



IP02 | Build to attack around

90 minutes | In possession | 4-4-2 reference | Free

Complete session plan - black-and-white print edition

Time	Stage	Starting format
0-10 min	Prepare	Adapt to the group
10-22 min	Connect	4-4-2 positional relationships
22-37 min	A - Recognise	6v6 + 3 common players
37-52 min	B - Create	7v6 + 3 common players
52-67 min	C - Exploit	8v6 + 2 goalkeepers
67-87 min	Transfer	7v7 + 2 goalkeepers; 7v6 + 2 with 15
87-90 min	Reflect	Whole group

Session purpose

The session moves from physical preparation and position-specific reference pictures into increasingly representative football problems. Players learn to recognise when central access is protected, create a wide overload, attack around the opposition and get back inside to threaten. The practices are linked by one learning objective rather than operating as isolated drills.

4-4-2 reference roles

- 1 - Goalkeeper | 2/3 - Full backs | 4/5 - Centre backs | 6/8 - Central midfielders | 7/11 - Wide midfielders | 9/10 - Forwards.
- In possession: retain width, depth, balance and occupation of the five lanes; use the outside player to create access back inside rather than treating circulation as the end objective.

Coaching approach

- Coach primarily one team and manage the opposition to provide realistic central protection and outside pressure.
- Use concurrent, individual, terminal, walk-through and coaching-process interventions according to the picture presented.
- Do not stop the practice merely to deliver planned content. Observe first; intervene when the intervention can improve recognition, overload creation or the inside return.
- Use questions and environmental manipulation before automatically giving the solution.
- Progressions and regressions are options, not compulsory stages.



- Primary observation lens throughout: did width and support change the picture, and did the team get back inside with purpose?

Opposition behaviour

- Protect central space and remain connected.
- Force play outside, but do not give up the inside return.
- Protect the outside-to-inside route and delay the final action.
- Recover quickly after the ball goes around.
- On regain, transition positively to maintain realism.

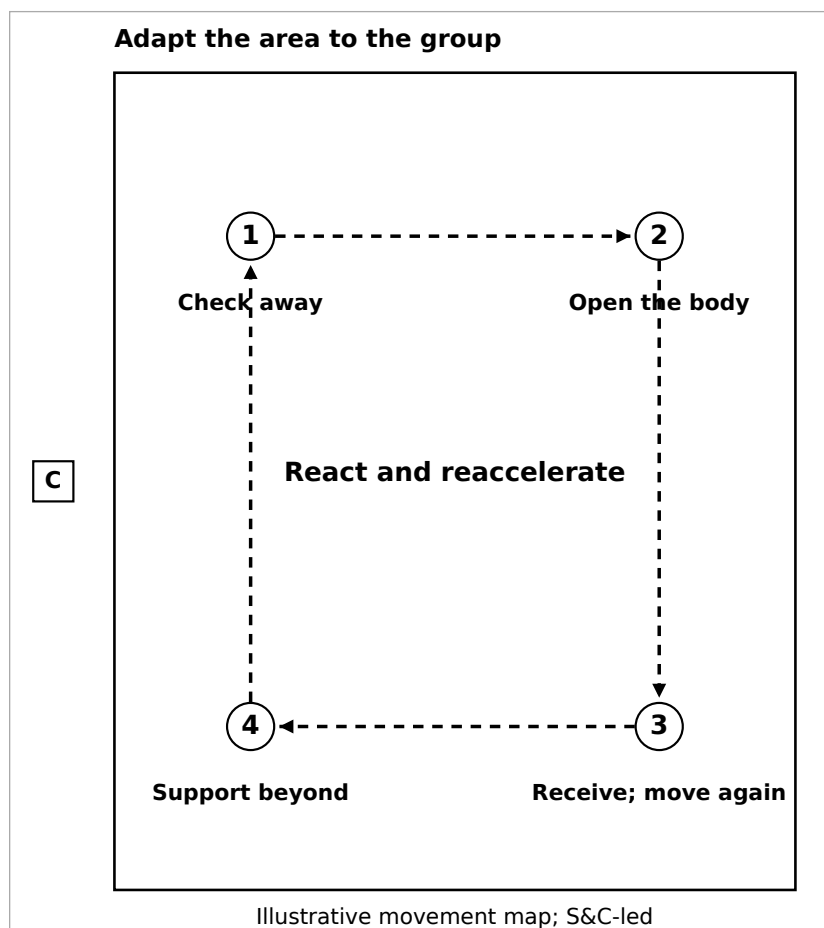
Success indicators

- Players recognise when central access is available and play through with appropriate timing and quality.
- Players recognise when the centre is protected and can create/use a wide overload without treating circulation as the end objective.
- Players go around the opposition and regain inside access through a pass, carry or combination.
- Players maintain balance while supporting the ball outside and the return inside.
- After getting back inside, players accelerate the attack and exploit the temporary advantage before the opposition reorganises.
- Players create and access spare players rather than simply passing because a numerical overload exists.

Physical preparation - Prepare

Physical preparation | 10 min | 0-10 min

Adapt to the group | Adaptable



Outlined circle: coached team. Filled black: opposition. Double ring: common player / GK. Square C: coach, outside the player total.

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

- Duration: 10 minutes
- Practice Type: Physical preparation / activation
- Purpose: Prepare players physically and cognitively for repeated wide-to-inside actions, changes of direction and accelerations around pressure.
- Ownership: S&C-led; football plan defines movement outcomes rather than prescribing the exact physical programme.

Physical emphasis: Multidirectional movement; acceleration/deceleration; lateral shuffle; change of direction; hip mobility/opening; short explosive actions; reaction to visual information; readiness to repeat actions around and back inside.

Football connection: Where appropriate: check away > accelerate outside; open body > receive forward; support underneath > combine; overlap/underlap > accelerate beyond; get back inside > finish or connect.



Coach observation: Players finish physically prepared to enter football work immediately. Use football actions as cues, but do not turn this phase into a tactical lecture.

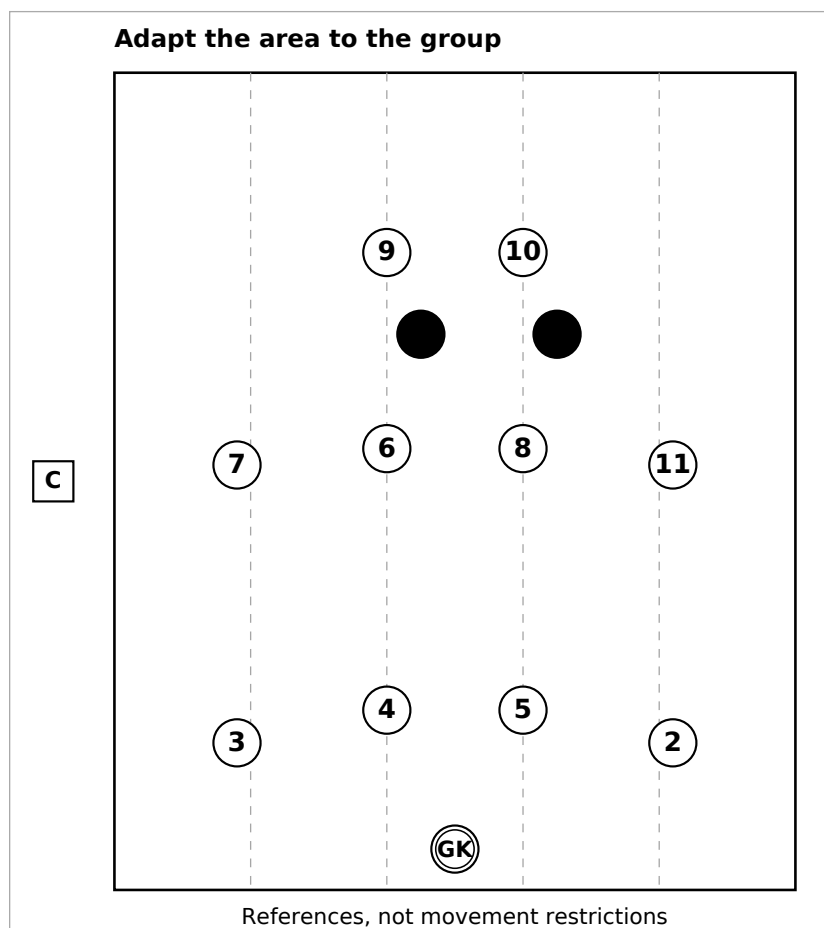
- **TRANSITION** Wide-channel equipment and two goals should already be set so the session moves directly from physical preparation into football.



Position-specific work - Connect

Specific practice | 12 min | 10-22 min

4-4-2 positional relationships | Adaptable



Outlined circle: coached team. Filled black: opposition. Double ring: common player / GK. Square C: coach, outside the player total.

- Duration: 12 minutes
- Practice Type: Position Specific
- Reference: 4-4-2 wide relationships and five-lane occupation
- Primary Purpose: Connect Build to Attack Around to recognisable 4-4-2 relationships, with width, support and balance.

Organisation: Use both sides where numbers permit. Start from realistic 4-4-2 reference positions, using five vertical lanes to make width and inside access visible. Present a small number of starting pictures, then progress to choice based on pressure.

- **THROUGH** - If the central route is open, do not force the wide solution. CB > CM > forward; 6/8 receives beyond pressure and plays forward.
- **AROUND** - Central route protected. CB > FB > wide midfielder > forward/inside player. The wide player fixes or attracts pressure so the next pass can get back inside.



- **OVER** - If the opposition presses high and space is available beyond, recognise when GK/CB can play over; 7/11 or 9/10 provide appropriate movement.
- **CARRY** - If the defender does not engage, CB/CM/wide player carries to commit pressure before releasing or combining around.

Positional detail: GK: scan/support/pass range. CB: body orientation, carry, disguise, forward pass. FB: width and timing. 6/8: support underneath, scan, receive to play forward. 7/11: hold width, fix defender, combine, move inside/beyond. 9/10: pin, connect, threaten behind and attack the inside return.

Progression (Harder): Move from fixed reference pictures into choice. Change the defensive pressure so players must recognise whether to play through, around, over or carry, then get back inside.

Regression (Easier): Reduce or temporarily remove pressure to rehearse the wide overload and inside return, then reintroduce the decision.

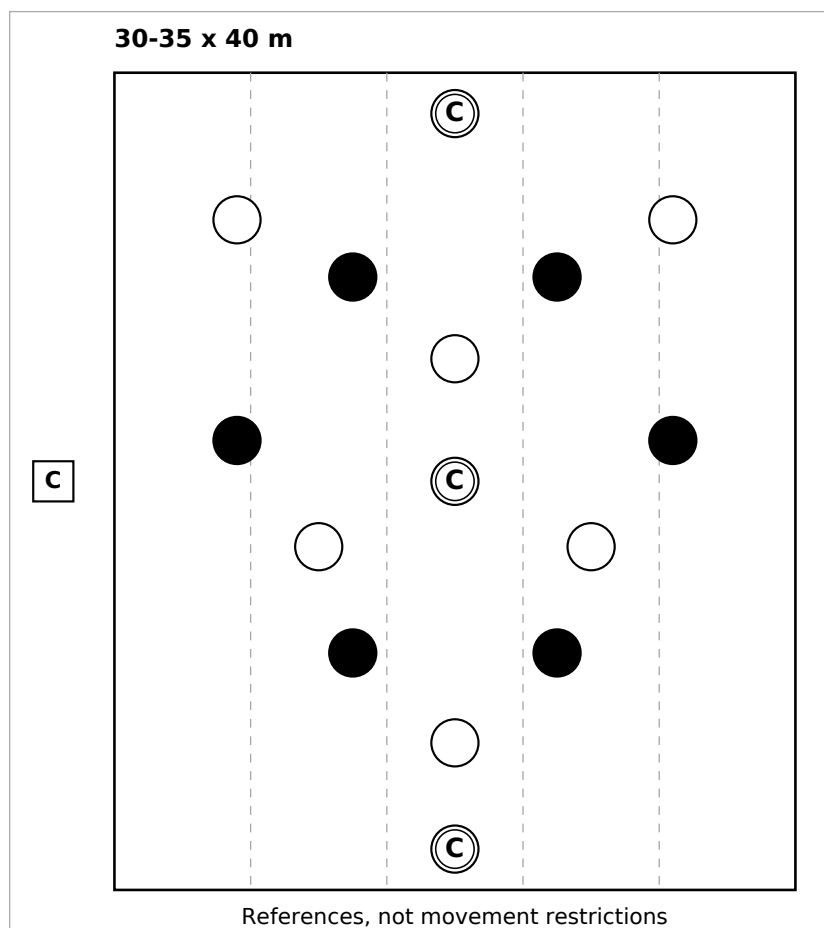
Coach Observation: Avoid making "around" a fixed script. The evidence is whether width, support and timing change the picture and create an inside route.



A - Recognise

General practice | 15 min | 22-37 min

6v6 + 3 common players | 30-35 x 40 m



Outlined circle: coached team. Filled black: opposition. Double ring: common player / GK. Square C: coach, outside the player total.

- Duration: 15 minutes
- Practice Type: General Practice / Possession
- Organisation: 6v6 + 3 common players; one common player at each end and one internal common player. Total = 15 players.
- Area: Approx. 30-35m x 40m; five vertical lanes (L1-L5).
- Focus: Recognise central protection and use the outside solution.

Explanation: Transfer from one end common player to the other. The internal common supports possession. Recognise central protection, use the outside lane and get back inside. Direction reverses after a successful transfer.

- **PLAYER PROBLEM** Can we recognise when the centre is protected, use the outside player and get back inside?



Start condition: Free play. No touch restriction, mandatory wide pass or compulsory use of every common player.

Technical detail: Scan before receiving; receive to see forward; first touch away from pressure; pass with appropriate weight/direction; disguise; carry when space is available; finish the action with quality.

Tactical detail: Recognise central protection; create width and depth; find the spare outside player; support underneath; combine/overlap/underlap; get back inside; play forward when appropriate.

Challenges / Conditions / Targets: Begin without conditions. If required: successful end-to-end transfer = 1 point; transfer that goes around pressure and returns inside = 3 points.

Progression (Harder): Reduce space; restrict common-player time; allow pressure on end common players; remove the internal common player or narrow one side.

Regression (Easier): Increase area; free the common players; reduce opposition pressure; restart from the outside lane.

Coach Questions: What is the opposition protecting? Where is the spare player? Can we go forward? If the centre is closed, how do we get around and back inside?

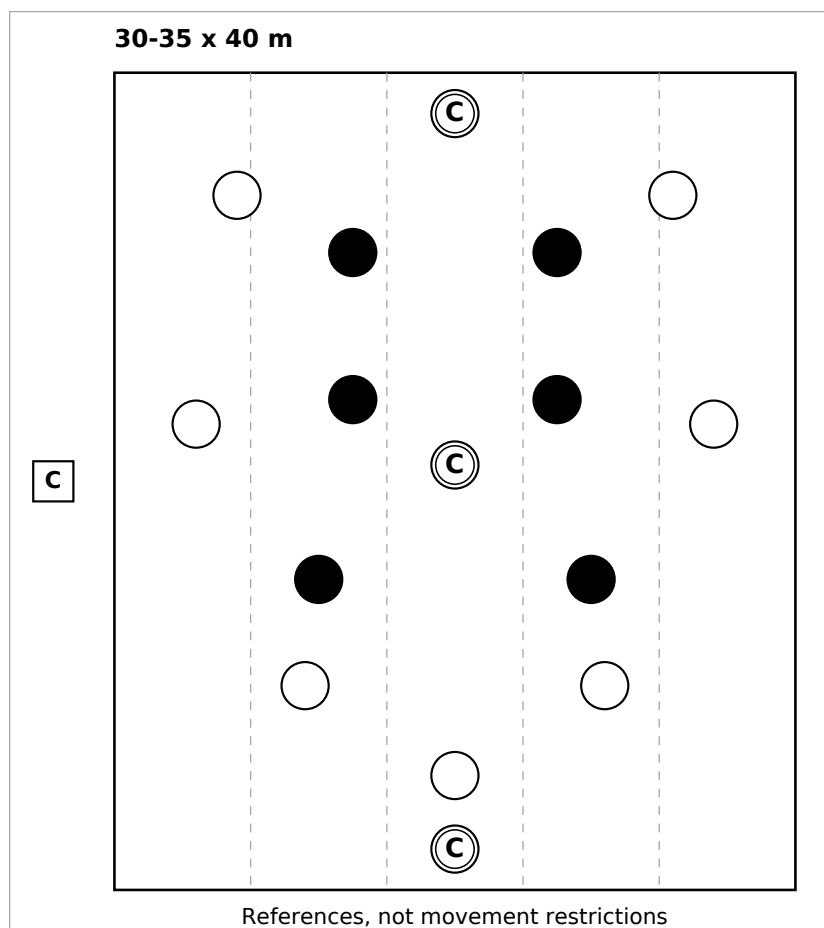
Coach Observation: Do not treat every wide pass as success. Judge whether the players recognised central protection, created the overload and used the outside route to regain inside access.



B - Create

General practice | 15 min | 37-52 min

7v6 + 3 common players | 30-35 x 40 m



Outlined circle: coached team. Filled black: opposition. Double ring: common player / GK. Square C: coach, outside the player total.

- Duration: 15 minutes
- Practice Type: General / Wide Overload
- Organisation: 7v6 + 3 common players (16 total); approx. 30-35m x 40m; five-lane reference (L1-L5).
- Focus: Create a 2v1 outside, progress around the opposition and regain inside access.
- PLAYER PROBLEM Can we create the wide overload, go around the opposition and return inside with purpose?

Key behaviour: Find the wide spare > commit the defender > release > move, but not as a compulsory sequence. If the defender does not engage, continue carrying or retain.

Coaching detail: Effective width; support angle/distance; carry at the defender; commit; timing of release; overlap/underlap; movement beyond; third-player combination; accelerate back inside after going around.



Progression (Harder): Start with 2v1 in the outside lane; add a recovering defender; then allow the opposition to choose when/where to press so the overload must be created.

Regression (Easier): Increase width; return to 2v1; manipulate defender starting position so the spare player and inside return are clearer.

Coach Questions: Who is spare? What makes the defender commit? When do we release? Who supports underneath? How do we get back inside after going around?

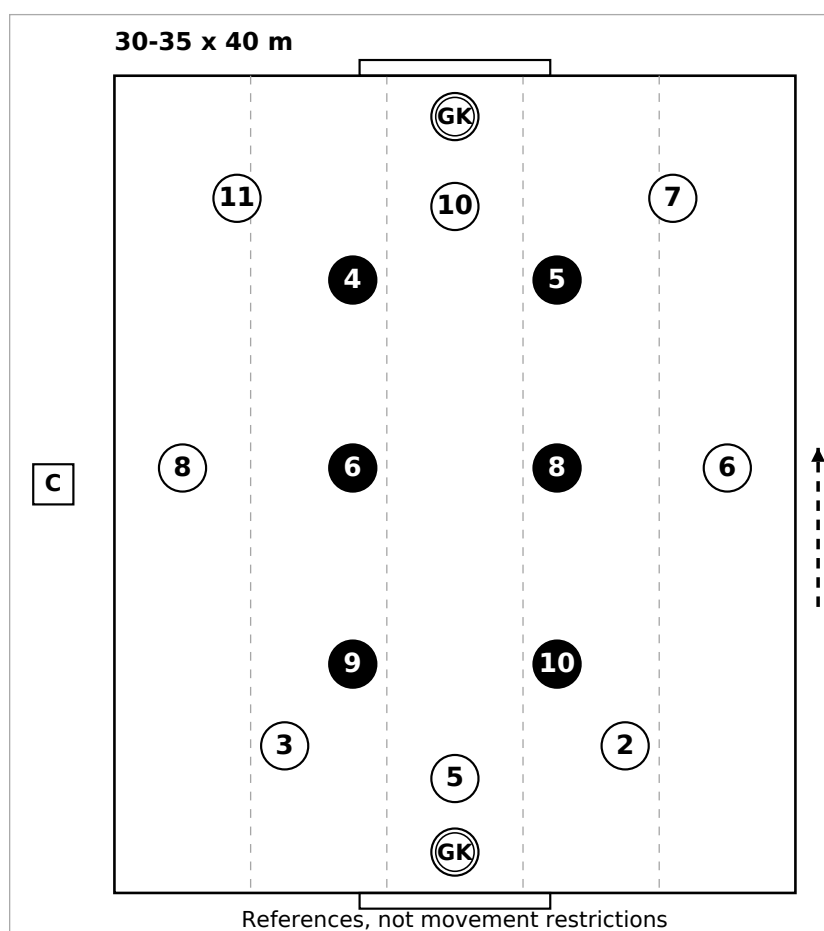
Coach Observation: Do not reward a wide pass merely because an overload exists. The correct decision may be to carry, retain or wait until pressure commits.



C - Exploit

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

8v6 + 2 goalkeepers | 30-35 x 40 m



Outlined circle: coached team. Filled black: opposition. Double ring: common player / GK. Square C: coach, outside the player total.

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

- Duration: 15 minutes
- Practice Type: Directional Small-Sided Game
- Organisation: 8v6 + 2 goalkeepers; two goals. Coached team has 8 outfield players, opposition has 6, and both GKs are active. Total = 16 players.
- Area: Approx. 30-35m x 40m; vertical five-lane reference (L1-L5); adjust only if realism or intensity is lost.
- Focus: Exploit a wide overload, attack around and get back inside to threaten goal.

Scoring: Goal = 1. Goal after attacking around and getting back inside = 3.

Qualifying line break: A qualifying attack goes outside through a wide overload, then returns inside through a pass, combination, carry or third-player action before the finish.



- **PLAYER PROBLEM** Once we go around, can we get back inside quickly enough to threaten goal before the opposition recover?

Before the attack: Scan; recognise central protection; hold width/depth; find the spare player; pin or move opponents; maintain balance behind the ball.

Around the opposition: Quality of pass/carry; receive forward; positive first touch; overlap/underlap; movement beyond; support around the ball.

Back inside: Accelerate; attack the inside return; support forward; finish or connect before the opposition reorganises.

Progression (Harder): If players go around but allow recovery, add a bonus for scoring within approximately six seconds of getting back inside. Reduce space or add a recovering defender if appropriate.

Regression (Easier): Increase area; allow an extra attacking player; reduce defensive numbers; give the wide player more time to receive and face forward.

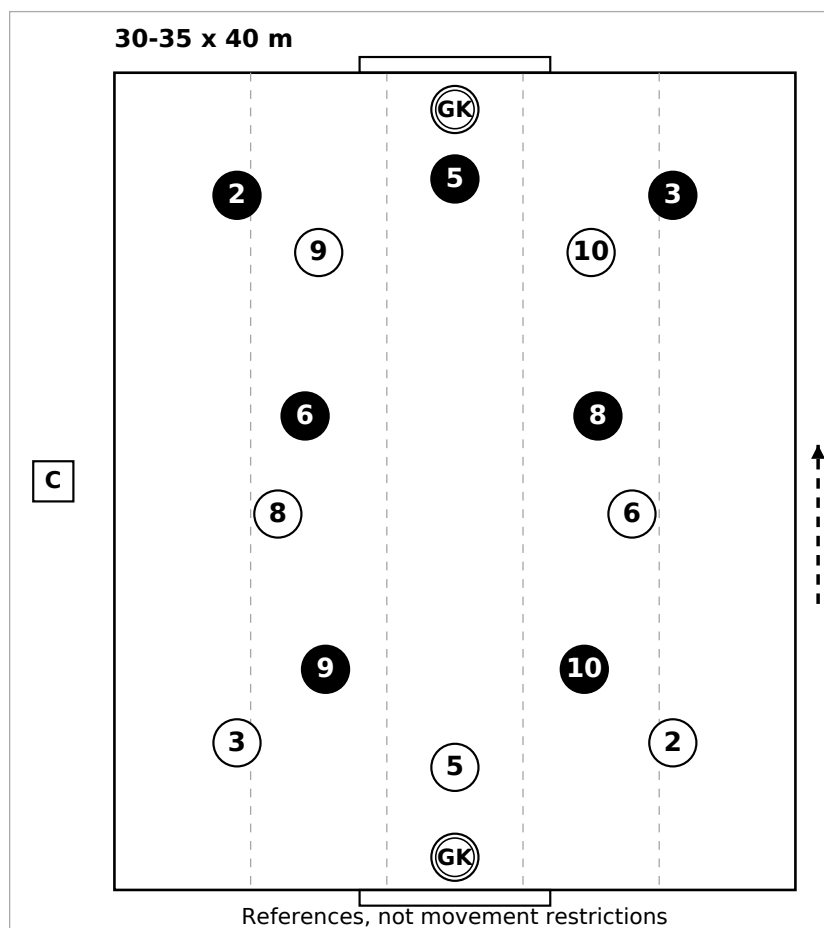
Coach Observation: Do not allow the practice to become a crossing or finishing session. Observe what created the overload, how the team went around, and how quickly it regained inside access.



Representative game - Transfer

Small-sided game (SSG) | 20 min | 67-87 min

7v7 + 2 goalkeepers; 7v6 + 2 with 15 | 30-35 x 40 m



Outlined circle: coached team. Filled black: opposition. Double ring: common player / GK. Square C: coach, outside the player total.

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

- Duration: 20 minutes
- Practice Type: Representative Game
- Reference: 4-4-2 relationships; use 7v7 + 2 GKs with 16 players, or 7v6 + 2 GKs with 15.
- Structure: Block 1: coached game 8-10 min. Block 2: free game 10-12 min. Use the same five-lane references, then remove most conditions.

Block 1 - coached game: Minimal conditions. Look for transfer of Build to Attack Around into positional football.

- CB/GK: recognise when to play through, around, over or carry; secure balance behind the ball.
- 6/8: support underneath, create the overload, receive forward and connect to the inside return.
- FBs: provide width, timing and the outside route; support balance if the ball travels inside.



- 7/11: hold width, fix the defender, combine, move inside and threaten beyond.
- 9/10: pin, connect, attack the inside return and create space for one another.
- Team: maintain balance behind the ball while supporting forward progression and inside access.

Managed opposition: Protect central space; prevent easy inside access; force outside without overcommitting; protect the inside return; transition positively on regain.

Block 2 - free game: Remove bonus scoring and most conditions. Play football. Coach mainly through observation and concise concurrent information.

Transfer test: Do players still create the wide overload, go around and get back inside once the practice stops explicitly rewarding it?



Player debrief and coach reflection

Reflection | 3 min | 87-90 min

Whole group | Adaptable

- Duration: 3 minutes
- Purpose: Consolidate understanding through concise player reflection on central protection, the wide overload and the inside return.
- What tells us that the centre is protected and the around solution is available?
- How can we create and use the spare player outside?
- What should we do immediately after going around the opposition?

Coach reflection

Principle: Did players improve their ability to build to attack around?

Decision Making: Were players choosing the outside solution from pressure, or simply following a practice rule?

Transfer: Did behaviours from A/B/C appear in the final game without prompting?

Position Specific: Which relationships need further work: GK/CB, FB/Wide, CB/CM, CM/Forward, Front Two?

Individuals: Who recognised central protection? Who struggled to create width? Who failed to support around the ball? Who consistently got back inside?

Practice Design: What was too easy, too difficult, unnecessary or missing?

Live Adaptation: What did I change during delivery, and why?

Next Action: What learning should transfer into the next in-possession session?

Source alignment

Framework terminology and practice-design fields are aligned to the supplied FAW Welsh Way, FAW Breaking Lines General Practice, FAW Practice Design, and Coaches' Voice / SSP examples. This is an NC-branded planning document based on those structures; it is not an official FAW template.

- Welsh Way: Build with Balance; Create & Exploit Overload; Find the Spare Player.
- FAW practice fields: organisation/area, explanation, challenges/conditions/targets, key points and interventions.
- Coaches' Voice / SSP fields: focus area, players, timings, progressions/regressions and positional/individual detail.
- Advanced additions: session rationale, success indicators, opposition behaviour, transfer test and post-session reflection.