



Coaches who have completed a USSF or NSCAA course should be well acquainted with the classic “Components of Coaching Soccer”. Below is the USSF version:

Technical	Tactical	Physical	Psychological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental / No Pressure • Match Related / Pressure • Match Conditions / Game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual • Group • Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic Attributes • General Endurance • Local Muscle • Endurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied Psychology • Individual Discourse • Team Management

BSC believes American coaches often under emphasize Technical ability in the “Match Related / Pressure” context. In other words, we are overlooking Skill:

- **Technical:** Knowing how to do something and actually being able to do it.
- **Skill:** Having the technical ability to do something under pressure and at game speed.
- **Tactical:** Knowing when to do something and why.

Because of this under emphasis, many coaches have not taken the time to learn how to create Skill engendering environments. We don’t create skillful players because we don’t know how. Further, since we don’t push Skills, we aren’t helping players learn to independently identify which Skill (or Skills) to apply in a certain Tactical situation, then to quickly make a choice.

If one agrees with this thesis, the natural question is: “How do we go about creating Skills?” One great way is to introduce a low level of pressure to Technical training (aka 50% pressure or shadow defending) as part of a progression from pure Technical movement to full pressure micro soccer and small sided games.

A great example of this coaching technique can be found on the [Scottish FA Developing Talent website](http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/resources/documents/DevelopingTalent/9-12/Technical/CreativePlayer/Flick%20Behind%20Standing%20Leg%20Cut.mp4). Below are links to two videos which show games using the shadow defending concept:

Hyperlink	Place in Clip
http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/resources/documents/DevelopingTalent/9-12/Technical/CreativePlayer/Flick%20Behind%20Standing%20Leg%20Cut.mp4	See 0:40
http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/resources/documents/DevelopingTalent/9-12/Technical/CreativePlayer/Fake%20outside%20take%20inside.mp4	See 0:27

In the videos, the set-up is simple and the progression from Technique to Skill completed in 4 Steps:

Step 1: Players work on the Technical piece with no pressure: learn the movement, execute the movement, repeat.

Step 2: Introduce the shadow defender to provide a bit of pressure in a game-like arrangement. Attackers should execute at 100% effort with Defenders applying 50% pressure (no tackling allowed). Design shadow defending environments to mimic situations where the Skill being taught could be applied:

- the center of the field vs along the touch lines;
- with a trailing defender, a defender on the shoulder or a defender directly to the front; etc.



This second step is particularly important as it's helping the players create mental pictures of when and where Skills could be applied so when they see them in the game the vision is familiar and the decision to execute the Skill is natural.

Step 3: Test the Skill in micro soccer games (2 v 2, 3 v 3 or 4 v 4). Once it appears players are comfortably applying the Skill, move to the final step.

Step 4: Complete the progression in a small sided game with full pressure. Encourage players to execute the Skill when encountering scenarios similar to what was emulated during the shadow defending step.

Note that this 4 Step methodology can be utilized to develop a wide range of Skills from dribbling moves to wall passes.

Final tips:

- Coaches must stay on topic or technical theme for the methodology to be fully effective.
- When players display a Skill (especially when used in correct situations) and escape pressure or create a scoring chance, then the coach must verbally show their approval. Spanish speaking coaches are constantly saying: "¡Eso es, eso es!" which is "That's it, that's it!" Give players the positive feedback needed to build their willingness to try and confidence to succeed.

