

## Training for Scoring From a Distance

**Mike Berticelli, Former Director of Coaching NSCAA, Head Coach Notre Dame Men**

This session was done with older boys (about U-19's) but would work for any age over 12.

US players are not good technically or mentally for shooting from a distance.

“Shooting drills make you good at shooting drills.” He tries to do as much as possible in a game like situation. Occasional shooting drills for pure technical work.

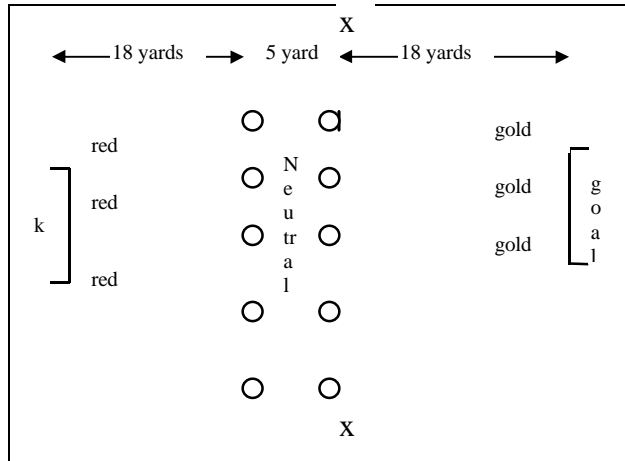
Typical Berticelli Crowd warm-up (minus Mike's great mannerisms and expressions): A football coach wearing a soccer coaches shirt to a drive into the country to relieve stress. As he drove he was observing the local sights. He happened upon a beautiful pastoral setting, a shepherd and his flock grazing in a pasture. The coach pulled the car over and sat there admiring the sheep. He decided he would like to have one of the sheep. He got out of the car, climbed a fence and approached the shepherd. Striking up a conversation with the shepherd he told him how he liked the sheep and wanted one of his own. The coach said “I can guess how many you have. If I do will you allow me to pick a sheep and if I don't then I'll give you a \$1000. The shepherd agrees to the proposition. The coach then proceeds to guess exactly how many sheep there were and picks out a sheep to take with him as his winnings. The shepherd says he has a counter proposal: “If I can guess what you really coach, can I have my dog back?”

### Warm-up

Divided players into two groups (7 per group: Keeper + 6 field players). Numbered each player 1, 2, 3,4,5,6,7.

1. passed sequentially (i.e. 1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, ...7 to 1)
  - Big point was that they were to call for the ball. No restrictions on type of pass. He them to be always moving. “Call a little earlier - before ball is on his foot.”
2. add a second ball and continue to pass each ball in sequence
3. add restriction that one pass is short, next pass is long. Continue in number sequence, short, long, short, long. With odd number on team players will pass short one round, long the next. He did this with 1 ball and with 2 balls.
4. add a second group playing in the same space as first group.
  - forces good vision, good communication so as to not hit player from other group.

Continue warm up with about 30 x 40 yard grid. Players will be taking long distance shots initially to keeper to get themselves and keeper warmed up.



Unfortunately my notes here don't make as much sense as they did Saturday (could have been the night at R&B bar!) so some of this part of the warm-up may be off a little.

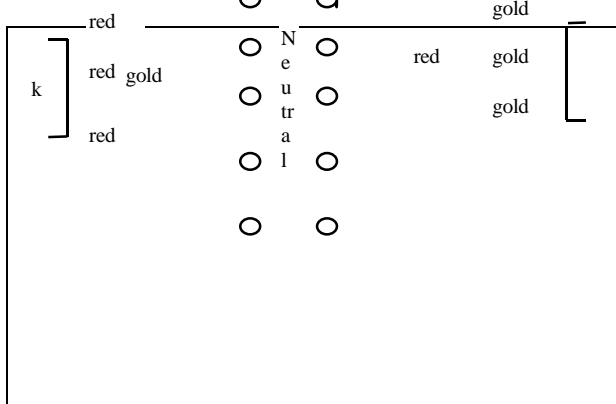
1. Keeper in each goal. His three defenders run to outlet positions (one to each side of box and one to middle of neutral zone.) Keeper supplies outlet pass to one of his teammates who make a second pass to a teammate who then just chips ball to the opposing keeper. From that position, one defender runs to each outlet point, third defender runs

around goal back starting position. While one team is making these conditioning runs back to position, the keeper who was just shot on provides an outlet pass to his defenders and they shoot. Just continue the exercise for several minutes alternating ends.

2. Simply add a third pass before the shot, which is a good direct ball to the keeper (still just warming up.)

### Shooting Exercises

Same setup. Moved right from warm-up to this. He added one red and one gold front runners in the ends opposite their defenders ends. Keeper distributes to one of his team. Front runner acts as defense (i.e. 3v1). No defense was allowed in the neutral zone. 3 try to get open shot from their own end or the neutral zone against the other keeper. Front runner can shoot if he can steal the ball. Front runner on team with ball can only finish a rebound, and will act as defender when opposition 3 has the ball. At this point he just kept them playing back and forth and other kids sat on side. He encouraged positive responses to a good goal.



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\*\*\*He stopped play midway and made a technical point that weight of the body needed to go through the ball and this would make you end up landing on the shooting foot. This is awkward in the beginning but if you keep momentum going it will happen naturally.\*\*\*

Next he added an incentive. Team that can score stays on. A new team comes in for the team of 4 that was on defense.

\*\*\*Convert force of upright body to down and forward – hop in to support foot .

\*\*\*Technical point at this time. Rotation of the ball is very important

- Backward rotation. Easy to save, (decelerating, slows further if hits ground, tends to float.
- No rotation. Easy to see, but hard to save due to unpredictability of motion.
- forward rotation. Dangerous. If hits ground picks up speed and skips forward. In air tends to dip.

\*\*where you hit the ball is ultimately what determines the rotation. Strike ball slightly above center for long shots power and force must go through the ball. Remember that you can't go under line if you hit over center, but if you hit under center it can go over the entire goal! \*\*

### Further progressions

- Can pass ball to front runner. This is a free pass, but frontrunner must lay pass back to one of three defenders for a shot.
- add 2<sup>nd</sup> front runner. 1<sup>st</sup> pass to front runner is still free. Can then lay back pass to defenders or pass to other front runner. (all passes after free pass are full defense except in neutral zone). Makes it 3v2 in the back on each side.

\*\*\* We need to encourage players to shoot from distance. Work on timing runs onto the laid back ball - Backs don't go in the neutral zone until ball is laid back from front runner.\*\*\*

\*\*\*Many other coaching points came up in this activity, but he stressed continuing to focus only on the topic at hand. You can use this drill for lots of things but you need to only use one focus in a given practice. Then he said to players "stay focused on where we strike ball so we keep it down low."\*\*\*

- add one more defender (now 4v2 at each end) Move goals back for more space.
- Any or all defenders can move into neutral zone or even forward zone (but still no defense in neutral zone).
- Add Not a free ball to target player unless he receives it in neutral zone.

*having moved goals back only 3 feet the shooting died off significantly so he moved the goals back to original position. Move goals in or out to improve success.*

- Pretty much no restrictions but any ball laid back into neutral zone can not be defended.

*Again could make many points about defenders organizing better, etc. but **focused** on long range shots. When encouraging them to shot when they have an opportunity said "everything is a shot out here!"*

- Pull cones. 6v6 with no restrictions except on balls laid back. Then no defense until after 1<sup>st</sup> touch.

*Frequent coaching point at this time. "Don't hesitate!!"*

- Move goals back for more space and play 8v8. Any pass laid back is still free. *Stopped to encourage shot when opportunity was missed. 1<sup>st</sup> option is a **shot** if in shooting range (which will vary from player to player.) Make a decision, don't just ignore the option! If you miss in soccer you're a hero – in bball if you miss by 2 inches "air ball" – take your shot don't hesitate.* They were working for pass and dribble before shot, he asked them to reverse that – look to take shot first and if not on rule it out, don't consider other options first. Move goals close enough that almost anything is a shot.

## **Summary**

He wasn't afraid to adjust to make a drill work – like moving goals in or out, this format can be used to work on several other topics, yet stick with your session, build up in numbers and complexity and becomes more realistic.

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