



NSCAA Master Coach Diploma
Domestic Professional Team Visit
Submitted by: Rob Herring

As you walk into the Columbus Crew's Obetz Training Facility, you immediately get the feel for why "America's Hardest Working Team" is sitting atop the MLS table and are having the best start in franchise history. The players are noticeably loose and in good spirits, and training is sharp, competitive, and very intense. Behind the scenes, legendary coach Sigi Schmid and his staff are doing everything in their power to make sure the streak continues and the squad keeps moving forward toward a possible MLS Cup Championship, the first in club history.

The two days of preparation leading up to the match with the Kansas City Wizards seemed to go as planned for The Crew. Unfortunately, starting left back Gino Padula was nursing a sprained MCL, and goalkeeper Will Hesmer was questionable for the match due to a sprain in the AC joint in his shoulder. Despite the potential loss of two starters in a line-up that got the team off to a 4-1 start, the team looked intent on earning another three points against the visiting side from Kansas City.

The match itself followed the intensity of the last two days of preparation. Columbus came out from the opening whistle with a fire and passion that reflected their training. Every player on the pitch worked very hard, especially when defending, creating numerous turnovers and counter-attacking opportunities. Consequently, Kansas City struggled to find a rhythm and were quickly punished for their mistakes with an early goal coming off a free kick in the 4th minute- a "hard work" kind of goal when Adam Moffat out-jumped goalkeeper Kevin Hartman just inside the six-yard box, knocking it home off the side of his head. Another hard work goal came in the 34th minute, when Alejandro Moreno hit a bicycle kick near the midfield stripe to play in a streaking Robbie Rogers. Rogers beat the charging Hartman to the ball and tapped in the second goal of the match. Things got even worse for Kansas City in the 37th minute, when Roger Espinoza was sent off for striking Frankie Hejduk in the face with a forearm following a tough tackle. The half ended with Columbus up by a man and two goals. It looked like a rout was on hand at Crew Stadium.

The second half, however, saw a re-energized KC team turn the tides on Columbus. The Crew seemed to sit back and relax on their two goal lead and man advantage, while a tactical change by Wizards Head Coach Curt Onalfo, which brought Scott Sealy into the match as the high striker and moved Claudio Lopez to the left wing, caused many problems for Columbus. Sealy literally posted-up Danny O'Rourke, the young Columbus center back, and did an excellent job of playing the "point man" in the 1-4-4-1 shape. Sealy, normally a vertical runner, did an exceptional job of receiving various kinds of balls with his back to goal and under tremendous pressure. He either turned on O'Rourke or played his teammates into dangerous positions to score. This tactic paid



off for the Wizards in the 73rd minute, when O'Rourke was called for a foul on Sealy as he backed into him just inside the penalty area. Lopez converted the penalty, and the game quickly took on a new feel.

Ultimately, the Crew weathered the storm and held on to the victory. Schmid's post-match comments were as expected. He felt the team looked very good in the first half, executing the ideas they implemented in the training leading up to the match. The second half was a different story, however, as the team struggled to maintain possession and sat back on the lead while Kansas City took the match to them. Although a bit ugly, he was certainly happy with the win and additional three points.

My deepest thanks goes to Brian Bliss, Crew Technical Director, and Sigi Schmid for granting me a tremendous amount of access and insight during my stay. I am very grateful for their hospitality and willingness to help me gain valuable knowledge on coaching and managing at the professional level. Bliss and Schmid are first-class professionals who embody American soccer. Great men like Bliss and Schmid have helped elevate our game to where it is today, and I am humbled that I had the opportunity to spend so much time with them.

Rob Herringer is the head men's soccer coach at Benedictine College, and is a member of the Master Coach class of 2008. He serves as the Regional Technical Director for Region X, including Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas.



Columbus Crew: Training Session #2
Submitted by: Rob Herringer, Master Coach Candidate

Date: May 2, 2008

Time: 10:15-11:30 a.m.

Location: Obetz Training Facility (Obetz, Ohio)

Weather: Overcast and cool

Staff:

Sigi Schmid, Head Coach

Robert Warzycha, Assistant Coach

Mike Lapper, Assistant Coach

Geovanny Salinas, Goalkeeper Coach

Steve Tashjian, Strength and Conditioning Coach

Jason Matthews, Athletic Trainer

Rusty Wummel, Equipment Manager

Players:

23 Outfield, 4 Goalkeepers, and 3 injured players (30 total).

Dynamic/Ballistic Warm-up with Strength and Conditioning Coach Steve Tashjian

Basic running and stretching exercises followed by work on the agility ladder.

Goalkeepers worked with Geovanny Salinas.

4 Goal Game
12 v 12 + 4
goalkeepers

Half field

Older players v.
Younger players.

Attack two goals;
defend two goals.

2-touch restriction.

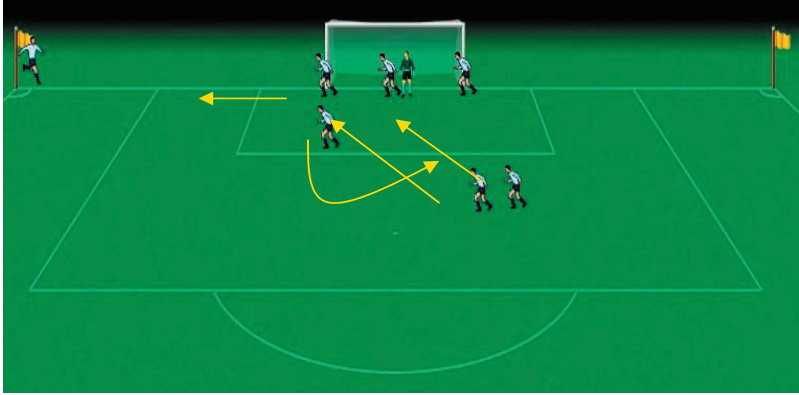
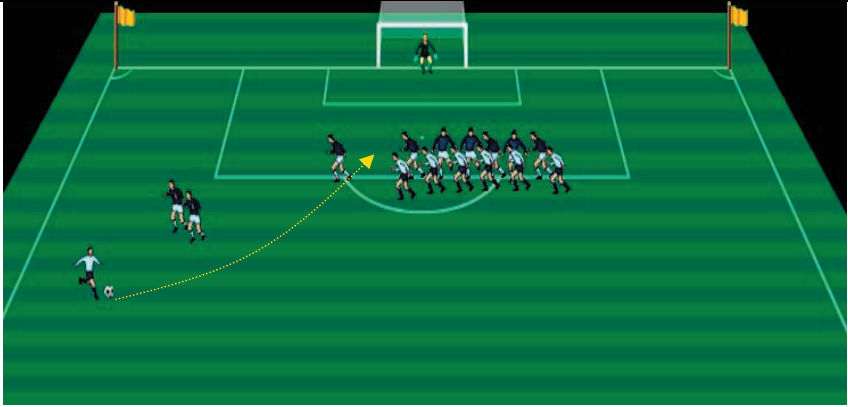
Assistant Coach Mike
Lapper rounded out the
24 outfield players.

Note: Coach Sigi Schmid likes playing games such as this the day before a match so players can take it easy or go as hard as they need to. The larger numbers helps with this.





Columbus Crew: Training Session #2
Submitted by: Rob Herringer, Master Coach Candidate

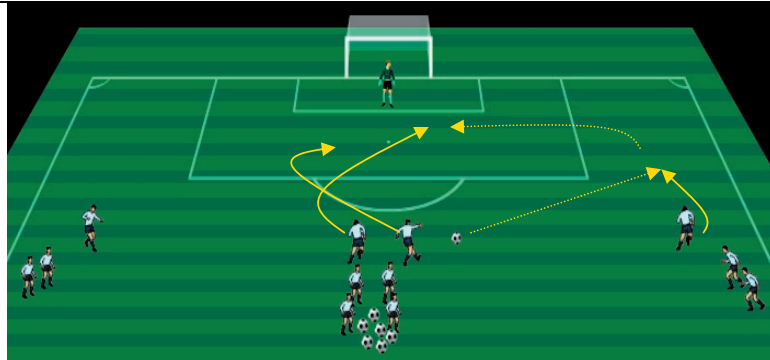
<p>Offensive Cornerkicks</p> <p>Starters v. Reserves (starting squad and movement shown)</p> <p>All kicks taken from same side and inswinging.</p>	
<p>Attacking and Defending free kicks outside of penalty area</p> <p>7 defending with 2 in the wall. 6 players attacking with one player taking the kick.</p> <p>Inswinging service.</p> <p>Runners working on slashing in front of man-markers.</p> <p>Players asking questions to coaching staff to make sure they understand their responsibilities.</p> <p>Changed the angle of the service in order to make players re-set.</p> <p>When the ball is inside 18 yards, the front man, who does not have a mark, will set the line of defenders on the wall.</p> <p>Teams switched roles.</p>	



Columbus Crew: Training Session #2
Submitted by: Rob Herringer, Master Coach Candidate

Individual Time

- Players work on anything they need.
- Many worked on crossing and finishing. The free kick artists worked on dead balls with the reserve team goalkeepers and against dummies.



***Players left the field, showered, and ate lunch on site. The coaching staff, along with Fitness Coach Steve Tashjian, played an inspiring game of soccer tennis (2 v 2) before heading in.

***Training facility has a full training room connected to the locker room, coach and team manager offices, a very small weight room, and a player lounge. There are two full-sized natural grass fields. No indoor or turf field.