



## The decision maker on the field

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### Newsletter: We kick Corona #1

Age group: 5-12

In this article we will discuss on-field creativity and how to develop within our young players. Arrigo Sacchi, former Italian soccer coach, once wrote “Michelangelo said he painted with his mind, not with his hands.” **On-field** creativity is the ability to create and find solutions for different game situations. Creative solutions are unique, innovative, useful, effective, and are not just a carbon-copy of a specific move from a practice session. There are infinite decisions to make during a soccer game, and it is impossible for the coach to make the decisions for the players. We, as coaches, can give our players a lot of input and advice during practice or on a game day. No matter how much input or advice we give our players, the game time situations will always look completely different. The coaches’ input from the sideline during a game, will always arrive too late for the player to execute. Also, often the players on-field perspective allows them to see a better solution to the situation than the coach can see from the sideline perspective. As coaches we want and need *our players* to find the right solutions during those game time situations. Coaches can also learn and benefit from the creativity of their players during those on field situations, as they may observe an unforeseen solution to the situation. This has the potential to benefit the coach and the team as a whole in the long run. In our first newsletter in the “We kick Corona!” series, we will offer samples of practice sessions to develop our players creativity. Let’s get started.

What does the player need to be creative?

- Well-developed coordinative capabilities (perceptiveness, orientation ability, ability to react quickly)
- Technical abilities: dribbling, tricks and moves, passing, receiving, ball control
- Courage
- Confidence
- Game intelligence

How can we help develop the player’s creativity on the field?

- Be creative and brave
- Technical exercises combined with many coordinative exercises
- Many games with different tasks on different fields and with many potentials of solutions

- Many small sided games
- Plenty of playtime without instructions



### Complex color competition

#### Set up:

- 10x10yd field > set up many cones of different color in the field.
- Set up a dummy 10yd behind the field (as seen in the picture).
- Set up 2 mini goals on each side that are marked with cones or pinnies (as seen in the picture).
- 2 teams behind the square.
- Each player has a ball.
- One player of each team is behind the dummy.

#### Execution:

- The coach calls 2-3 colors > the first player of each team dribble into the field > they stop the ball > now they must touch the cones in order of the called colors.
- The players then dribble through the field and play a give and go ball with the player behind the dummy > the player behind the dummy must move away from the defender before receiving the ball.
- Then the player dribbles the ball towards the mini goals > the coach holds up the color of one of the goal > the player must score on the respective goal.

#### Variation:

- Competition > which team has the most points after 5min?
- The players must touch the cones with different body parts (e.g. forehead, elbow, knee, etc.).



### Reaction chaos and 1v1

#### Set up:

- 15x20yd field with 4 mini goals.
- 2 small gates/goals with cones in front of each goal.
- 4 groups of different color.
- Every player has a ball.
- The coach stands at the sideline with 4 cones of color of the groups.

#### Execution:

- There are always two 1v1 games at the same time.
- The coach calls the first 1v1 by calling two colors > “blue” and “red” > the first called color dribbles with the ball and the second called color becomes the defender.
- After the first command the coach touches a cone with his foot in front of him (a color that he hasn’t called with the first command) > that color starts to dribble with the ball > and the color that hasn’t been called or touched becomes the defender.
- The attackers must dribble through one of the gates in front of their own goal > then they can score on either opposite goal.
- If the defender wins the ball > he or she can score on the opposite goal.

#### Coaching points:

- It will be chaotic in the beginning which is the purpose of this exercise.
- The players don’t know where the defender or the attacker is coming from > they always must adjust to the new situation and must decide quickly: is the defender coming from directly in front or from the side? Is the defender “sleeping”?
- As attacker: speed up, keep the head up, find the shortest way to the goal, change direction quickly, stay focused.
- The coach can call all colors > it doesn’t have to be a 1v1 from opposing sides.



### Chaos 2v2 + 2

#### Set up:

- Two 30x15yd field that are laying on top of another crosswise as shown in the picture.
- Two youth goals with goalie on field 1.
- 4 mini goals on field 2.
- 4 teams of 2 players.
- 1 Neutral team of 2 players.

#### Execution:

- There are two 2vs2 games at the same time.
- Red plays vs purple on field 1 with the youth goals.
- Blue plays vs yellow on field 2 with the mini goals.
- Green is the neutral team and plays with the team that has possession of the ball > on both fields.

#### Coaching points:

- Because of the chaos of two games at the same time in different directions the players will experience different situations > there will be times where the teams have more players on the team, less players, neutrals are not available at the moment, etc. > all these moments are dynamic and are changing quickly and the players always must find a new answer.
- The players must adapt quickly and must find new ideas to solve a problem > the players are forced to find new ideas and solutions.
- Let them play!
- Be supportive with guided questions.
- Be open for new/different solutions from the players.

To sum up, these exercises are great to develop the players' creativity without taking the fun of playing away. The players are forced to find a new ideas and solutions perpetually as the game situation changes due the dynamic of the exercises. The players won't always remember their actions, but they will learn how to adjust and how to reply to a new unpredictable problem on the field. They will be creative, they will find a solution quickly, and will make a decision autonomously. As always please let me know if you have any questions, if you need more information or if you have any feedback. Please feel free to contact me: [dgroth@nyswysa.org](mailto:dgroth@nyswysa.org)

Also, NYSW provided a database for at home practice sessions to stay fit (physically and mentally) during this time. Please check our website > <https://nyswysa.demosphere-secure.com/we-kick-corona-stay-in-the-game-with-at-home-practice>