



JUNIOR FOOTBALL PROGRAM



“Making friends with the ball”

A set of 18 basic skills and exercises which will assist young players to better enjoy the game.

ENQUIRES : KEVIN BEST 0243 264806

14. RUNNING BACKWARDS

THE CHALLENGE : The average of 3 attempts in succession

Recommended time: Level 1 - Beginners, Level 2 - 10 secs, Level 3 - 9 secs, Level 4 - 8 secs. Level 5 - 7 secs

Reasons for learning this skill

Running backward is predominantly used as a defensive measure where the player is required to track an opposition player who has made a forward run with or without the ball. The player is required to keep the opposition player in his/her sight whilst at the same time keep their eye on the ball and be as close to that opposition player as the situation warrants. As mentioned in the sprinting exercise, soccer has developed into a fast technical game in which all players have to adjust constantly. In defence, when the other team has the ball, players will find they have to adjust quickly to get into a positive defensive position behind the ball. The

he/she can turn quickly to sprint towards his/her own goal if the ball is passed behind him/her.

Organisation by coach or parent

N.B. To avoid injury, players should warm up and stretch properly, before starting any exercises.

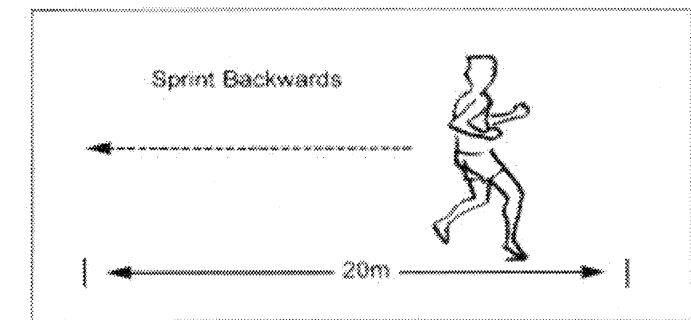
Two players, 2 cones, one tape measure, one stopwatch.

Task to practice - the challenge

Sprint backwards from a standing start over 20 metres - to be done in three successive attempts by bettering the target time (seconds).

Coaching hints - things to look for

When coaching runners you should note:



- technique should be introduced very early in a runner's career and emphasised regularly - but not forced;
- many runners have an eccentric or ungraceful style, but on analysis are applying force efficiently;

skill is used to delay the forward movement of the opposition ball player called "jockeying". By executing this skill effectively and delaying the forward movement of the ball player it allows time for other defensive players to get back behind the ball to provide cover and depth to the defensive shape of the team. A player must be also able to track opposition players without the ball. Good positioning means that the player can view the ball and the opposition player that he/she has decided to track/mark in the one view and be behind the ball. To be able to do this a player must be able to track running backwards. A defensive player will use this skill for about 6% of the game. The player should be able to run backwards over a short distance (10 to 20 metres) as fast as he/she can run forward. To be more effective the player should be running slightly to one side ('crab' like) so that

- the upper body carriage should be very slightly forward or upright as the runner faces, but never back as this causes a deceleration component and over balancing and possibly falling;
- the head is held relaxed, straight and still;
- the arms are a major component in the creation of balanced backward motion and should move from the shoulders without causing body sway;
- the elbow becomes the driving force for balance and for speed;
- the angle of the elbows should be 90 degrees approximately with the hands held slightly clenched;
- the magnitude of the swing depends on the speed of the runner, but should never be overdone as stride cadence is affected and energy wasted;

- in the arm swing the hands move from just behind the hips to chest height at the very most and swinging across the body is to be avoided;
- the ball of the foot should land momentarily ahead of the heel. When sprinting backwards the foot plant is higher on the ball and toward the toes, but the heel will still strike the ground. In the support of the foot in its lateral and linear plant position;
- the lateral extent is limited to a straight line which the feet touch, but do not cross each others path. A cross over gait creates excessive hip movement, while a spreading of the feet affects the line of applied force, thus reducing backward velocity. However in jockeying an opponent, a 'crab' like stance is more beneficial as it allows the player to bend the knees to the desired height for better balance to enable a change of direction quickly dependant on the opposition movements;
- the linear position of the foot dictates the stride length, an important part of a runner's ability to develop efficient backward motion;
- over extension creates a waste of energy and there appears to be a direct relationship between oxygen intake and stride length;
- under striding is also less efficient, but is not so detrimental as an overly long stride.

Additional skills practice

- Running backwards turning and sprinting ahead at a given signal (left and right).

Progressive training practice

Organise the players in pairs with one player with the ball dribbling whilst the other 'jockeys' in front running backwards. When the defender is competent have the dribbler making forward sprints.