

Defensive phase and pressing

Session overview

Part 1: activation and passing circuit

Part 2: defensive phase and 4v4 press

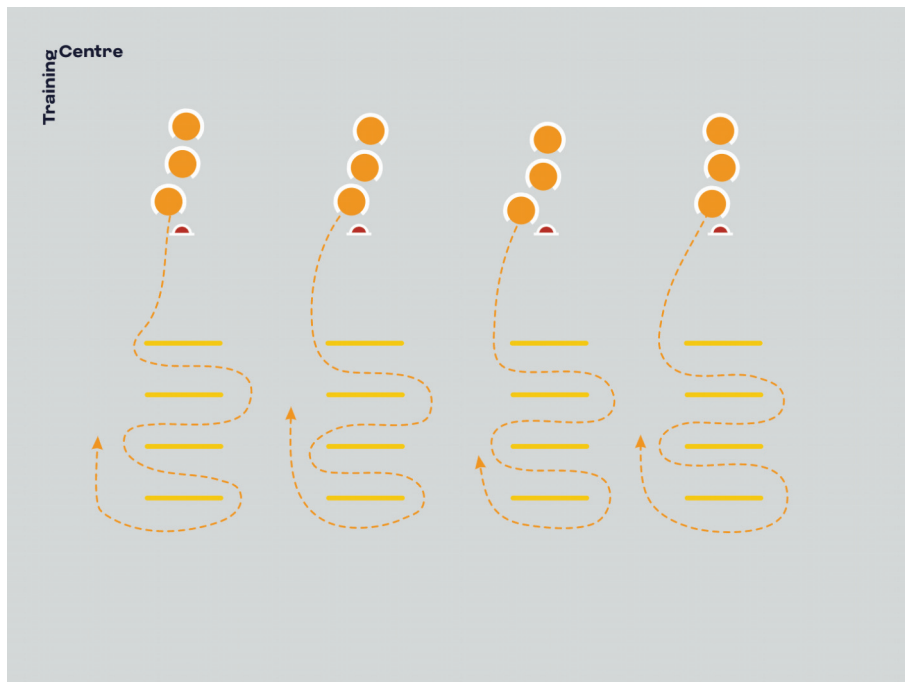
Part 3: pressing exercise to create a 2v1 numerical advantage

Coaching points

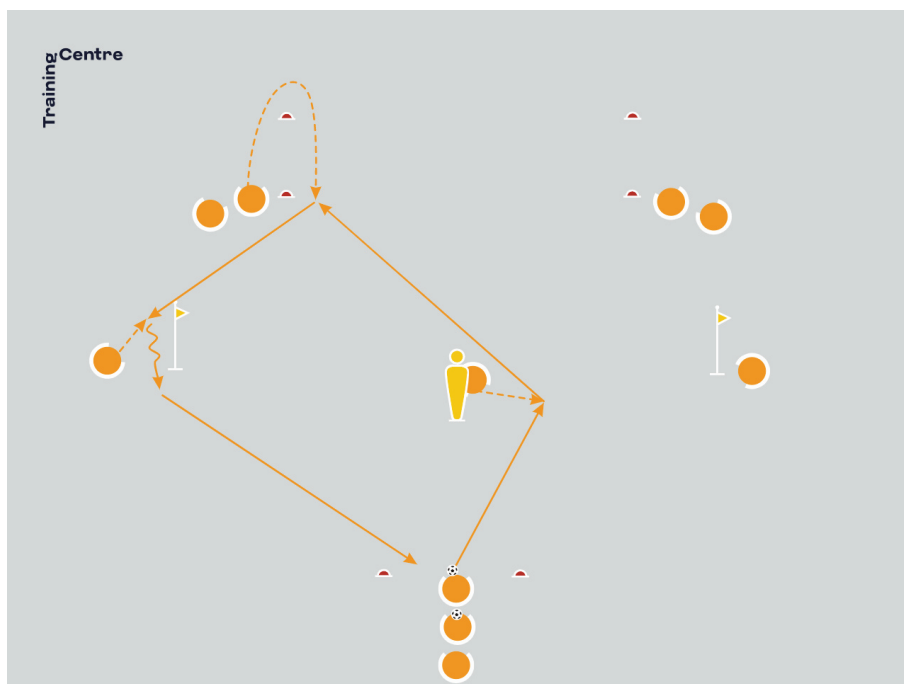
- Press the opponent hard when they receive the ball with their back to goal.
- Players must retreat quickly after their team loses possession.
- Players must help out defensively when the ball passes their position.
- Create a blind-side press. The forward drops back to press the ball-carrying player in the midfield line without entering her line of vision, catching her by surprise and thereby increasing the chances of regaining possession.
- Team-mates must work together to create numerical advantages in defensive scenarios.

PART 1: ACTIVATION AND PASSING CIRCUIT

The session begins with warm-up exercises that involve basic horizontal movements, skipping and continuous jogging. The players are then divided up into groups of six with one ball per group. Each group completes a passing circuit that involves making runs to receive the ball, directional controls, one-twos and positional rotations following each sequence.



Activation without the ball



Passing circuit and positional rotations

Organisation

- Mark out an exercise area that runs from the centre spot to 5m inside the touchline.
- Arrange the players in two hexagons and place a mannequin in the middle of each one.
- Each hexagon comprises 12 players divided into 2 groups of 6.

Explanation (activation)

- Place 4 cones 10m apart to mark the starting position in the activation exercise.
- Organise the players into 4 groups comprising 3 players each, with the players positioning themselves behind the cones.
- Travel 10m from each starting cone and place 4 poles horizontally along the ground, leaving 1m between each of them.
- The players jog towards the poles and sidestep between them, before jogging back to the starting position.

Explanation (passing circuit)

- 1 ball for each 6-player group.
- Players complete diagonal passes, horizontal runs to receive the ball, directional controls and one-twos before restarting the sequence.
- Players constantly rotate positions.

Variation

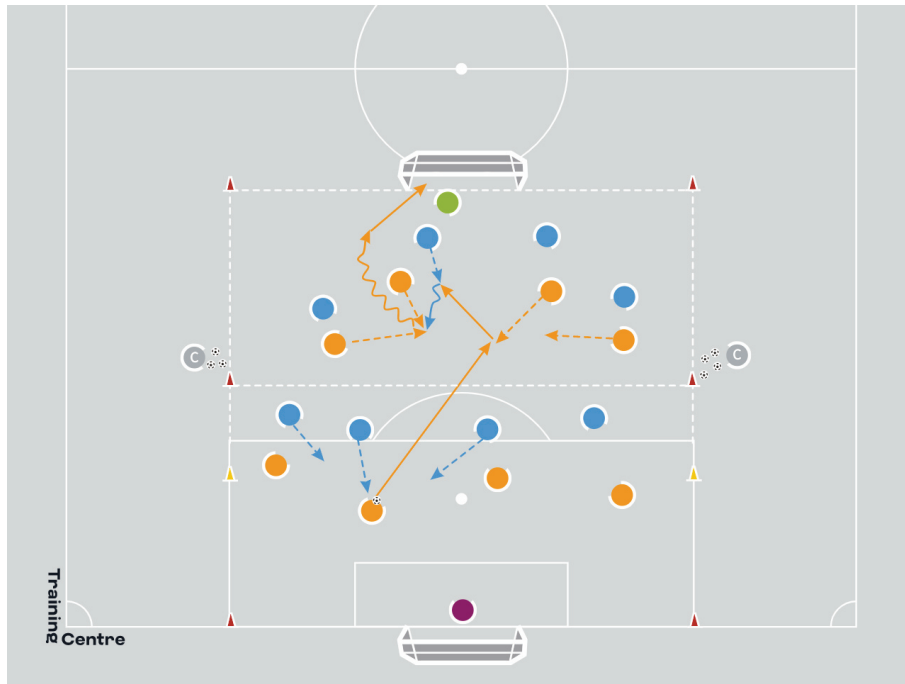
- The group positioned on the left of the hexagon swaps positions with the group on the right.

Coaching points

- Players must play firm passes.
- During the course of the circuit, players must concentrate at all times to make runs to receive the ball and should position themselves correctly to control the ball and play forward.
- Passes played into space must be weighted correctly to allow the recipient to run on to them.

PART 2: DEFENSIVE PHASE AND 4V4 PRESS

The aim of this exercise is for the players to execute a press and regain possession as quickly as possible. The exercise also works on other areas of the game, such as the organisation of the defensive block and intensity levels when pressing an opponent. The players are divided into two teams, each of which comprises a goalkeeper, four defenders and four attackers.



A 9v9 game on a reduced-sized pitch. Teams seek to create 4x4 situations (plus goalkeepers) in each zone. Yellow cones serve as a reference for the defenders to maintain the defensive block.

Organisation

- Set up a 40x40m exercise area with a goal at either end.
- Split the exercise area into 2 zones.
- Each zone contains a goalkeeper, 4 attackers and 4 defenders.
- The coaches position themselves on the touchline to introduce balls quickly for every restart.
- Place 2 yellow cones 4m from the halfway line in each zone. The cones serve as a reference for the defenders to remain compact and reduce the space afforded to the opposition.

Explanation

- The aim for both teams is to execute a high press to regain possession of the ball as quickly as possible inside the opposition's half. The exercise is performed on a reduced-sized pitch and creates a 4v4 scenario between attackers and defenders.
- Play is always restarted by the goalkeepers, who catch high balls served by the coaches positioned on the touchline, before picking out a team-mate inside zone 1.
- The defenders in zone 1 should try to progress up the pitch by playing passes and linking up with the attackers located in zone 2.
- Once the ball is moved into zone 2, the attackers should try to finish the move as quickly as possible.
- Both defenders and attackers must remain in their respective zone.
- The defensive line should use the 2 yellow cones as a reference to help them remain organised, reduce the space afforded to the opposition and regain possession quickly.
- The team out of possession adopts a high-intensity approach to try to regain possession and finish the move as quickly as possible.

Variation

- The goalkeepers can play the ball directly to players positioned in zone 2.

Variation 2

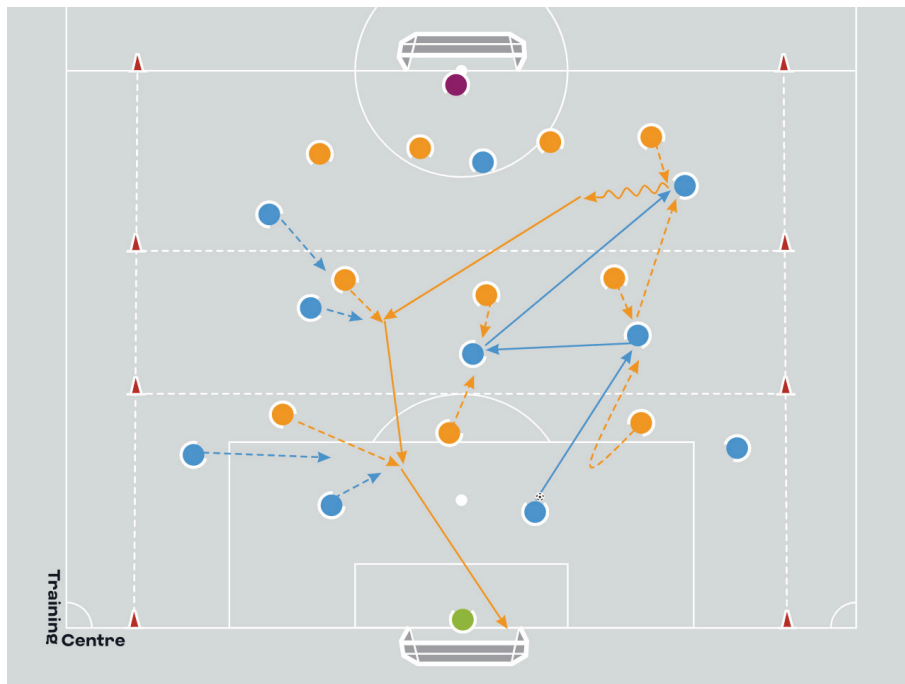
- Players in zone 1 are free to shoot from within their zone without linking up with players in zone 2.

Coaching points

- Press the opponent hard when they receive the ball with their back to goal.
- Communicate with and organise team-mates during the course of the exercise to ensure that the defensive line remains compact and well organised, which serves to reduce the space afforded to the opposition and enables possession to be regained as quickly as possible.
- Make the right defensive movements, including when players should press hard and when they should provide cover for their team-mates.

PART 3: PRESSING EXERCISE TO CREATE A 2V1 NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE

The final part of the session involves a pressing exercise. The exercise area is divided into three zones, with the team in possession seeking to progress up the pitch to score, while the side executing the press looks to create a 2v1 numerical advantage



11v11 pressing exercise with numerical advantage situations

Organisation

- Mark out a 55x45m exercise area that is divided into 3 zones.
- The central zone is 15m long, while the two end zones are each 20m long.
- Both teams set up in a 4-3-3 formation plus their respective goalkeepers.
- Zones 1 and 3 feature 4 defenders and a goalkeeper v. 3 attackers.
- Zone 2 features 3 midfielders v. 3 midfielders.

Explanation

- Players are distributed in each of the zones based on their position: defenders, midfielders and attackers.
- Players applying the press should seek to create a 2v1 numerical advantage.
- Only defensive players are allowed to drop back a zone to support their team-mates. The other players are not allowed to leave their respective zones.
- The aim is to create 2v1 situations where the player in the team applying the press drops back a zone to create a numerical advantage. This seeks to create collective pressure that enables a team to reduce the space afforded to the opposition and regain possession quickly.

Variation

- The game is played without any zonal restrictions, i.e. a normal 11v11 game.

Coaching points

- Players must retreat quickly after their team loses possession.
- The team in possession should try to progress quickly to the next zone.
- Players must help out defensively when the ball passes their position.
- Create a blind-side press. The forward drops back to press the ball-carrying player in the midfield line without entering her line of vision, catching her by surprise and thereby increasing the chances of regaining possession.
- Team-mates must work together to create numerical advantages in defensive scenarios.