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# COACHING



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## CLINIC

# Adding Fun To Soccer Practice

by  
Joy King

**I**t's mid-season, the players are getting bored; your team needs to relax and loosen up before or after a particularly tough match, or Mother Nature has driven you indoors--all indicators that a "fun practice" is in order. A "fun practice" consists of a series of small competitive games in which soccer skills have been incorporated. These games can be indoor or outdoor activities, so a rainy day practice can turn into being extremely fun and productive.

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### Game #1 Steal The Bacon

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The team is divided into two groups. Each group member is assigned a different number based on the total number of players making up each group. For example if each group consists of eight players, then the numbers one through eight are used with no two players having the same number within a group but each player having a matching number in the other group. Have everyone keep their num-

ber a secret from the other group since this adds fun as the game progresses. Each group forms a straight line approximately ten yards from their opponents and facing them. This forms sidelines and goals are set on the endlines. (See diagram 1).

A soccer ball is rolled, tossed, or placed stationary in the center of the area formed by the groups as sidelines and the endlines indicated by the goals. The coach or other designated person calls out a number and that numbered player from

# Strength Training Q & A #16

by  
**Matt Brzycki**  
**Princeton University**

## **C**an you give me suggestions on how to become a strength coach?

There isn't a step-by-step procedure for you to become a strength coach. Like most jobs, becoming a strength coach boils down to being in the right spot at the right time and/or who you know. However, you should get some professional schooling in Exercise Science or another related area. At the minimum, you should take courses in topics like Anatomy, Nutrition, Biomechanics, Motor Learning and Exercise Physiology. Obtaining different certifications is a good idea, too. Read as much as you can about strength training and related topics. When you read material, dissect it to the bone by asking yourself if it makes sense or not. Don't accept an article or a book as being gospel just because the author had numerous letters/degrees after his name or assorted weightlifting credentials. Finally, you must network yourself. You can do this at least two ways. First of all, attend as many clinics and conferences as possible. Introduce yourself to other coaches. Let

them see your face and hear your name. Also, get published. It's an excellent way of getting your name out there and will add some spice to a budding resume.

## **What exactly is the Super Slow Protocol?**

The Super Slow Protocol was developed and refined by Ken Hutchins in the early 1980's. In a nutshell, Super Slow is performing each set of an exercise using 15-second repetitions -- the weight is raised in 10 seconds and lowered in 5 seconds. Because of the elongated duration of each repetition, a set done with the Super Slow Protocol might be composed of 2 to 5 repetitions. This slow, purposeful speed of movement greatly reduces the effects of momentum. This increases the amount of muscular tension thereby making the exercise more efficient. Further, the controlled speed of movement decreases the stress on the joint structure and reduces the possibility of injury. Because of this, the Super Slow technique is ideal for rehabilitation. So, from those standpoints Super

Slow is desirable. However, Super Slow isn't always practical. First of all, the speed of movement must be monitored by either counting cadence or using a stopwatch. Secondly, the slower speed of movement means that you won't be able to use as much weight as you normally would. Some people might find that distressing to their egos. Nevertheless, the Super Slow Protocol is safe, productive and makes much sense.

## **How strong are my hamstrings supposed to be in relation to my quadriceps?**

It's long been suspected that an imbalance of strength between the hamstrings and the quadriceps increases the likelihood that the quads will overpower the hams and result in a hamstring injury. In the 1960's, Dr. Karl Klein measured the strength of the quadriceps and hamstrings using a crude tensiometer. He is credited with popularizing the notion among strength and fitness professionals that hamstring strength should be at least 60 percent of quadricep strength.

However, it's important to understand that the resistance you use on one leg curl machine will no doubt differ from the resistance you use on another. The same is true of leg extensions (or any other exercise for that matter). Mechanical differences in the design of the machine will effect your leverage and, therefore, the amount of weight you can lift. For example, a leg curl machine that has less mechanical friction will permit you to use more weight than another leg curl machine that isn't as smooth. Other "subtle" factors include (1) the length and weight of the movement arm; (2) the weight of a counterbalance (if provided); and (3) the distance between your knee and where you exert tension against the pad. So, comparing the weight that you can lift on one machine to that of another -- even those manufactured by the same company -- would probably be inaccurate. The important thing is to make sure that your hamstrings are as strong as possible.

#### **Will clenbuterol increase my muscle mass?**

Clenbuterol is a veterinary drug approved for use in animals that aren't intended to appear on your dinner plate. The drug is

used to increase muscle mass in show animals such as cattle, pigs and sheep. J. Michael Lynch -- a team physician at Penn State -- says the side effects from human consumption may develop in 15 percent of long-term users and would include tremors, sweating, insomnia, headaches and irritability. The Material Safety Data Sheet for clenbuterol describes the drug as extremely potent and capable of causing nausea and tachycardia (an accelerated heart rate). One report had 135 people hospitalized in Spain who had eaten clenbuterol in beef liver. Be advised that clenbuterol is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and isn't legally available in the United States. It's also banned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the International Olympic Committee. In short, you probably don't want to take clenbuterol . . . unless you're planning on competing at the county fair as a pig or a cow.

#### **Is there a preferred sequence for exercising the upper abs and the lower abs?**

Yes. If you're exercising both areas of the abdomen during the same workout, the upper abs should be trained before the

lower abs. Here's why: If you were to perform a conventional sit-up, you would use your rectus abdominis and iliopsoas (or hip flexor). The iliopsoas is the "weak link" in executing a sit-up. This means that your hip flexors -- i.e. your lower abs -- will fatigue well before your upper abs. Therefore, it would be a mistake to pre-fatigue the hip flexors first because you'd then weaken an already weak link thereby limiting the effect of the exercise on the upper abdominals.

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### **About the Author**

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Matt Brzycki is the Coordinator of Health Fitness, Strength and Conditioning Programs at Princeton University. Coach Brzycki has authored more than 120 articles on strength and fitness and a book, *A Practical Approach to Strength Training*, which is in its second edition. He has also coauthored the book *Conditioning for Basketball* with Shaun Brown, Strength Coach for the University of Kentucky basketball team.