

“Smart Pressure”

This session has been printed in the NSCAA Soccer Journal and is one that is geared for the advanced level player ages 14 and up. It is designed to get your team to think a little more when they are defending and to get them to play smarter, not necessarily harder. Getting the team to win the ball back as a unit requires for them to think and use their wits, not necessarily their strength.

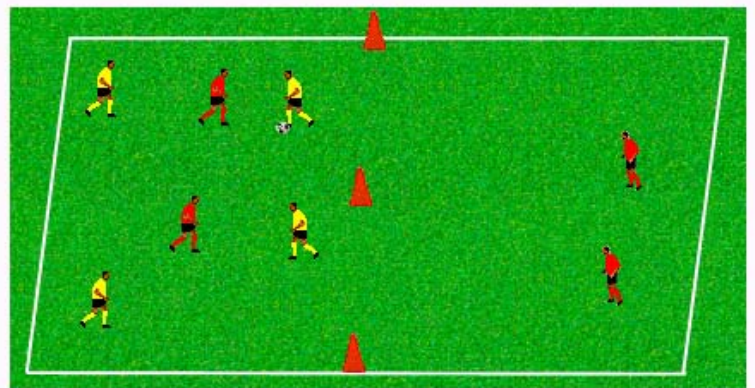
Warm-up-“Gladiators”

Partner up. Half of the partners have a ball, half do not. Each pair that doesn't have a ball, try to work together to get one. Pairs need to work together and are not allowed to work separately. If the defending pair win a ball or force a pair that are passing the ball to go out of bounds, then they get a ball and the pair that lost their ball have to try and win a ball from another pair.



1st Activity-4v2 to 2

Two teams of four players. In one half there are 4 attacking players v 2 defenders. In the other half 2 players who are with the defending team are awaiting a pass from their 2 defending teammates. When the 2 defenders win the ball of the attacking team loses possession, they play the ball into the other half and join their 2 awaiting teammates. 2 players from the team that last possession then go into the other half and try and win the ball back. This is where the 2 defenders have to work together and know when to pressure hard or soft. **When the 2 defenders win the ball back they should be facing their 2 awaiting teammates.** The attacking team gets a point if they can string 6 passes in a row.



2nd Activity 8v4 to 4

Same activity except in a larger space and more players. Now the 4 defenders really have to direct the attacking team into an area where they can play the ball to their teammates who are awaiting them in the opposite grid.



Final Activity

9v9 (including goalkeeper) Two teams get into a 3-3-2 formation and play. Before they start to play have each team “huddle” up and decide as a team where on the field they want to win the ball back. As a coach, try and sit back and see if you can tell where they made their decision to win the ball back. Do they win the ball on the right side of the field, left, force the ball into the other team’s center back to encourage that center back to dribble forward so that they can collapse? Let them decide, they may surprise you.

