

TOUCHLINE TALES WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM EL CLASICO

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WEEKLY

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LEEDS UNITED
AND ENGLAND
U19 STAR

FIVE MINUTE WORKSHOP

- > SPEED AND AGILITY
- > CORE BODY STRENGTH

4 WAYS TO COACH WITH PASSION

- > HARNESS EMOTIONS
- > CLEAR YOUR MIND

LEWIS COOK

CONTROL THE TEMPO

- > SCORE FIRST AND RUN THE GAME <
- > PASSING AND MOVING BETWEEN THE THIRDS <
- > CONTROL THE SCORE, THE GAME, THE OPPONENT <

THE BEST SOCCER PRACTICE PLANS EVERY WEEK

Our Own El Clasico



Soccer Coach Weekly
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Touchline Tales

On the same day as the El Clasico between Barcelona and Real Madrid in Spain our Under-14s played a match against their local rivals. It was a fairly friendly affair as both sets of players know each other well through school and teams they grew up in together.

So there wasn't any of that intense rivalry seen at the Barcelona game. The Under-14s are in good form as the season winds down and will finish in the top half of the Premier Division in their local league. They were in confident swashbuckling style as they created chance after chance.

"As the half wore on and they hadn't scored the misses began to cause some discontent among the watching parents"

But as the half wore on and they hadn't scored the misses began to cause some discontent among the watching parents. I was surprised that they had taken so many shots without registering one on target.

And their opponents began to realize it might be their lucky day and started to launch some good attacks themselves. The game became much tighter and the early pressure began to drop off. It was then that our team scored much to everyone's relief – but it didn't end there.

Anguish for Neymar as he misses a tap-in in the Barcelona versus Real game



As the half drew to a close the opponents had a really good attack but the final shot was covered by our goalkeeper – until one of our defenders stuck out his foot put the ball in his own net. 1-1 at half time.

It was a good second half and both teams had chances but we scored a good goal late on and we took the bragging rights for Monday morning when all the players would meet up again.

It was that evening that I watched the Barca v Real Madrid game. In that game Barcelona made the early running much like the Under-14s that morning. And here too there was a lot of attacking and no end product until a free kick was turned in by Barcelona much to the relief of the home crowd.

However, again like the Under-14s there was a mistake – after a great passing move Barcelona created a

wonderful chance for the skilful Neymar who only had to tap the ball in from the 6-yard box to make it 2-0. But he miskicked the ball and it bounced into the thankful goalkeeper's arms. From that a quick break gave Benzema the chance to backheel a pass into the box where Ronaldo stabbed it home.

They too went in at 1-1 when they should have been leading by more. The result again was 2-1 as Barcelona made amends for missing the chances. I think sometimes parents and coaches alike should remember that what they watched that morning by the 13- and 14-year-olds was mirrored by some of the best players in the world.



David Clarke



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England Progress Report: Lewis Cook

Many young players don't realize they can control the tempo of a game with and without the ball. One young England player is doing that week in and week out - Lewis Cook

Controlling the speed the ball is moved at and choosing the timing of an attack is an important part of running a game. To control the tempo of a game a team must be able to keep the ball when they have it and speed up or slow down the game. A team may be forced to retreat but they still have control of the ball and therefore can regain control of the tempo.

The midfield engine room is important for controlling the tempo of a game. One player I have seen a lot of is Lewis Cook of Leeds United who has just made his debut for England U19s having progressed from the U17s and U18s.

Cook is perfectly capable of sitting and controlling the pace and tempo of games - aged 18 and a well-built five foot nine, he already looks like a player who could be a regular in England's midfield.

His passing has a success rate of 77%, and he hits key passes almost every match, long or

short, attacking or creating space he has an exceptional passing range. His defensive ability is also excellent averaging 1.93 interceptions every game.

The Leeds United manager Neil Redfearn compares him to Scott Parker at Fulham: "He's got that energy, that aggression and that tenacity, a change of pace." These are the attributes that help him control games from his position in midfield.

And he is still just a young footballer at heart. Redfearn says: "He is still doing his jobs and still takes the mannequins in and out and still knocks on my door in the morning and says: 'How many mannequins do you need?'



"I look at him and think: 'You are one of my best players!'"

Sky Sports' Paul Merson and Leeds legend Eddie Gray are amongst those to praise his talent and promise, with Merson commenting: "He looked very young to me, he looked about 18, 19, very comfortable on the ball, tries to make things happen, very impressed with him, very impressed."

Gray said: "He is a terrific player. He plays with a maturity, he's got good ability, good pace and he works hard in games."

Use the sessions on the following pages to create players who can control all aspects of a game.

Goals Win Games

Teams can take control of a match if they score first – then they have to build on that to win the game. Use this session to help your players to control games they score first in

WHY USE IT

This is all about taking control of the game by scoring first. Players need to be alert and communicate with each other especially when there is a transition in play.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs, cones and three goals. In an area 30 x 20 yards place a small goal at each end and a normal-sized goal on one side. We used 12 players in the session.

HOW TO PLAY

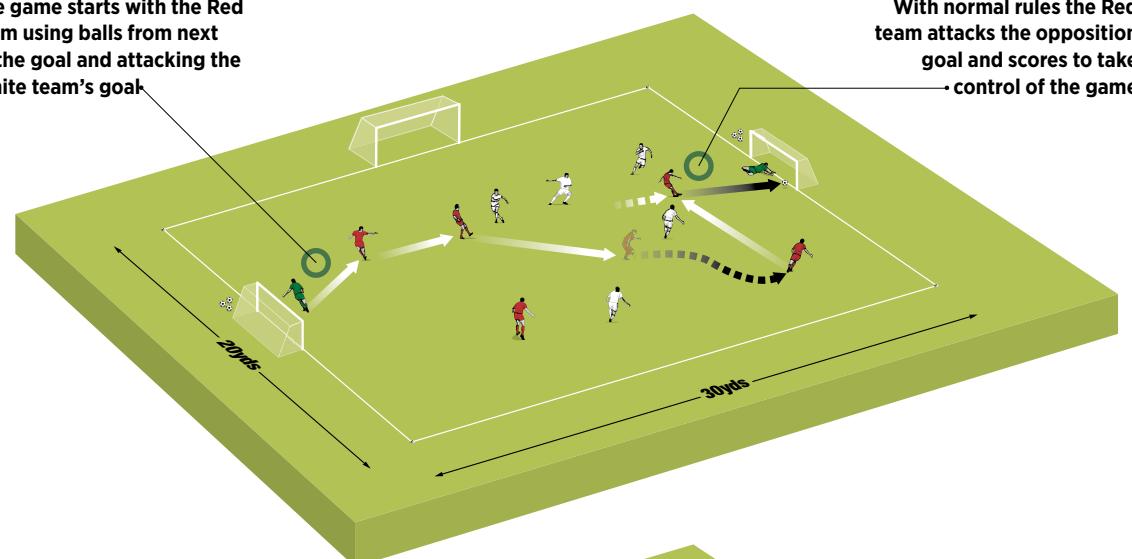
Split your players into two equal teams. Here we have two teams of 5 outfield players and 1 goalkeeper. The teams play a 5v5 in the middle, they play a normal game with offsides, corners, throw-ins. To win the game the team who scores in the goal at the side of the pitch first wins. But to access that goal they have to score in their opponents goal first. So if a team scores in their opponents goal they can attack the goal at the side but in the meantime if their opponents score in the other small goal they lose control of the game. Goalkeepers must move to the big goal quickly when their team are defending it. Whoever gains control and scores in the central goal wins.

TECHNIQUE

First touch passing and communication. Players must also be able to press and protect the central goal until the goalkeeper can get into position.

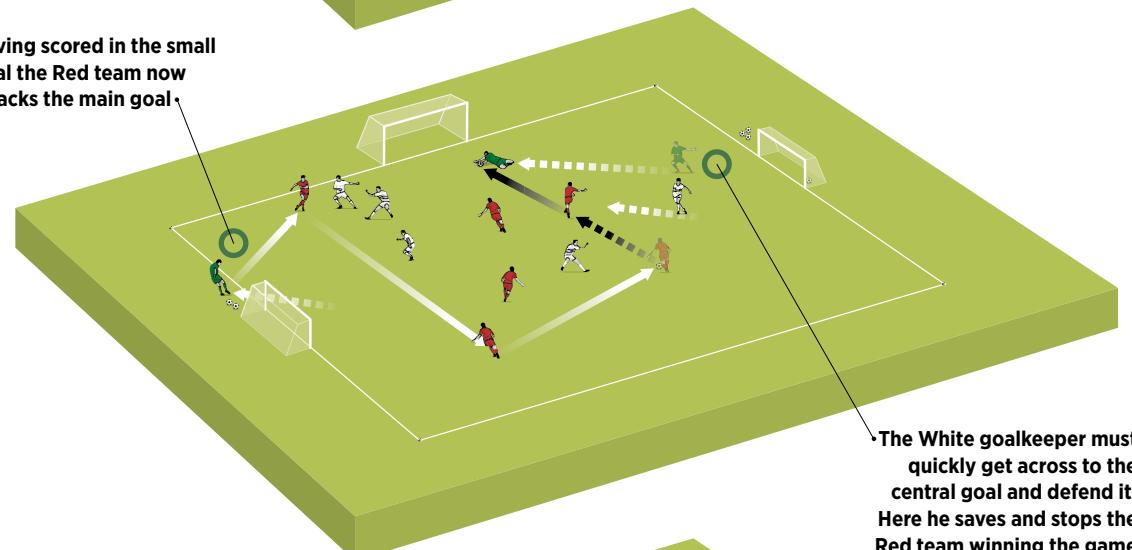
The game starts with the Red team using balls from next to the goal and attacking the White team's goal

With normal rules the Red team attacks the opposition goal and scores to take control of the game

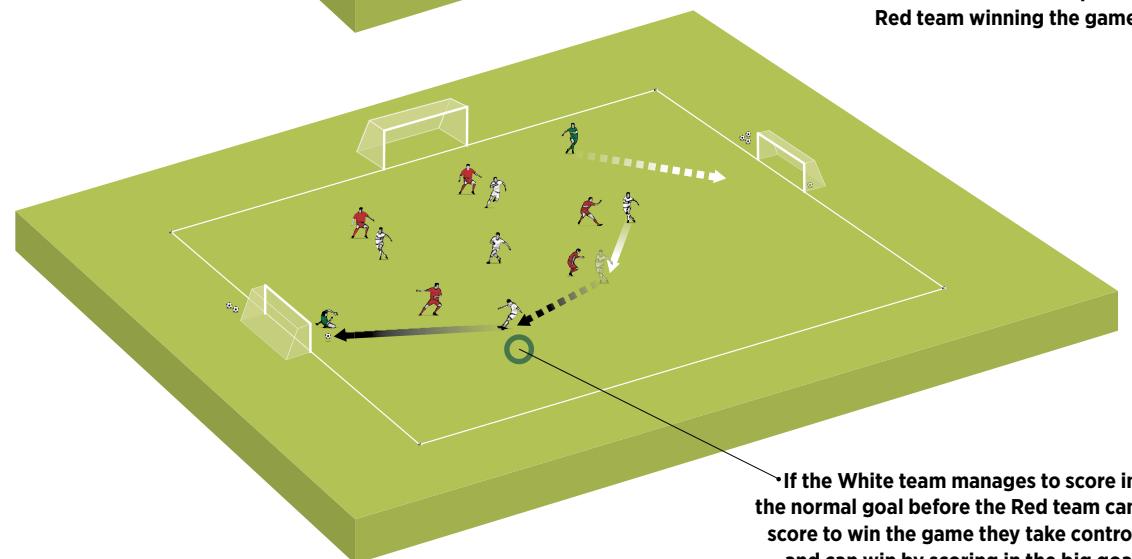


Having scored in the small goal the Red team now attacks the main goal

The White goalkeeper must quickly get across to the central goal and defend it. Here he saves and stops the Red team winning the game



If the White team manages to score in the normal goal before the Red team can score to win the game they take control and can win by scoring in the big goal



Player movement ➡➡➡

Ball movement ➡

Run with ball ➡➡➡

Shot ➡

Control The Game

This possession-based session gives players a good idea of looking and moving to the pass and awards points if the players succeed in moving the ball through the thirds

WHY USE IT

This is a session based on passing and moving between the thirds. It is quite a technical game but an excellent session in getting players to see the best passing options

SET UP

You need balls, bibs and cones in an area 60 x 35 yards split into three 20 yard thirds. We used 18 players in the session but you can scale this down to less players in a smaller area easily.

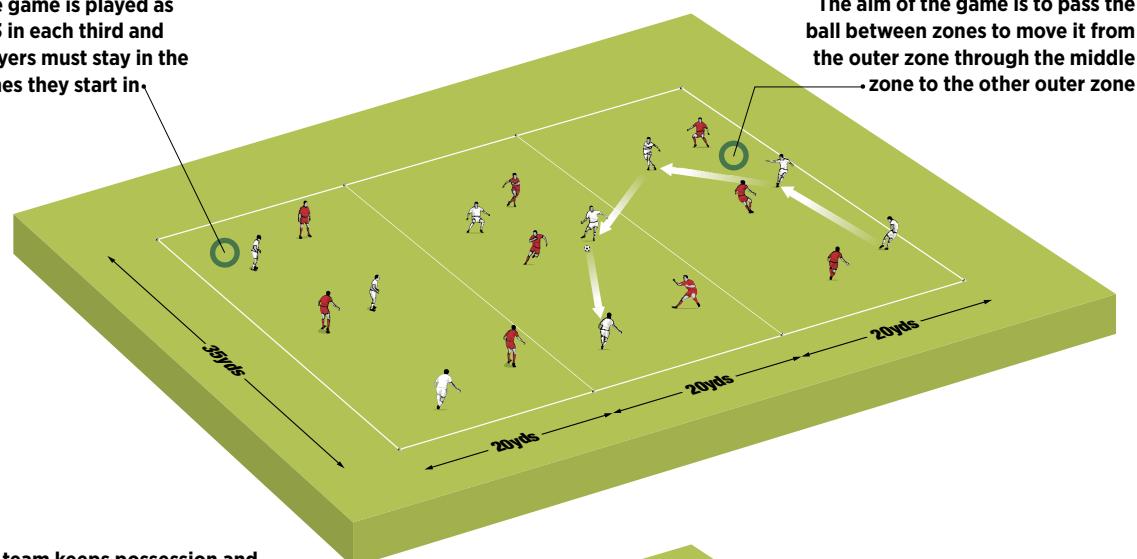
HOW TO PLAY

Split your squad into two teams and play a 3v3 in each zone of the pitch – players stay in their zones. Players must move the ball between zones and teams get 2 points each time the ball goes through the three zones from one end to the other. Teams get one point if they see a good pass between both end zones – this is a good attacking pass. Advance the session by introducing a ball from each end so two balls are in play at the same time to give players a good session in communication and observation.

TECHNIQUE

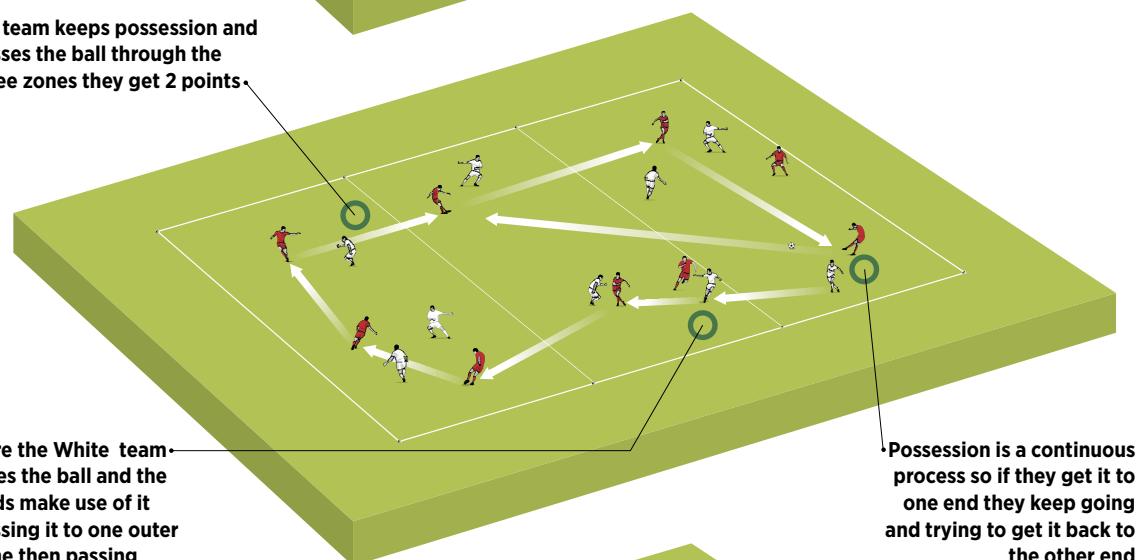
Players work at high pressure, and have to work hard to create space. Players should use match relevant movements to keep the ball individually but try to use as few touches as possible. Encourage simple passes between players and zones.

The game is played as 3v3 in each third and players must stay in the zones they start in.



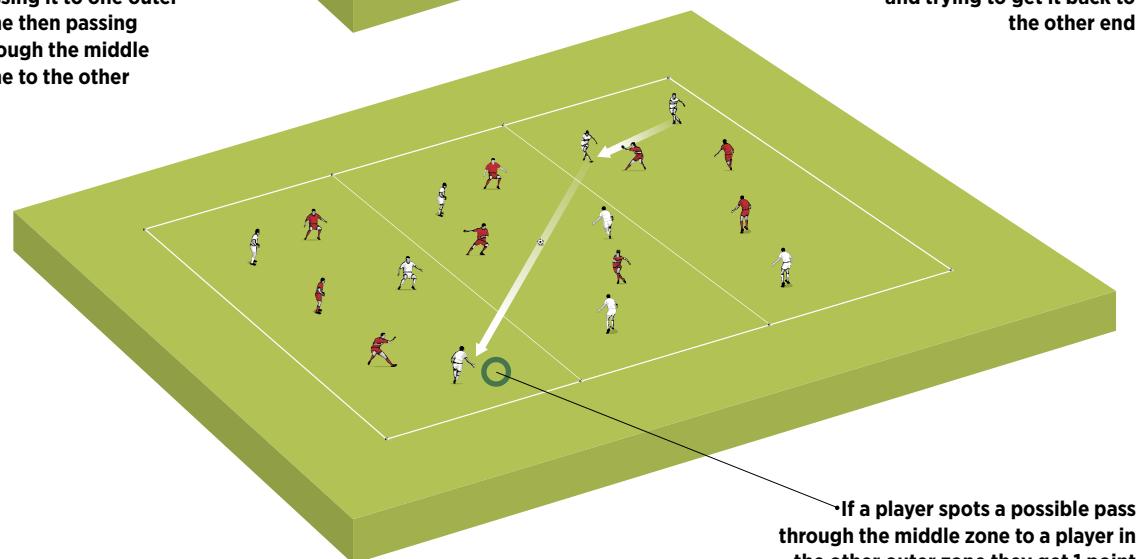
The aim of the game is to pass the ball between zones to move it from the outer zone through the middle zone to the other outer zone

If a team keeps possession and passes the ball through the three zones they get 2 points



Here the White team loses the ball and the Reds make use of it passing it to one outer zone then passing through the middle zone to the other

Possession is a continuous process so if they get it to one end they keep going and trying to get it back to the other end



If a player spots a possible pass through the middle zone to a player in the other outer zone they get 1 point

Player movement ➡➡➡

Ball movement ➡

Run with ball ➡➡➡

Shot ➡

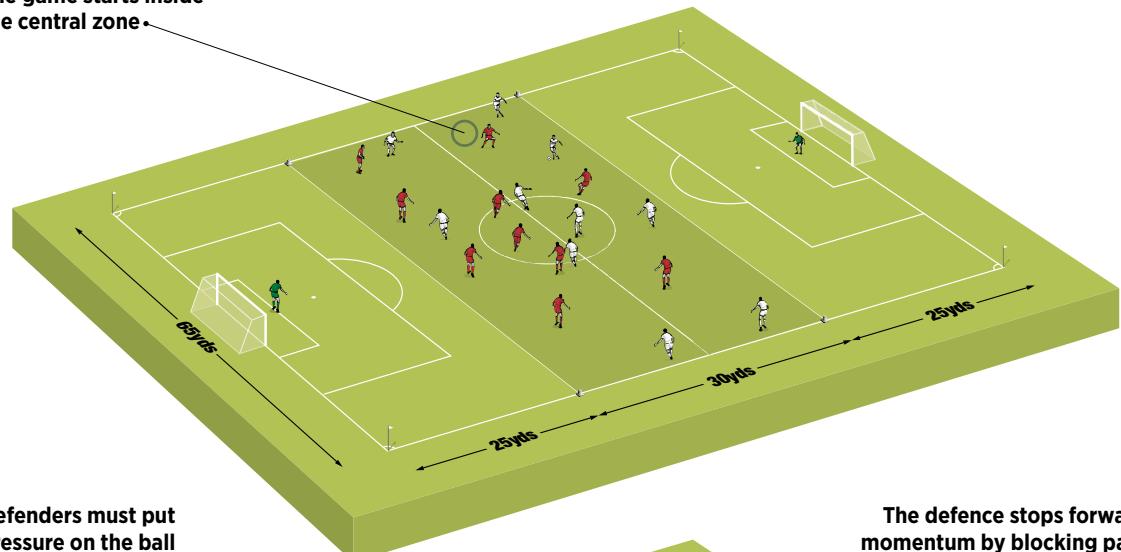
Control The Opponent

Develop your team's defending in open play by getting players into a compact channel. The aim is to stop the opponents from having forward momentum

WHY USE IT

Often when one team is in possession, all opposition players are within 30 yards – meaning all 20 outfield players are inside a compact channel across the pitch. By stopping forward momentum, you can lead opponents into a dead end to regain the ball and launch a counter attack.

The game starts inside the central zone

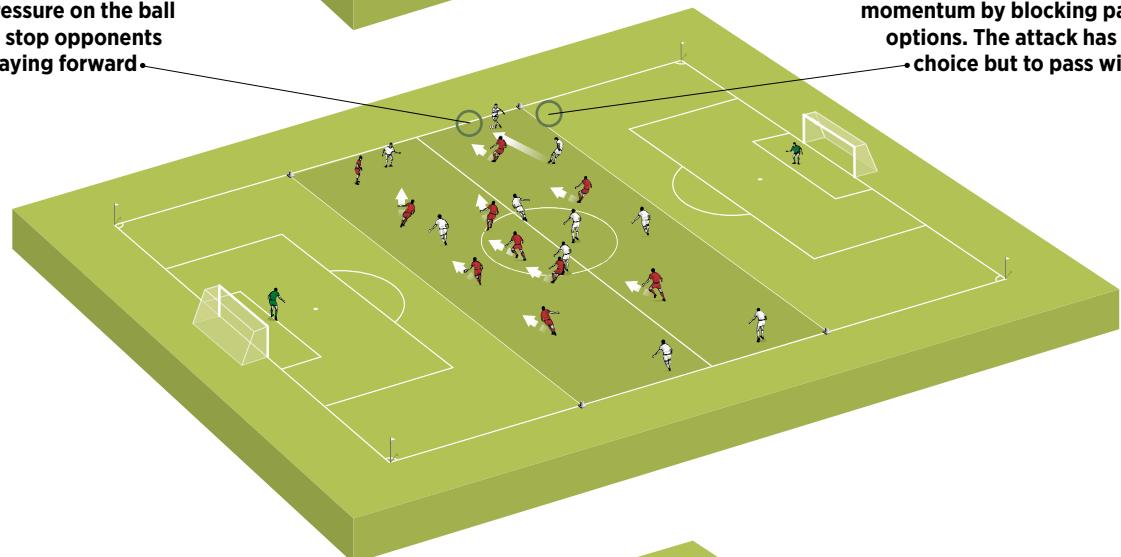


SET UP

Play 11v11 on a full pitch (smaller for younger players) with break out lines 25 yards from each goal to create a 30-yard central zone. Play a 4-3-3 formation.

Defenders must put pressure on the ball to stop opponents playing forward

The defence stops forward momentum by blocking pass options. The attack has no choice but to pass wide

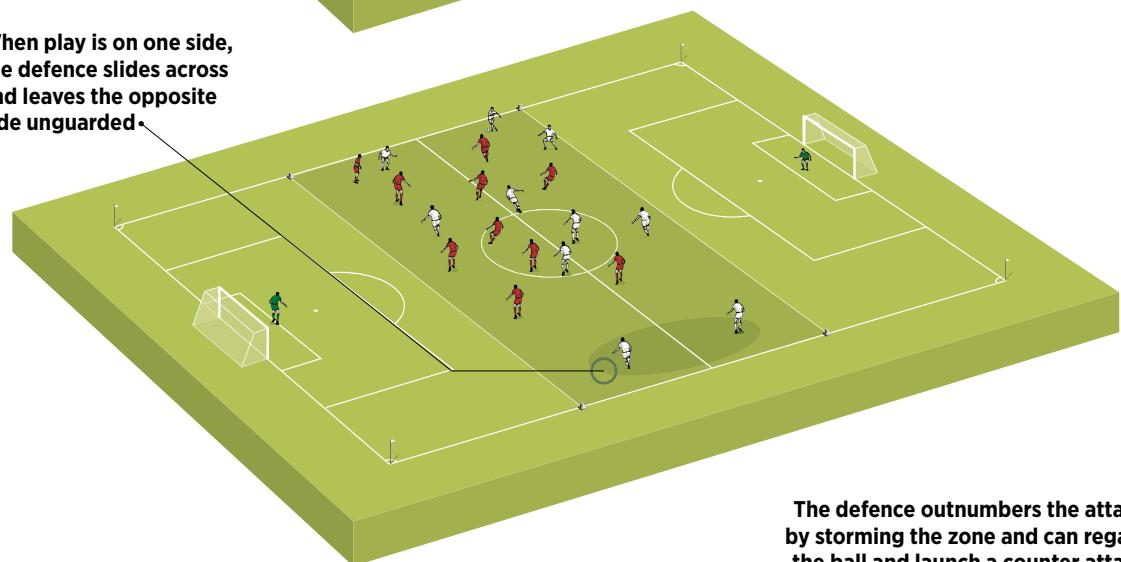


HOW TO PLAY

The game is played inside the central zone to replicate the compact nature of a real match. The aim is to work the ball through the pitch in order to break into the opponents' end zone and through on goal.

To control opponents, defenders must remain compact and slide across to lock play to one side of the pitch. Defenders must forget opponents on the opposite side and storm the players nearest the ball, outnumber them, regain possession and quickly counter attack.

When play is on one side, the defence slides across and leaves the opposite side unguarded



TECHNIQUE

- Good 1v1 defending and pressing.
- Concentration at all times to keep possession.
- Accurate passing when counter attacking.

The defence outnumbers the attack by storming the zone and can regain the ball and launch a counter attack

Player movement ➡➡➡

Ball movement ➡

Run with ball ➡➡➡

Shot ➡

5 Minute Warm-Up: Speed And Agility

> Game Specific Actions

WHY USE IT

This is a great warm-up to get your players moving in all directions so they are ready to play in matches

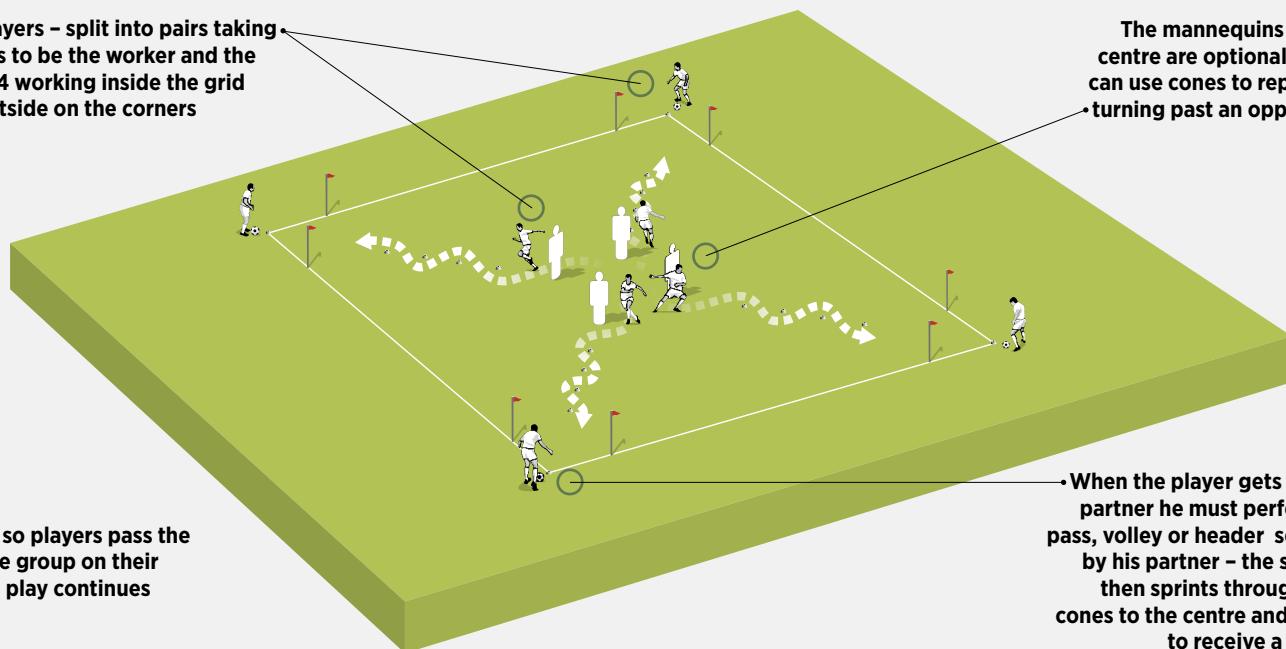
SET UP

You need flags, mannequins (or use cones), balls and cones. Set up an area 10 x 10 yards with four mannequins or cones in a 2 yard square in the centre

HOW TO PLAY IT

Split your players into four groups of two players. The first player in each pair starts in the middle and runs through the cones to their partner who serves a ball to them to perform a pass, volley or header

Use 8 players - split into pairs taking it in turns to be the worker and the server - 4 working inside the grid and 4 outside on the corners



The mannequins in the centre are optional - you can use cones to replicate turning past an opponent

Progress so players pass the ball to the group on their right and play continues

When the player gets to his partner he must perform a pass, volley or header served by his partner - the server then sprints through the cones to the centre and back to receive a serve

5 Minute Fitness: Turkish Get-up

> Core Body Strength, agility, flexibility

This five minute fitness drill can be used during your training sessions for a quick break to help coaching points sink in, or as an incentive for a drinks break.

This is all about building a connection all the way through the core strength of the body to keep players injury free and a good balance and agility test to keep players flexible throughout the season.

HOW TO DO IT

- > Start lying flat on the ground.
- > Extend one arm fully out vertically.
- > Keep arm fully extended throughout set.
- > Keep eyes on hand of extended arm.
- > Roll on to opposite side to outstretched arm.
- > Push up with other arm and stand up.
- > Repeat with opposite arm.
- > One set is six get-ups, do three sets with each arm. Take a 30second rest between sets.

Lie on the ground and extend arm fully out vertically

Push up with other arm into a kneeling position

Stand up and stretch



Passion Play

Jurgen Klopp finds it hard not to be passionate on the touchline whenever his team Borussia Dortmund play. Sport psychologist Dan Abrahams examines whether you can really coach with passion and offers four tips to harnessing emotion

01 FORGET THE BIG GESTURES

Passion is displayed in different ways. If you want to coach with passion, you may not have to adopt the traditional fist-pumping, dashing onto the pitch kind of behaviour that is the clichéd image of the passionate coach. Many quiet, unassuming coaches are highly passionate about their craft. They might not roar commands from the sidelines, but they can still use tone of voice, speed of delivery, and body language to get their point across in a passionate way. An emotive word can demonstrate far more passion – and make a greater positive impact – than an overblown gesture.

02 TRY TO KEEP A CLEAR MIND

Just as performance is part emotion and part intelligence, so is coaching. But passion must be mediated at all times by the intelligent brain – the part of you that reasons, that solves problems and that recognises errors in play. It was Chicago Bulls coach Phil Jackson who said he never let his heart rate go above the 100 mark for fear of making poor decisions. This may be a little extreme but it demonstrates the importance of keeping a clear mind for sound judgements. Passion can be a great vehicle for motivation – but not at the expense of entering the fog of excessive emotion.

03 FOCUS PASSION ON IMPROVEMENTS

Everyone wants to win but being passionate about winning is nothing new and it's certainly by no means unique. Passionate coaches should direct their passion into the process of coaching, into improving players and developing a team. Passionate coaches should love to build on the knowledge base they have, as well as update their skills in the mental, physical, technical and tactical components of the game. Passionate coaches should leave no stone unturned to find ways to improve their players and team. Finding that one per cent extra that gives your team the edge is what coaching is all about.

04 DON'T PANIC, USE POSITIVE PASSION

At the beginning of the season I sat in the stands at a Premier League club watching one of my clients play. I also spent time watching the behaviour of the coaching staff on both benches. I noticed a contrast in the coaching behaviour. The coaches on the bench of the losing team were frantically waving players this way and that and were barking orders. This behaviour demonstrated panic, not passion. Your players can see this. Panicking on the sidelines will make them panic too. Focus your passion on positive behaviour rather than mistakes and negative score lines.

Sport psychologist **Dan Abrahams** has worked with many leading footballers, including Scott Parker and Carlton Cole. He is the author of the book *Soccer Tough: Simple Football Psychology Techniques To Improve Your Game*