

Skill or Technique

Many believe that they are one in the same, but they are not. A player needs to have technique in order to have skill, but conversely having skill before mastering technique is impossible. The same can be said about skill. A player may be very gifted in the technical areas of dribbling, passing, receiving and shooting, but this does not always translate to a player processing skill. Why is this?

It is so because technical proficiency can be perfected in non-game related activities such as free space dribbling, passing between partners and shooting on goal all absent of defensive pressure and game conditions. Think about how many times you have seen players dribble and juggle a ball on a sideline with rousing applause only to be disappointed when he/she must enter the field of play and perform simple tasks technically that the **GAME** demands. When one figures the game into the equation players must adapt technically and now also begin to make decisions that coincide with the technique. When a player can do this regularly one could say they have **SKILL**. There are obvious differences between players' levels of skill and much of this depends on where that player applies this skill and what position they most often play. For example we can say that both Cristiano Ronaldo and John Terry have skill but it is apples and oranges. Creativity and imagination are the parts of skill that can not be taught, and that's what can separate the best players even though they both may possess' skill.

TRAINING SESSION

D) Three separate activities that showcase the players level of Tech. proficiency

** Free spacing dribbling with various commands of change of speed, direction, individual moves etc... (looking for creative dribbling, body and ball control, fluid) *no pressure- 1 player per ball*

** passing and receiving between partners on the move with various demands: low balls, air balls, straight pass, bent pass Receiving: low balls, air balls, bouncing, (looking for weight of pass, type of pass, accuracy—control of pass, surface used, body position/balance etc..) *no pressure- 5/6/7 groups of 2 all over field*

** Various shooting exercises: moving ball off dribble, layoff, various angles, bouncing, top of box, inside box etc.. (looking for: accuracy, power, surface used, body control, shooting fundamentals non-kicking foot, knee, follow through, head steady, etc.) *no pressure.*

EACH ACTIVITY LASTING 10-12 MINUTES. Idea is to get a feel by observation, of who can and cannot perform basic techniques the game demands without pressure. (total 30-35 mins)

II) Two groups of 6 or 7 where each group plays 4 v 2 or 5 v 2 in a limited area, but unmarked. Ask the players to gauge the area so it's not too big and not too small. The keep away is free flowing with demands of 1, 2 or 3 or more touches mandatory. Looking for: (procession rate, type of pass given, accuracy, 1st touch, preparation of next touch, cleverness/creativity when 3 or more mandatory touches) *pressure of 2 defenders*

Note: game is played with 1 ball, when the ball is knocked away or forced outside of area the entire group must follow the ball and reorganize themselves and begin again 4 v 2 / 5 v 2 Activity is 12-15mins. Coaches' observation of who can and cannot perform under minimal pressure

III) Playing the game 5 v 5 or 6 v 6 + GK'S

** May need to play with neutral to drive more of the SKILL with team in procession. (numerical advantage)

** play with some restrictions 3 touch max in defensive end, unlimited offensive end

** maybe a free zone wide on each flank where players from the team in procession can run into uncontested in order to get some flank service for finishing opportunities

Overall what we are trying to observe is who can and cannot perform technically under any pressure, limited pressure, game conditions. Coaches should make mental notes as to how the technique is used in order for it to become skill. The best performing players under no pressure don't always pan out to be the best performing under game conditions.

As fans of the game think back to the last time you watched a game on TV and heard the announcer say, “ **oh what unbelievable dribbling, beating two players and then scoring, what great technique!!!**” I can't remember hearing it that way. It's more like “**What unbelievable skill!!**”