

Michael Beale

The Ultimate

SOCCER

WARM-UPS

MANUAL

126 quick, easy and
fun ways to kick-start
your coaching sessions

SoccerCoach 

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The Ultimate Soccer Warm-Ups Manual

126 quick, easy and fun ways to kick-start your coaching sessions

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About the author

Mike is a Chelsea FC Academy coach. He works closely with kids and young adults, developing talented players into the stars of the future. He has a deep love and enthusiasm for the game and is desperate to share his knowledge with coaches around the world.

Mike has playing experience at all levels of the game. He was a professional with English Premiership club Charlton Athletic and FC Twente of the Eredivisie in the Netherlands. He has also played for a number of English Representative teams and US colleges.

His professional qualifications include:

- UEFA A licence
- UEFA B
- FA Level 2
- Sports Psychology diploma
- Sports Nutrition diploma
- Futebol de Salao coaching qualification
- Community Sports Leader Award
- FA Youth Coaching qualification
- FA Child Protection qualification

He is currently working towards a degree qualification in Professional Football Management and Business.

Mike's coaching career has so far included spells at Chelsea FC Ladies, Crystal Palace FC Ladies and AFC Wimbledon U19s. He currently manages a number of Chelsea FC youth teams.

Foreword

When I first met Mike Beale we talked a lot about coaching techniques and soccer generally. But as our conversation progressed, every now and then a distant look would come over his eyes and his voice would trail off. I'm boring him, I thought to myself. But then he would pick up his pen and quickly scribble out yet another new training exercise. He just can't help himself.

Mike lives, breathes, eats and sleeps soccer. If he isn't coming up with new drills, he's coaching at the Chelsea Academy or writing about coaching or watching matches.

The biggest lesson I've learned from Mike is the idea of providing your players with choice. Rather than telling them to follow a strict routine in an exercise, provide them with choices and get them to make decisions. This approach encourages individuality and self-expression and helps fight against the cookie-cutter mentality. Ultimately, this will help develop a player's flare and confidence.

Choice is also a big element of this book. There are 126 different exercises inside. I am certain that you will find enough material to keep your players stimulated, engaged, fit and happy – and they will never be bored.



Dwyer Scullion

Editor and Publisher

Introduction

For a soccer player of any age the warm-up is vitally important in helping reduce the risk of injury and preparing the body for exercise, but for the coach it is arguably the most important part of the session.

The warm-up is the first thing that happens in a session and sets the tone for the rest of the practice. As coaches we must inspire the players from the first moment they arrive at the match or training venue. The environment must be friendly, fun, energizing and competitive.

This sounds much easier than it actually is and the majority of coaches are always looking for new ideas and ways in which we can improve ourselves and our players and teams.

In this book I aim to provide you with many different types of warm-up practice that will improve your players both physically and technically.

Younger players don't necessarily need to perform all the stretching described here and you might just give them a ball and let them play various small sided games and exercises.

But does this style of coaching for older players work?

Keep the players moving

No doubt you will spend a little more time developing older players physically but you must not lose sight of the fact that the players come to the sessions in order to play soccer. In any training session, the game of soccer is the best learner and the players must spend the majority of their time with the ball.

Try to limit the amount of talking you do as a coach. You may want to pull an individual out of the practice and advise on technique. If it's a group drill then use a quick "basketball-style" time out and then let the players continue working. It's important to keep the players moving at a good flow and intensity during the warm-up phase.

I have included a wide range of different warm-ups in order to accommodate various numbers, age of player, ability of player and levels of intensity. The coach must adapt the size of the area used and the timing of the practices in order to suit their particular group.

In creating the sessions I have tried to transfer my thoughts to that of a young player and in order to improve my players' learning, enjoyment and ability I always make sure that the following statements are true:

- the session is fun
- the session is competitive
- the players have freedom to express their individual ability
- the players have choices in movement and technique
- the players have to think and solve problems
- the session is realistic and challenging
- the game is the leader, not the coach

THE WARM-UP

It is essential to begin every session with a warm-up as this prepares the body for the activity about to be undertaken, as well as reducing the risk of muscle injuries.

The warm-up is not only about raising your heart rate and then stretching your muscles; it is also about preparing your mind for the session or match. A good warm-up helps encourage a more professional approach, builds team spirit and improves performance.

For many professional soccer players the warm-up is about getting a positive mental attitude for the match by having some fun, building up energy and working on their technical skills.

Warm-ups can include work with or without a ball but in my view it should always include some ball work. Players are happier when working with the ball and you can work on both physical and technical aspects at the same time.

The warm-up should always start slowly and gradually build up in intensity.

The following can be used in a warm-up

- jogging and low intensity running
- static and dynamic stretching
- ball work, either individually or in groups
- short, high intensity running and changing of direction

The warm-up should always be designed to the specific needs of your individual players and team.

10 things to remember when warming up

- 1 Make it fun.
- 2 Make sure the players understand the reasons for warming up.
- 3 Make it relative to the theme/activity you are about to undertake.
- 4 You can work with or without the ball.
- 5 Start gently and then build up the intensity and heart rate.
- 6 Provide sufficient time for stretching and ensure that the technique is correct.
- 7 Provide adequate rest periods and ensure that water is available (taking on water is essential before, during and after exercise).
- 8 Time management is important – don't go on for too long.
- 9 Distances covered and size of area – make sure these are correct and not unrealistic.
- 10 Make allowances for the weather.

STRETCHING

Stretching has a very important role in soccer as it increases flexibility, range of movement and can help to reduce injury. Players should always be encouraged to stretch whether this is at home on a daily basis, before or after exercise or during breaks in both matches and training sessions.

There are two main types of stretches:

- static
- dynamic

We will look at both in more detail and give some examples of stretches that can be beneficial to you and your players.

Static stretching

Although static stretching is important there are no scientific studies that suggest it will help to improve the individual performance of a soccer player. It is very much down to personal opinion and peace of mind whether static stretching takes place in your team or individual warm-up. I like to use static stretching on the main leg/kicking muscles (hamstring, thigh, groin, calf) and use this stretching period as a time for calm and focus on the task ahead.

Static stretching is when the muscle is stretched to its maximum and held for a short period of time. You should feel the stretch on your muscle and then hold for a short period. The position should be comfortable and stretching should never be painful.

Examples of static stretching

- 1 Groin stretch – sit on the floor, bring your feet together so that both soles are touching. Gently lean forward and pull your feet off the floor. You should begin to feel the stretch in your groin area.
- 2 Thigh stretch – lay on one side and bend you leg towards your hand. Hold the leg in this period for a set time period. If you are unable to feel the muscles stretching then extend the leg backwards to increase the intensity.
- 3 Calf stretch – stand up; put one leg out in front of the other. Bend the front knee slightly whilst keeping the back leg straight and with the heel on the floor. Place you hands on your hips and lean forward to feel the stretch.
- 4 Hamstring stretch – stand up and place your legs shoulder width apart. Keep your legs straight. Bend forward and attempt to touch the floor. Once in this position you can push your arms out in front, between your legs, to the left or to the right in order to stretch the muscles on both legs.

Dynamic stretching

Dynamic stretching is simply stretching on the move. This type of stretching should be specific to soccer and include various kicking, changing of direction and movement patterns.

Although dynamic stretching will not increase flexibility it has been proven to enhance a player's performance.

All dynamic stretching is performed to a rhythm and this makes it more difficult to perform correctly than static stretching.

Examples of dynamic stretching

- 1** Heel flicks – whilst jogging, put your hands behind your back and then with each stride bring your heel up to flick against the palms of your hands.
- 2** High knees – whilst jogging, put your hands out in front of your body and then with each stride bring your knees up high to flick against the palm of your hands.
- 3** High kicks – jogging with three steps (1, 2, 3) make alternate kicking motions keeping the leg straight as you follow through.
- 4** Kick across body – jogging with three steps (1, 2, 3) make alternate kicking motions across your body.
- 5** Groin opening – bend your leg and bring your knee up and in front of your body, slowly move the knee outwards in a circular motion and then back down to the floor.
- 6** Groin closing – standing side on, bend your leg and bring your knee up in front of your body, slowly move the knee inwards in a circular motion towards your other leg (almost as if you are stepping over a little fence).

1. Warm-ups without a ball

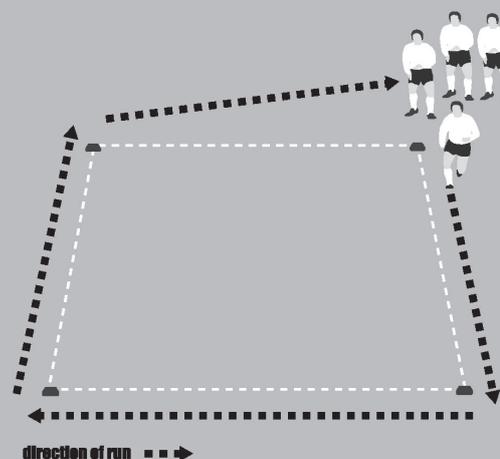
1. Box run



Actions

Get your players to perform a series of runs and complete one circuit of the box before resting.

- 1 Forward, sprinting around the cones.
- 2 Forward to first cone, backwards to next cone and repeat.
- 3 Forward to first cone, side steps to next cone and repeat.
- 4 Forward to first, turn and run diagonally to second, then forward and down side before going diagonally back to the start.
- 5 Forward to first, backwards diagonally to second, forward to third and then backwards diagonally to fourth.



What to shout:

- “Drive off, slow down and bend knees into the corners”
- “Explode and sprint after the turn”

2. Bounce and go



Actions

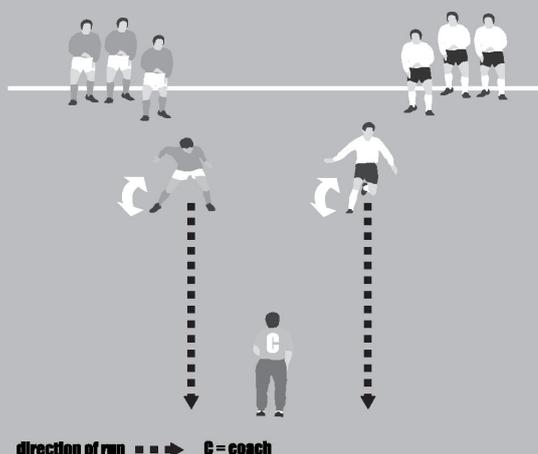
Tell your players to continuously bounce around in various directions. On your whistle, the players must react to whatever direction they are facing and then sprint to get past you first.



Progression

Add a ball to the practice. The players can be moving the ball and performing various skills.

On your whistle the players then have to dribble their ball past you.



What to shout:

- “Relax and bounce around”
- “Plant feet and drive off the mark”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

3. Sprinting cone react



Actions

The players must react to you calling a number. Get them to sprint to the number cone that you call. They must then jog on the spot until the next number is called. When you call “go”, the players sprint past you. Make sure they always face forward during this practice. They will therefore have to use back pedaling movements if you were to call “2 then 1”.



Progression

This time the number sequence is called at the start and the players do NOT jog on the spot. So if you call “3, 2” the players would sprint to cone 3, back pedal to cone 2 and then sprint past you.



What to shout:

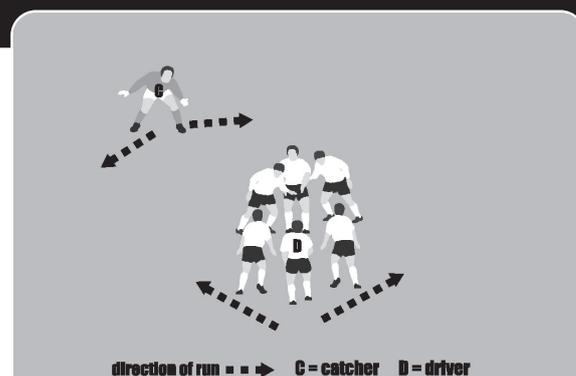
- “Be alert”
- “React quickly and drive off the mark”

4. Huddle movement



Actions

Nominate one player as the catcher.
Nominate another player as the driver.
The catcher goes out of the group.
The driver must put a bib in the back of their shorts and then get the rest of the players to link arms and form a huddle.
On your whistle, the catcher must try to pull the bib out of the driver’s shorts.
The driver must command the huddle to move either left or right in order to avoid being caught.
Continue the practice for 30 seconds or until the bib is successfully pulled away.



What to shout:

- “Listen to the driver”
- “Move your feet quickly”
- “Work as a team”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

5. Bib/cone reaction



Actions

Lay out various coloured bibs or cones inside a small area.

Get your players to jog around performing various warm-up movements.

On your call of a colour, the players must race to stand next to one of the bib/cones.

Make sure that there is one less bib/cone of each colour than there are players. If the players don't react quickly enough they're out!



C = coach



What to shout:

- "Be ready"
- "Be aware of what's around you"
- "React quickly"

6. Arrowheads



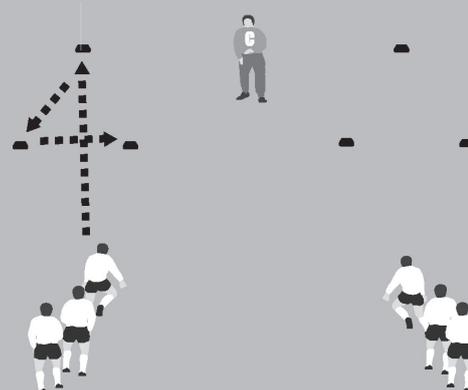
Actions

Place three cones in the shape of an arrowhead.

Upon your call of either "left" or "right" the players must complete four movements:

- 1 Sprint to the top of the arrowhead first
- 2 Then jockey diagonally to the side that the coach has called
- 3 Then side step to the opposite cone before
- 4 Turn and sprint back to the group.

The players must always face forward when completing the arrowhead movement.



C = coach



What to shout:

- "Always look forward"
- "Move and adjust feet quickly"

1. Warm-ups without a ball

7. Conductor and orchestra



Actions

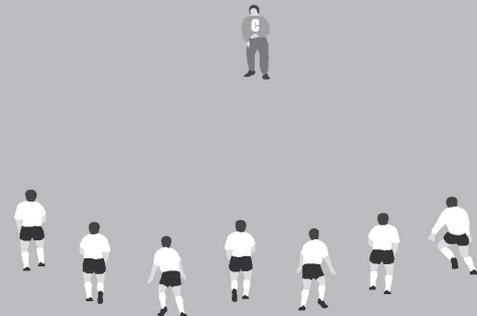
The players must react to your call and move in that direction.

They must always face you.

Call the following:

- Forward
- Sides to the left
- Sides to the right
- Jockey forward
- Jockey back
- Header
- Turn and sprint.

You can also include some dynamic stretches such as heel flicks and high knees.



C = coach



What to shout:

- “React quickly”
- “Be alert”
- “Move your feet”

8. Stepping mines



Actions

Four players must attempt to get across the coned area.

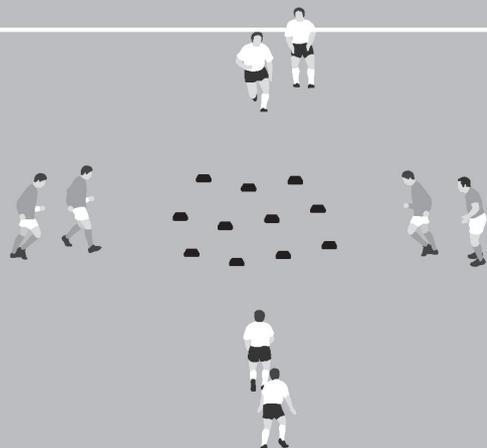
The players must side step the other players and use quick feet to avoid touching the cones on their way across.

The practice works continuously for a set period of time.



Progression

Give them a ball and have them dribble across the area.



What to shout:

- “Imagine stepping on hot ground”
- “Quick tip tap shuffles with feet”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

10. See, hear, feel



Actions

The players work through a series of sprints over a distance of ten yards.

You are trying to see how different players react to different sensory impulses.

Sprint 1 – visual

The players wait for you to drop a ball and then they sprint.

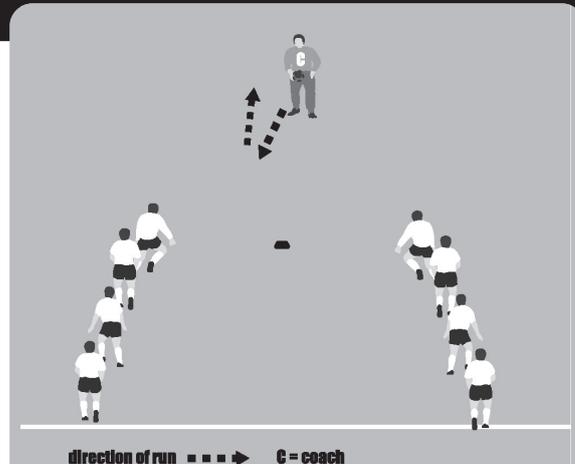
Sprint 2 – audio

The players wait for your call or whistle and then they sprint.

Sprint 3 – touch

The coach stands behind the players. The players wait for you to touch them on the shoulder and then they sprint.

Record the difference in the players' reaction times to the three sprints. You will be surprised to see the variations in individual's reaction times.



What to shout:

- “Work to your maximum”
- “It’s important we see the different reactions to different situations”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

11. Someone's following me

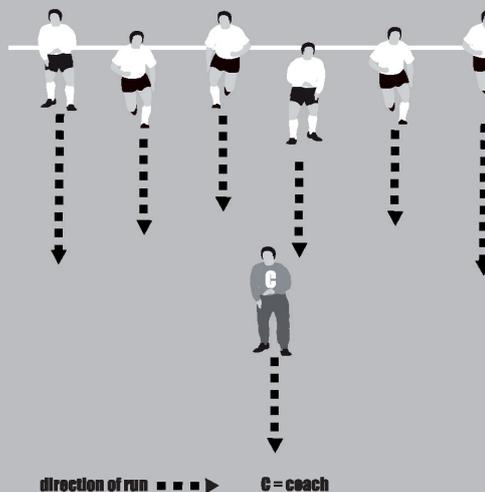


Actions

The players must try to catch you but they can only move when you are facing away from them.

If you manage to spot a player moving forward, they are "out" and must return to the starting position.

The first player to make contact with you wins the game.



What to shout:

- "Always look up"
- "Move quickly using small steps"

12. Knock the ball



Actions

The player in the middle must react to you calling out a colour.

The player must knock the ball off the cone called and then react to the next call.

Once all the balls have been knocked off, the player must then sprint out of the area and past you.



Progression

Play this game with a competitive edge. Have two or three circles marked out. The players must now race to be the first player past the coach.



What to shout:

- "Know where the colours are"
- "React quickly"

1. Warm-ups without a ball

13. Movement chase



Roles

One player acts as the attacker.

One player acts as the defender.



Actions

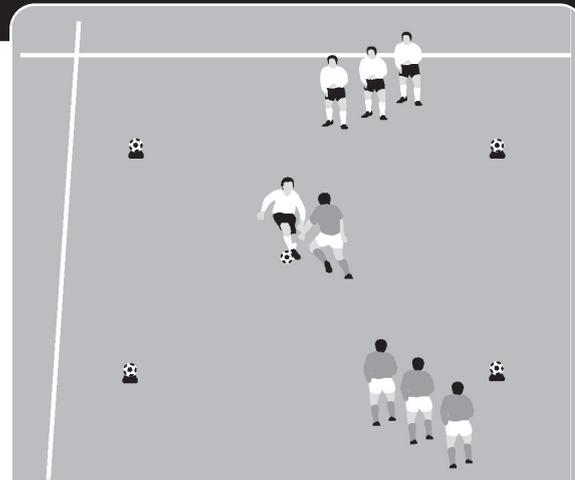
The defender must mirror the attacker's movements.

The attacker tries to lose the defender and race to knock a ball off one of the cones.

Can the defender react and beat the attacker to the cone?

The defender is allowed to go shoulder to shoulder or use their arms to hold off the attacker but he must not commit a foul.

Switch roles for the next attack.



What to shout:

- "Be clever"

- "Show disguise"

- "React quickly"

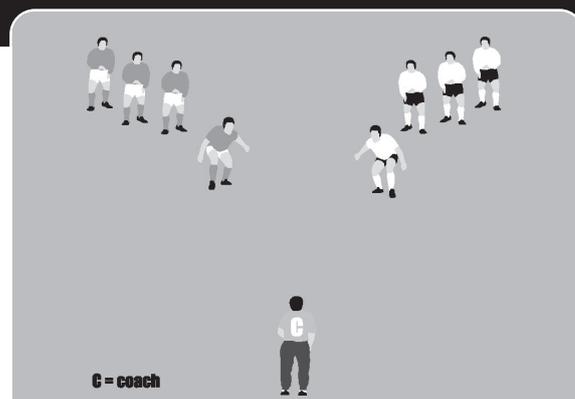
14. Reaction sprints



Actions

As with number 10 above you can change the starting theme for each sprint in order to test the player's reaction times. The following actions/themes are used:

- React to whistle
- React to touch
- React to dropped ball
- Bouncing around and react to whistle
- Two headers and react to direction called
- Jog forward and react to direction called
- Backwards running, react to call and turn to sprint
- Jockeying backwards, react to call and turn to sprint.



What to shout:

1. "Be alert"

2. "React quickly"

3. "Drive off your leading foot"

1. Warm-ups without a ball

15. Warm-up circle



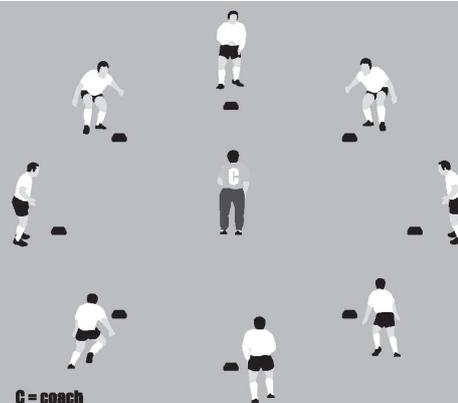
Actions

Get each player to stand behind a cone.

You stand in the middle of the circle.

The players react and move to your call, as follows:

- Go left – players side step continuously to the left
- Go right – players side step continuously to the right
- 2 left or 1 right – players move 1 or 2 cones to the side called
- Middle – players run into the coach and jockey backwards out
- Go – the players sprint across the area and switch places with the player opposite.



What to shout:

- “Be alert”
- “Be on your toes”
- “Adjust your feet”

16. Go left or go right



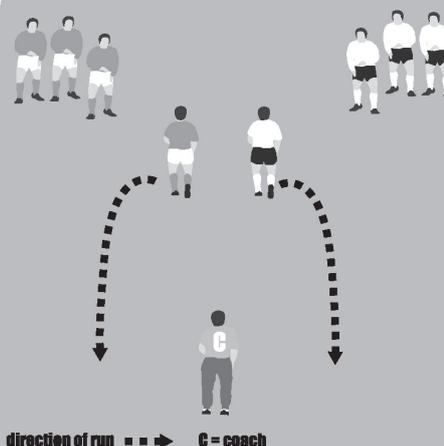
Actions

Get the two working players to jog on the spot and react to your call of left or right.

Upon your call, the players must turn in that direction quickly and sprint past you.

This practice is very important in the development of young soccer players as often there is a big difference in turning and reaction times depending on which is the natural kicking foot.

You can improve this reaction time by completing various exercises that make it natural for the players to turn off both feet.



What to shout:

- Turning to right – “push off your left foot into the turn”
- Turning to left – “push off your right foot into the turn”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

17. Colour react



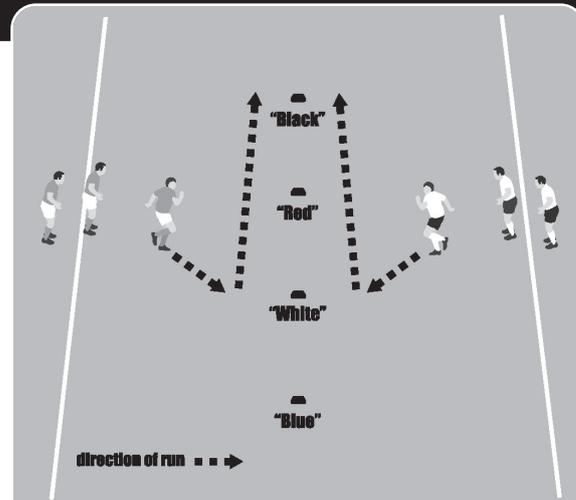
Actions

The players must react to your call and move to the appropriate cone.

You can call one colour or a set of colours.

The players must touch the cones and then sprint through to the opposite end.

An example would be “White and Black” as shown in the diagram.



What to shout:

- “Sprint”

- “Quickly react”

- “Adjust your feet”

- “Sprint to the finish line”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

18. Bounce around and react to the call

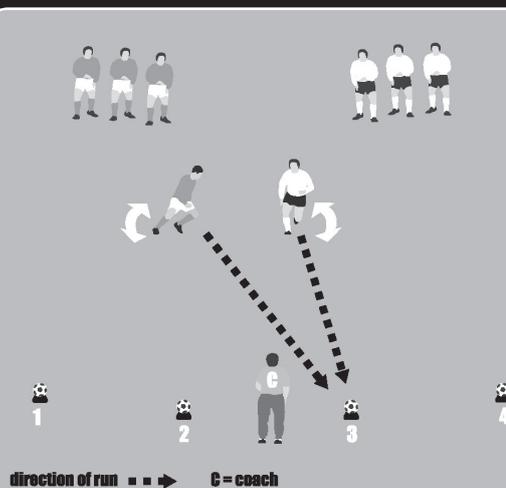


Actions

Get the players to continuously bounce around in random directions.

Call out a number. The players must react, sprint and try to be the first to knock the ball off the cone.

The players can use their bodies and arms to hold each other off but must not commit a foul.



What to shout:

- “Memorize the numbers”
- “Relax on the bounce but stay alert”
- “Plant feet and drive off”
- “Use your body strength”

19. Bib pull away



Actions

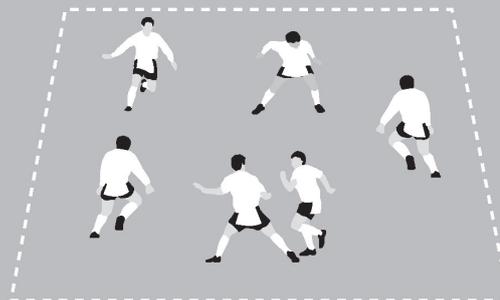
Each player must put a bib in the back of their shorts.

The players must move around the area and try to pull someone else's bib away.

They must also try to protect their own bibs.

If your bib gets pulled away you are out of the game.

The player who is left after everyone else has lost their bib is declared the winner.



What to shout:

- “Stay side on”
- “Keep looking around and never stand still”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

20. Speed reaction knockoff



Actions

Four players enter the area.

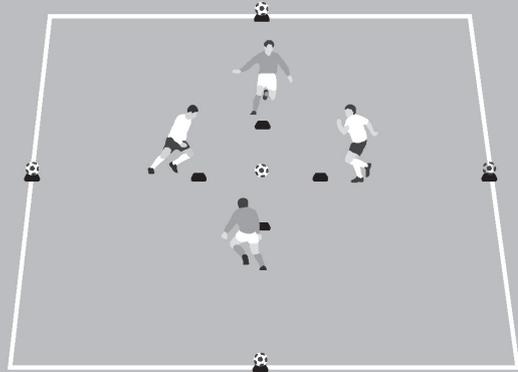
Each player goes to a cone and begins to jog on the spot.

The players must react to your call.

If you call “left” or “right” the players must move to the correct cone.

If you call “switch”, the players switch positions with the players opposite them.

When you blow a whistle, the players must turn and sprint to knock the ball off their outside cone and then race back to try and get to the middle ball first.



What to shout:

- “Be on your toes”
- “Move your feet quickly”
- “Drive off your leading foot”

21. Pressing technique



Actions

Get your players to pressure the mannequins one at a time.

Tell them to hold the pressure for 2–3 seconds before moving on.

Get them to angle their runs and show the mannequins inside, outside or jockey.



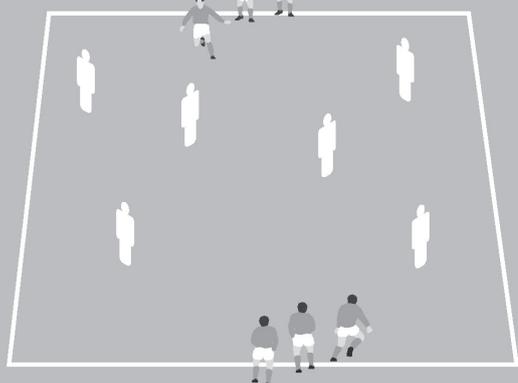
Progression

Work with two players.

The first player pressures.

The second player reacts to the first player's pressure and takes up the correct supporting position.

NOTE: The mannequin can be replaced with cones/poles if mannequins are unavailable.



What to shout:

- “Sprint to pressure”
- “Slow down as you approach”
- “Edge closer and take up the correct pressing position”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

22. Zig-zag warm-up



Actions

Players must complete a set of four runs.

On each run the players must show the mannequin inside.

Get them to angle their approach to the mannequins and work at realistic match pace.

Make sure they hold the pressure for 2–3 seconds on each mannequin.



Progression

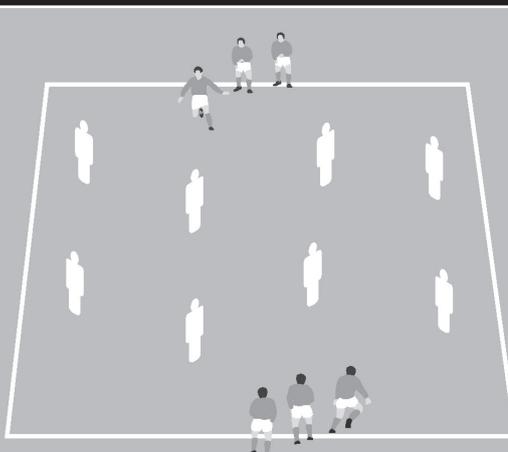
Players now work in pairs.

The first player gets tight and shows the mannequin inside.

The second player will take up a supporting run inside.

The players switch roles in order to pressure the next mannequin.

NOTE: The mannequin can be replaced with cones/poles if mannequins are unavailable.



What to shout:

- “Sprint to pressure”
- “Slow down as you approach”
- “Edge closer and take up the correct pressing position”

1. Warm-ups without a ball

23. React and pressure



Actions

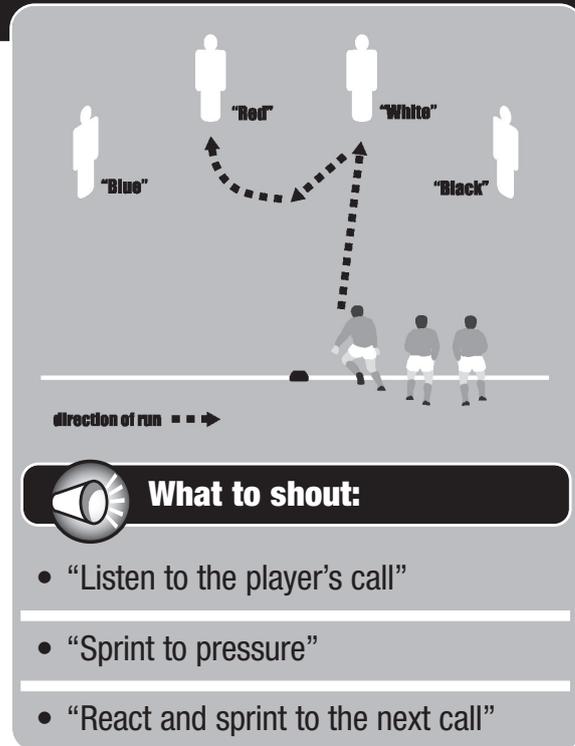
This practice is controlled by the players.

The working player must react to the waiting players' call.

The waiting player calls out a colour.

The working player must sprint to pressure the coloured pole/cone/mannequin called.

The player must hold this pressure for 2–3 seconds or until another colour is called.



1. Warm-ups without a ball

24. Protecting the ball or fighting for possession



Actions

Arrange your players as in the illustration.

The defending player must see how many balls they can knock off the cones in a set time.

The player protecting the ball must try to hold off the defender.



Progression

You can turn this practice into a continuous exercise.

If the defender wins possession they take the place of the player protecting the ball.

The player who lost possession must now race to try and win a different ball.

This practice enables all players to work at the same time on winning and protecting/shielding the ball.



What to shout:

- “Be strong”
- “Use your body”
- “Be alert and on your toes”

2. Agility ladder warm-ups

Quick to set-up and take down, agility ladders have become a very popular option in warming up practices. There are many different ladder movement exercises. The following examples can be used to improve the footwork, speed, agility, quickness and co-ordination of your players.

10 fast feet ladder drills

1 One foot

The players sprint through the ladder putting one foot between each rung of the ladder.

2 Two feet

The players sprint through the ladder putting two feet between each rung of the ladder.

3 Three forward, one back

The players make three forward steps followed by one backwards step as they go through the ladder.

4 Zig-zag

The players make quick side step movements in and out of the rungs in a zig zag motion. Tell your players to start to the right of the ladder and put their right foot into the first rung, then bring the left foot into the rung and the right foot out the opposite side. Continue this action along the ladder.

Tell your players to make three quick steps. It often helps if they count the steps as they go – “1,2,3” – “1,2,3”. Once comfortable going forward, get them to do the same practice going backwards.

5 In and out

Get your players to stand side-on to the ladder and have them put two feet into each rung in a forward and backwards motion. Next time, get them to face the opposite direction so that they get used to working to the right then left.

6 Jumps

The players must make two footed jumps through the ladder.

7 The hop

The players must make one footed hops through the ladders. This can be the same leg all the way through the ladder or three rungs on each leg.

8 Jump inside and outside

The players must make a two footed jump inside the first rung and then outside the second rung. The player's legs will therefore be together for the first landing and then open for the second landing.

9 Side stepping

The players must start side-on to the ladder and then jog/side step through the ladder using a high knee lift on each stride. The players should face the opposite direction on their next turn so that they get used to leading with both feet.

2. Agility ladder warm-ups

10 The crossover

The player must start with one foot inside the first rung and then in a swinging motion turn their hips and bring the first foot out and the next foot into the ladder. This swing on the hips and changing of legs continues along the ladder.

Training Tips

Follow these simple rules to make sure your players benefit fully from using agility ladders:

- Start slowly and as you build confidence in the exercise speed up. It's more important to have the correct technique than to sprint through the ladder. It's not a race.
- Listen to your feet. They should be making the correct sound and steps. Work to a rhythm.
- If you are struggling to grasp the rhythm then include some word cues such as "in and out, in and out" or "1,2,3 – 1,2,3".
- Use your arms. Most players are completely unaware of what their arms are doing when they are concentrating on their feet. Ensure that the players are using their arms in a running motion as this will add balance and strength.

Progressions

- You can add a sprint at the end of the ladder or include a ball and some technique work.
- Combine various ladder exercises into one practice so that the players have to continually adjust their feet.
- Ladders can be incorporated into station/circuit work.

Cones or balls can be used to recreate a ladder if one is not available to you.

2. Agility ladder warm-ups

25. Continuous ladders



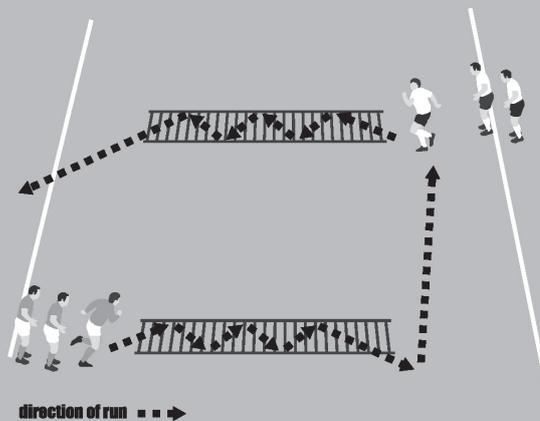
Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

The first player on both groups works the ladder.

The next player starts once the previous player has come across to join their group.

The players have a choice on which ladder footwork drill they complete, however they must not continually repeat the same drill.



What to shout:

- “Quick feet”

- “Use your arms”

- “Use different footwork drills”

26. Front and side steps



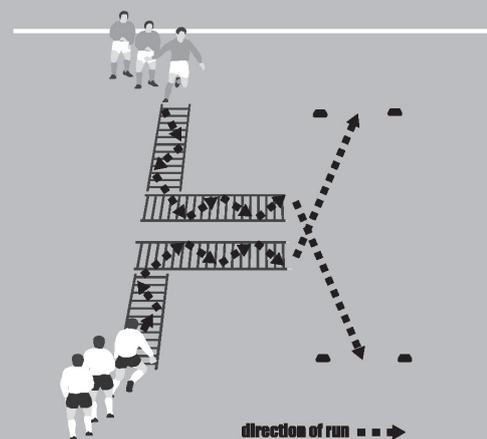
Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

Both groups work at the same time.

The first player in both lines must go forward through the ladder and side step through the second ladder.

They must then sprint through the gates and join the back of the opposite line.



What to shout:

- “Quick feet”

- “Adjust feet”

- “Use your arms and sprint to finish”

2. Agility ladder warm-ups

27. Stop players turning



Actions

Two coaches/servers repeatedly pass to each other using two touches.

Tell your defenders to react and travel as the ball is played in order to put pressure on the coach/server and stop them turning.

The player holds this pressure until the ball is played back to the other server.

The player then just jogs through to the opposite end making various dynamic movements on their way across.



Progression

Add ladders and cones so that the players can complete fast feet drills on their way across to the opposite end.



What to shout:

- “Press as the ball is played”
- “Sprint quickly and get touch tight”

28. Forward and backward steps



Actions

The practice works continuously for a set period of time.

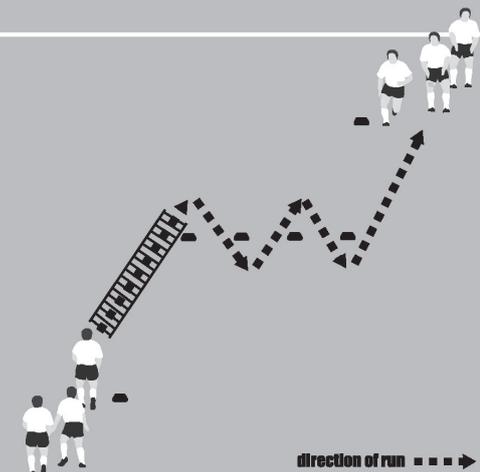
Get the player that starts the practice to sprint to the cones and then move through them by going forwards and then backwards.

The player then sprints to the back of the opposite group.



Progression

You can add a ball into the practice so that when the player has completed the forward and backward steps they will receive a varied serve for a volley, header or one-two pass.



What to shout:

- “Sprint”
- “Slow down and push off your standing foot”

3. Warm-ups with a ball each

29. Penny soccer



Actions

You need one player and three balls.

Get the player to pass the first ball between the other two balls.

Before the first ball has stopped rolling, the player must pass a second ball between the other two balls.

This is repeated with the player counting how many successful passes they make.

If the previous ball stops rolling before the next ball is kicked or the passing ball does not go between the other two balls then the game is over.

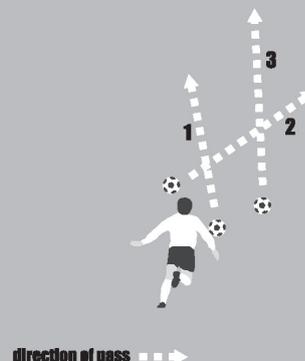


Progression

Add a partner and two small goals.

Can the first player successfully make passes up to their opponent's goal and then score?

If not, the other player takes over from where the first player made the mistake and attempts to attack their goal.



What to shout:

- "Keep on the move"
- "Have a soft touch on the ball"
- "Use both feet"

30. Dribble and touch the balls



Actions

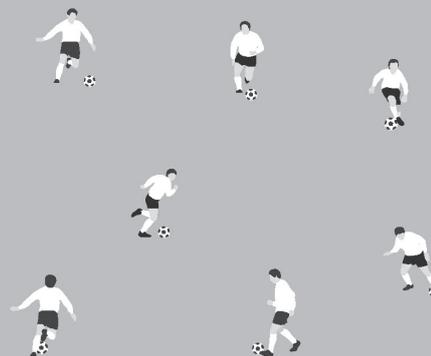
Get your players to dribble their balls around the area and complete various skills and turn movements.

On your whistle the players must quickly touch three balls with their hands and then continue to dribble.



Progression

Get the players to perform header jumps, step-overs or foot touches on each ball.



What to shout:

- "React quickly to the whistle"
- "Sprint and touch the balls"

3. Warm-ups with a ball each

31. Ball manipulation/familiarity



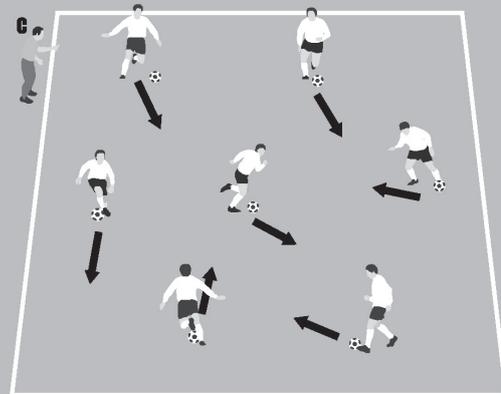
Actions

Cone off a small playing area.

Give each player a ball.

Work your players through the following dribbling exercises. The exercises will enable the players to work with both feet whilst using various parts of the foot.

- 1 Best foot
- 2 Weak foot
- 3 Inside and outside of best foot
- 4 Inside and outside of weak foot
- 5 Move around using only the sole of your foot to drag the ball
- 6 Dribble around and drop your shoulder and then take the ball in the opposite direction
- 7 Inside and outside of best followed by inside and outside of weak foot
- 8 Inside, outside and then a sole drag with best foot
- 9 Inside, outside and then a sole drag with weak foot
- 10 Inside, outside and then a sole drag with best foot and then continue with weak foot
- 11 Inside, outside, sole drag and then a step-over with best foot
- 12 Inside, outside, sole drag and then a step-over with weak foot
- 13 Inside, outside, sole drag and then step over with best and then continue with weak foot
- 14 Sole drag x 2 and then a step-over with best foot and then continue with weak foot
- 15 Sole and step-over with best foot and then take away with weak foot
- 16 Sole and step-over with weak foot and then take away with best foot
- 17 Dribble and step across the ball with your best foot, then take away with the outside of your best foot. Now repeat on your weak foot
- 18 Dribble forward and cut the ball with the inside of your best foot behind your weak foot and into space. Now repeat with your weak foot



What to shout:

- "It's always hard before it's easy"
- "Don't be afraid to ask for help"
- "Enjoy trying to master the skills"

- 19 Put your best foot on the ball and drag the ball towards your weak foot, now step-across the ball, missing it with your weak foot (the Ronaldo move)
- 20 Dribble the ball with your best foot, make a step-over with your weak foot and immediately step across the ball with your best foot. Now your whole body is the other side of the ball and you take the ball away with the outside of your best foot.

This is a basic 20 minute ball manipulation warm-up. I have over 150 drills in my personal library. As a coach you should challenge yourself and your players to see who can create and demonstrate a new skill in each session. You should look at the new skills being used by the world's best players and try to re-create this in your training programme or as a weekly homework skill.

3. Warm-ups with a ball each

32. Zig-zag skills



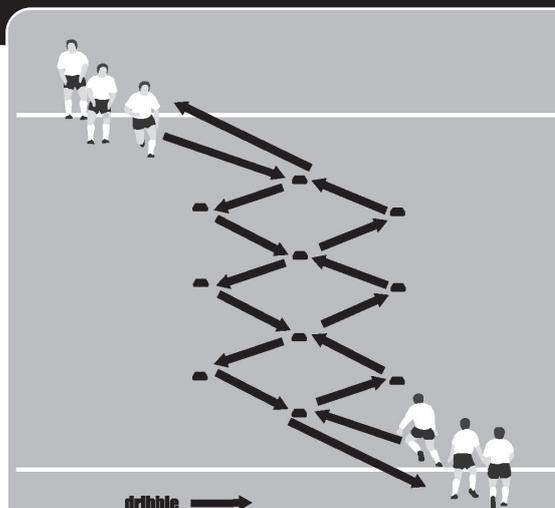
Actions

Arrange your players into two groups with two balls working at the same time.

Get your players to perform a series of running and skill movements using both feet as follows:

- 1 Around the cones
- 2 Drop shoulder
- 3 Step-overs
- 4 Sole pull back and flick behind the standing leg
- 5 Cut the ball behind the standing leg.

Each movement is repeated for a set time period.



What to shout:

- "Use both feet"
- "Show disguise"
- "Burst away from cones"

3. Warm-ups with a ball each

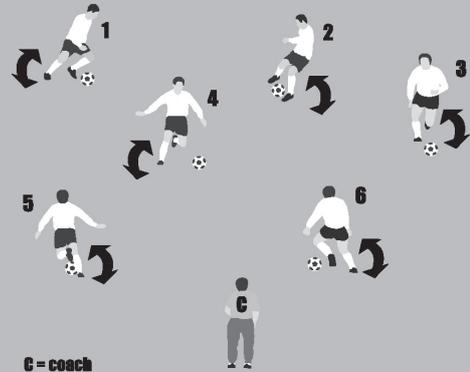
33. Dynamic movements with a ball



Actions

The players must react to your demonstration.

- 1** The players make two steps towards the ball and then a big step-over with the right foot followed by two steps backwards. The exercise is then repeated for the left foot.
- 2** The players jog towards the ball and then make jockey movements backwards.
- 3** The players take two steps forward and then make a kicking action to the side of the ball before making two steps backwards and repeating on the opposite side.
- 4** The players make side steps towards the ball and then make a high step over the ball with one leg before repeating in the opposite direction with the other leg.
- 5** The players jog behind their ball and then listen for your call of “right” or “left”. The players must quickly react and circle the ball in the direction called.
- 6** The players repeat the same as above but this time they must jump over the ball and land before circling the ball.



What to shout:

- “Work with a rhythm”
- “Always keep on the move”
- “Be light on your toes”

3. Warm-ups with a ball each

34. Dribble and movements to the balls



Actions

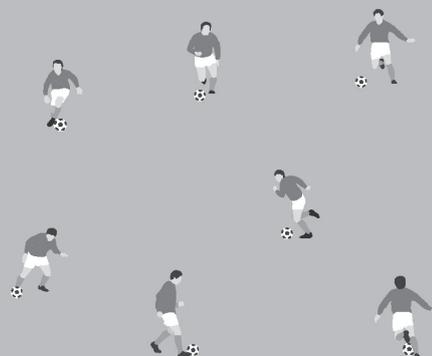
Get your players to dribble their balls around the area using various skills and turns.

On your whistle they must leave their balls and make various warm-up movements to each ball, for example:

- Heel kicks
- High knees
- Side steps
- Forward running
- Backwards running
- Jockeying
- Step-overs on the ball
- Inside ball touches
- Top of ball touches
- Heading jumps over the ball.

The players are free to choose the movements that they make but they must change after each ball they pass.

On your second whistle, the players collect a ball and continue to dribble.



What to shout:

- “React to whistle”
- “Move your feet quickly”
- “Use your imagination when moving around”

35. Dribble on demand



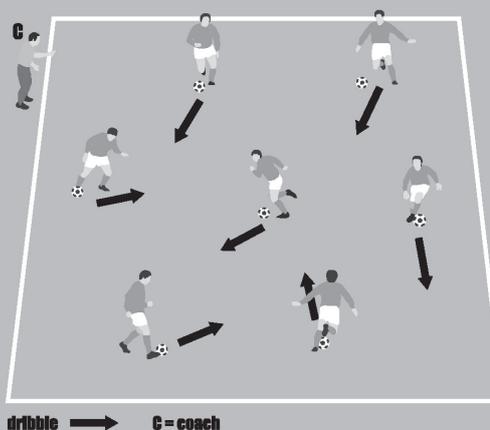
Actions

The players must listen to your various calls and carry out your commands.

You can call out instructions such as:

- Slower
- Faster
- Turn
- Skill
- Keep ball up
- Best foot
- Weak foot
- Change balls.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “React quickly to the coaches call”

3. Warm-ups with a ball each

36. Ball in hands

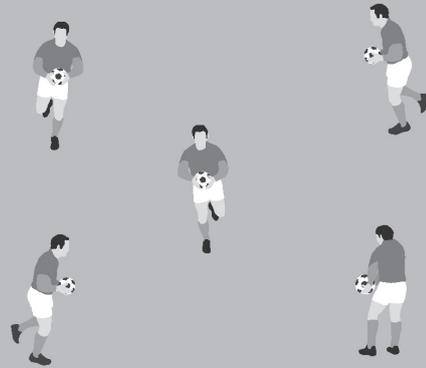


Actions

Get your players to jog around the area with a ball in their hands.

They should complete each of these exercises three times:

- 1 Throw the ball into the air and jump to catch the ball.
- 2 Throw the ball into the air and control with their foot and then dribble into space.
- 3 Throw the ball into the air and control on the thigh to the ground and then dribble into space.
- 4 Throw the ball into the air and control with the chest to the ground and then dribble into space.
- 5 Throw the ball into the air and control with a turn into space and then a dribble.
- 6 Roll the ball between your legs, turn and sprint after the ball.
- 7 Throw the ball back over your head and then turn to control and dribble.



What to shout:

- “Concentrate on your touch”
- “Watch the ball right onto the controlling area”
- “Have a soft touch”

3. Warm-ups with a ball each

37. King of the ring

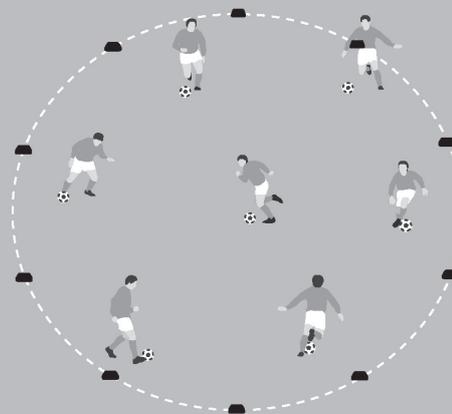


Actions

Get each player to dribble around the area with a ball.

The players must try to kick out the other players' balls whilst protecting their own balls.

The last player left in the area is crowned the king of the ring.



What to shout:

- "Keep on the move"
- "Know what's around you"
- "Use your body and legs to protect your ball"

38. Dribbling gates



Actions

Give each player a ball.

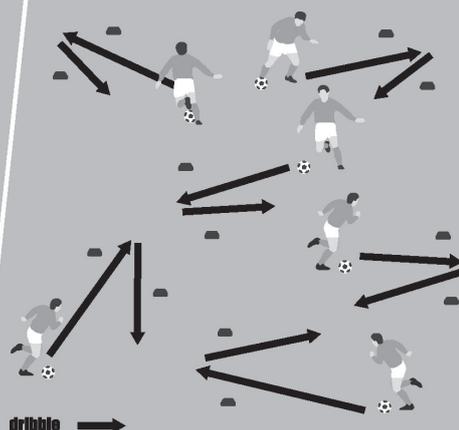
The players must attempt to dribble through as many gates as possible in a set time period.

They aren't allowed to repeatedly go in and out of the same gate.



Progression

Now the players must dribble through the gate and then make a turn back through the same gate.



What to shout:

- "Keep the ball close"
- "Use both feet"
- "Change direction"

4. Warm-ups with a ball between two

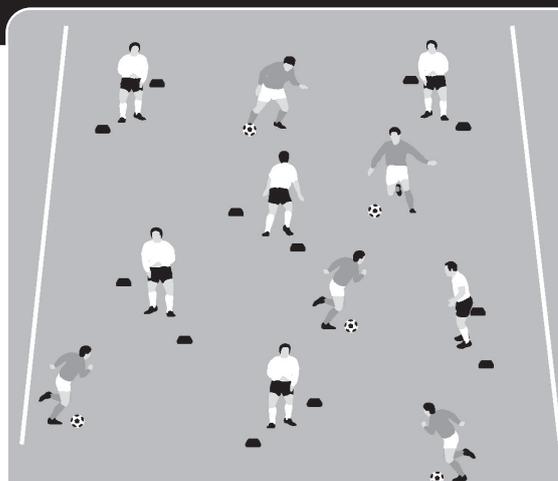
39. Gates – choice



Actions

Organise your players into two teams.
One team must stand in the gates, formed by cones.
The other team must dribble around the area and communicate in order to combine with the players in the gates.
The dribbling players have various choices.

- 1 Dribble and make a take-over movement and then wait in the gate.
- 2 Pass and tell the player to turn, and then wait in the gate.
- 3 One-two with the player in the gate.



What to shout:

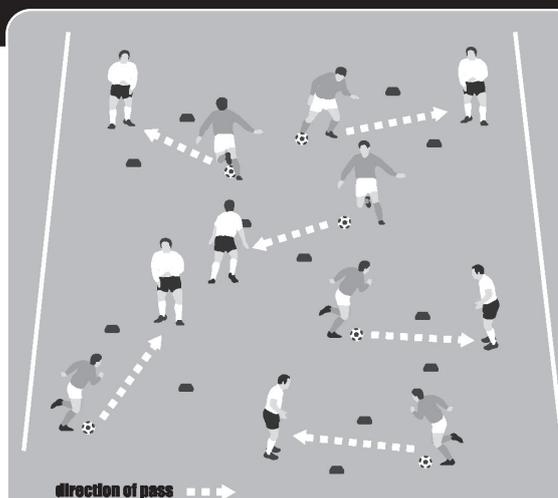
- “Communicate loud and clear”
- “Pass as you would want to receive”

40. Gates – pairs



Actions

Arrange your players in pairs.
The pairs of players must try to make as many passes to each other through as many gates as they can in a set time period.
The player in possession must look up to see which gate their partner has run to.
The pair with the most gate passes in a set period of time are declared the winners.



What to shout:

- “Head up”
- “See your partner”
- “Work together”
- “Communicate”

4. Warm-ups with a ball between two

41. Gate game



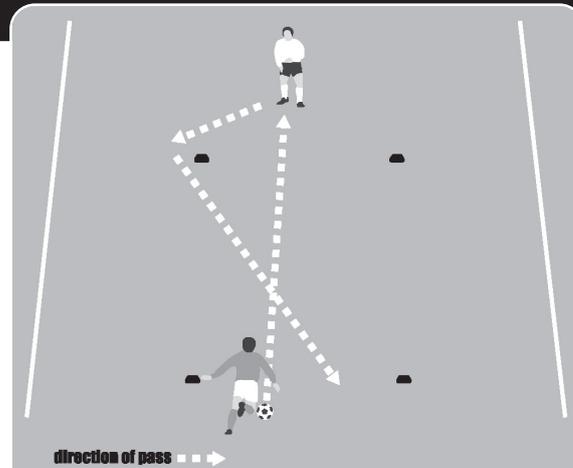
Actions

Get your players to make a 3x5 yd square with cones and stand at opposite ends.

The players must take a touch to the side and then pass through the middle of the two cones (gate).

If one of the players makes a mistake then the other player gets a point and restarts the practice.

The players must use both feet and various parts of the foot to control the ball and make the pass, for example, inside, outside and sole with both right and left foot.



What to shout:

- “Be on your toes”
- “Adjust your feet”
- “Have a good “feel” for the ball”

42. Technique and movement



Actions

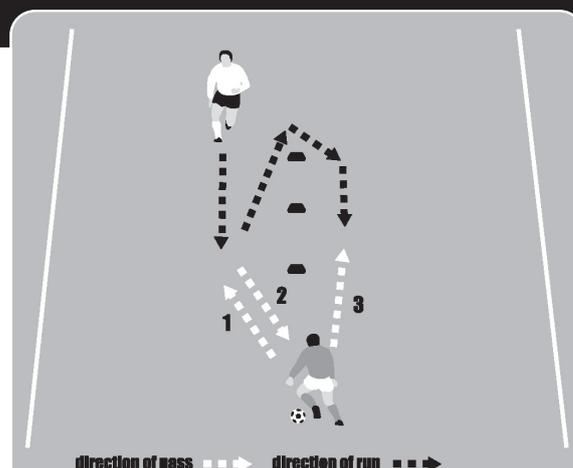
Get one player to act as a server.

The other player works.

The player working must go forward to receive a serve and then back pedal up and around the cones in order to receive another serve on the opposite side.

The players work for one minute each on the following drills:

- 1 First time pass
- 2 Bouncing serve and a half volley
- 3 Aerial serve and a volley
- 4 Aerial serve and a header



What to shout:

- “Plant your standing foot and drive off”
- “Always be on the move”
- “Concentrate on your technique”

4. Warm-ups with a ball between two

43. One passes, one throws



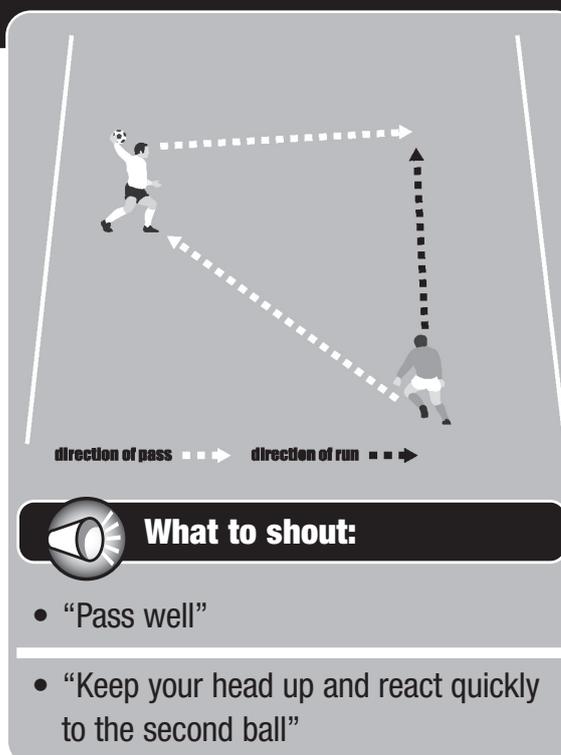
Actions

Two players must work together in order to make this practice work.

Player 1 must make a pass to player 2 and then react to player 2's thrown pass.

Player 1 must sprint after the pass and then pick the ball up.

Player 2 then repeats the practice by passing to player 1.



What to shout:

- "Pass well"
- "Keep your head up and react quickly to the second ball"

44. Dribble and jockey



Actions

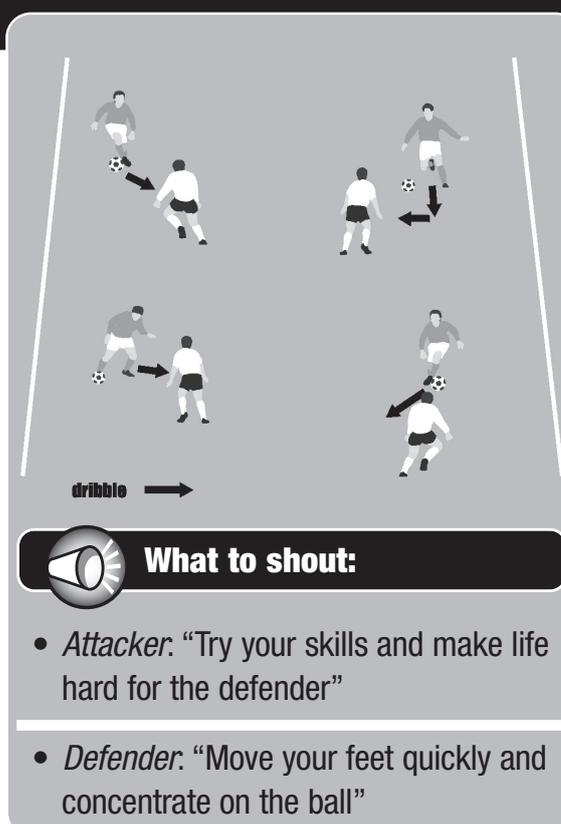
The player in possession of the ball is the attacker.

The player makes various dribbling movements, fakes and skills.

The player not in possession must act as the defender.

The defender must jockey the attacker and change position based on the attacker's movements.

On your whistle, the attacker and defender switch roles and continue the practice.



What to shout:

- *Attacker*: "Try your skills and make life hard for the defender"
- *Defender*: "Move your feet quickly and concentrate on the ball"

4. Warm-ups with a ball between two

45. Dribble, jockey and hold off



Actions

Arrange your players into pairs.

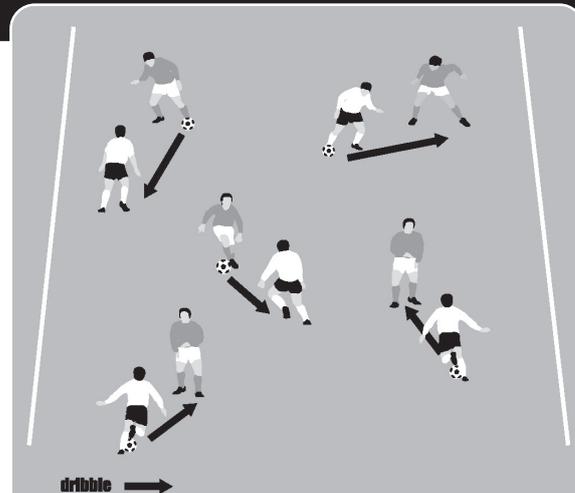
The partner in possession of the ball must dribble and try various skills.

The second player must jockey and continuously change position in relation to the dribbling player.

On your whistle the player in possession now turns away from their partner and begins to hold them off.

On your second whistle, the players change roles.

The practice is repeated continuously for a set time period.



What to shout:

- *Attacker*: “Try your skills and make life hard for the defender”, “get your body in between the defender and the ball”, “use your arms to hold off and add extra distance”
- *Defender*: “Move your feet quickly and concentrate on the ball”

4. Warm-ups with a ball between two

46. Dribble, turn and pass



Actions

Arrange your players into pairs.

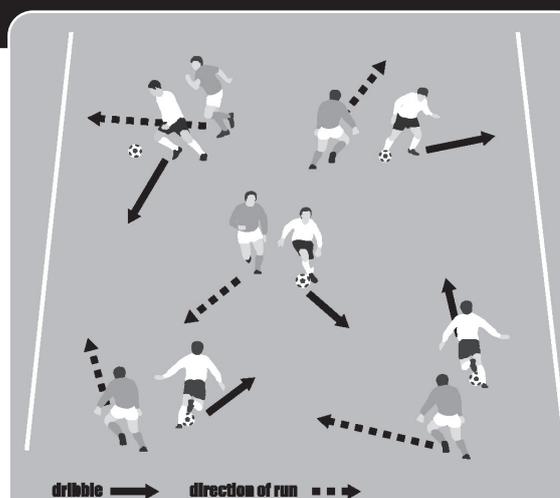
The player in possession must dribble away from their partner.

The partner jogs behind keeping a short distance from their team mate.

On your whistle the player in possession must complete a turn and then pass to their team mate.

The partner must make an angled run into space in order to receive the pass.

The practice is repeated continuously for a set period of time.



What to shout:

- *Dribbler*: “Dribble at medium pace”, “turn quickly”, “head up and pass well”
- *Receiver*: “Make it hard for the dribbler to find you”, “move off onto an angle”

4. Warm-ups with a ball between two

47. React and challenge



Actions

Both players must react to your serve and then challenge to win possession.

Vary your serves: aerial, bouncing, along the floor.

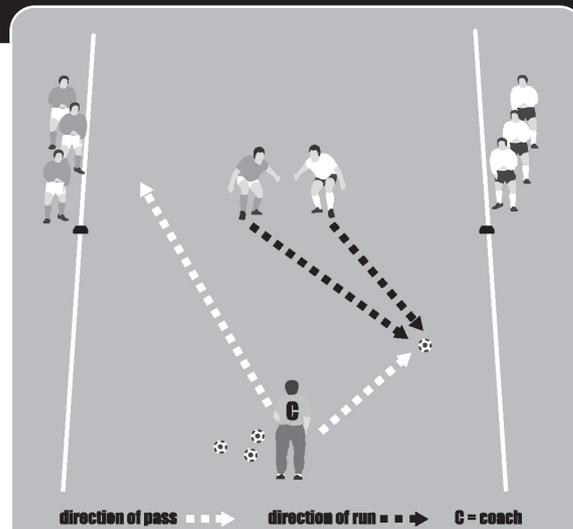
You should also serve the ball in a variety of directions.

The players can use their body strength (arms, shoulders etc.) to hold off their opponent and win the ball but they must not commit a foul.



Progression

After the first ball has been challenged, you can immediately serve a second ball.



What to shout:

- “Read the pass”
- “React quickly”
- “Use your body and strength in order to compete for the ball”

48. Dribble out to a partner



Actions

Arrange your players into pairs.

One of the partners goes into a 5 x 5m area with a ball.

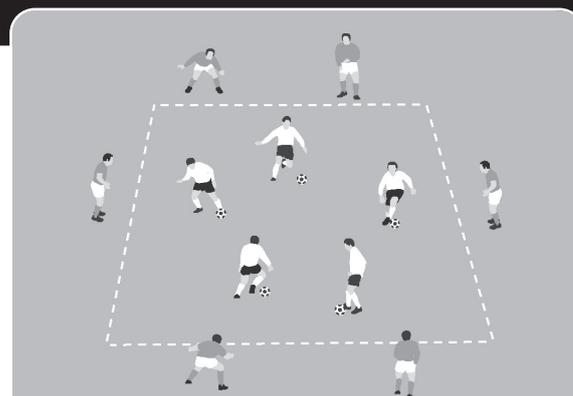
The other partner stands outside the area.

The player in the middle must dribble and complete various skills, turns and one-twos with the outside players.

After 20 seconds blow the whistle.

Immediately the inside players must dribble out to their team mate.

The practice is repeated continuously for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Lots of touches”
- “Use your imagination”
- “Keep on your toes on the outside”

5. Group warm-ups

49. Dribble pass and knock off



Actions

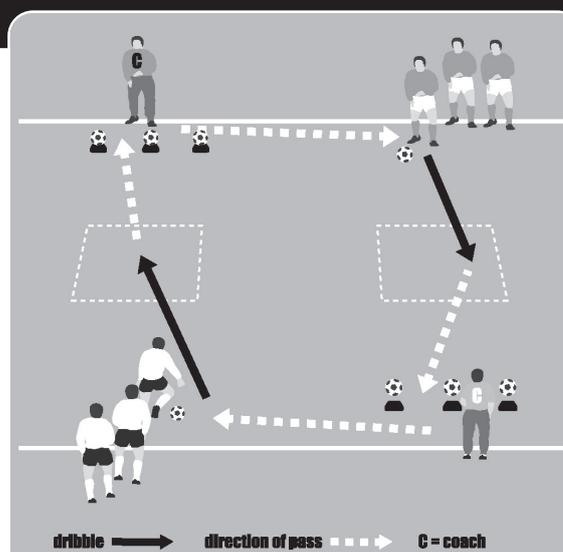
Arrange your players into two teams.

You and a helper act as ball collectors.

The two teams must compete against each other and try to be the first team to knock the balls off the cones.

The players dribble at top speed into the shooting box and then try to hit the cones with a pass.

The next player goes when the previous player has sprinted back to the group.



What to shout:

- “Dribble quickly”

- “Head up and pass”

- “Don’t ball watch”

- “Get back to your group”

5. Group warm-ups

50. Pass, throw and control



Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

The player in possession must dribble half way and then pass out to the opposite team.

The player receiving must make a pass to the dribbling player and wait for the return before repeating the practice in the opposite direction.

The receiving players can:

- make a grounded pass in order to receive a grounded return
- throw a bouncing pass in order to receive a volleyed return
- throw an aerial pass in order to receive a chest or headed pass.

What to shout:

- “Adjust your feet and make an angle to receive the throw”
- “Use a soft cushioned touch”

51. Heading knock off



Actions

This fun warm up game develops heading technique.

Arrange your players into two teams.

You and a helper act as servers.

The two servers continually throw balls to their team who must try to head and knock the balls off the cones.

The first team to knock all three balls off is the winner.



Progression

The same set up can be used for passing, half volleys, volleys and chest volleys.

What to shout:

- “Keep your eyes on the ball”
- “Head through the top of the ball and down to the floor”

5. Group warm-ups

52. Continuous heading



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams, either side of the goal.

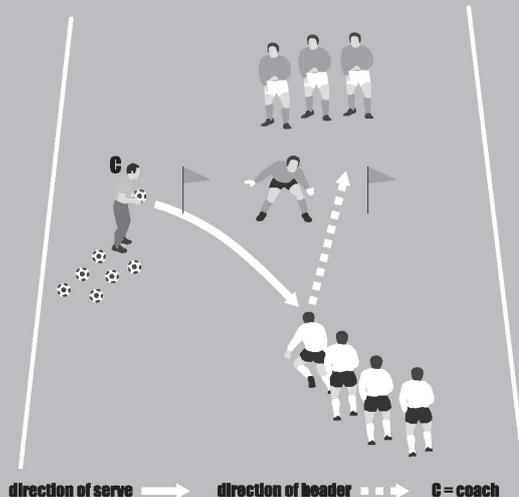
Nominate one team to be in goal first.

Serve a ball for the other team to head at goal.

Immediately after heading at goal, each player must react and become a keeper.

Then serve a ball to the opposite team and repeat the process.

The practice is repeated until one of the teams has scored five goals.



What to shout:

- “Keep your eyes on the ball”
- “Use your arms and body in order to head with power”
- “React and become a keeper”

5. Group warm-ups

53. Pass, shoot and defend 1v1



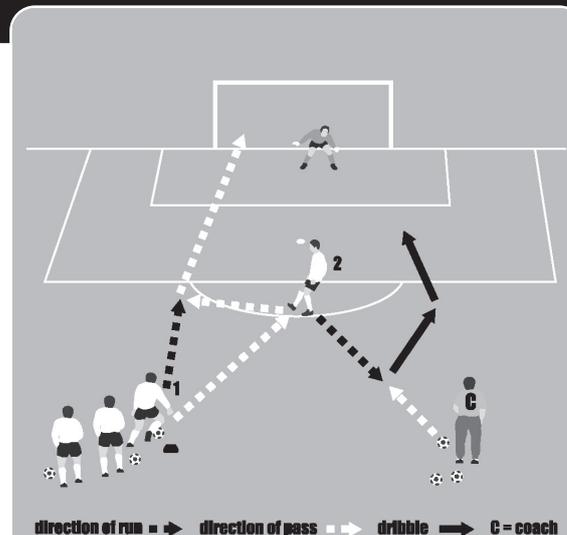
Actions

Player 1 passes into player 2 and runs to receive a lay off and a shot at goal.

After making the lay off, player 2 runs and receives a pass from you.

Player 2 now dribbles to attack player 1 in a 1v1 situation.

Player 1 must react after shooting and become the defender against player 2.



What to shout:

- “Hit the target”
- “React”
- “Be patient and force away from goal”

5. Group warm-ups

54. Defend technique



Actions

Both ends work at the same time.

On your call of “jockey”, “show right” or “show left” the players must pressure the mannequin and take up the correct position.

The player holds this pressure for 2–3 seconds before jogging out.



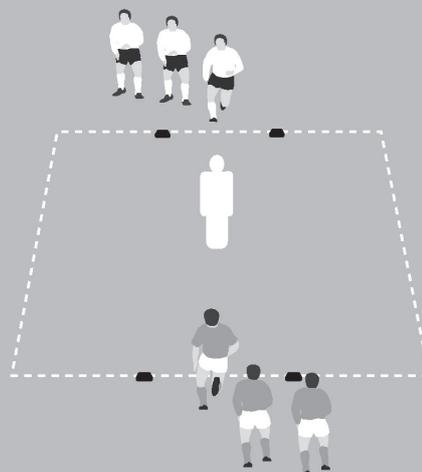
Progression

Remove the mannequin and play 1v1 duels.

Firstly work diagonally with the defender showing the attacker to the right.

Then switch and play the opposite way with the defender showing to the left.

Now defend straight on. The defender will now have to decide which way to show the attacker.



What to shout:

- “Adjust your run”
- “Sprint to pressure”
- “Slow down as you approach and edge closer”

5. Group warm-ups

55. Pressure and defend 1v1



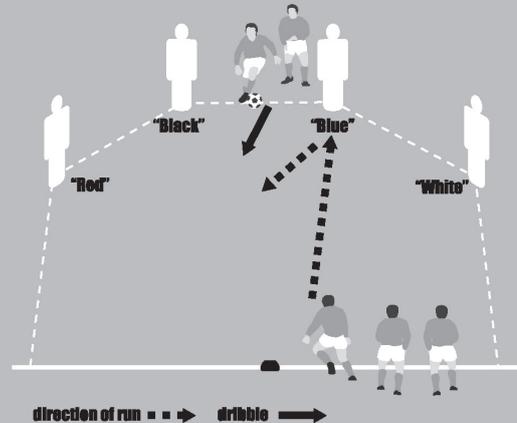
Actions

Tell the defender to react to the colour you call.

The defender must then sprint to pressure the mannequin.

On your call of “go” the attacker dribbles into the area.

The defender must now react and stop the attacker getting past the end-line.



What to shout:

- “Listen to the call”
- “Sprint to pressure”
- “React and get back to defend”
- “Now be patient to win the ball”

56. Running with the ball



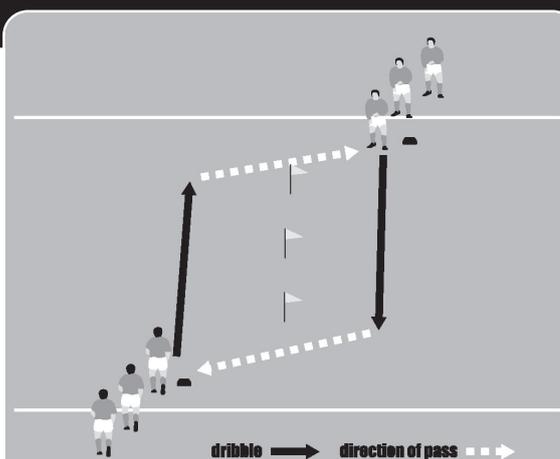
Actions

Arrange your players into two groups who work at the same time.

The players must dribble with the ball and then make a diagonal pass to the next group.

When running with the ball the players must get the ball as far out of the feet as possible and look up in order to see what is around them.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Get the ball out of your feet”
- “Head up and use the outside of your leading foot”

5. Group warm-ups

57. Running with the ball and changing direction



Actions

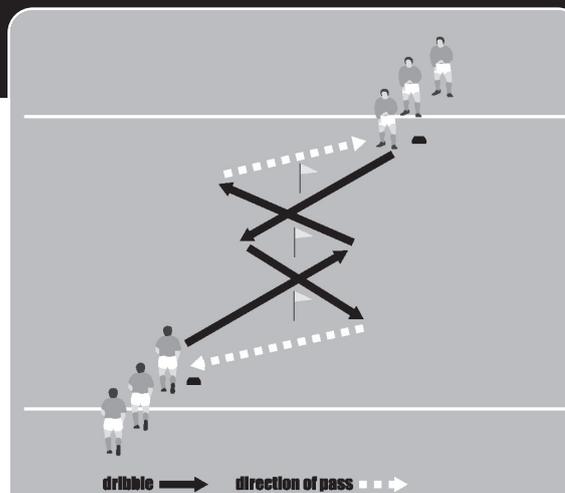
Arrange your players into two groups.

Two balls work simultaneously.

The players must dribble into the middle pole and then back out in order to make a pass to the opposite team.

Get your players to run with the ball out of their feet and then slow down as they get to the middle pole in order to change direction.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Get the ball out of your feet”
- “Head up and use the outside of your leading foot”
- “Slow down into the turn”
- “Use both feet and drive off into space”

5. Group warm-ups

58. 3v3 defending



Actions

This practice has three progressions:

- 1 The players wait for your call and apply the correct shape in relation to the mannequin called. On your whistle the players sprint forward and past you.
- 2 The players repeat the above but now on your whistle they must sprint to defend their goal in a 3v3 situation.
- 3 The same as above but, now two ends are working and the players enter a 3v3 game. Changes of possession will alter the player's roles and responsibilities as in a real game.

This practice initially teaches the players the correct technique, shape and positioning for 3v3 defending in a passive environment. Then, on your whistle, the players get the chance to put their new skills to the test in a small sided game.



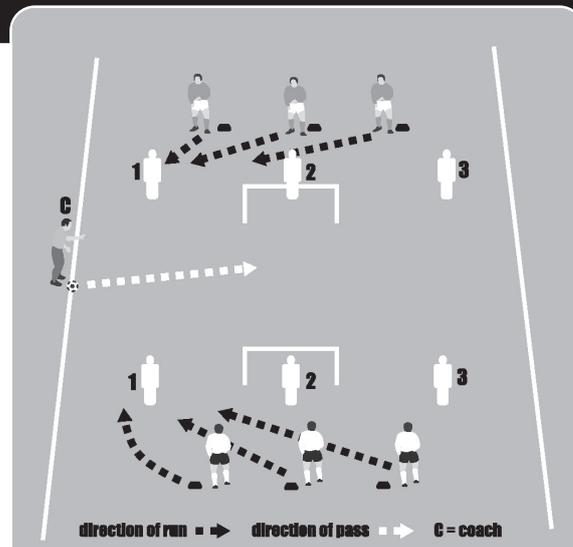
Key points

The nearest defender pressures and stops a forward pass.

The other defenders take up supporting/covering positions.

If the ball is passed, take up a new position in relation to the ball.

If the ball is passed backwards, immediately step forward as a group.



What to shout:

- "React to the number called"
- "Take up the correct position"
- "Communicate"
- "Move your feet quickly"

5. Group warm-ups

59. Pass and get the second ball

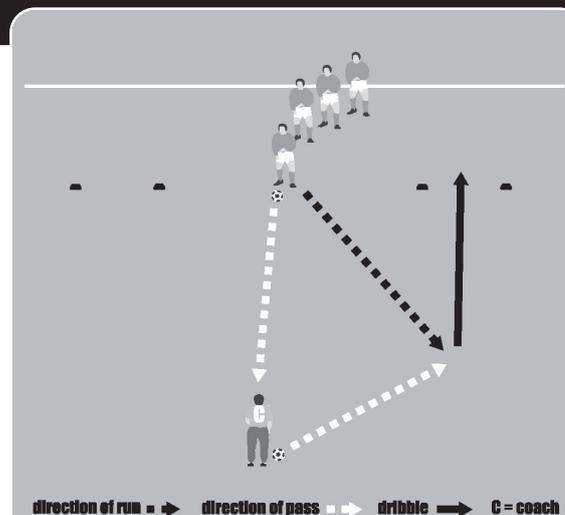


Actions

Tell your players to pass the ball to you.

You then make a second pass to the left or right.

The player must react and sprint to the second ball and then turn to dribble through the cones as quickly as possible.



What to shout:

- “React to the second pass”
- “Sprint to the ball”
- “Turn quickly and dribble at top speed”

60. Ball steel



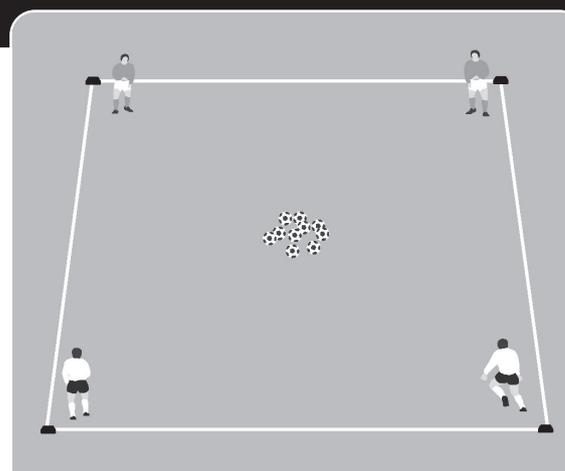
Actions

You need four players for this practice.

The players have one minute to race to the balls and dribble one back to their corner.

The players are allowed to steel balls from their opponent’s corners but they must only dribble one ball at a time.

The game is played for one minute. The winning player is the one with the most balls in their corner when the time has elapsed.



What to shout:

- “Work quickly”
- “Use your head”

5. Group warm-ups

61. Pass and run around



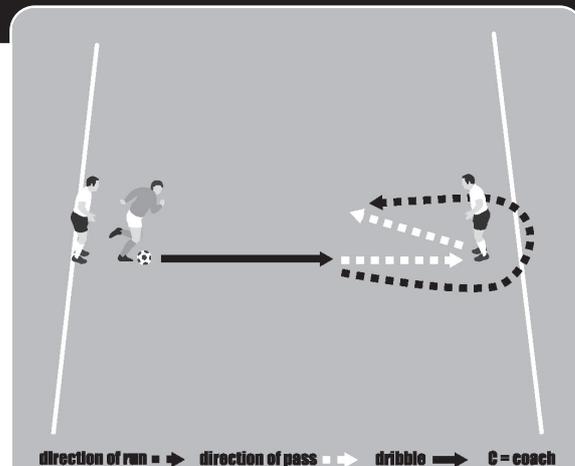
Actions

Arrange your players into groups of three.

The working player works continuously for one minute.

He/she must dribble half way across and then make a pass to the outside player.

The working player must then make a run around the outside player and receive a pass in order to repeat the practice.



What to shout:

- “Work to your maximum”
- “Concentrate on your technique”

62. Pass through legs



Actions

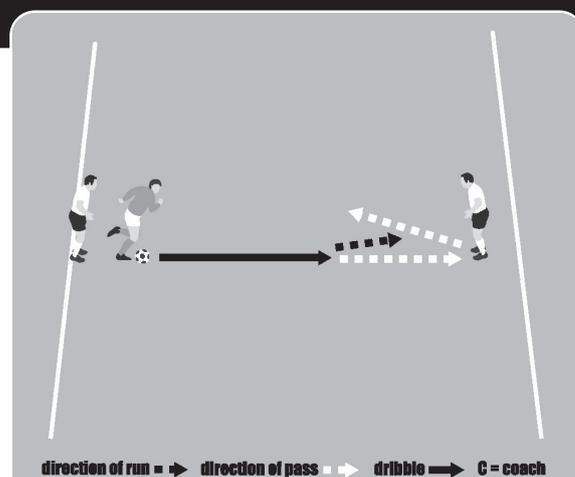
Arrange your players into groups of three.

The working player works continuously for one minute.

He/she must dribble half way across the area and pass to the opposite outside player.

The working player must then run towards the outside player and let the player pass the ball through their legs.

The working player then turns and repeats that practice at the opposite end.



What to shout:

- “Work to your maximum”
- “Concentrate on your technique”

5. Group warm-ups

63. Pass and one-two react



Actions

Arrange your players into groups of three.

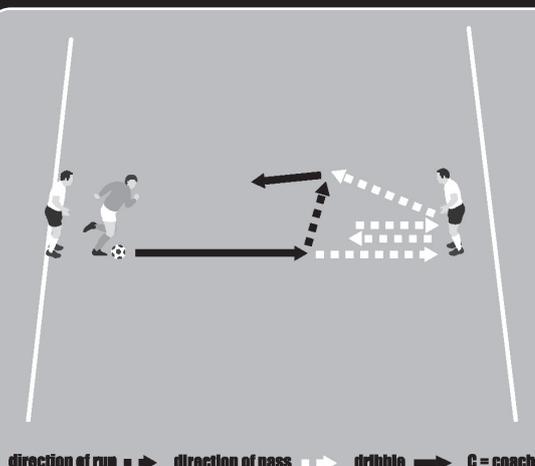
The working player works in the middle for one minute.

The working player must dribble across to the opposite player and make a pass.

The working player and the outside player then make continuous one touch passes.

When ready, the outside player makes a pass into the space behind the working player.

The working player must react and turn to run after the ball and repeat the practice.



What to shout:

- “Work to your maximum”
- “Concentrate on your technique”
- “Keep on your toes and react to the pass”

64. Pass, pressure and jockey



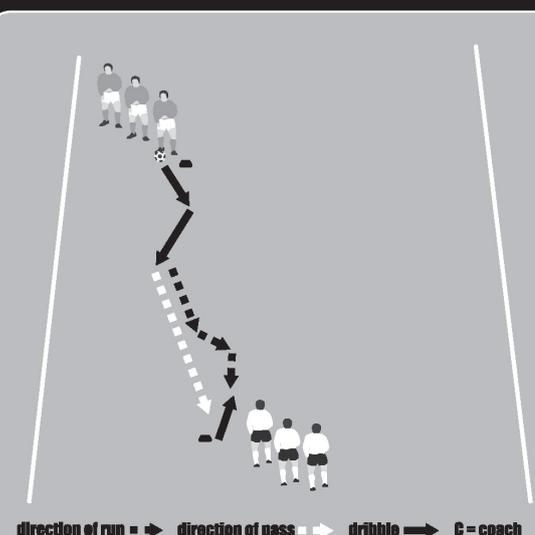
Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

The player in possession must dribble half way towards the other group and then make a pass.

The player must then race to pressure the receiving player and then jockey for three seconds.

The receiving player then repeats the practice at the opposite end.



What to shout:

- “Follow your pass quickly to pressure”
- “Slow down as you approach and edge closer”

5. Group warm-ups

65. Right and left fast feet

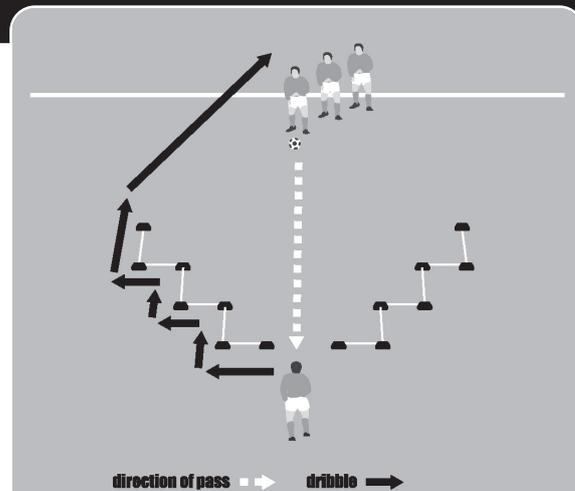


Actions

The working player receives a pass and must take the ball to the left or right.

The player makes repeated one-twos from right foot to left foot as they work their way down the coned “stairs”.

The player then dribbles to the back of the line and the practice continues.



What to shout:

- “Receive with a good touch”
- “Use quick changes of feet”

66. Pass, control and dribble



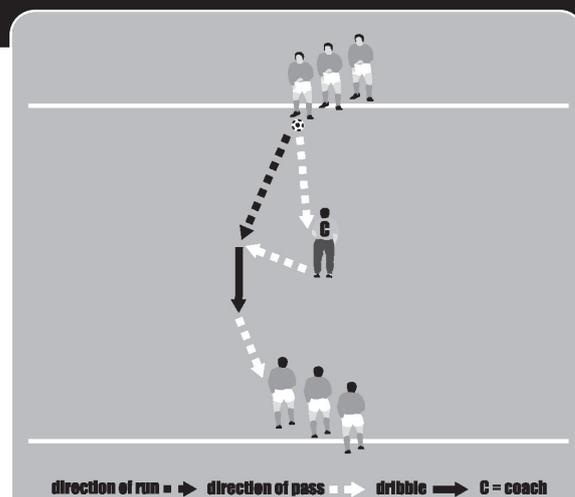
Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

The players make a pass to you. You make a return pass and the player dribbles out.

You can use various serves such as ground, bouncing or aerial pass.

The players must adjust to the serve, control the ball to the floor and then dribble out.



What to shout:

- “Adjust feet and body shape to the serve”
- “Concentrate on the ball and have a soft touch”

5. Group warm-ups

67. Pass, react to serve and pass out



Actions

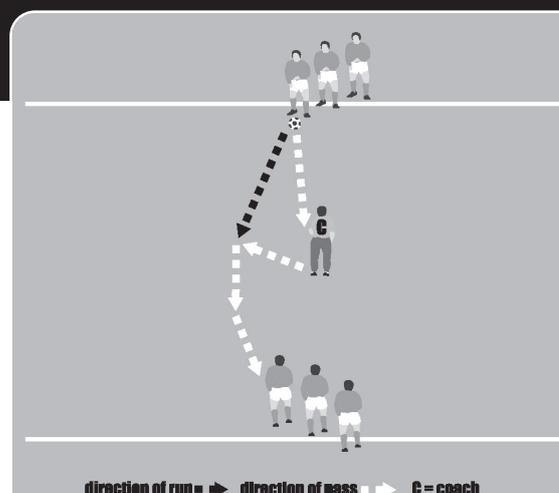
Arrange your players into two groups.

The players make a pass in to you and receive a return pass.

They must then pass out to the opposite end first time.

The coach can use various serves such as grounded, bouncing and aerial passes.

The players must react to the serves and either pass, volley or head out to the next player.



What to shout:

- “Adjust feet and body shape to the serve”
- “Concentrate on the ball and show good technique on your pass”

68. Defending principles 2v2



Actions

This practice is used to work on defensive shape in a passive environment.

The defending players must pass and then press the two attackers.

The attackers continually pass to each other.

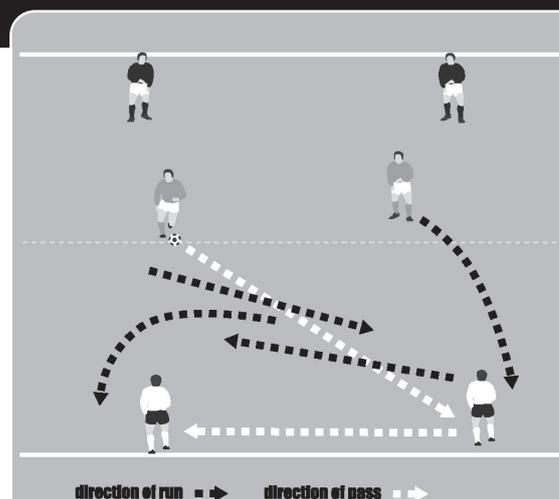
The defenders re-position and pressure the attackers in relation to the ball.

On your command the attackers pass to the opposite end. Now they follow their pass and become the defenders.



Progression

This practice can be used in 1v1, 2v2, 3v3 and 4v4 situations.



What to shout:

- “Work as a pair”
- “Move and communicate as a unit”

5. Group warm-ups

69. Dribble and skill to avoid



Actions

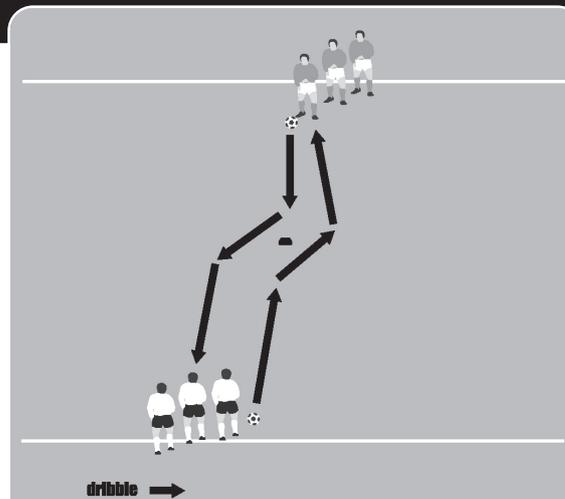
Two groups work simultaneously.

Tell your players to dribble towards the centre cone.

The players must complete a skill before the cone, avoid each other and move out to the opposite end line.

Various skills can be used, including:

- drop right shoulder and go left
- drop left shoulder and go right
- right step-over and go left
- left step-over and go right.



What to shout:

- “Keep the ball close”
- “Use disguise”

70. Pass and turn



Actions

The player in the middle receives a pass from one of the outside players.

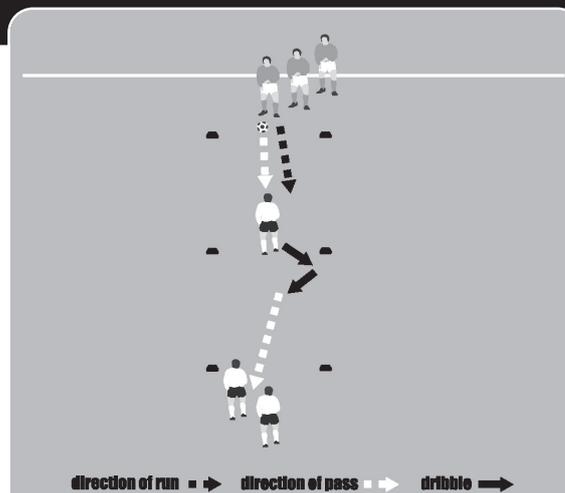
The middle player makes a turn, passes out and then joins that group.

The outside player that passed into the middle player becomes the new middle player.

The practice continues for a set period of time.

The players can use a turn of their choice, including:

- open body turn
- open legs and flick
- open legs and dummy
- control and Cruyff turn.



What to shout:

- “Be on your toes”
- “Use imagination on your turns”
- “Work with high quality”

5. Group warm-ups

71. 1v1 continuous



Actions

One player starts in the middle zone and has a choice of which defender to attack.

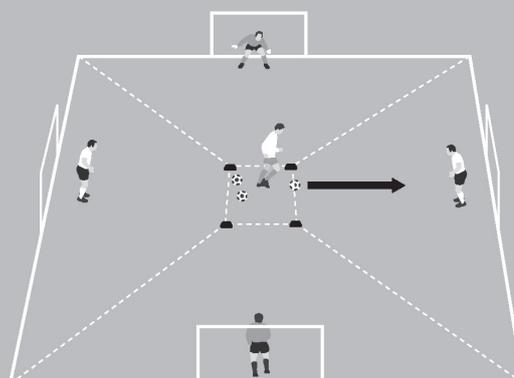
The player must dribble into the area and attempt to score.

If the player is successful they return to the middle zone, collect a ball and attack another defender.

If the defender manages to stop the player, the defender runs into the middle zone, collects a ball and attacks the defender of their choice.

The practice is continuous and can be played with more additional players starting in the middle for increased intensity.

The players soon learn that defending well gives them the chance to attack and score.



dribble →



What to shout:

- “Freedom to choose”
- “Be decisive”
- “Be clever”

72. Passing wave and sprinting



Actions

Arrange your players into two groups. You will also need two coaches/target men.

The first coach passes to the group on the right.

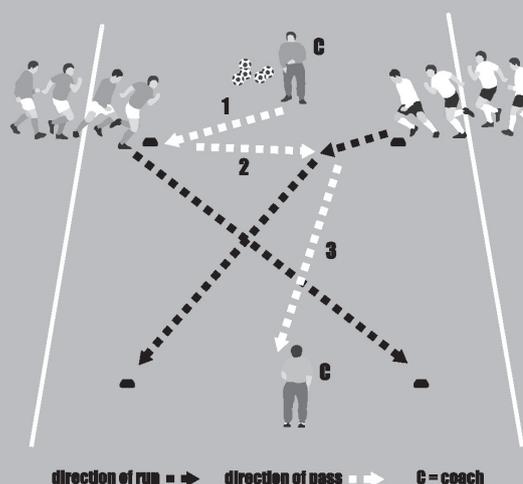
The player receiving must make a pass across to the other team and then sprint diagonally to the cone.

The opposite receiving player must have a touch and then play a long pass into the other coach and then sprint diagonally to the cone.

The practice continues until all the players are at the opposite cones.

The second coach then restarts the practice going in the other direction.

Therefore the players move up and down in a wave motion.



direction of run → direction of pass - - - C = coach



What to shout:

- “Pass and then move”
- “Concentrate on making a good pass”
- “Sprint with maximum intensity”

5. Group warm-ups

73. Pass then move to other ball



Actions

Divide the area into two zones and put five players and one ball in each zone.

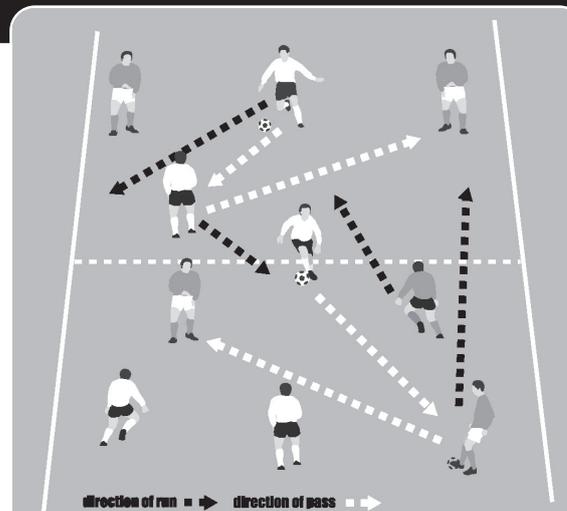
The players are only allowed to use one touch.

After passing the ball the players must run into the other zone in order to make a one touch pass in that zone.

The practice is repeated until:

- a passing mistake is made, or
- a player takes two touches, or
- a set time period has elapsed.

Tell your players to have a picture in their mind upon receiving the ball: “Know who you are going to pass to”.



What to shout:

- “Know what’s around you”
- “Keep your head up”
- “Have a picture in your mind”

74. Team multi goal defending



Actions

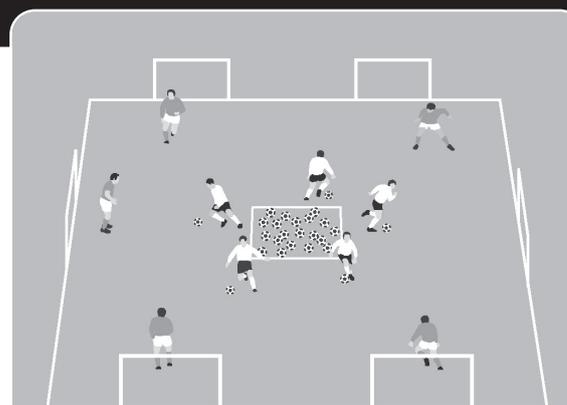
Nominate one team to work as attackers and one team as defenders.

Get the attackers to continuously dribble balls out of the middle zone and try to score in the goals.

The defenders must work together and try to stop the attackers scoring.

The game will start with lots of 1v1 situations but as the balls decrease this will turn into various overload and small sided games (2v1, 3v2, 3v3, 4v4 etc.).

Once all the balls have been played count the goals scored, rotate the roles and repeat the practice.



What to shout:

- “Keep your head up”
- “Stay on your feet”
- “Move to help your team mates”

5. Group warm-ups

75. 1v1 continuous team game



Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

Tell both teams to compete to score a set number of goals in a set time period.

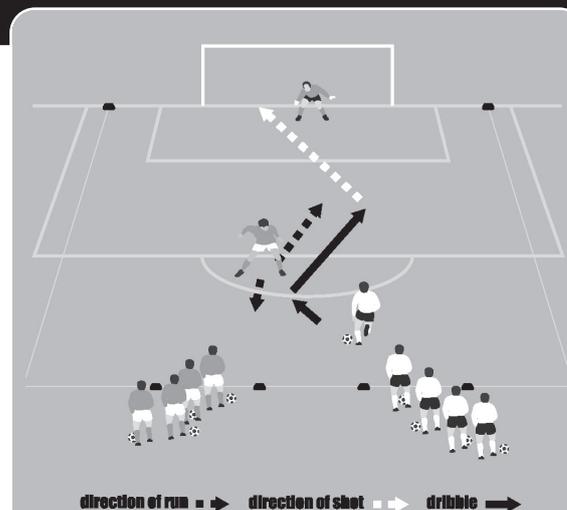
After dribbling in to attack, the player must then react and defend 1v1 against an opponent.

Therefore each team has one turn as an attacker and one turn as a defender.



Progression

Now the only way you get out of defending is by stopping the attacker from scoring. Therefore the defender must learn quickly to pressure the forwards and stop them scoring in order to get the chance to attack.



What to shout:

- “Be clever”
- “Show a skill”
- “Get your shot off”
- “React and defend”
- “Be patient”
- “Stay on your feet”

5. Group warm-ups

76. Get to the opposite group



Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

Let the two groups number themselves 1 to 4.

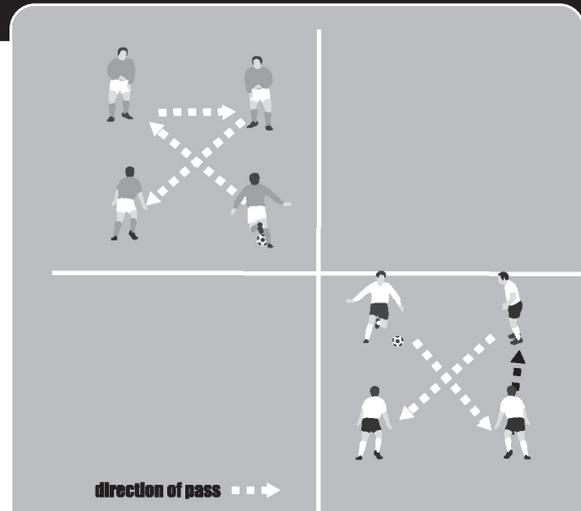
Tell the players to continually pass the ball and move in their areas.

Call out a number and that player must sprint across to the opposite area to join that team and continue to pass and move.



Progression

- Add a ladder that the player must perform quick feet exercises through on their way across to the opposite area.
- Call out a number and that player must now dribble the ball across to the opposite area.
- Lay out some cones for the player to dribble through on the way across.



What to shout:

- “React”
- “Get to the other group quickly”

5. Group warm-ups

77. Diamond technique



Actions

Arrange your players into four groups.

Give each group one ball.

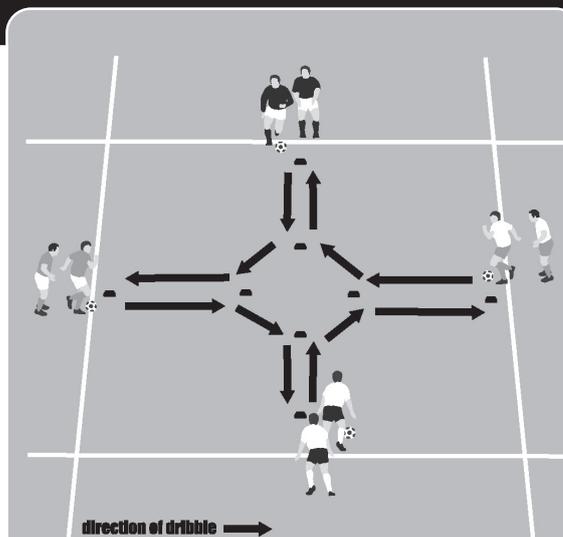
The players must dribble and complete various skills before passing out and waiting for their next turn.

Each skill is completed four times so that the players return to their starting positions.

Skills

- Dribble around the cone and go left.
- Dribble around the cone and go right.
- Drop right shoulder and go left.
- Drop left shoulder and go right.
- Right footed sole drag and go left.
- Left footed sole drag and go right.
- Right footed step-over and go left.
- Left footed step-over and go right.

You can add more skills depending on the level and ability of players.



What to shout:

- “Work to your maximum”
- “Concentrate on your technique”

5. Group warm-ups

78. Continuous defend and attack



Actions

Arrange your players into pairs.

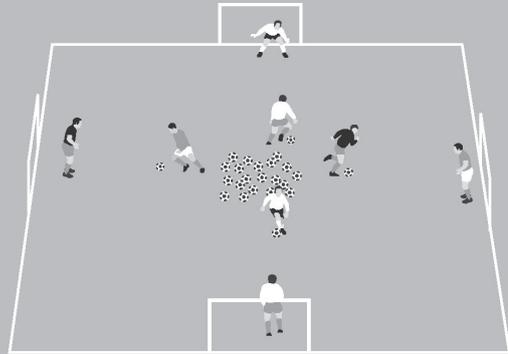
Nominate one to act as a defender and one as an attacker.

The attacker must continually dribble balls and attempt to score in the other team's goal.

The defender must stop the other attackers scoring in their goal.

Once all the balls have left the area, count the goals and decide which team won.

The attacker and defender switch roles for the next game.



What to shout:

- “Be clever in possession”
- “Show a skill or disguise”
- “When defending pressure and force away from goal”
- “Stay on your feet and be patient”

79. Dribble across and out of the area



Actions

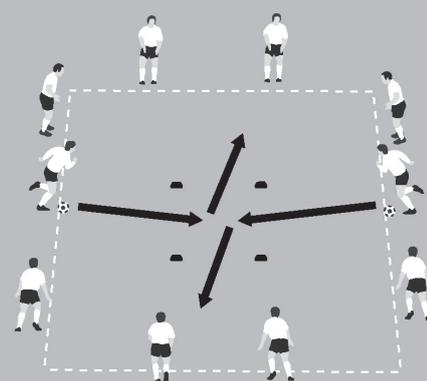
Spread your players out around the area.

Have two or three balls working simultaneously.

The players must dribble into the middle square.

They must then complete a change in direction, a turn or a skill and then dribble out of the area to a team mate.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Go in quickly and away with pace”
- “Know where you're going”

5. Group warm-ups

80. Wall passing and shooting



Actions

You will need two teams of players and a goalkeeper. Get one team to work as wall passers and one team as shooters.

The shooting player enters the area and makes two quick wall passes.

Then the shooting player dribbles out of the area at top speed in order to shoot at goal.

Immediately a new shooting player enters the area and repeats the practice.

After a set time period, the teams switch roles.



direction of run ———▶ direction of pass - - - -▶ dribble ———▶



What to shout:

- “Communicate”
- “Pass well”
- “Drive into space”
- “Hit the target”

81. Pass and move out to create space



Actions

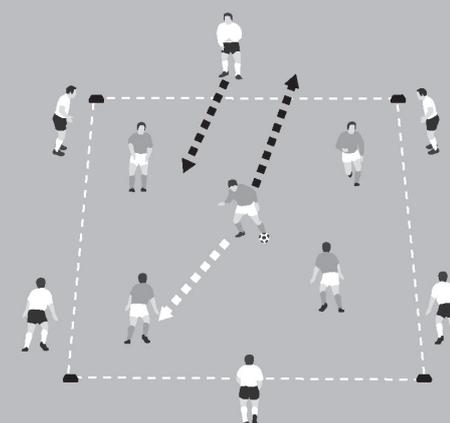
Arrange your players into two groups.

Put half the players inside the area and spread the other half around the outside.

The inside players must make a two touch pass and then jog out to take the place of an outside player.

The outside player then comes inside the area and looks to make a two touch pass before repeating the exercise.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



direction of run ———▶ pass - - - -▶



What to shout:

- “Know your next pass”
- “Be on your toes and ready to play”

5. Group warm-ups

82. Pass to the opposite team



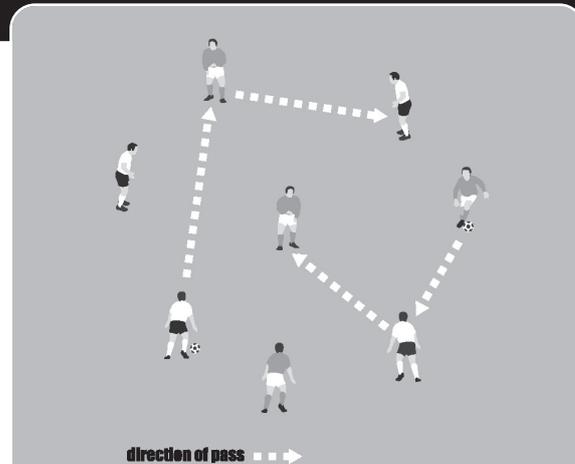
Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

Two balls are in play simultaneously.

Upon receiving a pass, the players must only pass to the opposite team.

Therefore the pass sequence is always red, yellow, red, yellow etc.



What to shout:

- “Keep your head up”
- “Know your next pass”
- “Communicate and want the next ball”

5. Group warm-ups

83. Run and avoid the pass



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams.

One team acts as the runners and works inside the area.

Give the other team four balls and spread them around the outside. These players are the passers.

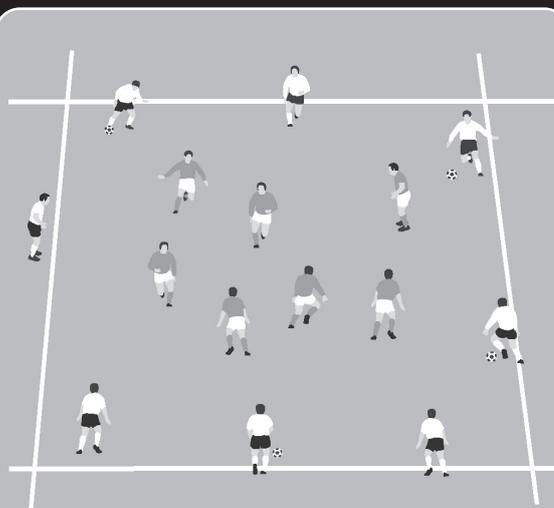
The running players must be constantly on the move and trying to avoid being hit by a pass from the outside players.

If one of the running players is hit by a pass then they are out of the game.

The passing players must pass below knee height or the pass does not count.

The game can be scored in two ways:

- the last player running is the winner, or
- how long does it take the passers to get all the running players out.



What to shout:

- “Head up”
- “Know what’s around you”
- “Keep on the move”

NOTE: You must ensure that the passes are not shots and are made with the inside of the foot only.

5. Group warm-ups

84. Dribble and avoid the pass



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams.

One team acts as the dribblers and works inside the area.

Give the other team four balls and spread them around the outside. These players are the passers.

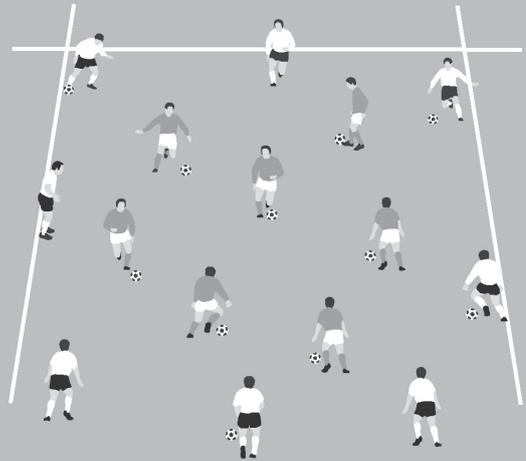
The dribblers must be constantly on the move and trying to avoid being hit by a pass from the outside players.

If one of the dribbling players is hit by a pass they are out of the game.

The passing players must pass below knee height or the pass does not count.

The game can be scored in two ways:

- the last player dribbling is the winner, or
- how long does it take the passers to get all the dribbling players out.



What to shout:

- “Head up”
- “Keep moving”
- “Keep your ball close”

NOTE: You must ensure that the passes are not shots and are made with the inside of the foot only.

5. Group warm-ups

85. Win ball, pass and rest



Actions

You need nine players for this exercise.

Put four players inside a small area dribbling a ball.

Put a defender in the middle, as illustrated.

Put four players around the outside of the area.

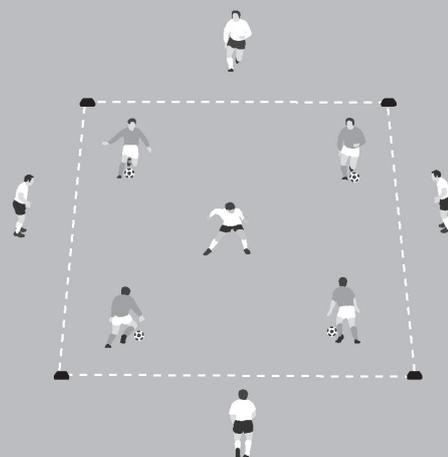
The defender must try to tackle one of the dribbling players and pass out to one of the outside players.

The defender then becomes an outside player.

The outside player goes into the area and becomes a dribbling player.

The tackled dribbling player now becomes the defender.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Cut the players off”
- “Be patient”
- “Watch the ball”
- “Win the ball”

86. Red light, green light



Actions

The players must react to your call.

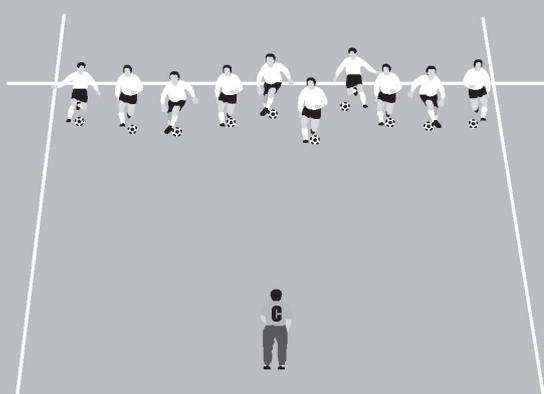
- Green light – the players run forward.
- Amber – the players jog on the spot.
- Red – the players must stand still.

Any players caught doing the wrong movement are sent back to the starting position.



Progression

This practice can also be completed with the players dribbling a ball (green), foot touches (amber) and controlling the ball (red).



C = coach



What to shout:

- “React to the call”
- “Keep the ball close”

5. Group warm-ups

87. Cops and robbers



Actions

Arrange a group of players with a ball each to act as the robbers.

Get two defenders to act as cops.

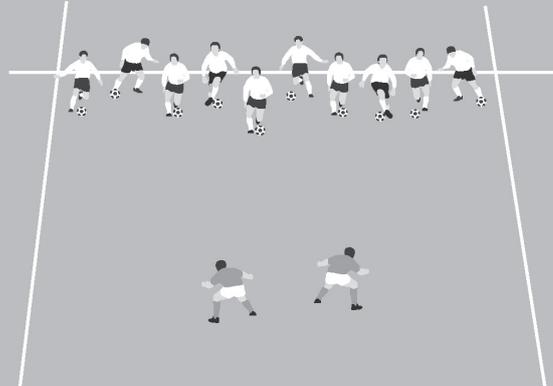
The robbers must attempt to dribble their balls to the opposite end line.

The cops must try to tackle the robbers.

If the cops manage to tackle a robber then they also become cops.

The last player to be tackled is the winner.

You then pick two new cops and the practice is repeated.



What to shout:

- “Head up”

- “Assess the situation”

- “Move quickly”

- “Keep the ball close”

88. Dribble/jog and then react



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams.

One team of players dribble the balls around the area.

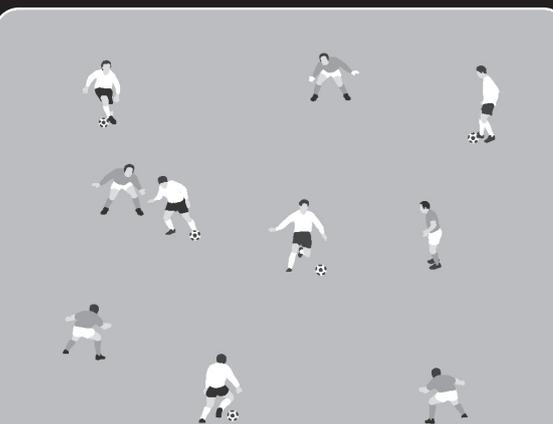
The other team must jog around the area.

On your whistle the jogging players must sprint and try to tackle a dribbling player.

On your second whistle, the player in possession of the ball must dribble.

The other player must then jog around.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Head up”

- “Be ready to react”

- “Work with maximum intensity”

5. Group warm-ups

89. Passing and soccer movements



Actions

Arrange your players into pairs.

One partner goes inside the area.

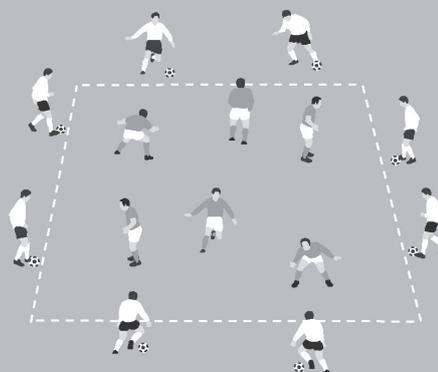
The other partner stays outside the area with a ball.

The players move around the area receiving various serves from the outside players and returning with a pass, volley or header.

On the coaches whistle the players must stop looking to receive a pass and now make various soccer movements for 10 seconds, such as:

- sprints
- jockeying
- change of direction
- side stepping etc.
- jumps

On your second whistle, the inside players must swap with their partners on the outside.



What to shout:

- “Work with maximum intensity”
- “Show good imagination in your movements”

90. Two team passing challenge



Actions

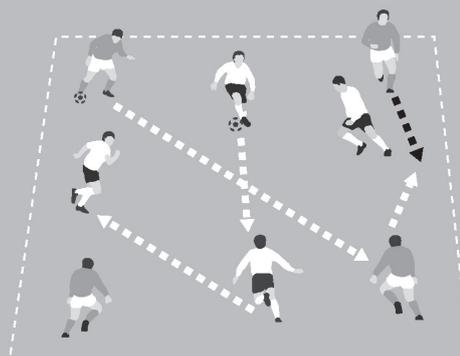
Arrange two teams of players inside a small area.

Each team has a ball.

The two teams have to listen for your call of a number, for example “15”.

The teams must quickly complete the number of passes called in order to be the winners.

All players must constantly be on the move.



direction of pass — — — — — direction of run — — — — —



What to shout:

- “Keep on the move”
- “Play with minimal touches”
- “Know your next pass”

5. Group warm-ups

91. One-two drop off



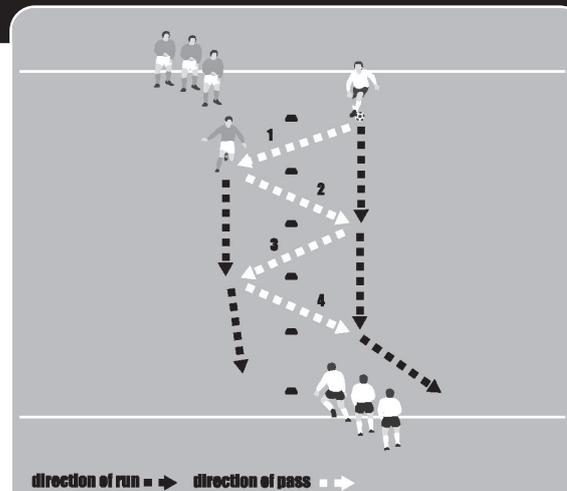
Actions

Arrange two lines of players.

The first two players come out and work down the line completing one-two passes through the cones.

On reaching the end of the line, the player that is on the side of their team goes off and a new player enters.

The practice is repeated in the opposite direction with the other team having a player dropped off and a new player entering.



What to shout:

- “Concentrate on your touch and weight of pass”
- “Keep on the move”

92. 3v1 Two team battle



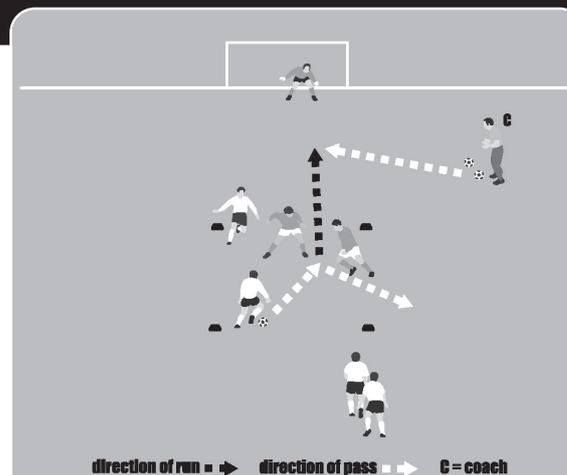
Actions

Arrange your players into two teams.

One team works on possession and one team works on defending.

The defenders enter the area and attempt to win possession or force a mistake. If successful the defender receives a pass from you and has a chance to shoot at goal. However if the players keeping possession manage to make ten successful passes then the defender is ejected from the area and a new defender enters.

The game is played for a set time. Once the time has elapsed, count the goals scored by the defenders and switch the roles. Can the new defenders beat the previous score?



What to shout:

- “Relax on the ball”
- “Work hard when defending”
- “Hit the target”

5. Group warm-ups

93. Dribbling driving lesson



Actions

Arrange your players into four groups with a ball for each group.

Each team must dribble across the area and out to their team mates as quickly as they can.

The players must look up and use both skill and control in order to avoid each other in the middle.

A misplaced pass equals a penalty point.

A crash equals a penalty point.

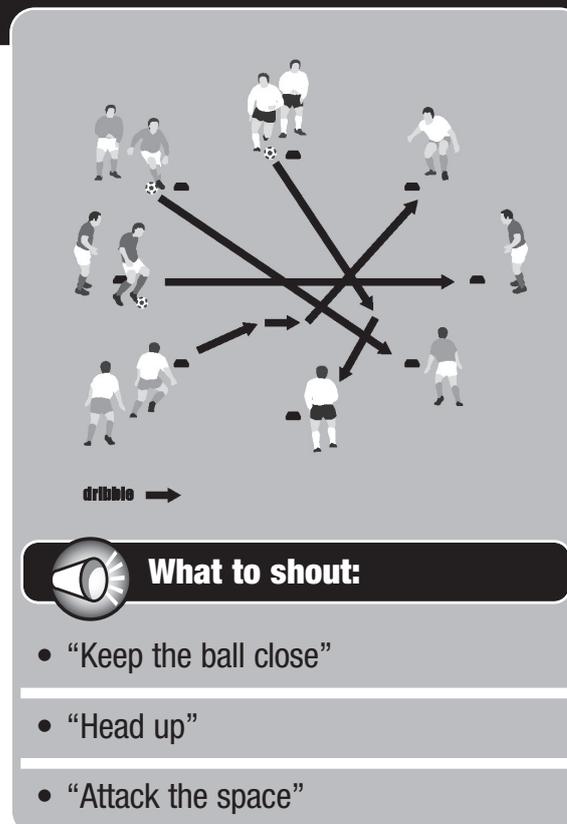
Dribbling out of the area equals a penalty point.

The practice is repeated continuously for a set time period. The team with the least penalty points is the winner.



Progression

To make the practice harder both technically and physically you should make the area smaller.



5. Group warm-ups

94. First touch and pass



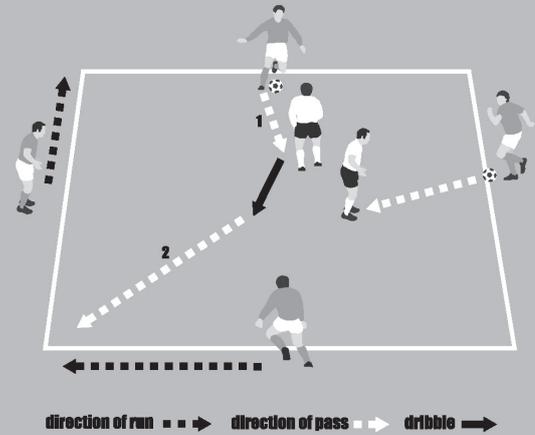
Actions

This practice uses six players.

Arrange four players outside the area and two inside the area.

Two balls are in play simultaneously.

The two inside players must continually receive a pass and then control the ball to pass out to one of the outside players. The outside players must be continuously on the move.



What to shout:

- “Have a picture in your mind”
- “Get side on”
- “Control with one foot and pass with the other”

5. Group warm-ups

95. Passing choice



Actions

Arrange your players into two groups and two setting players.

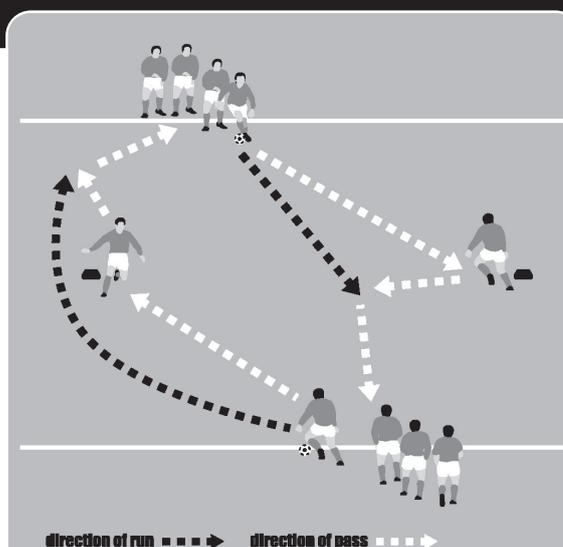
Two balls work continuously at the same time.

The players always pass to the setting player on their left.

When passing, the players have two choices:

- 1 One-two
- 2 Overlap.

The passer must communicate their choice to the setting player.



What to shout:

- “Communicate early”
- “Concentrate on the weight and type of pass”
- “Always be on your toes”
- “Don’t let the ball stop”

5. Group warm-ups

96. Pass and turn choice



Actions

Arrange your players into two groups.

The first player in each group goes out on an angle to make a diamond shape.

Two balls work continuously at the same time.

The passing player must communicate with the receiving player.

The passing player can either instruct the receiving player to “turn” or to “set and spin”.

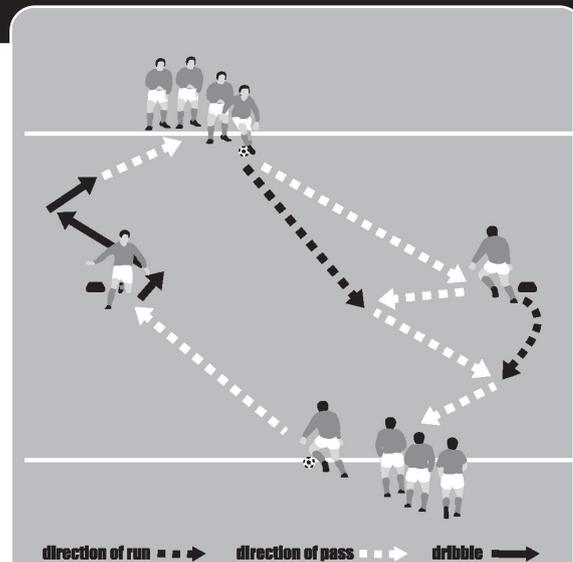
The passing player then takes up the position of a receiving player.



Progression

You can add various movements to receive such as:

- 1 Going away and then back to receive a pass to feet.
- 2 Coming short and then spinning away for a pass into space.



What to shout:

- “Communicate early”
- “Concentrate on the weight and type of pass”
- “Always be on your toes”
- “Don’t let the ball stop”

5. Group warm-ups

97. Pass down the sides, dribble across the middle



Actions

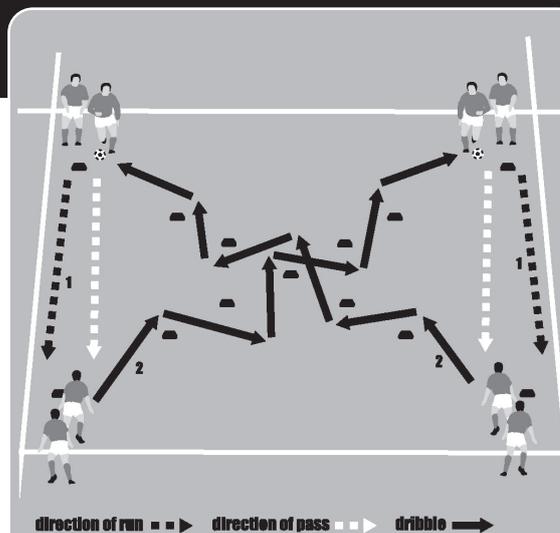
Get your players to work around the circuit.

There will always be two balls in play simultaneously.

To start, the player in possession passes down the side of the square and follows.

The receiving player then dribbles through the cones and diagonally across the square.

The practice is repeated for a set period of time.



What to shout:

- “Pass ball with good weight and feeling”
- “Dribble with the ball close to your feet”
- “Work with maximum intensity”

5. Group warm-ups

98. Play out and go out



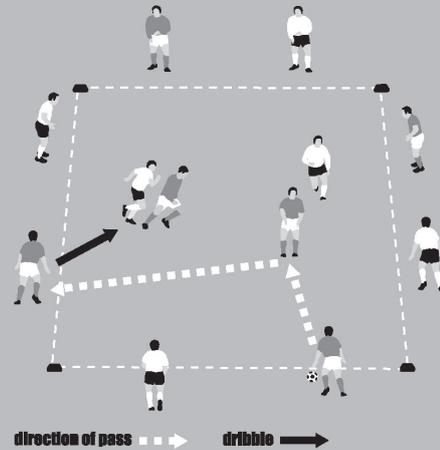
Actions

Arrange your players into two teams of six.

Each team has four players on the outside and two players on the inside.

Pass a ball into the players in the middle. They must battle for possession and then pass out to a team mate. After completing the pass they leave the area and the team mate dribbles in to take their place.

The game works continuously for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Be ready on the outside”
- “Know your next pass”
- “Be positive”
- “Use disguise in movements to receive and when in possession”

5. Group warm-ups

99. Work on your turns



Actions

Arrange your players into four groups.

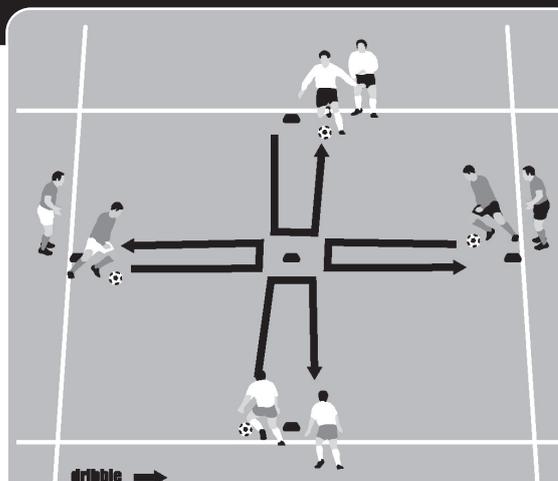
Each group has a ball.

The four groups work simultaneously.

Tell your players to dribble towards the centre cone and execute a turn before dribbling out to their team mates.

The players can use various turns of their own choice such as:

- Inside hook
- Outside hook
- Cruyff turn
- Drag back.



What to shout:

- “Slow in”
- “Quick away”
- “Show disguise”
- “Use imagination”

100. Combine and out



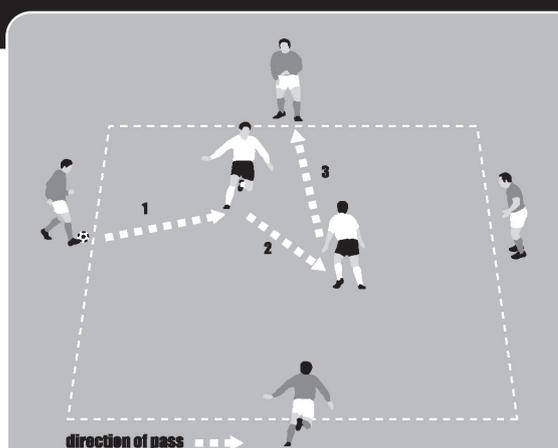
Actions

The two players in the middle must combine to play out.

The practice continues for one minute.

The inside players can only use one touch. This forces them to move and communicate in order to combine with each other.

The outside players must use two touches.



What to shout:

- “Adjust position to support team mate”
- “Communicate”
- “Know your next pass”

5. Group warm-ups

101. Dribble danger



Actions

The attackers take turns at dribbling into the area and attempting to get past the defender and across to the opposite side.

The defender must try to tackle the attacker or force them out of the sidelines.

If the defender manages to tackle the attacker, then the roles are reversed.

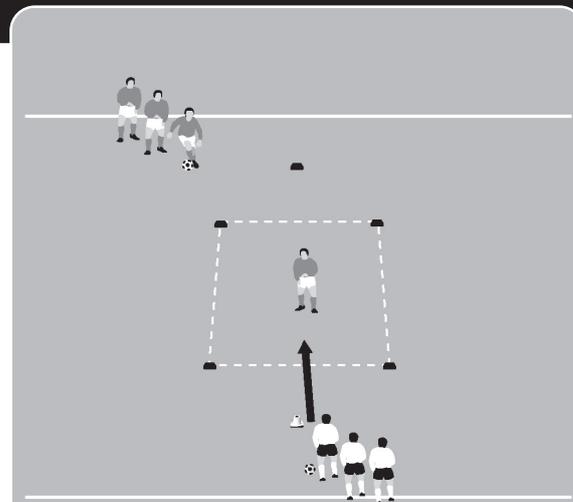
The game is played for a set time.

The defender that has stayed in the area for the most attacks is the losing player.



Progression

This game can be progressed with the introduction of a goal and goalkeeper. On winning the ball, the defender now gets the chance to dribble unopposed to shoot at goal. This acts as both a reward and extra incentive for the defender.



What to shout:

- "Be clever"
- "Be direct"
- "Show disguise"

5. Group warm-ups

102. Half-field possession



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams of four players.

Pass into one of the teams.

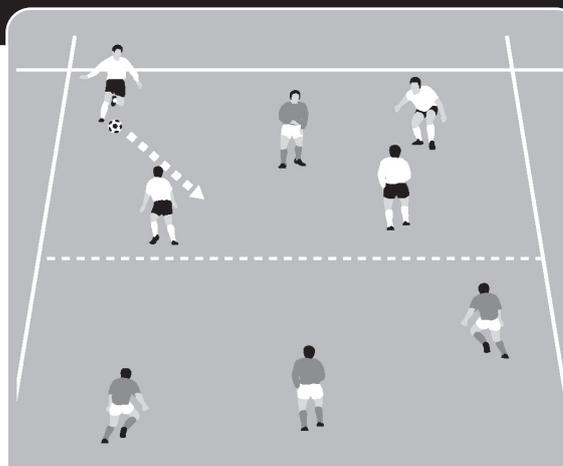
Call a player to go and defend 4v1 in that zone.

If the attackers manage to make five successful passes then another defender enters the zone to make a 4v2.

If the team manages to get a 4v4 then they receive a goal.

If the defenders manage to force a mistake or win the ball then, they dribble back to their area.

The player that lost possession must then be the first defender in the new zone.



direction of pass →



What to shout:

- “Relax on the ball”
- “Always be in a position to receive”

103. Pass and follow or dribble and follow



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams.

Both teams are trying to get across the area but each team has a different role.

The red team must dribble their ball across.

The yellow team must pass their ball using two touches.

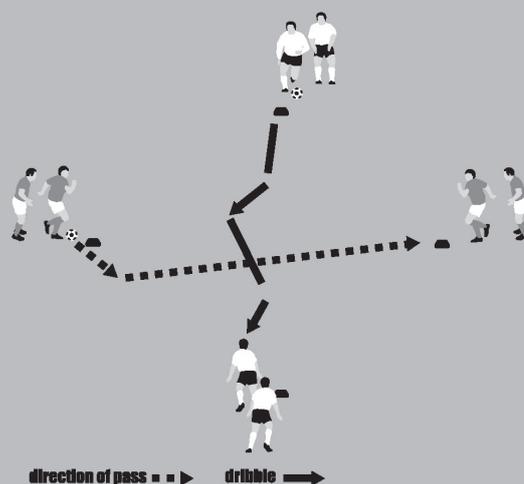
The players must avoid each other by looking up and seeing an opportunity to get across the area successfully.

On your whistle, the groups immediately switch roles.



Progression

To increase intensity you can make the area and distances smaller.



direction of pass → dribble →



What to shout:

- “Head up”
- “Assess the situation”
- “Be positive in possession”

5. Group warm-ups

104. 4v1 send across



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams of five players.

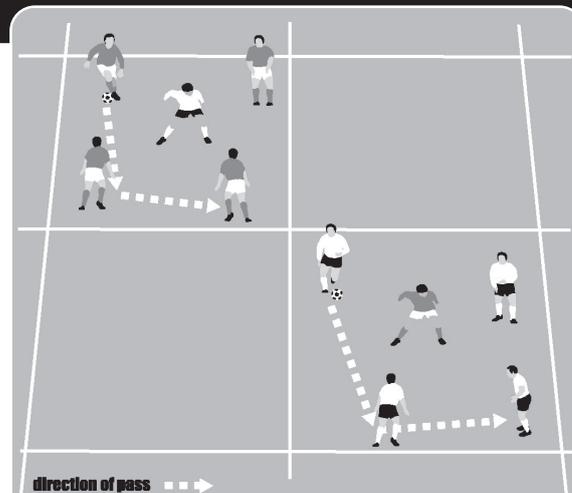
The teams number themselves one to five.

Each team sends number one across to the opposite area in order to defend.

The teams play 4v1 keep-away.

Whichever team's defender wins the ball the most number of times is the winner.

The game lasts for one minute.



What to shout:

- “Work to your maximum”
- “Stay on your feet”
- “Read the passes”

105. One-two square

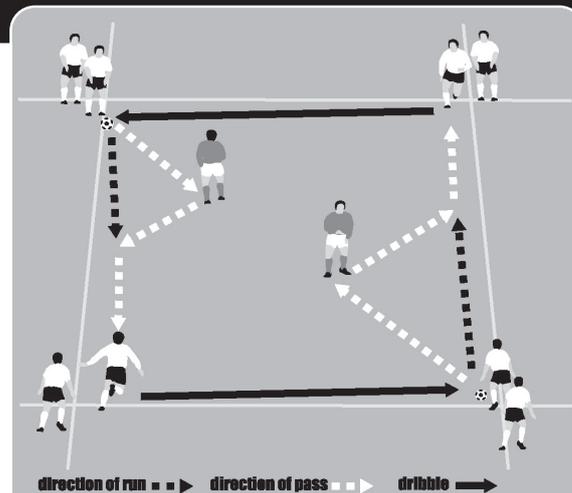


Actions

Put two players inside the square and arrange the others around the four corners.

The players on the outside must make one-two wall passes along the width of the square and straight dribbles along the length of the square.

The players must work for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Be on your toes to receive”
- “Pass with care”
- “Time your run to receive”

5. Group warm-ups

106. Pass and overlap square



Actions

Spread the players out equally around the four corners of the square.

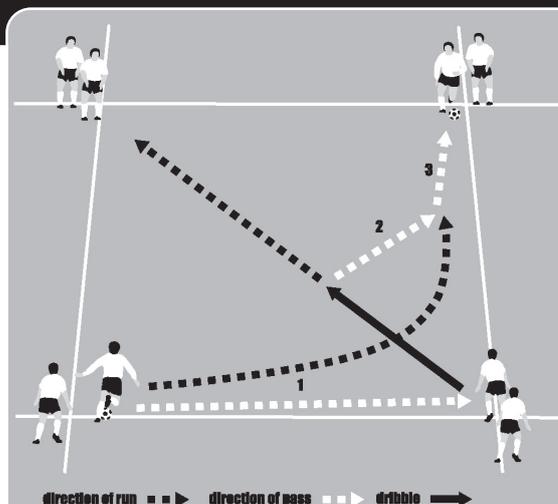
Two balls work simultaneously.

Player 1 passes across the square to player 2.

Player 2 dribbles towards the centre of the square and then makes a reverse pass to the overlapping player 1.

Both players then sprint out to the opposite corners.

Make sure that all players have a turn at both receiving and overlapping by rotating the direction in which the ball is initially passed.



What to shout:

- “Always be on the move”
- “Communicate”

107. Pass around the corner square



Actions

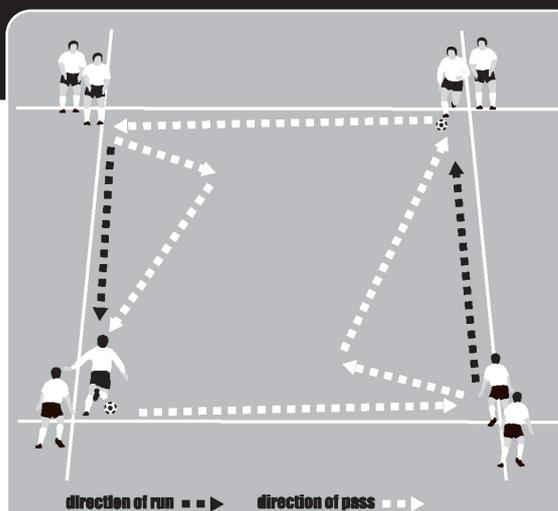
Arrange your players around the four corners of a square.

Player 1 must pass long into player 2 and then run to support.

Player 2 then sets player 1 who now plays a longer pass around the corner to player 3.

Player 3 then sets back to the supporting player 2 who then passes around the corner to player 4.

The practice continues for a set period of time.



What to shout:

- “Have a good feel for the ball”
- “Be light on your toes”
- “Use good weight on your pass”

5. Group warm-ups

108. Quick one-two square



Actions

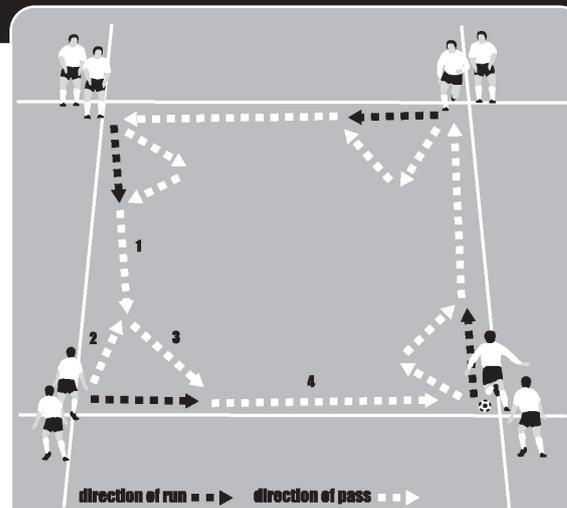
Arrange your players around the four corners of a square.

Two balls work simultaneously.

The first pass is made down the side of the square to the opposite player.

The player then supports and plays a quick one-two with the receiving player.

The receiving player then repeats the practice.



What to shout:

- “Be on your toes to receive”
- “Pass with care”
- “Time your run to receive”

109. Dribble and underlap square



Actions

Arrange your players around the four corners of a square.

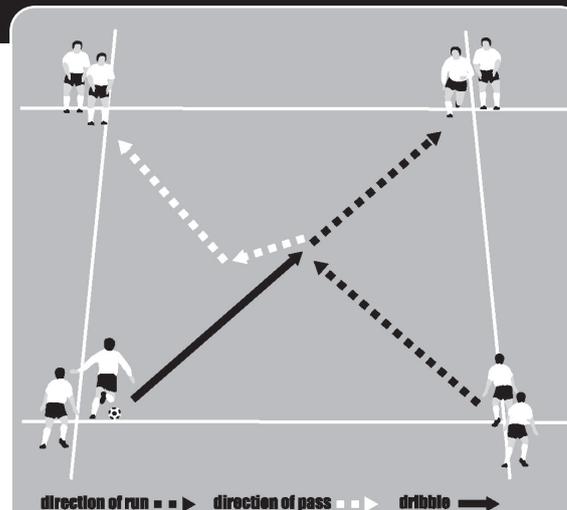
The first player must dribble the ball towards the middle of the square.

The second player makes an under-lapping run in behind the first player.

The first player back heels the ball into the second player's path and then sprints out of the area.

The second player receives the back heel and then dribbles out of the area.

The practice is repeated in the opposite direction.



What to shout:

- “Time your runs”
- “Communicate to combine”

5. Group warm-ups

110. Pass and crossover square



Actions

Arrange your players around the four corners of a square.

You act as the setting player.

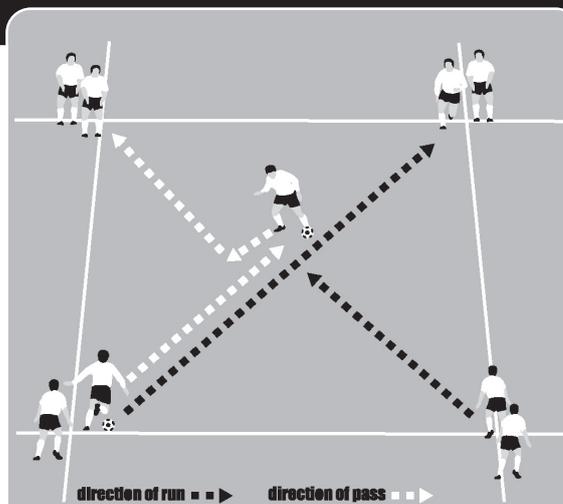
The players must pass and then sprint out to the opposite corner.

Player 1 passes into you and then sprints diagonally.

Player 2 makes a crossover run and receives a lay off from you.

Player 2 then passes out and sprints diagonally.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



What to shout:

- "Time your runs"

- "Pass well"

- "Communicate"

6. Warm-up circuits

111. Speed agility



Actions

Split your players into four groups.

The first player in each group starts in the middle square.

On your whistle, the players turn and complete a fast feet exercise through the cones before receiving a serve.

The players must perform a pass, volley or header to complete the task.

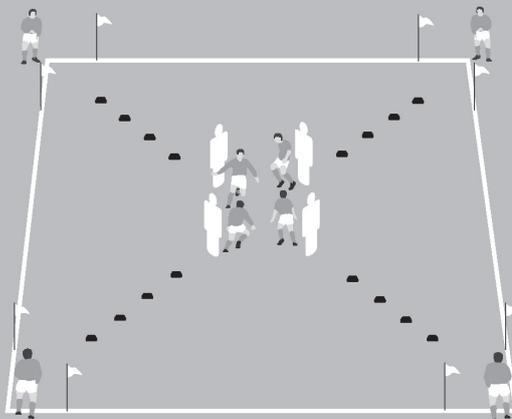
The serving player then runs into the middle square and the practice is repeated.



Progression

This practice has a number of possible progressions:

- 1 Quick feet, receive a pass and pass to the next group on the right
- 2 Quick feet, receive a pass and pass to the next group on the left
- 3 Receive an aerial pass, control to the floor and slalom in and out of the cones.



What to shout:

- “React and sprint”
- “Adjust your feet”
- “Concentrate on good technique”

6. Warm-up circuits

112. When to dribble and when to pass



Actions

Spread six players around the cone as illustrated.

Put two players in the middle acting as defenders. The two players each hold a bib.

One player stays in the middle as a supporting team mate.

Three balls are in play at all times.

The players must dribble into the area and get out the other side without being tackled.

The players must look up and see if they have a free passage to dribble out.

If they face a 1v1 they must use a skill to go past the defender or pass to the supporting team mate so that they can dribble out.

They can also play a one-two with the supporting team mate and get out themselves.

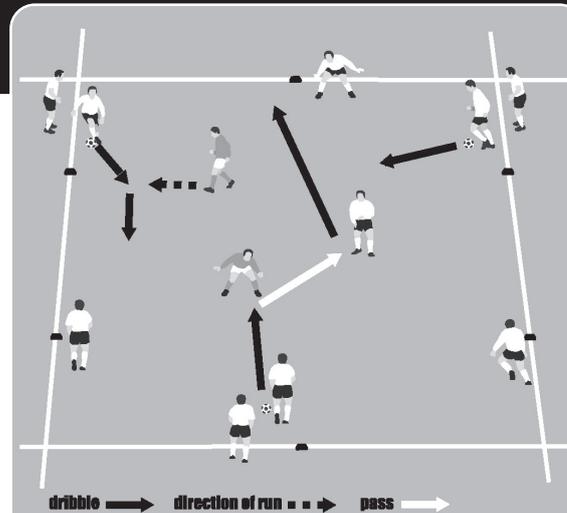
If the player is tackled then they take the bib and become the new defender.

If the player makes a bad pass then they also become the defender.

If an outside receiving player is not concentrating and looking for a pass then they become the new defender.

The practice is repeated for a set period of time – usually 2–3 minutes.

The golden rule of this practice is that only the player passing out goes out.



What to shout:

- “Head up“
- “Assess the situation“
- “Make good decisions“

6. Warm-up circuits

113. Strength and power



Actions

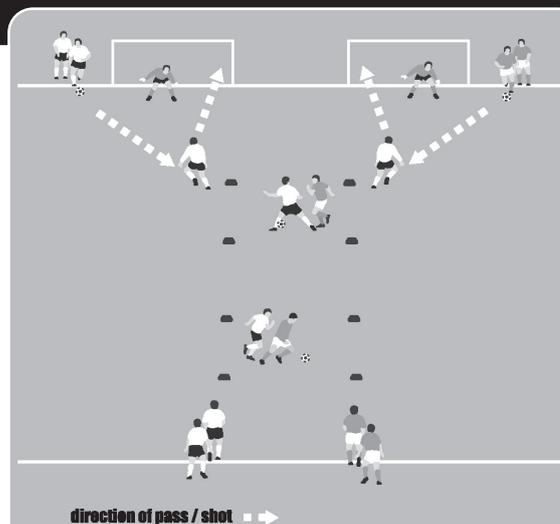
Arrange the players in pairs and tell them to react to your whistle.

- On **whistle 1** – the players sprint into the first area and battle to hold each other off.
- On **whistle 2** – the players sprint into the second area and again battle to hold each other off.
- On **whistle 3** – the players react and sprint to get a first time shot at goal.

The players then become servers.

The servers now jog back to the starting position.

The whistles work on a conveyor-belt effect. On each whistle a new pair is entering an area that the previous pair has just left.



What to shout:

- “Work quickly”
- “Use your body”
- “Hit the target”

6. Warm-up circuits

114. SAQ choice



Actions

Arrange your players into pairs with each pair taking up position on a cone.

The first player works across the area and out to another group.

On the way the player must complete one of these SAQ warm up drills:

- 1 Pressure the mannequin
- 2 360 turn in the small square
- 3 Quick feet through the cones
- 4 Two jumps over the mini hurdles
- 5 Various ladder movements.

The next time the player enters the area, they must complete a different drill on their way across the area.



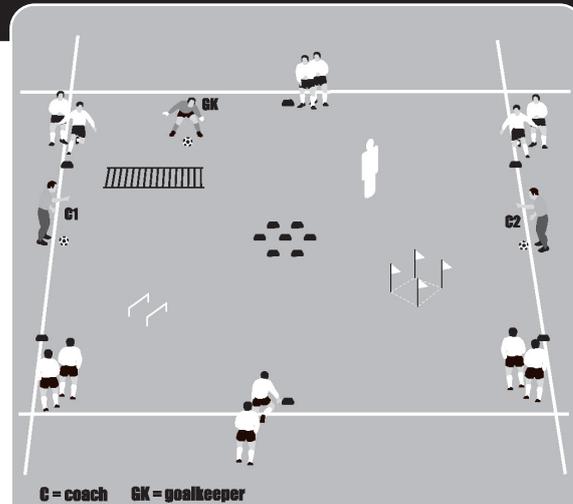
Progression

Two coaches and a goalkeeper are introduced into the practice. The players must now complete a SAQ warm up drill and then a technique warm up drill.

Coach one – the player receives two serves and must complete a right foot and then left foot volley.

Coach two – the player lets the coach pass through their legs and then turns to sprint after the ball and then return it to the coach.

Goalkeeper – the player receives a serve for a header to try and score past the keeper.



What to shout:

- “Work with maximum intensity”
- “Work all the circuit”

SAQ = Speed, agility, quickness

6. Warm-up circuits

115. Turning technique circuit



Actions

Spread your players out around the six cones.

Three balls work simultaneously.

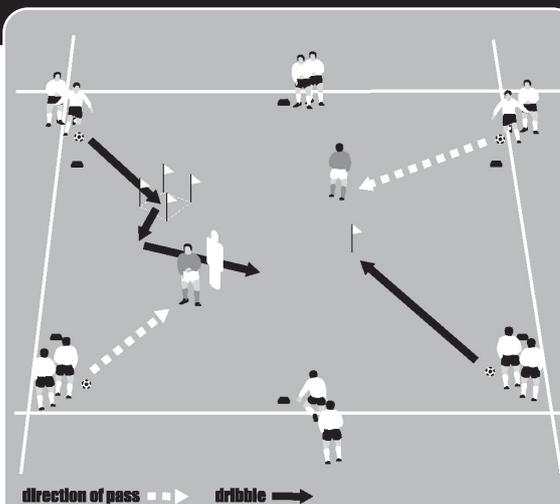
Two players enter the area, one into space and one up close to the mannequin/pole.

The players dribbling into the area have various choices and must not complete the same choice on their next turn.

Choices

- 1 Dribble into the small square, complete a turn and then dribble out to a team mate.
- 2 Dribble in and around the flag and then out to a team mate.
- 3 Pass to the player in space and tell them to turn. Now take their place.
- 4 Pass to the player by the mannequin/pole who then makes a turn under “pressure”. Now take their place.

The practice is repeated for a set period of time.



What to shout:

- “Make a choice”
- “Communicate early and be quick in your movements”

6. Warm-up circuits

116. Dribble or pass circuit



Actions

Spread your players out around the six cones.

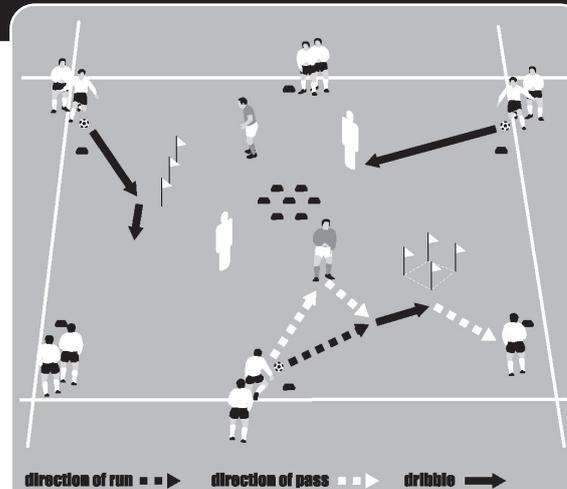
Three balls work simultaneously.

The players must enter the area and complete either a dribbling exercise or passing exercise and then dribble out to a team mate.

Choices

- 1 Skill on mannequin
- 2 Slalom on the flags
- 3 Quick feet through the crazy cones
- 4 Turn in the small square
- 5 Straight dribble across and out
- 6 One-two with a coach
- 7 Nutmeg on the coach
- 8 Pass and overlap the coach

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



direction of run - - - -> direction of pass -> dribble ———>



What to shout:

- “Make a choice”
- “Be positive”
- “Work with high quality”

117. Dribble technique



Actions

Spread your players out around the six cones.

Three balls work simultaneously.

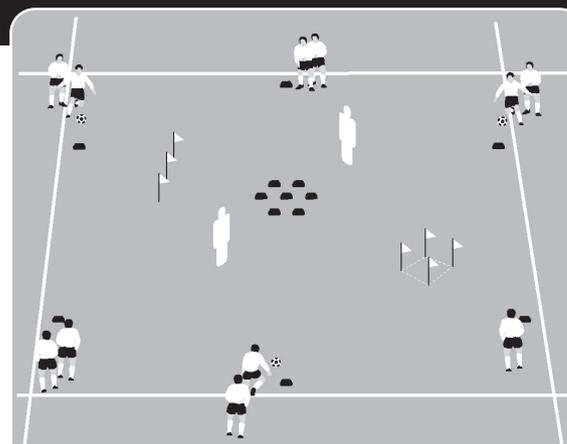
The players must get into the area and out the opposite side to a team mate as quickly as possible.

On the way across the area the players must complete various dribbling exercises.

Choices

- 1 Skill on the mannequin/cone/poles
- 2 Slalom in and out of the flags
- 3 Quick feet through the crazy cones
- 4 Turn in the small square
- 5 Dribble straight through the area and out

The practice continues for a set time period.



What to shout:

- “Make a choice”
- “Be positive”
- “Adjust depending on your choice”
- “Be quick in your movements”

6. Warm-up circuits

118. Dribbling square

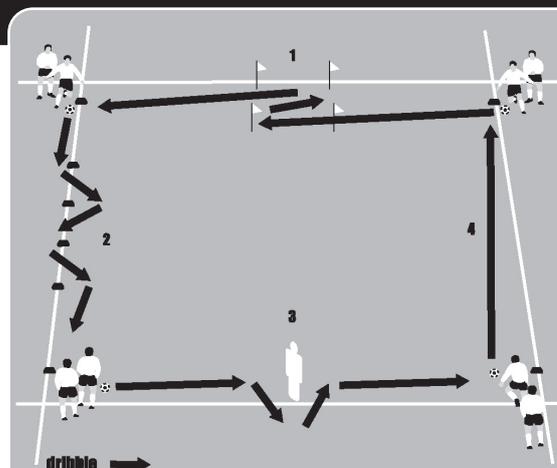


Actions

Arrange your players around the four corners of a square.

Four different dribbling actions are to be completed:

- 1** Dribble into the small square, complete two turns and then dribble to the opposite side.
- 2** Dribble and slalom in and out of the cones to the opposite side.
- 3** Dribble and skill on the mannequin.
- 4** Dribble the ball quickly using various parts of both feet (inside, outside, sole).



What to shout:

- “Adjust according to the exercise”
- “Work with high quality and tempo”

6. Warm-up circuits

119. Technique circuit



Actions

Arrange your players and two goalkeepers around the four stations as illustrated.

The first player at each station must come out to the middle square.

The players must complete a technique exercise and then go out to become a server.

The serving player must jog into the middle square and then out to complete a technique before becoming a server again.

The stations

- 1** Receive a pass and then pass first time into one of the mini goals.
- 2** Receive a thrown pass for a header at goal.
- 3** Receive a pass and make a one-two with you or a helper and then dribble out.
- 4** Receive an aerial pass for a control and shot at goal.

The players must complete a different exercise each time they enter the area.

The practice is repeated for a set time period.



Progression

Any of the techniques can be replaced with different exercises that the coach feels appropriate to the warm up. The examples above are to encourage quick play and improved finishing skills.



What to shout:

- “Work at maximum intensity”
- “Concentrate on your technique and work the whole circuit”

6. Warm-up circuits

120. Multi-function circuit



Actions

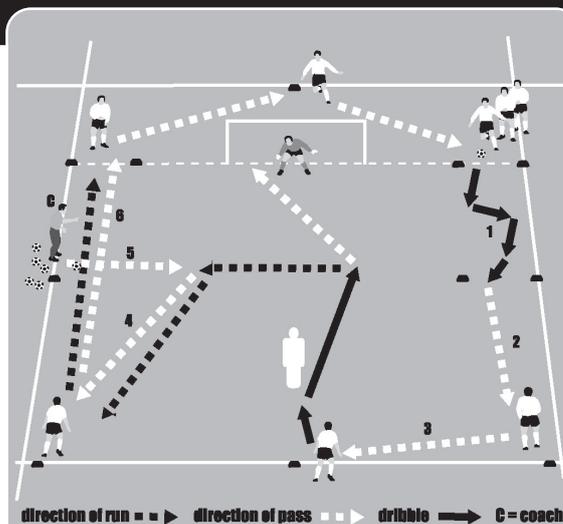
Arrange your players around the six stations as illustrated.

This circuit works on dribbling, short and long passing, skills, shooting, reactions and speed.

- 1** The player dribbles half way towards the next player, makes a pass and then sprints to the next position.
- 2** The receiving player makes a pass inside to the central player.
- 3** The central player completes a skill, shoots at goal and then reacts to receive a pass from you.
- 4** The central player then sets the supporting player.
- 5** The supporting player makes a long pass and then sprints to support.
- 6** The player receives the long pass, opens out and passes behind the goal to the next player.
- 7** The player behind the goal controls and passes back to the start position.

After each pass the player must sprint at top speed to the next position.

The practice continues for a set time period.



What to shout:

- "Be ready to receive"
- "Always be on the move"
- "Pass well and sprint to the next station"

6. Warm-up circuits

121. Pass and SAQ choice



Actions

The group of players are inside the area.

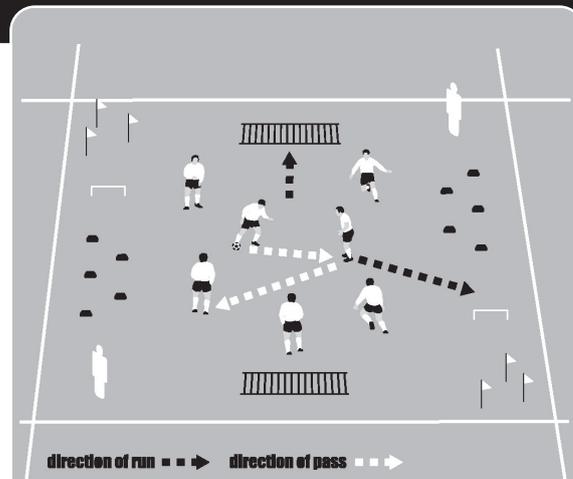
The players must make quick passes and then run to complete a speed and agility drill on the outside of the area.

The players have the choice of which speed and agility drill that they complete but must not do the same drill on their next turn.

Choice

- 1 Pressure the mannequin
- 2 Run around the mannequin
- 3 Fast feet through the ladder
- 4 Zig zag side stepping on the cones
- 5 Forward and backwards on the cones
- 6 Arrowhead movements of the flags
- 7 Two footed jumps on the mini hurdles

After completing one of the drills, the players return to the area and make another pass and then repeat the exercise for a set period of time.



What to shout:

- “Work with maximum intensity”
- “Work all the circuit”
- “Concentrate on the pass – it’s important”

SAQ = Speed, agility, quickness

7. Pre-match warm-ups

To get the most out of a pre-match warm up it should be personalized to your team. Spending time planning and discussing with your players what they would like to do in a warm up is often a very effective way of ensuring that the players enjoy it and that they prepare both mentally and physically for the game ahead.

Various approaches can be included in your warm up:

- jogging
- stretching (static and dynamic)
- sprinting
- ball work
- possession
- crossing and finishing
- small sided games

Nothing is set in stone and there is no right or wrong way – it's much better to find what's comfortable for you and your team of players. The same is true for the amount of time dedicated to the pre-match warm up.

Do you arrive early and go out to warm up before returning to the dressing room for the team talk?

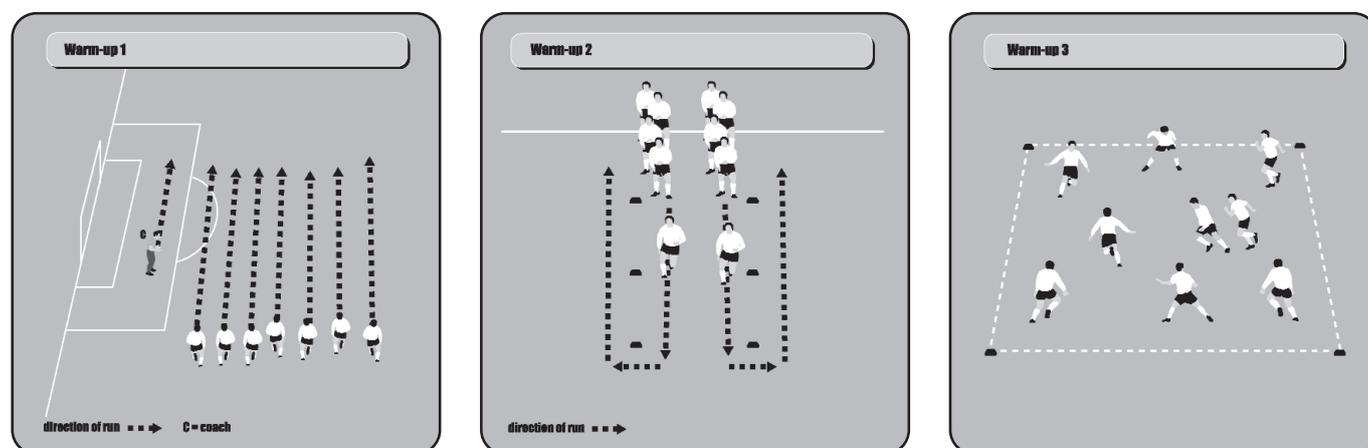
Or do you name the team and then go out to warm up and stay out on the pitch until kick off?

These are important decisions that must be made in advance and must be continued on a consistent basis.

Consistency is the key to a pre-match warm up as you need your players to work freely, knowing exactly what they are going to be completing during their preparation. This will allow the players to focus on the game ahead.

Personally, I only change the content of the pre-match warm up when I think that the players are bored with the current schedule and are not showing enough intensity.

The diagrams below show the three most popular ways of taking your team through the initial running and stretching routine.



- 1 The team follows the coach across the pitch.
- 2 The team work in two lines and run in pairs.
- 3 The players are free to run around a small coned off area.

8. Warm downs

A warm down is the process by which the body is helped to gradually recover from exercise and adjust to rest.

A warm down should be completed after each training session and match in order to help speed up the recovery process. Warming down helps your body get rid of waste products that have built up in your muscles while you were exercising or playing. The warm down involves the first two parts of the warm up, light aerobic exercise and stretching.

The following examples of warm downs can also be used as warm ups and this is true for a large majority of the practices shown in this book. Once again you can choose to warm down with or without a ball but the work should always be low intensity, allowing time for longer stretching periods and fluid intake.

10 things to remember when warming down

- 1** Make it fun – if the players enjoy it they will have no problems completing a warm down.
- 2** Ensure that the players know why they are warming down.
- 3** Make sure that the players put a jumper or tracksuit top on so that they keep the warmth in their bodies.
- 4** Keep the work at a low intensity.
- 5** Provide longer stretching periods and ensure the technique is correct (you can use dynamic and static stretching).
- 6** Ensure that plenty of fluid is available to the players and that they are beginning the hydration process.
- 7** You can work with or without a ball.
- 8** Time management is important – don't go on for too long.
- 9** Distances covered – keep the distances realistic to a warming down process.
- 10** The weather – make allowances for the weather (don't take them out in the pouring rain).

8. Warm downs

122. Stretching and dribbling



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams.

Tell one team to perform some dynamic and static stretching exercises of their choice.

Tell the other team to dribble in and out of the stretching players and complete various skills and nutmegs on them.

On your whistle, the players switch roles.

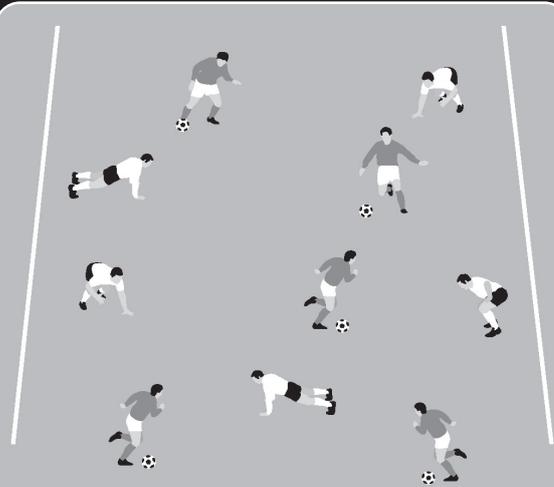


Progression

The practice can be progressed to include:

- the dribbling players making take-over moves with the stretching players
- the dribbling players making one-two passes with the stretching players
- the dribbling players pass to the stretching players and tell them to turn and dribble.

After all the progressions, you should give the dribbling players the choice of actions to use with the stretching players. The only rule to be used is that the players must not do the same progression on each turn.



What to shout:

- “Work at low intensity when dribbling”
- “Concentrate on your stretching exercises”

8. Warm downs

123. Soccer golf

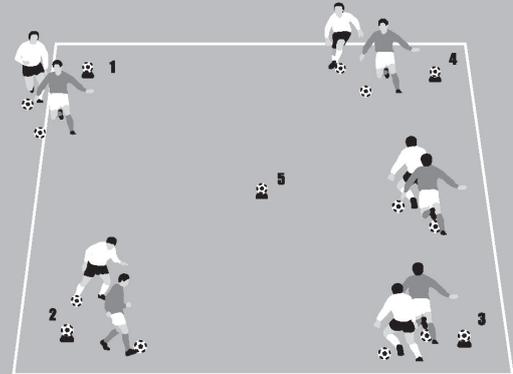


Actions

Arrange your player into pairs.

The aim of the game is to be the player that knocks the ball off the cone in the least number of shots.

The players work their way around the different holes which have various distances and starting angles.



What to shout:

- “Take care with your pass”
- “Stretch in-between shots”
- “No running or just walking or slow jogging”

124. Handball game



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams.

The players must throw and catch in order to move down the pitch.

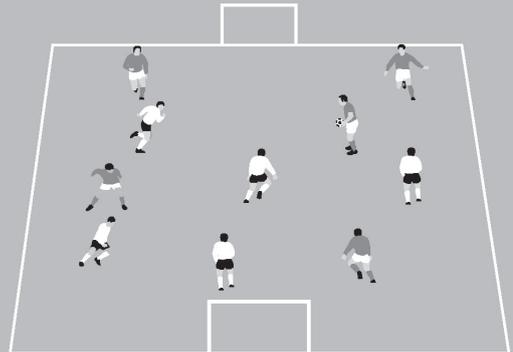
They cannot move when in possession of the ball and therefore rely on the movements of their team mates.



Progression

The teams must now score with a header from a thrown pass.

The teams must now score with a volley from a thrown pass.



What to shout:

- “Move off the ball”
- “Be in a position to receive”
- “Keep the ball moving”

8. Warm downs

125. Aussie rules



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams.

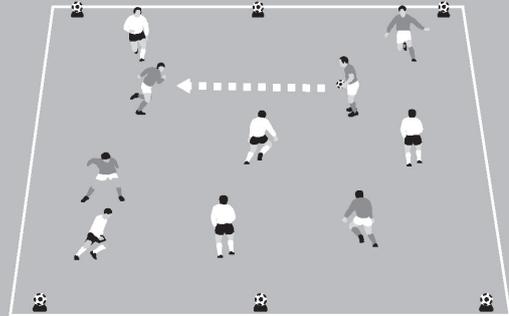
The players must make volley and catch passing movements.

The aim is to get down the field and knock a ball off the opponent's cones.

The player in possession of the ball must not move.

The other players in the team must make supporting runs and movements to receive.

The game is played for a set time or until one team has knocked off all their opponents balls.



direction of pass →



What to shout:

- "Move off the ball"

- "Be in a position to receive"

- "Keep the ball moving"

- "Don't force the play"

8. Warm downs

126. Head tennis



Actions

Arrange your players into two teams of varied ability.

Get the players to serve the ball with a half volley.

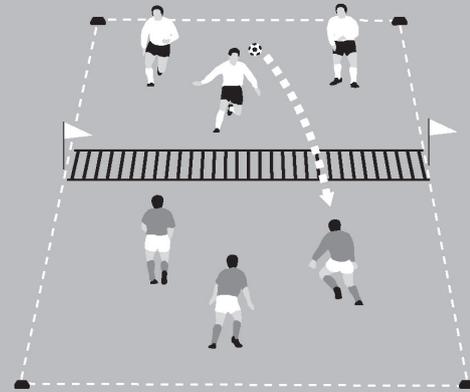
The teams are only allowed one bounce before returning the ball and each player is only allowed three touches.

The game is played for a set time or until a number of points has been reached.



Progression

- 1** Continuous rally – the players form two lines. The ball is served over and one by one they make a shot over the net and then run around to join the opposite side. The aim is to try and see how long the rally lasts.
- 2** Wimbledon – the players form two lines. Each player plays as an individual. The players take it in turns to knock the ball over the net and then run around to the opposite side. If you make a mistake or a point is scored against you then you are out. Eventually you have a 1v1 finale.
- 3** Team knock out – two teams but now if you make a mistake or happen to be the closest to the ball when a point is scored then you are out. Therefore the game starts with equal teams but as players are knocked out it becomes an overload advantage to one team. The winning team is the one that eliminates all their opponents.



direction of headed pass →



What to shout:

- “Be on your toes”
- “Adjust your body position”
- “Concentrate on your touch”
- “Use various parts of the body”
- “Combine with team mates”

Conclusion

I hope the sessions in this book will arm you with the extra knowledge and ideas that enable you to improve as soccer coaches.

The secret to beginning a practice well is to prepare properly. The coach always starts in a position of strength as the players generally arrive in good spirits, wanting to play soccer. I always start and end my practices with a fun exercise and by doing that I ensure that the players are happy and learning at the start and then happy and looking forward to the next session at the end.

This is a very simple rule but it has served me very well.

Thanks for reading. If you have any questions or feedback on this book, please feel free to email me at my personal address: mbeale4980@aol.com



Michael Beale

