

Playing Forward



Topic: Combination Play

Practice type: Skill Practice

No. of Players: 4 - 12

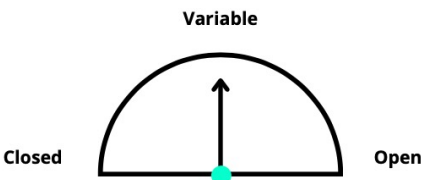
Offsides: Optional

Timing: 20 mins

Goalkeepers: Optional

Pitch size: 30 x 15

Age group: U7+



Objective:

This practice is designed to provide players with opportunities to practice combination play, forward passing and breaking lines with passing and movement. The coach can adjust the constraints to restrict players to only playing forward with a pass (no dribbling) and progress to allow forward supporting runs.

Organisation:

Set up a rectangular area with a zone for the defenders to start in. Mini goals provide an incentive for the defenders when they win the ball and transition to attack. If you have no goalkeeper, a scoring zone for the striker to drive into, or limited touches (e.g. two touches to score) could add value. With younger players, try and expose them to a variety of roles, and with older players this has real value as a position specific practice. Ensure a good supply of footballs and players who may be on non-contact or lighter training load could be used as a server. Alternatively, rotate players through positions every 3 sets.

What you might see

- Players playing forward too quickly
- Players being conservative and playing slowly

Actions you might take

- Start the practice by saying both midfielders must touch the ball before going forward.
- Reward players if they can score in less than a given time (e.g. 8 seconds)

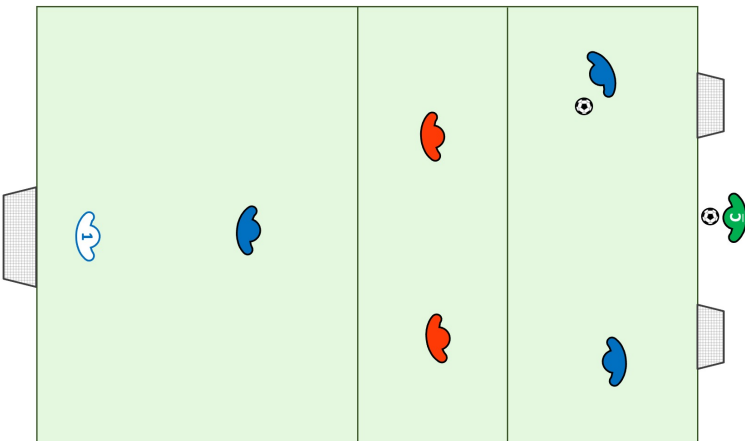
Adaptations:

Is the session too easy?

- Make the space smaller - less space to pass through
- Allow defenders to press
- Add a defender to go 1v1 with the striker

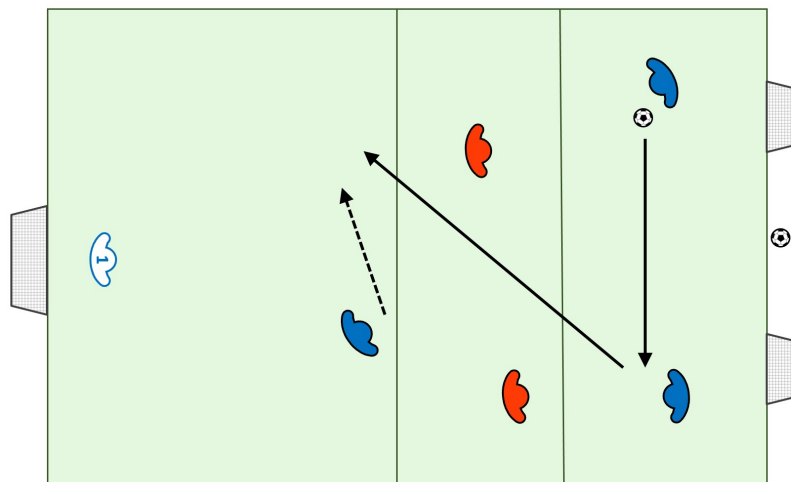
Is the session too hard?

- Make the space bigger - more space to pass through
- Create an attacking overload (e.g. 3 midfielders + striker vs. 1 defender blocking)

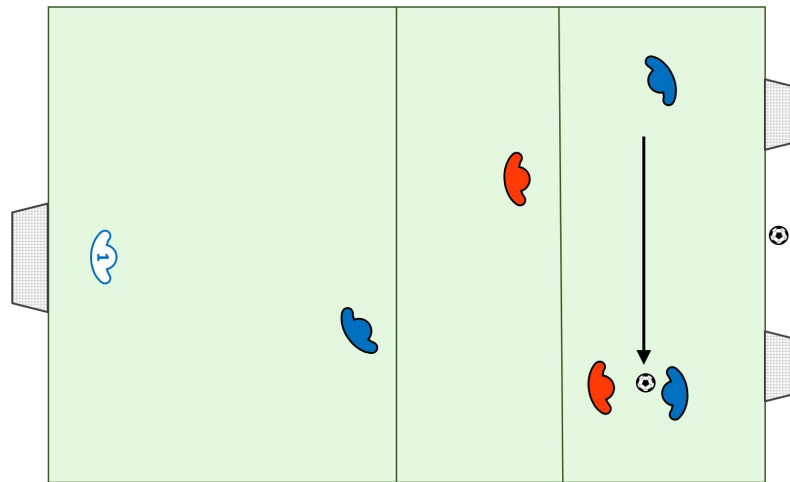


An example of the practice set up with 6 players. The coach could act as a server, or a seventh player could fill this role. The two red defenders are initially locked into their zone and focus on screening, blocking and intercepting. Blues aim to find a forward pass for the striker to score. Defenders cannot recover initially, and blue attackers cannot run forward meaning the striker must go 1v1.

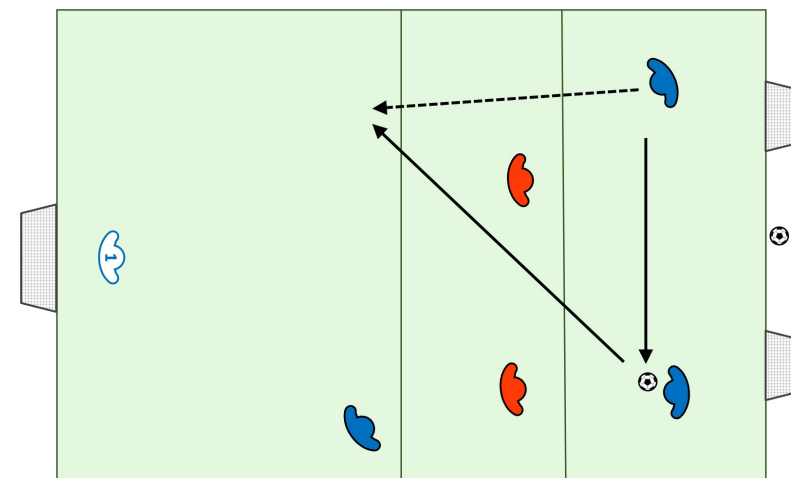
Technical	Psychological
Releasing Receiving Combinations	Patience Composure Confidence
Strength Agility	Collaboration Communication
Physical	Social



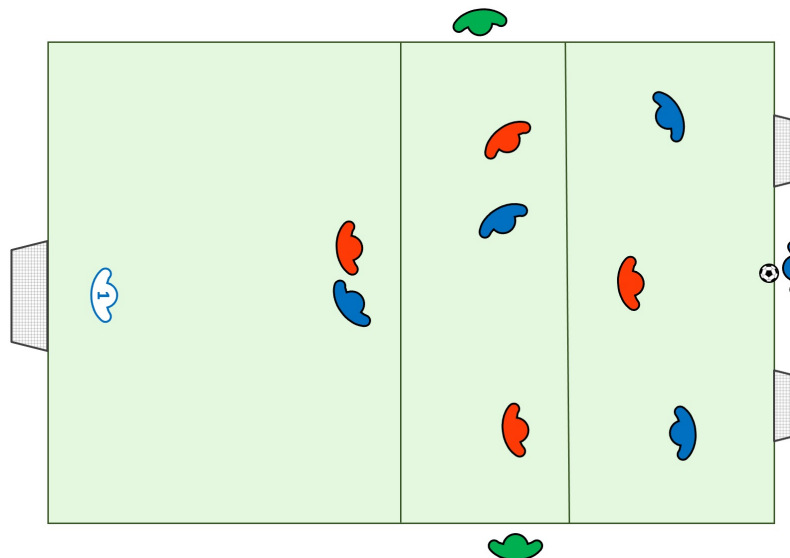
Blues successfully play a split pass between the red defenders for the striker to run on to. Realism is reduced given that defenders are locked in their zone and cannot recover, but this allows blues to get success initially. If reds had intercepted, they can pass or dribble into the mini goals. If you don't have goals, use cones to make gates.



In this progression we now ramp up realism by allowing the defenders to decide whether they hold and screen, or come out and press the attacker. If reds win it, they score in the goals. This will create more realistic scenarios and increase decision-making.



In this example, we now progress the practice to allow a defensive an attacking forward run beyond from the midfield players. Reds have decided to screen and the blue midfielder makes a forward run into space. The coach has discretion as to whether to allow defenders to track and recover.



An example of the same practice with more players. In this picture we feature a centre back, two central midfielders, an attacking midfielder and a striker for blue. For red, they have a centre back, two defensive midfielders and an attacking midfielder. If you wanted to include width, neutral wide players (possibly on limited touches) could play for both teams.