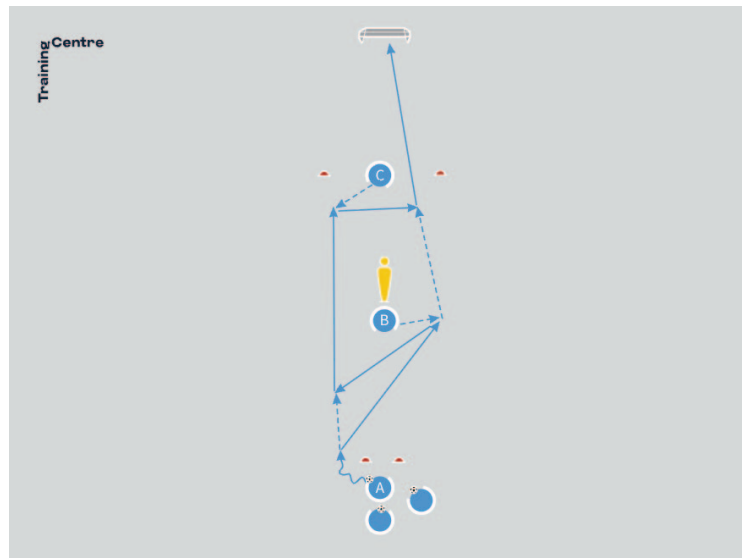
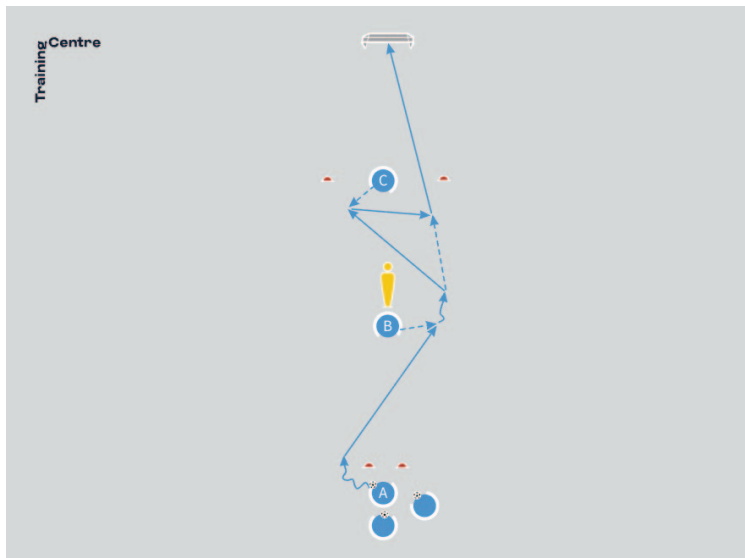


FC Twente/Heracles U-21

— Bypassing the first line and prioritising vertical play

PART 1: PASSING CIRCUIT COMPETITION



Organisation

- Mark out a passing circuit for 3 groups with 1 cone gate. Place a mannequin 10m ahead of this, with 1 mini-goal 16m from the mannequin and a shooting line 6m in front of the mini-goal.
- Distribute the players around the circuit, with a player each at positions B to D and multiple players with a ball at A.

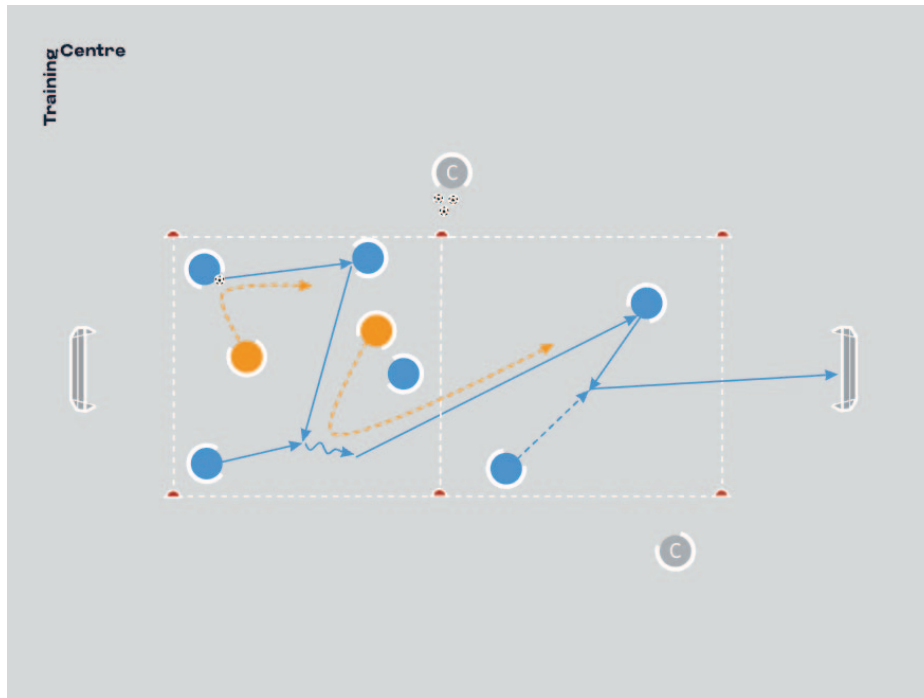
Explanation

- As they wait for the start signal, the first player in each group stands in front of the cone gate and stays on their toes by doing “tick tocks” (tapping the ball back and forth between their ankles). The first group to score a goal gets one point.
- Everyone moves along one position after each round.
- Competition: Which group can be the first to score five points?
- Sequence 1: A dribbles around one side of the cone gate. B peels diagonally off the mannequin and into space to receive the pass. B turns, plays a diagonal one-two with C and then finishes into the mini-goal before reaching the shooting line.
- Sequence 2: A dribbles around one side of the cone gate and plays a diagonal one-two as B peels off the mannequin. A passes into C, who has made a diagonal run into space and then lays the ball off first-time to B. B finishes on the mini-goal before the shooting line.

Coaching points

- Timing and angle to receive the ball: move towards the pass instead of standing still
- Passing quality: precise, well-weighted passes
- Readiness, scan before controlling the ball: next pass/mini-goal/under pressure
- First touch to keep play moving: in the direction of play, away from the press, setting up the next action
- Clear and early communication: “lay-off/turn/time”, plus hand signals or eye contact

PART 2: 4V2 ACROSS 2 ZONES



Organisation

- For 8 players, mark out a 10x5m pitch with a halfway line and tip over 2 mini-goals 2m behind the goal lines.
- Nominate 6 attackers (blue) and 2 defenders (red) and position them as shown.
- Set up a supply of balls for the coach on the halfway line.

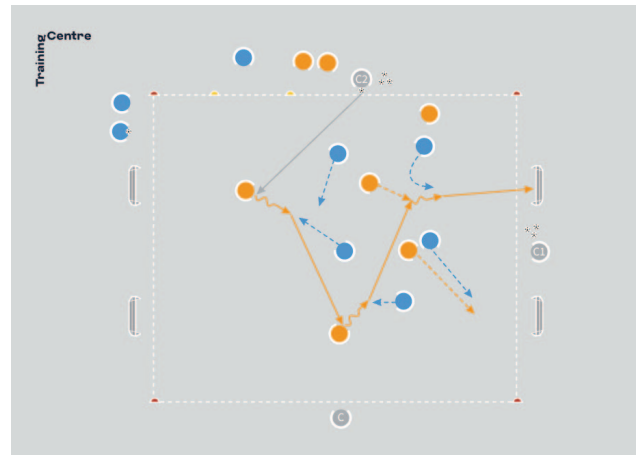
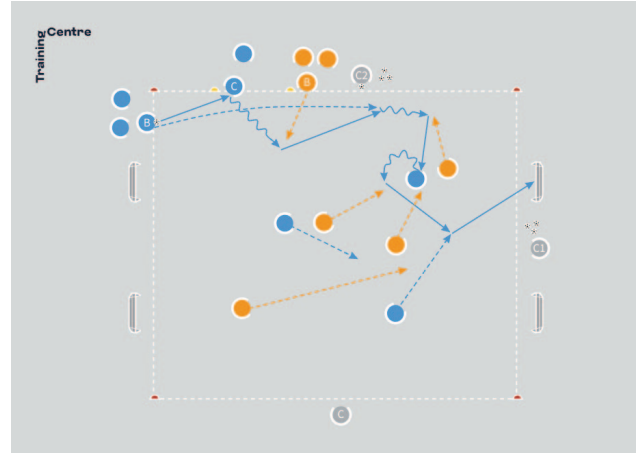
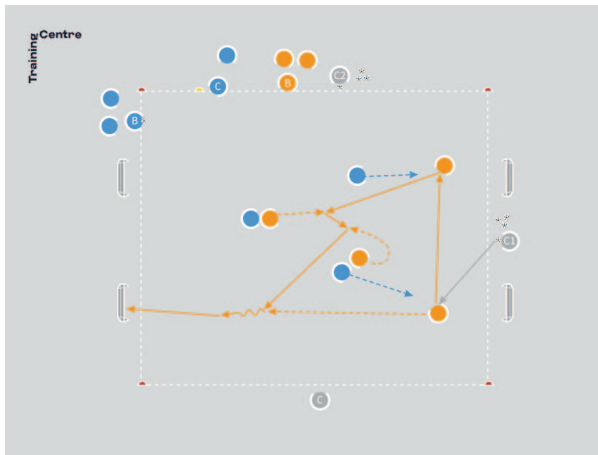
Explanation

- A 4v2 is contested in one half.
- The attackers attempt to switch play to the other half. After a switch, they have to play a lay-off (to practise using the third player) before they finish into the mini-goal; each goal by the attackers is worth one point.
- After gaining possession, defenders can immediately score in one of the mini-goals; each goal by the defenders is worth two points. They also score one point if the attackers put the ball out of play.
- Swap the defenders after 60 seconds. The losing team in each round have to do five press-ups/sit-ups.
- Play eight rounds.

Coaching points

- Add width and depth: stretch the pitch as much as possible, providing clear passing lines in both directions
- Control the tempo, recognise the right moment to switch: draw the opponent in to take them out of the game, then switch quickly and cleanly to the other half
- Readiness and first touch: scan before controlling the ball, using the first touch to set up an instant pass or switch
- Use the third player after the switch: push up immediately after the pass, create a triangle and lay off the ball ahead of the player to tee up the shot
- Pass quality under pressure: low, crisp, accurate, no selling team-mates short with underhit passes
- Transition after losing possession: stay in touch and close down passing lines immediately, as defenders can finish directly into the mini-goals

PART 3: 4V3 TO 5V5



Organisation

- Mark out a 25x25m pitch with 2 mini-goals at each end, behind the goal lines.
- Form one team of 7 (blue) and one team of 8 (red) and position them as shown. A defends player-to-player against A.
- Coach 1 is positioned centrally at one end of the pitch, just behind the end line, while coach 2 is positioned centrally on the opposite touchline to the players waiting to join the action; both should have a supply of balls.

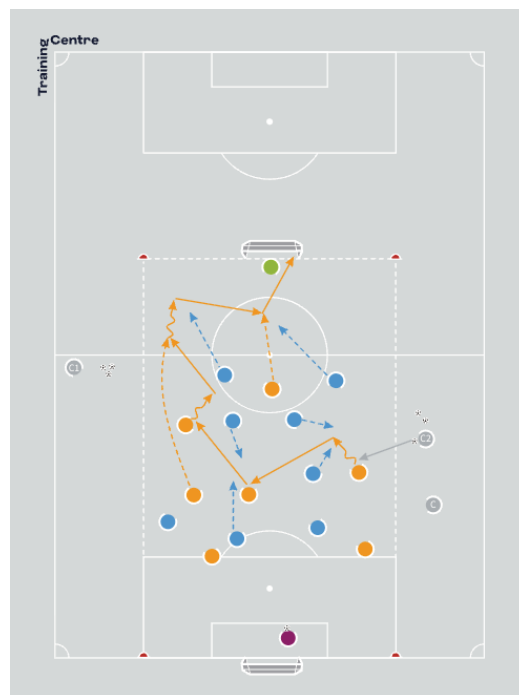
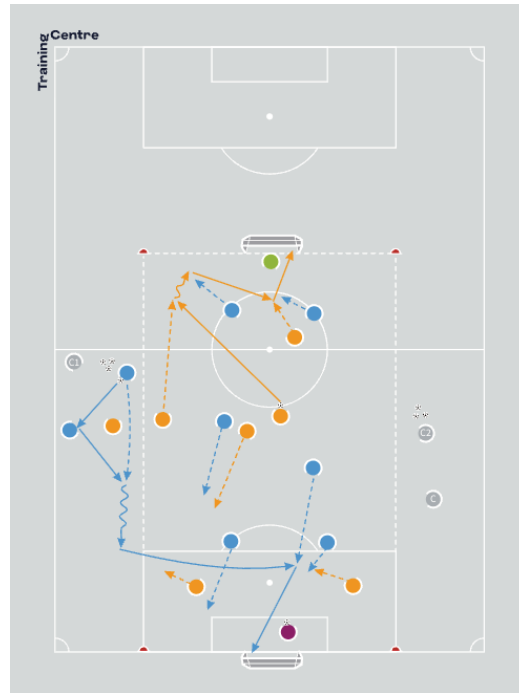
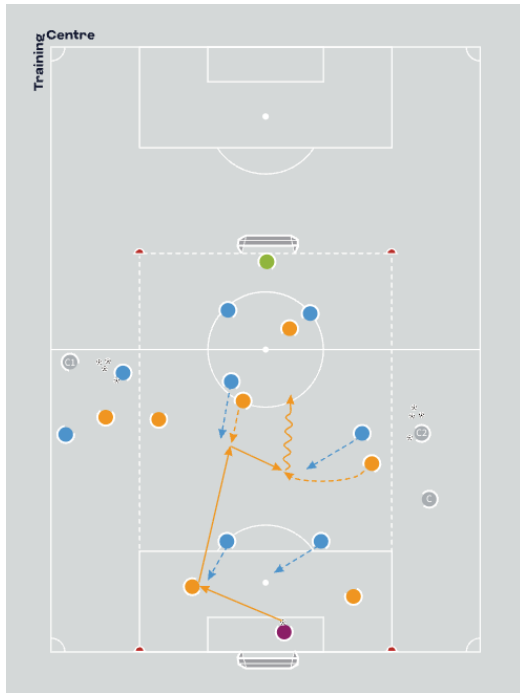
Explanation

- The 4v3 exercise begins when coach 1 passes to the blue team, who attack the mini-goals defended by the red team.
- After a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, red player B passes to C and both join play with blue player B to make a 5v5.
- After a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play in the 5v5, coach 2 plays a pass in to simulate the “third ball”.
- Swap the waiting players after each complete round. Coach 1 then starts a new round.
- Regularly swap the teams’ tasks.

Coaching points

- Quickly exploit the 4v3 overload: spot the free player, pass the ball crisply, prepare to finish rather than simply holding possession
- Play into space behind the first line: draw the opponent in to take them out of the game, then play a forward pass into space or to the third player
- Open posture and runs in behind: when receiving the ball, take a positive first touch to set up the next pass forward; make runs behind the last line
- Transition after a goal/ball out of play: the players already on the pitch should get back into shape immediately and the waiting players should sprint onto the pitch to make it 5v5 – there should be no switching off
- Communication and defined roles when entering play: who closes down, who goes wide, who runs deep, all ensuring that both teams hit the ground running for the 5v5 and that it is well organised
- Reaction to third phase (when coach 2 plays the ball on): scan quickly, the first action must be spot on, immediately close down after losing the ball and quick link-up options after gaining possession.

PART 4: 6V6 – 2V1 – 7V8



Organisation

- Mark out a 65x40m pitch, with 2 goals with goalkeepers and 2 penalty areas.
- Distribute two teams of 7 players, including goalkeepers, across the pitch; 1 attacker and 2 defenders are initially restricted to the penalty area.
- Position 2 yellow players and 1 pink player next to the pitch.
- Both coaches should have a supply of balls; coach 1 focuses on the 2v1 next to the main pitch, while coach 2 is stationed roughly at the halfway mark of the main touchline.

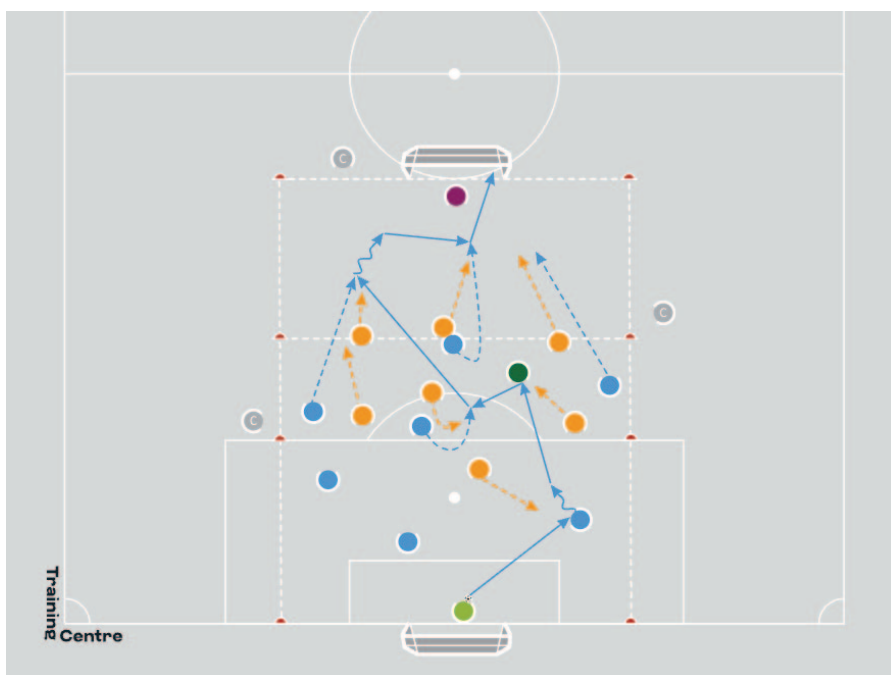
Explanation

- The blue goalkeeper starts each attack.
- The blue team should set up in a 2-3-1 formation, with the yellow team in a 2-2-2 shape.
- As soon as a player on the attacking team finds some space in the middle and can dribble towards the opposition penalty area, a second ball is introduced into the channel on the wing to create a 2v1.
- There is now a 3v2 situation playing towards one goal. At the same time, the players next to the pitch turn the 2v1 into a 6v4, playing towards the other goal. After completing their action, the players from the 3v2 situation can join in.
- Once both actions have been completed, coach 2 plays in a long ball to initiate a 7v8 game.
- After a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, all players get back into position and a new sequence begins.

Coaching points

- Running into space centrally and body positioning: the angle, gap and posture should allow the player in the middle to dribble forwards with the first touch
- Recognise the breakthrough moment: as soon as the central player is in space, they should increase the tempo and dribble towards the penalty area to draw in the opposition
- Quality of the pass into space: low, crisp and accurate, timed so that the recipient can continue their forward motion
- Decisions in the 3v2 format: add width, run in behind at the right moment, set up the finish instead of rushing the shot
- Deal cleanly with parallel actions: clear role definition in the 2v1 (in possession/supporting), find the free player quickly in the 6v5 format, and use switches/diagonal passes.

PART 5: 7V7+1



Organisation

- Split a 40x30m pitch into 3 zones (15m-long zones at each end and a 10m-long zone in the middle) and set up 2 goals with goalkeepers.
- Form two teams of 7 players, with an additional goalkeeper on each team, and nominate 1 neutral player.
- Place balls in the goals.

Explanation

- 7v7+1
- Both teams adopt a 3-3-1 formation.
- Goals can only be scored from the end zones (i.e. not from the middle zone).
- After a goal or if the ball goes out of the play, the goalkeepers continue play (if a team score, they are rewarded by retaining possession, so the next sequence begins with their goalkeeper).

Coaching points

- Neutral availability: the spare player should always be available at an angle, play with a maximum of two touches and accelerate switches
- Third player and staggered positioning: create triangles, prepare for using the third player, with clear runs in behind to link up with the target zone
- Pass in the direction of play: crisp and accurate, allowing the recipient to turn and move forwards or lay the ball off immediately
- Patience until reaching the penalty area, ruthlessness inside it: after tidy build-up outside the shooting zone, the tempo should be stepped up inside it with a view to clinically getting a shot away
- Defensive organisation and counter-pressing: quickly pressure the ball after losing possession, simultaneously organising cover in the central zone