



# ELITE SOCCER

COACHING PRACTICES FROM THE WORLD'S  
LEADING MANAGERS AND COACHES

AFC BOURNEMOUTH

# EDDIE HOWE

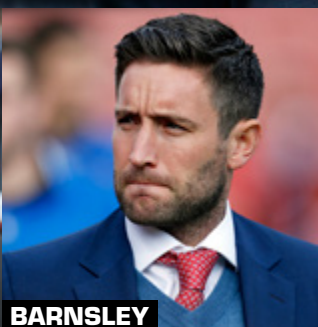
## BREAKING LINES

**Exclusive**  
Training practices from top  
professional managers



BURNLEY

**SEAN DYCHE**  
Linkplay  
between  
forwards



BARNLEY

**LEE  
JOHNSON**  
Back four  
protocols



ENGLAND UNDER-19s

**AIDY  
BOOTHROYD**  
The eleventh  
man



CARDIFF CITY

**MATTHEW  
BLOXHAM**  
Finding the  
spare man



LMA AMBASSADOR

**JOHN  
CARVER**  
Combination  
play

**EXTRA-TIME INTERVIEW:** WITH SWANSEA CITY MANAGER GARRY MONK

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## ISSUE 63 / OCTOBER 2015: FROM THE CHAIRMAN



### Engaging soccer coaching blueprints from the game's most innovative minds

Dear Coach,

Welcome to the October issue of Elite Soccer.

We're back with another packed issue as the season gets into full swing, so without further ado let me introduce you to what's available this month.

To start, from the Barclays Premier League, we're delighted to welcome AFC Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe into Elite Soccer. As arguably the most talked about young manager in the game, the 37-year-old's recent successes have been magnificent, though none greater than leading the Cherries into the top division for the first time in their history.

We're grateful for Eddie's time in putting together a session that looks at why breaking lines with smart possession can be the key to creating strong, confident sides who are both efficient at what they do and good to watch!

Moving on, from the Sky Bet Championship, Burnley boss Sean Dyche outlines how to perfect link play between forwards, while from League One Barnsley manager Lee Johnson offers a practice on back four defensive protocols.

England Under-19s coach Aidy Boothroyd looks at making the eleventh man count, while Cardiff City coach Matthew Bloxham presents an outline that focuses on finding spare players.

To conclude, vastly experienced former Newcastle United manager Steve Carver introduces a shooting practice that promises to get players in form and on target.

We hope you and your players enjoy what's on offer, and we'll see you again next month.

Yours in soccer,

*Howard Wilkinson*

Howard Wilkinson, LMA Chairman

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**ELITE SOCCER OCTOBER 2015**

# MANAGER PROFILES

Here are the six managers and coaches we're delighted to welcome into this issue of Elite Soccer



**EDDIE HOWE**  
**AFC BOURNEMOUTH**

Eddie Howe has a long history with Bournemouth reaching back to when, as a schoolboy, he joined the club's centre of excellence. He worked his way up to become a regular in the first team and earned two England Under-21 caps.

He signed for Portsmouth in 2001 but returned to Bournemouth on loan in 2004 before his playing career was cut short through injury.

Howe was appointed as manager in December 2006, at the age of just 29. Three years on, and despite a season in which the club was operating under a transfer embargo, he had guided the Cherries to only a fifth promotion in their history. In January 2011 he joined Burnley but returned to the south coast at the start of the 2012/13 campaign where he secured for the club promotion to the second tier.

Howe led Bournemouth to a 10th-place finish in the Sky Bet Championship in 2013/14, then promotion to the Barclays Premier League the following year, earning in the process the LMA award for the Manager of the Year.

Bournemouth have made a solid start to life in the top flight with the club securing their first Premier League victory on August 22 when defeating West Ham United 4-3 at Upton Park.

**SEAN DYCHE**  
**BURNLEY**



Sean Dyche was confirmed as the manager of Burnley in October 2012 having previously taken charge at Watford, where he ascended to first-team manager having been youth team coach and assistant manager. In his first season at Turf Moor, he led his new side to an 11th-place finish in the Championship, then the following year secured automatic promotion to the top flight for Burnley the first time since 1973. What was even more remarkable about his achievement was that Dyche paid a transfer fee for just one player. As a player, he spent the majority of his career with Chesterfield and captained their promotion-winning team in 1995. He also achieved promotions with Millwall and Bristol City.

**LEE JOHNSON**  
**BARNLEY**



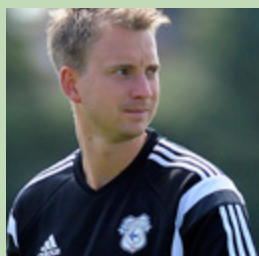
Lee Johnson was confirmed as the new manager of Barnsley on 25th February 2015. Johnson was previously in charge at Oldham Athletic where he had entered management for the first time, in the process becoming the youngest manager in English football. In a playing career spanning 468 first-team appearances and 40 goals, his two longest spells were at Yeovil Town and Bristol City, both when his father Gary was manager. Johnson helped Yeovil win promotion to the Football League and then to League One before joining Scottish side Hearts, then Kilmarnock. In his first full season in charge at Oldham, he led the club to a 15th place finish in Sky Bet League One.

**AIDY BOOTHROYD**  
**ENGLAND UNDER 19s**



Aidy Boothroyd joined the FA as a National Coach in February 2014. Previously, the Yorkshireman, who has managed at every professional level of English football, led Watford into the Premier League just 14 months after becoming the Football League's youngest manager. He had previously worked as assistant academy director at Norwich, then academy manager at West Bromwich Albion before becoming first-team coach at Leeds United. Since leaving Watford in 2008 he has taken charge at Colchester United, Coventry City and Northampton Town, before joining the FA last year.

**MATTHEW BLOXHAM**  
**CARDIFF CITY**



Matthew Bloxham is Professional Development Phase Coach at Under-18s level at Sky Bet Championship side Cardiff City. Matt enjoyed a lengthy term with the club's Community Foundation and Academics schoolboy programme, prior to joining the academy in a full-time role in 2012/13. Previously Individual Performance Manager, Matthew's task now is to enhance the Bluebirds' apprentice programme and, ultimately, player production. His input and knowledge is already providing the club's next generation of scholars with key learning tools for their future careers.

**JOHN CARVER**  
**LMA AMBASSADOR**



John Carver was previously Head Coach at Newcastle United, stepping up from his position as assistant manager to save the club from possible relegation to the Championship.

He had previously worked at the club from 1999 to 2004 as assistant manager to Sir Bobby Robson with a short spell as caretaker manager during that period. Carver's coaching and managerial career has included spells as caretaker manager at both Leeds and Sheffield United. He also took the hot seat at MLS side Toronto.

AFCBOURNEMOUTH

## Eddie Howe Breaking lines

### SET-UP

#### AREA

Up to 36x20 yards

#### EQUIPMENT

Balls, bibs, flat cones, goals, discs

#### NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v11

#### SESSION TIME

60mins

### Overview:

Getting players comfortable when both in and out of possession has been central to my coaching philosophy. I have seen players making huge strides in what they do when mastering the art of protecting or pursuing the ball, and good possession habits ultimately translate on the pitch into other skills, so I regard this session as a base onto which further development of players can be built.

## RONDO

Difficulty: Advanced

### What do I get the players to do?

#### The functional midfielder

Setting up as shown in the centre circle, the ball always starts with the coach, who feeds in, with the players on the outside looking to keep the ball away from those in the middle. They do this by using short passes to lure the defenders in, then penetrating between by playing long between the lines. These players on the outside of the circle are always moving ready to receive. If the team in possession reaches 25 passes, the possession pauses and a round of applause sounds for the achievement. Play then restarts quickly.

### What are the key things to look out for?

When in possession players must keep the ball by using a good weight of pass and touch. They need to show awareness of what's around them, adopting good body positions as they do so.

Out of possession the reaction must be to press. Team mates need to work together in closing down both space and opponents.

When one of the three defenders wins back possession in the middle of the circle, it must be a clear win and not just a touch. That defender team must be in control of the ball, or he can kick out of the circle. Now players switch, so the drill will be restarted with the man who conceded possession

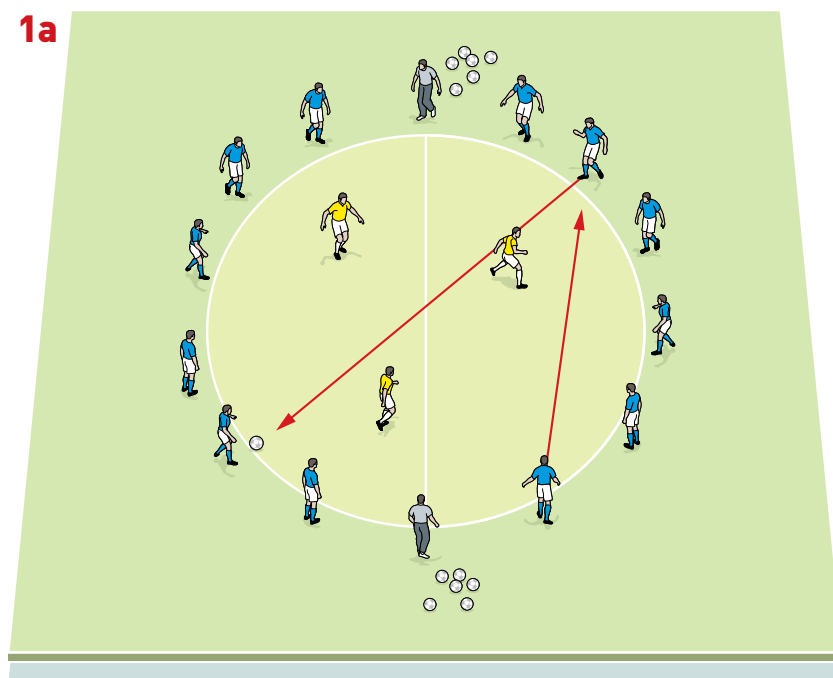
'reaction pressing', with the players on his left and right side reacting to join him.

### How do I progress the practice?

For the first progression we add an extra body in the middle (so four closers), with outside men restricted to one or two touches. When the ball breaks down the man

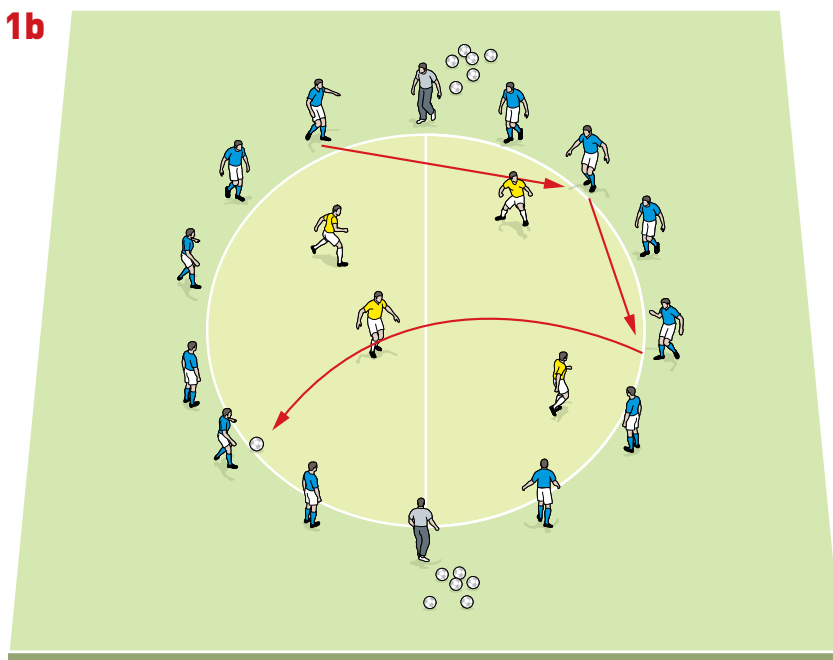
who conceded possession transitions quickly into the circle, with those on the left and the right joining him. The coach will call one of the three coming out of the drill to make the fourth. As a further progression we can add a floater to the middle for one-twos and bounce passes.

1a



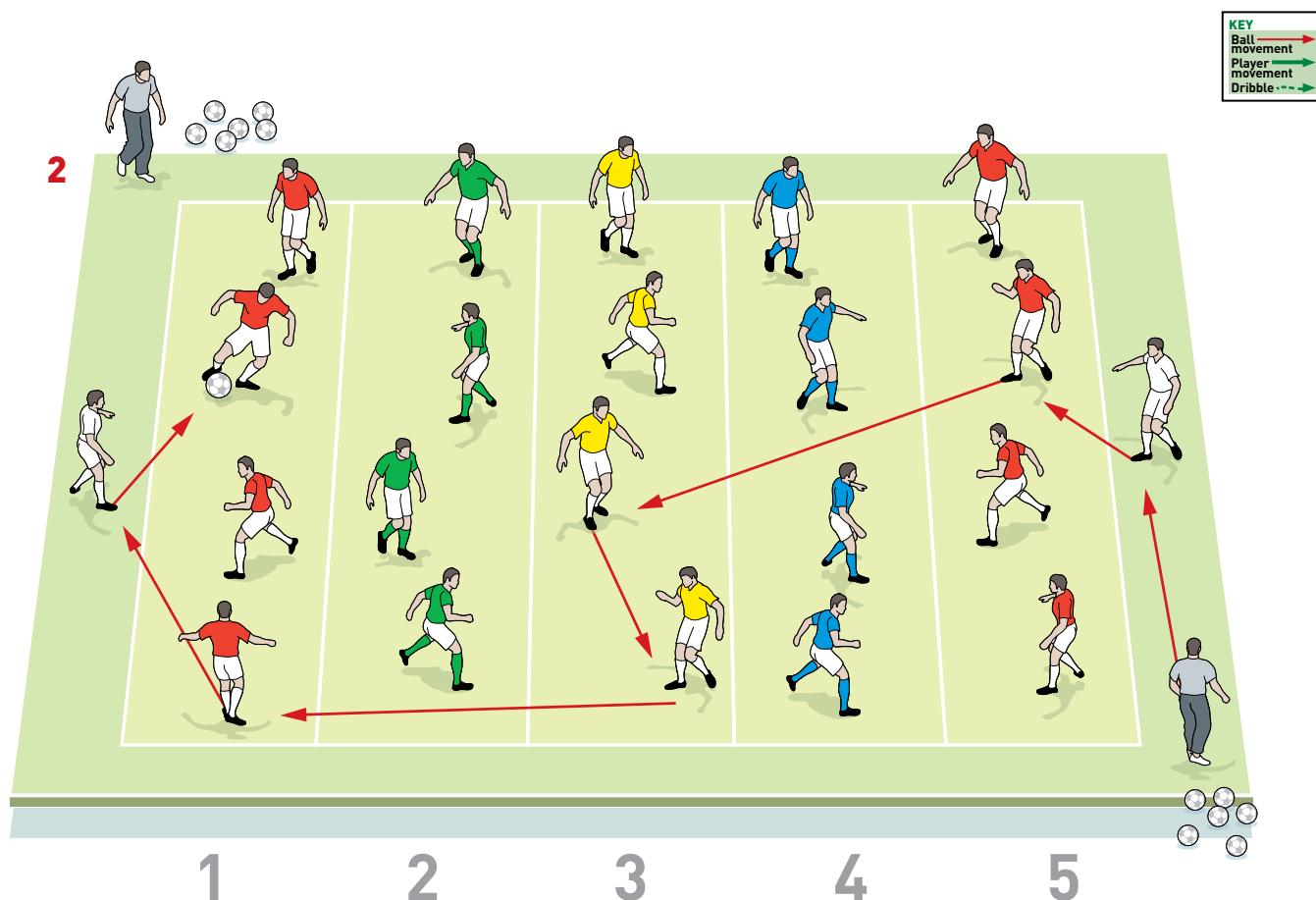
Outer players make long passes in order to split intruding defenders, and successfully retain possession

1b



In the progression, the threat of a fourth defender means outer players may need to make shorter passes in order to retain possession

## EDDIE HOWE: BREAKING LINES



The Five-Box Penetration exercise plots three attacking sides with two that are defending

### FIVE-BOX PENETRATION

**Difficulty: Advanced**

**What do I get the players to do?**

In this challenge the objective is to develop quick combination play with a focus on passing forward through the lines. So setting up in a 36x20-yard area we mark out six 6x20-yard zones. We work with two keepers and five teams of four. Three of the teams represent attackers in zones 1, 3 and 5, while two operate as defenders in zones 2 and 4. All players must stay in their zones. The game starts with the coach who plays to the keeper, who then feeds into zone 1. The objective is to play forward and through the lines, across the four zones to end with the

keeper at the opposite end. This is a continuous end-to-end timed practice.

If the defending teams in either zones 2 or 4 block any through pass, the team of four conceding possession swaps zones. The defending team now becomes the attacking team. The attacking team can move the ball at speed across the four to work the opening to penetrate, and can penetrate 'in one' when receiving from the keeper if they can work the opening, or if the defending team are unbalanced. If the attacking team is slow, at the coach's discretion he can switch them with a defending team.

**What are the key things to look out for?**

Defending teams need to work together in compact units as

well as being quick to shuffle across their respective zones. And when teams change from attack to defence or defence to attack, transitions must be quick so that an instant reaction (from both sides) can be seen. When in possession, it's two-touch maximum per player. We want to see a real speed to the practice and good body shape. We also demand good awareness of the ball, of team mates and opponents, smart decision-making and a measured weight of pass. Out of possession we're looking for good communication with team mates being a sensible distance apart. Players must also know to shuffle across the area.

*"When out of possession the reaction must be to press. Team mates need to work together in closing down both space and opponents."*

## EDDIE HOWE: BREAKING LINES

### SMALL-SIDED GAMES

**Difficulty:** Difficult – advanced

#### What do I get the players to do?

In this challenge the objective is to penetrate lines to a 3v2 counter-attack.

Resting greens start with the ball and will play to any one of the yellows. Yellows can penetrate if one of the defending four is disorganised, or work a clever opening between their opponents.

The defending four will have to work together to stop the penetrating pass – that means moving their feet and shuffling quickly to make sure distances and positioning are compact.

When the blues are penetrated they have to make a recovery run which transforms the practice into a 6v3 in the defending team's favour.

When the pass is penetrated to the reds it creates a 3v2 situation. The reds attack quickly at pace avoiding back tackles from recovering back defenders. The attacking three look for overlaps and clever interplay around the box.

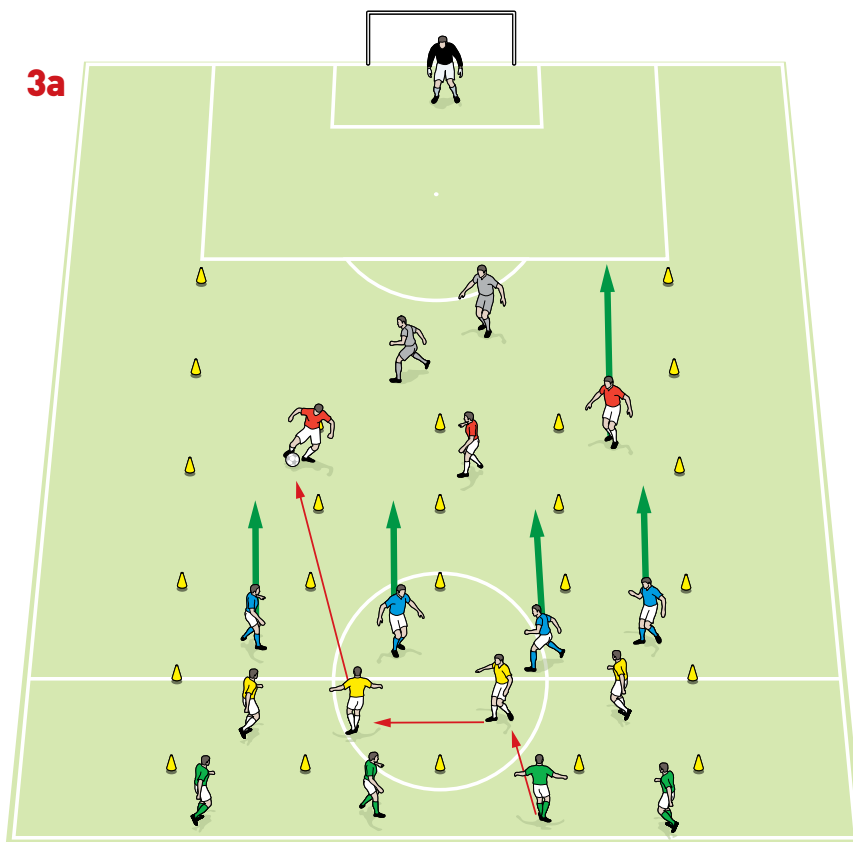
If the defending team wins the ball back they have an 'out pass' in the form of the resting two defenders, and this ends the drill.

We will keep players moving between challenges regularly, with defenders rotating positions with each other. Greens, yellows, blues and reds move up a zone - for example greens go to the yellow zone, yellows go to the blue zone and become defenders, while blues become the reds for the 3v2, with one man resting. Reds rotate to start and become greens.

When in possession we want players to move the ball quickly to work the opening to penetrate. Body shape for passing forwards and receiving in pockets is crucial, as is good awareness and dribbling, overlaps, decision-making and the ability for players to capitalise on goalscoring opportunities.

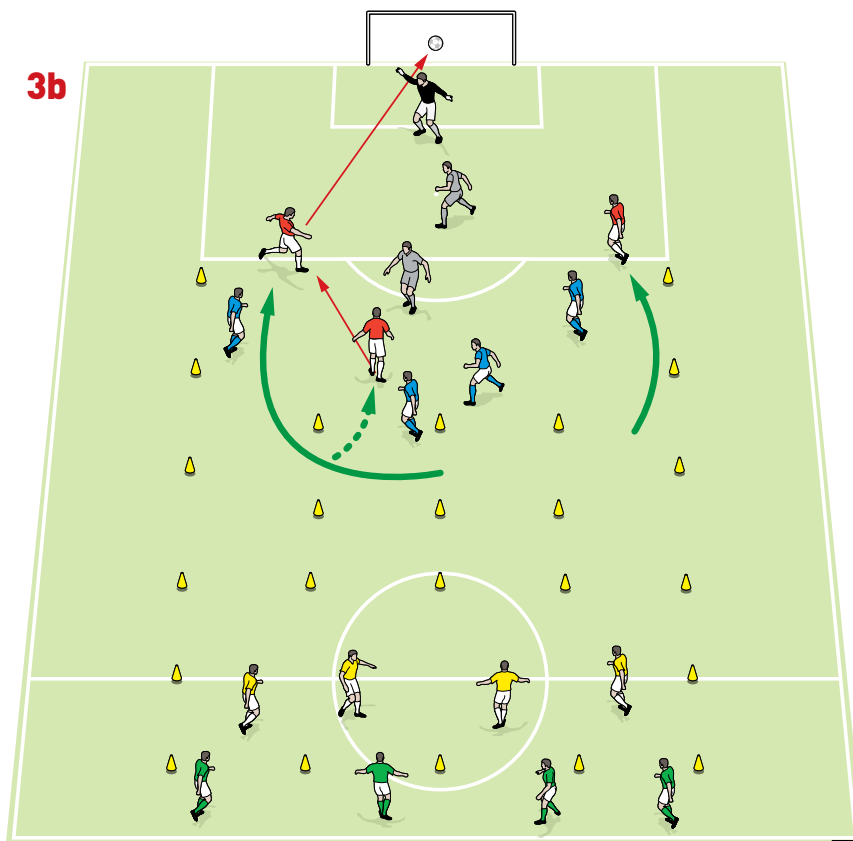
When out of possession we want players to shuffle, slide, block and make recovery runs. Defenders in a 3v2 must be slow coming away from goal, aiming to slow the attack for the recovering four.

3a

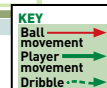


In the first small-sided game blacks and blues are defenders, with greens, yellows and reds in attacking mode

3b

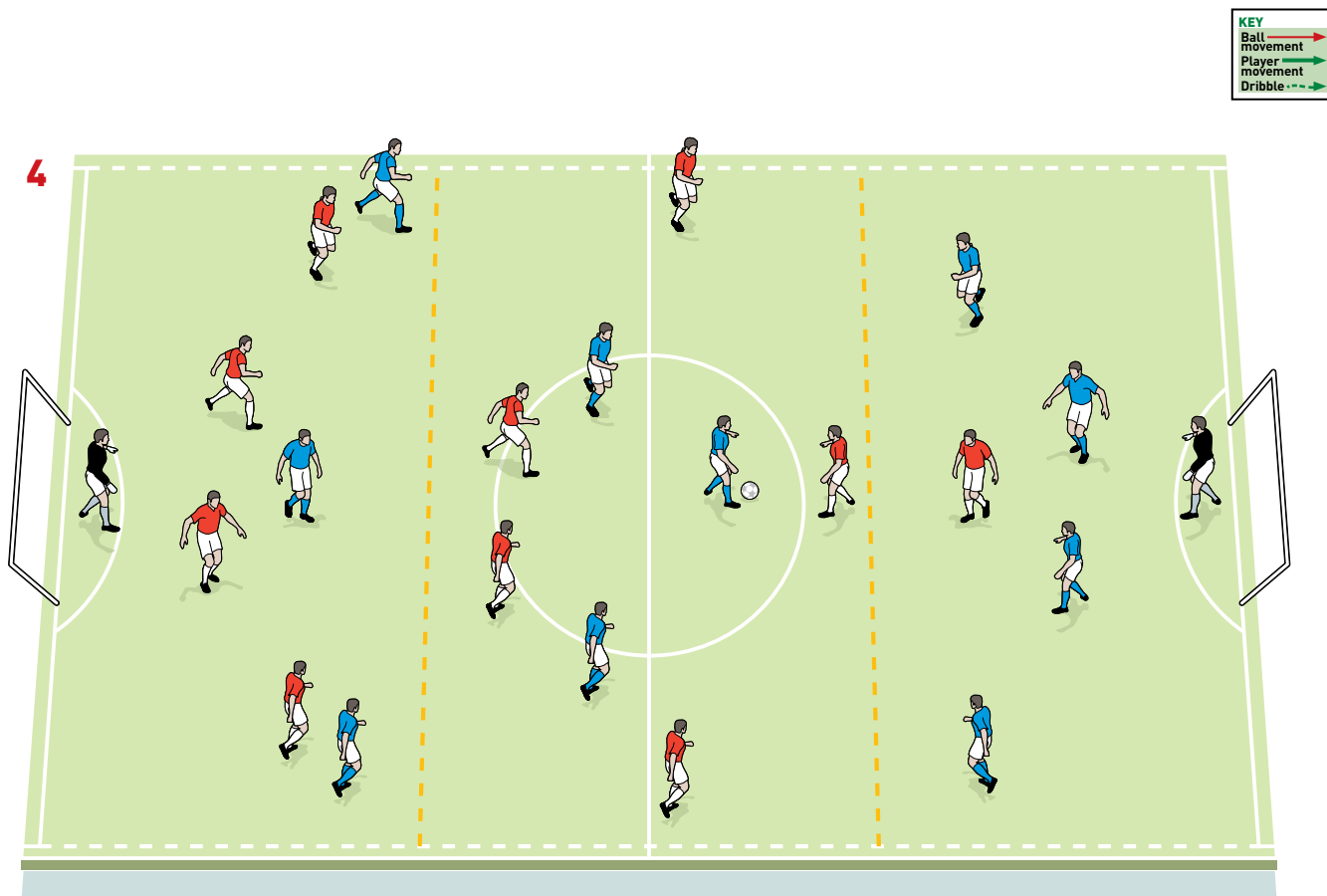


The ball is initially played to one of the wider of the three, who comes inside. The central attacker overlaps around the outside and gets played in for a shot on goal





## EDDIE HOWE: BREAKING LINES



**Reds (1-4-2-3-1) confront blues (1-4-3-3) in this 11v11 box-to-box game**

### PLAYING THROUGH THE THIRDS

Difficulty: Advanced

**What do I get the players to do?**

#### The functional striker

Setting up as shown this is an 11v11, working box-to-box, seven steps in from the touch line. Reds set up 1-4-2-3-1 while blues are 1-4-3-3. The objective is to play through the thirds, with players free to play in all zones with the only restrictions being on touches. So in zone 1 the restriction for the team in possession is that it is two touches. Zone 2 also has a two-touch restriction whereas zone 3 is all in.

The team in possession always starts the drill from the keeper, with a concentration on quick play, making the pitch big and looking to score.

The team out of possession must work the line, press high and look to win the ball high up the pitch. If the press is pierced, they must recover their shape as quickly as possible. The other focus should be on the block, playing with compactness and getting ready with a reaction press.

If the defending team wins back possession, the roles reverse. The touch restrictions stay the same

in the zones - the attacking team become defenders. Offsides apply while keepers have four seconds to get the ball back into play if it comes back to them from a corner or throw-in.

#### How do I progress the practice?

To progress we can change touch restrictions in each zone. Furthermore, we can put balls around the outsides enabling quick throw-ins, and can look at adding a floater. Finally, we might condition the practice so the ball cannot be played back once the ball moves into the next zone. ■

“When teams change from attack to defence or defence to attack, transitions must be quick so that an instant reaction (from both sides) can be seen.”

## BURNLEY

### Sean Dyche Link play between forwards

#### SET-UP

##### AREA

Use of half-pitch

##### EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goal

##### NUMBER OF PLAYERS

8v8 plus keepers

##### SESSION TIME

Unopposed practices 20mins,

Opposed practices 20mins,

Small-sided game 20mins

#### Overview:

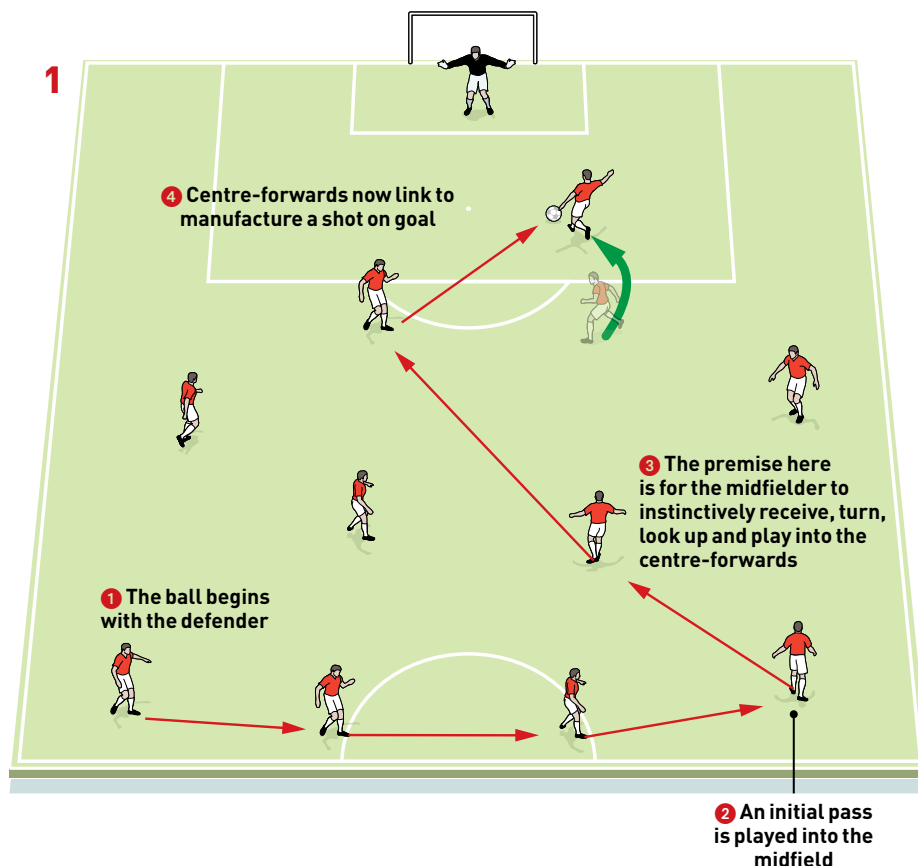
Some modern-day formations can make it difficult to gain a true understanding of attacking principles. For that reason, working on movements and link play in the attacking third is key. At Burnley we like to operate in a 4-4-2 formation, and we make sure our strikers understand the importance of linking and being productive. It's difficult to get two players linking 'naturally', and young centre-forwards these days are often schooled in 4-3-3, so educating them to play with two up front is vital for real centre-forward understanding. What I will say though is that attacking play is easier to coach compared to other outfield areas for the obvious reason that a goal comes as a result... we hope! This type of session will be used on an ad hoc basis but more so when new centre-forwards have been brought in.

#### What do I get the players to do?

At first we start without opposition players being involved. Passing patterns and combinations from full-backs and midfield players form the basis of the first three practices we show in this session.

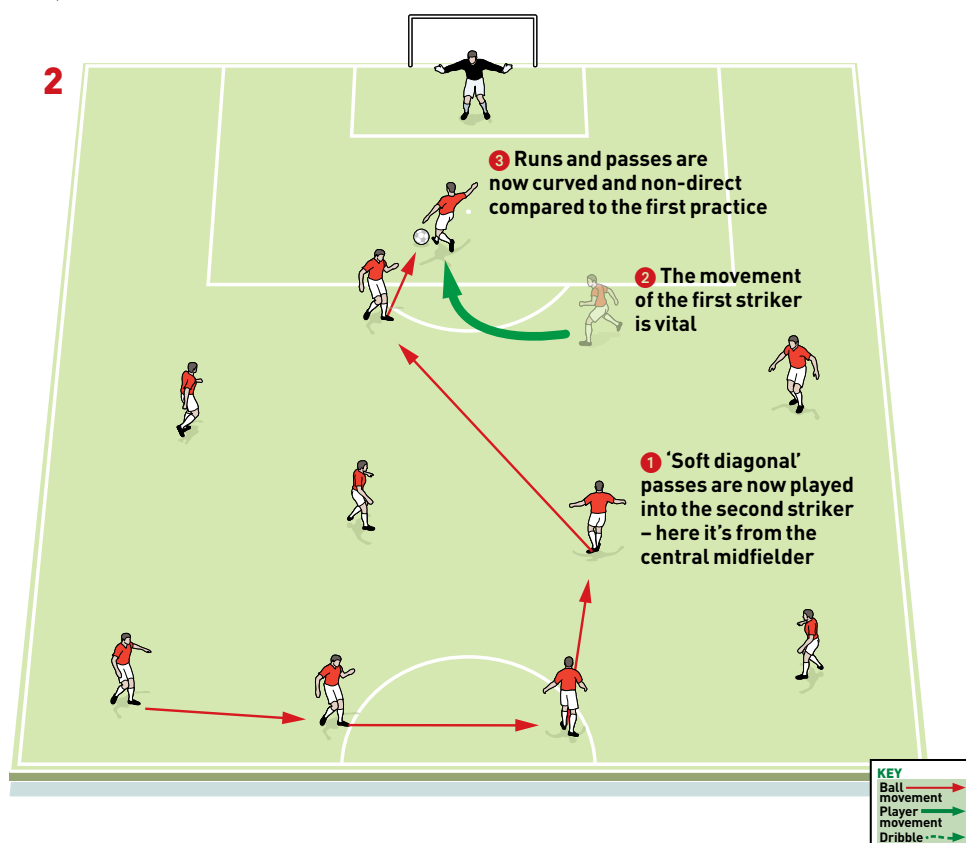
### Build-up play into two strikers

In this first phase the practice is run without opponents, as shown.



### Soft diagonals

In the second phase we now utilise shorter and 'softer' diagonal passes, as shown.





## SEAN DYCHE: LINK PLAY BETWEEN FORWARDS

### Reverse runs

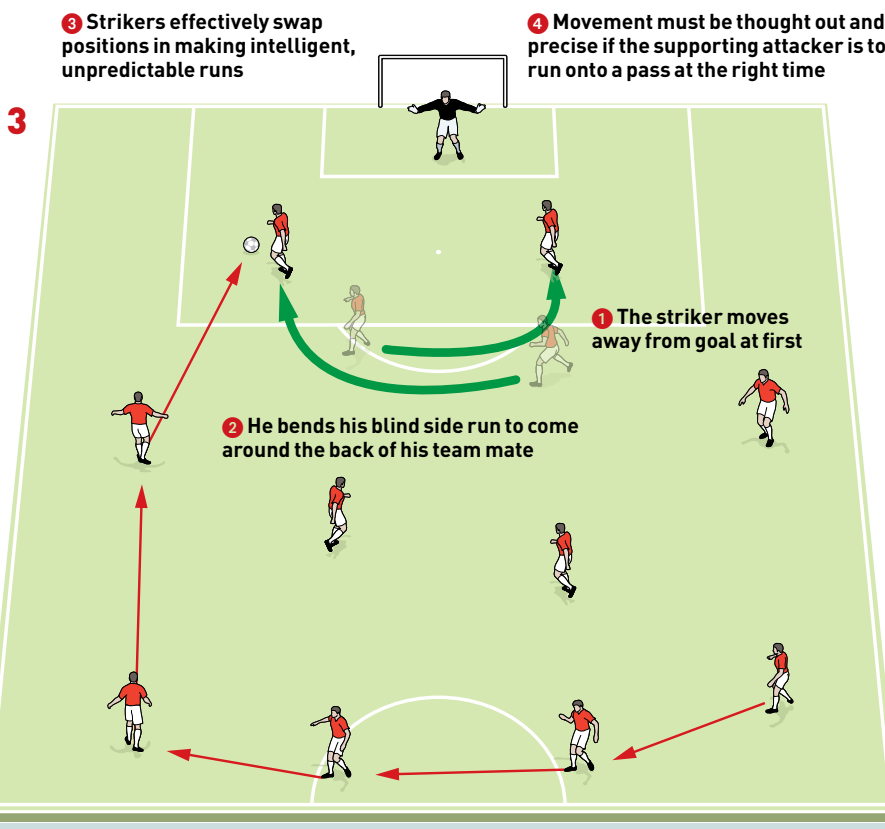
This set-up is designed to practise reverse runs and timing of movement onto the ball, as shown.

#### What are the key things to look out for?

Centre-forwards can often over-elaborate in their movements and perhaps aren't as aware as they should be of their striking partner's runs, so the emphasis here is on recognising good team possession with players showing sound awareness of timing and movement.

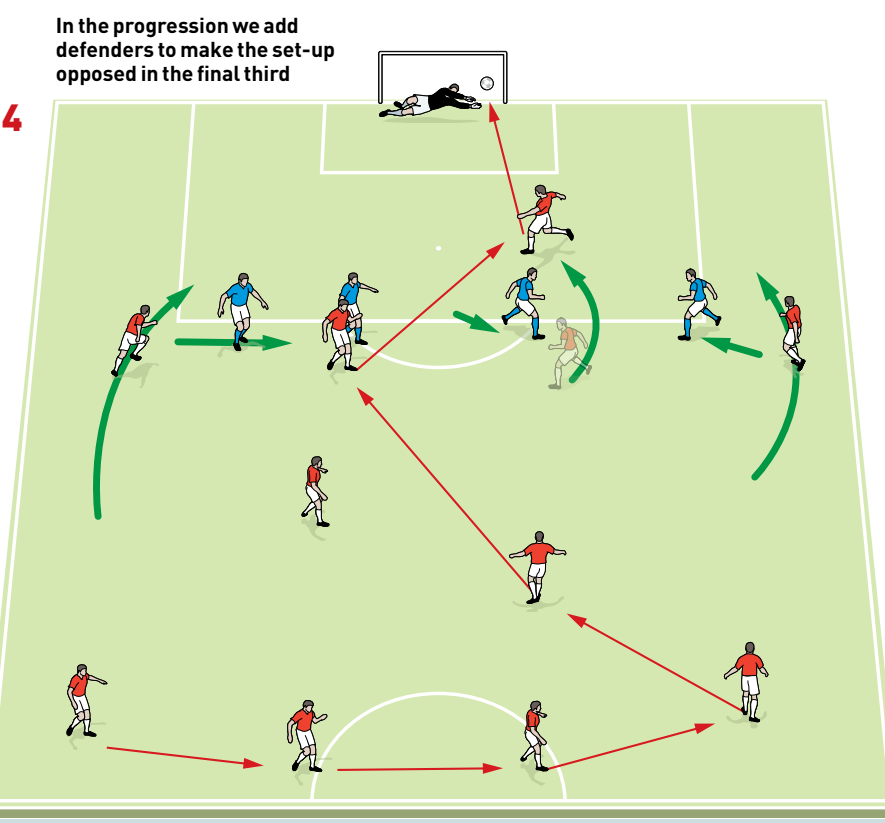
#### How do I progress the practices?

The obvious progression for all of these practices is to add in opponents and run them again (see below).



### Adding defenders

We now add in a back four whose job it is to sit tight until the ball comes near them. They do not need to advance down the pitch as we want to test attackers' ingenuity in the final third, seeing if they use the sharp and soft diagonals, reverse and curved runs used so far.



"Centre-forwards can often over-elaborate in their movements and perhaps aren't as aware as they should be of their striking partner's runs."

## SEAN DYCHE: LINK PLAY BETWEEN FORWARDS

### Small-sided game

This is 2v2 in each attacking third and 4v4 in midfield. One attacker is able to overload from the central zone where midfield players are two-touch; centre-forwards, meanwhile, are 'all in'.

The zone restrictions shown are important in helping to set up and emphasise links between centre-forwards.

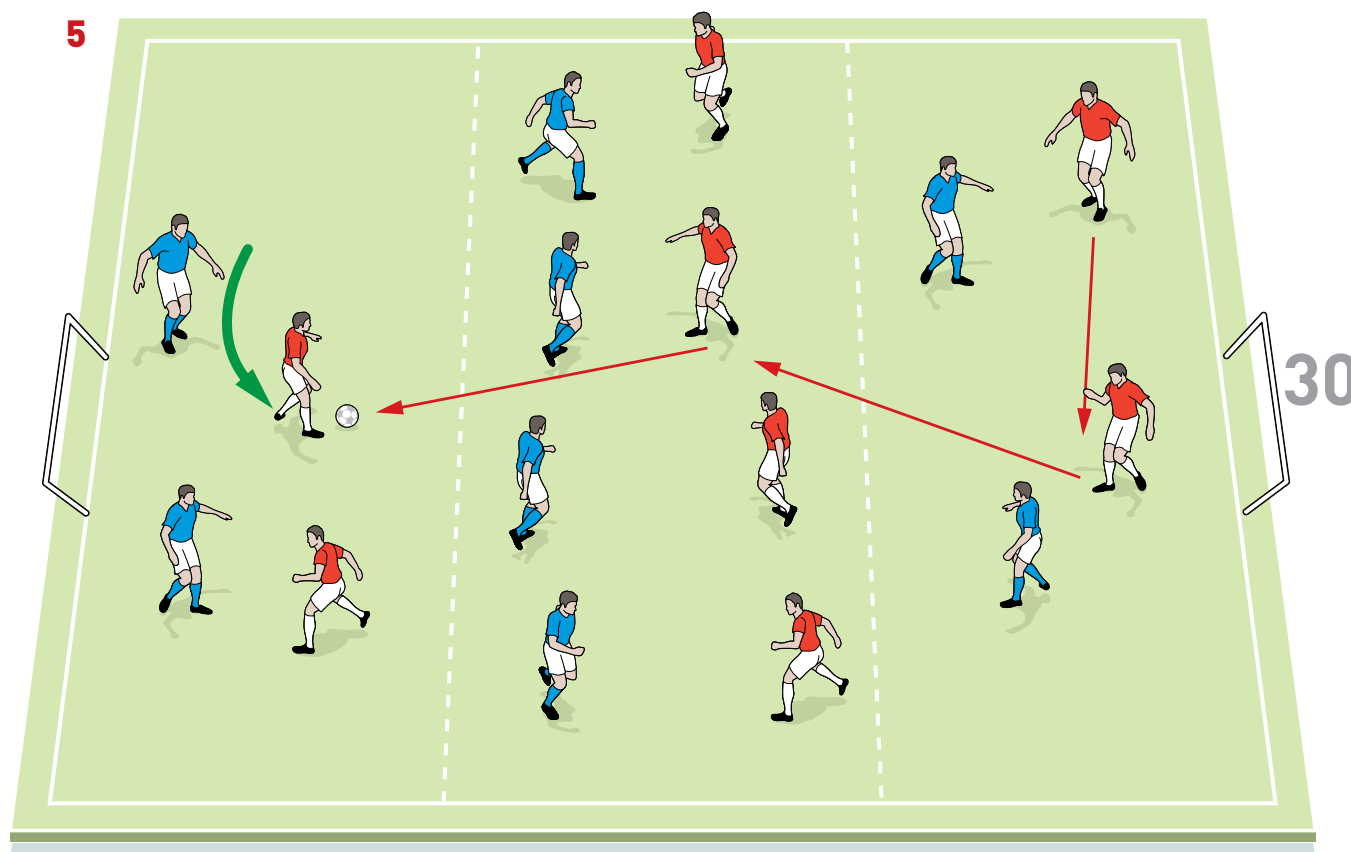
We'll also encourage passive defending at first, leading up

to full defending when we can see attacking players are mastering the principles and doing well. We can also alter the size of the pitch depending on the skill level and success of the players as the practice develops.

### What are the key things to look out for?

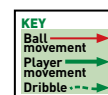
Technically, we want to see a good first touch, with clever one- and two-touch passes. Securing and keeping possession is vital, which means, tactically, players must have an understanding and awareness of pitch geography. So they must be thinking, 'Where am I on the pitch? Where is the ball? Where are the defenders? Where is the space?' ■

"Attacking play is easier to coach with centre-forwards for the obvious reason that a goal comes as a result... we hope!"



The small-sided game is designed to make the feeding of the ball into centre-forwards regular and direct, enabling players to showcase ball skills, movement and link-up play

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## BARNSLEY

### Lee Johnson Back four protocols

#### SET-UP

##### AREA

Up to a half-pitch

##### EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

##### NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 12

##### SESSION TIME

10mins per set-up

#### Overview:

The purpose of this session is to assess and coach the specific roles of the defensive unit, to include defensive protocols, communication and recognising triggers.

It's a session pivotal to how we organise our defensive thinking at Barnsley, and although it is specific to our back four, it is introduced in the context of the overall defensive aims of our team.

We'll run the session at least once a fortnight to ensure players continue to practise and react to the demands of being a solid unit.

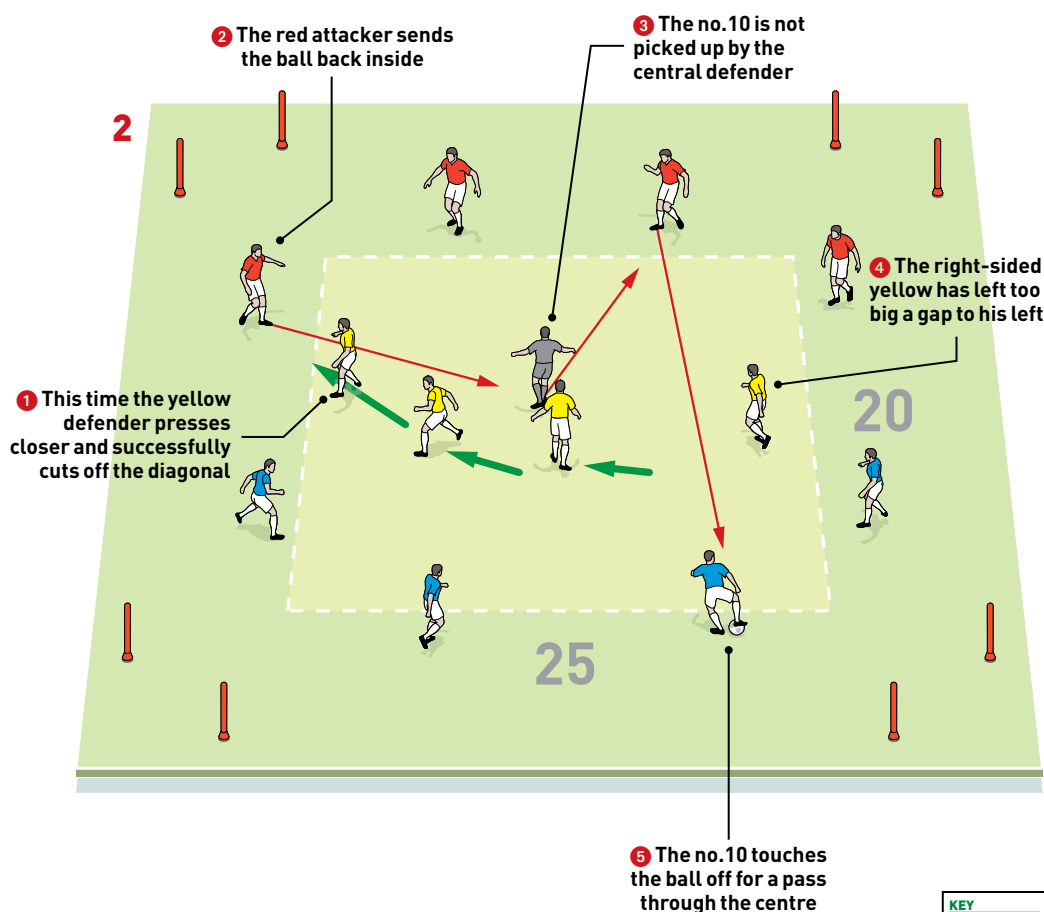
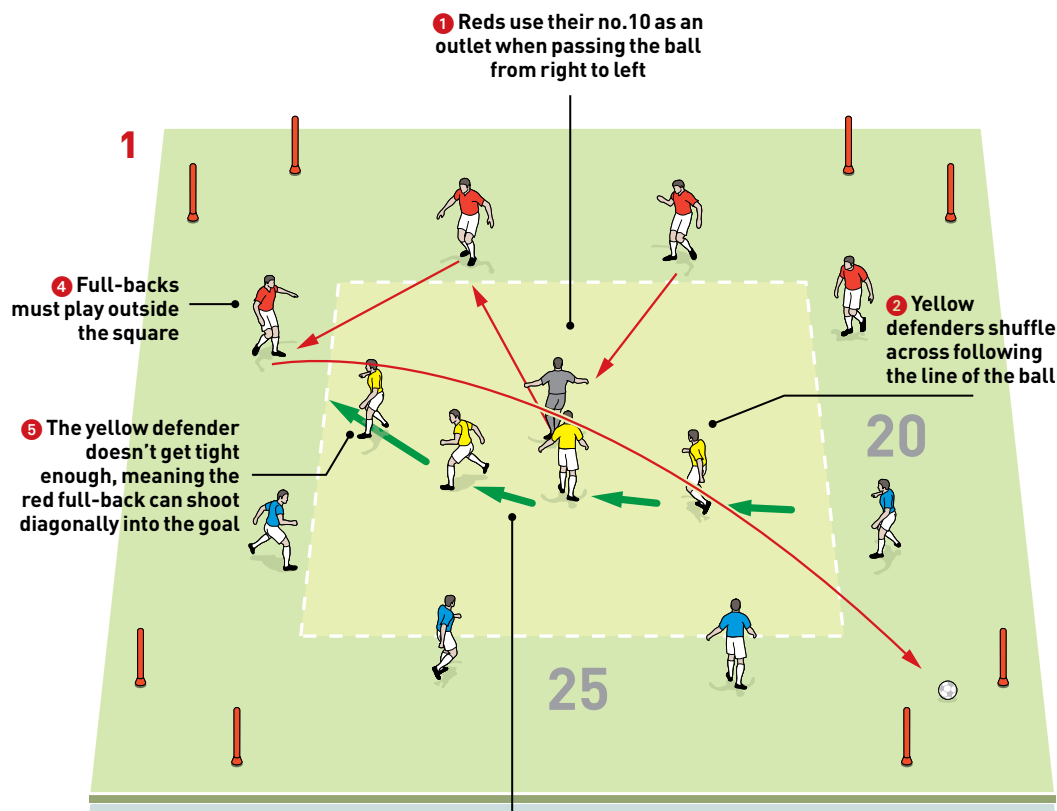
#### What do I get the players to do?

##### 4v4v4

The first exercise is played in a 20x25-yard area, as shown. Attacking (red) full-backs stay outside of the rectangle – they can play into their own team or can take a touch out of their feet, aiming to score by clipping a diagonal pass through the poles (1).

The (attacking) centre-back and centre-forward play differently – they must aim to play the ball between the defence to the other side (2), though everyone plays two-touch.

Our (yellow) defenders must prevent this threat by attempting to stop forward play when the ball goes wide – for that reason, speed and angle of approach are vital. Players need to shuffle as a back four, staying compact and as if connected on a piece of string.



KEY  
Ball movement  
Player movement  
Dribble



## LEE JOHNSON: BACK FOUR PROTOCOLS

Once an attack is concluded the blues at the bottom now attack from the bottom.

## What are the key things to look out for?

Organisation is key – players must communicate at all times. They must recognise and react to triggers to press or squeeze – perhaps when an opponent makes a poor touch or plays a slow square ball. And we need players to identify what the pressure is on the ball – how is the line and where is the other team's striker?

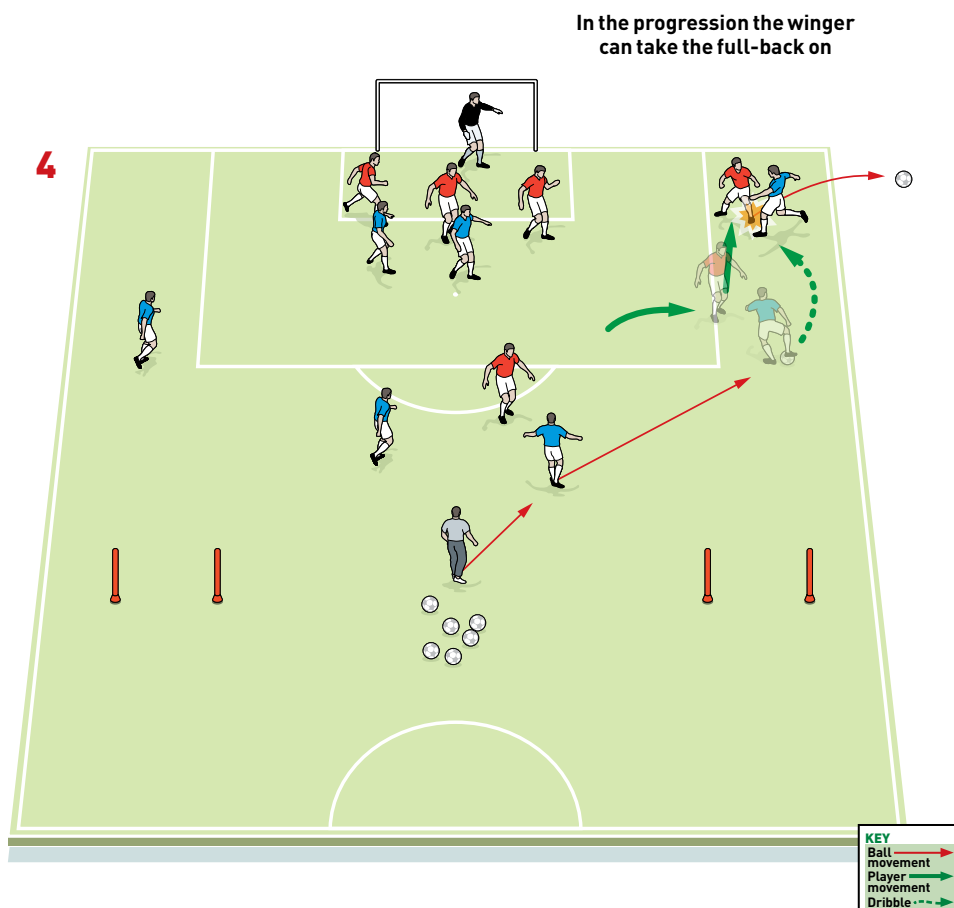
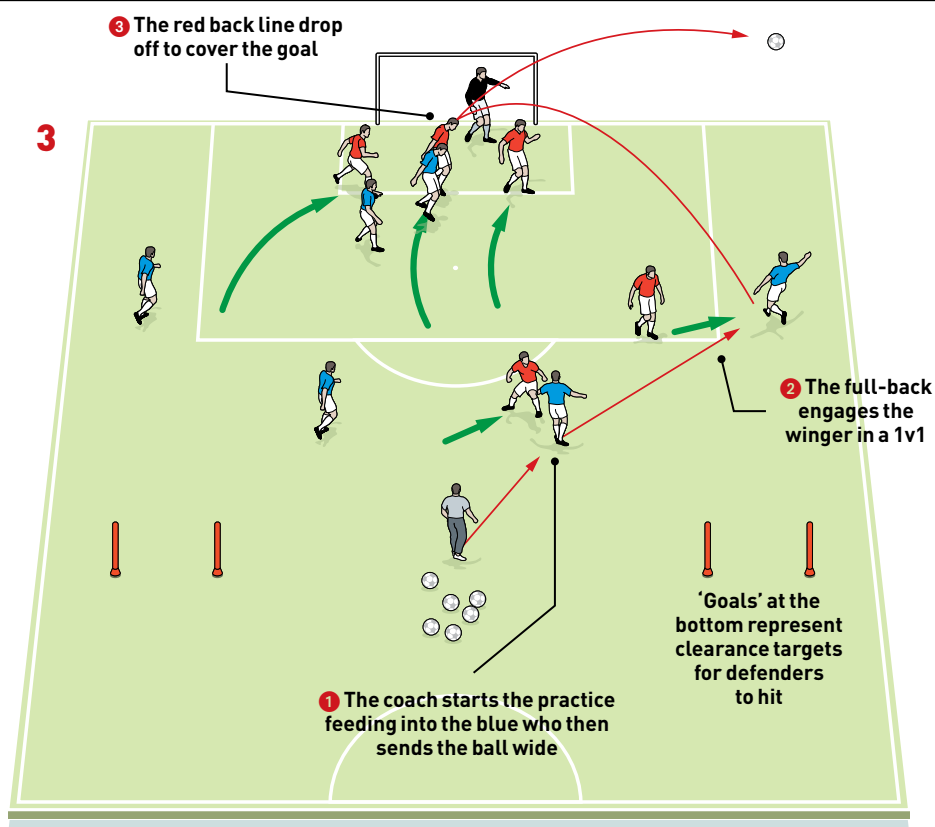
### Third of a pitch

We now set up on a half-pitch with the coach organising things so that the blues get attacks wide early. At first, the winger must cross the ball **(3)**, though we progress to a strongly opposed 1v1 format that allows the winger to attack the full-back **(4)**.

### What are the key things to look out for?

We want to ensure we stop the cross, first and foremost. The chances of us succeeding can be enhanced by checking the speed and angle of approach – defenders must adjust feet and not turn their backs on the ball. They must ensure they don't lead with the wrong leg when attempting to block the cross. Doing this could present the winger with the opportunity to check back with the full-back off balance.

The other three defenders should position themselves inside the posts – the full-back at the back post, one centre-back centrally and the other at the near post. Each should ensure he stays narrow. The centre-midfielder should position himself so as to be able to defend against pull backs or second balls.



## LEE JOHNSON: BACK FOUR PROTOCOLS

Players need open shoulders and must be able to see the ball and the striker, always being prepared to engage if necessary.

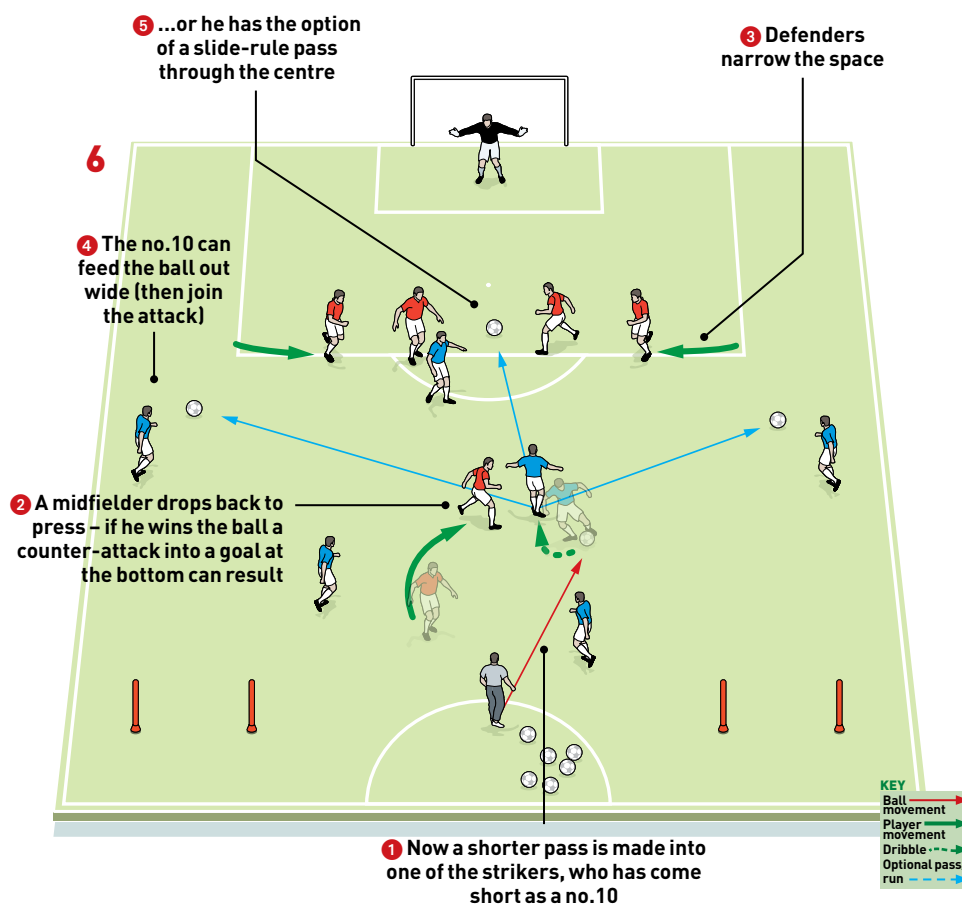
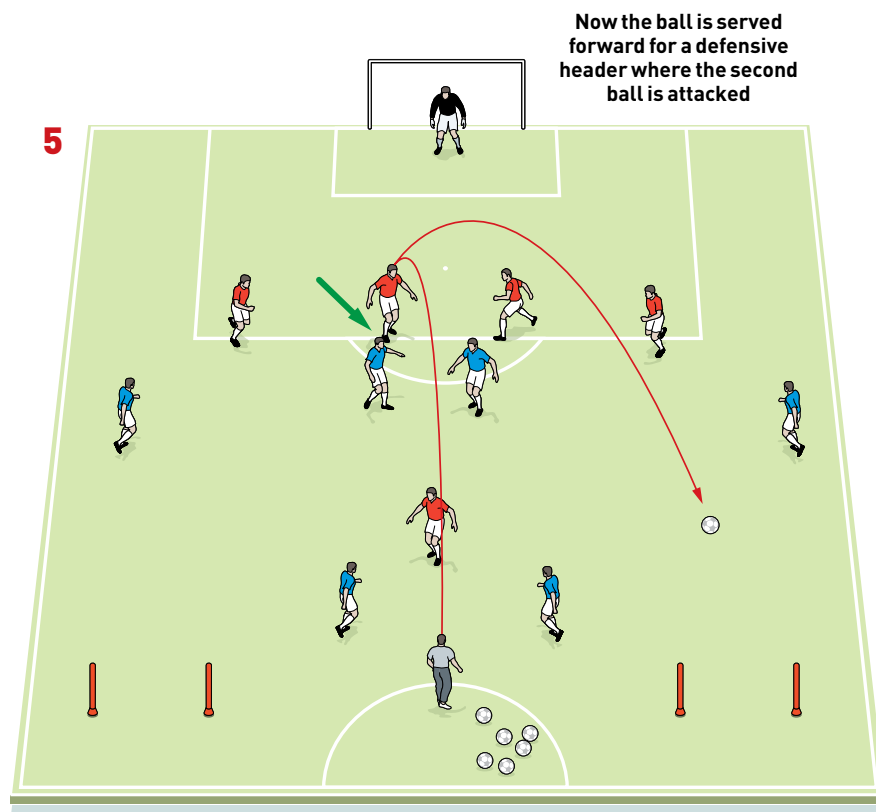
### What are the key things to look out for?

Keepers must be good communicators, letting players in front of them know when to squeeze, when to hold, when to drop and when to engage. Clearances should be made to clear the lines wide, and not back into the danger zone.

### How do I progress the session?

To progress we'll move to almost a half-pitch in creating different scenarios. We'll hit some balls up to the centre-backs to head and play on from there (5). We can also play the ball between the midfield and the defence to the number 10 to create a potential counter-attacking situation (with a pass into a goal on either side at the bottom) should play be turned over (6). Defenders must get narrow, hold their line and avoid popping out of the slot to leave gaps for the no.10 to play into. This means we should usually succeed in forcing the ball wide in order to be able to defend the cross, as practised, but they should be aware too of a ball through the centre to the lone striker. ■

“Players need open shoulders and must be able to see the ball and the striker, and always prepared to engage if necessary.”



## ENGLAND UNDER-19s

### Aidy Boothroyd The eleventh man

#### SET-UP

##### AREA

Use of a full pitch

##### EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

##### NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 16

##### SESSION TIME

70mins

#### Overview:

Here are a collection of uni-directional games that test a number of developmental characteristics in players, from the technical (multiple and varied touches and passes of the ball, position-specific work and handling pressure), to tactical (linking with players in similar positions and game understanding linked to rules and conditions).

The session also embraces physical and psychological properties, and acts as a vital grounding for coaches who

believe in the logic of using simple exercises to stimulate learning and confidence that can be played out in a much 'bigger' match situations.

#### What do I get the players to do?

##### One-directional games

##### In possession – progress and penetrate (20mins)

To set up as shown (1) with three teams working (two include a keeper who will be interchanged between teams) and there is one ball per team.

For the task to begin, one player must exit the area with the ball. This is the trigger for him to turn, then work the ball across the area to see it exit at the opposite side, with yellows, blues and whites each given instructions as to whether to play horizontally or vertically.

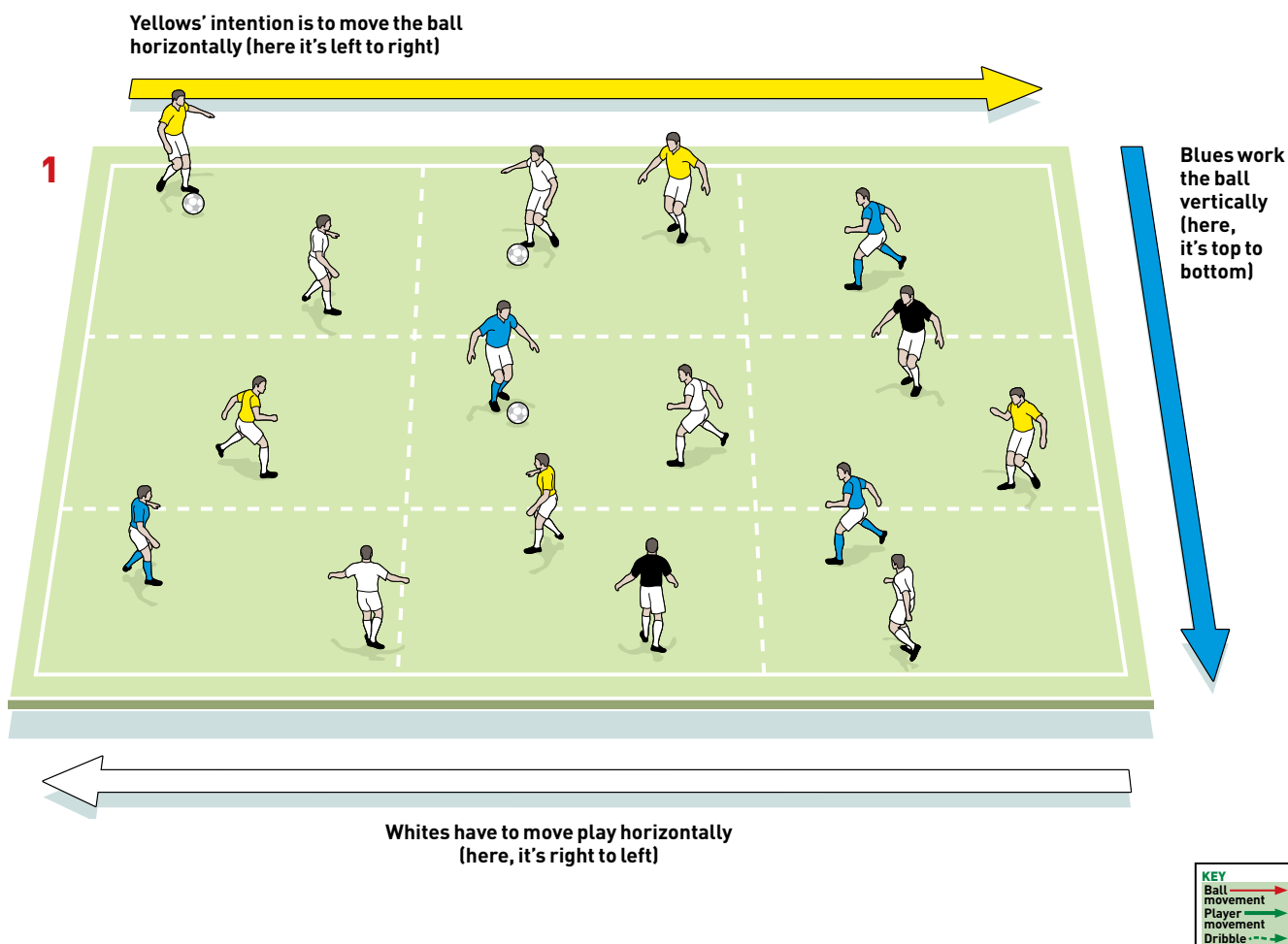
We will set a time limit or instruct a number of passes with the intention of keeping the parameters fluid. This is

achieved by the fact that teams have different player numbers. Two of these teams allow a keeper to be involved, who approaches and passes the ball in different ways to team mates.

#### What are the key things to look out for?

We want to see the keeper's technical work. He can instruct players as to whether he wants the ball fed to his hands or feet, and we can progress this as the session moves forward by varying the supply into the keeper and his instructed delivery back to team mates – he might be told to throw on the full, to miss out an area or to play with a side volley. There should be outfield players present in each zone, and we can offer individual challenges to players as they anticipate receiving the ball. We also want to see transitions with a new ball being sent in (who can react first?), with position-specific passing and offsides being used.

“This session acts as a vital grounding for coaches who believe in using simple exercises to stimulate learning and confidence.”





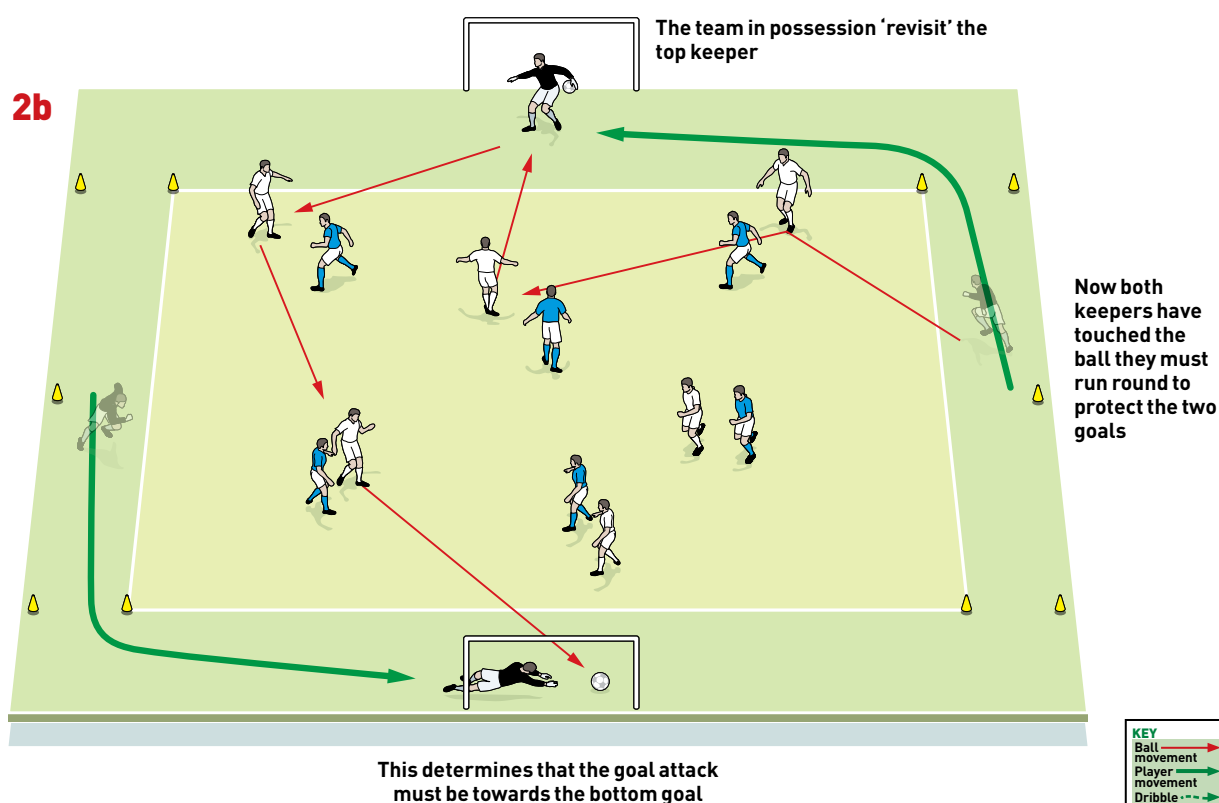
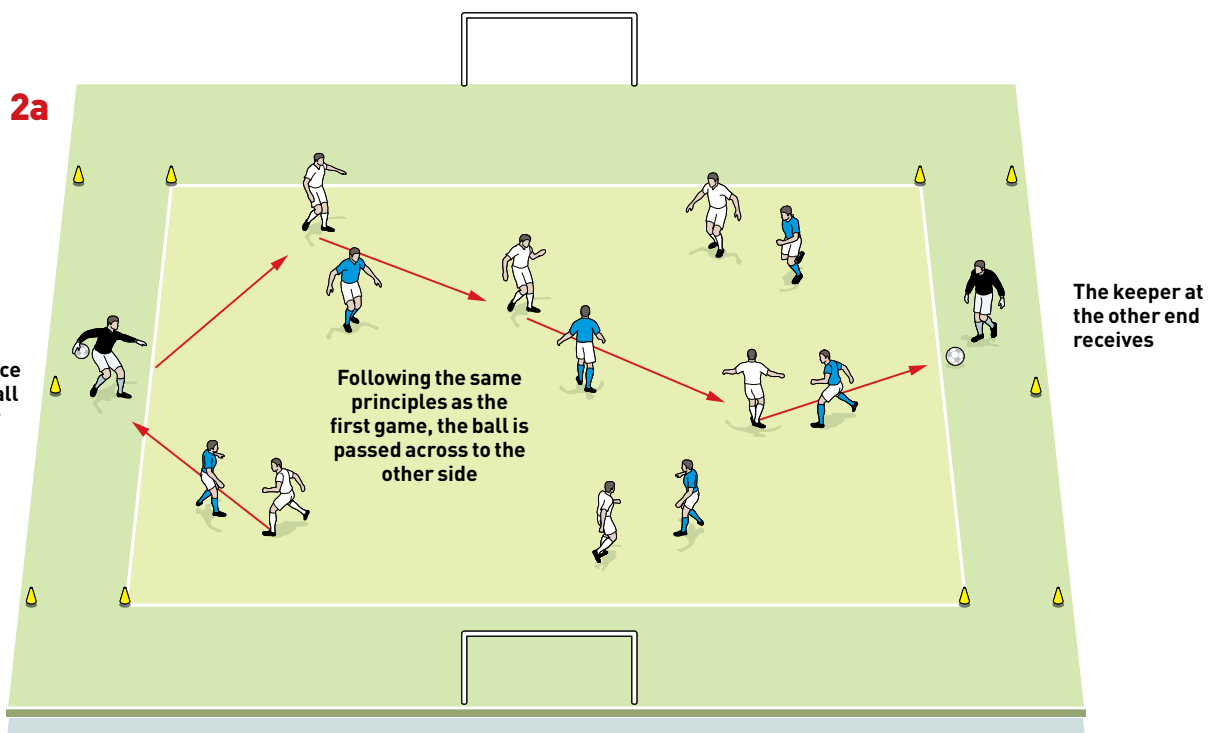
## AIDY BOOTHROYD: THE ELEVENTH MAN

### Game 2 (20mins)

Now we move the first game on a level by setting up as shown (2a). The team in possession must attempt to visit each keeper (in their end zone, using their feet) in order to score a point.

Once this has been done the keepers get into each goal straight away, with outfield players then looking to revisit one keeper (the choice being theirs) and score past the other (2b). If successful, keepers return to the end zone and the process restarts.

Extra challenges include the use of the offside line and an allowance for players to enter the keeper zone.



## Aidy Boothroyd: THE ELEVENTH MAN

### Goal protection

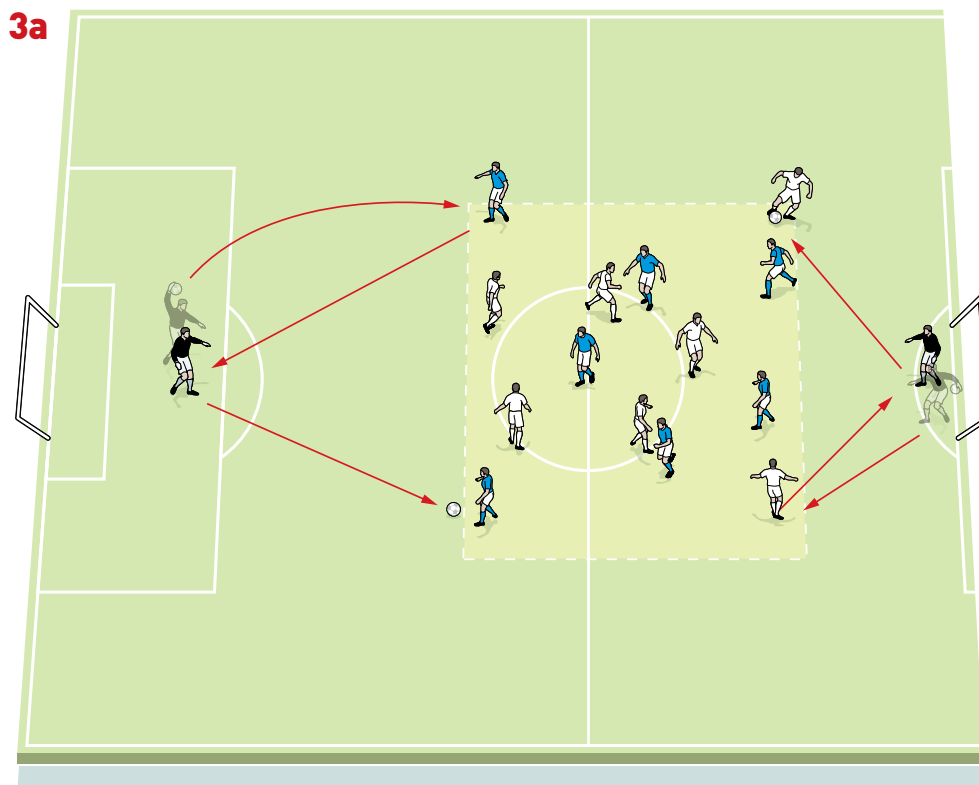
We now set up as shown (3a) with two teams operating in a 2-3-2 formation (replicating two centre-halves, three midfielders and two centre-forwards). There is a keeper in each goal – both begin by simultaneously playing out to a defender, receiving back and playing to the other side.

Each team then works the ball through their three units (unopposed), before breaking the line with a pass for a player to run through on goal and score (3b).

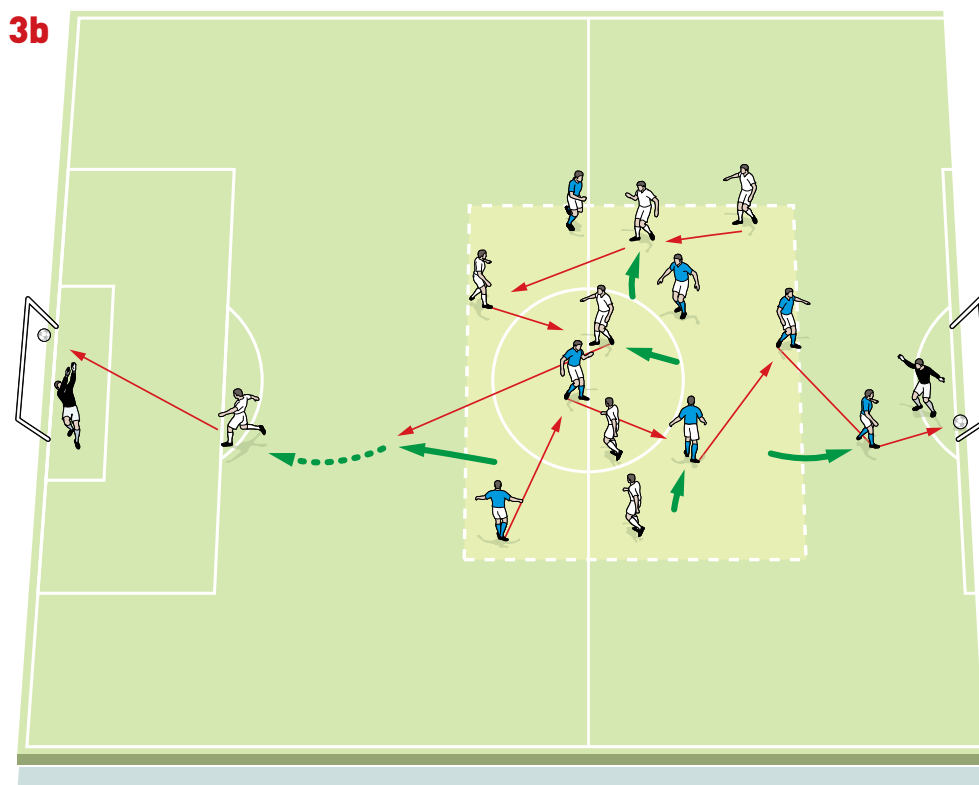
To progress this game players will swap the ends being attacked. We can also allow the two defenders to defend once they have distributed the ball, as well as engaging a recovering defender or supporting attacker. Further progressions include limiting the number of touches and playing fully opposed with just one ball. If needed, we can introduce a points system as well – one point for breaking through (pass or run), two points for a goal in under six seconds, and three points for a goal in under three seconds.

### What are the key things to look out for?

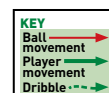
In this practice we're looking at the keeper's detail of pass, support options and ability to defend the spaces in front of him. We want to see defenders' receiving skills and body shape to play forward, good midfield play (positioning, support, rotating, receiving), and similar for strikers (timing of runs, finishing skills). ■



**In Goal protection both keepers start the task by simultaneously feeding a nearby defender and receiving the ball back, before then supplying a different defender**



**Now attacks at each end build with teams incentivised to complete the challenge and score in the goal as quickly and efficiently as possible**



## CARDIFF CITY

# Matthew Bloxham Finding the spare man

### SET-UP

#### AREA

Use of a full pitch

#### EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals, poles

#### NUMBER OF PLAYERS

10v10+1

#### SESSION TIME

Part 1: 15mins (75secs x8 with rests),  
Part 2: 20mins (3x5min games with rests),  
Part 3: 15mins

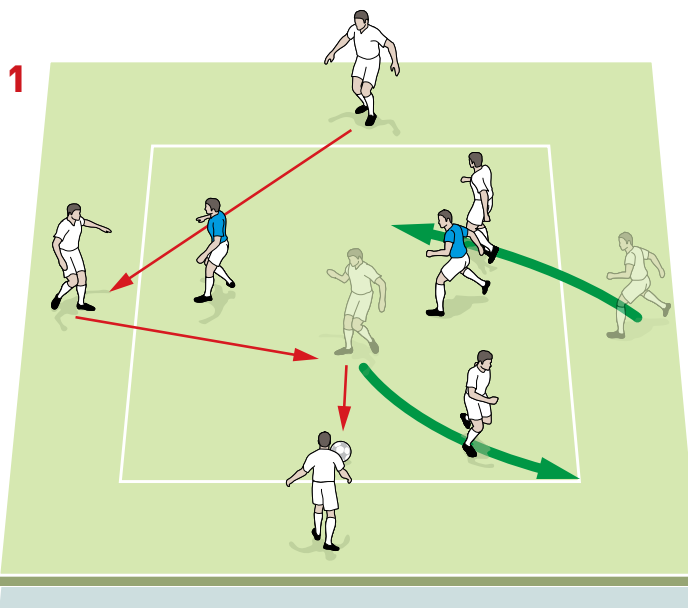
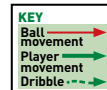
### Overview:

This session focuses on finding the spare man in central areas, which is especially important when feeding the no. 10 playing in between the lines of midfield and defence. The set-up encourages us to focus on the ball going wide, then being played into the no. 10 if central penetration isn't on.

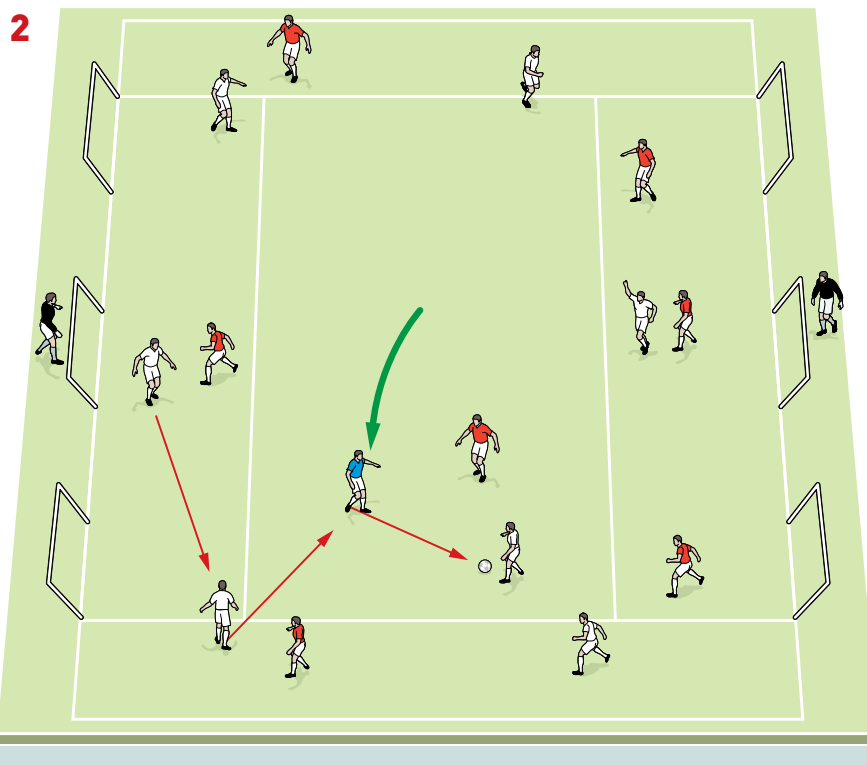
So the session - which can be taught through command or guided discovery depending on age/ability/weather - offers plenty of opportunity for finishing in and around the penalty area. It allows for controlled, patient possession, with the belief that if a team dominates zone 14 (the space in the middle of the pitch just outside the penalty area) it can dominate the game! The session can be run in the lead-up to playing against a disciplined low block - a side that wants to try to stop balls into central areas, and perhaps that has centre-backs who are strong in the air.

### What do I get the players to do?

This first task focuses on the spare man operating behind the opposition and the rotation that can occur. We set up a 20x14-yard grid with a centre-back at the top, two wingers on the outside and a centre-forward at the bottom. The no. 10 operates behind two defensive screeners - he can rotate out for a wide player. The ball must be worked from top to bottom. To progress, touches can be limited and the area size reduced if needs be.



In the first part, the spare man works behind the two defensive screeners as the ball is worked from the top to the bottom



In the second practice teams must play through the spare man (blue) who operates only in the middle zone



## MATTHEW BLOXHAM: FINDING THE SPARE MAN

### Part 2: 8v8+1

We now split a 44x66-yard pitch into three vertical channels with a central box in the middle, as shown. Teams operate within a 1-3-1-3 formation with the 'key player' limited to the central middle box. The aim is to play through him and score in one of the three goals. He must work on playing behind midfielders with movement to receive once the ball has gone into a full-back or wide player. His movement is to get in a position to receive half-turned behind the midfield screen once the ball has gone wide - this will allow the game to get stretched across the three channels so the ball can be bounced back in centrally. Upon receiving on the half-turn wide players and centre-

forwards must occupy the back line, looking to stretch play with clever incisive runs 'in to out', or vice versa, to allow for threaded balls. To progress, we can add offside lines.

#### What are the key things to look out for?

Attackers must be cautious, prepared and ambitious in their forward play. Defensively, when a team hasn't got the ball it must narrow up, so full-backs and wingers come into the edge of the central channel, forcing play wide. The keeper works on organisation and distribution of the team.

### Part 3: 10v10+1

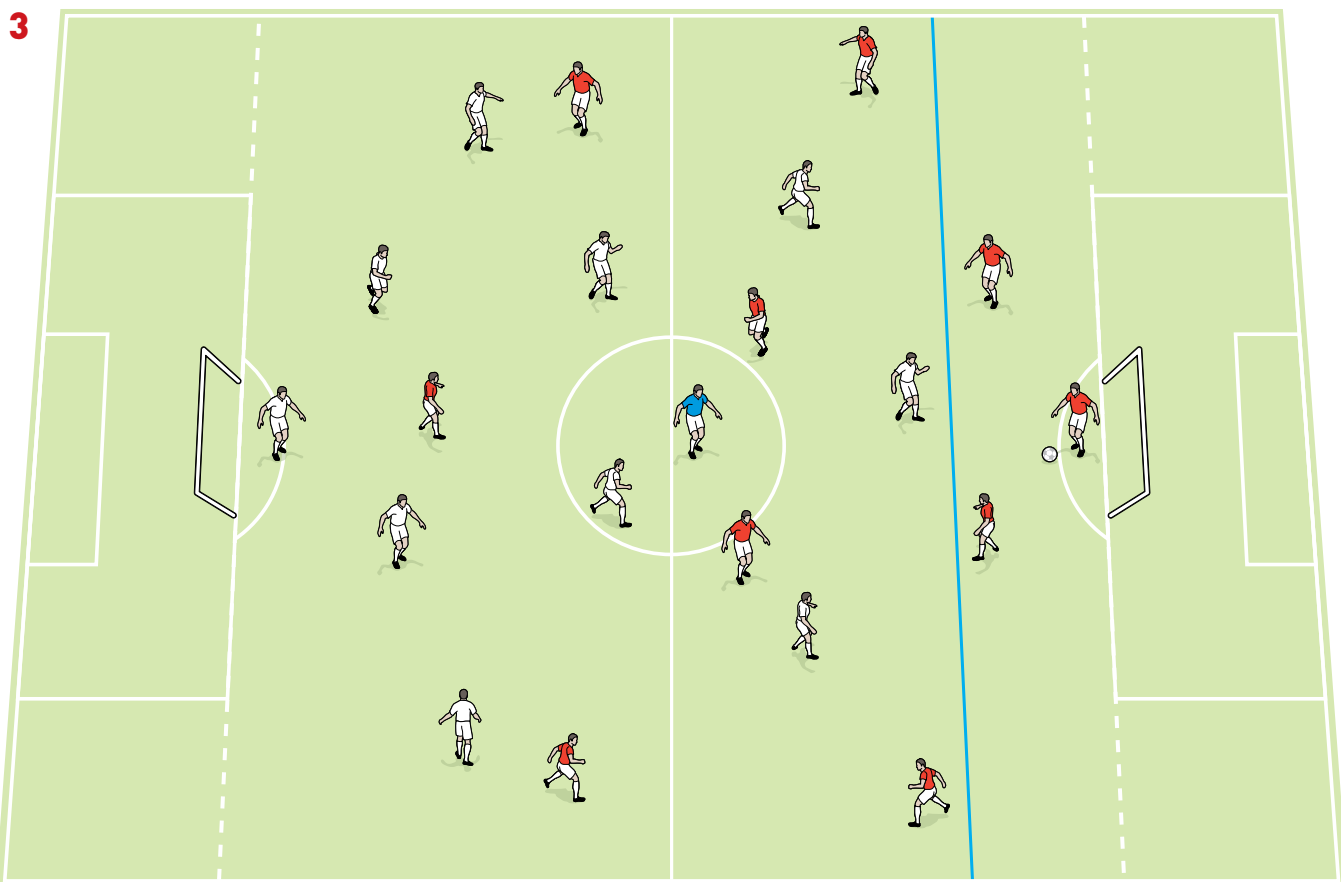
We now play in the space between the penalty boxes, full width, as shown, with both teams 4-2-3. The aim is to focus on the centre-halves having possession of the ball to dictate play, allowing play to go wide, with advancing full-backs looking to pass into the no. 10 or spare man in midfield in order to get behind the opposition.

#### What are the key things to look out for?

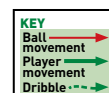
Playing with control and not being rushed is vital. We don't allow men to come in front of the defensive players - they must stay behind the opposition. Similarly, we won't force vertical penetration

because we want to teach players to be controlled enough to go round before going central. A typical mistake in younger players is that they don't control possession and try to rush penetration. This leads to them having to shoot from distance and, ultimately, they lose the ball.

The defensive team needs to ensure it narrows up to cover the middle channel and prevent vertical penetration - give them a time limit to get into this narrow shape if necessary so it doesn't become too easy. ■



In Part 3, whites have to drop to the line and narrow up into a medium block so the red centre-halves can carry the ball out and distribute to full-backs, whereby pressure can then be applied



## LMA AMBASSADOR

### John Carver Combination play (to create a shooting opportunity)

#### SET-UP

##### AREA

Up to a full pitch

##### EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals, mannequins/poles

##### NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Full squad

##### SESSION TIME

70mins

#### Overview:

Originality and ingenuity in front of goal are crucial if we are to maximise possession high up the pitch. So with that in mind here is a selection of shooting drills where the aims and objectives are to develop movement on the edge of the box.

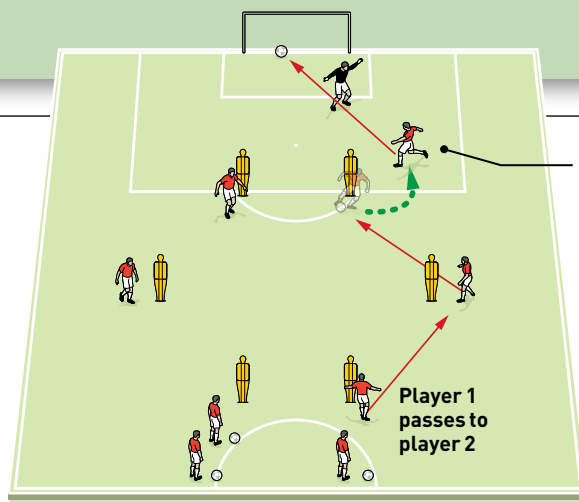
At first we seek to get players moving, showing how to create, trouble defenders and build, with the next phase being to improve the quality and execution of finishing.

To ensure a 360 degree practice, we will tell players to follow passes or rotate positions so each experiences the challenge and works on both sides (left and right).

#### What do I get the players to do?

Setting up as shown in the first practice, we guide players through basic passing and movement, with the emphasis on individual player instruction and an understanding of the task in hand... in other words where to run to and how to act. Each practice increases in intensity, as does the need to move and pass with confidence and accuracy. In order for the player to progress from one practice to the next, he must be proficient at what is being asked of him.

1



Player 3 works down the side of the centre-back and aims to get past him before shooting at goal

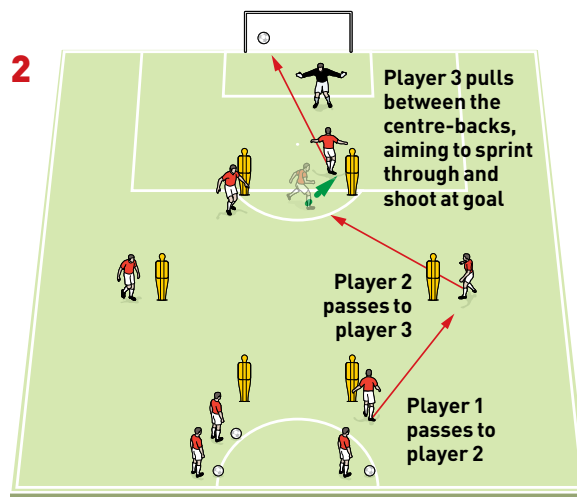
#### Working down the sides of the centre-backs

Players pass and follow as we begin the session by encouraging players to work outside the centre-backs. We work right and left sides.

#### Forwards pulling between the centre-backs

Players again pass and follow as we look to split the centre-backs with direct runs towards goal. Again, as with all practices, we work right and left sides.

2

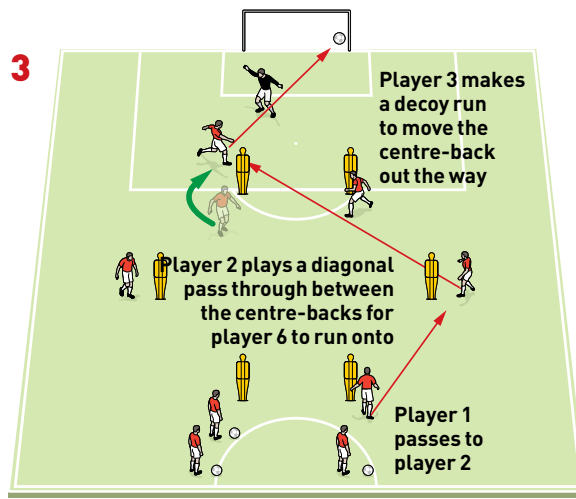


Player 3 pulls between the centre-backs, aiming to sprint through and shoot at goal

Player 2 passes to player 3

Player 1 passes to player 2

3



Player 3 makes a decoy run to move the centre-back out of the way

Player 2 plays a diagonal pass through the centre-backs for player 6 to run onto

Player 1 passes to player 2

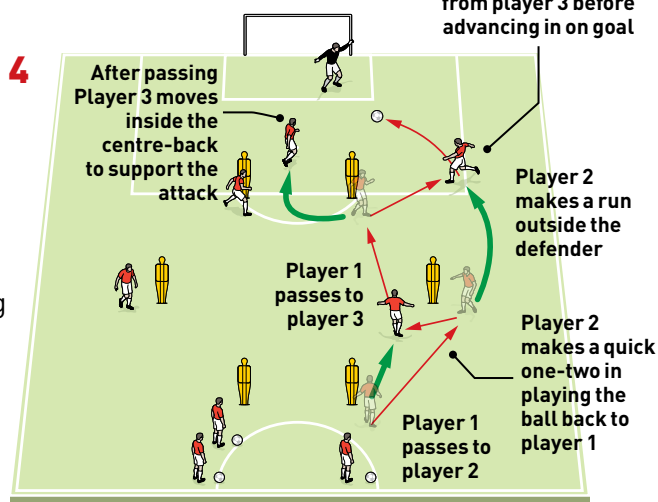
#### Forwards pulling onto the shoulder of the centre-backs

Still, players pass and follow as we look to encourage close contact with the centre-backs and the ability to be physical in creating a yard of space.

#### Developing quick play on the edge of the box (one-twos)

Now fast feet and clever passing in and around the box can confuse defenders.

4



Player 2 overlaps and receives the pass from player 3 before advancing in on goal

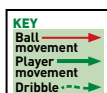
After passing Player 3 moves inside the centre-back to support the attack

Player 2 makes a run outside the defender

Player 2 makes a quick one-two in playing the ball back to player 1

Player 1 passes to player 3

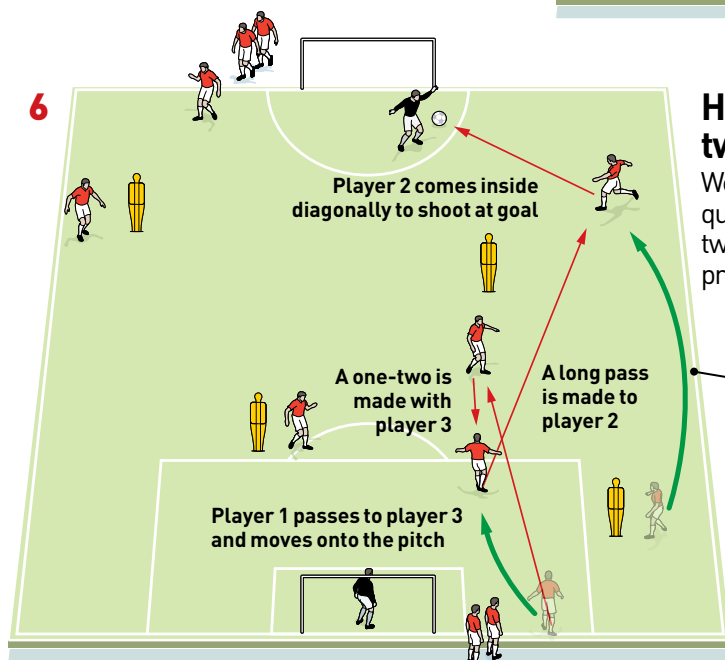
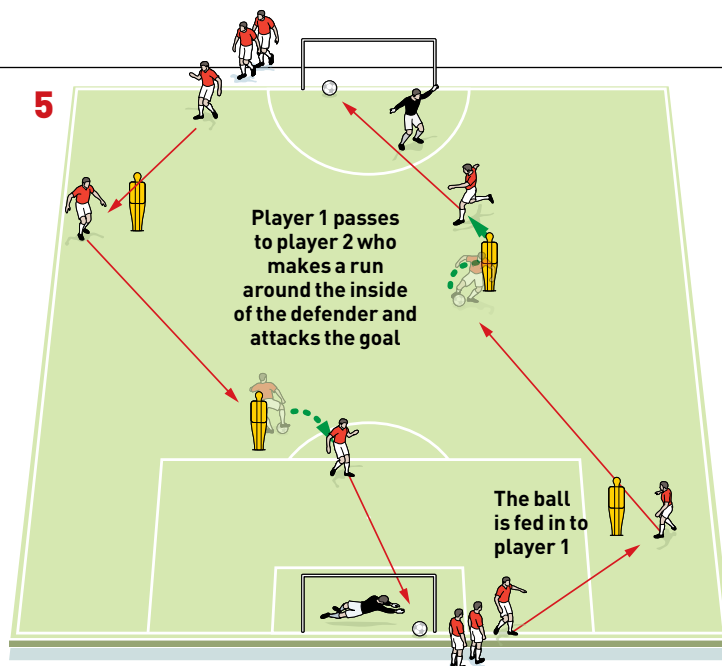
Player 1 passes to player 2



## JOHN CARVER: COMBINATION PLAY

### Half-pitch basics

We now put the principles we have practised into effect on a half-pitch with two moves coming in opposite directions. The shooting practice here comes in waves.



### Half-pitch one-tuos

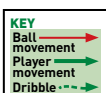
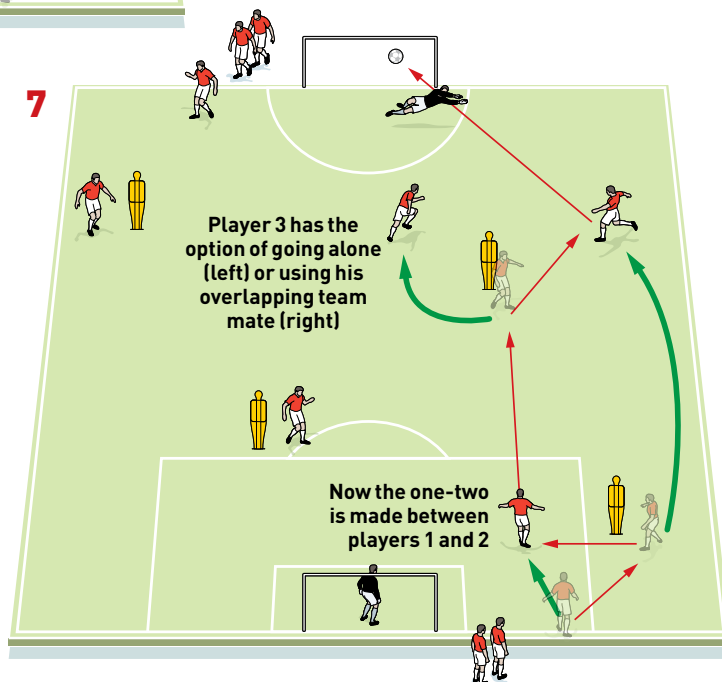
We now replicate the quick passing and one-tuos from the original practices.

Player 2 makes a run around the outside of the defender

“As the session progresses, near the end, towards opposed, match-realistic practice, we also want to instil good habits – a very simple one, for example, being for players to anticipate rebounds.”

### Half-pitch variation

Variation and unpredictability are key so that opponents cannot second guess patterns of play, but here we’re asking players to move the ball forward using one touch only.





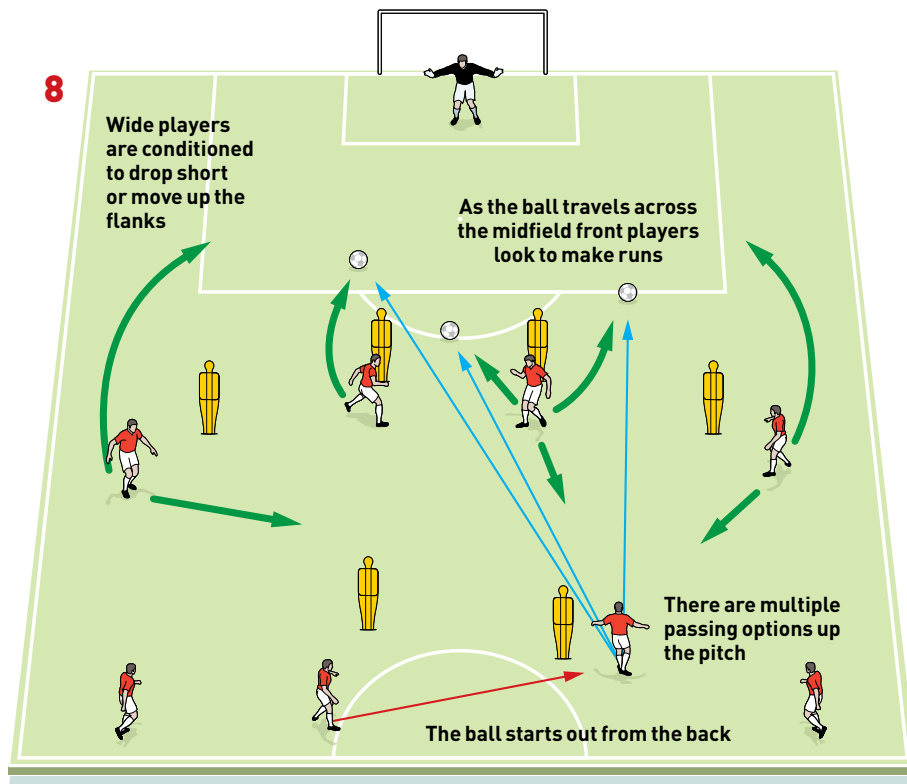
## JOHN CARVER: COMBINATION PLAY

### What are the key things to look out for?

In each practice we're looking for the staple elements of good attacking, namely smart movement, timing of runs, quality of finish, one- and two-touch play, clever passing and the ability to think quickly. As the session progresses towards opposed, match-realistic practice, we also want to instil good habits – a very simple one, for example, being for players to anticipate rebounds. ■

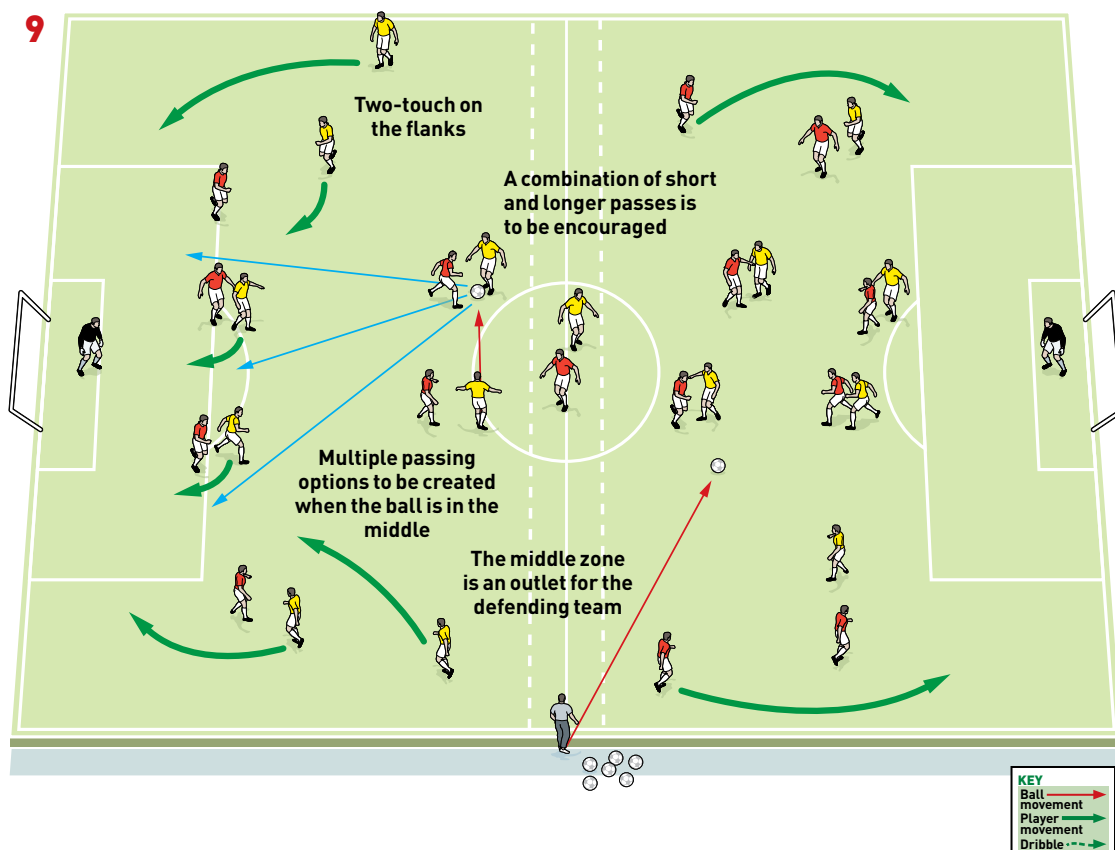
### Phase of play

Giving the players multiple passing options means they now have to make big (and quick) decisions. We can stimulate this by setting up a 6v8, as shown below.



### Attacking play in both directions **9**

In this 7v9 we work the ball to the left. When the move breaks down the coach serves a new ball to the right.



**EXTRA-TIME PROFILE**

Reproduced with kind permission  
of **The Manager** magazine.

# GARRY MONK: LIKE A SWAN TO WATER

Having played for Swansea City for a decade, Garry Monk knew the club and its players inside out when he took the manager's job. But few could have anticipated how comfortable he would be at the helm or how successfully he would handle his first full season in charge.

**W**hile Monk's first taste of management came only in February 2014, like many player-turned-managers, the idea of taking the helm had been seeded much earlier.

"I started thinking seriously about preparing to coach or manage when I suffered a bad knee injury at 26," he says. He was fortunate to make a full recovery and went on to play for Swansea for almost 10 years, but it was also a period of preparation. "I took my coaching qualifications, watched and analysed games and closely observed my managers at the club to understand how and why they did things," says Monk. These managers included Paolo Sousa, Roberto Martinez, Brendan Rodgers and Michael Laudrup, who he eventually replaced in 2014 when he was appointed Swansea's interim manager.

Some in Monk's shoes – still fit and young – might have considered a longer spell as player-manager, but his mindset was now very much in the management camp. "It wouldn't have worked for me to be in there among the players training and playing, because you then can't observe everything with the clarity you need as a manager," he says.

However carefully an aspiring manager has prepared, when opportunity finally knocks it can be a shock to the system, but the fact that Monk was already happily ensconced at Swansea and knew the dynamics of the club inside out meant there were fewer surprises.

"Under those kinds of circumstances, there will always be a sense of being thrown in at the deep end, but I felt comfortable in the role straight away and wasn't overwhelmed by the sudden change," says Monk. "I knew the players and the staff well and understood the club culture and the immediate concerns that we'd need to address," he adds.

"For example, we'd been on a poor run of form and confidence was pretty low, so as well as working on the coaching side, I knew we'd need to prioritise building

These are very modern managers who have blazed the trail and have opened doors for each other and the club. Chairman Huw Jenkins and the club have had real vision and their approach has paid dividends. It's a great model that has given young coaches an incredible opportunity to make an impact on the game.

the players' confidence back up. It was essential that I could persuade them to believe in themselves so that we could finish the remainder of the season strongly."

Monk certainly didn't have the luxury of being able to ease into the role of manager; Swansea were experiencing a rare 'wobble' in results, which had

seen them drop to two points above the Barclays Premier League relegation zone. What's more, his first match was against arch rivals Cardiff, and he had under a week to prepare. Swansea came away with a 3-0 win. "After that I was able to turn my attention to the remaining months of the season and plan for the weeks ahead," he says. "I made it very



## EXTRA-TIME PROFILE GARRY Y MONK

### GARRY MONK in numbers:

#### As a player...

1995–1996	Torquay United	5 (0 goals)
1996–2004	Southampton	11 (0)
1998	Torquay United (loan)	6 (0)
1999	Stockport County (loan)	2(0)
2001	Oxford United (loan)	5 (0)
2002–2003	Sheffield Wednesday (loan)	15 (0)
2003–2004	Barnsley (loan)	14 (0)
2004	Barnsley	3 (0)
2004–2014	Swansea City	226 (3)

#### As a manager...

Swansea City P69 W27 D15 L27

clear to the players what we were aiming for and what we would do each week towards that and I think having that common plan and mindset helped us regain and build on our stability."

Despite the uphill challenge and his leadership inexperience, Monk remained focused and drew on his connection with the club and its players to pull them out of the doldrums. "I spoke to them from the heart about the club's heritage and past achievements, about how and why it had grown," he says. "I also made sure the intensity of the training was high, so that the players didn't have time to think or dwell on any lack of confidence. I wanted them to understand that we were now in control of the club's future."

#### Stand back

While Monk's close relationship with the club and its players helped him hit the ground running in terms of plans and strategy, it could easily have made his transition from one of the lads to manager a tough one. However, he made sure the change-over was a gradual one; he was clear about who was in charge, while focusing more on unifying the group and pulling together to avoid relegation than imposing his new found seniority on the group.

He even took advice on what to wear on the touchline during his first matches in charge. "I think it's important to consider visual as well as verbal communication when it comes to people's perception of you," he says. "I chose to wear a tracksuit, as I didn't think it would have been right at that point to stand there in a suit. It would have been detrimental for me to have gone in there acting like a manager straight away, because I had been a player just like them days before."

When Monk was appointed Swansea's permanent manager in May 2014, however, he knew his relationship with the players would change significantly. Thankfully, having already earned their respect and support, the transition was a smooth one.

#### Settling in

Now, with a full season behind him, Monk has a greater understanding of the scale and breadth of the job and has established his own unique style. At the core of his approach, he says, are honesty and

consistency.

"I am hard but fair with the players and I demand high standards every single day," he says. "It is important as a manager to ensure the players are professional in everything they do, from how they approach their training each day to how they execute your instructions on match day."

Great man-management, he also realises, is central to the role, which means getting to know the players as individuals, building a rapport with them and understanding their emotions as well as their capabilities on the pitch. "You need to know what makes each individual tick and then bring them together to function as a focused team," says Monk. "I learned a lot from Brendan Rodgers, in particular, in that area. He is great at developing footballers, but also takes a genuine interest in the players' lives off the pitch."

The most satisfying parts of the job for Monk since he took over as manager last year have been putting his plans and methods into action, communicating them to the players without overloading them and then seeing the foundations that he has laid take effect. He also has a firm long-term strategy in place and a keen understanding of the club's culture, ethos and overall direction.

"The clarity of vision and the communication between the board and manager undoubtedly play a key role in what the club is able to achieve," he says. "I've been with Swansea since the journey started under various managers, so I have a really deep understanding of what the Swansea way is. Possession and attacking football will always be our priority; it's the best way to play football and the most satisfying for the players."

The only modification that Monk has made to the team's playing style is an

ability to adapt to back-up plans if for any reason the usual possession-based approach is not working. "We've played some great possession football this season and when they've needed to, the players have been able to adapt comfortably."

With the appointment of Monk, Swansea City has continued its recruitment strategy of giving opportunities to young, sometimes inexperienced, but often forward-thinking managers, among them Roberto Martinez, Paolo Sousa, Brendan Rodgers and Michael Laudrup.

"These are very modern managers who have blazed the trail and have opened doors for each other and the club," says Monk. "Chairman Huw Jenkins and the club have had real vision and their approach has paid dividends. It's a great model that has given young coaches an incredible opportunity to make an impact on the game."

Monk says he has massive respect for the more senior managers he shares the sidelines with, but he isn't daunted by the disparity in experience. "I thoroughly enjoy speaking with them after games, because I respect their achievements and knowledge, but you can't allow yourself to be overwhelmed. When you come up against another manager, it's like a game of chess. You both want to win and that means a tactical battle on and off the pitch, figuring out how the opposition might play and how you will counter it. I tend to get so immersed in this that it doesn't really matter which manager I am up against; I just want to win."

And win he has. In his first full season in charge, Monk led Swansea to an eighth-place finish, doing the double over both Manchester United and Arsenal along the way and achieving a record points tally for the club. He was also shortlisted for the LMA Manager of the Year Award, something he says was unexpected and a great honour.

"When you start out as a manager, you have to believe in what you are doing and stay focused on that, but the fact that other managers have voted for you – people who do the same job and understand how difficult it can be – gives you great confidence going forward. Getting the nod from your peers in this way gives you affirmation that what you're doing is right and that you're on the right path."



BOOKED: **THIS MONTH'S CHOICE**

By Richard Aldhous

# Embracing failure?

## BLACK BOX THINKING

By Matthew Syed

Published by John Murray Books  
RRP £20.00

**W**hen Matthew Syed published *Bounce* in 2011, there was a feeling that a lid had been lifted on some of the true psychological mechanics behind talent and power. It was a book of research, gleaned through first-hand experiences over the course of many decades – not least 10 years spent as the number one table tennis player in Britain – that weaved together to create one of the most stimulating and thought-provoking sports coaching books ever to hit the shelves.

So it is with expectation and intent speculation that the release of *Black Box Thinking* comes. And this is a book that, similarly, doesn't disappoint. Where *Bounce* was centred on the mentality behind success, this new book focuses more on the reaction to failure, and in listing the achievements of those in sport, business and entertainment, there is a rich multitude of layers upon which the research is based and discussed.

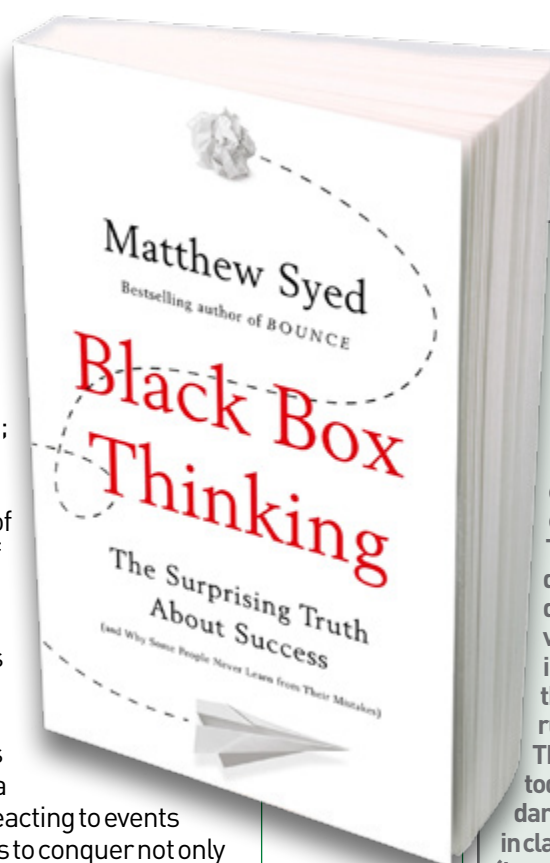
It may seem perverse to confront the negative side of competitive spirit, but that disappointment, and the rallying cry to steer clear of negative events, sits at the very heart of so many individual sporting successes. And the delivery of this matter is done in such an elegant and well-mannered way that Syed

offers the impression that initial failure should almost be encouraged; that it represents something of a passage of rites.

He uses case studies and his own personal experiences to decorate a method of reacting to events in a way so as to conquer not only the opposition but one's own personal demons.

As ever, it is about the small margins. That's why Syed's book doesn't propose a radical new model, a revolutionary set of ideals or a vision of acquiring success that no-one has previously imagined. This is about subtle references to how we go about our aims, yet all from a standpoint of initial failure, and that's what makes this so refreshing.

To sum up, the book represents a rallying cry to the future and to the positivity of what may come, whatever the setbacks and however tough the experience of the journey has been. In many ways that makes this many times the better of other sports psychology books, *Bounce* included.



### EXCERPT:

The first and most important issue is to create a revolution in the way we think about failure. For centuries, errors of all kinds have been considered embarrassing, morally egregious, almost dirty. The French Larousse dictionary historically defined error as 'a vagabondage of the imagination, of the mind that is not subject to any rule'.

This conception still lingers today. It is why children don't dare to put their hands up in class to answer questions (how embarrassing to risk getting an answer wrong!), why doctors reframe mistakes, why politicians resist running rigorous tests on their policies, and why blame and scapegoating are so endemic. As business leaders, teachers, coaches, professionals and parents, we have to transform this notion of failure. We have to conceptualise it not as dirty and embarrassing, but as bracing and educative. This is the notion we need to instill in our children: that failure is a part of life and learning, and that the desire to avoid it leads to stagnation.

We should praise each other for trying, for experimenting, for demonstrating resilience and resolve, for daring to learn through our own critical investigations, and for having the intellectual courage to see evidence for what it is rather than what we want it to be."



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