

ELITE SOCCER

COACHING PRACTICES FROM THE WORLD'S
LEADING MANAGERS AND COACHES

Exclusive
Training practices from top
professional managers

SUNDERLAND

GUS POYET

CLEVER KEEPER DISTRIBUTION

CONFIDENCE • CONTROL • COMPOSURE



DAGENHAM
& REDBRIDGE

**WAYNE
BURNETT**
Defenders'
decision-making



LMA AMBASSADOR

**NEIL
LENNON**
Crossing and
finishing



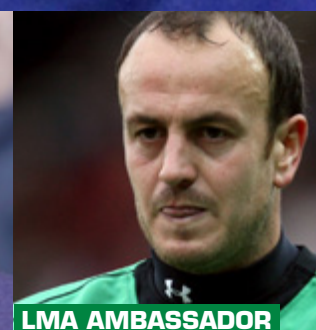
LMA AMBASSADOR

**MATT
WILLIAMS**
Defending in and
around the box



LMA AMBASSADOR

**IAN
BOGIE**
Penetrating in
the final third



LMA AMBASSADOR

**ANTHONY
WILLIAMS**
Switching
play



EXTRA-TIME INTERVIEW: WITH SLIGO ROVERS MANAGER IAN BARACLOUGH

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ISSUE 47 / JUNE 2014: FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Engaging practices from some of the leading names in soccer coaching

Dear Coach,

Welcome to the June issue of Elite Soccer.

Over the course of the next month or so, the world's eyes will be on Brazil. We're set for a rollercoaster ride of wall to wall soccer and the biggest names in the sport looking to clinch the ultimate prize – the World Cup.

Hopefully, along the way, we will be privy to the technical and tactical brilliance of the cream of international coaches. To get you in the mood, we've prepared another cross-section of original soccer blueprints from the best in the game.

Beginning in the Barclays Premier League, and rather on topic given England's World Cup group, there is a touch of Uruguayan flair on offer as Sunderland manager Gus Poyet presents a session that looks at the keeper's role in building from the back. It examines the control, composure and confidence needed between the sticks, yet involves players in all outfield positions, and is an original and engaging practice that we believe you'll admire.

We also have five other training ground practices to whet your appetite. From Sky Bet League Two, Dagenham & Redbridge manager Wayne Burnett answers our Coaching Consultation question, suggesting some great solutions to a reader whose defenders are making the wrong decisions under pressure.

We also feature a crossing and finishing session from Neil Lennon that was at the heart of so much of the former Celtic manager's success with the Hoops, and look at attackers' ability to break the offside line with LMA Ambassador Ian Bogie.

Experienced goalkeeping coach Anthony Williams presents a practice on switching play to devastating effect, and Torquay United's Matt Williams explains how to cement defensive understanding in and around the penalty area.

So no matter whether you're watching, coaching or playing soccer over the next month, we hope you take real value out of the enclosed sessions.

Best regards,

Howard Wilkinson

Howard Wilkinson, LMA Chairman

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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

MANAGER OF THE MONTH AWARDS



Crystal Palace manager **Tony Pulis** won the April Manager

of the Month award after his side confirmed their Barclays Premier League status for another season. It has been a remarkable turnaround for the London club who had only four points from their opening 11 matches, but on their way to an eventual 11th-placed finish, the Eagles saw off Cardiff City, Aston Villa, Everton and West Ham United during a remarkable month, losing only to eventual champions Manchester City.

CRYSTAL PALACE: P5W4D0L1 (LEAGUE ONLY)



In the Sky Bet Championship, Burnley boss

Sean Dyche guided his side to promotion back to the Barclays Premier League in April. And having seen his players score goals with ease all season, it was a handful of resilient defensive displays that took the Clarets over the line.

In six matches during April, Burnley conceded just two goals, as they strode to victories over Barnsley, Blackpool, Wigan Athletic and Ipswich Town.

They now return to the Premier League following a gap of four seasons.

BURNLEY: P6W4D1L1



In Sky Bet League One, **Darren**

Ferguson's Peterborough United's side cemented their play-off spot with a strong upturn in form during April. Just when the pressure seemed on for the son of Manchester United great Sir Alex Ferguson, Posh sauntered to five wins from their eight matches, defeating Colchester United, Gillingham, Coventry City, Carlisle United and Shrewsbury Town on the way to finishing sixth in the table. Sadly, play-off defeat was lurking around the corner as Posh lost 3-2 on aggregate to Leyton Orient.

PETERBOROUGH UNITED: P7W5D0L2



And finally to Sky Bet League Two, where

Manager of the Month honours went to **Andy Awford** who, as caretaker-manager of Portsmouth, guided the club away from the relegation trapdoor and into the relative comfort of mid-table.

It has been a torrid season for the south-coast side, who only six years ago were a Premier League club, but Awford at least alleviated fears of slipping out of the league altogether when he set his team on a run of four wins in five matches, as Pompey saw off Hartlepool United, Dagenham & Redbridge, Bristol Rovers and Northampton Town.

PORTSMOUTH: P5W4D1L0

CAREER PATH

...with Paul Cox, manager of Sky Bet League Two side Mansfield Town.

Q. You've come through Mansfield Town's first season back in the Football League with flying colours. Was it a good year?

A. It was a good year in the sense that we're now back to where we feel we belong, and certainly we achieved our aim which was to consolidate in League Two and continue to make progress both on and off the pitch. Of course, as a coach you're always looking for that little bit extra, and at times during the season we let ourselves down by not

doing things we should have, but overall the players responded well to the step up and it's been a pleasing season.

Q. Did you have to adapt quickly to the challenges of a new division?

A. Well there were a lot of professional sides and professional set-ups in the Conference, so we weren't coming into it blind, but of course there is an improvement in standard. I think the momentum from the previous season always carries you on as a group, but in any division you have to suss out the opposition quickly, and I think we did that well.

Q. Does the pressure now increase in terms of what is expected for next season?

A. I have great people around me here and the only pressure I feel is the pressure I put on myself. As a coach, you're always looking for the next idea, so I'll spend my summer assessing things and seeing how we can move forward next term, but that's a nice job when you're doing it from a point of having achieved what you set out to do.



SUNDERLAND

Gus Poyet Clever keeper distribution

Overview:

This session is about keeper distribution and retaining possession by building play from the back. It mimics short passes to centre-backs and midfield players, low driven and chipped passes to full-backs and wide midfielders, and longer passes to centre-forwards and wide attackers (through half-volleys and volleys).

At Sunderland, the keeper is deemed to have a major involvement in the style of football we try to play, so practices directly involving him in team attacks are very important. While prompting outfield movement, the session quickly improves the keeper's technical skill, widens his range of passing ability, improves awareness and lessens the risk of him losing possession. We'll rotate keepers throughout the session.

CLEVER KEEPER DISTRIBUTION

SET-UP

AREA

¾ of a pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, poles, variety of goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

3

SESSION TIME

Each drill 15mins,
Progression 10mins,
Game 20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Small goals practice

We set up as shown (1) and begin with a pass into keeper 1. The practice is maximum three touches and the ball cannot touch a mannequin or the practice is restarted.

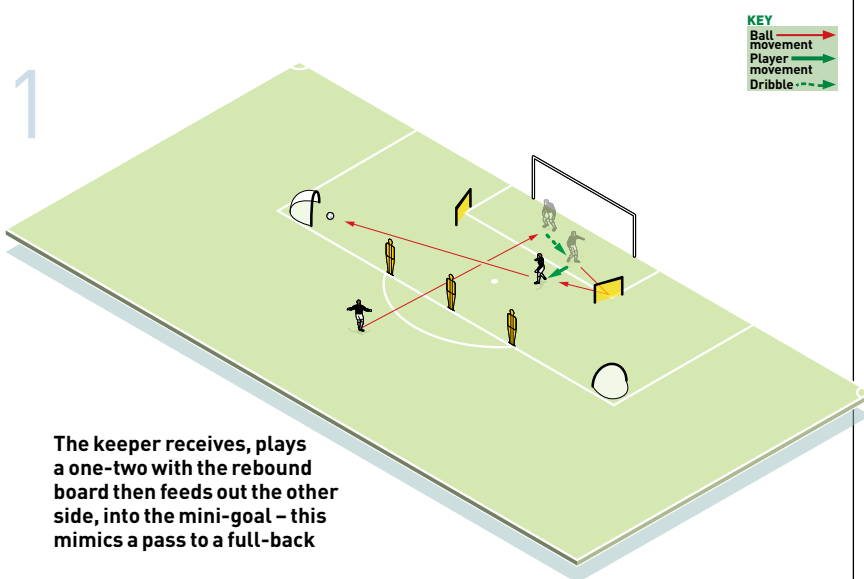
The keeper plays a one-two with the first rebound board, then passes into the small goal in the far corner of the 18-yard box. We now repeat this process six times ensuring the keeper switches between left and right sides (thus left and right feet).

How do I progress the session?

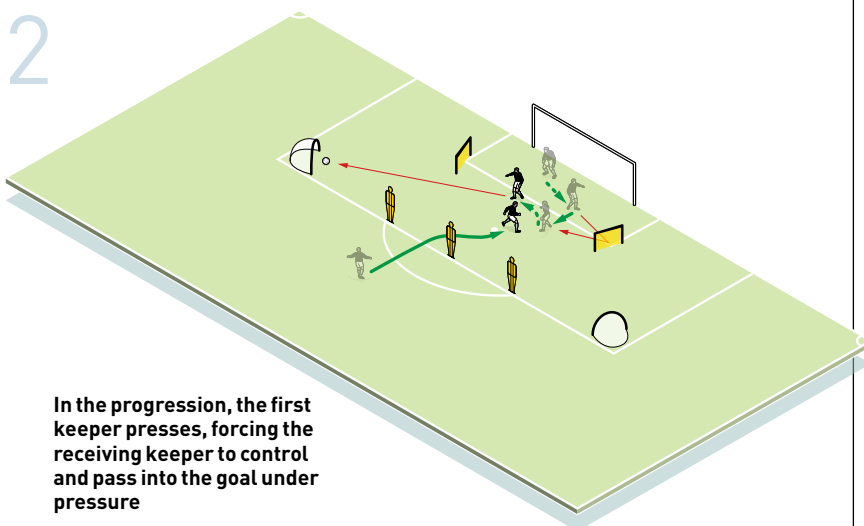
To progress we'll ask keeper 2 to press the receiving keeper after the one-two with the rebound board (2). Keeper 1 must still look to find space to pass into the small goal.

Five-a-side goals practice

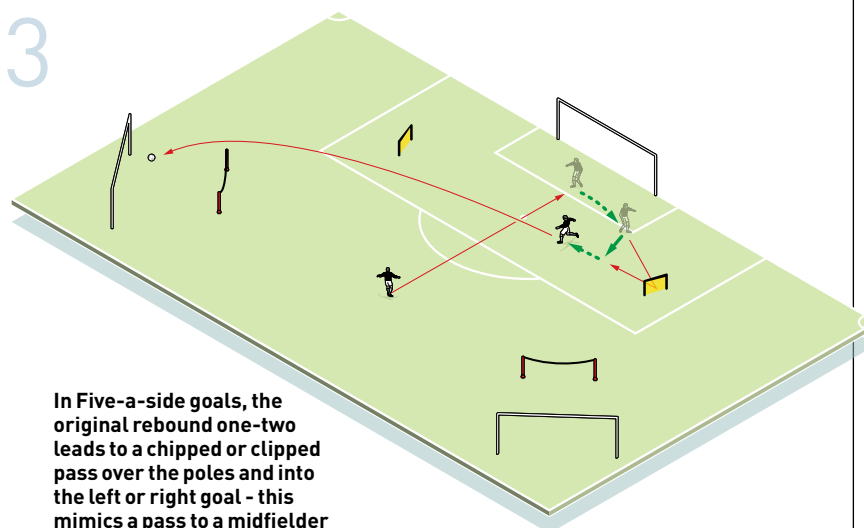
Now we change the set-up (3). The receiving keeper plays a one-two with the rebound board, then chips or clips a pass over the poles and into the left or right goal - this mimics a pass to a midfielder or winger.



The keeper receives, plays a one-two with the rebound board then feeds out the other side, into the mini-goal - this mimics a pass to a full-back



In the progression, the first keeper presses, forcing the receiving keeper to control and pass into the goal under pressure



In Five-a-side goals, the original rebound one-two leads to a chipped or clipped pass over the poles and into the left or right goal - this mimics a pass to a midfielder or winger



Gus Poyet SUNDERLAND

Gus Poyet is first-team manager of Sunderland, and oversaw his side's incredible run of form towards the tail end of the 2013/14 campaign that meant the Mackems retained their Barclays Premier League status.

The club had already made it to the Capital One Cup final, where they led Manchester City for 45 minutes, but in the closing month of the season saw off Chelsea, Cardiff City, Manchester United and West Brom to justify the board's decision to bring the former Brighton & Hove Albion manager into the club in October 2013.

Poyet, a midfielder, arrived in England in 1997 with Chelsea, before moving on to Tottenham Hotspur in 2001. He'd previously played for Grenoble, River Plate and Real Zaragoza, and in total made 26 appearances for Uruguay.

"The most common fault is over-hitting passes (either too hard or too high), and panicking under pressure."

CLEVER KEEPER DISTRIBUTION

Again, repeat on both sides (4).

Three-quarters pitch

Bringing in a third keeper, the one-two with the rebound board leads to the ball being chipped to keeper 3, who is positioned the other side of the poles. This keeper dribbles down the line and sends over a cross that the working keeper has to catch (5a).

He now moves to the edge of the penalty box, rolls the ball out onto the floor, then distributes by using a side volley/half volley into the full goal, which is positioned beyond halfway (5b).

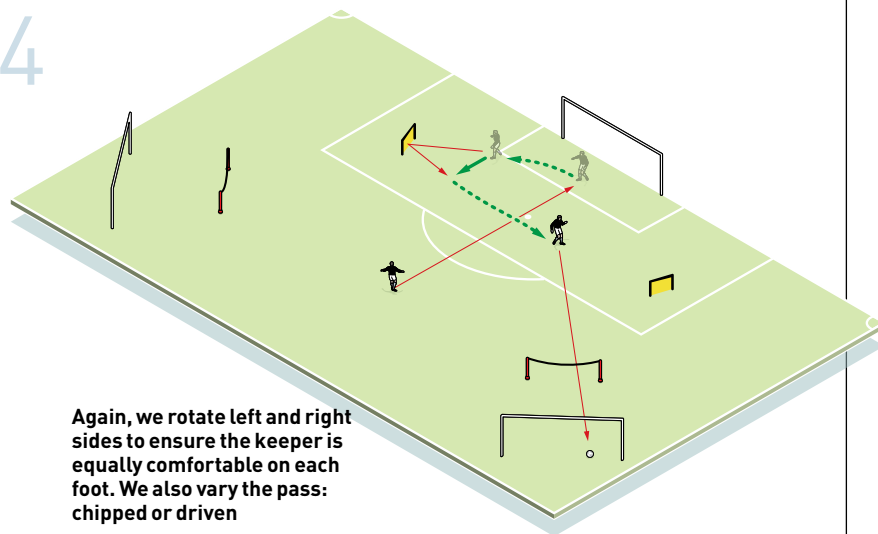
How do I progress the session?

Adding in extra interplay is a good way of progressing, and we'll also limit the time and touches for keeper 1.

What are the key things to look out for?

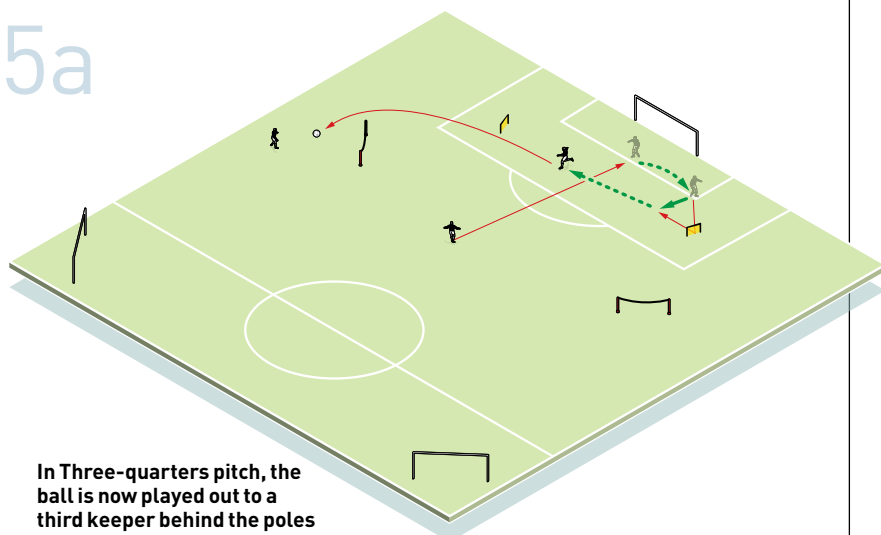
The keeper must remain calm and composed in possession of the ball at all times, even when being closed down – this can be practised in a small-sided game situation with the keeper conditioned to using his feet as much as possible and involved in building play from the back. Weight and accuracy of pass – in receiving and feeding out – are imperative, as is good playing technique. The most common fault is over-hitting passes (either too hard or too high), and panicking under pressure. ■

4



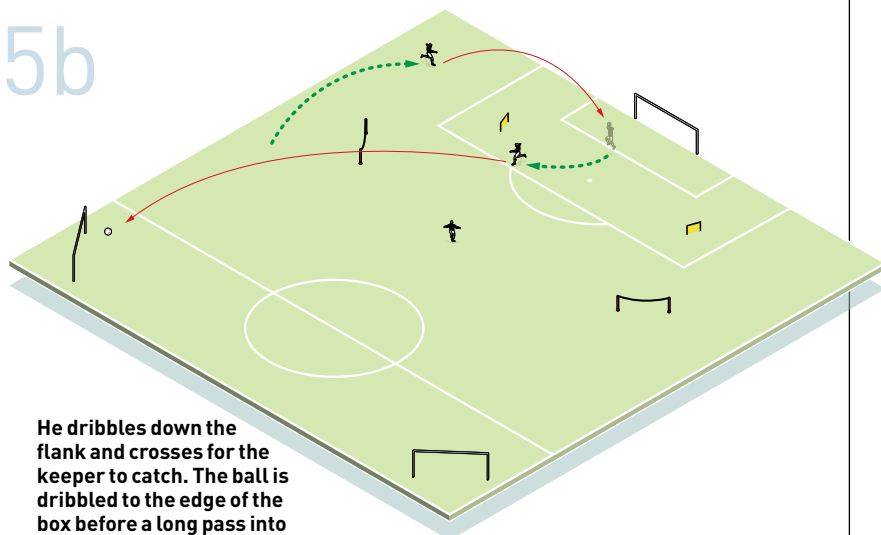
Again, we rotate left and right sides to ensure the keeper is equally comfortable on each foot. We also vary the pass: chipped or driven

5a



In Three-quarters pitch, the ball is now played out to a third keeper behind the poles

5b



He dribbles down the flank and crosses for the keeper to catch. The ball is dribbled to the edge of the box before a long pass into the full-sized goal – this mimics a long pass to an attacker

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

COACHING CONSULTATION

Each month, we ask one of the game's leading coaches to answer a question posed by an **Elite Soccer** reader.

THIS MONTH:

Defenders' decision-making

Q. My defenders are technically proficient, but they often make wrong decisions. How can I improve their understanding of key technical and tactical elements?

Question asked by Adam O'Reilly, a community soccer coach from London.

ANSWERED BY:

Wayne Burnett

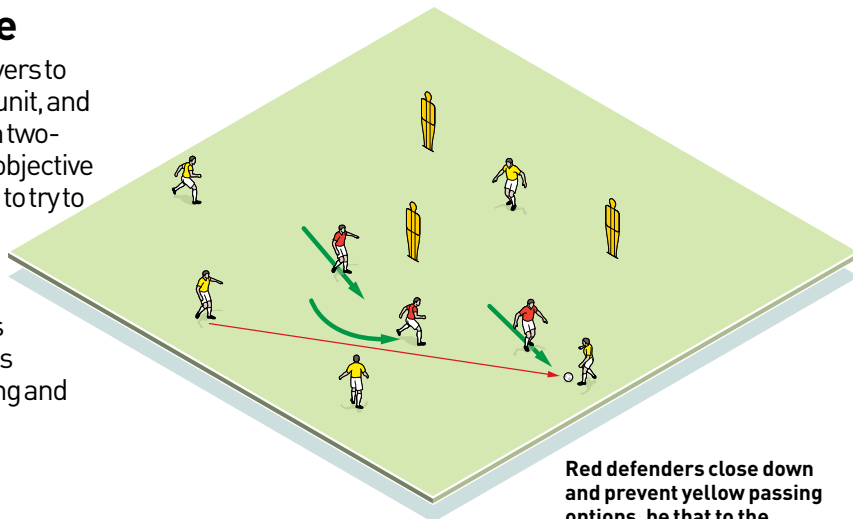
DAGENHAM & REDBRIDGE

Getting defenders comfortable with how to react in certain situations takes practice and repetition. At Dagenham, we found we were conceding far too many goals from open play. Opposition teams were switching and dictating play far too easily which was resulting in needless goals being conceded.

We came to the conclusion we should play a certain formation and try to press whenever

Front exercise

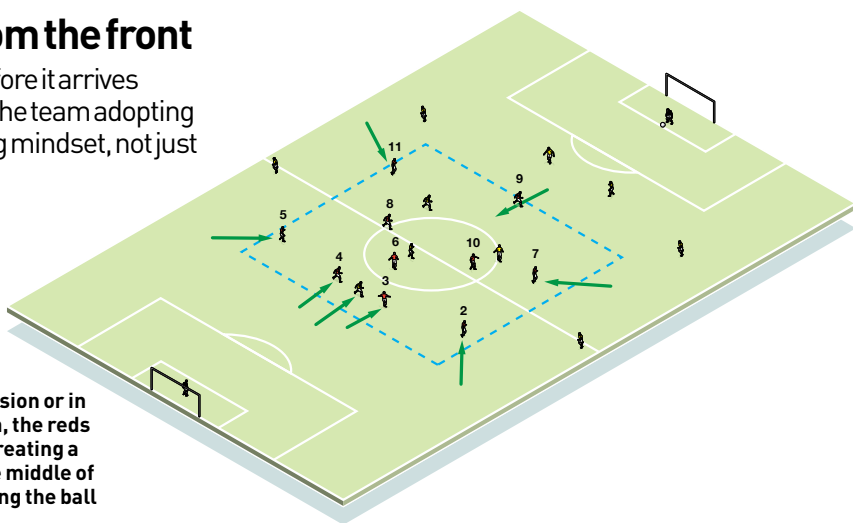
The drill teaches players to press as a defensive unit, and would be practised in two-minute phases. The objective is for the yellow team to try to hit the mannequins or play through to their support player. The defensive team's objective is to stop this happening by pressing and showing outside.



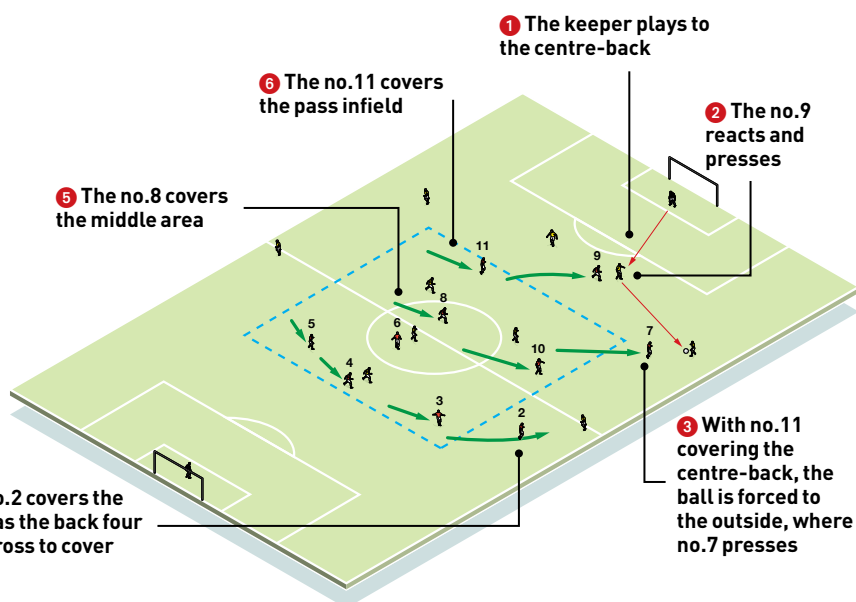
Red defenders close down and prevent yellow passing options, be that to the waiting target man or a mannequin

Defending from the front

Stifling the threat before it arrives means everyone on the team adopting a pressing, defending mindset, not just the defenders.



When losing possession or in a dead ball situation, the reds compact the area, creating a 10v4 situation in the middle of the pitch, thus inviting the ball outside



KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

SET-UP

AREA

Up to full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals, mannequins

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v11

SESSION TIME

60 mins

COACHING CONSULTATION DEFENDERS' DECISION MAKING

possible. We'd also make sure we were approaching opponents at the right angle, as well as showing outside at all times in all thirds of the pitch.

In any team, it's imperative players understand their roles and responsibilities within the team structure, and this session improved those key elements considerably.

Coaching considerations

Technical – body position, angle of approach, speed of approach

Tactical – show outside, cover, support, balance, pressing

Physical – balance, agility, coordination, speed

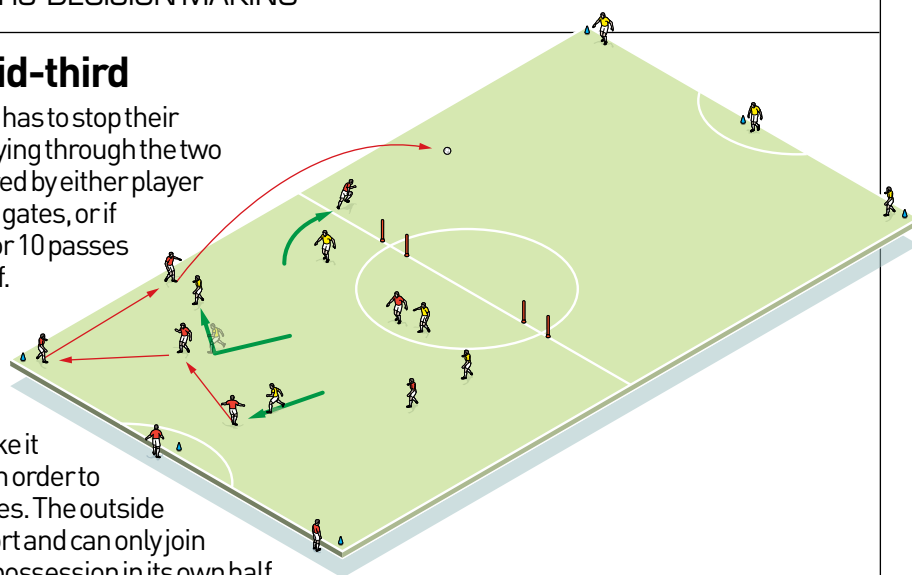
Psychological/social – communication, discipline, patience, teamwork

Why this works

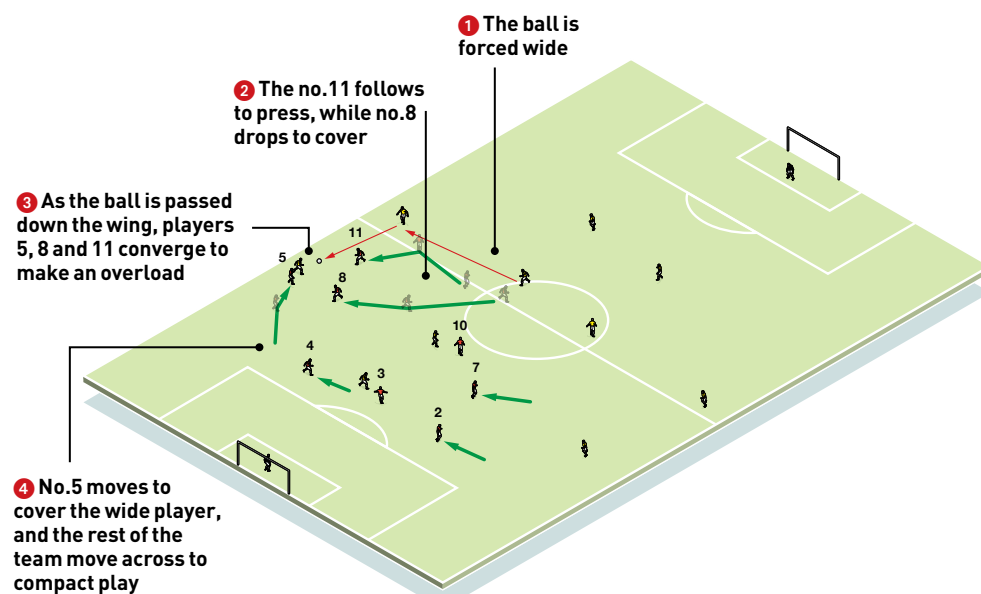
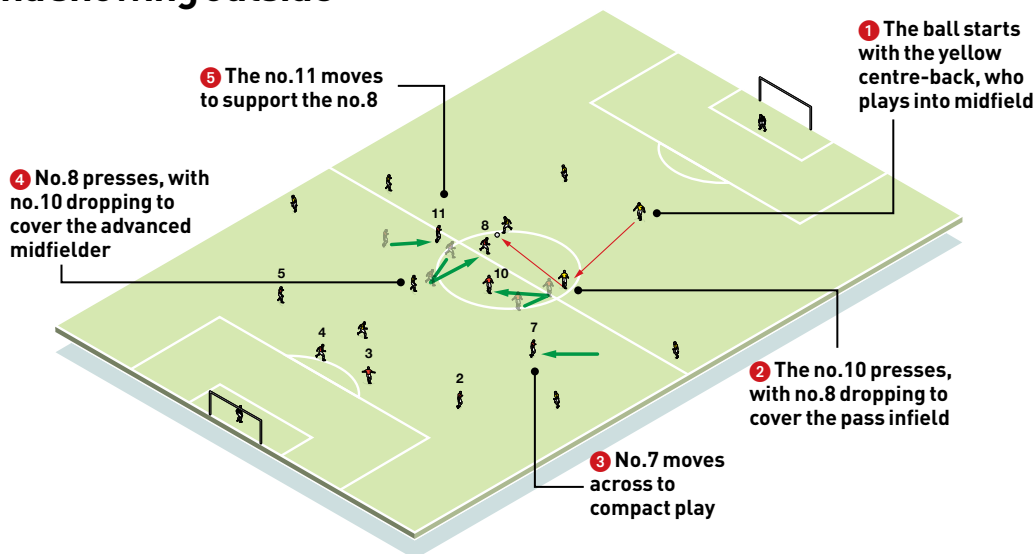
We chose to break defending sessions down into units and sections of the pitch rather than adopt a progressive format. This gives the players a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Defending mid-third

The defending team has to stop their opponents from playing through the two gates. A point is scored by either player passing through the gates, or if possession is kept for 10 passes in the opposition half. If possession is regained, the team can keep the ball in the opposition half or take it back into their own in order to play through the gates. The outside players act as support and can only join in when a team has possession in its own half.



Defending in the defensive third and showing outside



KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble



Wayne Burnett

DAGENHAM & REDBRIDGE

Wayne Burnett has just completed his first full season in charge of Dagenham & Redbridge, guiding the East London club to a comfortable mid-table finish in Sky Bet League Two.

The 42-year-old took over the reins from long-serving former manager John Still, having previously been in charge of non-league sides Fisher Athletic, Dulwich Hamlet and Grays Athletic.

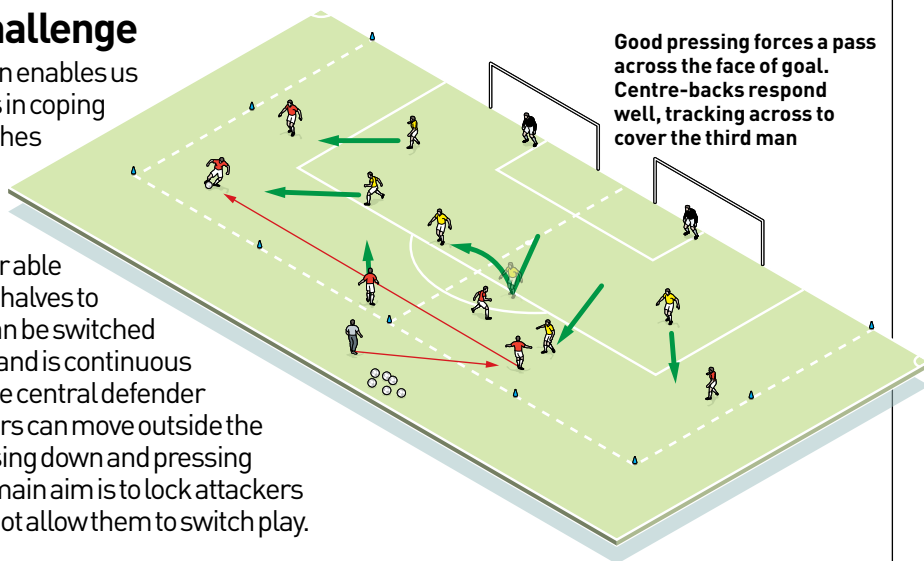
Prior to that, Burnett enjoyed a 15-year playing career, clocking up over 100 appearances each for Huddersfield Town and Grimsby Town, as well as appearing for the likes of Leyton Orient, Blackburn Rovers (where he was one of manager Kenny Dalglish's first signings for the club) and Bolton Wanderers.

If you have a Coaching Consultation question you would like a leading coach to answer, please email in at elitesoccer@greenstarmedia.net

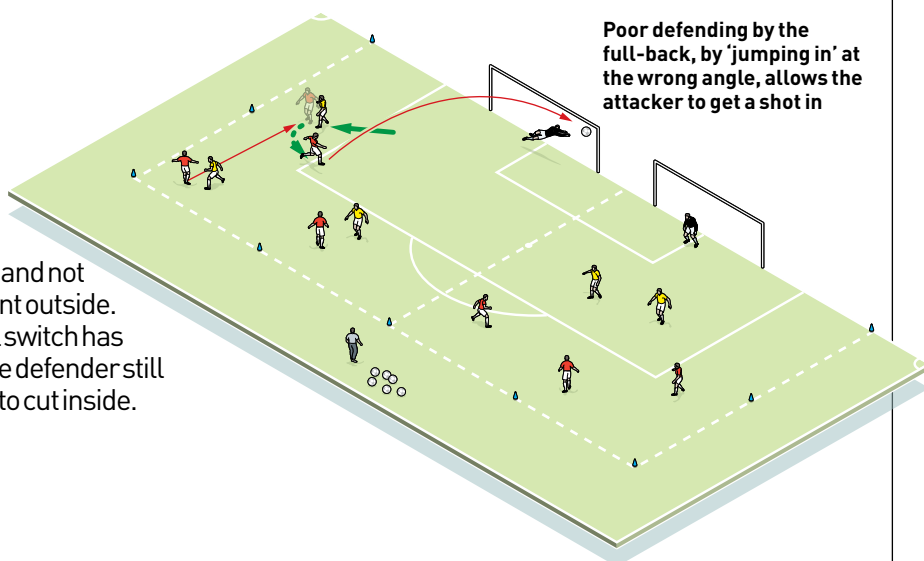
COACHING CONSULTATION DEFENDERS' DECISION MAKING

3v2 boxes challenge

Setting up as shown enables us to coach defenders in coping with multiple switches from left and right. Each half of the pitch is 3v2, with an additional defender able to move across the halves to make a 3v3. Play can be switched from zone to zone, and is continuous for 2mins before the central defender is rotated. Defenders can move outside the penalty area in closing down and pressing attackers, but the main aim is to lock attackers into one zone and not allow them to switch play.



Good pressing forces a pass across the face of goal. Centre-backs respond well, tracking across to cover the third man



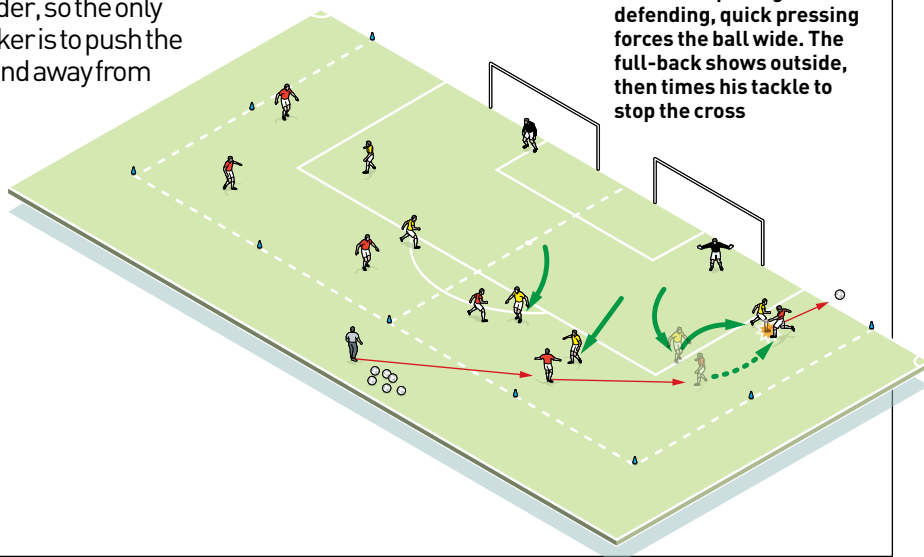
Poor defending by the full-back, by 'jumping in' at the wrong angle, allows the attacker to get a shot in

Error:

Wrong body shape and not forcing the opponent outside. Although the initial switch has been prevented, the defender still allows an attacker to cut inside.

Solution:

Moving square of the attacker limits his options. He cannot lay back to the server as that man is now being pressed by a defender, so the only option for the attacker is to push the ball down the line and away from goal.



In an example of good defending, quick pressing forces the ball wide. The full-back shows outside, then times his tackle to stop the cross

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

LMA AMBASSADOR

Neil Lennon Crossing and finishing

Overview:

This crossing and finishing practice is perfect for getting strikers hitting the net, and that's something you can never practise enough.

It's a fast-paced and involving blueprint and requires players to be alert and switched on at all times.



Neil Lennon
LMA AMBASSADOR

Appointed Celtic boss in 2010, Neil Lennon guided the Glasgow giants to three Scottish Premier League and two Scottish Cup successes, as well as masterminding Champions League victories over the likes of Barcelona and Ajax. As a player, he made 214 appearances for the Hoops as a tenacious and skilful midfielder.

CROSSING AND FINISHING

SET-UP

AREA

Up to a full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Ball, goals, poles, mannequins

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v11

SESSION TIME

Practice 20mins,
Game 20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Setting up as shown, the attacker moves from behind the goal, runs around the pole, into the box, and connects with a cross from the left, placing his shot inside the keeper and avoiding the mannequins on the edge of the six-yard box. An attack begins in the opposite direction

On the next attack, a player emerges from the other side of the goal, and the same crosser delivers a far-post cross (1b).

We continue running the practice, now using the other two crossers, and always delivering alternating near- and far-post balls.

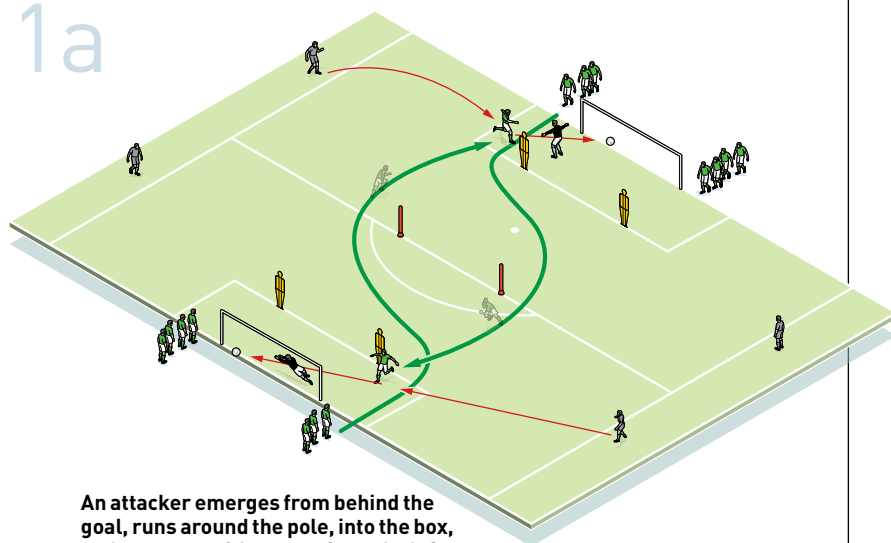
What are the key things to look out for?

This session is about precise deliveries and clinical finishes. Missing the mannequin is essential, and attackers, as a bare minimum, must ensure they hit the target.

How do I put this into a game situation?

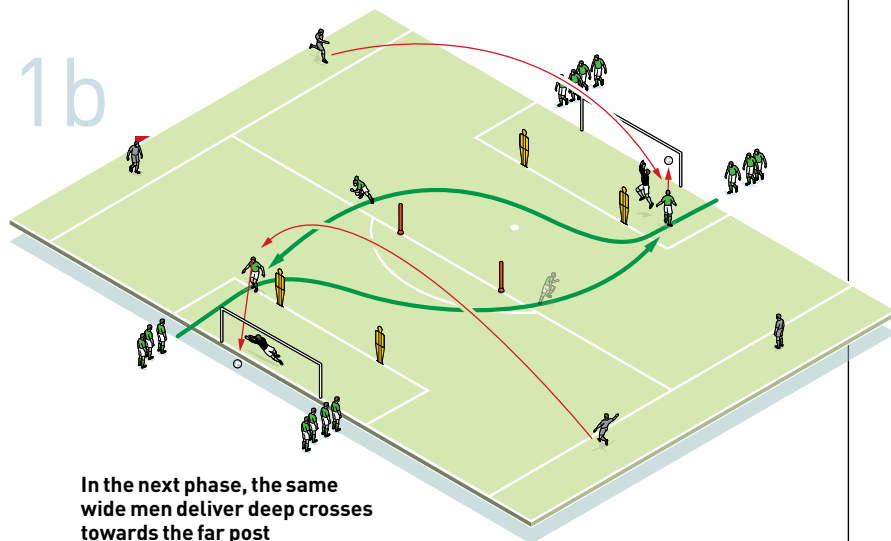
We will put these crossing and finishing principles into an 11v11, narrowing the pitch by five yards and marking an area just for wide attackers to go into (2). This encourages time and accuracy in crosses, though we will make them two-touch. ■

1a



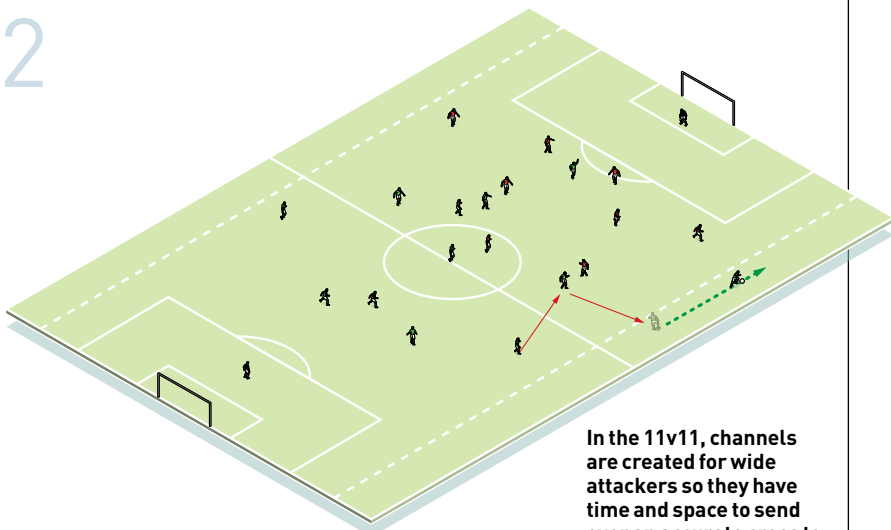
An attacker emerges from behind the goal, runs around the pole, into the box, and connects with a cross from the left, placing his shot inside the keeper and avoiding the mannequins on the edge of the six-yard box. An attack begins in the opposite direction

1b



In the next phase, the same wide men deliver deep crosses towards the far post

2



In the 11v11, channels are created for wide attackers so they have time and space to send over an accurate cross to be attacked

TORQUAY UNITED

Matt Williams Defending in and around the penalty area

Overview:

This session is about defending in and around the penalty area, and incorporates a number of defensive principles such as marking, pressing and blocking shots.

This is a high intensity practice and demands players to be focused on the dangers around them over multiple phases.

It's important to practise defending in and around the penalty area as it presents defenders with their final opportunity to stop the shot before the keeper has to make a save or a goal is conceded. And this session requires players to not just stop the first shot, but also defend into the second phase of play and beyond.

“This is a high intensity practice and demands players to be focused on the dangers around them over multiple phases.”

DEFENDING IN AND AROUND THE PENALTY AREA

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 44x36 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, target goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 20

SESSION TIME

Session 30mins,
Development 15mins,
Game situation 30mins

What do I get the players to do?

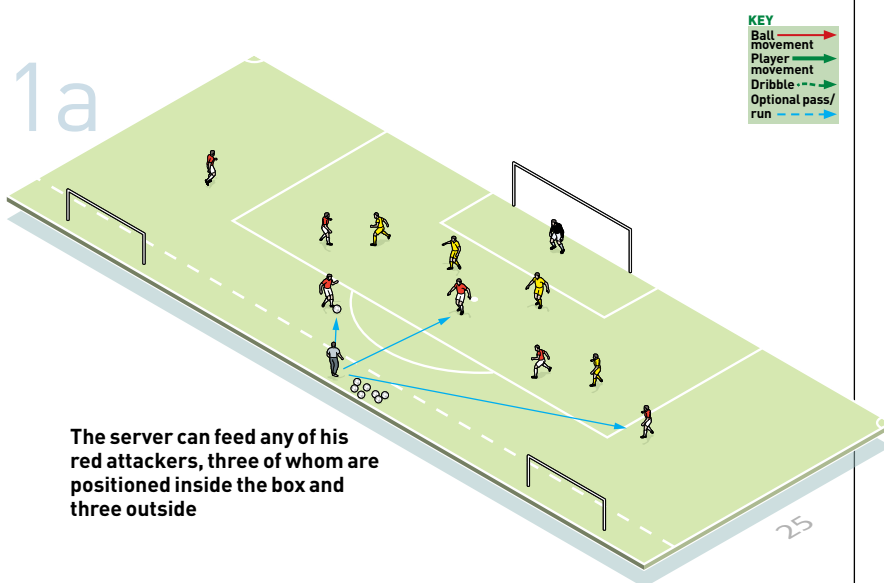
6v4 attack

Setting up as shown (1a), the back four defends just in front of the six-yard box, with three attackers in the penalty area and a further three around the edges.

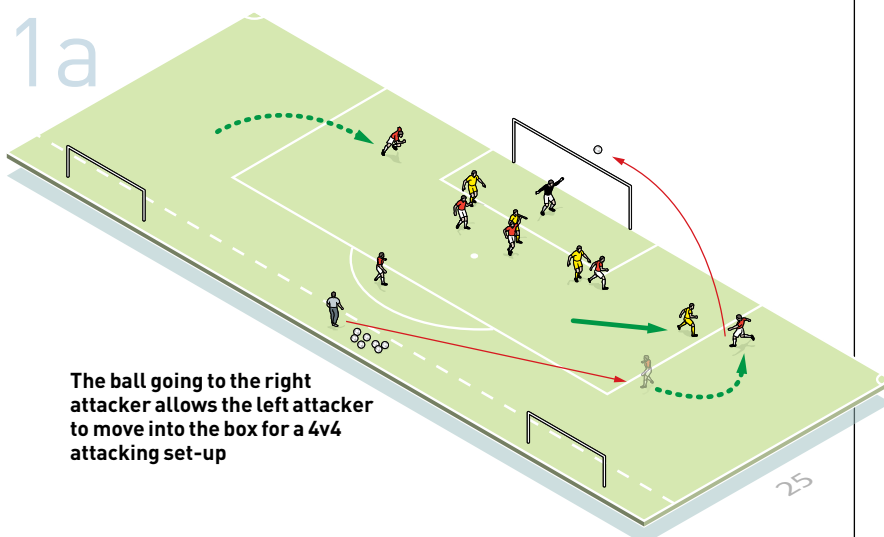
The server starts by playing the ball to an attacker. If it goes to the right midfielder, the left midfielder can enter the box (1b). Attackers have two minutes to score a goal, and if successful, a new ball is played in.

If possession is overturned, defenders – who can only defend inside the area – must play the ball into the server or pass into one of the wide goals. Doing this successfully takes a goal off the attackers' total.

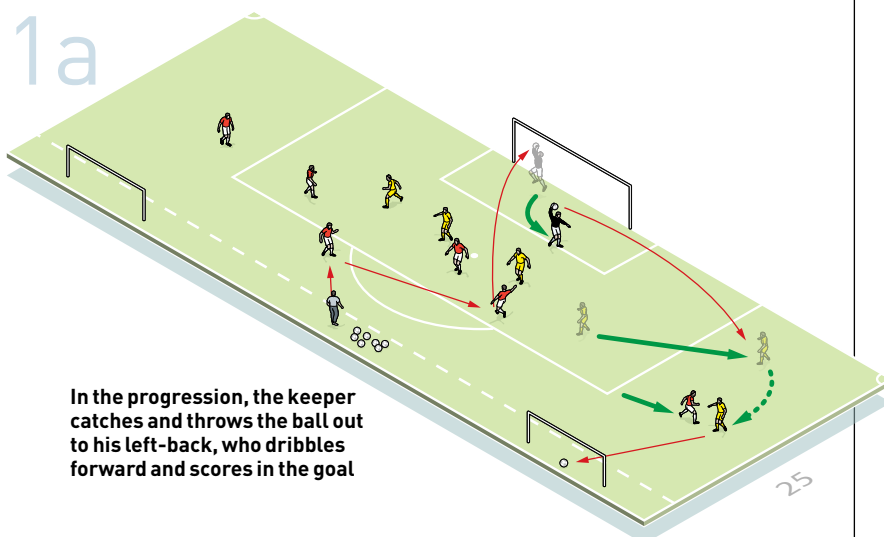
Play for two minutes, then rest for two minutes, then go again, rotating if desired.



The server can feed any of his red attackers, three of whom are positioned inside the box and three outside



The ball going to the right attacker allows the left attacker to move into the box for a 4v4 attacking set-up



In the progression, the keeper catches and throws the ball out to his left-back, who dribbles forward and scores in the goal



Matt Williams

TORQUAY UNITED

Matt Williams is one of the men charged with restoring Torquay United's league status at the first attempt after the Devon club slipped out of Sky Bet League Two in May. During his 12 years at Plainmoor, Williams has risen up through the ranks, developing youth and community football, and now works on a day-to-day basis with the club's first-team players.

“Defenders must choose a start position in relation to the ball, know when to press and when to hold, and ensure they mark in the box as well as patrolling runners from outside.”

DEFENDING IN AND AROUND THE PENALTY AREA

How do I progress the session?

When catching the ball, keepers can feed a full-back, offering him the chance to break out and score in one of the wide goals (1c).

Also, players outside the area can now shoot or dribble the ball in. If this happens, defenders can come out to stop the shot (2a).

What are the key things to look out for?

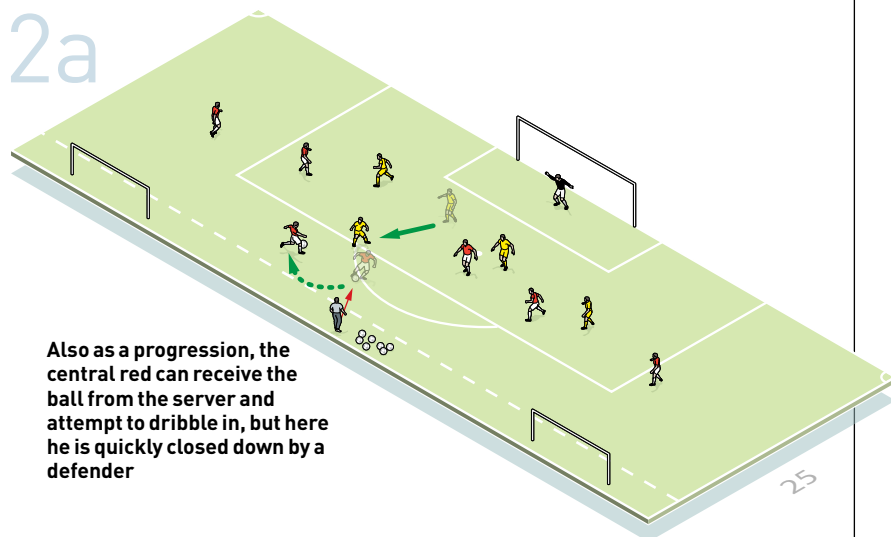
The defending team must protect the goal in multiple phases, dealing with the threat from both inside and outside the penalty area. They must close down the line of the ball (2b), stay on their feet, press at pace then slow and hold up play, and clear with height, distance and accuracy.

Tactically, they must choose a start position in relation to the ball, know when to press and when to hold, and ensure they mark in the box as well as patrolling runners from outside.

Small-sided game

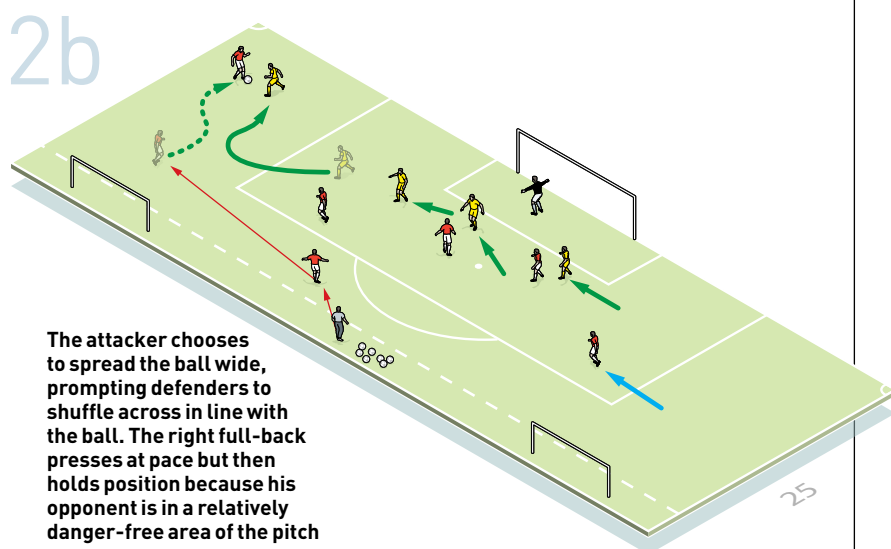
This is three teams of six in an area made of two penalty boxes placed together, as shown (3). Teams are 3v3 in each half with players all-in. The third team of six acts as one-touch attacking neutrals on the flanks, and this game tests defenders in protecting goal from multiple routes and angles. ■

2a



Also as a progression, the central red can receive the ball from the server and attempt to dribble in, but here he is quickly closed down by a defender

2b



The attacker chooses to spread the ball wide, prompting defenders to shuffle across in line with the ball. The right full-back presses at pace but then holds position because his opponent is in a relatively danger-free area of the pitch

3



In the Small-sided Game, reds are looking to utilise the outer blue players, who play with the attacking team

LMA AMBASSADOR

Ian Bogie Penetrating in the final third

Overview:

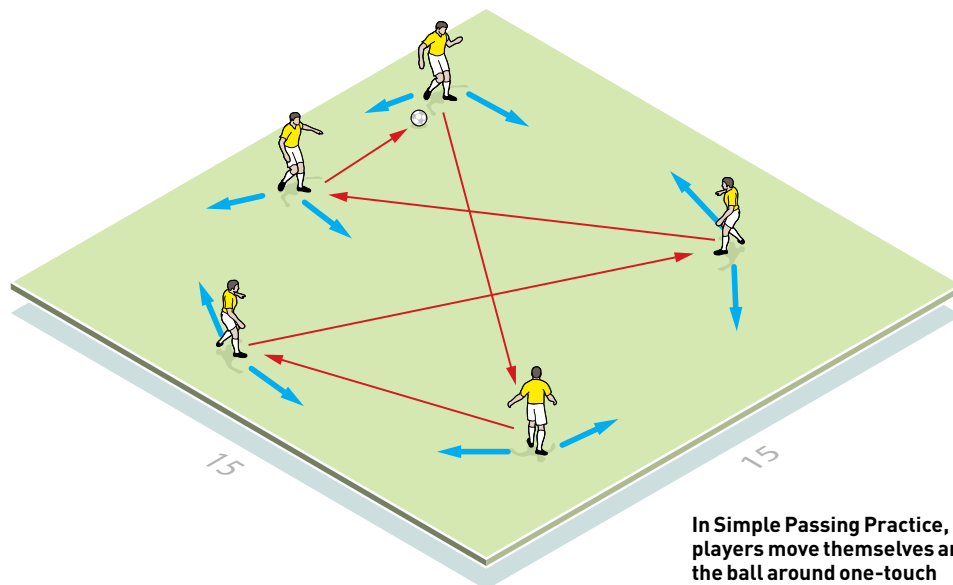
This session examines ways teams can break with precision and poise through an opponent's backline. It's a detailed practice that moves from a simple warm-up into more complex possession and penetration set-ups, and is great for teams really looking to harness an attacking unity and knowledge in the final third.

As with most soccer coaching principles, practice makes perfect, but thankfully this is a blueprint that players like to run again and again.

"This is a great session for teams really looking to harness an attacking unity and knowledge in the final third."

PENETRATING IN THE FINAL THIRD

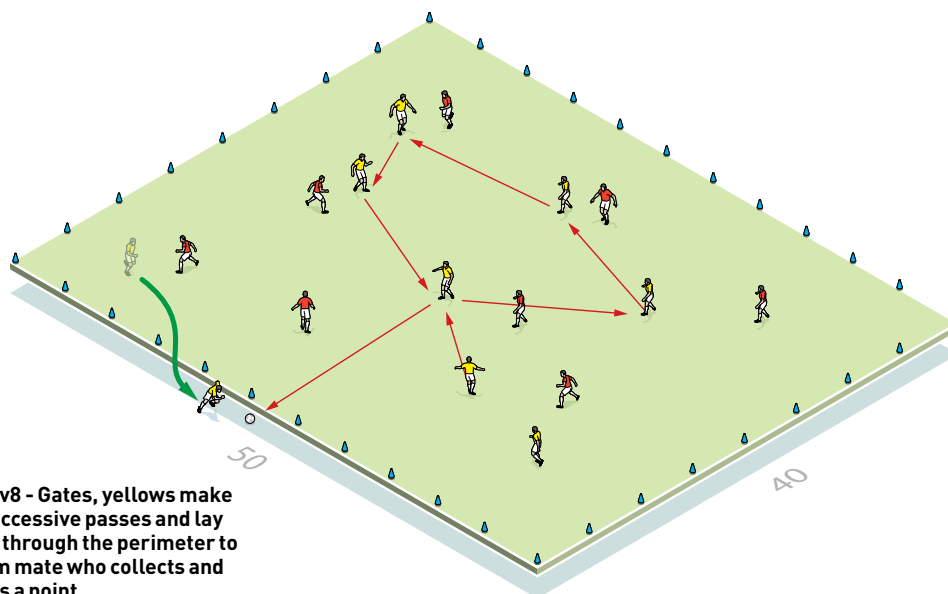
1



In Simple Passing Practice, players move themselves and the ball around one-touch

KEY
Ball movement →
Player movement →
Dribble - - - - -
Optional pass/run - - - - -

2



Into 8v8 - Gates, yellows make six successive passes and lay a ball through the perimeter to a team mate who collects and scores a point

SET-UP

AREA

Up to a half pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 9v9 (incl. keepers)

SESSION TIME

Passing practice
10mins, 8v8s 15mins
each,
Small-sided game
20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Simple passing practice

We set up, as shown, on a 15x15-yard grid with five players and one ball (use multiple grids to accommodate the full squad) (1). The players move throughout and pass one-touch.

What are the key things to look out for?

We want to see a good quality and weight of pass in short and long balls, smart timing of supporting players and excellent communication.

8v8 - Gates

Now in a 40x50-yard grid we play 8v8 (2). Cones are placed every

five yards along the touchlines. The team in possession of the ball must make six consecutive passes before releasing a player outside the grid to receive the ball. If successful, they score one point. The player's run outside the grid must be through a different gate than the pass.



Ian Bogie

LMA AMBASSADOR

Ian Bogie is a vastly experienced coach and manager, who appeared for a number of sides during a 16-year professional career, including Newcastle United, Preston North End, Millwall, Leyton Orient and Port Vale.

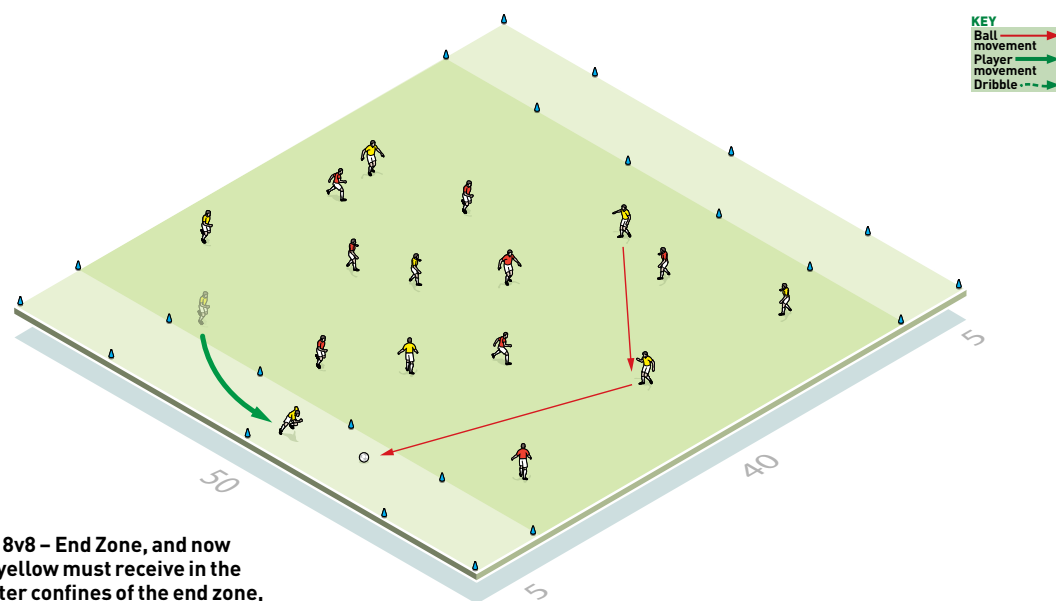
Moving into management in 2007, he accepted a job offer from Gateshead, then of the Northern Premier League. The following season the club were promoted via the play-offs, and 12 months later they were celebrating another promotion having finished second in Conference North.

He turned Gateshead into a notable force in the top tier of the non-league game, before arriving at fellow Conference team Stockport County in March 2013.

“Timing of runs into the end zones mimics breaking the offside line, so the quality of the penetrating pass must be good.”

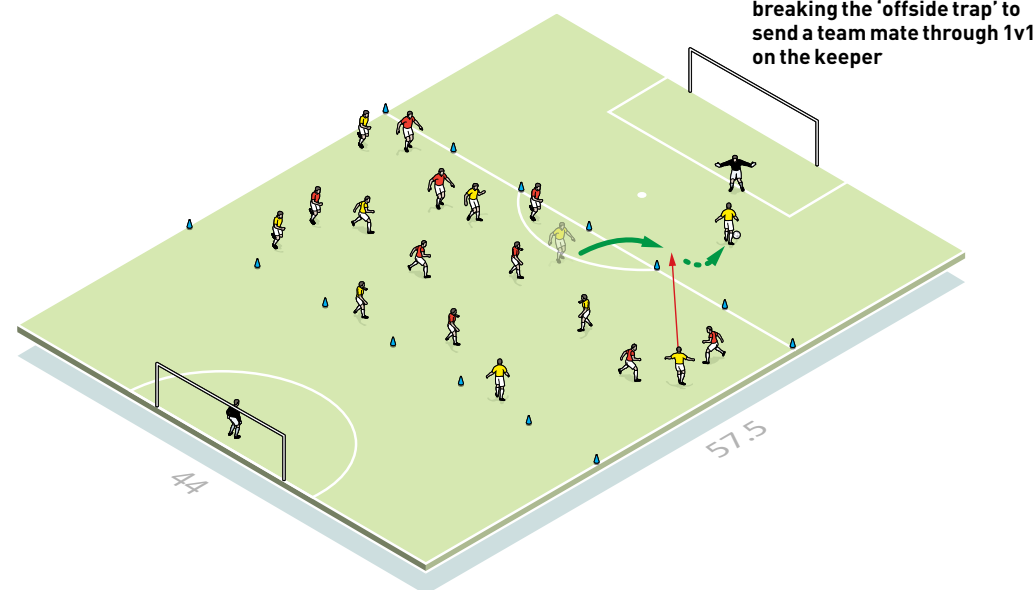
PENETRATING IN THE FINAL THIRD

3



Into 8v8 – End Zone, and now the yellow must receive in the tighter confines of the end zone, also ensuring he goes through a different cone to the ball

4



Finally in the Small-sided Game, yellows pass within a compressed central area, breaking the 'offside trap' to send a team mate through 1v1 on the keeper

8v8 - End Zone

Now we extend the area by adding 10-yard scoring zones along each of the long sides (3). This is an 8v8 directional game where the team in possession tries to penetrate the end zone with a pass through one gate. Again, the receiving player runs through a different gate, and this time has a defined

area in which to receive the ball.

What are the key things to look out for?

We're looking for shape and balance of the team in order to support around the ball. Timing of runs into the end zones mimics breaking the offside line, so the quality of the penetrating pass must be good. We also want

to see a combination of straight and diagonal runs.

Small-sided game

We now narrow a half-pitch to the width of the 18-yard box, with three clear zones marked out with cones (4). Now 8v8 plus keepers, each team possesses the ball until they penetrate the final zone to go 1v1 with the keeper.

What are the key things to look out for?

In addition to the previous observations, we want to see overlaps and third-man runs, and of course a quality finish on goal. ■

LMA AMBASSADOR

Anthony Williams Switching play

Overview:

Switching of play is a devastating and dynamic way of catching opposition players out of position, and this session takes the basic principles of switching before adding progressions and advancements in play so that teams can really utilise this attacking weapon. We witness the benefit of switching in every game we play. And of course, examining its principles as an attacking team also helps us learn how to defend against the switch when in defensive mode.

“Switching of play is a devastating and dynamic way of catching opposition players out of position.”

SWITCHING PLAY

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 40x40 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals, mannequins

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 16

SESSION TIME

Passing drill and Transfer game
10mins each,
Small-sided game
20mins

What do I get the players to do?

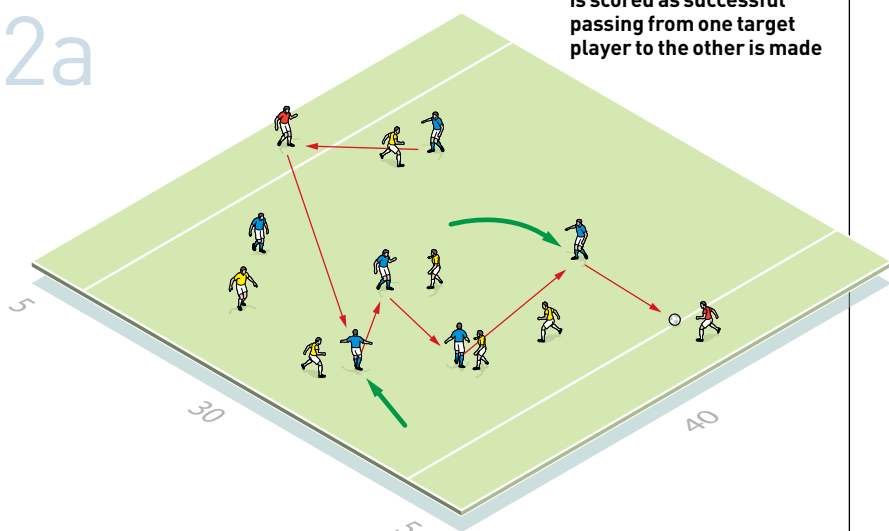
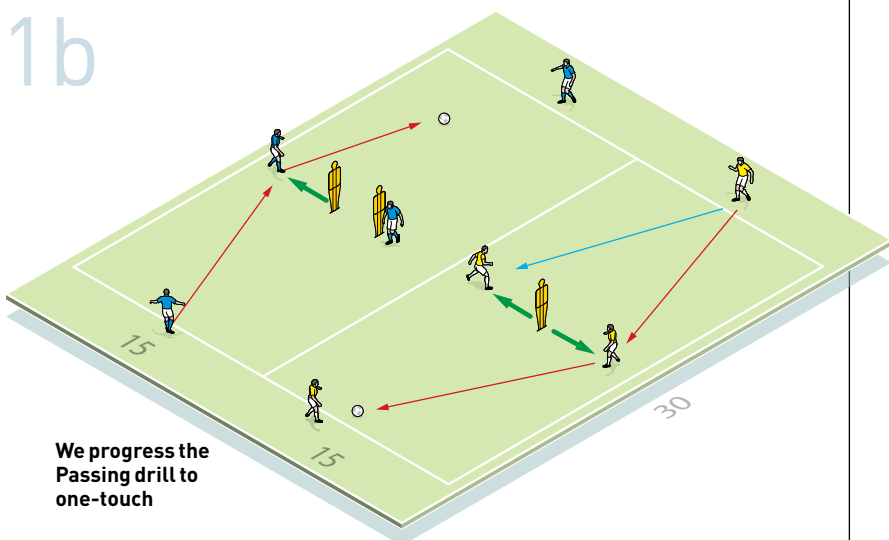
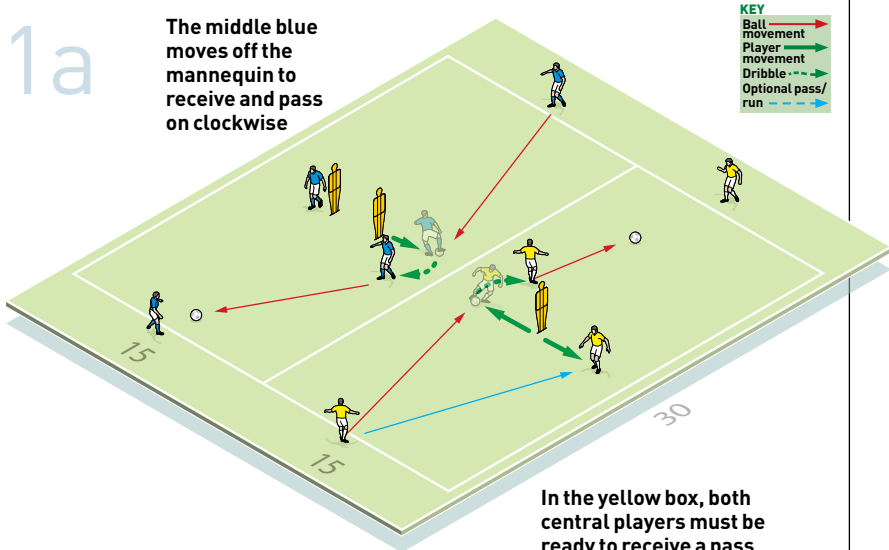
Passing drill (1a)

In the left-hand practice, there is a blue server at each end of the box, and a blue on each mannequin in the middle. The ball is played in from the top, moving clockwise with a diagonal pass towards the wing. The player must react to the pass and step back off the mannequin, ready to receive. Two-touch, the ball is then played on, before the move is repeated back in the other direction.

In the second box, we position two players on a single mannequin. Now, the ball can go to either player, so both need to react to the potential of the pass. To progress, we restrict players to one-touch (1b).

What are the key things to look out for?

Players must receive the ball on the back foot, side-on so they can see both servers. Movement off the mannequin must be realistic, with a sensible weight of pass from the server.





Anthony Williams

LMA AMBASSADOR

Anthony Williams spent the latter part of the 2013/14 season at Sky Bet League Two side Portsmouth, working alongside first-team manager Richie Barker as the club's goalkeeping coach.

Previous to that, he'd also partnered Barker at Crawley Town and Bury, following a long and successful playing career that saw him appear for 15 different clubs, including Hartlepool United, Grimsby Town and Wrexham.

He also made 16 appearances for the Wales Under-21 side.

SWITCHING PLAY

Transfer game

We now remove the poles and add a target player at each end, in a 5-yard zone (2a). It's 6v6, with each team required to switch play to target players quickly. This is all-in, then reverts to two-touch, and there must be three passes before a pass is fed into a target player. Involving both target players in a move, uninterrupted, earns a point.

If play is turned over the new team in possession attacks (2b).

What are the key things to look out for?

Players must recognise when they have space and time to turn. They need to create a picture in their heads before the ball arrives at their feet, something aided by good communication.

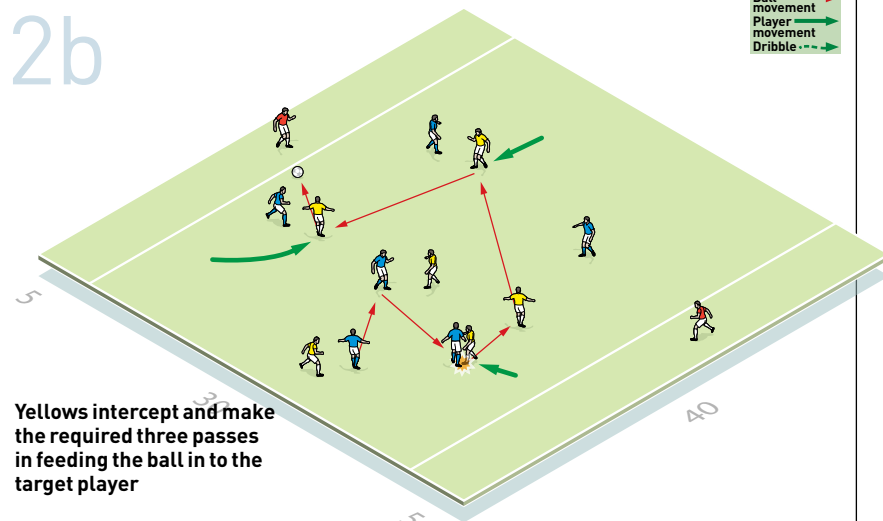
Small-sided game

We now switch direction of play by adding goals, as shown (3a). Target players no longer represent the scoring mechanism, but the switching mechanism, feeding the ball back into the middle to be attacked (3b).

Again, if the ball is transferred from one side to the other a point is earned, with two points for finding the net.

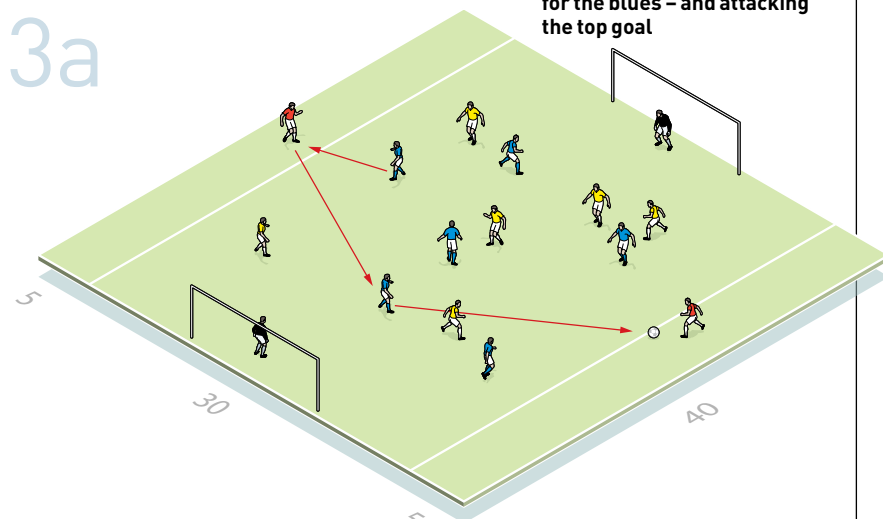
First this is two-touch, then remove wide areas and play 7v7, hoping players will still hold on to the principles of switching. ■

2b



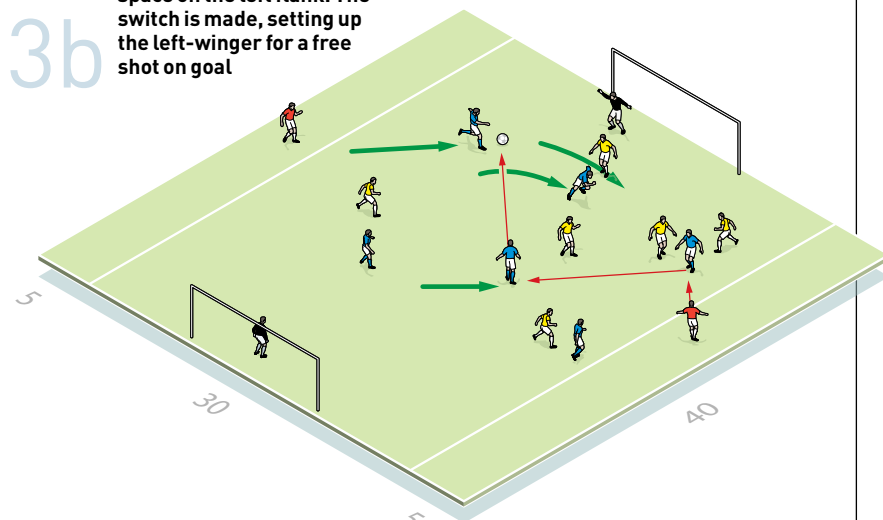
In the Small-sided game, the direction of play has now shifted 90 degrees, with target players the switchers – here, for the blues – and attacking the top goal

3a



The ball is fed inside and an attacking blue drags his defender away to create space on the left flank. The switch is made, setting up the left-winger for a free shot on goal

3b



“They need to create a picture in their heads before the ball arrives at their feet.”

EXTRA-TIME PROFILE

WORDS: Sue McKellar

IAN BARACLOUGH SLIGO ROVERS

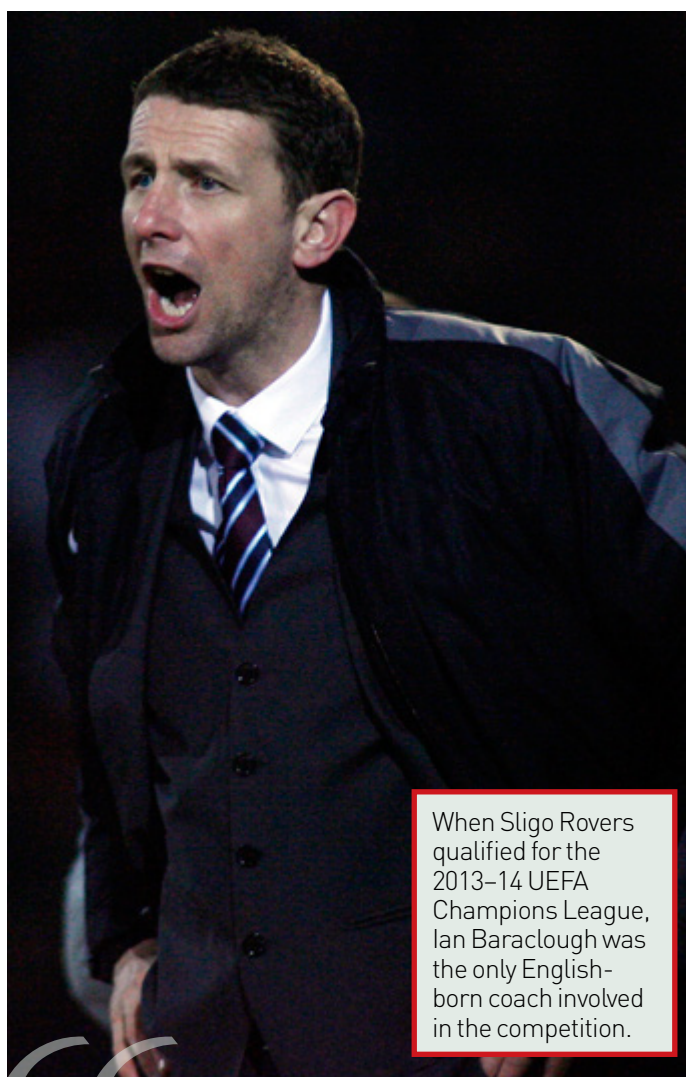
Few managers get the chance to manage overseas as early in their careers as Ian Baraclough. Since he took the helm of League of Ireland side Sligo Rovers, Baraclough has proven his worth not only as a coach but in a host of core management disciplines, as Elite Soccer discovers.

Baraclough had yet to hang up his boots as a player when coaching and management came knocking. When Nigel Adkins took over as manager of his club Scunthorpe United he invited Baraclough and another senior player, Andy Crosby, to join his coaching staff. Having shown an interest in coaching since his youth, Baraclough didn't hesitate to accept.

As always when going from being one of the lads to being part of the team coaching and selection process, the transition was a challenge, one that relied on Baraclough's maturity and natural man-management skills. But the experience of assisting Adkins provided a solid grounding and a great kick-start to Baraclough's management career.

"I had a great relationship with Nigel; he was a great role model and to this day I still employ some of the processes we used back then," says Baraclough. "One of the most memorable lessons he taught me was that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to managing people; you have to deal with players as individuals as well as collectively, and ensure that everyone feels included, whether they are on the bench that week or not. I still put a lot of work into my training sessions to make sure every player gets as much as possible from them."

His big 'in' to management came in 2010, when Adkins moved on to Southampton and Baraclough, despite his inexperience, was offered the chance to fill his shoes. While he realised it would be a steep learning curve, it was an opportunity he could not



When Sligo Rovers qualified for the 2013-14 UEFA Champions League, Ian Baraclough was the only English-born coach involved in the competition.

The club's success and the fact that the Champions League came to town was a much-needed pick-me-up for the local people. Hearing that iconic music play before each match was an absolute spine-tingler.

pass up. Unfortunately, a little over six months after taking the position, the young manager got a taste of the impatience of modern management when his tenure was terminated unexpectedly.

"I am still proud of what I achieved during my short spell as Scunthorpe manager and felt that our season was very much still alive when I lost my job," he says. "At that time, even being outside of the relegation zone was a success for Scunthorpe; they still haven't been any higher since."

Ousted from the world of football for the first time since leaving school at 16, it was a bitter pill to swallow. Yet, Baraclough used his time out of the game wisely, reflecting on his successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses as a manager and determining how he would need to improve.

He observed other managers and coaches at work, coached part-time at the Leicester City Academy and visited the renowned academy at Le Havre in France, where he picked up ideas and approaches, some of which he has implemented in his daily routine.

Greenshoots

Then, after a break of 11 months, the call came that Baraclough had been waiting for, albeit from an unlikely source. League of Ireland side Sligo Rovers was without a leader following the departure of Paul Cook to Accrington Stanley and Baraclough was invited to interview.

"Within a week, I had accepted the

IAN BARACLOUGH SLIGO RANGERS

role and had taken charge of the first league match of the season," he says. "I had never imagined that I would find myself taking a job abroad so early on in my career, but in management you have to be adaptable." You also have to be prepared to make sacrifices, he adds, one of the toughest parts of the job being leaving his very supportive family behind in Leicester.

Baraclough's first challenge at Sligo was proving himself worthy of the role and ensuring he didn't upset the apple cart. While new managers are normally appointed to sides that are perceived to be performing below par, Cook had achieved great success with Sligo, winning the FAI Cup and the League Cup the previous two seasons. With the fans anxious that their club might fall back in the hands of a relative unknown, Baraclough knew he needed to win them over.

"I was taking over a team that was on an upward curve, so I was conscious of not trying to change too much, too soon," he says. "It helped that when I was appointed I didn't bring any of my own coaching staff with me and I couldn't sign any new players because the transfer window was closed," he adds. "So I embraced the existing staff and threw myself into the role."

The fact that his football philosophy is similar to Cook's also helped to make the transition smoother. "Like him, I want to see expansive football," says Baraclough. "I believe that possession is key and want my players to keep the ball on the ground."

Working hard and adding more professionalism to the players' daily routine, Baraclough's impact was immediate as he led Sligo to the League of Ireland trophy for the first time in 35 years.

Foreign body

Whereas elsewhere in Ireland, fans' attention is divided between Gaelic sports, rugby union and horse-racing, football is Sligo's number one sport. "When the football club is doing well, the whole town and local businesses thrive as well, so 2012 was a great year," says Baraclough. "The club's success and the fact that the Champions League came to town was a much-needed pick-me-up for the local people. Hearing that

Accentuate the positives

One thing I learned from Nigel Adkins was that to engender a learning environment you have to identify five positives and one negative. While I address poor team performances, I don't dwell on them. Instead I try to instil self-belief by accentuating the positives. That was key to our League of Ireland title win. It's a question of balancing that with the right level of discipline to ensure players practise the best possible behaviours to improve.

I am also a strong believer in the power of aspiration in getting people to achieve their goals. If somebody is willing to invest in himself and challenge himself to get the best out of his abilities, the sky will be the limit. Your aim as a manager is to try to instil those ethics into all of your players. If you can get the majority on board to your way of thinking then you'll have a successful squad.

"If somebody is willing to invest in himself and challenge himself to get the best out of his abilities, the sky will be the limit."

Highs and lows:

September 2010

Baraclough was appointed caretaker manager of Scunthorpe United, having quit playing for the side in 2009 to act as first-team coach.

March 2011

After a disappointing season that saw Scunthorpe United in the relegation zone, Baraclough lost his job.

February 2012

Baraclough fought off tough competition to take the top job at League of Ireland side Sligo Rovers.

October 2012

Baraclough led Sligo Rovers to the league title, its first title in 35 years and earning qualification to the 2013-14 UEFA Champions League.

November 2013

Further success came to Baraclough when Sligo Rovers beat Drogheda United to take home the FAI Cup.

iconic music play before each match was an absolute spine-tingler."

Sligo, one of only five or six full-time clubs in the League of Ireland, is a growing business with a turnover of over £1.6 million. It is debt-free and, as a co-operative, its ground is owned by the people and can never be sold off.

With the help of sponsors and local people, the club erected a new stand in a matter of months for its first-round Champions League tie against Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Molde, which sold out. For Baraclough, being part of the club's development has been a valuable education. "Our success has meant we've since been able to invest more in the club, improving the match-day experience that we can offer the fans," he says.

Working under certain financial constraints has also tested the manager's initiative and resolve, as Sligo works hard to operate within its means; Baraclough saw his budget cut by 20 per cent this year. "It's a good test for my skills as a manager, because I need to ensure we remain good enough to compete at the top," he says. "This football club is so important to the community, so we will never stretch things to the limit and put it at risk. As a custodian of Sligo, I have to understand that."

It has been an incredible two years for Baraclough at Sligo Rovers. While the club didn't retain the League title in 2013, it came a highly respectable third, earning qualification for the Europa League, and won the FAI Cup. And setting aside the number of games and silverware won, it has been invaluable for the manager's personal and professional journey.

"I've been very fortunate to get experience of managing in European competitions so early in my career, which I know will be invaluable moving forward," he says. "Having lost my job at Scunthorpe after such a short period of time, I think there will always be a burning ambition to get back into English football management at some stage. I'm keen to demonstrate what I have learned and how I have developed as a manager." ■

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BOOKED: **THIS MONTH'S CHOICE**

By Richard Aldhous

Sporting sense

Performance Cycling: The Science of Success
By James Hopker and Simon Jobson
£13.39, Bloomsbury Publishing

This, to all intents and purposes, is a book about cycling. It presents a timely opportunity to draw comparisons to a sport which, like football, transports the skill of the individual into the overall ambitions of the team... for evidence, watch the upcoming Tour de France and savour teamwork at its most committed and best.

If such a comparison isn't lost – after all, no yellow jersey rider has ever made it to Paris without his 'domestiques', the workhorses sacrificing themselves for the cause – then likening the psychology of the sport's coaching to our own must also be worthwhile.

And while a third of this prolific tome looks at the core sensibilities of cycling – addressing everything from diet to bike set-up – the rest unveils an absorbing and engaging blueprint of the methods and mindfulness that drive forward arguably the world's most punishing and demanding sport.

Authors James Hopker and Simon Jobson have left the expertise to those who know best, with over 320 pages dedicated to a rich cross-section of contributions from experts in the field. Even so, Hopker (a Lecturer in the Centre for Sports Studies at the University of Kent) and

Jobson (Senior Lecturer in the same role at the University of Winchester) have gone about their edit using restraint and a sense of conciseness often missing from psychological research books.

And included in the final product are chapters such as 'How do I get the most out of coaching? The coach-athlete relationship', and 'How do I get in the right frame of mind? The psychology of cycling'. With further investigative insight into the mental dynamics of training versus competition, performance optimisation, post-competition methods, assessment of ability, as well as probes into varying performance dynamics for male, female, elder and disabled participants, there are multiple strands of thinking here that really stand up to scrutiny.

Each chapter author arrives with decades of sports performance coaching behind them. Former competitors, students of psychology and globally-renowned coaches, they unveil a lifetime's worth of knowledge in a way that is informative, accessible and, at times, light-hearted. Sure, a detailed



SELECTED EXCERPTS:

"When a coach and an athlete start working together, much gravitas is associated with the 'coaching philosophy', yet very few coaches publish what that means to the athlete... As with all human relationships, knowing where you stand is critical to maintaining a healthy interaction."

"Remember that, while daily and weekly communication is excellent, specific communication at the end of a training cycle allows a step back to review how training is going: 'seeing the wood and the trees'."

"Knowledge of the physiological requirements associated with successful performance should be integrated with tactical awareness to suit your specific capabilities."

breakdown of physical movement when tackling a category two climb may not be of use to you on the sports field, but the mental preparation for the ascent and mapping out a method to conserve and maintain belief during it can certainly be reflected in the requirements of a player required, perhaps, to play box-to-box as injury-time approaches.

As always, the heart of good coaching comes in many different forms. There's the requirement for expertise and proven information, of course, but more than ever before now the great and the good of management are looking at other sports in order to harvest knowledge and techniques from elsewhere, and this book certainly provides enough original insight to make it a worthy addition to any coach's reading collection. ■

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