

ULTIMATE ATTACKING SESSIONS

ELITE
SOCCER



**Exclusive training
sessions written by
the World's top coaches**



**Sir Alex
FERGUSON**



**Carlo
ANCELOTTI**



**Roberto
DIMATTEO**



**Alan
PARDEW**



**David
MOYES**

Unique coaching sessions from the leading figures in soccer management

Welcome to **Elite Soccer's Ultimate Coaching Sessions**, a new way of accessing training sessions from the world's best professional soccer coaches.

We have identified 25 of our favourite sessions from the **Elite Soccer** archive and compiled them into five manuals, each looking at a different key area of play: Attacking, Defending, Midfield, Goalkeeping and Fitness.

In this manual, **Ultimate Attacking Sessions**, each of the training plans is written by a manager or coach at the very top of the game, including Premier League and Champions League winning managers:

Sir Alex Ferguson explains how he looks for versatility in Manchester United's offensive wing play, giving us a training session that encourages the kind of variety and flexibility on the flanks that has long been the club's attacking trademark.

Carlo Ancelotti details the merits of attacking through the 4-3-2-1 formation, which is at the heart of his footballing philosophy and has brought him success throughout his managerial career.

Roberto Di Matteo, surely one of the brightest young managers in the Premier League, gives us his plan for a balanced attacking force that uses the full width of the pitch when going forward.

Alan Pardew brings us a session that emphasises the importance of movement from the front players. It highlights the kind of attacking running patterns that have proved so successful during his tenure at Newcastle United.

And *David Moyes* runs us through a competitive drill that encourages quick and incisive movement, changing the angle of attack in an instant – a tactic that has often brought rewards to his fast-breaking Everton team.

We thank each of these top professional coaches for providing us with their valuable insight into the game. And we hope that these training sessions provide you with the inspiration and motivation to take your own team on to great success.

Enjoy the manual and best of luck in your coaching.



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MANCHESTER UNITED

Sir Alex Ferguson Attacking wing play and shooting

Overview:

This session is about attacking from three different positions and is something that offers versatility in the final third, which is always essential.

We begin with shooting from outside the box, setting up opportunities for powerful accurate shots into the net - we have seen this come off many times, with Paul Scholes' memorable goal at Fulham this season a perfect example.

Moving on, we look at quick, instinctive interplay on the wing, finishing with a cross into the danger area. Plus we examine the roles of attacking first and second waves of crosses.

It's essential to practise these in order to fine-tune the movement of strikers, quality of delivery, and inventive combinations on the wing.

This is a powerful and insightful session that encourages players to practise hard, perfect their roles and reinforce habits, and is at the heart of why we are regarded as such a potent attacking force in the Barclays Premier League.

ATTACKING WING PLAY AND SHOOTING

SETUP

AREA

Half pitch

EQUIPMENT

Cones, balls

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

7 upwards to 20 (one goalkeeper, varying combinations of outfield players)

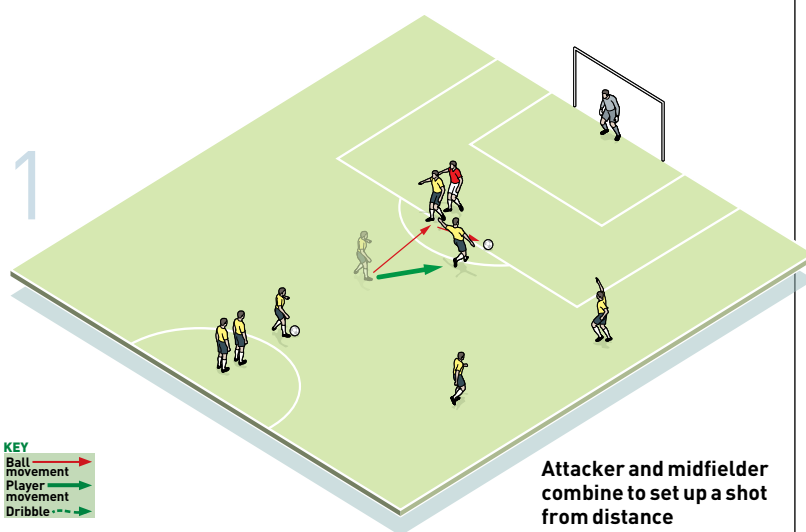
What do I get the players to do?

Use one defender, one attacker, two midfielders and two wide players. This is a two-ball routine.

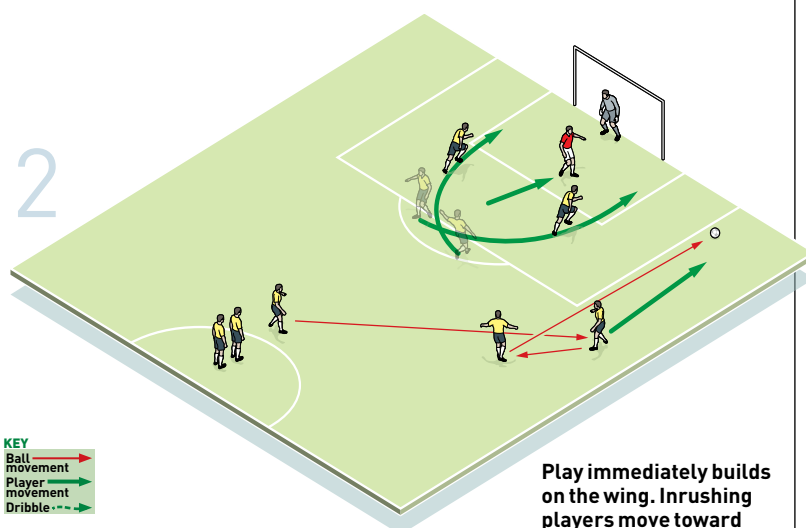
Positioned outside the D of the penalty box, the midfielder links with the striker and has a shot.

With the second ball, the other midfielder switches the play out wide. The two wide players combine and put a cross in for the intruding forward and attacking midfielder. The defender tries to clear the ball.

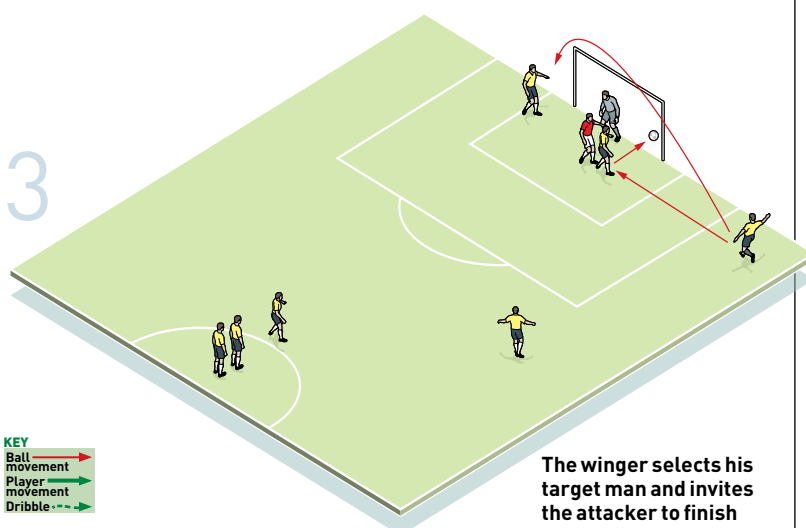
The crosser must be aware of the defender's position. As a coach you can make the defender defend either the near post or back post cross.



Attacker and midfielder combine to set up a shot from distance



Play immediately builds on the wing. Intruding players move toward near and back post areas



The winger selects his target man and invites the attacker to finish

ATTACKING WING PLAY AND SHOOTING

How do I progress the session?

Progress this session to a three-ball routine with a complete back four plus a defensive midfielder to defend. Add wingers on the other side on the pitch and an extra attacker and midfielder.

The midfield players now work in pairs. Together with the striker, they try to outplay an opponent in order to get a shot on goal. The attacker who previously laid the pass off can now spin away from his marker and shoot. Strikers should run in anticipating rebounds.

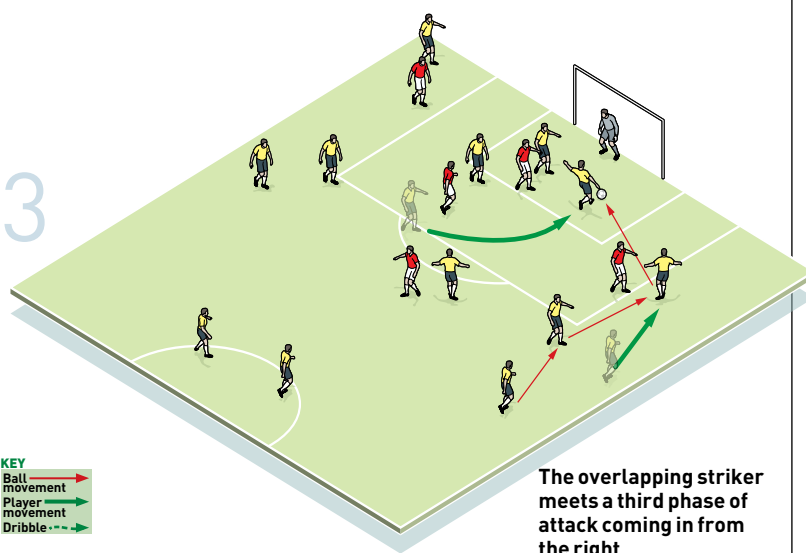
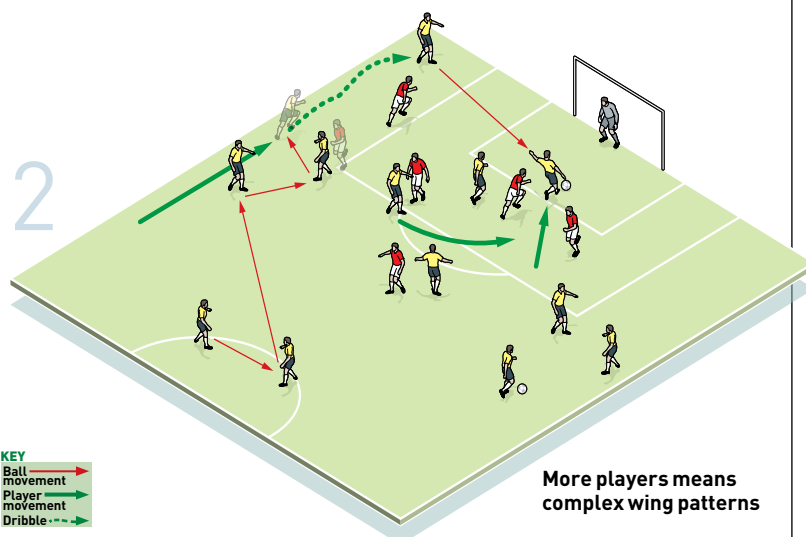
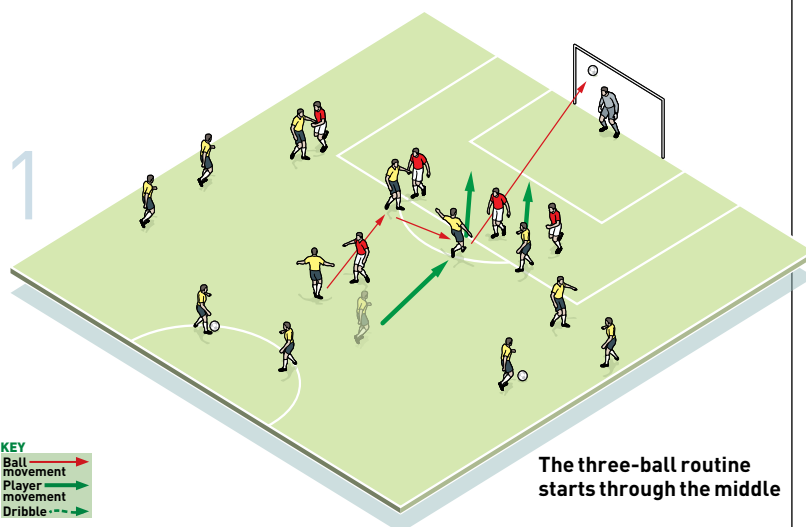
In the next phase, the full-back must try to stop the wide men from crossing. The wide men must try to outplay the full-back in a 3v1 situation.

When this ball goes dead, the opposite wide men put another cross in for the attackers and defenders to react to.

Defenders and strikers must always readjust their positions to deal with the next ball arriving. The aim is to make the routine more competitive and, at the same time, demand more creativity and unpredictability in forward play.

What are the key things to look out for technically/tactically?

We are looking for accuracy of passing and finishing, plus a variety of crosses.



“The strikers in the middle must be mobile and versatile.”



Sir Alex Ferguson

MANCHESTER UNITED

In November this year, Sir Alex Ferguson CBE celebrates 24 years in charge of Manchester United. The Glaswegian is the longest-serving and most successful manager in British football, having clinched 43 trophies for the Red Devils.

His early years in management saw him enjoy spells at St Mirren and East Stirling, before joining Aberdeen in 1978. His record of 10 trophies in seven years signalled the most successful period in the Dons' history, and after managing Scotland at the 1986 World Cup, United came calling.

It took him four years to secure a first major honour south of the border – the 1990 FA Cup – and a further three to land the Premier League title. But Ferguson hasn't looked back, winning a further nine league championships and numerous other domestic honours, plus the European Cup twice.

He has also been named England's Manager of the Year nine times, the LMA Manager of the Year twice, plus the Manager of the Decade for the 1990s.

ATTACKING WING PLAY AND SHOOTING

On the wings, rhythm and flow of passing is essential, and players must protect against mistimed runs or erratic passes.

The strikers in the middle must be mobile and versatile – they must run to the near post and back post, whilst still being prepared to receive passes in and around the penalty spot or further back.

How would you put this into a game situation?

Work this into a 10v10 game (including goalkeepers) across a half-pitch, marking out two wing channels.

Only one defender can enter the wide zone to defend the cross. This encourages 2v1 situations on the wing and ensures many crosses into the penalty area.

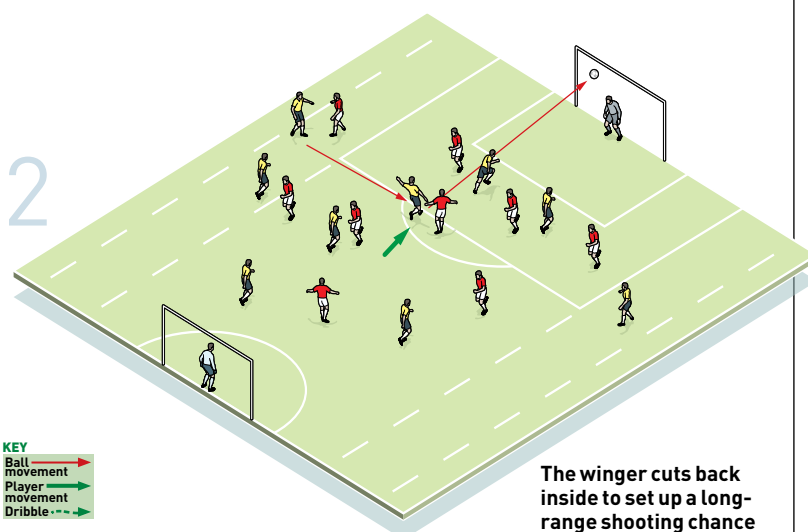
The approach should be varied, sometimes attacking down the wing to fire a cross into the six-yard box, on other occasions cutting back inside to set-up a long-range shooting chance.

If a ball from the wing is delivered into the box, players must finish using one touch. Award two goals for crosses that finish with a header or a volley. If the defending team wins possession, they break upfield.

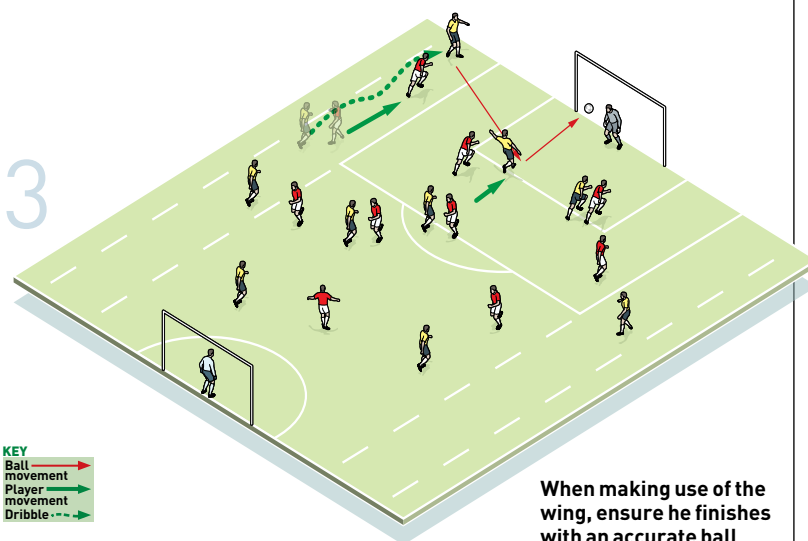
This game would usually last 45 minutes. The training session in total takes 75 minutes. ■



In the game situation, only one defender can go out to close down a winger in the channel



The winger cuts back inside to set up a long-range shooting chance



When making use of the wing, ensure he finishes with an accurate ball into the six-yard box

PARISSAINT-GERMAIN

Carlo Ancelotti Attacking movement in a 4-3-2-1 formation

Overview:

This session is based on tactical work, movement and patterns of play in the middle and attacking thirds of the field.

It uses a 4-3-2-1 formation, and a system that has always offered me great success at Milan, Chelsea and PSG. Of course, no system is perfect – each having its own distinct strengths and weaknesses – but this one links well with our playing style and philosophy.

This formation is particularly effective when constructing box-to-box passing moves – counter-attacking play that involves passing and receiving between the lines, well-timed movements and crossover runs, and the exploitation of space behind the opposition's back line.

The session develops in the following order: game – technical/ movement – phase of play – game.

ATTACKING MOVEMENT IN A 4-3-2-1 FORMATION

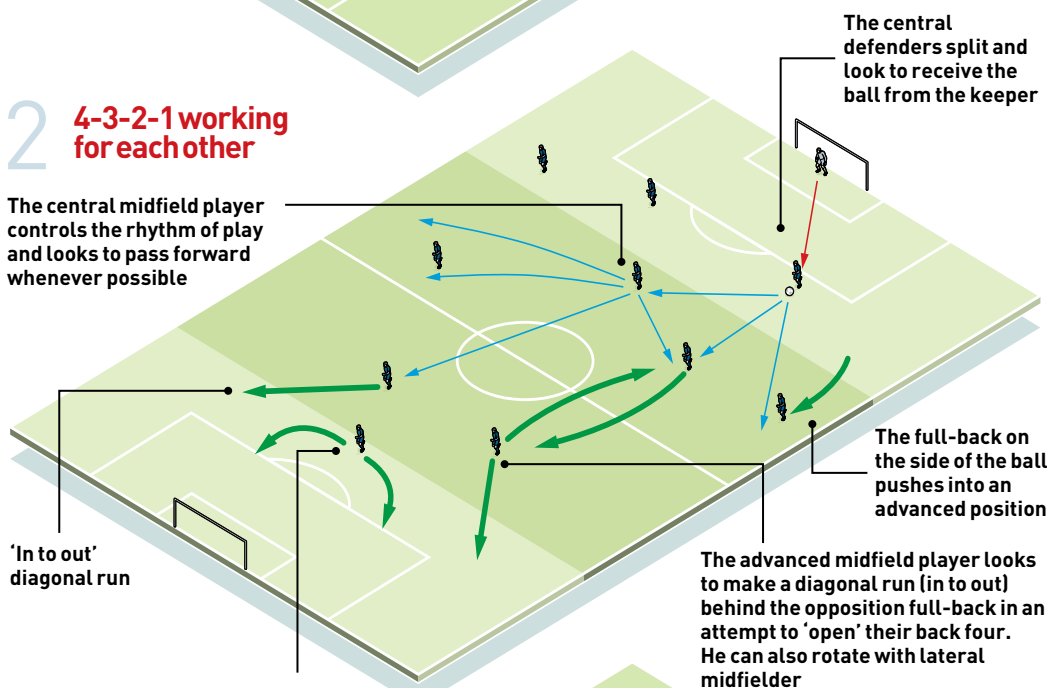
1 Formation philosophy

At AC Milan, Chelsea and now at PSG I have frequently used a 4-3-2-1 formation

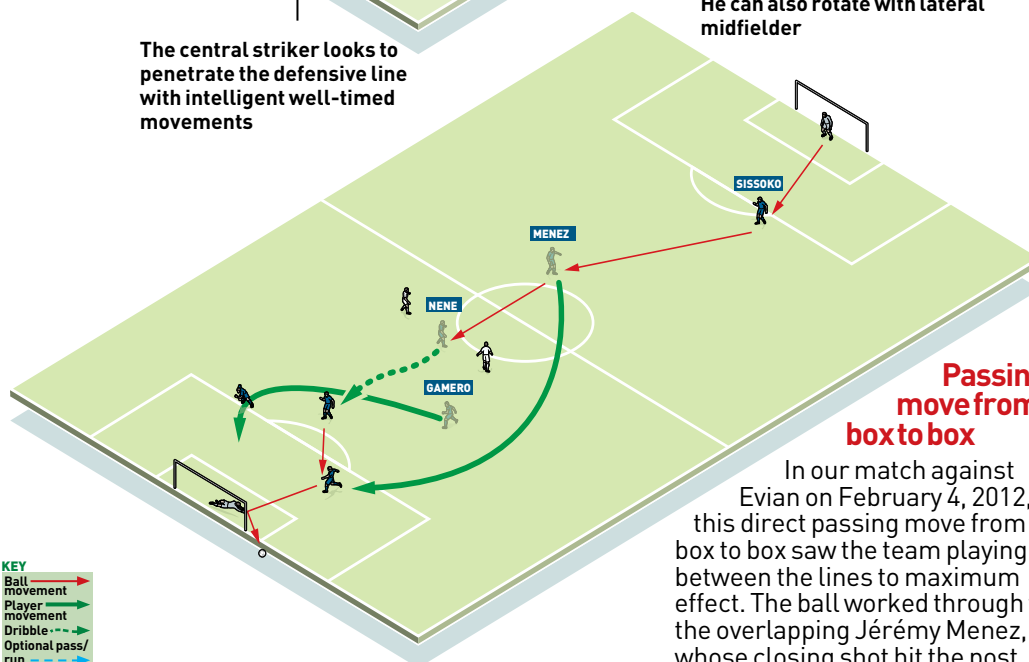


2 4-3-2-1 working for each other

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



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



KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble
Optional pass/run

Passing move from box to box

In our match against Evian on February 4, 2012, this direct passing move from box to box saw the team playing between the lines to maximum effect. The ball worked through to the overlapping Jérémy Menez, whose closing shot hit the post.



Carlo Ancelotti

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

Carlo Ancelotti has been manager of France Ligue 1 club Paris St Germain since December 30, 2011.

The Italian had previously taken charge of Chelsea in the Barclays Premier League and Serie A side AC Milan, and is one of only six men to have won the European Cup/Champions League as a player and manager (twice as a player and twice as a manager). The 52-year-old also enjoyed fantastic domestic success in his time in Italy, and is looking to repeat those achievements now in Paris.

As a midfielder, Ancelotti starred in two World Cups for Italy, and played for club sides Parma, AS Roma and Milan.

ATTACKING MOVEMENT IN A 4-3-2-1 FORMATION

SET-UP

AREA

Up to half-pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Full squad

SESSION TIME

Warm-up – physical trainer 15mins, 10v10 game (two small goals) 15mins, Pattern of play 20mins, Phase of play 20mins, or Possession practice 10v10 20mins, Total 90mins

What do I get the players to do?

This session is split up into a number of progressive set-ups, each rehearsing different positional and tactical elements contained within the 4-3-2-1 formation.

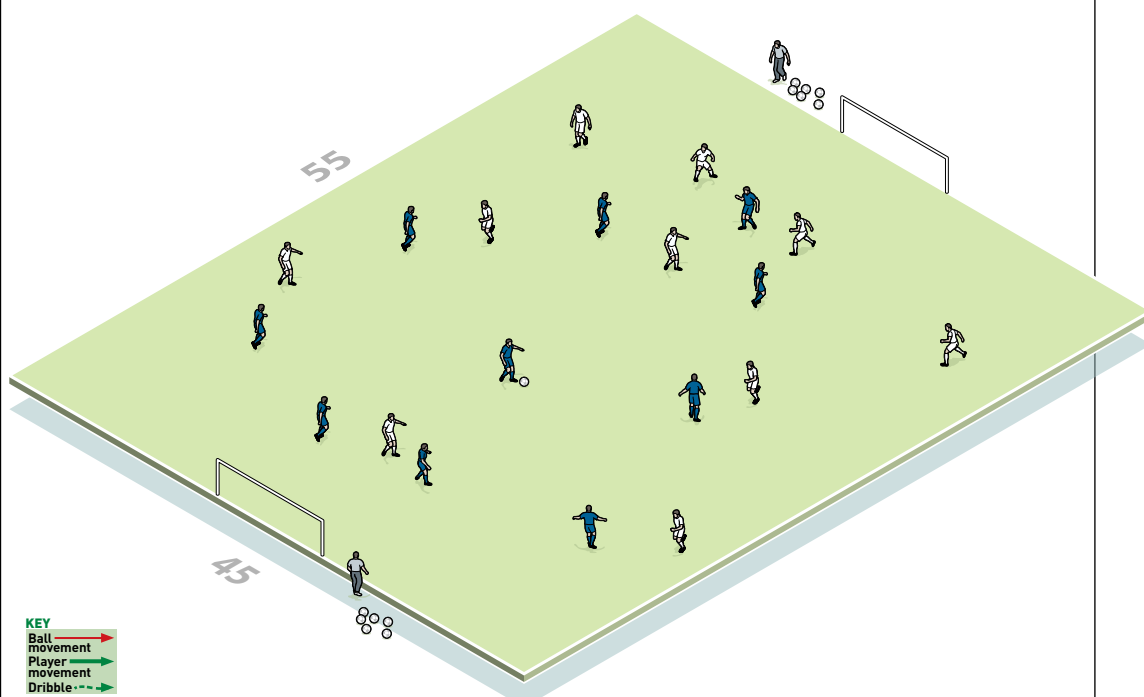
What are the key things to look out for?

Players must concentrate on the technical and positional elements on this session if

they are to make maximum use of it. They should build progressively on each element, taking through ideas and principles from each separate part of the practice.

It takes time for players to learn the fundamental parts of playing this formation, but the rewards are impressive, and all built around possession with a positive end result.

We are very fortunate at PSG to have excellent training facilities. We use two pitches every day that run parallel to each other. This allows us to set up all the exercises before the start time and then to move quickly from one to another during that session, maximising time and intensity. It's a good way to keep the players focused.



10v10 game with two small goals

We begin with a possession exercise in formation, using two target goals placed at either end of a 45x55-yard area. Players work as they would do in any normal game, but they must retain a strict formation throughout.

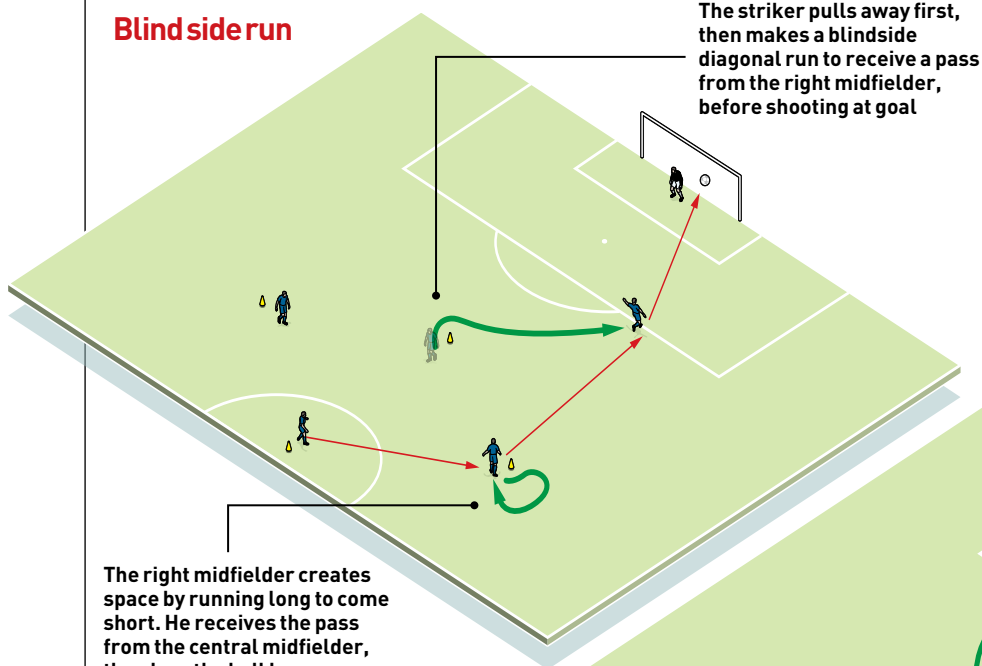
In this game, possession is used to generate goalscoring opportunities through intelligent passing and movement, plus positional play. We like to use possession exercises that are directional and have a clear aim.

There are no offsides in this game, which is played for 15 minutes – we will practise five minutes using free passing, five minutes two-touch, then the final five minutes as one-touch.

“This formation is particularly effective when constructing box-to-box passing moves.”

ATTACKING MOVEMENT IN A 4-3-2-1 FORMATION

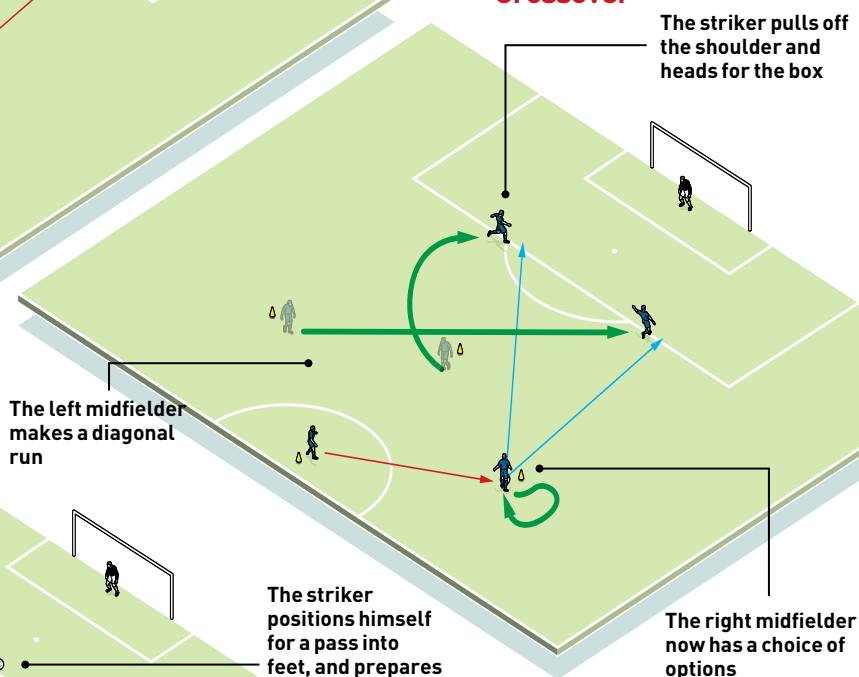
Blindside run



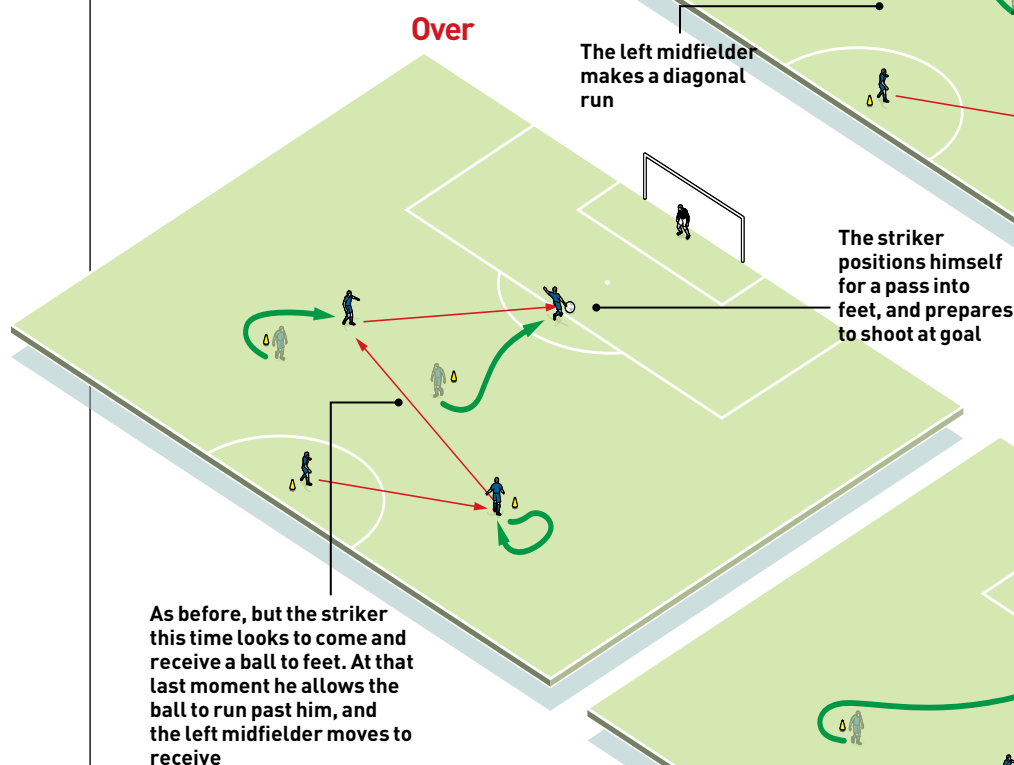
Patterns of play – technical

The next set of exercises feature one striker, two advanced midfielders and one central midfielder, on a half-pitch. Their start positions are as shown in the diagram. Movement patterns are developed gradually, as outlined below.

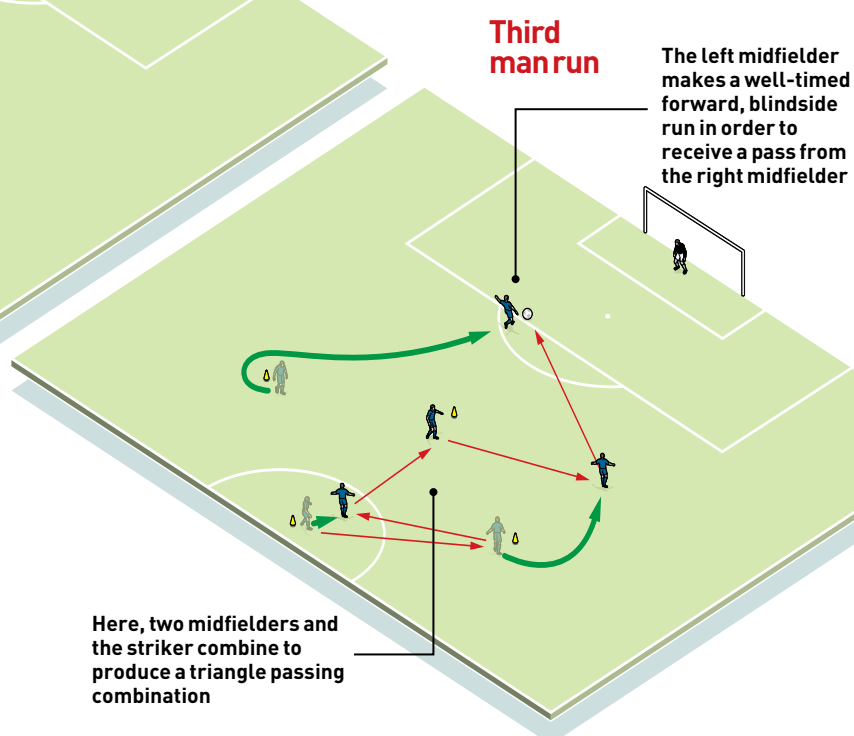
Crossover



Over



Third man run



KEY
 Ball movement
 Player movement
 Dribble
 Optional pass/run

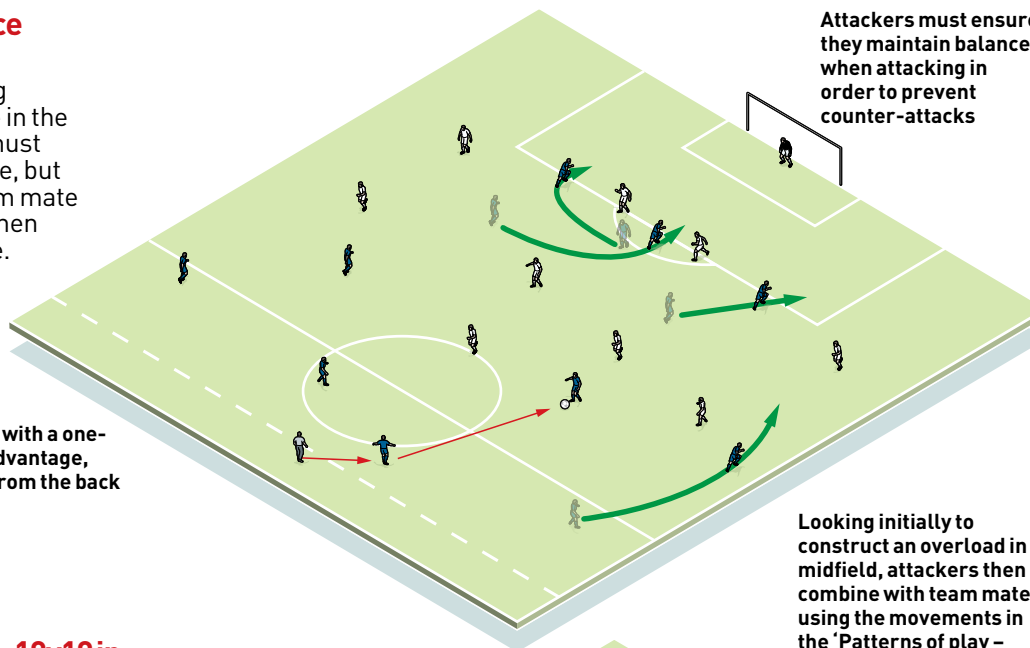
ATTACKING MOVEMENT IN A 4-3-2-1 FORMATION

Phase of Play Practice (10v9 plus a keeper)

Players on the attacking team of 10 look to score in the goal, while defenders must penetrate the dotted line, but only by passing to a team mate who receives the ball when already beyond that line.

Blues, with a one-man advantage, build from the back

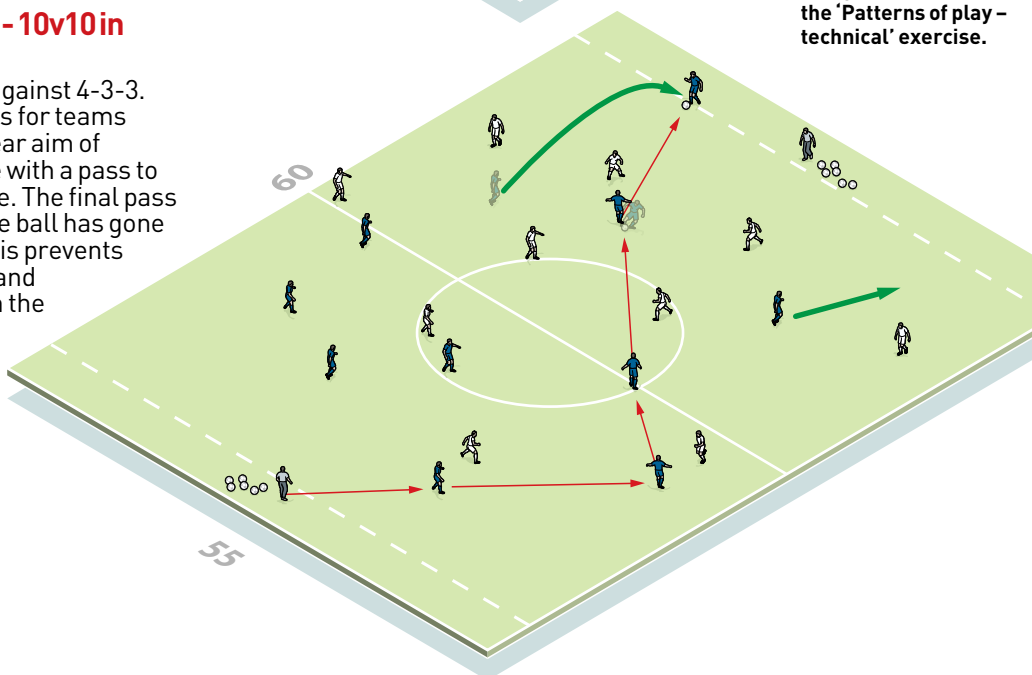
Attackers must ensure they maintain balance in order to prevent counter-attacks



Possession Practice - 10v10 in 60x55-yard area

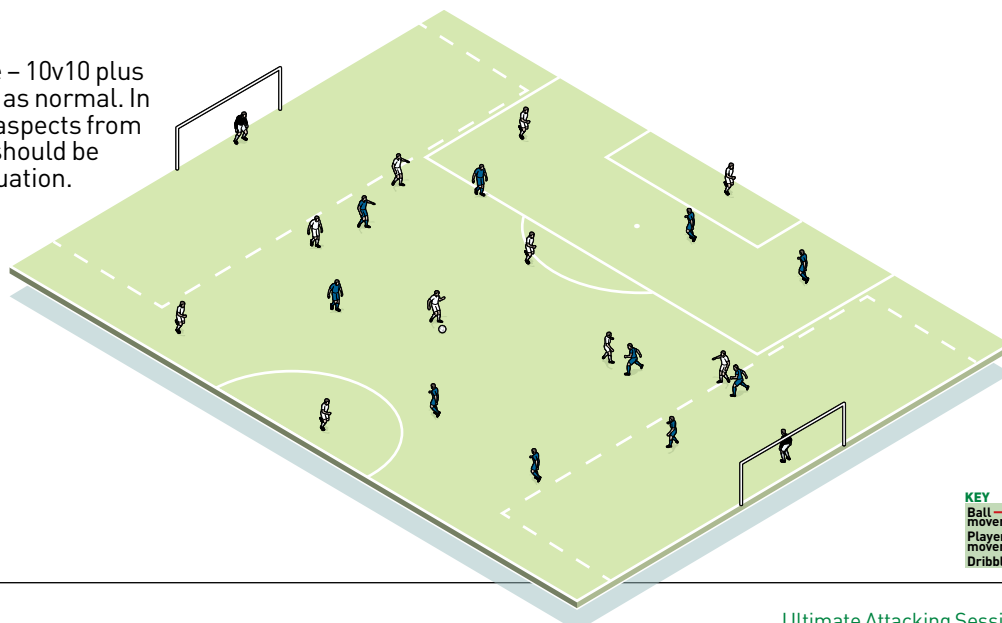
Teams line up 4-3-2-1 against 4-3-3. The aim of the practice is for teams to build play with the clear aim of penetrating the end line with a pass to an onrushing team mate. The final pass cannot be made until the ball has gone over the halfway line (this prevents a 'long ball' mentality), and offside is in play from the end lines.

Looking initially to construct an overload in midfield, attackers then combine with team mates using the movements in the 'Patterns of play - technical' exercise.



10v10 game

We conclude with game - 10v10 plus keepers. Offsides apply as normal. In a tight playing area, all aspects from the previous practices should be applied to this game situation.



KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

WEST BROMWICH
ALBION

Roberto Di Matteo Attacking Aims

Overview:

This session improves and develops attacking balance when going forward.

Often we have to switch play or break out at pace, and it's important that we retain structure and don't become one-dimensional. To help achieve this we adopt our club philosophy of utilising the full width of the pitch when attacking. We will practise this in training in the same way that we construct it in a match situation, ensuring that players understand how and when to move the ball from one side of the pitch to the other.

This session has led to the creation of numerous goalscoring chances in the Premier League this season - even against the top sides - and we will practise it in training at least once a week.

“Players must show good technique given the tight passing environment.”

ATTACKING AIMS

SET-UP

AREA

45x40 yards with four marked boxes in each of corners

EQUIPMENT

Cones, balls

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

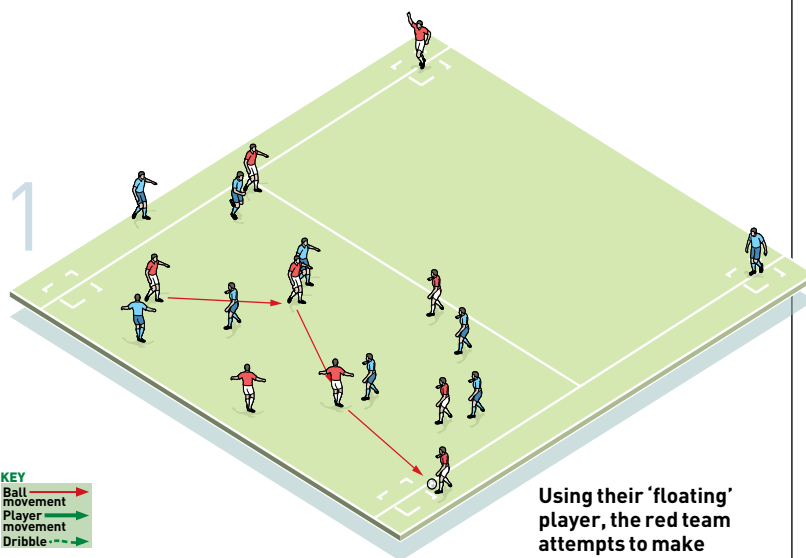
18 (9v9)

What do I get the players to do?

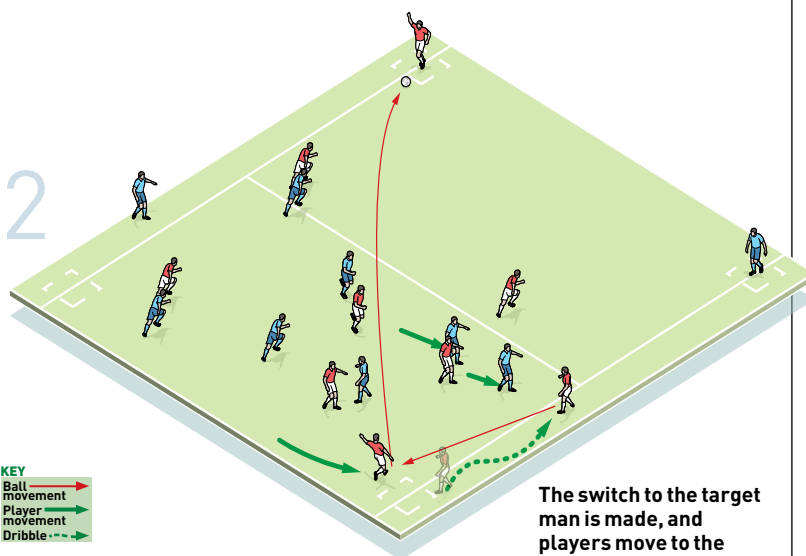
Splitting the playing area in two, all players begin in one half of the pitch with the exception of two target men - one for each side - who are located in the other half. The team starting with possession must complete a minimum of four passes before transferring the ball to their target man who is positioned in a small boxed area at the other end of the pitch. Defenders must close down space in trying to prevent the switch.

In making their passes, the attacking team can utilise a 'floating' team-mate, who is positioned off one side of the pitch and is free to play along the touchline up to the halfway mark. He cannot be tackled.

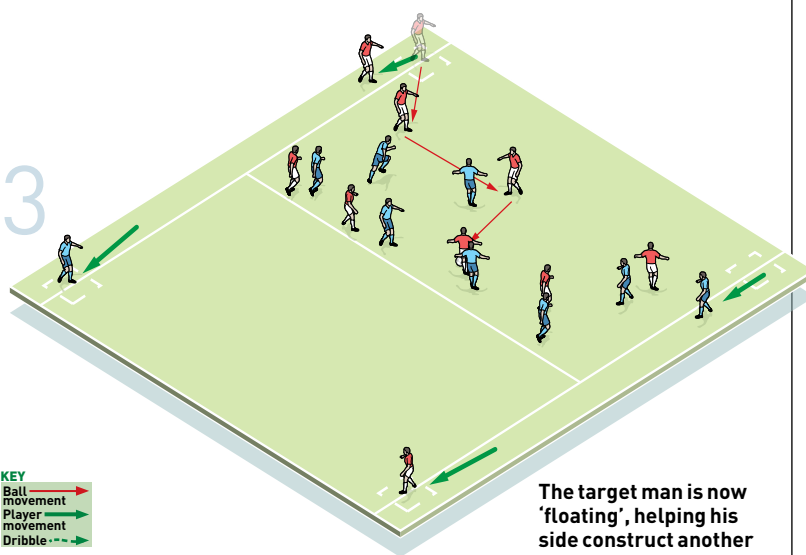
When a switch is successfully made and the target man receives possession, all players move to the other half. Here again, four passes must be made before a switch to the other half, where the former floating player is now fixed in a boxed area. Should an interception be made though, it is now the defenders' turn to build 'pass and switch' moves.



Using their 'floating' player, the red team attempts to make four passes



The switch to the target man is made, and players move to the other half of the pitch



The target man is now 'floating', helping his side construct another four passes

Roberto Di Matteo

WEST BROMWICH ALBION

Popular Italian Roberto Di Matteo enjoyed a hugely successful career as a player, turning out for Lazio and Chelsea amongst others. He remains the scorer of the fastest ever goal in a Wembley final when he found the net for the London club against Middlesbrough in 1997 after just 43 seconds.

Roberto was forced into early retirement at the age of 31 through injury, but despite boasting a degree and an MBA in business studies, he remained in football, enjoying his first break in management when being appointed the new boss of MK Dons in July 2008.

He led the club into the League One play-offs and, a year later, accepted the chance to become the new manager of West Bromwich Albion.

Promotion to the Barclays Premier League was secured at the first attempt, and this season the Baggies have achieved some notable scalps, including victory at Arsenal, a result which helped the former Italy international scoop the Premier League Manager of the Month award for September.

ATTACKING AIMS

What are the key things to look for technically/tactically?

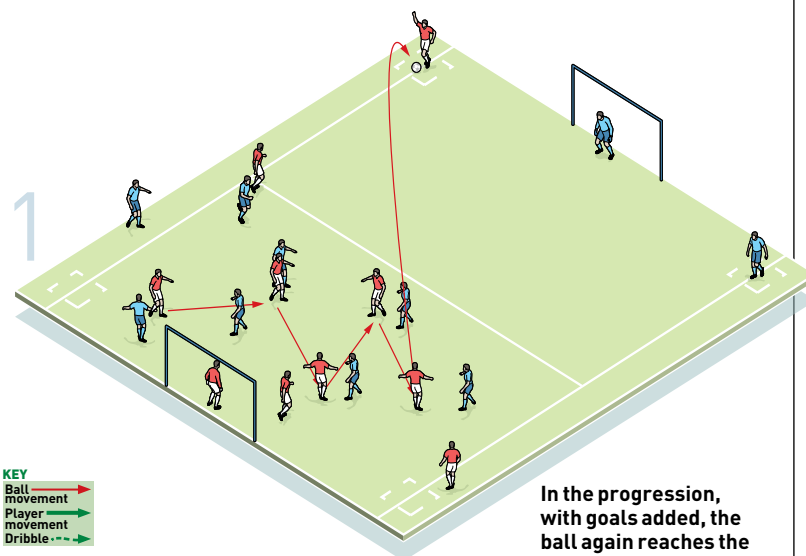
Awareness is everything in this session. Any player receiving the ball needs to check over his shoulder to be aware of all opportunities. Players must show good technique given the tight environment, as well as quality passing ability, particularly when the switch is made.

Tactically, this session is all about offering balance when the team attacks, ensuring that there is a good flow of forward movement while, in the progression, strong defensive cover is also factored in.

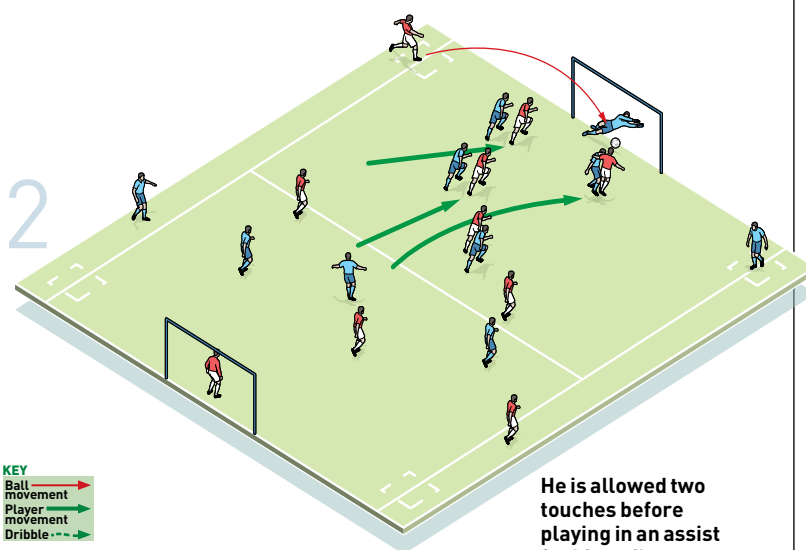
How do I progress the session?

We progress the session by adding a goal and goalkeeper at each end. Now, when four passes have been completed and the switch made, the target player has two touches to deliver a ball into the middle which is attacked. But, when a team breaks forward into the other half they must leave defensive players back to protect against the opposition turning over possession, because four quick passes can trigger a counter-attacking pass to the their target man.

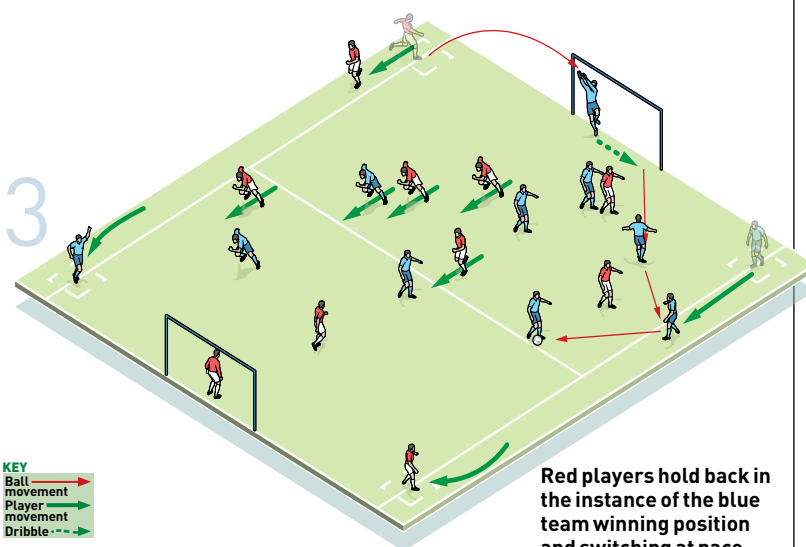
Progress this further by restricting play to three- or two-touch. ■



In the progression, with goals added, the ball again reaches the target player



He is allowed two touches before playing in an assist for his strikers



Red players hold back in the instance of the blue team winning position and switching at pace

NEWCASTLE UNITED

Alan Pardew The final third

Overview:

This session is about the movement of strikers in and around the box. We begin with different phases of play, looking at attacking runs across the face of a defender, pulling off the shoulder, plus complex combination moves.

All of these phases replicate movements required on match day, and all enhance our ability to create chances and score goals.

We saw the key elements of this session in action for our opening goal at Birmingham City in February. Jonas Gutierrez provided the supply line for a confident finish from Peter Lovenkrands.

“All of these phases replicate movements required on match day, and all enhance our ability to create chances and score goals.”

THE FINAL THIRD

SET-UP

AREA

Half pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

9 (6 attackers, 2 defenders, keeper)

SESSION TIME

Practice 30mins, development 25mins

What do I get the players to do?

Working on a half pitch, a defender is placed centrally on the edge of the 18-yard box. He is passive at first but can become active after the first three run-throughs. Ten yards further out are three strikers, with two wingers either to the left or the right.

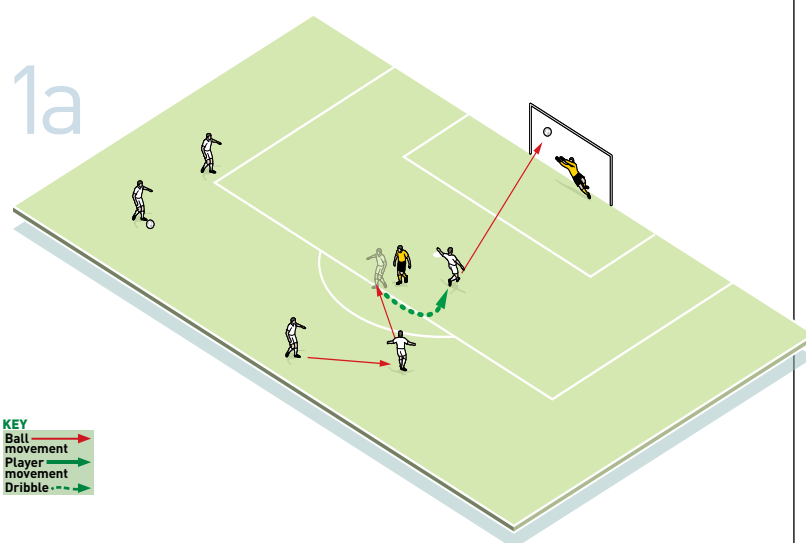
Runs across the face

Attacker 1 passes to attacker 2, who receives the ball on the back foot, then passes to attacker 3. This player collects the ball in his stride, makes a run across the face of the passive defender and takes a shot at goal.

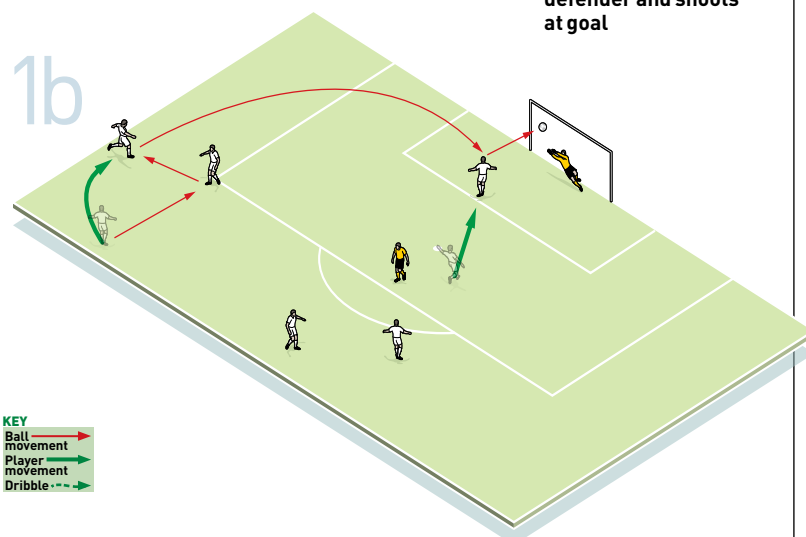
As this shot is being despatched, the two wingers combine to send a deep cross into the six-yard box. The attacker advances to finish the move with a header or shot.

Pulling off the shoulder

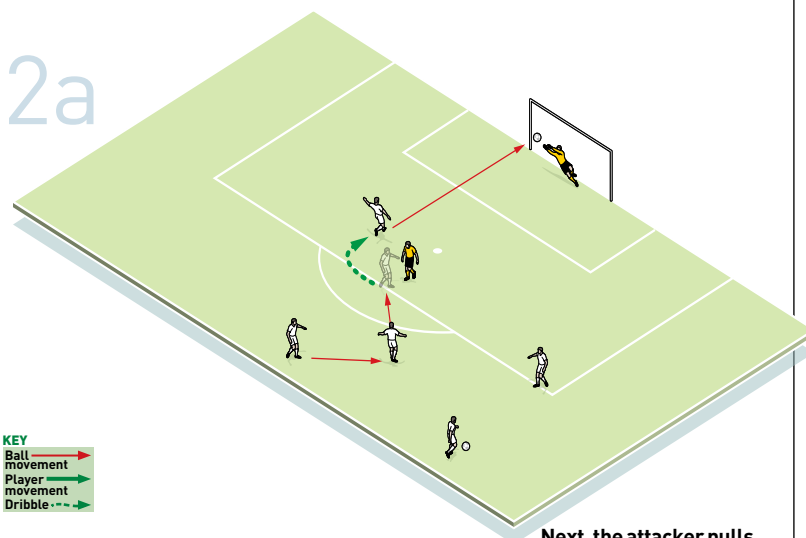
The move begins as before, though this time attacker 3 receives the pass with his back to the defender. He pulls off the shoulder, turning and despatching a shot. The wingers



Having received the pass, the attacker runs across the face of the defender and shoots at goal



The wingers then combine to send a long pass in to the attacker



Next, the attacker pulls off the shoulder, spins, and shoots



Alan Pardew

NEWCASTLE UNITED

Alan Pardew was installed as Newcastle United manager on December 9, 2010.

Prior to arriving at St James's Park, he had led both Reading and West Ham United to promotion, and also achieved the feat as a player with Crystal Palace.

It was with Palace that Pardew really made his name after heading the winning goal in the 1990 FA Cup semi-final against Liverpool. As a player he also turned out for Charlton Athletic, Tottenham Hotspur, Barnet and Reading, plus a host of non-league sides.

Pardew moved into management at Reading in 1999 following two spells in caretaker charge, before leading West Ham United to the 2006 FA Cup Final against Liverpool – a match the London club lost on penalties after a thrilling 3-3 draw.

He moved on to Charlton Athletic, then Southampton, where he clinched the Football League Trophy in March 2010, before returning to the Premier League with Newcastle.

THE FINAL THIRD

again combine, though this time a pass is laid down the wing, with a ball across the six-yard box to be finished by the attacker.

Combination play

In the third phase, we add an extra defender and attacker. This time attackers combine on the edge of the box, but instead of shooting, a pass is fed to the wing. The deepest winger overlaps while an attacker negotiates a route through tracking defenders into the penalty box. The winger's cross is aimed at the onrushing attacker who attempts to score.

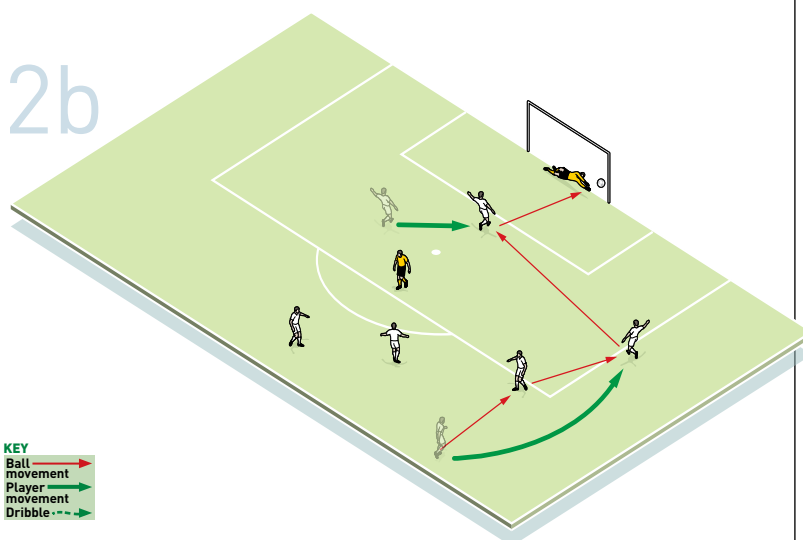
If involving more players, we run these moves on both flanks within the same phase.

What are the key things to look for technically/tactically?

We are looking for quick passing play in and around the box. We require quality movement from supporting forwards and a direct and purposeful run from the attacker. Timing of runs and good decision making is important, and this can only be developed over time and with practice.

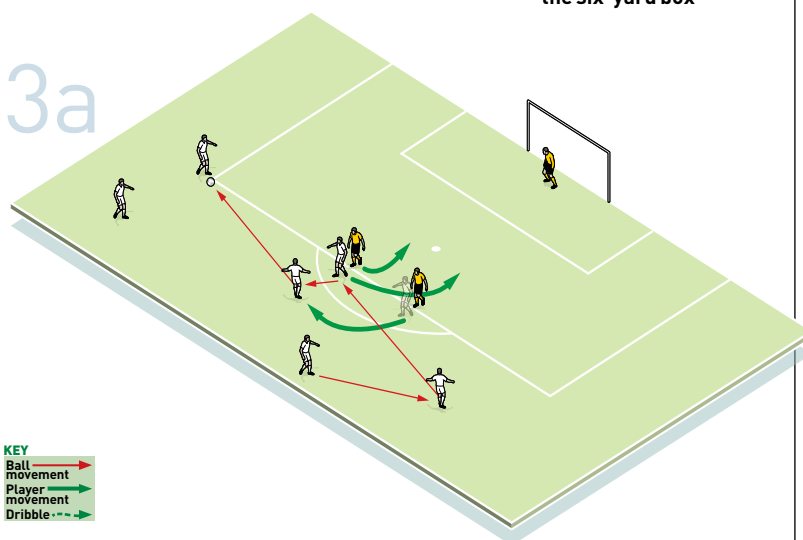
Finally, the striker must show composure in front of goal as he is finishing with a first-time shot or header. ■

2b



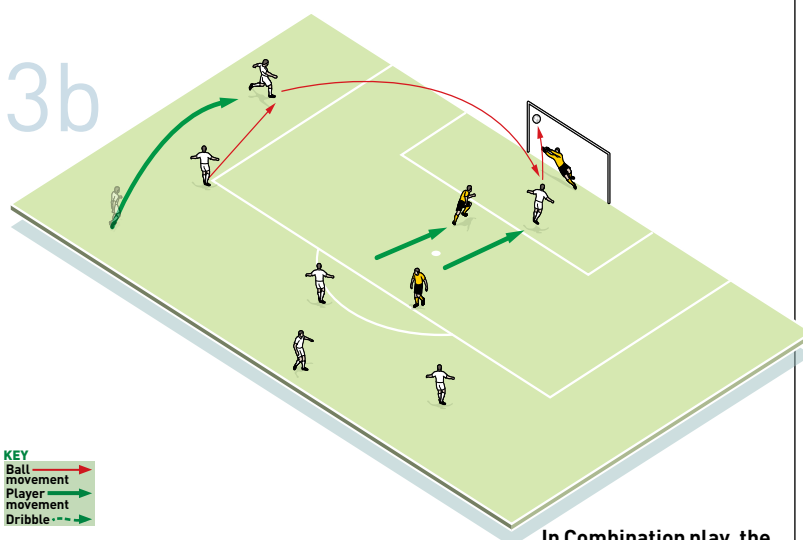
Wingers this time overlap on the right to send a square ball into the six-yard box

3a



With an additional defender and attacker, play is fed to the left

3b



In Combination play, the ball is aimed at the attacker, with a defender looking to clear

EVERTON

**David
Moyes**

The switch: changing attacking angles

Overview:

This session is designed to encourage and develop quick and incisive football. Players should be looking to quickly switch the point of attack, utilising forward and angled passing, one-twos, plus intelligent off-the-ball movement. The ability to retain possession and switch play quickly and effectively is important for breaking down and moving opposition defences about, therefore creating space for goalscoring opportunities.

This method worked brilliantly in our Premier League match at Blackpool in November. Attacking down the left side, Blackpool had good cover and forced us to play backwards. Steven Pienaar quickly dropped the ball into John Heitinga who immediately switched the point of attack to the right side, where Seamus Coleman progressed 1v1 with the left-back. Our midfielder won the first ball, moved in on goal, and scored.

THE SWITCH: CHANGING ATTACKING ANGLES

SET-UP

AREA

55x35 yards

EQUIPMENT

Set of poles, balls

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

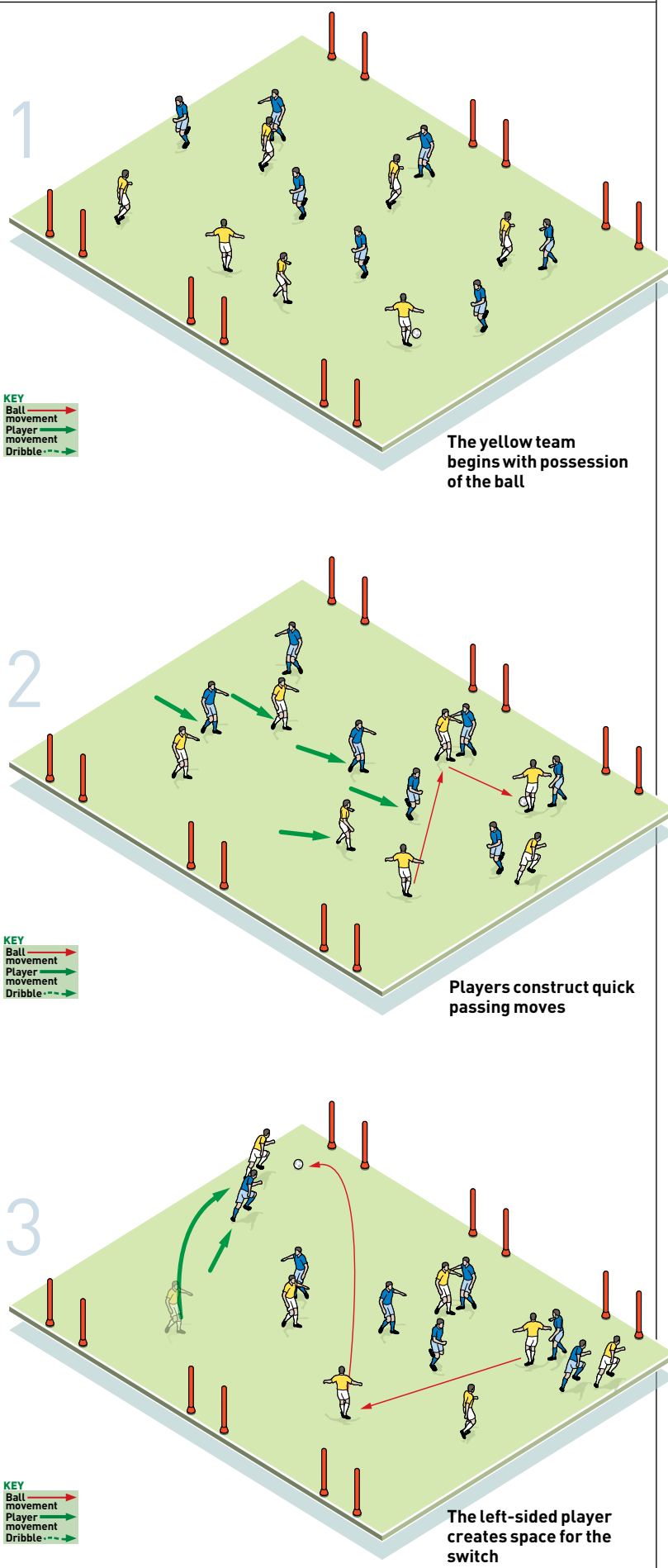
14

What do I get the players to do?

We play 7v7, with each team defending three goals spaced at equal points along the longer sides. The coach serves the ball to one team, whose aim is to score in any of the opposition's three goals. In possession, the attacking team must aim to pass quickly and switch play, looking for forward and angled passes. If they cannot score, they must keep the ball.

What are the key things to look for technically/tactically?

Technically we are looking for players to move the ball quickly whilst maintaining control at all times. We'd expect the switch of play to vary in its execution - either a number of short quick passes or one long ball. In addition, there are key tactical aspects to be achieved. If possible, we look for the attacking team to manufacture 2v1 situations on the opposite side of the play (i.e. in non-ball areas). The switch is progressive and should ultimately end with goalscoring situations created from crosses, shots or one-twos.



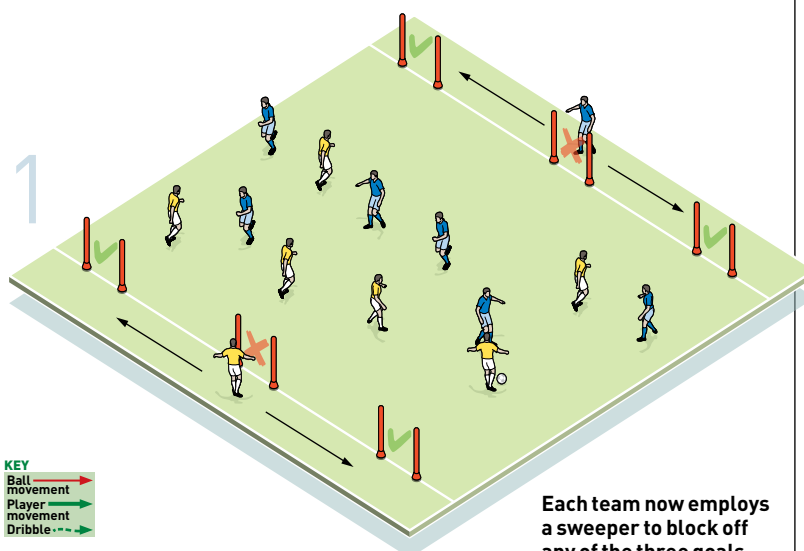
EVERTON
David Moyes

THE SWITCH: CHANGING ATTACKING ANGLES

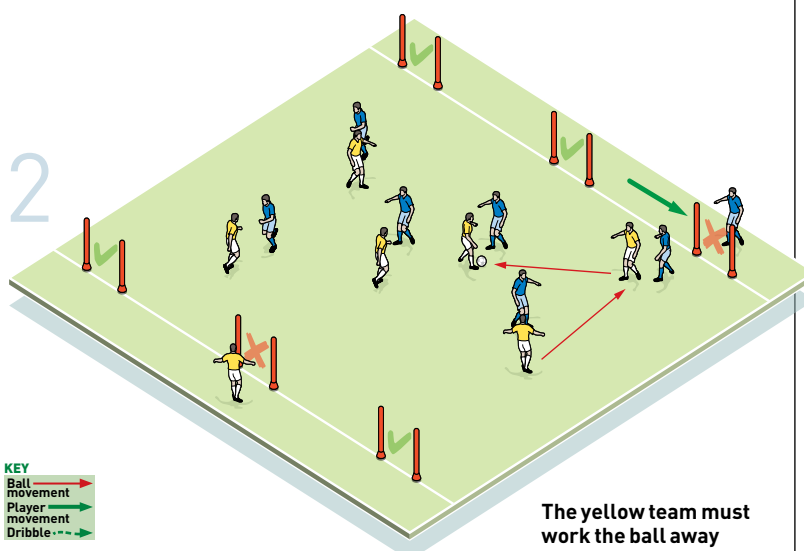
How do I progress the session?

We progress the session with the introduction of sweepers. Each team has one sweeper who plays behind the goal line, therefore off the playing area. Neither team can score in a goal that the sweeper is protecting.

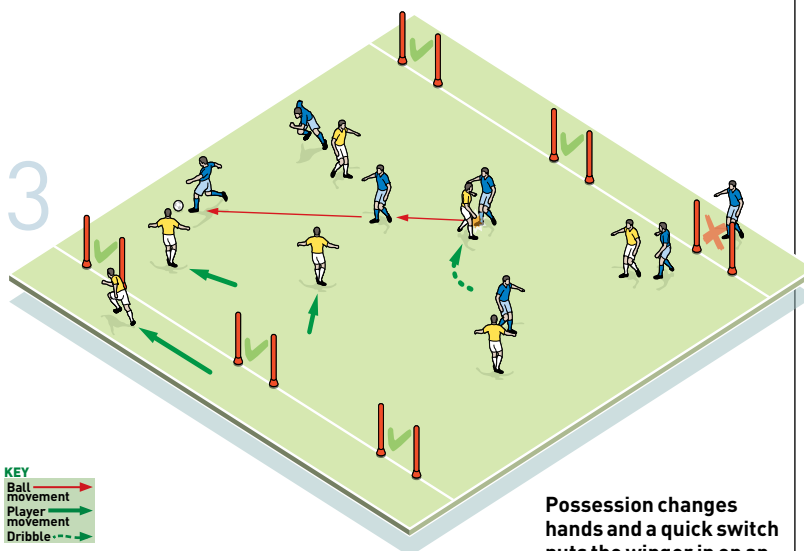
The introduction of sweepers forces the players to keep their heads up in order to establish where attacking play should be directed. The presence of this player on each team should encourage the opposition players to switch the point of attack quickly before the sweeper is able to get across and defend.



Each team now employs a sweeper to block off any of the three goals



The yellow team must work the ball away from a protected goal



Possession changes hands and a quick switch puts the winger in on an unguarded goal

“The switch is progressive and should ultimately end with goalscoring situations created from crosses, shots or one-twos.”



David Moyes

EVERTON

Everton manager David Moyes has been the recipient of the LMA Manager of the Year Award on three separate occasions.

The Glasgow-born centre-back always had an eye on the tactical side of the game having started taking his coaching badges at the age of 22. But first he enjoyed a long and successful playing career, clocking up over 500 competitive appearances for Celtic, Cambridge United, Bristol City, Shrewsbury Town, Dunfermline Athletic, Hamilton Academical and Preston North End.

It was at Preston where the Scot first stepped into management, guiding the Deepdale club into the League Two play-offs in his first full season in charge.

Following promotion, and a high finish the following year, Everton moved to install Moyes as replacement for Walter Smith in March 2002.

The manager staved off the immediate threat of relegation and has since earned the club Champions League and Europa League football, as well as an FA Cup final appearance.

He has also overseen the development of brilliant young players such as Wayne Rooney and Jack Rodwell.

THE SWITCH: CHANGING ATTACKING ANGLES

How would you put this into a game situation?

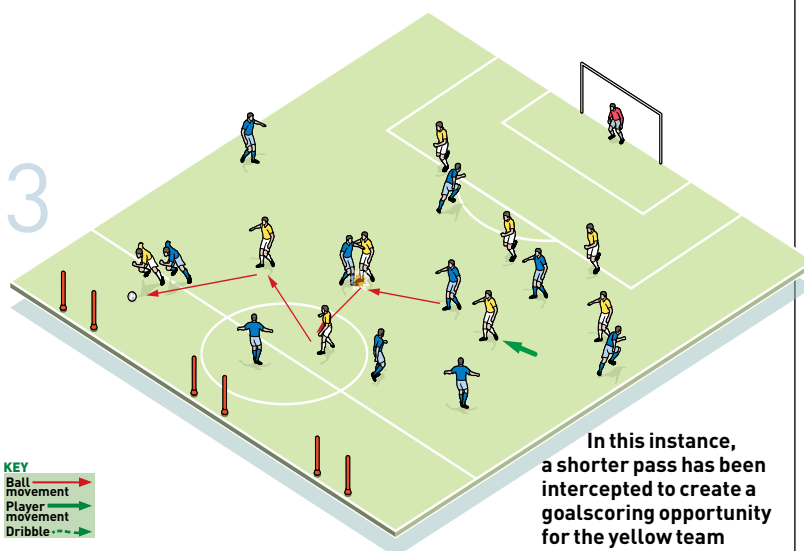
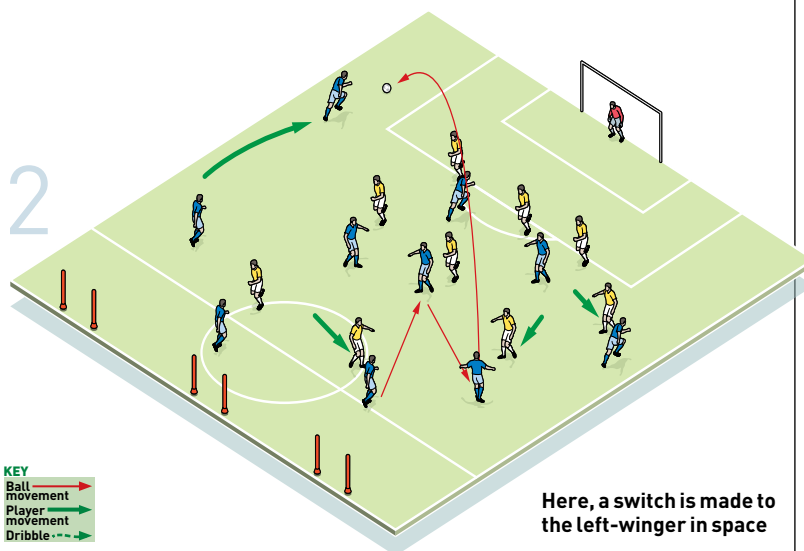
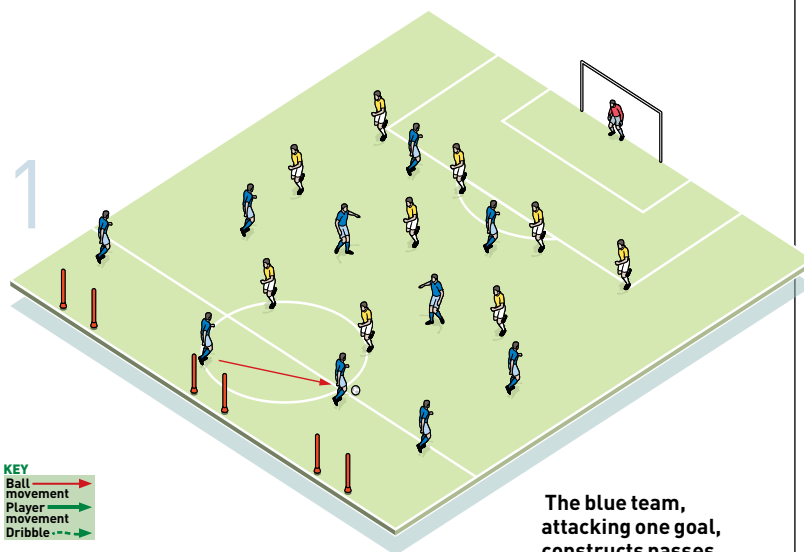
The drill can be increased to 10 or 11-a-side to become a game situation.

In terms of playing area, use a half pitch extended a few yards past the halfway line. There is one full-sized goal at the end of the pitch and three small goals positioned just beyond the halfway line, spaced equally along the line, as in the diagram.

The yellow team, which has a keeper in place, can score in any of the three goals. It must construct moves building from the back. The blue team attacks the one full-sized goal. Tactically, it must retain shape and position and should press from the front given they are shooting at only one target.

We encourage attacking play with a positive outcome everytime. Teams must play one-twos, crosses, unleash shots and perform switches between playing areas.

Depending on the coach's requirements, the session's focus can alter between the defensive or offensive elements of switching possession play. ■



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