

# FULL-BACK & WIDE PLAYER RELATIONSHIP

AGE PHASE: U12-U16

# SESSION OVERVIEW

# FULL-BACK/WIDE PLAYER RELATIONSHIP

## LEVEL

- U12-U16

## SESSION OBJECTIVES

To develop the relationship between the full-back and wide player in offensive situations, through:

- Speed of play
- Working together to create goalscoring opportunities
- Quality on the final pass

## PART 1: MOVING & RECEIVING DRILL

- The practice works best with small numbers to allow for lots of ball contacts. For example, eight players divided into a 2v2 +4.
- An area of 12m x 12m can be used for eight players, but can be changed depending on the number and quality of the players.

## PART 2: SUCCESS DOWN THE SIDES

- This practice works best with 18 players in a 10v8. One team acts as the attacking team and lines up in a 1-4-2-3 formation; the opposition sets up in a 1-3-3-1.
- The practice can be achieved with fewer players, as long as the attacking team has two players more.
- The area should be 36m x full width, with eight-yard channels on each side. Two players from the attacking team occupy each wide channel.

## PART 3: 10v10 SMALL-SIDED GAME

- In the final block, the dimensions remain the same as in Part 2, but the wide channels are removed to challenge the players' ability to transfer their learnings into a game situation.
- The coach can now even up the numbers in teams, to make it a 10v10.

## 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



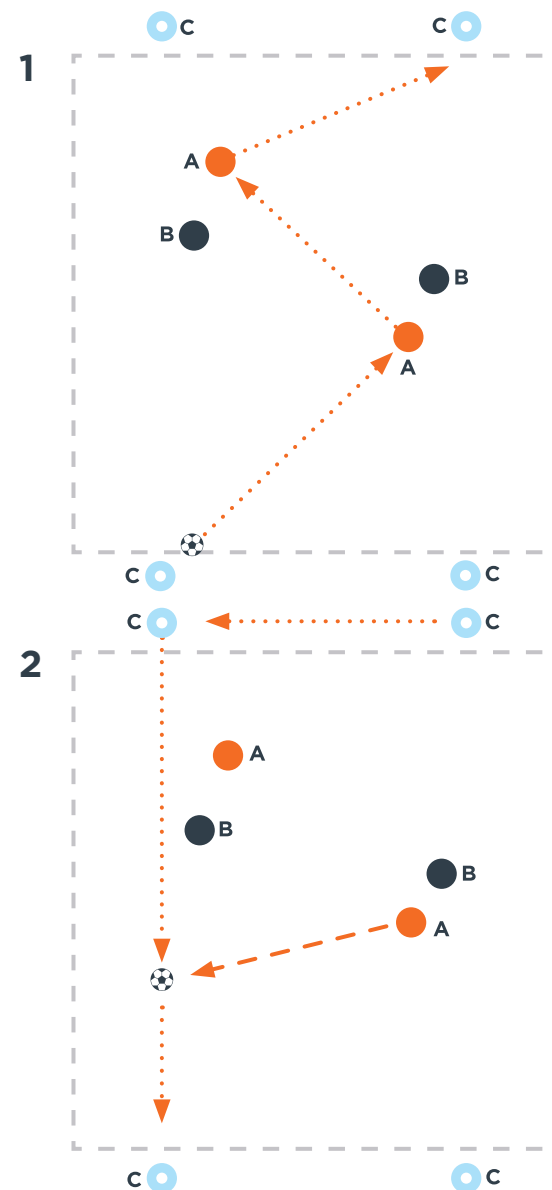
Football

# MOVING & RECEIVING DRILL

## FULL-BACK/WIDE PLAYER RELATIONSHIP

### FUNCTION

- The practice is a 2v2 within the grid. The team in possession – here, **Team A** – looks to receive and play to the neutral target players (**C**) at either end.
- The four neutral players (**C**), who are positioned in pairs at the top and bottom of the grid, play with the team in possession.
- Success is achieved by transferring the ball from end to end, either using the middle players or direct, without the ball going over head-height – as in **Diagram 1**.
- To progress the practice and affect the decision-making of the players in the 2v2, the two neutral players at either end have to play a square pass before playing back into the grid – as in **Diagram 2**.
- The coach can progress further by putting a touch limitation on all players, to challenge their ability to plan quickly and make informed decisions under pressure.



# MOVING & RECEIVING DRILL

# FULL-BACK/WIDE PLAYER RELATIONSHIP

## COACHING DETAIL: IN POSSESSION

### 1v1 AND LINK PLAY

- The practice demands that the central players (**A**) create space for both themselves and their teammate.
- Movement to receive on the back foot should be the priority, by playing on the shoulder of the defenders. This can be achieved by moving out to the wider areas of the pitch.
- This then challenges the defenders, who need to cut off any passes that might break a line as well as getting tight to their opponents to not allow them to turn.
- Players tend to use up a lot of energy trying to find space. The coach should explain how to create that space using clever, late, delayed movements, and stress that the quality of the movement sets players up for the best action.
- Upon receiving the ball in a central area, the teammate should concentrate on angles of support. For example, can they recognise when to stay away to create space for a split pass?

## COACHING DETAIL: POSITION & OPPOSITION MANAGEMENT

### DEFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- The coach should give particular instructions that each team should follow out of possession to create different problems for the team in possession.
- For example, the first priority for the defending team might be to stop any split passes. They could then drop off slightly, thus allowing the possession team more time with the ball.
- Alternatively, the priority might be to stop the opposition from turning when they receive the ball. As a result, this challenges the possession team to create opportunities for split passes to be played from neutral players (**C**) at one end of the grid to the neutral players at the opposite end.

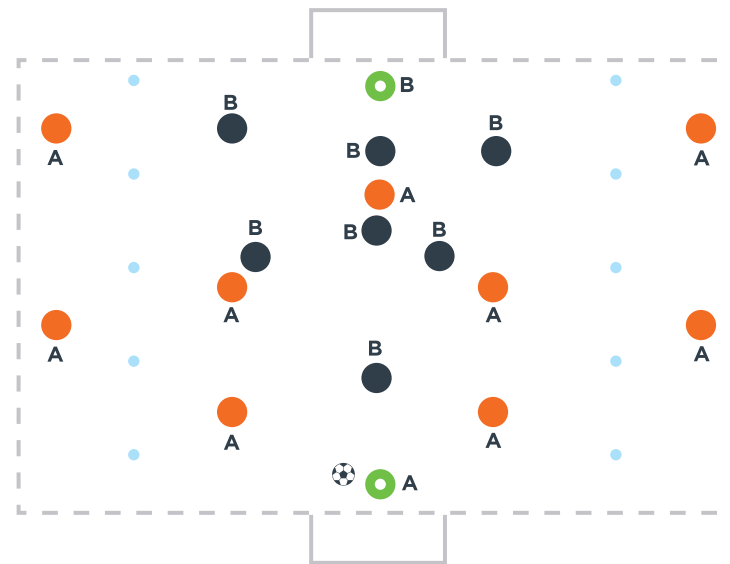
# SUCCESS DOWN THE SIDES

## FULL-BACK/WIDE PLAYER RELATIONSHIP

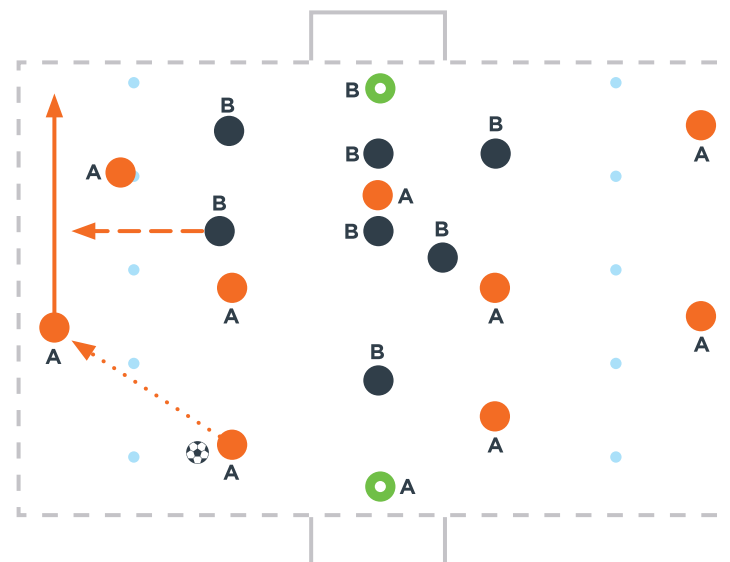
### FUNCTION

- This is a 10v8 practice in which an attacking team – here, **Team A** – sets up in a 1-4-2-3 formation against a defending team (**B**) set up in a 1-3-3-1 shape. The area should be 36m x full width, with eight-yard channels on each side.
- The ball starts with the goalkeeper for the possession team. **Team A** then expands to give both width and depth in order to create space for passes.
- The full-backs disperse to each wide channel and high on to the midfield line. The wingers also take up spaces in the wide channels, level with **Team B**'s last defensive line – as in **Diagram 1**.
- The **Team A** goalkeeper and centre-backs now have a 3v1 situation to build up play. The first pass from the goalkeeper must go to one of the two central defenders.
- The coach should instruct the opposition to defend in a block and protect the space in behind.
- If the possession team can't play through the defending team, they should play wide.
- Only the **Team A** full-backs and wide players can enter the wide channels. This should be unopposed in the first instance, to give confidence when combining.
- When the winger is narrow, the full-back should be encouraged to overlap, as in **Diagram 2**. If the winger is wide, then the full-back should look to underlap.
- To progress, one defending player is permitted in either wide channel when the ball is there – as in **Diagram 2**.
- Upon winning possession, the opposition should look to be direct and attack quickly.

1



2



# SUCCESS DOWN THE SIDES

# FULL-BACK/WIDE PLAYER RELATIONSHIP

## COACHING DETAIL: BUILDING TO ATTACK

- The coach should encourage the possession team to create width. This can be achieved either by the full-backs or the wide players, depending on the individual philosophy of the coach.
- It is important that the coach makes the practice opposed quickly to inject realism.
- Challenge the wide player or full-back to find space inside rather than just moving to create space in a wide area for a teammate.
- Although there are wide channels, encourage the players to use the markings on the pitch to ensure realism.
- Challenge the decision-making of the wide players. When should they combine? When should they cross? What type of cross should they deliver?
- Encourage efficient defensive transition upon losing possession.

## COACHING DETAIL: OPPOSITION MANAGEMENT

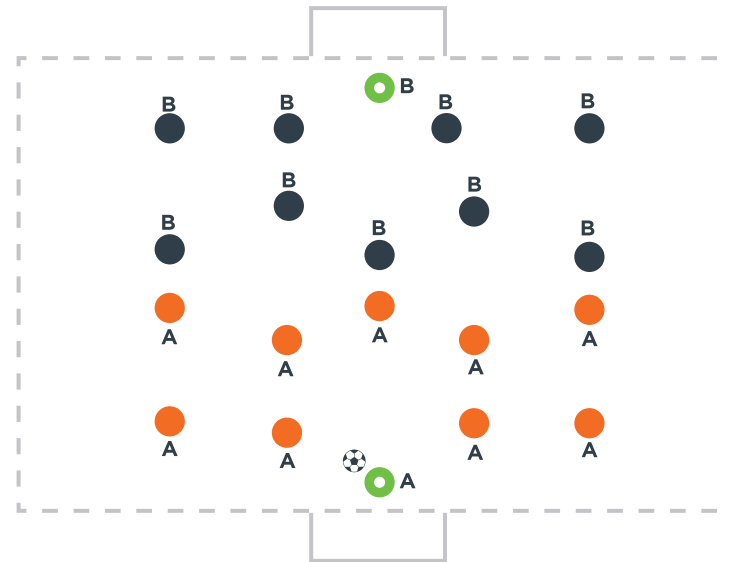
- The aim of the opposition should be to not concede. The coach should keep score to keep motivation high.
- Upon winning possession, the coach should encourage the opposition to be direct with their attacking play. Challenge them to get a shot off within a certain number of passes or within a certain timeframe.
- If the possession team have high levels of success, then awarding the defending team two goals for each goal can help with engagement.
- The teams should switch between attacking and defending at regular intervals.

# 10v10 SMALL-SIDED GAME

## FULL-BACK/WIDE PLAYER RELATIONSHIP

### FUNCTION

- The practice is primarily designed to encourage the team in possession to transfer the principles in possession when the ball is wide into a game-like situation.
- The teams should be set up as a 10v10, with both in a 1-4-2-3 formation.
- The coach can adapt the size of the pitch, but the layout should still encourage space to play in wide areas.
- The coach may add conditions to suit, such as a bonus goal when the final pass is delivered from a wide area.
- Should the teams struggle for success in wide areas, the coach can reintroduce wide channels and place limitations on the defending team.
- Players should be encouraged to be creative in wide, attacking areas of the pitch.



## COACHING DETAIL: ATTACKING OUT WIDE

### FROM PRACTICE TO COMPETITION

- Emphasis should be placed on the relationship between the full-back and wide player, which has been developed in the preceding practices.
- Once attacking opportunities are created in wide areas, the coach should encourage the forward players in central areas to be aggressive in their approach to getting on the end of crosses, passes in behind or pull-backs.
- Timing of runs should be an important point. This can be reinforced by implementing the offside law.

### DEFENSIVE TRANSITION

- The coach should ensure the transition from attack to defence is as it should be in a game situation – particularly the role played by the full-backs and wide players.
- This will ensure the players retain focus on the crucial aspects of the practice, and understand the importance of transitional periods both with and without the ball.