



**Topic = Individual Winter Training**

**Coach = Erik Imler, former University of KY Men's Assistant Coach**

Yesterday, I had a series of conversations with colleagues about what the focus of winter training should be. While there is no prescribed formula for every player, for the younger ones in particular, I believe there should be a heavy dose of technique. The remainder of the time could be spent with free play (small sided games, futsal, etc). It is overwhelmingly apparent at nearly every level of youth soccer in this country...*most players are let down by their own lack of technique.*

It is our job as coaches to spend this winter break period to work with player in much smaller groups to enforce proper technique and increase the amount of quality touches a player has on the ball. I am a big subscriber to allowing kids to play, but let's make sure we do something about all the 'DOUBLE AGENTS' running around out there.

**DOUBLE AGENT** - *soccer player who turns the ball over to the opponent more often than helping to keep his team in possession through lack of technique or poor decision-making. Teammates soon begin to wonder if he/she is actually playing "under cover."*

My solution to this epidemic is quite simple. Remember the saying..."*If you can't pass (or trap), you can't play.*" As coaches, it is our job to put a bigger emphasis on technique. There is no better time to hammer home this point than the winter break between playing seasons. Here is a recommendation...introduce a juggle chart. Each training session, dedicate 15 minutes to the players attempting to complete each item on the list. You set the quantities for each category based on the team overall skill level.

Right Foot Juggle (5 juggles)

Left Foot Juggle (5 juggles)

Alternate Feet Juggle (10 juggles)

Right Thigh Juggle (5 juggles)

Left Thigh Juggle (5 juggles)

Alternate Thigh Juggle (10 juggles)

Head Juggle (5 juggles)



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Against a Rebound Surface (brick school wall for example)

Right Foot Volley (5 volleys)

Left Foot Volley (5 volleys)

Alternate Foot Volley (10 volleys)

Chip Ball over Line - Right Foot (3 out of 5 times from 12 yds away)

Chip Ball over Line - Left Foot (3 out of 5 times from 12 yds away)

Drive ball and hit net of goal in air - Right Foot (3 out of 5 times from 18 yds away)

Drive ball and hit net of goal in air - Left Foot (3 out of 5 times from 18 yds away)

Head Ball Against Wall (10 headers in succession)

Around the World Juggle (foot, thigh, head, thigh, foot)

For a Video Example [click here](#)