

FCRF Talent Development

Attacking the cross

Session overview

Part 1: Passing circuit

Part 2: Combinations and crossing

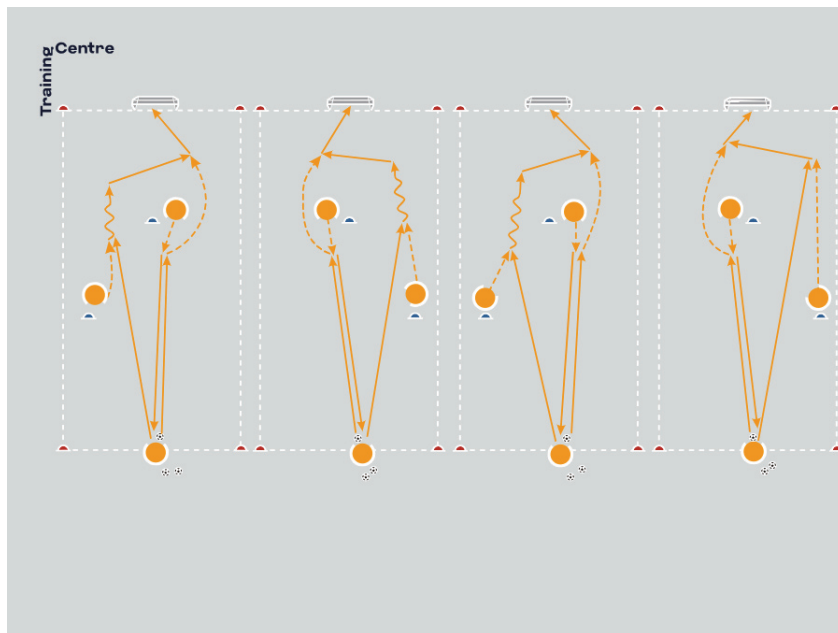
Part 3: 3v1 rondo and cross to finish

Part 4: 6v6 plus 3 small-sided game

Key coaching points

- Making well-timed runs and playing correctly weighted passes can influence the quality of combination play.
- Players should look to play first-time crosses that take advantage of the space behind the opposition's backline.
- Central players should play on the half-turn and adopt an open body shape to enable them to find wide players quickly and effectively.
- Attacking players must think ahead and anticipate the cross by sprinting into the penalty area as the pass is played towards the wide player.
- Players should time their runs to attack the cross. If they go too early, they may end up in an unfavourable position to finish on goal.

PART 1: PASSING CIRCUIT



This passing drill focuses on a unit scale and aims to introduce players into the session by working on passing ranges and combination play. The exercise involves various three-player passing sequences, all of which end with the player closest to the mini-goal passing the ball into the goal.

Organisation

- Mark out four 35m x 10m exercise areas side by side.
- Place a mini-goal at the end of each exercise area.
- Lay out cones inside each exercise area, as displayed in the graphic above.
- Allocate 3 or 4 players to each exercise area.
- In each exercise area, place a player at each of the 3 stations shown in the graphic above.

Explanation

- The exercise begins with the player positioned at the opposite side of the exercise area to the mini-goal in possession.
- Players perform various passing combinations to progress the ball towards the mini-goal.
- Players can drop to receive the ball in front of their station or make runs to receive the ball beyond their station.

- Once the ball is transferred beyond the station located at the side of the exercise area nearer to the mini-goal, players finish the sequence by passing the ball firmly into the mini-goal.
- After a set period of time, players rotate groups to give them the chance to perform the sequence in both directions.

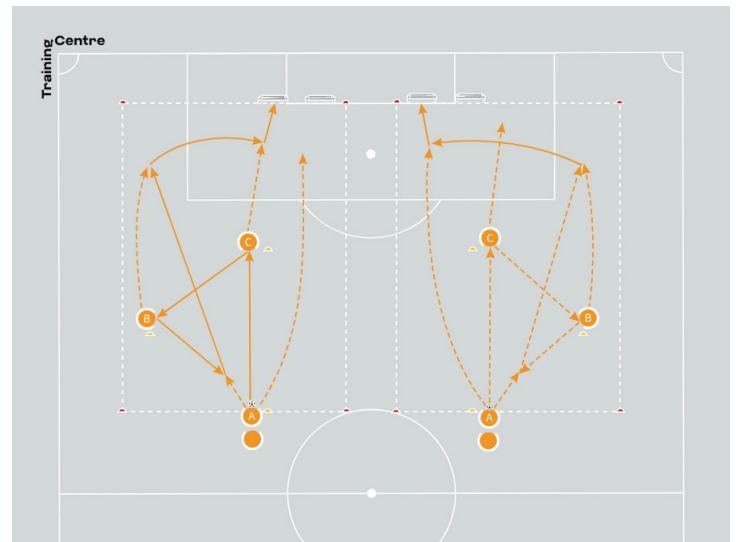
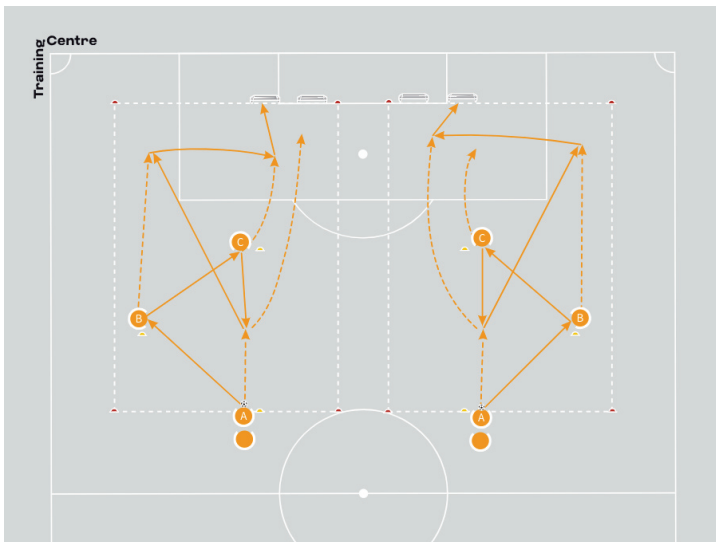
Variation

- Set a time limit to complete the circuit.
- Apply the offside rule.
- Increase the passing distance to the mini-goal.
- Create a competition between the groups in which the highest-scoring team are the winners.

Coaching points

- Firm, precise passes played to the receiver's back foot aid the fluidity of the sequence.
- Encourage the players to play one- or two-touch to improve the efficiency of their actions.
- Players must time their runs so that they receive the ball on the move or half-turn.
- Players should play firm passes into the mini-goal, as if they were playing a pass into an attacker to finish.

PART 2: COMBINATIONS AND CROSSING



Variation

The passing sequences involved in this exercise work on a unit scale and focus on passing combinations between central, wide and forward players. Players are asked to complete a passing sequence before finishing into the mini-goals.

Organisation

- Mark out two 25m x 25m exercise areas in 1 half of a full-size pitch.
- Place 2 mini-goals on the right side at the end of one of the exercise areas.
- Place 2 mini-goals on the left side at the end of the other exercise area.
- Mark out the stations A, B and C like shown in the graphic above.
- Split the players into 2 groups of 7.
- Position 2 players at station B, 2 players at station C and 3 players at station A.

Explanation

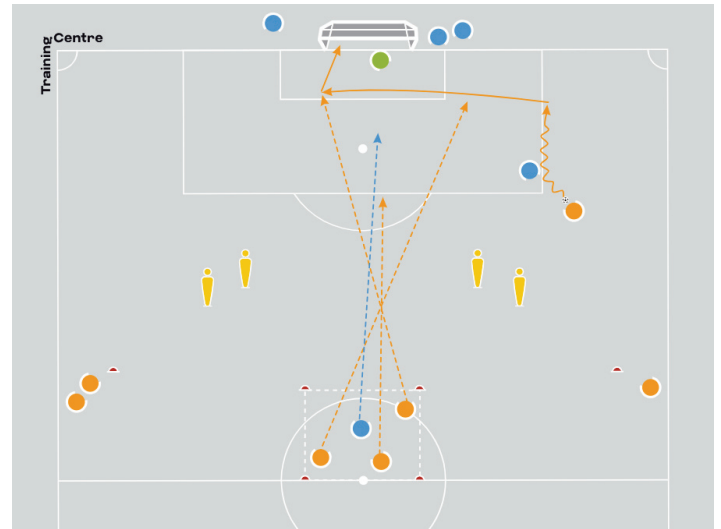
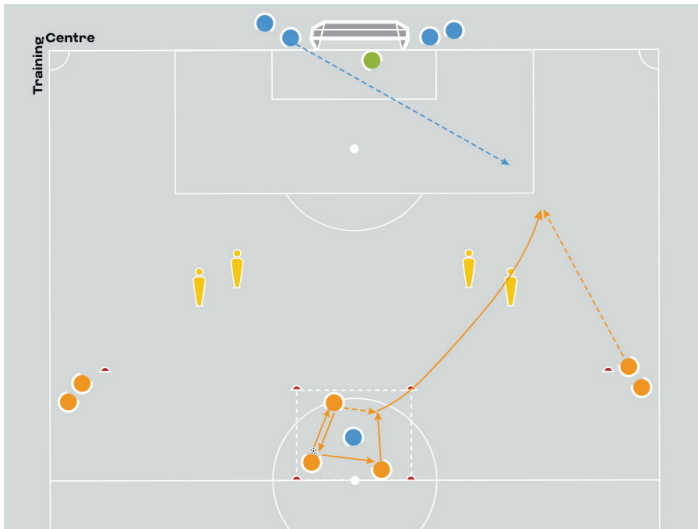
- The exercise begins with the player at A ("A") in possession.
- A plays a pass to B.
- B passes to C.
- C lays the ball off to the onrushing A.
- A plays a pass into the space in front of B.
- A sprints towards the mini-goals.
- C jogs towards the mini-goals.
- B latches onto A's pass and delivers a first-time cross towards either A or C.
- A or C finishes first-time into either of the 2 mini-goals.

Variation

- A passes to C.
- C lays the ball off to B.
- B plays a one-two with A.
- B latches onto A's pass and delivers a first-time cross towards either A or C.
- A or C finishes first-time into either of the 2 mini-goals.

Coaching points

- A should play a firm, well-weighted pass into B's path to avoid them having to break their stride and to help them to deliver an accurate cross.
- Firm and accurate passes aid the fluidity of the sequence.
- Immediately after playing the ball to B, A must sprint towards the mini-goals to meet B's cross, while C must hold their run and anticipate the cross.
- Coordinating the timing of their runs helps players to execute actions efficiently.



PART 3: 3V1 RONDO AND CROSS TO FINISH

This drill focuses on unit-level actions in attack. The exercise simulates an attacking scenario in which the attacking team play a long ball out wide behind the opposition's defence for a wide player to deliver a cross for players arriving from deep.

Organisation

- Use 1 half of a full-size pitch as the exercise area.
- Position a full-size goal at one end of the exercise area.
- Place a goalkeeper in the goal.
- Mark out a 10m x 10m area in which the side furthest from the goal lies centrally on the halfway line.
- Place a cone on each flank, 10m from the 2 corners of the 10m v 10m area that are nearer to the goal.
- Walk 15m from each side of the penalty area and place 2 mannequins 5m apart, angled towards the 10m v 10m area.
- Set up a 3v1 scenario inside the 10m x 10m area.
- Position 2 players at each wide cone.
- Place 4 defenders beside the goal (2 beside each goalpost).

Explanation

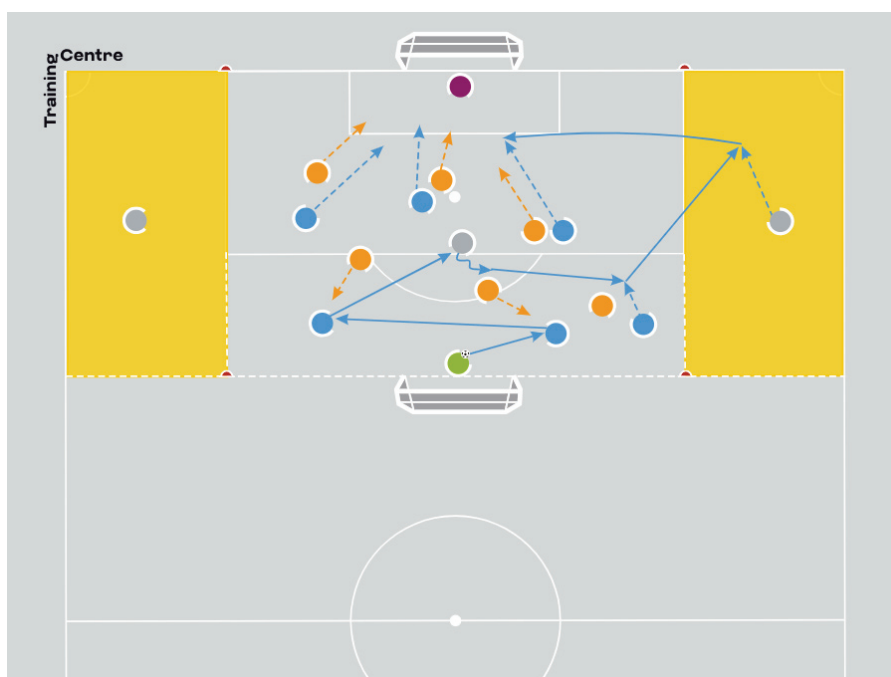
- The exercise begins with a 3v1 (oranges v. blue) rondo inside the 10m v 10m area.
- The 3 oranges try to keep the ball and aim to complete 4 passes.
- The blue player tries to dispossess the oranges.
- Once the oranges have completed 4 passes, the orange-team player who receives the 4th pass plays a long pass outside, inside or preferably over the 2 mannequins on either side of the exercise area.
- Before the long pass is played, the player stationed at the wide cone sets off to run into the space beyond the mannequins.
- As soon as the long pass is played, the 3 orange-team players sprint from the 10m x 10m area towards the penalty area.
- The blue defender sprints from the 10m x 10m exercise area towards the penalty

area and is joined in the penalty area by a team-mate who enters the exercise area from their position beside the goal.

- The wide player delivers a cross for the 3 orange-team players to attack, whilst the blue player who entered the exercise area from beside the goal tries to cut out the cross, and their team-mate defends the goal.

Coaching points

- The long pass played from deep should be firm and accurate.
- Attacking players should use the mannequins as a guide for where the pass is to be played.
- Attacking players must recognise when the long pass is played and immediately sprint towards the penalty area.
- When contesting the 3v1 rondo, attacking players should be aware and adopt the right body shape in readiness to play the long pass.
- Attacking players should make intelligent runs into the penalty area that cater for all possible crossing scenarios.



PART 4: 6V6 PLUS 3 SMALL-SIDED GAME

This small-sided game focuses on a team level and puts the attacking principles worked on in the previous exercises into practice. The in-possession team are asked to work the ball into the wide zones before attacking the cross.

Organisation

- Mark out a 30m x 40m exercise area.
- Split the exercise area into a central area and 2 wide zones.
- Position a full-size goal at either end of the exercise area.
- Place a goalkeeper in each goal.
- Divide the players into 2 teams of 6 (blues and oranges) and 1 group of 3 (greys), who acts as neutral players.
- Set up a 6v6 (blues v. oranges) inside the central area.
- Position the 3 grey players as follows: 1 inside the central area and 1 in either wide zone.

Explanation

- The exercise begins with 1 of the goalkeepers in possession.
- The blues attack the oranges' goal with the support of the 3 neutral players, who create a 9v6 overload.
- The oranges cannot enter the wide zones occupied by the neutral players.
- The oranges try to win the ball and attack the blues' goal. If they manage to do so, the teams immediately swap roles.

Coaching points

- When there is space behind the opposition's defence, the in-possession team should play the ball to the wide neutral players and attack the penalty area in readiness to meet a cross.
- The in-possession team should look to deliver first-time crosses that may catch the opposition's defence out of position.
- The wide neutral players should focus on delivering well-placed, driven crosses that hit the area between the goalkeeper and defenders and are in coordination with the attackers' runs.