

PENETRATING IN BEHIND

AGE PHASE: U17+

LEVEL

- U17+

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

- Threat, width, pocket
- Blindside runs
- Creativity on the ball

PART 1: UNOPPOSED TECHNICAL PATTERNS

- This practice is a small-scale, repetitive, technical pattern drill. Patterns are limited to how creative the coach wants to be, but must always contain forward runs, split passes, a threat in behind, width and a pocket player.
- The practice contains 12 outfield players, split into two teams of six, and two goalkeepers.

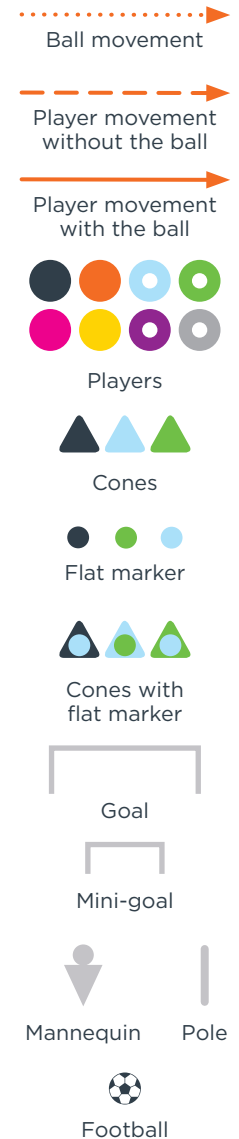
PART 2: POSITION-SPECIFIC BREAKOUT GAME

- This practice is position-specific for both teams, incorporating two teams of a midfield/attacking players, two designated central defenders and two goalkeepers.
- There is a strong focus on players' ability to find forward passes under pressure, and to press the ball as groups.

PART 3: POSITION-SPECIFIC SMALL-SIDED GAME

- This is a small-sided game in which the playing area is split into three vertical zones, with the middle zone set up wider than the two outside zones.
- Two designated goalkeepers are limited to their zones, with all other players free to move.

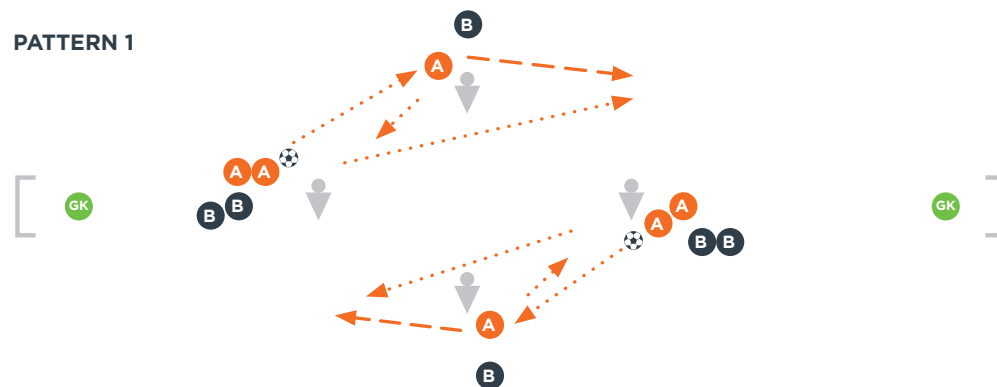
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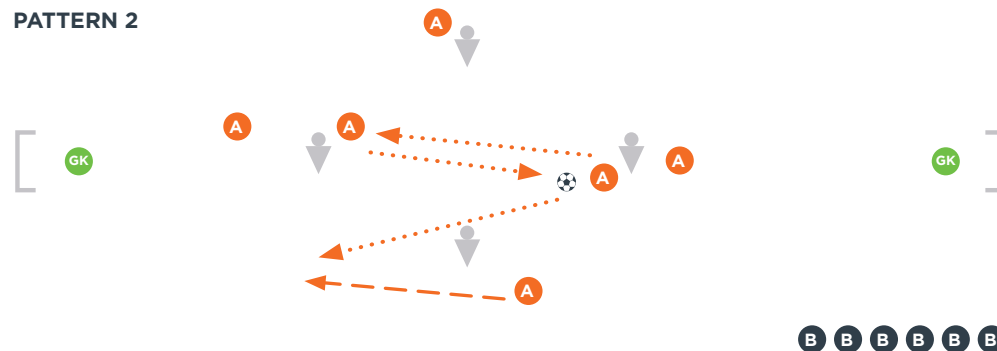
FUNCTION

- This is an unopposed technical pattern drill, consisting of two teams of six and two goalkeepers.
- Four mannequins are set up in a diamond formation for the attackers to play around.
- In **Pattern 1**, **Team A** play left and right patterns as shown at the same time.
- Once they complete their patterns, the **Team A** players rotate one mannequin around and stand to the side to allow **Team B** to play their patterns.
- **Pattern 2** follows the same process. The diagram shows only half the team playing towards the goal on the left for clarity's purpose; the other half should be playing towards the goal on the right. After the designated time, **Team B** replaces **Team A** and runs through the same patterns. After that, the **Team A** players return and rotate to the next mannequin.
- **Pattern 3** works with **Team A** playing their pattern towards one goal. When they are done, **Team B** come on to the playing area and play towards the other goal. **Team A** can then rotate their positions ahead of their next pattern.

PATTERN 1



PATTERN 2



PATTERN 3



COACHING DETAIL: TECHNICAL

BODY SHAPE

- Players must recognise when to receive and protect the ball (during set passes), and when they can receive with open hips to play forward.
- Move hips and shoulders when performing double movements, and face two goals when preparing to run in behind.

PASS DETAIL

- Fast-paced passes to the front foot of the players receiving with their back to goal to set the ball.
- Well-weighted passes in front of the advancing attacker when playing forward into space.

ANGLES OF RUNS

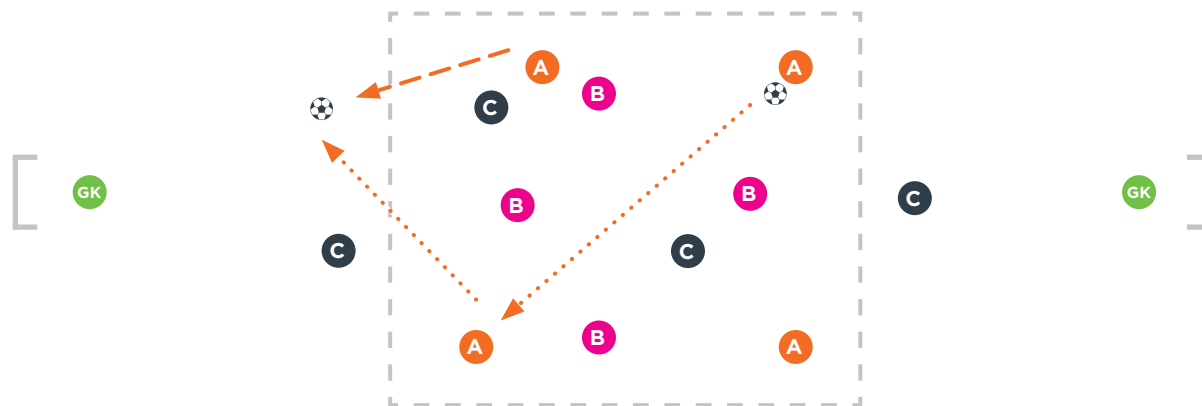
- Make angled forward runs to exploit spaces created through the movements of others or the patterns played.
- Aim to angle the run directly towards the goal. If this is not possible, aim within the width of the 18-yard box.

PRACTICE LAYOUT

- **PATTERN 1** One team – initially, **Team A** – works towards both goals at the same time. Half of the team plays the pattern on the left side of the diamond, while the other plays on the right side of diamond. Once **Team A** plays both patterns, **Team B** subs in and plays their patterns as **Team A** rotates to the next mannequin. This process repeats for the designated time frame.
- **PATTERN 2** One team – initially, **Team A** – works towards both goals at the same time. Again, half of the team plays the pattern to the left side, while the other half plays to the right. Once **Team A** plays both patterns, **Team B** subs in and plays their patterns as **Team A** rotates to the next mannequin. This process repeats for the designated time frame.
- **PATTERN 3** Each team works as a collective to one goal only. Once **Team A** plays their pattern, **Team B** subs in and completes theirs. The process repeats for the designated time frame.

FUNCTION

- This is a position-specific breakout game, where two teams of four – **Team A** and **Team B** – compete against each other to complete six successful passes between themselves with the aid of four common players (**C**).
- The common players within the marked area must stay there, and are limited to **2 touches**. The common players on the outside act as centre-backs for the team in possession and are also limited to **2 touches**.
- Once **six passes** are completed, the team in possession looks to break out of the marked area towards either goal. The outside common player on that side then becomes a live defender, and aims to stop the team scoring. The attacking team can commit as many players as they wish to the attack; the defending team must stay within the marked area.
- Once a shot is taken, there is a **3-second delay** until the next ball is fed in by the coach, to allow for recovery runs.
- Advance to only allowing each team – **A or B** – to attack a specified goal; add a time limit once a team breaks out of the marked area; adapt so defenders are allowed to follow and defend; or set a touch limit for all players within the marked grid.



COACHING DETAIL: TECHNICAL

RUNS IN BEHIND

- Players should attempt to run in behind the single defender at every opportunity.
- Positioning themselves on the outside shoulder of defenders and making blindside runs will allow for more success.
- Third-man runners are the best option within this practice, due to there only being one designated defender outside the marked area.

PASS DETAIL

- Pass weight is vitally important when penetrating in behind.
- Fast ball speed is required when playing to feet, to pull defenders out of slots and move units.
- When the opportunity arises to play split passes, the pass must be in front of the advancing attacker to sustain the speed of the attack.

BEING CREATIVE IN THE FINAL THIRD

- Passes around corners, one-twos, third-man runs and successful 1v1s will all pull defenders into different spaces, leaving areas to exploit.
- Encourage the attacking team to play with limited touches and express themselves.

AWARENESS

- Understanding when and how to move to create spaces will allow for more success.
- Praise double movements, blindside movements and players who 'sacrifice' themselves to open up positive passing lines and attract defenders.

COACHING DETAIL: IN POSSESSION

'THREAT, WIDTH, POCKET'

- When penetrating in behind, the attacking team must always provide: a threat in behind; width; and a player to play 'in pockets' to attract defenders out of their slots.

COACHING DETAIL: DEFENSIVE TRANSITION

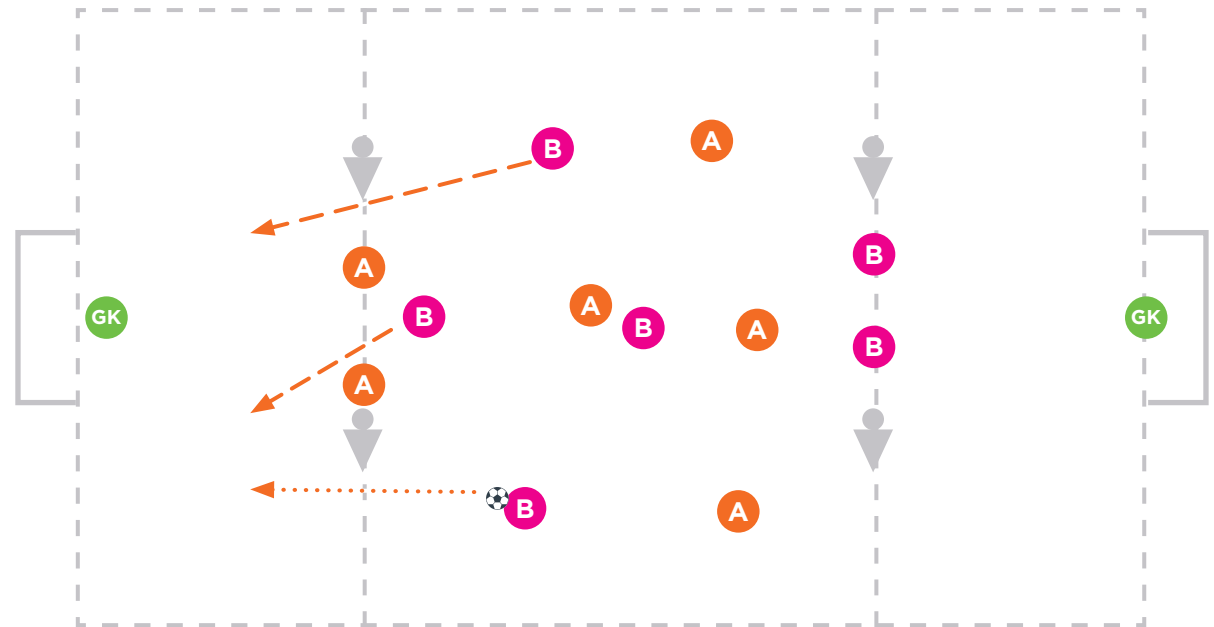
- Once the attack has been completed, encourage a quick recovery run from the attacking players who committed themselves to the attack.
- The rule of a **3-second delay** before the next ball being added will aid this.

FUNCTION

- This is a position-specific small-sided game with two teams of six players.
- A goalkeeper, two centre-backs, three midfielders and one attacker attempt to penetrate in behind through the use of slips, slides and runs in behind.
- The pitch is marked into three vertical zones. The two end zones highlight areas to penetrate in behind; the mannequins provide extra opportunities to challenge passing lines and for players to run off the blindside.

DIAGRAM

- In the diagram pictured, the wider midfield players move aggressively forward with and without the ball. Together with the forward, they create a 3v2 scenario against the opposition centre-backs with well-angled forward runs.
- The forward runs between the centre-backs to attract them, and on the blindside of the ball-side centre-back.
- A well-timed and weighted pass from the midfielder on the ball releases him in behind; the opposite wide midfielder can then sprint for the box for a crossing opportunity.



COACHING DETAIL: IN POSSESSION

RUNS IN BEHIND

- The team in possession should be very aggressive with forward runners, notably from the two wider midfielders and the forward.
- Blindside runs off the back of the centre-backs (or mannequins) will give the attacker an extra bit of space to work with.
- It also attracts the centre-backs into areas they should not be in, opening up running lanes for the attackers.

PASS DETAIL

- Timing of the passes so the forward runners can stay onside is key, along with the weight of the pass. It needs to be far enough in front of the attacker so speed can be maintained, but not too far so the advancing goalkeeper has an opportunity to collect the ball.
- Angles of pass are also critical. A mix of straight passes, straight passes plus diagonal runs, and diagonal passes plus straight runs are key to opening up the defence.
- Passing angles need to stay within the width of the box for maximum effect.

COACHING DETAIL: DEFENSIVE TRANSITION

- Due to the expectation of forward runners when in possession, there is a high chance of being underloaded on the defensive transition.
- The main aim of the session is to penetrate in behind. Committing players to attacks and having to defend underloaded only increases the likelihood of penetrating becoming successful.
- A higher-numbered game – for example, 11v11 – would make penetrating in behind harder but create more defensive stability on transitions.