

TOPIC: Playing Out of the Back in a 1:4:4:2 Formation

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Activity #1- Warm-Up:

Set Up:

Players are organized in a 18X44 yd grid (size of penalty box) as shown below. A supply of balls is placed with the coach. Target players (green) are positioned at opposite ends of the grid while 1 neutral player (green) is positioned inside the grid as shown.

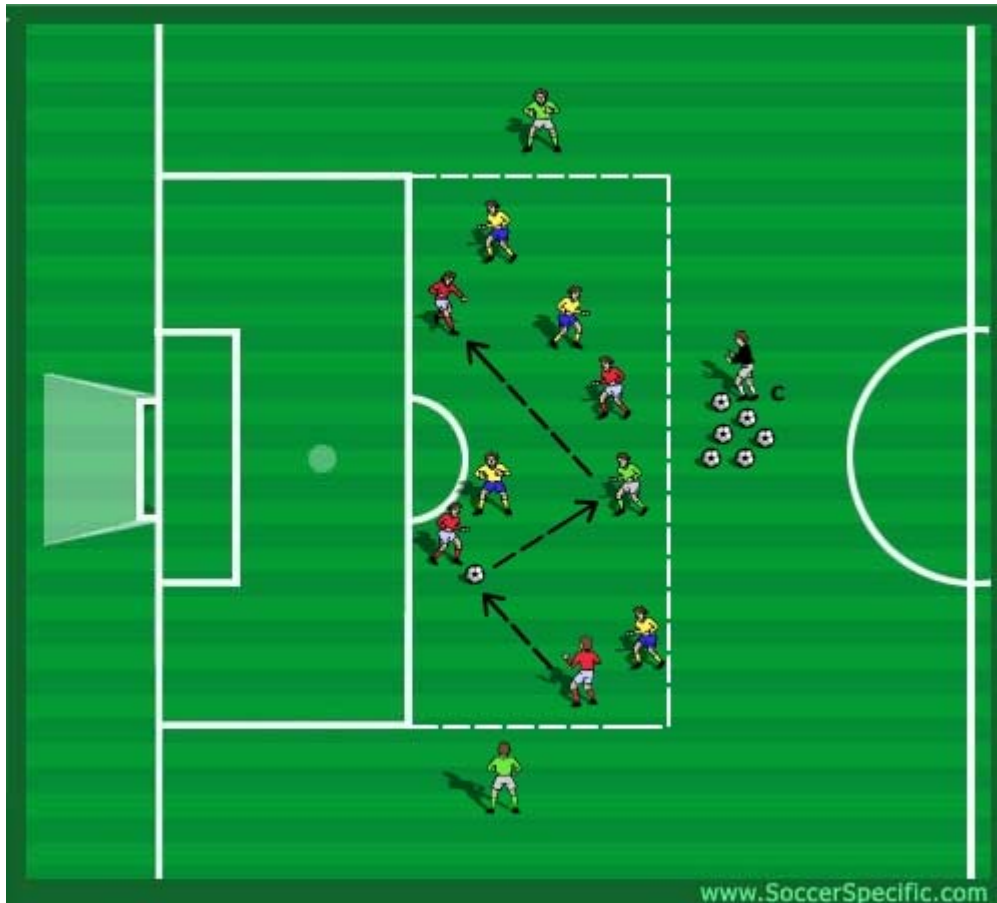


Diagram (a)

Explanation:

A 4V4+1 possession game is played. Both teams compete for possession of the ball and attempt to maintain possession through good ball movement and movement "off" the ball. The neutral player inside the grid provides for a "numbers-up" situation for the team in possession. Teams are awarded points for 8 consecutive passes or for playing to the target players on the outside of the grid.

Progressions:

1. 2 touch
2. 1 touch
3. can't pass it back to same player

Coaching Points:

- Angles and distance of support.
- Accuracy and weight of passing.
- Movement "off" the ball to offer support / passing opportunities.
- Situational decision making - make the right passes!

Activity # 2

Set Up:

Four defensive players (the "back-four") are positioned just outside the 18-yard box as shown in Diagram (b) below. A supply of balls are placed inside the box as shown.

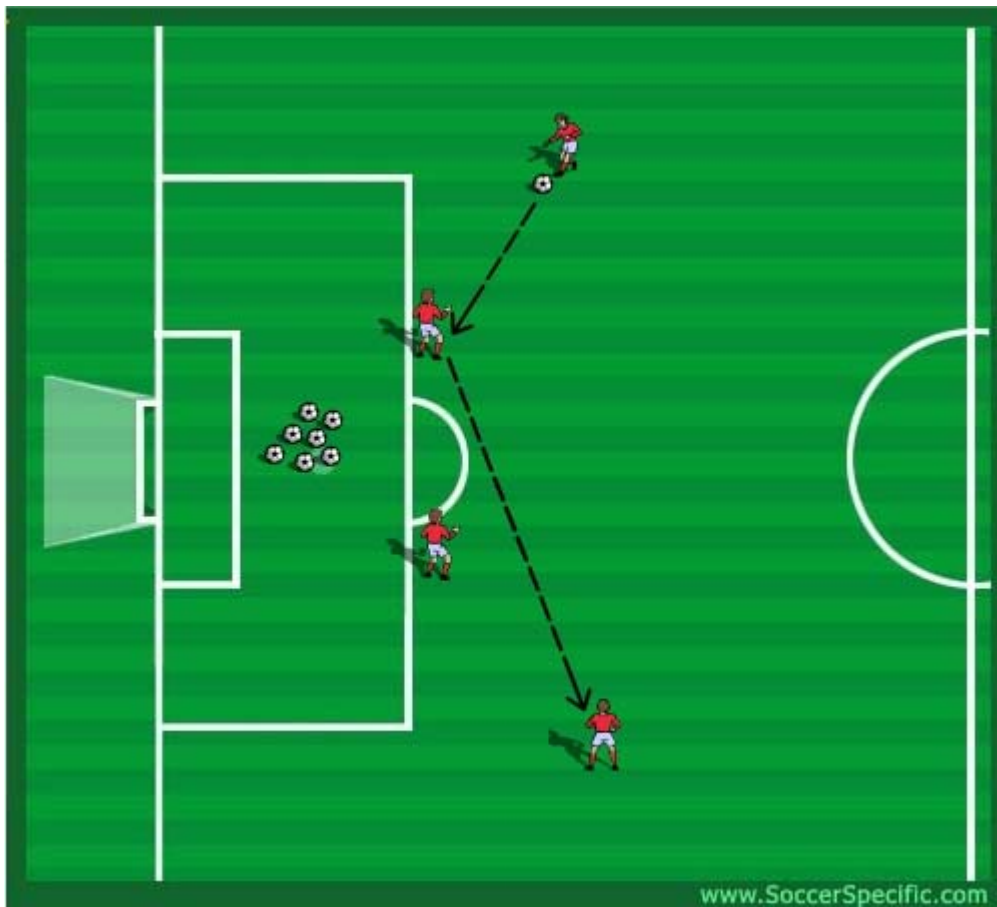


Diagram (b)

Explanation:

Play begins with a pass to ANY of the "back-four". The players must move the ball quickly and accurately across the line at game-realistic speeds. Players must focus on their shape as a "unit" while passing the ball - players must shift positions as the ball moves. Players do not need to pass to the player directly next to them - they are encouraged to "miss out" players to increase the speed at which the ball travels across the back-four. Play is continuous for time or number of reps.

Coaching Points:

- Establishing shape - half moon (see curved positioning of back-four above)
- Speed of play - quick ball movement
- Skip pass - miss players out to increase speed of movement across the back-four.
- Against the grain pass.
- Two touch maximum.
- Communication at all times.

Activity # 3

Set Up:

Same setup as previous activity with the addition of 2 opponents as shown below. The two opponents (yellow) act as "forwards" going against the back-four.

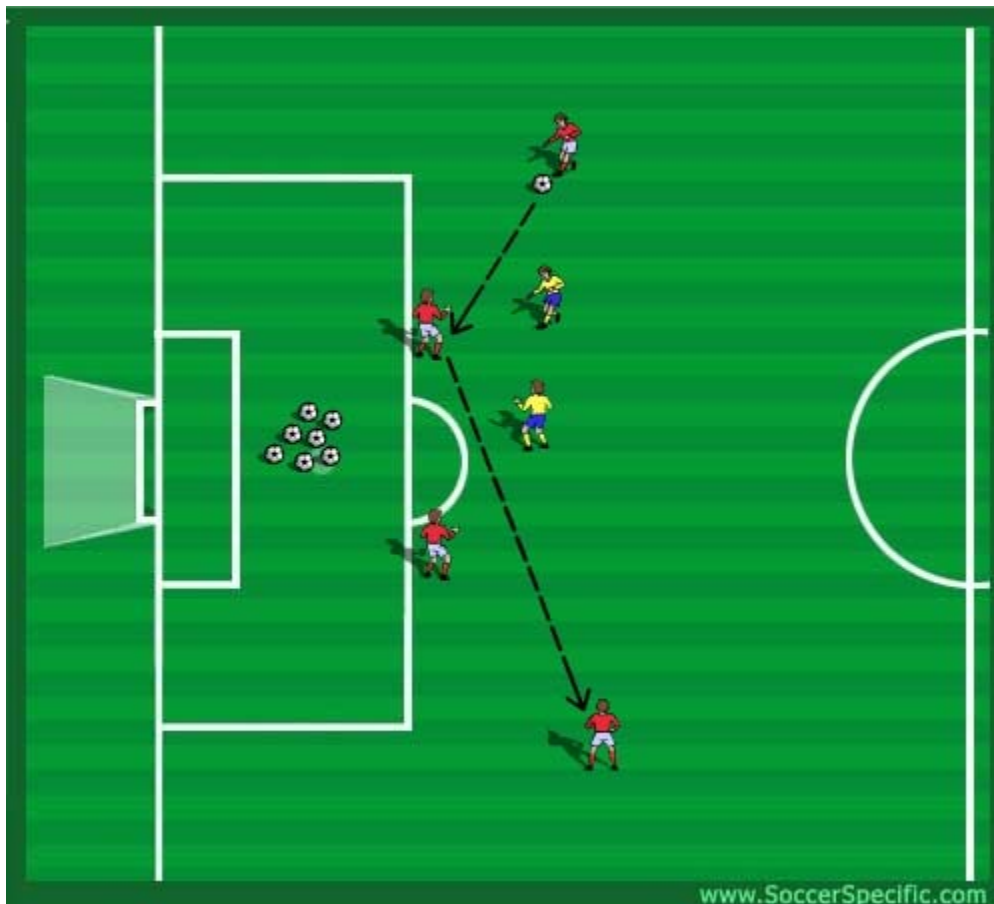


Diagram (c)

Explanation:

The "forwards" start the activity approximately 15 yards away and can challenge for the ball after the first pass from a coach or server. The back-four must attempt to maintain possession through quick ball movement. The back-four must avoid dropping too far back into their own 18-yard box to maintain possession. Back-four must attempt to get the ball quickly from one side of the pitch to the other without the forwards gaining possession. If the forwards gain possession they can "go for goal". Play is for 15-20 seconds then rest & repeat.

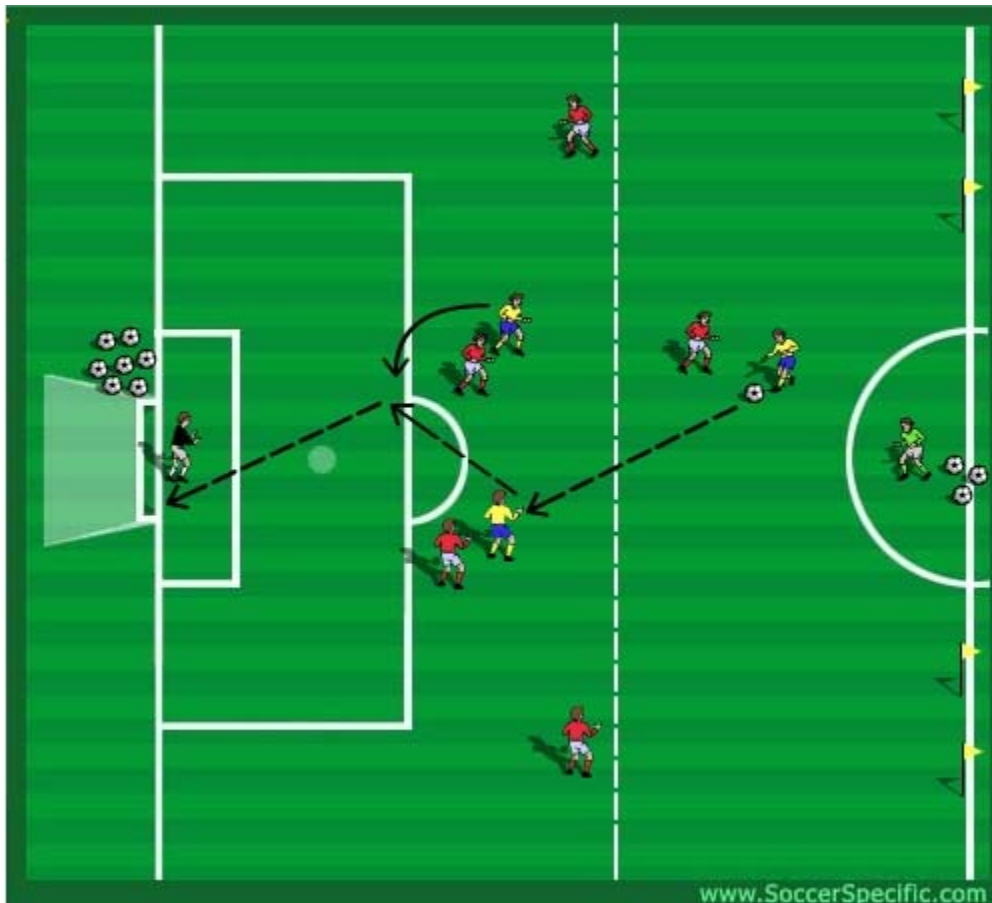
Coaching Points:

- Angles - show for the ball.
- Distance of support.
- Back-four must attempt to play out of the back while still offering cover and balance.
- Quick ball movement - clean technique on the ball.

Activity # 4

Set Up:

A 5V3 (back-four and 1 central midfield player vs. 2 forwards and 1 central midfield player) is organized on a half-pitch as shown below. The coach stands with a supply of balls at the half-way line. Flags are used to create goals on the half-way line at opposite side of the pitch as shown.



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Diagram (d)

Explanation:

Play begins with a pass from the coach to the attacking team (yellow). The attacking team must attempt to combine to create goal-scoring opportunities. The back-four must attempt to regain possession and quickly play out of the back. The back-four can link up with their central midfielder player if pressured by the forwards. Points are awarded for playing quickly through the gates on the half-way line or for releasing a full-back through the gates.

* Offside is in effect to keep the activity realistic for the attacking team as well as the back-four.

Coaching Points:

- Restraining line - hold the line - don't continue to drop off into 18-yard box.
- Recognize when to link with the defensive midfielder if pressured by forwards.
- Safety and risk factors - don't take chances with risky passes in the back.
- Tactical implication of technique when switching the ball - sharp accurate passing.
- Width and depth.

Progression:

1. Back four can score by hitting the center circle target in the air.
2. Back four must play through the midfield to score on directional goals.

Activity # 5

Set Up:

A 6V5 is organized on a half pitch as shown below. 3 midfielders and 2 forwards must now play against the back-four and 2 central midfield players.



Diagram (e)

Explanation:

As in previous activity - the back-four must attempt to prevent any goal-scoring opportunities and at the moment of gaining possession they must attempt to quickly play out of the back with a purpose. Throw-ins, goal-kicks and other restart situations are now included. Points are

awarded for successfully playing through the gates/goals on the half-way line. Two points are awarded if a full-back can be released through either gate.

Coaching points:

- Midfielders must make space for the back four - clear out to create space first.
- Utilize goal kicks, restart situations as other building opportunities.
- On winning the ball quickly look for passing options.
- Safety vs. Risk factors - if not sure - play the ball down the channels to safety!
- If pressured by forwards - can the central midfield players be used as link players?

Progression:

1. Attackers can't pressure until the restraining line is broken by a pass.
2. Attackers may cross the restraining line on the first touch by the first defender.

Activity # 6

Set Up:

An 11v11 is organized on a full pitch - NOT illustrated.
No restrictions.

Coaching Points:

*All previous coaching points from activities 1-5.