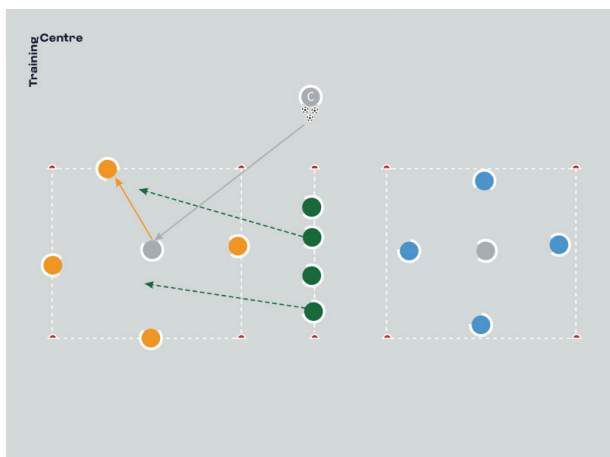


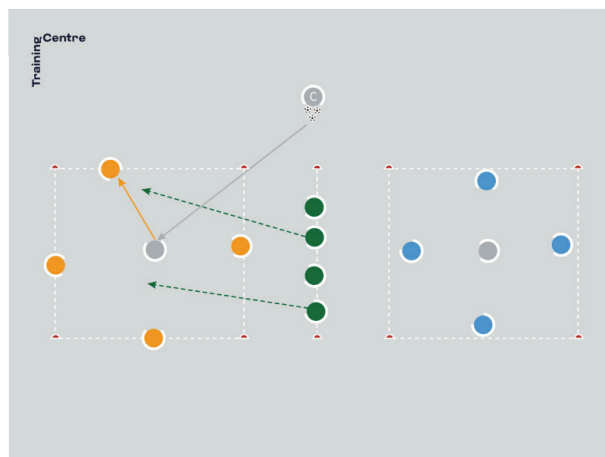
## Roger Schmidt: — Tactical activation through possession and transition I

### Setup

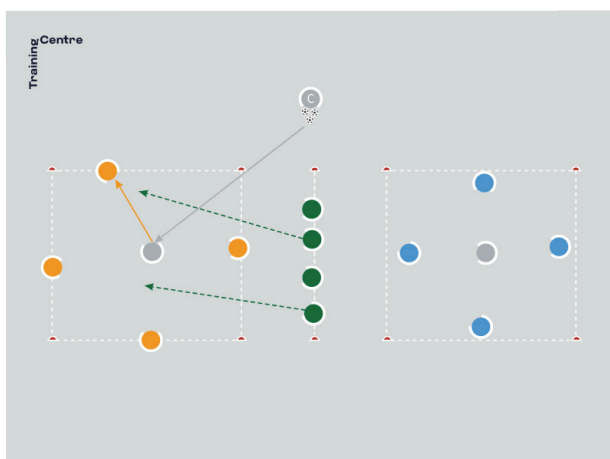
Three teams of four players and two neutral players take part in this game which is played across three zones. At the beginning of every round, each team occupies one zone, with the middle team acting as defenders.



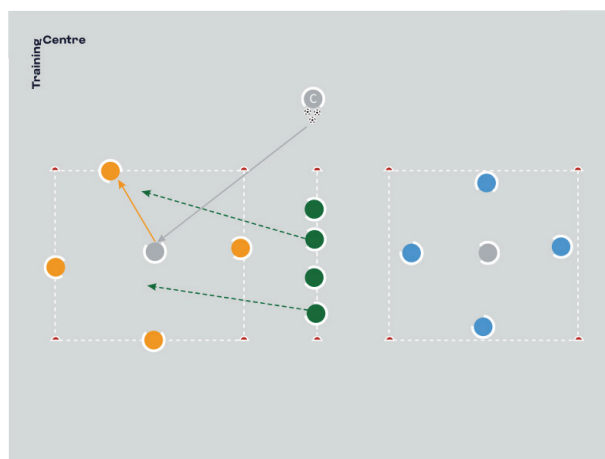
(1/4) The coach initiates play by passing the ball to one of the outside teams. That team, together with one neutral player, tries to complete 10 passes under pressure from two defenders who enter from the central zone.



(2/4) If successful, the attacking team then attempts to switch the ball to the opposite outside zone. The remaining two defenders in the middle try to intercept the switch. A successful switch earns the attacking team one point.



(3/4) Should the defenders win the ball or force it out of bounds(1), the team that lost possession immediately becomes the new defending team(2) in the other outside zone.



(4/4) As an additional incentive for defenders, if they win the ball and can immediately play a forward pass to the third team on the far side, they score a point.

## Why it matters

This is more than just a warm-up. It is a tactical activation. It primes players physically, mentally and tactically for the demands of Schmidt's style. Fast, complex and competitive, the drill reinforces four key behaviors central to his footballing identity:

- Forward-thinking play: Players are encouraged to find vertical passes and move the ball with intent.
- Quick transitions: The drill is built on rapid changes of possession, teaching players to switch mindsets instantly.
- High-intensity defending: Defenders apply immediate pressure, mirroring the aggressive pressing seen in Schmidt's teams.
- Purposeful ball recovery: Rewarding teams only when they turn defensive actions into attacking opportunities.

## Design and delivery

What makes this exercise especially effective is the dual scoring system. Teams can score by keeping the ball and progressing it forward, or by winning it and quickly switching play. This reflects the dual nature of Schmidt's game model: his teams are trained to create chances both in possession, through quick, vertical combinations and out of possession, by using intense pressing and counter-pressing as tools to win the ball high and strike immediately. In this philosophy, defending is not just about preventing goals, but about creating opportunities to score.

The effectiveness of this exercise depends not only on the setup, but also on how it is delivered. Small adjustments in duration, intensity or flow can significantly affect its impact.

### Key 1:

- Rounds last only 90 seconds, allowing players to operate at maximum intensity.

### Key 2:

- The coach ensures continuous play by immediately feeding new balls into the game.

### Key 3:

- Scorekeeping adds a competitive edge and keeps players mentally engaged.

This design pushes players physically while anchoring them tactically. It's a mental reset and a clear message: *this is how we train*, and *this is how we play*.