

FineSoccer

Drills and Exercises

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WORLD CLASS COACHING

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Edited by Tom Mura



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Introduction

These activities are contributed by Lawrence Fine of FineSoccer.com. Fine is well known throughout the U.S. soccer community, and Fine publishes five weekly email newsletters subscribed to by over 40,000 coaches worldwide. FineSoccer.com is frequented by thousands of soccer coaches each week and has archives of hundreds of training sessions and articles.

The activities in this eBook are drills, exercises and small-sided games that cover a wide variety of topics. The topics range from goalkeeping sessions to functional combination play with forwards.

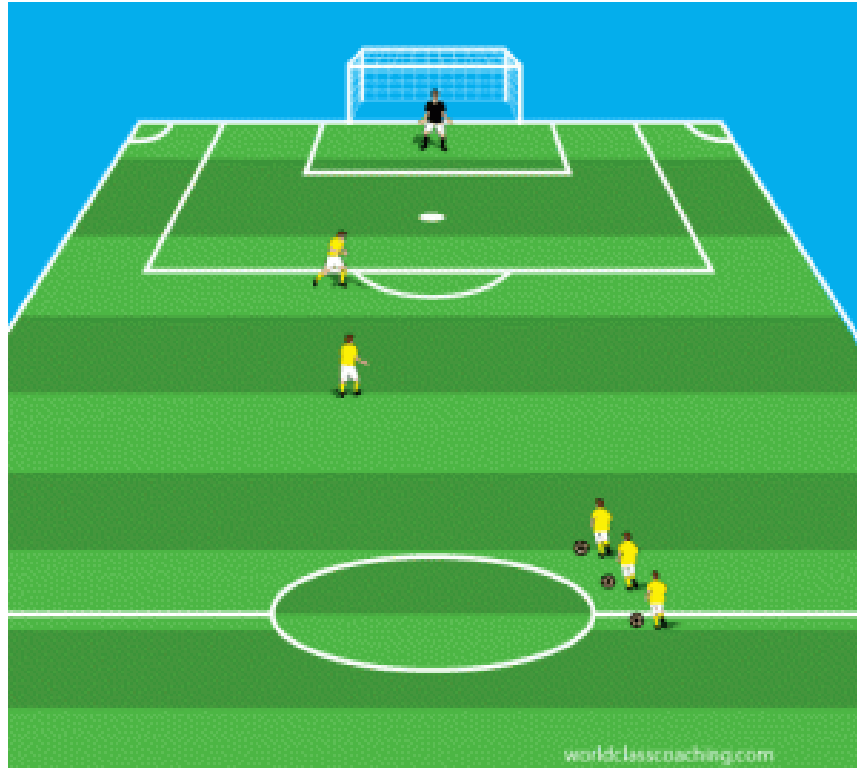
These are just a sampling of the sessions that are available at FineSoccer.com. A new article is released each week.

Lawrence Fine is also a monthly contributor to the **WORLD CLASS COACHING** magazine that is available through the Member Drills Database.

Combination Play For Forwards

Welcome to the FineSoccer Drills Drills and Exercises. This featured activity works on forwards working together, combination play and finishing.

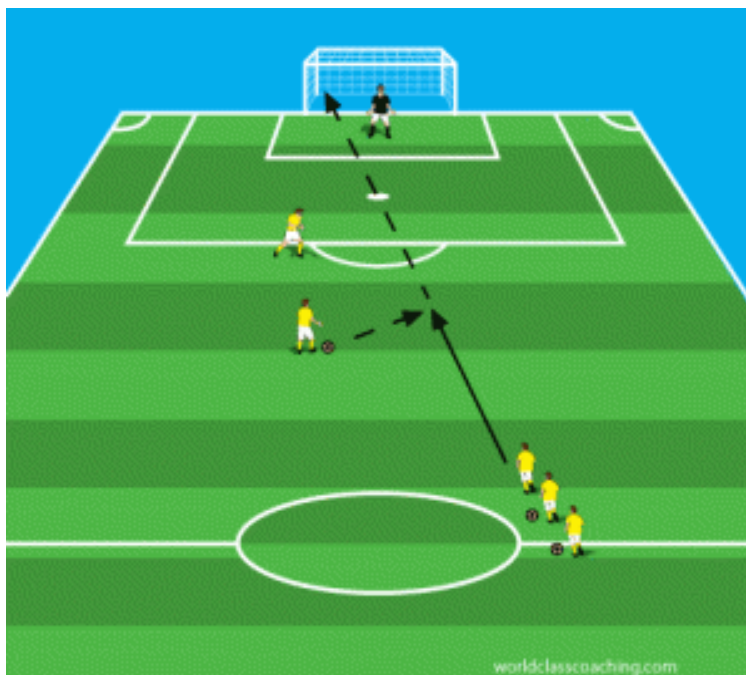
Start with a keeper in goal, two forwards staggered but close together and a few players in line near midfield with balls.



The first player in line plays the ball to the deep forward (who has checked back to the ball in a game situation) and that player lays the ball back one touch to the second forward.



The player who made the first pass makes a run forward to receive the ball and shoots first time.

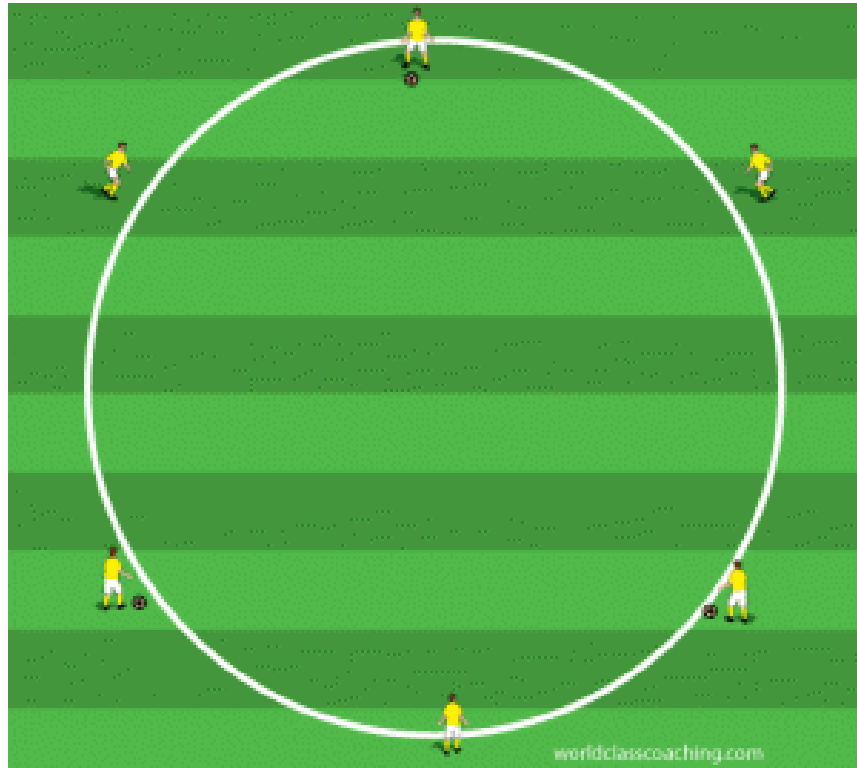


The deep forward would then rotate to the second forward position, the shooter would become the next deep forward and the next person in line starts the next set.

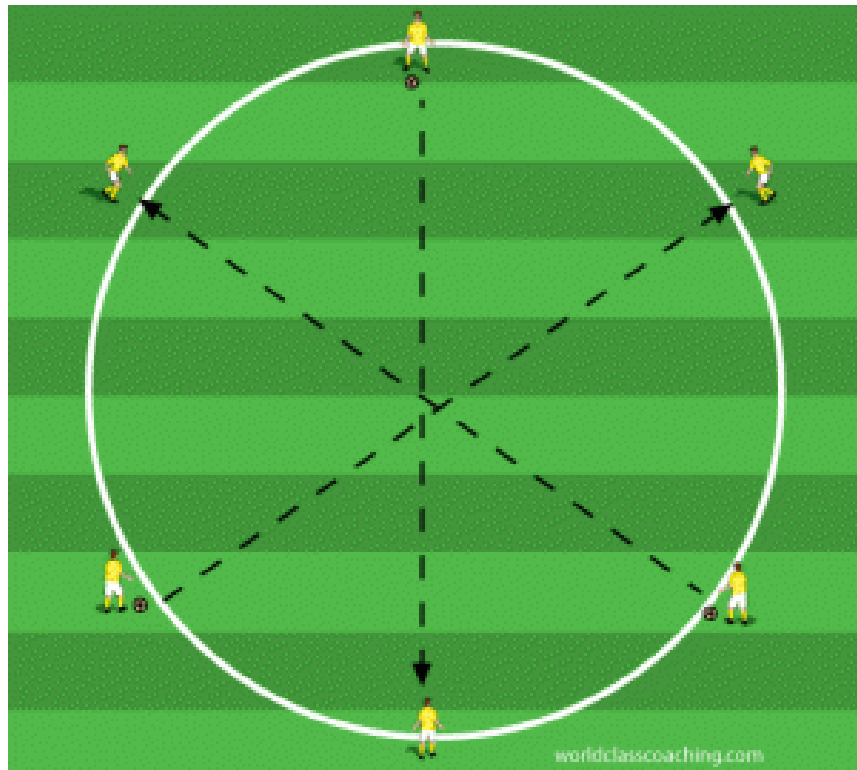
Passing With Proper Pace

This featured activity works on passing with proper pace.

Start with 6 players on the perimeter of a circle with a diameter of around 20 yards. They are in groups of 2's and are opposite their partners in the group. There is one ball per group.



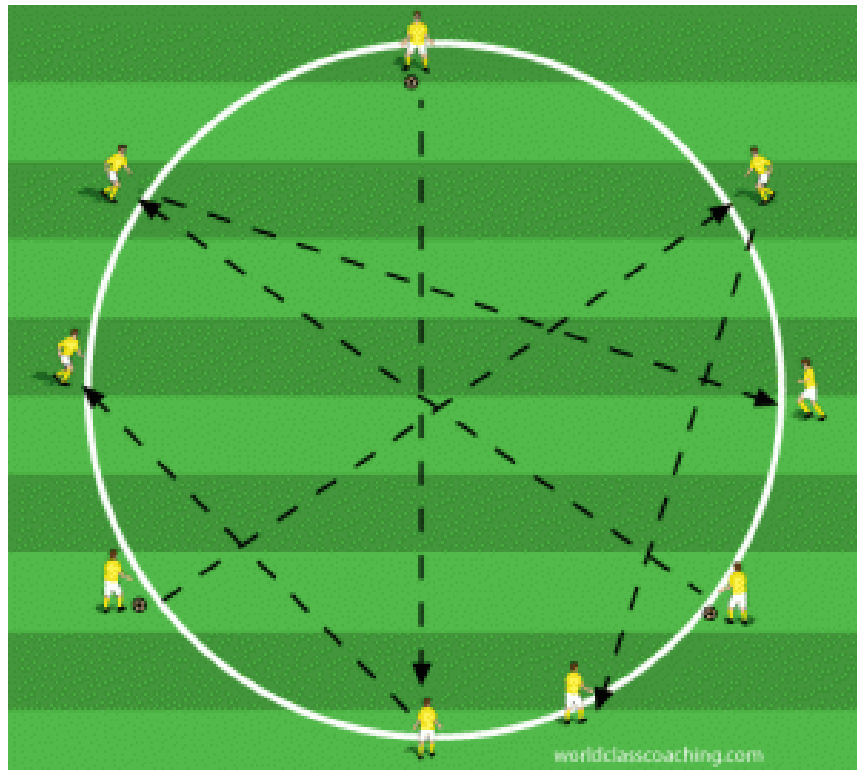
The players start off passing back and forth with their partner. They play 2 touch and must pass the ball so as it gets to the intended target and doesn't hit another ball.



The players must time when they pass the ball and the weight of the pass to make sure their ball doesn't hit another ball.

Next, the players do the exact same thing but this time, it's one touch passing. This means, they can't time when they pass but can alter the weight of the pass to make sure it doesn't interfere with the path of any of the balls.

Next, add a third person to each group



The players pass one touch between the group of three and again, must emphasize the pace/weight of the pass to avoid their ball making contact with the other balls.

This is a great activity to to work on one touch passing, vision, weight and communication.

Dribbling and Taking Players On

This featured activity works on dribbling and taking players on.

Start with your team in a 30 x 30 grid (smaller if you don't have a full team available) with half the players with balls and the other half without.



The players with balls are dribbling at half speed and the players without balls are jogging.

The players with balls make eye contact with a player without a ball and then dribble right at them. The player with the ball does a move, beats the defender (who is providing token pressure) and then moves on to find the next player to beat. The defenders want to put just enough pressure on the player with the ball to make it game related but are not trying to win the ball. This is done for a one minute period and then the players switch roles and the players who didn't have balls now are the dribblers and the players who did have the balls are now the defenders.

After each group has a turn, they repeat but now the dribblers are at full speed. Again, the defenders just provide token pressure. Each group gets a one minute turn on offense.

Next the dribblers stay at full speed but now the defenders put additional pressure on them. The defenders still aren't trying to win the ball but are making the attackers work hard to beat them.

In a 6 minute period, the players get a lot of touches on the ball, work on moves, acceleration, fitness and are now ready to move on in their training. This is a great warm up activity for players of all ages.

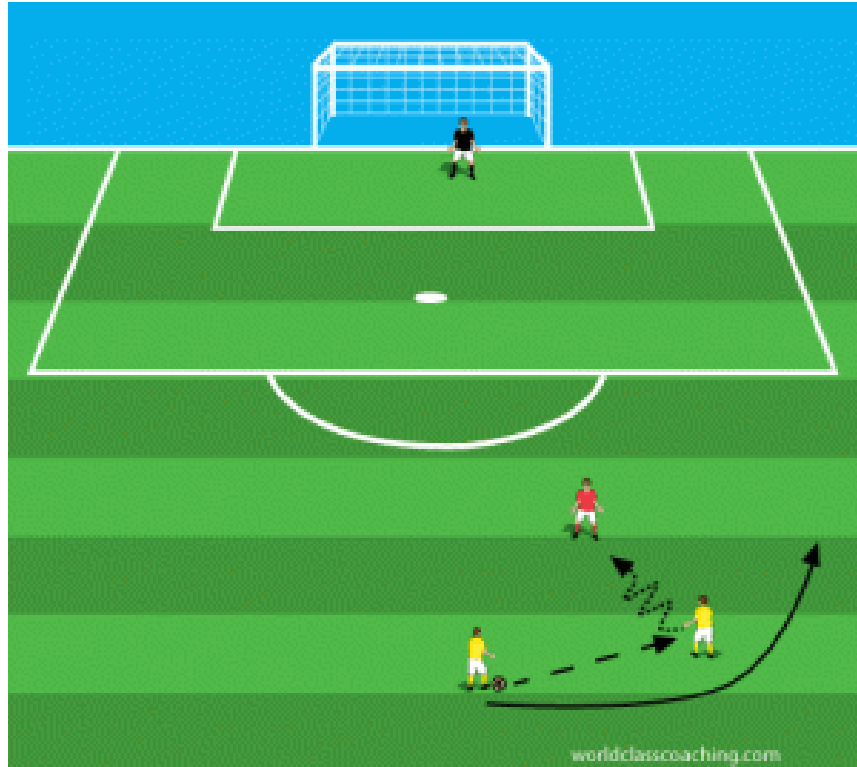
Attacking and Defending the Overlap

Welcome to the FineSoccer Drills Newsletter. Today's featured activity works on attacking with an overlap as well as defending the overlapping run.

Start with a keeper in goal and two attackers and one defender. The attackers are around 35 yards from goal to start and the ball starts with the middle player.

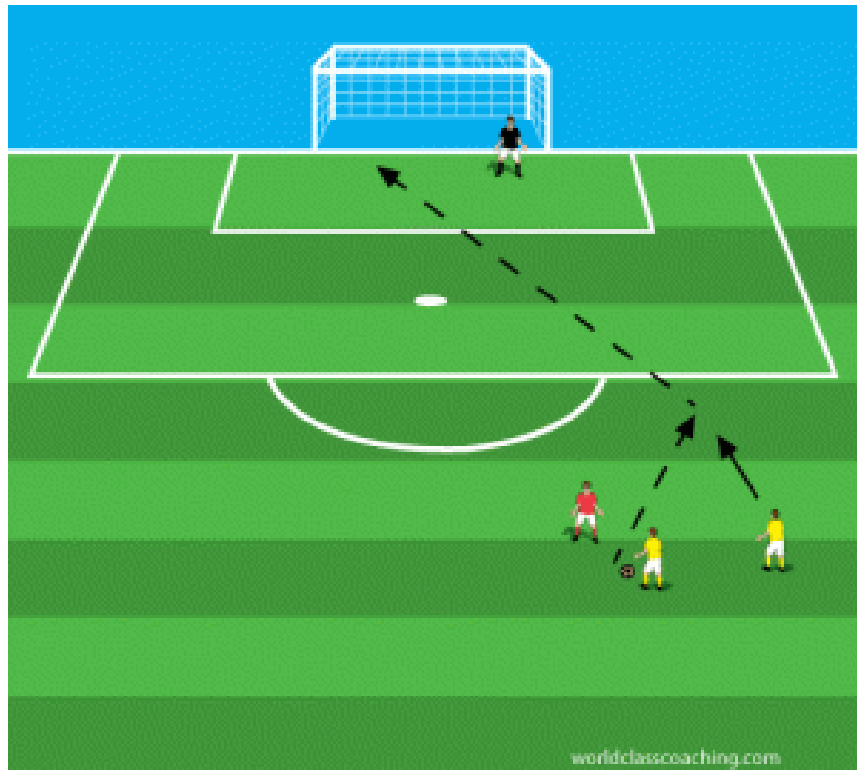


The player with the ball passes to his teammate who then dribbles at the defender. The player who made the pass overlaps the player with the ball.



The player with the ball has the option of passing the ball to the overlapping runner who hits a shot or can keep the ball and go to goal themselves.

This decision will be made based on the actions of the defender. If the defender stays with the dribbler, the pass would be the logical choice



If the defender goes with the runner, the player with the ball keeps the ball and goes to goal



This is not a possession game and the attacking players must understand they are too go at full speed. If the defending player can slow down the attack they win.

With a team of 16, these groups of 3's can go one right after the other and by the time they get back, it will be their turn to go again.

Next you can do the same thing but this time with two defenders. If the attackers are willing to go at speed, they can be just as successful as if there is only one defender

This is a great way to prepare a team to both attack and defend at speed. Give it a try and you will see what I mean.

1v1 Attacking and Defending Around the Box

This featured activity works on 1 v 1 attacking and defending around the 18.

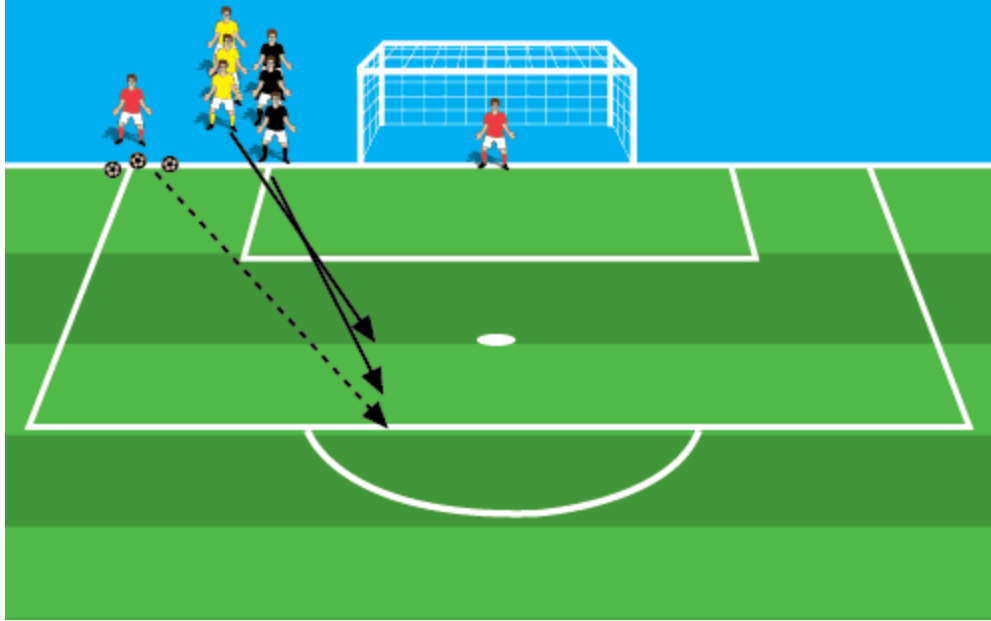
Most of the time, when we work on 1 v 1 play, it's with the attacker facing the defender. However, frequently in games, the attacking player receives the ball with his back to the goal and must create space and turn in order to get the shot. While the attacking player is trying to create space and turn, the defending player is trying to prevent the turn and force the attacker away from the goal.

This is the type of training you would do with small groups because otherwise, there is too much standing around.

Start with a keeper in goal, a line of attackers (in black) at the corner of the 6 and end line and a line of defenders (in yellow) just a step wider than the attackers and 2 yards back. There is a server with some balls wider than the defenders.



The server plays the ball toward the top of the 18 and the first player in each line sprints toward the ball.



The attacking player is going to use his body to shield the ball from the defender.



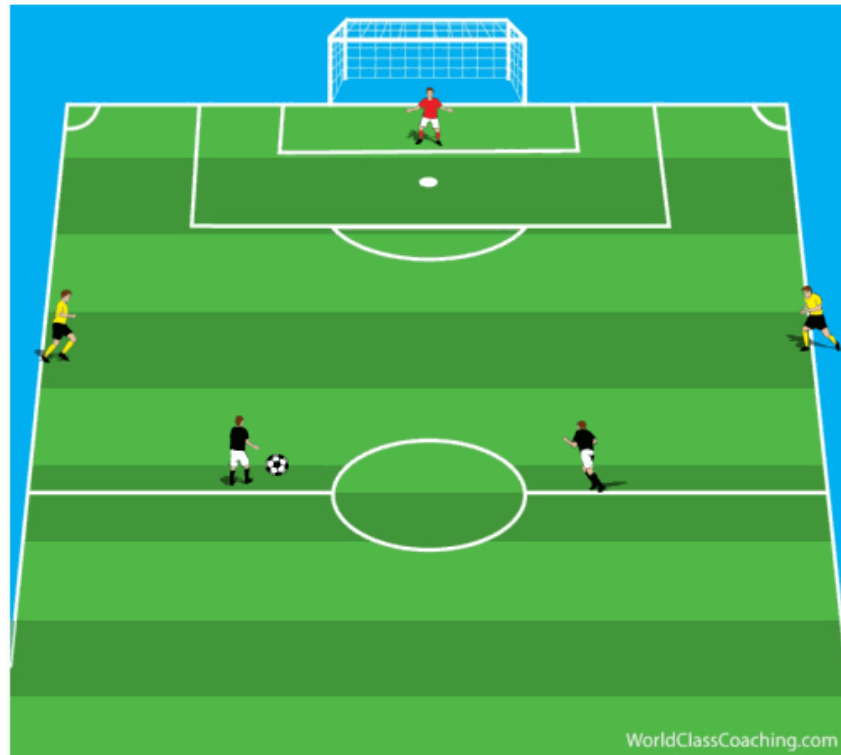
There are any number of options on how the attacking player gets turned including taking a touch away to create space, feinting one way and turning the other and leaning back into the defender and then turning and facing quickly.

While the attacking player is trying to turn, the defending player is simply trying to prevent the turn and slow the attacker down. If the defender isn't able to turn after a few touches, the play is over and the next group goes. If the defending player wins the ball, he plays the ball away and the next group goes.

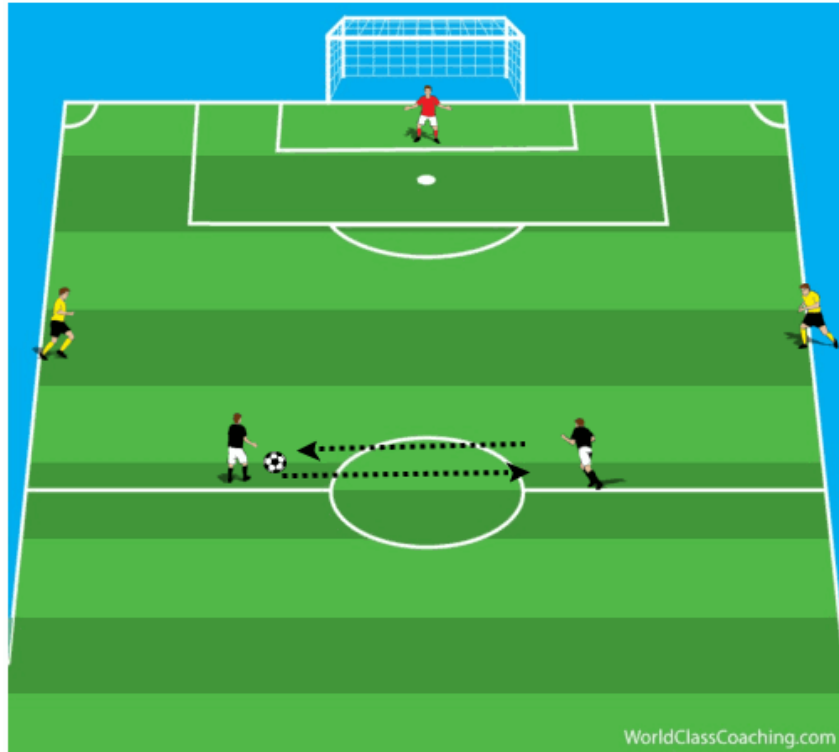
Defensive Transition and Shape

This featured activity works on defensive transition and shape.

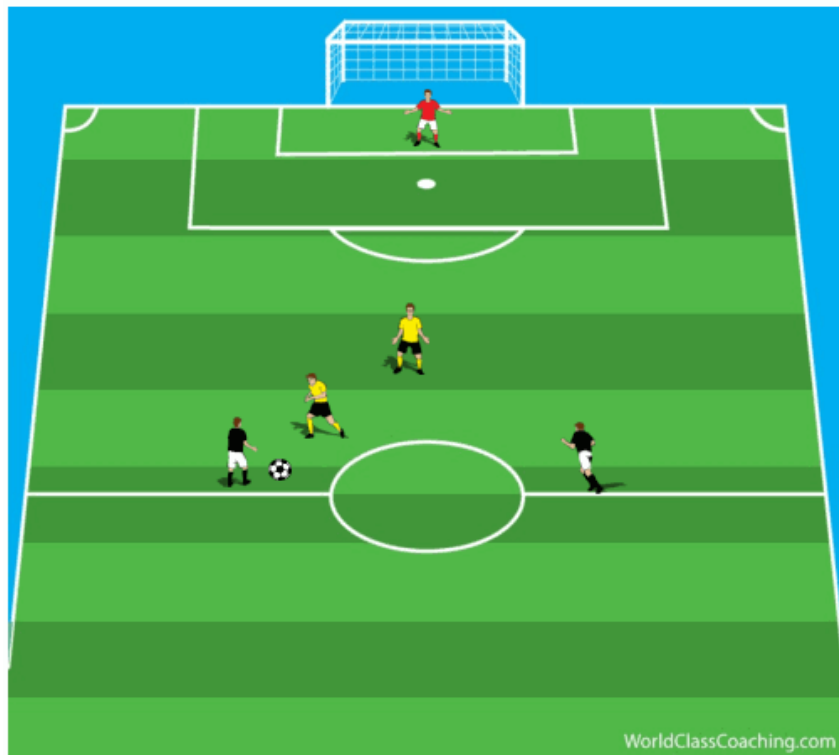
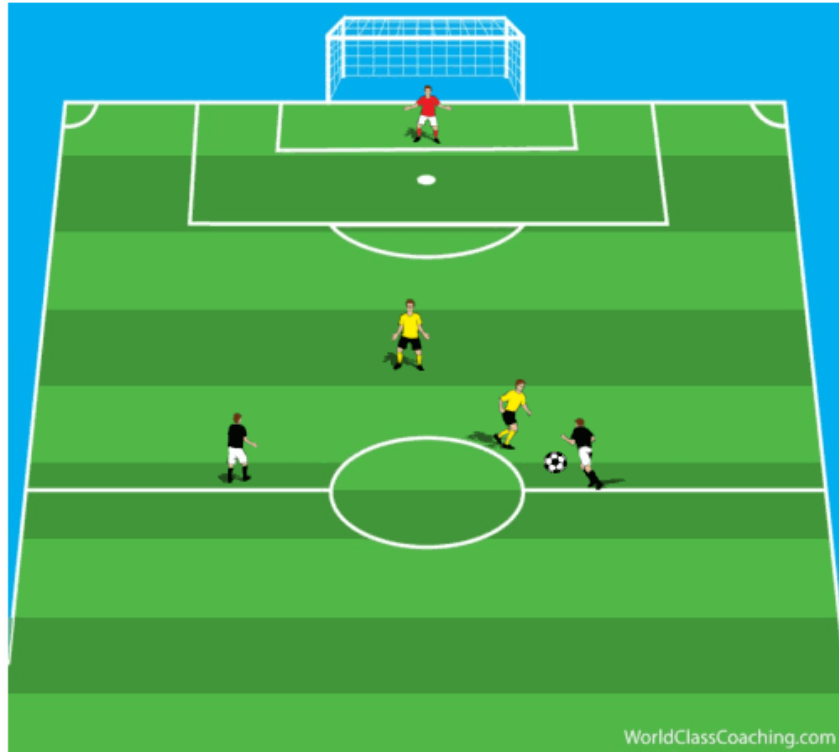
Start with two attacking players at midfield with a ball. Two defending players are out by the sidelines and a keeper is in goal



The attacking players pass the ball back and forth.



When the coach calls “go” the two attackers try to get to goal. The defenders sprint into position and it will depend upon where the ball is which defender becomes the first defender and which becomes the second defender.

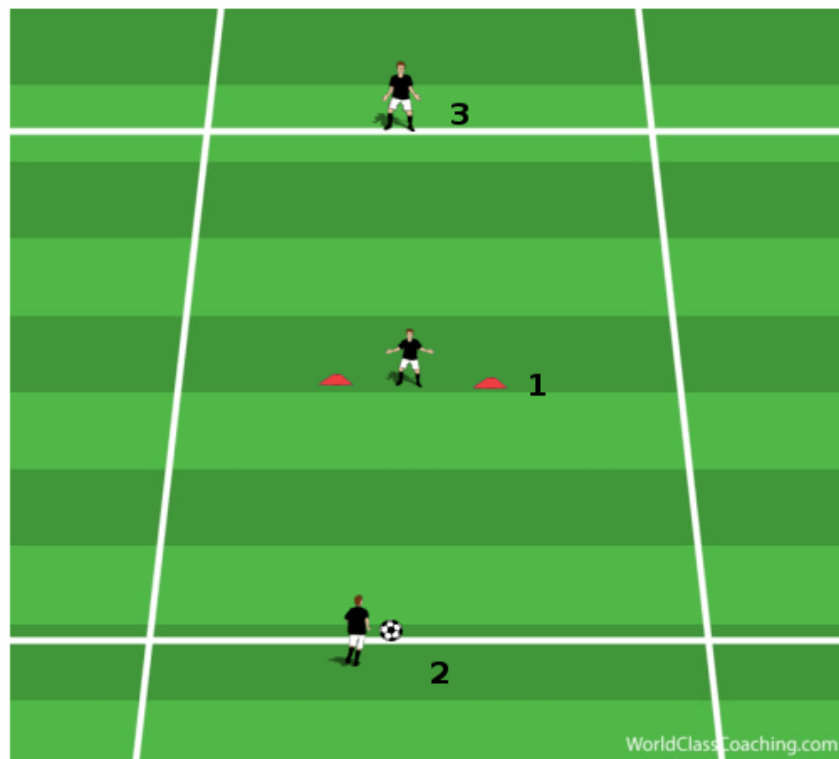


You also can do this with 4 attackers and 4 defenders or 4 attackers and 4 defenders. The key is to get the players accustomed to transitioning to good defensive positions and communicating with each other (and with the keeper) to make sure proper pressure, coverage and balance is provided.

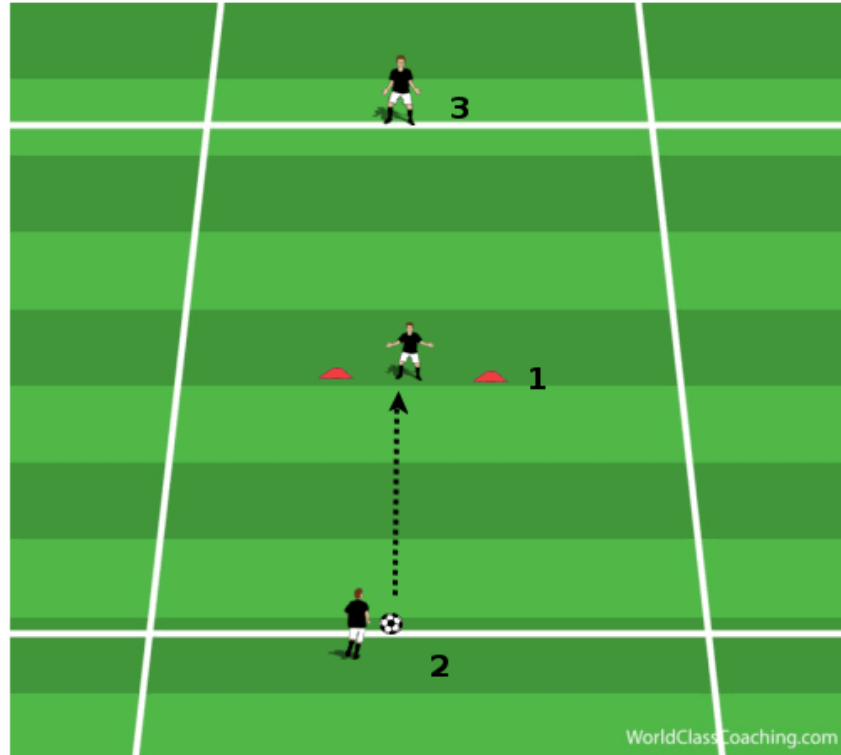
Three Goalkeepers - Attacking the Ball

This featured activity involves three keepers and works on attacking the ball, movement, shot blocking and distribution.

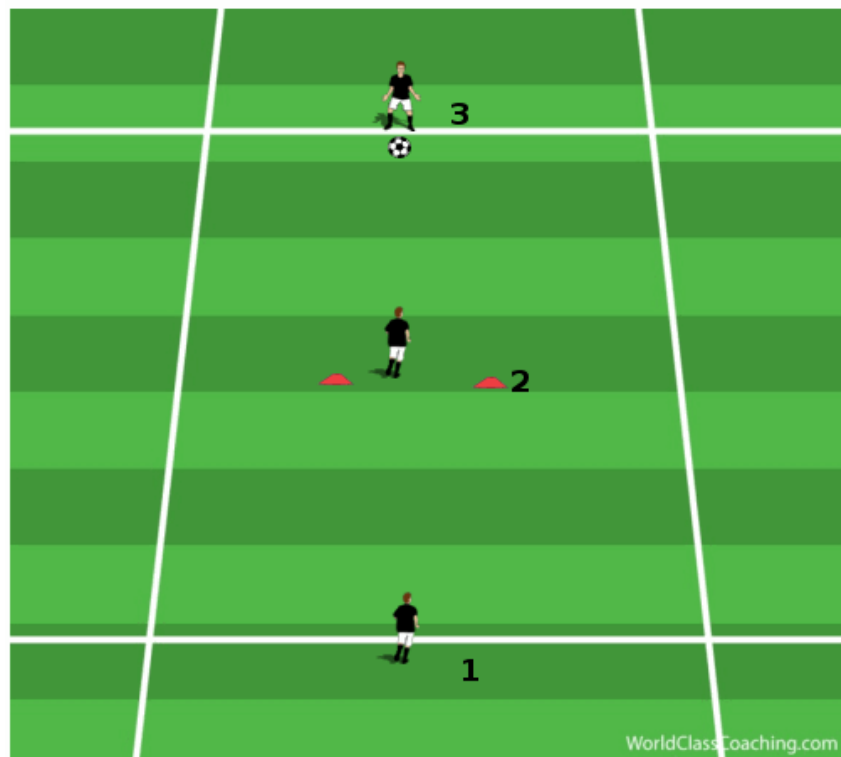
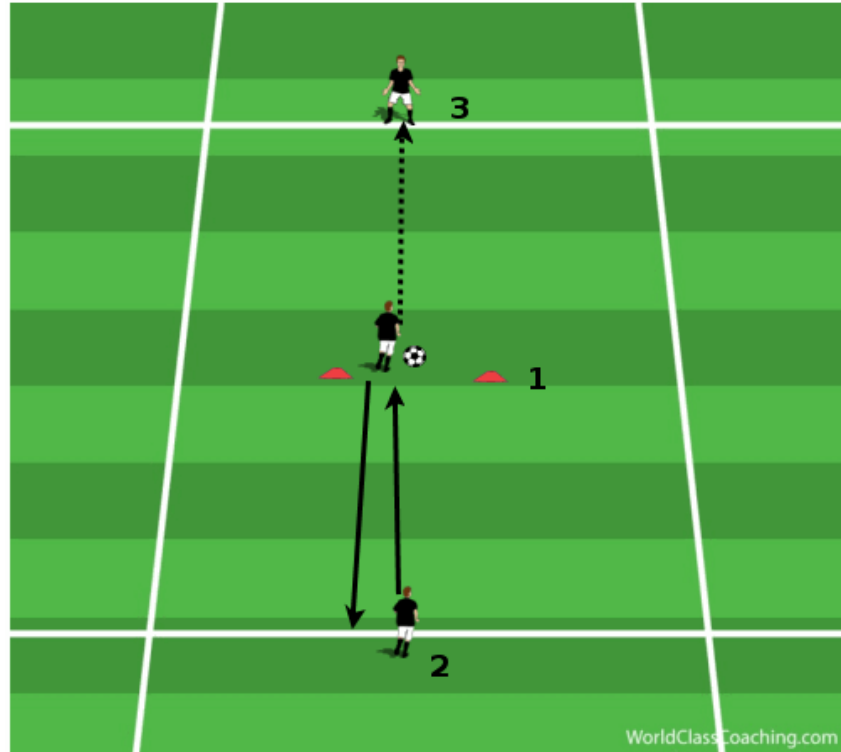
Start with two keepers 30 yards apart and the third keeper is in the middle. There are two cones making up a 6 yard goal in the middle. One of the keepers on the outside starts with a ball.



The keeper with the ball (2) shoots and tries to score between the two cones. Keeper 1 makes the save



Keeper 2 then turns, rolls the ball to keeper 3 and runs backwards to where keeper 2 started.
Keeper 2 follows his shot and takes on the role of the next keeper



As soon as keeper 3 gets the ball he takes one touch and shoots on keeper 2.

This is a quick moving activity which allows three keepers to work on many things in a short period of time.

Adding Structure to a Small-Sided Game

This featured activity simply involves adding structure to a small sided game.

Frequently a team will end a training session with a small sided game. They might play 7 v 7 including keepers



Instead of doing it this way, consider putting them into positions and a formation. In the diagram below we have both teams playing a 3-1-2



An alternative is to put them into different formations. In the diagram below the black team is in a 3-1-2 and the yellow team is in a 2-2-2. Challenging the players to figure out how to handle mismatches will allow them to work on their on field problem solving abilities.

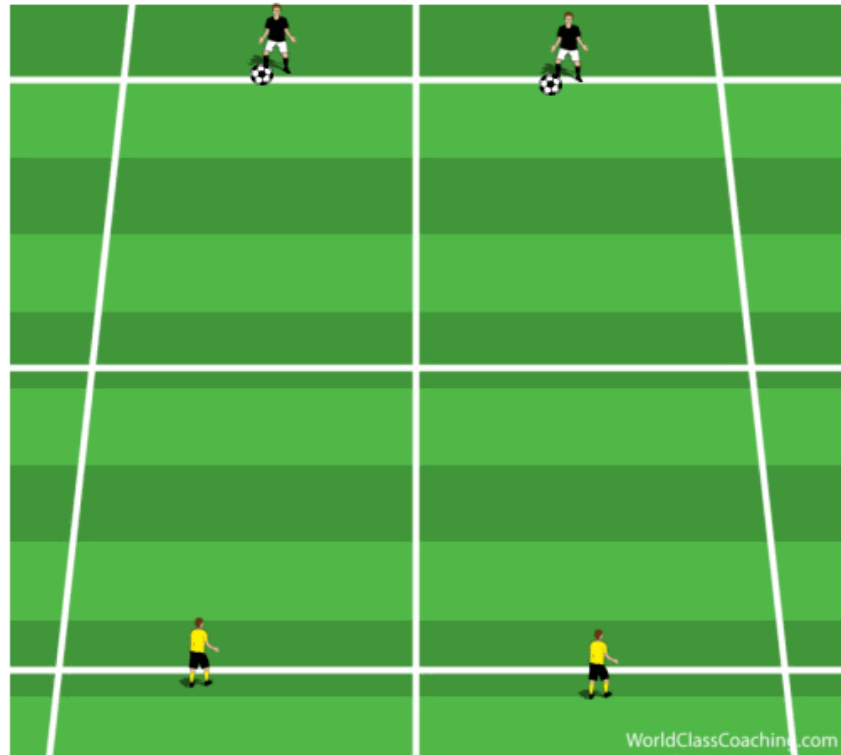
Just like in a regular game of soccer, just because they are playing a formation doesn't mean there isn't fluidity in their play, however, when there is a dead ball, it is expected they will go back to their formations.

Adding formations to small sided games can make a huge difference (both good and bad) in what is accomplished in a training session.

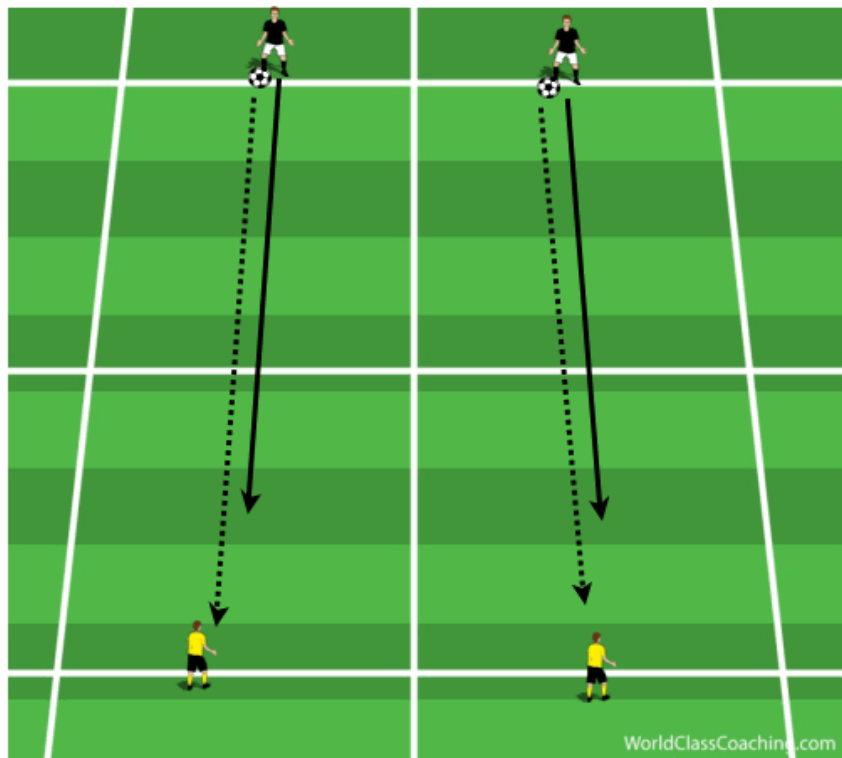
Individual and Team Defending

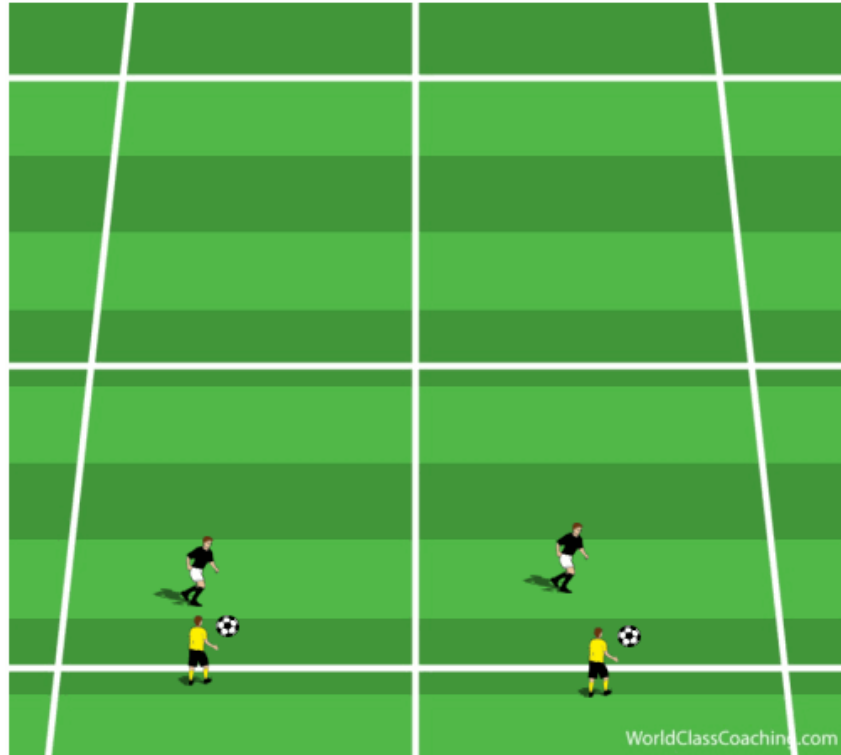
This progression works on individual and team defending.

Start with two grids side by side that are 10 x 20 each. One player starts on each end line with one having a ball.



The player starting with the ball passes to the other pass and then follows the pass to become the defender

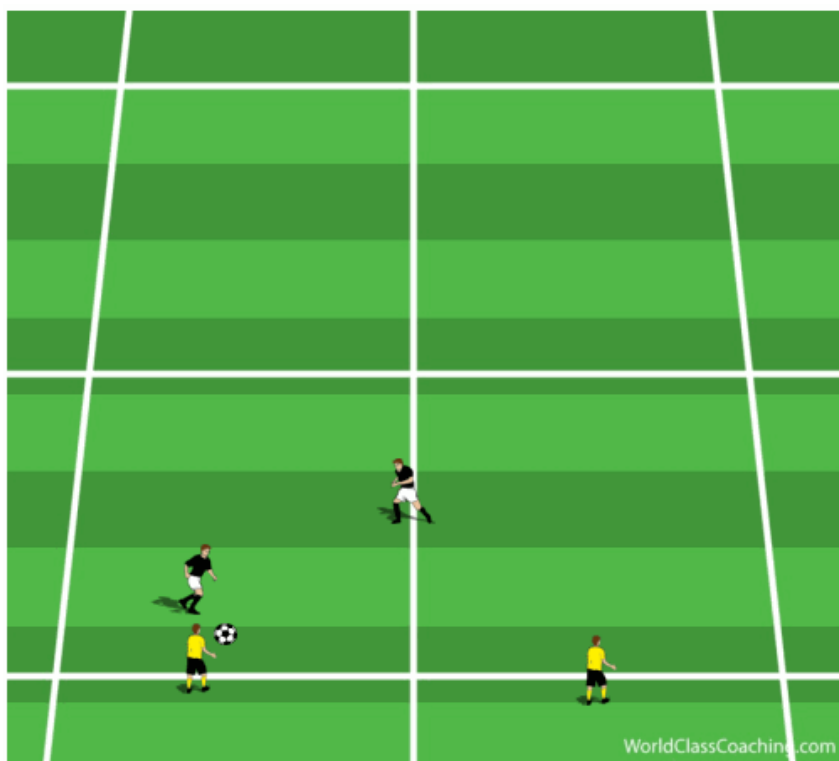
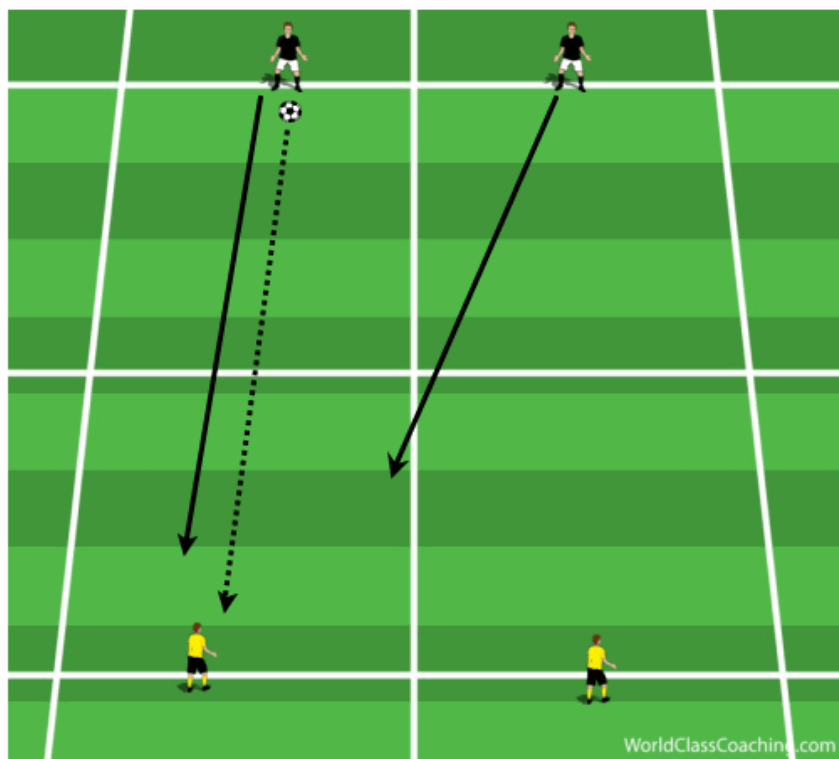




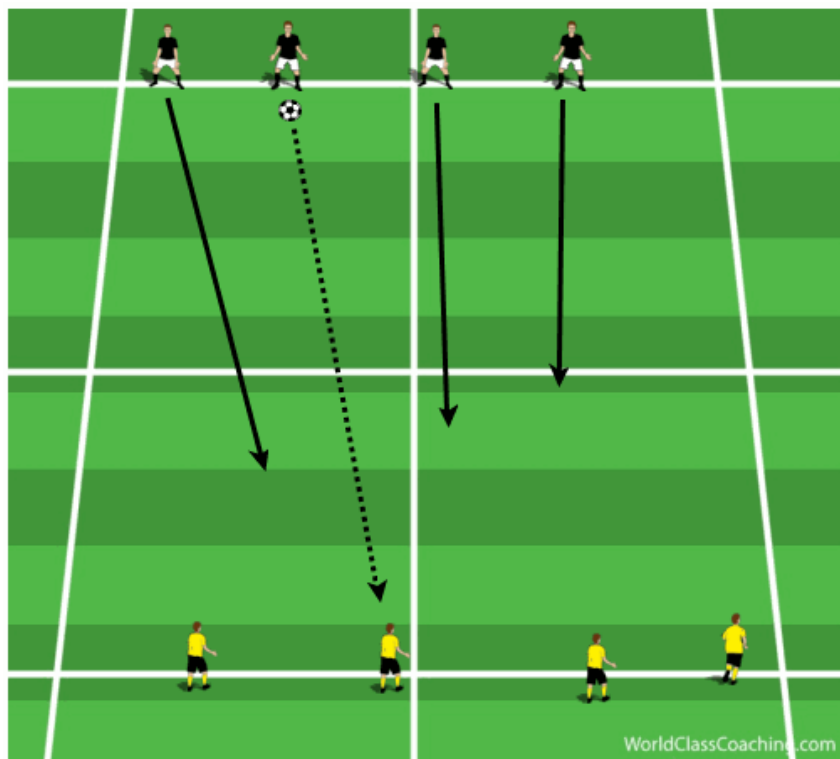
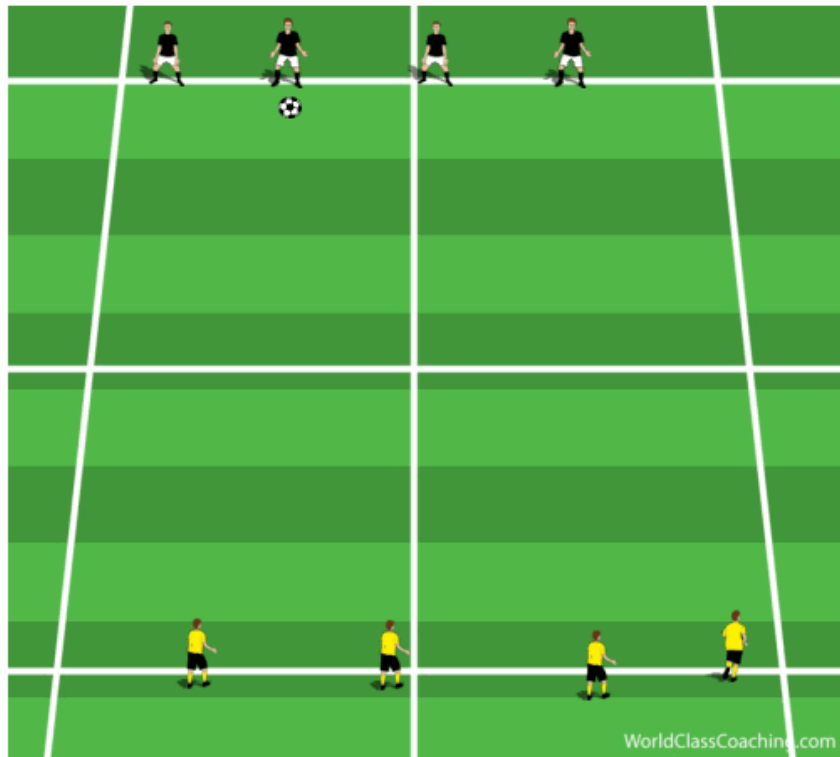
The player with the ball tries to beat the defender by dribbling across the far end line. If the defender wins the ball he tries to dribble across the opposite end line

The defender is working on slowing the attacker down and the attacker is working on moves. When the turn is over they switch roles and rest while the next two in their group has their turn (ideally there would be 4 total per grid).

Next we turn this into 2 v 2 so now there is only one ball and two attackers vs two defenders.



Next, have 4 defenders vs 4 attackers.



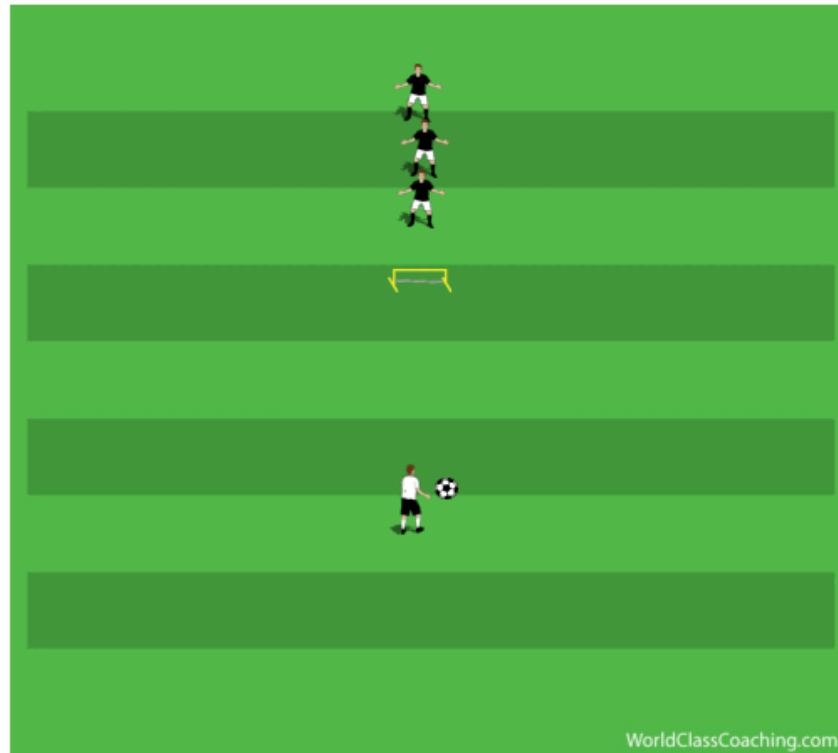
The key here is for the players to understand that defensively, they are playing as a team and not simply playing man to man. This type of progression is an excellent way for them to understand the concepts on zonal defending.

To learn more please check out the DVD Tactics and Drills for Zonal Defending.

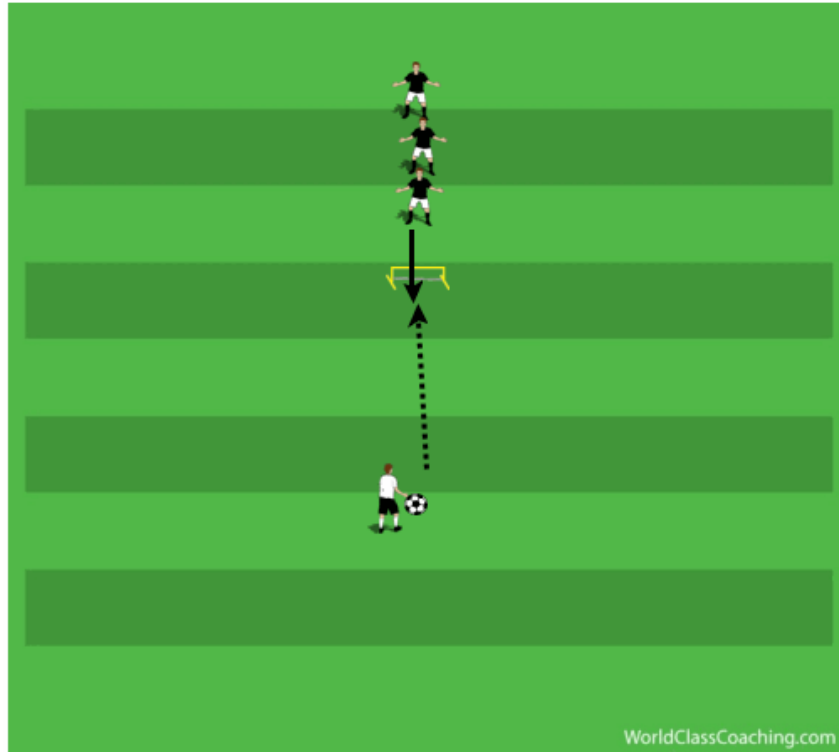
Catching and Explosiveness

This featured activity works on explosiveness and catching.

Start with a line of keepers behind a hurdle (the height of the hurdle can vary but between 1-2 feet high is ideal). A server starts with a ball 10 yards on the other side of the hurdle.



The first keeper jumps off of 2 feet over the hurdle and the server plays a ball in for the keeper to make the save. The emphasis is on landing softly and in a set position so the keeper is NOT diving over the hurdle)

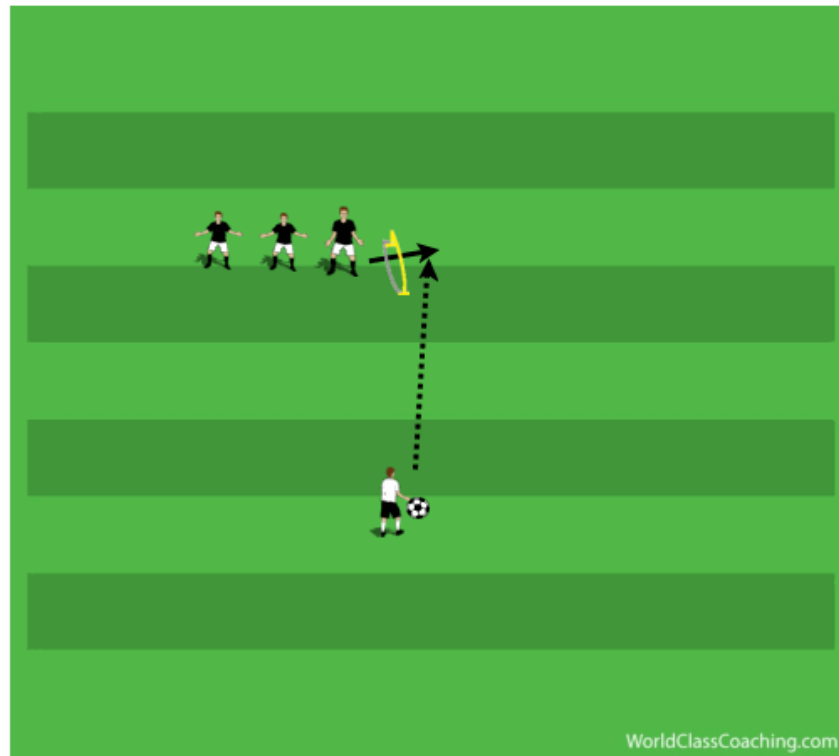


As soon as the ball is saved, the ball gets returned and the keeper goes to the end of the line and the next keeper goes.

After each keeper gets 5 turns we change it so the keeper now hops over the hurdle with one leg (this doesn't mean runs over the hurdle but instead hops off of one leg and lands on that same leg).

The keepers do 5 on each leg.

Next the hurdle gets moved sideways and the keeper, while facing forward, jumps off of two legs over the hurdle and then makes the save.



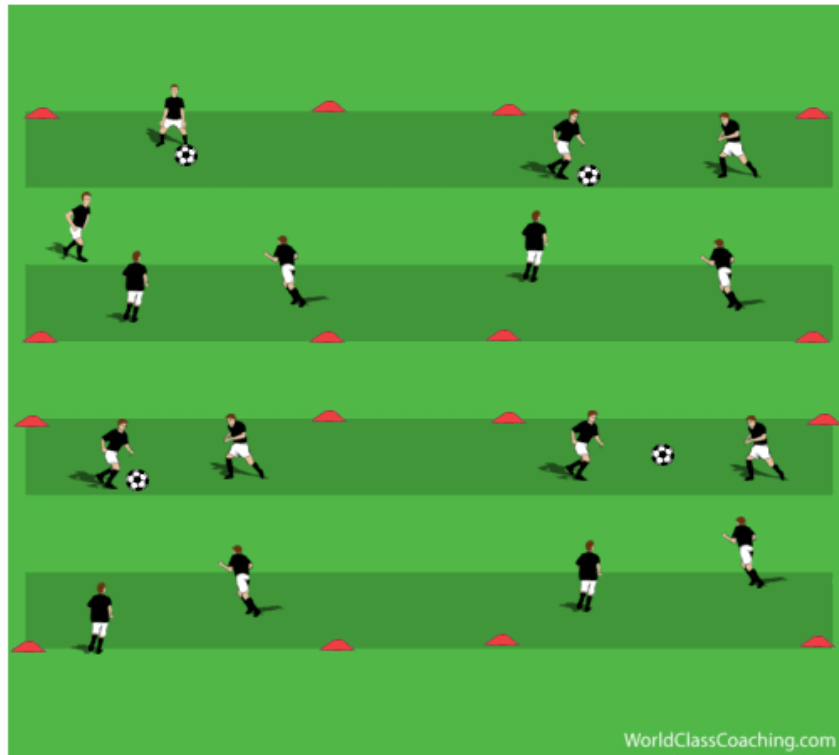
They do this 5 times in each direction and then do the same off of each leg.

The server can vary the serves (hard, soft, high, low etc) and this is a great way to work on a keepers explosiveness, balance and catching.

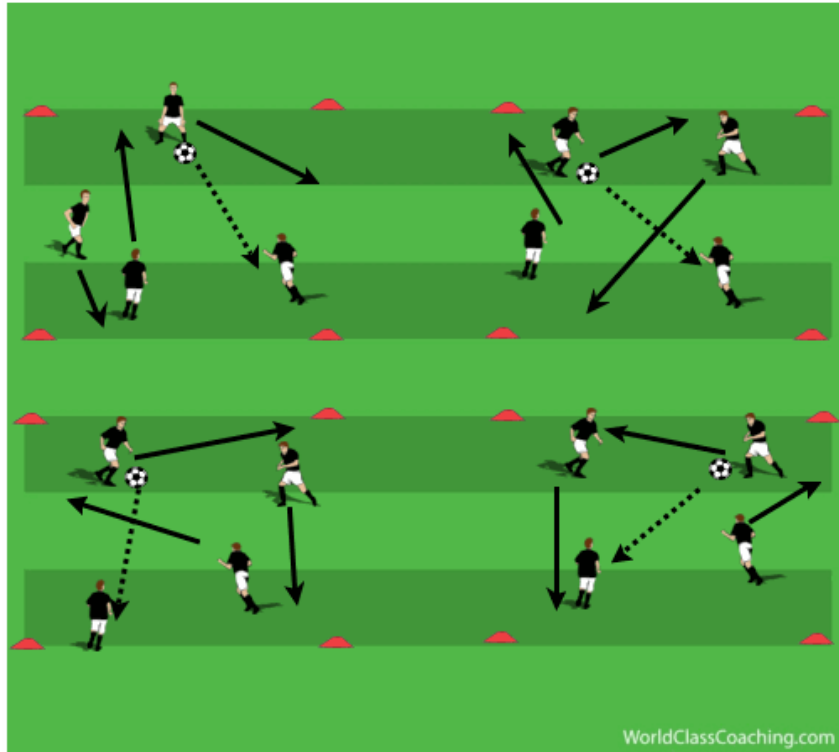
Head Up For Longer Passes

featured activity works on short passing, movement and then getting the head up for the longer pass.

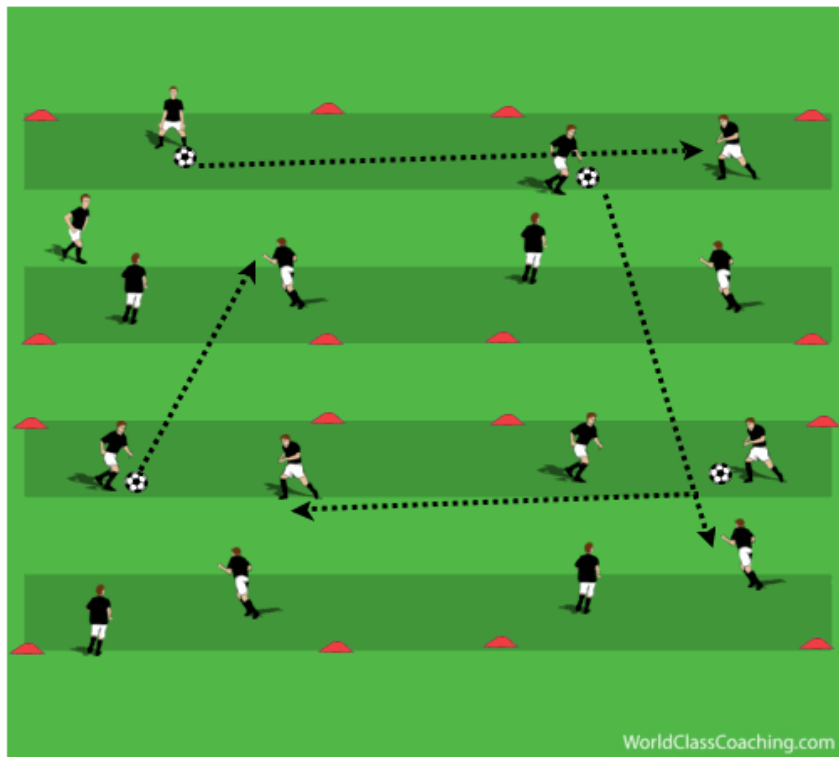
Start with 4 even groups in each in their own 30 x 30 grid. There is one ball per grid



The players pass amongst each other within their own grid and keep moving around



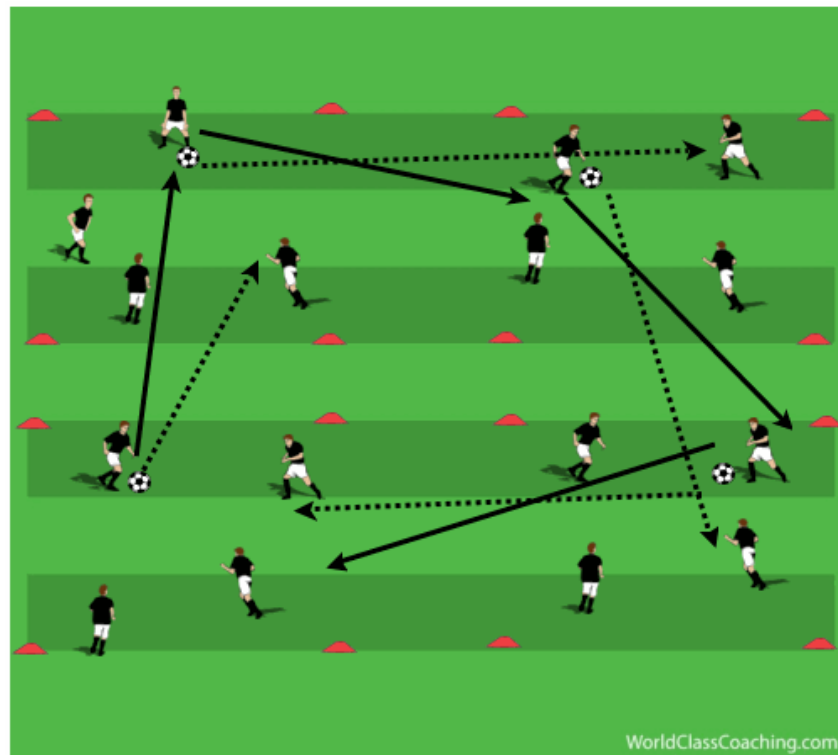
The players keep passing and moving until the coach blows his whistle. As soon as the whistle blows the players pass the balls to the next grid (clockwise)



Once the ball is received in the new grid the players start back up their passing and moving

This is working on the players getting their heads up, finding a player who is available and making an accurate pass.

Once the players get accustomed to doing this add in the concept of the passer following the pass into the next grid



This is working on getting the players into the habit of looking to follow their pass to support the longer pass.

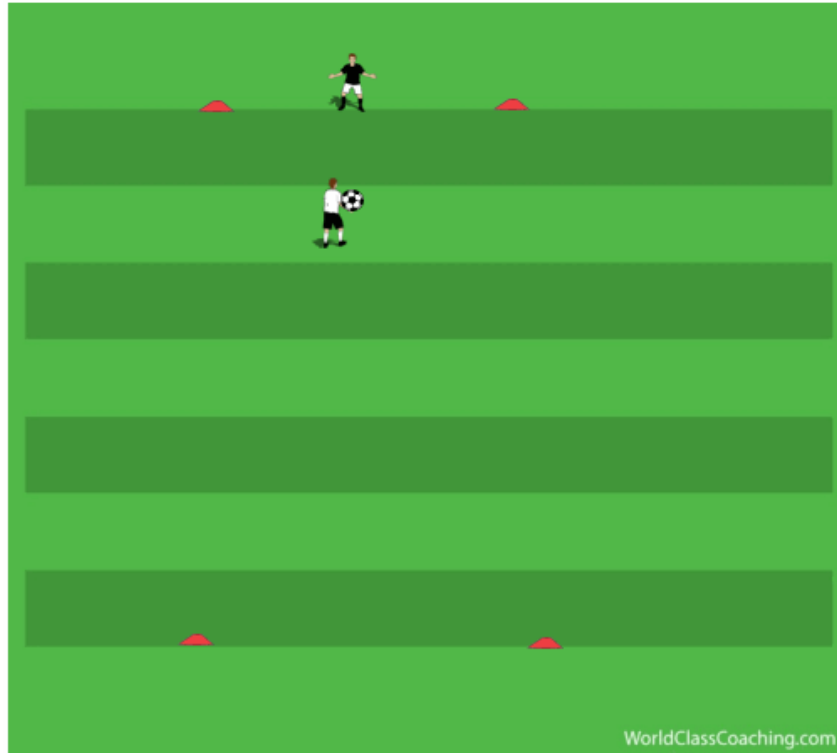
There are other things you could do which would include having two players switch grids on each switching pass or you could even add in a designated defender in each grid.

This is an excellent way to work on both short and long passes and movement on and off the ball.

Diving With Strong Hands

This featured activity works on diving, coming forward and strong hands.

A keeper starts on a line with the coach facing him 5 yards away with a medicine ball in his hands. There is another line 18 yards away.



The coach drops the medicine ball slightly out in front and the keeper has to dive and make the save before the ball hits the ground. This is going to force the keeper to dive forward (note this doesn't mean do a forward dive but rather attack the ball) in order to get to it quickly.



The coach then backs up a bit, the keeper gets up and returns the ball and they do this again until they get to the other end line. The coach would alternate sides so the keeper dives to his right one time and then to his left.

When they get to the end line, the keeper sprints backwards back to the original line and then rests while the next keeper takes his turn.

This is an excellent way to work on diving, attacking the ball and by using a medicine ball it adds an element of strength training in as well.

Finishing With Pressure Around the Box

This featured activity works on finishing around the 18 and dealing with pressure.

Start with a server with some balls around 25 yards from goal. A forward starts on the 18 and a defender is marking the forward. A keeper is in goal.



The server plays the ball into the forward and the forwards job is to get a shot hit (and ideally, to score)



The defenders job is to stop the attacker.

What frequently happens in a game is the ball gets played into a forward in a similar situation and the defender pressures the forward who then loses the ball because they weren't prepared for the pressure and, in many cases, weren't prepared for the contact that will most likely occur in this type of a situation. Because of this it's important that the defenders be willing to make contact in this type of activity AND that the attackers be willing to both handle this type of contact and to be willing to initiate the contact (I'm not suggesting the players should foul but the reality is that soccer is a contact sport when the ball is in this type of situation so in order to be prepared to deal with it in a game the players must prepare for it in training).

As soon as the first two players finish, the next two players take their turn.

Next you can add an outlet player for the forward. This player starts 5 yards back and is available to receive a pass to relieve pressure but this player is limited to one touch.





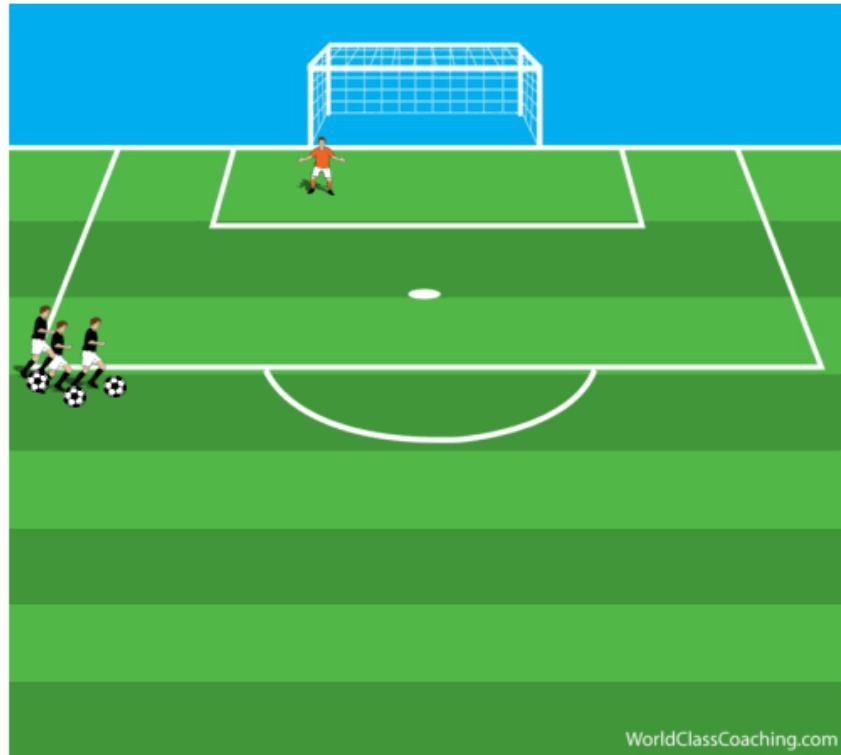
The key here is for the forward not to forget that their primary purpose is to score so the supporting player is an option but not necessarily the first option.

Players ability to handle 1 v 1 situations is usually dependent upon the number of times they have seen these situations so recreating as many as possible is extremely beneficial for the players. To see other ideas check out the DVD 25 Exercises To Train Competitive 1 v 1 Play by John Walker.

Improving Footwork and Positioning

This featured activity works on footwork, positioning and shot blocking.

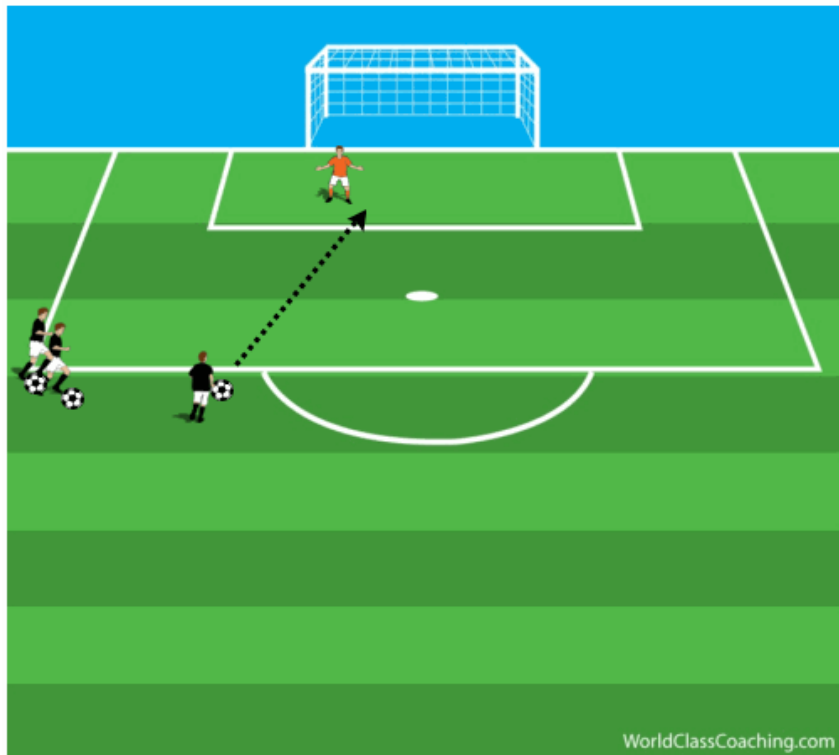
Start with a couple field players near the top corner of the 18 with balls and a keeper in goal.



The first player starts dribbling across the top of the 18

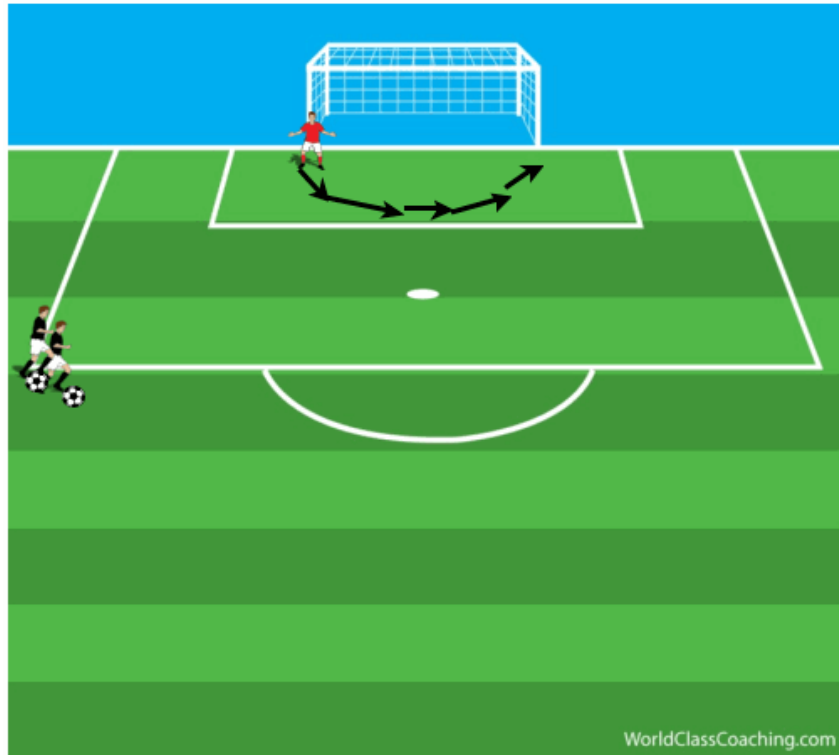


At any time the player can stop and hit a quick shot



As soon as the first player shoots the keep makes the save, returns the ball and then sprints to the near post for the next player to start.

In watching the keepers movement watch to make sure they are moving in somewhat of an arcing manner as opposed to straight across the goal and also watch to see that they aren't crossing their legs while shuffling.



Make sure to do this activity from both sides.

A Small-Sided Game With a Twist

This featured activity is a small sided game with a twist.

Start with a keeper in goal, 2 attackers and 2 defenders. The attackers and defenders start around the 12 yard spot. A server starts with balls around 30 yards out.

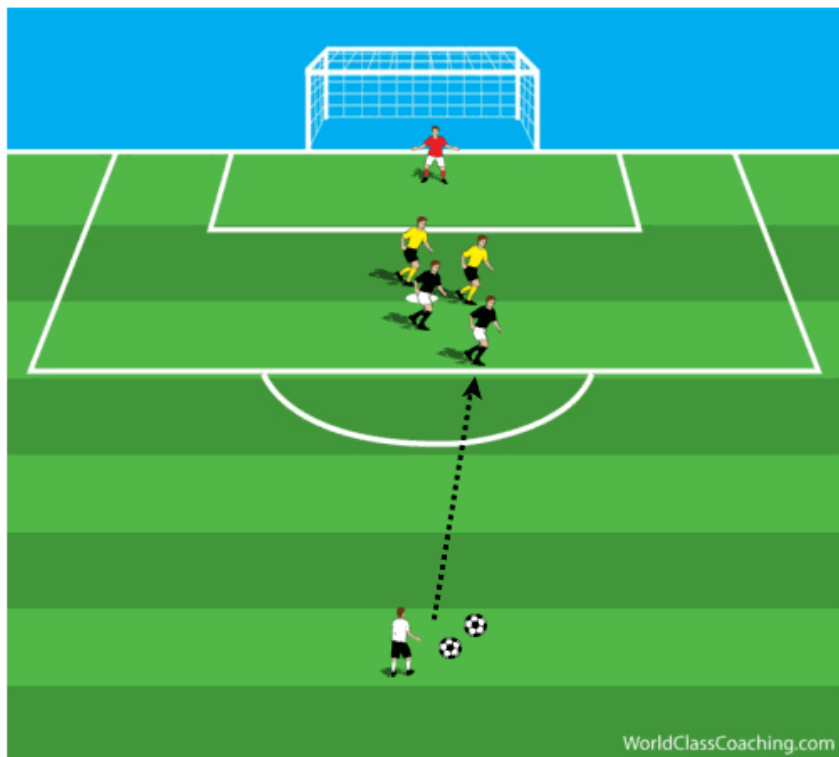


In this example, the black team is attacking and the yellow team is defending.

The game starts with the attacking player (or players) making a run to get open. Frequently this would mean checking away and then checking back to the ball.



The server plays the ball in and the game is live.



The player with the ball can turn with it and take his player on.



Or he can lay the ball back to his teammate who would have to make himself available



Or he can hold the ball while working on his options



Once the ball is played in, this becomes a regular 2 v 2 game. Once the attack is over (ball goes out of play, defense wins the ball, goal is scored etc) the players reset and start again.

The key to this game is attacking players frequently receive the ball with their back to the goal and if they don't prepare for these situations in training, they won't be ready in games.