

MYSA THROW-INS: May 2010

Question: How and when do you teach rules (e.g. legal throw-ins or offsides) to players who are learning the game without boring them with lectures or repetitive drills?

Greg Smith

I'm often surprised at how much kids already know about the rules. Asking questions like "Who can tell me one rule about throw-ins?" generates a lot of enthusiasm as the kids show what they know, rather than me just telling them.

Skip Newton

One method of teaching players the laws of the game is to incorporate those lessons into the "game" portion of your training sessions. Whether it's 4 v 4, 6 v 6, or a full-field scrimmage, let the play present you with the opportunity to teach the rules like offsides, throw-ins, etc. For example, when the ball goes out of play, you'll have the time to ask your players what the rules are for a legal throw-in. Let them provide you with the answers and then have play resume with one of the players demonstrating the proper throw-in technique. Then you can re-enforce this on subsequent throw-in opportunities.

Peter Rivard

Save some extra time at the end of practice and play a little bit longer repeating a certain part of the game when the ball goes out of play. For example maybe it is the day to work on kick-offs. While you're playing each time the ball goes over the end line it is a kick-off not just when a goal is scored. Or if you feel like you need to really work on it when the ball goes out of bounds you begin with a kick-off. Another opportunity to teach certain aspects of the game would be to incorporate it in to your training session. For example instead of starting a 1v1 or 2v2 game with a pass on the ground have it begin with a throw-in.

Steve

All rules should be "taught" within the context of games or activities. Throw-ins can be part of a trapping drill - the emphasis is not on the throw-in but you can still have the kids practice the right form. If you end with a scrimmage modify the activity; for instance scores count triple if from a throw-in or where a player can pick up the ball to do a throw-in if they can toe-touch the ball 5 times. The same is true for offsides. Have a game where scores only count if all of a team is on one side of the field. Build up ball and team awareness with lots of different activities. Then play a small sided game with offsides but instead of explaining the rules just state the offside rule and start the game. As you blow the whistle to enforce the offside rule the kids will learn by example - and if they have a question then you can answer their question. This is just-in-time coaching and is highly effective. Let the game be the teacher. It is your job to construct games that teach.

Terry Gersemehl

First, I don't believe in boring lectures and these shouldn't be the focus of your coaching. Throw-ins are by nature a skill that does require repetition to learn correctly. The mechanics are fairly simple and with repetitive guidance the team members can learn how to do it without being called by the ref for an infraction. The bigger question is keeping possession of the ball on the restart. So often I see players throwing the ball into a herd of defenders who are marking the player(s) the thrower is trying to get the ball to. Left open without any pressure from defenders are players who are never thrown the ball. This is a mistake that coaches often make from my perspective. The objective of the throw-in is to keep possession or the penalty that was given to the team for kicking the ball over the touch-line was of no effect. Often they benefit from kicking it "out-of-bounds" rather than being penalized.

Andy Coutts

Kids will figure out rules if coaches regularly give them a chance to play under those conditions in training. They'll learn from watching each other and from the natural feedback the game (and teammates or officials) provide. It's tempting early in the season to address all the rules because an illegal throw-in makes us as coaches look bad, but it's not worth creating a drill to fix. Use activities where they're tossing the ball to others to practice throw-ins while working on another skill like receiving or shooting. Include offsides in small-sided activities (2v1 to goal) first where the picture is clearer and they'll learn through the game. And generally frame the learning of rules by showing them what they CAN do within the rules, not merely what they CAN'T do.