

# St. Mary's Youth Soccer Training Series

**Topic:** Defensive Heading  
**Age/Level:** All  
**Type:**

→ Run    ..... Pass    ●~~~~~ Dribble

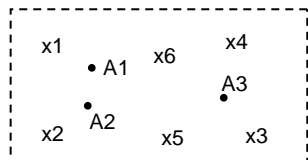


**Notes:**

This session is designed to progress the players through a session that covers defensive heading.

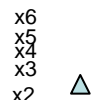
Thanks to Carlos Cantarilho

Progression: (Warm-up)  
 Exercise: Header Tag  
 Time: 10 Minutes



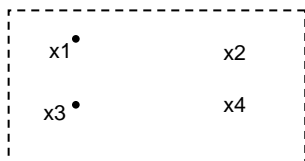
In a 25x35 grid, 3 players are it and try to tag teammates by tossing to themselves and hitting a player with a ball.

Progression: 4  
 Exercise: Heading Game  
 Time: 10-15 Minutes



Break the team into groups of 6. X1 faces 5 teammates. X1 tosses to X2, who heads it back and proceeds to the back of the line. X1 heads it back to X3 and so forth. Any time the ball drops, a new player steps in to fill the X1 role. Objective is to see how many consecutive headers one team can achieve. Emphasize controlling headers, movement, and communication.

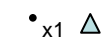
Progression: 2  
 Exercise: Heading Technique  
 Time: 20-30 Minutes



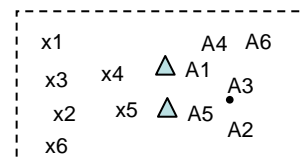
Depending on age Split players into groups of 2 10-20 yds apart. Players kneel on the ground facing each other 10 yards apart. X1 tosses to X2, who heads it back.

Emphasize: eye on ball, strike ball with forehead, lock neck, thrust forward from the waist. Strike just below equator, try to create arch.

Step 2: Same as before but standing. Add emphasis on height of tosses for timing, power for distance, and making the body wide for safety. If U-14 above try further distances.

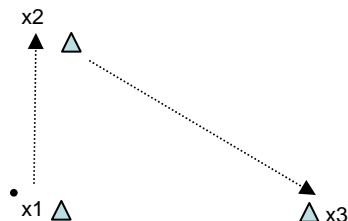


Progression: 5  
 Exercise: Head Volleyball  
 Time: 15-20 Minutes



Break the team into 2 groups. Play 6v6 in a 20x60 grid. The coach(es) can serve as the net. One team tosses and heads the ball over the net. A team has 3 touches to get the ball over the net. The net can move up and down as teams are unable to return the ball. The object is to drive the other team to the endline. Emphasize reading the flight of the ball, communication, striking the ball below the center to make it rise, and power for distance. Team W/O ball catches ball.

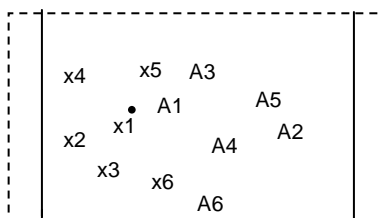
Progression: 3  
 Exercise: Heading Technique  
 Time: 10-15 Minutes



Break the team into groups of 3. Set up a triangle approximately 10 yards apart. X1 tosses to X2, who heads the ball for height, width, and distance to X3. Rotate after 5 headers.

Step 2: X1 starts to apply passive pressure and progresses up to game pressure. Emphasize: Striking with the forehead after toss below the center, high for time, wide for safety, and power for distance.

Progression: 6  
 Exercise: 6v6 Match  
 Time: 35 Minutes



In a 20x60 grid, play 6v6 with no goalies. Goals are scored by heading the ball into the zone. Give points for defensive headers. Place the scoring zone in the grid. Must head ball from own half of field into end zone.

Look to see if players are following key elements stressed in the session.