

## Objectives:

1. DEFENSIVE HEADING (u13 and older) session may be broken down over several sessions to protect players from too many headers in one sessions)

- Session 1: In the Defensive 1/3  
Defensive set plays: Corner kicks.
- Session 2: In the Middle 1/3
- Session 3: In the Attacking 1/3

## Session 1

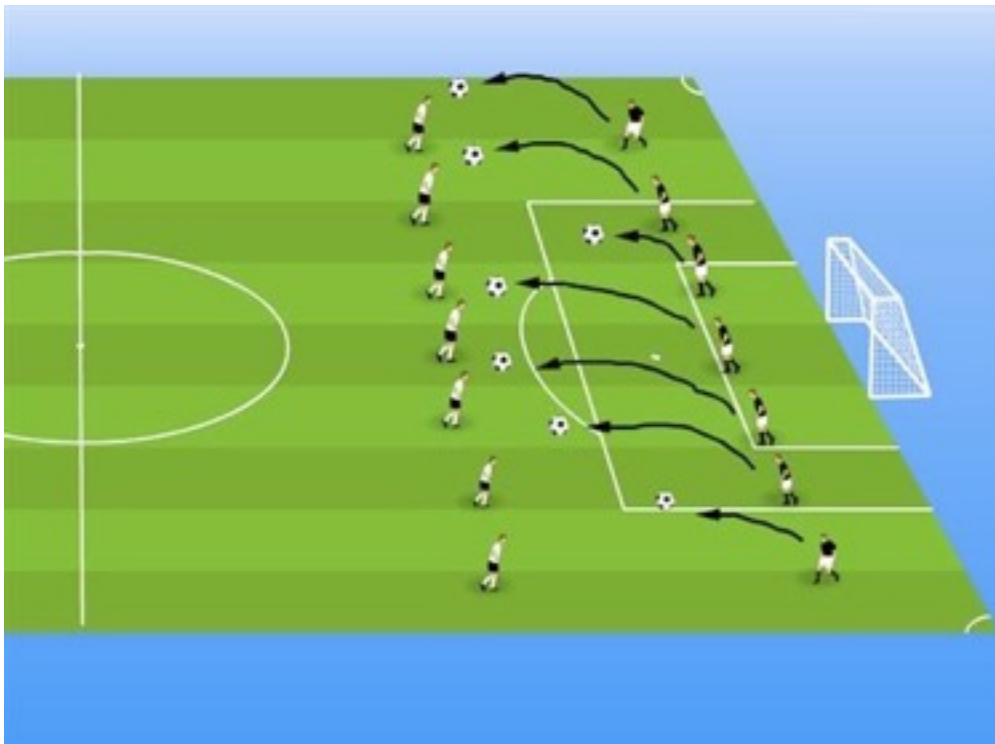
Focus: Defending Corner Kicks.

Players: 16 field players and 2 Goalkeepers.

Field: ½ field

## Warm up

A basic heading exercise to prepare players to win air balls. Group 1 passes the high ball to Group 2 which will head the ball back to Group 1. 1 player serves it to another player directly across. Switch the group's roles.



## Coaching Points

- Defensive Headers. Get under the ball and go for distance.
- Jump and meet the ball at the highest point.
- Arms open for balance and protection.
- The actual motion comes from bending the upper body backwards and then forward generating power for the header.

### **Progression 1**

Next a player from Group 1 competes for the ball in the air against a player from Group 2. Full pressure. One set of players (Group 1 and 2) at a time.

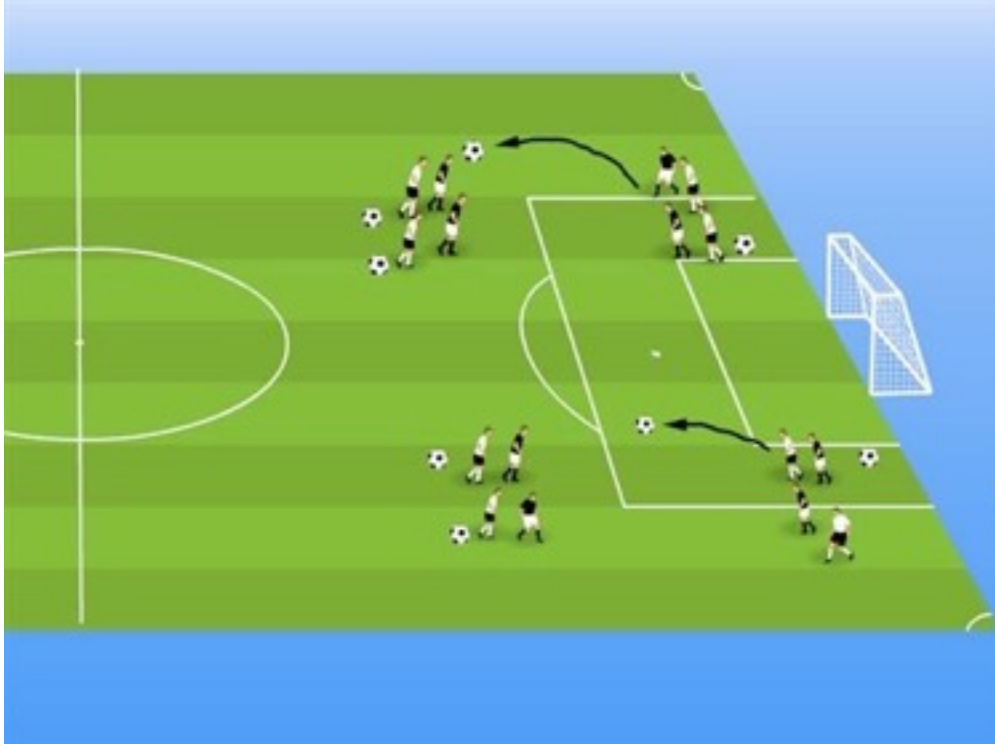


### **Coaching Points**

- Emphasize safety first, by explaining to the player of the importance of executing the heading technique in a very clean manner. Try going for the ball and not for the opponent, this will avoid unnecessary fouls.
- Even if a player will not win the ball, he should jump and try to compete for the ball anyways in a tentative of disrupting the opponent's header. Do not give out free headers; encourage your players to remain competitive.

### **Progression 2**

2v2 Headers. Same as above but 2v2's. One set of players at a time (Group 1 and 2).



### Coaching Points

- 2v2 means one competing directly for the ball and, the second player ready for the second ball/covering the headers back.
- A player that sees his chances of winning the first ball very difficult, should then considering to pull out from the challenge and wait for possible second balls. There are many situations where the goes up in the air trying to win the first ball and ends up heading the ball back to the opponent. Sometimes is better to wait for the ball if you are the second player.

### Progression 3

Finish the heading sequence with a 4v4, same style as prior progressions.



#### **Coaching Points**

- Try double-teaming more often.
- However do not neglect marking, picking up your opponent is a priority until a player sees a real chance to release him and win the ball.

#### **Progression 4**

Already warmed up for headers and win air balls, then go ahead and practice defensive corner kicks without opponents. 4 players + goalkeeper defending corner kicks from both sides. Rotate the groups.



### **Coaching Points**

- Judge the flight of the ball properly: direction and speed. Get to the end of it.
- Cover the player on the ball and be prepared for misjudges from the 1st defender, he may fail and the others should be alert to cover his mistake.
- Leave room for the goalkeeper's actions. Make sure to cover his back by retrieving to the goal line every time he comes out of his line.
- A near post header should send the ball back from where the ball came from.
- A ball that has already crossed most of the front of the goal should be cleared with the flow of the ball flight. Do not clear the ball back to the front of the goal once again.

### **Progression 5**

Add pressure. 4 defenders + goalkeeper versus 2 forwards.  
Rotate the groups.



### **Coaching Points**

- Attention to the ball and to opponents (marking). This job can be done by checking over the shoulder and keeping an eye on the ball OR by simply touching the opponent with the arms (no fouling, simply feeling where the opponent is) and watching the ball.
- Open stance. A player should have his hips open and face up field, especially central players and back post ones. Attention to the weak side of the field.

### **Progression 6**

Finalize the session with a Corner Kick scrimmage. 8v8 regular game; however establish that all restarts must be done by a team taking 2 corner kicks in roll. Then the game goes on.



### **Coaching Points**

- Organize the defenders in zone marking, but very tight individually marking within their own zones.
- Have a player in each goal post.
- Have a group of 3 players on top of the 6-yard.
- Have a player on the vicinity of the near post (soft spot).
- Have 2 players around the penalty kick mark area.
- Step up after the clearance.
- The two players on the post do not leave the goal until the ball leaves the 18-yard box.

### **Cool Down**

- A round of informal Penalty kicks and free kicks attempts. Not all players.