

Exercises for Forwards

CROSSING

- A. Cross a still ball into the penalty area trying to hit certain targets set up inside the box.

-Work on accuracy, the ability to cross using the inside of the foot (David Beckham style), getting the head up and crossing from different angles especially the early cross.

- B. Hit a moving ball (either pass the ball to yourself or have a partner pass the ball) and hit crosses as the ball is moving. Keep in mind it is easier to cross a ball when it is moving because the ball already has forward momentum.
- C. Dribble the ball and hit a cross off the dribble.
- D. With a defender shadowing you making it hard to get a cross in practice hooking crosses in around the defender
- E. Play 1 vs. 1 live trying to get crosses in.

HEADING

- A. Have a partner cross balls to the far post. Work strictly on heading technique.
- B. Have a partner cross balls to the near post. Before the ball is crossed try making a short run to the far post. This will get your body better shaped to head the ball and give you more goal to shoot at because you will be moving more towards the middle of the goal.
- C. Have a defender mark you. Try getting free by getting on the defenders blind side and work to get free at either the near or far post.

BREAKAWAYS

With a goalkeeper involved work on a "time limited" breakaway with the keeper.

For Forwards

- I. Line up 5 balls in a row close to the net. Without using a *stride* into the ball hit 5 consecutive shots.

Objective: Many times a forward will have to shoot in a situation where there is not space and/or no time. This exercise will help build confidence for that situation.

- II. Player A standing 15-18 yards from goal (depending on leg strength) receives a pass from Player B. Player A purposely catches the ball too close so that they must pull off a quick *snap* shot using the same technique as the exercise above.

Once Player A has found some success with this exercise have them do this with their body turned in various positions (half turned, back to the goal, etc.)

- III. Line up 5 balls in a row from 12 yards away. Strike 5 balls in a row (similar to Exercise I) with the side of the foot in an attempt to curl and place the ball in the corner.

- IV. Use the same exercise as exercise II.

Objectives of Exercise III and IV: If a player put the ball on goal from within 15 yards they have a 1 in 3 chance of scoring. Players need to develop confidence in their ability to not panic and hit a powerful instep drive when an accurate shot is more practical.

- V. Player A lines up 15 yards from goal with shoulders square to goal. Player B plays a square ball to Player A who must hit the ball first time.

Objective: This shot is one of the hardest balls for a forward to hit because it requires great timing and technique. First time shots are very difficult for a goalkeeper to save.

- VI. Player A stands about 18 yards from goal. Making a diagonal run across the penalty area Player B passes a ball *wide enough* to Player A so that he can turn and hit a first time shot on goal.

Objective: Diagonal runs by forwards are very important in clearing space in the penalty area. This run will only be made by the forward if they have confidence in their ability to score.

- VII. Player B with ball starts about 25 yards from goal. Player A stands 18 yards from goal. Player B starts to dribble towards goal, Player A makes diagonal run. Player B makes a pass wide enough for Player A to turn and shoot first time.

Objective: To develop coordination and timing between the midfielder and forward.

Start 25 yards away from goal (slightly to the right or left). Player B plays a through ball towards goal. Player A runs onto to it and strikes it first time.

Objective: It is important to practice shooting first time. First time shots are very difficult for goalkeepers because they have a difficult time getting their feet set. 50% of all goals are from first time strikes.

Bouncing Balls

Start out in the penalty area. It is important to start at different spots in the goal area. Player B should volley or throw a ball that bounces for you to strike the ball first time. Player B should try to make the bounces unpredictable (but realistic) for you. It is probably better for Player B to volley the ball.

You should also change up your stance in the goal area. For example, half turned to goal, three quarters turned to goal etc.

Eventually learn to hit bouncing balls on the run.

Objective: Many chances come from hitting bouncing balls and they are some of the most difficult shots to hit.

1 vs. 1 in the penalty area.

Just like 1 vs. 1 basketball when the ball turns over you must take the ball outside of the penalty area before striking a shot.

1 vs. 2 in the penalty area

Heading

Start out at the far post heading balls on goal. Player B crosses a still ball from many different angles.

Next, before the ball is crossed make a quick run to the far post. This will allow you to shape your body up better to head to goal and also allow you a greater angle and more goal to shoot at.

Next, try making this run with Player B crossing a moving ball. This will help you develop timing with your teammate, read cues as to when the ball will be crossed and be able to sprint into good scoring spots.

Next, try doing the same exercise adding a defender.