

TACTICAL TRAINING GAMES

by RENATO LOPES MOREIRA



Tactical Training Games

By

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In this book we are going to show some tactical games that will help you with your training sessions.

It's common knowledge that soccer is a basic Attack v Defense game. The team who has the ball organizes his actions and the team who doesn't have the ball organizes to recover it.

It's also common knowledge that a soccer game involves 22 players, 11 players for each team, playing in a 105x68 meters game field. But it's very difficult to see a 11v11 game situation or even a 10x10 game situation happening during a game today. Players have less space to play and it's easy to see a lot of players in the same space during a game disputing the ball.

In soccer games today, more often you see situations like 6v6 game situation in a 40 meters game area. The coach has to be prepared to train his team to play in situations like these.

The idea of this book is to show some exercises that work in these small situations and coaches can implement in their training sessions.

The basic principles of a soccer game are:

- (a) *Try to create majority of players;*
- (b) *Avoid equality of players;*
- (c) *Deny inferiority of players.*

To understand these basic principles players have to know the tactical structure of soccer and understand the reasons for some actions.

So, what are tactics?

Tactics are fundamental elements that give dynamics to the game, giving sense to the soccer game.

Tactics are also the decisions the players make during a game, with or without the ball, in an individual or collective way.

Tactics can be divided into two principles that order the players' actions during a game:

- (a) *General:* Equality (equal numbers), majority (numbers-up) or minority (numbers-down) situations involving the players in the areas of the ball;
- (b) *Specific:* Group of rules that direct players' action on both phases of the game, offensive and defensive, with the objective to unbalance the opponent's defense.

These principles lead us to tactical capacity which is directly related to the players:

(a) *Individual*: One player does an isolated action to reach a goal defined by the coach. The 1v1 game situation is the best example for highlighting this capacity.

(b) *Small Group*: Two or three players do a sequence of actions to reach a goal defined by the coach. 2v2, 2v3, 3v3, 3v2 game situation can be examples for developing this capacity.

(c) *Team*: Four or more players do a sequence of actions to reach a goal defined by the coach. 4v3, 4v4, 5v4, 5v5, 6v5 game situations can be examples for developing this capacity.

These capacities lead us to some tactical actions that might be done during the offensive and defensive phases in a game:

(a) *Offensive actions*:

- . Penetration;
- . Offensive coverage;
- . Mobility;
- . Space creation;
- . Offensive unit.

(b) *Defensive actions*:

- . Contention;
- . Defensive coverage;
- . Balance;
- . Concentration;
- . Defensive unit.

All of these will be converted to operational principles of a soccer game, which are:

(a) *Offensive phase*:

- . Maintain ball possession;
- . Build offensive plays;
- . Advance to the field;
- . Create situations to finish;
- . Finish to the opponent's goal.

(b) *Defensive phase*:

- . Recover ball possession;
- . Reduce the space into the field;
- . Prevent opponent's advance;
- . Prevent opponent's finishing situations;
- . Protect the goalkeeper.

With all this presentation about tactics we now can talk about the exercises of this book.

With all the principles and actions above, soccer can be considered a complex game which is represented by an 11v11 game situation. But if you try to think and prepare your team only having this situation in your mind it will be very difficult to do.

The idea here is to simplify this, presenting situations involving most current situations that happen during a game.

Here you will see some 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, 4v4, 5v5, 6v6, 7v7 game exercises involving majority (numbers-up), minority (numbers-down), transition, and all offensive and defensive principles shown above. And all these exercises will be played in a maximum 70 meters and a minimum 9 meters game area, adapting to soccer reality nowadays.

Here we have 27 games to improve your small confrontations during all the soccer game areas and phases.

And in all you will play in a smaller space, just like a real game.

They involve some exercises that you might use in your warmup or even during the main part of your training. And all exercises have some variations that you can apply and vary during the preparation of your team.

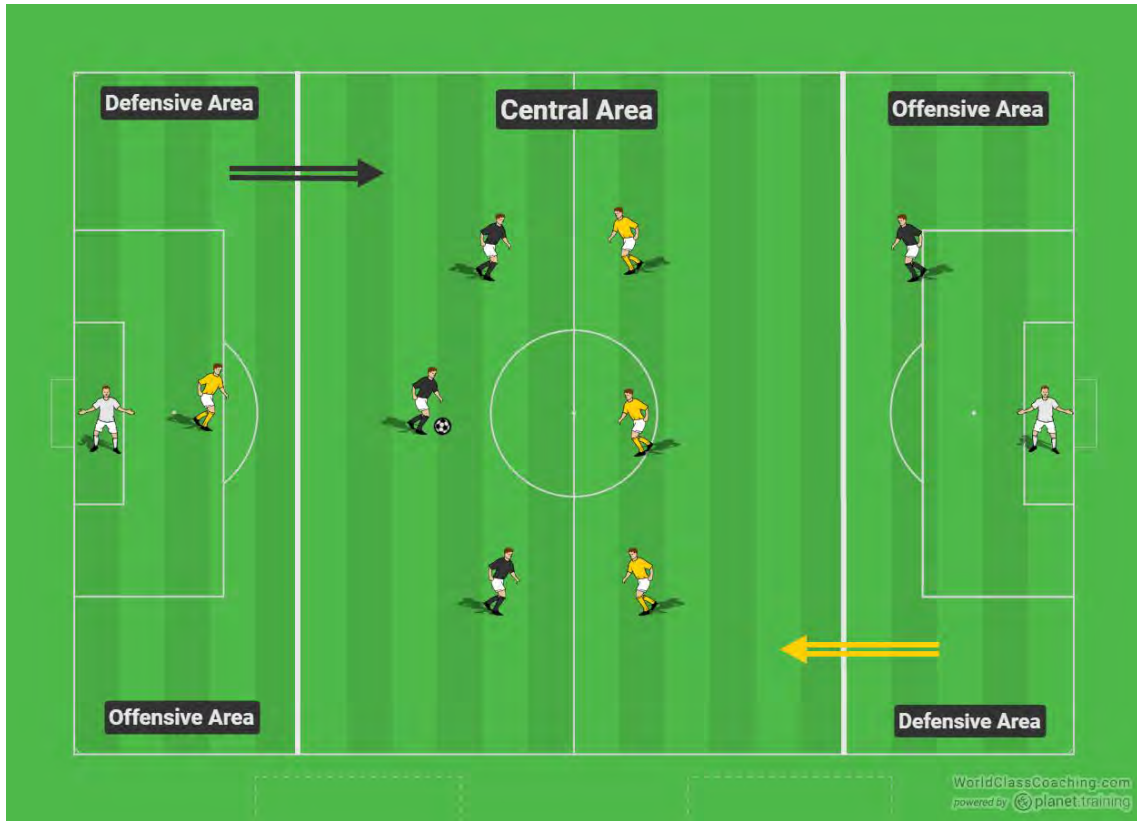
All these exercises were applied, tested, modified and thought out to give me what I wanted for my team. And they can be applied at any time of the season. You just have to adapt their volume and intensity.

I hope this material can be shared with other coaches around the world just like they have shared with me.

Good reading and good studying.

Renato.

4v4 with 2v1 in Offensive areas:



Setup:

10 players
A 40x20 meters game field.

Execution:

Divide the field into 3 areas:

- (a) A defensive one;
- (b) A central one;
- (c) A offensive one.

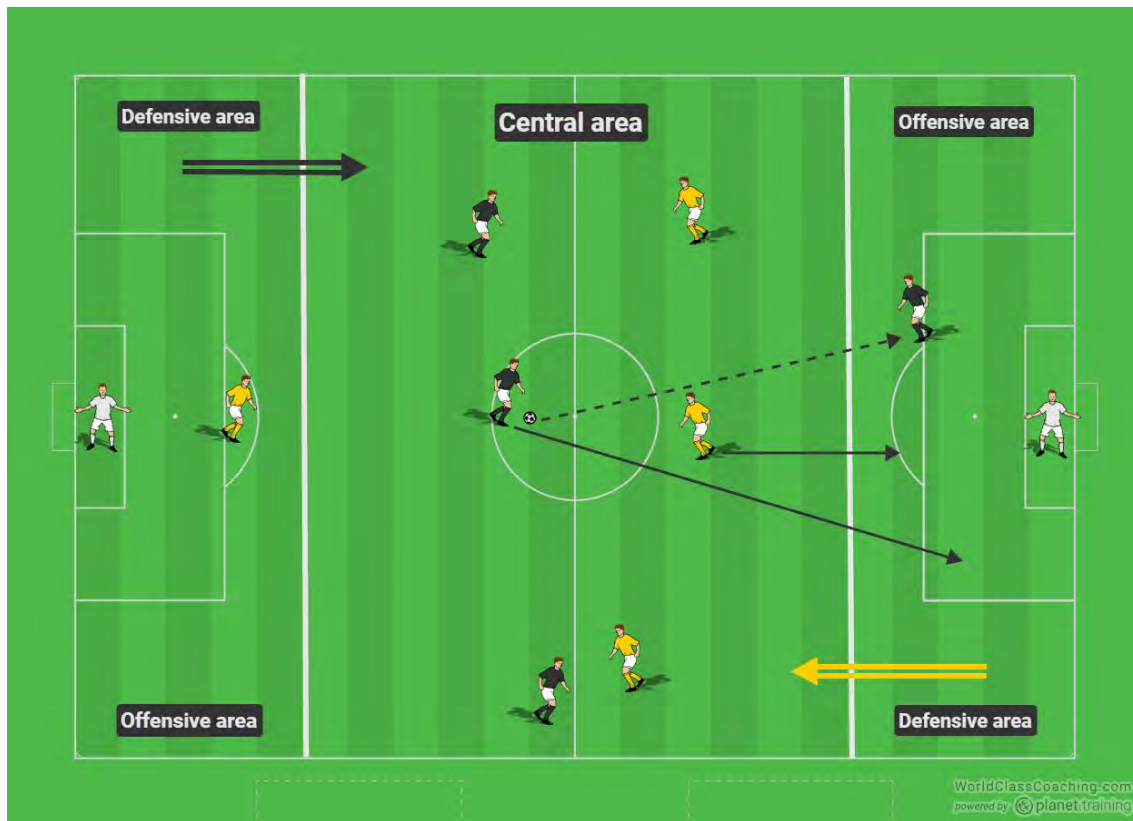
Put 3 players into the central area and 1 player of each team in the offensive area.

The game happens in the central area and the objective is to pass the ball to the offensive area in a coordinated way.

The player who makes the pass to the offensive area can advance to shoot, while just one defender can go there and try to stop the attack.

Then you have a 2v1 offensive situation in the offensive area.

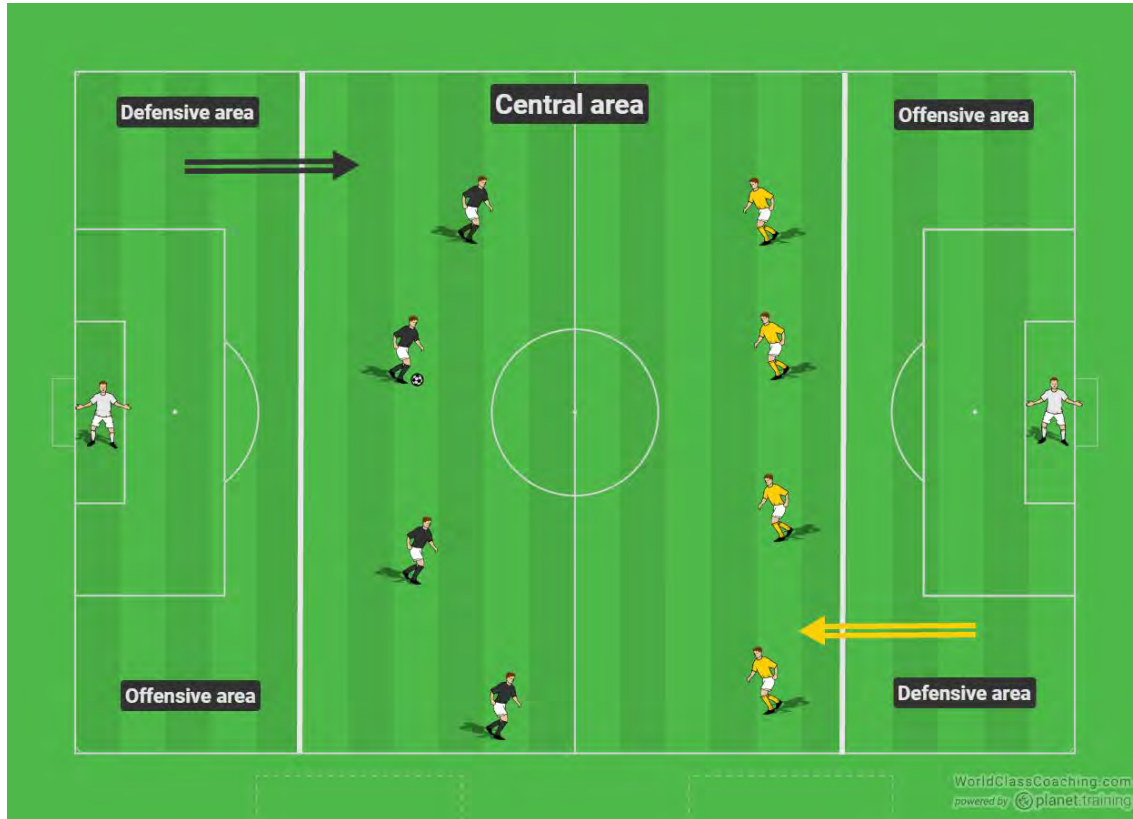
If the defense recovers the ball possession, they can counter attack.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase the game field area;
- . You can increase the number of players on each area;
- . You can vary the game situations, creating a 3v2, 4v3, 5v4, etc.
- . You can define the type of ball passed into the offensive area;
- . You can vary the area's size.

4v4 with 1 Goalkeeper in Offensive areas:



** This exercise can be a variation of the 4v4 game with 2v1 situation in Offensive areas.*

Setup:

10 players
A 30x20 meters game field.

Execution:

Divide the field into 3 areas:

- (a) A defensive one;
- (b) A central one;
- (c) A offensive one.

Put 3 players into the central area and the exercise start with a 4v4 game situation.

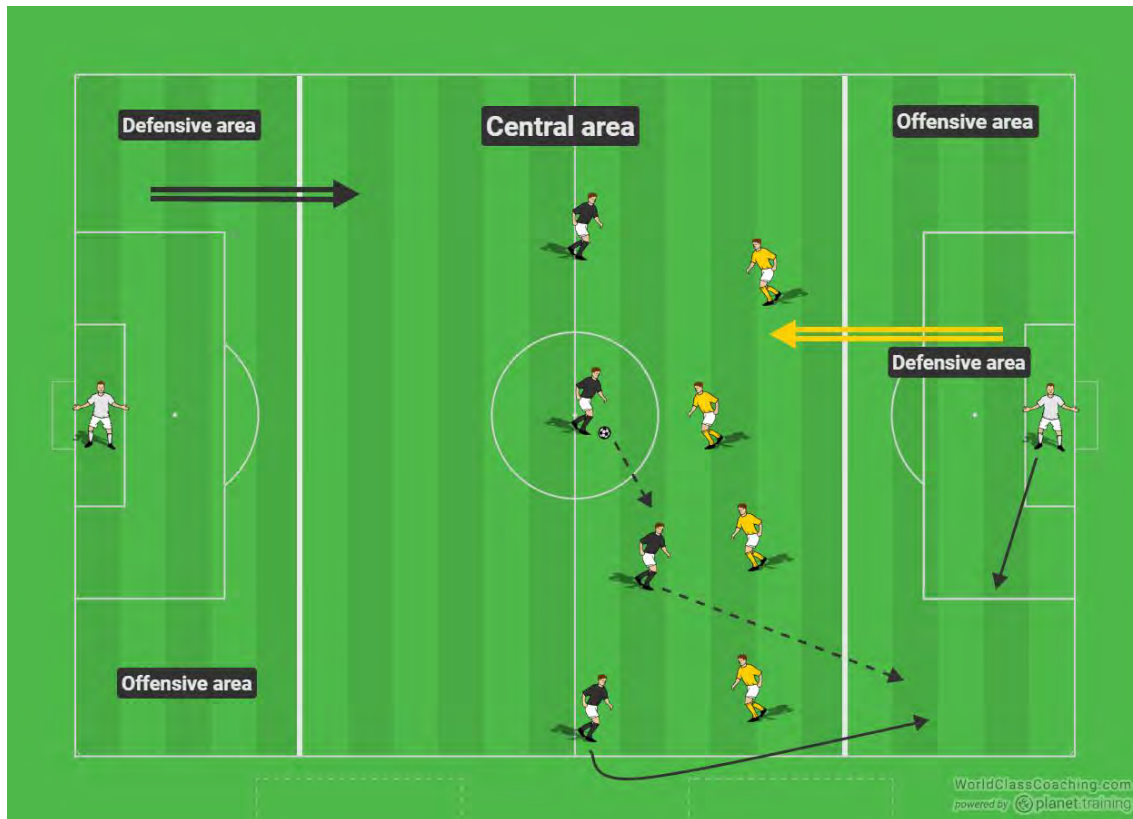
The game happens in the central area and the objective is to pass the ball to the offensive area with a vertical pass.

The attack has to carry the ball into the offensive area. They can do this dribbling or touching the ball with a vertical pass.

Only one player can enter the offensive area during the attack.

No defender can enter this area, leaving the Goalkeeper in a 1v1 situation.

If the Defense recovers the ball, they have the counter attack.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase the game field area;
- . You can vary the game situations, creating a 3v2, 4v3, 5v4, etc.
- . You can define the type of ball pass to the offensive area;
- . You can vary the area's size.

2v2+2 Offensive game:



Setup:

10 players
A 40x20 meters game field.

Execution:

Divide the field into 3 areas:

- (a) A Central one;
- (b) A Left corridor;
- (c) A Right corridor.

Divide the players into the 3 corridors leaving 2 players of each team in the Central area and 2 players on each corridor.

The game happens inside the central area with a 2v2 situation.

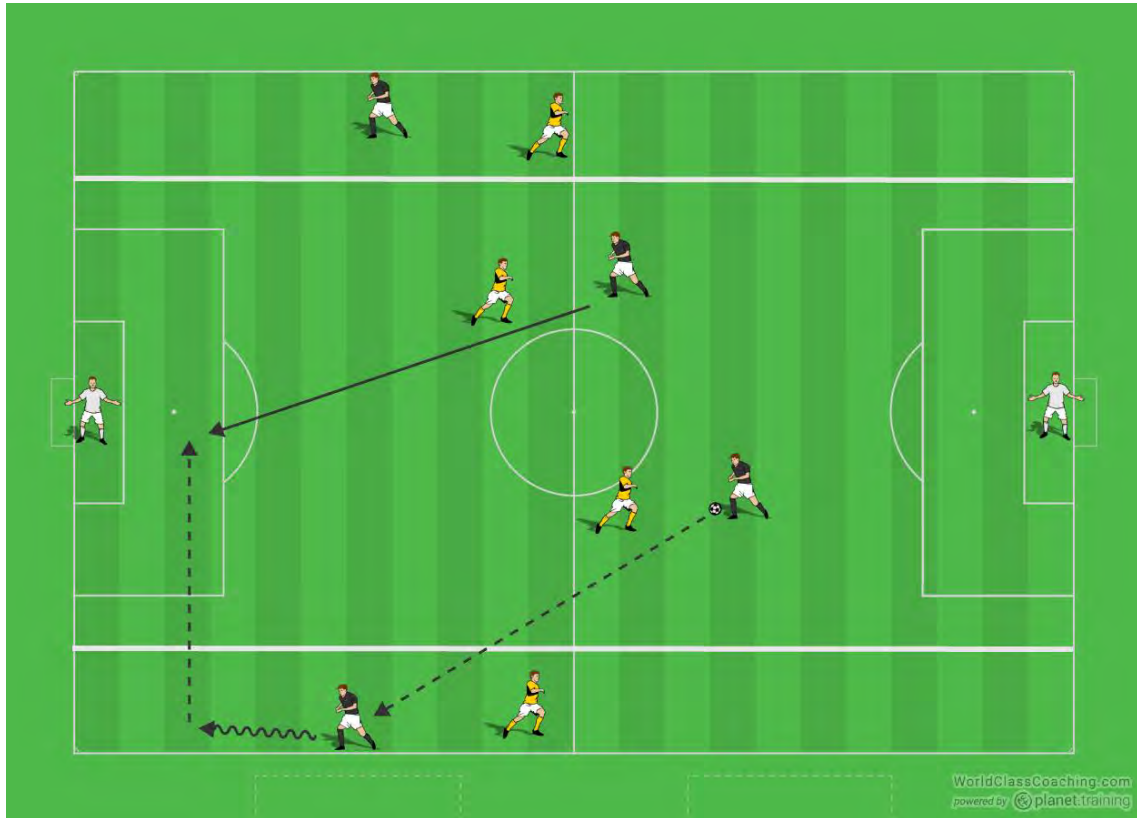
The attack can use the left and right backs' support while they have the ball.

During the attack you have a 4v2 situation.

If the defense recovers the ball possession they automatically start to counter attack and can use their left and right backs.

The defense is not allowed enter into the left and right corridors.

The left and right backs are allowed to move freely into the corridors.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the game field area;
- . You can allow marking in corridors;

5v5 Crossing game:



** This exercise can be a variation of the 2v2+2 Offensive game*

Setup:

12 players
A 50x35 meters game field

Execution:

Divide the field into 3 areas:

- (a) A Central area;
- (b) A Left corridor;
- (c) A Right corridor.

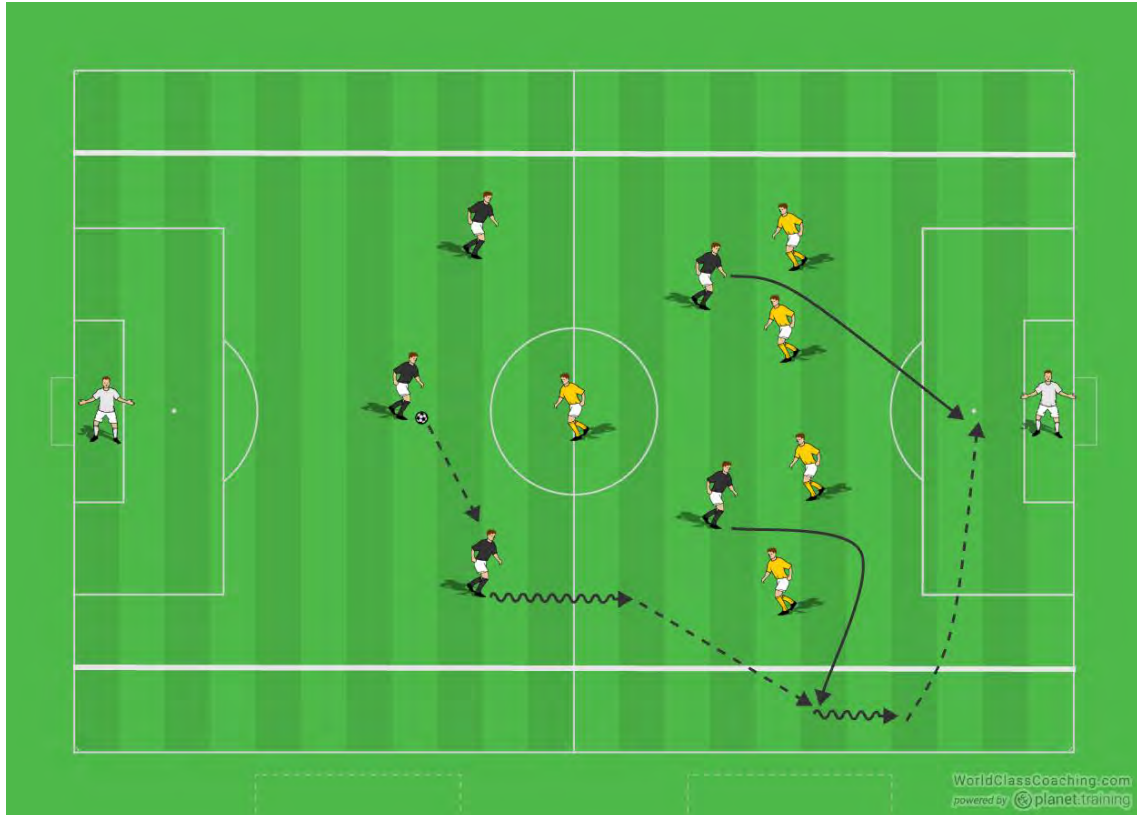
Put all the players into the Central area and start the exercise with a 5v5 game situation.

The attack can use the left and right corridors while they have the ball.

Only one player can enter at any corridor to play.
The goal will only be valid if the ball comes from a cross.

No defender is allowed to enter into the corridors to defend.

If the defense recovers the ball possession they automatically start to counter attack and can use their left and right corridors.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the game field area;
- . You can allow marking on corridors;
- . You can vary the type of crossings;
- . You can allow shots outside the corridors.

5v5 Crossing game + 2 supporter players:



** This exercise can be a variation of the 2v2+2 Offensive game and 5v5 Crossing game.*

Setup:

16 players
A 60x40 meters game field

Execution:

You will create four crossing areas on the game field--two crossing areas in each offensive field.

Each crossing area will be 3x2 meters.

Put one player of each team inside one crossing area and start the exercise with a 5v5 game situation.

The players inside crossing areas cannot leave their area.

The goal will only be valid if it the ball comes from a cross.

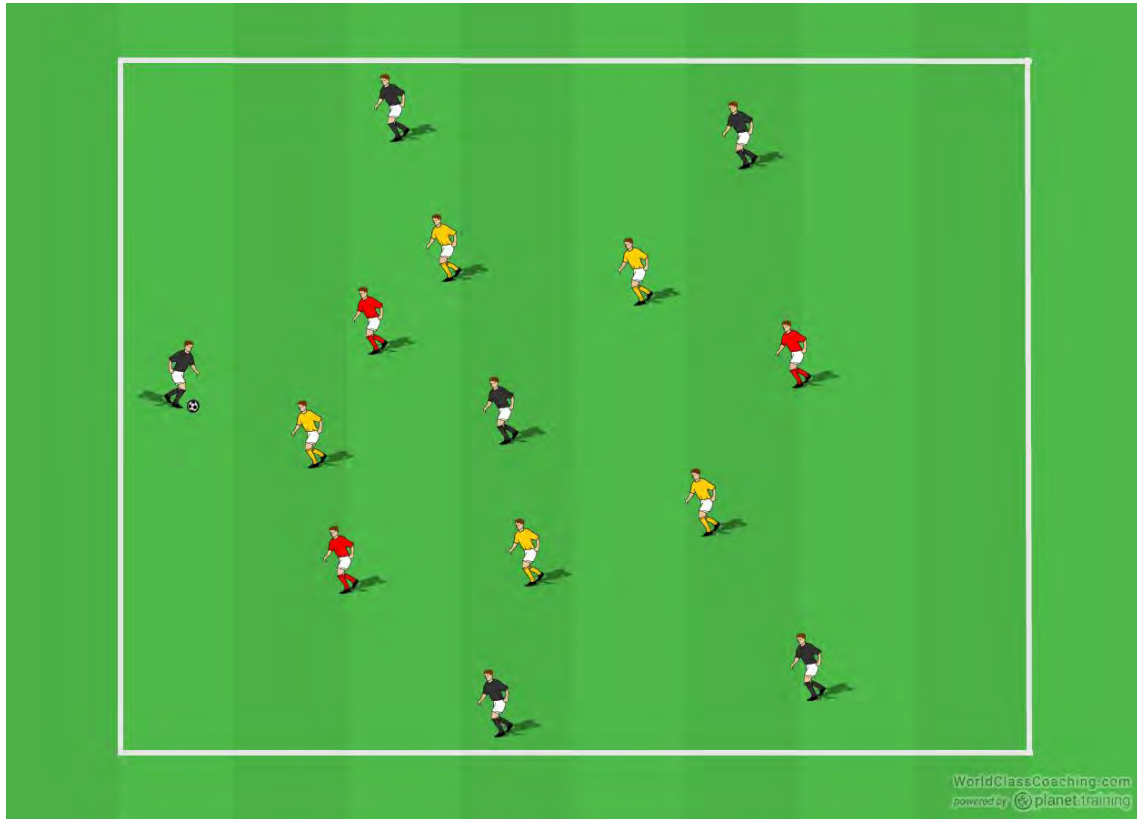
No defender is allowed to enter into the corridors to defend.

If the defense recovers the ball possession they automatically start to counter attack and can use their left and right corridors.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the crossing areas;
- . You can vary the location of the crossing areas;
- . You can start the exercise with the crossing areas empty.

5v5 game +4 supporter players:



Setup:

14 players
A 50x30 meters game field

Execution:

Two teams will play a 5v5 game.

There will be 4 support players that will play with the team that has the ball.

Attack will have to maintain the ball possession while the defense will try to gain it.

10 consecutive touches worth 1 point.

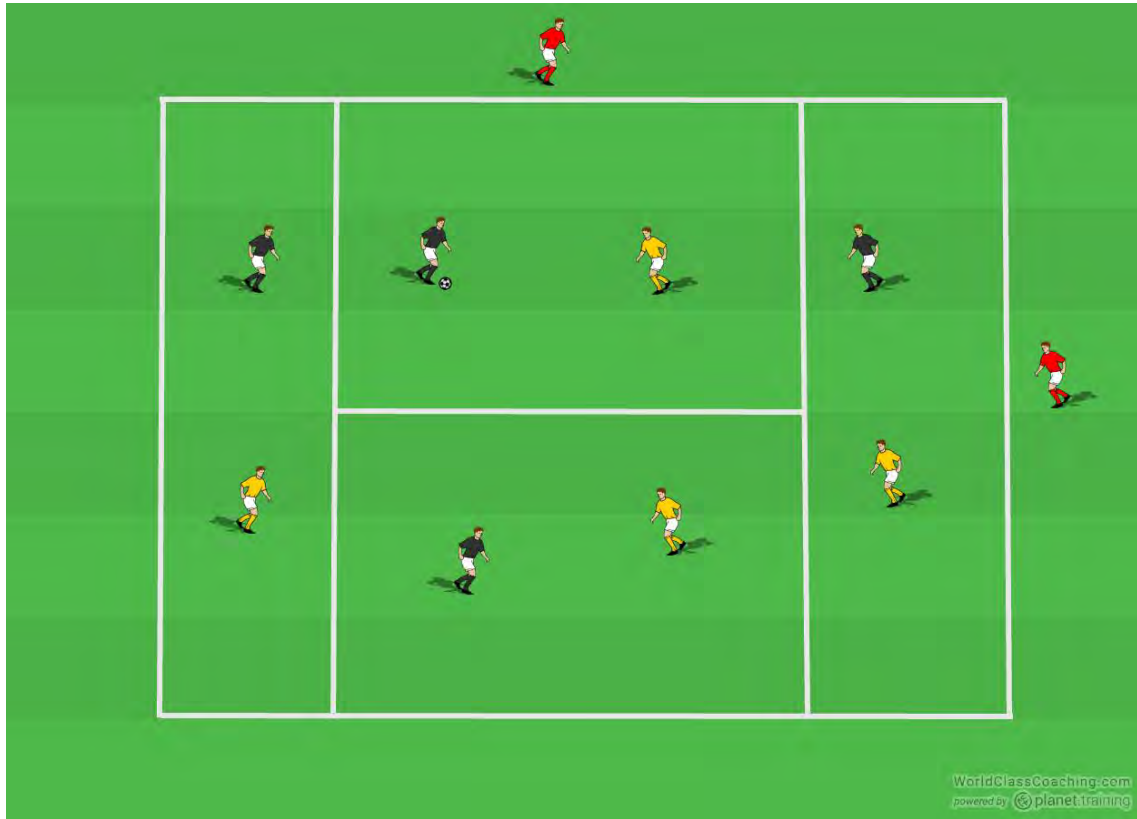
Every time the Attack loses the ball possession they lose 1 point.

Variations:

. You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;

- . You can increase or decrease the number of support players;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of touches to score 1 point;
- . You can increase or decrease the area game field;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by each players;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by each support player;
- . You can create 1v1 area fields on the game area.

4v4+2 support players:



Setup:

10 players
A 20x20 meters game field.

Execution:

Divide the field into 4 areas.

Divide the players into these 4 areas leaving 2 players of each team in each of them.

The 2 support players play outside the game field moving freely.

The game happens inside the areas with a 1v1 situation.

The attack has to pass the ball into the areas creating a 6v4 situation.

10 consecutive touches is worth 1 point.

If the defense recovers the ball possession they automatically start to pass the ball.

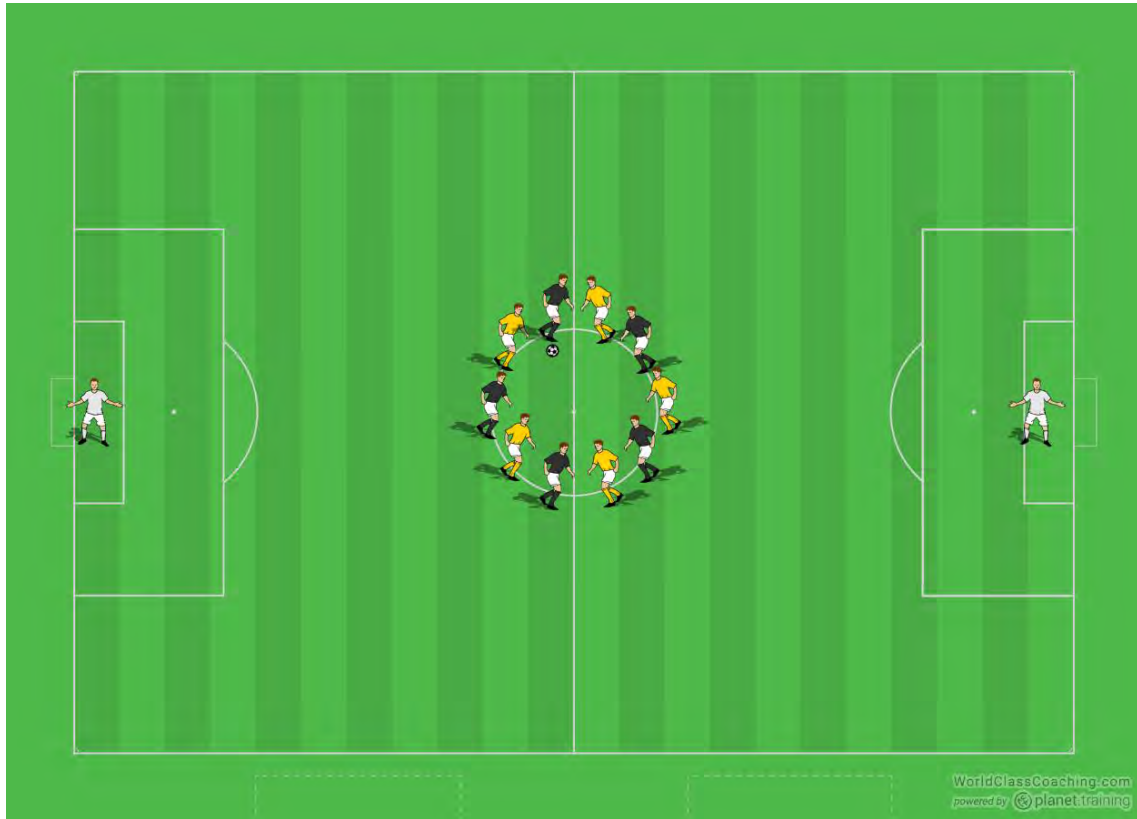
The players can change their position in the areas, as long as no area stays without one player from each team.

If it happens, the team loses 1 point.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the game field area;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of touches for scoring 1 point;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of support players;
- . You can deny the free movement to the support players;
- . You can allow team players leave the game field to play as support players.

5v5 Dummy game with free attack movement:



Setup:

12 players

A 40x20 meters game field

Execution:

The exercise will start with a 5v5 dummy game.

Players cannot pass the ball to any teammate during the Dummy game.

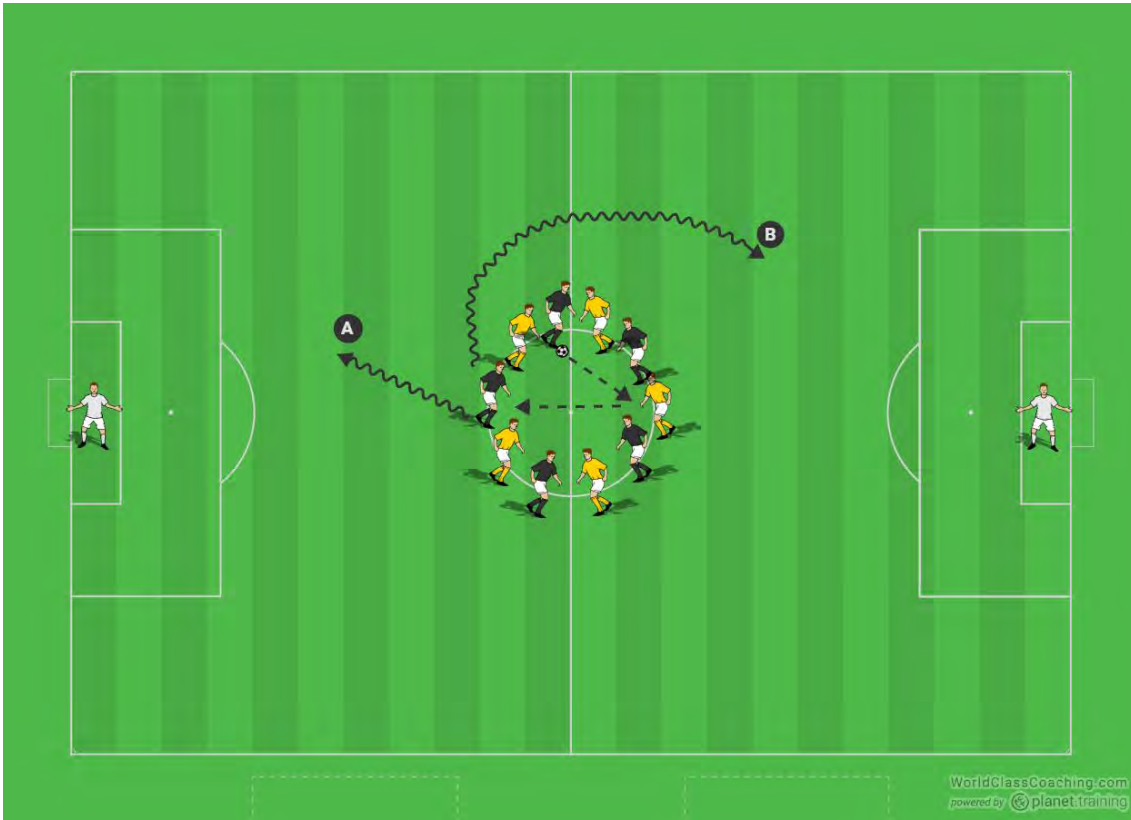
Players will touch ball between them until the coach gives the signal.

Then the players can move freely during the field like a normal game.

After the signal the attack can choose which goalkeeper he will attack: (A) or (B).

Defense must recover the ball in order to counter attack.

When the ball leaves the game area without being corner or foul kick, the exercise begins again with the dummy.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can define a number of touches instead of a signal to attack;
- . You can vary the signal to attack;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by each player.

5v5 game static game with free attack movement:



** This exercise can be a variation of the 5v5 dummy game with free attack movement.*

Setup:

12 players

A 50x35 meters game field

Execution:

The players will position themselves anywhere they want on the field.

Once they stay in one place they cannot change.

The exercise will start with a 5v5 static game.

Players cannot pass the ball to any teammate during the initial game.

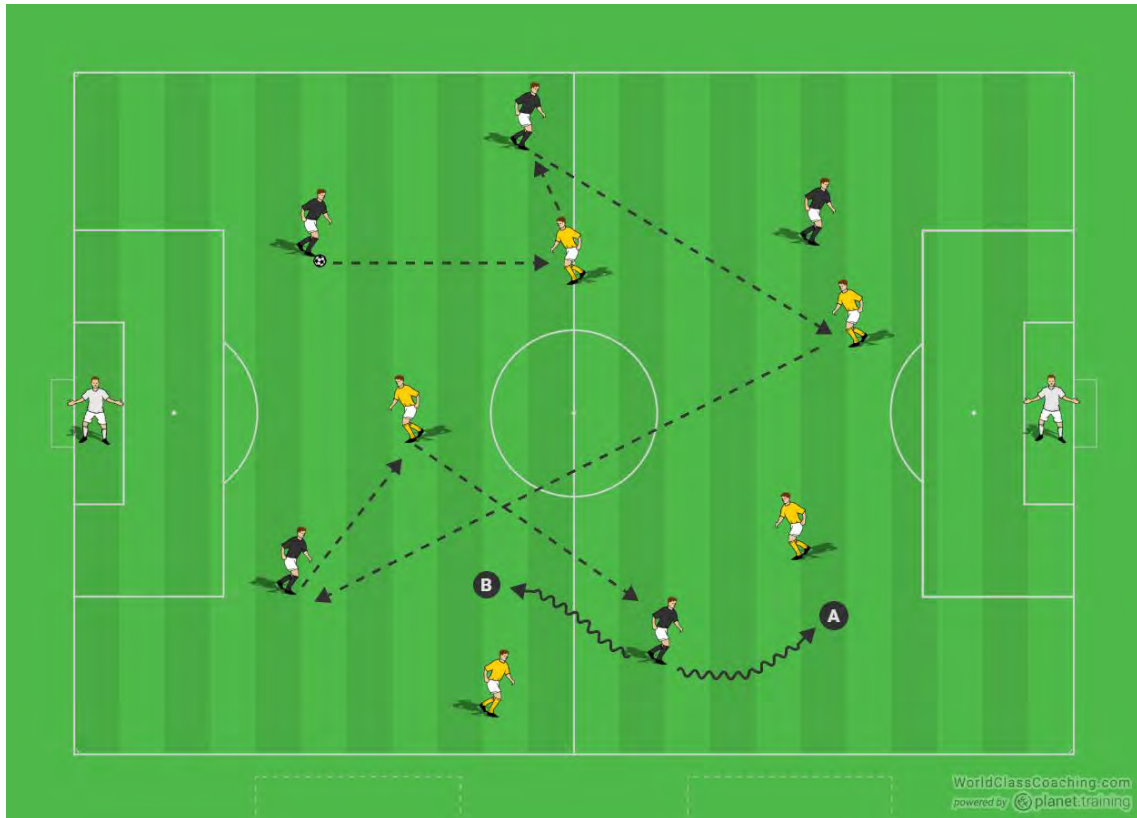
Players will touch ball between them until the coach gives the signal.

Then the players can move freely during the field like a normal game.

After the signal the attack can choose which goalkeeper he will attack: (A) or (B).

Defense must recover the ball in order to counter attack.

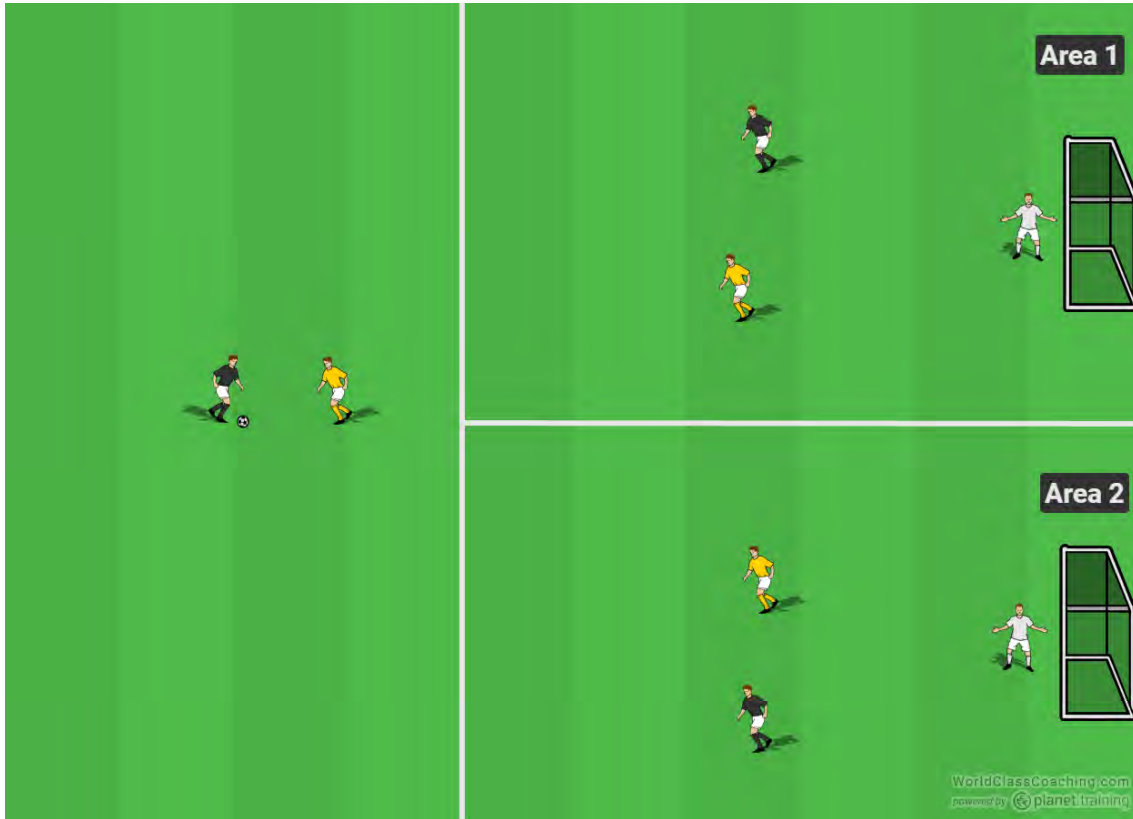
When the ball leaves the game area without being corner or foul kick, the exercise begins again with the static game.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can define a number of touches instead of a signal to attack;
- . You can vary the signal to attack;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by each player.

1v1 + 2v2 game into areas:



Setup:

8 players
20x10 meters game field.

Execution:

Divide the field into two areas.

- (a) Area 1;
- (b) Area 2.

Put two players on each area, one of each team. Each area will have a 1v1 game situation.

Players inside area 1 cannot go to area 2 under any circumstance.

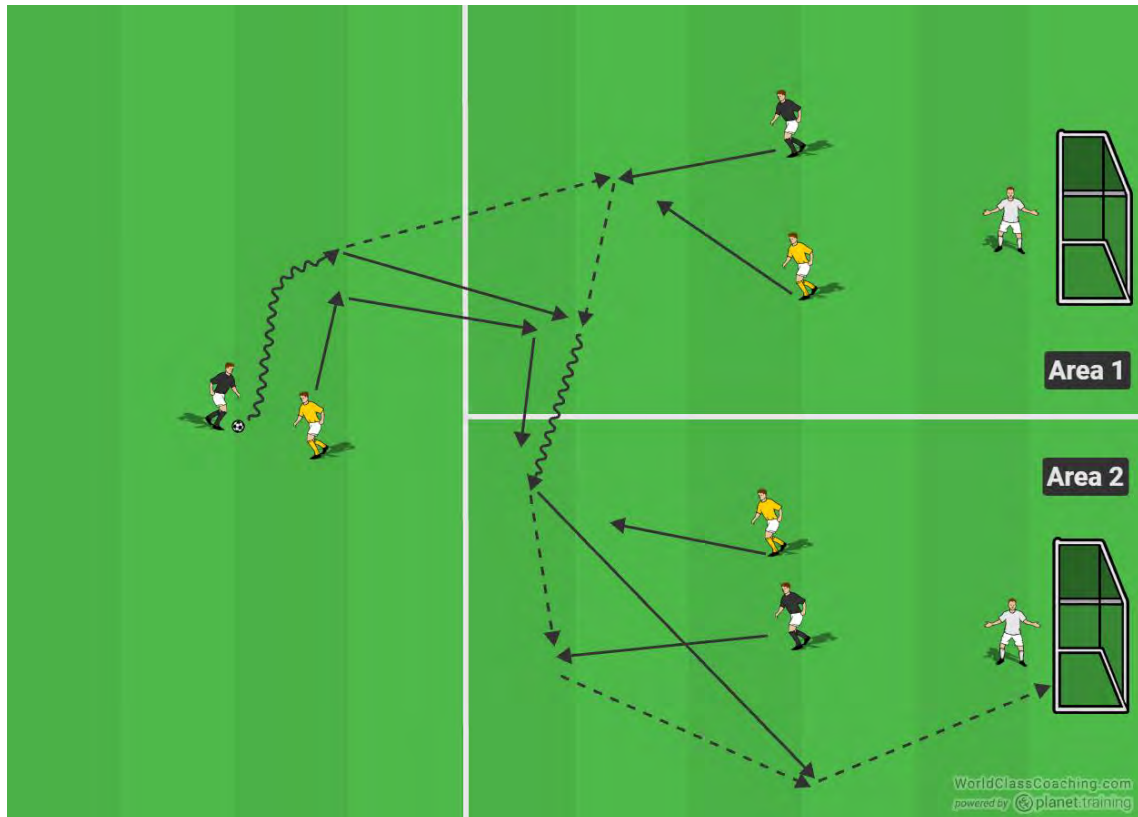
Then two players will start play in a 1v1 game situation.

These two players, outside the areas 1 and 2, can move freely between the areas. Inside the areas you will have a 2v2 game situation.

The attack can move the ball freely into the areas searching for the goal.

The goal will only be valid if there's a touch with at least one player inside the areas.

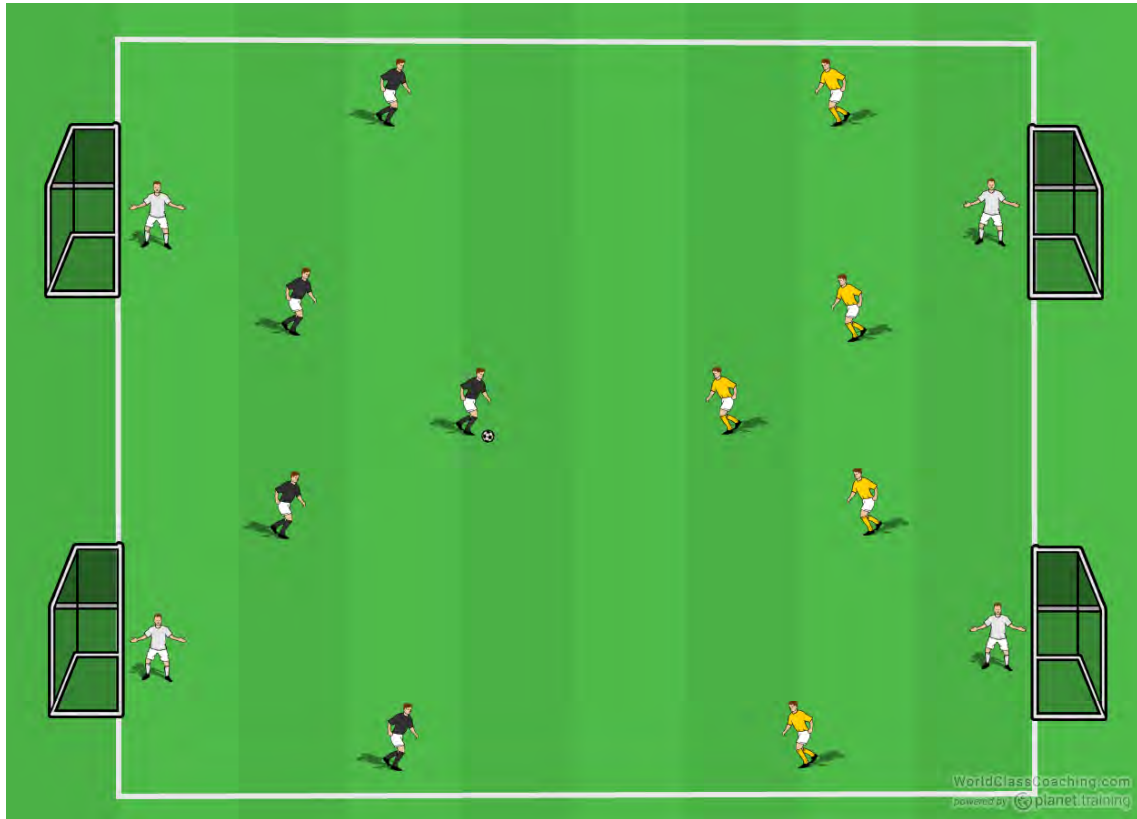
If the defense recovers the ball possession, the teams change functions and the exercise will start again.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of players inside the areas;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of players outside the areas;
- . You can add more Goalkeepers and work the transition and counter attack.

5v5 + 4 goals:



Setup:

14 players

50x35 meters game field

Execution:

Two teams with 5 players each will defend two goals.

The game will be played in a 5v5 game situation.

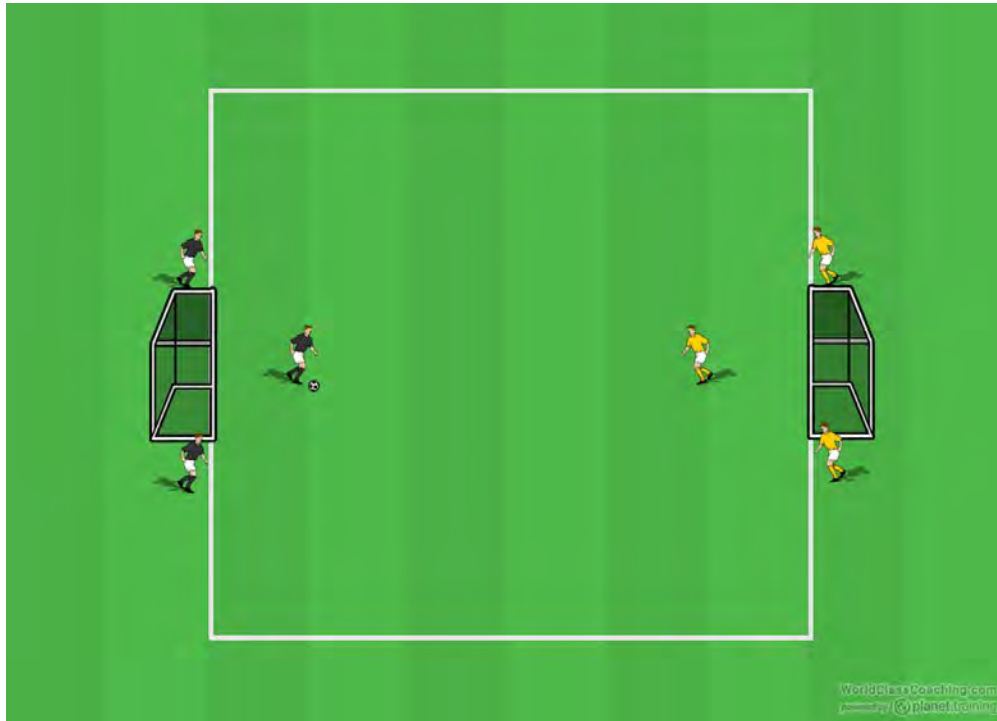
The attack can shoot from anywhere in the field at any goal they want.

The defense has to recover the ball to counter attack.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of goals defended;
- . You can add support players to create offensive majority.

1v1 Goal game (Winner stays on):



Setup:

2 players

18x10 meters game field

Execution:

A 1v1 game situation, where first goal wins.

The winner stays for another game while the defeated leaves the field and waits for his return.

All games will have 2 minutes duration and if it's a draw at the end of time, both players leave the field.

The player with the most victories is considered the champion.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the game time duration;
- . You can increase the number of goals scored to win a game.

1v1 chaotic game with 4 Goals:



Setup:

12 players
20x20 meters game field

Execution:

All players will play a 1v1 game situation in the same space.

The attacker decides which goalkeeper he will attack: (A), (B), (C) or (D).

If he scores a goal he continues to attack.

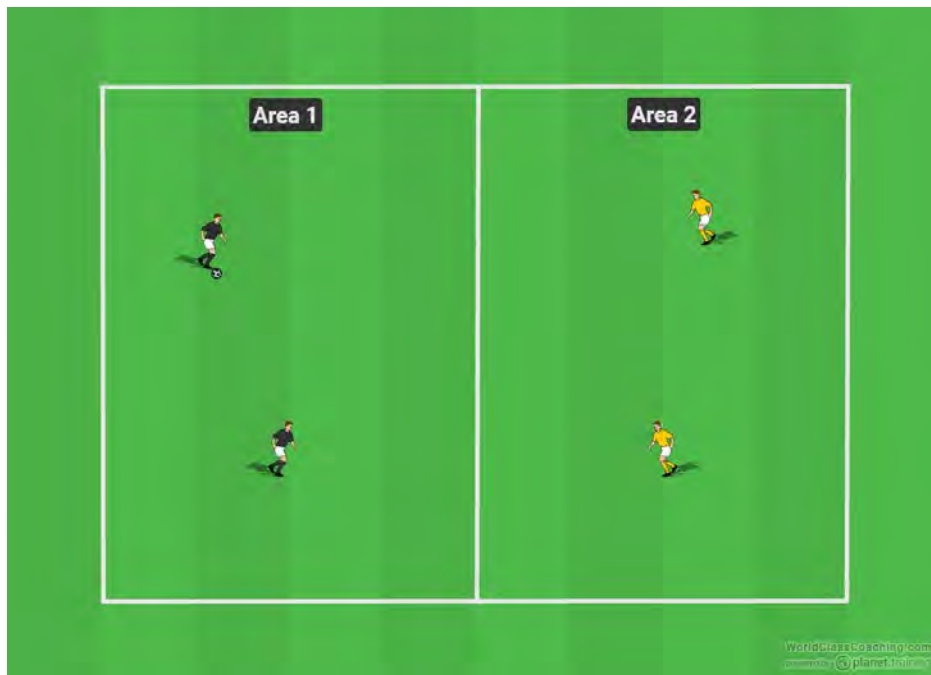
The defender has to recover the ball possession to counter attack.

The defender will only mark his attacker.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the game situations like 2v1, 2v2, 3v2, 3v3, etc;
- . You can set the defenders free to mark anyone he wants.

2v2 game with 2v1 offensive game into areas:



Setup:

4 players
20x10 meters game field.

Execution:

Divide the field into two areas.

- (a) Area 1;
- (b) Area 2.

Put each team on each area.

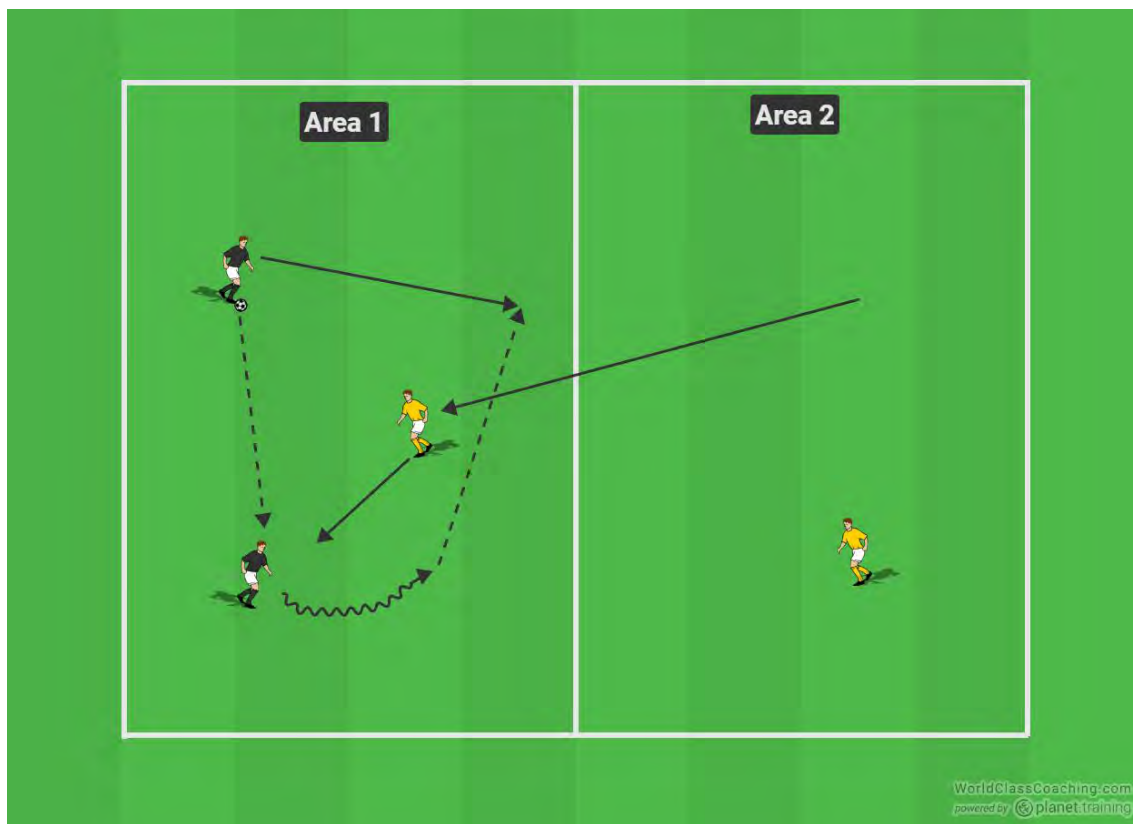
The attack will have to touch the ball between themselves.

One defensive player will go into the the attack area and try to recover the ball possession while the other will wait in their area.

The exercise will be played in a 2v1 game situation in the areas

If the attack makes five consecutive touches the defender has to go back to the defense area and switch places with his teammate.

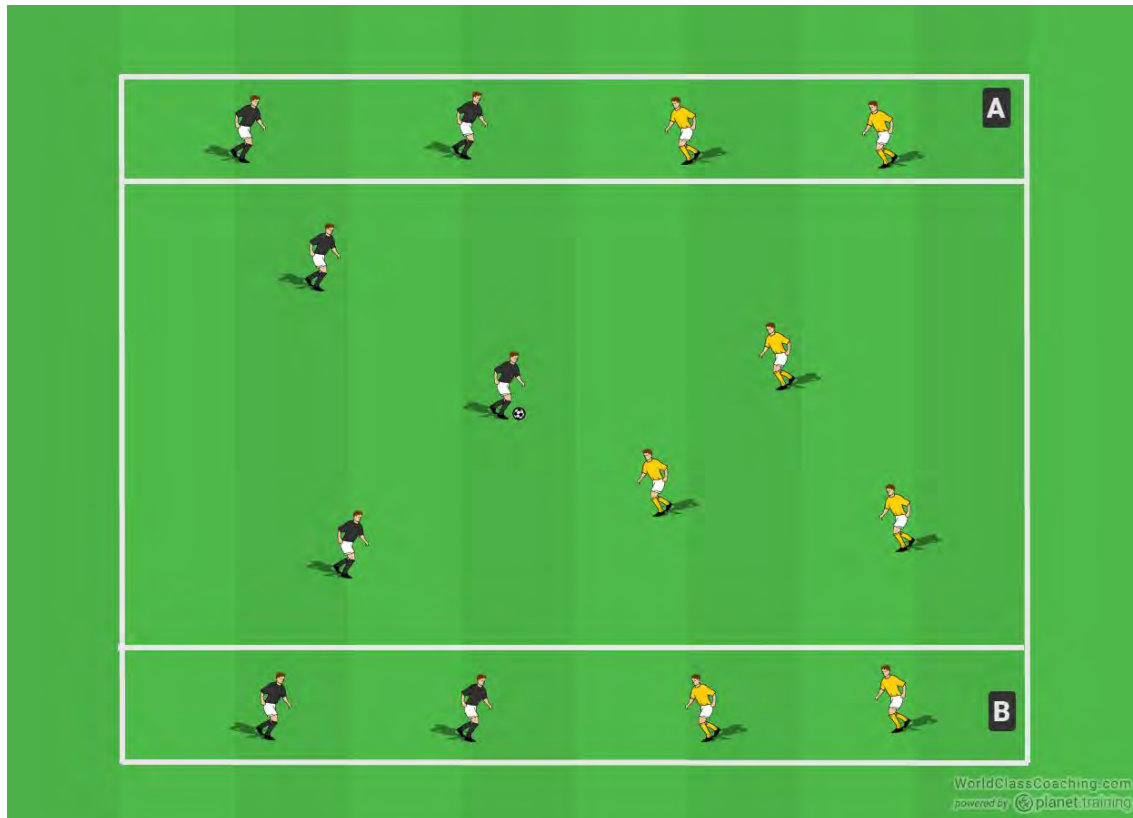
If the defense recovers the ball possession he will make a quick long pass to their area and one attacker then has to try to steal the ball possession.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the game field area;
- . You can increase the number of areas, putting a third one for example;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of players inside the areas;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of touches on the ball to switch the defender.

7v7 game touches between the areas:



Setup:

14 players
30x16 meters game field

Execution:

Divide the field into 3 areas:

- (a) Area A;
- (b) Area B;
- (c) A Central area.

Put two players of each team in each corridor.

Put three players of each team into the central area and start the exercise with a 3v3 game situation.

The attack have to pass the ball from corridor A to corridor B to score a point.

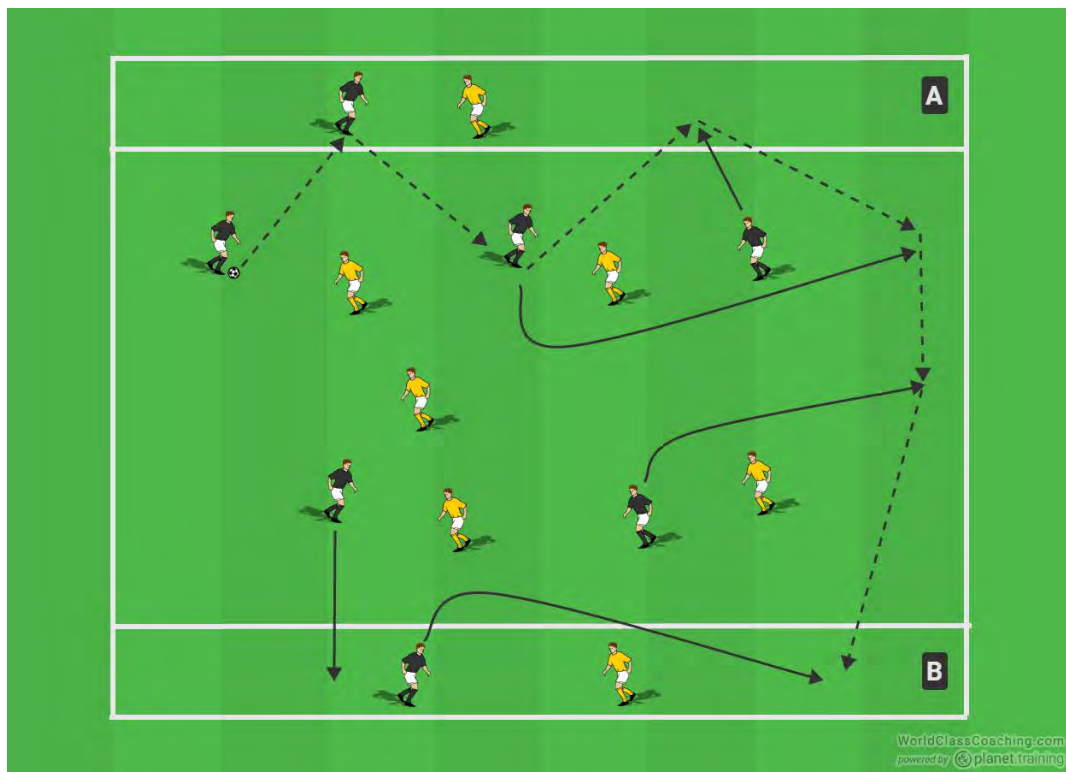
The players can move freely into the areas but they can't leave any area without one player at least.

High passes or direct passes from area A to area B are not allowed. The ball must pass to the central area to count a point.

Into the corridors, the defense is not allowed to take the ball. They can only surround the attackers.

In the central area, the defense can take the ball from the attackers.

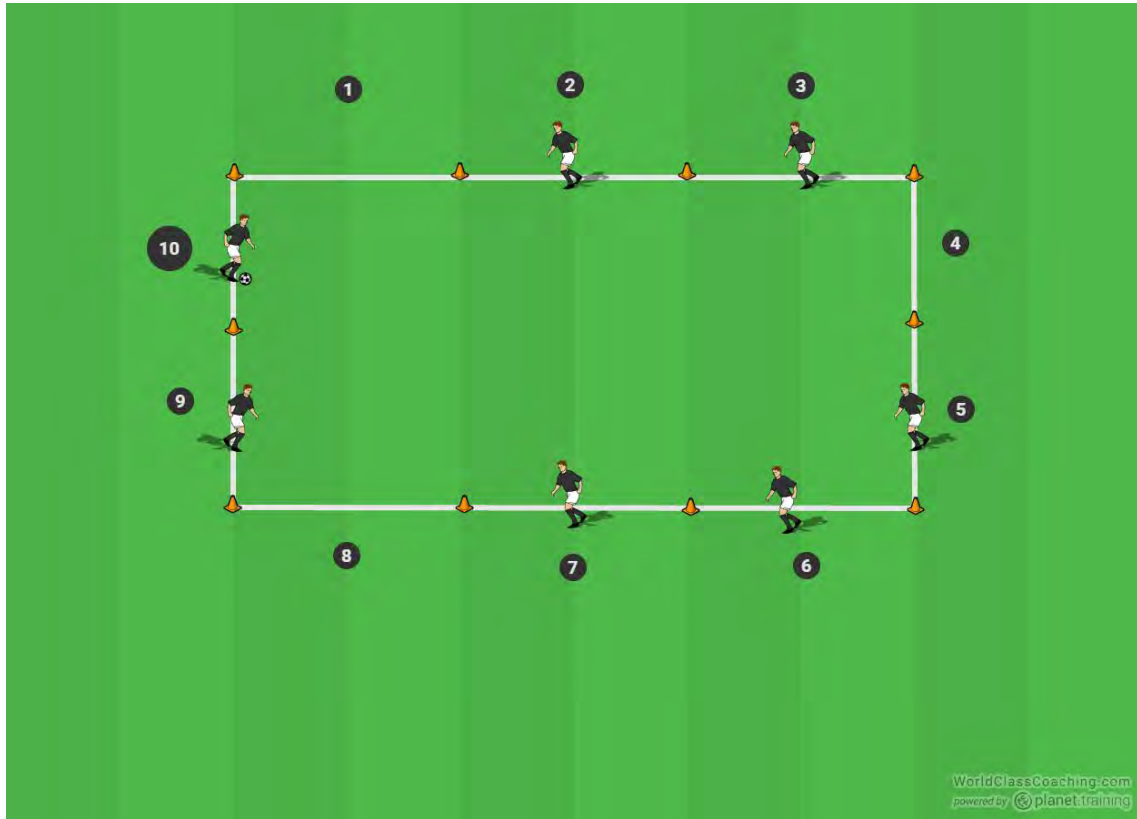
If the defense recovers the ball possession they automatically start to counter attack and pass the ball.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can add more areas;
- . You can add a support player;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by each player.

Find a new spot:



Setup:

7 players
9x9 meters game field

Execution:

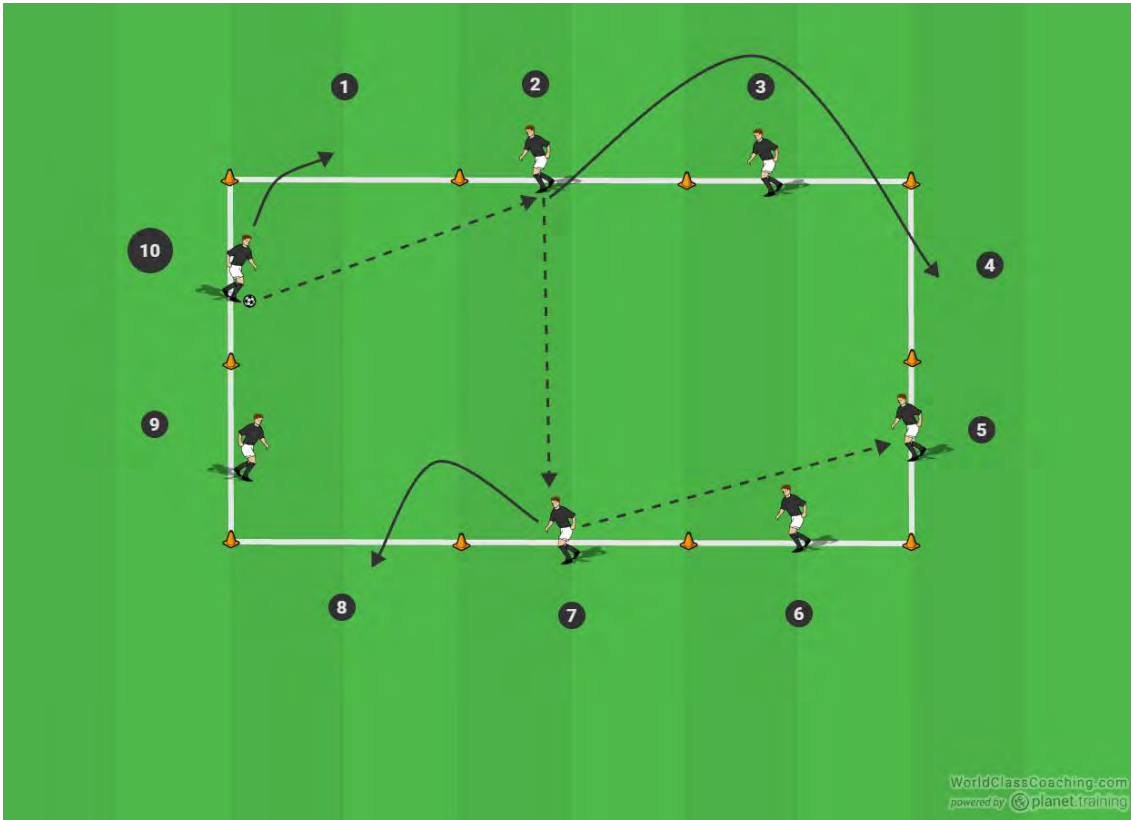
Divide the field into 10 areas.

Put one player on each areas.

There will be two empty areas.

Players must touch the ball between then and run to the empty areas, finding a new position for themselves.

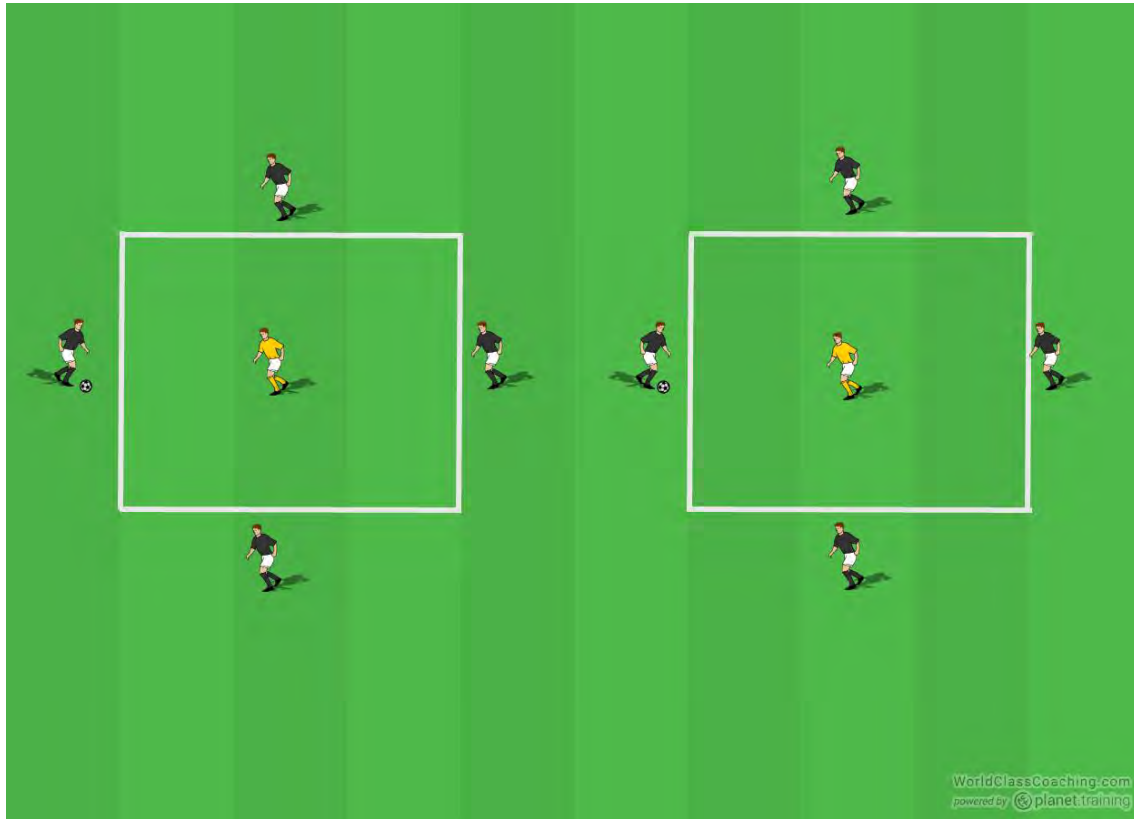
During the runs players have to maintain the passing line between them creating at least three passing options for the player with the ball.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of areas;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball for each player;
- . You can add an inside player trying to steal the ball.

4v1 dynamic game:



Setup:

10 players
5v5 meters game field.

Execution:

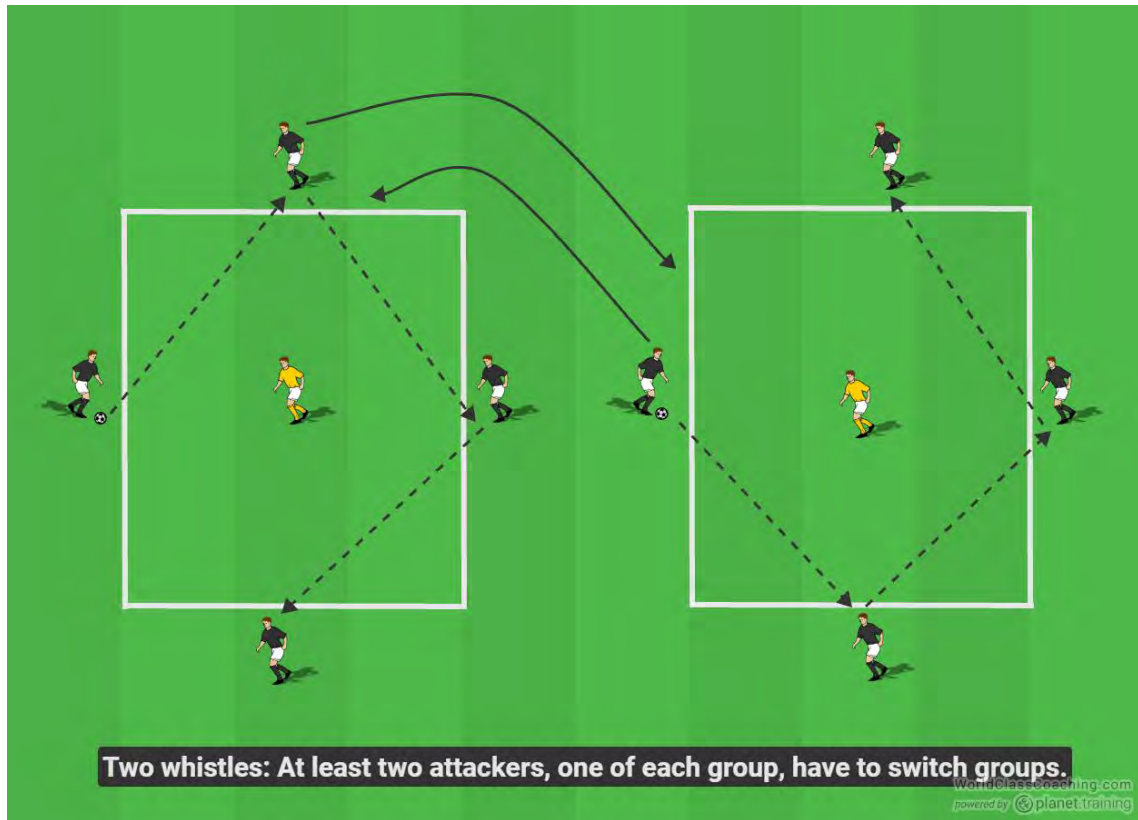
Divide the group into two small groups of five players.
Four players will pass the ball while one will try to recover the ball in a 4v1 game situation.

The coach will give two types of signals:

(a) 1 whistle: The defenders have to switch groups;



(b) 2 whistles: At least two attackers, one of each group, have to switch groups.

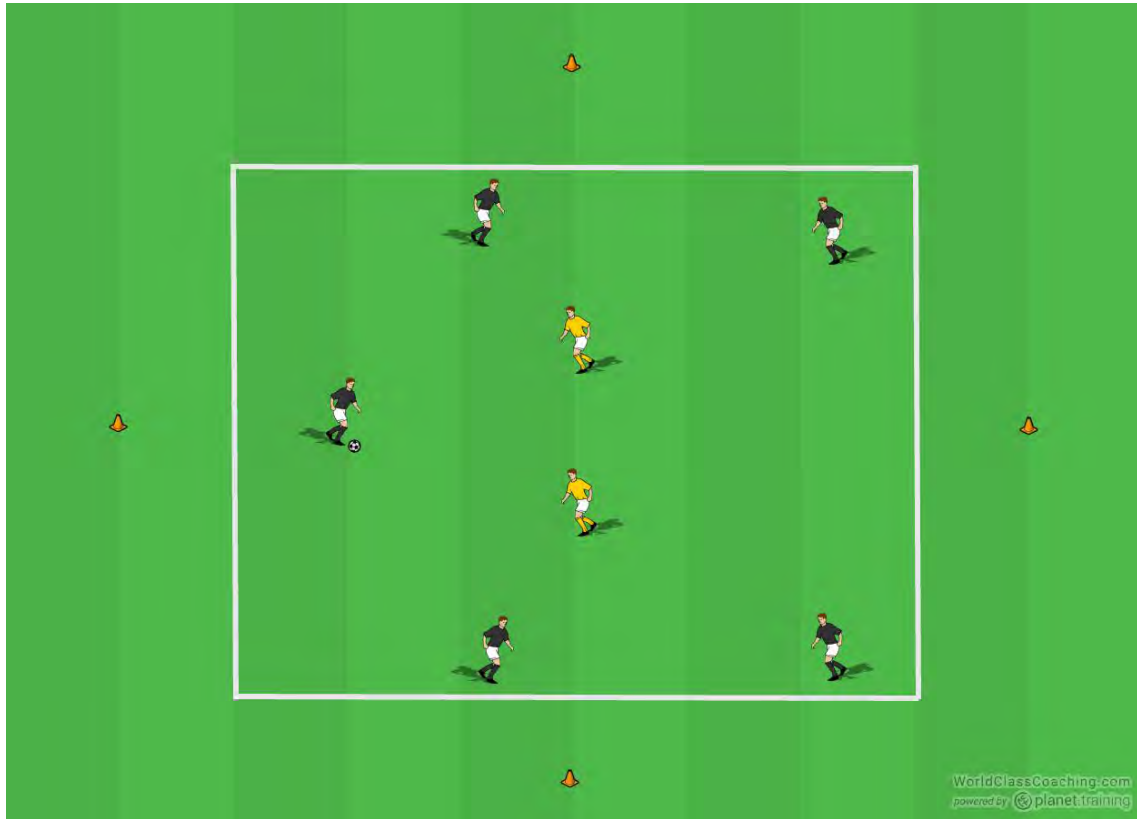


The same attackers cannot switch groups two times in a row.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can vary the game situations putting 4v2 instead of 4v1;
- . You can add more groups;
- . You can vary the signal to switch group;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by each player.

5v2 dynamic game (Pass and touch the cone):



Setup:

7 players
27x18 meters game field.

Execution:

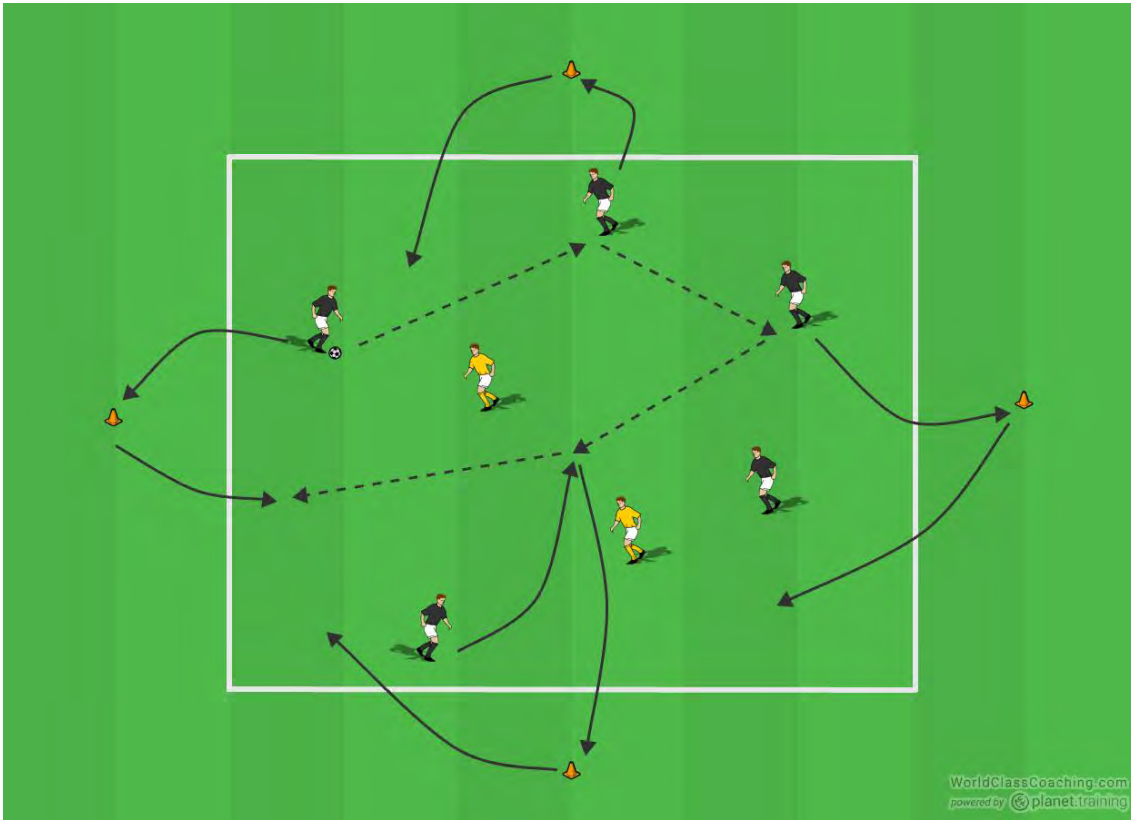
Five players will touch the ball while two will try to recover the ball in a 5v2 game situation.

The player who made the touch on the ball have to run until the cone outside the game field, touch it and return to the game field.

While the player is doing this he is not an option for the pass for his teammates. He cannot receive any touch while he is outside the field.

The same player cannot go to the same cone two times in a row.

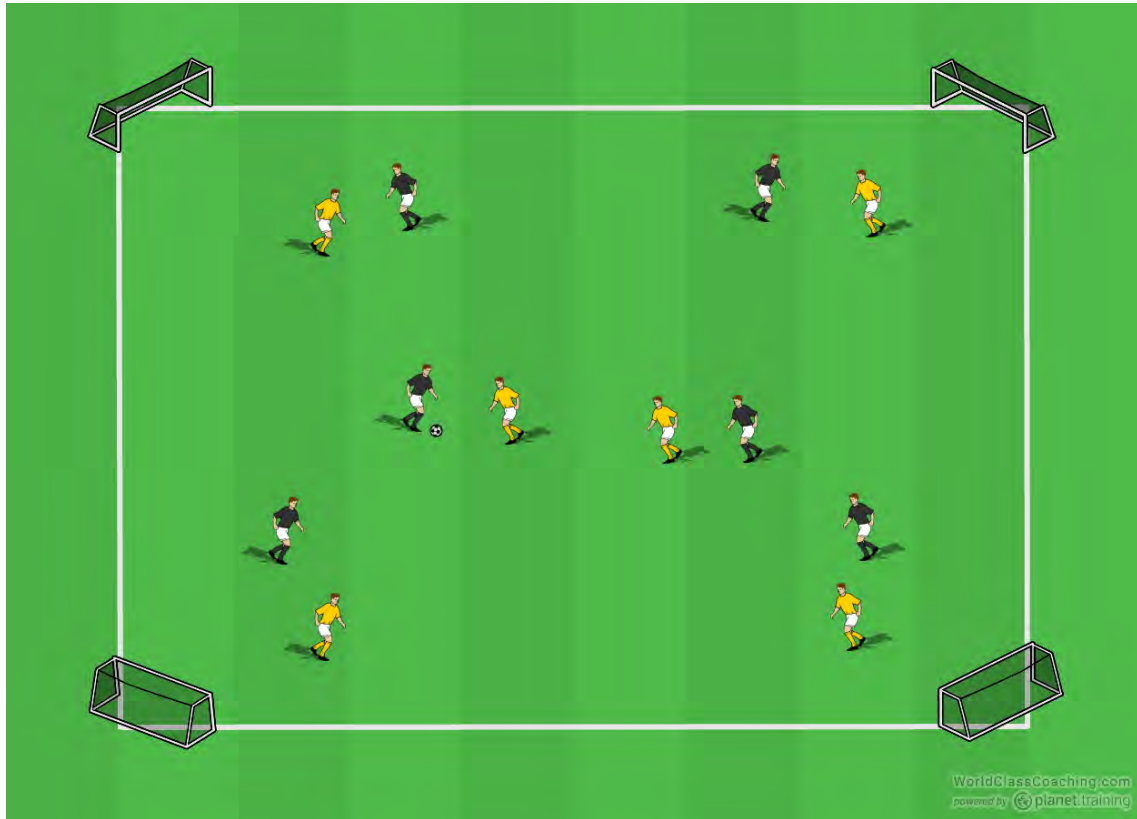
If the defender recovers the ball possession he switches position with the player who lost the ball.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can vary the game situations putting 4v3 instead of 4v2 for an example;
- . You can add more cones outside;
- . You can define which cone every player will run to;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by each player.

6v6 + 4 goals:



Setup:

12 players
40x25 meters game field

Execution:

Two teams with 6 players.

The game will be played in a 6v6 game situation.

Each team will defend the four goals.

The attack can shoot from anywhere in the field at any goal they want.

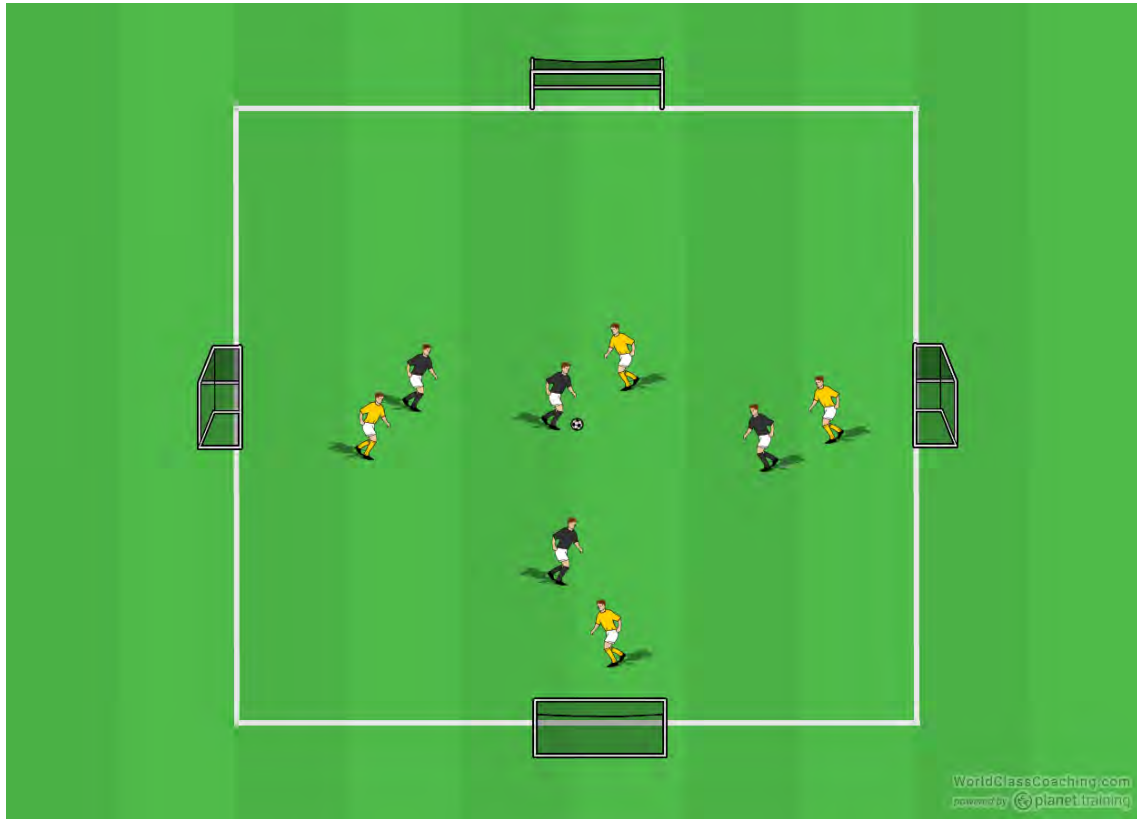
The defense has to recover the ball to counter attack.

Variations:

. You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;

- . You can increase or decrease the number of goals defended;
- . You can move the goals, putting them in different places on the field;
- . You can set where the attack can shoot to any goal;
- . You can define a number of touches on the ball for each player;
- . You can add goalkeepers.

4v4 + 4 goals:



** This exercise can be a variation of the 6v6 + 4 goals game.*

Setup:

8 players
30x17 meters game field

Execution:

Two teams with 4 players each will defend the four goals.

The game will be played in a 4v4 game situation.

The attack can shoot from anywhere in the field at any goal they want.

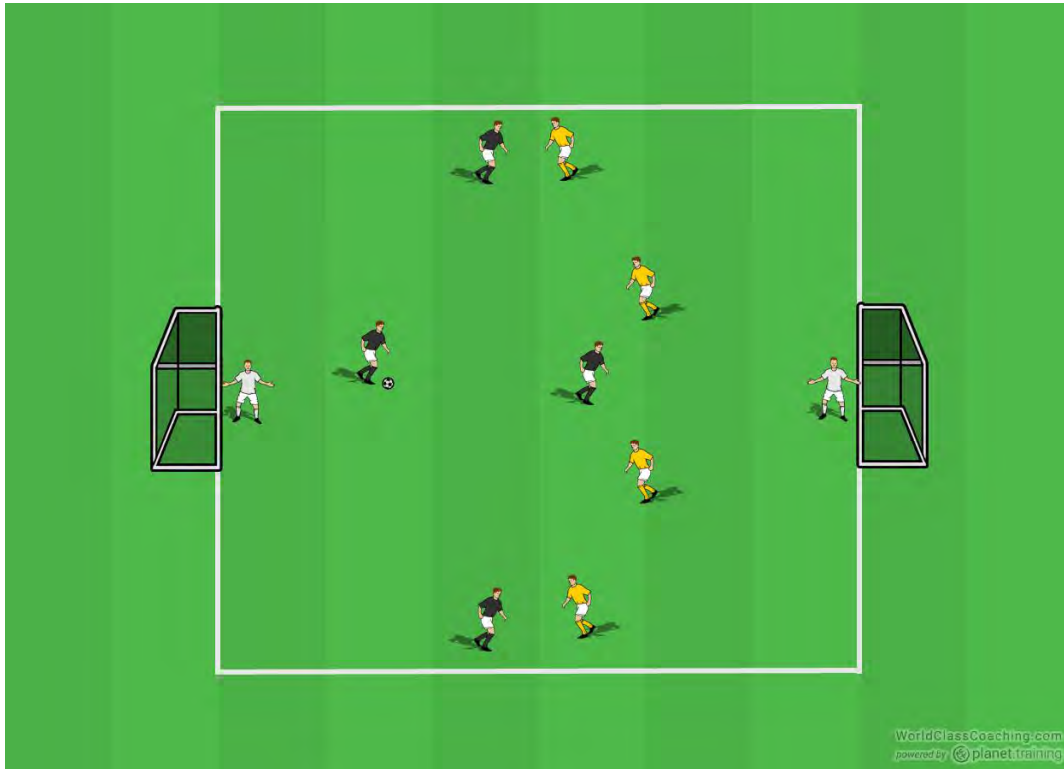
The defense has to recover the ball to counter attack.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can increase or decrease the number of goals defended;

- . You can move the goals, putting them in different places on the field;
- . You can set where the attack can shoot to any goal;
- . You can define a number of touches on the ball for each player;
- . You can add goalkeepers.

4v4 + 2 goals:



** This exercise can be a variation of the 4v4 + 4 goals game.*

Setup:

10 players
25x16 meters game field

Execution:

Two teams with 4 players each.

The game will be played in a 4v4 game situation.

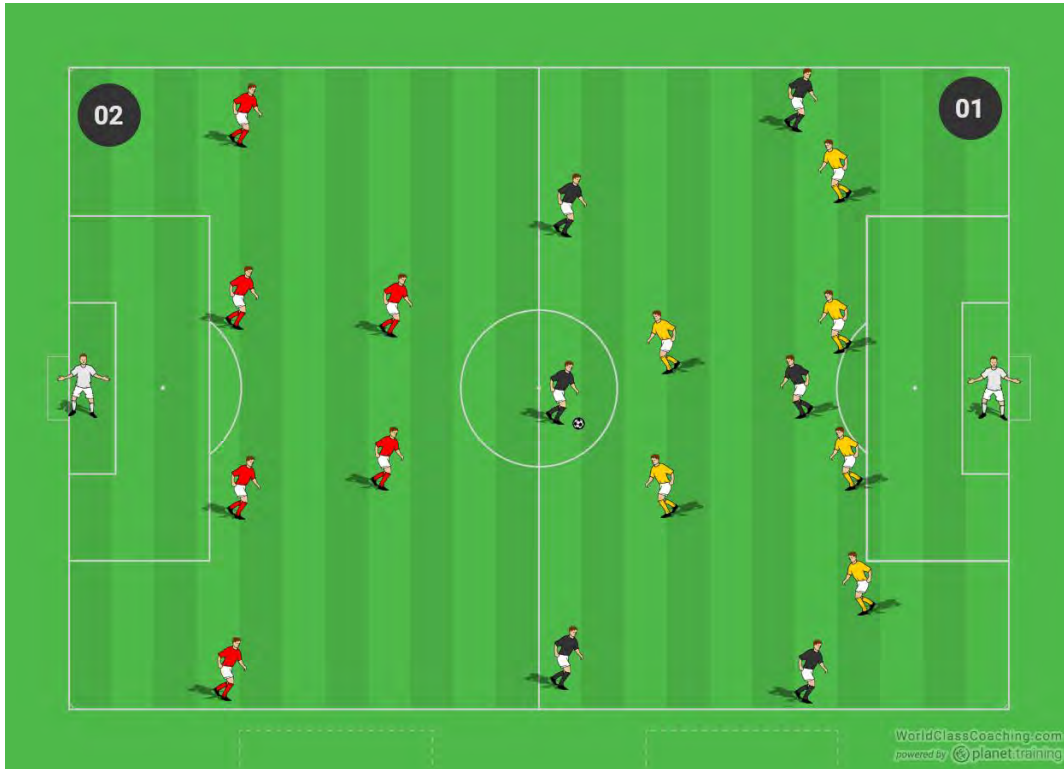
The attack can shoot from anywhere on the field.

The defense has to recover the ball to counter attack.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can define a number of touches on the ball for each player.

6v6 transition game:



Setup:

20 players
70x45 meters game field

Execution:

Divide the field in two:

- (a) Field 1;
- (b) Field 2.

Divide three teams with 6 players to each one.

Put two teams on Field 1, and the third team waits on Field 2.

The game will be played in a 6v6 game situation.

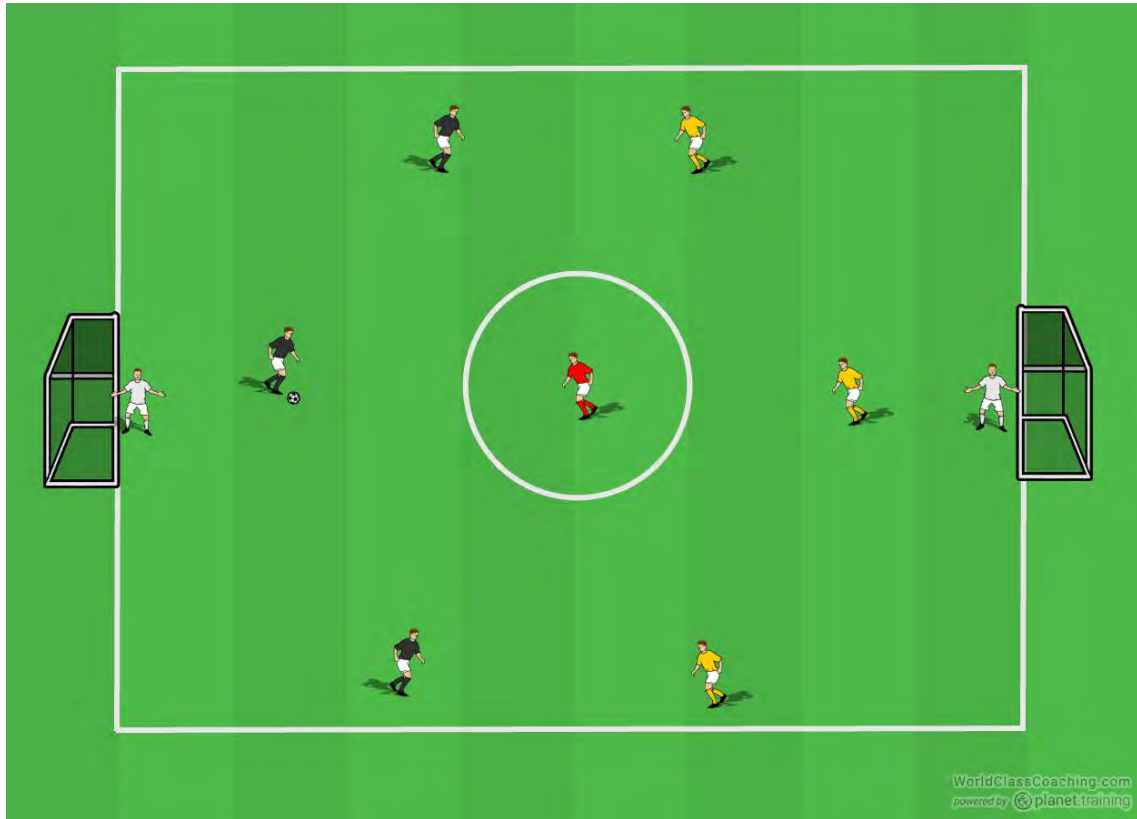
The attack has to score a goal to attack the third team on Field 2.

The defense has to recover the ball and pass over the midfield to attack the third team on Field 2.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can add a fourth team and made a simultaneous game into both fields;
- . You can start the exercise with a specific situation, a corner, for example;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by each player.

3v3 + 1 support player (Find the middle):



Setup:

9 players

27x18 meters game field

Execution:

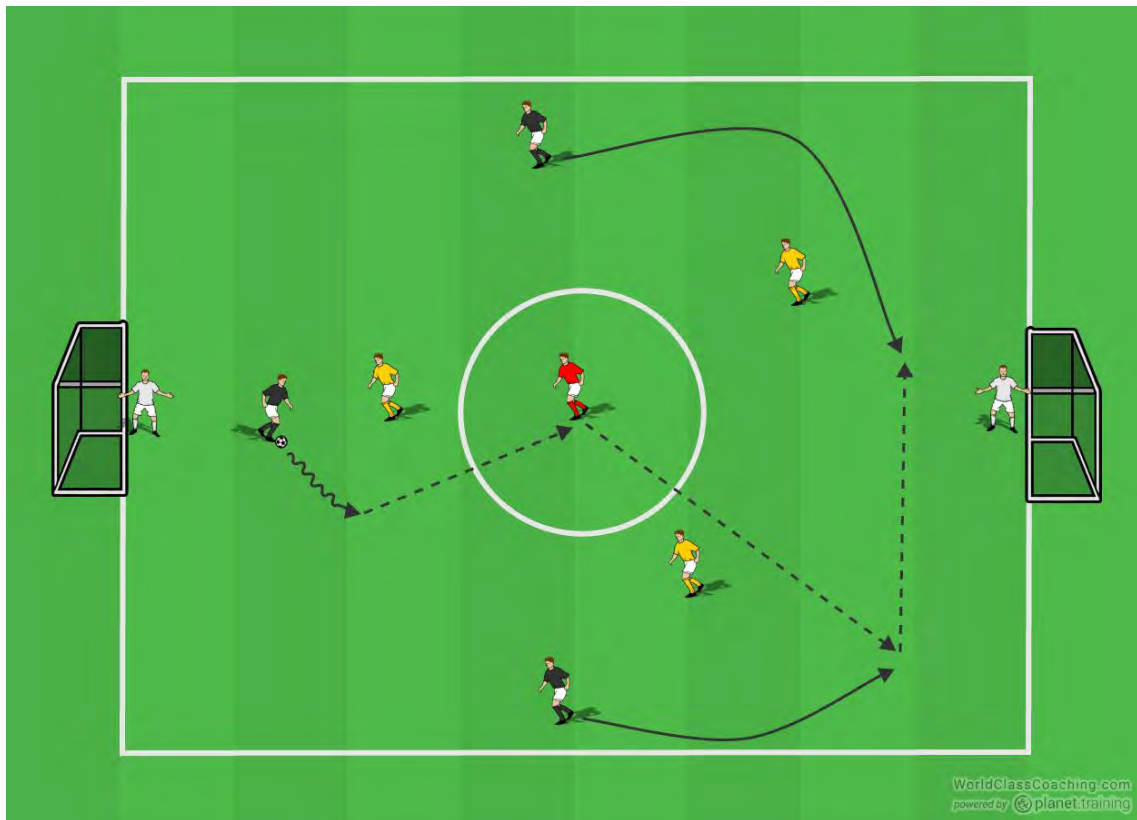
You will set a circle where the support player will play.

He cannot leave this space and other players are not allowed to enter there.

The game will be a 3v3 game situation with a support player helping the attack.

The goal is only valid if the support player touches the ball at least once.

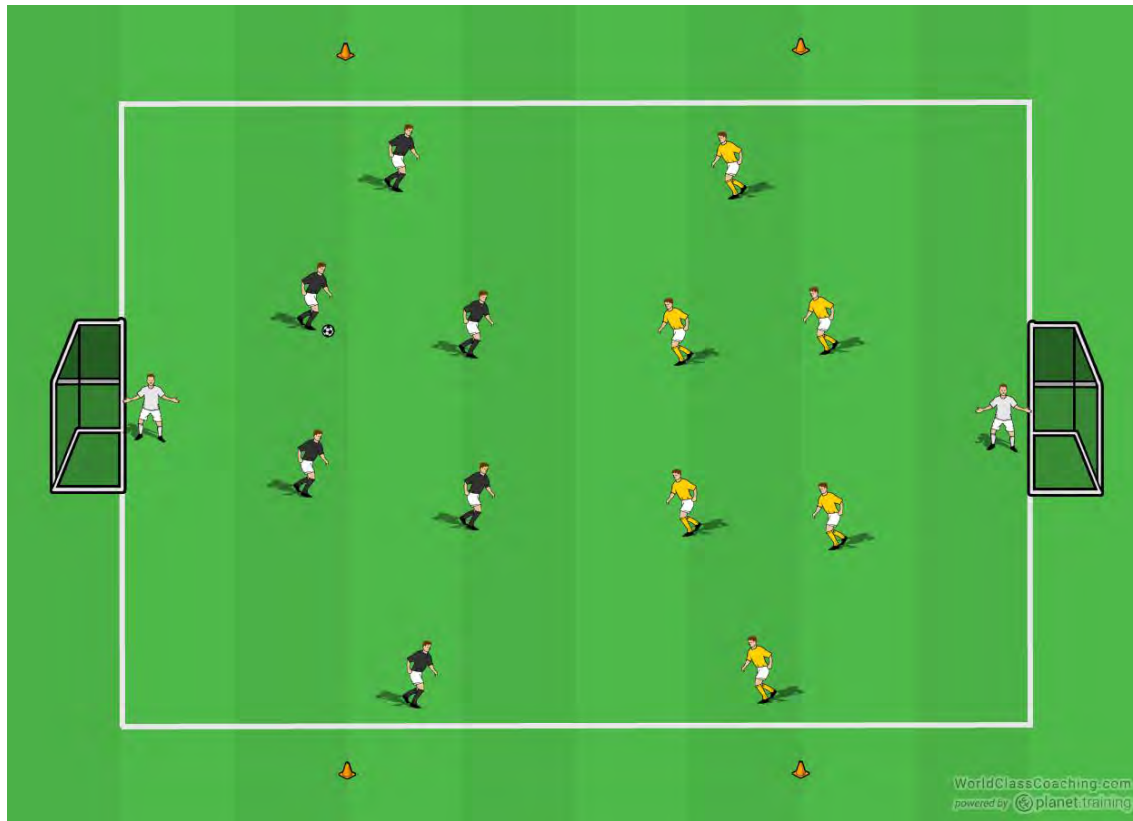
The defense has to recover the ball in order to counter attack.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can add more support players in different places on the field;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by the players;
- . You can limit the number of touches on the ball by the support player.

6v6 Transition Game:



Setup:

14 players
50x35 meters game field

Execution:

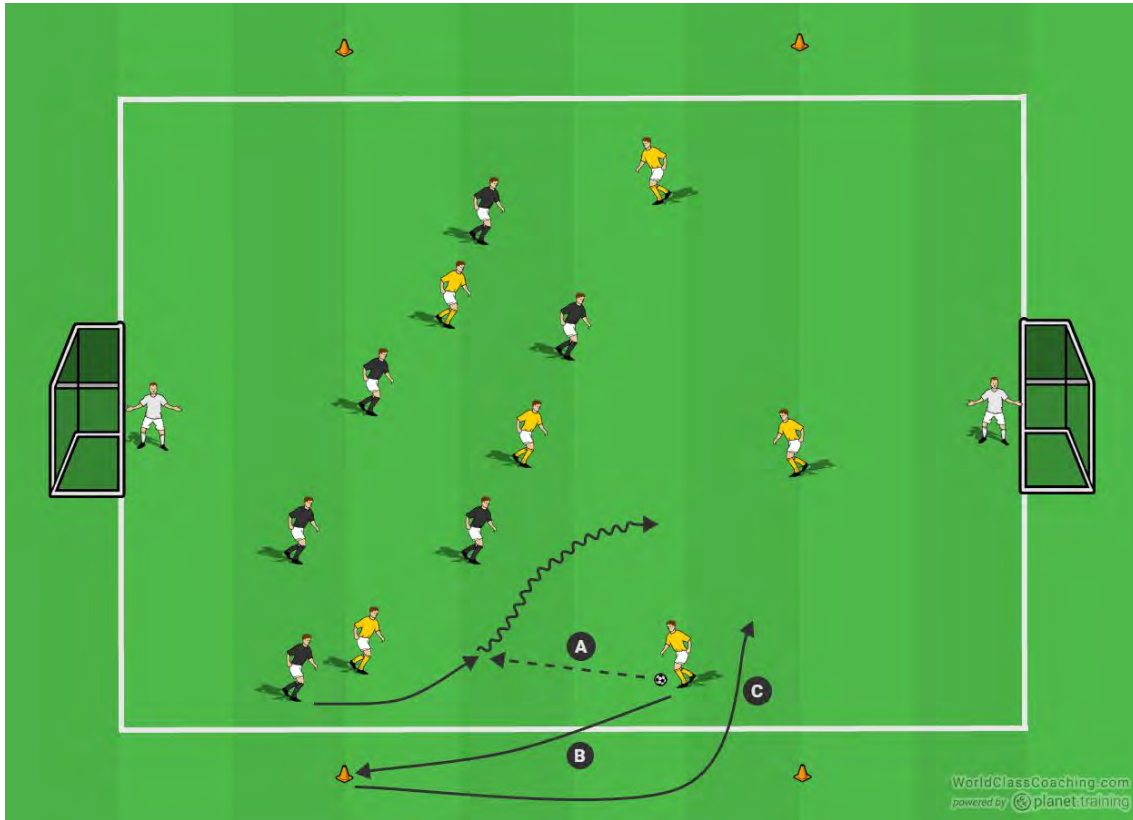
Divide two teams with 6 players to each one.

Put four cones outside the field, two for each field.

The game will be played in a 6v6 game situation.

When one player loses the ball over a steal or a wrong pass he has to run to a opposite cone from where he is and quickly recovery his position on defense.

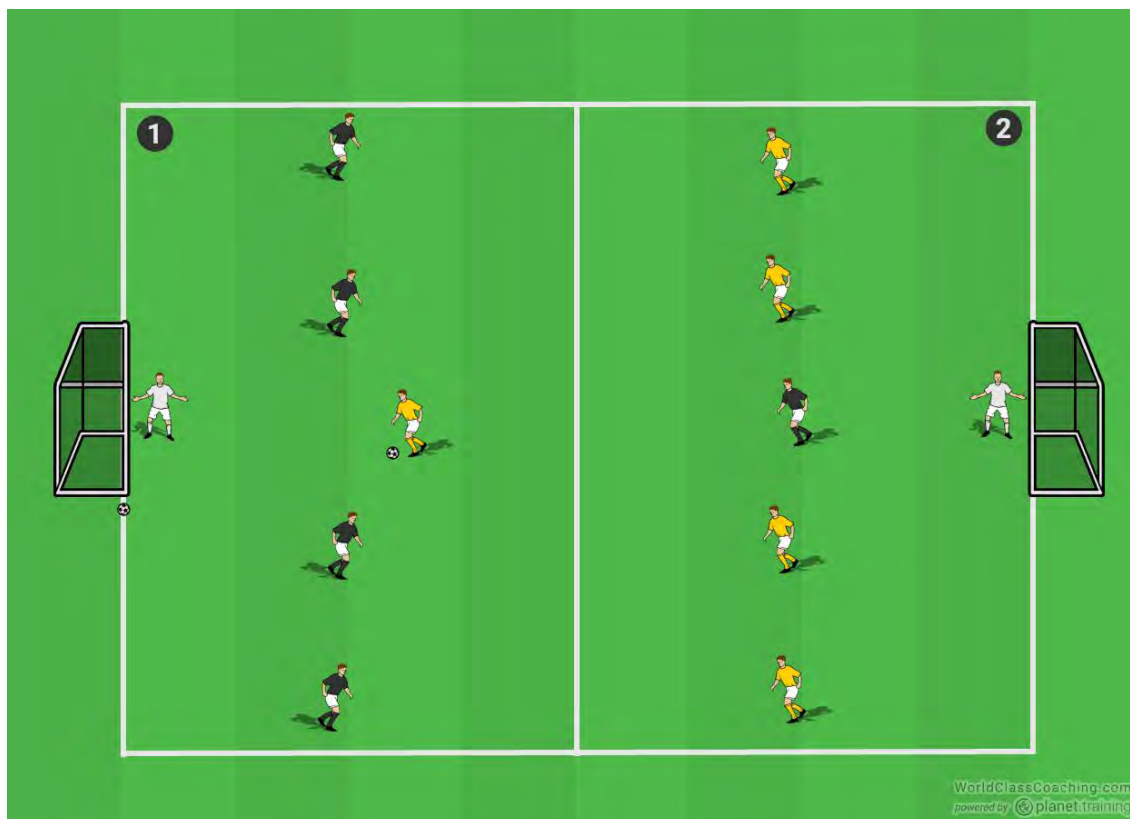
During this time the attack will have an 6v5 situation against defense.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can add more outside cones;
- . You can vary the position of the cones outside the field;
- . You can vary the number of cones player have to run to.

5v5 Transition game with a 5v4 initial game situation:



Setup:

12 players
45v25 meters game field

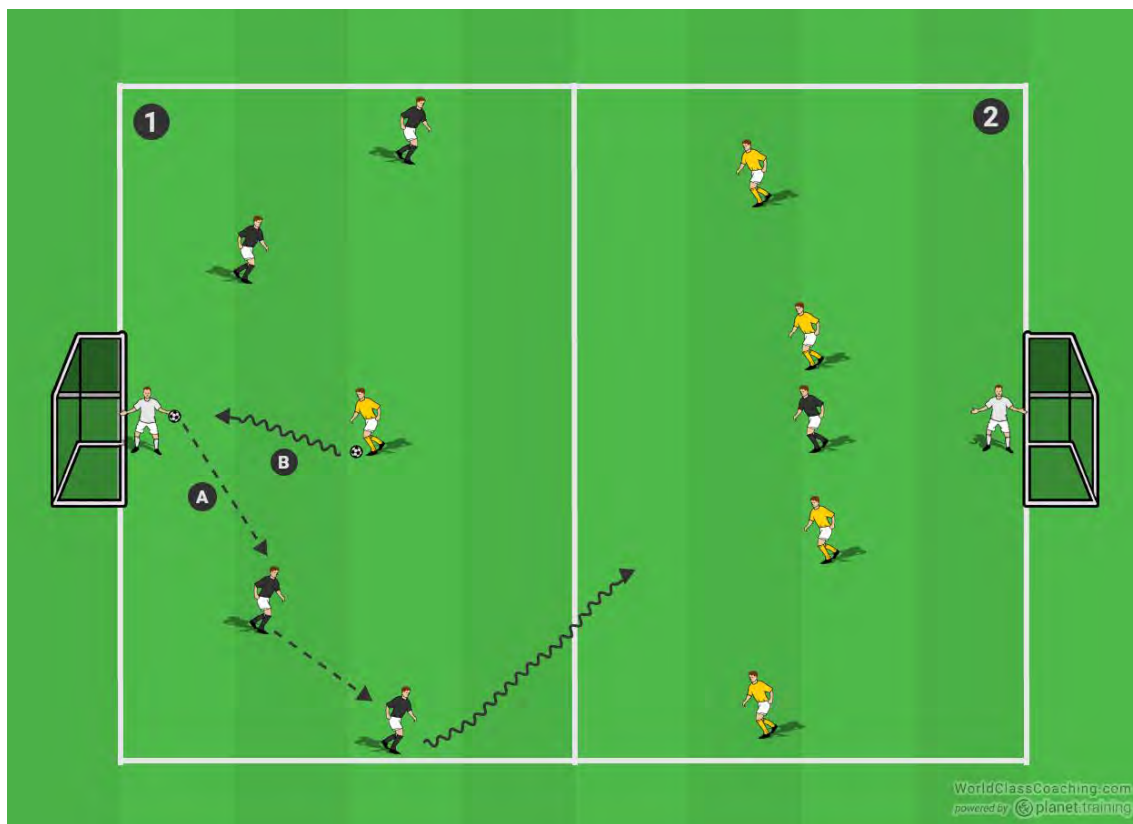
Execution:

Divide two teams with 5 players to each one.

One defender will start with one ball to shoot into the opponent's goal.

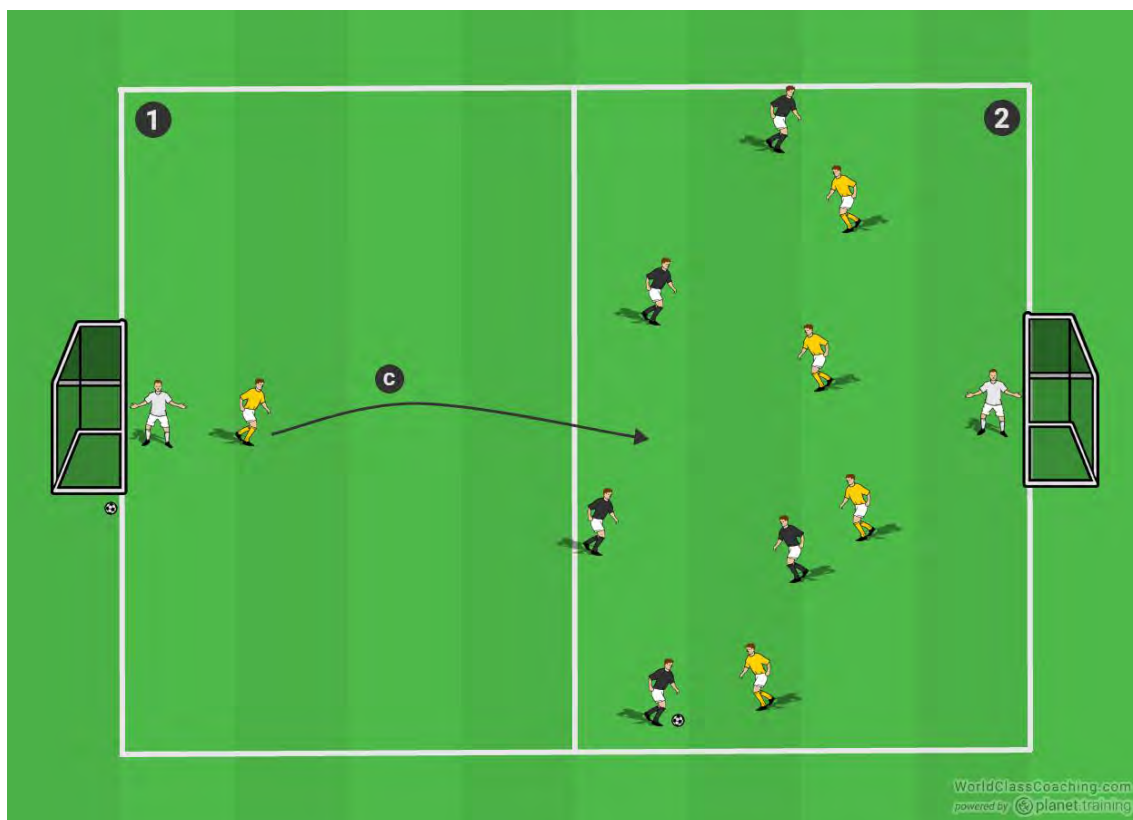
One attacker will start in offensive side of the field while the other four attackers will be positioned near to their goalkeeper to start the exercise.

The game will be played in a 5v4 game situation in these situations:



- (A) The Goalkeeper will start the exercise passing the ball to one of his back four. This line will build up the offensive game for the attack.
- (B) The defender who has the ball will attack the opponent's goalkeeper.
- (C) After attacking, the defender will try to recover his position into defense, preventing the offensive majority.

If the defender recovers his position the exercise will be play in a 5v5 game situation.



The attack has to build up his movement in an orderly way--the goalkeeper cannot make a long pass directly to his attack field.

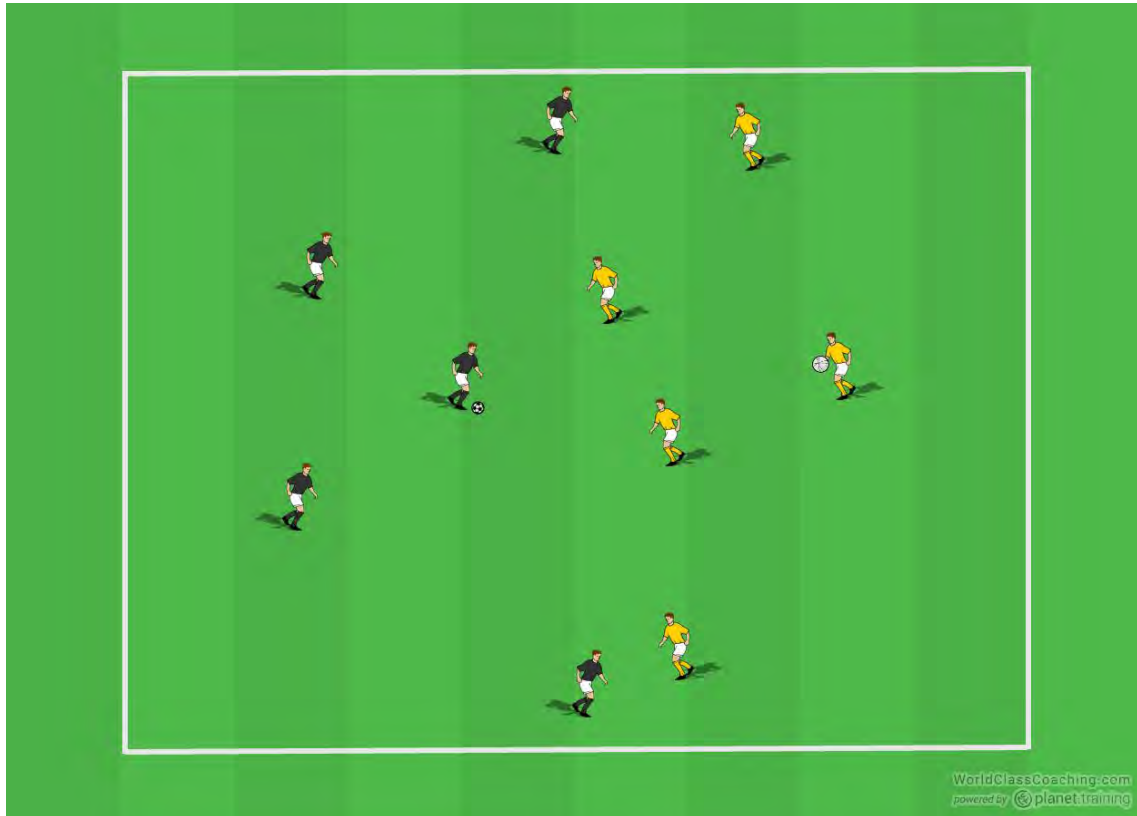
If the defense recovers the ball possession, they will have the counter attack.

If the ball leaves the field, without being a corner kick or a lateral, the exercise will restart.

Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can vary the build up formation using 3 players instead of 4 for example;
- . You can define the type of shot for the defender starting the exercise;
- . You can vary the game field size.

5v5 Holding ball game:



Setup:

10 players
20x20 meters game field

Execution:

Divide two teams with 5 players to each one.

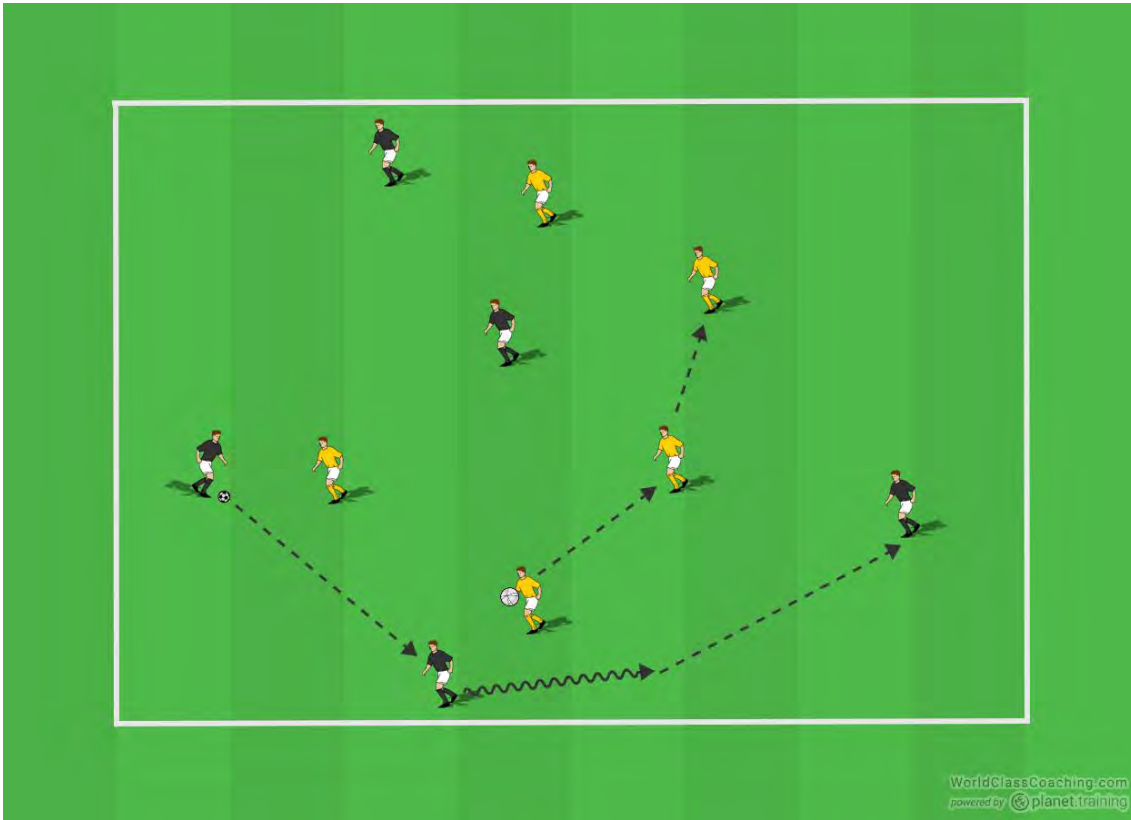
One defender will hold one ball which means that he's out of the game.

He cannot defend while holding the ball.

The defender who holds the ball can pass it during the exercise anytime he wants. When he does this, he's able to play.

The game will be played in a 5v4 game situation.

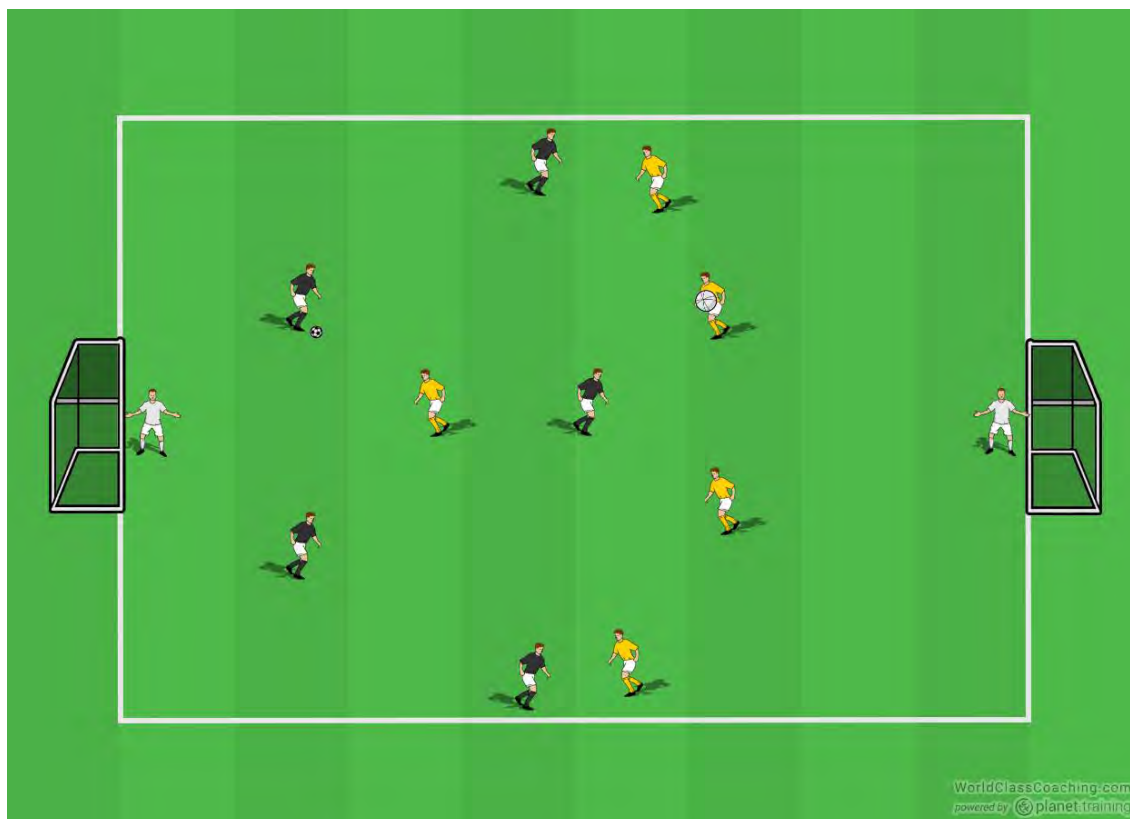
If the attack loses the ball possession, they become the team that holds the ball.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can add more holding balls;
- . You can increase or decrease the game field area.

5v5 Holding ball game + 2 Goals:



** This exercise can be a variation of the 5v5 holding ball game.*

Setup:

12 players
40x20 meters game field

Execution:

Divide two teams with 5 players to each one.

One defender will hold one ball which means that he's out of the game.

He cannot defend while holding the ball.

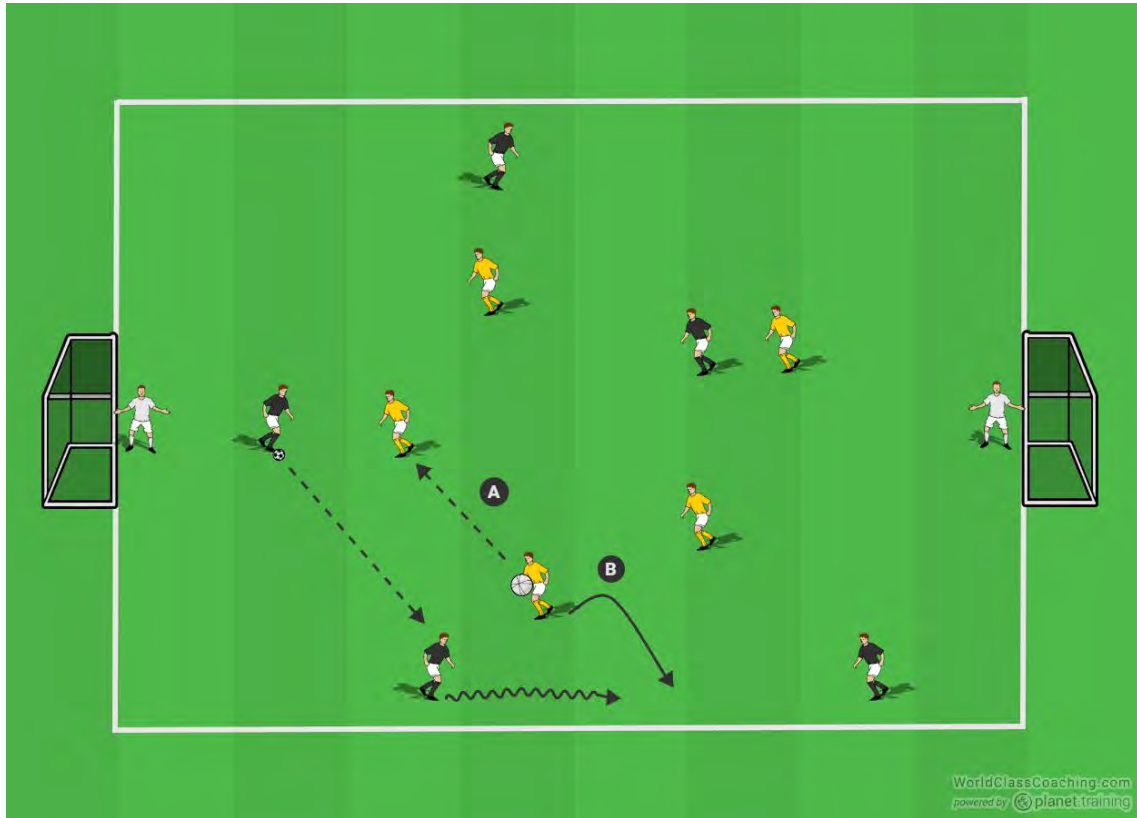
(A) The defender who holds the ball can pass it during the exercise anytime he wants.

(B) When he does this, he's able to play.

The game will be played in a 5v4 game situation.

The attack can shoot anywhere and anytime they want.

If the attack loses the ball possession, they become the team that holds the ball.
The defense must recover the ball possession to counter attack.



Variations:

- . You can increase or decrease the number of players involved;
- . You can add more holding balls;
- . You can increase or decrease the game field area.