

PREMIUM

THE 
SOCCER
GAMES AND DRILLS
COMPENDIUM



350 SMART AND PRACTICAL GAMES TO FORM
INTELLIGENT PLAYERS - FOR ALL LEVELS

FABIAN SEEGER

MEYER
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SPORT

The Soccer Games and Drills Compendium

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Meyer & Meyer Sports

Original title: *Spielnahe Fußballtraining*, Meyer & Meyer Aachen, 2015

Translated by: AAA Translation, St. Louis, Missouri

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

The Soccer Games and Drills Compendium

Maidenhead: Meyer & Meyer Sport (UK) Ltd., 2016

ISBN 978-1-78255-777-7

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Auckland, Beirut, Dubai, Hügendorf, Hong Kong, Indianapolis, Cairo, Cape Town,

Manila, Maidenhead, New Delhi, Singapore, Sydney, Teheran, Vienna

 Member of the World Sports Publishers' Association (WSPA)

www.w-s-p-a.org

ISBN 978-1-78255-777-7

Email: info@m-m-sports.com

www.m-m-sports.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	16
1 Games	18
1.1 Passing	18
1.1.1 5-on-3 (on mini goals)	20
1.1.2 4-on-4 plus 4 (on mini goals)	21
1.1.3 4-on-4 (on passing goals)	22
1.1.4 4-on-4 plus 4 (playing deep)	23
1.1.5 4-on-4 (playing deep with changing direction)	24
1.1.6 4-on-4 plus 2 (play through the wing player)	25
1.1.7 4-on-4 plus 2 (passing squares)	26
1.1.8 4-on-4 plus 4 (for possession)	27
1.1.9 4-on-4 plus 2 (switching play)	28
1.1.10 4-on-4 (superior number in possession)	29
1.1.11 4-on-4 (offense vs. defense)	30
1.1.12 3-on-3 plus 3 (seams)	31
1.1.13 3-on-3 plus 3 (for possession)	32
1.1.14 3-on-3 plus 4 (narrow for possession)	33
1.1.15 3-on-3 (against 3-on-2)	34
1.1.16 6-on-6 plus 6 (for possession)	35
1.2 Dribbling	36
1.2.1 4-on-4 (dribbling and first touch)	36
1.2.2 4-on-4 (on dribble goals, outside)	37
1.2.3 4-on-4 (on dribble goals, center)	38
1.2.4 4-on-4 (on dribble goals with finish)	39
1.2.5 4-on-4 (on dribble lines with finish)	40
1.2.6 4-on-4 (on dribble lines with follow-up action)	41
1.2.7 4-on-4 (through dribble fields)	42
1.2.8 4-on-4 (on central dribble field)	43
1.2.9 4-on-4 (on dribble goals with subsequent pass)	44
1.2.10 4-on-4 plus 2 (with outside players)	45
1.2.11 4-on-4 plus 2 (with dribbling players)	46
1.2.12 4-on-4 (touch competition)	47

6 THE SOCCER GAMES AND DRILLS COMPENDIUM

1.3	Transitioning and reacting	48
1.3.1	3-on-3 plus 4 (on mini goals)	48
1.3.2	4-on-4 (on mini goals with transition after finish)	49
1.3.3	4-on-4 plus 1 (with changing objectives)	50
1.3.4	4-on-4 plus 2 (on alternating mini goals)	51
1.3.5	4-on-4 plus 2 (with transition toward the goal)	52
1.3.6	4-on-4 (with changing game objectives)	53
1.3.7	4-on-4 (on alternating goals)	54
1.3.8	8-on-8 (with 3 balls)	55
1.3.9	4-on-4 (with change of direction)	56
1.3.10	4 plus 1 against 4 plus 1 (with changing objectives)	57
1.3.11	2-on-2 (with transition to 3-on-2 and change of direction)	58
1.3.12	4-on-8 (on 4 mini goals with transition to offense)	59
1.4	Small games	60
1.4.1	Catch (duel)	60
1.4.2	Catch (team competition)	61
1.4.3	Catch (1-on-1)	62
1.4.4	Handball header (open passing game)	63
1.4.5	Handball header (on goals)	64
1.4.6	Handball (shot on goal)	65
1.4.7	Numbers soccer (1)	66
1.4.8	Numbers soccer (2)	67
1.4.9	The Great White	68
1.4.10	Moveable goals	69
1.4.11	Calling names	70
1.4.12	Memory®	71
1.5	Tactics	72
1.5.1	Defensive tactics (defend with a high line)	72
1.5.2	Defensive tactics (block passing lanes)	73
1.5.3	Defensive tactics—pressing (1)	74
1.5.4	Defensive tactics—pressing (2)	75
1.5.5	Defensive tactics—pressing (3)	76
1.5.6	Offensive tactics (transition to offense 4-on-4 plus 4)	77

1.5.7	Offensive tactics (transition to offense 8-on-5 plus 3)	78
1.5.8	Offensive tactics (diagonal passes)	79
1.5.9	Offensive tactics (playing with a wing player)	80
1.5.10	Offensive tactics—opening the game (1)	81
1.5.11	Offensive tactics—opening the game (2)	82
1.5.12	Offensive tactics—opening the game (3)	83
1.6	Kick-off variations	84
1.6.1	Kick-off (tennis ball)	84
1.6.2	Kick-off (open passing game)	85
1.6.3	Kick-off (roll the ball)	86
1.6.4	Kick-off (wing player)	87
1.6.5	Kick-off (passing sequence)	88
1.6.6	Kick-off (dribbling competition)	89
1.6.7	Kick-off (positional technique)	90
1.6.8	Kick-off (reacting)	91
1.6.9	Staggered 3-on-3 (finish)	92
1.6.10	Staggered 3-on-3 (transitioning)	93
1.6.11	Staggered 3-on-3 (passing sequence and finish)	94
1.6.12	Staggered 4-on-4—passing sequence (1)	95
1.6.13	Staggered 4-on-4—passing sequence (2)	96
1.6.14	Staggered 5-on-5 (passing sequence and finish)	97
1.7	Chaos and action	98
1.7.1	From 1-on-1 to 2-on-2	98
1.7.2	From 1-on-1 to 3-on-2	99
1.7.3	From 2-on-1 to 3-on-2	100
1.7.4	From 1-on-1 to 4-on-3	101
1.7.5	Chaos 1-on-1	102
1.7.6	Chaos 3-on-3 (on 6 goals)	103
1.7.7	Chaos 3-on-3 (on 3 goals)	104
1.7.8	Fast 2-on-2	105
1.7.9	4-on-4 (ball in hand)	106
1.7.10	Integrated playing fields	107

1.8	Tournaments, playing fields, and rule variations	108
1.8.1	Tournament (Champions League)	108
1.8.2	Tournament (4-on-4)	109
1.8.3	Tournament (4-on-4)—explanations	110
1.8.4	Tournament (touches)	112
1.8.5	Tournament (goal hunt)	113
1.8.6	Tournament (winner plays)	114
1.8.7	Playing field (vertical field in the center)	115
1.8.8	Playing field (vertical field to the goal)	116
1.8.9	Playing field (switching play)	117
1.8.10	Playing field (play through the center)	118
1.8.11	Playing field (breadth and depth)	119
1.8.12	Playing field (target zones)	120
1.8.13	Creative rule variations	121
2	Drills	124
2.1	Passing (loops)	126
2.1.1	Triangle passing (simple passing)	126
2.1.2	Triangle passing (ball control and first touch)	127
2.1.3	Triangle passing (first-touch control and tempo dribbling)	128
2.1.4	Triangle passing (double-double pass)	129
2.1.5	Triangle passing (dropping off)	130
2.1.6	Passing square (Ping-Pong straight)	131
2.1.7	Passing square (Ping-Pong diagonal)	132
2.1.8	Passing square (Ping-Pong alternate)	133
2.1.9	Passing square (double pass)	134
2.1.10	Passing square (third man running)	135
2.1.11	Passing square (looking for position)	136
2.1.12	Passing square (play through the center)	137
2.1.13	Diamond passing (double pass)	138
2.1.14	Diamond passing (double pass and pursuit)	139
2.1.15	Diamond passing (overlapping)	140
2.1.16	Diamond passing (overlap and third man running)	141
2.1.17	Passing rectangle—overlap and play deep (1)	142
2.1.18	Passing rectangle—overlap and play deep (2)	143
2.1.19	Passing hexagon (double pass and third man running)	144
2.1.20	Passing hexagon (looking for position)	145

2.1.21	Passing star (competition)	146
2.1.22	Double passing square	147
2.1.23	Double passing loop	148
2.1.24	Passing loops (organized as a competition)	149
2.2	Passing Game (passing circles)	150
2.2.1	Passing circle (basic passing game)	150
2.2.2	Passing circle (double pass)	151
2.2.3	Passing circle (double-double pass)	152
2.2.4	Passing circle (overlapping)	153
2.2.5	Passing circle (instep shot and header)	154
2.2.6	Passing circle (third man running)	155
2.2.7	Expanded passing circle (overlap and third man running)	156
2.2.8	Combination passing circle and open passing game (interfering player)	157
2.2.9	Passing circle (passing and looking for position)	158
2.2.10	Passing circle (6er behavior)	159
2.3	Open passing	160
2.3.1	Open passing (commands)	160
2.3.2	Open passing (groups of three)	161
2.3.3	Open passing (groups of three plus hand ball)	162
2.3.4	Open passing (color game)	163
2.3.5	Open passing—sequence (1)	164
2.3.6	Open passing—sequence (2)	165
2.3.7	Open passing in groups of two—cone goals (1)	166
2.3.8	Open passing in groups of two—cone goals (2)	167
2.3.9	Open passing in groups of three (cone goals)	168
2.3.10	Open passing in groups of three (around triangles)	169
2.3.11	Open passing in groups of four (play on triangles)	170
2.3.12	Open passing (catcher)	171
2.4	Dribbling	172
2.4.1	Individual dribbling	172
2.4.2	Shadow dribbling	173
2.4.3	Linear dribbling	174
2.4.4	Linear dribbling (feints)	175

2.4.5	Individual dribbling (field changes)	176
2.4.6	Individual dribbling (dribble through cone goals)	177
2.4.7	Individual dribbling (dribble figure-8s)	178
2.4.8	Dribbling (competition)	179
2.4.9	Dribbling (fields)	180
2.4.10	Combination individual and linear dribbling	181
2.5	Shot on goal	182
2.5.1	Basic shot on goal	182
2.5.2	Shot on goal (first-touch control)	183
2.5.3	Shot on goal with passing (1)	184
2.5.4	Shot on goal with passing (2)	185
2.5.5	Shot on goal with passing (3)	186
2.5.6	Shot on goal with passing (4)	187
2.5.7	Shot on goal with passing (5)	188
2.5.8	Shot on goal with passing (6)	189
2.5.9	Shot on goal with passing (7)	190
2.5.10	Shooting competition (dribbling)	191
2.5.11	Shooting competition (squaring)	192
2.5.12	Shooting competition—passing (1)	193
2.5.13	Shooting competition—passing (2)	194
2.5.14	Shooting sequence with two finishes	195
2.5.15	Shooting sequence with two finishes (plus 2-on-2 and 3-on-3)	196
2.5.16	Shooting sequence with three finishes (1)	197
2.5.17	Shooting sequence with three finishes (2)	198
2.5.18	Shooting sequence with three finishes (3)	199
2.5.19	Shooting sequence with five finishes	200
2.5.20	Shot on goal (duels)	201
2.6	Feints and juggling	202
2.6.1	Basic feints (1)	202
2.6.2	Basic feints (2)	203
2.6.3	Basic feints (3)	204
2.6.4	Feint competition (team)	205
2.6.5	Feint competition (individual)	206
2.6.6	Feints (1-on-1)	207

2.6.7	Feints (shot on goal)	208
2.6.8	Juggling (1)	209
2.6.9	Juggling (2)	210
2.6.10	Juggling (3)	211
2.7	1-on-1	212
2.7.1	Basic 1-on-1	212
2.7.2	1-on-1 (transition)	213
2.7.3	1-on-1 (decision)	214
2.7.4	1-on-1—reaction (1)	215
2.7.5	1-on-1—reaction (2)	216
2.7.6	1-on-1—reaction (3)	217
2.7.7	1-on-1—reaction (4)	218
2.7.8	1-on-1—reaction (5)	219
2.7.9	1-on-1—reaction (6)	220
2.7.10	1-on-1—reaction (7)	221
2.7.11	Frontal 1-on-1	222
2.7.12	Diagonal 1-on-1 (1)	223
2.7.13	Diagonal 1-on-1 (2)	224
2.7.14	Diagonal 1-on-1 (3)	225
2.7.15	1-on-1 (wing)	226
2.7.16	1-on-1—two goals (1)	227
2.7.17	1-on-1—two goals (2)	228
2.7.18	1-on-1—arena (1)	229
2.7.19	1-on-1—arena (2)	230
2.7.20	1-on-1—arena (3)	231
2.7.21	1-on-1—arena (4)	232
2.7.22	1-on-1—arena (5)	233
2.8	Active defense	234
2.8.1	Chase and capture (1)	234
2.8.2	Chase and capture (2)	235
2.8.3	Chase and capture (team of two)	236
2.8.4	Chase and capture (finish)	237
2.8.5	Chase and capture (plus 1-on-1)	238
2.8.6	Chase and capture (team of three)	239

3	Fitness training	240
3.1	Soccer-specific speed training	242
3.1.1	Speed (repetition method)	242
3.1.2	Speed (shuttle race)	243
3.1.3	Speed (reaction and change of direction)	244
3.1.4	Fast 1-on-1—follow-up action (1)	245
3.1.5	Fast 1-on-1—follow-up action (2)	246
3.1.6	Fast 1-on-1 (dribbling with follow-up action)	247
3.1.7	Fast 1-on-1—shot on goal (1)	248
3.1.8	Fast 1-on-1—shot on goal (2)	249
3.1.9	Fast 1-on-1 (circuits)	250
3.1.10	Fast 1-on-1 (shot on goal and catch)	251
3.1.11	Fast 1-on-1—duel and shot on goal (1)	252
3.1.12	Fast 1-on-1—duel and shot on goal (2)	253
3.1.13	Speed (catching game)	254
3.1.14	Speed—sprinting game (1)	255
3.1.15	Speed—sprinting game (2)	256
3.1.16	Quick reaction and orienting	257
3.1.17	Fast 3-on-7	258
3.2	Soccer-specific athletic training (strength, stretching, stabilization and coordination)	259
3.2.1	Stretching (Balance Pad®)	259
3.2.2	Strength training (Balance Pad®)	261
3.2.3	Strength training—posture (1)	264
3.2.4	Strength training—posture (2)	266
3.2.5	Strength training—posture (3)	268
3.2.6	Strength training—posture (4)	269
3.2.7	Strength training—posture (5)	270
3.2.8	Strength training—posture (6)	272
3.2.9	Strength training—posture (7)	274
3.2.10	Strength training—posture (8)	276
3.2.11	Strength training—Thera-Band® (1)	278
3.2.12	Strength training—Thera-Band® (2)	279
3.2.13	Strength training—Pezzi exercise ball (1)	280
3.2.14	Strength training—Pezzi exercise ball (2)	282
3.2.15	Strength training—Pezzi exercise ball (3)	283
3.2.16	Regeneration and massage—Blackroll® (1)	284
3.2.17	Regeneration and massage—Blackroll® (2)	285

3.3	Soccer-specific endurance training	286
3.3.1	Endurance course (continuous method)	286
3.3.2	Endurance course (passing)	287
3.3.3	Endurance course—shot on goal (1)	288
3.3.4	Endurance course—shot on goal (2)	289
3.3.5	4-on-2 (interval runs)	290
3.3.6	Endurance game (3-on-2 plus 1)	291
3.3.7	Endurance game (4-on-4)	292
3.3.8	Endurance game (4-on-4 plus 4-on-2)	292
4	Indoor training	294
4.1	Indoor training	296
4.1.1	Line drills	296
4.1.2	Movement tasks (hoops)	297
4.1.3	Movement tasks (benches)	298
4.1.4	Movement tasks (jump ropes)	299
4.1.5	Chain tag	300
4.1.6	Bridge tag	301
4.1.7	Twin soccer	302
4.1.8	Soccer baseball	303
4.1.9	Shot on goal game (wall target)	304
4.1.10	Shot on goal game (cone target)	305
4.1.11	Shot on goal game (clean half)	306
4.1.12	Shot on goal game (3 plus 3 vs. 3 plus 3)	307
4.1.13	Team dodgeball	308
4.1.14	Individual dribbling	309
4.1.15	Dribbling (movement competition)	310
4.1.16	Dribbling (coordination competition)	311
4.1.17	Group passing game	312
4.1.18	Passing loop (benches)	313
4.1.19	Passing (benches)	314
4.1.20	Shot on goal (1)	315
4.1.21	Shot on goal (2)	316
4.1.22	Shot on goal (3)	317
4.1.23	Shot on goal (4)	318
4.1.24	Shot on goal (roundabout)	319
4.1.25	Variable 1-on-1	320

4.1.26	Diagonal 1-on-1 or 3-on-2	321
4.1.27	2-on-2 plus 4-on-4	322
4.1.28	From 1-on-0 to 4-on-3	323
4.1.29	4-on-3 plus 2	324
4.1.30	Double 3-on-3	325
4.1.31	Game—against the boards (1)	326
4.1.32	Game—against the boards (2)	327
4.1.33	Game (diamond)	328
4.1.34	Game (deep neutral players)	329
5	Goalkeeper training	330
5.1	Goalkeeper training	332
5.1.1	Warm-up (1)	332
5.1.2	Warm-up (2)	333
5.1.3	Warm-up (3)	334
5.1.4	Legwork (follow-up action)	335
5.1.5	Legwork—low balls (1)	336
5.1.6	Legwork—low balls (2)	337
5.1.7	Legwork—low balls (3)	338
5.1.8	Reacting (1)	339
5.1.9	Reacting (2)	340
5.1.10	Catching high balls (1)	341
5.1.11	Catching high balls (2)	342
5.1.12	Throw-out and punt	343
6	Team building	344
6.1	Teamwork	345
	Chain competition – ball transport – group run – one-leg hop	345
	Throwing and catching 1 – throwing and catching 2 – sorting – jumping rope	346
	Jumping rope – flying – field running – supporting legs	347
	Dribbling chain – 2-on-2 challenge – trust fall – 1-on-1 equilibrium	348
	Rock–paper–scissors – caterpillar – flying carpet – mass revolt	349
	5-on-1 with task – 1-on-1 with task – figures	350

7	Background knowledge	352
7.1	Soccer-specific training principles	353
7.2	Soccer-specific training management	354
7.3	Coaching for training and game management	354
7.3.1	Defensive coaching with individual tactics	355
7.3.2	Offensive coaching with individual tactics	356
7.3.3	Defensive coaching with group tactics	357
7.3.4	Offensive coaching with group tactics	357
8	Appendix	358
8.1	Legend	358
8.2	Definitions and reading support	360
8.3	References	361
8.4	Photo credits	362



PREFACE



Stephan Kerber

In my capacity as DFB (German Football Association) basecamp coordinator for the Hamburg Soccer Association (HFV), it has been my job since 2002 to expose the regional talent to cutting-edge training content.

360 basecamps are located all over Germany. Around 40 to 50 kids from age 11 to 15 are trained by over 1,200 DFB coaches and are coached with no additional costs for the talents. 29 basecamp managers coordinate the efforts nationwide. In Hamburg 300 young players are coached by 20 DFB-coaches. This system is unique—worldwide! The DFB invests huge sums in the upbringing of talents to ensure Germany's top position in soccer. By now representatives of many European soccer associations visit our training basecamps to learn about our training system.

As successful as German youth soccer has been in recent years, thanks to the increasingly better-functioning support structure, it is still important to analyze which training system will ensure success in years to come. Which new elements will be needed

to be competitive in top soccer? This compilation of attractive training exercises offers versatile content that makes it possible to specifically emphasize technical or tactical goals.

The goal was to create age-appropriate effective training units for the hard-working, hard-running, and technically accomplished team player. This was done primarily in close communication with the DFB basecamp trainers and the Hamburg Soccer Association's select team coaches, whose good ideas had to be developed further and put into a form that readers could comprehend.

This book contains many variations that did not just go straight from the desk into the book, but nearly all of the drills were tested, modified, and refined with the help of the DFB talent development program's different age groups in Hamburg and within the HFV's select soccer program, chiefly the age groups 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 (U19 to U12—a broad bandwidth).

Fabian Seeger started the process on October 1, 2009, as DFB basecamp coach at the DFB basecamp Sachsenweg in Hamburg. Working with the different age groups and constantly trying out his ideas and tips from other sources resulted in a broad spectrum that allowed for the content of this book to develop into this user-friendly version. Since then, there has been an awesome exchange, and I congratulate him on his diligence in creating something new from what he saw and for adding a new spin and realistic stimuli to standard drills. I still, today, feel greatly motivated by our joint efforts to devise complex exercises for top talent that create meaningful learning processes with a variety of guidelines. Counteracting monotony while creating experience-oriented, fun training units for long-term fun and learning success.

I hope this book will be widely read and the training exercises well used.

Enjoy!

Stephan Kerber



1 GAMES

A significant and universal goal of training is the best possible preparation for a competition. Ideally, it is particularly those movement patterns and behaviors required and practiced in a competition that are practiced during training. During a competition, a player is confronted with different situations and various decision-making options. What matters in the end is which problem-solving approach he chooses to purposefully reach the situation-specific result.

And yet successfully solving a game situation does not always consist of scoring a goal or winning the ball. In fact, there are many sub-goals that, in the end, result in successfully scoring goals and preventing goals. For the purpose of realistic training, chapter 1, Games, focuses on the development of certain drills that reproduce the complexity of 11-on-11 play on a smaller scale. The many challenges of different competitive situations can be combined as areas of focus in training to allow the conception of different drills with different objectives. In the process, individual training parameters, such as field size, team size, or number of goals, can be purposefully used to work on the current training topic. In doing so, the listed training parameters are in no way intended as mandatory factors, but rather should always be adapted to the team's respective performance and skill level as well as age group by the implementing coach.

Competitive soccer consists of widely different situations in which the players must largely act together. During training, the complexity of 11-on-11 is decreased, and segments of the game are separated. Looking at specific game situations and scaled-down game sequences generates drills that, next to fitness-related and technical requirements, focus primarily on individual and group tactics.

Depictions and descriptions of the individual drills generally leave out field measurements. Determining the field size, passing distances, or the distance between players and goals is considered part of a coach's toolbox. The coach determines measurements based on the specific training emphasis and, along with the topic's focus, is guided by variables such as age and capability of players, number of training participants, or the desired training intensity.

Playing ability

Pressure from the opponent

Action speed

Creativity

Decision-making

Time pressure

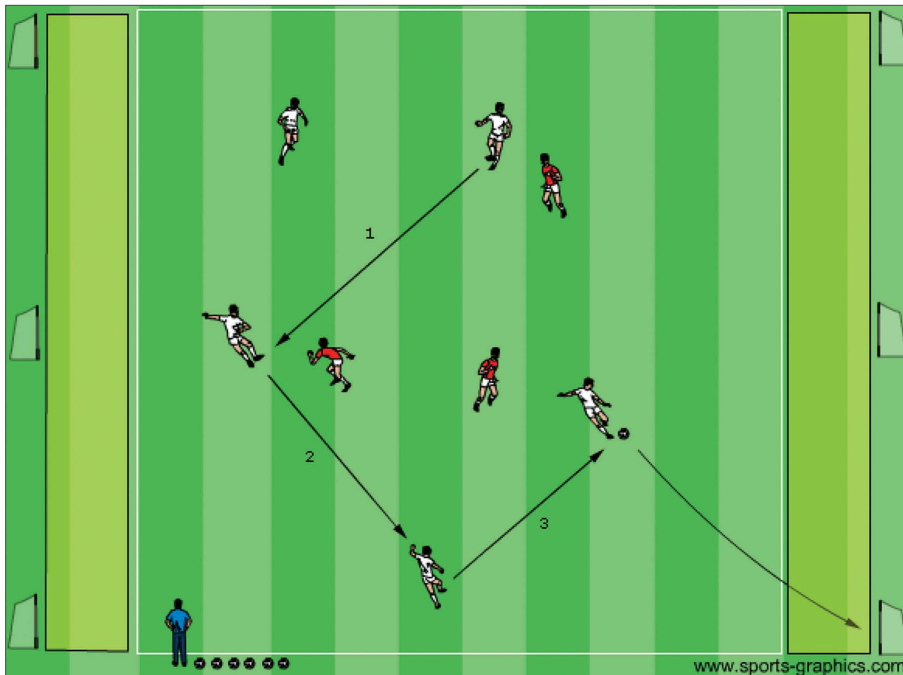
Cognition

Orientation skills

Transition skills

1.1 PASSING

1.1.1 5-on-3 (on mini goals)



Execution

The WHITE team plays the outnumbered RED team. After the finish the coach brings each new ball into the game to the WHITE team. Players are not allowed to step on the edge areas marked in YELLOW. The WHITE team must have played at least three passes within their own ranks before they can finish. The RED team can play freely and, after winning the ball, is allowed to immediately take shots on the goals with unlimited touches.

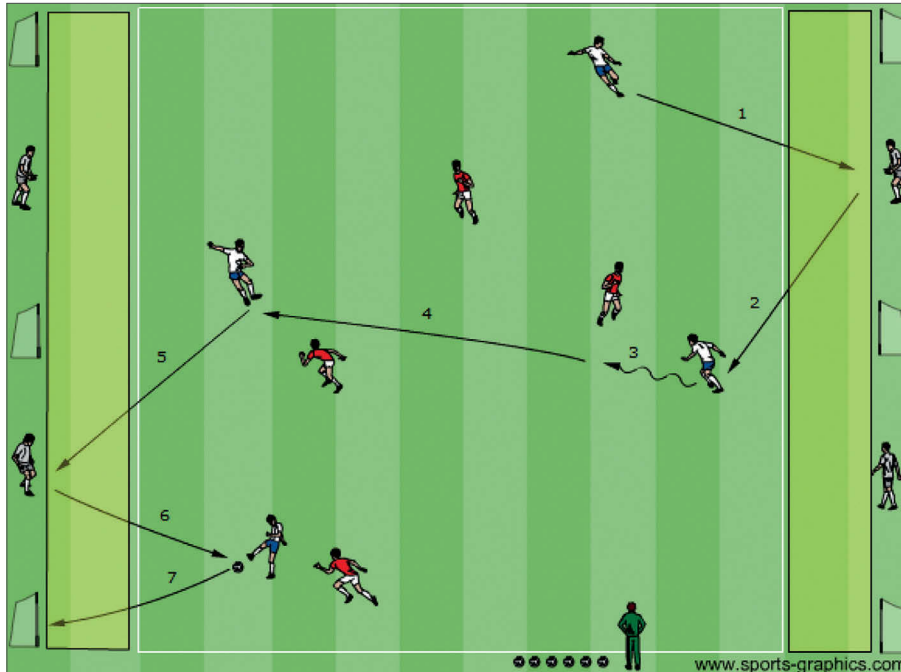
Concept

The superior number simplifies and prompts the desired passing game. Playing on mini goals also facilitates precise passing during the finish. The YELLOW areas (passing zone) induce and prompt forceful passes and finishes across the field.

Variations

- ★ Limit the number of touches for the superior number team.
- ★ Direct play with every other pass from the superior number team.
- ★ Prerequisite for a shot on goal: 4 or 5 passes within the ranks of the superior number team.
- ★ Specify the technique for the shot on goal: inside foot/laces kick/direct finish.

1.1.2 4-on-4 plus 4 (on mini goals)



Execution

Two teams of four players each play in the center of the field. Four additional players are positioned in the outside zones. The team in possession is allowed to involve all four players. No players are allowed to enter the YELLOW zones. Shots on goal must be direct (see 7) and after first involving an outside player (double pass or third man running). If a direct finish is not possible after the pass from outside (see 3), the team remains in possession. After a finish, the coach brings a new ball into the game.

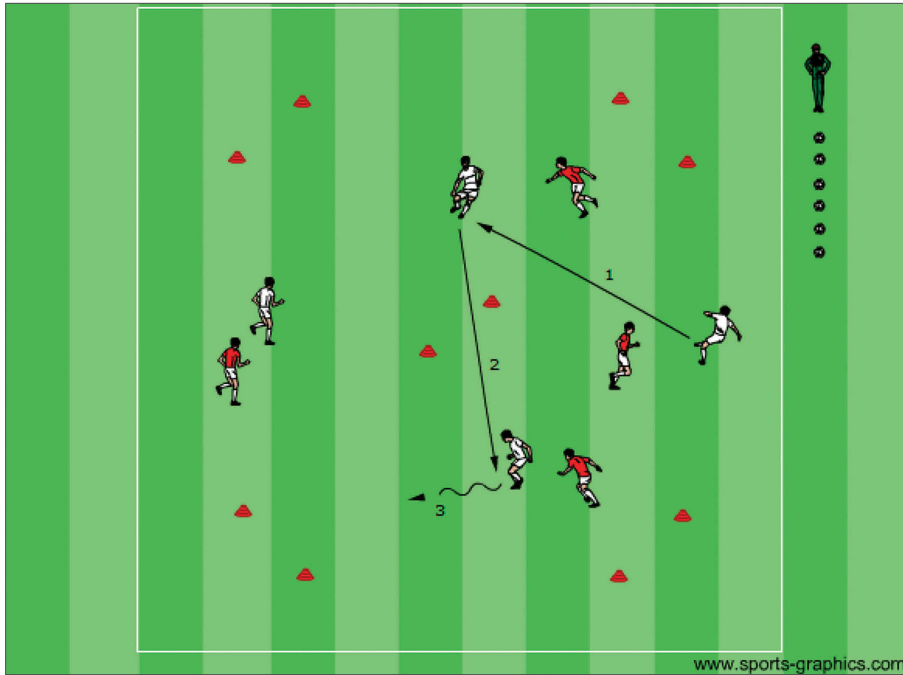
Concept

Involving the outside players forces double passes, third man running, and deep forward passes. The YELLOW passing zone prompts forceful passes. Since only direct finishes are possible, precision is required during the finish. In addition, the finishing situation must be well prepared using reliable combination play.

Variations

- ★ Limited touches for the team in possession.
- ★ Limited touches for outside players.
- ★ Double score for finishes with the weak leg.

1.1.3 4-on-4 (on passing goals)



Execution

The RED team plays 4-on-4 (see 1) against the WHITE team. The team in possession tries to play a pass to a teammate through one of the passing goals (see 2). After a successful pass through a passing goal (see 2), the team stays in possession and continues the game without interruption (see 3). If a ball goes off the field, the coach brings a new ball into the game.

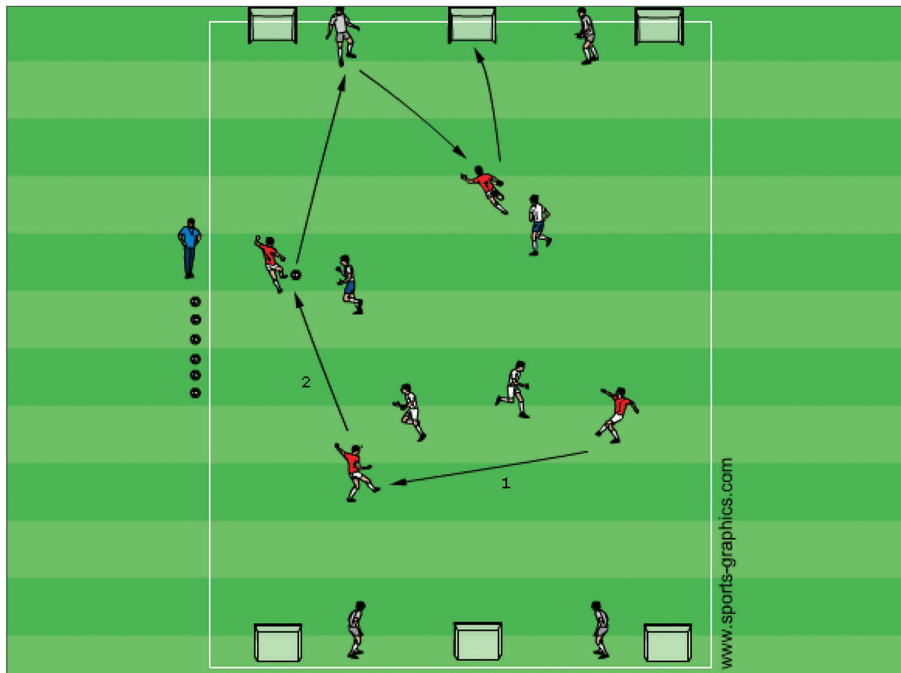
Concept

Playing a pass through one of the passing goals requires primarily well-timed and practical offers to help get open.

Variations

- ★ Simplify or expand to 4-on-4 (plus two neutral players in possession).
- ★ Specify the passing technique for playing through cone goals: direct passing.
- ★ Vary or modify the array of passing goals.
- ★ Limit touches for the team in possession.

1.1.4 4-on-4 plus 4 (playing deep)



Execution

The teams play 4-on-4 on the field. After two passes in the own ranks, the team in possession is allowed to involve the outside players. A shot on the mini goals is only possible if a pass from outside is turned into a direct shot. If a pass from outside is not turned into a direct shot but is handled and kept in the game, another outside player can be involved in an attempt to score through him as the game continues. After the finish, the coach brings a new ball into the game.

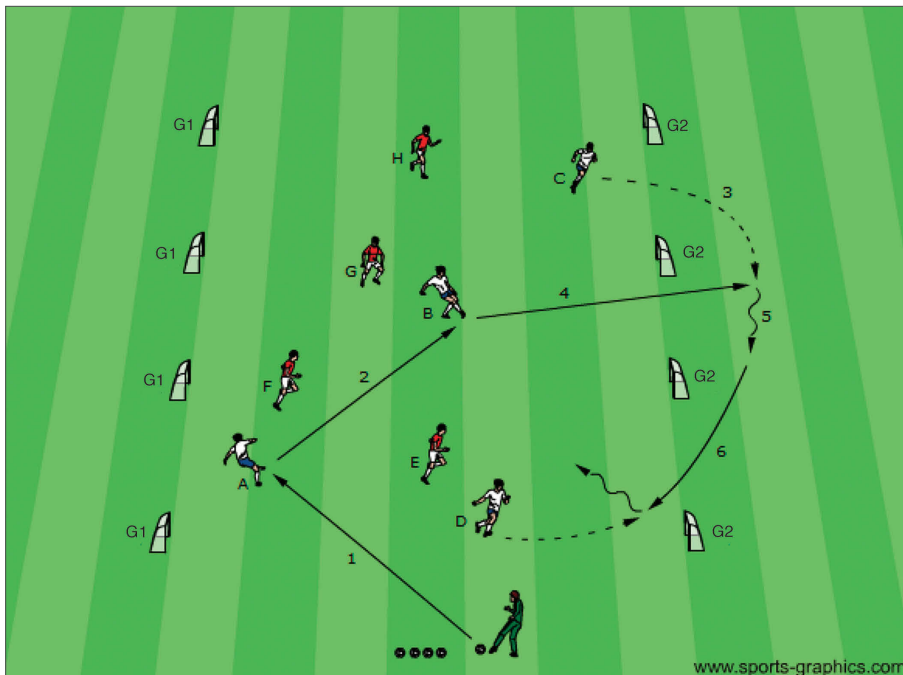
Concept

After playing 4-on-4 in a tight space, the game is opened up to the outside after two forward passes. After a pass to an outside player, immediate reaction and pursuit, or rather getting open, is required to bring on the finish. The direct finish in the form of a pass on a mini goal requires major concentration and precision.

Variations

- ★ Vary or modify the array of passing goals (e.g., diagonally staggered).
- ★ Specify the direction of play (e.g., RED team can only finish on the three upper goals).
- ★ Prerequisite for a shot on goal: 3 (or 4) passes in the ranks of the team in possession.
- ★ Outside players are not allowed to play direct return passes to the passing player.

1.1.5 4-on-4 (playing deep with changing direction)

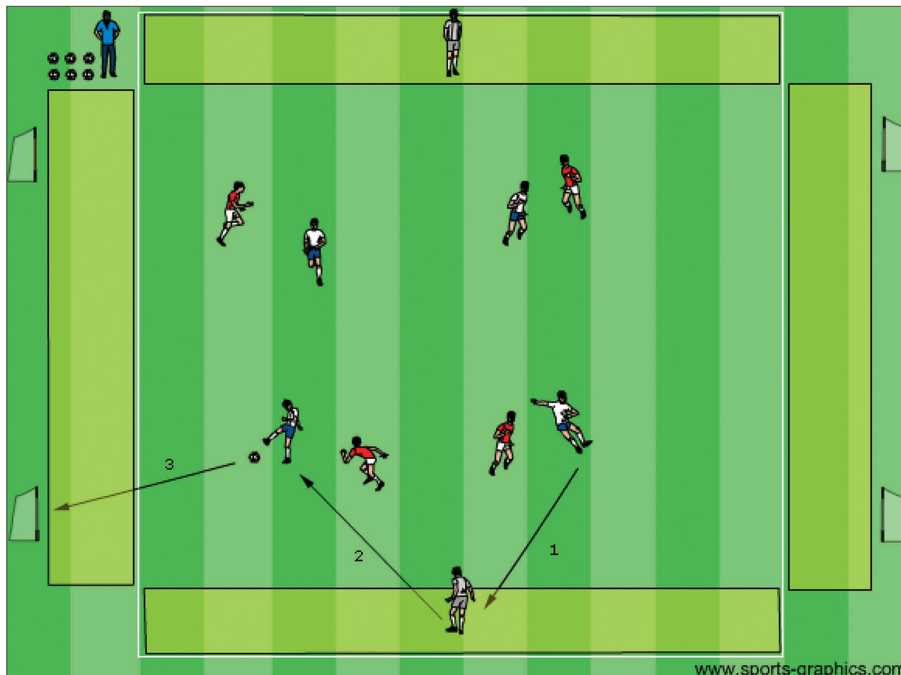
**Execution**

The RED team plays 4-on-4 against the BLUE team. Initially, players cannot play on the mini goals. After the coach's opening ball (see 1), the players pass each other the ball within the own ranks (see 2). Initially, the objective is to play a deep pass to a teammate through two mini goals (see 4). The player who gets open behind the mini goals (see 3) controls the ball (see 5) and dribbles back onto the field or plays a direct pass to a teammate on the field (passing game; see 6). Playing on the mini goals becomes possible after the successful deep pass. The direction of play depends on the deep pass. If the deep pass is played between the G2 goals, the team in possession attacks the goals on the opposite side (see figure). The defending team (here the RED team) attacks the G2 goals and can immediately start pressing. After a team finishes, the coach brings a new ball into the game.

Variations

- ★ Simplify or expand to 4-on-4 (plus two neutral players in possession).
- ★ Prerequisite for the deep pass: 3 (or 4) passes in the own ranks.
- ★ Limit the number of passes prior to deep pass (e.g., no more than five).
- ★ Limit touches for the teammate receiving the deep pass.

1.1.6 4-on-4 plus 2 (play through the wing player)



Execution

4-on-4-play in the center. Shots on the mini goals can only be taken after first passing to an outside player (see 1 and 2). Players cannot enter the outside zones where the outside players are positioned. The same applies to the passing zones in front of the mini goals. After the finish, the coach brings a new ball into the game.

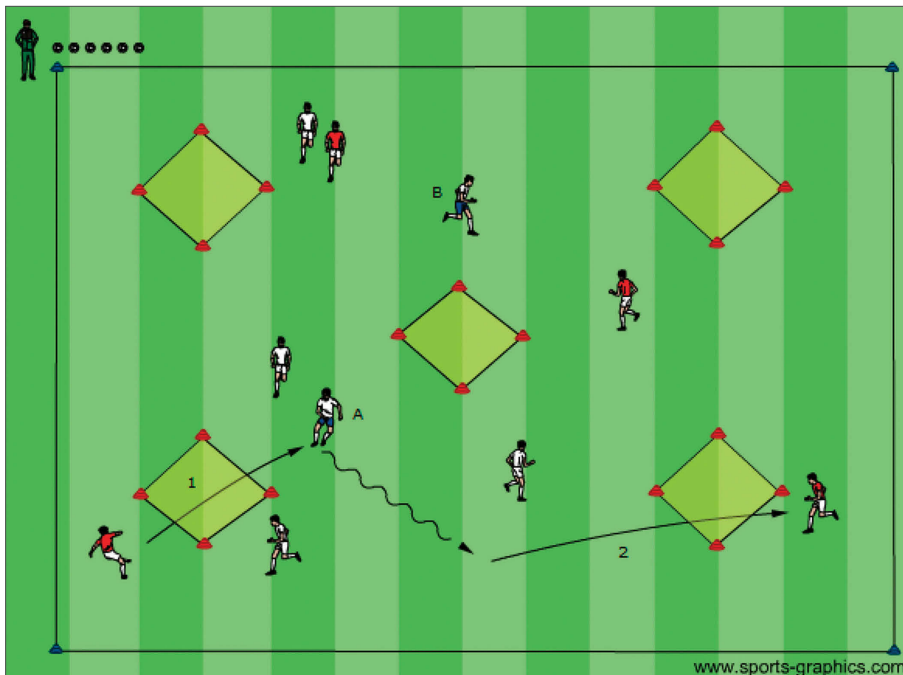
Concept

Play through the outside player must be initiated prior to the finish. Passing zones in front of the mini goals prompt forceful shots on goal. The possession team's superior number makes play through the outside player easier.

Variations

- ★ Specify the shooting technique (see 3): inside foot/instep/direct shot.
- ★ Prerequisite for a shot on goal: Involve both outside players (switching play).
- ★ Prerequisite for a shot on goal: Additional pass after a pass from an outside player.
- ★ Prerequisite for a pass to the outside player: 3 (or 4) passes within the own ranks.

1.1.7 4-on-4 plus 2 (passing squares)

**Execution**

The RED team plays 4-on-4 against the WHITE team on the field. The team in possession can also pass to the neutral players (see players A and B). Players cannot enter the cone squares (passing squares). The game's objective is to pass the ball to a teammate through the passing square. After scoring, or rather successfully passing the ball, the game continues without interruption. The successful team remains in possession and can score additional points.

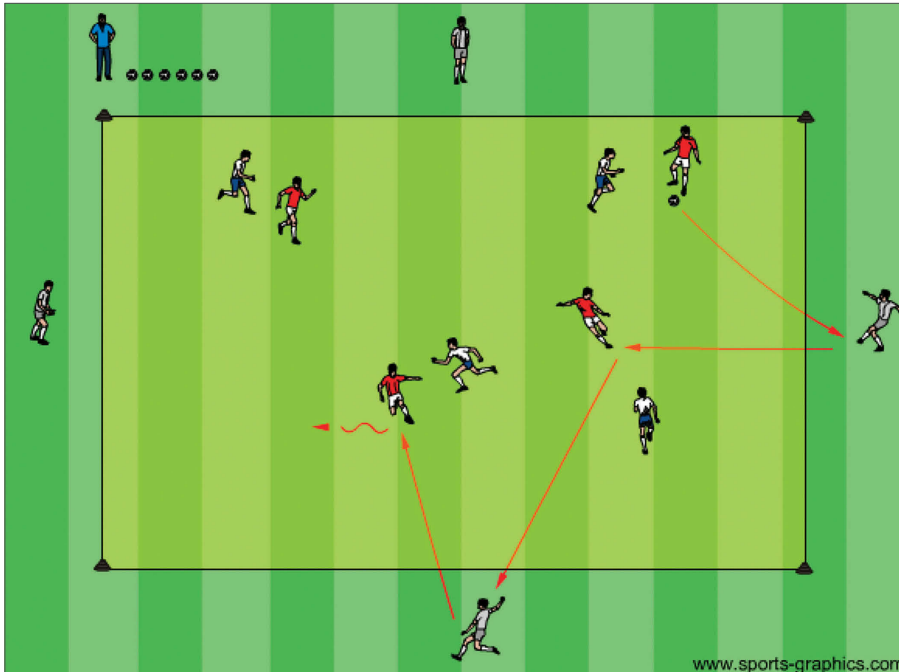
Concept

Having to play through the passing squares prompts forceful and sometimes longer passes. The array of the passing squares also facilitates demand for diagonal passes. Receiving the ball through one of the passing squares requires purposefully getting open and signaling availability.

Variations

- ★ Specify the passing technique for playing through passing squares: direct passing.
- ★ Scoring: short pass (one point; see 2) and long pass (two points; see 1).
- ★ Even numbers play without neutral players (e.g., 4-on-4).

1.1.8 4-on-4 plus 4 (for possession)



Execution

The RED team and the BLUE team play 4-on-4 on the marked field. The team in possession is allowed to involve the outside players. The game's objective is to play as many passes as possible in the own ranks. One player from each team counts the passes out loud.

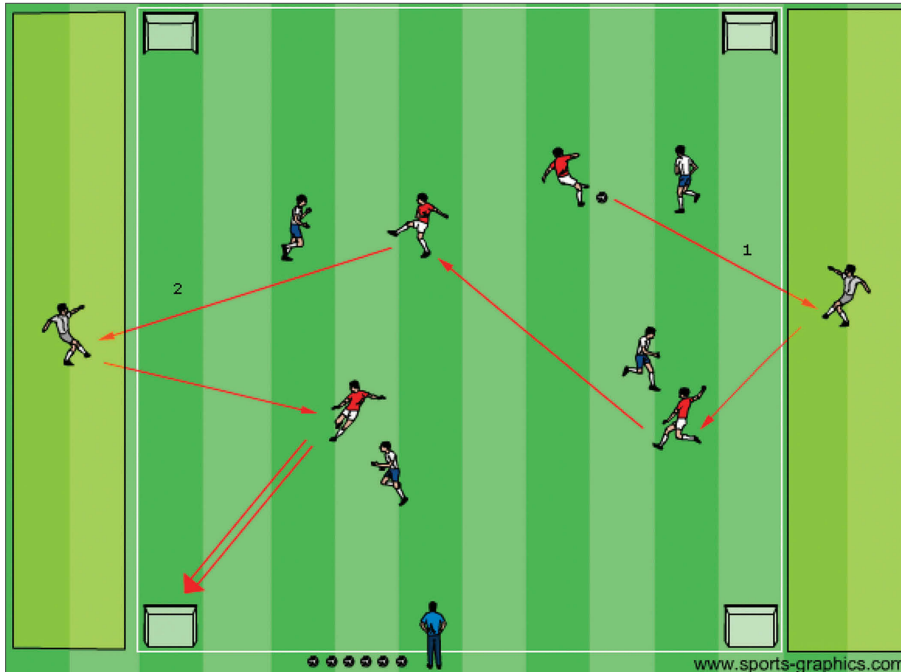
Concept

The large superior number makes passing or keeping the ball in the own ranks relatively easy. This drill facilitates lots of back-to-back passes in the own ranks and practicing passing techniques without too much pressure from the opponents.

Variations

- ★ Limited touches for outside players.
- ★ Limited touches for field players.
- ★ No passes allowed between two outside players.
- ★ Points scored after every 10 passes in a row.

1.1.9 4-on-4 plus 2 (switching play)

**Execution**

The RED team and the BLUE team play 4-on-4 on the field. The team in possession is allowed to pass to the two permanent outside players. Once the possession team has involved both players (see 1 and 2), they are allowed to shoot on the mini goals. After the finish, the coach brings a new ball into the game.

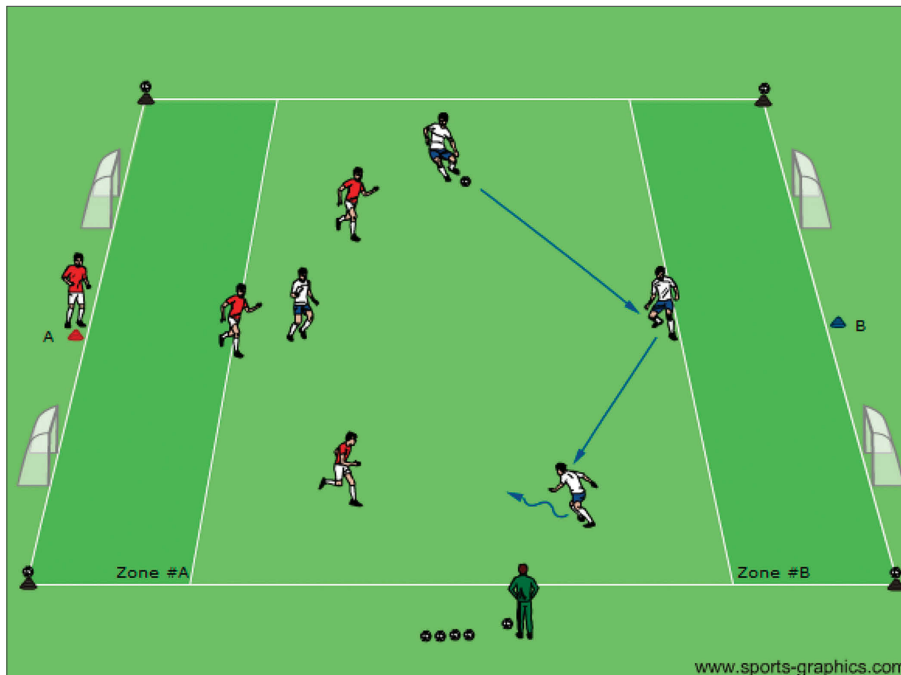
Concept

The possession team's superior number situation makes passing easier. The specified prerequisites for the finish force switching play. In terms of training emphasis, the required behavior for finishing on the mini goals prompts forceful passes instead of shots on goal.

Variations

- ★ Specify the technique for shots on goal: inside foot/instep/direct finish.
- ★ Limited touches for outside players.
- ★ Limited touches for field players.

1.1.10 4-on-4 (superior number in possession)



Execution

The RED team and the BLUE team play 4-on-4 on the field, whereby possession creates a constant majority–minority relationship. Each team has a position between its own mini goals (see A and B) where there is always a player from the defending team who does not participate in the game (here from team A). As soon as a team has possession, that player is once again allowed to complete his team. When the opponent has possession, one player must always withdraw and fall back to that position.

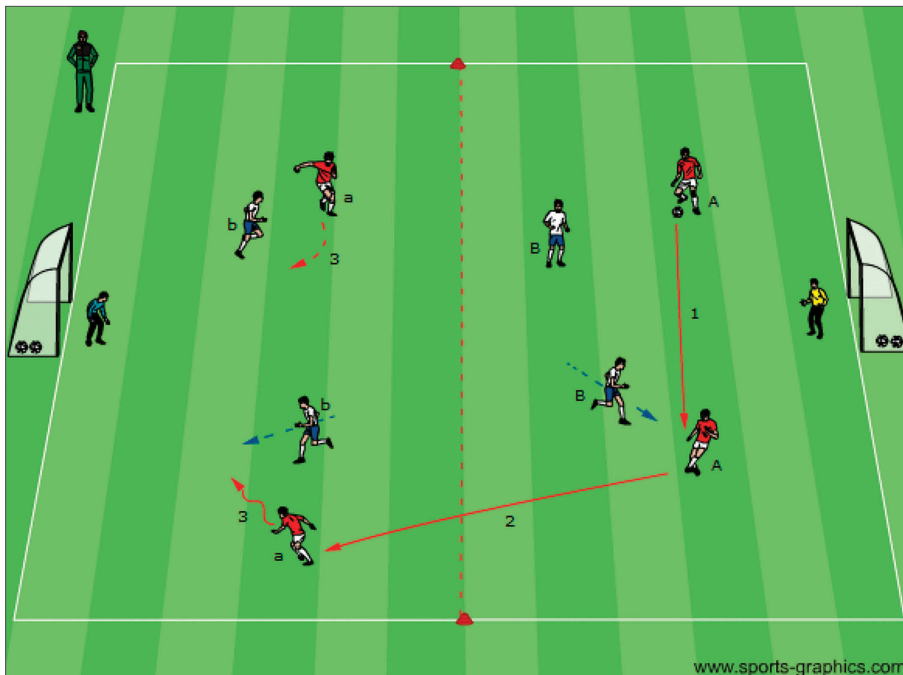
Concept

The superior number during possession makes passing play easier.

Variations

- ★ Option for the team in possession: Involve the waiting opponent.
- ★ Active players are not allowed to run into zones #A and #B.
- ★ Shots on goal from zones #A and #B are not allowed.
- ★ Game is continued with a ball from the coach.
- ★ Game is continued with a ball placed in a corner.

1.1.11 4-on-4 (offense vs. defense)

**Execution**

A centerline divides the playing field into two halves. The two teams play 4-on-4 on the two large goals (see team A/a and team B/b). In doing so, two players from each team position in their own half and two in the opposing half. Players are not allowed to leave their zones.

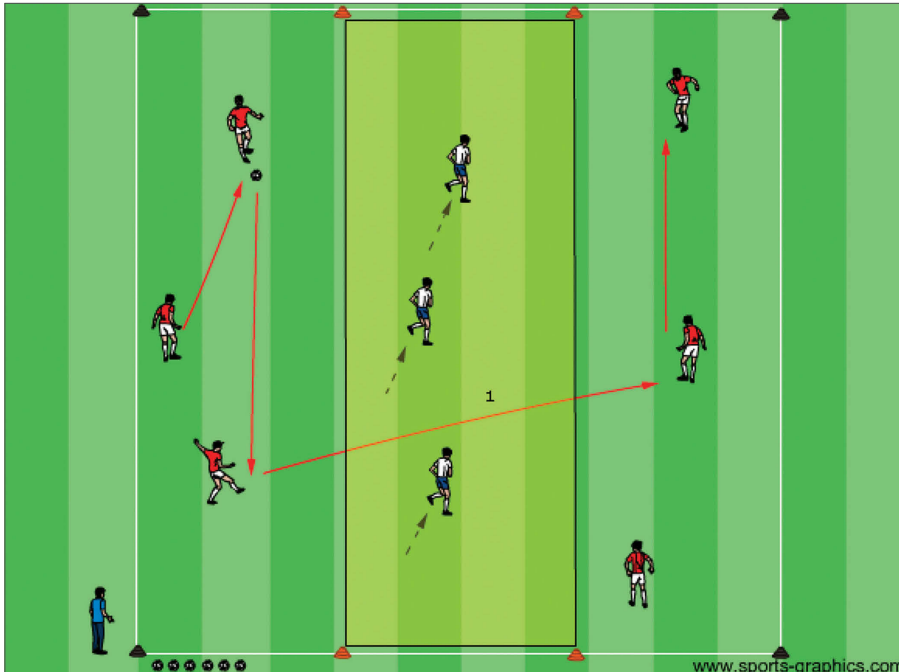
Concept

Two players from each team are defenders and open the game in possession (see players A and b). The two remaining players are attackers and continue the plays (see players a and B). This arrangement allows the players to practice their position-specific tasks and content, such as game build-up and joint defense (see players A and b) as well as pressing and creating goal-scoring chances (see players a and B).

Variations

- ★ Third offensive player possibly moves up for 3-on-2.
- ★ Limit no more than one additional pass between the two offensive players.
- ★ Use time limit for shot on goal after the pass into the offensive zone (e.g., 6 seconds).

1.1.12 3-on-3 plus 3 (seams)



Execution

The three players in each of the outside zones can circulate the ball within their own groups of three and have the goal of passing the ball through the center zone to the zone on the opposite side (see 1). In doing so they can insert the ball between the two players in the center or play past the three players on the outside. The players in the center zone shift and try to stop the balls. When a ball is intercepted, the coach brings a new ball into the game.

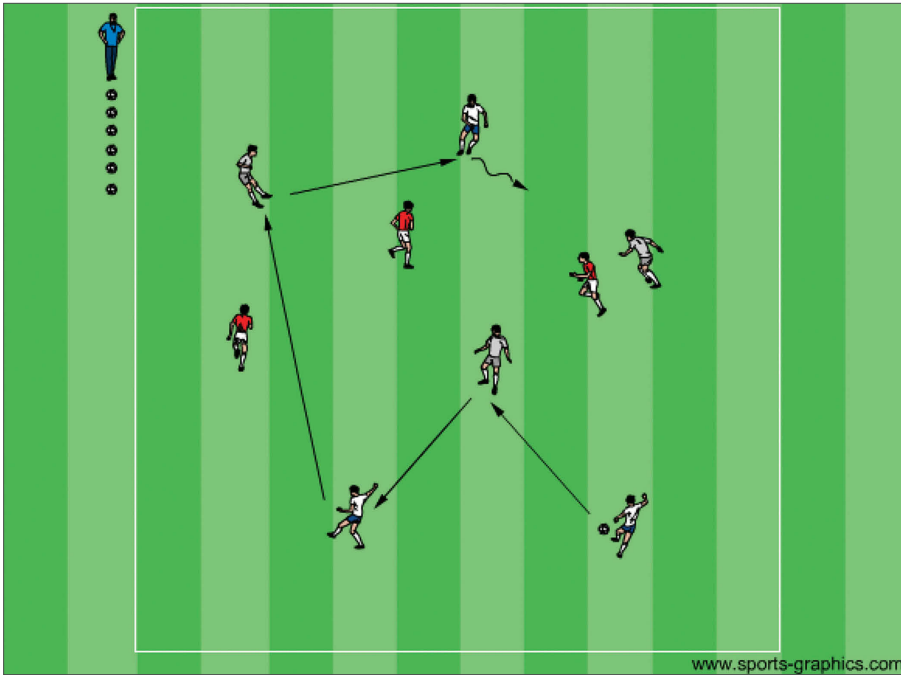
Concept

The passing game is generally easier without pressure from the opponents in the outside zones, allowing for time to prepare the pass to the other side. Pushing the ball through players prompts diagonal passes, and passing play from outside becomes easier if a quick switch in play precedes it.

Variations

- ★ Limit touches in outside zones.
- ★ Specify the passing technique for play through the center zone: direct passing.
- ★ Organize as a competition: Switch tasks after three turnovers.
- ★ Scoring: outside pass (one point); pass through the center (two points).

1.1.13 3-on-3 plus 3 (for possession)



Execution

Three teams of three players each play for possession on the field and try to play as many passes in a row as possible. As the figure shows, the BLUE team and the GRAY team play together against the RED team. When the RED team wins the ball, it keeps possession and plays together with the team that did not lose the ball. The team with the player who lost possession becomes the outnumbered team.

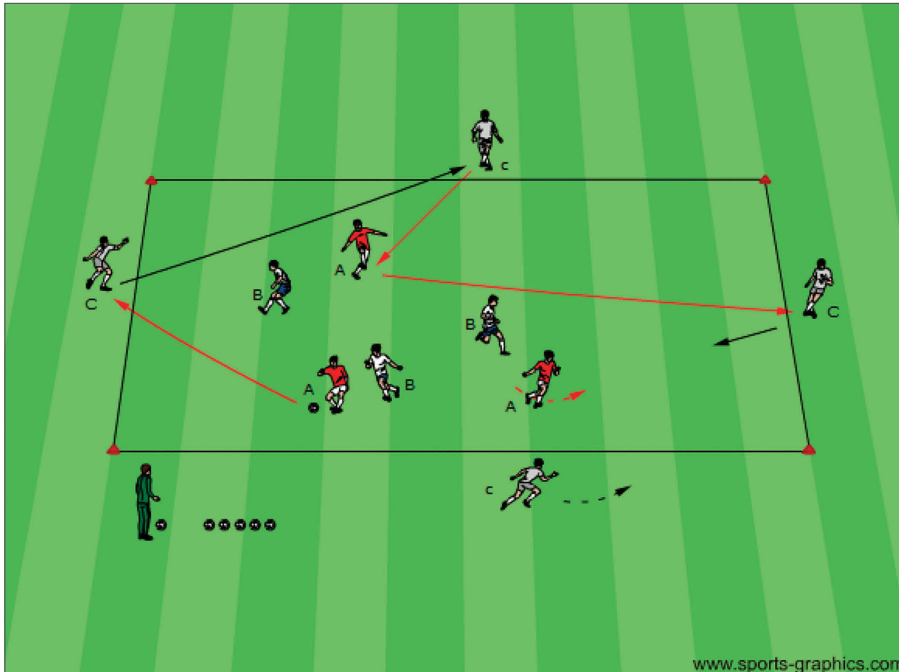
Concept

The superior number makes passing play easier. Still, the player in possession is under pressure because if he makes a mistake, he and his team become the minority without the ball.

Variations

- ★ Limit touches for the team in possession.
- ★ Direct play with every second or third pass from the team in possession.

1.1.14 3-on-3 plus 4 (narrow for possession)



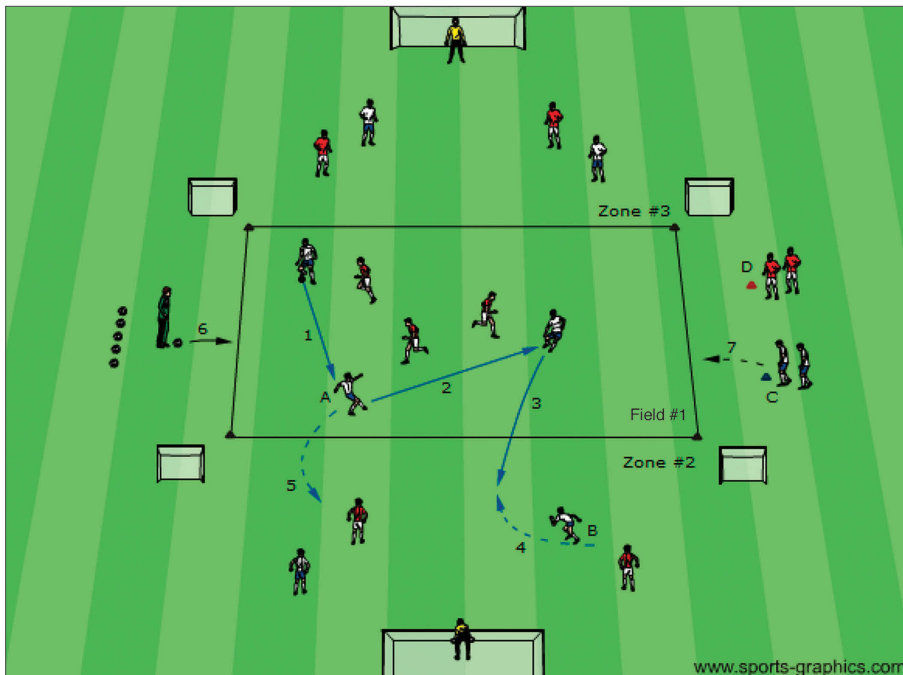
Execution

The RED team (see player A) and the BLUE team (see player B) each have three players on the field. Four players are positioned off the field and can only be passed to by the team currently in possession. The team in possession (see player A) attempts to keep the ball within the own ranks with the help of the outside players and, in doing so, tries to switch play to the short sides of the field through player C. The outside players can signal their availability to receive a pass along the entire length of their side (see player c). As soon as the ball goes out of bounds, the coach brings a new ball into the game.

Variations

- ★ Limit touches for outside players.
- ★ Limit touches for field players.
- ★ Specify 2 or 3 mandatory touches for the player in possession.
- ★ Specify the free leg (left/right) for outside players.
- ★ Organize as a competition: Which team switches play most often?

1.1.15 3-on-3 (against 3-on-2)

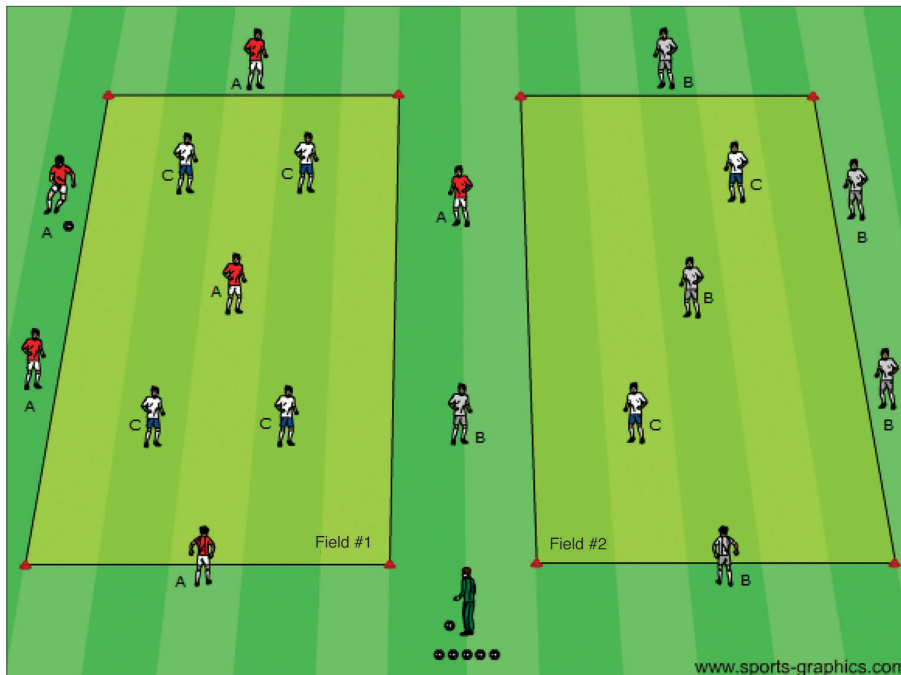
**Execution**

All players are assigned to a RED or a BLUE team. Three players from each team are positioned in the center of the field (see field #1). In addition, two players from each team are positioned in the zones in front of the goals (see zones #2 and #3). Waiting players are in positions C and D. The game always starts with 3-on-3 in the center (see field #1). The team in possession tries to play two consecutive passes (see 1 and 2) and then has the option of passing to a teammate in zone #2 or #3. Here the pass to player B in zone #2 is successfully completed (see 3). After a successful pass into an offensive zone, a player from the center can move up for 3-on-2 (here player A; see 5). The three attackers try to get a shot on the big goal. After winning the ball, the two defenders can counter on the two mini goals. As soon as a pass from the center has been successfully played into one of the two offensive zones, the coach brings a new ball into the game (see 6), and one player (here player C) completes the 3-on-3 of the waiting position in the center (see 7).

Concept

A fast passing game and, after two successful passes, a switch in play or vertical deep play is needed in the center. Each team's two players in the offensive zones must be ready for defense or offense.

1.1.16 6-on-6 plus 6 (for possession)



Execution

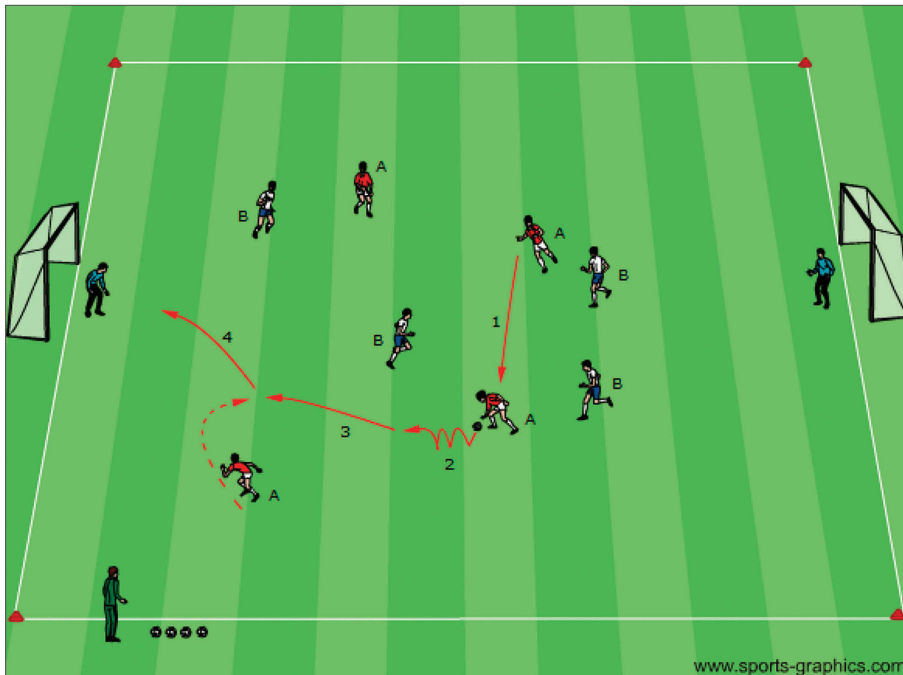
Three teams of six players each (see teams A, B, and C) spread out on a playing field that consists of two outside fields (see fields #1 and #2) and a center zone. Two teams always play together in possession (here teams A and B) against one team (here team C), which must split up between the two fields (see team C). Team A has possession and plays two-touch combinations. To switch the ball to the second field, the ball must always be passed to the players in the center zone. Only these players can pass the ball to the other field. The defending team (here team C) is always arranged in a 4:2 ratio. In doing so, four players are always on the same field as the team in possession. When there is a field switch, two players also move to the other field.

Guidelines

It is considered an error if the defending team touches the ball, a bad pass is played, the ball is passed into touch, or one player has more than two touches. After each error, the coach plays a new ball into the game, and each ball from the coach prompts a switch of play. The defending team must provoke three errors, or rather, win the ball. After winning the ball three times, the team switches positions with the team that caused the third error. The two players in the center have a special function. They decide whether the own team keeps possession or there will be a switch of play.

1.2 DRIBBLING

1.2.1 4-on-4 (dribbling and first touch)



Execution

The RED team plays 4-on-4 against the BLUE team. The players pass each other the ball by hand (see 1). At first, both goalkeepers can participate, making it initially 4-on-4 plus 2. The goal is to do a brief dribble by hand. The player in possession must bounce the ball 3 times in a row (see 2). Possession changes immediately if the ball first touches the floor or the player only bounces it once or twice. If a player is able to bounce the ball 3 times, he must then play at least one pass to a teammate (see 3). A shot on both goals using a volley or a dropkick from the hand (see 4) can follow immediately after.

Concept

One objective can be to get a player open so he has space to bounce or dribble the ball. The players should courageously use available spaces to bounce or dribble the ball. Precise and sensible first touches (if applicable with change of direction) are promising.

Variations

- ★ Prerequisites for a shot on goal: 2 or 3 additional passes after bouncing or dribbling.
- ★ Specify the shooting technique: dropkick/header/inside foot/instep.
- ★ Specify the shooting technique: direct shot out of the air without first catching the ball.
- ★ Playing with the foot: dribbling with at least four touches.