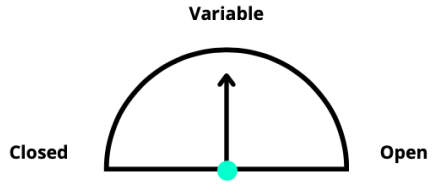
SSG: Running in Behind

Topic: Combination Play
Practice type: Skill Practice
No. of Players: 6-18

Offsides: Yes
Timing: 20 mins
Goalkeepers: Optional

Pitch size: 40 x 15
Age group: U10+



Objective:

To allow attacking players opportunities to combine and exploit space in behind to score. Attacking focus on weight and shape of pass, timing of run, clinical finish. Defenders focus on tracking runners and dealing with ball over the top.

Organisation:

Set a pitches with 6-8 players per pitch. If you have large groups, set up two pitches to increase repetition. 2 servers start with the ball. Servers must stay behind the line. They can pass between themselves or bounce with attacking players. Attackers can only enter the scoring zone with a pass over the top into space. Limit servers to 2-3 touch. If you have odd numbers, go with one server. If you have low numbers (E.g. 9 players) adapt to a 3v3+3. Ball must be played over the top (initially) by the servers. If defenders win the ball, they play on until they can find a pass into the servers and attackers can counter-press. GKs can be added. Ensure at least 20+ yards of space for players to run in to. A long narrow pitch is ideal.

What you might see

- Players not recovering to defend or making forward supporting runs
- Players making straight runs on a straight pass
- Slow play

Actions you might take

- Restrict to a one touch finish for attackers (to encourage forward runs).
- Reward defenders with a point every time they successfully win the ball and pass to a server.
- Add a time limit for attackers or defenders when in possession

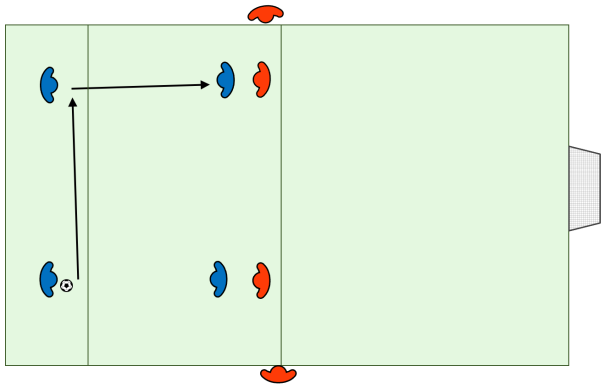
Adaptations:

Is the session too easy?

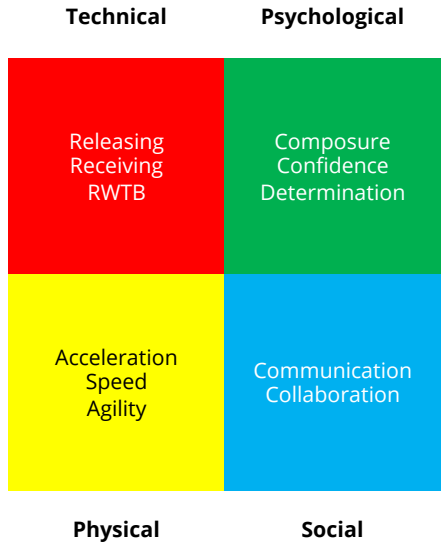
- Make the space smaller
- Add an extra defender

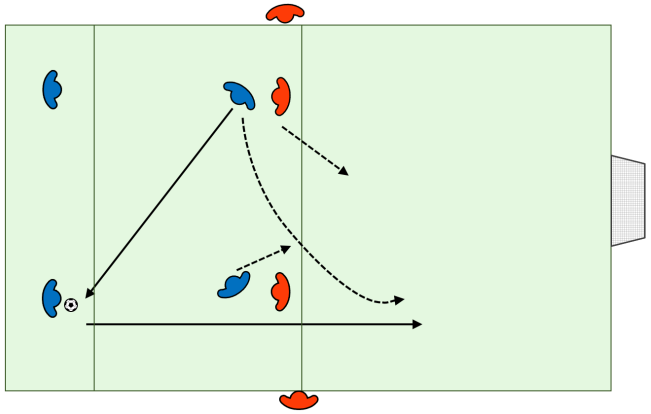
Is the session too hard?

- Make the space bigger
- Restrict to only one defender can recover

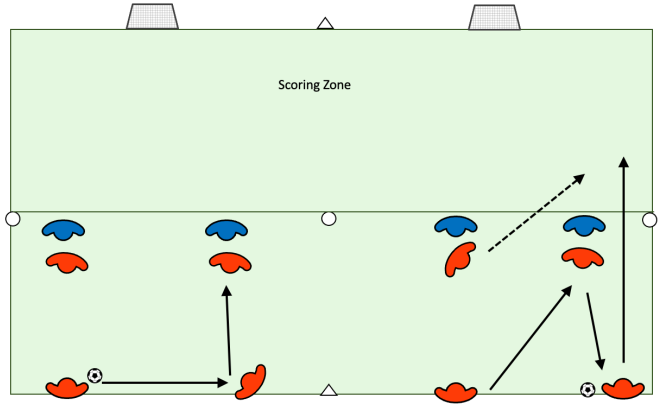


Set up a long narrow pitch appropriate for the age and ability of players. Servers must stay behind the line are limited to 2-3 touch. Attackers can only enter the space with a ball over the top (or through). Defenders must recover and try to win the ball, and find one of the servers. Rotate players through roles in the practice every few sets.

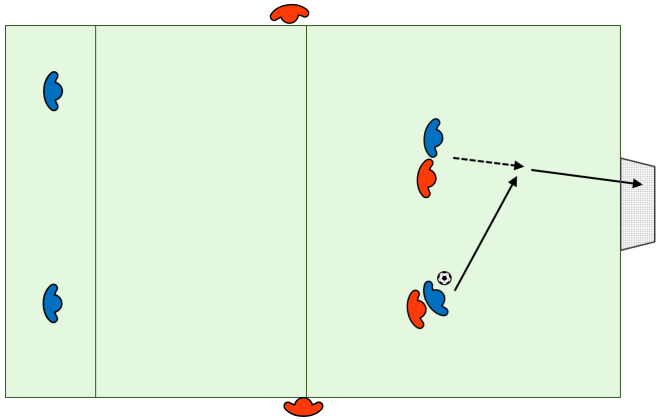




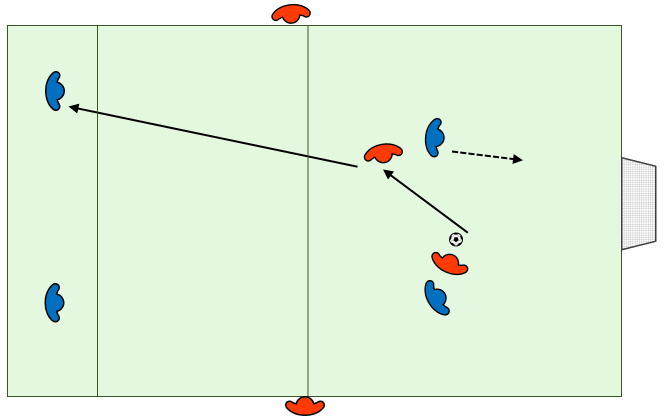
An example of a striker receiving the ball, setting it back and making an angled and well-timed run into space. This may trigger the second attacking player to make a forward supporting run. Defenders now need to solve the problem of which of them tracks which attacker.



An example of the practice set up with two pitches side by side so the coach can stay connected to both games. If you have extra players, you can add an extra defender, attacker or server, or adapt to a 3v3+3.



An example of the attackers getting success by breaking in behind and scoring from a one touch finish. It's important to encourage the players that the game doesn't stop until a goal is scored, the ball goes out or the defenders win the ball and secure it with a forward pass.



An example of the defenders successfully recovering, winning the ball from blue, securing it and finding a forward pass into the servers. The next defenders could rotate in and blue players could swap roles from here. Alternatively, you can work in sets of 3-4 turns before swapping.