

Soccer IQ by Dan Blank

The Holy Grail (Speed of Play)

- 🏆 Taking as few touches as possible requires you to
 - 🔧 Think faster
 - 🔧 Make decisions before the ball arrives
 - 🔧 Perform with sharper technical ability
- 🏆 To play fast, you have to want to play fast and fast is better than slow
- 🏆 Smart players prioritize playing quickly

Play From A Spot

- 🔧 Killing the ball close to you and then passing or shooting from that spot
- 🔧 By doing this you...
 - Put yourself in a position to immediately play forward
 - You freeze the defender and preserve your cushion
 - You will complete more of your passes
 - Team will possess the ball more

The Impossible Pass

- 🏆 Yelling for the ball when your teammate can't possibly get you the ball
- 🏆 Smart players communicate based on what's best for the ball
 - 🔧 Useful, concise information that helps teammates solve problems
 - 🔧 Act as if the person on the ball is blindfolded and is completely dependent on you

Passing Angles And Empathy

- 🏆 Seams that run between players or between players and lines that the ball can travel without being touched or intercepted
- 🏆 Ask yourself, "If I was him, and I wanted to play one touch, where would I want my teammate to be?"
- 🏆 Then get into that seam

Receive The Ball With The Proper Foot

- 🏆 The proper foot is the foot furthest from the defender pressuring you
- 🏆 Questions to ask yourself:
 - 🔧 Which foot will help me escape pressure?
 - 🔧 Which foot will help me advance the ball?
 - 🔧 Which foot will set up my next pass?
- 🏆 Be prepared to play with a first touch

Pass The Ball To The Proper Foot

- 🏆 Set teammates up so they can play quickly too
- 🏆 Attacks end because players pass to the wrong foot
- 🏆 Give a pass that you would like to receive
- 🏆 If the angle you're given isn't good enough, don't pass the ball to him
- 🏆 If you must pass it to him, play it to where he is supposed to be

Lift The Tight Angle Pass

- 🏆 When a pass on the ground won't do, elevate your pass about 12 inches off the ground

The Three-Step Rule

- 🏆 You are either the player with the ball (passer) or one of ten who can help the player with the ball (passing option)
- 🏆 When the ball leaves your foot, your role automatically switches and you become a passing option
- 🏆 Take at least three quick steps to move to a position where you can receive a pass back

Better Than Square

- 🏆 Choose an angle of support that makes the target player's life as easy as possible for a one-touch layoff
- 🏆 Play the way you face
- 🏆 Don't run past the ball
- 🏆 Read the side of the target player's body to which the entry pass will arrive and position yourself accordingly

Three Questions

Smart players are always asking

- What if?
- What's next?
- What's behind me?

Your most important body part is your eyes

Your eyes prepare you to make decisions that enable you to play quickly and keep possession

Keep your head on a swivel and evaluate your options and your opponent's options

Smart players make 90% of their decisions before the ball ever gets to them and they have a backup plan if their first option won't work

The Unabomber Pass

A pass that is delivered much later than it should have

When your teammate is available, pass him the ball

Smart players

- Make the ball do what's best for the team
- Understand that their passes should put teammates in the best possible position

Get Proactive

What's the difference between a smart forward and every other forward?

- When playing in advance of the ball, the average forward is reactive
 - He drifts around the field until he sees where the ball is kicked and then reacts and tries to chase it down
- When playing in advance of the ball, the smart forward is proactive
 - He runs to the place where he wants the ball delivered

The Unwinnable Race

Don't put yourself into footraces you can't win

How do you make that determination?

- Speed of the player making the run
- Amount of field that remains behind the defense

Two Runs

One run is for the defender's benefit; the other is for your benefit

If you want the ball deep, check back to the ball

If you want the ball at your feet, check away from the ball

Does He Need Me?

Running in advance of the ball is determined by the pressure on the ball carrier

If your teammate is under pressure, he will have to play a shorter pass

If your teammate is not under immediate pressure, he will have time to turn, face the defender, get balanced, and play a longer pass

The Splits

By your movement you force defenders to communicate and make decisions

By making the defense move, the greater the chance you can get them unbalanced and flat

Then a diagonal run can be effective to get beyond the defense

The player goes through one seam, the ball through the another

The Ball In Behind

There are two times to play a ball behind the defense

- When you can create a dangerous scoring opportunity
- When you have no other option

Give your teammate a chance to be first to the ball when playing it behind defenders

Make defenders turn and chase by making sure the ball gets behind them

The Shallow End

When going forward is no longer an option, step on the ball and keep the ball within the team

No Half Clearances

A defender should not try to pass his way out of every situation

- When dribbling out won't work, dump the ball into a position that will put your team in the least amount of danger
- If you are going to lose the ball, lose it as far away as possible from our goal as possible
- Defender's primary responsibility is to keep the other team from scoring

The World's Dumbest Foul

- An opposing player is facing his goal close to the sideline and end line
- Don't lose your patience by fouling; stay composed
- Let the defender try to figure out how to get out of that mess
- Don't make it easy for him

Pick A Surface

- Pick a part of your body to receive a ball that is going to make it easy on you
- Get the ball under control and prepare for a pass or shot

The Toe Poke

- If the only part of your foot that can possibly make contact with the ball in a close footrace is your toe, use it

The Wall To Nowhere

- If a free kick is awarded in a place on the field where a shot will **NOT** be taken, all you need is one player to make the wall

Throw-Ins

- Look to get the ball back in play quickly or at least get the ball raised over your head immediately; play before the other team is ready
- Don't throw the ball down the line between your teammate and the sideline
- Don't throw the ball so it bounces right in front of your teammate

Don't Turn Into Pressure

- Dribble to escape pressure and maintain possession
- Get your body in between the ball and the defender immediately
- If a defender takes away one side, you still have the other side

The Last Player In Possession Never Gets Tackled – Never

- If you find yourself in this position, under no circumstances should you dribble past the opponent's forward
- Leave yourself a three-yard cushion at least and play earlier than you might want to play

Clearing the First Wave

- Your pass/clearance has to get past the opponent's first line of pressure
- If you don't your team is almost always caught numbers down which means the opponent has a quick transition

Quick Restarts

- An opportunity for your team to take advantage of an opponent's mental lapse
- In an average game, there are upwards of 60 restarts
- A successful quick restart will begin an attack
- Smart players (and smart teams) are always looking for an edge to win a game

Judge Headers For Yourself

- Smart players don't allow the opponent to "talk" you out of where you think the ball should be; they know where the ball will land

Read His Eyes

- Most players telegraph their passes
- Almost all players look at the ball just as they are going to strike it
- And most players will take their last look where they intend to play it
- Smart players know where to look and know how to disguise their passes

The Pre-Fake

- Deception is a prerequisite in soccer to buy you time and space
- Smart players always lead the opponent in one direction and then go the opposite direction

Common Sense Defending

- Know your opponent is likely to favor their strong foot, figure out which foot that is
- Make him play to his weak foot

🏆 Take away an opponent's strong foot will neutralize many players

🏆 Make the player beat you with his weak foot

My Ball, Your Ball, Their Ball

🏆 The earlier you can be decisive, the better

🏆 Even if your decision may be the second best option, it's still better than the third option (your team no longer has possession)

🏆 Don't make a habit of passing that responsibility onto your teammates – be decisive

Turning The Corner

🏆 If you are in a wide position with the ball, angle your touch toward goal

🏆 Forces the defender to make a choice

👉 Surrender

- Eliminates that outside back since you are now inside of him and it forces the other defenders have to adjust because of the number imbalance

👉 Foul

Fix Your Radar

🏆 Run at the heart of the defense instead of dribbling straight down the line

🏆 You force defenders to communicate and make decisions

Drawing Penalties

🏆 You don't have to fall to be awarded a penalty kick

🏆 But the referee isn't going to call it unless you do fall

🏆 Force the referee to make a decision when confronted in the box

Keep The Ball Alive

🏆 Smart players are realistic

👉 They don't let the opponent off the hook with attempts at goal that are not dangerous

🏆 If you are going to shoot make sure you have a realistic chance of scoring

🏆 Otherwise back it out and maintain possession

🏆 Same thing with headers

👉 If you don't have a realistic chance of scoring, play it with your head to set up a teammate

Thrown-ins Aren't As Great As You Think They Are

🏆 They reduce your options and they limit the distance a player can legally throw the ball

🏆 Fifty percent of throw-ins result in loss of possession

🏆 If it doesn't give your team a distinct advantage, keep the ball in play and use your feet to move the ball instead of letting it roll out of bounds

Hunting Rebounds

🏆 Key = expect rebounds

🏆 Negate the opponent's advantage

👉 Recognize when a teammate is about to shoot

👉 Crash the goal

🏆 Smart forwards know to run as the shot is about to be taken

🏆 Rebounds win games

Bait And Switch

🏆 When a long flighted ball is played to the opponent's defenders, you judge whether or not you can get to that defender in time to win the ball outright or at least disrupt his clearance

🏆 Two keys to do this effectively

👉 Be a good actor – lull the defender into a sense of false confidence that he will have time

👉 Read the defender's body language – if he decides to settle the ball, sprint at him to panic him

Mismatches On Punts, Goal Kicks, And Corner Kicks

🏆 Pay attention to the man-to-man matchups

🏆 If you don't win the ball on punts, goal kicks, or corner kicks do something else

🏆 Smart goalkeepers pay attention to these things

Cut Off The Return Pass

- 🏆 When chasing a pass from one opponent to another chase along the ball's path to cut off the return pass
 - 👤 Pressure the ball
 - 👤 Take away at least one passing option

Scoring Goals

- 🏆 Shooting requires technique, but technique alone is not the answer
- 🏆 Five tips to help convert your chances
 1. *Expect The Ball* – expect the ball to find you and position your body to shoot with your first touch
 2. *Make the Goalie Make A Save* – that may mean to sacrifice a little power for accuracy
 3. *Don't Shoot Hand High* – Goalkeepers love it when you shoot hand high because that is where their hands are
 4. *Shoot Against The Goalkeeper's Momentum* – if the goalkeeper is moving right shoot left
 5. *Create An Own Goal* – if you are close to goal but an impossible angle and no other options, hit the ball low and hard across the face of the goal