



Session Plan

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Topic: Week 1: Player Review

Sub-Topic: fundamentals in & out of possession

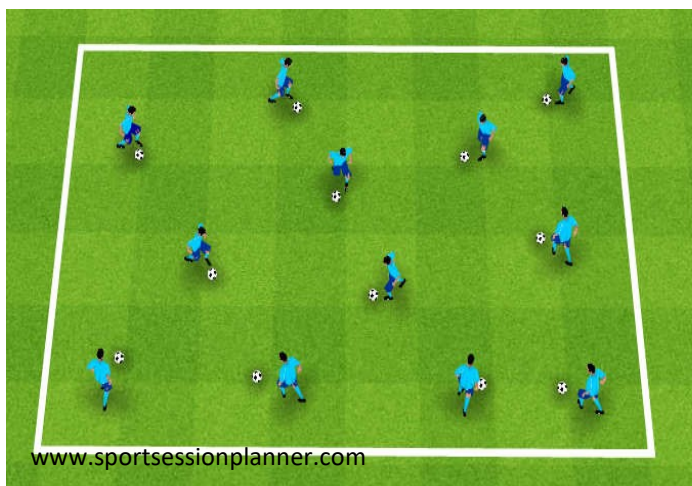
Suggested Age: U12+ (based on ability)

Key Learning Outcomes/Session Notes: Review session to determine age appropriate competencies both in and out of possession. Can be used to refine content for the remainder of a curriculum etc

Focal Player(s): All (for this age group)

Please note we'd usually recommend sessions focusing on a particular, defined topic for the benefit of player learning — this session however focuses of a range of topics both in & out of possession for review purposes.

Pre-Requisites: N/A as review session



Ball Mastery Technical Warm-Up (10 mins)

Set Up: Appropriate grid size based on player age and technical ability. Small enough space to create lots of interference and the requirement to manipulate the ball around other players to find pockets of space. Big enough to allow opportunities for players to be successful and experiment with new techniques that they haven't yet mastered in tight spaces.

Instructions: Each player has a ball and moves around the space performing turns, feints, moves etc. **Progression**—add 4 taggers with a ball, once tagged players perform 3 moves on outside then rejoin the grid.

Key Coaching Points: Praise, acknowledge and motivate players who try new moves that they haven't yet mastered | Head up and scanning | Identify the space you want to attack and select move that will get you there | Accelerate out of your move | Master moves on both feet

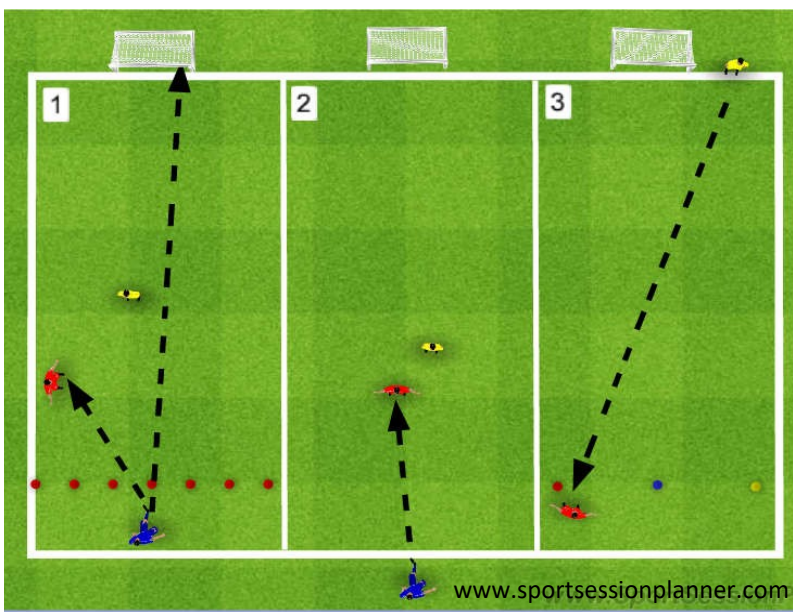
Possible Questions and Challenges: Who can show me a move and teach it to everyone else? | What type of touches do we use in tight spaces vs when we have space? (small and close vs longer touches out from feet) | Can we be equally as good with both of our feet? | Can we disguise our move from the players around us? Show me how (feints, exaggerated body movements, shifting body weight) | Can you perform 3 moves on both feet without crashing into someone and without losing the ball out of the grid within 15 seconds? | How many moves can you combine?

Coaching Tips: *Can we help players to practice with purpose by asking supportively (when they fail) - 'why do you think that happened?' 'What could you try differently next time?' 'I believe in your ability to master it with practice.'*



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Pitch 1: Possible Questions and Challenges: Can you show me how you can protect the goal and be close enough to apply pressure to the red attacker? | How can you force the attacker to go in a certain direction? (**curved run and side on body shape**) | Can you win the ball back and pass to the target player rather than kicking the ball out when defending? | Can you score more points than the attacker?

Progressions: Allow red attacker to use neutral blue to keep possession | Place a time limit e.g. 10 seconds on the red attacker to score to encourage direct, quick attacking play to challenge the defender

1v1 Circuit (25 mins—depending on outcomes/success). **Coaching points to focus on defending** but can equally be used for attacking session. For consistency & player learning, coach either attacking **or** defending in one session and manage the other (give a few little reminders if necessary).

Set Up: Each pitch = 15x30yds (adjust as necessary). Small nets at one end or a cone gate to dribble through. **Pitch 1**— 5yd zone using flat discs. **Pitch 3**— 3 different coloured cones as per diagram.

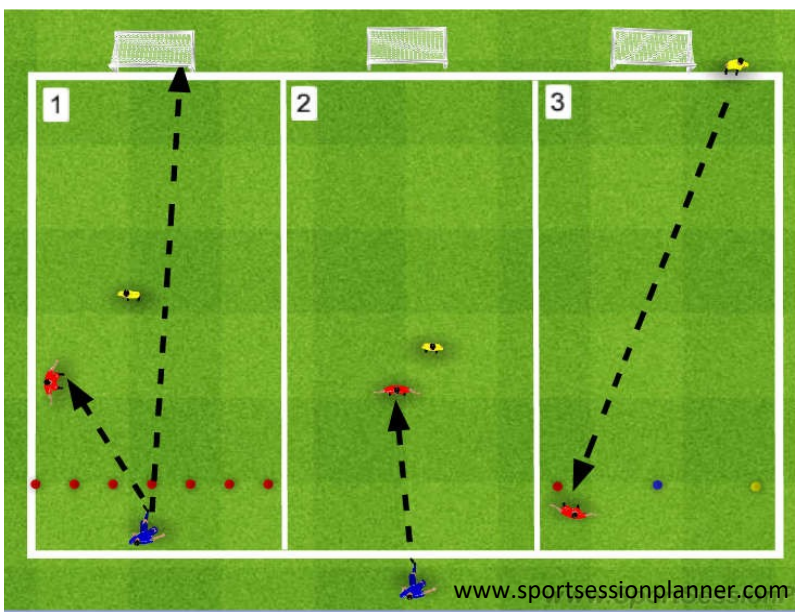
Pitch 1: Instructions: Neutral (blue) is locked in the 'safe zone' and plays into attacker (red) who looks to score in the small net. Blue can also score directly in the small net. Defender (yellow) looks to protect the goal, win the ball back from red and play into neutral for a point. Encourage red player to alternate their position to receive the ball from blue. Consider whether or not to let red use blue as support (if so, defender has to alternate between screening to protect the goal from blue and pressing to apply pressure to red attacker—may be use as a progression).

Key Coaching Points (Defending): Starting position to both protect the goal and be able to apply pressure to red | Apply pressure quickly to red once pass is made & curve run to force attacker in the desired direction (**towards sideline or towards defensive teammates**) | slow down around arms distance from attacker and take up low stance, side on and be on the balls of feet | Be patient, prioritise delaying the attacker before winning the ball | Try to ensure the attackers goes the way you want them to, don't let them go the other way | Focus on the ball, not the attackers feet and look to make a strong, committed tackle when the attacker attempts to make a move | If beaten by the attacker, recover quickly to protect the goal first, then apply pressure again



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Pitch 3: Instructions: Red attacker alternates starting position between red, blue and yellow cones to give defender opportunity to recognise and force play towards sideline. Red looks to score in small net, yellow looks to win the ball and dribble to cones for a point.

Key Coaching Points (Defending): Same as pitch 1

Pitch 3: Possible Questions and Challenges: Same as pitch 1

Progressions: Place a time limit e.g. 10 seconds on the red attacker to score to encourage direct, quick attacking play to challenge the defender

Pitch 2: Instructions: Neutral (blue) plays into attacker (red) who looks to score in the small net. Defender (yellow) defender looks to protect the goal, win the ball back from red and play into neutral for a point. Encourage red player to alternate their position to receive the ball from blue. Consider whether or not to let red use blue as support (if so, defender has to mark attacker goal-side and track their movement to receive).

Key Coaching Points (Defending): Apply pressure quickly to attacker to prevent them from turning | Don't get too tight to attacker - remain arms distance away to stop attacker from turning and beating you | Be patient, prioritise delaying the attacker before winning the ball | If attacker uses neutral player, track the run of the attacker and stay goal-side (**between attacker and goal**) | Focus on the ball, not the attackers feet or feints and look to make a strong, committed tackle when the attacker attempts to make a move | If beaten by the attacker, recover quickly to protect the goal first, then apply pressure again

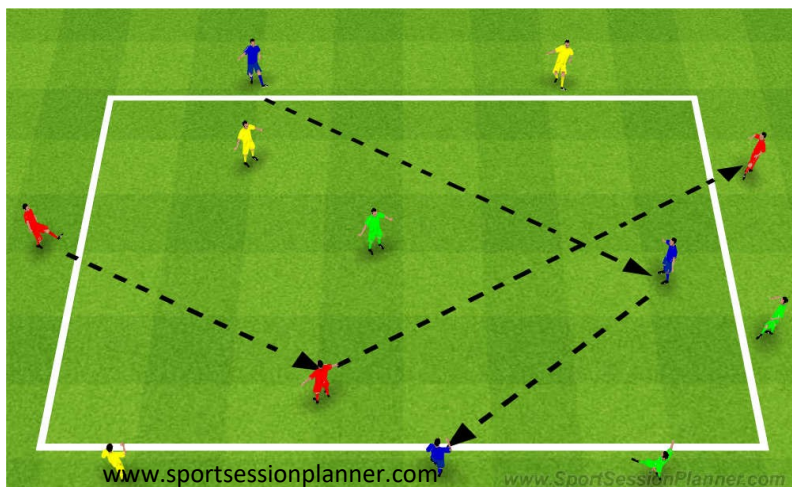
Pitch 2: Possible Questions and Challenges: Who can show me how you would defend in this situation? | Can you close down the attacker quickly to stop them from turning and keep them facing away from the goal? | Show me how you can mark the defender and follow their movement to stay between them and the goal (goal-side) | Can you recover quickly if the attacker beats you to defend the goal? | Can you win the ball back and pass to the target player rather than kicking the ball out when defending? | Can you score more points than the attacker?

Progressions: Manipulate the number of times that red can use the blue neutral — more gives defender increased repetition of marking and tracking runs, less gives greater repetition of defending against turning attacker | Place a time limit e.g. 10 seconds on the red attacker to score to encourage direct, quick attacking play to challenge the defender



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Possible Questions and Challenges cont'd: Can you receive the ball as 'high' (as far away from passer) as possible while still being in a 'passing lane?' (clear path for the ball the travel, 'can the passer see your feet?') | For outside players - Can you pass to the receivers back foot or safe-side (side of the body that is protected/furthest away from the defender)? | Can you show me a 'good' first touch? (Into space, away from pressure, close if under pressure, further away if space, sets up your next pass)

Coaching Tip: To build and maintain high practice standards and intensity, try using **Motivational Interviewing** techniques e.g. how would you rate that out of 10 — '5'. What would make it a 7? Can you now try to show me a 7? Just focus on 1 or 2 ideas to keep it focused.

Scanning, movement to receive and receiving (15-20mins)

Set Up: circa 20x20yds (adjust as necessary). 4 teams of 3 in different colours. 2 players in each 3 play outside the grid, one working player in the middle. 1 ball per team.

Instructions: simple to start — outside player with ball plays into central player who looks to connect with 3rd team member. Ball is then worked back the other way. Play for 1 min then switch in a new working central player. Where possible, players to play off of 2 touches to start with. Central players score a point for each time they successfully transfer the ball avoiding the interference.

Key Coaching Points: Shoulder check to look for teammate and to identify interference (ideally once before ball is played and again while it's travelling) | Explosive movement from central player to receive at a angle (not in a straight vertical line) | Good verbal and non-verbal communication | Open body shape to receive on the back foot (furthest from ball) | Directional first touch into a space that avoids interferences and sets up pass to teammate | Create a new angle to receive pass | 'Play in the future'—know what's next

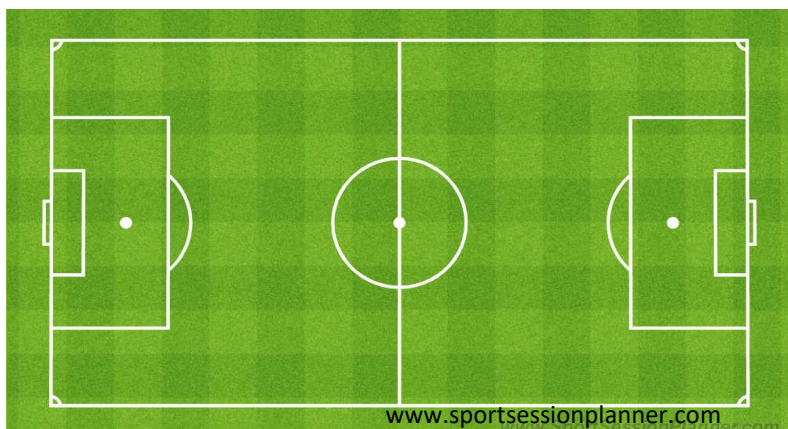
Progressions: Once outside player passes, they have to move to a different side of the grid (requires central player to scan to find where they have moved to and adopt correct body shape and first touch to set them up for the pass) | Add 2 defenders (depending on numbers, could remove one team, make 2 of them defenders and the other a neutral) - defenders look to win the ball back and play back to the outside players for a point. Neutral can't play to outside players so if used, must combine with central player. Rotate roles frequently.

Possible Questions and Challenges: How can we create space for ourselves to receive with the back foot? (Double movement, change of pace to find the space) | Show me how you can receive so that you can see as much of the field as possible/see both teammates (should encourage players to receive with an open body shape)



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Coaching Tip: *You don't always have to be intervening to be effectively coaching. With the right conditions and some guidance where necessary, small sided games can really help to develop creative, resilient problem solvers and begin to move away from reliance on the coach to provide all of the answers and fix the problems.*

About The Coach's Coach:

Our aim is to support clubs and coaches to provide the most impactful and enjoyable learning environments for youth players at all level of the game. Our programs include age and ability appropriate curriculum and session plans, classroom, on-field and online bespoke coach development and education opportunities, coach mentorship, technical and strategic planning and more.

Find out more at www.thecoachcoach.net

Conditioned Small Sided Game (15-20mins)

Set Up: 2 team with GKs. Regular game rules. Play 4 games of circa 5 mins each.

Conditions: At the end of each game, scores are reversed. E.g. if Team A win 2-0 they get 3 points for the win but then start the second game 2-0 down. If Team B win the second game (having started with a 2-0 lead) they get 3 points. Repeat for games 3 and 4 starting again at 0-0 at the beginning of game 3.

Key Coaching Points: Try to keep coaching to a minimum to allow players to develop through guided discovery (the guide comes mainly from the conditions) and trial and error.

The game encourages great communication, collaboration, social skills and game management— how many goals to win game 1 by to ensure the win but still make game 2 winnable? Good opportunity to put players in scenarios to attack quickly when they need to but also to keep possession when they have a strong lead.

What to look for: While keeping coaching in the game to a minimum—this SSG allows you to observe where your players are with their leadership and game management approaches. How well can your players begin to understand different approaches to the game and make decisions based on the specific scenario? This should be nowhere near perfect at this age group but they are useful skills to begin to hone and foster in young players and identify who may need more guidance and support in these areas as they develop.

The game may put some of your players in slightly uncomfortable situations (which is great!) - for example, a player who naturally likes to slow the game down, play sideways and backwards and rarely looks to go forward will be exposed to the necessity to do so by the conditions of the game when their team is losing.