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# Soccer Practice Drill Manual

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MGT 470

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Giulianne Domingues Pereira

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# Soccer Practice Drill Manual

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## **Introduction:**

This project is a short manual created to be used in a collegiate soccer preseason. Since preseason is around two weeks long, this manual has specific exercises for defenders and forwards. These exercises were chosen in order to cover the main necessities of a soccer team, which are defense and offense. Even though the goalkeepers are included in some of the exercises, this manual does not focus on this position, but on the field players. It will focus on passing, possession of the ball, positioning of the players, and finishing on the goal. This project contains 10 different figures that will explain the exercises choose for this soccer practice drill manual.

In a soccer game, the process to start a play begins from the positioning of each player. The positioning changes all the time, and it depends of the moment in the game. The team starts in a formal positioning in the beginning, but it changes in situations of offense and defense plays. It also varies depending of the strategies during the game. After positioning, the control and moving of the ball are exceptional and important techniques to accomplish the play before the pass. A good control of the ball allows the players to avoid losing the ball from the opponent. Since the player has a good possession of the ball, they can move it with confidence until passing the ball to a partner. Passing is very important because it is what allows the players to move the game in their way through the possession of the ball. A bad or good pass can decide a game. Finishing is the last part of a play; however, it is the result of an entire team work. The score comes from a shot on goal. Without an effective finish it is impossible to score, it is important in movement and in free kicks. Most of the exercises presented in this manual have the positioning, passing, possession of the ball, and finishing being worked together, but with different focuses.

## Passing the Ball

- Passing the ball exercises: These exercises will help to improve the passing performance from the players. The pass can be worked on through movement or static. It also can be worked on between two or more players and on the ground or in the air depending of the practice's purpose. This section contains four images explaining different exercises to work passing, conducting, and control of the ball.

The picture below shows an exercise that can be used in six different ways. It can work with the static or dynamic passing. The ball can be used on the ground or in the air. Another variation for this exercise can be the use of only two players or with the whole group.

### Passing Drill- Exercise 1

- 1) Between only two players:
  - a) Static pass on the ground: Players keep in the original positioning and pass the ball to each other. They can stop the ball when they receive a pass or they can just pass the ball back when it is still in movement.
    - i) Static pass in the air: The same way from *static pass on the ground*, but the players should be at a longer distance using the distance from the cones. The pass should be executed in the air.
  - b) Dynamic pass on the ground: Players start in the original positioning and the players who are with the ball pass it to the players who are in front of the cones. After they pass the ball, the same players sprint backwards until they reach the cones behind them. They should turn around the cones and run sprinting forward to the original position.
    - i) Dynamic pass in the air: The same from *dynamic pass on the ground*, but the players should stay in a longer distance using the distance from the cones. The pass should be executed in the air.
- 2) Whole group together:
  - a) Dynamic pass on the ground: The players start in the original position. The players with the ball should pass it on the ground to the players who are in front of them and move to the right facing the next player. The players in front of the cones should not move and just pass the ball back to the next players who will move in front of them. When the first player passes for all the static other players, they should sprint until the beginning of the line again. The next players should do the same in order to keep working the same drill.
  - b) Dynamic pass in the air: The same way from *dynamic pass on the ground*, but the players who are in front of the cones should hold the ball with their hands and the other players should pass the ball back in the air using their foot.

Figure 1:

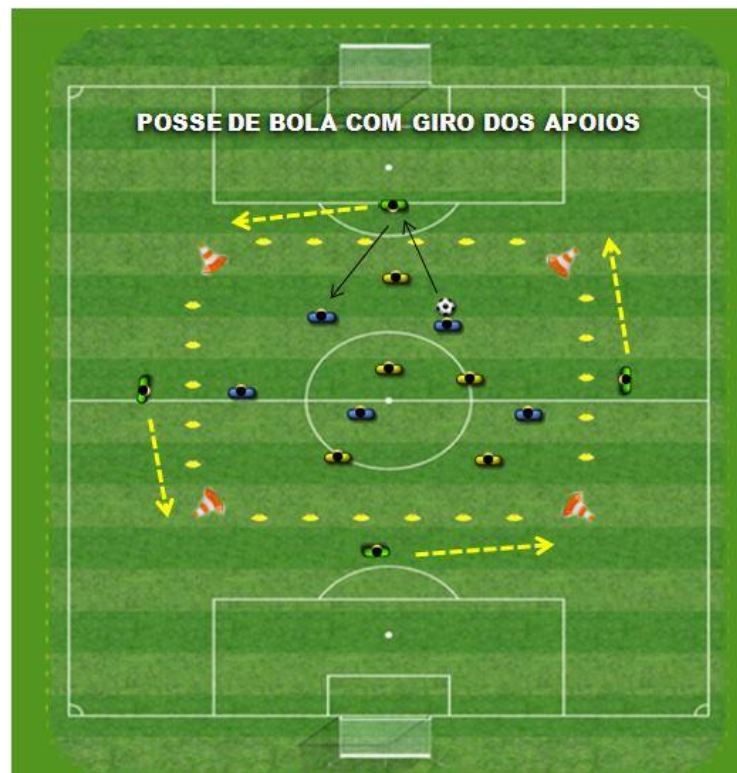


### Passing Drill- Exercise 2

The picture below shows an exercise of passing close to the game's reality. This exercise also works possession of the ball and positioning. It is a dynamic exercise that works on the confrontation between offense and defense.

The space used for this exercise is a small sided field limited by the cones. Players in blue play against players in yellow. Players in green located outside of the field are the support. Both teams play offense and defense and it depends which has possession of the ball. This exercise does not involve scoring, only possession of the ball. The team without the ball has to work defensively to get the ball back. The players in green help the team with the ball, and they work as extra players. The players in green cannot pass the ball to each other, only to the team that has the possession of the ball at that moment. The yellow arrows mean that the players in green can and should move around in order to provide more options for the team that they are supporting. This type of exercise also helps to work the organization of the players on the field. It helps the players to realize that they have to distribute themselves very well on the field to have more space to play and keep the possession of the ball.

Figure 2:



## Variations:

- 1) Players on the team that have the possession of the ball have the right of only two touches on the ball before passing it to their teammates.
- 2) Players located outside the field have the right of only one touch on the ball before passing it to the team that they are supporting.
- 3) Players located outside the field have only 5 seconds to pass the ball back to the team that they are supporting.
- 4) The players located outside of the field are not allowed to pass the ball back to the person from who they received it.

These variations help to increase the speed of the game.

### Passing Drill- Exercise 3

The picture below represents the same type of exercise as in *Figure 2*. However this exercise shows that the support is changed at the moment of the pass. Whoever passes the ball to the support should switch positions. This exercise works the same things from the *Figure 2*, but this one focuses more in the positioning and movement during the game. It also helps to create more options of passes and it makes it more difficult for the opponent to get the ball back.

Figure 3:



### Passing Drill- Exercise 4

The picture below represents an exercise that works with passing and control of the ball in movement.

The players should line up in four columns in a way that one column have to be in front of another one like *Figure 4* shows right below. The players who are facing each other have to start dribbling the ball at the same time in a median speed. Then, they have to change the balls when they meet each other at the half way. Once they receive the other's ball they have to keep dribbling it and pass the ball to the next player in the line and go to the end of it. This exercise helps to work the pass and control of the ball in movement. It also helps to work the positioning in the field after a pass.

Figure 4:



Variation:

- 1) The same exercise as represented in the *Figure 4*, but the players who dribble the ball should run in the diagonal direction making an "x" instead of running parallel to their lines.



## Offense versus Defense

- Offense versus defense exercises: It is the best way to work defenders and forwards at the same time. These exercises will help to improve the possession of the ball, dribbling skills, and marking performance from the players. Offense players will focus on the passes, dribbling, and strategic runs and change of positions. The defenders will focus on positioning, marking strategies, and building counterattacks. This section contains three images explaining different exercises to work defense versus offense.

### Offense versus Defense Drills- Exercise 1

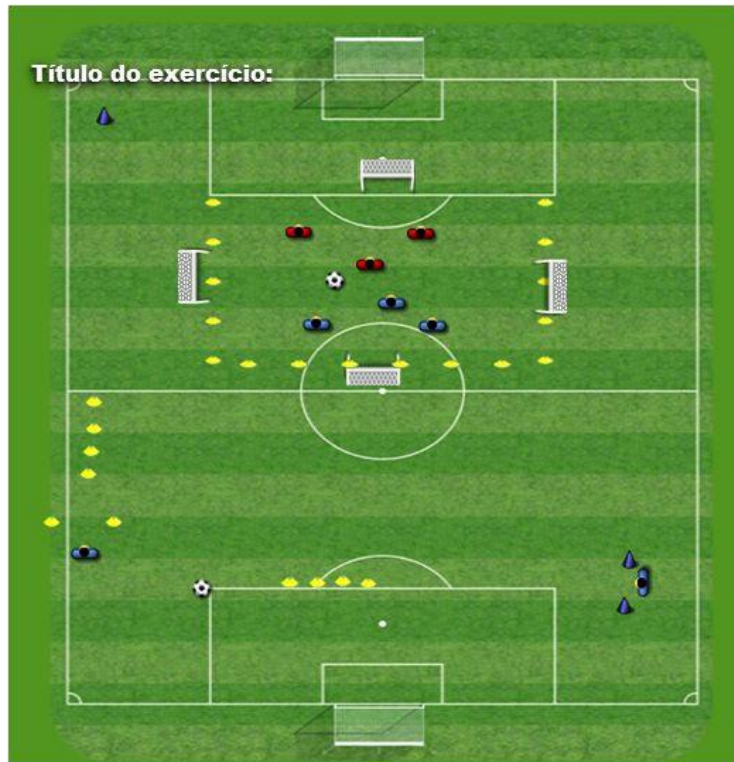
The *Figure 5* shows an exercise divided in three different sections.

Section 1: Players work sprinting between cones, and then sprinting free of obstacles until the next cone. It helps to improve the speed during the game. The cones help to create obstacles during the sprinting as markers do during the games.

Section 2: players work with dribbling of the ball in a “zig-zag” between cones. It helps to improve the speed of the players while they dribble the ball. It also provides the practice of the control of the ball in high speed and dribbling skills against the opponents.

Section 3: Players play defense versus offense in small sided field. The small field with four goals provides the perception to the players of creating more space on the field by distributing themselves. It helps to create more opportunity of passes between their teammates and it also makes them move around the field more. The four goals make the players work hard and fast to try score when they have the possession of the ball. The team without possession of the ball has to work extra to get the ball back and avoid the other team from scoring in any of the four goals.

Figure 5:



## Variation:

- 1) Players without possession of the ball have a time limit to get the ball back. If the time limit is 5 minutes, and they do not get the ball back on time, they have to switch with the players who are working the sections 1 and 2.
- 2) The players who get the most wrong passes during the small sided game switch with the players who are working in the sections 1 and 2.
- 3) The team that score the shorter number of the goals in 5 minutes in the small sided game have to switch with the team that is working in the sections 1 and 2.

## Offense versus Defense Drills- Exercise 2

*Figure 6* shows an exercise that works in a strategic way to build and execute counterattacking during games. This exercise involves positioning, passing, and dribbling skills.

Using 12 players, the exercise is technically a 7v5 game. Defense is positioned with four defenders. One midfield player stays positioned in the center of the field as the top of the diamond. The other two midfielders stay positioned wide open in both sides of the field creating the opportunity of counterattacking.

The ball starts in the right side of the defense, and then it is passed to the defender positioned in the center of the defense. The ball is passed again to the left side of the defenses' side of the field, creating the illusion that the ball will keep being passed to the left side. However the surprise is the top of the diamond that receives the ball and having the chance to choose any side to pass the ball to the attack. The two cones in the center of the field mark where the ball has to be passed for an effective counterattack.

The defense should not anticipate the play in order to allow the counterattack, and then the defenders can try to get the ball back. Even though the defenders already know what will happen in the play, they have to be positioned at the same way they would be in a game. This exercise provides both, offense and defense, working together to provide situations that happen during the games.

Figure 6:



Variation:

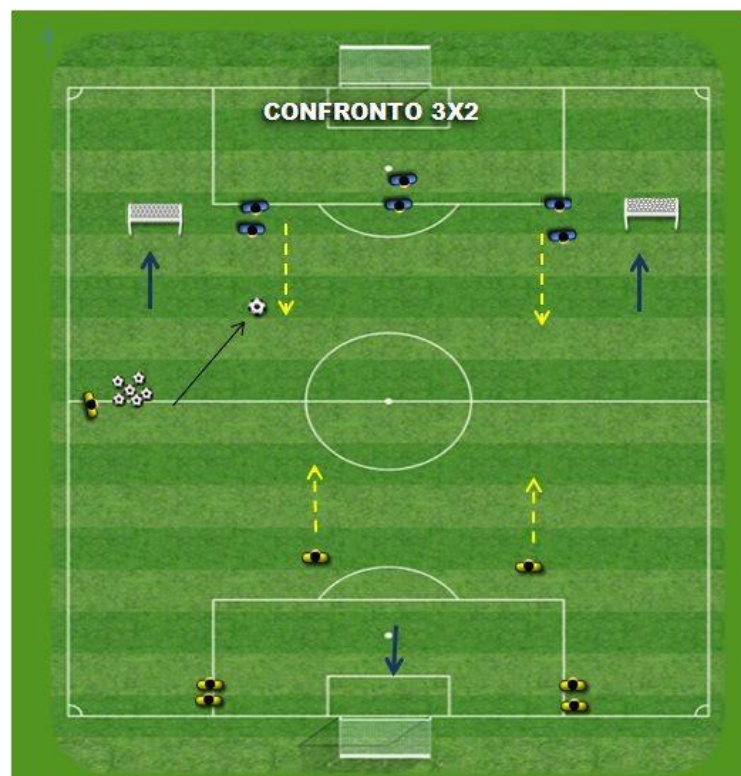
*Figure 6* does not show the presence of a goalkeeper and the forwards; however it can be a variation of this exercise. Forwards can stay around the box waiting for a pass or a cross coming from the wide midfielders, while the goalkeepers, wait for the finish from the forwards. The pass from the top of the diamond can be worked in the both ways, on the ground and in the air. The crosses also can be worked on the ground and in the air as well.

### Offense versus Defense Drills- Exercise 3

The exercise called 3x2 works with three offense players against two defenders. The offense players have to try passing for the defenders and score in the regular goal where the goalkeeper should be to save the shots. Once the defenders get the ball back, they have to create the counterattack and score on the small goals. These small goals represent players, and the score from the defenders would represent the efficient pass to an effective counterattack.

For this exercise, there are three lines of offense, two lines with defenders, and one person to pass the ball to the forwards starting the attack. The players are replaced for the other players who are waiting lined up in columns.

Figure 7:



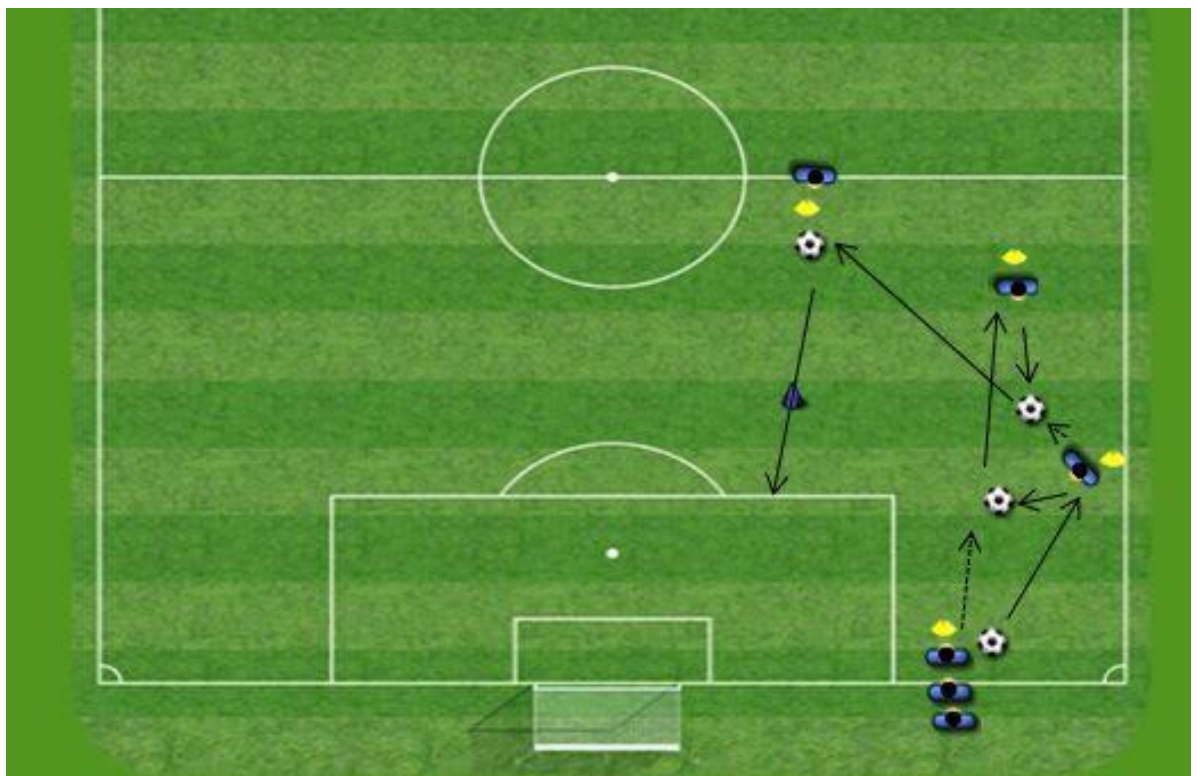
## Finishing

- Finishing exercises: It is the best way to work defenders (including goalkeepers) and forwards at the same time. These exercises will help to improve the shot on goal and dribbling skills from the forwards. They will help to improve the marking performance from defenders and the speed of reaction from the goalkeepers. Offense players will focus on the passes, dribbling, and different ways to finish on goal. The defenders will focus on the positioning, marking strategies, and building counterattacks. Goalkeepers will focus on different ways to save the balls and practice their speed of reaction. This section contains three images explaining different exercises to work defense versus offense.

### Finishing Drills- Exercise 1

This exercise works passing, positioning, and finishing using four players and one goalkeeper. The ball starts with the player at the goal line, who will pass the ball to the player at the side line, and they will move forward. The player at the side line will pass the ball back to the player who made the first pass. The player with the ball will pass it to the player in front of them, who will pass the ball back to the player at the side line. The player at the side line will pass the ball to the player at the center line, who will dribble the ball until the cone. Once the last player dribbles to the cone, they will finish on goal.

Figure 8:



Variation:

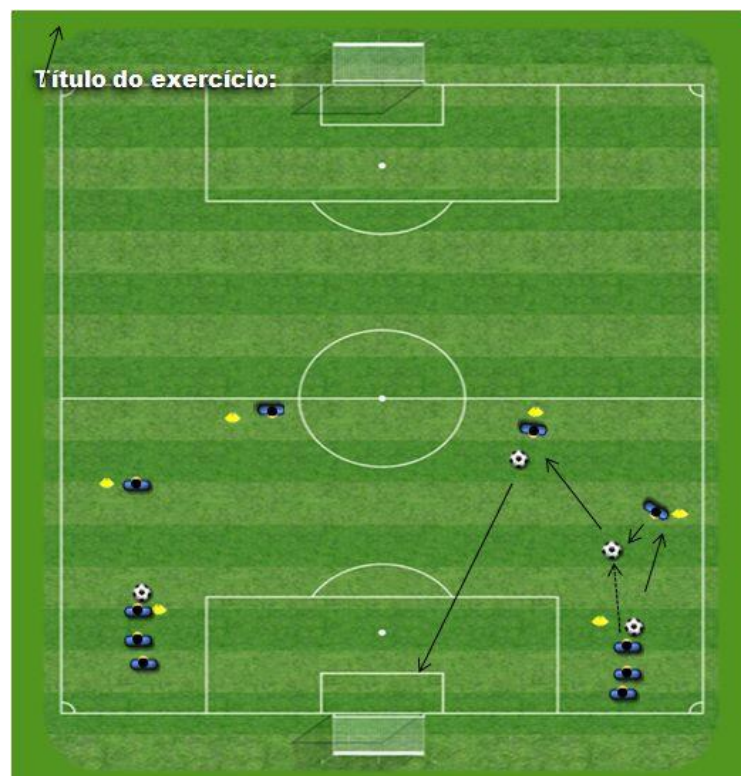
1) The player who made the last pass should run in behind the player with the ball. The player with the ball should make an assist to the player who is coming from the back. This variation makes it difficult for the other team to realize the player coming from the back as a surprise. Even the goalkeeper would not be able to identify who will finish the ball.

### Finishing Drills- Exercise 2

This exercise is similar to the one represented in *Figure 8*; however this uses only three players and also it uses both sides of the field. The use of both sides allows the players to work both legs for the shots on goal.

The ball starts with the player at the goal line, who will pass the ball to the player at the side line and moves forward. The player located at the side line pass the ball back to the player who moved forward. The player with the ball assists the player who comes from the center line to finish the ball.

Figure 9:



Variation:

The player located at the side line assist the player who comes from the central line. In other words, the player at the side line does not pass the ball back to the player who moved forward.

### Finishing Drills- Exercise 3

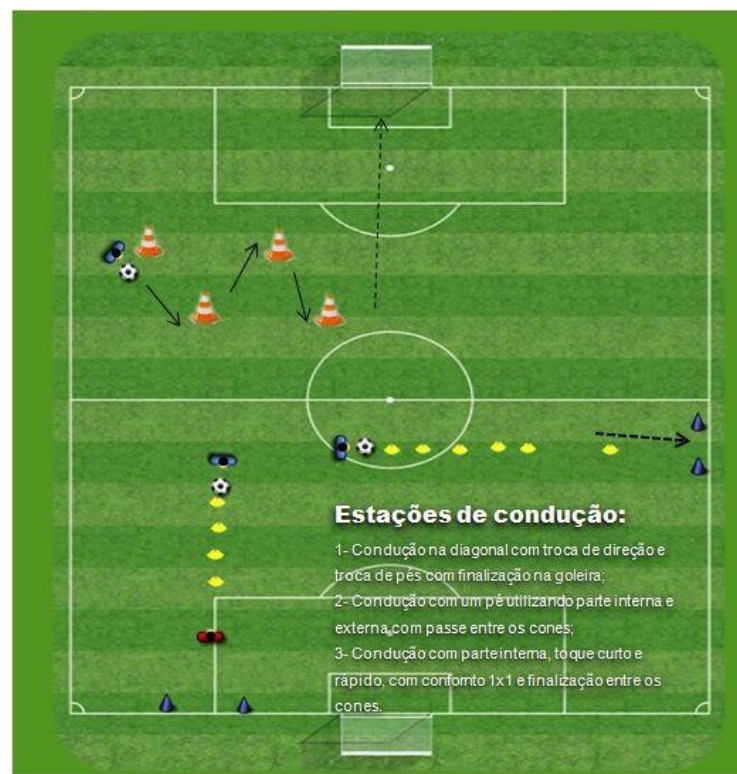
This exercise is divided in three sections, and it works with controlling of the ball, dribbling, and finishing on the ground and in the air.

Section 1: The player dribbles the ball between the cones at high speed and they have to finish the ball on the ground before it reaches the last cone.

Section 2: Similar to section 1, however the player has to beat the other player before finish the ball on the ground.

Section 3: The player has to dribble the ball at high speed between the cones and finish it in the regular goal, but with a goalkeeper there. The finishing can be on the ground or in the air. It also can be outside of the box or dribbling the goalkeeper inside of the box.

Figure 10:



## **Conclusion:**

This project provided around 30 different activities using the variations and sections of each exercise represented through the figures. Since it was created to be executed in a preseason, the project has limited number of exercises. However, the exercises presented are useful for different areas of concentration in soccer practices. The number of activities can be improved by the different ways that can be used to kick and pass the ball. The use of internal and external part of the foot is possible variations in some exercises. There are different ways to control the ball that can be possible variations to work with these exercises provided in this project. Certainly this manual has enough and efficient soccer drills to work defense and offense during two weeks of preseason.



## References Page

Pictures retrieved from a personal archive. Coach Suellen Ramos works with women soccer in a club in Brazil. She provided the pictures used in this manual in order to support this project.

Suellen Ramos can be contacted by Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/suellen.ramos2?fref=ts>

or Skype: Suellen Ramos