

6 Tips to Improve Passing and Reduce Turnovers

1. Do overload drills to build speed and strength. Using 2-ball passing drills such as Machine Gun Passing, Middle Man Passing, Pass & Switch, and Partner Passing with 2 balls where each partner passes simultaneously will build speed and accuracy. Using drills that force players to use one hand to pass, (such as Pound Passing) especially with their weak hand, will build strength and confidence. (It is important to explain to your players that the one-hand passing drills are DRILLS to build specific skills, not techniques to use in games.)

2. Teach spacing. This is the most overlooked and possibly the most important aspect of offensive play. Teach your players what is the optimum distance they can effectively pass.

3. Teach players to shorten the pass. As an aspect of spacing, taking a dribble toward a receiver will, in certain instances, improve spacing.

4. Make the easy pass. There is no need for great passes when ordinary passes will do. Pass to an open teammate in an area he can catch it, away from the defense. If you cannot do that, don't throw the pass.

5. Emphasize the catch. While we would all like every pass to be perfect, we all know that will not be the case. The receiver must go where he needs to go to catch the ball. This may seem unrelated, but, to draw a parallel, baseball players know that a great defensive 1st baseman makes great infielders. He covers up for bad throws and can make a shortstop a star. By emphasizing the catch, passers will become more confident and receivers more aggressive.

6. Scrimmage without dribbles. Nothing will teach players more about spacing, passing angles, getting open, and making effective passes than not allowing them to dribble. Be prepared for some initial frustration.

Remember, your players will take on your values. If you do not value passing in your practices, they will not value passing in their games.

