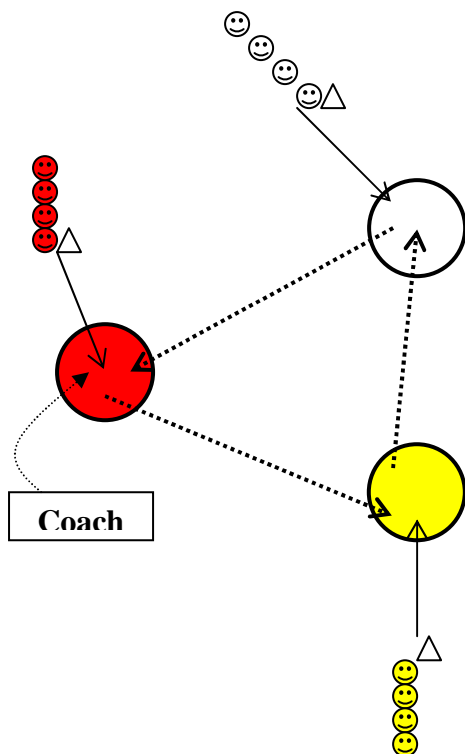


# Coaching Manual Update

## ATTACK THE CIRCLE



Set up three circles, each 10m diameter and each 25-30m from any other circle. Use flexi markers

Approximately 10m from each circle, set a cone. Players always start runs from these cones. Line up three or four players at each cone [red, yellow and white on the diagram]

The coach starts the drill by lobbing a ball into the red circle. The first red player bursts into the circle to collect the ball and **immediately** kick passes it to the yellow circle. The red player then goes to the back of the red line.

A yellow player should already be sprinting into his/her circle to receive the pass from the red. He/she then kick passes to the white circle and turns back to join...etc.etc.

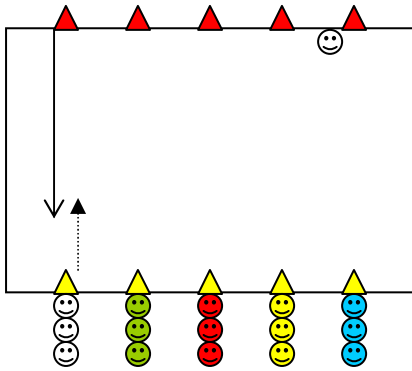
Once the red player has kicked the first ball, the coach should lob a second ball into the red circle for the next red player to start the move.

There should be no need for a third ball as the first ball will soon be on its way round to the start again.

**Remember – players must attack the circle at pace. Passers must hit the circle and NOT the player. Kickers must turn back to rejoin their own lines [i.e. no following the pass]**

**To extend this drill coaches may add a shadow runner to each of the runners and kickers. This will put pressure on the kickers and runners to be accurate and have a good first touch.**

## **RUN THE LINE/KICK THE LINE**



A very simple drill to let players practise solo running at pace and then delivering an accurate kick pass [hard foot and off the laces] to team-mate.

The groups are deliberately set close together to show players how an inaccurate kick can cause problems.

Set out a line of cones approximately 5m apart. Step out 25-30m and set another line of cones opposite the first.

Form groups of 3. The first player solo runs at pace to his/her opposite cone, turns sharply round the cone and kicks the ball to the next player in his group. This next player must attack the ball rather than wait for a nice bounce etc.

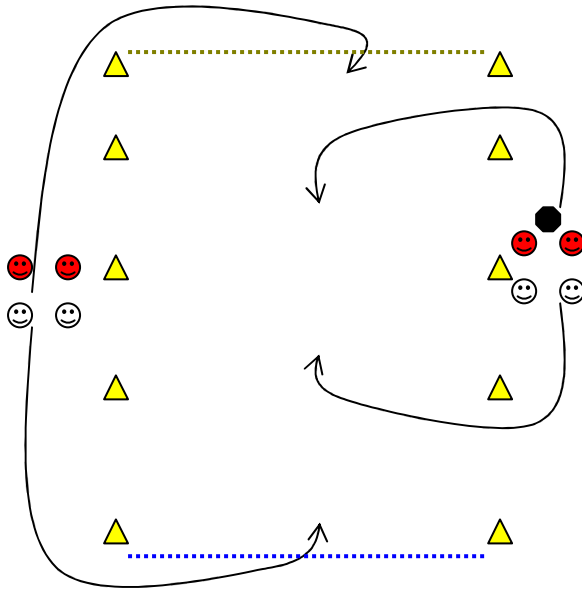
So, it is important that the kick is accurate and not sent high into the air. The player receiving the pass must learn to time his/her run and not start too early. A good idea would be to break once the solo runner has turned round the far cone.

If passes go astray, the receiver must still work to get the ball and then solo run to the proper cone etc.

***Coaches should remind players of the need to maintain good technique in solo running and in kicking as tiredness sets in.***

***Coaches may also find that letting groups race against each other can mimic match conditions.***

## STAGGERED ATTACK/DEFENCE



Set out ten cones in two lines to form a channel 30-40m wide. Each cone should be 10m from the next one in the line. At both ends of the channel place a row of markers [e.g. blue and green].

At the mid-cone on each side, start four players. Two are attackers [red] and two are defenders [white]. The reds on the right side of the channel have the ball.

On the whistle, the reds with the ball sprint to the nearest cone and turn into the channel to attack. At the same time, the whites on the same side sprint to their nearest cone and turn into the channel to tackle the advancing reds.

On the other side of the channel and at the same time, the reds and whites sprint to their 'end' cones and turn to back their team-mates up and form a second wave of defenders and attackers.

This leads to a 4 v 4 situation, with reds attempting to work the ball across the blue line of markers and the whites trying to win the ball back and work it over the green line of markers.

Encourage attacking players to make support runs and use width but remind them that they do not ALL have to touch the ball. Some runs will be to draw defenders away from the ball and create gaps.

Encourage defenders to force attackers to break two lines of defence, rather than one flat line of four.

Swap roles and partners after every turn.

## TWO-WAY PASSING

Diagram 1

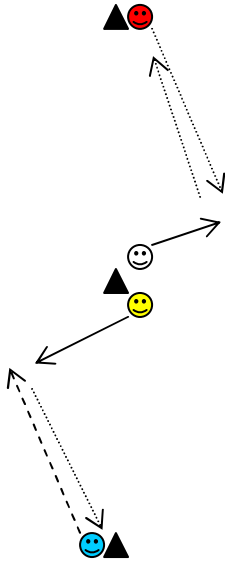
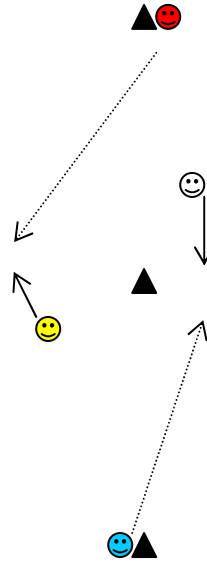


Diagram 2



Set up three cones in a line, each 30m apart.

Place one player at each of the end cones [Blue player and Red player]

Place two players the middle cone [White player and Yellow player]

Red and Blue have a football each.

Yellow and White stand back to back, Yellow facing Blue and White facing Red.

### Diagram 1

Whistle starts drill.

Yellow breaks for a kick pass from Blue, while White breaks for a pass from Red.

Yellow gathers ball and returns the ball to Blue with a fist pass.

White does the same to Red

### Diagram 2

Yellow turns immediately to move for another kick pass, this time from Red.

White turns to get a pass from Blue.

Yellow gathers ball and returns the ball to Red with a fist pass.

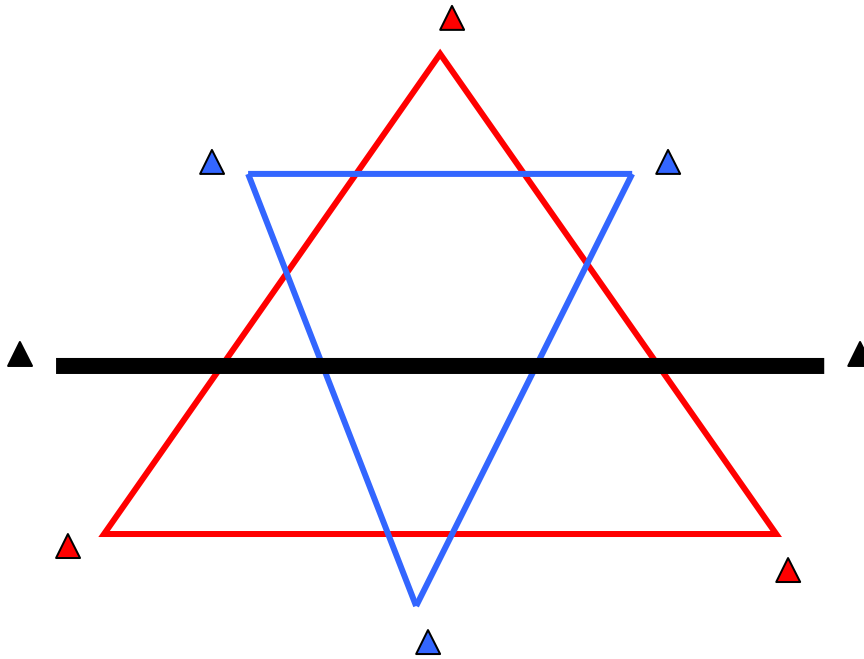
White does the same to Blue

They turn again etc. etc.

Let Yellow and White work hard for one minute, then switch Blue and Red into the middle and resume.

***Coach should emphasise that the kick passers are practising accuracy from 'free-kicks', while the runners are working on speed endurance, angles, first touch and proper fist passing from distance [not short flicks from the hand]***

## THREE STATION WARM-UP



This drill works for any number from 12 to 30. Simply increase the number of footballs used in each of the three drills.

Set up two large triangles and one line, using cones or poles. Match colours if possible. Superimpose them as shown.

The red triangle has sides 30m long. The blue triangle has sides 20m long.  
The line from black cone to black cone is 40m long.

### For 12 players:

Red Drill – place two players on the starting cone and one on each of the other two. Use one ball from start cone. Players **kick pass** and follow.

Blue Drill – place two players on the starting cone and one on each of the other two. Use one ball from start cone. Players **fist pass** and follow.

Black Drill – place two players on each cone. Use one ball. Players solo run across, fist pass and join opposite line.

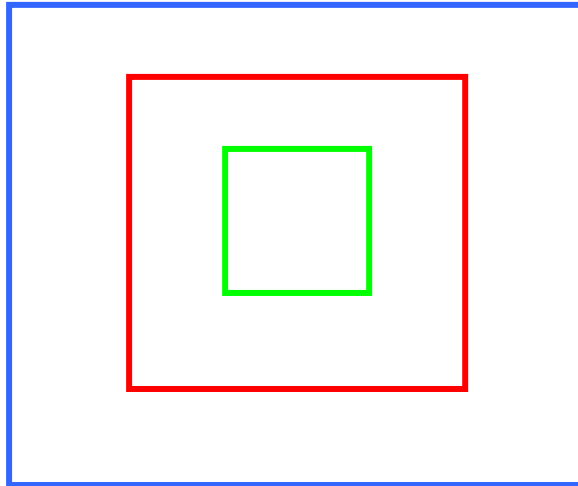
Start all three drills together and run for three minutes. Break for mobility and light stretching for one minute. Rotate groups and run for a further three minutes. Break for one minute....Rotate....etc.

### For 20+ players:

Use two balls for each drill. Start the footballs at different stations.

***Coach must emphasise the need to increase intensity, particularly in final drill.***

## THREE SQUARE SPEED ENDURANCE



This is a speed endurance drill with no ball being used. It is vital that rests are given between runs and between sets.

Set out a large square [blue] with four cones/poles at corners. Each side should be 40m long. No need to set lines of markers – just cones at corners.

Set out a middle square [red] with four cones/poles at corners. Each side should be 30m long.

Set out a small square [green] with four cones/poles at corners. Each side should be 20m long.

Place runners on each of the four corners of each square [e.g. 3 on each corner will allow 36 to take part].

All will run the perimeter of their own squares as follows:

**Jog 3 sides, then sprint 1 side.**

**Rest for 20 seconds.**

**Jog 2 sides, then sprint 2 sides.**

**Rest for 40 seconds.**

**Jog 1 side, then sprint 3 sides.**

**Rest for 60 seconds.**

**Sprint 4 sides.**

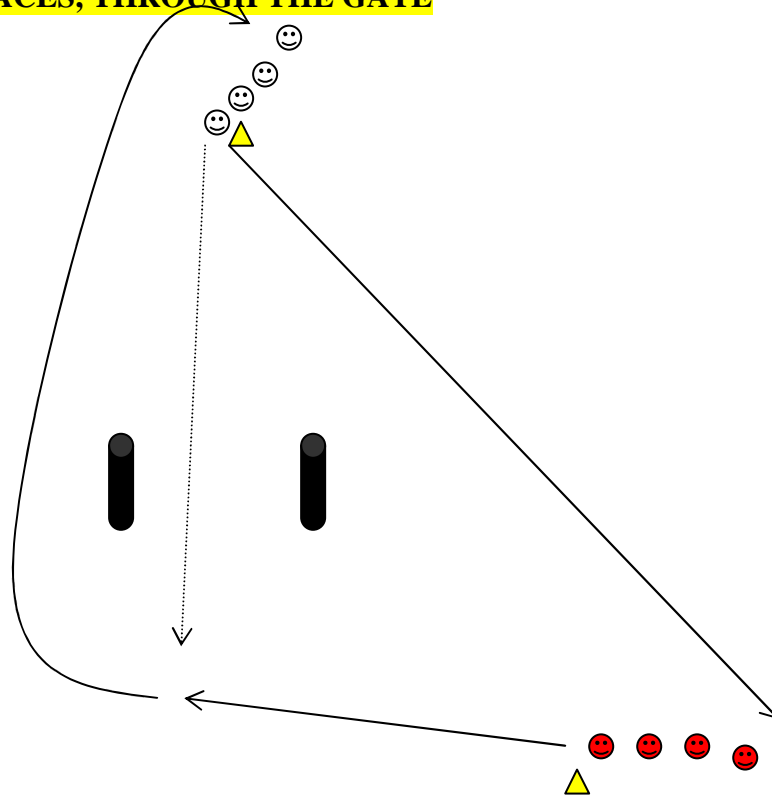
**Rest for two minutes.**

**This constitutes one set.**

Those on the small square will have jogged 120m and sprinted 200m: Those on the middle square will have jogged 180m and sprinted 300m: Runners on the large square will have jogged 240m and sprinted 400m.

Swap squares for the second and third sets, so that all players do the same work. By the end of the exercise each player will have jogged 540m and sprinted 900m. It should take no more than 20 minutes to run properly.

## OFF THE LACES, THROUGH THE GATE



Set up two posts [e.g. rounders posts] 5 metres apart. This is the gate.  
Set out one cone, facing the gate, 10-20m away.  
Put the second cone on the other side of the gate and offset by 10-15m [see diagram].

Four players at first cone – each with a ball; four at second cone – no footballs

First Red calls for a pass. White kick passes through the gate for Red to run onto the pass and take it a pace [ball must be kicked through the gate – NOT directly at the receiver].

Red gathers the ball and solo runs left of the gate to join the White line.  
White follows the kick and runs left of the gate to join Red line.

Once the gate is clear each time the next receiver call and the ball is kicked etc.

Run the drill for approx. 3 minutes.

***Coaches must stress the need for players to work at pace, maintain good kicking technique even when fatigue sets in and time runs for the pass. Kicking 'off the laces' is best [i.e. toe down, head down when the ball is struck]***

***After a rest, change the angle of the receiver's run, by shifting the second cone to a different spot.***

## CALL THE COLOUR

# H



Set the coloured cones 15-30m from goals and 3m apart.

Set out a line of markers 3m behind the coloured cones.

Set a single cone 15m behind the markers.

Start 4 players [each with a ball] at the single cone and 4 players near the goals.

First player solo runs from the white cone towards the line.

As he/she reaches the line of markers the coach calls a colour [red, yellow or blue].

Player must react quickly to shoot for a point from that cone.

The shot for a point is the signal for the next player to start a solo run etc. etc.

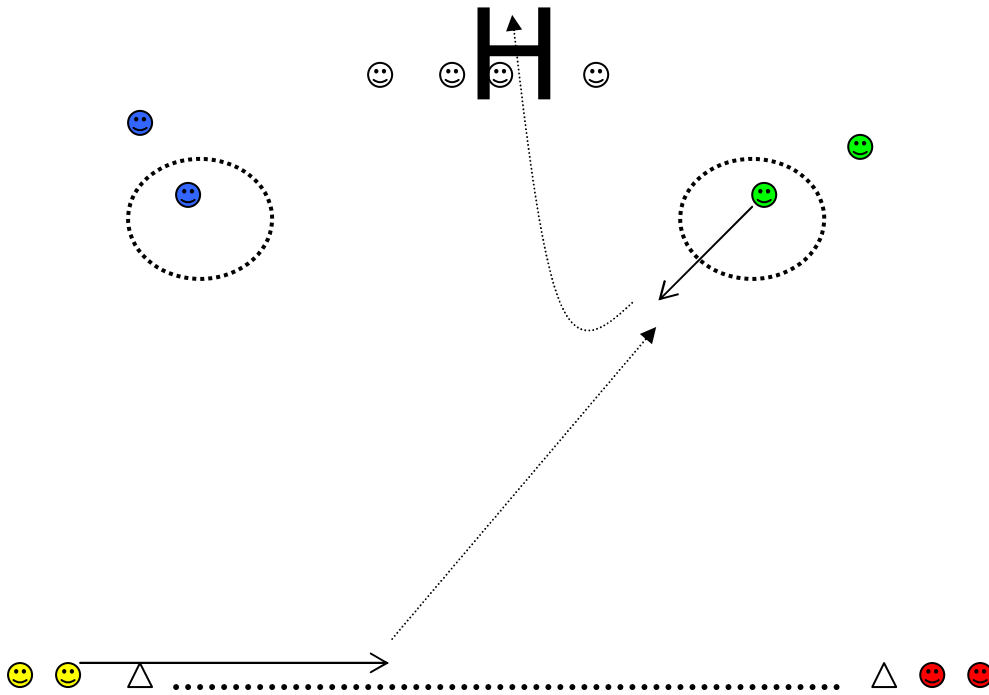
Players near the goal simply retrieve and return footballs to those players taking shots. Rotate groups after 5 minutes.

This drill helps players work on the quick reactions needed to make space for a shot. Coaches should encourage players to use left and right feet when shooting, rather than try to hit awkward shots off the outside of the boot.

***Remember – head down, toe down.***



## LATE RUN & SCORE



Set up two circles of markers – each 5m diameter and about 10-15m from goal.  
Set out a line of markers between two cones – 30m long and 40-60m from goal.  
Take 12 players and make 3 groups of 4.

On the whistle, the first yellow player solos along the line.  
Coach calls 'NOW' and the player turns quickly to kick pass towards the first green player who breaks from the circle.  
The green player takes the ball, turns quickly and shoots.

The shot is the signal for the first red player to solo, coach calls 'NOW', red turns to pass to the first blue etc. etc.

Passers [reds and yellows] simply cross over each time along the line.  
Shooters [greens and blues] swap shooting positions each time.  
Retrievers [whites] return the footballs to passers.

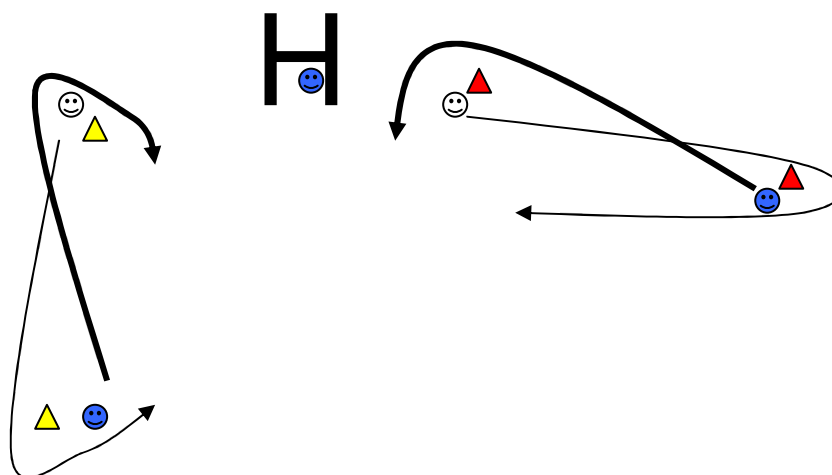
Groups swap every few minutes.

*Coaches must emphasise the following:*

*The shooters may jog about inside the circle, waiting for the call and kick. They must work hard on holding for as long as possible and then breaking out of the circle as late as possible [i.e. just as the ball is about to be kicked]. This is done to simulate good forward play, where he/she has one chance to break away from a marker.*

**All runs, passes and shots must be AT MATCH PACE, once players have become accustomed to the drills.**

## SAVE OR SCORE?



Set up two yellow cones – one on the end line about 10m from the goalpost, the other about 25m from it, straight out the pitch.

Set up two red cones – one on the end line about 10m from the goalpost, the other 25m from it, running at a sharp angle towards the point where the 13m line meets the sideline.

The two white players are attackers and start on the end line cones. The blue players are made up of the goalkeeper and two defenders. The defenders start on the outfield cones.

The white player on the yellow cone has the ball.

On the whistle, the whites sprint from the endline cones to the outfield cones and turn to attack. The white player with the ball should solo run at pace. At the same time, the blues sprint from the outfield cones to the endline ones and turn to defend.

The thin black arrows represent the white movement and the thick black arrows show the blue movement.

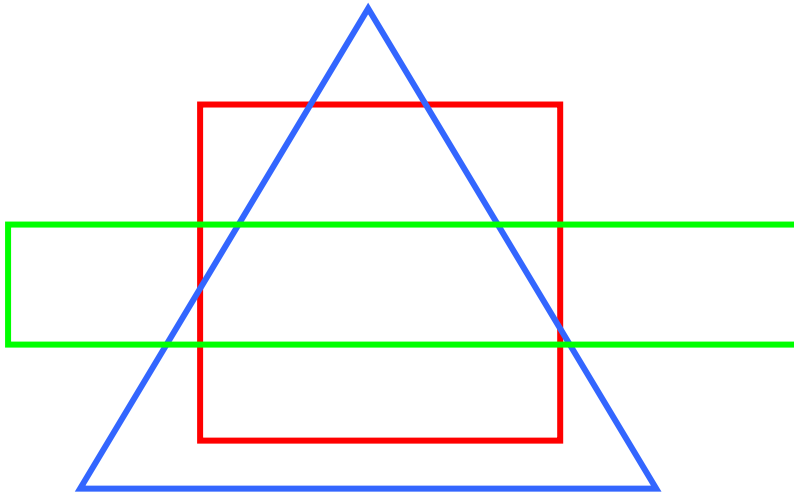
Whites try to combine [or perhaps not] to score a goal past the 'keeper. Blues must work out how best to defend and stop this.

The move is over when the whites score or hit a wide or the goalkeeper saves or the defenders intercept.

Have another group of 4 players ready to start [or even a couple of groups] when this move finishes. Swap roles and positions after each attempt.

**Coaches should watch how players work together. This usually shows up lots of faults re. where to move, when to move, change of pace, how to protect the goal, who to mark or tackle etc. Coaches must take time to help players improve in these areas.**

## **SPEED ENDURANCE MIX**



Use cones or poles to set out three overlapping running tracks as shown:

Place four red cones to form a square with 30m sides.

Place three blue cones to form a triangle with 40m sides.

Place four green cones to form a rectangle 50m long x 10m wide.

Each track, therefore, is 120m long.

Divide your squad into 3 groups. Let's say you have 10 in each group.

Start the red group on the four corners of the square [2, 2, 3, 3]

Start the blue group on the three points of the triangle [3, 3, 4]

Start the green group on the four corners of the rectangle [2, 2, 3, 3]

On the whistle everybody completes 1 lap of their track as fast as possible. Run them clockwise. This will take approx. 25-30 seconds. **THIS RUN IS CALLED A REP.**

Let them rest for a full minute on the clock as they walk to the next shape and colour [e.g. reds to blue / blue to green / green to red].

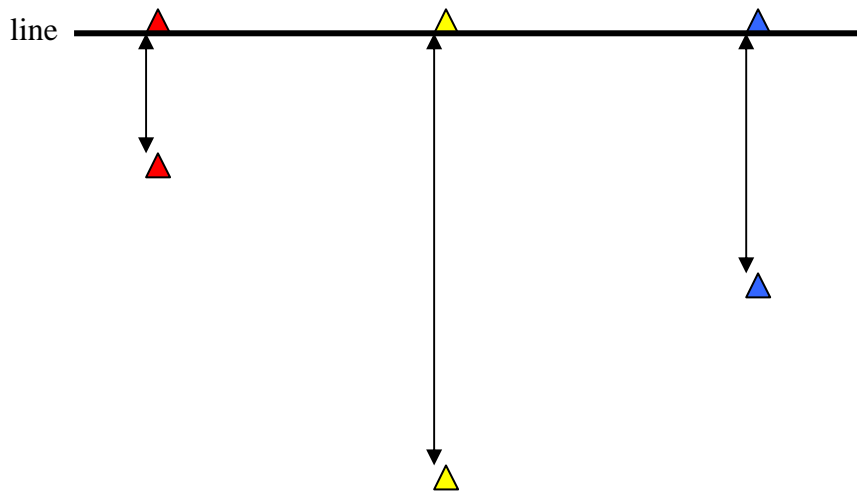
Run them again on the whistle and rest for a minute.

Switch once more and run again to finish the three colours and shapes. Each player will have covered 360m. **THIS IS CALLED A SET.** [3 reps in a set.]

Rest everyone for a full two minutes this time and then repeat the set, complete with proper rest periods. Run them anticlockwise this time and think about swapping players between groups to break up mates.

***This type of overlapping speed endurance drill has one main advantage. Players are unaware of how well other groups are doing, so they work harder. Coaches must remember that any work like this is best done EARLY in the session and with proper rests between reps and sets.***

## STAGGERED RACES [for Speed/Speed Endurance]



A simple drill to work on different mixes of sprints and turns.

Space out three cones along a sideline, 45m line or end line [red, yellow and blue].  
Step out 14m exactly from the red and set another red.  
Step out 25m exactly from the blue and set another blue.  
Step out 40m exactly from the yellow and set another yellow.

Let's say you have 12 players working on the speed drill.  
The first four should stand at the red cone that is NOT on the line.  
The next four should stand at the yellow cone that IS on the line.  
The last four should stand at the blue cone that is NOT on the line.

On the whistle all three groups race as follows:

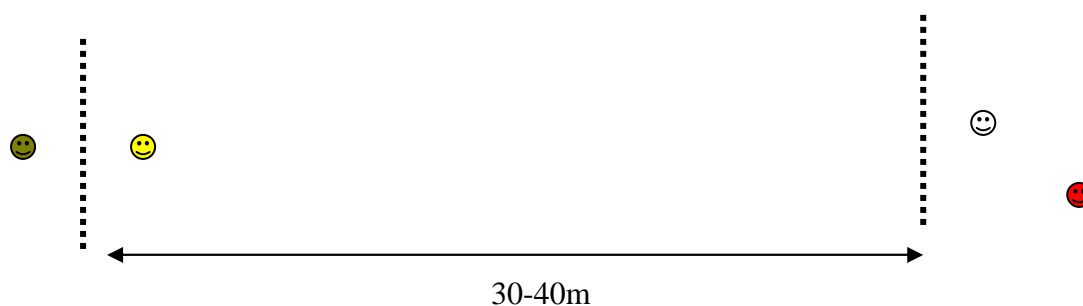
Reds sprint 5 legs [in-out-in-out- in...to finish on the line]  
Yellows sprint 2 legs [out-in...to finish on the line]  
Blues sprint 3 legs [ in-out-in...to finish on the line].

Reds will have run 70m, blues will have run 75m and yellows will have covered 80m.  
There should be a close finish to the race because reds may have the shorter distance, but they have four turns to make; blues have two turns to make, while yellows have the longest run, but only one turn to make.

Rest for 1 minute between races [reps], switch colours and run three races altogether to make a set. [each player will have covered 225m in a set]. Run two sets.

***Coaches must remember that any work like this is best done EARLY in the session and with proper rests between reps and sets.***

## **EVADE & PASS**



Set out two lines of fleximarkers 30-40m apart.

Choose 4 players. Green and White are teammates. Yellow and Red are teammates.

Green has the ball. Yellow faces Green from across the line. White waits for Green's pass on the far side of the other line. Red rests.

Start with Green trying to evade Yellow and hit a good kick pass to White, who moves out to gather the ball. Green should use a feint and side-step or a roll to find space to deliver a pass. White must watch for this and time his/her run to receive the ball.

When White collects, he/she turns sharply to first pass over the line of markers to Red and then stands facing Red as an opponent [just as Yellow did for Green].

Meanwhile, Yellow has moved to the far side of the other line of markers and Green rests.

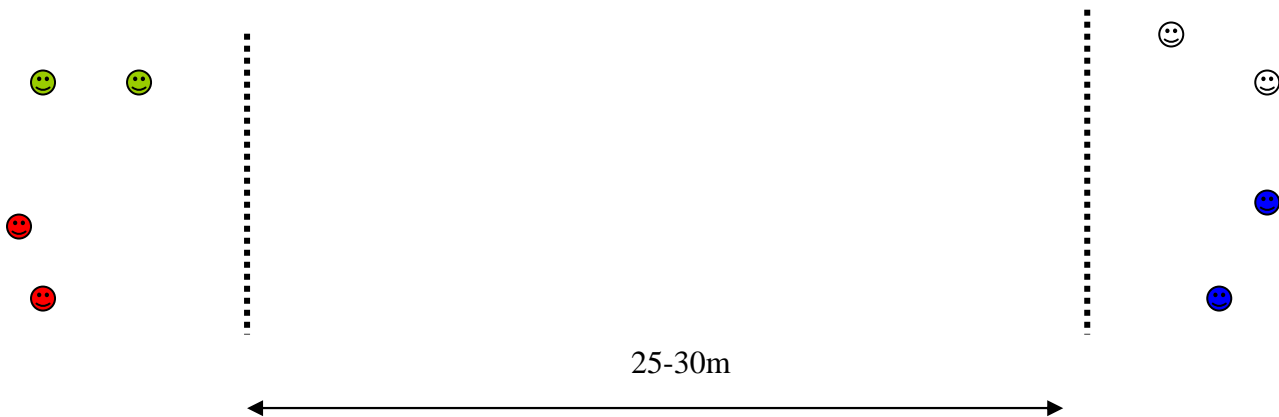
Red evades White to find space for a long kick pass to Yellow, who moves out to gather the ball.

White turns and first passes to Green, etc. etc.

After a couple of minutes, swap roles and partners to give all players the opportunity to practise evasion, kick passing, timing support runs, receiving the ball cleanly and turning sharply.

***Coaches must insist that passers evade at speed. They should not let players away with simply ballooning the ball into the air to cover the 30-40m. Coaches must also watch for receivers who break too early [when the kicker hasn't even made space.]***

## CROSS THE GAP



Four pairs of player, two on either side of the gap; greens play with whites, blues with reds.

Start a ball with the reds and a ball with the whites. Red hits a kick pass across the gap [no high ball] and a blue receives. The other blue player runs to support the receiver [off the shoulder] and take a first pass on the burst. He/she must immediately kick pass across the gap to a red receiver etc. etc.

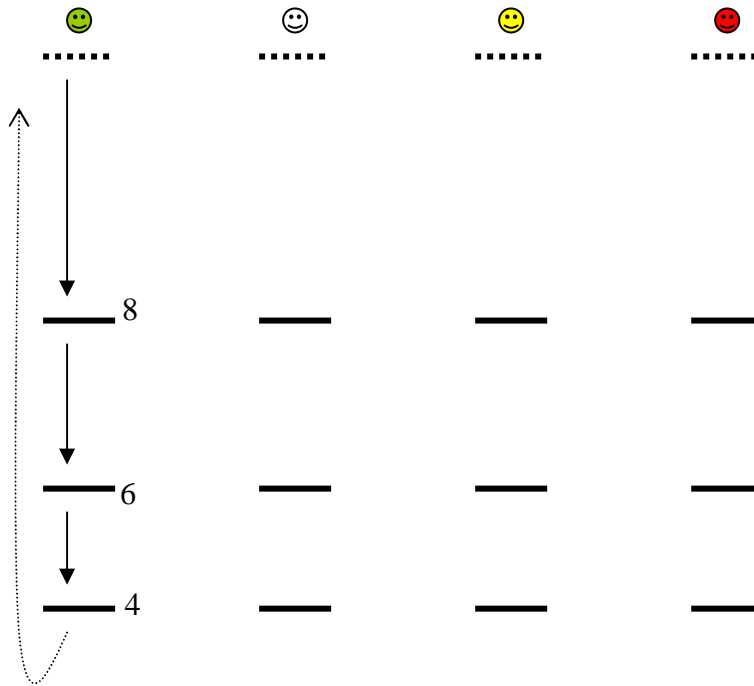
As this goes on, the same happens between the greens and whites.

The keys to the success of this drill are:

- The passes must be hit properly [driven across the gap, no more than 2-3m above the ground]
- As the pass is hit, the players must decide quickly who will receive and who will support
- The support runner must learn to peel off and make a late run to take the ball on the burst, rather than stay too close to the receiver when the ball arrives.

***Coaches will find that the latter is the hardest to coach. Support runners tend to run towards the receiver even when the ball is in flight. It often runs counter to their instincts to actually move away to create a distance and then burst when it is most effective.***

## SPRINTS & STEPS



A simple drill to work on different mixes of sprints and steps [fast feet].

Set up the following pattern and repeat it as often as you see fit. The diagram shows 4 of these patterns.

Set out a short line of fleximarkers as a start line [e.g. four of them].

Step out 20m and lay a pole [e.g. bamboo stick or training pole – 2m long] on its flat as shown.

Step another 15m and do the same. Step another 10m and do likewise.

Start a player behind the line of markers. On the whistle he/she sprints the 20m to the pole and steps rapidly over and back across the pole 8 times [i.e. 4 over and 4 back].

He/she then races on over the next 15m and steps over and back 6 times at the next pole. The last sprint is 10m long and there are 4 steps to complete at the final pole.

This is a 45m run, punctuated by 18 fast feet rep. Rest period is afforded by the walk back to the start.

When the first player in the drill has cleared the first pole, the next in line may start.

If a coach sets up 4 such courses [as in the diagram] up to 20 players may be accommodated.

Coaches must stress the need for 100% sprint work over all three distances. Players will tend to flag on the last leg.

A good idea is to run 3 sets of these [3 runs in a set], with a drinks break of one minute between each set

## FORWARD / BACKWARD LINES



A simple drill to work on different mixes of forward and backward sprints. Line four players up at the cones as shown. In front of them lie lines of fleximarkers [red, blue, black and green for the purposes of the diagram]. Make sure to vary the distances between each line.

The coach calls a combination of colours and the players must sprint to the colours in the order called. Should one of the colours mean that players have to run back to reach it, then this sprint should be done backwards [i.e. still facing forward – good for hamstrings and to copy back pedalling during a game].

So, the coach calls **BLACK, BLUE, GREEN**". Players sprint to cross the black line, run backwards to cross the blue line and finish with a forward sprint to cross the green line. In this example the players will cover 75m in total.

Calling the colours **'BLUE, RED, GREEN, BLACK'** will see each player cover 95m per run.

Rest is based on the walk back to the start and lining up behind other groups. The second group of four players may run their combination as the first group walks back [leave ample room for this].

This drill is best run with 12-16 players and early in the session [e.g. after an extensive warm-up with the ball].



## **WIPEOUT [Game]**

A game to try as part of a series:

Choose two teams [e.g. 7v7 up to 15v15], bib them and adapt the size of the pitch to suit.

The game is normal Gaelic football with one twist. To win the game, a team must score 3 times consecutively [without their scores being interrupted by an opposition score]. Should the opposition score before 3 consecutive scores are taken, any scores earned are wiped out and the opposition are now deemed to be winning 1-0.

e.g. Team A scores a point and then a goal. They are now winning 2-0 in scores taken. Team B scores a point. Team A's two scores are wiped out and Team B leads 1-0.

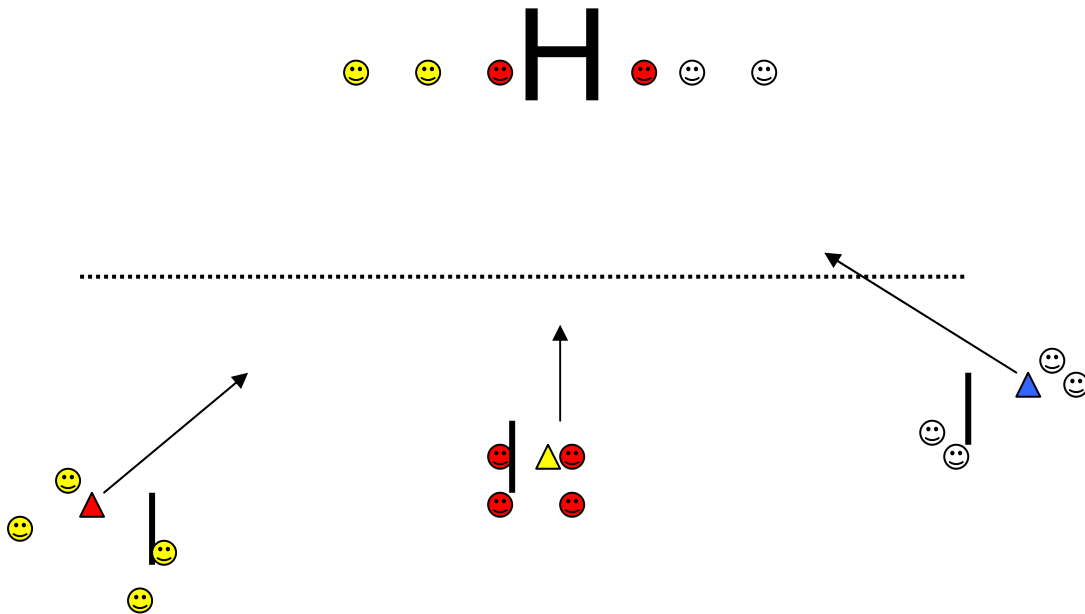
The first team to reach score consecutive times wins the game and goes 1-0 up in the series. Run the series to suit [e.g. series is over when one team wins five games].

A modification of this involves delaying the 'wipeout' element until a certain number of scores has been reached.

e.g. Teams play first to get five scores on the board, but 'wipeout' rules only apply after 4 scores. So, both teams keep playing and scoring as normal until one reaches four scores. Should this team manage a fifth without the opposition scoring first, it wins the game. However, should the opposition score, the four scores are wiped out.

***Why bother play this game? It focuses players much more and leads to a higher degree of intensity. Players are keener to defend, to find space, to shoot sooner and to turn the ball over.***

**STEP, SPACE, SCORE**



**A drill to let players practise soloing towards goal, stepping into the tackler to make room and then shooting for a point:**

Organise three groups of players [e.g. 6 reds, 6 yellows and 6 whites].  
Take two from each group and send them behind the goals to retrieve footballs.  
Set out three cones about 30m from goal and at different angles. Beside each cone place a pole. Groups choose a cone/pole each from which to start. Each pair should have a football.

Focus on the yellow group on the diagram. One player takes a ball and stands at the cone. Another stands at the pole. The remaining two wait their turn to do the same. The solo runner [player at cone] and the shadower [player at pole] run at pace towards the goal. The shadower runs tight to the solo runner but does not tackle.

At some point along the run the solo runner must step into the shadower to make room for the shot. The shadower must provide stiff resistance without charging or shouldering. The solo runner must make the shoulder-to-shoulder contact. Once room has been made, the solo runner must shoot for a point.

Both players follow on to the end line. The ball is retrieved by the yellows behind the goal and carried out to the start. Meanwhile the other two yellows who were waiting their turn [at the cone/pole] start the exercise.

Reds and whites do the likewise at the same time.

***The key is to ensure that solo runners do not step away from the shadower and are not forced to change the angle of their runs just because an opponent is running alongside them [most players do this subconsciously and end up kicking the ball wide]. This drill is designed to work against those instincts.***

## **THREE TO SCORE**

**One piece of Gaelic game analysis suggests that winning teams keep up an average of at least one score for every three times they take possession of the ball in the opposition half of the pitch. Anything less often spells defeat.**

**This game is designed to simulate such conditions and force players to work to keep up the scoring rate.**

**Set up a pitch to suit numbers on each team, and then run a line of fleximarkers along the halfway line.**

**Let players take part in a game with normal rules.**

**Point out that each team STARTS with a score of 3.**

**For each time that a team attacks [i.e. takes possession in the opposition half] and does not score, 1 is taken off the starting score of 3.**

**The first team to have its score reduced to 0 loses that game [usually one of a series of games set by the coach].**

**If a team scores before the 3 becomes 0, the rate is maintained and a new '3' is awarded.**

**e.g.**

**Team A misses with its first shot and has its score reduced to '2'.**

**The next attack from Team A is turned over and the score is cut to '1'.**

**Team A now has one last chance to score.**

**Team A scores on the next attack. The team's score is set at '3' again and the game goes on.**

**So, each time a team scores, the score is reset at '3'.**

**Try this game and see how it focuses players. At first you may find it leads to a lot of tight fist passing as players attempt to keep possession. However, they should learn quickly that such a method of play will allow the opposition to regroup and spoil attacks more easily. Soon they'll find that a more direct style of play [with quick support to front players] is best.**

## **SCORES AND TURNOVERS**

Here's a game to focus players on working harder to turnover the ball during play. It is particularly useful for coaches who are keen to improve forwards' work rate when the opposition has the ball.

Play normal Gaelic rules. Set up a pitch to suit the number of players. Run a line of fleximarkers across the halfway line.

To win one game in a mini-series [e.g. best of five] a team may either score four times or turn the ball over twice inside the opposition half.

A 'turnover' is only awarded for an interception during play, a tackle that wins possession, a block that leads to possession.

If a team manages to turn the ball over, play does not stop; rather it continues until the next break in the game [e.g. score, wide, free, sideline]

So, a team that finds itself 3-0 down in scores and with 1 turnover earned, may still win the game if one of its players forces one more turnover in the opposition half of the pitch.

Such a situation will also highlight the need for defenders to make sure the ball is not lost inside the defending half of the pitch.

If players respond by working a tight fist-passing game, they may find that this leads to even more opportunities for the opposition to turn the ball over.

If they decide to simply kick the ball into the other half to avoid the turnover, it invites another attack from the opposition team.

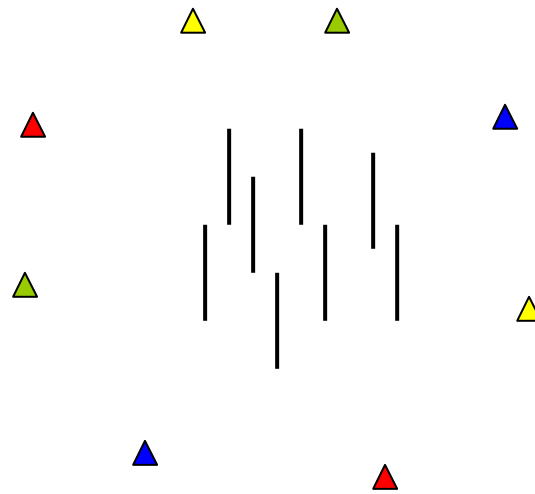
The right balance must be found between keeping possession and delivering a telling pass into the other half for a teammate.

**To those who complain that the scoring team is being unduly punished, remember...the game is deliberately designed to force a higher work rate from attackers when opposing defenders have the ball. Forwards are being given an incentive to win the ball back.**

Coaches are free to change the ratio of scores to turnovers [e.g. to win, a team needs 3 scores or 2 turnovers].

## **TOUCH & TURN**

A speed/reaction exercise for 4-6 players in a small area:



Set out 8 tall poles in a random fashion, with approximately 2m between each. Around these, in a circle, set 8 cones. The shortest distance between any pole and any cone must be 5m.

Ask a group of players [4-6 in number] to stand inside the 'poles' area. On the whistle, each player must sprint to a cone, touch it... sprint to a pole, turn sharply around it, sprint to a different cone, touch it.....sprint to a different pole etc. etc.

Players must run 'head up', scanning the area ahead and about them for other players and making sure they use evasion to avoid collisions.

Coaches may wish to compare the runs to those in a match where a ball breaks and a player has to make a 5m burst to get to it....or to a situation where an opponent is making a sharp turn and has to be tracked.

The coach should time the exercise to run for 20 seconds. After 20 seconds, the group should rest, while a second group takes up the challenge.

As groups work through the exercise, the coach should reduce the time by 5 seconds each time:

1<sup>st</sup> run – 20 seconds

2<sup>nd</sup> run – 15 seconds

3<sup>rd</sup> run – 10 seconds

4<sup>th</sup> run – 5 seconds

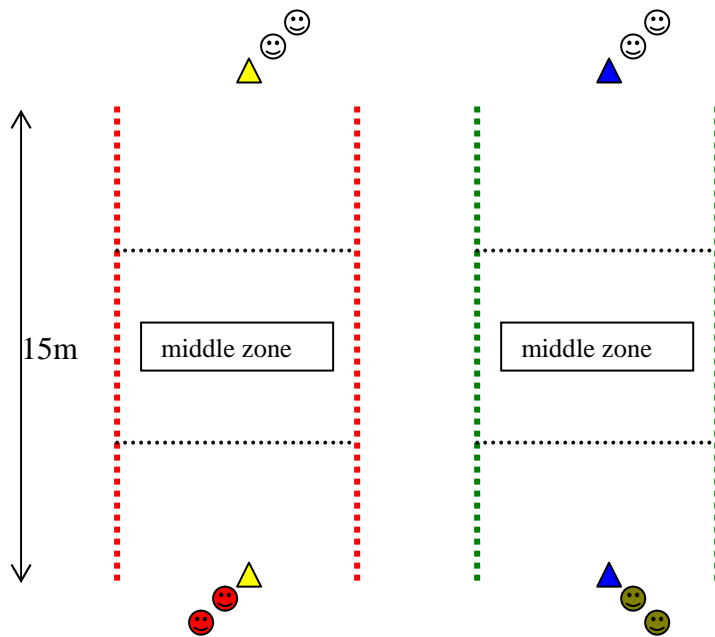
5<sup>th</sup> run – 10 seconds

6<sup>th</sup> run – 15 seconds

7<sup>th</sup> run – 20 seconds

**By the end of the exercise each player will have completed 7 sprint patterns over 95 seconds [with recovery built in].**

## FRONT TACKLE [DELAY & DENY]



An exercise to work on closing down a player on the ball, in order to delay him and deny him space; it will also promote use of evasion techniques in a small area.

Set out two channels of fleximarkers, each 5m wide and 15m long [shown as RED and GREEN on diagram]. Split each channel into thirds with markers set across [shown as black on diagram]. At the ends of each channel, line up two players [8 in total].

First red player solo runs at pace into middle zone, trying to make it through and across to the far zone. First white player moves to meet and delay the runner in the middle zone, trying to force him outside the channel area.

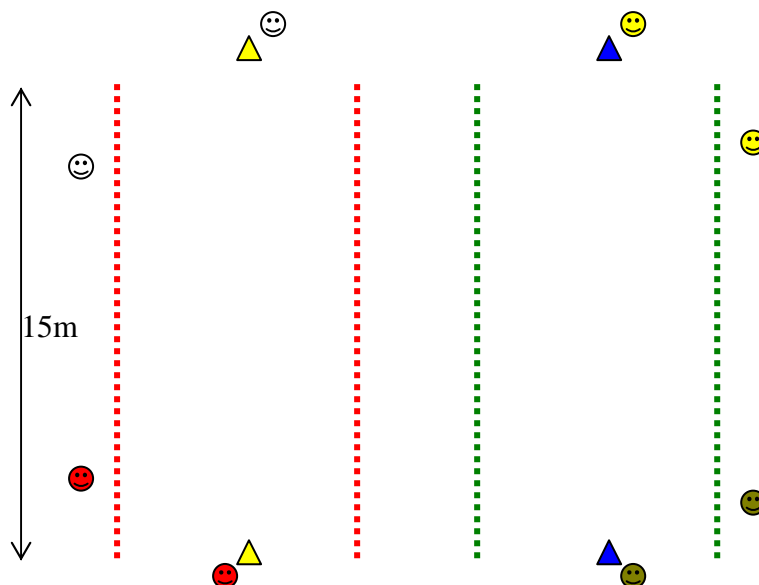
The tackler must delay the runner and deny space, rather than rush headlong into a challenge that leaves him floundering and the runner making it past to the far zone.

The tackler makes most mistakes when foot position is not right and he is easily brushed aside or evaded. Too many players stand with feet planted firmly to the ground in a wide stance.

They must work to keep on their toes, moving freely to counter any moves by the runner; they must work to stay 'on the front foot once contact is made [i.e. same body angle needed to push a car].

If a player breaks through to the far zone or the tackler forces him out of the channel legally or if the tackler holds up his progress for five seconds in the middle zone, the move is over. Players step aside to allow the next group of two meet the challenge. The same pattern is repeated in the green zone. Coaches should run the exercise for approximately 5 minutes.

## NEAR HAND TACKLE [DISPOSSESS]



An exercise to work on **dispossessing** a player carrying the ball:

Set out two channels of fleximarkers, each 5m wide and 15m long [shown as RED and GREEN on diagram]. At the ends of each channel, start a player with the ball [e.g. red player at the yellow cone on the diagram]. Start the tackler outside the channel and about 5m along it [e.g. red player shown outside channel on the diagram]

First red player solo runs at pace in a straight line, trying to make it through and across to the far end of the channel. Second red player moves to meet and dispossess the solo runner, trying to knock the ball away with the **near hand**. [i.e. the hand nearest to the opponent - on the diagram, the red tackler will try to dispossess using his/her right hand.]

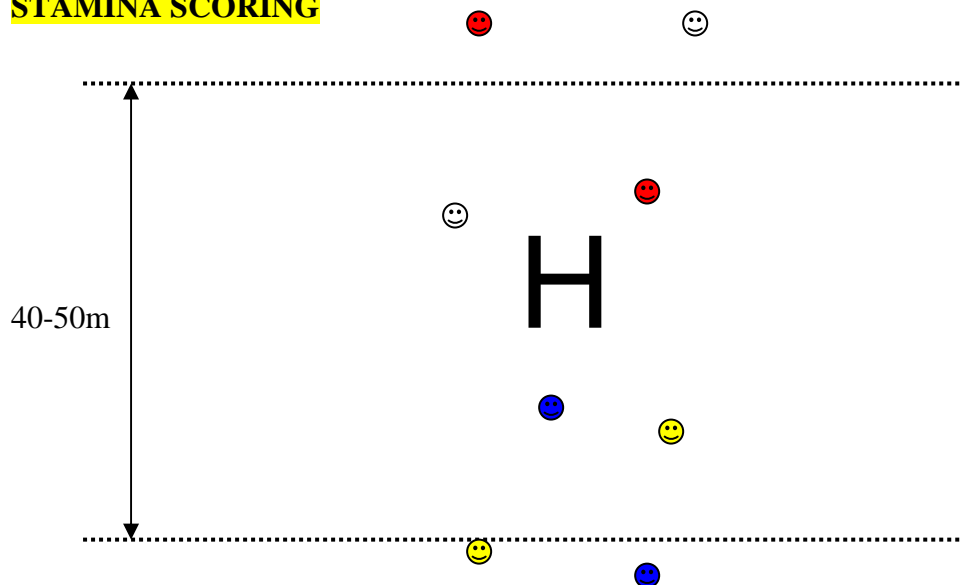
The tackler must work hard to get the timing of the tackle right, rather than rush headlong into a challenge that leaves him floundering and the runner making it past to the far end.

The tackler makes most mistakes when foot position is not right and he is easily brushed aside or evaded. Too many players run alongside the solo runner and then try to reach for the ball by bending forward or slapping at it while it is held tightly.

Tacklers must work to keep on their toes, and strike for the ball while it is being toe-tapped or bounced. The tackling hand blocks the path of the ball as it comes back up to the solo runner.

Once the channel is clear the two white players run the same exercise. In the next channel, greens and yellows do likewise.

## STAMINA SCORING



**A drill to let players practise receiving, passing, support running and scoring from distance....all with constant movement. Players must work to maintain good technique as fatigue sets in.**

Set two lines of fleximarkers with a distance of 40-50m between [set to suit ability]. Midway between these lines, place one portable goal.

Take eight players [or up to 12 if there is room] and pair them up. Two pairs work on one side of the goals while the other two pairs work on the opposite side. [yellow and blues across from reds and whites]

Split each pair as follows; one player inside the line of markers and closer to the goal...the other player outside the line of markers.

Use four footballs. Give a ball to each of the players outside the lines of markers. These are the shooters. Inside the lines are the four receivers/passers.

The exercise must start with shooters kicking for points. Receivers gather footballs and turn to pass to their partners who have stayed outside the lines [e.g. blue shooter kicks for a point...red receiver gathers and turns to pass to red shooter].

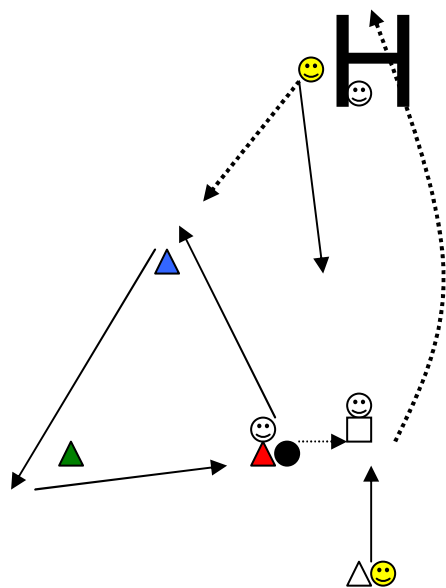
Once a receiver has passed the ball he/she must run outside the line of markers to become the shooter. This means the shooter has to take the place of the receiver and run inside the line after shooting.

***NB This only begins when the receivers have gathered and passed the footballs for the first time.***

***Shooters and receivers keep alternating for the full two minutes of the exercise. The drill must be done at pace. Shooters must take passes cleanly and kick immediately for points. Any runs must be sharp. The drill is best done when opposite pairs work together. [e.g. reds work with blues, while yellows work with whites]***



## SCORES & SPRINTS [May 2005]



Use four cones and a tackle bag to set up the drill. Start with the tackle bag and place it 25-30m from goal. Place the red cone 2m to the side of the tackle bag. Now create a triangle with the blue and green cones [10x10x10m triangle]. Finally place the white starting cone 8-10m in front of the tackle bag.

During the exercise, the two yellow players will work together, as will the two whites.

Start the ball from the feeder at the red cone. The yellow player at white cone makes a run towards the tackle bag. Just before he/she hits and rolls off the bag, the feeder should pop a quick fist pass to him/her.

Player in possession now breaks the tackle and shoots for a point or a goal [use the goalkeeper to call the type of shot]. The shooter runs on to take up a position behind the goal

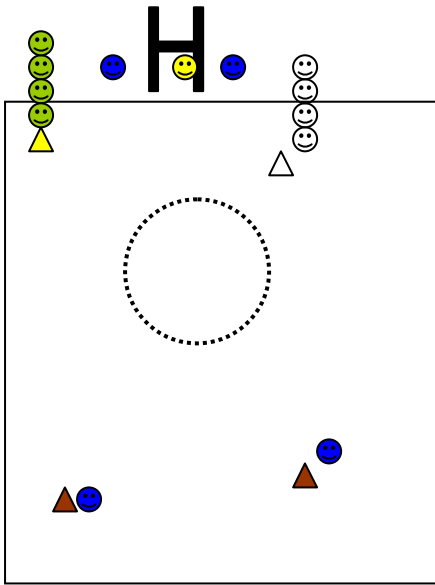
The yellow player behind the goal retrieves the shot, and passes it immediately towards the blue cone. This is where the feeder should move quickly to collect the pass.

After the pass, the yellow player must sprint hard to reach the white cone. Meanwhile the feeder solo runs at speed from the blue cone to the green cone and back to the red cone to get ready to feed the ball again. The exercise is now ready to repeat.

The work rate of the two yellow players has to be high, as it has to be for the feeder. The player on the tackle bag should provide proper resistance to make the drill work.

***The diagram shows this exercise set up for 4 players [+ goalkeeper]. Coaches should be able to replicate this set-up to the left and right of this to accommodate 12 players in total [where is the rest of the squad? – working at another exercise elsewhere on the pitch! – do not pack this drill with too many players or the focus will be lost]***

## BEAT THE BLOCK?



A drill set up to allow forwards to come out from close to the end line, collect the ball and beat an attempted block to shoot while still in the scoring zone.

Set up a circle of markers in front of goal [approx. 20m diameter and centred 20m from goal]. This is the scoring/blocking zone.

Start four shooters on the yellow cone set wide to the left of goal and approx. 5m from the end line.

Start four blockers on the white cone set to the right of goal and approx. 8m from the end line.[the blockers must be a little closer to the circle than the shooters].

Start two passers on the red cones [give them a supply of five or six footballs] and two retrievers behind the goal.

Each passer takes it in turn to kick an angled pass to a shooter who sprints into the scoring zone. At the same time, the blocker breaks into the circle but lets the shooter take possession

The shooter takes the ball, turns quickly and attempts to score a point. The blocker tries to get in a block rather than a tackle. The shooter must try to take the ball and shoot quickly, rather than jink and turn for a while.

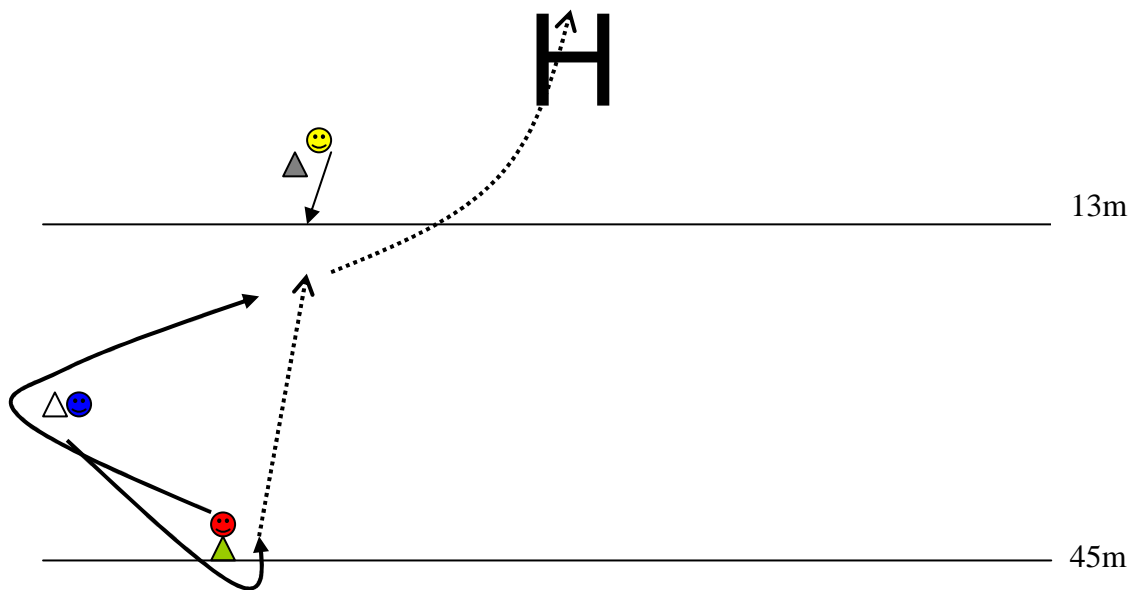
The shooter should then break off to join the blocking group on the other side of goal, while the blocker becomes a shooter.

The coach rotates groups every few minutes. The passers may switch with the retrievers after a couple of minutes, then a few minutes later, the greens switch with the blues etc. etc.

The same drill may be set up with a goalkeeper who calls out instructions for some players to shoot for goal instead of points.

***The key to good blocking is still FOOTWORK – getting into the right spot to make the block is vital. Defenders must stay mobile, not dive in and push down on the ball to make the block.***

## TIMING, PACE & PRECISION



**Red** player starts with the ball.

**Red** swaps places with **Blue** at pace and passes the ball to **Blue** as they cross.

**Blue** turns sharply at the green cone and kick passes to **Yellow** player.

Meanwhile **Red** has continued his/her run to round the white cone and make a support run towards **Yellow**.

If the timing is right, **Red** will take a short pass at pace from **Yellow** and shoot for a point.

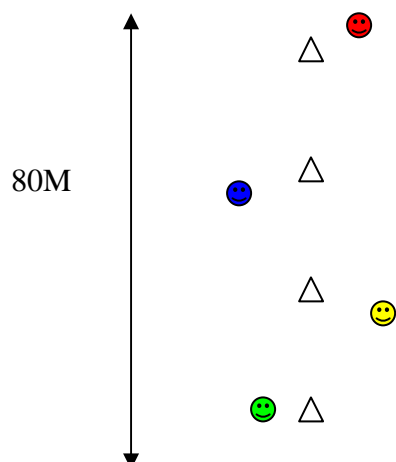
Rotation is simple. The next attempt will begin when Yellow reaches the white cone, Blue stays at the green cone and Red moves to the grey cone.

The key to proper execution is movement, change of pace and timing. **Red** must be sure that his/her run is not too early and **Yellow** must delay his/her run to receive the kick pass.

*A good way to ensure delay and make the drill more realistic is to ask **Yellow** to walk or jog in the area around the grey cone, while keeping an eye on **Blue** [who will deliver the pass]. Once the pass is on, **Yellow** must burst to gather it and lay it off to **Red**.*

**Replicate this exercise in three positions across the pitch. Work six players [2 groups of 3] at each drill and send 6 behind the goal to retrieve. This method engages 24 players.**

## MOVING CONES DRILL



***A drill to let players practise constant movement, changes of pace, receiving, turning sharply and kicking/fist passing.***

Set up four cones across the width of a football pitch [approx. 80m].  
Take four players and let each stand at a cone ONLY BEFORE THE DRILL BEGINS.

All players are instructed to keep moving left and right of their cones when not in possession. Those receiving a pass must move towards the ball to gather it, turn sharply and play it, then resume the jogging about the cone.

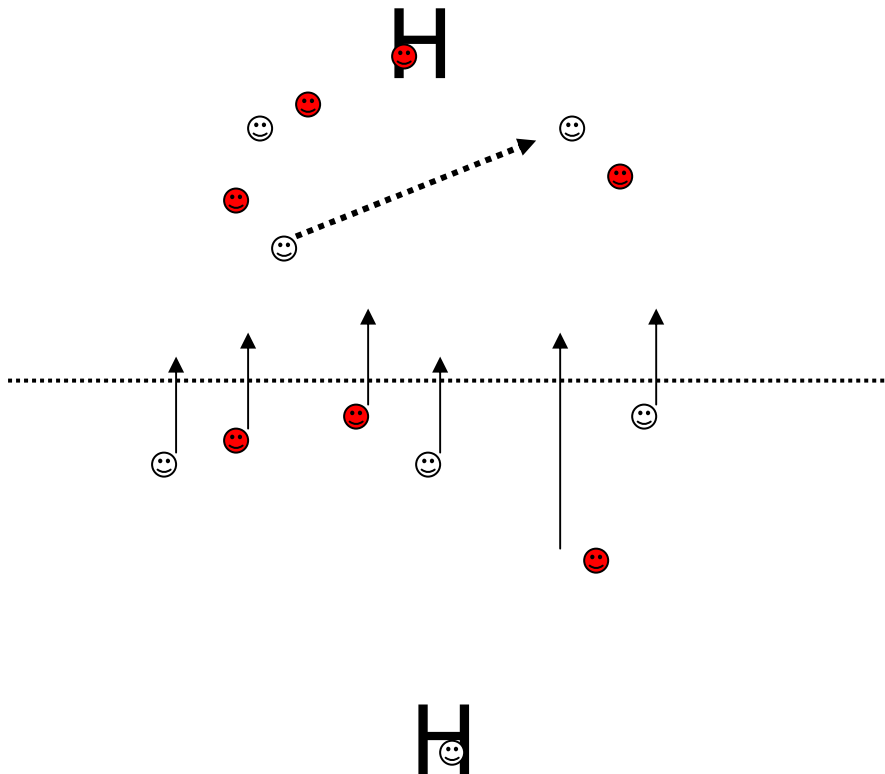
Red starts with the ball and kicks it to Yellow, who attacks the ball, gathers it and turns sharply to play it to Green.  
Green looks up and kicks to Blue, who turns and passes to Red etc. etc.

The key is to keep players moving and for receivers to indicate to the passers where they want the ball played.

Run this pattern for two minutes, then swap the two inside players [Blue and Yellow] with the two outside players [Green and Red].

Modify this drill by reducing the distance from 80m to 30m and using fist passes.  
Again, the key is total movement.

## ALL ATTACK, ALL DEFEND



A simple game, played from 5 a-side up to 15 a –side:

Set out a line of fleximarkers across the mid-point or halfway line of the pitch you have chosen to use.

The reds are defending the top goal on the diagram while the whites defend the lower goal.

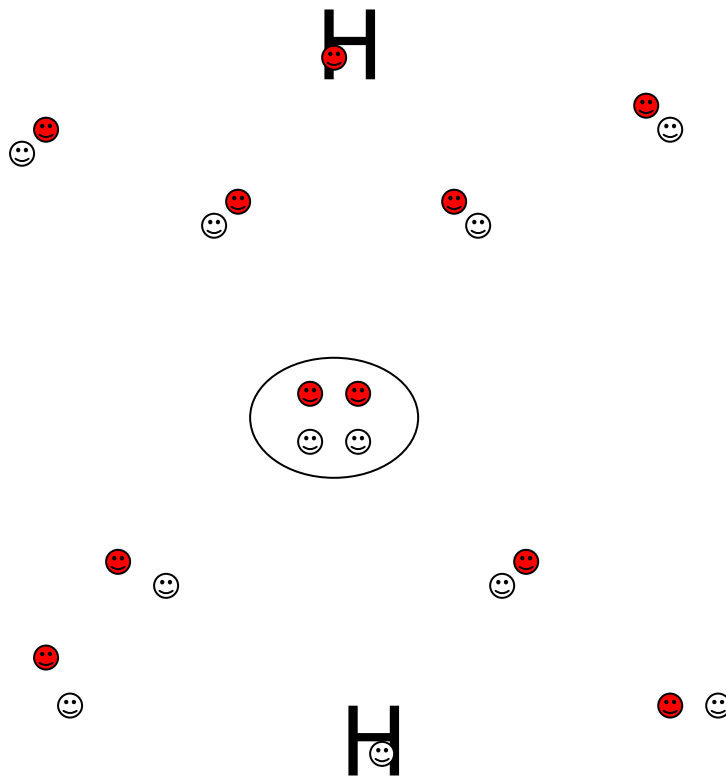
In this situation the whites are on the attack in the reds' half. Should they score a point or a goal, it will only count if the entire white team is in the red half. If a player lags behind in his/her own half of the pitch, the score will not count. The onus is on the players to stay focused and get into position, rather than on the ball players to hold up the attack.

Furthermore, the reds must also react to the white attack. All players on the red team must make it back into their own half to defend against the attack. Should any red player fail to cross the line before the whites score, any white score will count double.

For any red attack, the same rules apply.

**So, for any score to count, the team on the attack must have all of its players inside the opposition half.....and to ensure that a score does not count double, all players on the defending team must be inside their own half too.**

## WORTH ATTACKING, WORTH DEFENDING!



A simple game played from 9 a-side up to 15 a-side: [11 a-side game shown in diagram]. Line out players with TWO pairs of midfielders [shown in circle] Play the game with normal rules. The only conditions are those set for the midfielders.

Encourage these midfield players to join in their own team's attacks as follows:

- Award 3 points for any pointed score from play that a midfielder takes or assists\*
- Award 6 points for any goal from play that a midfielder takes or assists\*

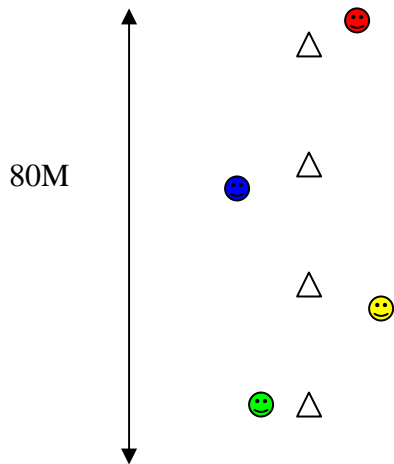
\* Assists = provides the final pass for the score

The trick is to let only the four midfielders know of the conditions, as the coach doesn't want other players to forget their own marking duties and swarm tackle a midfielder because of the extra scoring rewards. Nor does the coach want teammates holding up promising attacks just to let a midfielder get on the end of a shot.

**The rationale behind the game is to force midfielders to focus on their man-to-man marking duties and to prevent unmarked support runs from opposition midfielders. In many Gaelic football matches, it is often the case that a defence is beaten, not by a one-on-one match up in the full back line, but by an extra player [often a midfielder] running through, unmarked, to join in the attack.**

**In a 15 v 15 game, the coach can extend this rule to include half-backs, forcing half-forwards to work hard and cut out long supporting runs too.**

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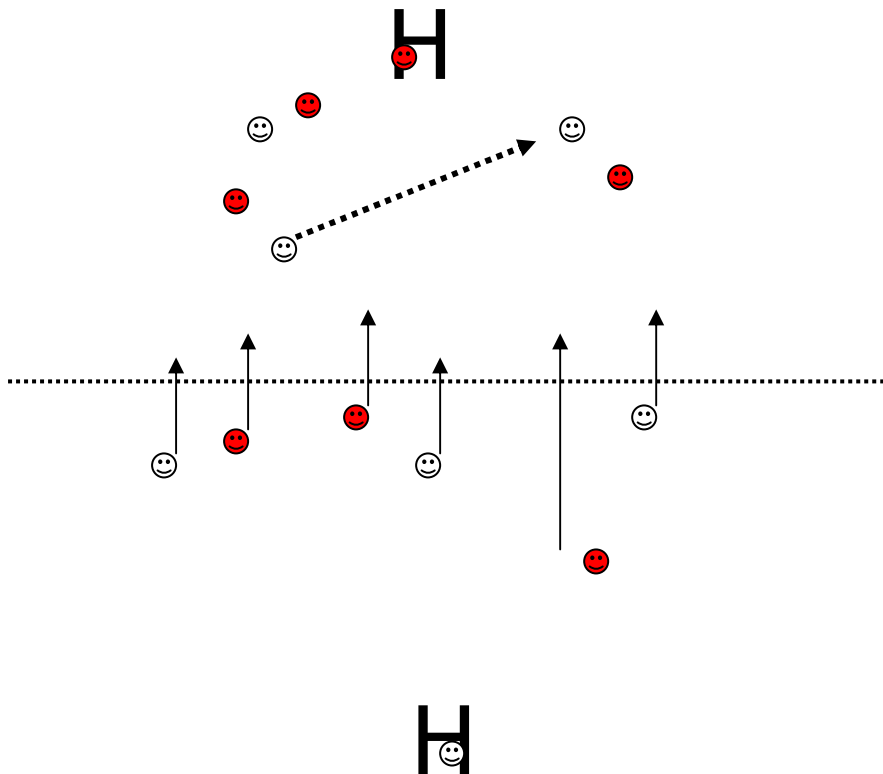
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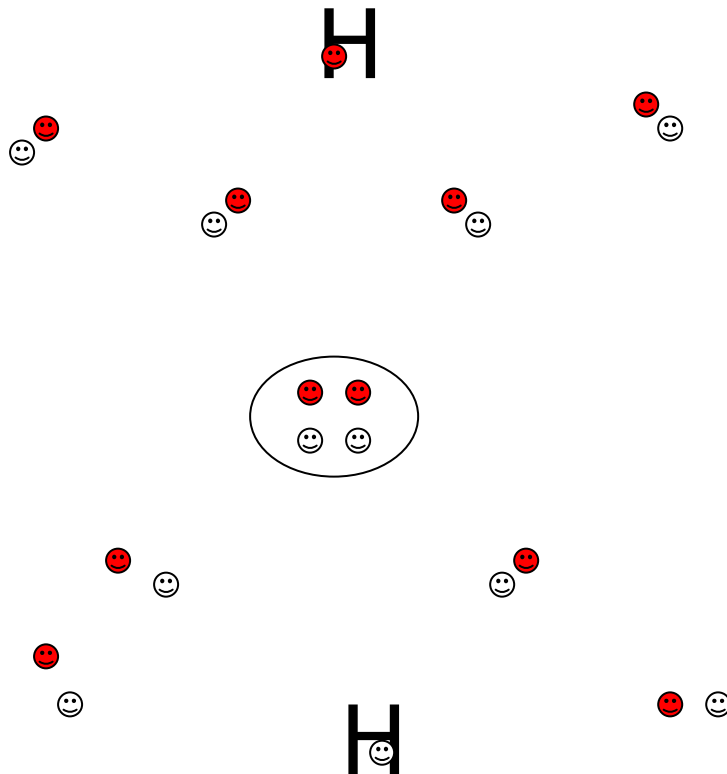
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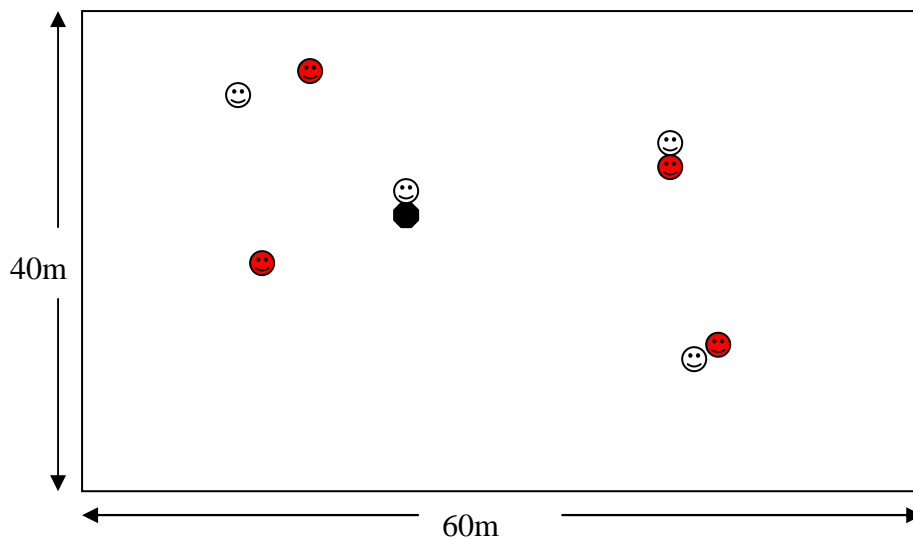
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## MATCHED FOURS



Set aside an area as shown and start a 4v4 game where the rules are;  
Match opponents up [i.e. – Red 1 and White 1, Red 2 and White 2, etc]  
No direction of play

Fist pass, hand pass, solo run, kick pass all permitted

**Score only by making a 30m pass to a team-mate [one bounce max.]**

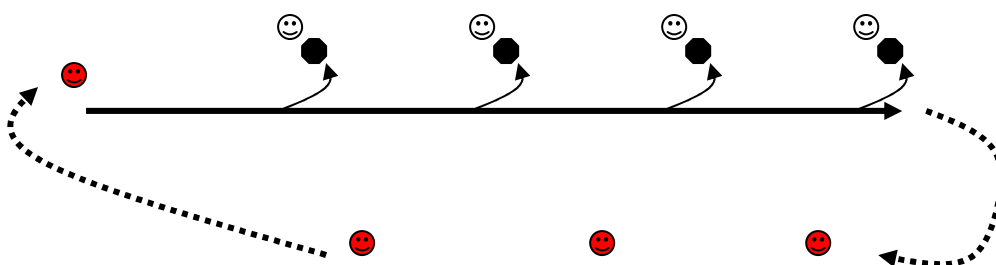
Once the referee calls a score, ball is placed on the ground for opposition to take possession.

**Each player may only tackle his/her 'matched opponent'** [e.g. Red 3 may only tackle White 3]. Referee must be strict on fouling and may award a 'score' against offender's team.

Run for 4 minutes. Highest number of 'scores' wins.

Next two teams on.

## BLOCKING RUN



Single red player runs along a line of white players [each white is holding a ball – 5m gap between white players].

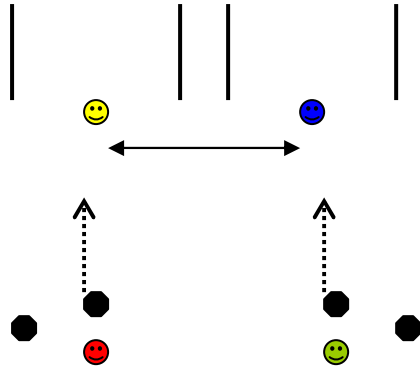
As single red passes by, each white attempts to kick pass towards the three resting reds.

Single red blocks attempts to each kick and keep momentum up until the end of the line.

Football retrieved by whites [or resting reds if block is missed].

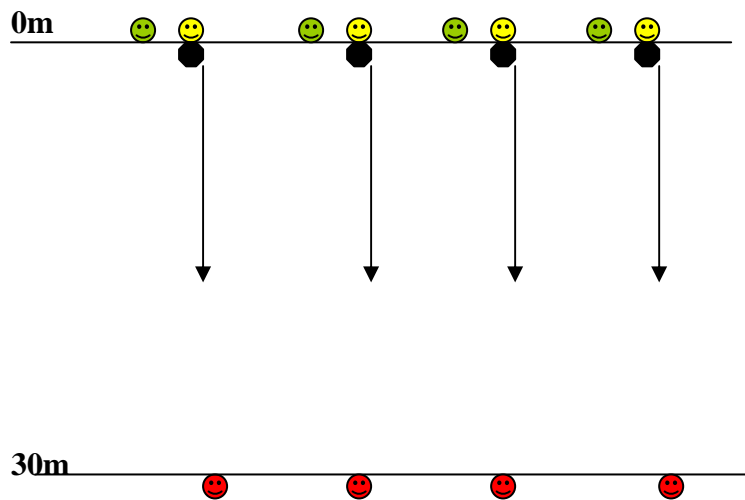
Next red moves into place to make the blocking run and finished red takes place in the 'resting group' [i.e. dotted lines]. Rotate to suit.

## GOALKEEPER SHUFFLES



Use poles to set up two sets of goals [each 5m wide and with a 1m gap between].  
Two goalkeepers [yellow and blue] take up position.  
Two players [red and green] stand approximately 5m in front of each goal.  
Red kicks to yellow as green kicks to blue. Goalkeepers return footballs [fist or kick] to red and green, then shuffle across to other goal in time for red and green to kick again [red to blue and green to yellow]. Repeat, repeat, repeat for about one minute.  
Extra footballs kept beside kickers.

## THREE PLAYER MIX



### An exercise to mix physical fitness with ballwork:

On the whistle, Yellow solo runs to the 30m line of markers. Red is doing tuck jumps; Green is doing press-ups.

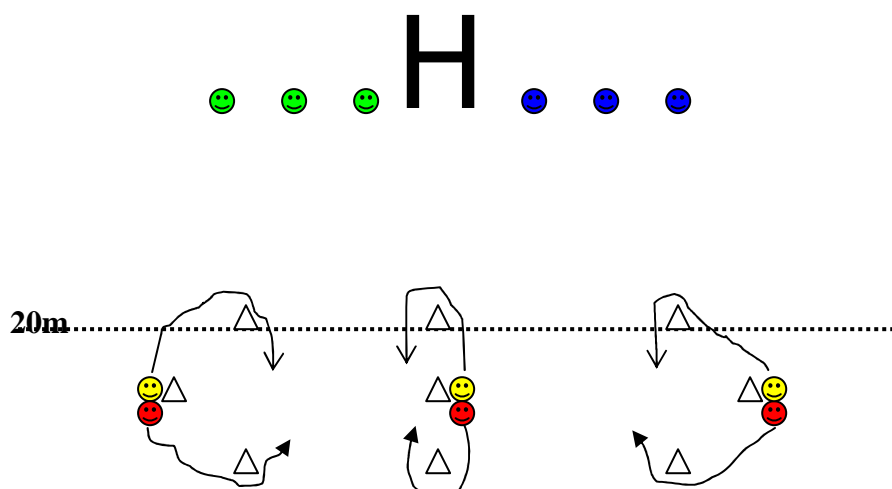
When Yellow reaches the line, he/she gives the ball to Red, who solos back again; Yellow takes over the tuck jumps from Red.

When Red reaches the 0m line he/she passes the ball to Green and takes over doing the press-ups while Green solo runs out etc. etc.

Each player does four solo runs to complete the set. Break for one minute. Repeat, changing the two exercises. Break etc.

***Each runner must solo at pace to ensure that his two colleagues are not overworked.***

## BREAK AND SHOOT



Nine cones set out as above; each group of three shows where players work;  
Focus only on one set for this explanation.

Two players [Red and Yellow] stand side by side and facing sideline at centre cone  
[set about 25m from goal – shorten to suit age or ability].

Red is the attacker [with ball] and Yellow is the defender. Defendaer calls 'GO' and  
both break. Red turns to solo around cone set at 30m; Yellow turns to race around  
cone set on 20m line.

Red must shoot for a point and Yellow must get in position to block or tackle.  
Distance between the groups of players across the pitch must be enough to ensure that  
players do not run into another group.

Greens and Blues retrieve the footballs each time. Reds and Yellows switch roles each  
time. After three minutes, Blues and Greens take over.

## **BREAK AND SHOOT**



Reds start with a ball each, facing the Whites, who are on the 45m line. On the whistle, Reds solo at full pace towards Whites;

Whites sprint towards Reds and take a very short 'popped' pass from them as they cross.

Whites must shoot for points immediately. Set up a competition between shooters [e.g. first score wins – all shots from outside 20m line].

Whites follow shots and run to end line; Yellows retrieve footballs and move to 20m line. Reds start on 45m line. Whistle begins next race.

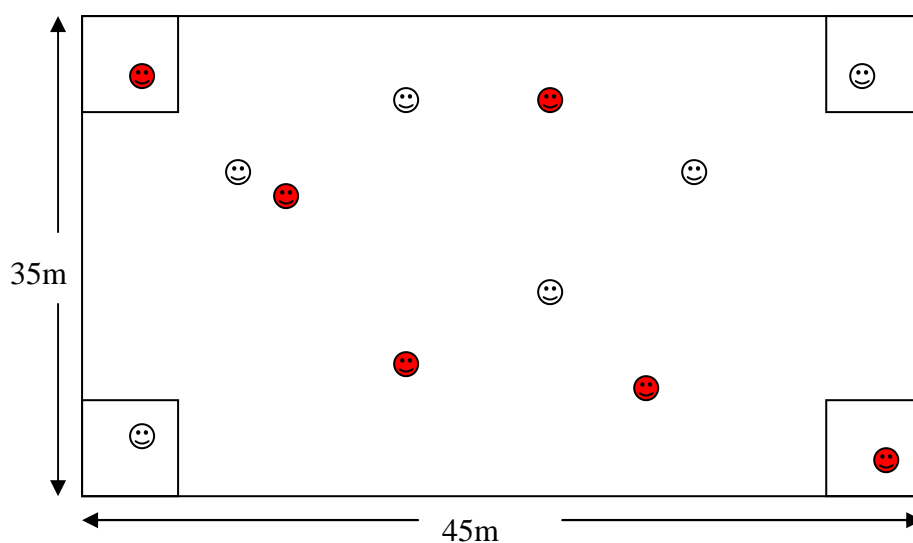
***Players must work hard to maintain pace and balance when striking the ball.***

Drills from watching Mayo v Fermanagh – long ball in between two, backed up by feeder + shadower – and paired shooting one with ball runner and fed inside to other runner

Paddy Tally's game on possession until whistle

Mickey Lynch's drill at Derry Dev.

## **PASS or BREAK**



***A small-sided game in a confined space, designed to force players to make decisions on and off the ball. Should I fist pass? Is it better to break the tackle? Is there a better support position? Is a lateral run the better option to receive the pass? Has a gap opened up and should I break through it rather than pass?***

Area is set up [best position is in a corner of a main pitch between end line and 45m line] for 6v6 game.

Two players from each team stand diagonally opposite inside 'receiving areas' [3mx5m each] marked with cones or domes.

The four outfield players on each team battle to work the ball to a 'receiver'. Passes may only be fisted [do not allow loopy overhead passes – this will force support players to move into space rather than just behind an opponent].

Player in possession must learn to make quick decisions re. what to do – pass or break the tackle or carry further.

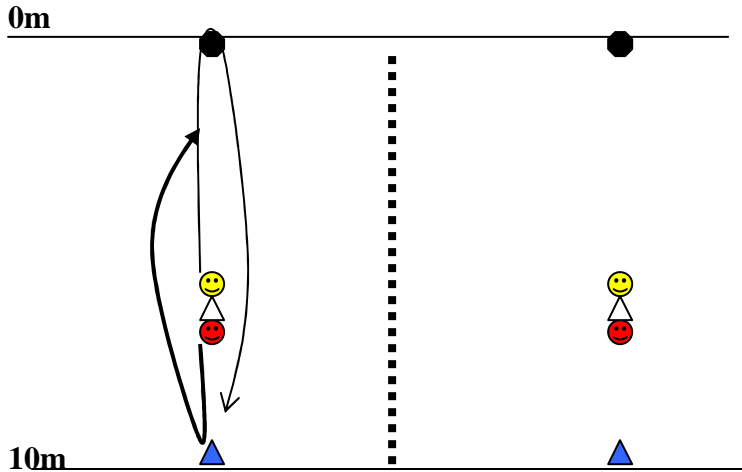
When a player fists the ball to one of his/her receivers, he/she takes the place of the receiver, who then takes the ball to outfield play. The team then tries to work the ball quickly to the other receiver, diagonally opposite.

e.g. Ball starts with a red receiver who fist passes to an outfield team-mate; reds try to work the ball to other red receiver; they are successful and the receiver is replaced by the red player who made the final pass. Play continues. Whites try to dispossess reds.

Coach should punish a 'loopy' overhead pass by awarding the ball to the opposition; coach should do the same if a 50/50 pass is played between team-mates.

***Be strict if you want to improve handling, decision-making and support play.***

## **PUSH THE CAR**



**A tackling/breaking the tackle drill that lets players work on technique. This drill shows up those tacklers who aren't properly balanced, whose footwork needs improving, who are easily passed or who tend to foul an opponent.**

Yellow and red line up either side of a fleximarker [white] that is set approximately 8m from the end line: The ball is placed on the end line and a second fleximarker is set 10m from that line [blue].

The yellow player calls 'go' and breaks quickly to lift the ball. At the same time the red player breaks to touch the blue fleximarker. Red turns to close down yellow. Yellow should be far enough ahead to lift the ball and may even be able to turn towards red.

Yellow tries to evade or break red's tackle and solo to the blue marker. If yellow manages to step on the blue fleximarker, he/she earns one point.

Should red dispossess yellow on the way or delay him/her legally for a specified time [e.g. 5-8 seconds after the ball is lifted – tackler can even count the time aloud], he/she wins the point.

The coach should ensure that red does not simply guard the blue marker but must chase to tackle yellow as early as possible [even before he/she gets a chance to turn].

***The coach must convince red that the best tackling position is one where his/her upper body is forward, arms are strong and to the front and feet are in a split position [not planted side by side on the ground]. The best way to describe the position to a young player is to get him/her to imagine pushing a car that will not start. Such a stance [with feet ready to move quickly] will ensure that the tackler is not easily passed or knocked off balance.***

Set the drill up for different pairs but keep a gap of at least 8m between groups. Players swap roles and swap partners over a period of 10 minutes. They will find it tough.