

ELITE SOCCER

COACHING PRACTICES FROM THE WORLD'S
LEADING MANAGERS AND COACHES

Exclusive
Training practices from top
professional managers

LIVERPOOL

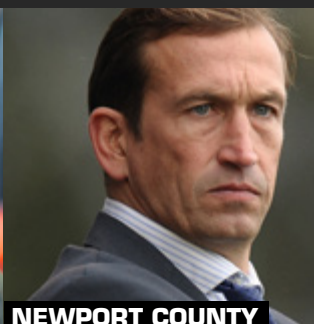
BRENDAN RODGER'S

MAXIMISING TEAM LEARNING



CHARLTON ATHLETIC

**CHRIS
POWELL**
Pre-matchday
session



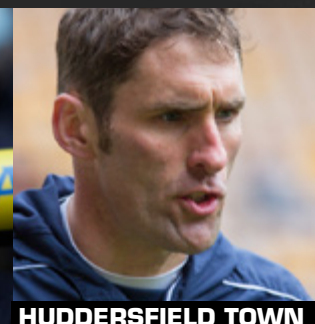
NEWPORT COUNTY

**JUSTIN
EDINBURGH**
Crossing and
finishing



LMA AMBASSADOR

**PAUL
BUCKLE**
Passing between
the lines



HUDDERSFIELD TOWN

**DARREN
ROBINSON**
Mid-season
fitness



MORECAMBE

JIM BENTLEY
Attacking play
in a 4-3-3
system

**EXTRA-TIME
INTERVIEW:**

**WEST HAM UNITED MANAGER
SAM ALLARDYCE**



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ISSUE 42 / JANUARY 2014: FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Bespoke soccer blueprints from a selection of football's most accomplished coaches

Dear Coach,

Welcome to the January issue of Elite Soccer.

It's a time of the year when, in an ideal world, we'd like to sit back, relax and take stock. Of course, that's rather difficult if you're involved in the world of soccer coaching, because if anything, the demands are even greater, with a flurry of matches and, no doubt, a function or two... unless, of course, you have the luxury of a mid-season break, but more on that later.

For those of you looking nervously at a packed upcoming schedule, why not allow Elite Soccer to help matters, because here's another selection of fantastic training plans, each designed to excite and inspire.

In this issue, our cross-section begins with a brilliant session from Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers. We're hugely excited about putting forward a possession practice that is at the heart of the Reds' expansive and ambitious attacking play this season – a precise, technical and complete plan that has helped them end the year as genuine title contenders in the Barclays Premier League.

Into the Sky Bet Championship, and Charlton Athletic manager Chris Powell provides for us a plan for the final session before match day. It explains how he guides his side through key principles that players must replicate the following day, and is a fantastic bespoke practice.

From Sky Bet League Two, Newport County boss Justin Edinburg offers us an original and high-tempo crossing and finishing scenario, while LMA Ambassador Paul Buckle teaches the mechanics of forward passing between and through the lines.

Our Coaching Consultation this month comes from Morecambe manager Jim Bentley, who answers a reader question on how to ensure synergy between attacking players. While for those of you reading this who are enjoying a mid-season break, Huddersfield Town coach Darren Robinson has delivered a mid-season fitness programme that keeps players fit and active during a rest period.

From everyone at Elite Soccer, we wish you a Happy New Year and every success – in soccer and in life – for 2014.

See you next month,

Howard Wilkinson

Howard Wilkinson, LMA Chairman

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4

BRENDAN RODGERS
LIVERPOOL

Maximising the potential of individual, group and team learning



6

CHRIS POWELL
CHARLTON ATHLETIC

Pre-matchday session

8

JUSTIN EDINBURGH
NEWPORT COUNTY

Crossing and finishing scenarios



10

PAUL BUCKLE
LMA AMBASSADOR

Passing between and through the lines



12

DARREN ROBINSON
HUDDERSFIELD TOWN

Mid-season fitness programme



COACHING CONSULTATION

14

JIM BENTLEY
MORECAMBE

Attacking player on player in a 4-3-3



3

MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Our review of the past month

16

EXTRA-TIME:

...with Sam Allardyce

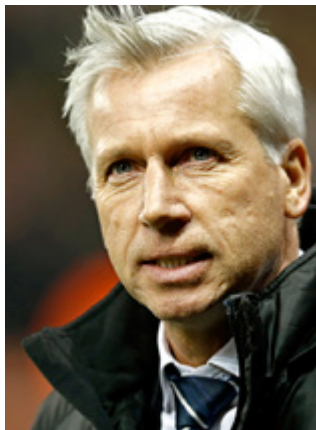
17

BOOKED

Elite sports book review

MANAGEMENT MATTERS

MANAGER OF THE MONTH AWARDS



Newcastle United manager **Alan Pardew** scooped the

Barclays Premier League Manager of the Month award for November after his side won all four of their matches.

Following a slow start to the campaign, the club enjoyed an upturn in fortunes during the month, with home wins over Chelsea, West Bromwich Albion and Norwich City, plus an away success in the capital at Tottenham Hotspur.

The Toon conceded just two goals in those matches, enjoying solid defensive performances that also saw goalkeeper Tim Krul scoop the Player of the Month award.

NEWCASTLE UNITED: P4 W4 D0 L0 (LEAGUE ONLY)



In the Sky Bet Championship, Brighton &

Hove Albion boss **Oscar Garcia** collected the divisional award after the south coast side won three of their four matches in November.

Brighton secured league victories over Doncaster Rovers, Blackburn Rovers and Wigan Athletic, then battled to a 1-1 draw at AFC Bournemouth.

The club also have the highest average league attendance in the Championship, as they look to mount a concerted promotion challenge this term.

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION: P4 W3 D1 L0



In Sky Bet League One, **Uwe Rosler**

took the divisional award after his Brentford side won four and drew one of their five league games, to move firmly into the promotion picture.

As part of that run, the Bees thumped Crewe Alexandra 5-0, as well as securing victories over Crawley Town, Peterborough United and Notts County.

The results were enough to impress the directors at Wigan Athletic, who prompted swooped to take Rosler to the DW Stadium as the Lancashire club's new first-team manager.

BRENTFORD: P5 W4 D1 L0



And finally to Sky Bet League Two,

where Manager of the Month honours went to **Phil Brown**, the manager of Southend United. The Essex club won four of their five matches in November, drawing the other, as well as progressing to the second round of the FA Cup, after winning 3-0 at Morecambe.

In the league, Southend saw off Mansfield Town, Exeter City, York City and Portsmouth, as well as drawing at Cheltenham Town.

SOUTHEND UNITED: P5 W4 D1 L0

CAREER PATH

.... with Paul Cook, manager of Sky Bet League Two side Chesterfield

Q. Chesterfield are going great guns this season – do you feel you have settled into management now having also had success with Accrington Stanley?

I think most managers will admit it is a learning curve that needs to be ridden. I've had setbacks along the way but the most important thing for me was to build on those experiences and recognise where I'd perhaps done things wrong. At times you have to hold your hands up and say 'that

wasn't so good'... then make sure you don't make the same mistake again!

Q. Are you hungry for success?

Of course. You have to be, otherwise what's the point? I know at certain levels – youth football, for instance – the emphasis is on enjoyment, but you get to a certain point where it always has to be about getting results. At the end of the day this is a business, and a business that relies on the football club doing well.

I think the other thing that drives me on is a fear of failure. We've all had those instances in our career where things don't go to plan, as I've said, and no-one wants to go back there.

Q. Is there added pressure when the set-up of the club, in Chesterfield's case, is so geared for football at a higher level?

There is more pressure, but it's a nice pressure, because you get a lift every day from the set-up and the facilities that we have. It's also much easier to be demanding in terms of the performance of your players and yourself when there are such fantastic facilities all around.



LIVERPOOL

Brendan Rodgers Maximising the potential of individual, group and team learning

Overview:

This is a session that lasts 70 minutes, with coaches and players in a number of specialisms – each offering simplicity and structure, yet requiring good technical ability, intelligence and a certain amount of individualism and flair.

At Liverpool, we want to construct training exercises that progress from one area to the next, building in difficulty as it goes. This eliminates boredom, keeps players focused, and ensures that each stage of the learning process is realistic and valuable.

We split our coaching team up so that players each have someone overseeing their exercise. This also enables us to coach the whole squad by creating numerous areas where drills, practices and games are performed at the same time.

MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF INDIVIDUAL, GROUP AND TEAM LEARNING

SET-UP

AREA

Up to full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals, hurdles, mannequins

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 20 (11v9)

SESSION TIME

Warm-up 15mins,
Speed conditioning
5mins, Possession
– the lay-off 12mins,
Individual and group
specifics 20mins,
Small-sided game
18mins

What do I get the players to do?

Warm-up

We set up as shown (1), with four 15x5-yard channels. At the bottom of each are three small hurdles. At mid-tempo, players have different instructions for running either around or over them, then move to the top of the practice area and back. As one player returns, the next leaves.

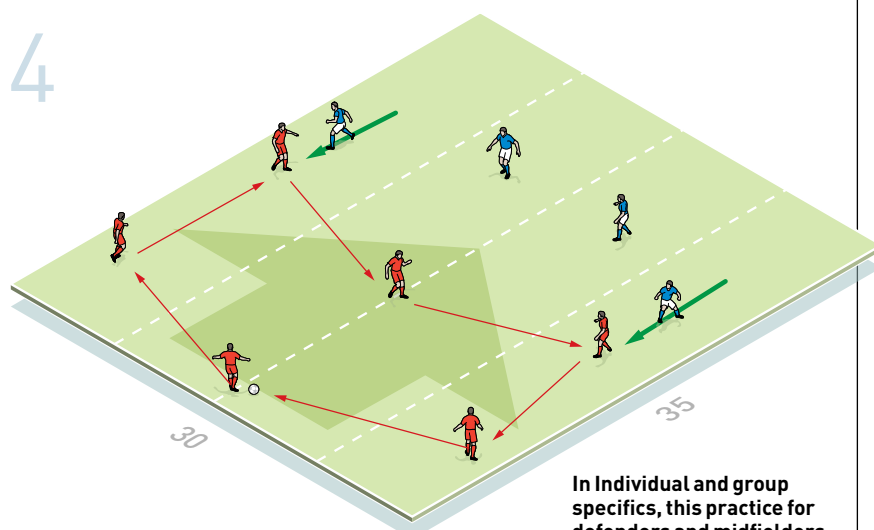
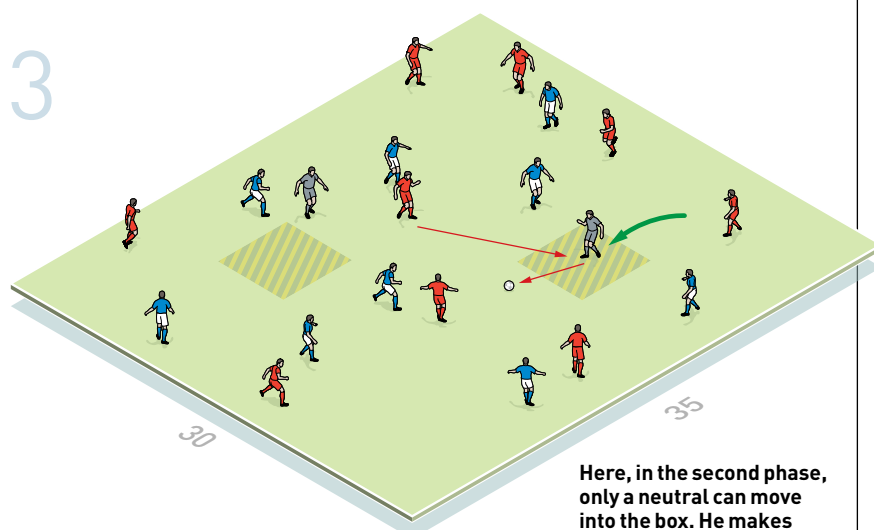
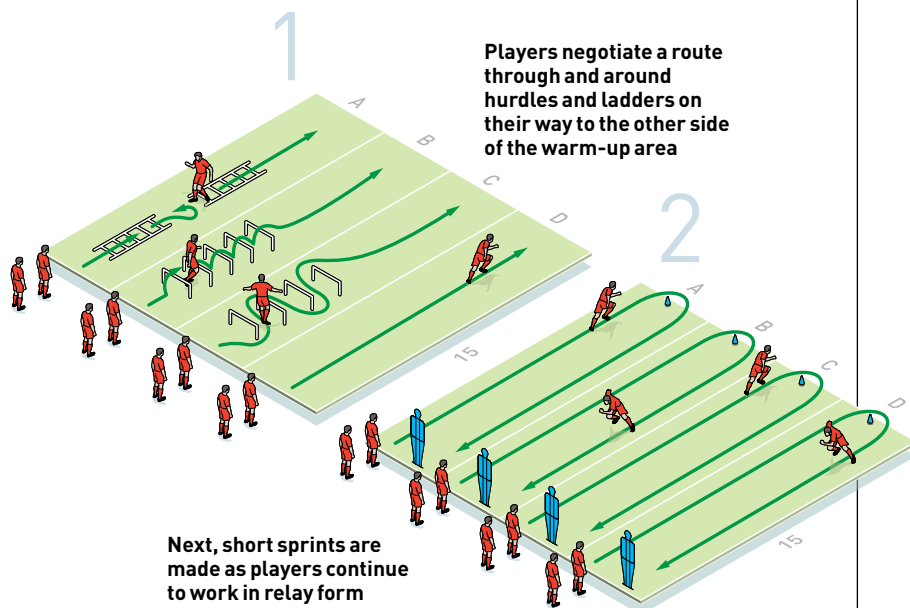
Speed conditioning

Next, players must sprint from the start line, run 5 yards to the cone, before coming back.

Possession – the lay-off (2)

This is 9x9 plus two neutrals, who play for the team in possession. In the first phase, any attacker can meet a team mate's pass in one of the two scoring boxes. Receiving an immediate return pass earns him a point.

In the first progression, now only neutral players can venture into the box. Again,



Brendan Rodgers LIVERPOOL

Brendan Rodgers has already earned himself a place in the hearts of the Liverpool faithful after an impressive start to his tenure as Liverpool manager. Under Rodgers, Liverpool have made continual progress and the first half of this season 2013/14 has seen his side sustaining a consistent challenge for Champions League qualification.

Rodgers was appointed as manager of one of the most famous clubs in world football following a stunning two years of progress with Swansea City. His first season in charge saw him lead the South Wales club into the top flight for the first time in three decades. With a philosophy of playing slick, fast measured technical football, the young manager's methods certainly impressed and saw Swansea secure 11th position in the Barclays Premier League and Rodgers nominated for the LMA Manager of the Year award.

Previously, the Northern Ireland born defender – whose playing career was caught short due to a knee injury – managed both Reading and Watford following his appointment by Jose Mourinho first as Chelsea Youth Team Head Coach and then Reserve Team manager.

MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF INDIVIDUAL, GROUP AND TEAM LEARNING

5

BRENDAN RODGERS Improve the Balance of the Back Four

MIKE MARSH Develop Movement in Front of and Behind the Back Four

COLIN PASCOE Improve Link-up and Combinations in and Around the Box

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

In the Small-sided game,
blues work with a 10v9
overload

an immediate return pass earns a point. Finally, only neutral players constructing a one-two can earn a point.

Individual and group specifics

Now split coaching comes to the fore, with first-team coaches assigned different exercises and tasks. Defenders and holding midfielders work with myself, Brendan

Rodgers, passing the ball from side to side, as shown, and gradually advancing up the pitch (4). They are pressed by a line of four opponents, but must move forward in balance.

Wingers and attacking midfielders work with Colin Pascoe, setting up as shown (5) to construct technical link-up play before going through on goal. There

is no set structure when looking at the imagination and creativity of our attacking play; but quick and accurate passes into feet and into space will give us the confidence to move around and through opponents. Finally, attacking midfielders and strikers work with Mike Marsh. This is about penetrating the defensive line,

with attackers using clever and sharp passes, blind side and disguised runs.

Small-sided game (6)

We conclude with a game, which is 10v9/9v10 in a 50x40-yard area. We look to develop flexibility, and the confidence for players to put everything they have learnt into a real game situation. ■

CHARLTONATHLETIC

Chris Powell Pre- matchday session

Overview:

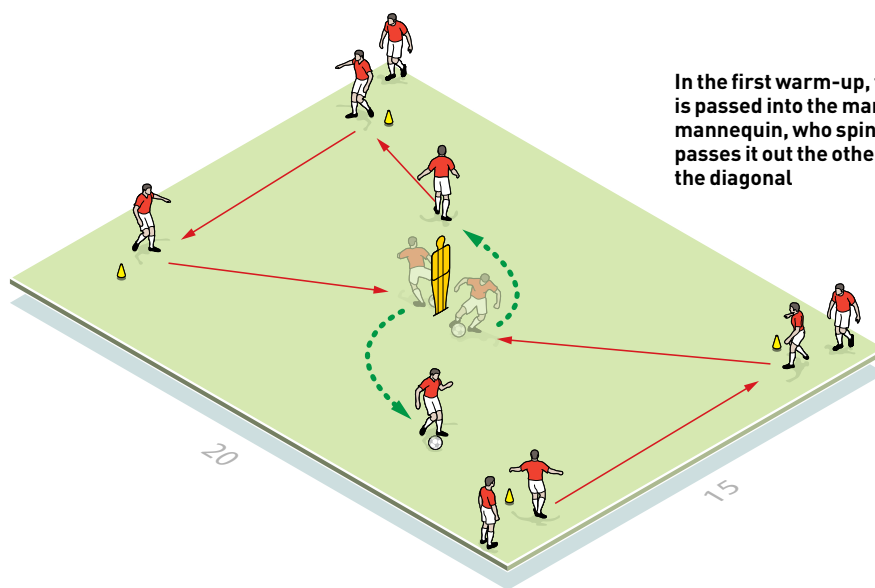
This is a 90-minute session that prepares players for matchday. It's effective because it ensures players are working on the basic elements of passing, movement and possession, and forms a really important team practice in ensuring everyone is ready for competitive action.

The brilliance of this session is in its simplicity. Players must perfect touch, technique and team play, then have the intelligence to take those skills through into the next part of the session.

"Players must perfect touch, technique and team play, then have the intelligence to take those skills through into the next part of the session."

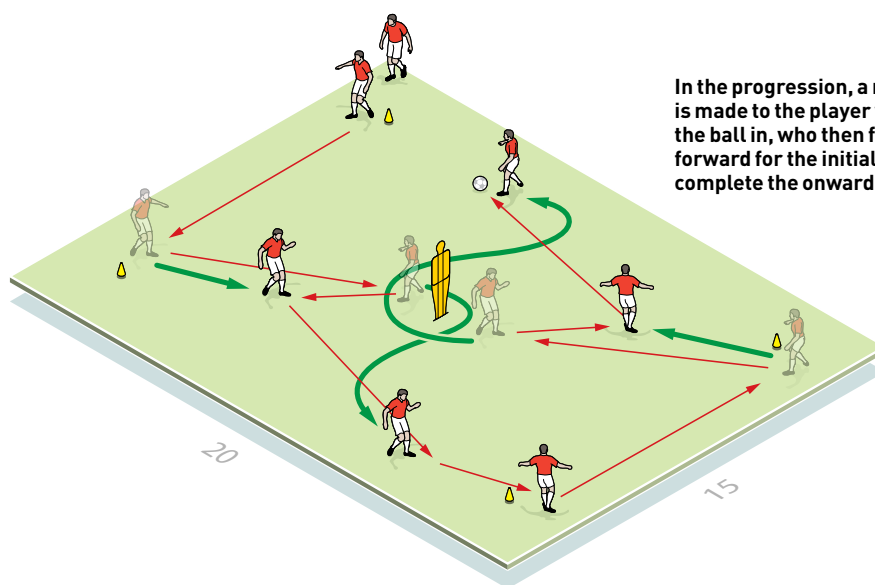
PRE-MATCHDAY SESSION

1



In the first warm-up, the ball is passed into the man on the mannequin, who spins and passes it out the other side on the diagonal

2



In the progression, a return pass is made to the player who passed the ball in, who then feeds it forward for the initial receiver to complete the onward pass

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble

SET-UP

AREA

Up to full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v11

SESSION TIME

Warm-ups and possession drills
15mins each,
Half-pitch challenge
25mins,
11v11 20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Warm-ups

90secs work, 30secs rest

For the first warm-up, we set up as shown (1), in a 20x15-yard area. Player 1 passes the ball across to player 2, who takes it and feeds into player 3. This man then turns the mannequin and passes on to player 4, where the cycle is repeated again. We'll then run it on the other side of the area.

For the second warm-up (2), player 1 passes all across the grid to player 2, who plays in to player 3. This man sets the ball back to his man and makes a run around the mannequin. Player 2 now sets the ball down the channel for player 3 to receive and play on to player 4, where the cycle is repeated. Again, run it both ways.

Possession drills

6mins work, 90secs rest

The first possession drill (3) is a 4v4 with

overloads provided by two floaters (who play for the team in possession to make a 6v4). In a 25x25-yard box this is three-touch at first, progressing to all-in.

Next, we mark off the corners and play 5v5 (4). Eight passes must be completed before a point can be scored – this is done by a player dribbling into a corner.



Chris Powell

CHARLTON ATHLETIC

As a player, Chris Powell came through the ranks at Crystal Palace but made only three appearances for the Eagles before signing for Southend United. He clocked up over 200 appearances for the Shrimpers, then repeated the feat at Charlton Athletic – his first of three spells – before winding down his career with spells at West Ham United, Watford and Leicester City.

In total, the left-back made 667 club appearances, plus five for England – at the age of 31 becoming the oldest Three Lions debutant in over 50 years.

After a spell in caretaker charge at Leicester, he became first-team manager of Charlton in January 2011. And within 15 months Powell had guided the Addicks back into the Championship as npower League One champions.

PRE-MATCHDAY SESSION

Half-pitch challenge

Next, we play 6v4, setting up as shown (5), with four midfielders and two defenders (whites) against four defenders (reds). The ball is fed out from the goal by the inactive players, for whites to begin, looking to score in the goal.

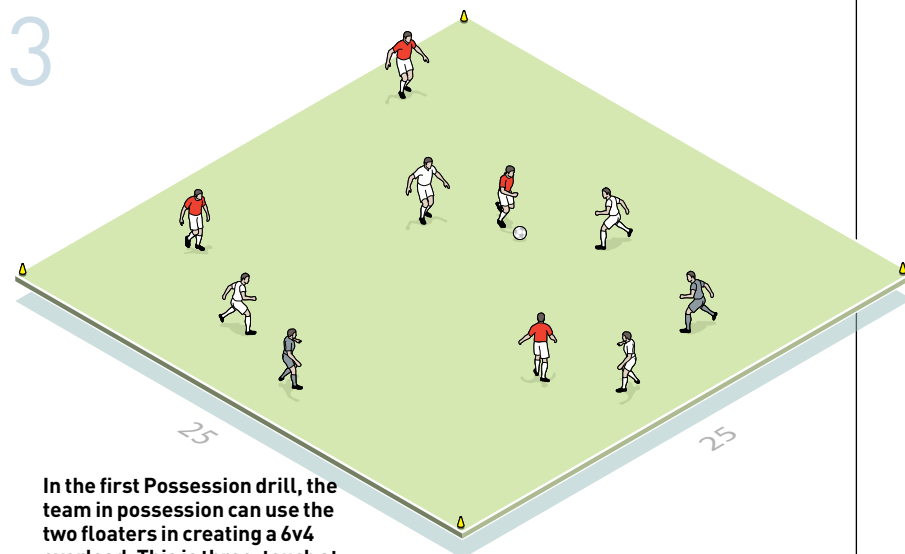
We then progress to an 8v6 by including blue offensive wing-backs and yellow defensive central midfielders. Players can be swapped and rotated throughout.

We conclude with an 11v11 game on a full pitch – no restrictions.

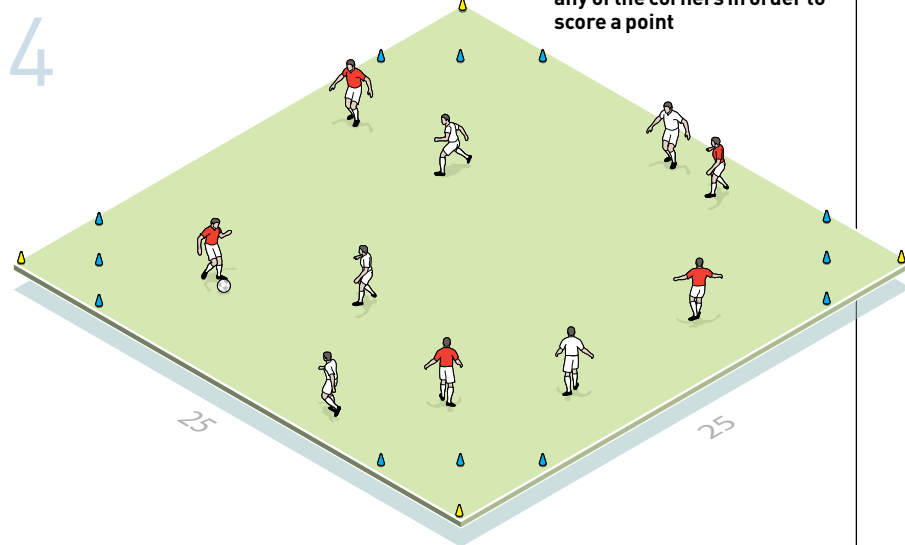
What are the key things to look out for technically/tactically?

In the warm-ups we're looking for accurate passing, good control and great link-up play between team mates. The Possession drills ask the same thing of the players, albeit in a competitive element, with the Half-pitch challenge adding in formation elements.

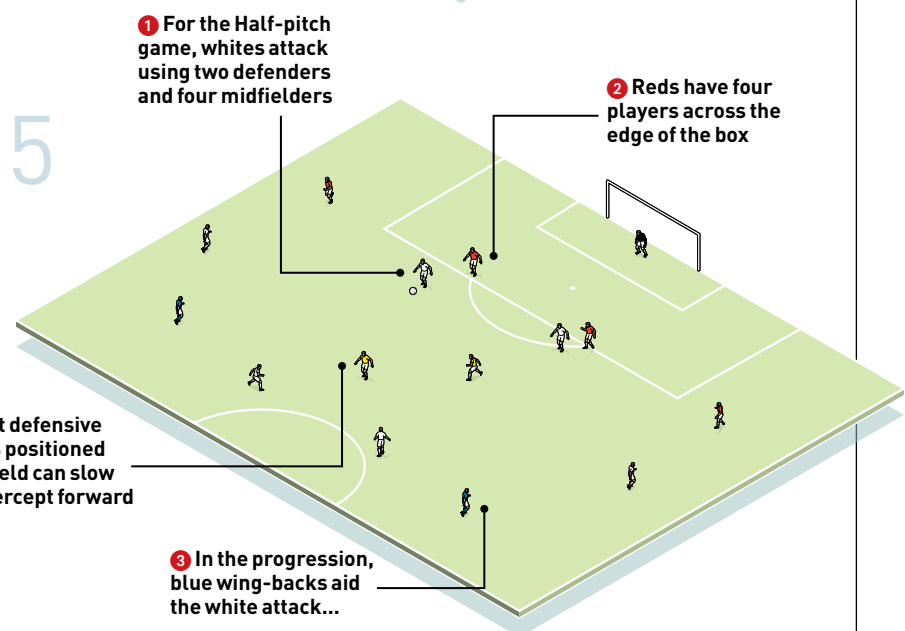
Concluding with a full pitch 11v11 game enables players to showcase all of the skills practised. ■



In the first Possession drill, the team in possession can use the two floaters in creating a 6v4 overload. This is three-touch at first before going all-in



In the 5v5, teams must make eight consecutive passes before dribbling the ball into any of the corners in order to score a point



1 For the Half-pitch game, whites attack using two defenders and four midfielders

2 Reds have four players across the edge of the box

4 ... but defensive yellows positioned in midfield can slow and intercept forward moves

3 In the progression, blue wing-backs aid the white attack...



NEWPORT COUNTY

Justin Edinburgh Crossing and finishing with shooting scenarios

Overview:

This multidirectional session is about game-realistic play, positive moves and developing the ability to finish from crosses, with varied shooting scenarios.

It is important to practise this because being clinical in front of goal when chances arrive can be the difference between winning and losing football matches. After all, 50% of the goals we've scored this season have been by strikers.

The session encourages players to practise shooting from distance, and greatly improves an understanding of getting into goalscoring positions.

We work on this session at least once a week.

"The session encourages players to practise shooting from distance, and greatly improves an understanding of getting into goalscoring positions."

CROSSING AND FINISHING WITH SHOOTING SCENARIOS

SET-UP

AREA

50x40 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals, mannequins

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 16

SESSION TIME

Crossing sequence
20mins,
Progressions 10mins each

What do I get the players to do?

Crossing sequence

Setting up as shown (1a), we begin from position B, with one blue touching the ball to a team mate, who takes a touch then shoots.

A third blue now joins and all three players move forward, looking to get on the end of a cross from a team mate at position A, to the left (1b). A red defender in the goalmouth attempts to stifle the threat.

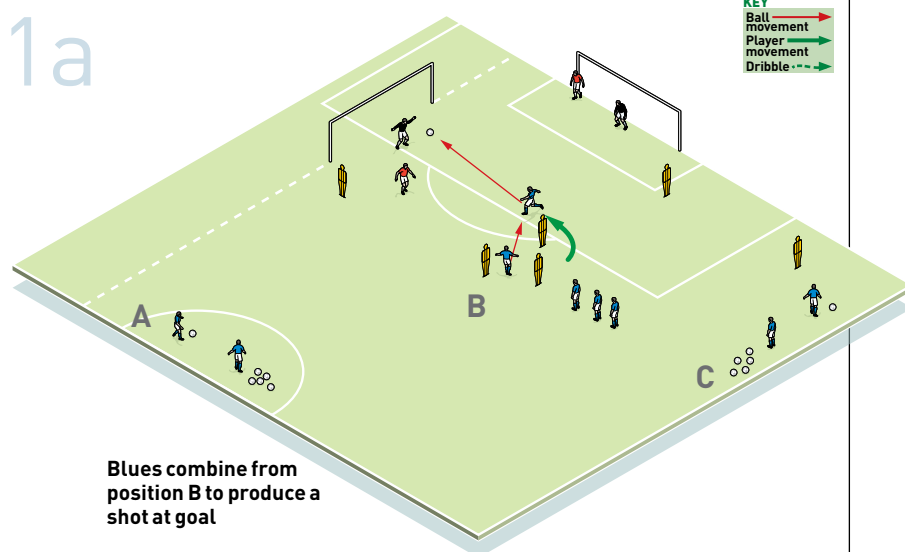
Next, attackers turn to their right, and a cross is delivered from position C, on the right-hand side (1c).

After these attacks, three new blues come into the area at position B.

How do I progress the session?

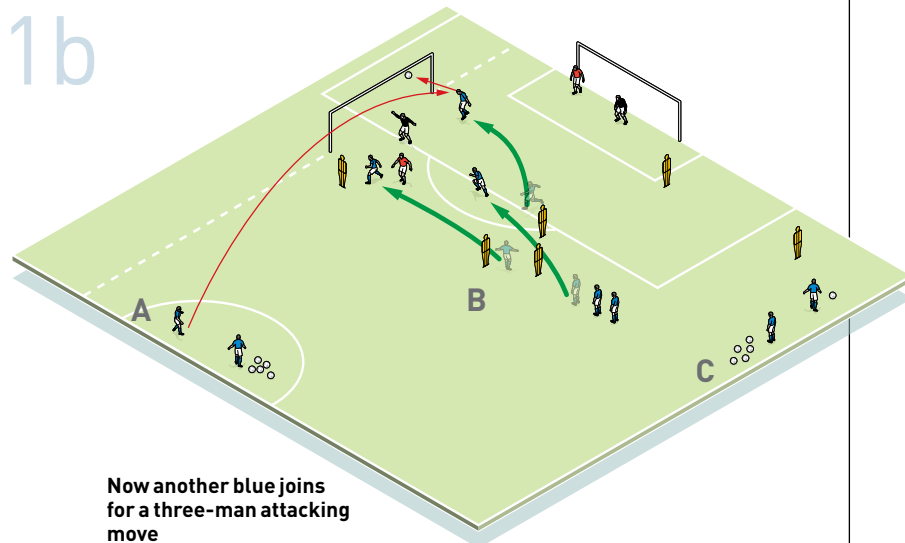
There are a number of standard progressions we'll try. So from position B, wall passes can be made between the three blue players before a shot is taken. Alternatively, we might ask them to attack the goal ensuring runs are made strictly from

1a



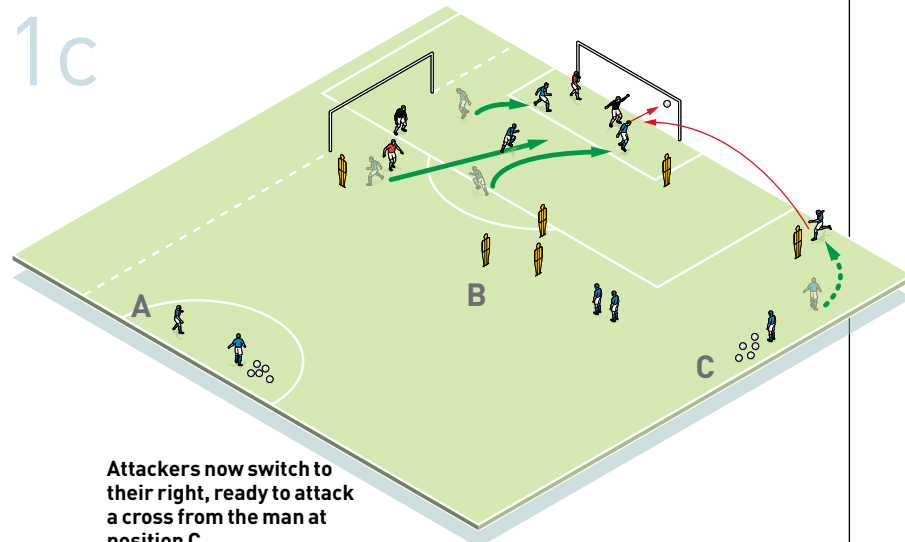
Blues combine from position B to produce a shot at goal

1b



Now another blue joins for a three-man attacking move

1c



Attackers now switch to their right, ready to attack a cross from the man at position C



Justin Edinburgh NEWPORT COUNTY

After almost a decade in non-league football, Justin Edinburgh's first season as a Football League manager has been hugely successful so far, with his Newport County side firmly in the Sky Bet League Two play-off picture.

The former Tottenham Hotspur and Portsmouth defender earned his crack at league management after guiding the Exiles to promotion from the Blue Square Bet Premier, after the south Wales club defeated Wrexham 2-0 at Wembley in May in the Conference play-off final.

Previously, Edinburgh had been in charge of Rushden & Diamonds, Grays Athletic, Fisher Athletic and Billericay Town.

"The practice will fail unless players ensure they're communicating well at all times, with quick transitions to the next area."

CROSSING AND FINISHING WITH SHOOTING SCENARIOS

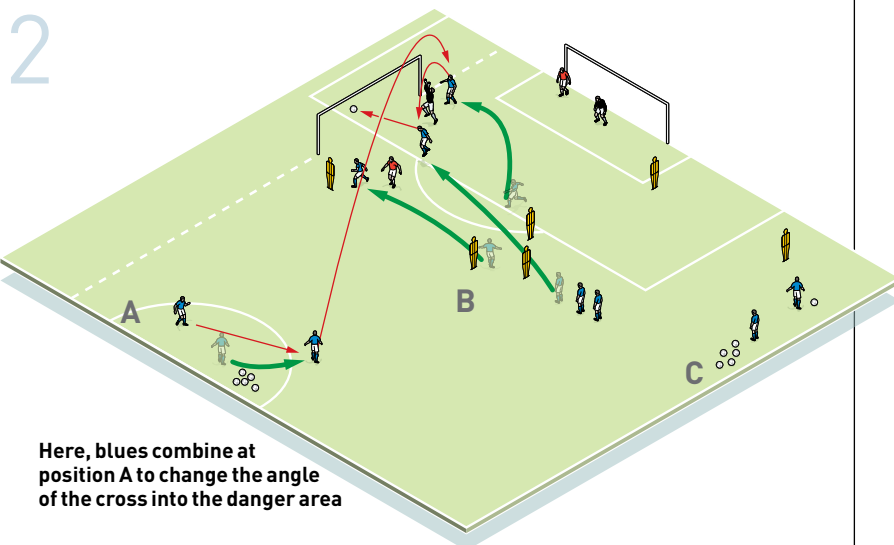
onside positions; or we can condition it so one blue has to dribble past a passive defender before shooting.

From position A, before crossing, the wide man can dribble the ball forward first, or make a short pass with a team mate. We also want to experiment with deep crosses, as well as altering the pace, power and distance and angle of the delivery (2). The same progressions apply for position C (3).

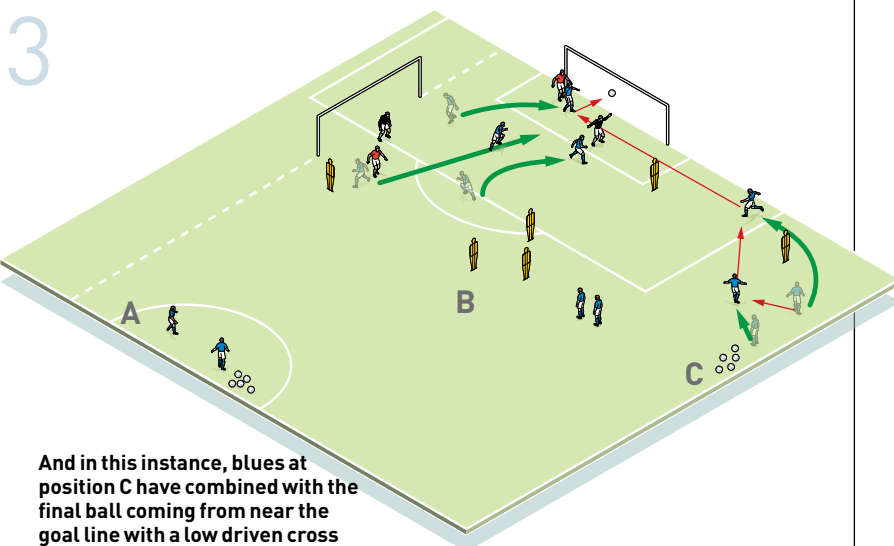
As a final progression, invite a crosser to join in the attack (4). This adds an extra forward option, as well as providing a second ball option for attacking knockdowns, or crosses only half-cleared by a defender. We can also add further defenders for increased realism.

What are the key things to look out for?

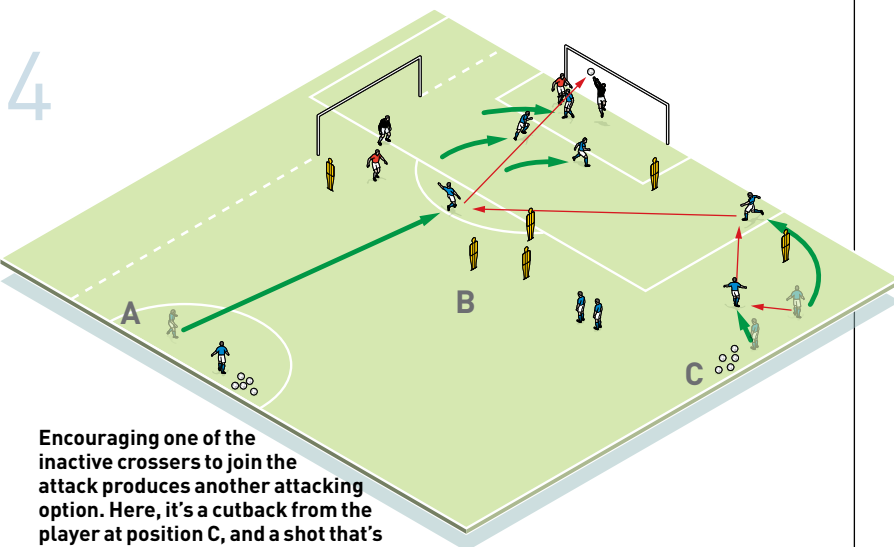
We want to see good shooting technique, with the ball being driven or passed into the goal, and using one-touch finishing, volleys and half-volleys. The practice will fail unless players ensure they communicate well at all times, with quick transitions to the next area. ■



Here, blues combine at position A to change the angle of the cross into the danger area



And in this instance, blues at position C have combined with the final ball coming from near the goal line with a low driven cross into the six-yard box



Encouraging one of the inactive crossers to join the attack produces another attacking option. Here, it's a cutback from the player at position C, and a shot that's well saved by the keeper

LMA AMBASSADOR

Paul Buckle Passing between and through the lines

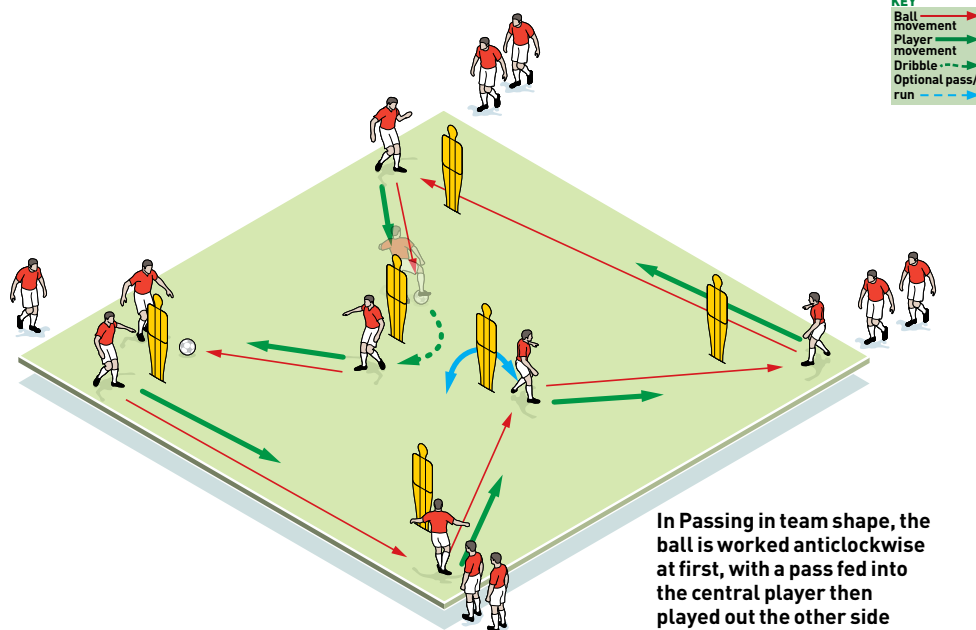
Overview:

Particularly when playing at home, the problem of teams coming to sit in and defend can be a very real one. When at Luton Town, we perfected a method of countering this by making the pitch big, giving my team options in attack by pulling the opposition out of holes in order to penetrate through or around them.

This attacking session, therefore, is about playing through and around the lines of defence. It focuses on keeping the ball on the floor, with players encouraged to find positive blind side angles of attack. It's vital to practise this if your team is set up to pass the ball. It can be used in measured build-ups or quick counter-attack situations, with players' positioning, passing and receiving skills, and weight of pass, all crucial in determining the success of the session.

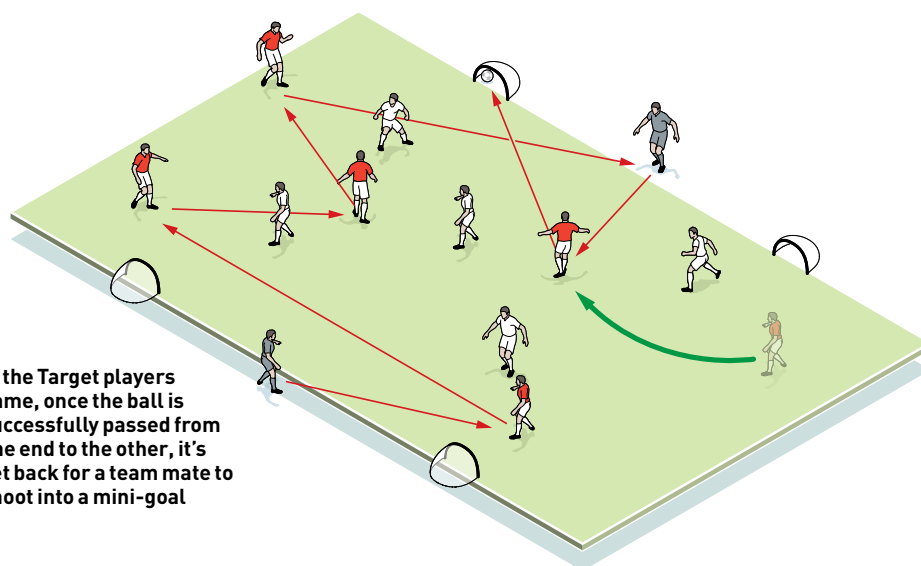
PASSING BETWEEN AND THROUGH THE LINES

1



In Passing in team shape, the ball is worked anticlockwise at first, with a pass fed into the central player then played out the other side

2



In the Target players game, once the ball is successfully passed from one end to the other, it's set back for a team mate to shoot into a mini-goal

SET-UP

AREA

Up to half-pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, mini-goals, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 11v10

SESSION TIME

Passing in team shape
20mins,
Target players game
20mins,
Through the lines
30mins

What do I get the players to do?

Passing in team shape

We begin, as shown (1), by passing anti-clockwise from the top left starting point, with the ball fed from one base to the next. Players on the mannequins must pull away or to the side.

Once mastered, we change direction, also utilising a different starting point. Quick changes are important, as is plenty of variation.

Target players game

Next we move on to a 30x18-yard area - 7v5 with the ball and 5v7 without (2). Play begins with a target man, who must use 'team mates' to thread the ball through to

the other target man. There, it's touched back for a player to fire into either mini-goal. The starting position of the outfield players must mirror a game situation, and target players are two-touch maximum.



Paul Buckle LMA AMBASSADOR

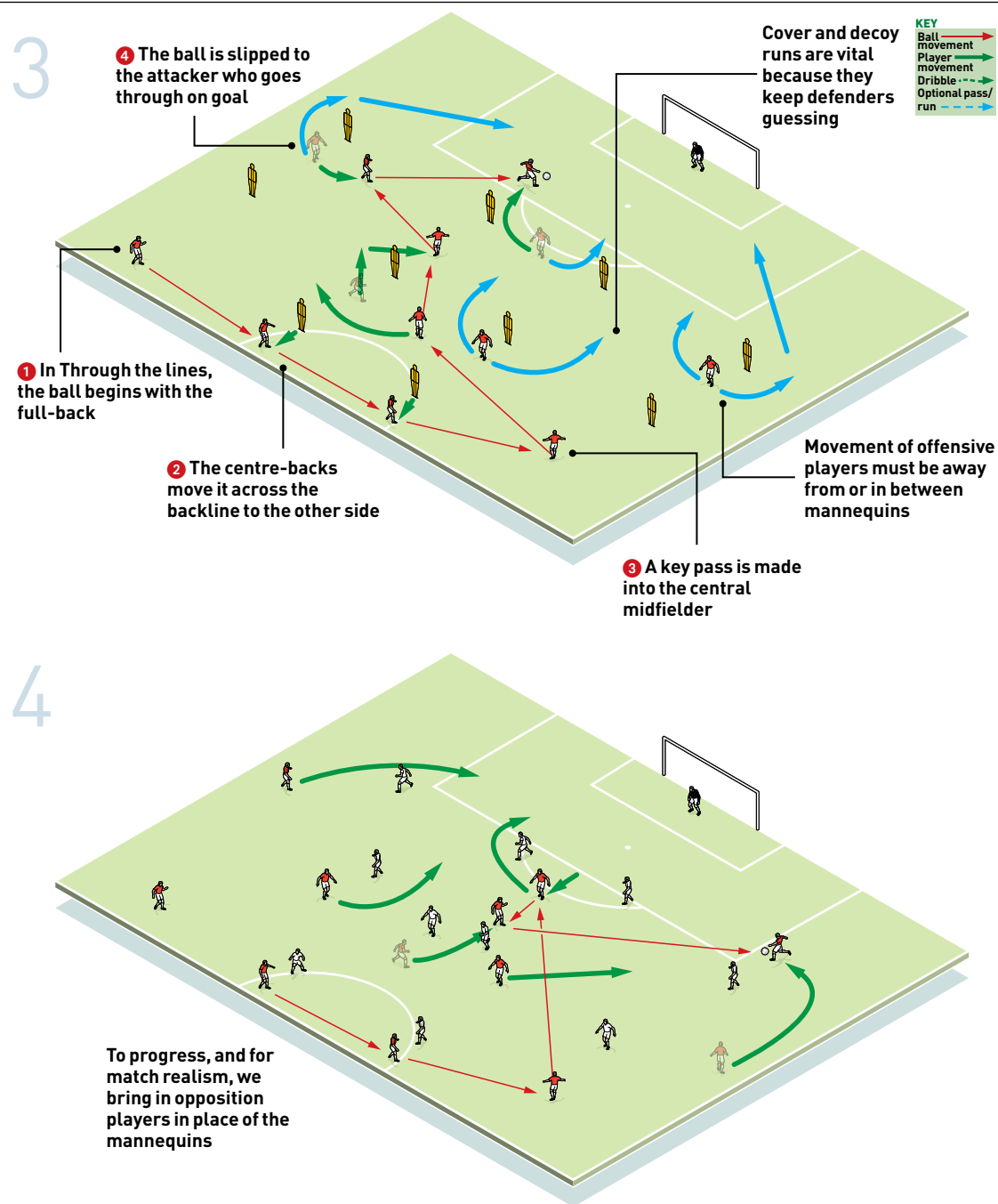
Paul Buckle is currently looking after the development of youth players in the United States as Technical Director at the Metropolitan Oval, a large soccer complex in New York City.

Last year, the 42-year-old said goodbye to the UK game, for the time being at least, less than two months after guiding non-league Luton Town to one of the biggest modern-day FA Cup shocks, as his unfancied outfit triumphed 1-0 at Barclays Premier League side Norwich City.

Buckle also had successful spells in charge of Torquay United and Bristol Rovers, while as a player, he starred for Torquay, Exeter City, Colchester United and Brentford.

"All players should enjoy these practices because they are game-related, and repeated success is achievable."

PASSING BETWEEN AND THROUGH THE LINES



Through the lines

This next practice, on a half-pitch, is three-touch – unopposed at first (3), but then either 10v10 (4), or 10v8 in favour of attackers if wanting to force an overload. The start point forces full-backs to play to centre-backs, and as the attacking play builds, movement of players must be away

from or in between mannequins, with a decisive pass or cross into the box to finish.

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

Practices must be performed at match pace, with good timing of movement. Weight of pass must be measured, crisp and accurate, with players

open and side-on to receive and play forward.

The final pass in front of or behind the striker is vital, as are attacking and cover runs of team mates. And all this should be done with the positions of the team mirroring game situations.

Throughout, we want to see players experimenting with

different passing combinations. If they are ambitious and energetic, they will enjoy all that this session offers, because the practices are very game-related, and repeated success is achievable.

Huddersfield Town

Darren Robinson Off-season training plan

Overview:

This is an off-season training programme that focuses predominantly on the building of an aerobic base, so that other components of fitness can be added when the player returns to pre-season. It starts with cross-training activities to help the player freshen up after a long season – this aims to maintain a base level of fitness, with the first two weeks designed to keep the player active but off his feet. The programme then becomes progressively more intense.

Some of the sessions are as short as half an hour, and if a player is dedicated, he can realistically fit something in every day and still maintain a good level of fitness.

All exercises can be completed without supervision, but we encourage players to call us if they are unsure about anything.

As the programme progresses further, the player will undertake more runs involving turning, stopping and multidirectional challenges. He will need to do these runs to prepare himself for football-specific activities in pre-season. Indeed, some of the soreness experienced by players in the early stages of pre-season can be reduced by performing these types of exercises.

Coaching Q&A

Do you test players before they leave for the off-season?

No. They're not motivated at this time of the season. Some work the system to look better in the summer when they return and therefore underperform, while out of contact players also lack the motivation to extend themselves.

Do you test players when they return?

Yes. All players are given clear agreed target goals for body mass, body composition, strength and aerobic fitness levels, plus bespoke KPI programmes with a specific theme such as hypertrophy, strength development, maintenance.

What are the targets for the fitness upon their return to training?

To minimise de-training and maximise fitness. We want to see group integration, cohesion and a bedding in of the playing ethos for the year ahead.

OFF-SEASON TRAINING PLAN

Warm-ups

Prior to every session, it is expected that the player will perform a decent warm-up, preparing himself for the work ahead. He can vary the type of warm-up, using a ball, fast feet drills or a steady jog, but it is important that he has a higher heart rate level, warm muscles and mobilised joints.

Atypical warm-up could include:

5-10mins jogging... to increase body temperature

5-10mins dynamic stretching exercises... leg swings, hip extensions, shoulder rolls, golf swings

8-12 strides over 30-50 yards... focus on correct running technique, quality of run and increasing work intensity

Cycle sessions

The cycle sessions included in the programme are designed for performance of maximal power through each interval. Make sure that the saddle is set to the appropriate height, so that when sat down with the pedal at its lower point, the leg should be extended with a slight knee flexion.

Cycle 1:

10mins easy cycle.

12x10secs maximal effort burst, staying seated in the saddle. 1min easy spin in between each effort, concluding with 10mins easy cycle.

Cycle 2:

10mins easy cycle.

14x10secs maximal effort burst, staying seated in the saddle. 1min easy spin in between each effort, concluding with 10mins easy cycle.

Cycle 3:

10mins easy cycle.

16x10secs maximal effort burst, staying seated in the saddle. 1min easy spin in between each effort, concluding with 10mins easy cycle.

Cycle 4:

10mins easy cycle.

18x10secs maximal effort burst, staying seated in the saddle. 1min easy spin in between each effort, concluding with 10mins easy cycle.

Cycle 5:

10mins easy cycle.

19x10secs maximal effort burst, staying seated in the saddle. 1min easy spin in between each effort, concluding with 10mins easy cycle.





Darren Robinson

**HUDDERSFIELD
TOWN**

Darren Robinson is a UEFA Pro Licence Coach who has worked in a number of different roles, combining coaching at senior and academy level, sports science, performance analysis, strength and conditioning.

He currently works as Head of Performance at Sky Bet Championship club Huddersfield Town, assisting the first-team manager with ensuring all aspects related to performance are achieved in respect of players maximising their athletic capabilities, practice time and skill development.

Darren has also worked at Barclays Premier League club Hull City, is a five-time ironman and has represented GB at World Age Group championships on two occasions.

“All exercises can be completed without supervision, but we encourage players to call us if they are unsure about anything.”

OFF-SEASON TRAINING PLAN

Swim sessions

The swim sessions are designed to give the player a good workout with less impact on his body in comparison to running, for example. Footballers need to be aware of some of the differing stresses and outcomes when attempting to do fitness and conditioning sessions in the pool. Most I have worked with are typically less competent than a regular swimmer and often find front crawl stressful and challenging aerobically. This is not always due to overall physical fitness, but rather to CO₂ intolerance and a poor body position in the pool, making the stroke less efficient and harder to swim each length. Many rugby league clubs offer swim lessons to their players as they recognise the benefits of off-feet endurance training with swimming, and it is something worth considering for the older footballer, given that he may have had a hard season on the joints and bones.

Heart rate is often lower in the pool due to the nature of swimming in water and having a horizontal position.

Rest periods should not replicate football sessions - I have seen football coaches adopt the classic 4x4mins efforts with 3min rest, which is far too long to successfully stress the player. A typical club swimmer would maybe perform 12x2mins efforts with only 15secs rest in between each rep, and still be able to maintain form and pacing. ■



Swim 1: Aerobic Development

- 4 length breast stroke
- 2 lengths crawl kick / 2 lengths breast kick with board
- 2 lengths back kick without board and arm held high
- 4x1 length hammer head kick – fold your arms above your head and kick hard. 15secs rest between efforts
- 16x1 length efforts, building pace each length with 15secs rest
- 2x8 lengths crawl with 20secs rest
- 2x8 lengths pull boy steady with 15secs rest
- 4 lengths breast swim down

Total volume is 64 lengths: 1,600m (or 1 mile)

Swim 2: Extended Aerobic Swim

- 4 lengths breast stroke
- 2 lengths back stroke / 2 lengths breast kick with board
- 4x2 lengths as 1 length polo – head up the full length. 1 length front crawl, 20secs rest
- 50 lengths continuous – stroke count each length and aim to keep each effort consistent
- 4 lengths breast swim down

Total volume is 70 lengths: 1,750m

Swim 3: High Intensity/Threshold Swim

- 2x4 lengths as 2 lengths swim / 2 kick
- 8 lengths pull
- 4 lengths kick
- 10x4 lengths with 20secs rest
- 8x2 lengths with 15secs rest
- 6x1 length with 10secs rest
- 4 lengths easy breast stroke swim down

Total volume is 86 lengths: 2,150m

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 player-on-player in a 4-3-3 formation

My players only seem to attack as individuals, with no real synergy or communication. How can I improve this?

Question asked by Chris Beech, a London community soccer coach.

ANSWERED BY:

Jim Bentley

MORECAMBE

Attacking play is about more than just what strikers do, and this session shows the effectiveness of linking a midfield three and front three, with forward play benefiting further from the addition of attacking full-backs.

Progression

We can develop the session into an 11v11 situation on a full-size pitch, working on different combinations within the 4-3-3 system, encouraging build-up play and movement.

Coaching considerations

Technically, we want to see a good quality of pass

SET-UP

AREA

Up to half-pitch plus 10 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 15

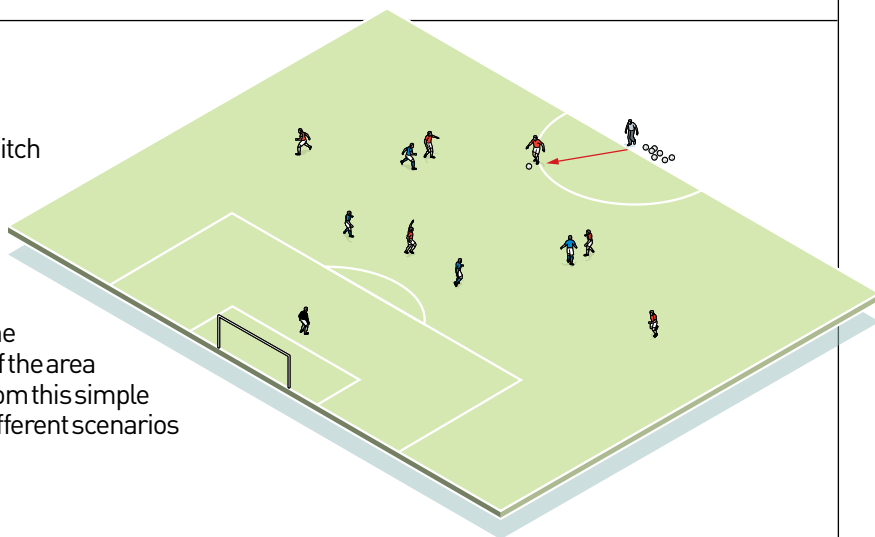
SESSION TIME

Starting positions and Scenarios 10mins each

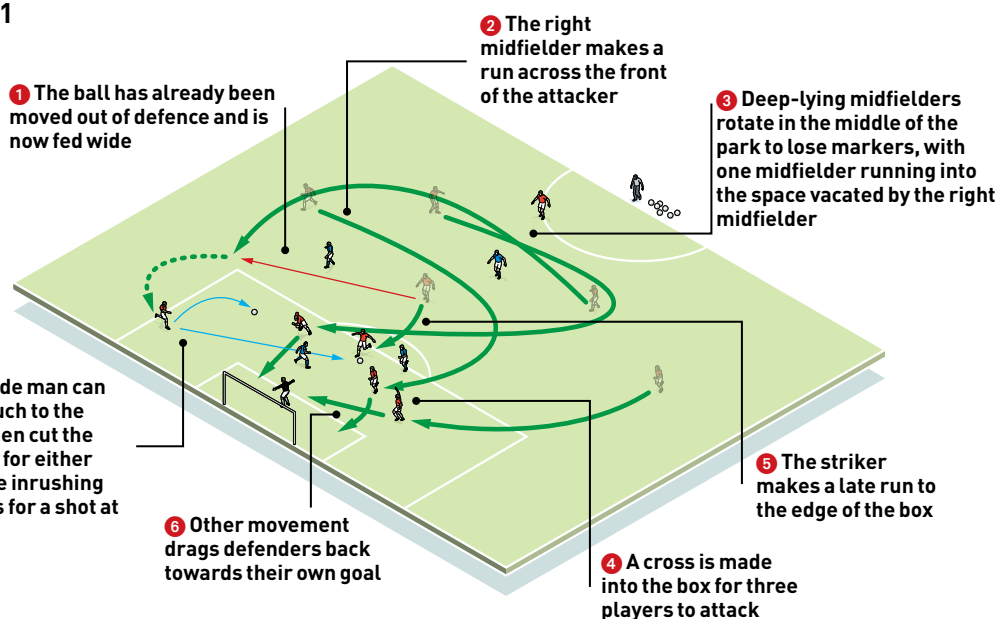
6v4

Starting positions

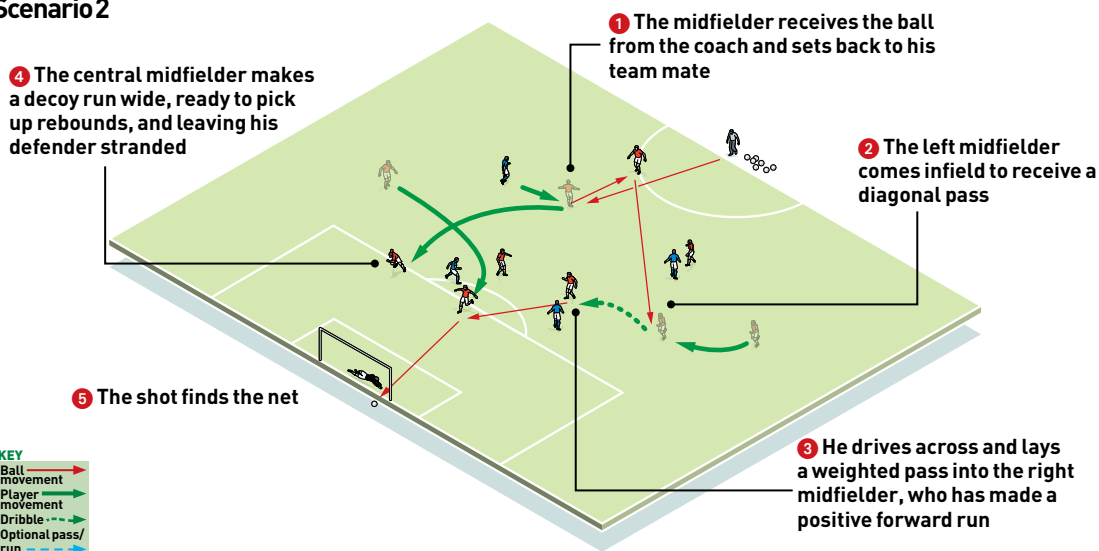
First we set up a 6v4 half-pitch practice, showing 'ideal' starting positions. The coach begins by passing out, with the ball going to one of the three red midfielders. If blues win the ball back they clear it out of the area and the coach restarts. From this simple foundation, we can plan different scenarios with each new attack.



Scenario 1



Scenario 2



KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble
Optional pass/run

COACHING CONSULTATION

and touch, excellent hold-up play and a positive end product. Tactical awareness means players need to recognise the movement to receive, with the ability to lose a marker and create space, plus good timing of support runs and smart combination play.

Why this works

The session embraces every player as an attacking option and outlet, rather than just the attackers. Rehearsing set scenarios can mean creating brilliant and complex attacking options where every player has a role to perform. And this can be really difficult for defenders to cope with. ■



Jim Bentley
MORECAMBE

Jim Bentley is manager of Sky Bet League Two side Morecambe, and one of the longest serving managers in professional football having joined the Shrimps in May 2011. Bentley, 37, is also a former Morecambe player, having made 328 appearances for the club, mostly in their days as a non-league outfit. He also made 161 appearances for Telford United having come through the youth ranks at Manchester City.

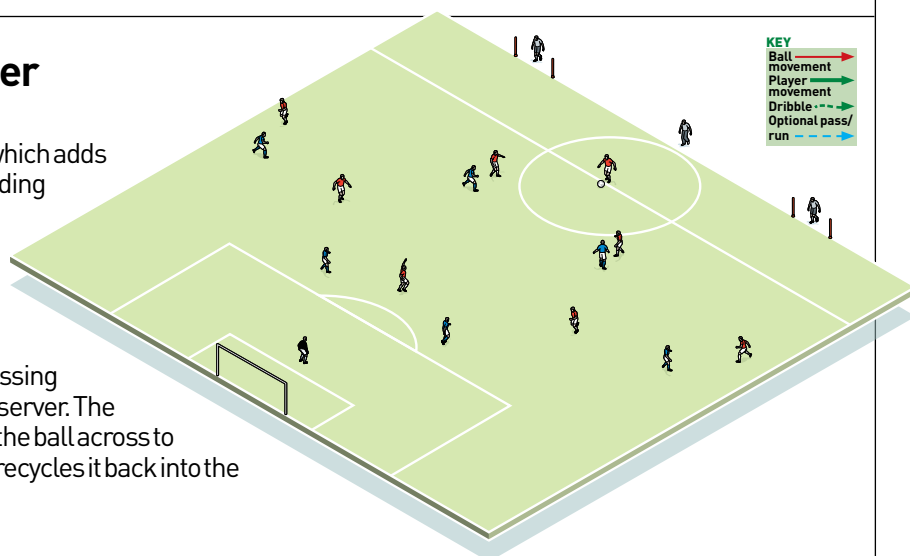
If you have a Coaching Consultation question you would like a leading coach to answer, please email in at elitesoccer@greenstarmedia.net

8v6 plus keeper

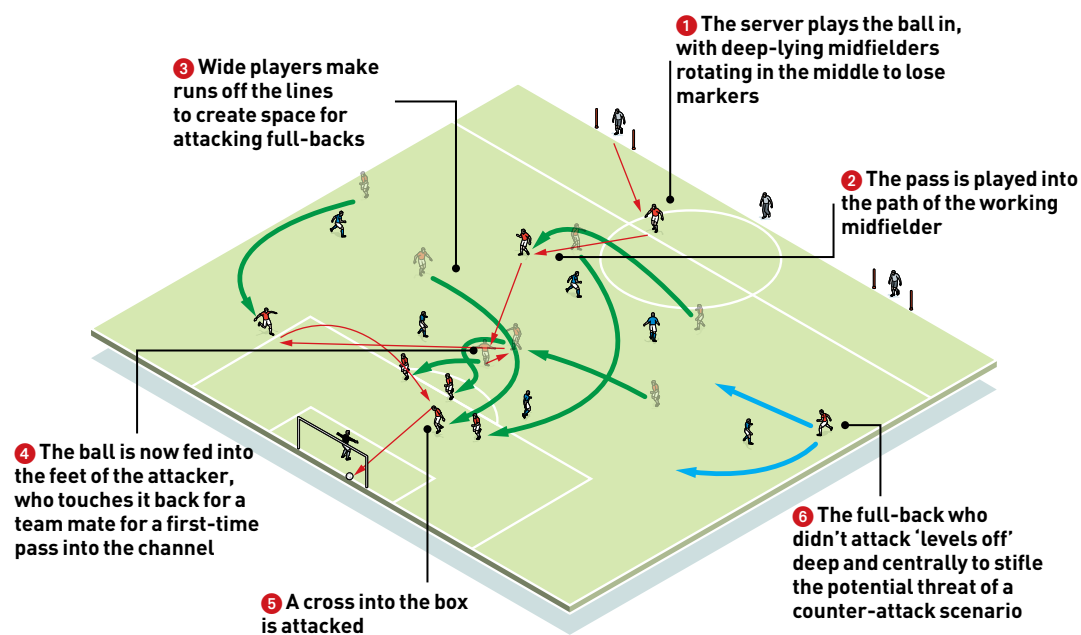
Starting positions

This is a progression which adds in attacking and defending full-backs. Again, it shows ideal starting positions for players.

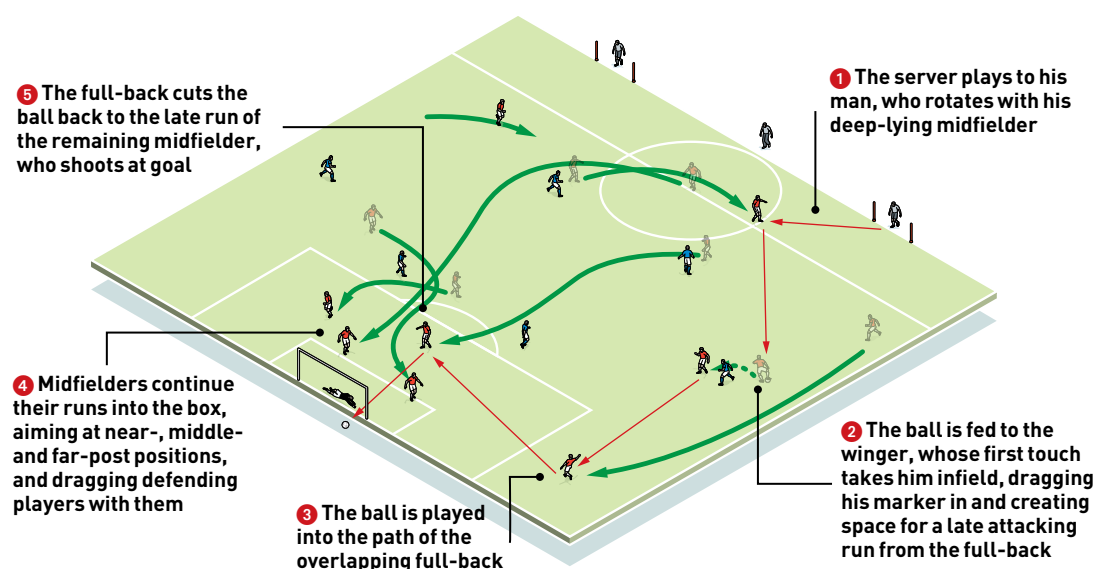
This time, if blues win the ball back, they must try to score by passing through the gates to a server. The server then transfers the ball across to the other server, who recycles it back into the session.



Scenario 1



Scenario 2



EXTRA-TIME PROFILE

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The Manager magazine

SAM ALLARDYCE WEST HAM UNITED

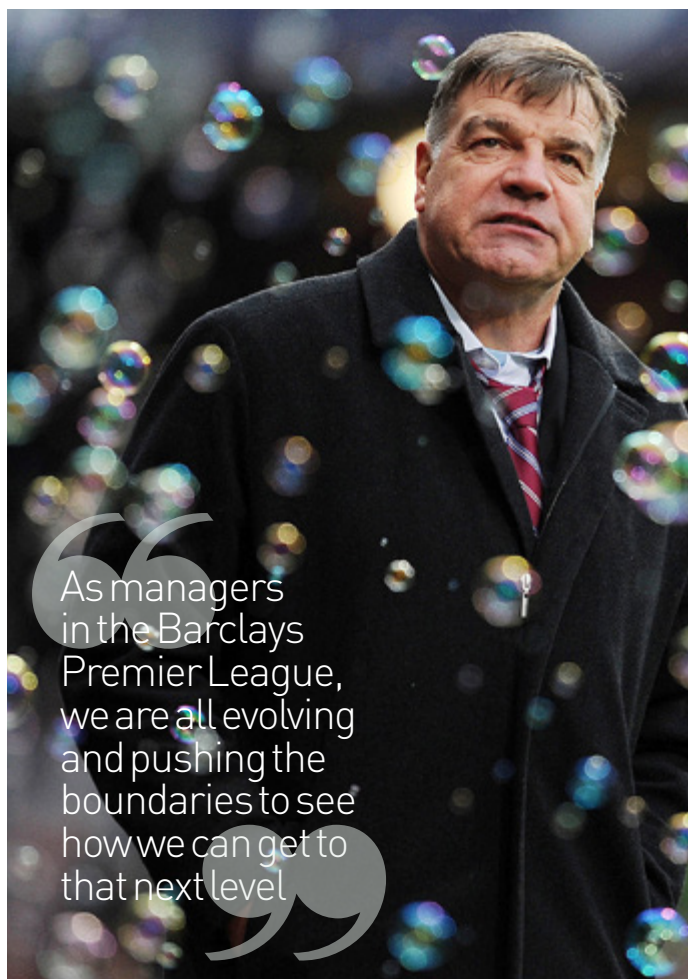
West Ham's Sam Allardyce is a very different manager to the man who first took his place in the dugout 21 years ago. We find out how he has shaped his role and how the role has changed him.

"As a leader, you need the courage and belief to think ahead, decide where you want to go, how you are going to get there and with what philosophy," says Sam Allardyce. "Then you have to sell that vision and philosophy to your staff."

While this need for long-term planning is true in any business, the high volume of sackings in football means managers often don't have the luxury of looking too far ahead. "As a result, your vision might be broken down into shorter periods of six or 12 months, maybe two years maximum," says the West Ham manager.

Given the likely short timescale in which a manager has to make a difference, most would be tempted to make quick changes in an effort to make an early impact on performance. However, while the steamroller approach might work in some organisations, Allardyce has learnt that in football things need time to evolve if they are to be accepted and reap rewards.

"Radical changes can upset the equilibrium," he says, citing his time at Newcastle United as an example. "I tried to bring success to the club as quickly as I possibly could, but on reflection I think I tried to change things too radically, too quickly." Allardyce came to the club armed with knowledge, new ideas and a firm belief in how he should do things, but the dramatic changes he had planned were too much for some, particularly the existing players. "They weren't used to sitting in meetings analysing performance and attending one-on-one appraisals," says Allardyce.



As managers in the Barclays Premier League, we are all evolving and pushing the boundaries to see how we can get to that next level

"Perhaps if I had integrated the changes a little more slowly they might have been better received."

Looking back over his 21-year career in management, Allardyce says it was when he joined Bolton Wanderers in 1999 that he began to develop most as a manager. "Up until that point I had been experimenting at clubs like Limerick, Blackpool and Notts County, but although I had the desire to develop, there simply wasn't the budget available to create the structure and philosophy I'd have liked," he says.

Although Bolton wasn't an affluent club, it benefited from a new stadium and a real desire to change and improve. "There was a willingness and an intent to evolve," says Allardyce, who sold the idea of building something that was sustainable to the board of directors. "I instigated the evolution of the

club by first bringing on board a number of highly qualified staff," he says. "I then let them work with their staff to raise standards and move things forward at a departmental level."

Allardyce's job was to pull all of this together, interlinking the departments and establishing open communication between them. "It is so important to sit down, share information and almost take minutes of what you have been doing, just as any well-managed business would do," he says. "After all, if each member of staff is expert in what they do and passes their knowledge on to the players, those players will have greater self-belief and be stronger physically and mentally.

As a result, the whole culture will grow, as it did at Bolton during my time there."

Now approaching his 22nd season in management, Allardyce's thirst for knowledge and self-improvement is still as strong as ever. The challenge now, he says, is finding new ideas and inspiration. "As managers in the Barclays Premier League, we are all evolving and pushing the boundaries to see how we can get to that next level," he says. "We're always looking to embrace new ways of thinking from inside or outside of football; ideas that might add to our teams' performances in some small way. Given all the new methods I've taken on board over the years, the differences may only be small now, but I'm always looking at new ways to fine tune." ■

BOOKED: **THIS MONTH'S CHOICE**

Best foot forward

The loneliness of the long distance runner has been well documented, but the psychology behind the loneliness of the long distance runner, less so. Until now, that is...

**Running & Philosophy:
A Marathon For The Mind**
By Michael Austin

What's provoked a series of essays exploring the philosophical wisdom runners contemplate when out for a run is unclear, but the end result is an engaging book that looks at the psychological desire to break into a jog, the intention to achieve, and the wisdom imparted by a distance athlete on his sport of choice.

The book assesses an intriguing range of thought processes, from the expected, 'how long must this go on for?', 'how do I feel?', through to the strangely bizarre, 'could a zombie run a marathon?'.

It creates an original selection of talking points in sports science and psychology, uniquely assessing athletes' thoughts and emotions at times of high involvement sport, and prompts talking points as to how shaping thoughts and processes can affect performance.

True, you may need to delve deep into these essays, working a route past zombies, skeletons, motor vehicles and other James Joyce-esque mental forays, but the root of this book offers access to the efficiency of thought during exercise, and whether realigning that brain process can positively or negatively impact on performance.

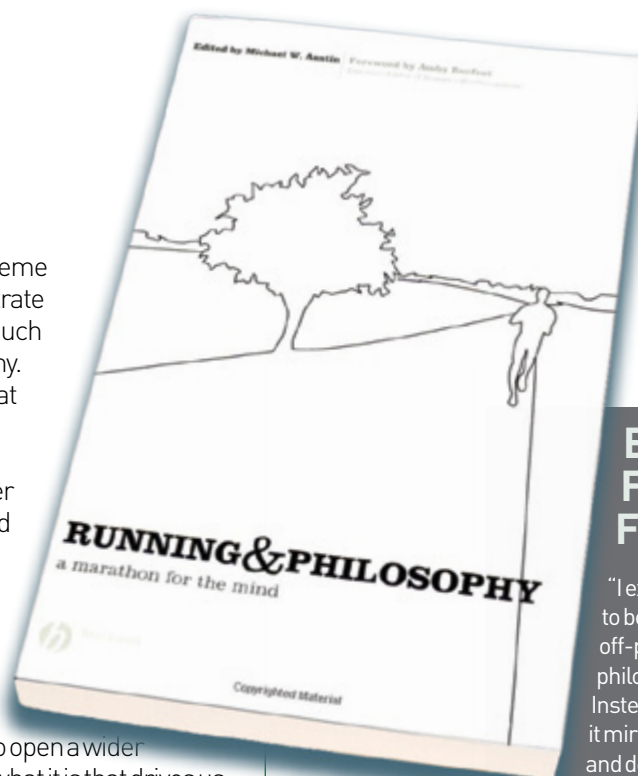
Some of the chapters use sport

as a loose theme and concentrate rather too much on philosophy. Others look at inspiration, motivation, sporting peer pressure and definitions of success, where the pursuit of running is merely just the vehicle to open a wider debate into what it is that drives us to exercise or participate in sporting activity.

Whether you view this as a book for philosophers interested in running, or a book for runners interested in philosophy possibly depends on your passion for both, but as an original glance into the sorts of philosophical ideologies that cross our minds whilst exercising (yet are quickly forgotten as soon as we finish) this book may yet prompt an interesting turn in what we can really find from the cerebral reality of sport. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Austin is assistant professor of philosophy at Eastern Kentucky University. He has published articles in ethics and philosophy of religion, and is the author of 'Conceptions of Parenthood: Ethics and the Family'.



EXTRACT FROM FOREWORD

"I expected the book to be intimidating and off-putting, like my college philosophy semesters. Instead, and dare I say this, it mirrored the thoughts and debates that have

filtered through my own mind during more than 100,000 miles of running. Here, in one chapter, is a runner who needs a workout to let off steam after a fight with his spouse. Been there, done that (too often). Here's another who wonders if running is a sort of religion, and another trying to unravel the nature of happiness.

"Others ask: Is pain unstructured? How should we serve our community? Is running an art like other aesthetic pursuits?

"Ohmigosh, I've wrestled with all these questions myself while running, sometimes in the company of training partners, more often by myself. Does that make me a philosopher? I'd certainly like to call myself one. But I don't think it matters."

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WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY:

Peter Beardsley
England legend and Football Development Manager at Newcastle United FC

"All young players will improve by following the Coerver Coaching programme. I have seen many different methods of coaching skills and Coerver Coaching beats them all."

Gérard Houllier
Former Technical Director at the French Football Federation, Former manager of Liverpool FC, Lyon FC & Aston Villa FC

"Coerver Coaching is the best technical skills teaching method I have come across; even after 25 years it continues to excite."

Kristine Lilly
Soccer legend, twice World Cup winner & twice Olympic gold medal winner

"Coerver Coaching has history, it's authentic and the best soccer teaching programme I have seen. I worked with it all through my career and it certainly made me a better player."

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