

CLEMENT IBRA WOULD DO THINGS THAT WERE JUST UNBELIEVABLE

SOCCER COACH WEEKLY

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Issue 396

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- ✓ KEEP POSSESSION
- ✓ DOMINATE OPPONENTS

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WITH EVERY SESSION

DELIBERATE PLAY OPEN YOUR OPPONENTS' DEFENSIVE LINE

Look Before You Receive



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Touchline Tales

I worked on a great session with the kids this week, it was a whole-part-whole session about body position in a game involving passing and receiving. We spent a lot of time on the receiving moment in a match and how players should ready themselves for that crucial moment in a match.

All too often players are more focused on the ball before they receive it than the position of the passer and any obstacles in their way at that point. What we worked on was how do we react to make sure no one is going to suddenly appear and intercept the ball?

I've been working on a lot of whole-part-whole sessions as I work my way up the FA Youth Module ladder because they help to focus on the coaching, so not only do the players understand the coaching point but the coach taking the session understands it too.

Which is a massive point when you coach a session... you need to understand what you are coaching. The focus of the coaching can change as well. For instance I laboured the process during the part session to get across to my players that they must be aware of what is going on around them BEFORE the ball is received and aware AS the ball is being received.

Getting players to run into space is one thing but they must realise that in some instances, what was space before



Javi Martinez of Athletic Bilbao looks for space against Schalke's Raul

"Two challenges for them as they receive the ball – where is the space? where is the danger?"

they ran into it, can quickly be closed down as they receive the ball.

Two challenges for them as they receive the ball. Where is the space? Where is the danger? Recognising these two points needs players to look around them as they make themselves available for the ball – importantly they look quickly behind them as they should already have a good idea what is in front of them.

As they enter the space, which gives the trigger for the pass, they should again look quickly behind them so if danger is coming they can protect the ball with their body.

That simple bit of information is often the hardest part of receiving the

ball. Players think they have made a great first touch only to find themselves pressed quickly into losing it.

I often get emails from coaches who tell me their players have great skill but are easily pushed off the ball. My first question to them is how do they receive the ball? Do they look over their shoulders once then twice? Often the answer will be that they don't look at all.

Quick looks in part sessions are worth their weight in gold.



David Clarke



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Fun, Stimulating And Competitive

If you want someone who has coached at all levels of the game and is currently flying high with one of the best club teams in the world, look no further than Paul Clement, the assistant head coach at Real Madrid

Paul Clement's rise from grassroots coach to the Bernabeu is the stuff of dreams for almost every coach I have met – but it just goes to show that if you're good enough you can go as far as you want in the coaching world.

He met Carlo Ancelotti while he was the Under-16s coach at the Chelsea academy and followed the manager to Paris and then to Madrid.

Clement believes in “open, attractive football”, with the emphasis on intelligence and technique. In a recent interview with the English FA, Clement spoke about training the superstars at Real Madrid.

“The players would go out and play the Rondos and boxes [possession in tight areas] every day the games that are really common in Spain.

“The players would love to do that, but it's not what they need, so we try and give them a balance of things that are enjoyable, stimulating and competitive for them, as well as the things they need tactically. Whether that is offensive or

defensive in transition or set plays. So we try and strike a balance.”

Much like a grassroots coach would like to work if they had the time!

He also told *The Guardian* newspaper: “You work from the game and come backwards to the sessions. You don't invent things for the sake of it. All the drills, even the warm ups, which are always with the ball, emphasize good control and passing: diagonal passing. Not playing straight, not playing lateral; always an open body position, trying to play forward, playing on angles.”

On the difference in training sessions at Chelsea, PSG and Real Madrid, Clement said: “I can think of one particular exercise we've done at all three clubs. The players were doing it here very early on, and myself and Carlo just looked at each other. We couldn't believe the level.

“Chelsea had fantastic players but they were different: mature, powerful, very strong physically. Paris Saint-

Germain had a mix of the old PSG and the new, and Ibra [Zlatan Ibrahimovic] would do things that were unbelievable, things I've never seen before, but there was a big range. From young players to old, the technique is so good. The thing I noticed from day one was that the execution is at a higher level.

“You have to keep challenging them, so you reduce time and space so that they have to think quicker, act quicker.”

Words and activities by:
David Clarke

“I think it's a cultural thing, a belief in a certain way of playing. You see it in the national team and the academies. At seven or eight, they're already developing two-footedness, they're not so concerned about the physical side or winning”



CLEMENT ON SPANISH SKILL LEVELS

The Final Pass

Patterns of play help players to understand how fast forward passing and support can create situations where the final pass opens up the opposition in front of goal

WHY USE IT

This session works on patterns of play building up to the final ball into the striker. Important for youth players to understand the role of the support players in build up play.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs, cones and a goal using half your normal-sized pitch. Place three cones across the pitch where players involved stand. We used 5 players for each run down the pitch.

HOW TO PLAY

The central midfielder and two advanced wide midfielders stand on the three cones. There are three different runs from the half way line. You don't need to do them all at once, you can work on one one week and then move on the following week. This helps players to understand and spot the triggers to move. In the first run the wide midfielder has an option to pass, in the other two he sets up play for two different ways to attack the goal.

TECHNIQUE

Tactical movement to create space to receive the ball, accurate passing and a good shot in the build up to a goal.

Start with a pass to the right midfielder. On this trigger the striker moves off the cone and heads for the box while the left midfielder makes a diagonal run across the box.

The right midfielder now has options to pass near or far side of the penalty box. This decision will be crucial when attacking the box

The game starts as before with a pass to the right midfielder, who passes across the pitch with the striker dropping short then turning quickly to allow the ball to run on.

Now the pass is into the penalty area for the striker to attack

In the final run the two midfielders and the striker combine to produce a triangle passing combination

The left midfielder makes a well timed forward run and receives a pass from the right midfielder

Player movement 

Ball movement 

Run with ball 

Shot 

Technical Development

At Real Madrid it is a basic requirement for players to feel comfortable on the ball so passing games like this are a must for developing all aspects of attacking play

WHY USE IT

Every young player in your team needs to feel comfortable to have the ball at his feet all the time – especially in tight areas of the pitch. The final part gives ownership of the session to the players.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs and cones in a 20x20 yard area. Set up the 7 cones as shown – 2 on each of the top corners, 2 cones 7 yards in from each side on the near end with a cone centred in front of these 2. We used 8 players in the session.

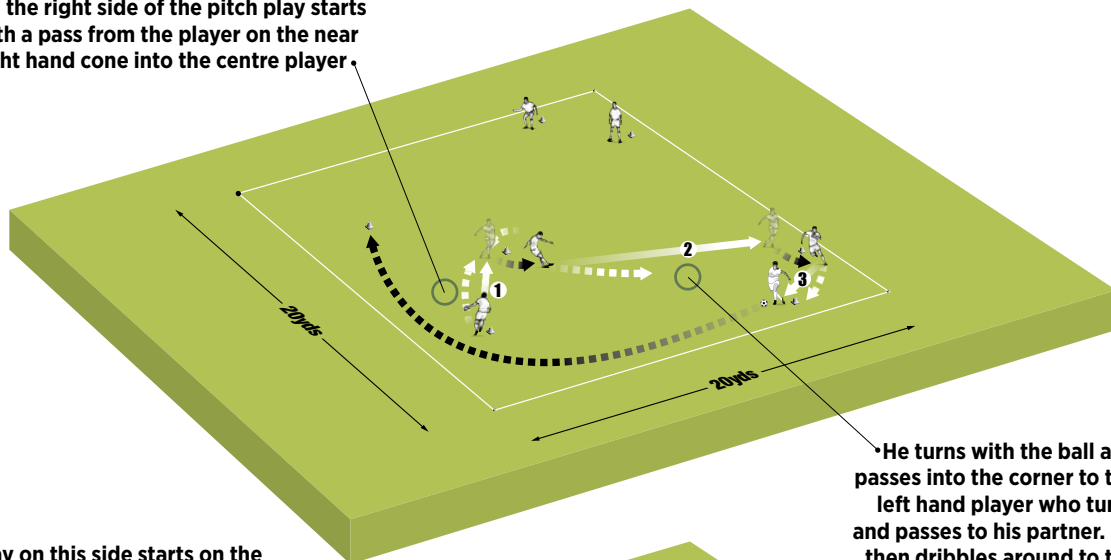
HOW TO PLAY

The two sides of the area shown in diagram 1 and 2 are worked at the same time in groups of 4. On the right hand side the first player passes into the centre and the ball is passed to the corner. Here the ball is passed on and the player turns and dribbles the ball around to the left hand side of the pitch. Players follow the pass. On the left hand side the ball is played into the centre for a one-two then passed into the corner for a one-two there. Again the player dribbles around to the right hand side. Players follow the pass. Once they are familiar with the movement remove the cones and allow the groups of 4 to turn, pass and play one-tvos by constructing their own passing moves.

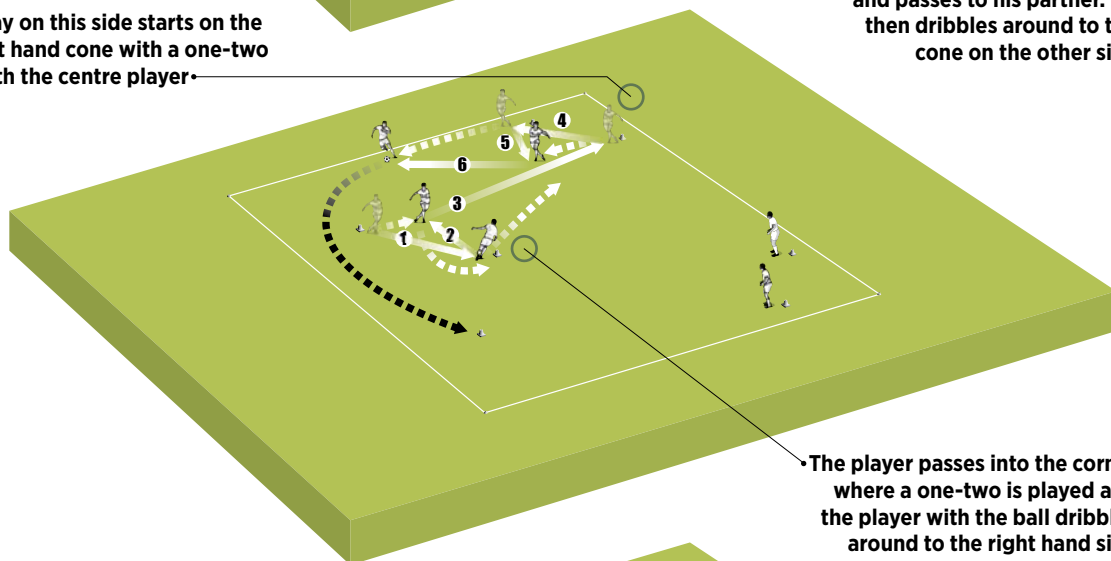
TECHNIQUE

Rehearses the core elements of technical ability with lots of movement in a tight space.

On the right side of the pitch play starts with a pass from the player on the near right hand cone into the centre player.



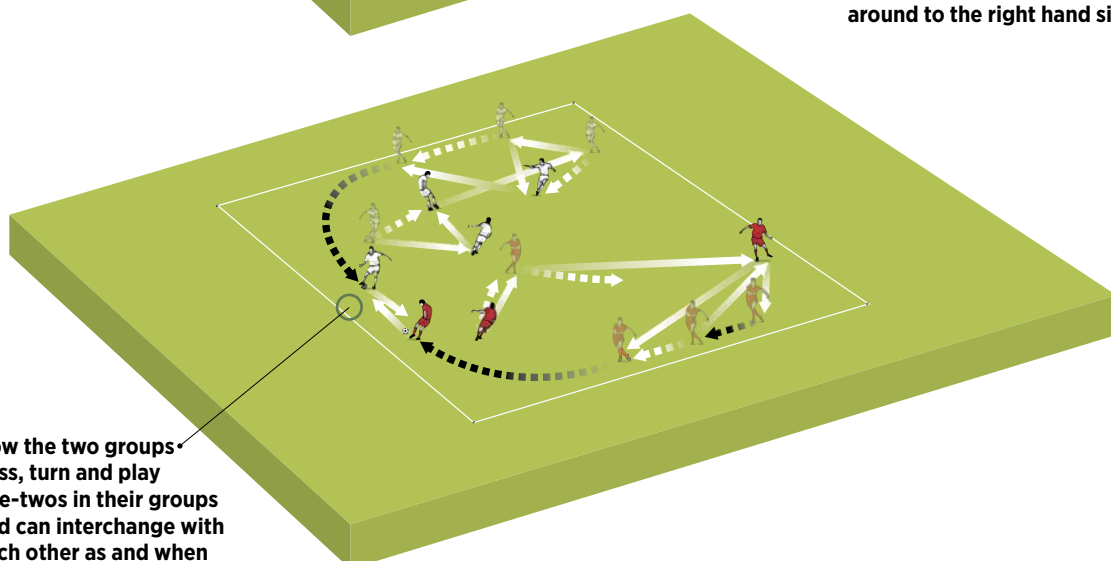
Play on this side starts on the left hand cone with a one-two with the centre player.



He turns with the ball and passes into the corner to the left hand player who turns and passes to his partner. He then dribbles around to the cone on the other side

The player passes into the corner where a one-two is played and the player with the ball dribbles around to the right hand side

Now the two groups pass, turn and play one-tvos in their groups and can interchange with each other as and when the opportunity arrives



Player movement ■■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■■→

Shot →

Attacking Movement in 4-3-2-1

Real Madrid works in a number of different formations under Carlo Ancelotti and Paul Clement but the main one works on this tactical set up to maximise player skills

WHY USE IT

Great formation for box to box passing moves, counter-attacking play that involves passing and movement to get behind the opposition defence

SET UP

You need balls, bibs and goals on your normal pitch. Use your squad in this session.

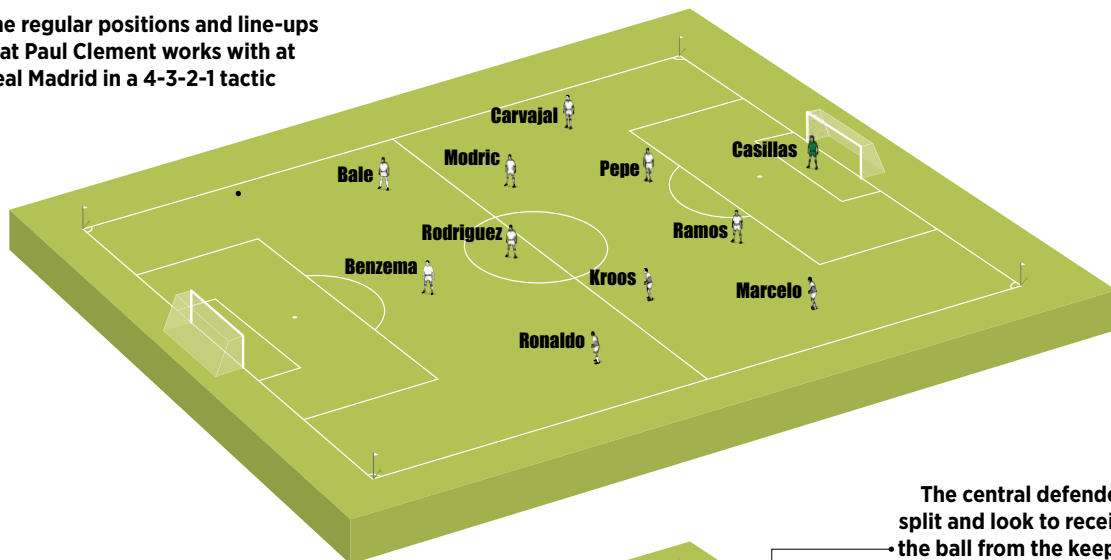
HOW TO PLAY

This set up shows the formation and the attacking moves, and shows a classic box-to-box move for your players to practice. Working with this system is a great way to give your side an attacking style that can counter-attack at speed. Players should practice the move unopposed but once they have done it a couple of times you can add defenders to make it more realistic to the game

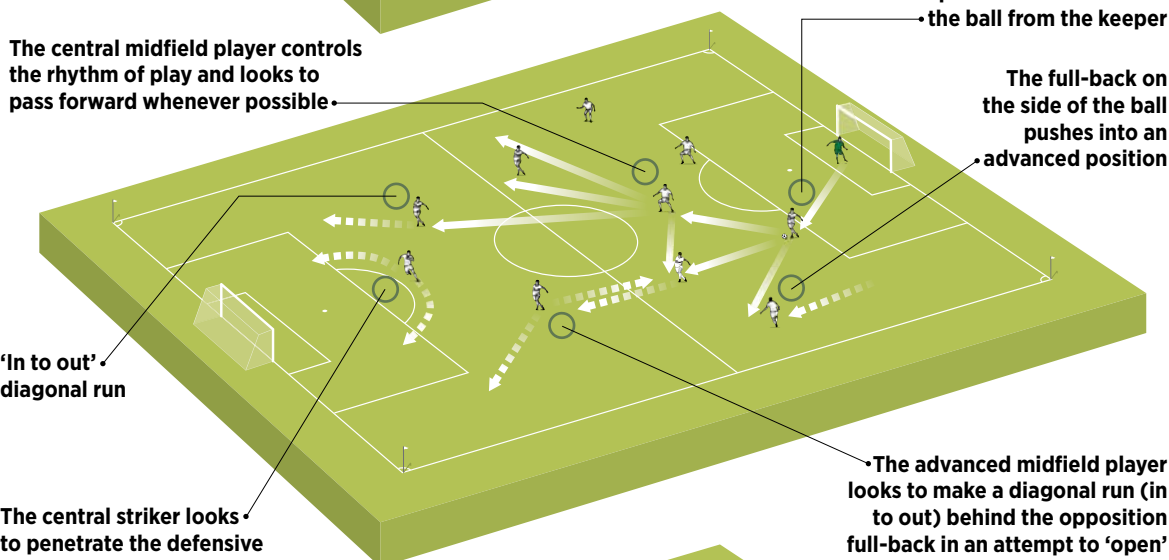
TECHNIQUE

Passing, receiving, well-timed movements and crossover runs, all aimed at exploiting the space behind the opposition's back line.

The regular positions and line-ups that Paul Clement works with at Real Madrid in a 4-3-2-1 tactic

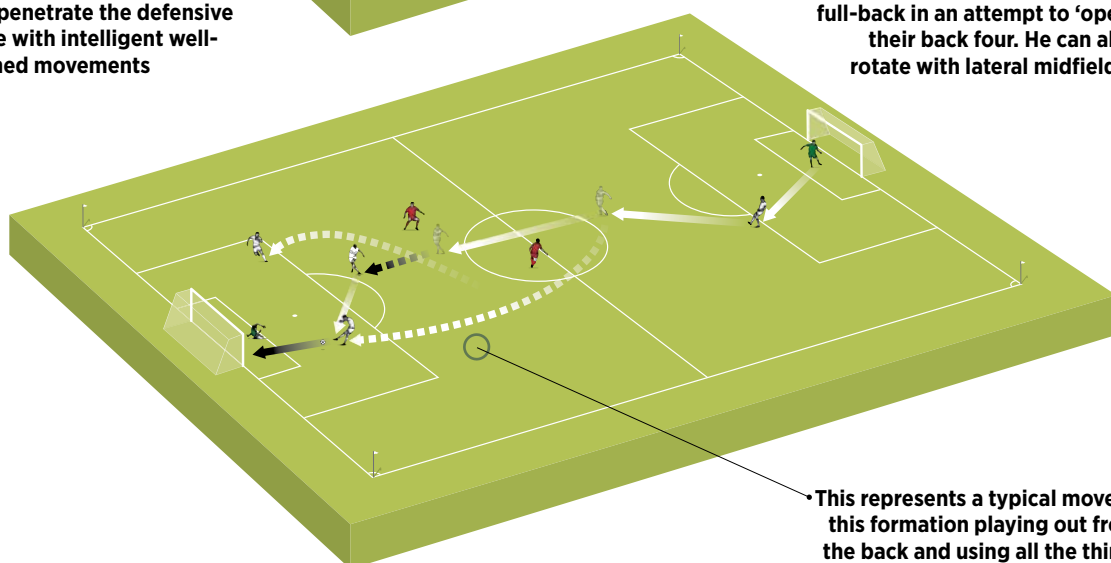


The central midfield player controls the rhythm of play and looks to pass forward whenever possible.



'In to out' diagonal run

The central striker looks to penetrate the defensive line with intelligent well-timed movements



This represents a typical move in this formation playing out from the back and using all the thirds of the pitch to pass and move

Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot



Intelligent Short Passing

Germany won the World Cup in Brazil by dominating teams all the way to the final. They produced three of the best attacking games at the tournament. How did they do it?

Germany won the World Cup this year playing a possession-based game which saw them overpower a number of teams on their way to the final, not least in the semi-final against Brazil.

Germany's historic thrashing of Brazil was not its only dominant attacking performance of the tournament. There was also the 4-0 first-match destruction of Portugal. Further, even though the Germans had to go to extra time against Algeria, they created more big chances in that match than any other team in this World Cup.

Germany had three of the seven best attacking games at the tournament. The secret is simply that it plays possession soccer. No team in the World Cup completed more passes than Germany. Only Spain, the inventors of tiki-taka, played more passes on a per-minute basis. The German style, much like the Spanish, focuses on short passing to keep possession.

So Germany was the most dangerous attacking team in the tournament and won the World Cup on the back of some

fantastic, dominating play. Who doesn't love to dominate the opposition with a lot of possession by intelligent short passes which in the end opens up the entire opponents defensive line?

Possession football normally uses elaborate build-up where the team looks to pass their way forward looking to tire the opposition out as they have to chase the ball around. Tempo doesn't need to be quick, but passes must be accurate and within the overall plan.

Players will take less risks, but can choose to play through balls to the lone striker/false nine or inside forwards.

Players will constantly make themselves available giving them the ability to decide if it's right time to enter the final third or retain possession for a longer time to unbalance the opposition team further.

Players will be closely linked together making the team able to overload specific areas (where the ball is). These 2v1 or 3v1 situations will not only make them dominate the match, but can also be used to regain possession quickly.

THE ART OF POSSESSION

ADVANTAGES

By keeping possession, you will eventually make the opponents more undisciplined and impatient. The other team can't score if you keep possession of the ball, so in order for them to regain possession, they will be forced to chase you all over the pitch.

DISADVANTAGES

By playing patient build-up it may make your attacking predictable. The other team can defend by staying deep packing the penalty box reducing available space to exploit to a minimum, forcing you to shoot from long or use other tools which may increase the risk of losing possession. If teams Park The Bus they will not be easy to break down and play becomes boring and the team open to a quick smash and grab counter attack.

Words by:

David Clarke

Activities by:

Jason Sisneros,
University of
North Carolina
Women's Soccer,
Assistant Coach

Big Shot

This game encourages supporting and movement off the ball as well as making sure players learn how to deal with the basics of passing and receiving

WHY USE IT

German possession hinges on numbers up scenarios to create “stages” for their attack. This exercise will help your team keep possession in smaller zones to penetrate into larger zones, like tight space in midfield looking to pass into the final third.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs, cones and goals. Mark out an area equivalent to two penalty areas or two 18 yard boxes stacked together. We used 12 players (14 in the progression) in the session

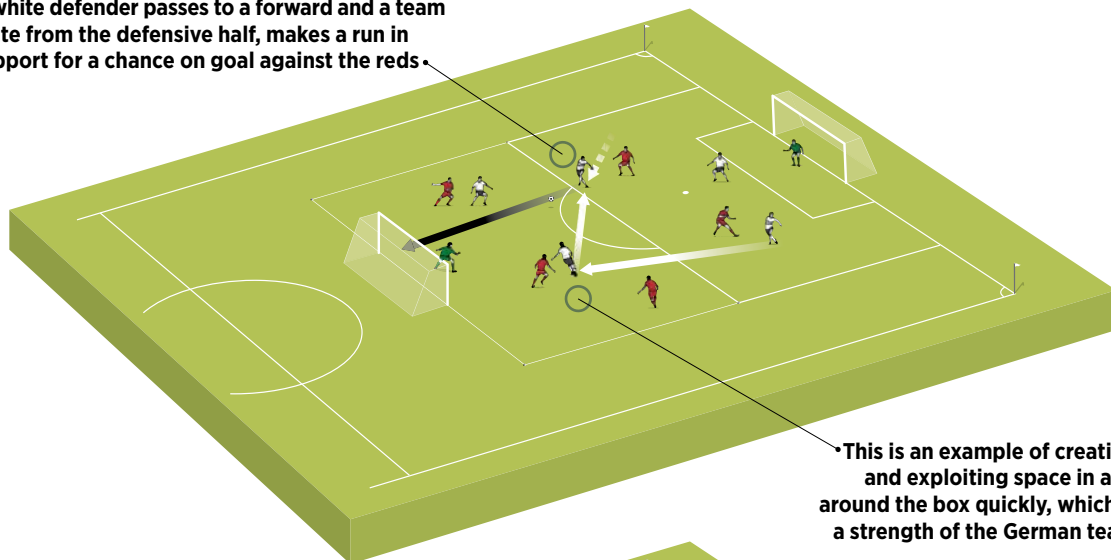
HOW TO PLAY

You need two teams of 6 players arranged into a back line of 3 and front line of 2 plus goalkeepers and 2 players for the progression. Players must stay within their designated half of the field, unless the defensive line completes a pass to the forward line – at which point 1 defender is allowed to join the attacking half creating a 3v3. Players can score from anywhere – goalkeepers cannot score. Attackers are not allowed to drop into the defensive zone. There is no offside. For the progression extend the wings of the pitch and add an extra player to each team who has two touches to get a good cross in.

TECHNIQUE

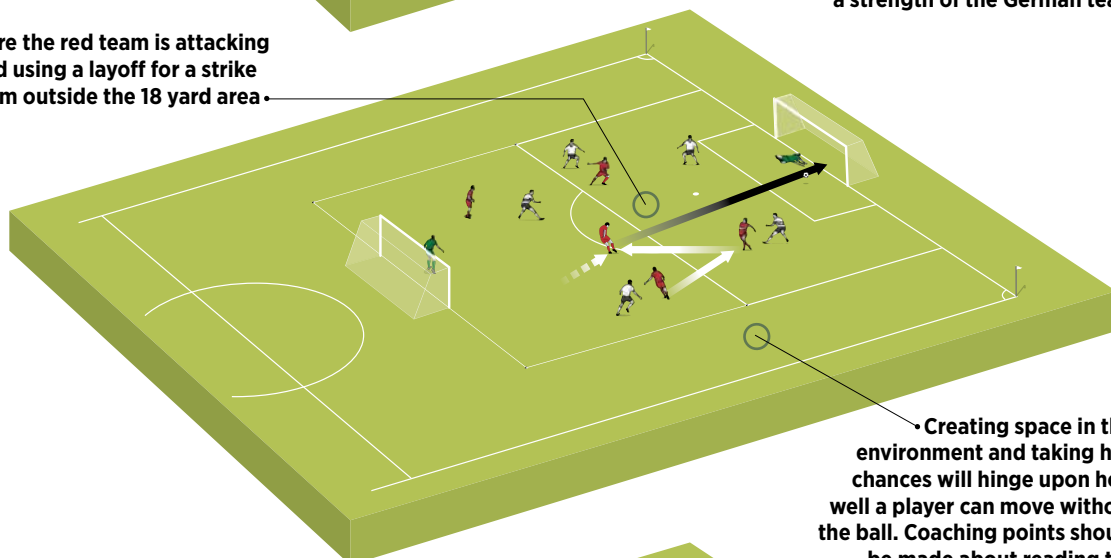
Main Coaching Points: third attacker runs in support, speed of play and constant movement, combine to create opportunities.

A white defender passes to a forward and a team mate from the defensive half, makes a run in support for a chance on goal against the reds.



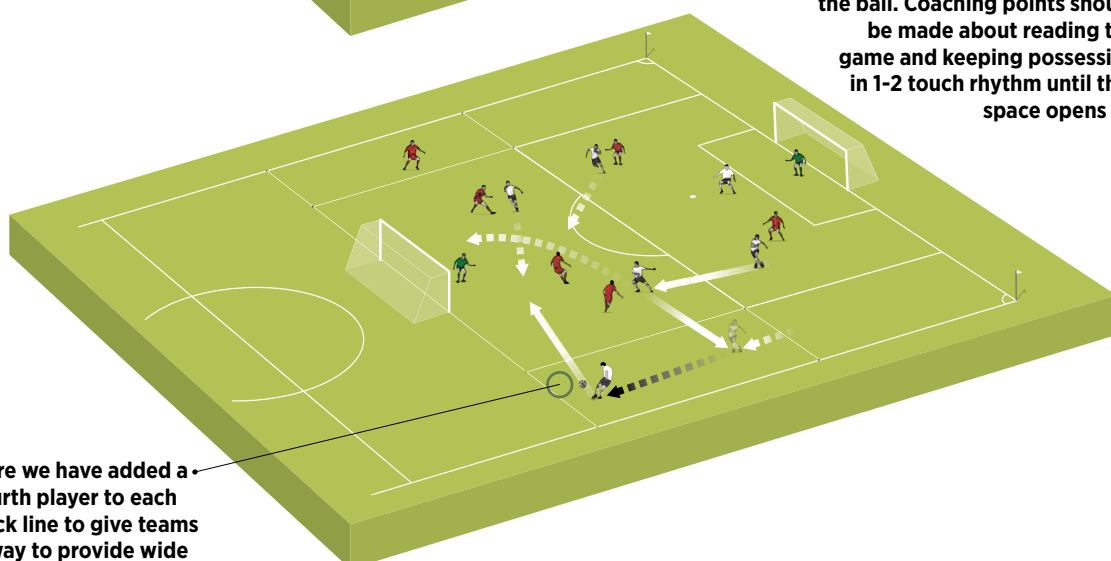
• This is an example of creating and exploiting space in and around the box quickly, which is a strength of the German team

Here the red team is attacking and using a layoff for a strike from outside the 18 yard area.



• Creating space in this environment and taking half chances will hinge upon how well a player can move without the ball. Coaching points should be made about reading the game and keeping possession in 1-2 touch rhythm until that space opens up

Here we have added a fourth player to each back line to give teams a way to provide wide service as an option



Player movement ■■■→

Ball movement →

Run with ball ■■■→

Shot →

Stages Of Attack

In this session players are working on penetrating areas of the pitch and keeping possession to create chances in the important final third

WHY USE IT

This is all about keeping possession like Germany especially in numbers up situations. Teams must learn to move into supporting positions that open up spaces in opposition defences.

SET UP

You need balls, bibs and cones. Mark out an area 24x12 yards split in half. In the progression you need to make the area into four 6x6 boxes. We used two areas with 6 players in each area and 12 players in the progression.

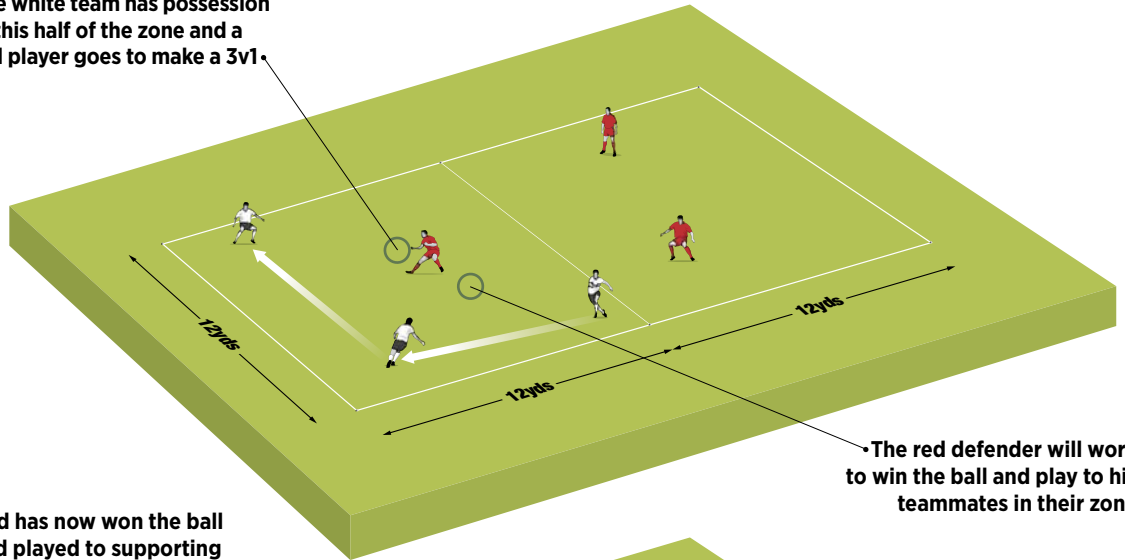
HOW TO PLAY

Split each group of 6 into two teams of 3 players. Players are arranged 3 to a grid and the grids share a central line. One team has possession and one player from the opposition can go and press. If he wins the ball he takes it back to his square or if the ball goes out the other team get it and try to keep possession. Four passes scores a point. Once you open the game to include 4 grids, now the objective becomes the team in possession must make 4 passes and then pass to their team mates in the other square to score. One opposition player can go and press from the next square.

TECHNIQUE

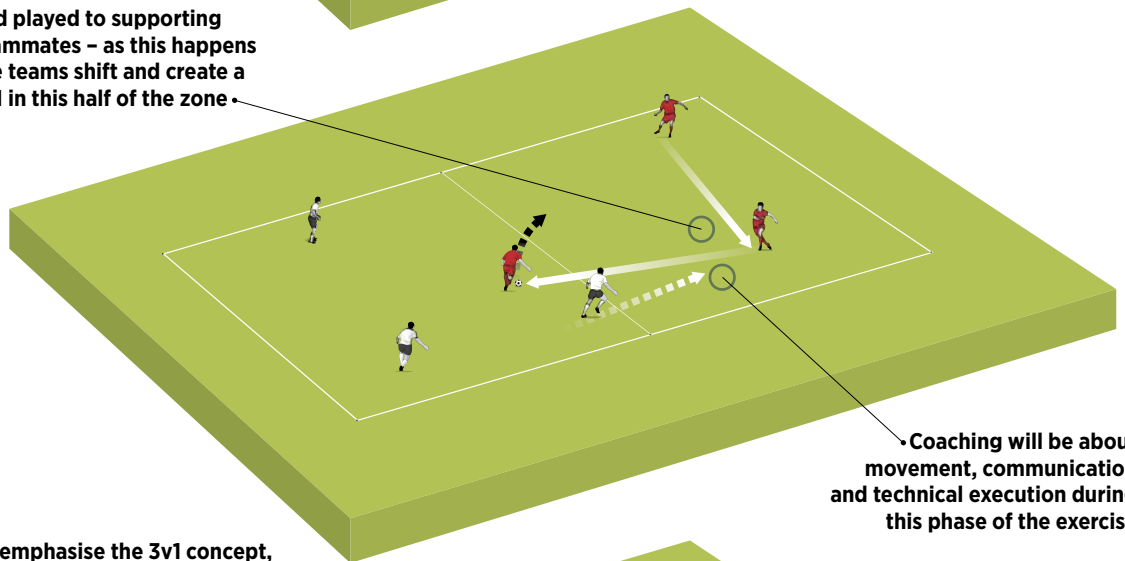
Clean passing with correct weight and accuracy. Continual support and rhythm. Main Coaching Points: second attacker support at all times, one and two touch rhythm.

The white team has possession in this half of the zone and a red player goes to make a 3v1.



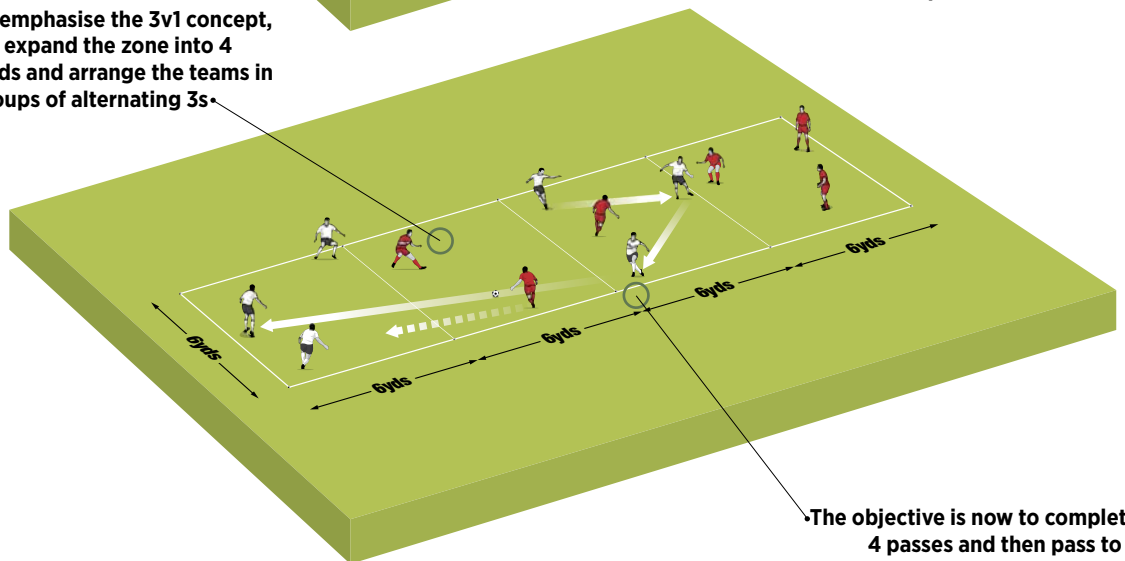
The red defender will work to win the ball and play to his teammates in their zone

Red has now won the ball and played to supporting teammates – as this happens the teams shift and create a 3v1 in this half of the zone.



Coaching will be about movement, communication and technical execution during this phase of the exercise

To emphasise the 3v1 concept, we expand the zone into 4 grids and arrange the teams in groups of alternating 3s.



The objective is now to complete 4 passes and then pass to a teammate in the opposite grid

Player movement ■■■■➔

Ball movement ➔

Run with ball ■■■➔

Shot ➔



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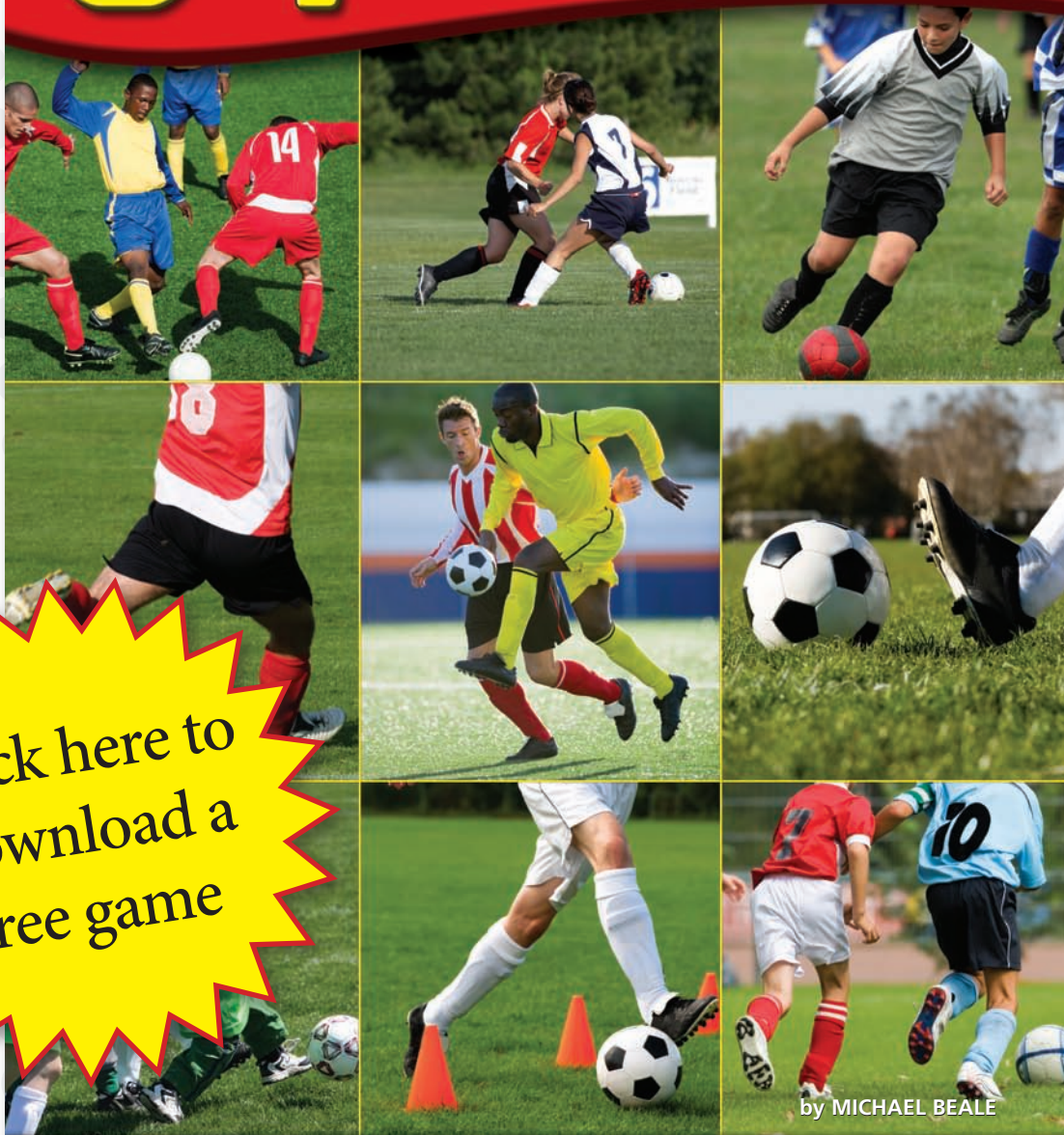
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