

Jason Carney

# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO DEVELOPING SOCCER PLAYERS

A start to finish blueprint for soccer success





# **The Complete Guide to Developing Soccer Players**

*A start to finish blueprint for soccer success*

*by*  
Jason Carney

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## Creating a learning environment for young soccer players

We know that performance follows attitude. With the proper attitude, coaches, boys and girls will commit to the hard work, preparation and to the challenge of doing their team job well.

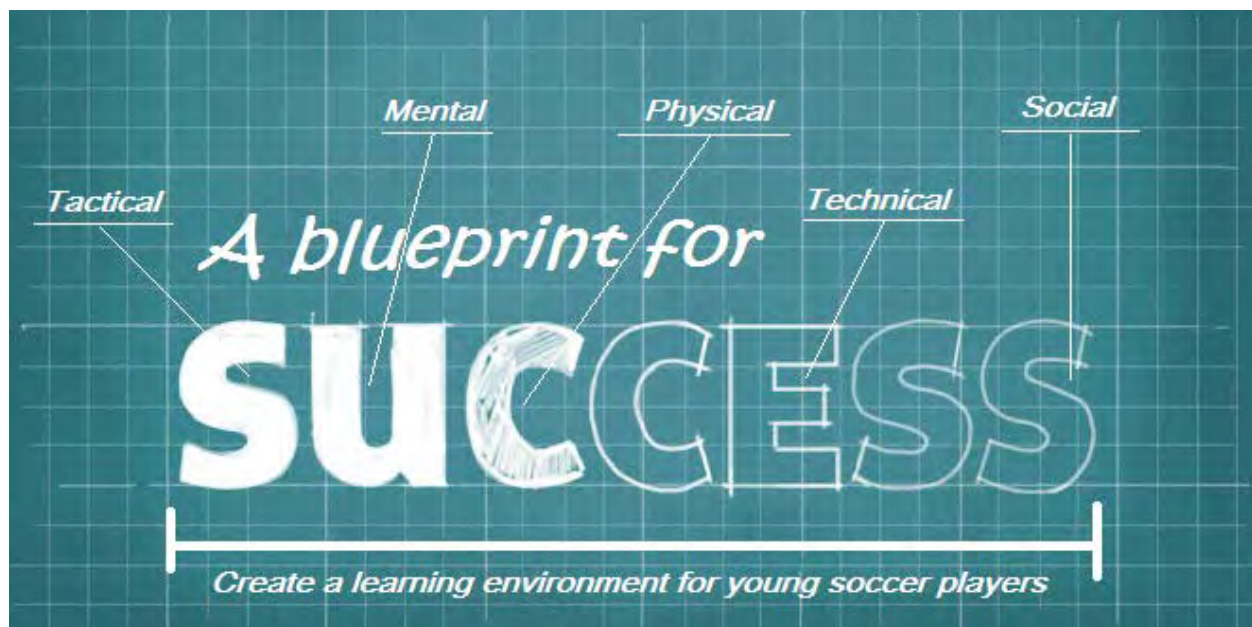
Attitude is shaped largely by:

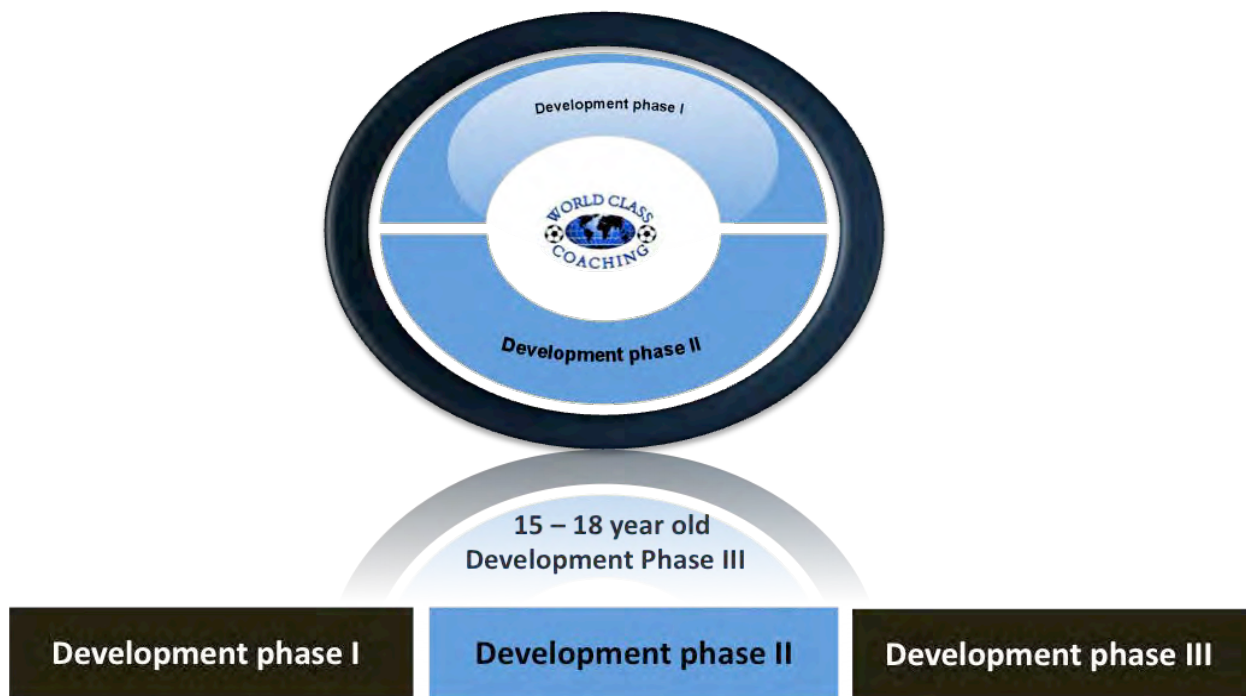
- The personality of the player
- The influence of parents, role models and friends
- The practice and coaching situation

Add these three together to get your coaching environment. Inside this book we aim to give coaches a culture of teaching, developing, standards, discipline, care and concern. This will lead to inspiration and commitment to the pursuance of a stable soccer program.

Players have to be encouraged to come out of their comfort zone and understand that soccer is about decision making. Coaching soccer is not easy. If the coach wants to improve then this will carry over to the players. Planning a coaching session can sometimes take longer than the session itself and we hope that this book can help you develop as a coach.

In today's world, especially soccer, patience is very rarely implemented. Developing soccer players takes time and support. The support should come from the parents, coach and team-mates and we have to let young players know that they will be given time to develop. We cannot succumb to the egos of parents or coaches. Follow the process from this book and we can guarantee you will develop your players.





8 – 10 year old

11 – 14 year old

15 – 18 year old

### **Mission statement**

Your goal is to develop well rounded children who will understand:

- **Fair play** – Character
- **Work ethic** – Speed and mobility
- **Discipline** – Courage and bravery
- **Teamwork** – Knowledge and awareness
- **How to win** – Technical and tactical awareness
- **How to lose** - Mental toughness

**Enjoyment** - It's proven, kids who have fun in soccer, try harder, perform better and stay involved longer



## **'The big picture'**

We want you to develop good players and honest people. Decisions should be made that are beneficial to the player and to the team. Do not succumb to the short term pressures of winning or feeding coaches or parents egos. This is not easy and it arrives with many challenges. You have to concentrate on the long term goal.

Tips to focus on are:

**1. Coaching excellence, not results** – Constantly teach the process. Do not get swayed by the result of the game. If you focus on results you will be unaware of what is needed to develop the team or player. If you focus on performance then you will always be able to work out why you won or lost. Stay in control and the players will follow. Judge yourself on the progression of the players and team not your win/loss record. Sure, you have to win for the sake of the players but this should not be your motivation or a parents.

**1.Be patient** – Teaching the game excellently and ignoring the score does not mean you will not win. You will win better and more often if you are patient and stick to the process. Let the players know that they have your support.

**2.Teach the parents** – Parents will not buy into the process if they do not see how it benefits their child. Sell the benefits. Seeing their child improve and seeing the enjoyment that they are having will sell the process. Keep parents up to date with what is going on. Practice / game times etc. Great communication will serve you well for the future.

**3.Coach appropriately** – Be an expert on your piece of the puzzle. The three development phases is the puzzle. Work out the top priorities of the team you are coaching and also work with each individual player. Inspire the players to keep on improving. Communicate to the players what those priorities are and every practice session that is conducted the players must know what they are working on.

**4.Understand growth stages** – Boys and Girls develop physically, mentally and emotionally at different paces. You have to realize this and not give up on the late developers.

**5.Discipline** – The good kids on your team, the ones that come to practice and give 100% will want you to address the players that give 50% or the players that show a lack of respect. These are your values. Your players give 100%. These values do not guarantee you a win but what it does is gives each player individual toughness and binds teams together as a unit. Tough love will be needed but you must not cross the line.

**6.Challenge the players to manage themselves** – Players must be motivated to work on their skills and fitness away from the practice field. Hold them accountable for their actions. Have your players perform the warm ups themselves with a couple of players leading the exercises.

**7.Love the artist** – Most of your players will become disciplined. They will be good at learning from your coaching sessions. You will get a few players that will create their own patterns of play. This is higher risk but a higher reward. Are you big enough to forgive them for their mistakes? As long as the player is respectful and follows the rules of becoming a team player, then every team needs an artist of some sort.

**8.Trial and error** – Your practice sessions are challenging. This will lead to mistakes. Dealing with mistakes is the biggest part of a player and coaches development. It's what happens after the mistake that is important. Learn and move on. Do not be afraid to move to plan B when coaching a session. Not every exercise will work for your team.

# A vision of a coach's development

*The modern coach prepares their players for the modern game.*

## **Coach development:**

- If you are not positively affecting the behavior of your players, you cannot call yourself a coach. Be the expert and the role model. Players will mimic the actions of their coach.
- Encourage players to be creative. Players must understand that the coach will forgive positive mistakes. Be creative when planning a practice session. Do not make your sessions, one dimensional. Players will find them boring. Make it possible to create the '**Decision maker**'. Be concerned about your standards as well as your players. Do the right thing for your group not the easy thing. The players will know that you are working for the good of the team and you will gain more credibility from them.
- Get to your session early and if possible, set up your whole session. Keep your breaks, short (for recovery only) This way the players will learn how to refocus quickly and often.
- You still strive to be the best you can possibly be.
- Success cannot solely be based on winning tournaments. Have a balance between winning and developing a large pool of players that are capable of competing at their highest level possible. If your coaching session is technical and tactical and conducted in the correct manner, then winning soccer games will follow. You are responsible for creating an environment where your players can develop winning habits.
- Treat all players with respect. If respect is shown by coaches, it is generally given back with effort, concentration and honesty.
- Work hard and have fun transforming a young athlete's potential into performance. Practices should be fun places to be.
- Focus on potential. Do not just focus on what your players cannot do, focus on what they can do.
- Protect your hard working players. Do not let the players be disrespectful. No yelling is needed, just sit them out for a few minutes, then invite them back in by asking them 'Are you ready to focus now?'. Running the whole group is not as effective as it was 20 years ago. Tough love is needed, but do not cross the line.
- Let's get rid of the statement "This is how it's always been done". Be a forward thinking coach. The game has changed a lot so we have to be constantly aware of changes within the game. The difficult task is not implementing new ideas, but trying to get rid of the old ones.
- Becoming obsessed with improving the performance of yourself and your players is a good thing. Success has always been driven by hard work. Coaching is not easy but it helps to follow a process. A coach who is focused on the process believes that the games are won on the practice field.

## **Coaching styles:**

- **Command** – "I want you to do this..."
- **Q & A** – "How can you get the ball to the open wide player?"
- **Observation** – "Watch how Johnny opens up his body when receiving the ball."
- **Guided discovery** – "Show me how you can switch the play."
- **Trial & error** – "Recognize the moment to drop the ball back."

## **Game day:**

- Keep everything in perspective
  - Played well and won – Celebrate.
  - Played well and lost – Disappointing, but there were lots of positives.
  - Played bad and won – Good result, but we need to improve.
  - Played poorly and lost – With hard work this week at practice, we will get it right. Team work!!!!

# Practice curriculum

***No matter how good your session plans are, without enthusiasm, energy and focus, it will not have maximum effect.***

Every practice session must have a purpose and the players have to be challenged both mentally and physically.

## Format:

- Objective of the practice session (to teach game intelligence). Cover the coaching points (good delivery). Have a variation or progression in your practice session if applicable.
- Your practice sessions are fun places to be. You provide the foundations that constitute a learning basis from which players construct and develop playing skills and game intelligence (decision making). Your players will learn, compete, grow, work hard and feel like they are achieving something.
- Establish a clear philosophy. Work from the end backwards. Our end goal is to produce quality soccer players and people. Let the players know what you are all working towards. "The big picture is..."
- The sessions must include these aspects: Technical, Tactical, Physical, Mental & Social
- The topic of the practice session must be relayed to the players (planning and organization). Communication is key when coaching. Your relationship with your players is of utmost importance.
- Have high standards whatever the level. The more the players are aware of your standards, the more realistic they are to achieve and you will be able to hold players accountable for their actions.
- Can your technical and tactical sessions be ran using a goal and a goalkeeper? The object of the game is to score so it will help the players if the practices involve a goal whenever possible.
- Quality demonstrations. We are coaching decision makers which involves quality practices. Our players will need an excellent demonstration of how the exercises work.
- The practice sessions must reflect the game. Have varied practices so that players will see themselves in as many situations as possible.
- Expect your players to have at least 650 touches per practice session. Quality touches that are related to playing soccer.
- Ball technique exercises should provide plenty of physical activity. A few motivational running competitions and agility training are sufficient when it come to fitness.
- Have your players show up to your practices excited. If you challenge them every session, this will generate excitement. They will be less enthused if you do the same thing every week. Your sessions will make them think, move constantly and the physical demands will mean that when they get a water break, they will use them exactly for that.
- When coaching your session focus on the details whether it be technical or tactical. The player must understand both. We want players receiving the ball correctly. Players must understand where they pass the ball and how they receive it. Also focus on the players reaction after they make a mistake. How can you improve the reaction? Players need to know they have your support. Help them through the mistakes.
- You will spend more time planning practice sessions than you will coaching them which does not mean you are incapable but actually means that you care.

## Games are won on the practice field

*If you focus on results things will not change. Focus on change and you will get results.*

**Technique** –The natural starting point in the development of a soccer player is getting the body into a good position to receive the ball. Choosing the proper body part to receive the ball, being strong and balanced on your feet, and then applying the proper touch on the ball are all essentials in building a solid foundation for good technique. Instruct your players to receive the ball on the ‘half-turn’ as this will give the players many more options. Receiving the ball using the ‘back foot’ requires the player to have the correct body shape. This will help the player move the ball more comfortably and quickly. When time and space become a premium, players with better technique will have more time on the ball and be more successful when using the ball. An absolute priority is to develop a clean first touch. Receiving and position of the ball as it arrives allows more time to release the ball with an accurate well timed and well-paced pass. The first touch is the key to becoming a quality player. A good first touch allows you to keep the ball or to play it off first time, thus creating a serious problem for the defender. Good technique can find an answer to a game situation more quickly.

**Attacking Play** - With a solid grounding of technique established, you can now begin to coach your players in attacking play. The greater the control a player has in the final third, the greater the chance to dictate to your opponents. It is especially important to keep the ball and probe for scoring possibilities. In attacking play, all the players must contribute, from the keeper, the backs to the forwards, everyone has a role to play. The key to good attacking play is passing angles. Running, passing and looking in straight lines narrows the view of the game and lacks creativity. It is important to pass short and long and to play angles, not just straight lines. Your players must be able to decide for themselves what play is available by moving into areas that will cause the opposition problems. The decision on the pass, the accuracy, the weight and the timing of the pass is now key in creating that shooting chance. Players have to understand the moments of when to dribble, shoot or when to pass. Playing a passing game does not mean that you cannot dribble. Players must see the moment when you can create a “numbers up” situation (2v1). If the opposition sees the danger and have sufficient cover, don’t dribble. Move the ball with a pass to get away from that danger.

**Counter attack** – “An attack in reply to an attack”. Your teams will understand when the opposition is ‘out of balance’ once they regain possession. Once they see the counter-attack is on, the team splits. If they are tightly grouped, they will lose possession quickly. The player winning possession will look to play forward and others will support to create more attackers than defenders. The quality of that first pass and movement is key. There must also be a defensive balance to the team. The defensive players will move into areas that will prevent a counter attack from the opposition.





**'Third Man' Running** - It is more than just the player with the ball and one player off it; passing must include consideration for the 'third man'. In teaching a player 'third man' running; pay attention to wide angles and other players running into space. When players make wide runs, they open up more room to play into. The art of the 'third man' running is in the speed of execution. With constant practice and repetition, this will become automatic when the game pressure kicks in. An example of a third man run is when player A passes to player B and player A continues their run. Player B passes to player C who passes to the continuing running player A. This is what is known as "Third man running." Your players have to be educated on this kind of movement. This is very difficult for the opposition to defend against and causes them confusion.

**'Transition'** – This is the process of going from defense to attack or attack to defense. Your players should understand both sides to a transition. Young players have a natural instinct to work harder when in possession of the ball. Some do not seem to work as hard when possession is lost. You have to work on transitions at practice so that your players work just as hard at defending as they do attacking. Teaching the players the tactical understanding of transition is so important. Some players will understand it more than others. Know who those players are. Get them to be your eyes on the field.

### ***Attacking in transition***

- Your team must be organized defensively before winning possession.
- The first pass must have quality and put the opposition under pressure.
- It is a young players natural instinct to go direct for the goal. This can lead to the ball being forced into areas that will break down your attack. Players must be quick in transition but also be smart.
- Players must move off the ball into open space and offer support to the player in possession. If they do not receive the first pass they must constantly move to support the transition. They may not even touch the ball but their support could still have helped the transition by taking a defensive player away from goal.
- Full backs attack on the wings. If the team understands this then the full back is an easy option for the player in possession.

### ***Defending in transition***

- Get players behind the ball as quickly as possible.
  - How does the player / team react once the ball is lost?
  - As soon as possession is lost the closest player (first defender) puts pressure on the ball to prevent the opposition playing the ball forward. The second defender (could be more than one player) offers cover.
  - Play with a holding midfield player (or two). This player is constantly in support of the ball being played backwards when you are in possession. Once you lose the ball they may be the first line of defense.
- Transitions must be a part of your practice sessions.

The opposition will be worried about you if your team has good transition skills in offense. They may be reluctant to push numbers forward which will put less pressure on your defenders. You will also frustrate the opposition if you have great defensive transition.

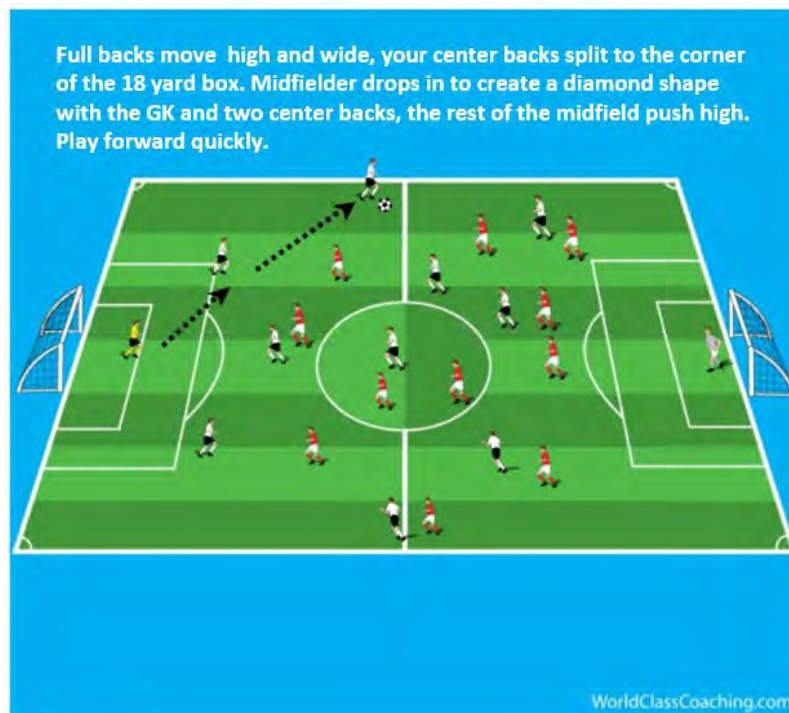
**'Defending'** – This is a team effort. Teach all your players to defend. Your forwards defend from the front, your midfielders get behind the ball and your defenders take good positions on the field. They communicate as a team. Your players will concentrate and understand the art of defending and be confident in 1v1 situations. They all need to know the defensive stance and know when to delay or when to tackle. To be a successful team you need all 11 players committed to the defensive side of the game. A defender needs to focus, break and then refocus again as quickly as possible. Your practice sessions must reflect the same challenges that can occur in a game. Coaching your team on how to defend 'out of

balance' will challenge them to solve problems quickly. Defending is done with good communication and team-work. Because we will attack from all angles, players may have to step into another position and cover for one of their team-mates that has gone on the attack.

Recruit an 'Artist'. Every team needs a player that causes the opposition problems. This can actually help you defensively. One or two more players from the opposition may be reluctant to attack because they are more concerned about the 'Artist'. If your team understands defending then moving to other formations or playing with 10 players (if one gets a red card) becomes a lot easier.

**'Pressing'** – Teams should be taught that when we lose possession of the soccer ball, we press as a team and win the ball back as soon as we can. Pressing quickly and aggressively will cause the opposition to panic and make mistakes. Once the ball is won, we go back to possession mode. Your players will understand they have two different mind sets. 'in possession' and 'out of possession'.

**'Playing out from the back'** – At U11 and below in some states the GK cannot punt the ball (concussion) so this will force the coach to teach playing out from the back. Goalkeepers are encouraged to play the ball out from the back but you need to practice this tactical aspect. Do not expect the players to perform this on game day without sufficient practice. Players on the field have to quickly move into open space for this to happen. If this does not happen then the GK options of playing out the ball become less. It takes a lot of courage to do this especially at the learning stage. If there is not an option for the goalkeeper to throw it out, then a punt will be the correct choice. At U11 the ball has to be placed on the ground without a challenge from the opposition and kicked. Players will also be encouraged to use the goalkeeper when keeping possession.



- When the GK has the ball the right and left full backs push high and wide to force opposing wide players backwards.
- The two center backs split to the corner of the 18 yard box to increase the distance between themselves and the opposing striker. If there are two strikers, the center backs go wider to create space for the midfield player to collect the ball. If the opposition has one striker then the midfield can push high.

- The GK must be heavily involved in this process and must be comfortable with the ball at their feet.
- Once the ball gets played out, can your players pass the ball forward? Can they create an overload? Your players should always want the ball. Playing this way will lead to mistakes but eventually the positives will outweigh the negatives. You have to encourage them to be brave.
- You still require good decision making from the GK. If the GK is not playing the ball out from the back, why? Are they afraid or is no-one being brave enough to receive it?

**‘Set pieces’** – Encourage your players to be creative. Work on corner kicks, restarts etc. Both offensive work and defensive work should be practiced. Does your GK know how to set up the wall? Who goes in the wall? If you have two teams at your practice session, have a full size game at the end of practice and organize set piece routines. If you are not getting any opportunities to coach set pieces in the game, randomly announce a corner for one of the teams. See how the players react. Teach them.

**‘Defending against corner kicks’** – For your U12’s and under you do not want any of our practice sessions to involve heading. Maybe your club can invest in some soft ‘Nerf balls’. How do you teach defending against set pieces? What you have to do is place them in positions that are going to eliminate the chance of the opposition scoring. Below shows how the red defending team positions themselves on corners. The 3 key areas are zone marking and all others are man marking. Always leave a striker (4) or two up the field. If you bring everyone back, the opposition will have more attackers.

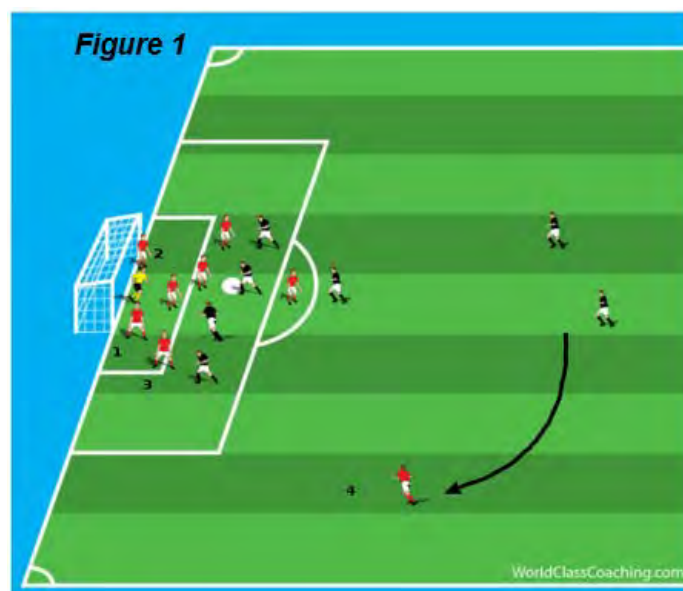
### **Figure 1**

**Position 1** – The defender comes off the post slightly to stop any balls being delivered into the near post area.

**Position 2** - The defender covers the back post by standing inside the post on the goal line about one yard from the post.

**Position 3** - This defender stops any low balls that are coming into the danger zone.

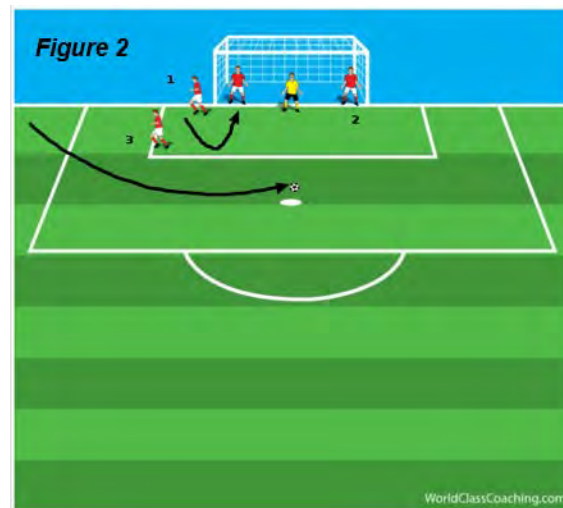
**Position 4** - When the ball is delivered and the attacker can see a team-mate is ready to clear the ball they should quickly move out wide. It is easier for the defender to direct the ball to position 4 when the corner is delivered.



### **Figure 2**

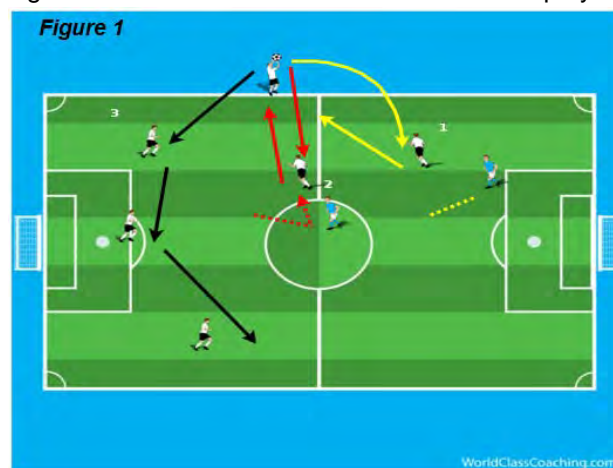
When the corner is delivered to a dangerous area defender #1 now moves inside the goal like #2. With the GK, player 1 and 2 now in the correct areas, it gives the opposition a smaller window to score. There will be a lot of swipes at the ball and players ducking out of the way. Having the goal covered is crucial. Player 3 also moves in an area that covers the goal.

Have your more tenacious players in position 3 and in the danger zone (six yard area) Players in positions 1 & 2 do not need to be your best headers of the ball or more aggressive players but should have some soccer intelligence or quickness. At the younger age groups goal-keepers very rarely come and catch the ball on a corner kick. What they can offer is good communicating like “Away” or “push out”.



**‘Throw-ins’** – In Development phase I & 2 all throw ins will be thrown to feet. Once receiving the ball to feet, the ball will either be played back to the thrower or the thrower will give the instruction for the receiving player to turn. Throws are very hard to defend against if executed properly. The key is quick movement away from the defender, quality throw to the foot with a quality touch being performed. The thrower must attempt to throw the ball to the receiving players foot without the ball bouncing. If the receiving player is a good distance away then the ball can hit the ground first.

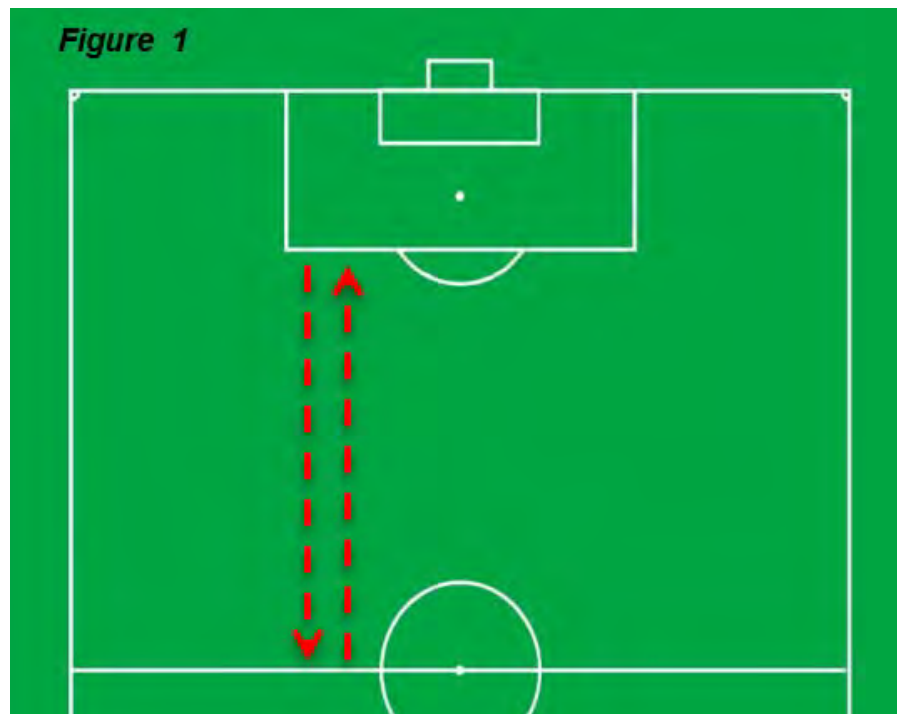
*Figure 1* - Players 1 & 2 show positions on the field where the ball is being passed back to the thrower. Player 3 shows the ball being thrown backwards and the team switches play.





**'Physical demands'** - Fitness has to be part of your practice planning. Whether you do your fitness with a ball or without, the goal is geared towards getting the player conditioned for playing soccer. Fitness at home must also be part of a players development. This shows self motivation. Soccer fitness at home can consist of a 1.5 mile jog. Then stretch. On the return journey home for the next 1.5 miles the player may sprint a 'tree' jog a 'tree'. This mimics what happens in a game.

A good coach will make sure that their team is in soccer shape. All the skills and tactical advice you give your team will not mean a thing if your players cannot cover the ground in an adequate manner. Do not overlook fitness. *Figure 1* shows a simple fitness exercise.



At intervals in your practice session, have your players line up on the 18 yard line. On your call, they have to sprint to the halfway line and back in 15 seconds. The rule is that if one player does not get back in 15 seconds, the rep does not count. Use your discretion on this as you may have a player that cannot do it. You can add a cone that is five yards closer or 5 yards further away for your faster players. After they run the exercise they then get 15 seconds rest before doing another one. 5 sets is a good starter, then gradually move to 10. (Once a good fitness level is reached, your practice sessions should be sufficient to keep up the fitness levels as long as players are still doing it at home) SAQ (Speed, Agility, Quickness) is also encouraged. Give the players ladder work or coordination running techniques. Use these exercises as part of your warm up.

**Formations** - Teams are now progressing to the 4-3-3 (4-2-3-1) formation that has been used by the Dutch for years. This formation can either have one holding midfielder or two (depending on how the game is going) This formation creates triangles all over the field and when played effectively, can be very successful. Your full-backs should be part of the attack. The right and left forward can either stay wide or move inside to help the center forward. The attacking midfielder should also move to support the center forward. Do not leave the center forward isolated against two defenders. You still have to teach your players other formations (4-4-2, 4-2-3-1) in case changes need to be made during the game. This will really help their soccer knowledge. If a team is playing poorly, a new change in formation can really help the team to “wipe the slate clean” and refocus. Young players become anxious when dealing with formations. This anxiety can come from parents or a coach that cannot explain the formation clearly. Be very clear about the role of each player. Keep it simple at the younger ages. Explain with images and not just words. Explain to the players why you think the formation you are using will work. Explain the roles of the defenders, midfielders and attackers by using a wipe board or by placing cones on the ground. Young players will embrace the change and enjoy learning more about the game.

At U9 and U10 the game is 8 v 8. The preferred formation is 2-4-1. The reason 2-4-1 is more successful is that it creates overloads in the midfield, attack and is easier to understand pressure and cover when defending. You will find yourself defending against four players because the opposition is playing 3-3-1 and the three defenders will not move forward. When you go on the attack one of our midfielders will join the forward and create panic for that one middle defender as our wide players move into attacking positions on the wings. The explanation of 2-4-1 to the players is easier and they can get a firm grasp of what is needed. When playing against the opposition there are lots of situations where there are no forwards to defend against. The opposition forward will come back to defend.

The explanation to the two defenders is:

- If the opposition has no forward, one defender pushes up into the holding midfield position which allows the two midfielders to attack freely.
- If the opposition has one forward, one defender stands behind and one in front (Still providing that holding midfield role)
- If the opposition has two forwards, both defenders defend goal side of the forwards. (Very rare)

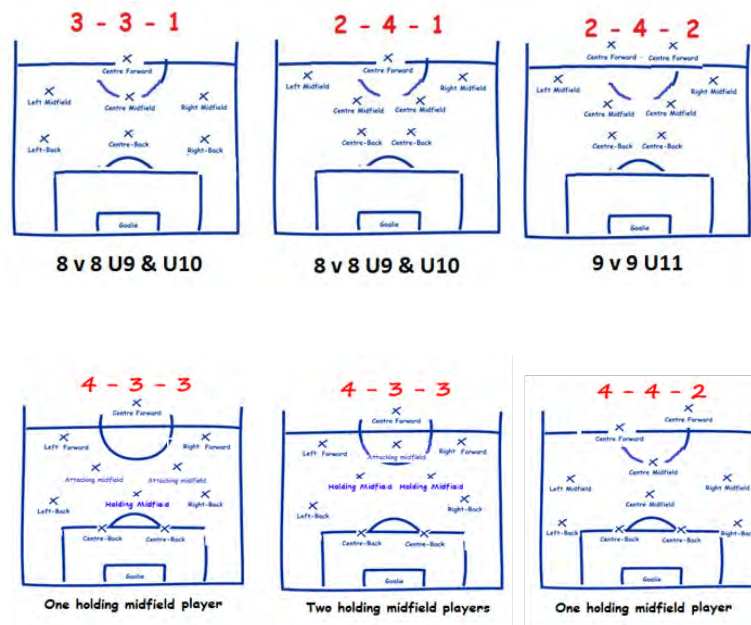
The explanation to the midfielders is:

- When we lose possession get behind the ball. When we win possession move into space for an attack.

The explanation to the forward is:

- Stay up the field, stay on-side and wherever the ball is being played by the opposition, you keep moving to positions where you can receive it when possession is gained.

3-3-1 can also be used. If you are playing against a good coach and the opposition are pushing both wide players forward when attacking then this may cause you problems in a 2-4-1 formation and the easiest way to play against this without causing the young player anxiety is to play the same formation as the opposition and play 1v1 all over the field. This very rarely happens and the 3-3-1 formation is very rigid. If you play it, make sure to get both wide players involved in the attack and be prepared for lots of 1v1's. When playing 9 v 9 play 2-4-2 and apply the same principles.





## The team within the team

*Treat everyone with respect and you'll get the support*

**Parents** – A key element in your coaching environment are the influence of parents. The parents are the ones that influence the children to participate and they need to be made part of the development process. This does not mean they can tell you what formations to play or tell you where their child should be playing on the field. Of course, you will get some parents that come and tell you this. You have to address the issue with integrity and if you have followed a structured plan and stuck with the process, you will have a quality answer that they will understand and hopefully agree with. If the parents see a progression in the development, they will buy into the process and just sit back and enjoy the ride. If you start to look disorganized, stop communication and not give players an opportunity to improve then the problems of parental support will disappear. When you think about it, the parent is the foundation of the soccer club. The parent is the one who is teaching their child physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. There will be many times that your team or a player will encounter a few problems. To get the team or player back on track as quickly as possible you will need a strong parental support. If the parent supports the coach and the philosophy then this will help speed up the development of the soccer player whether it is physical or mental. The one thing players should not be hearing are over critical parents. So if a player is going through a troubled time, you and the parent have to be the supportive structure to help that player get back to enjoying the game.



**‘Game day’ (The best day of the week)** – You want to excel at your practice sessions and have the discipline to use game day as an extra teaching and learning opportunity. Do not get involved with the match officials or the opposition coach. You want the game officials and soccer community to enjoy coming to your games.

Warm up starts 30 minutes prior to kick off. All players must be present. Players that fail to make warm up on time, jeopardize their playing time (If you think the reason they have given for being late is valid, then you can start that player). Players must get at least 25 minutes playing time. If a young player is struggling, you need to help them. Game management is important. Have a notepad and write down incidents that occur or do not occur.. This will help you conduct your half time team talk and also help for planning your next practice session.



### **Playing philosophy**

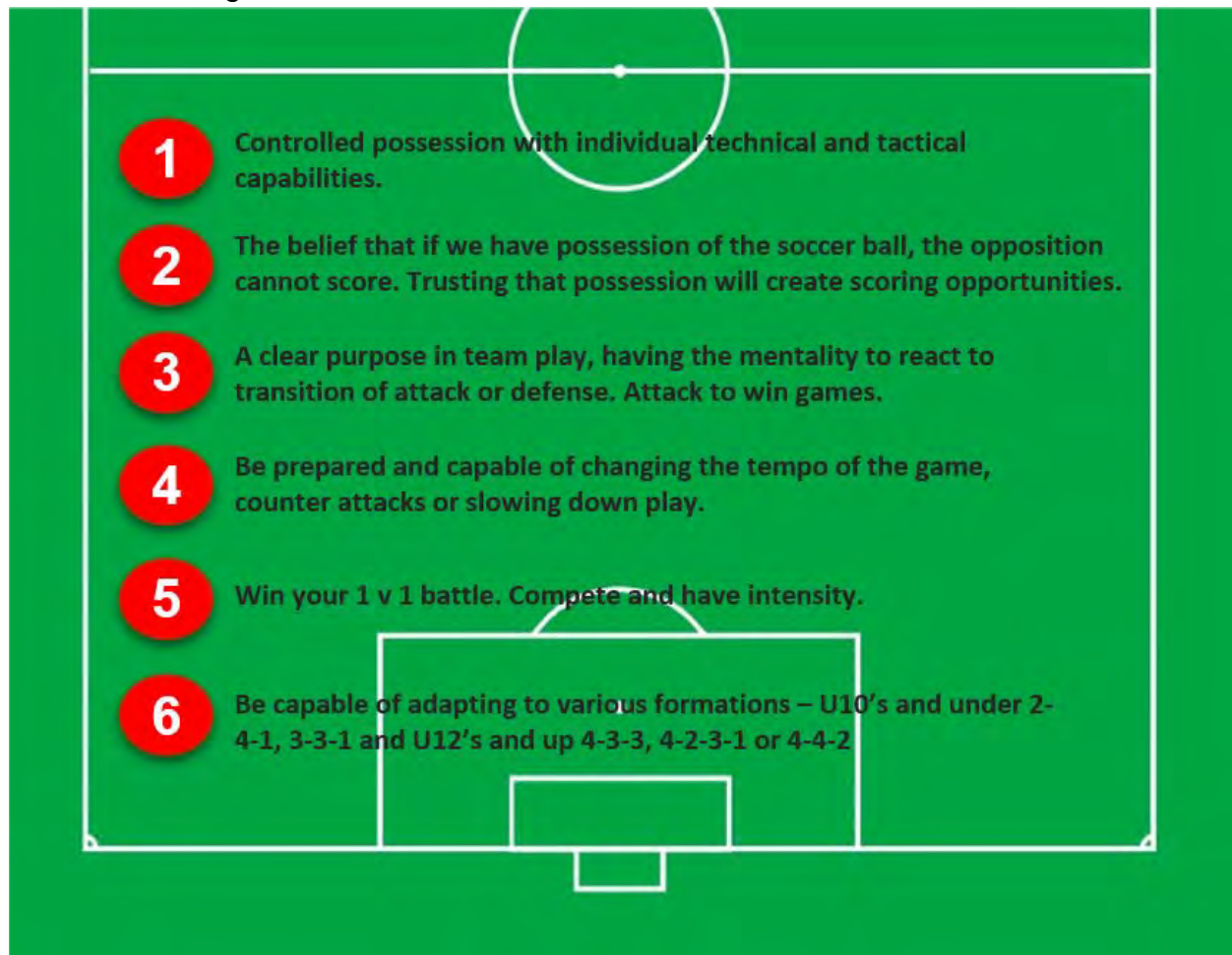
A controlled possession game approach with the emphasis on quality passing. This will be combined with intelligent and timely support and movement leading to penetration up the field to provide goal scoring opportunities. Because our style of play is based around possession, passing and control of the ball, it is paramount for your teams to develop the ability to play through the thirds. This can either be on the counter attack or by a patient build up. So what does this entail? When a team plays through the thirds it plays from one third to the next (backline to midfield line to forward line) rather than bypassing the midfield. There is no doubt that it is a risky proposition to make a pass from the backline into the midfield that has a chance of being intercepted or stolen. At the youth level a long ball over the top with a run and chase mentality can produce excellent results in terms of winning games. This is why you stick with the long term development model over a win now model which is short term. Play with holding midfield player(S). These players offer support when in possession and are the first line of defense when the ball is lost.

To defend effectively where all players contribute to regaining possession of the ball. This will be done aggressively and quickly. Players will have a clear understanding of the tactical objectives of pressure cover balance.

Even if you know that the majority of your players will never see the light of day at the international level, you must teach all your players in a way that they may have a chance to succeed at the highest level possible.

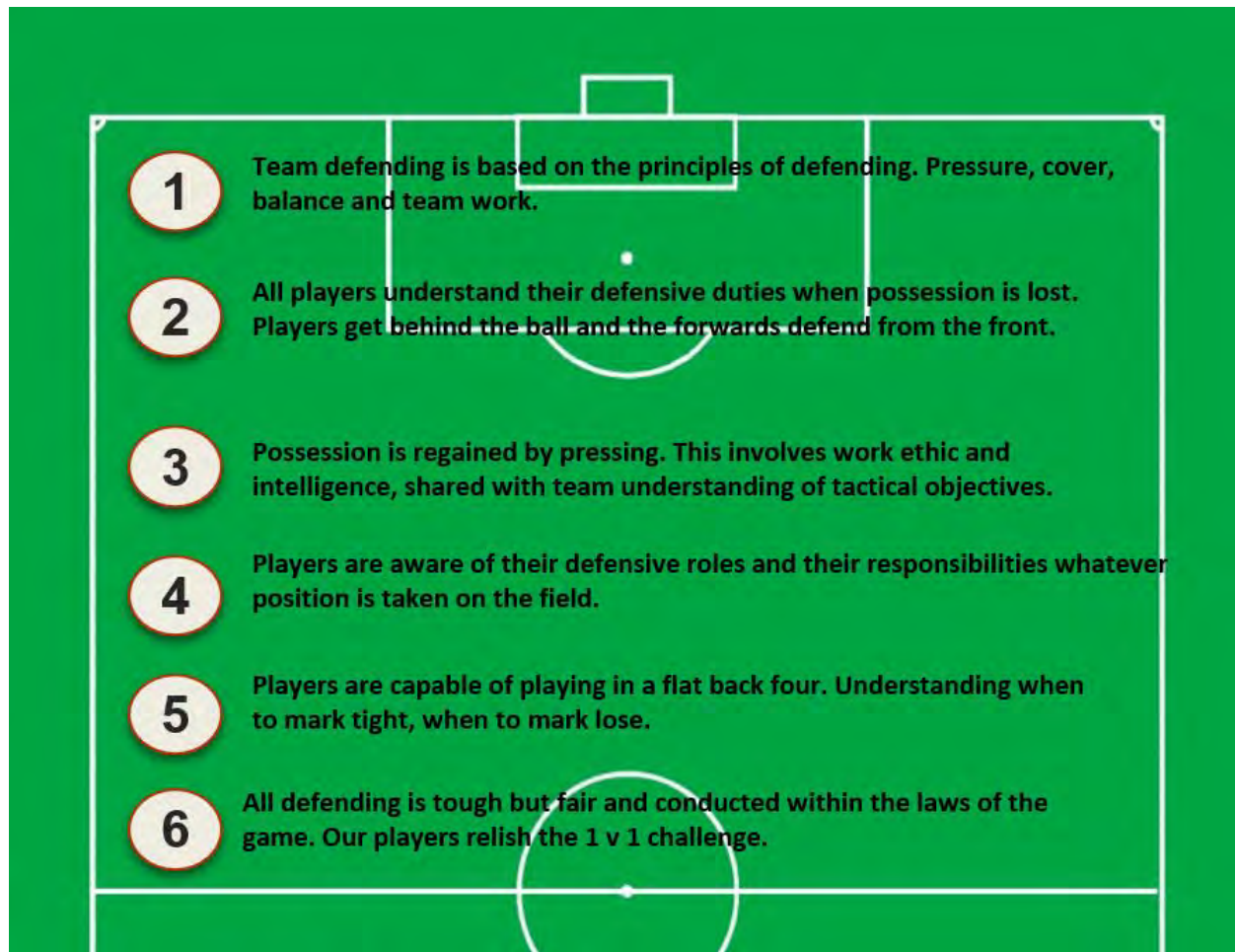
## Playing philosophy - Attacking

Attitude – Intelligence - Enthusiasm



## **Playing philosophy - Defending**

Attitude – Intelligence - Enthusiasm



## Warm ups - The start of your session sets the tone.

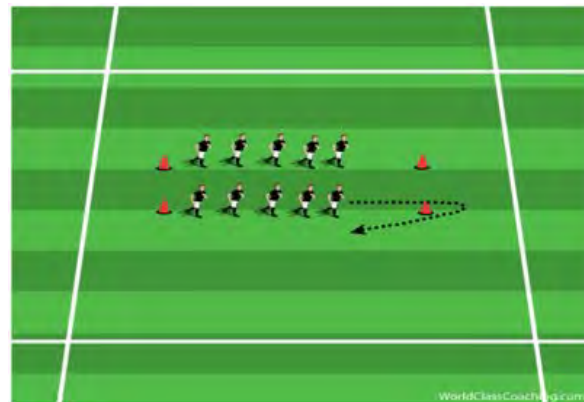
Your warm ups have four important objectives...1. Decreases the risk of injury. 2. Increases agility, skill, power and performance. 3. Allows players to mentally prepare and focus on the game or session ahead. 4. Team bonding. The warm up should be done as a group and you must teach the players to conduct their own warm ups. This will build team chemistry a lot quicker and give the group a sense of responsibility.

1. This exercise shows 10 players. While the group is jogging you can use the 4 cones as shown. Have the cones set at 5 x 20. Designate two players to run the exercises. They stand at the front of each line.

Jog around the cone and back for about (5 minutes)

Perform dynamic exercise: (5 minutes)

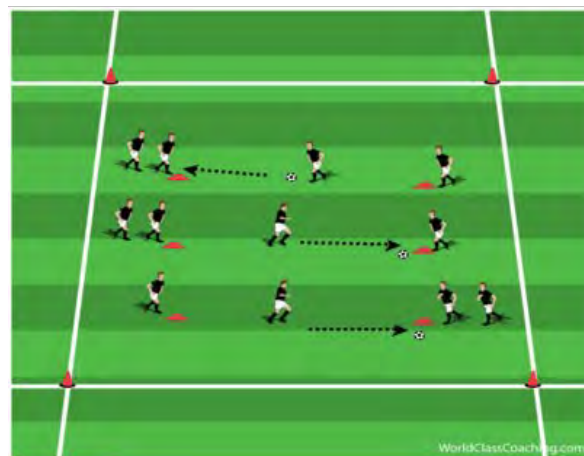
- Mimic kicking a ball
- Karaoke
- 'Over the gate'
- Lunges
- Walk and hamstring stretch
- Knee lifts with rhythm
- Jog backwards



2. You now introduce the ball. Depending on the number of players you have will determine the number of stations. One ball per group. Have maximum of 6 a minimum of 3 in each group.

The player with the ball dribbles to the halfway mark and passes to the next player and follows the pass. The receiving player does the same. (3 minutes)

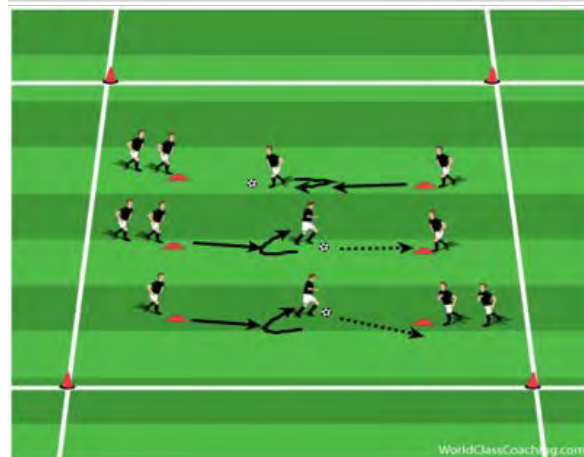
Players now play two touch passing. The player receives the ball with a clean first touch and passes to the opposite player and follows the pass (3 minutes)



3. The player with the ball now dribbles to the middle and performs two turns. Once the second turn is complete, they pass to the opposite player and then follow the pass.

Turns performed:

- Drag back with the sole of the foot
- Cruyff
- Inside of foot
- Outside of the foot
- Step over and outside hook





## Warm ups - continued...

In a 30 x 30 area place the players on the four corners of the grid with two players in the middle. Two soccer balls are placed at opposite corners. Run two stations if you have a lot of players.

The player with the ball passes the ball to one of the central players. They then follow their pass.

The receiving middle player CANNOT pass the ball from where it came from. They must pass the ball to an open outside player and then follow the pass.

The passing sequence continues. Pass and follow.  
Variation

The only change now is once the outside player passes in the ball and follows the pass, the inside player passes the ball out but CANNOT follow the pass. They look for a corner that has the least amount of players and join that corner.

*Look for the correct body shape, receiving on the back foot and intensity.*

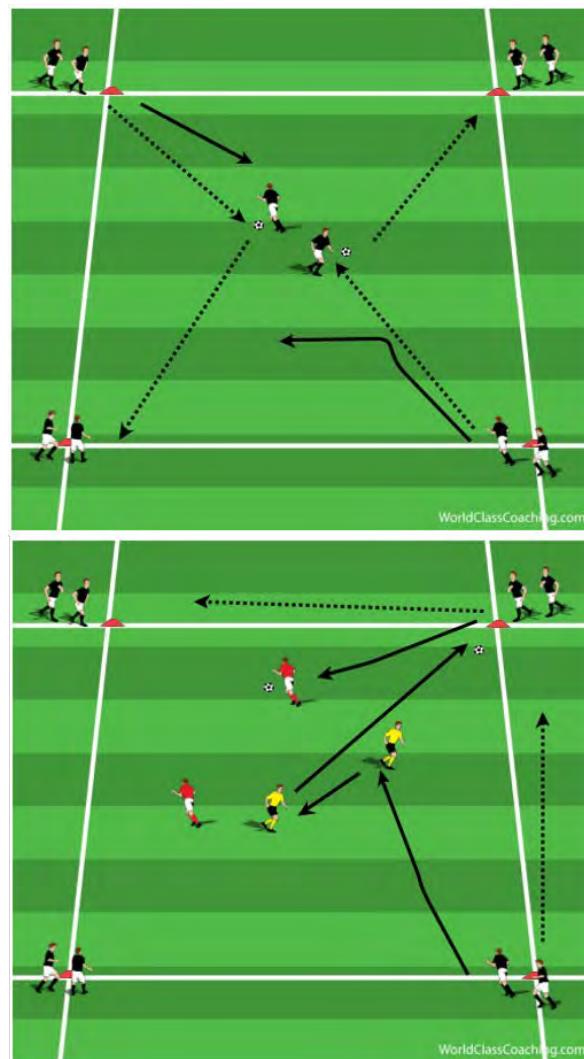
**For more advanced players:** Area: 30 x 30. Players are spread out on the corners with four players in the middle. The middle players are in pairs. Two soccer balls are used. The soccer balls can be different make / color / style. Each soccer ball is connected to the pairing in the middle. The two middle yellow players may use a "Red" ball and the Red players use a "White" ball.

1. The balls are passed counter clockwise. The outside players must know which ball is with which pairing.
2. The ball is moved round the square by either using the middle players or not.
3. Once an outside player makes the pass, they start moving to the next corner of the grid.
4. The ball can get to the next corner by using any of the 3 players involved. It can be one pass from corner to corner. It can go to one middle player to the corner or a combination can be played through all players to get to the corner.
5. Swap the middle players.
6. Now move the ball clockwise.

### Coaching points:

Decision making

If the player is struggling with a decision, just make one pass to the next corner cone and build from there.





# Development – Phase I

## 8 - 10 year old

Not every exercise in phase I will work for your group. You may take an exercise from numerous sessions that you feel will work for the group of players you have but as long as you have a progression to your session then the players will stay motivated and will feel a sense of achievement. Run your practices in three stages. Warm up, game related exercise and then a conditioned game. At this early age the goal is to get them to love playing soccer, teach them how to respect each other and how to give it your best.

Keep your activities competitive and fun and the players will keep coming back. When you are doing technical work the key is to keep them engaged and not standing in lines. How can you teach technical skills and keep them motivated at the same time? These are skills that you will have to acquire over your time with the group and your time as a coach. This is not easy but this is the start of your building process. This is where the foundation is set. In this part of the book we show you 10 practice sessions that have worked for players between the ages of 8 - 10.

## Taking care of the soccer ball

**Stage I - Area – 12 x 12** (Depending on the amount of players you have) Form two teams of equal size. Number each teams players. The teams are shown who the numbered players are from the opposite team.

1. The coach calls a player ("Black 2") That player has a set amount of time (eg 10 seconds) to tag the player with the same number from the other team.
2. If they succeed, their team scores a point. If not, the other team gets the point.
3. Which team can score the most points?

**Variation:**

All the players now have a soccer ball.

Partners with the same number now hold hands and try to tag all the players (20 seconds) No ball is used.

**Coaching points:**

Awareness and movement

Ball dribbling skills

Fun



**Stage II - Area: 3 boxes. A 12 x 12, 6 x 6 and a 3 x 3.** Three players are at each box with one of them being a defender in the middle and the other two having a soccer ball. Players start from a side of the square.

1. The player has to dribble to any side of the square without being tagged.
2. If they dribble to the opposite side, they get two points. If they dribble to the nearest sides, they get one point. If they are tagged while doing this, the point does not count.
3. Players cannot be on the same side. So if a player dribbles to a side where the other player is, that player must move.
4. Players cannot stand at a side for longer than 3 seconds.

**Variation:**

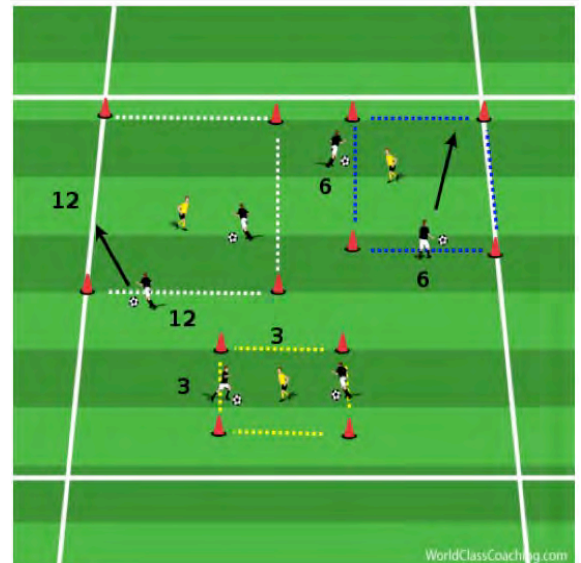
You could have 3 outside players if you have 12 players or make more squares.

**Coaching points:**

Look to attack space.

Keep the ball close to you.

Quick feet on the ball.



## Taking care of the soccer ball

**Stage III** - Area: 40 x 30. 9 Players 2 goalkeepers 3 v3 with a “Magic man” (Floater). In one half there is a 2v2 and in the other half a 1v1.

1. When play starts the “Magic man” plays in the half with the team who has the ball. This creates an overload.
2. When the ball is transferred to the opposite half, the “Magic man” moves to support the player with the ball.
3. If the defending player wins the ball, the “Magic man” now plays with that play.
4. Keep rotating the floating player.

### **Coaching points:**

Lots of movement to create the angle for a pass.  
Does the player need to use the support player? Use the support player as a decoy.  
Timing of run and pass  
Communication.  
Patience to get the ball to the opposite side.  
Decision making when taking the shot.  
Do not aim for the middle of the goal.



### **Coaching notes:**

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## Dribbling

**Stage I - Warm up** – Appropriate size circle with 10 players in 5 pairs and one ball for each pairing. The pairings are numbered 1 – 5 and stand on the opposite side of the circle from their partner.

- The coach calls out a number.
- The pairing with that number run clockwise. The player with the ball has to run round the circle and back to their starting point before the chasing player tags them.
- Once the exercise is finished, the chasing player now has the ball and waits for their number to be called out.

**Variation:**

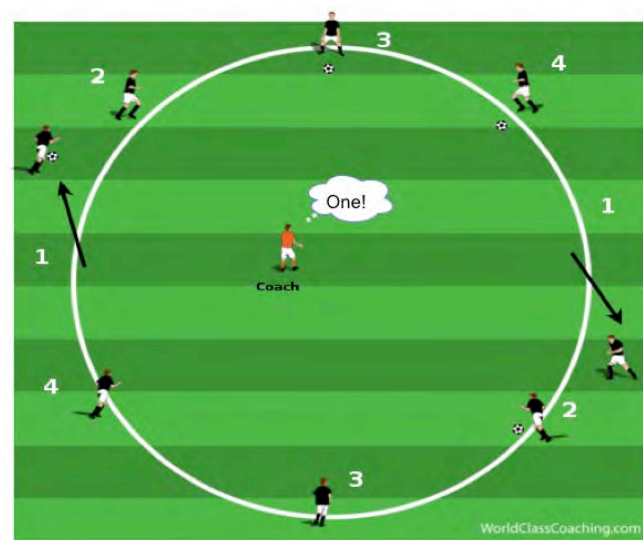
You can call two numbers at the same time. Warn the players to keep their heads up so they don't bump in to each other.

Players chasing can run either direction.

**Coaching points:**

Fun, energetic, competitive.

Keep the ball close to you running tight to the circle. Awareness.



**Stage II - Area:** Make a larger circle around a smaller circle with cones on the outer circle.

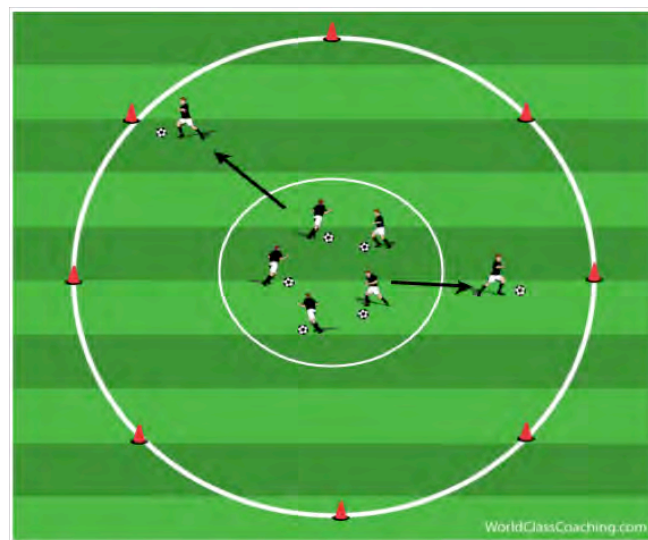
- All players have a soccer ball and are dribbling inside the small circle.

1. The coach gives the signal and the players have to stop their soccer ball, sprint around any outside cone and come back to dribble their ball.
2. The coach gives the signal. The players can now get any ball when they return but the coach has removed one. Who can be first?
3. Now run the same exercise as #1 but the players dribble the ball to the outside cone and return.

**Coaching points:**

Ball control. Speed of thought. Decision making.

Fun. Competitiveness.





## Dribbling

**Stage III - Area -** 30 x 30 field with two goals with. 6 v 6 is shown with the teams located at the outside gates.

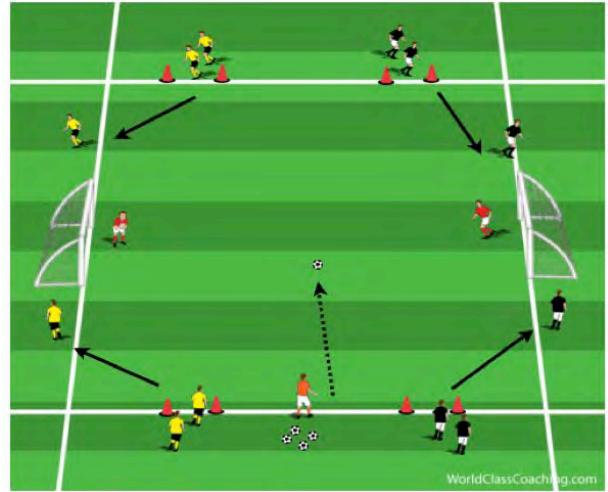
- The coach calls out **TWO!**
- Two players, one from each gate run around the back of their goal and onto the playing field.
- The coach plays in a ball and a 2v2 is played.

**Variation:**

The coach can call out more numbers if your squad size is bigger.

**Coaching points:**

This session is teaching the competitive side along with team-work, decision making and fitness.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Dribble / run with the ball

**Stage I - Warm up:** Exercise shows 10 players in a 10 x 20 area.

The dark players all have a ball and the red players are in pairs and have one ball. Players do not have to have designated colors. This just helps with the explanation.

1. The dark players run / dribble their ball from east to west, back and forth.
2. The red players that are in pairs go from north to south. The first player with the ball runs / dribbles the ball north, comes back and passes to their team-mate, who then performs the same task.
3. Switch the roles of the players.

**Coaching points:**

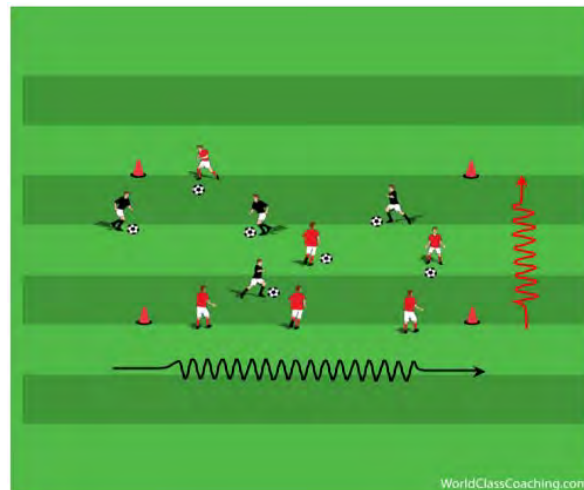
Fun, energetic, competitive.

Try and not hit other balls.

Close ball control. Lift your head. To see what is going on.

**Variation:**

The red players now stand facing each other and pass the ball to each other through the crowd.



**Stage II - Area:** Have four 12 x 8 playing areas. This exercise shows two teams of five players.

Each team has one ball. The black and red players are not situated in a box that is next to them. They have to work through an area occupied by the opposite team.

1. The players pass the ball between each other and when they see that they can either make a pass or run through another teams area, they do so.
2. Teams do not tackle each other.
3. A player can move without the ball to the other playing area but that must trigger one of their team-mates to switch.

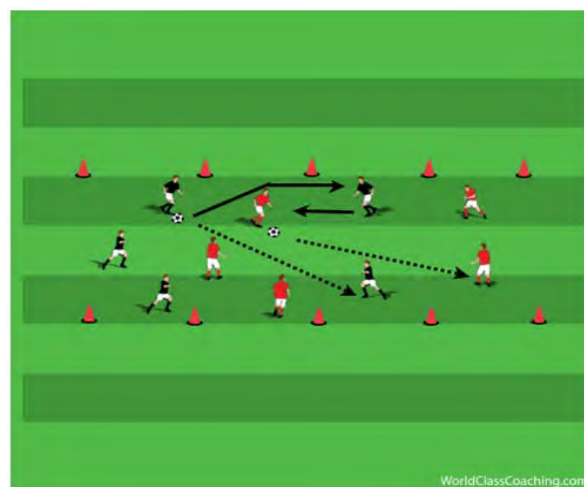
**Coaching points:**

Awareness. When to run or pass the ball. Communication

**Variation:**

Players can now tackle the opposite team. See if a team can use the two balls. This will get hectic but will create a game environment.

Area - 25 x 36 playing area. Two equal teams of 3 v 3 or 4 v 4



## Dribble / run with the ball

**Stage III** - Finishing with a game is so important.

1. Play normal soccer with or without goalkeepers.
2. Players must be encouraged to use the skills they have just learned from the previous practices.
3. Understand the moment to step in and teach.

The teaching moment is:

Step in. Ask the player the question ie "Who was open for the pass?" The player will tell you the right answer and you get them to make that pass. You tell the rest of the group "No one can move until the player receiving the pass touches the ball." This enables the player on the ball to make the pass and it gives them the image of what it looks like.



### Coaching notes:

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## Getting the ball from A to B

**Stage I** - Area: 15 x 15. This exercise shows 9 players. Two players have a soccer ball.

The exercise starts with the two players with a ball dribbling around the area and trying to hit the other players below the knee.

1. This has to be done with a side foot pass.
2. If a player is hit below the knee they go and collect a ball from the coach and help to hit the other players.
3. Play until all players have been hit.
4. Change starting hitters.

### Coaching points:

The players with the ball must show energy, movement of the ball and quick turning reactions while chasing players. Do not allow this to get out of hand. Emphasize the importance of the

pass. Pass with the side of your foot. The contact made on the ball is in the middle, not on the bottom. Aim for the legs. If players kick their ball out, they have to retrieve it.

**Stage II (a)** - Area: 12 x 20. This exercise shows 5 players. One soccer ball.

1. Player A has the ball with player B stood in the middle of the playing area.
2. Player B moves to the left or right with an open body stance.
3. Player A passes the ball to the back foot of player B.
4. Player B passes to player C and follows the pass.
5. Player C continues with the passing sequence.

### Coaching points:

Player B moves and calls for the ball. They give a quick look over their shoulder to player C.

Open body stance. Quality passing.

**(b)** 1. Player A has the ball with player B stood in the middle of the playing area.

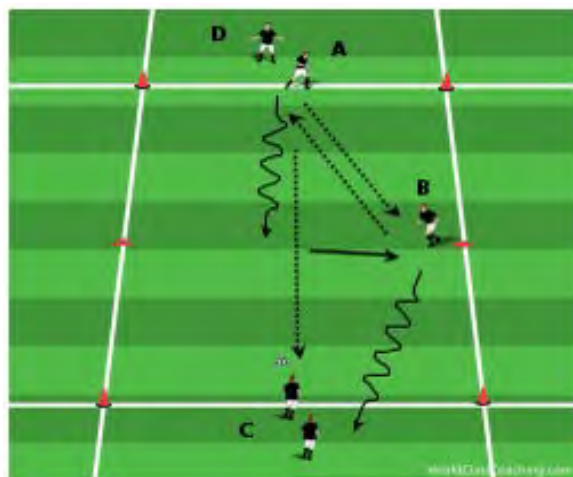
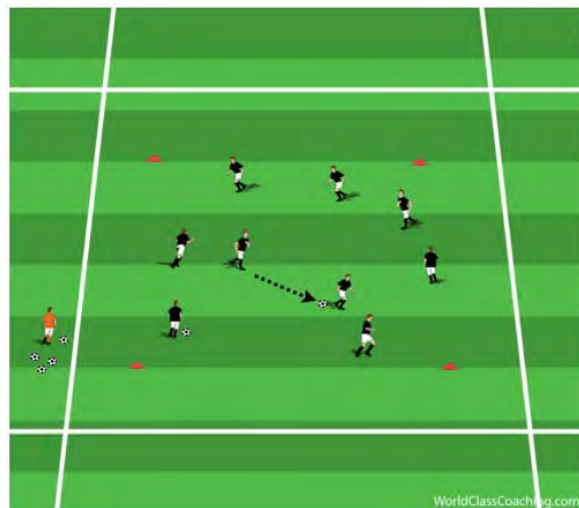
2. Player B moves to the left or right with an open body stance.
3. Player A passes the ball to player B who passes back to player A.
4. Player A now passes the ball long to player C.
5. Player B Follows the pass and player A moves into the middle playing zone.

### Coaching points:

Movement.

Lay off to player A.

Long pass.



## Getting the ball from A to B

- (c) 1. Player A has the ball with player B stood in the middle of the playing area.  
2. Player B moves to the left or right with an open body stance.  
3. Player A passes the ball to player B.  
4. Player B now moves the ball inside and player A overlaps player B.  
5. Player B passes to running player A.  
6. Player A passes to player C.  
7. Player B stays in the middle area until the coach replaces them.

Coaching points:

Movement.

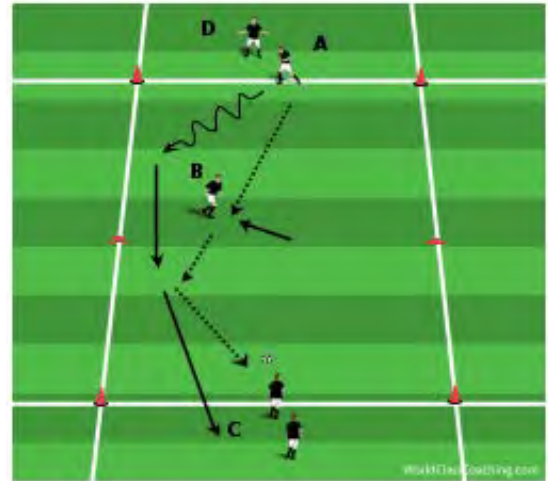
Timing of run / pass

Communicating

Field size to suit players ability. Play 4 v 4 with no GK. Or 5 v 5 with GK.

Normal soccer rules apply.

1. Teach the players about angles.
2. Do not over coach.
3. Look for situations where the players get the ball from one area to another.



**Coaching notes:**

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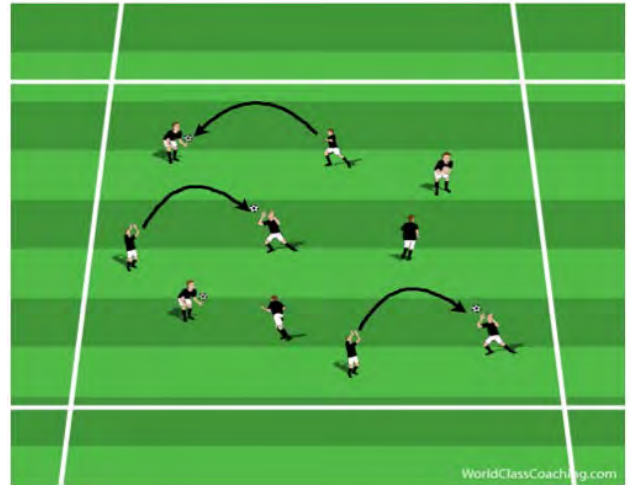
## 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3

**Stage I** - Area: 20 x 20 (Depending on the amount of players) Half the players are holding a soccer ball.

1. Players move around the area throwing the ball to a player that does not have one.
2. Players cannot hold the ball for longer than 3 seconds.
3. When throwing the ball the players communicate and make eye contact with the player they are throwing the ball to.
4. Players keep moving.

**Coaching points:**

Plenty of movement, communicating and fun



**Stage II** - Area: 6 players separated by colored pinnies are located about 25 yards from goal. They have all the soccer balls.

1. Player from one team plays a 1 v 1 against the goalkeeper.
2. Once the shot has been taken the player stays on the field and the yellows play a 2 v 1 against the dark player.
3. Once the shot has been taken or scored the players stay on the field. The next two dark players join the game to create a 3 v 2.
4. Once a shot has been taken or scored the players stay on the field and the final player from the group of six joins in to create a 3 v 3.
5. If you have 12 players, you now run the next group of six players.
6. The team / player that starts the exercise is the attacking team.

**Coaching points:**

Decision making. Being aware of the transition. Team work.



# 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3

**Stage III** - Area: 6 players separated by colored pinnies are located about 25 yards from goal. They have all the soccer balls.

1. Player from one team plays a 1 v 1 against the goalkeeper.
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4. Once a shot has been taken or scored the players stay on the field and the final player from the group of six joins in to create a 3 v 3.
5. If you have 12 players, you now run the next group of six players.
6. The team / player that starts the exercise is the attacking team.

**Coaching points:**

Decision making. Being aware of the transition. Team work.

**Coaching notes:**



## Passing & decision making

**Stage I** - Area: 20 x 20 with six players and one soccer ball.

1. Players are split in colors 3 / 3.

Every time a ball is passed to a player, they have to pass to a player of the opposite colored jersey.

**Variation:**

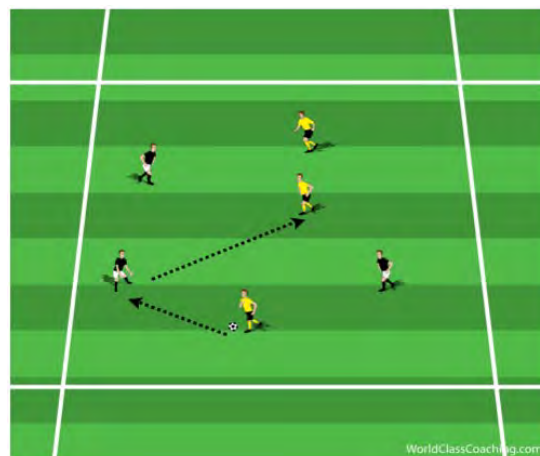
Assign a team that has to pass the ball one touch

Play with two balls

**Coaching points:**

Communication

Awareness



**Stage II** - Area: Set up two 12 x 20 grids. Exercise shows 10 players, 5 v 5. (Can be done with more players)

The coach has all the soccer balls.

1. The coach serves in a ball. Once the ball is touched by that team, one defender from the opposite team enters the area.

2. The team with 5 players keep possession. The coach counts the passes. After every 5 passes another defenders comes in to help. So 5 passes, 10 passes and so on. See how many defenders the possession team can get in their area of play.

3. If the defender wins the ball, they quickly move back into their playing area and the coach serves the ball to the other team.

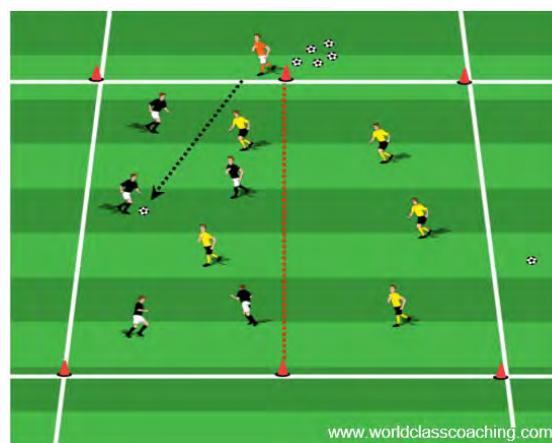
4. Same process.

**Variation:**

Now send in two defenders only. Those two defenders have to win the ball and pass it back to their team.

**Coaching points:**

Communication, support play, passing.



## Passing & decision making

**Stage III** - Area: 30 x 30 field with two goals. 6 v 6 is shown with the teams located at the outside gates.

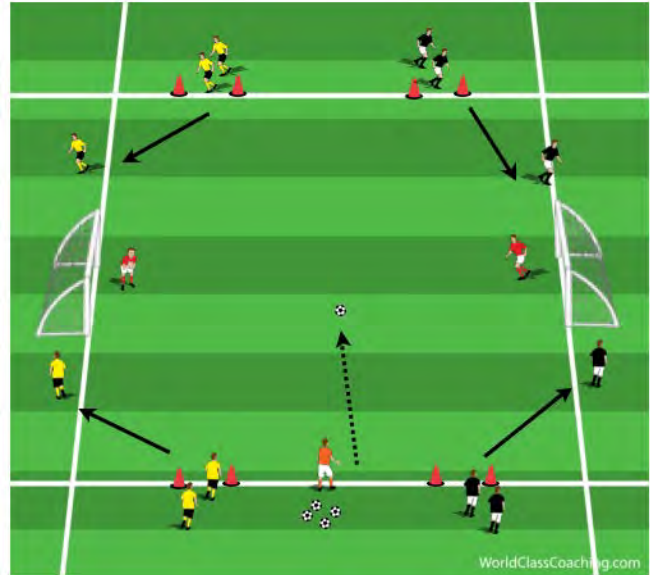
1. The coach calls out **TWO!**
2. Two players, one from each gate run around the back of their goal and onto the playing field.
3. The coach plays in a ball and a 2v2 is played.

**Variation:**

The coach can call out more numbers if your squad size is bigger.

**Coaching points:**

This session is teaching the competitive side of soccer along with team-work, decision making and fitness.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Ball technique & passing

**Stage I - Area:** One large circle with a smaller circle in the center. Size is suitable for the age and ability of the players. Have two equal groups. The players on the outside have a soccer ball. Players in the center circle do not have a soccer ball.

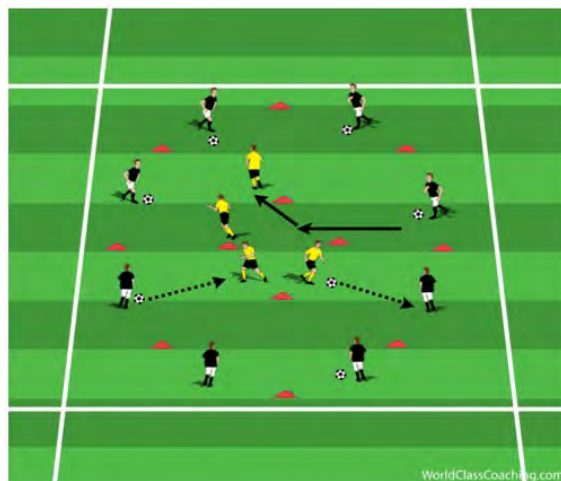
- The coach explains the control and pass required:
    1. Players control the ball with the inside of the foot and pass it back to the server.
    2. Control the ball with one foot across the body, and pass with the opposite foot.
    3. One touch pass back.
    4. Chest control and pass if appropriate.
- Once they perform the exercise, they **MUST** go back into the center circle, and then come out again and receive a pass.

### Variation:

- Players on the outside take legal throw-ins instead of passing. Player receives the ball and passes back to the thrower's feet.

### Coaching points:

Quality control and pass.

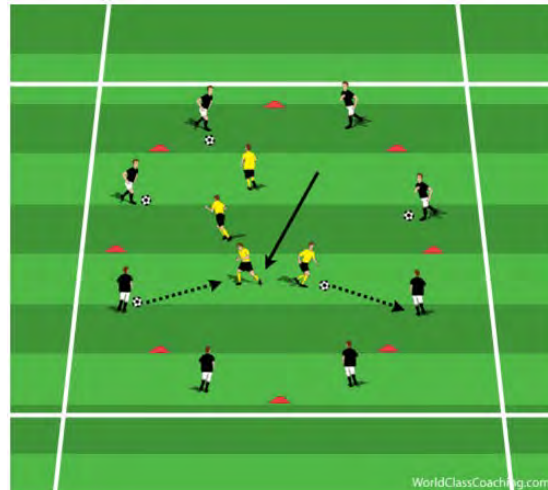


**Stage II - Area:** Same as the previous set-up, but take out the center circle and leave three / four players inside the circle. Always have one more ball than the number of players in the middle on the outside.

1. Players in the center receive a pass from the outside.
2. They **CANNOT** pass to the player who passed them the ball. They take their first touch with an open body position, and pass to a player on the outside who does not have a soccer ball.
3. Throw-ins can also be used by outside players. (Legal throws)

### Variations:

Put players in two's in the middle of the circle (4 players)  
 Players on the outside now pass to the designated player from each pairing, who passes to their partner, who then passes to the outside.





## Ball technique & passing

**Stage III** - Field size to suit players ability. Play 4 v 4 with no GK. Or 5 v 5 with GK.

Normal soccer rules apply.

1. Teach the players when to dribble, when to pass, when to shoot.
2. Do not over coach
3. Let them figure things out themselves.
4. Step in if you see an opportunity to coach passing.
5. Players will very rarely pass the ball back. If you see that moment, teach it.



### Coaching notes:

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## Being competitive

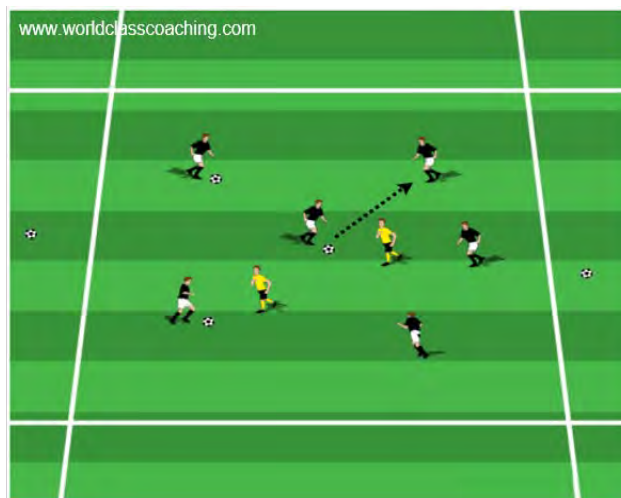
### Stage I - Fun keep away.

Area: 20 x 20. This exercise shows eight players. Two yellow defenders and six dark attackers. All the dark players have a soccer ball.

1. The exercise starts with the two defenders entering the area and attempting to kick all the balls out of the playing area.
2. The dark players dribble and shield their ball from the defenders.
3. If a dark players ball is kicked out, they now become a support player for the other dark players.
4. You will eventually end up with one soccer ball and a 6 v 2.
5. Switch defenders.

#### Coaching points:

When a player loses the ball, they must look around the area for the players that need help. Dribbling and shielding. Communication and the use of space. If the last ball gets kicked out, bring in another ball and coach spacing.



**Stage II - Area:** Three 12 x 12 boxes with 4 players in boxes 1, 2 and 3 with one ball in each box.

1. Two players start at the cones on the end-line as shown.
2. The players that are in the 12 x 12 area pass the ball and move in their own area working on their technique.
3. On the coaches signal, the two players sprint round the cones to box one and enter the 12 x 12 area.
4. They attempt to win the ball while the 4 players play keep away.
5. Once they win the ball, they move into box two until they have won the ball and then into box three. Once they win the ball in box three, they sprint past the end line.
6. The coach times the players to see how long it takes.

#### Coaching points:

Praise the competitive actions  
Team work.



## Being competitive

**Stage III** - Set up 60 x 40 with 8 v 4. The coach has all the soccer balls and a stopwatch. Each game runs for 90 seconds.

1. The coach serves in the ball to the dark team.
2. The four yellows work together to win the ball while the dark team look to keep possession.
3. As soon as yellows win the ball, that ball is no longer in play and the coach serves in another ball.
4. The coach counts how many balls are used in the 90 seconds of play.
5. After 90 seconds of play, switch to new defenders.

**Coaching points:**

Yellows pressing the play and working together. Forcing the play to tight areas.

Defenders press as a team

Communication



**Coaching notes:**

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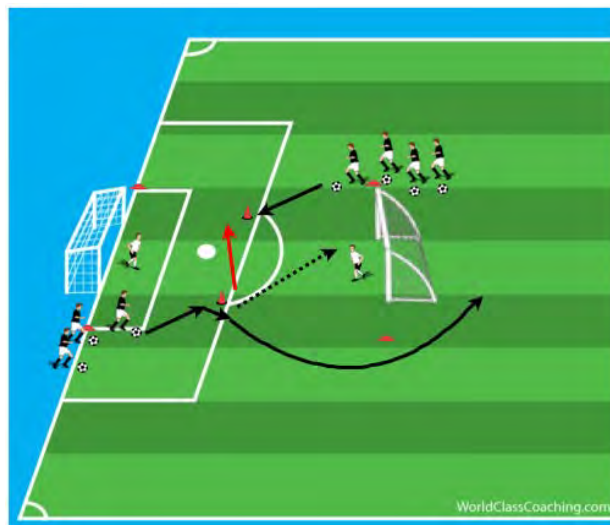
# Shooting

**Stage I** - Area: 25 x 30, 2 goals with goalkeeper's. Each player has a soccer ball.

1. First player from each group dribbles towards the cone, performs a fake move at the cone and shoots at the goal.
2. They then get their ball and join the opposite group.
3. Move the teams to the other cone to work on their opposite foot. Same drill is conducted.

**Variation:**

1. Red line: One player at a time. First player dribbles and shoots.
2. After they take the shot, the next player from the opposite group starts. The player who has taken the shot sprints across to tackle the shooting player. If the player gets tackled, or takes a shot, they then chase the player from the other team who has begun the exercise..
4. After the chase, they then join their own group.
5. So, "After a shot, you chase!!"



**Stage II** - Area: 25 x 30. Two teams. The coach has all the soccer balls. Each team is standing in their goal, linking arms.

1. Each player is numbered 1 - 5. (or more)
2. The coach calls out a number (or two numbers) and serves in the ball.
3. The player with that number from each team enters the field, plays a 1 v 1, 2 v 2 etc and attempts to score on the opposition's goal.
4. The remaining players stay linked together and act as a large goalkeeper. If they break the chain, then a goal is awarded to the other team.

**Coaching points:**

Awareness

Team work

Can you use your partner? Either by passing or as a decoy to win a 1v1.



## Shooting

**Stage III** - Field size to suit players ability.  
Play 4 v 4 with a GK or without. Make the goal a suitable size for the players ability.  
Normal soccer rules apply.

1. Teach the players when to dribble, when to pass, to create shooting opportunities.
2. Do not over coach
3. Let them figure things out for themselves.



### Coaching notes:

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## 1 v 1, 2 v 2 dribbling

**Stage I - Sit down tag** - Area depends on how many players you have. 20 x 20 is shown. Designate 2 players to be a 'Tagger' and separate them with a colored pinnie. The rest of the players have a soccer ball

1. The players with a ball dribble around the playing area. The yellows run around inside the area and attempt to tag the players.
2. If a player gets tagged, they sit on their soccer ball.
3. To free these players they must be tagged on the shoulder by a dribbling player.
4. See if the yellows can get every player sat down.

**Coaching points:**

Close ball control

Look for players sitting down

The coach can tag players on the shoulder if it gets too easy for the taggers.



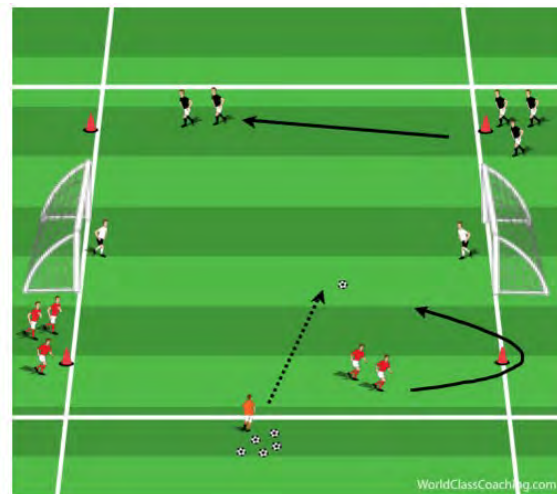
**Stage II - Area: 25 x 30, 2 goals with GK's.** Teams are placed at opposite ends as shown with a cone facing each team 30 yards away.

1. The coach calls out a number. If coach calls "TWO", 2 players from each team run around the opposite cone as fast as they can. They now attack the goal they are facing.
2. The coach serves in the ball. A 2 v 2 is played.
3. Play until a goal is scored or until the ball goes out of bounds.
4. Players return back to their group and the coach calls out another number.

**Variation:**

Play with no GK. First player that runs around the cone becomes a GK.

Tell the players to + 1 every time you call a number. Shout 2, but 3 go etc



## 1 v 1, 2 v 2 dribbling

**Stage III** - Field size to suit players ability.

Play 4 v 4 with no GK. Or 5 v 5 with GK.

Normal soccer rules apply.

1. Teach the players when to dribble, when to pass, when to shoot.
2. Do not over coach
3. Let them figure things out themselves.



### Coaching notes:

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## Running with the ball

**Stage I - Area:** Groups of six in two teams of three are shown. One soccer ball is used. You may have more than 6 players. Make more groups instead of having longer lines. The teams are 25 yards apart with another line 5 yards in (as shown)

1. The first player, with the ball at their feet, runs towards the opposite group.
2. They attempt to stop the ball on the first line (You can start with this as a warm up and then move to the next part 3 as the variation to the exercise)
3. As soon as they do this, the opposite player sets off and runs with the ball at their feet.
4. The player that has stopped the ball, runs to the end line and then chases the player.
5. The player that is chasing has to tag the other player that is running with the ball. No tackling.
6. Once the chase is over, that player joins the end of their own team line.
7. The sequence continues.
8. Every player ends up back with their own team-mates.

### **Coaching points:**

Good first touch and take few touches while still being in control of the ball.



**Stage II - Area:** 25 x 20 with two goals. This exercise shows 12 players. Designate two defenders. All other players have a ball each are spread out equally on the 4 corners.

1. One defender is on the middle cone while the other one rests.
2. Two outside players go towards the goal they are facing. These players must be diagonal from each other, as shown in the diagram.
3. The defender chooses which attacker they want to tackle.
4. The two attacking players. One has to dribble round the defender while the other player can run with the ball to goal.
5. When the exercise is over the players the next group starts.

### **Variations:**

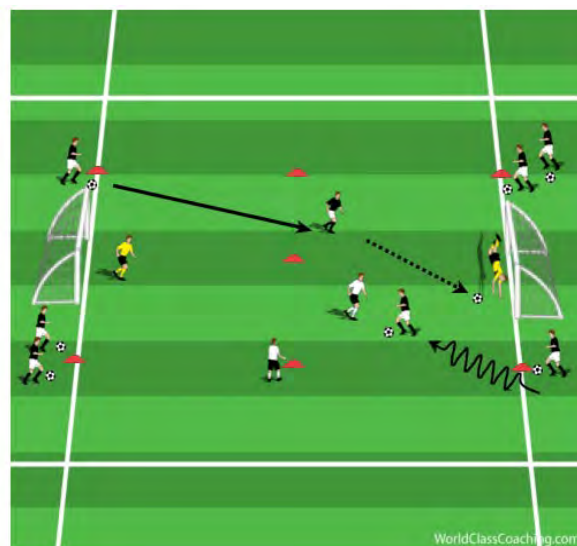
If the defender wins the ball, they can go and score.

Once the attackers get passed the halfway point, another defender can go in.

### **Coaching points:**

Opposed you will dribble. Unopposed you will run with the ball.

Quick attack, drive forward.



## Running with the ball

**Stage III** - Field size to suit players ability.

Play 4 v 4 with no GK. Or 5 v 5 with GK.

Normal soccer rules apply.

1. Teach the players when to dribble, when to pass, when to shoot and if they see space in front of them, run with the ball.
2. Do not over coach
3. Look for players turning
4. Let them figure things out themselves.



### Coaching notes:

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## Ball control and passing

**Stage I** - Area: 20 x 20 (Depending on the amount of players at practice) The coach nominates 4 players to be the taggers. They make two pairs and hold hands.

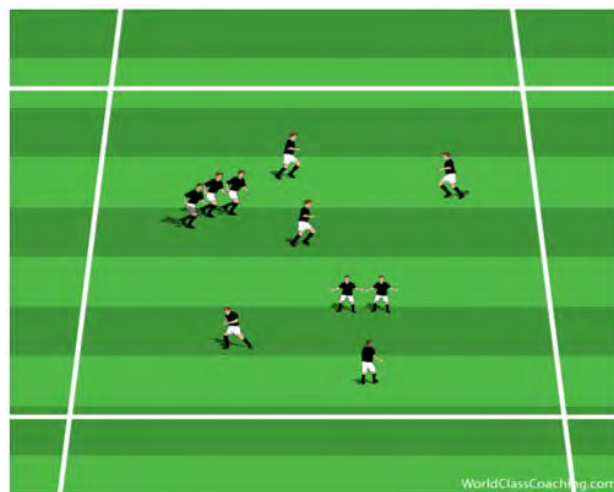
1. The two pair of taggers move around the playing area attempting to tag the other players. The taggers have to stay connected.
2. Once they tag a player, that player joins the line.
3. Once the line has 4 players, it splits into a pair again.
3. See how quickly all the players can be tagged.

**Variation:**

Have one big line of taggers. They do not split into a pair (Fun)

**Coaching points:**

Get the group of taggers to communicate with each other.



**Stage II** - Area: 5 / 6 players are situated at a 15 yard triangle.

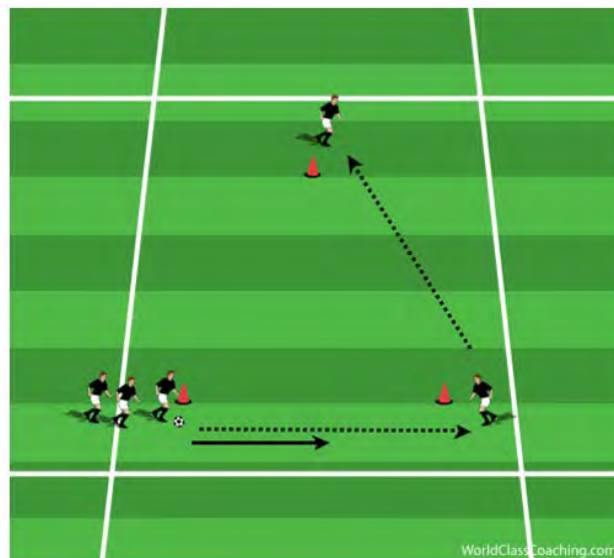
1. One soccer ball is passed counter clockwise. Once the player passes the ball, they follow their pass.
2. The receiving player takes an open body stance and controls the ball with the right foot.
3. If the group has good technique, add another soccer ball.
4. Now player clockwise. The receiving player opens up their body and takes their first touch with the left foot.
5. Make it a competition if you have more than one group going. Which team can execute most passes without making a mistake. The mistakes will be:  
Weak pass, control with the wrong foot, wrong direction of pass.

**Variation:**

Make the triangle bigger. Players play a give and go around the cone.

**Coaching points:**

Accuracy, weight and timing of the pass and also the correct body shape and correct foot when receiving the ball.





## Ball control and passing

**Stage III** - Area: 25 x 25. Players form two teams of four. Two players from each team play 2 v 2 while the other two are located on opposite corners as shown.

1. The two attackers try to maintain possession as long as possible while attempting to get the ball from one corner to the other.
2. When a pass is made to one of the corner players, the passer and receiver immediately switch places.
3. If this is a little difficult for your players add one or two players that play as floaters (Red pinnies) Whoever has the ball plays with the two red players so a 4 v 2 is played. The only thing is that the corner players stay in place until the coach moves them because if a red passes the ball, they cannot switch.

**Coaching points:**

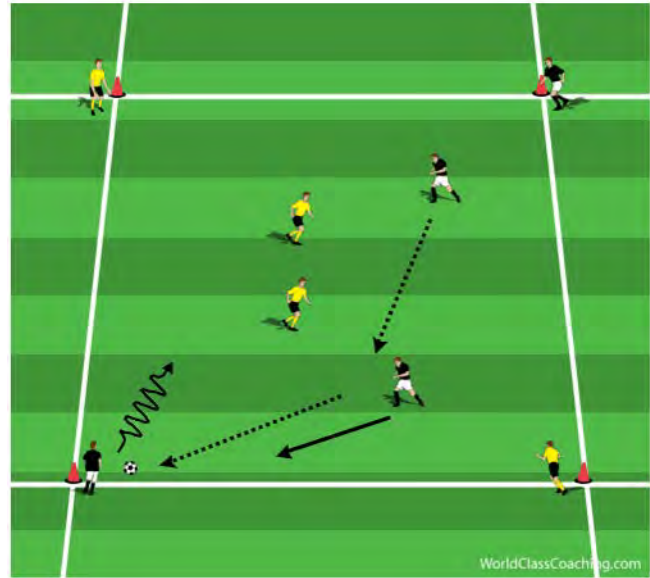
Lots of movement to create the angle for a pass.

Weight, accuracy and timing of the pass.

Quality first touch.

Communication.

Patience to get the ball to the opposite side.



**Coaching notes:**

[illegible]

## Transition

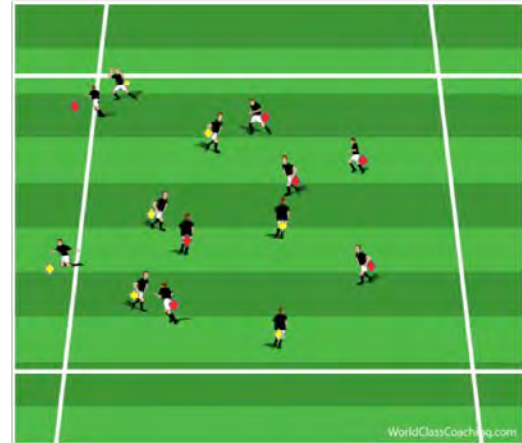
### Stage I - Tail Tag

Area: 20 x 20, Each player has a pinnie tucked in the back of their shorts. Play with two / three teams all separated by the colored pinnies.

1. The players run around inside the area trying to steal pinnies from the opposite team.
2. Once they grab a pinnie, they throw it out of the playing area.
3. The player who has had their pinnie thrown away can now put it back in and rejoin the game.

#### Variation:

1. Once your pinnie is taken, you are out.
2. Each player now has a ball. They try to steal other pinnies while keeping control of their ball.



**Stage II** - Area: 20 x 20. Two teams. This exercise shows eight players. Two yellow defenders and six dark attackers. All the dark players have a soccer ball.

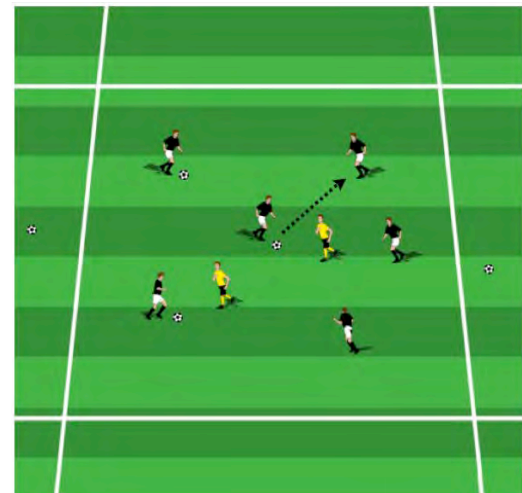
1. The exercise starts with the two defenders entering the area and attempting to kick all the balls out of the playing area.
2. The dark players dribble and shield their ball from the defenders.
3. If a dark players ball is kicked out, they now become a support player for the other dark players.
4. You will eventually end up with one soccer ball and a 6 v 2.
5. Switch defenders.

#### Coaching points:

When a player loses the ball, they must look around the area for the players that need help.

Dribbling and shielding. Communication and the use of space

If the last ball gets kicked out, bring in another ball and coach spacing.



## Transition

**Stage III** - Area: 20 x 30. Play 3v3 with other team-mates standing by their own goal.

1. The teams play against each other.

2. The rules of the game are:

- On the coaches whistle, both teams leave the field leaving the ball where it is.
- They are replaced by three other team-mates who continue the game with the score remaining the same.

Coaching points:

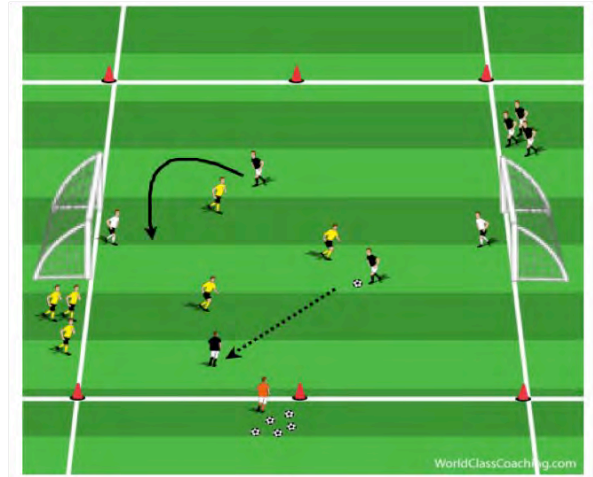
Encourage the players to play with intensity.

Transition – Organize quickly on defense or attack.

Players should control and pass the ball using the correct technique.

Movement off the ball is vital for this 3v3 exercise

Finish with a 4 v 4 game.



Coaching notes:

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## Find that shooting opportunity

**Stage I - Area:** Three cones 20 yards away from goal with three groups of players. All the players have a soccer ball.

1. Player A starts the exercise by dribbling around the coach and shoots at the goal.
2. As soon as Player A has taken the shot, they turn and receive a pass from Player B.
3. Player A now passes to running player B who shoots at the goal.
4. Player B and C now play a 2 v 1 against player A.
5. Players rejoin a new group of players.

**Variation:**

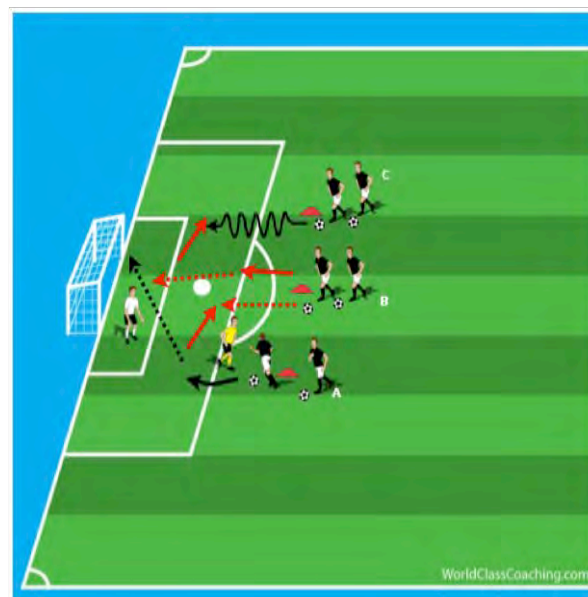
Player A shoots and then plays a 1 v 1 with player B. Once they have finished the 1 v 1 player C calls out the name of the player they want to play with in the 2 v 1. Player C and the player called play against the player that was not called.

**Coaching points:**

Technique of shooting

Positive 1 v 1

Team work 2 v 1



**Stage II - Area:** Play to one goal. Have some defenders and attackers stood by the goal and some midfield players stood about 25 yards from goal. The coach has all the balls.

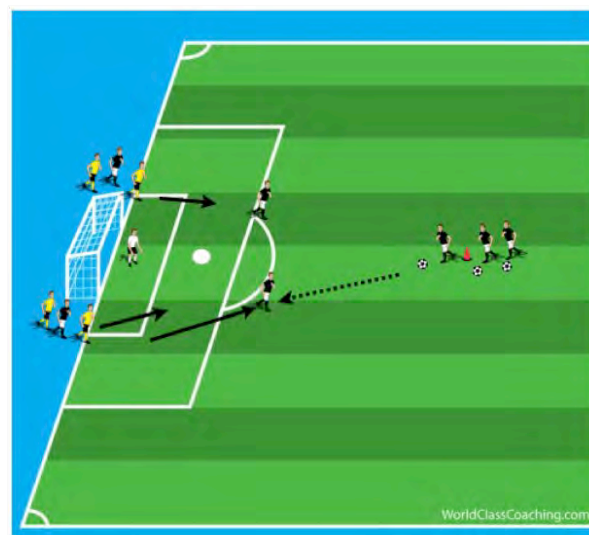
1. The coach passes the ball to the first midfield player.
2. Two forwards and two defenders come onto the playing area.
3. A 3 v 2 to goal is now played.
4. Once the game is finished, players go back to the start.

**Coaching points:**

Try to get the attackers to use the extra player either to pass to or use as a decoy.

Spacing and angles.

Take the shot?



## Find that shooting opportunity

**Stage I** - Area: 60 x 40. Two teams, 7v7

The teams play against each other. The rules of the game are:

***Attack together.***

- When the attacking team looks like they are going to score, every player on the attacking team must be across the halfway line in the attacking half for a goal to count.

***Defend together.***

- All the defenders must be in their defending half. If not, and the attacking team scores, the goal counts as double.

**Variation:**

- Play two touch
- Add one or two neutral players

**Coaching points:**

Attacking together does not mean leave open spaces at the back.

Defend together



**Coaching notes:**

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## Shooting and overload

**STage I** - Area: Divide 30 x 36 into three zones. Assign goalkeepers to the middle zone and the players in the outer zone each have a ball.

1. Outer players attempt to play as many ground balls as possible through the goalkeeper zone to the other side.
2. The goalkeeper attempts to save the balls.
3. If the ball is saved the goalkeeper gets a point and returns the ball to an outer zone.
4. After 3 minutes, see how many points the group of goalkeepers had. Now switch goalkeepers.

### **Coaching points:**

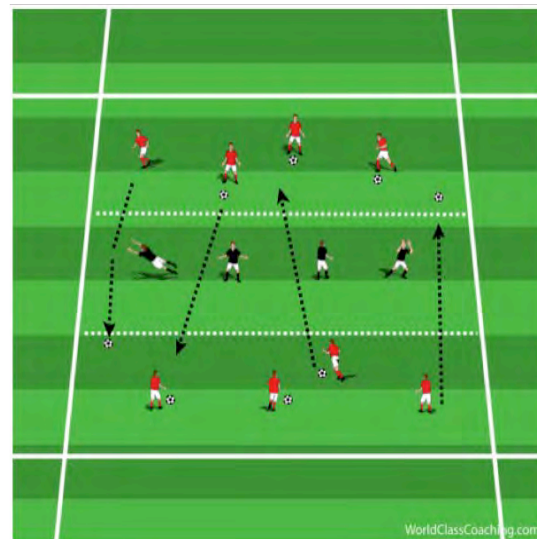
Technique of shooting.

Place your shot.

Try not to hit a GK that is not looking in your direction.

Keep the balls low.

If the GK saves the ball they distribute the ball with good technique.



**Stage II** - Area: 30 x 40 with two goals. The teams are divided into defenders (Dark) and attackers (Red) with two goalkeepers. Attacking players are split into 3 groups, A, B and C, while defenders are in two groups either side of the goal, D & E.

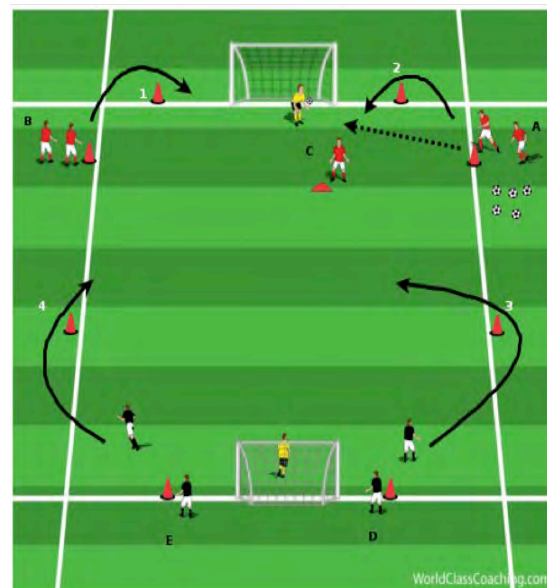
1. 3 attackers get ready. Play starts from player A who chips the ball to the GK.
2. As soon as the pass is played, players A & B run around the cones marked 1 & 2 and players D & E run around the poles marked 3 & 4.
3. The GK distributes the ball to player C who attacks the opposite goal and will be joined by team-mates A & B.
4. A 3 v 2 is played. If the defenders win the ball, they can attack the opposite goal.

### **Coaching points:**

The support of A & B are crucial. They have to be quick to support player C.

Player C has to entice player D or E towards the ball to create space for their team mates.

Offside rule is in play.



## Shooting and overload

**Stage III** - Area: 25 x 30, 2 goals with GK's. Teams are placed at opposite ends as shown with a cone facing each team 30 yards away.

1. The coach nominates one group who sends 2 players (Dark team) and the other group who sends 1 player (Red team). Once the coach shouts "GO", the players sprint around the far cone and come onto the field of play.
2. The coach serves in the ball. A 2 v 1 is played.
3. Play until a goal is scored or until the ball goes out of bounds.
4. Players return back to their group and the coach calls out another number.

**Variation:**

The red team now sends 2 players and the black team sends 1 player.

Move to a 3 v 2, 4 v 3

**Coaching points:**

Team work & Enthusiasm

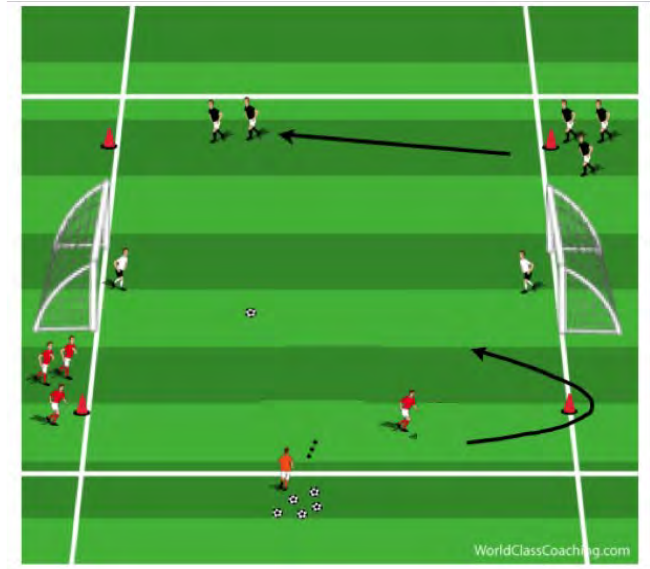
Make the extra player count

Encourage players to be positive

Attack at speed

Close ball control

Spacing when playing numbers up



**Coaching notes:**

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# **Development – Phase II**

## **11 - 14 year old**

Not every exercise in phase II will work for your group. You may take an exercise from numerous sessions that you feel will work for the group of players you have or you may use some sessions from phase I or phase III. As long as you have a progression to your session then the players will stay motivated and will feel a sense of achievement. Run your practices in three stages. Warm up, game related exercise and then a conditioned game. Phase II will challenge your players even more. The technical and tactical parts of soccer are incorporated in the following sessions.

## Possession overload

**Stage I** - Area: 30 x 40 with two goals and two teams. Teams start 5 yards from the corner as shown. The coach has all the soccer balls.

1. Start with 3v2. The coach serves in a ball for the attacking three. Two defenders from the opposite team attempt to win the ball.
2. Possession changes hands when: A shot is taken or scored, the ball is won by the two defenders or the ball is kicked out of bounds.
3. As soon as the exercise is over, the attacking three quickly get off the field. They are replaced by two players from their team who become defenders.
4. The defending two are joined by a team-mate. If the defending two win the ball, they must now pass to the oncoming third player.
5. This oncoming player must always start the exercise in the 3v2. If the ball is scored or shot out of bounds, the coach will pass a ball to the oncoming third player.

### Coaching points:

This exercise is hectic and challenges everyone's mental awareness. Know when to pass when to take a player on. Communicate. Make the extra player count.



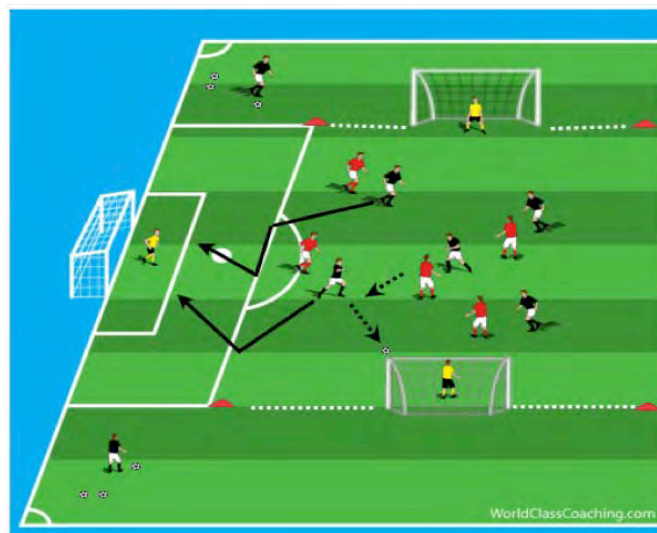
**Stage II** - Area: Half a field. A 30 x 40 yard field is set up outside the penalty area. The two teams play 5 v 5 or more inside this area.

A goalkeeper is positioned in the main goal and two wide players are situated as shown with soccer balls.

1. Teams play normal soccer rules.
2. As soon as a goal is scored that team must send in two players into the penalty box where they receive a cross from one of the wide players.
3. Once the ball comes in, the two players attempt to score.
4. The team that conceded the goal now have a 5 v 3 overload. They play quickly and attempt to score.
5. Once the players attacking the cross have finished, they rejoin their team.

### Coaching points:

Players reaction to the transition, defense and offense. Players get in for the cross quickly.



## Possession overload

**Stage III** - Area: 40 x 60 playing area with two teams.  
Play 7 v 7.

1. Normal soccer rules apply
2. The only rule change is:
  - When a player scores, they join the other team.
3. See how many players end up on the attacking / defending team?

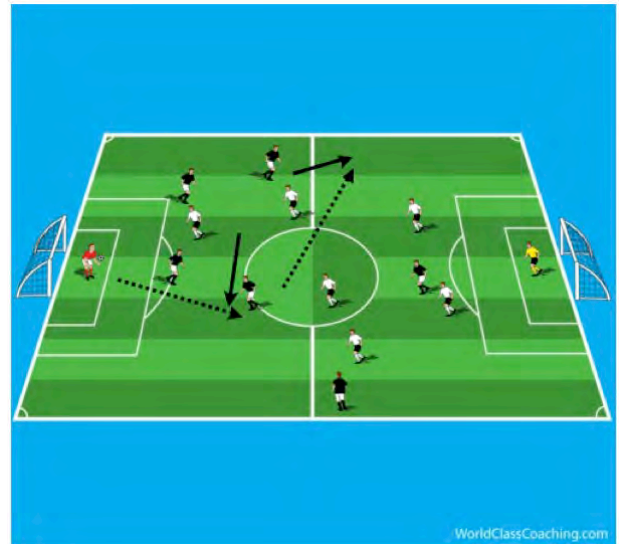
**Coaching points:**

Mental awareness of the transition

Team defending, communication.

Team in possession use your numerical advantage.

**Finish the session playing a scrimmage. Look for the team that can move the ball to create an overload.**



**Coaching notes:**

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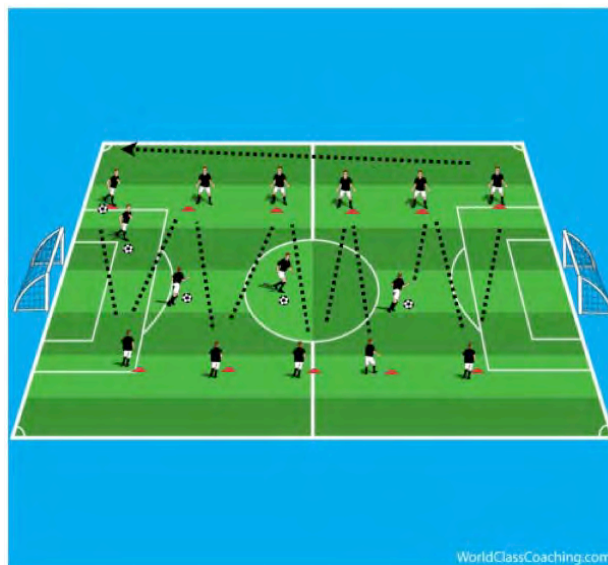
## Running with the ball

**Stage I** -Technical warm up. Area – The cones are staggered 30 yards apart in length and 20 yards apart in width. Players at the starting point each have a ball and one player on each of the other cones without a ball. To keep the exercise going, have two players situated at a few cones, one with a ball.

1. Players run with the ball to the next player.
2. They pass the ball and then stay at that cone until the next player arrives.
3. The player at the end of the exercise runs with the ball back to the start.

**Coaching points:**

Fitness. Technique of running with the ball.



**stage II** - Area: 60 x 30 (Three 20 x 30 grids) Middle zone is empty. The exercise is shown using 13 players. 5 v 2 in one grid 4 v 2 in the other.

1. In the 5 v 2 Grid. Players keep possession for 4 or more passes.
2. After 4 or more passes, a player can run with the ball to the next group to create a 5 v 2 in that grid.
3. The running player must pass the ball to a team-mate before entering the grid.
4. Players that are now in the 4 v 2 grid swap defenders. The coach has all the balls so he can keep the game flowing. If the ball is won by a defender, call out a player, serve in a ball and have them start the exercise again.

**Coaching points:**

Enthusiasm, intelligence and energy

Patience in possession, movement to find space. Create angles.

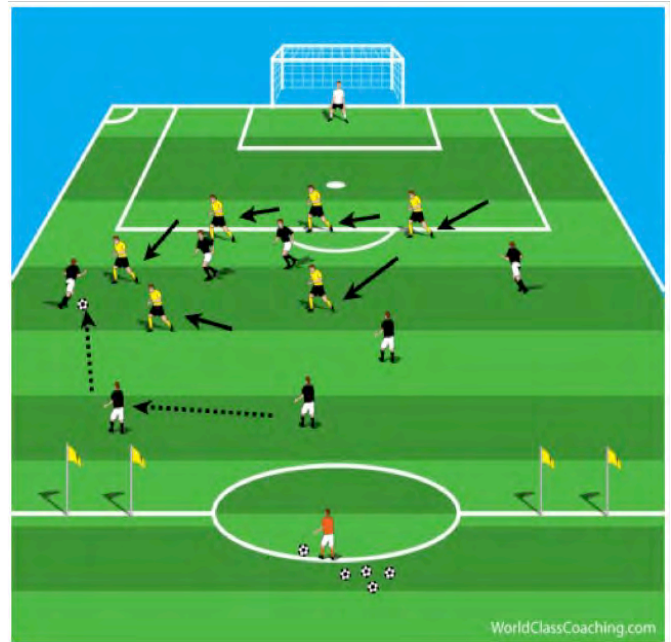
Decision making to find the right player who can exploit the space in the middle zone.



## Running with the ball

**Stage III - Area:** Half a field with 8 v 8 (You can also play an overload if required) Two goals are placed on the halfway line as shown. The dark team scores on the goal and the yellows score one for a pass to the coach or two for running with the ball through one of the marked goals.

- Let the teams play.
- Encourage them to run with the ball when the opportunity comes.
- We have to teach them to have different ideas in situations they encounter.
- While they are playing in a tight area, they must be aware of the players that are in space and where to move the ball.
- Allowing them to play at the end with a little guided discovery from the coach will help them to eventually make their own choices on the field.



**Coaching notes:**

[illegible]

## Receiving the ball to play it forward

**Stage I** - Technical warm up - Area: 30 x 30 playing area.  
This exercise shows 8 players (Run two stations if needed)  
Two soccer balls are used.

1. At the start of the exercise group A passes the ball to the right and group B passes to the left.
2. That receiving player quickly moves away from the cone, which acts as a defender, receives the ball on the back foot and passes the ball diagonally.
3. The next receiving player moves off the cone, receives the ball on the back foot and passes to the starting position.
4. All players follow their pass.

**Variation:**

Players can stand in front of the cone and move the ball with the outside of the foot.

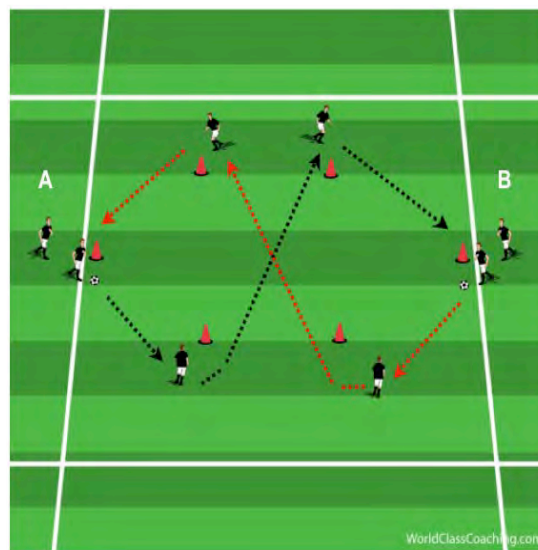
Group A now starts by passing to the left and group B to the right.

**Coaching points:**

Quality passing

Quick movement

Correct receiving technique



**Stage II** - Area: Play 7 v 7 on a field that is split into thirds. A GK, 2 defenders, 3 midfielders and 1 forward. This can be arranged with more players. All players play in their zones.

The conditions of the game are:

1. Once a ball is played into the next third, the best player that is positioned to support the possession team can move into that third of the field and offer support.
2. When the ball is played into the forward, two players on the possession team can go in and help.
3. Once possession is lost, that team must move back to their original positions.
4. Can the team that regained possession quickly counter because the opposition are out of balance?

**Coaching points:**

Once the ball is played forward does the team attack quickly or keep possession and use the extra players to their advantage?

Quality passing, moving and communication.



## Receiving the ball to play it forward

**Stage III** - Area: 60 x 40 (or full field) with two teams playing 7 v 7.

Normal soccer rules apply.

1. Allow the teams to play and see whether they have learned from your previous exercises.
2. Know the right moment to step in to coach playing forward.
3. This part of the session is a valuable opportunity to coach the style of play you want from your team.
4. Make sure the team sticks to good habits.



### Coaching notes:

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## Transitions

**Stage I - Technical warm up -** Playing area is two 15 x 15 boxes with 6 players and one soccer ball. One player is positioned on each end line.

1. Every player has to touch / pass the ball. The last person to receive the ball passes the ball long to the player on the opposite end line.
2. All four players now move into the opposite playing area. The player who passed the ball to the end line player, swaps positions.
3. The end line player who has just received the ball passes to one of the incoming players and starts the same passing sequence.
4. Every player has to touch / pass the ball. The last person to receive the ball passes the ball long to the player on the opposite end line.

**Variation:**

- Add a defender

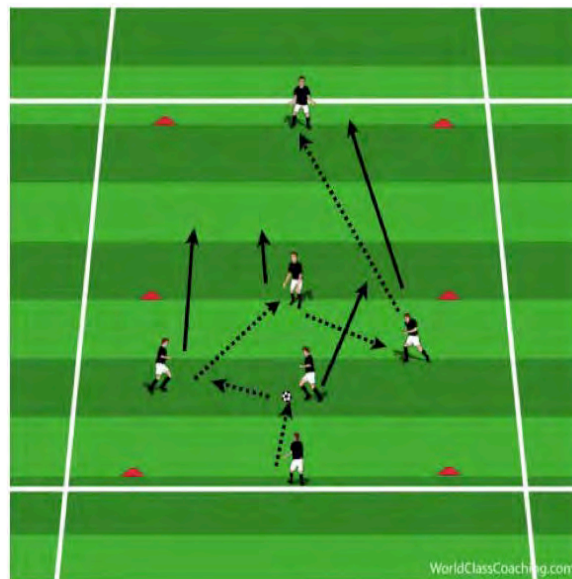
**Coaching points:**

Quality of passing.

Intelligence to make the correct pass. Who is the last player receiving the pass?

Body shape of the receiving players.

Communication.



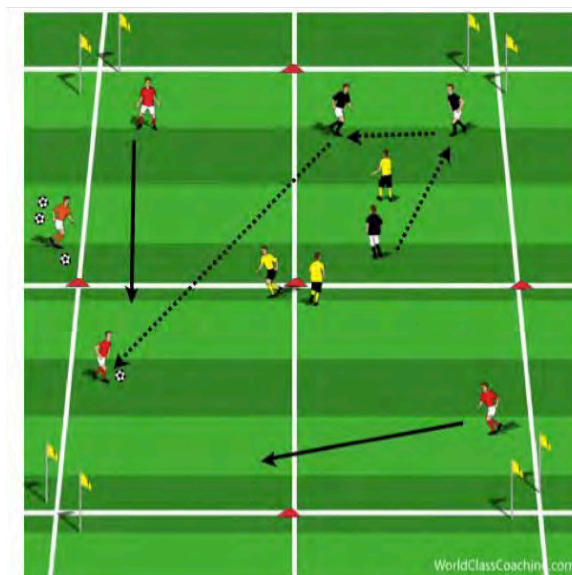
**Stage II -** Set up 24 x 24 (four 12x12 boxes) with 9 players (3 teams of 3). 3 yard goals are placed at each corner of a box.

1. The black team starts with the ball, the red team places a player in each vacant box while the yellow team stay on the center cone.
2. A yellow player enters the black teams box, attempting to win possession.
3. The blacks have to keep the ball for 5 or more passes before passing to a red player.
4. Once the pass is made to a red, the other two reds quickly join the box where the ball is, while the blacks now occupy the vacant squares.
5. The yellow that was just defending joins the center and a new yellow comes in to defend.
6. If yellow wins possession and passes out to a teammate they can then attack one of the three corner goals protected by a lone opponent.

**Coaching points:**

Awareness of others

Quickness when moving to the other boxes





## Transitions

**Stage III - Area:** Set up 60 x 40 grid split in half.

Exercise shows 14 players, 7 v 7. (Can be done with more players)

- The coach has all the soccer balls.
1. The coach serves in a ball. Three defenders from the opposite team enter the area.
  2. The purpose of the exercise is for the 7 players to play possession while the three defenders attempt to win the ball back and pass it to their team-mates in the opposite area.
  3. If the defenders are successful, they then move back into their area along with three defenders from the opposite team.
  4. If the ball is kicked out by a defender, the coach passes a ball back in for the attacking team to start playing again.

**Variations:**

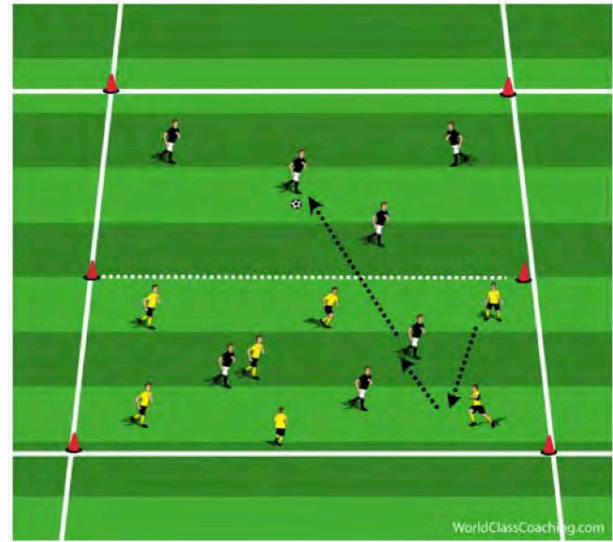
- Play 7 v 4 if the group is more advanced.
- Play two touch

**Coaching points:**

Create space. Know when to take a touch or play a one touch pass.

Communicate. Defenders close down passing angles.

**Finish the session playing a scrimmage. Look for players reacting to winning and losing possession of the ball.**



**Coaching notes:**

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## 650 game related touches

**Stage I** - Technical warm up - Area: Three 5 x 24 channels with players at the start with a soccer ball and one player occupying the spaces as shown.

The inside central player receives the ball on the back foot. The outside player, with their first touch, moves the ball into the next channel.

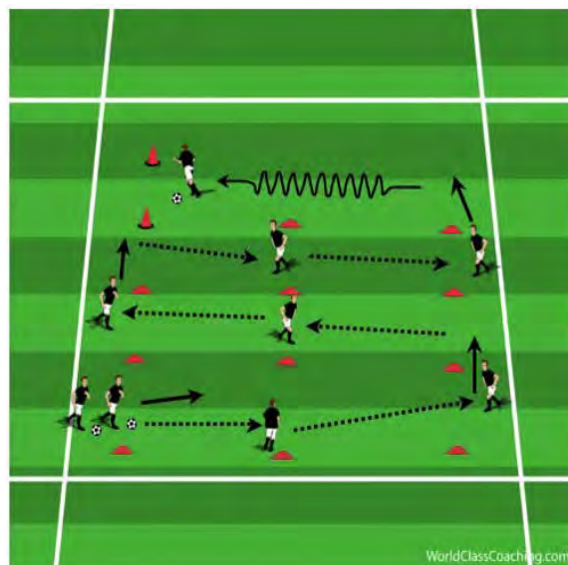
1. Starting player passes the ball to the correct foot of the next player and follows the pass.
2. Central player receives the ball on the back foot and passes to the correct foot of the outer player, and follows the pass.
3. Outer player takes a first touch into the next channel and passes to the next player and follows the pass.
4. Once the final player of the group receives the ball, they move the ball wide and run with the ball through the gate and then rejoins the start.

### Coaching points:

Quality of passing. Weight, accuracy and timing.

Body shape when receiving the ball.

Quick movement after the pass.



**Stage II** - Set up 30 x 24 split in two 30 x 12 playing areas. The teams start in opposing halves.

1. The coach serves in the ball to the yellow team.
2. Two or three blacks (depending on the ability of the group) move into the yellow half and attempt to win the ball.
3. Yellows count the number of completed passes.
4. Once a tackle or interception is made by a defender, the blacks move back into their playing half, along with two or three yellows.
5. The coach serves in a ball for the black team. They perform the same task.
6. The teams must remember the last number that was called out before they lost possession and then when they restart, they continue from that number.
7. First team to get to 50 passes accumulated from each time they are in possession, wins.

### Coaching points:

Awareness of others, create angles and space

Defenders press as a team

Communication

Finish the session playing a scrimmage



## 650 game related touches

**Stage III** - Area: 60 x 40, one soccer ball.

5v5v5 with five defenders holding a disc. This makes 10v5.

1. The teams are separated by colored vests.
2. Choose a defending team (yellow). All yellows are holding a disc.
3. The attacking teams (black & red) play possession soccer. Once a defender wins possession of the soccer ball, all defenders drop the disc.
4. The team that lost possession or has kicked the ball out of bounds has to pick up a disc that has been dropped before they are allowed to defend the ball.

**Variation:**

Play without holding cones.

**Coaching points:**

Possession. Move the ball quickly.

Defending – contain the ball if your team mates have not yet picked up a disc.

Pressure, cover and balance

Communication

Enthusiasm

**Finish the session playing a scrimmage. Looking for players that want the ball.**



**Coaching notes:**

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## Passing combinations

**Stage I** - Area: 30 x 30. Exercise shows 15 players. Start with 10 players on the outside and 5 players inside the square. The 5 players each have a soccer ball.

1. The player with the soccer ball moves around the playing area and passes to an outside player.
2. Once they pass they follow the pass a swap places with the player they passes to.
3. The receiving player takes a touch and moves into the playing area and passes to another outside player and swaps positions.

### Variation:

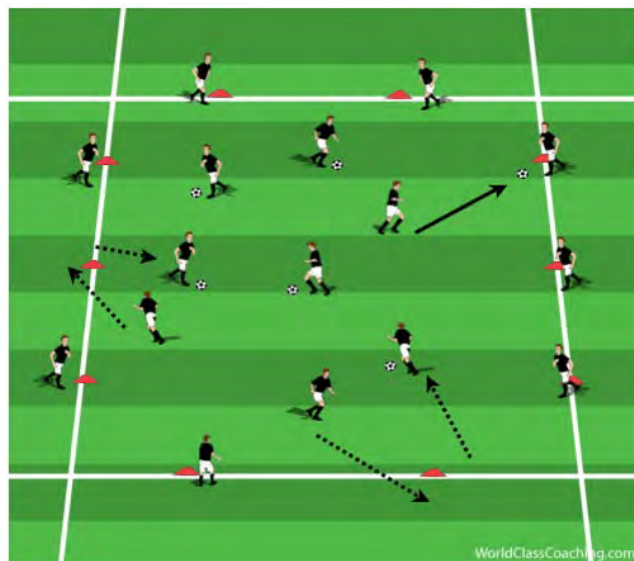
- Play a give and go with the pass.
- Communication - Player in possession keeps the ball for two passes.

Pass 1 is made and the passing player calls for the ball back. They DO NOT swap on the first pass. Pass 2 is made and the player passing the ball calls 'Switch' to the receiving player. The receiving player enters the playing area.

### Coaching points:

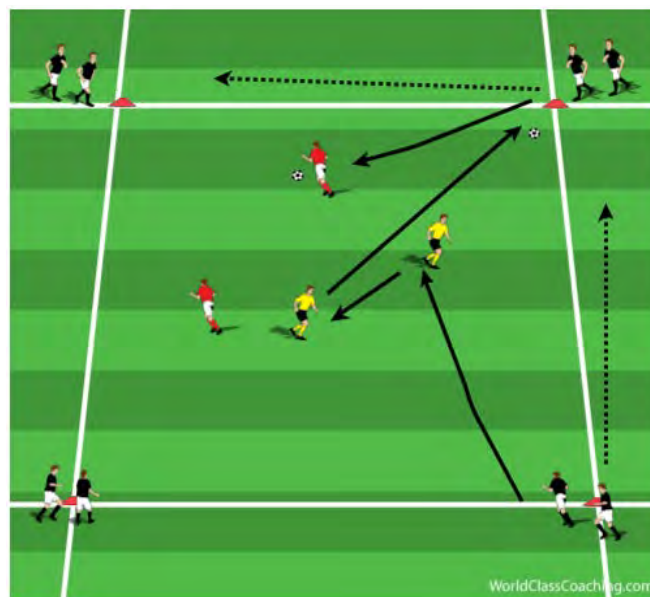
Passing technique

Body shape when receiving in variation 2



**Stage II** - Area: 30 x 30. Players are spread out on the corners with four players in the middle. The middle players are in pairs. Two soccer balls are used. The soccer balls can be different make / color / style. Each soccer ball is connected to the pairing in the middle. The two middle yellow players may use a "Red" ball and the Red players use a "White" ball.

1. The balls are passed counter clockwise. The outside players must know which ball is with which pairing.
2. The ball is moved round the square by either using the middle players or not.
3. Once an outside player makes the pass, they start moving to the next corner of the grid.
4. The ball can get to the next corner by using any of the 3 players involved. It can be one pass from corner to corner. It can go to one middle player to the corner. A combination can be played through all players to get to the corner.
5. Swap the middle players.
6. Now move the ball clockwise.



If the player is struggling with a decision, just make one pass to the next corner cone and build from there.

## Passing combinations

**Stage III** - Area: Two 30 x 15 areas with two goals with goalkeepers as shown. One defender is in each playing area with two attackers and other players stood at the starting cone with a ball.

1. The ball is played into the playing area to create a 2 v 1.
2. The two attackers play combinations to attack the goal.
3. The defender cannot go past the two red cones.
4. Once the attack is complete, the attacker joins the opposite group and the player who started the exercise now comes onto the field.
5. Swap defenders.

**Variation:**

Play 3 v 2 by adding another defender and the starting player also comes into play once they pass the ball.

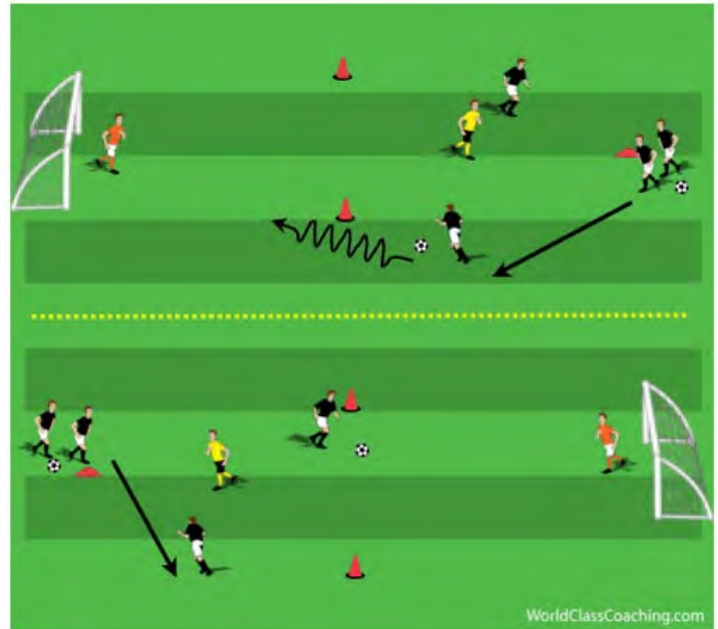
**Coaching points:**

When to pass to feet when to pass to space?

## Movement and communication

## Decision making

Receiving the ball on the “Back foot”.



**Coaching notes:**

[illegible]



## Counter attack

**Stage I - Area:** Two 15 x 15 boxes with 6 players and one soccer ball. One player is positioned on each end line.

1. Every player has to touch / pass the ball. The last person to receive the ball passes the ball long to the player on the opposite end line.
2. All four players now move into the opposite playing area. The player who passed the ball to the end line player, swaps positions. The end line player who has just received the ball passes to one of the incoming players who start the same passing sequence.
3. Every player has to touch / pass the ball. The last person to receive the ball passes the ball long to the player on the opposite end line.

**Variation:**

Add a defender



**Stage II - Set up** on half a field 8 v 5. In a 20 x 30 area place 9 players 6 v 3 and two strikers and two defenders on the edge of the 18 yard box.

1. The coach serves in the ball to the dark team.
2. After 5 or more passes the dark team pass a ball to one of the strikers.
3. Once the pass is made two black players can go and support the two strikers and one yellow player can go and defend (4v3)
4. Attackers attempt to score quickly.
5. If yellows win the ball, they have to try and get the ball to the coach.

**Variation:**

Involve more players attacking and defending

Add wide players

**Coaching points:**

Awareness of others, create angles and space

Defenders press as a team

Communication

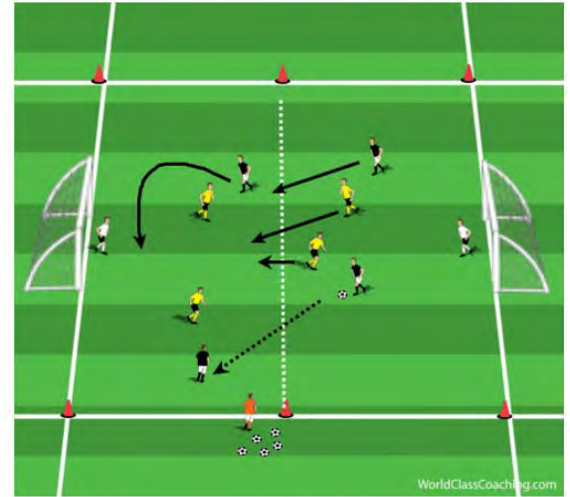


## Counter attack

**Stage III - Area:** Suitable size field for the group

1. Play a scrimmage having one of the teams with 2 more players.
2. Play an overload and encourage the team with the two extra players to counter attack quickly.
3. The attacking team with the two extra players must recognize whether or not the defending team are out of balance.
4. If the defending team are out of balance, a quick counter attack is encouraged.
5. If the defending team is in balance, then a controlled possession style is encouraged.
6. Look for good decision making.

There will be mistakes. This is a part of learning the game.



### Coaching notes:

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## Balanced defending

**Stage I - Area:** Set up three (or four) 10 x 20 grids. Each grid has a goal at each end. The coach has all the soccer balls. Players are placed at both sides of their goal.

Part 1 is 1v1 and is played in one grid.

1. The coach serves in a ball to any player. That player plays a 1v1 against the player diagonally opposite.

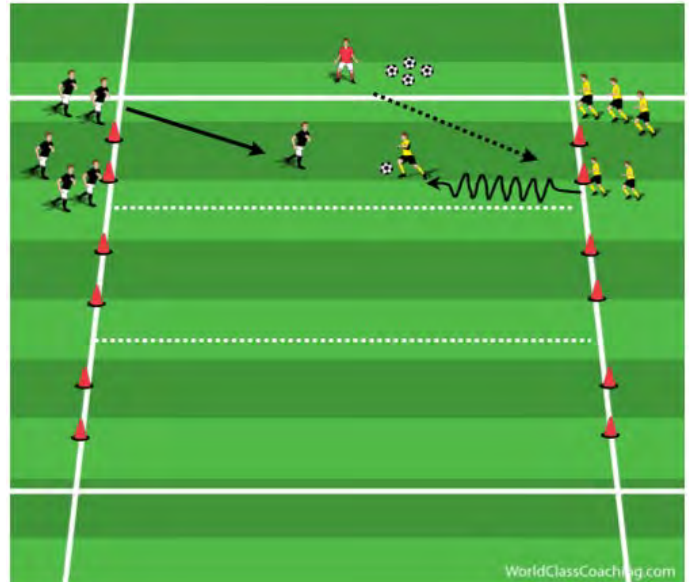
2. The object is to score on the opposite goal.

**Coaching points:**

Force the play one way

Take a good defensive stance

Encourage defenders to make the tackle.



**Stage II -** Half of the players from each team move to the next grid.

Part 2 is 2v2 and is played in two grids.

Players must stay in their own grid.

1. The coach serves in a ball to any player. That player and their team mate in the opposite grid enter their playing area. Two defenders enter their playing area also.

2. Players can pass to each other to try and move the defenders but they must stay in their own playing area.

3. A goal can be scored on either goal. The object of the exercise is to teach the defender who is not adding pressure, to cover their goal

**Variation:**

Part 3 - Now move to the third grid and play 3 v 3.

Watch how the players will offer instant cover and balance.

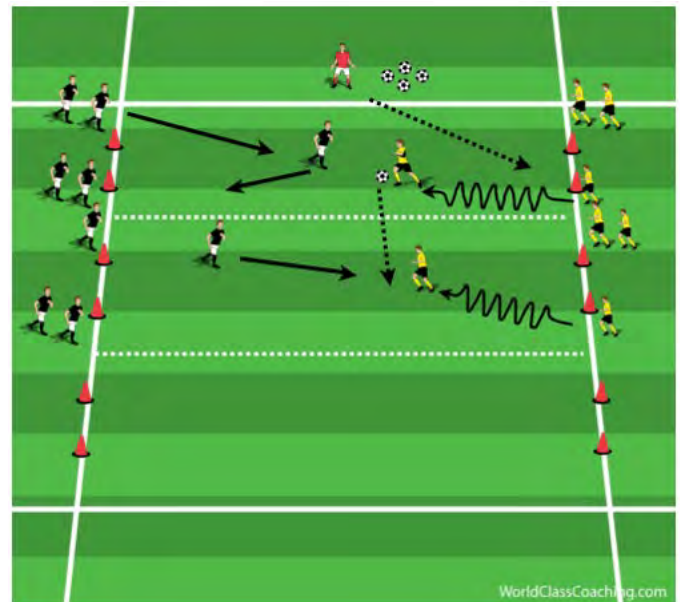
**Coaching points:**

Force the play one way

Take a good defensive stance

Encourage defenders to make the tackle.

Communication



## Balanced defending

**Stage III - Area:** Half a field with two teams 7 v 6 + GK.

Two 3 yard goals are placed on the halfway line.

1. Play 7 v 6 in the attackers favor. The number of players can be changed depending on the formation you want to work on.

2. The coach serves the ball to any dark player.

3. The defense move as a unit to close the play down. Pressure, cover and especially balance has to be used because the defense are playing a man down.

4. If the defense win the ball they attempt to keep possession and score through one of the goals on the halfway line.

**Variations:**

- Build up to 11 v 11 if possible

**Coaching points:**

Communication from the defending team is so important

Players must have the knowledge to spot the danger.

Leave the 'non danger' player, the player who is furthest away from play. You do not have to guard this player tight.

Even though numbers are down on defense, encourage the players to double team the player in possession, win the ball back and quickly counter attack.

Players need to understand when to delay the play so defenders can recover.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Overlaps

### Stage I - Area: 20x30.

This exercise shows 12 players.

Set up as shown. One soccer ball is used.

1. The starting player switches the ball to the opposite wide player and continues his run to the opposite group.
2. The wide player takes a good first touch inside and dribbles.
3. The center player makes an overlapping run at pace. The wide player passes the ball to the overlapping player who now passes to the next player.
4. The players that have just completed the exercise join the opposite group.
5. The attacking move now comes back in the other direction.

#### Variation:

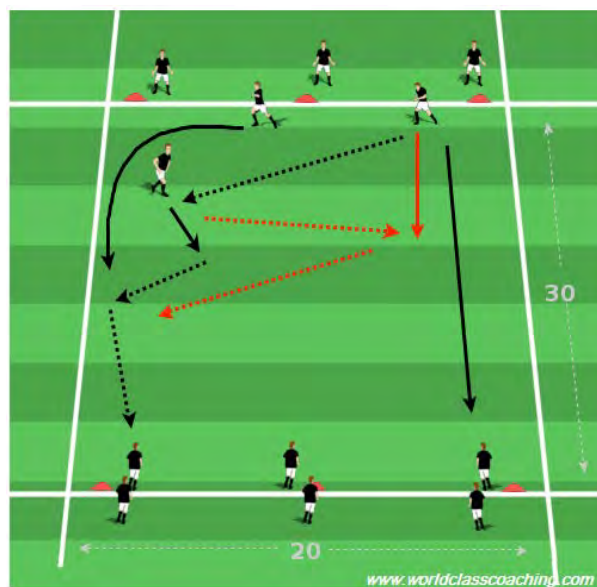
a) See red arrows.

Both wide players play a give and go before passing to the overlapping player.

b) The receiving wide player touches the ball back to the central player who now dribbles the ball and decides which wide player to pass to.

#### Coaching points:

Communication, Weight of pass, Timing of run



**Stage II - Area: 25 x 40.** This exercise is 3 v 3. The coach has all the soccer balls. Set-up is as shown (shows two teams of 6 players) The strikers are placed on the middle cones opposite to their team-mates.

1. Coach serves in the ball.
2. Can the receiving player find the target man?
3. If they do, they have to work together to get across the end line they are attacking. Yellows are attacking right to left, darks left to right.

#### Variation:

Two target players join in on the middle cone. It is now 4v4.

#### Coaching points:

Running off the ball. Players can also use the runner as a decoy.

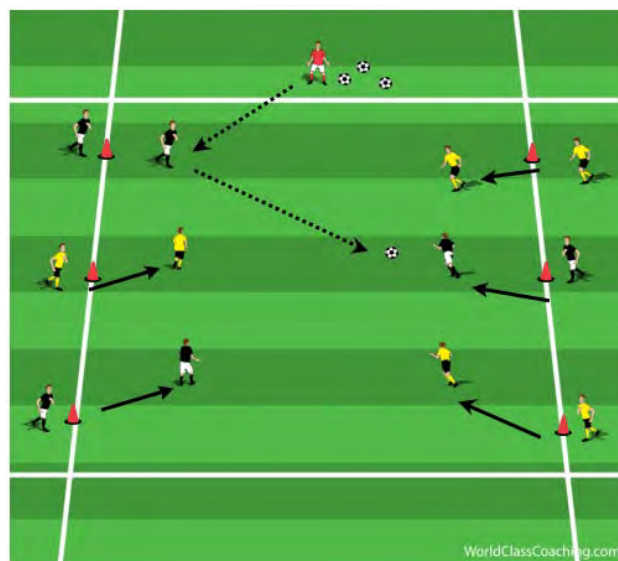
Lots of overlaps are performed in this exercise.

Decision making. When to pass, move dribble?

Communication

Players are always creating angles.

Look for the third man running





## Overlaps

**Stage III** - Area: 40 x 60 playing area with two teams.

Play 7 v 7.

1. Normal soccer rules apply.
2. Start the game with the goalkeeper having the ball.
3. Look for players making under and over lapping runs.
4. Look for the third man run.
5. Lots of movement off the ball from the possession team.

**Coaching points:**

Let them play and figure it out.

When stepping in to coach, ask the player what they see.



**Coaching notes:**

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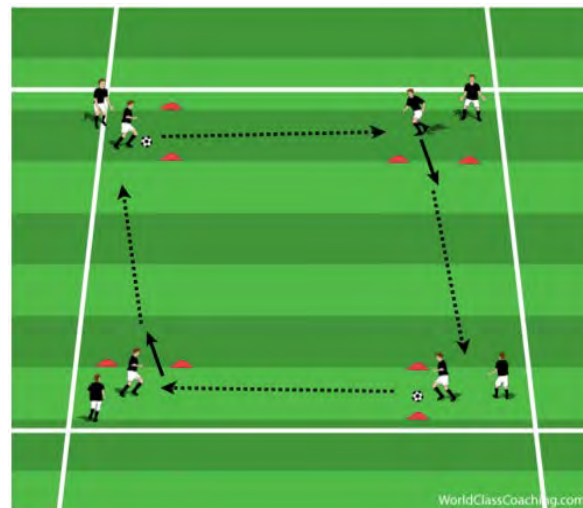
## Playing out from the back

**Stage I** - Area: 15 x 15 with four gates as shown above. 8 - 10 players with 2 soccer balls.

1. The two starting players pass the balls clockwise.
2. Receiving player takes a quality first touch through the gate, then passes to the next player.
3. After passing, players follow the pass.
3. Change direction and pass counter clockwise. The gates will have to be changed. See if your players can work it out?

### Coaching points:

Pass the ball to the correct foot  
 Receive the ball on the back foot  
 Quality first touch with open body stance  
 Quality passing – Accuracy, weight and timing of the pass  
 Communication



**Stage II** - Area – 22 x 30 with two goals divided into two halves. A GK and two defenders start in each half. A midfielder starts on the halfway line. Two opposing strikers are in each half. When not in the game, the strikers wait on the halfway line.

1. GK starts with the ball.
2. Two defenders split and midfielder drops to create a diamond shape 4 v 2.
3. The aim of the four defensive players is to create 3 passes and transfer the ball into the next group.
4. The strikers put the defense under pressure.
5. The other strikers enter the game once the ball is given to the GK at the other end. So does the midfielder player.
6. If the strikers win the ball they try to score.

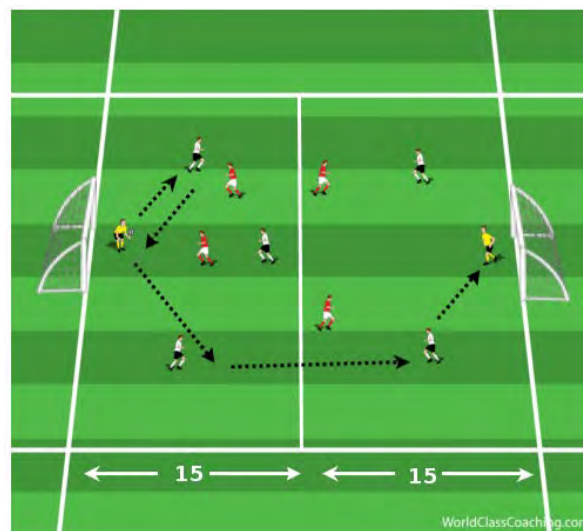
### Variation

There is now no passing restrictions. The GK, defenders and the midfielder player combine to play the ball to the two strikers inside the opposite half. If successful, the midfielder joins in to create a 3 v 2 to score.

Now play from the opposite direction.

### Coaching points:

Center backs split  
 Create the diamond shape – The midfielder must never be on the same line as the strikers.  
 Correct body shape  
 Use the GK whenever you can



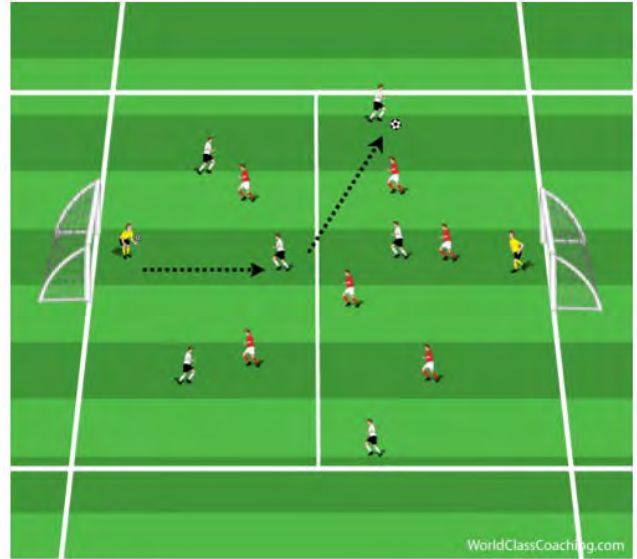
## Playing out from the back

**Stage III** - Area: 60 x 40 field 7 v 7 set up in a 2-3-1 formation.

1. Play possession soccer with the team in possession looking for opportunities to play forward. If forward passes are not available, look to keep possession.
2. When the ball is lost, press the ball to win it back.
3. When the GK has the ball, look to play the ball out from the back. The two central defenders spread out wide and the two wide midfield players are also wide but further up the field. The central midfielder drops in to receive the ball.

**Coaching points:**

You may have your attackers to be passive when the GK gets the ball. Get your players comfortable at playing out from the back.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Pressing – Force the play

**Stage I** - Area: 30 x 30 with two goals with goalkeepers.

There are 4 defenders on the field and two teams of four jogging on the outside. All three teams are separated by colored vests. The coach has all the soccer balls.

1. The coach passes a ball to the defenders. The defenders pass and move around the area.
2. The coach calls out a color "Red!"
3. The red team enters the field and attempts to win the ball from the defending team and score on either goal.
4. The defenders play possession soccer.
5. After a few tries, switch out the defenders.

**Variation:**

- You can play numbers up with the attackers, play 6 v 4

**Coaching points:**

Pressure as a team

Speed of thought when the ball is won by attackers

Create scoring opportunities



**Stage II** - Set up 40 x 30 divided into two halves with two mini goals as shown. Play 7 v 6 plus server (or other formation to suit the group) The server / coach has all the soccer balls.

1. The coach serves in the ball to the red team who look to score in either goal.
2. The defenders try to force play to one side of the field by using the central line as a guide.
3. Once the ball is moved to one side, the defenders can now overload the attackers in that area and force a mistake.
4. As you can see, the circled players in the opposite area do not need to be marked tightly.
5. If the defenders win the ball they attempt to get the ball to the server.

**Coaching points:**

Defenders pressing the play and working together.

Forcing the play to tight areas.

Defenders press as a unit

Communication



## Pressing – Force the play

**STage III** - Set up on half a field and play equal teams.

The coach has all the soccer balls.

1. Work on the dark team regaining possession.
  2. The dark sends in the closest defender to pressure the ball. The second defender(s) act as cover and the third defender(s) balance out the field.
  3. The second defenders can be more than one player. The darks have to win the ball back as soon as possible and then transition the mind to possession soccer.
  4. Dark team scores on the goal, yellows have to dribble through the two gates or pass to the coach.
- The dark team try and prevent the yellows from scoring.

**Coaching points:**

Work on the attackers pressing.

Force the play inside where team mates are located.

Leave the furthest defender and press as a group.

Communication



**Coaching notes:**

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## Transition – Possession v pressure

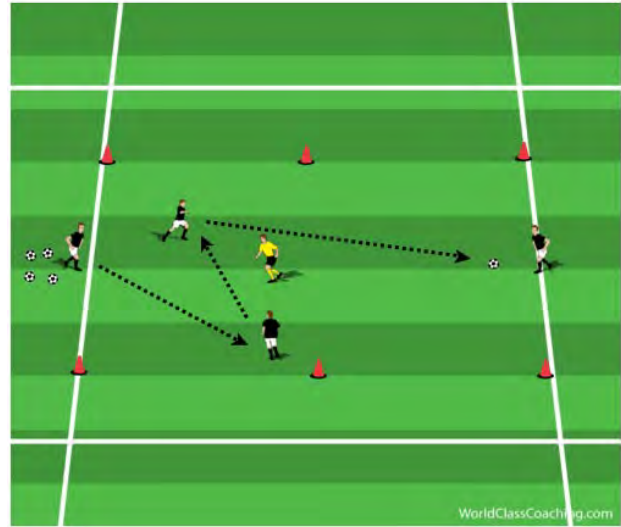
**Stage I** - Technical warm up Area: Set up a 10 x 20 playing area. This exercise shows 5 players so you can run numerous stations.

- One end player has 5 soccer balls.

1. The object of the exercise is for the 5 balls to be passed to the opposite player using 2v1. Players can also use the end-line player as a team member.
2. The players in the middle can only use the 5 balls. If the defender wins a ball, that ball is 'out'.
3. Once the balls have been transferred to the opposite end, the two attackers and the defender move to the opposite area and attempt to pass the rest of the balls to the opposite end..
4. See how many times the players can go back and forth.

### Coaching points:

Decision making. Outside passer chooses the best option.  
Body shape when receiving the ball.  
Fakes and turns.  
Patient build up.  
Team work



**Stage II** Area: 30 x 40 (with 5 yard channels) Two teams play 5 v 5. Two target players are placed in the outside channels.

1. The black team are trying to work the ball across the field from target player to target player.
2. Every time the black team passes the ball across the field to a target player, they get 1 point.
3. The white team are trying to win back the ball as quickly as possible and when they do, they can attack either goal.
4. The black team can also use the goalkeepers when in possession.

### Coaching points:

Possession team:

Create angles to receive the ball.

Body shape.

Transition when possession is lost.

Attacking team:

High pressure

Quick transition to create a shooting opportunity.



## Transition – Possession v pressure

**Stage III** - Area- 60 x 40 with two teams playing 8 v 8.  
You can play with a floating player(s) if you feel necessary.  
These players play for the team in possession only.  
Play normal soccer rules and look for the teams reactions to gaining and losing possession.

- When the ball is lost:

The defending team gets behind the ball and try to win it back as quickly as possible.

- When possession is won:

Can the team quickly counter because the opposition is out of balance or do they need to keep possession?  
Coach appropriately and step in to teach at the right moment.



### Coaching notes:

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## Goalkeeper distribution

### **Stage I** - Technical warm up - Area: 30 x 30 playing area.

Two goalkeepers are placed in the middle of the playing area. Players are placed equally on the 4 corners.

Two soccer balls are used.

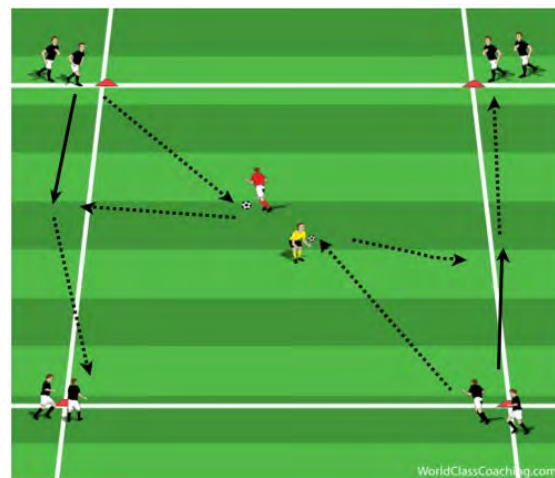
1. The player with the ball chips or passes the ball into a goalkeeper.
2. The goalkeeper either catches the ball or use their feet to distribute the ball back to the player who played them the ball.
3. Once the goalkeeper distributes the ball the player passes to the opposite corner player and follows the pass.
4. The next corner player performs the same task.

#### **Variation:**

The goalkeeper can either distribute the ball to the player that passed them the ball or they can distribute to the next corner player.

#### **Coaching points:**

Ball control by all players.



### **Stage II** - Area: Play 7 v 7 on a suitable size field.

Goalkeepers are the only players allowed in the center circle.

Each team has a designated goalkeeper.

1. To score 1 point a team must chip or pass the ball into their goalkeeper.
2. To score two points that goalkeeper must start the attack by throwing or passing to a team-mate.
3. Goalkeepers have 4 seconds before distributing the ball.
4. The attacking team can score on any goal.

#### **Coaching points:**

Pressure to stop the pass to the goalkeeper.

Movement into space once the goalkeeper has the ball.

The goalkeepers decision once they receive the ball. Which

goal can we attack and what kind of distribution is needed?

Defensive transition to stop the opposition scoring.



## Goalkeeper distribution

**Stage III** Area: 60 x 40 (or full field) with two teams playing 7 v 7.

The field is split into thirds.

Normal soccer rules apply.

The only change is when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball the opposition must move behind the line marked on the field.

Once the goalkeeper distributes the ball the opposition can now cross the line and attempt to win the ball.

Remove the lines once you feel the team is getting a grasp on playing the ball out from the back.

**Coaching points:**

Split quickly into space once the goalkeeper has the ball.  
Quality of the goalkeepers distribution and where it goes  
(To feet or to space)



**Coaching notes:**

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## Move the ball away from pressure

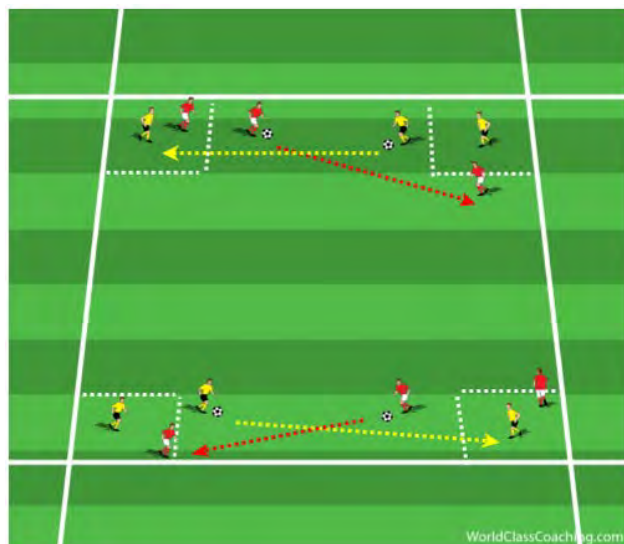
**Stage I** - Technical warm up. Set-up a large square 40 x 40 area and place a much smaller 5 x 5 square in each corner. Split into groups of 6 and put two players with a ball in opposite corner squares and one player in the remaining squares.

1. Reds pass clockwise and yellows counter clockwise.
2. The player with the ball passes to their teammate in the next box and then follows their pass.
3. Encourage players to play with 2 touches if they can and with a maximum of 3 touches. In a game, 4 touches will give defenders enough time to close down the space.
4. The receiving player must look for space so the player passing the ball can get the ball to them. Players scan the field.

### Variation

Move one player from each team in middle of the large area. If you have goalkeepers then choose those players.

Now players can choose to play a combination with one of the central players. This might be a 'round the corner' pass with the first touch, a give-and-go or almost anything else that creative players might try. GK's can use their hands to receive the ball and roll out passes.



**Stage II** - Functional practice - Area – Half a field. 6 players go at one time.

1. Player one passes to wide player 2. As player 2 takes their first touch, the striker, player 3 checks to the ball. Player 2 passes to player 3 who drops the ball back to player one.
2. Player 1 now switches the play wide to player 4.
3. Player 5 makes an 'under lapping' run. Player 4 plays the ball into the running path of player 4. Player 4 crosses the ball for players 1, 2, 3 & 6 who have all entered the box.
4. Play the other side. (5 – 4, 4 – 6, 6 – 5, 5 – 2, 2 – 1 and cross)

### Variation:

Wide players 2 and 4 come off the end line to make room for an overlap. Player 1 and 5 now go on an overlap before crossing the ball.

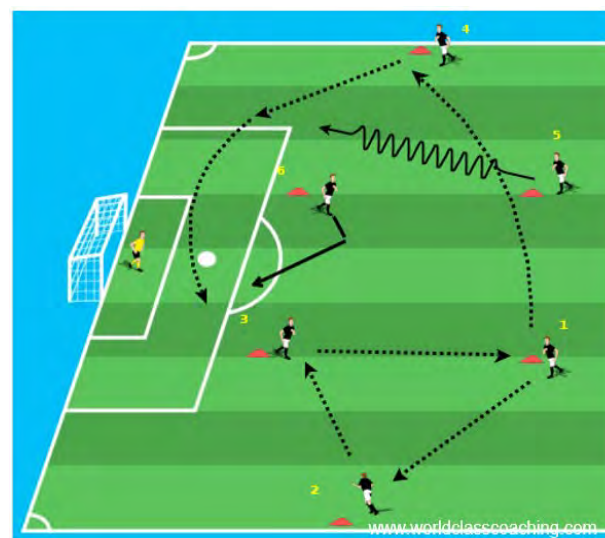
Add two defenders and see if your players can solve real match situation problems.

### Coaching points:

Sharp tight touches.

Quality passing and crossing. Keep the cross away from the goalkeeper.

Movement into the box.





## Move the ball away from pressure

**Stage III** - Area: 40 x 60 playing area with two teams. Play 7 v 7.

1. Normal soccer rules apply.
2. Start the game with the goalkeeper having the ball.
3. The defenders are passive. The GK distributes the ball to the defender. They switch the ball to the opposite side.
4. Once that wide player touches the ball, the game is live.
5. Look for players moving the ball away from pressure.
6. Play with the restart for about 10 minutes and then let the players play.

**Coaching points:**

Mental awareness of space.  
Players keep scanning the field.  
Move the ball quickly and with quality.



**Coaching notes:**

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## **Development – Phase III**

### **15 - 18 year old**

Not every exercise in phase III will work for your group. You may take an exercise from numerous sessions that you feel will work for the group of players you have or you may use some sessions from phase II or even phase I. As long as you have a progression to your session then the players will stay motivated and will feel a sense of achievement. Run your practices in three stages. Warm up, game related exercise and then a conditioned game. Phase III will challenge your players even more. The technical and tactical parts of soccer are incorporated in the following sessions.

## Possession and switch

**Stage I - Area:** Three 30 x 15 areas with 3 teams of five players. Reds and yellows occupy the two end boxes and the dark players are in the middle box but starting from the outside (as shown). The coach has all the soccer balls.

1. The coach passes a ball into the yellows. Two dark defenders enter that area and attempt to retrieve the ball.
2. The yellow team must make 5 consecutive passes (or more) before passing the ball to the red team. If the ball is switched then the two defending dark players come out and reset to the sides while two new defenders go in to close down the red team. The red team attempt to keep the ball for 5 or more passes and switch.
3. If the defenders win the ball the now become attackers. The team that they won the ball from now become the defending team and the coach passes a ball in to the opposite group.

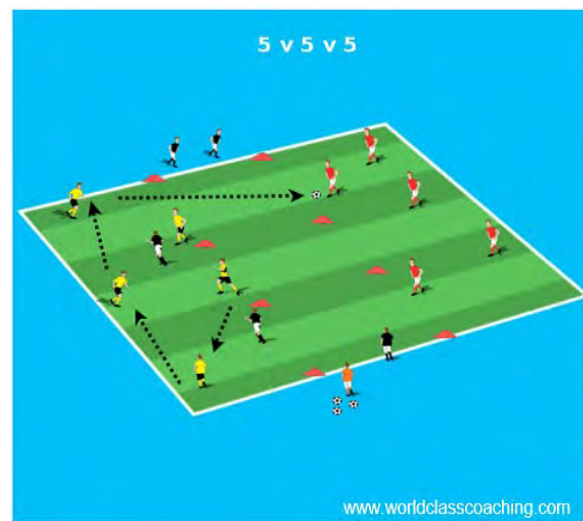
**Variation:** The defenders can stand in the middle zone to block the passes.

### Coaching points:

Movement into space

Communication – Remember 5 OR MORE passes. The players will try to pass on 5.

One or two touch passing



**Stage II - Area:** 30 x 45 with three teams 5v5v5. The coach has all the soccer balls.

1. The coach nominates a team to defend (yellow)  
Optional: The defending team are holding a cone. When they win possession, all defenders drop the cone and the team that lost possession have to pick up a cone before they can defend.
2. The dark team and reds combine to play a 10 v 5.
3. When possession is won by a defending team, the team that gave away possession now becomes the defending team.
4. 10 passes is a goal.

### Coaching points:

Movement into space from the possession team

Pressing from the defenders

Communication

One and two touch passing. Move the ball quickly and accurately.



## Possession and switch

**Stage III** - Area: 60 x 40 7 v 7 + 1 with goalkeepers.

1. The players are separated into two teams.
2. The yellow player is a 'floater'. This player always plays with the team in possession of the ball.
3. Normal soccer rules apply.
4. Look for the teams to move the ball away from pressure.

**Coaching points:**

Encourage them to work on the theme of the exercise.

Let them play and figure things out.

Use the guided discovery coaching style. "Show me how you can..."



**Coaching notes:**

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## Running off the ball

**Stage I** - Technical warm up – Area: 25 x 40 area with 2 teams of seven players. Each team has one ball.

1. Yellows move the ball from east to west and reds north to south.
2. When the ball is passes to an an end player, the player passing the ball swaps positions with the player they passed to.
3. The receiving end line player passes to the other end line player and makes an overlapping run.
4. The end line player can either pass to the running overlapping player or pass the ball to a central player.

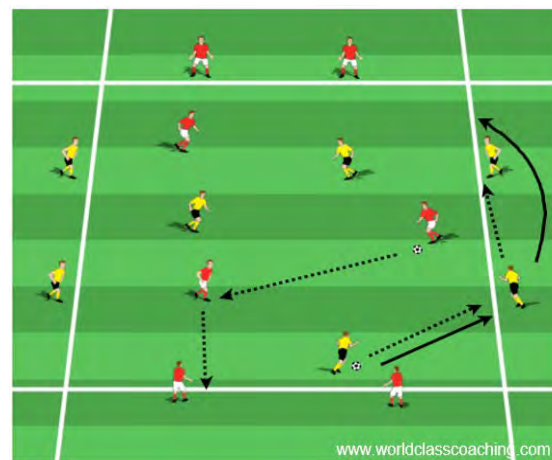
**Variation:** One ball. The teams play against each other. A point is scored for each successful overlap.

**Coaching points:**

Running off the ball

Decision making. Do you pass to the running player?

Communication



**Stage II** - Area: 25 x 40. This exercise is 3 v 3. The coach has all the soccer balls. Set-up is as shown (shows two teams of 6 players) The strikers are placed on the middle cones opposite to their team-mates.

1. Coach serves in the ball.
2. Can the receiving player find the target man?
3. If they do, they have to work together to get across the end line they are attacking. Yellows are attacking right to left, darks left to right.

**Variation:**

Two target players join in on the middle cone. It is now 4v4.

**Coaching points:**

Running off the ball. Players can also use the runner as a decoy.

Decision making. When to pass, move dribble?

Communication

Players are always creating angles.

Look for the third man running





## Running off the ball

**Stage III** - Area: 60 x 40 7 v 7 with goalkeepers.

1. The players are separated into two teams.
2. You can play with a floating player or not.
3. Normal soccer rules apply.
4. Look for the teams to keep possession and good movement off the ball.

**Coaching points:**

Encourage them to work on the theme of the exercise.

Good movement off the ball creates problems for the opposition even if you do not get the ball.

Use the guided discovery coaching style. "Show me how you can..."

Lots of communicating, third man running.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Defensive shape

**Stage I** - Area: 60 x 20. 4 v 4 in the central area with each player occupying a 10 x 15 playing area. One target player at each end line. The team in possession must stay in their boxes but the defenders are aloud to roam.

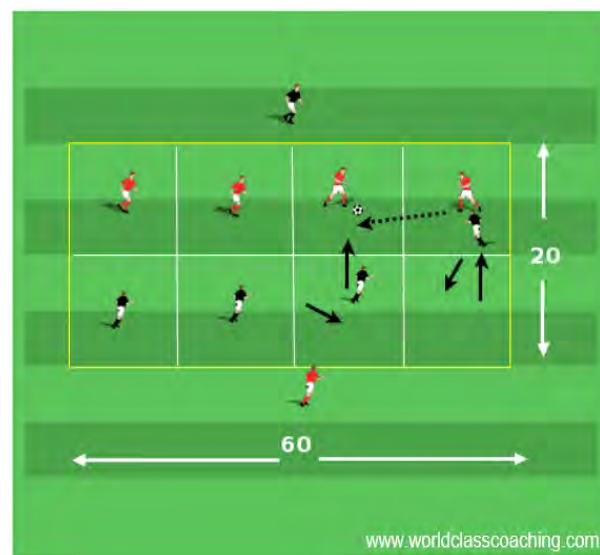
1. The target dark player passes the ball to a red player. The red player looks to play a pass to the target player or to a team-mate.
2. The nearest defender presses the red player and forces the play inside.
3. The other defenders offer cover and slide across to prevent the pass being made to the target player. A constant distance between the defenders must be maintained.

**Variation:** Add two target players

**Coaching points:**

Communication

Pressure, cover and balance.



**Stage II** - Area: Full side field. The 60 x 20 grid from the previous exercise is in the center of the playing field. One target man for each team plays as the striker. Each team has two defenders and a goalkeeper.

1. The object of the exercise is for the midfield 4 to stop the ball going through to the opposition target man and also pass to their target man.
2. If the attacking midfield find the target man then the midfielders can move in to support the counter attack. The defenders in the central playing area stay put.
3. Can the attacking team finish with a shot.
4. Look for midfielders out of possession to close down with speed and offer cover and balance.

**Coaching points:**

One of the defenders is tight marking the target player.

Good communication

Closes player presses the ball

Aggressive play



## Defensive shape

**Stage III** Area: Half a field. Before you set the team up for a full scrimmage have a little competition between the two teams. The coach sets up 4 defenders and a midfielder against 5 attackers. The coach has 5 soccer balls.

1. The coach plays the ball to a dark player.
2. The reds have to prevent the dark team from scoring.
3. If the reds win the ball, they attempt to pass it to the coach.
4. The dark team have 5 attacks. See if the reds can keep them out.
5. Switch roles.

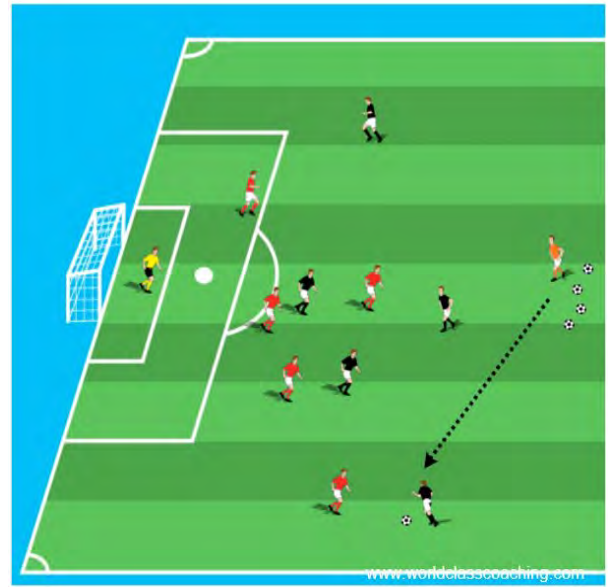
**Coaching points:**

Good defensive shape and communication.

Defenders keep a suitable distance from each other.

Closest player presses the ball.

Finish off your session with a game. Look for the defensive shape of both teams.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Positional play

**Stage I** - Technical warm up - Area: 60 x 40. 7 v 7 with three floating yellow players who play with both teams for the warm up. Each team has a soccer ball..

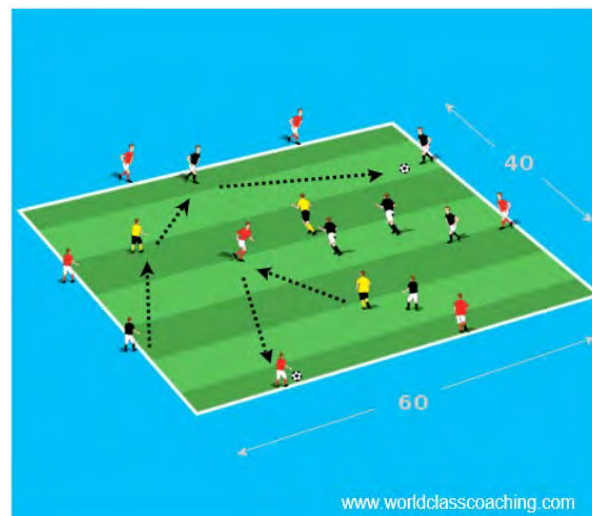
Players in the team of seven are placed in a position they play on the field. Players positioned at point A would be center backs and point B center forwards. The floating players would be midfield players. This will build familiarity between the players.

1. Both teams pass their ball around the playing area.
2. The floating players can play in with either team.
3. You are looking for players to gain confidence and work on body shape and the first touch before they move to phase two of the practice.

**Variation:** Limit the yellow players to two touches.

**Coaching points:**

Communication  
Quality passing  
Body shape



**Stage II** - Area: 60 x 40. 7 v 7 with one ball. The three floating yellow players who play with the team in possession.

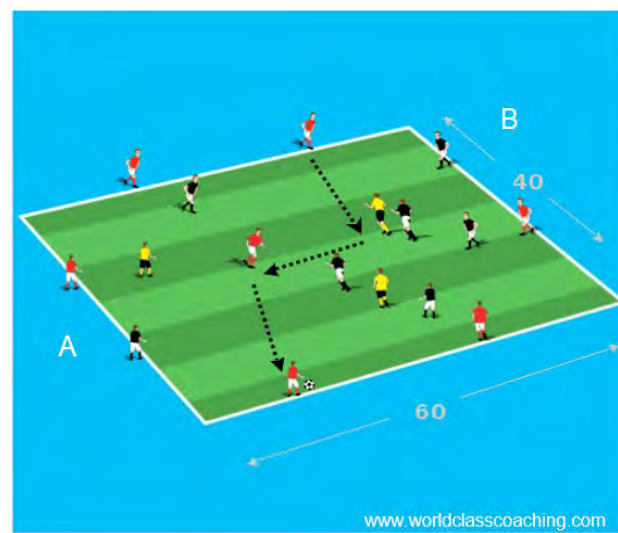
Players in the team of seven are placed in a position they play on the field. Players positioned at point A would be center backs and point B center forwards. The floating players would be midfield players. This will build familiarity between the players.

1. Red team passes the ball around using the floating yellow players. They move to an outside position to make the playing area bigger. Keeping possession of the ball will build confidence.
2. When the ball is lost and the dark team gain possession there must be a quick reaction from reds to defend. Players move in from the end lines to close down space.
3. The dark players quickly spread to the outside to provide options for possession.
4. Rotate the players if need be.

**Variation:** Limit the yellow players to two touches.

**Coaching points:**

Communication. Keep possession. Body shape. Defenders close down quickly. When possession is won make the field bigger by spreading out



## Positional play

**Stage I - Area:** Play equal sided game on a field suitable for the amount of players you have.

1. Put the players in positions they play on the field.
2. You can play with floaters or not.
3. Once a player scores, they join the other team.
5. How will the team with less players react?
6. You can limit the amount of touches.

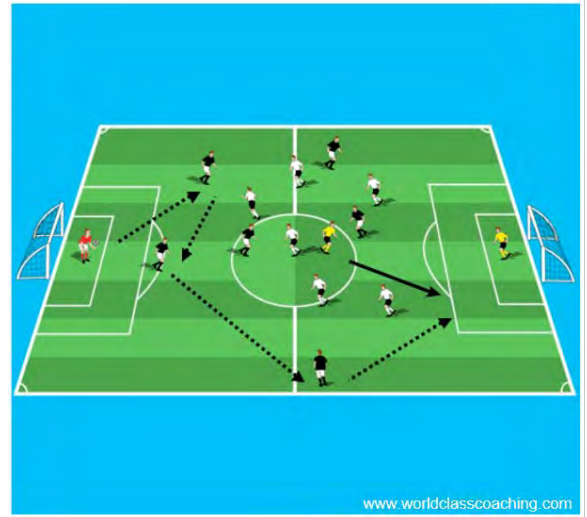
**Coaching points:**

Good possession and positional play.

Always make sure there are triangles on the field. Support is offered ahead of the ball, to the side or the player can drop the ball back.

The player receiving the ball has the thought "Can I play the ball forward?"

Communication and movement. If a player moves out of position then cover is offered from a team-mate.



**Coaching notes:**

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## 1v1 with the goalkeeper

**Stage I** Area: 40 x 40 with two teams working at the same time. Two goals with goalkeepers. Play starts at position 'A' with the players each having a soccer ball.

1. Player A starts the exercise by passing to 'checking' player B.
2. Player B receives the ball on the back foot and passes to running player C..
3. Player C plays a 1v1 against the goalkeeper. After shooting player C joins group 'A'.
4. Players follow the pass.

**Variation:** Start from position C

### Coaching points:

Pass the ball accurately to the correct foot or space.

The tempo of passing must be game related.

Player C take a touch that will affect the goalkeepers position before shooting.

Shot at the goal. Choose a target.

### Variation:

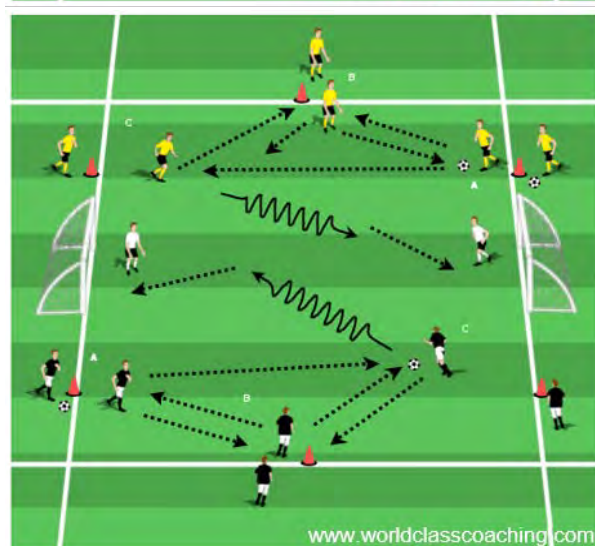
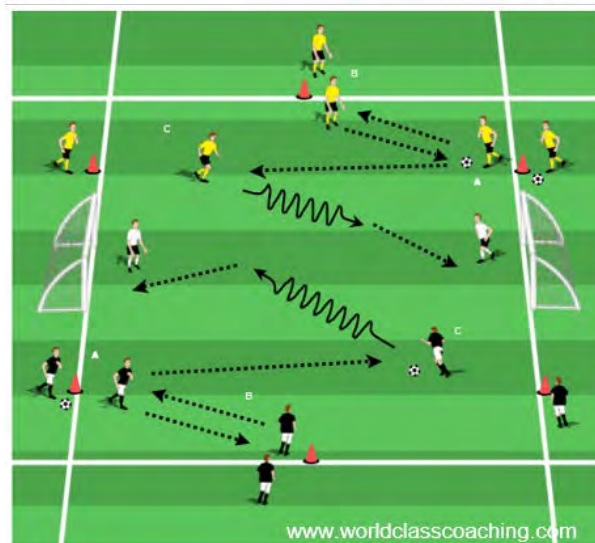
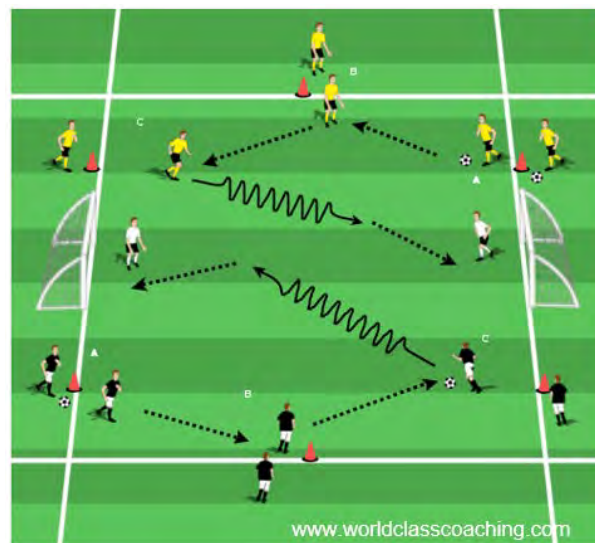
1. Player A starts the exercise by passing to 'checking' player B.
2. Player B receives the ball and passes back one touch to player A.
3. Player A passes long to running player C.
4. Player C plays a 1v1 against the goalkeeper. After shooting player C joins group 'A'.
5. Players move to the next cone.

**Variation:** Start from position C

### Variation:

1. Player A starts the exercise by passing to 'checking' player B.
2. Player B receives the ball and passes back one touch to player A.
3. Player A passes long to running player C.
4. Player C now plays a give and go with player B.
5. Player C plays a 1v1 against the goalkeeper. After shooting player C joins group 'A'.
6. Players move to the next cone.

**Variation:** Start from position C



## 1v1 with the goalkeeper

**Stage I - Area:** Full field with equal size teams. The field has a suitable size central playing area.

1. The teams play possession soccer inside the playing area.
2. To score a player must time their run and run out of the playing area. Offside rule applies.
3. If they break through and a pass is played to them, they play a 1v1 with the goalkeeper.
4. The timing of the run to goal is key. If the player runs wide then this would not be realistic for the player to play a 1v1 with the goalkeeper.

**Coaching points:**

Quality possession and movement

Timing of the run

Execution of shot

Finish off your session with a game. Look for the defensive shape of both teams.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Counter attacking

**Stage I** - Area: 20 x 30. This exercise shows 12 players. Set up as shown. One soccer ball is used.

1. The starting player switches the ball to the opposite wide player and continues his run to the opposite group.
2. The wide player takes a good first touch inside and dribbles.
3. The center player makes an overlapping run at pace. The wide player passes the ball to the overlapping player who now passes to the next player.
4. The players that have just completed the exercise join the opposite group.
5. The attacking move now comes back in the other direction,

**Variation: a)** See red arrows. Both wide players play a give and go before passing to the overlapping player.

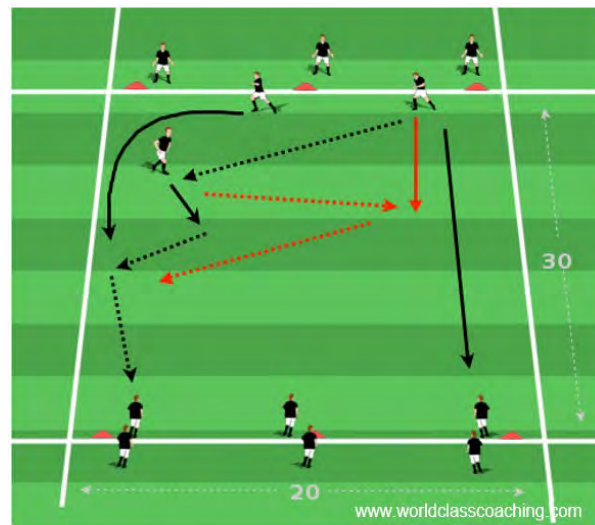
**b)** The receiving wide player touches the ball back to the central player who now dribbles the ball and decides which wide player to pass to.

### Coaching points:

Communication

Weight of pass

Timing of run



**Stage II** - Area: Two penalty areas as shown. A 3v2 is on the field. The balls and players are behind both goals.

1. Darks attack the yellows in a 3v2 counter attack.
2. Whoever shoots the ball from the dark teams comes off and the two remaining dark players become defenders.
3. A yellow player now enters the field with a ball and joins in with the other two yellows. They now have a 3v2 advantage.
4. If the defenders win the ball they continue to play. If the defenders take a shot, the same 3 attackers play until they get a shot off or you can send in a new set of three.

### Coaching points:

Good passing, movement and communication.

Make the extra man count.

Create good angles for passing and look for third man runs



# Counter attacking

**Stage III** - Set up on half a field 8 v 5. In a 20 x 30 area place 9 players 6 v 3 and two strikers and two defenders on the edge of the 18 yard box.

1. The coach serves in the ball to the dark team.
2. After 5 or more passes the dark team pass a ball to one of the strikers.
3. Once the pass is made two black players can go and support the two strikers and one yellow player can go and defend (4v3)
4. Attackers attempt to score quickly.
5. If yellows win the ball, they have to try and get the ball to the coach.

**Variation:**

Involve more players attacking and defending  
Add wide players

**Coaching points:**

Awareness of others, create angles and space  
Defenders press as a team  
Communication



Finish your session with a scrimmage.

**Coaching notes:**

[illegible]



## Ball control & possession

**Stage I** - Area: 40 x 30 area made into four 20 x 15 boxes. Inside each box are 2 players from one team and one from another. 12 players are in two teams of six. Each team has a ball. Each ball is started by a team that has two players in the same area.

1. Reds pass the ball counter clockwise. When the ball is played into a playing area with two players on the same team, they combine a pass.
2. The ball is played into the next playing area. That player now follows the pass into that area. The single player opens up their body and quickly passes to the next player and follows the pass.
3. The dark team are passing the ball clockwise.

**Variation:** Each team starts with 4 soccer balls

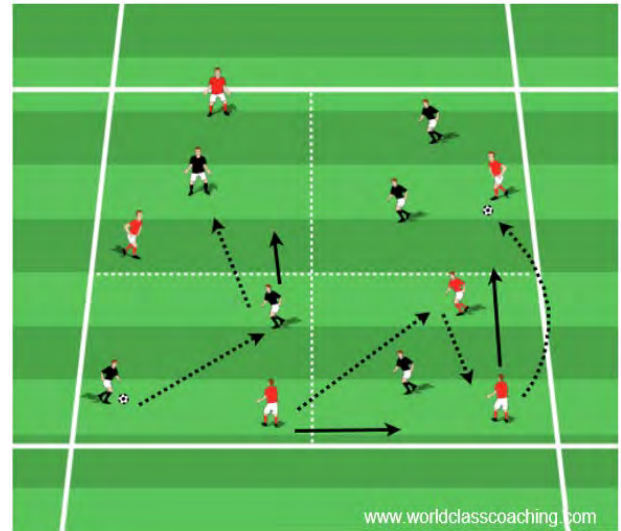
### Coaching points:

Passing

Ball control – with an open body. Receive on the 'back foot'.

Angles of support. Make sure the player passing the ball can find the target player.

Communication



Area: 40 x 30. 8 v 4. Set up as shown. It's 2 v 1 in each playing area. One soccer ball is used. All players stay in their playing zone.

1. The red team look to keep possession in the 40 x 30 area by staying in their own zones. If they complete 10 passes it counts as a goal.
2. The lone defender must look to intercept or tackle. If the defender wins the ball back they must pass it to one of their team-mates to get a point.
3. Switch out the defenders.

### Variations:

Limit the touches to two touch

### Coaching points:

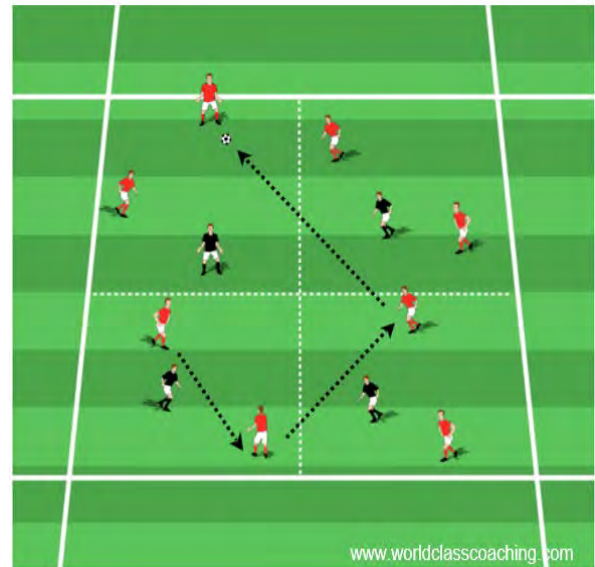
Vision and awareness

First touch

Body shape of the receiving player.

Communication

Disguise when passing. Look one way, pass the other.





## Ball control & possession

**Stage III** ▀ Area: 60 x 40. 7 v 7 including goalkeepers. There are 3 playing zones. The outer playing area is 15 x 40 and the central playing area is 30 x 40.

A defender and an attacker from each team are in the outer area and a 4 v 4 is played in the central area.

1. If a defender or goalkeeper has the ball they are supported by one of the central players. A 2 v 1 is played. One of these players can either pass or dribble into the central area, 4 v 4.

2. If the ball is played to an attacker, they can be supported by a central player, 2 v 1 to goal.

**Variation:**

You can add 1 or 2 floating players in the central area. They play with the team in possession.

**Coaching points:**

Movement to support each other

Body shape

First touch

Communication

Finish off your session with a game. Look for the defensive shape of both teams.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Organizing a flat back 4

**Stage I - Technical warm up** - Area: 24 x 25 (Two 12 x 25 areas)

4v4 with 2 or 3 target players outside the area. The coach has all the soccer balls.

1. The 4 players cannot come outside their area.
2. The coach serves in a ball.
3. The objective of the exercise is for the players in possession to pass to any of the target players. The 'back four' move as a unit to block the passes.
4. If a pass is blocked or a pass is made to the target players, the game continues.
5. Change target players

**Coaching points:**

Team-work and communication

Positional sense, angles, balance of the four players



**Stage II - 1v1 in a flat back 4** - Area – Half a field with four playing areas as shown. Two midfielders for each team are placed on the half way line. The dark midfielders are support players for the attackers and are there for wall passes. The yellow midfield are there for the defender to pass to if they win the ball. The coach has all the soccer balls.

4v4 with 2 or 3 target players outside the area. The coach has all the soccer balls.

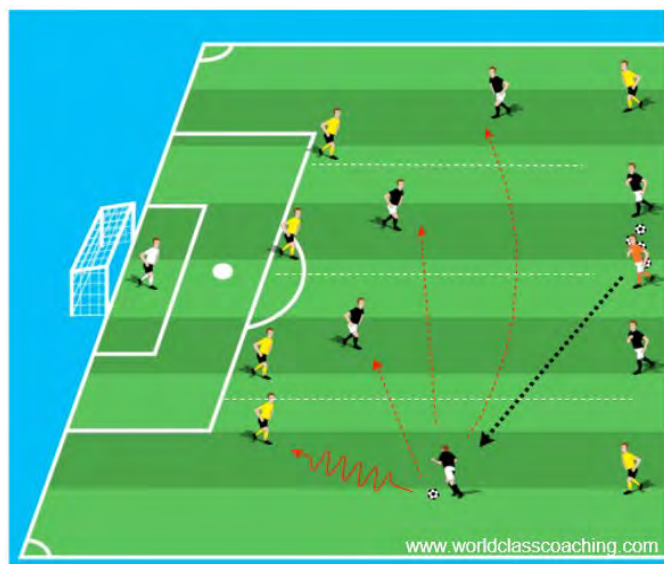
1. The coach passes to an attacker. That player can only use the channel they are assigned to. They play a 1v1 against the defender. The other attackers still offer support in their channel.
2. If the attacker is successful they can either shoot or cross for a team-mate.
3. If he/she cannot beat the defender they pass to another team mate (red lines)
4. Defenders who are not involved in the play must still take up good defensive positions in their channels.

Variation: Remove the channels.

**Coaching points:**

Team-work and communication

Positive 1v1



## Organizing a flat back 4

**Stage III** - Area: Half a field. 6 v 5 on the field with a goalkeeper. Four defenders and a holding midfielder player against 6 attackers. The number of players can be changed depending on your teams formation. The coach has all the soccer balls.

1. The coach serves in a ball to an attacking player.
2. The closest defender closes the player down.
3. The rest of the defense work on cover, balance and depth.
4. If the defenders win the ball they attempt to pass the ball through either of the gates either first time or combination passing with their team-mates.
5. Good communication is maintained between the defending team.

**Coaching points:**

Communication (From the goalkeeper)

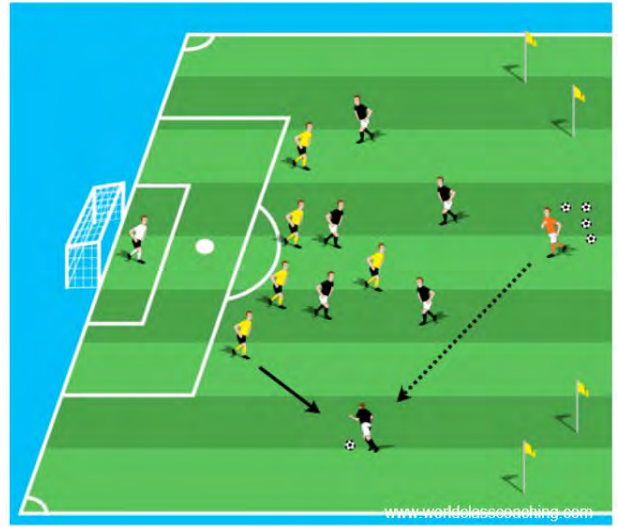
A balanced defense.

Pressure, cover, balance and depth.

Positioning of the full backs.

Recovery runs. Get behind the ball.

Finish off your session with a game. Look for the defensive shape of both teams.



**Coaching notes:**

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## Third man running

**Stage I** - Area: 20 x 40 Exercise shows 10 players with one soccer ball. (Can be done with more players or run two stations) Two players are placed in the central area.

1. Player A passes the ball to the first central player and continues his / her run.
2. Player B moves forward and receives the pass from the middle player. He / she then passes the ball to the next middle player who passes to the running Player A. Player B joins the opposite group.
3. Player A now passes to the end player. The exercise now goes the other way in the same passing sequence.

### Variations:

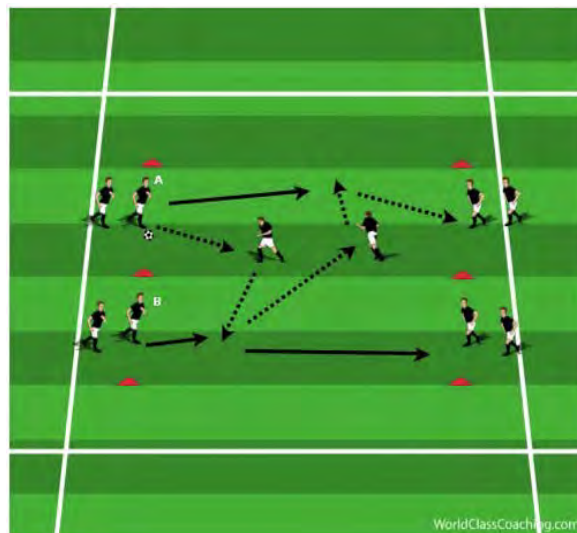
Change the middle players.

Add two balls. One at each end. The quality has to be good for this to work. The middle players have to be alert. Get Players A & B to make diagonal runs instead of straight ones. One ball is used.

### Coaching points:

Timing of runs and quality of passing.

Middle players checking to the ball.



**Stage II** - Area: 60 x 45 with the field having three 15 yard playing zones. The game is shown as 7 v 7 using two midfielders from each team in the middle playing area. Other players can move through this zone but they **cannot** stop in it. The outer zones are 3v2 and all zones have limited touches. Middle zone 2 touch and outer 3 touch.

1. The two midfielders from each team stay in the middle zone.
2. Teams keep possession and the ball can either be dribbled across or a run be made by an attacking defender.
3. The two midfielders are always offering support.
4. More than one defender can move into the attacking third. Be careful of the counter attack from the opposition.

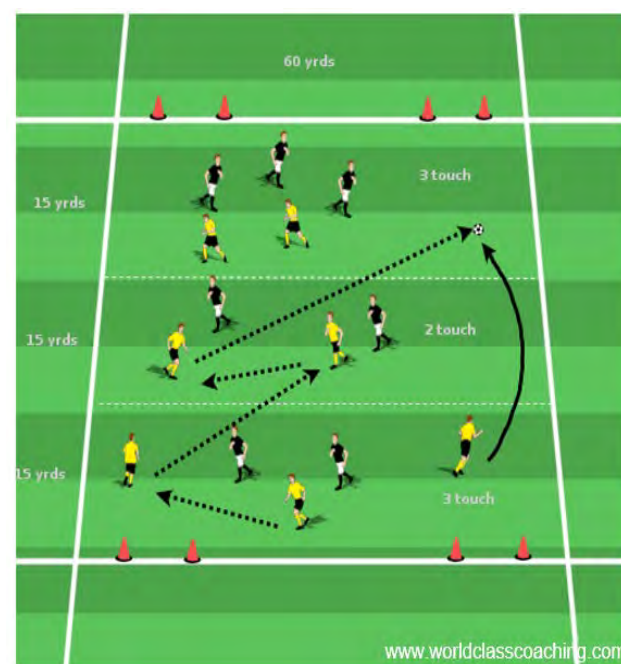
### Coaching points:

Link up play

Movement to create angles

The player passing the ball can continue the run and may get the ball after one or two passes.

Quality passing. To space or to feet.



## Third man running

**Stage III -** Area – 60 x 60. 7 v 7 including goalkeepers. There are 3 playing zones all 60 x 20. A defender and an attacker from each team are in the outer area and a 4 v 4 is played in the central area.

1. If a defender or goalkeeper has the ball they are supported by one of the central players. A 2 v 1 is played. One of these players can either pass or dribble into the central area, 4 v 4.
2. If the ball is played to an attacker, they can be supported by a central player, 2 v 1 to goal.
3. If a goal is scored from a third man run it counts as double.

**Variation:**

You can add 1 or 2 floating players in the central area. They play with the team in possession.

### Coaching points:

Movement to support each other

### Body shape

## First touch

## Communication

Finish off your session with a game. Look for the defensive shape of both teams.



**Coaching notes:**

[illegible]



## Build up play

**Stage I** - Area: 30 x 30. 7 v 7 no goalkeepers..

1. The ball is thrown from team-mate to team-mate.
2. Once the ball is caught by a player they cannot travel with it.
3. Team mates move up the field to receive a throw.
4. As soon as the ball hits the ground, possession goes to the opposite team. If a block is made from a throw and it hits the ground then possession stays with the team that threw it.
5. A goal has to be scored by a header or a volley.
6. The player holding the ball has 3 seconds to get rid of it.

**Variation:** You can add goalkeepers

**Coaching points:**

Communication

Movement

Build up play

Decision to set up a goal scoring opportunity

Team work



**Stage II** - Area: 60 x 50 with two end zones 10 x 50. 7 v 7 is played in the main playing area with one soccer ball.

1. The coach has all the soccer balls. The coach feeds in a ball to the dark team. They are looking to work the ball up the field to pass into the end zone for a receiving player to run on to and control.
2. If the attacking team feel under pressure in possession a player can drop back into the defending end zone and cannot be followed by an opponent.
3. That player must then be supported by a team mate and pass the ball to that player (as shown) before the attack is started.

**Coaching points:**

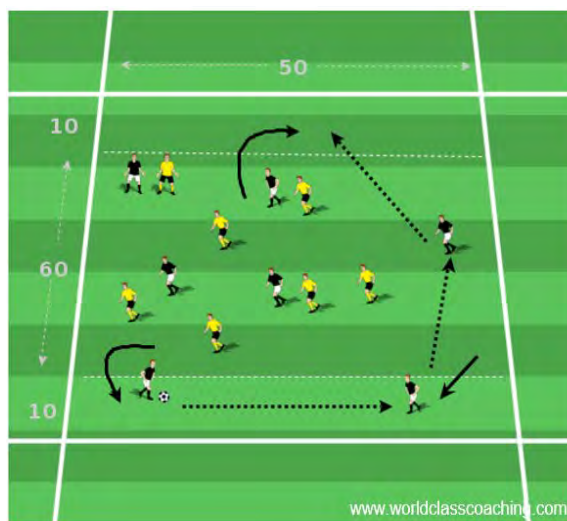
Early accurate and quick passing

Keep the ball

Movement and support

Spread out

Timing of runs



## Build up play

**Stage III** - Area: Half a field extended by 10 yards with a 5 yard safe zone. 17 players including a GK arranged in a 7 v 7 in main playing area with two supporting players in the safe zone. Defenders line up the 4 defenders and three midfield players.

1. The coach plays the ball to a yellow player.
2. If pressurized the midfield player can drop the ball back in the safe zone to retain possession or switch the attack.
3. The purpose is to create scoring opportunities in free play.
4. The offside rule applies.
5. If the defenders win the ball they attempt to pass to one of the players in the safe zone.

### Coaching points:

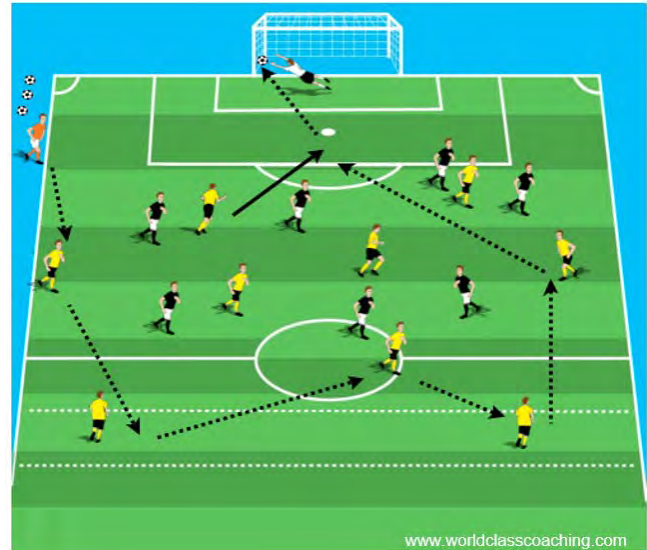
If yellows win the ball off the defenders, encourage counter attacks.

Spread out when in possession

### Movement and support

Combination passing to correct space or foot.

Finish off your session with a game. Look for quality possession.



**Coaching notes:**

[illegible]

## Switching play

**Stage I - Technical warm up -** Set up: 40 x 20 area with 12 players (Two groups running simultaneously) Two balls are used.

1. The balls are passed clockwise focusing on details of passing:

Accuracy, weight & timing

2. All players take two touches.

3. Players pass and follow their pass.

4. The middle player is switching the field. He opens up the body, receives the ball on the back foot and passes the ball to the correct foot of the next player.

**Variation:**

- Play the opposite direction

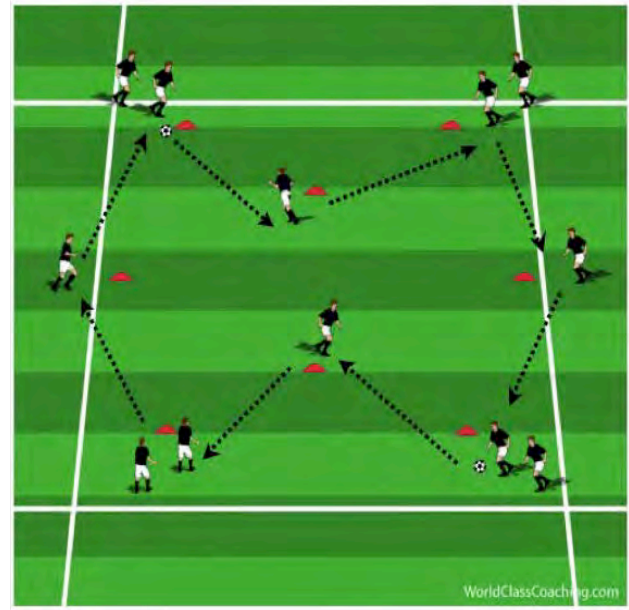
- Add another ball

**Coaching points:**

Quality of passing - Details

Body shape

Communication



**Variation**

Same set-up as shown using two balls.

The ball is now played one touch in the central area.

1. Player 1 passes the ball long to player 2.

2. The receiving player 2 plays the ball one touch to player 3

who plays the pass into space for player 4 to run on to.

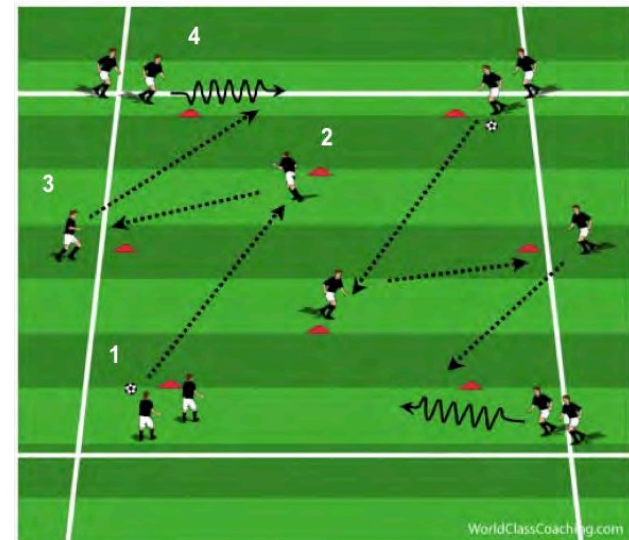
3. Player 4 dribbles and passes to the next player.

4. Play the opposite direction

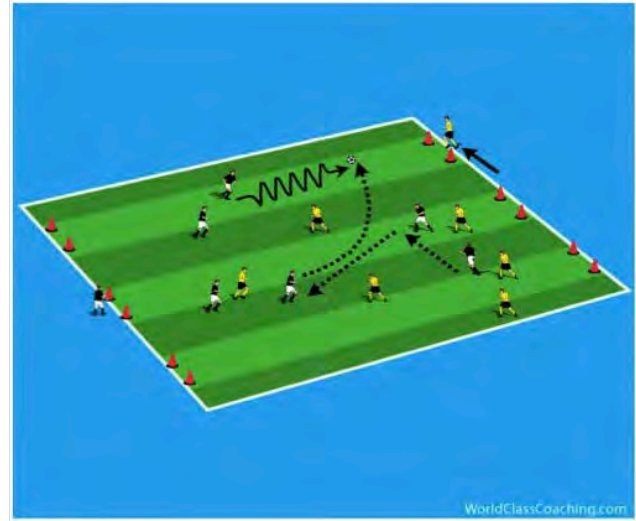
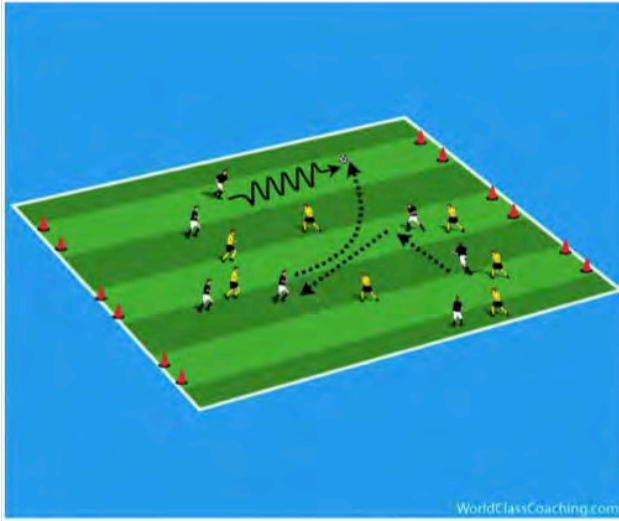
**Coaching points:**

Details of passing

Timing of the run from player 4



## Switching play



**Stage II - Area:** Set up: 60 x 40 area with 14 players

1. Play 7v7 with each team defending three goals as shown.
2. The object of the exercise is for each team to score on the oppositions three goals.
3. The team in possession must look to pass the ball quickly and switch play.
4. If they cannot score they must keep possession.

**Variation**

1. Progress the session by adding a sweeper for each team behind the goal line.
2. The teams cannot score a goal in a goal that the sweeper is protecting.
3. This forces the teams to switch the ball quickly.

**Finish the session playing a scrimmage. Look for players reacting to switching the play.**

**Coaching points:**

Move the ball quickly  
Vary the switch. Short quick passes or a long ball.  
Create 2v1 situations  
Look for the 'third man run'.  
Communication

**Coaching notes:**

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