

## Counter-attacking

### Session overview

**Part 1:** 3v2 progressing into 4v3: attack v. defence

**Part 2:** 7v7 plus 2 GKs small-sided game

### Key coaching points

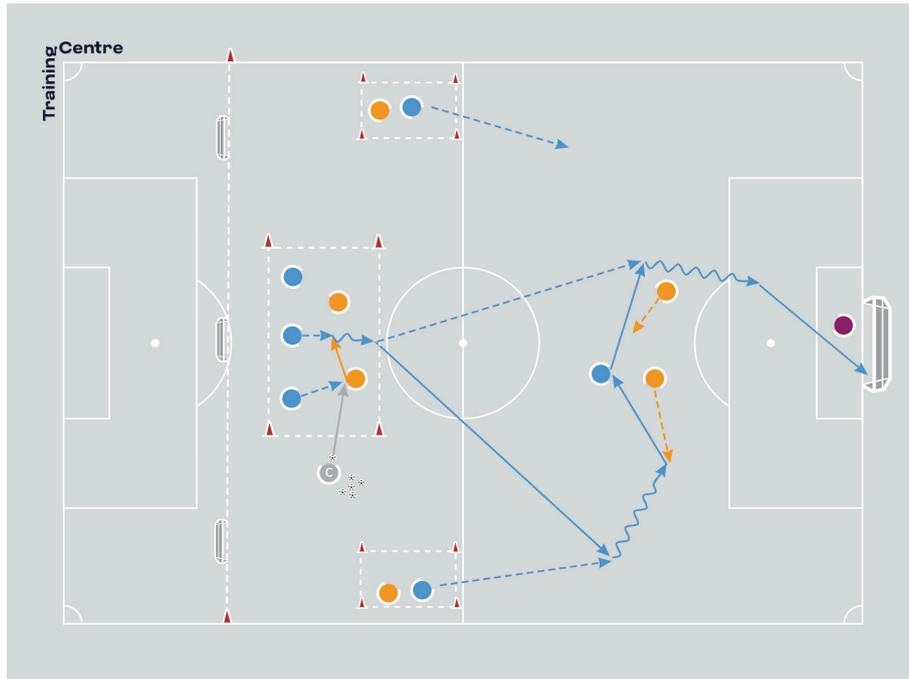
- Whenever possession is regained, players must try to take as few touches as possible to play forward and to quickly attack the opponents, allowing them to take advantage of numerical superiority and defensive disorganisation.
- Players should take a positive first touch towards the opponents' goal to attack the space that is available in transition, and to attract a defender to create space for a team-mate.
- Passes must be appropriately weighted and played into space rather than into feet as often as possible so that the attack does not lose momentum and allow the opponents to reorganise defensively.
- Players off the ball must take up positions to attack in behind the defensive line, whilst timing and coordinating their runs to avoid being caught offside.

### PART 1: 3V2 PROGRESSING INTO 4V3: ATTACK V. DEFENCE

In this practice, the players rehearse counter-attacking situations initiated from different positions on the pitch. They are first put in a 3v2 situation, before evolving into a 4v3. Boumehdi sets up this exercise in a way that the counter-attacking team can easily recover possession and then create a high number of repetitions. She encourages the players to quickly break towards the opponents' goal once they have regained possession to create goalscoring opportunities before the opposition has time to get into its defensive shape.

### Organisation

- Use  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a full-size pitch.
- Place 3 mini-goals at one end of the pitch and a full-size goal at the other end.
- Both teams have 6 outfield players.
- The attacking team (oranges) has a goalkeeper.
- In their half of the pitch, the 2 orange centre-backs face a blue centre-forward.
- On the left and right wings, an orange and a blue player face each other in a 1v1 situation inside a 5x5m square.
- In the centre of the blues' half of the pitch, 2 orange players and 3 blue players face each other in a 2v3 situation inside an 8x5m area.
- The 2 orange players inside the central rectangle are positioned on a flat line so it is easier for the 3 blue players to regain possession and then create more counter-attacking opportunities.



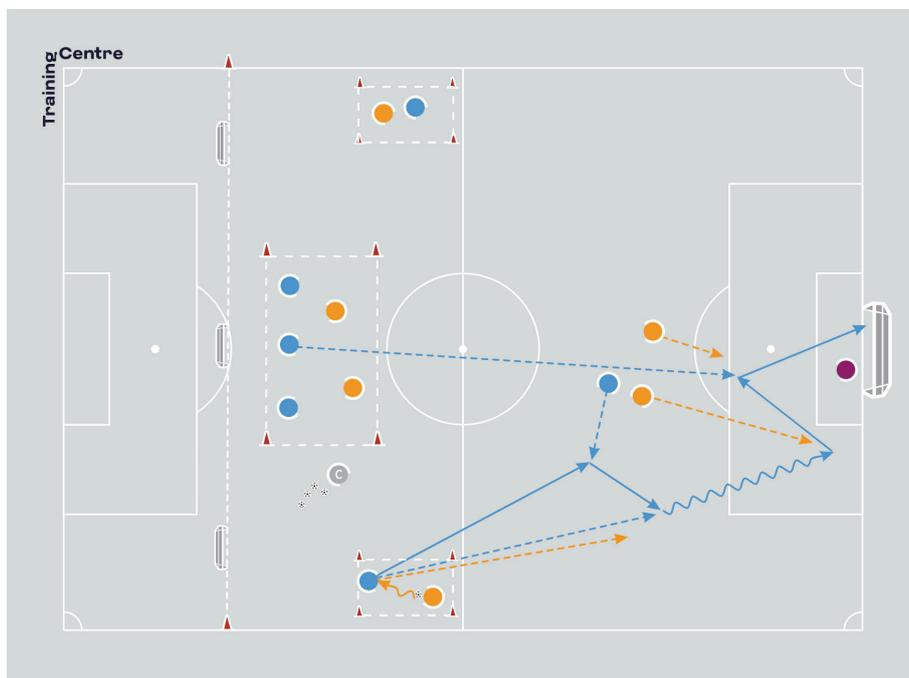
3v2 then 4v3 attack v. defence

## Explanation

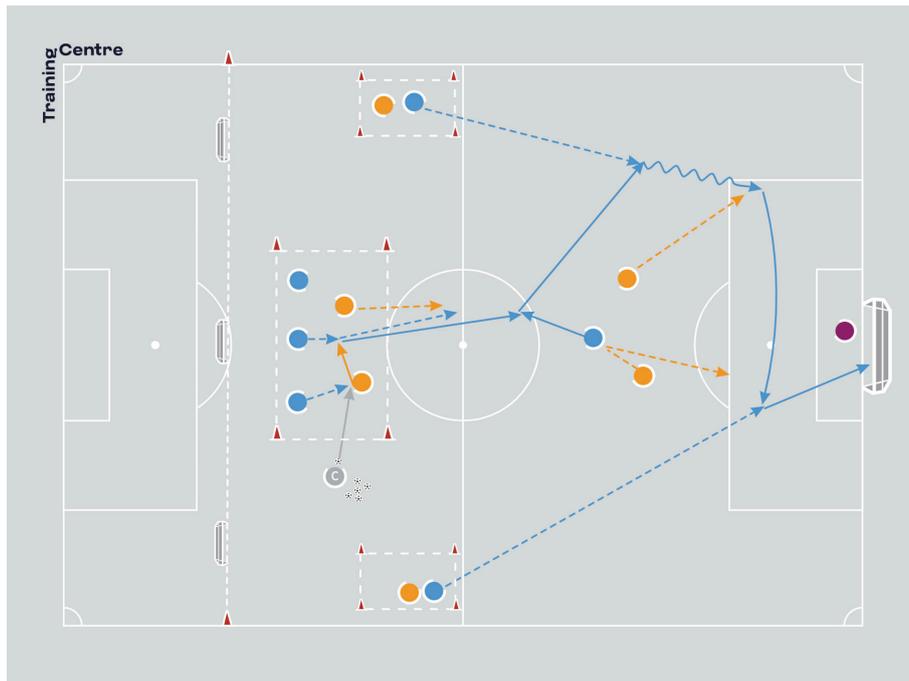
- The orange team starts with the ball in any of the 3 zones with the aim of trying to score in the mini-goals placed at the back.
- The blue players inside that zone try to regain possession and initiate a counter-attack.
- If the blues win the ball inside the central area, the player who does so plays into 1 of the 2 wide players and joins the attack to create a 3v2 in their favour. The other wide player is not allowed to join the attack at this stage.

## Variations

- Variation I: the sequence is now starting in one of the outside zones. If the blues win the ball inside one of the wide areas, the player who won it tries to combine with the centre-forward and attack the available space. At the same time, 1 of the 3 players in the central area joins the attack.
- Variation II: both blue wide players can join the attack and 1 orange player from the central area can recover to support the 2 centre-backs and create a 4v3 situation in favour of the blue team.



Variation I



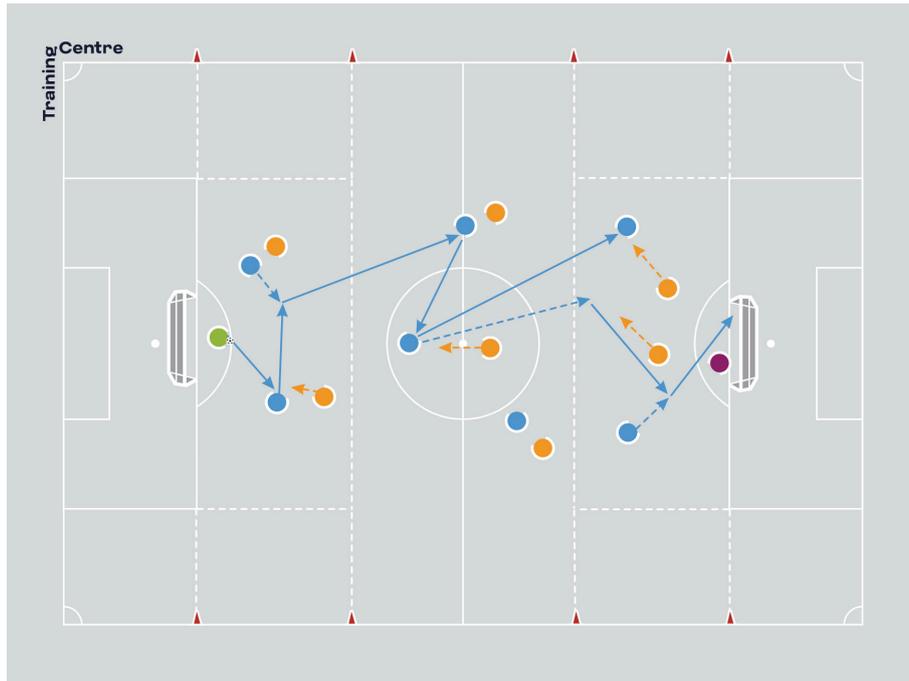
Variation II

### Coaching points

- Take a minimal number of touches and passes to play forward and progress towards the goal quickly before the opponents can recover their defensive organisation.
- When possession is regained in the central area, the first pass is played wide to attack the space that is usually vacated by the opposition's full-back while their team is in possession.
- When possession is regained in the wide areas, the centre-forward should drop to support the wide player and combine with them. This movement is likely to attract a defender that 1 of the players from the central area can attack when joining the counter-attack. This player and the centre-forward must then attack different zones inside the penalty area, such as the near post or the penalty spot, so that the wide player has multiple crossing options. They are encouraged to synchronise and coordinate their runs off the ball to bemuse the defence and to lose their markers.

## PART 2: 7V7 PLUS 2 GKs SMALL-SIDED GAME

The session then moves into a 7v7 plus 2 goalkeepers small-sided game on three-quarters of a full-size pitch, from the edge of one penalty area to the other. The pitch is split into three zones inside which there are player-related restrictions. Both teams are set up in a 2-3-2 formation to ensure even numbers in the central zone at all times. This also means there will be two groups containing 3v2 scenarios inside the other thirds. When a team regains possession, one player from the central area can join the attack inside the final third to create a 3v2 plus goalkeeper situation.



7v7+GK 3 zones  
small-sided game

### Organisation

- Use  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a full-size pitch.
- Split the pitch into 3 zones.
- Both teams set up in a 2-3-2 formation.
- Each unit of players is locked into its third.

### Explanation

- A player from the central area is allowed to join the attack inside the final third when their team is in possession.
- They are allowed to either dribble inside the final third or to pass to one of the centre-forwards and then make a run inside the zone.
- Once in the final third, the players have 5 seconds to try to score a goal.
- If they fail to score within 5 seconds, the other team starts a new attack.

### Coaching points

- When their team is in possession inside the central area, the 2 centre-forwards should split and take up wide positions to exploit the space around the 2 centre-backs, who must stay in a central position to defend their goal.
- When 1 of the midfielders can dribble inside the final third, they should drive towards the centre of the pitch to attract and pin the 2 defenders into a central position, therefore creating space for the 2 centre-forwards.
- When 1 of the centre-forwards receives the ball in a wide position, they should also drive towards the centre of the pitch and the goal so that a defender is forced to press them, creating space for the other 2 players to get into goalscoring positions.