

ELITE SOCCER

COACHING PRACTICES FROM THE WORLD'S
LEADING MANAGERS AND COACHES

Exclusive
Training practices from top
professional managers

WEST HAM UNITED

SAM ALLARDYCE

DIAGONAL PASSING

• MOVEMENT • ANGLES • INTENT



BLACKBURN ROVERS

**GARY
BOWYER**
Possession
football



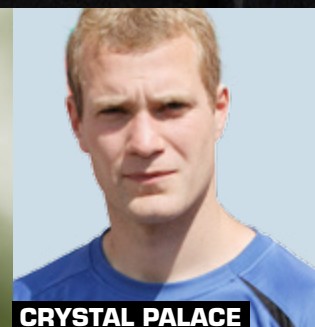
BURTON ALBION

**GARY
ROWETT**
Playing against
pressure



CAMBRIDGE UNITED

**RICHARD
MONEY**
Shooting in
opposed practice



CRYSTAL PALACE

TIM COE
Passing out
from the
back



LMA AMBASSADOR

**HENNING
BERG**
Attacking
philosophy

**EXTRA-TIME
INTERVIEW:**

**WITH CRYSTAL PALACE
MANAGER TONY PULIS**



Elite Soccer is published by:



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Published in partnership with:



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ISSUE 41 / DECEMBER 2013: FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Engaging training sessions from some of the best names in European soccer coaching

Dear Coach,

Welcome to the December issue.

As the busy festive period approaches, many coaches find themselves on the lookout for new coaching ideas, and here at **Elite Soccer** magazine we're delighted to offer another broad cross-section this month, with West Ham United manager Sam Allardyce leading the way.

The 59-year-old is one of the most recognisable faces in English football, and 'Big Sam' has outlined for us a great session that highlights the benefits of diagonal passing, both in defence and attack. It's a blueprint that has served his side well this term, and we hope it can do the same for yours.

Moving into the Sky Bet Championship, Blackburn Rovers manager Gary Bowyer outlines a training session that relies on positive possession football; while from Sky Bet League Two, Burton Albion's Gary Rowett showcases an excellent practice that teaches how best to play against concerted opposition pressure.

We also dip into the Skrill Premier, where Cambridge United boss Richard Money offers us a fantastic, multi-angled attacking process that builds and develops as it goes, while Crystal Palace's Tim Coe puts forward a coaching outline for teams looking to pass out from the back.

Finally, we're delighted to welcome Champions League, FA Cup and Premier League winner Henning Berg in to answer our Coaching Consultation feature, answering a reader question on nervy attackers.

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

Elite Soccer is a monthly publication for professional, semi-professional and aspiring soccer coaches and is available by subscription only.

£97 for 12 issues.

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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

MANAGER OF THE MONTH AWARDS



Southampton manager
Mauricio Pochettino

scooped the Barclays Premier League Manager of the Month award for October, as his side continued their excellent start to the campaign.

The Argentinean manager has moulded the Saints into a polished top flight outfit, and in October they overcame Swansea City and Fulham at home, as well as securing a brilliant point at Old Trafford, as Adam Lallana's last-minute goal thwarted Manchester United.

The month also saw Southampton players Lallana and Jay Rodriguez called up to the England squad.

**SOUTHAMPTON: P3 W2 D1 L0
(LEAGUE ONLY)**



In the Sky Bet Championship, Burnley boss

Sean Dyche collected the divisional award for the second successive month. The Clarets have been in outstanding form this season on their way to the top of the table, and in October they overcame Doncaster Rovers, Reading, Ipswich Town and QPR as part of a sequence of seven straight league wins. Dyche's side conceded just one league goal during the month, and had extended their unbeaten league run to 12 matches at the time of going to press.

BURNLEY: P4 W4 D0 L0



In Sky Bet League One, **Steven Pressley**

has overseen a fantastic revival in Coventry City's fortunes, and they moved well clear of the drop places in October despite having started the season with a 10-point penalty.

The Sky Blues are still playing their home games in Northampton following a dispute with the owners of their ground, though their nomadic existence doesn't appear to have affected results, and in October they defeated Stevenage, Sheffield United, leaders Leyton Orient and Walsall, as well as earning a credible draw at promotion favourites Wolverhampton Wanderers.

COVENTRY CITY: P4 W4 D1 L0



And finally to Sky Bet League Two,

where Manager of the Month honours went to **Colin Cooper**, of Hartlepool United. After a sluggish start, Pools are now showing real forward momentum, and October appeared to be a game-changing month for the club, who clinched league wins against Mansfield Town, Exeter City, Plymouth Argyle and AFC Wimbledon.

Cooper's side also overcame League One side Sheffield United away from home in the Johnstone's Paints Trophy.

HARTLEPOOL UNITED: P5 W4 D0 L1

CAREER PATH

... with Keith Hill, manager of Sky Bet League Two side Rochdale

Q. You've done a rare thing in football and 'gone back', returning to a project you'd left behind...

A. I have, but football is like any other aspect of life. You have to do things that make you happy, and certainly every moment I've spent at Rochdale has been happy. When I left to join Barnsley it was an opportunity that was too good to turn down, and coming back felt similar - we have a great club

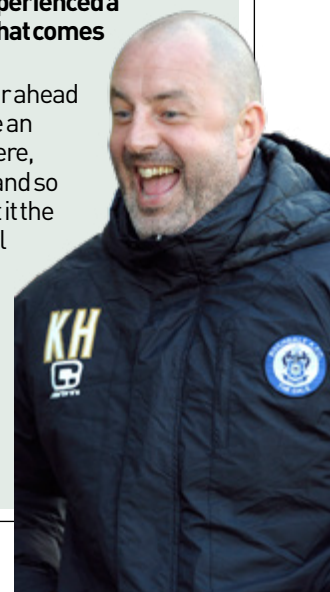
here with great people, and it feels like it did the first time. And the chances are, if the manager is happy then so too will the players be, and that's a great foundation for doing well as a team.

Q. Speaking of happy, you approach the game with a smile on your face. Is that important to you?

A. Different managers and coaches come across in different ways, but for me it's always been a case of being genuine. Yes, it helps to have a smile on your face, but more important than that is being true to yourself. If you try to be someone else you'll get found out quickly; people will only respect you if they truly know who you are.

Q. You've already experienced a lot in the game, so what comes next for Keith Hill?

A. Well, looking too far ahead is a bad idea. We have an immediate project here, which is promotion, and so far we're going about it the right way, but football is unstable even at the best of times, so my philosophy has always been to look at short-term targets and rewards, and I think I'll always be that way.



WEST HAM UNITED

Sam Allardyce Diagonal Passing

Overview:

This session is about changing the direction of play, including in counter-attacking, in order to create space, and to spread the opposition's shape.

It's based on the idea of a decisive diagonal pass and the subsequent movement to receive and support.

Starting in defence, the principles are then used in gaining space and advantage in attacking overload situations, thus looking to create an end product, be that a cross, pass or a finish.

It's important to practise this from both offensive and defensive perspectives. A team might be pressing with little space to receive, so to turn them puts us on the front foot. Similarly, defending deep and being well organised means there should be little space for opposition attackers to thread through two banks of defenders.

"Good interlink play will always force the opposition to come out and lose their shape."

DIAGONAL PASSING

SET-UP

AREA

Full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 22

SESSION TIME

3x15mins per practice, with rotations and reviews

What do I get the players to do?

Moving out of defence

Setting up as shown, we work players through the key components of the practice, ensuring that the movement out of defence is characterised by precise, quick and decisive diagonal passing.

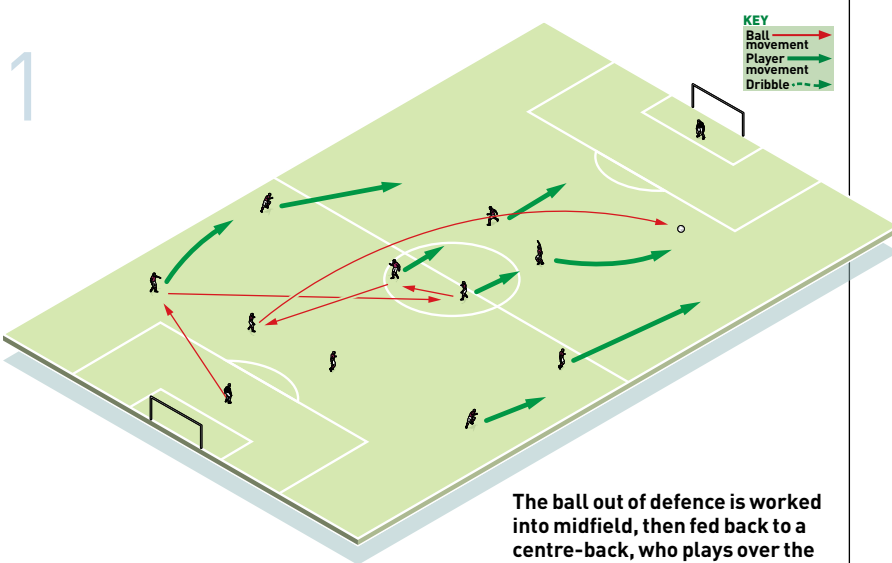
It begins with full-back movement in order to receive from the keeper. The left-back then plays into midfield. Centre-midfielders receive and interlink, then set the ball back to one of the centre-backs, who has space and time on the ball.

The centre-back now has a choice – he can either play diagonally into space on the wings, or directly upfield to the centre-forward who has made room for himself (1).

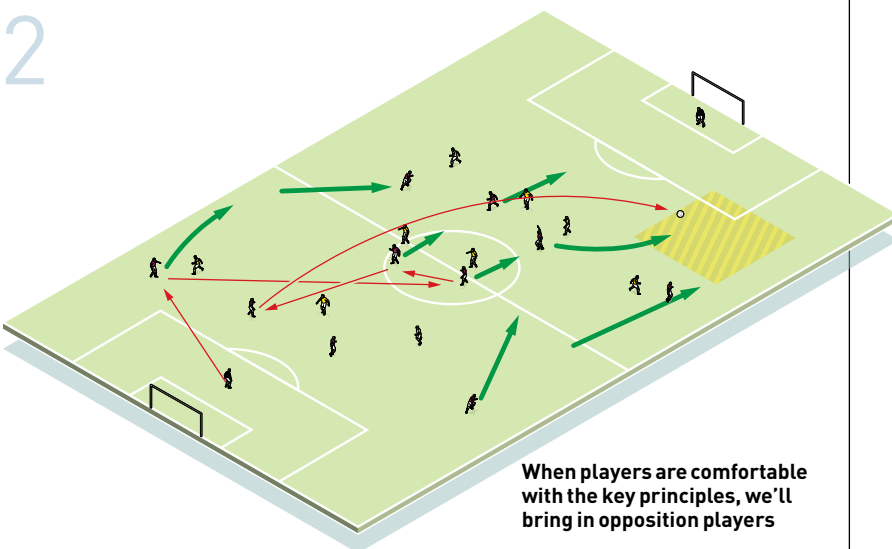
We would begin this practice unopposed, before bringing in opposition players (2).

What are the key things to look out for?

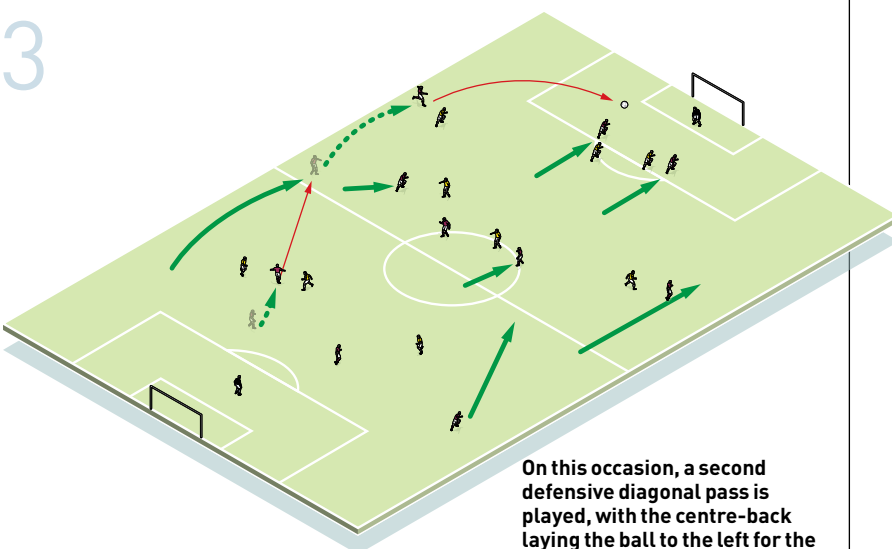
Good interlink play will always force opponents to move



The ball out of defence is worked into midfield, then fed back to a centre-back, who plays over the top and into space



When players are comfortable with the key principles, we'll bring in opposition players



On this occasion, a second defensive diagonal pass is played, with the centre-back laying the ball to the left for the full-back to take it in his stride



Sam Allardyce WEST HAM UNITED

Sam Allardyce joined West Ham United in June 2011 with the express intention of restoring the club's Barclays Premier League status. And within 11 months, the charismatic coach had fulfilled that aim, with the Hammers defeating Blackpool in the 2012 Championship Play-Off Final.

Since then, the east London club have continued their upward momentum, finishing a commendable 10th last term, and this year playing a brand of expansive football that has helped develop and showcase the notable talents of Ravel Morrison, Mohamed Diamé and others.

Allardyce, 59, is probably best known for the incredible success he earned as manager of Bolton Wanderers - which included guiding the Trotters into Europe for the first time in their history - though he has also managed Newcastle United, Blackburn Rovers, Notts County, Blackpool, Preston North End and Limerick.

And as a player, he made over 500 senior appearances, operating as a tough-tackling defender.

DIAGONAL PASSING

forward and lose their shape, and that's a key aim in these practices. We also want to see support runs from all other players in making themselves available (3), a good choice of passes, and pass appreciation. And it's key that players frequently adjust their positions, staying on the front foot in order to maximise potential attacking opportunities.

Attacking aims

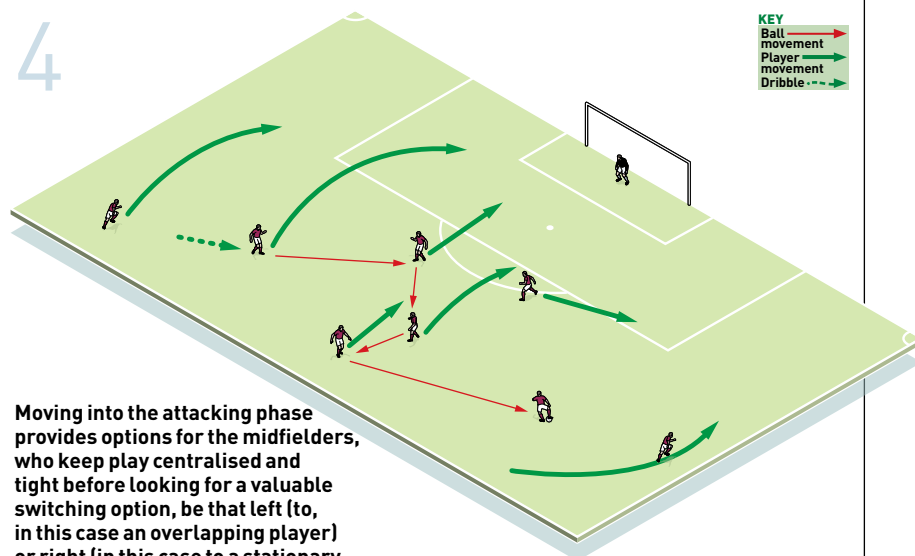
The next part of the practice examines play in the final third, with players switching play to create space and overloads. They do this by interlinking, passing quickly (4), and forcing the defending team to stay narrow for as long as possible.

Again, we would begin this unopposed, before bringing in opposition players.

What are the key things to look out for?

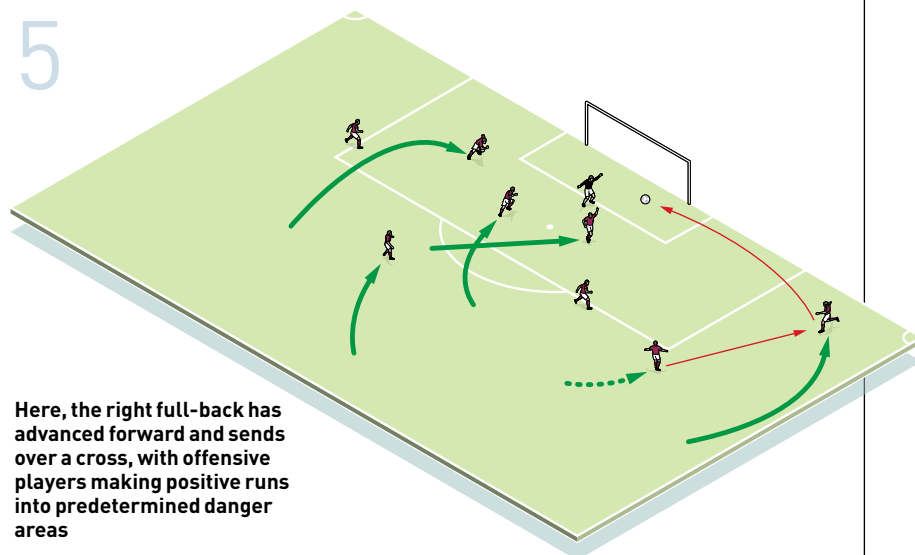
We want to see smart movement to receive and quick movement to support, with the intention of creating overloads wherever possible. And of course, it's vital there's a positive end product, be that a pass, a shot or a cross (5), with offensive players making determined runs into the box to cover vital crossing areas (6). ■

4



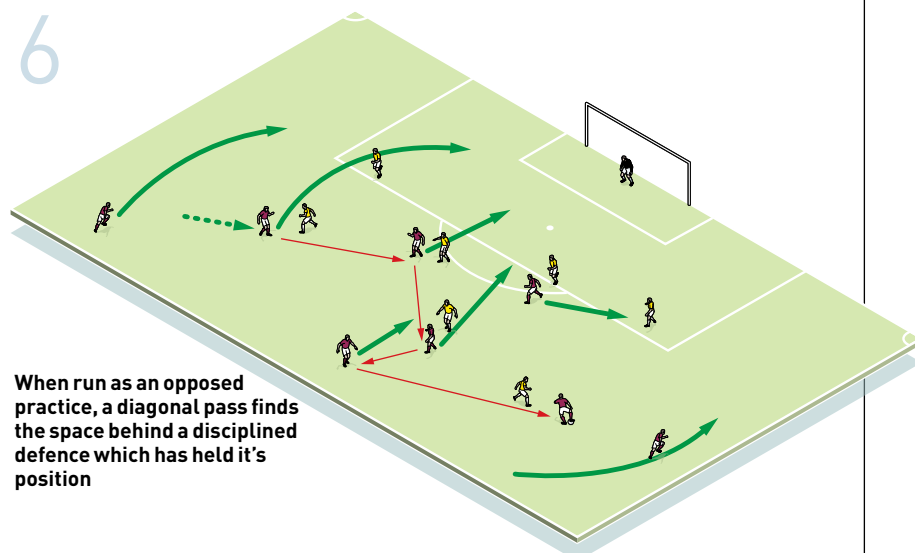
Moving into the attacking phase provides options for the midfielders, who keep play centralised and tight before looking for a valuable switching option, be that left (to, in this case an overlapping player) or right (in this case to a stationary player)

5



Here, the right full-back has advanced forward and sends over a cross, with offensive players making positive runs into predetermined danger areas

6



When run as an opposed practice, a diagonal pass finds the space behind a disciplined defence which has held its position

BLACKBURN ROVERS

Gary Bowyer Possession football

Overview:

This session is not only about having an appreciation of the ball and keeping possession, but also looks at the importance of winning possession back, both as individuals and in packs – emphasising the value of players being hard to beat.

Naturally it's very important to keep hold of the ball whenever we can, but when possession is lost, which is inevitable, we must have a quick and effective game plan for regaining it; and that means players must operate with an understanding of how to do this whilst working extremely hard.

This session showcases these principles, which are put to practice in each game we play.

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 40x36 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, bibs, cones, goals, mini-goals (or poles)

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

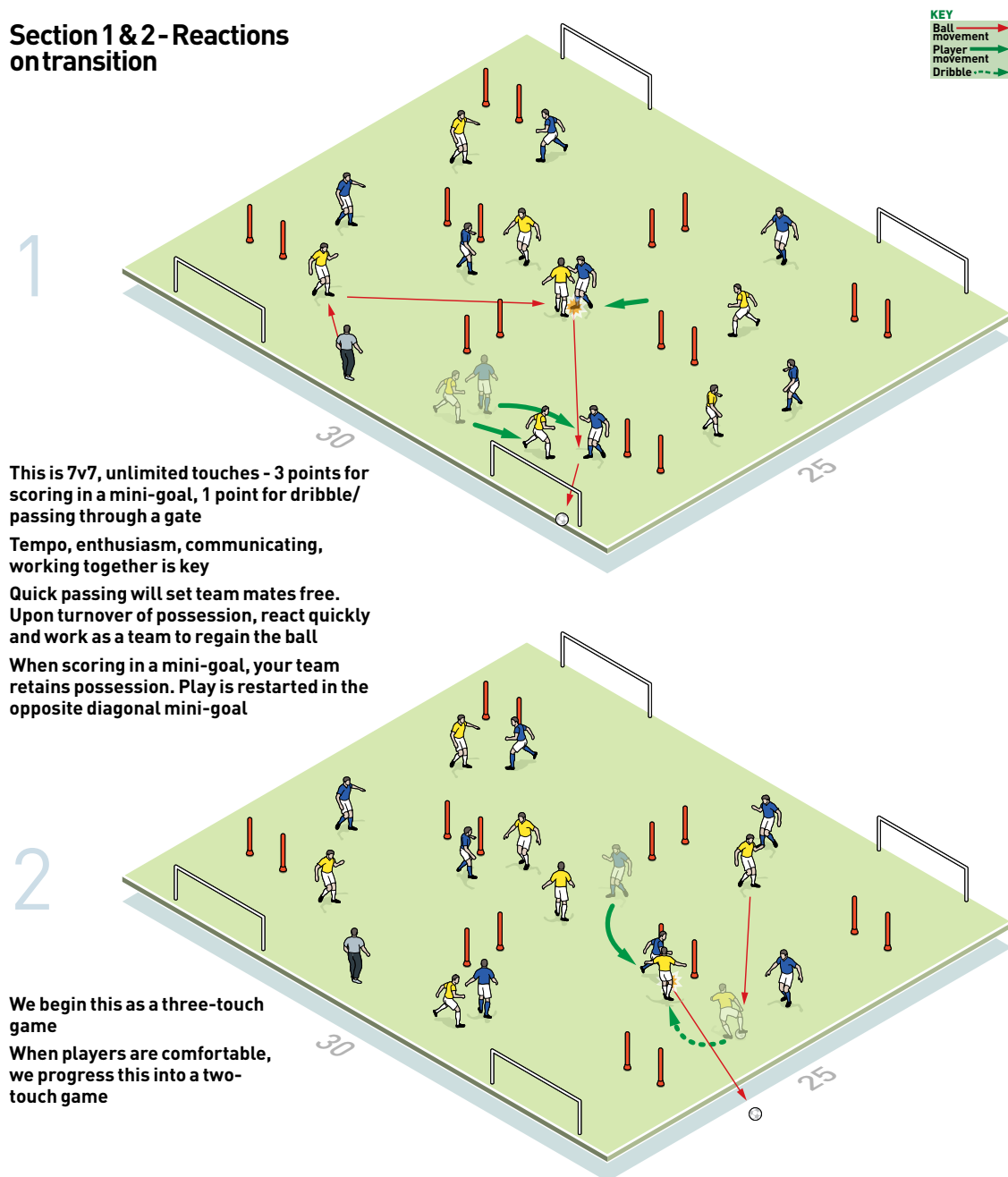
14

SESSION TIME

Both 7v7 games, 6-8 mins x 3 or 4

POSSESSION FOOTBALL

Section 1 & 2 - Reactions on transition



This is 7v7, unlimited touches - 3 points for scoring in a mini-goal, 1 point for dribble/passing through a gate

Tempo, enthusiasm, communicating, working together is key

Quick passing will set team mates free. Upon turnover of possession, react quickly and work as a team to regain the ball

When scoring in a mini-goal, your team retains possession. Play is restarted in the opposite diagonal mini-goal

We begin this as a three-touch game

When players are comfortable, we progress this into a two-touch game

What do I get the players to do?

7v7 game – multiple goals (mini and gated) (1/2)

We set up as shown, using 14 outfield players in a 30x25-yard area. There is a mini-goal in each corner and eight gated goals laid out in the centre. Teams scoring in the mini-goals are awarded three points whereas

teams dribbling/passing through the gates successfully are awarded one point. The first team to reach 20 points wins the game.

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

We want to see high energy levels with players adopting an 'all-in' attitude, moving the ball at

a high tempo and recognising when to switch play. We're looking for smart passing, good player movement and an awareness of each other's positions. This game is particularly strong for testing players' reactions and mindsets when both in and out of possession, as they will be transitioning between offensive

and defensive duties regularly.

How do I progress the session?

The easiest and most effective progression for this game is to make it three-touch and then progress to two-touch. Not only does this demand greater skill from our players, it also ensures speed of pass and thought.



Gary Bowyer

BLACKBURN ROVERS

Gary Bowyer was forced to retire from playing professionally at the age of just 26, due to injury. He had starred for Hereford United, Nottingham Forest and Rotherham United, but hung up his boots and moved into youth coaching, where he took up a role at Blackburn Rovers.

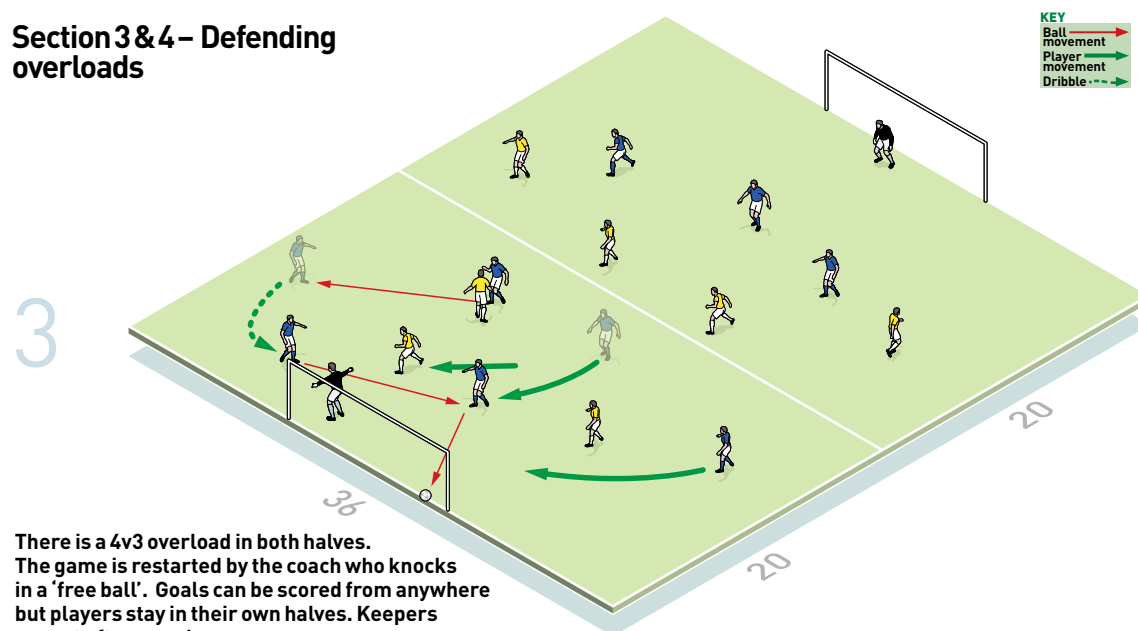
By 2009 he'd elevated his position to youth team manager, and he stepped up to first-team duties as caretaker boss in 2012.

Another spell as caretaker followed in March 2013, before the 42-year-old was finally awarded the manager's post on a permanent basis in May of this year.

"We're always demanding improvement in technical ability and tactical understanding, and this is emphasised throughout."

POSSESSION FOOTBALL

Section 3 & 4 – Defending overloads



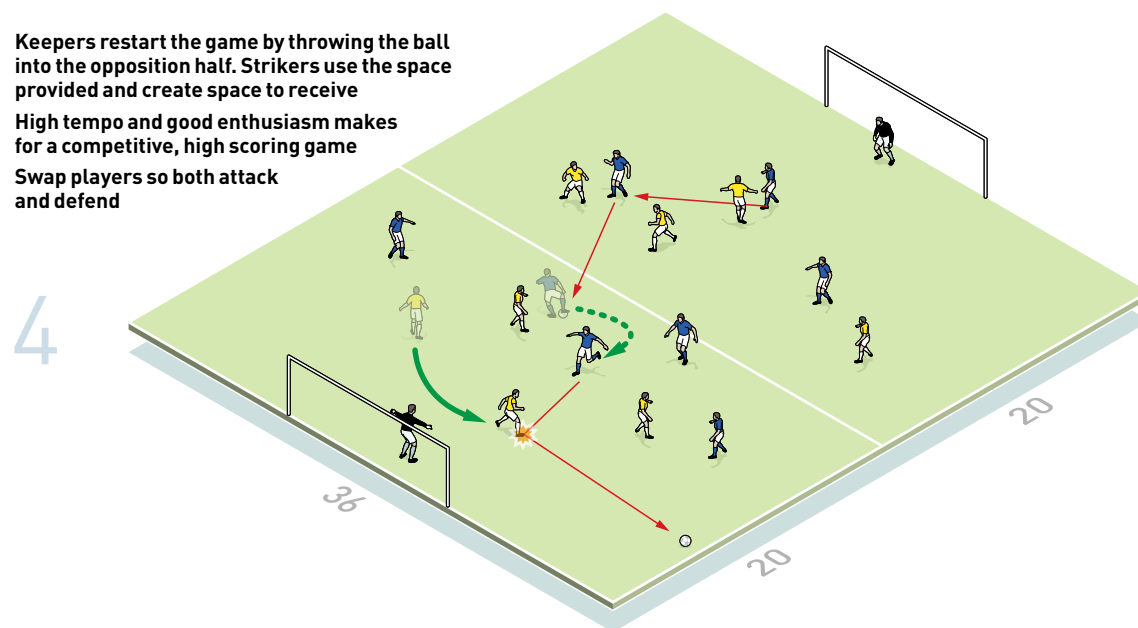
There is a 4v3 overload in both halves. The game is restarted by the coach who knocks in a 'free ball'. Goals can be scored from anywhere but players stay in their own halves. Keepers restart after a goal.

Defenders stick together, communicate, block shots and cover, then attack when possession is regained

Keepers restart the game by throwing the ball into the opposition half. Strikers use the space provided and create space to receive

High tempo and good enthusiasm makes for a competitive, high scoring game

Swap players so both attack and defend



7v7 game – two full size goals with two keepers (3/4)

We now move into a new 7v7 game, this time played on a 40x36-yard area. This is a progression of the first game, using two goals instead of four, and removing the pole gates.

Each player remains in their designated half

of the pitch, with three defenders in each half protecting their goal, working together to remain compact and hard to beat.

We rotate the players with each new game.

What are the key things to look out for?

Each defence is operating against a 4v3 overload, so

this is a demanding test for the players both mentally and physically. Coaching points revolve around emphasising the importance of distances between the defensive unit, encouraging defenders to stay close and compact, communicating, and giving cover throughout. For

the attackers, we encourage getting shots off, goals, rebounds and good decision making. We're always demanding improvement in technical ability and tactical understanding, and this is emphasised throughout. ■

BURTON ALBION

Gary Rowett Playing against pressure

Overview:

This is a session that aims to combat the threat of playing against a team that presses well in central areas.

We practise this so that players can deal with high and persistent pressure from opponents, particularly in midfield.

Last season, we used this to good effect, notably in cup games against teams of a higher standard than us, because it offered us the ability to soak up pressure then attack on the break.

“We used this session, to good effect, in cup games against teams of a higher standard, because it offered us the ability to soak up pressure then attack on the break.”

PLAYING AGAINST PRESSURE

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 100x60 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 10v10

SESSION TIME

Three boxes games, 20mins each, plus 15mins progressions

What do I get the players to do?

Three boxes – wide start

Setting up as shown, in the left-hand box the aim of the attacking team of six is to retain quick possession, evading the attention of the three defenders.

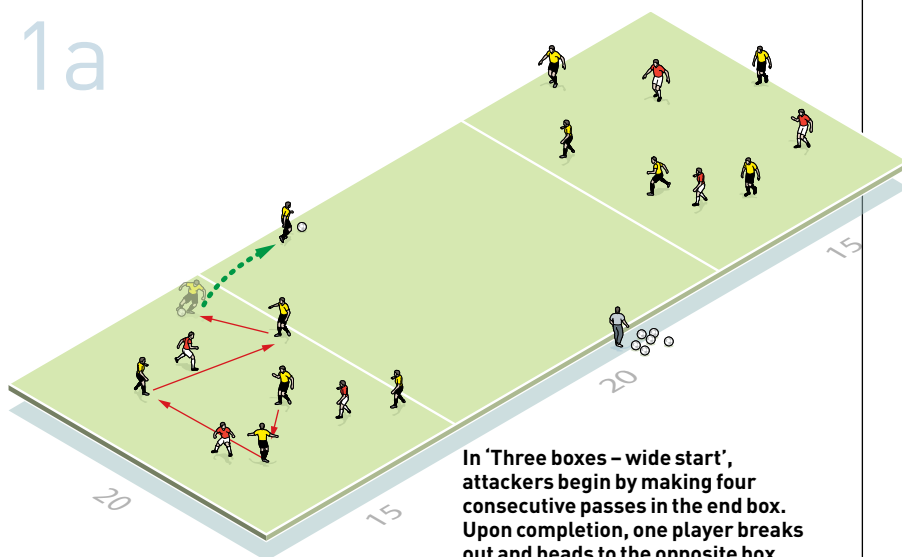
After four passes, one attacking player is allowed to break out of the box (1a). He advances across the central area and into the other box, where a 6v3 possession overload occurs (1b).

If defenders win the ball, it is returned to the coach to restart. Otherwise, they press for one minute, before all players are rotated.

How do I progress the game?

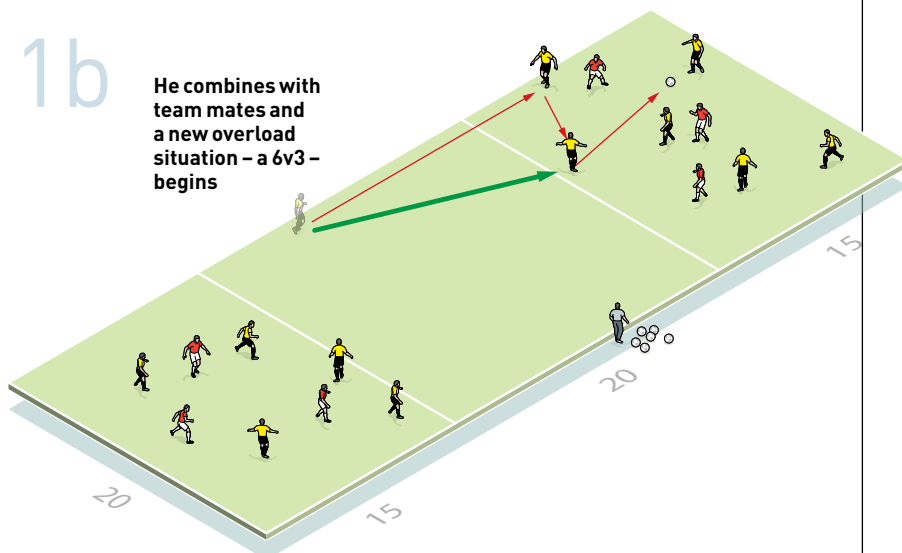
We now add a defender and an attacker in the middle box. The breakout player can now play a one-two with the attacker (2), or can ignore him and pass/dribble forward directly into the opposite box. This new team mate can also now also advance into the other box – this creates a 7v3 overload. We can also increase the number of passes

1a



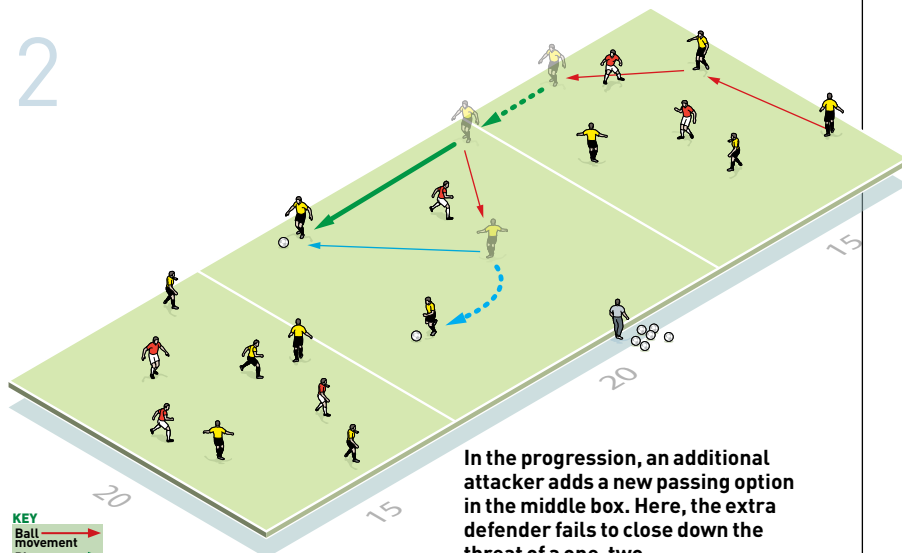
In ‘Three boxes – wide start’, attackers begin by making four consecutive passes in the end box. Upon completion, one player breaks out and heads to the opposite box

1b



He combines with team mates and a new overload situation – a 6v3 – begins

2



In the progression, an additional attacker adds a new passing option in the middle box. Here, the extra defender fails to close down the threat of a one-two





Gary Rowett

BURTON ALBION

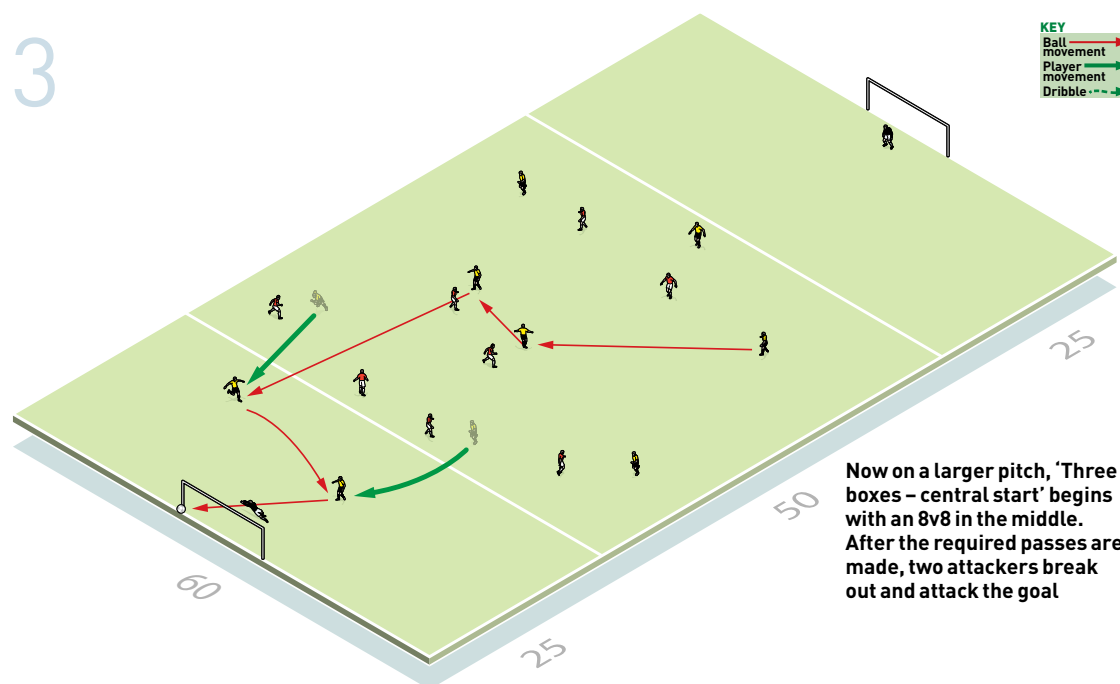
Gary Rowett was a skilful yet powerful defender who played for a number of top clubs, including Everton, Derby County, Birmingham City, Leicester City and Charlton Athletic.

A persistent knee injury curtailed his Football League career, but he went on to play for Burton Albion in the Conference, remaining closely involved with the club, and eventually becoming assistant manager (to Paul Peschisolidi) in 2009. The caretaker manager position followed before he was given the top job on a full-time basis in 2012. And last season, he guided the club to a fourth-placed finish, where they lost out to Bradford City in the npower League Two play-offs.

“Players must always look to be progressive with their passing, moving in behind the opposition and into space.”

PLAYING AGAINST PRESSURE

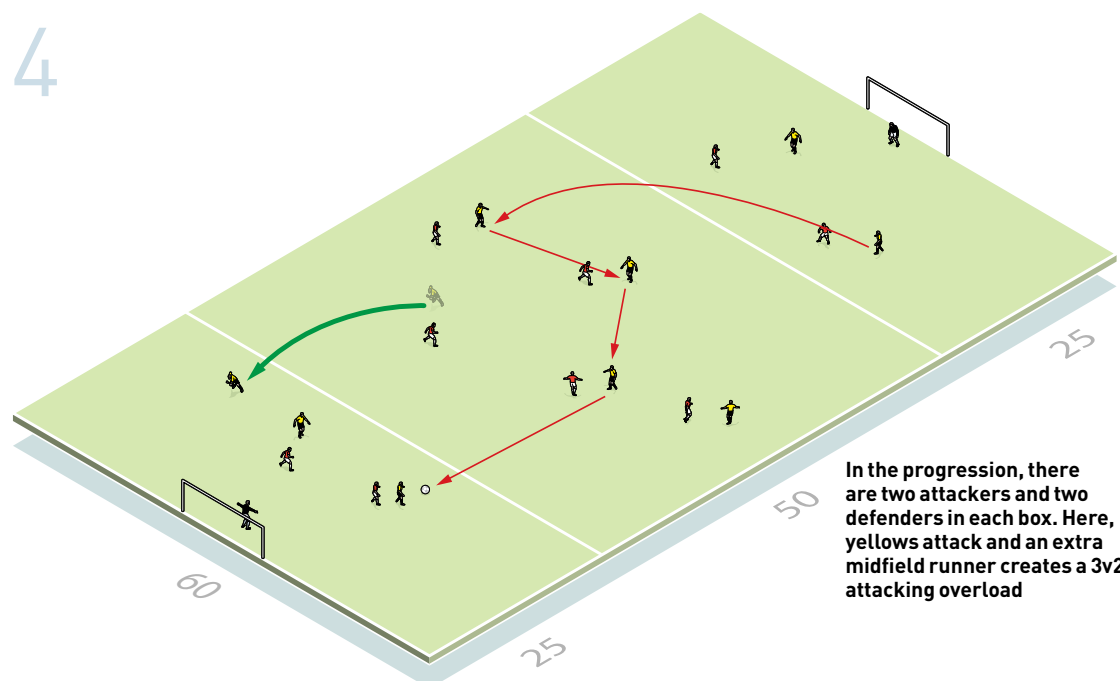
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KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

Now on a larger pitch, ‘Three boxes – central start’ begins with an 8v8 in the middle. After the required passes are made, two attackers break out and attack the goal

4



In the progression, there are two attackers and two defenders in each box. Here, yellows attack and an extra midfielder runner creates a 3v2 attacking overload

required before the break-out.

What are the key things to look out for?

Players must look to create space quickly after winning possession, with the emphasis being on quick passing and effective movement. They must be progressive with their

passing, moving in behind the opposition and into space.

Three boxes – central start

Next we move onto a bigger pitch and, as shown, the game begins with all players in the centre. There is also a goal and keeper at each end.

The 8v8 combines quick passing with

breaking into the end zone. So after four passes have been made, a breakout attacker can move into the goalscoring box. He must be supported by a team mate to produce a cross and subsequent effort on goal (3). At first, defenders are not allowed to track back, but this condition can be removed.

How do I progress the game?

We now add two defenders and two attackers in each end zone. This offers midfielders attacking targets to play in to, and one supporting midfielder can also break to offer a 3v2 attacking overload in the box (4).

CAMBRIDGE UNITED

Richard Money Shooting in an opposed practice

Overview:

Although every coach understands the need for isolated and individual finishing practices, this session works by placing players in realistic goalscoring positions, and as a team. It trains them in how to create and combine in overload situations, harnessing a raw ability to capitalise on goalscoring opportunities, shoot early, or pass to team mates in better positions.

Any or all of these practices can be used, but it's important the coach manages the situation if something happens to stem the flow. If, for whatever reason, momentum is being lost, stop and restart with an unopposed attack.

The simple premise on the attackers is to be positive, ambitious, and to shoot on sight.

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 70x44 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 21

SESSION TIME

3v2 9x90secs,
Boxes and floaters
2x10mins,
Other practices
6x4mins with 30secs
rest in between

SHOOTING IN AN OPPOSED PRACTICE

What do I get the players to do?

3v2 practice

In a 36x25-yard area, we start with a very simple attacking overload practice. It's 3v2 both ways, with yellows always restarting with a ball from a keeper; they combine to score in the goal (1), then turn and attack again the other way.

We will use six defenders here, with each pair working for one minute before rotating.

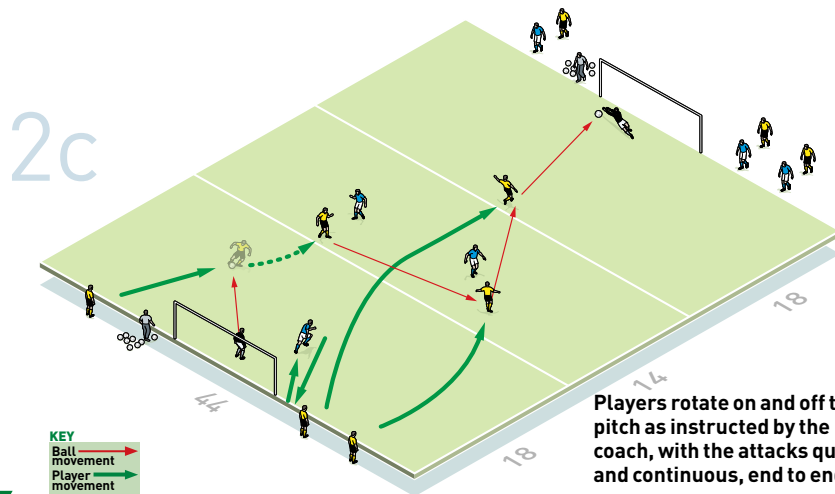
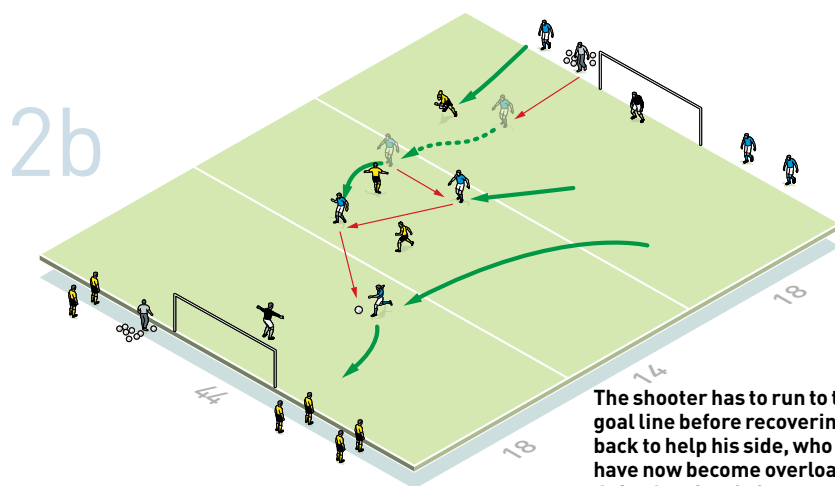
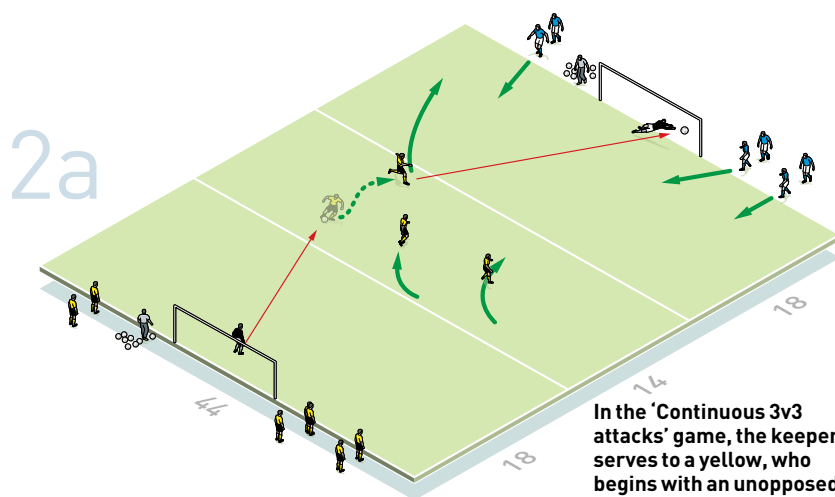
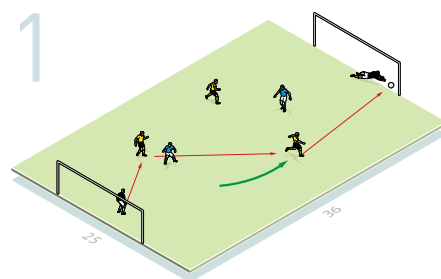
Continuous 3v3 attacks

Now we set up as shown (2a), play beginning with a server by the bottom goal. To kick off the move, the keeper feeds out to unopposed attackers - one moves forward with the ball and shoots.

After his shot, he runs to the goal line then recovers. He's now a defender, because three blues enter from that same goal line as attackers. They can now attack the bottom goal, 3v2, until the other defender recovers back (2b).

From here, all players attack, then defend (2c), before rotating off the pitch on the coach's call, but the player taking the shot always has to recover from the goal line for the defending phase.

If the keeper saves a shot, the same ball is used, otherwise the server introduces a new ball and the player retrieves his effort. This all adds to the requirement that players must keep the transitions fast.





Richard Money CAMBRIDGE UNITED

Richard Money is a vastly experienced coach and football manager who, after a 17-year playing career, took his first steps into management with Scunthorpe United in 1987, initially on a caretaker basis, then as full-time boss six years later. In between, he was youth coach at Aston Villa, and he returned to the training ground with Nottingham Forest during the 1990s, before moving on to Manchester City, and Coventry City, where he was first-team coach and Academy Director. Successful spells in Sweden and Australia followed, though he came back to England to manage Walsall and Luton Town, sandwiching a coaching spell at Newcastle United.

He joined Cambridge United in 2012, and his expertise has seen the club move clear at the top of the Skrill Conference Premier this season, having begun the season 14/1 outsiders.

SHOOTING IN AN OPPOSED PRACTICE

3v3s plus one

Now altering the dynamics, teams start in their attacking and defending zones before moving forward. This new set-up adds yellow and blue players to both sides of the central zone. We can also place players at the end of pitches, in the same way we did in 'Continuous 3v3 attacks'

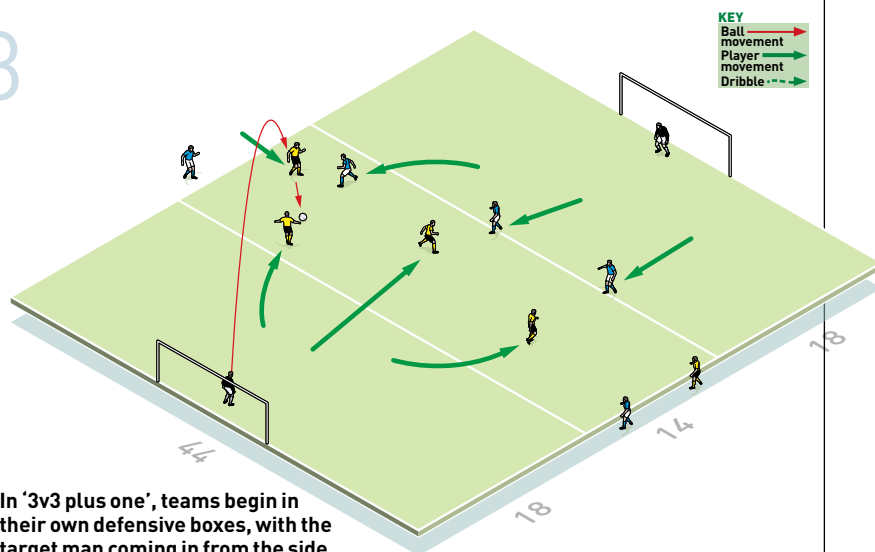
So the keeper begins by passing to an incoming yellow, who acts as a target man in a 4v3 attacking situation (3). Upon completion of this attack, the three attackers leave the playing area. When the defenders have defended they attack with the next ball against three new players who enter from the other end.

So in this practice all players defend then attack.

How do I progress this game?

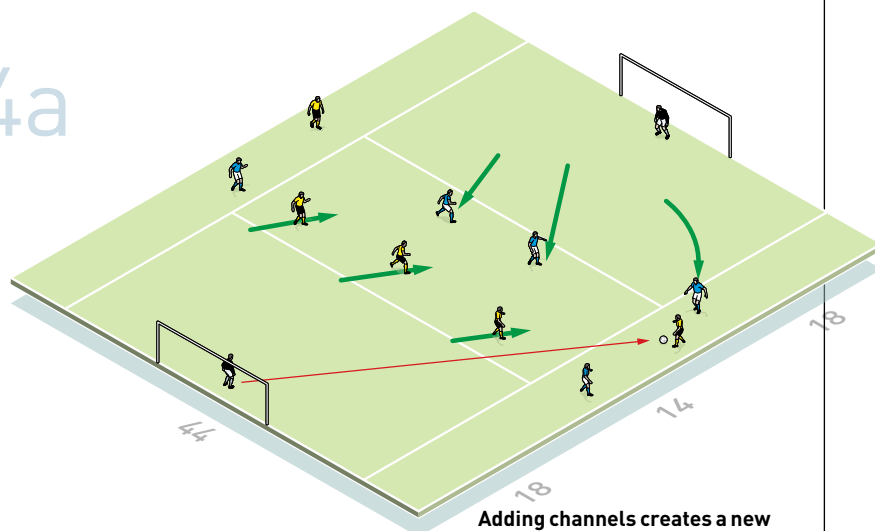
Adding a channel creates a notable change to attacking and defending dynamics (4a). Each side channel is only five yards wide, but yellows and blues can oppose each other in this space, and the initial serve from the keeper must go into this space. We also allow a defender to move into the channel to close down in a 2v1 situation. The incentive here for the attacker is that by retaining possession

3



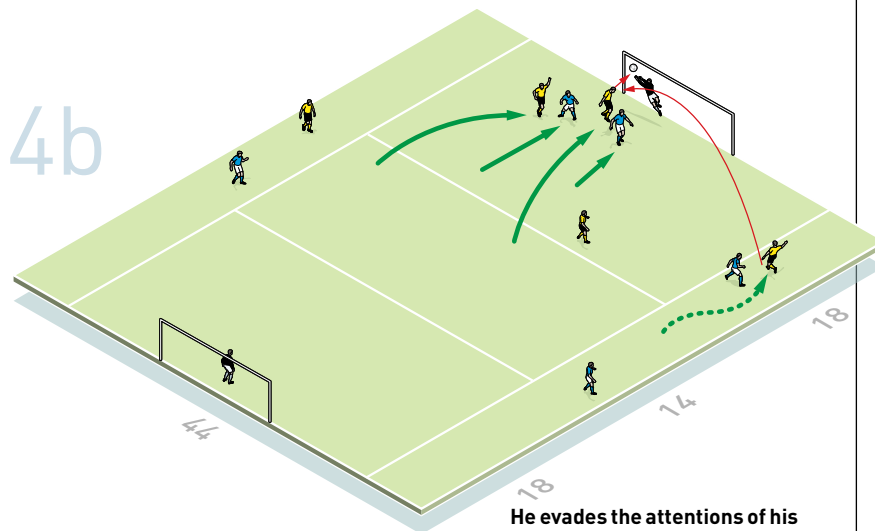
In '3v3 plus one', teams begin in their own defensive boxes, with the target man coming in from the side to create a 4v3 overload – in this case, for the yellow team

4a



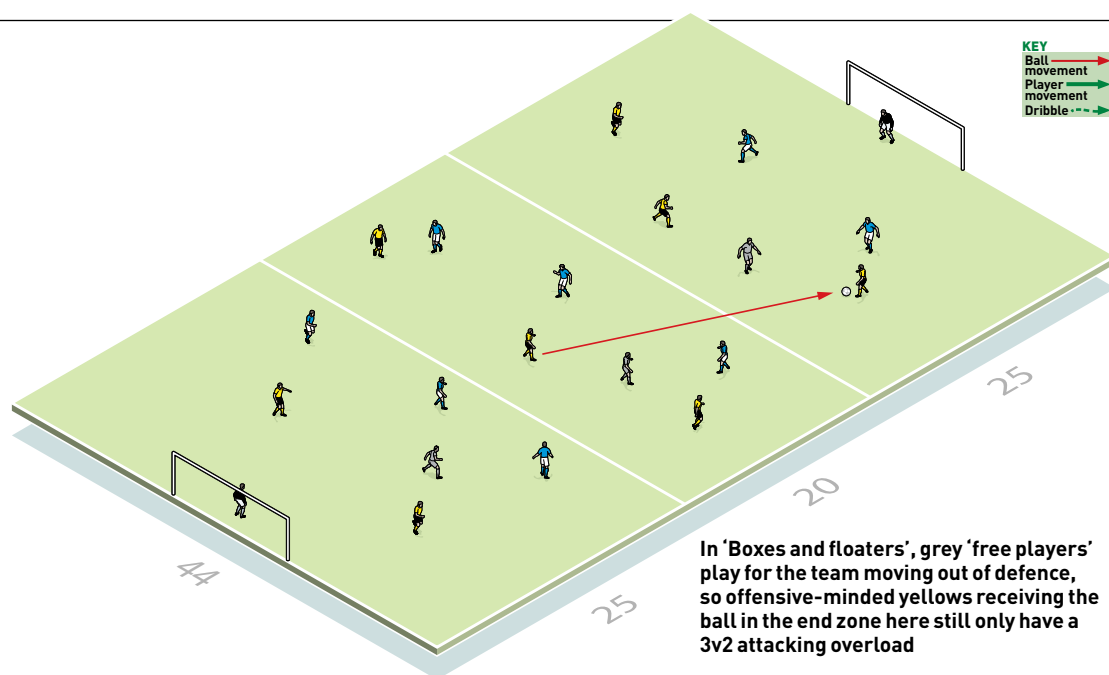
Adding channels creates a new dimension and encourages wide attacks. Here, a blue defender moves into the channel to press the yellow in possession

4b



He evades the attentions of his marker, and floats a cross into the box where attackers have a 3v2 central advantage

SHOOTING IN AN OPPOSED PRACTICE



- and feeding back inside or up the line (4b) - his team have created an overload in the centre by virtue of the extra defender being dragged into the channel.

Boxes and floaters

Finally, in a 70x44-yard area, we set up a game that's 3v2 in each end zone and 3v3 in the middle (5). In each zone there is also a 'free

player', who can help create mini-overload situations, but only plays for the side who are moving out of defence (so he cannot act as an attacker in a 4v2 overload).

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

Naturally, we want to see players adopting

a positive attacking mindset in each practice. Passing must be sharp and accurate and at high tempo. Players must always be seeking out opportunities to overlap or underlap, making diagonal runs through defenders and testing the decision-making abilities of team mates, be

they attackers or defenders. If teams are encouraged to play through midfield quickly in creating early goalscoring opportunities, many of the positive technical and tactical elements should follow naturally.

"If teams are encouraged to play through midfield quickly in creating early goalscoring opportunities, many of the positive technical and tactical elements should follow naturally."

ATTACKING INTENT

Best goalscoring home and away records in professional world football (all statistics correct up to November 25)

BEST HOME			
	TEAM	AVE GOALS SCORED	GAMES PLAYED
1	Rangers Scotland League One	4.5	6
2	Man City England Premier League	4.33	6
3	Olympiacos Greece Etniki Katigoria	4.2	5
4	TSW Pegasus Hong Kong 1st Division	4	4
5	Kitchee Hong Kong 1st Division	4	3
6	Atletico Madrid Spain Primera Liga	3.86	7
7	IK Sirius Sweden Division 1	3.69	13
8	Al Shabab Riyadh Saudi Arabia Pro League	3.6	5
9	FC Ypa Finland Kakkonen	3.6	7
10	Barcelona Spain Primera Liga	3.57	7

BEST AWAY			
	TEAM	AVE GOALS SCORED	GAMES PLAYED
1	Bani Yas United Arab Emirates UFL	3.5	4
2	Rangers Scotland League One	3.33	6
3	HIFK Finland Kakkonen	3	7
4	South China Hong Kong 1st Division	3	3
5	Jonkoping Sodra Sweden Superettan	3	2
6	Al Shabab Al Arabi United Arab Emirates UFL	3	4
7	Astra Ploiesti Romania Liga I	3	7
8	Al Wasl United Arab Emirates UFL	3	4
9	Al Jazira United Arab Emirates UFL	2.75	4
10	Doxa Katokopias Cyprus 1. Division	2.75	4

CRYSTAL PALACE

Tim Coe Passing out from the back

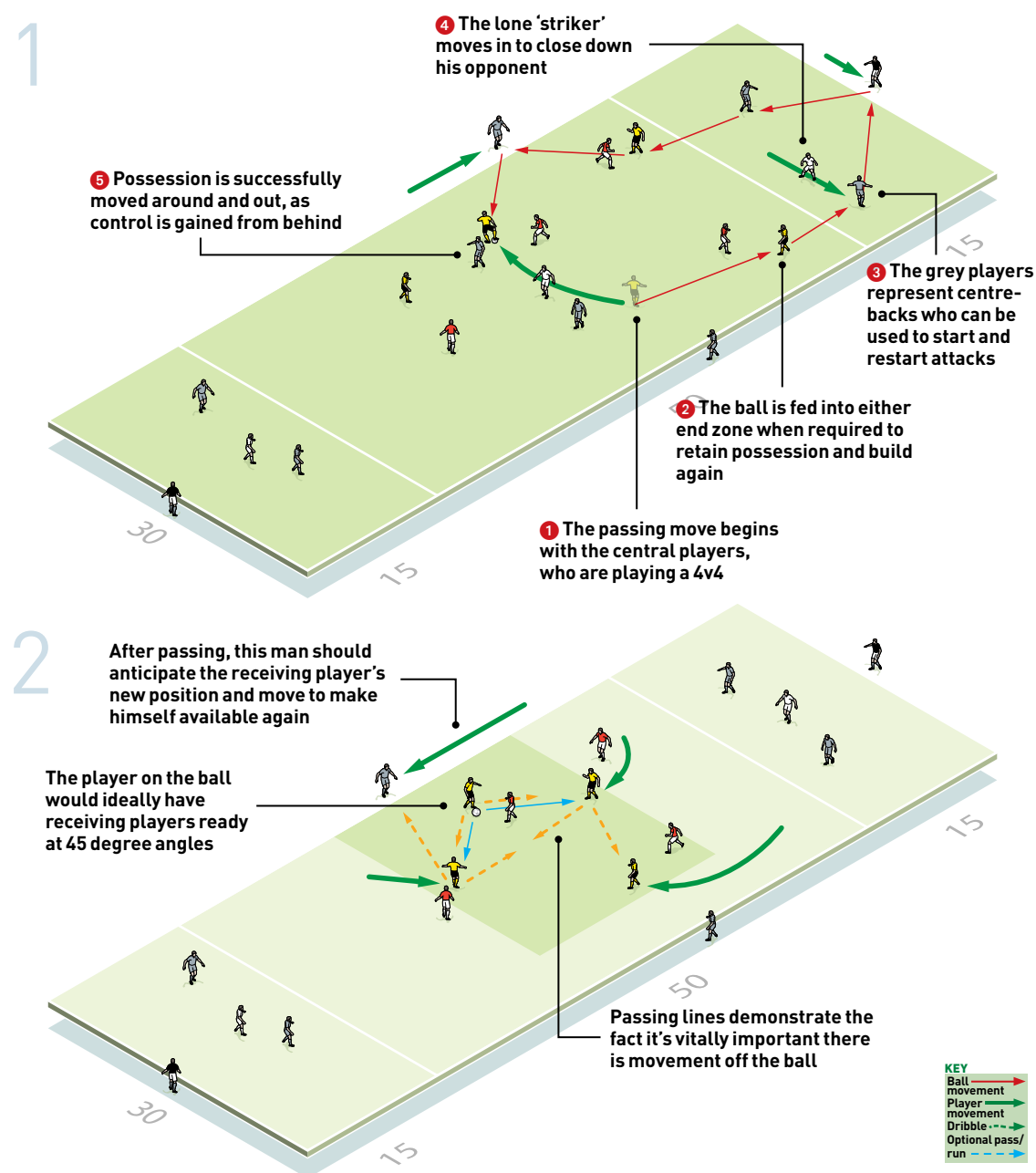
Overview:

This session examines the art of gaining control from behind – through good use of the keeper and centre-backs – before playing into and through midfield with accuracy.

Using every member of the team and all of the space on the pitch is very important in order to get control of the ball and take the initiative in games.

This process is particularly valuable when we're playing against opponents who press aggressively, since it gives us a core of control and understanding.

PASSING OUT FROM THE BACK



SET-UP

AREA

50x30 yards with a 15x30-yard zone at each end

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 16

SESSION TIME

Initial set-up and Progression 20mins each (4x4mins with 4x1min break for rest and coaching), Game 20mins (3x6mins with 2x1mins break)

What do I get the players to do?

We set up as shown (1) with two neutral players in each end zone who are available to whichever team has possession. They represent centre-backs in a game. There is an opposition striker who puts the centre-backs under pressure, but they have the benefit of a 2v1, and also the use of a keeper as and when

required. In the middle third we play 3v3 or 4v4. There is also the option of placing neutral players on the sides – but these are limited to one or two touches. These represent the full-backs in a game. Five consecutive passes are rewarded with a point.

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

The first objective for the team in possession is to recognise when and how to use the players to establish and maintain control. Once this is achieved, players need to be encouraged to recognise how much time they have with a view to staying on the ball in order to take

opportunities to pass forward.

At the end of the day, as long as the supporting positions of passing players is right, and awareness good, opportunities should arise to make progress with the passing, but decision-making and control must be adequate (2).



Tim Coe

CRYSTAL PALACE

Tim Coe is Chief Scout at Barclays Premier League side Crystal Palace. Despite being only 28, Coe has already achieved huge variety in his soccer career, having started out as an Academy player at Reading.

Serious injury ended his playing days at the age of just 20, but he soon returned to Reading to perform scouting duties, whilst embarking on a law degree at university.

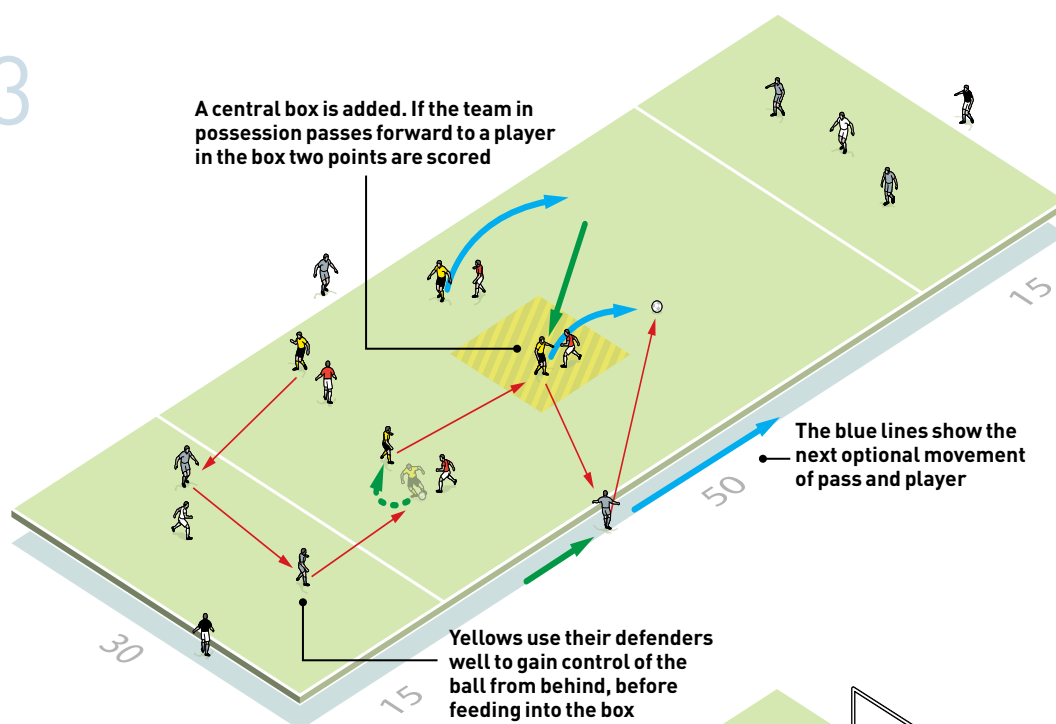
He spent two years at Aldershot Town as the club's Head of Youth Development and also enjoyed scouting spells at Millwall and Huddersfield Town while completing his studies.

Now at Palace, he has been instrumental in developing the scouting department so that it can recommend players to enable the south London club to be an established Premier League force in the future.

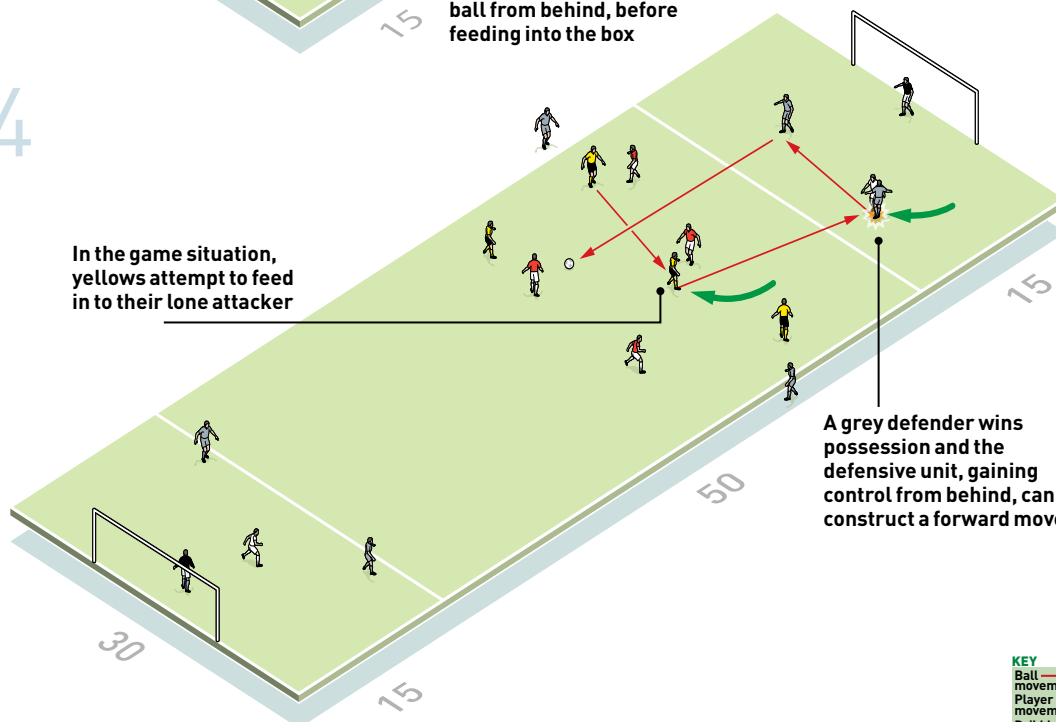
"The first objective for the team in possession is to recognise when and how to use the players to establish and maintain control."

PASSING OUT FROM THE BACK

3



4



KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble
Optional pass/run

How do I progress the session?

To progress, and in order to encourage making territorial progress through passing, a target area can be set up in the centre of the pitch to play into whenever possible

(3). As a forward pass should be worth more than a sideways or backwards pass, playing into the target area earns two points.

How do I put this into a game situation?

We remove the restrictions so that

each team attacks a designated end (4), whilst looking to achieve the same passing objectives. Now, when attacking, the team must look to find the lone white attacker, who is overloaded 2v1 in the area by grey defenders. ■

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:

Attacking philosophy

My players are nervy in the final third, frequently giving the ball away. How can I improve our attacking play?

Question asked by Tom West, an amateur coach from London

ANSWERED BY:

Henning Berg

LMA AMBASSADOR

This session offers a solution, combining specific practices, each progressing players' understanding of team play and decision-making playing from the back, through midfield and in the final third.

Although attacking is the main focus, this is also a very good exercise for defending – it's a good idea to have two coaches, each looking at a separate element.

Coaching considerations

Principles of attacking play must be coached

SET-UP

AREA

Up to half pitch plus 20 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

11v10

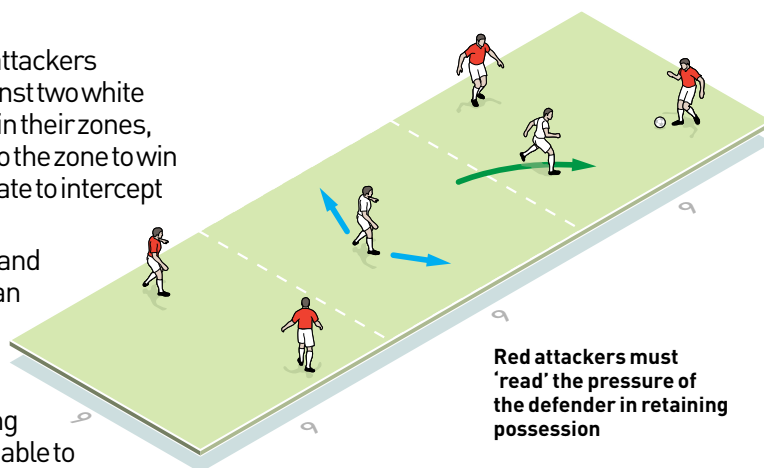
SESSION TIME

20mins per exercise

Three boxes

Each box is 9x9 yards – red attackers must keep possession against two white defenders. Reds must stay in their zones, though one white can go into the zone to win the ball, leaving his team mate to intercept any through passes.

This game is effectively 2v1 and 4v2 at the same time, and can be one- or two-touch, with attackers 'reading' defender pressure and movement, and reds making angles so they stay free and able to receive the ball.



Red attackers must 'read' the pressure of the defender in retaining possession

Breaking for the end line

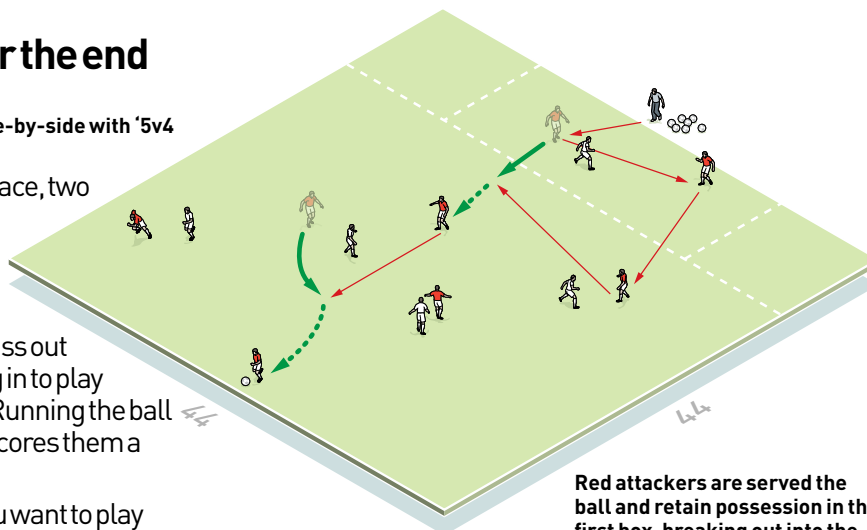
(To be performed side-by-side with '5v4 to the end line')

In a 44x44-yard space, two central defenders begin against a solitary striker, as shown. They must dribble or pass out of the zone, joining in to play 5v4 in main area. Running the ball over the end line scores them a point.

Alternatively, if you want to play against two strikers, put them in the first zone against two defenders and one midfielder, with 3v3 in the main area.

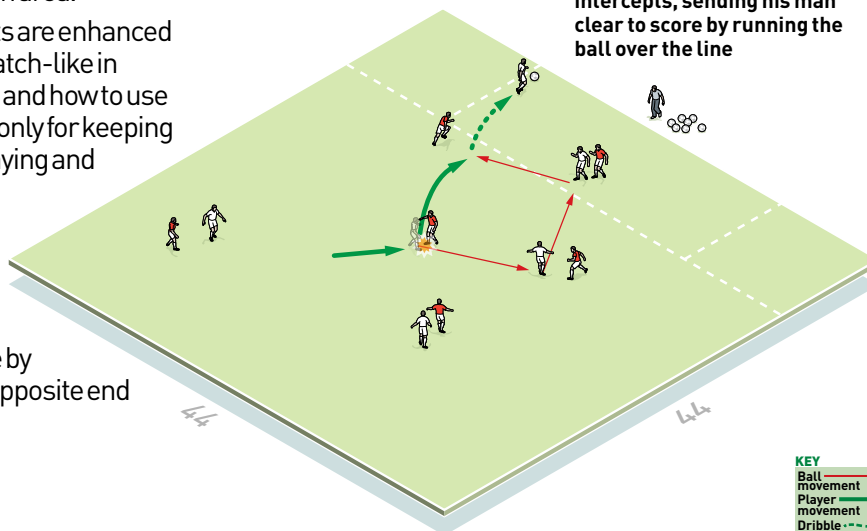
The learning points are enhanced – now it is more match-like in terms of positions and how to use the extra man not only for keeping the ball, but for playing and running through a defence too.

When defenders win the ball, they look to break and score by running over the opposite end line.



Red attackers are served the ball and retain possession in the first box, breaking out into the main area for a 5v4 overload...

...but a white defender intercepts, sending his man clear to score by running the ball over the line



KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

COACHING CONSULTATION

in relation to the individual qualities of your team, so you must decide how possession-orientated you are, how direct you want to be, and if you want to play mostly through the middle or from wide areas. Think too whether you want your style to be flexible (like Jose Mourinho's Chelsea side), or persistent (like Pep Guardiola's Bayern Munich). Whatever you decide, it has to be practised so everyone understands their roles and individual qualities. ■



Henning Berg

LMA AMBASSADOR

Henning Berg is best known for the seven years he spent with Blackburn Rovers, across two spells. At Ewood Park he won the Premier League title, before repeating the feat at Manchester United in 1999 – part of the Treble-winning side that also clinched the FA Cup and Champions League. He returned to Rovers to manage the now Sky Bet Championship club in 2012 having enjoyed great success as a manager and coach in his native Norway, for Lyn and Lillestrøm.

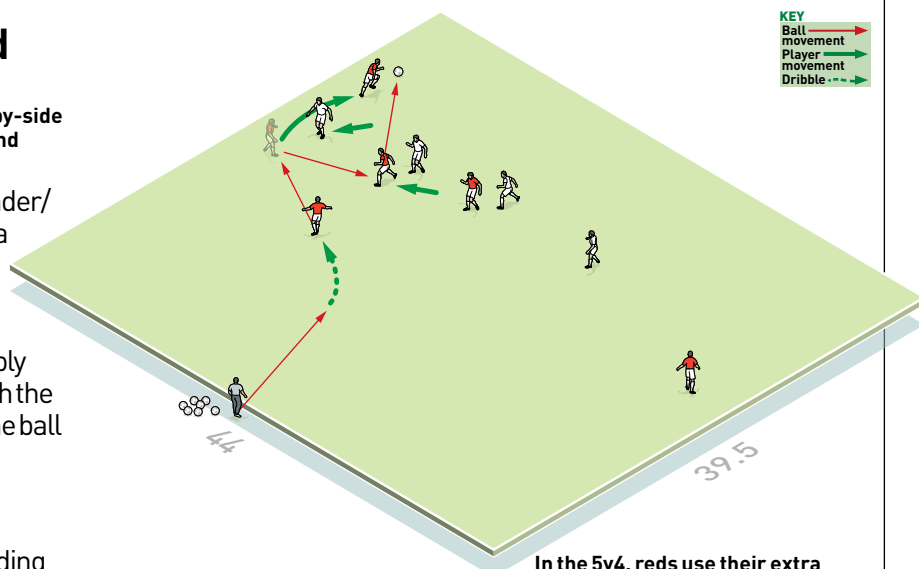
If you have a Coaching Consultation question you would like a leading coach to answer, please email in at elitesoccerfa@greenstarmedia.net

5v4 to the end line

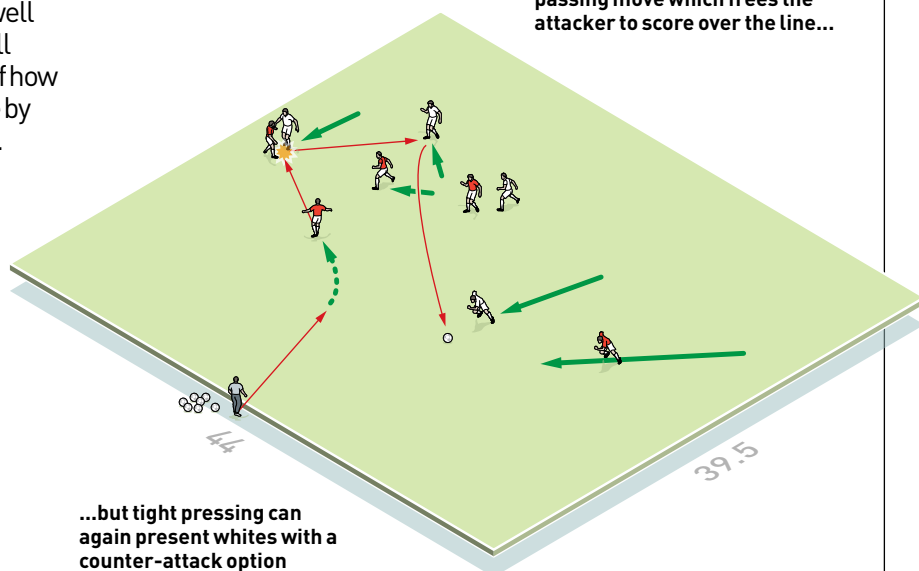
(To be performed side-by-side with 'Breaking for the end line')

Moving from a defender/midfield practice to a midfield/striker practice, this is a direct 5v4 where attackers must simply run at defenders with the intention of taking the ball over the line.

Players play in their normal positions to increase understanding of each others' qualities and movement, as well as building an overall team appreciation of how to open up a defence by using the extra man.



In the 5v4, reds use their extra man to construct a quick one-touch passing move which frees the attacker to score over the line...

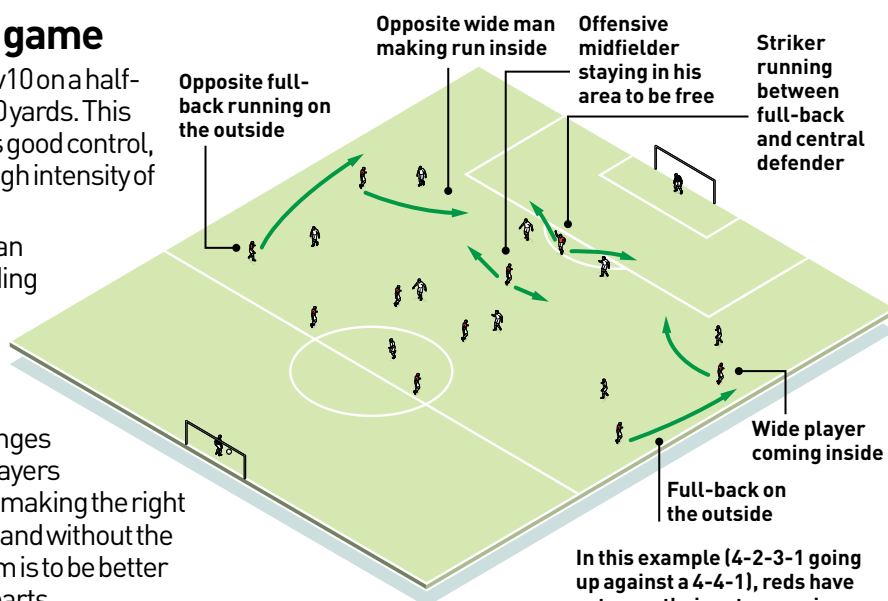


...but tight pressing can again present whites with a counter-attack option

Small-sided game

To finish, we use 11v10 on a half-pitch extended by 20 yards. This tight area promotes good control, movement, and a high intensity of play.

Attackers have a man advantage, so deciding whether this extra man should be a striker or midfielder will give you different challenges and possibilities. Players understand and making the right decisions both with and without the ball is vital if the team is to be better than the sum of its parts.



In this example (4-2-3-1 going up against a 4-4-1), reds have set up so their extra man is being used as a midfielder

EXTRA-TIME PROFILE

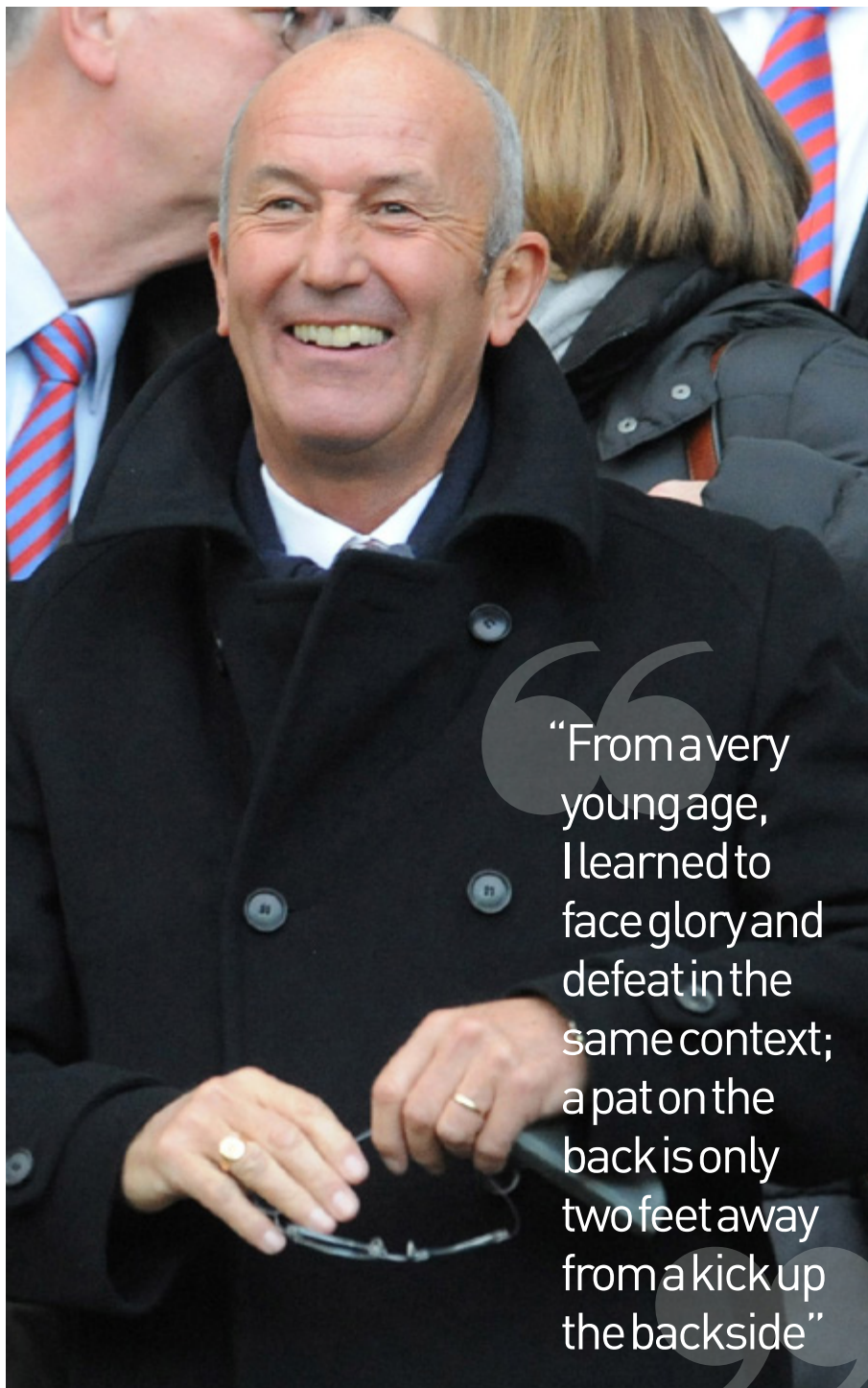
TONY PULIS CRYSTAL PALACE

At the end of November, Tony Pulis was unveiled as the new manager of Barclays Premier League side Crystal Palace. With previous club Stoke City, Pulis ended the Potters' 23 years of exile from top-flight football when he led them to the Barclays Premier League. During a five year period under Pulis, Stoke finished no lower than 14th in the Premier League table and he led his side to four major cup quarter finals, an FA Cup semi-final and final. Subsequently Stoke qualified for the Europa League and progressed to the latter stages of the competition where they were eventually eliminated by Spanish giants Valencia. Pulis will undoubtedly draw upon this extensive experience as he gets to work at Crystal Palace. So this month we've dipped back into the archives to pull out an interview he gave to the LMA's 'The Manager' magazine just after Stoke City's return to the top flight.

Q Why has coaching always appealed to you?

A When I left home at the age of 16 to sign for Bristol Rovers I was one of six children, living in a three-bedroom terrace in South Wales. With no disrespect intended, I had no plans to return. I wanted to keep playing football and taking advantage of opportunities further afield.

When I was about 20, I took advice from respected coach Dave Burnside to do my preliminary and intermediate coaching badges, which I did and passed. Dave was impressed with how I handled them and urged me to go on to take the full coaching badge. Not only would it be great experience, he said, but it would be two weeks of great preparation for the new season. I'd been out



“From a very young age, I learned to face glory and defeat in the same context; a pat on the back is only two feet away from a kick up the backside”

PROFILE:

Tony Pulis was born in Newport, south Wales, and signed his first professional contract with Bristol Rovers when he was just 16.

He went on to play for a number of lower league sides, including

Bournemouth, Gillingham and hometown club Newport County. He also spent a year in Hong Kong with Happy Valley.

His managerial career has been as prolific, overseeing the fortunes of Bournemouth, Gillingham, Bristol

City, Portsmouth, Stoke City (twice), Plymouth Argyle and, now, Crystal Palace.

Tony counts his greatest achievement in football as taking Stoke into the Barclays Premier League for the first time in their history, in 2007.



DECEMBER 2013

EXTRA-TIME

injured, so the chance to get fully fit was a real bonus. I was as surprised as anybody that I actually passed it.

Taking the coaching badges opened up another field of opportunities for me. From an early age, it made me look at the game from a different perspective. Players tend to be concerned only about themselves and don't question things or look at them from other people's perspective.

Q How important was your coaching apprenticeship under Harry Redknapp to your later success?

A I have worked with many great people in football and learned a awful lot, good and bad. Harry Redknapp is a very good coach and I don't think he gives himself enough credit for that. He has a great knowledge and understanding of the game and taught me a lot, not only about coaching, but players and the football industry as a whole.

We travelled the length and breadth of the country to watch games and, on the way, we'd go through the Rothmans Football Directory and test one another on players. Harry knew them all and he knew which ones would bring him success. Football is his passion.

The approach to football management is different today than it was when I was starting out. Back then, I doubt anybody would have taken a job in the top flight without having first gained experience at a lower level. Working for Harry for a year as his assistant manager was very beneficial – it was my first taste of being responsible for professional players.

Q What stages of your career have been the most formative?

A I believe you actually gain most strength from the bad times in your career. From a very young age, I learned to face glory and defeat in the same context; a pat on the back is only two feet away from a

STATSLIFE

As manager (correct up to November 25):



Bournemouth

107 games
(31 wins, 38 draws, 38 defeats)
win ratio of 29%

Gillingham

216 games
(94 wins, 62 draws, 60 defeats)
win ratio of 44%

Bristol City

33 games
(10 wins, 14 draws, 9 defeats)
win ratio of 30%

Portsmouth

35 games
(11 wins, 10 draws, 14 defeats)
win ratio of 31%

Stoke City

131 games
(47 wins, 32 draws, 52 defeats)
win ratio of 36%

Plymouth Argyle

39 games
(12 wins, 15 draws, 12 defeats)
win ratio of 31%

Stoke City

333 games
(122 wins, 98 draws, 113 defeats)
win ratio of 37%

Crystal Palace

– no games played



kick up the backside. You have to understand that football can be fickle – you can be flavour of the month one minute and perceived as absolutely useless the next. I try to keep my feet on the ground, believe in what I am doing and keep working hard.

Q What's the secret to achieving success on a modest budget?

A You have to be very focused and driven. The budgets of the top four or five clubs in the Barclays Premier League mean they can attract the best players in the world. If you're lucky enough to be able to sign that level of talent, you can relax a little bit in the knowledge that it should win you games. We have to work at a different level to them, and that takes drive, great spirit and togetherness.

Q How do you get a team to perform for you?

A You need good characters in your team who you know will always give it their best, whatever happens. If you lose a game, you have to know that they will dust themselves down and go out fighting again. That's what I demand of my players.

Our success is the result of a real team effort from everyone at the club. Everyone plays an important part, right down to our laundry lady, who I always make time to have a cup of tea and a chat with.

Q Outside of match days what motivates you day to day?

A The desire to remain working in football – I want to be there tomorrow and every day thereafter. I have been in football since I was 16 and it is what I have always wanted to do. Playing was brilliant and, while management is tougher than it ever has been, I still love my job.

'YOU CAN QUOTE ME ON THAT...'

"Tony Pulis deserves huge respect for fashioning a team that are one of the most difficult to play against, not to mention constructing a properly accomplished defence, and all from limited resources."

Miguel Delaney, ESPN

"It's not very often that a manager comes in and completely transforms a club from top to bottom, but that is the feeling of Tony Pulis's era at Stoke City – the change has been that profound."

Stoke City chairman Peter Coates

BOOKED: **THIS MONTH'S CHOICE**

By Dan Cottrell

Step forward, Sir Alex

Alex Ferguson: My Autobiography
Alex Ferguson
RRP £25

Once, Tony Blair asked Alex Ferguson for some advice. Ferguson told him: "The most important thing in my job is control. The minute they threaten your control, you have to get rid of them."

Ferguson's autobiography, published after he stepped down as Manchester United's longest serving coach, is littered with moments where his control was potentially threatened. In a sense, the whole book is an exercise in how he kept his teams on track to win championship and after championship, cup after cup.

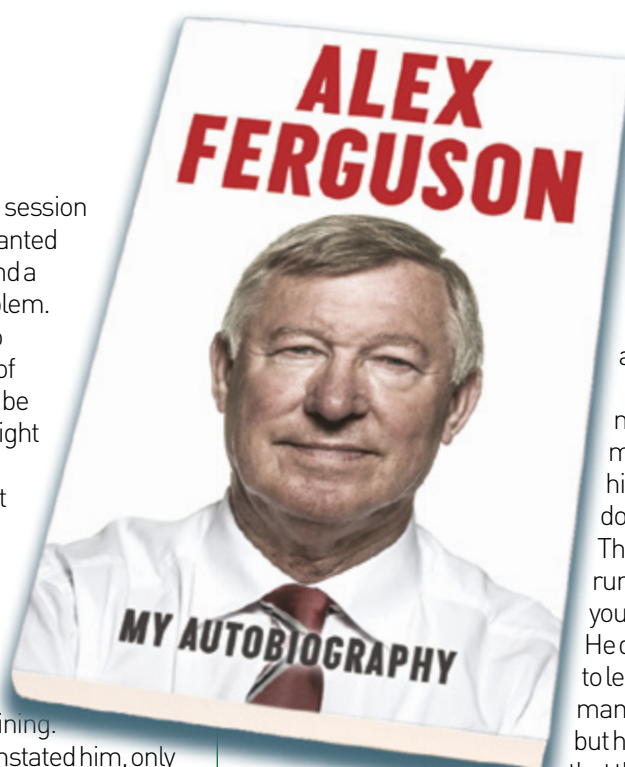
He can be placed alongside the great coaching achievers. After a good if undistinguished career as professional footballer in Scotland, Fergie worked his way through semi-professional coaching (while running two pubs in Glasgow) before he joined Aberdeen. His European Cup success with the Dons, pretty much against the odds, led him to one of the biggest jobs in world football, Manchester United.

Ferguson's trick was see through players quickly. He knows that everyone wants to play. If he took away this privilege, they would end up either begging to come back or to leave. If a player asked for a leave of absence, Fergie would always say yes. "Because who would want

to miss a training session at United?" He wanted to help players find a solution to a problem. However, he also knew that some of his players could be scamps or lose sight of why they were playing in the first place.

He banned a player for life when he had lied about why he was missing from training. Eventually he reinstated him, only after that player had begged for his place back. When Rio Ferdinand was asked out to America to interview the rap star P Diddy, Ferguson asked Ferdinand: "Is he going to make you a better centre-half?"

There are whole chapters dedicated to individual players and rival managers. Though these have been the sections to boost sensationalism and copy sales, his attention to these particular relationships is actually very revealing. We all have players (and adversaries) who are both vital and frustrating. Of course, a club like United could attract some of the biggest names in world football. Some even went on to greater things after their time with Ferguson, but the way he dealt with



"The moment the manager loses his authority, you don't have a club."

them gives us an insight into how we all might balance the needs of the team and the individual.

He says: "The moment the manager loses his authority, you don't have a club. The players will be running it, and then you're in trouble". He does not seem to lean on too many management gurus, but he had learned that the hard way from

other "tough" managers like Jock Stein.

Players like tough managers or a manager who can be tough. He says they prefer a manager to be a man. "There's a reward. The player will be thinking: '1. Can he make us winners? 2. Can he make me a better footballer? 3. Is he loyal to us?'" If the player says yes to all three, then he will "tolerate murders"!

Indeed, Ferguson has a reputation for his anger, and he does little remove this notion. He says he sometimes feared the consequences of his outbursts. Yet come Monday morning, all was back to normal, though the players certainly knew who was boss.

In the modern age of a more player-centred approach, perhaps ▼

BOOKED: THIS MONTH'S CHOICE

it is hard to see how we can learn from this old-fashioned method of management. In that sense, Ferguson cuts a lonely figure, craving someone to knock on his office door in the afternoon. He knows that he is revered and feared. He knew it made no sense to offer a chance for his players to think that the manager had "lost it". He worked extremely hard to know the detail, refreshing himself regularly.

Ferguson is renowned for building a team from within. At United, he rarely built a jigsaw of a team, finding the exact match to replace what he had just lost. While he did buy players to fill gaps, he looked to take good players and make them more complete. Though he did fall out with some, he also retained some of the best for many, many years. He says more than once that he would worry if he could not give them enough football. These players were not sheep who were happy to just get the odd game in the first team.

Ferguson knew they all craved to play and needed the footballing life force of high-octane competition.

His youth policy is world famous. He also bought players young. It is interesting that he is quite candid about the mistakes he has made in his choices. "Too quick a decision, not enough information, should have seen the signs" are laments to his tried-and-tested formula. His seemingly unscientific methods for success are commonsensical: look at their mother and father, study what they did. Watch how the players train, how they conduct themselves. Did he want obedient players? No, he wanted players with a bit of devil in them. They needed to have the self-confidence to express themselves on the pitch, when and where it really matters.

When it comes to referees, Ferguson is quite clear - they are not fit enough and they do not impose themselves.

On the press, he grudgingly acknowledges they need to sell papers. However, he is protective over his privacy and his family. When

Sir Alex Ferguson's Record:

Teams managed:

1974-1978 St. Mirren
1978-1986 Aberdeen
1985-1986 Scotland
1986-2013 Manchester United

Titles and Honours (highlights)

UEFA Champions League (2)

UEFA Cup Winners' Cup (2 - one with Aberdeen)

UEFA Super Cup (one with Aberdeen)

Premier League (13)

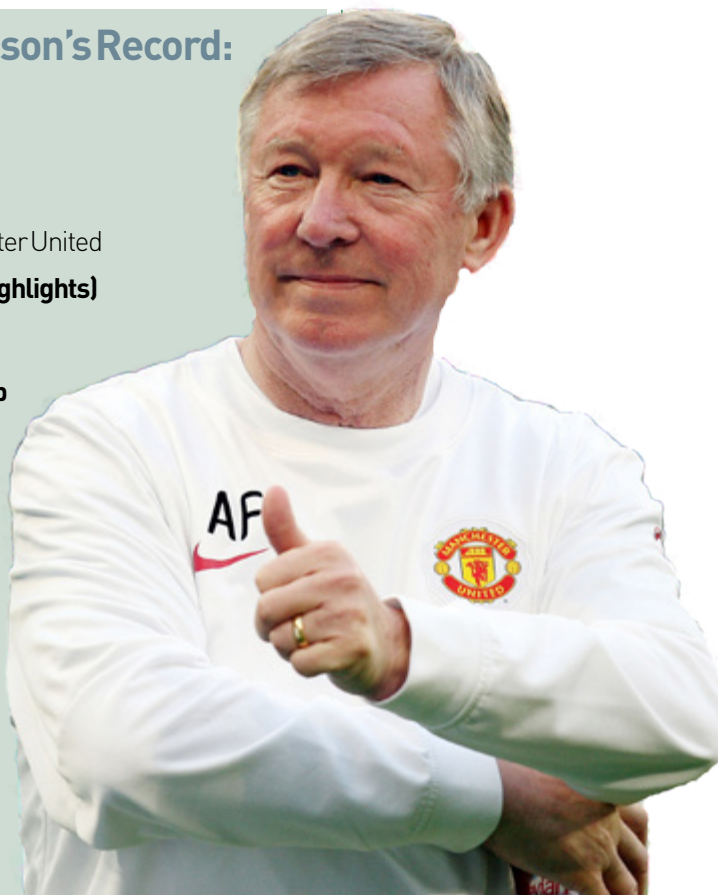
Scottish Premier Division (three with Aberdeen)

FA Cup (5)

League Cup (4)

LMA Manager of the Decade

Knighted in 1999



he is in front of the camera, he wears his "Alex Ferguson face". He revealed nothing about his torments or strains. He would never criticise a player publicly. His answers were plain. Over the years he had learned not to score intellectual points. The focus was always on the next game and what would need to be done.

There is a golden chapter on psychology. In fact it should be required reading for any coach. It starts by dealing with players who have lost form. He says to tell the truth, and do it a way which gives the player some hope. On other teams, he would convince them that Manchester United always played better in the second half of the season. He would furiously

tap his watch at the end of matches, putting pressure on the referee and opposition. They thought he knew exactly how long there was to go, some inside knowledge - of course he had as much idea as the next man.

This is a passionate book that seethes and revels in the maelstrom of top-flight football. Alex Ferguson hated losing and strained every sinew to make sure his sides didn't. Few sports coaches can boast his record. He is candid about his mistakes and pulls few punches. Whether you love or hate football, love or hate Manchester United, and even love or hate the man, you might well draw plenty of lessons from the manager.

It is a compelling read for any coach who knows that player management is one of the most difficult and time-consuming jobs. Tactics and training are the fun parts. Ultimately, it takes hard graft dealing with the all the paraphernalia that goes with young men who have lots of money and adoration.

"Ferguson knew it made no sense to offer a chance for his players to think the manager had 'lost it'."

67 EASY TO COACH DRILLS FOR MARKING, TACKLING & BLOCKING

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**67 Easy to Coach Drills
for Marking, Tackling & Blocking**



Michael Beale

WHAT THEY SAY:



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