

As a coach, you have a major influence on your athletes. Not only will you affect the development of their skills and long-term enjoyment of the sport, you will also play a role in their development as individuals. It is important that you have effective resources to help you.

The Coaching Association of Canada, in partnership with the national sport organizations, compiled the following coaching tips.

Third's Game



Use this practice for passing, dribbling, controlling a ball under pressure, shielding, combination play, shooting and finishing, support play, defending techniques, goalkeeper shot-stopping, communication, reading the game, and thinking ahead.

Divide the players into 2 teams of 5 to 10 plus 2 goalkeepers and play in a 60 m x 40 m area or on a full size soccer pitch.

- The pitch is divided into thirds. An equal number of strikers and defenders are in each end third, and an equal number of midfield players are in the middle third. All players are restricted to their designated third of the field and cannot enter another third.
- The game starts with a goalkeeper serving a ball to the defenders, who must inter-pass until they can pass the ball into one of their midfield players.
- The midfield players then combine to pass the ball into the strikers, who must try to create and take shooting opportunities.
- If a goal is scored, the goalkeeper saves, or the ball goes for a goalkick, then the opposing goalkeeper restarts the game by serving the ball to the defenders and the process is repeated in the opposite direction.
- There are no offsides or corner kicks, but throw-ins are taken as normal.
- If the defending team wins the ball the attack changes direction toward the other goal.

Note: The ball must always be played through each third!!

Conditions can be added by allowing midfield players to shoot from inside midfield third, and the goalkeeper to also serve the ball into the midfield third. Defenders who pass into a midfield player may move into the middle third and support the pass (i.e., 3 v 2), but if the play breaks down, that player must return to the end third. Finally, a midfield player passing into a striker can move into the end third to support the pass (i.e., 3 v 2). Again if the play breaks down, that player must return to the middle third.

The coach should encourage defenders to be composed when playing in end third and use the goalkeeper if in trouble; always be half turned when receiving the ball as a defender or midfield player; look at the situation early before receiving the ball; when playing pass forward support the ball from behind unless the player is able to turn; strikers should look to improvise and try flicks, turns, etc.

