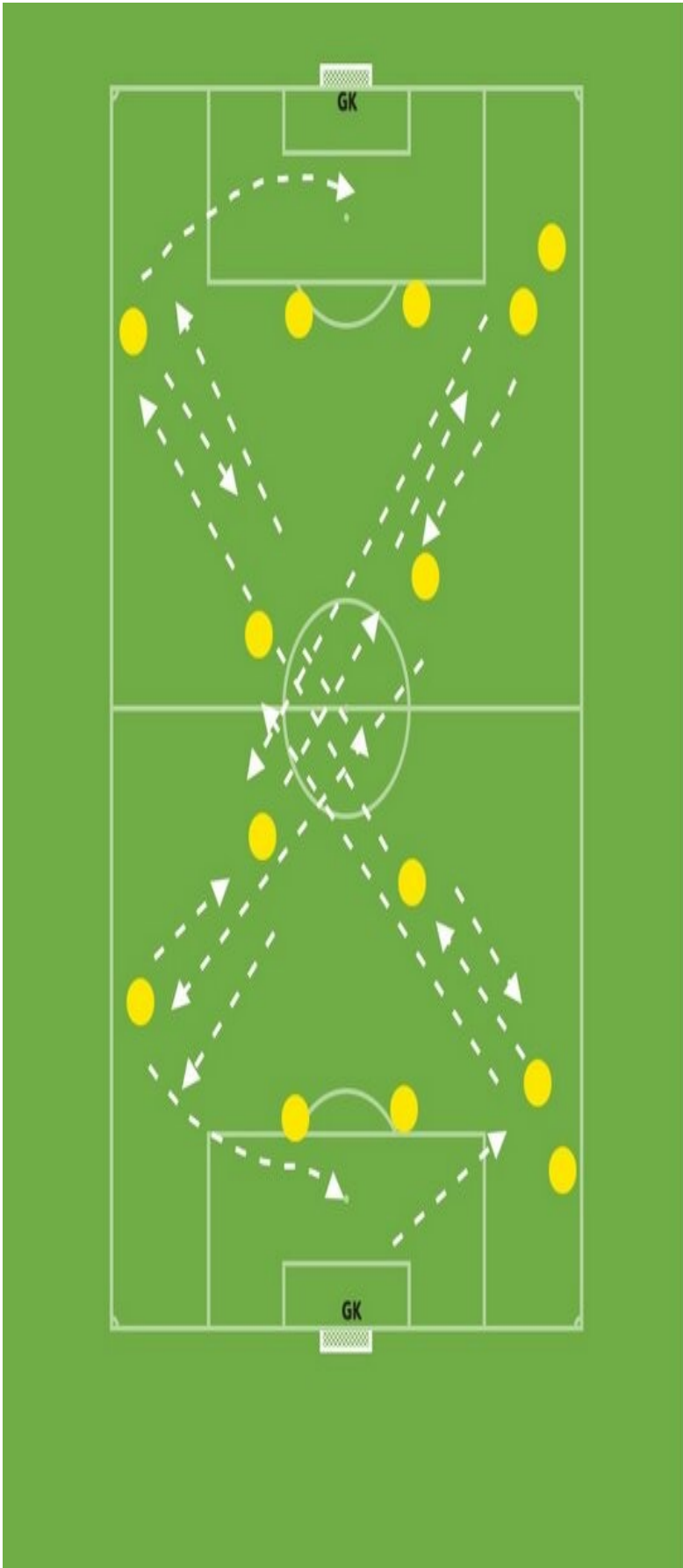




Coach Tony Mee  
Youth academy sessions



### Passing Warm Up - Squad Practice

#### Warm-Up

Set up as shown. Keeper distributes to full back position. Pass direction as shown, passer follows his pass.  
 When ball reaches wide attacking position it is crossed in for a first time finish by one of the two strikers, one of which moves onto the full back position.

#### Progression 1

Pass, set, longer pass (driven)

#### Progression 2

Pass, set, longer pass (lofted)

#### Progression 3

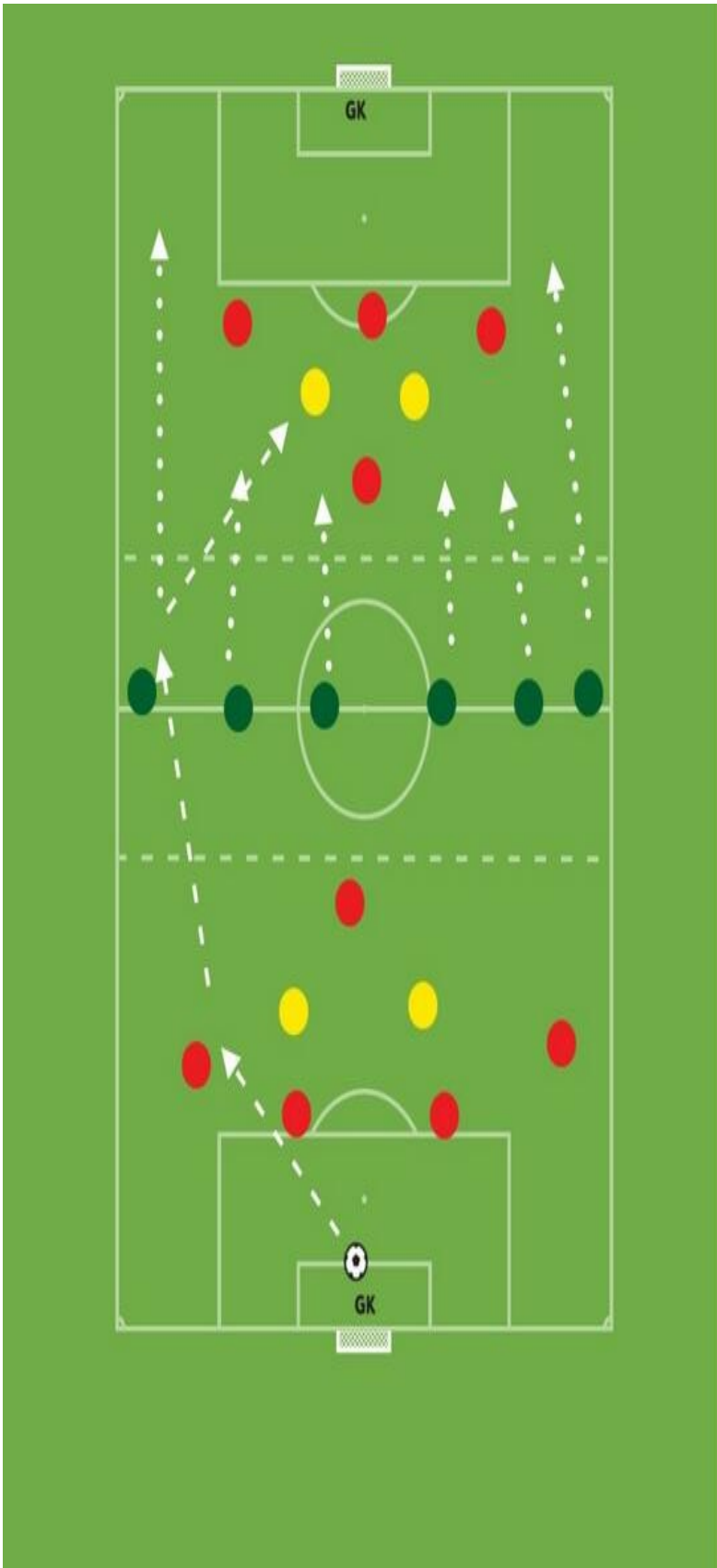
The highest midfielder plays into the striker who sets the wide player.

#### Progression 4

Any combination of the above - players must communicate!

#### Focus

Quality of pass, pace & timing of runs



## Defending - Squad Practice

### Organisation

As shown (with the numbers involved we set up as shown, 3v1 and a screening MF player at one end & 4v2 and a screening MF at the other end).  
6 midfield players attack both ways.

### How to Play

Play starts from the GK into the defence and onto MF. The midfield players play into strikers & then join in to attack.

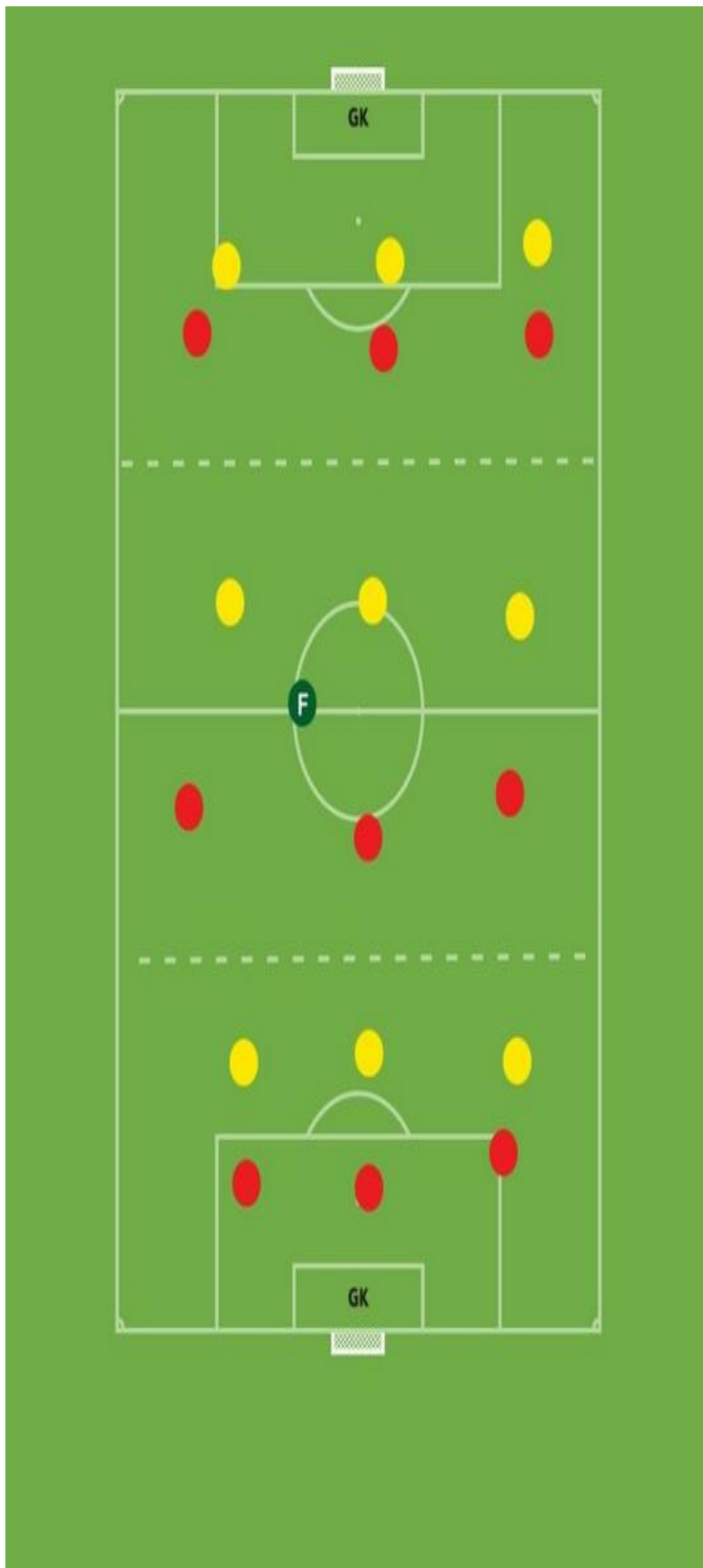
If defenders win the ball or clear it the MF attack the opposite goal.

### Coaching points

Screening MF - try to prevent balls into the strikers feet. Shuffle across and around in relation to the ball.

Defenders - block shots! Stay compact when the ball is in central areas. Force play wide.

GK - distribute quickly to strikers or wide players to encourage the counter attack with throws & side volleys.



## Defending and Counter Attacking

### Organisation

Set up the pitch as shown. 3v3 in each area with a floater playing anywhere on the pitch.

### How to play

Dashed line can be used as an offside line. Players are restricted to their zones with the exception of the floater. Play normal rules.

### Coaching Points

Out of possession - be brave, block shots, win tackles.

In possession - move quickly to support, pass quickly & accurately. Get shots away.

### Progression

A midfield player can go forward into the attacking third to create a 4v3 or 5v3. This would also encourage quick counter attacks if the ball is regained.

### Progression 2

### SSG

## Conditioning, crossing & finishing

### Organisation

As shown. Work alternate sides of the pitch. Players do 10 reps each.

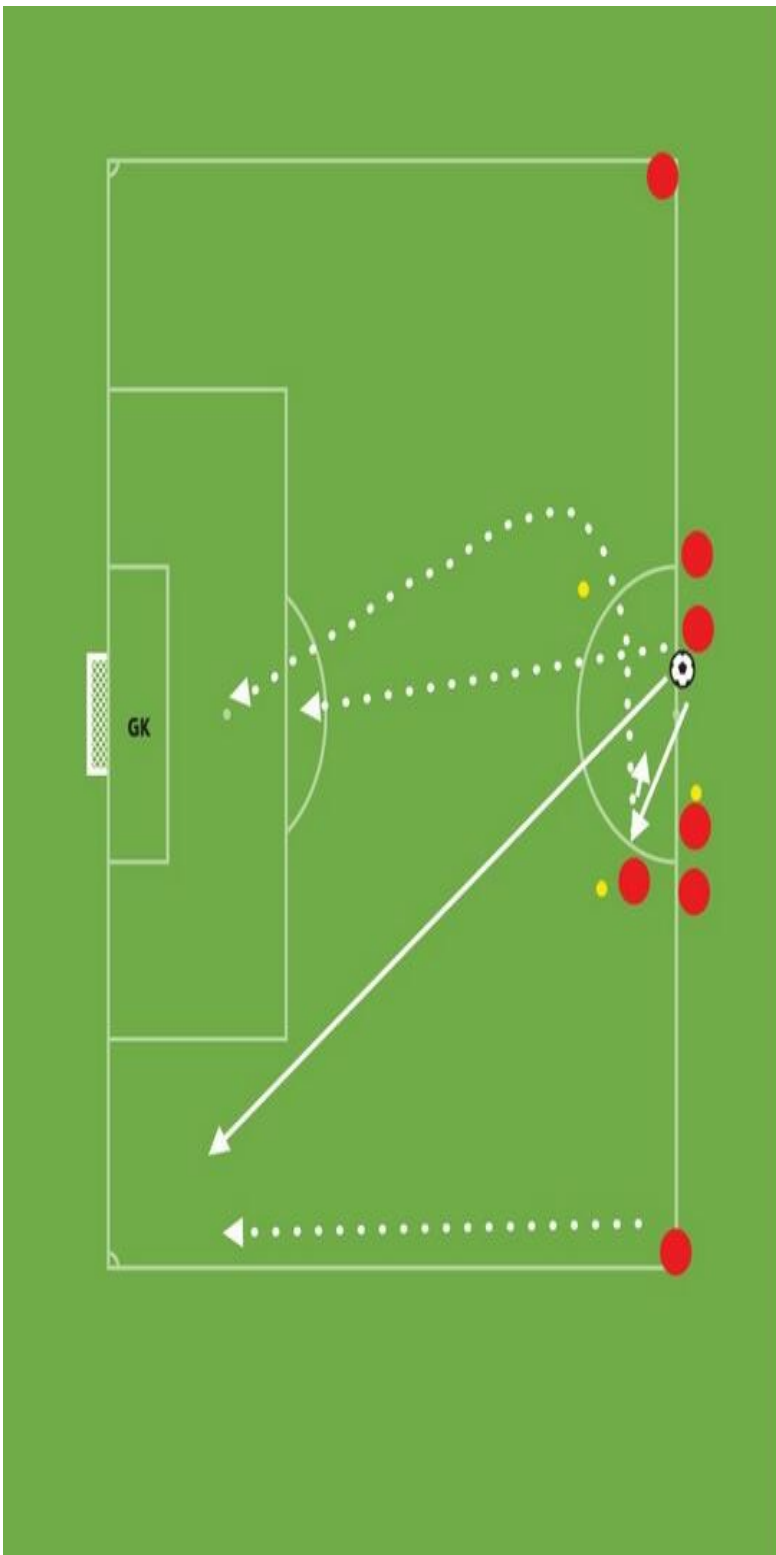
### How to Play

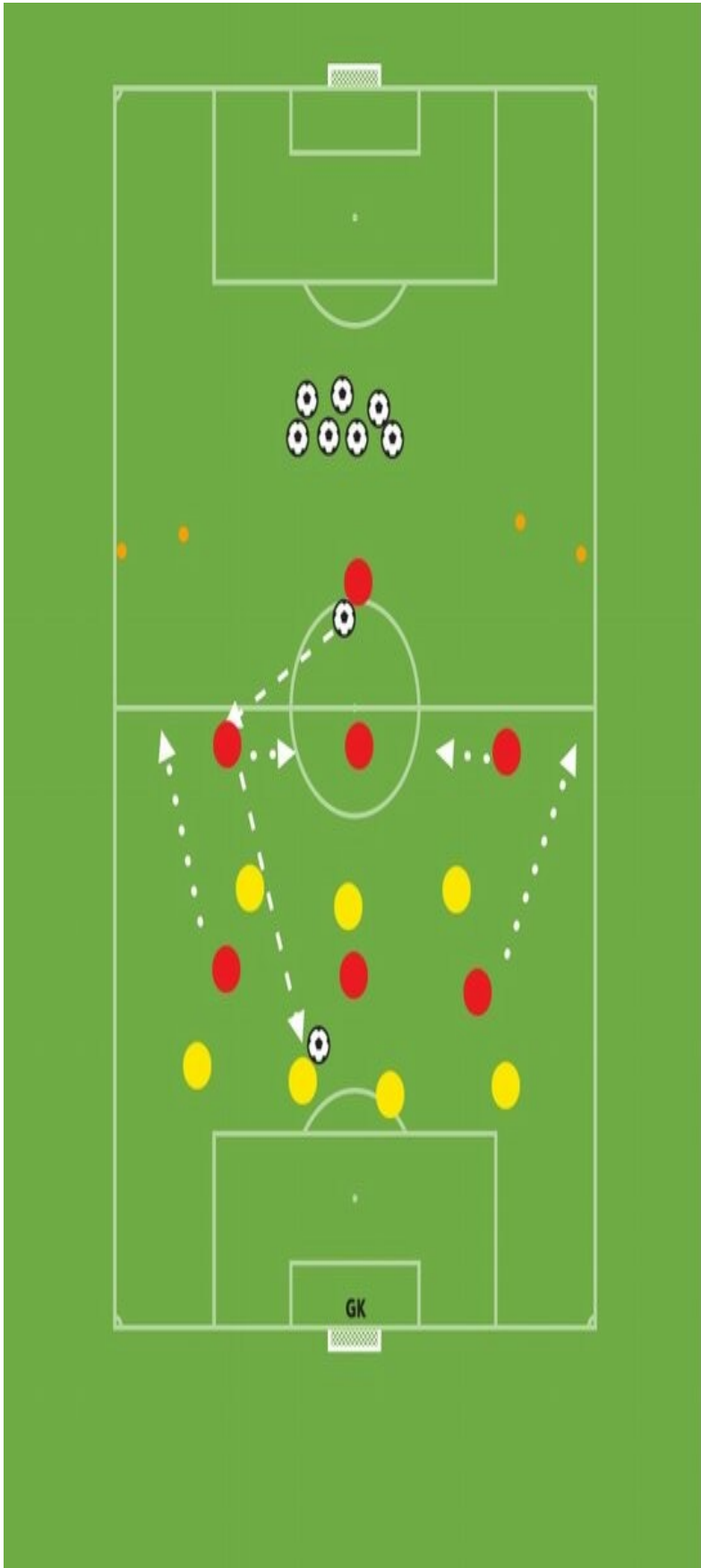
Players in centre circle play a short pass which is set back and a longer diagonal ball is sent wide for the full back/winger to sprint on to. The two central players make the runs shown to get into the box.

One attempt is made to score from the cross and all 3 players must turn and sprint back to the half way line.

You may use static balls or servers to roll the ball back to the wide players if the diagonal ball is a poor one.

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WHEN THE PRACTICE STARTS ALL PLAYERS ARE RUNNING AT MAXIMUM SPEED AND RETURN TO THE HALF WAY LINE AT MAXIMUM SPEED.**





## Attacking 4-3-3 to Defending 4-5-1

Purpose of practice

For the red team to transition from attacking with a front 3 to defending with a midfield 5

Organisation

As shown. Yellow team defend with a Back 4 and a Midfield 3.

Red team attack with 3 forwards, 3 midfield and a sitter.

How to Play

Reds try to score into the goal. Yellows try to score by trying to running the ball through the orange poles.

Coaching points

When reds lose the ball, the outside attackers drop outside the 3 midfield players.

Central striker stay between the centre backs.

Retreat into a 5 towards the halfway line

If the transition occurs as the result of a MF player going beyond the strikers, they must all drop back to make the line of 5 until shape can be regained

**ONLY PRESS THE BALL IF...**

defenders have a poor touch

Someone makes a sloppy pass

## Favourite Crossing & Finishing Session

### Organisation

As shown. Numbers to suit

### How to Play

Passes as shown.

The 2 MF follow the first pass.

In this example 5 plays wide to 7 who crosses first time. Players 8,9,10 make the runs shown.

Player 5 would hold just outside the box for a cutback/knock down.

Alternate sides after each cross.

### Variations

7 holds the ball and plays into 2 on the overlap.

7 sets back to 2 for a deeper cross.

The wide player on the opposite side (11), would narrow off for over hit ball. Opposite full back would tuck in to provide cover.

Could add a defender in wide areas.

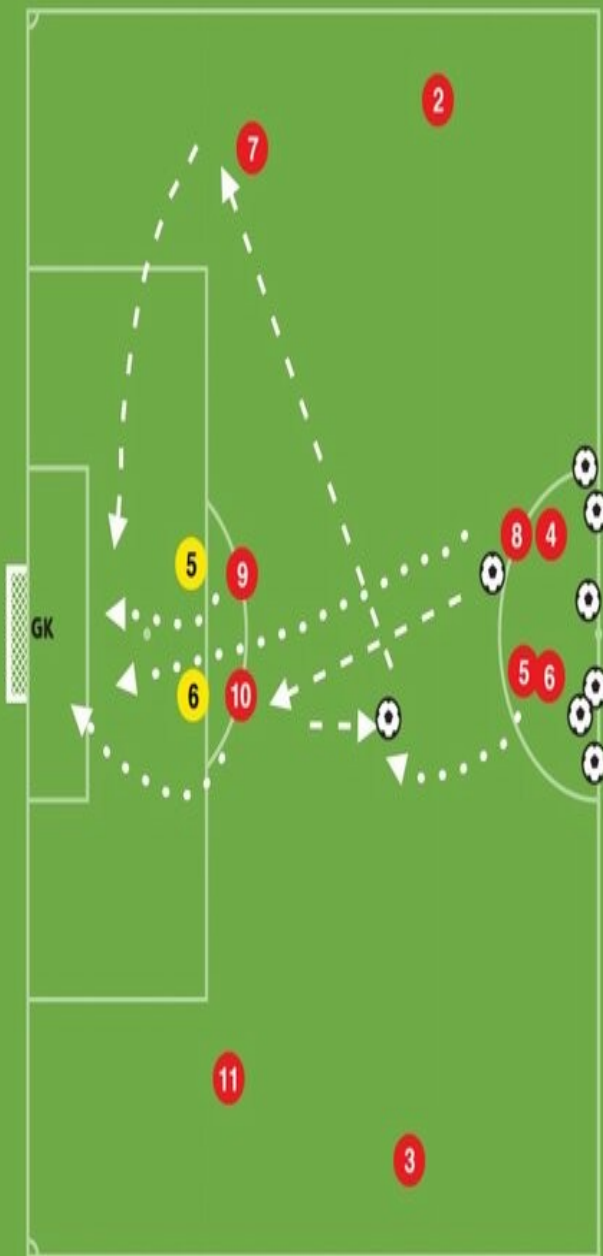
### Coach

Quality of all passes.

Timing of runs.

Movement to lose markers.

Quality of or improvised finishing.



## Midfield rotation, pressing & dispersal

Organisation

As shown  
5v5 in the box with 4 neutrals

Objective

To retain possession of the ball using team mates & neutral players  
To create space for others to play in

How to Play

Outside players on 2 touch

Both teams must keep at least 1 player in each triangle

The yellows in possession combine to play the ball into a different area (as shown)

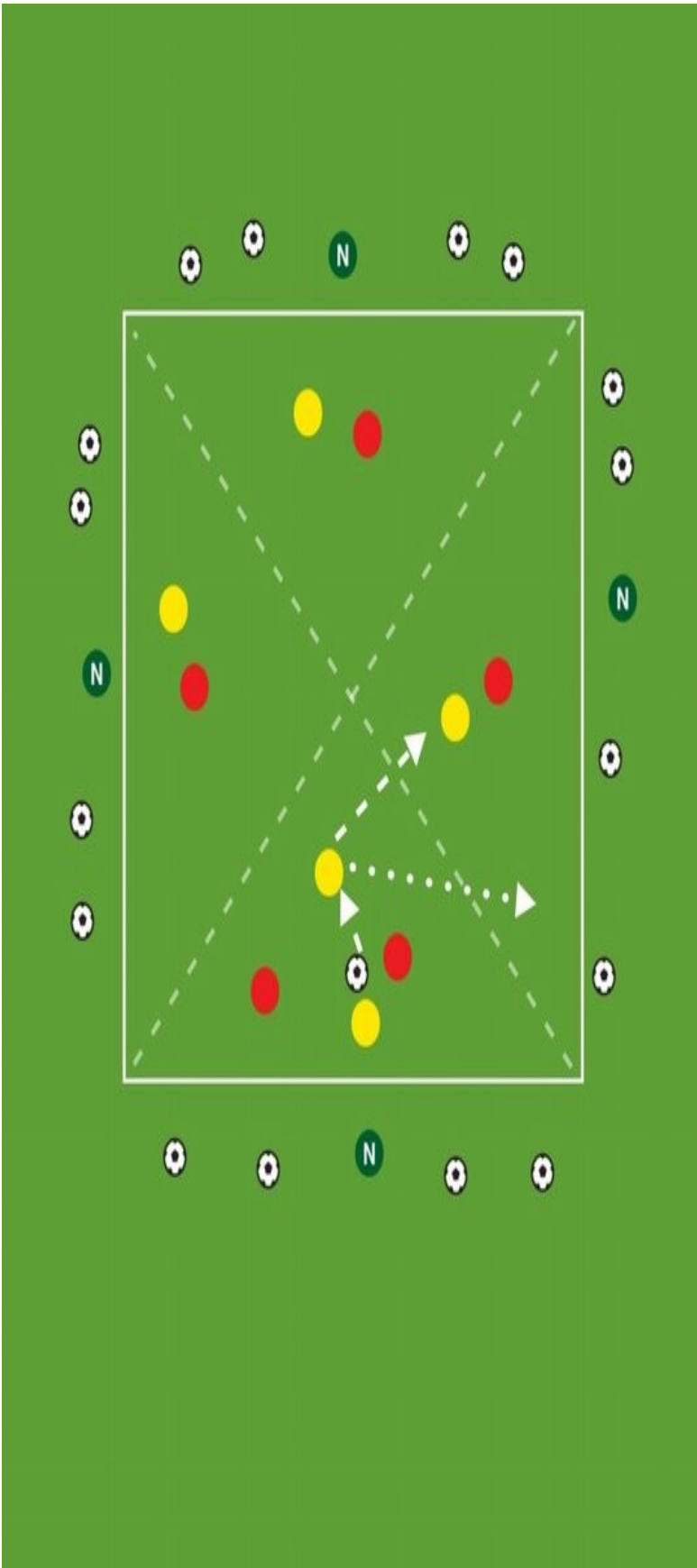
The player who passes the ball out has to leave that area and can be replaced by another (he doesn't have to follow his pass-he may leave for any other triangle) but his place must be taken

The player receiving in a 1v1, may pass out of his area first time but must still leave it and be replaced

Progression

Allow players to run/dribble the ball into a different area

Allow 1 outside to outside pass





## Patterns of Play - Warm Up

### Organisation

2 identical areas with the group divided in 2

The triangles are mannequins

Area to start with was about 15x15, 2 MF players in the centre of each grid

### How to play

Play to the back foot, movement off the mannequin to show for the ball.

The ball can be played into the MF players at any time by any player.

Follow your pass around the outside.

MF players stay in for a period of time.

### Progressions

Change direction

Pass, set, pass longer

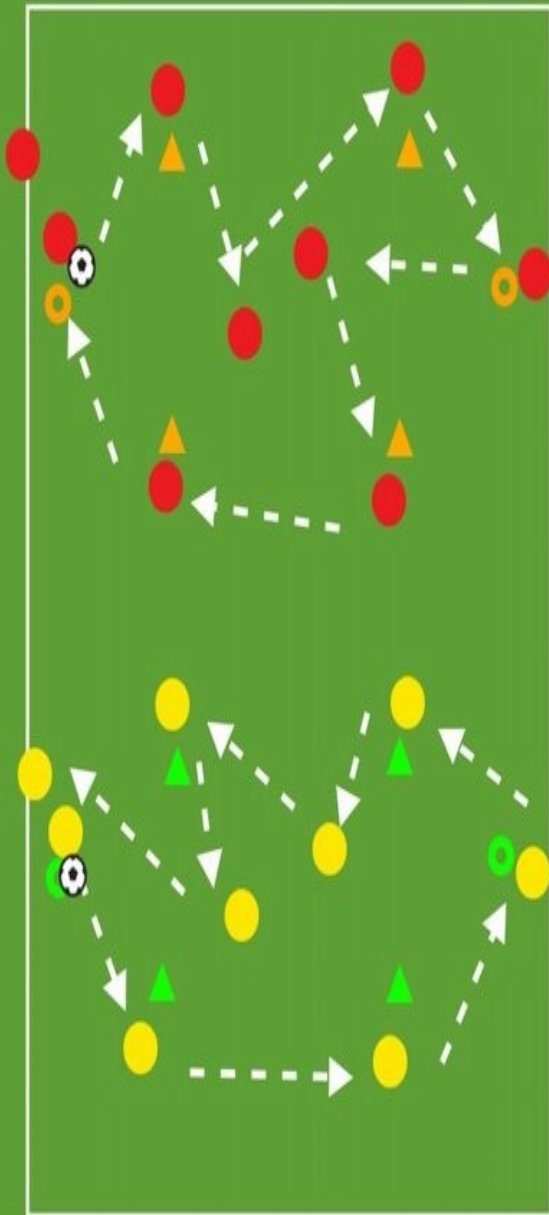
MF players must combine

Rotate into the middle if you pass into the middle

Play what you see

Both areas combine

Add a third ball



## Attacking Patterns of Play

### Organisation

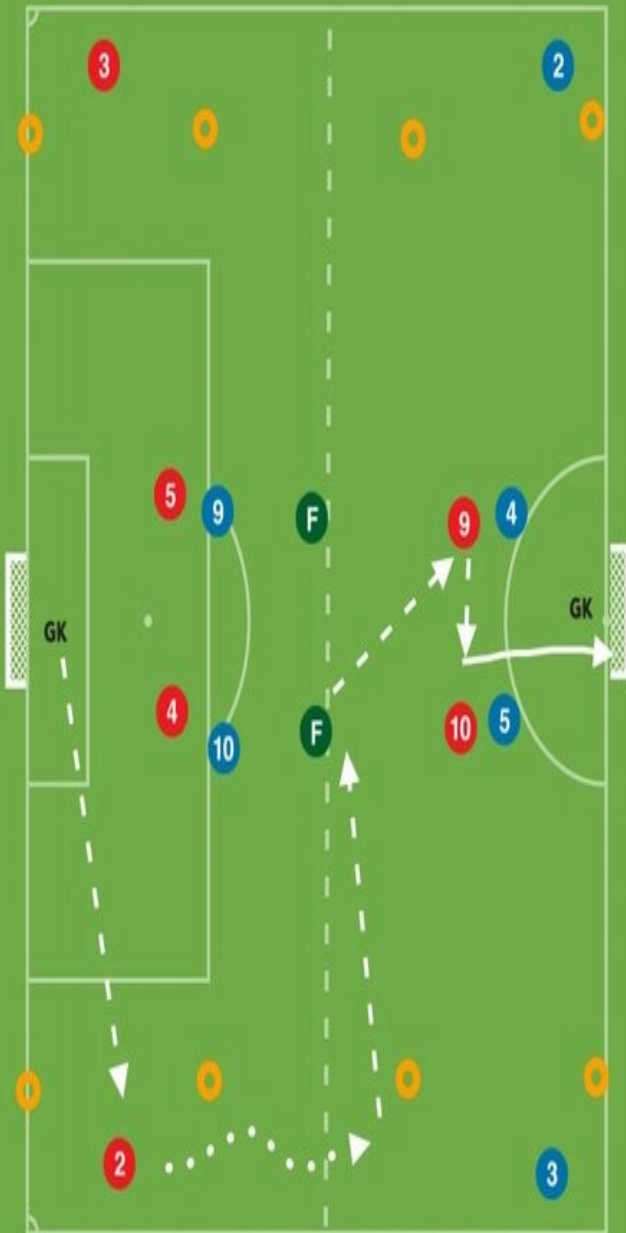
The defenders 4 & 5 are restricted to the defending half.  
The full backs 2 & 3 attack in/from the channels.  
Midfield F play both ways.

### How to Play

GK serves the full backs who can either drive down the channel and cross or combine with the MF players.  
Opposite FB can come in off the line.  
After each attack the game restarts with the other GK.

### Progressions

GK can serve any player but ball must go wide at some point before a shot.  
Full backs can push on and be served higher up the pitch.  
Full backs can come in to create overloads.  
Full backs can drive in and MF can overlap into the channel.  
Free play.



## Penetrating Passes

### Organisation

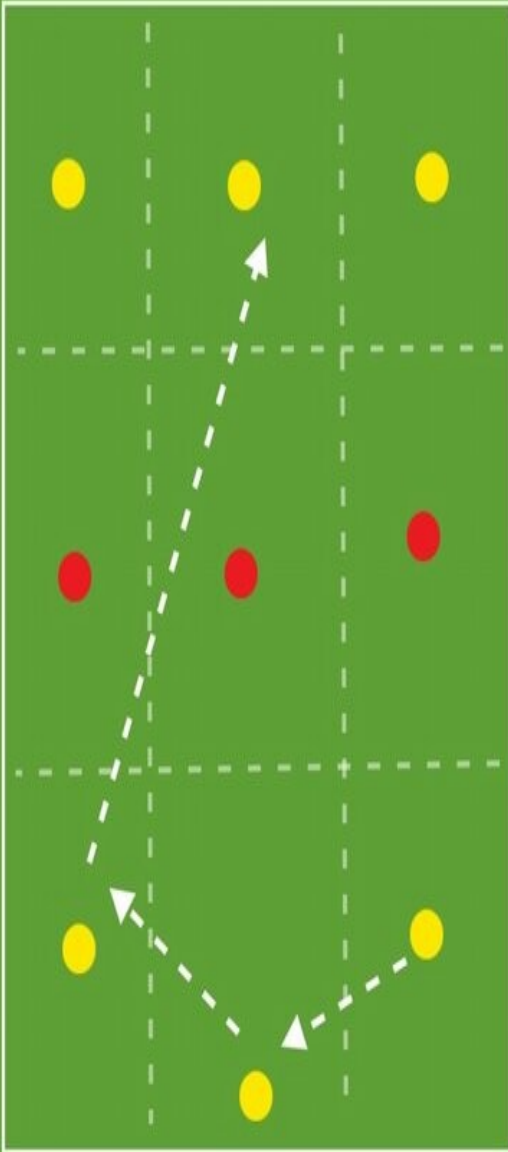
As shown, boxes to suit the size/ability of the players.  
All players stay in their own boxes.

### How to Play

Yellows keep possession until they see an opportunity to pass through the reds.  
Reds can move anywhere they want within their own boxes.

### Progression

The reds can move forward to press the player with the ball.



## Position Specific - Strikers Coming Short

### Organisation

Area to suit size/age of players.

3 zones of equal size with a player from each side in central zone.

4v2 in each end zone

Rotate all players through all roles with younger age groups.

### How to play

Team keeps possession with a view to playing to striker who must check into neutral zone nearest his team. Defenders don't follow to start off.

Introduce opposite striker defending into neutral zone to increase speed of play.

### Focus

Striker to time movement when he can see that a player is shaped to play forward.

Receive on half turn and play forward.

If forward checks and doesn't receive he must return to central zone.

### Development

Into a game/SSG where the focus is on these movements. Applicable to CM movements as well as strikers.



## Possession & Transition Session

Possession/transition Session

Organisation

A 20 x 20 area divided into 4 areas (make size appropriate to age/ability of players).

Play 1v1 in each area with 2 neutrals

4 players on outside

Practice

In this example reds start in possession, 1 neutral player can play in box to make a 2 v 1.

The ball can be transferred to any other area but floaters are restricted to making a 2 v 1.

If yellow win the ball they can keep the ball and look to play out to the blues.

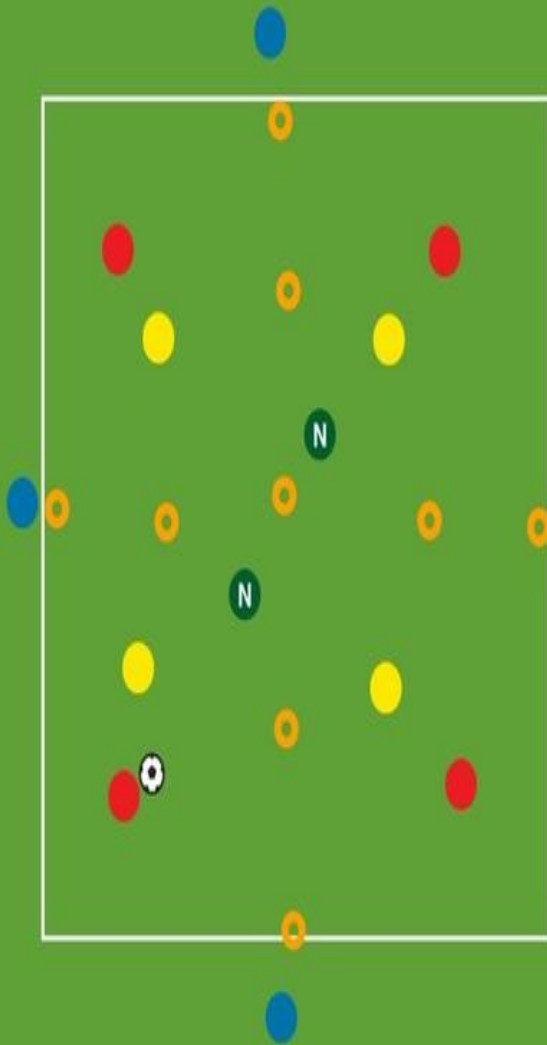
The blues play into a different yellow, they then enter the pitch to become defenders and the reds leave the pitch to become the support players.

Variation

Play for a set time (e.g. 3 minutes) where each team retains the same role. If the defending team play out to the support players, they return the ball to the attacking team & the practice continues (should discourage the defenders from just kicking the ball out).

Variation 2

If the defenders win the ball, they pass to the support players who pass back into the same team who now play with the floaters.



## Pre-match Warm-up RUFC Youth part 1

### Organisation

I use the area in the corner of the pitch between the corner flag and the 18 yard box.

Players pass & follow in the direction of the arrows.

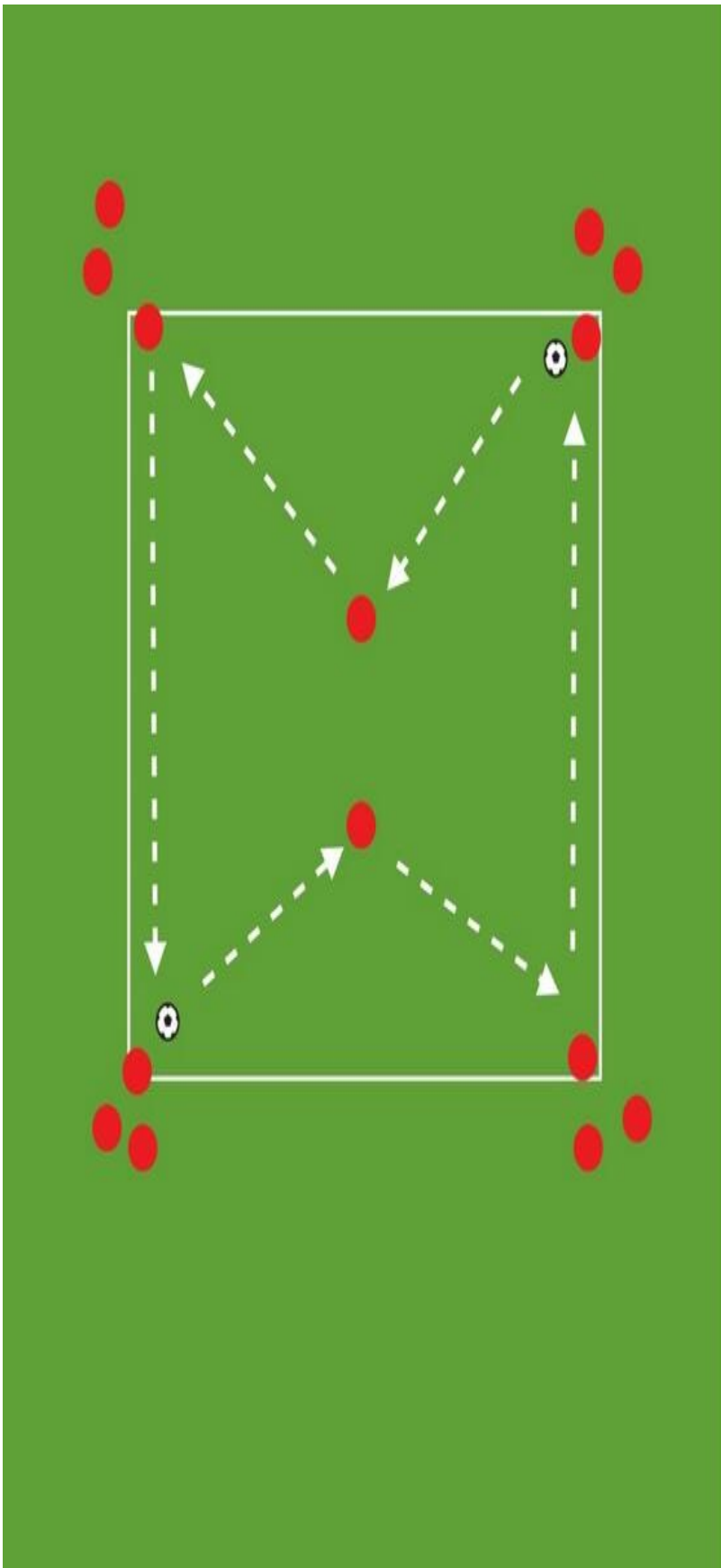
Play 1 or 2 touch on passes, different dynamic stretches performed on runs.

Players must change the angle of the ball with first touch.

Coach calls changes of direction for the runs/passes

This can be done with all squad players or just with the starting 10 outfield players.

GK warms up separately.



## RUFC Youth Pre-match Warm-up part 2

### Organisation

Approx 25 yards wide up to the halfway line

1 plays to 2 and makes an overlapping run.

2 plays to either of the middle players, WHO MUST COMBINE, then runs to the opposite flank.

The middle player then plays to either 1 or 2 who play into the end, where the process starts again.

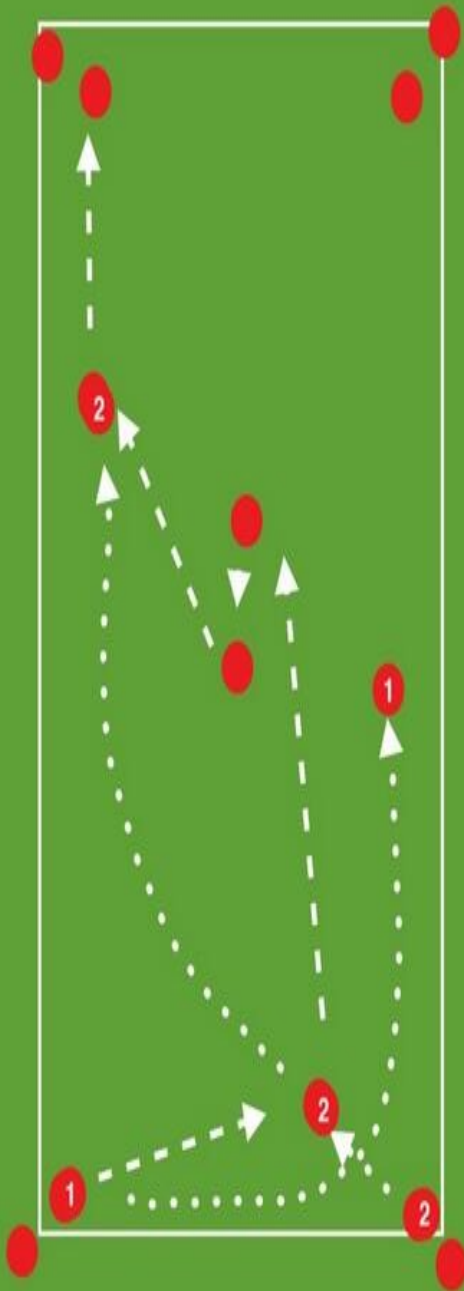
Rotate so that everyone plays in the middle (forwards go in together or with a midfield player)

Runs are longer and at greater pace.

Allows the players to get a feel for how the pitch will play.

Players perform their own dynamic stretches when not in possession.

Try to encourage 1 or 2 touch play for the combination.



### RUFC Youth Team Pre-match warm-up Part 3

#### Organisation

We play a small sided game in roughly the same area as Part 2 with the addition of a small box (10x10)

The idea being that the teams keep possession but when they can, they play into the player in the box.

The player in the box then dribbles into play and the player who passed it in takes his place.

We would now go into last minute instructions & prep.

When the toss up is taking place we go into a loose huddle with me in the middle and do some quick sprints, shuffles, forwards, backwards etc.





## Pre-Match Warm Up - Variation

Organisation

Area size to suit players

How to Play

All 4 corners play simultaneously.

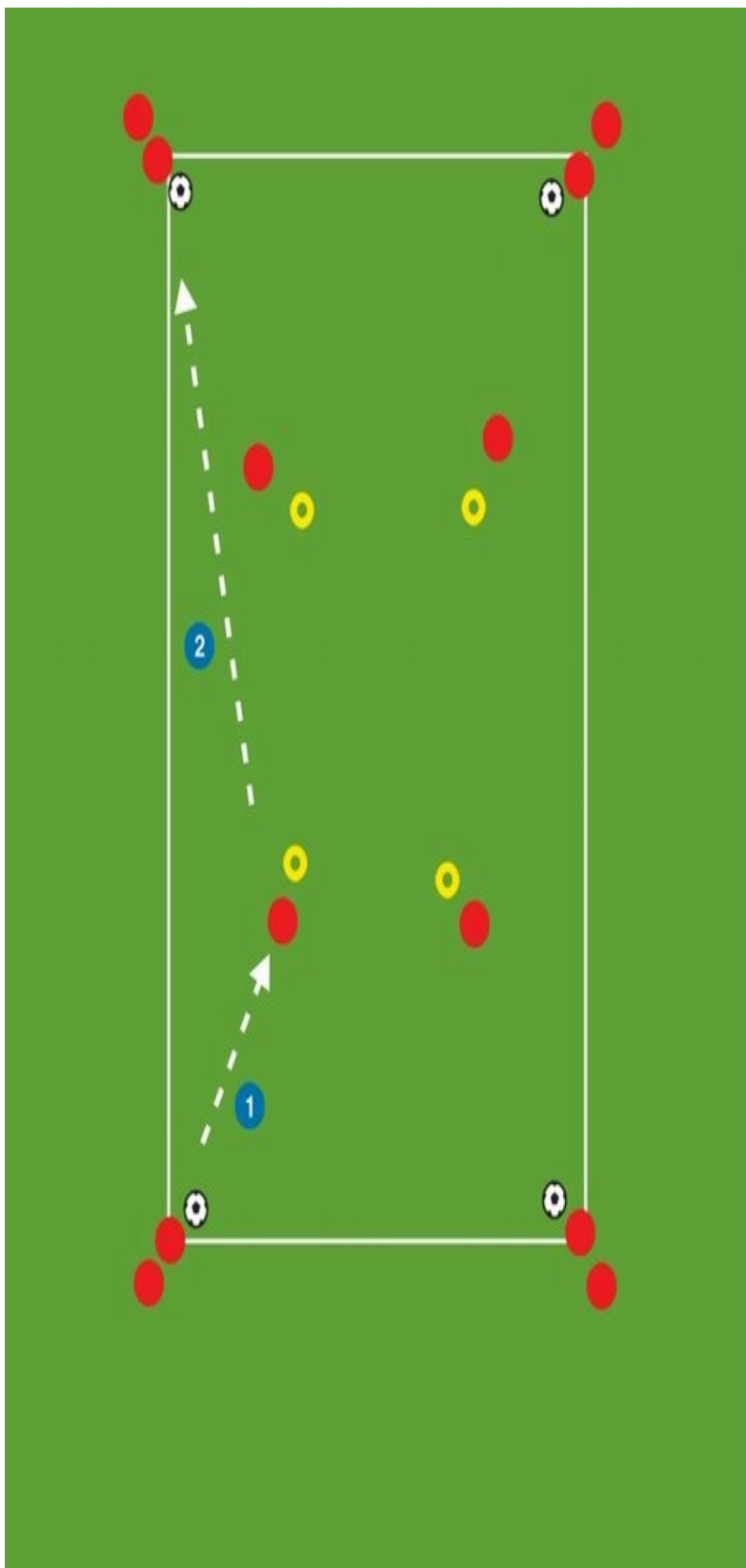
Always follow your pass.

Variations

Change direction.

Players on the inside receive, turn and play out diagonally.

Inside players receive, run into middle, change balls with player on opposite diagonal and play out.



## Pressing & Transition Session - Part 1

### Organisation

2 pitches side by side

30 x 20

Supply of balls between the 2 pitches

### How to Play

Reds try to keep possession 4v2.

If yellows can win the ball back they transfer the ball to their team mates & the game becomes 4 yellows v 2 reds in the other half.

If reds play the ball out of the area in their half, 1 of the yellows gets a ball from halfway & restarts.

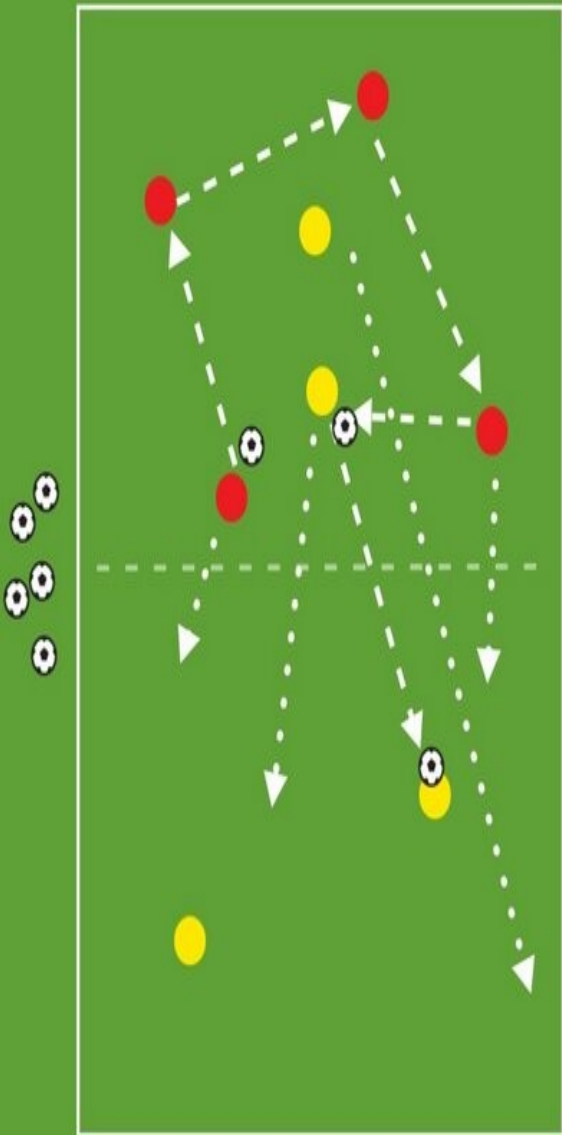
If reds keep the ball for 10 passes a third defender goes to help out.

### Coaching

Reds - good passing angles & support play.

Yellows - try to make play predictable. Try not to get "split" (angles & distances).

Communication. Seize the initiative off a poor touch.



## Pressing & Transition Session - Part 2

### Organisation

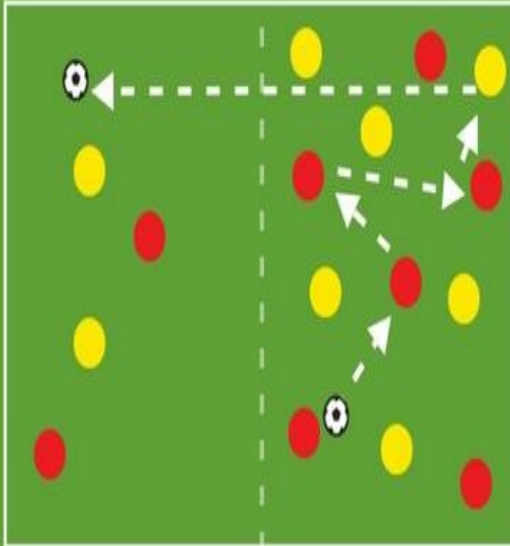
Pitch size to cope with age/stage of players  
Initial set up as shown

### How to Play

Similar to the first part, reds play 6 v 2 to keep possession.  
If yellows win the ball back they play into their team mates in the other half (the 2 reds can't intercept).  
If reds put the ball out, yellows take possession from half way line.  
Players must then transition into the other half leaving behind 2v2.

### What to Coach

Playing in tight areas.  
Passing & support.  
Pressing.  
Defensive cover positions.  
Dispersal in possession.  
1v1 battles (when the ball is played across players may have to screen/shield until rest of team make the transition).



## Pressing & Transition Session - Part 3

### Organisation

As shown, however, the areas were a bit tighter, I've used this size for clarity.

Yellows are attacking from bottom to top.

Players are restricted to these areas EXCEPT- when the midfield play the ball into the striker, 2 midfield players can join in to make an attacking 3v2.

The ball must go through the thirds.

### How to Play

Normal rules but no offsides.

### Coaching

Attacking - patience in possession if there is no forward pass (particularly in defensive third).

Midfield rotation to try to get on the ball.

Passing and support.

Fast passes into the striker when it is "on".

Fast transition to attacking third to support the attack.

### Defence

Forward player try to force the pass in one direction.

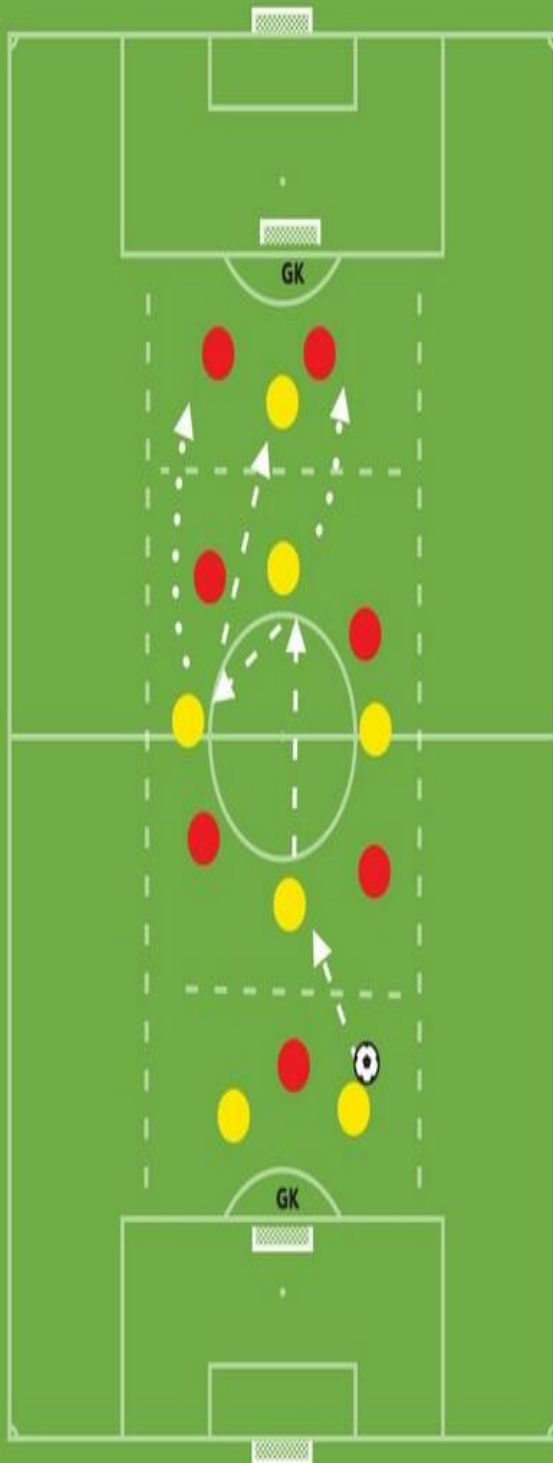
Press hard in midfield to try to win the ball back.

In defensive third try to hold up the striker, watch where the runners are coming from.  
**BLOCK SHOTS!**

### Progressions

Allow defenders to pass from back to front.

Go into free play whilst working on the principles you have been coaching.



## Shooting Practice Part 1

### Organisation

As shown  
Size of area to suit age/stage of players  
Work both ends simultaneously  
For ease of use I have shown 2 practices

### Top Half

Pass-Set-Shot (1 side then the other), shooter rotates with setter

### Bottom Half

Pass-set to opposite side runner-shot, players rotate after each shot

### Coaching Points

Observe the position of the keeper

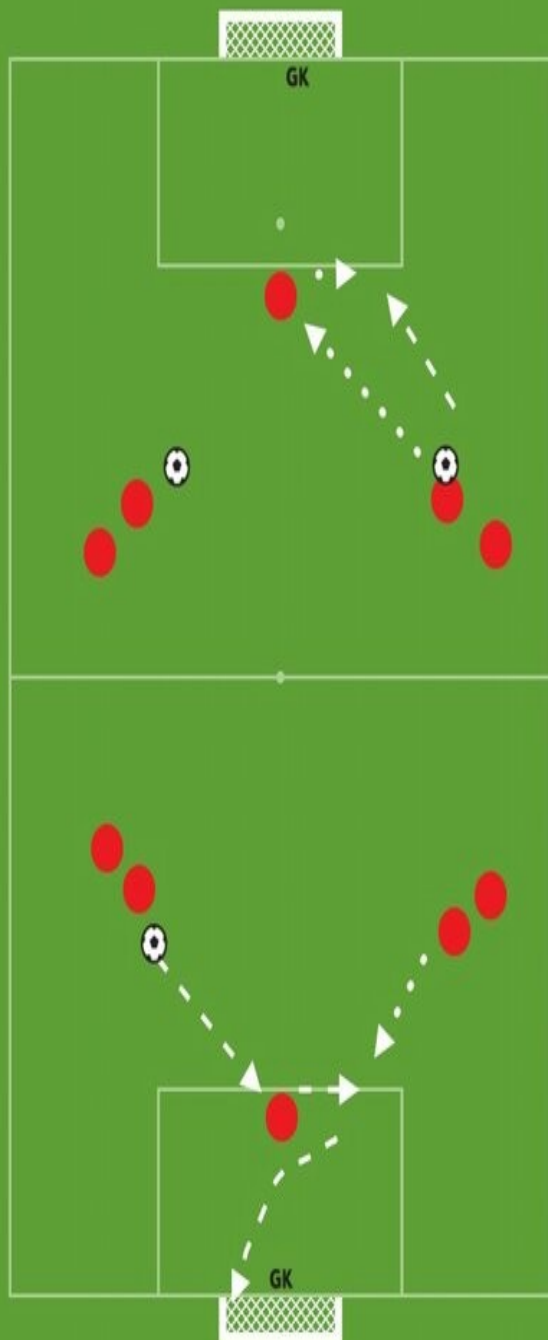
Accuracy before power

Timing of runs

Work from both sides to encourage use of weaker foot

### Progression

Clip or throw balls into setter. This should be set with 1 touch which will produce some uncomfortable sets. Shooter must deal with bouncing, bobby balls.



## Shooting Practice Part 2

### Organisation

Game is played as a normal 4v4.

Both teams can use the blues to help keep possession.

Goals can be scored in open play or from a return pass from the blue player behind the goal that is being attacked.

### Coaching Points

Look at the game and see where shooting opportunities occur.

Can the attacking team bend shots around defenders?

Do they shoot when team mates are in better positions?

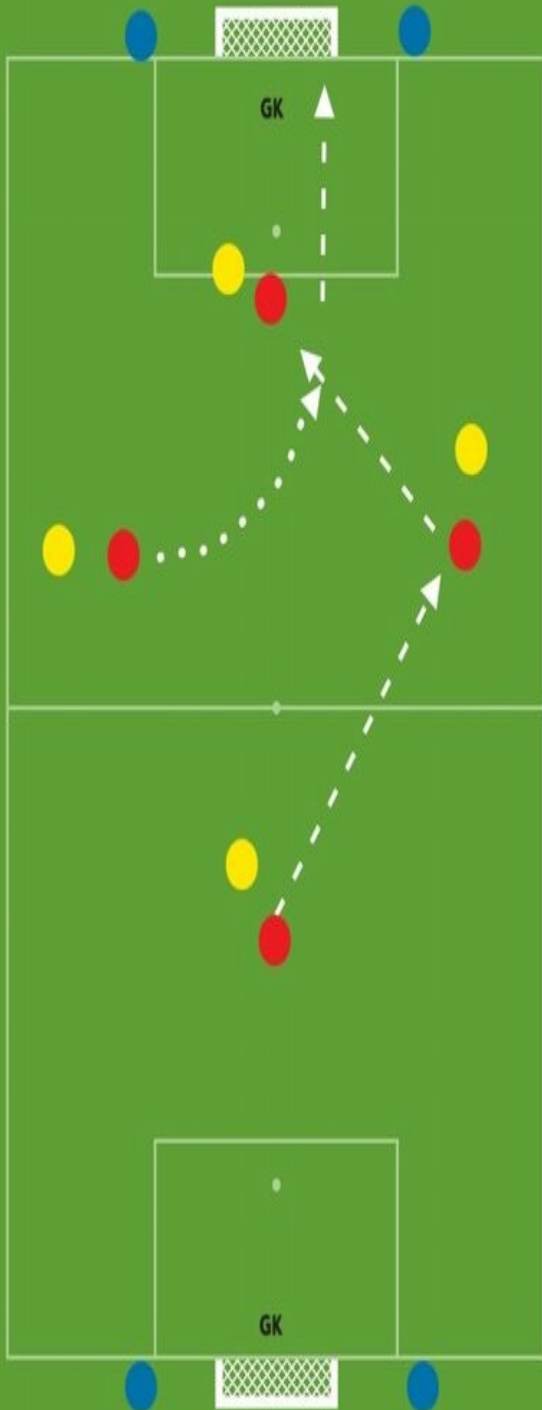
Attitude to rebounds.

Movement ahead of the ball to create space.

### Progression

Can only score off the end player.

Move it into a 6v6 game.



## Squad Practice - Crossing, finishing & defending - Part 1

### Organisation

Half pitch or appropriate size for your players

### Sequence

Red 1 indicates a ball thrown in the air for CB to head out beyond server. CB then recovers to defend at near post.

As soon as the header is made the server plays pass Blue 1, next receiver plays pass Blue 2 to overlapping runner who crosses through the front post area.

### Factors

All service/passes to be crisp and game pace.

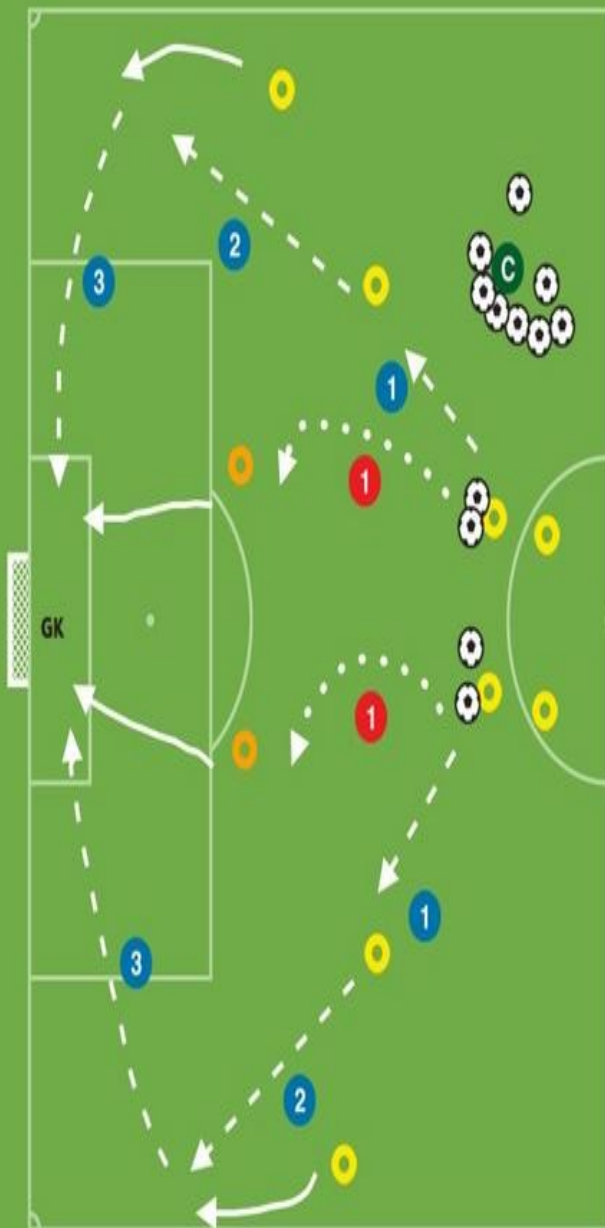
GK should choose which ball to defend & communicate clearly with defender "away, keeper's etc.)

CB headers should have height & distance.

Crosses should be played on the run & through the target area.

When crosses have been dealt with, coach feeds a ball to the 2 servers who attack against the 2 CB - game pace.

CBs need to react quickly after dealing with the cross.



## Squad Practice - crossing, finishing & defending. Part 2

### Organisation

As previous.

Add a CF

### Sequence

CF starts passively but interferes with the line of one of Red 1

Rest of sequence continues as before with the CF attacking one of the crosses.

Coach feeds one of the servers who now (with the addition of the CF) play 3v2 to a finish (offsides are in play).

### Factors

The unopposed defender can now choose whether to head clear or bring the ball down and play out.

### Further progressions

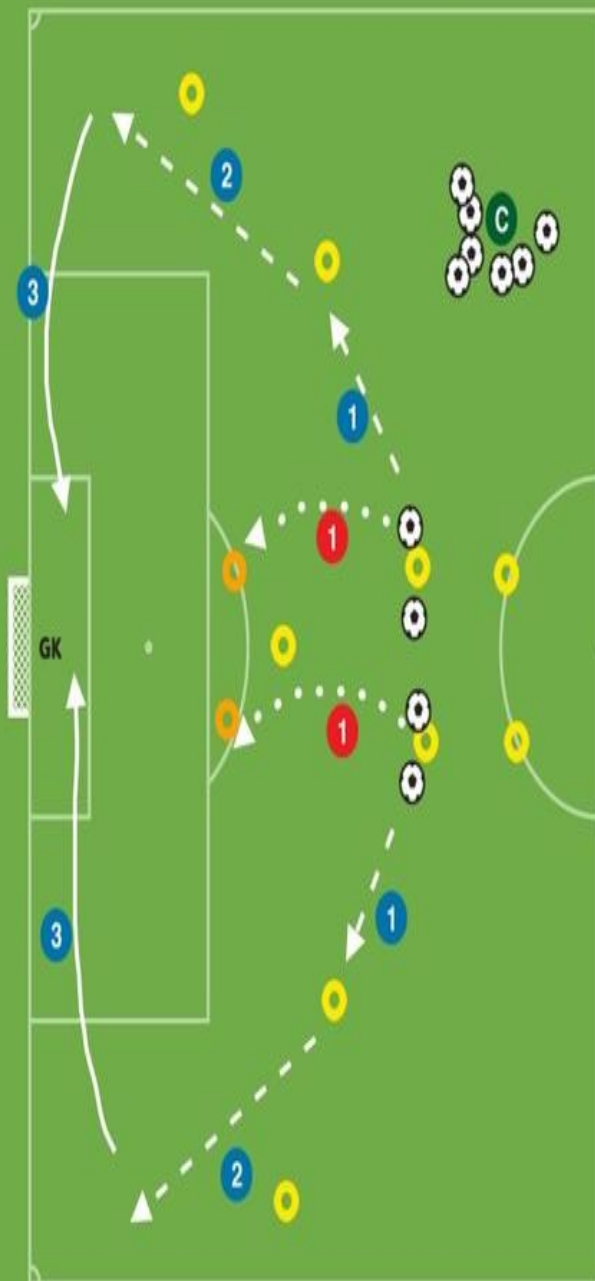
Add a recovering defender wide to chase down the crosser/s

Add a recovering defender centrally behind the servers who becomes active on the 1st touch after the coaches ball in

Have the balls lofted in from the halfway line

Add a 2nd CF

Your own to suit.





## SWITCHING PLAY

Organisation

Shown set up as 4v4 but numbers to suit.

Focus

Switching play, when, where & how

How to Play

A simple team game with corner goals. Directional practice with both teams trying to score. In the diagram Reds attack LH goal but Yellows recover good shape. Reds switch play to leave a 1v1. Original passer can make a 2v1.

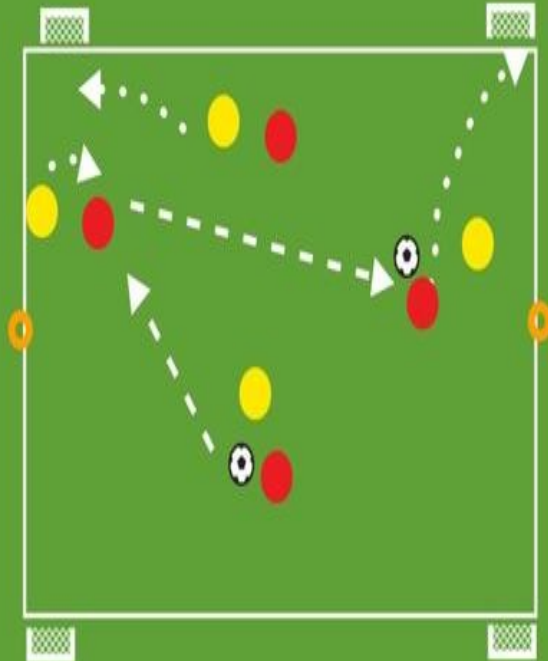
Key Points

Encourage 1v1s & attacking overloads

Encourage running with the ball to exploit space across the pitch

Switch play quickly with accurate passes

Look for crossovers and reverse pass opportunities



## Team Defending Session - Part 1

### Organisation

Pitches set up as shown. One pitch had a GK and so didn't have the poles in the goal. The GK stays on the team of 5.

### How to play

3 minute games. The team of 5 score a point for every 5 passes while the team of 4 try to win the ball back. If the team of 4 win the ball they can score in either goal between the poles and the posts (or past the GK).

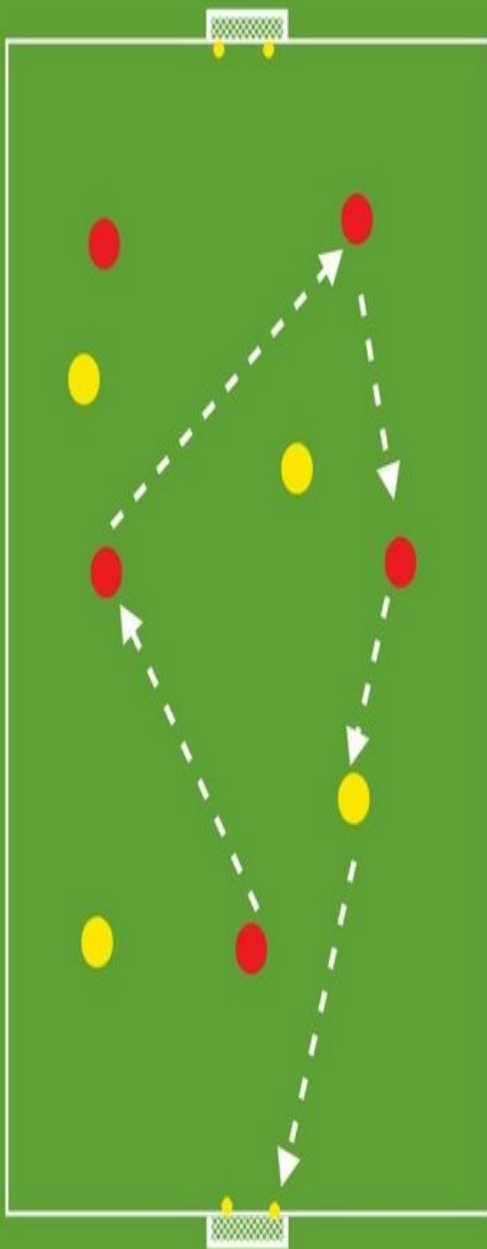
The game always restarts with the team of 5.

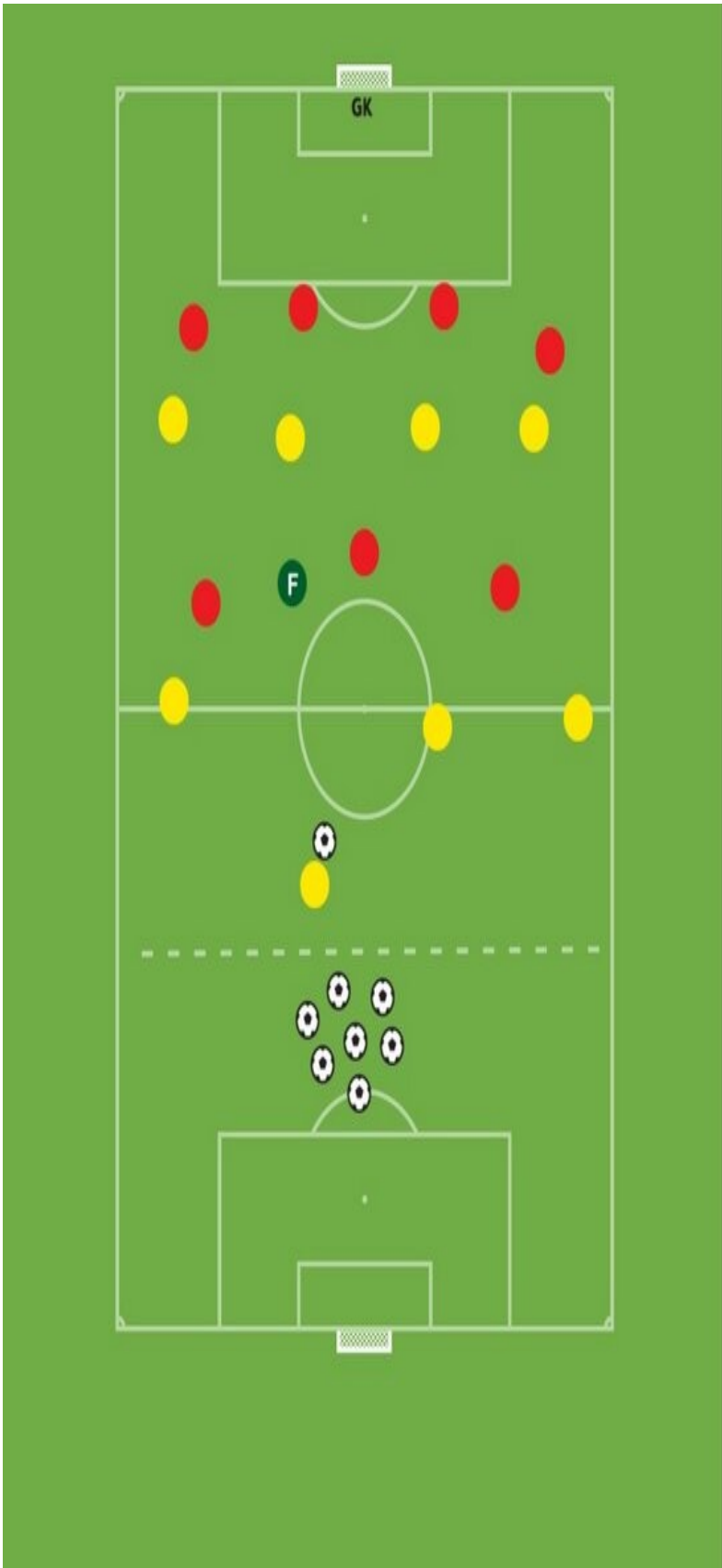
### Coaching Points

Team of 5 - passing and support angles and distances.

Team of 4 - make play predictable. Double up on players in possession to win the ball.

Clinical finishing.





## Team Defending - Part 2

### Organisation

As shown. Yellow team try to score in the goal, red team defend and try to take the ball over the red line. Focus is on defending team.

### How to Play

Normal rules. Match tempo. Floater plays for team in possession.

### Coaching points

1. Hold the defensive line, don't chase runners.
2. If attacker runs offside, keep an eye on him coming back into play.
3. Communicate!
4. Goalkeeper to communicate & organise.
5. Match tempo, win your tackles, try to stop crosses.
6. Midfield 3 to slide across the pitch as the ball transfers, always recover beyond the ball until the penalty box.
7. Midfield 3 to be compact if ball is central, particularly in shooting distance.

## Training Session Warm Up

### Organisation

As shown with a player at each mark, other players with the balls

### How to Play

The practice is designed to continue after the physical warm up & incorporates all players. Both groups pass and follow as shown with both balls going at the same time. The distances should allow both a shot and a cross to be played in to the goalkeeper. Shots are to be at the keeper not into the goal

### Coaching Points

Quality of pass

Movement & Body shape to receive

Speed of movement to follow the pass

Quality of ball strike on shot & cross

GK - footwork & handling

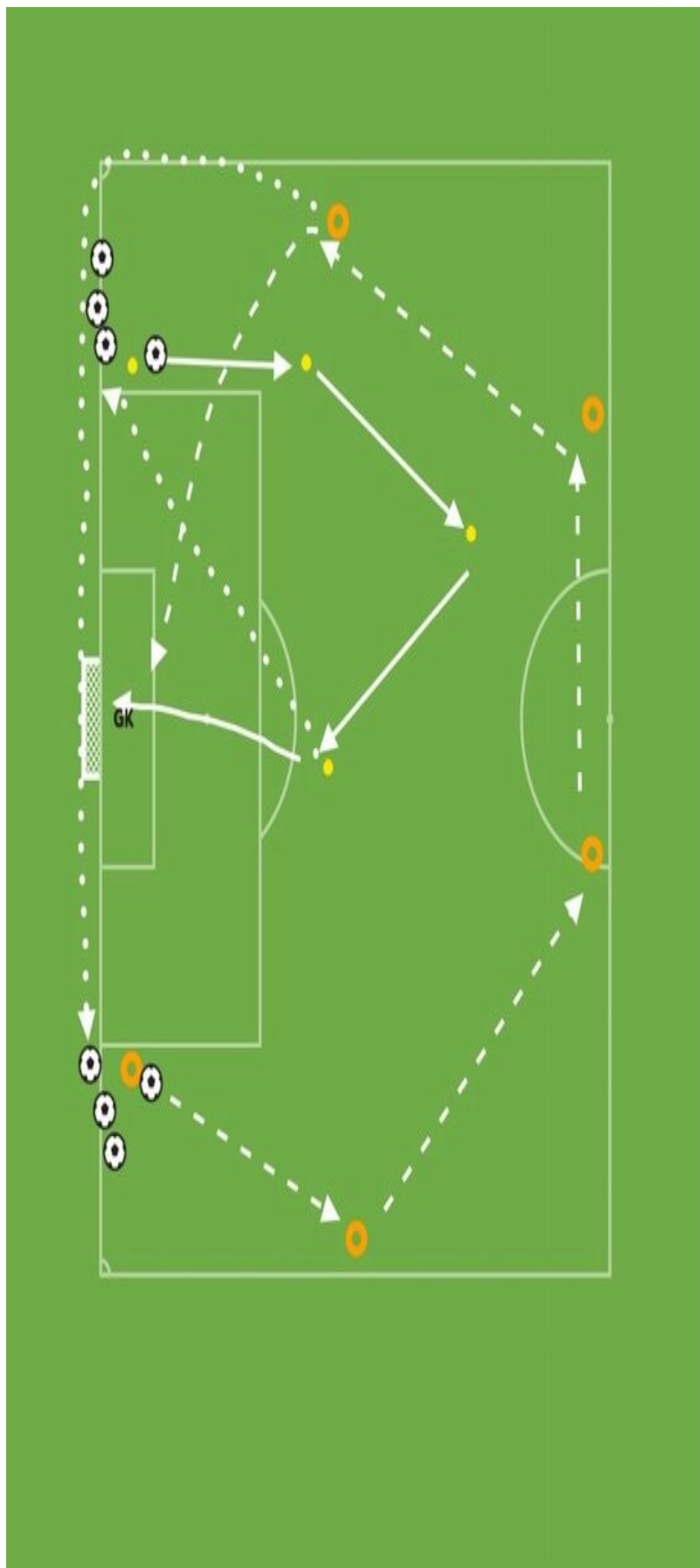
### Progressions

Inside group to outside and vice versa

Pass & follow - set - longer pass

Try to score

Shooter then tries to connect with cross after his shot



## Transition, possession, defending.

### Organisation

A square big enough to suit the age/stage of your players, divided as shown.

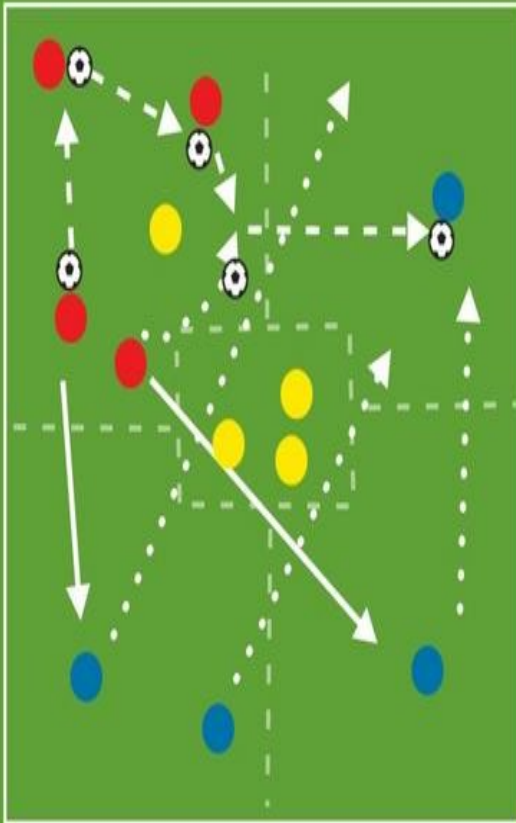
3 teams who start as indicated

Reds start with ball and attempt to complete a set number of passes

On completion they transfer the ball to one of the other squares (blue team). The other blues then move to occupy that square and another yellow becomes the next defender.

2 of the reds quickly move to the empty squares

Play for a set time or until ball is won



### Focus

Quick passing & support play in 4v1

Pressing to force a mistake in 1v4

1v1 battles & screening/protecting the ball

Transitions with ebb & flow of the game

Support play from team who pass the ball into another square

### Variations

Restrict touches in 4v1

Allow a 2nd defender

## Transition Session - Attack to Defence Part 1

Organisation

Area to suit age/stage of players

Focus

Transition

Reaction to losing possession

Movement after winning possession

1v1

How to play

Play a 4v4 in the central area with other players organised as shown.

Team in possession keeps the ball using the players in the outer boxes.

If yellow plays to yellow (as shown), the yellow player can be pressed by the red in the outer box.

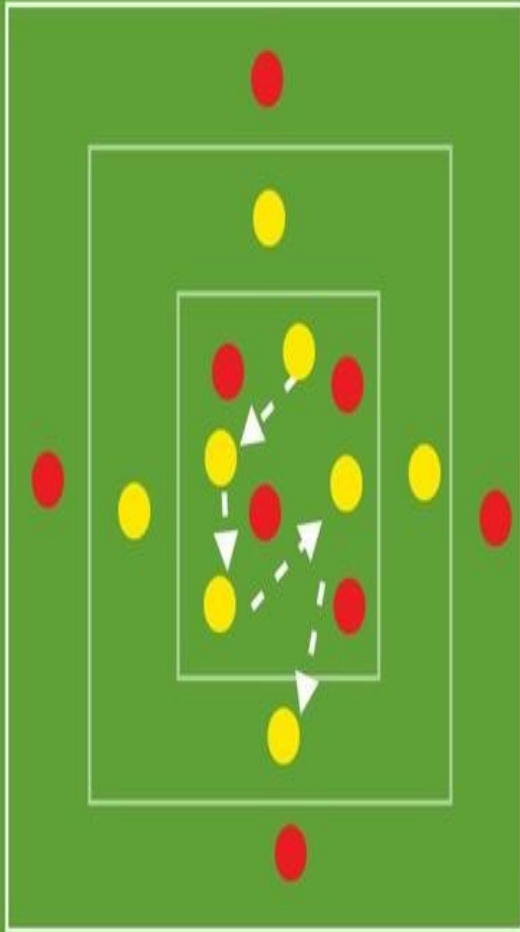
If reds win the ball they play out to a red who can be pressed by a yellow from the front. Players in outer boxes MUST play back into middle box.

Progressions

Rotate inside & outside players.

On the next rotation the outer players change over (yellows would be in outer box).

Allow outer players to play to other outer players.



## Transition Session - Attack to Defence Part 2

### Organisation

A 50x 50 marked as shown with goals marked with poles as shown.

There are 2 games.

Teams are positioned as shown.

Both games are played simultaneously from East to West (green goal to green goal).

Goals can only be scored from the attacking half and below the top height of the poles.

Team that scores keeps possession from their own half.

### How to play

On the coaches shout or whistle the games switch to North/South between the 2 teams who started in the N/S boxes.

Any ball in play is left where it is.

### Focus

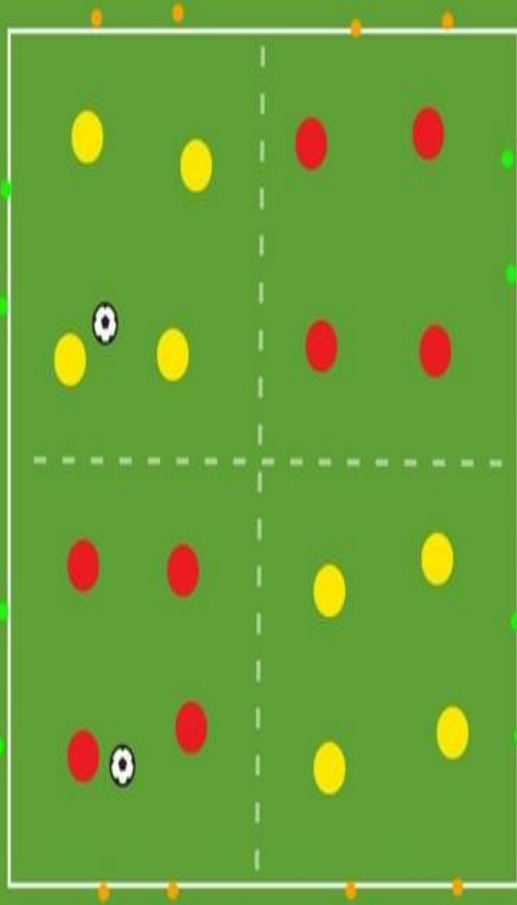
Any player out of possession and on the wrong pitch should immediately recover towards the goal they are defending.

First to the ball restarts the game.

Nearest defender to the ball should try to delay the attack.

### Progression

Allow the teams to work out the reorganisation themselves i.e. the same 4 players may not necessarily be playing together.



### Transition Session - Attack to Defence Part 3

#### Organisation

An 8v8 game. 3-2-2 formations.

Dashed line - path of ball.

Dotted line - line of runs.

**THE BALL CAN ONLY BE WON BACK IN YOUR OWN HALF.**

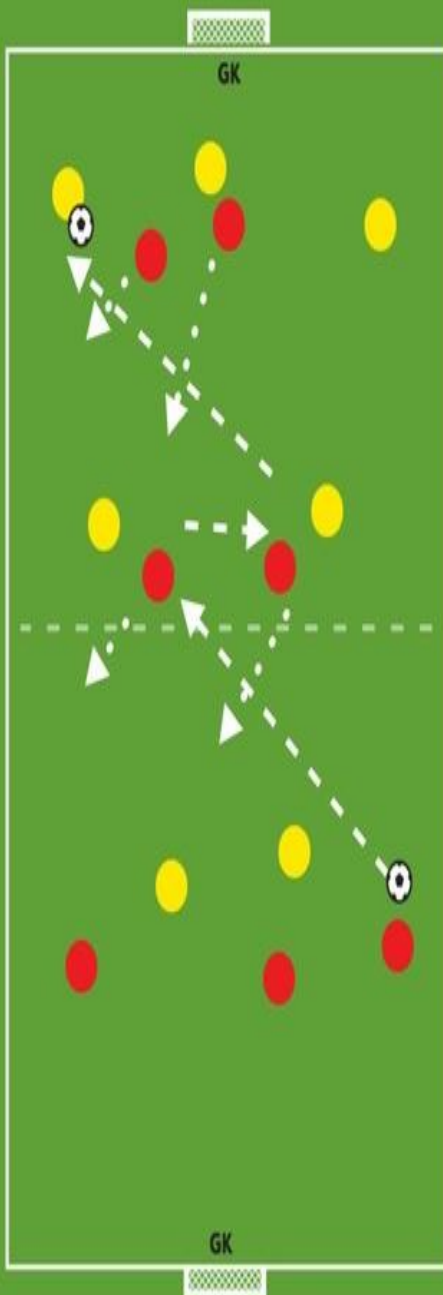
The diagram shows an example where the red team advance the ball up the pitch and lose possession.

The nearest red slows down the attack by forcing play in one direction or getting in the way of a forward pass. The next nearest recovers into a position behind the ball. The remaining reds take up defensive positions in their own half.

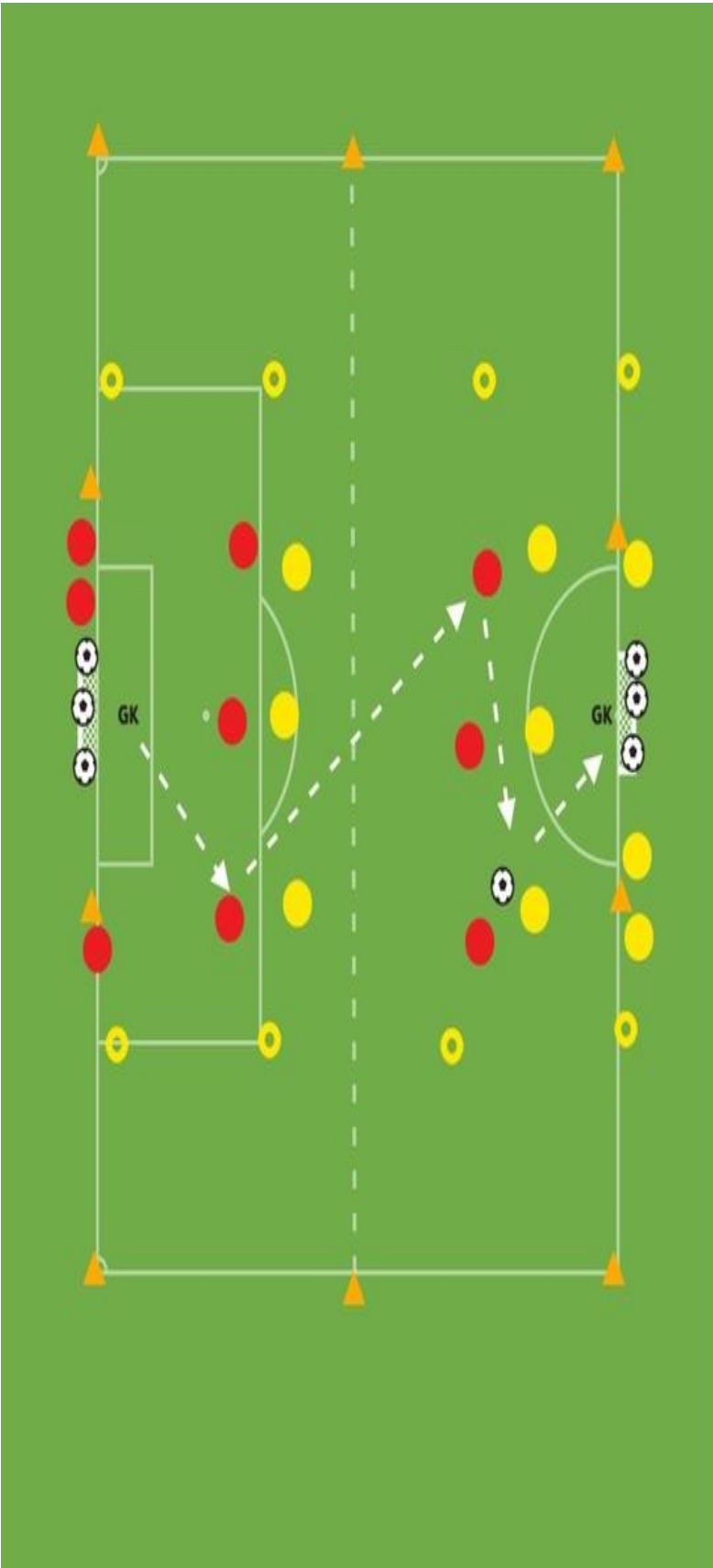
As the yellows cross the halfway line the reds would press aggressively with the nearest man. Try to get at least 1, preferably 2 in close covering positions. (Barca's 3-1 rule).

Defenders closest to the goal mark on the inside shoulder.

Midfield players try to screen the oppositions front 2 (prevent easy passes into feet).







### Waves Practice

Multiple Outcomes

Passing & Support  
 Finishing  
 Fitness

How to play

Reds attack from L-R. Game is 3v3 in each half and players are restricted to their own half. No restriction on touches.

When one team scores, both Reds and Yellows attacking 3s, sprint off via the triangular cones and round the outside cones to their own goal.

The defensive 3s move into the attacking half and the 3 behind the goal come on to be the defensive 3.

The keeper who's team has scored restarts the game by rolling a new ball in.

## Working With Holding Midfield Players

### Organisation

Practice is designed to work with the 2 holding midfield players in a 4-2-3-1 formation. This part of the practice was done in 2 areas simultaneously. The triangles represent mannequins.

### How to play

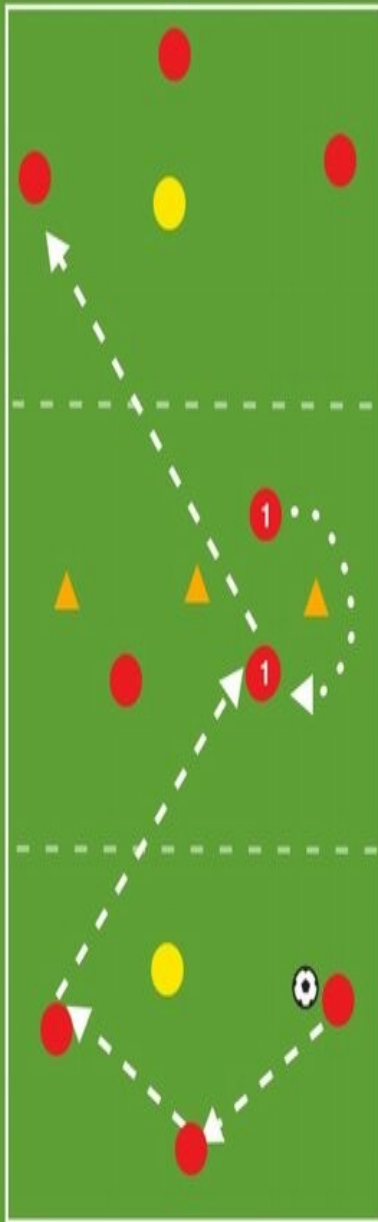
The defenders in a 1v3 must press to win the ball. Each red must touch the ball before passing into the 2 central midfield players. Middle players then pass into the opposite end.

### Coaching Points

Middle 2 to make "circular runs" behind and through mannequins. Arrive into space at pace on the half turn. Realistic movement to support the pass when ball is in the end zones.

### Progression

Middle players must combine before playing forward.  
Add a 2nd defender in end zones.  
Add a defender in middle third.



## Working With Holding Midfield Players Part 2

### Organisation

As shown. Red defenders start with the ball. Red objective is to score in the goal. Yellow objective is to defend then get the ball to their forwards to take over the end line. Players play in the areas shown with the exception of a neutral zone between the red defence and midfield.

### How to play

Defenders move the ball until a midfield player drops into the neutral zone. If the pass doesn't come straight away, the midfield player must get out and be replaced. The yellow defenders cannot follow into the neutral zone. Reds should play forward then support the attack. Work the ball into the attackers to a finish.

### Progressions/Adaptations

1 player can move up or back to create overloads.  
If holding MF player can't play forward they can set a defender who can play long into the attackers.  
Remove all restrictions.  
Move into a SSG

