

Topic: Winning Possession in Midfield and Transitioning Quickly to Support the Attack by
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Warm Up:

Set Up:

The squad of players is split into 4 groups and positioned as shown in Diagram (a) below. Five cones are placed approximately 1-yard apart and a 6th cone is placed a further 15 yards away as shown.

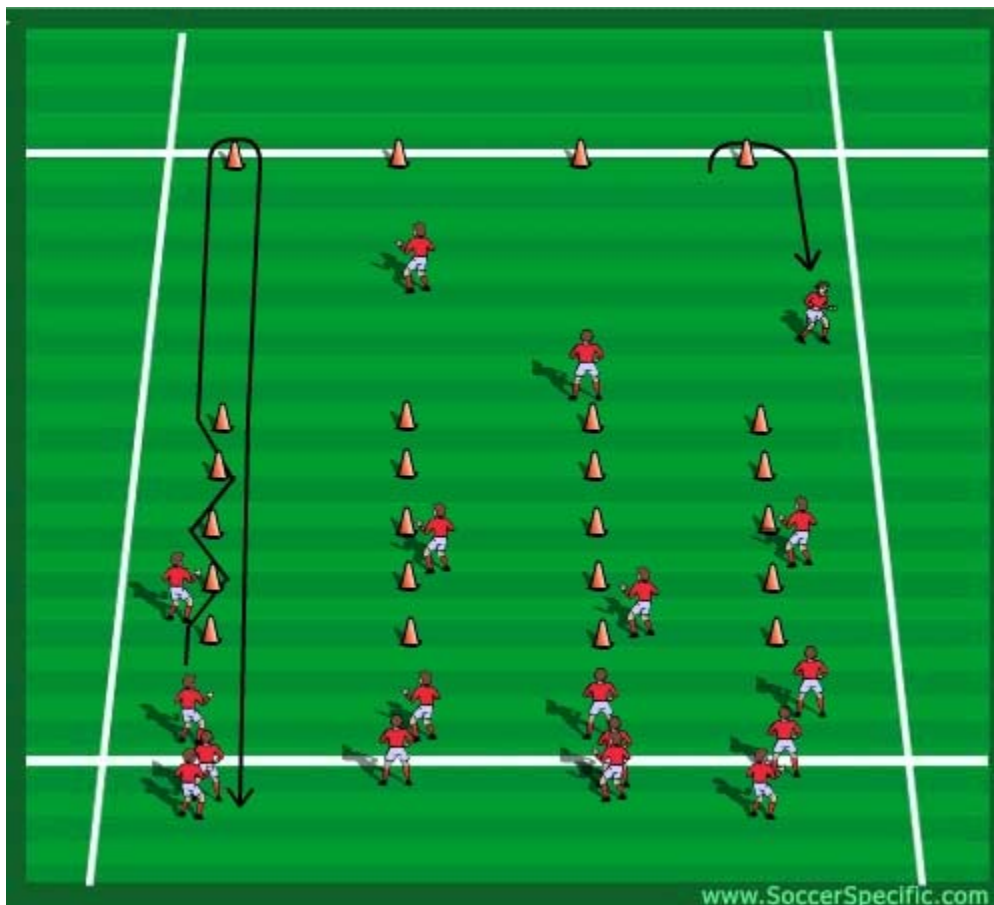


Diagram (a)

Explanation:

Players perform various footwork, shuffles, zig-zagging etc. through first 5 cones and then perform various dynamic movements to the cone placed 15 yards away. The players then jog back to the starting point to repeat the sequence.

Coaching Points:

- Build up the intensity as the warm-up progresses.
- Increase range-of-motion with various dynamic movements.
- Encourage correct mechanics for all movement patterns.

Activity #1:**Set Up:**

Two 15x15 yard grids are created side-by-side as shown in Diagram (b) below. Goalkeepers are positioned at each end of the grids to act as target players. A 4v4 is organized in each grid as shown. The setup is repeated to accommodate the entire team.

Note - Two games of 4v4 are illustrated in Diagram (b) below.

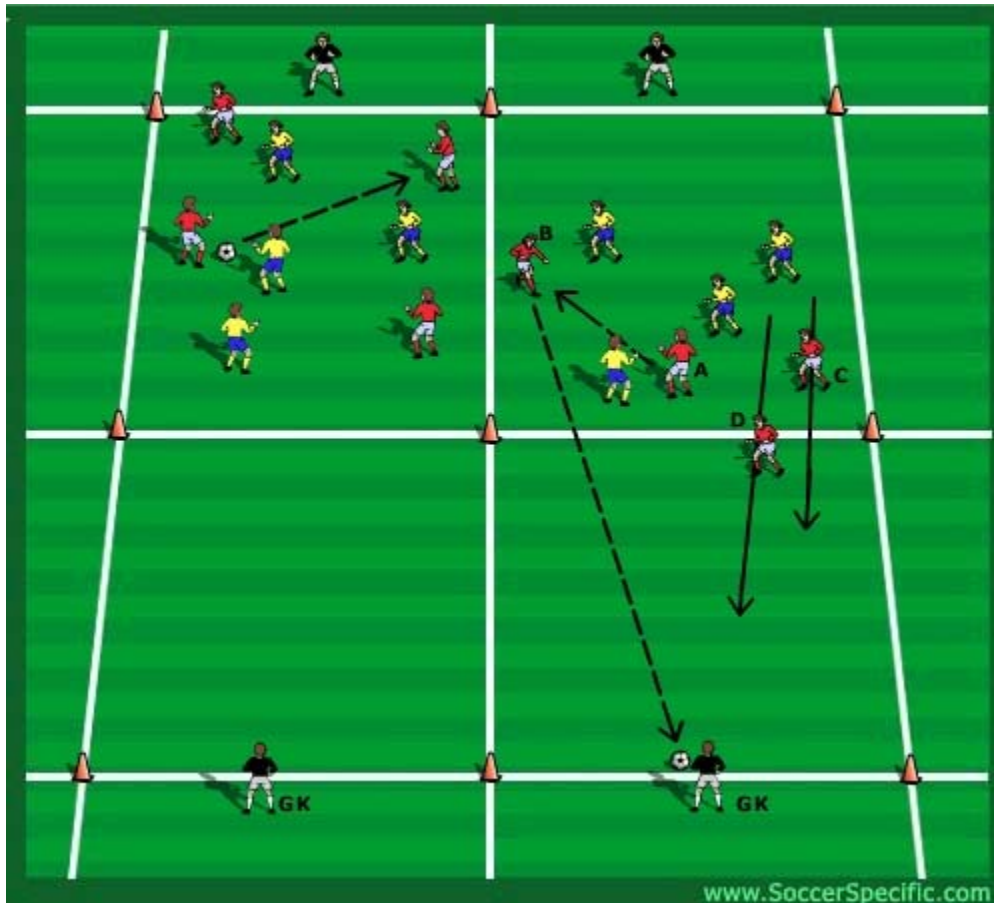


Diagram (b)

Explanation:

Both teams attempt to maintain possession of the ball inside the 15x15 yard grid. Points are awarded for playing the ball to a goalkeeper at the perimeter of the OPPOSITE grid and then traveling to the other grid to receive the return pass - play then continues in that grid. Emphasis is placed on quick transitions to support the play. Goalkeepers are limited to 2-touch.

In Diagram (b) above, Player (B) has switched the ball to the opposite grid. Players (C,D) are already sprinting forward to support the play and receive a return pass from the Goalkeeper.

Note - Games are 3-4 minutes in duration due to the high intensity nature of the activity.

Coaching Points:

- Travel as the ball travels - "get there quickly"
- Correct timing and distance of support is vital
- Quality of passing to target players must be high.

Progression:

The same grids are utilized for the activity illustrated below in Diagram (c). The target goalkeepers have been removed from the activity.

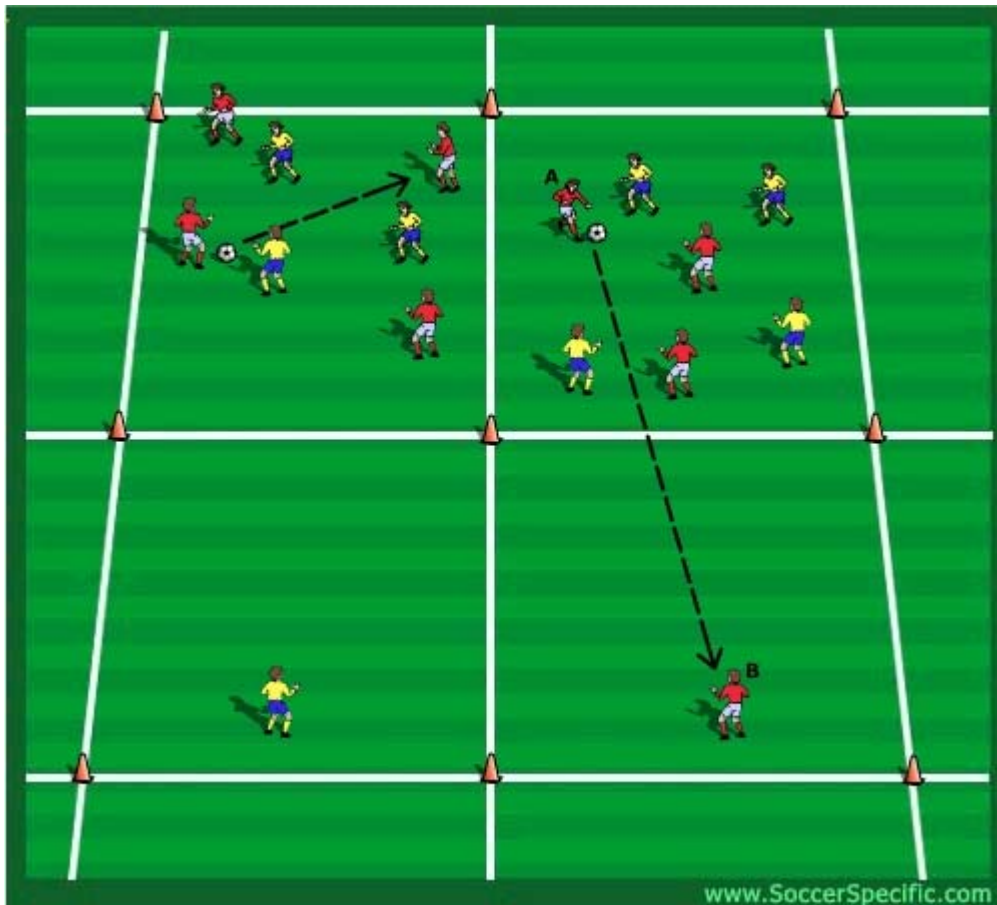


Diagram (c)

Explanation:

One player from the defending team must remain in the opposite grid as shown above. The other 3 teammates must attempt to gain possession from the 4 opposing players. This creates a numbers-down situation for the defensive team and forces them to work as a "unit" to regain possession. If the defensive team wins possession they must quickly switch the ball to their teammate in the opposite grid. Immediately they must travel to support the play. In the Diagram above, Player (A) has won possession of the ball and quickly passes to his/her teammate in the opposite grid. The reds will now transition quickly to support the play while the yellow team must send over 3 players to defend. Points are awarded for a successful "switch" and 7 consecutive passes.

Coaching Points:

- Work together to defend as a "unit"
- Attempt to regain possession quickly.
- Immediately look to switch the ball on gaining possession.
- Travel quickly to support the play.

Activity #2:**Set Up:**

A 15x15 yard grid is created at opposite sides of the pitch as shown below. A half-pitch is needed for the following activity. A 4v3 in favor of the attacking team is organized in each grid and a 2v2 (2 center forwards, 2 central defenders) is organized approximately 25 yards from goal as shown. A goalkeeper is positioned in goal. The coach starts the activity with a supply of balls in the center circle.



Diagram (d)

Explanation:

The coach begins the play EACH time with a pass into alternate grids. The coach must pass to the team of 3 players (yellow team in above diagram). As soon as the ball enters the grid the Red team must attempt to quickly win possession before playing quickly into the center-forwards. As soon as the ball is played to either center-forward 3 of the Red team must sprint forward to support the attack - this creates a 5v2 in favor of the attacking team. The 5 players must attempt to QUICKLY attack the goal and attempt to score. Long passing sequences are not encouraged - the emphasis is on quickly winning possession and quickly attacking. Rotate center-forwards to avoid fatigue.

Diagram (e) below illustrates 3 players bursting out of the grid to support the attack. Player (A) has passed into the checking center-forward. Immediately 3 players have traveled to support the play - Player (A) is breaking wide, while (B,C) are showing underneath to give the center-forward 2 additional passing options.



Diagram (e)

Coaching Points:

- Play quickly into the center-forwards upon winning possession of the ball.
- Defend as a unit to quickly win back the ball.
- Travel quickly to support the attack.
- NO long passing sequences - players are encouraged to get the attack off quickly.
- Center-forwards may combine with each other or attempt 1v1 situations if opportunity arises.
- Timing of runs from center-forwards is crucial.

Activity #3:

Set Up:

Goals are placed on the top of the 18-yard boxes as shown below. 3 zones are created on the pitch - 7v7 in middle zone, 1v1 in each end zone as shown. In the diagram below Player (A) is a target center-forward while (B) is a marking central defender.

Note - for illustration purposes only half the pitch is diagrammed.

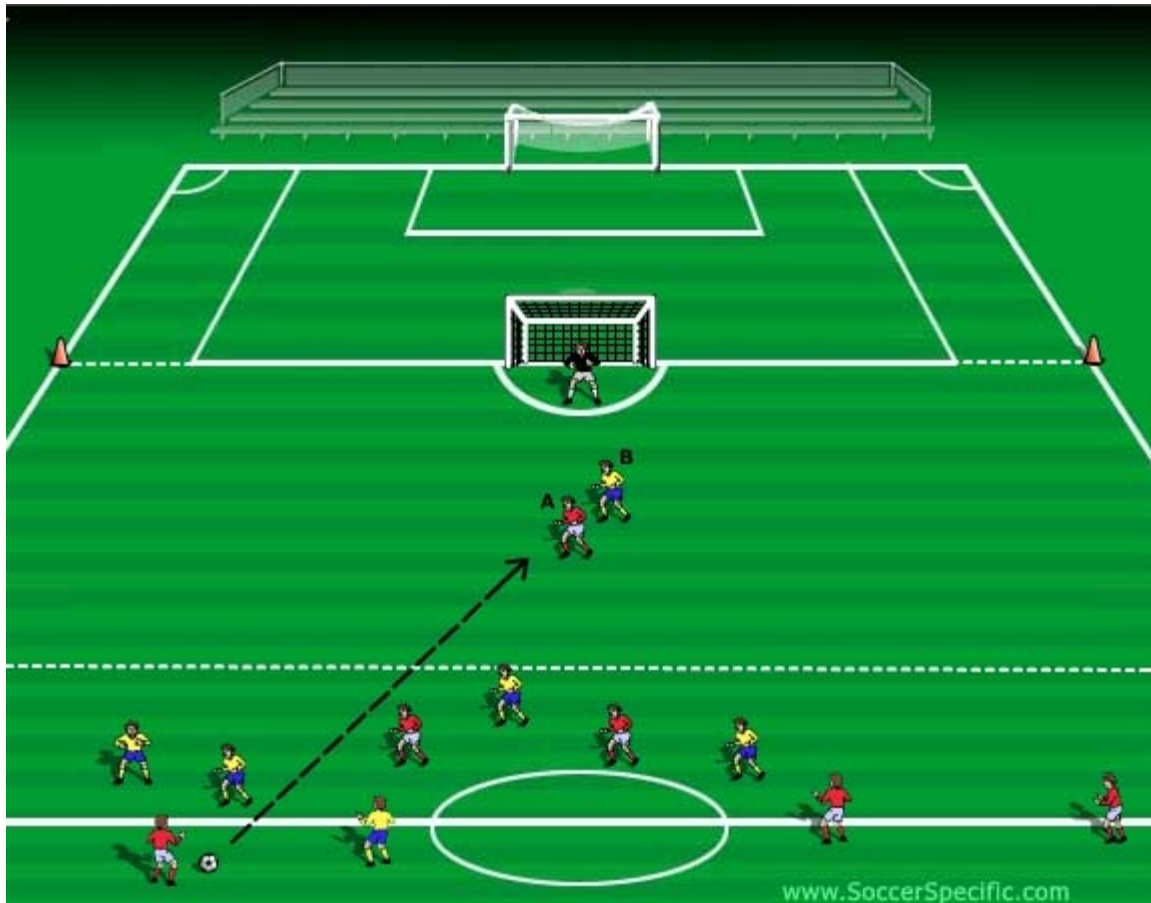


Diagram (f)

Explanation:

Both teams compete in the middle zone (7v7) for possession of the ball. Players are encouraged to look for opportunities to play forward to the target player in the end zone. After playing the ball into the target player 3 players must "burst" forward into the end zone to support the attack - this creates a 4v1 going to goal. No defensive players from the middle zone can track back to defend in the end zone. After an attempt on goal play resumes with a pass into the central zone by the coach.

Progressions:

- (1) Allow 1 player from the middle zone to track back to defend.
- (2) Allow 2 players from the middle zone to track back to defend.

Coaching Points:

- Play quickly into the center-forward upon winning possession of the ball.
- Travel quickly to support the attack.
- NO long passing sequences - players are encouraged to get an attack off quickly.
- Timing/angle of runs from center-forward is crucial.

Final Game: (not diagrammed)

A 9v9 with goals on the 18 yard boxes is organized. No restrictions are in place. All previous coaching points/concepts are emphasized and encouraged.