

SOCCE**RCOACHING**.net magazine

BUILDING UP FROM THE BACK (1)

- **PASSING**
- **1 VERSUS 1**
- **PREPARATION EXERCISES**

66

July 2014

Building up from the back

Building up from the back is one of the basic elements of the Dutch Soccer philosophy. Although the Dutch national team did not show this in the World Cup 2014, almost every youth player that kicks the ball blindly forward will hear from his coach not to do that. Therefore, here in The Netherlands, a goalkeeper is more than a person that stops shots: you have to be able to participate in the build up play as well.

But what do we mean by building up from the back? As I said, most coaches in The Netherlands would say to reach the midfielders (or attackers) by short and simple passes. Creating a goal by a build up which starts at the back will bring a proud feeling to most coaches.

But, a good build up from the back might be one of the most difficult things to achieve in soccer.

Especially if the opponent is of equal strength or even better than your team. And if the opponent puts pressure on the build up, most teams will struggle. Even teams like Barcelona have problems with building up when the opponent puts pressure on it. That happened to them several times in the Champions League.



Although you have the ball (and therefore you decide what happens), you are still dependent on your opponent during the build up. Do they put full pressure on you? Do they let play you the first ball to the side and then put pressure on it? Or do they stay in their own half and simply wait for you there?

And then we haven't even talked about how different formations play against each other.

Or the different ways how you can build up. Do you want to play with attacking wing defenders? Or do you want to stay in formation and try to outnumber your opponent in midfield?

As you can see, there are a lot of things to consider and that makes it very hard to make this eMagazine. There are a lot of variables in play. However, I tried hard to give you several ideas which you might use when improving the building

up from the back of your team.
I hope you enjoy reading it.

With the best regards from The Netherlands,

Paul van Veen

Passing

Good passing skills and being able to control the ball are essential if you want to build up from the back. You don't want to lose the ball so close to your own goal because of a bad pass or a ball that bounces away several meters from your feet when controlling it. Losing the ball in this area of the field will cause immediate danger of conceding a goal.

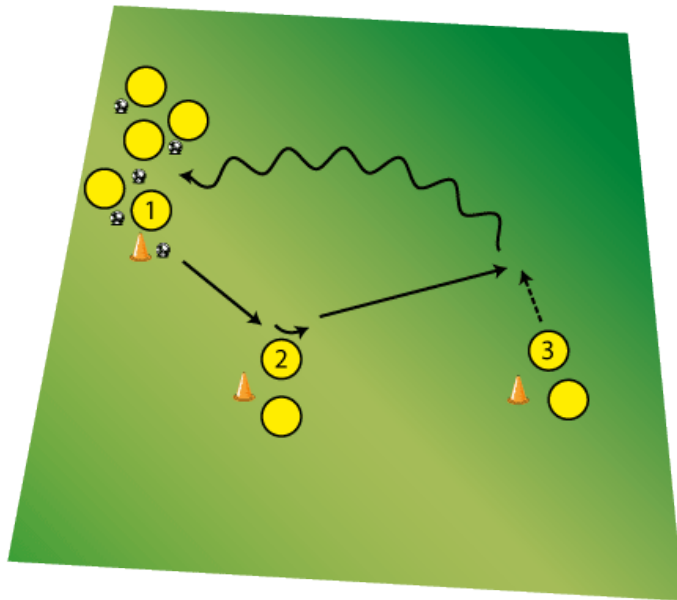
So it is a logical thing that we start this magazine with a chapter which exercises improving passing. Logically, we will start to show practice where you don't have to deal with opponents yet. You only have to worry about the ball, your timing and the space.

Although we don't work with opponents yet, we always try to recreate situations which have a relationship to the match. For example, if a player has to play a moving ball in a particular situation,

we bring the player in a situation where the player has to play a moving ball. We always want to simulate a real match. If a player has to move towards a ball, please make sure the player moves at the same speed as the match.

The coaching points we expect from the coach are all about the passing and controlling the ball. First, make sure all players are concentrated and then you can coach technically.

EXERCISE 1 CHANGING SIDES



Organization

- Player 1 plays the ball to player 2
- Player 2 controls the ball to the side and plays to player 3 (play in front of player 3)
- Every player moves up one position, player 3 dribbles to the starting position
- At every position, there are two players to make sure we have as many repetitions as possible

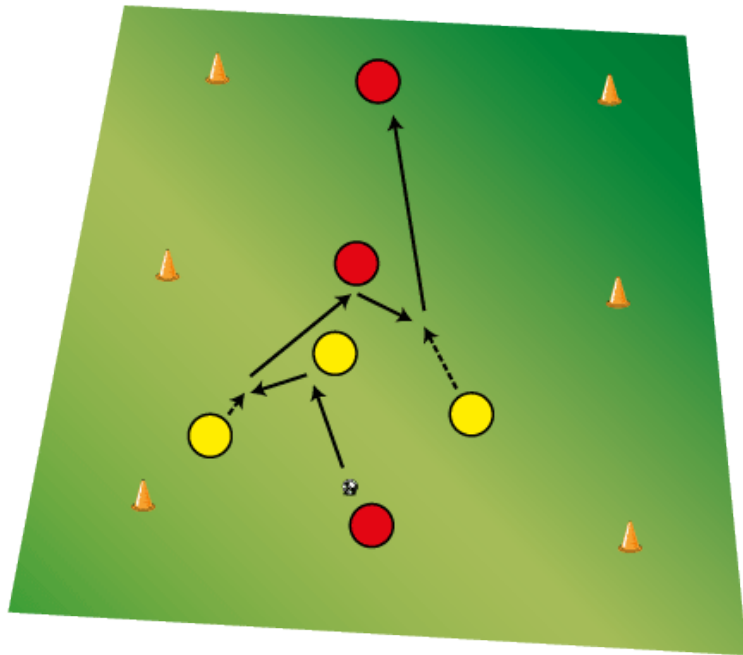
Coaching

- Make sure every player is concentrating
- Make sure every player uses the correct technique
- Keep the balls low!

Other

- Please note the relationship with the match: player 1 is the left defender, player 2 is a central defender and player 3 is the other central defender (or right defender)

EXERCISE 2 PASSING IN FREE SPACE



Other

- Instead of telling them how to pass, you can also let them explore it for themselves

Organization

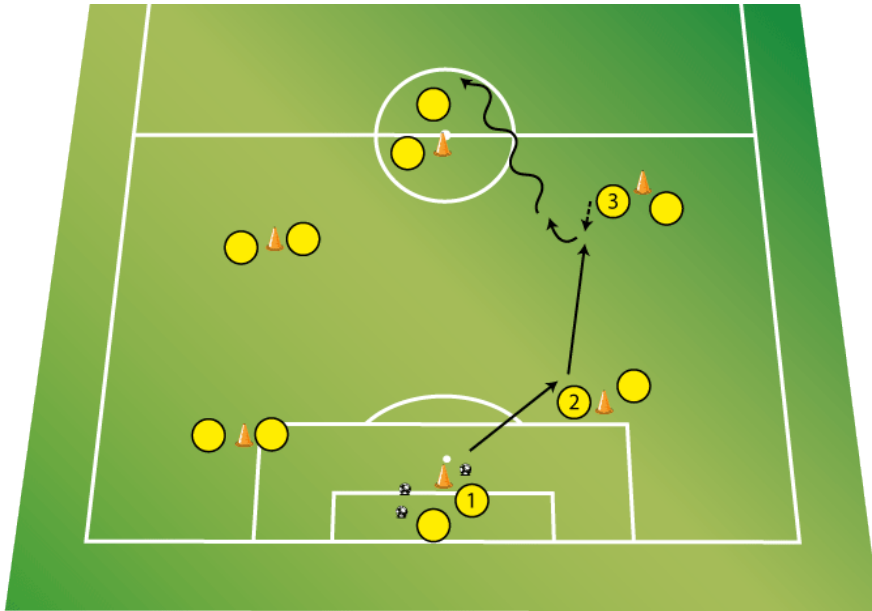
- With 6 cones, we make 2 marked areas of 15x15m
- In this area we work with 6 players; 3 of them (the red) are positioned on a line; 3 play in free space
- We start with all yellow players in the bottom area and the bottom red player begins with the ball
- That player plays the ball to a yellow player 1, who plays the ball to yellow player 2, who plays to the middle red and finally the 3rd yellow player plays the ball to the red player at the other side
- All yellow players move to the top area, where we immediately continue (preferably one-touch) with a pass from the red player to the 1st yellow player.
- After 2 minutes red and yellow changes position

Coaching

- We always play forward-backward-forward-backward-forward. Make sure players choose the correct position

EXERCISE 3

BUILDING UP THROUGH THE CENTER



Organization

- Player 1 plays the ball to player 2
- Player 2 controls the ball forward and plays the ball to player 3 (who moves towards the ball)
- Player 3 turns and dribbles to the other side
- Every player moves up one position
- At every cone we have 2 players ready to avoid waiting times
- From the other side the same exercise is performed

Coaching

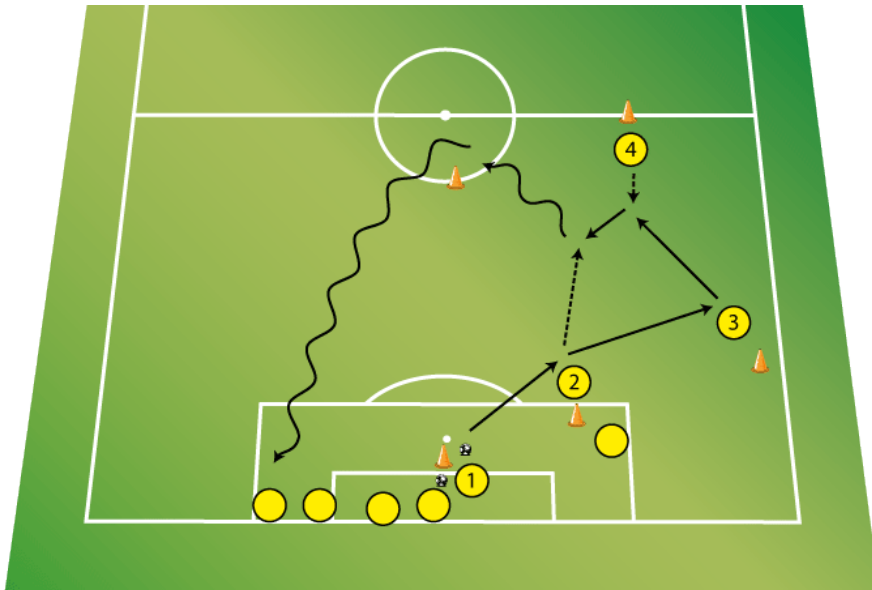
- Technical skills

Other

- Please note the relationship with the match: player 1 is the goalkeeper, player 2 is a central defender and player 3 is the right midfielder

EXERCISE 4

BUILDING UP OVER THE WING



Organization

- Player 1 plays the ball to player 2
- Player 2 turns with the ball and plays the ball to

player 3

- Player 3 controls the ball in a forward direction and plays the ball to player 4, who moves towards the ball.
- Player 4 plays the ball with one-touch to player 2, who moves forward
- Player 2 controls the ball and dribbles around the cone to the starting position
- Player 1 moves to the position of player 2; players 3 and 4 stay in their position

Coaching

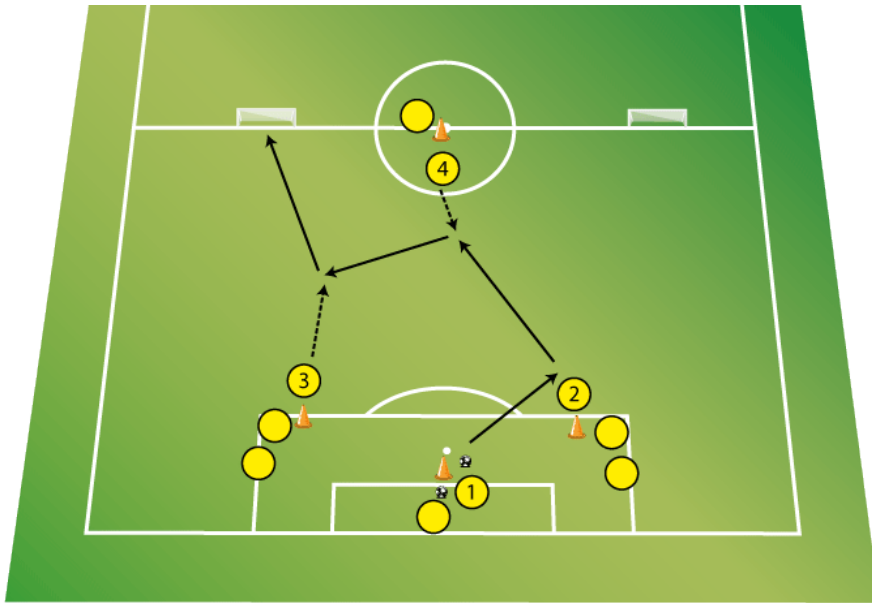
- Please make sure that in position 3 and 4, you put players who play in that position in the match

Other

- Please note the relationship with the match: player 1 is the goalkeeper, 2 is a central defender, 3 is the right defender and 4 is the right midfielder

EXERCISE 5

BUILDING UP USING THE CENTRAL DEFENDER



Organization

- Player 1 plays the ball to player 2, who turns with the ball and plays it to player 4 (who moves towards the ball)
- Player 4 plays the ball (with 1-touch) to player 3, who is already moving forward
- Player 3 passes the ball (with 1-touch) in the goal of that side
- Every player moves back to their starting position and the next ball begins
- When the players understand the exercise, let player 1 decide whether to play to the left or the right

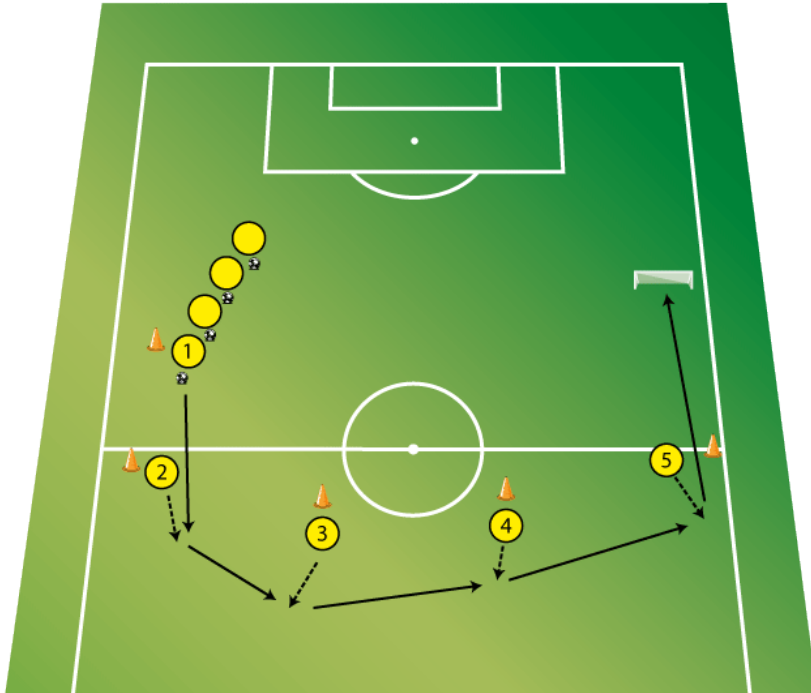
Coaching

- Technical skills

Other

- Please note the relationship with the match: player 1 is the goalkeeper, 2 and 3 central defenders, 4 is a central midfielder

EXERCISE 6 CHANGING SIDES (2)



Organization

- Player 1 plays the ball to player 2 who is making space backwards
- Player 2 controls the ball and plays it to player 3 who already has made space backwards
- Player 3 controls the ball sideways and plays to player 4, who has made space backwards
- Player 4 controls the ball forwards and plays the ball in front of player 5 who first moved backwards and now moves forwards
- Player 5 controls the ball and touches the ball in the goal
- Every player moves up one position

Coaching

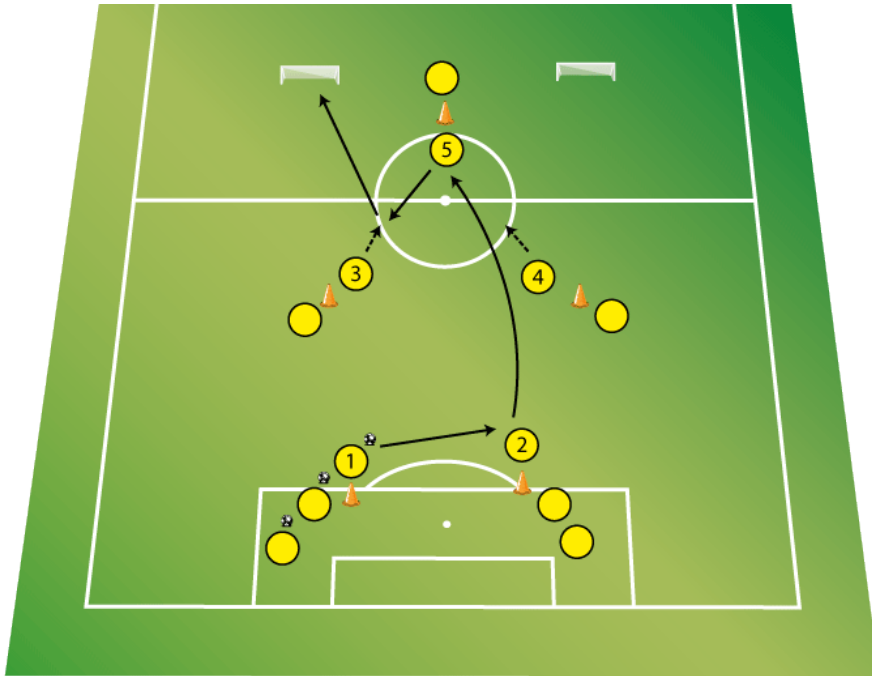
- Make sure all players keep their faces towards the goal of the opponent

Other

- Please note the relationship with the match: player 1 is a midfielder or wing attacker, 2 is the left defender, 3 and 4 central defenders, 5 is a right defender

EXERCISE 7

BUILDING UP USING A LONG PASS



Organization

- Player 1 plays the ball to player 2, who controls the ball forwards
- Player 2 plays the ball through the air to player 5
- Player 5 controls the ball and plays it directly to player 3 or 4 who move forward (1-touch is also allowed)
- The player that receives the ball plays the ball with 1-touch in one of the goals
- Player 1 and 2 switch positions, all other players move back to their initial starting position
- To avoid waiting times, there are 2 players at every position

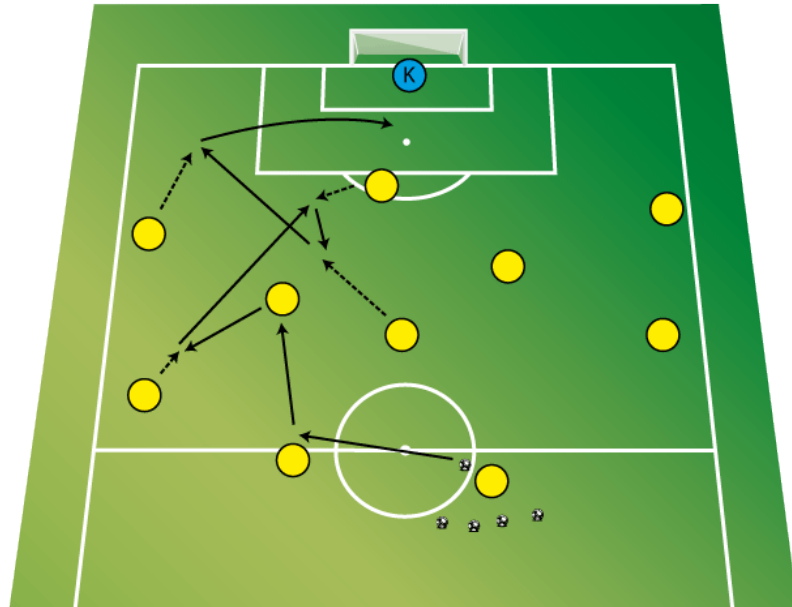
Coaching

- Technical skills

Other

- Please note the relationship with the match: player 1 and 2 are central defenders, 3 and 4 are midfielders and 5 is a center forward

EXERCISE 8 11 VERSUS 1



Organization

- We play a possession game without opponents
- The coach gives 3 or 4 variations on how to build up
- The players determine which variation to perform. They have to recognize this through play, not by simply shouting a number
- All passes and movements should be performed at the same speed as they would be performed in a match

Coaching

- Does every player recognize the build up?
- Are the players at the other side of the field in the correct position as well?
- Technical skills, it is still a passing exercise

Other

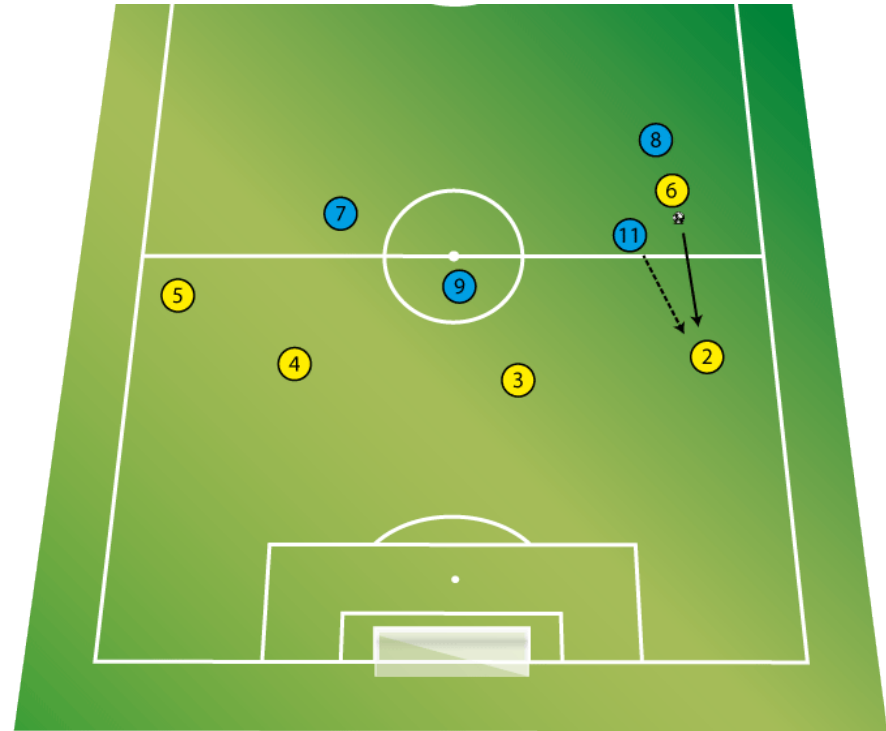
- Please note the relationship with the match: player 1 and 2 are central defenders, 3 and 4 are midfielders and 5 is a center forward

1 versus 1

If you read a magazine about building up from the back, you might not expect a chapter about 1 versus 1. However, if you build up from the back sometimes a player comes in a situation where the best situation is not a pass, but using their 1 versus 1 skills. Most of the time, something goes wrong in the process and although we have to try to avoid this, we still have to prepare players how to deal with this situation.

1 versus 1 with opponent coming from front

We will look into three different situations of the 1 versus 1 we can run into. The first situation is where the opponent is coming straight at us. As you can see in the first drawing, this might be a pass from the midfielder to a wing defender. During the pass, the opponent moves forward to put pressure on, arriving at the defender just after he controls the ball.



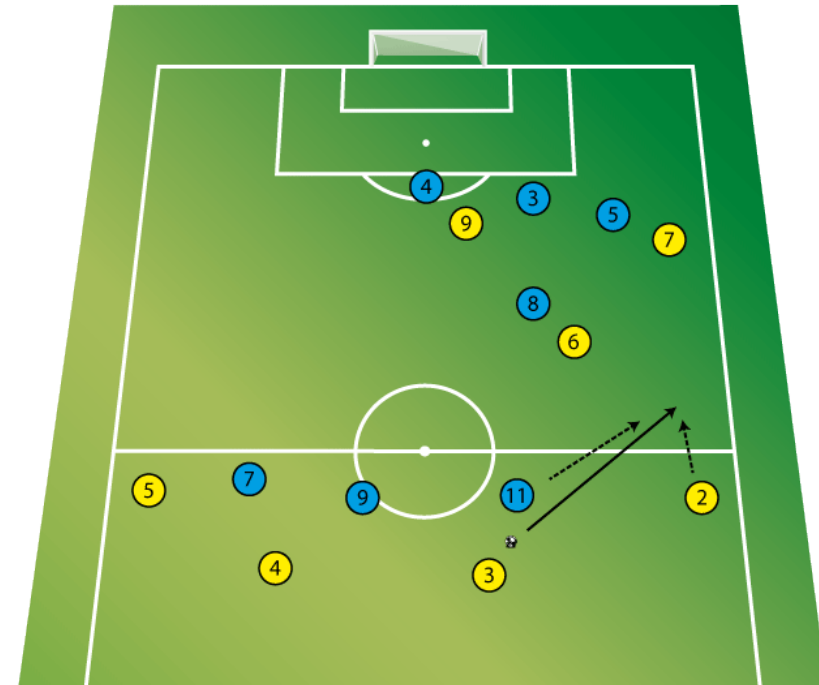
There are three ways to deal with this situation. The first one is to beat the opponent with a fake move (the opponent has a lot of speed, so should be relatively easy to beat). Please note that this 1 versus 1 is very different from an attacking playing 1 versus 1, because then the defenders often

moves backwards.

The second way is not to beat the opponent, but move sideways, but for this one it is very important that your teammates assist you. The third option is to pass or kick the ball (make sure you don't run into a block).

1 versus 1 with opponent coming from behind

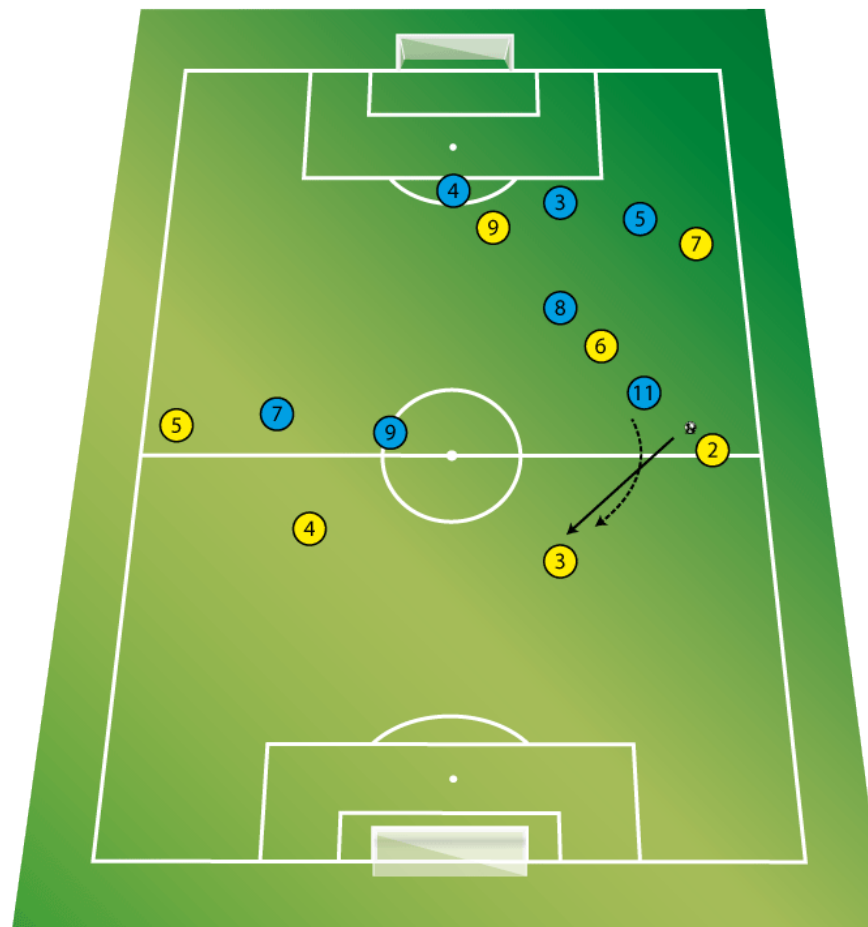
The second situation is a situation that can happen to a wing defender. The ball is played from the center to the wing and the opponent who is putting pressure continues his attempt to win the ball. This will mean he will come from the side and from behind (see diagram). This leaves the wing defender under (time sensitive) pressure to find a solution. A ball to a midfielder or attacker is of course the best solution, but if he can't find a solution and wants to keep possession of the ball, the player should cut the ball and so beat the opponent, to play back to one of the central defenders.



1 versus 1 with opponent coming from the side

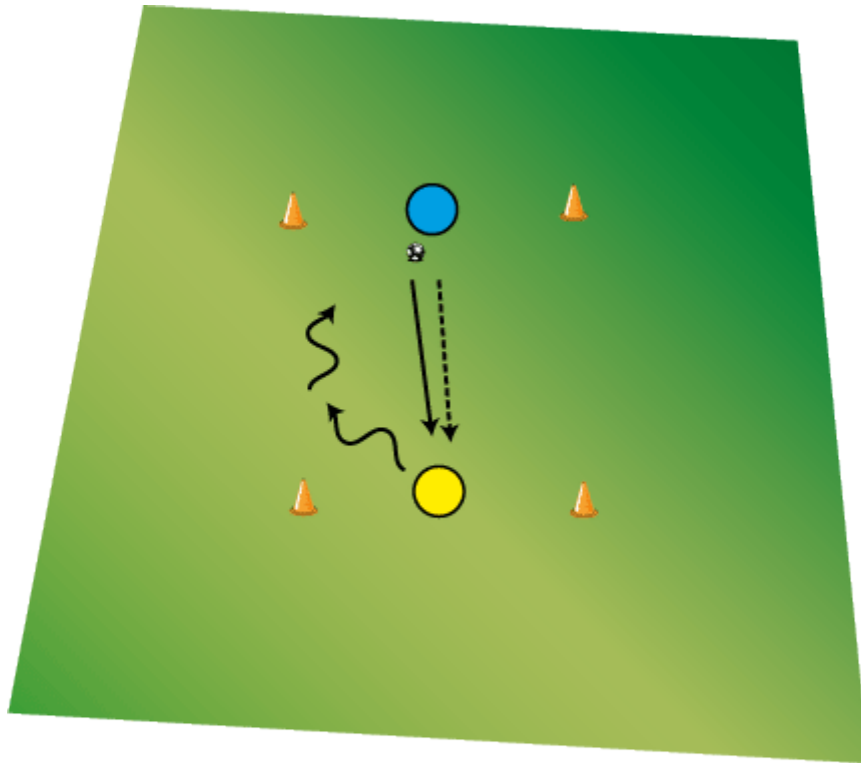
The last situation is the opponent who is coming from the side and the front. This can happen to the central defender that receives the ball from a wing defender (see image). Playing a 1 versus 1 in this situation is probably a big risk, but might be the only solution in some instances. Depending on the time the defender has, he can choose to (a) control the ball and play a pass; (b) control the ball sideways to gain some extra time to search for a solution (in the diagram that has to be on the left and in the center) or (c) think the situation is too dangerous and simply kick the ball long.

To determine what the best solution is in a certain situation has to do with the insight and the experience of a player. That means that the player has to be brought into this situation a lot in order to gain that insight and experience.



EXERCISE 9

BEATING AN OPPONENT FROM THE FRONT



Organization

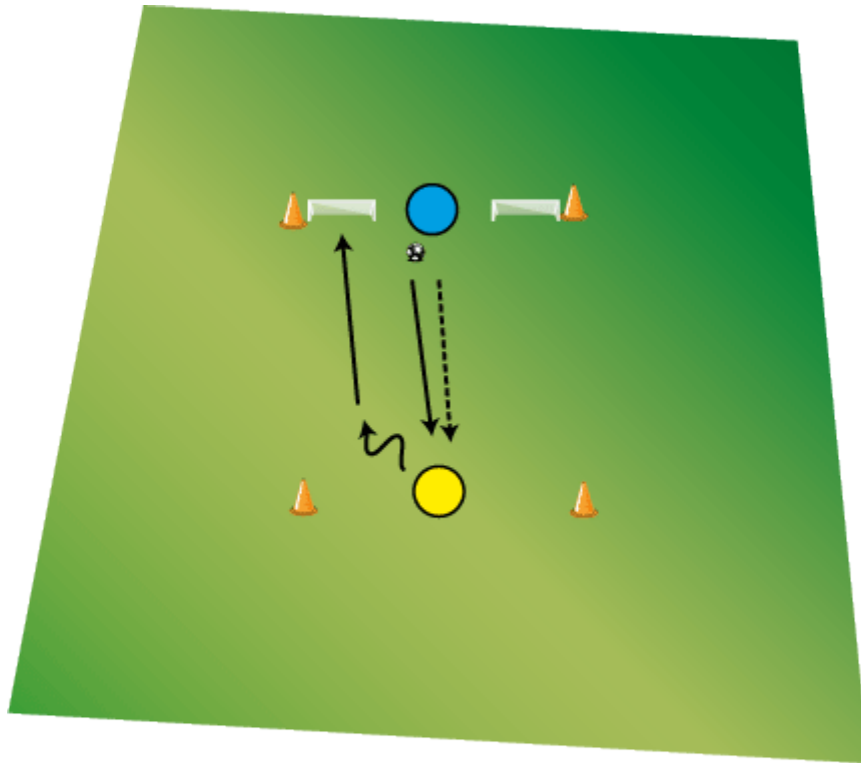
- An area of 6 by 6 meters
- One player with ball (the opponent) and a player without ball at the other side of the area
- The player with ball plays to the other player and immediately runs after the pass to put pressure
- The player who receives the ball tries to beat the opponent either left or right
- The player dribbles to the other side of the area and now they switch roles

Coaching

- The player who has to apply pressure, always moves forward (to play all or nothing to try to take the ball)

EXERCISE 10

BEATING AN OPPONENT FROM THE FRONT (2)



Organization

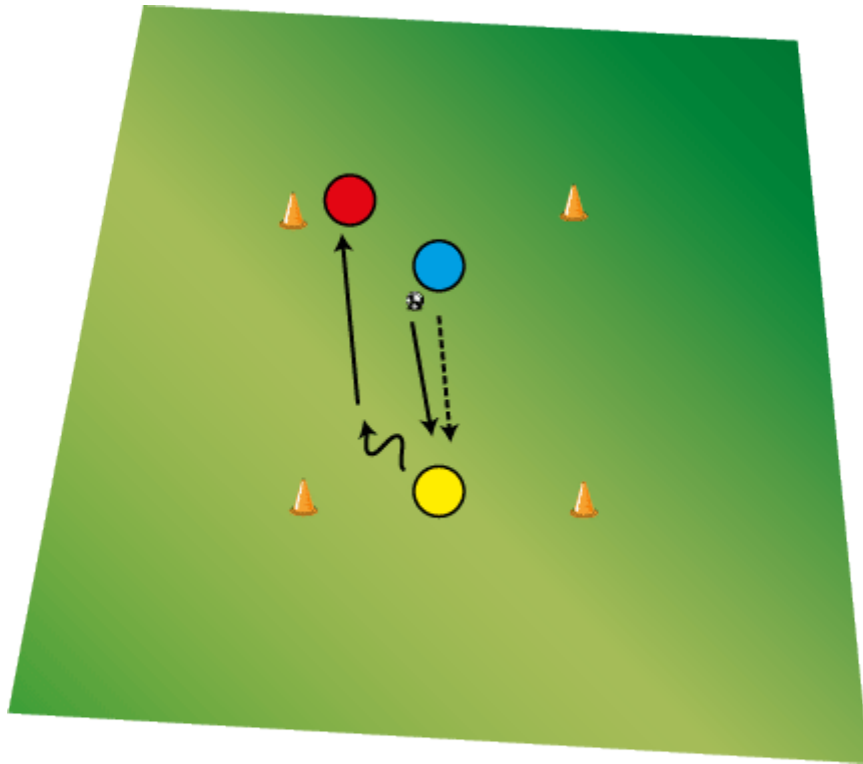
- An area of 6 by 6 meters, 2 goals at 1 end
- One player with ball (the opponent) and a player without ball at the other side of the area
- The player with the ball plays to the other player and runs after the pass to put pressure on the ball
- The player who receives the ball tries to score a goal, either by beating the opponent or passing fast
- Players switch roles

Coaching

- The player who has to apply pressure always moves forward (to play all or nothing to try to take the ball)
- The player who receives the ball does not have to beat the opponent now. Depending on the situation (and available time), the player can pass the ball or beat the opponent. Please note that you don't need to beat the opponent completely to score a goal.

EXERCISE 11

BEATING AN OPPONENT FROM THE FRONT (3)



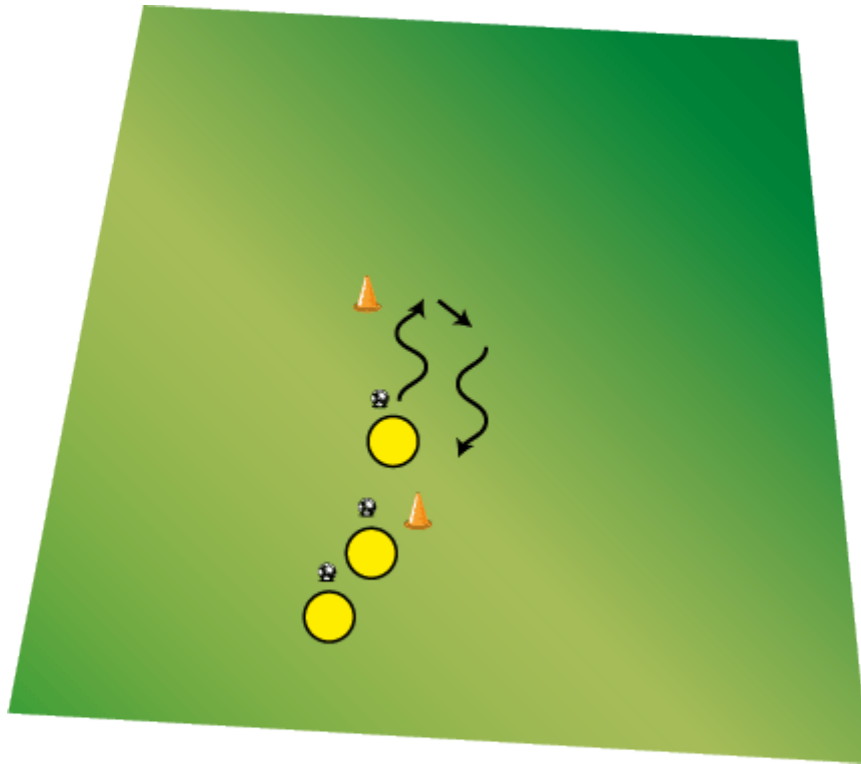
Organization

- An area of 6 by 6 meters
- One player with the ball (the opponent) and two players at either side of the area
- The player with the ball plays to the other player and runs after the pass to put pressure on
- The player who receives the ball tries to pass the ball to the player at the other side.
- The player who passes moves to the other side of the field and the player receives the ball (or should receive the ball) now starts with the ball

Coaching

- It is a little bit more difficult than the previous exercise, because now you have to look at which side the third player is moving and you have to move to that side
- The player who has to apply pressure, always moves forward (to play all or nothing to try to take the ball)

EXERCISE 12 CUTTING THE BALL



Organization

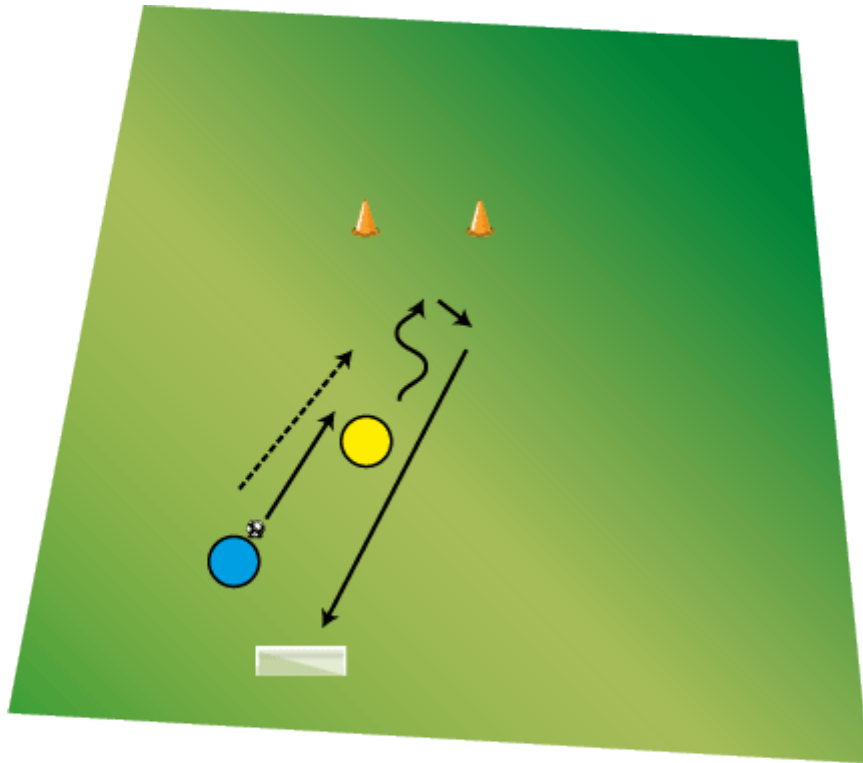
- Two cones (about 8m apart), the 2nd cone is positioned a little bit to the left
- 3 players, every player has a ball
- The first player dribbles to the 2nd cone and cuts the ball to the right and then dribbles back to the starting cone
- The 2nd player starts, etc.
- After a while, move the cone to the right and perform it the other way around

Coaching

- Players have to act like there is an opponent to their left and keep their body between the opponent and the ball at all times
- Perform scenario at game speed

EXERCISE 13

OPPONENT COMING FROM BEHIND



Organization

- Work in groups of 2 players
- The player with ball (blue) passes the ball to the yellow player and puts pressure on immediately.
- The yellow player can dribble in between the 2 cones (1 point) or cut the ball and pass in the goal (2 points)
- If no goal is scored, the player loses a point
- Then the yellow player passes to the blue player
- Who has the most points after 5 minutes of play?
- Then choose a new opponent (winners play with winners)

Coaching

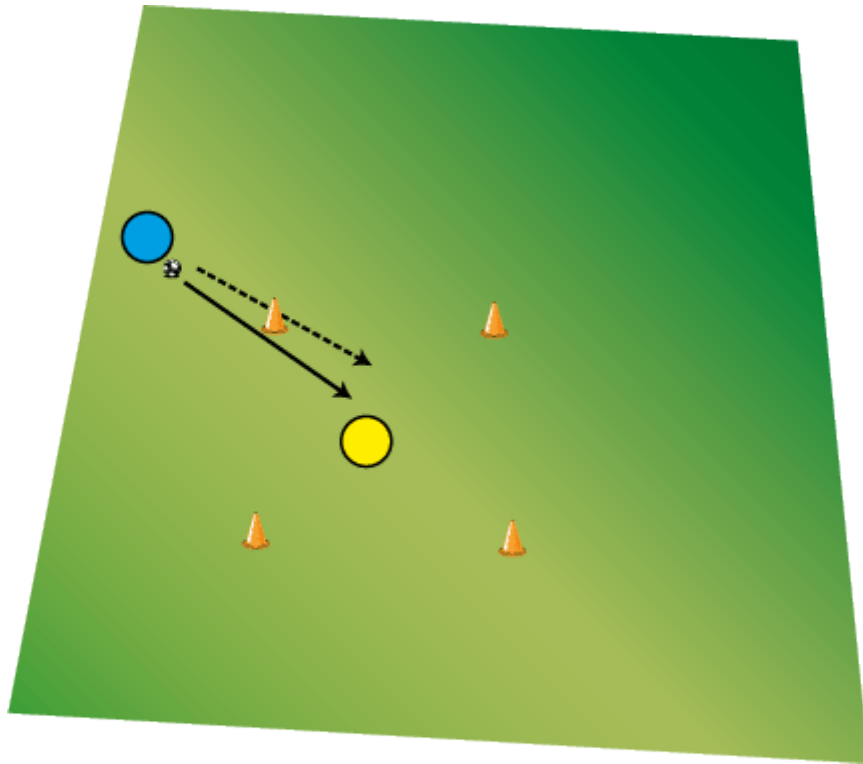
- Please change the distance between the goals.
- The player who receives the ball should learn what the best option is in different situations.

Other

- The pass back in the goal can be seen as a ball back to the central defender

EXERCISE 14

OPPONENT COMING FROM SIDE/FRONT (1)



Organization

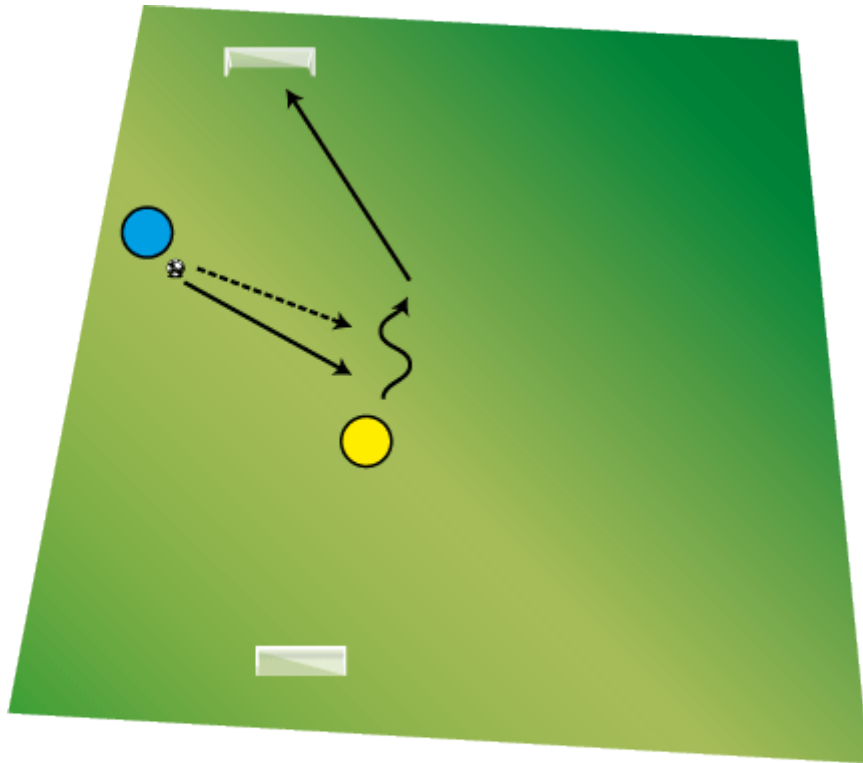
- We have a square of 8x8 meters
- 2 players
- One player has the ball outside the square and the other player in the middle of the square.
- The player who receives the ball can score a point by dribbling over either side of the square.

Coaching

- If the ball is played with a lot of speed, you might choose to use the speed to dribble outside to the right or bottom. Please keep in mind that you have to dribble, so the ball must be kept under control when dribbling over a line
- If the ball does not have a lot of speed, you might want to attack it and you might need to beat the opponent instead

EXERCISE 15

OPPONENT COMING FROM SIDE/FRONT (2)



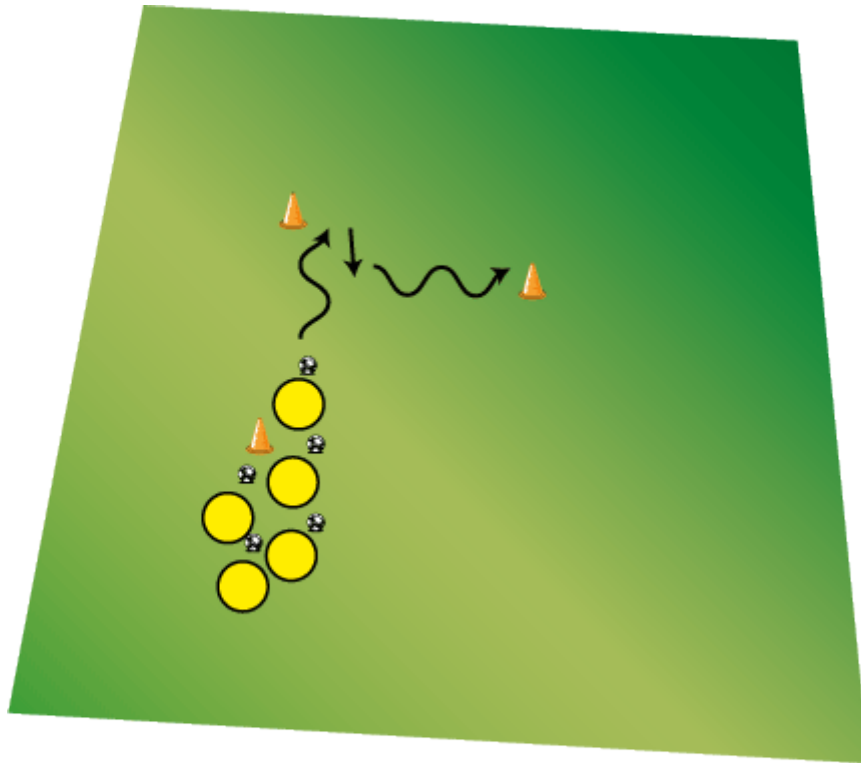
Organization

- We have two goals, about 10 meters apart
- 2 players
- One player has the ball and plays the ball to the other player and puts on immediate pressure
- The receiving player can score in either goal. The top goal means 2 points, the bottom goal 1 point, and if no goal is scored you lose one point
- Switch roles after each pass, which player can score the most points?

Coaching

- Please make sure the exercise is not too easy for the receiving player; if it is, reduce the distance for the pass

EXERCISE 16 DRIBBLE AND CUT



Organization

- 3 cones all about 10 meters apart
- 5 players
- Every player has a ball
- A player dribbles to the cone in front of them, cuts the ball and then moves sideways to the other cone
- Then the player dribbles at low pace back to the starting position

Coaching

- It is about the situation where a center defender dribbles forward, sees there is no space after, and has to cut sideways.

Preparation exercises

Building up from the back can't be seen as a standalone aspect of the soccer game. There are a lot of exercises which might not have the same organization as the build up from the match, but have a lot of similarities and therefore can be used as part of a training session you use to improve the building up from the back.

The exercises in this chapter are divided in three parts. The first exercises are the exercises where you already have an extra player. There is a rule not to use goals to score (pass) in, because that is too easy. This would be the same as playing the ball to a midfielder with no further idea what to do next.

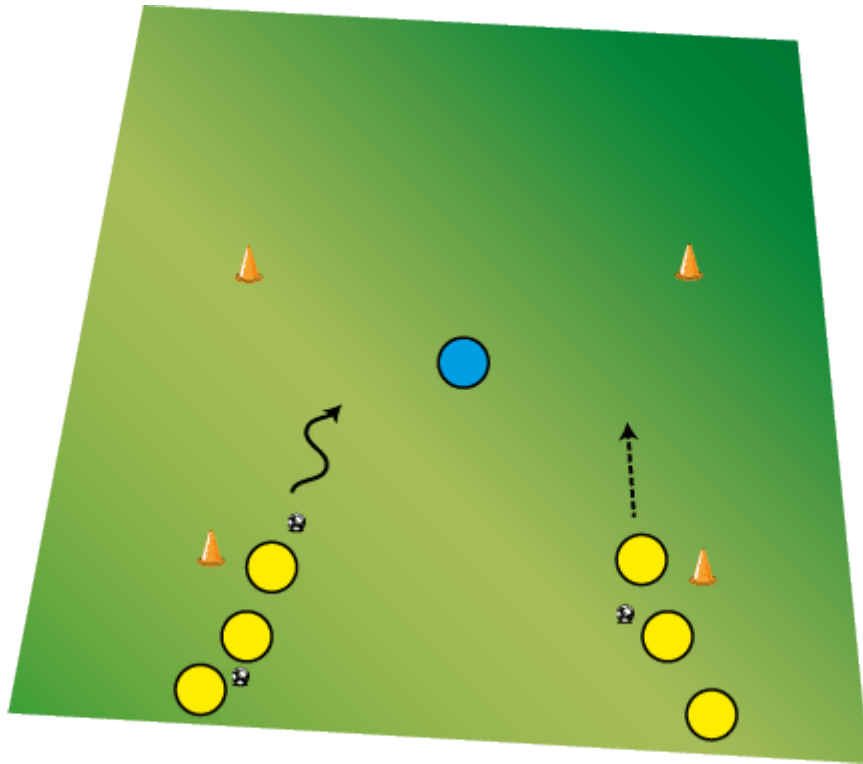
The second set of exercises are possession games where we have (a lot) more players than the opponent and we try to keep possession as long as possible. Here, the passing is important, receiving

and controlling the ball and finding space.

The exercises at the end of the chapter will be possession games where both teams have the same number of players or we have just a bit more than the opponent. Here the space is tight and players are challenged to find pragmatic solutions.

EXERCISE 17

2 VERSUS 1



Organization

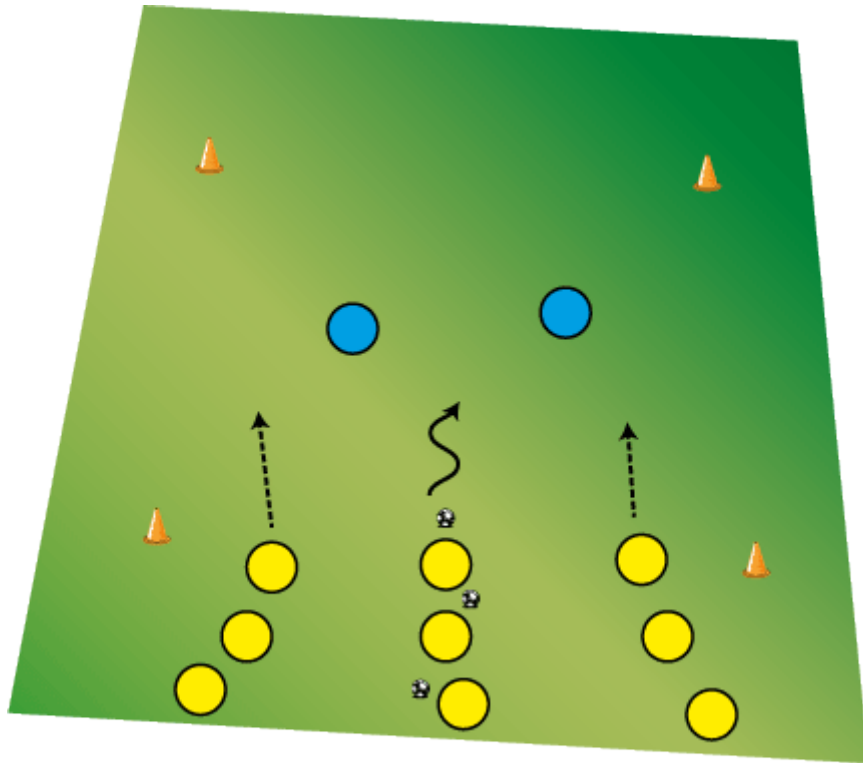
- Square of about 10x10m
- 1 defender in that area
- Other players make teams of 2 (1 with the ball) and position themselves at one side of the area
- The first team plays 2 versus 1 in the area and try to dribble over the line at the other side of the area
- The defender tries to kick the ball out of the area
- If the attack is finished and the defender is back in position, the next team can begin
- Switch the defender after 2 minutes

Coaching

- Coach a team of 2
- Use the width of the field
- Please make sure you can always receive the ball

EXERCISE 18

3 VERSUS 2



Organization

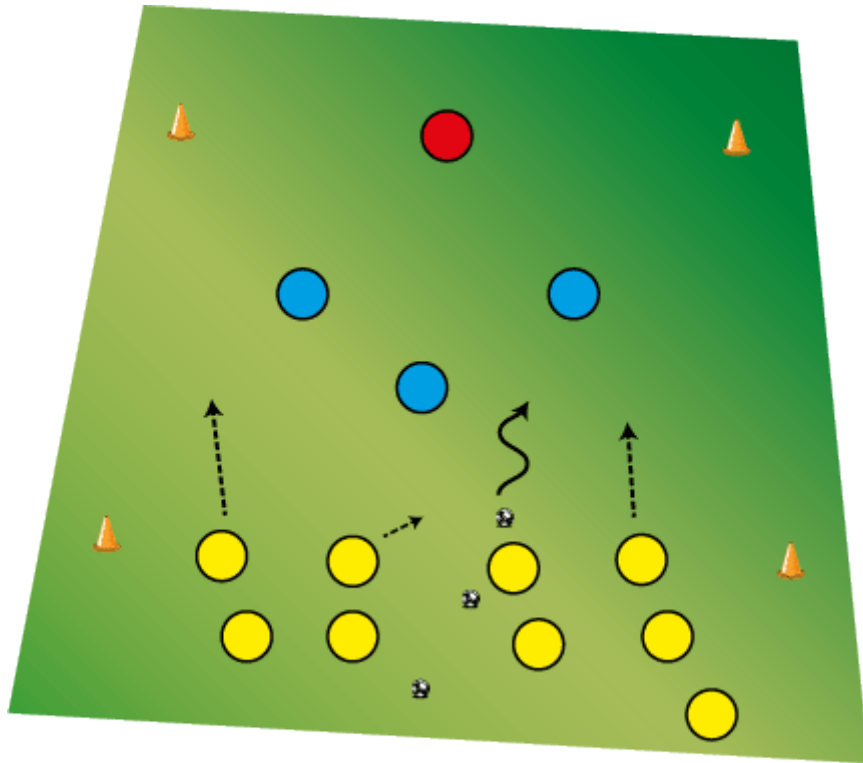
- Square of about 15x15m
- 2 defenders in that area
- Other players make teams of 3 (1 with the ball) and position themselves at one side of the area
- The first team plays 3 versus 2 in the area and tries to dribble over the line at the other side of the area
- The defenders try to kick the ball out of the area
- If the attack is finished and the defenders are back in their position, the next team can begin
- Switch the defenders after 3 minutes

Coaching

- Coach the team of 3
- Use the full width of the field
- Please make sure you can always receive the ball, also if this means you have to move backwards.

EXERCISE 19

4 VERSUS 3



Organization

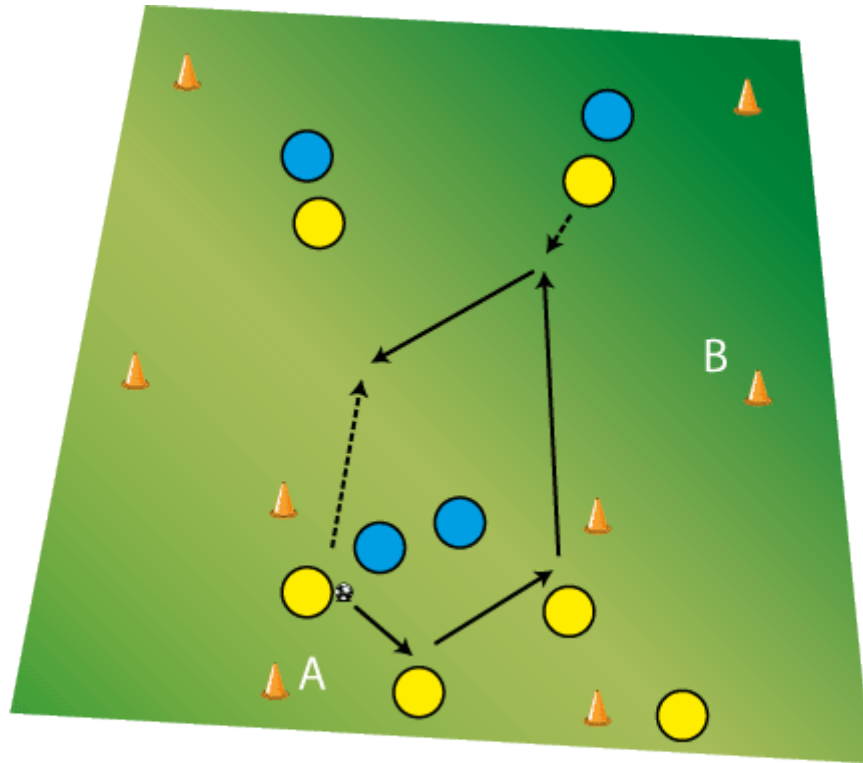
- Make an area of about 30x25
- 3 defenders in that area (blue) and one player on the end line (red)
- Other players make teams of 4 (1 with the ball) and position themselves at one side of the area
- The first team plays 4 versus 3 in the area must dribble over the line at the other side of the area
- They can use the red player on the end line for this. The red player is limited to 1-touch.
- The defenders try to dribble the ball out of the area
- If the attack is finished and the defenders are back in their position, the next team can begin
- Switch the defenders after 4 minutes

Coaching

- Coach the team of 4
- If you pass towards the red player, please make sure another player of your team is already on the way to support the red player

EXERCISE 20

FROM 3 VERSUS 2 TO 3 VERSUS 2

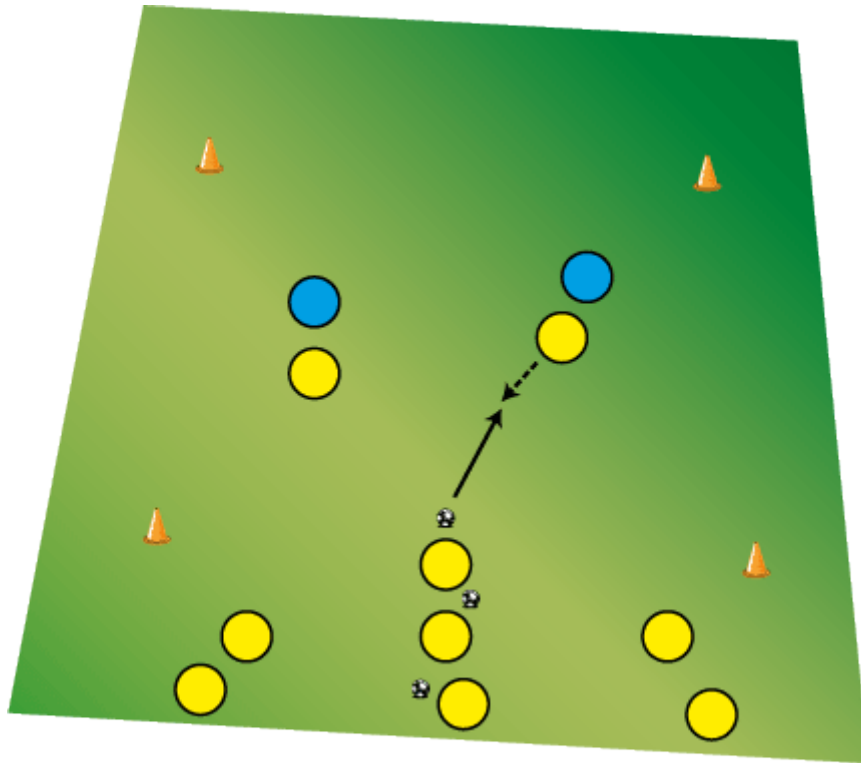


Organization

- Two areas
- Area A: 12x8m; 3 players of team 1; 2 defenders of team 2
- Area B: 20x15m: 2 players of team 1; 2 defenders of team 2
- Just outside area A there is another player from team 1 (who will not participate in the first round)
- We start in area A: team 1 tries to keep possession of the ball and after 5 passes, they are allowed to play to a member of their team in area B.
- If that succeeds, one player of team A can run to area B.
- Then they have 15 seconds to score in area B by dribbling the ball over the end line
- The player who has run to area B, comes back to area A, but in the meantime we can already start because the waiting player has joined the team of 3 in area A.

EXERCISE 21

3 VERSUS 2 STARTING WITH A PASS



Organization

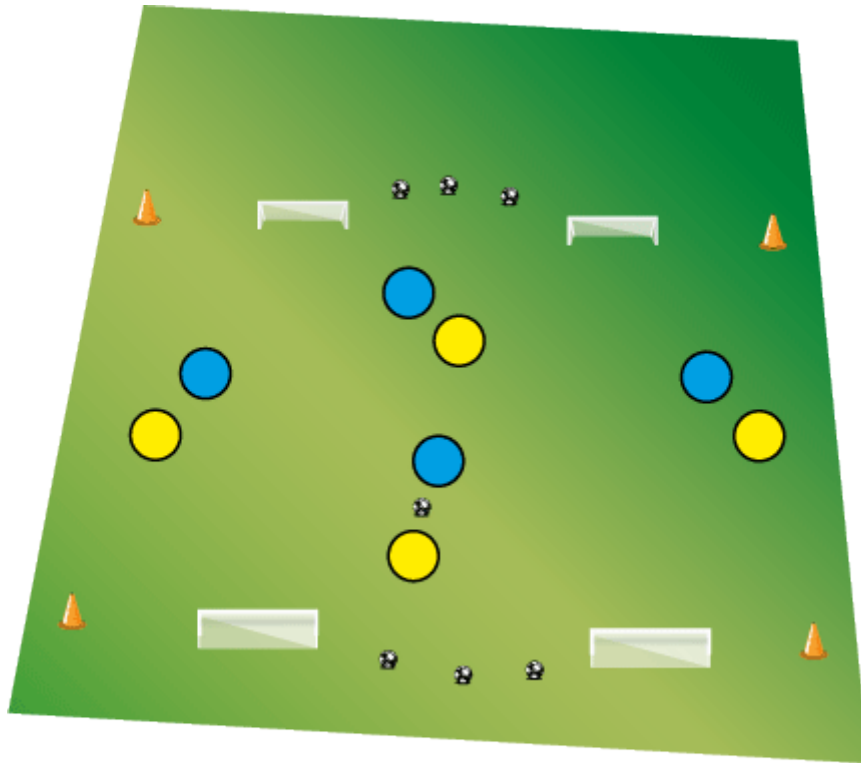
- Create an area of about 20x20 meters
- 2 defenders in the area
- The other players make teams of 3 (1 with ball)
- In the diagram you see the starting position. 2 of the attackers start close to the defender and 1 player with the ball on the starting line (note the difference subtle to exercise 18)
- The player with the ball can't dribble, but has to start with a pass to one of the other attackers (which will have to lose their defenders). After that pass there are no restrictions any more and the attackers can score by dribbling over the end line

Coaching

- Coach the defenders that maybe their biggest chance of winning the ball is when the first pass has to be played

EXERCISE 22

4 VERSUS 4 WITH 4 GOALS



Organization

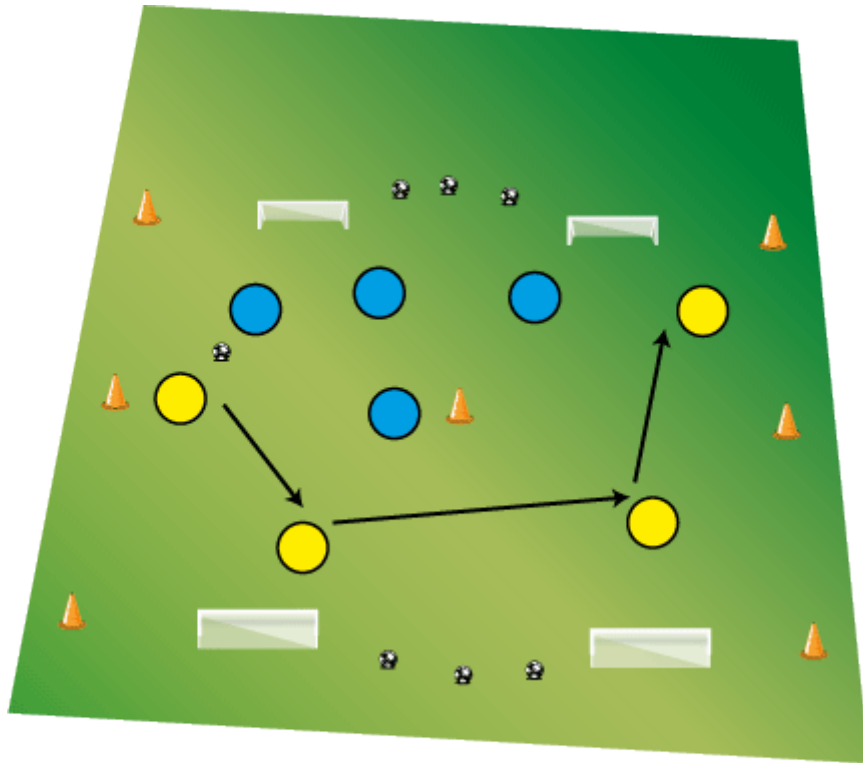
- Make a field of 40x25 meter, wider than it is long
- 2 teams of 4 players
- We play a game 4 versus 4 where both teams have to score 2 goals

Coaching

- Coach especially on changing sides. If it is too crowded on e.g. the left, try to get to the other side

EXERCISE 23

4 VERSUS 4 WITH CENTER CONE



Organization

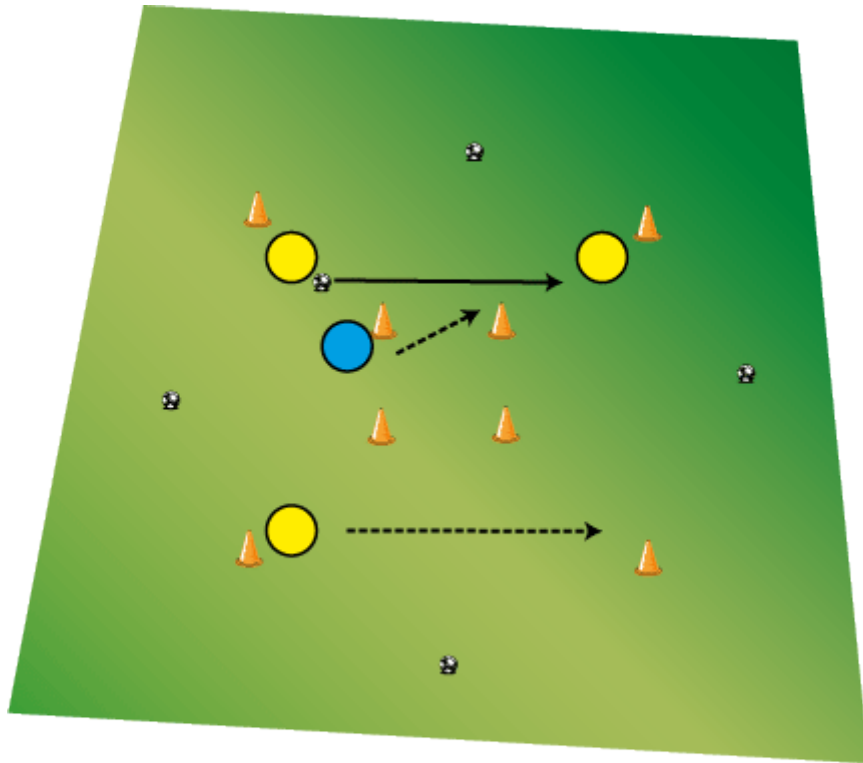
- Make a field of 40x30 meter, more wide than long
- Exactly in the middle of the field we put a cone
- 2 teams of 4 players
- We play a game 4 versus 4 where both teams can score in either one of the 2 goals
- We have an extra rule in place where you can't change sides through the cone at the half of the opponent. If you want to change sides, you have to do this in your own half (see also diagram)
- If you (accidentally) play the ball over the line at the half of the opponent, this will give the opponent the ball

Coaching

- If you change sides, you have to act quickly, because you have to go by first playing backwards (to the defenders)

EXERCISE 24

3 VERSUS 1 POSSESSION GAME



Organization

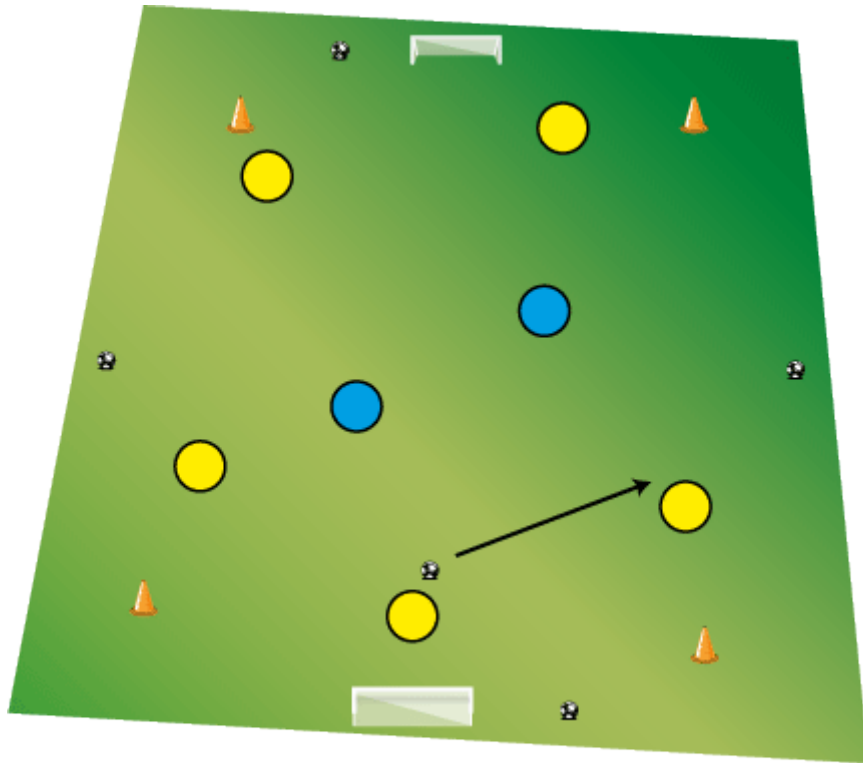
- Square of about 10x10m
- In that square we have another area of 6x6m
- 4 players, where 1 is the defender
- The team of 3 tries to keep possession of the ball while the defender tries to win the ball
- We have an extra rule that the team of 3 is not allowed to enter the center area or play the ball through the center area
- After 2 minutes, change the defender

Coaching

- The team of 3 always is on the move. If a player has the ball, there should always be someone to the left and someone immediately to the right.
- That means that the player who does not get the ball has to move to a new position

EXERCISE 25

5 VERSUS 2 POSSESSION GAME



Organization

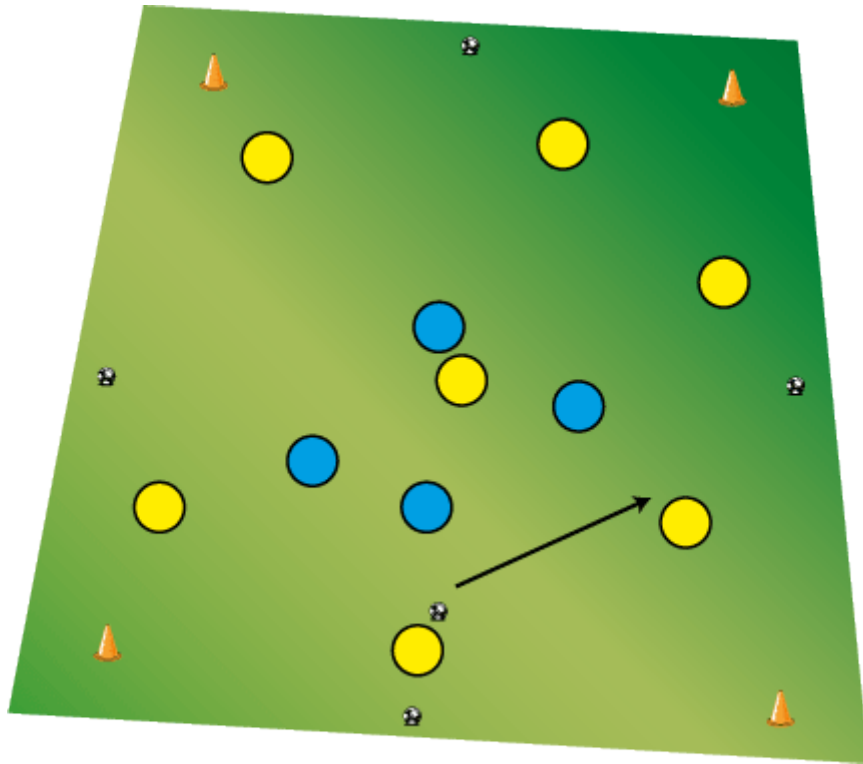
- Make an area of 25x15 meter
- Two goals just outside the area, as shown in the diagram
- 2 defenders; 5 players try to keep possession of the ball while under pressure of those 2 defenders
- When the defenders manage to get hold of the ball, they can score in one of the 2 goals
- Then the team of 5 must start with the ball again
- After 3 minutes, pick 2 new defenders

Coaching

- Coach a team of 5

EXERCISE 26

7 VERSUS 4 POSSESSION GAME



Organization

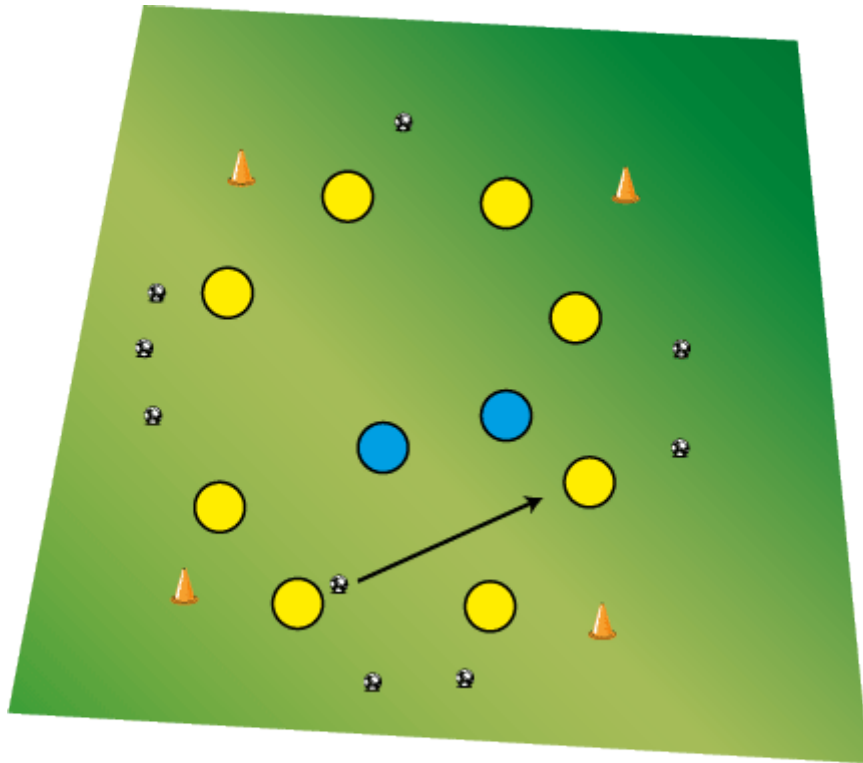
- Make an area of 35x15 meter
- 2 teams: 4 defenders and a team of 7
- One player of the team of 7 plays in the center
- The team of 7 try to keep possession of the ball while under pressure from the 4 defenders
- When the team of 7 play 10 consecutive passes, they get a point
- When one of the defenders touch the ball, they get a point and the team of 7 starts again with a (free) ball
- After 5 minutes we switch from defenders

Coaching

- Coach a team of 7
- Use the player in the center to get to the other side of the field

EXERCISE 27

8 VERSUS 2 POSSESSION GAME



Organization

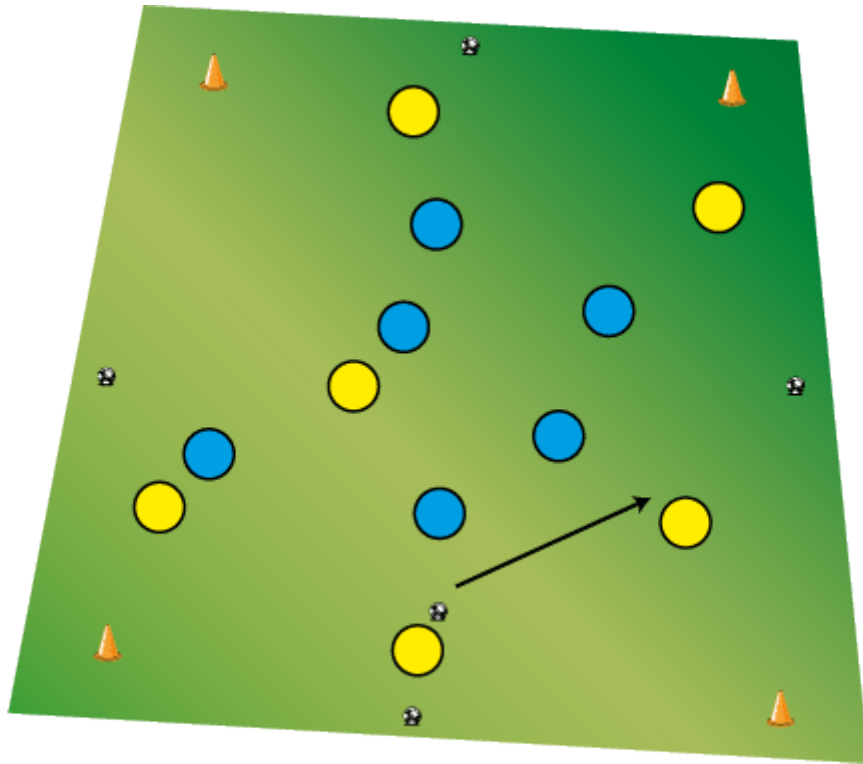
- Make an area of 25x15m
- 2 defenders (youngest 2), who hold a bib in their hands
- 8 players try to keep possession of the ball while under pressure of the 2 defenders
- The 8 players are only allowed to touch the ball once
- When one of the defenders manage to touch the ball, he switches with the player where it all went wrong (that might not be the player that has touched the ball for the last time). In case of a discussion, the defender has the final decision
- For the team of 8, it is not allowed to a fixed player in the middle

Coaching

- In these type of games, sometimes players try to give each other a bad pass. In this exercise, they really try to keep possession of the ball

EXERCISE 28

6 VERSUS 6 POSSESSION GAME



Organization

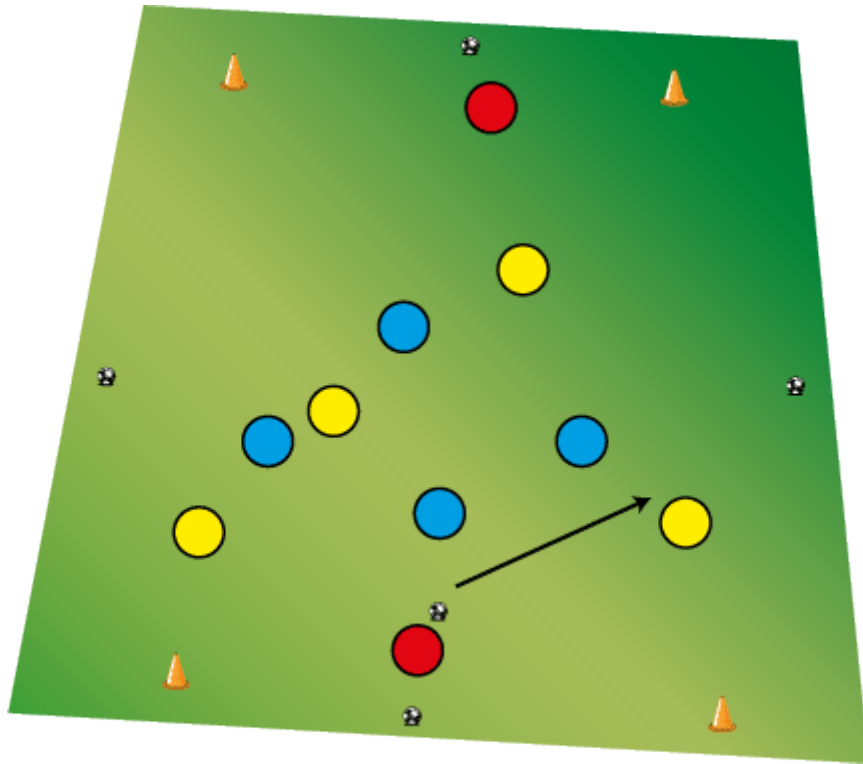
- Make an area of 45x35m
- We play a possession game where 2 teams of 6 players try to keep possession of the ball
- The extra rule is that balls are not allowed to be played high. If there is a pass above the knee, the other team gains possession of the ball
- If the ball goes out, the other teams starts with the ball with a pass

Coaching

- Because the teams are only allowed to play the ball low, please always make sure your team has enough players close to the player who has the ball.
- But also make sure you also keep players at the other side of the field, because otherwise you can't switch sides

EXERCISE 29

4 VERSUS 4 PLUS 2 POSSESSION GAME



Organization

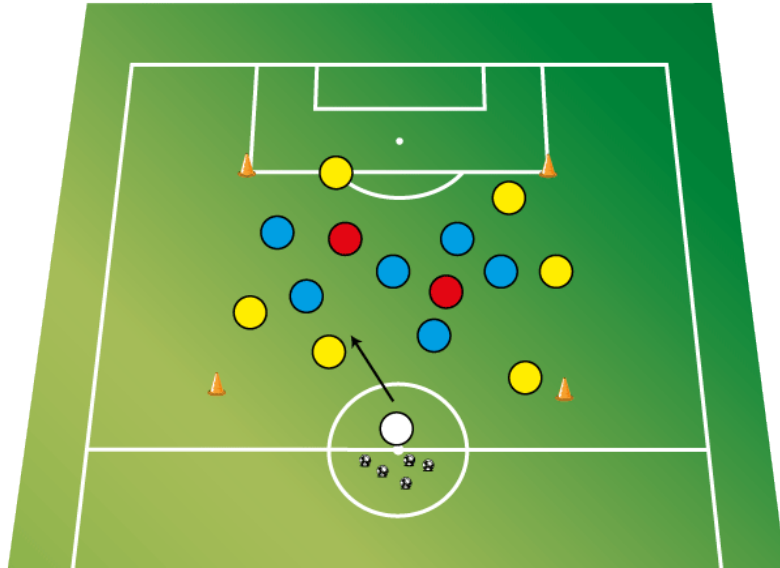
- Make an area of 30x20m
- Make 2 teams of 4 players and choose 2 neutral players (which will play on the side)
- These teams try to keep possession of the ball and when they have possession of the ball they can also use the neutral players
- Unlimited touches

Coaching

- When the ball ends up to a neutral player, this is a very good situation to coach. Please make sure that the neutral player has an option to the left, the right and in the center.

EXERCISE 30

6 VERSUS 6 PLUS 2 POSSESSION GAME

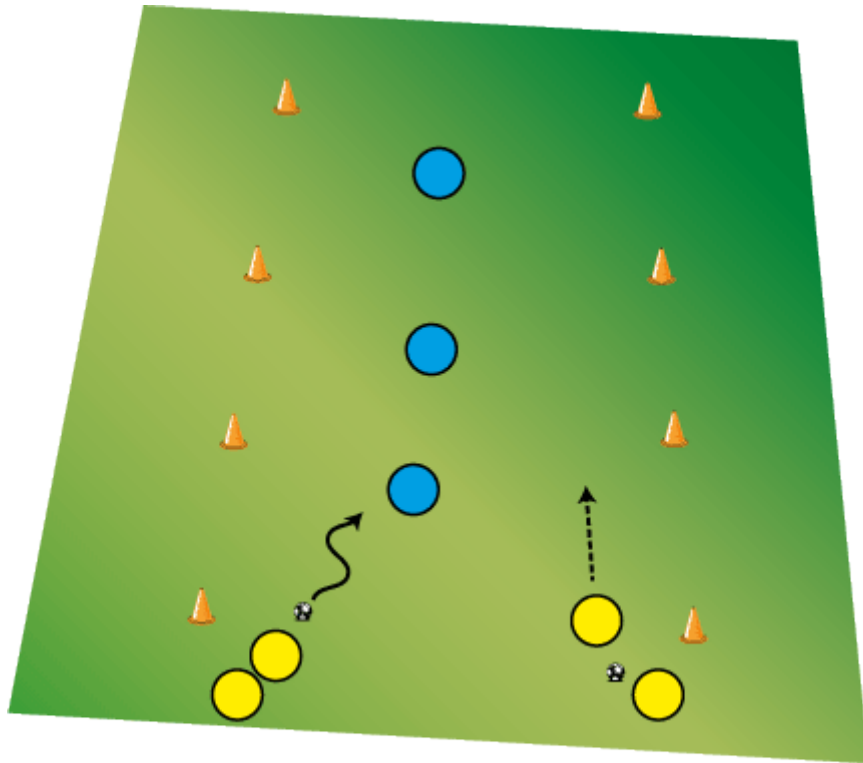


Organization

- Make an area of 40x35m
- Two teams of 6 players and 2 neutral players
- Please make sure all balls are close to the coach (see diagram)
- The teams try to keep possession of the ball and when they have possession of the ball they can also use the neutral players
- When the ball is out of bounds, the coach will play the next ball

EXERCISE 31

THE KING GAME 2 VERSUS 1



Organization

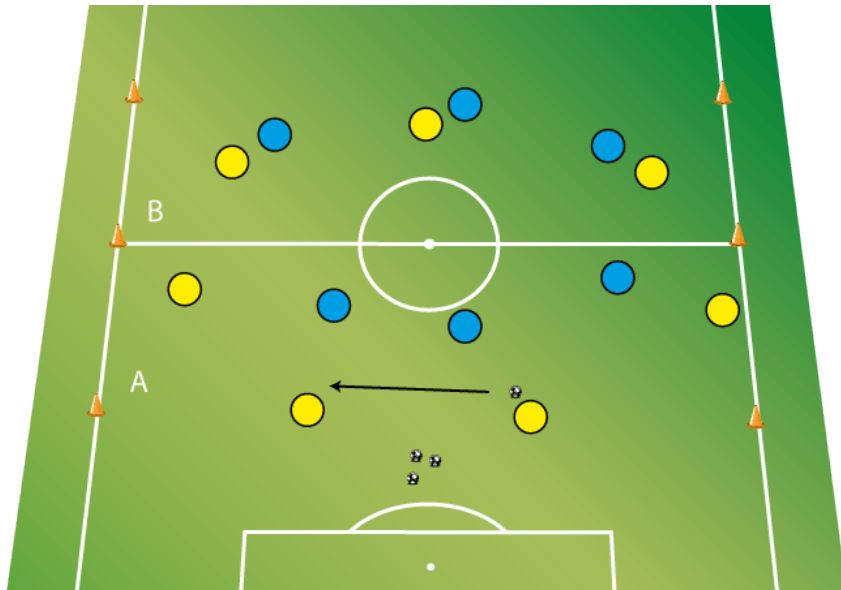
- Make 3 areas of 15x10 which are connected to each other (see diagram)
- In each area we add a defender
- The other players make teams of 2 (with 1 ball) and position themselves at one side
- The team of 2 tries to beat all defenders and dribble over the line at the other side of the field
- If they manage to do that, they will run back to the initial starting position (outside the areas)
- If the ball goes out of bounds, one of the attackers will switch with the defender in the area where things went wrong
- Defenders are not allowed to leave their area during the attack
- The next team starts when the ball goes out of bounds

Coaching

- It is important to think ahead, just beating the first defender is not enough

EXERCISE 32

FROM 4 VERSUS 3 TO 4 VERSUS 3



Organization

- We have 2 areas of 65x25m: area A and area B
- In area A we have 4 yellow players and 3 blue players. In area B both teams have 3
- The yellow team starts with the ball in Area A. They try to keep possession of the ball while under pressure of the 3 blue players
- If they have played 3 (or more) passes, they are allowed to play the ball to one of the yellow players in area B. When they succeed, one player of the yellow team moves to area B as well.
- They now have 15 seconds to score a goal (by dribbling over the end line). When they achieve this, they score a point
- The blue team scores a point when they avoid this sequence three times in a row
- Every attack starts with a yellow player in area A
- Which team will be the first one to score 4 points?
Then swap roles