



Warming up with technique training

Part 2: Passing, by Paul Schomann, DFB coach

For many teams, the same familiar scene plays out before each practice session: The players emerge from the locker room, find a ball and start passing in a circle. Or each one gets a ball, and they all start booting wild passes: long flighted balls, even shots, all without properly warming up.

Granted, this scenario may be somewhat exaggerated, but it still stands in stark contrast to everything we've ever said in *SIS* about the importance of warm-up. Fortunately, Paul Schomann is here to show us a better way. The first part of his series (in *SIS* 5/08) focused on dribbling, and in this installment he gives us passing exercises to prepare players for practice.

When planning their practices, many coaches only plan the main part of the session and fall back on standard drills for warm-up. The disadvantages of this approach are numerous. Above all, it wastes valuable practice time, because a warm-up consisting of drills can never achieve the proper effect.

Warm-up activities should never be thought of as something separate from the rest of practice; they should prepare players for the concepts and objectives of the main session. The theme of your session should be apparent from the start. For example, if you're planning games that train combination play for the main session, then your warm-up might consist of various passing exercises.

The theme of your session needs to be highlighted on a structural level as well, as the quality and intensity of warm-up are largely determined by the structure of your session. Running a smooth practice session begins with having your equipment ready. Unnecessary changes in setup and teams should be avoided. You'll find further tips on planning and running your practice sessions below in Figure 1.

The exercises that follow require minimal effort to set up and run. They're not designed for any particular age level, so you can use them for youth players as well as adults. It's generally a good idea to include the goalkeeper.

FIG. 1 ESSENTIAL TRAINING TIPS

Plan carefully

- Don't just do drills!
- Prepare players for the main session (theme).

You've got to sell it!

- Show your excitement when you introduce activities.
- Demonstrate activities correctly.

Include every player

- No one should be a spectator.

Stay flexible

- Are you prepared for unexpected absences?
- Are you prepared for changes in the weather?

Get everyone excited

- Provide challenges for all ability levels.
- Create positive experiences.

Don't be afraid of corrections

- Make more corrections as the level of difficulty increases.

Use warm-up games properly

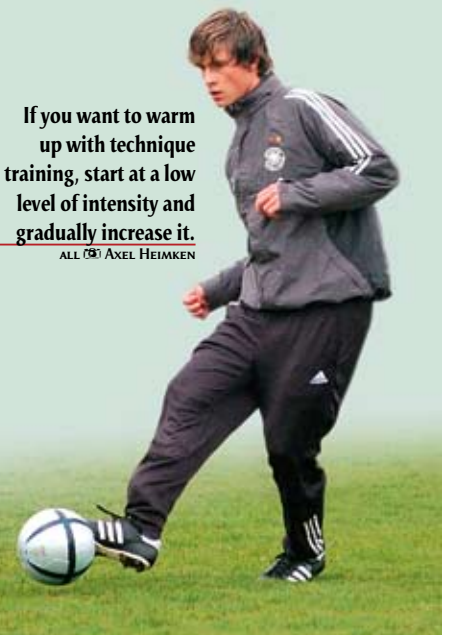
- Older players take longer to get warmed up.
- Younger players are ready to go right away.

Include goalkeepers occasionally

- It's often not feasible to train your keepers by themselves, especially at lower age levels, so include them.

If you want to warm up with technique training, start at a low level of intensity and gradually increase it.

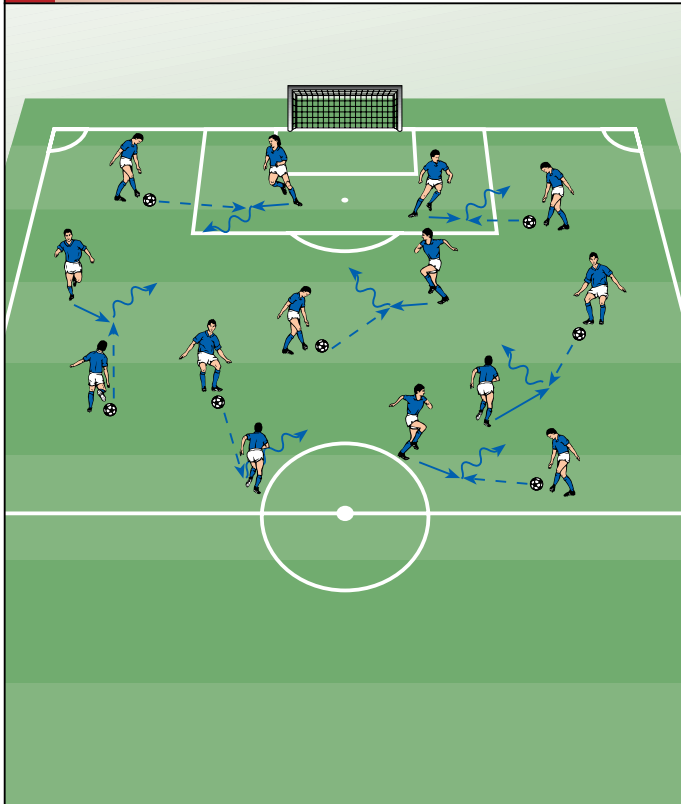
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WARM-UP: Passing

Passing in pairs



Setup

- Divide players into pairs.
- Pairs spread out across a half; each one has a ball.



Tips

- Give players the first three minutes to do whatever they want. Object: creative ball handling.
- Gradually increase the tempo and the force of passes.
- After every exercise that includes sprints, switch to an active rest period (e.g. juggling) or stretching.
- Always make sure players are focused.
- Goalkeepers should warm up with field players (see photo sequence). Object: improving field player techniques.

Sequence

Do the following exercises in order:

- Exercise 1: Partners pass back and forth while dribbling at an easy pace, receiving and controlling each pass while moving.
- Exercise 2 (see photos): Player A plays a hard pass with the inside of the foot to B. B moves to meet the pass and takes it to one side (slight acceleration). Then B passes to A, etc.
- Exercise 3: Player A plays an approximately 15-yard pass to B and follows the ball. B passes directly back to A's feet, and A sprints off to one side while receiving and controlling the ball. Then players switch roles.
- Exercise 4: Players A and B pass back and forth in place with the insides of both feet (active rest period).
- Exercise 5: Player A passes to B and follows the ball. B receives and controls the ball and takes it toward A, who controls it with a quick sprint off to the side. Players slow down briefly and then switch roles.
- Exercise 6: Same as Exercise 5, except now the receiver turns after receiving and passes into the other player's path.
- Exercise 7: Player A dribbles toward B, plays a hard pass to B's feet and then shows for the ball with a sprint. B drops the ball directly back into A's path. A runs to receive the ball and dribbles a short distance with it; then players switch roles.



▶ 1



▶ 2



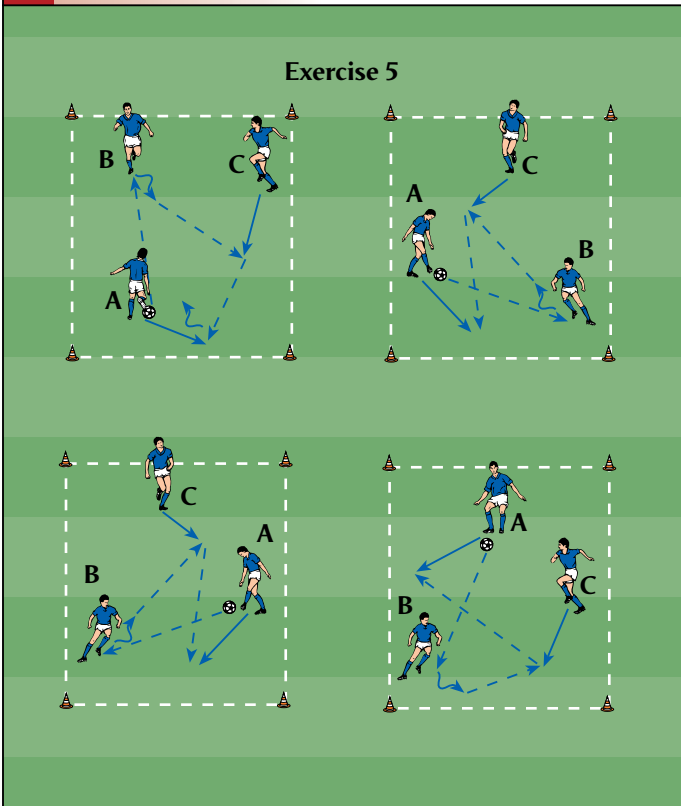
▶ 3



WARM-UP: Passing

Passing in groups of three

Exercise 5



Setup

- Mark out several 15 x 15-yard fields. Divide players into groups of three and assign each to a field. Each group has a ball.

Tips

- If the number of players is not divisible by three, have the goalkeeper(s) warm up with the field players.
- The ball should always be in motion—no dead balls!
- All passes should be played on the ground with the inside of the foot.
- Exercises should start out slowly, then gradually increase in tempo.
- Between exercises, do stretching and strengthening activities. For active rest periods, practice juggling, passing directly at close range or receiving with one foot and passing with the other.



Sequence

Do the following exercises in order:

- Exercise 1: Players pass back and forth while dribbling; each pass must be received and controlled (no direct passes).
- Exercise 2: Same as Exercise 1, except passers do a quick jump and squat after passing.
- Exercise 3: Passers follow the ball a short distance and then run away in the opposite direction.
- Exercise 4: Same as Exercise 3, except players continue to watch the ball carrier while running away in the opposite direction.
- Exercise 5: Players pass with limited touches, alternating between one and two. For example (see diagram): A has one touch, B has two touches, C one, A two, etc.
- Exercise 6: Players must pass directly. Do two 30-second rounds at top speed, with juggling between rounds.
- Exercise 7 (see photos): B runs toward the ball carrier (A) and shows for a pass. C runs to B's position. B lets the pass roll between his feet, and C lays the ball off directly into B's path.
- Exercise 8: Same as Exercise 7, except now the first passer receives a pass at the end of the sequence.

