



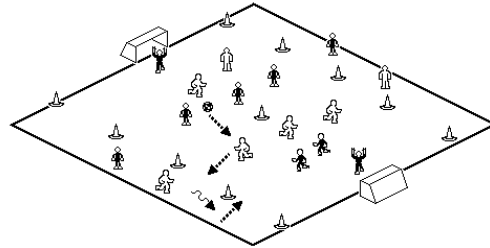
# ***Finishing (From flank play)***

*by Laura Ray, Mass Youth Soccer Development Coach*

**OBJECTIVE:** The objective of this training session is to create opportunities to receive the ball in wide areas and to deliver crosses with a purpose for forwards and other midfielders attacking/finishing on goal. Can look at other options for wide midfielders such as: driving endline and laying ball back away from keeper, early crosses in and behind defenders, attacking towards goal to get a shot off themselves or commit defenders in order to lay ball off to another attacking player.

## **1) 3v2 + 3v2 with Free Flank Players to big goals with GK's (20 minutes):**

Field space is 50 yards wide by 50 yards long. Goals are placed on opposite endlines. Use some cones to mark a visible midfield line across the field creating 2 halves. Create outside lanes the length of the field on both sides (5 yards wide). Position 3 blue attackers & 2 red defenders in one half and 3 red attackers & 2 blue defenders in the other half. Players are restricted to their half field. Each team will have a designated wide player in each lane, so that when the two defenders win the ball,



they can either play the ball out wide to their free flank player to get a cross off in the attacking half of the field or play it to one of the three forwards who can either play it out wide (recommended, but not forced) or get a shot off. If a goal is scored or if the ball goes out of bounds, the coach will designate one of the keepers to start play with a new ball. *Note: Can play 2v1's in each half if down players.* Version 2: Remove restriction of staying in half of the field. Allow the flank players to compete with each other.

## **Coaching Points:**

Technical Coaching Points:

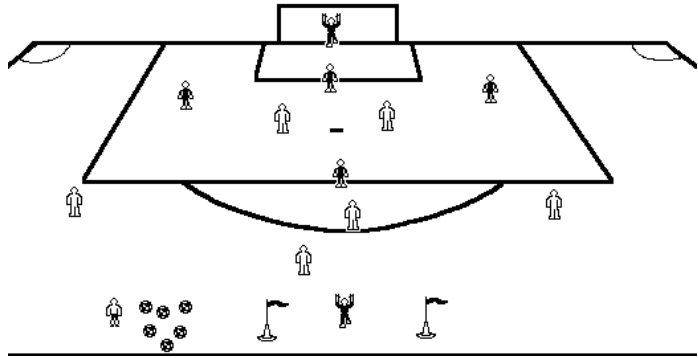
- Crosser should make a positive touch forward and at an angle to the goal before hitting the ball
- They should get their hips turned to face the target
- Can cross the ball: driven to near post on the ground or in the air / lofted to far post / driven back away from the keeper towards the 6 yd box and the penalty mark (or to a trailing attacker just at the top of the penalty area)
- Finishing technique of attackers – coming across face of the goal to see the ball and the goal
- Using proper surface as the ball is coming to them and/or they are going to meet with ball

Tactical Coaching Points:

- Wide player giving width to the field
- Type of cross should be determined by where the goalkeeper is and runs into the box
- Timing of runs by attackers to get to the crosses
- Stress crosser should choose a target to play the ball to versus just hitting the ball in front of the goal
- Attackers reading the cues of the server – did the server dribble endline, so there will be a cross that goes back towards the 6 yd box to the top of the penalty area? / did the server take an early touch inside and will be looking to play an early cross in and behind the defense – to the near post or to the far post?
- When the restrictions are off – can the players combine with the wide player to get them into the attack and/or to get space out wide to deliver a cross?

## 2) 6v4 + GKprs to Two Big Goals (30 minutes):

Field space is 50 yards wide by 60 yards long. Place one goal on each endline. Create the 6-player team with your forwards and midfielders and your 4-player team with midfielders and backs. The 6-player team will attack the goal on the normal endline and the 4-player team will attack the goals on the other endline. The coach will serve balls in from behind the 6-player team to different areas of the field. Any time a team scores or the ball goes out of bounds the coach will serve another ball in to the attacking team. You can have the players run through 2 or 3 attacking patterns to see some different options.



### ***Possible Patterns:***

1. The center mid takes a touch forward and then plays a ball wide to the outside mid, the outside mid then takes a few touches aggressively attacking the outside back does a quick feint and then breaks to attack the end line. After passing the defender, they serve a ball centrally using the penalty mark as the target location. Well timed runs by attacking players are crucial to successful finishing...they must arrive as the crossed ball reaches the destination and finish with an appropriate body surface (foot, head, etc.).
2. The center mid plays a ball immediately wide, the wide midfielder takes a few touches toward the defender and plays in a low driven ball to the near post, the 2 forwards are making runs with the first towards the near post in front of the goalkeeper and the second right in the center of the 6 yard box. The attacking midfielder should be entering near the top of the penalty box in case of a rebound and the opposite outside mid should be entering the penalty box from the back side.
3. As the center mid takes a touch forward and plays the ball to the closest forward who is checking to the ball, they then play it to the outside midfielder who crosses it in to a forward prepared to finish on goal. Can vary the cross and drive it low, mid height or lofted for a forward or opposite outside mid to finish.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce coaching points listed in #1
- Show them the options, then let the players see if they can try them based on the flow of play and where & how pressure is being applied (i.e.: where the defenders and the goalkeeper are positioned, etc.)
- Cues for the different options will be: where the GK and defenders are in relation to the ball, the goal they are defending and the movement of the attacking players
- Encourage your players to find other options as well to get the ball out wide and to get a cross off; combination play on the flank, etc.
- Encourage them to find new run patterns into the box to finish off crosses

## 3) 8v8 Scrimmage (30 minutes):

Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

### **Coaching Points:**

- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (technique of crossing, decisions of where and when to cross, placement of service, timing of runs, technique in finishing off of cross, etc.).

4) **Cool-down (10 minutes):** Juggling in pairs of 2, no player can take more than 2 touches before they pass it to their teammate. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.