

TACTICAL



SERIES

ADVANCED 1v1 TRAINING

by Stefano Santona



WORLD CLASS COACHING

Tactical Series

Advanced
1v1
Training

by

Stefano Santona

Published by
WORLD CLASS COACHING

Tactical Series

Advanced 1 v 1 Training

First published January, 2017 by
WORLD CLASS COACHING 12851 Flint St. Overland Park, KS 66213
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About the Author

Santona Stefano is an Italian coach that has a Master's Degree in Sport and Exercise Sciences. He has earned a number of difference certifications including a UEFA C License. Stefano has coached with Coerver Coaching Calcio Italia, Meletolese F.C., ASD Juventus Club Parma and Crociati Noceto SRL among others. He has an extensive background in physical education and specifically in coaching soccer.

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FOCUS ON 1 V 1 TOPIC IN FOOTBALL

In this book we're going to explore some debates regarding issues related to the 1v1.

Many people might think that it is a small part of football, but we find that in teaching 1v1, there are many important aspects of concern that need to be considered.

Many people may think that the 1v1 is more useful to train with one age group rather than with another age group.

These ideas can be controversial. Here I will try to explain the topic, including these issues, in a practical way, with an explanation and some sample exercises.

If football is a team game, it is also a situational sport and so we have to evaluate the aspects that make it so. When we define a game a "situational sport" we see that, regarding 1v1 situations, the main aspects are:

- Frontally facing the opponent
- the concept of attack/defense
- anticipation of the players movements

At the same time, however, we must enter into the technical aspects that interest us.

Within any 1v1 situation, the technical fundamentals are:

- stopping and ball control
- passing or shooting (because a 1v1 duel ends with another technical skill. Pragmatically, 1v1 duels always contain another element)
- heading (it's still a 1v1)
- bypassing or getting behind the opponent
- dribbling of the ball before, during, and after the duel

Furthermore, we recollect that a player's coordination capacity is his or her ability to perform an act with an harmonious and economical use of energy. So, in addition to the aspects mentioned above, we need to analyze and consider some aspects of coordination skills that are trained in 1v1. These include:

- control and direction of movements
- adaptation of the technical gestures to all 1v1 situations
- learning the movement
- coupling and combination of movements
- kinesthetic differentiation
- static and dynamic balance
- space-time orientation
- rhythm
- simple and complex reactions
- transformation of the movement
- accuracy and speed of movements
- managing the operations in different conditions and situations
- management of the ball
- management of time in relation to many variables, such as pressure and different spaces between players and on the field

Let us look in more depth at some items in this list:

Kinesthetic differentiation:

This is when an athlete achieves, in different ways, movements on the basis of perceptions of time, space, and applied strengths.

Kinesthetic differentiation skills included in football:

- touching the ball with the optimal strength related to the situation on the field
- skills related to the reception of the ball
- evaluating the trajectory of the ball
- sending the ball into a space or into the goal
- evaluating the properties of the ball
- relaxing the unnecessary muscles involved in a movement

Static and Dynamic Balance:

This is the player's ability to keep the body in balance within its base of support (static equilibrium) or to maintain or restore balance during and after large movements of the body (dynamic equilibrium).

In football, we are talking of dynamic equilibrium in the majority of the situations, specifically:

- maintaining balance in the struggle/duel for ball possession
- maintaining balance in spite of the opponent's fake
- maintaining a stable body position during shooting
- stopping the ball by jumping
- rapidly recovering after losing balance
- quickly recovering balance while performing a series of fakes

Space Time Orientation:

This is the player's ability to change the position and the movement of their body in space and time related to a well-defined field of action.

In football:

- movement adaptation with respect to the point where the ball will come
- to choose the exact spot in which to belong on the field with respect to the trajectory of the ball and the situation
- ability to send the ball exactly in the most appropriate point
- simultaneous control of ball movement and player

Rhythm:

Ability to organize muscle commitments in chronological order.

In football: harmony between the ball movement and movement of different body parts (dribbling).

Reaction skills:

Ability to react to particular stimulus in response to a signal with adequate body actions.

In football:

- to respond quickly to the trajectory of the ball
- appropriate reaction to external information (teammates, goalkeeper, coach, etc.)
- rapidly transitioning from a static position to a dynamic movement related to the ball's and players' movement
- to have movements adapted to different speed and movement of the ball

Segmentation skills:

Ability to coordinate movement of different body areas.

In football it is a link between ball, fakes, passes, dribblings, shot on goal, etc.;

For example:

- Receiving and passing the ball by jumping
- Combination of more than one action
- Aerial shot on goal

Symmetry skill:

In football we talk about using the non-dominant foot.

We have:

- Improvement of non-dominant foot skills;
- Improvement of dominant foot skills (brain's horizontal transference);

So, concluding the introduction, we see that success in a 1v1 situation depends on the simultaneous presence of many qualities that are complex and global.

The coordinated and conditioned abilities, in football, are integrated in a complex way:

1. Execution of a shot (power transmission) in precarious equilibrium (coordination)
2. How to do something by changing the strength of commitment (coordinative capacity of differentiation)
3. To go around the opponent (speed + technique + balance + rhythm)
4. To brake and change direction (eccentric strength in precarious balance conditions)
5. To accelerate quickly replying to a stimulus (speed + reply skill)

We can therefore say that all motor skills (conditional and coordinative) are integrated in a complex way to handle the requirements imposed by the game. This results in an individual player's sense of the ball: "... The ability to adapt and shape the movements and the muscular efforts, on the basis of perceptions (players, ball, areas, goals, etc.)."

In summary, the best thing is to be in the right place, at the right time, with the optimal control of energy needed for the performance.

Besides the physical dimensions of 1v1, players and coaches must also take into account that 1v1 work is also a psychological task; we are working on the development of personality.

When coaches want to develop the 1v1 skills of their players, a continual process of change needs to be implemented. Coaches and players need to consider their own:

1. awareness: to be aware of their skills in a 1v1 situation
2. desire: desire to improve their skills in a 1v1
3. research: research tools and the means to make the change
4. commitment: to work actively to achieve the purpose

The coaching staff of a team will have to identify which aspects they will have to spend more time on.

PROGRESSION OF 1V1
EXERCISES TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY TO BEAT OPPOSING PLAYERS

CHAPTER 1

Exercises without a ball for improvement in bypassing the opposite player, achievement of the space, and finding the goal

1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME

Area Size:

Different geometric shapes (square, rectangle) depending on the focus. Vary the width or length size depending on the age and technical quality of the players.

Time:

5-10 minutes

Objectives:

- To create space
- To run fast in the created space
- Movement of the players related to the opposite player
- Just a little bit of fitness work involving change of direction

Execution:

This exercise is about the ability to create the space without the ball, in relation to the decision of the defender.

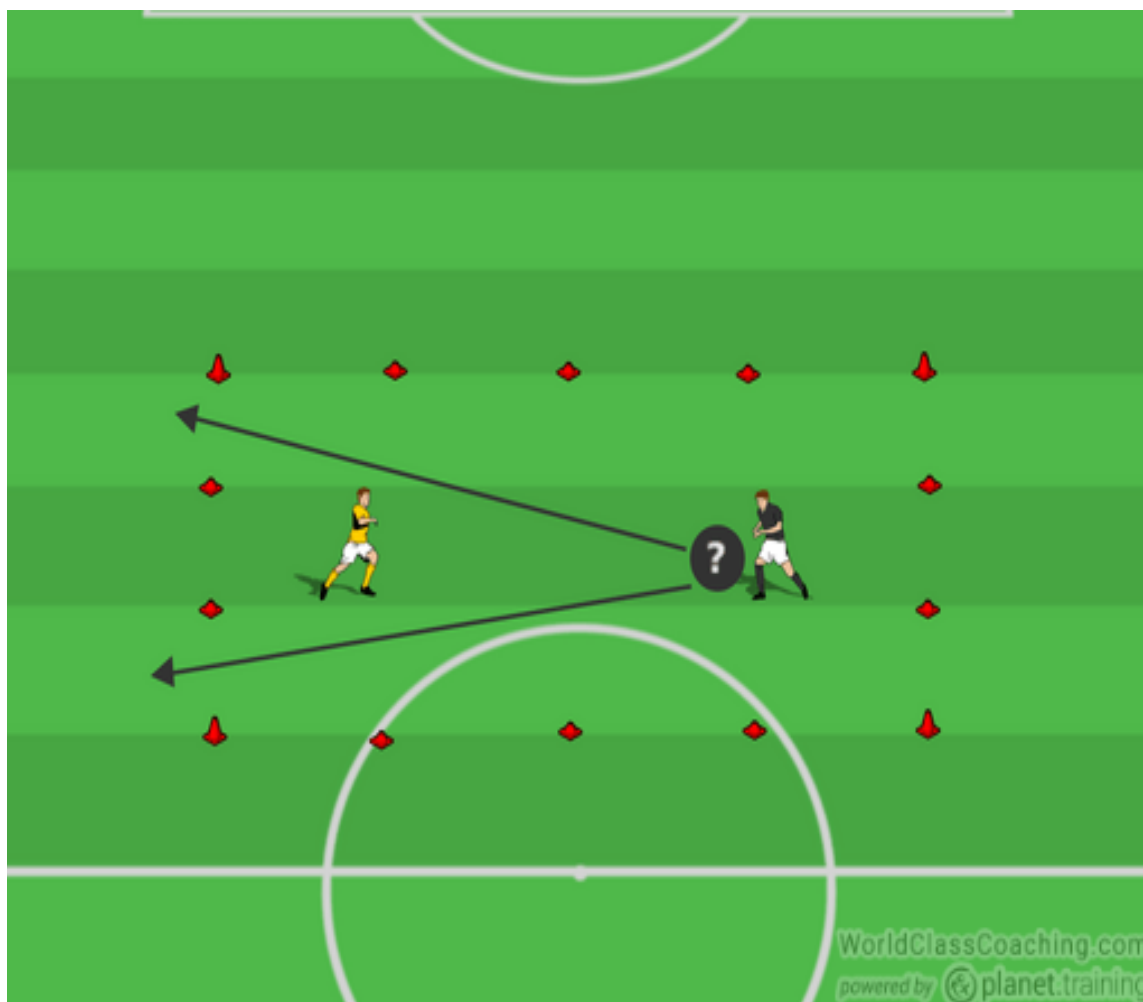
The striker has to run past the line behind the defender, but if the defender touches the striker with his hand, he scores the point.

It is important to play a very fast game (so 10-15 minute max, related to age of the player and area size).

1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME

1st OPTION

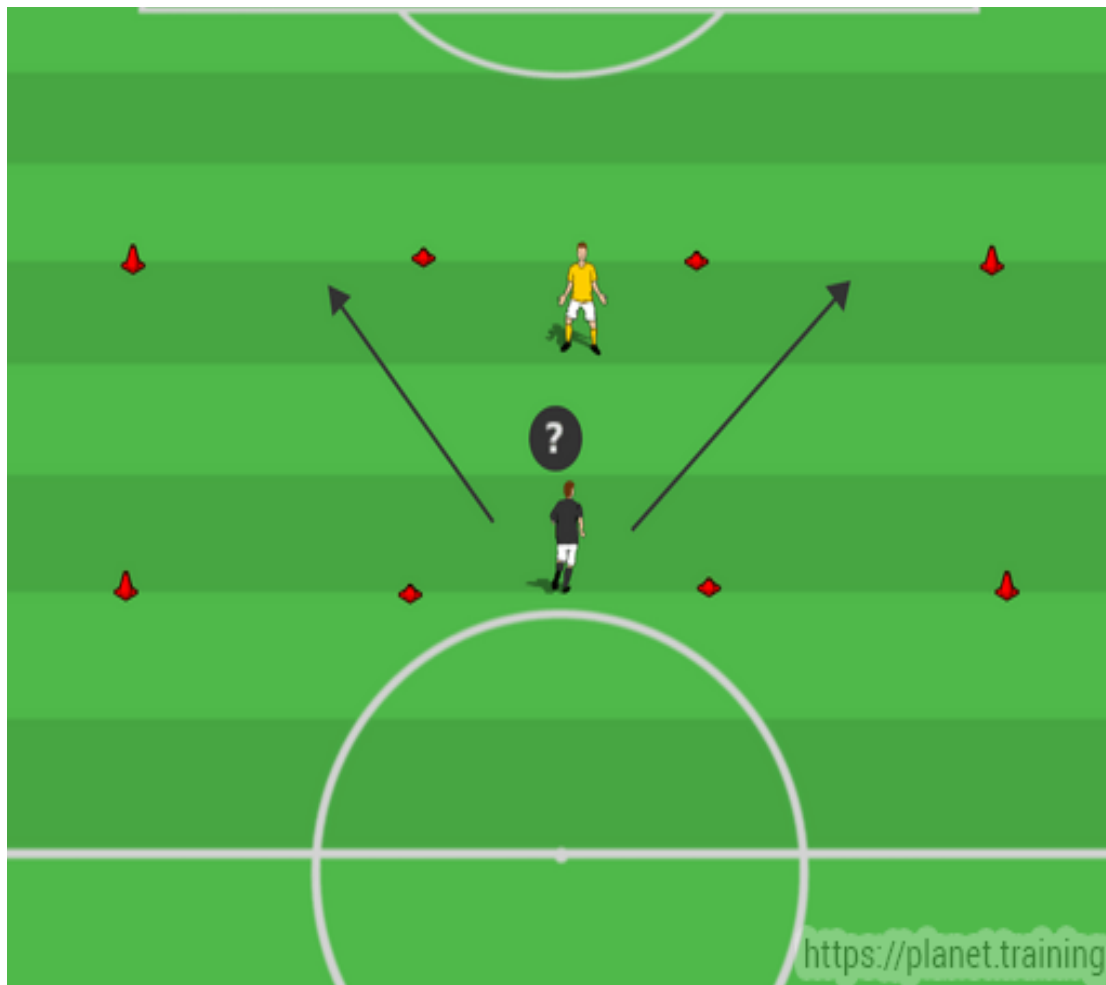
Working on length



1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME

2nd OPTION

Working on width



1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME

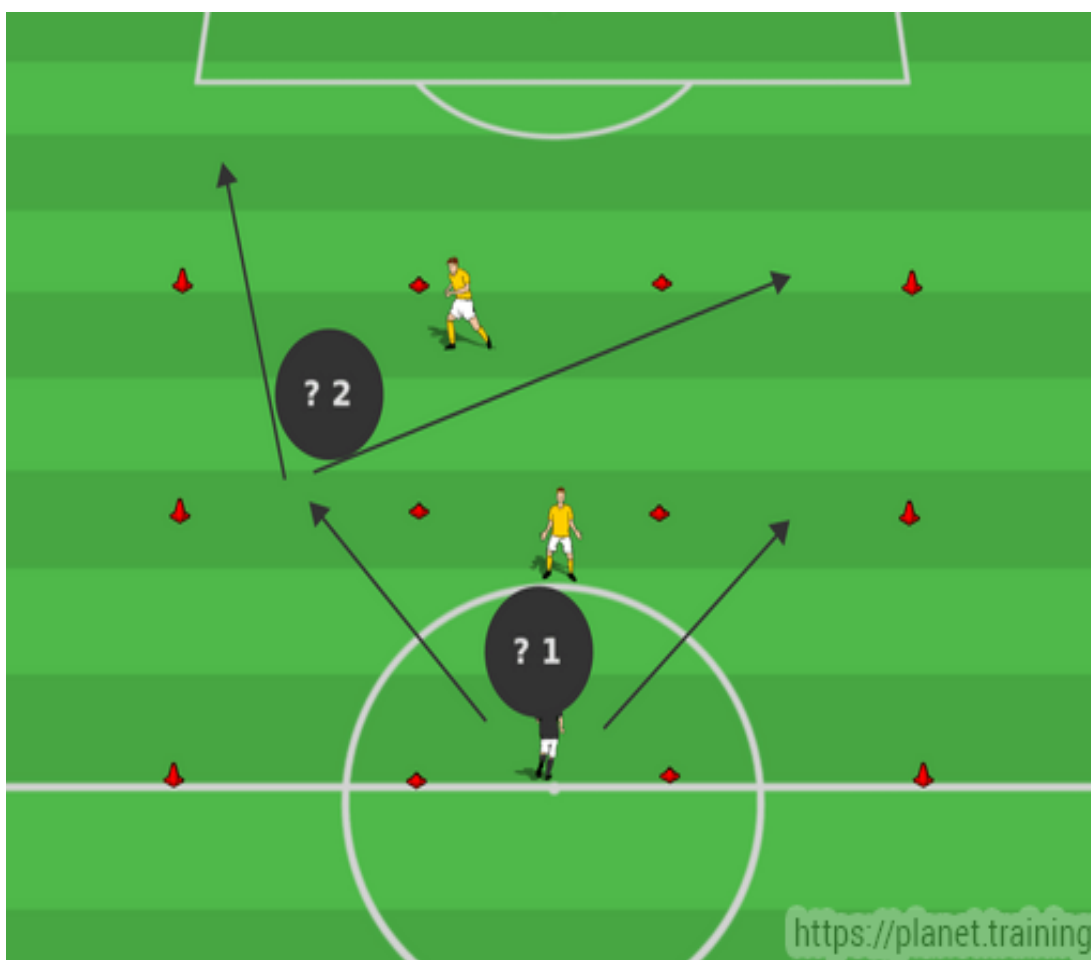
3rd OPTION

Working on width twice

In this progression we have to play 1v1 twice.

The striker has to choose what to do twice.

This is more difficult than the previous exercise because now the second defender has got the time to interpret and adapt to the action.



1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME

4th OPTION

Working on width and length

Now we have to play 1v1 three times.

The striker has to choose what to do twice on width and one time on length.

This is more difficult than the previous exercise because now the striker has to resist more fatigue.

This pattern is particularly interesting because, even though it is a progression of the previous exercises, it is more related to football because it recreates a real action (work on width on the middle of the field and work on length on the last part of the field).



1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME WITH GOALS

Area Size:

Different geometric shapes (square, rectangle), depending on the focus. Vary the width or length size depending on the age and technical quality of the players.

Time:

5-10 minutes

Objectives:

- To create space
- To run fast in the space created
- Movement of the players related to the opposite player
- Just a little bit of fitness work involving change of direction

Execution:

This exercise is about the ability to create space in relation to the decisions of the defender and the goal's location.

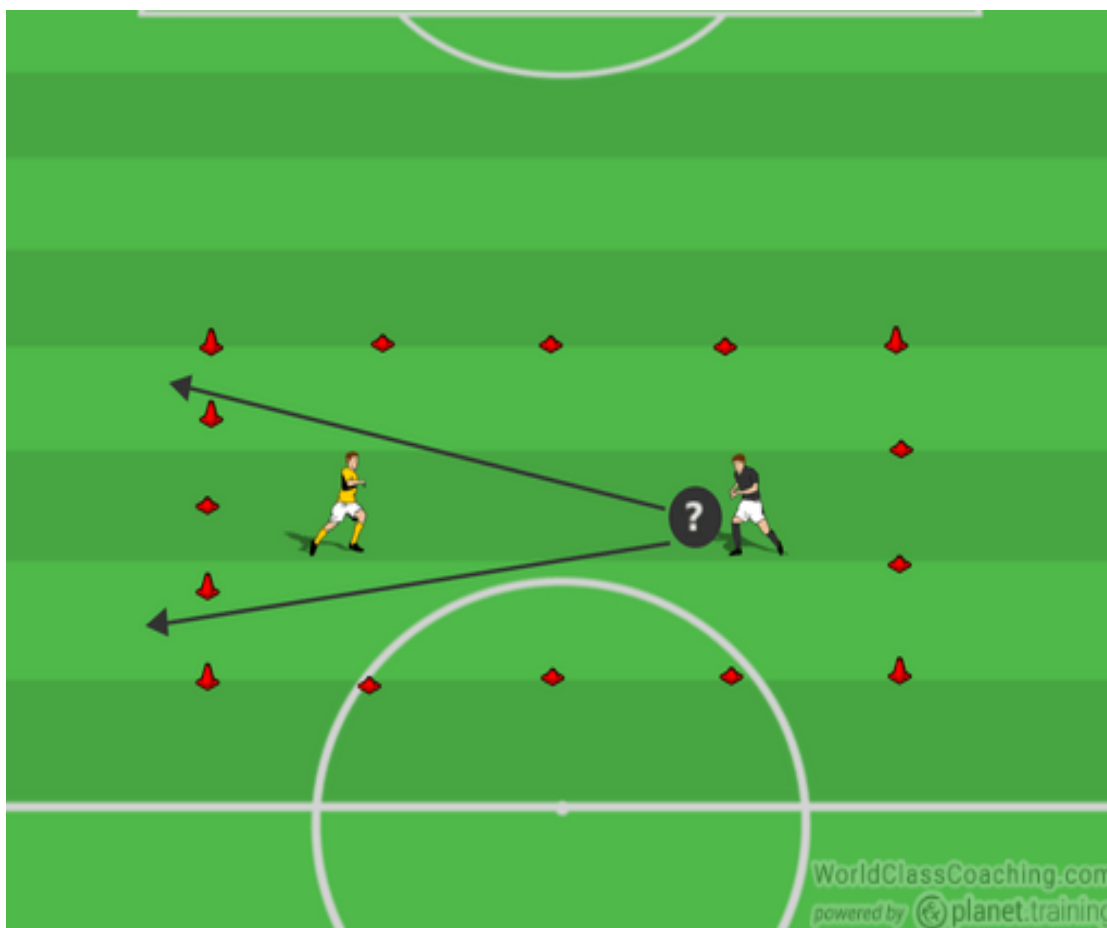
The striker has to pass through the goal behind the defender, but if the defender touches the striker with his hand he scores the point.

The difficulties are increasing. Now we have only two little spaces in which to score a point and the defender knows that he has to cover those two little spaces and not the full width of the line.

It is important to play a very fast game (so 10-15 minute max, related to age of the player and area size).

1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME WITH GOALS

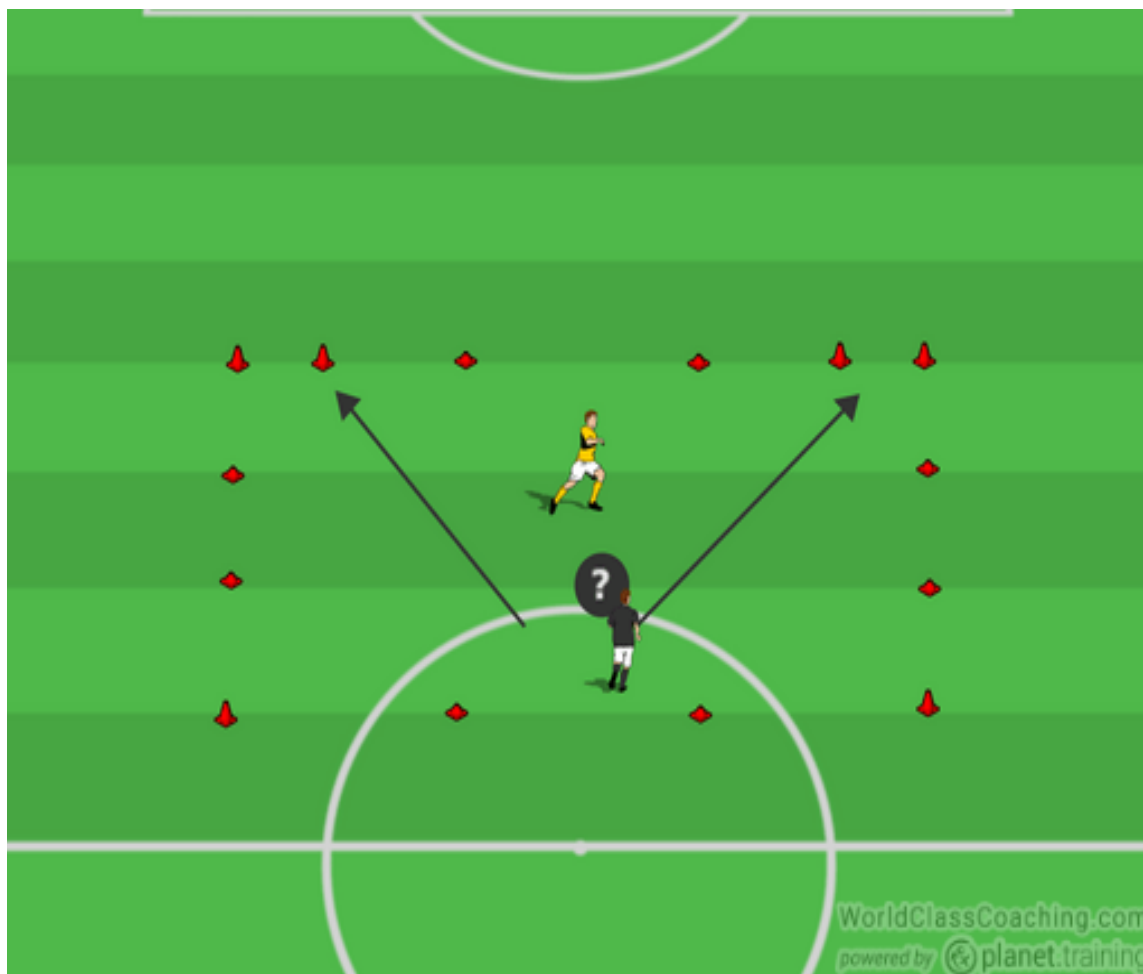
1st OPTION
working on length



1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME WITH GOALS

2nd OPTION

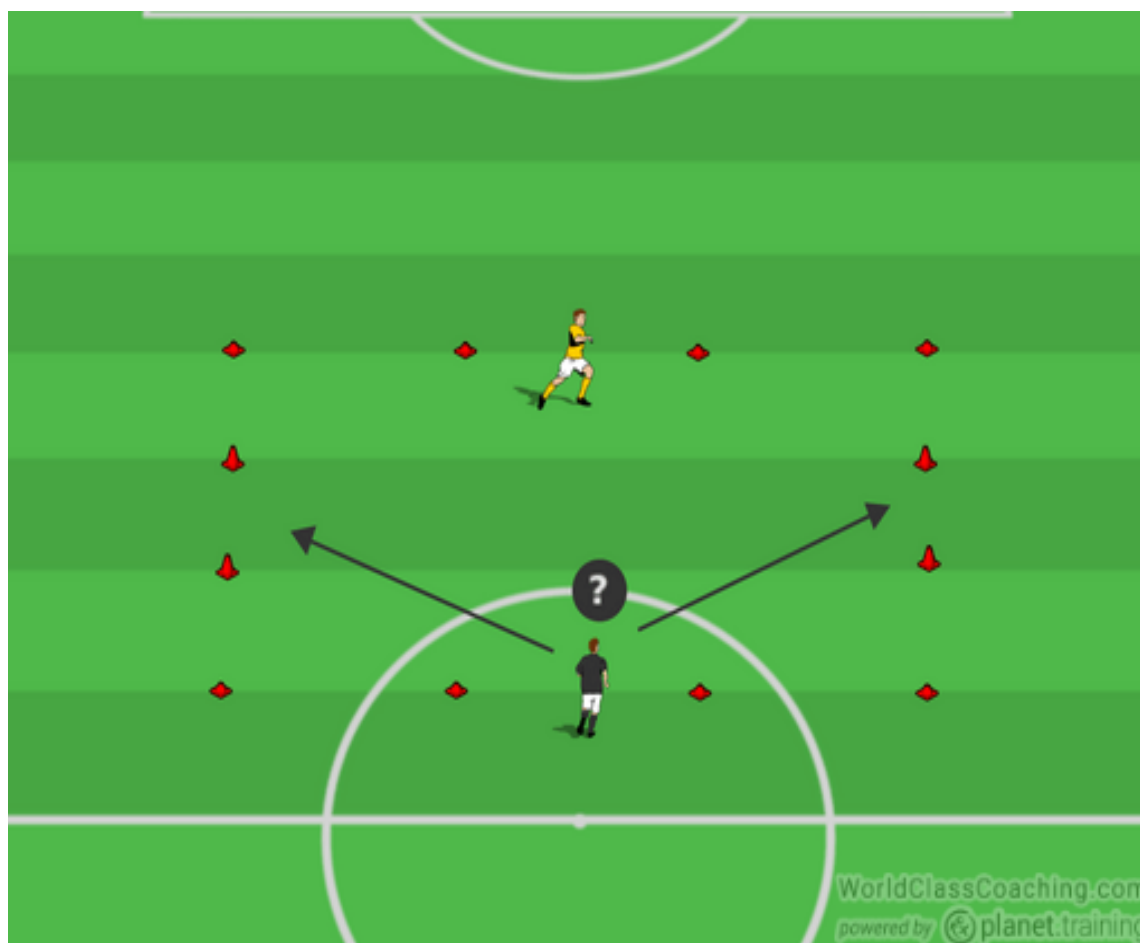
working on amplitude and width



1 VS 1 "MIRROR" GAME WITH GOALS

3rd OPTION

working on spaces located on lateral sides (30° working angle).



CHAPTER 2

Exercises with ball for improvement in passing the opposite player and achievement of the spaces

1 VS 1 GAME "ACHIEVE THE SPACE"

Area Size:

Different geometric shapes (square, rectangle) depending on the focus. Vary the width or length size depending on the age and technical quality of the players.

Time:

10-15 minutes

Objectives:

- To create the space
- To run fast in the space created
- Movement of the players related to the opposite player
- Just a little bit of fitness work involving change of direction
- Ball mastery during a duel

Execution:

This exercise is about the ability to create space while possessing the ball, in relation to the decision of the defender and the goal's location.

The striker has to achieve the space behind the defender, but if the defender wins the ball, the defender has to dribble over the line behind the striker.

The difficulty increases because now the striker has to also manage the ball.

It is important to play a very fast game (so 10-15 minute max, related to age of the player and area size).

1 VS 1 GAME "ACHIEVE THE SPACE"

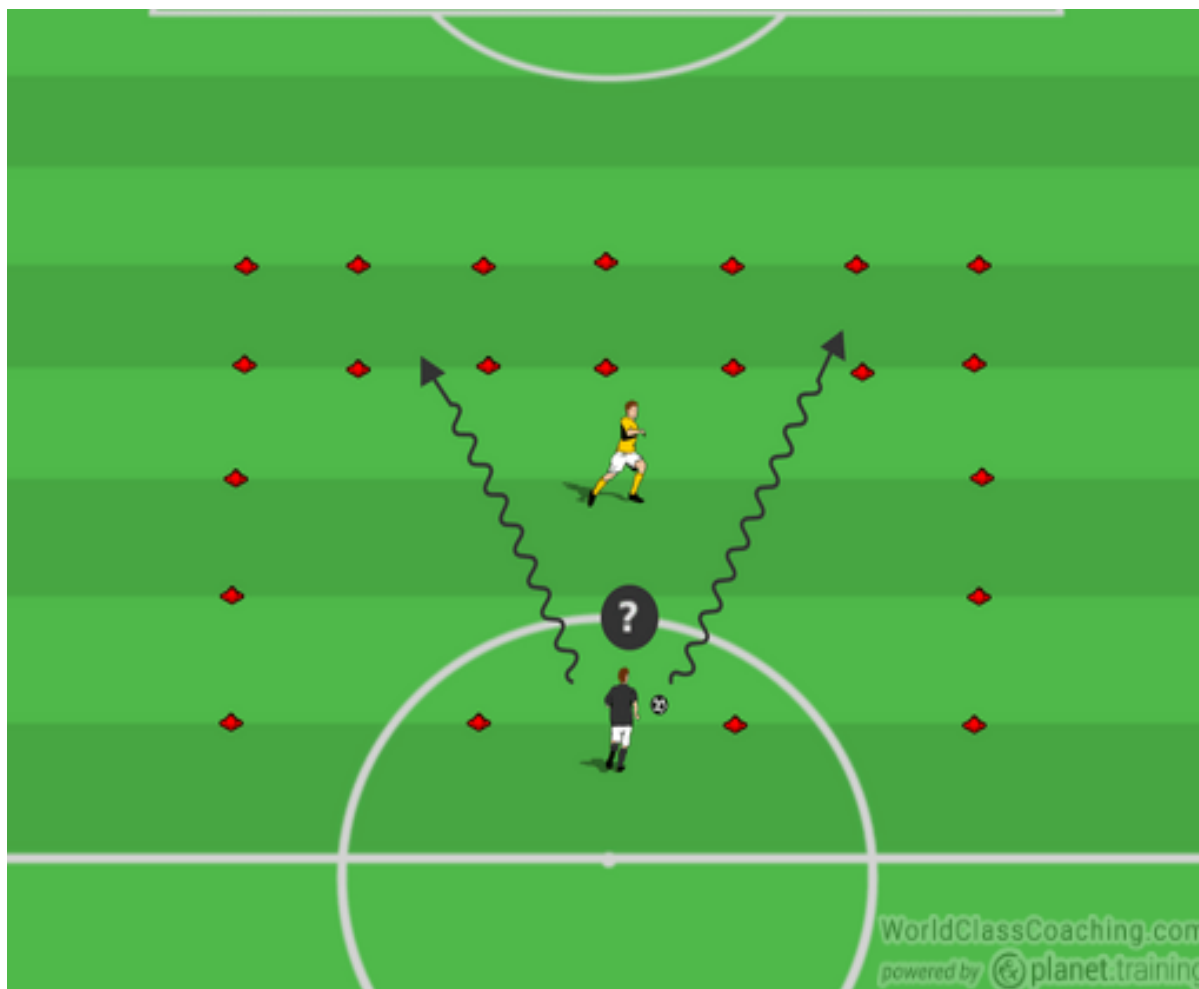
1st OPTION
working on length



1 VS 1 GAME "ACHIEVE THE SPACE"

2nd OPTION

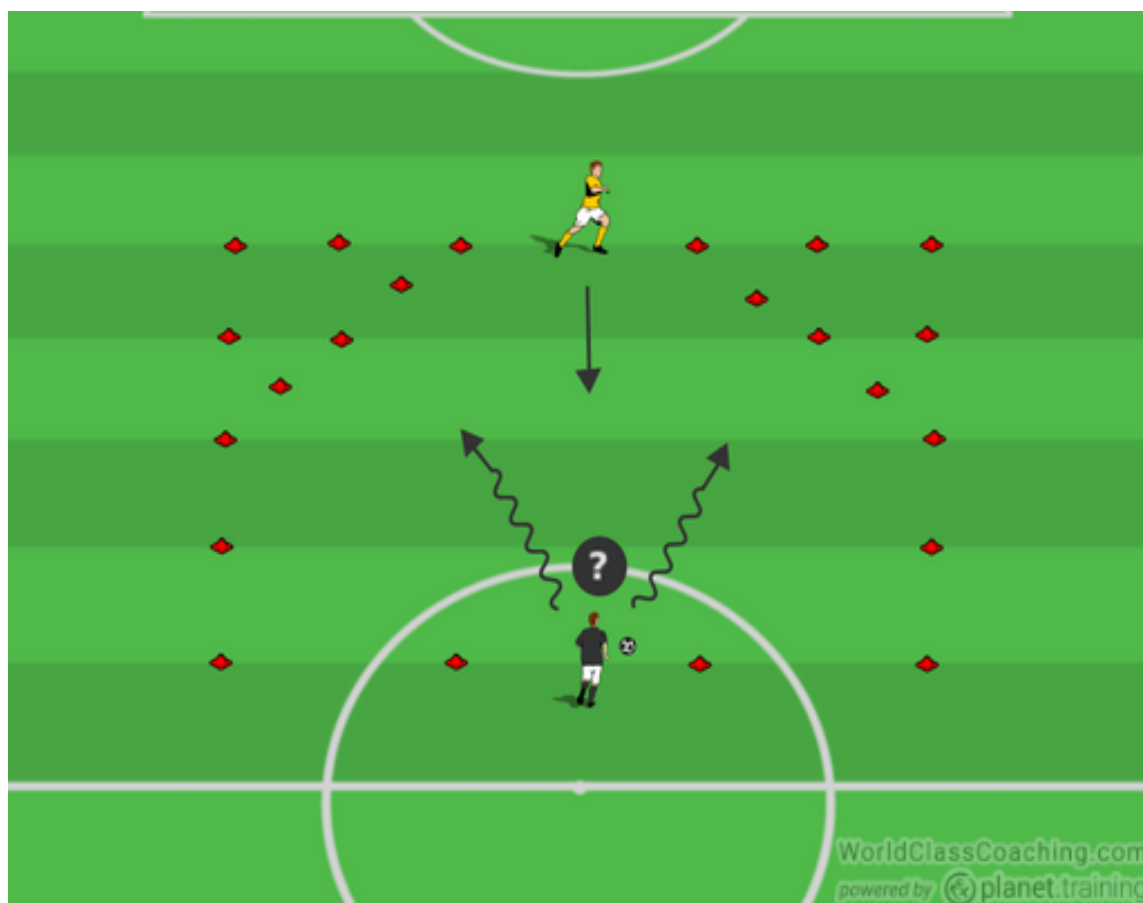
working on amplitude and width



1 VS 1 GAME "ACHIEVE THE SPACE"

3rd OPTION

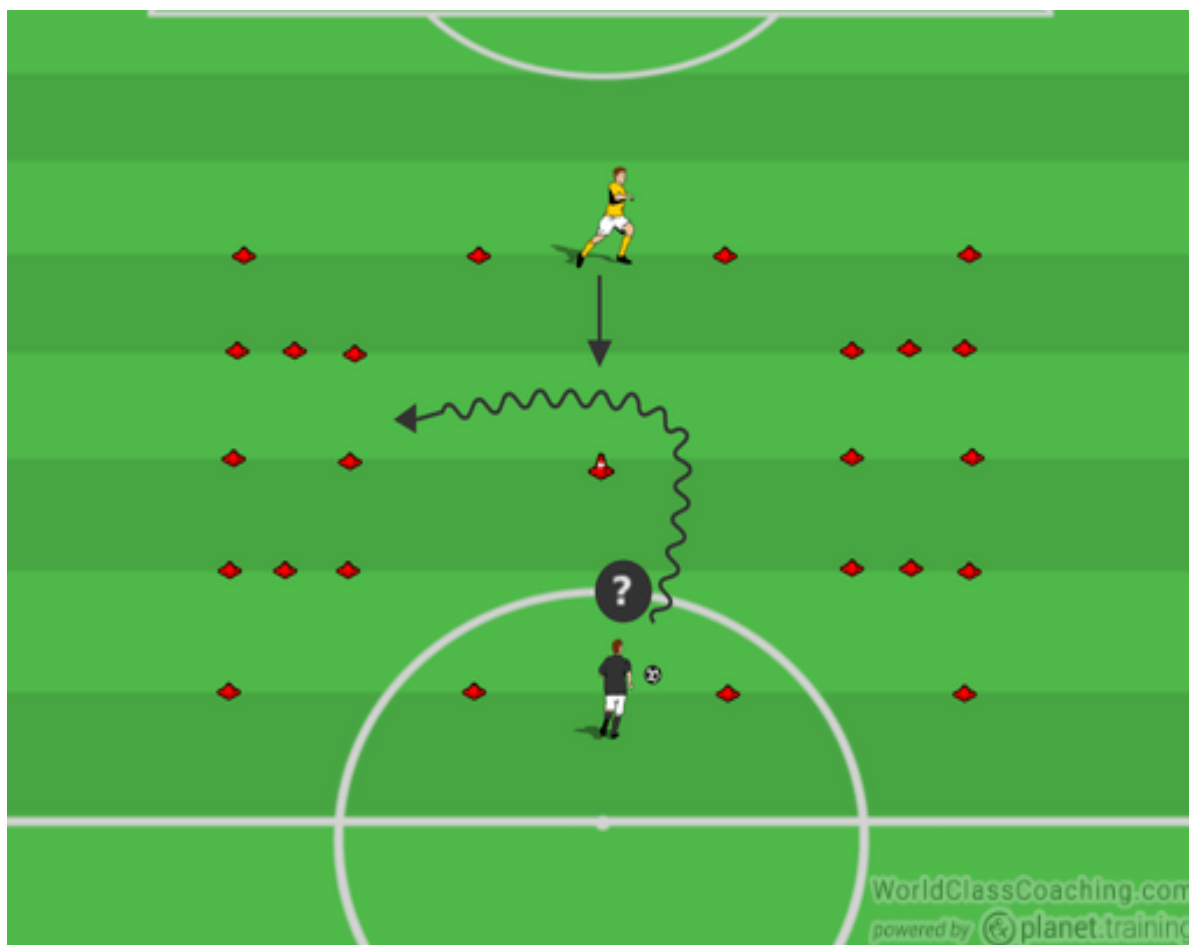
working on spaces located on lateral sides
(45° working angle)



1 VS 1 GAME "ACHIEVE THE SPACE"

4th OPTION

working on spaces located on lateral sides (with change of direction)



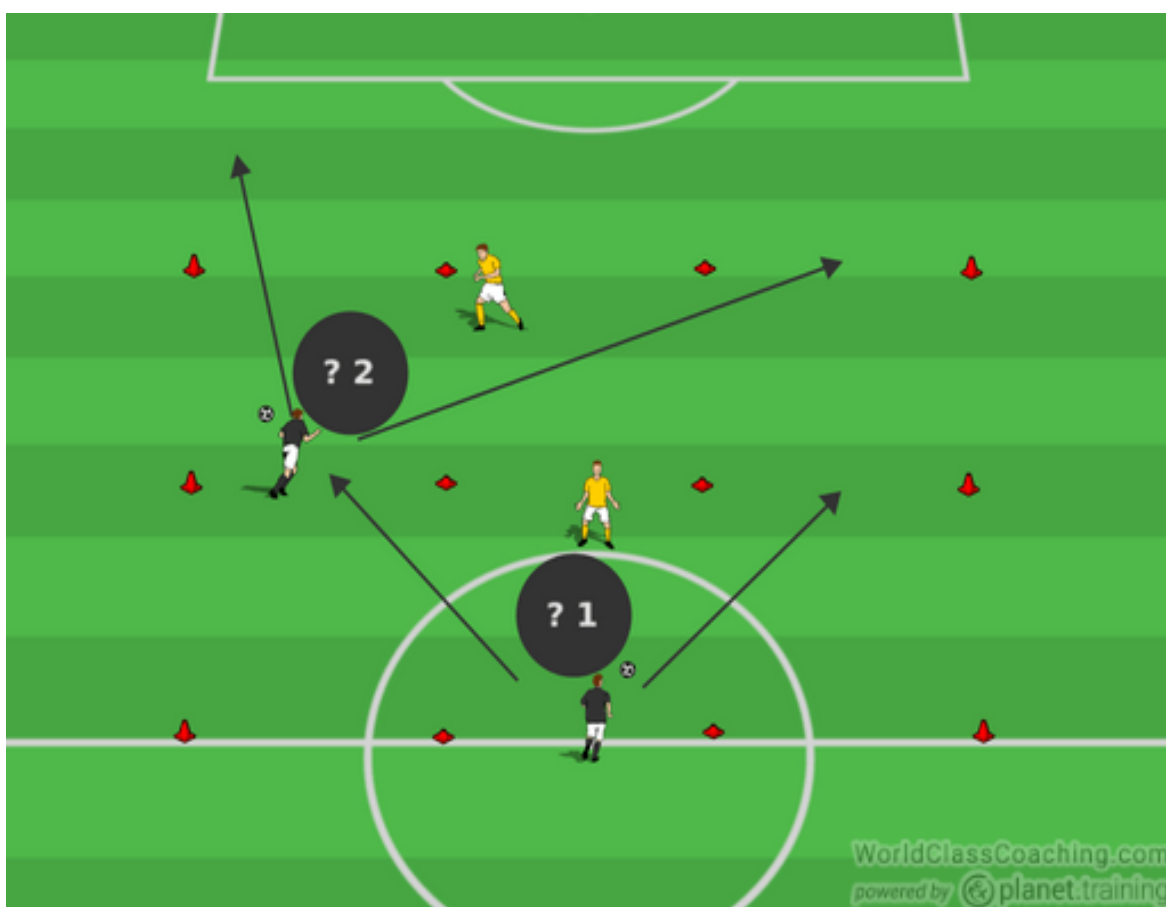
1 VS 1 GAME "ACHIEVE THE SPACE"

5th OPTION

This exercise is the same exercise I proposed without the ball.

We already know what has changed putting the ball in the game.

The striker has to cross over two lines to score the point; if a defender wins the ball, the point is scored by the yellow team.



1 VS 1 GAME "ACHIEVE THE SPACE"

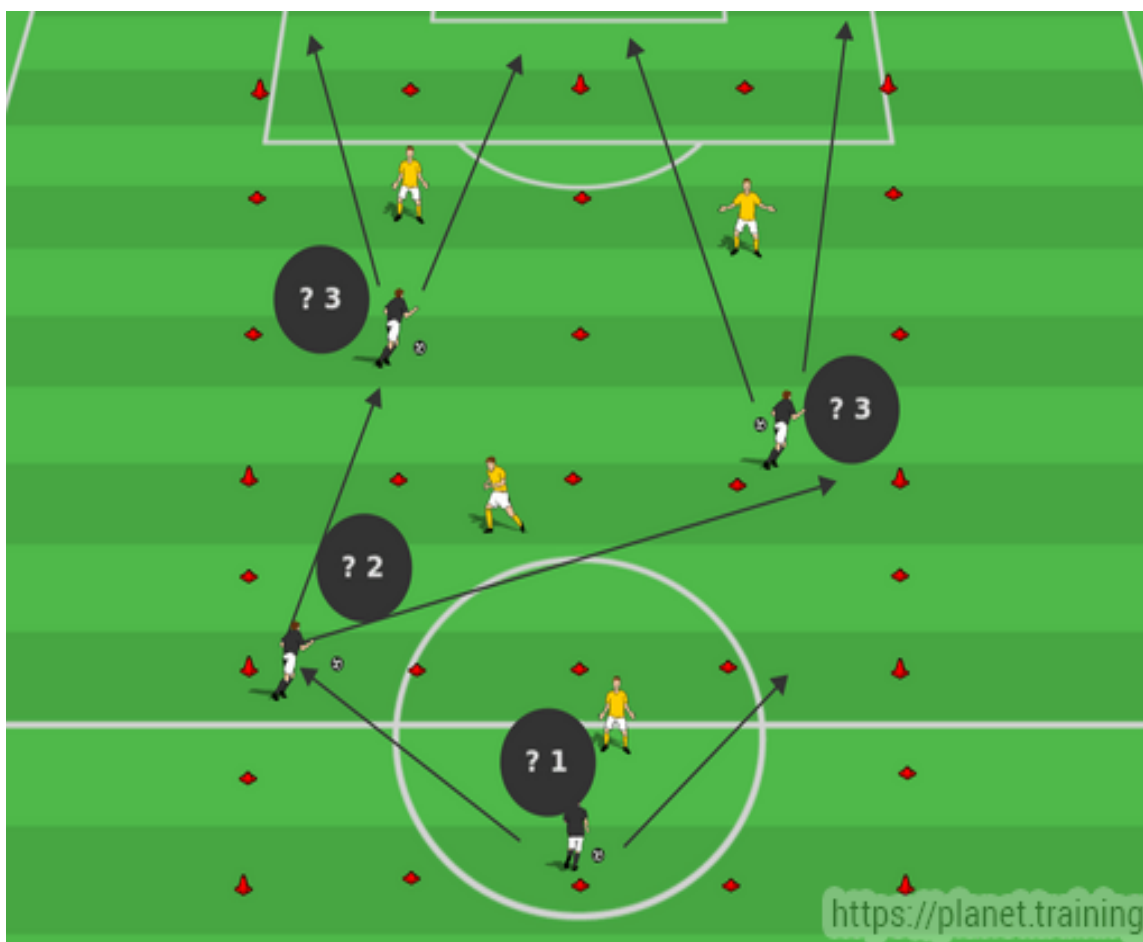
6th OPTION

This exercise is the same exercise I proposed without the ball.

We already know what has changed putting the ball in the game.

The striker has to cross three lines to score the point; if a defender wins the ball, a point is scored by the yellow team.

An additional concern for the stiker in the third space: he has to choose where to play based on his favorite foot (to be more comfortable in being able to dribble over the last line).



CHAPTER 3

**Exercises with ball for improvement in passing the opposite player,
achievement of the spaces, finding the goals, and scoring**

1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOAL”

Area Size:

Different geometric shapes (square, rectangle) depending on the focus. Vary the width or length size depending on the age and technical quality of the players.

Time:

5-10 minutes

Objectives:

- To create the space
- To run fast in the space created
- Movement of the players related to the defenders
- Just a little bit of fitness work involving change of direction
- Ball mastery during a duel
- To score in the goals

Execution:

This exercise is about the ability to create the space possessing the ball, in relation to the decisions of the defenders and the goal's location.

The striker has to score in the goals, but if the defender wins the ball, he has to dribble over the line behind the striker.

The difficulties are increasing because now we have also to manage the ball and to be aware of the position of the goals.

It is important to play a very fast game (so 10-15 minute max, related to age of the player and area size).

1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOAL”

1st OPTION

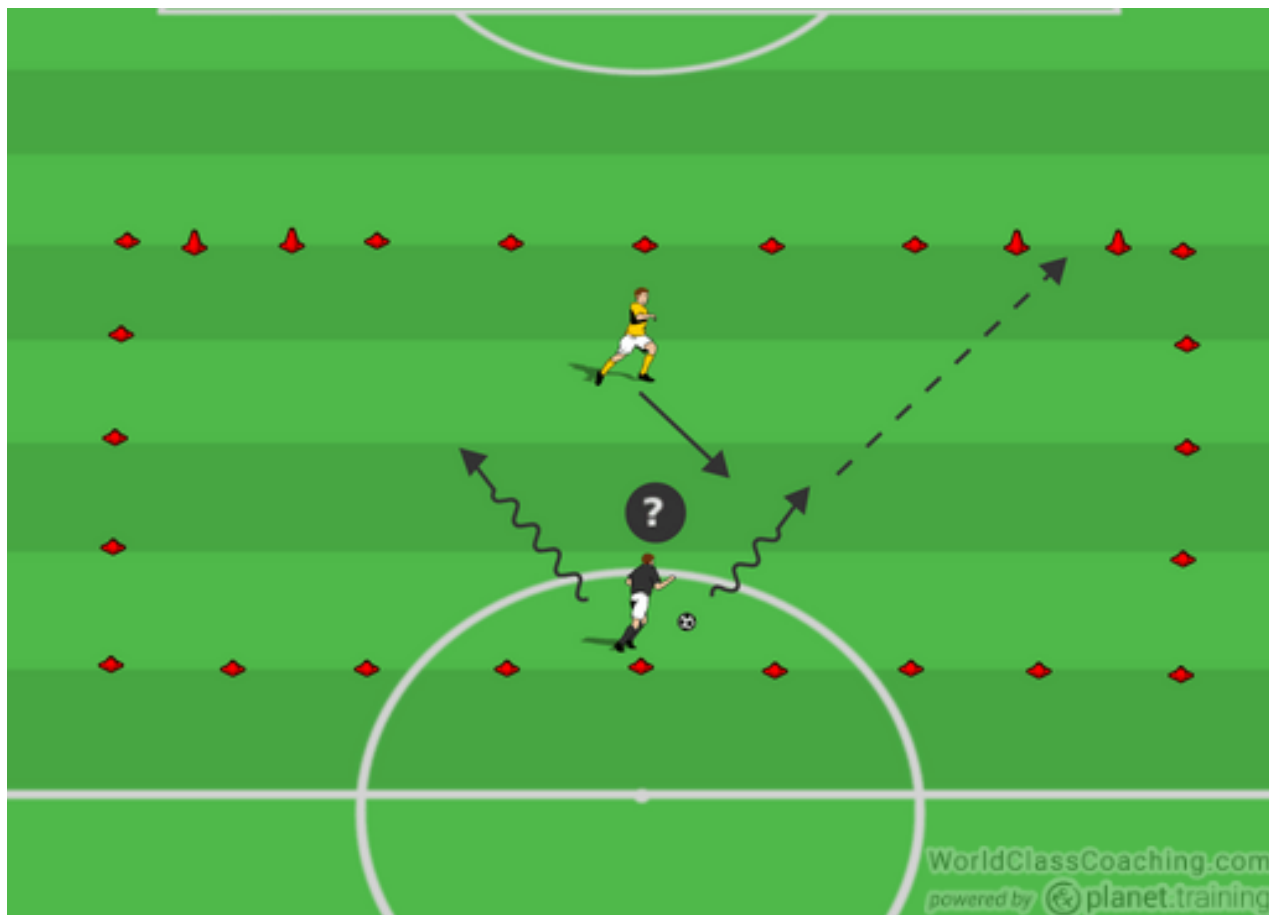
Working on length



1 VS 1 GAME "SCORE IN THE GOAL"

2nd OPTION

working on width

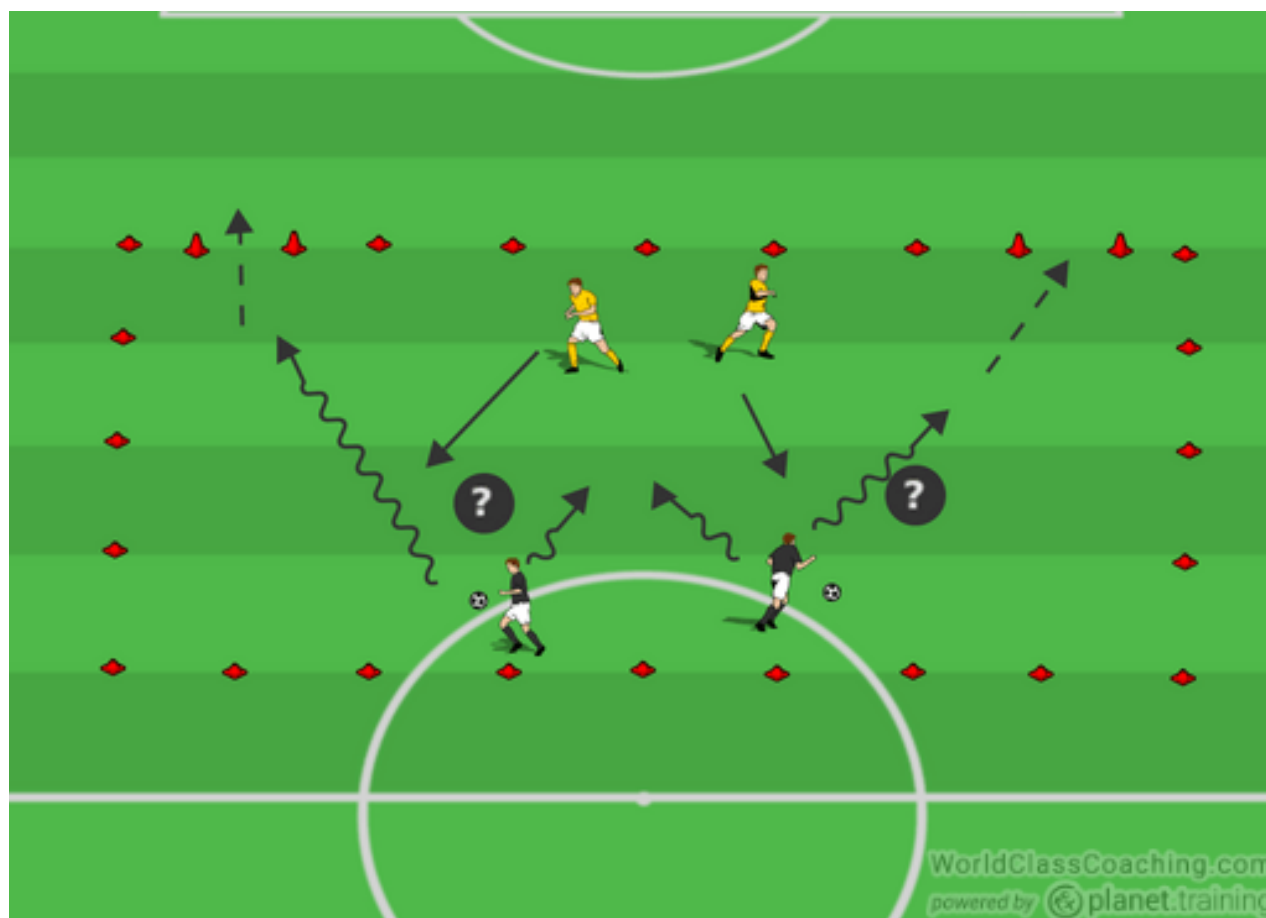


1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOAL”

3rd OPTION

working on two 1vs1 on the same field

Difficulties are increasing because the players have to maintain a higher level of attention. Furthermore, in this exercise there is deep work on peripheral vision.



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS”

Area Size:

Different geometric shapes (square, rectangle) depending on the focus. Vary the width or length size depending on the age and technical quality of the players.

Time:

15-20 minutes

Objectives:

- Movement of the players related to the opposite player
- Just a little bit of fitness work about change of direction
- Ball mastery during a duel
- To score in the goals

Execution:

This exercise is about the ability to create space and score in the goals possessing the ball, in relation to the decision of the defender and goal's location.

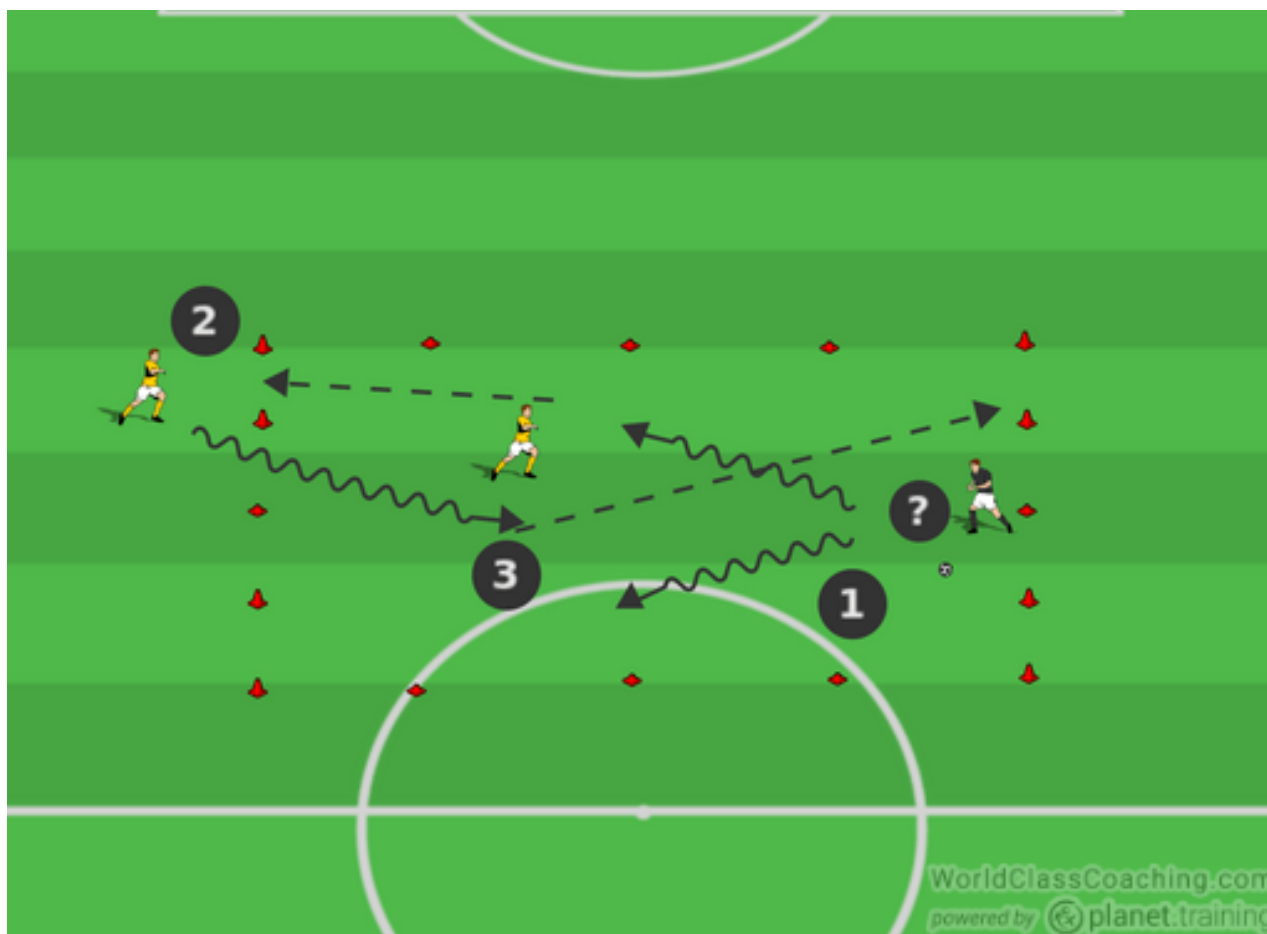
- The striker has to score in the goals, but if the defender wins the ball, the defender has to score in the goals behind the striker (**num. 1** in the picture).
- After the striker scores in a goal, a player behind the goal will start another offensive action; the first striker becomes the defender (**num. 2** in the picture).
- Same exercise of point n°. 1 but with the player that was striker becomes defender (**num. 3** in the picture).

1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS”

BASIC EXERCISE

The difficulties are increasing because now the striker has also to manage the ball, to be aware of the position of the goals, and to be ready to stop the opponent player that will start a new action (so we can talk a little bit about offensive – defensive transition).

It is important to play a very fast game (so 30-45 minute max, related to age of the player and area size).



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS”

PROGRESSION

This exercise is a teaching progression of the previous ones, but we have a vertical progression of 1v1.

- The striker has to score in the goals, but if the defender wins the ball, he has to counterattack in the goals behind the striker (**num. 1** in the picture).
- After the striker scores in a goal, the defender has to run to play another 1v1 against another striker (**num. 2** in the picture).
- The player behind the goal will start another offensive action; so now the player who was striker now defends (**num. 3** in the picture).
- A new 1v1 is taking place (**num. 4** in the picture).

1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS”

INTERMEDIATE EXERCISE

The difficulties are almost the same as the previous exercise, but now we are really talking about transition.

It is important to play a very fast game (so 30-45 minutes max, related to age of the player and area size).



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS”

PROGRESSION - VARIATION

This exercise is a teaching progression of the previous ones, but we have a rotating direction of 1v1.

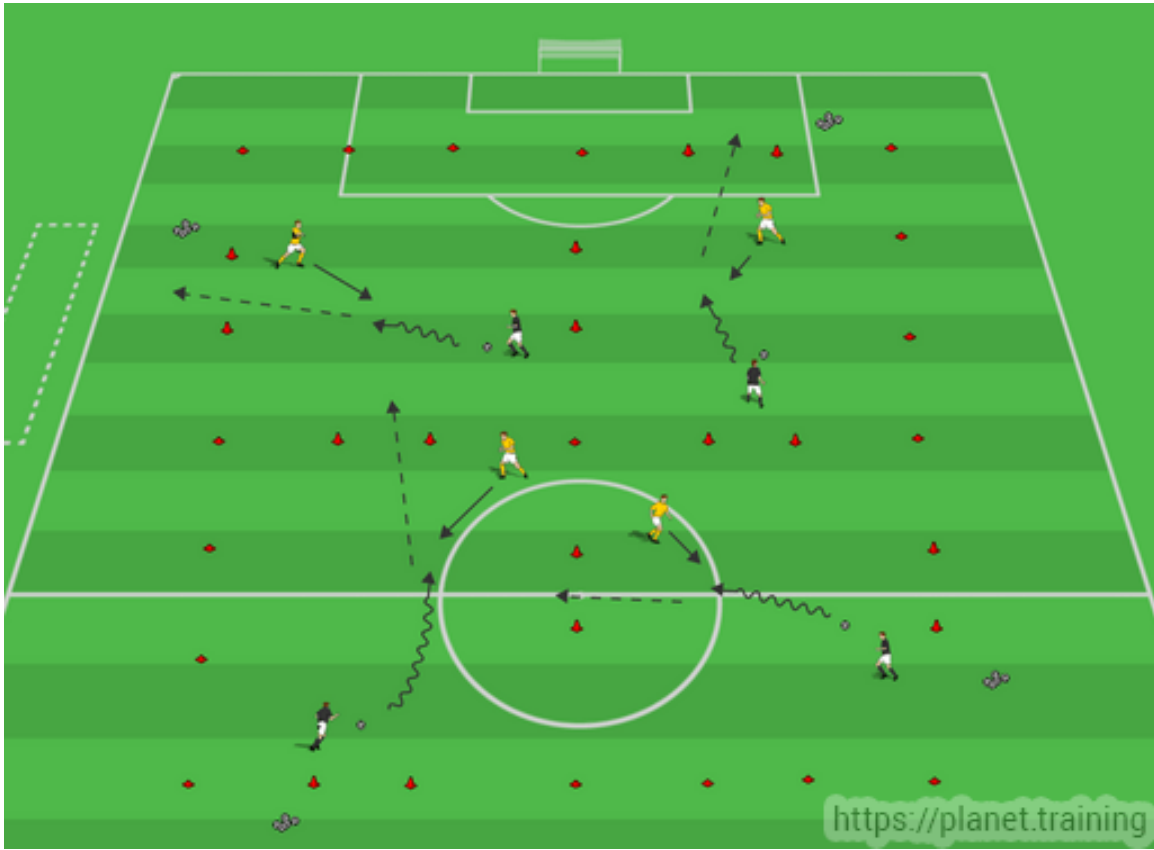
The players have to be always inside the same field during the exercise.

It is a simply 1vs1 game, but we have to score and then to wait for the ball that is coming through the goal of the field nearest to ours.

Then, we have to try to score again.

The difficulties are almost the same of the previous exercise, but now we have to maintain a high level of attention (looking forward for another ball that is coming).

It is important to play a very fast game (so 30-45 minutes max, related to age of the players and area size).



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS”

VARIATION

This exercise is similar to the previous ones, but now the problem is the time.

Players have to play a 1v1 for a period of time chosen by the coach; after the coach stops play, we have to count the goals that each team has scored (black team and yellow team).

The players have to be always inside the same field during the exercise.

The difficulties are almost the same of the previous exercise, but now we have time pressure (a very important parameter in football).



CHAPTER 4

Exercises with ball for improvement in getting past the opposite player, achievement of the spaces, finding the goals, and scoring (with GK)

1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS” + GK

Area Size:

Different geometric shapes (square, rectangle) depending on the focus. Vary the width or length size depending on the age and technical quality of the players.

Time:

10-15 minutes

Objectives:

- To create the space
- To run fast in the space created
- To get past the opposite player
- Movement of the players related to the defender
- Just a little bit of fitness work involving change of direction
- Ball mastery during a duel
- To score in the big goals
- Work on fakes

Execution:

This exercise is about the ability to create the space and score in the goals possessing the ball, in relation to the decision of the defender and the goal's location.

The striker has to score in the goals, but if the defender wins the ball, he has to score in the goals behind the striker.

After the striker scores in a goal, a player behind the goal will start another offensive action; so now the striker becomes the defender.

Same exercise of point n°. 1 but with the player that was striker becoming the defender.

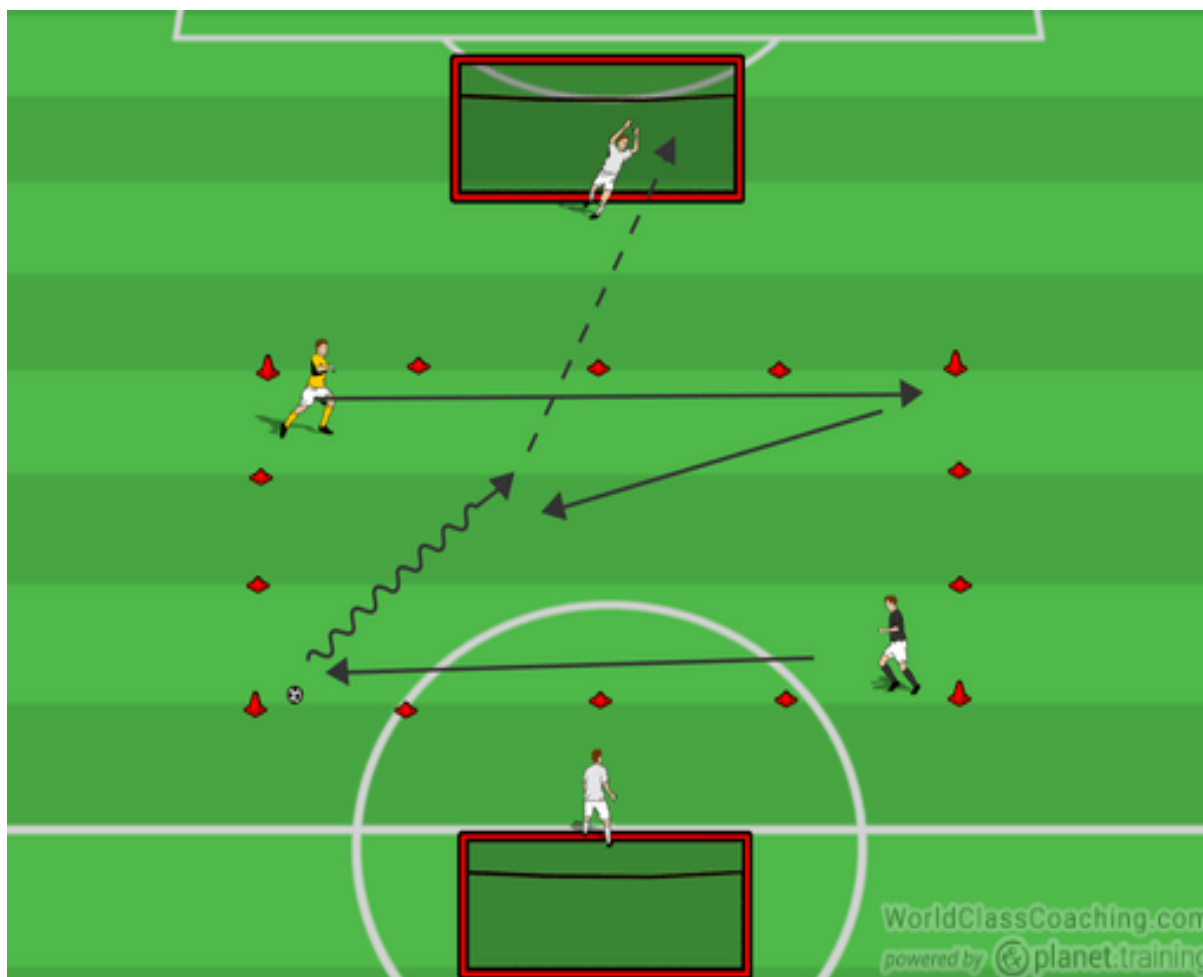
The difficulties are increasing because now we have also to manage the ball, to be aware of the position of the goals and to be ready to stop the opponent player that will start a new action (so we can talk a little bit about offensive – defensive transition).

It is important to play a very fast game (so 30-45 minutes max, related to age of the player and area size).

1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS” + GK

1st OPTION

Horizontal run and vertical game.



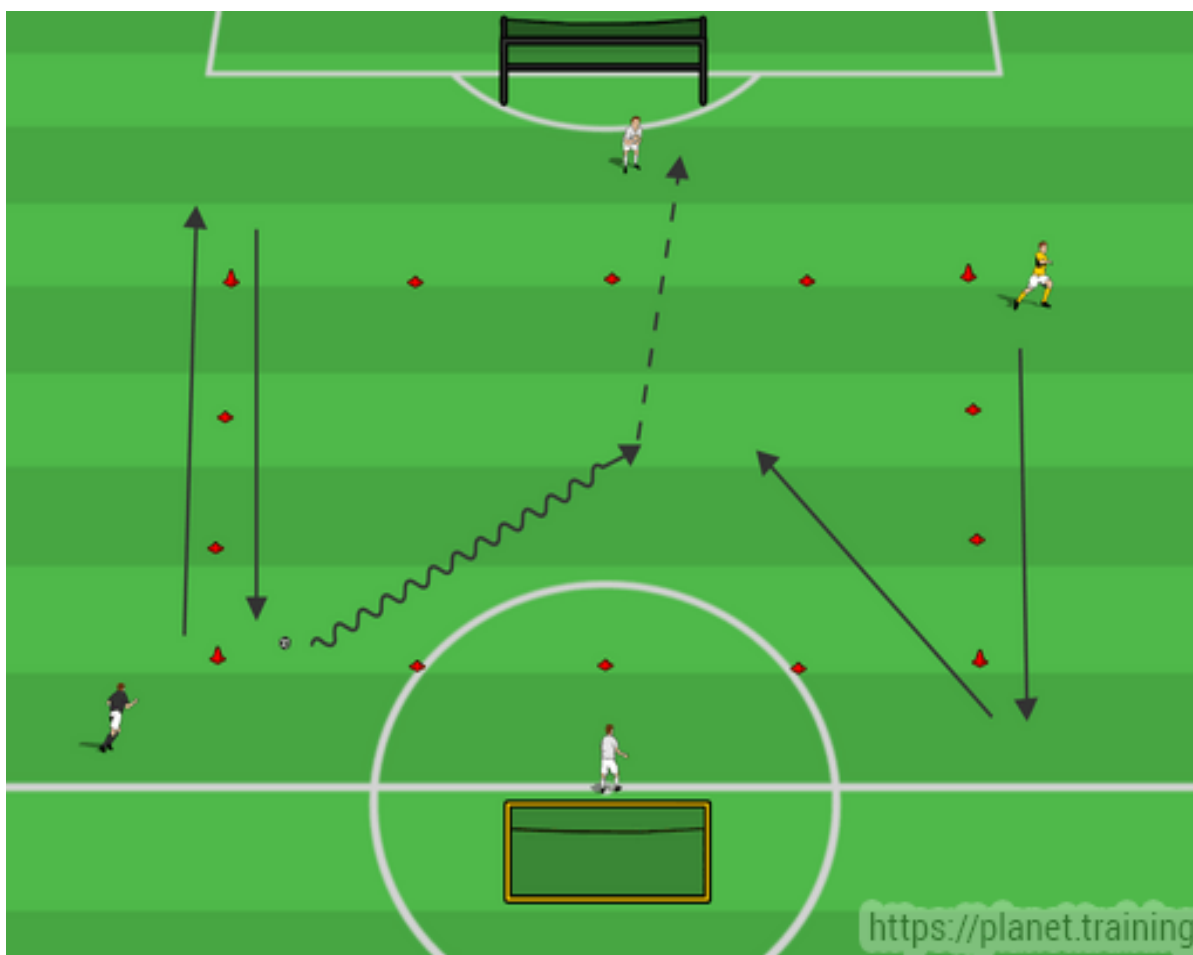
1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS” + GK

2nd OPTION

If we want to be more specific we can have different colored goals.

In this variation we also have changed the lines of movement (from horizontal movement in the previous exercise to vertical movement in this one).

It is more difficult for the defender because he will have to chase the striker. For the striker it is simpler because if he is very quick the path to the goal is free.



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS” + GK

3rd OPTION

The players can score in the big goals or in the little goals.

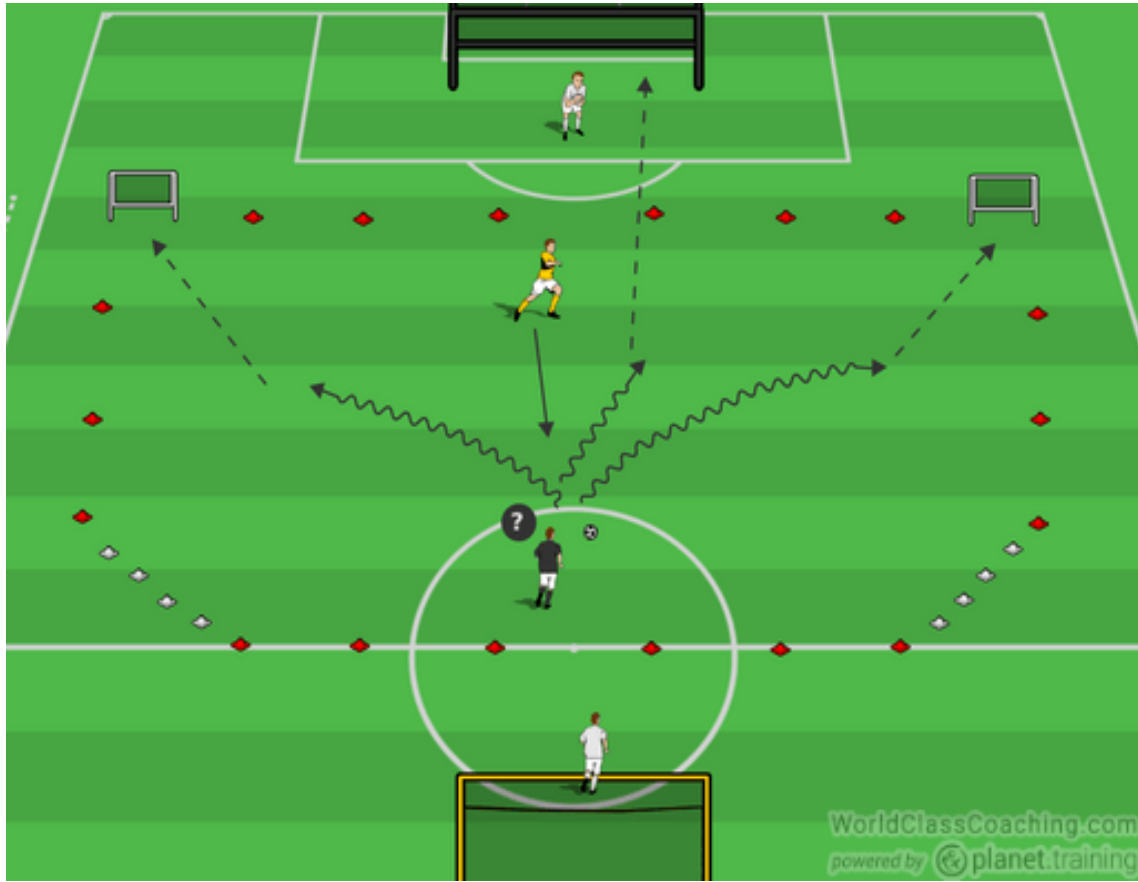
Now we are working on 1vs1 with GK, but we also have the possibility to score in the little goals.

This work is about a situation that we can find a lot of times during a match: the striker want to shoot, but he can't, so he has to open the game up laterally.

The difficulties are increasing because the striker has more possibilities to score (big goal 2 points, little goals 1 point).

If the defender wins the ball, he has to go to score in the big goal or maybe to dribble across the white line placed on lateral corners of the field (as if he is counterattacking).

This exercise is also work on transition, because the roles can change in a second.

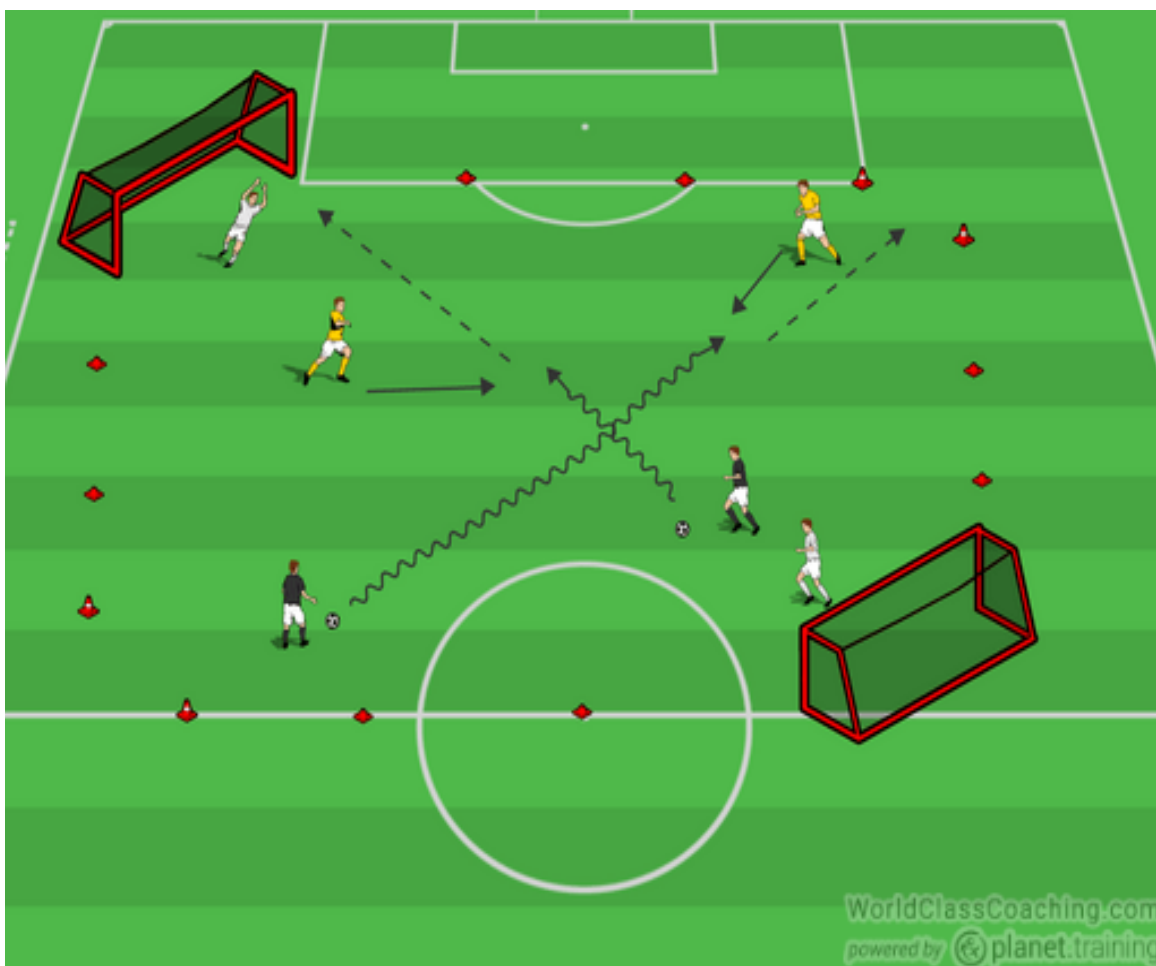


1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS” + GK

4th OPTION

Two players are working on 1v1 with GK and two players are working on 1vs1 with little goals.

Difficulties are increasing because the players have to maintain a higher level of attention; in this exercise there is a deep work on peripheral vision.



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS” + GK + TWO 1VS1

5th OPTION

Two players are working on 1v1 with GK and four players are working on 1vs1 with little goals, in two different smaller fields.

This exercise is about the ability to create the space and score in the goals possessing the ball, in relation with decision of the GK and goal's location.

- The striker has to score in the big goals, but if the defender wins the ball, he has to score in the big goal behind the striker (**Num. 1** in the picture)
- After the striker shoots in a goal, the GK will start another offensive action passing the ball to one of the defenders positioned in one of the lateral little pitches (**Num. 2** in the picture)
- In the little pitch in which we have the defender receiving the ball from GK, we are going to play 1v1, while on the opposite lateral pitch the defender has to bring a ball and start another 1vs1 (**Num. 3** in the picture)

The difficulties are increasing because now the players don't know beforehand where they will play.

It is important to play a very fast game (so 30-45 minutes max, related to age of the player and area size).

It is also important to have quick decisions by the GK to make the exercise run quickl.



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS” + GK + TWO 1VS1

6th OPTION

Two players are working on 1v1 with GK and four players are working on 1v1 with little goals, in two different small fields.

This exercise is about the ability to create the space and score in the goals possessing the ball, in relation with decision of the GK and goal's location.

- The striker has to score in the big goals, but if the defender wins the ball, he has to score in the big goal behind the striker. Meanwhile, GKs are passing balls to each lateral side (it has to be chosen beforehand by the coach) (**Num. 1** in the picture)
- In the little pitches in which we have the defenders receiving balls from GKs we are going to play 1vs1, after a little work on speed ladder before to receive the ball (**Num. 2** in the picture)

It is important to play a very fast game (so 30-45 minutes max, related to age of the player and area size).

It is important also to have quick decisions by the GK to make the exercise very fast. GKs have to be very quick because after the pass they have to be ready to receive the shot from the striker.



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS AND DEFEND YOUR GOALS” + GK

7th OPTION

Two players are working on 1v1 with GK and four players are working on 1v1 with little goals, in two different small fields.

This exercise is about the ability to create the space and score in the goals possessing the ball, in relation with decision of the GK and goal's location.

- Defenders and strikers have to work just a little bit on speed ladder; after that defenders pass the ball to the strikers which creates a 1v1 situation; one GK (chosen previously by the coach) has to pass the ball to the striker too (**Num. 1** in the picture);
- After the strikers' ball control we are going to play three 1vs1: one situation is played in the central pitch (where the players have to score in the big goals) and two others 1vs1 are played in lateral pitches (**Num. 2** in the picture);



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS” - LET'S TRAIN GKs

Area Size:

Different geometric shapes (square, rectangle) depending on the exercise; size depends on age and technical quality of the players.

Time:

10-15 minutes

Objectives:

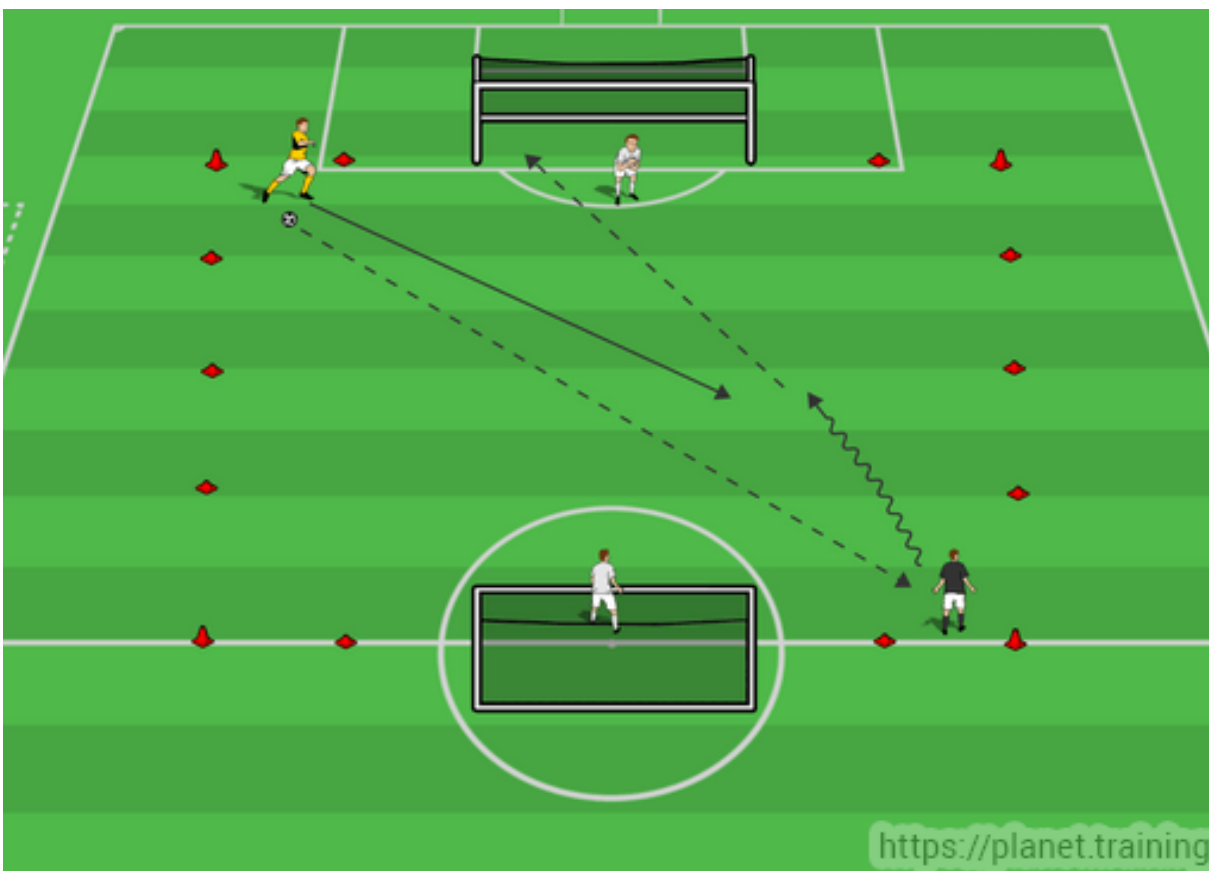
- We have to train GKs, so we have to play a very fast game to let them achieve experience playing a lot of different situations
- To create the space
- To run fast in the space created
- To overpass the opposite player
- Movement of the players related to the opposite player
- Just a little bit of fitness work about change of direction
- Ball mastery during a duel
- To score in the big goals
- Work on fakes

1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS” - LET'S TRAIN Gks

1st OPTION

Defender has to pass the ball to the striker; then the striker has to score in the goal.

If the defender wins the ball, he has to score in the other goal.



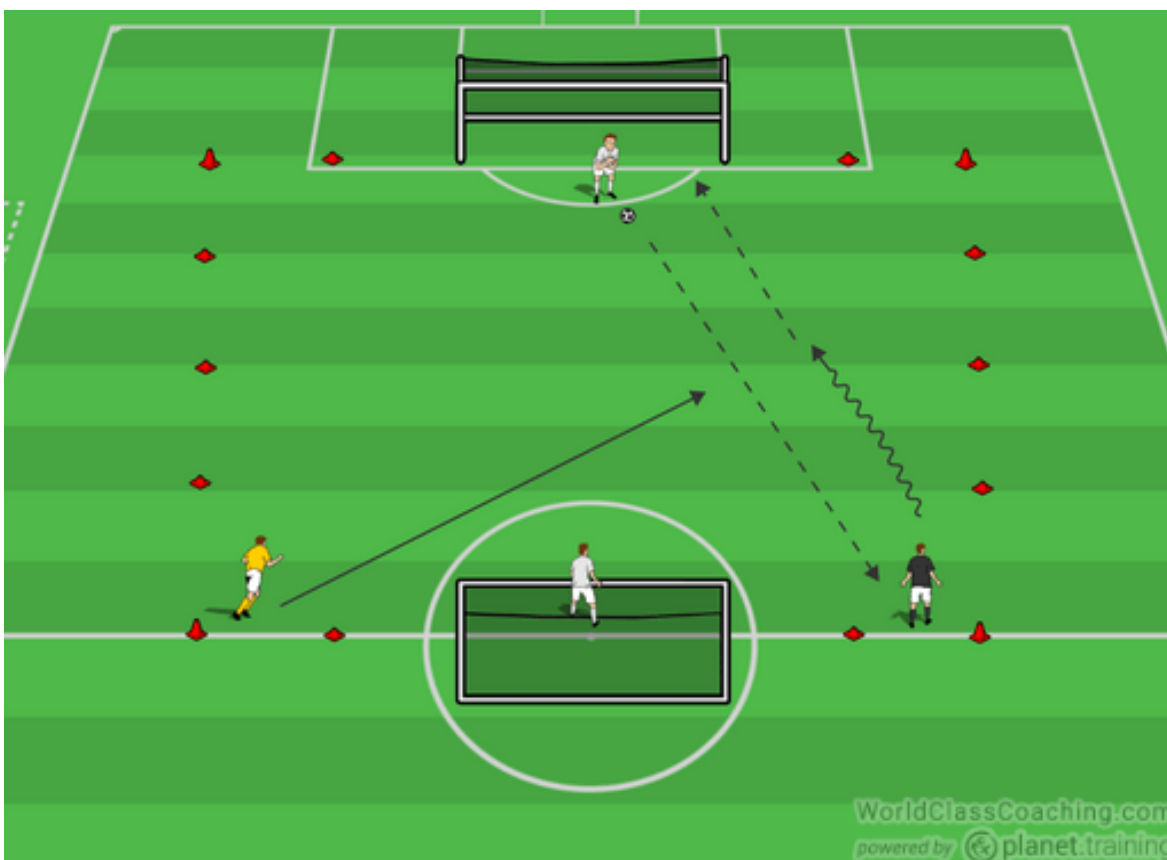
1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS” - LET'S TRAIN Gks

2nd OPTION

GK has to pass the ball to the striker; then the striker has to score in the goal while the defender attempts to stop him.

This exercise is more difficult for the defender than for the striker.

If the defender wins the ball, he has to score in the other goal.



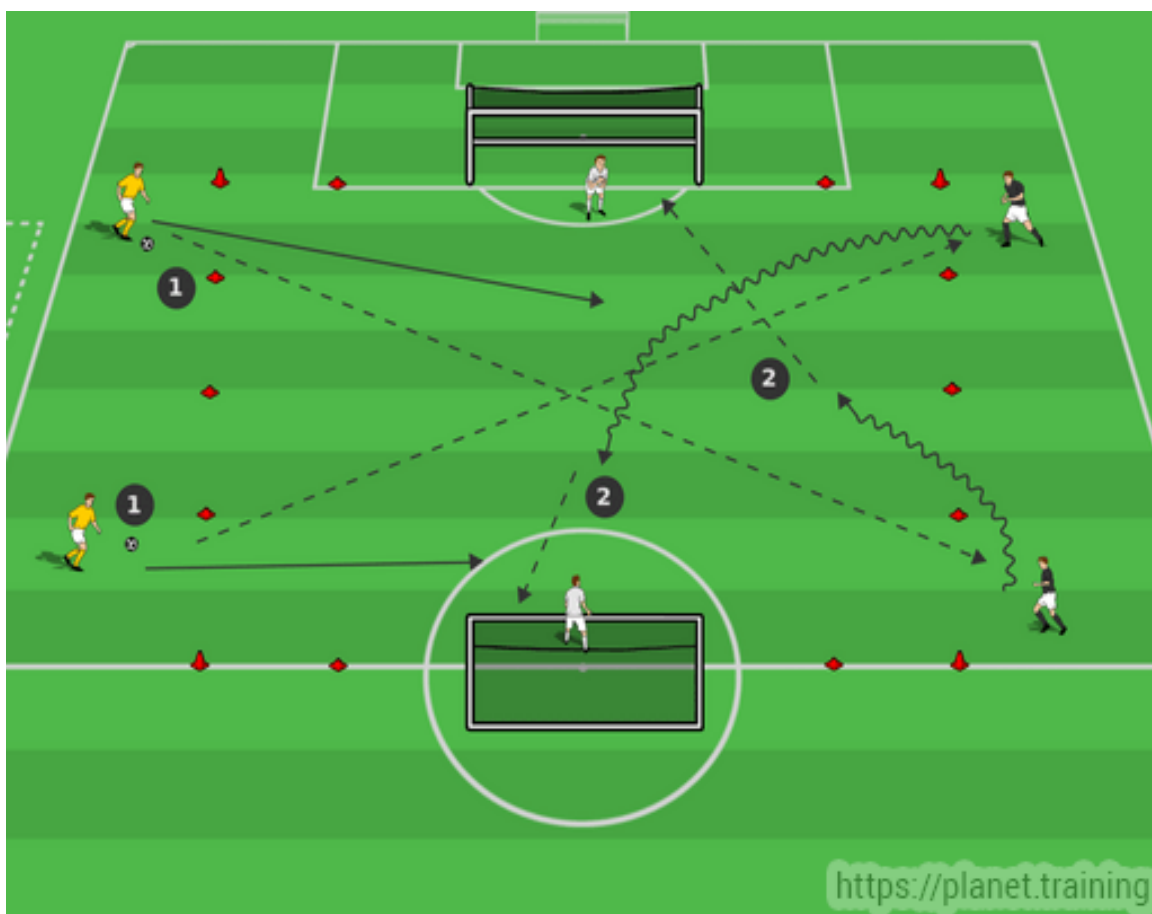
1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS” - LET'S TRAIN GKs

3rd OPTION

We have defenders on one side and strikers on another one side of the pitch.

- Defenders have to pass the ball to strikers (**Num.1** in the picture)
- Strikers have to score in the goal while defenders are going to stop them (**Num. 2** in the picture)

If the defender wins the ball, he has to score in the other goal.



1 VS 1 GAME “SCORE IN THE GOALS” - LET'S TRAIN GKs

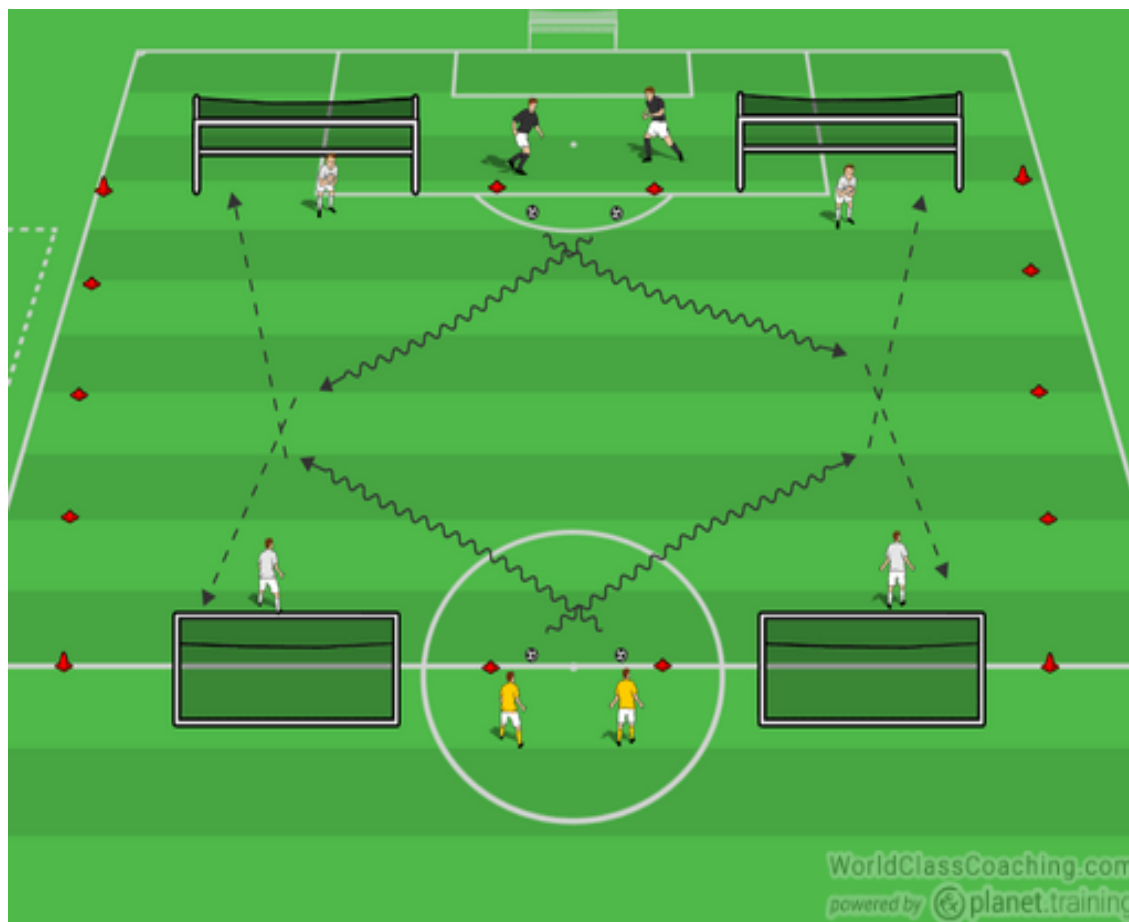
4th OPTION

This is a time-related exercise.

Black team is playing against yellow team; players just have to go to score as many goals as possible (in a time limit chosen by the coach).

Coach can give them rules about the shot (right foot? left foot?) or the dribbling (one touch and shoot? two touches and shoot? three touches and shoot?); time rules are always the best (do we have 3 seconds to shoot? 2 seconds? 5 seconds?)

We can do this exercise with a high number of players in the team, but we need a minimum of 4 Gks.



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