

TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Long pass, short pass

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Many of you will be taking on new teams over the coming weeks and months. When I first meet a group of new players, I like to be able to assess them by using a few exercises that test skill levels, whilst ensuring it's still a session that the kids enjoy. And central to this is putting on a practice that players will not find too hard nor too easy.

To do this, I use exercises that can be changed and adapted quickly so as to be able to alter difficulty, just like this one below, which tests passing range.

How to set it up

- For this session, you need balls and cones.
- Set up a 30x20-yard area as shown.
- The ball is passed around the area in a sequence as players 'work the circuit', as follows, with the letters refer to the working player in each group A, B, C and D:

A passes to B

B passes to A

A passes to D

- A then runs around C and heads towards D

D plays a one-two with A

D takes over the session and passes to C

C passes back to D

- Now the move continues back, bringing in the next player in group A

D passes to A then runs around B before heading towards A

A plays a one-two with D

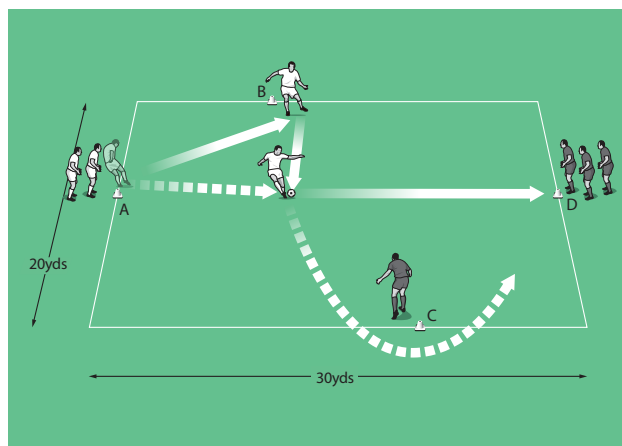
D passes to B, and the move starts again.

Technique and tactics

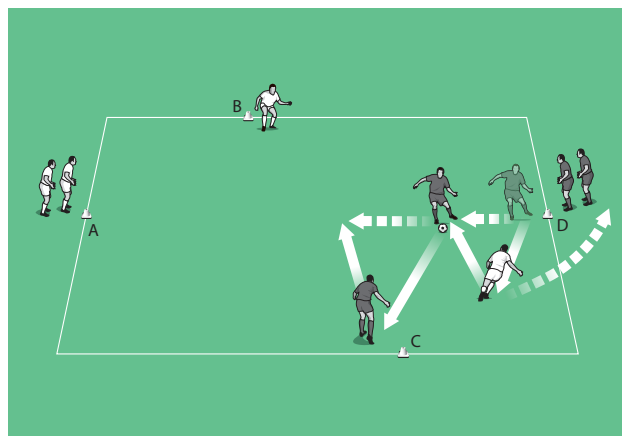
- This is a classic 'long pass short pass' combination game. Control of the ball is the essential ingredient to make the session work, while weight of pass and slick interchanges make it very realistic to game situations. The prime techniques are good first touch, strong weight of pass, and positive movement.

Advancing the session

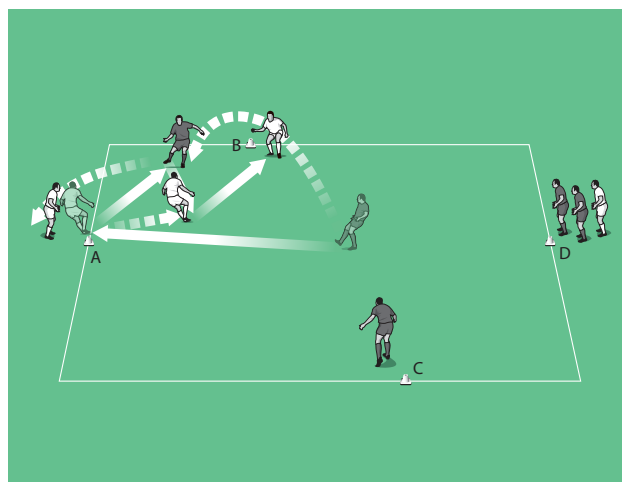
- Because it's unopposed, players have space, meaning the biggest threat to the momentum of the move is in the accuracy of the pass. Therefore, by making the area smaller (and you can decide to what extent you change the dimensions), there is less room for the pass and players must react quicker. In contrast, stretching out the parameters means players have more time, increasing the chances of success.



A and B combine with short passes before a long pass into D



Short passing in the form of a series of one-twos between A, D and C enables the move to come back in the opposite direction



A long pass back to A precedes another succession of short passes

player movement ball movement