

## Transitions

### Session overview

**Part 1:** 4 zones – 3 plus 3v3 – Attacking and defensive transitions

**Part 2:** 4v4 plus 2 (6v4) – Attacking and defensive transitions

**Part 3:** 4v4 and 2 goalkeepers plus a floater – Attacking transition

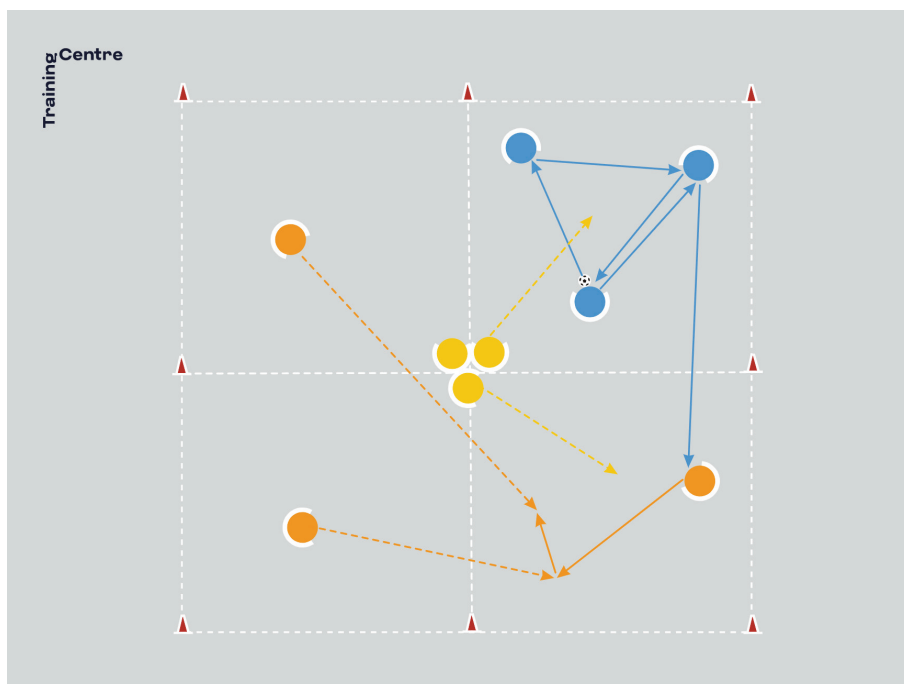
**Part 4:** 8v5 and a goalkeeper – Attack v. Defence

### Key coaching points

- When working an overload, the attacking team should look to pick out and use the spare player effectively at all times.
- Attacking players should interchange positions and make intelligent runs in order to create and exploit overload scenarios.
- Overlaps and underlaps represent a very effective means of creating space for players on and off the ball, and can serve as decoys that cause a defender to make mistakes.
- The timing, weight and accuracy of the final pass are critical to the successful execution of the overload scenario.
- The attacking team should seek to create 2v1 scenarios within 4v3 and 3v2 overloads as this will allow them to use the spare player more effectively, whilst also serving to isolate the defender.

### PART 1: 4 ZONES – 3 PLUS 3V3 – ATTACKING AND DEFENSIVE TRANSITIONS

Our first exercise involves operating in tight spaces and reacting quickly to transitions. The objective is for the players to get used to showing quick footwork and reacting to changing circumstances, such as when tasked with trying to win the ball back immediately after having lost it.



*The blue team aim to complete 4 passes within their zone of the grid, before transferring the ball to a defenderfree zone.*

### Organisation

- Mark out a 20x20-metre grid and divide it into 4 equal zones.
- Place a cone in the centre of the grid.
- Split the 9 players into 3 teams of 3.
- Place 3 blue players in one zone and give them the ball.
- Place 1 orange player in each of the other 3 zones.
- The 3 yellow players take up a starting position in the centre of the grid and keep 1 foot on the cone whenever they are not actively defending.

## Explanation

- The exercise starts with the blue team being given the ball in 1 zone.
- The blue team aim to complete 4 consecutive passes.
- 1 yellow player presses the blue players to try to win the ball.
- Once the blue team have completed 4 consecutive passes, they have to transfer the ball to an orange player in one of the other zones.
- The receiving player is joined by their team-mates and the orange team seek to complete 4 consecutive passes within this zone.
- A different yellow player presses the team in possession.
- Once the orange team have completed 4 consecutive passes, they transfer the ball back to a blue player in one of the 3 defender-free zones.
- If the team in possession lose the ball, they become the defending team.
- The team that won the ball are then tasked with keeping possession and completing 4 passes within the zone in which they won it.

## Variation 1

- Limit the team in possession to 1 touch per player and allow them to transfer the ball to the next team after 2 successful passes.

## Variation 2

- Limit the team in possession to 2 touches per player and allow them to transfer the ball to the next team after 3 successful passes.

## Coaching points

- When the players are not on the ball, they should avoid ball-watching and instead be constantly scanning for available spaces and to see where the opposition players and their team-mates are.
- Constantly scanning the pitch will help the players to react and adapt quickly to the play. This will ensure that they can keep possession more effectively or win the ball back earlier.
- After losing the ball, the players should produce a strong reaction to allow them to regain possession quickly.
- When in possession, the players should move quickly to support teammates and give them a passing option.
- Communication is key. The players should be telling each other where they want the pass to be played and where the space is.

## PART 2: 4V4 PLUS 2 (6V4) – ATTACKING AND DEFENSIVE TRANSITIONS

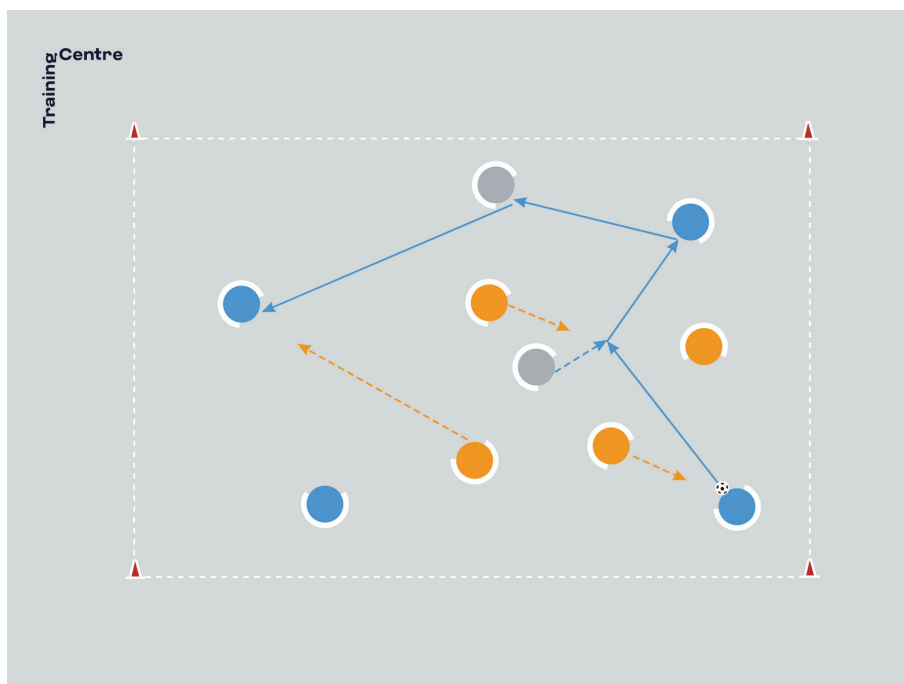
This second drill is based on possession and transitions in tight spaces. The team in possession will always find themselves in a 6v4 overload, which means that it is easier for them to maintain and make good use of possession. This drill also enables the players to develop their ability to react quickly to win the ball back after having lost it.

## Organisation

- Mark out a 20x10-metre playing area.
- Split the 10 players into 3 teams: 2 teams of 4 players and 1 team of 2 players, with the latter acting as floaters.

## Explanation

- The aim of the exercise is for the team in possession to keep the ball for as long as possible.
- The blue team start with the ball and aim to keep possession.
- The orange team try to win the ball back.
- The 2 floaters support the team in possession at all times to create a 6v4 situation.
- When a team lose possession, they should try to win the ball back immediately.



*The 4 blue players are supported by 2 floaters to create a 6v4 possession-based game.*

## Coaching points

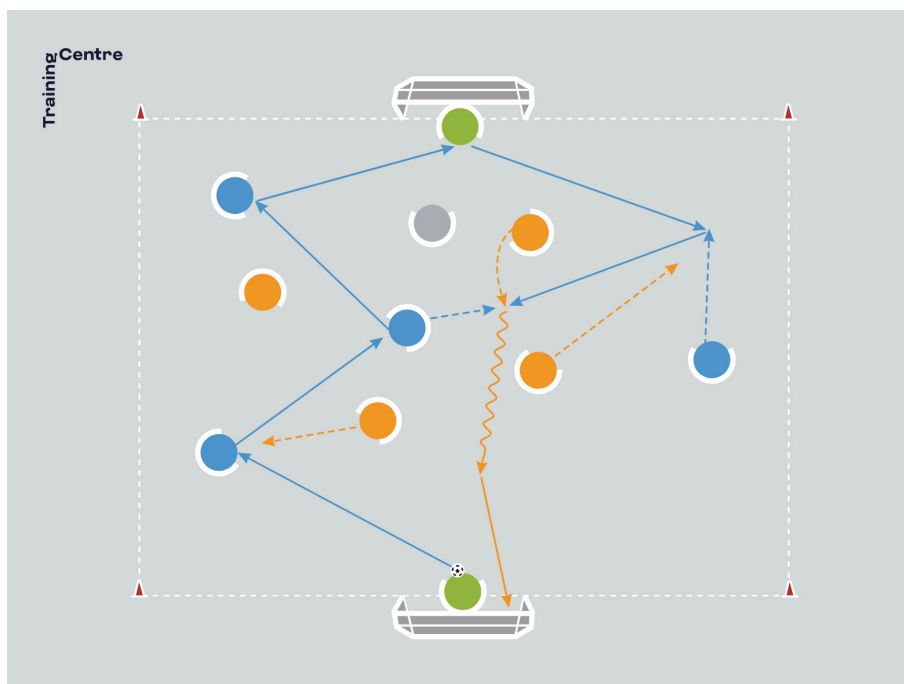
- The team in possession should always look to offer as many passing outlets as possible.
- Taking up wide positions, coupled with central anchor points, enables the team with the ball to play around the pressing players or through the middle of the playing area to ensure improved ball distribution.
- Promote spatial awareness to encourage players to offer their team-mates good passing options.
- Given that the team in possession have a 6v4 numerical advantage, they should always have a spare player available.
- Encourage all players to react quickly when transitioning from defence to attack and vice versa.
- If players are able to play centrally whilst at the same time looking up to identify longer passes, it will allow them to offer more passing options at all times, even when they find themselves under pressure.

## PART 3: 4V4 AND 2 GOALKEEPERS PLUS A FLOATER – ATTACKING TRANSITION

This exercise focuses on the players' ability to react quickly in the attacking transition. When a team win possession, they should try to make quick decisions and execute actions quickly, such as shooting on sight, so as to take advantage of the lack of balance in the opposition's set-up.

### Organisation

- Mark out a 30x20-metre pitch.
- Place a full-size goal at either end of the pitch.
- Position a goalkeeper in each goal.
- Split the 9 outfield players into 2 teams of 4 players, with the spare player acting as a floater.



*The blue team are supported by the floater and both goalkeepers to create a 7v4 scenario.*

## Explanation

- The blue team start with the ball and aim to keep possession.
- The 2 goalkeepers and the floater support the blue team to create a 7v4 overload.
- The blue team trying to keep possession score a point by completing 10 successive passes.
- The orange team have to try to win the ball.
- When the orange team win the ball, they have to try to score in either of the goals.
- The orange players can take an unlimited number of touches.
- Offer both teams the opportunity to play with the 7v4 advantage.
- Rotate the floater frequently.

## Variation 1

- Increase the difficulty for the team keeping possession by limiting the number of touches per player to 2.

## Variation 2

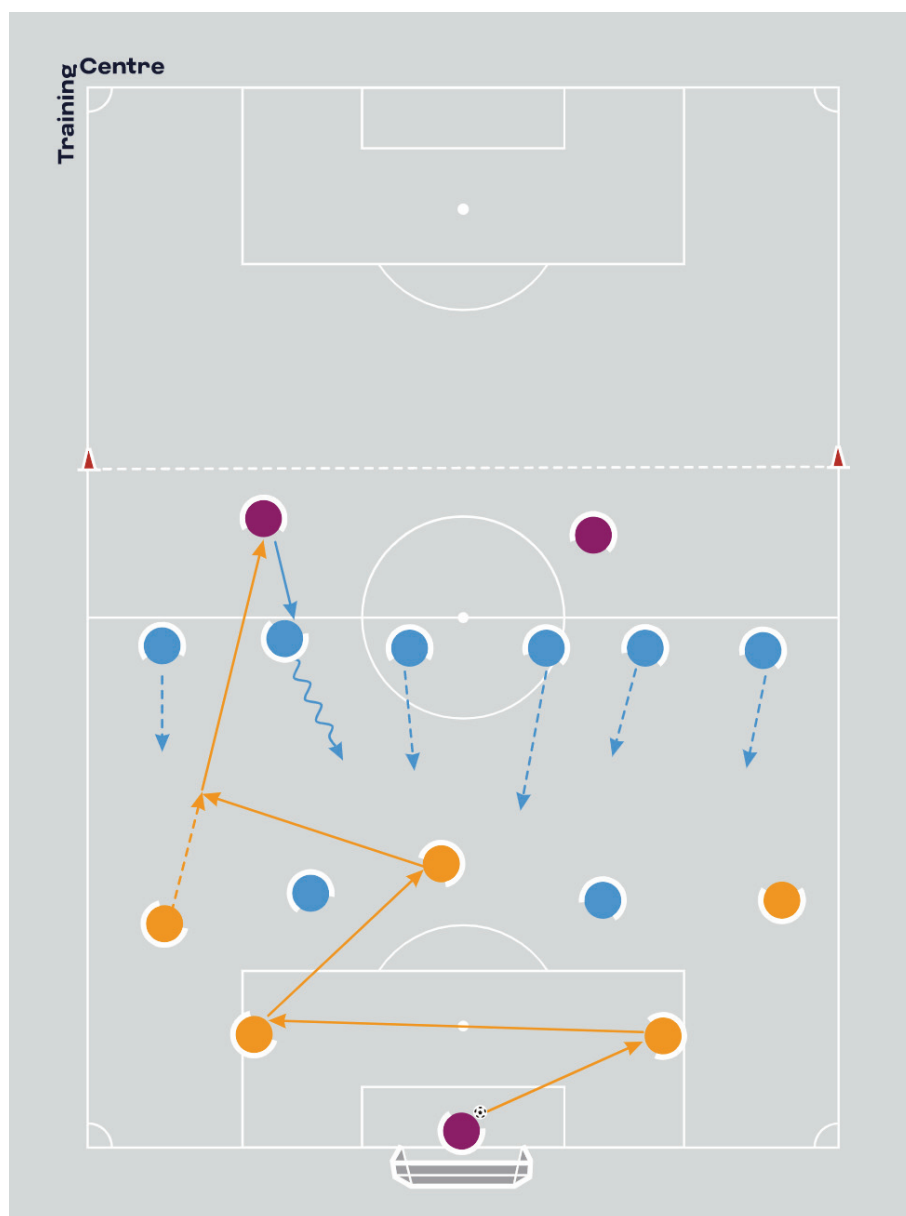
- Further increase the difficulty for the team keeping possession by limiting the number of touches per player to 1.

## Coaching points

- Transitioning quickly from defence to attack and vice versa is crucial to a team's success when it comes to scoring or preventing the opposition from doing so.
- The team in possession benefit from a 7v4 overload at all times and so should always seek to pick out a spare player.
- After winning the ball, the team with fewer players should play direct football and try to score quickly.
- Being aware of their distance from goal and their team-mates' positions can help the "defending" players to make quicker decisions after they have regained possession.

## PART 4: 8V5 AND A GOALKEEPER – ATTACK V. DEFENCE

Our final exercise focuses more heavily on the defensive transition and the players' reaction to losing the ball. The 8v5 overload sees the defending team face a greater challenge when it comes to remaining compact and protecting their goal.



*The orange team play the ball forward to trigger the counter-attack for the blue team.*

### Organisation

- Mark out a 60x50-metre pitch.
- Place a full-size goal at either end of the pitch.
- Position a goalkeeper in one of the goals.
- Set the orange team up in a 4-1 formation, with 4 defenders and 1 defensive midfielder in front of the goalkeeper.
- The blue team comprise 8 players: 2 strikers and 6 midfielders, with the latter positioned on the halfway line.
- Position the 2 strikers ahead of the midfielders.

## Explanation

- The orange team build from the back and seek to overcome the press applied by the 2 blue players.
- As soon as the blue team receive the ball, they launch a counter-attack in an 8v5 overload.
- The blue team have to try to score.
- The orange team seek to prevent the blue team from scoring.
- If the orange team win possession, they have to advance and play the ball to the 2 strikers (represented in the above diagram by purple players), who are waiting to receive the ball beyond the halfway line.
- The ball reaching the strikers represents the trigger for the counter-attack.

## Coaching points

- This exercise focuses primarily on the reaction and set-up of the orange team when in the defensive transition.
- The attacking team should launch the counter-attack quickly and try to exploit spaces in the defending team's set-up.
- Given that there are 8 attacking players and the significant numerical advantage involved, the defending team need to be very compact and defend the central areas tightly.
- The defenders and defensive midfielder must react to certain situations by pushing up to the line of the ball in order to block off passes and longrange strikes.
- If the defending team lose the ball, they should remain calm and compact and defend their goal at all costs.
- Highlight different types of body positioning when defending crosses. For example, defenders should position themselves so that they can face up to the cross whilst also being able to see the players whom they are marking.