

SOCCER COACH WEEKLY

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TECHNIQUE TACTICS & MENTALITY

COACH GAME INTELLIGENCE

- ✓ SUCCESS WITH TURNOVER BALL
- ✓ COUNTER-ATTACKING
- ✓ VISION TO SWITCH PLAY

TOUCHLINE TALES

HAVE A PLAN 'A'
AND A PLAN 'B'
EVEN A PLAN 'C'



IAN BARKER, DIRECTOR OF COACHING EDUCATION, NSCAA

MIDFIELD SUPPORT

- ✓ AS FAST AS ARGENTINA
- ✓ AS CLEVER AS SPAIN
- ✓ MESSI V FABREGAS

SOCCER WARM UPS PERFECT PASSING

SIMPLE EFFECTIVE SESSIONS FOR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT



< **STEVE McCLAREN:**
ON THE BALL AT
DERBY COUNTY

Calling All Boy Scouts



Soccer Coach Weekly
Issue 393



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Touchline Tales

A massive change in the weather during the last month made me think of that old Boy Scout saying: be prepared!

It has been so easy over the summer with hard pitches and plenty of sunshine – the main problem being to bring drinks to cover anyone who forgot to bring one – and no other extras needed apart from reminding players to bring trainers as well as boots because the ground was pretty hard.

But with the autumn well on its way the weather is going to be very changeable from week to week. I know this, and you know this, but even though I always preach about having a plan A, B and C for the conditions of the match I was caught out last week by a sudden and very violent downburst from a cloud so low you could almost touch it.

The problem was, and I'm making excuses here, it started as a sunny morning with no sign of rain. My colleague Adam had warned me the day before that rain was forecast.

But I knew better.

And standing there at the side of the pitch I could see the heavy cloud coming. The game was nearly at half-time, but I had no chance of getting anything from the car as we were unable to park anywhere near the pitch.

I did try holding the half time team talk with the coming storm behind me,

Be prepared for wet conditions



“I was caught out by a sudden and very violent downburst from a cloud so low you could almost touch it”

but I then saw the faces of the players who were looking directly at it – so I turned them around so they couldn't see the clouds.

It wasn't until late in the second half that the storm hit – I stood there in short sleeves while all around me brollies and rainproof garments appeared. The players were okay as they were running around, but in the back of my mind I wondered if they too had forgotten a change of clothes, as no reminder had gone out to the parents.

Everything and everyone got a soaking, but the game was completed and I sent everyone home without

making them stand around for a post-match team talk. Driving home in the car the wet players and myself steamed up the windows and the flip-flap of the wipers interrupted my thoughts on why I hadn't put plan B and C into action.

And so I have sorted all my changeable weather gear out and made sure that I, as well as my players, am prepared for any sudden change in the weather.



David Clarke



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Dutch Vision

Coaching game intelligence is the way ahead for successful youth teams, according to former England manager Steve McClaren

Steve McClaren, manager of Derby County in the English Championship, is one of a rare breed of English managers to have won a top flight league in Europe since Howard Wilkinson won the last English Division One title with Leeds United. The former England manager won the Dutch Eredivisie in 2010 with FC Twente making him a much sought after coach.

The 53-year-old is best known for his two-year spell in charge of England, having previously been assistant manager during Sven-Göran Eriksson's tenure. In McClaren's time leading the Three Lions he achieved a 50% win ratio. He has also managed Middlesbrough – where he won the League Cup and took the club to a UEFA Cup final – and Nottingham Forest, and spent 11 years as assistant to Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United.

He sees his Dutch odyssey as the biggest success of his career. "When I was at Manchester United, being part of all of the successes we enjoyed there, I thought it would be fantastic to win a league title as the manager of the team. And so it proved. Twente are a fantastic club."

He followed that success up by becoming the first Englishman to manage in the German Bundesliga with Wolfsburg – so he knows a thing or two about different ways to coach.

Holland is all about tactics while in Germany it is their organizational efficiency and discipline that is apparent.

"Dutch players are very strong technically and tactically. This comes about from the way they are brought up by the clubs from an early age. To give you an example: at Twente, the youth teams from 11 years old and upwards all watched the first team in action.

"They would be set homework which focused on a tactical aspect of the game. Their coach would read, mark and feedback on these...It develops a very strong tactical understanding of the game from a very early age.

"Everybody in the Netherlands is a coach. Everybody you met – even if you were out shopping – discussed tactics with you and offered sensible opinions on such matters."

In terms of youth coaching there is a big difference in cultures: "The

differences are incredible. The key difference between them all though is the amount of money spent on youth development in the Netherlands and Germany, compared to England. Looking at Germany right now, you can see what good quality youth development work does.

"I would love to see our children taught game intelligence from a young age, like they do in the Netherlands."

Words and activities by:
David Clarke

"It would benefit the coaching system in England if the clubs would put more belief in their coaches and systems. Instead of giving good English coaches a chance at the top, clubs tend to look overseas more than they do within their club or lower down the divisions. In the Netherlands, if a coach is good, they get their chances"

**McCLAREN ON
YOUTH COACHING**



Transition Success

Swift counter-attacks are very successful in youth soccer but teams must react quickly and move to support the play. They have to be quick in this game with only 10 seconds to score

WHY USE IT

This session is about counter-attacking, transition and players rotating in their positions. Attackers practice good link up play and fast paced combinations and decision making. Defenders work against overloads.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs, cones and goals. Set up a 60 x 40 yard area split into two halves with goals at each end. We've used 16 players in this session plus a server.

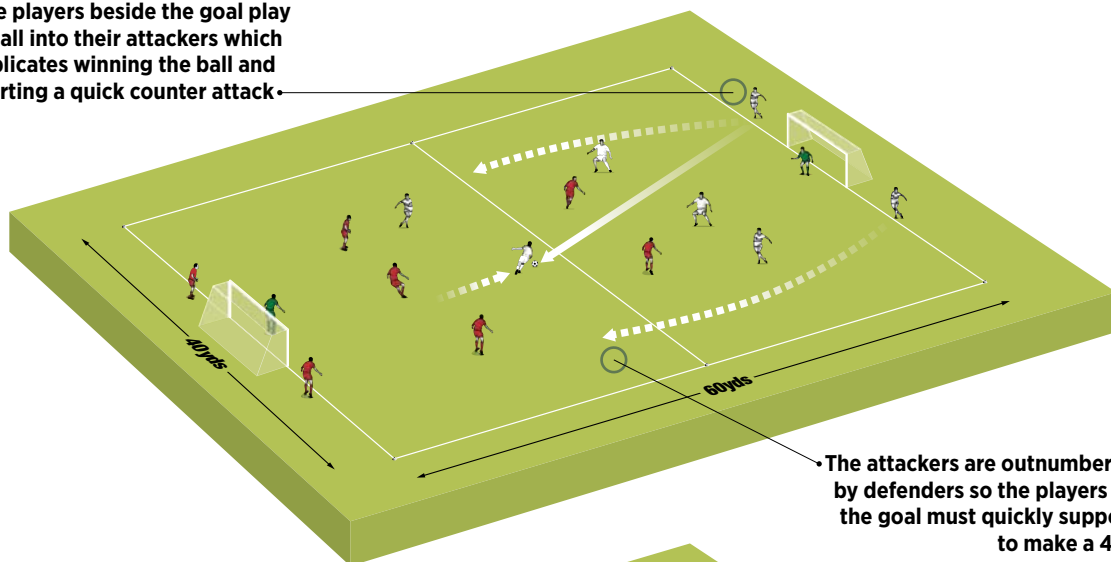
HOW TO PLAY

Split your players into two equal teams of 8 players. There should be 3 defenders and a goalkeeper and 2 attackers in each half. Two supporting players start either side of their own goal. To begin one of the two players next to the goal passes to one of the attackers in the other half of the pitch, and the two players then support the attack and create a 4v3 overload. Attackers have 10 seconds to score. If no goal is scored in this time possession is overturned and the other team restarts from their end of the area.

TECHNIQUE

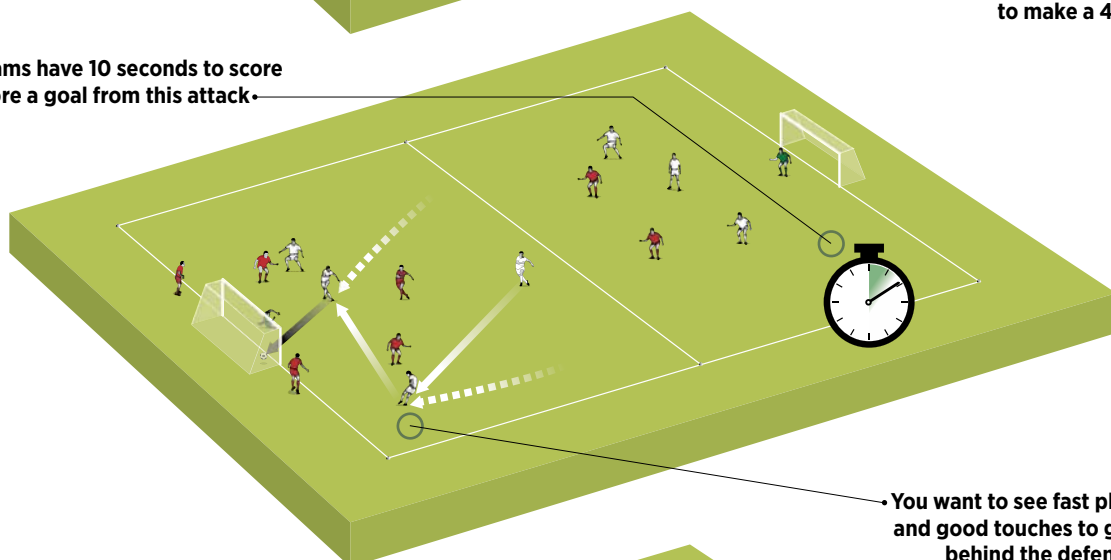
Good passing to start the move and good touches to set play up. A good counter-attack needs all players to be concentrating and playing good passes to move the ball quickly. Finish with a good shot – close range or long range.

The players beside the goal play a ball into their attackers which replicates winning the ball and starting a quick counter attack.

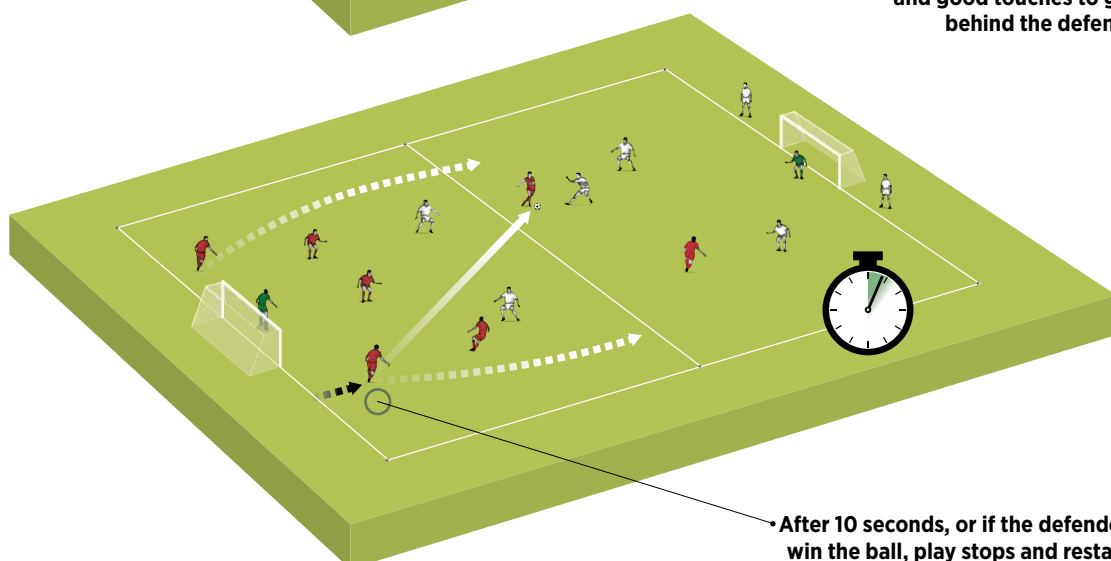


The attackers are outnumbered by defenders so the players by the goal must quickly support to make a 4v3

Teams have 10 seconds to score a goal from this attack.



You want to see fast play and good touches to get behind the defence



After 10 seconds, or if the defenders win the ball, play stops and restarts with the defending team attacking

Player movement ■■■■

Ball movement ———

Run with ball ■■■■

Shot ———

Box Switch

Simple fact – being able to switch play makes the pitch bigger and gives more options to create goalscoring situations. This possession session is all about using space on the pitch

WHY USE IT

This session is about counter-attacking, transition and players rotating in their positions. Attackers practice good link up play and fast paced combinations and decision making. Defenders work against overloads.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs and cones. Set up a 30x30 yard area with four 5x5 yard boxes. We've used 16 players in this session.

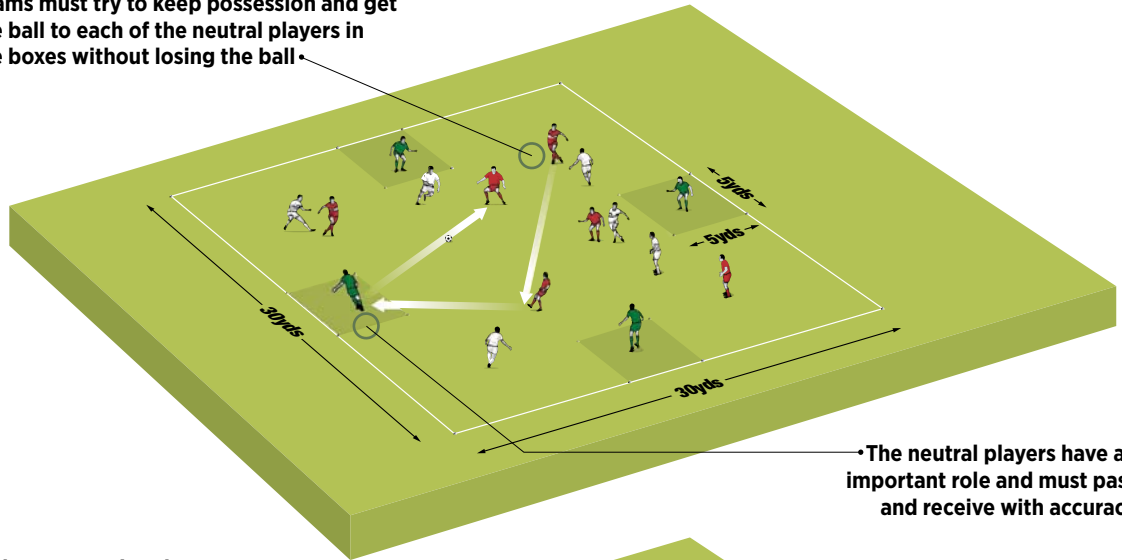
HOW TO PLAY

Split your players into two teams of 6 players plus 4 more in the small boxes who play for the team in possession. Teams must keep possession using the 4 players in the boxes. Teams must try and get the ball to all four players in the boxes to win the game. Play three games of 4 minutes. Once they have played it a couple of times make it a rule that the ball must come out of a different side of the box to the one it went in to count as a pass to that player.

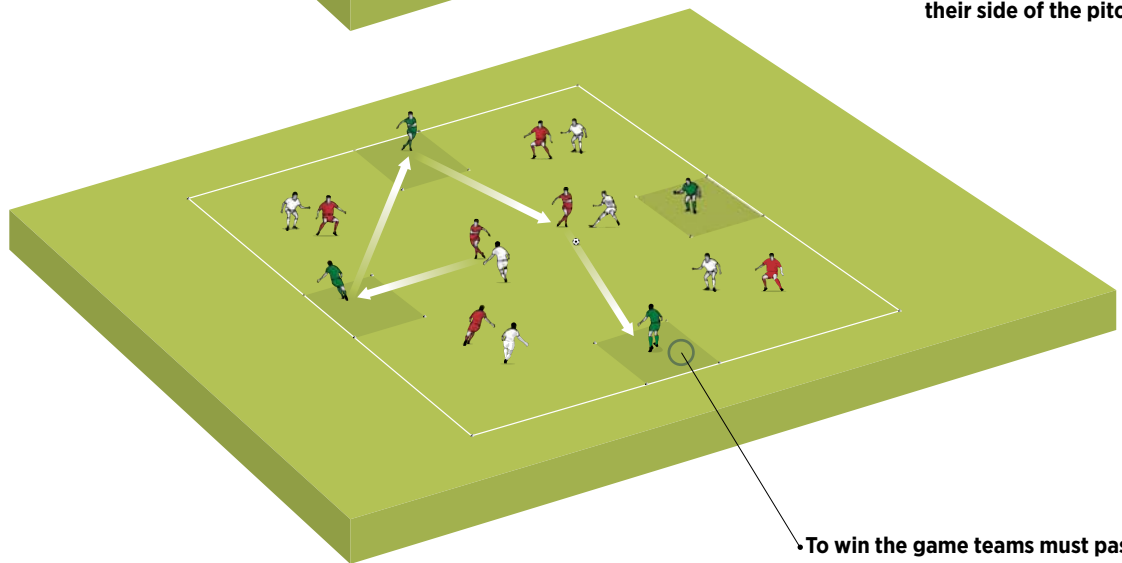
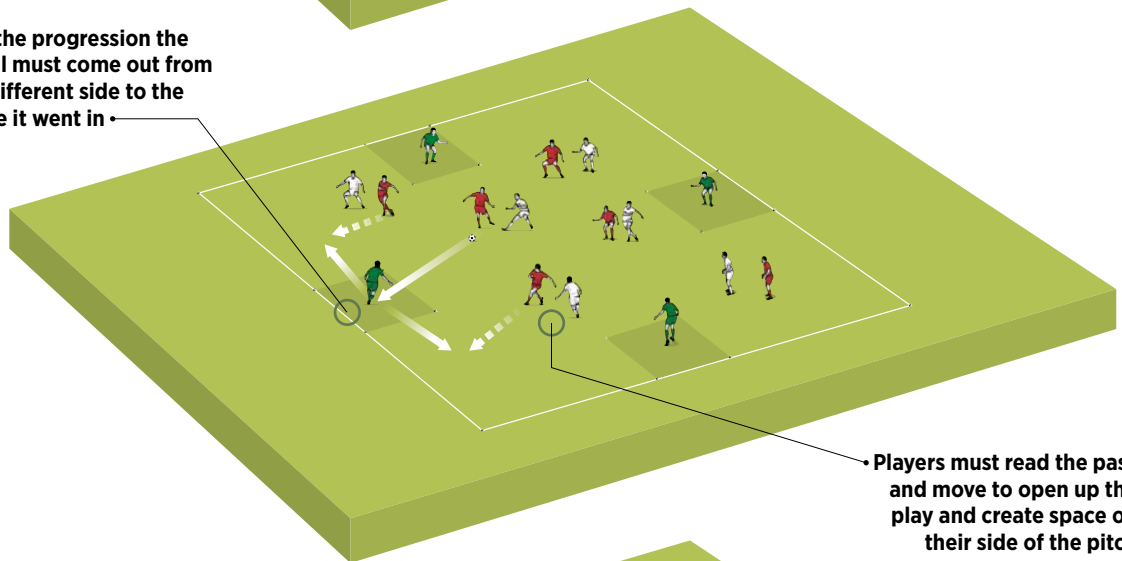
TECHNIQUE

Body position is important – it must be open to receive the ball and move it on afterwards.

Teams must try to keep possession and get the ball to each of the neutral players in the boxes without losing the ball



In the progression the ball must come out from a different side to the one it went in



Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot



Lionel Messi and Fernando Gago link up in a game of soccer tennis during a training session ahead of their 2014 World Cup

Club Versus Country

Lionel Messi shows his skills by playing in a fast counter-attacking team with Argentina but he is also the key player in a slower possession game at Barcelona

Argentina made it to the World Cup final this year on the back of some very fast counter attacks – Spain play a lot slower and never got going at the tournament. But both styles of play are ideal for youth teams and both will be successful at this level.

A key player to both types of play is Lionel Messi. At Barcelona he plays a much slower game with bursts of energy and he is used to having an array of talent all around him – but for his international team it is different.

There is no Xavi, no Andrés Iniesta pulling the strings, a crucial component for the Catalans. What the Argentina coach Alex Sabella did to make the best use of Messi was inject startling pace into the team's tactical structure.

A typical Argentina team will adopt a 4-3-3 formation, with Messi taking up the 'false nine' position he has at Barcelona – Gonzalo Higuain and Sergio Agüero play either side of him, creating a potent force in the final third.

The biggest influence to the team's mentality is behind this attacking spearhead. Ángel di María plays from midfield on the left, but when Argentina break on the counter the Manchester United player acts almost as a fourth forward.

The side are most dangerous not

when building up slowly from the centre-circle forwards, but when the opposition is stretched and holes appear on the counter-attack.

The team most like them in Spain is Real Madrid. Think of how Carlo Ancelotti's line-up attacks quickly, in great numbers, using the length and breadth of the pitch with Ronaldo and Gareth Bale the fast attacking

Spain's Cesc Fabregas during training at the 2014 World Cup



midfielders. For Argentina Fernando Gago's diagonal balls, angled out to Higuain on the right or Di María on the opposite flank, serve as the first step in opening up the field and stretching the opposition.

Messi, meanwhile, takes a deeper role than he does for Barcelona, often seen closer to the halfway line than the penalty spot.

Spain will be pleased to see the re-emergence of Cesc Fabregas at Chelsea as he plays the Messi role in the Spanish team. Surrounded by Messi's Barcelona teammates Fabregas had a poor World Cup, with the Spanish manager Vicente del Bosque choosing to ignore his array of strikers and use Fabregas as the false 9 in a 4-2-3-1 pyramid.

Spain will also benefit from the great relationship developing between Fabregas and Diego Costa – Chelsea's fast possession play creating opportunities for passes from midfield into the attacker's runs.

Spain will come back with a bang – of that I have no doubt. And with Argentina looking strong there will be some classic international matches to look forward to.

Try the following sessions to help your players develop their match day skills.

Words by:
David Clarke

Activities by:
Ian Barker



National Soccer Coaches
Association of America

Argentina Midfield

When a team is on the attack it is vital midfield support is quick and the passes are the correct weight and into space. Use this session to get your players supporting each other

WHY USE IT

Argentina has an array of attacking talent. This activity seeks to improve the combined play of the forwards and the attacking midfielders

SET UP

You need balls, bibs, cones and goals. Use half your normal pitch split into equal thirds. We've used 14 players in this session.

HOW TO PLAY

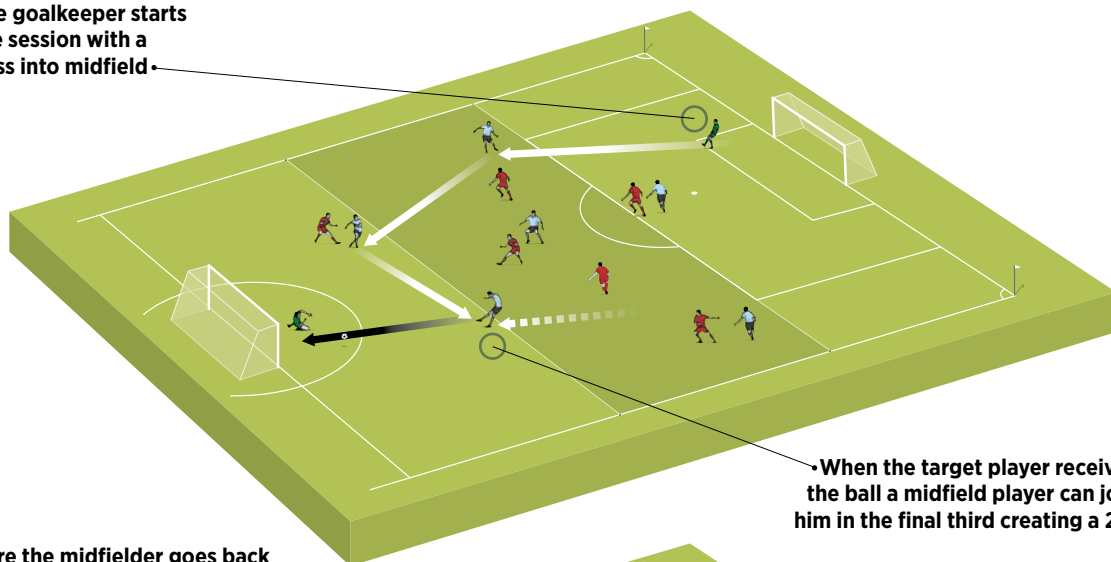
Split your players into two equal teams of 7 including goalkeepers – each team has 1 defender in the defensive third 4 midfielders in the middle third and 1 attacker in the final third. The goalkeepers start the session with a pass into the middle third. When a pass is made to the target player in the attacking third one midfielder may join the striker in the attacking third to create a 2v1 to goal. At every restart players must return to their starting zone. Progress the session by allowing an extra defender in the defending zone to create a 2v2.

TECHNIQUE

Passing and receiving. Dribbling with an end product – pass or shot. Shooting of the turn. Finishing quickly in numbers up situations.

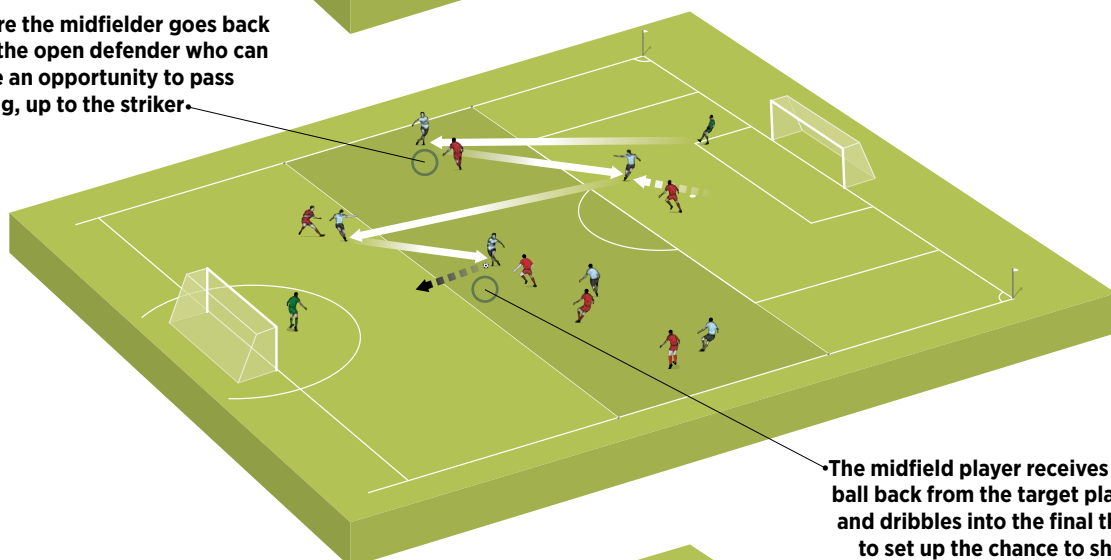
Activity by: Ian Barker, Director of Coaching Education, National Soccer Coaches Association of America

The goalkeeper starts the session with a pass into midfield



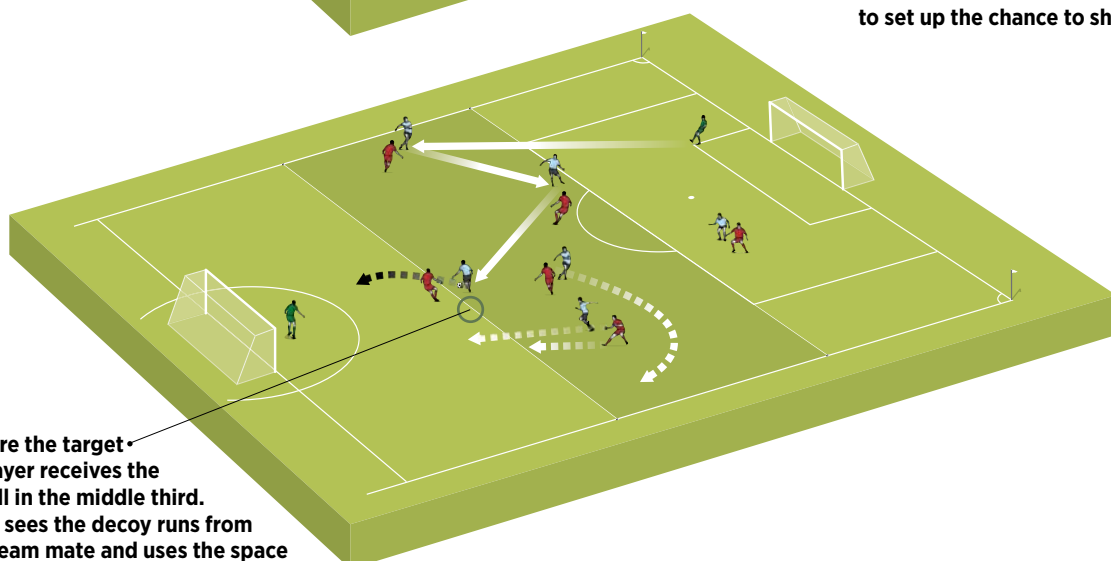
When the target player receives the ball a midfielder can join him in the final third creating a 2v1

Here the midfielder goes back to the open defender who can see an opportunity to pass long, up to the striker



The midfielder player receives the ball back from the target player and dribbles into the final third to set up the chance to shoot

Here the target player receives the ball in the middle third. He sees the decoy runs from a team mate and uses the space to dribble into the final third



Player movement ■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■→

Shot →

Simply Spain

Keeping possession is a mixture of good technique and movement. In this session players are rewarded for passing and receiving – it helps them make maximum use of space

WHY USE IT

Spain has excelled at creative possession focused play – this session seeks to support that style. This activity gets players playing quickly under pressure and moving off the ball.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs and cones. Set up an area 25x25 yards. We've used 10 players in this session.

HOW TO PLAY

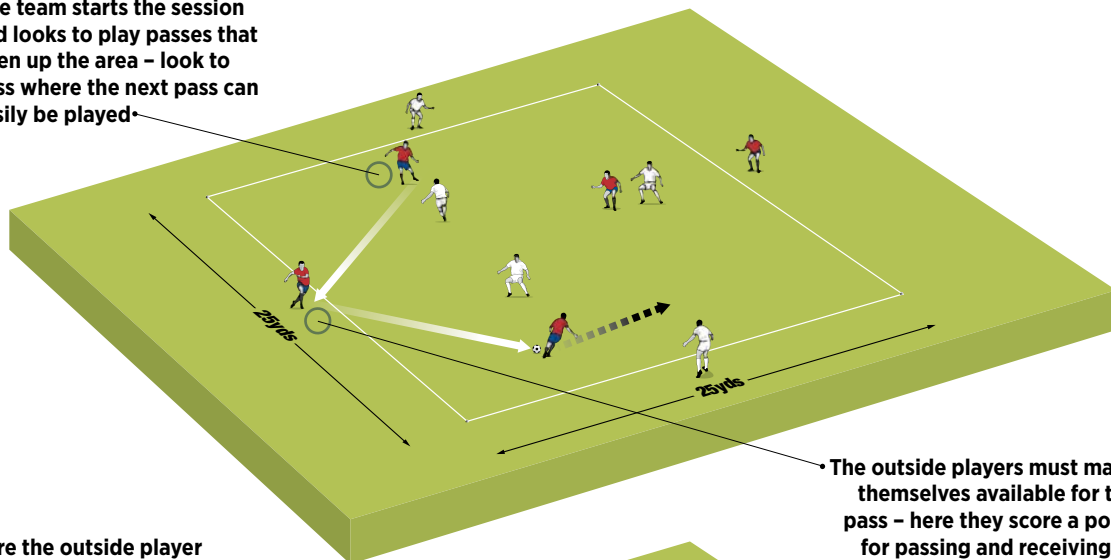
Split your players into two equal teams of 5 – each team has 3 players in the centre with 2 outside the area. One team starts with the ball in the centre and must keep possession – using the outside players creates a 5v3 overload in favour of possession. Teams score by passing to an outside player and receiving it back. Outside players can be one or two touch to make the session harder. Swap outside players every 5 balls and see which team scores the most points in that time.

TECHNIQUE

Passing and receiving under pressure, with angle of pass and direction of pass crucial – pass to the side away from opponent. Moving off the ball in combination. Seeing third man options and maintaining passing lanes.

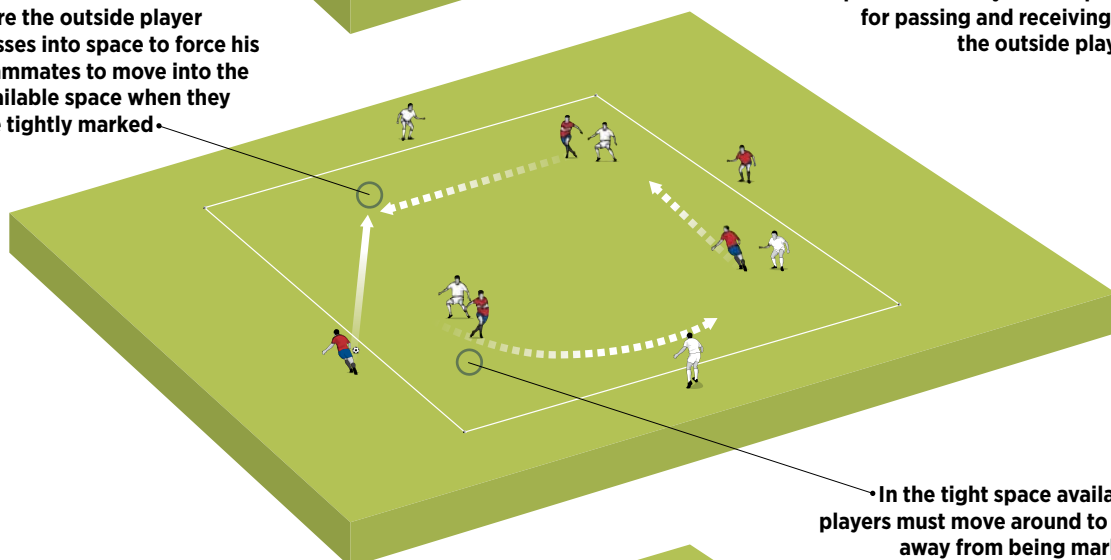
Activity by: Ian Barker, Director of Coaching Education, National Soccer Coaches Association of America

One team starts the session and looks to play passes that open up the area – look to pass where the next pass can easily be played

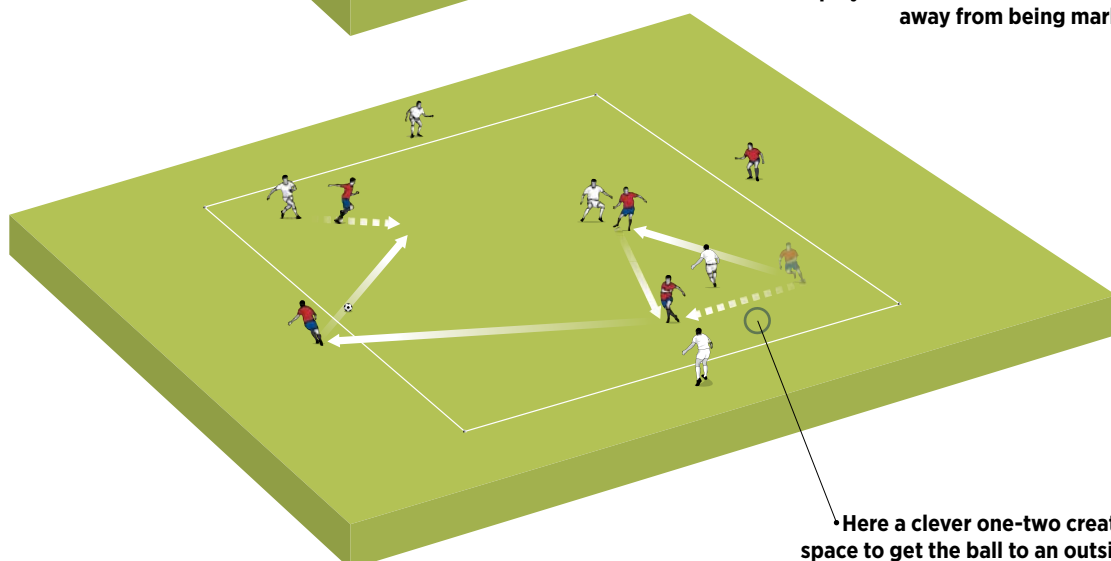


The outside players must make themselves available for the pass – here they score a point for passing and receiving to the outside player

Here the outside player passes into space to force his teammates to move into the available space when they are tightly marked



In the tight space available players must move around to get away from being marked



Here a clever one-two creates space to get the ball to an outside player and set up a scoring point

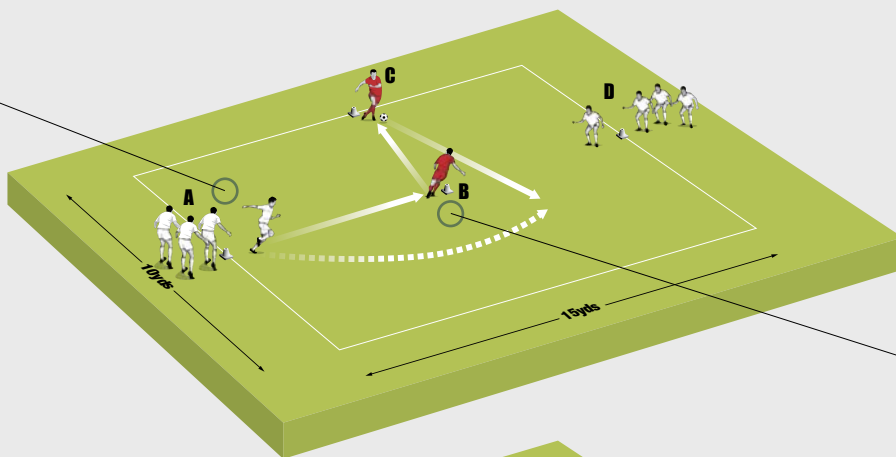
Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

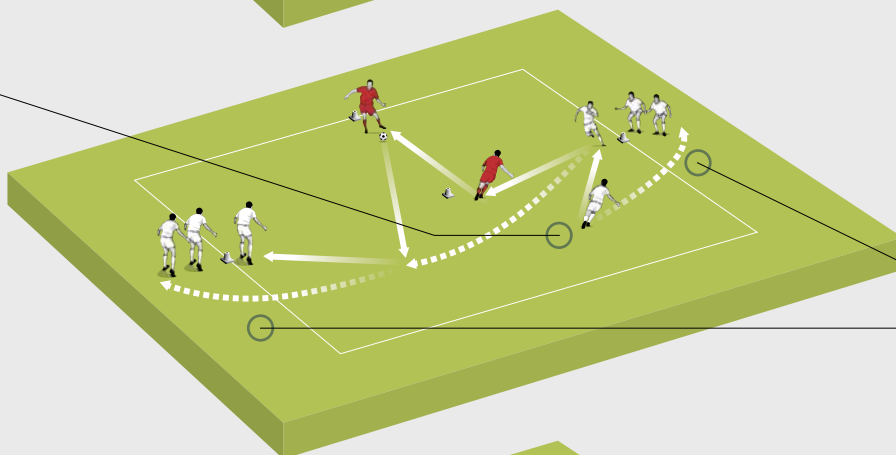
Shot

A passes to B, and makes a supporting run behind B.

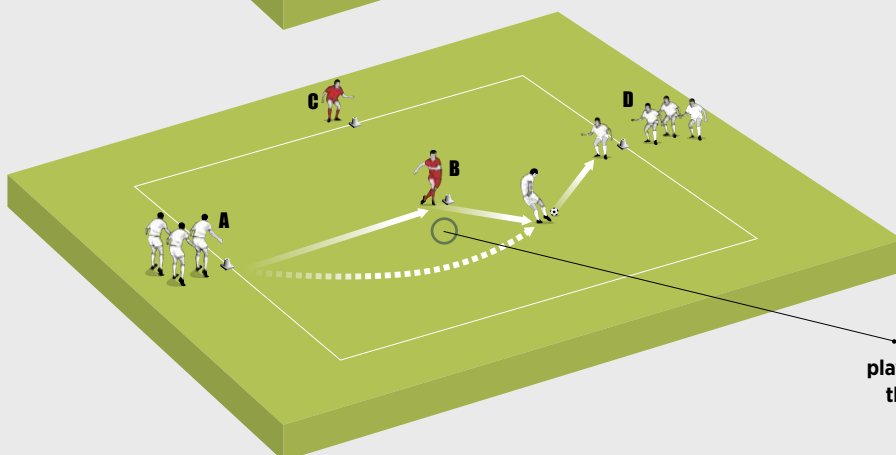


B passes to C, who makes a first time pass to the supporting player A

A passes to D who begins the process again by passing to B and running to support



A and D players join the back of the lines opposite to where they started from



Progress the session by giving player B the choice of missing out the pass to C and passing to the overlapping player directly

Run with ball ■■■► Player movement ■■■► Ball movement —►



Soccer Warm-ups

No.12: Perfect Passing This simple passing exercise will encourage your young players to work on their possession so they can dictate the play at speed in match situations

WHY USE IT

This session is to help players to pass the ball at speed and will improve the skills of young players in one of the most vital areas of the game – possession. It also helps encourage supporting runs on the outside of a team-mate and helps players understand link play.

SET UP

Set up an area 15x10 yards.

We are using 10 players in this session. You need balls and cones.

HOW TO PLAY

Follow the passing sequence in the diagram, making sure players use communication to let other players know when to pass. Look for accuracy and weight of pass. B and C should be rotated every four goes as they are the servers and you want them to take part.

TECHNIQUE

This is an unopposed session to get players looking up and calling for the pass. It is vital that players look up so they pass accurately. This simple passing sequence will help you to gradually speed up your players' first touch, control and pass so that they will do it at speed in matches and so that they know how to take advantage when they have possession.

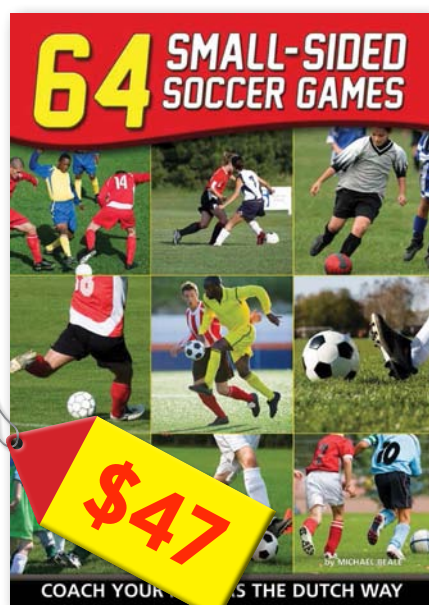
DIFFICULTY RATING



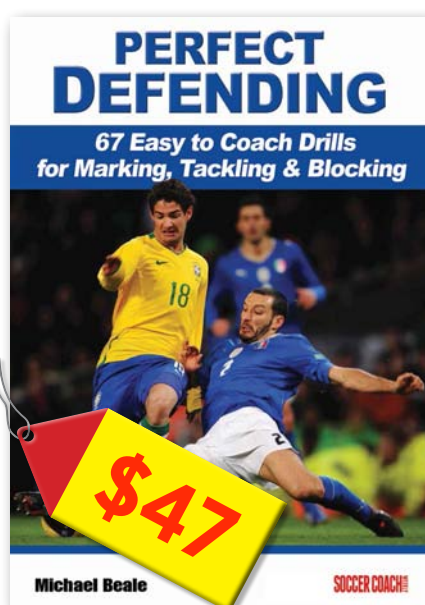
Simple passing but gets two stars because some of the movements of players can be confusing at first. Once players understand the movement it should be at a fast pace

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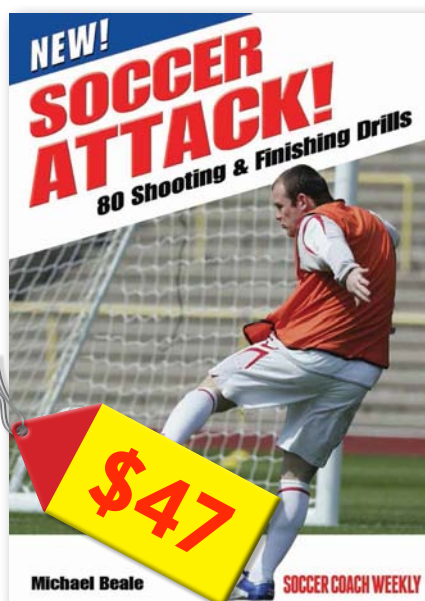
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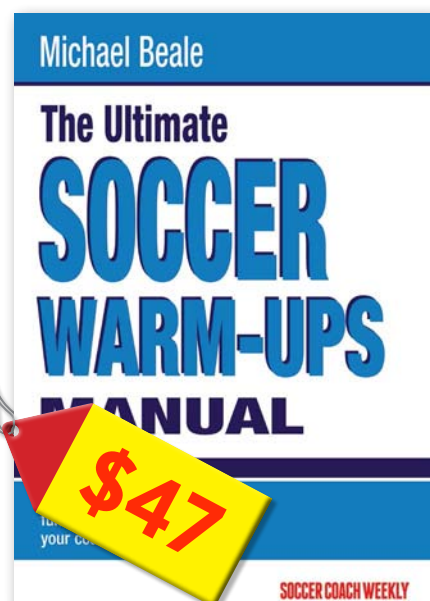
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