

Transition —●— into attack

Session overview

Part 1: 6v6 plus 4: quick transition into attack

Part 2: 7v5 plus 4: transition from defence into attack

Part 3: 8v8 plus goalkeepers: transition into attack

Key coaching points

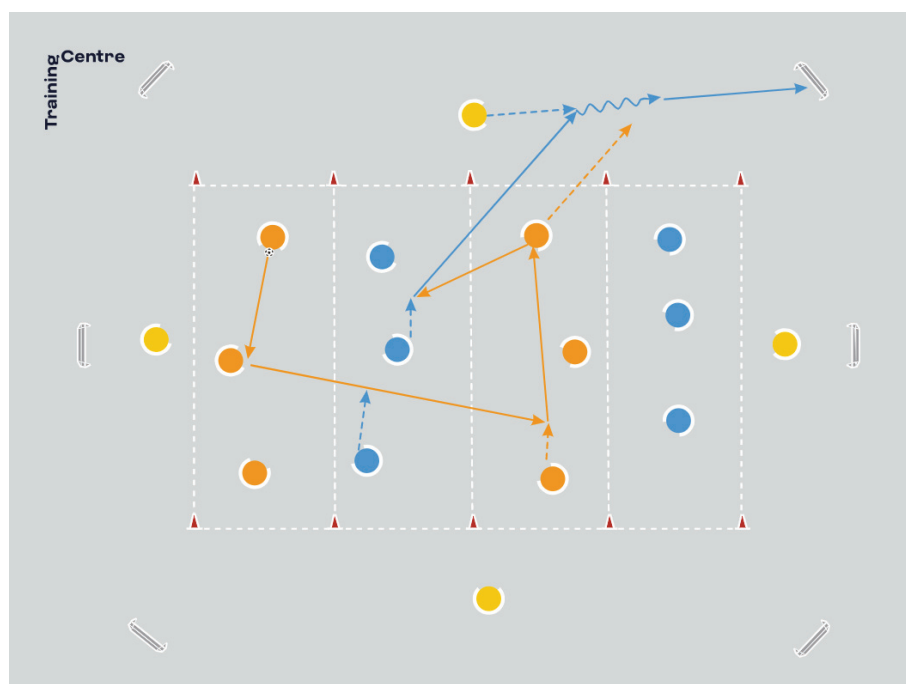
This session requires 16 outfield players and 2 goalkeepers.

- During the transition into attack, players should always be aiming to look forward, play forward, run forward and play quickly.
- When in possession, players should always try to play through, around or over the press.
- To prevent the opposition from playing through them easily, the defending team should focus on compactness and covering, and supporting one another when pressing, as these are the key components of a good transition into attack.
- The team in possession should try to stretch the opposition so that space and gaps appear to play into.
- Wide players cannot switch off when the ball is in the central areas and need to be on their toes in order to take advantage of transitions.

This session was created with a set of specific, real-game scenarios in mind and aims to answer the following question: how can a team set itself up for an effective transition into attack?

PART 1: 6V6 PLUS 4: QUICK TRANSITION INTO ATTACK

In terms of playing quickly when in attacking transition, this first exercise sets the tone for the session. By working in small and tight spaces, the team in possession must look to play through the press and progress the ball forward strategically, whilst the defending team focuses on shutting down the passing lanes and being ready to spring an attack quickly once the ball is won back.



Organisation

- Mark out a 30x20m area and split it into 4 zones, each 8m in width.
- Divide 12 players into 4 groups of 3.
- 2 groups are the orange teams and the other 2 are the blue teams.
- Position the orange teams in the first and third zones and position the blue teams in the second and fourth zones.
- Position 4 yellow players around the outside of the area, 1 on each side.
- Place 2 mini-goals 4m directly behind the end zones. Place 4 mini-goals in each of the 4 corners, 4m from the area and facing inwards.

Explanation

- Players must pass through the zones to their team-mates. For example, the orange team in the first zone passes to the orange team in the third zone.
- If they successfully pass between the lines, they score 1 point.
- The team out of possession must try to shut off the passes through the spaces and win the ball back.
- Once they win it back, they must try to score in any of the mini-goals as quickly as possible.
- The yellow players on the outside should also become active and can link up with the team in attacking transition.
- In defensive transition, the team that loses the ball cannot defend outside the area.

Variations

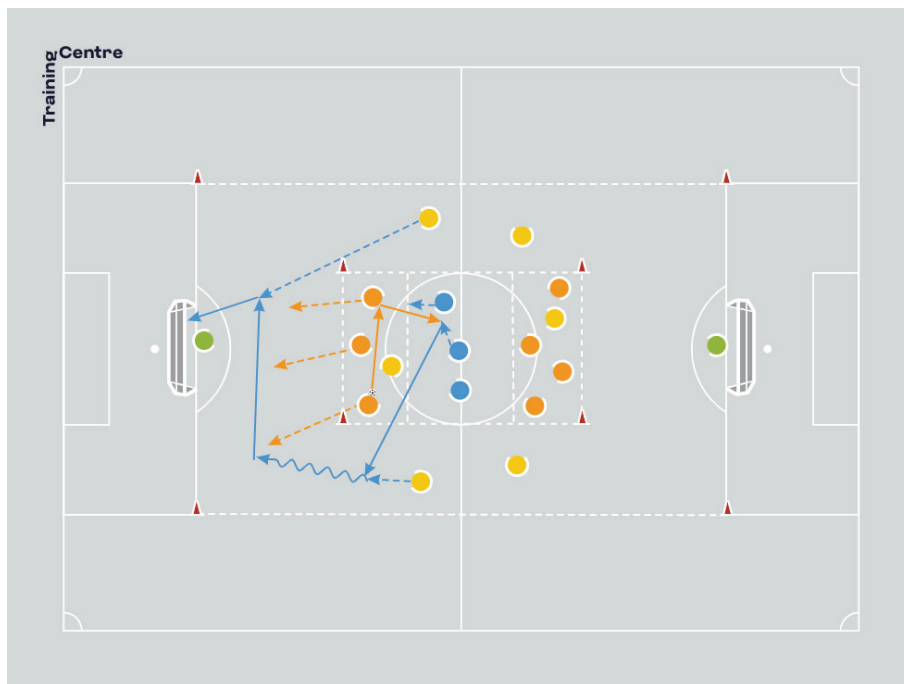
- Variation I: the yellow players behind the end zones (the number 9s) can enter the zones and apply pressure on the ball. They can then link up with the team in attacking transition once the ball is won
- Variation II: 2 points are awarded if a goal is scored after linking up with the number 9.
- Variation III: For the last 2 minutes, allow defenders to defend outside their zones when trying to win the ball back.

Coaching points

- The team in possession should be looking to play forward quickly to break the opposition lines.
- In the attacking transition, the team that wins the ball should look to be as direct as possible so that they can take advantage of any defensive disorganisation and score.
- When the number 9 is introduced, the team recovering the ball must look to link up with them as soon as they win it.
- The defending team needs to stay compact to prevent spaces that allow the opposition to play through them easily from opening up.
- The closest defending player to the player in possession should press at all times, and the remaining players should position themselves so that they can remain compact.

PART 2: 7V5 PLUS 4: TRANSITION FROM DEFENCE INTO ATTACK

The second practice provides players with some attacking transitions that rely on quick forward play in order to take advantage of unbalanced defensive structures. The defending players will learn how to press intelligently so that they can win the ball back and transition when the opposition are at their most vulnerable.



Organisation

- Mark out a 70x40m pitch.
- Place a full-size goal at each end of the pitch.
- Mark out a 30x16m area in the centre of the pitch.
- Divide this area into 3 zones with the central zone being larger than the others.
- Divide the players as follows: 7 orange players, 3 blue players and 6 yellow players.
- Position 3 orange players inside the first zone and 4 orange players inside the third zone.
- Position the 3 blue players inside the central zone.
- Position 1 yellow player in the first zone and 1 yellow player in the third zone.
- Position 2 yellow players on the outside of either side of the area.
- Position a goalkeeper in each goal.

Explanation

- The ball starts with the orange players, who need to pass the ball through the central zone to their team-mates in the other end zone.
- The blue team needs to press, shut off the passing lanes and win the ball back.
- The yellow player occupying the zone where the ball is needs to press and try to win it back, too.
- When the blue team wins the ball back, they should transition into attack quickly and link up with the yellow players.
- At the same time, the yellow players outside the area need to become active and join the attack.
- The orange team can leave their respective zones to defend against the attack.

Variation

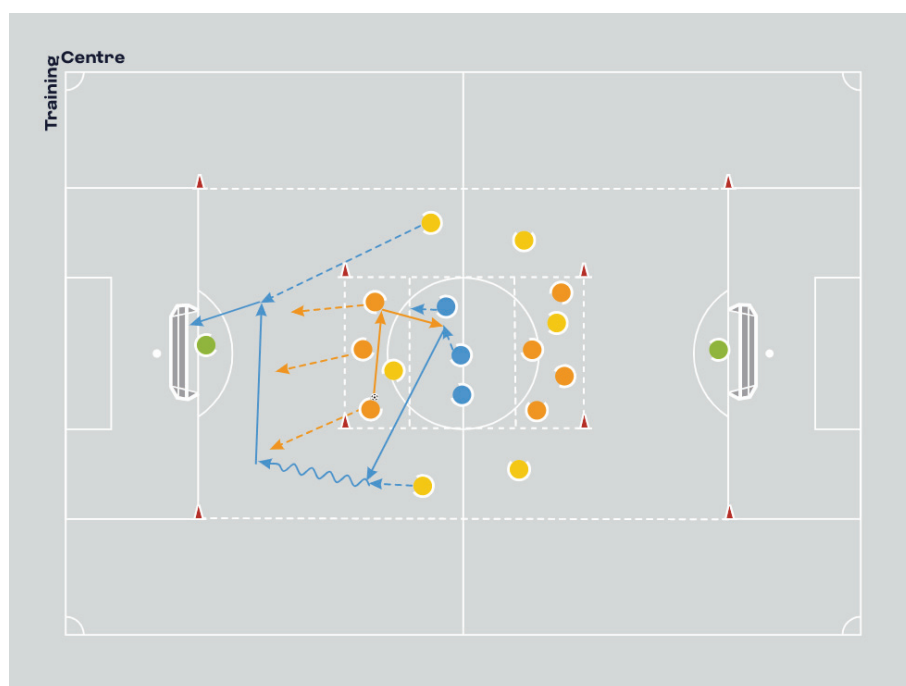
- The orange team can use the goalkeeper as an extra passing option.

Coaching points

- The team in attacking transition should play forward quickly as soon as they win the ball.
- The yellow players outside the area should not switch off and be ready for the counter-attack, whilst playing on the shoulder and checking the defensive line for offside.
- Ensure good cover and balance when in transition.
- The defending team should identify when to press and when to sit back whilst remaining compact.
- Use intelligent pressing to delay the opposition. By timing and managing the press, the defending team can control where the ball is played, making it easier to identify when to press.
- The defending player closest to the ball carrier should press, whilst the supporting players should provide depth so that the opposition cannot play over the top.

PART 3: 8V8 PLUS GOALKEEPERS: TRANSITION INTO ATTACK

This final exercise aims to teach players how to be constantly aware of the flow of play, their opponents and team-mates whilst always being ready for a quick transition into attack or vice versa. By giving the players free rein, they should now be able to recognise when to press, and when to stand off and block the passing lanes in order to set up the transition.



Organisation

- Mark out an 70x40m pitch.
- Place a full-size goal at each end.
- Mark out a 20x20m area in the centre.
- Position a goalkeeper in each goal.
- Set up an 8v8.
- Set up each team with 2 centre-backs, 3 midfielders and 1 centre-forward inside the central area and a wide player on each flank.

Explanation

- The ball starts with either goalkeeper and the team in possession needs to build an attack.
- Play freely and ensure the players set up transitions accordingly.
- The players should play in the roles that they have been given, although they are not bound to these positions if space becomes available.

Coaching points

- The players are not bound to their positions and if space opens up as a result of the play, attacking players can use it to help build counter-attacks.
- The defending team should press intelligently. By shutting off the passes between centre-backs, they can invite the opposition to play forward and then set up the midfielders for the transition by anticipating the pass.
- Similarly, when opposing centre-backs go down the flanks, the wide player can focus on shutting off the pass down the outside and the central players can be prepared to press and transition, should the pass come inside.
- The team in possession should look to stretch the pitch as much as possible so that they can force the opposition to shift and reposition accordingly, which can lead to gaps being created to move the ball forward.
- The goalkeepers should also be ready for a quick transition into attack, should an opportunity present itself.