

Medium Mixed Bag

The Mixed Bag practice that we showed in the August 2006 World of Soccer Newsletter has been modified below to become a Medium Mixed Bag. For three reasons:

- We can never do too much practice on crossing, but we have to modify crossing practice according to age, ability and numbers.
- Younger players cannot cross from the flanks of a full field, but should be encouraged to do so with a modified field.
- For older players 14-years of age and upwards there are times when a coach would like to work on crossing, but may only have 9 or 10 players at practice on any given evening.

Medium Mixed Bag

Objective:

- To encourage young players to think more about using the width of the field.
- To develop crossing skills and to look to finish (or defend) attacks from the flanks.

Organization:

- Mark in an area 36 yards long (two penalty areas long) by 30 yards wide and then further extend the width with a 6-yard channel on either side. For older players (13+) go wider; younger players (U 11 and less) make it narrower.
- Put in a half way line, but not in the channel.
- Play 2 Attackers vs. 1 Defender and a goalkeeper in each half or whatever the numbers allow you.
- There are two neutral "crossers" of the ball - one on each flank.

- Keep a supply of balls in each net.
- Goalkeeper at one end starts by throwing the ball out to one of the "crossers" (wingers).
- The wingers play a cross in towards the goal.
- If the defender or the goalkeeper gets the ball they play out to one of the two wingers and the attack goes the other way.
- At younger ages try to rotate all players at intervals - possibly through all positions.
- Use the offside law to prevent attackers standing in front of the goalkeeper.

Teaching:

- Encourage an accurate thrown ball from the keeper to the winger.
- Wingers should aim to cross the ball towards the far post with a hard driven pass or a lofted pass.
- The wingers should also aim the ball to split the difference with the cross in between the defender and the goalkeeper.
- Attackers should go away from the crosser and then come in as the ball is played in - one to the near post area the other to the far post.
- Defender and goalkeeper have to work well together as the defender cannot man-mark two attackers.
- Goalkeeper should take charge and organize the defender(s).