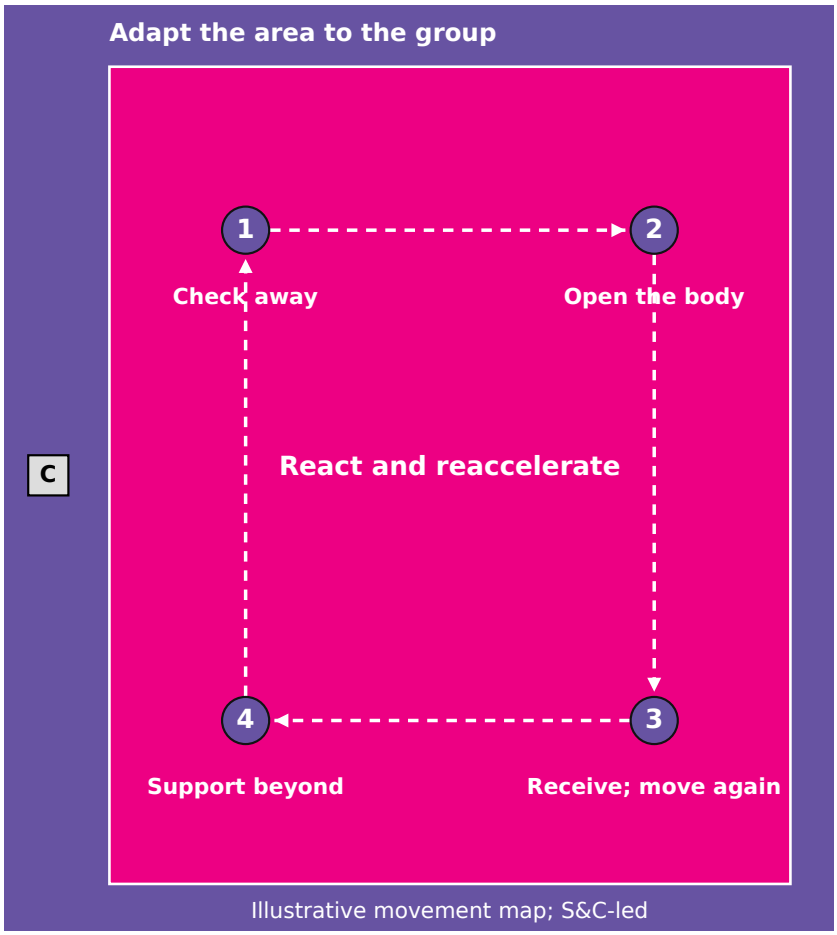
Physical preparation - Prepare

Physical preparation | 10 min | 0-10 min

Adapt to the group | Adaptable



Purple: coached team. Black: opposition. White: common player. Green GK: goalkeeper. Square C: coach.

Solid arrows show passing options; dashed arrows show movement. These are examples, not compulsory routes.

10 minutes · S&C-led physical preparation and activation.

Prepare players for multidirectional movement, acceleration and deceleration, changes of direction, hip mobility, short explosive actions and reactions to visual information. The football plan defines the intended movement outcomes; the S&C lead adapts the physical programme to the group.

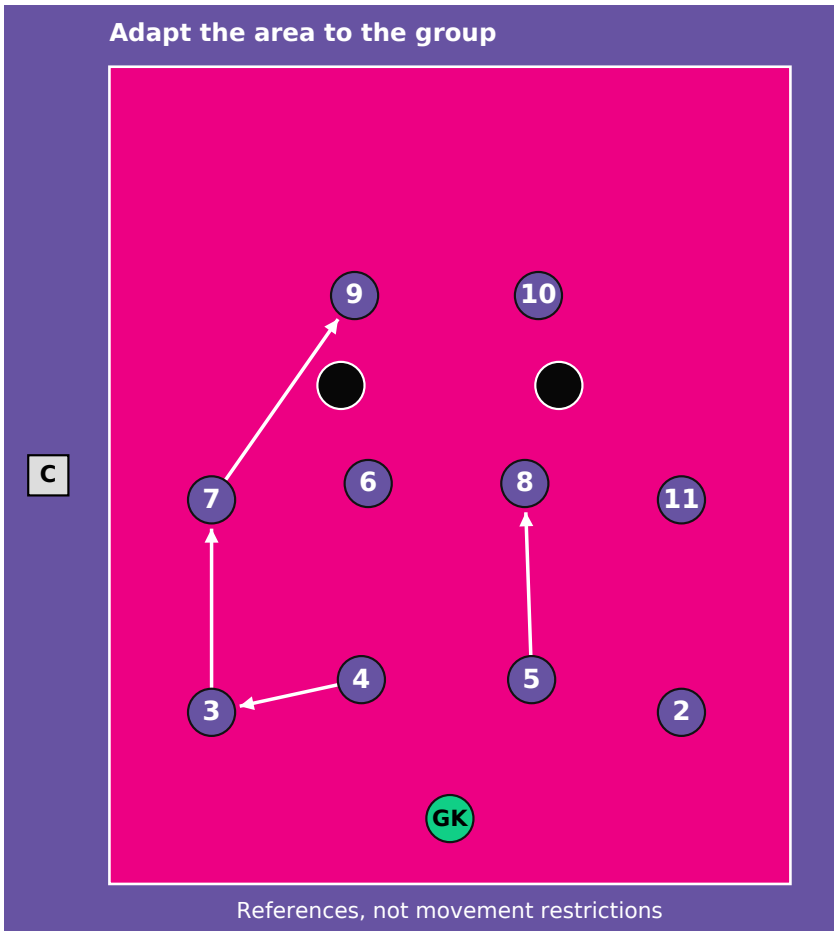
Connect the movement to football where appropriate: check away and accelerate to receive; open the body and change direction; receive and move again; support underneath and accelerate beyond.

Players should finish ready to enter football work immediately. Keep tactical explanation brief and have the position-specific equipment ready.

Position-specific work - Connect

Specific practice | 12 min | 10-22 min

4-4-2 positional relationships | Adaptable



Purple: coached team. Black: opposition. White: common player. Green GK: goalkeeper. Square C: coach.

Solid arrows show passing options; dashed arrows show movement. These are examples, not compulsory routes.

12 minutes · 4-4-2 positional relationships. Use both sides where numbers permit. Begin with a small number of realistic starting pictures, then vary defensive pressure so players choose the solution.

• Through: centre-back to central midfielder to forward. The 6/8 escapes first pressure and receives to play forward; the 9/10 provides depth and connection.

• Around: when the centre is protected, use the full-back and wide or central midfielder to reopen forward access.

• Over: high or compact pressure can leave space beyond. The goalkeeper or centre-back reads the opportunity while wide players or forwards time their movement.

• Carry: when nobody engages, the centre-back or midfielder advances to commit pressure and create a spare player.

Positional detail

Goalkeeper: scan, support and vary passing range. Centre-backs: body orientation, disguise, carrying and forward passing. Full-backs: width and timing. Central midfielders: escape cover shadows, scan and receive forward. Wide players: maintain width, move inside or threaten beyond. Forwards: pin, connect, show and threaten behind.

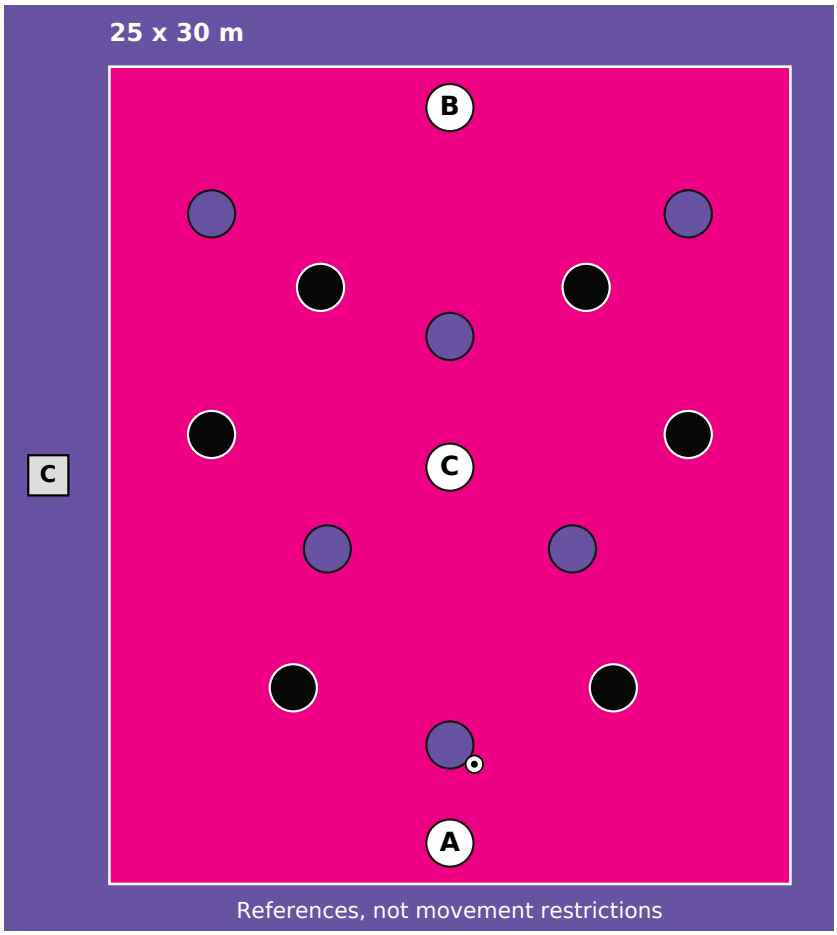
Adapt the challenge

Increase difficulty by changing the defensive picture and asking players to diagnose it. Simplify with reduced pressure to rehearse the relationship, then reintroduce opposition and choice. Observe whether players identify a solution when the picture changes.

A - Recognise

General practice | 15 min | 22-37 min

6v6 + 3 common players | 25 x 30 m



Purple: coached team. Black: opposition. White: common player. Green GK: goalkeeper. Square C: coach.

Organisation and operation

Use six purple and six black players, with white common players A and B at opposite ends and white common player C inside. The grey C outside the area denotes the coach and is not another participant. All three white players support the team in possession.

Start from one end common player. The team in possession seeks a controlled transfer to the opposite end player. After a successful transfer, retain possession and reverse the direction of the next transfer. On a turnover, the new possession team establishes a connection with an end player and works towards the other end. Restart balls that leave the area promptly from an end player. Rotate common-player duties at suitable breaks.

Begin with free touches and no compulsory route through the internal common player. Award one point for a completed end-to-end transfer. The internal player is an available support option, not a mandatory checkpoint.

Learning focus

Ask: "What does the pressure allow us to do?" Encourage scanning before receiving, a body position that reveals forward options, and a first touch that moves the ball away from pressure. Use width and depth to stretch defenders, with support both beyond and underneath the ball. Players should recognise when a pass is available, when to move an opponent, and when an unopposed carry is the most effective action.

Coach the weight and direction of passes alongside the receiver's preparation. A pass around pressure can be an intelligent solution when the centre is protected. Do not reward a forced split pass simply because it travels forwards.

Questions

- Where is the pressure coming from, and where is the spare player?
- Can you receive with an option to play forwards?
- If the middle is closed, how else can we progress?
- What support does the receiver need after your pass?

Progressions and regressions

To increase difficulty, reduce the area, limit common-player touches where appropriate, or remove the internal common player. Introduce one change at a time and assess whether decisions improve. An optional bonus can reward a controlled transfer that genuinely eliminates opposition pressure.

To simplify, increase the area, protect the internal common player from challenges temporarily, or reduce defending numbers. Keep end-player touches unrestricted if receiving quality is limiting the practice. These are adaptations to the illustrated starting format.

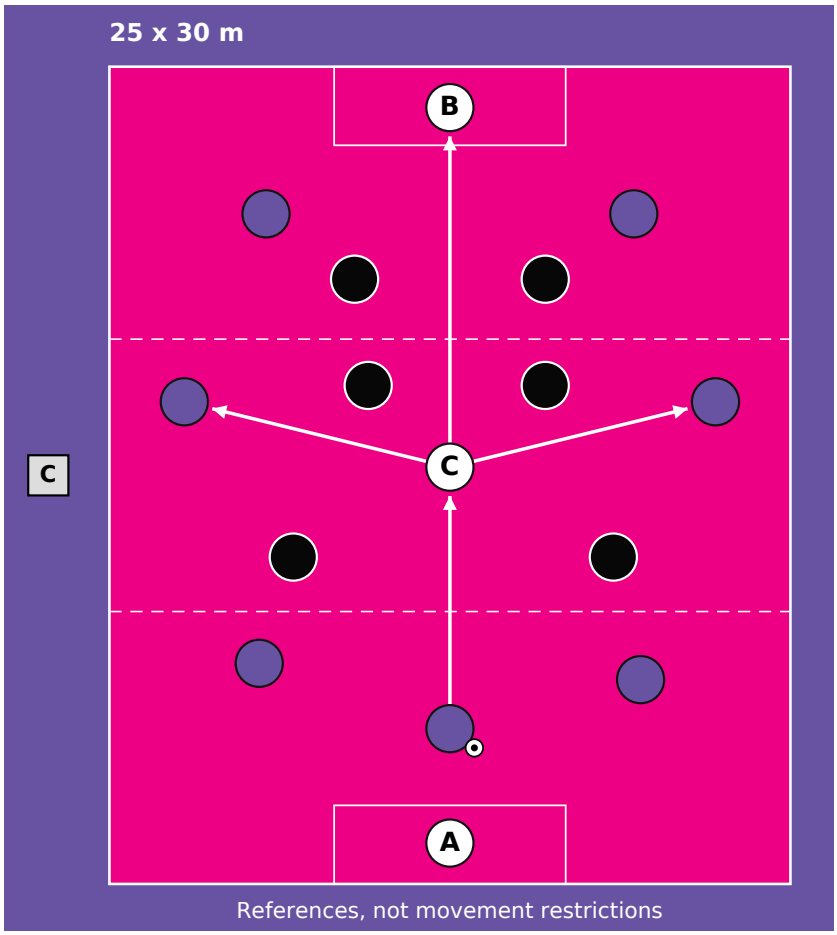
Observe

Look for earlier recognition of pressure, purposeful forward movement and controlled possession after progressing. Record why a chosen route worked, rather than counting split passes alone.

B - Create

General practice | 15 min | 37-52 min

7v6 + 3 common players | 25 x 30 m



Purple: coached team. Black: opposition. White: common player. Green GK: goalkeeper. Square C: coach.

Solid arrows show passing options; dashed arrows show movement. These are examples, not compulsory routes.

Organisation and operation

Use seven purple and six black players, plus white end common players A and B in the marked target boxes and white internal common player C. The grey C and spare balls sit outside the area. This is a continuous directional possession practice.

The possession team connects one end target to the other by creating passing or carrying opportunities beyond pressure. After receiving at the opposite end, reverse the transfer direction and continue. Common players support whichever team has possession. On a turnover, the new possession team connects with an end target and attacks the other. End target boxes provide receiving spaces; initially keep opponents outside them. Rotate the common players and the extra outfield-player role between blocks so different players experience the advantage.

The dashed thirds provide reference points for recognising depth and support. Players may move across them. The passing arrows illustrate options from the ball carrier through the internal common player and towards wider support or the far target; they are not a compulsory sequence. A direct

forward pass or carry remains available when the pressure allows it.

Award one point for a controlled end-to-end transfer. If needed, introduce a second point when the transfer follows a clear action that draws an opponent and releases a teammate beyond that pressure. Crossing a dashed line alone does not earn the bonus.

Learning focus

Ask: "How can we create the forward option?" The ball carrier should recognise whether a defender engages, carry when space remains available, and release when doing so gives a teammate an advantage. Supporting players create separation, move out of cover shadows, and adjust their angle and timing as the defender moves.

Use the internal common player to explore combinations, bounce passes and third-player support without insisting that every attack passes through them. Width can pull opponents apart; movement between or beyond lines can then make the next forward action possible. The objective is to create and use a meaningful advantage, not simply accumulate passes with extra players.

Questions

- What happens if the defender does not engage the ball carrier?
- Can your movement take an opponent away from the next receiver?
- When should you hold, carry or release the ball?
- Can the next player receive beyond pressure rather than beside it?

Progressions and regressions

To increase difficulty, reduce the purple team to six for balanced outfield numbers, remove the internal common player, or narrow the practice slightly. These alternatives reduce the illustrated advantage. Another option is to allow controlled pressure on an end target when the pass travels, provided sufficient space is available.

To simplify, keep the internal common player unopposed temporarily, widen the area, or allow a brief uncontested first reception on restarts. Retain free touches until players can recognise and execute the available options. Local 2v1 or 3v2 situations may emerge within the practice.

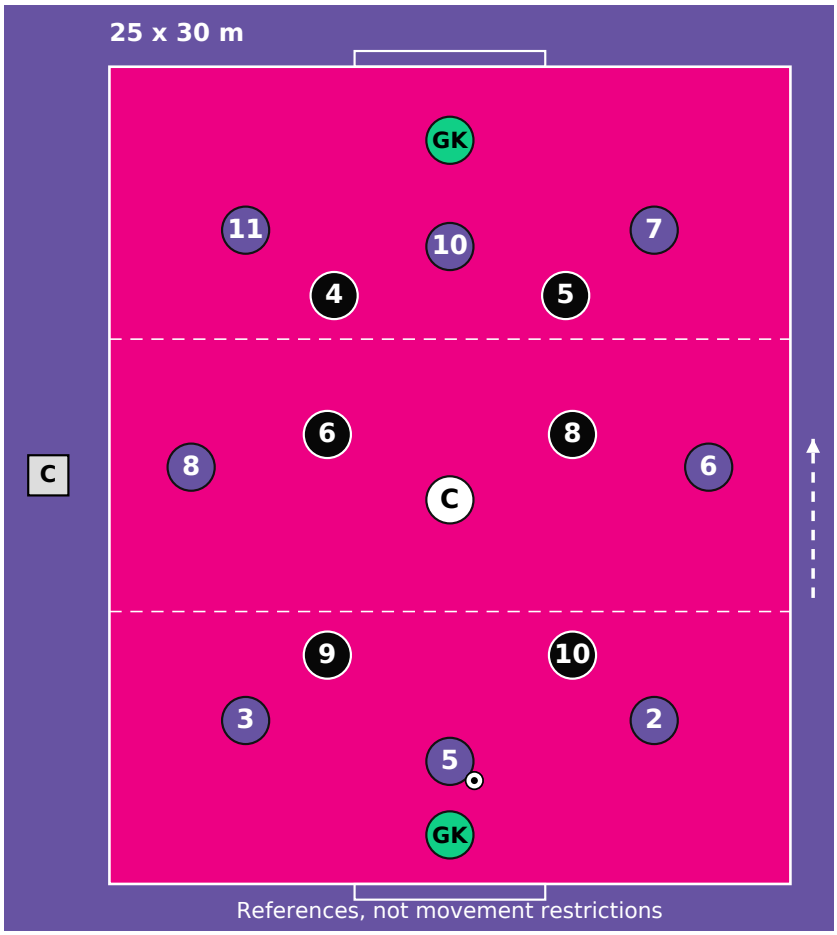
Observe

Look for a defender being moved or committed before a teammate receives with an advantage. Distinguish purposeful circulation that creates an opening from possession that leaves the opposition unaffected.

C - Exploit

Small-sided game (SSG) | 15 min | 52-67 min

8v6 + 2 goalkeepers + 1 common player | 25 x 30 m



Purple: coached team. Black: opposition. White: common player. Green GK: goalkeeper. Square C: coach.

Coached team attacks up; opposition attacks down. Common players support whichever team has the ball.

Organisation and operation

Use eight purple outfield players against six black outfield players, one goalkeeper per team and one white common player supporting the team in possession. This is an intentionally uneven directional game, with an initial numerical advantage for the purple coached team.

Purple attacks upwards towards the top goal and defends the bottom goal. Its starting lines are 3-5-2 in the defensive third, 8-6 in midfield and 11-10-7 in the attacking third, read left to right on the image. Black attacks downwards and defends the top goal, with 4-5 at the top, 6-8 in midfield and 9-10 in the bottom third. The ball begins with purple 5. Shirt numbers identify roles in this illustration, not named players.

The thirds are visual references, not movement restrictions. Players can cross them, interchange and recover. Allow normal transitions when possession changes. Restart after a goal from the conceding team's goalkeeper; use a pass-in for touchline restarts and agree other restart rules before play. Keep replacement balls ready to maintain useful playing time.

Scoring

A normal goal scores one point. A goal scores three points when the same uninterrupted attack contains a recognised line-breaking action and exploits the resulting advantage. Agree clear examples with players: a pass, carry, combination or appropriate route around or over pressure that accesses space or a teammate beyond opponents. Merely crossing a reference line is insufficient.

Learning focus

Ask: "Once we get beyond pressure, how do we use the advantage before defenders recover?" Before the line break, retain the scanning, spacing and manipulation developed in A and B. During it, focus on pass quality, receiving body shape and a positive next action. Afterwards, encourage purposeful support ahead of and around the ball, while recognising whether to carry, combine, pass or finish.

The greater numbers should give purple repeated opportunities to solve the problem. They do not guarantee success, and black should remain active and realistic in defending and counterattacking. If purple progresses without needing to recognise or manipulate pressure, reduce the advantage rather than adding arbitrary passing requirements.

Questions

- What created the opening?
- Who can support the next action as the line is broken?
- Can we attack the space before the opposition reorganises?
- Is the forward action available, or do we need to retain and rebuild?

Progressions and regressions

To increase difficulty, remove the common player or reduce purple's extra outfield players. If appropriate, add one further bonus point for a goal within approximately six seconds of a recognised line break, making the maximum four points. Use this only when players need encouragement to exploit the advantage promptly; do not make rushed finishing the objective.

To simplify, widen the area, protect the common player temporarily, or remove bonus scoring and play with normal goals. Adapt the opposition's starting pressure if the game produces too few meaningful opportunities to learn. Changes to numbers or area are later adaptations and are not represented in the starting diagram.

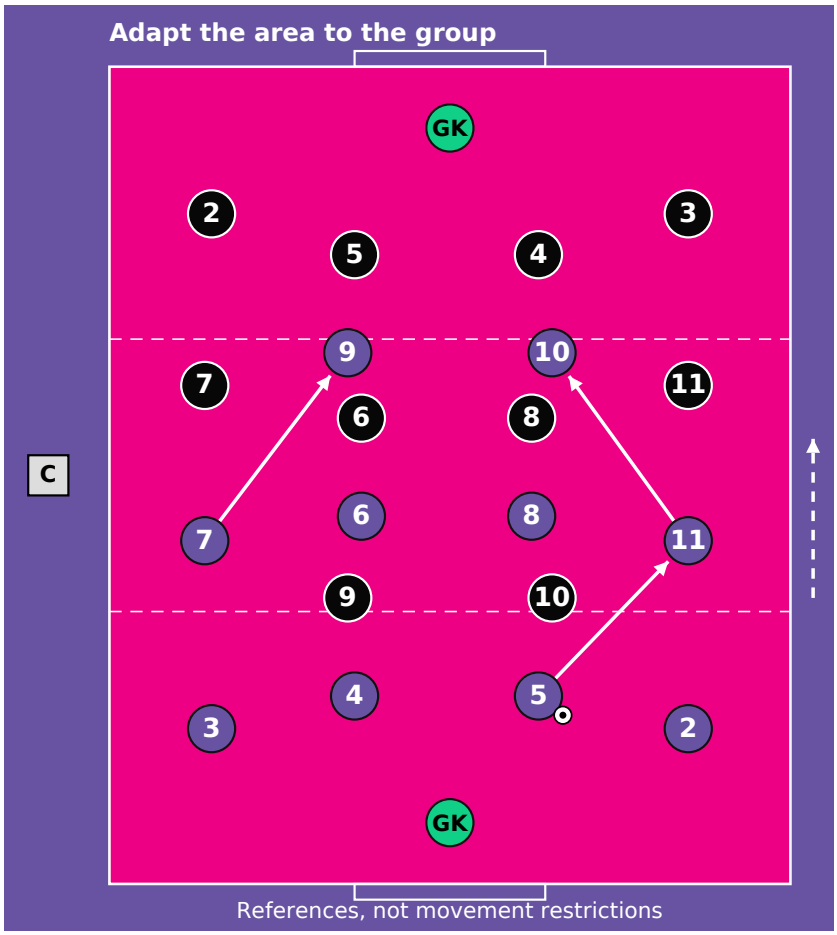
Observe

Assess the actions immediately before and after the line break. Look for controlled progression, timely support and a useful next action before recovery. Evaluate decision quality as well as goals, especially given the uneven teams.

4-4-2 game - Transfer

Full-pitch practice | 20 min | 67-87 min

11v11 reference; adapt to attendance | Adaptable



Purple: coached team. Black: opposition. White: common player. Green GK: goalkeeper. Square C: coach.

Coached team attacks up; opposition attacks down. Common players support whichever team has the ball.

Solid arrows show passing options; dashed arrows show movement. These are examples, not compulsory routes.

20 minutes · 11v11 reference on a suitable pitch, or an adapted representative game that preserves the positional relationships. Use a coached block of 8-10 minutes followed by 10-12 minutes of free play, keeping the total at 20 minutes.

Coached game

- Centre-backs recognise when to carry or play through, around or over.
- Central midfielders find space beyond first pressure and connect to the next line.
- Full-backs provide the route around pressure and support balance.
- Wide players provide width, move inside when appropriate and threaten beyond.
- Forwards pin, connect, create space for one another and threaten behind.
- The team maintains balance behind the ball while supporting forward progression.

Manage the opposition to protect central space, discourage split passes, force play outside when appropriate, protect space behind and transition positively after regaining possession.

Free game and transfer test

Remove bonus scoring and most conditions. Coach mainly through observation and concise concurrent information. Do the breaking-lines behaviours remain when they are no longer explicitly rewarded?