

Dear Coaches, as you have seen, corner kicks have changed in the Small Sided Game (SSG). Last year on the larger fields, corner kicks were a technical challenge vs. a tactical opportunity to score a goal for almost all teams.

Last year, most coaches would take your best player, the player who could kick the ball the hardest and furthest, and let them take the corner kick. For most teams, when the ball was kicked it may arrived somewhere near the near post of the goal thus falling short of the desired target area. On a “good day” maybe reach center of the goal, forget about any back post play.

Now with SSG, your team should be able to play the ball to the near post with ease, the center of the goal is within reach, and the far post is an option. SSG has allowed the taking of a corner kick to become a tactical opportunity vs. a technical challenge.

Some coaching points for corner kicks:

Attacking team: Lots of movement in front of the goal, players should be making runs to near post, center goal, and far post areas. Don’t be standing in front of the goal waiting for the ball. Play the ball to the outsides of the goal area to keep the goal keeper in the goal, thus taking the goal keeper out of the play. Have a plan to determine where the ball will be played; near goal, center goal, or back post of the goal and a signal to indicate that plan. If the kick is not direct, try and finish on the first touch or get it knocked-down in front of the goal for a finishing touch.

Try a “two players” corner, one player taking the initial kick plays the ball to the other player that takes a shot on goal or pass. A “short” corner is a player coming out of the goal area to receive a pass from the player taking the initial kick. Then playing the ball back for a cross or shot on goal.

Remember, LOTS of movement in front of the goal.

Defending team: Have defenders placed on the near post, back post and just outside of the goal area (center goal). Have a “10 yard” player, a player that is about 10 yards away from the corner. Goal keeper must see the ball at all times and organize the defending team. The goal keeper should be positioned in the middle to back half of the goal. It is easier to come forward to catch a ball vs. backing up to catch it. Once the kick is taken, defending players should “attack” the ball and play it out and wide quickly. A counter attack begins.

Corner kicks are a tactical opportunity to score a goal, so take advantage of the tactical advantages of the SSG format.

Good luck this season.

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