

ELITE SOCCER

COACHING PRACTICES FROM THE WORLD'S
LEADING MANAGERS AND COACHES

Exclusive
Training practices from top
professional managers

MANCHESTER CITY

MANUEL PELLEGRINI

DEADLY TRANSITIONS:

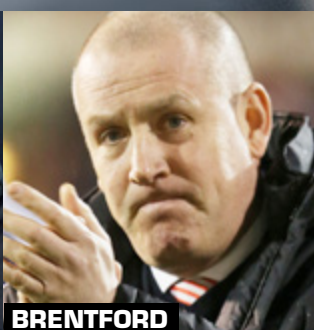
TECHNICAL • TACTICAL • PHYSIOLOGICAL • PSYCHOLOGICAL



BARNSLEY

**DANNY
WILSON**

Defending
from the front



BRENTFORD

**MARK
WARBURTON**

Forward
runs



LMA AMBASSADOR

**DAVID
PLEAT**

Triangular wing
contributions



LMA AMBASSADOR

**GRAHAM
TAYLOR**

Possession and
scoring



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**MATTHEW
BISHOP**

Pressing
masterclass

EXTRA-TIME INTERVIEW: NORWICH CITY MANAGER CHRIS HUGHTON



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ISSUE 44 / MARCH 2014: FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Brilliant training ground practices from the best in the game

Dear Coach,

Welcome to the March issue of Elite Soccer.

We're gearing up towards those tense final months of the campaign when dreams are fulfilled, ambitions are shattered, and one or two coaches will be looking around desperate to find that bit of inspiration that will carry their players over the line.

Certainly, we're hoping such inspiration might come in the form of one (or more) of our six engaging soccer practices, delivered for us by some of the very best names in the game.

Right now, they don't come much bigger than Manuel Pellegrini. The Manchester City coach has galvanised his side this term, with the club playing arguably some of the most attractive football in its entire history. Certainly, the session on deadly transitions that the Chilean has presented for us in this issue offers some pretty strong clues as to how City have developed a gameplan that turns defence into attack with such devastating effect. We hope it works for your side as well.

Elsewhere, and from the Sky Bet Championship, Barnsley boss Danny Wilson presents a practice that looks at defending from the front in a 4-3-3 formation; while Brentford boss Mark Warburton explains how a bespoke session on forward runs has guided his side into the automatic promotion positions in League One this term.

And we're delighted to reproduce two sessions from two of the most experienced British coaches in the modern game: former England manager Graham Taylor answers our Coaching Consultation piece by offering a solution to a coach whose players don't survey options effectively, while charismatic former top-level boss David Pleat isolates the threat of the wide attack in a number of position-led set-ups.

Finally, LMA Ambassador Matthew Bishop delivers for us a pressing masterclass that's as relevant for attackers as it is for defenders.

It all adds up to another fantastic cross-section of sessions, and as usual, we hope you find them interesting and stimulating.

Good luck for the month ahead, and we'll see you all again at the end of March,

Howard Wilkinson

Howard Wilkinson, LMA Chairman

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MANAGEMENT MATTERS

MANAGER OF THE MONTH AWARDS



Manchester City manager **Manuel Pellegrini**

scooped a second successive Manager of the Month gong when picking up the award as his table-topping side coasting through January, winning all four of their league matches. It is City's goalscoring prowess that has really impressed this term, and Alvaro Negredo continued his excellent recent run with eight strikes in all competitions during the month, as the Blues set themselves up immaculately for a concerted title push this year. City beat Swansea City, Newcastle United, Cardiff City and Tottenham Hotspur. Please turn to page four to see Chilean Pellegrini's Elite Soccer coaching session.

MANCHESTER CITY: P4 W4 D0 L0 (LEAGUE ONLY)



In the Sky Bet Championship, Leicester City

boss **Nigel Pearson** collected the divisional award after the Foxes won all five matches to move clear at the top of the table. While their title rivals have struggled to maintain consistency, Leicester cruised into top gear in January to confirm their tag as title favourites. It's a decade since the club last graced the Premier League, but victories over Millwall, Derby County, Leeds United, Middlesbrough and Birmingham City ensured the East Midlands club would end the month with a sizeable lead at the top of the table.

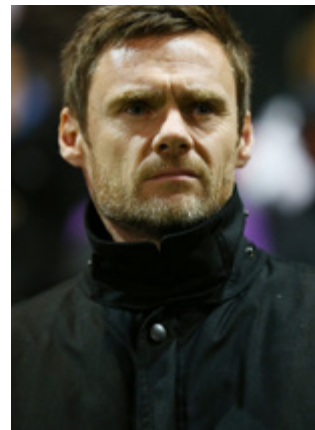
LEICESTER CITY: P5 W5 D0 L0



In Sky Bet League One, **Russell**

Slade's Leyton Orient side continued to mount a serious title challenge with four wins in January. Many expected the East London club's challenge to fade away in the second half of the season, but experienced boss Slade has maintained momentum in his troops, and with victories in January over Shrewsbury Town, Carlisle United, Crewe Alexandra and Coventry City, the Os are well placed to take their promotion challenge right to the season's close, despite the attentions (and bigger playing budgets) of Wolverhampton Wanderers and Brentford.

LEYTON ORIENT: P4 W4 D0 L0



And finally to Sky Bet League Two, where honours

go to **Graham Alexander**, the manager of Fleetwood Town. In only their second season as a Football League club, the Lancashire outfit continue to impress, playing a brand of expansive, attacking football. And in January, they saw off Accrington Stanley, Dagenham & Redbridge, Hartlepool and Burton Albion on their way into the division's automatic promotion places. It has proved a pleasing start to life in management for Alexander, who occupies his first post after a 21-year playing career that saw him make over 100 appearances for each of Scunthorpe United, Luton Town, Preston North End and Burnley.

FLEETWOOD TOWN: P5 W4 D1 L0

CAREER PATH

... with Neal Ardley, manager of Sky Bet League Two side AFC Wimbledon

Q. This is your first managerial job – it must be a special one as well given your time with the now defunct Wimbledon?

A. Yes it is special. Obviously the surroundings are different, but the old Wimbledon spirit is definitely here, and it's a pleasure to come to work each day. What has been achieved here over a short

period of time is incredible, but it's for us now to carry that on.

Q. That must bring a considerable pressure with it?

A. It does, but it's not any different to the pressures experienced by managers up and down the country. No matter what has gone on in the past, we have a duty to only look at what we do as a club now, and every other manager and player is probably thinking the exact same thing.

Q. You were previously Academy Manager at Cardiff City. Was that good

preparation for this role?

A. Managing teams is the same no matter how old the players are, but starting at Cardiff was fantastic for me.

It was somewhere I could really learn my trade, and cement a few ideas in my mind as to how I would like to be as a manager. The big thing will always be the team – that's at the heart of everything we do, and is a key philosophy.



MANCHESTER CITY

Manuel Pellegrini Deadly transitions

Overview:

This session examines how we condition a player technically, tactically, physiologically and psychologically when attacking and defending transitions in a small-sided competition-based game.

It's important to practise this because it improves our mastering of a scenario that appears regularly in matches – namely the attacking team regaining possession and aiming to create space, passing the ball quickly, then playing to a target player in a zone to score.

The session is also good for defenders – their task is simply to organise well, stay alert and aim to regain possession as quickly as possible.

“It's important to practise this because it improves our mastering of a scenario that appears regularly in matches.”

DEADLY TRANSITIONS

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 60x40 yards

EQUIPMENT

Cones, goals, bibs

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

5v5 plus two targets and two wide players

SESSION TIME

Main session 30mins,
Progressions 20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Setting up as shown (1a), the ball starts with the two wide players – we will alternate which of these starts. Only one player from each team is allowed in the end zones – these are the target players and must remain in that space. No other players can enter.

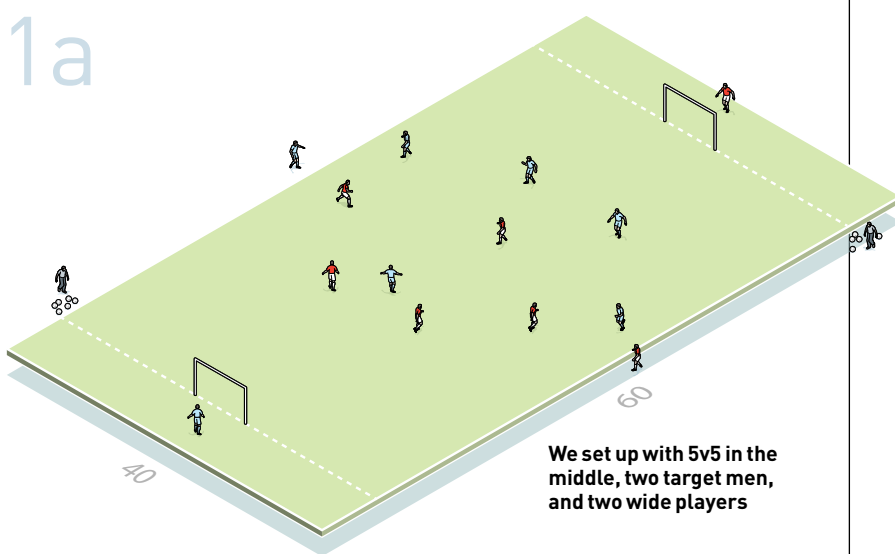
It's 5v5 in the middle with the aim of the team in possession working space so as to float the ball into the target player (1b), who must finish one-touch (1c).

Should the ball go out of play, a new ball comes back in from the wide player as quickly as possible.

In addition, the two wide players and the target men can offer support to the 5v5 and can be passed to if needed, but unless a pass is played in the air a target man cannot make a scoring attempt.

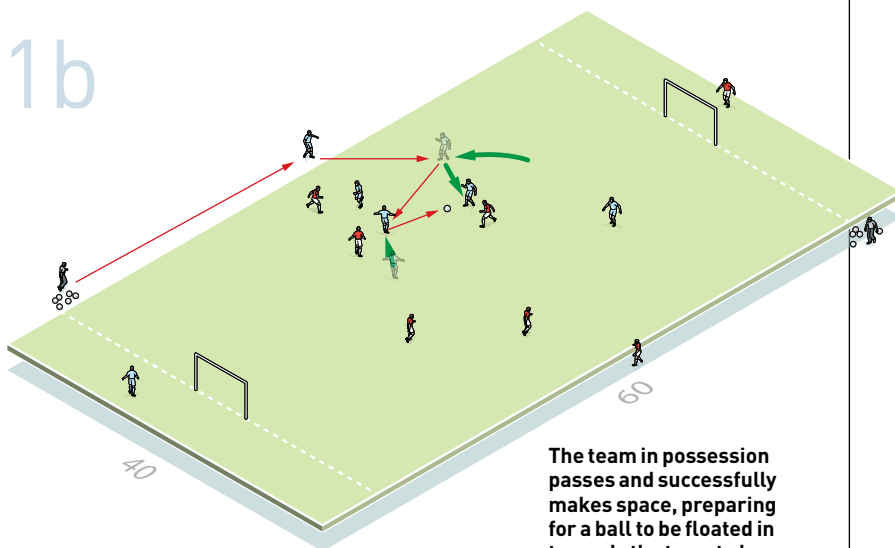
Each game should last three minutes with 45 seconds rest before the next one begins. We repeat this eight times, ensuring the two target players and two wide men are rotated for each game.

1a



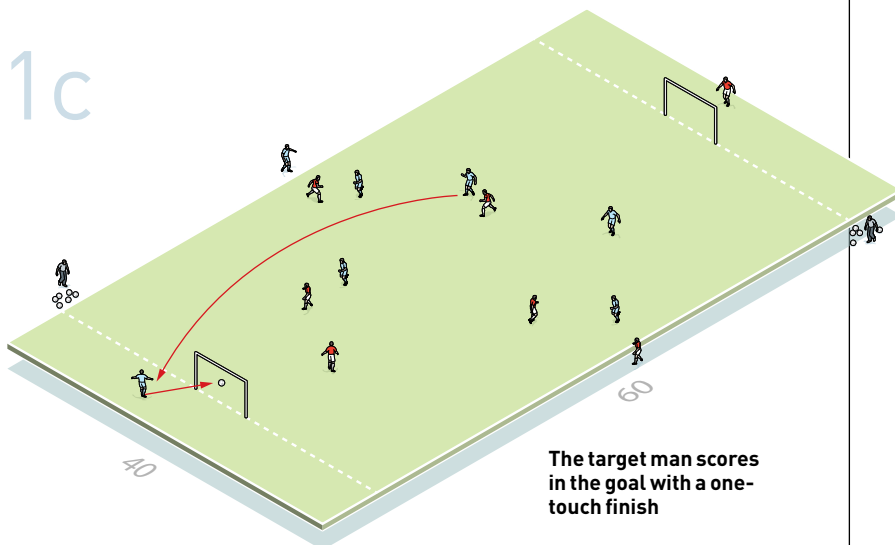
We set up with 5v5 in the middle, two target men, and two wide players

1b



The team in possession passes and successfully makes space, preparing for a ball to be floated in towards the target player

1c



The target man scores in the goal with a one-touch finish

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble



Manuel Pellegrini

MANCHESTER CITY

Manuel Pellegrini has enjoyed an incredible first six months in charge of Manchester City, taking the club to the top of the league standings with some of the most expansive, attacking football witnessed in the Barclays Premier League.

The club has also impressed in this season's Champions League and has breezed through both FA and Capital One Cup campaigns.

Chilean Pellegrini joined Manchester City with a wealth of managerial experience accumulated in both South America and Europe. Amongst those clubs was Argentine side River Plate where in 2003 he led his team to the Clausura Championship.

In Spain he has managed Villarreal and reached the semi-finals of the Champions League.

Three years later his abilities were rewarded when he secured one of the biggest jobs in world football with Real Madrid.

In 2010, Pellegrini guided Malaga to a fourth-placed finish in La Liga, and secured the club Champions League football for the first time in their history.

As a player, he made 451 appearances for Universidad de Chile.

DEADLY TRANSITIONS

What are the key things to look out for?

2

Maintaining a high tempo is very important so as to ensure pressure is placed on transitions for both defenders and attackers.

In terms of technical proficiency, speed and accuracy of pass is important, particularly the pass made in the air to the target man.

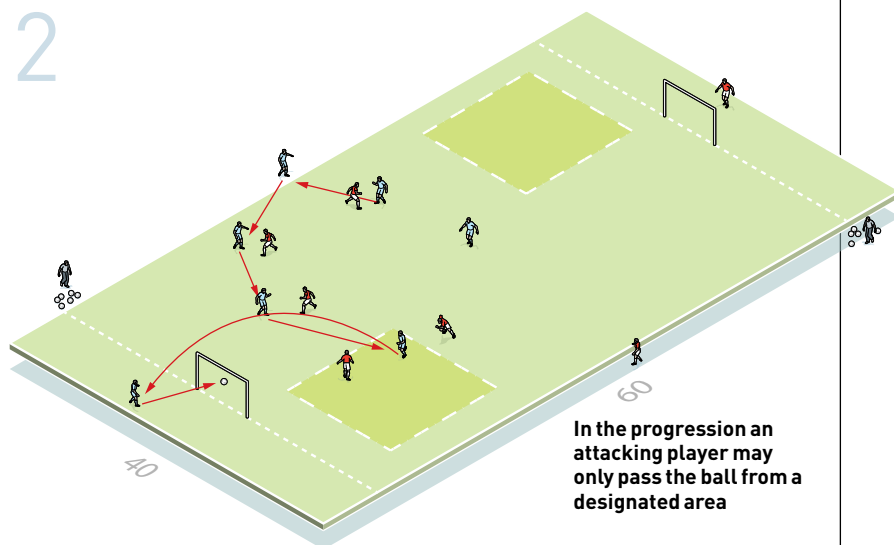
Tactically, each team of five must rotate positions so as to create space for players, whilst maintaining awareness of defensive balance. For the defending team, we're looking at their ability to press quickly and be compact.

Physically, repeated sprints, continued movement and high-intensity activity is important. And we're looking for players to understand the psychological aspects of the practice as well, to include good communication with team mates to coordinate attacks and 'the press', whilst also being alert to deal with fast transitions, even with little recovery time.

How do I progress the session?

To progress, we can reduce the number of touches allowed, change the number of passes required (minimum of three), or condition the pass to the target man to come from a first-time pass.

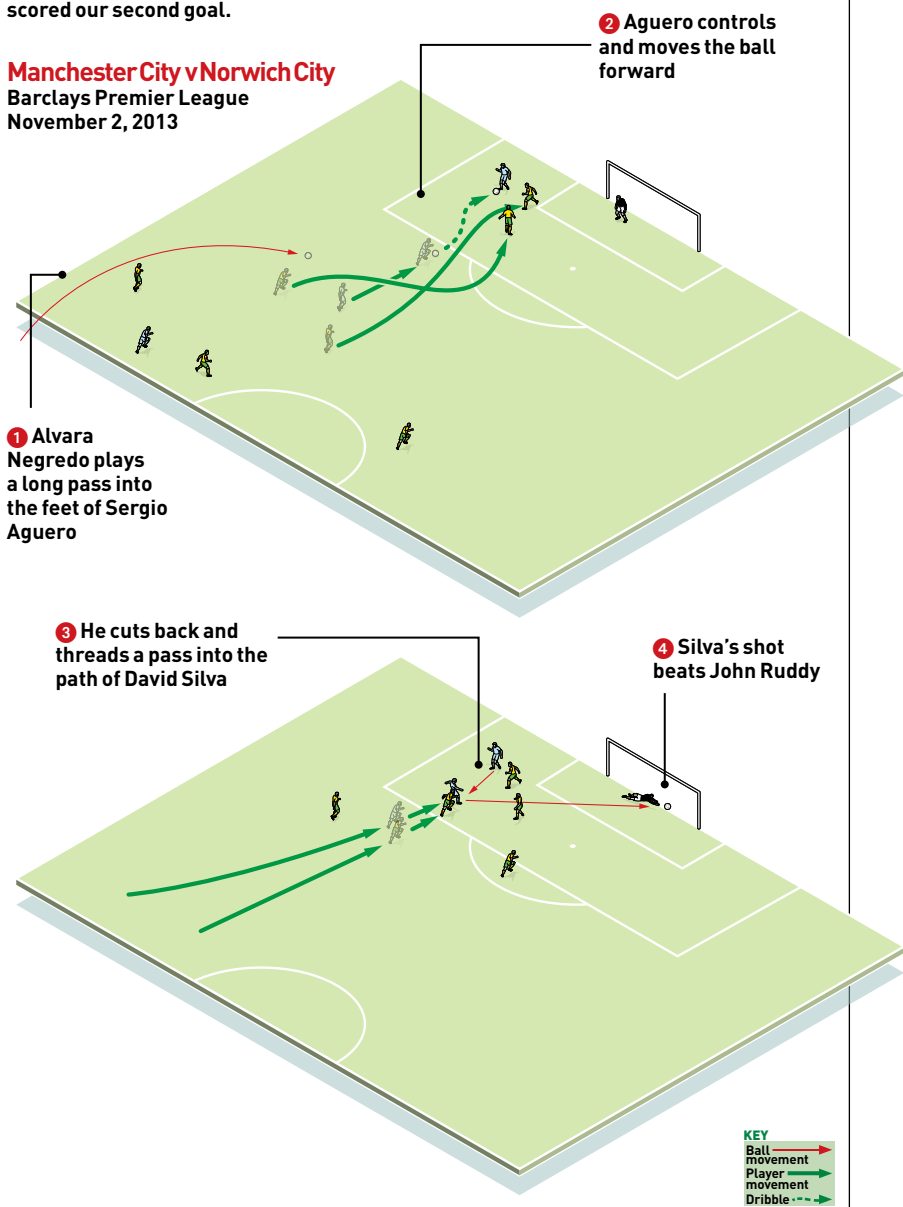
We can also create specific areas on the pitch where the attacking team must move the ball to before the final pass (2). ■



Proving the practice

In our 7-0 Barclays Premier League victory over Norwich City this season, we saw the elements of this session played out brilliantly as David Silva scored our second goal.

Manchester City v Norwich City Barclays Premier League November 2, 2013



BARNLEY

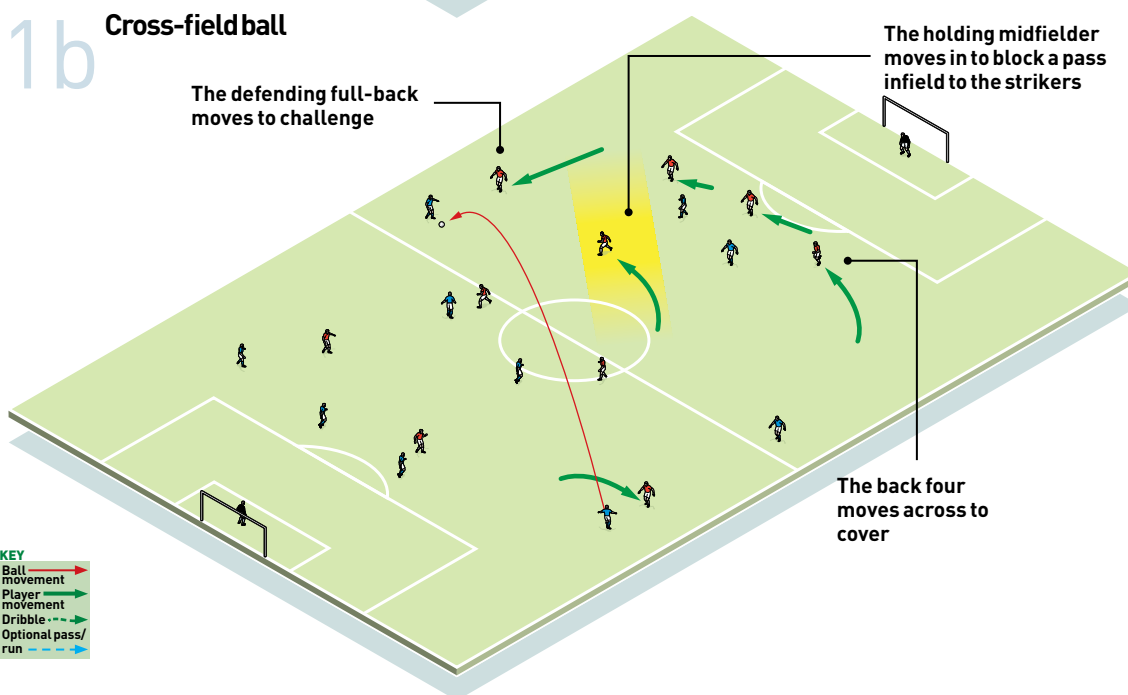
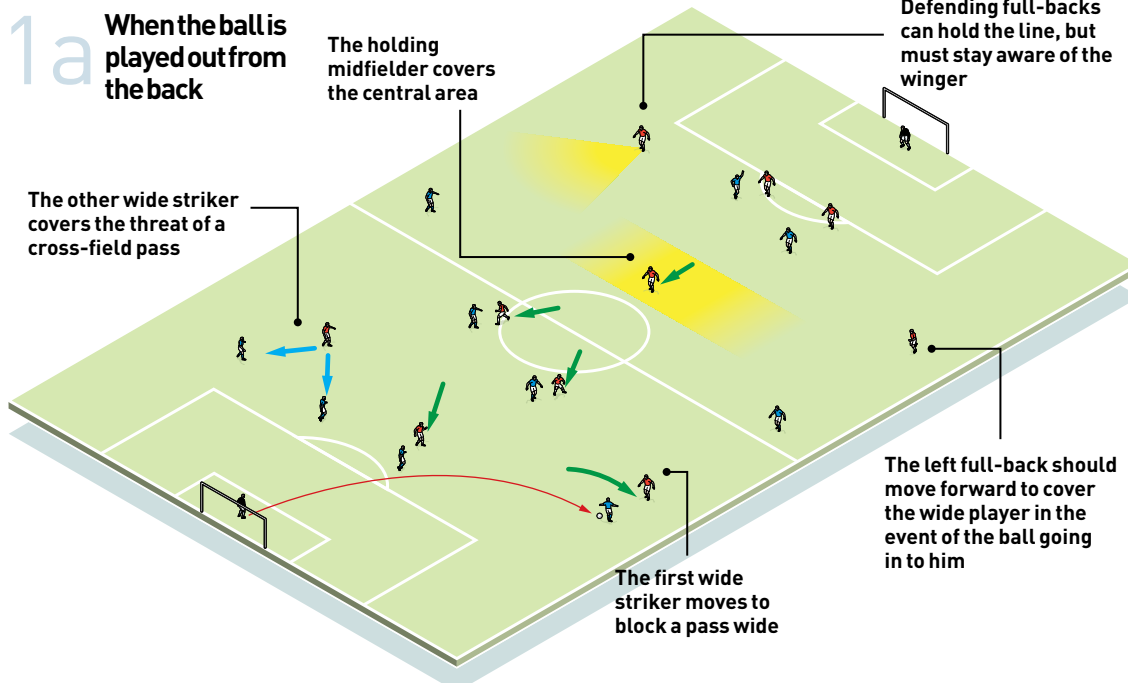
Danny Wilson Defending from the front in a 4-3-3 situation

Overview:

This session coaches players on understanding defensive positioning. It enables us to teach how to channel opposition passes into areas of strength for us, where we can attempt to turn possession over. Furthermore, it gives players an idea of which passes we can allow and which should be prevented. As a result, the session will help prevent us from being overstretched, or exposed to positions of vulnerability.

“This session gives players an idea of which passes we can allow and which should be prevented.”

DEFENDING FROM THE FRONT



SET-UP

AREA

Full pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

11v11

SESSION TIME

As long as required

What do I get the players to do?

We set up as shown, 11v11, on a full pitch, with teams lining up in 4-3-3 (reds) and 4-4-2 (blues) formations. The opposition keeper starts play by throwing the ball out to his right-back.

What follows is the gradual learning of a bespoke coaching

set-up, with players understanding their roles, both as individuals and banks of players. By following this outline closely, we can successfully defend from the front in a 4-3-3, as well as still retaining the positive attacking elements that are so prevalent in this offensive formation.

A common problem is when the striker allows the full-back to play the pass into the wide man, enabling the opposition to start their attack. To prevent this we put in place a key part of defending from the front – namely that our striker has to arc his run so as to cut off the line from the full-back to the wide man, forcing



Danny Wilson

BARNLEY

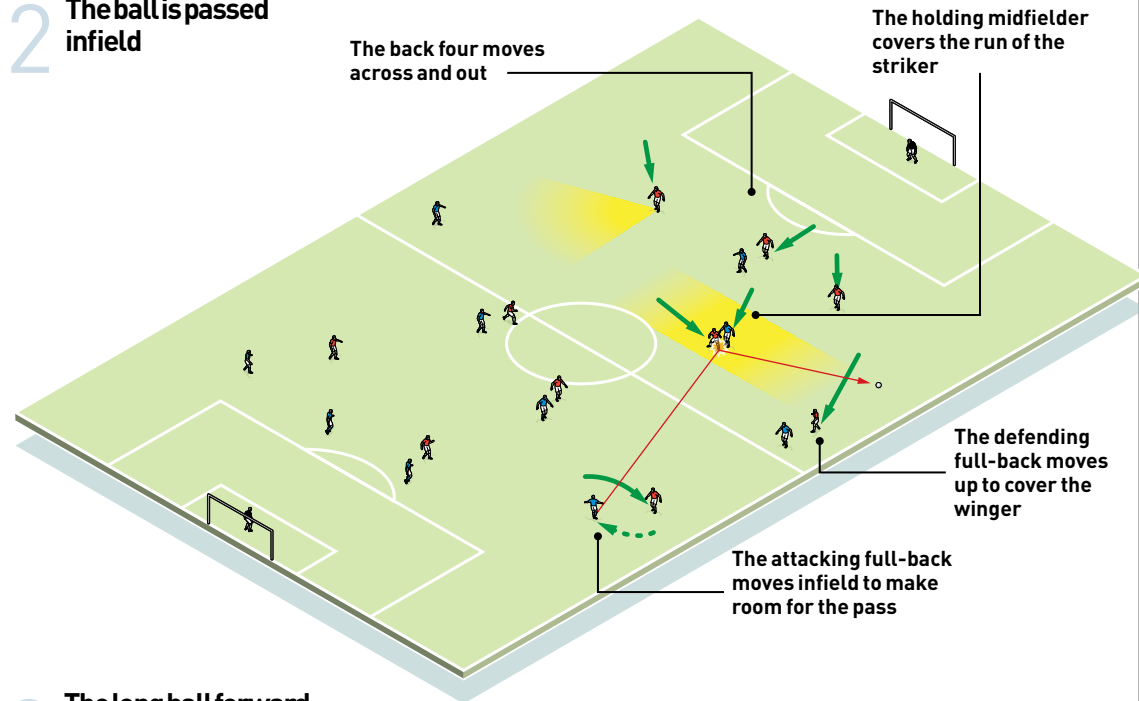
Barnsley manager Danny Wilson has now enjoyed 38 years in professional football – his first involvement in the game being as a player for Wigan Athletic in 1976. He went on to make over 100 appearances each for Chesterfield, Brighton & Hove Albion and Luton Town, as well as enjoying successful spells at Bury, Nottingham Forest, Sheffield Wednesday and Barnsley.

As a manager, his CV is similarly impressive, in 1997 taking Barnsley into the Premier League for the first time in the club's history, as well as also earning promotion for Hartlepool United in 2007, before taking Swindon Town to the League One Play-Off Final in 2009.

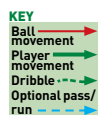
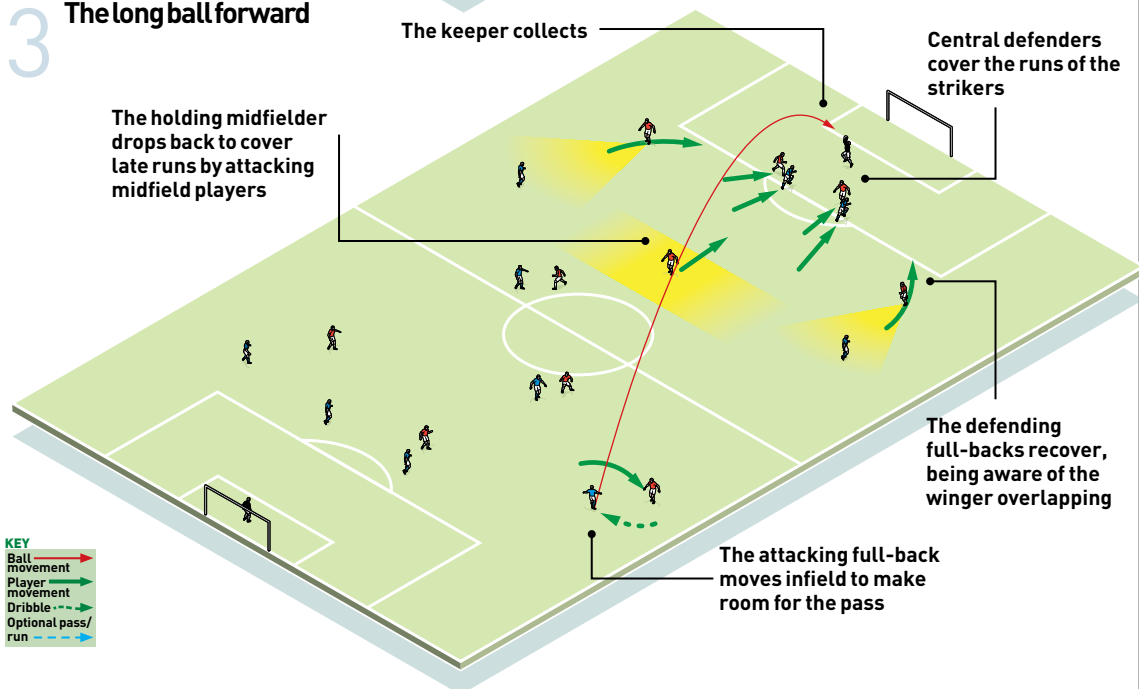
The 54-year-old has also managed Bristol City, MK Dons and Sheffield United.

DEFENDING FROM THE FRONT

2 The ball is passed infield



3 The long ball forward



“Through intense and repeated coaching, each player can cement his part in the process.”

him to play inside or backwards (1a).

As soon as the striker locks into the right-back, that is the trigger for his team mates to move forward and press. The central striker is aware of the other centre-back, or is in a position to stop a cross-field pass to the left-back.

Two centre-midfielders mark 'ball side' and press inside the ball. The deeper centre-midfielder stops any long ball into the strikers (2).

Centre-backs hold a deeper line so as not to be turned around. The right-back doesn't have to go tight to the winger or right-back on cover, but remains

aware of the diagonal ball. The keeper sweeps up any longer ball (3).

What are the key things to look out for?

The set-up succeeds or fails on the basis of players knowing their roles and responsibilities when defending from

the front. Through intense and repeated coaching, each player can cement his part in the process and, as a result, can create a definite team principle of suffocating the threat that comes when the opposition is in possession. ■

BRENTFORD

Mark Warburton Forward runs

Overview:

The session focuses on forward runs and encourages positive forward movement linked to patient buildup play and good pitch geography. The session can be adapted depending on squad size, and the focus is on the timing of movement and an end product being achieved either by passing or running with the ball.

We will always highlight the need for good lines of passes and team shape. Irrespective of what drill we run, we like to emphasise good pitch geography with key areas of the area always being occupied.

We run this session at least twice each week as it's seen as a vital part of our overall match strategy, with the key attacking principle being to create space and receive. This demands regular practice time and the key factors should be constantly reiterated and highlighted.

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 60x32 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, flat cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 9v9

SESSION TIME

Passing drill 15mins plus 3mins per progression, Small-sided game 4v4mins with 90secs recovery

FORWARD RUNS

What do I get the players to do?

Passing drill

This drill prepares players for playing forward, with an offside line showing the need for good timing of movement (1).

Players move the ball around the area, following their passes, with receivers coming off their poles to create space to control the ball and send it on.

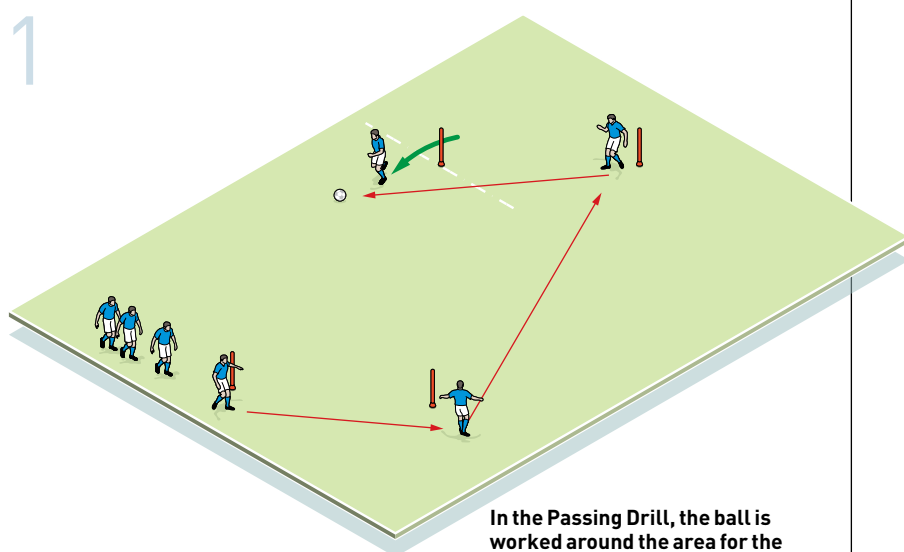
What are the key things to look out for?

Players must show a good weight and accuracy of pass and excellent communication - verbally and through eye contact. A positive first touch by the receiving player is crucial, as is the timing of the final player in not breaking the offside line before the pass is played. The last man runs with the ball to the back of line as the move restarts.

How do I progress the practice?

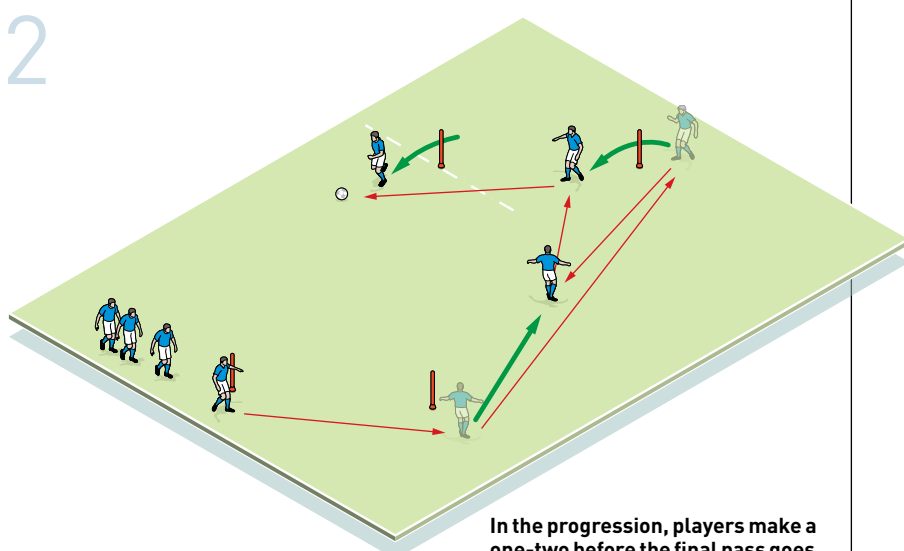
To progress, we ask for players to make a quick one-two at the top end of the grid, as shown (2). Next, another one-two can be added at the start of the practice (3). Then, as a final progression, the last man can move in to play an early touch before the ball is moved up the wing. He then needs to reset quickly, making a blind side run around the pole to collect the ball and finish (4).

1



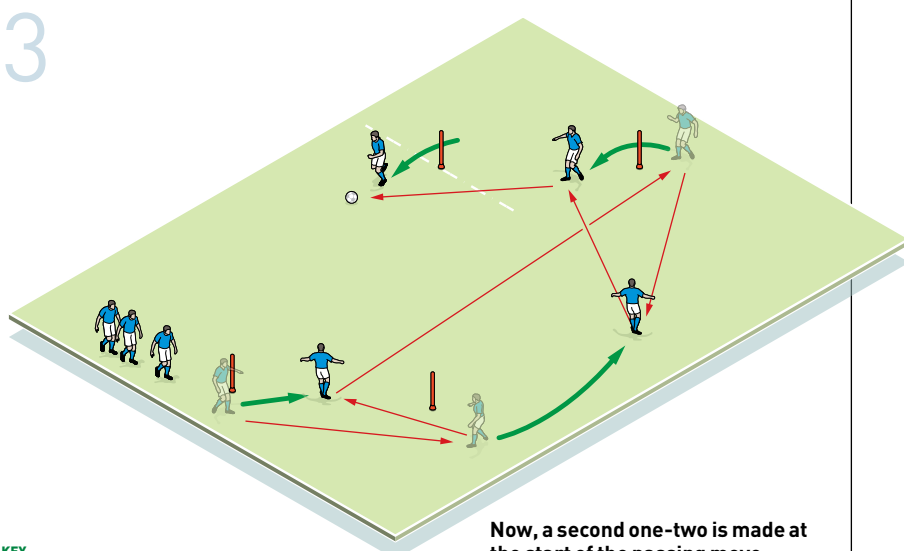
In the Passing Drill, the ball is worked around the area for the last man to run onto, ensuring he times his run so as to stay onside as the pass is played

2



In the progression, players make a one-two before the final pass goes forward

3



Now, a second one-two is made at the start of the passing move





Mark Warburton
BRENTFORD

There aren't many current Football League managers who can boast a career in London's unrelenting banking district, but Brentford manager Mark Warburton worked for two decades as a trader, both in the UK and in Chicago and Charlotte in the United States.

Launching the Under-19s European cup competition NextGen Series offered Mark an interesting route back into the game having played part-time for Enfield.

He established the Harefield Academy at Watford before moving on to become Assistant Manager then Sporting Director at Brentford.

And when former manager Uwe Rosler left to join Wigan Athletic in December of last year, the 51-year-old moved into the Griffin Park hotseat, guiding the Bees to the top of the Sky Bet League One table.

"Within this session, we will always highlight the need for good lines of passes and team shape."

FORWARD RUNS

Small-sided game

We use 18 players on a 60x32-yard area, as shown (5). Being long and narrow, it focuses players on the need for good forward passing and movement.

Each team allocates two attackers and three defenders. A point is scored by one of the attackers receiving the ball under control, or running with the ball, into the relevant end zone. They are the only players who can go into that end zone. Likewise, for the opposing end zone, only the allocated defenders and attackers can enter the 'scoring area'.

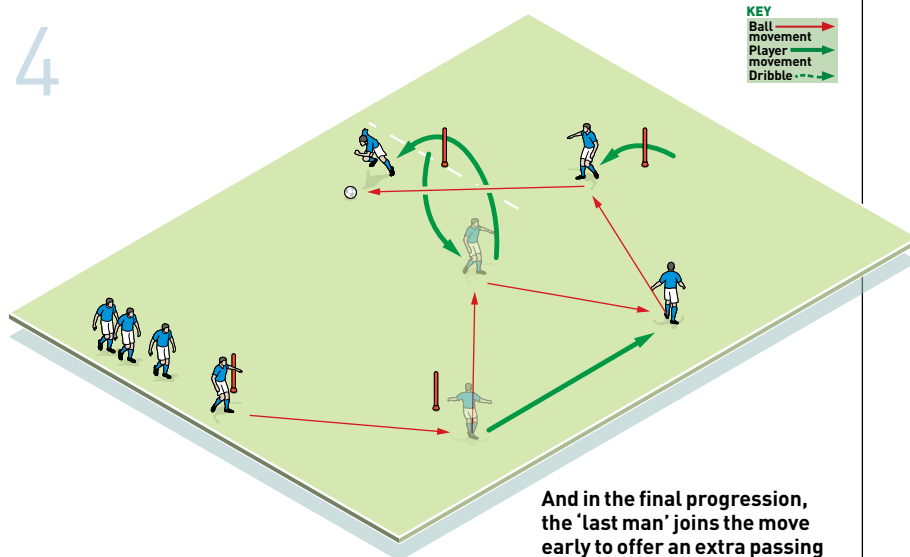
A further point can be scored by the team in possession completing eight consecutive passes. This prevents the defending team simply sitting back and protecting their respective end zone.

A progression of the game can see an additional point scored if a forward closes down a defender and steals possession in the end zone. This encourages the strikers to maintain focus and concentration.

What are the key things to look out for?

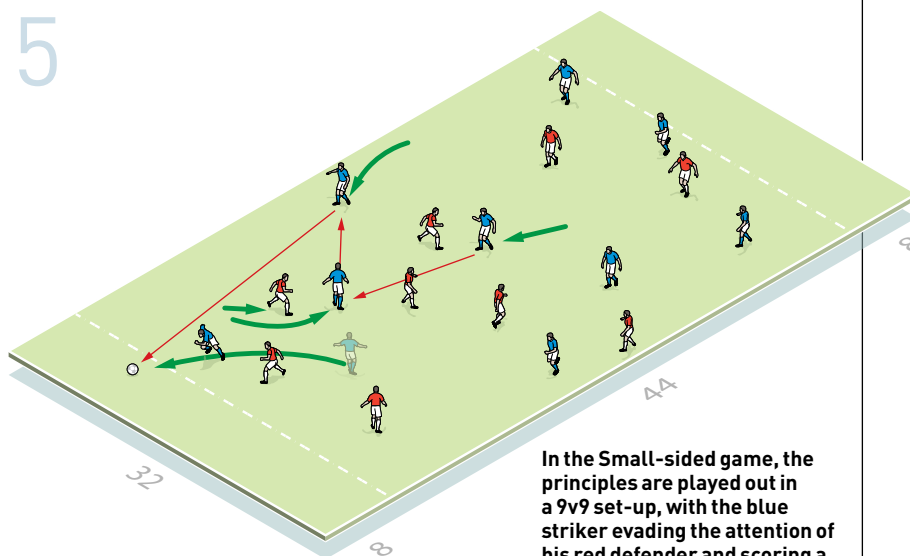
Forwards should never be level or 'flat'. Instead we want to see 'opposite' movement, so one forward going short and the other long. And the team in possession must not 'force the pass', instead carefully securing a point through eight successful passes.

4



And in the final progression, the 'last man' joins the move early to offer an extra passing outlet, before returning to his starting position and completing the move

5



In the Small-sided game, the principles are played out in a 9v9 set-up, with the blue striker evading the attention of his red defender and scoring a point by collecting a pass made into the end zone

How do I progress the game?

To progress, we can restrict touches, play one forward against two defenders, or allow any team in possession to score in the end zone. ■

Striker psychology

Before the practice commences, we will remind players how a striker can construct a scoring situation. This may be from running in behind, from 'pinning' his defender in the end zone, or perhaps receiving on the half-turn and dribbling into the end zone. The key aspect though is the creation of space to allow such opportunities.

A player in possession needs to ask himself 'can I play forward?', 'can I play square?', 'can I pass back?', all the time looking to 'tempt' defenders away from their own end zone, thus creating space for the forward movement.

LMA AMBASSADOR

David Pleat

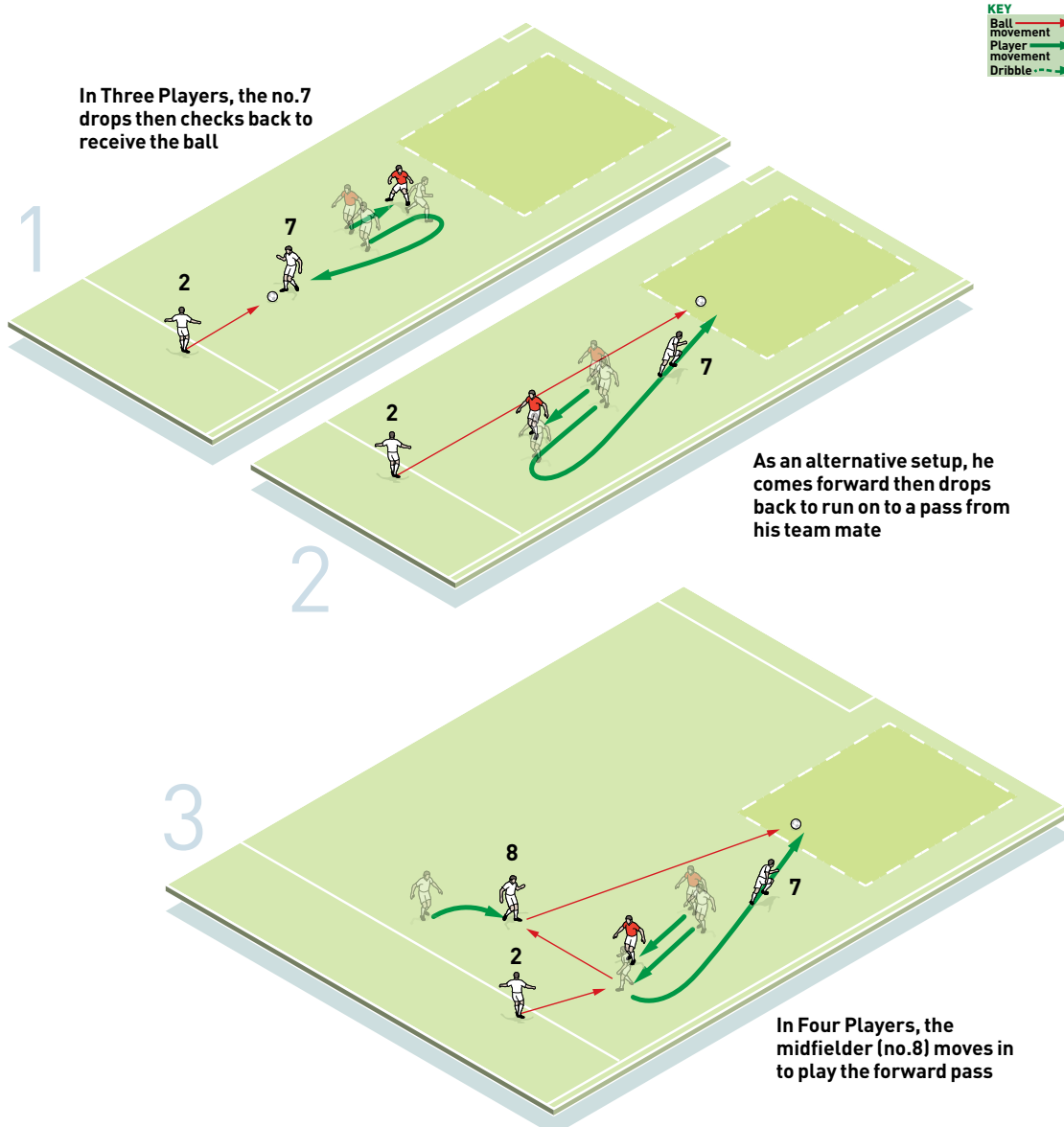
Wing and wide man contributions

Overview:

This is a progressive and precise session that outlines some of the intricacies of smart wing play. It has been put together to offer a basic wing setup before advancing this through various stages, and using the involvement of additional team mates, plus opposition players. Good play on the flanks is a prerequisite of any football team. You cannot be successful without fully utilising the linkup play between the receiving winger (your no.7), midfielders and other players, and this session outlines the real positive effect that can be gained from a concerted training exercise.

“You cannot be successful without fully utilising the linkup play between the receiving winger (your no.7), midfielders and other players.”

WING AND WIDE MAN CONTRIBUTIONS



SET-UP

AREA

30x20 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 7

SESSION TIME

10mins per practice

What do I get the players to do?

Three players

Setting up as shown, a pass by the no.2 is played into the feet of the no.7. Simply, he takes the full-back

away with a sharp burst of 10 yards or less, checks, then returns to receive the ball to feet in front of his marker (1).

Alternatively, if there is space behind, the no.7 can run towards his own full-back to receive, then race beyond his marker (2).

Considerations for your no.7:

Q. Is there space?

Q. Is he happy to receive the ball in front of his marker or behind?

Four players

We introduce a midfielder to the side (no.8), in order to progress into space behind. Now, a pass is made backwards square to the no.8, whose movement enables him to pass inside of the full-back and into space for the no.7 to run on to (3).

Considerations for your no.7:

Q. Is there space ahead and a good angle for the passing player?

Five players

Now we introduce a front striker (no.9). The no.7 attracts his opponent in tight, and plays around the corner to the no.9 who has moved towards him. He plays the ball into space behind the full-back for the no.7 to run on to (4). No.2 and no.8 can work together to change the starting point of the pass (5).

Considerations for your no.7:

Q. Has he attracted the full-back in tight



David Pleat LMA AMBASSADOR

David Pleat is a vastly experienced football manager, who has taken charge of a host of sides in the top flight, including Luton Town, Tottenham Hotspur and Sheffield Wednesday. He guided Spurs to a third-place finish in 1987 and FA Cup final appearance – this was to be his first of two trips to Wembley inside 12 months when, the following season, he coached Luton to League Cup final success with a 3–2 victory over Arsenal. Pleat also managed Leicester City and Nuneaton Borough, and is now a prolific name in media punditry, appearing regularly on ITV, ESPN and Radio 5Live broadcasts.

“We are looking for quick passing, precision, and a maximum awareness and understanding of team mates’ positions.”

WING AND WIDE MAN CONTRIBUTIONS

enough to leave good space behind?

Q. Can he play left-footed around the corner first time, so as not to break stride?

Seven players

We now introduce an opposition no.5 and a defender to mark no.9 (6). The no.9 has attracted his marker towards the wide area away from the centre. He receives and lays back to no.8, who plays forward, as the no.7 turns behind into attacking play.

Considerations for your no.7:

Q. Can he receive comfortably, and is no.9 aware and looking for the ball at a 45 degree angle?

Q. Can the no.8 find space when marked to receive and play first-time into space?

Q. Has the movement of the no.9 dragging the centre-half towards play helped make space?

How do I progress the session?

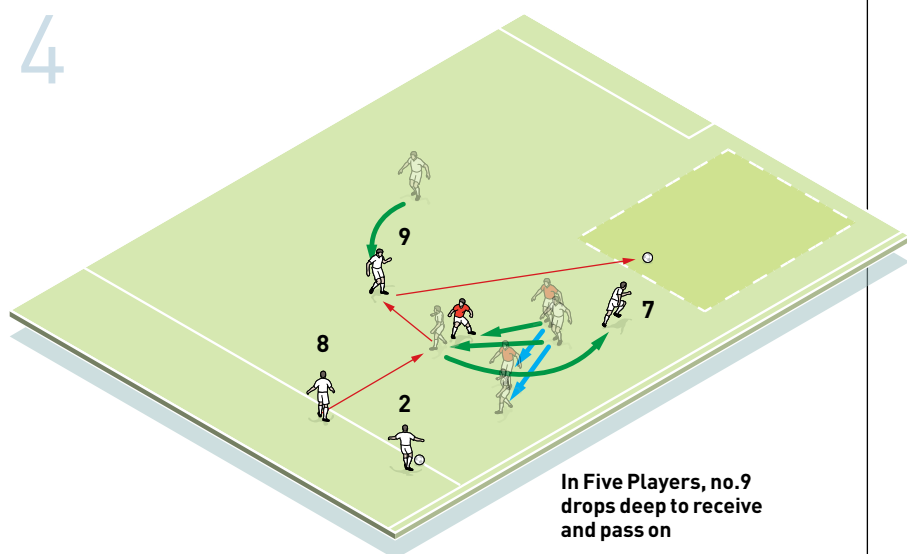
We can add a marker to the no.8, or have the coach feed no.9, who can immediately be approached by the opposition wide left player (to make a fully competitive practice).

We can also add a dribbling element by instructing team mates to dribble beyond the no.7.

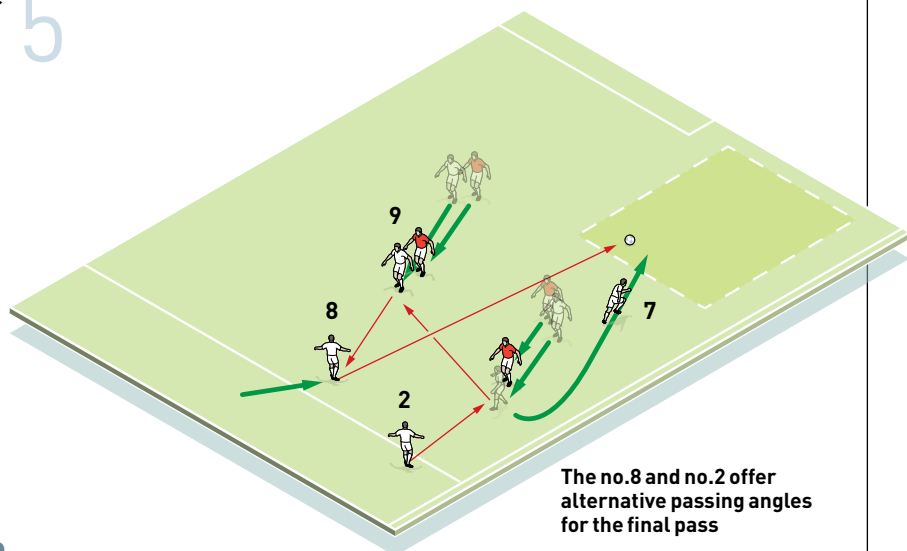
What are the key things to look out for?

We are looking for quick passing, precision, and a maximum awareness and understanding of team mates’ positions. ■

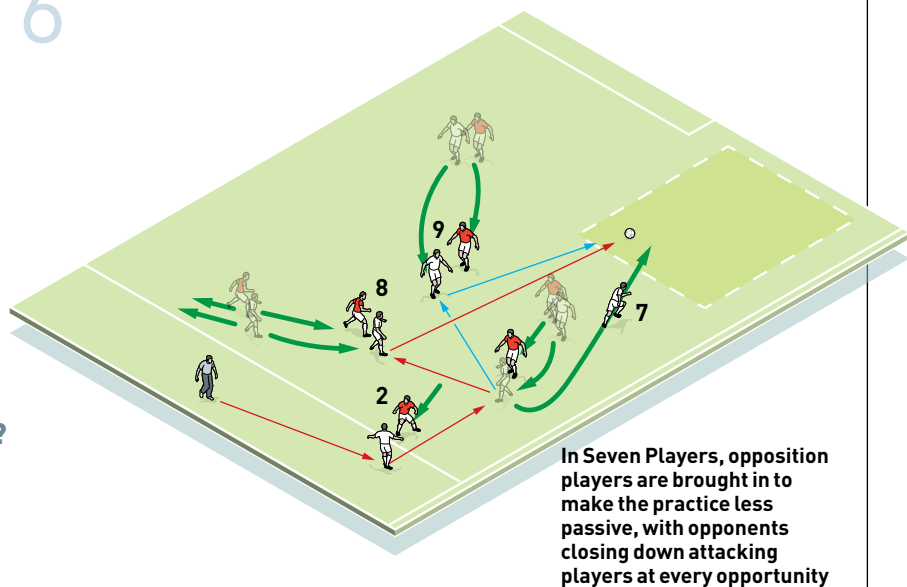
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5



6



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:

Possession and scoring

My players tend to run out of ideas in the final third. How can I get them to take better advantage of the opportunities around them?

Question asked by Stuart Muntain, a community soccer coach from Liverpool

ANSWERED BY:

Graham Taylor

LMA AMBASSADOR

For players to see the options in the final third, simply, they must play with their heads up, and this is a session that has this as its heart, encouraging them to see the options, respond to them, and conclude with a positive end product, namely a shot. In any game of football the more accomplished players get at knowing what they are going to do before they receive the ball, the better they become.

Look at any game and observe those players who are continually looking around them ▼

SET-UP

AREA

70x44 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

24

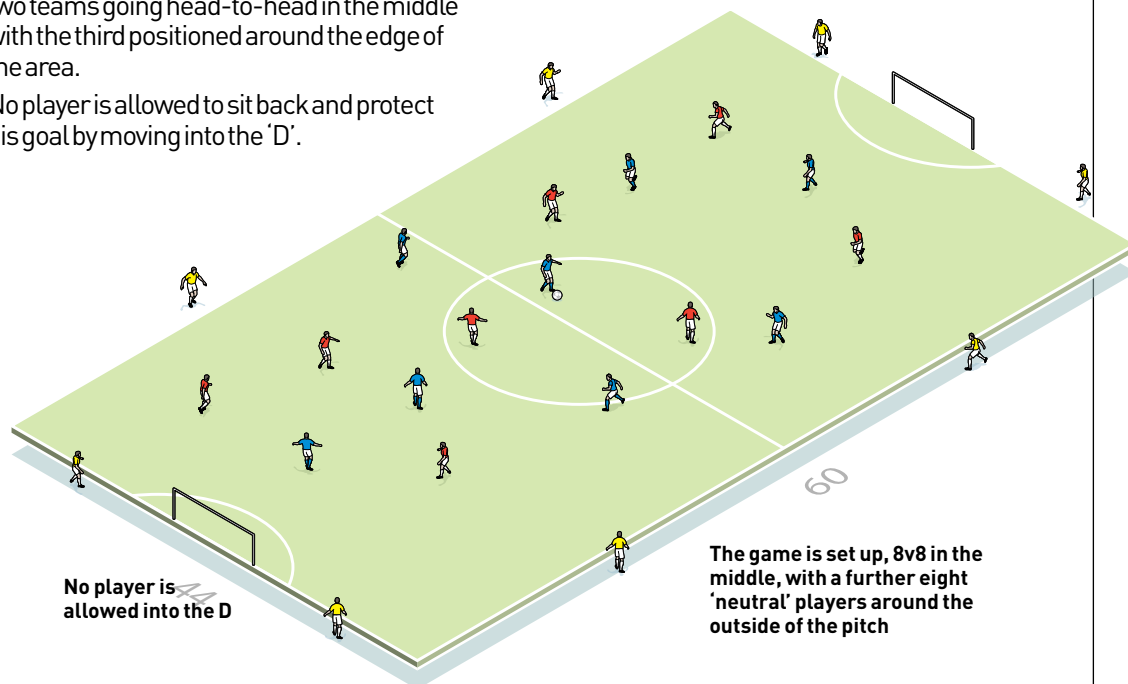
SESSION TIME

60mins

Set-up of the game

Set up using three teams of eight, as shown – two teams going head-to-head in the middle with the third positioned around the edge of the area.

No player is allowed to sit back and protect his goal by moving into the 'D'.



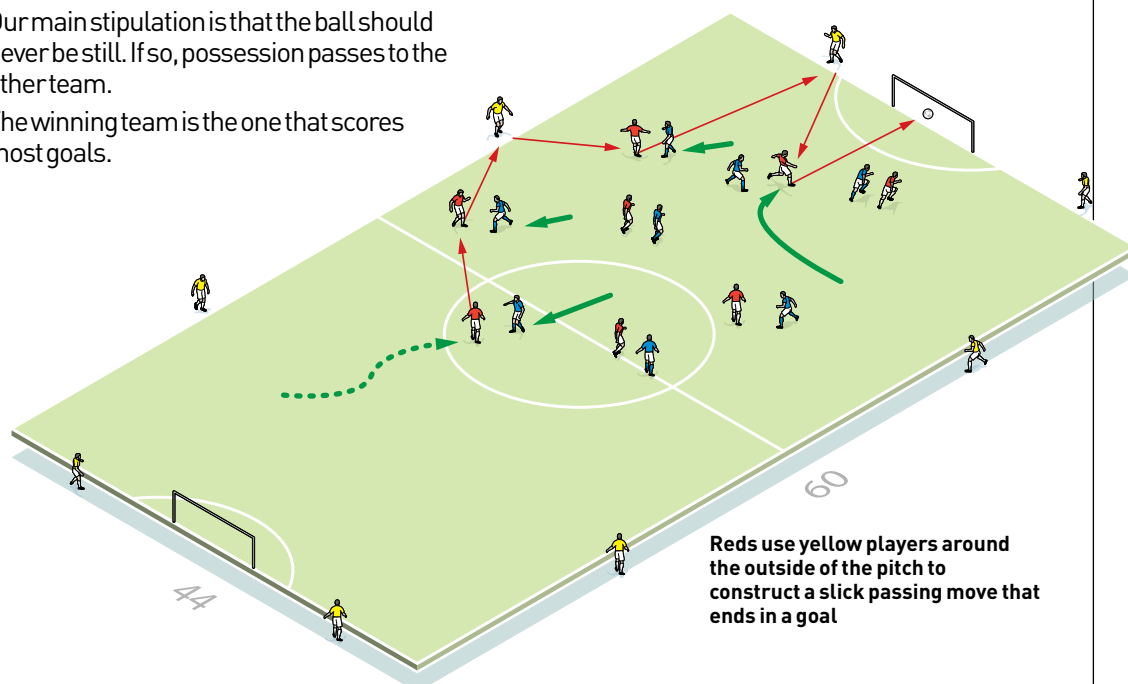
The game is set up, 8v8 in the middle, with a further eight 'neutral' players around the outside of the pitch

Using yellows

When in possession of the ball, reds and blues – who can have as many touches as they need – must use yellow players, who make themselves available for a pass and can, two-touch, pass it on.

Our main stipulation is that the ball should never be still. If so, possession passes to the other team.

The winning team is the one that scores most goals.



Reds use yellow players around the outside of the pitch to construct a slick passing move that ends in a goal

COACHING CONSULTATION

prior to receiving the ball. They are 'taking pictures' of the game and not just looking at the ball. ■



Graham Taylor
LMA AMBASSADOR

Graham Taylor enjoyed over three decades in management, having started at Lincoln City in 1972. Domestically, he oversaw the Imps, Watford (twice), Aston Villa and Wolverhampton Wanderers, but it is on the international stage that the 69-year-old is best known, with an eventful three years in charge of England.

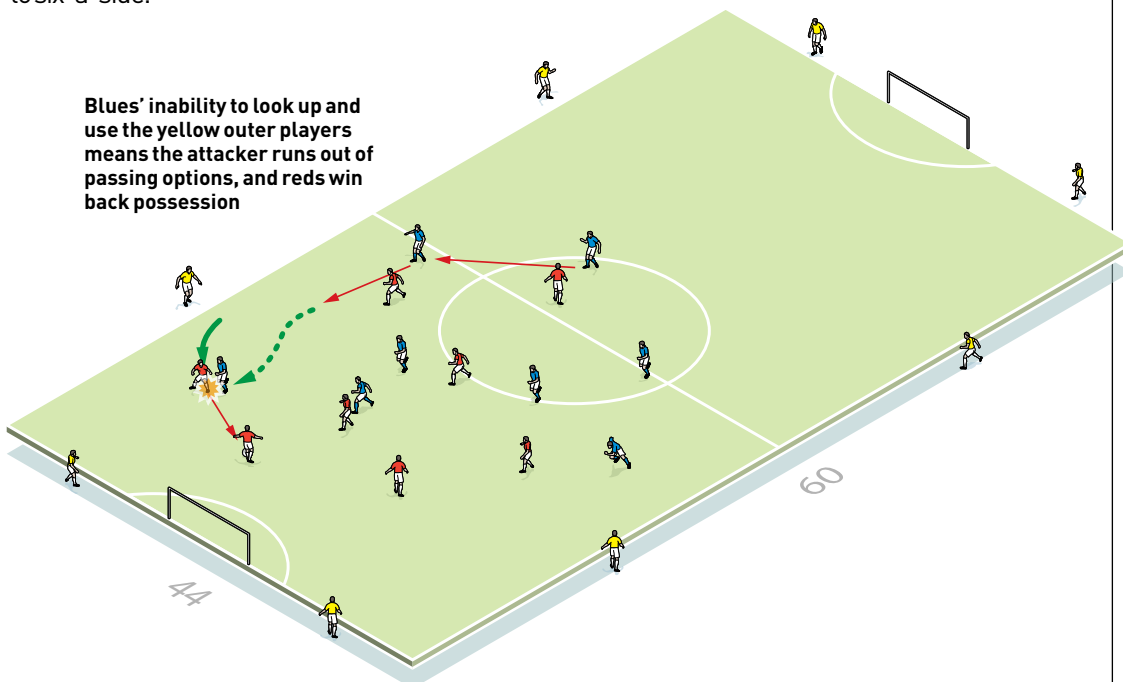
He secured qualification for an ageing squad when taking them to the 1992 European Championships in Sweden, and although he couldn't repeat the feat two years later as the Three Lions missed out on the World Cup in USA, he did complete three years in charge with an impressive 47% win ratio.

In domestic football, Taylor has taken charge of over 1,000 matches; and as a player turned out in the lower leagues for Grimsby Town and Lincoln, before having to hang up his boots at the age of 28 because of injury.

Technical observations and progressing the game

We want to see early and quick movement of the ball and as many attempts on goal as possible from a team that enters the opposition half. A common fault is when a team fails to use the players around the edge of the area.

To progress, we can introduce the two-touch rule to all teams. We can also increase difficulty by reducing the teams to six-a-side.



Coaching considerations

We need to see a high tempo, quick passing, good movement and creation of space, and of course, players surveying space all around them so they can decide on the right space to play into even before the ball arrives.

Why this works

This is a simple yet effective method of getting players to look around and assess options in matches. Feeding outer players (who will for the most part be unmarked) provides the easiest passing outlet, and this is something that will be taken into match day situations.

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

LMA AMBASSADOR

Matthew Bishop Pressing masterclass

Overview:

The session is comprised of a variety of high intensity practices which focus on pressing as a team and transitional play. Beginning with a small-area warm-up, it is enlarged into two game set-ups. We regard the key tactical elements practised as vital for all players in all positions although, as you would expect, particular attention is given to the defending/pressing team, who must work together to hunt the ball down.

“We want to see pressure on the ball, cover and support, good communication and recovery runs, and players recognising when to press and when to drop.”

PRESSING MASTERCLASS

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 60x44 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

18

SESSION TIME

Extended warm-up
18mins,
Possession v pressing
game 16mins,
Three-team practice
27mins incl.
progressions

What do I get the players to do?

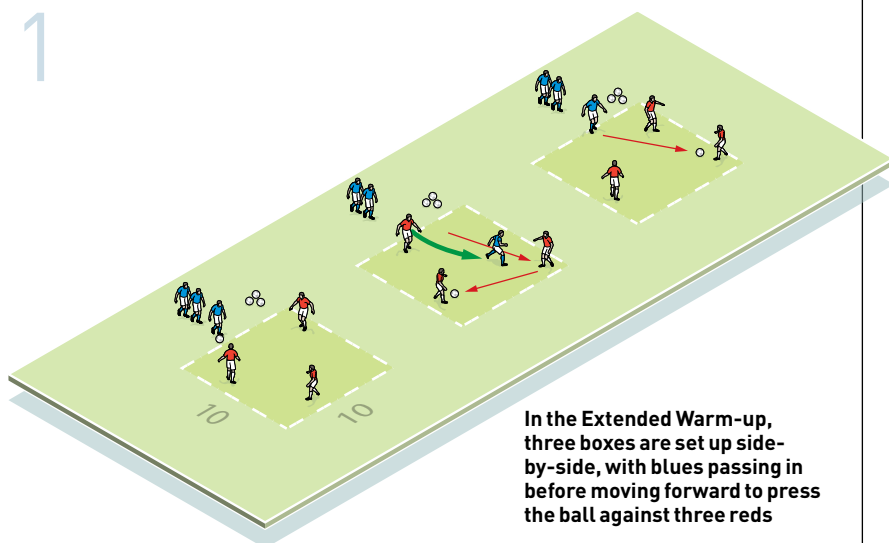
Extended warm-up

We set up as shown (1), in three 7x7-yard boxes, with three reds inside each. The first blue defender plays to any red, then presses in a 3v1. Reds must make 10 passes to win the challenge. If successful, or if the blue defender wins the ball, the game finishes and the next blue begins. After each round scores are taken and blue teams move clockwise to the next box. After all blues have pressed in all boxes, switch teams.

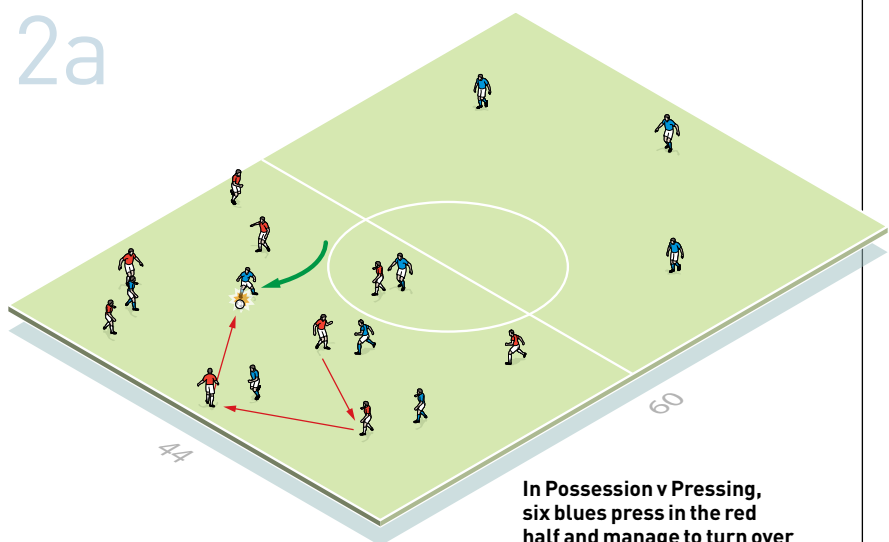
To progress, we restrict touches of the ball. This gives defenders less or more time to close down, meaning the challenge can be made less or more difficult.

What are the key things to look out for?

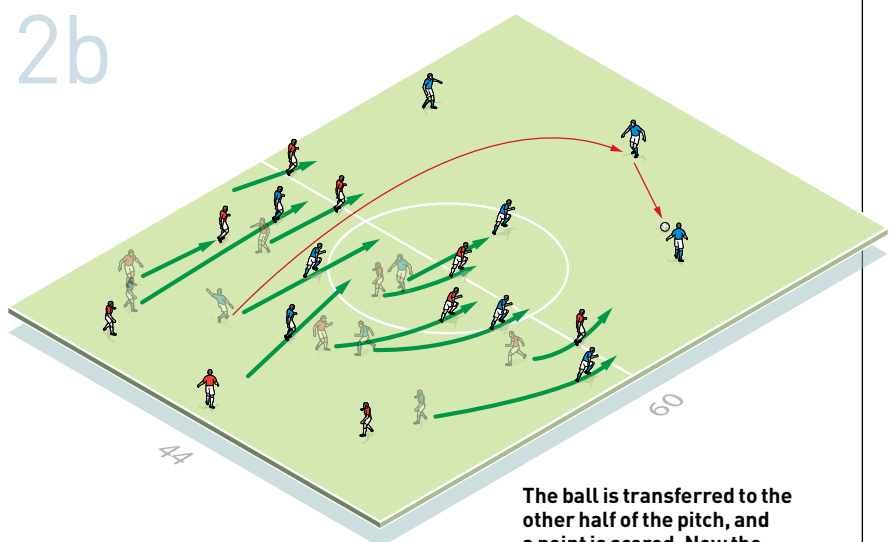
We want to see pressure on the ball, cover and support, good communication and recovery runs, with players recognising when to



In the Extended Warm-up, three boxes are set up side-by-side, with blues passing in before moving forward to press the ball against three reds



In Possession v Pressing, six blues press in the red half and manage to turn over possession



The ball is transferred to the other half of the pitch, and a point is scored. Now the balance shifts and a new 9v6 game is created in the other half, with reds pressing the ball





Matthew Bishop LMA AMBASSADOR

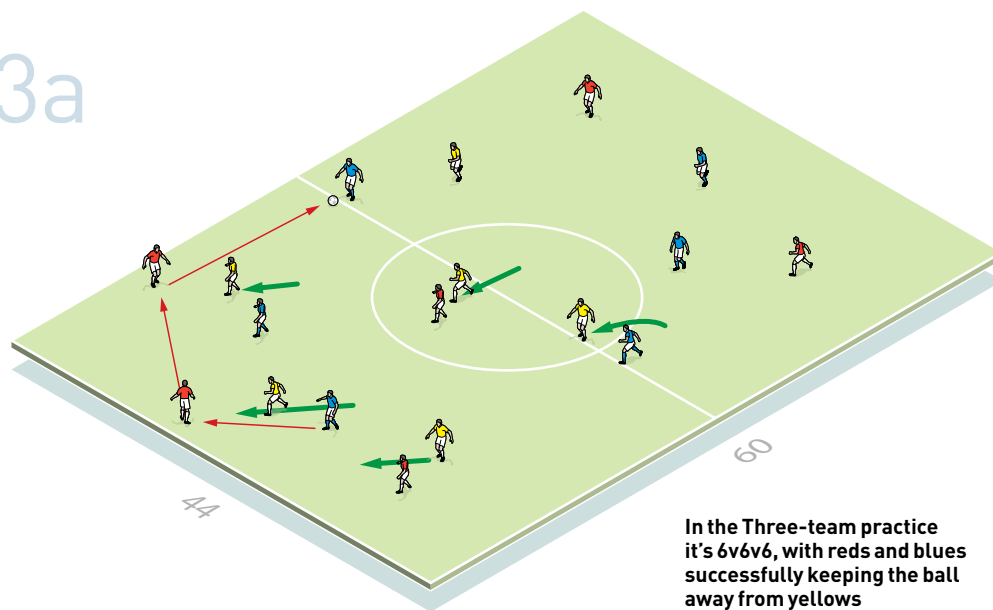
Matthew Bishop is a Football Association National Coaches Educator for the north-west and West Midlands, and has vast experience at all levels of the game.

Beginning in 2005 as a National Development Manager for the Football Association of Wales, he progressed to Senior Coaching Coordinator before taking up Assistant Manager positions at Newport County and Aldershot Town.

This wealth of experience both in the boardroom and on the training pitch makes Matthew one of the most promising and innovative figures in UK soccer coaching.

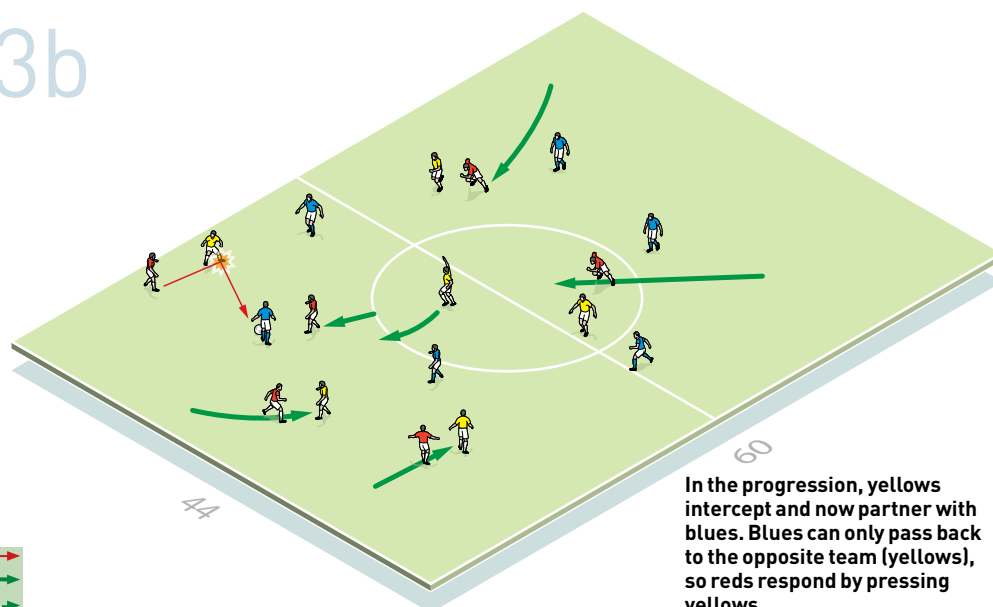
PRESSING MASTERCLASS

3a



In the Three-team practice it's 6v6v6, with reds and blues successfully keeping the ball away from yellows

3b



In the progression, yellows intercept and now partner with blues. Blues can only pass back to the opposite team (yellows), so reds respond by pressing yellows



"We regard the key tactical elements practised as vital for all players in all positions."

press and when to drop – that means an appreciation of distances, and positions of team mates and opponents. So we must see quality passing, angles and quick movement.

Possession v pressing game

Now setting up 9v9, as shown (2a), it's reds versus blues in one half with the three remaining blues in

the other. Reds look to maintain possession against six pressing players. When blues turn over they transfer the ball quickly to the three team mates in the other half (2b). Now a new pressing challenge begins in the other half. A point is scored on each turnover providing a successful pass is made into the other half.

Three-team practice

In the same area we now use three teams of six – the practice begins with yellows pressing (3a). Reds and blues must retain possession for two minutes. If yellows turn over possession they score a point, with a second available for five consecutive passes. Each team takes it in turns to press the ball.

To progress, the two teams in possession can only pass to an opposite colour (e.g. reds to blues). If a pass accidentally goes to the pressing team or the ball is intercepted, that team receives a point and continues with the ball (3b).

EXTRA-TIME PROFILE

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The Manager magazine

CHRIS HUGHTON NORWICH CITY

Modest and measured in his approach, Chris Hughton is a rare find in the world of senior management. Confident in his own personality and abilities, Hughton has no reservations about drawing inspiration from a host of managers, past and present.

While Chris Hughton remains true wherever possible to his calm and thoughtful style of leadership, underneath is a steel and determination that enables him to deal with the tough scenarios that inevitably arise in football, albeit in a respectful manner. It is perhaps because of this considered, well-balanced and open style of leadership that he has become one of the most employable and universally liked managers around.

Hughton retired from his 14-year playing career in 1993, aged 34, having spent 13 years with Tottenham Hotspur and brief spells with West Ham United and Brentford. During that time, he also earned 53 caps for the Republic of Ireland - Hughton is the son of an Irish mother and a Ghanaian father - becoming the first mixed-race player to represent the country.

When retirement beckoned in 1993, it came as little surprise to those who knew him that he pursued a career in the dugout, having shown an interest in coaching during the latter stages of his playing career.

During a 14-and-a-half-year coaching tenure on Tottenham's backroom staff, Hughton worked as a coach under the likes of Glenn Hoddle, George Graham and Martin Jol. He also served as caretaker manager on several occasions before his departure from the club in 2007.

A year after leaving Tottenham, Hughton joined Newcastle United as first-team coach under Kevin Keegan. During the close season of 2009, he was appointed as caretaker manager of the club



and promoted to permanent manager in November of that year. His first season in charge was outstanding - the side were unbeaten at home and went on to win the 2010 Championship title and promotion back to the Barclays Premier League. Hughton won the LMA Championship Manager of the Year, not to mention the respect and admiration of the Newcastle team and supporters.

But despite his success at the club, Hughton soon found himself out of a job, to the widespread disbelief and anger of his loyal supporters, team and many observers across the football community. Newcastle were, at the time, a very respectable 11th in the table.

In spite of the setback, Hughton showed remarkable resilience and it is testament not only to his proven ability, but also his likeability and desirability as a manager that he was soon offered another job, this time at Birmingham City. There, he made an immediate impact in the 2011/2012 season, taking the side to fourth in the league and into the

group stages of the Europa League, before leaving to move back into the Barclays Premier League as manager of Norwich City.

Q You coached at Tottenham for 14-and-a-half years before embarking on management - how well did that prepare you?

A It was invaluable and formed the foundation of all of my philosophies as a manager. Such a long apprenticeship might not be for everyone and some can go straight from player to manager at a young age, but I wouldn't have been ready. I worked under seven managers while coaching at Spurs, so there was always something new to learn and experience. It was exciting to see what each new manager would be like, how he would involve me and what I would learn. The club could easily have said, 'now that the manager has left we won't be keeping you on', but they showed faith in my abilities and, in return, I provided some continuity.

Q You then moved away from London for the first time to join Kevin Keegan at Newcastle - how big an adjustment was that?

A When I lost my job at Tottenham after almost 15 years on the coaching staff my ambition was to find a completely new challenge. I'd spent my entire playing and coaching career in London, but any apprehension I felt at relocating to another part of the country was outweighed by the excitement. I was going to a legendary club with an incredible tradition, rich history and great fan base and I was going to assist Kevin Keegan. I learned a lot from him during our time together, especially from his strengths in man-management.

Q When the club appointed you manager were you ready?

A Absolutely, although however much preparation you have as

CHRISH HUGHTON NORWICH CITY

a coach, when you cross that line into management it is completely different.

My first job as manager of Newcastle was far from the stable, calm environment you would want when starting out. The team had just been relegated, we'd lost a lot of players and the club was up for sale. I had to dig deep and draw on the wealth of experience I'd gained as a coach. I knew I still had a good squad, so the challenge was making sure each and every one pushed in the right direction to get us back into the Barclays Premier League.

Central to that was creating the right environment at the training ground, because the training pitch can provide great solace for players. I knew that if I could get everyone on board, we could be a strong force in the Championship.

Q Despite successfully guiding the club back to the top flight, you were sacked the following season. How do you reflect on that?

A I was disappointed, but I didn't let it knock my confidence and self belief. It helped to know that many managers and others in football thought I'd done a good job at Newcastle. The reaction was terrifically supportive. My coping mechanism was to keep busy and prepare for the next job.

Q That came at Birmingham City, who you led to the play-offs in your first year. The opportunity then came to manage Norwich City - was that a tough decision?

A Yes, because although it was challenging at times - especially in the aftermath of relegation from the Barclays Premier League - I really enjoyed my year with Birmingham.

My decision to leave was based on what Norwich City had to offer - the chance to return to managing at Premier League level at a club that had made great strides in the preceding seasons. It very much whetted my appetite.

"Your influence on match day is really just about any changes that you decide to make and the team you select. Everything else is down to how they are feeling on the day."

Q You're known as a real gentleman of the game. How does that translate into your conduct as a leader? How do you treat your players?

A It's very difficult to lead outside of your personality. Look at most managers and you'll get a sense of what they are like and how they lead. I try as much as possible to be accessible to the players and staff, respectful and honest with them. I have always felt that it's important to create an environment that players enjoy and buy into, where they want to do their best for each other and commit to a team ethic. The team is more important than any individual, so I also try to treat everybody the same.

Unfortunately, there will always be times in management when things don't run smoothly and moments when you need to be strong with the players. Discipline is part and parcel of the game. But, even then, it is not in my personality to be overly confrontational - I'd rather deal with someone in a respectful way, spend time with them and find a solution. However, when a situation arises that requires discipline I am more than capable of handling it.

Q Having been a coach, what type of dynamic do you look to engender with your own coaching staff?

A As a manager who is used to coaching it can be difficult to delegate, but it's important to appreciate the job the coaching staff do, step back when appropriate and allow them to take sessions with the team and express themselves. Most

managers need to delegate more anyway, because of the range of responsibilities they now have.

When appointing coaching staff, aside from having a good training, trust and loyalty come first. You need people you can get on with. Often, though, you will look to appoint coaches who are a little bit different to you so you have a good balance of opinions. I have a great staff around me and I expect high standards from them. We make sure that we set the standards we expect from our players.

Q You can prepare within the training environment, but how do you get players mentally tuned on match day?

A Your influence on match day is really just about any changes that you decide to make and the team you select. You remind them of certain vital information in the pre-match meeting and everything else is down to how they are feeling on the day. At that point, there is only so much you can do. You have to be confident in the overriding philosophy that you have employed at the club and the work that you have done on the training pitch over a period of time. It should ensure the players believe in their ability to win and are ready for most things.

Q You were the first mixed-race player to represent the Republic of Ireland and are an incredibly positive role model for black coaches and managers. How important is that to you?

A First and foremost I'm a manager, but I am, of course, also black. While we've certainly seen some positive changes at grassroots and academy level, where there are more black coaches, there still aren't at the top level. It is something I am very conscious of and I get a lot of letters and feedback. If, in any way, that helps somebody to make progress, inspires them or changes thinking within the game then, yes, it is something I am very proud of. ■

BOOKED: **THIS MONTH'S CHOICE**

By Mark Lawford

Pedal power

Inside Team Sky: The Inside Story of Team Sky and their Challenge for the 2013 Tour de France
By David Walsh
£18.99 Simon & Schuster

As one of the premier sporting events in the calendar year, the Tour de France is a spectacular feat of human endurance. It has also, over the years, created many stories, myths, heroes and villains, and none more so than Lance Armstrong. The American recovered from testicular cancer in the mid 1990s to win seven consecutive Tours, before being stripped of his medals in 2012 for doping offences.

David Walsh, author of *Inside Team Sky*, was one of the journalists who helped to expose Armstrong. A keen cyclist himself and chief sports writer with *The Sunday Times*, he battled over many years to see that justice was done.

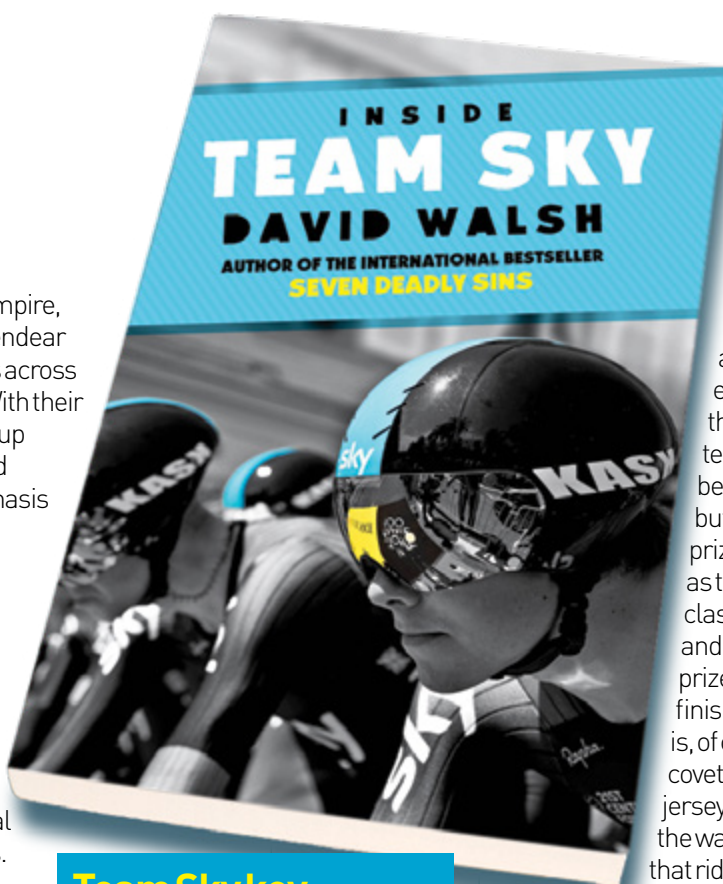
In recent times the sport has tried to put its house in order, presenting a clean bill of health to the sponsors and general public. Against this background, Walsh persuaded Team Sky to give him all-areas access to their 2013 assault on the Tour de France. It was an intriguing assignment because Team Sky were perceived as both the poster boys of the Tour and the team most likely to be cheating.

They had won the race in 2012 with British superstar Bradley Wiggins. As a new team (just three years old), backed by the unpopular

Murdoch empire, they didn't endear themselves across the sport. With their flash back-up vehicles and heavy emphasis on science, many were looking to find fault, and more especially, a Team Sky cyclist who was taking illegal substances.

The book splits into three stories. First, Walsh is on a mission to see if Team Sky is in fact clean. Second, it's a story of the race of itself. And third, it's a fascinating insight into a parallel world of coaching high performance. Unwittingly, Walsh has created a management book, warts and all.

In simple terms, the Tour is a 2,000-mile cycle race, with each stage being either a time trial or a



mountain race. There are other elements to the race and team points to be garnered, but the real prize is known as the 'general classification', and the ultimate prize for finishing on top is, of course, the coveted yellow jersey. Along the way though, that rider relies immeasurably on his team-mates - they

will provide the all-important slipstream for him to ride in as well as emotional and tactic support. As a result, the Tour is best regarded as a strange mix of individual and team strength.

Equal opportunities

There are three main coaches in the book, with Sir David Brailsford, the hugely successful GB Olympic cycling boss, the main man. His remit was to win a Tour victory within five years when he took on the new team in 2010. He has exceeded that already with victory in 2012 and 2013.

It was Brailsford who invited Walsh to join the tour, and who allows him free licence to roam around the team. What Walsh finds

Team Sky key numbers

- 9** Number of tour cyclists in the team
- 2** Number of Olympic gold medal winners in the team (Geraint Thomas MBE and Peter Kennaugh MBE)
- 5** Number of nationalities in the team
- 2** Number of Tour de France wins since forming four years ago
- 0** Number of positive dope tests since 2010

BOOKED: THIS MONTH'S CHOICE

and hears tells us much about how the best teams operate.

First, although Sky has some extremely well-paid superstars, no one gets singled out for special treatment. The team has a system of 'carers' who are supposed to rotate around the cyclists during the tour. It's pretty clear that the management isn't happy if someone gets more attention than the others.

Second, no detail is left to chance. No-one shakes hands with anyone else, lest they pass on a sickness bug. Every cyclist has his own mattress brought to each hotel. Every cyclist has his own snacks and drinks prepared for every stage of the day.

Many of the other teams make fun of this, but it's obviously paying off on the roads. The detail doesn't stop there, with the team scientists looking at anyway to shave seconds off the cyclists' timings.

This is where Tim Kerrison steps in. He arrived with the team not as a cycling expert but as a top sports scientist with the Australian swimming team. After careful research, he was quite clear on the three key elements that won races: asphalt, heat and mountains. This talented team had won gold medals in velodromes - Kerrison changed their training programmes and crunched the numbers.

However, his employment wasn't all about science and mathematics - there was to be an emotional side too. As head of performance support, he stressed to Walsh that he used the post-training talks he had with the riders to discuss about how they felt. These were as important as the science.

Educate to persuade

Kerrison's methods are very much athlete-driven. The coaching team will put the cyclist on the bike in the lab and ask him about adjusting his style. As this is done, the cyclist feeds back on what's working and looks at the speeds he's achieving. Every time it works, the cyclist adopts it. Team Sky educates to persuade.

Team Sky's 16 Rules

The rules posted at the front of the bus

We will...

- 1 Respect one another and watch each others' backs
- 2 Be honest with one another
- 3 Respect team equipment
- 4 Be on time
- 5 Communicate openly and regularly
- 6 If we want our helmets cleaned, leave them on the bus
- 7 Pool all prize money from races and distribute at the end of the year
- 8 Any team bonuses from the race split between the riders on that race
- 9 Give 15% of all race bonuses and prize money to staff
- 10 Debrief after every race
- 11 Always wear team kit and apparel as instructed in the team dress code
- 12 Not use our phones at dinner - if absolutely required we will leave the table to have the conversation
- 13 Respect the bus
- 14 Respect the personnel and management
- 15 Ask for any changes to be made to the bikes the night before the race and not race day
- 16 Follow the rules

As the story and the race progresses, it's clear the cyclists aren't lab-created machines. They can be highly strung and, as individuals, that makes managing them a tough assignment. Brailsford especially has to keep them in check and motivated.

He knows there is also immense scrutiny because of previous doping scandals. The riders are constantly accused of it via social media and on the roads themselves. Banners, shouts and even spectators throwing urine at the team as they ride are all part and parcel of the day. All the time,

No detail is left to chance. No-one shakes hands with anyone else, lest they pass on a sickness bug. Every cyclist has his own mattress brought to each hotel. Every cyclist has his own snacks and drinks prepared for every stage of the day.

Team Sky state they are clean.

There are times when the team looks fragile... key athletes are underperforming. At one stage Brailsford decides he needs to speak to them. Instead of doing this one-to-one in a room, he goes out on the unwinding ride on a rest day. As they cycle, each one drops back to Brailsford to chat. They're in their own environment, more relaxed and happy to listen and open up. It proves a turning point for the team.

Forward thinking

Rod Ellingworth, the performance manager, is the third key element of the coaching team. Brailsford says that Ellingworth has the unique quality of being able to plan in the short-, medium- and long-term all at the same time.

He uses the analogy of the hands of a clock. Most coaches work on the second hand - what needs to happen today or

tomorrow. Others can look over the medium-term, and where the team will be in four to six weeks' time. And a few, working off the hour hand, will be planning into next year. Yet Ellingworth will do all three at the same time. Under pressure that is something special.

As we know ourselves, it's one thing to have the talent, and quite another to orchestrate it into an effective, coherent team. More than once, Brailsford modestly talks about being a conductor. He's one of the best of his generation of high-performance coaches.

Walsh captures the blood, sweat and tears of the Tour, which puts all these achievements in their true context. And what does Brailsford enjoy most? The processes, not the winning. A lesson for us all, perhaps. ■

To order your copy of **Inside Team Sky** please click here.

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