

A man in a blue FIFA jersey is captured mid-air, performing a bicycle kick on a beach soccer field. He is barefoot and has a focused expression. The background shows a clear blue sky, green trees, and a goalpost with a net. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

FIFA Training Centre

**BEACH
SOCCER
COACHING
MANUAL**



Let's go to the beach!

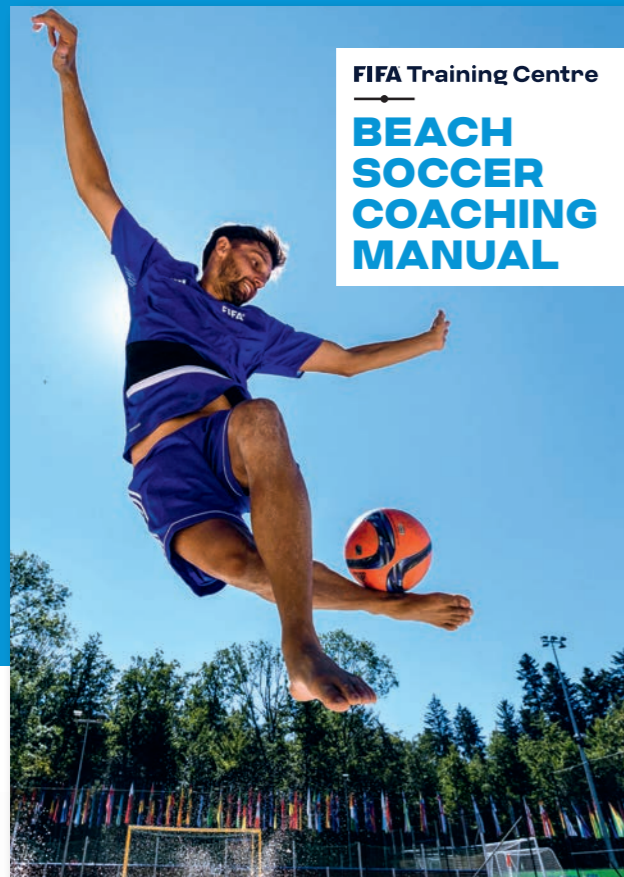
Beach soccer has gained significant popularity in recent years. Since its inclusion in FIFA's portfolio of competitions in 2005, world football's governing body has been working hard to support and promote the growth of the sport. As part of this endeavour, the organisation has implemented various development programmes and initiatives to assist its member associations. This coaching manual is designed to provide leaders in the dynamic sport of beach soccer with technical and logistical guidance.

Beach soccer coaches play a crucial role in fostering a love of the game and supporting the growth of the sport. To ensure that coaches are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed, we have made professional development a priority. By investing in coaches and supporting their growth, we can help players to fulfil their potential and improve the overall quality of the game. We believe that such initiatives help to guarantee a bright future for beach soccer across our member associations around the globe.

Football unites the world!

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A brief introduction to beach soccer and this manual

Beach soccer is a thrilling sport that is enjoyed by people of all ages, genders and abilities. Given its Brazilian roots, eye-catching moves and high-tempo play are hallmarks of the game. Since its inception in 1992, beach soccer has grown in popularity to the extent that it is now played in over 130 countries. The sport's dynamic nature results in the constant evolution of its laws, strategies and skills, which combine to provide even greater excitement for players and fans alike.

As noted above, the training exercises in this manual are suitable for all beach soccer players. However, the intensity levels involved in the exercises can be adjusted according to the characteristics of the group (i.e. their ability, fitness and age). For example, a coach can adapt the distances involved or duration of an exercise to make it more suitable for players of different abilities. This manual also offers suggestions on how to use training sessions to motivate and challenge players without overwhelming them.

This coaching manual features the latest techniques and strategies for coaching beach soccer. It includes a variety of exercises that are designed to enhance players' technical skills, tactical awareness, coordination and fitness. The exercises are suitable for players of all ages, abilities and fitness levels. This manual is a valuable resource for anyone looking to improve their beach soccer skills and knowledge of the sport.

Like football, beach soccer is a fast-paced sport, but the fact that it is played barefoot on sand significantly alters the nature of the game. Playing on sand requires players to have a high level of physical fitness and coordination, which makes beach soccer a unique and challenging alternative to association football. There are also parallels with team sports that require speed and strength, while excellent coordination is crucial to mastering the technique required to play beach soccer. The nature of the playing surface and the consequent unpredictable ball movements help players improve their technical skills and tactical awareness and adapt to unexpected situations. Beach soccer is an exciting and demanding sport that requires mental and physical training.



In beach soccer, where matches involve two teams of five players each, good tactical intelligence is an essential skill. All players must be able to play in both attacking and defensive positions. However, the goalkeeper's role is particularly important, as they dictate the pace and rhythm of the game.

The development of technical skills is also an important element in beach soccer. The combination of considerable ball contact time, an uneven playing surface and limited time in which to control the ball requires players to acquire specific skills. Skilled players possess excellent coordination and are able to lift the ball out of the sand to combine with team-mates, while also executing tricks and flicks, such as scissor kicks and feints.

The fact that the fundamentals of the sport are easily acquired and provide a foundation for players to build on their technical skills makes beach soccer particularly suitable for children and young people. The fast-paced nature of the sport enhances cognitive skills by requiring players to quickly identify and analyse game situations and act decisively. Players can buy themselves time to plan and execute their actions by accurately analysing the game and anticipating their opponents' moves. This ability to read the game and anticipate individual actions is essential for success in team sports and is best developed at a young age.

In beach soccer, a strong emphasis is placed on the effective execution of set pieces. Studies have shown that a considerable percentage of beach soccer goals are scored

from well-planned set pieces. It is therefore important that coaches devote a significant amount of training time to this aspect of the game.

Given that beach soccer is played on sand, it can also help players improve their physical conditioning, with the high cognitive and technical demands of the sport requiring players to push themselves to the limit. Fun and enjoyment are at the heart of the beach soccer experience for players and spectators alike. Over the years, the sport has become faster, more spontaneous and more entertaining as a result of the updates to the Laws of the Game. Beach soccer is also known for its commitment to fair play, with all fouls resulting in a free kick to the fouled player. As players can score from anywhere on the pitch, a foul can quickly be punished with a goal.

In this coaching manual, we delve deeper into these aspects of the game and explore how they should be considered when devising a fitness and tactical training programme.

The graphics and illustrations in this manual are designed to help you visualise and understand the various exercises and coaching techniques that are presented.

Finally, all of the training sessions in this manual are accompanied by video footage, which is available via the [FIFA Training Centre](#).

Beach soccer: a brief history

Since its inception, beach soccer has offered a unique blend of football, a party atmosphere and sheer spectacle. It embraces recreation, youth, fitness and energy, all of which are key elements of beach culture. Beach soccer matches are highly entertaining and feature a constant flow of breathtaking moves. The smaller pitch, acrobatic goals and the unpredictable nature of the playing surface combine to create a sport that captivates players and spectators alike. Over the years, beach soccer has attracted a number of high-profile former footballers, such as Zico, Eric Cantona, Romário and Michel. The sport also has superstars of its own, including former aces Madjer (Portugal), Ramiro Amarelle (Spain) and Benjamin (Brazil).

Football has been informally played on beaches for decades, but it was only in 1992 that Beach Soccer Worldwide – a Barcelona based organisation that was specifically established to develop the sport – codified the Laws of the Game. The Laws were designed to create a fast-paced, free-flowing sport consisting of three 12-minute periods, unlimited substitutions and extra time and a penalty shoot-out to determine the winner if the score is level after regulation time. Throw-ins and kick-ins were introduced to speed up the game and the introduction of a lighter ball required players to improve their ball control.

The inaugural Beach Soccer World Championship took place in 1995 at Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro, where Brazil were crowned champions after beating the USA 8-1 in the final. The tournament proved to be a success and led to the launch of the Pro Beach Soccer Tour the following year, which featured 60 games played across South America, Asia, the USA and Europe. The widespread interest in the tour led to the creation of the European Pro Beach Soccer League in 1998, which was subsequently renamed as the Euro Beach Soccer League and has become the leading competition in the world. By 2004, 17 European countries had entered teams and the Americas League was formed, featuring sides from North and South America. The Pro Beach Soccer Tour has also expanded to the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Australia, Mexico, Greece, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

The next key step in the development of the sport was to join forces with FIFA, a move that would bring beach soccer to all six of the continental confederations.



Joining the FIFA ranks

FIFA has played an instrumental role in helping beach soccer to achieve global recognition. National leagues are currently organised throughout the world, as well as prestigious international events such as the Intercontinental Cup, the European Beach Soccer League and the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup™. Joining FIFA has helped beach soccer establish itself on the global sporting stage.

More than a game

Beach soccer is extremely media friendly, with a competition format that lends itself handily to television broadcasting. The structure of a beach soccer match fits perfectly into an hour-long TV broadcast with three periods and two breaks. Beach soccer is currently broadcast in 170 countries worldwide. As the sport's global popularity has grown, the levels of commercial interest have intensified.

Beach soccer has gained widespread popularity among football's governing bodies, media outlets, fans and players alike due to its impressive blend of finesse, strength and energy. The festivities surrounding the sport often feature celebrities and professional athletes from other sports, as well as a variety of pre-match entertainment.

This extensive interest in the sport has resulted in significant commercial and multimedia opportunities. Beach soccer's unique ability to adapt to different venues and the minimal cost involved in terms of both infrastructure and equipment make it an attractive option for any member association. Beach soccer is a sport with a strong emphasis on fair play, with the game's elite players acting as role models for children and young people around the world. In short, beach soccer has quickly established itself as an important player on the international sporting landscape.





Beach soccer facts

- Teams consist of four outfield players and a goalkeeper.
- There are two on-pitch referees and a third referee and a timekeeper may be appointed.
- There is no offside.
- A game consists of three 12-minute periods.
- Extra time and a penalty shoot-out are required if the score is level after regulation time.
- An unlimited number of substitutions may be made during a match.
- All free kicks are direct and, if the offence was a foul, the fouled player must take the free kick, unless they are seriously injured.
- The pitch dimensions are as follows: 35-37m in length and 26-28m in width.
- The penalty area is the area on the pitch between the goal line and an imaginary parallel line at a distance of nine metres from the goal line (indicated by yellow flags placed at each end of the imaginary line). The imaginary halfway line is marked by red flags placed at each end of the line.
- A red card results in a sending-off. However, the penalised player may be substituted once two minutes have elapsed (or once a goal has been scored before those two minutes).

Footprints in the sand



When FIFA Beach Soccer Technical Expert **Angelo Schirinzi** first decided to create a beach soccer team for his home nation, Switzerland, he was certainly not shy of a challenge. He'd fallen in love with the sport after watching Eric Cantona playing it on Eurosport and thought that this 5v5 game

on sand with each player having much more responsibility than in association football was incredible and very attractive to watch. It inspired him to set up a team for his home nation, who didn't have a team at that time. One of the first things he had to do was create a playing surface with sand which wasn't so easy in a landlocked country like Switzerland! He also had to get a team together so he called former football players to play in the first tournaments. To promote beach soccer in its infancy in Switzerland, a plan to show it to as many people as possible was devised. They invited Brazil over to play in a match at the main station in Zurich where many people pass through every day. The match was not only completely packed out, but was also covered by a lot of newspapers, which helped the sport grow and develop. With time, Schirinzi began to recruit younger players and changed training methods to develop the team. This evolution in recruitment and training led to success at the 2005 European Championship in Moscow, which Switzerland won with a completely new team.



Ramiro Amarelle is a Spanish beach soccer legend who made no fewer than 309 appearances for his country, scoring over 300 times. After his career, he went on to develop the sport by coaching in Russia, Ukraine and China, before focusing on his current role in the

United Arab Emirates. Amarelle says that beach soccer is special because it allows you to fulfil your dreams. It gave him the opportunity to develop as a person, an athlete and a professional – he couldn't ask for any more than that. He states that, in the early days, it was barely recognised as a sport. Now it is part of FIFA, which was unthinkable back then. He is proud of his achievements and is also really grateful for everything beach soccer has done for him. For Amarelle, technique is what really sets the sport apart. It's the most attractive element and differentiates it from association football. Both have goalposts but beach soccer has a special feature: the sand. Players have to adapt to it. The specific technical moves make it completely different: aerial play, flicking the ball off the sand, dribbling, finishing and goalkeepers' actions which are amazing.



FIFA Beach Soccer Technical Expert **Claude Barrabé** worked wonders when he was asked to help organise the beach soccer team in Madagascar, a small African country that had never won anything. In a country where the youngsters don't have any shoes and walk around barefoot on the road and on

the sand, Barrabé noticed that this seemed to make them stronger. Europeans wear shoes and have pretty flat feet, whereas people from Africa have splayed toes and very hard soles which makes them stronger when running on the sand. He made the most of that physical strength and simply complemented it with his European tactics. And it worked: Madagascar won the Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations in the Seychelles, beating Senegal in the final. This was a truly phenomenal achievement for a small country that had never previously tasted any success.



A coach is tasked with improving the performance levels of individual players and the team, choosing the line-up and game strategy, instilling a team philosophy and managing the team's competition calendar.

A coach in the modern game has to mentally prepare players and ensure that they eat well, while also understanding their players' bodies and recognising the importance of post-match recovery. A number of the qualities required of a coach are listed below:

Profile of a beach soccer coach

Personality

- Positive attitude
- Fair and open
- Leadership qualities
- Goal-oriented
- Able to provide constructive criticism
- Respectful

Teaching skills

- Ability to convey their beach soccer philosophy
- Methodology
- Theory

Specialist skills

- Technique
- Tactics and systems
- Physiology and anatomy
- Psychology
- Nutrition
- Organisation
- Overall planning

Social skills

- Communication
- Conflict resolution and decision-making
- Ability to motivate
- Foster a pleasant environment
- Offer positive feedback
- Ability to recognise their own mistakes

5.1 Coaching styles

There are a number of different coaching styles, all of which can be used successfully with different personalities and in different situations.

Profile of a beach soccer coach

Authoritarian

- Helps by issuing instructions
- Imposes their own solutions
- Tends to relationships

Democratic/ cooperative

- Focuses on players' problems
- Facilitative style
- Involves players in seeking solutions
- Discovers alternative solutions
- Encourages players to discover their strengths

Paternalistic

- Focuses on players as people
- Adopts a direct approach to intervention
- Reassures players

Participative

- Player-focused approach
- Intervenes in a straightforward way
- Considers the players' experience
- Helps players to recognise their own challenges and seek their own solutions



5.2 Match coaching

Matchday provides unique challenges that demand a specific skill set and preparation from a coach.

Pre-match

- Competition and opposition analysis
- Pre-match team talk (line-up tactics, motivation and objectives)
- Warm-up

In-match

- Player motivation
- Analysis of both teams (tactics and players)
- Adjustments to the team (tactics and players)

Post-match

- Warm-down and recovery
- Match analysis (of individuals and the team)
- Adjustment of recovery and plan for subsequent hours and days



5.3 Training planning

Practice is the main means for developing individual players and teams. Meticulous planning increases the quality of these sessions and, consequently, the benefits felt by the participants.

Training planning refers to the systematic process that enables us to understand how to organise effective training sessions.

Training planning involves organising training in the short, medium and long term, ranging from daily training sessions to planning on a weekly, monthly and annual basis and beyond. Planning should be performed in a sequential and structured manner. The desired results are defined in advance with the aim of achieving certain targets, objectives or goals, taking into account the limitations imposed by the available human and material resources.

A coach must monitor the progress being achieved towards the established objectives and evaluate what has been achieved and make any necessary adjustments. Planning can be carried out for individuals or the team as a whole.



Features of appropriate planning

Training planning should be:

- **systematic:** all elements within the process should be taken into account;
- **achievable:** training should be easy to implement and appropriate to the players' ability;
- **flexible:** adaptable when required;
- **creative:** the coach should be open to changes and new approaches;
- **forward-looking:** able to anticipate what will happen based on the objectives and content;
- **dynamic:** constantly seek improvement; and
- **self-critical:** assess what has been done to address things if necessary.

5.3.1 Types of planning

Planning can be for the short, medium or long term.

<p>Duration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macrocycles: more than six months • Mesocycles: bimonthly, monthly or weekly • Microcycles: daily
<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results-based: win/qualify • Performance-based: individual or team improvement
<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General, specific or task/activity-based
<p>Conditioning factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age and ability of players and other characteristics • Priorities of the member association or club, philosophy, model
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole planning process or the outlined objectives • The content or the different stages • The coaching staff and their roles



<p>Advantages of planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures a rational, fact-based decision-making process • Reduces risk, uncertainty and improvisation • Ensures that all stakeholders within the organisation are aware of the goals or objectives • Allows for the effective and efficient deployment and coordination of resources • Enables greater control over processes, leaving fewer aspects to chance
<p>Disadvantages of planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always some degree of uncertainty • A tendency to plan too rigidly, which may hinder players from using their initiative • Objectives may be unrealistic or inadequately explained



5.3.2 Planning phases

Breaking down plans into phases provides a granular timeline for a coach to follow.

<p>Situation analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the initial situation, available resources, environment, etc. • Determining objectives and priorities • Establishing the general direction: hypothesis, goals and general objectives 	<p>Devising an action plan, schedule and determining methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Content • Equipment • Methodology • Time frame • Evaluation 	<p>Execution of the plan</p> <p>Organise the whole schedule to achieve the goals and objectives</p>	<p>Evaluation of results</p> <p>Determine how and when to monitor and evaluate results in relation to the schedule</p>
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5.4 Training session content

The first step is to establish the focus and objectives of the session with regard to:



The next step in the process involves selecting appropriate training exercises and game types:

- Determine the duration and intensity of the exercises, as well as the rest periods between them.
- Organise the infrastructure, equipment and players.
- List the areas requiring special attention: coaching points.
- Exercises should always closely reflect the tactical approach players are asked to adopt in any match.

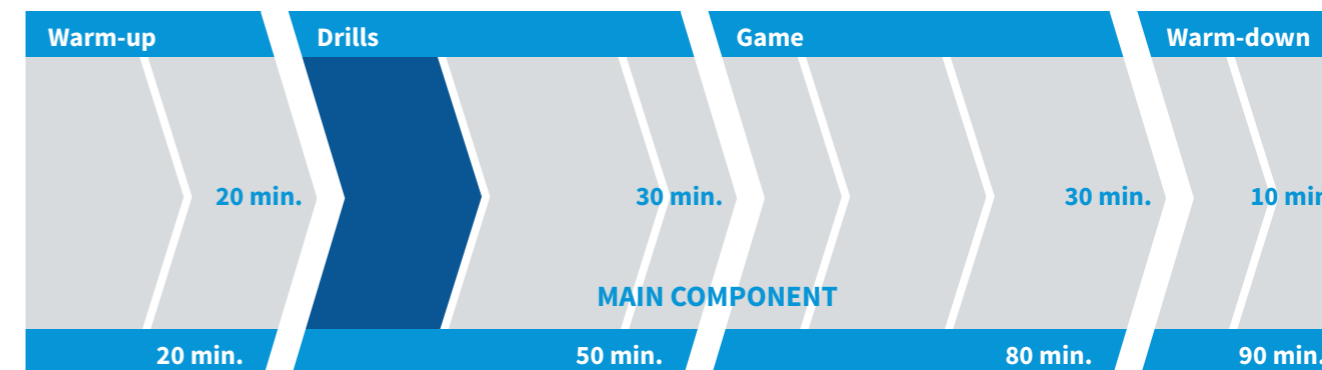
Organise the equipment, schedule and players:

- Locate all equipment required for each exercise.
- Allocate an appropriate amount of time for each exercise.
- Be aware of players' individual needs for each exercise if necessary.

Coaches must observe all players at all times and never lose sight of the fact that they should enjoy the training sessions. While it is important that players complete the various exercises and achieve the objectives set, the main goal is to ensure that players have fun.

5.5 Training session structure

Striking the right balance within a session is key to achieving the training objectives.



All training sessions must include the following three key components:

Warm-up

- To prepare the body for the demands of the main component
- Injury prevention
- Analytical exercises related to the main component
- Including as many exercises with the ball as possible helps to improve players' basic skills

Main component

- The focus or topic of the training session should be related to the coach's key objective
- The key objective may consist of two or three analytical exercises and a game
- Training components should build on each other and become progressively more complex
- The game should seek to replicate real match conditions as closely as possible

Warm-down

- Reduces workload, slows heart rate
- Helps to prevent injury and reduce recovery time



5.6 Coach's input during training sessions

A coach's behaviour can be the difference between group engagement or disinterest.



Explanation

- The objectives of the exercise
- Individual players' roles and functions
- Rules, restrictions, restarting play, exercise area, number of players, equipment, etc.
- Use of appropriate visual aids (e.g. tactics board or video) to motivate players

Demonstration

- Involve coaches and/or players

Observation

- Observe players performing the exercise, with a particular focus on the previously presented coaching points

Intervention

- Give instructions if the exercise is not being carried out as it should be
- Reiterate coaching points
- Consider the use of language, gestures and direct interaction
- Try to involve the player(s): ask them to recall the stated objective(s), focus on the problem(s) and encourage cooperation

Adjustment

- The complexity of the exercise
- Task allocation
- According to players' ability and current physical condition (divide them into ability groups if necessary)



Playing 5v5 on sand is considerably more tiring than playing football on grass. The majority of beach soccer matches are part of a tournament, which involves players playing a game almost every day for between three and ten consecutive days. Not only does this take its toll physically, but it also has a mental impact. Short competitions also result in teams having to play many high-stakes matches within a very short period of time.

From a sports psychology perspective, it is therefore essential that coaches work not only on technique, tactics, fitness and nutrition, but also help players to master the mental side of the game.

A coach and players can work together to set their development goals by having individual conversations that may typically include the following questions: How can I fulfil my performance potential? Which goals can I achieve individually as a player and which can I achieve as part of the team? How can I remain focused during a match? How can I deal with pressure? How can I stay calm under pressure? Should I have any pre-match rituals?

A coach and players then come together to plan, document and monitor the exact steps to be taken. Regular conversations can also enhance the players' personal development in general and also benefit them in other areas of their lives, such as at school, work or in social settings. The following measures can be used to strengthen players' mental resilience, which can help to sustain or improve their performance levels in matches:

- **Visualisation** (imagining certain match situations before the game)
- **Breathing techniques**
- **Relaxation in water**
- **Massages**

Psychological aspects are also of great importance during the course of a match. One of the main goals for each player is to build up a high level of self-confidence, while it is vital that they feel trusted by their coach and team-mates. It is important that players head into matches in peak psychological condition.

Players must be aware that any mistake could result in a goalscoring opportunity for the opposing team. Sometimes a mistake is made that does not affect the match outcome, while at other times, that same kind of mistake can lead to a defeat. It is therefore imperative that players stay focused and disciplined throughout the match.

During the high intensity of a match, it can be difficult for players to identify and understand the key moments that helped them win or lose. It is usually only in hindsight that such decisive moments are identified and it is at this point that a coach comes into their own: analysing, outlining and explaining where things went right or wrong.

In a beach soccer match, the team that are trailing always have a chance of getting back into the game due to the high number of set pieces, which are a good source of goalscoring opportunities. In particular, the goalkeeper must be mentally strong because they are the main player in both the defensive and attacking areas of a team's tactical set-up.

5.7 Psychology and mentality

Just like technical skills, mentality can be trained. Coaches need to target this so their players thrive during match-defining moments.

Coaches should constantly ask themselves how they can optimise their team's performance levels when players are under pressure, and how they can prevent pressure from adversely affecting performance levels. The phenomenon of players performing well in training when not under pressure and then underperforming in match scenarios is a major area of interest for sports psychologists.



5.8 Nutrition

High performance requires a holistic approach. Nutrition is a vital element of this approach, helping players reach their full potential.

Given its status as a key aspect within training, basic knowledge of nutrition is invaluable to a coach, regardless of whether their team play beach soccer purely for fun or compete at elite level and follow an intensive training schedule. The diet followed by the players during training and competition influences the way they train and play.

Choosing the right food and drink can result in improved performance levels, even where there is no change to the training programme. It is vital that the players replenish their energy reserves with food and drink immediately after physical activity.

The key to good nutrition is to consume enough energy to stay healthy and achieve good results. It has been proven that staying adequately hydrated improves performance. It is therefore recommended that short drinks breaks be taken during training. Players should also take the opportunity to drink during breaks and substitutions in competitive matches.

5.9 Match analysis

Match analysis is used to evaluate matches in the post-match phase in order to improve the tactics, strategy and approach adopted by the whole team or an individual player. This analysis improves game understanding and helps coaches identify areas that need to be addressed in future training sessions. It is one of a coach's most important tasks.

The following are examples of things to include in a match analysis to allow a coach to understand the match and their team's performance:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals scored by the goalkeeper • Goals scored following build-up play • Goals scored after completing fewer than three passes • Goals scored from a one-on-one situation • Goals scored from a counter-attack | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set pieces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free kick after a foul on a bicycle kick • Free kick after a handball • Penalties • Throw-ins • Corners • Kick-offs |
|--|---|

Comments and conclusions on the following topics:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams' attacking play (strengths and weaknesses) • Teams' defensive system (strengths and weaknesses) • Team formations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key players • Particular fitness aspects • Mental aspects (team and individual players) |
|--|--|





6.1 Ball familiarity

Organisation

- Mark out a playing area with markers or cones and set up obstacles using markers, poles, etc.

Explanation

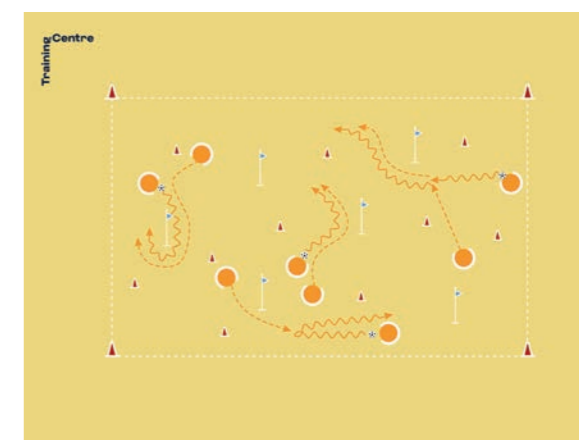
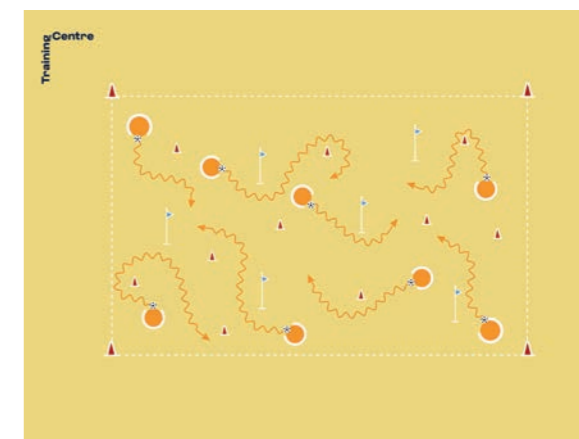
- Each player is given a ball.
- Players dribble around the playing area, avoiding obstacles and changing direction as they go.
- Players should use both feet and practise using different points of contact (inside of the foot, outside of the foot, etc.).

Variations

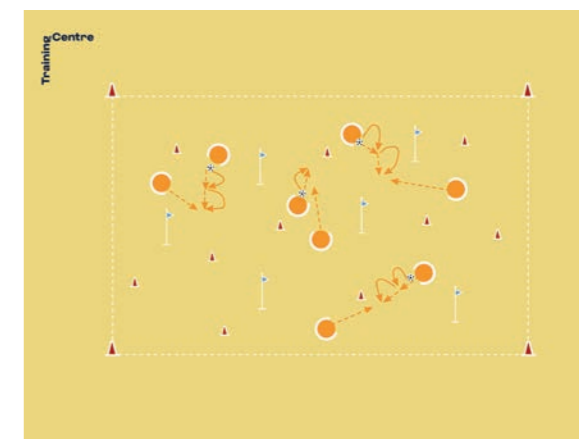
- Divide the players into two equally sized groups. The players without a ball should try to dispossess those with a ball. As soon as a player loses their ball, they must try to win another ball back.
- Each player is given a ball. The players should carry the ball by flicking it up at regular intervals. The aim is to work on different ways of flicking the ball up off the sand.
- Once again, divide the players into two equally sized groups. The players without a ball should try to dispossess those with a ball. If a player dribbling a ball manages to flick it up and catch it, they can no longer be dispossessed and have two seconds to get away from their opponent. This forces the defender to try to win the ball before it is flicked up.
- Players dribbling a ball must take at least one additional touch after flicking it up before catching it.

Coaching points

- Players should constantly move around the playing area without running into each other, while simultaneously keeping the ball under control.
- They should use both feet to dribble and flick the ball up off the sand.



Variation 1



Variation 2



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6.2 Passing

Organisation

- Set up a series of ten-metre lanes using markers.
- Position three players at each lane, two at the starting point and one at the opposite marker.
- Give the players a ball at the starting point of each lane.

Explanation

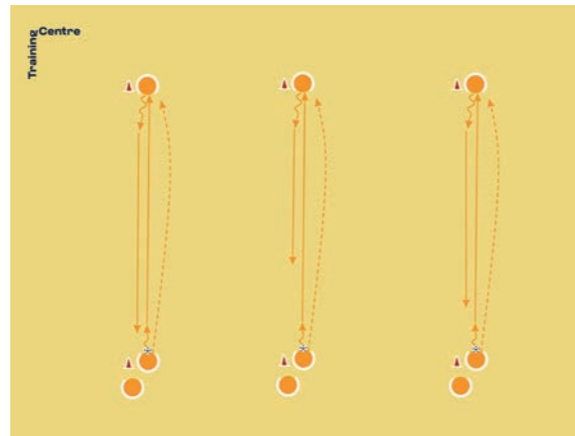
- Players dribble 2-3 metres, play a pass in the air while the ball is moving to the player stationed at the opposite marker, then follow their pass.

Variations

- Carry out the same exercise, but this time the players must stop the ball before playing a scooped pass.
- Carry out the same exercise, but this time the players must stop the ball, flick it up off the sand and play a volleyed pass.
- Players must then perform the move in three touches: control the received pass, flick the ball up off the sand and play a volleyed pass.

Coaching points

- Passes should ideally land at the recipient's feet, giving them the best possible chance to control the ball without any deceptive bounces.
- When playing passes while the ball is moving, players should take care to ensure that the ball is not in a depression in the sand.



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6.3 Juggling

Organisation

- Set up a series of ten-metre lanes.
- Divide the players into equally sized teams (e.g. three teams of three players each).
- Place a cone at the end of each lane that the players must go around before returning to the start cone.

Explanation

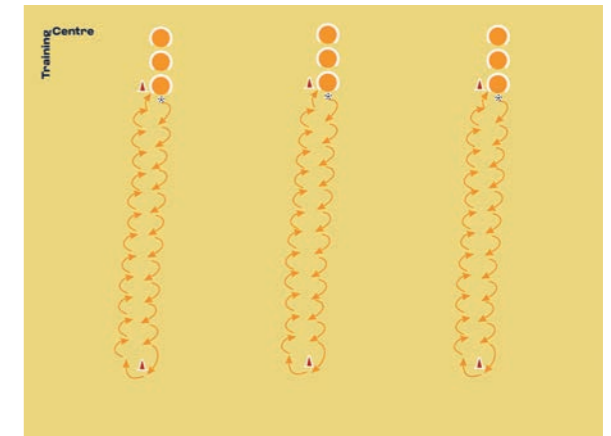
- This exercise is a team relay race where players take turns to juggle the ball to the end cone and back using only their feet before placing the ball at the next team-mate's feet.
- If the ball touches the ground, the player must crouch down and sit on the ball before being able to continue.
- The first team to complete the sequence win the race.

Variations

- Players may use only the thigh. If the ball touches the ground or the player uses a body part other than the one being practised, they have to crouch down and sit on the ball before being able to continue.
- Players may use only their right foot when juggling the ball to the end cone and their left foot when returning to the start cone (or vice versa).
- Ask the players to flick the ball up off the sand and juggle using only their head.
- Ask the players to alternate touches between the right foot and left foot when juggling to the end cone and between the right thigh and left thigh when juggling back to the start cone (or vice versa).

Coaching points

- Combine speed of execution and technical quality.
- Make the exercise as fun as possible for the players.



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6.4 Dribbling 1v1

Organisation

- Mark out a square or rectangular exercise area. Adjust the size of the exercise area to increase or reduce the difficulty of the exercise.
- Organise a line of players at either end of the exercise area.
- Give each line of players a ball.

Explanation

- Create a 1v1 situation between an attacker and a defender, both of whom are given a ball. The attacker aims to stop the ball behind the defender's end line. The defender attempts to steal the ball from the attacker while keeping possession of their own ball.

- The players switch roles after each round.

Variations

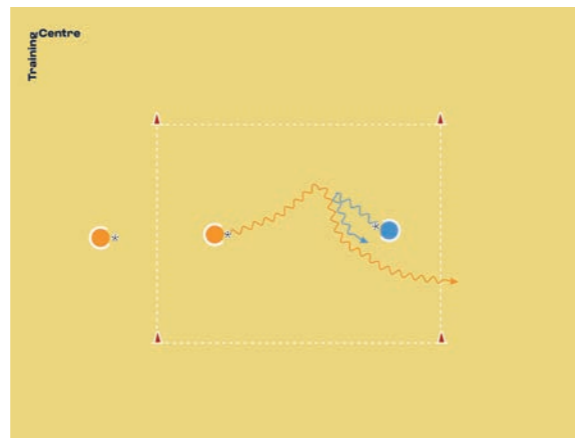
- Perform the exercise with one ball. Two teams contest 1v1 situations in succession. The attacker dribbles the ball and attempts to stop it behind the defender's end line. If the defender wins the ball, they then attempt to dribble the ball and stop it behind their opponent's end line. The player who succeeds in stopping the ball behind their opponent's end line stays on and becomes the defender in a 1v1 situation against the next attacker. Each player can stay on for no more than two rounds.

- The exercise begins with the ball in the middle of the exercise area. The defender only becomes "live" once the attacker has touched the ball. The attacker can use feints before dribbling the ball and trying to stop it along either of the touchlines. The attacker must take more than one touch for the point to count.

- Perform the same exercise, but this time, the attacker attempts to stop the ball behind their opponent's end line.

Coaching points

- The attacker should try to beat their opponent as quickly as possible.
- The defender must close the attacker down.
- This exercise allows players to work on feints with and without the ball.



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6.5 Volleyed pass

Organisation

- Set up at least one circuit, depending on the number of available players. Each circuit area is marked out by four cones that form a diamond.
- Place six players in each circuit.

Explanation

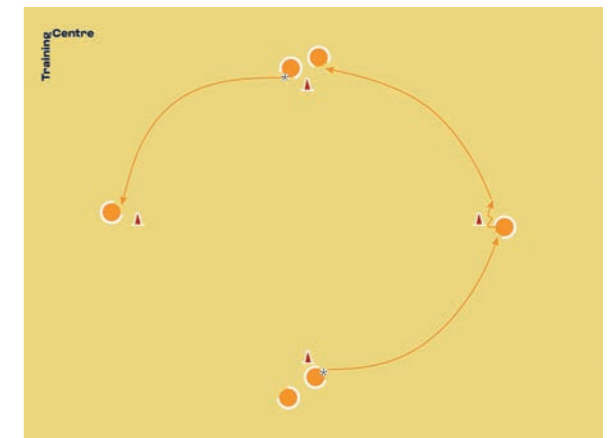
- Ask the players with a ball to flick it up off the sand, play a volleyed pass and then follow their pass.
- The recipient of the pass juggles the ball with two or three touches before playing a volleyed pass to the next player in the sequence.
- This exercise is performed with two balls in play. The coach determines the direction of the sequence.

Variations

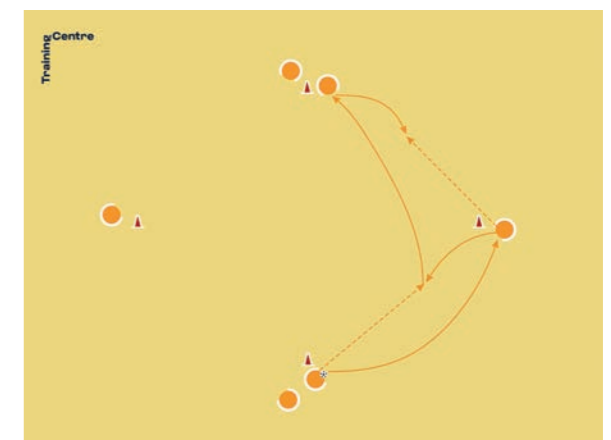
- Change the direction of the sequence while the exercise is being performed.
- Play two-touch: one touch to control followed by a volleyed pass.
- Perform the exercise with one ball. The recipient of the pass plays a return pass to their team-mate, who advances towards them. This team-mate then plays a volleyed pass to the player stationed at the next cone in the sequence. Players may take one or two touches.
- 5v1 rondo: the players on the outside of the rondo must pass the ball without it touching the ground or using their head. If they manage to complete 20 passes, the player in the middle of the rondo occupies the same role for another round.
- 4v2 rondo: the players on the outside of the rondo can use their head, but are limited to three touches.

Coaching points

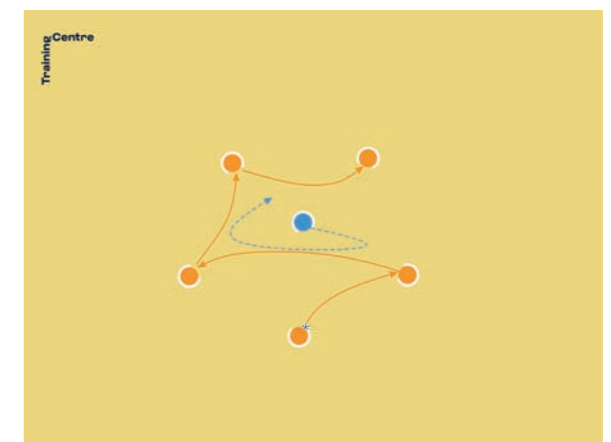
- Ask the players to keep the ball in the air for as long as possible. The ball must not touch the ground during the exercise.
- Work on communication: ask the recipient to let the passer know that they are ready to receive the pass, while the passer should call to the recipient before playing the pass.



Circuit 1



Circuit 2



Rondo



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6.6 Shooting/finishing circuit

Organisation

- Set up two ball stations on the goal line, one level with each corner area. Position two players at each station.
- Place two cones slightly ahead of the imaginary halfway line, one opposite each ball station. Position two players at each cone.

Explanation

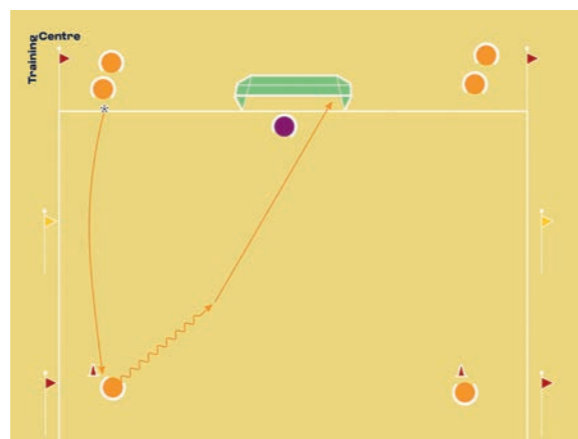
- The attacker receives a pass in the air from a player situated at the station opposite them. They control the ball and run a few metres with it before shooting on goal.
- Rotate stations: after shooting, the attacker takes up a position at the passing station located diagonally opposite them, while the passer moves to the shooting station opposite them.

Variations

- The passer plays the ball to the chest of their team-mate, who brings it down to the ground before running a few metres with it and shooting on goal.
- The attacker controls the ball, runs a few metres with it and then flicks it up off the sand before shooting.

Coaching points

- The aim is to record as many shots on target as possible. The attacker should therefore take the goalkeeper's positioning into account, while also focusing on their own dribbling and shooting.
- After controlling the ball, players should dribble towards goal.
- This exercise also allows the goalkeeper to work on their reflexes.



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6.7 Volleyed shot

Organisation

- Set up two ball stations on the goal line, one level with each corner area. Divide the players between the two stations.
- Place a cone on the imaginary halfway line opposite each station. Position a player at each cone.
- Position two players on the imaginary penalty line diagonal to both the cone and the starting station. This supporting player plays a one-two with the attacker.

Explanation

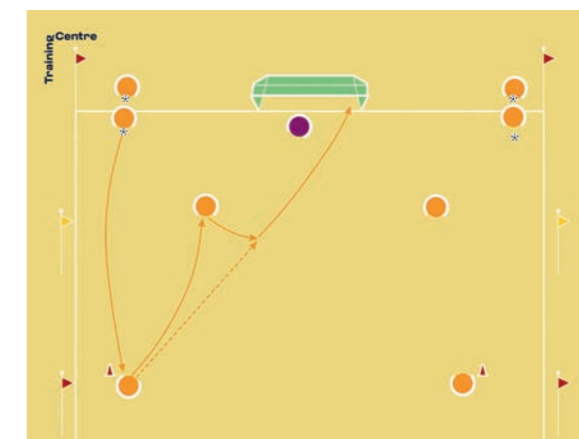
- The attackers stationed at the cones receive a pass in the air from the station opposite them. They need to control the ball, play a one-two with the supporting player on the edge of the penalty area and then shoot on the volley.
- A maximum of two touches per player are allowed.
- Rotate stations: once a player has taken their shot, they take up the role of the supporting player on the edge of the penalty area. The supporting player joins the back of the queue at the starting station diagonally opposite them, while the player who made the initial pass moves to the cone to become the attacker.

Variations

- Only one touch per player is allowed.

Coaching points

- The quality of the first touches and passes in the air are key. Players should give their team-mates the best possible chance of scoring by carefully weighting their passes.
- This exercise also allows the goalkeeper to work on their reflexes.



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6.8 Scissor and bicycle kicks

Organisation

- Set up two ball stations on the goal line, one level with each corner area. Divide the players between the two stations.
- Place a cone at the imaginary halfway line opposite each station. Position a player at each cone.
- Place a player on the edge of the penalty area, who attempts to score with a bicycle kick.

Explanation

- Players stationed at the imaginary halfway line receive a pass from the station opposite them. They must bring the ball under control and play a pass along the ground to the attacker on the edge of the area, who should trap the ball before flicking it up off the sand and shooting with a bicycle or scissor kick.

- After flicking the ball up, the attacker may take up to two more touches to set themselves and perform the bicycle kick.

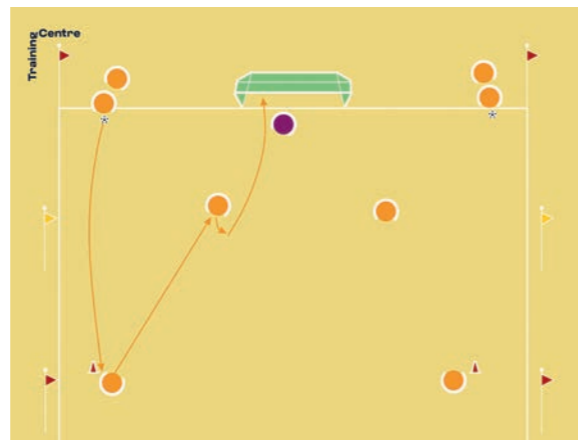
- Rotate stations: once a player has taken their shot, they join the back of the queue at the opposite starting station from where they started. The players at the imaginary halfway line and the starting station follow their passes to take up their next position.

Variations

- Players stationed at the imaginary halfway line play passes in the air to the attacker at the edge of the area, who should trap the ball before flicking it up off the sand and shooting.
- After flicking the ball up, the attacker may only take one touch to shoot on goal.

Coaching points

- The attacker should flick the ball up as high as possible to perform the bicycle or scissor kick.
- The attacker should adjust their body position to set themselves for the shot.
- If needed, the attacker may take a further one or two touches after flicking the ball up to set themselves for the shot.
- Emphasise the importance of high-quality, accurate passes to give the attacker the best chance to score.
- The top-performing players in this exercise can be used as an example for the others.



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6.9 Headed finishing circuit

Organisation

- Position a goalkeeper in each goal.
- Organise four players in the middle of the pitch, facing one of the goals.
- Set up four ball stations, with one player at each station:
 - Station 1: on the goal line, halfway between the goal and the corner flagpost
 - Station 2: in the corner area
 - Station 3: on the touchline, just inside the 9m flagpost
 - Station 4: from the goalkeeper at the opposite end of the pitch

Explanation

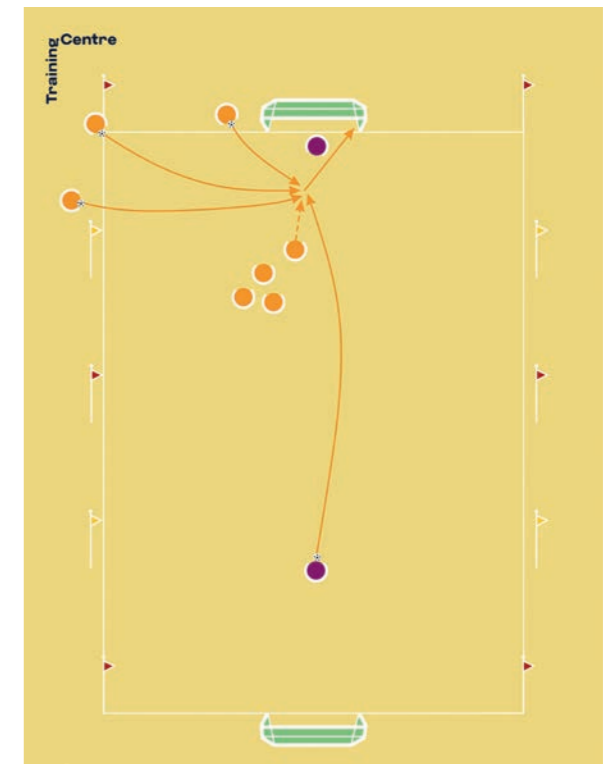
- The four attackers take it in turns to make headed attempts on goal from a ball thrown up by the player on the goal line.
- They then take it in turns to make headed attempts on goal from a corner kick, a throw-in from the touchline and an overhead throw-out from the goalkeeper at the opposite end of the pitch.

Variations

- Repeat the circuit on the opposite side of the pitch.
- Two attackers attempt to score from the goalkeeper's throw-out. The player receiving the ball may attempt a first-time headed finish themselves or set up their team-mate with a header (the team-mate may finish the move however they wish). The two attackers may make diagonal runs across each other.

Coaching points

- Emphasise the importance of quality of execution and timing.
- The attacker should adjust their body position to set themselves for the headed shot.
- From the goalkeeper's throw-out, the attacker should open up their body to create a favourable angle for a headed attempt on goal.



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6.10 Tackling 1v1

Organisation

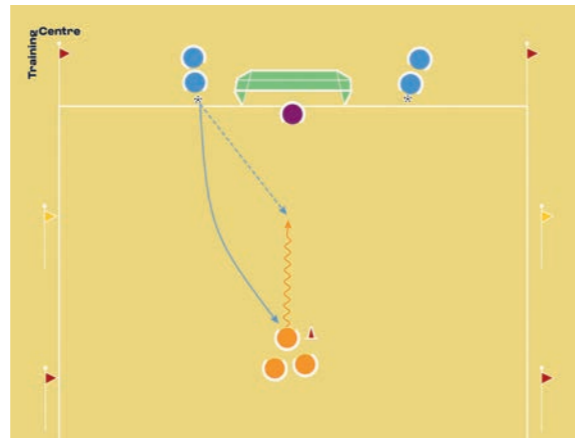
- Create two groups – one attacking and one defending.
- Set up two ball stations on the goal line, one either side of the goal. Divide the defenders between the two stations on the goal line.
- Place a cone in the middle of the pitch on the imaginary halfway line. Position the attackers at the cone, facing the goal.

Explanation

- The defenders take it in turns to play a pass to an attacker on the imaginary halfway line and then immediately follow their pass to close down the attacker.
- The attacker controls the ball, then tries to take on the defender, who attempts to win the ball.

Coaching points

- The defender must get close to the attacker to win the ball effectively.
- The defender should challenge the attacker to prevent them from going through on goal.
- The defender should try to guide the attacker onto their weaker foot.
- The defender should show determination to win the 1v1 duel.
- Ask the defender to stay on their feet for as long as possible and prevent the attacker from breaking free.



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6.11 Interception

Organisation

- Organise two goalkeepers, two defenders and four attackers (two of whom will be incorporated into the exercise as a variation).
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Mark out an area in front of each goal using cones.

Explanation

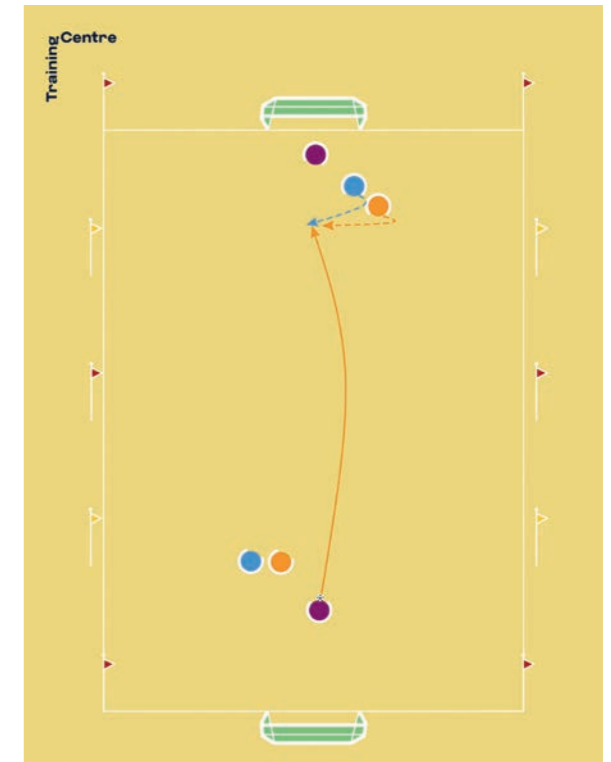
- Create two teams, each with a goalkeeper, an attacker and a defender. These players must remain within the marked area.
- One of the goalkeepers starts the exercise with a long throw-out towards their attacker in the opposing area. The defender should try to anticipate the pass and get to the ball first.
- The attacker should try to win the ball inside the playing area, rather than on the edge of the area. The attacker can try to score if they win the ball.
- The goalkeepers take it in turns to throw the ball out. They should restart play as quickly as possible.

Variations

- If the defender intercepts the ball, they can try to score in the opposing goal with a long-distance effort.
- Introduce another attacker into each area to create a 2v1 situation. The attackers have a maximum of 5-6 seconds to take a shot on goal. Keep the score: a point is awarded if a team's goalkeeper finds their attacker(s). Another point is awarded if the attacker manages to score. Play is always restarted by the goalkeeper who was most recently defending.

Coaching points

- The defender must try to anticipate the trajectory of the ball to intercept it. The defender should always try to get in front of the attacker(s).
- The defender can also feint to try to deceive the opposing goalkeeper as they look to release the ball.
- The attacker(s) should try to lose their marker to allow them to bring the ball under control and score.
- This exercise also allows goalkeepers to work on their long throw-outs.



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7.1 Introduction

The goalkeeper is by far the most important player in beach soccer and can be described as a team's orchestrator. They initiate virtually every move, which allows them to dictate the tempo of the game. In contrast to football, there are no goal kicks in beach soccer, but throw-outs. As a result, the goalkeeper's ability to throw the ball is of utmost importance when launching attacks.

The majority of goals in beach soccer are scored following moves involving fewer than three passes, with the goalkeeper often the initiator of goalscoring opportunities. Following the introduction of new laws affecting goalkeepers, the increasing importance of their role has been witnessed in recent beach soccer competitions around the world. This applies not only in terms of making saves or protecting their goal, but also when it comes to constructing and organising the team's attack – with the goalkeeper recording the team's highest possession statistics in some instances or even topping the team's scoring charts.

The four-second time limit for the goalkeeper to restart play and retain possession in their own half of the pitch limits the goalkeeper's actions, forcing them to up their game when playing with the feet. In terms of accuracy and decision-making, although obviously greater at elite level, the demands placed on a goalkeeper are often similar to those of an outfield player. Nowadays, teams whose goalkeepers possess solid technical and tactical skills have a huge advantage over their opponents and are often able to create 5v4 situations.

A modern goalkeeper is required to have an increasingly wide range of skills, from physical and psychological aspects to technical and tactical elements, with an ever-increasing demand for such all-round ability. The goalkeeper has a dual role, both as a player who initiates and directs play with their hands, while also playing with their feet in a role similar to an outfield player. This duality can be key in giving teams the upper hand when seeking to disrupt the opposition's defence.



In terms of the physical demands of beach soccer, a goalkeeper must be an all-round athlete, with the strength to move on the sand and the ability to make constant body movements when blocking, receiving passes, diving, jumping, defending one-on-one and in the aerial duels, which are a prominent feature of the game. Since an unlimited number of substitutions may be made during a beach soccer match, outfield players are frequently substituted, giving them the time to recover on the bench, while it is more challenging to replace a goalkeeper during a match. Play is not stopped when a substitution is made, which means that a coach must wait for the right moment to substitute their goalkeeper, given all the risks that this entails. Alternatively, they can wait for a moment when the referees have stopped play (e.g. following a foul or goal). However, this may not always happen at the exact moment when a coach wants to replace their goalkeeper.

There is a difference in both technical and tactical terms between defensive moves, attacking moves and those in the transitional phases of play. It is worth noting that, from the moment they gain possession, goalkeepers have just four seconds to make a decision and execute any technical move within their own half of the pitch.

As a result, the tactical training for goalkeepers in this coaching manual contains many concepts that are similar to those designed for outfield players, adapting them to match situations in which the goalkeeper takes centre stage. All tactical aspects of the game, both attacking and defensive, are relevant to the goalkeeper's role.

In psychological terms, a goalkeeper must be able to cope with the stress and responsibility that comes with their involvement in the game in both the defensive and attacking phases. They run the risk of conceding a goal at any time and must be mentally prepared for the challenge that this presents.

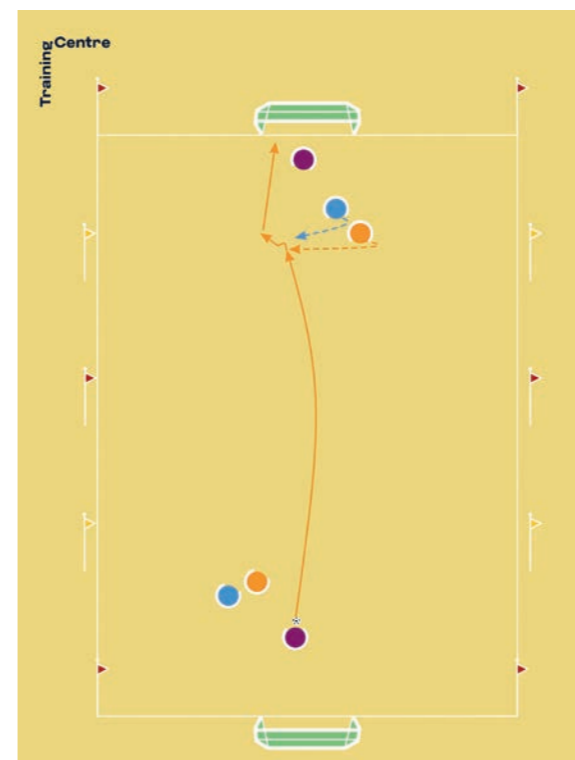
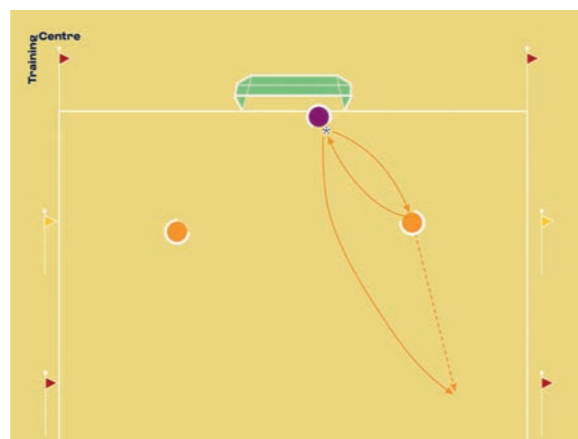
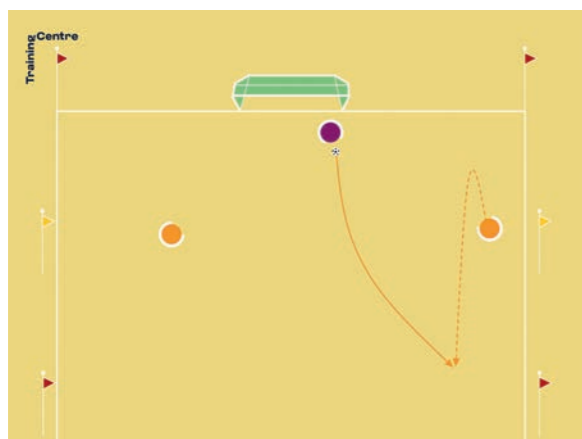
7.2 Short restarts (underarm throw)

EXPLANATION

The goalkeeper has various options to get the ball into play. The underarm throw involves the goalkeeper throwing the ball in a circular motion from below. It is used for precise passes over short distances, primarily in the defending team's own half.



7.3 Short and long throw-outs



Organisation

- This exercise requires three goalkeepers and four outfield players (to be introduced during the exercise).
- Set up a station with balls.
- Use a full-size pitch with two goals.

Explanation

- A goalkeeper is positioned in one of the goals, while the other two goalkeepers play as defenders.
- The goalkeeper plays short throw-outs (underarm throw) to the defenders, who must control the ball before playing a return pass using their feet.
- The defenders move across the width of the pitch (left, centre and right).
- The goalkeeper varies the height of the throw-outs played to the defenders (to the feet, thighs and then chest).
- Rotate the goalkeepers.

Variations

- The goalkeeper plays a short throw-out to the feet of the defender, who showed for the ball. The defender plays the ball back to the goalkeeper's hands, and the goalkeeper then throws it into the path of the same defender, who has made a forward run.
- The second variation is identical to the first one, but one of the goalkeepers playing as a defender is asked to press the goalkeeper on the second throw-out.
- Introduce an outfield player. The goalkeeper plays long throw-outs (overhead and underarm) to pick out their three team-mates in turn (left, centre and right).

- Position an attacker and a defender in each half and a goalkeeper in each goal. The goalkeeper is awarded one point every time their throw-out finds the attacker directly and a further three points if the attacker goes on to score after having been picked out by the goalkeeper's throw-out. Keep the score. The game is played for one minute.

Coaching points

- Improve the accuracy of throw-outs and practise short and long restarts.
- Emphasise the importance of the quality and timing of the throw-out.
- Read the play and team-mates' calls to receive the ball.
- Choose the most suitable throw-out depending on the situation.



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7.4 Diving, catching and reflexes

Organisation

- This exercise requires three goalkeepers and a coach who participates in the exercise.
- Set up three stations with balls on the edge of the penalty area (left, centre and right).
- The exercise is performed using one goal.

Explanation

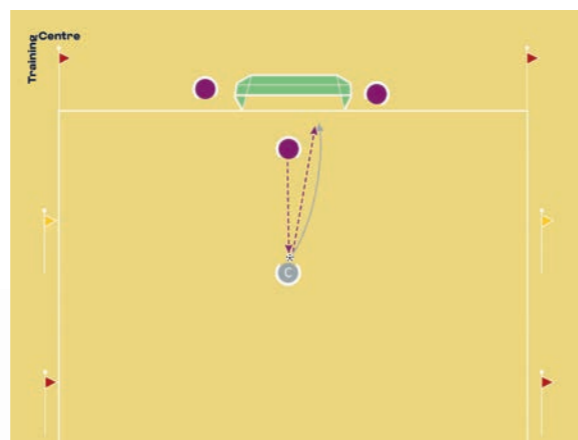
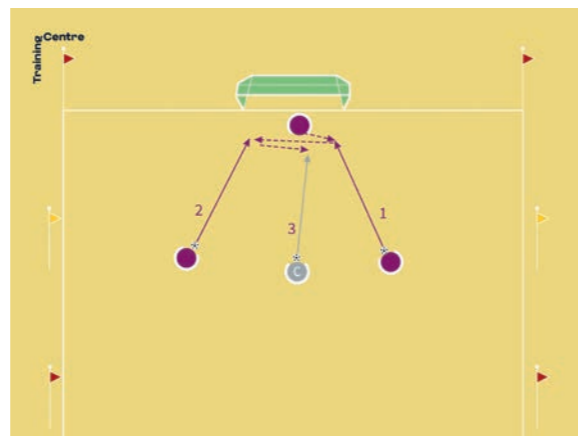
- Position one goalkeeper in the goal and the other two goalkeepers and the coach at one station each with balls.
- The players take shots off the sand in the following order: right (near-post shot), left (near-post shot) and centre (the player decides).
- Vary the height of the shots (along the ground, then at mid-height, then high).
- Within the same sequence, players have the option to vary between a shot along the ground, at mid-height and high.
- Rotate the goalkeepers.

Variations

- Work on diving backwards. Position a goalkeeper in the goal. The coach takes up a central position with a ball in their hands. The goalkeeper runs out of their goal and taps the ball being held by the coach, before retreating towards their goal to deal with the coach's lobbed throw. The sequence is performed twice in a row, once on the right and then on the left.

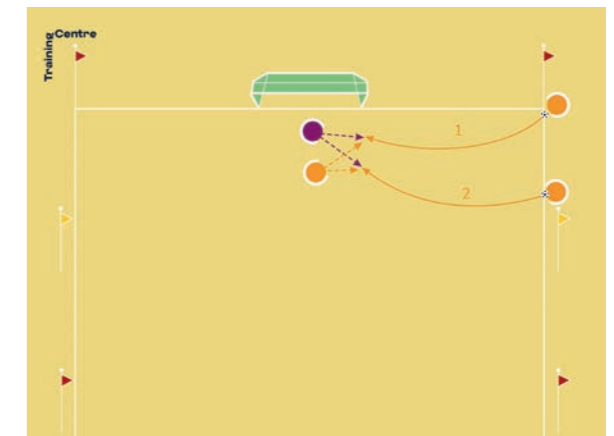
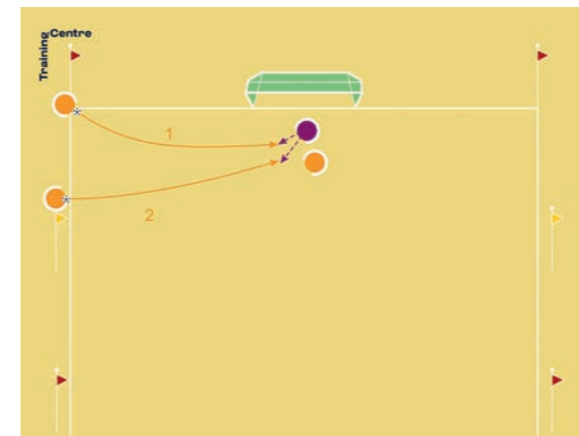
Coaching points

- The goalkeeper should adjust their positioning and work on catching.
- The goalkeeper should read the play and the attackers' intentions.
- Ask the goalkeeper to avoid committing too early, to stay on their feet for as long as possible and always keep their eyes on the ball.



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7.5 Aerial play and punching clearance



Organisation

- This exercise requires three goalkeepers and an attacker.
- Set up two stations with balls: one in the corner area and one on the touchline.
- Use a full-size pitch with two goals.

Explanation

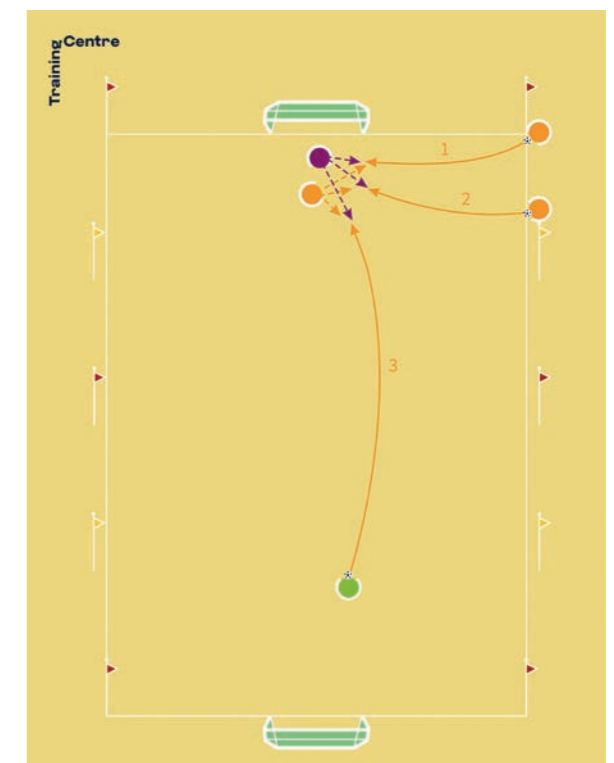
- To start with, the exercise is performed with one goal. The goalkeeper is asked to catch the balls, which are delivered from the corner area and then the touchline.
- To begin with, the attacker positioned in the penalty area remains passive.
- Rotate the goalkeepers.

Variations

- Deliver the balls from the other side of the pitch and ask the attacker to hinder the goalkeeper. Depending on the situation, the goalkeeper may choose to either catch or punch the ball.
- Introduce a third station: position a goalkeeper in the second goal and ask them to play a long throw-out. Once again, the goalkeeper may choose to either catch or punch the ball.

Coaching points

- Ask the goalkeeper to call when coming out to catch or punch the ball.
- Where necessary, the goalkeeper should adjust their positioning by taking small crossover steps, while keeping their eyes on the ball.
- The goalkeeper should read the situation to decide whether they should come out or stay put. If the delivery is too short, the goalkeeper should stay on their line to protect their goal.



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- Depending on the situation, the goalkeeper may choose to either catch or punch the ball. If they opt for the latter, they should try to punch the ball towards a team-mate.

7.6 One-on-one situations

Organisation

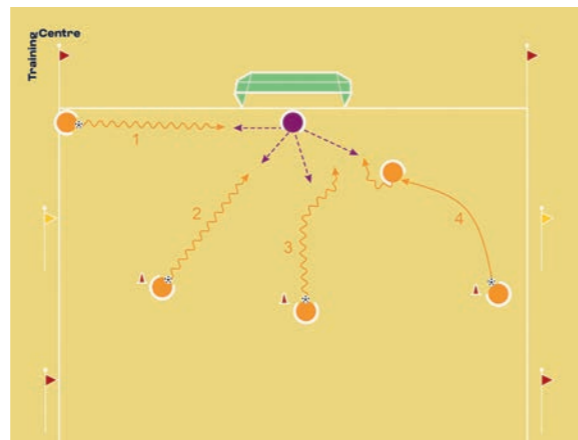
- This exercise requires three goalkeepers and two outfield players.
- Position one goalkeeper in the goal.
- Set up four stations, with a player positioned at each one with a ball:
 - Station 1: corner area
 - Station 2: left side of the penalty area
 - Station 3: centre of the penalty area
 - Station 4: right side of the penalty area

Explanation

- The players positioned at stations 1, 2 and 3 dribble the ball from their stations towards the goal to draw out the goalkeeper. The player occupying station 4 throws the ball to the chest of the attacker, who is positioned with their back to goal in the penalty area. The attacker may either perform an overhead kick or bring the ball down to the ground before turning to face the goalkeeper in a one-on-one situation.
- The goalkeeper faces four attempts on goal in each sequence. The first three attempts involve players dribbling the ball and the goalkeeper having to decide whether to smother the ball or stay on their feet and set themselves to face a shot. When facing the player from station 4, the goalkeeper should either try to block the overhead kick or smother the ball.
- Rotate the goalkeepers.

Coaching points

- The goalkeepers should close down their opponent, reduce the size of their steps and lower their centre of gravity to smother the ball or set themselves to face a shot.
- The exercise works on three key areas: mental, technical and tactical.



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7.7 Playing with the feet

Organisation

- This exercise requires two goalkeepers and four outfield players.
- Set up two stations with balls in one half of the pitch (stations 1 and 2).
- Use a full-size pitch with two goals.

Explanation

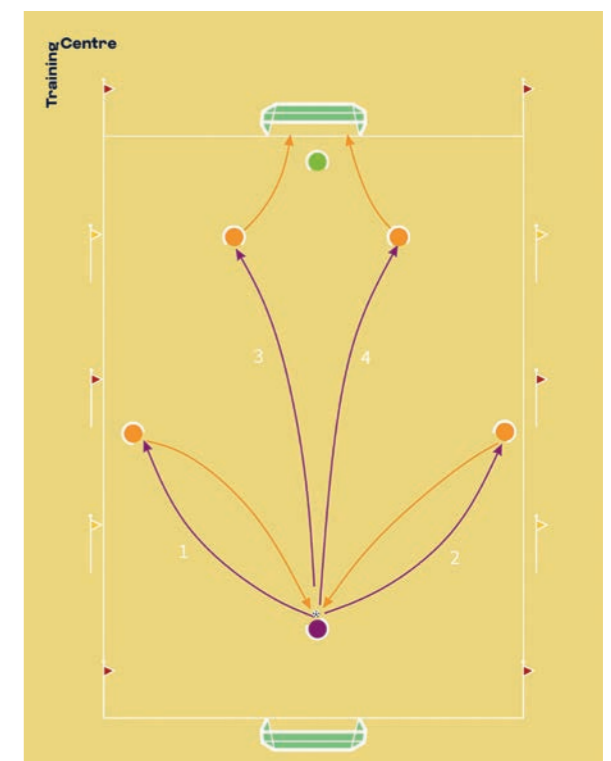
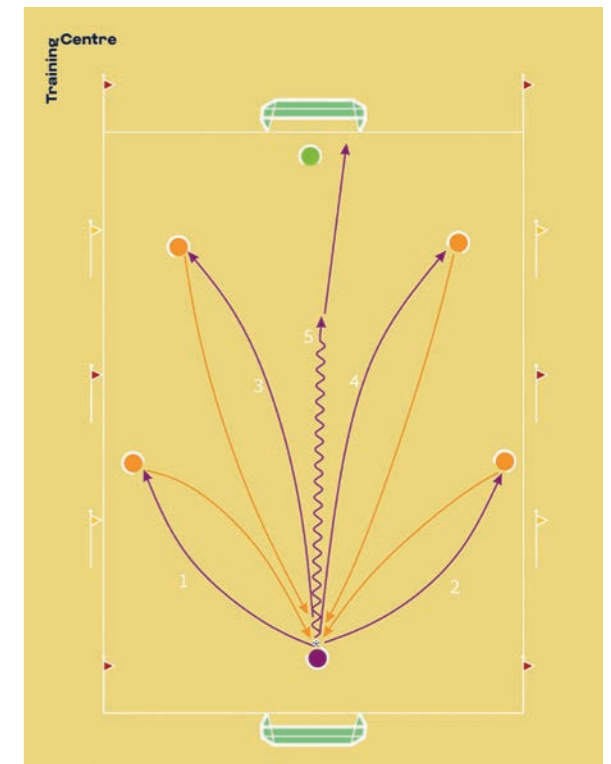
- Position a goalkeeper and two outfield players in each half.
- The goalkeeper performing the exercise exchanges passes with each of their team-mates. The goalkeeper controls the ball, bringing it down to the ground, before lifting it off the sand to play the pass.
- The exercise involves the following sequence: short pass to the left and then to the right; long pass to the left and then to the right; and a long shot.
- Before taking the shot, the goalkeeper advances a few metres while juggling the ball.

Variations

- After playing the two short passes into their team-mates' feet, the goalkeeper plays a pass to the chest of the players positioned at stations 3 and 4 to allow them to complete the sequence with an overhead kick or scissor kick.
- The goalkeeper must play the ball to their team-mates' chest when playing both long and short passes.

Coaching points

- Practise and improve the goalkeepers' ability to play with their feet when playing different passes (short, long, to feet and in the air).



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7.8 Positional marking

Organisation

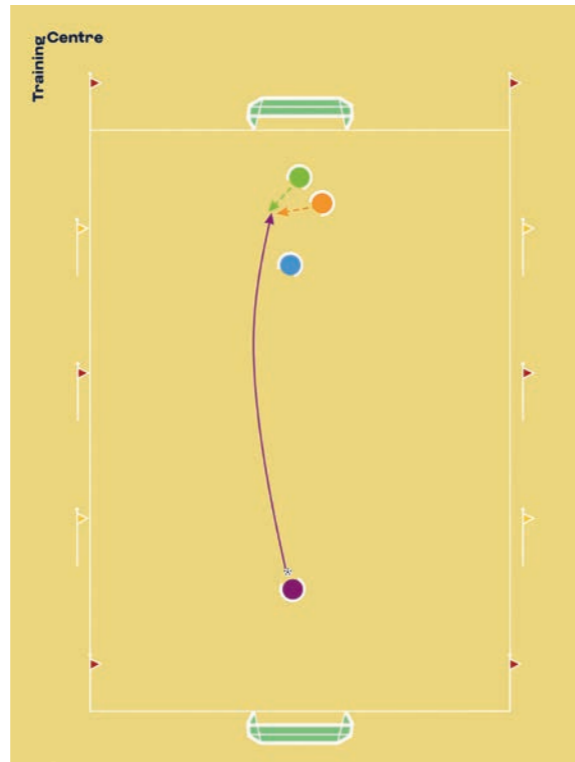
- This exercise requires two goalkeepers, one attacker and one defender.
- The exercise is performed with one ball in play.
- Use a full-size pitch with two goals.

Explanation

- Position a goalkeeper in each goal. Position an attacker and a defender in one of the two penalty areas, placing the defender on the ball side of the attacker.
- One of the goalkeepers plays a long throw-out towards the attacker positioned in the opposing penalty area.
- The other goalkeeper has to read the trajectory of the ball, come out to mark the attacker and anticipate the situation in order to intercept the ball.
- The defender may only enter the penalty area once the ball has been played, which means that the goalkeeper has to read the play and come out of their goal to mark the unmarked attacker.
- Alternate the side on which the exercise is performed (left and right).
- Rotate the goalkeepers.

Coaching points

- Depending on the situation, the goalkeeper may choose to either catch or punch the ball. If they opt for the latter, they should try to punch the ball towards a team-mate.
- Work on the goalkeeper's ability to mark off the ball.



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7.9 Dropping back

Organisation

- This exercise requires two goalkeepers and two outfield players (to be introduced during the exercise).
- Use a full-size pitch with two goals.

Explanation

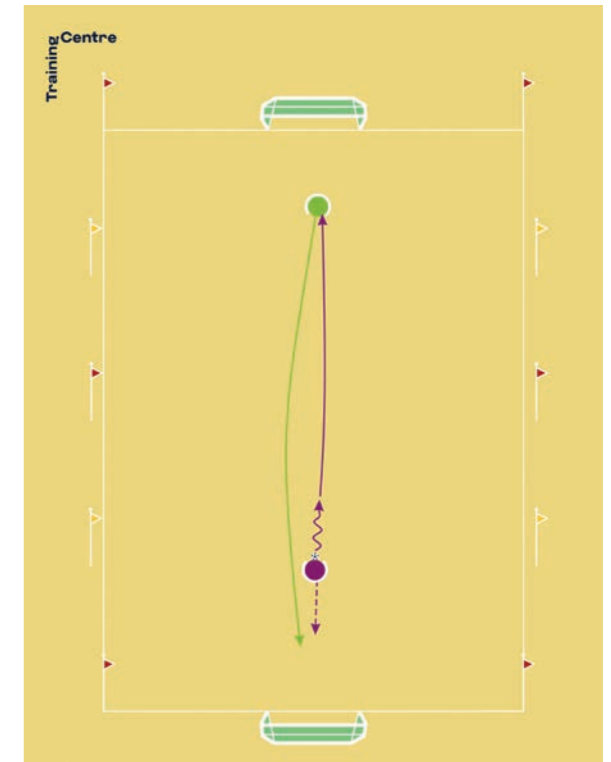
- The goalkeeper who begins the exercise flicks the ball off the sand and progresses up the pitch by juggling it, before shooting towards the goalkeeper in the opposing goal, who recovers the ball and places it quickly on the sand, before attempting to score with a first-time lobbed shot.
- The goalkeeper who starts the exercise has to retreat to their goal as quickly as possible to divert the ball and avoid being lobbed.

Variations

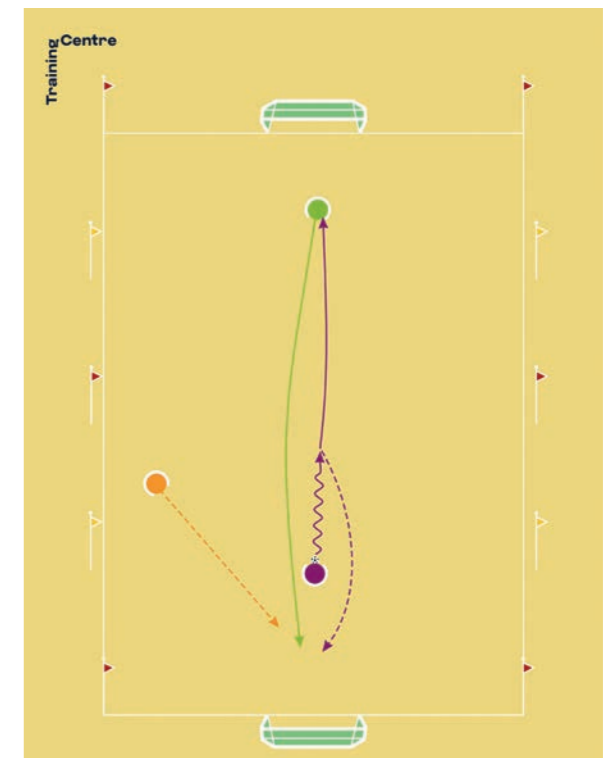
- Introduce an attacking player, who becomes an option in the counter-attacking move. The goalkeeper who started the exercise should anticipate the lob or the goalkeeper's throw-out to the attacker.
- Introduce a second attacker to give the goalkeeper another option and work on both sides (left and right).

Coaching points

- The goalkeeper should take small crossover steps when retreating, while keeping their eyes on the ball.
- Emphasise the importance of timing when retreating.



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7.10 Defensive anticipation

Organisation

- This exercise requires three goalkeepers, a coach who participates in the exercise and two attackers (to be introduced during the exercise).
- Set up three stations with balls on the edge of the penalty area (left, centre and right).

Explanation

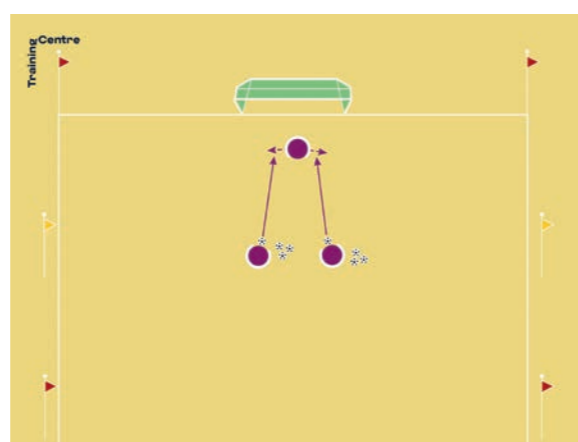
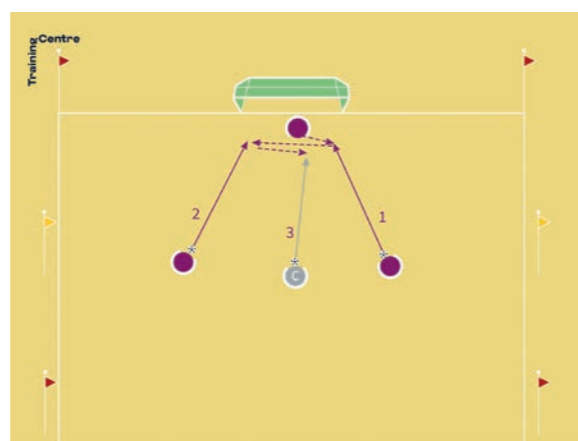
- The players positioned at the stations take it in turns to take volleyed shots that bounce directly in front of the goalkeeper, allowing the goalkeeper to practise reflex saves and anticipate deceptive bounces. Shots are taken in turn from the three stations.
- The goalkeeper either catches the ball or parries it before gathering it in.
- Rotate the goalkeepers.

Variations

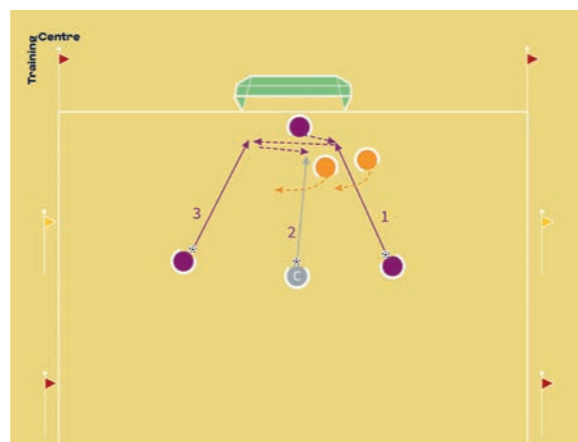
- Work on catching the ball at mid-height. Depending on the situation, the goalkeeper either catches the ball open-handed or between their hands, forearms and chest.
- Work on catching the ball in the air (at head height).
- Work on reflex saves from shots taken in central areas and at close range that bounce in front of the goalkeeper. Perform the exercise using two shooting stations.
- Revert to the initial set-up (three stations) and introduce two attackers, who are placed in front of the goalkeeper and are asked to distract them without touching the ball. This emulates a match situation.

Coaching points

- Goalkeepers should maintain a low centre of gravity to be able to react and readjust at any time.
- Goalkeepers should try to anticipate deceptive bounces off the sand.
- Goalkeepers should choose the most appropriate action, depending on the situation.
- Goalkeepers should be on their toes when the shot is taken.



Variation 1



Variation 2



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8.1 Introduction

Tactics is a broad term that refers to the approach adopted by a team. Choosing the right tactics can make all the difference to the match outcome. A number of factors come into play when deciding on the tactical approach to be adopted: each player's individual ability (including technique, physical condition and mentality), the team structure and the players' development and level of training. A team's ability to adapt to each opponent is another factor to consider.



8.1.1 Knowledge of the game

Choosing the right tactics requires the use of perception, analysis and decision-making skills. Coaches should introduce rules or key concepts that allow players to think and develop their creativity.

Variables to consider

- Playing area, duration, opposition, technique, number of players and opponents, etc.
- The above variables have an impact on perception

Skills involved

- Perception, cognitive and motor skills
- Ability to consider various environmental factors
- Decision-making

8.1.2 Training games involving match situations

Learning also takes place during play. Applied games are a training method that encourages players to enhance their understanding of the game and its mechanisms with the aim of developing their game intelligence.



Both transitions involve a number of factors:

Who regains possession:

- Goalkeeper
- Outfield player

How possession is lost:

- A pass or an individual move
- A player is subsequently beaten or is still able to offer defensive support

Number of defending players compared to attacking players:

- More
- The same
- Fewer

Where possession is lost on the pitch:

- Opposing team's half or own half
- Centrally or out wide



8.1.3 Transitions

Transitions represent the main source of goals and set pieces in a game. There are two types of transition, with the distinction between the two being based on whether the team has possession.

Attacking transitions

This is the phase of the game in which a team reorganise themselves immediately after having regained possession. It is important that every member of the team is involved in attacking moves in order to increase the number of passing options. It is vital that each player is aware of their role upon regaining possession. A quick transition from defence to attack increases a team's chances of catching the opposition off guard before they have the opportunity to organise themselves defensively. The scope to improve attacking transitions depends on the players' ability, as well as the coach's tactical approach to attacking play.

Defensive transitions

This is the phase of the game in which a team reorganise themselves after having lost the ball in attack and must therefore switch to the defensive phase. This type of transition occurs when a team lose possession and, despite it being an unpredictable situation, it is still possible to analyse and simulate match situations to train for such scenarios. Practising can improve the players' ability and enhance the coach's tactical approach.

Stable environment

- No opposition
- Constant space and time limitations
- No restrictions
- Individual or group
- Standardise technical and tactical moves to work on these aspects

Unstable environment

- With opposition
- Variable space and time limitations
- Mixture of variables, instructions, etc.

Variable environment

- Individual or group tasks
- Standardise technical and tactical moves to work on these aspects

Simplified match situations

- Specific groups of players arranged tactically
- Individual or group tasks

Match situations

- 5v5 or numerical advantages to emulate competitive scenarios
- Space and time limitations
- Specific match scenarios

8.2 Defensive tactical principles

8.2.1 Defensive positioning in general

Tactical positioning

Upon losing possession, a team can adopt one of the following two approaches to their tactical positioning:

- If a team are looking to regain possession immediately, they should direct their efforts towards pressing the opponent in possession.
- If a team are not looking to regain possession immediately, they should direct their efforts towards adopting their original defensive set-up.

Defensive play

Once a coach has decided which type of defensive strategy to adopt, they can set their team up in one of the following ways:

- **Withdrawn:** players take up positions in their own half and wait for the opposing team
- **Compact:** players take up positions in midfield and wait for the opposing team
- **Advanced:** players take up positions and press inside the opposing team's half
- **Mixed:** players take up defensive positions, but when the ball enters their space, they press in another zone
- **Combined:** involves two of the above strategies

Defensive press

The defensive press involves players pressing the ball until possession is regained.

Split the group: one group goes after the ball, while the other retreats to prepare to face an attack.

8.2.2 Marking

Marking refers to the tactical strategy adopted by a defending team in an effort to regain possession and prevent the opposing team from scoring. A team can implement any of the following marking strategies:

Player-to-player marking

Player-to-player marking involves a player limiting themselves to marking an opponent until the defensive move is over, without taking their own team-mates' positioning into account.

Zonal marking

Zonal marking sees each player assigned to a particular zone on the pitch, which may vary depending on where the ball is, and tasked with defending against the player(s) who enter that zone.

Mixed marking

In a mixed marking system, each player is assigned to a zone until an opponent enters that zone, at which point the player marks the opponent until the opposing team's attacking move is over.

Combined

This involves a team adopting two or three of the aforementioned marking strategies during the same match.

8.2.2.1 Player-to-player marking

Organisation

- Set up a rectangular playing area using cones.
- Organise a 2v2 inside the playing area with one player on each side of the rectangle.

Explanation

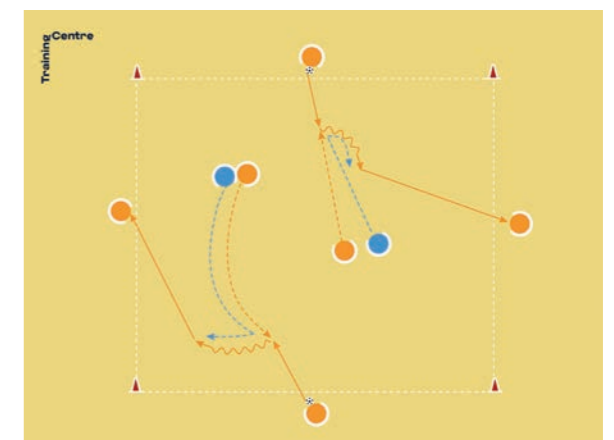
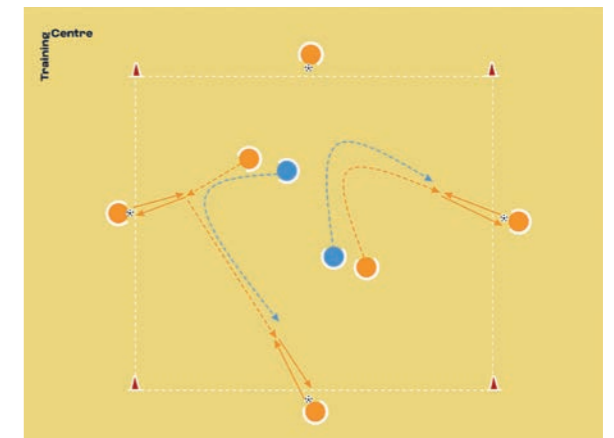
- Two balls may be in play at any time.
- The four supporting players around the outside of the playing area feed the ball to their team-mates inside the area, who then have the option of playing the ball back to any of those same four players.
- Initially, the players feeding the ball throw the ball up for their team-mates.

Variations

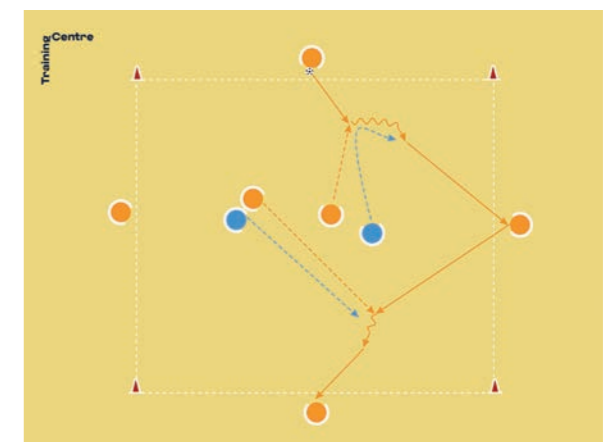
- The supporting players now play the ball off the ground using their feet.
- Players can no longer play the ball back to the same player from whom they received it. Two balls must always be in play.
- Only one ball in play.

Coaching points

- The defenders must close the space between themselves and the players inside the playing area while anticipating the passes from those positioned around the outside.
- Meanwhile, the attackers should work on losing their marker.



Variation 1



Variation 2



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8.2.2.2 Zonal marking

Organisation

- Set up a rectangular playing area using cones, similar to the one used in the player-to-player marking exercise.
- Begin the exercise with two defenders v. one attacker inside the playing area, with a supporting player on each side of the rectangle.
- The supporting players around the outside of the playing area start with a ball each.

Explanation

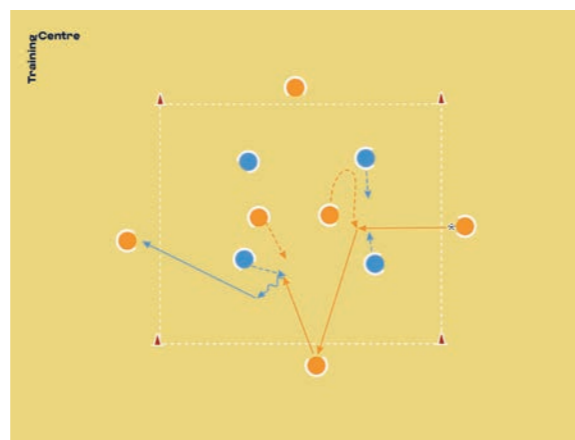
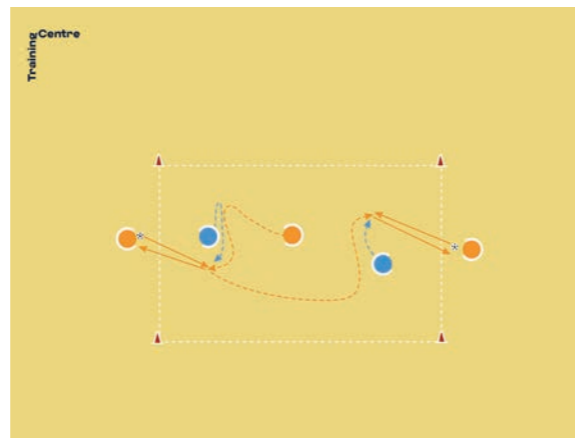
- Each defender remains in their half of the pitch. The attacking player starts by choosing an end from which to receive the ball. They then go to the other end of the playing area to receive the ball in the other defender's zone.
- The supporting players on each side of the rectangle play the ball into the attacker for them to control it with one touch.
- The defenders try to intercept or win the ball in their zone before the attacker can receive it.

Variations

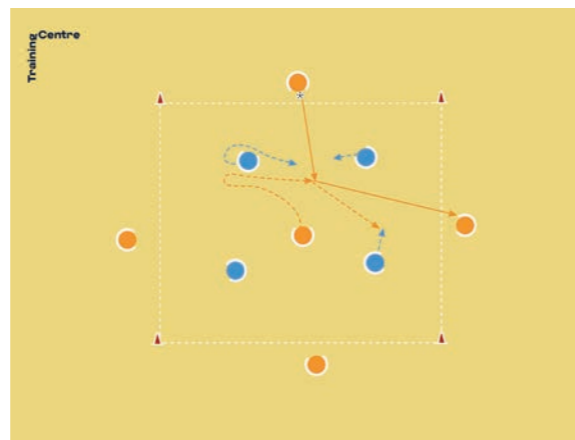
- Make the playing area bigger and increase the number of players.
- Organise four defenders v. two attackers inside the playing area, with two defenders in each zone. Place one supporting player on each side of the playing area. If the defenders manage to win the ball, they must play the ball out to one of the four supporting players. Only one ball should be in play.
- Develop the exercise by organising four defenders v. one attacker.

Coaching points

- The aim for the defenders is to be alert to the danger in their zone, while adopting an aggressive approach and anticipating.
- The defenders should use their hands to track their opponent. Create a competition between defenders and attackers.



Variation 1



Variation 2



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8.2.2.3 Mixed marking

Organisation

- Organise a corner taker, four defenders who each occupy different zones and three or four attackers.
- Establish four zones, dividing the defenders and attackers between them.

Explanation

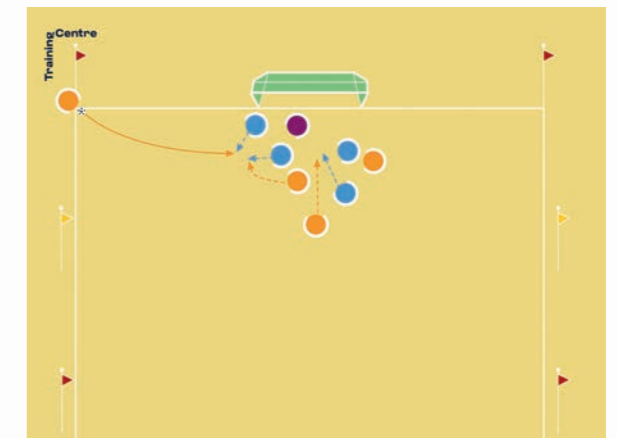
- Defenders should mark the player in their zone. The defending team should adopt a player-to-player and/or zonal marking system, depending on the situation.

Variation

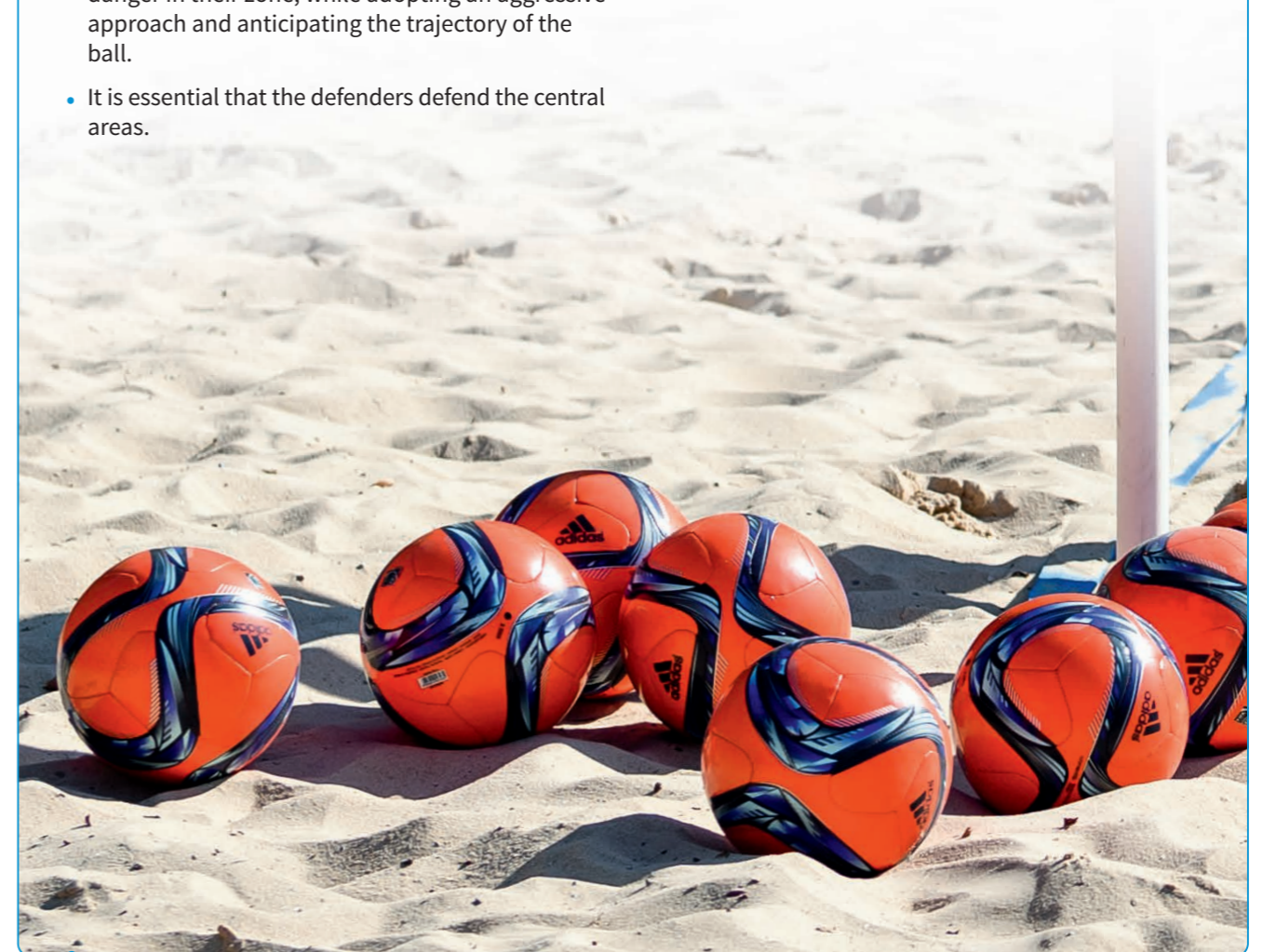
- Practise different combinations with the attackers one after another, in an attempt to disrupt the defence and work on defensive automatisms.

Coaching points

- Players must communicate when defending and adopt a mentality of clearing the ball as far away from the danger zone as possible.
- The aim for the defenders is to be alert to the danger in their zone, while adopting an aggressive approach and anticipating the trajectory of the ball.
- It is essential that the defenders defend the central areas.



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8.2.3 Covering

Organisation

- Use the full pitch.
- Position a goalkeeper in each goal and four outfield players. Organise the outfield players into a 2v2.

Explanation

- Start with a short throw-out from the goalkeeper before attacking the opposite goal. The defenders must prevent the attackers from scoring by providing defensive cover for their team-mate.

Variations

- The goalkeeper may come out of their goal after their initial throw-out to create a 3v2 situation.
- The defenders must anticipate the play and press the goalkeeper higher up the pitch.
- The goalkeeper must then look to play the ball deeper to test the defensive cover.

Coaching points

- The defenders need to be encouraged to constantly communicate with each other to ensure cover in behind. Players must remain aware of their team-mate's positioning to be able to anticipate the cover. Also ask the goalkeeper to cover the space in behind the defenders.



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8.2.4 Recovering

Organisation

- Organise one goalkeeper and four outfield players in a 1-2-1 formation.
- This exercise is initially performed without any opposition to help explain the scenario and work on dropping back into a defensive position.

Explanation

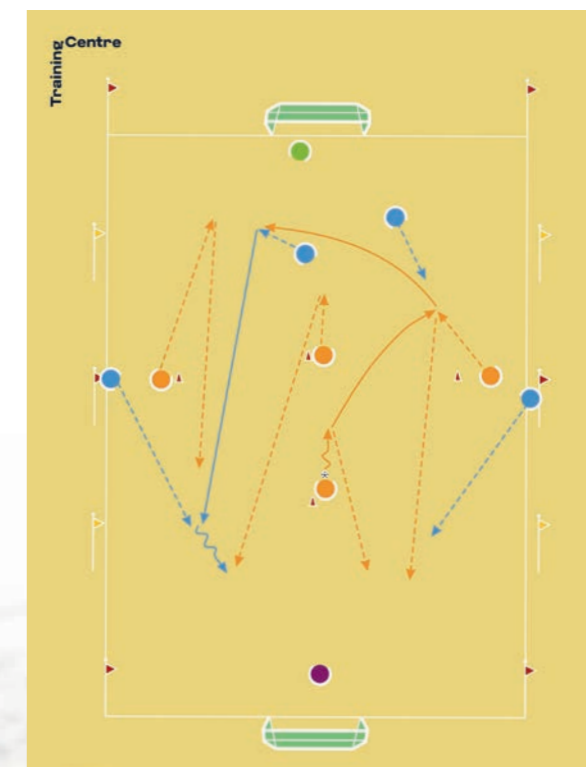
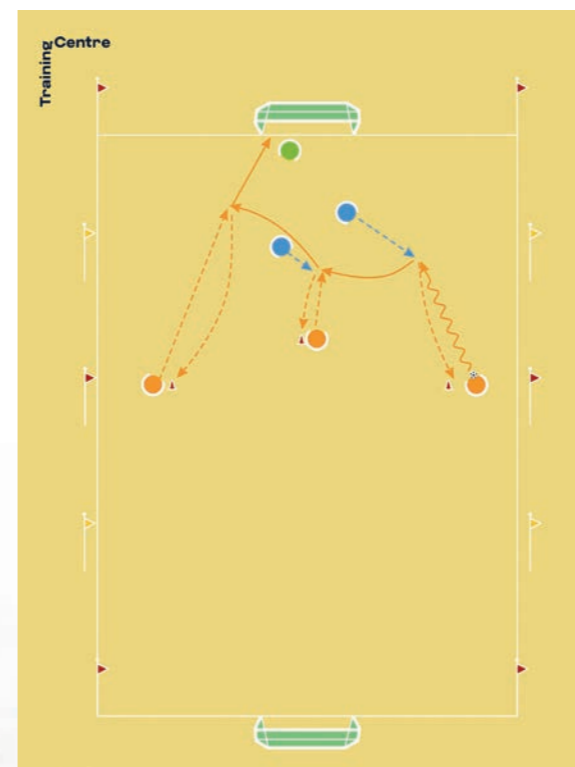
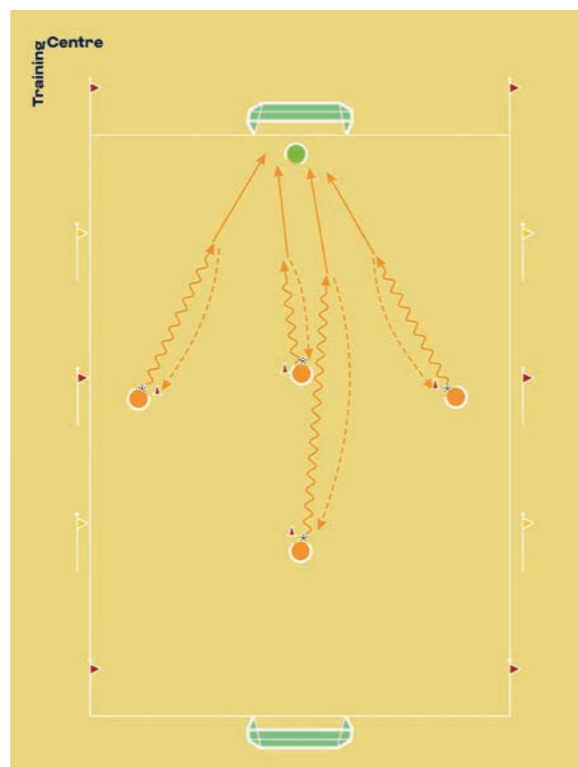
- Each attacking player dribbles the ball and has a shot on goal before quickly dropping into a defensive position.
- The exercise focuses on quick defensive recovery.

Variations

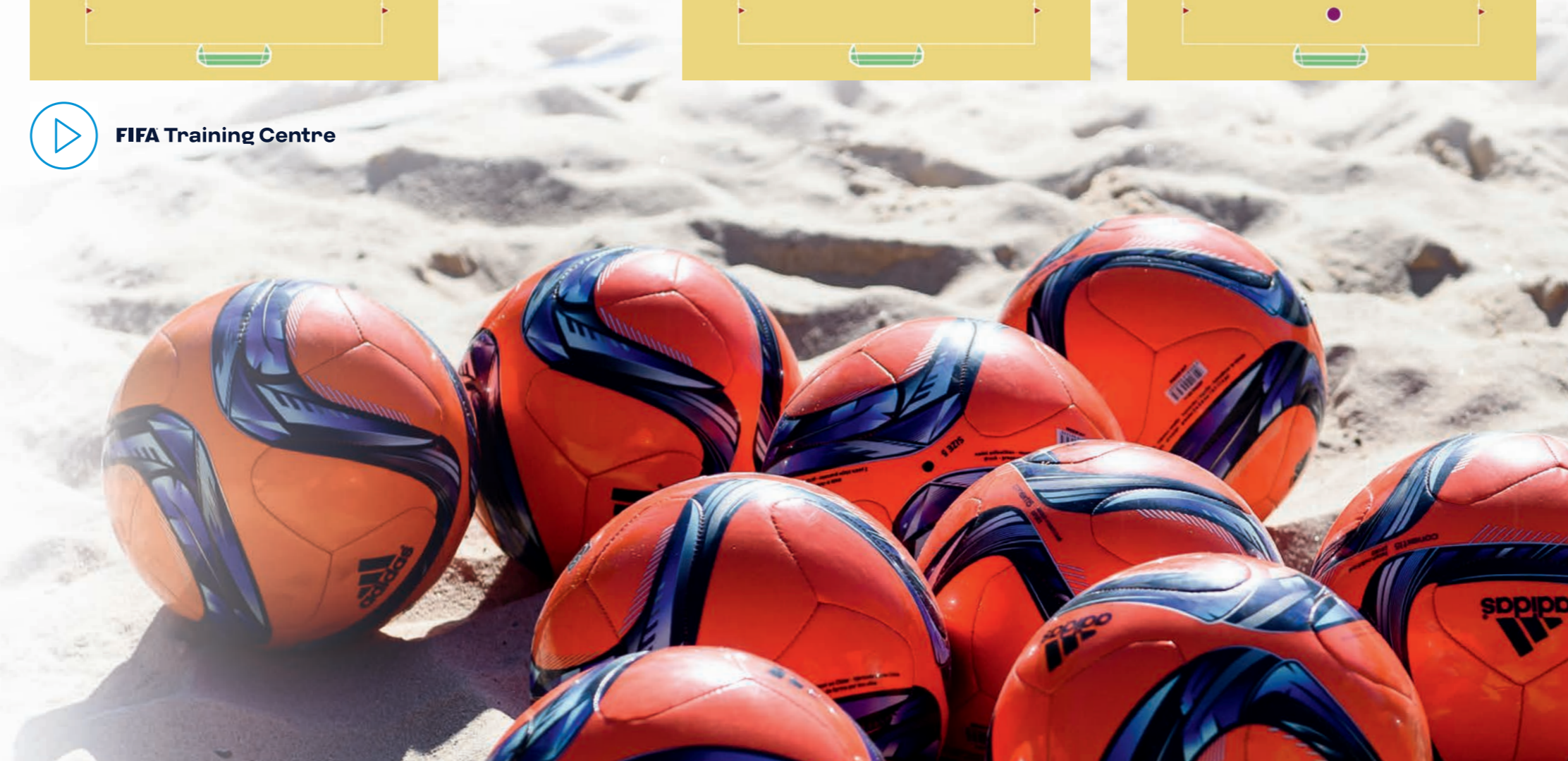
- Introduce two defenders. Set up four attackers v. two defenders (where only three attackers can form part of the attacking move). Once the attacking move comes to an end, the attackers must quickly recover their initial positions by dropping back into a 1-2-1 formation (no counter-attack permitted at this stage).
- Allow the opposition to counter-attack and tell the players to drop back into their nearest defensive position as soon as they lose the ball. 4v4 counter-attack, with two more players being added to the defending team.

Coaching points

- Emphasise the idea that players recover their initial defensive positions as quickly as possible after the attacking move comes to an end.
- Communication is also key in this exercise.
- Players must keep their eyes on the ball while recovering their defensive position.



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8.2.5 Changing position

Organisation

- Create a 4v4 plus two goalkeepers and use a full pitch.

Explanation

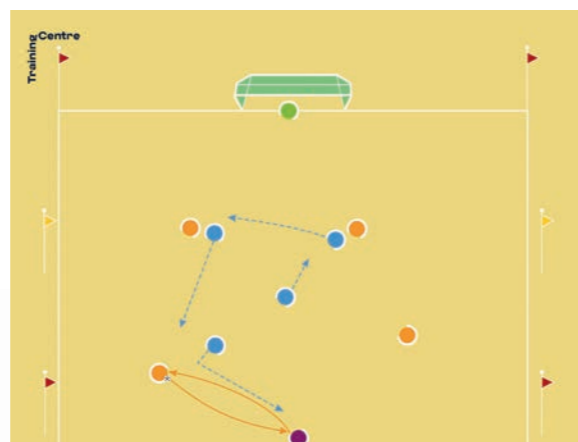
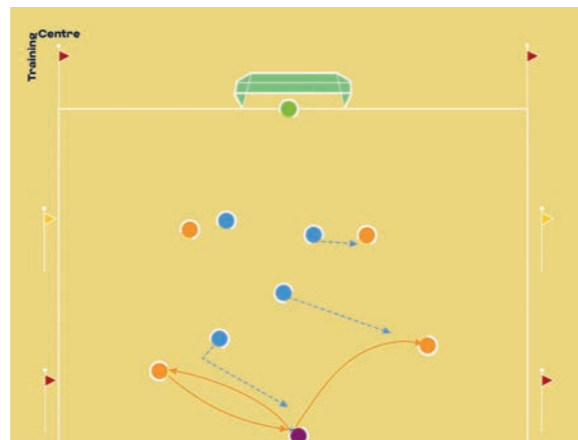
- Put the players in a match situation and ask the defenders to come out systematically to press the player on the ball.
- The defenders should try to cover the change of position as much as possible. Initially, only the attackers may change position. Start the exercise by organising the players in a 1-2-2 formation.
- Practise the attacking moves by building the play, always starting from the goalkeeper.

Variation

- Allow attackers and defenders on both sides to change position as a team. This variation works on defensive coordination and anticipating positional changes.

Coaching points

- Communication is key in this exercise.
- Players must learn not to leave key tactical spaces open, such as the middle of the pitch.
- Create a defensive plan with a specific rotation to steal the ball from the opposition.



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8.2.6 Defensive work as a group

Organisation

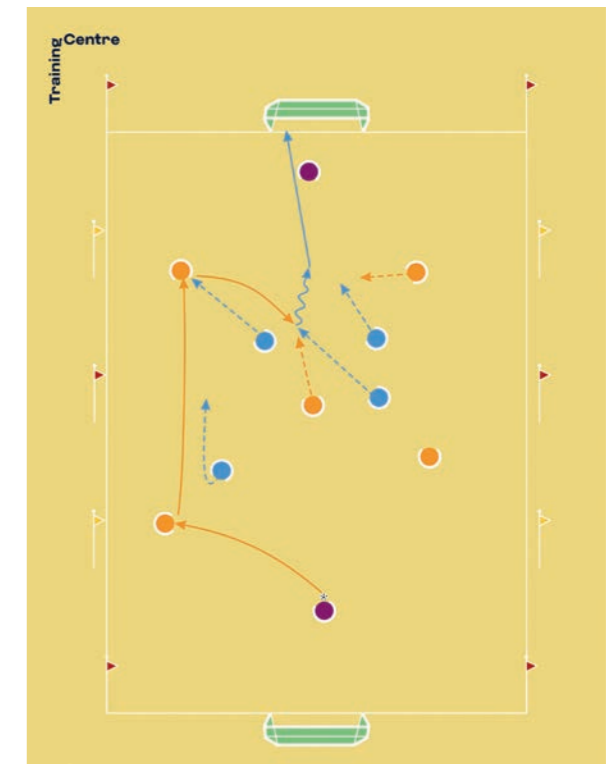
- Place a goalkeeper in each goal and set up a team of five players in possession (orange) against four defenders (blue) to create a 7v4 numerical advantage in favour of the team in possession. Use the full pitch and both goals.

Explanation

- The two goalkeepers and five outfield players (orange) try to keep possession against four defenders (blue) in a 7v4 scenario. The seven players in the team with the numerical advantage aim to keep possession of the ball, while the four defenders try to identify the right time to press.
- The principle being practised in this exercise is to press as a compact unit in an attempt to regain possession. Players should defend as a unit and identify the right time to press and regain possession when facing a numerical disadvantage. Anticipation, communication and coordination are key elements in this exercise.
- Once they regain possession, the defending team should try to score as quickly as possible to complete the sequence.

Coaching points

- Ask the players to identify the best situations in which to press.
- An example of an ideal situation in which to press as a unit is when an opposing goalkeeper or outfield player plays a long ball, with the defending team encouraged to press the recipient of the long pass and the team-mates closest to them.



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8.2.7 Delaying an opposition attack

Organisation

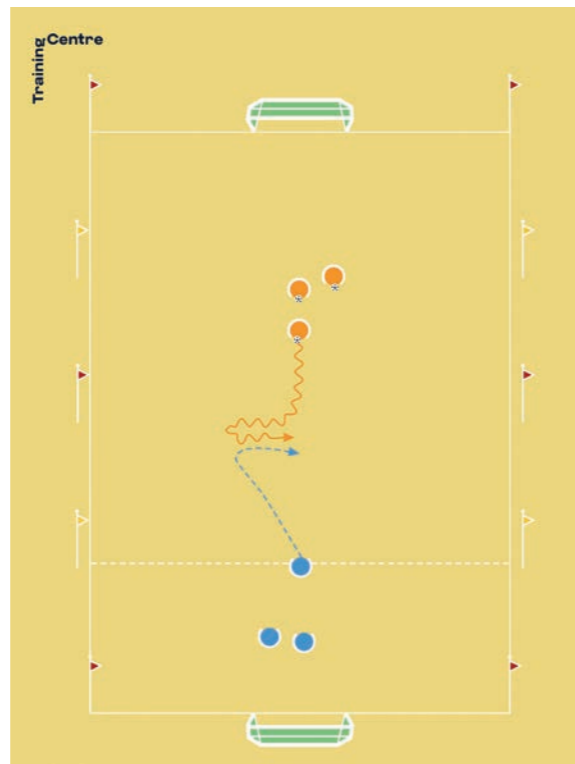
- Use the full pitch and set up three stations for the attackers using cones.
- Position one station on the right, one centrally and one on the left for each of the teams.
- The exercise begins with the oranges attacking against the blues.

Explanation

- Begin the exercise by setting up 1v1 situations. The attackers take it in turns to dribble past the defender in front of them. Attackers may only begin dribbling towards the defender once the defender has moved forward from their starting station.
- The defenders aim to reduce the distance between themselves and their opponent, while slowing their progress up the pitch.

Variations

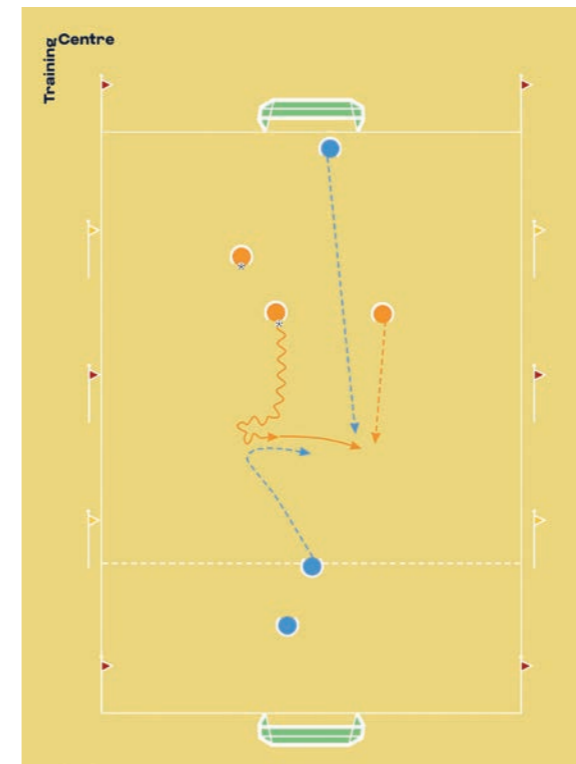
- Place two attacking players in a starting position in the middle of the pitch against one defender, who is positioned in front of them. Place an additional defender in the opposite goal and ask them to sprint back to help their team-mate facing a numerical disadvantage, thereby turning the 2v1 situation into a 2v2 in the opposite half. The player facing the numerical disadvantage must try to slow the attacking players' progress as much as possible to allow their team-mate to recover and provide defensive support.
- Introduce two goalkeepers, one in each goal. One of the defenders begins the exercise behind the goalkeeper – who starts the sequence with a throw-out – and tries to recover their position as quickly as possible to support their team-mate. The sequence begins with a short throw-out from the goalkeeper.
- Develop the exercise into a 3v1 situation that becomes a 3v2 once the additional defender, who begins the exercise behind the goalkeeper, has recovered their position. The aim and priority for the defenders is to defend and protect the central areas of the pitch as much as possible.
- The next variation involves an initial 3v1 that becomes a 3v3. In this variation, two additional defenders, who take up a starting position behind the goalkeeper – who starts the sequence with a short throw-out – try to recover their defensive position.



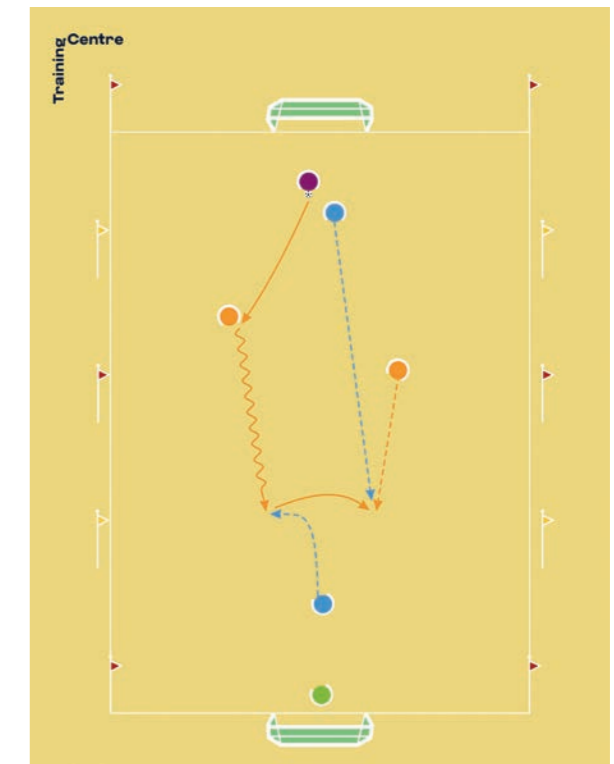
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Coaching points

- The aim of the exercise is for the defenders to delay the opposition's counter-attack by orienting their body to force their opponent towards the touchline or central areas, depending on the situation.
- The defenders should try to reduce the distance between themselves and their opponent as much as possible. The defenders should feint to close the attacker down, delaying the progress of the overloaded attack for as long as possible and allowing their team-mates to recover their defensive position.



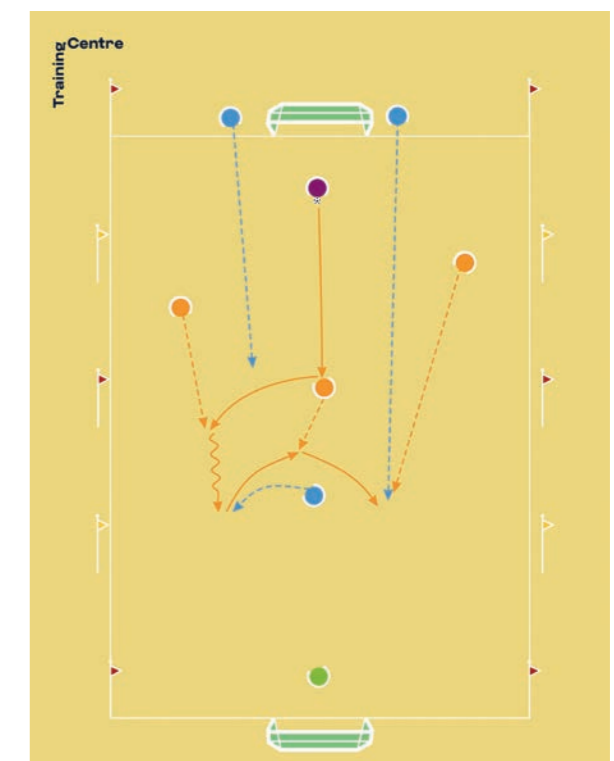
Variation 1



Variation 2



Variation 3



Variation 4

8.2.8 Pressing

Organisation

- Use the full pitch and create a 4v4, plus two goalkeepers.

Explanation

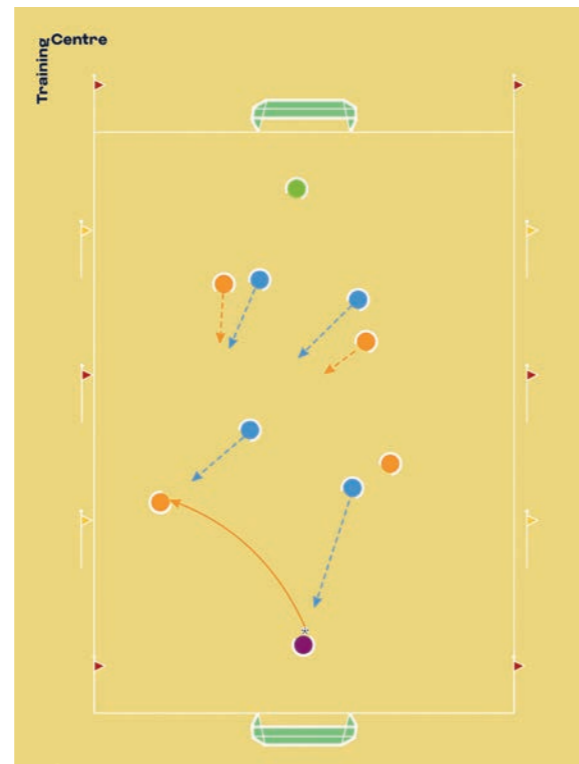
- Ask one team (blue) to press the opposing team (orange) across all areas of the pitch. The blues must press in unison to regain possession.
- The exercise begins with a set-up that simulates a match situation, with the blues' goalkeeper playing a long restart towards the opposite goalkeeper to simulate a turnover in possession.
- The team in possession then try to score. The defending team look to hinder the attacking team's progress by pressing high, as they aim to regain possession.

Variation

- Switch the teams' roles (the pressing team and the team in possession).

Coaching points

- The coach should explain the benefit of counter-pressing and how it can be used in the different phases of the game.
- The defending team should also press the goalkeeper when they are in possession.
- The attacking players should limit the number of touches per player to overcome the opposition's press. Attacking players should look to combine with the player furthest from the press to try to break through this defensive phase.



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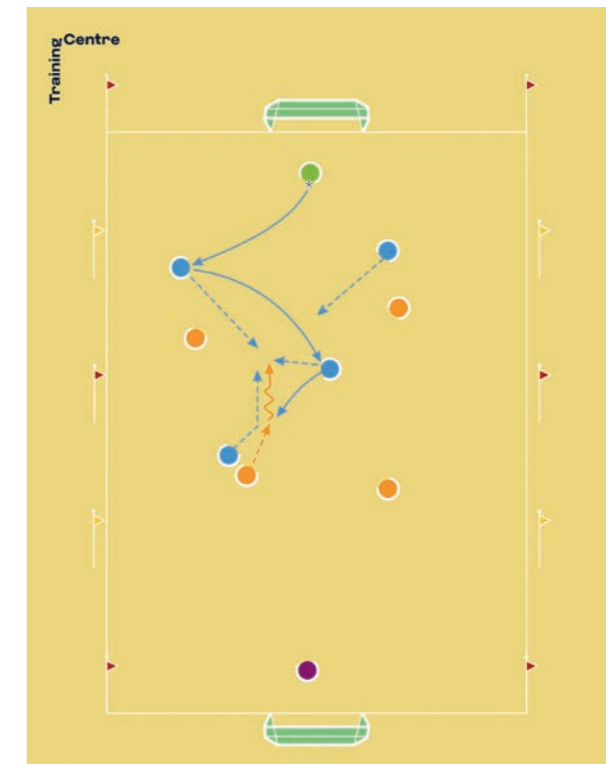
8.2.9 Counter-pressing

Organisation

- Create a 4v4, plus two goalkeepers and use a full pitch to simulate a match situation.

Explanation

- Set up a match situation and introduce the simple rule that when a team lose possession, at least half of their players must press to try to win the ball back immediately, before launching another attack. This exercise involves free play.
- The exercise begins with one of the goalkeepers in possession.

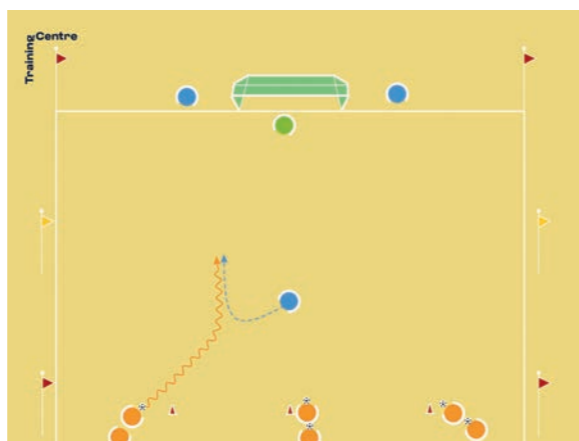


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8.2.10 Shepherding your opponent

Organisation

- Divide the attackers between three stations located on the edge of the penalty area (one on the right, one centrally and one on the left) and ask them to dribble towards the opposite goal.
- Set up a station with defenders behind the goal being attacked.
- Mark out an attacking lane using cones.
- Give each attacker a ball so that the next player is able to attack as soon as the previous player has completed the sequence.
- Create 1v1 situations.



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Explanation

- A defender stationed behind the goal being attacked enters the pitch to defend against an attacker who tries to dribble past them at pace.
- The defender should shepherd the attacker away from goal to prevent the attacker from scoring.

Coaching points

- Encourage the defenders to adopt the right body position to shepherd their opponent towards either flank. The defenders should position themselves at a 45-degree angle to their opponent.
- The defenders should try to keep their back to goal and their opponent in front of them at all times. Players should defend with their back to goal.
- This exercise allows players to work on the timing of their tackles to try to win the ball at the right time.



8.3 Attacking play

Attacking play relates to the movement of the team in possession of the ball. It involves passing (over a range of distances) and dribbling in an effort to progress towards the opposing team's goal and overcome their defence to score. The attacking team must use the ball effectively, move it around and overcome the opposing team with skill and confidence in any situation that may arise during a match.

This is the phase of the game in which a team reorganise themselves immediately after having regained possession. It is important that every member of the team is involved in attacking moves in order to increase the number of passing options. It is vital that each player is aware of their role when possession is regained. A quick transition from defence to attack increases a team's chances of catching the opposition off guard before they have the opportunity to organise themselves defensively.

This section explores the following three general principles of attacking play:

- **Direct attacks:** the aim is to have a shot on goal after a limited number of passes.
- **Combined attacks:** the attacking team try to retain possession and adopt a more cautious approach to the build-up.
- **Counter-attacks:** a direct form of attack in which the opposing team do not have the time to organise themselves defensively after losing possession.

The attacking style chosen during a match depends on the team's overall tactics, the players' technical ability, the opposing team, the match situation and a host of other factors.

8.3.1 Direct attacks



Description

- Involves the fastest route to goal
- Fast transitions, short moves and a limited number of players
- Medium- and long-distance passing

Players' technical and tactical approach

- Physical, aggressive and well-disciplined

Basic elements

- Quick combinations to finish the move
- Short periods of possession
- Balls played into space and second attempts on goal

Situations that can pose problems

- Playing the ball around and individual moves in a team's own penalty area
- Poor teamwork and communication between players

Internal structure

- Fast transitions from defence to attack
- Short build-up
- Fast finishing
- All attacking moves should end with a shot on goal

8.3.1.1 Pass to attacker by the goalkeeper

Organisation

- This exercise requires ten outfield players and two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up a ball station close to each goal.
- Place a goalkeeper in each goal and split the players between the ball stations at either end of the pitch.
- Place an attacker in each penalty area.

Explanation

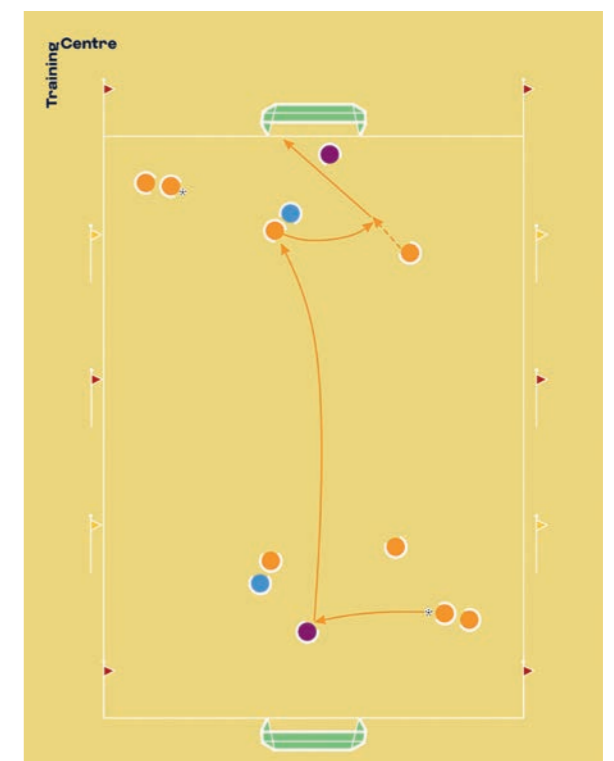
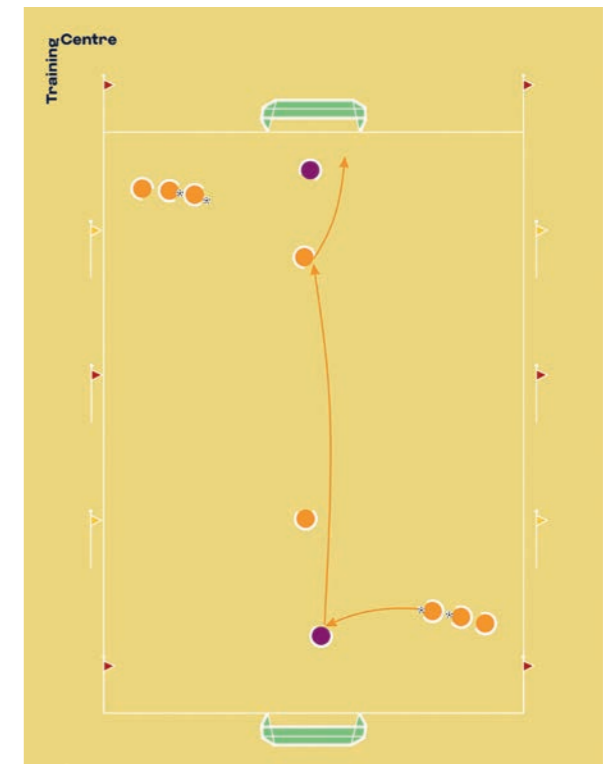
- The player at the ball station plays a backpass to their goalkeeper. The goalkeeper then plays a long throw-out towards the attacker, who finishes the move with a shot on goal.
- The goalkeepers at either end of the pitch take it in turns to play the throw-out to alternate the direction of the attacking sequence.

Variation

- Set up a scenario with two attackers v. one passive defender in each penalty area. The attackers have a maximum of four seconds to score after receiving the ball from the goalkeeper. Defenders should provide low-intensity opposition, without pressing the attackers too hard.

Coaching points

- Ask the attackers to finish the move swiftly. They can attempt to score with an acrobatic overhead kick to work on their body shape and shooting accuracy.
- Ask the goalkeepers to practise throwing the ball out accurately at a good height to help the attackers finish the move with an acrobatic overhead kick.



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8.3.1.2 Pass to attacker by a team-mate

Organisation

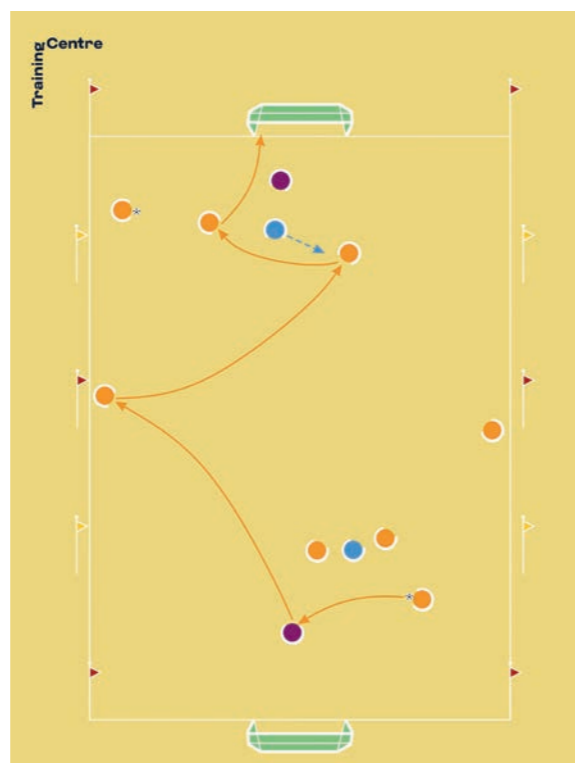
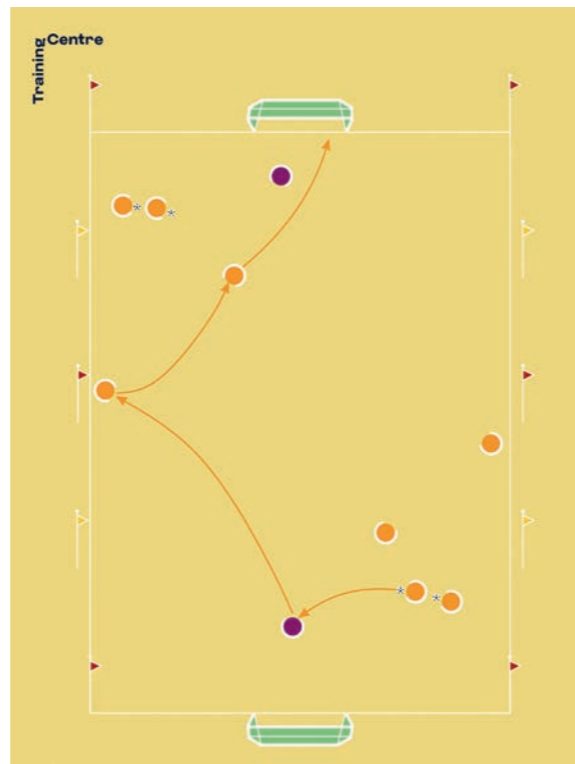
- This exercise requires ten outfield players and two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up a ball station close to each goal.
- Place a goalkeeper in each goal, three players at each ball station, an attacker in each penalty area and a player at each end of the imaginary halfway line.

Explanation

- The player at the ball station plays a backpass to their goalkeeper. The goalkeeper plays a long throw-out to the player on the far side of the pitch at the end of the imaginary halfway line, who controls the ball and plays it to the attacker, who attempts to finish.
- The goalkeepers at either end of the pitch take it in turns to play the throw-out to alternate the direction of the attacking sequence.

Variation

- Set up a scenario with two attackers v. one defender in each penalty area. The attackers should try to score, while the defenders should try to break up the move or intercept the passes.



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8.3.1.3 Long shots

Organisation

- This exercise requires eight outfield players and two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up a ball source close to each goal.
- Set up a player station at each end of the imaginary halfway line.
- Divide the players into two teams of four, with two players per team at each station.

Explanation

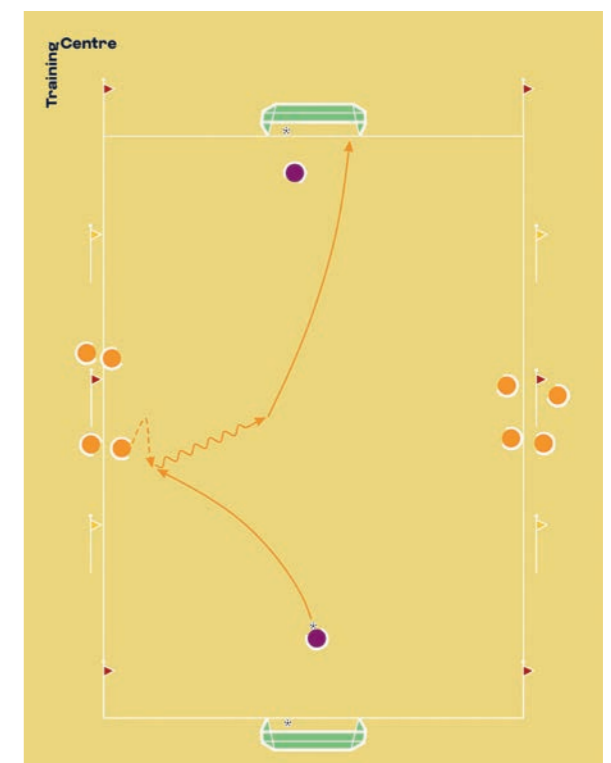
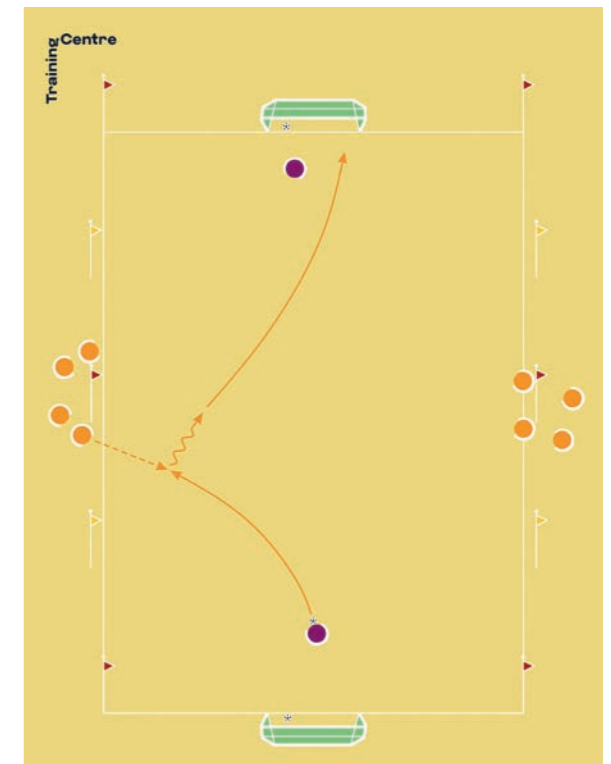
- The goalkeeper starts the move by throwing the ball out to the player who steps forward from the station and shows for the ball. The player controls the ball on the turn to face the opposing goal, before lifting the ball up off the sand and taking a long shot on the volley.
- The goalkeepers at either end of the pitch take it in turns to play the throw-out to alternate the direction of the attacking sequence.
- Count the number of goals scored by each team.

Variations

- Apply the same principle, but this time the attacker must feint or make a decoy run before receiving the ball. The player drives the ball a few metres into the centre of the pitch before lifting it up off the sand and shooting on the volley.
- After having feinted or made a decoy run, the attacker must drive the ball into the space in the centre of the pitch and then take a shot without lifting it up off the sand.

Coaching points

- The players should try to make their shots rebound off the sand in front of the goal to make it difficult for the opposing goalkeeper.
- When striking the ball off the sand (without first lifting it up), players should make sure that the ball is not in a depression in the sand. Players should drive the ball a little closer to goal if needed.
- Attackers should work on feigning passes and checking their runs.



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8.3.1.4 Creating space to receive

Organisation

- This exercise requires eight outfield players (four attackers, four defenders) and two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up a ball source next to each goalkeeper.
- Divide the players into two teams of four and a goalkeeper. Place three outfield players on the edge of the penalty area occupied by the goalkeeper starting the move and the fourth player on the edge of the opposing penalty area. Ask the opposing team to mark the players looking to receive the ball.

Explanation

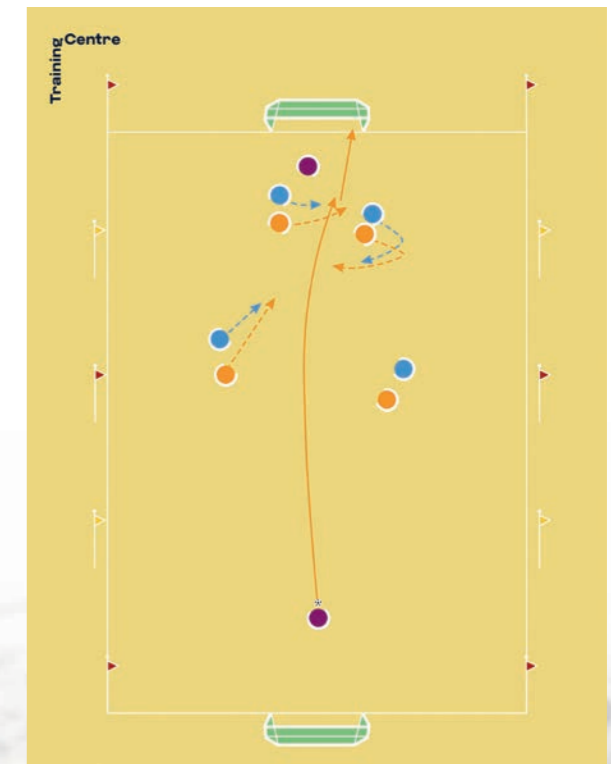
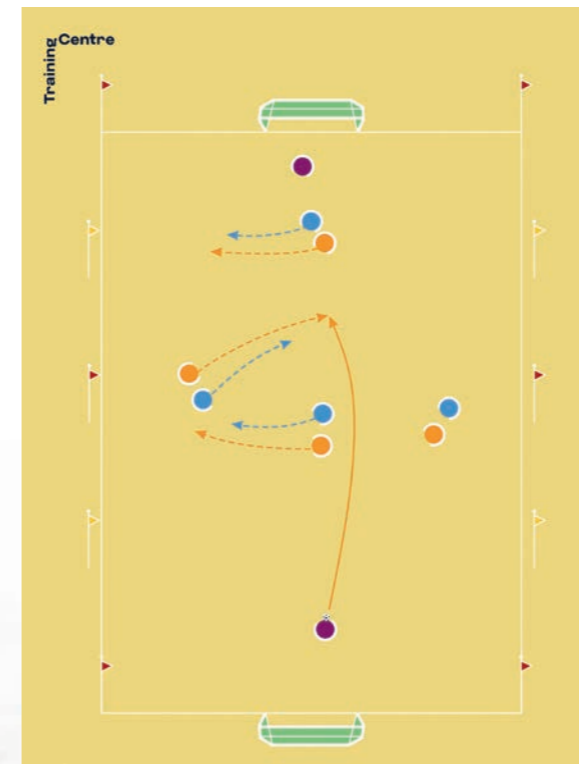
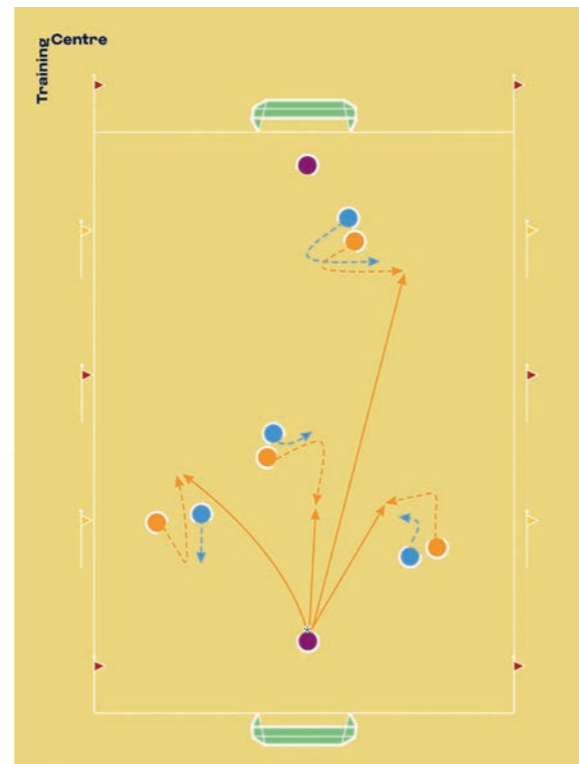
- The coach begins by explaining how players can lose their markers to receive the ball by using various movements (changes of direction, decoy runs, feints, etc.) to get in front of their opponent or in behind.
- The players being marked then take it in turns to try to lose their marker in order to create the space to receive the ball from the goalkeeper.
- The players should vary their runs and show for the ball in different areas.

Variations

- This time, the aim is to create space for a team-mate. Work on different types of marking and different marking systems (two or three players involved, open up the middle of the pitch or the channels, etc.). Make sure the two teams take turns. Analytical work. No shooting allowed.
- The team in possession line up in a 1-2-2 formation. The exercise begins with a long throw-out from the goalkeeper to an attacker. One of the attackers tries to lose their marker, while the other attacker takes up the space created by their team-mate. The goalkeeper has the option of playing the ball to either of the two attackers. Play continues as normal from the goalkeeper's long throw-out.

Coaching points

- Encourage players to feint, make decoy runs and check their runs.
- Players should try to find different ways to lose their marker.
- The coach can also ask players questions to help them identify the space they need to create and the space created.



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8.3.1.5 One-two passing

Organisation

- This exercise requires eight outfield players and two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up a ball station on the touchline to the right of each goalkeeper, level with the edge of the penalty area.
- Place a goalkeeper in each goal, a player at each ball station, a supporting attacker in each penalty area and the remaining players in a queue at each end of the imaginary halfway line.

Explanation

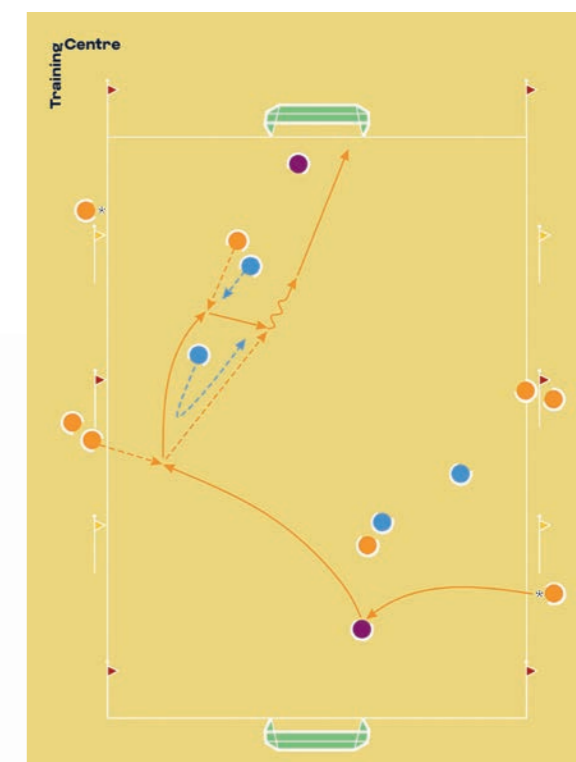
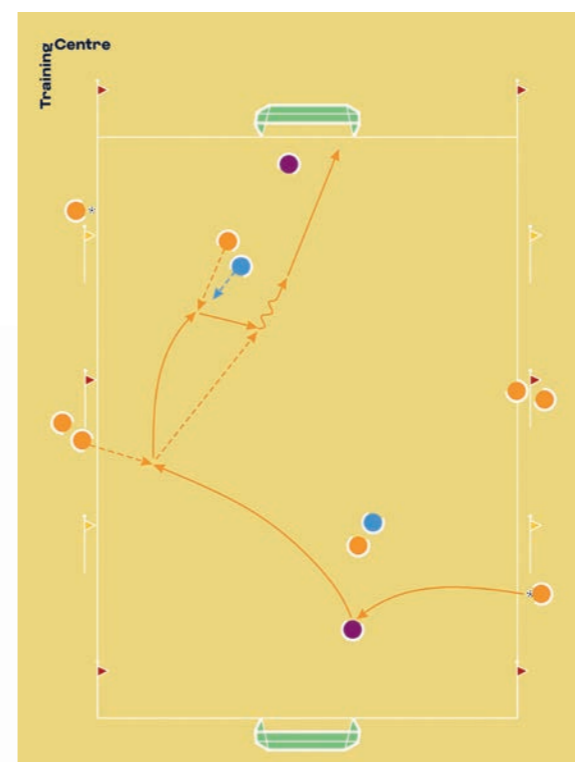
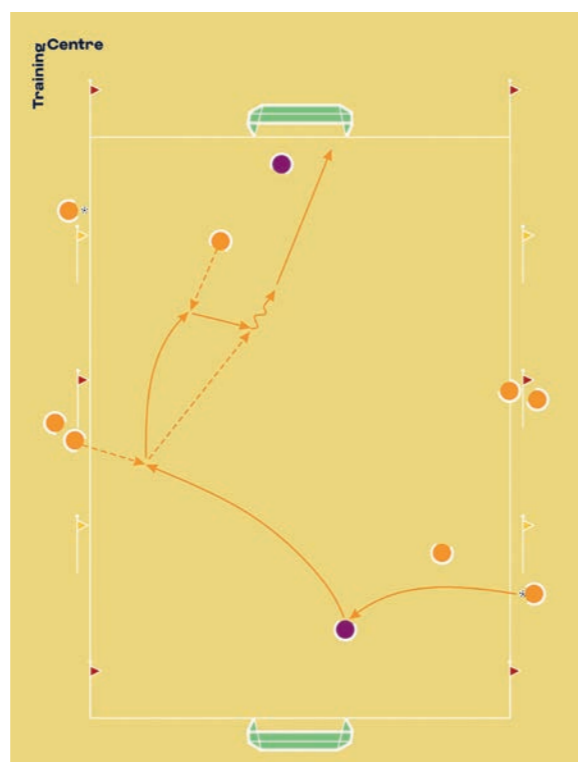
- The goalkeeper receives a backpass from the player at the ball station and plays a long throw-out towards the team-mate positioned at the end of the imaginary halfway line on the opposite flank.
- This player controls the ball, before playing a one-two with the support player situated in the penalty area and either takes a first-time shot or takes a touch to control the ball before finishing. The goalkeepers at either end of the pitch take it in turns to play the throw-out to alternate the direction of the attacking sequence.

Variation

- Introduce a defender into the penalty area to impede the attacking players performing the one-two.
- Introduce a second defender into the penalty area to create a 2v2 situation in the final third, simulating a match situation.

Coaching points

- Play well-timed passes.



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8.3.1.6 Pass and overlapping run

Organisation

- This exercise is performed using one goal. Rotate the goalkeepers.
- Set up a ball station on each touchline, level with the imaginary halfway line, and place two support players on the edge of the penalty area.

Explanation

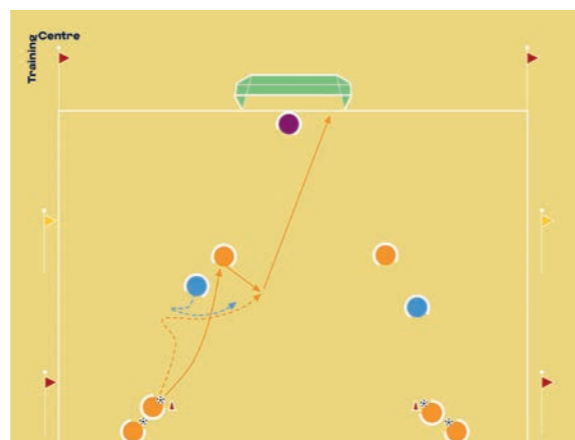
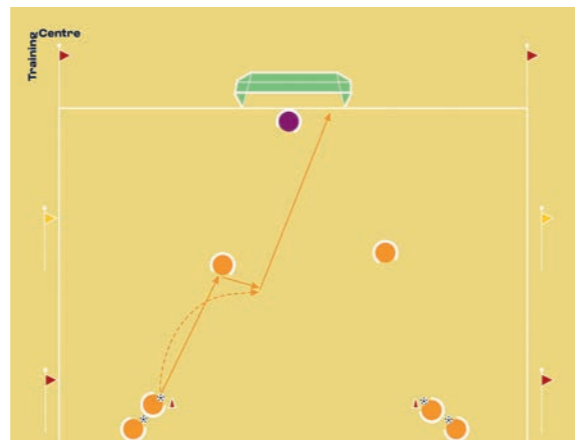
- The player at the ball station plays a pass into the nearest support player, before checking their run and making an overlapping run in behind the support player to receive their pass and take a first-time shot on goal.
- The support players should vary the passes they play to their overlapping team-mate (along the ground and in the air).

Variations

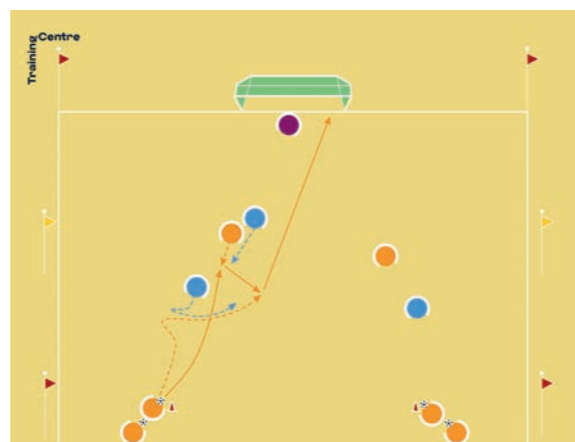
- Introduce a passive defender, who is tasked with intercepting the final pass and closing the shooter down, forcing them to check their run before making the overlapping run.
- Introduce a second defender to create a 2v2 situation.

Coaching points

- The shooter should not show for the ball immediately after playing it to the support player, but instead make a decoy run and change direction to lose their marker before seeking the return pass in the one-two sequence.



Variation 1



Variation 2



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8.3.1.7 Playing quickly

Organisation

- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up a ball station beside each goal.
- Divide the outfield players into pairs.

Explanation

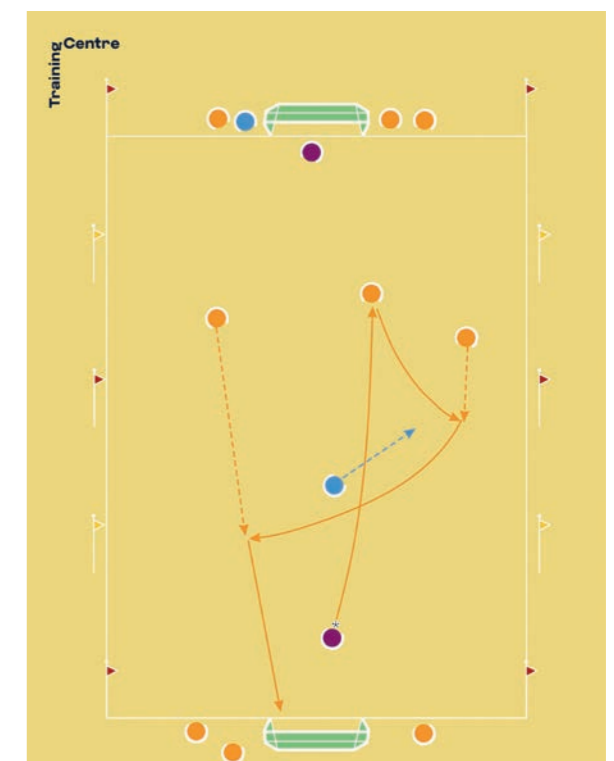
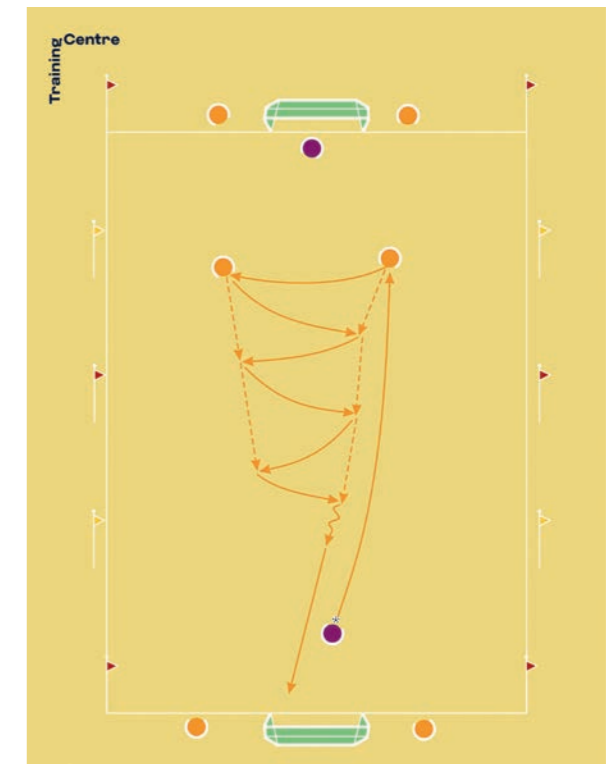
- The goalkeeper begins the exercise with a long throw-out towards the two players positioned at the edge of the opposing penalty area. The two players have to try and score into the goal defended by the goalkeeper who played the throw-out.
- From the goalkeeper's throw-out, the pair progress towards goal as quickly as possible by exchanging aerial passes while moving. They should try to score in no more than six touches (including touches to control the ball).
- The goalkeepers at either end of the pitch take it in turns to play the throw-out to alternate the direction of the attacking sequence.

Variation

- Create a 3v1 situation in favour of the attacking team. In this variation, the attacking pair are again asked to finish on goal in no more than six touches. Where appropriate, a pair may shoot on goal in fewer than six touches.

Coaching points

- This exercise allows players to work on aerial passes.
- Players should try to finish on goal as quickly as possible by setting up their team-mates in the best shooting positions.



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8.3.2 Combined attacks



Description

- Gradual approach towards the opposing team's goal, keeping the ball under control
- Each attack involves a series of individual and collective moves
- Fewer attacks in total

Players' technical and tactical approach

- Requires intelligent, talented and skilful players (both technically and tactically)
- Good ball management, precision, confidence, etc.

Basic elements

- Controlled ball movement
- Many passes in different directions to disorientate opponents
- Long periods of possession and lots of off-the-ball movement

Situations that can pose problems

- Having to play in tight spaces
- Too many players occupying the same area or taking up positions far away from one another

Internal structure

- Play over short distances to begin with to promote confidence and control
- Create and seek space behind opponents
- Requires talent and creativity to finish moves efficiently



8.3.2.1 Build-up from defence

Organisation

- This exercise requires eight outfield players (two teams of four) and two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up a ball source close to each goal.

Explanation

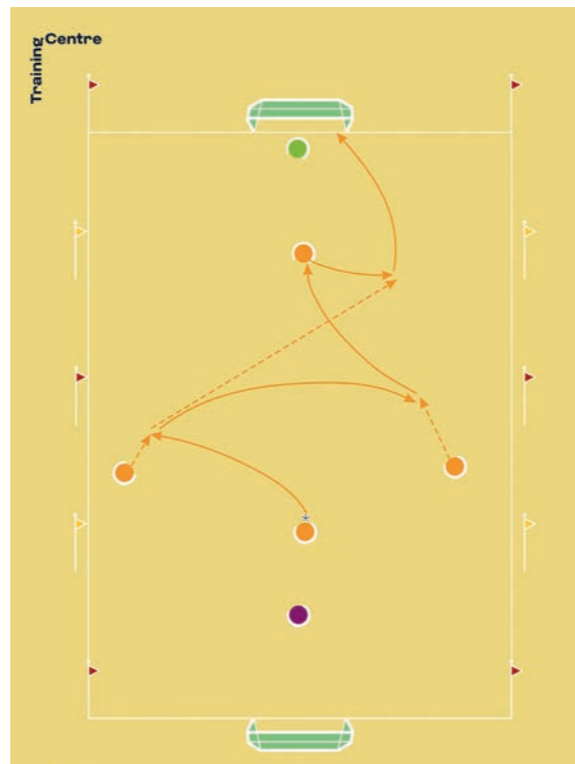
- Place a goalkeeper in each goal and set up one of the teams in a 1-3-1 formation with no opposition.
- The sequence begins with a throw-out from one of the goalkeepers. The aim is for the team to move the ball around in their own half and wait for the right time to initiate an attack and take a shot on the opposing team's goal.
- The coach should suggest several formations that allow the team to play out from the back with short passes, while giving the players the freedom to build the attack as they wish.
- Rotate the teams after each sequence.

Variations

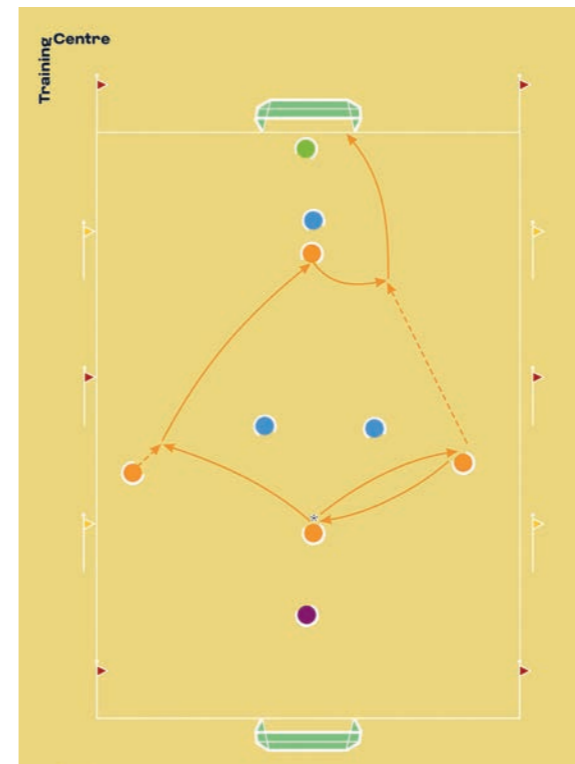
- Introduce three passive defenders, who should apply low-intensity pressure.
- Progress to a 1-2-2 formation, with no opposition from outfield players. In this variation, the goalkeeper plays an active role in the build-up phase. The goalkeeper must combine with their team-mates at least two or three times before the team can initiate the attack.
- Introduce a defender into each half of the pitch. The defenders may only intervene in their own half of the pitch and may not cross the imaginary halfway line (marked with yellow cones) to help their team-mate.

Coaching points

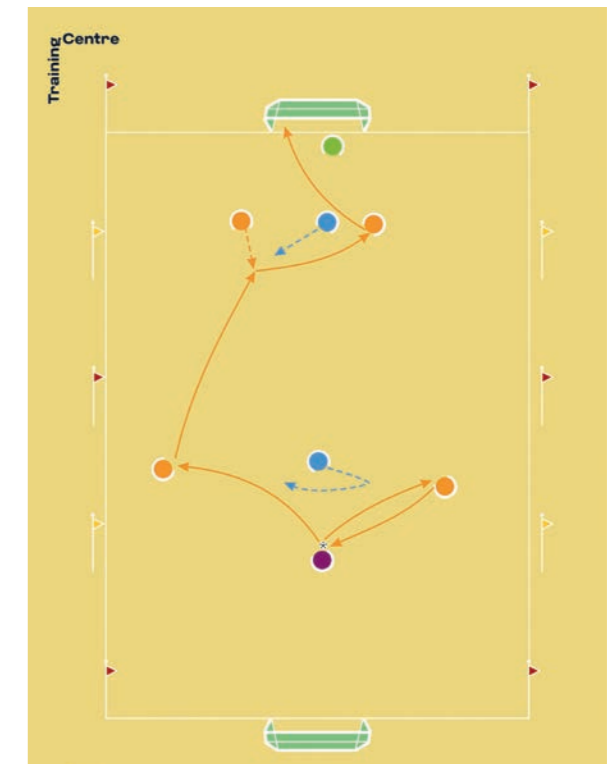
- Players must keep themselves and the ball moving at all times during the build-up phase.
- Encourage players to make crossover runs and stray from their original positions.
- Emphasise the importance of communication and remind players to be patient and wait for the right time to initiate the attack.



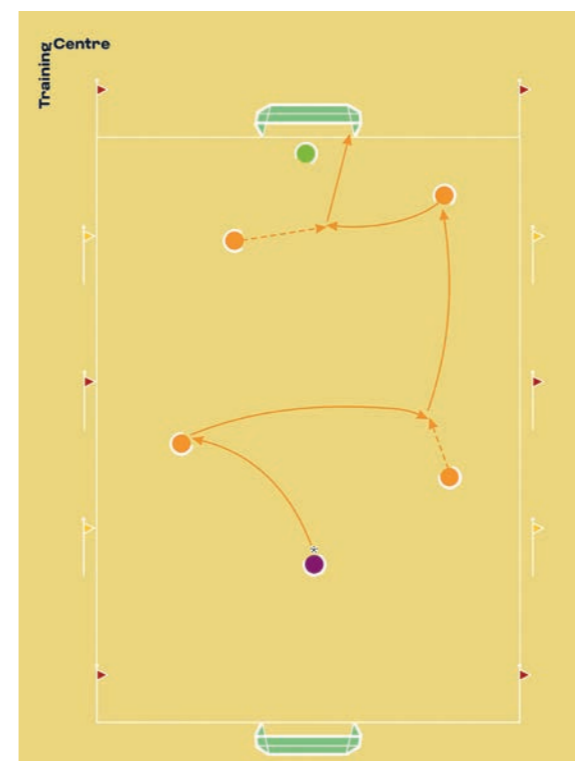
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Variation 1



Variation 2



Variation 3

8.3.2.2 Retaining possession

Organisation

- This exercise requires six outfield players (organised into a 4v2), plus two goalkeepers.
- Set up a playing area, the size of which can be adapted to achieve the desired level of difficulty.
- Place the outfield players inside the playing area, with the two goalkeepers around the outside as support players for the team in possession.

Explanation

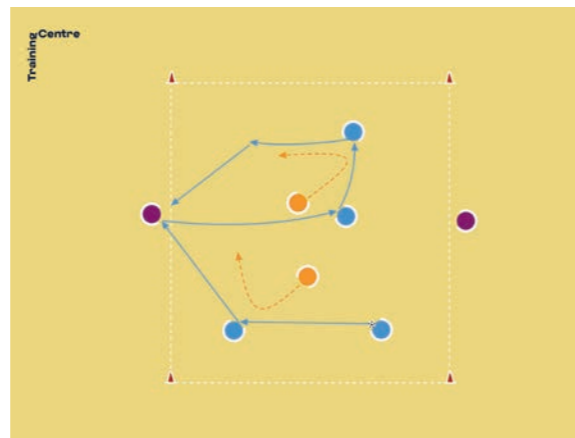
- This exercise uses a 6v2 “piggy in the middle” to work on retaining possession.
- The team with the numerical advantage attempt to keep possession of the ball by playing passes in the air and on the ground, while the two opponents apply a low-intensity press. The outfield players can move around inside the playing area and use the support players around the outside.
- The in-possession players should try to find their team-mate with the most time and space to give them the best possible chance of receiving and playing the ball.

Variation

- Option of adding two more defenders into the playing area to create a 6v4.

Coaching points

- The in-possession team players without the ball should work on their movement to make themselves available to receive the ball. The player on the ball should analyse the situation to find their team-mate who is in the best possible situation to receive the ball.
- Encourage players to vary their passes by playing the ball in the air and on the ground.



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8.3.2.3 Delaying attack to wait for support

Organisation

- This exercise requires six outfield players and two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up two ball stations on the edge of one of the penalty areas (one on the left and one on the right).
- Place a goalkeeper in each goal and a supporting attacker in the penalty area at the opposite end of the pitch to the two ball stations. Divide the remaining players between the two ball stations.

Explanation

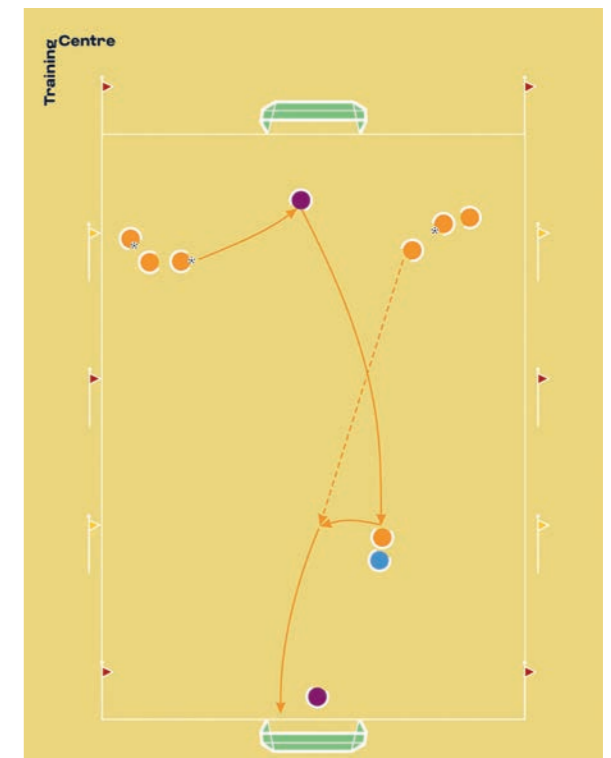
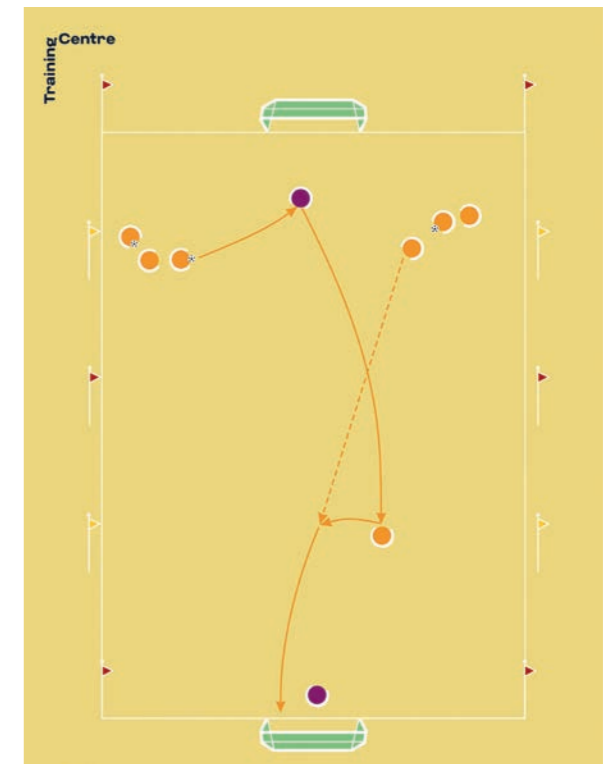
- A player at one of the ball stations plays a backpass to the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper then plays a long throw-out towards the supporting attacker in the opposing penalty area, who holds the ball up with their back to goal. A player from the other ball station runs forward and shows for the ball, meeting the supporting attacker's lay-off with a first-time attempt on goal from inside the zone marked by the blue cones.
- Players positioned at the ball stations on the right and left take it in turns to perform the sequence.

Variation

- Introduce a defender into the penalty area to mark the supporting attacker.

Coaching points

- The supporting attacker should hold the ball up with their back to goal and play a well-timed lay-off to their team-mate.
- Ask the supporting attacker to make a decoy run before receiving the ball to allow them to lose their marker and get their body between them and the ball, while waiting for their team-mate to join them in the attacking third.



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8.3.2.4 Changing the tempo

Organisation

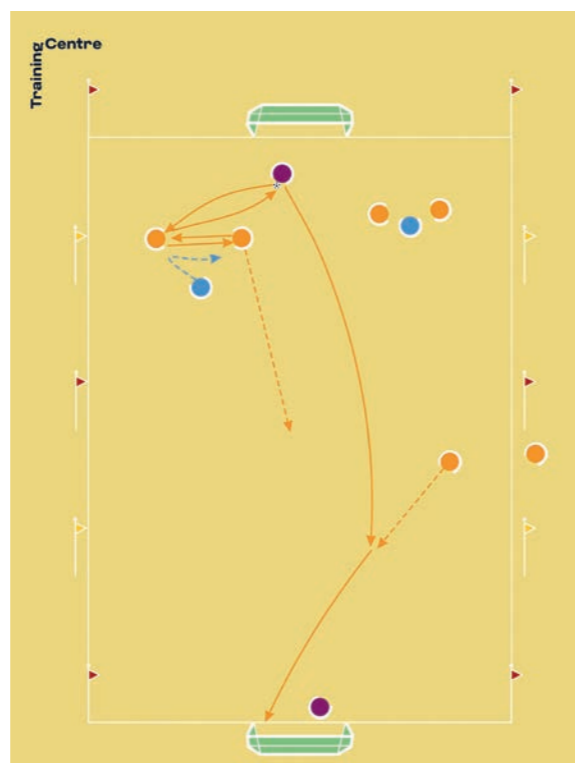
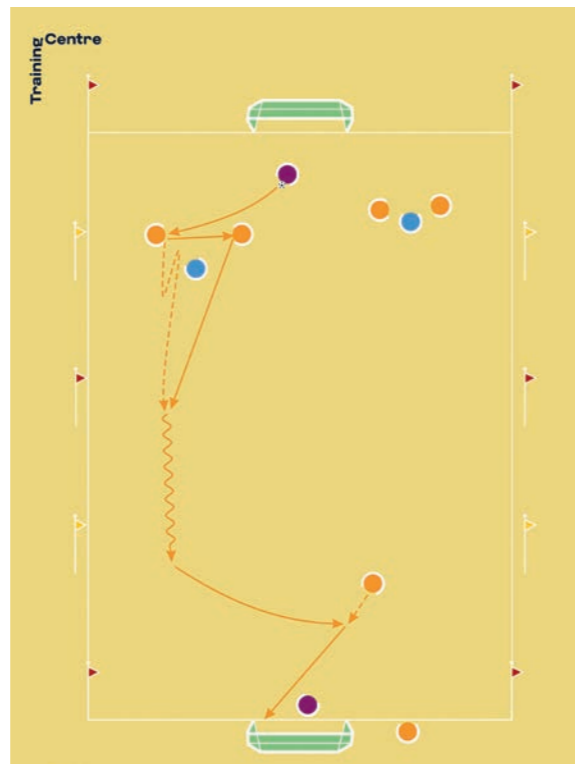
- This exercise requires six outfield players and two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up two zones on the edge of one of the penalty areas (one on the left and one on the right).
- Create a scenario with two attackers v. one defender in each zone.
- Place a goalkeeper in each goal and an attacker in the penalty area at the opposite end of the pitch to the two zones.

Explanation

- The goalkeeper plays a short throw-out to one of the in-possession players inside one of the two zones.
- The two in-possession players exchange short passes with the aim of slowing the tempo.
- After completing several passes, one of the pair darts in behind the defender to latch on to their team-mate's long ball and can either take a shot themselves or set up their attacking team-mate positioned in the penalty area. The defender should provide low-intensity opposition to their opponents' passes.
- Players positioned at the zones to the right and left of the penalty area take it in turns to perform the sequence.

Variation

- After completing several passes, one of the in-possession players plays a backpass to the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper then quickly plays a long throw-out towards a player positioned at the zone on the opposite side of the pitch, who takes up a position on the touchline, level with the imaginary halfway line. This player can either take a shot or set up the attacker situated in the penalty area.



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8.3.2.5 Retaining possession

Organisation

- This exercise requires eight players, four of whom are introduced as a variation at a later stage.
- Set up two stations either side of the imaginary halfway line, with a ball at each station.
- Put the players into two pairs and ask them to stand opposite each other, using the full width of the pitch.

Explanation

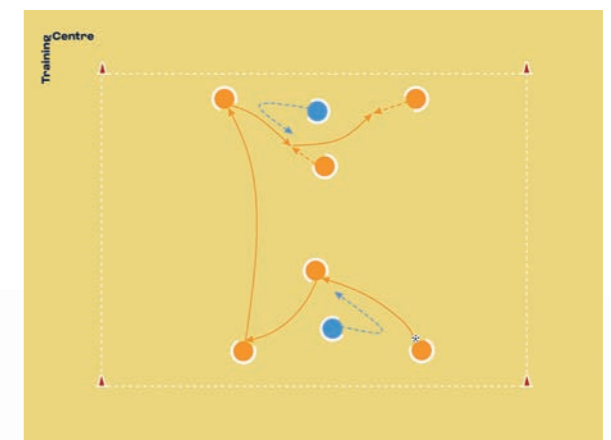
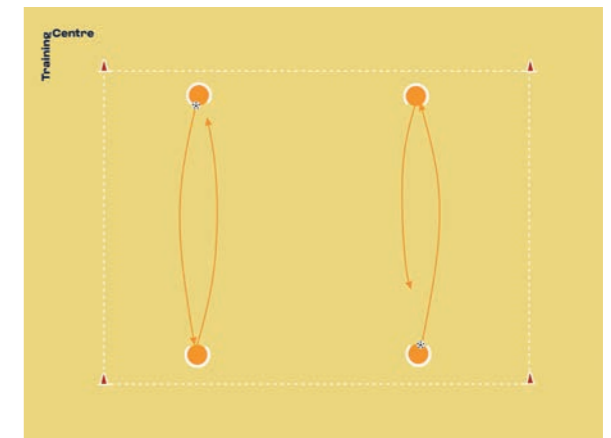
- The players in each pair play the ball to each other to simulate switching play.
- The idea behind the exercise is to practise finding a team-mate who is free on the opposite flank.

Variations

- Perform the exercise with one ball. Set up two playing zones, one at each end of the imaginary halfway line. Introduce the four remaining players to set up a 3v1 "piggy in the middle" within each playing zone.
- The first three players exchange passes among themselves before switching the ball as quickly as possible to the opposite playing zone. The other three players must then exchange passes among themselves before switching it back. The exercise continues back and forth in this manner. Within each playing zone, the "piggy in the middle" should try to intercept the passes. If they manage to win the ball, they swap places with the player who lost it.

Coaching points

- Focus on playing aerial passes when switching play.
- Try to find the player with the most time and space to give them the best possible chance of receiving and playing the ball.



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8.3.2.6 Attacking the available space

Organisation

- This exercise requires six outfield players, one of whom is introduced as a variation at a later stage, plus two goalkeepers.
- Use the full pitch and both goals.
- Set up the five outfield players in a 3v2 in one half of the pitch.

Explanation

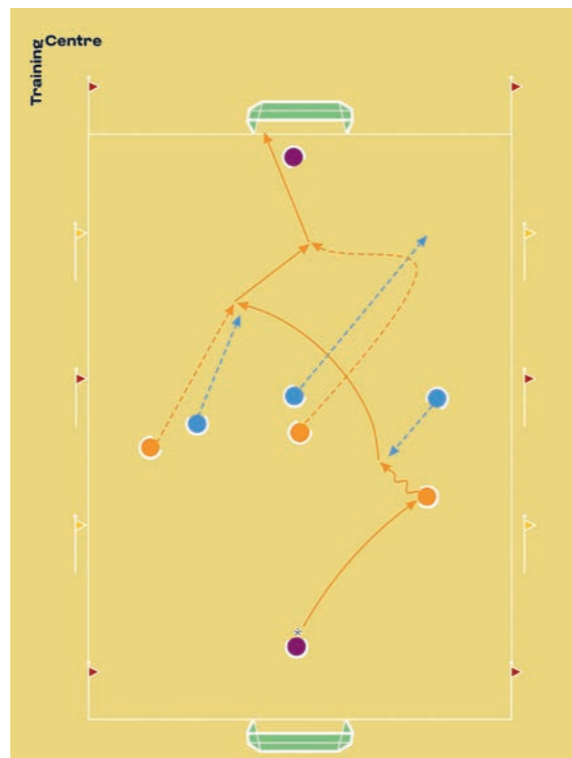
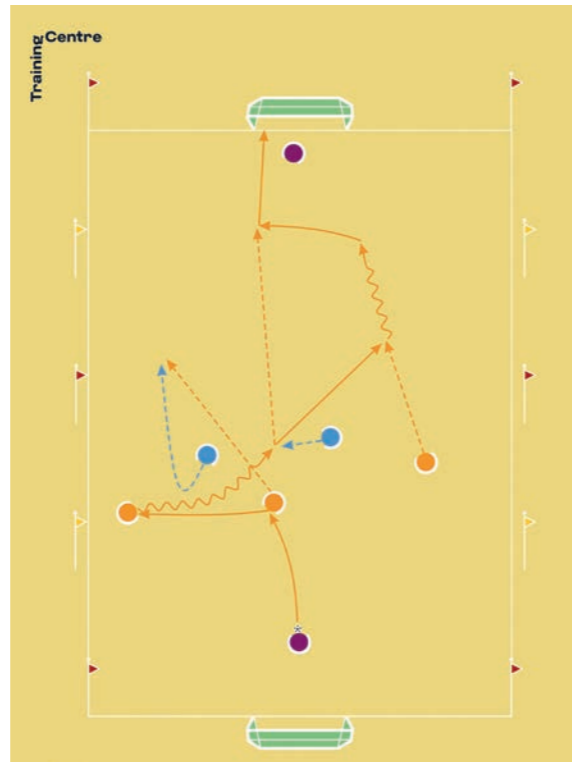
- The move is always started by the goalkeeper, who plays the ball to one of their three team-mates with a short throw-out. The three attackers must then work together to attack the space behind the opposition defenders.
- Once the goalkeeper has started the move, the team in possession cannot use them again.
- The two defending players should press as high up the pitch as possible to emulate this match situation and vacate the space behind them. If they manage to win the ball, they can go on and attempt to score.
- Once the move comes to an end, the players walk back to their starting positions. Rotate the defenders regularly to allow them to rest.

Variation

- Introduce the sixth outfield player as an additional defender, thus creating a 3v3 scenario.

Coaching points

- Ask the in-possession team players without the ball to attack the space behind the defence.
- Try to find the player with the most space and time to give them the best possible chance of receiving and playing the ball.



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8.3.3 Counter-attacks



Description

- A counter-attack involves a rapid transition between regaining possession after defending against an attack and launching a direct attack on the opposing team's goal in no more than two or three passes.
- Once possession has been regained, the attacking team carry the ball towards the opposing team's goal as quickly as possible.
- This strategy requires precision, speed and the use of the full width and length of the pitch.

Basic elements

- Establish defensive zones in which to regain possession and launch a counter-attack
- Establish attacking ball movement and players' distance from the ball

Situations that can pose problems

- Holding on to the ball for too long
- Misplaced passes or technical errors after possession is regained

Internal structure

- Recovery of possession, followed by a transition and attempt on goal



8.3.3.1 Counter-attack

Organisation

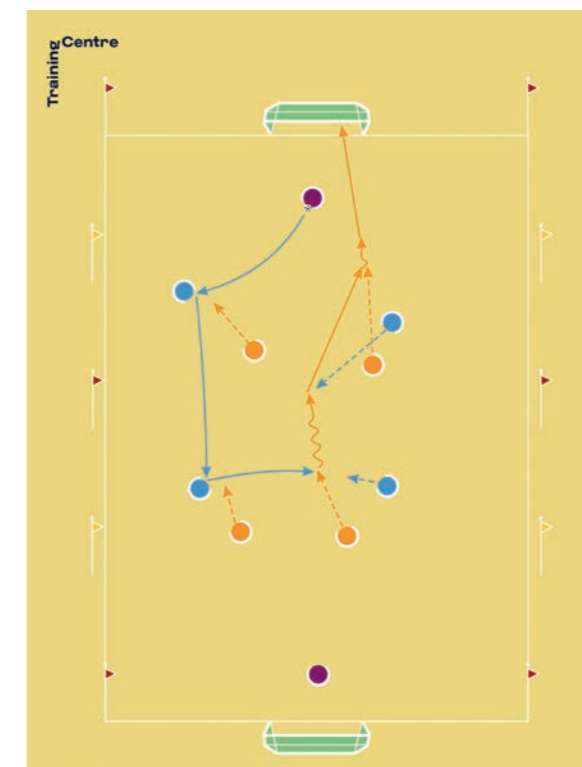
- Use the full pitch and set up a 5v5.

Explanation

- The move starts from one of the goalkeepers, who exchanges passes with their two defenders, while the opposing team sit in a low block. The goalkeeper, who is out of their goal and advanced up the pitch, then plays a long pass with their feet towards the opposing goalkeeper to simulate losing possession.
- As soon as their goalkeeper recovers the ball, the team in a low block should burst forward quickly on the counter-attack and attempt to score within a maximum of three seconds after the long throw-out from the goalkeeper.
- During the first few moves, the defending team should drop back and allow the action to unfold to help illustrate the principles of counter-attacking play (analytical work).
- Rotate the teams after a few moves so that both sides have the opportunity to work on counter-attacking.

Variation

- This time, the team in possession at the beginning of the exercise tries to score rather than playing the ball to the opposing goalkeeper. Counter-attacking in a match situation: the defending team and the attacking team perform the exercise at full intensity.



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8.4 Formations

The decision regarding the playing system adopted by a team can prove to be decisive and depends on the ability and motivation levels of each player and the team as a whole.

Depending on the physical ability of the team and the opposing team, there may be scope to tweak the formation ahead of kick-off or even during a match, depending on the scoreline. The following formations may be adopted:

- 1-3-1
- 1-2-1-1
- 1-1-2-1
- 1-2-2
- 1-1-3

Organisation

- Using a full-size pitch, two teams of five compete against each other and organise themselves tactically based on the coach's instructions.

Explanation

- This exercise always starts from one of the two goalkeepers and aims to work on building attacks in the specific formation set by the coach. Here, Schirinzi starts with a 1-3-1 formation (attacking team).
- The coach asks the out-of-possession team to defend passively to allow the in-possession team to grasp all aspects of the formation and work on different passing combinations.

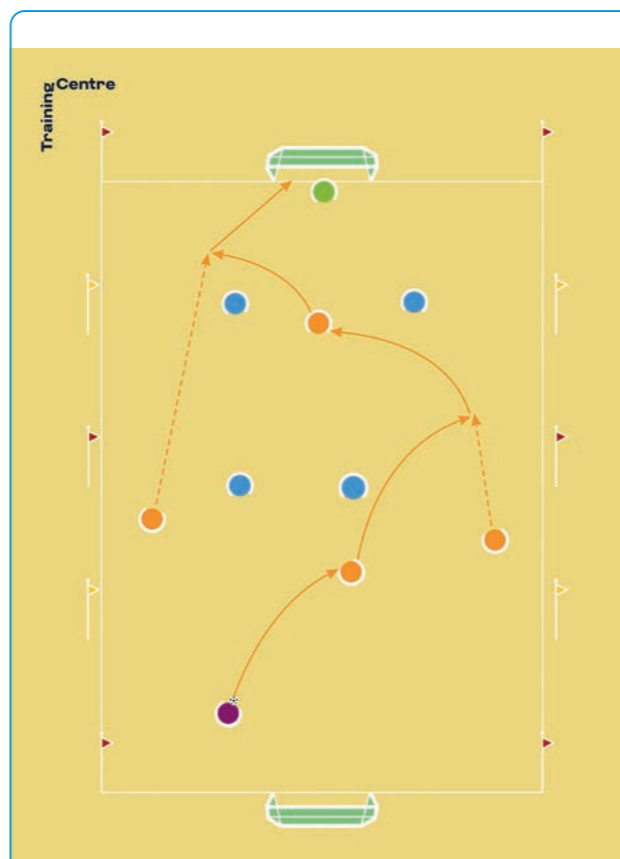
Variations

- Organise the in-possession team in a 1-2-1-1 formation.
- Organise the in-possession team in a 1-2-2 formation.
- Organise the in-possession team in a 1-1-2-1 formation.
- Organise the in-possession team in a 1-1-3 formation.

Coaching points

- Ask the out-of-possession team to defend passively to allow the in-possession team to work on their tactical organisation.
- Vary the direction of the attacks.

8.4.1 1-3-1



Description

- Three defenders and one attacker
- A defensive set-up

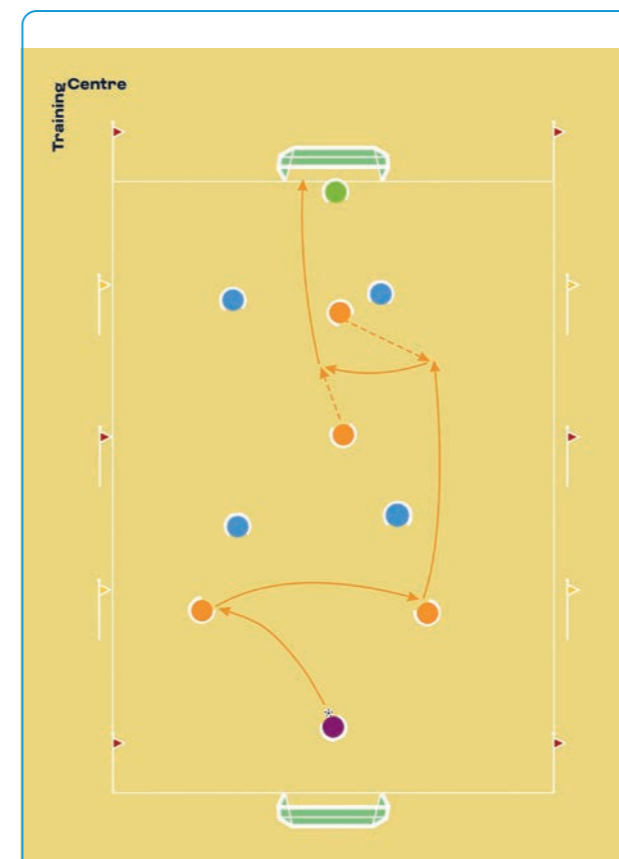
Advantages

- Players are ideally distributed across the defensive zone and can form a compact unit
- A suitable formation when the team are dominant and the opposing team have pressed too hard
- Allows teams to retain possession for long periods and build up slowly from the back

Disadvantages

- Considerable distances between the wide defenders and attacker make it difficult for players to support each other
- The attacker is often isolated
- Few attacking options if players fail to progress up the pitch

8.4.2 1-2-1-1



Description

- Two defenders, one midfielder and one attacker
- The midfielder supports both the attacker and the defenders during opposition attacks (has to cover a lot of ground and be very physically fit)
- The formation suits a very direct playing style

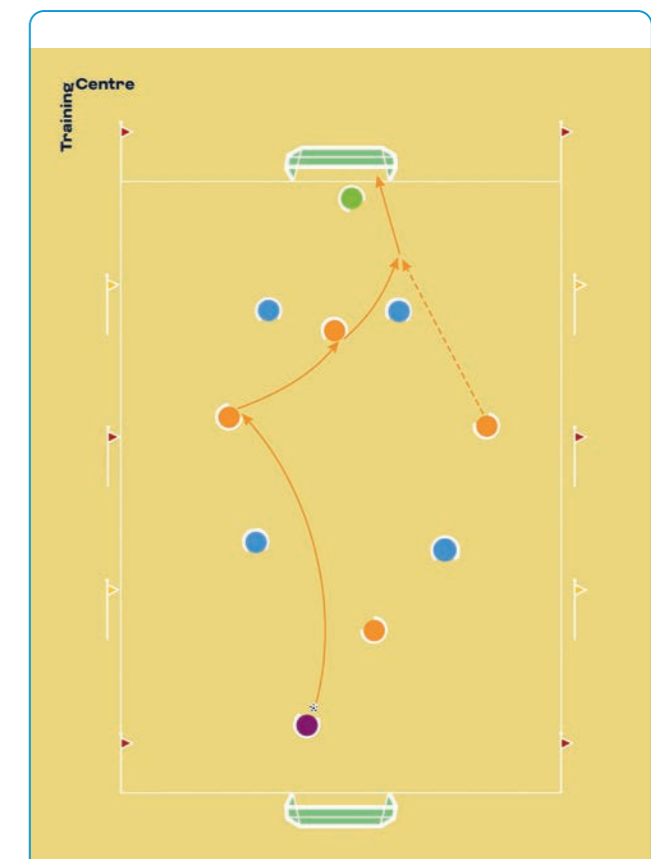
Advantages

- Players are well-distributed across the length of the pitch

Disadvantages

- The team fail to use the full width of the pitch
- The defenders' positioning is not clearly defined
- Attacks become very predictable, with the majority involving a long ball played up to the attacker

8.4.3 1-1-2-1



Description

- One central defender, two wingers and one central attacker
- Variables of the above set-up

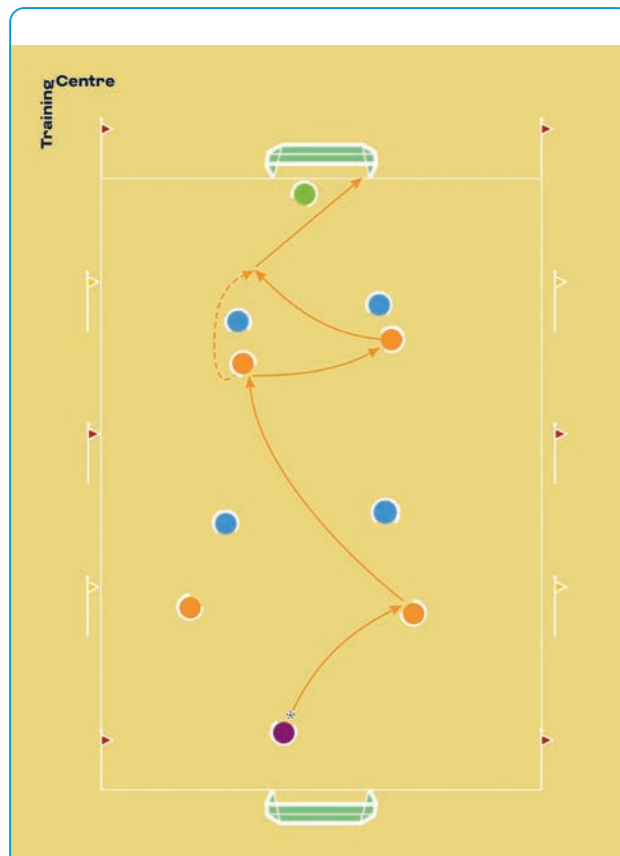
Advantages

- Players are well-distributed across the length and width of the pitch
- Allows adventurous wingers to attack frequently at pace

Disadvantages

- Demands sound tactical understanding of players to take up good defensive positions and regularly switch to mark zonally
- The central defender is likely to face many one-on-one situations

8.4.4 1-2-2



Description

- Two defenders and two attackers

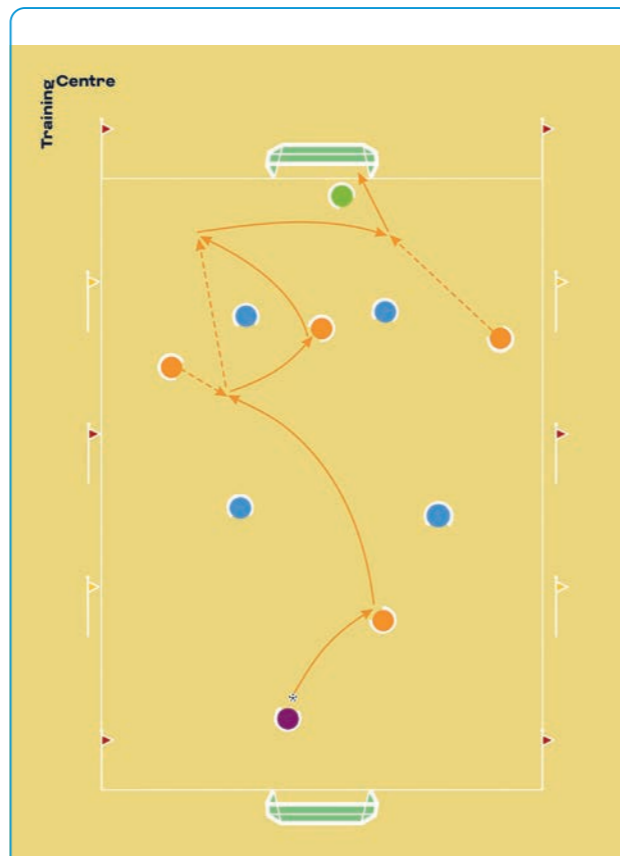
Advantages

- A clear distinction between attack and defence
- Players are well-distributed across the width of the pitch

Disadvantages

- Attackers tend to neglect their defensive duties
- A lot of space between the lines
- Defensive positioning means that no specific player is delegated with the task of marking the opposing attacker

8.4.5 1-1-3



Description

- One defender and three attackers
- A very attack-minded set-up

Advantages

- Adopted to apply constant pressure on the opposing team and prevent them from organising themselves

Disadvantages

- Vulnerable to counter-attacks
- Players have to cover a lot of ground
- Only suitable for players who have a strong ability to compete at a high tempo

8.5 Set pieces

The fact that around a third of beach soccer goals are scored from set pieces reflects the significance of such situations in the sport. This section examines all of the attacking and defensive approaches that a team can adopt in the various situations in which play is restarted.

Situations

There are a number of situations involving restarts of play, each of which can be considered from two perspectives – that of the attacking team and that of the defending team.

- Kick-off
- When the ball goes out of play
- Corner kicks
- Goal clearances
- When the referees stop play for a foul
- Free kicks
- Throw-ins

Types of moves:

- Feints
- Rotation

Tactical planning of restart strategies

Simplicity, the element of surprise and speed are all factors for a team to consider when selecting the restart strategy to be adopted. Before choosing a strategy, the following points should be taken into account:

- The number of tactics involved in each strategy
- The tactical aims of each strategy
- The number of players directly or indirectly involved
- Each player's tactical role
- Whether the strategy is attacking or defensive
- The area of the pitch where the strategy is to be implemented
- The state of the pitch
- The weather conditions
- The characteristics and ability of both the team's players and the opposing team's players.



8.5.1 Corner kick

Organisation

- This exercise is performed using one goal and involves a 4v4, plus a goalkeeper.
- Attacking team: one player takes the corner, while the other three take up positions inside the penalty area. Defending team: three defenders use player-to-player marking, while the other defender is positioned at the near post.

Explanation

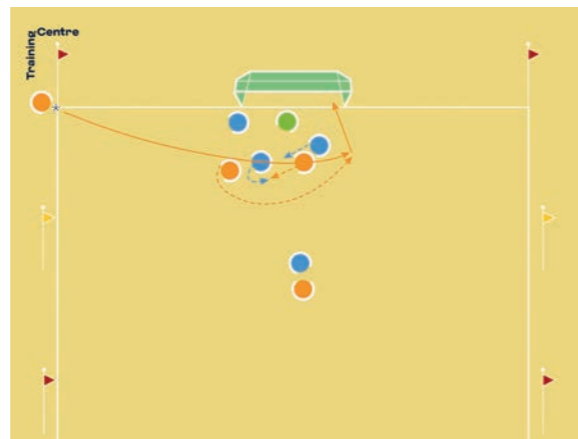
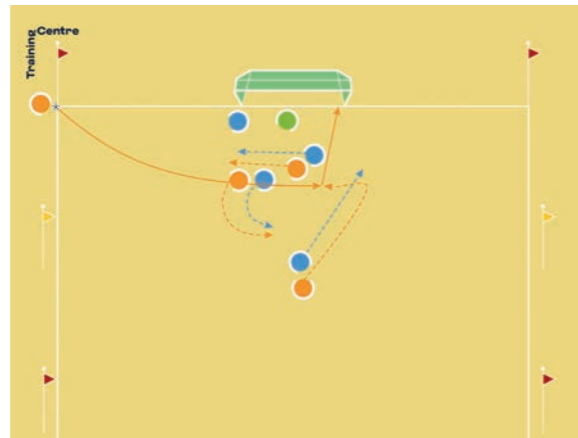
- Ask three of the defenders to mark player-to-player, while the remaining defender is tasked with defending the near post.
- Amarelle presents the corner-taking team with several attacking combinations. Firstly, the attacking players make rotational runs to free themselves from their markers, before the exercise progresses to passing combinations.

Variations

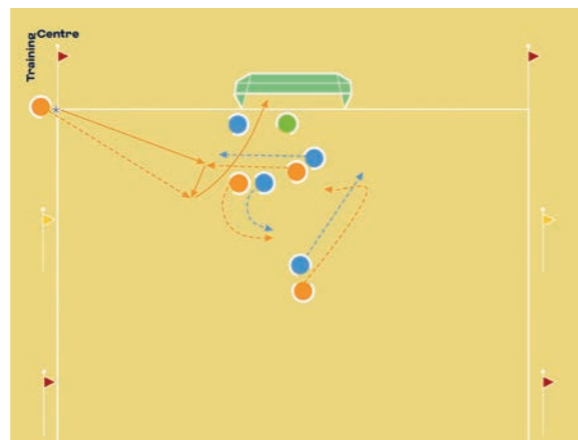
- Vary the combinations and create specific match situations. Introduce the notion of blocking to allow a team-mate to free themselves from their marker.
- Rotate the teams. The attacking team become the defending team and vice versa.

Coaching points

- After performing each sequence several times, switch to the imaginary corner arc on the opposite side of the pitch to allow players to work on the combinations from different positions.
- Attacking players should attack the ball aggressively at pace, while making various movements to confuse their opponents.
- Coaches should be creative and present players with various systems for this restart.



Variation 1



Variation 2



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8.5.2 Free kicks

Organisation

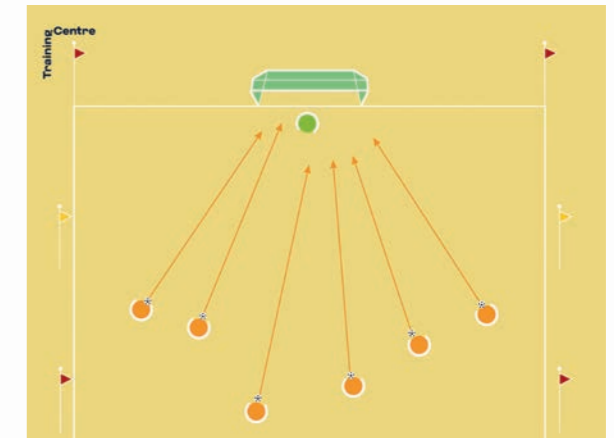
- Set up free kick stations in different positions around the pitch.
- This exercise is performed using one goal, which is defended by a goalkeeper. Rotate the goalkeepers.

Explanation

- Players take it in turns to take free kicks based on their position on the pitch.
- Start the exercise with free kicks taken by players situated closest to goal and finish with those furthest from goal.
- Create a competition between the outfield players and the goalkeepers.

Coaching points

- Ask players to vary the height of their free kicks (along the sand to create deceptive rebounds that are difficult for goalkeepers to deal with, mid-height and high).
- Ask players to vary their free kick positions to simulate match situations.



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8.5.3 Kick-off

Organisation

- Set up a 5v5 scenario, with one team taking the kick-off and the other team defending it.

Explanation

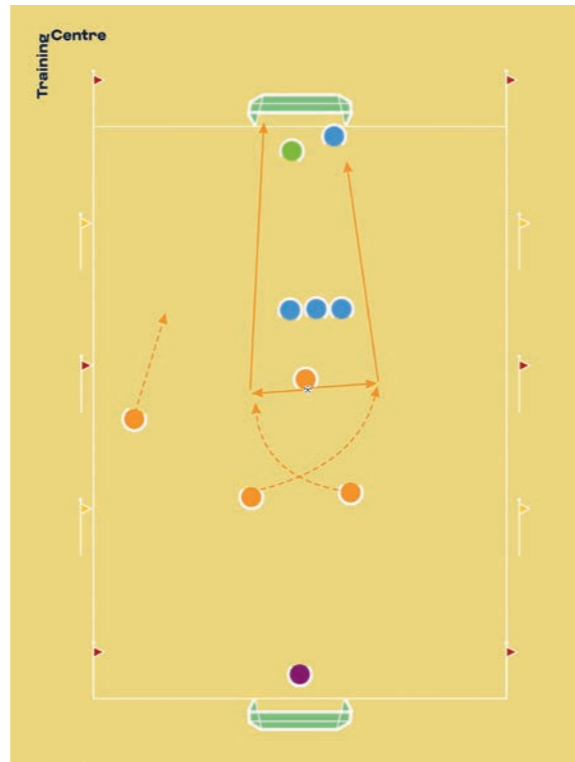
- This exercise focuses on a number of kick-off variations.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-off, i.e. the kick-off taker must play the ball to a team-mate before a shot on goal can be taken.
- Ask the defending team to defend passively. The aim of the exercise is to work on different kick-off variations.
- The exercise begins with the kick-off taker playing the ball along the sand to their team-mate, who takes a first-time shot on goal.

Variations

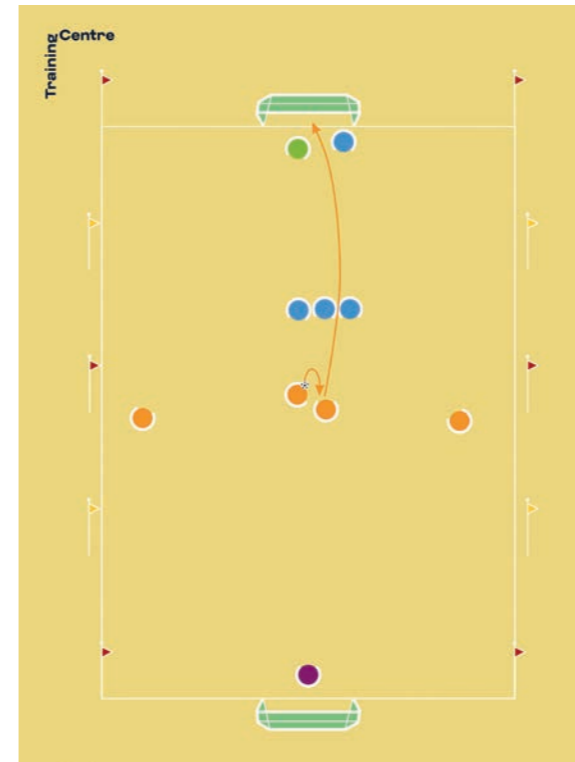
- **V°1:** The kick-off taker flicks the ball off the sand to their team-mate, who takes a first-time, volleyed shot on goal.
- **V°2:** Aerial passing combination that culminates in one of the two wide players taking a volleyed shot on goal.
- **V°3:** Aerial passing combination that culminates in one of the two wide players performing a bicycle-kick finish.
- **V°4:** Allow the defenders to defend actively and apply a press, simulating a match scenario.

Coaching points

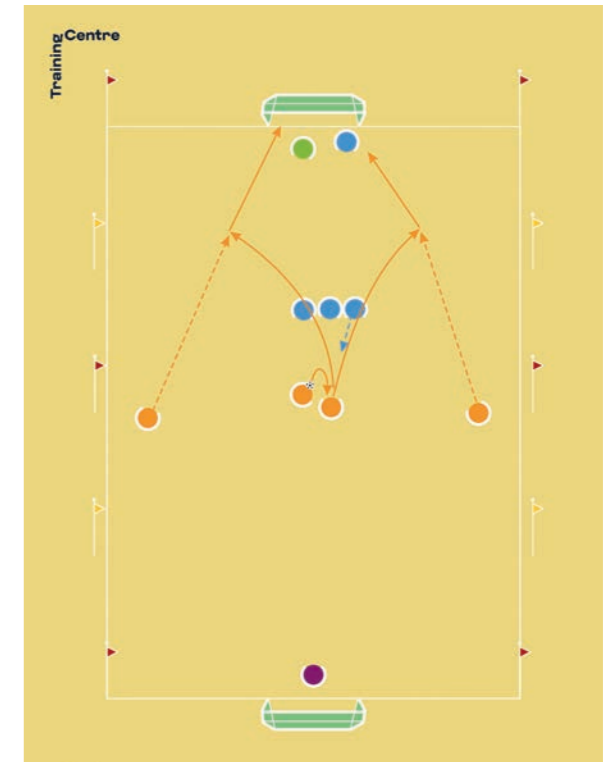
- Develop different kick-off variations.
- Ask the attacking players to adapt their approach according to the press being applied by the opposition.



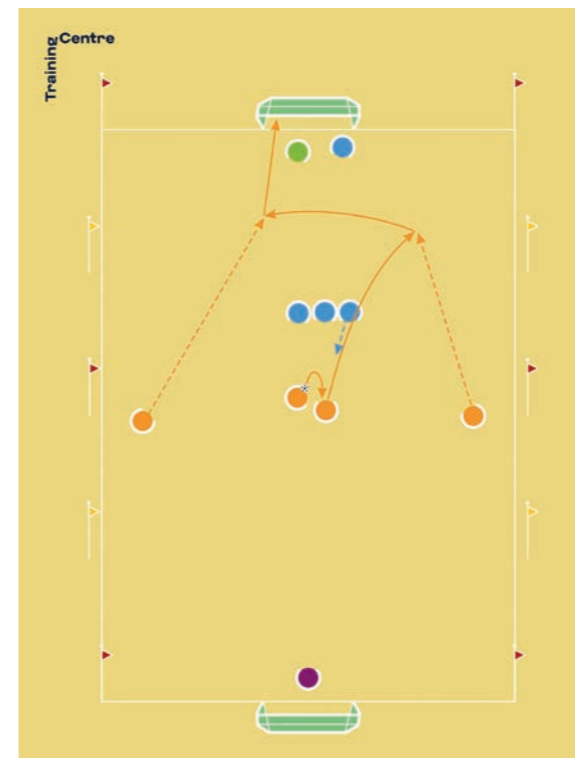
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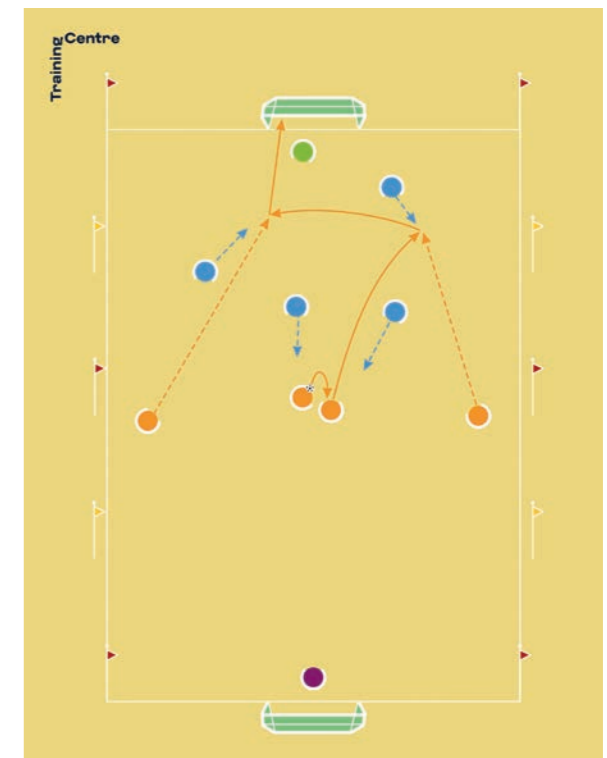
Variation 1



Variation 2



Variation 3



Variation 4

8.5.4 Throw-in

Organisation

- Set up a scenario with four attackers v. four defenders and a goalkeeper.

Explanation

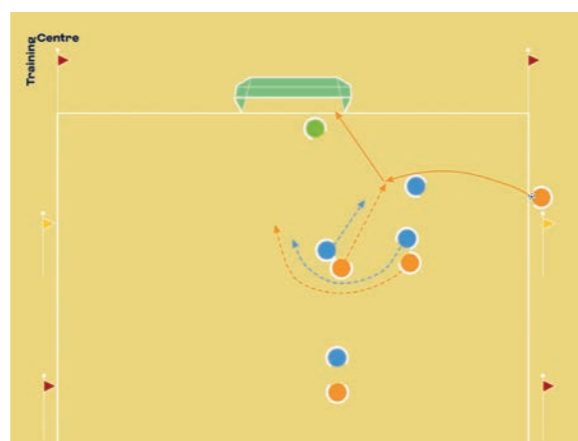
- There are several possible throw-in combinations, and Schirinzi presents a number of strategies for this restart. From the touchline, play is restarted with either a kick-in or throw-in.
- The first combination culminates in a near-post finish.
- Ask the defenders to defend passively to allow the attacking players to work on the various combinations.

Variations

- Combination culminating in a far-post finish.
- Combination focused on the central attacking area. The player receiving the throw-in makes a decoy run to create space to control the ball on their chest before performing a bicycle kick.
- An attacker plays a short return pass to the thrower, who then plays a lofted ball towards the far post, where an unmarked team-mate takes a shot. This is a three-step combination. The thrower combines with a team-mate before playing the ball to the far post. Alternatively, the thrower receives a return pass and takes a shot.

Coaching points

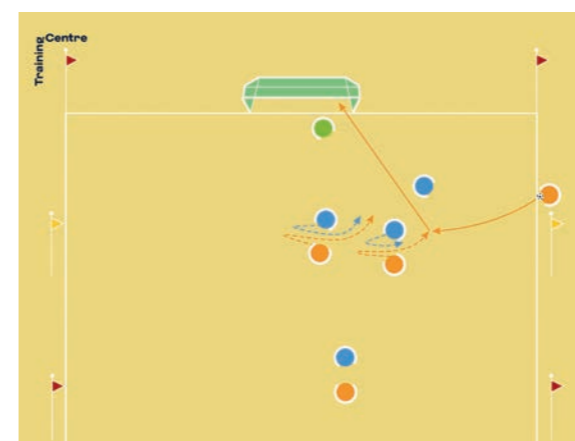
- After performing each sequence several times, switch to the opposite touchline to allow the players to work on the combinations from different positions.
- Attacking players should attack the ball aggressively at pace, while making different movements to confuse their opponents.
- Coaches should be creative and present players with various systems for this restart.



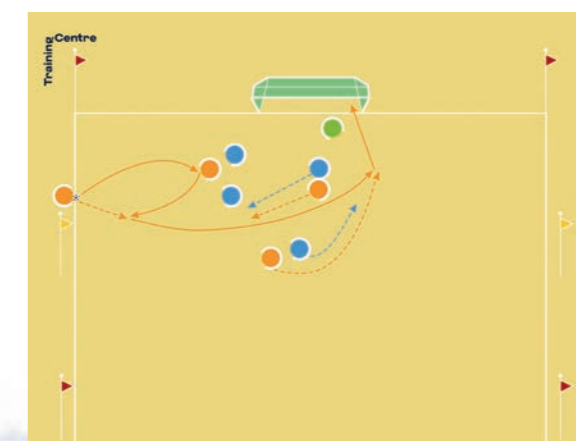
Variation 1



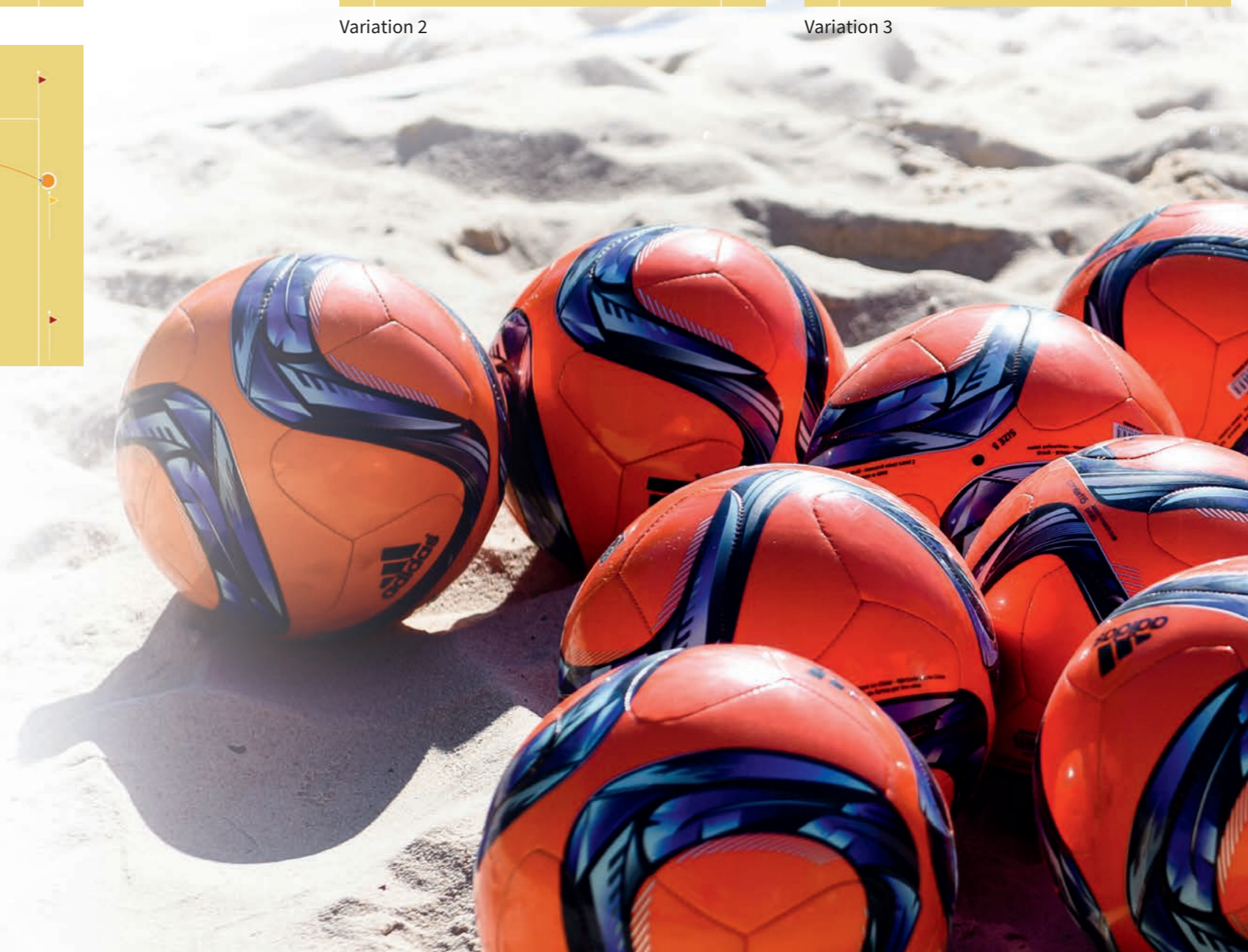
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Variation 2



Variation 3





You have to make the sand your friend in beach soccer. The unique conditions produce unrivalled levels of feints and outstanding aerial play, as well as demanding robust conditioning to overcome the soft sand. Good fitness and coordination skills that combine speed and power are required to perform the simplest of movements. Beach soccer offers an excellent alternative to traditional forms of physical exercise and coordination training. Explosive strength, which is a key attribute in beach soccer, is one of the key areas outfield players and goalkeepers work on in training to improve their performance and fitness levels.

FIFA Beach Soccer Technical Expert Angelo Schirinzi believes the levels of fitness required to play beach soccer have increased a great deal since the early days. In the beginning, former players were invited to play beach soccer to give publicity to the game. It was more recreational, but when FIFA entered, it became far more of a serious challenge. All of the big powerhouses of beach soccer began to train and develop players on sand and the sport became very specific. It meant that even elite football players could no longer play beach soccer as it required other conditions and skills. For example, football is primarily played on the ground whilst beach soccer is played in the air with a lot of flicks involved. As it is very hot, the mentality is different. In the outfield positions, you play 4v4. You cannot hide yourself and fitness levels have to be very high. There is more engagement and it is played at a more intense level than association football.

The sport started with three or four countries and now there are hundreds of associations worldwide looking to develop the sport. Beach soccer legend Ramiro Amarelle believes the organisation and the quality of the players has improved considerably. He says there are limiting factors in today's game and, without good fitness, it's tough to compete at elite level. General fitness, fitness training, injury prevention, good habits, recovery, nutrition and hydration are all basic areas where the sport has progressed and helped to improve the quality of modern-day players. They are far more skilful and well-rounded now. As they also compete in more competitions, this allows them to play more matches so they have better development opportunities. They get more hours on the sand, more training sessions and more matches. As a result, their fitness levels have to be much higher. Full-time professionals train five or six times a week and they end up playing 60-70 matches a year. These players benefit from conditioning advice, fitness coaches, individual training programmes and technical training.

FIFA Beach Soccer Technical Expert and former professional goalkeeper, Claude Barrabé, believes beach soccer is also good for players returning to fitness in the 11-a-side game. It helps injured players get back to training and work on their fitness. It's useful for goalkeepers too. Due to the unpredictability of the sand and the fact it isn't flat, it is great for reflex work. The problem for goalkeepers is adapting to the surface as balls can go anywhere. For professional beach soccer player Edu Suárez, when it comes to beach soccer, everything is different. The pitch isn't the same and you have to adapt, not only with the ball, but also how to run and move. To adapt to the sand, you have to learn how to run in the sand. It seems easy but it isn't since it's so different. The lateral movement, sprinting, everything changes. It's basically learning how to move your body on a new surface. According to Suárez, after a lot of hours training in the sand you can adapt and get rid of those football habits and turn yourself into a 100% beach soccer player.



9.1 Endurance

In order of prominence, endurance, explosive strength, and speed are the major focus during pre-season training. If an individual player or the team as a whole are lacking in any of these areas, specific training sessions during pre-season can prove to be highly beneficial. This also applies once the season is underway. Strength and coordination exercises can also be incorporated into training sessions at regular intervals throughout the season.

Explanation:

Endurance training is designed to improve a player's stamina. Endurance refers to the body's ability to exert itself over prolonged periods. Endurance training reinforces cardiovascular fitness, the immune system and health in general. As a result, high levels of endurance reduce the risk of injury and improve recovery. Good endurance is the basis for excellence in speed and explosive strength training. Integrated endurance training includes exercises that are specifically designed to improve endurance, with additional technical and tactical elements.

Methods/basic principles:

During endurance exercises, a player's heart rate should be between 130-160bpm.



9.1.1 Endurance

Organisation

- Set up three or four lanes using markers. Adjust the length of the lanes based on the distance you want the players to cover.

Explanation

- This exercise begins with the player at one end of the lane dribbling the ball at mid-pace towards their team-mate at the opposite end of the lane. When the player reaches the end of the lane, they lay the ball off to their team-mate, who dribbles it back to the other end of the lane.
- Ask the players to dribble the ball along the sand.
- Perform the exercise for four to five minutes.

Variation

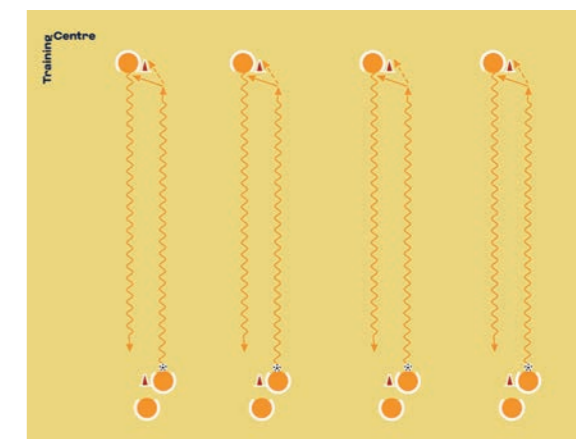
- Ask the players to flick the ball up off the sand and juggle it for a few metres as they carry the ball from one end of the lane to the other. They should then allow the ball to drop to the sand and dribble to the end of the lane. This variation is to be performed at mid-pace.

Game situation

- 5v5 game: set up a 5v5 game using the full pitch and establish a rule that the players can only pass the ball using their hands. Players are not allowed to run with the ball in their hands. Players can only score with headers. If the ball touches the sand, possession switches to the other team. Create a competition between the teams and incorporate your own rules.

Coaching points

- Ask the players to perform the initial exercise at mid-pace.
- Introduce muscle-strengthening elements throughout the exercises.



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9.2 Explosive strength

Explosive strength refers to the combination of speed and strength to generate as much energy as possible in the shortest possible time. Explosive strength is particularly important in beach soccer, since movements such as jumping or shooting require much more energy when playing on sand compared to grass or other firm surfaces.

Methods/basic principles:

- Complete a warm-up before progressing into the main part of the training session
- Rapid and explosive movements
- Load: 80-90% of maximum velocity
- No significant increase in heart rate between repetitions
- One-minute rest
- Three repetitions per set
- One to three sets per training session
- Rest between sets: three to five minutes. The team can be divided: five players complete the set while the remaining players (who are given balls) help and motivate the active players, before swapping roles

9.2.1 Explosive strength

Organisation

- Place the outfield players in one of the goal areas and a goalkeeper in the opposing goal. Set out three markers at different angles a few metres from the starting marker and another ahead of them in line with the starting marker. Place two balls on the edge of the opposing penalty area.

Explanation

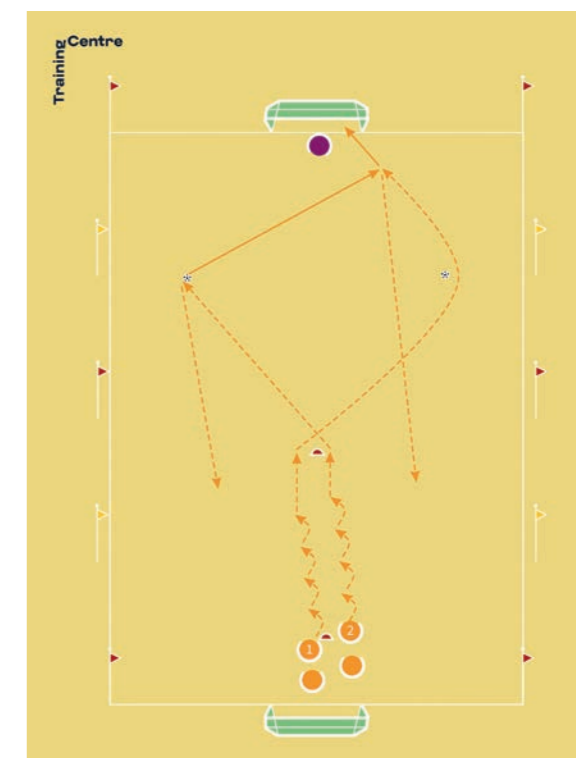
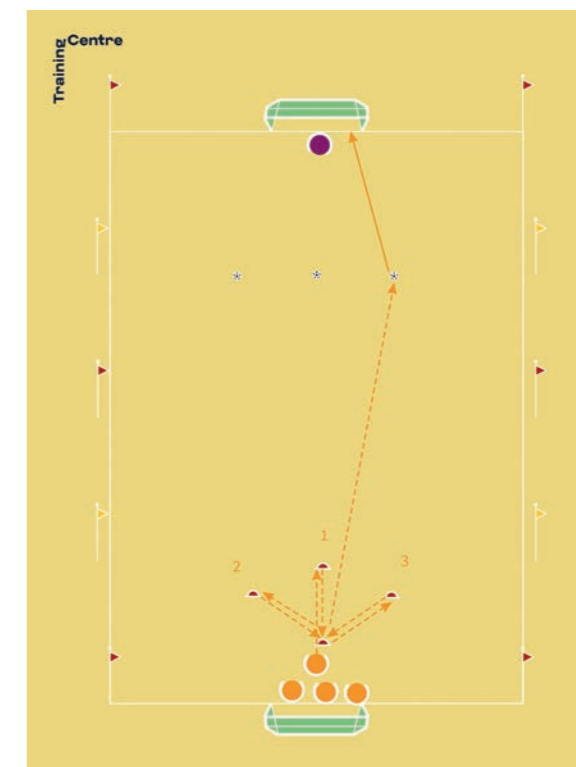
- Players take it in turns to perform the exercise.
- Ask players to move as quickly as possible between the starting marker and one of those in front of them and back, before repeating the sequence with the other markers.
- After having performed the sequence with each of the three markers, the player then sprints to the fourth marker and then to one of the two balls situated on the edge of the opposing penalty area and takes a shot.
- Each player is asked to perform the exercise four times (two left- and right-footed shots apiece).

Variation

- Divide the players into pairs. After performing four single-leg hops from the starting marker and then sprinting towards the first marker, each player in the pair sprints diagonally in opposite directions towards the ball on their respective flank. The first player to reach their ball takes up a position at the far post to meet their partner's cross and finish on goal, which is defended by a goalkeeper. Once the move is over, the players must get back into position as quickly as possible.

Coaching points

- Ask the players to perform the exercise at very high intensity.
- As the coach, you should play an active role in the exercises, particularly when it comes to encouraging the players.
- The players should orientate their body position towards the goalkeeper throughout the exercise. When sprinting back towards the starting marker after having completed the sequence, players should scan over their shoulder towards the goalkeeper.



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9.3 Speed

Speed can be divided into three categories: reaction speed, acceleration and action speed. Reaction speed refers to a player's ability to react as quickly as possible to a stimulus, such as an acoustic signal. Acceleration is measured by the speed recorded over the first five to seven metres, while action speed refers to the ability to maintain a speed for up to 20 metres after the first five to seven metres.



Methods/basic principles:

- Complete a warm-up before progressing into the main part of the training session
- Full recovery after each repetition
- Maximum speed
- Significant increase in heart rate after each repetition
- Basic speed training sessions are performed without a ball, while individual exercises may require a ball (e.g. shooting on goal)

9.3.1 Coordination

Organisation

- This exercise is to be performed simultaneously in several square playing areas, with three to six players in each area.

Explanation

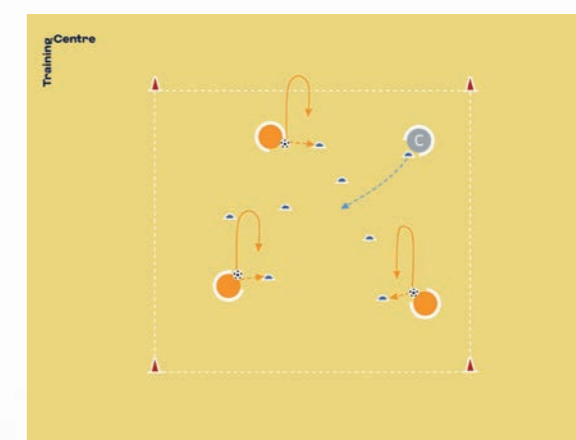
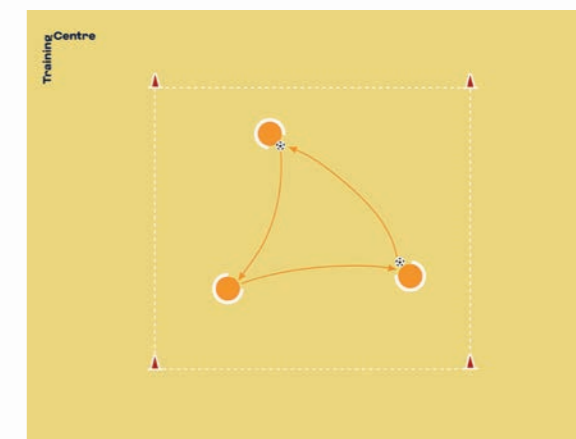
- The initial exercise involves the players juggling the ball and playing volleyed passes to each other within the playing area. Perform the exercise with several balls in play (e.g. two balls amongst three players).

Variation

- Encourage players to compete against each other to see who is the best at juggling the ball. Lay down markers on the sand and ask players to pick them up while keeping the ball in the air. Award players with points for each cone they pick up while keeping the ball in the air. Establish a points system based on the colour of the cones to create a fun and competitive training environment.

Coaching points

- Play an active role in the exercises. Introduce new rules during the course of the exercise. Join in with the exercises to help create a fun and competitive training environment.



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9.3.2 Speed

Organisation

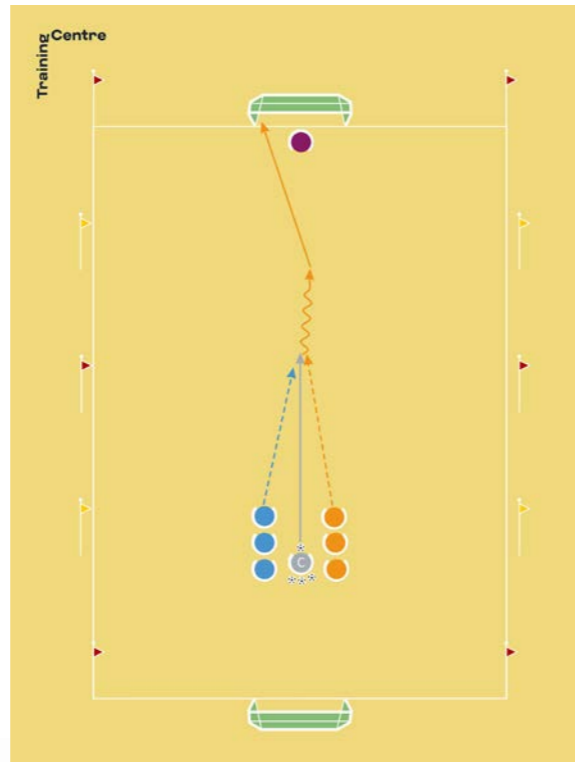
- Create two teams. Set them up in parallel rows, and place a goalkeeper in the opposing goal.

Explanation

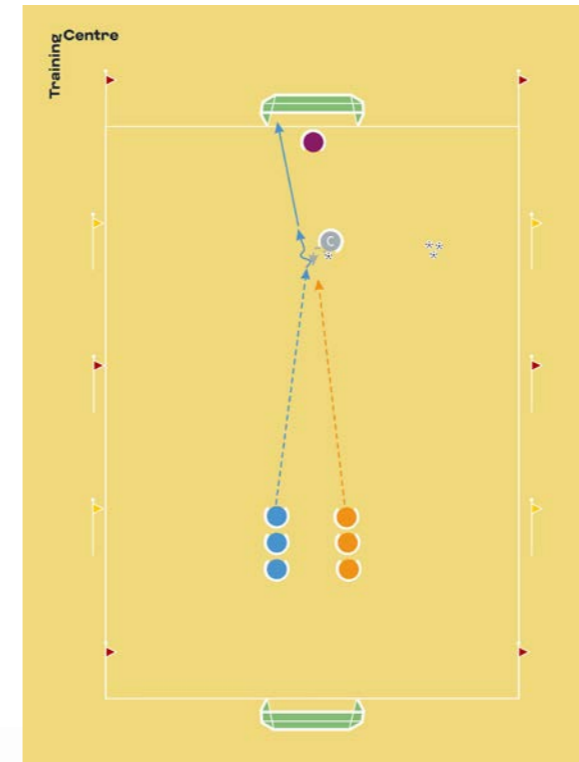
- The coach takes up a position behind the rows of players and throws a ball along the sand between them.
- The first player in each team races to the ball. The player to reach the ball first takes it on to set up a one-on-one.
- Schirinzi delivers a series of exercises that work on speed and reaction times. As soon as the first player to reach the ball has touched it, the second player becomes inactive.
- Create a competition between the teams.

Variations

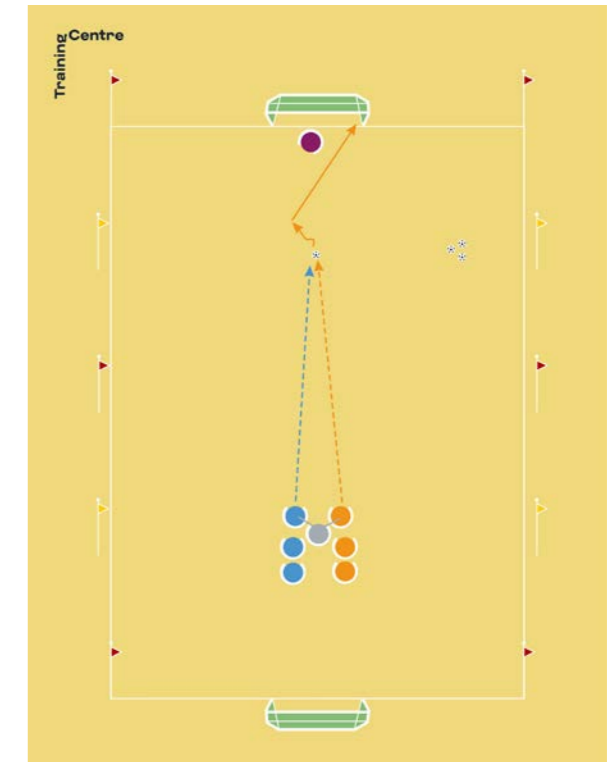
- The coach takes up a position in front of the players. As soon as the coach drops the ball, the players sprint to reach it first.
- Vary the starting signal. For example, by tapping players on the back or making a specific sound, etc.
- The players start flat on their stomach and race to tap the coach's hand. This variation does not involve a finishing element.
- The players start in a seated position with their back to the coach and race to tap the coach's hand. Nor does this variation involve a finishing element.



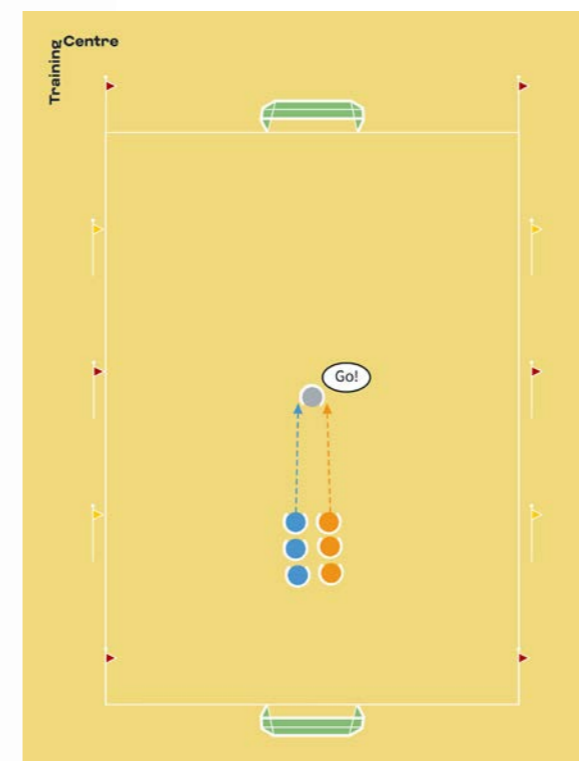
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Variation 1



Variation 2



Variations 3 and 4



9.4 Strength

Strength training can help players to build muscle. It is also beneficial for maintaining good posture and preventing back pain, for example. It is therefore an important element of injury prevention. Exercises such as stretching or abdominal crunches can be incorporated into training programmes.

9.5 Fitness training for goalkeepers

A goalkeeper's physical condition is a key factor in enabling them to perform well in matches and training sessions. Goalkeepers work on their fitness during pre-season, but they must also maintain and improve their fitness levels over the course of the season. Integrated physical training (speed, strength and coordination) is one way to improve fitness, while also honing technical ball skills. Goalkeepers can participate in team training sessions or train separately with a goalkeeping coach.



9.5.1 Endurance

Organisation

- This exercise requires three goalkeepers: one in goal and one at either end of the imaginary halfway line.

Explanation

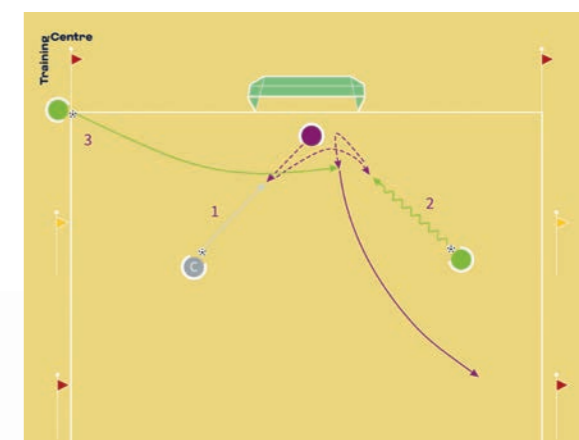
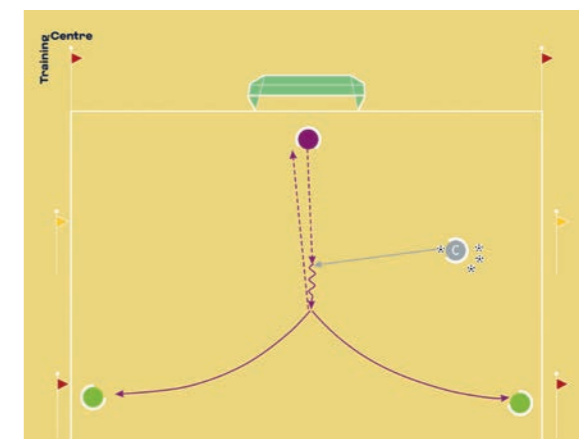
- The goalkeeper runs out of goal at mid-pace towards the ball on the edge of the penalty area. They flick the ball up off the sand and juggle it for a few metres, before playing a volleyed pass into the hands of the goalkeeper on their left. They then get back into their starting position and repeat the sequence, this time playing a volleyed pass to the goalkeeper on their right.
- Perform the exercise four to six times before rotating the goalkeepers.

Variation

- This variation requires three goalkeepers and a coach. Place a ball inside the corner arc and a ball on each side of the penalty area. Simulate several match situations.
- The coach serves a mid-height, volleyed shot from the left side of the penalty area. The goalkeeper then gets back into goal before coming out to smother the ball at the feet of the goalkeeper on the right of the penalty area. The goalkeeper once again retreats towards their goal. The third match situation involves the goalkeeper judging the flight of the ball to deal with a corner kick delivered to the far post, before playing an overarm throw-out to the blue square.

Coaching points

- Ask the goalkeepers to keep an eye on what is happening in front of them when retreating towards goal. The goalkeepers should take sidesteps or crossover steps when retreating towards goal.
- Work on several match situations.



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9.5.2 Explosive strength

Organisation

- Place four cones in a row running backwards from the goal line on either side of the goal. Take up a central serving position on the edge of the penalty area or ask one of the goalkeepers to occupy this position.

Explanation

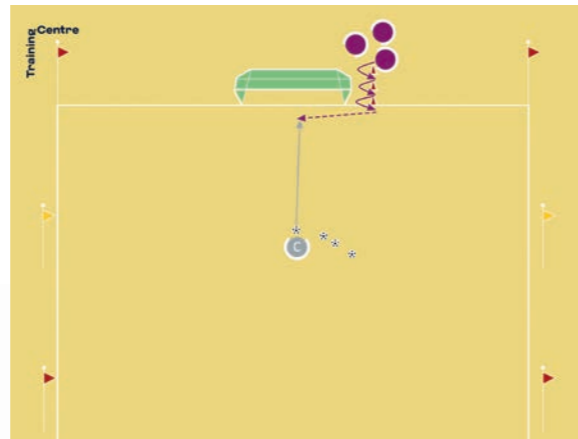
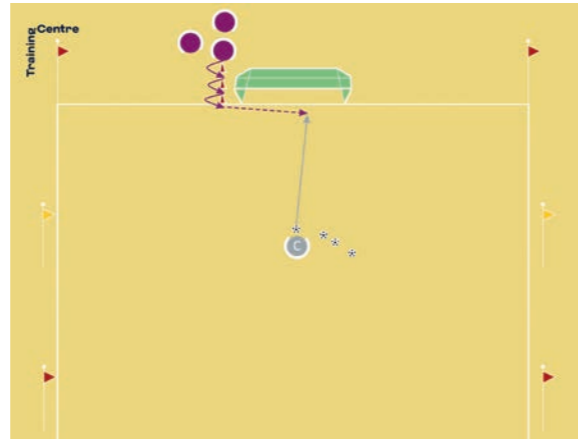
- The first goalkeeper jumps over each of the four cones. They then take a few steps to get into position and try to save a shot directed towards the far side of the goal.
- The goalkeepers take it in turns to perform the exercise.
- After jumping over each of the four cones, the goalkeeper is tasked with catching or parrying a mid-height shot from the coach/goalkeeper positioned centrally on the edge of the penalty area. The shot is directed towards the far side of the goal from where the goalkeeper has come, forcing them to react quickly.

Variations

- Vary the side of the goal on which the exercise is performed.
- The goalkeepers perform standing tuck jumps (knee to chest) over the cones and are then asked to catch or parry a shot along the sand, before quickly getting back up to deal with a mid-height shot directed towards the far side of the goal.

Coaching points

- Ask the goalkeepers to take small steps to adjust their position before throwing themselves into the dive.



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9.5.3 Speed

Organisation

- Place one of the goalkeepers in goal and a goalkeeper with a ball on each flank (between the imaginary halfway line and the penalty area). Set up a square zone on either side of the penalty area.

Explanation

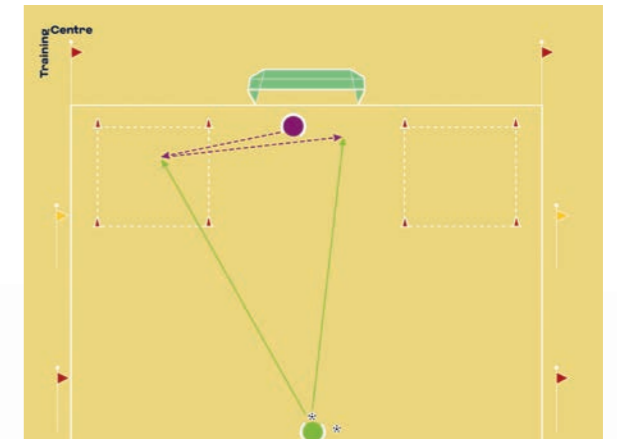
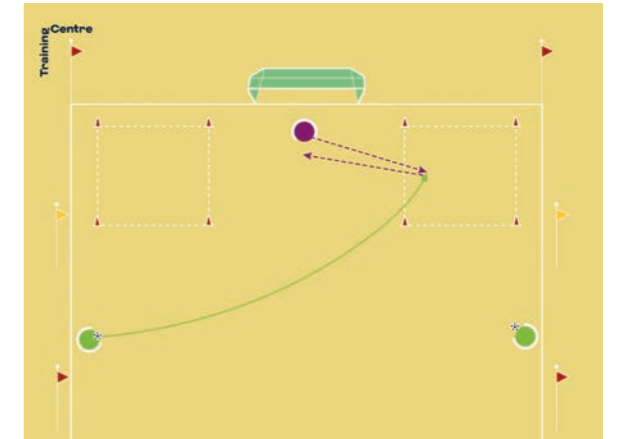
- The “server” goalkeepers take it in turns to play an aerial ball towards the square zone on the opposite side of the penalty area.
- The goalkeeper has to try to catch or divert the ball before it touches the sand in the square zone. Each goalkeeper performs the sequence four times.

Variation

- Set up a station in a central area in the opposite half of the pitch. This variation involves a two-ball sequence (delivered consecutively). For the first ball, a “server” goalkeeper plays an underarm throw towards one of the two square zones. For the second ball, the “server” goalkeeper throws the ball towards goal. After dealing with the first ball, the goalkeeper has to quickly get back into position to catch or parry the second ball.

Coaching points

- Ask the goalkeepers to move at very high intensity.
- The goalkeepers must demonstrate high energy levels when getting back into position after each intervention.



FIFA Training Centre

10.1 Complementary training for football

Playing beach soccer is an excellent way to complement football training, especially for children. As previously noted in this manual, playing on sand demands high levels of technical ability, fitness and coordination, so beach soccer helps to develop all of these aspects.

Technique and tactics

The combination of significant ball contact time, an uneven playing surface and having limited time in which to control the ball is highly beneficial when it comes to improving a player's technical ability. The fact that the foundations of technical skills are laid at a very early age makes beach soccer particularly suitable for children and young players. From a tactical perspective, beach soccer also offers many benefits for players who usually play on grass. Rapid switches of play, seeking a quick, direct route to goal and the many rehearsed patterns of play and movements all serve to improve a player's tactical understanding.

Fitness and coordination

Players require a high level of fitness and coordination to move on sand, owing to the fact that it gives way with every step they take. In this respect, beach soccer offers an exciting alternative to traditional conditioning and coordination training.

Cognitive skills

Beach soccer also helps to improve a player's cognitive skills. The sport's characteristically high tempo forces players to immediately identify and analyse each situation and make quick decisions. By correctly anticipating a situation during a game, players buy themselves time to choose and prepare the appropriate course of action. The ability to read the game and anticipate individual moves is a crucial success factor for any player in a team sport and is best learned at a young age.

10.2 Infrastructure and competition calendar

In many places, the demand for public football pitches far outstrips the supply. As a result, in countries with long coastlines, such as Brazil, many footballers take to the sand to pursue their hobby. Permanent or temporary beach soccer pitches can be set up with little effort and minimal cost, offering an attractive alternative to the existing infrastructure.

Of course, beach soccer is not confined to coastal regions, as the sport has also established itself in many landlocked countries. The football season does not usually span the whole calendar year and many clubs do not offer any alternative activities during the summer and winter breaks. As such, beach soccer can be introduced as a seasonal extension to the football season at these times of the year.



10.3 Injury prevention and rehabilitation

The physical characteristics of sand means that beach soccer training enhances a player's performance levels and strengthens muscle groups that are not activated when playing on a firm surface. Indeed, complementary training sessions on sand can reduce the risk of injury. Playing on sand not only strengthens muscles, but also reduces the strain on the spine, joints, ligaments and tendons. Along with the fact that footwear is not permitted in beach soccer, the cushioning effect of the playing surface is the main reason for the low number of injuries in the sport when compared with football.

Muscle-strengthening and the reduced strain on the spine, joints, ligaments and tendons are also important factors when designing a rehabilitation programme for overworked joints and injuries. In cases where particular knee or ligament injuries prevent a player from training on a hard surface, beach soccer may offer a suitable alternative.



11.1 General considerations for coaches

Remembering the main reasons young players participate in the sport can prove invaluable when coaching. Below are some key principles that can be followed for coaches and players to make the most out of their beach soccer experience:

- The main objective is for players to enjoy the game.
- Education and development are key objectives.
- Recognise and learn from your mistakes.
- Offer positive feedback, create a friendly atmosphere and foster good relationships, both amongst the players and between the players and yourself.
- Be a role model.
- Encourage players to improve their game.
- Allow players to use their initiative and ensure that they are not afraid of making mistakes.
- Emphasise the importance of fair play.

All exercises contained in this manual can be used to coach players at grassroots level. It is very important to simplify the nature of each exercise by considering the following advice:

- Use smaller pitches or playing areas.
- Reduce the distances between players in passing or shooting drills.
- Use hands to play passes.
- Adapt the size of balls (smaller or bigger for certain exercises).

Grassroots (6-9 years)



Characteristics

Players in this age group:

- try to score as quickly as possible;
- do not understand the importance of teamwork;
- use less of the pitch;
- play in central areas, without creating much width;
- fight for possession as individuals, not as a team; and
- do not fully understand the reason for most of the Laws of the Game.

Coaches should emphasise:

- the importance of retaining possession; and
- that, to get the most out of the game, it is preferable to play as a team, rather than as individuals.

Grassroots (9-12 years)



Characteristics

Players in this age group:

- use more of the pitch;
- display greater cooperation and coordination with team-mates;
- use space to make themselves more available to team-mates;
- understand different roles (attackers and defenders);
- leave greater distances between themselves and their opponents; and
- have a better understanding of the Laws of the Game.

Coaches should emphasise:

- how to play off the ball, in both the attacking and defensive phases;
- how to use the whole pitch; and
- how players can become more efficient in attacking and defensive actions by cooperating with their team-mates.

Youth (12-16 years)



Characteristics

Players in this age group:

- use the space well;
- decide on main and supporting roles;
- plan collectively;
- understand the game as a whole (attacking and defending);
- play for the team; and
- understand and accept the Laws of the Game.

Coaches should emphasise:

- the importance of understanding actions performed by team-mates;
- motivation to cooperate and participate in the attacking and defensive phases;
- fast transitions;
- the importance of occupying spaces near to and away from the ball, in defence and in attack;
- how to play on both flanks, centrally, up front and at the back; and
- how to create space and stop the opposing team from creating space.

Youth (16-18 years)



Characteristics

Players in this age group:

- are developing perception, analysis, decision-making and execution skills;
- display a competitive spirit;
- do not like to be pushed into doing things;
- are influenced by psychological aspects;
- are undergoing puberty, which makes them very sensitive and emotionally unstable; and
- develop on the basis of what they see and feel.

Coaches should emphasise:

- the following weighting in training: 50% technical, 25% physical and 25% tactical;
- how to avoid fatigue;
- the development of all basic tactics;
- different formations and strategies;
- attacking and counter-attacking play;
- how to adopt zonal defending and defensive positioning;
- their support regarding constant decision-making;
- simplified game tasks with changing rules to encourage different moves; and
- games and circuit training.

Generally speaking, we should use different kinds of matches, pitch sizes, numbers of players and goal sizes. This applies to all age groups.

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