

# ITALIAN ACADEMY TRAINING SESSIONS

A COMPLETE SOCCER COACHING PROGRAM  
FROM THE ITALIAN SERIE 'A'

U11-U14



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# Italian Academy Training Sessions for U11 - U14

## A Complete Soccer Coaching Program from the Italian Serie 'A'

Written By the  
**Soccer Italian Style Coaches**



Mirko Mazzantini



Simone Bombardieri

Published By





# Meet the Coaches of Soccer Italian Style



## **Mirko Mazzantini** "ACF Fiorentina Academy Coach"

Mirko Mazzantini coached for Empoli FC for 10 years, at almost all the main age groups of the academy level. In 2010 he was then recruited by AFC Fiorentina working with the U14/U15 Academy teams. During the 2010/11 season Mirko won the U15 Italian Academy Serie 'A' championship. UEFA 'B' Coach and author of many coaching publications, articles, books and DVDs.



## **Simone Bombardieri** "Empoli FC Academy Coach"

Simone Bombardieri played as a player in the Empoli FC club for 5 years. He then started his career as a coach being recruited by Empoli FC where he has been coaching the academy age groups in the last 9 years from U9 – U14. This coming season Simone is in charge of the U15 Academy team. UEFA 'B' Coach and author of many coaching publications, articles, books and DVDs.

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# Soccer Italian Style Philosophy

Soccer Italian Style was born in 2005. Mirko Mazzantini (ACF Fiorentina) and Simone Bombardieri (Empoli FC) are both professional academy coaches of the Italian Serie 'A'. They have combined due to their great passion for youth development and they have embarked on a joint project that has taken them to various other parts of the world such as the United States, Canada, France and Norway.

The Soccer Italian style philosophy is made up of the principal features of the Italian style series and Mirko and Simone's vast experiences of professional training in Italy and football worldwide. The book outlines a training methodology that is simple and efficient which the authors have personally tested over time throughout their careers in Italy. ***They have been highly successful in producing top players who are both technically and tactically astute.***

The success of this program has been demonstrated by the numerous academy victories against the main teams in Italy and European football with far greater resources. Mirko's Under 15 team at Fiorentina won the Italian Academy League in 2010-11 beating teams such as AC Milan, Inter Milan and Juventus to the title.

Many players who have been trained using this exact program in Italy have gone on to professional careers and have been capped for the Italian national teams in various age groups, where before this was simply not the case.

This book contains 12 training sessions with each session focused on fundamental technical or tactical coaching that is analysed throughout the 6 practices. The 12 sessions have been developed to demonstrate the need of progressions in training, using the basic principle **“from simple to complex”**.

Inside the two volumes there are general team exercises that are useful for all coaches and players in every position, but there are also many specific exercises that are designated for individual roles or positions within a team (e.g. attackers, midfielders or defenders).

Mirko and Simone have a high expertise in technical training and they have developed activities that are open to numerous variations which means that the 12 sessions can be used over and over to make this program of training even more complete.

This passion has driven the pair to “write on paper” what they have learned and experienced up to today, with a great hope that this method will be greatly enjoyed by the readers and used throughout the world to create top quality professional players.

## Soccer Italian Style

Mirko Mazzantini & Simone Bombardieri

# Session Format

There are at least 6 practices in each of the 12 sessions with some having additional progressions.

**All 12 sessions always start with:**

Practice 1 - Warm-up always with the ball

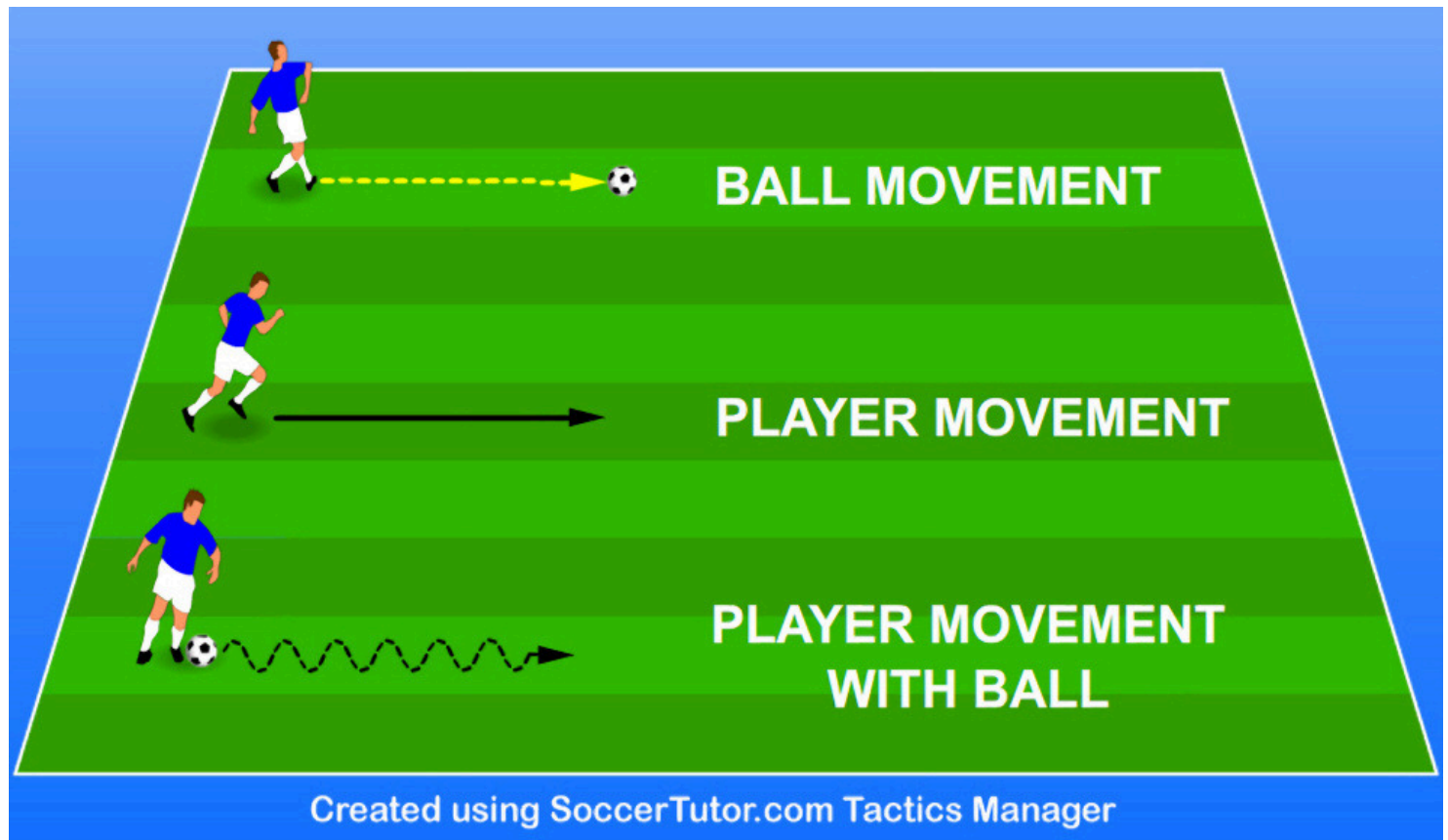
Practice 2 - Football specific conditioning

Practice 3 - 6 cover both technical and tactical practices.

**Each practice includes clear diagrams with supporting training notes such as:**

- Name of Practice
- Objective of Practice
- Coaching Points of Practice
- Variations or Progression of Practice (if applicable)
- Coaching Points of Practice.

## Key





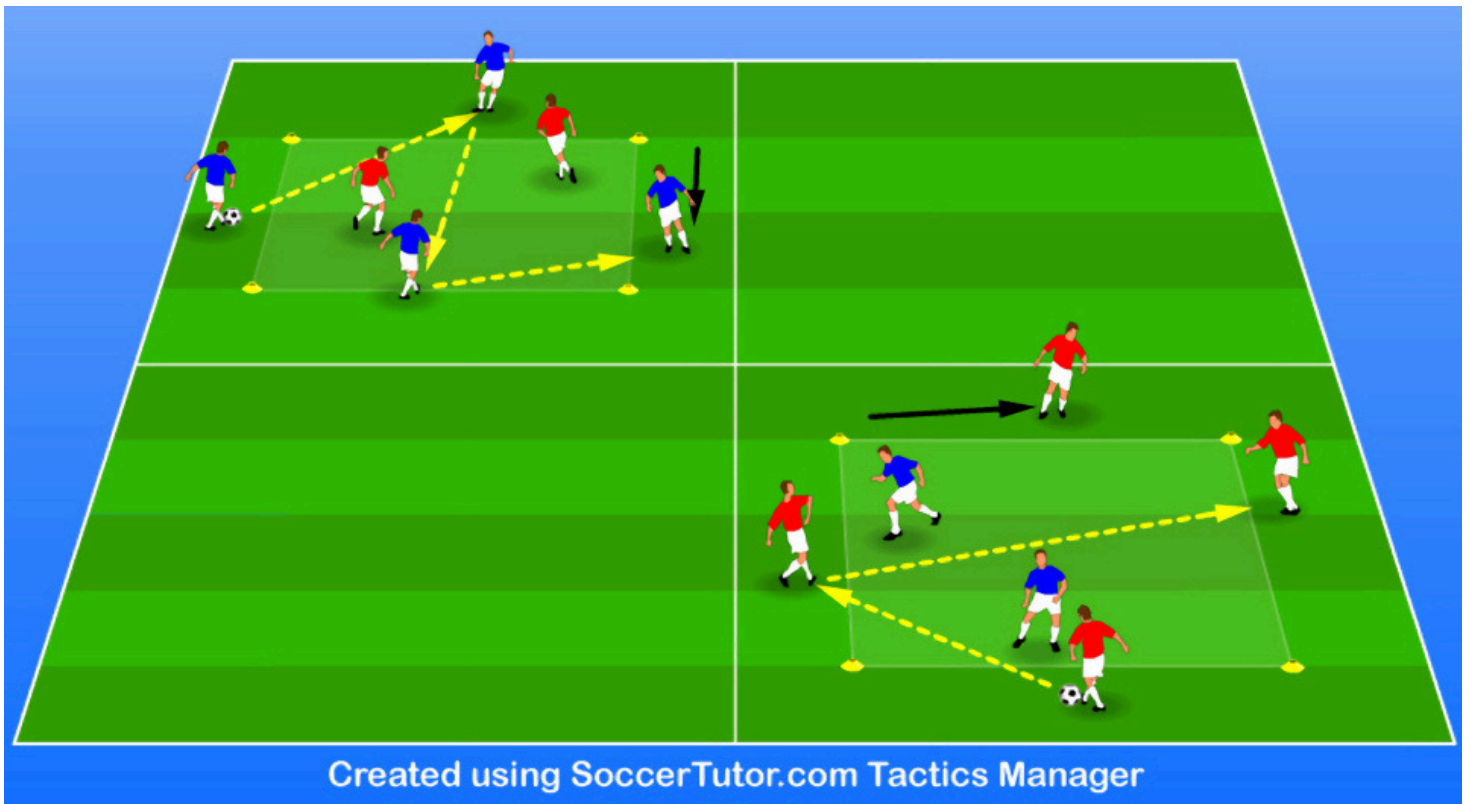
# Session 1

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- Practice 1**      **Passing and Possession Warm-Up**
- Practice 2**      **Coordinated Global Circuit - Technical and Mobilisation**
- Practice 3**      **Passing, Receiving and Creating Space**
- Practice 4**      **Possession and Speed of Play in a Small Sided Game**
- Practice 5**      **Game Situation – Fast Break Attack**
- Practice 6**      **Create and Exploit Numerical Advantage in a SSG**

Passing and Possession Warm-Up

15 Minutes



**Objective**

To develop passing, possession and creating space (unmarking) in a warm-up practice.

**Description**

In a square of 5 yards we play 4 v 2.

The four players outside the square have a maximum of 2 touches and must maintain possession playing only from outside of the square.

The two defenders inside the square have to intercept the ball. The player who loses possession ball will change roles to become a defender.

**Coaching Points**

1. Create space to find the right position and angle to receive the ball.
2. Improve the speed of play by limiting to 1 touch when possible.
3. It is very important to coach the correct body shape for receiving passes.
4. The 2 defending players must communicate and work together, one closing down the man in possession and the other covering the angle for the pass.



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### Objective

A technical and tactical drill, to coach the central defenders on passing out from the back.

### Description

Players A, B and C exchange passes until the coach signals A or C to pass through the cones (gate) to one of the central defenders (D1 and D2).

The player follows his pass closing down the defenders, along with B who runs through the central gate to intercept the pass or tackle the central defender.

Player D1 who receives the pass is limited to 2 touches and passes to partner D2 who needs to have moved behind the line of the ball and into space.

The sequence is completed when player D2 passes through the set of cones to player C.



**S**occer Italian Style coaches **Mirko Mazzantini (AFC Fiorentina)** and **Simone Bombardieri (Empoli FC)** are both professional coaches and in this book provide a full training program from their top Italian Serie 'A' academies.

This book contains 12 complete training sessions detailing over 80 practices and progressions as used in the academies of the Serie 'A'. Each session focuses on technical or tactical elements of training and are structured "from simple practices to more complex game situations". This outlines a complete program of training across the 12 sessions.

**The 12 sessions (over 80 practices) cover the following attributes:**

**Technical training;** passing and receiving, possession, ball control and dribbling, moves to beat, crossing, finishing, shooting and heading, football specific conditioning with and without the ball and more.

**Tactical training;** game situations, tactical small sided games, phase of plays, creating space and improving game intelligence, possession play, attacking combinations, transition play, defensive positioning, set pieces and build-up play from the back and more.

Most of the practices cleverly structured for "global training" which means working on more than one attribute at the same time. This is valid for all players, with drills and exercises for specific roles (Attackers, midfielders and defenders).

There are also numerous variations for many of the practices, meaning that the 12 sessions can be repeated again and again providing great practices for any coach to produce academy level training sessions.

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