



Tactical vocabulary

This booklet gives you an insight into the tactical vocabulary used by elite professional coaches.

Each slide gives you a new coaching term.

These coaching terms are used to develop a team tactical approach and playing style.

Playing between the lines



Each formation has different lines (sections of the team)

For example – a 442 formation has three lines

Line 1 – four defenders

Line 2 – four midfielders

Line 3 – two forwards

Therefore, between the lines is a term used to describe the space between the line of forward/midfielders or midfielders/defenders.

You will often hear top level coaches instructing players to pass “between the lines” or arrive “between the lines”.

Line breaking passes / runs

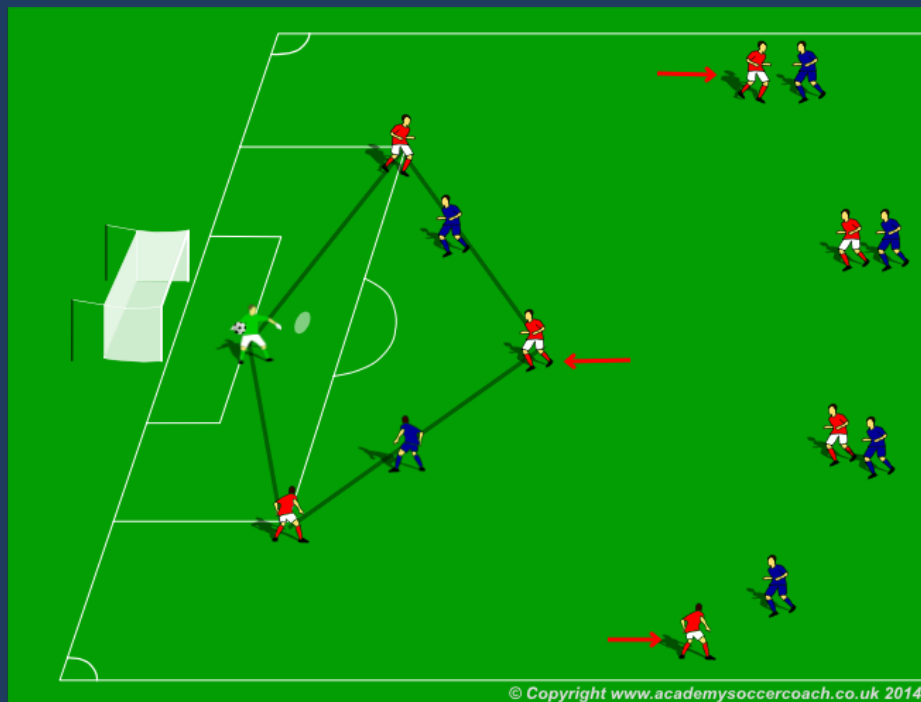


Line breaking passes are ones that go through a line of the opponents formation

For example, a pass that goes between two opposing defenders is known as a line breaking pass as it has broken the opponents defensive line.

This is the same for a line breaking run. However, line breaking runs are used more frequently inside the final 3rd of the pitch and are often only used to describe a run that takes a forward/midfielder behind the opponents defence and into a goal scoring position. Cristiano Ronaldo is an expert at this type of run.

Creating a defensive diamond



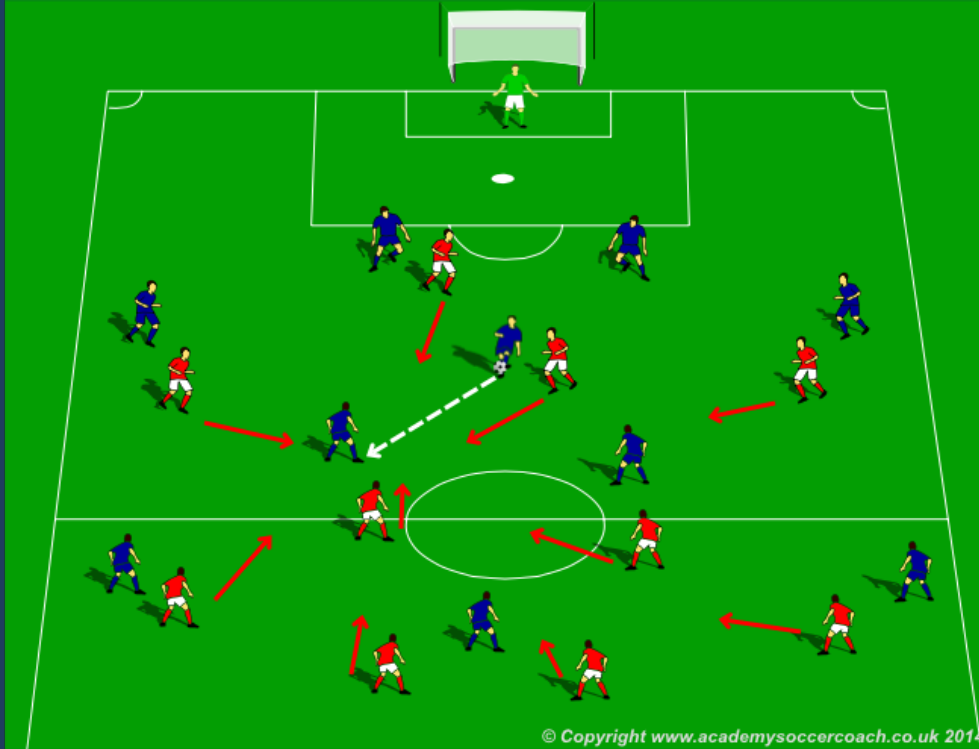
The midfielder drops deep to create a defensive diamond to play out 4v2

Creating a defensive diamond is when a teams midfielder drops down to form a diamond shape with the teams goalkeeper and two centre backs.

This enables the team to play out of defence against a team playing with two forwards.

For this to happen, the teams full backs must go high and wide and the midfielders/forwards must go into advanced positions to really exaggerate the space for the players to play out of defence

Transition



On losing possession, The team immediately apply pressure on the ball.

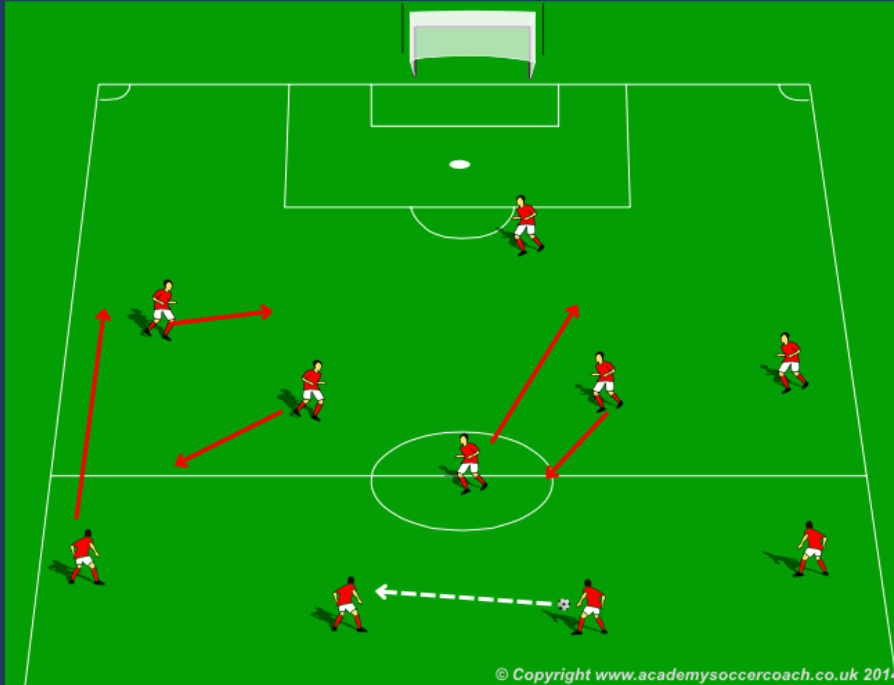
Transition is the term used to describe the moments when

- 1 – possession is won
- 2 – possession is lost

Having good transition in attack is seen by quickly seizing the opportunity to pass/dribble in order to create a counter attack.

Having good transition in defence is seen by quickly reacting to recover the teams defensive shape (making the pitch small) or by immediately pressuring the opponents and regaining the ball

Rotation



The full back, wide player and inside midfield rotate in a triangle to disrupt the defence

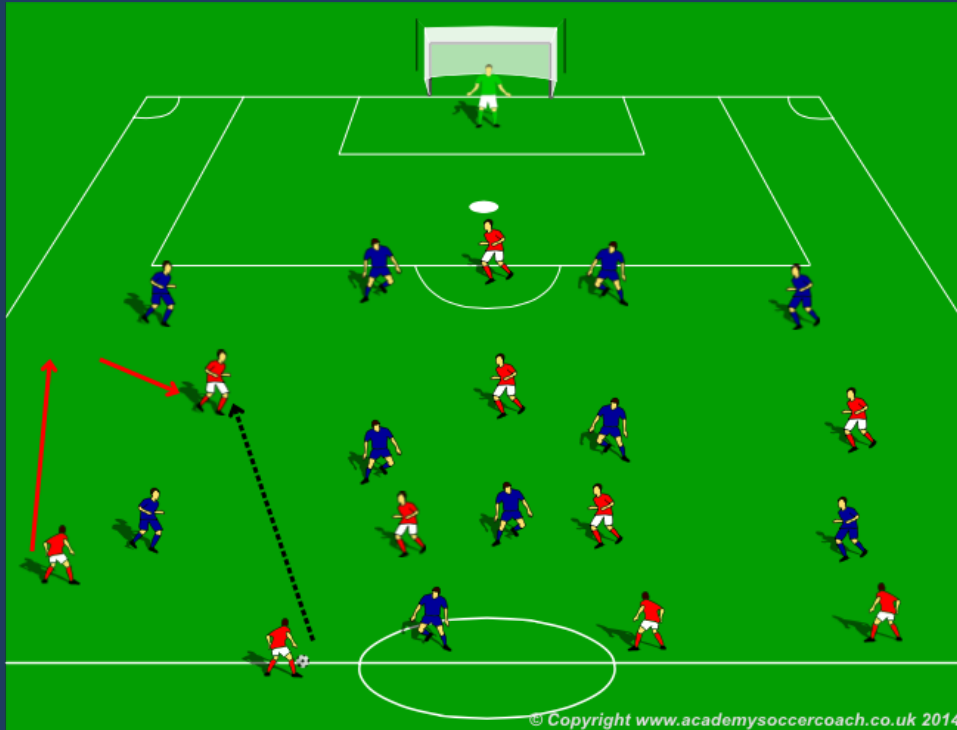
Rotation is the term used to describe a teams movement in possession of the ball.

Rotation can be a single player moving into a new position on the field to create space to receive a pass

It can be two or three players who quickly transfer positions to disrupt the opponents defence

It can be the whole team rotating formations when in attack or when defending.

Off the line



Off the line is the term given to a wide player that moves from a wide area into central areas to receive the ball

The reason for a wide player to make this movement is varied

- 1 – To receive a pass to feet
- 2 – To receive a pass behind the defence
- 3 – To create space on the outside for a team mate

The wide player moves off the line to receive and leaves space for the full back outside

Open shoulders



Inesta opens his shoulders in order to receive a pass from Xavi

Open shoulders is a term used to describe a players body position when receiving the ball

All players should be encouraged to take up an open body position when the team is in possession of the ball.

Taking up this position will enable the player to see both goals on the pitch and maximise the opportunity for them to see what is around them

Can you turn?

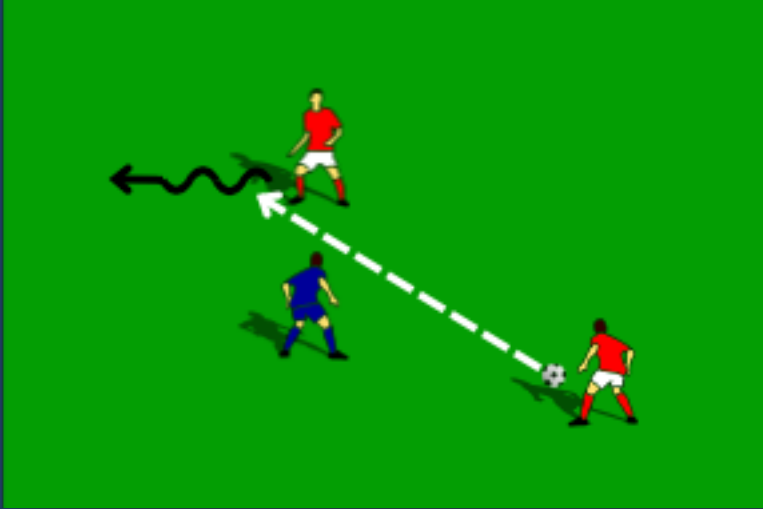
Do you need to receive back foot?

Do you need to receive front foot?

What are your options?

Are questions the player will be able to answer themselves just by taking up an open shoulder position when the team is in possession

Back foot / front foot



Back foot is the term to describe the foot furthest away from the ball

When receiving in time and space to turn, a player should open their body and receive the ball on their back foot to dribble forward

Front foot is the term used to describe the foot closest to the ball



When receiving the ball under pressure from an opponent and unable to turn, a player must receive the ball on their front foot and protect the ball by placing their body between the ball and the opponent. Now the player has the choice to pass to a team mate or to turn away from the opponent using a quick skill or trick

Right hand / left hand

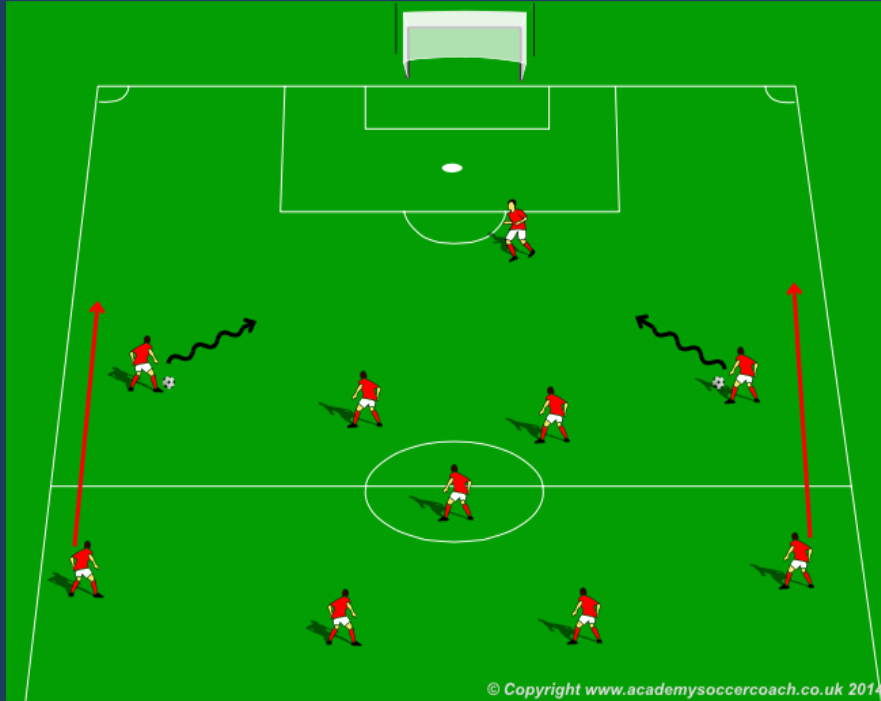


Right hand/ left hand is the term used to describe a players passing options when in possession of the ball

For example – a defender is bringing the ball out of defence and must continuously look to their right and left for an angled passing option

This term also has implications for the team mates not in possession of the ball as they must now make movements to receive the ball and give the player an option to pass to the right or left.

Inverted winger



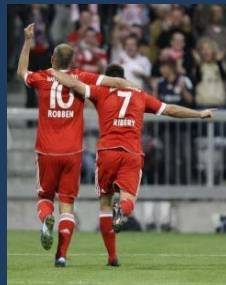
Inverted winger is the term used to describe a wide player who plays on the opposite side to their natural kicking foot

For example,

FC Bayern Munich has Frank Ribery (right footed player on the left wing) and Arjen Robben (left footed player on the right wing)

Teams use inverted wingers to come inside and off the line to combine with team mates

Often teams will use overlapping full backs on the outside to add extra players to the teams attack and maintain width as the wide player comes inside



Overlap / Underlap run



An overlapping run is the term used to describe a player who runs on the outside of a team mate who is in possession of the ball

Underlaps are often used in wide areas to create (1) 2v1 overloads (2) to pull players away from the player in possession (3) to gain crossing or shooting opportunities

An underlapping run is the term used to describe a player who runs inside the ball.

For example – a midfielder passes outside to the wide player. As the ball travels, the full back then makes a forward run inside the pass.

The aim is to run into space beyond the ball in order to receive in an advanced position or to pull players away from the player in possession of the ball.



Play on the shoulder



Off the shoulder is a term used to describe a desirable position for a midfielder or forward when the team is in possession

For example – if one midfielder is in possession of the ball, the other midfielders should look to be in advance of their opponents and on their shoulder to receive the ball.

Now when you receive the pass, you are beyond your opponent and can dribble forward to attack



An advantage to this style of play is also seen when a pass is played further advanced into the teams forward as you now have a head start on your opponent and can easily support the player in possession and receive the next ball.

Blindside run

Blindside runs is a term used to describe a run made by the teams forward.

When the team is in possession, the teams centre forward should always look to be on the diagonal to the ball.

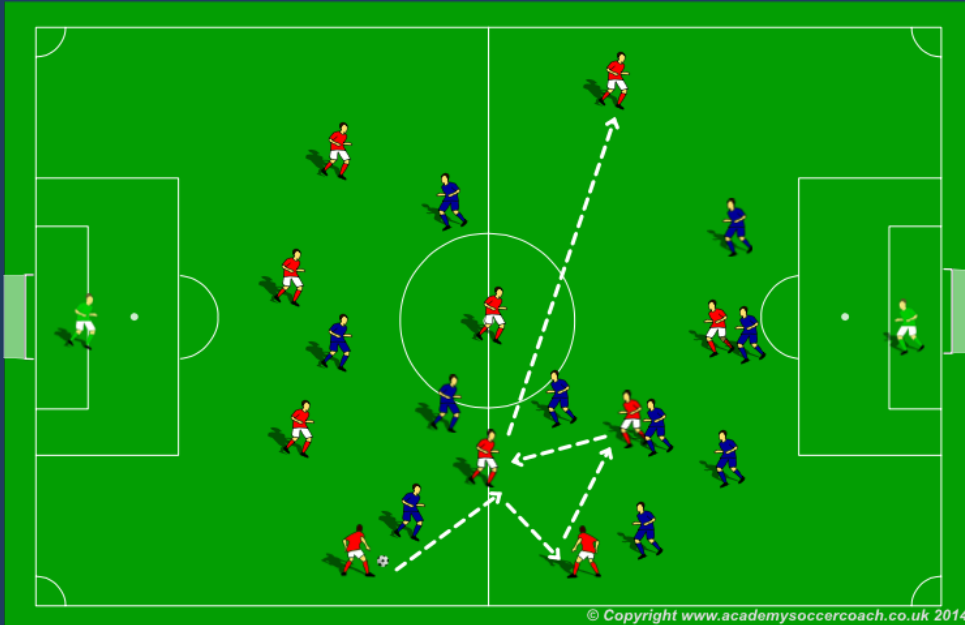
This is very important and allows the forward to see spaces in which to run into. In addition, the player should be on the shoulder of his opponent so that the opponent cannot see the ball and the forward without moving their head to look.

This is called the "blindside" as the defender must take their eyes off the forward to look at the ball. When doing this, the forward can quickly make their move and arrive in the space to receive and score a goal



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Teaser Passes



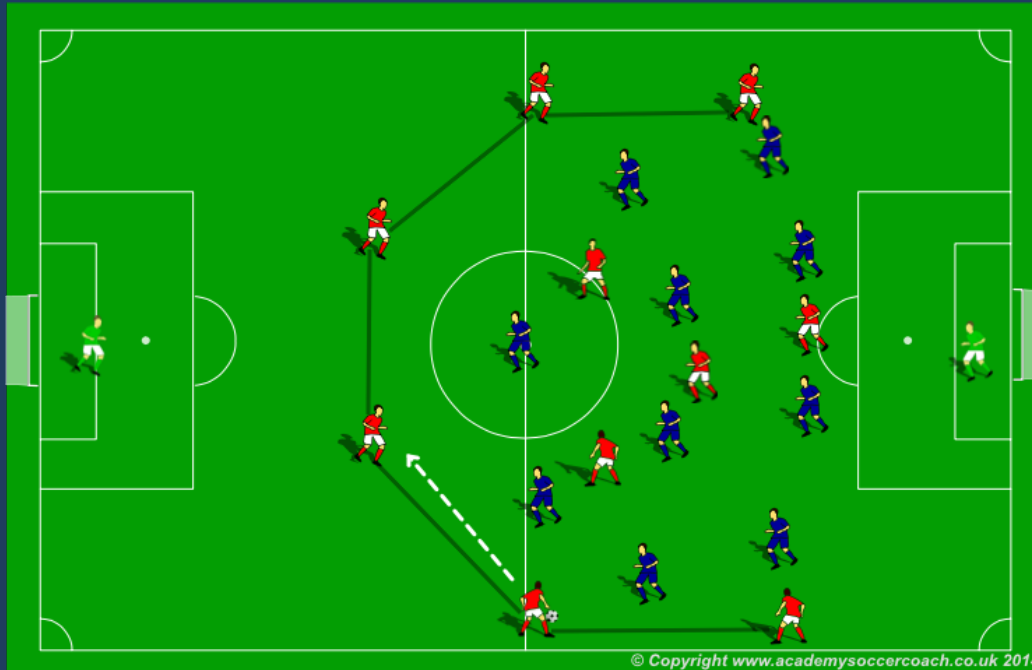
Quickly transfer the ball away from pressure and into the space created by teaser passes

Teaser passes are a term used to describe a short passing tactic that lures your opponents to the ball.

The aim of using teaser passes is to pull / hook opponents out of position and get them chasing the ball.

Now that the opponents are all in one area of the field, your team can quickly transfer the ball to the other side of the pitch and take advantage of the space left by your opponent

The Horse-shoe

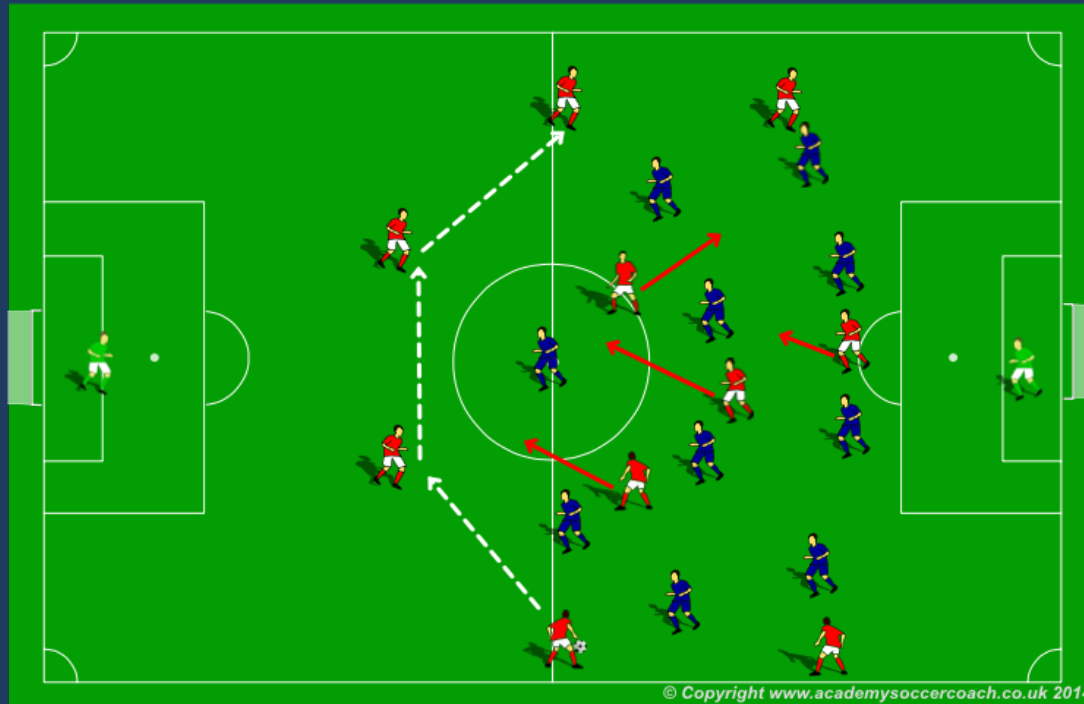


The horseshoe is a term used to describe the moment when your team quickly passes the ball across the defensive line from one side to the other.

When playing against teams who have a low press, your team may have to quickly circulate the ball across the teams horse-shoe to get the opponents chasing from one side to the other.

The aim of using this tactic is to wear your opponents down so that spaces appear in the defence to exploit

Tumble Dryer



Tumble dryer is a term used to describe movement made by players in central areas of the pitch. This tactic is specifically used when opponents are sitting deep, inside their own half.

As the defenders switch the ball across the teams horse shoe, the players in central areas must make random movements to move the oppositions defenders. The aim of the tumble dryer is to force defenders out of the compact defensive position leaving space for the team to exploit.

1 touch kills



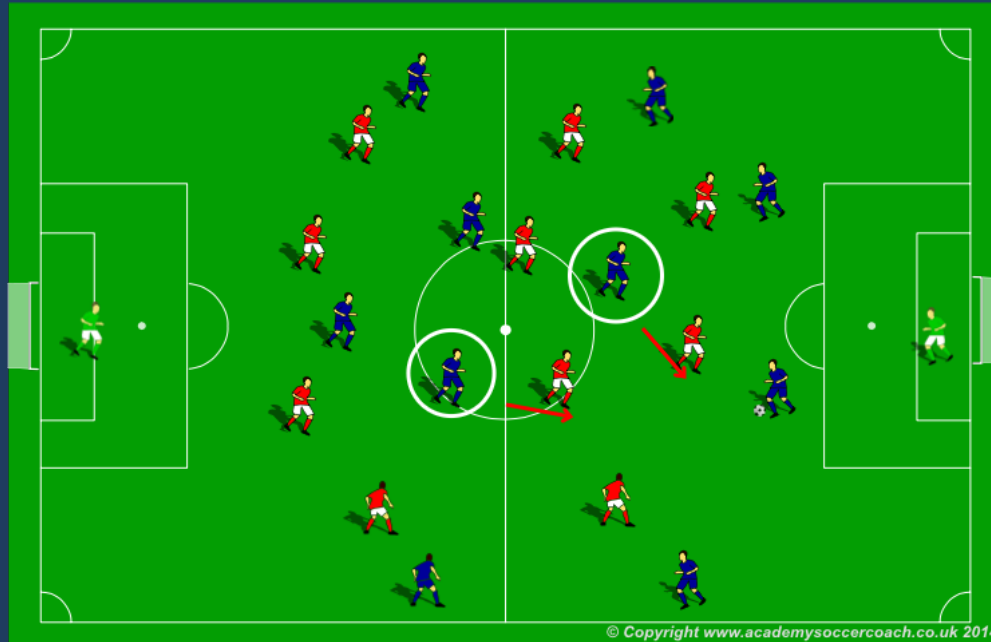
1 touch kills is the term used to describe a quick first time pass.

Playing a first time pass when under pressure is a very difficult skill to master. This is due to the opponents forcing your team to pass the ball at a high tempo in order to keep possession.

However, if you can successfully execute a first time pass in these situations, you will often find that it kills the opponents pressure and gets your team out of a tight situation and into an area of space.

To make a first time pass you must have your head up prior to receiving the ball and be scanning the pitch with your eyes in order to see the team mate in space

Front marking

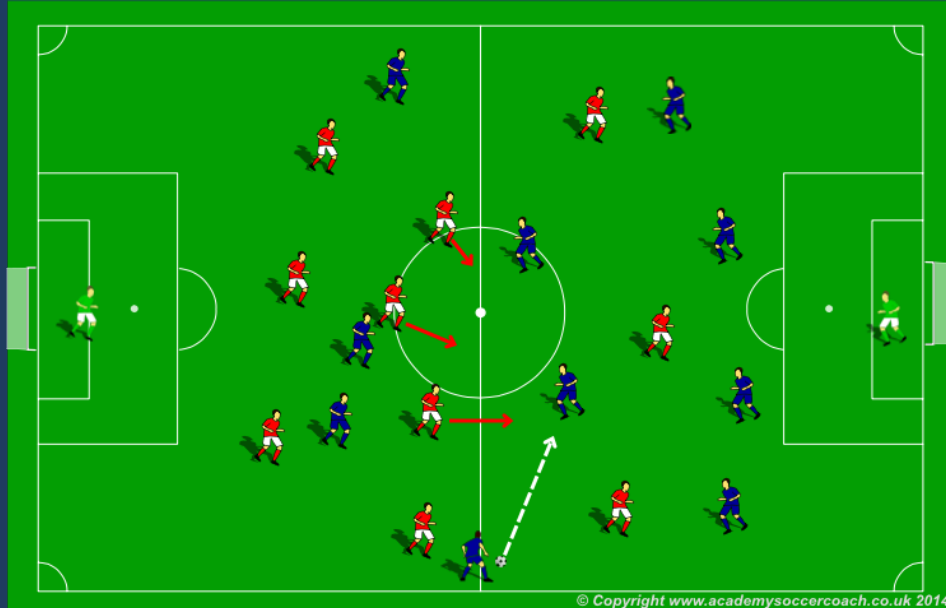


Front marking is a tactic used by midfielders and forwards to press the ball. This is a very positive tactic that can see your team regaining possession high in the opponents half

When front marking, you start in front of your opponent but are marking them by blocking the line of pass to your opponent and therefore, nullifying the threat of your opponent at that moment.

The issue arises if you are caught out, as now your opponent is free to turn and attack your defence. Therefore, when front marking you must always be light on your toes and adjusting your position in relation to the ball. In addition, communication from your defenders behind is essential.

Space not man



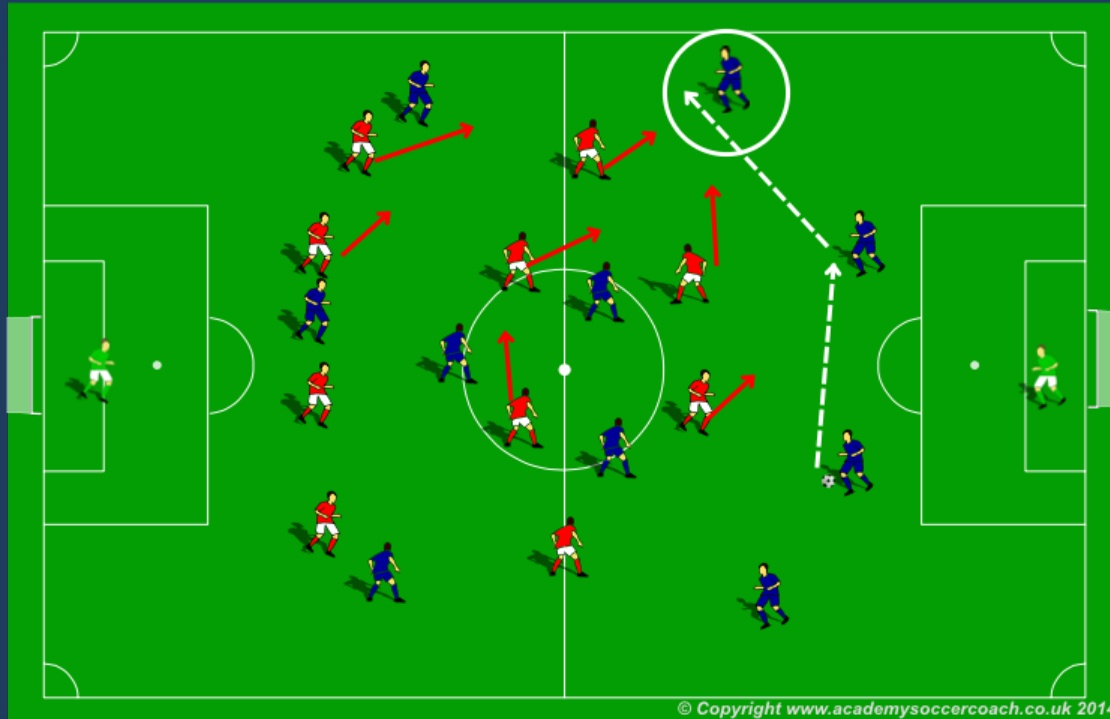
The midfielder marks the space in order to force the opponents into a backward pass

Space not man is a term used to describe a players starting position in order to force opponents backwards.

A player should mark the space (closest to their teams goal) and therefore, allow the opponent to receive the ball with a backwards or sideways pass. Now the player can go and pressure the opponent from a position goal-side of the ball. This is especially true for midfielders who should always get goal side first and block spaces before going to pressure their direct opponent.

If the player marks the man and not the space, then the opponent in possession may not pass to the opponent being marked. They may now decide to use the space left to dribble forward or pass into a more advanced position.

Steer and storm

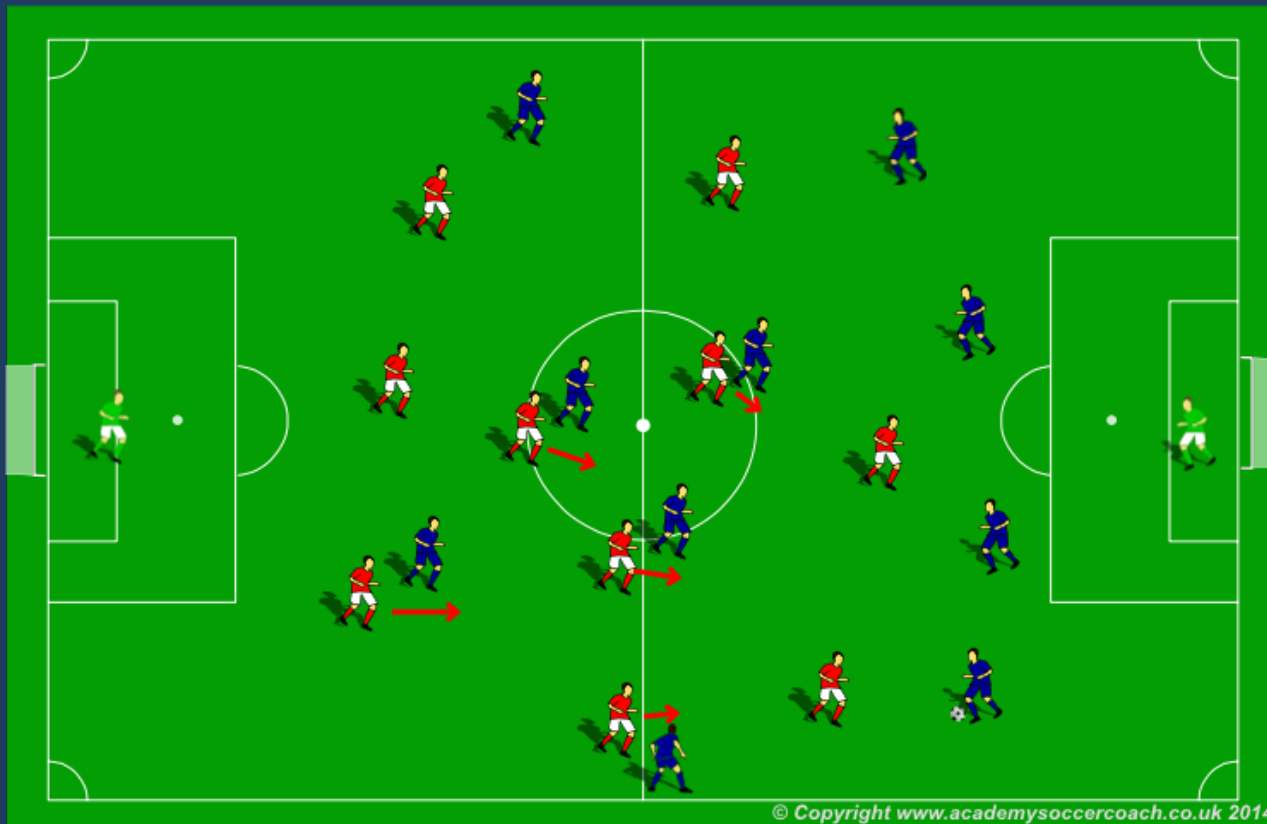


Steer and storm is a tactic used by teams who like to regain the ball in certain areas of the pitch.

An example of this is seen when a team do not pressure the opponents central defenders but have a high pressure on the opponents full backs.

A team using this tactic is looking to steer the opponents into one side of the pitch and then quickly storm/overload the area with players to outnumber the opponents and recover possession of the ball. If used well, this tactic is very effective.

Aggressive Marking

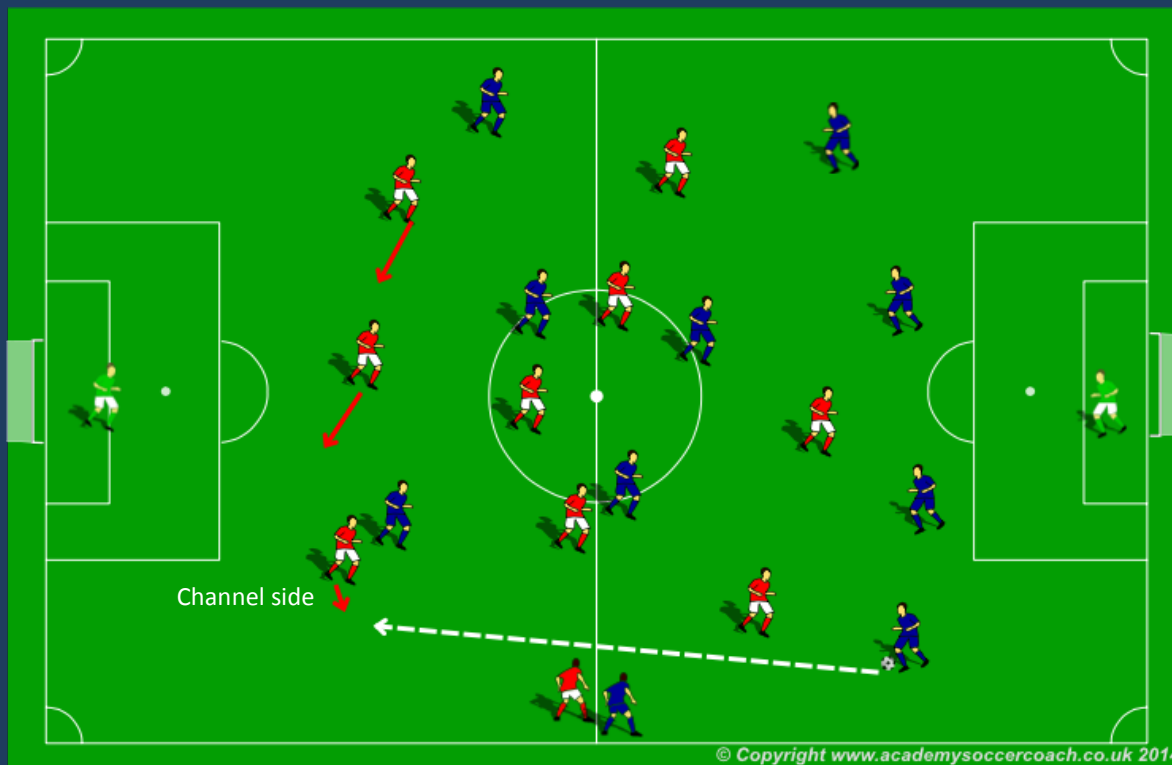


The defenders mark on the shoulder and in a position to intercept the pass.

Aggressive pressing is a term used to describe a defender marking on the shoulder of their direct opponent rather than behind the opponent

This is a very positive approach to defending and enables your players to step in front of their opponents to intercept the ball and quickly launch a counter attack.

Channel Side

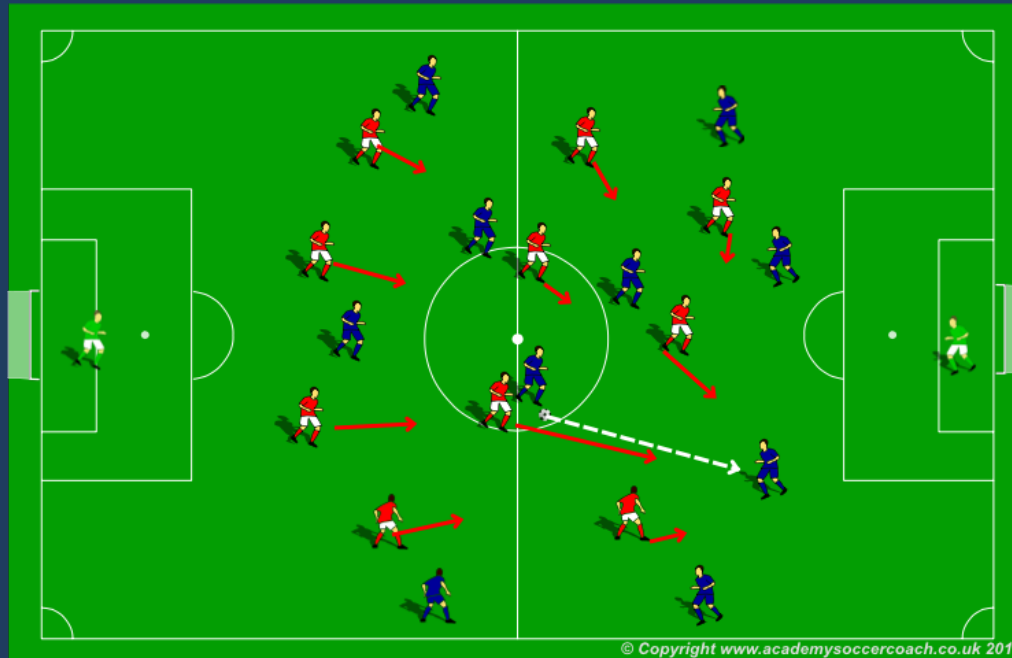


Channel side is a term used to describe a defending position used by a central defender.

Channel side means to be closer to the line than your opponent, on the shoulder of the opponent and in a supporting position behind the teams full back.

Once in this position, the defender is able to defend passes made into wide areas.

Jump to press

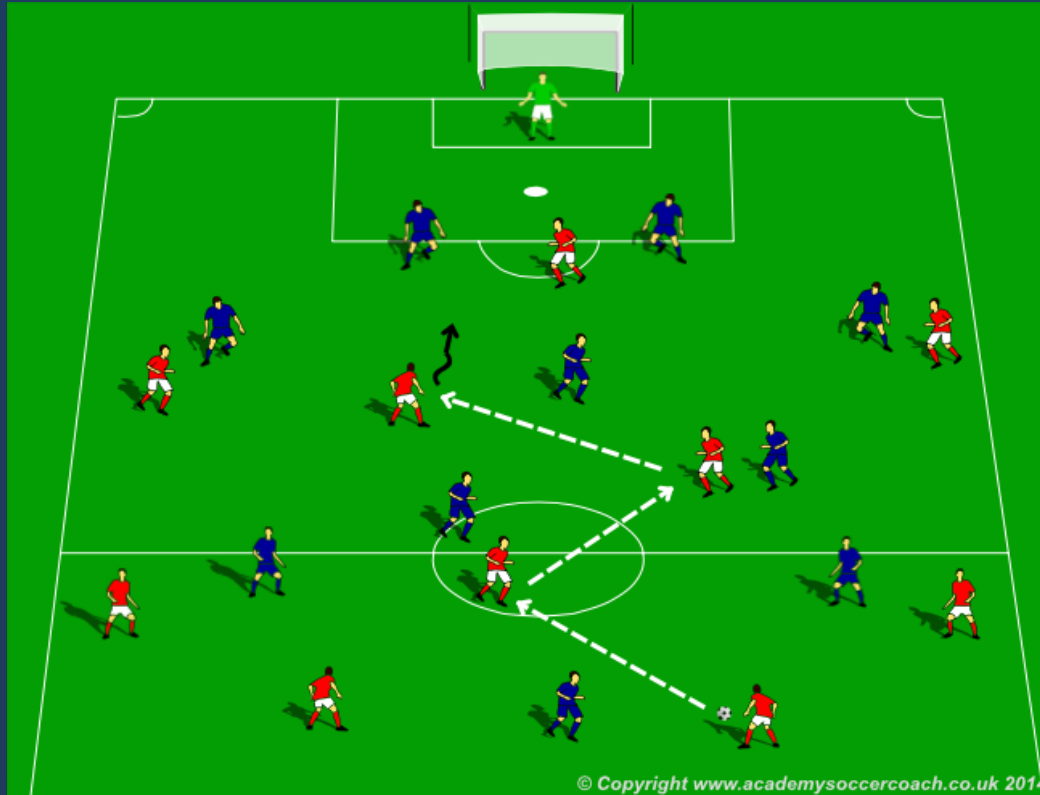


Jumping to press is a term used to describe a tactic of pressing passes that are played backwards.

This tactic is used specifically by midfielders and forwards. To start, the player goes to stop an opponent from turning and therefore, forcing the opponent to pass backwards. Now the player jumps passed this opponent and goes to pressure the next player in possession.

When doing this, team mates must follow the player jumping to insure that they are not isolated and passed around by the opponents

Zig zag passing



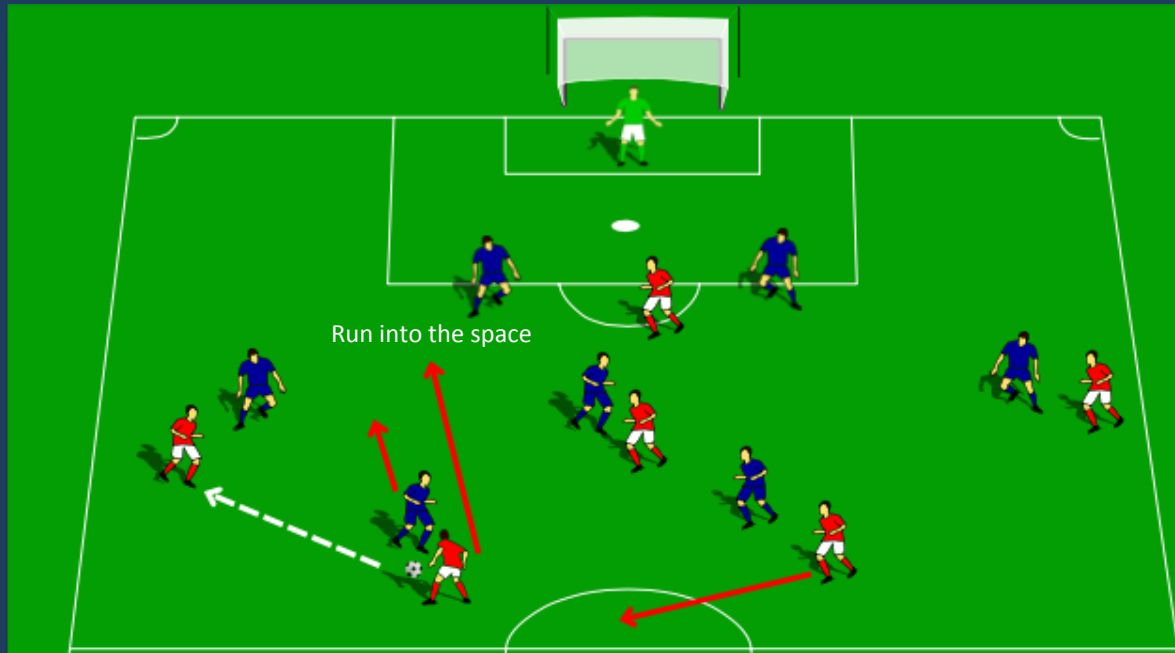
The midfielders combine with quick diagonal passes to zig zag through the pitch

Zig zag passing is a term to describe a team that plays quick combination passes through midfield

The act of zig zagging is to work the ball through the pitch in order to construct the teams attack

To use this type of tactic, the midfielders must play on different angles and with an open body stance so that they can quickly play forward passes between the opponents midfield.

Play and run

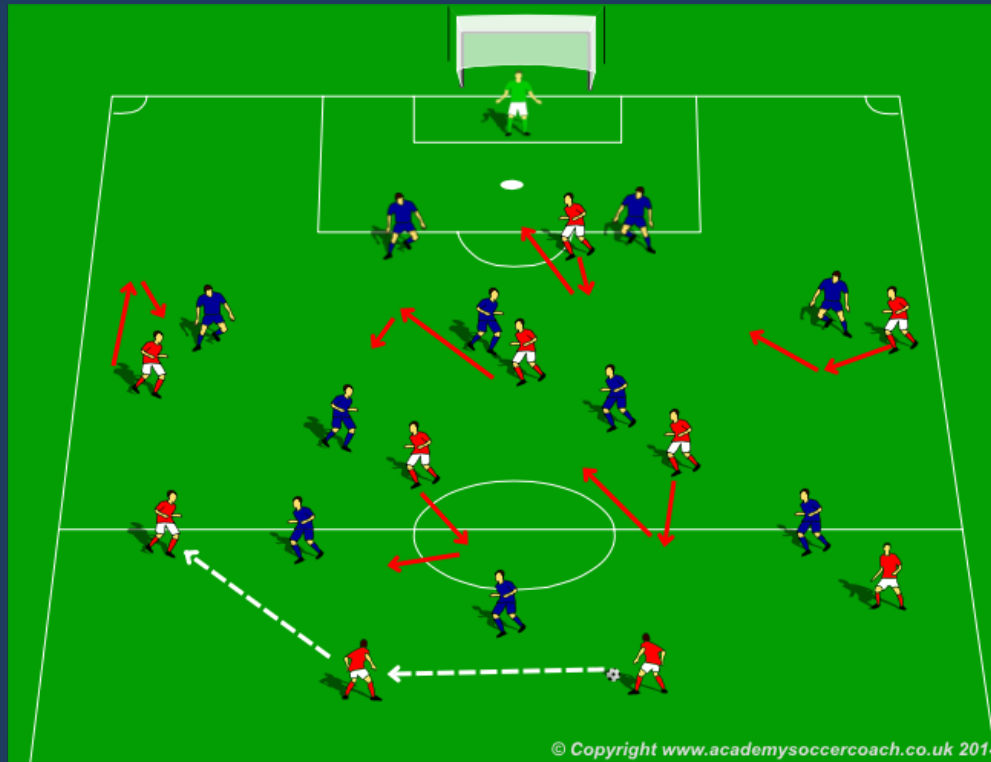


Play and run is a term used to describe a player making a forward run after making a pass.

An example of this is a midfielder passing wide to a team mate and then making a forward run in advance of the ball. This type of run will (1) pull players away from the new player in possession (2) allow the midfielder to get into an advanced attacking position.

This style of play is useful when trying to use a rotation style attack.

Ball moves, you move



Ball moves, you move is a term used to describe the constant movement of your teams players.

As simple as the words spoken, when the ball moves , all your players must be on the move and looking to receive a pass or creating space for the player on the ball.

This is a big learning focus for young players as it eradicates ball watching.

Touch on the move



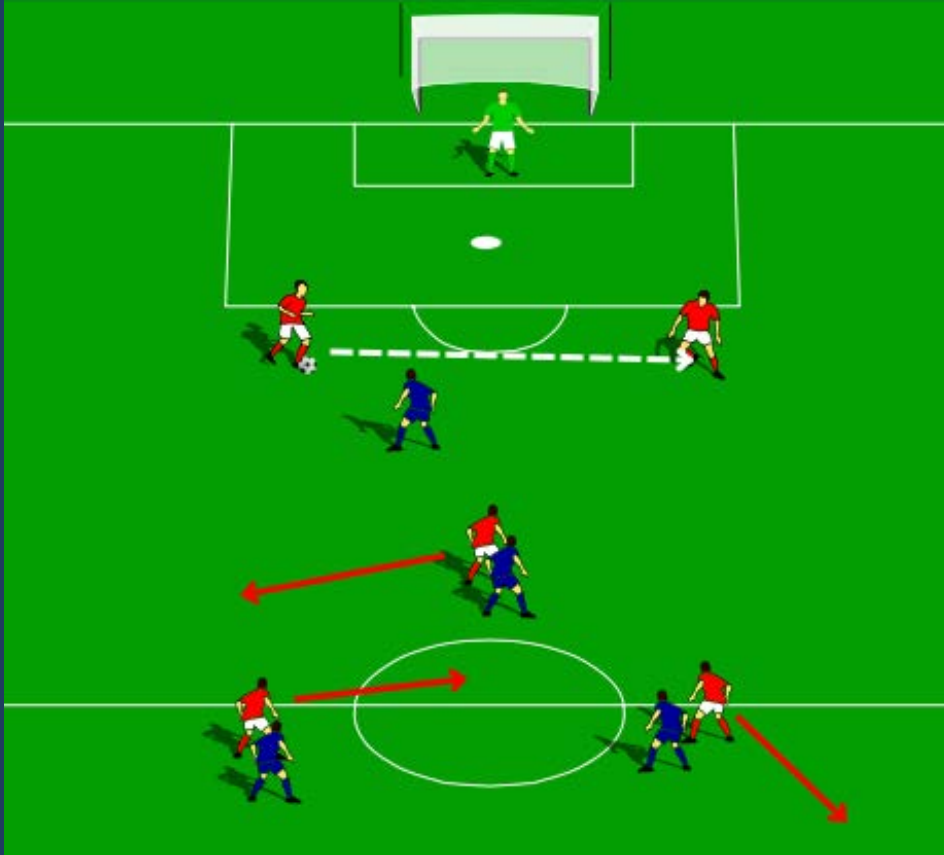
Touch on the move is a term used to describe a player who takes a first touch into space (not allowing the ball to stop rolling) when receiving a pass.

Not stopping the ball is a very important skill to learn as a young player.

- (1) It makes it hard for the opponents to apply pressure as you keep the ball active and on the move
- (2) It changes the angle of the ball and therefore, opens up passing or dribbling opportunities
- (3) It keep the ball moving with a high tempo around the pitch



Rotate on square pass



The three midfielders rotate as the square pass is made.

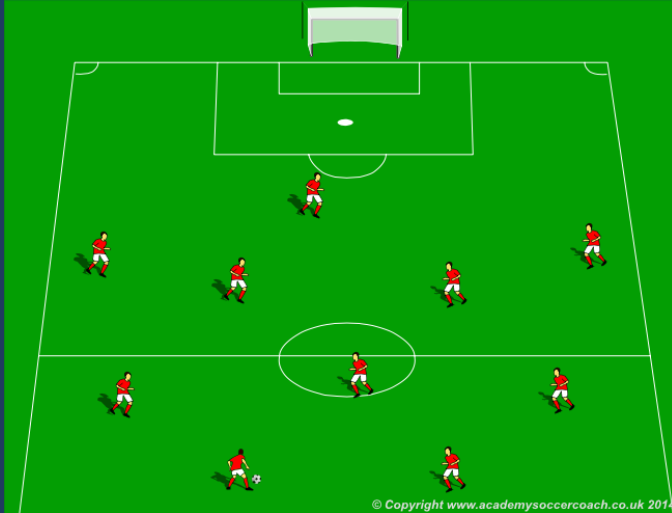
Rotate on square passes is a tactic used by the teams midfield to rotate positions.

When a defender makes a sideways or square pass to a 2nd defender it is because they are not able to make a forward pass

This action is made because your players are (1) marked (2) not moving in space to receive.

Therefore, as the ball is played, your midfielders must become active again and on the move to receive a pass. The most effective way of doing this is to rotate positions with the other midfielders in order to pull the opponents away from the ball.

See both goals / Face there goal



All players stand in an open body position

See both goals is a tactic used when the team are in possession of the ball.

All players are encouraged to open their shoulders so that they can see both goals on the pitch.

This improves vision and awareness for all the players in the team and opens space to play forward. When forward passes are made, the players are already at an advantage to the opponents as they are on the half turn.



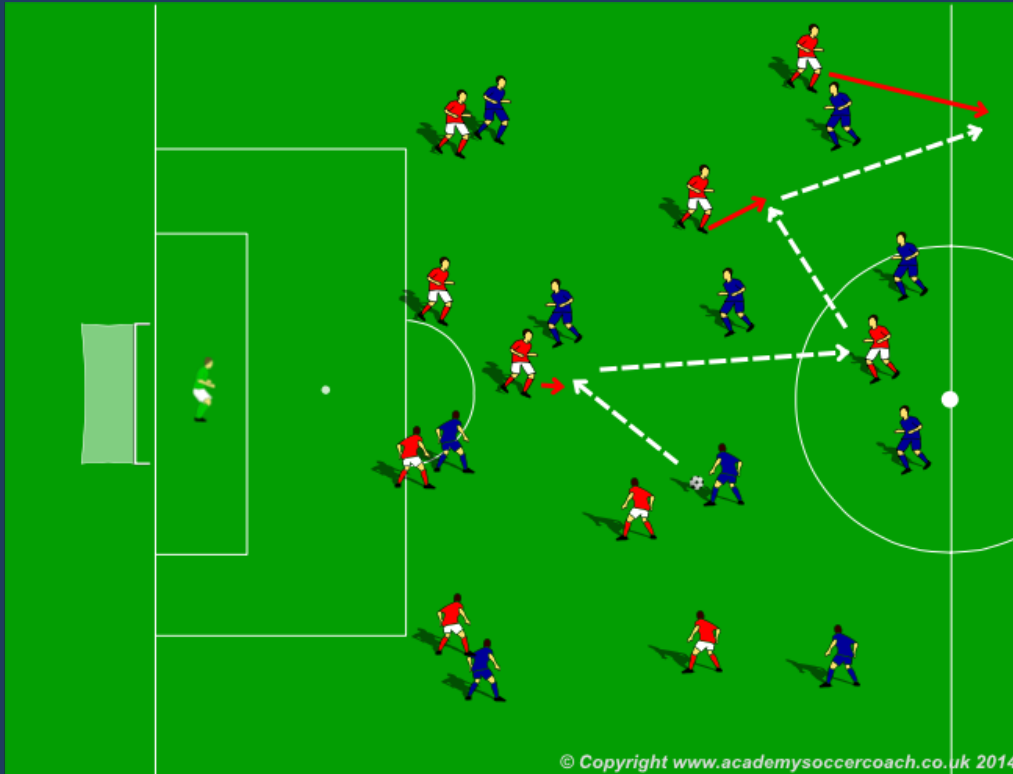
All players face the opponents goal when defending

Face there goal is a tactic used when the team are defending. This term is used as a reminder for a player to recover the teams defensive shape

Simply put – the aim for the players is to be goal side of the ball and facing the opponents goal when defending.

This places one more player between the ball and your teams goal.

Three to us



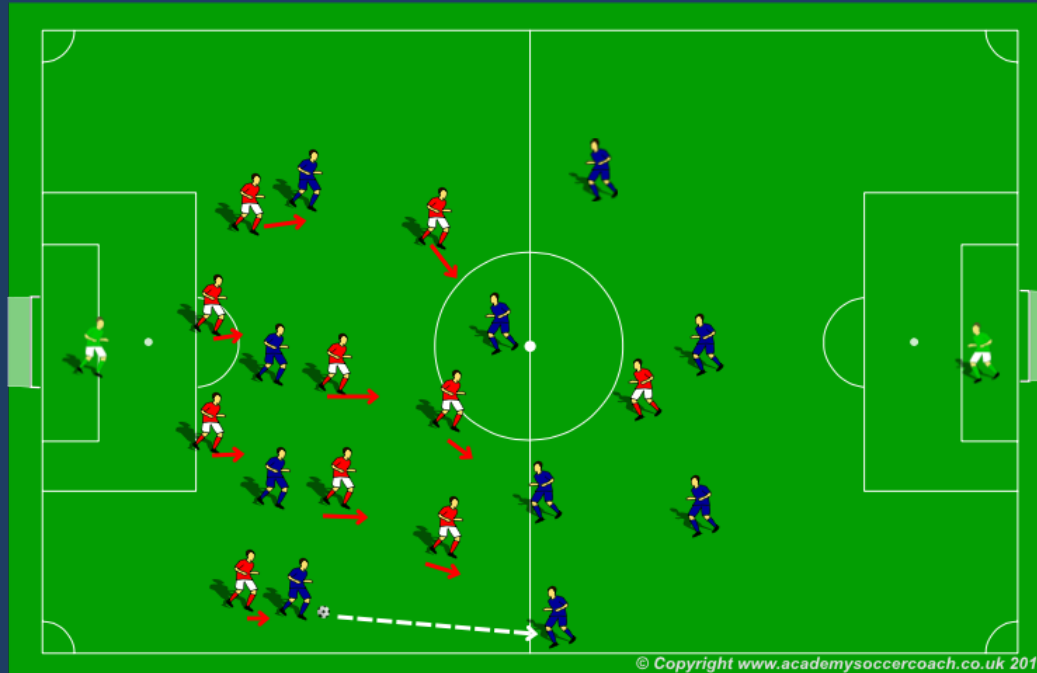
Three to us is a tactic used by teams on regaining possession of the ball and making three quick passes.

Using three quick passes enables the team to

- (1) Regain control of the game
- (1) Avoid quick pressing from the opponents
- (2) Work the ball into space or a 1v1 situation to attack

The team make three quick passes to gain control of the game and launch a quick attack

Step and hold



Step and hold is a tactic used by a teams defenders to move the defensive line.

This is specifically used when the opponents make a backward pass.

As the pass is played backwards, the teams defence move forward to push the team out of defence.

As the new player is about to receive the ball, the defenders must quickly stop and hold the new line in order to be set and in a defending position

Body work



Body work is a term used to describe a player using their body to shield and protect the ball.

When using body work, a player can use their arms, shoulders or legs to win the battle for the ball and secure possession for the team.

Now that the ball is secured, the player can now look to work away from the opponent using a quick turn/skill or by getting their head up to pass.

Hazard work



Hazard work is a term used to describe a player using various quick turns and disguises to shake a defender off their back.

A player would use Hazard work when receiving a pass with a defender close behind them.

The player must now look to complete a turn or change of direction to race away from the opponent

A player can do this in a number of ways

(1) No touch turn and let the ball run across your body

(1) 1st time turn

(1) Two touch turn

(1) Take the ball one way and then quickly turn and go in the opposite direction



