



From the Desk of the Technical Director

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After two weeks watching the ongoing trials for our 2010 state teams, I would like to issue a challenge to Tasmania's young footballers from about the age of six and up.

Can you keep a ball up in the air with your **feet** for 50 touches without it touching the ground?

If not, practice until you can. It will immediately make you a better player.

As Brazilians coaches told me on my trips there: "If you can keep the ball up for 50 touches, then you can keep it up for 100, 200, whatever you like."

And every player down there can do just that.

There's good reason for juggling a ball.

This past weekend I read an interview an English writer did with Carlos Alberto, captain of the Brazil team that won the World Cup in Mexico in 1970, beating Italy 4-1.

Alberto scored one of the most memorable goals of all time in that game, running on to a pinpoint pass from Pele to complete a mesmerizing passage of play and smash the ball home from about 15 yards. Anyone who saw it will never forget it. Those who have not should watch it on You Tube.

Every player on that Brazil side - arguably the best team ever - could make the ball do everything but talk!

So when Carlos Alberto gives an opinion, it should be noted.

Alberto watched Brazil beat England 1-0 in a friendly two weeks ago and said every second touch by an English player ended in a tackle because their control on the first touch was not good enough.

Ball juggling is a great way to help cure that deficiency.

Without a good first touch, the odds of keeping a ball up for 50 touches are as unlikely as winning the lottery.

A good first touch provides the chance for a good second touch.....and so on.

Juggling requires no coach, no adult supervision, no referee, no field, just a determination to practice. It can be done in the garden, in a park, on concrete, dirt, a playground, the beach, in fact, any available piece of ground. It can be done with shoes or barefoot.