



Attacking & Finishing in the Final Third

Objective: Improve your teams' ability to score goals in the attacking third of the field.

1) Penalty Area Finishing Game (Warm-up- 10-15 minutes):

Inside the penalty area, play 2v1 with the remaining players around the outside of the penalty area, each with a ball. The two attackers must look to receive a pass from an outside player and then can attack the goal either by combining together or going directly to goal. Once the ball is out of play, attackers must look to get another ball. If two balls are played in at the same time, both balls are kicked out of play.



Coaching Points:

- Proper technique using inside of their foot (toe up, heel down, ankle locked, knees bent, head over the ball).
- Proper technique when passing/shooting using the laces (toe down throughout, ankle locked, knees bent, head over the ball).
- Proper heading technique- eyes open, mouth, closed, tuck chin in, use upper part of forehead, use neck and arched back for power.
- Attackers must look to see where the defender and 2nd attackers are (check shoulders before ball is received).
- Communication by the attackers and the passers is essential

2) Big Shot (20-25 minutes):

Use a 45x40 yard space (width of 18 yard box) play 3v2 in each of the two areas. Players must remain in their zone and can shoot the ball at any time or try to combine with the lone striker to score a goal. The two attackers must pressure the three players in his/her zone. If the attacking players win the ball, he/she can go directly to goal. Ball can be passed between the two zones to retain possession. After 5 minutes, rotate the attacking players. *Version 2:* If a pass is successfully made to a striker, then the player who passed the ball in may combine with the striker and cross into the opposite zone. Once play is over, joining attacker must return to starting zone.



Coaching Points:

- Techniques mentioned in exercise 1.
- Timing and pace of check runs for the striker to receive the ball.
- Striker must hold the ball up under pressure and look to turn when free. Receiving the ball with the outside of the foot, strong shielding base, knees bent, keeping body between ball and defender.
- Eye contact must be made between the passer and the striker before pass is played.

3) Channel Play (8v8 +2) (20-25 minutes):

In a 60x55 yard space (half field length, full field width), play 8v8 with one neutral player in each of the two wide channels. Players in the channels have two touches and move freely within the channel. Crossing the ball is encouraged, but playing short is allowed. Rotate the channel players every 3-4 minutes. **Version 2:** Players may pressure the players in the wide channels. **Version 3:** All players may move freely in the wide channels and the two neutral players are now placed on either of the two teams.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce points made throughout the session.

4) Game to Two Goals: (25-30 minutes): Play 7v7 or 8v8 with 2 goalkeepers

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.

5) Cool Down: (10 minutes): Juggling in groups of four. Start with three touches each player then work down to one touch and back up to three. Statically stretch the large muscle groups.



Attacking In the Middle Third

Objective: To train your players in the middle third of the field. To provide your players with the opportunity to solve the many problems that the game presents when connecting from the back.. Players must recognize when and how to hold (possess) the ball and when to go forward (penetrate) with speed. Recognizing and responding to the varying changes in the rhythm of the game is crucial to successful play in the middle third.

1. 5v2 Possession Game (15 minutes):

In a 10x10 yard grid, five players (attackers) keep the ball away from the two (defenders). If the two defenders win the ball, they are awarded a point if they successfully dribble out of the grid. The attackers are awarded a point if they successfully make 5 consecutive passes without losing possession to the defenders or out of bounds. Change the defenders every 2-3 minutes. Stress that players must always be moving and on the balls of their feet to support play.



Coaching Points:

- Stress proper passing & receiving techniques.
- As the players get warm, talk to the them about speeding up their play (technical & tactical speed)

2. 7 vs. 7 + 1 To 3 Goals (20 minutes):

Using half the field and 50 yards wide, each team has 4 players in the defensive half and 3 in the attacking half. There is also a neutral player that only plays with the team in possession of the ball. The ball can only be passed (not dribbled) to a teammate in the attacking half of the field. **Version 1:** Both the neutral player and the passer can join in the attacking half to create a 5 v. 4 situation. **Version 2:** Both the the neutral player and any one member of the team in possession can join in the attacking half of the field. Upon loss of possession, the player must quickly return to his defensive half of the field to avoid a quick counterattack.



Coaching Points:

- Movement off the ball and away from markers by players in the attacking half.
- Accurate passing into the attacking half to players showing for the ball.
- Quick decision making by the player deciding to run into the attacking half.
- Point out moments when to change the point of attack and attack a different goal.
- Recognizing time to possess the ball and slow play down versus possession to penetrate and speed play up
- Encourage appropriate combination play to help with possession and penetration
- Recognize when to quickly penetrate the attacking half of the field with passes and supporting runs in order to create quick counter attacking opportunities.

- **7 v. 7 + 1 to Goals with Goalkeepers (10-15 minutes):** Same conditions as above but now teams are attacking a regular goal. Make sure to start with Version 1 and then go to Version 2.

3. **Game to two goals with GKs (45 minutes):** Play- 8v8 or 11v11 with 2GK'S.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.

4. **Cool Down (5-10 minutes):** Juggling in groups of four. First group that juggles the ball 20 times (3-touch maximum per player) is the winner. Statically stretch the large muscle groups.





Attacking in the Defensive Third

Objective: Improve the team's ability to play out of the back (defensive third).

1. **Colors-Warm Up (15 minutes):** Divide group into two teams. At first use one ball, then after 5 minutes, use two balls per group. Each group passes and moves and plays through each other. Players may only pass to teammates while trying to avoid the other team as they look for each other. Field space will vary based on size of groups – set up no larger than half field.

Coaching Points:

- Work on passing and receiving techniques; proper pace and accuracy of the pass; proper 1st touch.
- Work on technical speed.
- Work on combination play: wall-pass, take-over, overlap and double-pass
- Perfect communication.
- Talk about visual cues.

2. **5v4+1GK to 1 Target In the defensive third of the field (15 minutes):**

A team of 5 + 1GK defends the large goal and tries to score by passing to one a target player located in an end zone just inside the midfield line. The opposing team tries to score in the large goal. The defending team can only find the target player with a pass that is made past the 18 yard box, thus encouraging combination play, and movement off the ball. This also discourages defenders from just looking for a long ball out off the back.



Coaching Points:

- Constantly survey the playing area
- Develop & keep individual and group shape under the pressure of the opponents.
- Develop rhythm of play based on what the game presents...increase speed of play at the right time.

3. **6v5 +1GK to two small goals on half a field (15 minutes):** On ½ of a soccer field place 2 small counter-attack goals on the mid line. The red team defends the large goal and tries to score on the 2 counter-attack goals. The white team defends the 2 counter-attack goals and tries to score on the large goal. The defending team must be past the top of the 18 yard box before attempting a shot on one of the two goals.



Coaching Points:

- Encourage defenders to use central players to change point of attack when it is safe to do so. Safety first!
 - As soon as the red team recovers the ball, the first attacker must recognize options away from the ball; he/she must look to play the ball wide or, simply, away from pressure. The positions of supporting players are very important at this point.
 - 3rd attackers positioning is now crucial to success. The 3rd attackers must provide appropriate width and depth.
 - Changing roles quickly, as the ball moves, is vital to the success of the counter-attack out of the back 1/3. It takes discipline, fitness and tactical speed.
 - The coaching points made in these more realistic game-like environments will be more beneficial to the players.
4. **Game to two goals with GKs (40 minutes):** Play – 8V8 or 11v11 with GKPR’s. We always try to finish with a scrimmage, with playing numbers as close to the numbers that we play with in our league games.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.
5. **Cool-down (5-10 minutes):** Individual juggling; challenge players to see who can juggle the most in a 2 minute period. Conclude with static stretching of large muscle groups.



Changing the Point of Attack

Objectives: To help players recognize when and how to change the point of the attack (switch fields) in relationship to situations that the game presents.

1) 3v3 with 2+2 (15 to 20 minutes):

In a grid 35yds x 25yds, three players are in Red and three players are in Yellow on the inside of the grid, with two Red targets on opposite sides from each other and two Yellow targets on opposite sides from each other on the outside of the field. The target players can move freely along their sideline. Red team tries to keep possession and find Red target players on the outside. Yellow team attempts to do the same. To get points, the team in possession must pass the ball to one of their target players on the outside; then the target player must pass it back to the same player or another player on their team, to get a point. First team to 10 points wins. *Version 2:* Target player must pass the ball back to another player on their team to get a point. Target player on outside should not force the ball into a third player, important to keep possession, so it is OK to pass the ball back to the person who passed it to them (they just do not get a point, but they do maintain possession for their team). *Note:* Must find one Target player to get a point, then to get the next point, must find other target player on opposite side (do not force it).

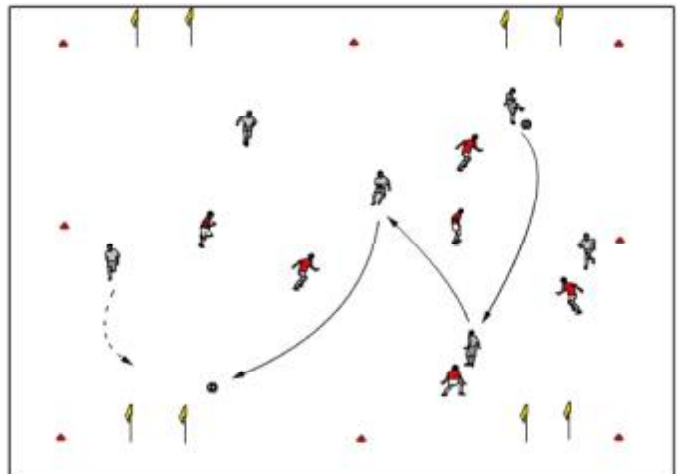


Coaching Points:

- Inside players receiving ball across body to see all options, if possible.
- Get players to open up hips to field (left and right) to be able to find target player on the opposite side as quickly as possible.
- Communication – Always be giving your teammates information (“Man on, time, turn”).
- Simplicity, play the way you are facing.
- Visual cues of target players (head up, eye contact, lateral movement) and inside players (head up, eye contact, movement into space, movement of body).

2) 5v5 (or 6v6) to 4 goals (15 to 20 minutes):

In a 40-45 yd x 55-60 yd grid set up in the midfield area of the field, have 5 Red and 5 Yellow players. Place two 5 yard goals on the far left and far right of either end line. Red is going in one direction and attacking two goals and Yellow is going in the opposite direction attacking the other two goals.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1.
- Play quick 1-2 touch passes to draw defenders in.
- Be sure players are in good supporting positions behind (left and/or right), next too (left and/or right) and/or in front (left and/or right) of the ball as it is being possessed.
- Visual cue: Attacking team has possessed the ball for enough time to attract many players from the defending team toward the ball, leaving the weak side open.
- Weak side player who is looking to get the ball on the switch, gets wide (near touchline) as the ball is being moved centrally, then begins to 'attack' or move into the open space in front of them on the weak side, calling for the ball verbally and visually, by their movement forward.

3) 7 plus GK v 8 to 1 big goal and 2 small counter goals (15-20 minutes):

In a 70 yd x 60 yd grid, 8 red attacks the one big goal and the 7 yellow plus GK attack the two wide counter goals.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1.
- Patience! Don't force passes.
- Look to play the ball that is switched in front of the other outside midfielder or back (this is to ensure the pass beats as many defenders as possible to "get in and behind the defense").



4) 11v11 Scrimmage (35-45 minutes): Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (patience, angles and distance of support prior to switch, timing of the switch, etc.).

5) Cool-down (10 minutes): Groups of 5 heading challenge. One player in the middle, four players circle around them. Player in the middle tosses ball to player on the outside who heads in back to player in the middle. Player in the middle then heads to next player on the outside, who then heads it back to player in the middle and so on. Give player in the middle multiple chances to get the ball all the way around the circle, and then switch up players to ensure everyone gets a chance to be the middle player. Finish cool-down with static stretching of major muscle groups.



Defending In the Attacking Third

Objective: To help players recognize the transition to defense and the shape necessary to effectively defend in the attacking third. Making the play predictable in the attacking third will allow the midfielders and defenders to more easily get their defensive shape behind the ball and lead to winning the ball back more easily. Pressure, cover and balance in relation to the ball are crucial in order to make play predictable. This session will look at when the GK plays the ball out of the back with their feet and/or a throw, as well as when the back four win the ball.

1) 8 vs 4 keep-a-way (Warm-up – 15 to 20 minutes):

Three teams of 4 players play in 30 x 30 yard space (make smaller as skills allow). Two teams keep the ball away from the other team for 2 minutes. Defending team plays high pressure defense and wins a point every time they touch the ball. Each team plays defense once and teams compete to see who earns the most points when on defense. *Note: this game should be played in a fairly tight space to force offense to play quickly. Coach can also switch to low or high pressure to see if players around the ball defensively see the difference between when the ball is high pressured and low pressured.*



Coaching Points:

- Key is to make the play predictable – the first defender should be cutting off the angle of a pass that will switch the point of attack and force the ball and player to where their defensive numbers are versus trying to immediately win the ball.
- Discuss when to pressure, how to pressure and where to pressure ball - Immediate pressure on the ball and ensuring the first defender is making the play predictable by forcing the player with the ball into DEAD space (towards their cover defenders).
- Players in covering positions should be at about a 30-45 degree angle from first defender, communicating to them about which way they should be forcing the person with the ball, etc.
- Player(s) in a balancing position(s) should be behind ball, in a position to see both ball and 3rd attackers and to transition to attack if the ball is won.
- Defensive shape is a key to successfully winning the ball back. – connected, compact, and forcing the ball to where the defensive numbers are.
- Communication by players around 1st defender – must know when they can step up and pressure more tightly versus just forcing them one way, as well as which way to force the play (Force right or force left, etc).

2) 6v5 to 1 Big Goal and three small counter goals (20-25 minutes):

Two teams - 6 red players will be attacking the big goal and 5 yellow players will be attacking the three small counter goals (which are placed at the midfield line - left, center, and right). Coach can use players as targets in the three small goals to get more players involved. Coach has soccer balls out near midfield area and plays the ball in different ways:

a) play a ball over the head of the last defenders and towards the goalkeeper.
b) play a ball out wide and deep into the corners.
c) play a ball straight into the back four. *Variations:* Add another player to yellow, then can continue to add players on each team as deemed necessary.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points from Activity #1.
- Visual cues for attacking team transitioning to defense are:
 - a) Which way is player facing when they get the ball,
 - b) is the back player facing their own goal or facing forward,
 - c) this then makes the forward who is transitioning to defense have to read whether they can pressure straight away or start to make play predictable (cut off angles of pass and force in direction where their team numbers are or back off and invite a pass into a pressure pocket).
- Also, as the ball is traveling, the forwards will need to decide whether to get in and win the ball right away and/or angle their body to force the ball back in a certain direction.
- If player receiving the ball does not have control, then tackle and win possession of the ball!
- If player receiving the ball does have control, then defender has to make a decision as to how closely to apply pressure, whether to contain or delay because they are numbers down, whether to close down space quickly because they are numbers up, and/or whether to force to DEAD space or to the outside, depending upon where they are on the field.
- Defender on the ball also wants to be aware of the attacking team's 2nd and 3rd attacking players
- If defenders can force the player with the ball into a numbers down situation and cut off weak side players, they are more likely to be effective.
- If there is immediate and tight pressure on the ball, defenders off the ball can squeeze the space centrally, making the field smaller for the attacking team.
- If pressure on the ball is light (loose), then cover and balance are looser.
- Job of four midfielders in front of the ball (and potentially 4 backs) to read when defender looks at a long target, puts their head down, preparing to send it long; this is the time they should be dropping off in front of the ball.

3) 11v11 scrimmage (30-45 minutes): Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points from Activity #1 and Activity #2.
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (recognizing making play predictable, when to pressure, how to pressure, where cover is off the ball defensively, team shape, transition, etc.).

- Once defenders win it, are they able to transition quickly to the attack – if they are in good defensive supporting positions, once they win it, it is a simpler transition to the attack (they need width and depth quickly)

4) **Cool-down (10 minutes):** Juggling in groups of 4 and finishing cool-down with static stretching of major muscle groups.

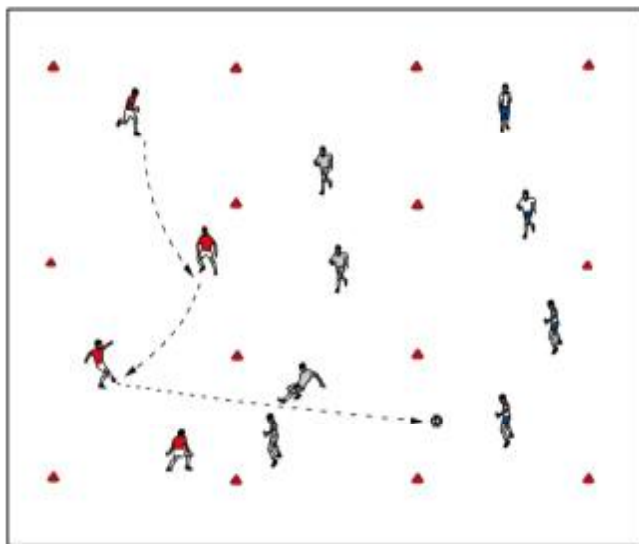


Defending In the Middle Third

Objectives: To help players recognize the transition to defense and the shape necessary to effectively defend in the middle third. Pressure, cover and balance in relation to this shape are crucial in order to make play predictable and win the ball back.

1) Split the middle (Warm-up – 15 to 20 minutes):

Make a grid that is wider than longer (50 yards wide x 30-40 yards long – 10-12 yards long for each zone) and make three zones. Split group into three teams of four – 4 red, 4 yellow and 4 blue (make sure one group of 4 is your midfielders). Two groups are in the outside zones on opposite sides, while the group of 4 midfielders are in the middle zone. The teams on the outside are passing the ball back and forth and try to play the ball through the middle zone to the team on the opposite side (NO balls can be served over the top of the middle group!). If the team in the middle wins possession of the ball, they switch with the team who tried to play it through. If the ball goes through the middle, they stay until they win possession of it.



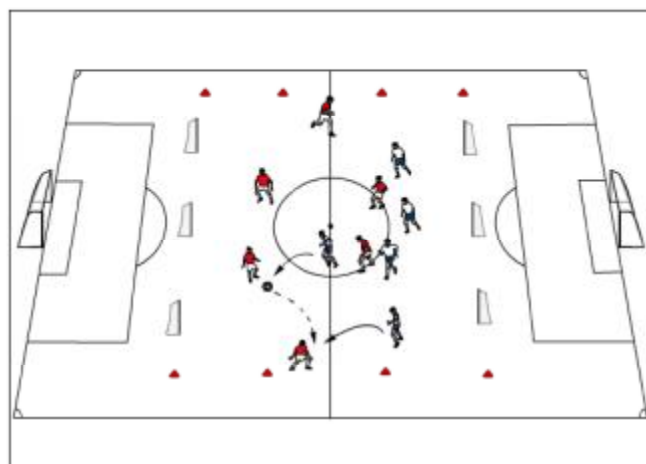
Coaching Points:

- Discuss when to pressure, how to pressure and where to pressure ball - Immediate pressure on the ball and ensuring the first defender is making the play predictable by forcing the player with the ball into DEAD space (towards their cover defenders).
- Players in covering positions should be at about a 30-45 degree angle from first defender, communicating to them about which way they should be forcing the person with the ball, etc.
- Player(s) in a balancing position(s) should be behind ball, in a position to see both ball and 3rd attackers and to transition to attack if the ball is won.
- Defensive shape is a key to successfully winning the ball back. – Flat, connected and compact, forcing the ball to where the defensive numbers are.

2) 6v5 to 6 small goals (20-25 minutes):

6 red (4 midfielders and 2 forwards) and 5 yellow (4 midfielders and 1 supporting central defender) each going to three small goals, placed on the left, center and right of each end. Use middle third of the field...it should be wider than longer (50-60 yards wide x 40-45 yards long).

*In this activity the coach is working with the 5 yellow players, helping them to defend against a team with numbers up. **Version 2:** Add another player to yellow creating a 6v6.*



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points from Activity #1.
- Visual cues for defenders are:
 1. If player receiving the ball does not have control, then tackle and win possession of the ball!
 2. If player receiving the ball does have control, then defender has to make a decision as to how closely to apply pressure, whether to contain or delay because they are numbers down, whether to close down space quickly because they are numbers up, and/or whether to force to cover or to the outside, depending upon where they are on the field.
 3. Defender on the ball also wants to be aware of the attacking team's 2nd and 3rd attacking players.
 4. If defenders can force the player with the ball into a numbers down situation and cut off weak side players, they are more likely to be effective.
 5. If there is immediate and tight pressure on the ball, defenders off the ball can squeeze the space centrally, making the field smaller for the attacking team.
 6. If pressure on the ball is light (loose), then cover and balance are looser, as well.
 7. The balancing player should recognize third attacker movement off the ball (i.e.: overlapping runs) and shift slightly to weak side if there is loose pressure on the ball. If there is tight pressure, balancing player simply needs to be aware of players coming through, communicating to teammates about when to pick them up, pass them off and when & where to shift on the field defensively.

3) 9v9, 10v10 or 11v11 scrimmage (30-45 minutes): Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (recognizing when to pressure, how to pressure, where cover is off the ball defensively, making play predictable, team shape, transition, etc.).
- Reinforce coaching points from Activity #1.
- Ensure 2nd and 3rd defenders are tracking players coming through – keep sight of the ball and the player (s).
- Recognize when they can pass players off (zone) and when they need to mark player to player (as ball gets into the middle third, players will see that the defending action may start off in a zone, become player to player marking, then be a combination of both.
- Players must slide (move) from side to side as a defensive unit staying connected...but balanced.
- Once defenders win it, are they able to transition quickly to the attack – if they are in good defensive supporting positions, once they win it, it is a simpler transition to the attack (they need width and depth quickly).

4) Cool-down (10 minutes): Juggling in groups of 4 and finishing with static stretching of major muscle groups.

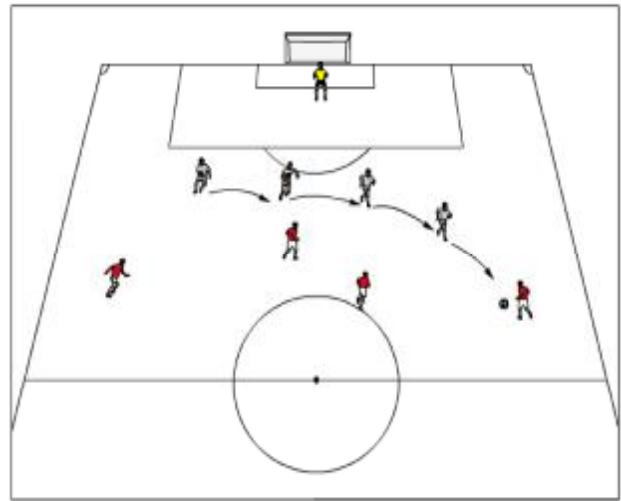


Defending In the Defensive Third

Objective: To help players recognize the transition to defense and the shape necessary to effectively defend in the defensive third. Pressure, cover and balance in relation to this shape are crucial in order to make play predictable and win the ball back.

1) 4v4+GK Pattern Play Warm -up (15-20 minutes including dynamic stretching):

In the defensive 3rd of the field, four attacking players pass the ball side to side, while the four back players + GK shadow their play (movement) by sliding as a unit laterally and providing pressure, cover and balance appropriately. This way, the defending unit visualizes their defensive responsibility changes in a gradual, patterned manner.

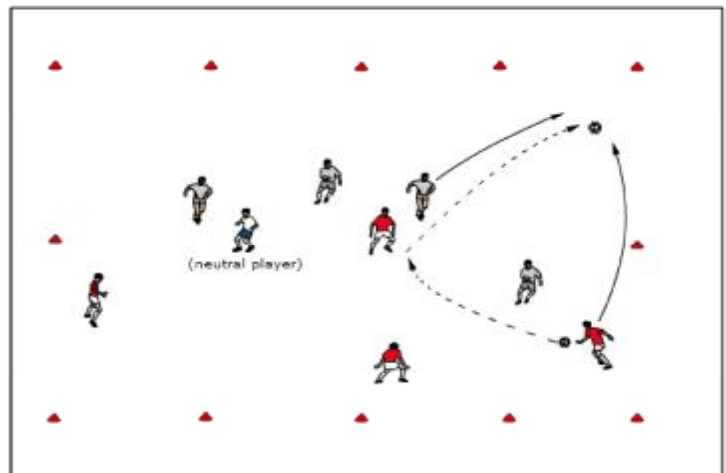


Coaching Points:

- Discuss when to pressure, how to pressure and where to pressure ball - Immediate pressure on the ball and ensuring the first defender is making the play predictable by forcing the player with the ball into DEAD space (towards their cover defenders).
- Players in covering positions should be at about a 30-45 degree angle from first defender, communicating to them about which way they should be forcing the person with the ball, etc.
- Player(s) in a balancing position(s) should be behind ball, in a position to see both ball and 3rd attackers and to transition to attack if the ball is won.
- Defensive shape is a key to successfully winning the ball back. – Flat, connected and compact, forcing the ball to where the defensive numbers are.

2) 4v4 + 1 Neutral player – Dribbling Across the end line (15 minutes):

Two teams of 4 try and dribble the ball across the opposing team's end line. Each team is allowed to use the neutral player in order to create a 5 v. 4 attacking situation. (The neutral player does not play defense and only plays with the team in possession.) Defenders learn to shift from side to side and mark the most dangerous players while leaving 1 attacker (the least dangerous one) unmarked. Quick recognition and decision making are the key elements to this activity. Encourage communication amongst the defenders when making quick marking adjustments.



Coaching Points:

- Pressure on the ball must be applied immediately to delay the progress of the attacking team, allowing the defending action to organize.
- While the ball is being pressured, other back players must get into good defensive cover and balancing positions to prevent penetration to the goal.
- Changing roles quickly, as the ball travels, is vital to the success of the defending action. It takes discipline, communication, fitness and tactical speed.

Visual cues for defenders are:

- If player receiving the ball does not have control, then tackle and win possession of the ball!
- If player receiving the ball does have control, then defender has to make a decision as to how closely to apply pressure, whether to contain or delay because they are numbers down, whether to close down space quickly because they are numbers up, and/or whether to force to cover or to the outside, depending upon where they are on the field and where the goal and their cover is located.
- Defender on the ball also wants to be aware of the attacking team's 2nd and 3rd attacking players.
- If defenders can force the player with the ball into a numbers down situation and cut off weak side players, they are more likely to be effective.
- If there is immediate and tight pressure on the ball, defenders off the ball can squeeze the space centrally, making the field smaller for the attacking team.
- If pressure on the ball is light (loose), then cover and balance are looser, as well.
- The balancing player should recognize third attacker movement off the ball (i.e.: overlapping runs) and shift slightly to weak side if there is loose pressure on the ball. If there is tight pressure, balancing player simply needs to be aware of players coming through, communicating to teammates about when to pick them up, pass them off and when & where to shift on the field defensively.

3) 5v5 +1 Neutral Player + 1 GK to 3 small goals on half a field x 50 yards (15 minutes):

On a 1/2 field x 50 yards to one goal and 3 counter goals. Defend the goal with the purpose to counter attack. Keeper takes on sweeper role when team as possession of the ball. In half a field, the team of 5+ 1 neutral player defends the goal and tries to score on two 3 yard goals placed wide on the midfield line. The opposite team tries to score in the goal and defensively tries to prevent the other team to score on the two small goals. Work with the teams to help them creating a good shape as soon as they regain possession of the ball.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points from Game#1&2.

4) Game to two goals with GKs (40 minutes): Play 9v9, 10v10 or 11v11 with goal keepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.

5) Cool-down (5-10 minutes):

Individual juggling; challenge players to see who can juggle the most in a 2 minute period.

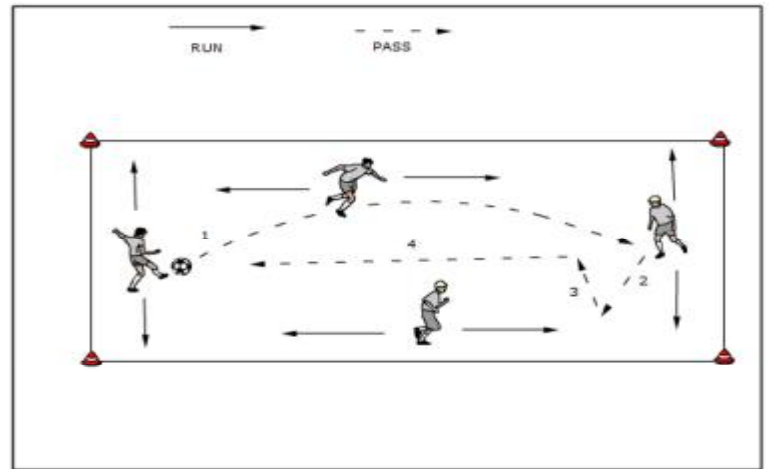


Functional Training of the Forwards (1 Forward)

Objective: Functional training of the lone forward - recognizing the technical and tactical demands of the position and responding to them positively.

1) 4 v 0 or 5 v 0 Pattern Play (10-15 minutes):

In a 30yd x 40yd grid, each group of 4 or 5 players moves the ball from one end of the grid to the other. In this activity, the point is to move the ball accurately and quickly, while the players maintain their positions in a “kite-type” shape. The idea is to have 2 wide players supporting the player with the ball and one high player for a long pass option. The players in the area around the ball make 4-5 passes before looking long to the high option. Once the ball is played to the high player, the 2 wide players move to support the ball at the other end of the grid.



Coaching Points:

- Develop & keep individual and group shape.
- Develop rhythm of play and increase speed of play.
- Recognize visual cues such as body shape of teammates, supporting positions, high option “ON”.
- High player needs to recognize visual cues from the other 3 players...i.e. when one of the 3 passing players looks up and prepares the ball in his direction, he can check to it and call for it.
- When the 2 supporting players move in to support the high player, simple combinations can be worked on to prepare the lone forward for his function in the game...i.e. double - pass, overlap, wall-pass or takeover.

2) 7v7 - 3 Zone game (15 minutes):

On a field 44 yards wide x 60 yards long, create 3 zones (thirds of the field). Play a 7v7 game with the following formation for each team: a goalkeeper, 2 backs, 3 midfielders and 1 forward. The players are restricted to their zones (backs to the back third, midfielders to the middle third and forwards to the attacking third).



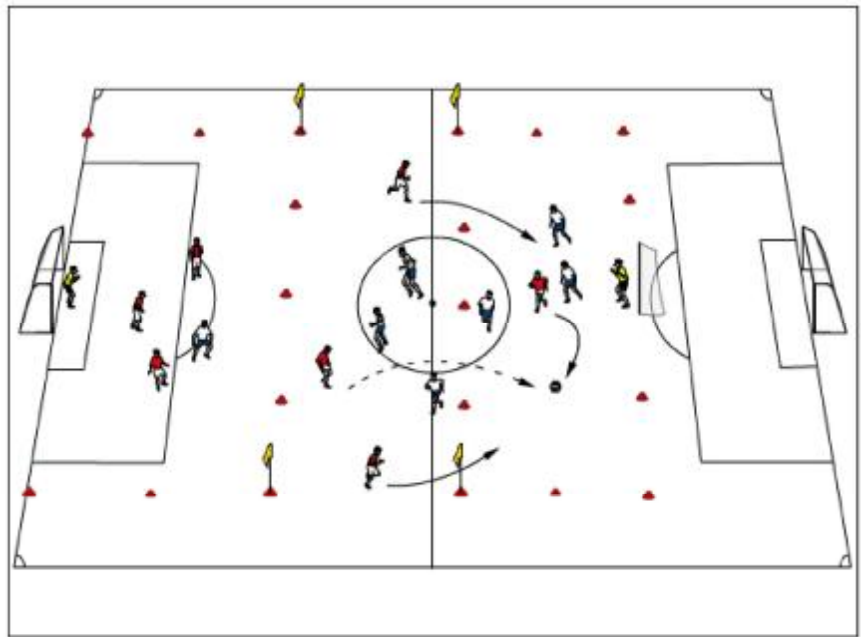
When a ball is played into the lone forward in the attacking third, one player from his team can join him in the attacking zone. This can be a midfielder or a back. If the ball is played out of the attacking zone, the supporting player must return to their zone.

Coaching Points:

- Recognize the opportunities for penetrating passes from the midfield into the final third.
- Lone forward must be risky and recognize the optimal times to penetrate (with the dribble, pass and/or shot).
- Cue of passer to forward – looking up – make eye contact and/or verbal communication.
- Forwards’ ability to create space for themselves and others – timing of runs to either get the ball themselves (recognizing passer’s cues) or get in and behind the defense – angles of runs.
- Quick 1-2 touch combinations (wall pass/take over/overlap/double pass).
- Intelligent runs by the forward – diagonal / straight / bent around defender to get ball back.

3) 8v8 - 3 Zone game. (20 minutes) (In a regular size 8v8 field divided into thirds.

On a field 55 yards wide x 80 yards long, create 3 zones (thirds of the field). Play an 8v8 game with the following formation for each team: a goalkeeper, 3 backs, 3 midfielders and 1 forward. The players are restricted to their zones (backs to the back third, midfielders to the middle third and forwards to the attacking third). When a ball is played into the lone forward, two players from her team can join her in the attacking zone. If the ball is played out of the attacking zone, the supporting players must return to their zones.



Coaching Points:

- Same points as game#1 and #2.

4) Game to two goals with GKs (35-40 minutes): Play- 8v8 to 11v11.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.

5) Cool Down (5-10 minutes): Individual juggling – “Around the World” (right foot, right thigh, head, left thigh and left foot). Static stretch the large muscle groups.



Functional Training of the Forwards (2 Forwards)

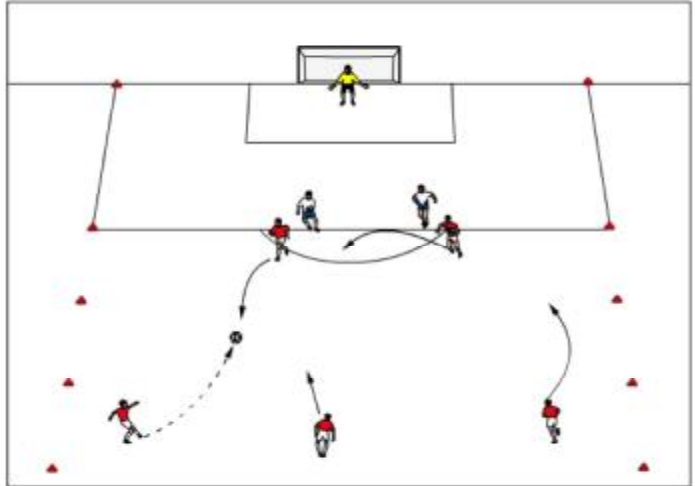
Objective: To help the forwards recognize movement off each other and in relation to the defenders to combine and get through the defense, to create space for self and others, as well as recognizing cues of getting the ball from the midfielders/backs.

1) Functional Pattern Play (30 minutes):

5 v 2 + GK: three midfielders and two forwards versus one goalkeeper. The 3 midfielders pass 5-7 times between each other about 40-50 yards out from the end line. The two forwards look to receive the ball from the midfielders, combine with each other or with the midfielders and finish on goal. (The forwards must receive the ball 18-25 yards out from the goal before going to goal).

Possible patterns:

1. As the ball is played to the left midfielder, the left forward makes an early checking run toward the ball and spins out creating live space for the right forward to check into to receive the pass at the appropriate time. The forward can: turn and shoot on goal; combine with the other forward who has recycled his run and finish with a shot; play the ball to the central midfielder who can take a long range shot, etc.
2. The central midfielder can play the ball to the right forward who passes it to the overlapping right midfielder; the right midfielder then serves a ball to the left forward making a well timed run to the far post.
3. Any one of the midfielders plays a ball to the high forward, who plays it back to the other forward, positioned at a slight angle, who shoots on goal.



Version 2: Add in one defender against the two forwards. **Version 3:** Add in two defenders against the two forwards; now when a midfielder plays the ball into one of the forwards, any one of the three midfielders can join in the attack. **Version 4:** Add in a third defender against the two forwards and now when the midfielder plays the ball into one of the forwards, two of the three midfielders can join in the attack. **Version 5:** Add in 1-2 defenders against the midfielders and now let all midfielders combine when the ball is played into the forward.

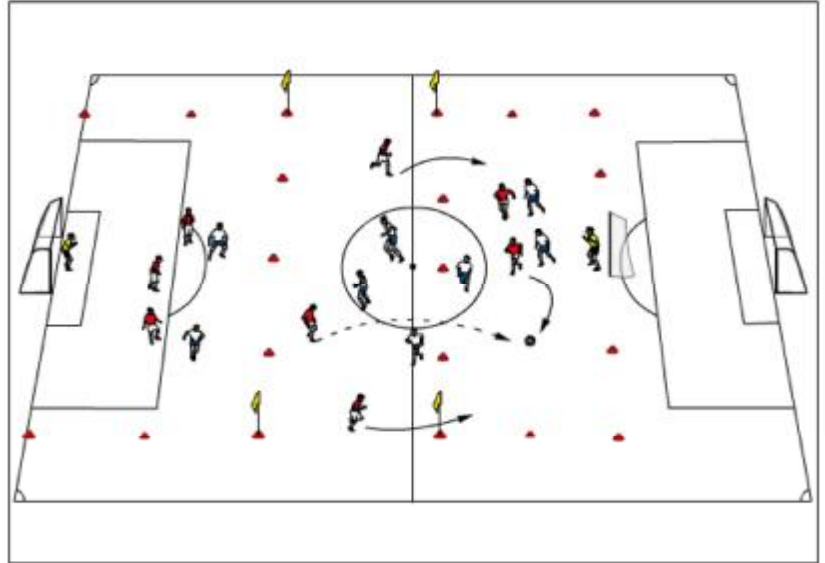
Coaching Points:

- Combination play
- Cue of passer to forward – looking up – make eye contact and/or verbal communication.
- Forwards' ability to create space for themselves and others – timing of runs to either get the ball themselves (recognizing passer's cues) or get in and behind the defense – angles of runs.
- Quick 1-2 touch combinations (wall pass/take over/overlap/double pass).
- Intelligent runs by the forwards – diagonal / straight / bent around defender to get ball back.

- Appropriate supporting angles – looking to read the defenders – do they both commit to the forward with the ball, where is the space that just opened up – should the other forward look to make a run in behind defenders or drop off behind the forward with the ball to use as support, etc.
- Forwards should look to work ‘off’ each other; angled positioning of the forwards within playing distance of each other.
- As the ball is played from side to side the two forwards may switch roles, but must stay connected.

2) Three Zone 8v8 plus GK’s to 2 Big Goals (30 minutes):

In a field 60 yards wide by 80 yards long, 2 teams of 8 plus goalkeepers. Field is split up into three zones (25 yards long on both attacking zones and 25-30 yards long in the middle zone. If goalkeeper plays it to their backs, backs can look to find midfielder players or attacking players. **Version 2:** Once a pass is made into attacking third, any midfielder from attacking may join in to create a 3 v. 3 in the attacking zone. **Version 3:** Two midfielders may join into the attacking third to create a 4 v. 3.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points from Activity #1

3) 11v11 scrimmage (30 minutes): Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (recognizing opportunities of when forwards should check to the ball, what type of run, movement of other forward off the ball – combine/support/get self in for shot, etc.).

4) Cool-down (10 minutes): Groups of 5 heading challenge. One player in the middle, four players circle around them. Player in the middle tosses ball to player on the outside who heads in back to player in the middle. Player in the middle then heads to next player on the outside, who then heads it back to player in the middle and so on. Give player in the middle multiple chances to get the ball all the way around the circle - switch up players to ensure everyone gets a chance to be the middle player. Finish cool-down with static stretching of major muscle groups.



Functional Training of the Forwards (3 Forwards)

Objectives: To help improve play of three forwards in the attack.

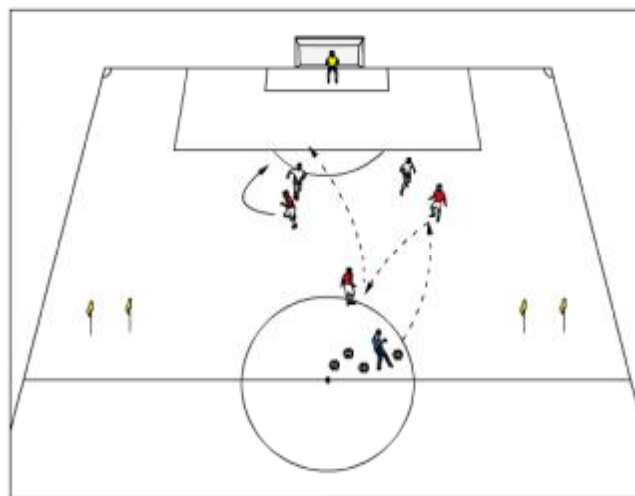
1) 3v3 to end lines (Warm-up – 10-15 minutes): In a 20x30 yard space at the top of the 18 yard box (in the attacking third of the field), play 3v3. Team defends one end line and attacks the opposite end line. Goals are scored when one team dribbles the ball past the opposite end line while keeping the ball under control.

Coaching Points:

- Players should be looking to penetrate via dribbling and through passes
- Creating depth and width when in possession of the ball
- Attackers should provide support for the player with the ball

2) 3v2 with goalkeeper, building to 5v4 with goalkeeper (20-25 minutes):

Start off with pattern play and movement of three forwards using the various patterns listed below. Three forwards score on goal while defenders can score through the counter goals or by passing to the coach. Use the top of the penalty box as an offside line. Add two wide mid fielders on the attacking team (red) and two outside backs on the defending team (white).



Possible patterns:

1. Ball is played to one forward who lays the ball off to the withdrawn attacker. When pass is laid off, third forward peels off and bends run behind central defender to receive through ball played by withdrawn forward.
2. Ball is played into right forward from outside angle who steps over the ball and turns toward goal. Left forward plays on touch pass between the center backs to right forward who runs onto the ball for a shot or cross.
3. Ball is played into left forward who lays ball off for withdrawn forward to have a shot on goal. Other forwards attack the goal for any rebounds.

Coaching Points:

- Two forwards need to provide as much depth (without being offsides) as possible.
- As ball is played, they need to check towards the ball in order to receive or play quickly to teammate.
- Proper technique when receiving, passing and shooting the ball
- Bent runs toward the goal to follow up for rebounds (frame the goal), front post, back post and middle runs must be made.
- Forwards need to make eye contact with passer of the ball to ensure timing of pass.
- Proper finishing technique- use large surface to redirect ball on goal.

3) 7v5 with goalkeeper (25-30 minutes): Red team attacks the full size goal with goalkeeper while the white team attacks the counter goals. Focus on the possible patterns listed below. Red team plays with three forwards (one withdrawn striker) and four midfielders while white have four backs with one defensive midfielder. Place cones 20 yards from goal for an offside line.

Possible patterns:

1. Wide midfielder passes the ball into the first forward who lays the ball off to the withdrawn striker. Ball is switched to the other wide midfielder for a cross into the box.
2. Central midfielder plays the ball into forward who directly passes down the wide channel to the outside midfielder for a cross into the box.
3. Wide midfielder plays a wall pass with the forward in the wide channel and crosses the ball into the box.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout session.

4) 11v11 scrimmage (30-45 minutes):

Depending upon numbers, space will change. Can play 9v9 with goals 12 yards from the end line. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout session.

5) Cool-down (10 minutes):

Juggling and finishing cool-down with static stretching of major muscle groups.



Functional Training of the Central Midfielders

Objective: To provide a training environment that focuses on the functions of the central midfielders: where they play, how they play and the decisions they make to keep the attacking action connected, effective and going to GOAL.

1) Inter-passing in Two Groups with Designated Central Midfielders (25 minutes):

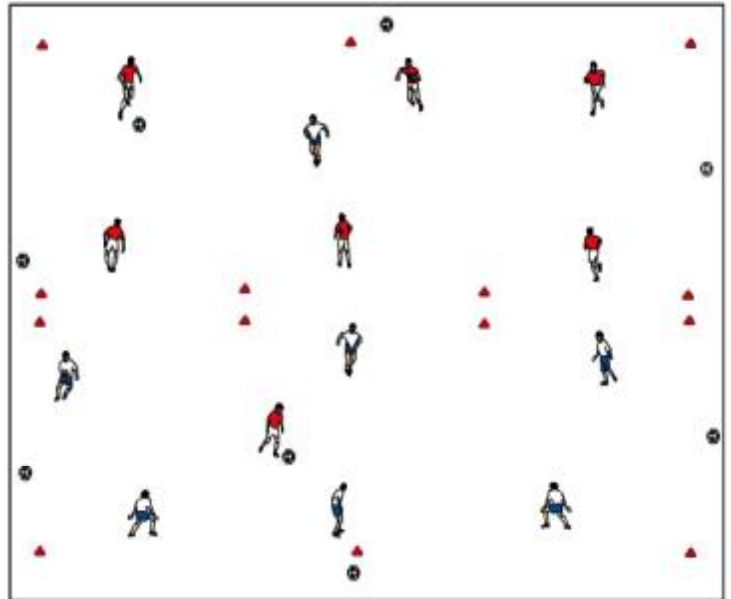
In two grids, each 30 yards long x 20 yards wide, two groups of 7-8 players inter-pass the ball freely. Dress your central midfielders (CM's) in a different colored vest and assign each one to a different grid. As the ball is being passed amongst the players in the grid, the CM must demand the ball every 3-5 passes and play it back to the player who passed it to him or play it to another player in the grid.

Version 2: If the CM plays the ball back to the passer, it must be one-touched. If he plays it to another player, he can take 2-3 touches before passing it.

Version 3: Introduce an opponent who is responsible for marking the CM man-to-man.

Version 4: Play an 8v4 keep-away game. Make sure that your CM is one of the Eight. The Team of Eight is awarded a

point every time they can pass to the CM and the CM can return it to one of the Eight. The team of four is awarded a point if they win possession and can dribble the ball out or pass it out of the grid to a teammate.

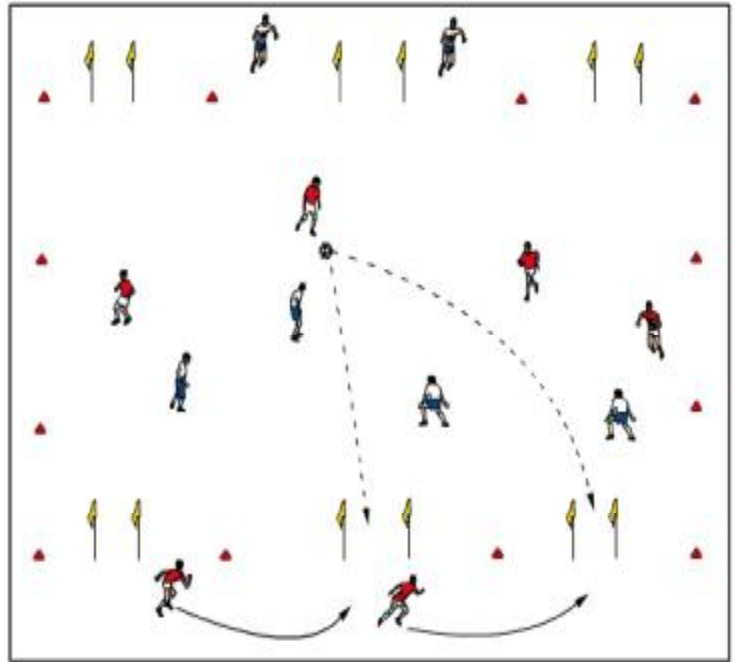


Coaching points:

- CM must be technically clean...perfect execution (dribbling, receiving, passing, shooting, heading, tackling)! CM must be technically fast...timing of dribbling and/or passing is crucial!
- CM must be tactically fast...timing of decisions to speed up play or slow it down is crucial!
- CM must be tactically fast...patience...keeping space live...knowing when to show up for the ball.
- CM must be surveying the field 100% of the time to give proper direction to his teammates...keep the ball; slow it down; change the point of attack; penetrate, delay the opponent's attack, win the ball back, etc.
- CM must know when to move the ball to another part of the field.

2) 4v4 game to Six Goals with Target Players (25 minutes):

In the middle third of the field set up a grid the full width of the field (about 60 yards) and 35 yards long (the grid is wider than it is long). On each 60 yard end line set up three 4-yard goals with cones or flags; two of them about 3 yards in from each corner and one centrally located. Make sure that one of your CM's is assigned to each team of four. Position 2 target players behind each set of goals on both ends of the field. Play a game of 4v4. Each team scores by passing the ball through one of the 3 goals opposite them to a target player. The 2 target players must move laterally, covering all 3 goals, and show up behind a goal at the right time to receive a ball from the attacking team. If a goal is scored, the target player who received the ball restarts the game by passing it in to the team who just got scored upon.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points from the 1st activity.
- Pay special attention to the decisions made by the CM:
 1. is her combination play appropriate;
 2. is she looking to penetrate into the attacking third when possible;
 3. if she's defending, is she forcing the ball into appropriate pockets of the field;
 4. is she taking responsibility for the ball and taking long range shots, getting the ball to flank players to open up the opponent's defense, and/or slotting passes through the defense to forward players.

3) Match...8v8 to 11v11 (30 minutes): Organize your players into 2 teams and play soccer.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.
- The coaching points made in these more realistic game-like environments will be more beneficial to the players.

4) Cool-down (10 minutes): Individual juggling; challenge players to see who can juggle the most in a 2 minute period.



Functional Training of the Wing Midfielders

Objectives: To help improve wing midfielder play in the attack.

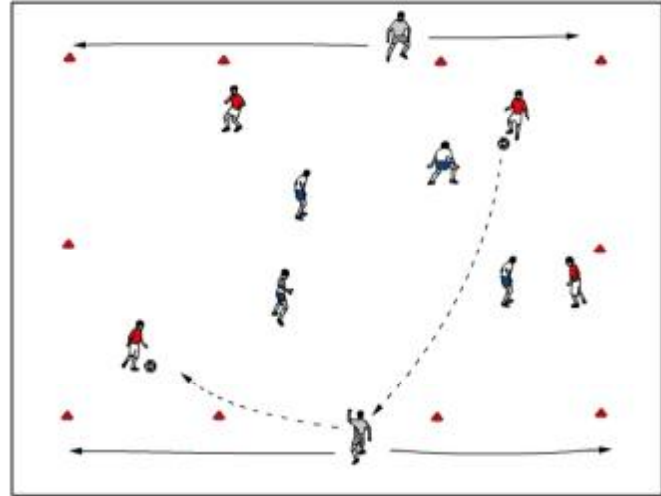
1) 4 v 4 + 2 Outside Players (Warm-up – 20-25 minutes):

Version 1: Two teams of four players play in a grid approximately 25x40 yards. Outside players are positioned on the longer sides of the field and are available to the team that is in possession.

Version 2: Outside players must play the ball to a player other than the one they received it from.

Coaching points:

- Encourage the outside players to be active up and down the sideline.
- Remind outside players to look around before they receive the ball!
- Change outside players every 2-3 minutes.
- Eventually try “two touch” restriction on all players.



2) 7 v 6 + 2 Outside Players (25-30 minutes):

One team plays with a goalkeeper and 6 field players and attempts to score on two small goals. The other team plays with 6 field players and attempts to score on a regulation goal. Field is 45x60 yards. Each team can use the outside players when in possession. A goal resulting from a direct assist from an outside player counts as two points.

Coaching Points:

- Encourage wide players to be very active up and down the sidelines.
- Remind wide players that they must demand the ball – communicate!
- Wide players should look for quick combinations on the ground as well as crossing balls to change the point of attack.
- Wide players must use the time without the ball to decide what they will do when the ball comes to them – think one step ahead!



3) **11v11 scrimmage (30-45 minutes)**: Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout session.
- Goals resulting from crosses from any wide players count as two points.

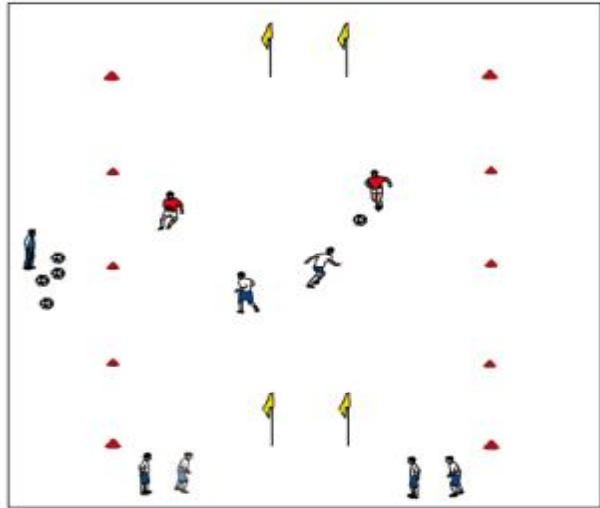
4) **Cool-down (10 minutes)**: Juggling and finishing cool-down with static stretching of major muscle groups.



Functional Training of the Central Backs

Objectives: To help improve the decisions of the central defenders in terms of how they defend, where they defend and what they do when they win possession of the ball.

1) **2v2 to small goals (Warm-up – 20-25 minutes):** Set up many small sided fields 20 yards long by 15 yards wide. Organize many 2v2 games. Set up teams by function: **2 central backs** play together as a team, 2 center mids play together, 2 center forwards play together, outside backs play together, etc. At the field where the **central backs** are playing, have an extra team or two on the outside. Rotate these teams into the game to play against the **central backs**. Coach serves balls into the field from the outside and at the mid point of this field. They will play the ball in to the team playing against the **central backs**.



Coaching Points:

- Communication – who should be pressuring ball, which way to force the player with the ball, when to step and put tighter pressure on them (especially in relation to the defensive 1/3 of the field).
- Cues for central backs: Bad touch on the attackers part – aggressive to win the ball, distance of 2nd attacker in relation to goal determines if 2nd defender (central back) can step and double team 1st attacker (if 2nd attacker takes themselves out of the play) or must be dropped off just slightly and about a 30 degree angle.
- Central Backs have many technical functions that should be considered: heading; ability to clear the ball with feet and head; tackling; quality first touch; immediate transition with the dribble, pass or shot.

2) **4v4 to six goals (20 minutes):** In a field 35 yards long by 50 yards wide (wider than longer), place three goals on each end line (central, left and right). Have 4 backs play against 2 forwards and 2 midfielders. Coach can add in another player or two for each side as play continues. **Use of extra players:** the GK can play behind the goals that the 4 backs are defending to aid in communication. Add in 3 target players behind the goals that the 4 backs are attacking.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points from activity #1
- There must be pressure on the ball! Cues: as ball is traveling, defensive shape (pressure, cover & balance, flatness) must take place!
- Central Backs need to organize the back four as a group defensively through communication – when to step, when to shift, when to drop, etc.
- Decide marking responsibilities and zonal coverage on and off the ball.
- Transition...when they win the ball back, do they have a plan to go forward as quickly and efficiently as possible or can they keep possession until the opportunity to go forward is ON!

3) 6v5 plus GK to 1 big goal and three small counter goals (20 minutes): Use ½ the field for this game and place three small goals (can also place targets behind each goal to get more players involved), left, center and right on the midfield line. Team of 6 will attack the big goal and the team of 5 (plus a GK) will attack the 3 small goals.



Coaching Points:

- Reinforce defensive coaching points from activity #1 and activity #2.
- Central Backs must read that when the ball is being played out (either by themselves, their GK or the outside backs, they must communicate to get their whole defensive line to step up the field and quickly.
- GK must stay connected with the back four and the rest of the team.

4) 8v8/11v11 scrimmage (30-45 minutes): Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers. Be sure to finish with 4 backs for either number to ensure continuation of understanding of roles for the central backs.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points from activity #1, #2 and #3
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (recognizing when to step defensive line up, how to maintain possession if they win it, when to get players (outside backs/selves/midfielders) to pressure ball, etc.).

5) Cool-down (10 minutes): Juggling; finish cool-down with static stretching of major muscle groups.



Functional Training of the Wing Backs

Objective: To help improve wing backs' play in the attack.

1) **6v0 Shadow Play with Goalkeeper (Warm-up – 10-15 minutes):** Begin by having the four backs and two midfielders passing the ball around freely, without pressure, in the defensive third of the field. On the coach's command, wing backs are to find central midfielder, center back or the coach.

Coaching Points:

- Wing backs must receive the ball with their hips open to the field, so that they can see the entire field ahead of them.
- Proper technique of receiving and passing whether the ball is in the air or on the ground.
- Proper angle of support to receive the ball from center back or midfielders.
- Good first touch forward, into space when available.
- Eye contact must be made when passes are made.

2) **6v3 to Counter Goals with Goalkeeper (15-20 minutes):**

In the defensive third of the field, four backs are trying to combine with the two midfielders to score on the counter goals at midfield. Two forwards and one midfielder apply pressure and attack the full size goal when they win the ball.

Coaching Points:

- Wing backs need to recognize when they can play forward and when to retain possession.
- If wing backs have open midfielder or space to play ball forward to goals, they must do so (no pressure).
- If wing backs see defender taking the goals they must find midfielders or backs to retain possession.
- Wing backs may dribble penetrate if space and pressure is not applied in the defensive third.
- Reinforce points mentioned in warm-up.



3) **8v6 to Counter Goals with Goalkeeper (20-25 minutes):** Build to playing with four backs three midfielders and one forward to counter goals against two forwards and three midfielders and one defender scoring on the full size goal.

Coaching Points:

- Wing backs should look to pass to the forward when possible, recognizing where pressure is coming from and if the forward is available to receive the ball.
- When under pressure from the forward from the inside of the field, wing backs need to recognize if they can either pass to the forward or to an outside midfielder in order to build the attack.
- Wing backs can look to overlap when outside midfielder dribbles the ball towards the middle of the field and space is open on the outside of the field, creating a 2v1 situation.
- Reinforce points made previously.



4) 9v9 Scrimmage to Two Goals with Goalkeepers (25-30 minutes): Using a 4-3-1 v a 3-3-2 formation, play a match to two goals. Move the goals up 12 yards from the goal line on each end and use the full width of the field. Moving to 11v11 if your team has the numbers is advised as well.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout session.

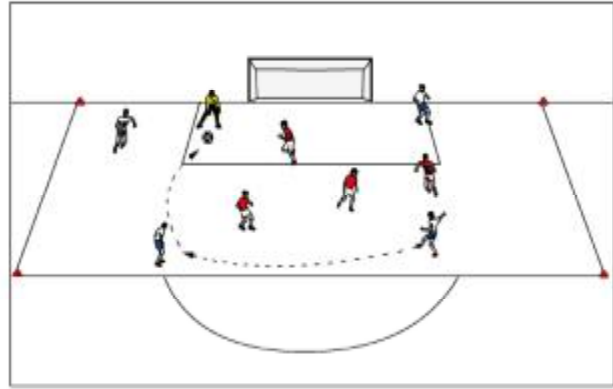
5) Cool-down (10 minutes):

In groups of four, choose one “captain” per group who will lead them on a slow jog in different directions around the field. During the jog they are to perform various dynamic stretches while cooling-down. Finish with static stretching of major muscle groups.

Functional Training of the Goalkeeper

Objective: To provide a training environment for the goalkeeper that offers ample opportunity to practice and improve on his/her defensive and attacking roles...last defender, first attacker, connection with team on both sides of the ball and appropriate & commanding communication.

1) 4v4+1 Neutral Player (15 minutes): In an 18 yard x 44 yard grid (size of penalty box) play a 4v4 game. Include a goalkeeper in the game as a neutral player (plays for the team that has possession of the ball). Both teams compete for possession of the ball and attempt to maintain possession through good ball movement and movement “off” the ball. The goalkeeper, as neutral player, provides for a “numbers up” situation for the team in possession. Teams are awarded a point for 8 consecutive passes or playing the ball through the goalkeeper to another teammate. Version 2: 2-touch restriction.



Coaching points:

- Focus on the goalkeeper’s foot skills, passing and receiving technique and decision making (to pass or to dribble, angle and distance of support, etc.).
- Concentrate on the goalkeeper’s confidence in taking responsibility for the ball.

2) 5v2 to Big goal and 2 or 3 Counter-Attack Target Players (15 minutes):

Width of box x 40 yards. The 5 players (in blue) are the goalkeeper and the back four who are protecting the Big Goal and trying to pass to one of the 2 targets located at the opposing end line. The 2 players (in yellow) are the opposing attacking forwards who are trying to score on the Big Goal. The activity is started when the coach or another player, who is located at the end line, serves a ball into the defensive third. The yellow team is awarded 5 points for scoring a goal; the blue team is awarded 1 point for successfully passing the ball to one of the targets.



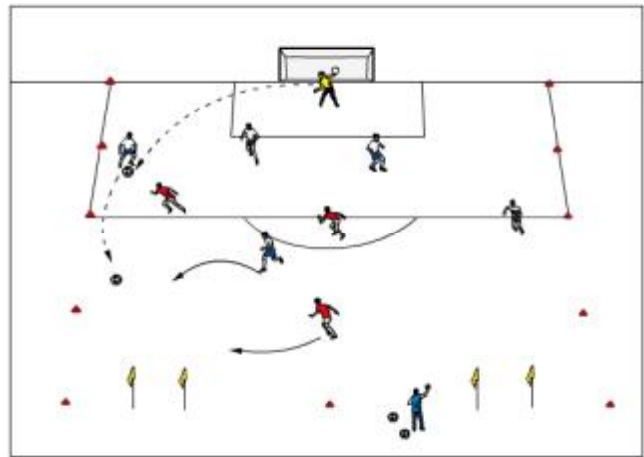


Coaching points:

- Focus on the goalkeeper's ability to organize the back 4 players when they are defending and when they are attacking.
- This will require the goalkeeper to communicate appropriately and confidently with the back 4 players.
- This means that when they are defending, the goalkeeper must direct players by name to pressure the ball, cover appropriately and balance the defensive action (track players away from the ball so that there are no surprises); to keep the back 4 players connected in a somewhat flat shape; to anticipate dangerous through balls by the yellow team.
- When they are attacking, the goalkeeper must stay connected to the back 4 players (not leave a large gap between himself and the back 4; to be part of the attack by initiating the attack with good distribution or being available as a supporting player.

3) 6v3 to Big goal and 2 Counter-Attack Goals (15 minutes):

Width of box x 40 yards. The 6 players (in blue) are the goalkeeper, the back four and one central midfielder who are protecting the Big Goal and trying to pass the ball through one of the 2 counter-attack goals located at the opposing end line. The 3 players (in yellow) are the opposing attacking forwards and one central midfielder who are trying to score on the Big Goal. The activity is started when the coach or another player, who is located in the center circle, serves a ball into the defensive third to the blue team or to the yellow team. The yellow team is awarded 3 points for scoring a goal; the blue team is awarded 1 point for successfully passing the ball through one of the counter-attack goals.



Coaching points:

- Reinforce all of the coaching points made in activities 1 and 2 above.
- As players are added to the activity, the environment becomes more chaotic and complicated, so the goalkeeper must concentrate even harder on his organizational & communication skills.

4) 7v5 to 1 Regulation goal and 2 small counter-attack goals (15 minutes):

Use 2/3 of the field. The 7 players (in blue) are the goalkeeper, the back four and two central midfielders who are protecting the Big Goal and trying to pass the ball through one of the 2 counter-attack goals located at the midfield stripe.





The 5 players (in yellow) are the opposing attacking forwards and three midfielders who are trying to score on the Big Goal. The activity is started when the coach or another player, who is located in the center circle, serves a ball into the defensive third to the blue team or to the yellow team. The yellow team is awarded 2 points for scoring a goal; the blue team is awarded 1 point for successfully passing the ball through one of the counter-attack goals.

Coaching points:

- Reinforce all of the coaching points made in activities 1 and 2 above.
- As players are added to the activity, the environment becomes more chaotic and complicated, so the goalkeeper must concentrate even harder on his organizational & communication skills.

5) **9v9, 10v10 or 11v11 game (30 minutes):** Play soccer with no restrictions or incentives.

Coaching points: Reinforce all of the coaching points made in activities 1 and 2 above. As players are added to the activity, the environment becomes more chaotic and complicated, so the goalkeeper must concentrate even harder on his organizational & communication skills

6) **Cool-Down (10 minutes):** 2 players per ball, about 3 yards apart. One player serves the ball underhand so that the partner can volley it back to the server's hands. Alternate feet each time. After 15-20 repetitions, partners change roles. Repeat using inside of foot and instep. Finish cool-down with static stretching of the major muscle groups.