

RUNS BEHIND THE DEFENSIVE LINE

AGE PHASE: U17+

SESSION OVERVIEW

RUNS BEHIND THE DEFENSIVE LINE

LEVEL

- U17-First team

SESSION OBJECTIVES

To improve a team's ability to find a player on the run in behind the opposing team's defensive line through:

- The forward line providing maximum width and depth
- Identifying the third-man runner
- Timing of movement behind when the ball-carrier has time and space to execute a pass

PART 1: POSSESSION PRACTICE

- This practice is a Rondo-based possession practice that begins to layer the details of finding a player on the run behind the defensive line.
- The practice requires a minimum of seven players.

PART 2: TACTICAL SITUATION GAME


- This practice is a tactical situation to improve the understanding and execution of plays leading to runs in behind the defensive line.
- The practice requires a minimum of 14 players and can be position-specific.


PART 3: CONDITIONED 11v11

- This practice is a conditioned 11v11 with three zones to link all of the concepts trained to a game-specific environment. The offensive team will be in a 1-4-3-3 formation, while the defensive team will be set up in a 1-4-1-4-1 formation.
- The practice requires 22 players.

KEY

 Ball movement

 Player movement without the ball

 Player movement with the ball


Players


Cones


Flat marker


Cones with flat marker


Goal

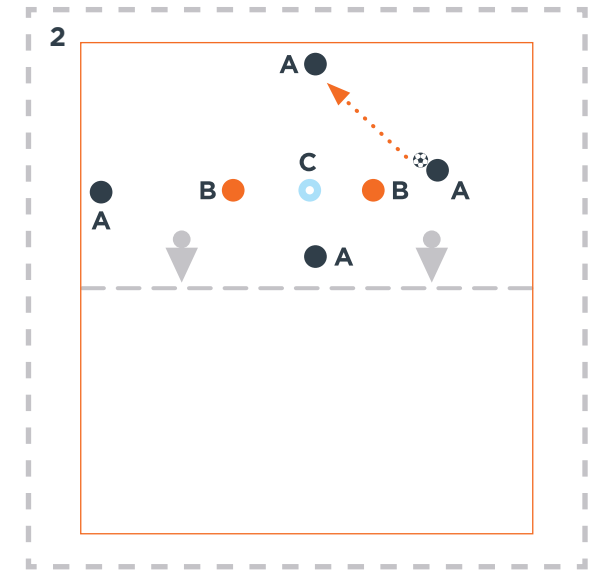
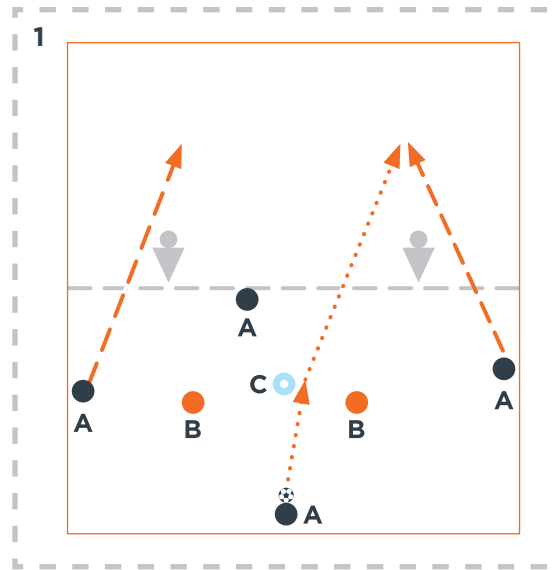

Mini-goal

 
Mannequin Pole


Football

FUNCTION 1

- The possession practice begins in a 5v2 on one half of the field space as pictured.
- If the team in possession (**A+C**) connects **15 passes consecutively**, the defenders stay in the middle again. If the ball goes out of bounds or one of the defenders (**B**) deflects the ball, the attacker who gave possession away will swap teams with the defender who has been in the longest.
- After **3 consecutive passes**, the team in possession can run behind the mannequin and receive a pass from **Player C**. The line in the middle is the offside line.
- Everyone has **1 touch**. However, after 3 consecutive passes, **Player C** will be able to use 2 touches.
- If **Player C** gives up possession, they will also have to swap with a defender.



FUNCTION 2

- The player receiving the pass in behind will have **2 touches** to maintain possession; all of the players run to join them in the other half.
- The team in possession must then connect another **3 passes** before transferring the ball in behind the mannequins – this time in the opposite direction.
- If the team in possession is able to transfer back and forth twice, the defenders will have to stay in the middle for another sequence.
- The **15 consecutive passes** also remains a way for the defenders to stay in the middle for another sequence.

COACHING DETAIL: IN POSSESSION

POSITIONING

- Players should move to create triangles.
- One player on each side of the playing area provides maximum width and depth.
- Player C should always offer support inside.

BALL SPEED

- The ball must move quickly to unbalance defenders, creating time and space for Player C to execute their pass in behind the mannequins.

AWARENESS

- Player C must constantly check shoulders and should know when the moment is available to receive side on and play in behind.
- As the ball moves from side to side, Player C must gather information to know if their teammate can run in behind the mannequins.

COACHING DETAIL: MANAGING THE OPPOSITION

AGGRESSIVE PRESSING

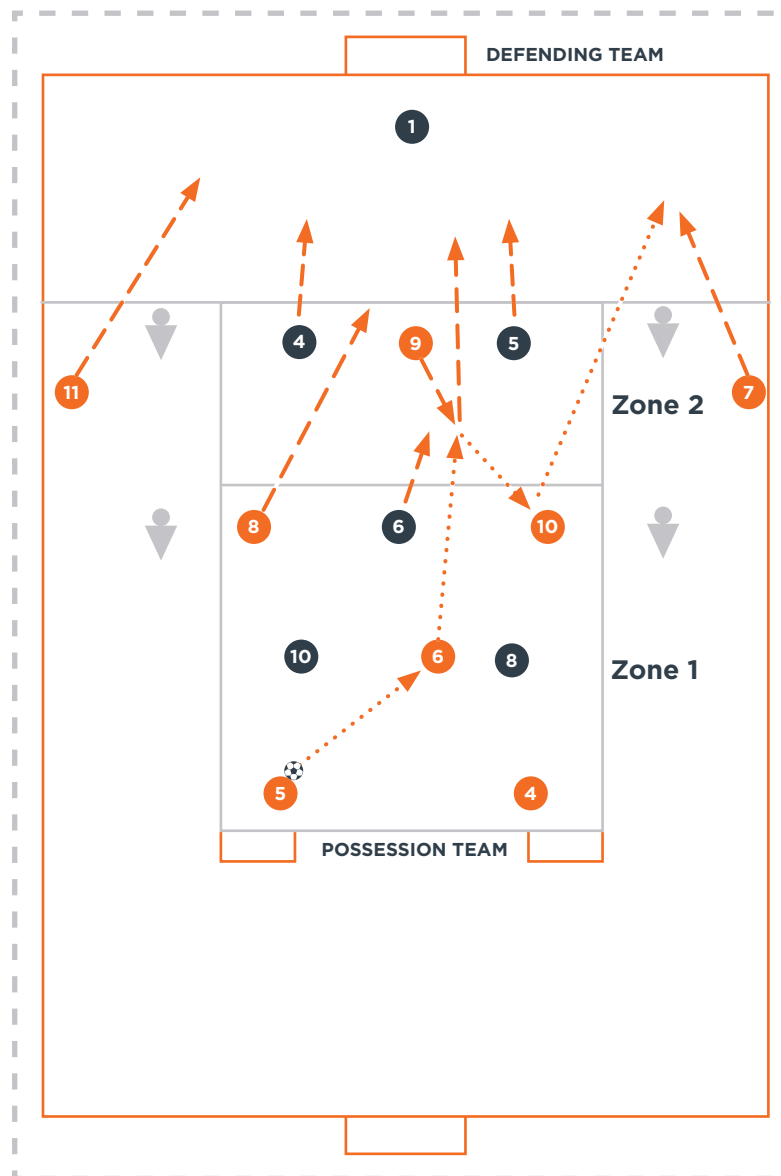
- The two defenders must press the opponent aggressively, while co-ordinating pressure and cover to deny split passes. This will be necessary to give the team in possession an appropriate and relevant challenge.

TACTICAL SITUATION GAME

RUNS BEHIND THE DEFENSIVE LINE

FUNCTION

- The tactical situation game begins with a 5v3 situation in Zone 1: two centre-backs (**4 and 5**) and three midfielders (**6, 8 and 10**) vs three midfielders (**6, 8 and 10**).
- Zone 2 consists of one forward (**9**) vs two centre-backs (**4 and 5**). To begin the practice, all players must be positioned in the space as depicted in the diagram.
- If the **9** makes a movement to receive in Zone 1, one centre-back can mark them. However, both attacker and defender can only be in that zone for **3 seconds** before returning to Zone 2.
- If the attacking team plays a pass into **9** in Zone 2, as **6** does in this diagram, one defending midfielder (in this diagram, **6**) can also drop into Zone 2 to defend against a set back into Zone 1 from **9**.
- After **2 passes**, the team in possession has two options. One is to link with the **9** and use third-man play to run in behind for **7** (as pictured here) or **11**. The other is to play directly in behind towards **7, 11** or an advancing **9**. The full-pitch horizontal line serves as an offside line.
- Once the possession team progresses in behind the defensive line, they will have **6 seconds** to score in a 3v2 + goalkeeper situation.
- One attacking midfielder (here, **8**) will run to the top of the full-pitch horizontal line to position for rebounds. If there is one, they must shoot within **2 touches or fewer**.
- If the three defending midfielders recover the ball in Zone 1, they try to score in one of the 2 small goals. If the two defending centre-backs recover the ball in Zone 2, they can score by connecting a pass with one of their midfield teammates in Zone 1.
- Once the 3v2 + goalkeeper situation ends (goal or interception or out of bounds), or the defending team scores, a new ball will begin with the attacking centre-backs (**4 and 5**) in the 5v3 Zone 1.



COACHING DETAIL: IN POSSESSION

ZONE 1: 5v3

- Position in a 2-1-2 shape to create triangles.
- Midfielders should have a side-on body shape to be able to open passing lines into the 9 and know when to support underneath for third-man plays.
- Midfielders receive passes side on from centre-backs to identify runs in behind from forwards.
- Centre-backs using short passes to draw out opposing midfielders to create space to play into forward.

ZONE 2: 2v1

- Forward (9) should be positioned between centre-backs to fix them, creating space for supporting movements behind opposing midfielders.
- Alternating movements of support, and runs in behind when marked – and when teammates have time and space to play in behind.

MOVEMENTS FROM WINGERS (7 and 11)

- Providing maximum width and depth, on the back shoulder of their respective mannequin.
- Initiating diagonal runs in behind as the ball is being set from the forward (9) to the supporting midfielder for third-man play.
- Both wingers remain 'activated' to run in behind as a midfielder is able to receive side on, with time and space to play a penetrating pass.

COACHING DETAIL: MANAGING THE OPPOSITION

AGGRESSIVE PRESSING

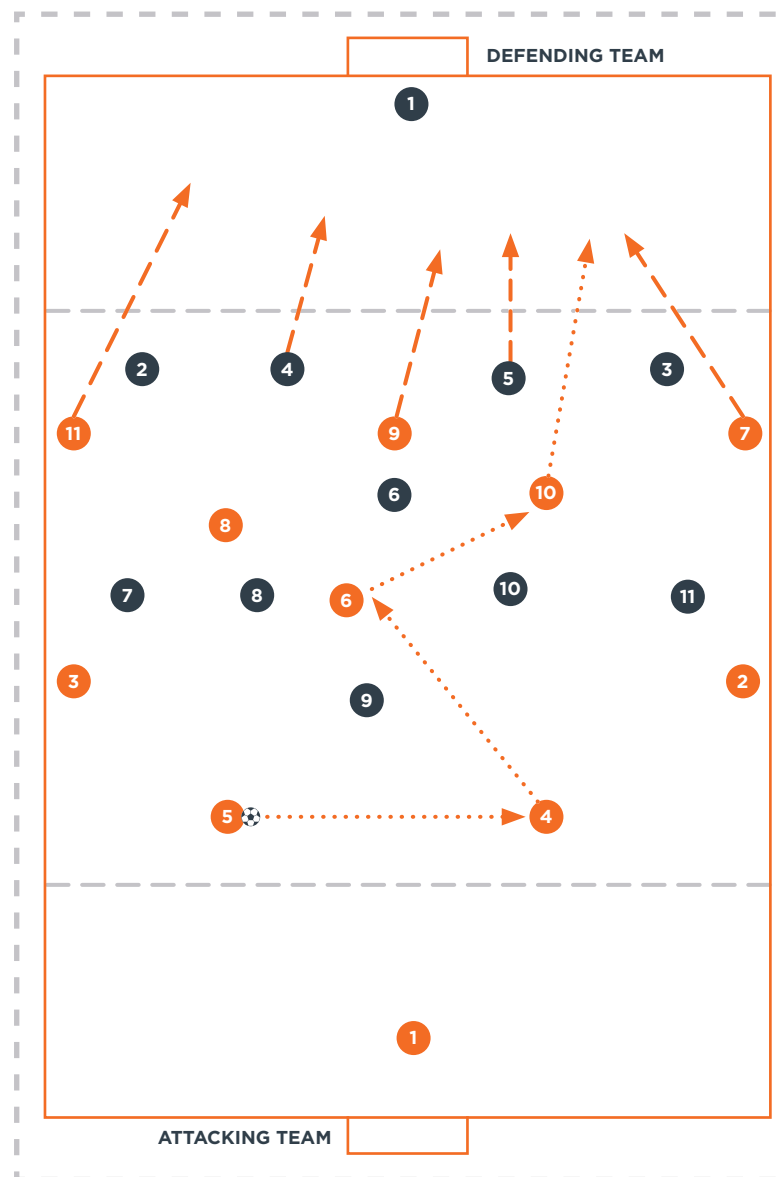
- The three defenders in the 5v3 Zone 1 will use aggressive pressing in a 1-2 shape.
- The centre-backs in Zone 2 must co-ordinate defensive movements of marking the forward (9) and anticipating runs in behind from the wingers (7 and 11).
- Once the possession team progresses in behind for the 3v2 + goalkeeper situation, the centre-backs (4 and 5) must co-ordinate pressure and cover, forcing opponents to the outsidess.

OFFENSIVE TRANSITION

- Execute quick counter-attacks to score.
- The moment the ball is recovered, teammates must identify free spaces to move into, to be an option to receive a pass from the ball-carrier.

FUNCTION

- The objective of the game is to build and play a penetrating pass into a teammate making a run behind the defensive line. The dotted lines at either end of the pitch will serve as the offside line.
- The game is symmetrical, meaning both teams will be training the topic of making runs in behind the defensive line.
- The field is divided into three zones, with the middle third being the main game space.
- The team in possession, here playing from bottom to top and set up in a 1-4-3-3 formation, can drop into their defensive third to initiate the build-up. Once the ball enters the middle third, however, they cannot go back into defensive third.
- Prior to playing a penetrating pass to a runner behind the defensive line, the team in possession must connect **3 passes**.
- Once the team in possession plays a penetrating pass, any two defenders (here, **4 and 5**) and any three attackers (here, **7, 9 and 11**) can enter the final third to play 3v2 + goalkeeper for **6 seconds**.
- If the in-possession team scores, they will begin with a new ball from their goalkeeper.
- If the ball goes out of bounds over any of the side lines, play will start again with the goalkeeper of the defending team, here set up in a 1-4-1-4-1 shape.
- The diagram here shows the attacking team playing through the middle third before **10** plays a pass to **7**, who is making a diagonal run behind his opposing full-back (**3**) to penetrate into the final third.



COACHING DETAIL: IN POSSESSION

POSITIONING

- Position in a 1-4-3-3 shape, with the 7 and 11 providing maximum width and depth for the team – heels on the touchline and playing on the back shoulder of the full-backs.
- Three central midfielders creating a triangle, with one defensive midfielder (6) and two attacking midfielders (8 and 10).
- The central forward (9) positioning between the centre-backs, to fix them and create space between the opposing midfield and defensive lines.

RUN-IN-BEHIND DETAIL

- Wingers (7 and 11) time runs in behind as midfielders receive side on with time and space.
- If the full-back is marking the winger strongly, the winger will need to move towards the ball and then quickly change pace to lose their marker in behind.
- As the midfielders lift their head up, supporting movements from the 9 will drag a centre-back out of position, creating space in the opposing defensive line for the winger to exploit.
- 7 and 11 make diagonal movements inside to drag a full-back out of position, thus allowing the 9 to make diagonal runs in behind the full-back.

THIRD-MAN RUN DETAIL

- As the 9 makes a supporting movement between the lines, both 7 and 11 become alert to the possibility of running in behind.
- 8 and 10 position to receive a set from the 9, from where they can play a pass in behind towards whichever winger has the advantage.

COACHING DETAIL: OUT OF POSSESSION

MIDDLE-BLOCK DEFENDING

- The team out of possession will set up in a 1-4-1-4-1 mid-block.
- The goal is to shift across the field in a compact unit.

DEFENSIVE TRANSITION

- When possession is lost, the player closest to the ball will apply quick pressure while the team regains its defensive shape of 1-4-1-4-1.