



DAVID CLARKE'S
ULTIMATE SOCCER
COACHING SESSIONS

Coaching plans you can take straight on to the field

PERFECT PASSING

Soccer Coach
WEEKLY

FOREWORD

Welcome to Ultimate Soccer Coaching Sessions: *Perfect Passing*

Ultimate Soccer Coaching Sessions is a new way of bringing you, the coach, a concise set of coaching plans that will help you develop specific elements of your team's play.

Each book contains 10 specially chosen training sessions that will provide you with a great platform for developing and enhancing specialist soccer skills, such as crossing, tackling, heading, wing play and more.

The book is made up of two sections – Core sessions, which gives you plans for developing fundamental skills, and Advanced sessions, which shows how you can use drills to help your players move towards an elite level. Each session is broken down into easy to follow elements, making them simple to fit into your coaching plan.

If your players are in control of their passes, then more than likely they will be in control of the game. In *Perfect Passing* I've picked out 10 great coaching sessions that will help you drill your players in all aspects of this vital skill.

Yours in soccer
David Clarke
Editor



CORE SESSIONS

1. **Distance passing**
2. **The lay-off pass**
3. **Outside of foot swerve pass**
4. **Flick pass**
5. **Pass and move like Barcelona**

ADVANCED SESSIONS

6. **Passing and running off the ball**
7. **Quick combination play**
8. **Positive forward passing**
9. **Three-pass frenzy**
10. **A disguised pass**



Green Star Media Ltd
Meadow View, Tannery Lane
Guildford, Surrey,
GU50AB, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1483 892 894
Fax: +44 (0) 1483 894 148
Email:
david.clarke@coach-soccer.com

Publisher:
Kevin Barrow
Editor:
David Clarke
Illustrator:
Michael Ronald
Book Project Manager:
Matt Boulton
Customer Services:
Duncan Heard
Operations Director:
Toby Curthoys
Managing Director:
Andrew Griffiths

Cover picture: iStockphoto/
Thinkstock

LEGAL NOTICES

Disclaimer

Whilst the editor and publisher have made every effort to ensure the accuracy and above all safety of the information and advice contained in this publication, and have gathered the information from sources believed to be reliable, Green Star Media Ltd makes no warranty or guarantee as to the completeness, accuracy or timeliness of the information, and is not responsible for any errors or omissions.

In no event will Green Star Media Ltd, its affiliates or other suppliers be liable for direct, special, incidental, or consequential damages

(including, without limitation, damages for personal injury or related claims) arising directly or indirectly from the use of (or failure to use) the information in this publication, even if Green Star Media Ltd has been advised of the possibility that such damages may arise.

Copyright notice

This publication is protected by national and international copyright laws. No part of it may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical (including photocopying), recording or

by any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from Green Star Media Ltd.

Green Star Media Ltd will take legal action against any individuals or organisations found to be infringing its rights, and will make that action public. Purchasers of this publication may circulate electronic or hard copies only to members of their own club or school, provided this is done without commercial gain. However, no part or whole of this publication may be circulated elsewhere or displayed on any website or distributed commercially except under licence from the copyright owners.

Green Star Media Ltd will pay a £250 reward for information leading to the successful legal prosecution against individuals or organisations copying or republishing this information in any format, including websites and bulletin boards. Your confidentiality is guaranteed.

© 2011 Green Star Media Ltd. All rights reserved. Green Star Media Ltd is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. No: Z5287130

Distance passing

It's important to be able to pass the ball over long distances because it's often the quickest way to exploit the space behind a defence, or the fastest method of switching the point of attack and so create space.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Dynamic stretching, gentle running and ball work
The Session 20-30 mins	Learning distance passing technique
Development 10 mins	Practising distance passing skill
Game 10-15 mins	Practising skill in a competitive game
Warm-down 5-10 mins	Gentle running and ball work, static stretching



SET-UP

- 10 x 40m area split into four equal zones.



WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

The players stand in two lines at opposite ends and take it in turns to hit lofted passes to the opposite side of the playing area.

Switch to weaker foot.



THINK ABOUT

- Angled approach.
- Lean back slightly.
- Strike with the laces.
- Strike bottom half of the ball and a vertical line that bisects it.
- Firm ankle, extend the kicking foot.
- Sweep through and across the ball.
- Non-kicking foot diagonally behind the ball but not immediately next to it.
- Head steady.



DEVELOPMENT

Put one player in each of the middle two zones. The player at the end sidefoots a pass along the ground to the centre of the playing area, where the nearest player returns it on their second touch. The player at the end controls it, then hits a lofted pass to the far side over the heads of both players in the middle. The sequence is repeated at the opposite end.

A further development involves the middle player running towards the player at the end to exert some pressure after hitting the return pass. To increase difficulty the lofted pass can also be hit first time.



GAME SITUATION

Set up manned target zones in four corners of a grid. Two teams of equal sides play a passing game against each other, scoring points when they hit a lofted pass accurately into a manned target zone. No player from either side is allowed to enter these zones.



CALL OUT

- "Let's have well-weighted short passing"
- "Eyes on the ball"
- "Don't try to hit the ball too hard"
- "Technique first, power later"

direction of run → pass →

1

A simple long pass. Check their technique.

2

Now a short pass, a touch to control it, and a lofted pass over the heads of the central players.

3

This game will really get them working on their accuracy.

Outside of foot swerve pass

Swerving the ball with the outside of the foot is a difficult skill to learn, but once acquired it will enable your players to make passes that are hard to intercept because they 'bend' around opposition defenders.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Preparing the body for physical exertion using static and dynamic stretching, gentle running and ballwork
The Session 10-15 mins	Learning the basic technique for swerving the ball
Development 15-20 mins	Practising skill in a more game-like scenario
Game 15-20 mins	Improving accuracy in a game situation
Warm-down 10 mins	Cool-down including static stretching, de-brief Q&A to check players understand the aims of the session



SET-UP

- 10x20m grid.
- 4 players, split into pairs.
- 2 corner flags or poles set up centrally approx 2m apart.



WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Players take it in turns to pass the length of the grid to the pair opposite. Each player attempts to swerve the ball around the poles in the middle.

Players should practise using both feet.



THINK ABOUT

For the outside of the right foot

- Approach ball straight on.
- Non-kicking foot alongside, slightly behind.
- Kicking foot pointed down diagonally towards the inside, ankle locked.
- Foot moves right to left across body.
- Strike ball left of centre.
- Strike bottom half for lofted passes.
- Follow through.



DEVELOPMENT

A player from each pair stands opposite each other on the sideline at halfway to act as servers.

The two remaining players must now control a ball, passed from either server, before swerving the ball to the opposite end of the grid.

The players at each end receive, say, 10 consecutive passes before the servers start passing to the opposite end.

Rotate so everyone acts as a server, and make sure balls are constantly returned to the servers.

To progress, increase distance between the poles in the middle, or try adding extra poles closer to the kickers.



CALL OUT

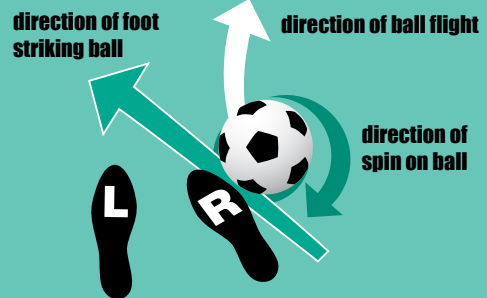
- "Fix your eyes on the ball"
- "Keep your head still"
- "Hit the ball firmly"



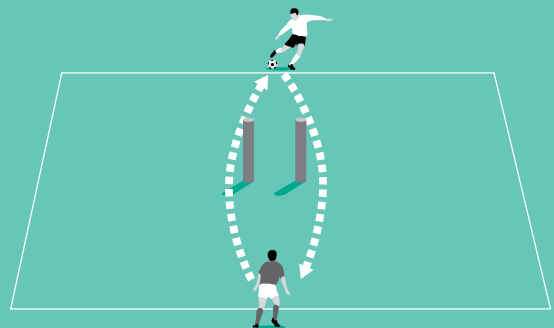
GAME SITUATION

Create target 'goals' at end that the players have to score in. The player with the most goals wins.

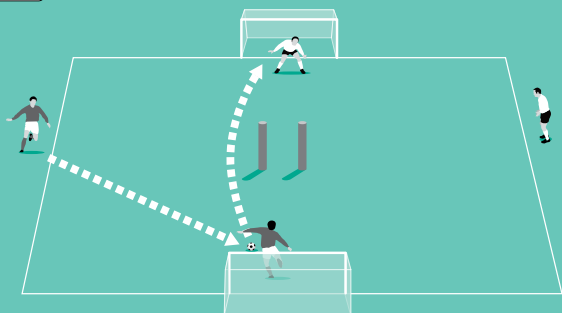
pass →



Learn the technique for swerving the ball.



Swerve the ball around the poles to the opposite side.



Control a pass then try to swerve the ball into the target goal beyond the poles.

Pass and move like Barcelona

Rapid one-touch passing as performed by Barcelona week-in week-out requires quick brains as well as quick feet. This demanding session puts both to the test.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Dynamic stretching, gentle running and ball work
The Session 10 mins	Players can use one-touch passing
Development 15 mins	Players can use one-touch passing at speed
Game 15 mins	Players use the quick passing skills they have learned in a small-sided game
Warm-down 10 mins	Gentle running and ball work, static stretching



SET-UP

- Begin with an area measuring 10 x 10 yards (top picture).
- Move on to an area 30 yards long by 20 yards wide. Create two five-yard-wide zones – containing lots of balls – in from each touchline (bottom picture).



WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

One player starts in the middle of the area with three other players each starting on a corner cone. This leaves a cone spare, as in the top picture.

An outside player must play a one-two with the central player so the outside player can run to the spare cone.

Immediately after a one-two, the outside player must pass to the next outside player.

There will not be a spare cone to run to so the second outside player will pass the ball to the next outside player on his right.

The third outside player can play a one-two with the central players and run to the spare cone.

Continue in an anti-clockwise direction, and rotate the central player after about a minute.



DEVELOPMENT

Introduce a second ball. The balls start in diagonally opposite corners. The first passes are made at the same time.

If there is an empty cone to the player's right he plays a one-two with the central player and runs to the cone. If there is a player to the right, he passes to that player.

Continue in an anti-clockwise direction, and rotate the central player after about a minute.



GAME SITUATION

Play 4v4 in the area shown in the bottom picture. This makes the pitch narrower so players have to use quick skills and passing combinations.

The players make a pass-in using the nearest ball in the channel if the ball goes out of play. Any player can go in goal. The team that scores most goals wins.



THINK ABOUT

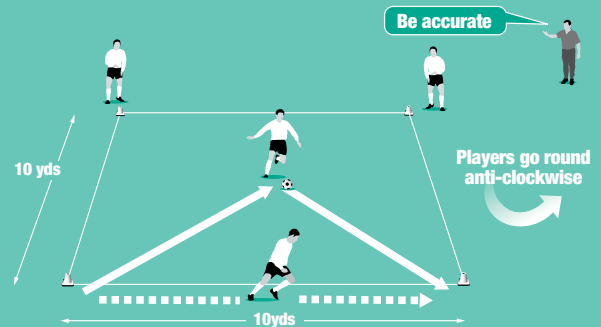
For a side foot pass, players need to:

- Have their belly button facing the target.
- Have the inside of their foot at a right angle to the ball.
- Follow through the ball's horizontal mid-line.
- Strike the ball with the correct weight so the pace is right.

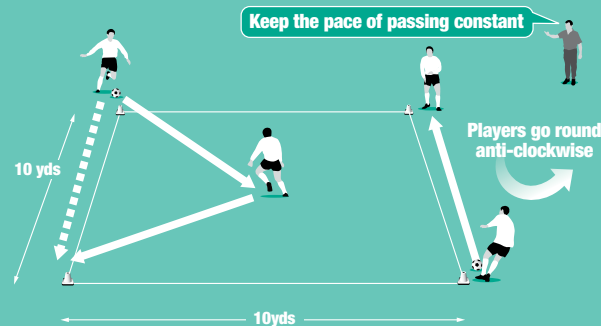
Players receiving the ball need to:

- Be on their toes.
- Watch the movement of the ball and other players.
- Time their runs so they coincide with the arrival of the ball.

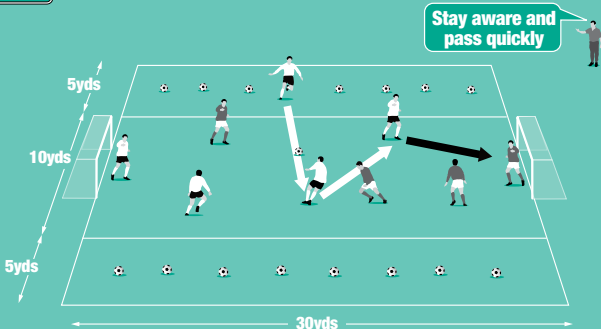
pass shot → player movement □□□→



One player goes in the centre while three others play passes and run around the edge of the area.



Now use two balls. The exercise has to work by each player on the outside going round in one direction.



Play 4v4 in a small channel with balls along the side so play can continue quickly when a pass goes out of play.

Passing and running off the ball

This practice encourages players to support their passes. It will get them communicating and develop their appreciation for playing the ball and running into space.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 7–10 mins	Handball, throw catch and move
The Session 20–25 mins	Players choose between a wall-pass and overlap
Development 15–20 mins	Players learn to make 3rd man runs
Game 15–20 mins	Normal game
Warm-down 7–10 mins	Gentle jogging and stretching



SET-UP

- 40 x 30 yard area.



THINK ABOUT

- Communication is vital, so set the standard for your players. In the initial practice, make sure you shout the player's name when you are making the return pass. Tell your players to shout "coach" when they play the first ball to you and also when they run to receive your return.
- If your players are struggling, mark out a target square using four cones. Tell passing players to get the ball to stop in this area and the player running off the ball will have a clear destination for their run.



WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

The outside player passes into the coach and the non-receiving player makes a run off the ball and communicates to receive a pass from the coach.

The ball is played into the middle player who plays a quick wall pass with the coach. The player can make a run for a one-two or overlap after passing.



DEVELOPMENT

The ball is passed into one of the central players and then set back to the original passer. The other central player makes a run into space to receive a through pass from the starting player.

Now two middle players work for a set time period. The outside player passes into the two middle players and makes a 3rd man run, quickly the two centre players combine and then play a through pass to the outside player.



GAME SITUATION

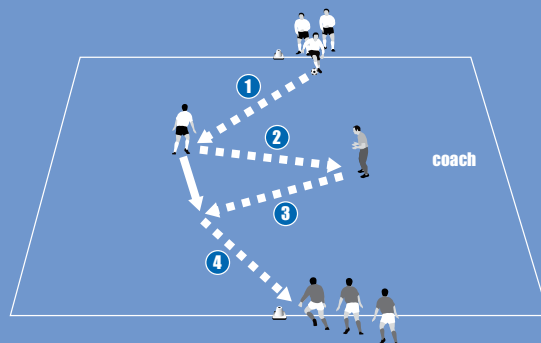
Play a game and look for movement off the ball and passing options to the player in possession.



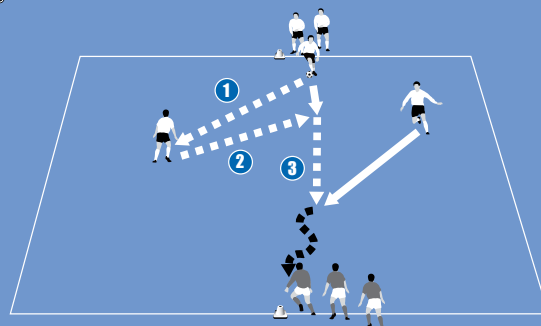
CALL OUT

- "Work with each other"
- "Create an angle to receive"
- "Move off the ball"
- "Talk!"

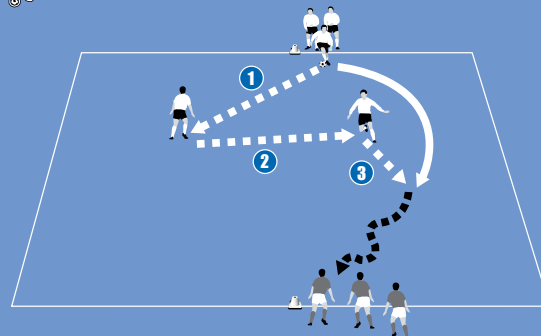
direction of run → pass ⇄ dribble →



Start by playing a wall pass yourself to show your players the weight and direction they need on their passes.



The development encourages movement to support the initial pass.



This time the starting player makes a 3rd man run to receive the ball into space.

Quick combination play

These quick passing drills improve the quick play and imagination of your forwards around the box.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Various dribbling skills
The Session 10-15 mins	Practicing various combinations in front of goal
Development 10-15 mins	Practicing combinations under pressure
Game 15-20 mins	No restrictions
Warm-down 10 mins	Gentle jogging and stretching



SET-UP

- Half pitch.
- Balls, cones.



THINK ABOUT

- For through balls and wall-passes the weight of the pass is important to ensure that it arrives in the path of the forward's run.
- The addition of one or more defenders will illustrate how combination play like this can pull defenders apart to create space for team mates.



CALL OUT

- "Movement to receive"
- "Communicate"
- "Hit the target"



WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Drill 1 – the midfielder passes into the first attacker who plays a quick one-two with the second striker and shoots at goal.

Drill 2 – the midfielder passes into the first attacker who sets back to midfielder who plays a through ball for the second attacker to score.

Drill 3 – the midfielder passes into the furthest attacker who dribbles along the edge of the box and then back heels the ball for the deep striker to make a crossover run to score.

Make sure that players get a chance in each position.



DEVELOPMENT

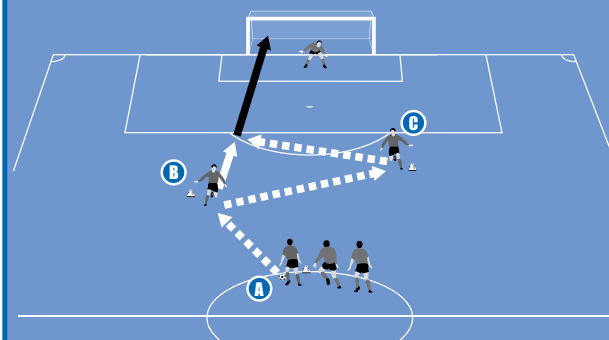
Add a defender, or pair of defenders. This will test the attacker's ability to execute the combinations under increased pressure. The defender's can be passive or active, depending on your attacker's ability.



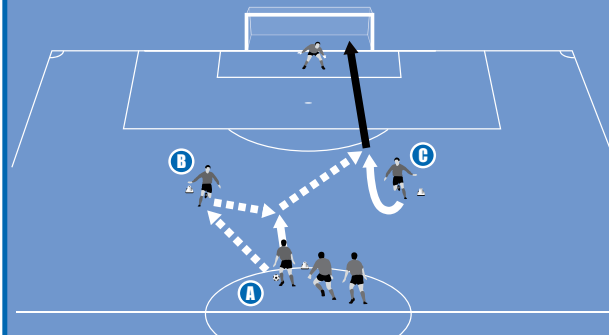
GAME SITUATION

Play a normal game and look at the combination play from the attackers in the final 3rd of the pitch.

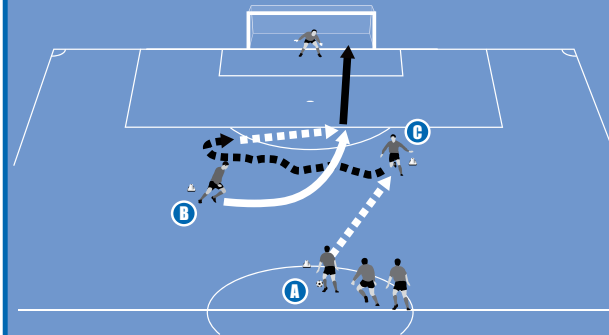
direction of run \Rightarrow pass $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$ shot \blackrightarrow
dribble $\bullet\bullet\bullet\blackrightarrow$



Begin with a simple wall pass.



Add an extra pass from the starting midfielder.



In a game situation C's run would create space for B to attack by dragging a defender across.

Positive forward passing

If players are able to make a positive pass into attacking areas they must be prepared to support play and ensure that players in advanced positions do not get isolated.



SET-UP

- 30x40 yard area.
- Balls, cones, goals.



THINK ABOUT

- The aim of keeping possession of the ball is to work your opponent's legs in order to open up spaces to attack.
- Some teams do this very well. However, they do not reap the benefits of their good possession as they play too many square or backward passes.
- It is vitally important that players focus on making good, forward attacking passes and then make supporting runs in order to get beyond defenders and into goalscoring positions.



CALL OUT

- "Can you play forward"
- "Don't rush the pass if it's not on"
- "Support the pass"



WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

In pairs, players make short passes using two touches over ten yards.

Next they move backwards to a distance of 30 yards apart and play low, driven passes over the longer distance.



DEVELOPMENT

Put the players into groups of three with two players starting at one end, and one opposite. The development combines both of the passing ranges as the two players combine with a short one-two before a low driven pass is made to the player opposite.

The player making the long pass follows the ball to play a one-two at the opposite side and the sequence repeats in the opposite direction.



GAME SITUATION

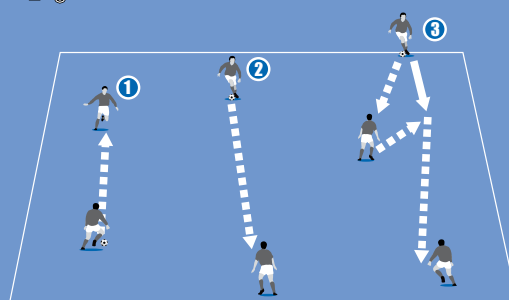
In a small-sided game each team must nominate two target players to play on the goal line – one either side of the goal. To score a goal a pass must first be made into the two target players who then set the ball back to a supporting runner.

The supporting runner does not have to be the player who made the initial pass.

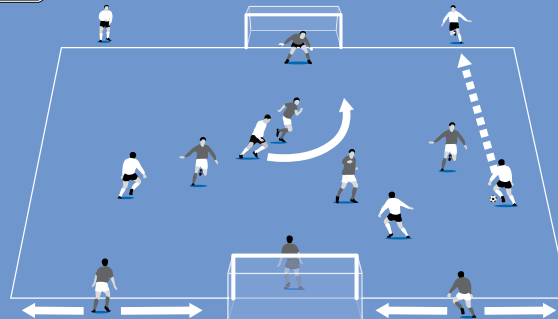
Rotate the players so that everyone has a turn working as a target player.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Various dribbling and skills
The Session 10-15 mins	Short passing along the ground and longer aerial passing
Development 15-20 mins	Combining passing and supporting runs
Game 15-20 mins	Play a forward pass and support to receive a shooting chance
Warm-down 10 mins	Gentle jogging, stretching, de-brief Q&A with coach

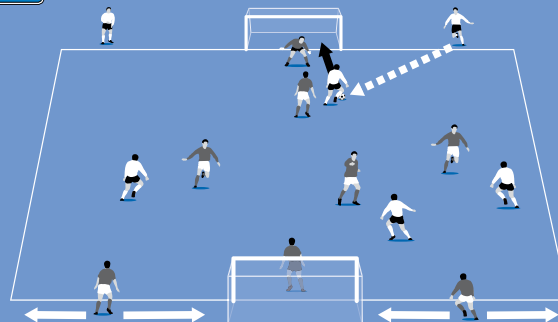
direction of run \Rightarrow pass $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$ shot \blackrightarrow



Combine the passing styles and introduce the need to support the forward pass.



In the game players must find a target player with a forward pass.



The target player can lay the ball off for any team mate to score.

Three-pass frenzy

More than 80% of goals are scored in three or fewer passes after regaining possession of the ball. An alert move forward after winning the ball can catch defences out and give your team chances to score goals.



SET-UP

- Use a pitch 50 yards long by 30 yards wide.
- Balls, cones, two goals.



THINK ABOUT

- When regaining the ball, can your team play a quick forward pass to catch the opponents' defence off guard?
- Once a forward pass is made, can the team have supporting players running forward to help the player in possession?
- When your team wins the ball back, can they make three quick passes and shoot?



CALL OUT

- "Play a quick forward pass"
- "Make forward runs to support your team mates"
- "Get your shots off early"



WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Three players start on the pitch and receive a pass from a team mate on the outside of the pitch.

The players are limited to two touches and must combine quickly to take a shot at goal. The players must not use more than three passes before shooting.

The player who has shot at goal must now run off the area at the opposite end and allow a new player on to the pitch.

The exercise now works in the other direction and swaps after each attack with the shooter being replaced.



DEVELOPMENT

The black team attacks the white team's goal in a 4v4 situation. If the whites win the ball, they look to break upfield quickly.

The attackers can use as many touches as they like but are limited to three passes before shooting at goal.



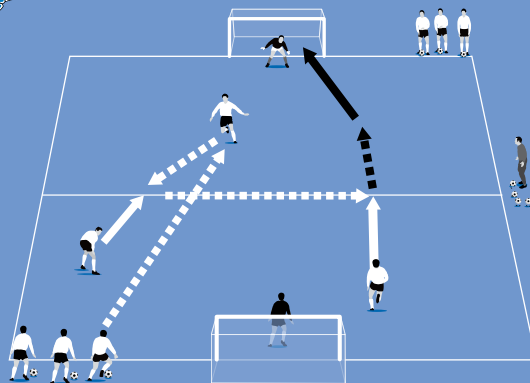
GAME SITUATION

If a team can score a goal using three or fewer passes after winning the ball, it earns two points.

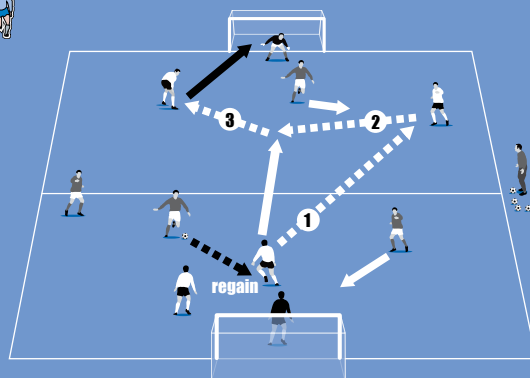
Goals scored with more passes only earn one point. The team with most points wins the game.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Players are passing and moving to play the other ball
The Session 15 mins	Three quick passes to score a goal
Development 15 mins	Regaining the ball and passing forward to score
Game 15 mins	Teams regaining the ball make a quick forward pass and run to support and score a goal
Warm-down 5 mins	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises

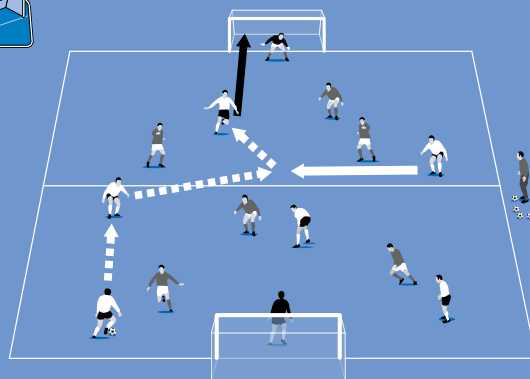
player movement ⇨ pass/serve □□□⇨
run with ball ■■■⇨ shot ⇨



Three players combine quickly to shoot at goal. They are limited to two touches each and have no more than three passes between each other.



If a team defends well, it can counter attack to shoot at goal within three passes.



In a small-sided game, teams earn two points for making a maximum of three passes before scoring a goal.

A disguised pass

A disguised pass will often outwit an opponent and can lead to a goal. It will also help your players keep possession of the ball so no goals can be scored against your team. Here's how to improve your players' abilities to execute this move.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Running to complete various techniques
The Session 15 mins	Players complete various disguised passes
Development 15 mins	Attackers must combine to score a goal
Game 15 mins	Teams are awarded double goals for using clever, disguised passing to score
Warm-down 5 mins	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



SET-UP

- Mark out two 30-yard channels. Use cones to set up a central gate in each channel (top picture)
- Move to a small-sided pitch with a 5-yard central zone (middle picture).



WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Set up the cones and split the squad into two lines as in the top picture. Players complete various disguised passes to make their way across the area. They have to:

Dribble diagonally and outside the central gate then make a reverse pass to a team mate at the opposite starting point.

Dribble to the centre gate and as a team mate runs past in the opposite direction, back heel the ball for the team mate to run on to.

Dribble to the centre gate and complete a "look-away" pass to a team mate who runs from the opposite end on the outside. This pass is completed by looking where the team mate is and then looking in a different direction as the ball is released.

Dribble to the centre gate and meet a team mate at the middle, leave the ball and let the team mate "take" the ball in the opposite direction.



DEVELOPMENT

Set up a small-sided game using two teams. Each team places three attackers in one half and three defenders in the opposite half (middle picture).

You stand in the central zone and use a disguised pass toward a set of attackers to begin the game. These attackers try to combine and score a goal.

If the defenders win the ball, they pass to their attackers in the other half so they can build an attack.

If the ball goes out of play or a goal is scored, you begin the game again from the centre.



GAME SITUATION

Play a small-sided game with two teams but award double goals for using disguise on a pass that leads to a goal being scored.



THINK ABOUT

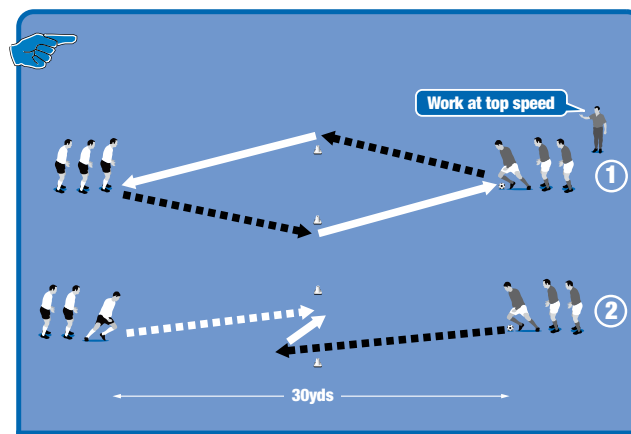
- At the top level of soccer, teams now defend closer to their goal to reduce the space that an opponent has to attack, so you need players who are capable of producing moments of creativity to create and score goals.
- The use of disguise in a pass can often lead to unlocking the opponent's defence so developing these skills in training sessions is crucial.



CALL OUT

- "Work at top speed"
- "Make eye contact with your team mate"
- "Time your pass"

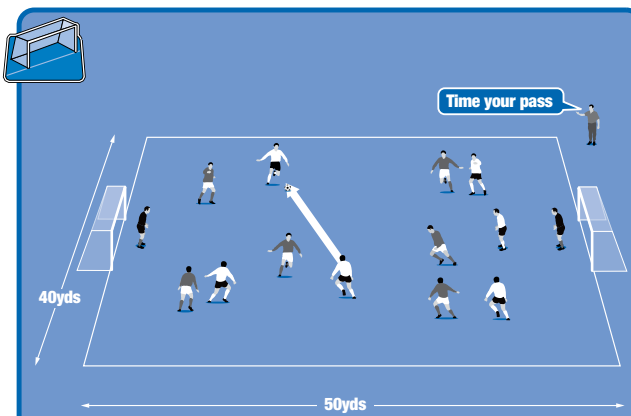
player movement pass
run with ball



Players dribble a ball across the area and perform disguise passes. Shown here are skills 1 and 2.



You start the game in the central zone. Attackers try to use disguise passes to each other to try and score.



Goals scored which use a disguised pass as the final ball before a shot count as double.