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# ATTACKING THE COMPACT DEFENSE

BY JAMES LAMBERT

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# **Attacking a Compact Defense**

*by*  
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# Introduction

We have looked at a number of methods that can assist in breaking down compact defenses. We have looked at some tactical methods relating to Diagonal high balls and the early ball behind the defense.

The technical methods we have covered relate to methods of dribbling, Speed dribbling, tactical Dribbling and Running with the ball.

Of course this is just scratching the surface, there are many more methods of breaking down any football team. For this edition though I would like us to just focus on the tactical and technical components we have shown within this analysis.

## Tactical

- Diagonal high balls
- Early ball behind the Defense

## Technical

- Speed Dribbling
- Tactical Dribbling
- Running with the ball

I want you to watch the video's and take notes of what you see. Then create your own sessions within the guidelines of Functional Skills, Passing Exercises and Small Sided Games.

All Exercises can be submitted and we can share these exercises with World Class Coaching Subscribers. I am more than happy to review and give feedback on the best sessions submitted.

Welcome to the World of coaching, this should be about your own creativity not just copying off others.

Thank you again to Mike Saif and World Class Coaching for allowing me to contribute to Coach Education around the world.

Thank you to my family, Jocelyn, Noah-James, Olivia and Lara for supporting me and my work.

Thank you to AS Roma Sydney Technical Director and friend Anthony Uchino for his feedback and help to create specific sessions based on the analysis.

# Training Sessions

The aim of this book is to show how to create training sessions from the analysis rather than create a book full of sessions. By understanding how to use the analysis to create sessions, the coach can learn to be creative in their planning. Of course you could look at coaching manuals to get ideas that may help you modify a session to create a False 9 specific session. World Class Coaching has many books that could have the sessions modified to support the analysis in this book.

**Training sessions will be broken into four components:**

- **Functional Skills**

Functional Skills Exercises are passing exercises that work the individual technical action. These are exercises that work specific actions within different size grids to create repetition with the technical action.

- **Passing Exercises**

Passing Exercises will be in the specific areas of the field that the movements actually happen. A Passing Exercise will recreate passing patterns and the recommended technical actions for the position and the role. Passing Exercises can be made fully rotational so that all players experience different positions. Alternatively, Passing Exercises can be fully position-specific with no rotation or partly specific - leaving key players within certain zones.

- **Small-sided Games**

These are games involving the 8 to 16 players that create situations that will encourage certain movements and technical actions we want to focus and improve. The game can be the teacher; it is now up to the coach to develop Small-sided Games that create a great love and passion for the game. This also gives the players a chance to try out what they have learnt within the session.

# Functional Skills

## How to Create a Functional Skills Exercise

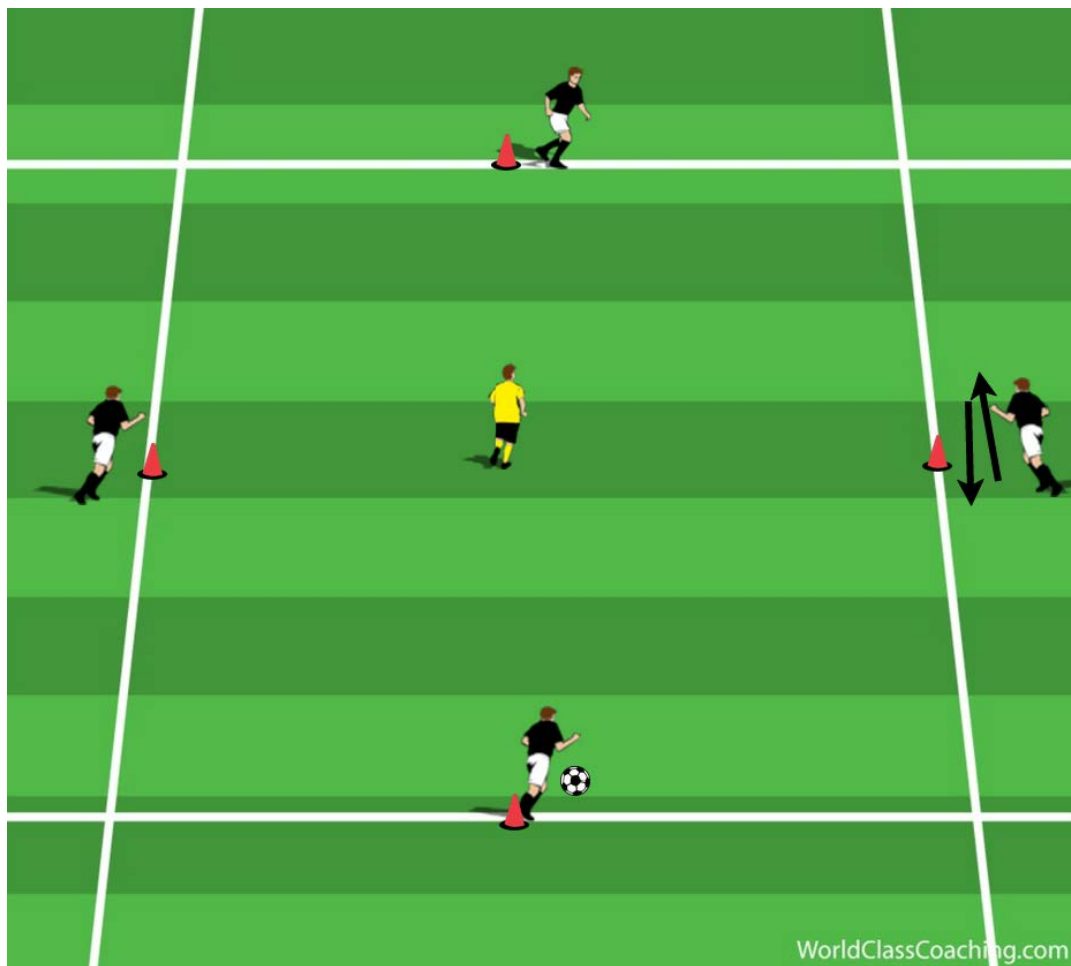
Functional Skills Exercises are passing exercises and drills that work the individual technical action. These are exercises that work specific actions within different size grids to create repetition with the technical action.

Functional Skills exercises are used to zoom in on a specific technical skill to create more repetition on that Technique. This could be players working with a ball, passing in twos or threes, or a full team with a number of balls passing and moving whilst repeating certain technical actions. Functional Skills Exercises are not built within tactical shape - they're designed around, and are expected to focus on, a specific action.

Functional Skills Exercises are limited to 15 minutes and should not be used for a full session. These exercises are based on repetition and unless the session is progressed the learning outcomes are often poor. By progressing the session the player, will have opportunity to try out these skills progressively by receiving more pressure. The failing with using Functional Skills alone is the player can look technically sound but often they cannot reproduce the skill under pressure. If we progress the session, the player will also develop tactical knowledge. This will assist them in their movement, positioning and when to practise the given technical act or skill.

My reason for including Functional Skills is to not isolate many technical trainers who prefer using this type of training. I do however, recommend this is not over-used and is just a starting point to the training session.

## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods (STEP 1)



### Objective:

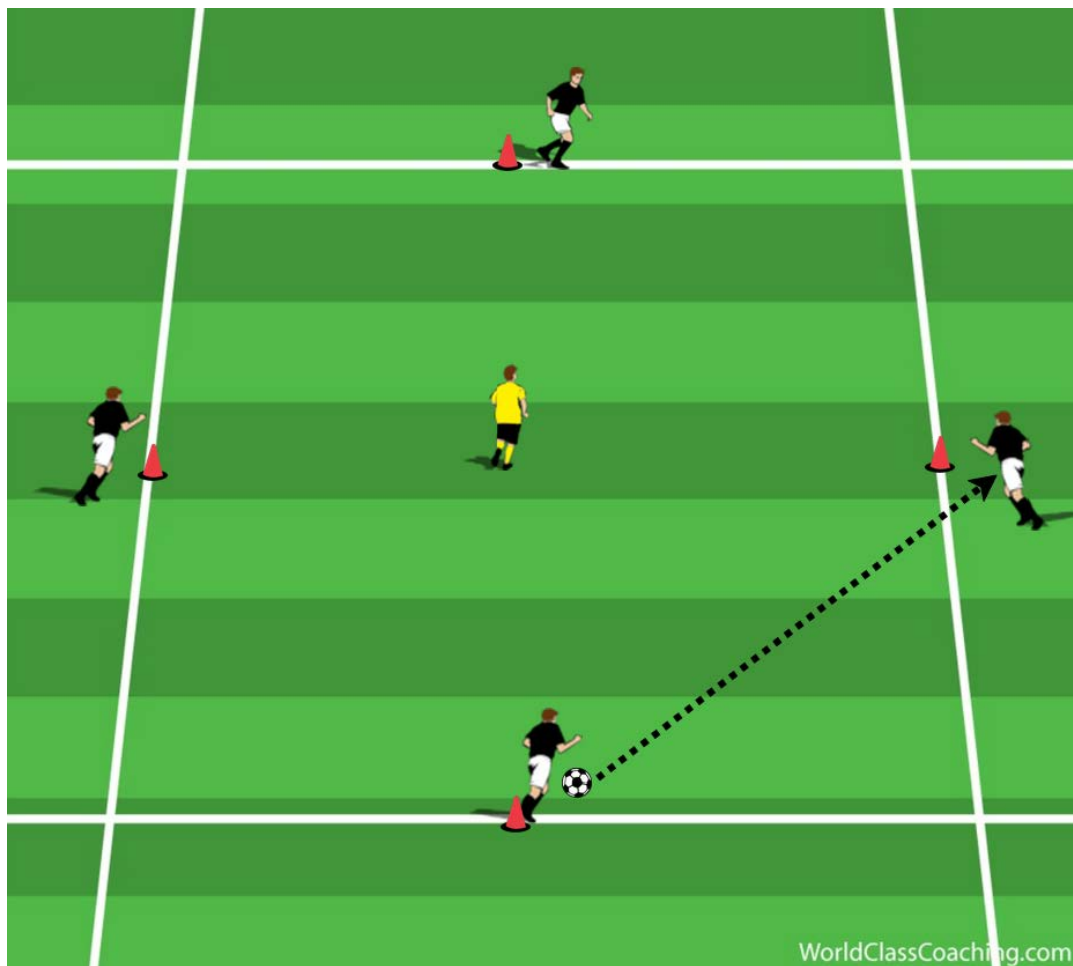
Practicing the different Dribbling methods

### Exercise Description:

1. The game starts with a diagonal pass to one of the outside players



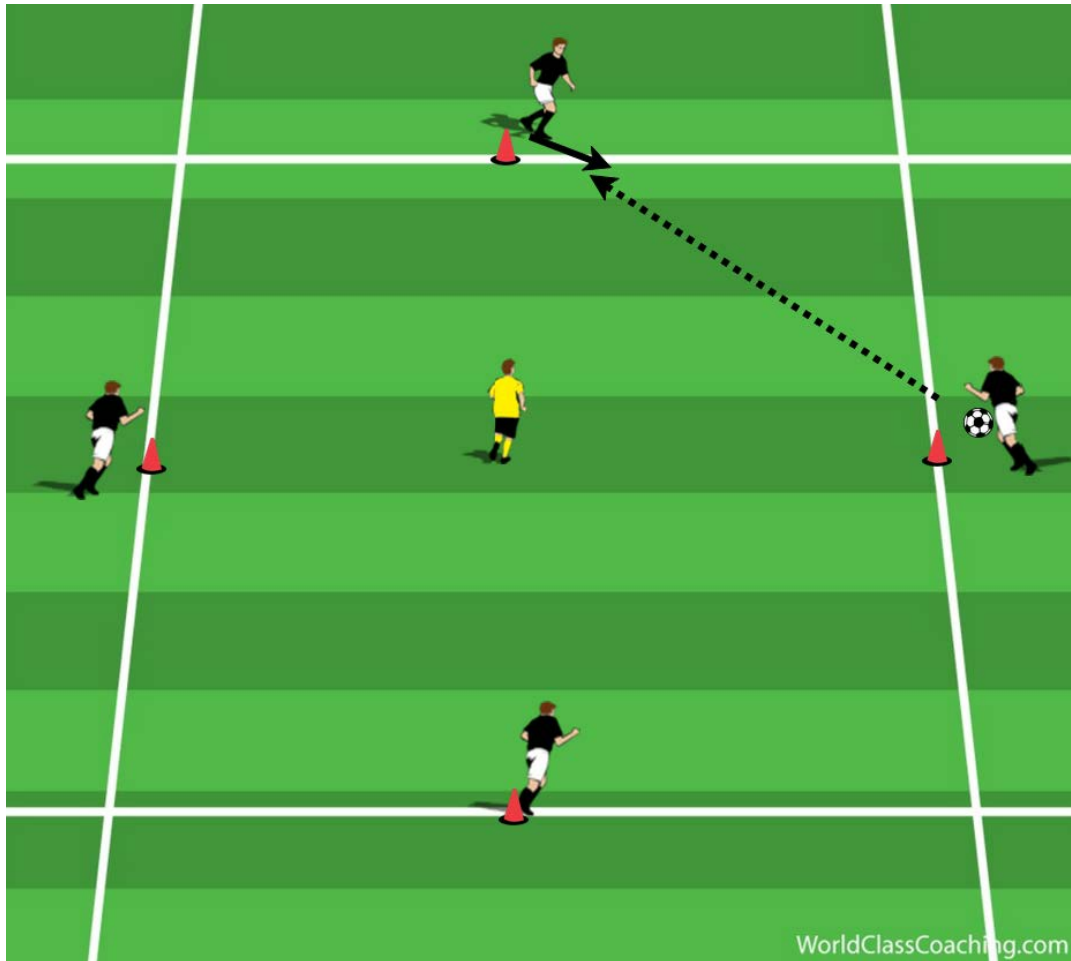
## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods(STEP 2)



### Exercise Description:

2. We request a programmed movement of the outside player checking away, dropping in, facing forwards and receiving far foot.

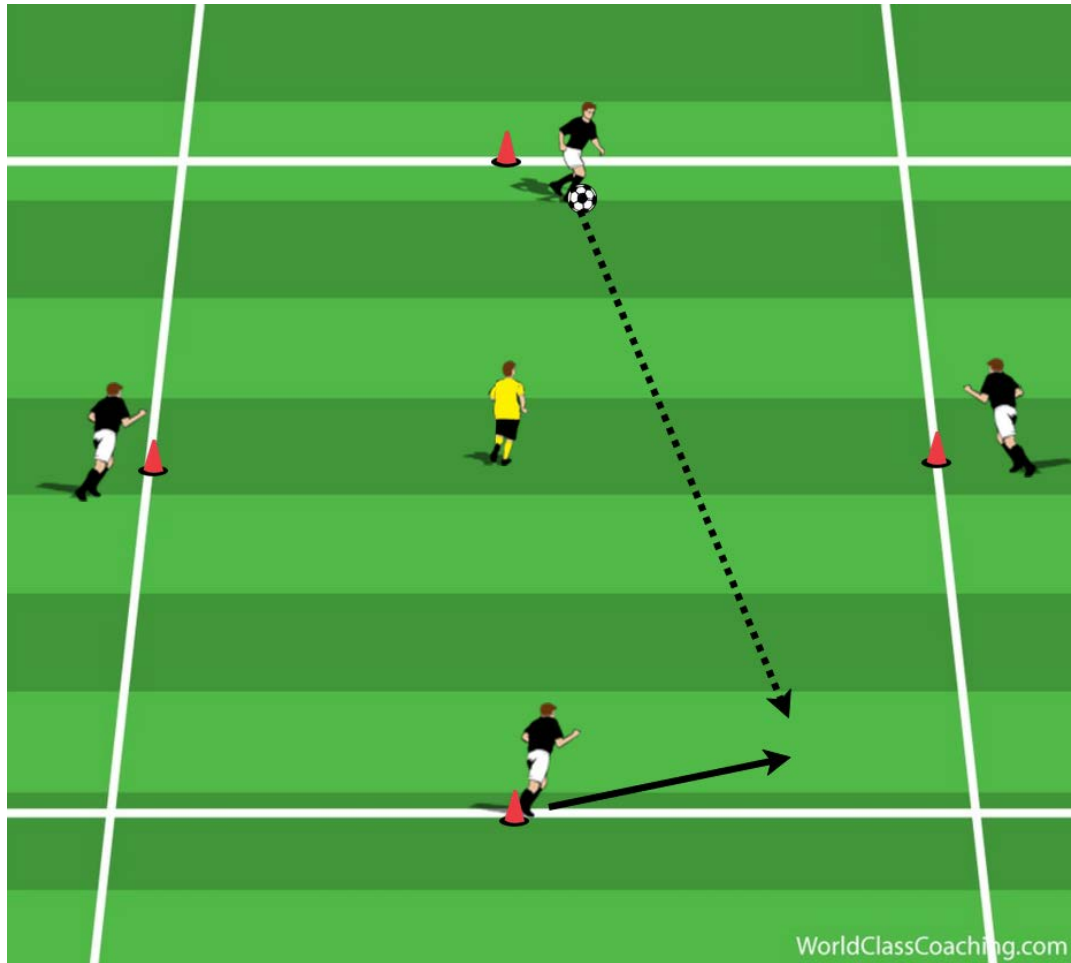
## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods (STEP 3)



### Exercise Description:

3. Side player first touch must set up the next pass

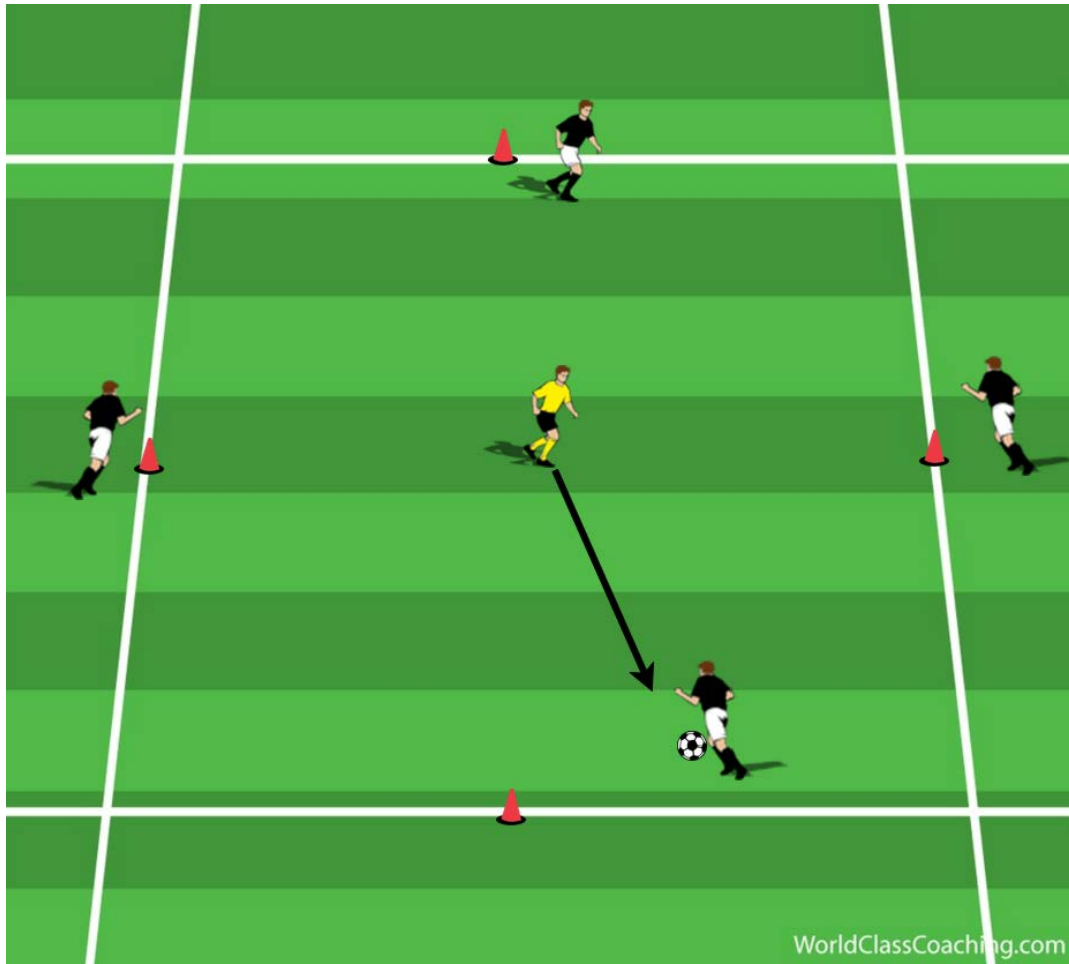
## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods (STEP 4)



### Exercise Description:

4. Again the first touch of the receiver must set up his next pass. Now the opposite end player shows for the ball laterally

## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods (STEP 5)

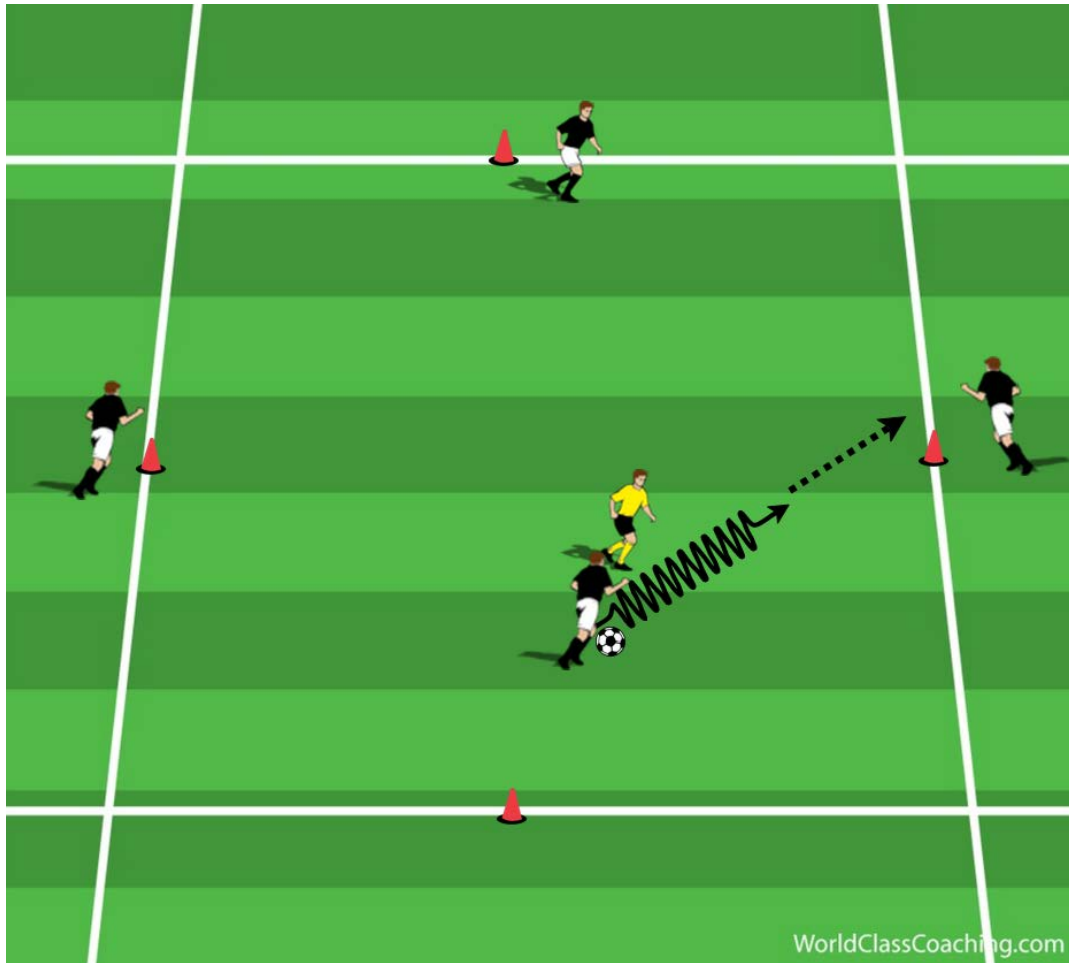


### Exercise Description:

5. First touch for opposite player must set up the dribble (1v1)

Note: The game now progresses from this moment

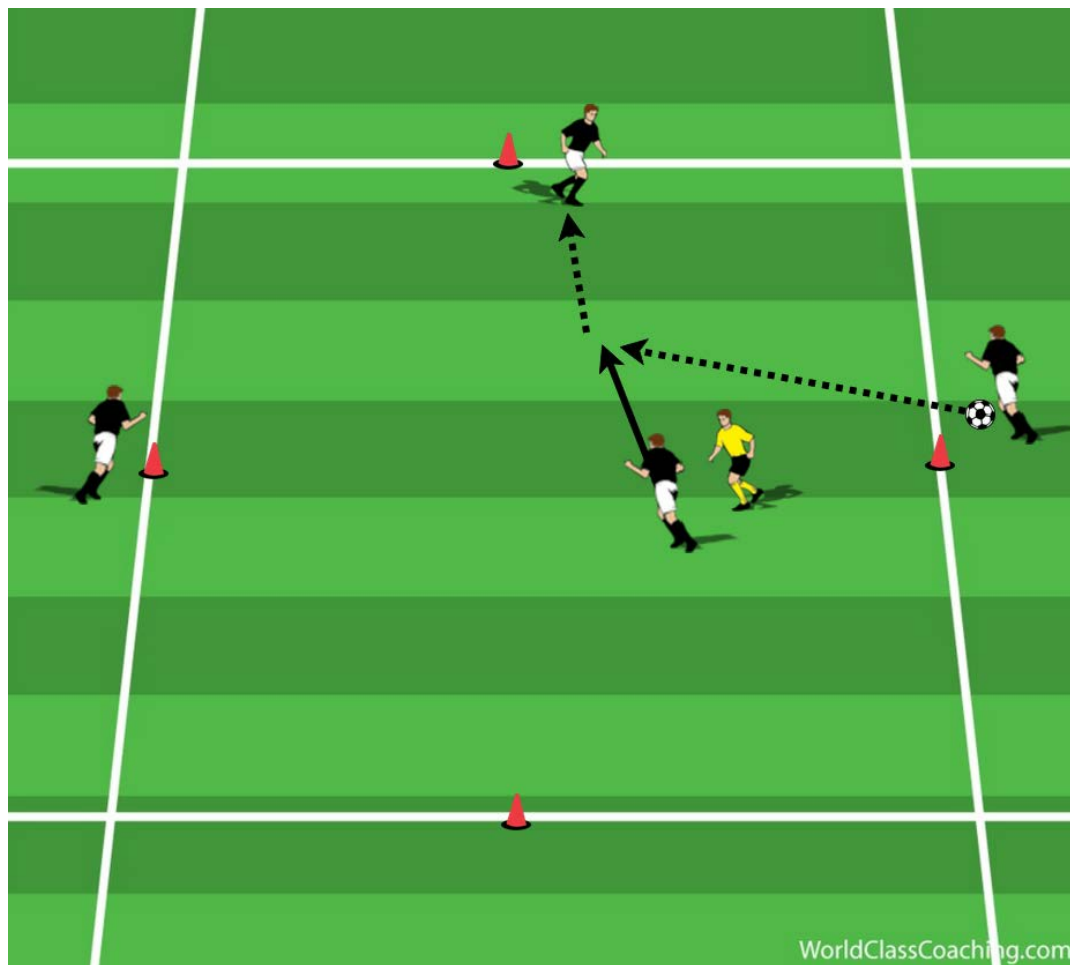
## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods (Progression 1)



### Progression 1 Description:

The player on the inside can use either side as bouncers to try and get him past the defender to get to the otherside.

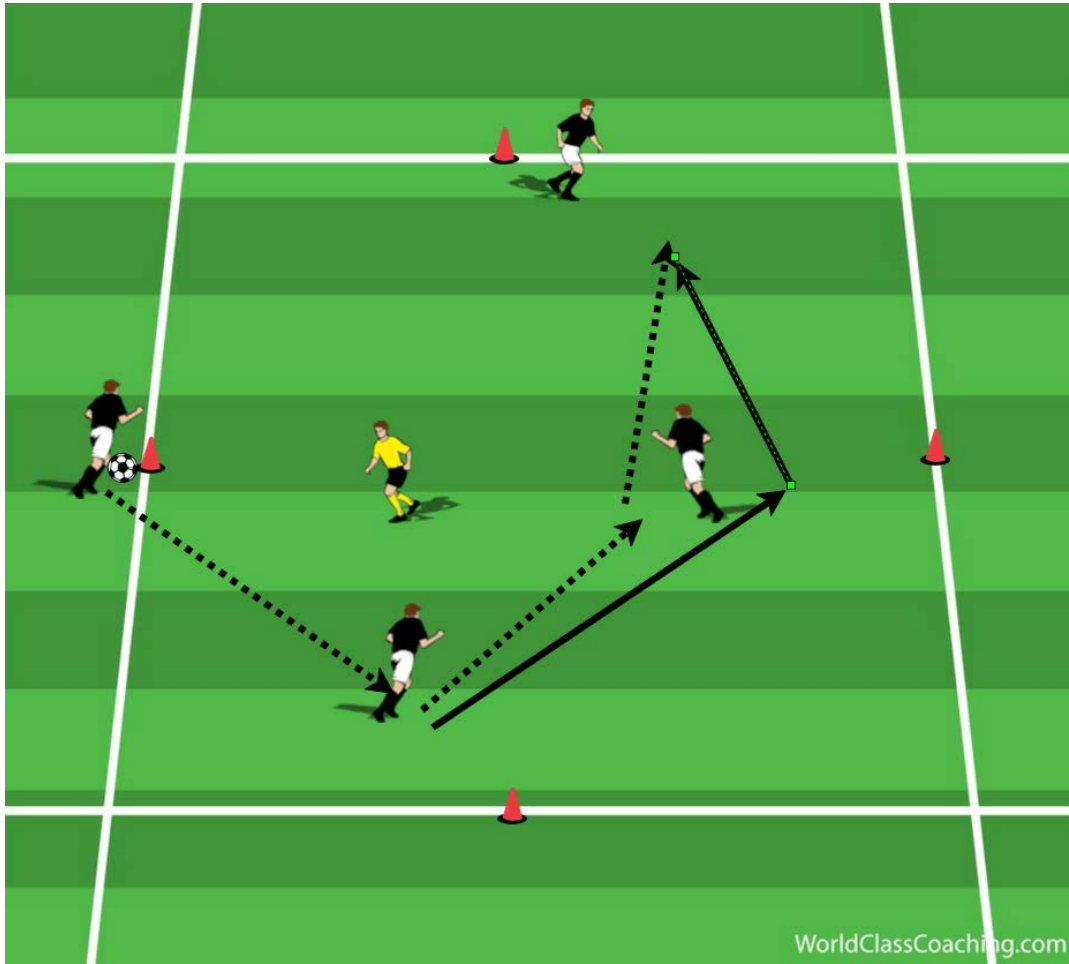
## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods (Progression 2)



### Progression 1 Description: Continued

The player uses the bouncer to rather play a one two and get around the defender or he could drop to set up another 1 v 1

## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods (Progression 3)

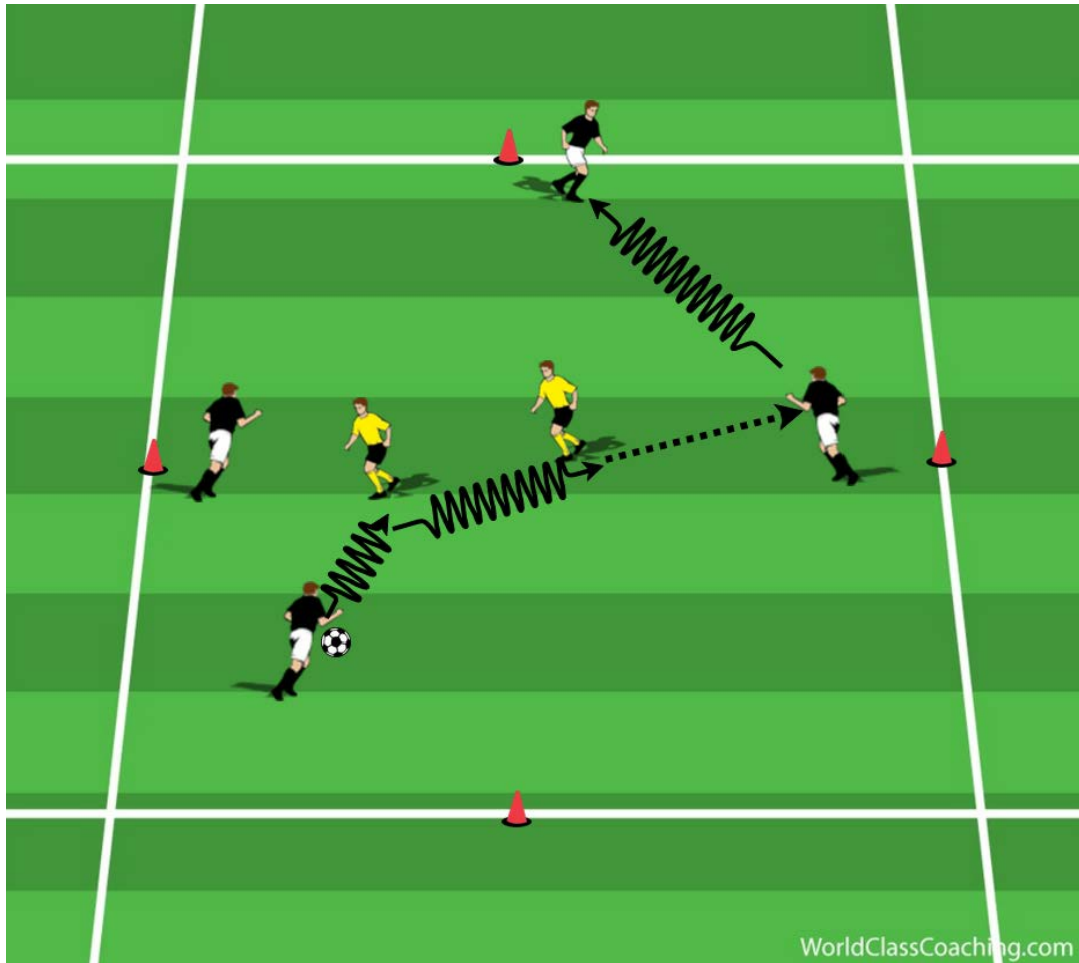


### Progression 2 Description:

One of the outside players can now join in with the central player to assist him in getting over to the otherside.

Note: Only one player can assist him in the grid at one time

## Functional Skills – Dribbling methods (Progression 4)



### Progression 3 Description:

Add another defender

Both outside players can now join in and any player getting to the ball to the end player is a success.



# Passing Exercises

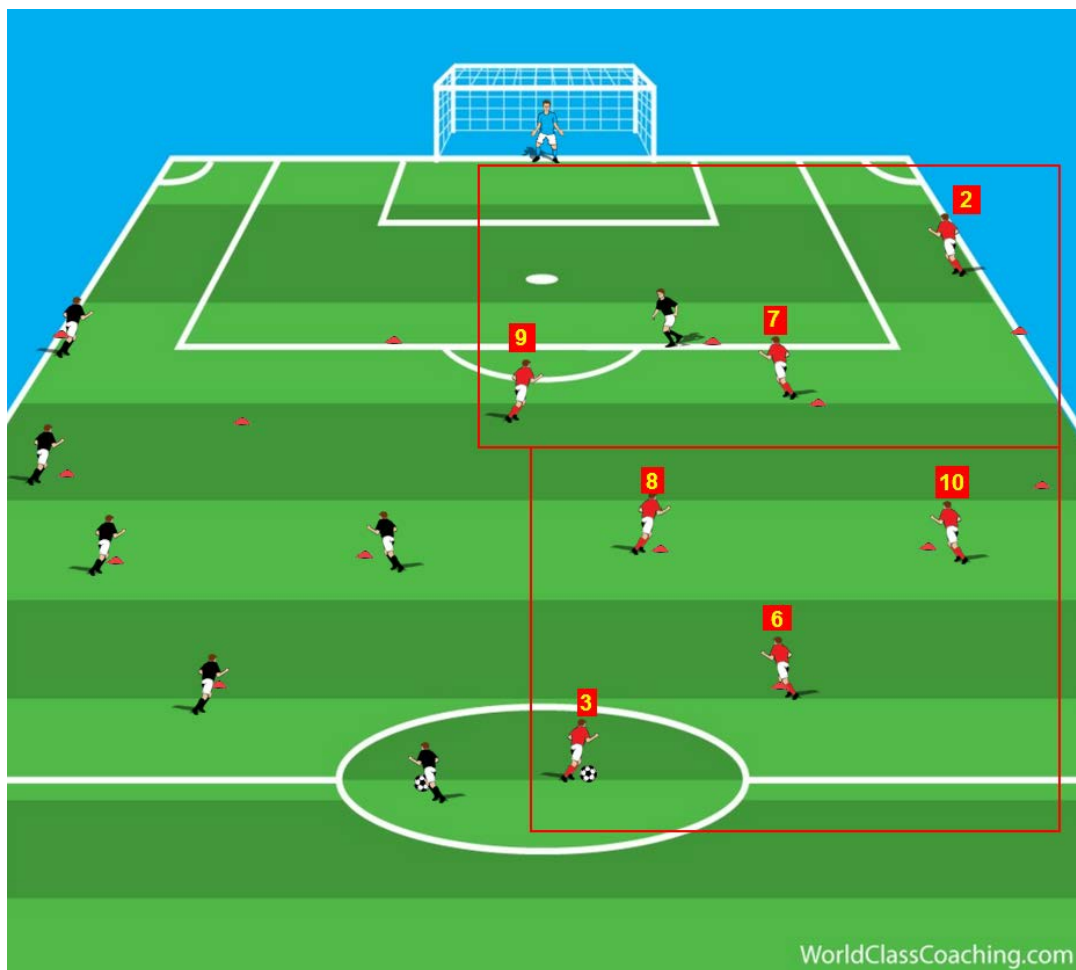
## How to Create a Passing Exercise

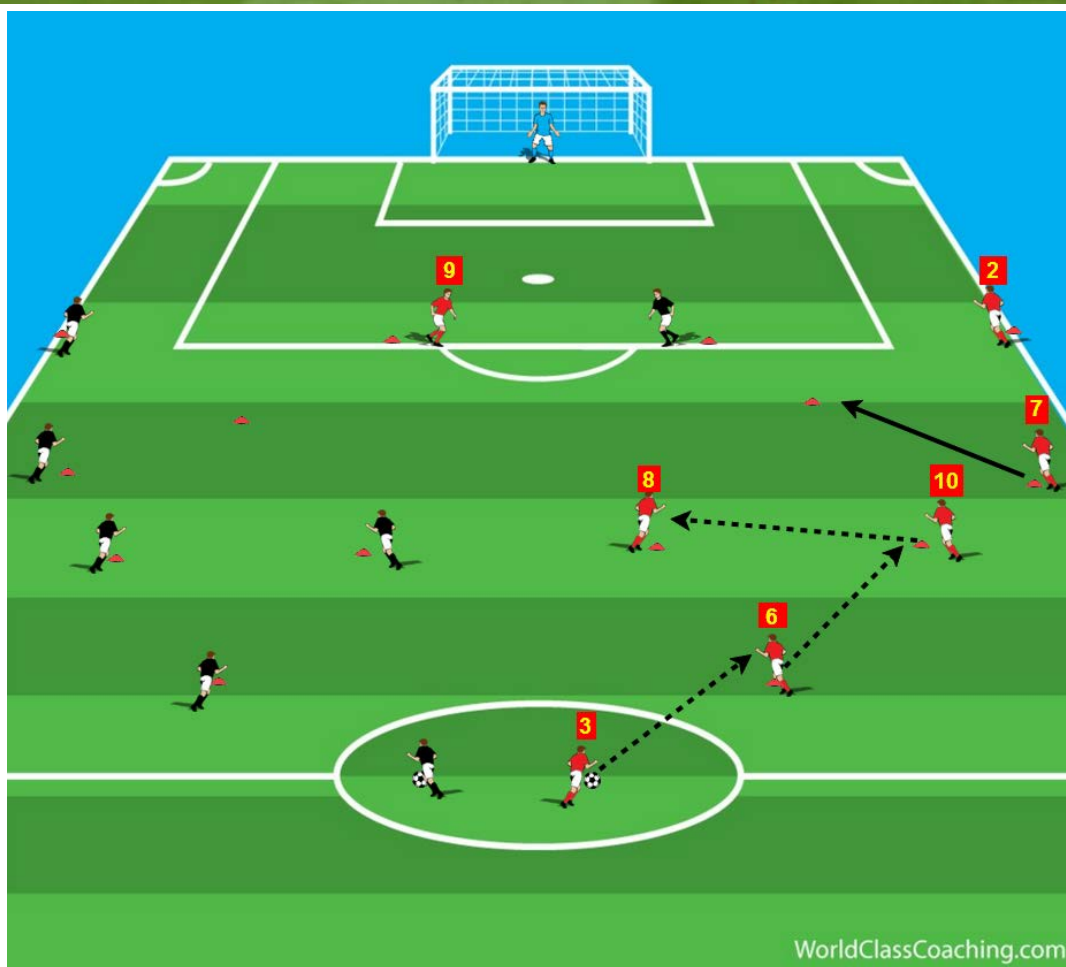
Passing Exercises will be in the specific areas of the field that the movements actually happen. A Passing Exercise will recreate passing patterns and the recommended technical actions for the position and the role. Passing Exercises can be made fully rotational that so all players experience different positions. Alternatively, Passing Exercises can be fully position-specific with no rotation or partly specific - leaving key players within certain zones.

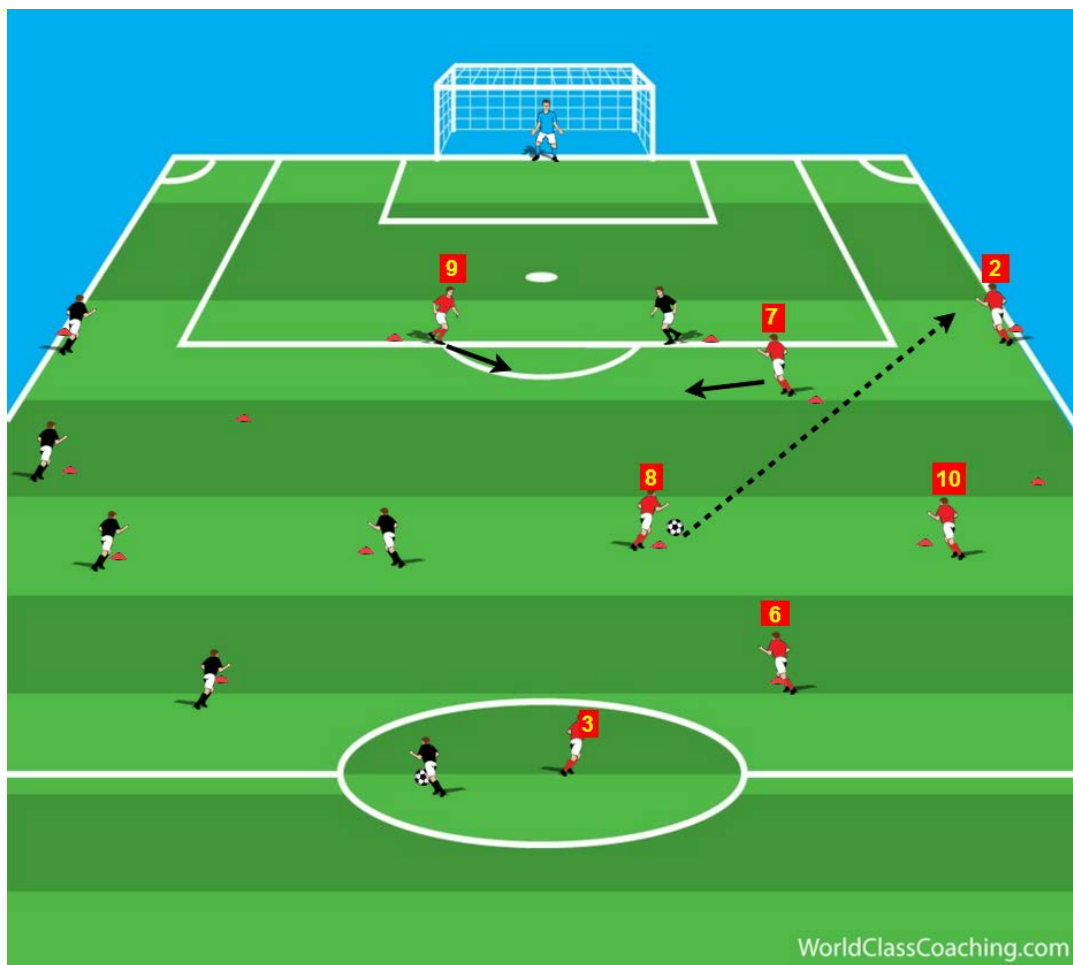
We can create Passing Exercises by studying the top teams or even our own team within games. If certain parts of your team's build-up is breaking down you can recreate this in order to work with specific players who may be struggling. Leading up to the Passing Exercise you could create a Functional Skills Exercise to work on the technical elements of the player or players' problem.

On the next few pages we look at a specific build-up from Spain. This Passing Exercise combines both rotation of positions and position-specific elements. Players 9, 2 and 7 will continually run through the movements, delivery and attacking movements into the penalty box. Players 6, 8 and 10 will rotate and stay with their section.

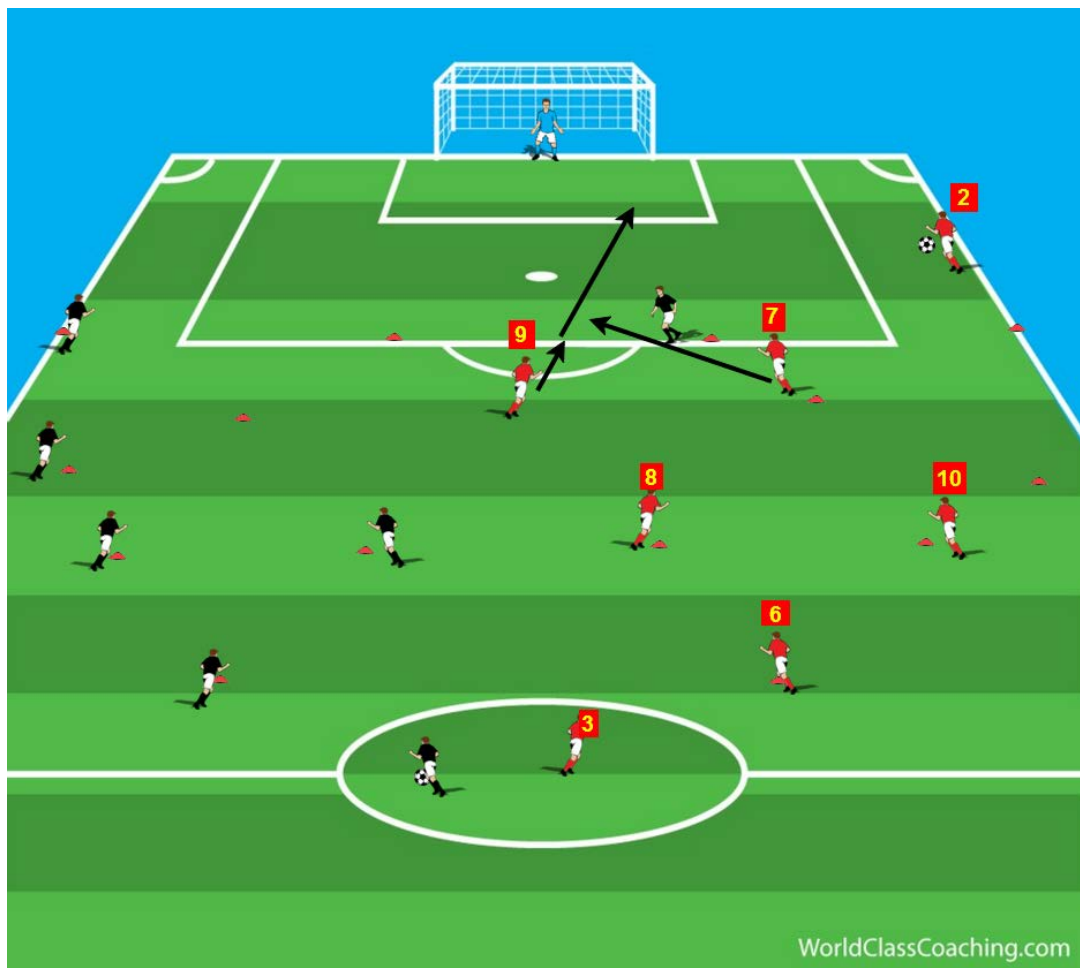
This will be replicated on both sides of the field so all players are busy and active.



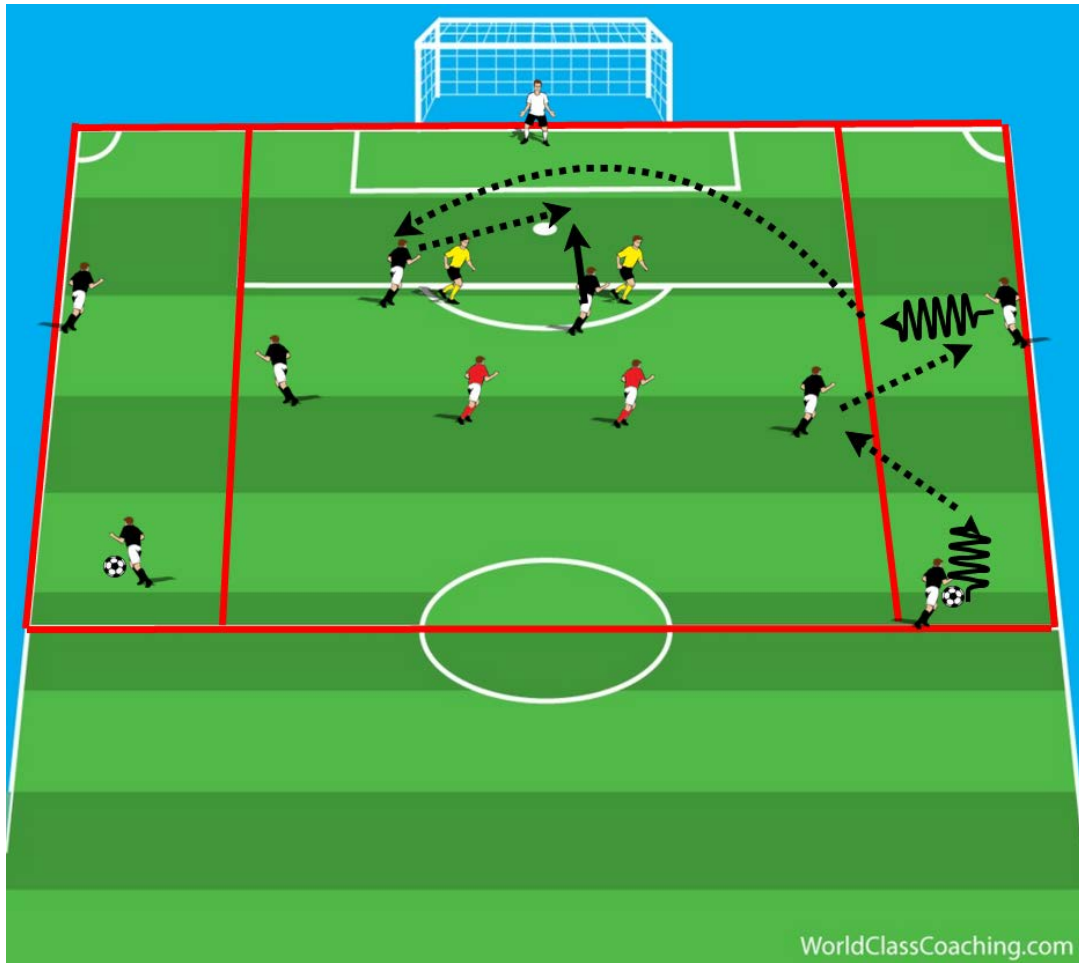








## Passing Exercise – High Diagonal ball (Progression 1)



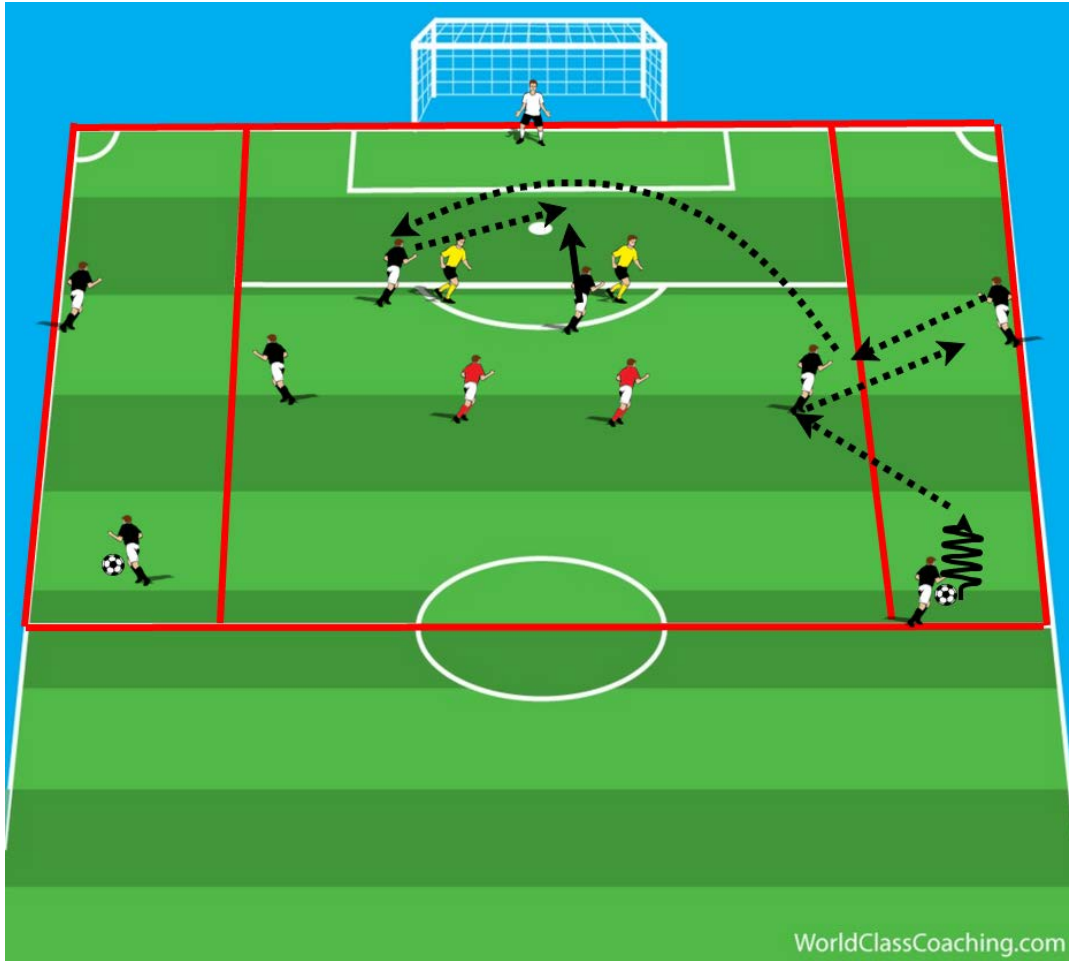
### Objective:

Practicing build up and diagonal high balls in to the box to work the two forwards. The exercise alternatively works on both sides, players can rather stay in position or pass and follow in the wide areas.

### Exercise Description:

1. Right back passes to the Attacking midfielder
2. Attacking midfielder passes to the Right Winger
3. Right winger cuts inside and Passes an High ball to far Attacker

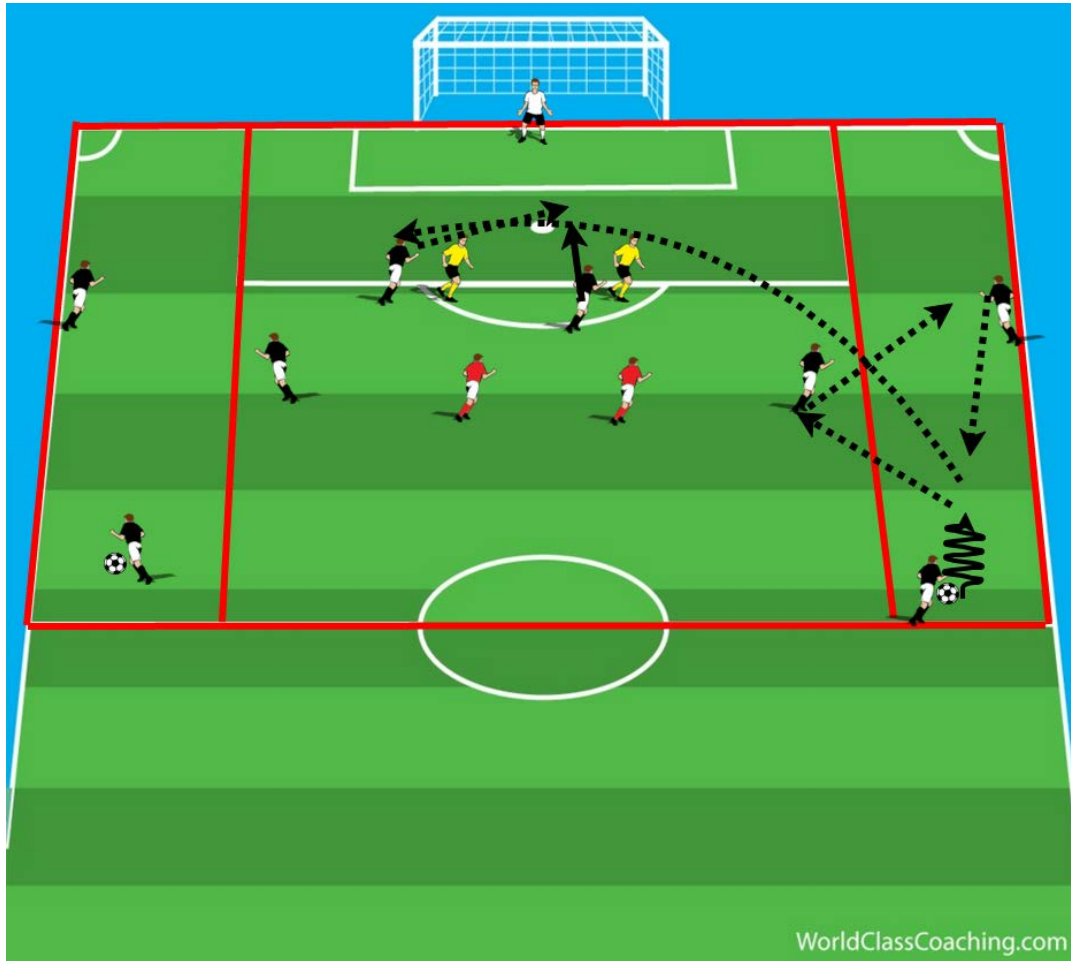
## Passing Exercise – High Diagonal ball (Progression 2)



### Exercise Description:

1. Right back passes to the Attacking midfielder
2. Attacking midfielder passes to the Right Winger
3. Right winger receives and passes back to the Attacking Midfielder
4. Attacking Midfielder takes a touch and Passes an High ball to the far Attacker

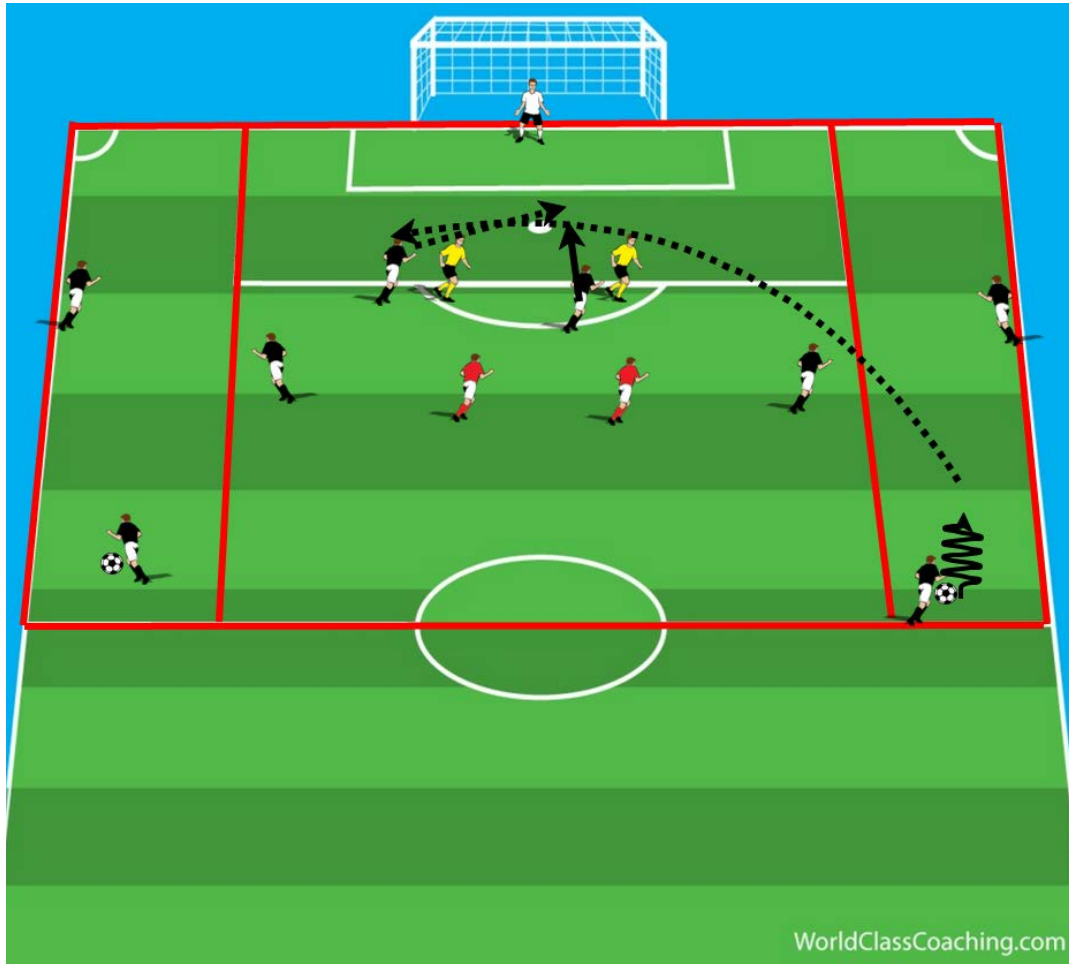
## Passing Exercise – high Diagonal ball (Progression 3)



### Exercise Description:

1. Right back passes to the Attacking midfielder
2. Attacking midfielder passes to the Right Winger
3. Right winger receives and passes back to the Fullback
4. The Fullback now passes a long high diagonal to the far striker

## Passing Exercise – high Diagonal ball (Progression 4)



### Exercise Description:

1. Right back surprises the defenders and passes a long high diagonal to the far striker off his first dribbling rather than passing through the Attacking midfielder and Right winger.



# Small-Sided Games

## How to Create a Small-Sided Game

These are games involving the 8 to 16 players that create situations that will encourage certain movements and technical actions we want to focus and improve. The game can be the teacher, it is now up to the coach to develop Small-sided Games that create a great love and passion for the game. This also gives the players a chance to try out what they have learnt within the session.

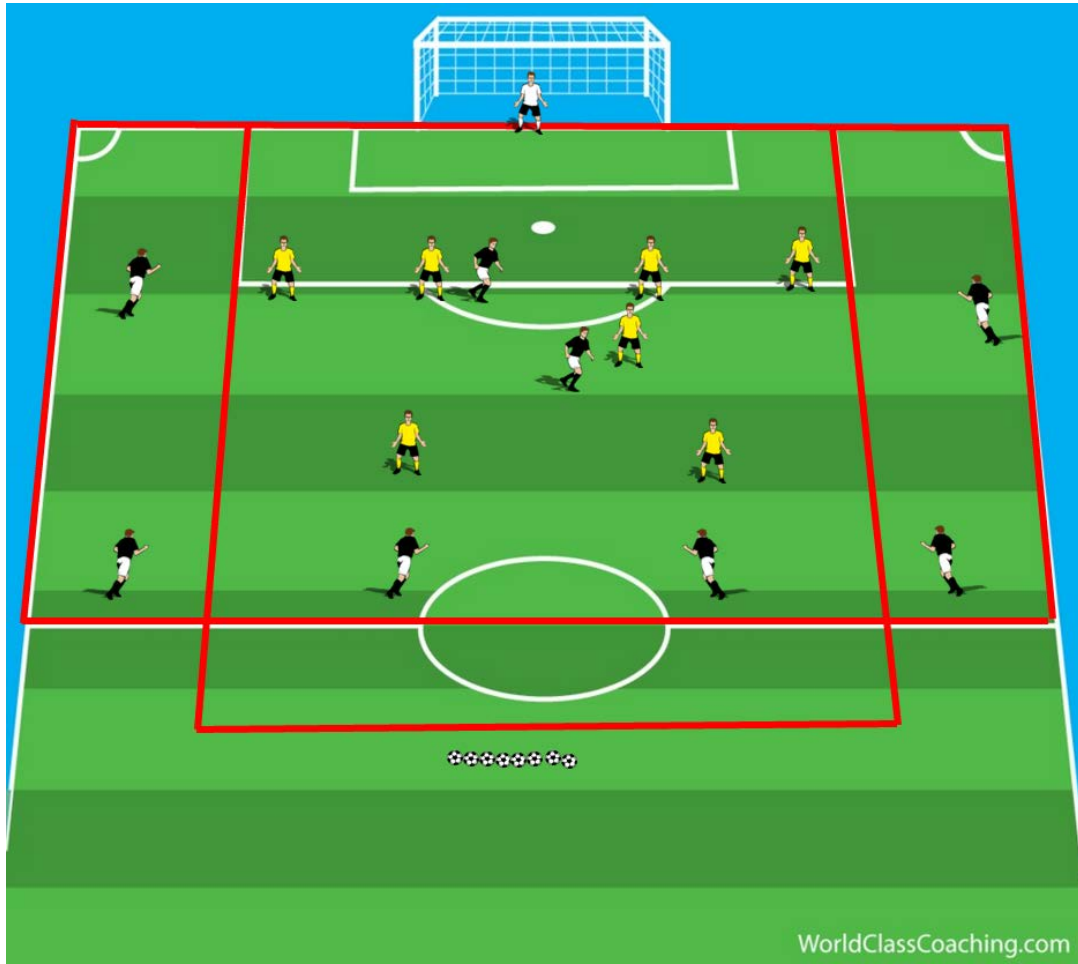
In order to develop the best players, the lowest levels of recreational Grassroots football must improve. In many countries, parents take up the coaching jobs of young football teams. They then “Google” football drills and receive many ideas on teaching children how to kick a ball. Unfortunately, they teach the children like a technical coach in isolation which is not bringing improvement to the children and they do not have the knowledge or demonstration ability of a technical coach.

If these parents were taught simple games that give the children different ways to score and different ways to play, the game would be the teacher. This parent may only facilitate the game but that is fine because the children are playing and enjoying football. Many passing repetitions are in place and the children will learn through many more hours of playing. When the better players move up the ladder, then more educated coaches can start to refine their skills.

At all levels, Small-sided Games work. They work because, if done correctly, players of all ages enjoy them and feel like they’re playing football. If we have targets, goals and are free to play we enjoy the experience and the effort increases.

To create a game, think about what technical skill and movement you want to improve. If you want to work on the team switching play and working on their possession, then games with 3 goals work very well. If you want to improve the strikers’ movement in tight spaces centrally, then playing a long narrow field will focus the team on this specific moment in the game. Of course all coaching points and advice from the coach will be needed to get the most out of Small-sided Games.

## Small Sided Game – Early ball behind (Set up)



### Objective:

Practicing the create an overload in the wide are for the fullback to play the early ball behind.

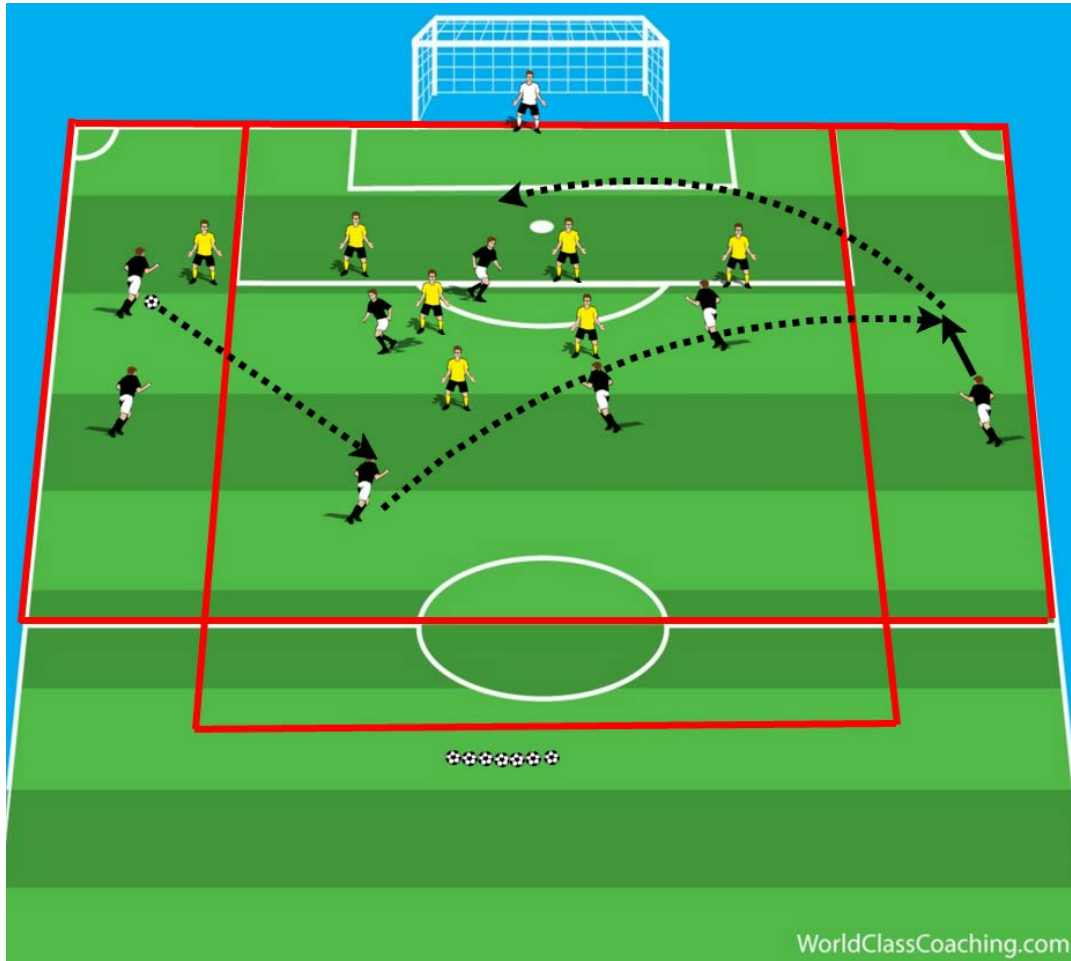
- Black team need to score via an early ball behind
- Yellow team defend and if they win the ball they have to enter the end central zone with the ball.

Note: if the game becomes difficult you can give 3 points for the early ball behind and 1 point for a normal goal.

### Exercise Description:

1. The game starts with the black holding midfielders

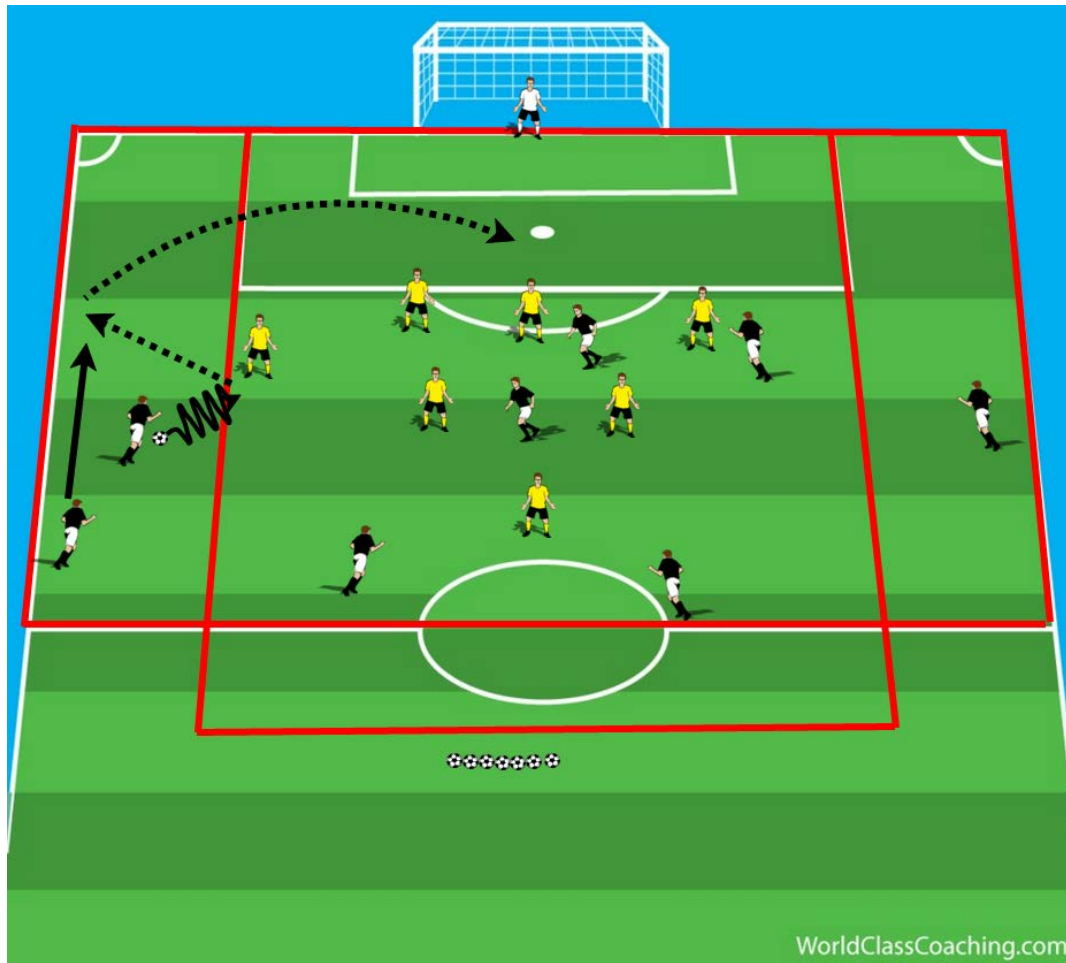
## Small Sided Game – Early ball behind (Coaching Point 1)



### Exercise Description:

1. Can we move the opposition over and create the opportunity to switch using the longer ball
  2. Work on the fullback
- Positioning
  - First touch on the run
  - Delivery behind the defense

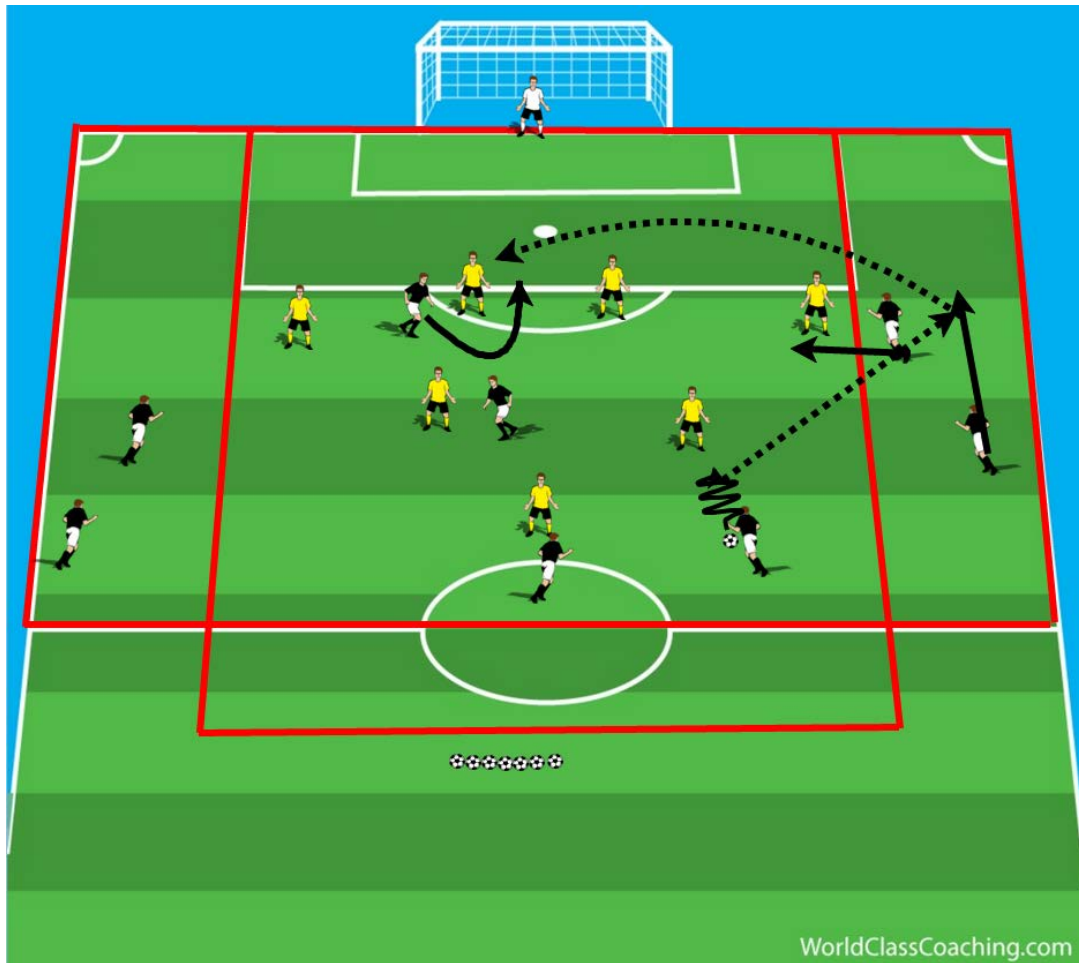
## Small Sided Game – Early ball behind (Coaching Point 2)



### Exercise Description:

1. Deep lying winger tactically dribbles in field
2. Fullback overlaps
3. Work on the fullback
  - Positioning
  - First touch on the run
  - Delivery behind the defense
4. Work on the striker
  - Striker to move far of the build up
  - Striker to time his run to meet the ball
  - Run across the front of the defender

## Small Sided Game – Early ball behind (Coaching Point 3)



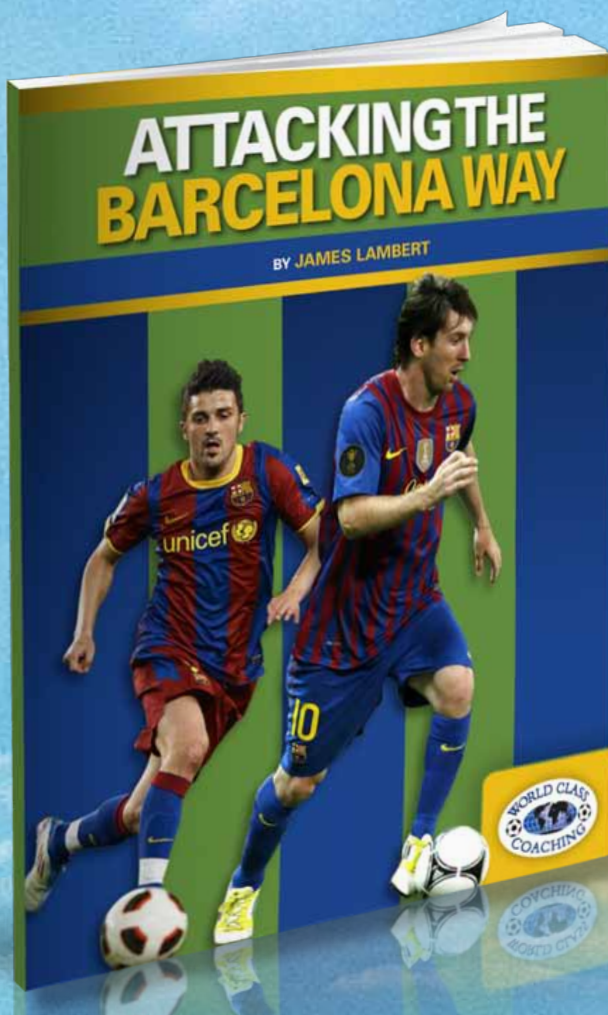
### Exercise Description:

1. Attacking midfielder Speed dribbles to draw the defender
2. Winger moves laterally across
3. Fullback overlaps
4. Attacking midfielder passes the ball wide



*Also from James Lambert*

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