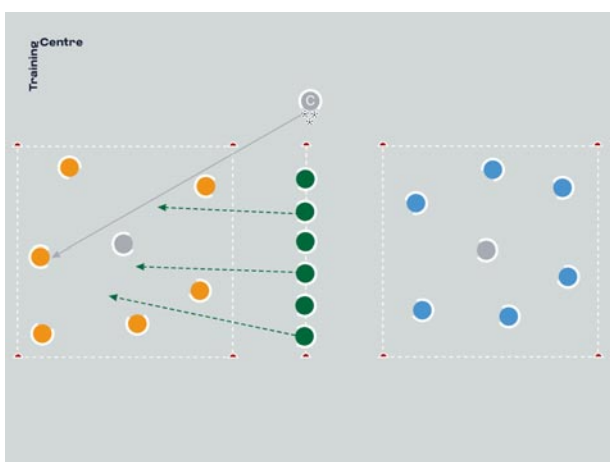


## Roger Schmidt: —●— Tactical activation through possession and transition II

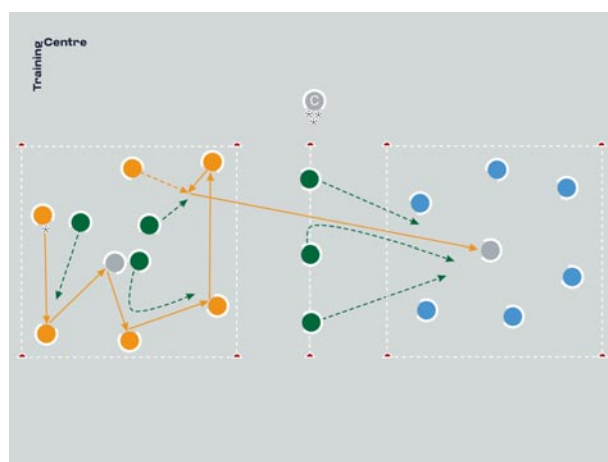
### Setup

This variation involves three teams of six players and two neutral players, spread across three zones. Each round begins with one team in each zone, and the middle team serving as defenders. Just like in the first version, teams can score in two ways:

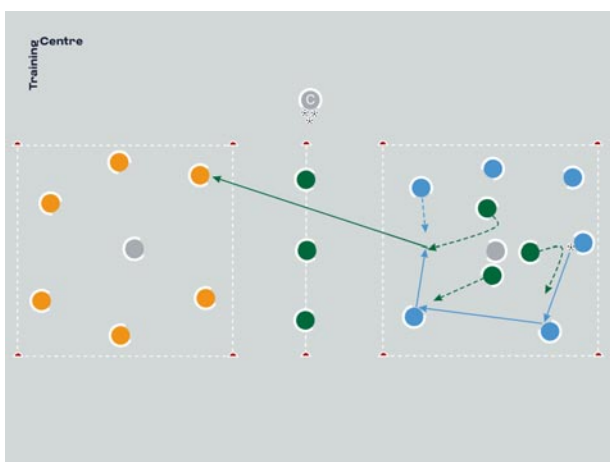
- By completing 10 passes and switching play successfully, rewarding structured possession and vertical progression.
- By winning the ball and transitioning it quickly to the opposite zone, reinforcing the idea that defending is a launchpad for attack.



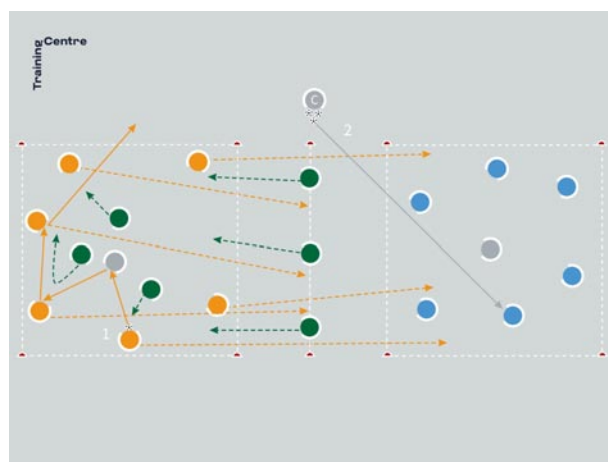
(1/4) The coach starts play by passing to one of the outside teams. That team, along with one neutral player, attempts to complete 10 passes under pressure from three defenders entering from the middle zone, creating a 7v3 scenario.



(2/4) If successful, the attacking team tries to switch play to the opposite outside zone, where the third team is waiting. The remaining three defenders in the middle zone attempt to intercept the switch.



(3/4) If the defenders win the ball, they can score by immediately transferring it to the far side. The team that lost possession can counter-press to prevent the switch and try to regain control.



(4/4) If the ball goes out of bounds, the coach plays a new ball. The team that lost possession becomes the new defending team in the opposite outside zone.

This is more than just a warm-up. It is a tactical activation — a focused, high-intensity drill designed to instil the core behaviours that define Schmidt's playing identity:

- **Forward-thinking play:** Players are encouraged to find vertical passes and move the ball with intent.
- **Quick transitions:** The drill is built on rapid changes of possession, teaching players to switch mindsets instantly.
- **High-intensity defending:** Defenders apply immediate pressure, mirroring the aggressive pressing seen in Schmidt's teams.
- **Purposeful ball recoveries:** Rewarding defensive actions that lead to attacking opportunities.

## In Possession

The attacking team consists of seven players (six, plus one neutral), requiring structure and strategic ball movement. This setup begins to resemble real match situations, especially during the build-up phase, with a back four and three central players. A central figure in this structure is the **neutral player**, who acts as a pivot.

Their responsibilities include:

- Retaining possession under pressure
- Facilitating ball circulation
- Initiating vertical progression

To perform effectively, the neutral player must:

- Constantly adjust their position to remain available
- Scan the field to anticipate pressure
- Decide when to turn, switch, or recycle the ball

## Out of Possession

The pressing team defends with three players, demanding coordination, communication, and clarity of roles. Though outnumbered, the defenders can be highly effective if they “hunt in a pack”, isolating the ball carrier, cutting off passing options, and pressing in unison.

To succeed, the pressing trio must:

- Defend as a compact triangle, shifting as the ball moves
- Stay 5–8 metres apart to support one another and cover lanes
- Isolate the ball carrier, prevent switches, and force turnovers

This mirrors the demands of the game, where pressing as a unit is essential to sustain pressure and win the ball high up the pitch.