

Basic Types of Passing

Now that we have introduced the basic pass and trap concepts, there are several basic types of passing that we would like to acquaint you with along with basic drills to teach them. The basic pass types are:

1. Square
2. Diagonal
3. Through
4. Wall Pass (Give and Go)

A key ingredient of a good passing game is player movement. There are two types of positive movement. The first type is *towards the ball*. This is also called "**showing**" for the ball. The second type of movement is *away from the ball*. This type of movement stretches out the defense or causes the defense to have to adjust.

Showing for the ball is characterized by a quick burst of movement towards the ball at the time. This type of run demands the ball to be played to the feet of the player showing.

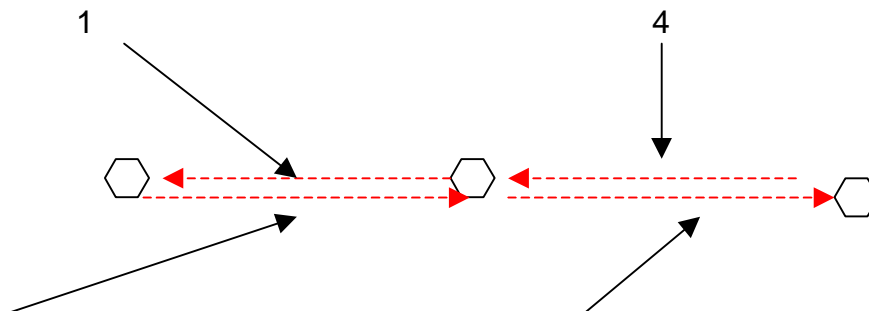
Runs away from the ball are often into undefended space. These runs usually provide a long pass opportunity. Passes should be targeted into space for the player to run onto.

Players must be trained to constantly adjust their position based on the ball position and location of the other players. When one player moves, this generally creates space for another player to move into or exploit.

The Square Pass

A pass is defined as "square" when the passing and receiving players are basically in line with each other shoulder-to-shoulder.

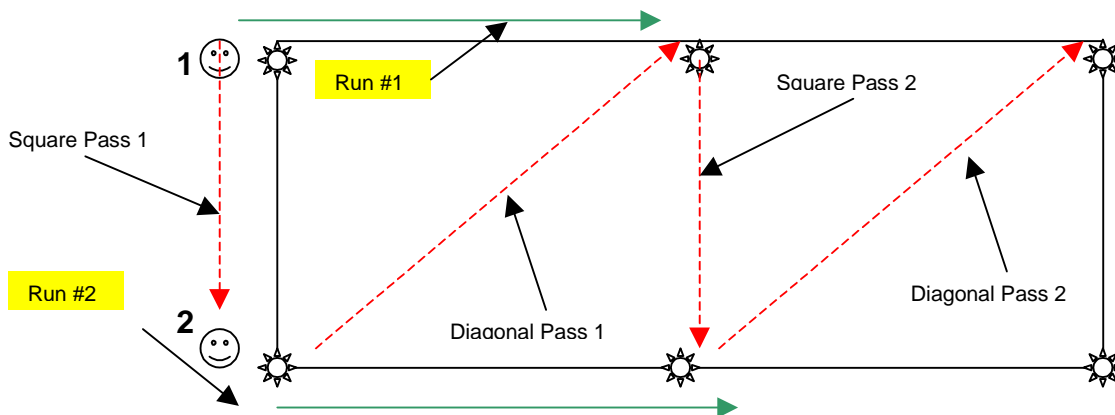
The three players below are square to each other. The pass sequence is 1-2-3-4, pass and return.



Now of course it would be extremely boring, and not of much tactical use if this is all that the players did, so we combine the square pass with either a diagonal or a through pass to create an opportunity.

The Diagonal Pass

As the name suggests, this pass is made on a diagonal. The easiest way to teach it is to make a grid of cones as shown below.



Player #1 makes a square pass to his/her partner (**Player # 2**). He/she then runs to the next cone in line and receives back from his/her partner a **diagonal** pass. The player making the diagonal pass immediately runs to receive back a second square pass.

This type of pass is to space and causes the defenders to adjust their position

The sequence is repeated for as many repetitions that you have room on the field for. At the end of the sequence the players switch positions and the player originally making the square passes now receives them and plays the ball back diagonally to his/her partner.

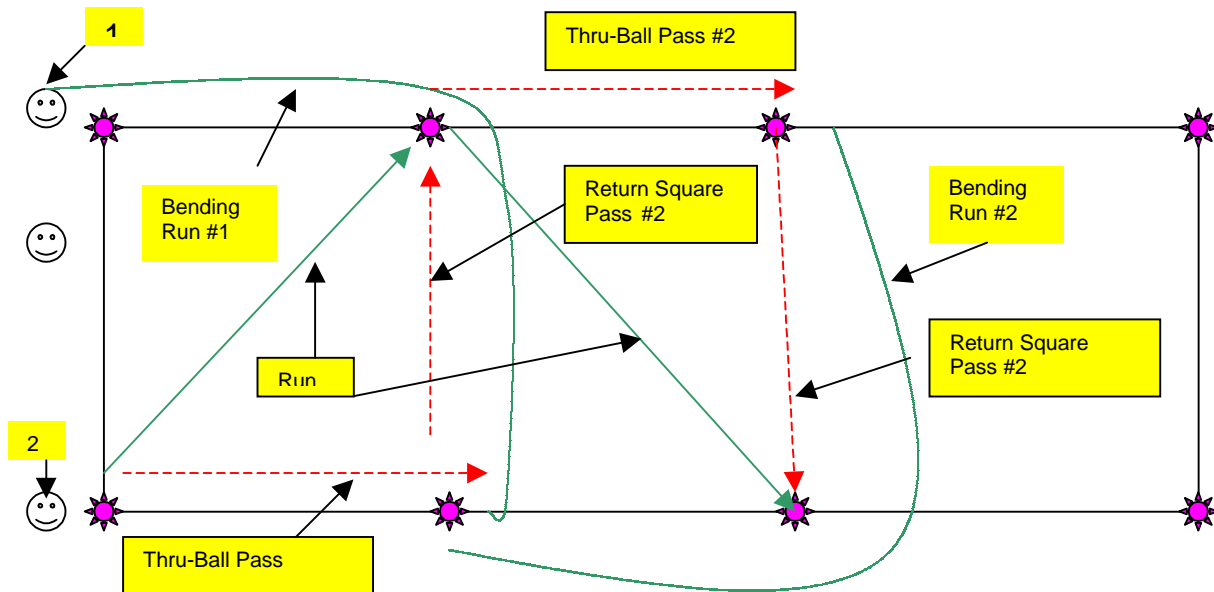
Coaching Points

1. It is important that both players in the drill practice both types of passing
2. Use both the left and right foot to pass
3. Make sure that the player receives the pass with the correct foot so that they open to the field and can play the ball back to their partner without excessive adjustments
4. Trap the ball outside of their footprints

5. Pass and then request a return pass. In this case the request is made by executing a run-to-“space”. Make sure that the passer sees and recognizes the request.
6. Proper weight on the pass, so that it reaches the receiver, but doesn't come at such a high speed that it can't be handled, is important.
7. Stress timing the pass so that the ball and receiver reach the cone at approximately the same time.
8. Emphasize that this is not a race and that just receiving the ball and “bombing” it down field is not the goal of the exercise

The Thru-Ball Pass

In the simplest form of the thru-ball pass the receiver will make a *bending run*, initially around a static defender, and then receive the ball.



Player #2 has a ball. **Player #1** makes eye contact with **Player #2** and then starts out on a bending run around the cone directly in front of him/her. The run ends at the cone directly in front of **Player #2**. **Player #2** passes the ball to player one at this cone (leading him into the cone).

Again this pass is to space. Space is exploited by the person making the run and causes the defense to adjust.

Player 2 then makes a diagonal, cross-field run and receives a square pass back from **Player #1**.

Player #1 then repeats his bending run in the opposite direction and receives another thru ball from **Player #2**. **Player #2** repeats his diagonal, cross-field run and receives back a square pass.

This sequence is repeated for as many times as the coach wants and then is reversed so each player gets to make the bending run and the thru-ball pass.

Coaching Points

1. Eye –Contact before the pass – *Request the Ball*
2. Timing – Have player and ball arrive at the cone at approximately the same time
3. Receiver must open up to the field of play. This is a difficult concept at times, particularly in this drill. The receiver naturally has their back to the field of play unless they turn their hips as they receive the ball and face back in towards the field.
4. Receiver of the square pass must also open up to the field

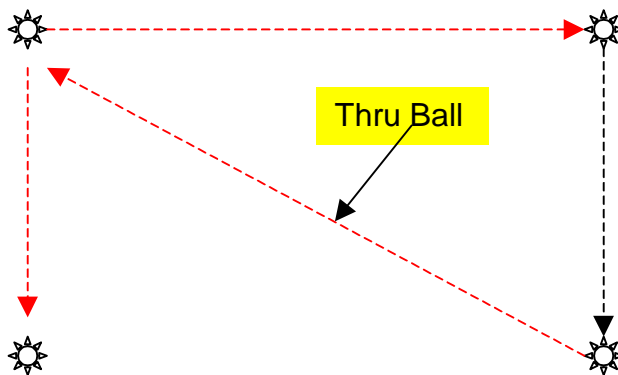
Progressions

1. Add a static defender in each of the passing zones so that there is a visual cue as to where the pass has to go to clear this person
2. Add a second static defender around which the bending runner has to maneuver
3. Have the defenders become semi-active, placing pressure on the passer and receiver but NOT being allowed to intercept the ball
4. Move the game to a free-flow style (remove the cones and boundaries). Play with numbers up on offense and have the players make bending runs throughout the field and receive the ball. Start this with semi-active defenders and progress to $\frac{3}{4}$ active and full pressure as #3 above.
5. Make sure in the free-flow drill that the players are bending their runs behind defenders.
6. Can make this drill a run towards the ball by having the receiver “show” at the cone at which he is receiving the pass. The play still makes the bending run but at the end checks back towards the passer and receives the ball.

In this case, instead of making a square pass back to the original passer, the player receiving the ball should two-touch it to the player making the diagonal run

Thru-Ball Pass in the Triangle

We now want to introduce the thru ball pass and relate it to the basic shape the team takes on the field, that is, the triangle. In order to perform this exercise we set up a rectangular grid of cones, approximately 10 yards by 15 yards. Place a player at each cone. What you effectively have here are two triangles.



The ball is passed from player to player in any order. Every third (or every fifth, you decide) pass is a thru ball. The thru ball is to the player diagonally across from the passer. Initially, players should yell thru ball as they let the pass go so that the concept becomes ingrained.

Coaching Points

1. Two touch passes to start. Emphasize all of the proper receiving and passing techniques discussed.
2. Players should be thinking ahead, knowing that if the ball is coming to them where they want to go next with the ball.
3. Make sure that they open up to the field of play.
4. Since there is no pressure, stress technical excellence.

Progressions

This is a good drill for working progressions from easy to difficult while teaching the concept of a thru-ball pass.

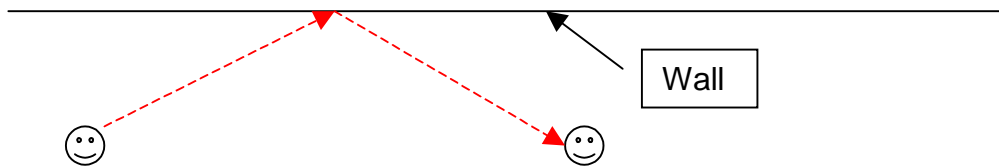
1. Progression 1 is to have two players in different color pennies on the field, inside the grid. These players are entirely passive. They are there to give the ball handlers visual cues as to where pressure is coming from.
2. Have the ball handlers decide now when they should split the defenders with the thru pass
3. Let the defenders become semi-active, i.e. be allowed to intercept a ball but not steal it, or pressure the players, once the pass is past them.
4. Have the defenders become fully active allowing them to pressure all over the field.
5. Switch players often.
6. **Praise good decision making**

The Wall Pass

One of the most effective passing techniques/tactics for soccer is the give-and-go pass. The give-and-go (or wall pass) is basic to the games of basketball, hockey as well as soccer. In simple terms, the player with the ball passes to their teammate, who, at the beginning, is stationary. The receiving player is, in essence, the wall.

And what happens when a ball hits a wall? It rebounds. If it hits it at an angle it rebounds at the same angle. And that is all we are trying to do here.

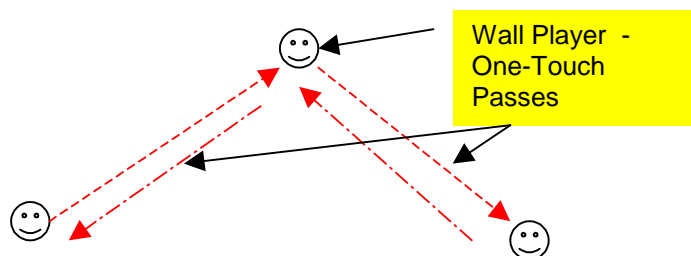
Perhaps the easiest way to introduce the wall pass is to use a wall. If you have a gym you can spread players out along the walls and just have them pass to each other as shown below.



If you are outside start the fundamental skill by putting three people together in a triangle. The player at the apex of the triangle is now the wall.

In order to teach this skill correctly, you want the center player to truly act like a wall. In order to do this you want this player to one-touch the ball on to the next player. With the younger ages the wall player should start out as a coach or a parent so that the drill builds success.

One of the good coaching points about wall passes at the younger ages is that when the pass is given it always moves on and /or comes back. Skilled players sometimes tend to hold the ball longer than is prudent simply because they think that when they give it up, it will never come back to them.



Coaching Points

1. Switch the center player after every ten passes.
2. Receiving players can use two touches. Since they are under no pressure, stress technical excellence. They should play the ball to the wall player so that he/she doesn't have to move for the ball.
3. The wall player has the "pressure" of having to one touch the pass on to the next player. Stress that he/she should play the ball with the foot that is open to the field. For example, a pass coming from their left, and moving on to their right, should be played with the right foot.

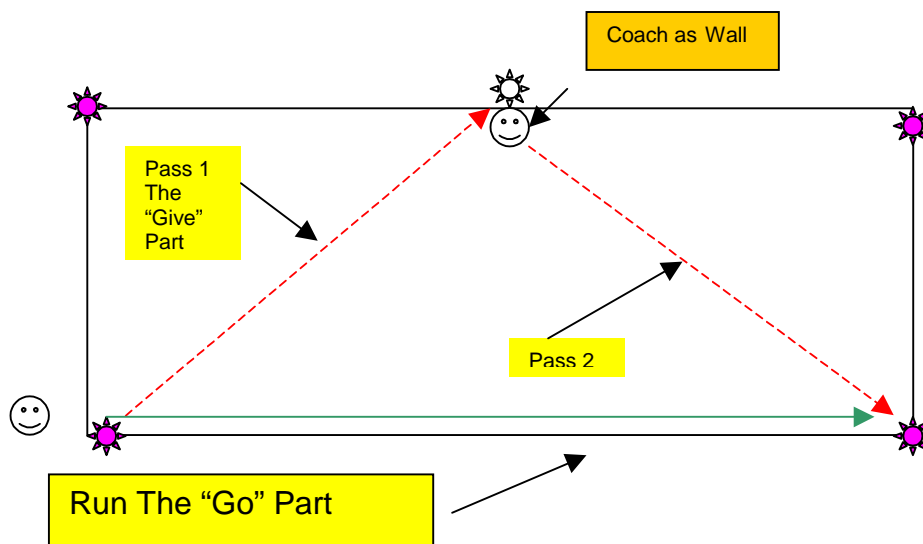
Failure to do so causes the ball to be chopped across the body, either as a pass, or as a "prelude" touch so that the right foot can send the ball onward.

The first instances causes the ball to be struck as the foot is moving usually leading to a more inaccurate pass. The second "wastes" time since you are now two-touching the ball.

4. With regard to #2 above, every pass will not be perfect. The wall player must be prepared to move laterally to open themselves up to the field of play. They do this by 1), being on their toes with their knees flexed, ready to move and 2), swiveling their hips so that they get around the ball and take it on the correct foot.

Wall Pass with Movement (The Give-and-Go)

The next progression of the wall pass is to add player movement. I would suggest for the younger levels that you start this drill with a coach acting as the wall to build success. Timing the run of the player is critical and takes a lot of demonstration and a lot of practice. The basic setup is shown below:



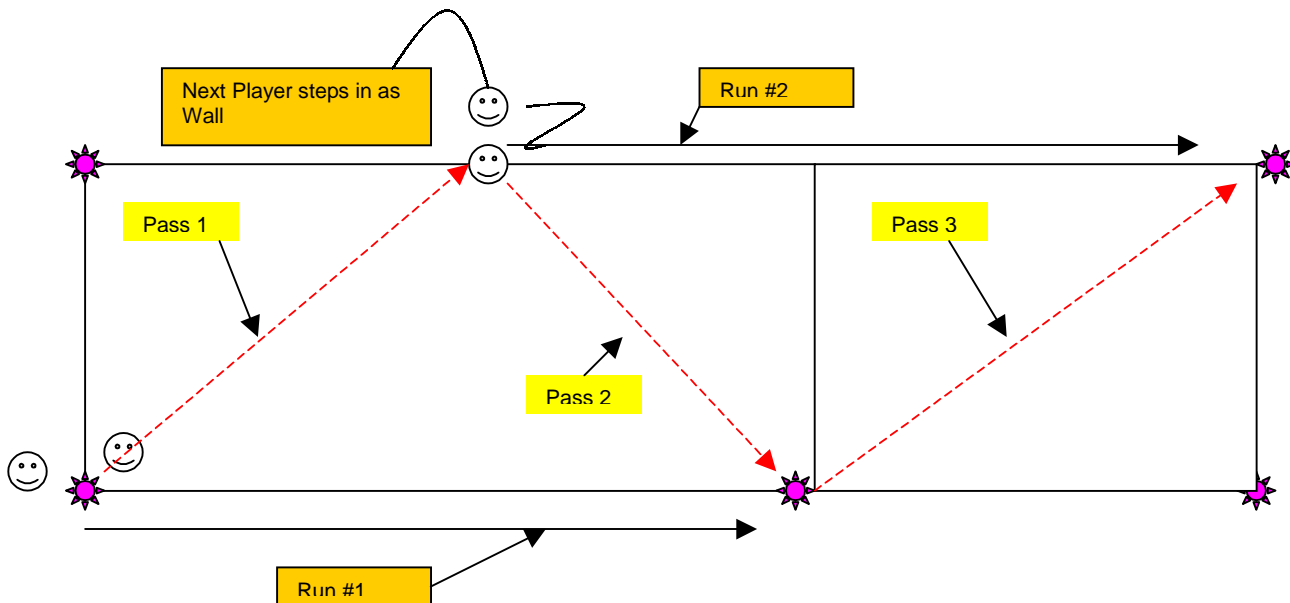
Player passes to the coach and **immediately** makes his run to the second cone on his side. The coach times the run so that the ball and the player arrive at the same time. If there are two coaches repeat the process. Otherwise have the players pull a move after they receive the ball and rejoin the line at the end.

Coaching Points

1. Stress that the run is immediate. Do not watch the pass since once it has left your foot, there is nothing your eyes can do about affecting the flight of the ball
2. Stress that the ball must be played with the proper weight so that it gets there, but doesn't get there with so much pace that it cannot be handled
3. Stress that the ball should be played to the foot that is open to the field. In the illustration above this would be the coach's left foot. In that way the coach does not have to chop the ball across his body.
4. Stress receiving the ball on the foot open to the field. In the illustration above that would be the receiving player's right foot.
5. Switch sides often so that both feet are used by the wall player and by the receiving player

Progressions

1. Once the timing aspect of the drill is understood and the players have achieved some measure of technical proficiency receiving the ball "on the fly", it is time to make a player the wall.
2. Start the drill in the same manner and work both feet.
3. Switch the wall player often
4. Add movement of the wall player as shown below.



After wall player makes his pass he makes a run to get the wall pass back from whom he passed it to. A second player steps in as the wall. This minimizes standing around.

5. Add a passive defender so that the players can see where the pass has to go and how the run affects the defender.. Generally the pass goes past the defender's front and the run is made behind his back
6. Allow the defenders to attempt to intercept the pass. However since the defender "knows" the drill you now have to add movement on the player making the pass so that the defender has to concentrate not only on the pass but on the fact that the ball handler might dribble past them.