

The Banana Kick

Typically this kick is made with the inside of the foot to bend the flight of the ball for a pass or shot. This can also be done with the outside of the instep of the foot. The outside of the instep is that part of the foot extending from the outer edge of the full instep to the outer edge of the foot. It is a relatively flat surface. In the front it is bordered by the base of the small toe and stretches almost up to the outside of the ankle. This wide and flat surface is particularly suited to kicking a moving ball. The kicking foot has a slightly unnatural position because it is turned inwards. This kick can be used to curve the ball as well as playing it straight. Kicking with the outside of the instep is suitable for passing and clearing, as well as for shooting and feinting. It is especially suitable for shots on goal and for short disguised passes out to the side. The whole leg is used to give force to a sharp kick, but a quick flick of the ankle is all that is needed to push the ball out to the side. Because of the relatively large area of contact on the outside of the foot this kick is especially suitable for direct passes or direct conversions of balls passed to you. When well played it can deceive and trick the opponent time and time again.

Technical Execution

Upper Body: bent slightly forwards and to the side towards the support leg. The arms should be out to the side for balance.

Support Leg: about six inches away from the ball, toes turned slightly away from the direction of the shot towards the kicking leg.

Kicking Leg: during swing forward turned inwards and downward with stiff ankle.

Area of Contact: outside of the foot between the edge and the top of the foot, from the bottom of the toes to the anklebone.

As with all ball skills the eyes should be on the ball throughout the movement, particularly at the moment when the foot connects with the ball. After driving the ball forward, the kicking leg is straightened and swings across in front of the body from the hip.

Instruction on this type of kick should only be undertaken once all the other kicks have been mastered. This kick requires a good deal of power to carry the ball any distance and to get the bend on the ball. So it is logical that the outside of the foot kick should be introduced to players who have reached puberty. Realistically players will begin to execute this kick well once they have reached adolescence and their muscles have the necessary power to play outside of the foot passes/shots well. This kick should be introduced to players in the under-12 age group. It should then be refined every year thereafter.

Here are a few training exercises to learn the outside of the foot kick.

1. Practice kicking with the outside of the instep before a wall. The player stands at some 10 to 15 yards from the wall. He/she drives the stationary ball against the wall and volleys the rebounds.
2. Swerving the ball into the goal. The ball is placed at some point on the goal line or near the corner flag. It has to be swerved by the outside of the instep in such a manner that it should land in the net without having bounced.

3. Shooting the ball over or around an obstacle. The ball is placed on the ground at some 16 to 20 yards from the goal. An obstacle should be 6 to 7 yards from the goal. The ball should be kicked to clear the obstacle either around it or over it while en route to goal.
4. Shooting from a corner kick. One player sends an outswinger from some spot on the goal line or from the corner flag. The player standing in the goal area runs onto the center and volleys the ball into the net with the outside of the instep of the foot nearest to the direction from which the ball comes. The exercise should be practiced from both sides.

Naturally players need to practice this kick with both feet. They may be better with the dominant foot, but they should be able to make this type of kick with either foot. Be patient when learning this kick and realize that it will take years of correct practice with proper coaching to perfect.

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