

Training session of Ajax U 10 team

16 players plus 2 keepers and 4 coaches

The aim of the training was receiving under pressure and taking a player on

The playing area was 16 x 10 m – there were 4 areas within a half field – each group did a particular activity and then they moved to the next area and a new variation. Each activity lasted 10-12 minutes.

There were 4 groups of 4 players, each group with a coach

The pressure was varied: front, back, right side, left side

The objective was to receive under pressure, (pressure from front, back, right and left), take on in a 1v1 duel and dribble the ball over the opposite end line -- players were encouraged to try different moves to imbalance the defender – players were attacking both on the right and the left side – it is very important in the Ajax philosophy to develop both sides of the body equally well.

The first pass was ALWAYS hit with high ball speed – the receiving touch was clean and the player was moving as he received the ball. The pace was very quick with many repetitions. The duels were intense.

The activities were:

1. Play starts with a pass to the receiving player at the midway line - passer immediately follows pass (frontal pressure) and challenges receiving player – receiving player must collect the ball and take on the on-coming defender and get to the endline. Players 1 and 2 switched roles as did players 3 and 4.
2. Play starts the same as drill # 1 – but now the defender starts behind the receiving player (back pressure) – receiving player must collect the ball and turn and take-on the defender and get to the opposite endline. Rotation: 1-2, 2-4, 3-1, 4-3
3. First pass goes to the deep end of the area with a defender starting at the midway line – the defender challenges the receiver (front pressure from deep pass) as the ball approaches – receiver must beat the first defender and then take-on the passer as the second defender and then get to the endline. Rotation: 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-1
4. The defender was positioned on the right and on the left side (alternately) near the midway line and attacked on the angle (side pressure) – in addition the defender was lined up next to the receiving player on the back line and chased the from behind (back pressure). The defensive position (right, left or chase) in this activity changed as the coach dictated. Rotation: 2-1, 1-2, 3-4, 4-3

To finish off the session, they played 4v4 in 2 groups, with different aims. One group played with full goals and 2 keepers and the other played to mini goals, without keepers. The area was 40 x 25m. The group with the keepers were shooting early in the play and the shots were well placed and high paced. They have a definite attacking mentality and they shoot to score, and they are not happy when

they miss. This group of U 10 players were already showing signs of Ajax development as they were very comfortable on the ball, confident in the 1v1 duels, and were looking to advance the ball quickly into scoring positions. As soon as the chance to score was there, they unloaded!!

I got the impression that defense is only about getting the ball back quickly in order to have a chance to score. Their defensive mentality seemed to be very attacking minded – they did not want to get beat, but they also wanted to win the ball back as soon as possible, and then try to score. The creativity and the willingness to take people on was evident throughout the session. The players were encouraged to battle hard on both sides of the ball and the intensity was very high throughout the entire training session.

This session focused primarily on the individual player skills of receiving and taking on. Playing under pressure was constant and the players freely tried many moves to beat their man. The pressure was from all directions and the players played both from the right and from the left. There was no rest interval as the rotation was constant and as soon as one play ended, the next one began. The young players had great enthusiasm and seemed to be really enjoying themselves.