



Training Sessions From Sheffield United Academy Coaches

Sheffield United F.C. Academy Training Sessions



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Edited by Mike Saif

Front Cover - Players receive instruction at the Sheffield United Academy Indoor Center



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The following sessions are from presentations and training sessions conducted by Sheffield United Academy coaches, Ron Reid, Kevin Fogg and Scott Sellars.

Working with Midfielders

Ron Reid

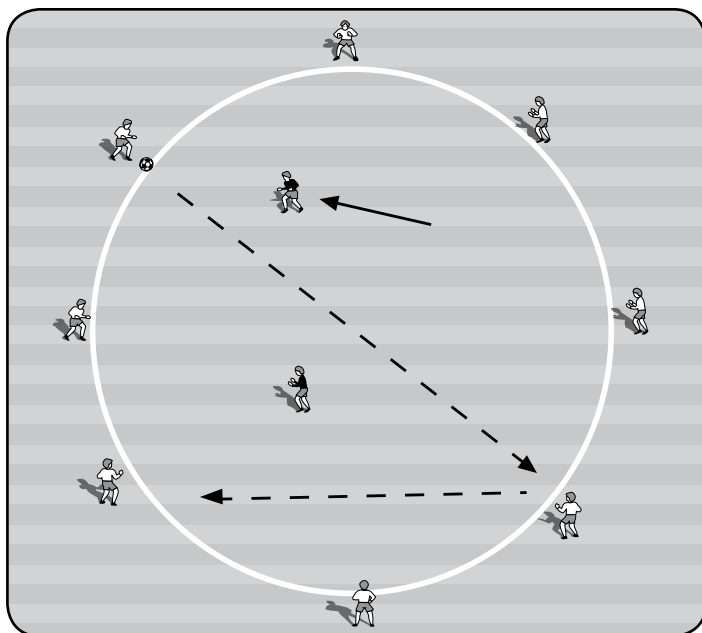
Qualities of a Midfielder

Out of Possession

Sound 1 v 1 defensive skills
 Interceptions and blocking
 Compete in the air
 Tracking and recovery runs
 Maintain shape
 Understand defensive responsibilities

In Possession

Secure possession - good passing skills
 Good dribbling and running with the ball
 Sound 1 v 1 attacking skills
 Makes runs off the ball
 Finishing in and out of the box
 Understand offensive responsibilities

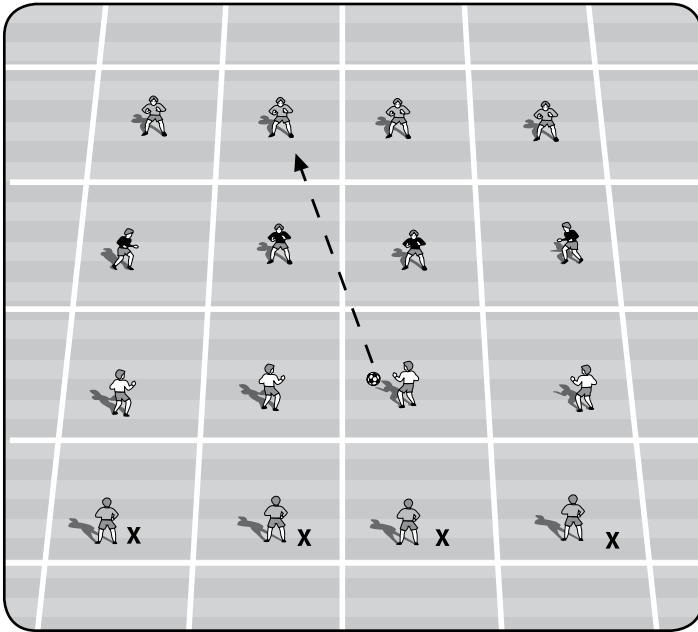


Warm-Up

Play keep-away in a circle with two defenders in the middle. Begin with the outside players playing two-touch and then progress to one-touch.

Coaching Points

- 10 passes for a point
- Defenders should not get “nutmegged”
- Defenders should avoid having the ball passed between them



Whites attempt to play through to grey players. If the blue's intercept, they attempt to play the opposite direction to the X players. After a while change the end two lines of players with the middle two lines.

Practice One

Players stay in their own square. Play two-touch with passes under head height.

Practice Two

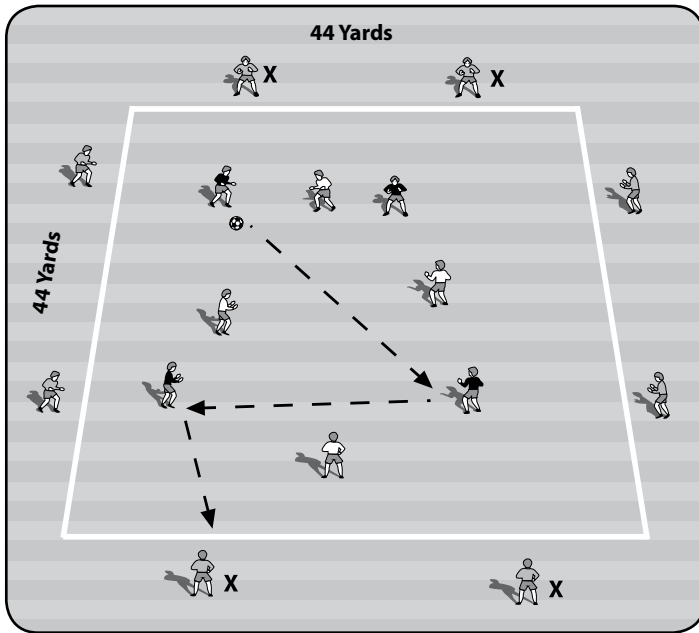
Players stay in their own channels across the field. Play two-touch with passes under head height.

Practice Three

Darks v Whites in the middle two channels. Whites play to the grey players and Darks play to the X players.

Coaching Points

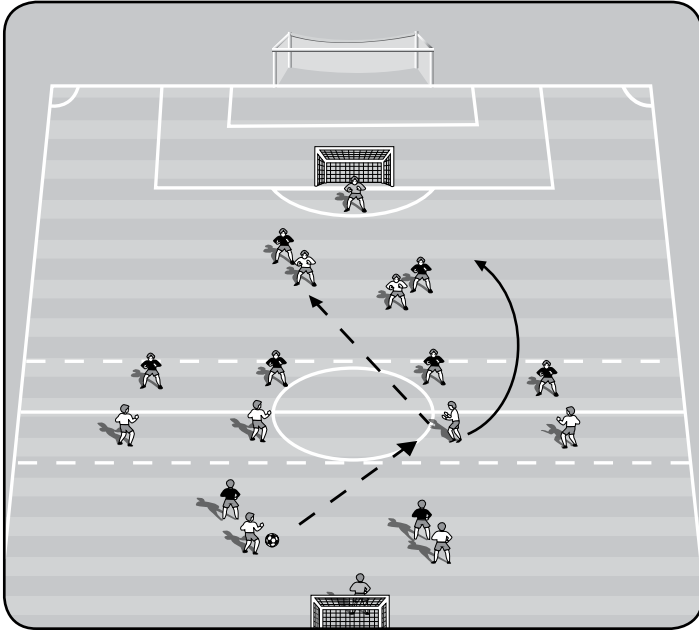
- Maintain team shape
- Zonal marking
- Press and cover
- Slide side to side as a line



Forward Runs

This game focuses on when and where midfielders should make forward runs. Play 4 v 4 inside the grid and have eight players on the perimeter as shown. The dark players play north to south using the X players as targets and the white players play east to west using the grey perimeter players as targets.

Change the inside teams with the outside teams periodically.



Game Situation

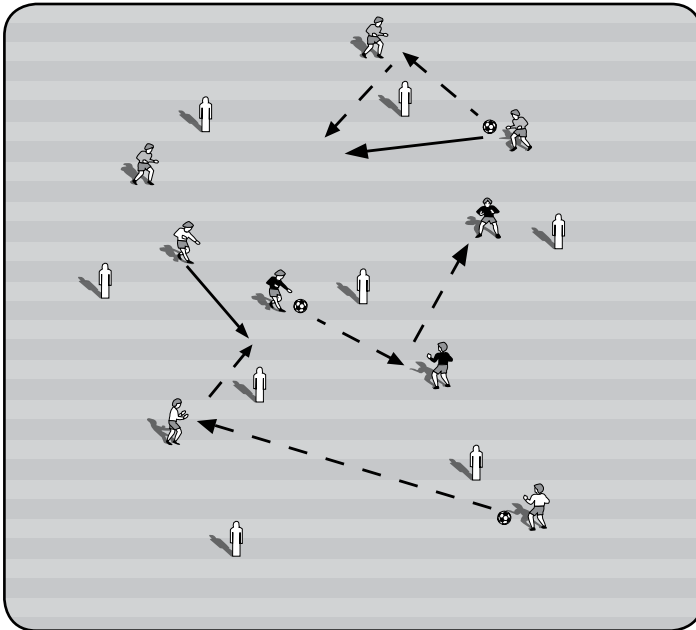
This game progresses the previous exercises and puts the players into a game-like situation. The four dark midfielders play against the four white midfielders in the 20-yard zone as shown.

The game starts with the white defender having a free pass to any white midfielder. The midfielders then play within the zone and attempt to play a pass to one of their forwards. The midfielder that makes the pass can leave the zone and join the two forwards to make a 3 v 2 in the attempt to score.

Team Build Up With a Lone Striker Ron Reid

Demands

- Striker plays within width of penalty area
- Fullbacks receive the ball as often as possible
- No channel balls - *unless desperate*
- No long balls to striker - *unless desperate*



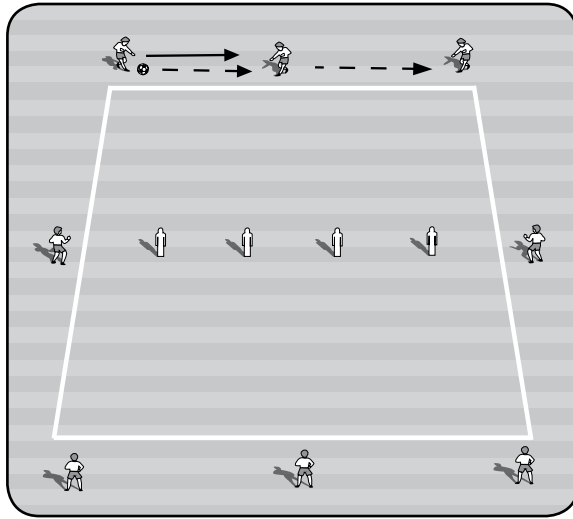
Preparation to Play

Place mannequins in the area as shown. Have three groups of three players pass and move in the area.

Coaching Points

- Look to make passes between mannequins
- Look to make passes over mannequins
- Look for combinations (give-and-go's, etc.) around mannequins

Have the other players juggle outside the area giving them certain conditions. Change the players after a certain time limit.

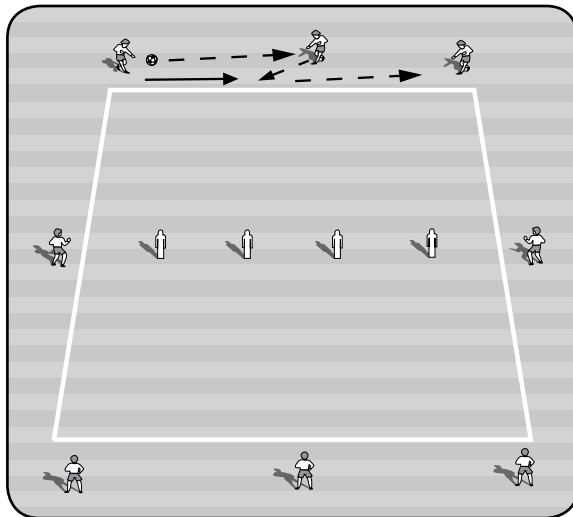


Pass Around Mannequins

Organize the players around the area with mannequins lined up in the center as shown. The first player passes to the second player and follows his pass. Continue around the area and change direction periodically.

Coaching Points

- Passes need to be firm and accurate
- Receive with an open body position and across the body

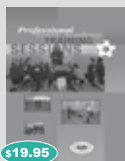


Variations

Practice different variations like the Pass - Set - Pass shown above.



BOOKS

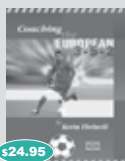


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The author shares his 20 years of experience coaching at pro youth academies in England.

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This book takes an in-depth look at the formation used by Liverpool to win the Champions League Final.

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Item # 1011

This is the most comprehensive book ever written about the 4 - 4 - 2 formation. Covered are the roles and responsibilities of the defenders, midfielders and forwards in both attacking and defending situations.

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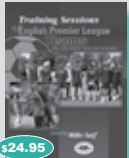
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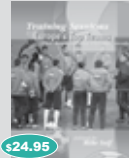
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4-4-2 DVD's



Item # 4001 - Attacking
Item # 4002 - Defending

Item # 4003 - Possession
Item # 4004 - All Three DVD's



Item # 4005 - Attacking - # 4006 - Defending - # 4007 - Both DVD's

The 4-4-2 is the preferred formation for just about every team in the English Premier League. The 4-4-2 is also used by the majority of the world's top coaches and teams such as European giants Juventus, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich as well as the national teams of Brazil, England, USA, Italy, etc.

These DVD's will explain how the 4-4-2 formation is played, why it is so successful and why it is the formation of choice for the world's top teams. Coach David Williams (former Leeds United, Everton and Manchester United U19 coach) explains the roles and responsibilities of the defenders, midfielders and forwards, both in attacking and defending situations. The DVD's show many practices that he has used during his vast coaching experience in the English Premier League, and will show you how to train your players to play using the 4-4-2 formation. These practices start with 2 v 2 exercises and build all the way up to 11 v 11 conditioned games.

TOPICS INCLUDE

Defending With a Flat Back Four

Zonal Defending

Improving Confidence For Heading

Developing Techniques For Youth Players

Developing Quick Play Using Circle Practices

Passing Progressions

Counter-attacking With Pace

Improve Your Shooting and Finishing

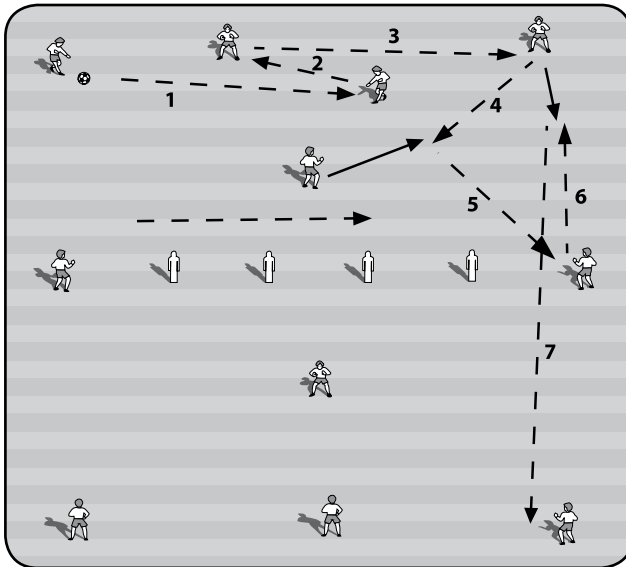
Build-Up Play For Crosses

Attacking In Waves

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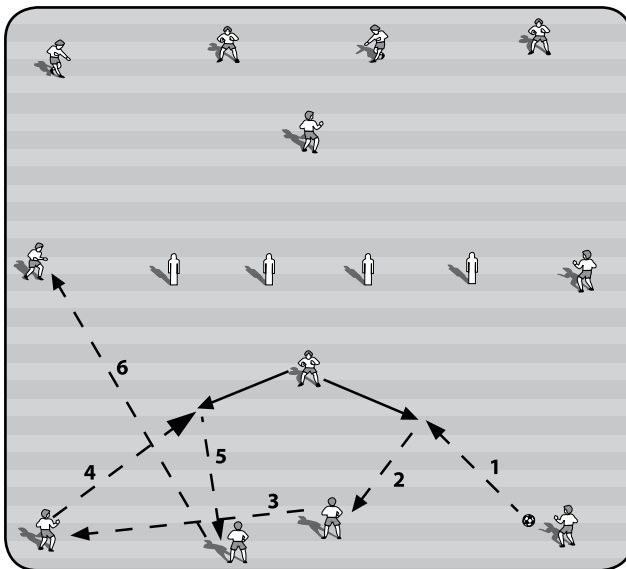
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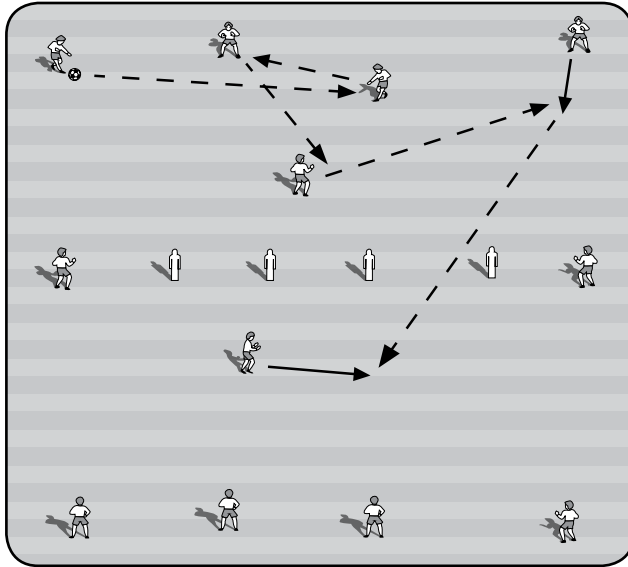
Using Midfield Support

Now practice going around the mannequins with a back-four and using a midfielder as support.



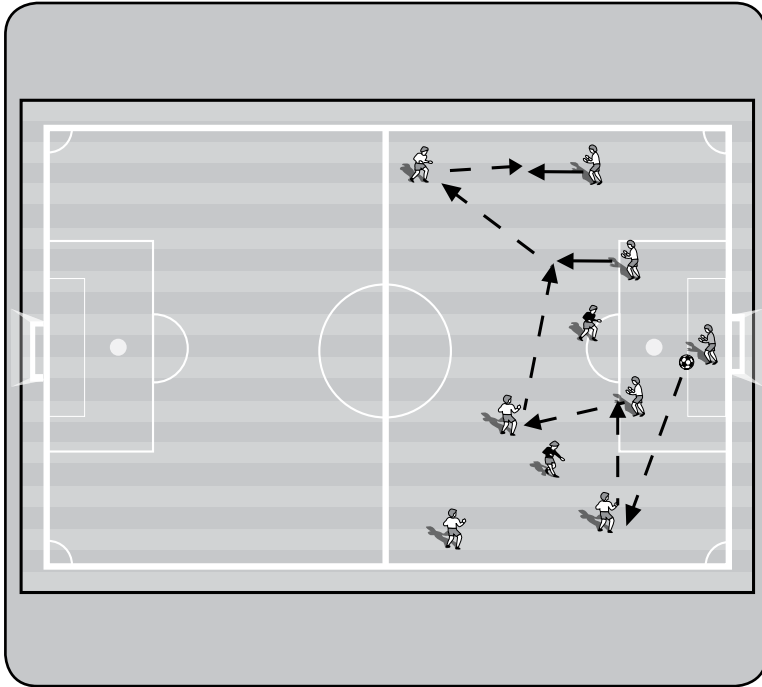
Variations

Practice different variations like the one shown above.



Play Through Mannequins

Progress to the option of playing through the mannequins either to the midfield support or the opposite back four.



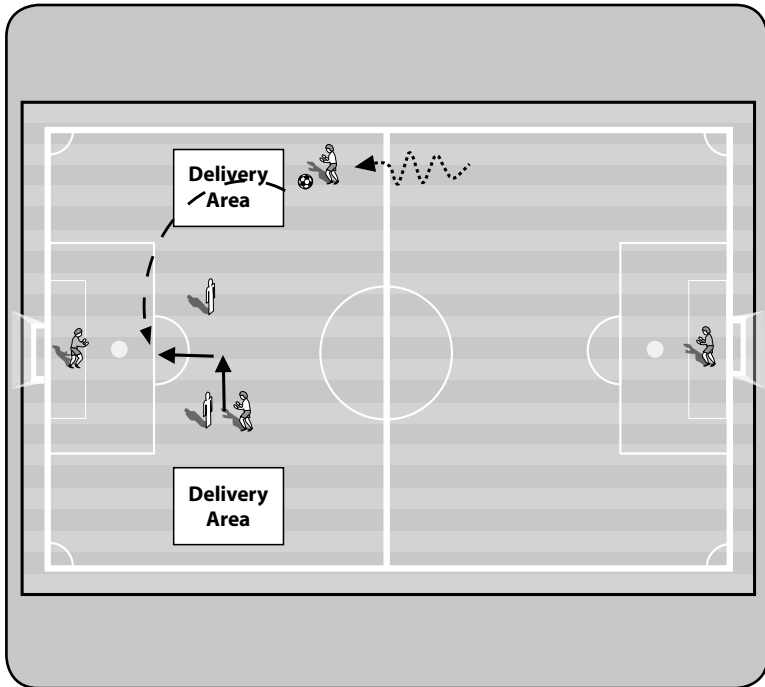
Playing From the Back to Get Into Wide Areas

On a full field, organize a goalkeeper, four defenders, a center midfielder, two wide players and a lone striker. Have two opposition forwards to provide pressure to the back-four and place two mannequins in the center defender position at the attacking end of the field.

Begin with the goalkeeper and practice different combinations attempting to get the ball into wide positions.

Coaching Points

The center defenders and midfielders should receive the ball in a side-on position.



Playing From the Back to Get Into Wide Areas - Attacking Half

When in the attacking half, the wide players should look to get their crosses in from “Delivery Areas” as shown. The lone striker should work on the opposite side of the field away from the ball and time his runs through the mannequins to remain inside.

Coaching Points

The crosses should be played behind the first mannequin.

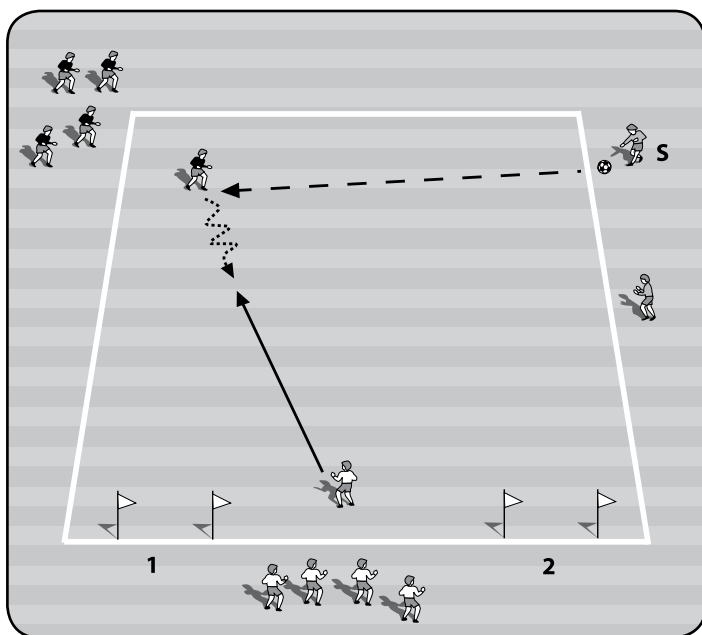
Progressions

- Add two midfielders on both teams
- Add defending fullbacks to pressure the wide players

As a coach, use your imagination and practice various combinations for both the defending half and attacking half.

Working With Defenders

Ron Reid & Kevin Fogg



Defending - Facing an Opponent

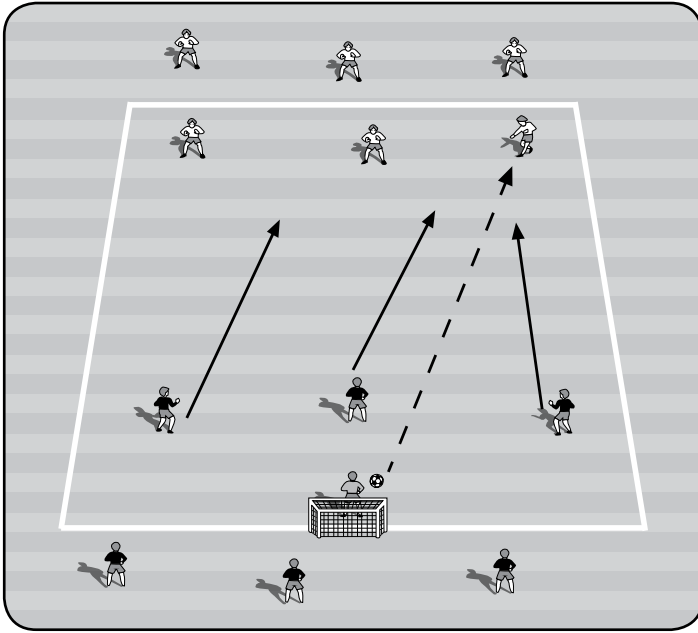
The server plays the ball to the attacker and calls "Gate 1" or "Gate 2". The defender closes down the attacker and prevents them from playing the ball through the gate. The attacker can use the wall player if needed. The wall player should be limited to one or two-touch. Repeat with waiting players.

Coaching Points

- Approach - speed/angle/distance from ball
- Body shape - Jockey position to show in or out

Progressions

- Play 2 v 2 - pressure/cover
- Introduce a recovering defender to chase the attacker from behind
- Play 3 v 3 - pressure/cover/balance and unit shape



Defending - Facing an Opponent

The Goalkeeper throws the ball to one of the attackers. The three defenders close down the three attackers and defend the goal. Repeat with second group of attackers and defenders.

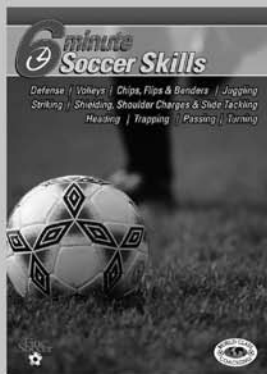
Coaching Points

- Approach - speed/angle/distance from ball
- Body shape - Jockey position to show in or out

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Players

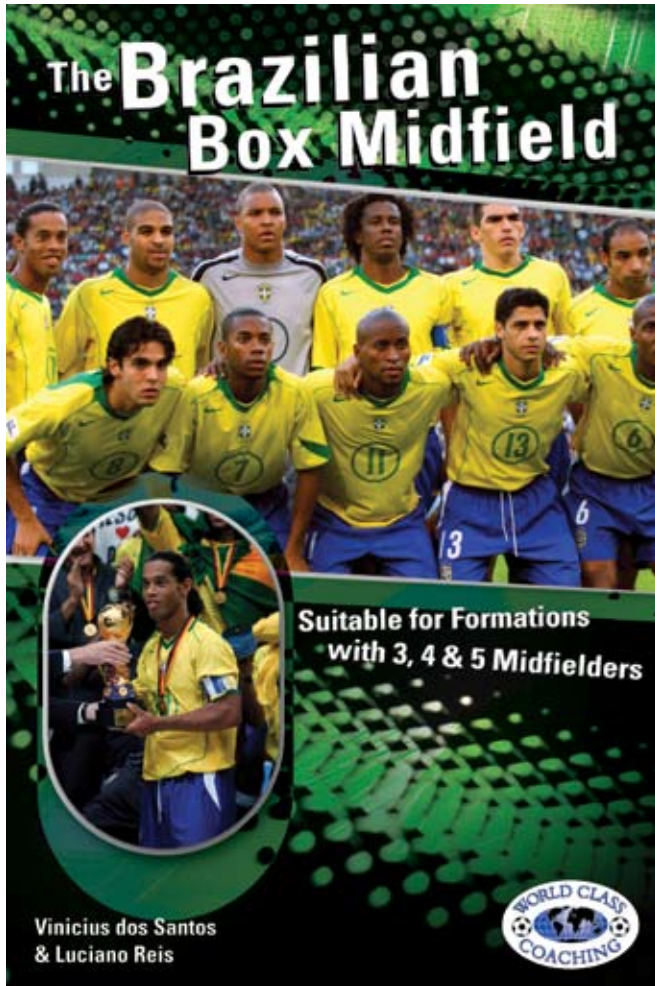
Each skill can be practiced on your own in the back yard, or with teammates. Watching these DVD's will motivate the player to practice more and improve their individual skills.



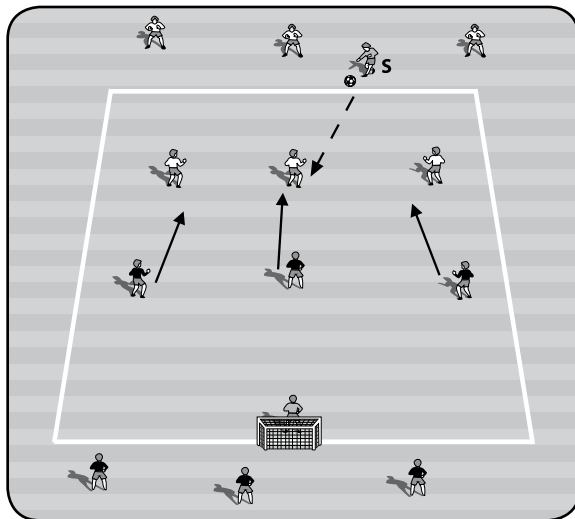
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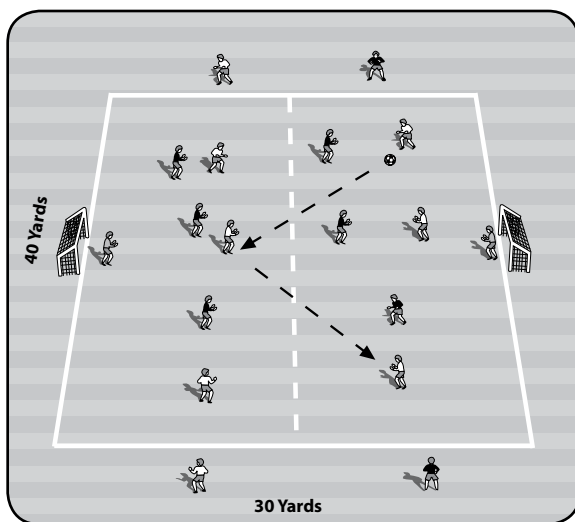


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Defending - Preventing Opponents Turning

The server plays to one of the forwards. The defenders close down as quickly as possible to prevent the forwards from turning. The server plays as a support player behind.

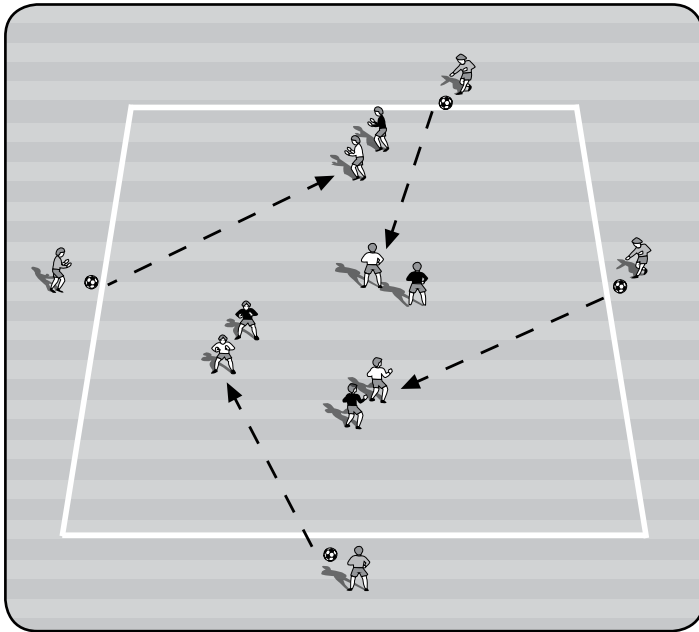


Defending - All Aspects

Two teams of six play inside the area. Two additional players for each team are on the sidelines. The sideline players must cross the ball with one or two touches. The coach can put various conditions on the game to coach various aspects of defending (heading, tracking, blocking, etc.).

Working With Strikers

Ron Reid & Kevin Fogg

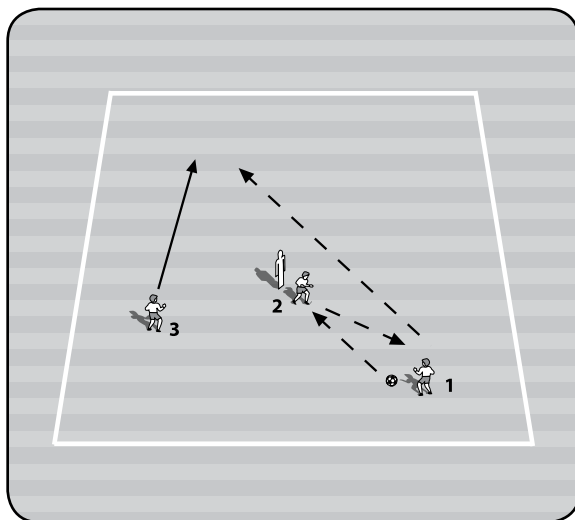


Working With Strikers

The servers pass the ball into the forwards. The defenders attempt to prevent the forwards from turning.

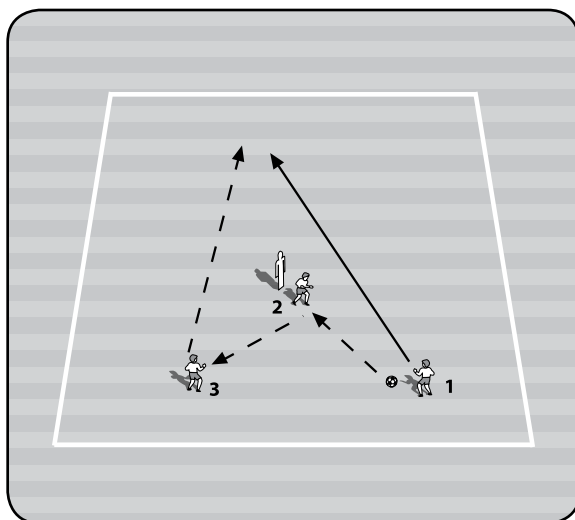
Coaching Points

- Movement - Make space in front to receive (safe side)
- Technique - Stop just before receiving the ball
- Strength - Shield the ball from the defender
- Awareness - Move away to pass and receive from a different server
- Repeat - Rotate functions and roles



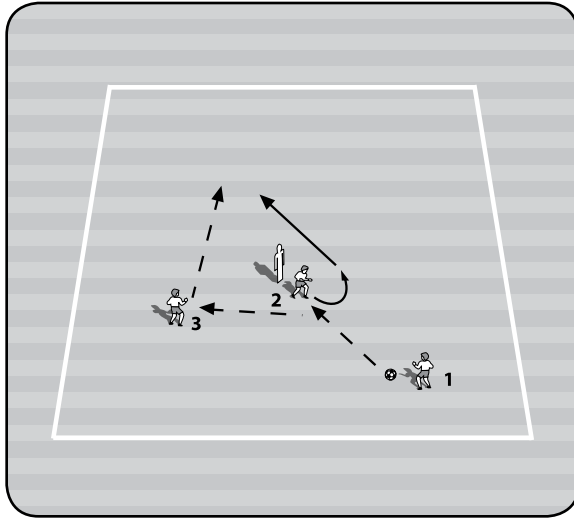
Working With Strikers

Player 1 plays to Player 2 with a mannequin at his back. Player 2 sets the ball back to Player 1. Player 1 plays the ball behind the defender (mannequin) for Player 3 to run onto.



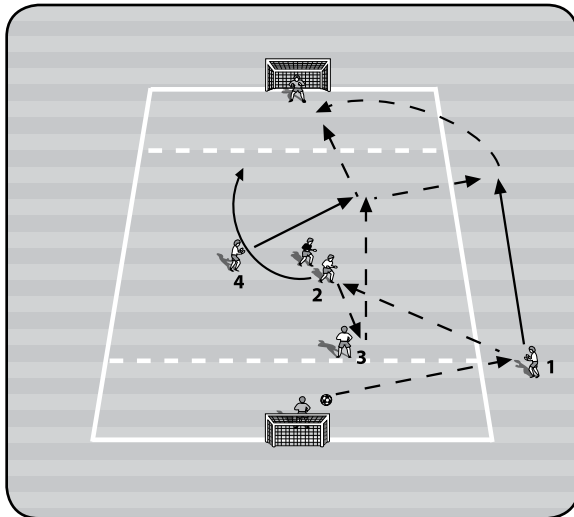
Working With Strikers

Player 1 plays the ball to Player 2 with a mannequin at his back. Player 2 sets the ball back to Player 3. Player 3 plays the ball behind the defender (mannequin) for Player 1 to run onto.



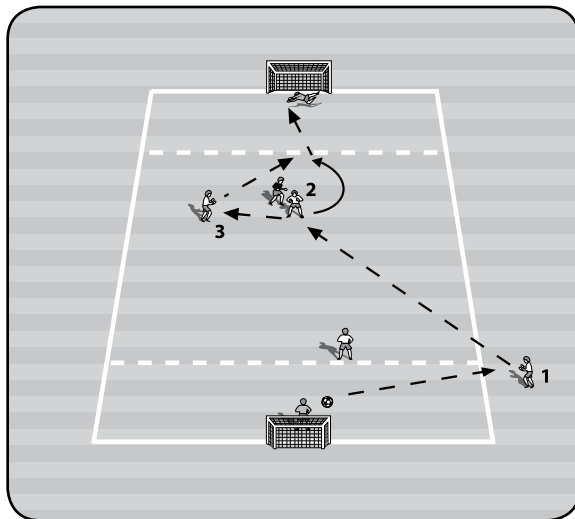
Working With Strikers

Player 1 plays to Player 2 with a mannequin at his back. Player 2 sets the ball back to Player 1. Player 3 plays the ball behind the defender (mannequin) for Player 2 to spin onto.



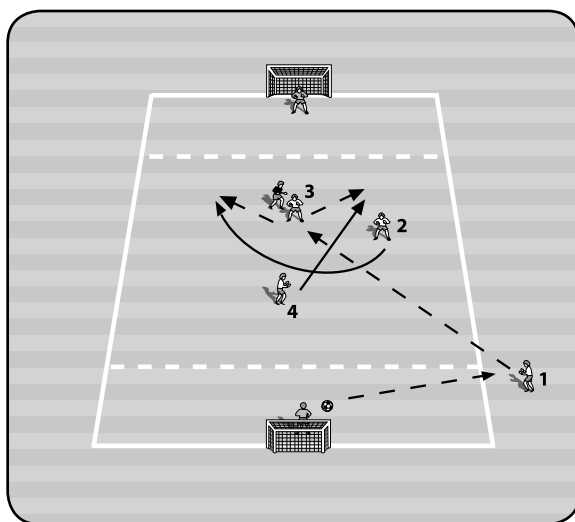
Working With Strikers

The GK throws wide to Player 1. Player 1 passes inside to Player 2. Player 2 sets the ball back to Midfielder 3. Midfielder 3 passes the ball outside the defender for Player 4 how makes a flat/bent run behind the defender. Player 4 has the choice of a shot or a pass wide for a cross. Repeat on the opposite flank.



Working With Strikers

The GK throws wide to Player 1. Player 1 passes inside to Player 2. Player 2 passes to Player 3 and spins around the defender. Player 3 passes with one touch into the path of Player 2.

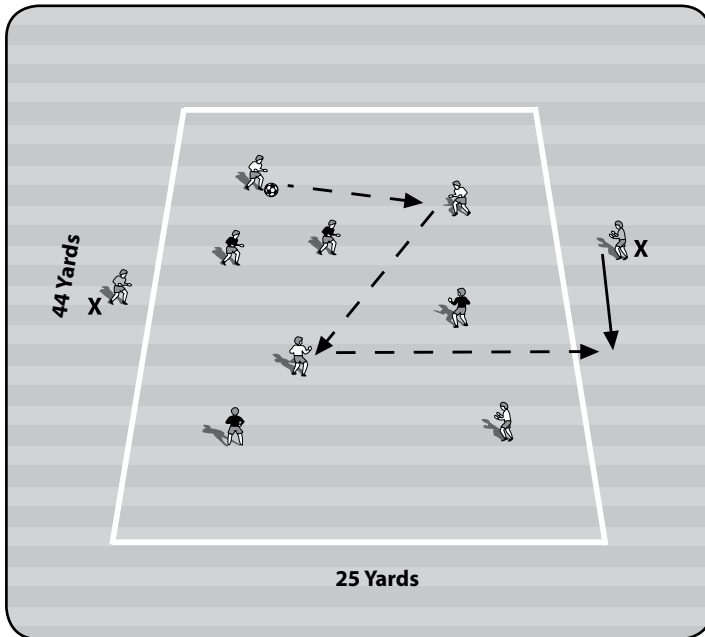


Working With Strikers

The GK throws wide to Player 1. Player 1 passes inside to Player 3 who holds the ball. Player 2 makes a flat run across the front of Player 3. Midfielder 4 runs into the area cleared by Player 2. Player 3 has the option of playing to either option.

Small-Sided Games

Scott Sellars & Kevin Fogg



Small-Sided Game

Play 4 v 4 to target players as shown. When the ball is played to a target player, possession changes.

Coaching Points

- Create individual space - Body shape/half turn
- Movement - Support behind and beyond the ball
- Quick play and quick decisions
- Good first touch away from pressure
- Run with the ball if space is there
- Be aware on transition on change of possession
- Team shape - Pressure the ball
- Track the runners

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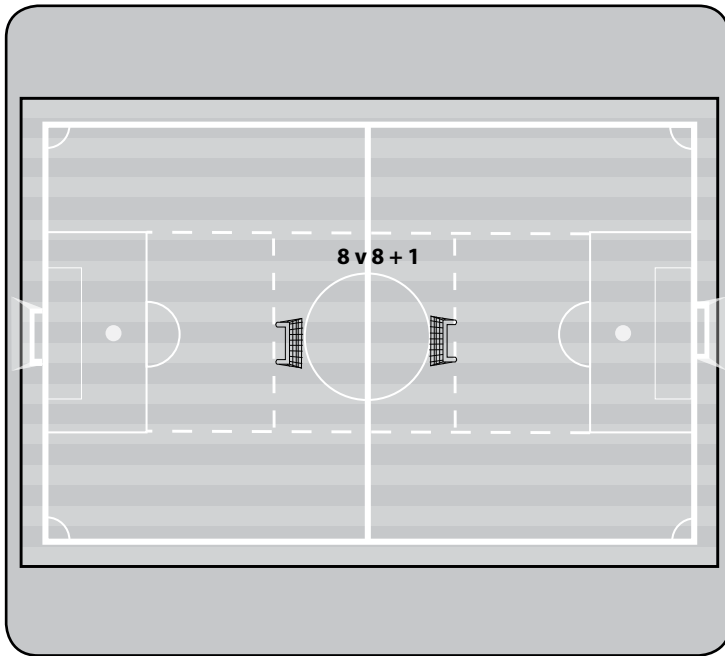
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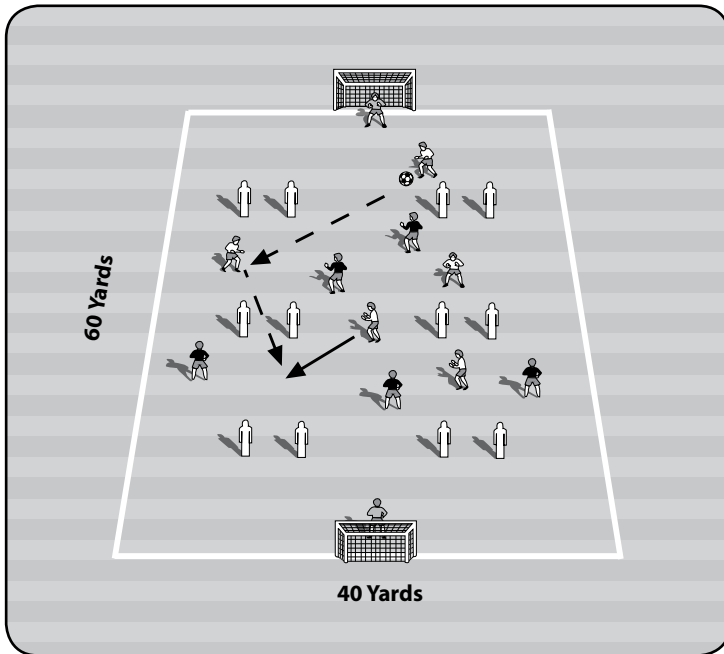


Small-Sided Game

Mark a field from penalty area to penalty area with lines extending from each penalty area as shown. Place the goals facing the wrong way 15 yards either side of the half line. The goal lines are also offside lines. Play 8 v 8 plus one neutral player

Coaching Points

- Support behind and ahead of the ball
- Timing of runs so as not to be offside
- Switch from one end to the other
- Focus on quality finishing



Small-Sided Game

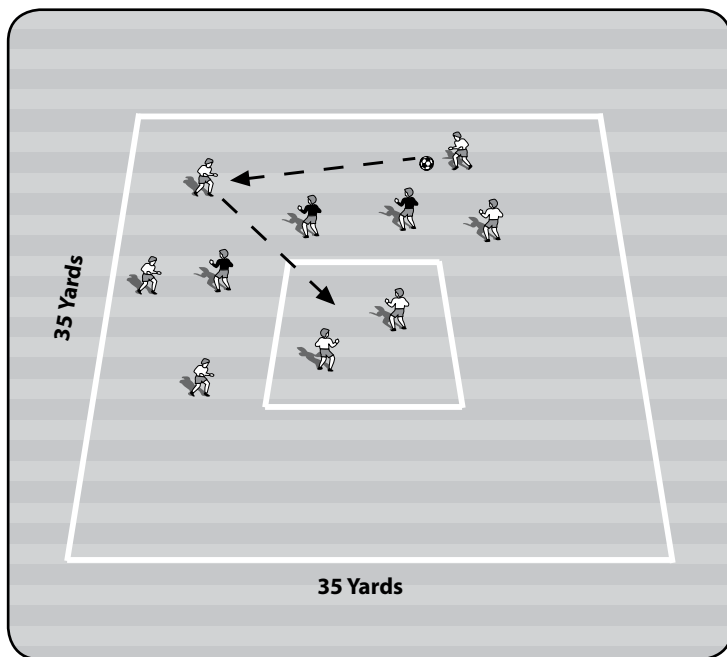
Play 6 v 6 on a 60 x 40 field with six pairs of mannequins placed as shown.

To Score a Point

- Pass between mannequins to another player as shown
- Run the ball between mannequins
- Play a give-and-go between mannequins (two points)

Coaching Points

- Awareness
- Supporting runs
- One and two-touch passing
- Defending - Tracking and isolating players and goals



Small-Sided Game

Mark a 35 x 35-yard field with a smaller 6 x 6-yard square in the center. The five white players pass the ball with the objective of trying to pass the ball to the two white players inside the small square.

The three defenders (dark players) work as a unit to stop the white players passing to the smaller square.

Coaching Points - Defenders

- Press the ball
- Look to intercept or block passes

Coaching Points - Attackers

- Keep possession - Be patient
- Pass the ball quickly and keep it moving
- Good supporting angles

Progressions

- Players inside the smaller square follow their pass out of the square and the player making the pass inside the square takes his place
- Play 4 v 4 with both teams looking to play into the smaller square