

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF GOAL SCORING

by Super striker Greg Nicol

Goal scoring can be divided into 2 basic areas. The 1st is, goals that are scored from near the top of the circle, with the other area including all goals scored within the 9-yard area. To be considered an all round striker one must be able to score consistently from both areas. To score goals from either area of the circle a striker must have the ability to vary the types of shots one uses. One can't be seen by defenders and goalkeepers to be predictable and by varying ones shots this can be prevented.

Top of the circle shots:

- (1) Front stick hit**
- (2) Back stick hit**
- (3) Front stick slap hit**
- (4) Front stick bunt**

These four shots will be used from the top of the circle (i.e. further than 9-yards). The key to being successful from the top is not always the power one gets from the shot, but the speed of execution.

By using a shorter back swing along with quick footwork one can execute a shot from an area that has defenders. This may also catch the goalkeeper on the move or not 100% ready to make a save, which often results in a goal. This with the extra power the goals will be more frequent.

Another key point is that the striker must be aware of his position in the circle before he receives the ball, as there will not be enough time to look up at the goal. There must also be an awareness of where the space is in the circle, so when the ball arrives your first touch can maneuver the ball into space for the shot. Another tip would be to try and identify the weaknesses of the defenders and goalkeepers and try to exploit them. Also try and vary the height of the shot, some goalkeepers are sharper in the air than others and therefore shots on the ground would be the better choice.

Shots that are 18 inches are probably the most successful and goalkeepers really struggle with this height.

To sum up on shots from the top of the circle:

- (1) Awareness of space and position in circle**
- (2) Speed of execution**
- (3) Variation of shots**

A combination of these three points will ensure goals are scored from the

top of the circle.

These shots will generally be used from the 9-yard area:

- (1) Front stick slap**
- (2) Front stick flick**
- (3) Front stick bunt**
- (4) Back stick flick**
- (5) Deflection**

Again one of the keys to being successful in this area is variation, this ensures that the defenders and goalkeeper cannot anticipate what shot is used. This area is even more congested so execution of the shot needs to be quicker. First time shooting (i.e. shooting without trapping the ball 1st), is often used and recommended. Properly the most important aspect of the 9-yard area is the body position; one must have a low centre of gravity to allow for shorter quicker movement in the congested area. It will also assist in getting more power from a relatively small back swing. The control will also be greater particularly on the deflection, as with the top of the circle. Variation in height is essential.

Training:

When training in the circle, strikers should always train at high tempo simulating match play. There should be a defender contesting the ball to assist in getting a quick shot away, as well as realizing where the space is. Strikers should always train a variety of shots and not just hitting from the top, and also if there is a keeper available one must also train rebounds. Remember a high percentage of goals are scored in this way!!!

Other exercises include one versus one on the goalkeeper is also something which may occur in the game and needs to be trained. The key here is to get the goalkeeper onto one foot and then move the ball at pace to the other side getting a quick shot in.

Greg's five top tips for being a Super Striker:

- (1) Strikers need to be aware of;**
 - Space in circle**
 - Position in the circle**
- (2) Strikers need to have variation in their shots, avoid predictability**
- (3) Training needs to simulate match play**
 - Tempo**
 - Pressure**
- (4) Low centre of gravity nearer the goal (9-yards)**
- (5) the ball is always in the correct place, move your feet to make room for the shot. Footwork is crucial in scoring goals.**