

ELITE SOCCER

COACHING PRACTICES FROM THE WORLD'S
LEADING MANAGERS AND COACHES

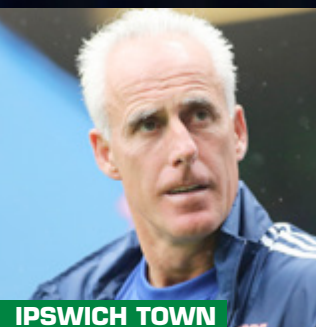
Exclusive
Training practices from top
professional managers

NORWICH CITY

CHRIS HUGHTON

VARIABLE SQUAD TRAINING

• REDUCED PLAYER NUMBERS • DIFFERENT AGES • DIFFERENT SKILLS



IPSWICH TOWN

MICK MCCARTHY
Possession and
penetration



PETERBOROUGH
UNITED

DARREN FERGUSON
Playing through
in a 4-4-2



LMA AMBASSADOR

MICHAEL APPLETON
Receiving
skills



LMA AMBASSADOR

DAVE BASSETT
Defensive
heading



SWINDON TOWN

MARK COOPER
Finishing
outside the box

**EXTRA-TIME
INTERVIEW:**

**WITH WATFORD MANAGER
GIANFRANCO ZOLA**



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ISSUE 40 / NOVEMBER 2013: FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Brilliant training ground practices from the best in the game

Dear Coach,

Welcome to the November issue of Elite Soccer.

While the drama of soccer in 2013 is as much about what goes on off the pitch as it is the events on it, the thing that really counts – at all levels of the game – is technical and tactical knowledge, innovation and expression, and that's where Elite Soccer comes in.

So in this issue, we've another fantastic cross-section of training sessions, from some of the most intelligent coaches in the game.

To begin, and from the Barclays Premier League, Norwich City manager Chris Hughton outlines a training session that was inspired by what to do when players are away on international breaks. It looks at uniting players of different standards – from the first-team to the youths – in a blueprint that is relevant for every position on the pitch. I'm sure it will be of use to you when, like all coaches, you have a reduced squad.

Into the Sky Bet Championship, and Ipswich Town manager Mick McCarthy provides for us a fantastic session on possession, progression and penetration – focused ideas that have been such a key part of the East Anglia club's ascent over the past year.

From Sky Bet League One, Peterborough United boss Darren Ferguson explains how to play through teams using a strict 4-4-2, while our Coaching Consultation comes from Swindon Town manager Mark Cooper, where he answers the problem of players who are afraid to shoot from long range.

We also showcase a fantastic defensive heading session from former Wimbledon and Sheffield United manager Dave Bassett – an FA Cup winner with the Dons in 1987 – while highly experienced coach Michael Appleton focuses on technical receiving skills in a great session to conclude.

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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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

MANAGER OF THE MONTH AWARDS



Arsenal manager **Arsène Wenger** scooped the

Barclays Premier League Manager of the Month award for September, as his side recovered from a slow start to the campaign to record four straight league wins.

The Gunners saw off Tottenham Hotspur, Sunderland, Stoke City and Swansea City to leap to the top of the table in style.

They also defeated West Brom in the League Cup and Marseille in the Champions League, and it was a double celebration for the north London club as midfielder Aaron Ramsey scooped the Player of the Month award.

ARSENAL: P4 W4 D0 L0 (LEAGUE ONLY)



In the Sky Bet Championship, Burnley boss

Sean Dyche collected the divisional award. The 42-year-old former Watford manager saw his side really hit form in the month, with home victories over Birmingham City and Charlton Athletic sandwiching an impressive away win at Leeds United. There was also a 1-1 derby draw with local rivals Blackburn Rovers.

And the Lancashire outfit carried their runaway form on into October with four further wins out of four, to move clear at the top of the table, amassing an incredible 25 points from 27 available.

BURNLEY: P5 W4 D1 L0



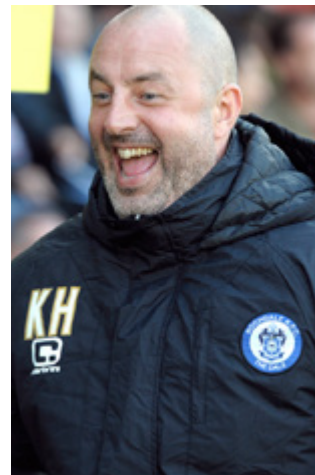
In Sky Bet League One, **Simon Grayson**

has Preston North End purring as the manager looks to take a side into the Championship for the fourth time, having previously achieved the feat with Blackpool, Leeds United and Huddersfield Town.

In September, the Lilywhites found their feet, with victories over Oldham Athletic, Stevenage, Sheffield United and Swindon Town.

Grayson's side conceded only twice in the month to move into the League One play-off places.

PRESTON NORTH END: P4 W4 D0 L0



And finally to Sky Bet League Two,

where Manager of the Month honours went to **Keith Hill**. His Rochdale side are eyeing up a return to League One, and four narrow victories in September showed that Dale have the nerve and the battling qualities to be a force this term.

Hill's men saw off Bury, Torquay United, Accrington Stanley and Wycombe Wanderers to move into the League Two automatic promotion places, with striker Scott Hogan scoring in every game.

ROCHDALE: P4 W4 D0 L0

CAREER PATH

... with Guy Whittingham, manager of Sky Bet League Two side Portsmouth

Q. As tough jobs in football go, this surely must be right up there given your side's perilous situation off the pitch?

A. In one way you're right – for a while, we never knew what was going to happen from one day to the next; we could never be quite sure

who was going to turn up for training, or what the next announcement would be from the boardroom. But that uncertainty actually galvanised the players – there was a Dunkirk spirit that we were keen to use productively and I feel we are now in a place where we can really build going forward.

Q. As FA Cup winners in 2008, it's still an incredible fall from grace. Does it frighten you that Pompey are now so far down the ladder, in the fourth tier of the game?

A. We cannot change what has happened and all of our focus is now on the future. We are busy enough day-to-day in putting together a team that really cares about Portsmouth Football Club, and there's

not the time to dwell on the past, which is perhaps just as well!

Q. You must have learnt a lot as a person... things you can take forward in your managerial career?

I have, and it's things that you cannot learn until you are in the throes of a situation like this. I know this will stand me in good stead, but to be honest, the biggest thing I've learnt is that we have amazing supporters. I guess I knew that all along, but for what they've been through, it has been quite an incredible and emotional experience to see the resilience and passion from the stands. That's what we do it for, after all – the fans.



NORWICH CITY

Chris Hughton Reduced squad training

Overview:

We all have times when we're left to train with a depleted squad. At the top level, this is usually because of international call-ups but it's nonetheless important that we make the most of these training days when the group is varied.

It also allows us the opportunity to evaluate the development of players physically, tactically and in terms of ability levels, without the usual distractions of a full first-team presence.

So, this is a multi-purpose session for a mixed group, including one or more goalkeepers. It incorporates directional play, high intensity movements, tracking, tactical awareness, runs off the team shape and finishing.

To show the versatility of the session, I ran this during the recent international break with 12 players - eight from the first-team and four from the development squad, and it worked perfectly.

REDUCED SQUAD TRAINING

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 52x34 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 6v6 plus keepers

SESSION TIME

6v6 square 15mins,
Two Boxes 4x4mins,
Formation game 2x8mins

What do I get the players to do?

6v6 square

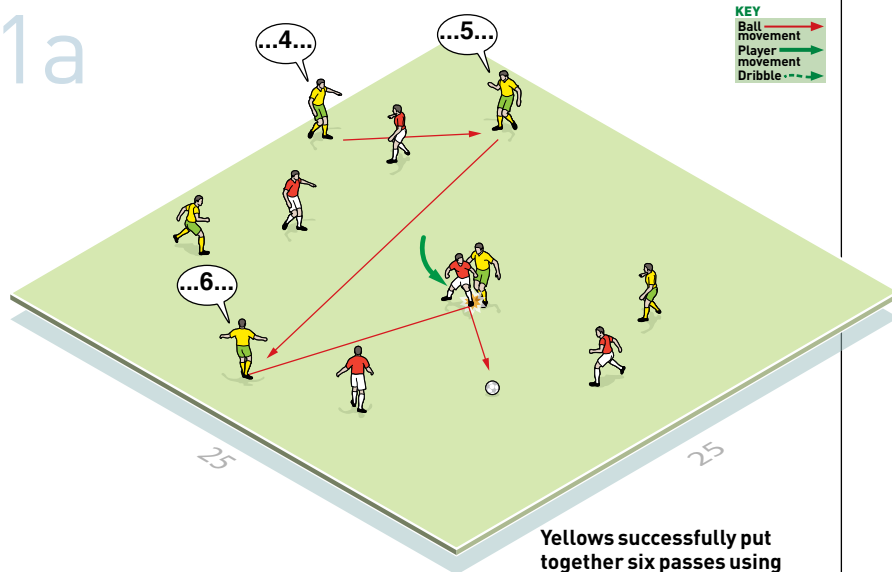
We start by playing a warm-up possession game in a 25x25-yard square, as shown (1a). Multi-touch, teams play to retain possession and accumulate passes. If possession is turned over or the ball goes out of play, the other team begins. The winning team is the one that reaches 21 passes - these do not have to be made consecutively (1b).

Two Boxes game

Now we put together two penalty boxes to create a 44x36-yard area. This is 6v6 plus keepers (making it 7v6), who play outfield for the attacking team, and in the 5x5-yard box for the defending team.

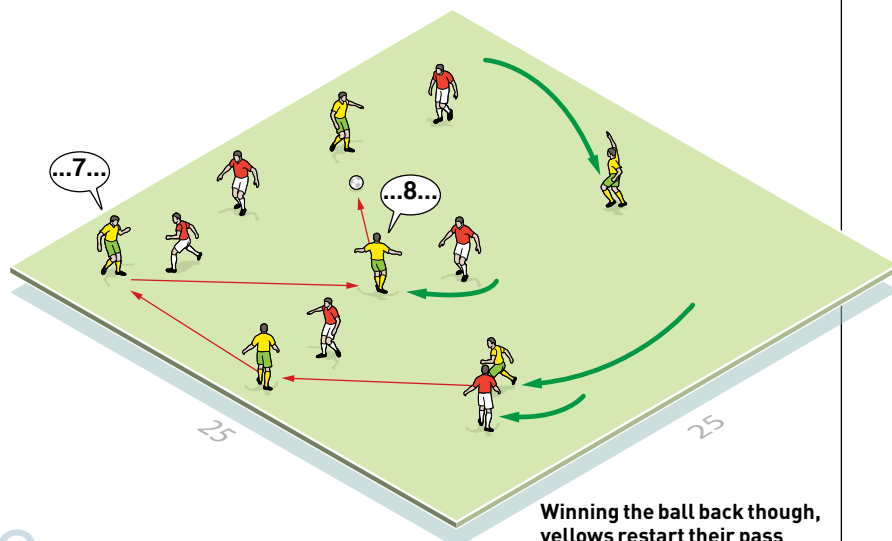
This game is three-touch, but with no corners, and the keepers start with goal kicks. The object is for players to clip the ball into the hands of the opposition keeper. A team doing this from their defensive half scores one point (2a), but if succeeding when in the opposition half, the reward is two points (2b).

1a



Yellows successfully put together six passes using clever possession football, before a stray pass is intercepted by a red

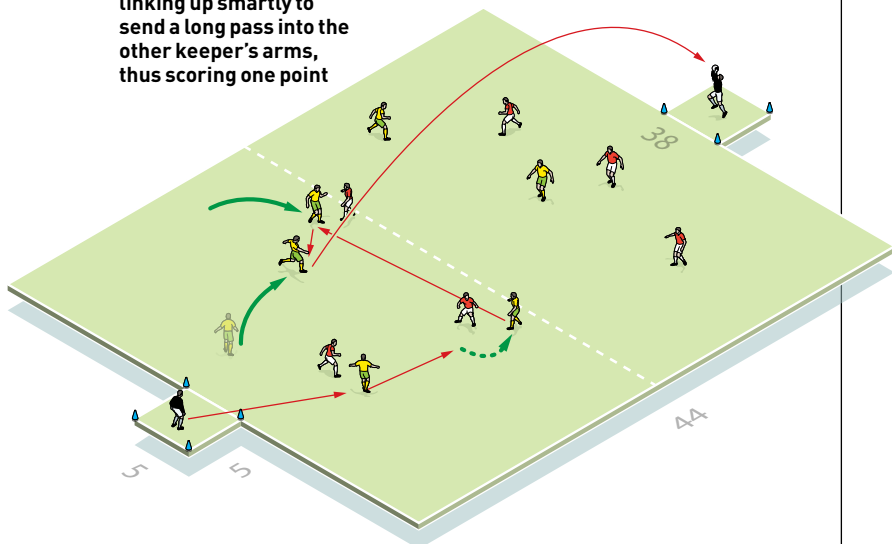
1b



Winning the ball back though, yellows restart their pass count from the previous total

2a

The keeper begins the move, with yellows linking up smartly to send a long pass into the other keeper's arms, thus scoring one point





Chris Hughton NORWICH CITY

Former Republic of Ireland international Chris Hughton concluded a marvellous 16-year playing career in 1993 having starred at the top level for West Ham United and, notably, Tottenham Hotspur, totalling 398 appearances.

He went on to work as a coach at Spurs for 15 years – his influence felt across the first-team, reserve and Under-21 sides, as well as accepting Assistant and Caretaker Manager posts.

He became first-team coach at Newcastle United in February 2008, and within two years had landed the St. James's Park hotseat on a permanent basis. By the end of the 2010/11 season, promotion back to the Barclays Premier League had been gained, and having moved on to Birmingham City, Hughton almost repeated the feat a year later, earning the Blues a 4th-placed finish in the Championship. In June 2012 the 54-year-old was allowed to join Norwich City, and he masterminded the Canaries' safety in their first season back in the top flight with a final league position of 11th.

REDUCED SQUAD TRAINING

Formation game

(3a/3b)

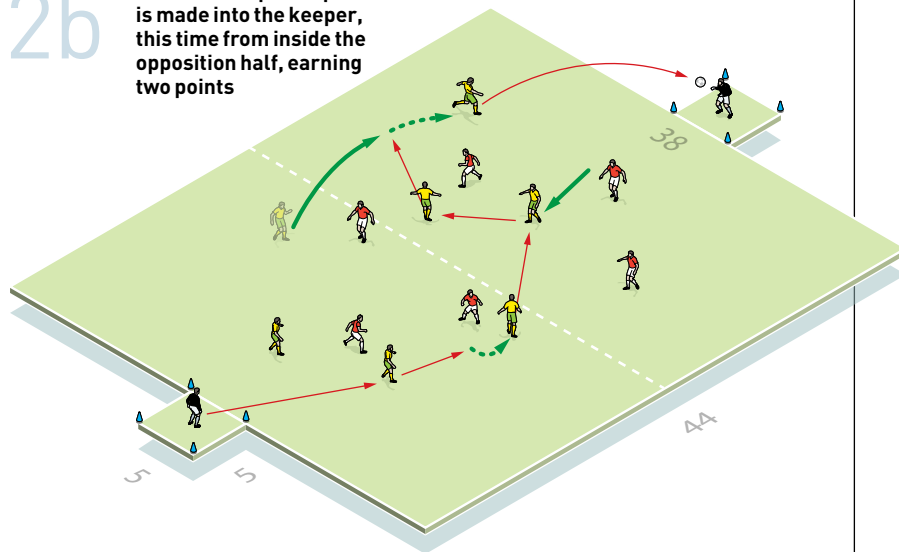
The final game is another 6v6 – this time in a 52x34-yard area. Shape is important here, with teams lining up in contrasting 3-2-1 and 2-3-1 formations. There are no offsides, unless players are obviously 'goal-hanging'. The game is three-touch, and we play as we would a normal game, though all movement and recovery is based on team shape. Teams must swap formations after eight minutes.

What are the key things to look out for?

We're looking for quick, positive, sharp and instinctive link-up play throughout this session, with players building a clear understanding of positions – both their own and opponents'. Movement and the creation of space are essential, particularly in the final game with players being asked to be creative and expressive whilst still respecting the rigidity of their formations. ■

2b

Another completed pass is made into the keeper, this time from inside the opposition half, earning two points

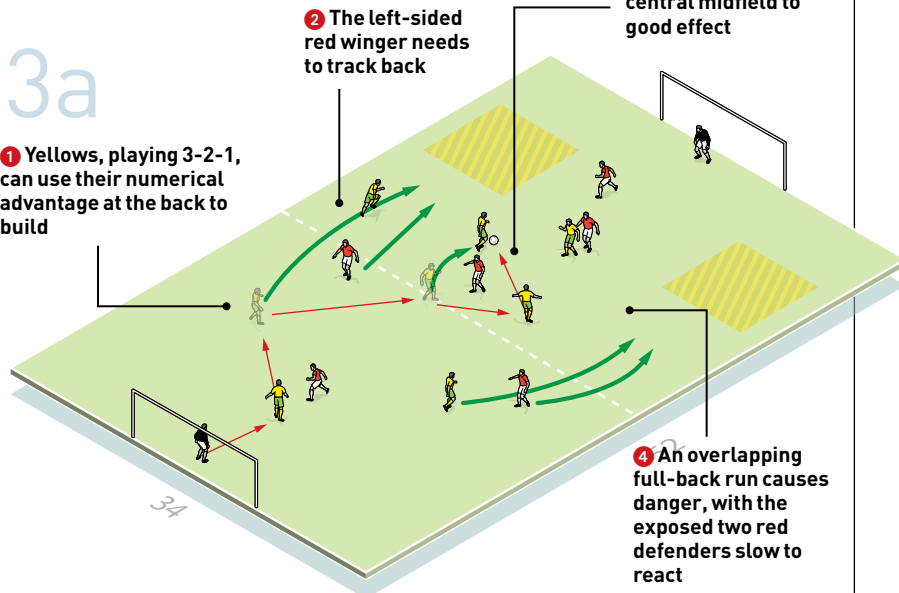


3a

1 Yellows, playing 3-2-1, can use their numerical advantage at the back to build

2 The left-sided red winger needs to track back

3 They overload in central midfield to good effect

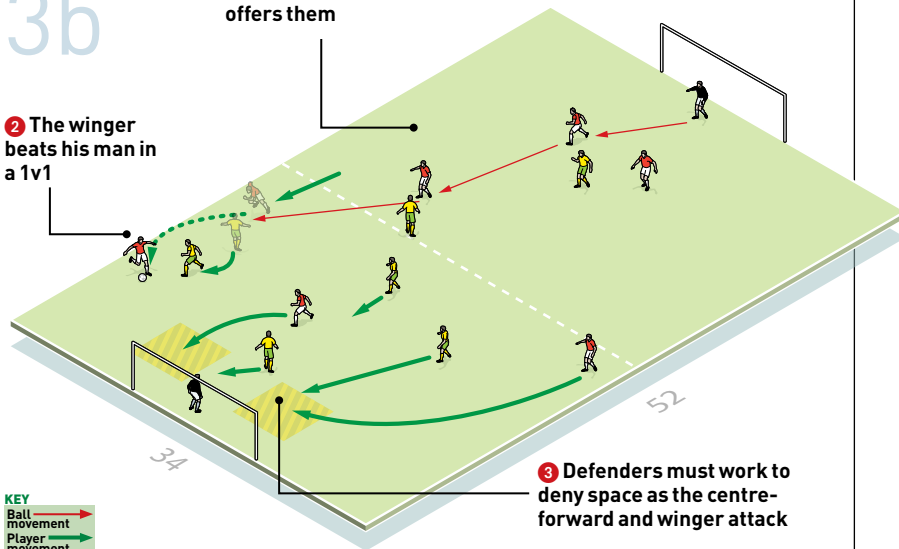


4 An overlapping full-back run causes danger, with the exposed two red defenders slow to react

3b

1 Reds, attacking with a 2-3-1 formation, use the width their midfield offers them

2 The winger beats his man in a 1v1



3 Defenders must work to deny space as the centre-forward and winger attack

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

IPSWICHTOWN

Mick McCarthy Possession, progression and penetration

Overview:

This session is about establishing positive habits in possession. It takes the form of a training circuit followed by a number of progressive games – the session is high tempo, and focuses on the players' ability to assess options and choose the appropriate one. This helps develop into patterns of play. It's important to practise this to build a cohesive pattern for the team, and a shared thought process that leads to the creation of goalscoring opportunities. Numerous times last season we saw these principles really come to fruition in league games.

“The session is high tempo, and focuses on the players' ability to assess options and choose the appropriate one.”

POSSESSION, PROGRESSION AND PENETRATION

SET-UP

AREA

Up to a full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, flat cones, goals, ladders

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v11

SESSION TIME

80mins (maximum)

What do I get the players to do?

Training circuit (1)

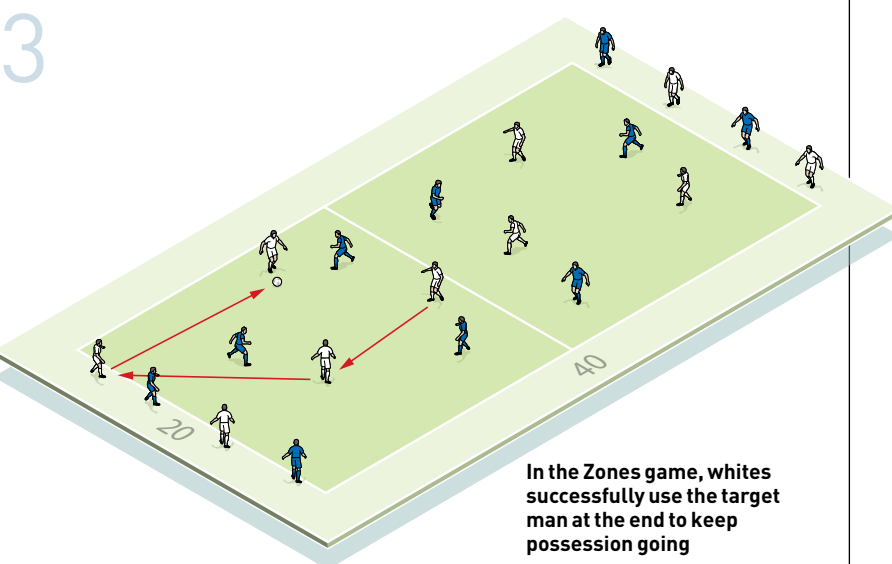
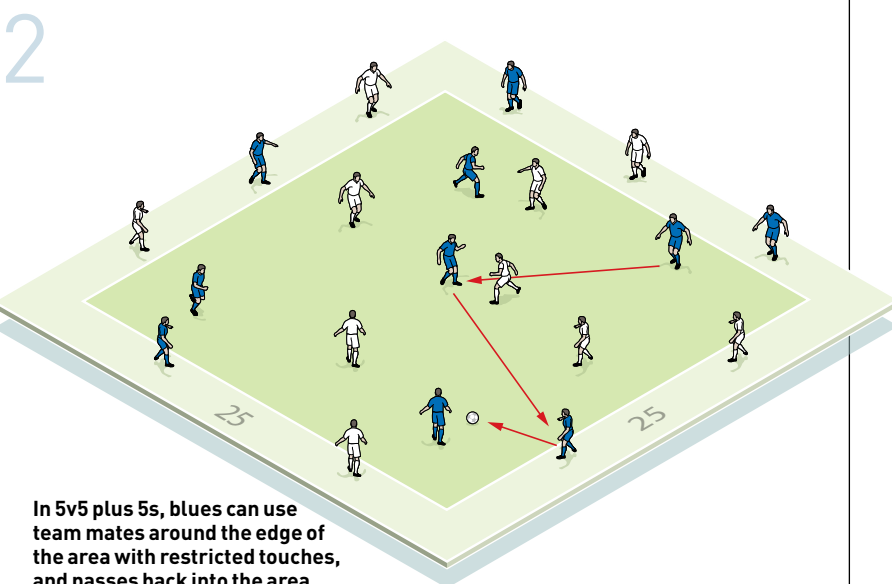
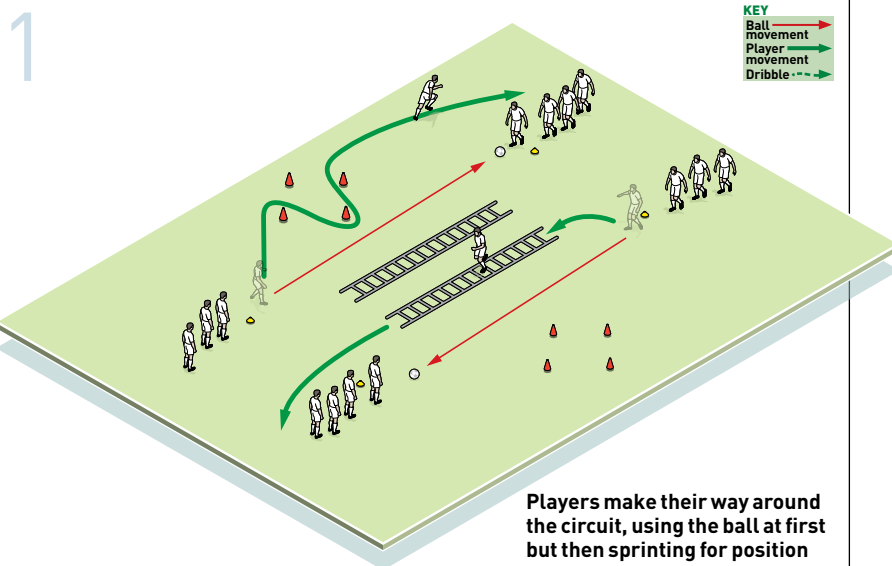
Players pass the ball in a straight line and work through the ladders or cones to the back of the group at the other side. We can vary this drill by making it two- and one-touch, or might instruct different movement on the ladders or through the cones.

5v5 plus 5s (2)

Setting up as shown, this is 5v5 in the central section with five additional team members each for blues and whites, positioned around the sides. The game is three-touch for inner players and two-touch for outer, who cannot lay the ball back to the same man who passed in.

Zones game (3)

The next game is 3v3 in each zone, and each player must stay in his half. The outer players are now target players, with two at each end.





Mick McCarthy
IPSWICH TOWN

Mick McCarthy joined Sky Bet Championship side Ipswich Town in November 2012, subsequently guiding the East Anglia club clear of relegation danger by playing a brand of tough yet entertaining football.

The 54-year-old Yorkshireman had previously enjoyed a successful six-year tenure at Wolves, during which time he took the Molineux club back into the top division.

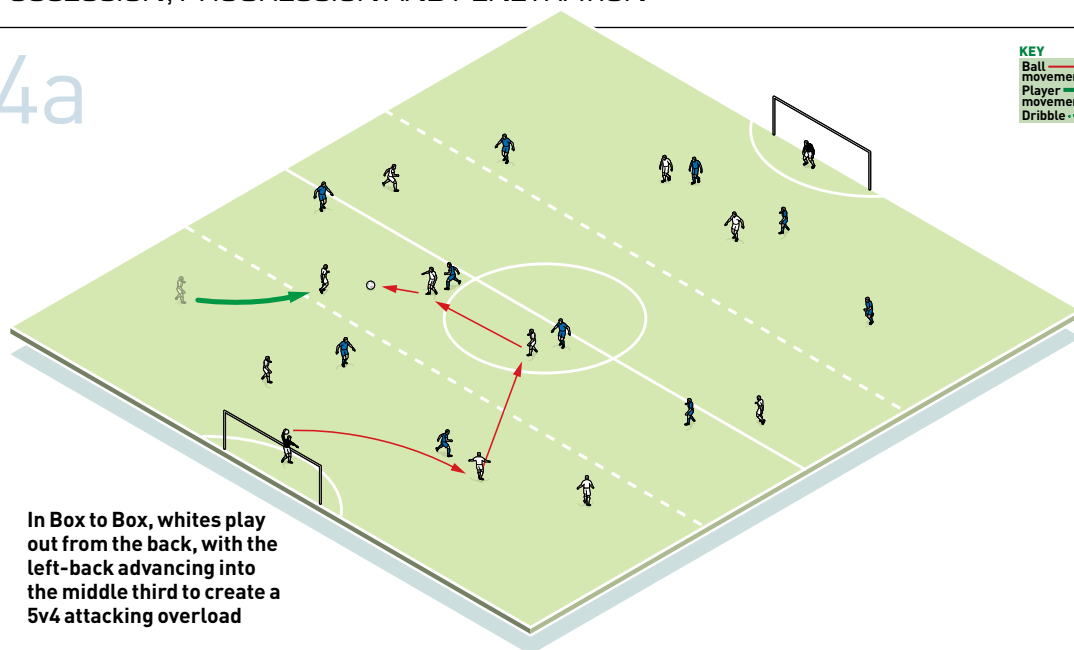
Outside of impressive spells at Sunderland and Millwall, McCarthy is also renowned for overseeing the Republic of Ireland's 2002 World Cup campaign, where his side were unlucky to be eliminated by Spain in a penalty shoot-out.

As a player, he starred as an uncompromising defender for hometown club Barnsley, Manchester City, Celtic, Lyon and Millwall.

"We want to see good angles of play, assured touch and control, running off the ball, blindside runs, plus varied receiving skills and positions."

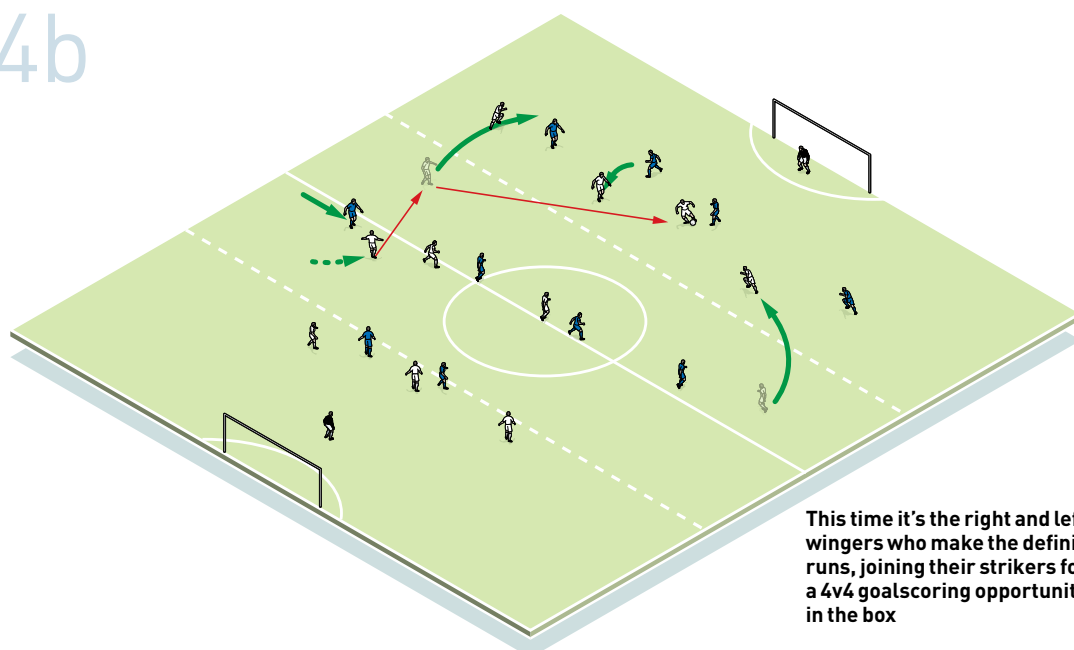
POSSESSION, PROGRESSION AND PENETRATION

4a



In Box to Box, whites play out from the back, with the left-back advancing into the middle third to create a 5v4 attacking overload

4b



This time it's the right and left wingers who make the defining runs, joining their strikers for a 4v4 goalscoring opportunity in the box

Box to Box (4a/4b)

We split the pitch into thirds with players starting in zones. Teams must play through each zone, overloading or equalising playing numbers as they go. One defender can move into the middle third to make a 5v4, then two can progress from the middle third to the attacking third to make a 4v4. The intention is to create

as many goalscoring opportunities as possible. We would then extend this into a full-sized 11v11 game, to finish.

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

In each of the games, we want to see good angles of play, assured touch and control, running off the ball, blindside runs, plus

varied receiving skills (such as on the half-turn) and positions. We're also looking for players to play through the lines and rotate within their restrictions. And players must always know their options before they pass and receive.

Tactically, support positions from behind and in front of the ball are crucial, along with sensible spacing

between players and good timing of runs and movement.

How do I progress the session?

Conditions such as one- and two-touch can be brought in to increase difficulty. We might also suggest that players can only pass forward, or at most are permitted only one backward pass. ■

PETERBOROUGH
UNITED

Darren Ferguson Playing through teams in a 4-4-2 formation

Overview:

This session is about wide players or strikers receiving in between the lines. The focus is on quality of passing and timing of movements, and it's a scenario that we want to see come into play regularly when we use 4-4-2.

The zoned nature of the practice means we know where opposition players will be and can train with that in mind. It's a dynamic way of linking up play, and builds communication and rapport between team mates, particularly the wide players and strikers. In our league game against Sheffield Wednesday last season we used this session to devastating effect, regularly affecting their full-backs and playing balls down the side of their centre-backs on the way to a vital home win.

PLAYING THROUGH TEAMS IN A 4-4-2 FORMATION

SET-UP

AREA

Up to the space between the boxes, full width

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v11

SESSION TIME

Screens 10mins each,
Zone Conditioned
game 30mins

What do I get the players to do?

Screen 1

In the first screen, the ball is played across the central midfielders and into the wide player, who steps in to play as the ball arrives. He moves the ball on first time.

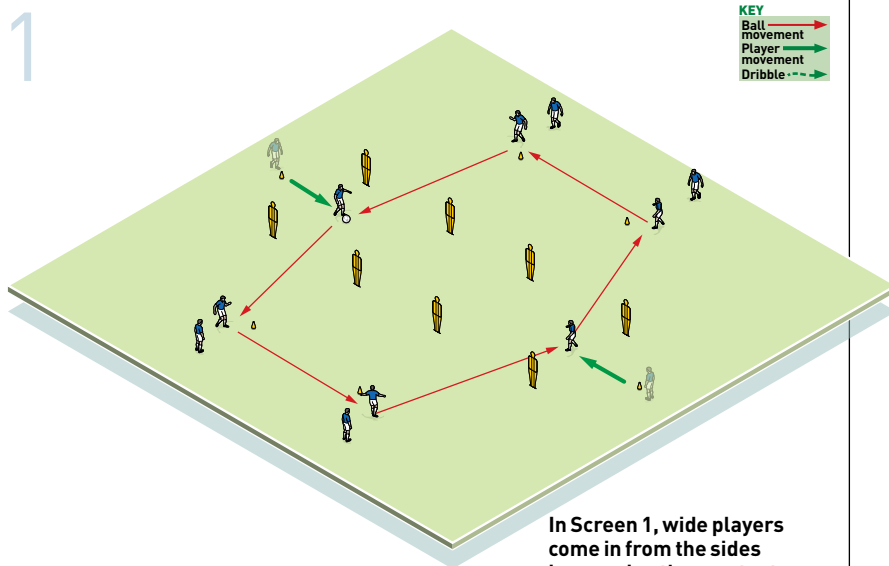
Screen 2

In the progression, the player steps in, controls, turns, then passes it out the other side, ensuring the run is made outside the wide mannequin. The timing of the movement here is vital in terms of receiving the pass and moving it to the right man whilst playing between the lines.

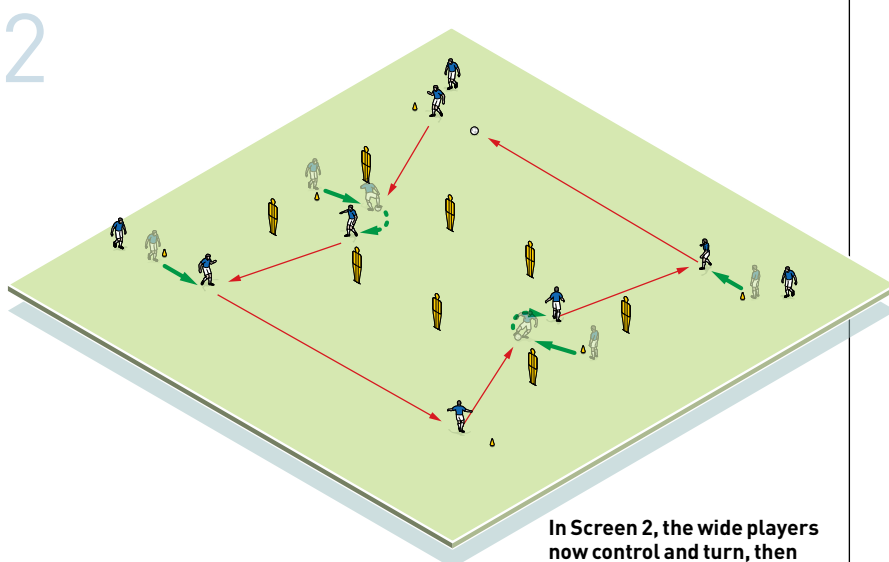
We will also add in variations to keep players on their toes – for instance, instructing quick one-twos with the end player.

Screen 3

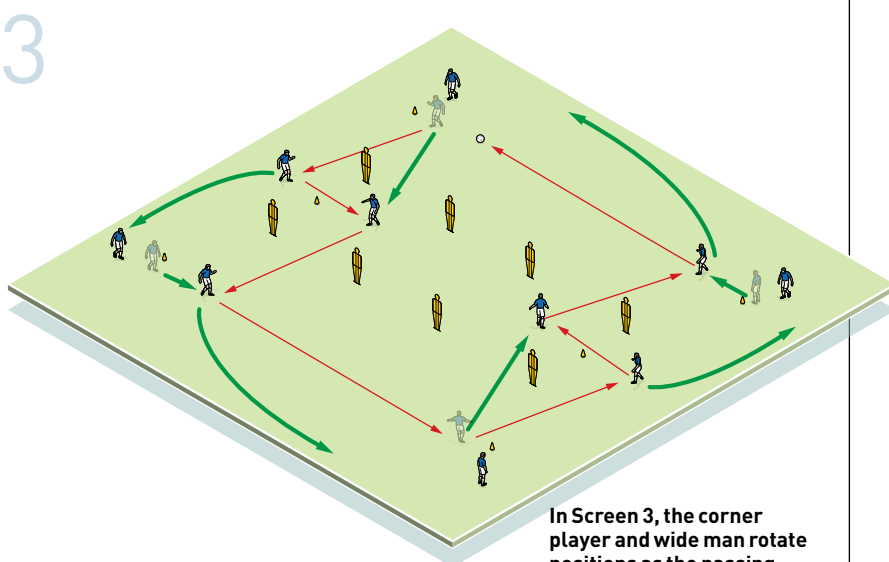
The next screen looks at the timing of rotation. Here, players on the corners pass into the middle then jog down the side ready to rotate with the central player. As the corner man runs towards



In Screen 1, wide players come in from the sides in ensuring the constant movement of the ball around the circuit



In Screen 2, the wide players now control and turn, then pass out the other side



In Screen 3, the corner player and wide man rotate positions as the passing circuit gradually increases in complexity



**Darren
Ferguson**

**PETERBOROUGH
UNITED**

Darren Ferguson's Peterborough United side are hotly tipped to make a return to the Sky Bet Championship this season having been relegated back to League One on the final day of last season in cruel circumstances.

The last-minute goal that sent Posh down was hard to take for Darren, son of Sir Alex Ferguson, whose side once against provided rich entertainment for the London Road faithful, playing a brand of expansive, attacking football – indeed, their tally of 66 goals was higher than Hull City, whose second-placed finish earned them promotion to the Premier League.

With the exception of a short spell in charge of Preston North End, Ferguson has now been in charge at Peterborough for six years, in that time earning the club two promotions.

“This is a passing drill so we want to see quality of pass and speed of pass in attempting to break the lines.”

PLAYING THROUGH TEAMS IN A 4-4-2 FORMATION

his team mate, he instructs as to where and how the switch will occur, enabling the two individuals to comfortably achieve the learning objective, namely to understand the rotation and the clearing space for a team mate to run into.

Zone Conditioned game

Setting up as shown, the defending team (yellows) must stay in their zones, while blue attackers can move between areas in creating overloads.

Play as you would do a normal game, but as soon as possession is turned over, the other team assumes the role of attackers and can then move about with those privileges.

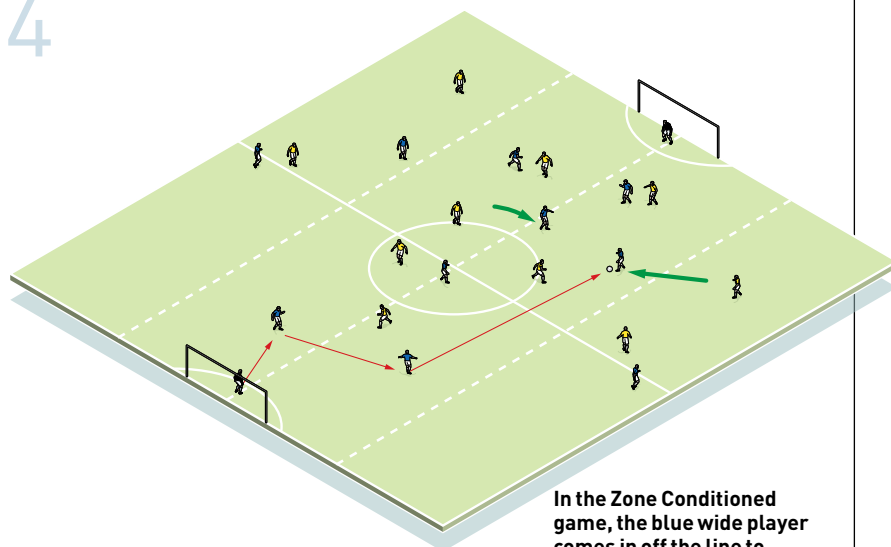
How do I progress the game?

As a progression, the full-backs are allowed to follow wide players into the next zone.

What are the key things to look out for?

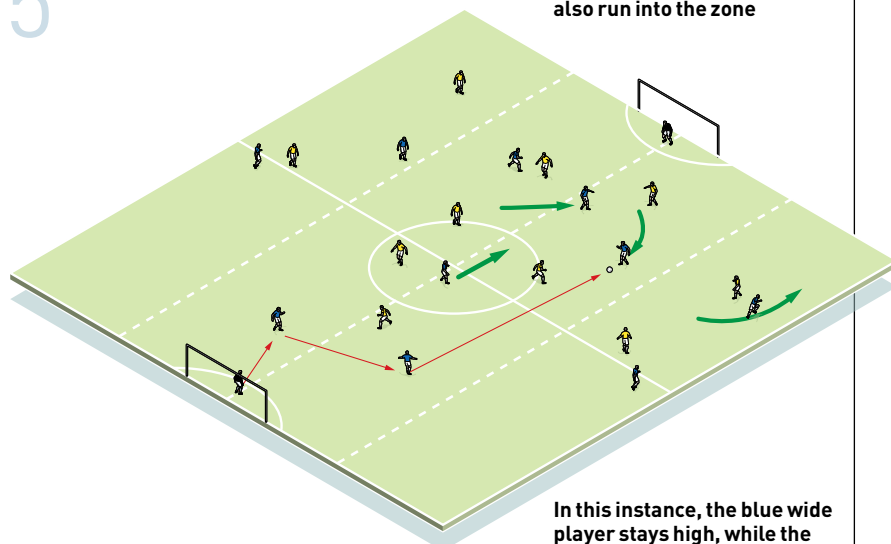
This is a passing drill so we want to see quality and speed of pass in attempting to break the lines. Receiving between and in behind players is obviously essential, as is the timing of movement coming in off the line. When on the attack, full-backs must use their first touch to open up with the intention of either playing down the side or inside. ■

4



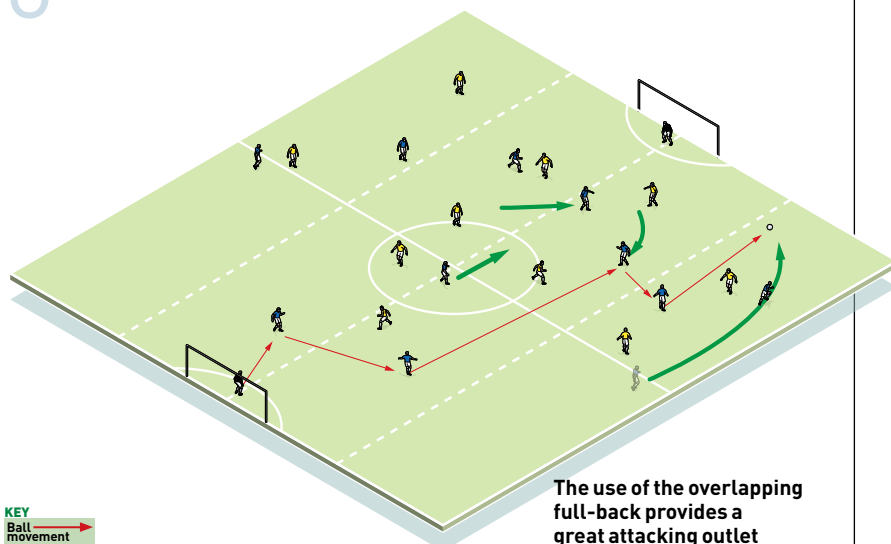
In the Zone Conditioned game, the blue wide player comes in off the line to receive the ball, and creates an attacking 3v1 overload, with a central attacker having also run into the zone

5



In this instance, the blue wide player stays high, while the striker comes to play in the pocket

6



The use of the overlapping full-back provides a great attacking outlet and equalises the player numbers in the wide zone



LMA AMBASSADOR

Michael Appleton Receiving skills

Overview:

The session helps players perfect receiving skills, whether that be on the front foot, back foot or the half turn; and whether as a result of one-, two- or three-touch football.

This is a vitally important part of our game which improves awareness and close control, especially in the attacking third of the pitch.

Barcelona are particularly good purveyors of accomplished receiving skills, and most of their goals showcase an absolute masterclass in passing and control.

A key part of this session is players running off the ball at all times – team mates must always be looking to create space and offer options.

“A key part of this session is players running off the ball at all times.”

RECEIVING SKILLS

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 106x40 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, discs, goals, mannequins (if available)

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 16 plus 2 keepers

SESSION TIME

Four Boxes and progressions 25mins,
Four Strips 4 x 2-4mins,
Three Zones SSG 25mins

What do I get the players to do?

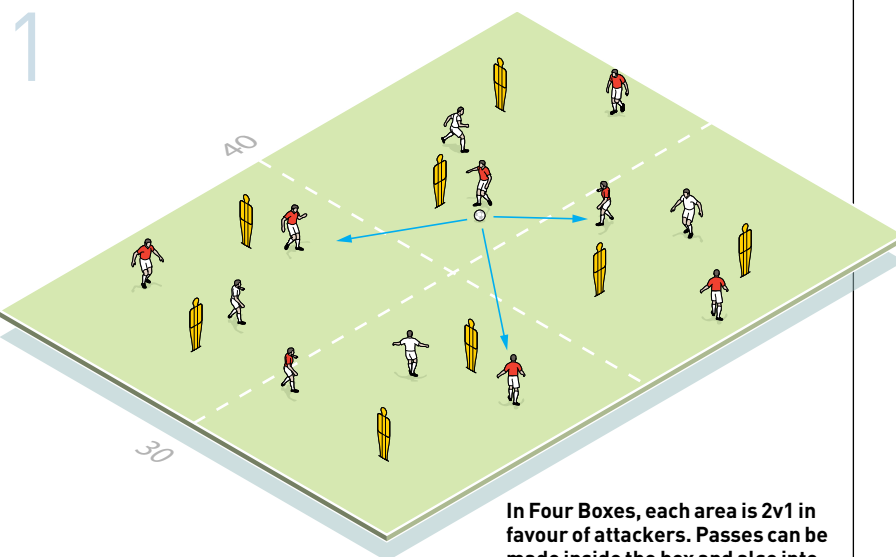
Four Boxes (1/2)

We begin with a couple of practices that lead into a small-sided game. The first is on a 40x30-yard area, with 12-16 players working in groups. Setting up as shown, it's 2v1 in each box with some scattered mannequins. The lone defender must look to intercept or tackle, with all players staying in their boxes.

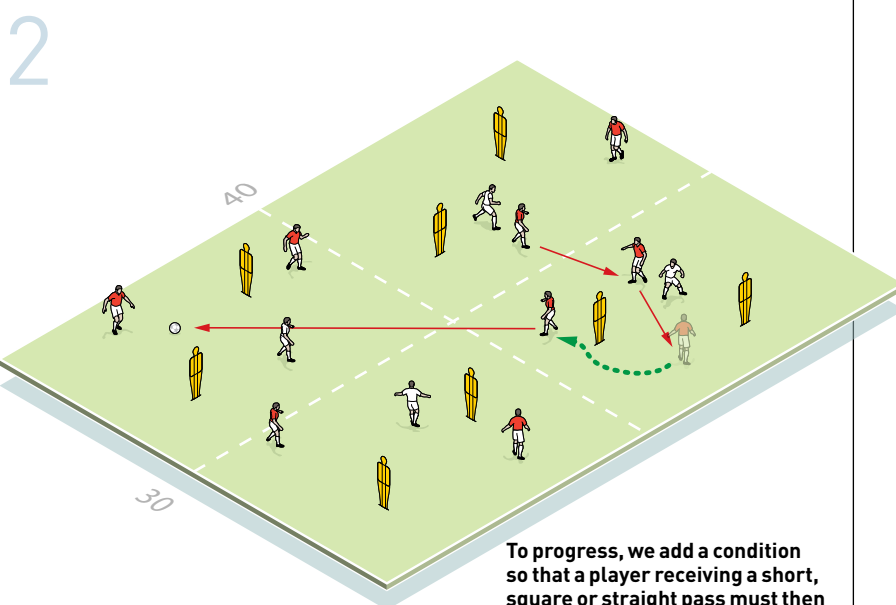
As the practice continues, we can apply certain conditions in order to increase difficulty. For instance, players receiving a short, square or straight pass must then pass diagonally. Other passing conditions can be determined by the coach. We can also add a second or third ball, or an extra man to make a 3v1, so that players have to be aware of opportunities/threats from all sides.

Four Strips (3a/3b)

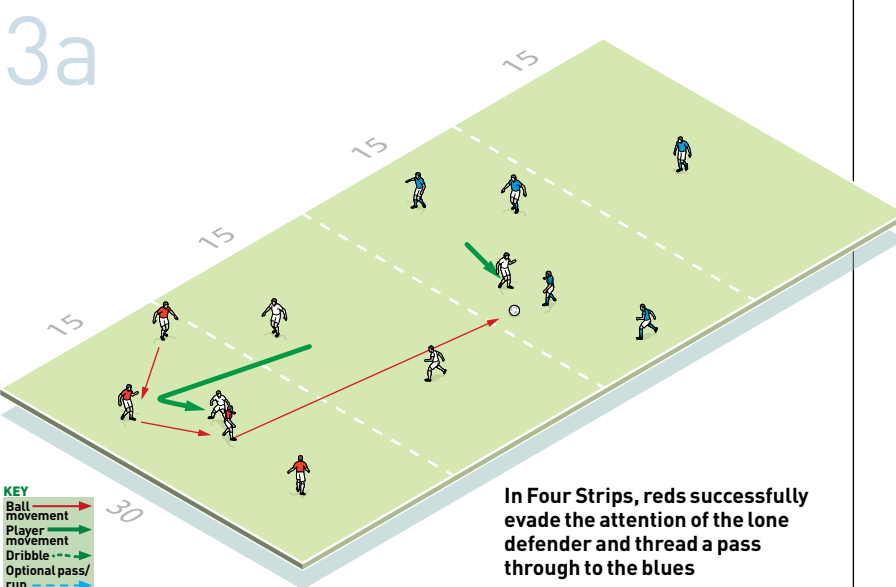
This game uses three groups of four, the



In Four Boxes, each area is 2v1 in favour of attackers. Passes can be made inside the box and also into different zones, but players must remain in their boxes at all times



To progress, we add a condition so that a player receiving a short, square or straight pass must then make a diagonal onward pass



In Four Strips, reds successfully evade the attention of the lone defender and thread a pass through to the blues





Michael Appleton

LMA AMBASSADOR

At the age of 27, Michael Appleton's playing career was cruelly cut short, after the former Manchester United trainee was forced to admit defeat in a two-year battle against a posterior cruciate knee ligament injury. But he remained with his club, West Bromwich Albion, in a coaching capacity, working with a variety of different age groups before rising up to first-team coach. And he further proved his versatility by assuming caretaker manager and assistant manager (to Roy Hodgson) roles.

Moving to Portsmouth in November 2011, the 37-year-old worked against extreme financial restraints to help keep the south-coast club afloat and competitive. After a brief spell in charge of Blackpool, Appleton switched to Blackburn Rovers in January 2013. He won three of his first five matches, as Rovers defeated Arsenal 1-0 at The Emirates in the FA Cup fifth round.

"We want to see players receiving on the front- or back- foot, with their first touch, moving the ball away from pressure."

RECEIVING SKILLS

aim being for red players to work the ball around the area and feed through to blues, bypassing the whites. One white can enter the end zone, while another comes forward to press the ball.

As the challenge progresses, we increase the difficulty by limiting touches.

Three Zones SSG (4a/4b)

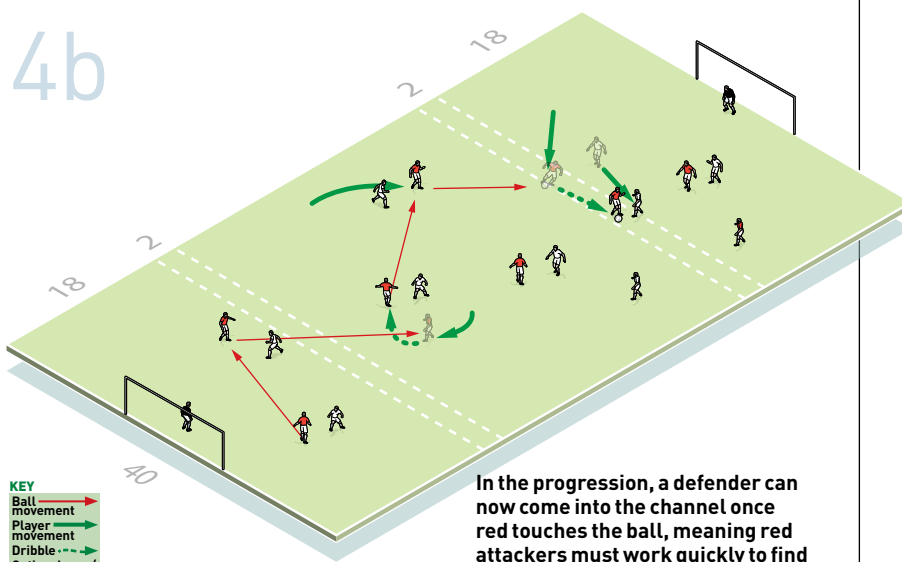
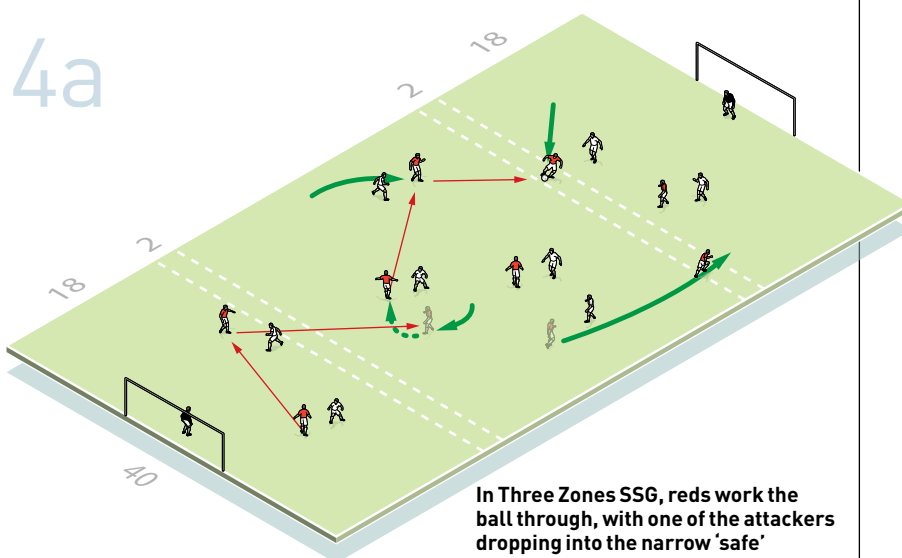
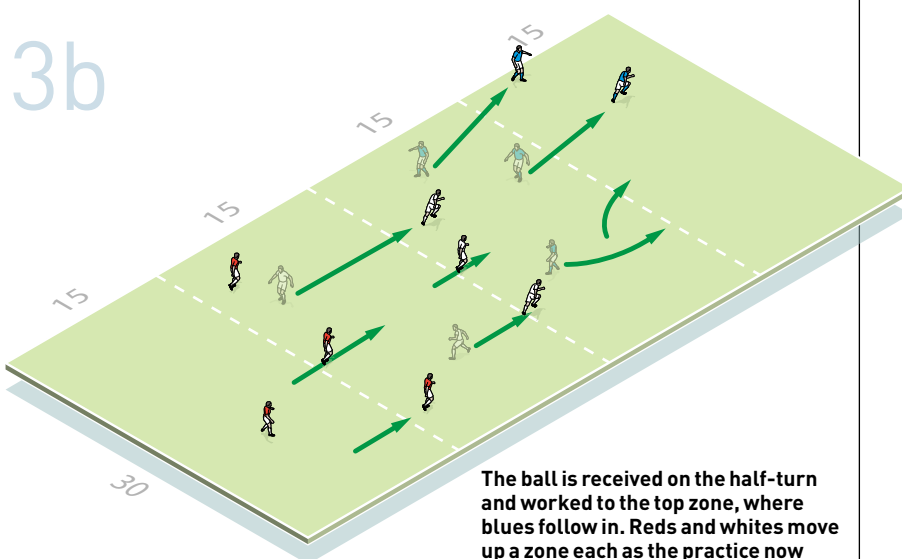
This small-sided game requires 16 outfield players plus keepers. It's 2v2 in the end zones and 4v4 in the middle. The thin channels represent safe zones for attackers to drop into, and the intention is to create 3v2 overloads in the end zones with midfield runners.

To progress this game, we can allow the defender to enter the safe zone after the attacker's first touch in order to speed up the practice.

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

Tactically, we are looking for vision, speed of thought and movement. We want to limit straight passes because they are too predictable and easy to defend. For defenders, the ability to press quickly and effectively is important.

Technically, we want to see players receiving on the front- or back- foot, with a first touch moving the ball away from pressure. ■



LMA AMBASSADOR

Dave Bassett Defensive understanding through heading

Overview:

This session is about encouraging understanding between the back five (four defenders and a keeper), and teaches them how to cope with long aerial deliveries, be they from the opposition keeper or outfield players. The aim here is to improve heading technique, and to highlight the importance of cover when defending. It's important to practise this because keepers deliver more balls into the opponents' middle or final third than any other player, being in contact with the ball up to 60 times per game.

This practice is successful every time a goal isn't scored or an opposition restart isn't awarded.

"The aim here is to improve heading technique, and to highlight the importance of cover when defending."

DEFENSIVE UNDERSTANDING THROUGH HEADING

SET-UP

AREA

Up to a full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v11

SESSION TIME

Practices and Progressions 10mins each,
Game 20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Heading Clear

Setting up as shown, the server delivers a high ball for reds to defend under minimal pressure from blues (1). We encourage communication, cover and good technique – namely heading away using height, distance and aggression.

Players must react to where the headers go – so moving up, working as a group, squeezing and holding.

Re-run 10 times, then swap team roles.

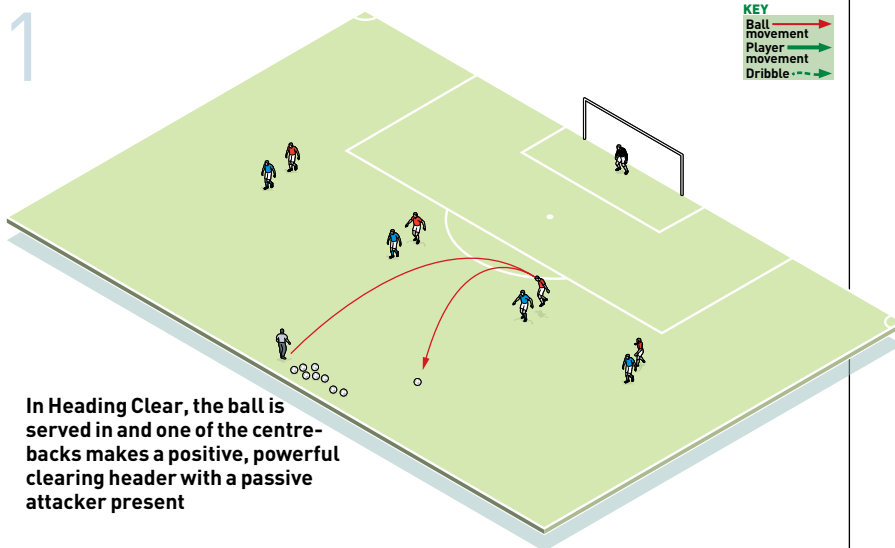
Coming Short

Now attackers are active, and one drops deep to receive, so centre-backs must have the space behind them covered by the wing-backs (2). This prevents a gap appearing in the 'primary danger' area, where a striker could run onto a flicked header for a 1v1 with the keeper.

Allowing 'secondary danger'

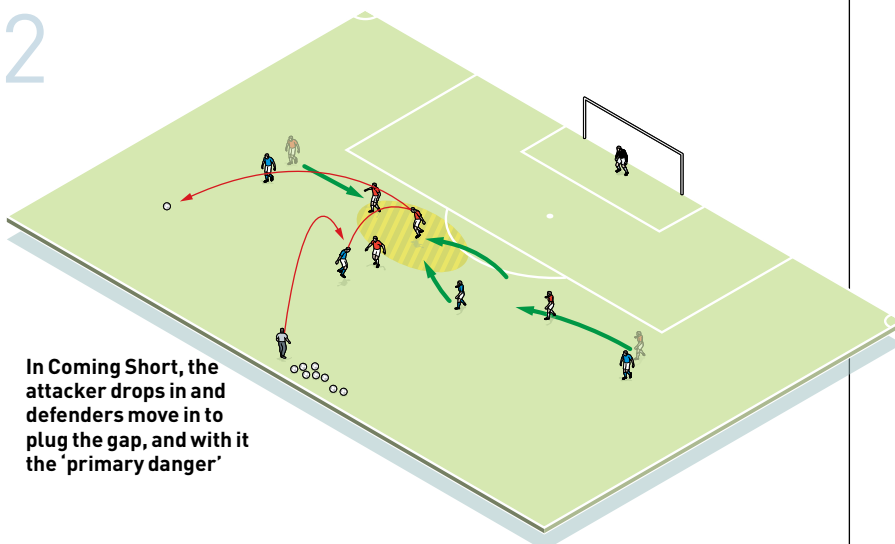
With full-backs plugging the gap, they are of course exposing the wings to attacks. Although not ideal, we regard this as 'secondary danger', ▼

1



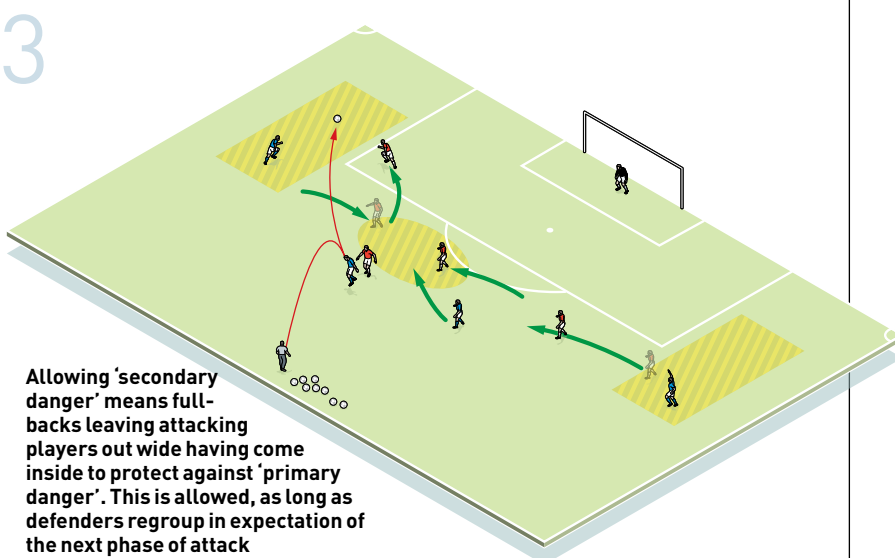
In Heading Clear, the ball is served in and one of the centre-backs makes a positive, powerful clearing header with a passive attacker present

2



In Coming Short, the attacker drops in and defenders move in to plug the gap, and with it the 'primary danger'

3



Allowing 'secondary danger' means full-backs leaving attacking players out wide having come inside to protect against 'primary danger'. This is allowed, as long as defenders regroup in expectation of the next phase of attack



Dave Bassett
LMA AMBASSADOR

Dave Bassett is the man praised for Wimbledon's meteoric rise through the Football League, a run that culminated in FA Cup final success in 1987 at Wembley as 'The Crazy Gang' defeated Liverpool 1-0.

After a playing career that largely revolved around the non-league game, Bassett took charge of Wimbledon in January 1981, and within four months was toasting the Plough Lane outfit's promotion to the third tier.

Elevation to the old Second Division arrived in 1984, and two years later the modest south London club were upsetting the apple cart again in gaining promotion to top level, where they would remain for over 15 years.

That FA Cup success proved to be the pinnacle for Bassett, although he went on to have successful managerial spells at Sheffield United, Crystal Palace, Nottingham Forest and Barnsley.

"Players must react to where the headers go – so moving up, working as a group, squeezing and holding."

DEFENSIVE UNDERSTANDING THROUGH HEADING

because the attacking team still has a lot to do to score from here, and that's unlikely if we defend properly (3).

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

Central defenders must adopt an aggressive attitude, with all five players working to remove the primary danger whilst staying in line as a group. Good communication (for instance, in staying high to allow the ball through to the keeper, or dropping deep to head) is essential (4).

Wing-backs must be brave enough to get around the back of the central defenders to cover, even if it means leaving space out wide.

Wide attackers must not come infield and affect the centre-forwards, whose job it is to attack every ball.

How do I progress the session?

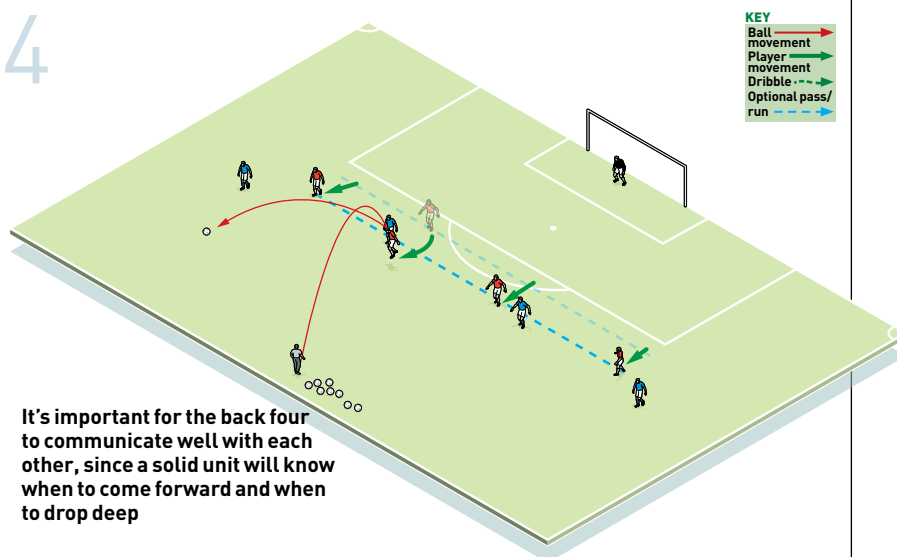
To progress, bring in two attacking midfielders. Two touch, they cannot go beyond the ball once it's been served in, but can pick up second balls or knockdowns (5).

We can also bring in another line of strikers, therefore rotating back fours in attacking waves.

Finally, add an opposition keeper to deliver a variety of crosses into different areas (6).

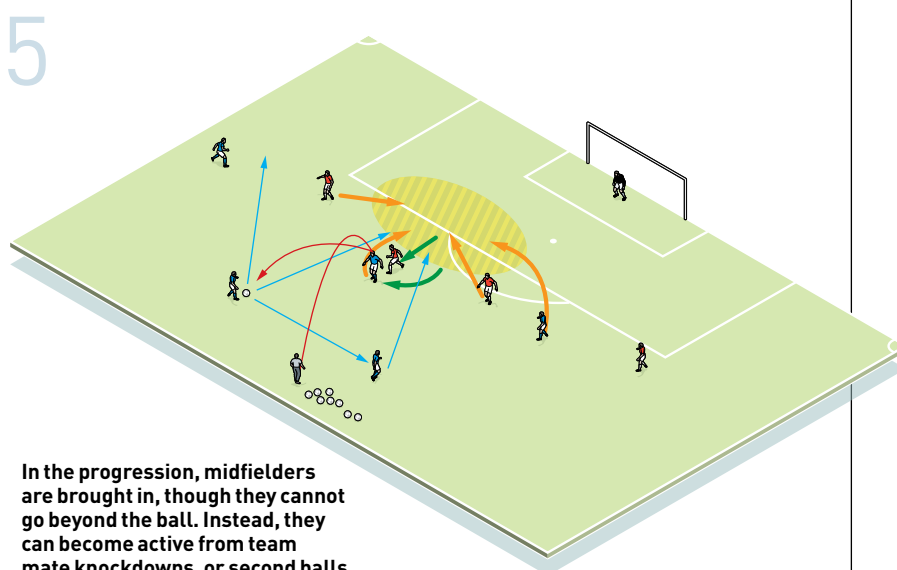
For a full-pitch game situation, play until the ball is dead then restart with either keeper. ■

4



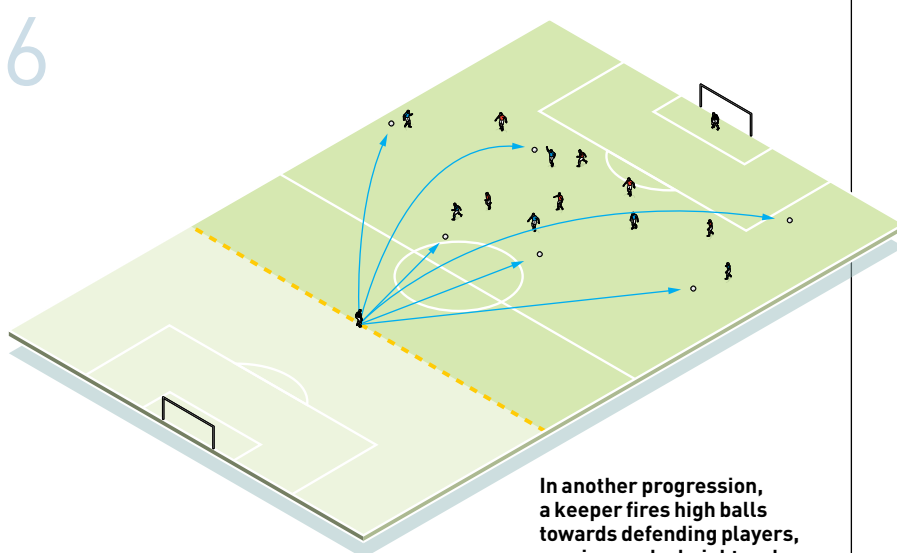
It's important for the back four to communicate well with each other, since a solid unit will know when to come forward and when to drop deep

5



In the progression, midfielders are brought in, though they cannot go beyond the ball. Instead, they can become active from team mate knockdowns, or second balls resulting from inadequate headed clearances

6



In another progression, a keeper fires high balls towards defending players, varying angle, height and speed

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:

Finishing outside the box

My players enjoy technical football, and as a result want to walk the ball into the net. How can I shift their approach?

Question asked by John Saint, a coach of men's and women's football in Yorkshire

ANSWERED BY:

Mark Cooper

SWINDON TOWN

Technical football doesn't have to mean walking the ball in. Indeed, this session utilises key technical elements in passing and receiving, with an end goal of creating shooting opportunities from outside the box.

Coaching considerations

Moving the ball quickly and with purpose is pivotal to the success of attackers in this session. We are looking to coach positive and instinctive attacking play at all times, yet players still need to

SET-UP

AREA

44x36 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

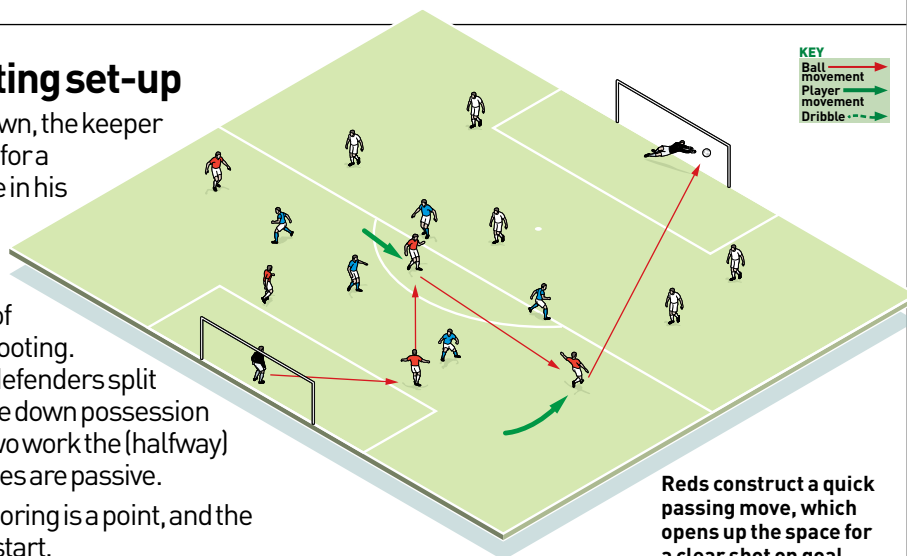
5v5 (v5), plus two keepers

SESSION TIME

10mins per exercise

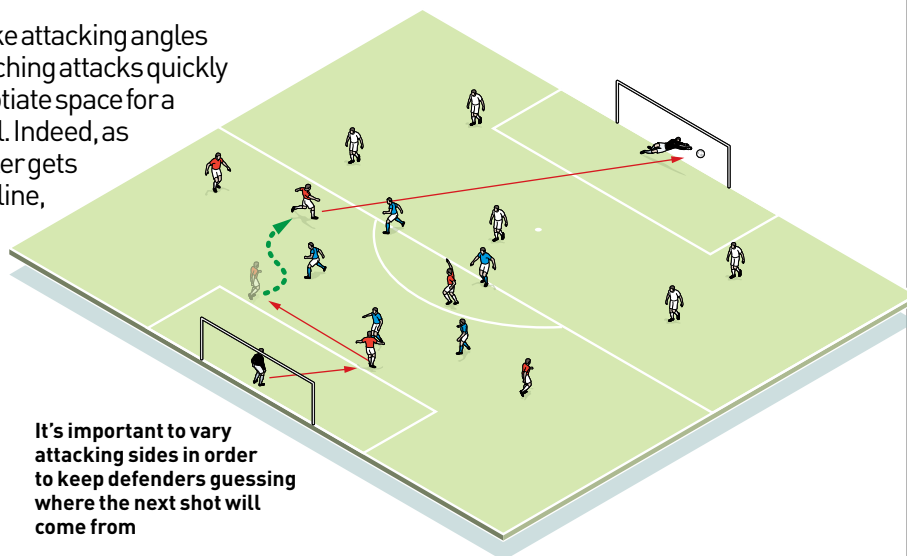
Basic shooting set-up

Setting up as shown, the keeper feeds the ball out for a possession game in his half of the pitch. Reds must work the ball through to near the edge of the box before shooting. Opposition blue defenders split so that three close down possession while the other two work the (halfway) line to block; whites are passive. The reward for scoring is a point, and the opportunity to restart.



Reds construct a quick passing move, which opens up the space for a clear shot on goal

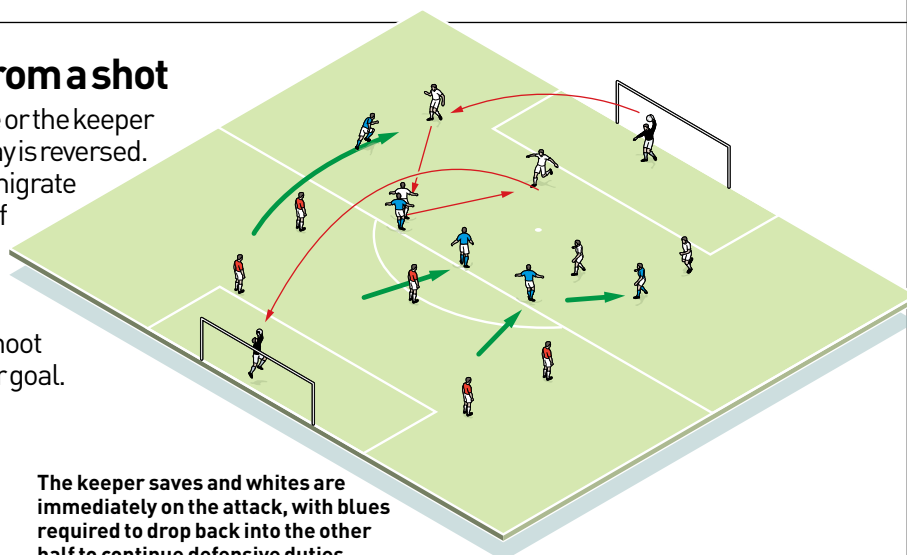
Reds cannot make attacking angles predictable, switching attacks quickly in looking to negotiate space for a clear shot on goal. Indeed, as soon as an attacker gets near the halfway line, his instinctive reaction must be to shoot, not pass.



It's important to vary attacking sides in order to keep defenders guessing where the next shot will come from

Turnover from a shot

If reds shoot wide or the keeper makes a save, play is reversed. Blue defenders migrate to the other half of the pitch and now have to close down white attackers, who shoot towards the other goal.



The keeper saves and whites are immediately on the attack, with blues required to drop back into the other half to continue defensive duties

COACHING CONSULTATION

be realistic – namely getting the ball as close to the halfway line as possible before shooting.

Why this works

The practice works by cementing an attacking mindset that can be directly reconstructed in a match situation. ■



Mark Cooper
SWINDONTOWN

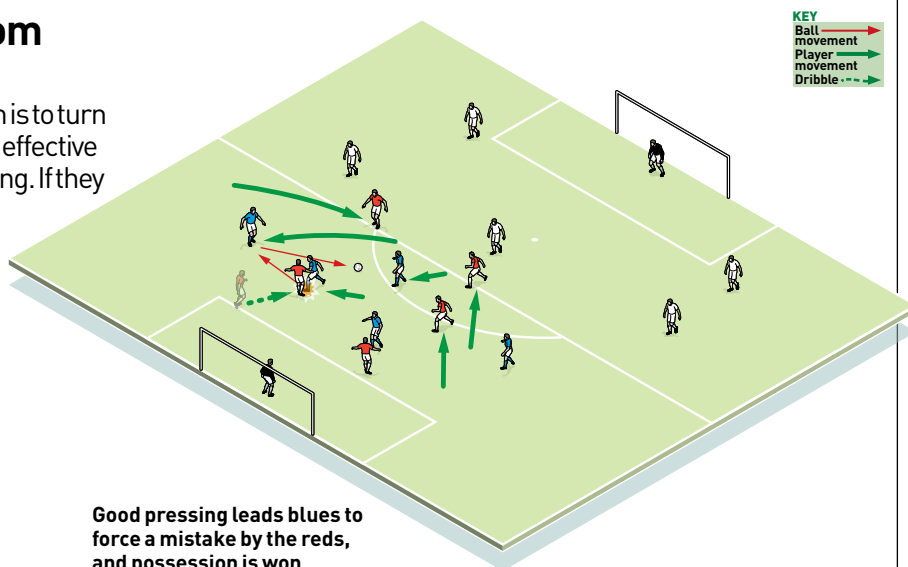
Mark Cooper is manager of Sky Bet League One side Swindon Town. Son of former Leeds United legend Terry Cooper, the 44-year-old made over 500 senior appearances in the lower leagues and non-league before officially hanging up his boots in 2007.

His subsequent managerial experience saw him preserve Tamworth's Conference status for five successive seasons, and after two years at Kettering Town, he landed the manager's role at Championship side Peterborough United. Subsequent jobs at Darlington, Kettering again and AFC Telford United followed, before he arrived at Swindon Town in August 2013. And despite a backdrop of financial uncertainty, the Robins have enjoyed a fantastic start in Sky Bet League One this season.

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

Turnover from a tackle

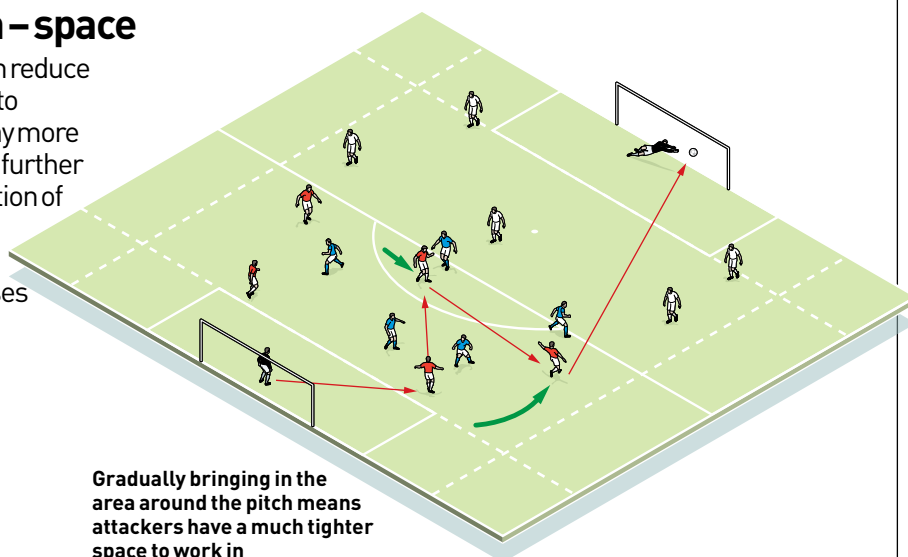
Blues' ultimate aim is to turn over possession by effective pressing and tackling. If they succeed in this, they earn a point.



Good pressing leads blues to force a mistake by the reds, and possession is won

Progression – space

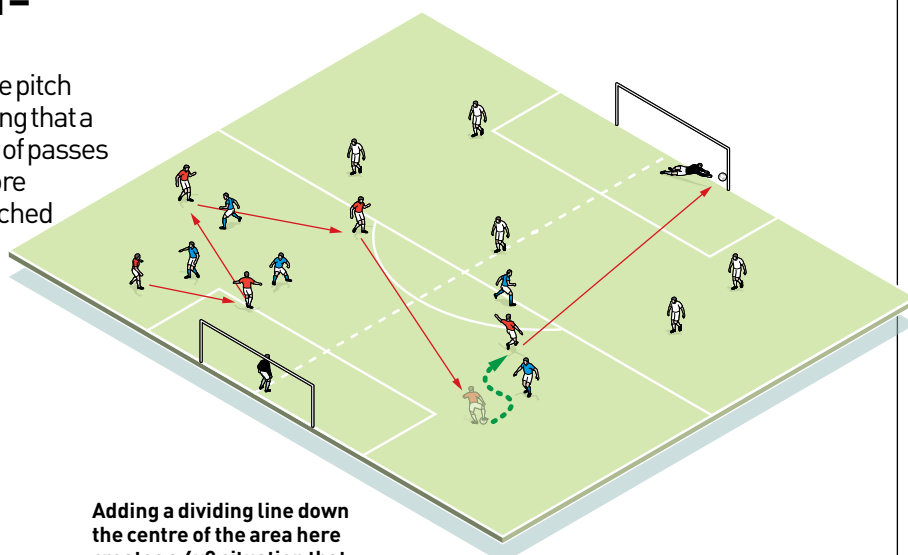
To progress, we can reduce the size of the area to make attacking play more concentrated. This further incentivises the notion of shooting on sight. We could also put a time limit on passes being made before a shot is taken.



Gradually bringing in the area around the pitch means attackers have a much tighter space to work in

Progression – overloads

We can also split the pitch lengthways, dictating that a minimum number of passes must be made before the ball can be switched to the other side.



Adding a dividing line down the centre of the area here creates a 4v3 situation that, once solved, frees up a 1v1

EXTRA-TIME PROFILE

GIANFRANCO ZOLA

WATFORD



This issue we've dipped into the archives to republish a brilliant interview that former West Ham and current Watford manager Gianfranco Zola gave to *The Manager* magazine way back in 2008. It offers some intriguing insight into the influences and successes the 47-year-old has worked into his managerial style at Watford.

"I remember when I first came to play in England, I thought it was fantastic that football was so engrained in the culture; how it was lived and breathed. I saw that it would be a great opportunity to manage here."

Q You were doing well as a coach of the Italian Under-21 national side, so what made you decide to begin your career as club manager over in England?

A "First of all I like the idea of assembling a team as a manager and making the team play the way that you want. The experience with the Italian Under-21s has been great for me because it inspired me. I didn't want to be a manager but then when my friend Pierluigi Casiraghi became



PROFILE:

Gianfranco Zola was born in Oliena, Italy, and signed his first professional contract with Sardinian side Nuorese in 1984, at the age of 18.

He signed for Serie D side Torres two years later, before being picked up by

giants Napoli in 1989, where he scored 32 goals in 105 appearances.

It was with Parma where he really flourished though, and his 49 goals courted the attentions of Chelsea, who paid £4.5million for the hitman in 1996.

He hit 59 goals for the Blues in 229 appearances, becoming a cult hero for his brand of expressive, innovative wizardry and goalscoring.

He returned to Italy in 2003 to sign off his career with Cagliari.

His first managerial appointment was at West Ham United in 2008, where he managed to keep the side in the Barclays Premier League on limited resources. And after a short break, he returned to the English game in 2012, guiding Watford to the Championship play-off final in his first season in charge.

EXTRA-TIME

manager of the Under-21s I worked alongside him and I enjoyed it very much. I enjoyed seeing the players playing with a certain attitude and a certain idea and that's why I thought I might be able to be a manager somewhere.

"When I was a footballer in England I remember that it was fantastic how the sport was considered and lived and breathed. That made me think 'oh yes this is a very good opportunity to manage in England and I am going to take it.' Also I know in this country that if you do well at your job you are going to be well respected."

Q How important do you believe it is to be able speak the language of the country you are coming to manage in to give yourself the best opportunity of success?

A "In my job one of the most important things is communication, so for me it is vital that you are able to speak good English so that you can tell the players what you want, and express that."

Q Italian football is slightly different technically to the Premier League; have you had to adjust your approach to coaching at all from how you were coaching in Italy?

A "Well it is certainly different for me because, first of all, my role in Italy was a part-time job; and secondly, I was coaching young players and so the expectations from the players were different. Yes I have changed a little but I have tried to keep the same principles because that's why I am a manager. I want to see my team playing good

STATSLIFE

As manager (correct up to October 28):



West Ham United

80 games
(23 wins, 21 draws, 36 defeats)
win ratio of 29%

Watford

67 games
(33 games, 11 draws, 23 defeats)
win ratio 49%



football, enjoying their football and making it enjoyable for the others.

"Obviously when you speak to a 19- or 20-year-old player you speak to them in a certain way, then when you are speaking to players who are 27-30, who have had so many experiences in their lives, you have to use a different approach. So you need to develop skills like that."

Q Why do believe it is important to take the opportunity to experience managing in another country?

A "Experience abroad is important not even just as a manager but

as an individual because the whole experience makes you better. You learn another language, another

culture and another way to think. There was a very wise man who said 'When your brain expands it never goes back to the previous situation' which means if you give your brain more things to think about and more things to look at it will get better and better and bigger and bigger. Such an experience

will make you a better person."

Q Do you believe that managing abroad can give you an edge as a manager?

A "Yes, you will experience styles of play and player behaviour, and they are things that will improve your knowledge and experience. The more you know about these things the more possibilities you have to your job in a better way."

Q What have you found most fulfilling to date about managing in England?

A "The most fulfilling thing is that you have 24 players and you need to get the best out of them. In order to do that it pushes you a lot and it's like you are exploiting the best of yourself. This process of finding things to make them better will eventually make you a better person as well. Obviously I am Italian and I can share all of my knowledge and experiences with the players. I tell you it is a great thing when you feel you are helping somebody else get better." ■

'YOU CAN QUOTE ME ON THAT...'

"The way he played the game was the right way. He was so entertaining and yet so humble, you wouldn't know how good he was. So polite and dignified, there is not one air of conceitedness about him."

Former Crystal Palace manager Ian Holloway

"He was such a lovely footballer and is such a nice man. Everyone says it... there is a universal will for him to succeed."

Daily Mail journalist Martin Samuel

BOOKED: **THIS MONTH'S CHOICE**

By Dan Cottrell

How to get serious about being a leader

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership
John C Maxwell
RRP: £8.39

To think that there are as many 21 Laws of Leadership is quite a daunting thought. But if you are going to be a leader and good one at that, then this is the size of the task. John Maxwell, who wrote this bestseller, knows right from the first to the last Law, that if you are serious about making people follow you, you have to get serious about being a leader.

I don't need to prove the value of this book to coaches who want to improve themselves. It comes highly recommended by leaders from all walks of life. Though it is aimed at business, the Laws are equally applicable to sport and, indeed, Maxwell draws on experiences from the NBA and NFL to illustrate certain points.

I am going to offer you an executive summary of the book. It should whet your appetite to drill down into the ideas and see what you can draw from them. It is an easy book to read and you can drop in and out of the Laws without having to follow one to another. As is the case these days with most self-help books, it comes with summaries and checklists. It is also worth noting that the latest addition is updated and includes some of the more recent management thinking.

Summary

1. The Law of the Lid

I think that boards of directors at soccer clubs take the idea of the 'lid' too literally. It says that the organisation can be held back by the leadership. It might be better to get a new leader who can grow the team, than expect the leader to grow. If you want your team to grow, you need to grow as a leader (before you get sacked!).

2. The Law of Influence

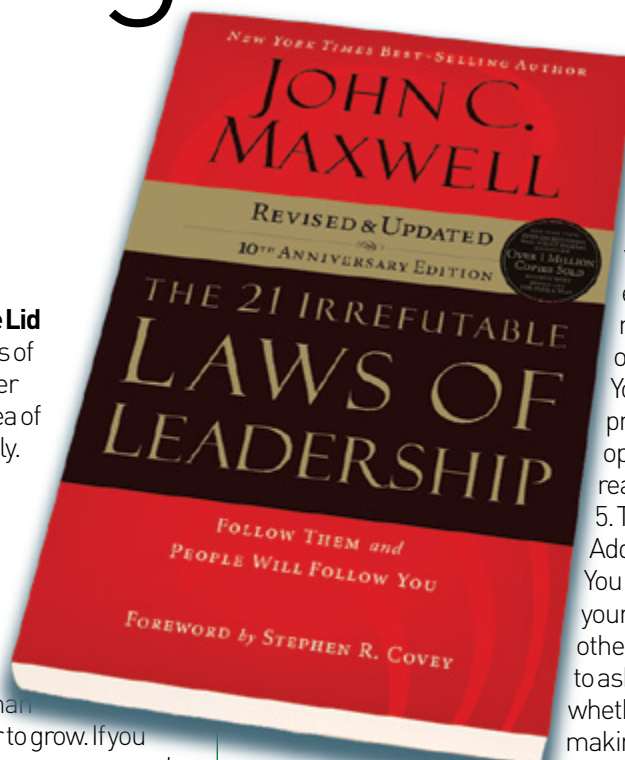
You need to create change. You do this by influencing people and they must follow you. Get the followers to participate. "He who thinks he leads but has no followers is only taking a walk".

3. The Law of Process

You can learn to be a leader. You have to absorb these skills: Dealing with people, emotional strength, vision, momentum and timing. You do not stop learning. You need to work on it daily, like Larry Bird who became the best free throw shooter in the NBA by throwing 500 shots every day before breakfast.

4. The Law of Navigation

You are not simply steering the ship, you are setting the course.



"You are not simply steering the ship, you are setting the course"

You must see the end destination, recognise the obstacles ahead. You are well prepared, both optimistic and realistic.

5. The Law of Addition
You add value to your team by serving others. You need to ask the question whether you are making things better

for the people who follow you. You can only be doing that if you know you are doing it. You can do this by truly valuing others, making yourself more valuable to others, knowing and relating to what others value.

6. The Law of Solid Ground

Trust is the foundation of leadership. If you continually break the trust of others, they will not follow you. Your team will know when you make mistakes, so you need to acknowledge these errors to help them regain your trust. To build trust you need to display competence, connection and good character. You should be someone they can rely on, and puts others ahead of themselves.

7. The Law of Respect

The team will follow you if they feel you are stronger than them. Not necessarily more skilful, but ▼

BOOKED: THIS MONTH'S CHOICE

showing leadership qualities such as vision, respect for others, courage, success, loyalty and adding value to others.

8. The Law of Intuition

You need to evaluate all your decisions with a leadership bias. Therefore you should be able to read the situation, read the trends, read the resources, read the people, read yourself. With all this at your disposal, you will have better intuition and won't get blindsided.

9. The Law of Magnetism

Who you are is who you attract. If you want to attract better people, you should become the sort of person you want to attract.

10. The Law of Connection

You have to connect with people if they are going to follow you. You cannot move them if you cannot first move them emotionally. You can connect with people by first connecting with yourself. If you don't believe in yourself then why will anyone else believe in you? Then you have to open and honest, know who you are talking to and practise what you preach.

11. The Law of the Inner Circle

You can lead with others to help you. And you need a strong group around you. They are able to influence others, add something else that you don't possess, want to work with you and have a positive impact with you and the others in the group.

12. The Law of Empowerment

Empowerment is a common theme for soccer coaches. You need to be able to give power away to gain more authority.

13. The Law of the Picture

People do what people see. You should give a vision, a vision that the team can feel they can achieve. That helps overcome problems in the short run.

14. The Law of the Buy-In

Again it is a well-worn axiom for soccer coaches - you want the followers to buy-in to your vision. But to do that, they need to buy-in to you first. You have to be a worthy

Charting a course with a navigation strategy

P.L.A.N.A.H.E.A.D.:

- Predetermine a course of action
- Lay out your goals
- Adjust your priorities
- Notify key personnel
- Allow time for acceptance
- Head into action
- Expect problems
- Always point to the successes
- Daily review your plan

leader. Once you have proved yourself, you can then provide the vision.

15. The Law of Victory

It is rare to find an uncompetitive soccer coach. You need to channel that into a constant desire to win, never giving up, and having a plan B should plan A fail because you never stop fighting. You have to engender a unity of vision within your team. Then you have to provide the motivation, empowerment and direction to win.

16. The Law of the Big Mo

Momentum in a game of soccer often means that your team can handle pressure, apply pressure and press home any advantage. Small reverses are quickly forgotten, because the team believes it is moving in the right direction. If you can create this off the pitch, you will be able to build an even stronger, more successful team. With momentum you make bolder decisions, steer rather than start



John C. Maxwell is an internationally recognised leadership expert, speaker and author who has sold over 13 million books. His organisations have trained more than two million leaders worldwide. The book was first published in 1997 and updated in 2007. It has sold over one million copies.

"Your lasting value is measured by your legacy. What will happen when you leave the team is what you need to think about. You can do this by living the legacy you want to leave."

initiatives and motivate players more easily.

Momentum is your responsibility. You cannot wait for it, you have to use your vision and energy to create it. That comes from your passion and enthusiasm.

17. The Law of Priorities

Being busy does not mean being successful. You need to pick the right activities to work on now, ones which will give your team the greatest benefit. You should also ask yourself: What must I do that nobody can or should do for me? Delegate when someone else can do the work, eliminate what does not need to be done.

18. The Law of Sacrifice

You will need to give up to go up. There will be areas of your life that will have to take a back seat. There is a cost of leadership: Your rights diminish as your responsibilities increase.

19. The Law of Timing

There are four possible outcomes when you make a decision and they can be based on the timing of your decision: Wrong action at the wrong time, the right action at the wrong time which leads to resistance, the wrong action at the right time leading to a mistake and finally success with right time, right action. Be prepared, use your experience, be confident and decisive.

20. The Law of Explosive Growth

You can improve the team by leading followers. You can maximise your leadership by leading leaders.

21. The Law of Legacy

Your lasting value is measured by your legacy. What will happen when you leave the team is what you need to think about. You can do this by living the legacy you want to leave. And if you can, try to choose people who can take on your role when you leave. Probably more significant will be your legacy with individuals who you coached. They will be able to tell others what you did for them. What would you like them to say?

You can make all your players **20% FASTER**

and that **will**
win you more
matches!



Mike Antoniadis

I have helped
Chelsea, West
Ham and the US
national team
make their players faster –
and I can do the same for you.

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“ Mike has the ability to pinpoint
weaknesses and develop
training programmes to
make better players **”**

Kit Symons

Academy manager, Fulham FC

<http://tinyurl.com/po5ca66>