



ATTACKING PATTERN PLAY - PASSING COMBINATIONS

This activity helps the coach establish attacking patterns of play with particular emphasis on building possession from the keeper to the striker. The coach should teach player their functional responsibilities and set up the team in a familiar formation. The field is split down the center with a left and right side. Mannequins are placed on each side to represent opponent's in #9, #8, #7/11 and #3 positions. Two keepers start with the balls at one end and start all attacking possession. The objective is for both sides of the field to establish passing patterns to progress the ball from the keeper to the striker.



PHASE 1 DIAGRAM



PHASE 2 DIAGRAM



PHASE 3 DIAGRAM

KwickTactiX: <http://bit.ly/KwikTactixFB>

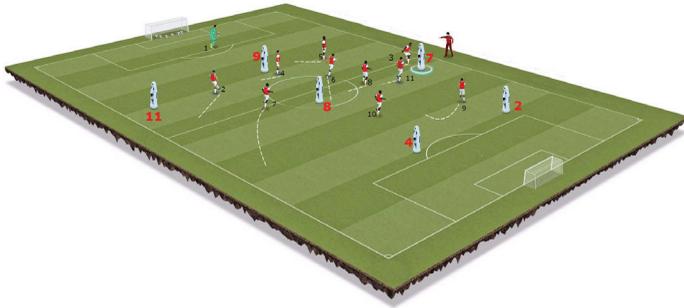


United Soccer Coaches publish a series of Diploma courses and manuals with 100's of training activities for coaches working with players aged 3-18+. Attacking and Defending Principles of Play Diploma series is supported by 48 attacking and defending activities. *Attacking Principles* is a 3hr course with PDF manual: http://bit.ly/Attack_Dip for just \$40.

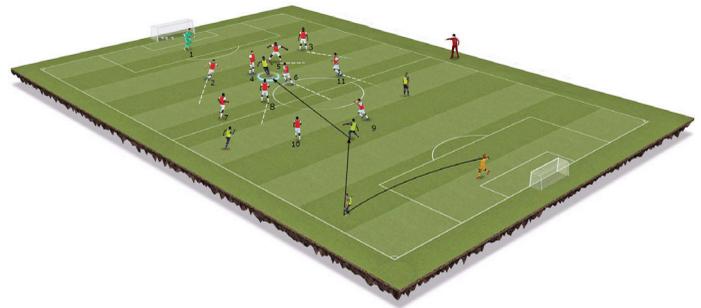


DEFENDING PATTERN PLAY - 1-4-4-2

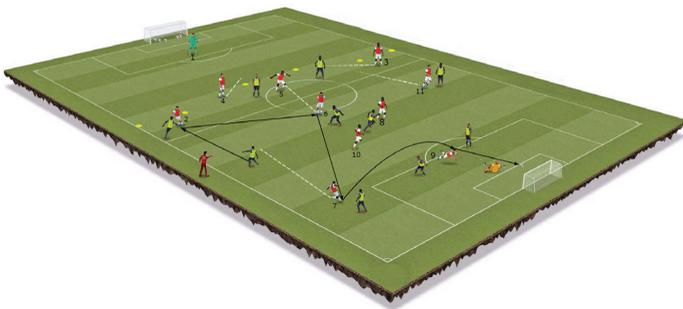
Following a training model established by Italian National Team Coach Arrigo Sacchi, players in their positional roles move around the field to defend as connected units and as a team. Topics to introduce include: applying pressure, double marking to create a turnover, moving as a back line to close space ahead and catch the opponent offside, diagonal arrangement of the midfield and defensive lines, man-to-man and zonal marking, defensive vertical and horizontal movement. Using half to a full field, set up 4-11 mannequins/flags each representing an opponent. Without the ball, the coach will demonstrate with the players his/her defensive style.



PHASE 1 DIAGRAM



PHASE 2 DIAGRAM



PHASE 3 DIAGRAM

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Why use it?

This is a phase of play activity involving three lines of the team, namely, defense, midfield and forwards. The attacking team must use a numerical advantage to score in three goals with varying points value.

Set up

The set up is a 40x30 yards area with 3 mini goals placed along the end line at each end. One goal is in the center of the line and the other 2 wide goals are 4 yards from the sideline. The team with possession has a numerical 5v4 advantage. The coach observes from the sideline.

How to play

The primary objective is for the team in possession of the ball to determine the best strategy to score goals. To add an extra degree of challenge the goals are worth different points values. The attacking team should seek to maximize the size of the area sending players wide, high and deep. The options are to play around the 'edges' and penetrate wide, pass down the seams between defenders and/or play over the defense into space vacated behind. If the defenders win possession a player from the attacking team steps off the field and a player for the defending team steps on to create a 5v4. Play 6 intervals each lasting 2 minutes. Intervals 1-2 maintain 5v4 numerical advantage. Intervals 3-4 add an extra defender to create 5v5 and intervals 5-6 make the central goal worth 3 points and the outside goals worth 1 point.

Coaching notes

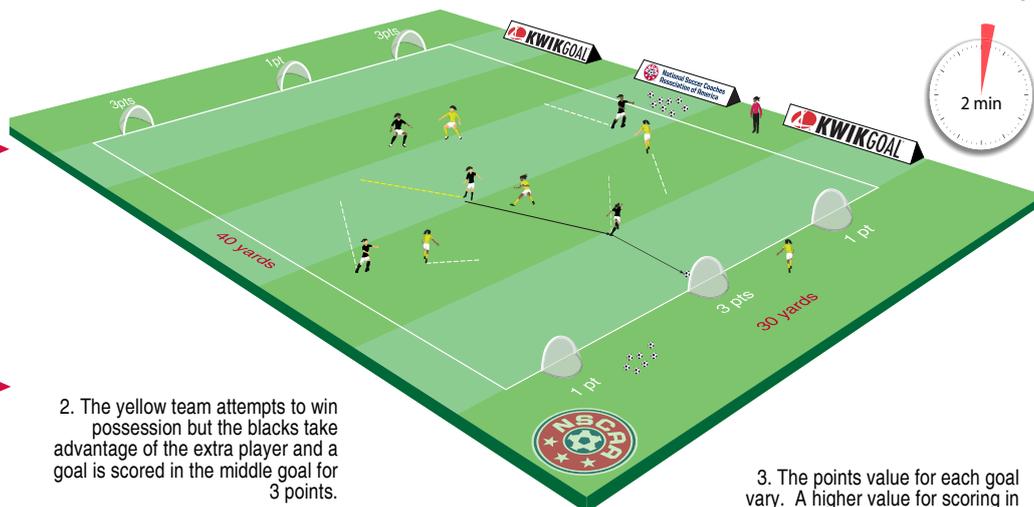
Coaching Objectives: Assist players to read the visual cues that determine which is the best strategy to exploit weaknesses in the defense. With only 4 players, the defense is outnumbered so the attackers must communicate effectively to coordinate ball and player movements.

Coaching Tip: Providing a points system will help the coach to direct a particular game strategy. For example, telling the players that a goal scored in a wide goal is worth 3 points and a goal scored in the center is worth 1 point should lead to the attackers spreading play wide.

How to modify

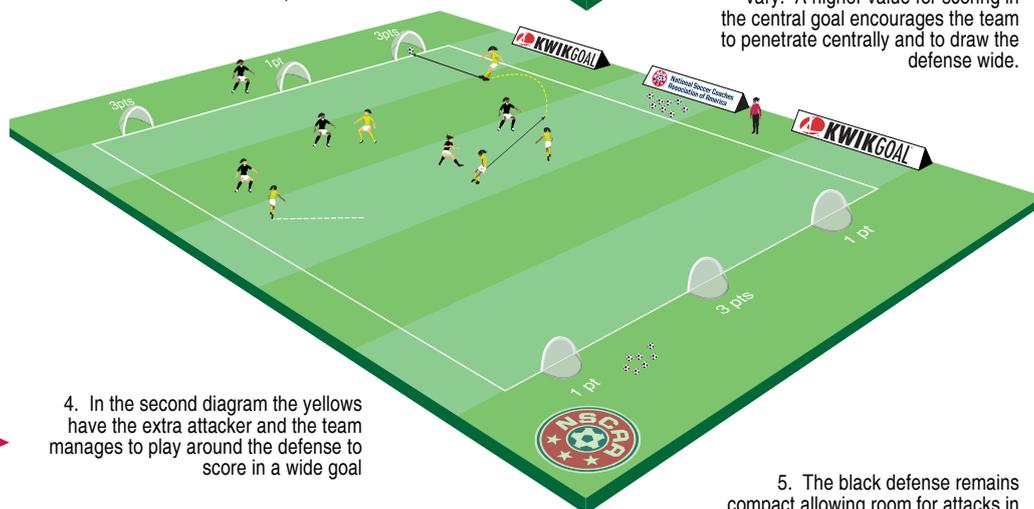
Less Challenging: Reduce the number of defenders further. The coach can also add a restraining line to prevent the defenders pushing too high, wide or dropping too deep.
More Challenging: Change the values of the goals and only inform the attacking team.

1. The black team has possession and a numerical 5v4 advantage.



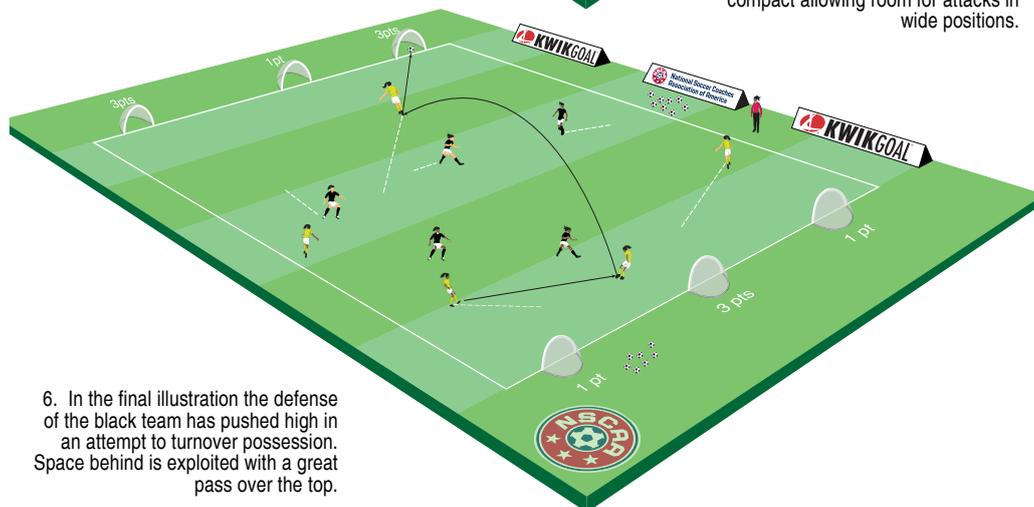
2. The yellow team attempts to win possession but the blacks take advantage of the extra player and a goal is scored in the middle goal for 3 points.

3. The points value for each goal vary. A higher value for scoring in the central goal encourages the team to penetrate centrally and to draw the defense wide.



4. In the second diagram the yellows have the extra attacker and the team manages to play around the defense to score in a wide goal

5. The black defense remains compact allowing room for attacks in wide positions.



6. In the final illustration the defense of the black team has pushed high in an attempt to turnover possession. Space behind is exploited with a great pass over the top.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 3, 4 and 5 - 9-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing technique, possession and creating space as an individual/team.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over short/medium distances, communication and movement off the ball.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Theme:

- + Group and team defending.
- + Team possession and purpose.

Competencies:

- + Defending in small groups - applying pressure, covering and support.
- + Transition from defense to attack and attack to defense.
- + Passing a short and medium distance.
- + Receiving a pass.
- + Attacking in small groups.

WHY USE IT

This exercise is a terrific way of teaching players high pressure defending roles (1st, 2nd, 3rd), coordination and also transition into possession.

SET UP

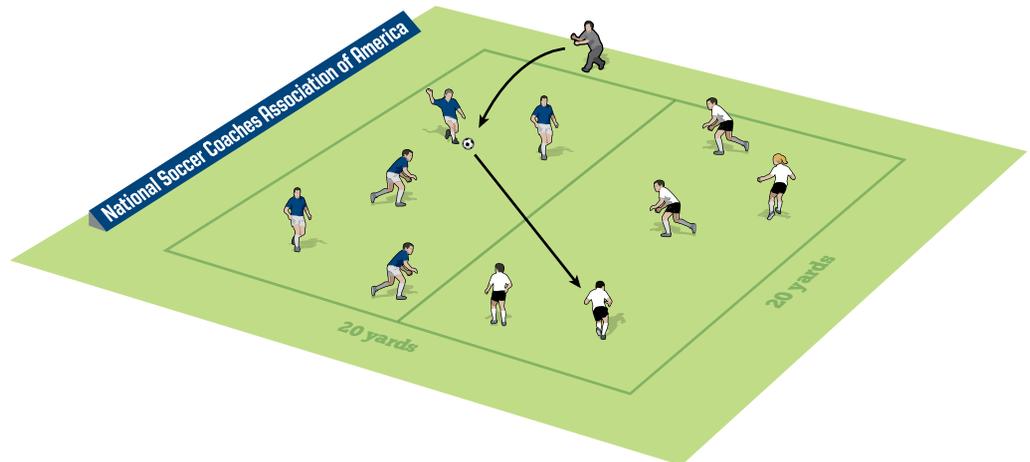
Utilize a 20x20 yard grid divided in half with a line of cones as shown. The coach is stationed at the side of the grid with a ball supply for all re-starts.

HOW TO PLAY

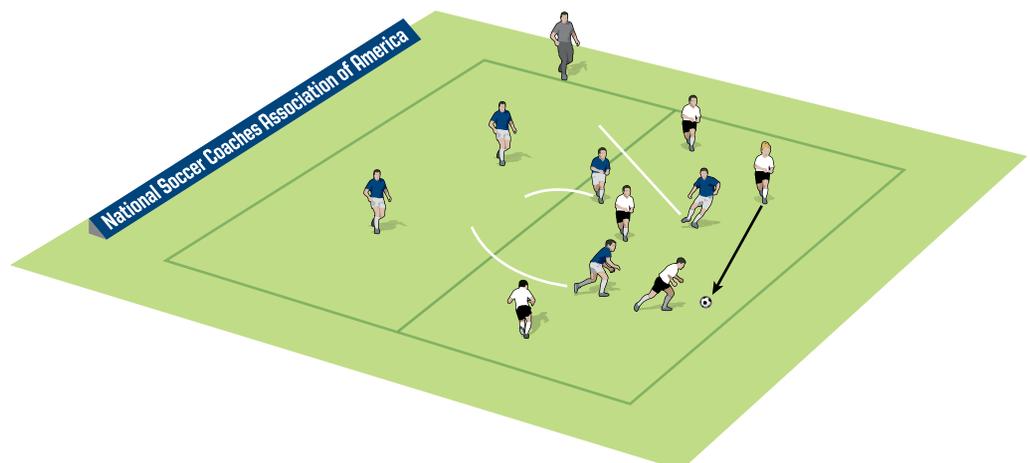
The exercise begins with the coach playing a ball into one team. The ball is immediately passed to the other team (simulating a turnover). The defending team send 3 players into their opponent's half of the grid to try to win back the ball. When the ball is won it is passed or dribbled back into the other half of the grid and the 2 teams change roles. Look to see if players understand first (pressure, make play predictable), second (cover) and third (balance) defender roles and how to interchange.

COACHING NOTES

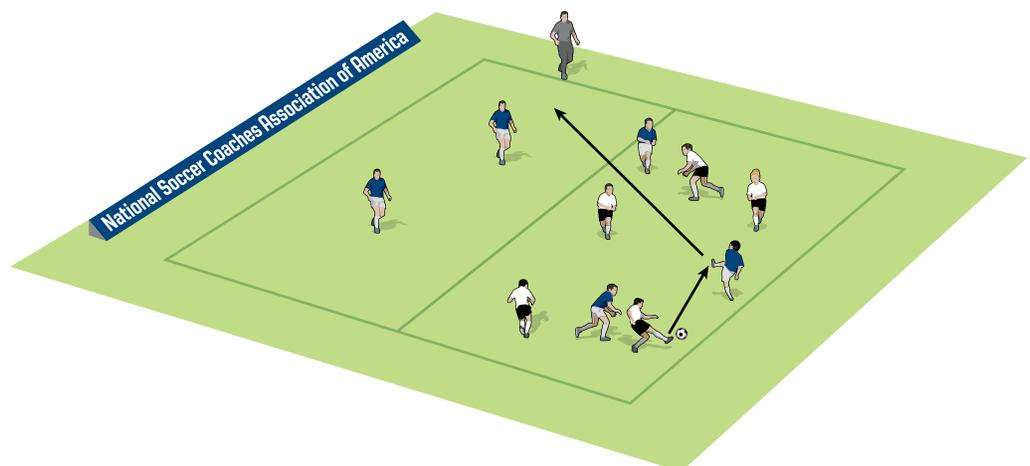
- + Main coaching objectives - Can the defending players get in and establish immediate pressure?
- + Coaching Tip - Stop the action to adjust defending positions, careful to emphasize angles and distances.
- + Adaptations: Serves from grid to grid must be in the air; expand or shrink the grid to adjust pressure.



- + Coach plays into one team and the ball is served to the opponent.



- + Players from the defending team get into the opponent's zone
- + 1st player looks to pressure while 2 and 3 cover.
- + Meanwhile, the white team combine passes



- + The pressurizing run forces the ball to be played back
- + The cover and balance defenders have read the options available
- + Cover defender wins the ball and plays it back into the blue team's grid.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Theme:

- + Advanced technical training.
- + Team possession with purpose.
- + Group and team defending.

Competencies:

- + Receiving.
- + Passing over short and medium distances.
- + Passing techniques - chip, lofted, driven and swerve.
- + Mental conditioning - decision making and speed of play.
- + Support with and without the ball.
- + Pressure, cover and support.

WHY USE IT

This is an activity observed during a professional team training session in Germany. A possession game where players must think as well as play.

SET UP

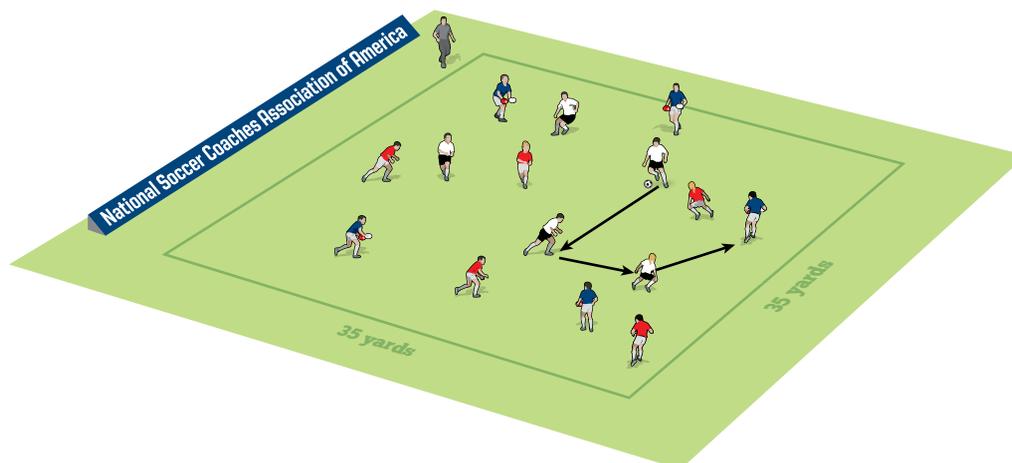
35x35 yard grid. 3 teams of 5-6 players in 3 colors. Players in 1 team spread out and hold 2 cones corresponding to the colors of the other team's vests - 1 in each hand.

HOW TO PLAY

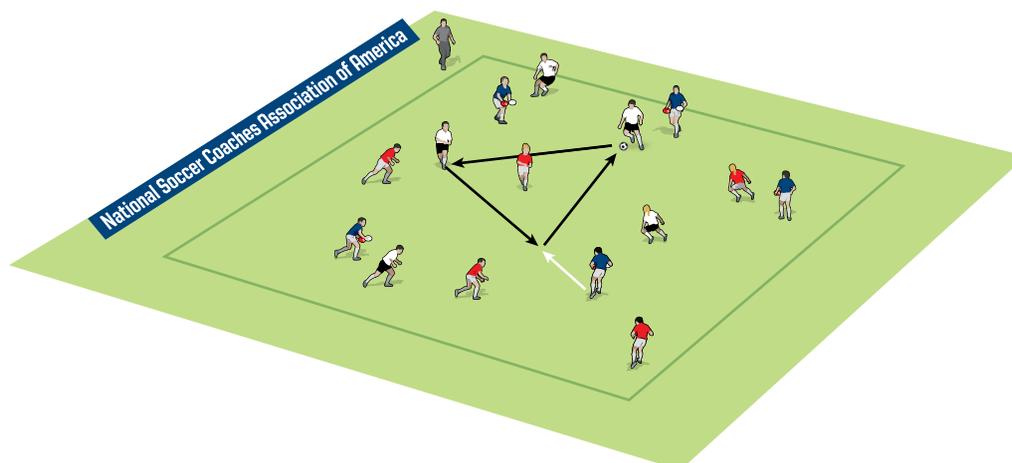
This is a possession game where the 2 active teams (without cones) try to possess the ball and those holding cones are playing in support of the team in possession. When a member of the stationary team receives a pass from another team, they must pass back to a player in the same team. The stationary player cannot be tackled. Once a pass is made, the stationary player drops the cone corresponding to that team's color. The first team to have all of the cones of their color dropped wins.

COACHING NOTES

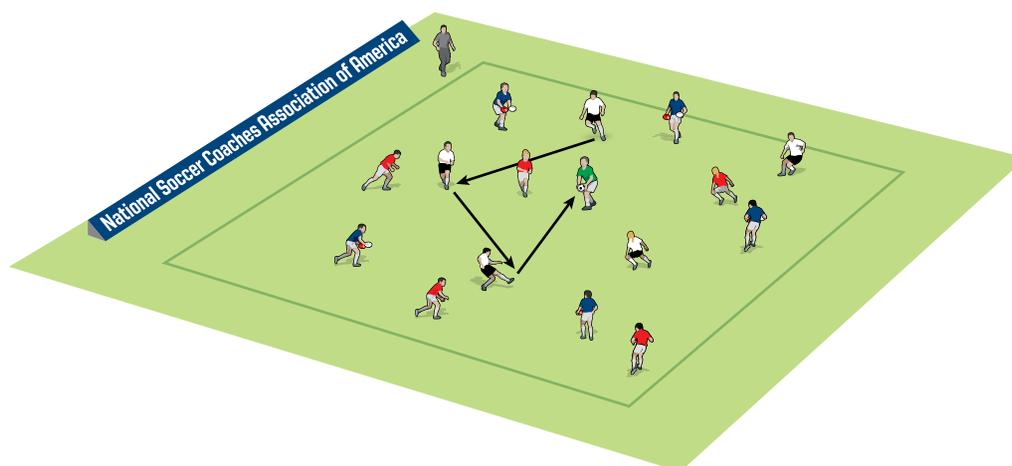
- + Objectives: Quick passing can lead to quick points.
- + Coaching Tip: Encourage target players to continue to call for the ball even after they have dropped all cones of a color. If they receive a pass, they pick up the cone of the color that passed to them!
- + Adaptations: The inactive team can move throughout the grid. Add a goalkeeper and any serve caught by the goalkeeper is worth a point.



- + Blue team players hold cones corresponding to the color of the other teams vests.
- + White and red play a possession game.
- + The team in possession attempt to pass to blue players that are holding the cone corresponding to their team's color vest..



- + Blue players can now move.
- + White players combine passes with a blue target checking to the ball.



- + Add goalkeeper playing for the team in possession
- + White team combine passes and play to the goalkeeper's hands for a point.

Y PATTERN PASSING - PART A

WHY USE IT

This activity helps players to improve first touch. Focus on the decision, direction, distance and disguise of player's first touch and their speed of play. This activity is best used as warm-up.

SET UP

30x15 yards. 6+ players in a group, Cones 15 yards apart set in a Y pattern, 4-6 minutes in each phase.

HOW TO PLAY

2 players start with a ball at one end of the area at the base of the 'Y'. 2 players on either side of the center cone and 1 player on each cone at the top of the 'Y'. The central player on each side checks away from the cone (defender). A pass is made at an angle to the side of the receiver away from pressure - diagram 1. The receiver turns with the outside of the foot and passes across the mid line to the player at the top of the 'Y' furthest away - diagram 2. The passing player follows her pass and the receiving player dribbles down the side of the field and back to the start cone - diagram 3. This is a good starting point for most players. To progress we add in some double pass combinations. Firstly, the central player makes a double pass with the player starting the sequence, makes a turn and then makes a pass - diagram 4, on the next page. The passer sprints across the field to make another double pass and releases the player down the line on a dribble - diagram 5 on the next page. All players continue their run to the next cone and the activity repeats. Now perform on the other side to gain proficiency with both feet.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - 'Decision', 'Direction', 'Distance' and 'Disguise' of the first touch, while increasing speed of play.
- + Coaching tips - The little things matter. Players should execute the activity at game-speed using the appropriate foot to turn, pass and receive.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging - A) Increase space, B) Simplify the turn/reception for central player by not having them check back.
- + More challenging - A) Decrease space B) Add more aggressive turns, disguise and creativity, C) Touch restrictions.

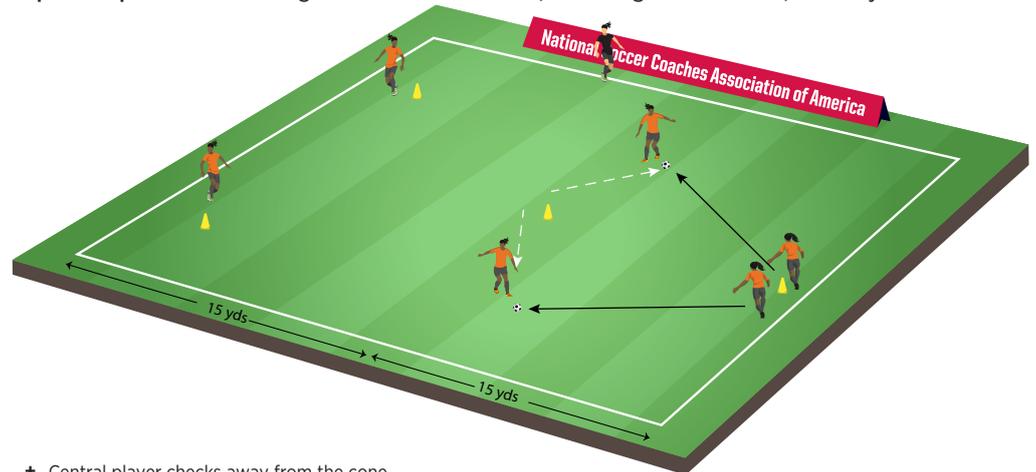
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY (Refer to NSCAA Player Development Curriculum)

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

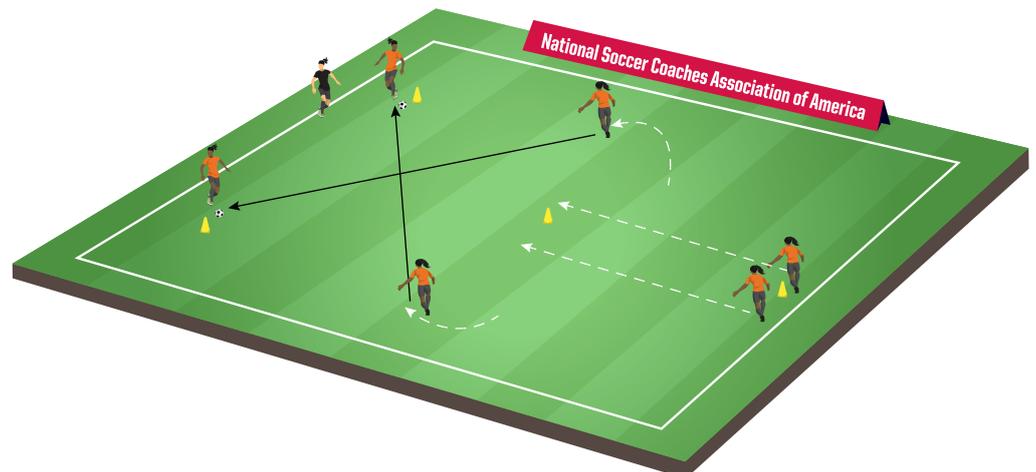
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing, receiving and attacking principles of play.

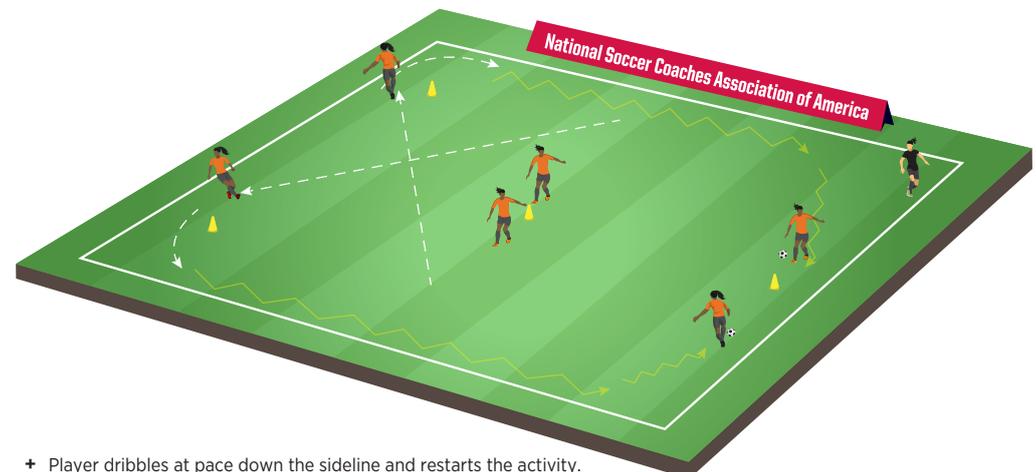
Top 3 competencies: Passing over a short distance, receiving with the feet, mobility on the ball.



- + Central player checks away from the cone.
- + 2 groups should go simultaneously.
- + 3-5 players per group.



- + Turn with the outside of the foot - the cone represents a pressing defender - keep the ball far away.
- + Receiver 'on her toes' and ready to receive the pass.
- + Firm pass along the ground across field.



- + Player dribbles at pace down the sideline and restarts the activity.
- + Work through this sequence a few times and then progress to diagram 4 (next page).

Y PATTERN PASSING - PART B

WHY USE IT

This activity helps players to improve first touch. Focus on the decision, direction, distance and disguise of player's first touch and their speed of play. This activity is best used as warm-up.

SET UP

30x15 yards. 6+ players in a group, Cones 15 yards apart set in a Y pattern, 4-6 minutes in each phase.

HOW TO PLAY

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COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Decision, Direction, Distance and Disguise of the first touch while increasing speed of play.
- + Coaching tips - The little things matter. Players should execute the activity at game speed using the appropriate foot to turn, pass and receive.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging - A) Increase space. B) Simplify the turn/reception for central player by not having them check back.
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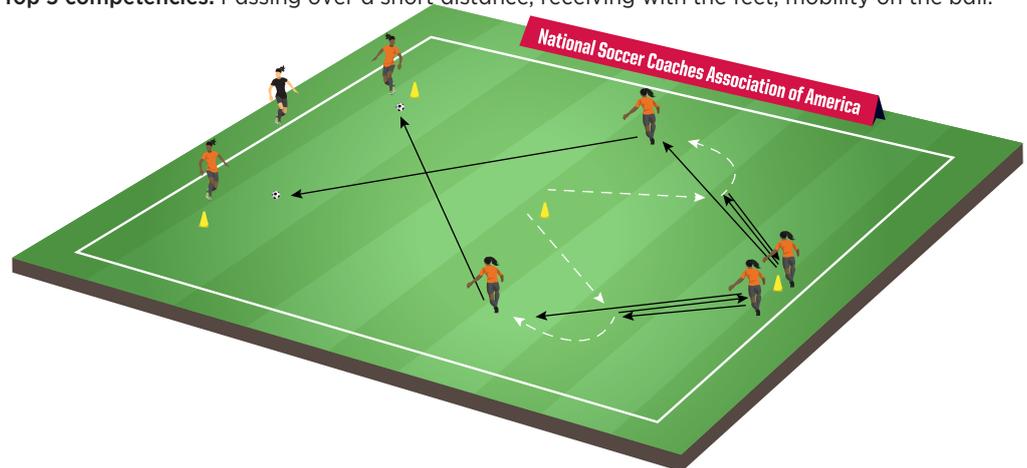
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Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

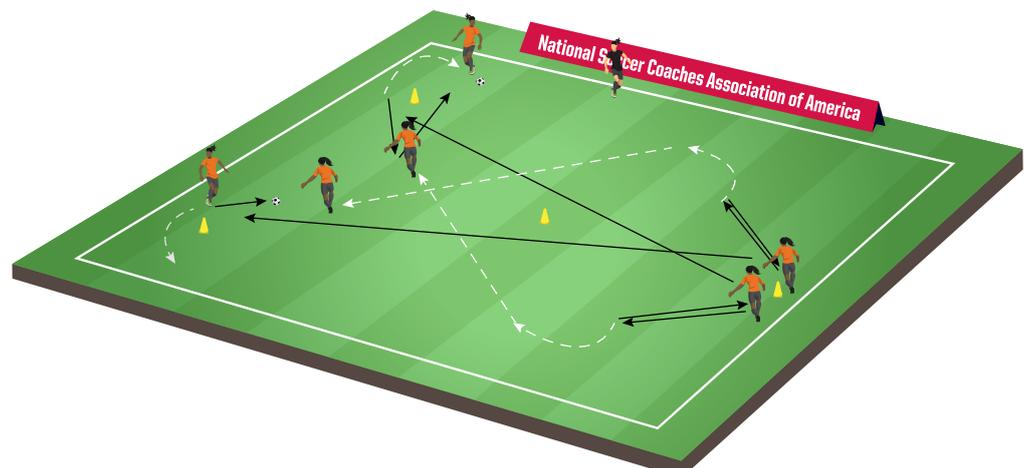
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing, receiving and attacking principles of play.

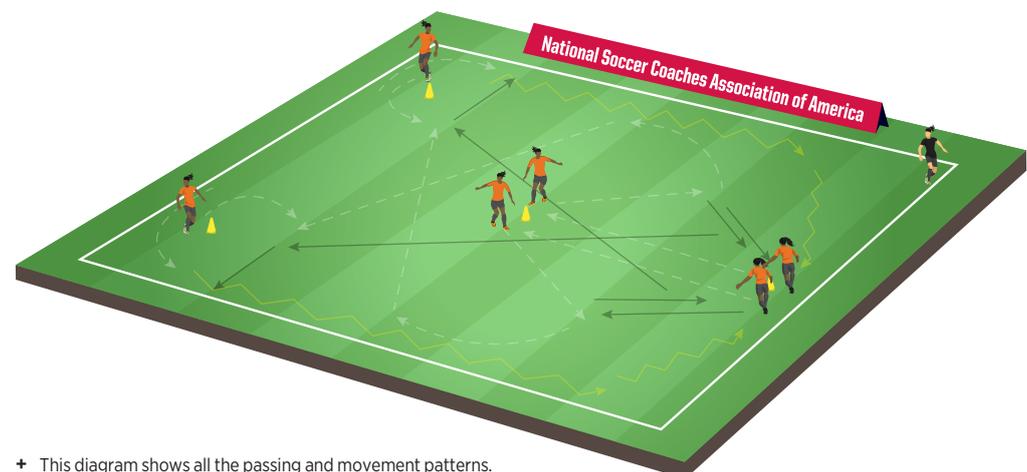
Top 3 competencies: Passing over a short distance, receiving with the feet, mobility on the ball.



- + Similar sequence as before, but a double pass is added between the central player and the player starting the activity.



- + The passer sprints to support at an angle and performs a double pass combination with the player at the top of the 'Y'.



- + This diagram shows all the passing and movement patterns.

Pressure

WHY USE IT

All coaches know how it feels when their team is attacking and loses the ball, and their defender is unable to hold up play long enough for help to arrive. This teaches defenders how to hold up attackers.

SET UP

Mark out a 20x10 yd area with a goal at one end. You need to have a pair of cones at the far end and a pair five yards nearer the goal. We've used eight players including a keeper. You need balls, bibs, cones and a goal.

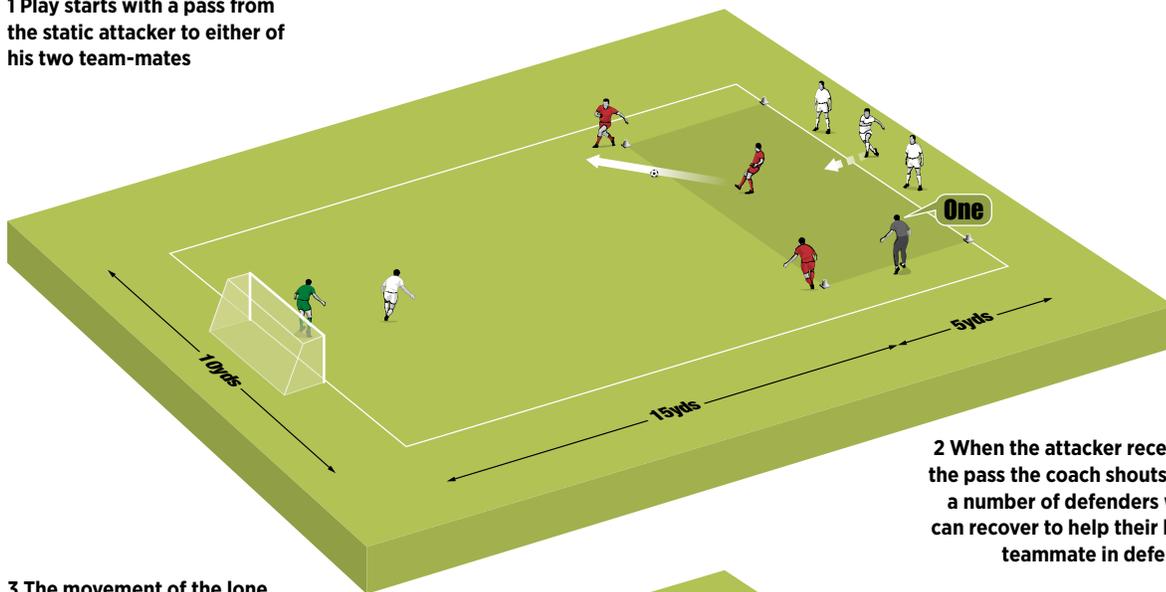
HOW TO PLAY

Split the players into three attackers, who stand at the cones nearest the goal; three recovering defenders, who are five yards back at the far end of the area; a defender in front of goal; and a keeper. The middle of the three attackers acts as a server and passes to another attacker. When the attacker receives the ball that is the signal for the coach to shout out the number of recovering defenders that must get back to help the lone defender. Play restarts with the attacker each time.

TECHNIQUE

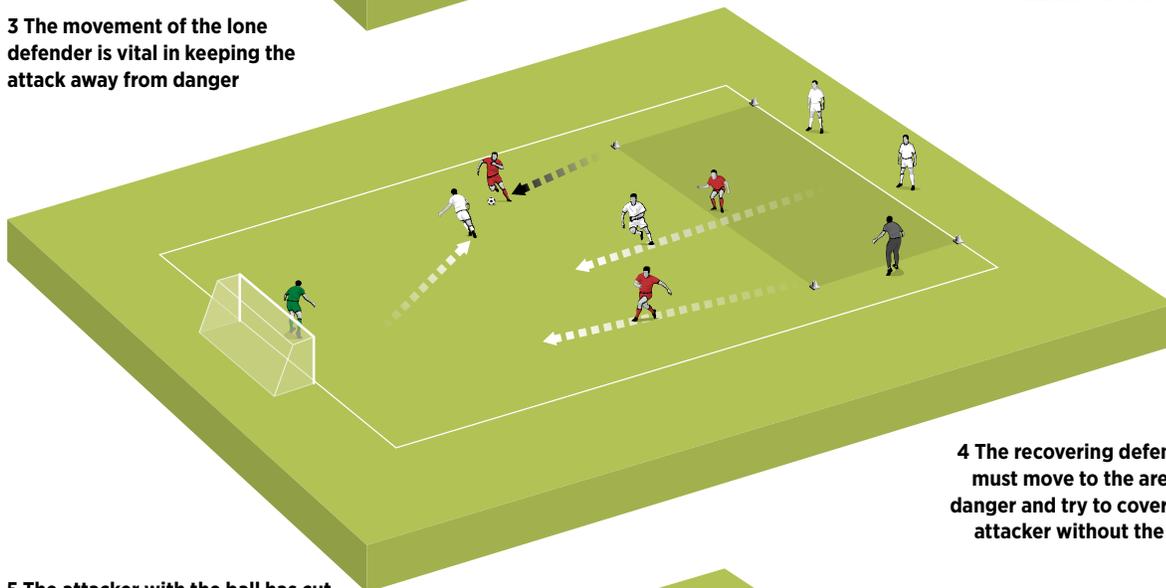
Rio Ferdinand can read the game well and knows how to position himself to make life difficult for attackers. It is this skill that defenders need to learn, plus recognising when the team has to recover and get back into defence.

1 Play starts with a pass from the static attacker to either of his two team-mates



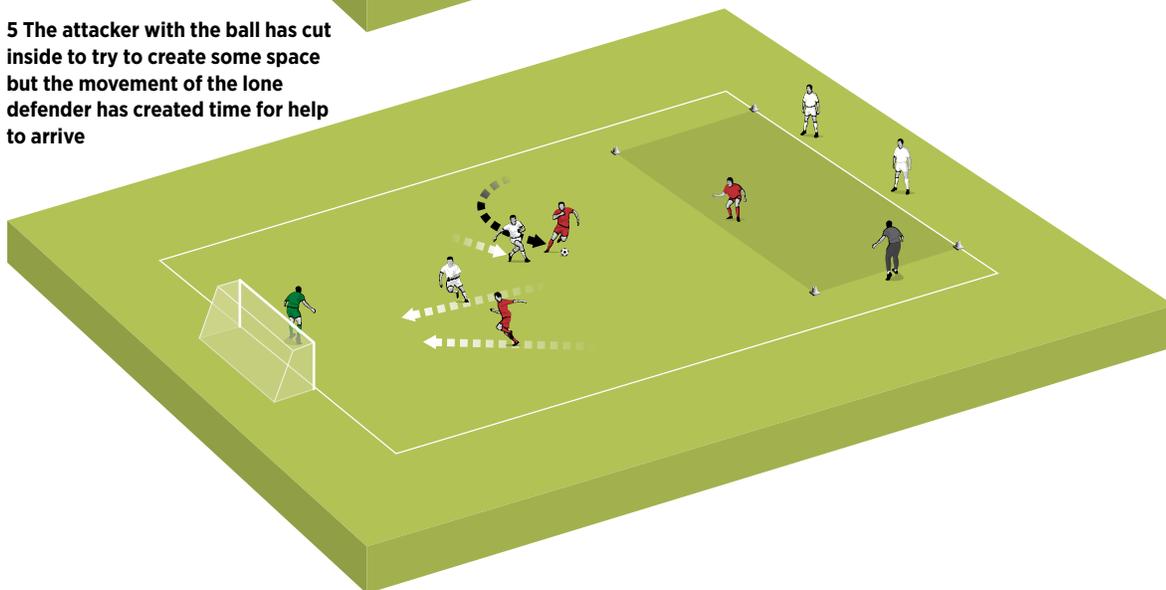
2 When the attacker receives the pass the coach shouts out a number of defenders who can recover to help their lone teammate in defence.

3 The movement of the lone defender is vital in keeping the attack away from danger



4 The recovering defender must move to the area of danger and try to cover the attacker without the ball

5 The attacker with the ball has cut inside to try to create some space but the movement of the lone defender has created time for help to arrive



Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot



5V3 WITH ROTATING TARGETS

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY: Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES: *Top 3 themes:* Passing combinations, creative movement off the ball and defending 1v1. *Top 3 competencies:* Support runs - overlap etc., passing over short/medium distances and communication.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach serves the ball to either team to start. The team in possession must seek to transfer the ball from one target player to another to score a point. When in possession, the attacking team has a 5v3 advantage. Once the ball is passed to a target player, the game reverses. The target players represent a striker and a central defender. Once the activity reverses direction, the central defender becomes a deep lying support player and the players in the area can pass back to maintain possession. The defenders attempt to intercept or challenge the attackers to win the ball. Once the defenders win possession, they must pass to either target player - this pass does not score a point. Play 3 minute intervals and then switch players.

DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 3v3 in the middle and both teams have a target player standing on opposite sides of the square.
2. The yellow team gets the game underway and combine to score 1 point with a pass to a target. Play must now go in the opposite direction with yellows still with possession.
3. In the second illustration the yellows combine again. The coach allows the players to exchange position when the ball is played to a target.
4. The yellow attackers switch positions. On receipt of the pass, the target player dribbles onto the field into space. A passing combination sets up a perfect opportunity for an overlap.
5. Reds intercept a pass and are immediately on the attack. Yellows must move swiftly to defense.
6. The red target player enters with the ball and yellows move to collapse space around the dribbler.

WHY USE IT

Continuing with a theme of player mobility in establishing opportunities to play with speed, this activity creates

a constantly changing environment requiring player adaptability. The directional nature provides game-realistic transitional moments and challenging players to decide whether to play with a fast or slower tempo.

SET UP

The set up is a 30x30 yards square with 3v3 in the area and 2 support/target players for each team standing opposite each other. The coach serves the balls and stands in a position to observe and instruct.

HOW TO MODIFY

Less Challenging: A 'Zombie' condition for a defender to create a 3v2 advantage in the center.

More Challenging: Allow players on the inside to exchange positions with the target striker when a successful combination is made. Interchanging positions should add another layer of complexity. Coaches can also add touch restrictions.

COACHING NOTES

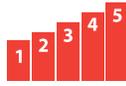
Coaching Objectives: Recognizing space and opportunities to penetrate are critically important for speed of play. With young players in particular, the tendency is to move to create space for oneself - even if that movement closes space for others. Thus, help players to appreciate the importance of creating space for teammates and using movement to unbalance the defenders.

Coaching Tips: With numbers even in the middle, turnovers will be frequent, particularly for less competent players. One tip is to make a defender passive/Zombie when a turnover occurs, essentially creating a 3v2 in the middle.

NOTES: _____



2V2-3V2 SUPPORTING ANGLES



STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5.
6 to 18 year old players.



CHALLENGE LEVEL

Start: Easy-Moderate challenge level.
Progress: Moderate challenge level.



DURATION

20-25 min passing, receiving and
defending theme.



NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Commence with 4 players per area.
Progress to 6 players playing and 3
players 'on deck' in each area.



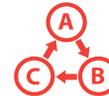
EQUIPMENT

Training vests - 3 colors
3'x4' Kwik Goal Infinity Goals or equivalent.
Cones - 4
Flat markers - 2
Soccer balls - 4-5 balls at each
end of the field.



FIELD REQUIREMENTS

Layout 1: 30x15 yards area.



PRACTICE TYPE

Small sided game with variable and random
characteristics.



GAME FORMAT

Appropriate for all formats of the
game - 4v4, 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11.



ATTACKING CONCEPTS

Penetration, width and depth, support,
mobility and improvisation.



DEFENDING CONCEPTS

Pressure, cover and patience.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES

- Primary Themes: Passing over short and medium distances, receiving with the feet, creating space, passing combinations and defending as an individual and in pairs.
- Attacking Competencies: Passing with both feet, receiving with both feet, passing, movement - width and length, passing to eliminate a defensive threat, communication with teammates.
- Defending Competencies: 1st defender set up, closing space and applying pressure, 2nd defender movement to cover and alternating defensive roles.

The four previous activities provided a controlled (constant) environment for the coach to gradually layer and increase technical requirements for passing and receiving. These are almost 'laboratory' conditions ideal for introducing new techniques and correcting flaws. However, 2v2-3v2 Supporting Angles features more game-like conditions, with the addition of direction, opponents and goals. Decision making is now as important as technical competency as situations on the field change constantly. Execution of technique in a variable and random environment is methodology coaches use to determine if the transfer of learning occurs and prepares players for games.



QUICK START INSTRUCTIONS

Set up: Play 2v2 in a 30x15 yards area with a flat marker creating a 5 yards end zone at both ends. Balls are placed by the side of each small goal.

How to play: An attacker collects a ball from the end line and combines with a teammate to beat the 1st defender. The end zone enables the attackers to enter without pressure and the 2nd defender must stay in the defensive half. The player shooting the ball must run around the goal before re-entering the field to defend.



SET UP

The area is a 30x15 yards rectangle with two small goals at each end. Use cones on the sidelines and flat markers on the field to create a 5 yards deep build-out zone at both ends. A good supply of balls should be placed by the side of the goals to allow the players to restart quickly. The initial sequences start with 2 players from each team and build to 3 players on three teams with one team waiting on deck.

PLAYING INSTRUCTIONS

Easy-Moderate Challenge Level (Sequences 1 and 2): Our focus is primarily on the passing and receiving qualities of the team in possession, although the coach will also want to encourage defense effort. One player from the attacking team collects a ball from the end line and has a choice to dribble or pass to a teammate. Only one of the defenders is permitted to be in the offensive end, so the second defender must back-off beyond the halfway line. The attacking pair have a numerical advantage 2v1 as they build from the back. To provide the attackers with more of a benefit the defender cannot enter the end zone, allowing more time and some space to develop an attack. Once players enter the attacking half, parity is restored 2v2. The player shooting must run around the goal before re-entering the field to defend, whether or not a goal is scored. The other attacker must drop back to the defensive half. This creates a transitional moment and a brief opportunity for the other team to collect a ball and build their own offense. If a defender wins possession the roles reverse in the flow of the game.

Moderate Challenge Level (Sequences 3 and 4):

Adding an extra player to both teams provides more passing options and complexity. The attacking team is at full strength and the defending team must drop a player off the field to establish a 3v2 attacking team advantage. The coach can decide whether to continue with end zone conditions and defensive restrictions. When the 2 defenders win possession, they must make a pass back to the player standing on the end line – this condition establishes with players the importance of a pass-back option if congestion ahead and keeping possession is questionable. Numerous conditions can be added to increase the challenge level (see teacher-coach conditions, restrictions and modifications).



TEACHING MOMENTS WITH THE PASSER:

- A wall pass combination (give and go) is a good option for 2 attackers to beat 1 defender. The passer draws the defender close before releasing a firm ground ball. The receiver must be within 10 yards to make a return (wall) pass exchange quick and effective.
- Avoid square passes with the receiver. Square passes are more likely than a 45 degree pass to be intercepted.
- With space behind a defender to play into, a passer should look to take away the recovering threat of the pressure defender with a penetrating pass ahead of the receiver.
- As soon as a pass is made, move into a support position without delay.
- Commit a defender to the ball before passing.
- Attempt passes with both feet.
- Discuss with players the virtues of playing passes in front, behind and around the defense.

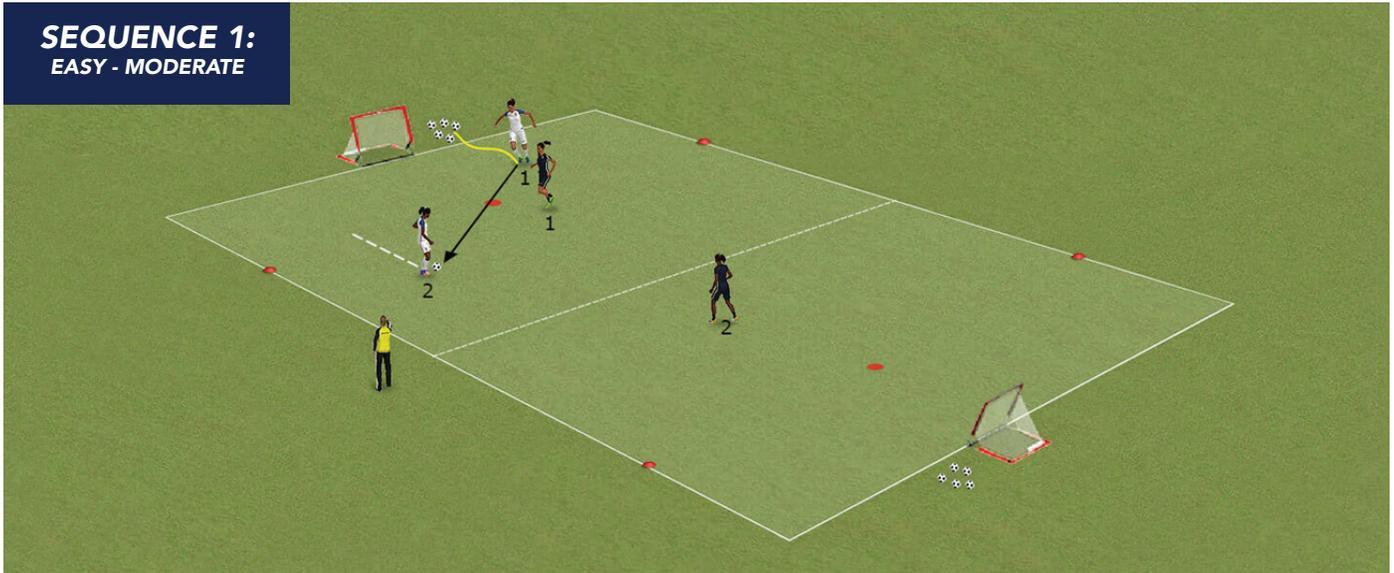
TEACHING MOMENTS WITH THE RECEIVER:

- Expanding the size of the area a defender must cover is to the advantage of the attackers, so the receiver/s should move wide, high or deep.
- The body position on receipt of the ball is critical. An open – forward facing - position when space is ahead to move into or a more closed – protective - position with the body between the ball and an opponent when in a tight space.
- Use hand signals and verbal commands to indicate to a teammate where to pass. For example, shouting “FEET” or pointing 2 hands to the ground in front indicates the receiver wants the ball firmly player to the feet. Conversely pointing upfield tells the passer to play into space.
- Seek space and constantly look ‘over the shoulder’ to sense when space is closing.
- Remain in a ready position – alert and light on the feet.
- Try to play with a two-touch receiving rhythm, with the first touch setting up a dribble, pass or shot.
- Use movements like a bent run, overlap or move-away-check-back to create space.

TEACHING QUESTIONS TO ASK PLAYERS:

- When you collect the ball from the end line to start an attack, what are your first thoughts?
- As a potential receiver, what can you do to best support your teammate in possession?
- What are the visual cues to indicate a pass behind a defender is possible?
- What movement options are available to a receiver to make a passing combination less predictable for the defenders?

SEQUENCE 1: EASY - MODERATE



#1 white attacker collects a ball from the end line to start the attack and dribbles into the build-out zone. As the black defender #1 applies pressure, the attacker passes ahead and into space in front of white #2. This pass eliminates black #1 as an immediate threat to the attack. Black #2 cannot enter the attacking half and must wait for the whites to cross halfway.

TEACHER-COACH CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

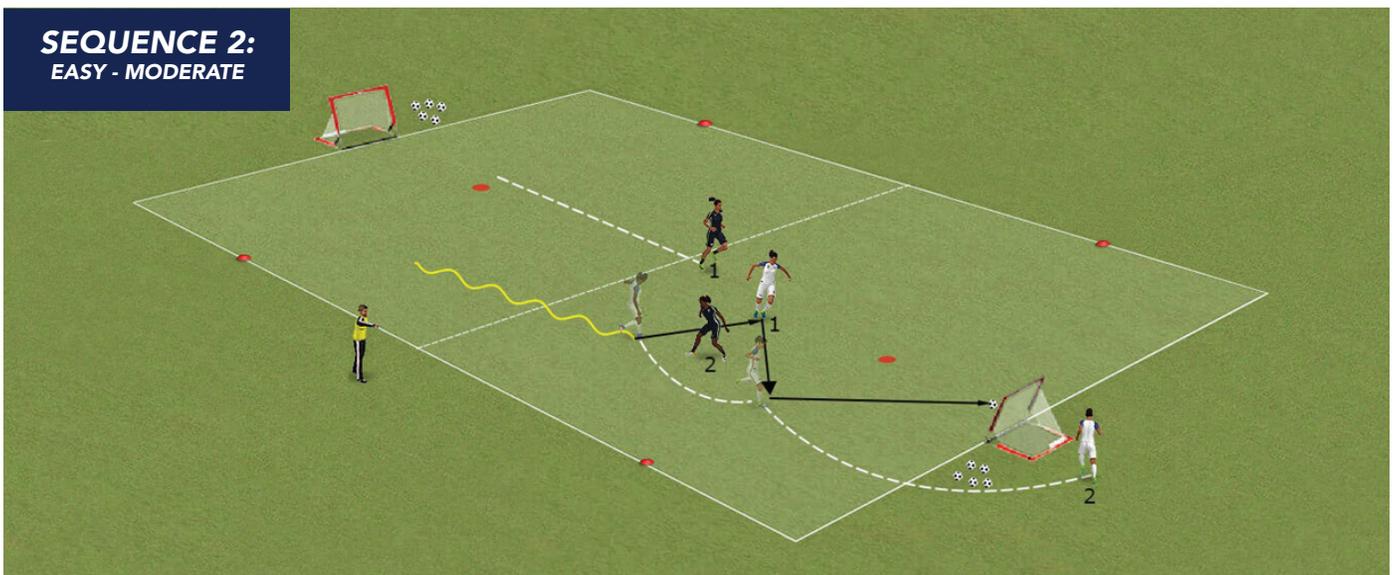
To make the activity less challenging:

- Include a build-out zone to allow the attacking team some space to start the attack.
- Allow only one defender to enter the front half of the field to give the attackers a 2v1 advantage.
- Start with just 1 defender to create a 2v1 numeric advantage on the whole field.
- The coach has the balls at halfway to restart the game quickly as the attacker is running around the net.
- Set up two goals at both ends to provide more targets for the defenders to protect

To make the activity more challenging:

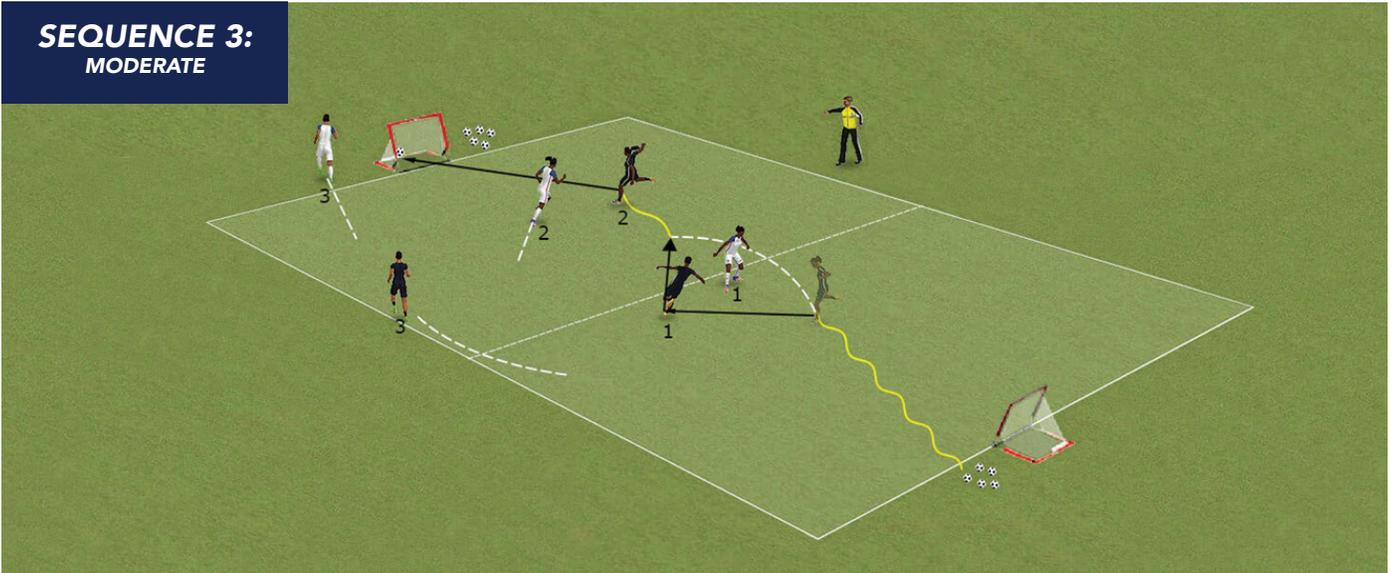
- Introduce a competition – each team has 5 balls to attack and total up the number of goals scored. The coach can also play a 'golden ball' onto the field worth 2 goals if scored.
- Remove defensive and zonal restrictions.
- Require off-the-ball movement requirements, such as an overlap or underlap run before receiving scoring.
- Require a passing combination, such as a double pass or wall pass before scoring.

SEQUENCE 2: EASY - MODERATE



This illustration progresses sequence 1 further up the field where the whites engage the 2nd black defender. As black #1 works hard to recover, white #2 draws the defender towards the ball. The timing of the pass is perfect, with white #1 moving within 10 yards to complete a wall pass around black #2. White #2 smashes the ball into the net and then starts to run around the goal to create a transitional moment.

SEQUENCE 3: MODERATE



Each team now has 3 players. The defending team must drop off one player off the field. White #3 leaves the field to collect a ball, ready to start a new attack. Black #2 dribbles the ball up the field until white #1 applies pressure. Black #3 moves wide to create space and this draws white #2 out of a cover position. Black #2 and #1 perform a wall pass around the defender and score.

TEACHER-COACH CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

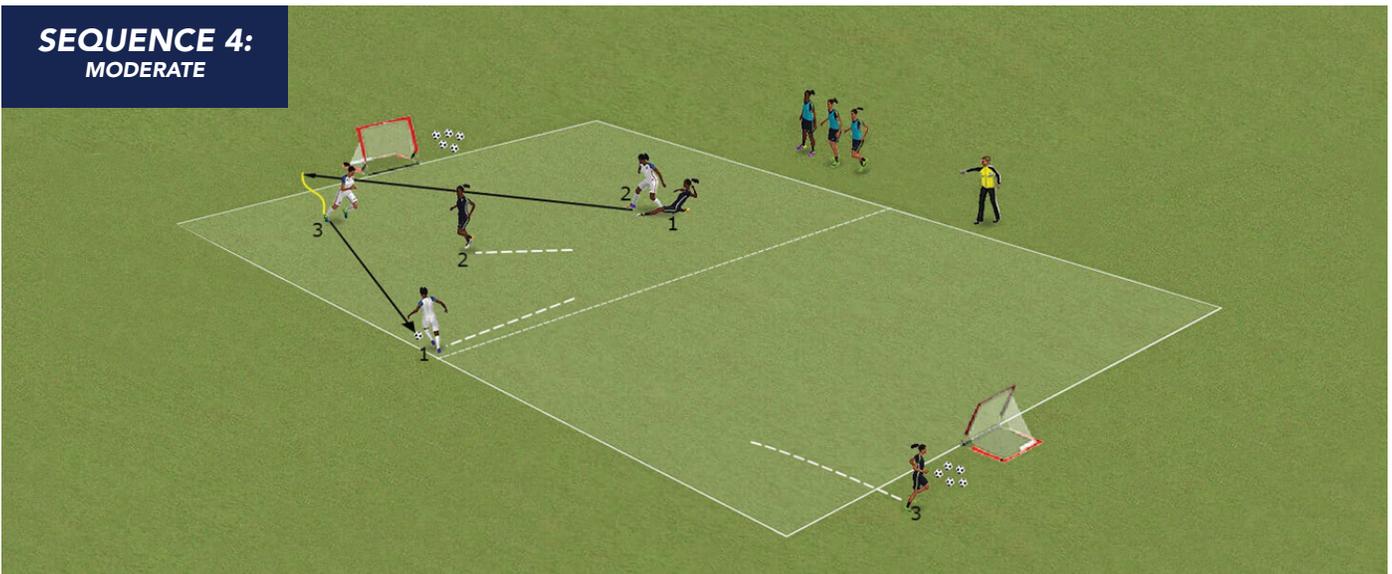
To make the activity less challenging:

- Play with fewer players (sequences 1 and 2).
- Drop 1 player off the field from the defending team to create a numeric advantage for the attacking team 3v2.
- Prevent one defender recovering into the defensive half.
- The coach has the balls at halfway to restart the game quickly.

To make the activity more challenging:

- Add a competitive element with a third team replacing the losers – first to 3 goals.
- Increase the tempo by restricting attacking players to 2 touches.
- Require off-the-ball movement requirements, such as an overlap or underlap run before scoring.
- Require a passing combination, such as a double pass or wall pass before scoring.
- Attackers can only score with a one touch finish.
- The shooter must run around the goal before defending.

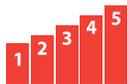
SEQUENCE 4: MODERATE



In the final illustration, a new team is waiting on the sidelines to replace the loser - first to 3 goals competition. The black team loses possession to a solid challenge by white #2. To secure possession, white #2 passes back to #3 off the field and this creates the transitional moment. Black #3 leaves the field and whites attack with a 3v2 advantage.

ACTIVITY 6

PASSING COMBINATIONS IN A CIRCLE



STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Stages 3, 4 & 5.
9 to 18 year old players.



CHALLENGE LEVEL

Start: Easy-Moderate challenge level
Progress: Moderate-Difficult challenge level



DURATION

20-25 min passing, receiving
and defending theme.



NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Commence with 12 players.
Progress to 14 players.



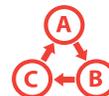
EQUIPMENT

Training vests - 3 colors
Use the center circle of an 11v11 field
and/or cones/flat markers - 6
Soccer balls – 4-5 balls.



FIELD REQUIREMENTS

Layout 1: A circle 30 yards diameter.



PRACTICE TYPE

TPassing and receiving training activity
with variable and random characteristics.



GAME FORMAT

Appropriate for 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11
formats of the game.



ATTACKING CONCEPTS

Penetration, width and depth, support,
mobility and improvisation.



DEFENDING CONCEPTS

Pressure, cover and patience.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES

- Primary Themes: Passing over short and medium distances, receiving with the feet, creating space, passing combinations and defending as an individual and in pairs.
- Attacking Competencies: Passing with both feet, receiving with both feet, passing, movement – width and length, passing to eliminate a defensive threat, communication with teammates.
- Defending Competencies: 1st defender set up, closing space and applying pressure, 2nd defender movement to cover and alternating defensive roles.

★★★
TOP
10

WHY IS THIS ACTIVITY IN THE TOP TEN?

A circle is an ideal shape for an activity teaching passing and receiving combinations and maintaining possession. The shape encourages players to extend their passing angles to 360 degrees, with options all around the outside of the area. With no corners and straight lines, a circle creates game-realistic functional training of central midfield players, with opponents applying pressure and teammates supporting from all sides. Attacking players have ample opportunity work on a variety of passing combinations – playing wide to support players or passing around/between defenders in the center.



QUICK START INSTRUCTIONS

Set up: 7 players are evenly spaced around the outside of a 30 yards wide circle denoted by flat markers. 3 players start in the area and combine passes with the peripheral players. One ball for each central player.

How to play: Central players commence with a pass to a peripheral player. The central player moves to new position and receives a return pass. Continue the sequence, switching central players every couple of minutes.



SET UP

Use the center circle of an 11v11 field or establish a 30 yards diameter circle with flat markers. The size of the area can be increased to allow players to pass over greater distances if appropriate. Around the periphery of the circle evenly distribute 7+ support players and in the center 3 teammates each with a ball. Spare balls should be nearby in case of an errant pass.

PLAYING INSTRUCTIONS

Easy-Moderate Challenge Level (Sequences 1 and 2):

At first, the coaching objective is to develop some passing patterns/combinations between the internal and external players. The peripheral players can move around the edge of the area to provide support, but cannot enter the area. The player in the middle can move anywhere inside and should be challenged to find space in a new position following a pass. Central players start with a pass to any of their outlying teammates. Once the pass is made, the passing player should move towards the edge providing an acute/flat angle. The aim is for the central player to avoid receiving the return pass with their back to the center of the circle and reduce passing options. A curved run permitting the ball to pass across the body will increase options for the receiver and open the passing radius. An open body shape to extend a player's passing range is necessary to effectively change the point of attacking and switch play. Repetition, reinforcement and deep practice is time well spent. A simple give-and-go can develop to double pass, overlap and underlap combinations.

Moderate Challenge Level (Sequence 3):

The challenge level is increased by including defenders. Now the 3 central attackers must perform passing combinations without losing possession to 2 defenders. The numerical advantage remains firmly with the attacking team 8v2, so other conditions/restrictions create more parity. One ball is used and the central attackers must combine with at least 1 pass before linking with players on the outside. Continue to emphasize internal player movement to find and create space to receive a pass. Allow central and peripheral players to transfer positions in the flow of the game following a double pass combination. Change the defenders regularly to ensure the intensity and urgency of the opponents is maintained. Play for two minutes and count how many times the attacking team is able to combine with the outside players following a successful combination between the 3 internal attackers – then swap defenders.

Moderate-Difficult Challenge Level (Sequence 4): To complete the progression, play cone-drop for the last 10+ minutes. Three teams with 4 players each compete. One team starts on the periphery and the 4 players can move liberally around the edge to cover the full circumference of the circle. Each external player holds a different colored cone or training vest in each hand. Two teams start in the center and the coach passes a ball to one of the teams to commence the game. The teams inside the circle attempt to win possession and pass to one of the outside neutrals playing for the team in possession. Once a pass is made successfully, the outside player 'drops' the colored cone/ vest corresponding to the player that passed the ball and plays a return pass to the same team. The objective for both is to be the first team to pass to each of the 4 outside players once before the opponent. If a pass is mistakenly made to a peripheral player twice by the same team, the receiving player picks up the cone/vest. Play until the cones/vests of one team are no longer held by the neutral team. When the final pass is made to the outside player the game is over and the losing team become the edge players. One point for each win – first to 4 wins is the champion. Numerous conditions can be added to increase the challenge level (see teacher-coach conditions, restrictions and modifications).



TEACHING MOMENTS WITH THE PASSER:

- As soon as a pass is made, move into a support position without delay.
- Commit a defender to the ball before passing
- A wall pass combination (give and go) is a good option for 2 attackers to beat 1 defender. The passer draws the defender close before releasing a firm ground ball. The receiver must be within 10 yards to make a return (wall) pass exchange quick and effective.
- Attempt passes with both feet.
- Discuss with players the virtues of playing passes in front, behind and around the defense.

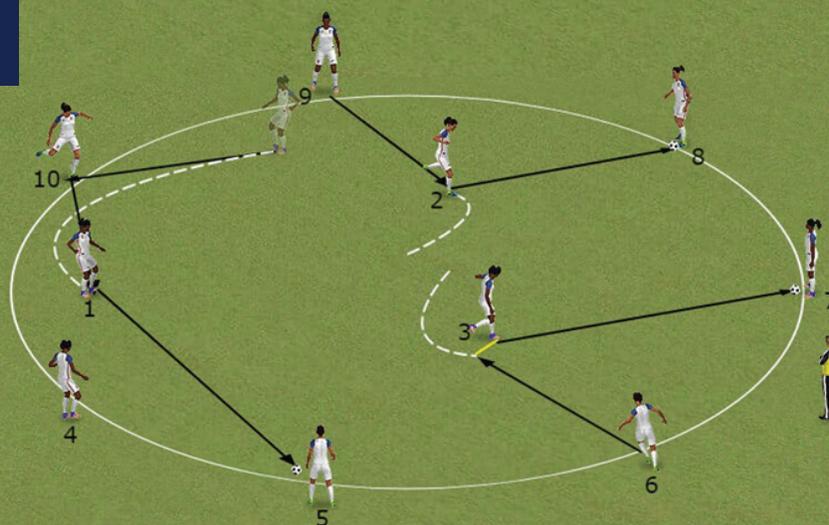
TEACHING MOMENTS WITH THE RECEIVER:

- Work with central players to prevent receiving the ball with their back towards the center of the area and/or opponents.
- Central players should be encouraged to move towards the edge of the circle and at a flat angle allowing a return pass from the outside to be played 'ahead'.
- The body position on receipt of the ball is critical. An open – forward facing - position when space is ahead to move into or a more closed – protective - position with the body between the ball and an opponent when in a tight space.
- Peripheral players must be ready to receive a pass and should communicate with the passer for a return pass. The receiver is in an advantageous position to see space and opponent's and must provide clear instructions to assist a teammate.
- Use hand signals and verbal commands to indicate to a teammate where to pass. For example, shouting "FEET" or pointing 2 hands to the ground in front indicates the receiver wants the ball firmly player to the feet. Conversely pointing upfield tells the passer to play into space.
- Seek space and constantly look 'over the shoulder' to sense when space is closing
- Remain in a ready position – alert and light on the feet.
- Try to play with a two-touch receiving rhythm, with the first touch setting up a dribble, pass or shot.
- On occasion allow the ball to run through the legs, turn and follow.

TEACHING QUESTIONS TO ASK PLAYERS:

- How can a bent run into space help the receiving player as the ball arrives?
- What is a good support angle to a passing player in an area without straight lines and corners?
- What verbal and non-verbal instructions can you use to let a teammate know where to move?
- What combination options are available between players in the center of the area?

SEQUENCE 1: EASY - MODERATE



Players #1, #2 and #3 start with a ball each and pass to any available peripheral player. Following a pass, the central player moves to a new position to receive a return pass. Notice #2 and #3 move only a short distance to receive a return pass and as such have their backs to the center of the area. Conversely, #1 has made bent run to the edge of the area and receives the return pass with an open body and an option to pass in almost any direction.

TEACHER-COACH CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

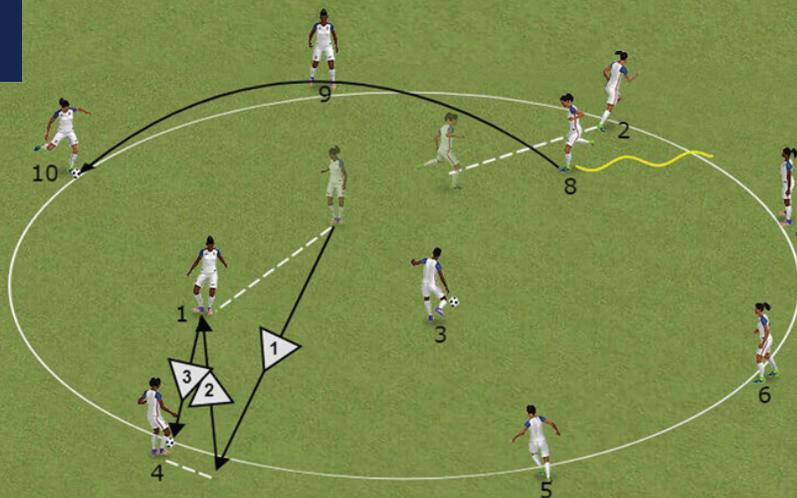
To make the activity less challenging:

- Each central player has a ball and players on the periphery must pass back to the same player.
- Use the hands at first to establish passing and movement patterns.
- Keep the area relatively small (center circle) to encourage short passes.

To make the activity more challenging:

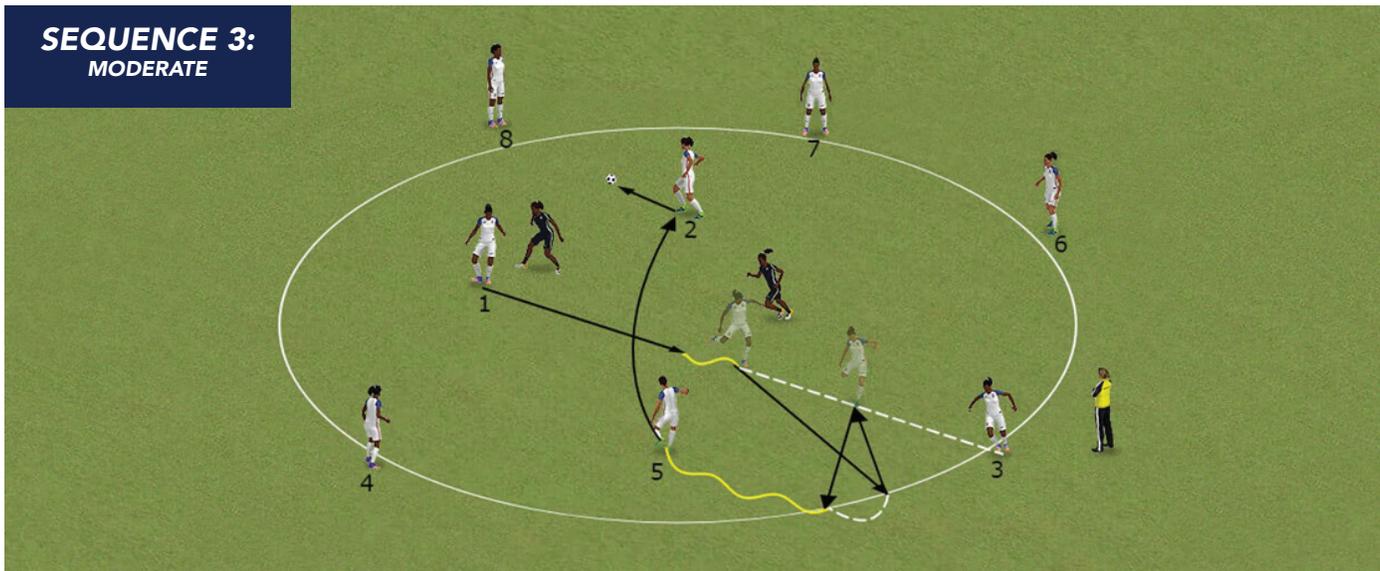
- Introduce a competition – first player to successfully combine with each of the 7 peripheral players first.
- Alternate passing types, including driven, chipped and bent pass.
- Pass and receive with different feet.
- Restrict to a two touch receive-pass rhythm.
- Require a passing combination, such as a double pass or wall pass with outside players.
- Receiver to turn using the outside of the foot or allowing the ball to roll between the legs

SEQUENCE 2: EASY - MODERATE



This illustration progresses sequence 1 adding prescribed passing combinations. #1 and #4 make a double pass combination and #2 and #8 switch positions. As #8 dribbles into the area a longer passing option is available and the ball is chipped to #10.

SEQUENCE 3: MODERATE



Defenders are added to the area and the number of peripheral players is reduced. #1 combines inside with #3 and #5 receives a pass on the outside. #3 and #5 perform a double pass combination and this initiates a change in positions. #3 dribbles inside and sees an opening to split the defenders with a pass ahead of #2.

TEACHER-COACH CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

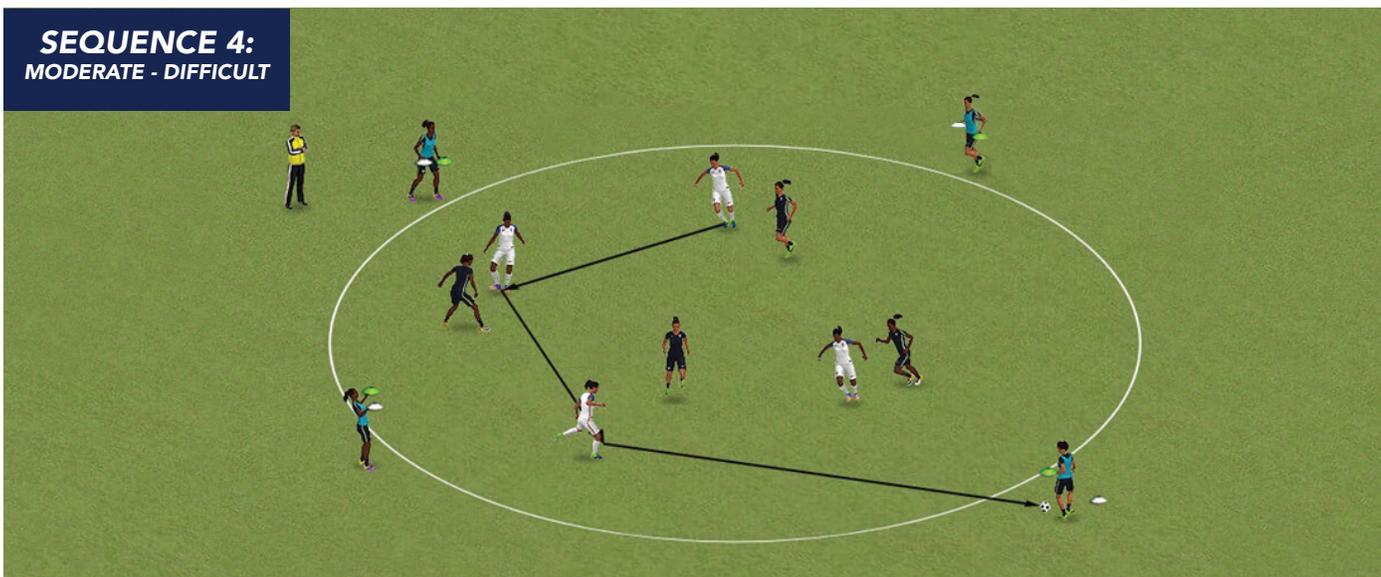
To make the activity less challenging:

- Limit the number of defenders to 1 or start without defenders (sequences 1 and 2)
- Allow the central players to play to the outside without needing to combine inside first.
- Make the area larger to provide the attackers with more space and give defenders more ground to cover.

To make the activity more challenging:

- Play 3v3 in the middle.
- Insist on all 3 central players touching the ball before a pass is made to the outside for a point.
- Progress to a 3 team game – cone drop (see sequence 4).
- Increase the tempo by restricting central players to 2 touches and outside players to 1 touch.
- Require off-the-ball movement requirements, such as an overlap or underlap run before receiving.
- Require a passing combination, such as a double pass or wall pass before scoring.

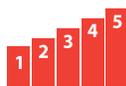
SEQUENCE 4: MODERATE - DIFFICULT



Cone drop is a 3 team game. The white team successfully passes to the blue neutral player on the outside. On receipt of the pass, the blue player drops the white cone and passes back to the white team. The white team must now attempt to pass to the other 3 blue players. First team to drop all 4 cones wins.

ACTIVITY 7

6V3 TO 6V6 END ZONE GAME



STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Stages 3, 4 & 5
9 to 18 year old players.



CHALLENGE LEVEL

Start: Moderate challenge level
Progress: Moderate-Difficult challenge level



DURATION

20-25 min passing, receiving
and defending theme.



NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Commence with 6 players.
Progress to 12 players.



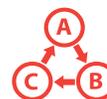
EQUIPMENT

Training vests - 2 colors.
Cones – 10-12.
Soccer balls – 8-10 balls.



FIELD REQUIREMENTS

Layout 1: 70x30 yards.



PRACTICE TYPE

Passing and receiving training activity
with variable and random characteristics.



GAME FORMAT

Appropriate for 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11
formats of the game.



ATTACKING CONCEPTS

Penetration, width and depth, support,
mobility and improvisation.



DEFENDING CONCEPTS

Pressure, cover and patience.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES

- Primary Themes: Passing over short and medium distances, receiving with the feet, creating space, passing combinations and defending as an individual and in pairs.
- Attacking Competencies: Passing with both feet, receiving with both feet, passing, movement – width and length, passing to eliminate a defensive threat, communication with teammates.
- Defending Competencies: 1st defender set up, closing space and applying pressure, 2nd defender movement to cover and alternating defensive roles.

6v3 to 6v6 End Zone Game is a great activity to introduce players to build-up play from the back and to teach functional responsibilities for central defenders, wide fullbacks/midfield, central midfield and strikers. The length of the area permits a full repertoire of passes and end zone movement restrictions establish length between deep-lying defenders and a high-lying striker. The set-up allows a coach significant flexibility to extract numerous passing and receiving individual competencies and advanced tactics, including when to possess and when to counter attack, combination and link play between units of the team and changing the point of attack.



QUICK START INSTRUCTIONS

Set up: Use cones/flat markers to create a 70x30 yards rectangle with a 5 yards end zone at each end. Two teams of 6 players start the activity with the team in possession having a 6v3 advantage. Balls are accessible at both ends.

How to play: Each team sets up with the same formation – 2 defenders, 3 midfield and 1 striker. The striker must stay in the end zone and 2 defenders start in the other end zone. 3v3 midfield players in the center. The objective is to start play from the defensive zone and pass to the striker/target at the other end for a point. The defenders and striker for the team out of possession must drop out of the area completely. Restart from the defenders.



SET UP

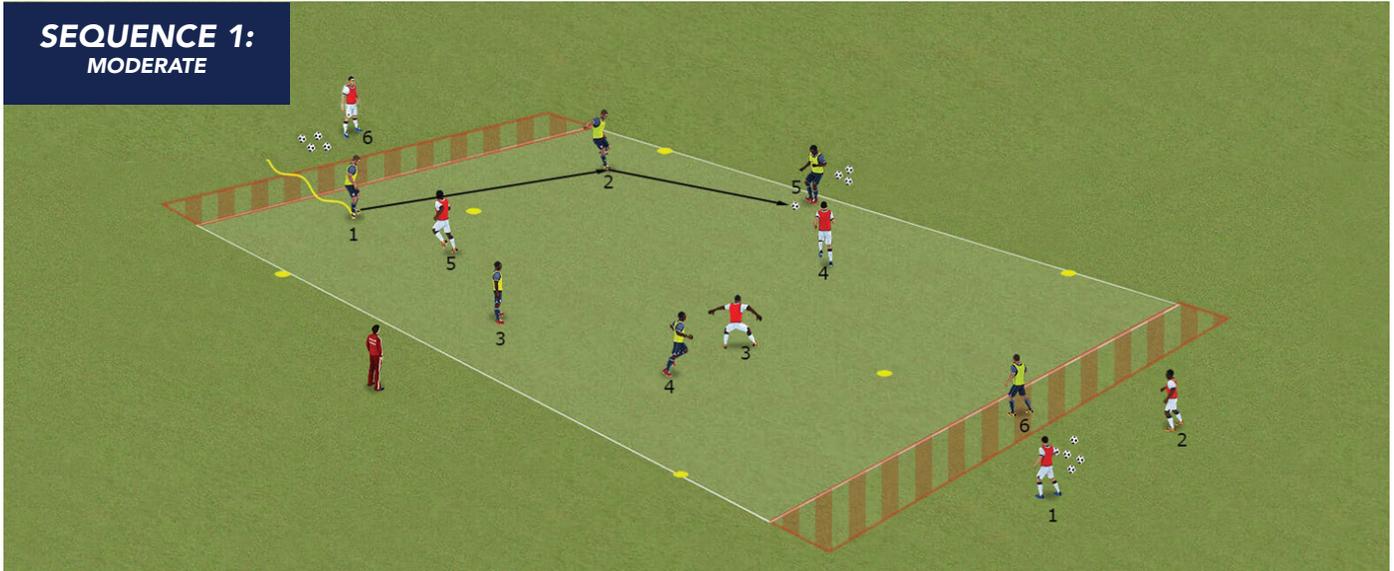
A 60x30 yards central area is capped at both ends with a 5x30yards end zone. Flat markers are used to create an additional 10 yards build out zone at both ends. The coach stands on the side line to observe and teach and a good supply of soccer balls is available for restarts outside each end zone. Teams are attacking in one direction only and set up with 2 defenders, 3 midfield and 1 striker. Defenders initiate all attacks by collecting a ball from the end line.

PLAYING INSTRUCTIONS

Moderate Challenge Level (Sequences 1, 2 and 3): The primary objective for the attacking team is to pass to the striker in the end zone for a point. The defending team attempts to win back possession and pass to its target player at the opposite end. The attacking team has a 6v3 numerical advantage, with 2 defenders starting from one end, 3 midfield players in the large area and a striker restricted to movement inside the end zone. The striker and 2 defenders for the team out of possession must leave the field behind the end zone, ready to re-enter following a turnover. To start the coach selects an attacking team and one of the two defenders collect a ball. The opponent's striker cannot interfere and must 'drop-off' the field to clear space. At first, midfield players cannot enter the 10 yards build-out zone, allowing the defenders 15 yards (end zone plus build-out zone) to develop controlled possession without pressure. One or both defenders with possession can proceed into midfield to create a numerical advantage. The attacking team combines to play through, around or over the 3 opponents and the goal is to pass to the striker for a point. The striker remains unopposed and can move laterally, but for now, cannot enter the area. Change roles every 5-6 attacks. When the attacking team loses possession, the defenders and striker for the new attacking team become active and move into the end zones to establish a 6v3 advantage in the other direction. If the ball is kicked out of the area, the opponent restarts with a defender collecting a ball and dribbling or passing to a teammate.

Moderate-Difficult Challenge Level (Sequence 4): Once players have demonstrated their attacking competencies, increase the challenge level but lifting the restrictions on player movement and balancing the teams. Removing the build-out zone allows the defending team to press higher up the field. Gradually reintroduce players to the defending team until numbers are even. Eventually, there will be 2 even teams – 6v6 – playing to the end zones without other restrictions. Numerous conditions can be added to increase the challenge level (see teacher-coach conditions, restrictions and modifications).

SEQUENCE 1: MODERATE



Two teams of 6 players attempt to score points by passing to a striker. The yellow team start with possession and #1 collects a ball from the end line. Yellow's defenders (#1 and #2) combine uncontested in the build-out zone and pass wide to #5. The yellow team has a 6v3 advantage, with red #1, #2 and #6 stepping outside the playing area.

TEACHER-COACH CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

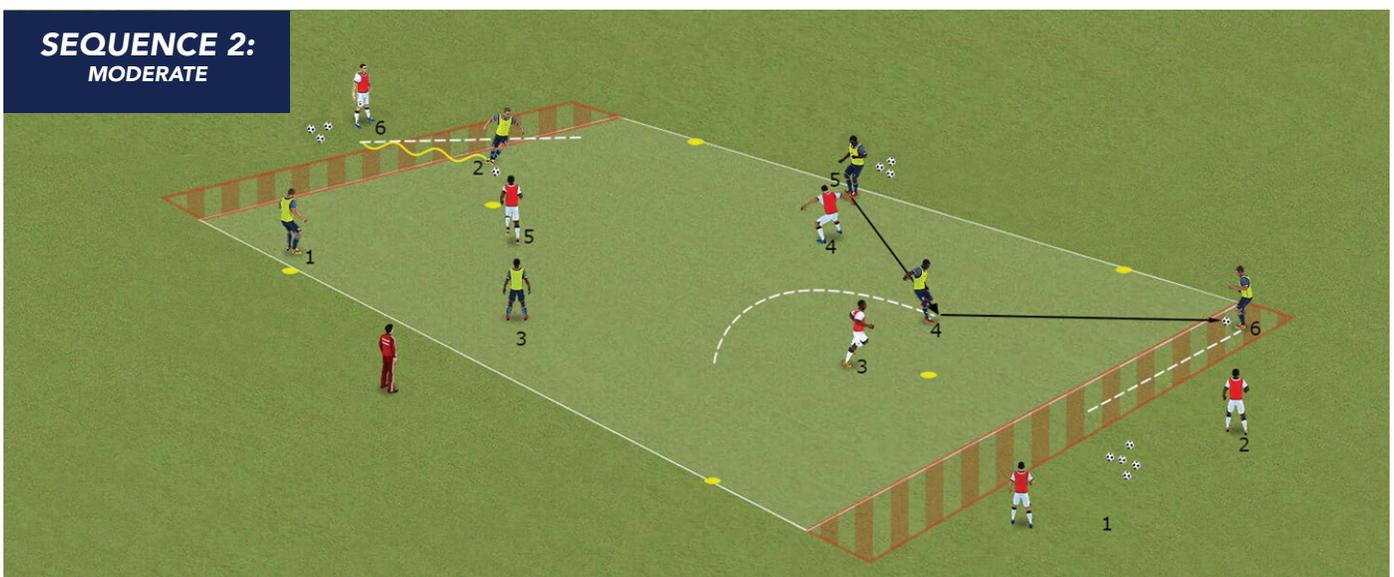
To make the activity less challenging:

- Both teams start with a ball and develop unopposed passing patterns from one end to the other.
- Reduce the number of defenders – make 1-2 a 'zombie' defender – move around the area without attempting to win possession.

To make the activity more challenging:

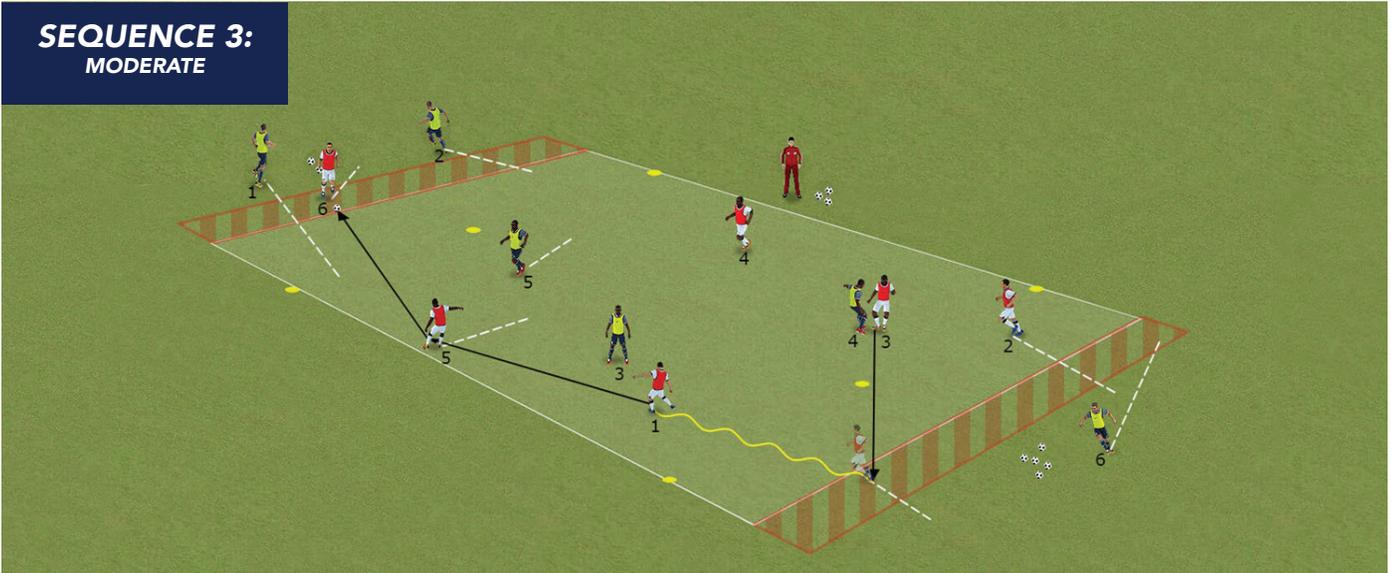
- Reduce the size, or remove the build-out zone.
- Introduce a team competition – first team to 8 points wins.
- Restrict to a 2-3 touch receive-pass rhythm.
- Require a passing combination, such as a double pass or wall pass before passing to the striker.
- Reduce the size of the area to limit the available attacking space.

SEQUENCE 2: MODERATE



Play progresses upfield with yellow #5 and #4 combining with the striker #6 for a point. The striker is restricted from leaving the end zone, but can move laterally to support teammates and present a high-lying target. As soon as yellow's score a point, #2 collects a new ball and starts the next attack. The scoring team retains possession.

SEQUENCE 3: MODERATE



In this diagram, red #3 has won possession. Immediately, the yellow defenders (#1 and #2) and attacker (#6) drop off and red defenders (#1 and #2) and attacker (#6) come on. Red #1 is alert and receives a pass from #3. #1 penetrates space and draws yellow #3 to the ball. Space is wide for red #5 who passes into the striker for a point.

TEACHER-COACH CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

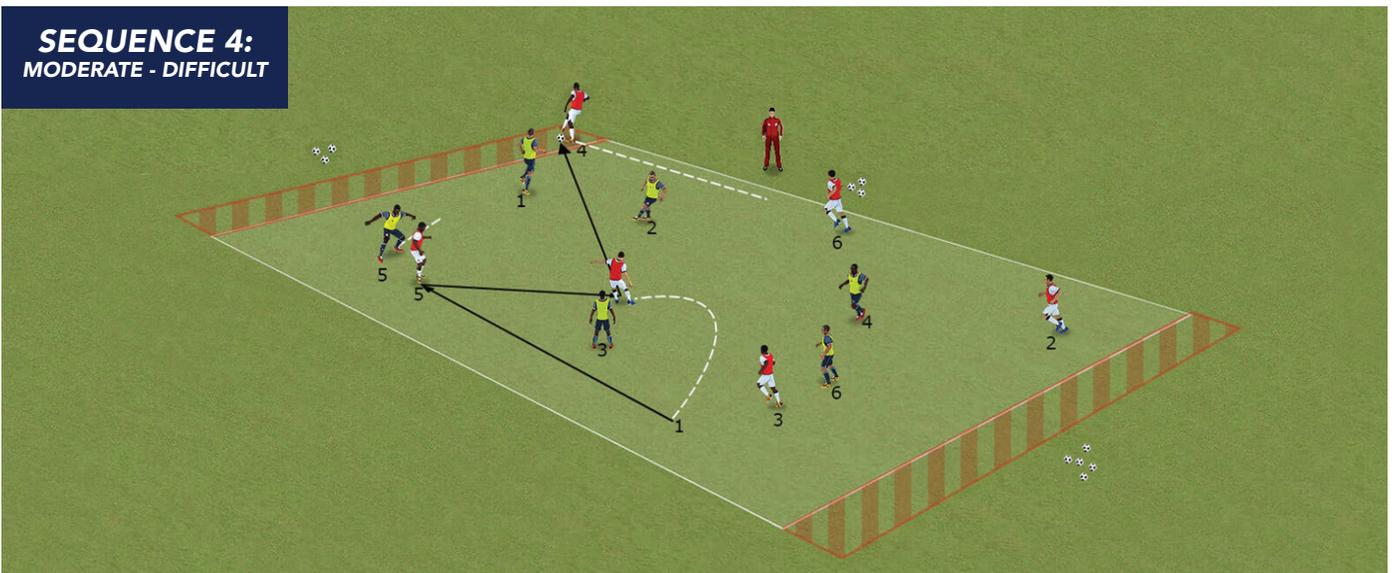
To make the activity less challenging:

- Maintain the attacking advantage 6v3 (sequences 1, 2 and 3)
- Add an all-time offensive player/s.
- Make the area larger to provide the attackers with more space and give defenders more ground to cover.

To make the activity more challenging:

- Insist on all 3 central players touching the ball before a pass is made to the target for a point.
- Double the points if the striker and teammate can make a double pass combination.
- Players switch positions with the defenders and striker following a double pass combination.
- Lift movement restrictions for end zone players.
- Remove the build out zones.
- Play 6v6 in the central area with no players in the end zones (sequence 4).
- A point is scored when the ball is controlled in the end zone by a player following the pass.
- Increase the tempo by restricting central players to 2 touches.
- Require off-the-ball movement requirements, such as an overlap or underlap run before receiving.
- Require a passing combination, such as a double pass or wall pass before scoring a point.

SEQUENCE 4: MODERATE - DIFFICULT



Most restrictions have been removed for the final sequence. Play 6v6 in the main area. Red #1 and #5 play a wall pass around yellow #3 and a pass is made in front of red #4 between the yellow defenders and into the end zone.