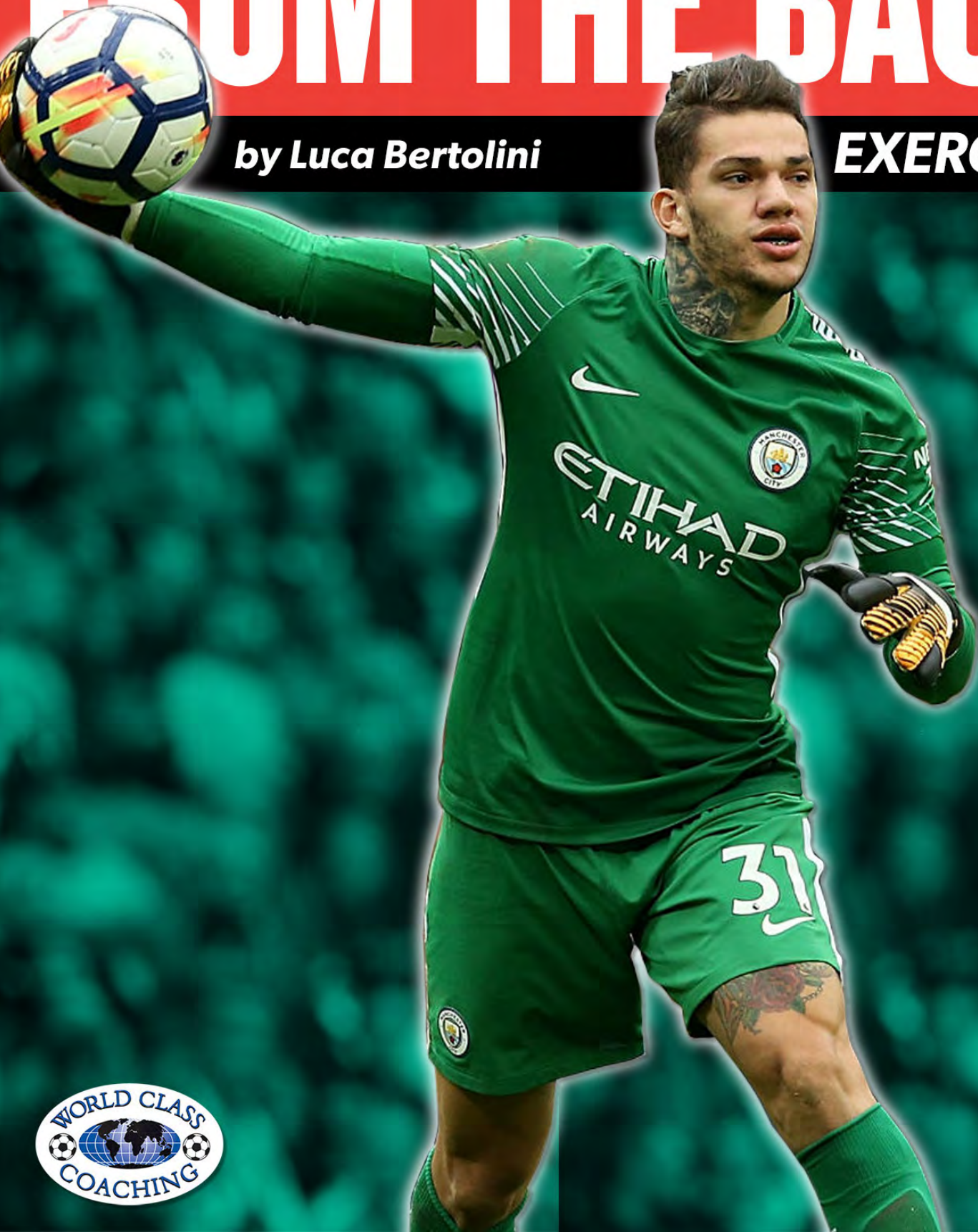


BUILD UP FROM THE BACK

by Luca Bertolini

EXERCISES 1



Build Up From The Back

Exercises 1

By

Luca Bertolini

Published by

WORLD CLASS COACHING

First published October, 2018 by
WORLD CLASS COACHING 12851 Flint Street Overland Park, KS 66213 (913) 402-0030

Copyright © WORLD CLASS COACHING 2018

All rights reserved. No parts of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher.

Authors – Luca Bertolini
Editor - Tom Mura
Cover Art By - Barrie Smith



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Goalkeeper Distribution	6
Distribution Along the Flanks	20
Play Out Switching the Side	29
Coaching La Salida Lavolpiana (The La Volpe Exit)	36
Possession, Rondos and Position Games	48

Introduction

This is the second volume of the building up from the back topic and the first of two about the exercises to coach this phase of play. This first book includes:

- 1) Technical exercises to coach the player technical skills, the individual tactics and the passing pattern of play to build up and to play out, breaking the first line of the opposition without active pressure (air-bodies are the opponents at this stage).
- 2) Rondos, possession and position games to work on the player tactical skills to build up and play out against active pressure and to coach the reactions to the loss or the recovery of the ball.

Tactical exercises, real game situations and specific small-sided games will be included in the second volume.

Positional play is necessary to build up play from the back because it allows forward passes from the first third, it creates numerical advantages in the middle third with a defender or the fullbacks pushing forward, or it creates 1 v 1 duels up front. To build up from the back means to have a goal in mind.

The concept of "build up" could also last until the final stage of the attacking phase, just before a player is able to face the opposition goal and create a scoring chance; for this reason it is very important to break up the general concept and to understand how to coach the specific game situation of the building up from the back and of the playing out phases.

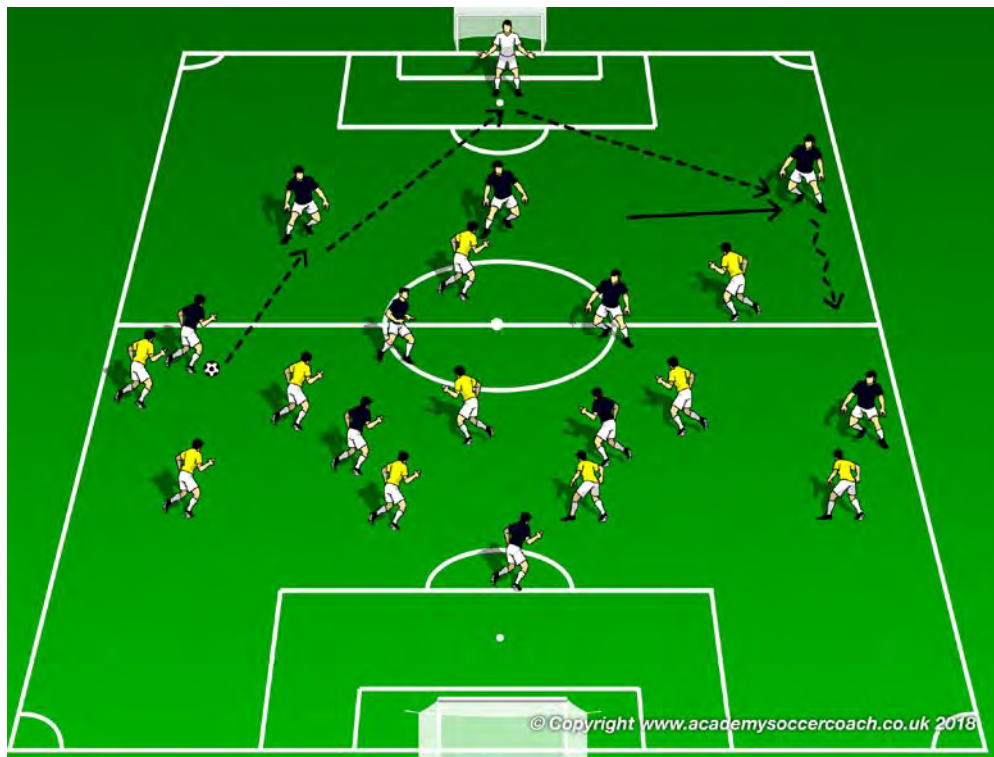
Build up from the back means the goalkeeper is in possession of a still ball or the defenders are not under active pressure, and the move has to be started.

- The center backs are usually positioned wide
- The fullbacks must be placed on wide and advanced positions
- The middle third has to be overload to ensure numerical advantage
- The wingers must make the pitch as wide as possible
- The forwards can both stay placed high on the pitch or drop back to help the advanced midfielders
- The back four or three don't have to be placed on the same imaginary line to provide passing options for the ball carrier, enabling the creation of triangles among them; this idea should work between the couple of fullbacks, of the center backs, and among them collectively too
- The players should be able to receive with a proper body shape to play forward as the ball is received; the posture must be angled toward the following pass or dribble direction
- The midfielders should create space for the defenders to dribble up if there's no pressure, attacking the opposition defense line when defending deep
- It has to create numerical advantages to play forward or to keep the possession if it's not possible to go up the pitch. This is the point of the phase where a second division is necessary:
 - a) If the possession direction is directed backwards, then we have to talk about "**build up to play out from the back**," as opposition pressure is supposed to be active (however strong or not)
 - b) If the possession direction is standing or it is directed forward, we then may talk about "**to build up play during the possession phase**"; this is the phase of play that should take the move to the final stage

Build up from the back



Build up to play out from the back



If the possession team must build up to play out from the back, that means the creation of a space in the middle third is not possible and the opposition pressure lines cannot be broken through.

The ball must be then play backwards, even through the goalkeeper, to move the opposition and to switch the side of play to try to go forward again.

Build up play during the possession phase



The building up of play means that the team in possession is trying to create a finishing chance wherever the ball is (inside the defense half or the attacking half).

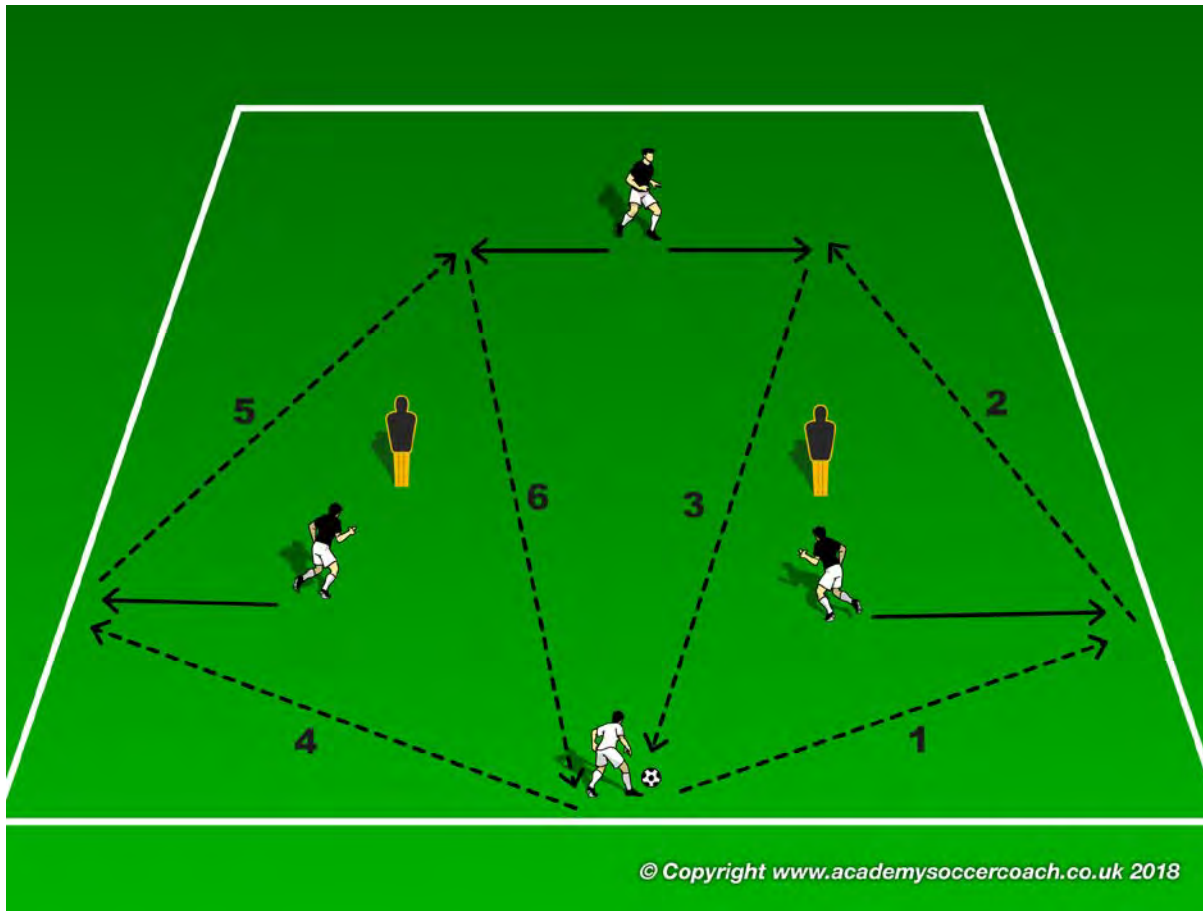
Whatever the differences among these different phases of play, some common key points are:

- 1) Depth is more decisive than width if the team wants to play forward
- 2) All the players should take part in this phase to circulate the ball, to create space, numerical and positional advantages to attack the opposition half
- 3) Look for individual solutions in the middle third
- 4) Keep the pitch as big as possible
- 5) Escape the marker with the right timing to receive and with the correct body shape.

Goalkeeper distribution (all the passing patterns of play aim to coach the short distribution)

The goalkeeper must be able to play targeted passes as well as to receive back passes, to control them and even to play with one touch; another important key point is the technical skills with both the feet to help the play out from the back if the team is under pressure. He must be able to recognize the better positioned teammate, who can receive without opposition pressure.

Exercise 1: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against two opponents



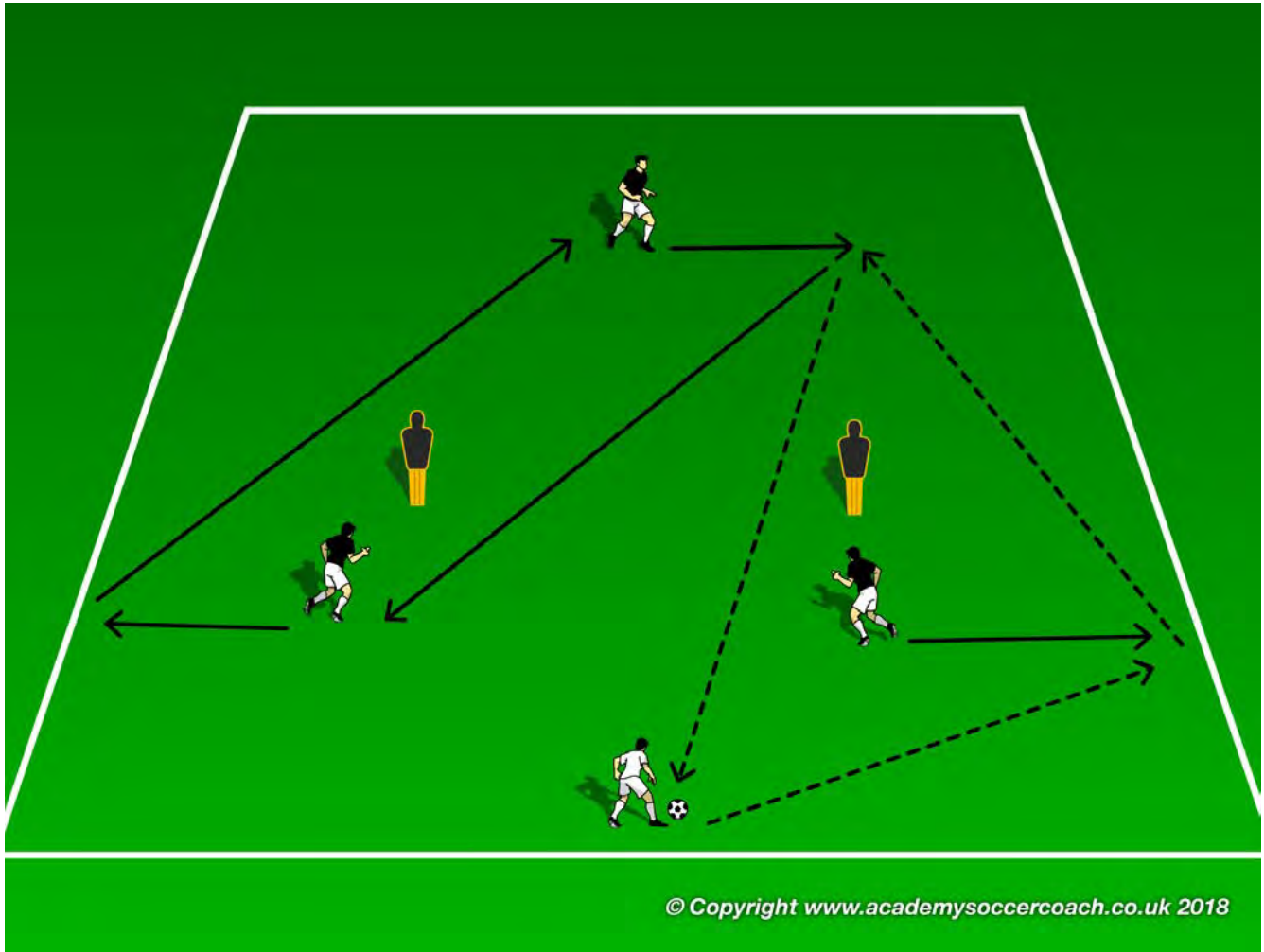
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; two air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate two opponents. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide to receive; the sequence starts from the right in the picture. As the first center back receives, the forward balance player must be unmarked at the back of the air-body; he receives and passes back to the goalkeeper, who carries on the sequence on the other side, and the balance player must be unmarked at the back of the opposite air-body to pass back again.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the goalkeeper can decide the side where to start the sequence time to time.

Eye on: play diagonal passes, be unmarked behind the air-body and pay attention to the timing of runs and passes.

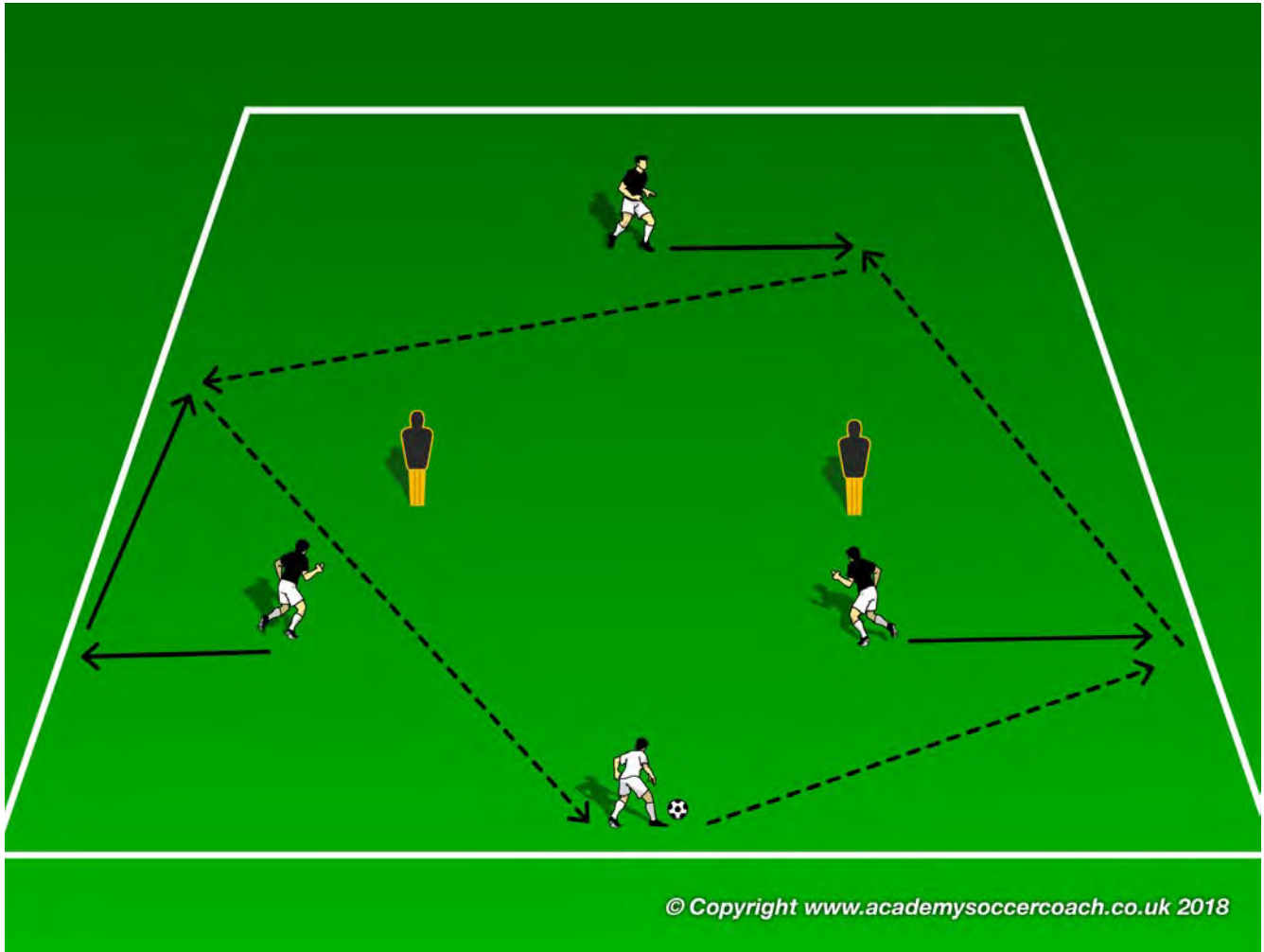
Exercise 2: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against two opponents



Set-up and Sequence: this is a variation of the previous practice. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide to receive; one center back receives and the forward balance player must be unmarked at the back of the air-body; he receives and passes back to the goalkeeper. The center back who didn't receive the ball must exchange the position with the balance player after the back pass.

Eye on: play diagonal passes, be unmarked behind the air-body, pay attention to the timing of run and passes and reaction speed to receive and pass or to move without the ball.

Exercise 3: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against two opponents



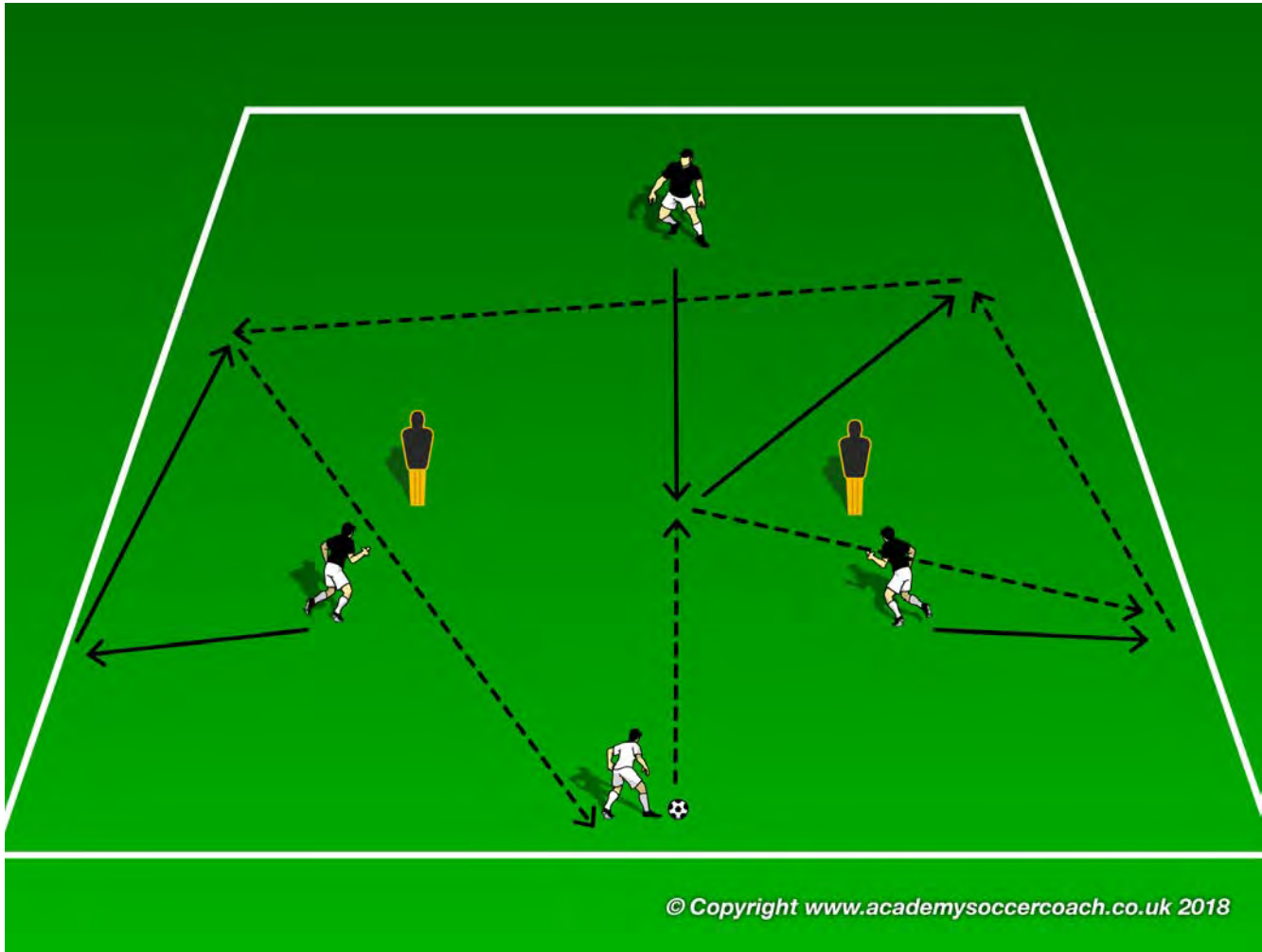
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; two air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate two opponents. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide to receive; the sequence starts from the right in the picture. As the first center back receives, the forward balance player must be unmarked at the back of the air-body; he receives and passes toward the opposite side where the other center back is unmarked sideways of the air-body. The sequence goes on with the back pass toward the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the goalkeeper can decide the side where to start the sequence time to time.

Eye on: play diagonal passes, be unmarked behind and sideways the air-body and pay attention to the timing of run and passes.

Exercise 4: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against two opponents



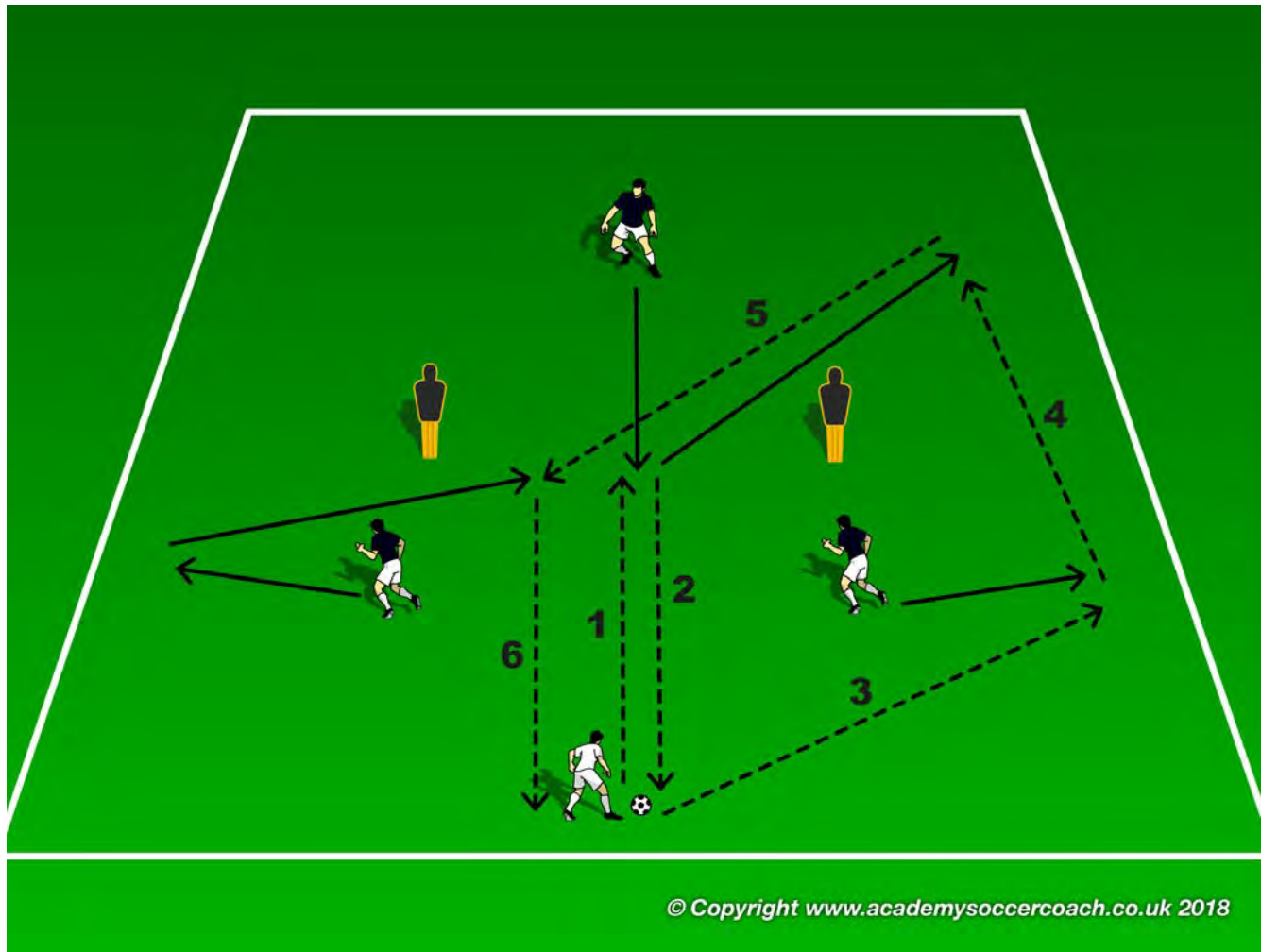
Set-up and Sequence: this is a variation of the previous practice. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide to receive. The sequence starts with the center balance player who drops back in between the air-bodies to receive the first pass. He then passes the ball toward one center back (on the right in the picture) who receives and sends a return pass behind the air-body. The balance player passes then toward the opposite side where the other center back is unmarked sideways of the air-body. The sequence goes on with a back pass toward the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the goalkeeper can decide the side where to start the sequence time to time.

Eye on: play vertical and diagonal passes, be unmarked behind and side-on to the air-body, pay attention to the dropping back timing, behind and sideways runs and passes.

Exercise 5: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against two opponents



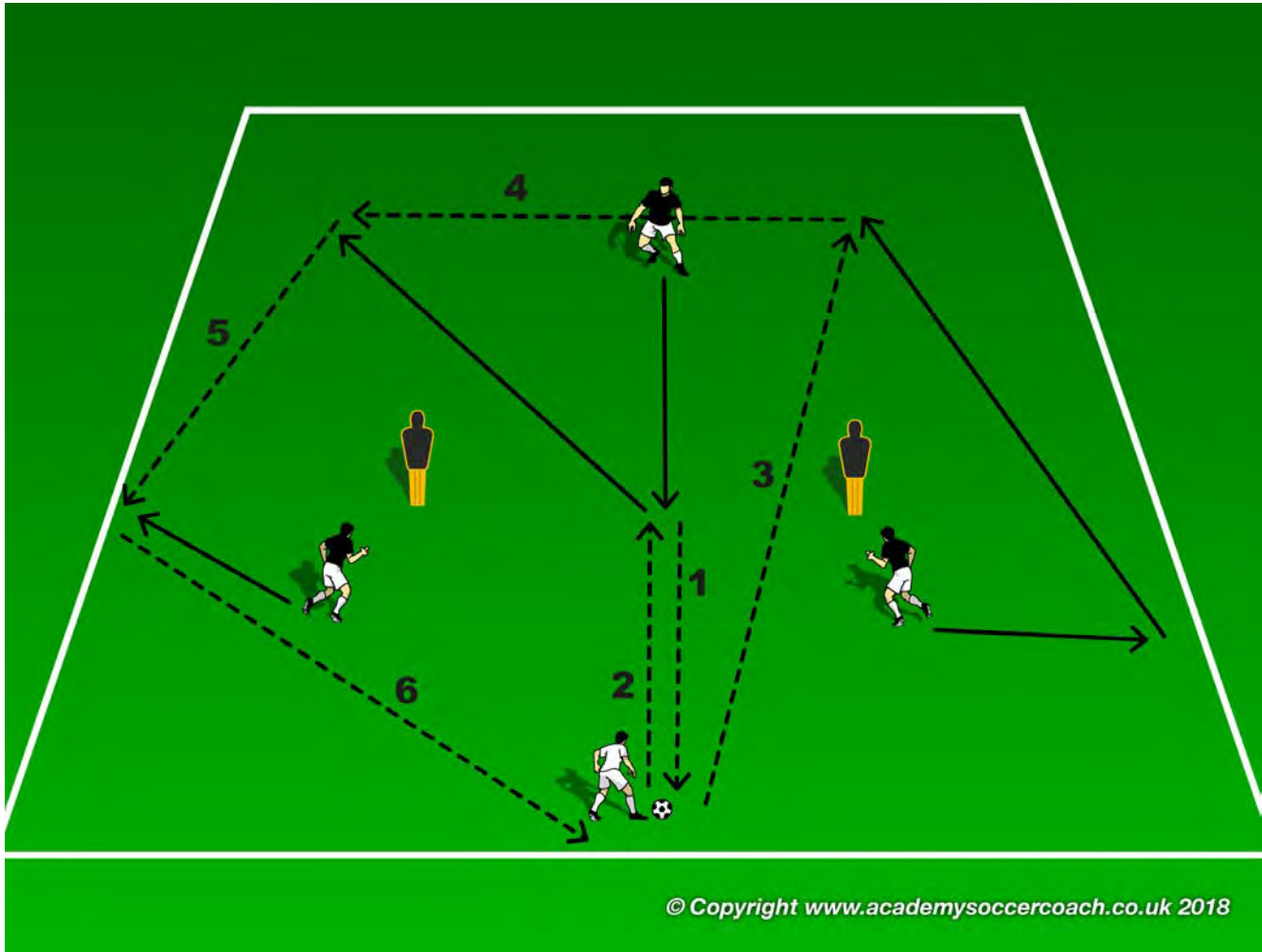
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; two air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate two opponents. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide to receive. The sequence starts with the center back player who drops back in between the air-bodies to play a wall pass with the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper passes out wide to the center back (on the right in the picture), who receives and he passes forward and behind the air-body, where the center back player receives. The opposite center back runs inside in front of the nearest air-body to receive and to pass back toward the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the goalkeeper can decide the side where to start the sequence after the first wall pass time to time.

Eye on: play vertical and diagonal passes, be unmarked behind and in front of the air-body, pay attention to the timing of runs and passes, receive inside a back pass to play out again and cover the goal space.

Exercise 6: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against two opponents



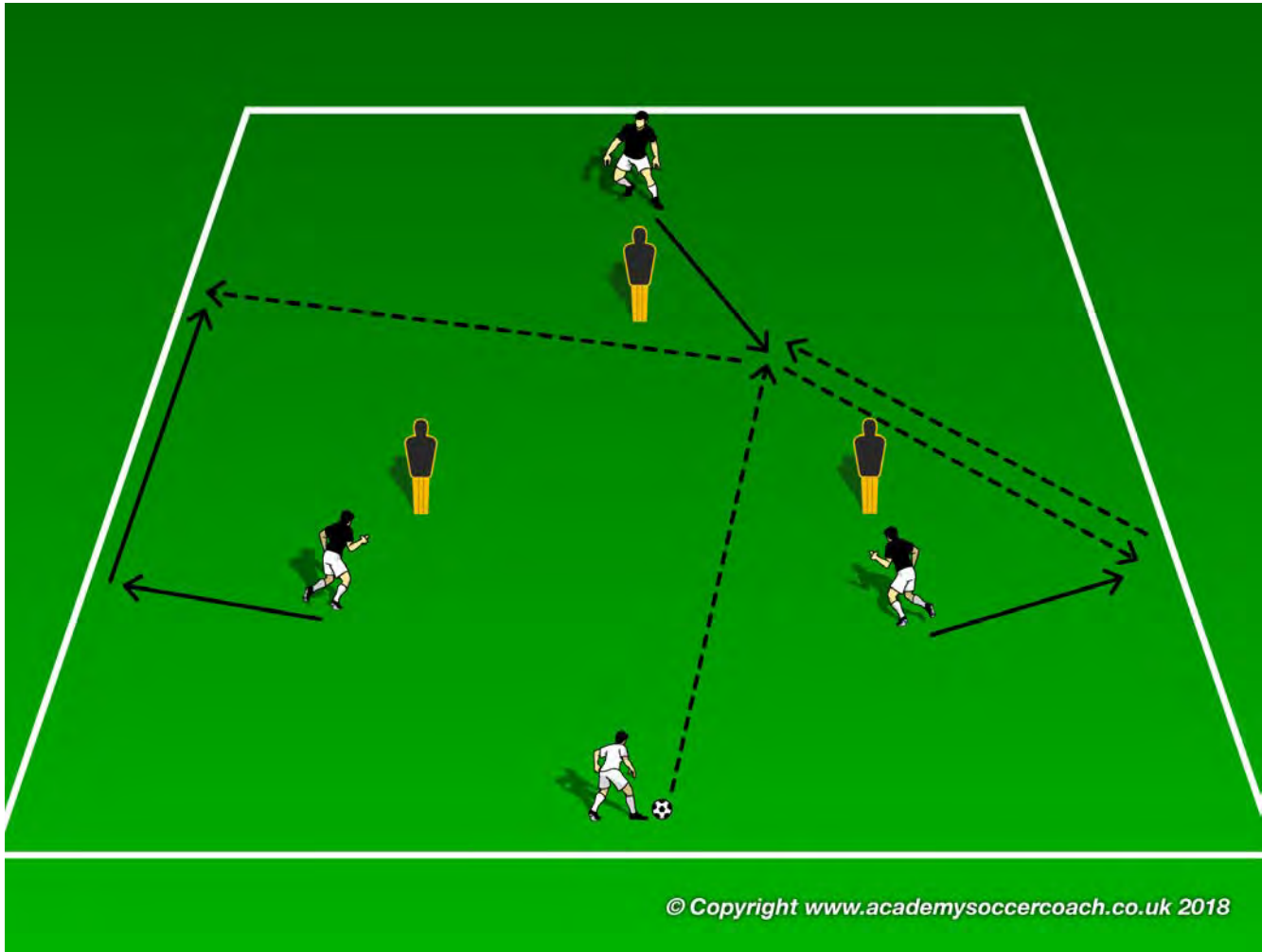
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; two air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate two opponents. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the first center back runs wide to receive; the sequence starts with the center back player, who drops back in between the air-bodies to play a wall pass with the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper passes forward to the center back (on the right here), who receives behind the air-body and he changes the side of play for the balance player who moved back to be free away from the air-body. The opposite center back moved wide and sideways the air-body to receive and to pass back toward the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the goalkeeper can decide the side where to start the sequence after the first wall pass time to time.

Eye on: play vertical and diagonal passes, be unmarked behind and side-on to the air-body, pay attention to the timing of runs and passes, push forward to play out.

Exercise 7: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against three (1-2) opponents



Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate two forwards and an advanced player. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide; the sequence starts from the right in the picture. The forward balance player must be unmarked in front of the first air-body, dropping a little back; he receives and plays a wall passing combination with the first center back, who must be placed sideways and away from the air-body. As the back pass is received, he changes side of play toward the other center back who moved up, leaving the last air-body at the back. The sequence goes on with:

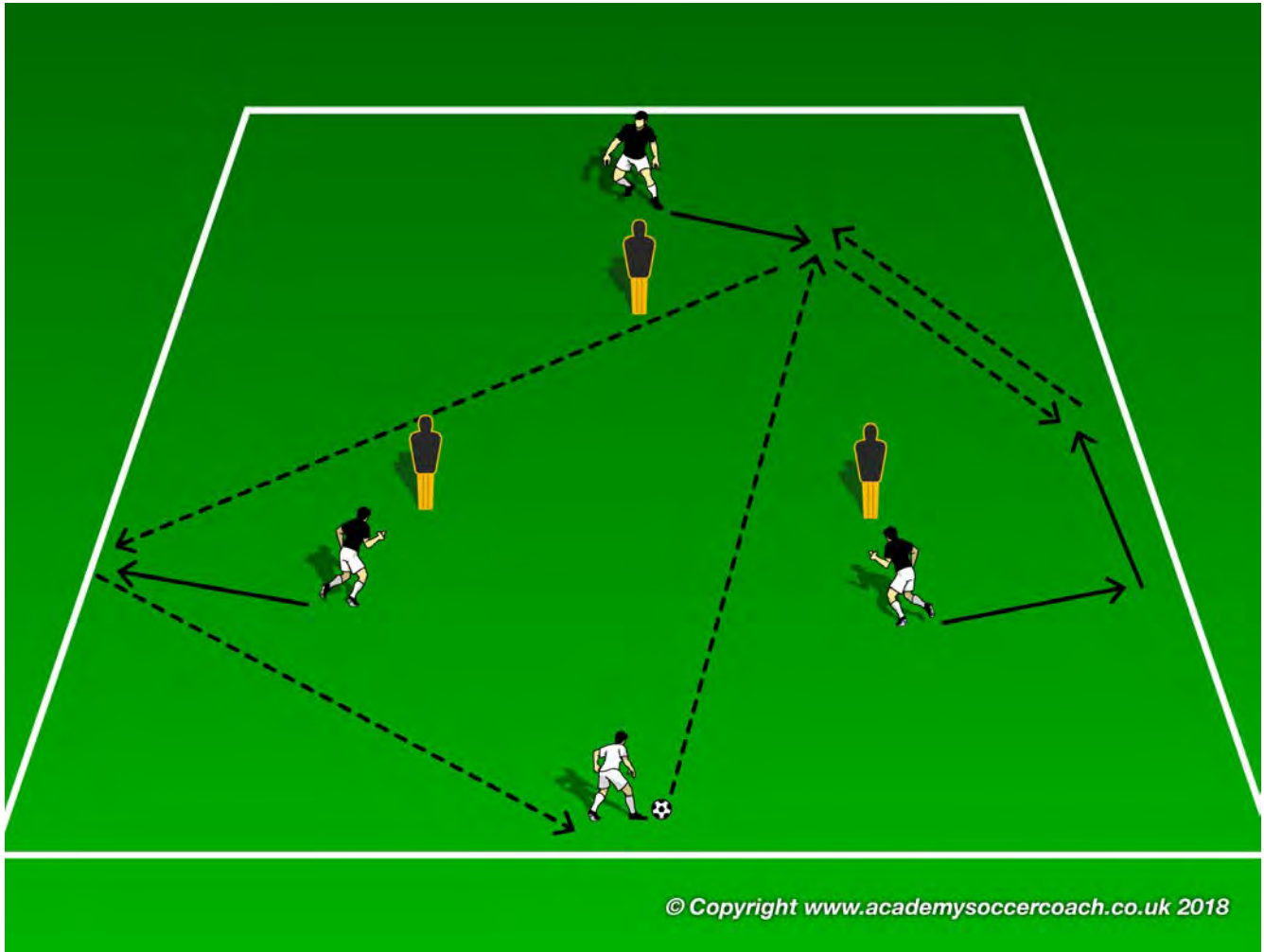
- back pass toward the goalkeeper
- back pass toward the balance player who then pass again to the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the balance player can decide the side where to start the sequence time to time.

Eye on: play diagonal passes, be unmarked behind the air-body, pay attention to the timing of runs and passes.

Exercise 8: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against three (1-2) opponents



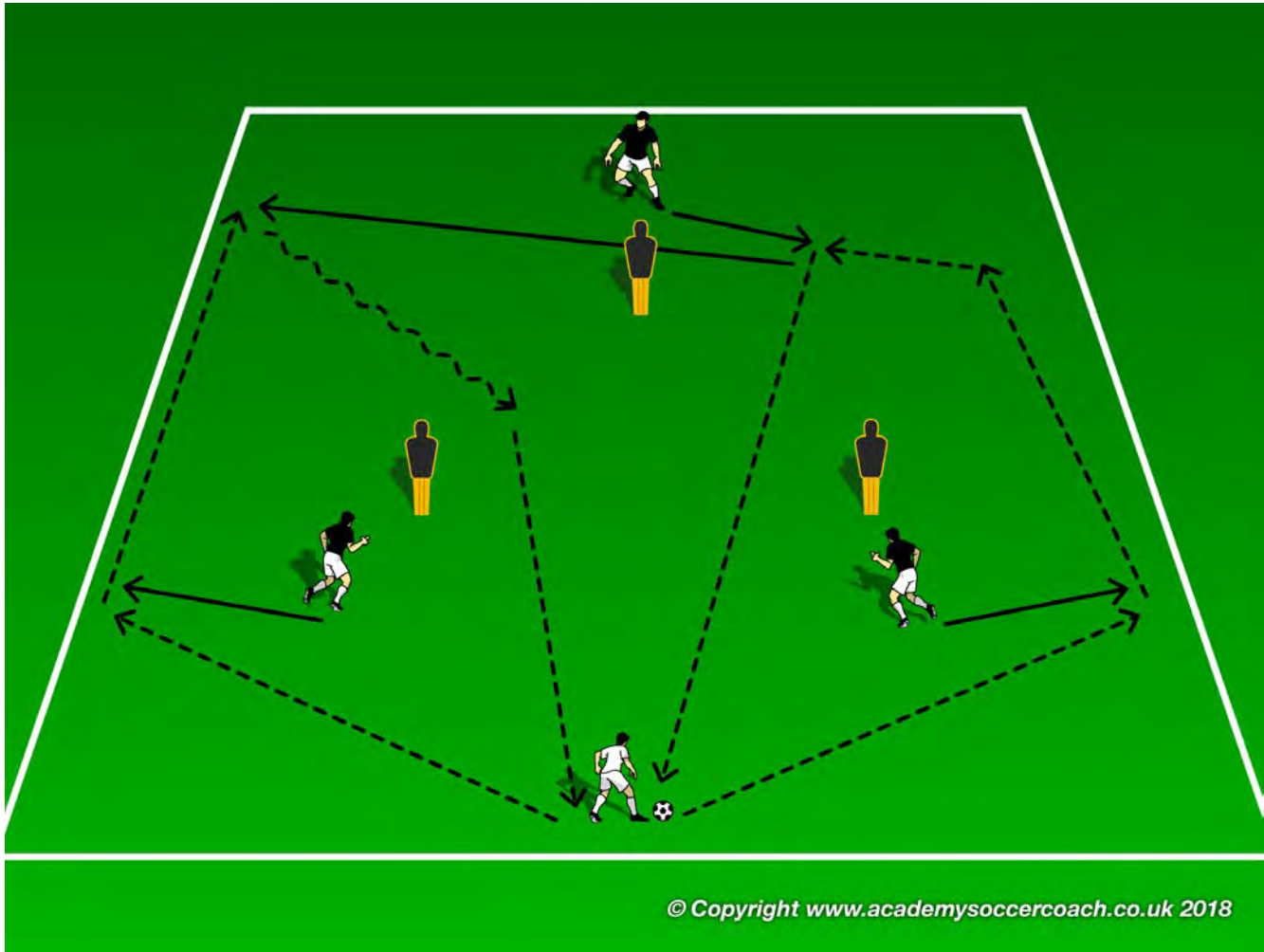
Set-up and Sequence: this is a variation of the previous practice. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide; the sequence starts from the right in the picture. The forward balance player must be unmarked behind and away from the first air-body; he receives and plays a wall passing combination with the first center back who must be placed sideways and away from the second air-body. As the back pass is received, the balance player changes side of play toward the other center back, who moved away and sideways the last air-body. The sequence goes on with a back pass toward the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the balance player can decide the side where to start the sequence, moving away from the first air-body on the left or on the right.

Eye on: play diagonal passes, be unmarked behind and sideways the air-body and pay attention to the timing of runs and passes.

Exercise 9: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against three (1-2) opponents



Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate two forwards and an advanced player. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide; the sequence starts from the right in the picture. The forward balance player must be unmarked in front of the first air-body, dropping a little back; he receives and plays a wall passing combination with the first center back, who must be placed sideways and away from the air-body. As the back pass is received, he changes side of play toward the other center back who moved up, leaving the last air-body at the back. The sequence goes on with:

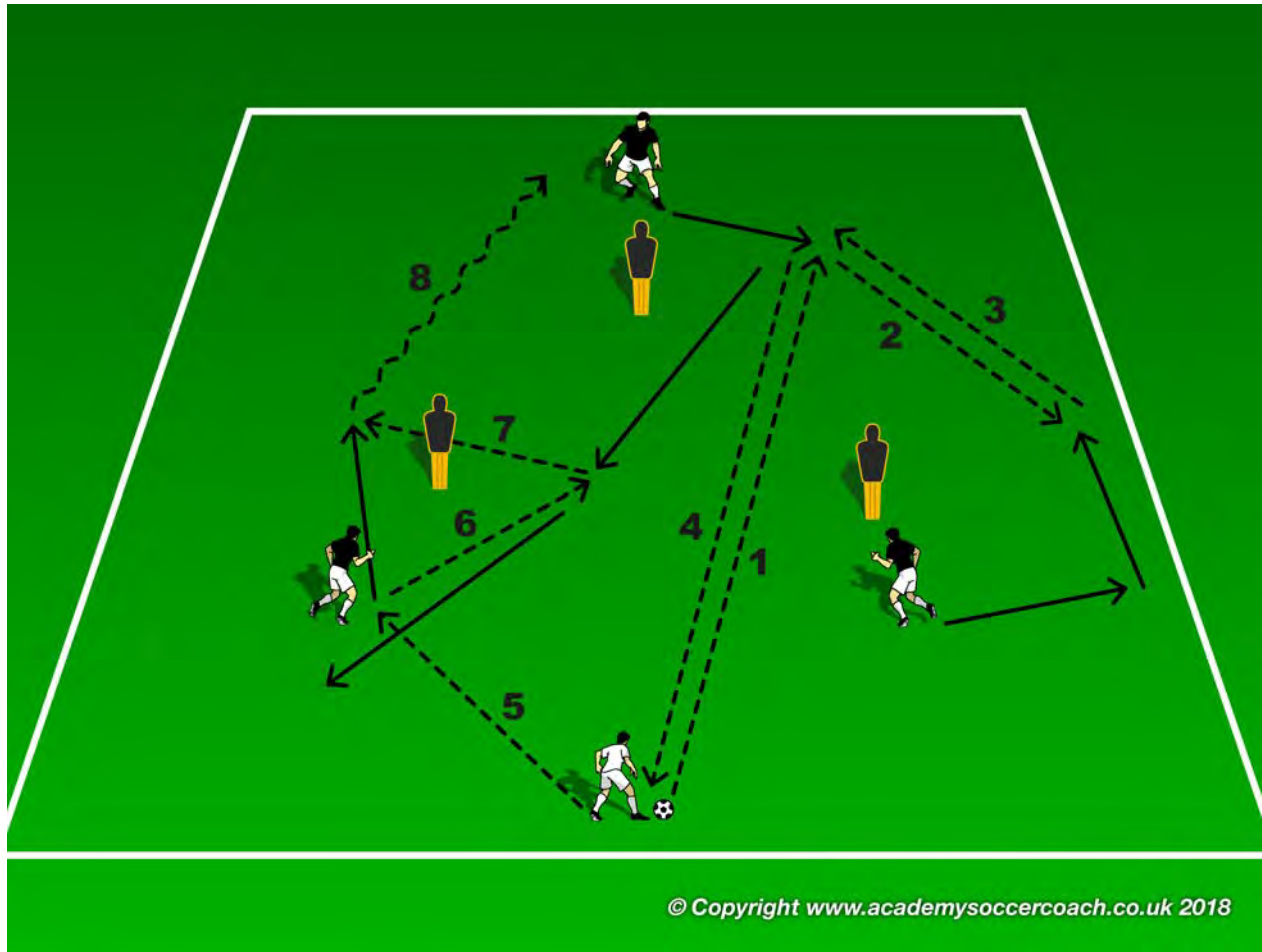
- back pass toward the goalkeeper
- back pass toward the balance player, who then passes again to the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the balance player can decide the side where to start the sequence time to time.

Eye on: play diagonal passes, be unmarked behind the air-body and pay attention to the timing of runs and passes.

Exercise 10: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against three (1-2) opponents



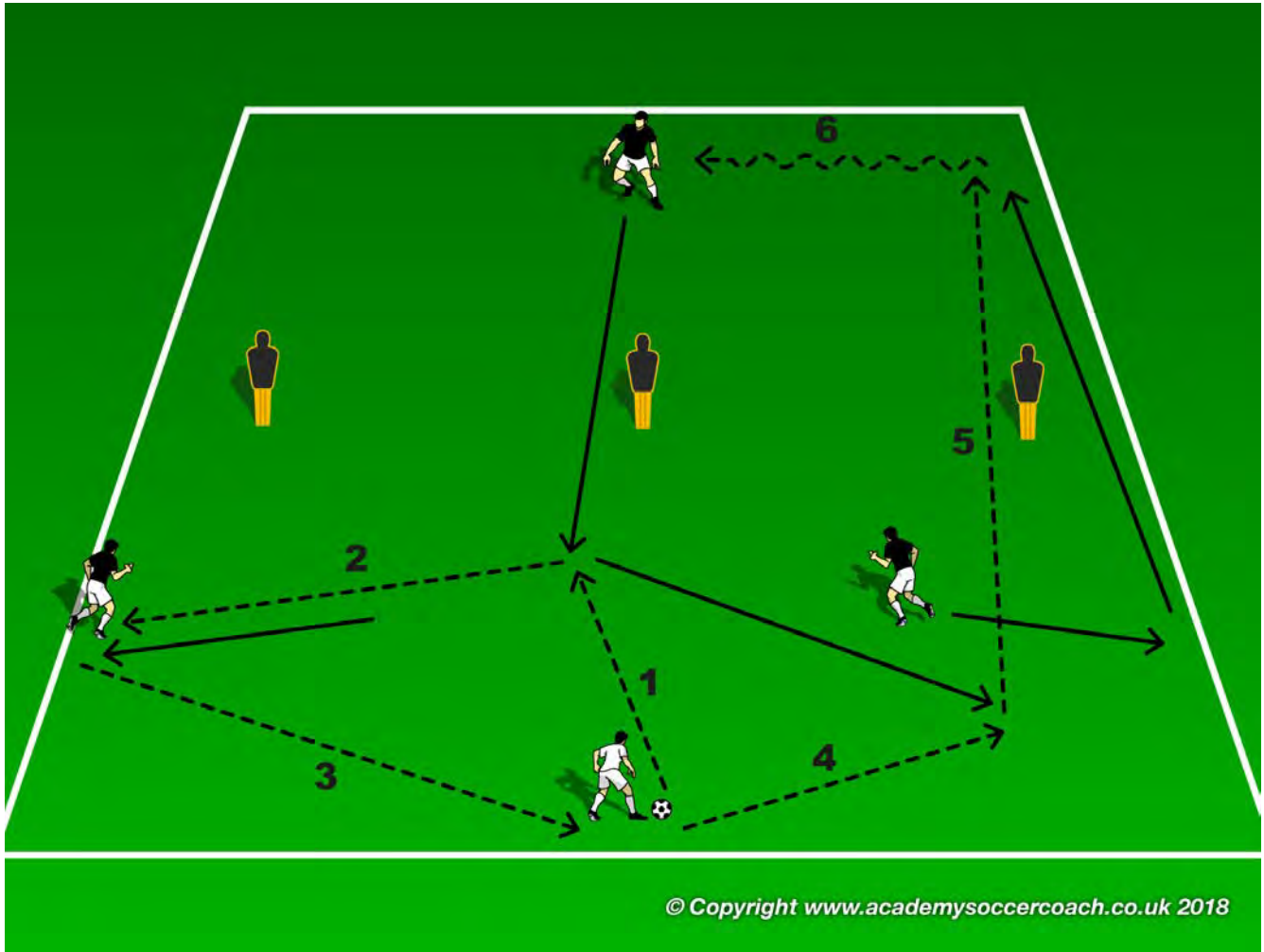
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate two forwards and an advanced player. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, one center back runs wide; the sequence starts from the right in the picture. The forward balance player must be unmarked behind and away from the first air-body; he receives and plays a wall passing combination with the first center back, who must be placed sideways and away from the second air-body. As the back pass is received, the balance player passes back to the goalkeeper, who distributes again to play out toward other center back. The sequence goes on with a wall passing combination between the center back and the balanced player, who dropped back and the center back dribbles up to simulate the break through of the first pressure line. The sequence can end with a back pass to the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the balance player can decide the side where to start the sequence, moving away from the first air-body on the left or on the right.

Eye on: play diagonal passes, be unmarked behind and sideways the air-body, pay attention to the timing of runs and passes, and work on different lines.

Exercise 11: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against three opponents



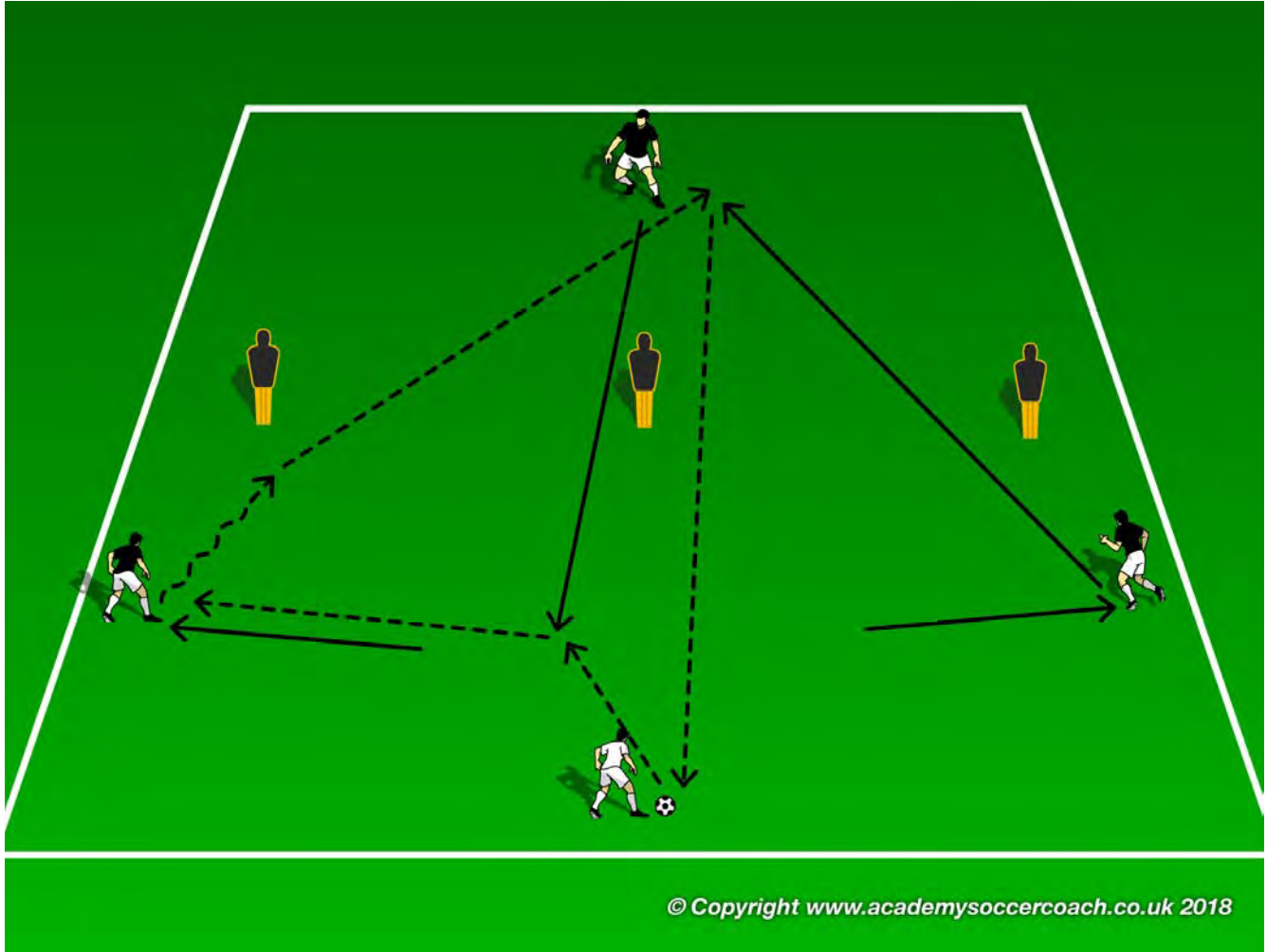
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate three forwards on the same line. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide; the sequence starts from the left in the picture. The forward balance player must drop back, anticipating the first air-body; he receives and plays a wide pass toward the first center back. The center back passes the ball toward the goalkeeper, who distributes toward the right side, where the balance player dropped off again on the same line of the defenders. The sequence goes on with a forward pass to the center back, who moved wide first and then behind the air-body, to simulate the break through of the first pressure line. The sequence ends dribbling the ball toward the center space and passing back to the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the balance player can decide the side where to start the sequence, dropping back on the left or on the right of the center air body.

Eye on: play vertical and diagonal passes, be unmarked away and behind the air-body, and pay attention to the timing of runs and passes, work on different lines.

Exercise 12: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against three opponents



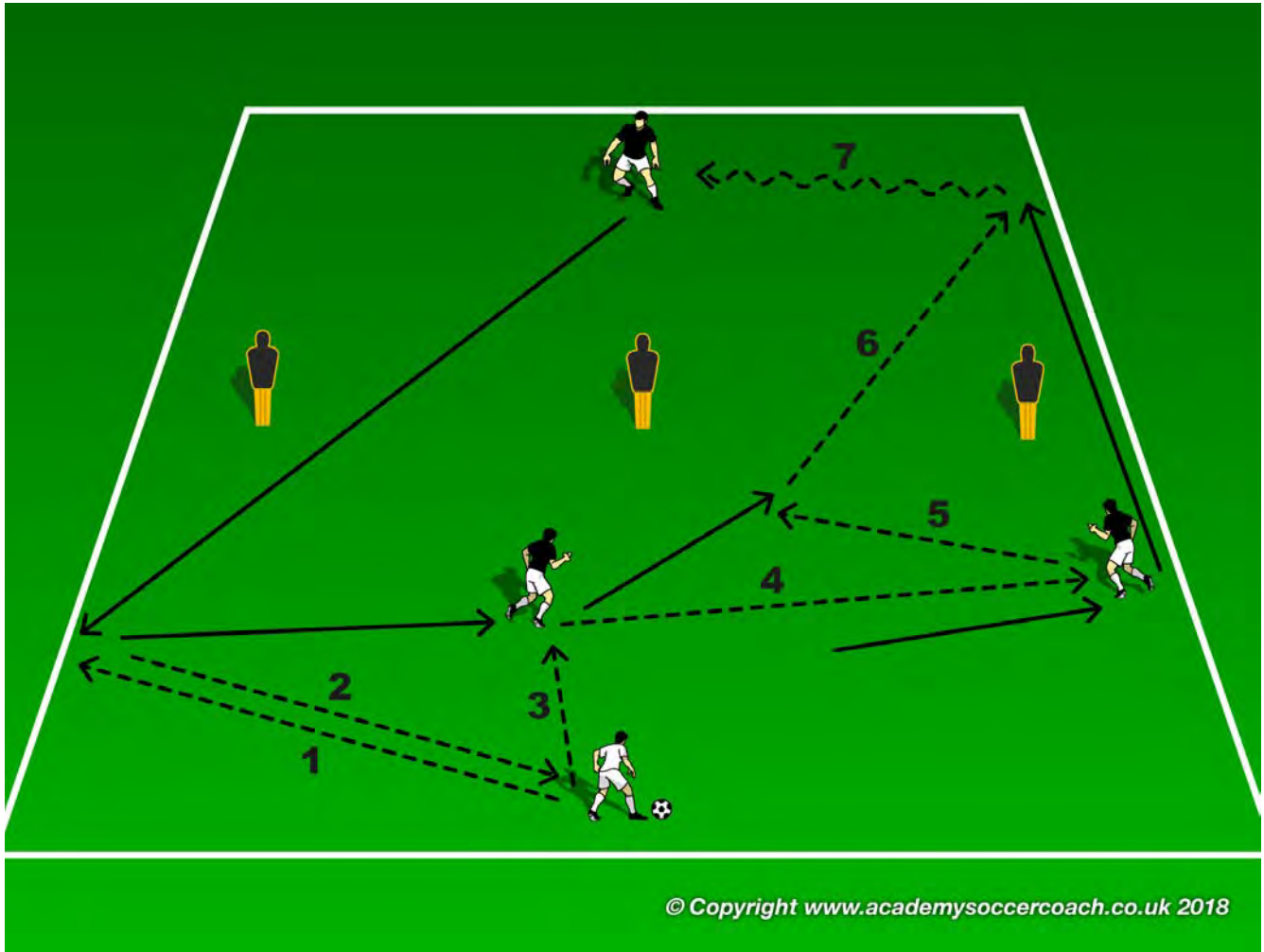
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate three forwards on the same line. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs run wide and the forward balance player must drop back, anticipating the first air-body; he receives and plays a wide pass toward the first center back who dribbles the ball up, on the left in the picture. The second center back must cut inside and receive the ball behind the air-bodies to simulate the break through of the first pressure line. The sequence ends with a back pass to the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the balance player can decide the side where to start the sequence, dropping back on the left or on the right of the center air body.

Eye on: play vertical and diagonal 1 touch passing combination to break the first pressure line, drop back with the right timing, and work on different lines.

Exercise 13: distribution with center backs and a forward teammate against three opponents



Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate three forwards on the same line. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs shift across the right (or on the left); the sequence starts from the left in the picture. The forward balance player must drop back, to cover the position of the left center back to play a wall passing combination with the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper then distributes again toward the opposite through the center backs, who play another wall passing combination to simulate the break through of the first pressure line, receiving the back pass behind the air-body. The sequence ends dribbling the ball toward the center space and passing back to the goalkeeper.

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Variation: the goalkeeper can indicate the side where to shift.

Eye on: play 1 touch passing combination to switch the side, drop back with the right timing, and work on different lines.

Distribution along the flanks

The creation of numerical advantage on the flanks or how to manage a duel with equal numbers of players are the main objectives for a team to progress forward on the flanks. If there is enough space for a through pass between the air-bodies, the center balance player can receive behind them to progress forward; but if it's not possible, he must drop back to create a 3 v 2 duel to overcome the opposition pressure.

The players involved in these exercises are the goalkeeper, the center back, the fullback and the center balance midfielder; the goalkeeper must always have a free wide passing option to distribute, when the opposition forwards try to force the direction of play toward the sidelines.

The positions of the fullbacks are key points to play out from the back, as they often have to face front 1 v 1 duels and the success of this phase of play depends on their duels or their skills to combine with teammates at speed.

The player technical skills, with good speed and both the feet, must be the tools to coach in these situations. These technical skills must be practiced in the correct positions, with reminders of the right direction of further passes, wide and deep movements, opposition pressure, and position in relation to teammates and opponents.

The fullback must be able to help the creation of numerical advantage inside a strong area or a strong side, as well as to push forward when he's placed along a weak side of the opposition, after a switch of play.

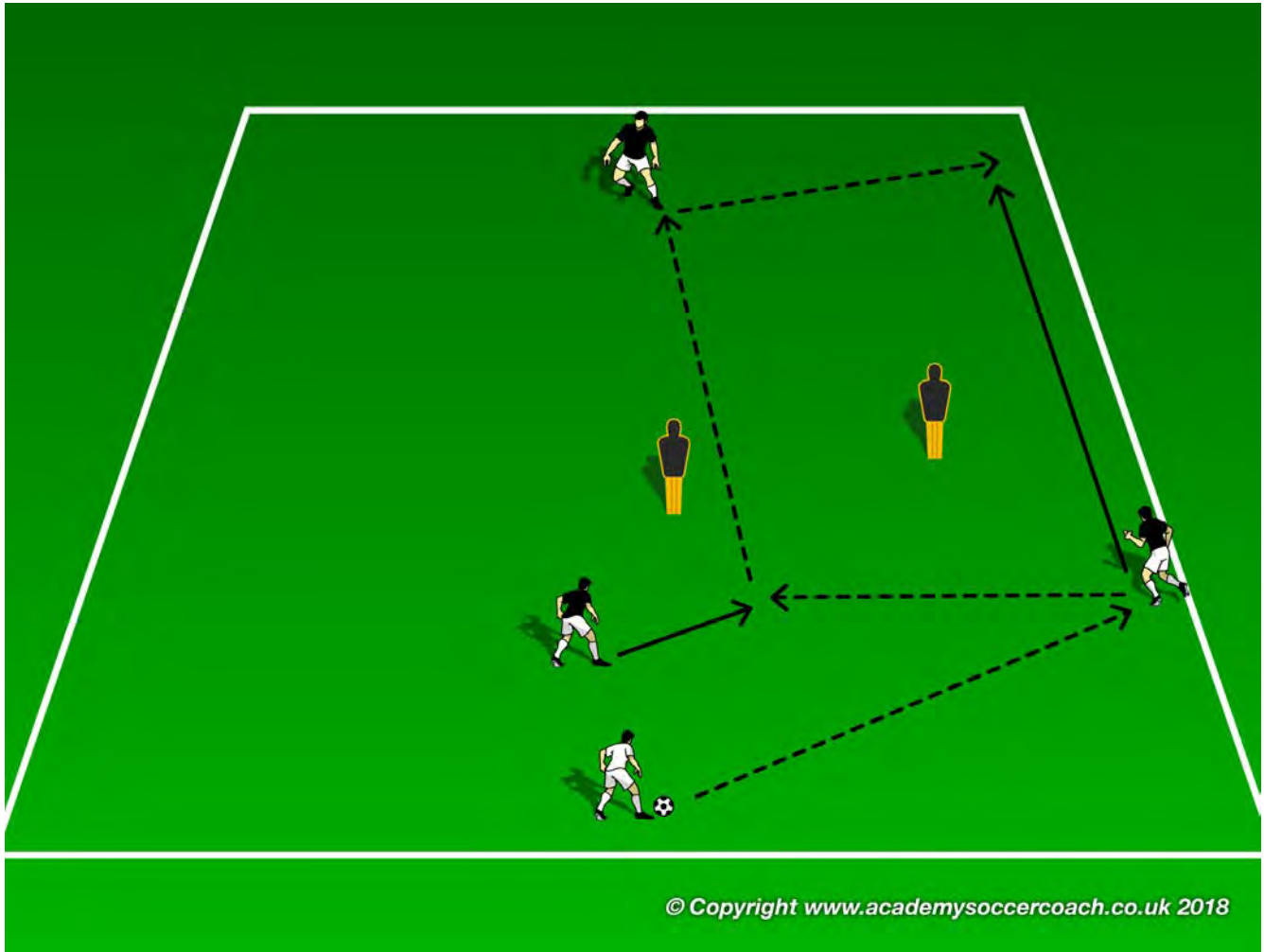
They have to know how to push up in the midfield, how to cut past the opposition, how to take the right choices to build up in order to play out, as they have to overcome the opposition pressure and they must be able to face different styles of defensive play and opposition pressure.

The center backs must always have the vision of the field to organize this phase of play, they must be always a support for the fullbacks, or they must be able to shift toward wide positions when the fullbacks run forward or toward the center in the middle third.

The center balance player must be free to be a target player. He must call for the ball at the right time and with the correctly angled posture as well as create space dropping back to receive; he must be ready to receive from the fullbacks and to combine with them to break through the opposition pressure.

If the pressing forwards are three, the second center back is involved in the sequences to create 4 v 3 duels to progress up the pitch and the center balance player must always drop back, either to receive the ball and support the move, and to provide the coverage of the space, when the center back shifts across to the right or the left sidelines.

Exercise 14: distribution along the flanks against two opponents



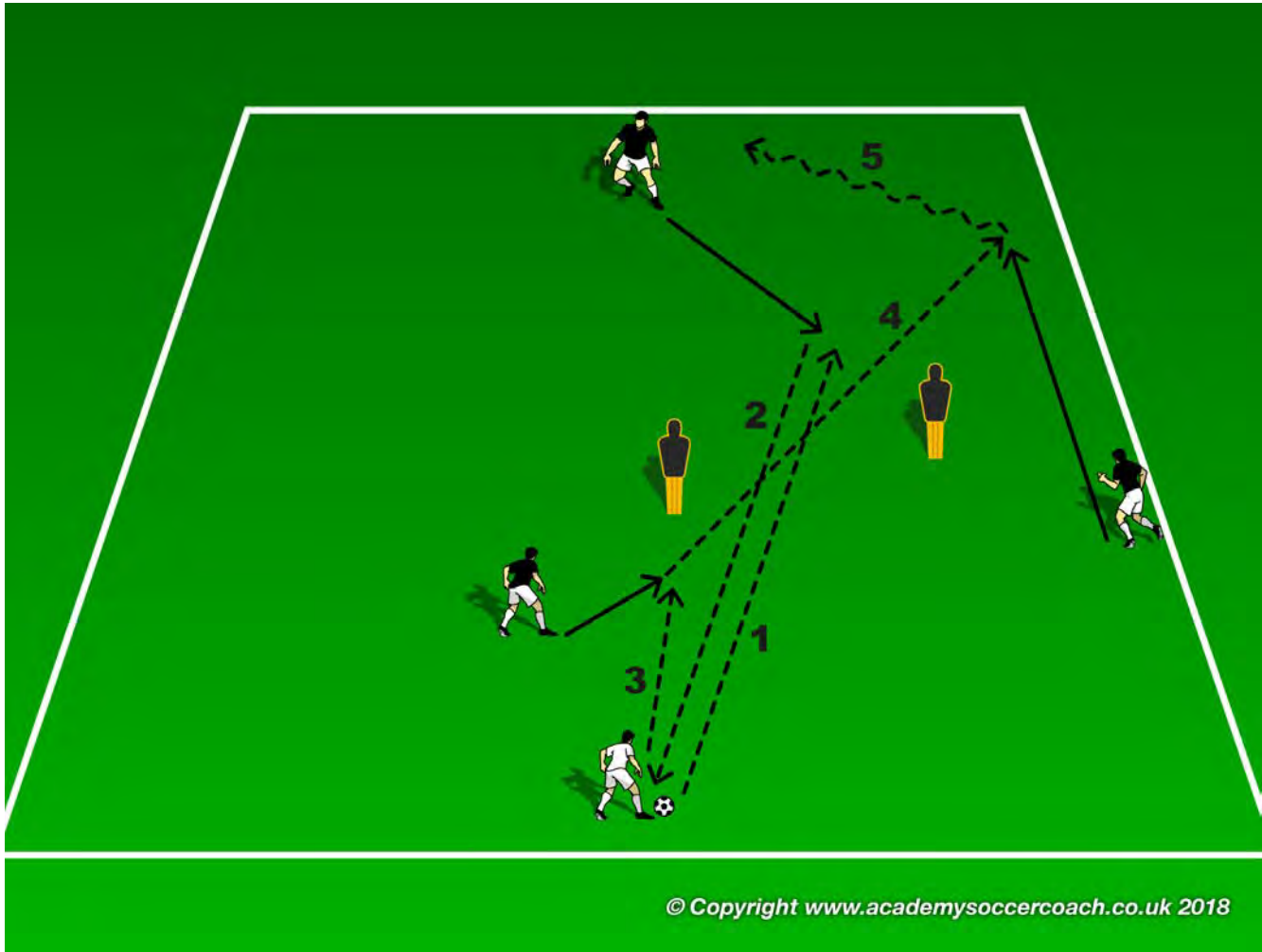
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed wide inside a rectangular or square area; two air-bodies are placed along one side to simulate two pressing forwards. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center back shifts across the side of play (right or left) and the fullback receives; the sequence is carried out on the right in the picture. The fullback passes inside to the center back, who then plays forward to the balance player, breaking through the line between the air-bodies (pressing forward). The fullback receives on his run and wide. The sequence ends:

- with a back pass to the goalkeeper
- with a wall passing combinations with the center balance player
- with a back pass to the center back who move away toward the free side to lose the air-body

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Eye on: play 1 touch passing combination to overcome the air-bodies line, run forward to receive with the right timing, play as third man on the flank.

Exercise 15: distribution along the flanks against two opponents



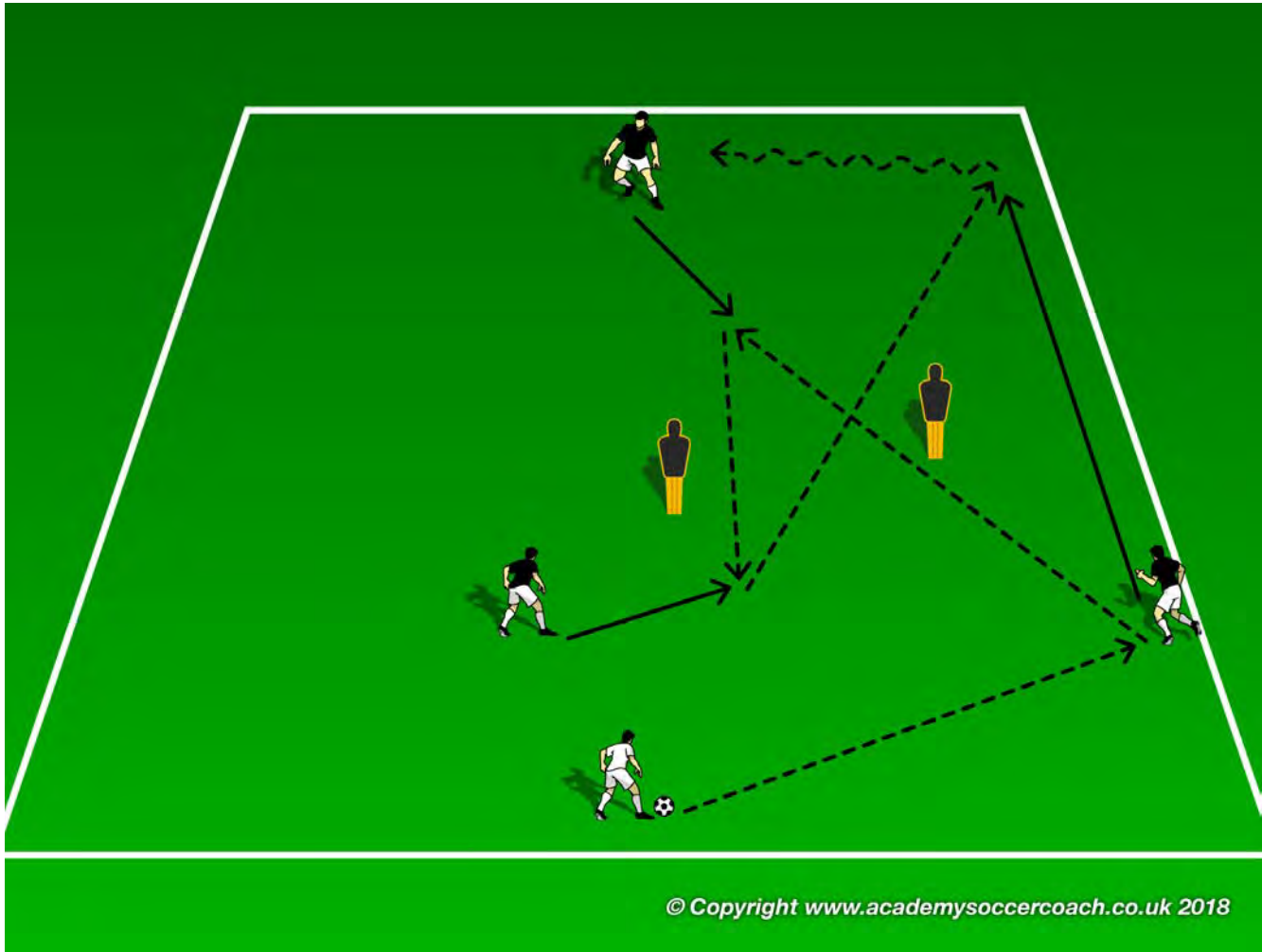
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed wide inside a rectangular or square area; two air-bodies are placed along one side to simulate two pressing forwards. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center back shifts across the side of play; the sequence is carried out on the right in the picture. The goalkeeper plays a wall passing combination with the center balance player who drops back behind the air-bodies to be an option; as the back pass is received, the center back passes forward and between the air-bodies to cut them out, on the run of the fullbacks, who receives and dribbles the ball up. The sequence ends:

- with a back pass to the goalkeeper
- with a wall passing combinations with the center balance player
- with a back pass to the center back who move away toward the free side to lose the air-body

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Eye on: play 1 touch passing combination to overcome the air-bodies line, run forward to receive with the right timing, play as third man on the flank.

Exercise 15: distribution along the flanks against two opponents



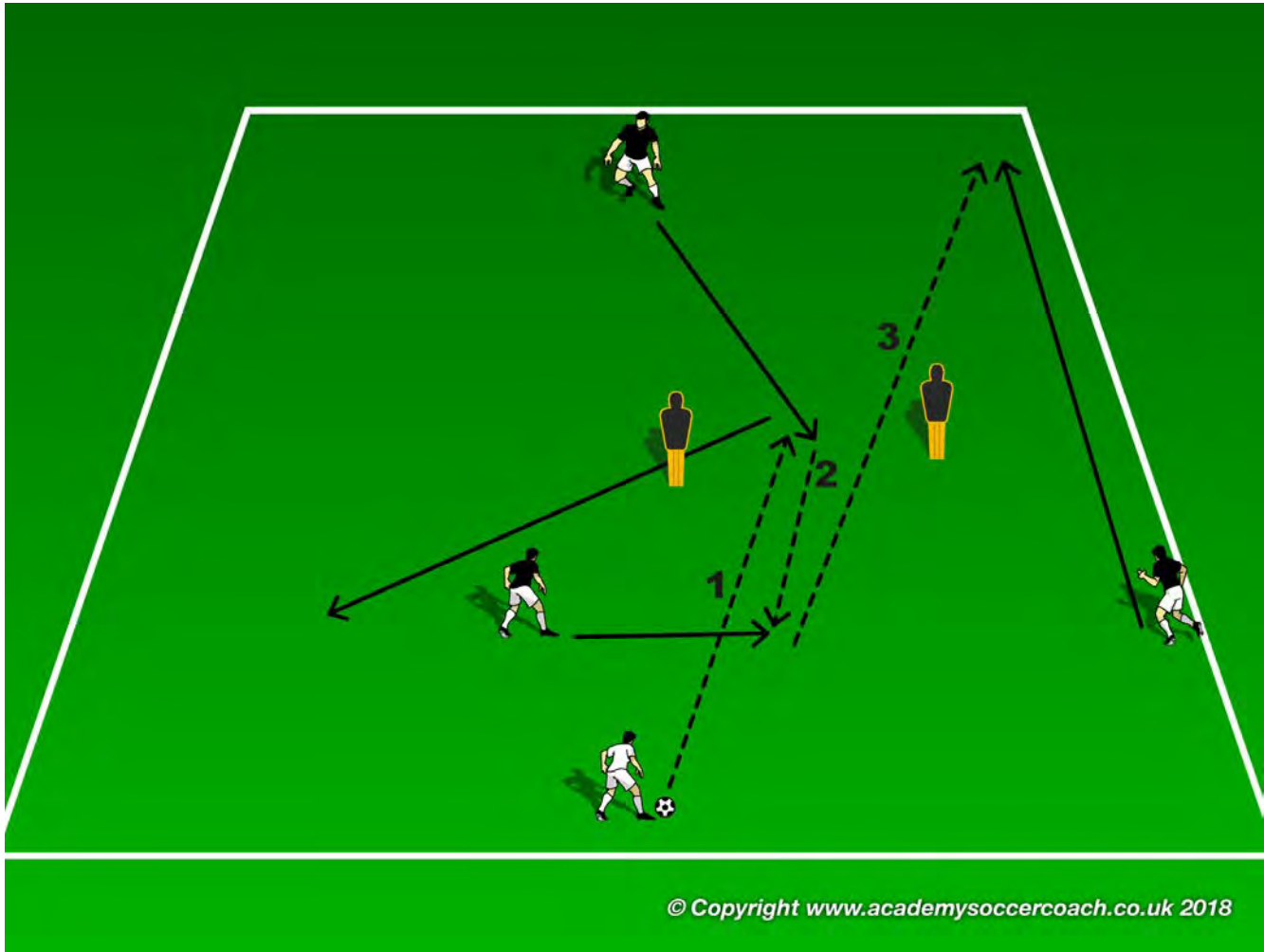
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed wide inside a rectangular or square area; two air-bodies are placed along one side to simulate two pressing forwards. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center back shifts across the side of play; the sequence is carried out on the right in the picture. The goalkeeper passes to the fullback who plays forward with one touch toward the center balance player while he's dropping back behind the air-bodies to be an option. As the balance player receives, he passes back between the air-bodies again to the center back, who plays a one touch forward pass on the run of the fullback, who receives behind the air-body cutting the line of pressure and he then dribbles the ball toward the center space. The sequence ends:

- with a back pass to the goalkeeper
- with a wall passing combinations with the center balance player
- with a back pass to the center back who move away toward the free side to lose the air-body

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Eye on: play 1 touch passing combination to overcome the air-bodies line, run forward to receive with the right timing, play as third man on the flank.

Exercise 16: distribution along the flanks against two opponents



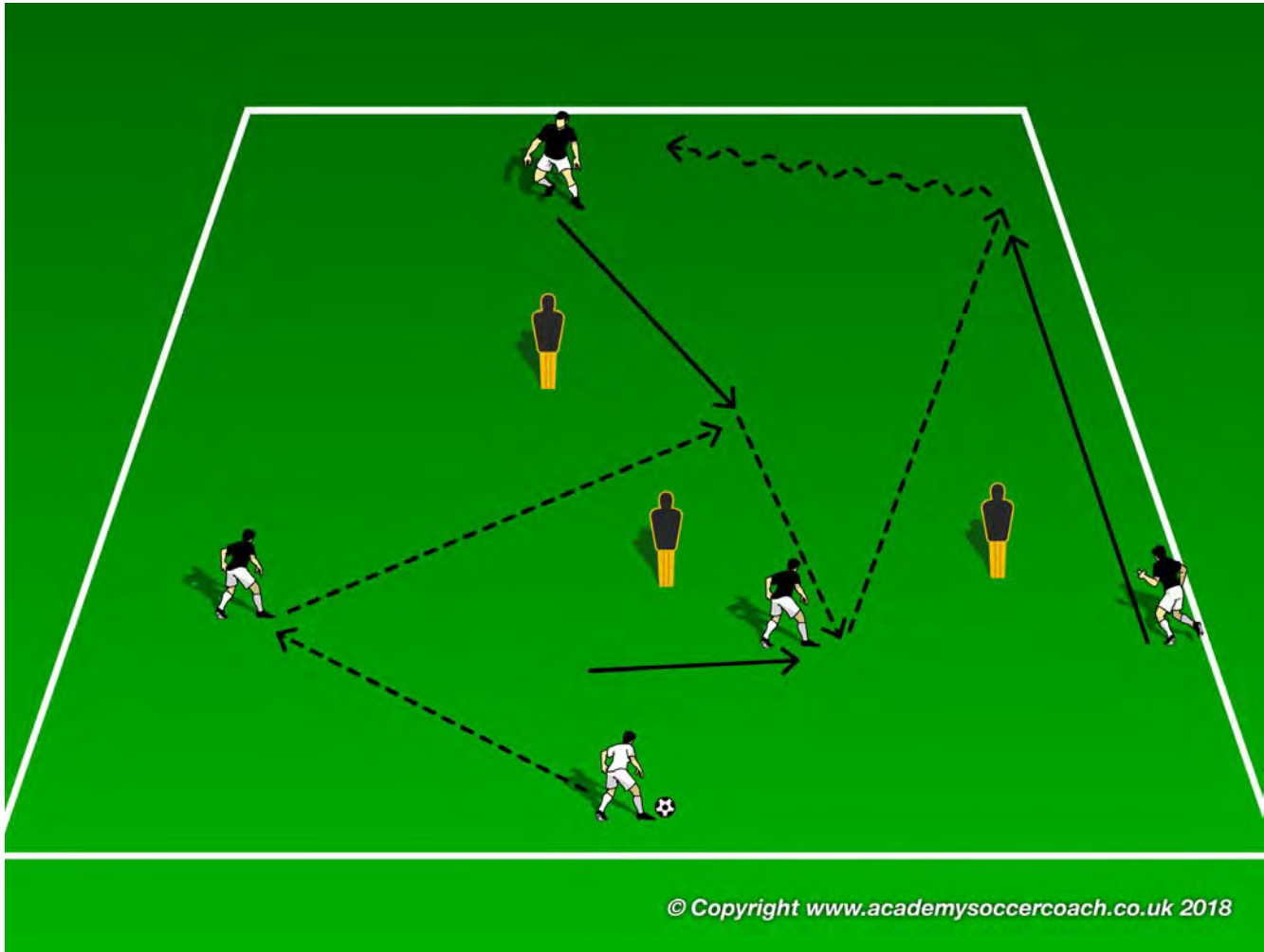
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and three players are placed wide inside a rectangular or square area; two air-bodies are placed along one side to simulate two pressing forwards. The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center back shifts across the side of play; the sequence is carried out on the right in the picture. The goalkeeper plays a wall passing combination with the center balance player while he's dropping back in behind the air-bodies to be an option. As the back receives, he passes forward again on the run of the fullback, who receives behind the air-body, cutting the line of pressure. The center player moves then wide to receive a potential back pass to save the possession. The sequence ends:

- with a back pass to the goalkeeper
- with a wall passing combinations with the center balance player
- with a back pass to the center back who move away toward the free side to lose the air-body

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Eye on: timing of dropping back run and wall passing combination, play 1 touch combinations to overcome the air-bodies line, run forward to receive with the right timing, play as third man on the flank.

Exercise 17: distribution, switching the side, along the flanks against three opponents



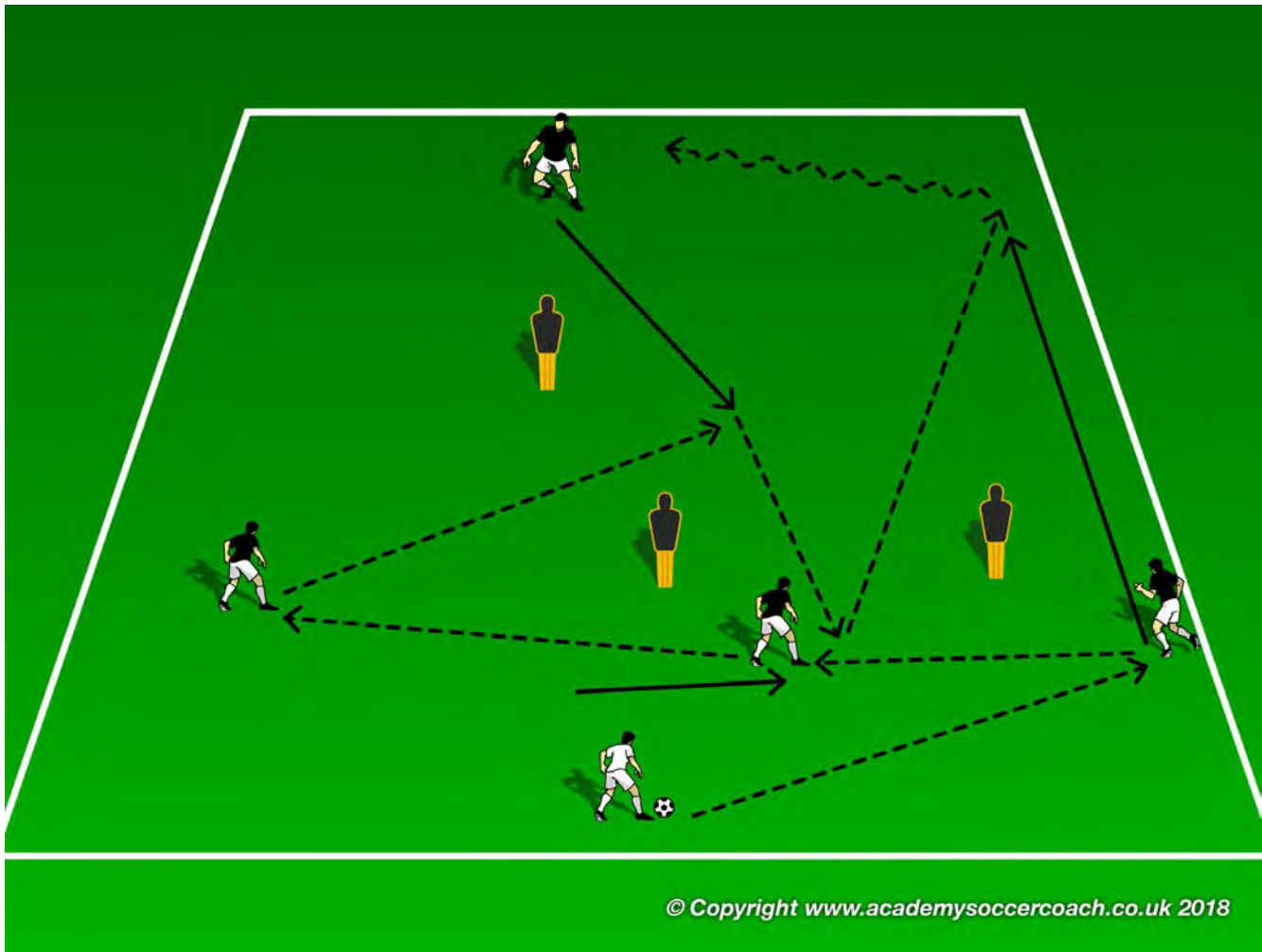
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and four players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards (1-2). The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center back of the flank where the combination has to be carried out shifts across, while the goalkeeper passes the ball to the opposite center back. The receiver passes the ball to the dropping back forward center balance player, anticipating the first air-body; he receives and passes back to the second center back who then plays forward on the run of the fullback who receives the ball behind the air-bodies to simulate the break through of a pressure line. The fullback dribbles toward the center space. The sequence ends:

- with a passing combination to move the ball back and play out again
- with a direct pass to the center back or the goalkeeper

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Eye on: timing of run to link the movements, play diagonal 1 touch passing combination to break the pressure line, drop back with the right timing, and work on different lines.

Exercise 18: distribution, switching the side, along the flanks against three opponents



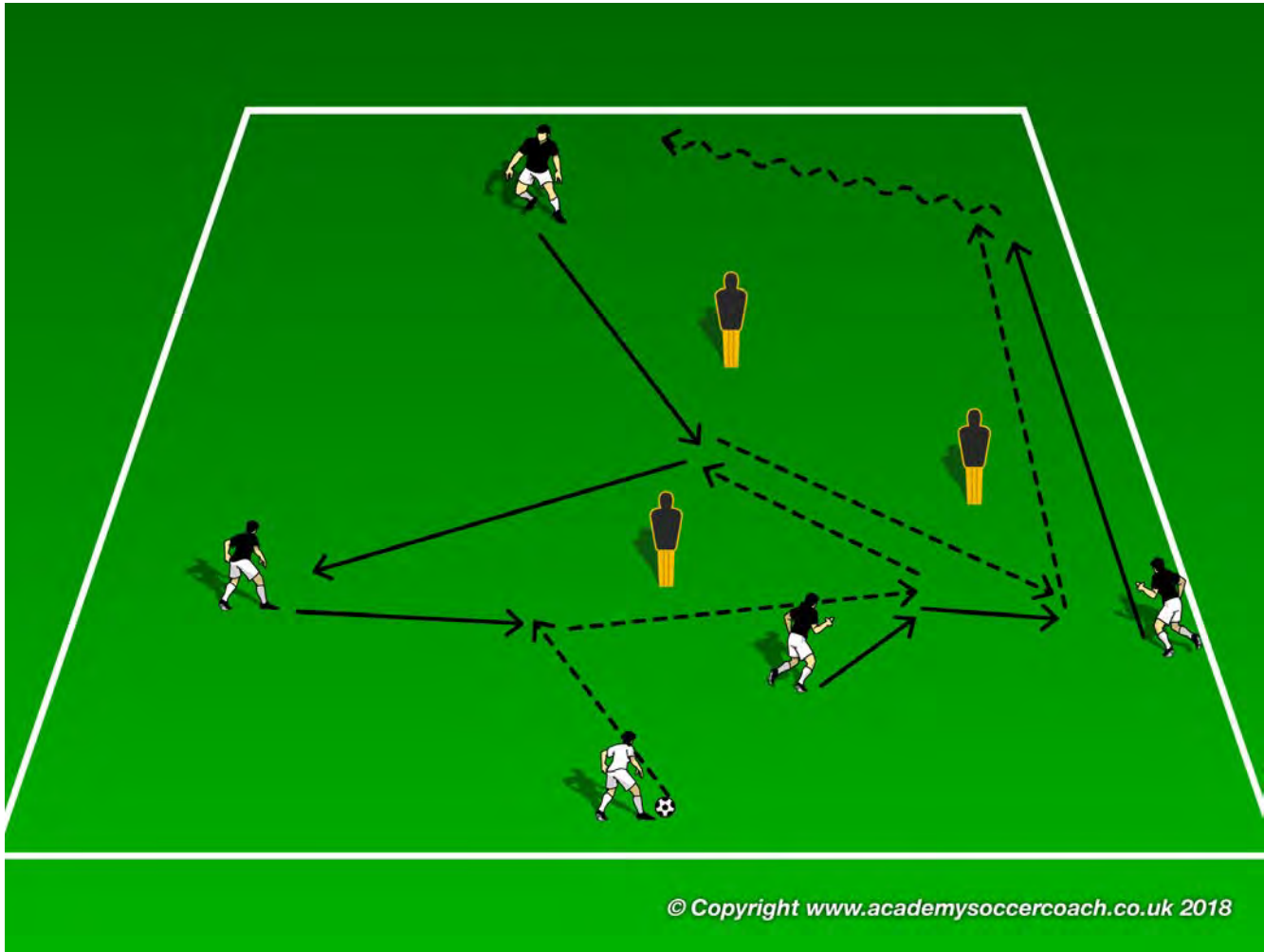
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and four players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards (1-2). The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center back of the flank where the combination has to be carried out shifts across, while the goalkeeper passes the ball to the fullback. The receiver passes the ball inside to the nearest center back and again toward the second center back; the forward center back player now must drop back to receive, anticipating the first air body. Then he passes back to the first center back. The player now in possession plays forward on the run of the fullback who receives the ball behind the air-bodies to simulate the break through of a pressure line. The fullback dribbles toward the center space. The sequence ends:

- with a passing combination to move the ball back and play out again
- with a direct pass to the center back or the goalkeeper

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise.

Eye on: timing of run to link the movements, play diagonal 1 touch passing combination to break the pressure line, drop back with the right timing, and work on different lines.

Exercise 19: distribution, switching the side, along the flanks against three opponents



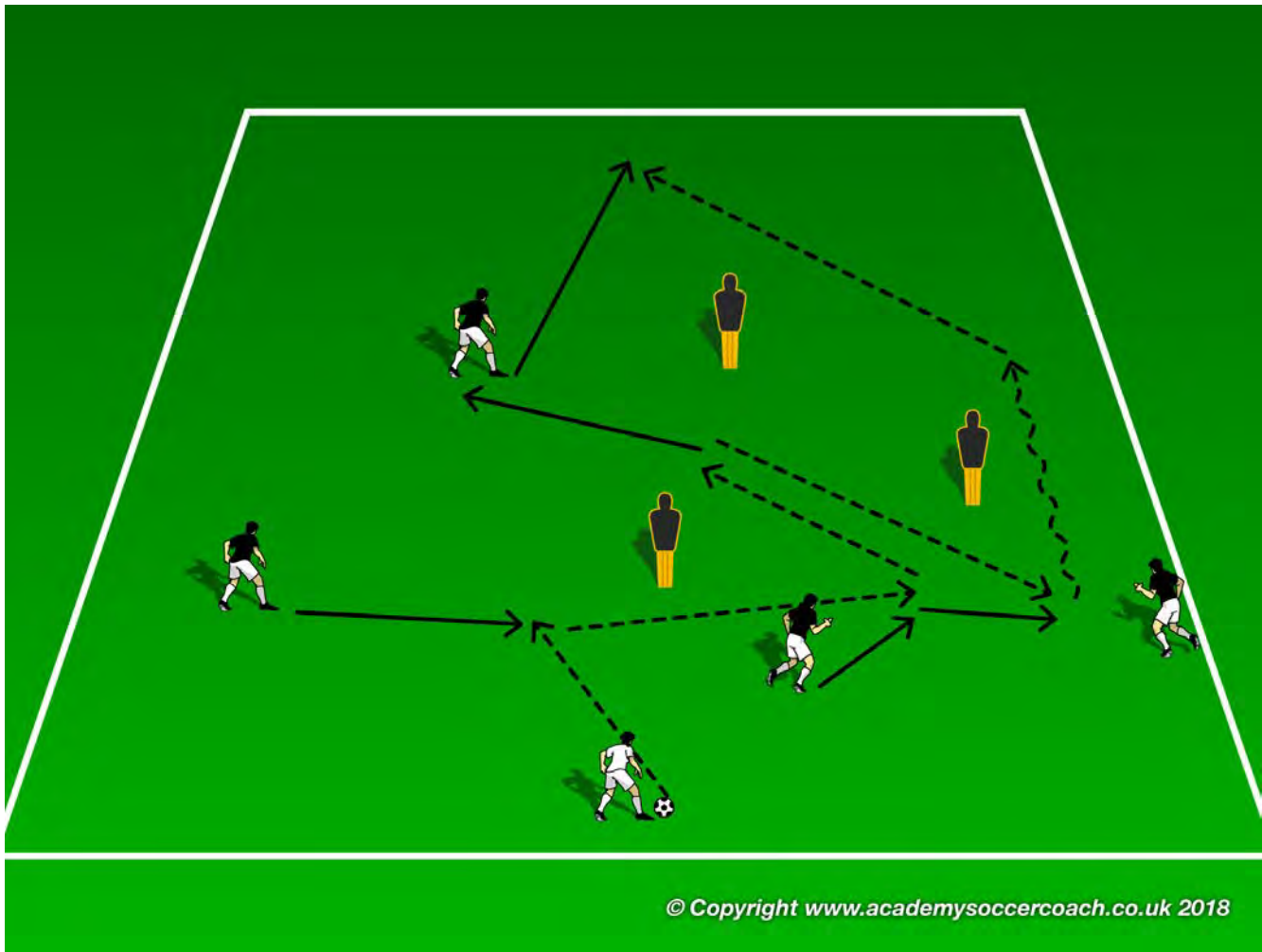
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and four players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards (1-2). The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs shift across the flank where the combination has to be carried, while the goalkeeper passes the ball to second incoming player. The receiver passes to the further teammate toward the right and he plays a wall passing combination with the dropping back center balance player, before passing forward on the run of the fullback. The fullback receives the ball behind the air-bodies to simulate the break through of a pressure line and he dribbles toward the center space. The sequence ends:

- with a passing combination to move the ball back and play out again
- with a direct pass to the center back or the goalkeeper

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise, depending on the side of movement.

Eye on: timing of run to link the movements, play diagonal 1 touch passing combination to break the pressure line, drop back with the right timing, and work on different lines.

Exercise 20: distribution, switching the side, along the flanks against three opponents



Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and four players are placed inside a rectangular or square area; three air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards (1-2). The goalkeeper is in possession and when he sends a sign, the center backs shift across the flank where the combination has to be carried, while the goalkeeper passes the ball to second incoming player. The receiver passes to the further teammate toward the right and he plays forward to the dropping back center balance player. The fullback receives the ball and dribbles the ball over the first two lines of the air-bodies to simulate the break through of a pressure line and he passes over the last air-body, where the balance player receives to overcome the last pressure line. The sequence ends:

- with a passing combination to move the ball back and play out again
- with a direct pass to the center back or the goalkeeper

The players rotate their positions clockwise or counterclockwise, depending on the side of movement.

Eye on: timing of run to link the movements, play diagonal 1 touch passing combination to break the pressure line, drop back with the right timing, and work on different lines.

Play out switching the side

These might be the main reasons why a team plays out from the back:

- The team does not have particularly tall players, lacking a target player that can hold the ball up to avoid the risk of losing possession if the ball is kicked long
- The players are technically skilled and the possession has to be retained
- Team is slow at counter attacking
- Opposition is organized and the options for counter attacks are too risky.
- To draw the opposition higher up the field to create space or build an attack.
- To set the tempo and the rhythm of a game
- To control the possession of the ball during the main part of the game
- To move the opposition throughout the whole field
- To create spaces and to exploit them behind the pressure lines
- To switch the side of play when the pressure of the opposition cannot be overcome, or the spaces and the forward passing lanes in the middle third are closed
- To produce technically better players that can play in tight spaces under pressure, talking about youth academy

All the following patterns of play and sequences can be useful to build up from the goalkeeper and also to play out when the team is under pressure and it has to play back to switch the side.

Playing out from the back is not only a task of passing the ball by and between the defenders to midfielders and then to the strikers or wherever the game progresses, but it's a style of play to overcome the opposition pressure when possible, to invite the opposition out to create space, as well as the possession tool to switch the side and to move the opponents, alternating strong and weak sides.

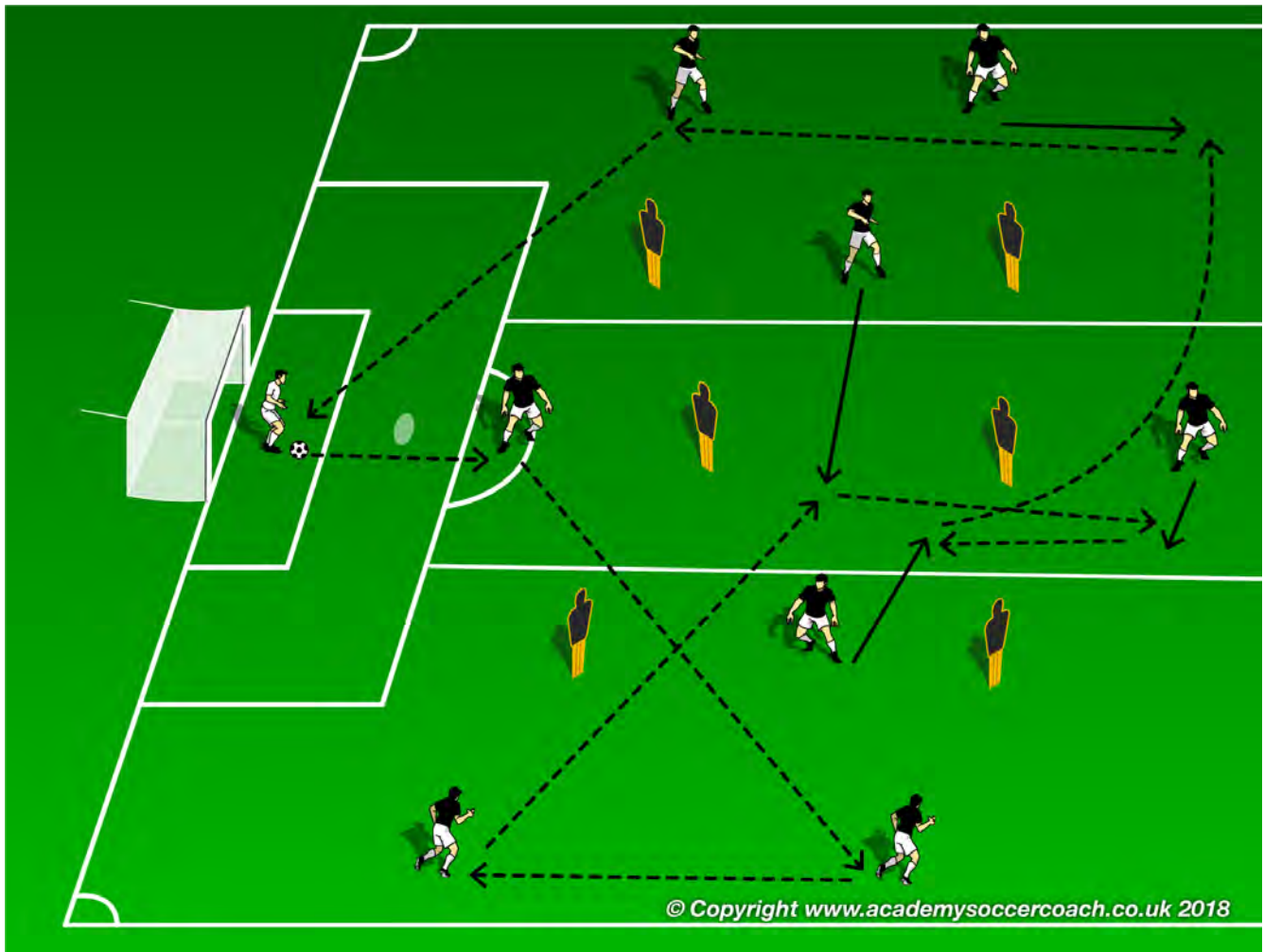
Synchronized movements play a key role as defenders and midfielders need to create space and channels for the ball to be played into and forward if they play out from the back, and they all have to create passing options to come back and switch the side with the fewest number of passes possible.

The pitch should be made big as the goalkeeper is in possession to start a move and when the possession is regained. Every player on the ball should have numerous options due to movements and angles made by the teammates; one side option, one back option and one forward option at least.

All the following patterns of play are created to build up from the back, to play out and to switch the side against six opponents, up the field (3 - 3) that are represented by the air-bodies. As the combination allows the player in possession to take the move to the final stage, the same sequence to play out from the back is then simulated to avoid the pressure of the opposition and to switch the side to find new spaces along the weak side of the opposition.

All the patterns of play are not specific for a system of play and the players are placed on the pitch in useful positions and angles to progress up to it.

Exercise 21: play out switching the side (8+gk v "6")



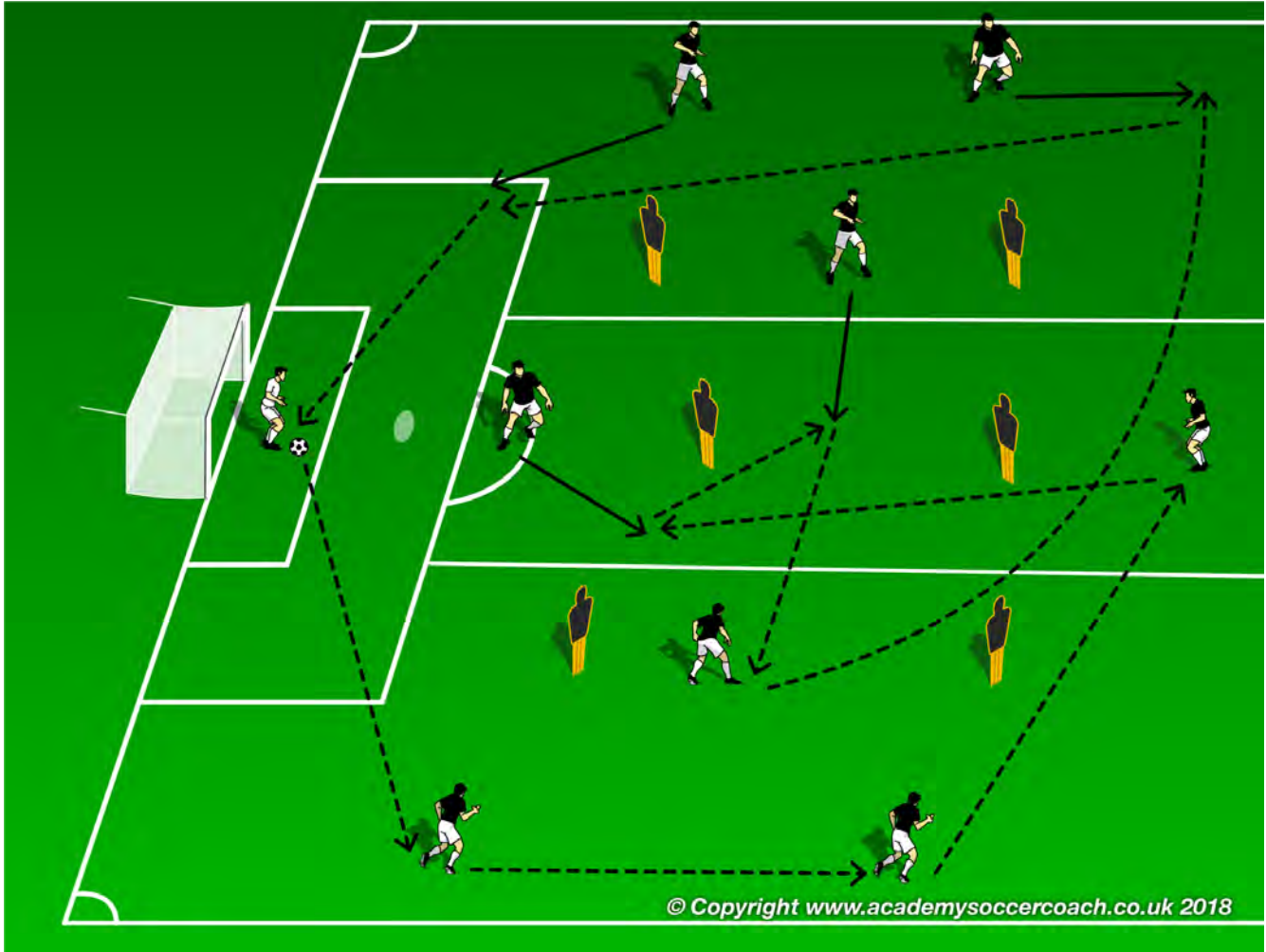
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and eight players are placed inside a half of a pitch; six air-bodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards and three midfielders behind them (3-3). The players of the possession team are the center backs, the fullbacks, three midfielders and one forward or advanced midfielder. The half field is vertically divided into three parts.

The goalkeeper passes the ball to the center midfielder who then plays wide on the right side where a 3 v 2 duel is being simulated; the middle and the right part of the field are now overload.

The side of play is then switched to the left side through the center where a fast passing combination is played to solve a potential 4 v 2 duel. The left fullback receives over the second line of pressure and he passes back to the center back and then to the goalkeeper, to play out as if the team were under pressure.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick combinations to switch the side, fast replacing on the field to play out.

Exercise 22: play out switching the side (8+gk v "6")



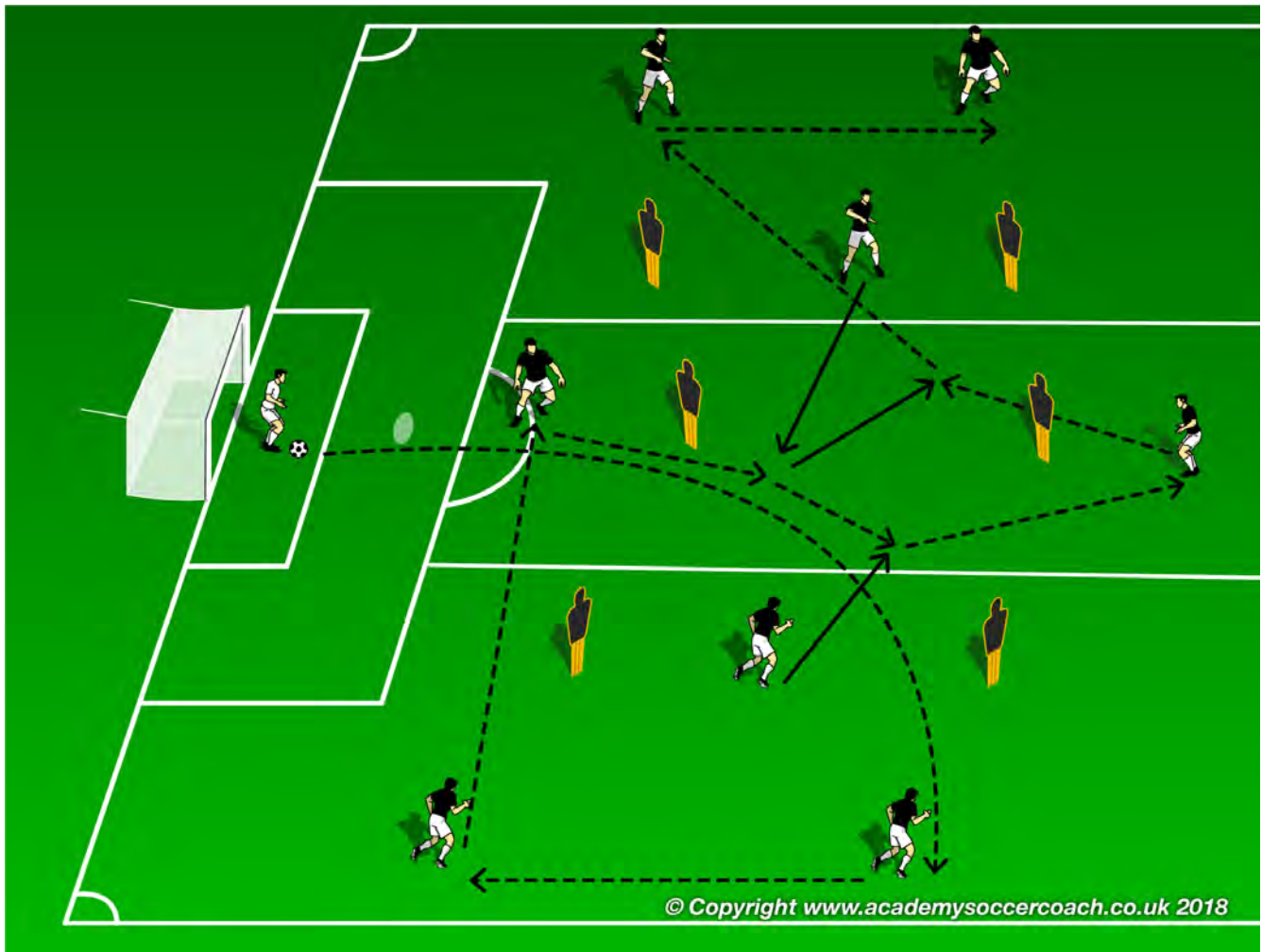
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and eight players are placed inside a half of a pitch; six airbodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards and three midfielders behind them (3-3). The players of the possession team are the center backs, the fullbacks, three midfielders and one forward or advanced midfielder. The half field is vertically divided into three parts.

The goalkeeper passes the ball to the center back who then plays forward to the fullback on the right side, where a 3 v 2 duel is being simulated; the middle and the right part of the field are now overloaded.

The side of play is then switched to the left side from the right one, after a quick passing combination in the center to solve a potential 3 v 2 duel. The left fullback receives over the second line of pressure and he passes back to the center back and then to the goalkeeper, to play out as if the team were under pressure.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick combinations to switch the side, fast replacing on the field to play out.

Exercise 23: play out switching the side (8+gk v "6")



Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and eight players are placed inside a half of a pitch; six airbodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards and three midfielders behind them (3-3). The players of the possession team are the center backs, the fullbacks, three midfielders and one forward or advanced midfielder. The half field is vertically divided into three parts.

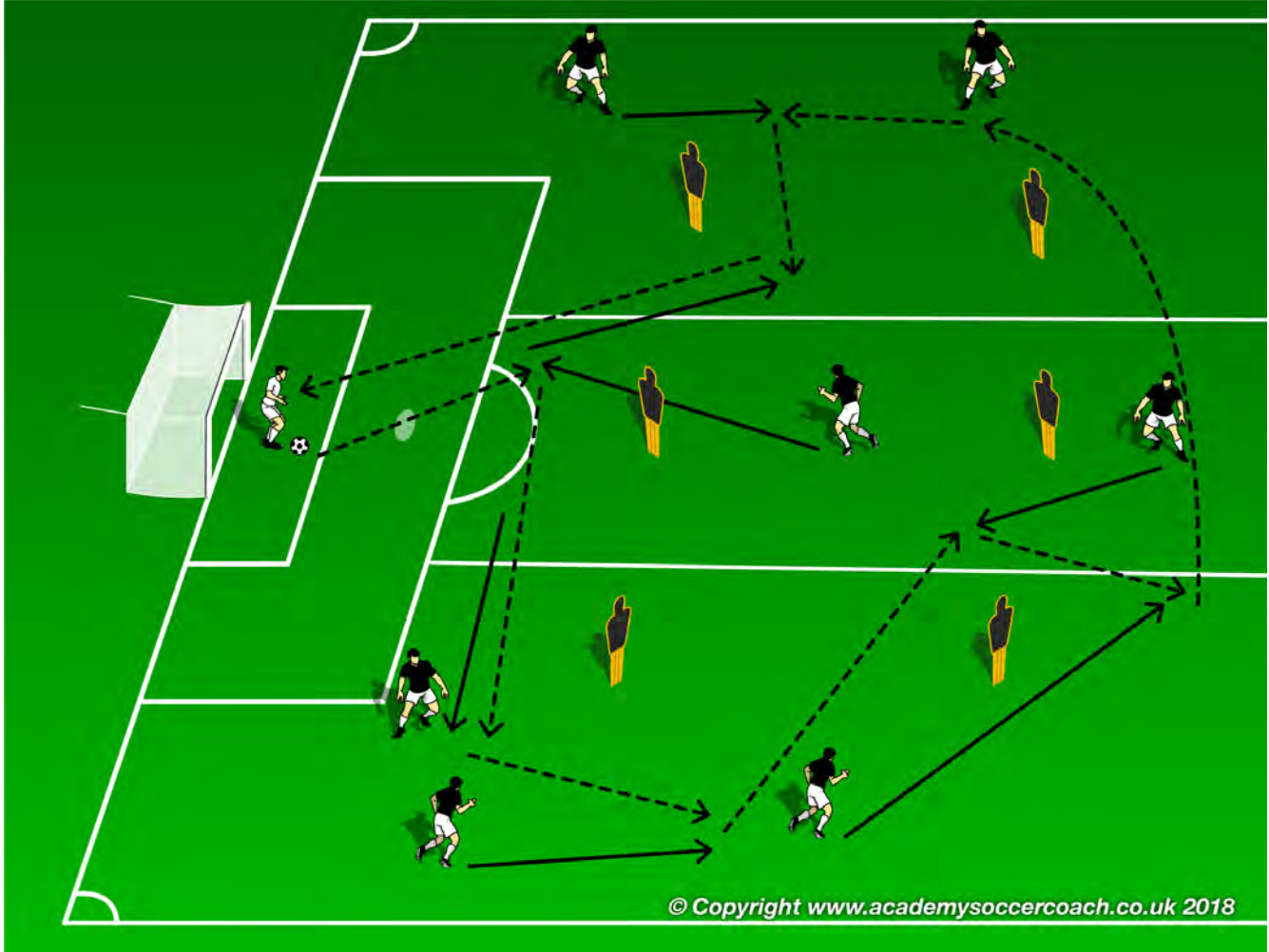
The goalkeeper plays a long ball to the fullback, who then passes to the center back on the right side, where a 3 v 2 duel is being simulated; the middle part of the field is now overload.

The side of play is then switched to the left side from the center after a quick passing combination, to solve a potential 4 v 2 duel. The left center back receives on the defense line and he passes forward toward the fullback.

The sequence ends with a back pass to the goalkeeper or with a pass to the center midfielder to play out as if the team were under pressure.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick combinations to switch the side, fast replacing on the field to play out.

Exercise 24: play out switching the side (7+gk v "6")



Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and seven players are placed inside a half of a pitch; six airbodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards and three midfielders behind them (3-3). The players of the possession team are the center backs, the fullbacks, two midfielders and one forward or advanced midfielder. The half field is vertically divided into three parts.

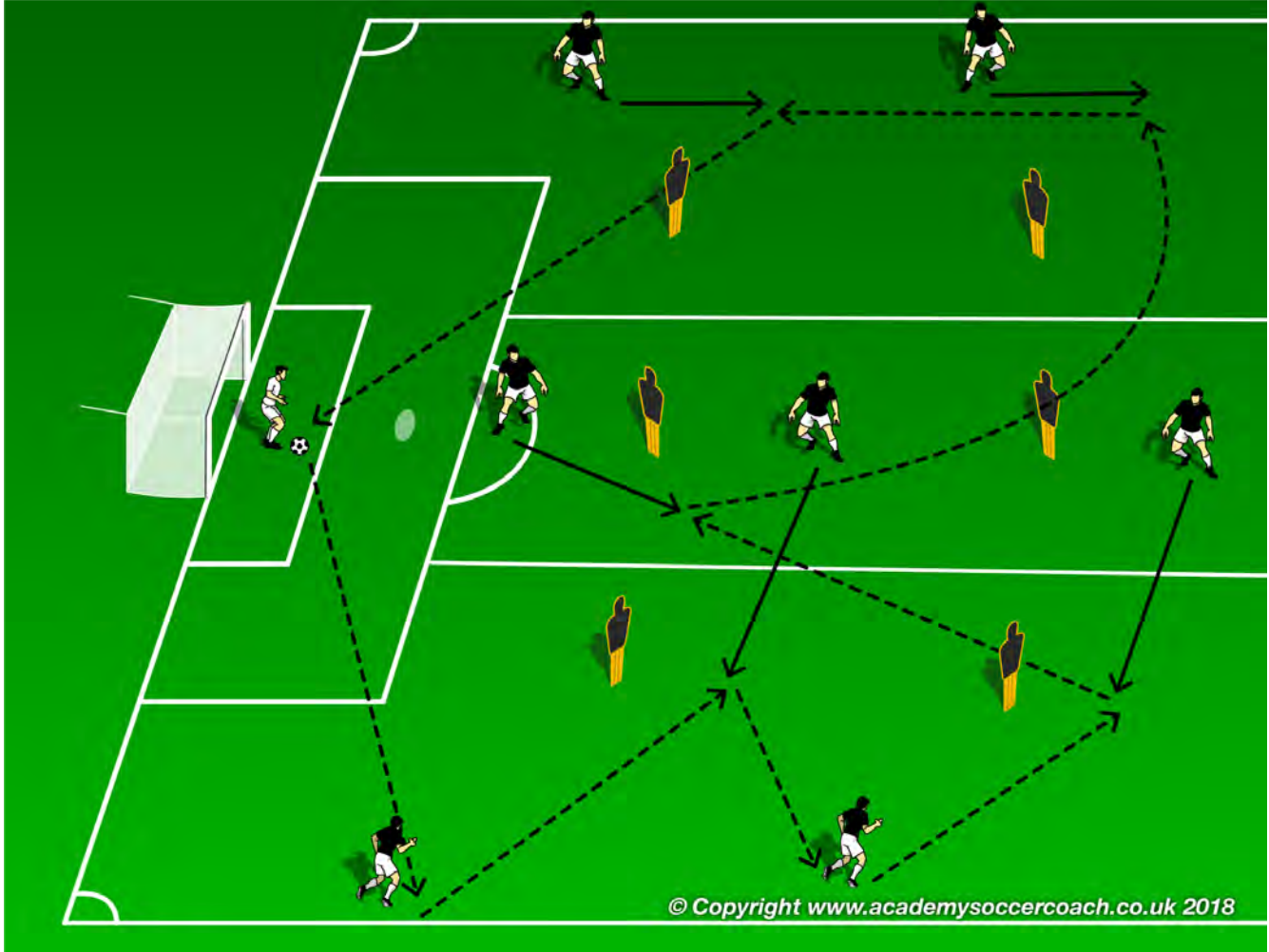
The goalkeeper passes the ball to the dropping back center midfielder, who then passes out to the center back who is shifting wide on the right flank, to create a simulated 3 v 2 duel; an equal number of players (2 v 2) act in the middle part of the field.

The side of play is then switched to the left side from the right one, after a 3rd man passing combination near the center area. The left fullback receives and he passes back to the center back.

The sequence ends with a back pass to the goalkeeper from the center balance player who received before, to play out as if the team were under pressure.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick combinations to switch the side, fast replacing on the field to play out.

Exercise 25: play out switching the side (7+gk v "6")



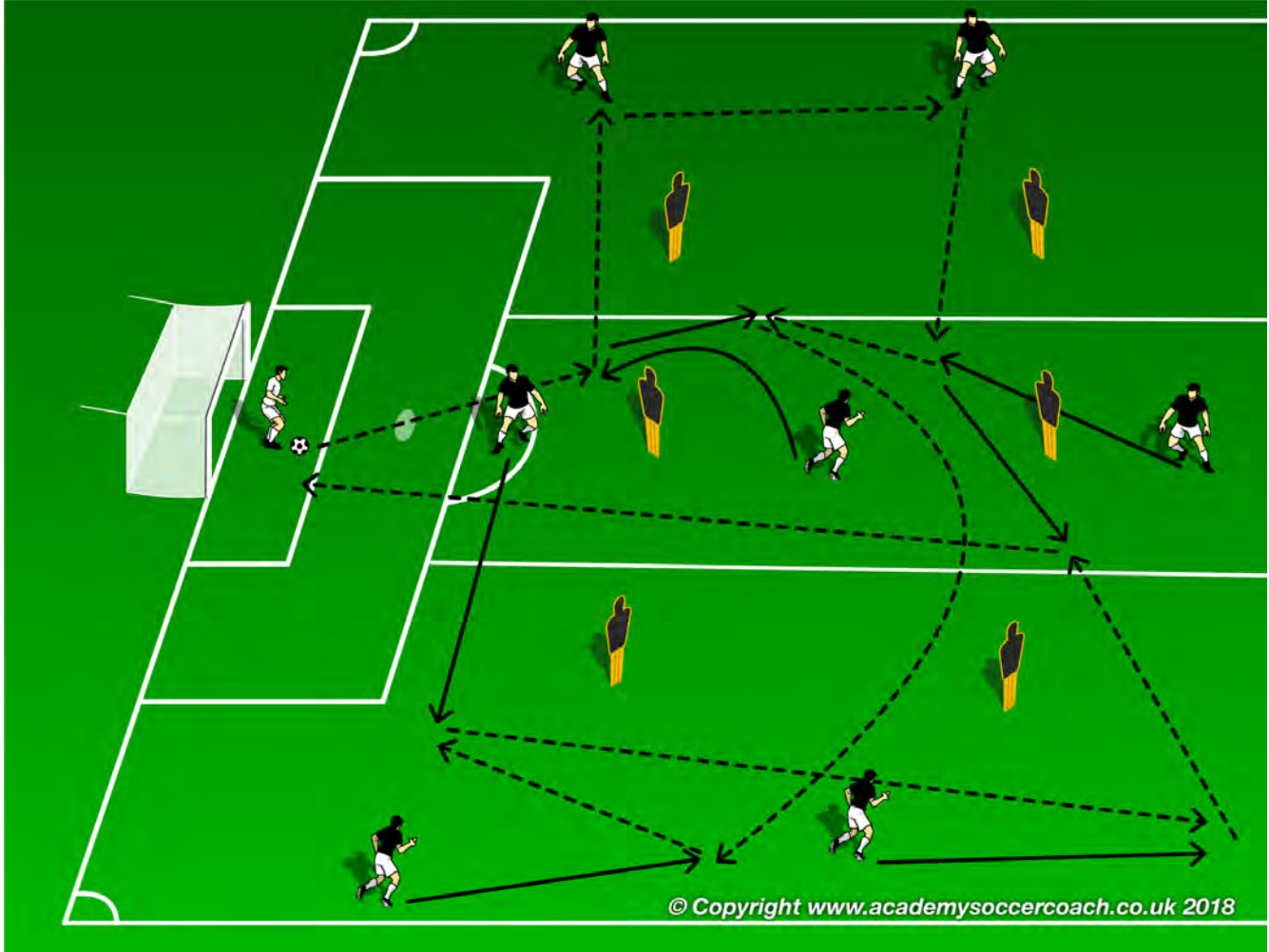
Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and seven players are placed inside a half of a pitch; six airbodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards and three midfielders behind them (3-3). The players of the possession team are the center backs, the fullbacks, two midfielders, and one forward or advanced midfielder. The half field is vertically divided into three parts.

The goalkeeper passes the ball to the fullback, who then passes inside toward one of the incoming midfielders, shifting wide on the right flank to create a simulated 4 v 2 duel, as the forward has dropped back there too. An equal number of players (2 v 2) act in the middle part of the field.

The side of play is then switched to the left from the center very quickly, as the center midfielder is potentially in numerical disadvantage (1 v 2); the fullback receives and he passes back to center back. The sequence ends with a pass back to the goalkeeper from the center back who received before, to play out as if the team were under pressure.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick change of side under pressure, creation of a strong side, fast replacing on the field to play out.

Exercise 26: play out switching the side (7+gk v "6")



Set-up and Sequence: one goalkeeper and seven players are placed inside a half of a pitch; six airbodies are placed in the middle to simulate three pressing forwards and three midfielders behind them (3-3). The players of the possession team are the center backs, the fullbacks, two midfielders, and one forward or advanced midfielder. The half field is vertically divided into three parts.

The goalkeeper passes the ball to one dropping back center midfielder in front of the first line of pressure, who then passes forward to the center striker who dropped back too and who plays out wide on the left side. The center back receives and he passes forward to the fullback.

The side of play is then switched to the right side from the left, after a quick passing combination inside the center area, where a 3 v 2 duel has to be solved. The right center back receives and he passes back to the center midfielder, who shifts across to create numerical advantage 3 v 2. The sequence ends with a back pass to the goalkeeper of the center forward, to play out as if the team were under pressure.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick combinations to switch the side, fast replacing on the field to play out.

Coaching La Salida Lavolpiana (The La Volpe Exit)

All the following exercises are designed to coach the timing of movements of the key players who are involved in this famous building up from the back sequence:



- Goalkeeper in possession
- Center backs move wide
- Center balance player drops back in between the center back
- Fullbacks move forward

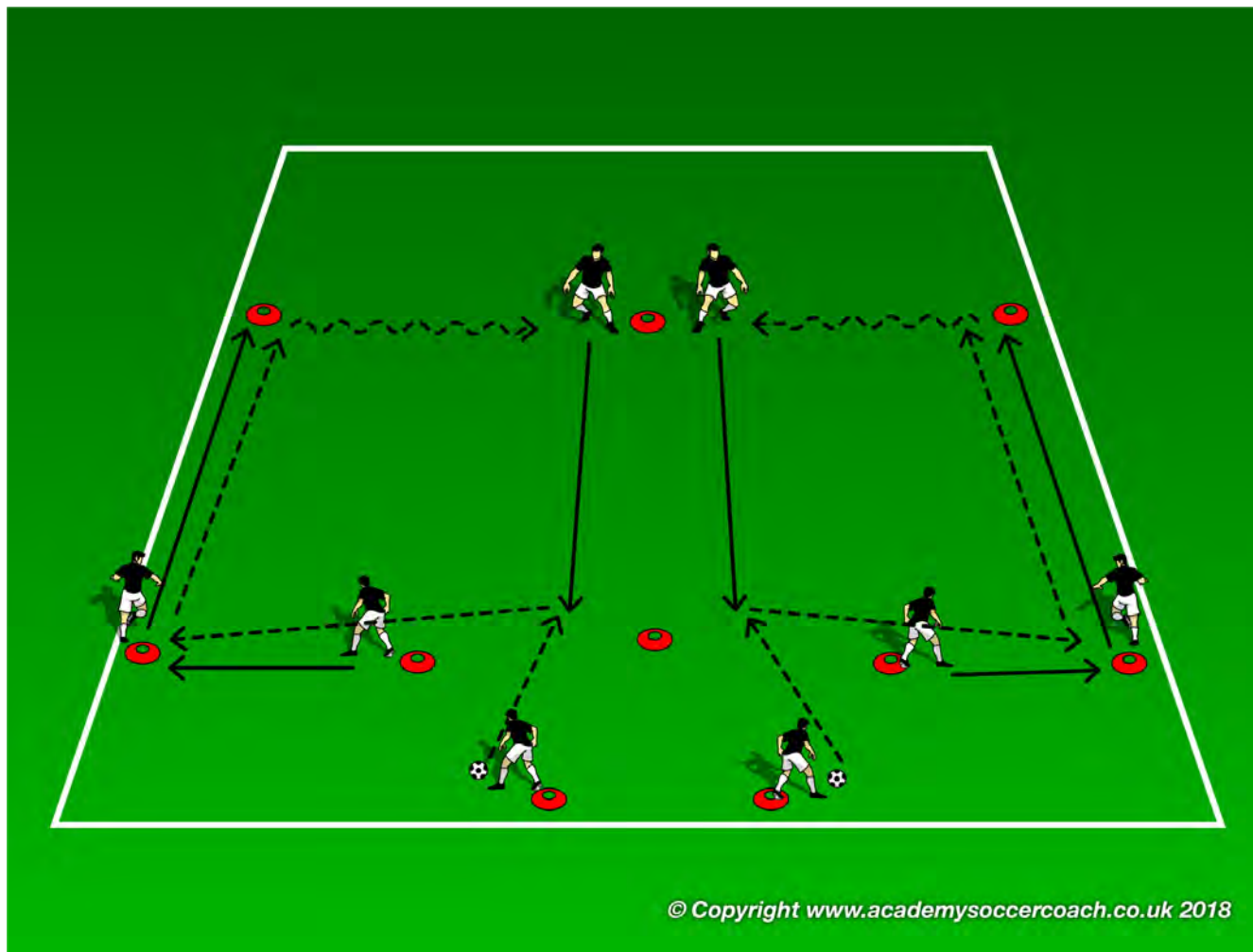
Despite its application all over the world, consider these aspects before practicing:

- It must be adapted to the context or the team build up sequence can become a predictable strategy
- If the opposition team neutralizes the exit with a sign, the possession team must have other available passing lanes
- The timing in decision making is a priority

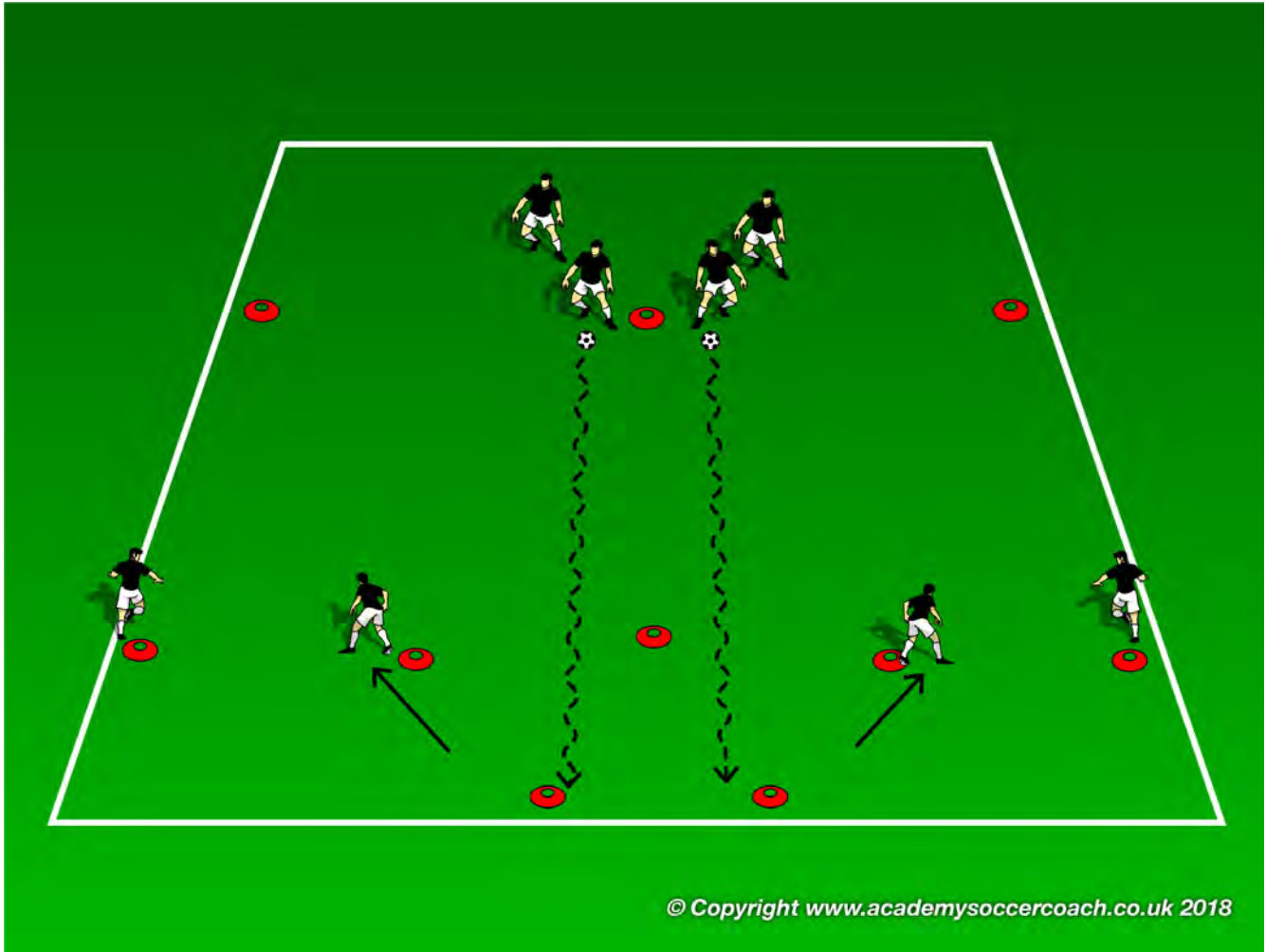
Exercise 27

Set-up: 8 players are placed as in the picture. From the bottom, they play as:

- 1) goalkeepers
- 2) center backs
- 3) fullbacks
- 4) balance midfielders



Sequence: the players at the bottom are in possession as if they were goalkeepers. The balance players drop back to receive, while the center backs run wide and the fullbacks run forward. The center backs must control the ball on the outer cones and then pass forward on the run of the fullbacks, who receive wide on the cone and dribble inside first...



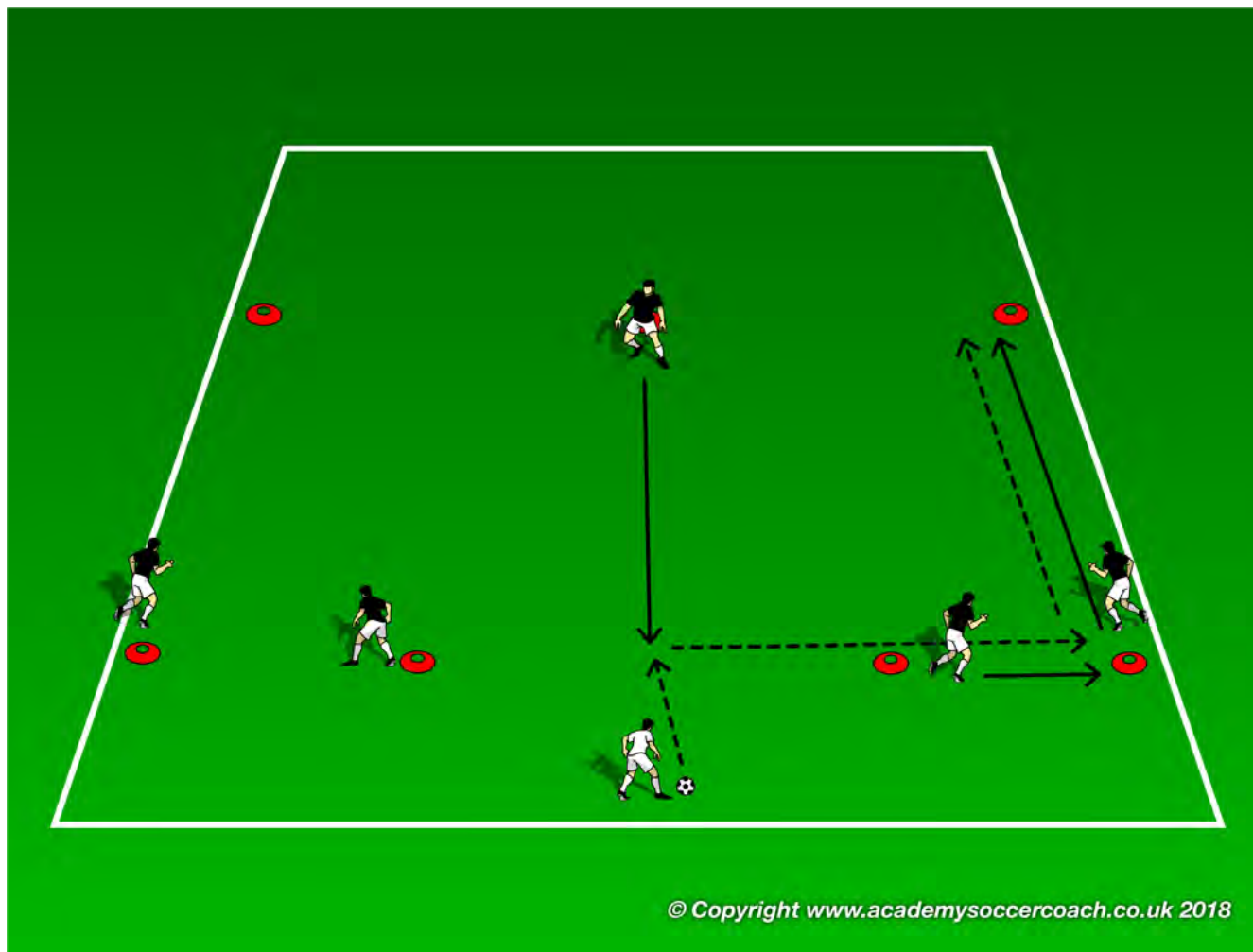
...and then backward on the cones at the bottom. The players move toward the next cone. The sequence is carried out on the right and on the left at the same time.

Eye on: quality of the passes, synchronization of deep, wide and forward runs.

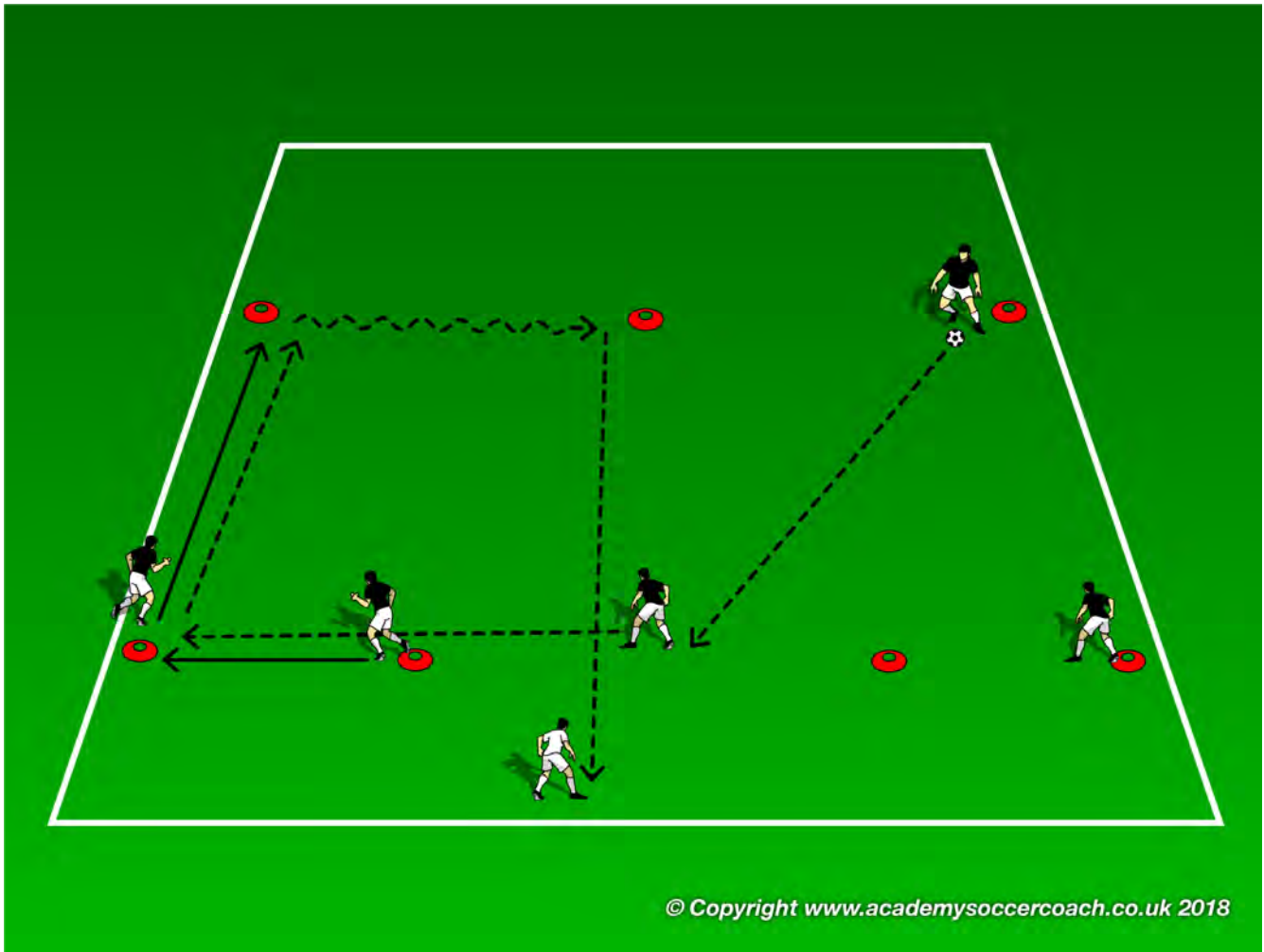
Exercise 28

Set-up: 6 players are placed as in the picture. From the bottom, the players are:

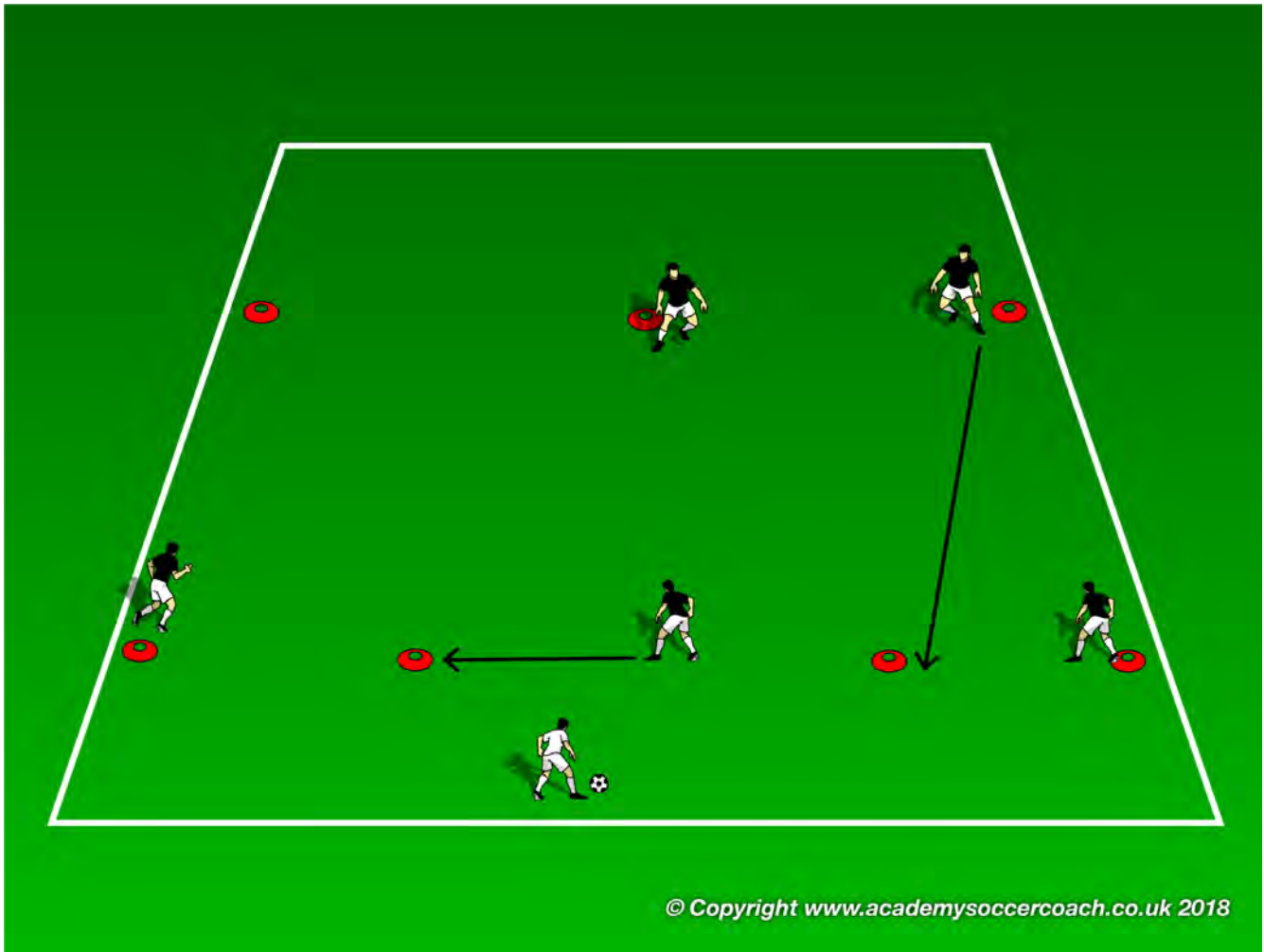
- 1) goalkeeper
- 2) center backs
- 3) fullbacks
- 4) balance midfielder



Sequence: the goalkeeper at the bottom is in possession and he calls for the side where the sequence has to be started. The balance player drops back to receive, while the center back runs wide and the fullback runs forward. The center back must control the ball on the outer cones and then pass forward on the run of the fullback, who receives up and wide on the cone.



The fullback then turns and he passes back to the balance player, who is now on the defense line. The balance player passes the ball out on the run of the opposite center back and then the fullback receive the ball on the upper cone, before dribbling the ball toward the center and passing back to the goalkeeper.



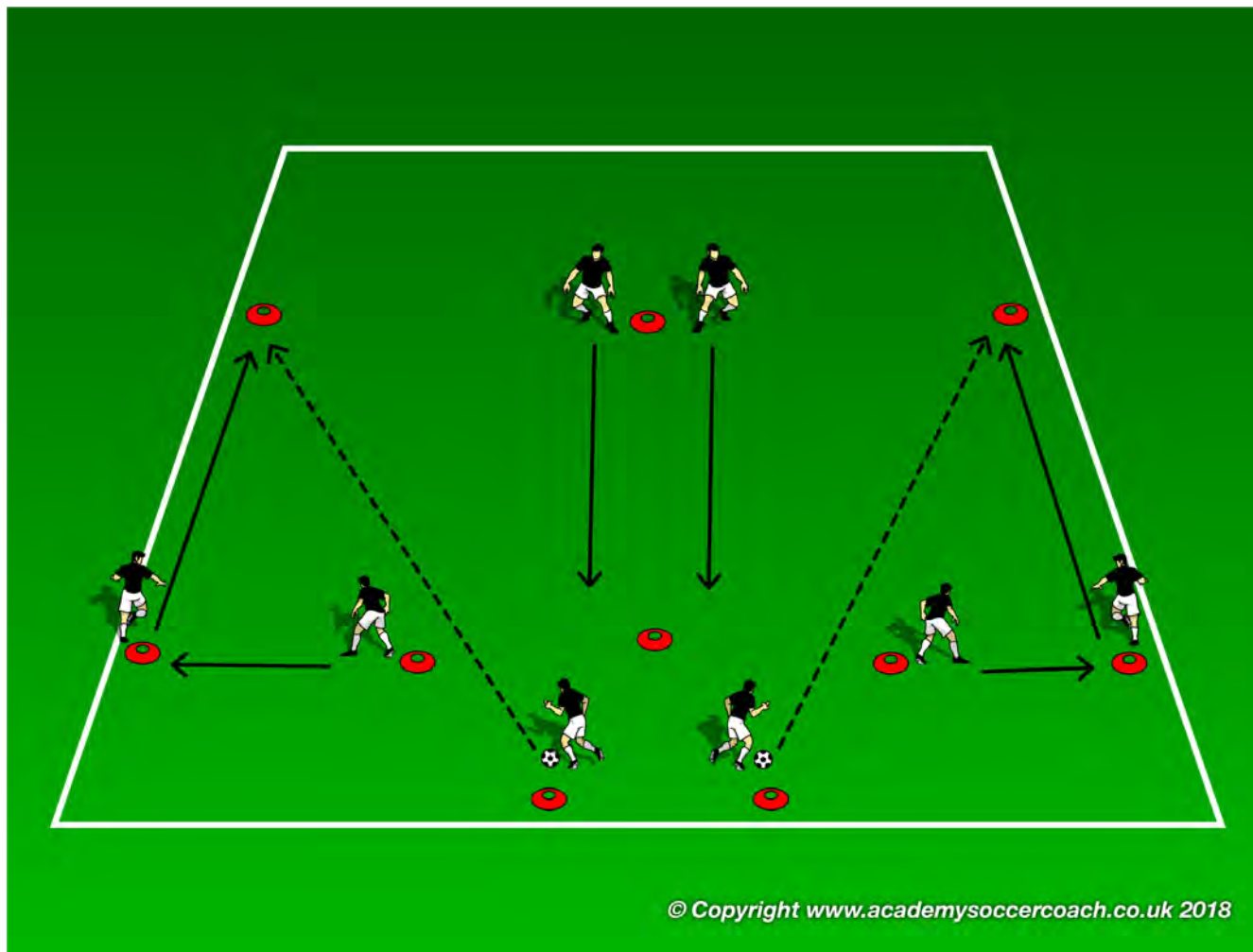
All the players rotate their positions toward the next cone; the first fullback becomes center back and the balance player becomes the opposite center back.

Eye on: quality of the passes, synchronization of deep, wide and forward runs on the first side of play, quick combination to change the side of play.

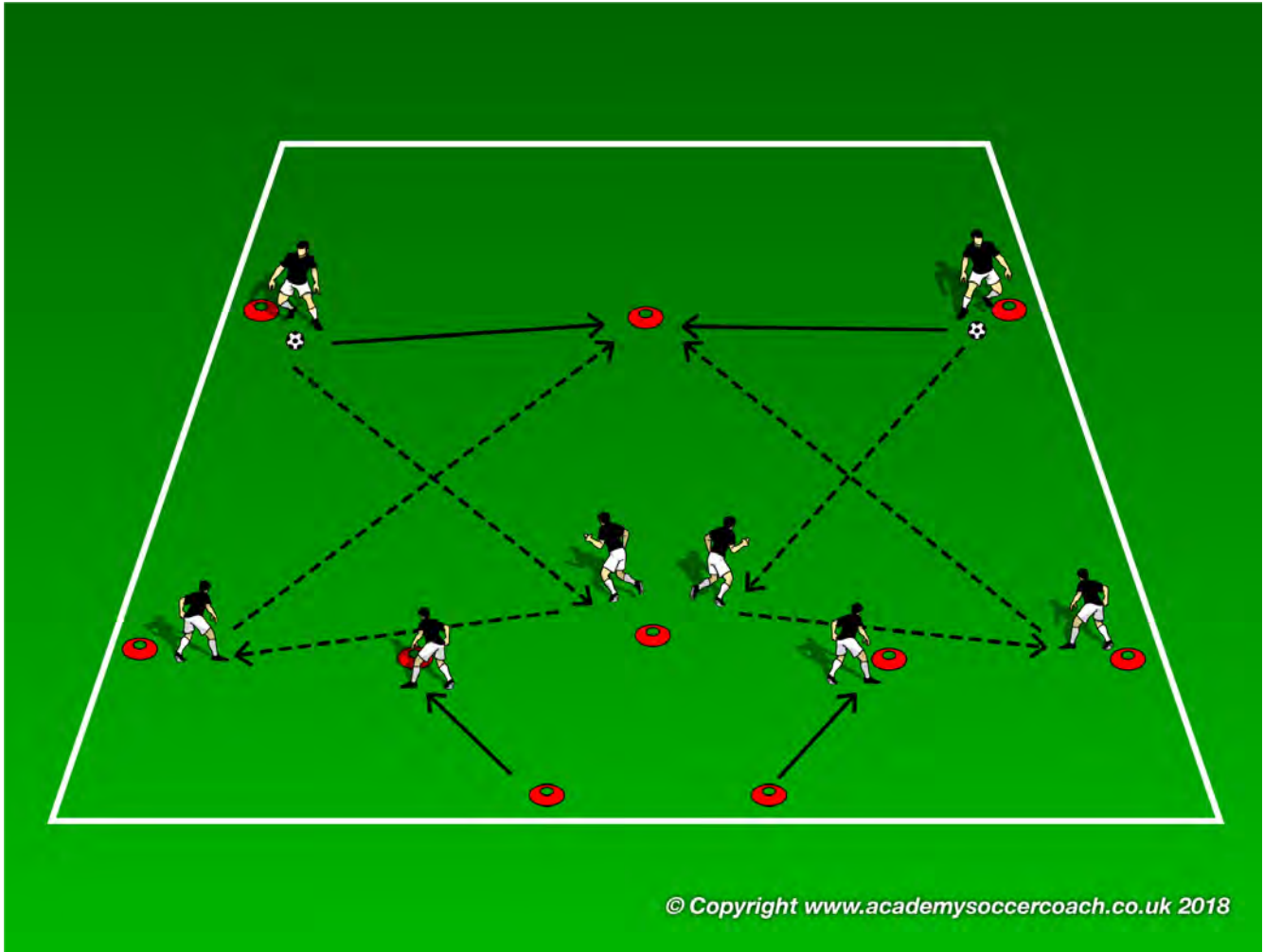
Exercise 29

Set-up: 8 players are placed as in the picture. From the bottom, they play as:

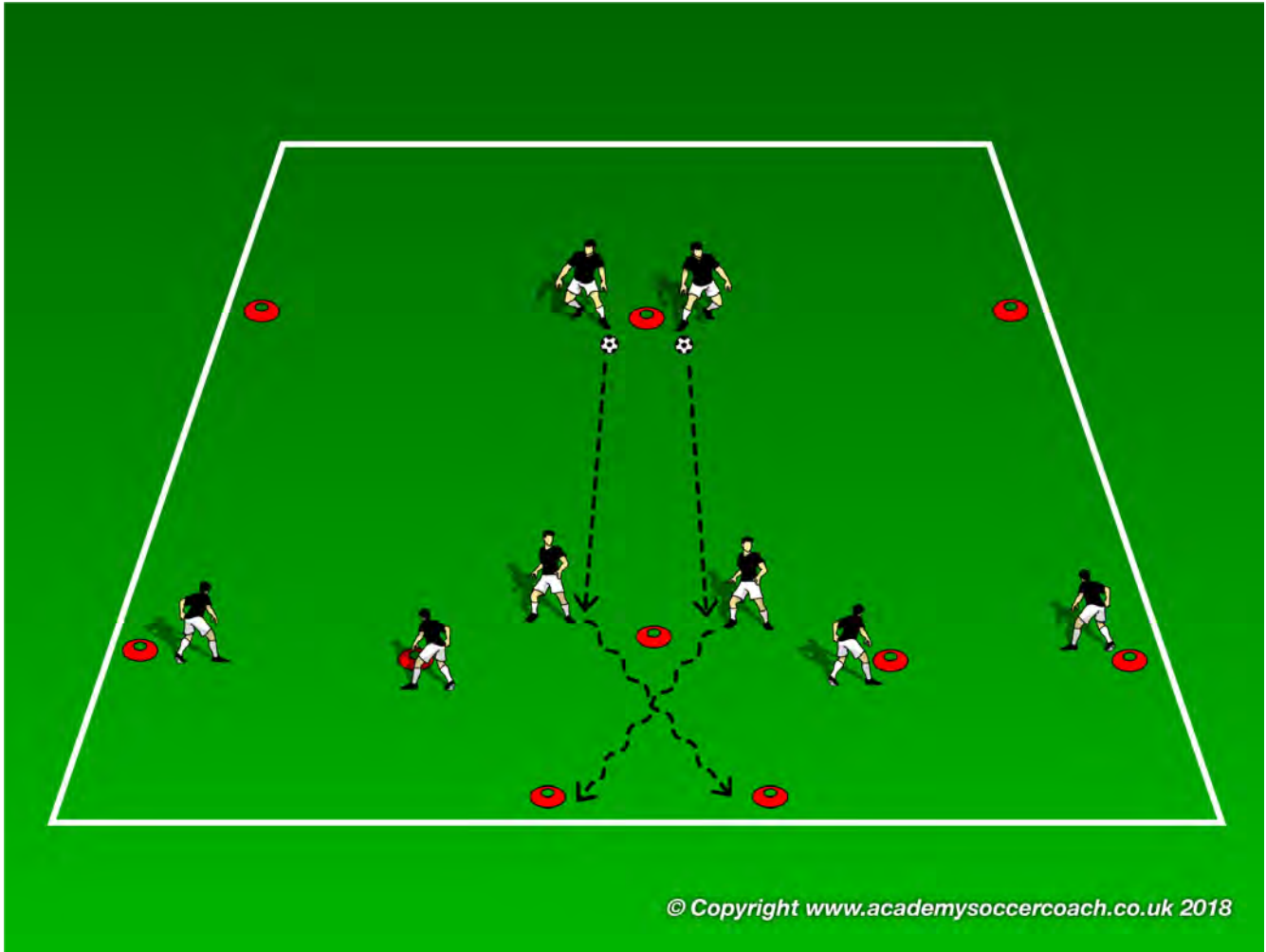
- 1) goalkeepers
- 2) center backs
- 3) fullbacks
- 4) balance midfielders



Sequence: the players at the bottom are in possession as if they were goalkeepers. The balance players drop back to receive, while the center backs run wide and the fullback run forward. The fullbacks receive a direct pass from the "goalkeepers"...



...they turn and pass back to the balance players, to distribute to the center backs on the left and on the right. The center backs pass then toward the upper cone where the fullbacks receive...



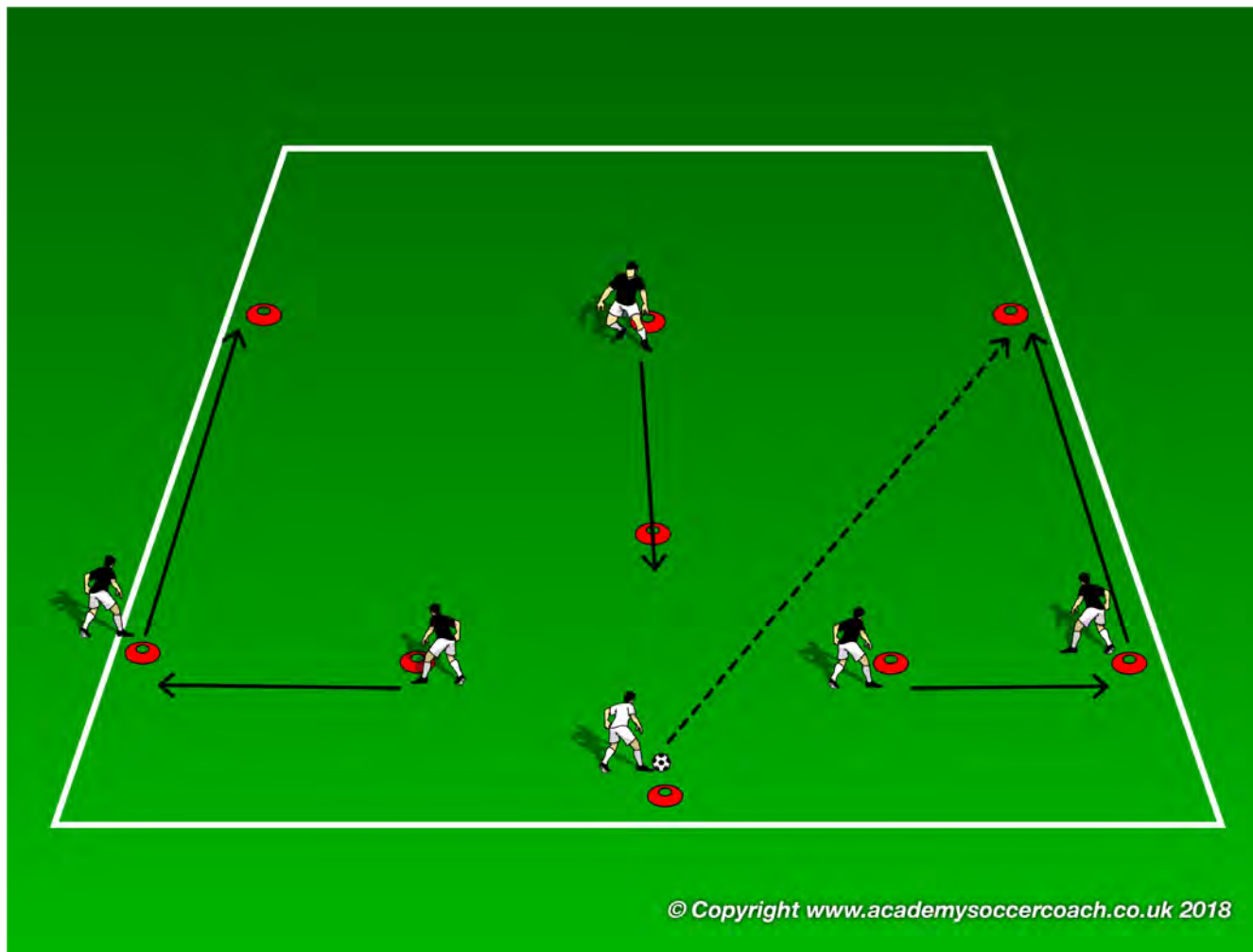
... and the balance players receive the last pass and dribble back to the bottom, while they are crossing their runs.

Eye on: quality of the passes, synchronization of deep, wide and forward runs.

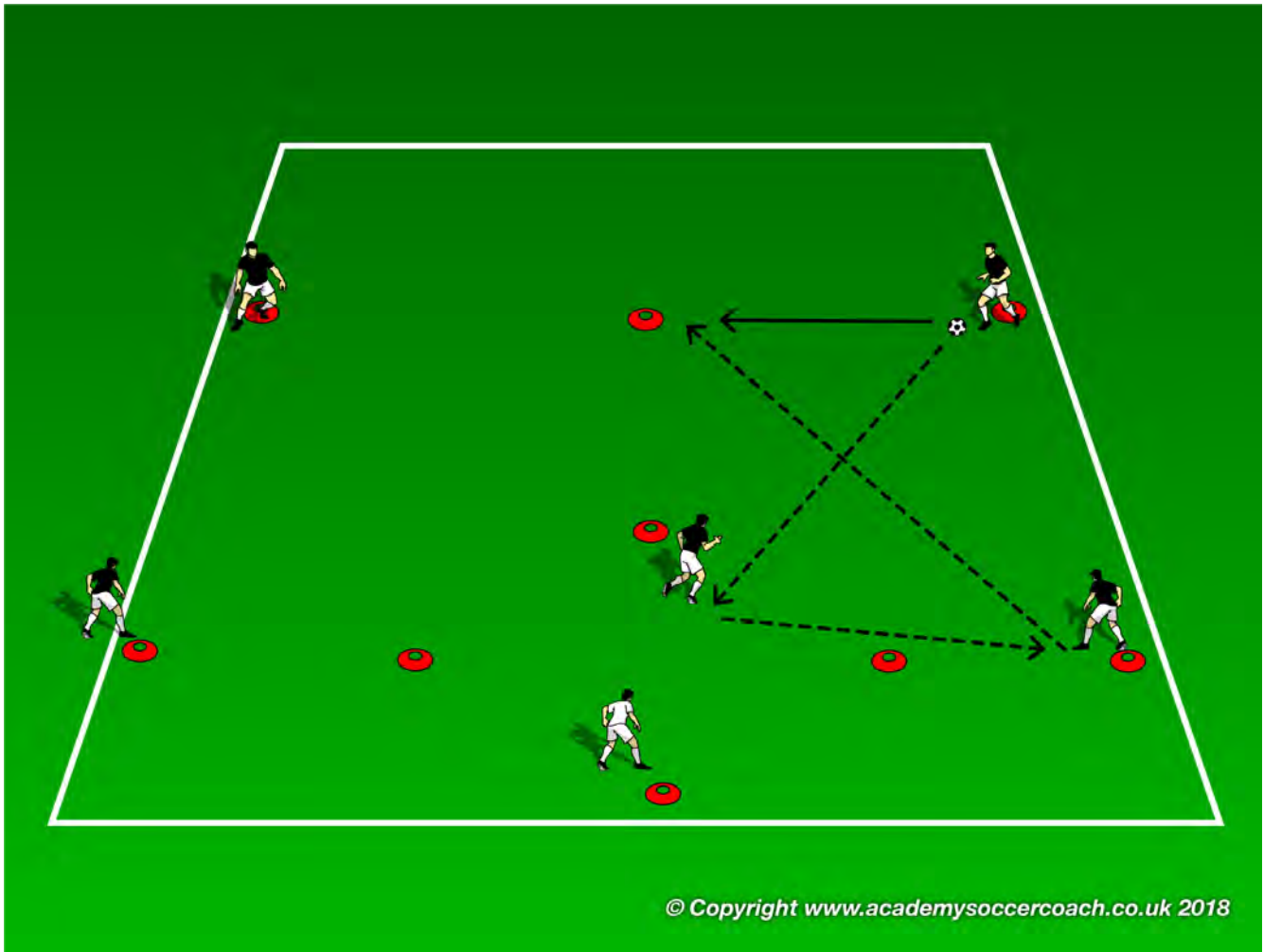
Exercise 30

Set-up: 6 players are placed as in the picture. From the bottom, they play as:

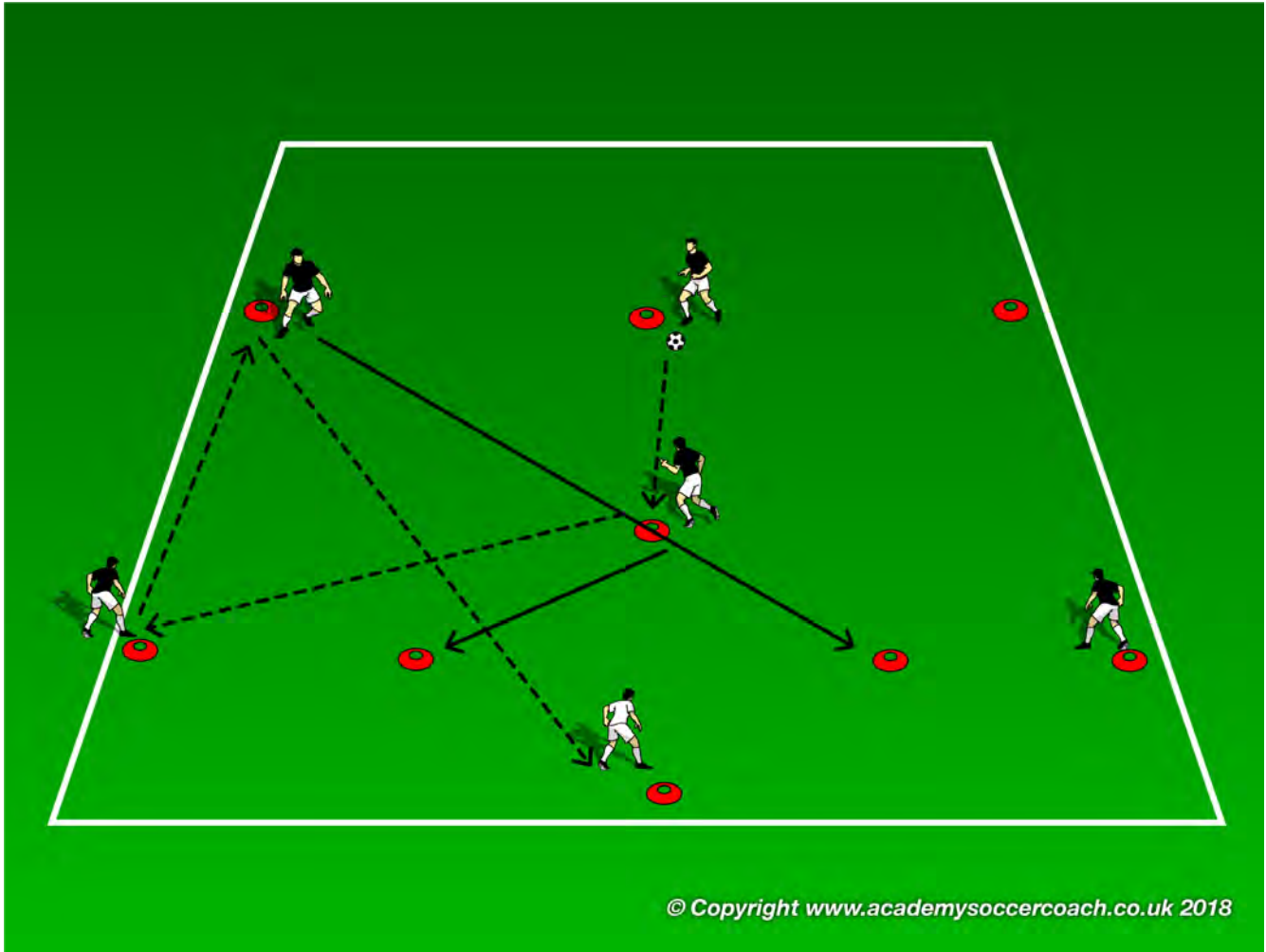
- 1) goalkeepers
- 2) center backs
- 3) fullbacks
- 4) balance midfielders



Sequence: the goalkeeper at the bottom is in possession and he calls for the side where the sequence has to be started. The balance player drops back to receive, while the center backs run wide and the fullbacks run forward. The right fullback in the picture receives a direct pass from the goalkeeper being placed wide on the upper cone.



As the fullback is on the upper cone, he turns and he passes back to the balance player on the defense line. The center balance player plays wide on the right toward the center back, who passes forward again toward the inside run of the fullback.



As the fullback receives, he passes back again to center balance player, who changes direction toward the center back. The opposite fullback then receives on the upper cone on the left side and the goalkeeper receives the last pass to start the sequence again. The balance player and the second left fullback become center backs.

Eye on: quality of the passes, synchronization of deep, wide and forward runs on the first side of play, quick combination to change the side of play.

Possession, Rondos and Position Games

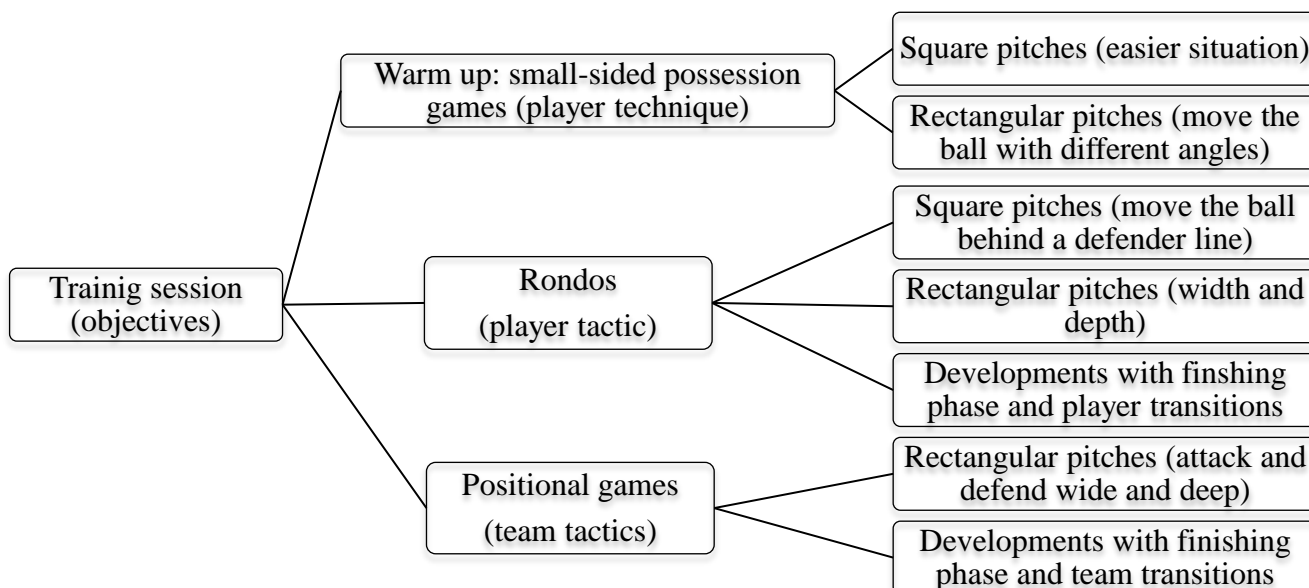
All the following exercises aim to practice the principles of play to build up under active pressure of the opponents; this way, the build up phase, transitions, the possession phase under pressure, the play out under pressure phase are all coached at the same time, as well as the positioning and re-positioning of the players. If all the previous exercises improve the basic technique, the body positioning, the body angle to progress on the pitch as the ball is received, these small sided games are useful to coach the players under pressure and put them into real game situations.

The players must stay on the ball with an open stance ready to receive from any side or forward direction. They must be focused and think quickly as well as to have speed of play as the team demands a high level of performance from each player. Creativity and teamwork must be key words to fix the issues of the opposition. Keeping possession as player and as team must be the first aim, but to look for opportunities to cut the opposition lines when possible is very important. The rhythm of the passes must recall the technical exercises; the tempo of play and the rhythm are critical for team success.

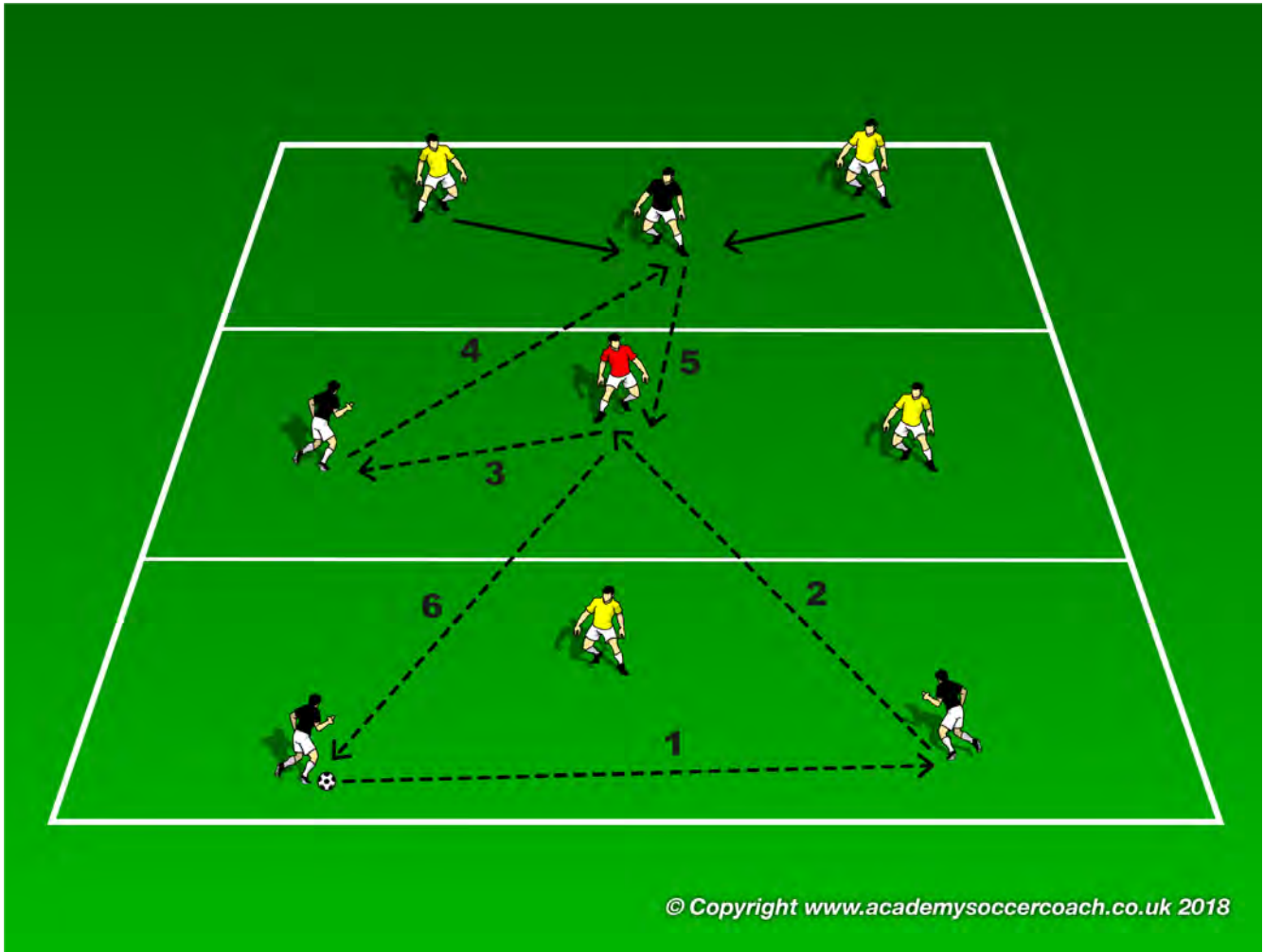
These are the three main way of passing the ball, that the player should try to look for, to break through the opposition lines of pressure, in these kind of exercises:

- First Line Break/Pass: pass to the teammate next to you. The easiest pass to perform in a rondo as it doesn't require a wide range of vision (possession)
- Second Line Break/Pass: the pass will bypass the teammate next to you but it doesn't split defenders. The second line pass requires a little larger passing vision; it's more difficult than the first line pass (move the opponents)
- Third Line Split Pass: this is the pass that splits the defenders through the middle. It requires skill, creativity, vision and timing of play. In soccer the ultimate goal is to get the ball forward and score. Third line split passes help to develop this skill (break the pressure line)

How to use the exercise and how to progress in a training session with build up of play as first objective:



Exercise 30: multiple 2 v 1s



Set-up and Sequence: nine players are placed inside a 3 areas rectangular space; two teams of four play a 2 v 1 duel inside the outer areas and a 1 v 1 + 1 free player in the middle.

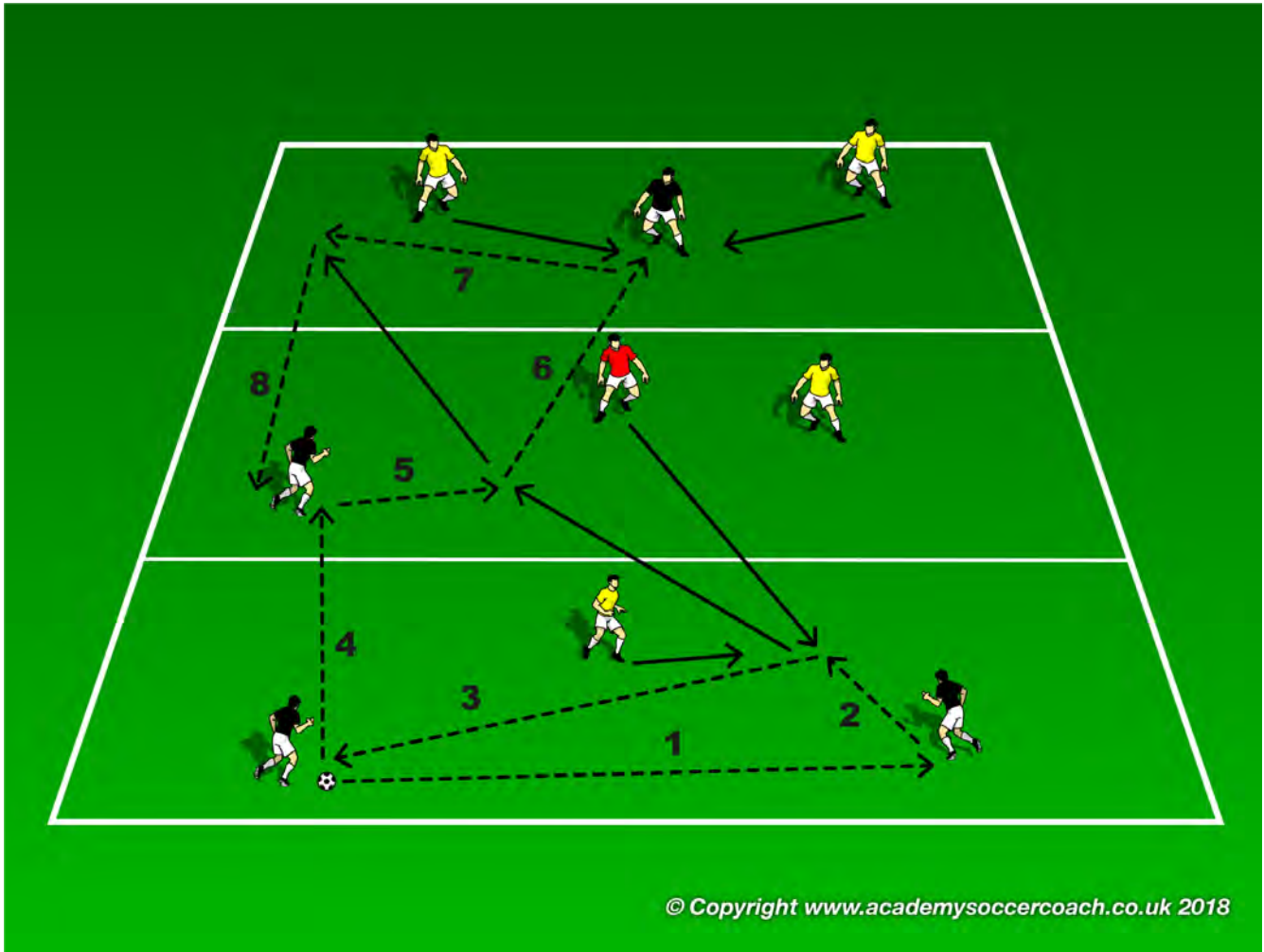
The goal for the team in possession is to win the 2 v 1 duel while building up with the fewer number of touches possible and to progress quickly in the middle, utilizing the free player.

As the forward receives being outnumbered, he must be able to keep the possession and to send the ball back in the building up area to continue the sequence. If the defending team wins the possession, the objective is the same.

Variation: the center free player is a defender, so the receiver must play with one touch if possible.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick combinations, closure of passing lanes and immediate pressure to win the ball back.

Exercise 31: support play in 3 v 1, 2 v 1 and 2 v 2 duels



Set-up and Sequence: nine players are placed inside a 3 areas rectangular space; two teams of four play a 2 v 1 duel inside the outer areas and a 1 v 1 + 1 in the middle.

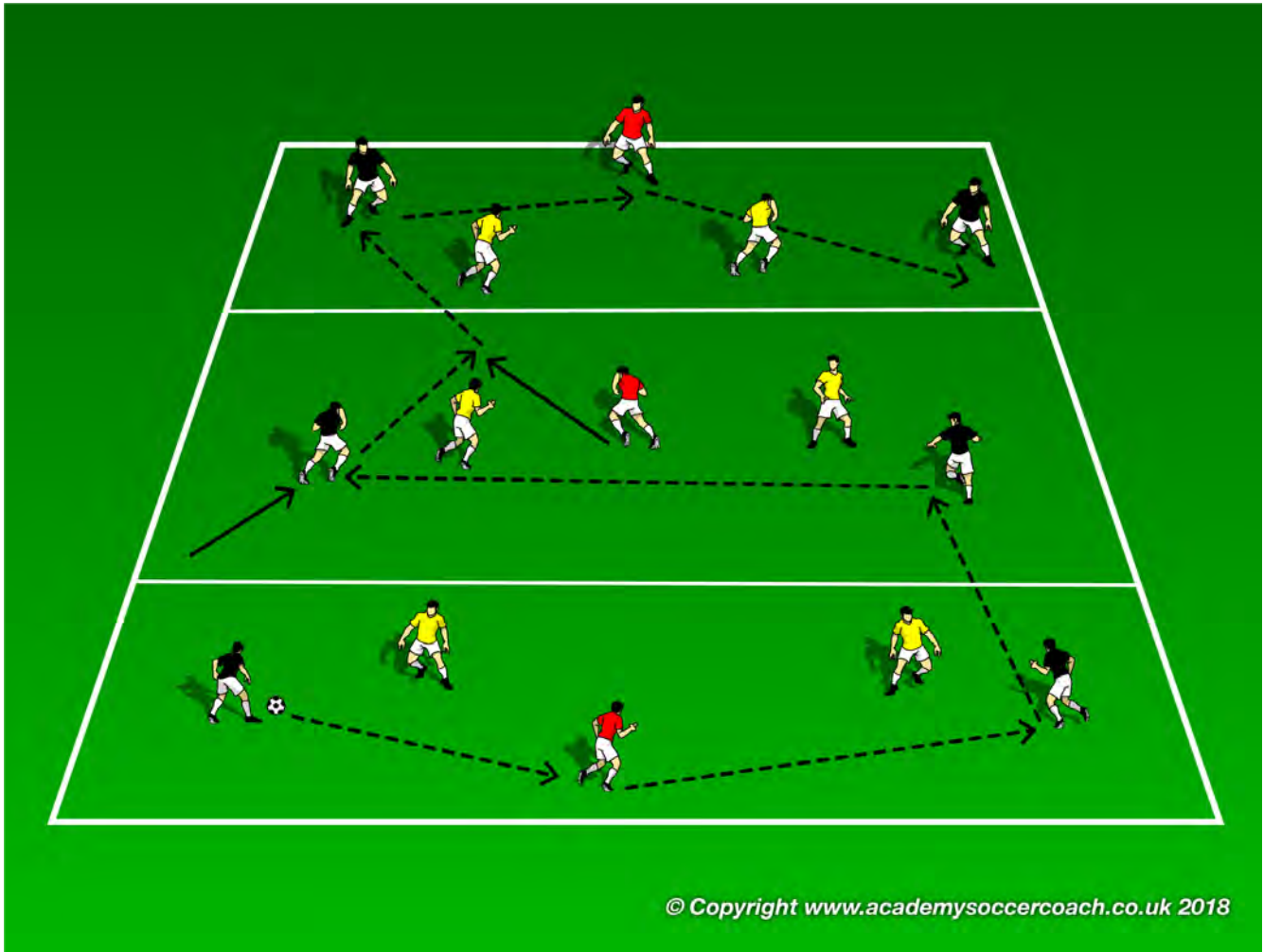
The goal for the team in possession is to create and win a 3 v 1 duel while building up with the fewest number of touches possible and to progress quickly in the middle, thanks to the free player.

As the midfielder receives, he's playing a 1 v 1 duel and the free player must support him, creating a 2 v 1 to send the ball up the pitch. The midfielder must then support the forward in keeping the possession, as he's outnumbered at the beginning, equalizing the tactical situation in a 2 v 2 duel. The objective is to keep possession and to repeat the sequences as many time as possible. If the defending team wins the possession, the objective is the same.

Variation: the center free player is a defender, creating a 2 v 2 to counter the build up phase, a 1 v 2 in the middle to recover the possession and a 3 v 2 inside the upper part to put pressure.

Eye on: quality of the passes, support play to help the teammate in possession, quick combinations, closure of passing lanes and immediate pressure to win the ball back.

Exercise 32: multiple 3 v 2 duels



Set-up and Sequence: fifteen players are placed inside a 3 areas rectangular space; two teams of six play multiple 3 (2+1) v 2 duels inside all the areas; one free player is placed in the middle of each space, to create numerical advantage for the team in possession.

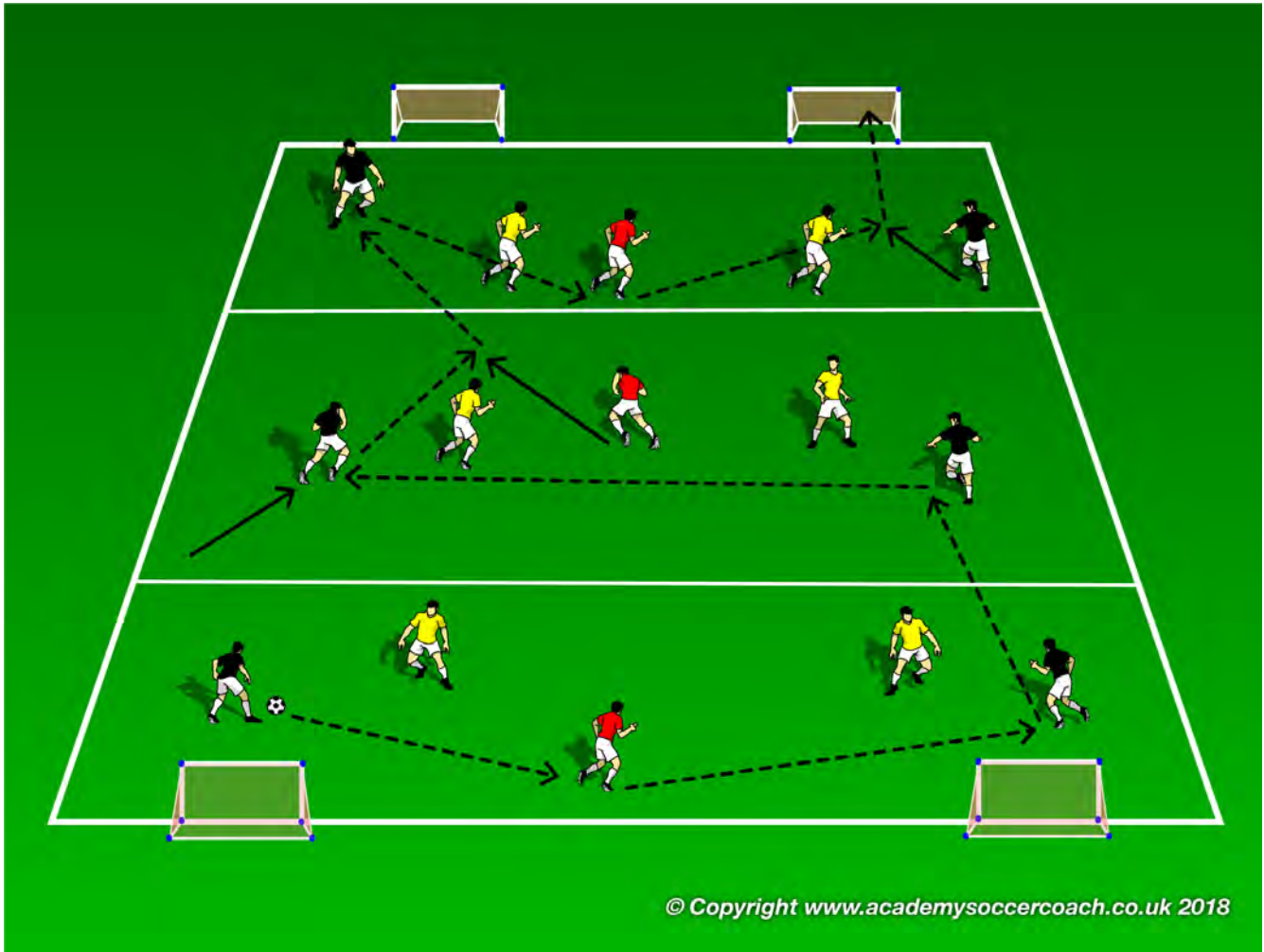
The goal for the team in possession is to win the duels as soon as possible and with the fewer number of touches.

The lines of pressure should be broken through with 1-2 passing combinations with the receiving of return passes behind the defenders. The possession must be maintained all over the areas.

Variation: the free players can become defenders, to make the possession team building up in an outnumbered situation, playing out outnumbered, as well as to keep the possession in the same situation.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick combinations to progress up the pitch, closure of passing lanes and immediate pressure to win the ball back.

Exercise 33: multiple 3 v 2 duels

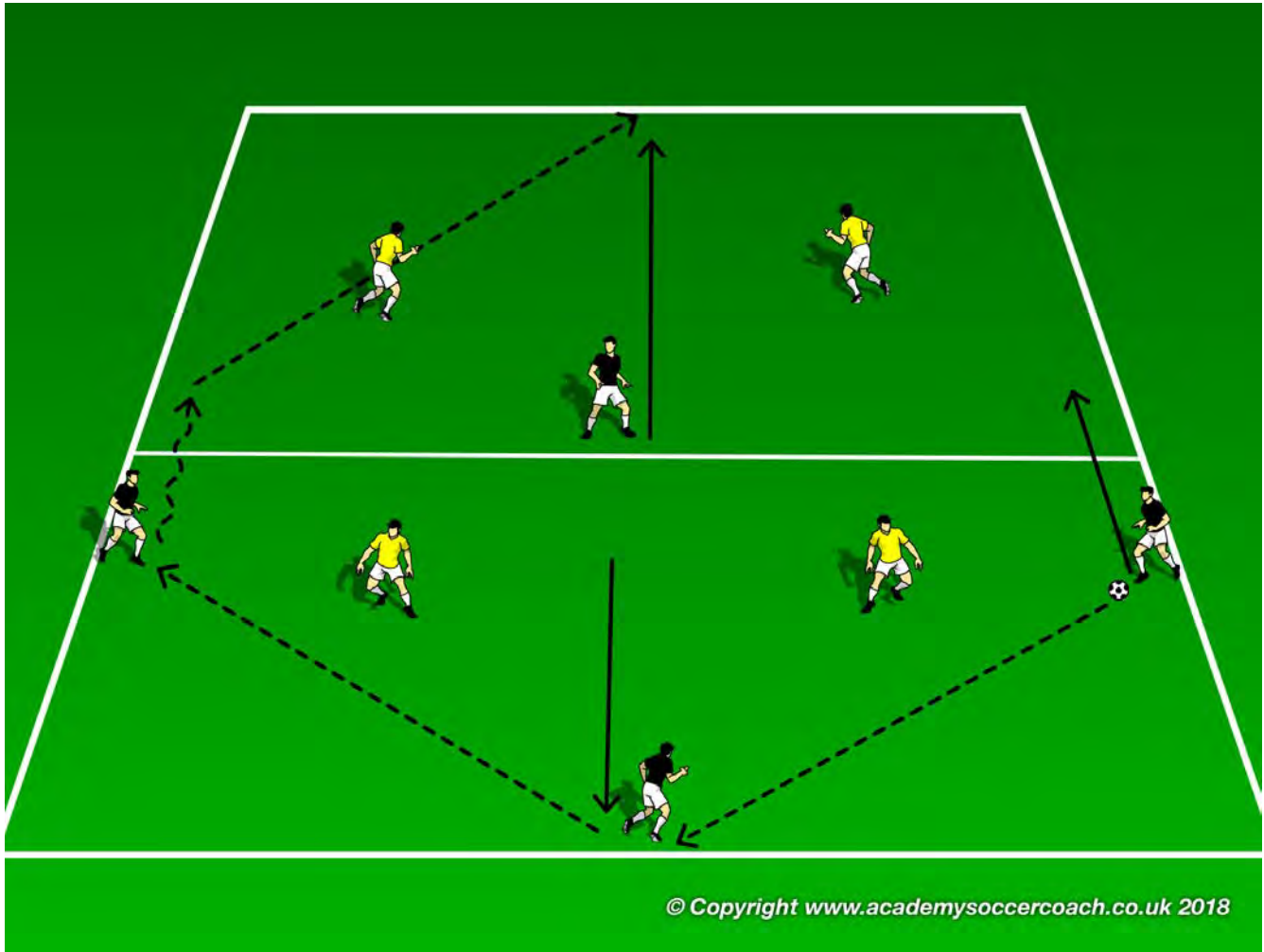


Set-up and Sequence: this exercise is a progression of the previous one. The teams have two mini goals to attack and two to be saved; every time the possession is being played in the finishing area, a score chance shall be created as soon as possible and with the fewer number of touches.

Variation: the free players can become defenders, to make the possession team building up in an outnumbered situation, playing out outnumbered, as well as to finish in the same situation. The team in possession must be fast and effective. As the defenders recover the ball, they must be quick the same, as the free players become defenders immediately; quick transitions to attack and to defend are then required.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick combinations to progress on the pitch, fast finishing, closure of passing lanes and immediate pressure to win the ball back.

Exercise 34: multiple 3 v 2 rondo



Set-up and Sequence: two teams of four players are placed inside a two area rectangular space as in the picture. The possession team players are along the sidelines and the defenders are placed in the middle of two areas.

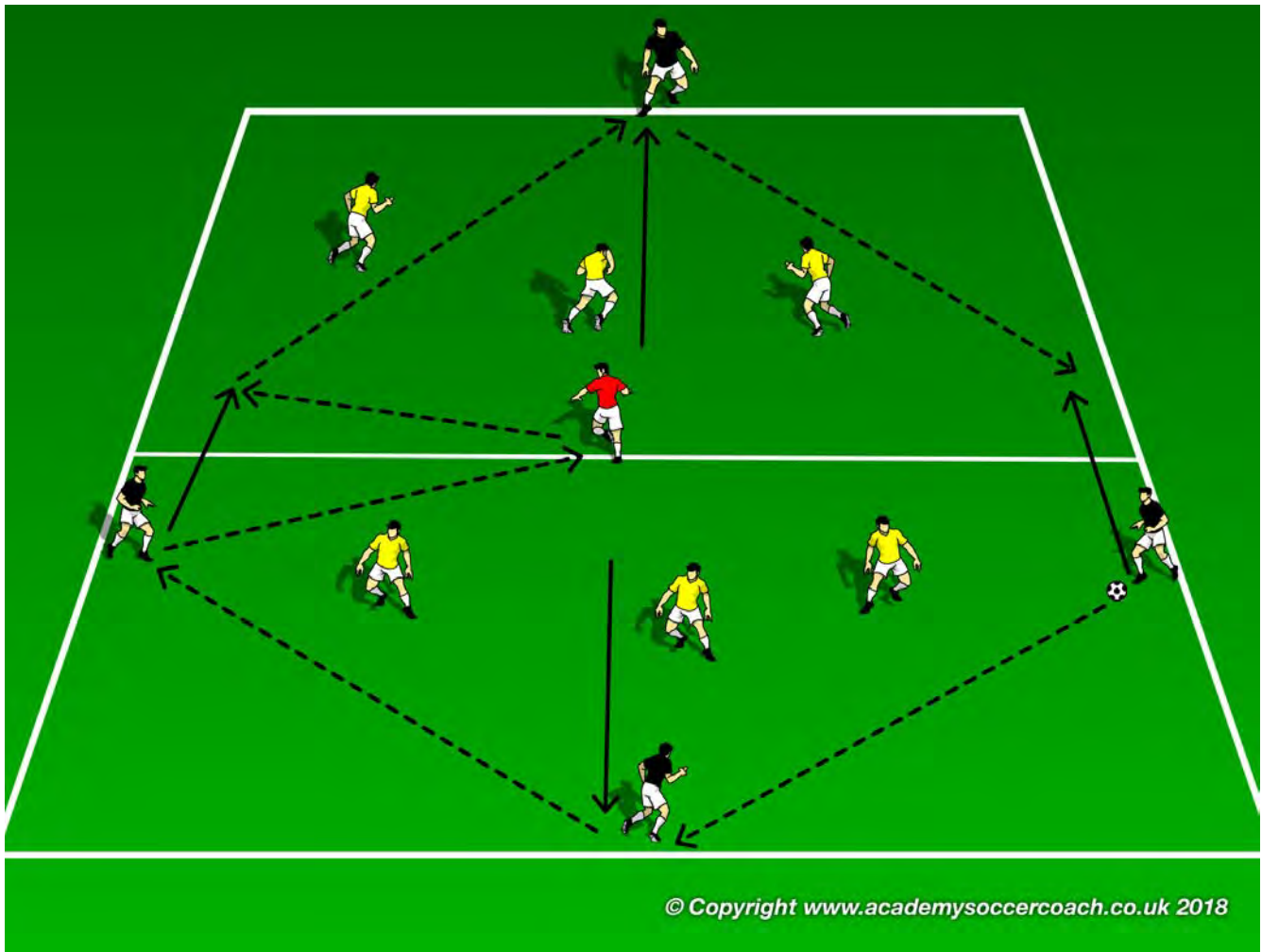
The goal for the team in possession is to win the 3 v 2 duels through wide passes and to take the move on the other half time to time. The lower vertex must always drop back from the middle line.

If the defenders win the ball, all the players must replace themselves along the lines to manage the possession and in the middle to defend.

Variation: one defender can run inside the playing half to create a 3 v 3 duel; the player who is placed along the middle line can be involved to create a 4 v 3 duel.

Eye on: quality of the passes, quick dribble of the ball to progress on the pitch, closure of passing lanes and immediate pressure to win the ball back.

Exercise 35: double 3 v 3 + 1 position game



Set-up and Sequence: two teams of four players (the black one) and of six (the yellow one) together with a center red midfielder are placed inside a two areas rectangular space, as in the picture. The possession team players are placed along the sidelines and the defenders are placed in the middle of two areas.

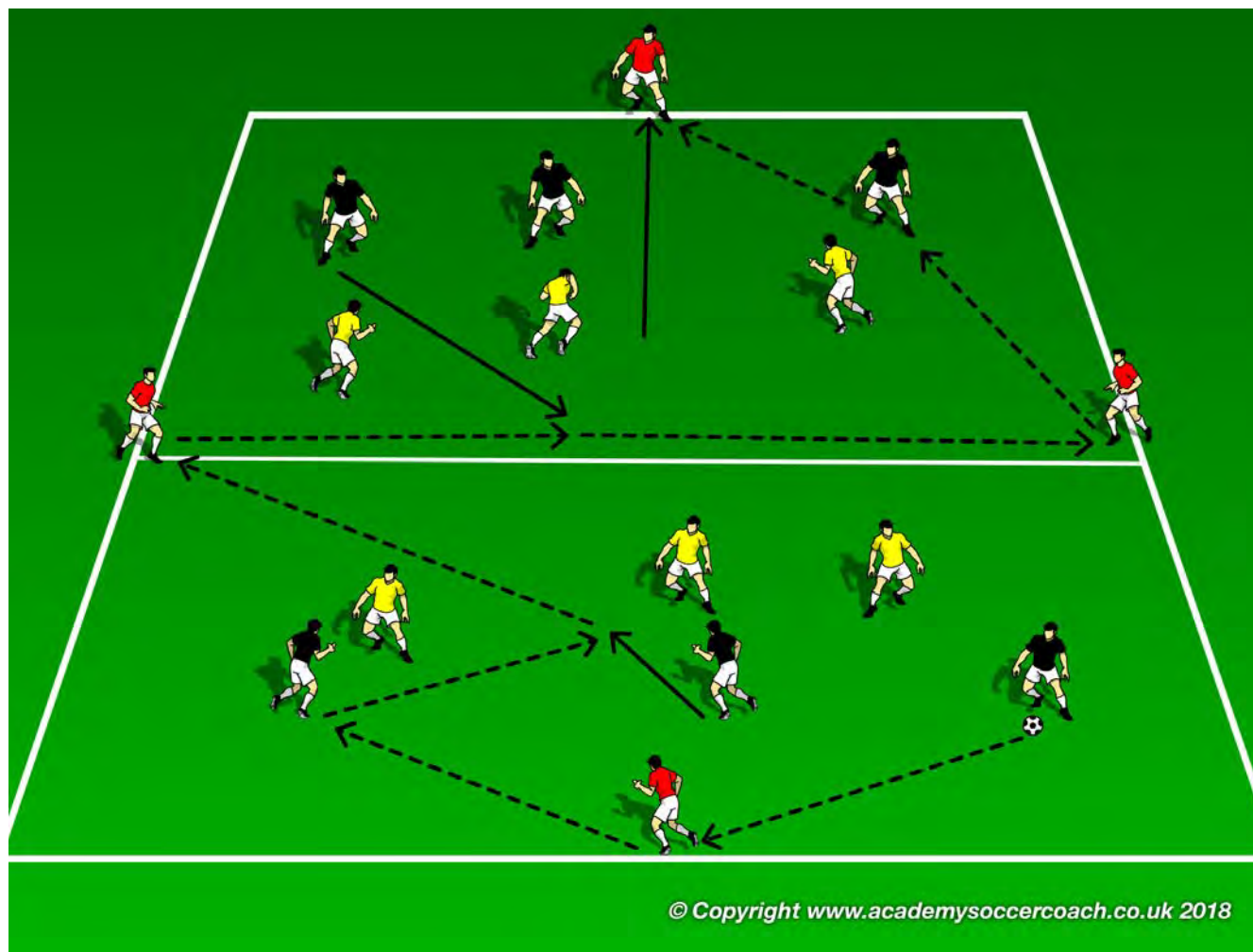
The possession team is placed on the field with a balance midfielder and two center backs in every half of the area; the red center midfielder is a target player who must receive behind the defense lines of three to progress the move toward the other area time to time. The goal for the team in possession is to win the 3 v 3 duels to play through the center and to change the half field.

If the defenders win the ball, all the players must replace themselves along the lines of the half pitch, where the ball was won to manage the possession and in the middle to defend.

Variation: one defender can run inside the playing half to create a 3 + 1 v 4 duel.

Eye on: quality and quickness of the passes, closure of passing lanes and immediate pressure to win the ball back.

Exercise 36: double 3 v 3 + 3 position game



Set-up and Sequence: two teams of six (the black and the yellow one) together with four red free players are placed inside a two areas rectangular space, as in the picture. The red free players are placed along the sidelines.

The possession and the defending team are placed inside the field with a red balance midfielder and two center backs in every half of the area; the red center midfielder is a target player who must receive behind the defense lines to progress the move toward the other area time to time. The goal for the team in possession is to win the 3 v 3 duels to change the half area.

If the defenders win the ball, they change the role inside the area where the possession was won and they must try to change the side as soon as possible.

Variation: one defender can run inside the playing half from the other one to create a 3 + 1 v 4 duel.

Eye on: quality and quickness of the passes, closure of passing lanes and immediate pressure to win the ball back.