

ELITE SOCCER

COACHING PRACTICES FROM THE WORLD'S
LEADING MANAGERS AND COACHES

Exclusive
Training practices from top
professional managers

LMA AMBASSADOR

SIR ALEX FERGUSON

MY PHILOSOPHY



SCUNTHORPE UNITED

**BRIAN
LAWS**
Shooting
showcase



PLYMOUTH ARGYLE

**JOHN
SHERIDAN**
Short and sharp
passing



PORTSMOUTH

**GUY
WHITTINGHAM**
Passing forward
with a purpose



WEST HAM UNITED

**SIMON
COPLY**
Utilising space
and overloads



ABERDEEN

**TONY
DOCHERTY**
Counter-
attacking

**EXTRA-TIME
INTERVIEW:**

**WITH MANCHESTER UNITED MANAGER
DAVID MOYES**



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ISSUE 39/OCTOBER 2013: FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Engaging soccer sessions from the game's best coaches

Dear Coach,

Welcome to the October issue of Elite Soccer.

Across 26 years, Sir Alex Ferguson's presence at Old Trafford defined an era, the most successful in Manchester United's long history. And although he stepped away from day-to-day duties in May, the Scot holds Director and Club Ambassador roles that will retain his influence going forward.

It's therefore a privilege to welcome him back into Elite Soccer magazine. Indeed, in this very special issue, 'Fergie' reveals for us the very football philosophy that formed the basis of the club's success. It's a blueprint that's designed around brilliant simplicity, yet in its repetition and perfection, has fuelled the relentless momentum of over two decades of honours at Manchester United. And we'd love for your team to use the session in providing the bedrock for your own success.

To complement Sir Alex's contribution, we've a fantastic cross-section of other sessions, with Scunthorpe United manager Brian Laws next in line, producing for us a practice that looks at a succession of attacking avenues and angles.

Plymouth Argyle manager John Sheridan presents a bespoke training practice that teaches players how best to construct short and sharp passing moves, while Portsmouth boss Guy Whittingham explains how sides can move forward from the back with positivity and purpose.

West Ham United coach Simon Copley outlines how players can utilise space and overloads, while Aberdeen's Tony Docherty takes our Coaching Consultation slot in answering a reader question on counter-attacking.

As always, we hope you find these quality sessions interesting and stimulating, and we welcome your feedback on any aspect of the magazine.

See you next month,

Howard Wilkinson

Howard Wilkinson, LMA Chairman

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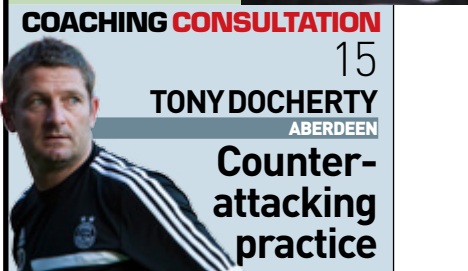
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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

MANAGER OF THE MONTH AWARDS



The new season is now well underway, and in the Barclays Premier League, Liverpool manager **Brendan Rodgers** was given the August Manager of the Month award after leading his side to their best start to a league campaign in over two decades. Liverpool defeated Stoke City and Aston Villa in the only two league games of the month, as well as firing four goals past Notts County in the League Cup. Their upward momentum continued at the start of September with a 1-0 success over champions Manchester United. And with striker Daniel Sturridge picking up the Player of the Month award for August, hopes are high at Anfield.

LIVERPOOL: P2 W2 D0 L0 (LEAGUE ONLY)



In the Sky Bet Championship, Blackpool boss **Paul Ince** collected the divisional award. The 45-year-old former Macclesfield Town, Blackburn Rovers, MK Dons and Notts County boss continued his excellent work from the tail-end of last season by guiding his side to three wins out of four in August. The club's strong start was significant for a defensive resilience which saw only two goals conceded in seven-and-a-half hours of league football, with the club earning wins against Doncaster Rovers and Barnsley, plus title tips Reading and Watford. Ince also managed to hold on to highly-rated son Thomas Ince during the August transfer window.

BLACKPOOL: P5 W4 D1 L0



In Sky Bet League One, **Russell Slade** continues to work miracles at Leyton Orient, and he picked up the monthly award for August. On reportedly one of the division's smallest budgets, the 52-year-old guided the east London club to the top of the table, kicking off the campaign with a stunning 5-1 win at Carlisle United. Further wins against Shrewsbury Town, Stevenage, Crewe Alexandra and Colchester United ensured Orient finished the month with a 100% league record. And into September, they extended that run further, with victories over Port Vale, Notts County and Brentford making it a stunning eight wins out of eight – an impressive start for a side who began the season 40/1 outsiders for the title.

LEYTON ORIENT: P5 W5 D0 L0



And finally to Sky Bet League Two, where the Manager of the Month award went to **Paul Cook**. His Chesterfield side began the season with a flurry of points and goals, winning four of their opening five games, as they look for a return to League One. The Spireites saw off Bury, Cheltenham Town, Southend United and Portsmouth, and picked up a useful point away at Rochdale, to sit top of the table. The Derbyshire side also achieved the unusual feat of scoring two goals in each of their first five league games.

CHESTERFIELD TOWN: P5 W4 D1 L0

CAREER PATH

...with Mark Cooper, manager of Sky Bet League One side Swindon Town

Q. You come from a great footballing legacy [Mark's father is former Leeds United legend Terry Cooper]. Did that help you on your way?

A. I think having someone like that can take you so far – you've got someone who has been there and done it, and experienced what it's like to play the game. But football changes so quickly; what was relevant even a decade ago is maybe not relevant now, so really I've

always found it about forging your own path and overcoming those obstacles with your own ideas and insight. Naturally we all need to use the skills and expertise of others, but as a player, coach or manager, you have to stand up and be counted for who you are.

Q. You've spent a number of years managing and coaching in the non-league game. What did that teach you?

A. I think the lessons are the same no matter what level you manage or coach at. You need to build a rapport with players and let them understand you are their friend as well as their gaffer, but there is a line to be drawn at every club. I've always demanded 100% effort from my players, and in return, they expect that from me.

Q. You must be enjoying the challenge at Swindon?

Yes, it's fantastic. As a club we've had to tighten our belt a bit, but I'm used to working under these sorts of conditions, and I enjoy the challenge of getting every last bit out of players. Good coaching is about asking players to go the extra yard for you, and I think we're really achieving that here at the moment with this crop of players.



LMA AMBASSADOR

Sir Alex Ferguson My philosophy

Overview:

My key football philosophy has always been to make sure my teams keep hold of the ball. The use of possession in creating space and reducing opposition threat is recreated in every match situation, so this knowledge is invaluable in the modern game.

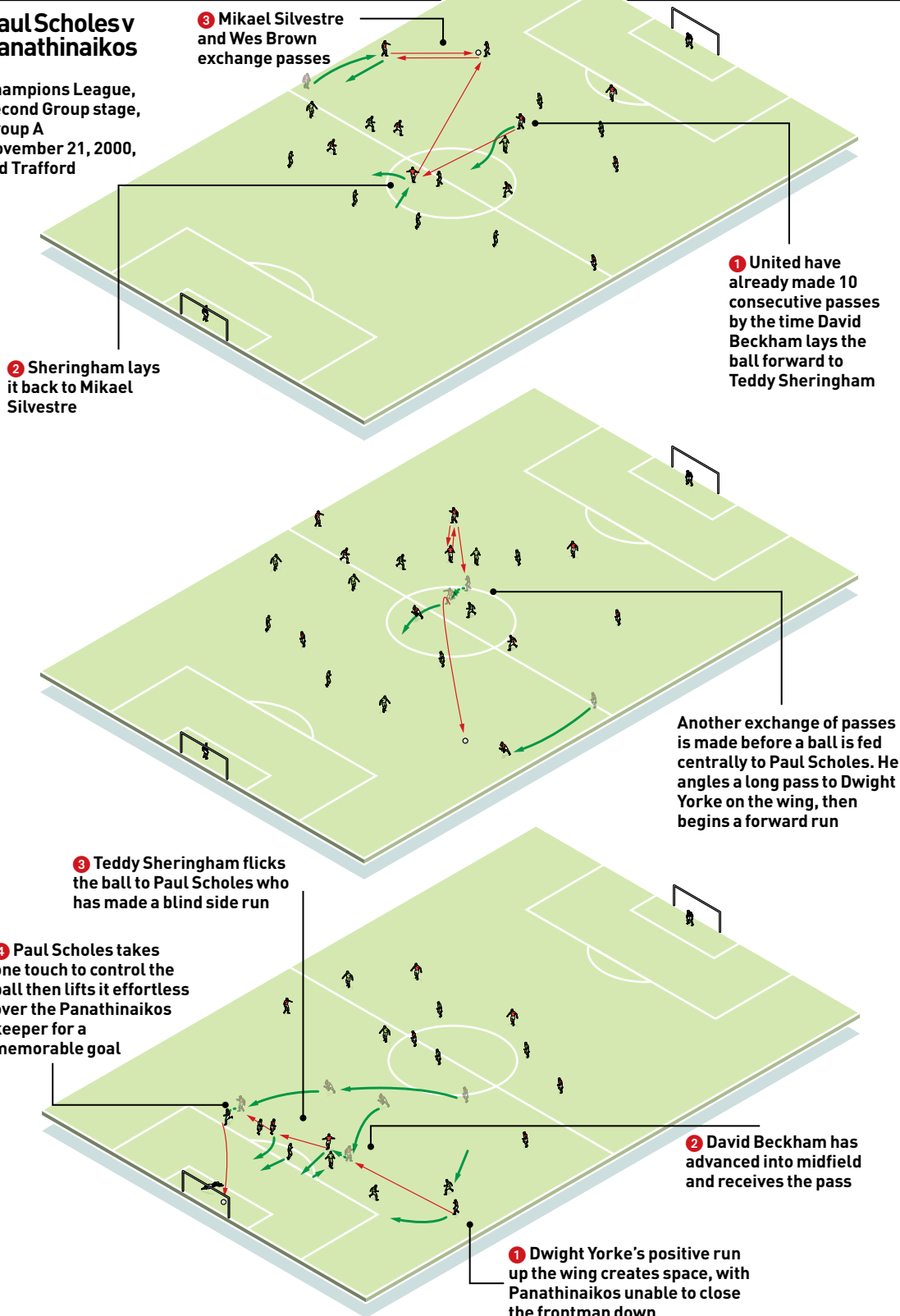
While the concept is straightforward, searching for improvement and development in this vital skill is important. There are a variety of challenges that enable us to perfect the art, and this practice can be embedded in more difficult game play situations by applying specific coaching exercises and conditions... encouragement to switch the ball, for instance.

At United, the players are so good at these activities it is a joy to watch. All players are comfortable receiving the ball and using space, from the goalkeeper right through the team.

MY PHILOSOPHY

Paul Scholes v Panathinaikos

Champions League, Second Group stage, Group A
November 21, 2000, Old Trafford



I have used the quick, tight, measured passing that you see in this session in my soccer training at Aberdeen and St. Mirren, right through to Manchester United.

While there are countless examples of players who have excelled in this role, the performance that Paul Scholes put in against Panathinaikos in the Champions

League at Old Trafford in 2000 was particularly special. We were leading 2-1 and looking to keep hold of the ball in order to see the game out. We not only achieved

that, but constructed a passing move of more than 20 passes, which ended with a sublime Scholes chip over the goalkeeper and into the net.

MY PHILOSOPHY

SET-UP

AREA

Up to a half-pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals, poles

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 9v9

SESSION TIME

Boxes 20mins,
6v6 20mins,
Goals 20mins

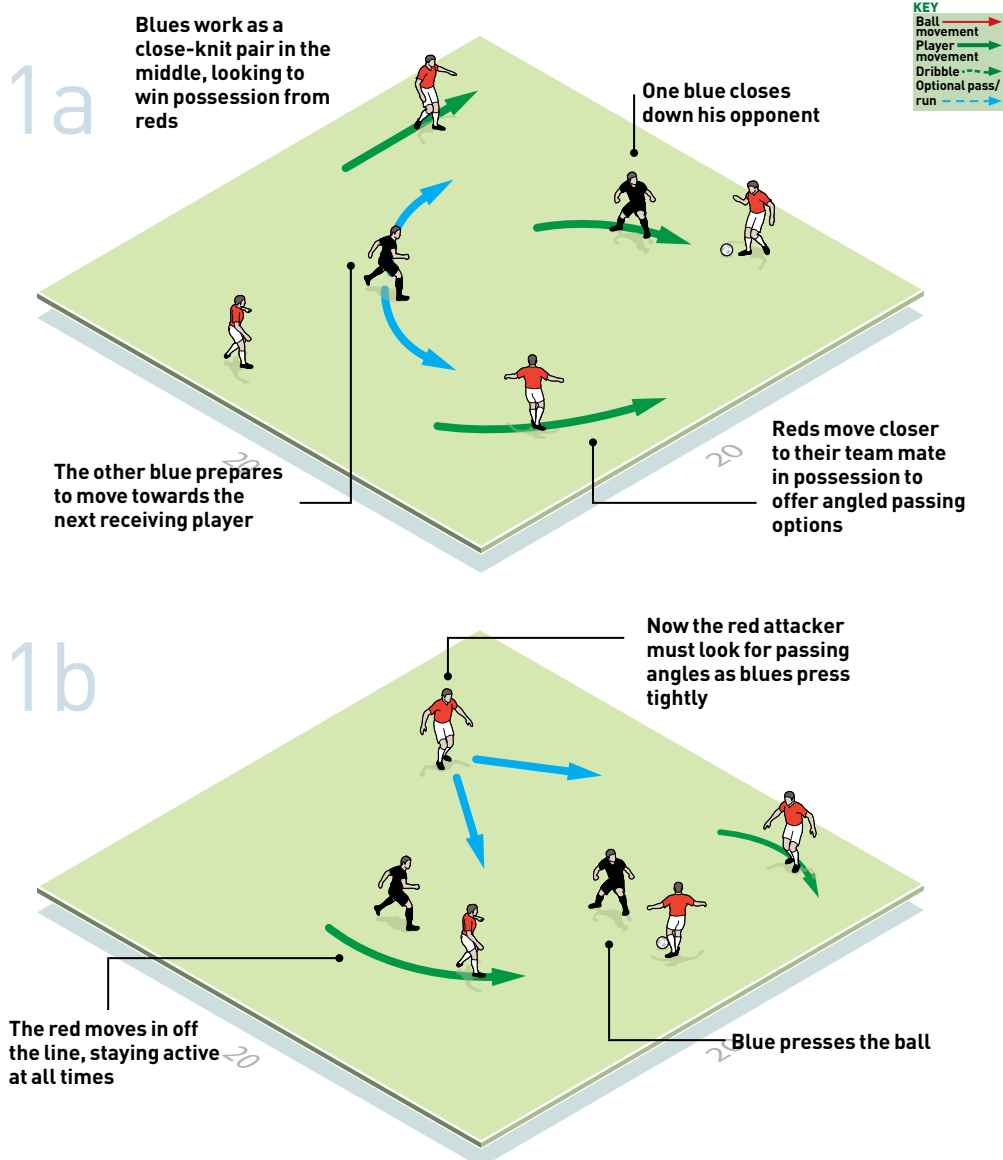
Boxes(1a,1b)

This involves the use of boxes as a primary start, something that is fundamental to players building understanding and motivation of movement and passing in tight areas. We use multiple boxes so that everyone is active.

A simple 4v2 in a 20x20-yard box is two-touch, ensuring players enjoy time on the ball. Blues work together to intercept while reds must retain possession using quick, efficient link-up, the use of angled runs and passes, and an appreciation of space. Players should operate on the balls of their feet, always ready to turn.

How do I progress the game?

Progressions are always determined by the quality of the session at each stage, so, in this example, once we are sure sufficient progress is being made and a high quality of passing attained, we apply the same principles to one-touch 5v2. The adjustment of teams (to 6v2, 7v2 or even 6v3) or box size (right down to 10x10 yards) becomes part of the players' motivation and entertainment as it is they who, through their actions, show they are ready for the more demanding parts of training. And remember, perseverance is vital for the creation of habit and expertise.



Technique: Balls of the feet

A player who is up on the balls of his feet is already 'on the move', in motion, and his feet are anticipating onward movement (be that a run or the receipt of the ball). Being on the balls of the feet also implies minimal contact with the ground, enabling players to turn quickly. Contrast this to being flat-footed. The player needs to find time and energy to rise up on the balls of his feet to move off. Spinning movement is also restricted because the whole foot is planted in the ground.





Sir Alex Ferguson

LMA AMBASSADOR

At the end of last season, Sir Alex Ferguson CBE concluded 26 years in charge of Manchester United, and celebrated by leading the Red Devils to their 20th top division title.

The Glaswegian had been the longest-serving and most successful manager in British football, clinching 49 trophies and numerous other awards along the way.

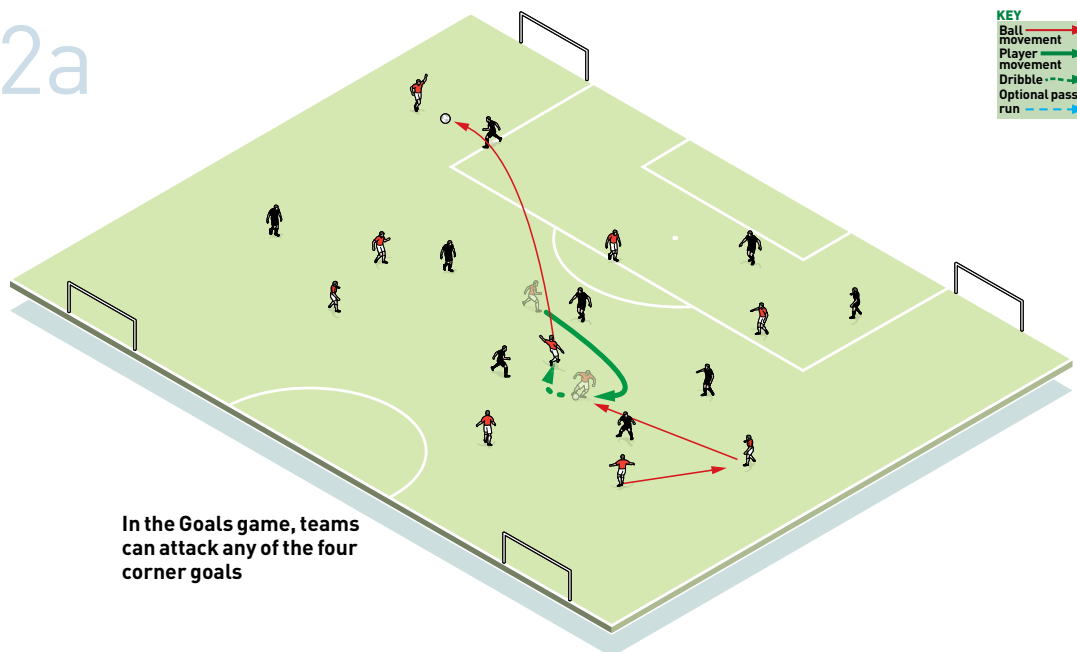
After managing St Mirren and East Stirling, Ferguson moved to Aberdeen in 1978, earning the Dons 10 trophies in seven years.

And after guiding Scotland through the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, Ferguson began to turn the tide at United – the 1990 FA Cup success providing the catalyst for a run of domestic success that may never be bettered by one man.

Two Champions League titles, 13 Premier League wins and five FA Cup final victories were key achievements, but 'Fergie' was also England's Manager of the Year 10 times, the LMA Manager of the Year three times, and Manager of the Decade for the 1990s.

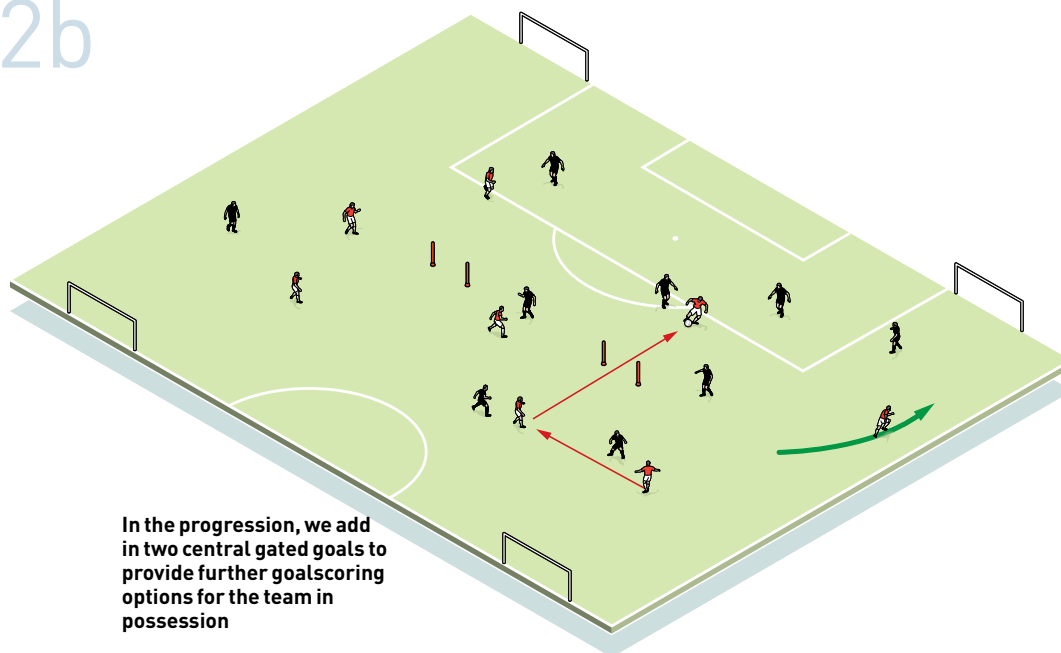
MY PHILOSOPHY

2a



In the Goals game, teams can attack any of the four corner goals

2b



In the progression, we add in two central gated goals to provide further goalscoring options for the team in possession

6v6 (not shown)

Next, we enlarge to a 40x40-yard box, playing 6v6. This is an evenly weighted practice that examines ball retention without the benefit of an overload.

Goals (2a, 2b)

Then, on a half-pitch and with a goal in each corner, players combine measured

possession with goalscoring. They can score in any goal, though passes must be 18 yards or more.

To progress, we can add two gates, as extra goalscoring options, or as part of an instruction that the ball must be passed through a gate before a goal is attacked. Gates must be placed near the centre of the

practice, no closer than 10 yards from each goal line.

What are the key things to look out for?

In every part of this session, ensure players begin two-touch, with team mates always providing angles at which to receive the ball. The consistent

pattern of movement should not be forgotten, and we want to see players using the balls of their feet... never flat-footed. And any player in possession must be pressured at all times, with excellent work rate throughout and no-one standing on the lines – that's too easy. ■

SCUNTHORPE UNITED

Brian Laws Shooting showcase

Overview:

This shooting showcase, which incorporates good crossing, is one of the most important training exercises that we have. It helps players learn how to create space and goalscoring opportunities, using movement and good ball skill.

A large part of this practice is about instinct, too – in terms of central players running to the correct areas and wide men knowing when and where to cross the ball.

Observing and learning the movement of team mates and opposition players means we have been able to exploit these attacking situations with ruthless efficiency in match situations, and this session is one that will always be run in the lead-up to a game.

SHOOTING SHOWCASE

SET-UP

AREA

Up to a half-pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 16

SESSION TIME

Session 15mins,
Progressions 15mins,
Game situation
15mins

What do I get the players to do?

Setting up as shown, this first practice requires plenty of balls, and players must work at a high tempo.

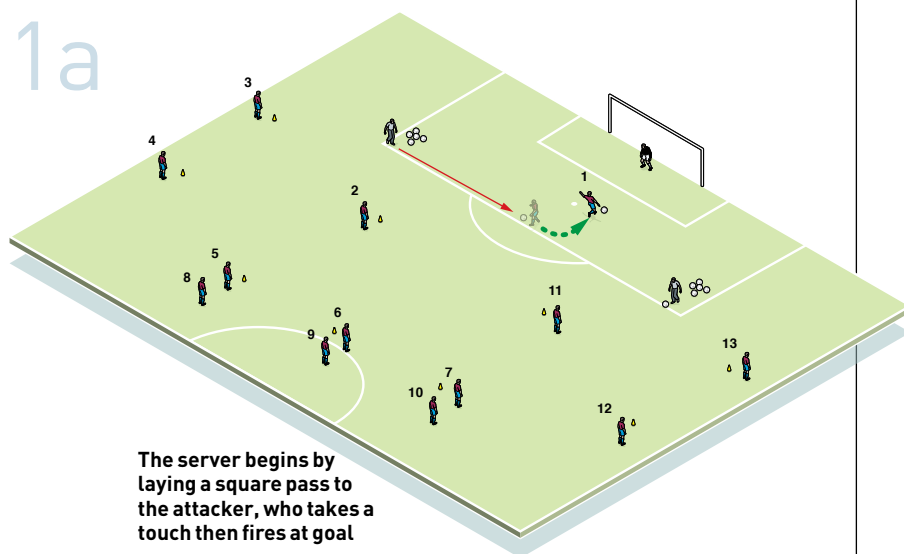
In the first phase (1a), the coach plays a firm pass into striker 1, who takes a touch and shoots past the keeper.

In the second phase (1b), the pass goes towards striker 2, who plays a one-two with striker 1 before finishing. Striker 1 must stay alert in case a save by the keeper presents a rebound opportunity.

In the third phase (1c), striker 3 plays into the coach as striker 4 overlaps. A cross now comes into the box with striker 1 joined by midfielders 5, 6 and 7 joining the attack. They time their runs, aiming at near-post, far-post and central goal areas, looking to finish.

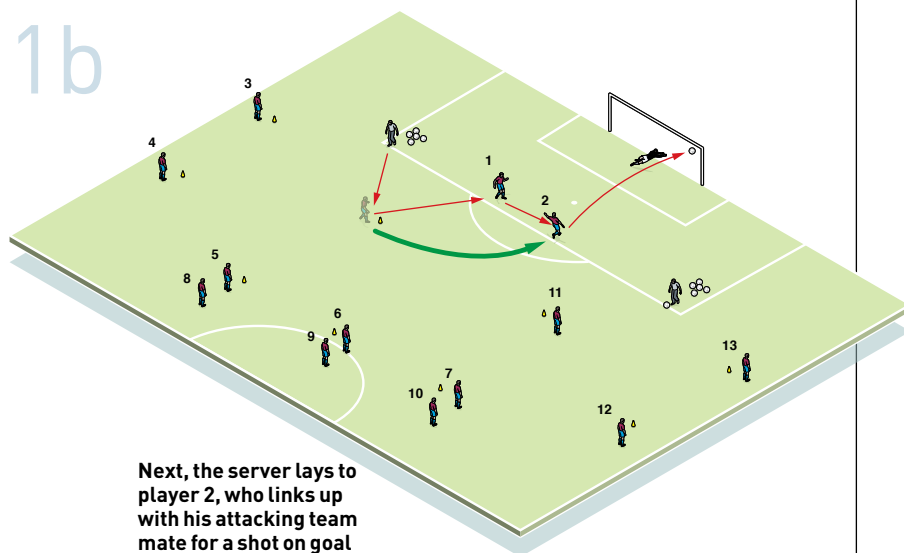


1a



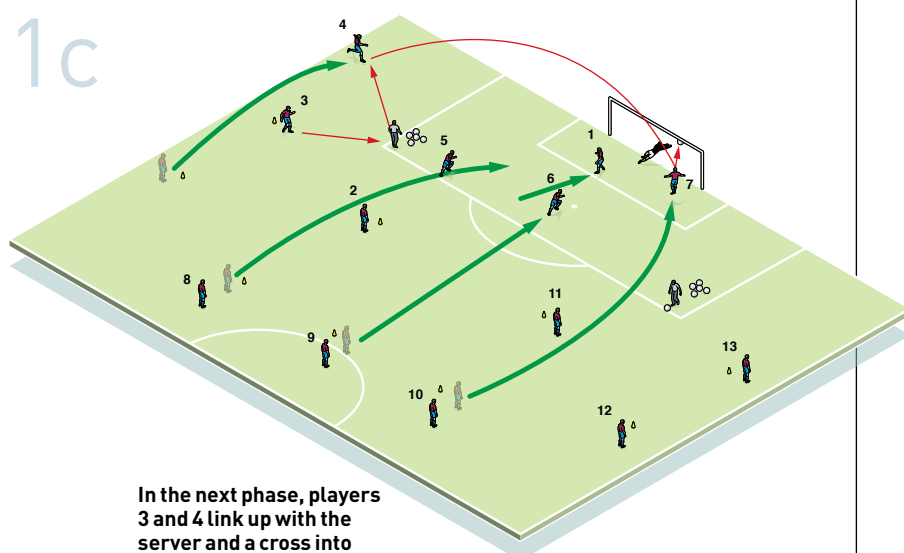
The server begins by laying a square pass to the attacker, who takes a touch then fires at goal

1b



Next, the server lays to player 2, who links up with his attacking team mate for a shot on goal

1c



In the next phase, players 3 and 4 link up with the server and a cross into the box is attacked by striker 1 and supporting attacking midfielders, who run from deep

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

“This session is one that will always be run in the lead-up to a game.”



Brian Laws

SCUNTHORPE UNITED

Brian Laws is now in his third spell as manager of Sky Bet League Two side Scunthorpe United.

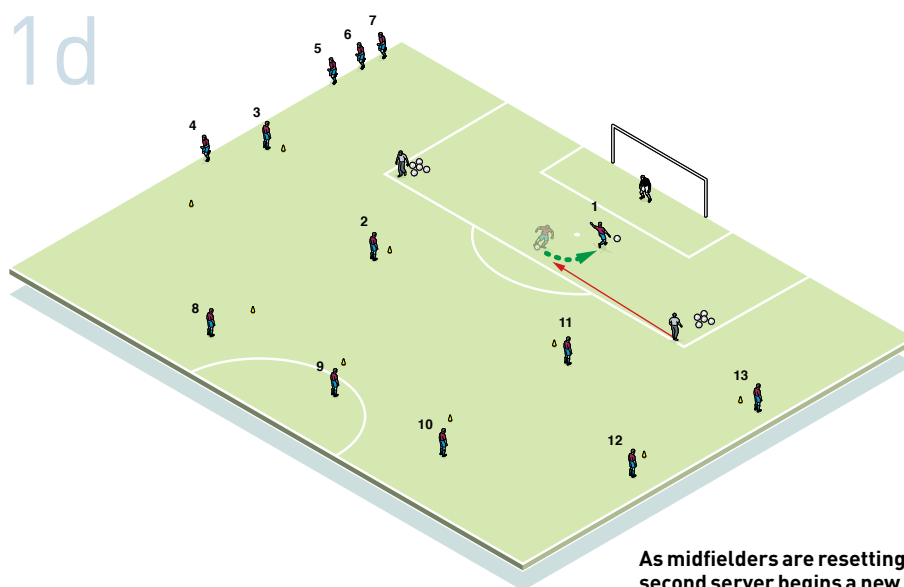
The 51-year-old, who also played for the Lincolnshire club, achieved promotion twice with 'The Iron', in 1999 and 2005, and now returns looking to complete a third success, with the club tipped to be one of the division's front-runners this season.

In between his first two spells in charge at Glanford Park, Laws was manager of Sheffield Wednesday, joining the Hillsborough outfit in 2006, and he led the Owls to a memorable double over city neighbours Sheffield United in the 2008/09 season.

Laws also enjoyed time in charge of Burnley in the Barclays Premier League, and as a player worked under mercurial Nottingham Forest manager Nigel Clough. He also turned out for Burnley, Huddersfield Town, Middlesbrough, Grimsby Town, Darlington and Scunthorpe.

SHOOTING SHOWCASE

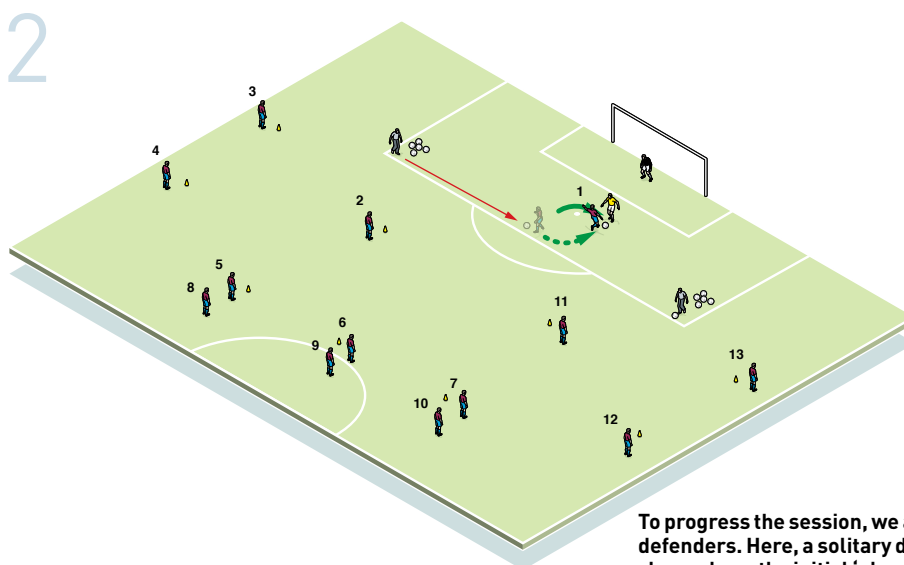
1d



KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

As midfielders are resetting, the second server begins a new set of attacking phases from the right-hand side

2



To progress the session, we add in defenders. Here, a solitary defender closes down the initial 'phase 1' pass into the attacker

In the fourth phase (1d), the set-up is rerun, albeit on the right-hand side of the pitch, and repeated.

We will rotate striker 1 frequently, with all working midfielders resetting to the back of their lines.

What are the key things to look out for?

Players need to concentrate on technique, and must acknowledge good movement of strikers to realise space, as well as ensuring an accurate delivery of passes and crosses. Passing needs to be quick, and a variety of crossing techniques employed – a chip,

a drive, and a curled pass.

How do I progress the session?

We can progress the session by adding a defender in the box (2). This increases the difficulty for attackers and makes the quality of the delivery even more important.

We can then add more strikers and defenders, depending on how players are

coping with and adapting to the set-ups. We can run this as a full game situation, with player numbers being dictated by the coach. Strikers must find the goal, while defenders score a point by clearing the ball into designated end zones that can be created near the halfway line. ■

PLYMOUTHARGYLE

John Sheridan Short and sharp passing

Overview:

This session is great for improving passing quality—in technique, accuracy and weight. It also helps perfect the skill of disguising a pass.

In a crucial match against Barnet last season, we saw some of these elements reproduced perfectly, with two of our players working quick one-tuos on the edge of the box before a terrific shot was fired into the top corner. The 2-1 win went a long way towards securing our Football League status.

Although the core of this session is uncomplicated, these basics are vital for players because a reliance on good passing forms the bedrock onto which every other skill is added. For that reason, I view this as one of the most important sessions that we run.

“A reliance on good passing forms the bedrock onto which every other skill is added.”

SHORT AND SHARP PASSING

SET-UP

AREA

Up to a full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v11

SESSION TIME

Warm-up 10mins,
Passing drills 25mins,
11v11 20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Warm-up(1)

It's important we warm players up properly, so we'll get them moving from cone to cone, with sharp and gentle turns, sprints and jogs between targets, and any other dynamic movements that loosen them up for what is to follow.

Passing lines(2)

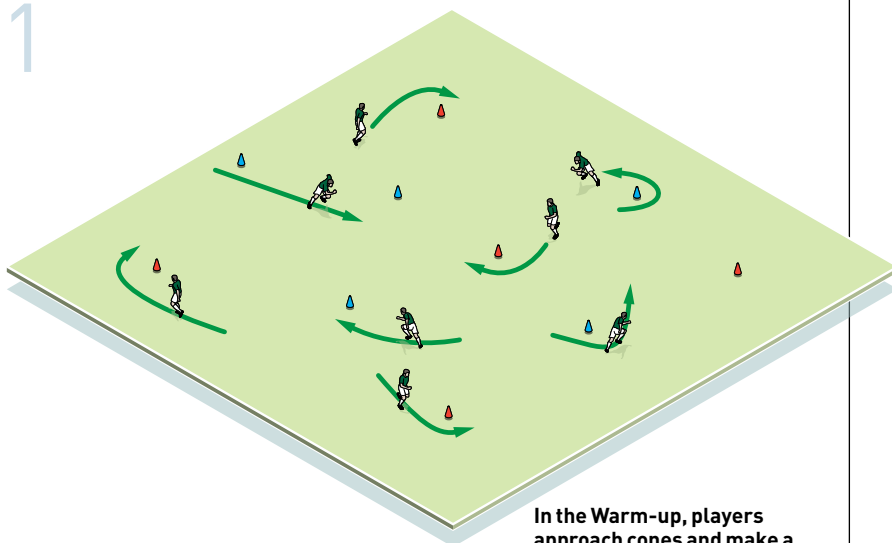
Next, setting up two lines of players 10 yards apart, we practise one- and two-touch passing moves. We can extend the distance between players as they become more proficient and confident.

Passing diamond(3)

We now move to angled passing, using a passing diamond (or clock). The target player in the centre receives from one player then, one-touch, angles a pass to the next man around the edge in a clockwise direction, continuing on until he completes the loop. We then rotate the target player.

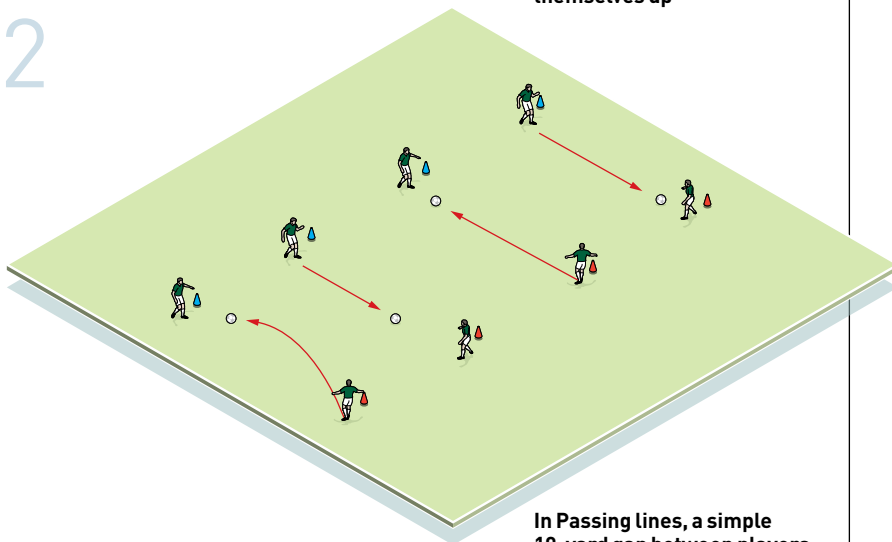


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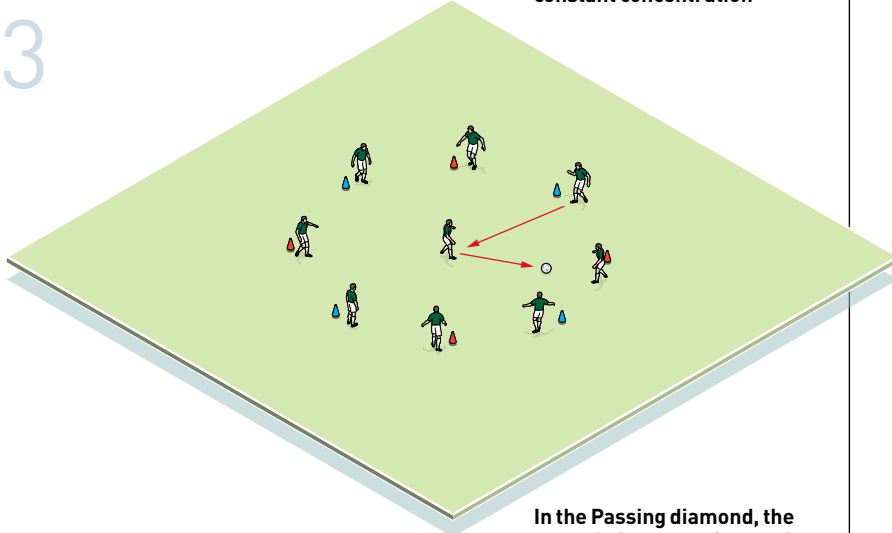
In the Warm-up, players approach cones and make a variety of turns, sprints and dynamic movements to loosen themselves up

2



In Passing lines, a simple 10-yard gap between players presents a one- and two-touch passing challenge that requires constant concentration

3



In the Passing diamond, the central player receives and moves the ball on to the next man clockwise on the circle, using one-touch only





John Sheridan
PLYMOUTH ARGYLE

Former Republic of Ireland international John Sheridan is now in his third managerial appointment having enjoyed considerable success at former clubs Oldham Athletic and Chesterfield.

At Oldham, he guided the Latics to a sixth-placed finish in League One in 2006, narrowly failing to make the play-offs the year after; while three years later, and in his second season in charge at Chesterfield, Sheridan saw his team clinch the League Two title. And a Wembley victory in the Football League Trophy arrived the following year as the Spireites defeated Swindon Town 2-0.

As a player, Sheridan played for a host of top clubs including Leeds United, Sheffield Wednesday and Bolton Wanderers. He went with the Republic of Ireland to the 1990 and 1994 World Cup finals before hanging up his boots in 2004 at the age of 39.

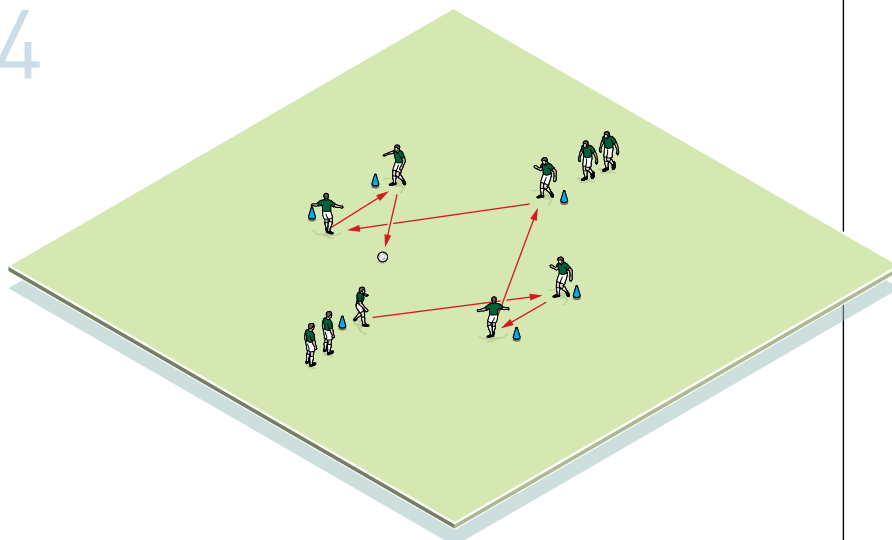
“We’re looking for a good first touch, awareness of team mates and good decision making.”

SHORT AND SHARP PASSING

Set passes (4)

Next, we use a set pass formation. One player in each pair plays square to the other, and a diagonal pass is made across the area to the front player in the line of three. A similar onward diagonal pass is then made to the opposite pair, and the practice restarts in the other direction. Keep pairs fixed, but each player in the line of three rotates after touching of the ball. Play for two minutes then rotate all players.

4

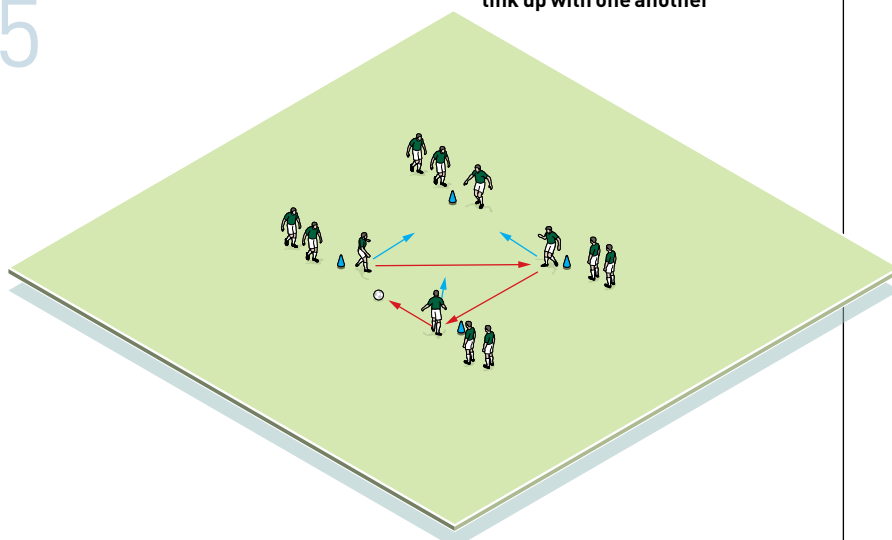


In Set passes, a circuit of short straight and longer diagonal passes enables players to vary how they link up with one another

Disguised passes (5)

With disguised passes, the player ‘shows’ one way (denoted by the blue lines) but passes another. Each player follows his pass, running to the back of the next line, and allowing the ball to be worked clockwise around the area.

5



In Disguised passes, the emphasis is on ‘showing’ to pass one way then pushing the ball off at an angle. The pass can go in any direction. Players follow their passes

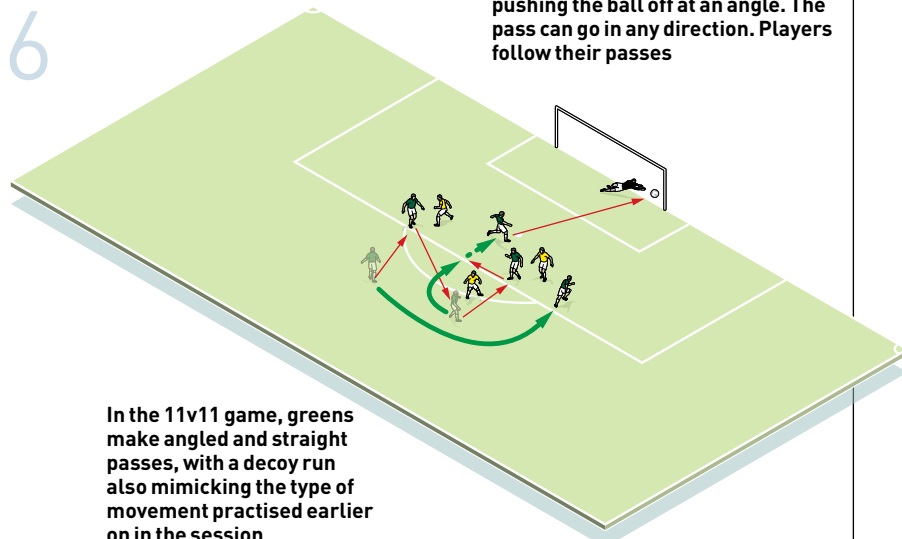
What are the key things to look out for?

We’re looking for a good first touch, awareness of team mates and good decision making. Passing quality is essential, both in terms of accuracy and weight of pass.

6

How would you put this into a game situation?

In a standard 11v11 set-up (6), players can only play two- or three-touch. Opponents must press the ball all over the pitch, with players replicating the passing and movement lessons learnt in the main part of the session. ■



In the 11v11 game, greens make angled and straight passes, with a decoy run also mimicking the type of movement practised earlier on in the session

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

PORTSMOUTH

Guy Whittingham Passing forward with a purpose

Overview:

This session aims to help players understand the importance of passing forward when the opportunity is there to break the lines of defence.

Recognising when to pass forward, sideways and backwards is a core skill and something that must be practised. After all, the more correct decisions a player makes in these situations, the greater his value to the team.

In our recent televised match with Accrington Stanley, we passed the ball well, with precision and intent, and the elements practised in the session were present for both of our goals.

“The more correct decisions a player makes in these situations, the greater his value to the team.”

PASSING FORWARD WITH A PURPOSE

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 30x20 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, bibs, cones, poles, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 10

SESSION TIME

Session 10-15mins,
Development 10-15mins,
Game 15+mins

What do I get the players to do?

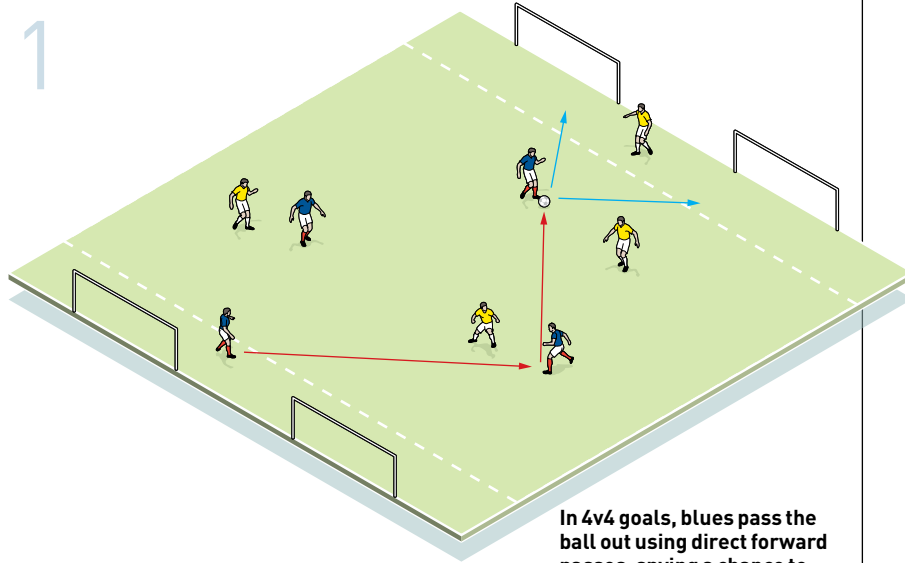
The session is comprised of small-sided games. These are fast, exciting, match-realistic, and increase players' knowledge of when to pass forward. We rotate all players regularly.

4v4 goals

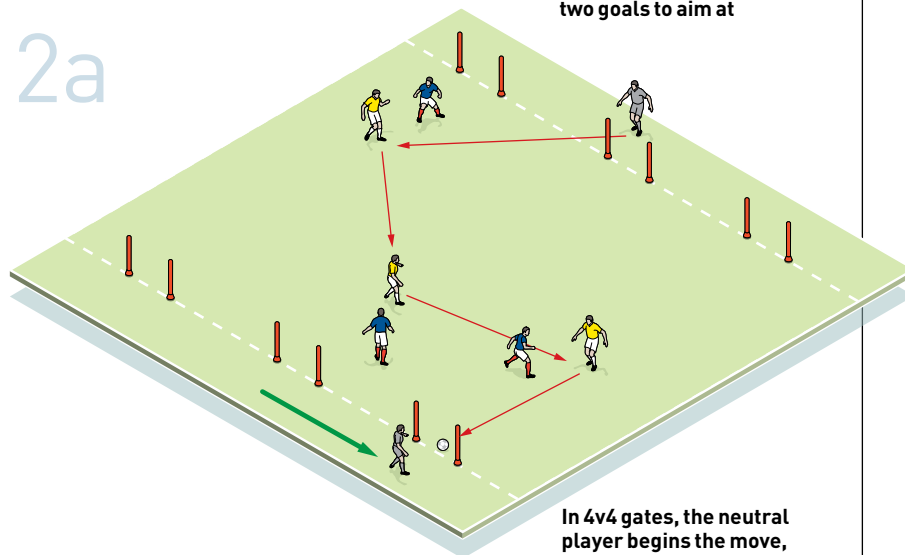
We have four small goals in a 20x20-yard square (1). In front of each there is a three-yard zone only one defender can occupy. He cannot be tackled, but helps build attacks in what is essentially a 4v3. Any player can score, and which point that team restarts from the home end. Any shot that goes wide or out to the side transfers possession to the other team.

4v4 gates

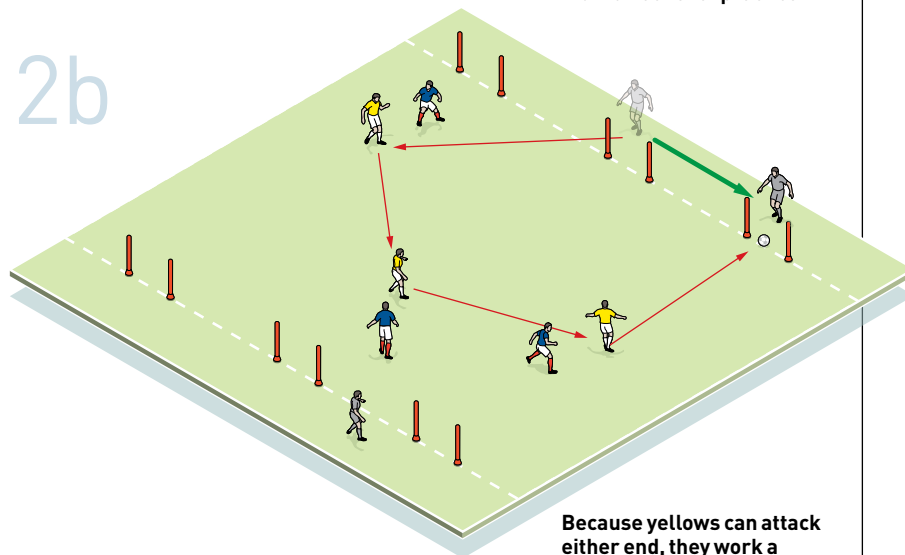
We now remove the goals and create six gates across the area, each three yards wide. The defender is now neutral, playing for the side in possession, and behind the gates. This multidirectional practice speeds up the frequency of through-



In 4v4 goals, blues pass the ball out using direct forward passes, spying a chance to thread through to the front man, who has the choice of two goals to aim at



In 4v4 gates, the neutral player begins the move, working with the team in possession in what is now a multidirectional practice



Because yellows can attack either end, they work a quick passing move and successfully feed the ball back to the neutral target man



Guy Whittingham
PORTSMOUTH

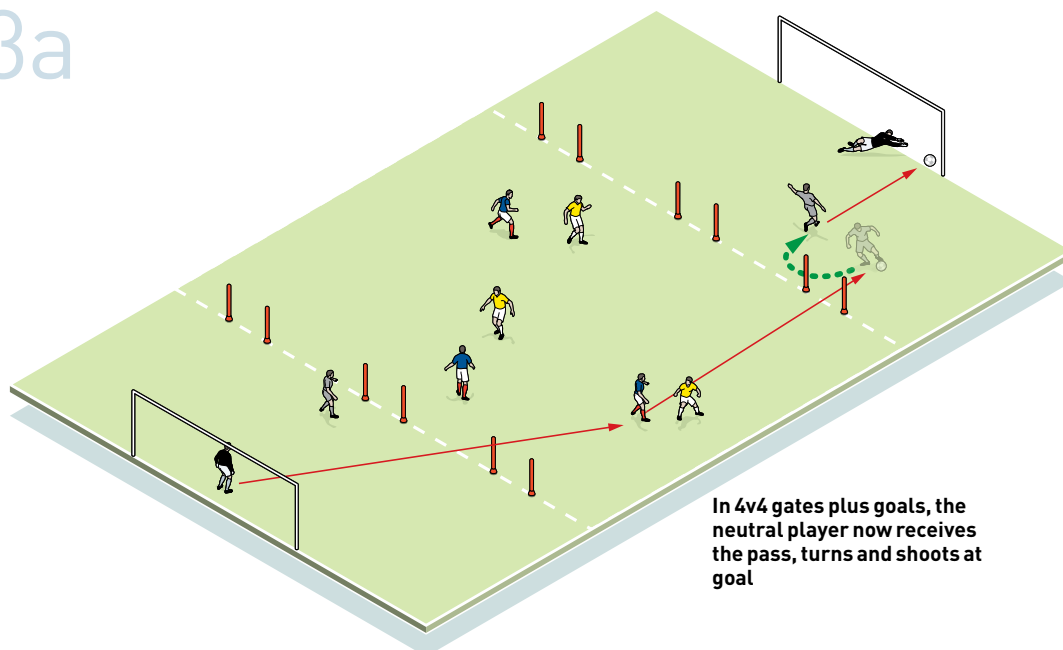
Guy Whittingham stepped into the fray in arguably Portsmouth's darkest hour. The very survival of the south-coast former Premier League outfit was in real doubt when the club's former striker agreed to take charge of team affairs in November 2012, initially on a caretaker basis.

A lack of finances and transfer embargo meant the 48-year-old could not prevent Pompey slipping into Sky Bet League Two, but Portsmouth, now under new owners, have a fresh lease of life and upward momentum.

As a player, Whittingham scored 92 goals for the club across three spells, and also played for Aston Villa, Sheffield Wednesday and Wycombe Wanderers, amongst others.

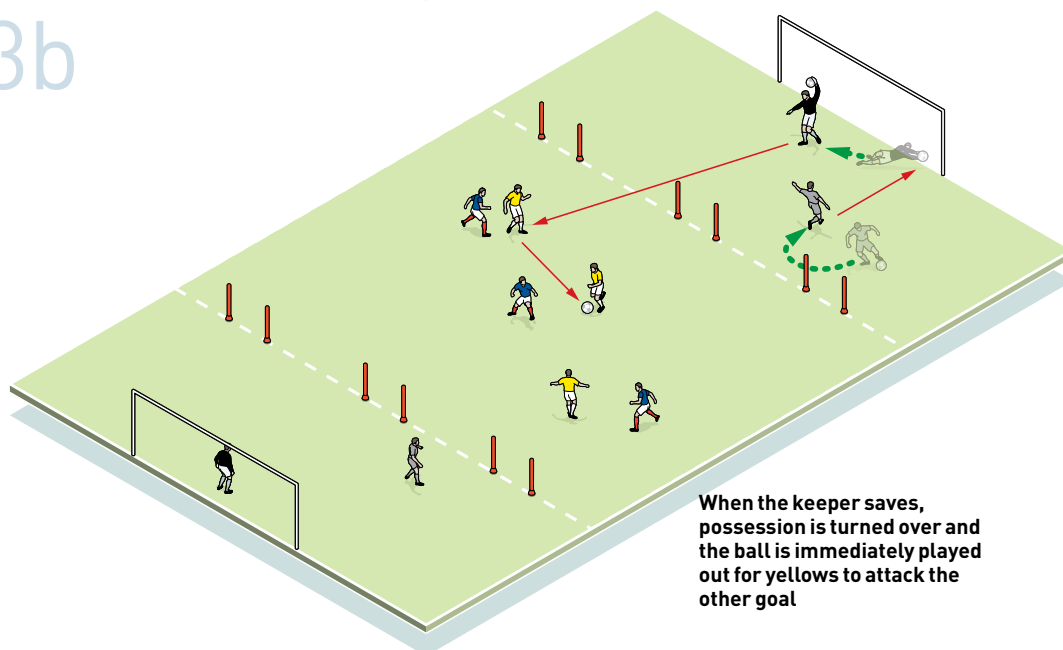
PASSING FORWARD WITH A PURPOSE

3a



In 4v4 gates plus goals, the neutral player now receives the pass, turns and shoots at goal

3b



When the keeper saves, possession is turned over and the ball is immediately played out for yellows to attack the other goal

"The best way to find a passing option is to keep the opposition moving, and the best way to do that is to keep the ball moving."

pass options - the neutral a scoring target in one instance (2a), then a player who passes the ball out of defence in the next (2b).

4v4 gates plus goals

We now extend the area by five-yards at each end, and add full-size goals. Each team attacks a designated end (3a).

Keepers begin, and when the ball comes to a neutral player, he now turns and shoots. If he scores, the other keeper restarts play. If not, the unbeaten keeper plays out (3b).

What are the key things to look out for?

Players need to be aware of the opportunity to pass forward... to spot

the moment and penetrate with a pass, but patience is key. The best way to find a passing option is to keep the opposition moving, and the best way to do that is to keep the ball moving. Passes need to be crisp and on the ground, with good technique, and team mates supporting at every opportunity.

How do I progress the session?

We can increase the difficulty by reducing the area size, limiting the number of touches or introducing more players. We can also dictate a minimum number of passes before the ball is sent through to the end man. ■

WEST HAM UNITED

Simon Copley Utilising space and creating overloads

Overview:

This session is about utilising space in tight areas, creating overloads and exit routes, whilst moving the ball up and through the thirds. It also offers useful methods for unlocking teams who sit outside their 18-yard line defending deep and tight.

This tactical practice uses tight spaces, and requires smart player movement off the ball, either in moving away from a marker or facilitating overloads within a grid. Quick interchanges of play and good angles of setting and support are crucial in this practice, which also rehearses playing through the thirds, albeit on a reduced scale.

Passes should be firm but grounded to ensure possession is kept in what is a small space, but the practice must be at a high tempo.

This scenario appears regularly in matches where play is kept tight and players have to unlock the opposition defence, so it's a really important practice for us.

UTILISING SPACE AND CREATING OVERLOADS

SET-UP

AREA

45x30 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

15 (6v6+3)

SESSION TIME

Session 30mins,
Development 15mins

What do I get the players to do?

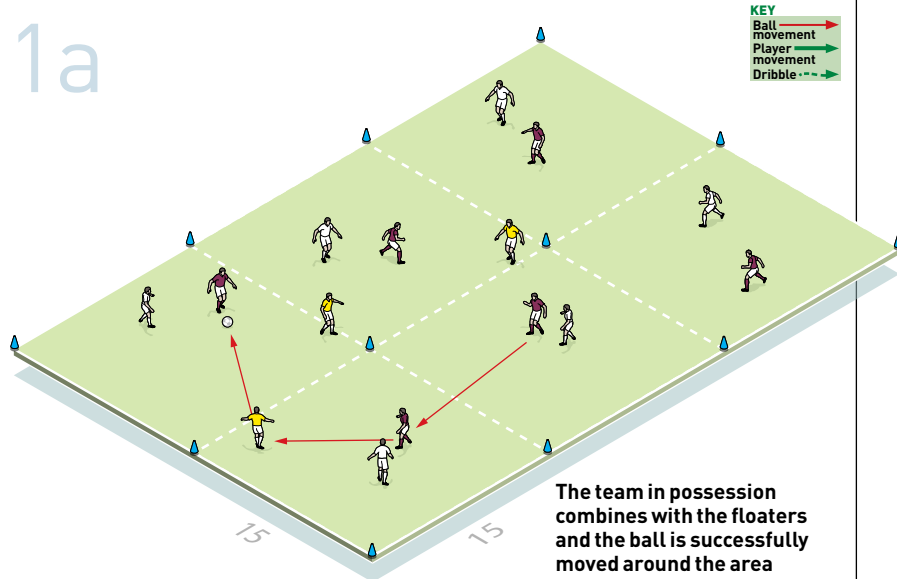
Both teams have a player in each box. The team in possession has to collectively work the ball up and through the thirds with players moving around their individual boxes to make space.

The three floaters play for the team in possession (1a); their job being to combine with players, create overloads and facilitate movement of the ball around the area. In doing this, they can move into any box.

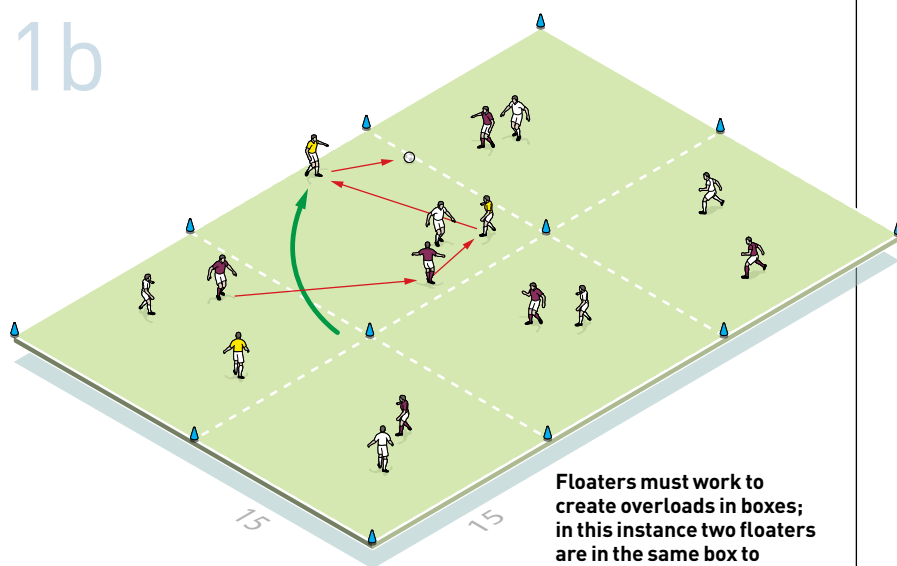
What are the key things to look out for technically/tactically?

Players must 'work' their squares even when out of possession, negotiating space and making runs that either offer a passing angle (if a team mate has possession) or a block (if the other team has possession). Working out how to 'move' opponents is important. As the ball approaches the grid, markers should use reverse movement to 'take away' the man (either moving from the front to receive behind, or from behind to receive in front).

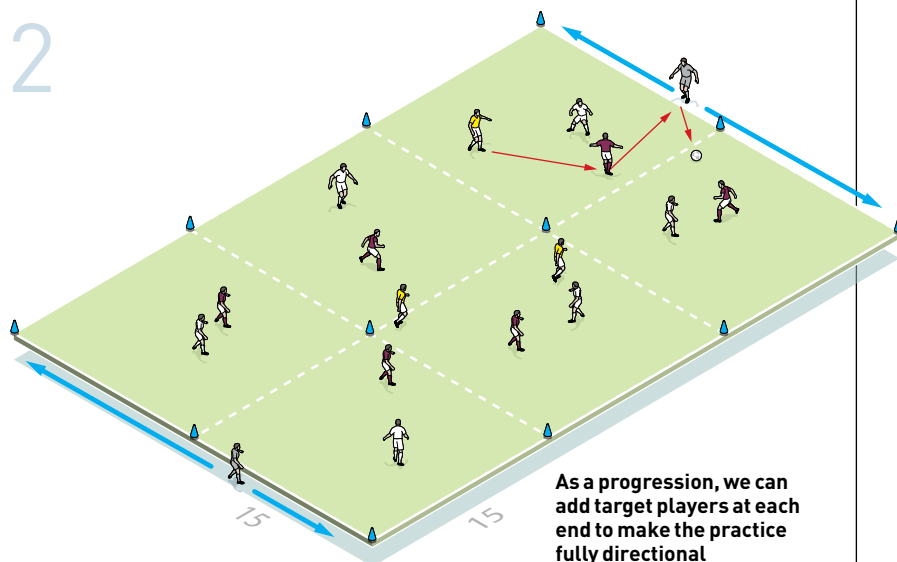
1a



1b



2





Simon Copley
WEST HAM UNITED

Simon Copley is an Academy Manager at Barclays Premier League side West Ham United, responsible for developing the next generation of talented youngsters at the east London club.

The Hammers have a reputation for unearthing gems, and Simon oversees the progression of players from the Under-15s, as well as working alongside Trevor Bumstead in assisting the Under-16s.

“As the ball approaches the grid, markers should use reverse movement to ‘take away’ the man (either moving from the front to receive behind, or from behind to receive in front).”

UTILISING SPACE AND CREATING OVERLOADS

This skill will be enhanced over time through repetition, though to put it into practice, players must read the game at all times.

Floater players are encouraged to link up play by constantly rotating and offsetting against each other, offering angles of support to play out, with 2v1s and 3v1s created as this develops (1b). This mindset must be ‘up, back and through’ – playing up to a target, setting back into a midfield area, then threading a ball into a third target.

How do I progress the session?

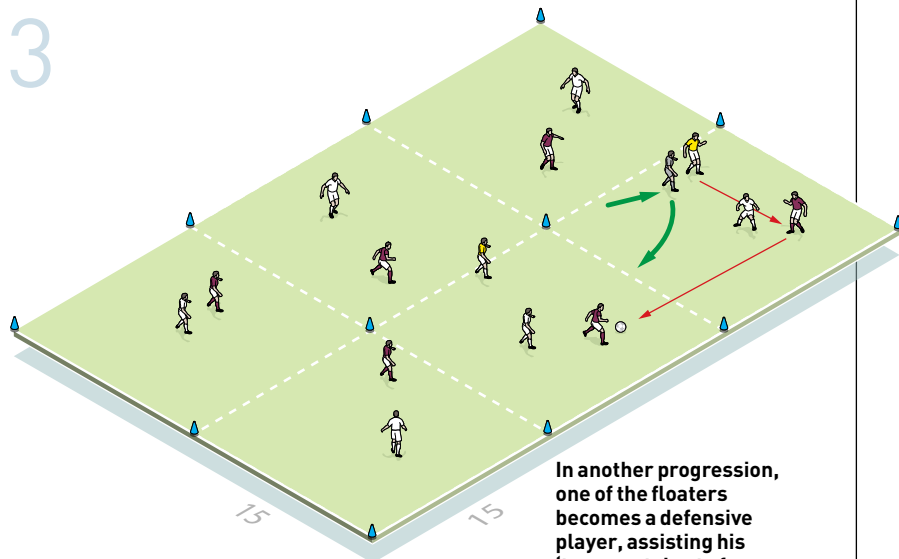
To progress, limit touches for floaters. This encourages quick play and quick thinking. End targets can also be added (2) to make play directional and offer a scoring outlet.

Next, we can make one of the floaters defensive, playing for the team out of possession (3). This increases game intensity, reduces time on the ball, and makes players double check recipients of passes.

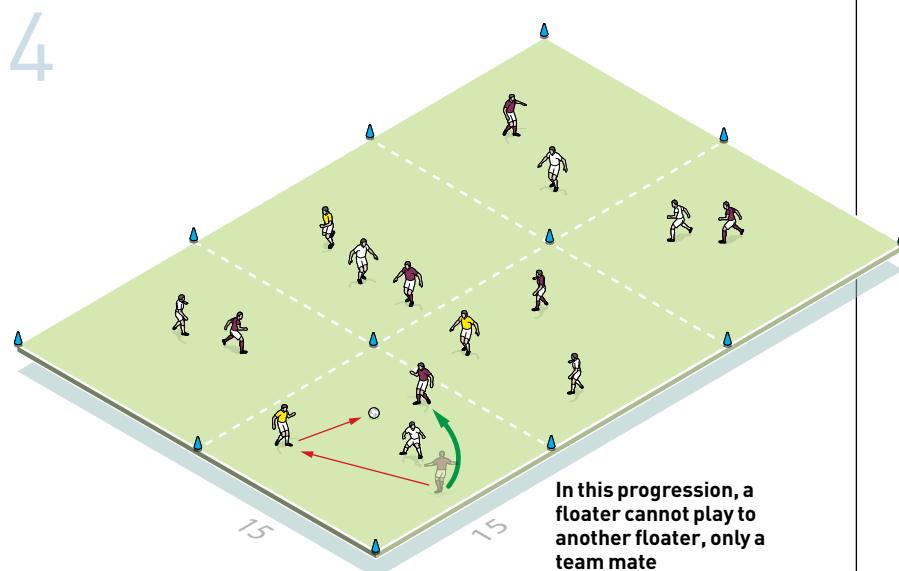
We might also insist that floaters cannot pass to other floaters, only grid players (4).

Finally, allow team mates to swap grids (5), though every grid must always be occupied.

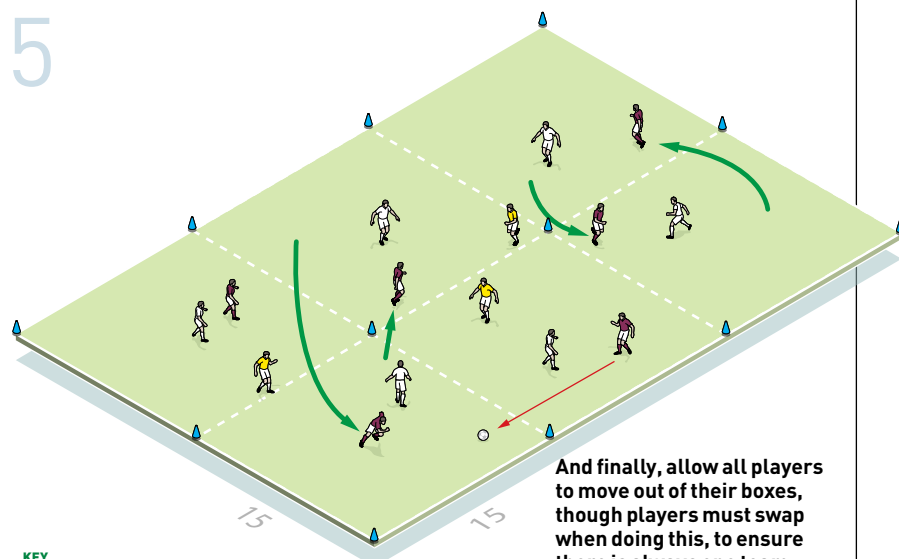
While these progressions encourage different aspects of tactical play, all improve speed of thought and movement, anticipation of passes and player communication. ■



In another progression, one of the floaters becomes a defensive player, assisting his ‘team mate’ out of possession and creating a 2v2 in the box



In this progression, a floater cannot play to another floater, only a team mate



And finally, allow all players to move out of their boxes, though players must swap when doing this, to ensure there is always one team mate of each shirt colour in every box



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:

Competent counter-attacking

My side's ability to counter-attack is quite one-dimensional. How can I add other elements into my coaching?

Question asked by Chris Beech, coach with Shoreditch Youth Soccer Community Group in London.

ANSWERED BY:

Tony Docherty

ABERDEEN

No counter-attack should be predictable, but it can be difficult to keep things fresh because when coaching a quick break you're often going to have very similar things occurring... such as a rapid attacking burst and overloaded defence.

To combat this problem, I've developed a progressive counter-attacking session that incorporates link play by strikers, support play by midfielders, with situational wide and attacking players involved too.

Coaching considerations

The main striker must be encouraged to get into a position to link with midfielders. Each midfielder must support the striker early and make good decisions regarding supporting runs. Wide

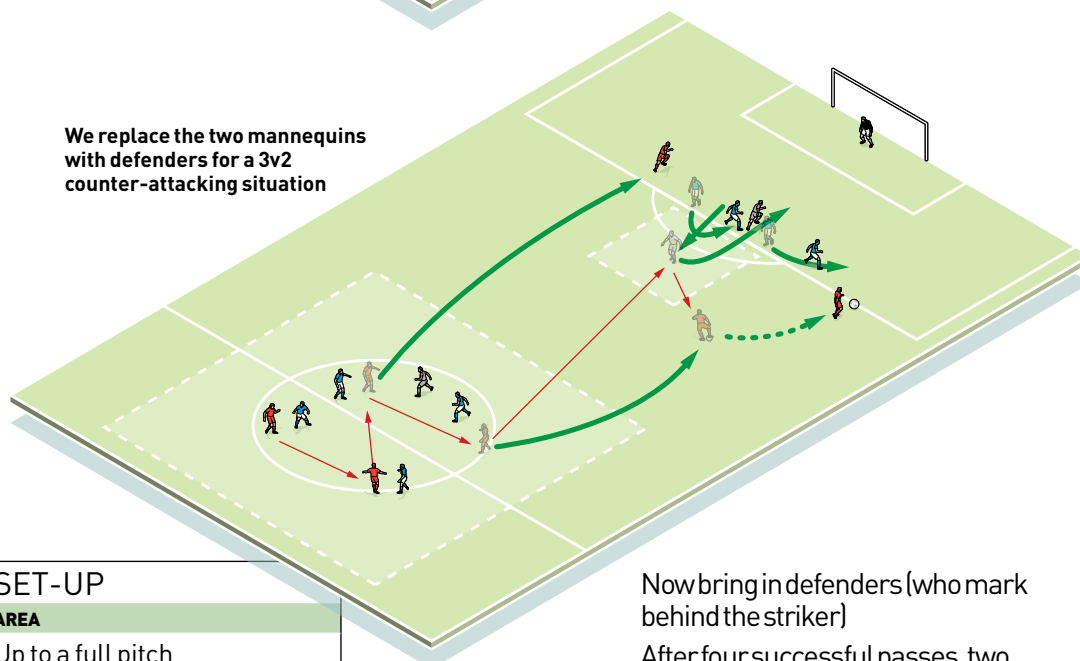
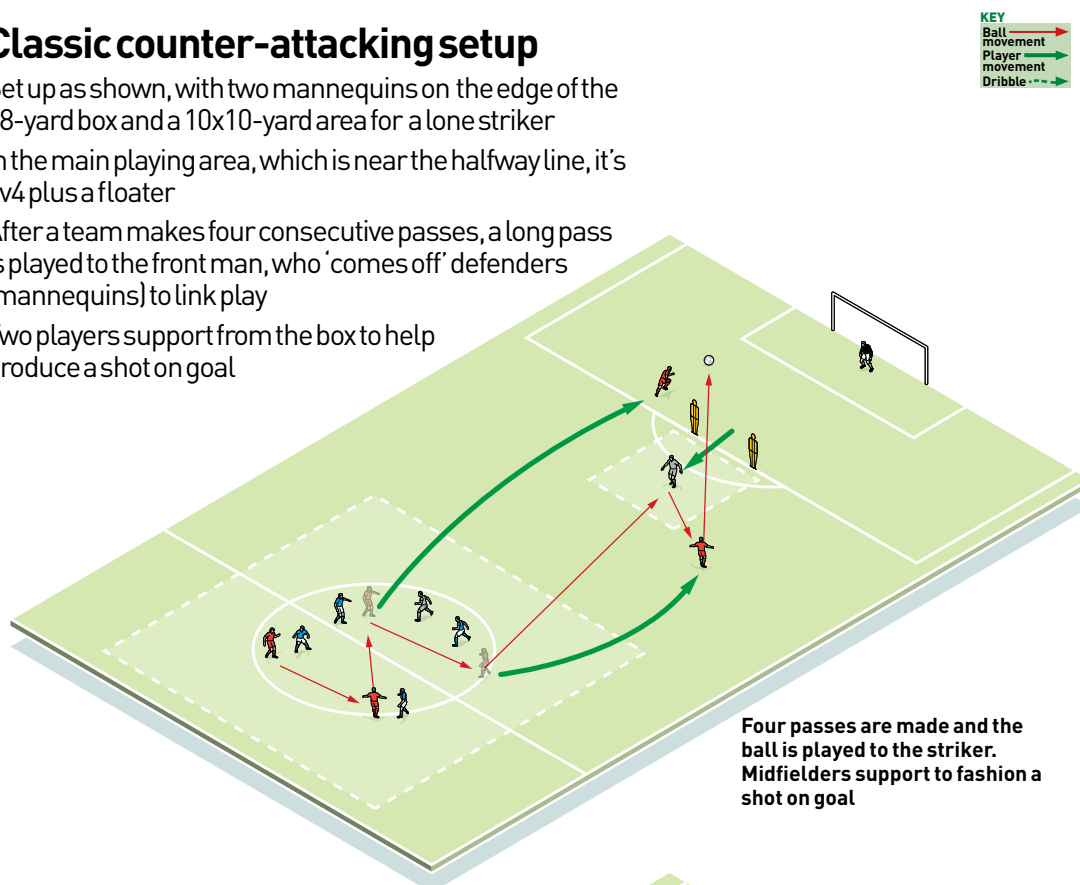
Classic counter-attacking setup

Set up as shown, with two mannequins on the edge of the 18-yard box and a 10x10-yard area for a lone striker

In the main playing area, which is near the halfway line, it's 4v4 plus a floater

After a team makes four consecutive passes, a long pass is played to the front man, who 'comes off' defenders (mannequins) to link play

Two players support from the box to help produce a shot on goal



SET-UP

AREA

Up to a full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 22

SESSION TIME

Each half-pitch setup 10mins,
full pitch setup 20mins

Now bring in defenders (who mark behind the striker)

After four successful passes, two attackers support to make a 3v2

Ensure good decision-making follows to make the most of the overload

COACHING CONSULTATION

players must support with a game-realistic mindset, namely "how can we score?", while the team, as a while, should assume that speed and precision of passing is of the essence throughout.

Why this works

The practice works because it encourages good decision-making within ever-changing counter-attack situations. It's also flexible enough so additional players can be introduced to take this onto a full pitch practice. ■



Tony Docherty
ABERDEEN

Tony Docherty is a key member of the management team at Scottish Premiership side Aberdeen, supporting first-team manager Derek McInnes.

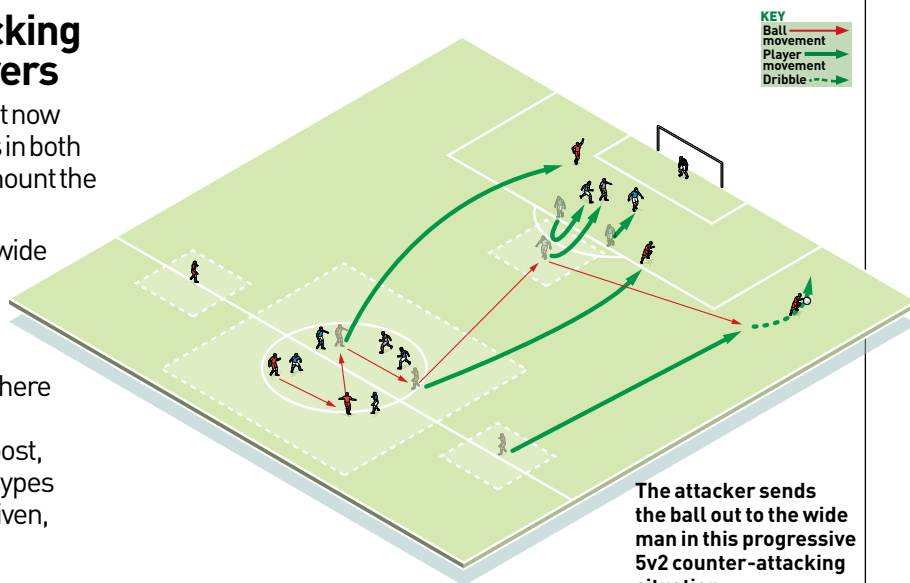
A former SFA Development Officer, Tony was assistant manager at Falkirk, before moving to Dundee United as part of the management team. He worked with McInnes during a hugely successful spell at St. Johnstone from 2007, and returned to partner the former Rangers midfielder at Aberdeen. Docherty is renowned for combining technical and tactical excellence on the pitch with polished man-management skills off it.

Counter-attacking with wide players

Work as before, except now the lone striker brings in both wide players to help mount the attack

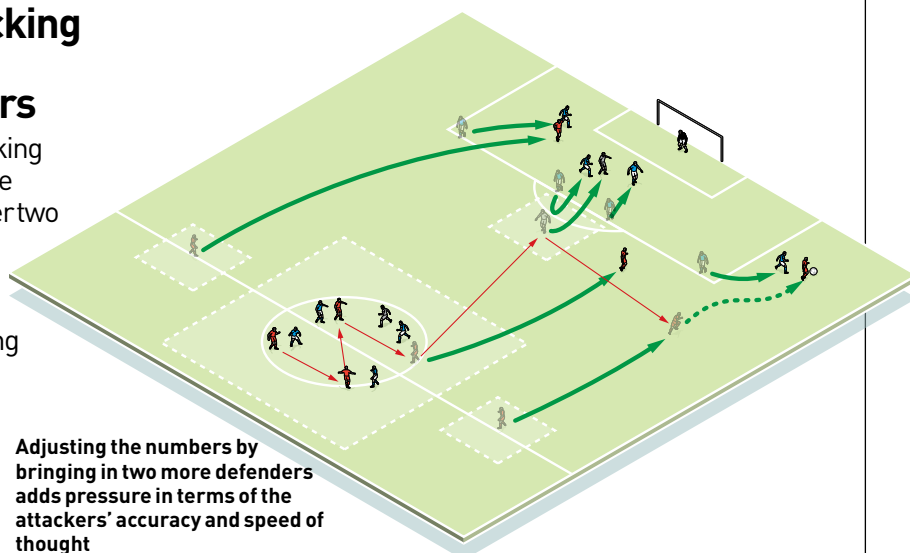
Two midfielders, two wide men and a striker create a 5v2 attacking overload situation

You can bring in detail here regarding direction of attacking runs (near post, far post, centre goal), types of crosses (floated, driven, curling) and more



Counter-attacking with variable player numbers

After bedding in attacking play and principles, the introduction of another two defenders (to make a back four) changes things again, now creating a 5v4 attacking situation

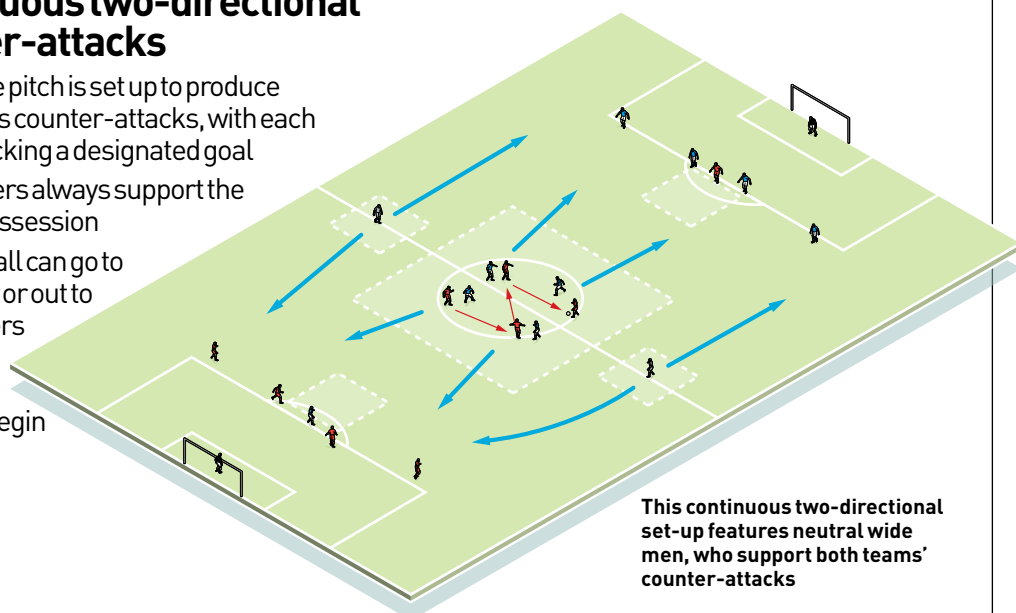


Continuous two-directional counter-attacks

Finally, the pitch is set up to produce continuous counter-attacks, with each team attacking a designated goal

Wide players always support the team in possession

Now the ball can go to the striker or out to wide players for the counter-attack to begin



EXTRA-TIME PROFILE

DAVID MOYES MANCHESTER UNITED

With David Moyes having kicked off life in charge of Manchester United with the winning mentality so closely associated with his predecessor Sir Alex Ferguson, we felt it was fitting to present the former Everton manager as our debut 'Extra-Time Profile'.

In this new feature, we will, each month, track the progress of one of the game's most recognisable names, as well as taking a peek into the psyche of the man behind the name. To help us do this, we'll pull an absorbing interview from the archives, one that helps us understand the principles and prerogatives of what makes a certain coach who he is today.

For David Moyes, we've chosen an interview he gave to *The Manager* magazine way back in 2009. It's an honest and intriguing read that offers a fantastic insight into the Scot's passion and mindset for the game.

Q You were still a player when you got your first management job, but you certainly weren't unprepared. How important was that?

A I had made a real effort to get out there and improve myself. I qualified as a coach when I was about 23 years old, but continued to attend coaching courses for several years after that. I enjoyed the learning experience, which came as much from being around people in the football industry as the courses themselves.

While it wasn't necessary, I took both the Scottish and English qualifications to show that I could be a coach in both countries. Initially, I completed the courses to become a better player, but I always hoped that one day I would be a manager and I thought I could get myself noticed. As well as equipping me with the necessary skills for the job, the courses were excellent networking opportunities.

Preparation is absolutely essential. When your first chance at management comes along you are judged very quickly. Lose the first six games and you could be out of a job. It's important to be prepared so you can get off to a good start.

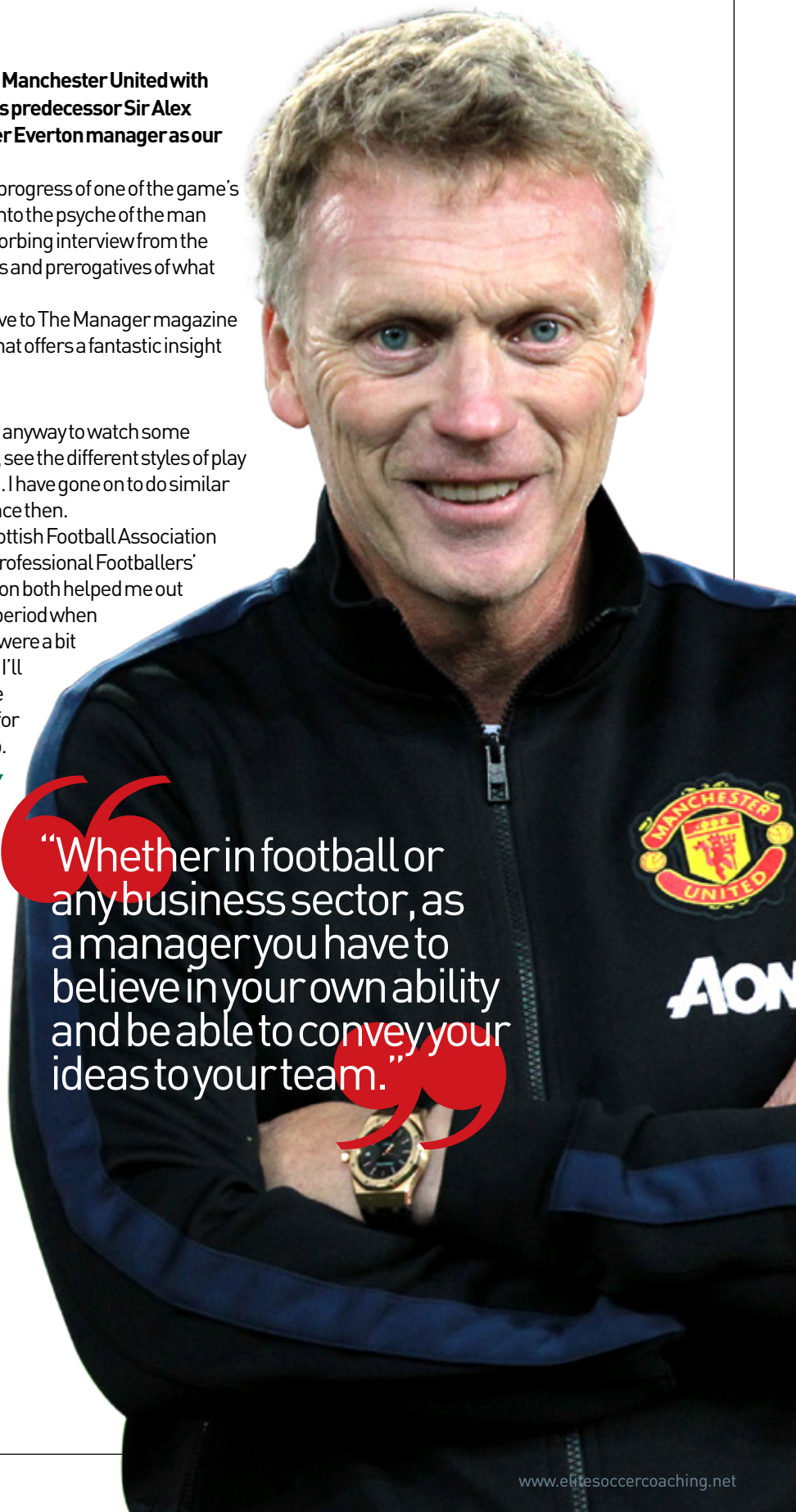
Q Have you always been immersed in, and dedicated to, football?

A It has always been my hobby as well as my profession. Ahead of the World Cup in France in 1998, I wrote to a few national sides to request access to their training sessions; I wanted to observe different coaching methods. Only Scotland said yes, but I travelled

to France anyway to watch some matches, see the different styles of play and learn. I have gone on to do similar things since then.

The Scottish Football Association and the Professional Footballers' Association both helped me out during a period when finances were a bit tight, and I'll always be thankful for their help.

"Whether in football or any business sector, as a manager you have to believe in your own ability and be able to convey your ideas to your team."



EXTRA-TIME PROFILE: DAVID MOYES

Q You've been in management for 10 years. How have you adapted your style since the early days?

A As a player, I used to take notes on any training sessions or drills that I enjoyed. I still look back at them today. Since then, things have changed – the profile of the game, the longevity of managers – but the same principles of coaching can still be adjusted and applied to the modern game.

Over the years, I have become more relaxed and less intense as a manager. I think that transition comes with confidence and experience.

Q How important is the relationship between a manager and the board?

A The manager's relationship with his chairman is probably the most important of all. You need someone who can support and work with you, not someone who gets too high when you win and too low when you lose. I have been very fortunate in that, where Chairman are concerned, I have been allowed to get on with my job. Interference from club chairmen and owners has become a real problem for some managers. My advice to aspiring young managers is to interview the chairman, rather than let him interview you.

Q You've consistently challenged the big four clubs, despite having comparatively modest spending power. What's your secret?

A We've worked hard at Everton to make the right recruitment decisions. Like the majority of football managers, I have limited resources, so I look for value for money and try to get the best out of what I have.

When I first came to the club, I knew

STATS LIFE

As manager (correct up to September 23):



Preston North End

234 games
(113 wins, 58 draws,
63 defeats)
win ratio of 48%

Everton

518 games
(218 games, 139
draws, 161 defeats)
win ratio 42%

Manchester United



7 games
(4 wins, 1 draw, 2 defeats)
win ratio 57%



David Moyes has never lost a Barclays Premier League match against Sunderland, despite 15 meetings between the two sides.

He has masterminded more wins against Fulham (13 in 22 matches) than any other club.



that there wouldn't be much money available, so I simply asked to be allowed to develop the team. The board agreed and the result has been a period of stability and growth.

Q How would you describe your management style?

A Whether in football or any business sector, as a manager you have to believe in your own ability and be able to convey your ideas to your team.

It is important to recognise and embrace change and adapt your approach accordingly. I believe in ongoing self-development and am always on the lookout for any new training methods, tactics or techniques that could give my team the edge in football's competitive marketplace.

I never take my position as Everton manager for granted. As well as reviewing my team's performance following a game, I assess my own. I examine the decisions I made and then try to learn from that.

Q How do you get a team to work at their best – is it about fear, respect, pride or friendship?

A Giving the players a framework of all of those things breeds team spirit. I respect the players and expect it back from them in return. We have pride in ourselves and how we do our jobs, and try to be disciplined and controlled, while showing the supporters that we are playing for them.

Friendship comes from winning and from mutual respect. We have a low turnover of players, partly because of our business model. We don't break the bank on wages or expensive players, but we do well with what we have and we reward that success. The team will always be more important than any individual. ■

'YOU CAN QUOTE ME ON THAT...'

"Mr. David Moyes is probably a fine example to everybody in government of stability and making the right decisions for the long term."

Andy Burnham, politician, May 2013

"[David Moyes shows] application combined with pragmatism with the necessary hint of despotism; understanding what is at your disposal and maximising it."

Chris Bascombe, The Telegraph, May 2013

PROFILE:

David Moyes was born in Bearsden in Scotland, a small town on the outskirts of Glasgow.

He signed youth forms with Icelandic side ÍBV Vestmannaeyjar, then Drumchapel Amateurs, before signing for Celtic in 1980, and went on to make 24 appearances for the Hoops. He also

played for Cambridge United, Bristol City, Shrewsbury Town, Dunfermline Athletic, Hamilton Academical and Preston North End.

His first managerial job was at Preston in 1998. He switched to Everton in 2003 and, in 2005, secured the club a fourth-placed finish, and with it, a Champions League qualifier.

He was announced as the successor to Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United in May 2013. The 50-year-old's first Barclays Premier League victory as manager of the Red Devils was a stylish 4-1 win at Swansea City on August 17. David has won the prestigious LMA Manager of the Year award on three occasions, in 2003, 2005 and 2009.



BOOKED: **THIS MONTH'S CHOICE**

By Dan Cottrell

The finest art

The Art of Team Coaching - How Sun Tzu would coach coaches
Allan P. Sands
Available on Amazon (Kindle)

As you walk into the indoor training facility for the Welsh National rugby team, you are met by a Sun Tzu quote: 'Every battle is won before it is ever fought'. Perhaps Wales had indeed beaten England in their famous victory of 2013 before they had stepped onto the pitch.

There is little doubt that the words of the famous general from ancient China resonate for many coaches, yet few would want to toil through his book finding what is relevant to their coaching. Luckily Allan Sands has done just that. Though not written specifically for any sport, it is obviously aimed at invasion games – rugby being one, soccer definitely another.

Sands has worked his way through the book contextualizing Sun Tzu into sporting terms. There is a danger that some of the metaphors become a little stretched. Death and total destruction are not necessarily easily translated into hard tackles or winning games, despite our desire to beat bitter rivals. However, the premise of the commentary is to make us think around the challenges of managing players and teams to win games. We simply have to remember to swap scoring points for spilling blood when we

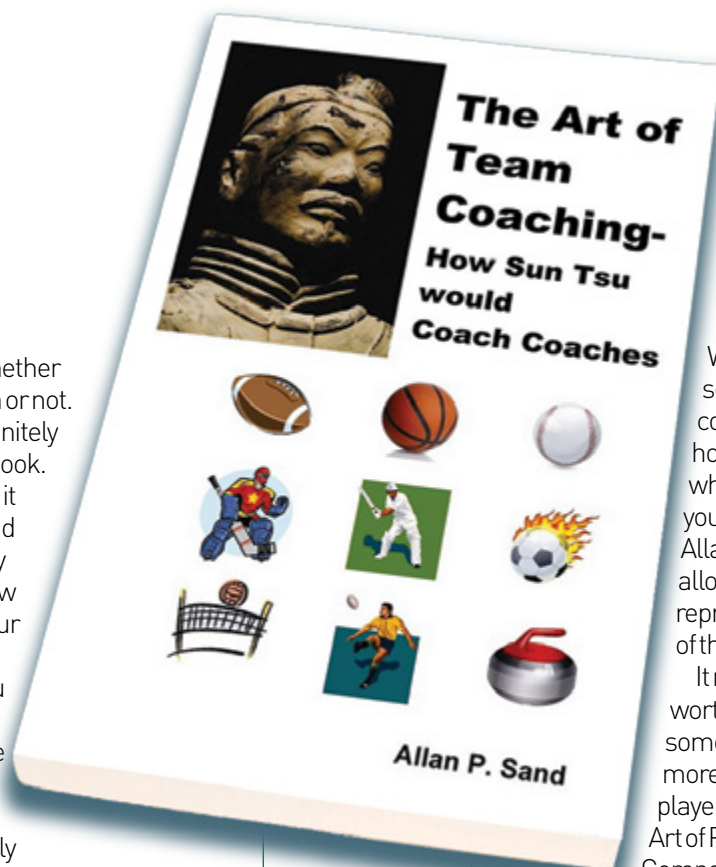
measure whether we have won or not.

This is definitely a reflective book. You can read it in chunks and then go away and think how it informs your coaching. It won't tell you what move or play to use in the next match, but it might subtly change your approach to attack or defence.

Often it will simplify your thinking, and I believe it will make you feel like you are a wiser coach. Why? Because you will consider what you are doing, why and then have to justify it to yourself. As Sands says himself in the introduction, "you will see things different. These will be your discoveries." In other words, it is not someone giving you exactly how you should run your team. It is you working out for yourself what works for you.

Ordinarily this would be hard work, but Sands has made the task easier by summarising Sun Tzu's words in bite sized ideas to ponder. You can read either the general or Sands or both to gain greater insight into your own coaching.

The book itself follows the thirteen chapters of the Art of



War. Each section has a comment on how to apply what is said to your situation. Allan has kindly allowed us to reproduce some of the book here.

It might be worth point some of your more enlightened players to 'The Art of Personal Competition'.

The best game approach uses designed offensive and defensive strategies tailored to your opponent's strengths and weaknesses.

Introduction and welcome

War has been a subject of study by all civilisations throughout recorded history. In the modern era, one document has become required study by war colleges the world over. The Art of War by the ancient Chinese general Sun Tzu has become the premier guide to students of military operations and battlefield management.

His notations, warnings, solutions, and commentary have been studied by hundreds of thousands of people who work within organizations from the small to the most complex. His ideas and concepts have direct application to businesses, governments, and most directly in sports.

BOOKED: **THIS MONTH'S CHOICE**

Waging war

It is only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the evils of war that can thoroughly understand the profitable way of carrying it on.

The best lessons learned occur when mistakes are made. The sum of a person's wisdom can be tallied by the number of errors in judgment and failures they have experienced. This applies to coaching personnel as well as players. (This statement assumes that the people around you know and apply this fact. Don't try to help a person who won't learn from such experiences.)

Planning attacks

Thus the highest form of generalship is to baulk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.

The best game approach uses designed offensive and defensive strategies tailored to your opponent's strengths and weaknesses.

The next best is a straight-forward continuous denial of opportunities. Limiting movement and preventing scores give your players time to capitalize on opponent errors.

The worst approach is no planning, weak responses, and incorrect actions.

Energy

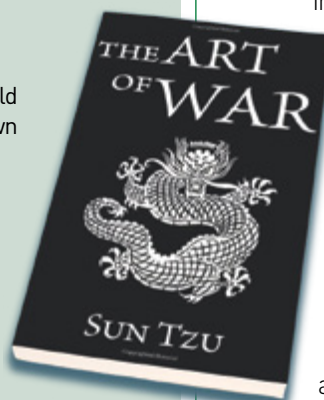
The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals. Hence his ability to pick out the right men and to utilize combined energy. When he utilizes combined energy, his fighting men become as it were like unto rolling logs or stones. For it is the nature of a log or stone to remain motionless

About the author:

Allan Sands is an experienced coach and senior technical writer. He is a certified as an instructor by the Professional Billiards Instructors Association (PBIA) and American Cue Sports (ACS). On the national PBIA Instructors Committee and the national ACS Marketing & Player/League Development Committee. He is the author of 13 books on multiple subjects. He is also fluent in Mandarin Chinese.

Sports and The Art of War

The Art of War has been applied in the world of sports. NFL coach Bill Belichick is known to have read the book and used its lessons to gain insights in preparing for games. Australian cricket as well as Brazilian association football coaches Luis Felipe Scolari and Carlos Alberto Parreira are known to have embraced the text. Scolari made the Brazilian World Cup squad of 2002 study the ancient work during their successful campaign.



on level ground, and to move when on a slope; if four-cornered, to come to a standstill, but if round-shaped, to go rolling down. Thus the energy developed by good fighting men is as the momentum of a round stone rolled down a mountain thousands of feet in height. So much on the subject of energy.

It is important to not depend too much upon star players to achieve your goals. Constantly rotate through your roster giving everyone opportunities to shine. When circumstances do require special treatment, your top players are rested and very intent on doing their best.

To counter the opponent's star players, assign specially trained individuals who can prevent or otherwise interrupt their activities.

The clever coach makes the opposing team react to his actions. If the opposing coach attempts to do the same, modify your activities. Use your play selections to keep him mentally off-balance.

Weakness and strength

Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him.

The clever coach makes the opposing team react to his actions. If the opposing coach attempts to do the same, modify your activities. Use your play selections to keep him mentally off-balance.

By holding out advantages to him, he can cause the enemy to approach of his own accord; or, by inflicting damage, he can make it impossible for the enemy to draw near.

During the opening minutes of the game, provide tempting opportunities to the opponent. Observe their readiness to respond. This can also validate previously gathered intelligence.

Variation in tactics

The art of war teaches us to rely:

- Not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him;
 - Not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.
- So the art of competition means that you:
- Do not depend on your opponent being unprepared, but depend on your readiness to compete against him.
 - Do not depend on your opponent being weak, but depend on your abilities and cleverness to deny opportunities.
 - Do not depend on your opponent being unable to stop you, but depend on your ability to counter their efforts. ■



POWER NAP

How Quality Sleep Leads to Premier Performance

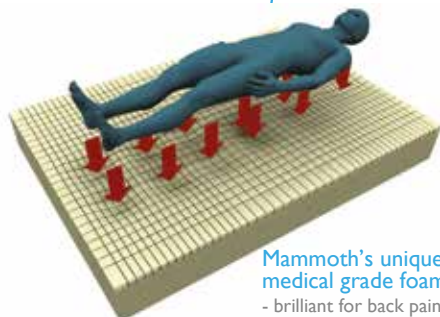
Sports scientists are urging athletes to pay more attention to one of the most overlooked elements of an effective training regime – sleep.

It's a message that many professional sports have responded to. Many NBA teams have 'sleep coaches' as they have seen the benefits on endurance, reaction times and injury recovery; benefits that could give any top footballer a real competitive edge.

As we sleep, an important growth hormone is released, IGF-I (insulin like growth factor I) which repairs both bone and muscle tissue. Laboratory research has shown that no muscle or bone cells are repaired while our bodies are awake and active. So without sleep your body will not be able to recover from the exertions of training or from an injury caused by a strong tackle— you'd be left with pain but no gain!



Joel Jameson
Champion:
Ironman Triathlon
loves his Mammoth



Mammoth's unique
medical grade foam
- brilliant for back pain

Sleep for Body and Brain

Sleep rewires the brain and body. Lots of learning - including for new physical moves - takes place while you sleep, as brain connections are made and pruned. High levels of physical activity cause the production of new brain cells - in memory areas - that become functional within days.

Mammoth Sport Breakthrough

Working with a wide range of elite athletes, including professional football players, one company, Mammoth Technologies has developed a mattress that enhances the effectiveness of sleep by creating an ideal environment for body tissue and cognitive recuperation.

The Mammoth Sport range also helps keep the body cool and hydrated with its design protected V-Max castellations, making it the favoured choice for Olympians, rugby players, footballers, cricketers and other top sports people.



Chiropractic
Patients
Association

Partners in product design



Dr Jason Ellis
from the BBC's
Goodnight Britain

In a recent study by the Sleep Research Centre at Northumbria University and led by renowned sleep expert, Dr Jason Ellis, Mammoth mattresses were found to outperform other mattresses in the quality of sleep and how enjoyable participants in the study found their sleep.

The research used test subjects who slept a night on a Mammoth Mattress and a night on their usual mattress. Incredibly those who slept on a Mammoth moved up a clinical level – which turned poor sleepers into good sleepers. This makes Mammoth Mattresses the only mattress proven to enhance sleep.



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HydraFlex Sport V-Max (UK Sizes) *

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Double	£499	£299
King	£549	£349
Super King	£599	£399

Mammoth Sport V-Max (UK Sizes) *

Single	£649	£449
Double	£799	£599
King	£899	£699
Super King	£1099	£899

*European sizes also available