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# MASTER COACH

VOLUME 01



108

ESSENTIAL  
DRILLS &  
GAMES

SOCCER COACH WEEKLY



# Welcome To Master Coach



Master Coach  
Volume 1



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## Dear Coach

Welcome to **Master Coach** Volume 1, a compilation of all the exercises, drills and games that have featured in **Soccer Coach Weekly** over the last six months. It is the first time these activities have been available in print and I know they will be a fantastic addition to your coaching kitbag.

All of the drills in this manual have been tried and tested by me using the teams I coach at all age levels. I have been influenced by coaches from grassroots through to academy standard so I understand the problems faced by coaches at every level of the game. This has helped me create the best activities available and now it is my opportunity to pass them on to you, so that you have the opportunity to recreate these activities with your own players.

I am constantly going on courses to add to my knowledge, which is why I'm always coming up with new and innovative coaching solutions. The activities in this book incorporate a range of coaching approaches that make it easier for you to get the best out of your players as you coach them. Playing through the thirds, advancing technical play and getting players to take a chance without fear of failure are just a few of the things this manual stands for.

Because I spend my life coaching soccer, I know how useful it is to have a source of go-to drills and activities in your kitbag that you can refer to when you are out on the training ground. That's what makes this book so valuable – you can use it to plan training sessions in advance or you can use it to change sessions as you go. It may be that you've planned a session for 14 players, but only six turn up to training. Or perhaps your plan to work on attack is scuppered when only defenders show. Whatever your Plan A, you'll always have a Plan B with **Master Coach** in your bag.

I've divided the manual into sections that group together activities and drills of similar themes. This makes it easy for you to find the drill you need in no time at all and you can get on with the real job of coaching



**“Master Coach will help you improve every single one of your players”**

your players. It also means you will have a comprehensive set of activities to use in your coaching that will solve any problem you have, anywhere on the pitch.

The fact that each copy has a plastic cover, means the manual won't fall apart in the rain and you can easily wipe it clean before storing it back in your kit bag, which makes it ideal to use out on the training ground.

When I first began coaching I would have loved to have had a resource like **Master Coach** to take with me when I had things I needed to work on and sessions to create. It can be used as the basis of any syllabus a coach wants to work out or as a guide for

solving any problems your team has – there are so many options.

However you choose to use **Master Coach**, I'm certain that it will help you raise the standard of your coaching and improve the level of play for every single one of your players.

I hope you enjoy using the **Master Coach** manual and that your players do too.

Yours in soccer



David Clarke  
Head Coach

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Each of the pages in **Master Coach** has been reproduced as it was first published in **Soccer Coach Weekly**. To make reference easy, the sessions have been divided into three sections: Attack, Midfield and Defence. Each section is then divided into different disciplines – Attack is divided into Shooting, Creativity and Support; Midfield into Possession and Pressing; and Defence into Technical and Tactical

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**117 THANK YOU, MASTER COACHES**

I am extremely grateful to everyone who bought this manual. But in particular I would like to thank the coaches listed on these pages. Their support and backing went a long way to getting this manual made. They are a select group who have chosen to do all they can to become better coaches and together we are making soccer coaching a more enjoyable, more rewarding experience for thousands of children around the world. Keep up the good work!

# Changing Direction

Run players through this testing exercise that not only offers shooting opportunities with both feet, but also develops their ability to change direction when attacking goal

## WHY USE IT

Changing direction when approaching goal is a great way for attackers to create some space and move to where they can take a shot. If players are running in straight lines, play becomes too predictable.

## SET UP

Set up an area of 20x15 yards. We've created a goal 1.5 yards wide on the left side and placed two cones on the other side, one two yards diagonally in from the top right hand corner and the other six yards from the goal. We've used four players.

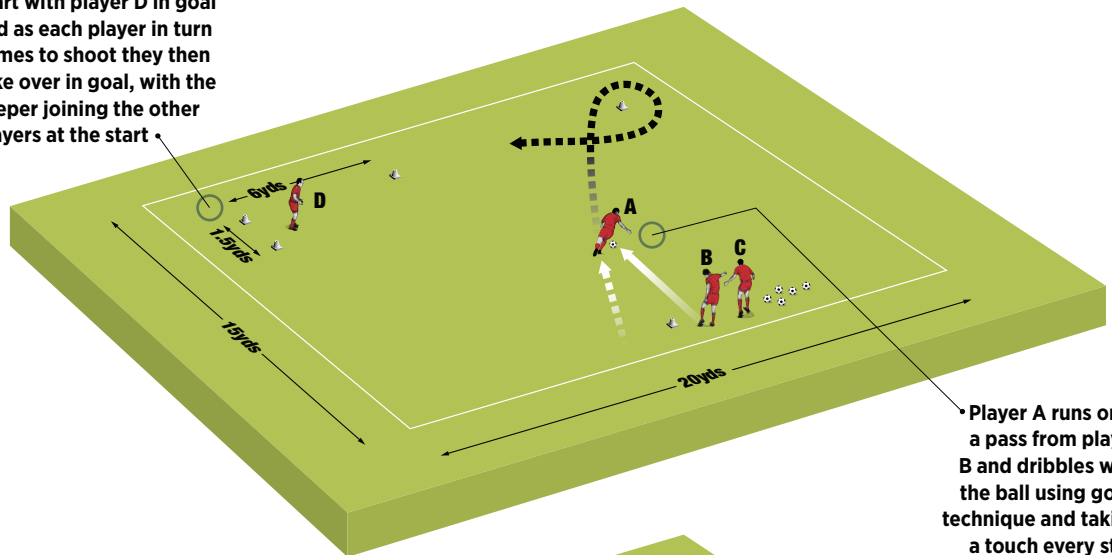
## HOW TO PLAY

Start with player D in goal. Player B passes a ball about five yards in front of player A for him to run on to. He dribbles the ball around the cone in the corner, then to the right of the second cone before hitting a right-foot shot at goal. Once A has shot he goes in goal and D goes back to the start and the routine begins again. Later reverse the way the players run and make them shoot left-footed.

## TECHNIQUE

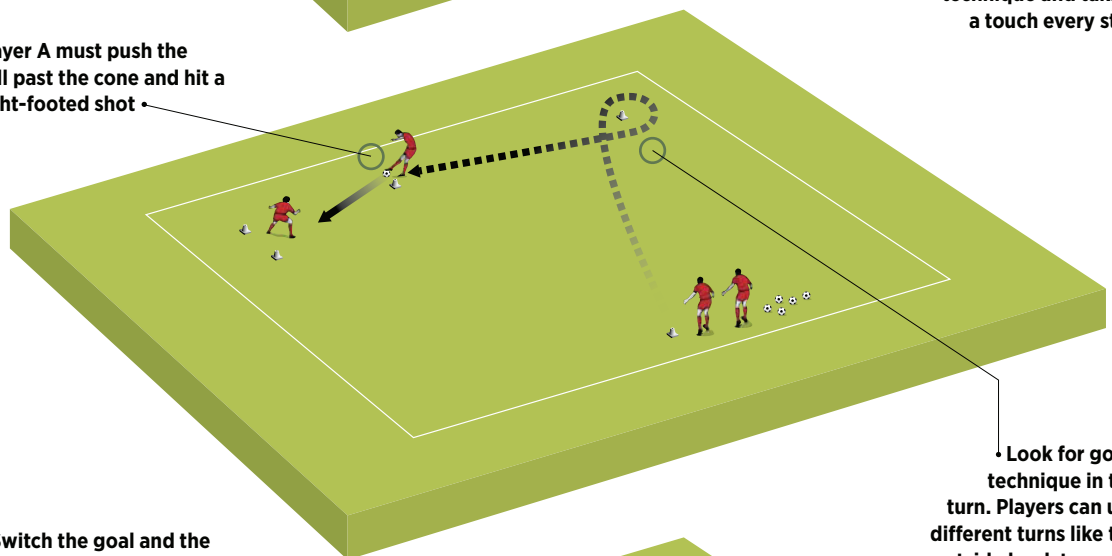
This session needs timing and touch and requires players to look up and take account of a situation. Tempo is essential and players can build on the turn with both a left and right foot finish.

Start with player D in goal and as each player in turn comes to shoot they then take over in goal, with the keeper joining the other players at the start



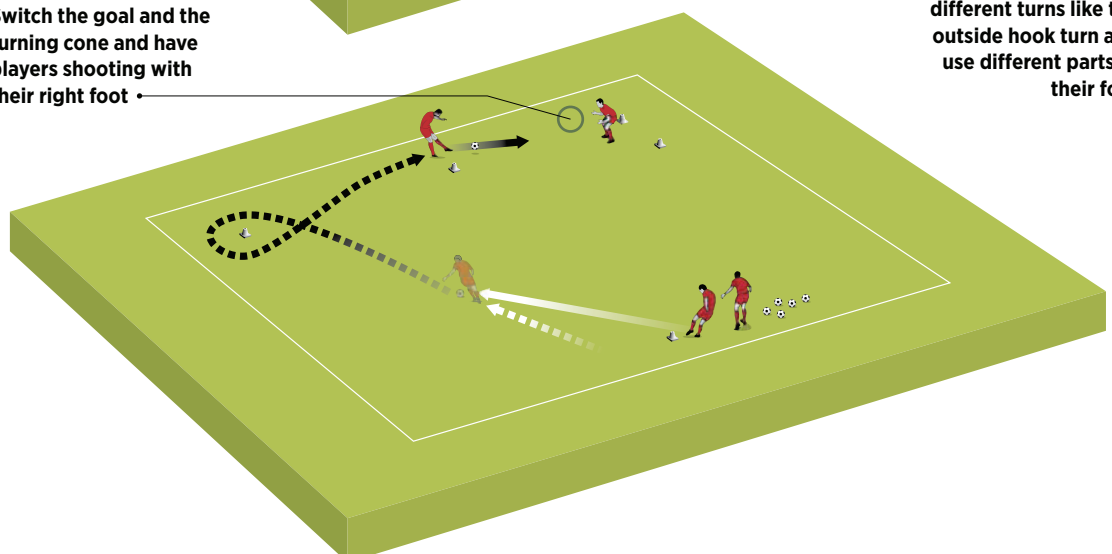
Player A runs onto a pass from player B and dribbles with the ball using good technique and taking a touch every step

Player A must push the ball past the cone and hit a right-footed shot



Look for good technique in the turn. Players can use different turns like the outside hook turn and use different parts of their foot

Switch the goal and the turning cone and have players shooting with their right foot



Player movement 

Ball movement 

Run with ball 

Shot 

# Creative In The Box

If you want to see your players create more scoring opportunities in the penalty area, use this session to improve movement and creativity in the attacking third of the pitch

## WHY USE IT

This is a fast game that relies on individual skill and teamwork to create shooting opportunities. The coaching points rely on the skills of players to be creative around the opposition goal, mirroring the role of skilful midfielders like David Silva, who can conjure up chances at will.

## SET UP

Set up a playing area of 30x20 yards. We've used 10 players: two teams of four plus two keepers. You need balls, bibs, cones and two goals.

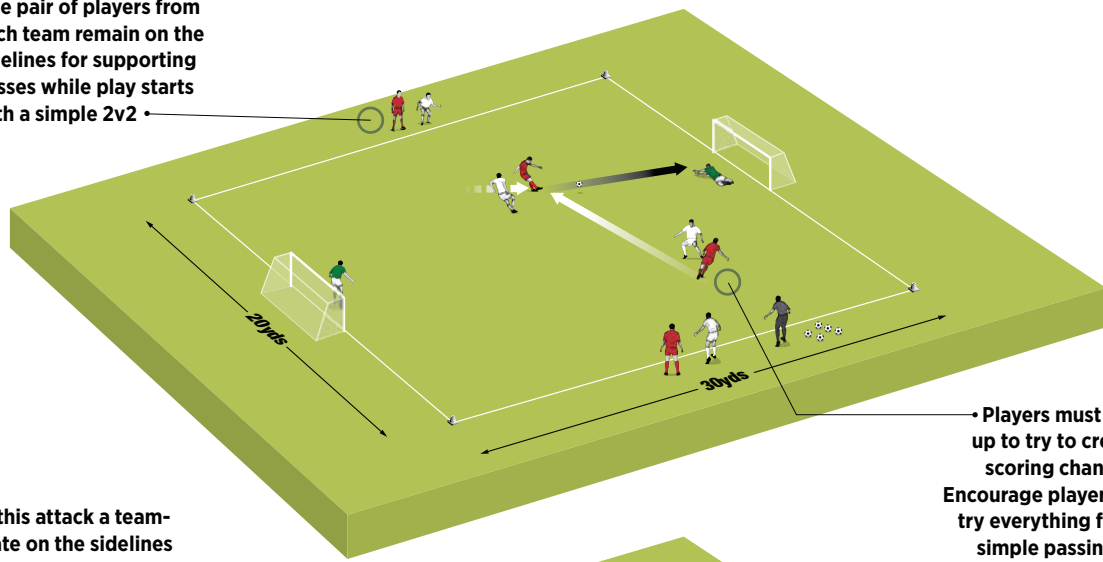
## HOW TO PLAY

Players pair up within their teams and play a simple 2v2, with one pair from each team at the side of the pitch. The game starts and restarts with the keeper, who isn't allowed to kick so the ball must be rolled out. Players at the side of the pitch can be used to pass but must stay off the pitch and are restricted to one touch. Swap pairs with their team-mates at two minute intervals.

## TECHNIQUE

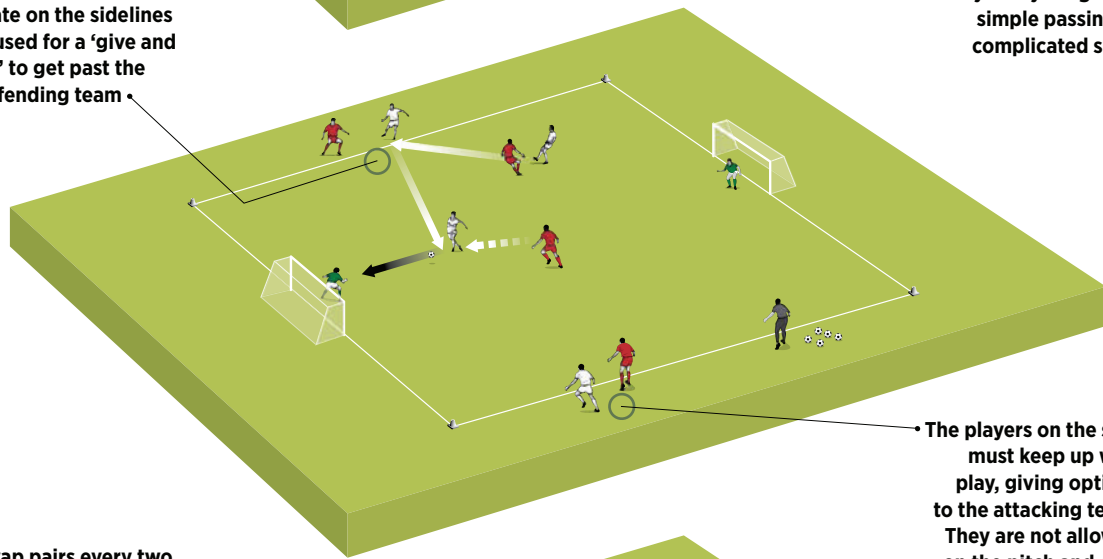
In this session, match-like scenarios provide a good way of encouraging creative passing moves, while the frequent changing of roles is good for concentration levels. Communication and precision are essential because a mistake will almost certainly give the opposition the chance to counterattack.

One pair of players from each team remain on the sidelines for supporting passes while play starts with a simple 2v2



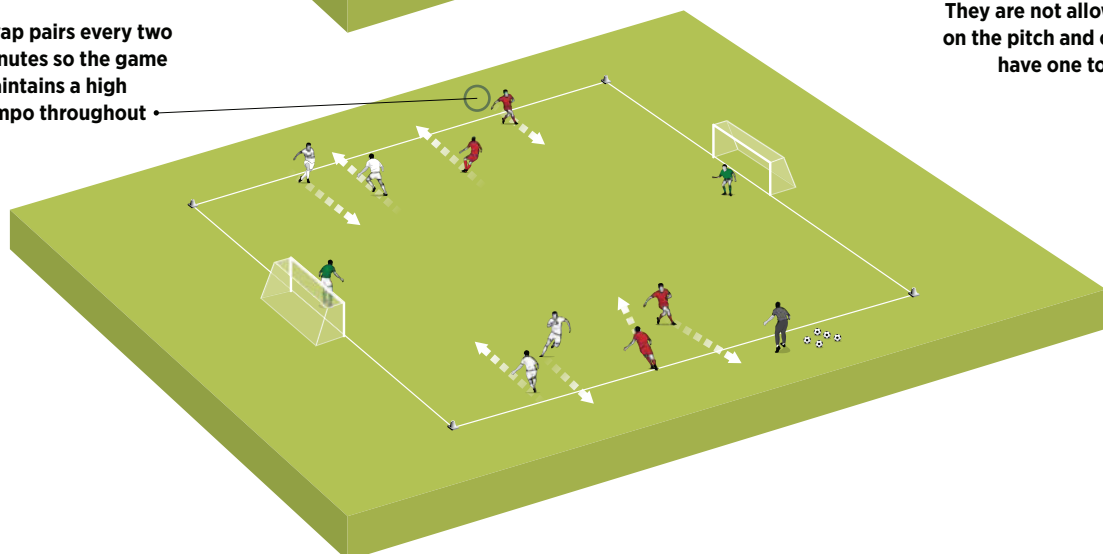
• Players must link up to try to create scoring chances. Encourage players to try everything from simple passing to complicated skills

In this attack a teammate on the sidelines is used for a 'give and go' to get past the defending team



• The players on the side must keep up with play, giving options to the attacking team. They are not allowed on the pitch and only have one touch

Swap pairs every two minutes so the game maintains a high tempo throughout



Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot

# Strike In Pairs

Help your strike partners develop an effective understanding with each other in order to create the space needed to score goals like Robin van Persie

## WHY USE IT

When two strikers play together they develop an understanding. Robin van Persie uses his strike partners to create the space needed for match winning shots on goal. Follow this drill and your players could forge a similar understanding.

## SET UP

You need at least eight players, plus two keepers. One striker and a defender should be in each half, with a line of second strikers for each team at the side of the pitch by the halfway mark. You need balls, bibs, cones and goals. Play a small-sided game on a 40x30-yard pitch with goals at each end.

## HOW TO PLAY

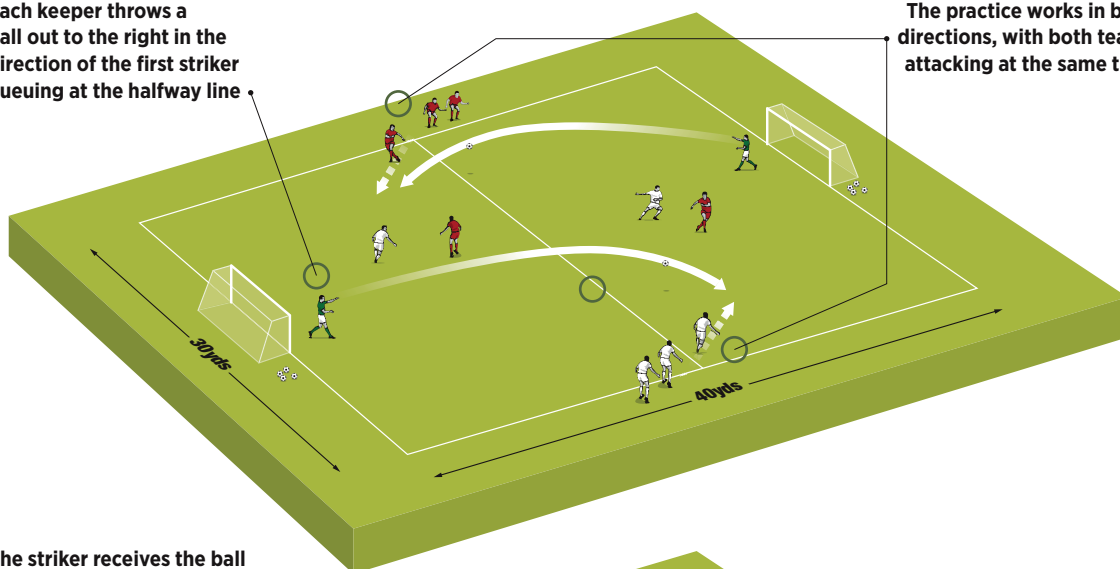
To attack at both ends simultaneously, each keeper throws the ball to the first of the strikers waiting on the sidelines. He must combine 2v1 with the attacker already on the pitch in order to set-up a scoring chance.

## TECHNIQUE

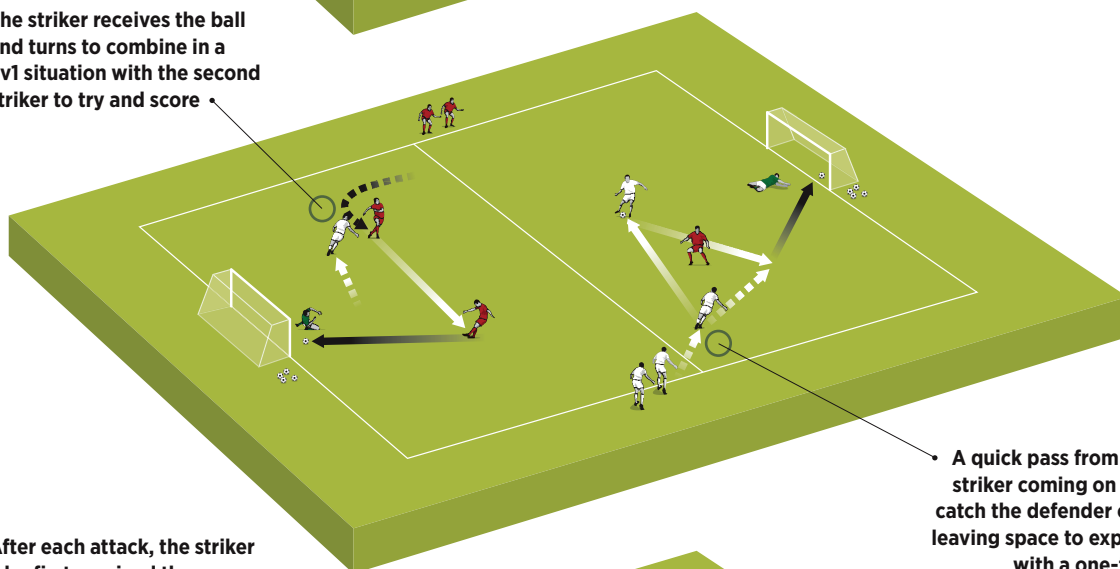
To develop a partnership between two forwards they must work intensively in training, moving into different positions to disrupt the defence. Creativity is key to opening up space and a good first touch can help to beat defenders.

Each keeper throws a ball out to the right in the direction of the first striker queuing at the halfway line

The practice works in both directions, with both teams attacking at the same time

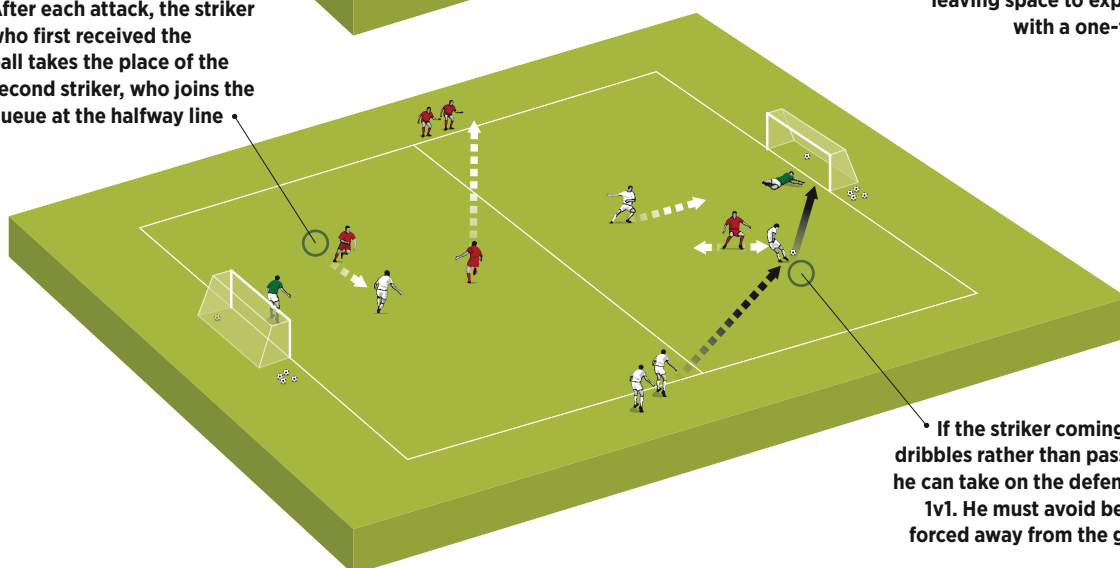


The striker receives the ball and turns to combine in a 2v1 situation with the second striker to try and score



A quick pass from the striker coming on can catch the defender out, leaving space to exploit with a one-two

After each attack, the striker who first received the ball takes the place of the second striker, who joins the queue at the halfway line



If the striker coming on dribbles rather than passes, he can take on the defender 1v1. He must avoid being forced away from the goal

Player movement 

Ball movement 

Run with ball 

Shot 

# Creative Midfield

Help your players to hone their creativity with this game of possession versus attack. Players must keep the ball or take quick advantage of gaining possession with clever attacks

## WHY USE IT

This drill is aimed at getting midfielders to use creativity in the final third of the pitch in order to create or take scoring opportunities.

## SET UP

Set up a playing area of 30x25 yards. In this session we've used 12 players. You will need balls, bibs, cones and two goals.

## HOW TO PLAY

One team is in possession and the other team attacks. The team in possession is made up of the four outside players on the sidelines, two inside players and the two goalkeepers. The other team attacks either goal and uses four players. The players of the possession team have two touches and the team scores a point by making six passes.

## TECHNIQUE

This is a great activity to get young players showing their creative flair. The attacking four will have plenty of opportunities to use the overload in the middle when they win the ball, and the possession team needs to use the ball well with good passing technique. Encourage the attacking team to use skills like feints or step overs and clever passes to set up team-mates.

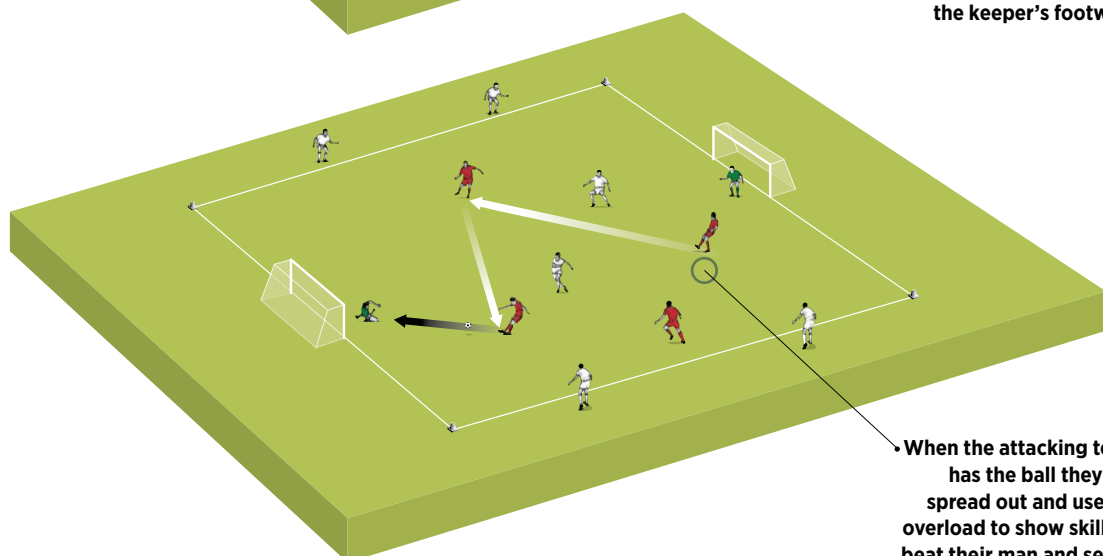
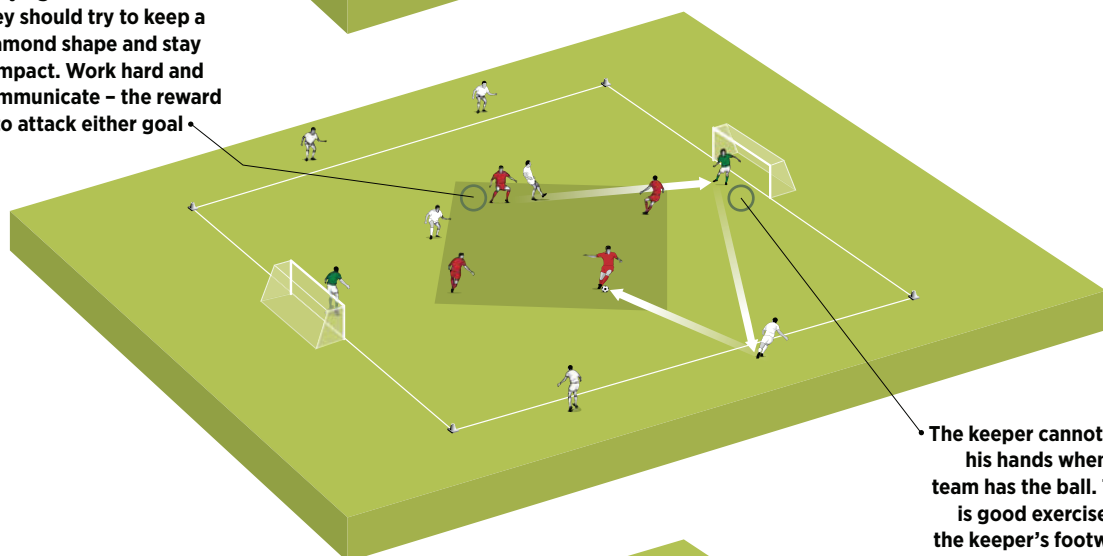
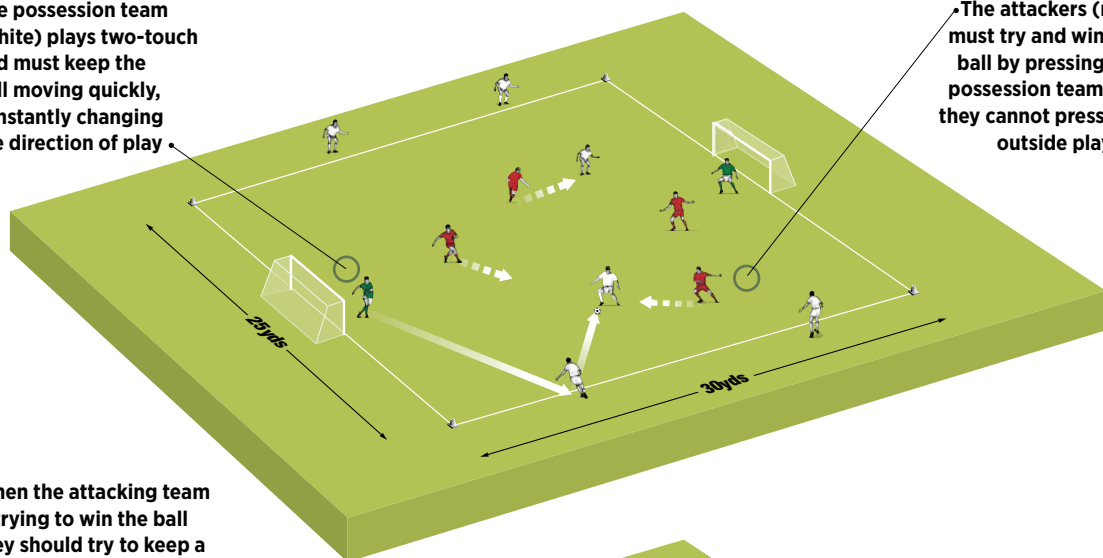
The possession team (white) plays two-touch and must keep the ball moving quickly, constantly changing the direction of play

When the attacking team is trying to win the ball they should try to keep a diamond shape and stay compact. Work hard and communicate - the reward is to attack either goal

The attackers (red) must try and win the ball by pressing the possession team but they cannot press the outside players

The keeper cannot use his hands when his team has the ball. This is good exercise for the keeper's footwork

When the attacking team has the ball they can spread out and use the overload to show skills to beat their man and set up goal scoring chances



Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot



# Steal The Ball

It's all about positioning in this lively intercepting game aimed at teaching your players how to nick the ball back from the other team while it's still in midfield

## WHY USE IT

This is a great game to help defensive midfielders prevent penetrative passes by intercepting the ball. Once they have it, they are encouraged to counterattack.

## SET UP

Mark out a 12x12-yard square with pop up goals (or cones two-feet apart) on each corner and placed two-feet behind the line. Mark out a centre box 4x4ft. You need balls, bibs and cones.

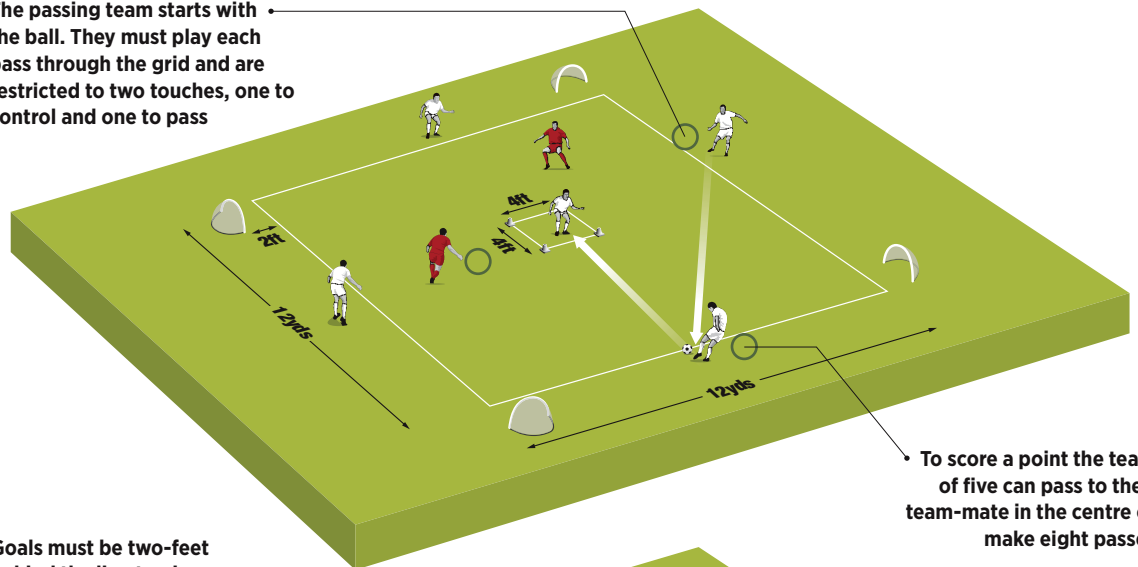
## HOW TO PLAY

Play a 5v2 game with one player of the team of five locked in the centre box and one on each side of the playing area. The team of five play with two touches and the two midfielders must try to steal the ball. As counterattacking is vital, if they intercept the ball they can score in any of the four goals. The key to success is the midfielder's starting position in relation to where the ball is, where the centre square is and where the opponent is.

## TECHNIQUE

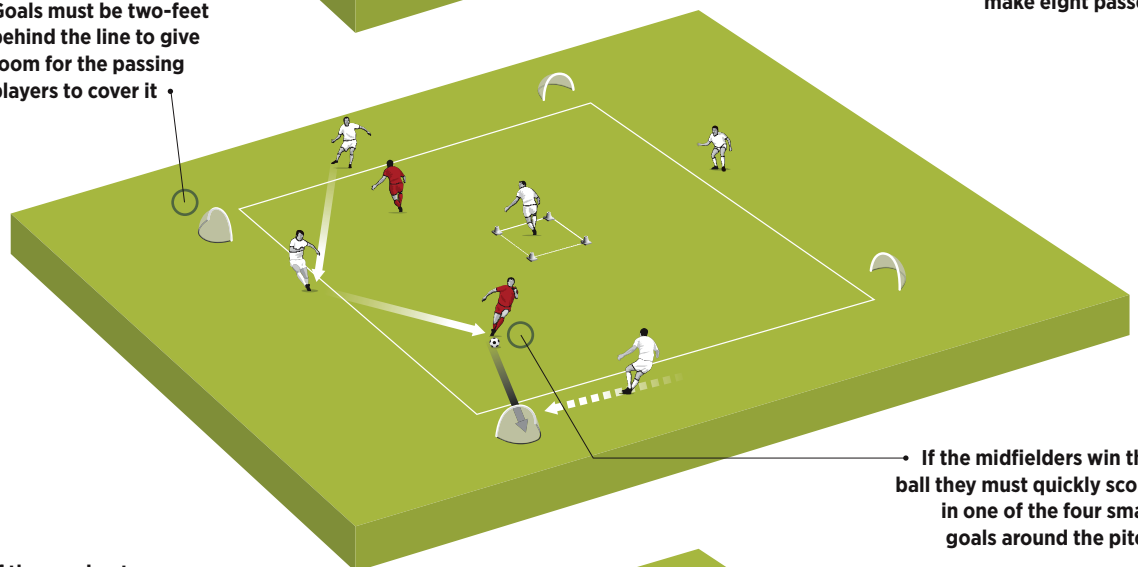
In this small area the midfielders must press and support each other to steal the ball from the passing team. They will learn where best to position themselves to make it hard for the passing team to penetrate the box.

The passing team starts with the ball. They must play each pass through the grid and are restricted to two touches, one to control and one to pass



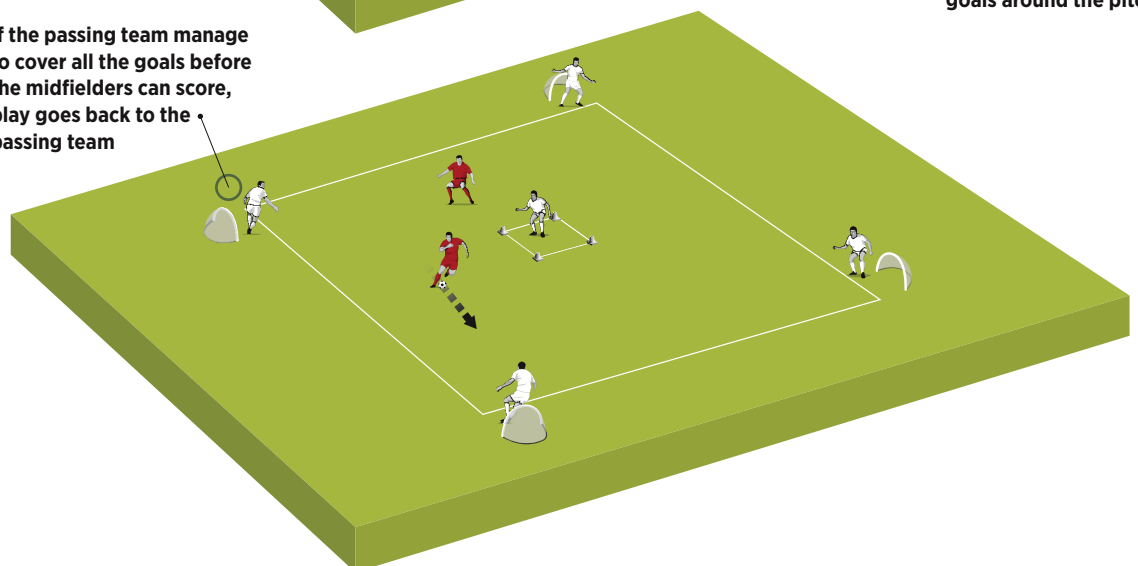
To score a point the team of five can pass to their team-mate in the centre or make eight passes

Goals must be two-feet behind the line to give room for the passing players to cover it



If the midfielders win the ball they must quickly score in one of the four small goals around the pitch

If the passing team manage to cover all the goals before the midfielders can score, play goes back to the passing team



Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot

# Great Wall

If you want your team more resistant to set pieces, this useful exercise will encourage them to form a wall capable of withstanding direct free-kicks

## WHY USE IT

We've all seen direct free-kicks win matches in both professional and youth games, but a well placed wall will cut out a very high percentage of goals from free-kicks at youth level. That is what you should aim to achieve with this session.

## SET UP

Use the penalty area of your pitch. We have used six players plus the goalkeeper for this session. You will need balls and a goal.

## HOW TO PLAY

You need to use players who are not afraid to be in a wall and try to select the tallest. Use between two and four players for the wall. Number them one to four in the order they should stand in the wall. Use one of your free-kick takers. Players should stand on the goal line and on your call run to get into position. Play six free-kicks, three on each side of the area.

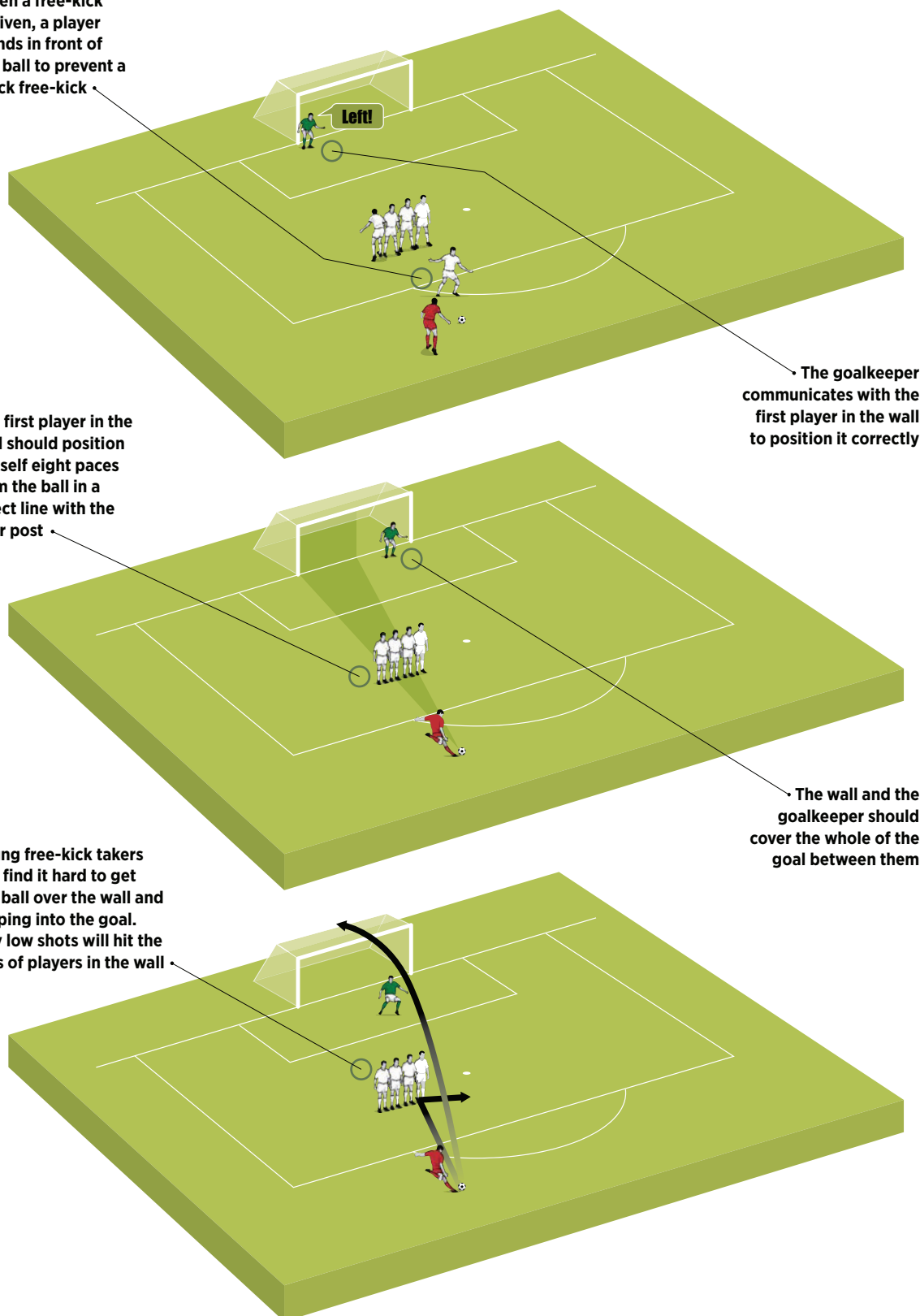
## TECHNIQUE

By following this session teams are less likely to get punished from quick free-kicks or from direct shots at the goal. The positioning of the wall and the keeper are key to successfully defending free-kick set pieces.

When a free-kick is given, a player stands in front of the ball to prevent a quick free-kick

The first player in the wall should position himself eight paces from the ball in a direct line with the near post

Young free-kick takers will find it hard to get the ball over the wall and dipping into the goal. Any low shots will hit the legs of players in the wall



Player movement 

Ball movement 

Run with ball 

Shot 