

FINAL-THIRD PRINCIPLES

AGE PHASE: U12-U16

LEVEL

- U12-U16

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Developing principles of play in the attacking third, including:

- Technical rehearsals
- Playing and moving forwards with intent
- Creating and exploiting overload situations
- Finishing

PART 1: TECHNICAL PASSING

- The practice takes place within an area of 24m x 12m and requires a minimum of 10 players.

PART 2: WAVE GAME


- An opposed attacking practice where the use of 14 outfield players and a minimum of two goalkeepers will ensure intensity remains high.


PART 3: SMALL-SIDED GAME, 2v1 INTO 6v6

- A progression from Part 2 sees the practice develop further to encourage an increased need for quick decision-making.

KEY

 Ball movement

 Player movement without the ball

 Player movement with the ball



Players



Cones



Flat marker



Cones with flat marker



Goal



Mini-goal



Mannequin



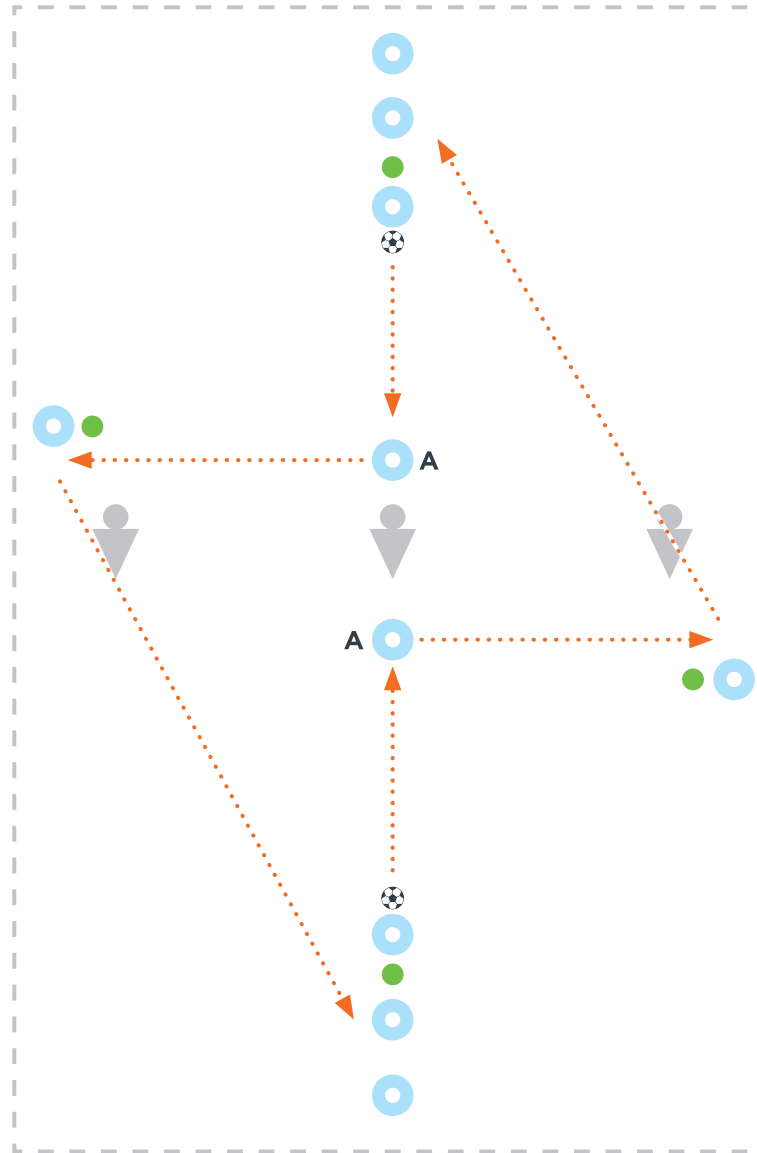
Pole



Football

FUNCTION

- This possession practice provides an opportunity to get detail into the technical aspects of play in the final third, which can be the difference when looking to create attacking opportunities and capitalising on any space afforded by the opposition.
- Two balls work at the same time, and in one area split in half by three mannequins.
- To begin, two players (**A**) start centrally either side of the middle mannequin, with one ready to receive from the top line and one from the bottom line. Initially, both middle players will face the passer and receive with the intention of playing the next pass out to their left. All players follow their pass.
- The emphasis is on circulating the ball quickly and accurately around the area, so the practice should run entirely on two touches – one to receive, one to pass – unless alternative conditions are placed.



COACHING DETAIL: UNOPPOSED POSSESSION

HIGH TECHNICAL DETAIL AND DEMANDS

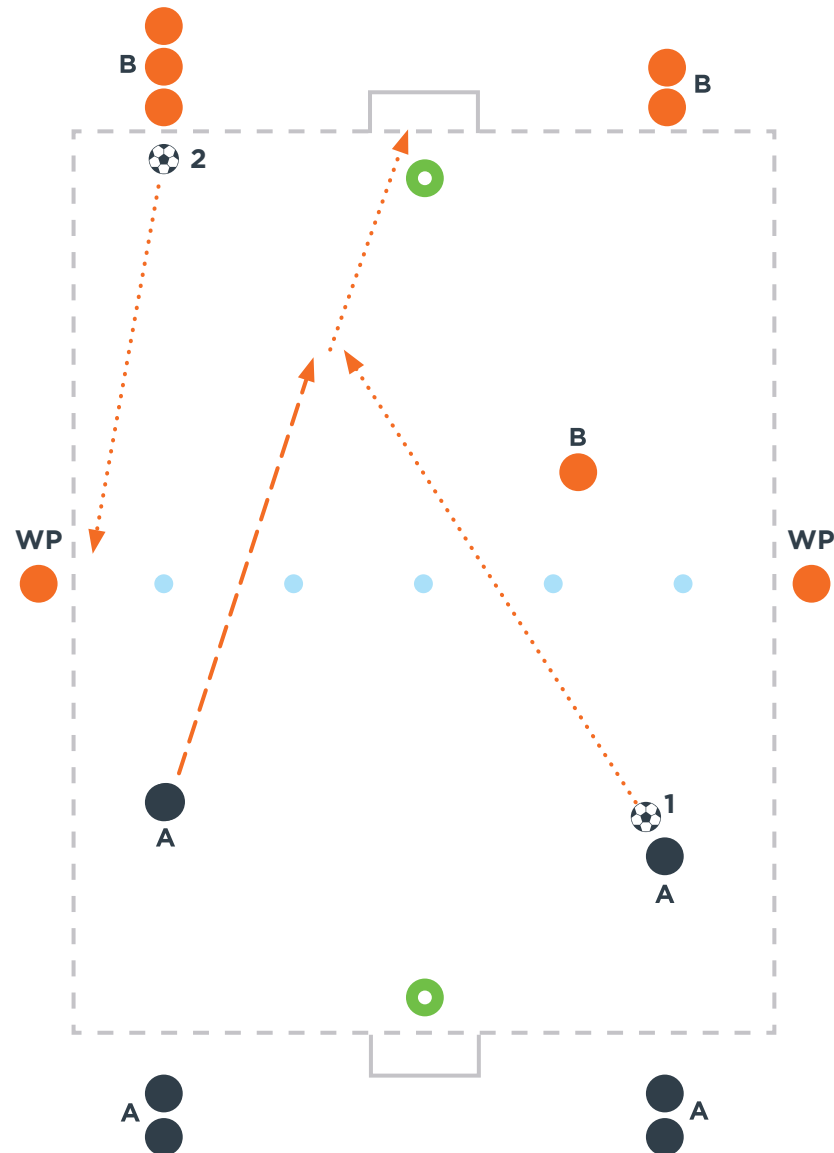
- All aspects of this practice should meet the standards needed in order to successfully complete the next action.
- As there is no opposition, the coach should encourage and drive an intensity he would expect in final-third ball circulation and player movement.
- The initial focus should be on the development of the play around the central player – who can be categorised as your central striker, attacking midfielder or inside forward, depending on your preference. This player begins the practice by moving to receive and asking for a pass.
- The following questions can then be asked:
 1. Is the weight of the pass into the middle player appropriate to them taking a first touch that leads to being able to play a pass with the second action?
 2. Have they planned appropriately to execute the next action (body shape, for example)?
 3. Does the middle player's first touch go in the direction they want the pass to travel?
 4. Is the pass into the next player the correct weight so the receiver can control the ball with their back foot, thus enabling a pass forwards on their second touch?
 5. Is their forward movement after making the pass aggressive?
- The same demands can then be placed on players in other roles. For example, when the players in wide positions receive the ball, can their first touch beat the man (the flat cone) because their body shape was open, they received on the back foot and the weight of the pass into them allowed them to make a forward action?

CHANGE IN TYPES OF PRESSURE – THE WHAT-IFS

- Challenge the middle player by changing your coaching position and becoming the mannequin yourself. You can then apply passive pressure to the receiver.
- Doing the same in the wide areas can also change the conditions of the practice. For example, if there is pressure on the player in the wide area, the space may not be there to receive on the back foot and go forwards. Could they drop shorter to receive and play a bounce pass back to the middle player before running in behind to receive the next pass? If so, this would affect the weight of pass they would need to receive in order to effectively play a bounce pass.
- Feel free to adapt in accordance with your model of play, desired challenges and outcomes.

FUNCTION

- The team with **Ball 1**, in this case **Team A**, begins the practice by playing 2v1 against **Team B**.
- As soon as the ball goes dead, **Team B** feeds **Ball 2** to one of the two wide players (**WP**) to create a 3v2 in the opposite direction. The original **Team B** defender now becomes one of the attackers.
- The two original attackers from **Team A** leave the pitch, and a different two players from that team enter the practice to become the defenders in the new 3v2.



COACHING DETAIL: OPPOSED PRACTICE

TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

- The first touch must be the appropriate weight and direction so the next action can be positive and force the opposition backwards.

AWARENESS OF FORWARD PLAYERS' MOVEMENT

- The player in support in the 2v1 must look to exploit space on the shoulder of the defender and give them a larger space to cover. This movement should be direct and cause the defender an extra problem.

UTILISING THE OVERLOAD

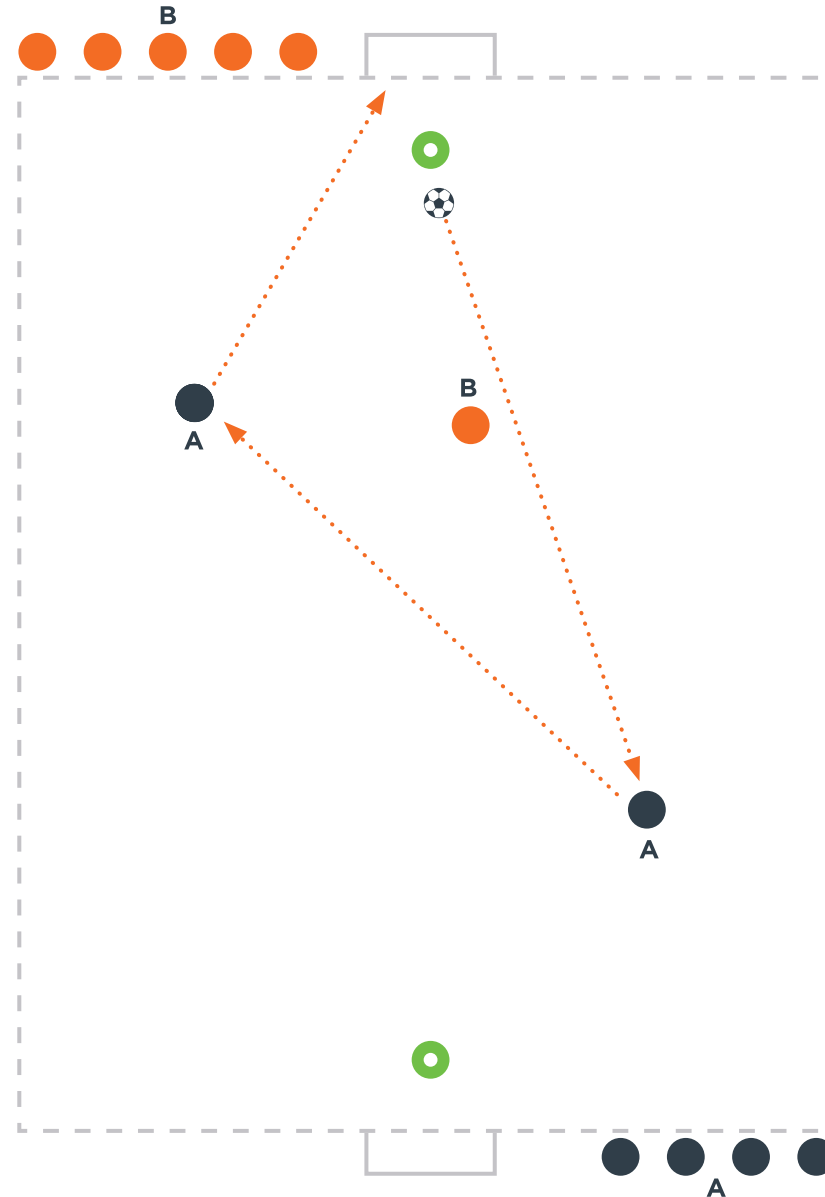
- The player in possession must look to make the most of any overload. They must travel with the ball, forcing the defender to commit to the ball or cover any space that may allow a forward pass to a teammate or a shot at goal.
- The timing of any decision to pass, shoot or continue to dribble should be made based largely on the decision-making of the defender or defending team.

ATTACKING TRANSITION

- Players should be reminded of the importance of capitalising on any transitional moment from defence to attack. Exploiting any space left within the opposition's attacking shape can lead to more penetrating attacks.

FUNCTION

- The practice is a progression from Part 2 of the session.
- The goalkeeper from one team – here, **Team B** – starts play with a pass into one of the opposition players positioned near the opposite goal.
- This triggers a 2v1 – as seen in the diagram – in favour of the attacking team (**Team A**), which in turn progresses into a 3v2, 4v3, 5v4 and 6v5. The practice eventually concludes with a 6v6.
- Each time the play breaks down, one player from each team is added to the playing area.
- After the 6v6, the practice restarts with the goalkeeper from **Team A**, who passes into an opposition player for **Team B** to begin with the 2v1 overload.
- Play the normal offside rule to maximise the realism of timings of runs and passes.
- Progress to the attacker receiving from their own goalkeeper rather than the opposition goalkeeper, so their first action is with back to goal.



COACHING DETAIL: ATTACKING PLAY

MAXIMISE THE OVERLOAD

- The coach should emphasise the need to make the most of any overload by creating width to stretch defenders and encourage overlaps, appropriate timing of runs and 1-2s.

COACHING DETAIL: DEFENSIVE TRANSITION

MOMENTS OF TRANSITION

- Once the moment of transition occurs, the attacking team must look to make the most of this situation by ensuring forward runs from players off the bat are aggressive and stretch the opposition.