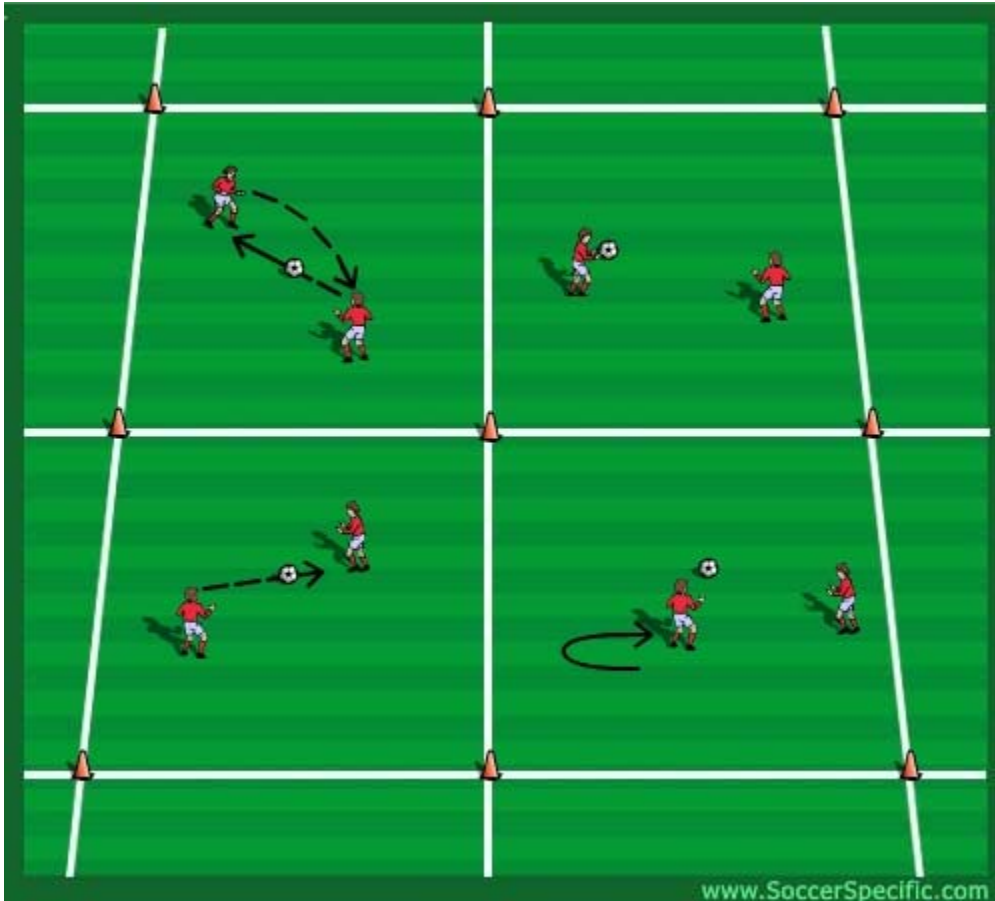


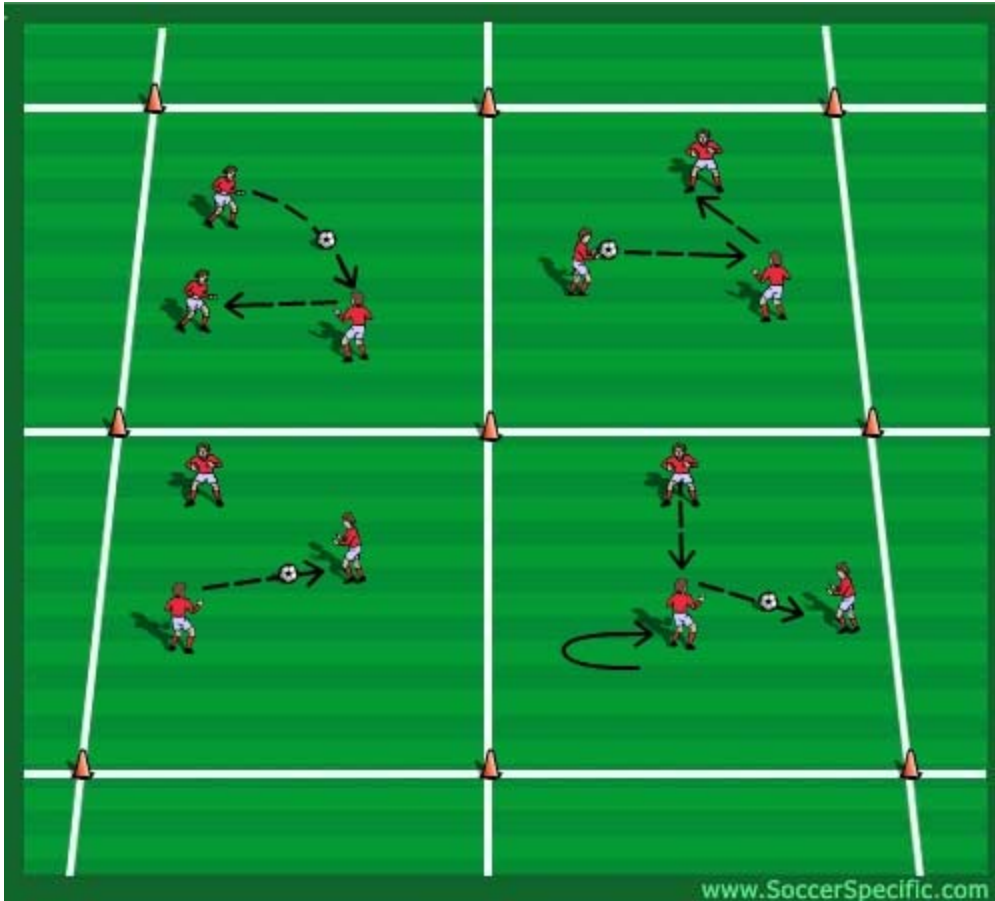
Topic: Youth Heading: By Greg Maas, State Technical Director, Utah Youth Soccer Association and www.SoccerSpecific.com.

Activity #1: 10 x 10 yard grids. Technical heading work in pairs (server and header), one ball between two as shown below in Diagram (a).



Explanation: Players start about 5 yards apart. Check away, return and head ball from server. Begin with attacking headers, focus on the top $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ball and head the ball down. Next, defending headers, focus on the bottom $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ball and head the ball up and away. Rotate players every 8-10 reps and repeat.

Activity #2: 10 x 10 yard grids. Technical heading work in groups of three (two servers and one header), one ball between three as shown below.

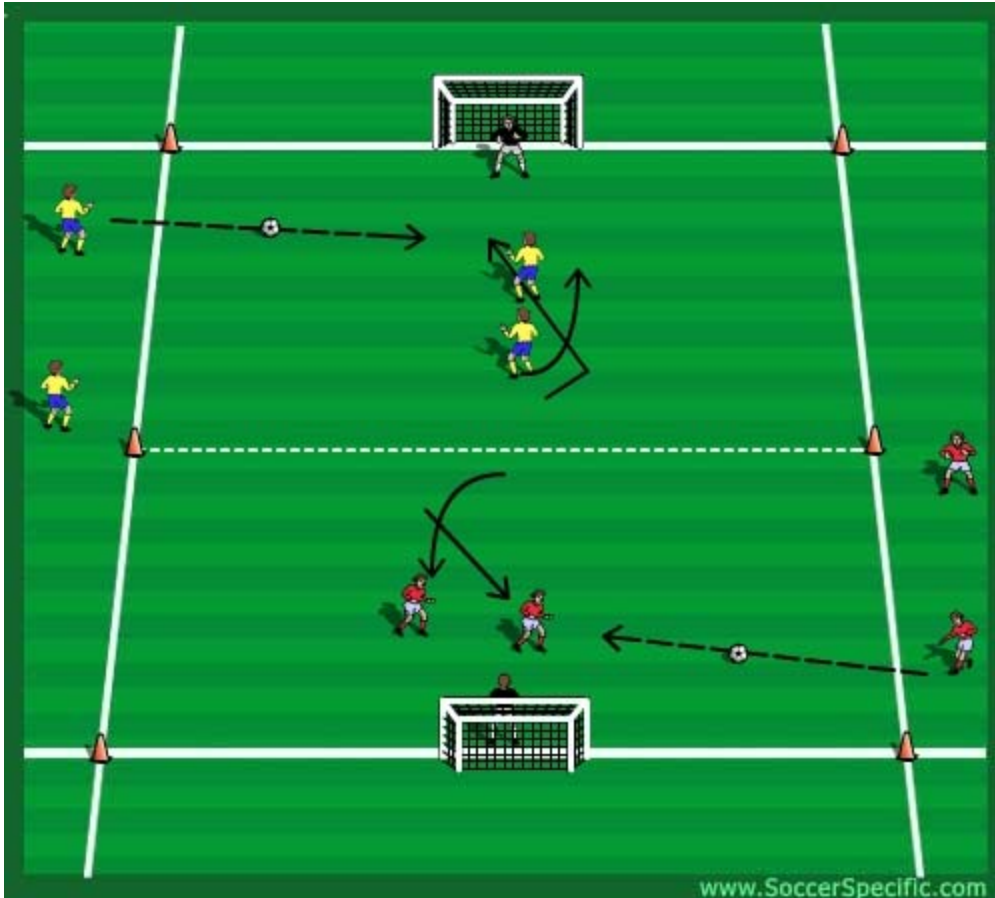


Explanation: Check away, return and head ball to opposite server. Focus on **redirecting** the ball down and away for attacking headers, and then up and away for defending headers. Rotate every 8-10 reps and repeat.

Coaching Points:

- Body mechanics, shape and balance
- Eye on the ball – read the flight of the ball
- Body in line of flight with the ball
- Area of contact (striking surface)
- Upper body and legs to generate power

Activity #3: 30 x 40 area to two large goals with goalkeepers and “servers” in each of the flank channels as shown in Diagram (c) below. Pairs of players attack the crosses into the box. *Note:* for young players, service from the flanks should start with the hands. Be sure to have a supply of balls for both servers in the flank channels.



Explanation: Flank players service balls into the area beginning with their hands. Target players begin without defenders, making both near and far post runs as shown above.

Progression: Same activity with the addition of a defender inside [each] of the "boxes."

Coaching Points:

- Timing and angle of runs (i.e., near and far)
- Adjust starting position as ball travels
- Assess flight of the ball (i.e., driven, flighted, etc.)
- Always know where the goal is and follow the ball with your eyes after heading it
- Head balls down and at angles away from the goalkeeper

Activity #4: Team Handball – 40 x 50 area or as needed to two large goals with goalkeepers. Divide the squad into two teams. Place extra balls in the net and around the perimeter of the field.



Explanation: The team must head the ball into the opponent's goal for a point to be awarded. Play commences with a [throw] with the hands by the attacking team who must then pass it (with the hands) to a teammate without letting it hit the ground. The attackers are allowed to take three steps between passes. All goals must come from a header. The team not in possession may challenge for the ball, but are not allowed in the 6-yard box unless marking an attacker. The defending team may contest throws or headers, but may not steal the ball out of the hands of the attacking player. A turnover occurs when the ball hits the ground or is intercepted from a header.

Progression: Must score in five passes or less. Increase the size of the field.

Coaching Points:

- Must have constant support and movement
- Communicate and demand the ball
- Use the arms to generate greater heading power
- All of the above