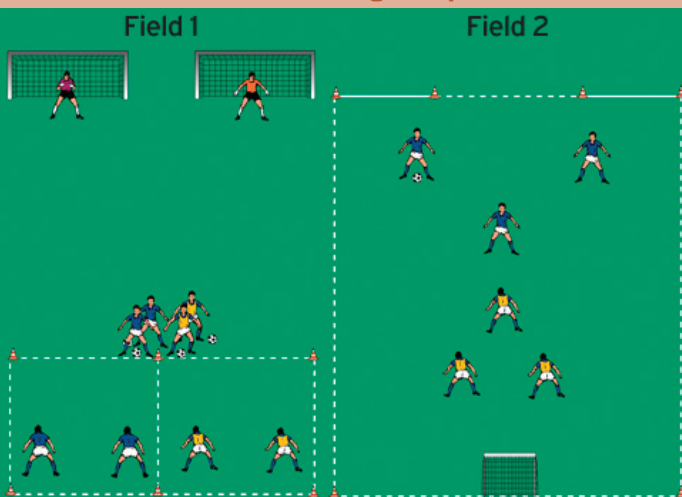
- Each tagger has to tag two runners before returning to the middle grid.
- Taggers have to carry a ball in their hands while tagging. After tagging a runner, they “tag” a teammate in the middle grid by throwing the ball to him.

Tips and corrections

- This exercise should be run as a round-robin tournament. Teams score three points for each round they win and one point for each tie.

MAIN SESSION

Main session 1: Shooting competition 1



Setup

- Field 1: Set up two standard goals with goalkeepers and two grids facing them.
- Field 2: Mark out a grid with one small goal and two goal lines.
- Divide players into two groups and assign one to each field.

Sequence: Field 1

- Divide players into two teams. Two players from each team stand in their team's grid; the rest line up at the starting cone with one ball each.
- At the coach's signal, each team's starting player passes into the grid and then runs after the pass.
- Players complete at least three passes with their teammates and then shoot at their team's goal.
- The shooter runs out of the grid, retrieves the ball and lines up with his team.
- Which team can score the most goals in three minutes?

Sequence: Field 2

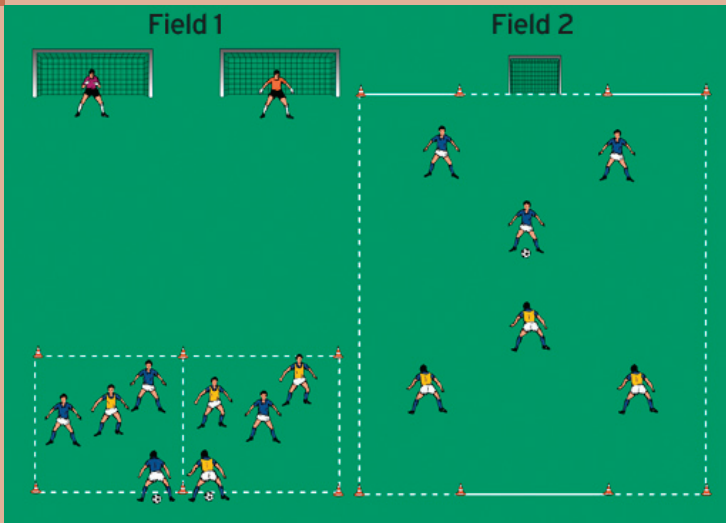
- Divide players into two teams, who play 3 v. 3.
- The blue team starts out attacking on the goal. Yellow can counter-attack on the goal lines.
- Teams switch sides after two minutes.

Tips and corrections

- Goals scored directly count double.
- Field 1: Limit players' touches if necessary.
- Field 2: Have players dribble in instead of doing throw-ins.

MAIN SESSION

Main session 2: Shooting competition 2



Setup

- Grids and groups are the same as in the exercise above, except that on Field 2 the goal is moved between the goal lines and replaced with a third, longer goal line.

Sequence: Field 1

- Divide players into two teams and position two attackers and one defender in each grid.
- At the coach's signal, a third attacker dribbles into each grid.
- Teams play 3 v. 1 to score on the goals. Attackers can score either by shooting from inside the grid (two points) or going 1 v. 1 against the goalkeeper (one point).
- Which team can score the most goals in two minutes?

Sequence: Field 2

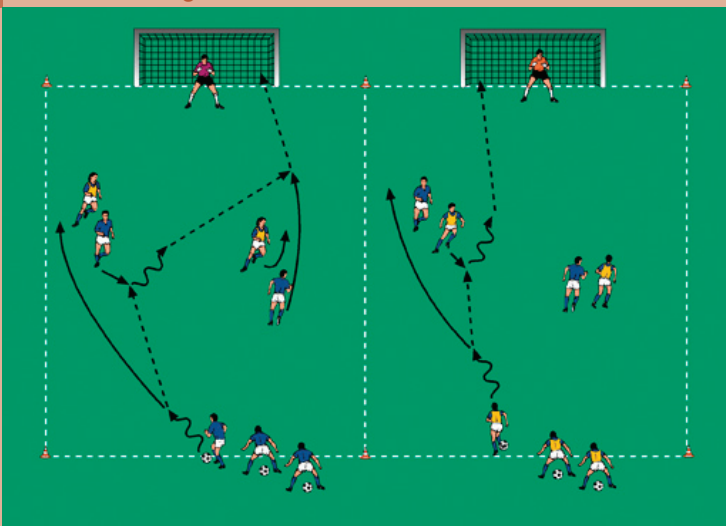
- Divide players into two teams, who play 3 v. 3.
- The blue team can attack both on the goal (two points) and on the short goal lines (one point). Yellow can counterattack on the long goal line.
- Teams switch sides after two minutes.

Tips and corrections

- Field 1: Attackers should try to quickly and purposefully exploit their 3 v. 1 advantage.
- Field 2: Teams should play without restrictions. Have players kick the ball in from their endline instead of doing throw-ins.

CONCLUSION

3 v. 2 relay



Setup

- Mark out two grids, each with a standard goal with goalkeeper.
- Divide players into two groups.
- Each group selects two players to be defenders for the round.
- Two attackers from each team face off against the opposition's defenders inside their grid.

Sequence

- At the coach's signal, a third attacker dribbles into each grid, creating a 3 v. 2 situation.
- After each round, one attacker leaves the grid and a new one dribbles in.
- Which team can score the most goals in two minutes?

Variations

- Attackers are limited to three touches.
- Attackers may play no more than five passes among themselves in each round.
- If the defenders win the ball, they can score a point by shooting it across their opponents' endline.

Tips and corrections

- To avoid overworking players, limit playing time to two minutes per round.
- Spend the first couple of rounds "just" watching without interrupting. The early plays tend to be rushed and sloppy due to time pressure and the competitive nature of the exercise, but in our experience, attackers will gradually become more confident and focused on their own.