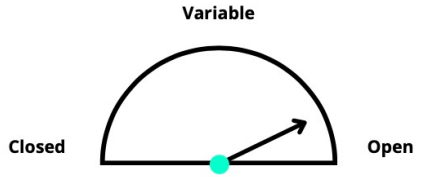
SSG: Transition Game

Topic: Transition/Counter Attack
Practice type: Small Sided Game
No. of Players: 10 - 20
Offsides: Optional
Timing: 20-30 mins
Goalkeepers: Yes
Pitch size: 45 x 25
Age group: U10+



Objective:

This practices is designed to encourage high repetition of forward runs, forward passing and quick attack. As a result, there is also an opportunity to challenge defenders who will often be outnumbered, have to make recovery runs or be tasked with emergency defending.

Organisation:

Set up a narrow small sided game divided into thirds with two goals. Goalkeepers are critical to this practice functioning and should have a good supply of footballs in their goals to play quickly. The key constraint is that midfield players cannot recover into the final third to defend. This creates attacking overloads in the final third for the team in possession, and if the defenders or GK win the ball they can exploit midfield overloads in the central third by attacking at speed. You can adapt to allow a defender to recover and support as required.

What you might see

- Slow play or players passing sideways
- Players fatiguing

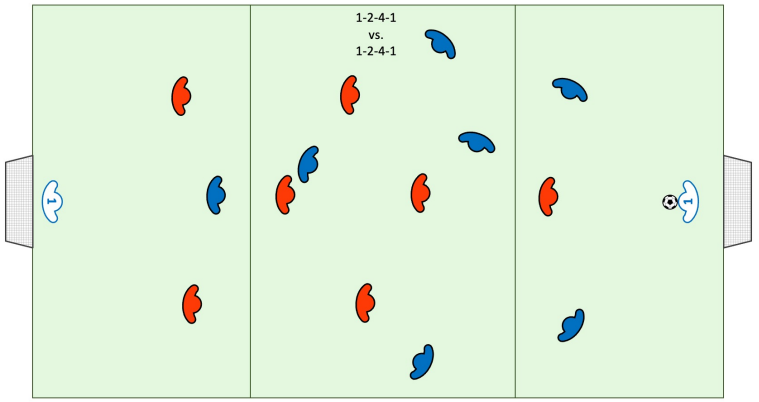
Actions you might take

- Ensure a narrow pitch to reduce opportunities to play sideways or safely
- Manage the length of the pitch
- Reward teams for goals in less than a certain length of time (e.g. 8 seconds)

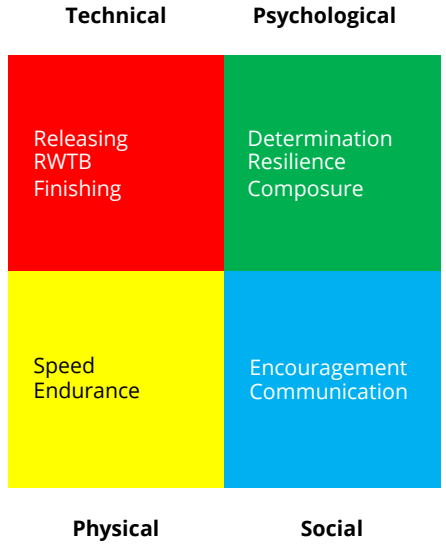
Adaptations:

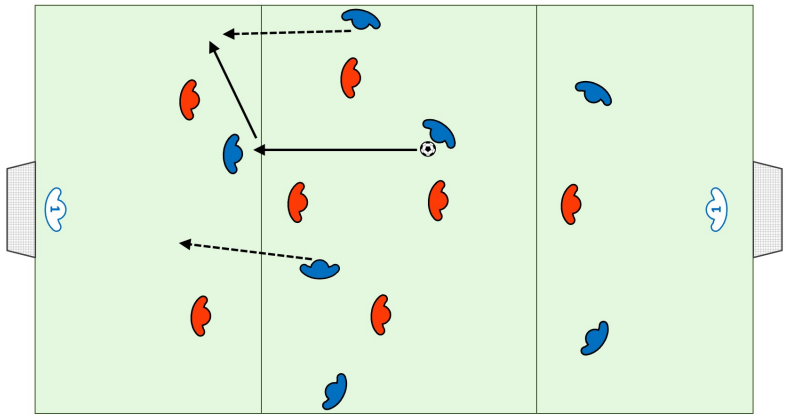
Is the session too easy?
- Make the space longer
- Allow a defender to recover in support
- Restrict goal scoring to one touch finish

Is the session too hard?
- Adjust the space to manage fatigue
- Adjust rules around which players are locked/unlocked

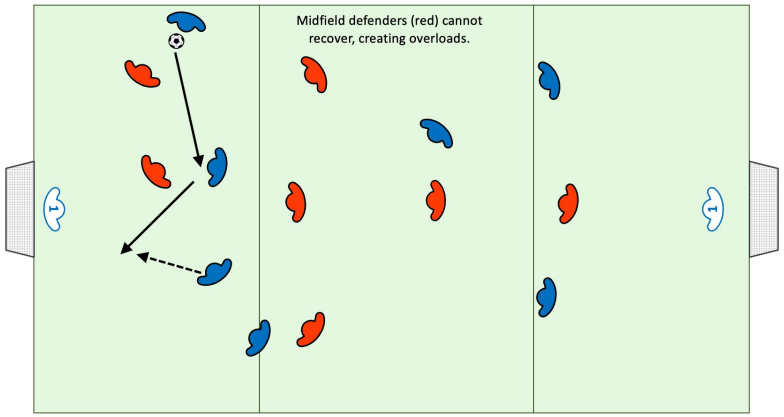


Example of the set up. A small sided game, pitch divided into thirds and in this example, an 8v8 in a 1-2-4-1 shape. This could be adapted from 5-a-side through to 11-a-side. Midfield defenders cannot recover and defend in their defensive third. You can also lock the 2 defenders into their zone to encourage them to work on quick forward passing and progress to allow them to drive in with the ball.

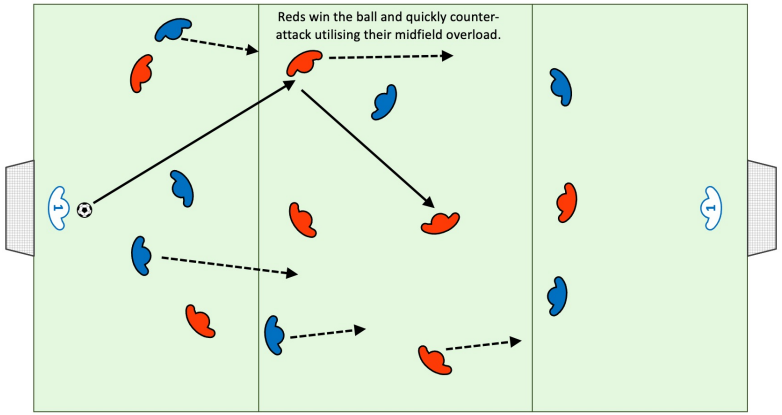




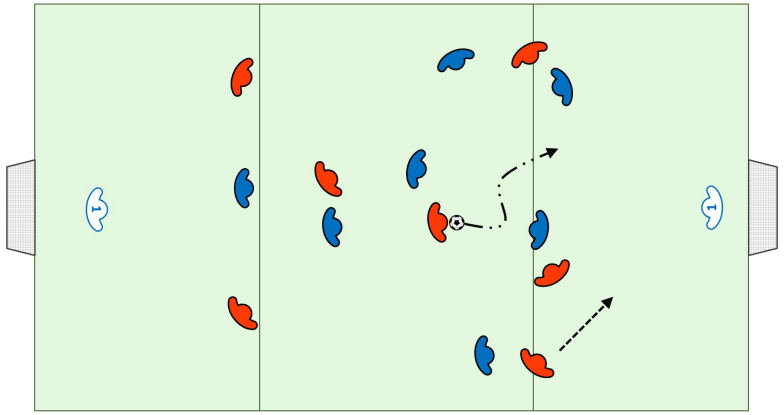
Blues on the attack. Blue midfield successfully play through the red midfield into the attacking third. This is a trigger for forward supporting runs from midfielders in order to create and exploit overloads in the final third and challenge red defenders to cope with defending outnumbered.



Blues now attack with a 4v2 and successfully create a scoring opportunity. Red midfield cannot recover and should be preparing for the next attack. Whilst this lacks realism, it creates a ‘wave’ style practice that encourages lots of attacking and defending.



Red goalkeeper makes a save and quickly distributes the ball into the middle third so their team can exploit the 4v2 midfield overload and counter-attack. Blues are tasked with recovering quickly and the two defenders must delay and dictate to slow the attack or win possession.



Reds successfully create a 3v2 overload in the final third. Continue to encourage quick attack, forward runs and forward passing.