

John McDermott (Academy Director) – Tottenham Hotspurs

“Managing Upwards” – Academy Manager’s Licence 2009

“Know Thyself”

Key ingredients to forming the most successful companies

- **Get the right people on the bus**
- **Wrong people off the bus**
- **Right people in the right seats**
- **Figure out where to drive it**

How can you get your knowledge?
Where do you go for it?

Your role – educationalist?

Know your club

Staffing

Philosophy

Plan to implement

Know your industry (expertise)

He is a “Hoverer” – a bit of everything.

5 Pillars of Youth Development

Book: Miesl

- Recruit the best players and potential
- Create the best learning environment
- Nurtured by the best coaches
- Holistic support
- Pathway and opportunity

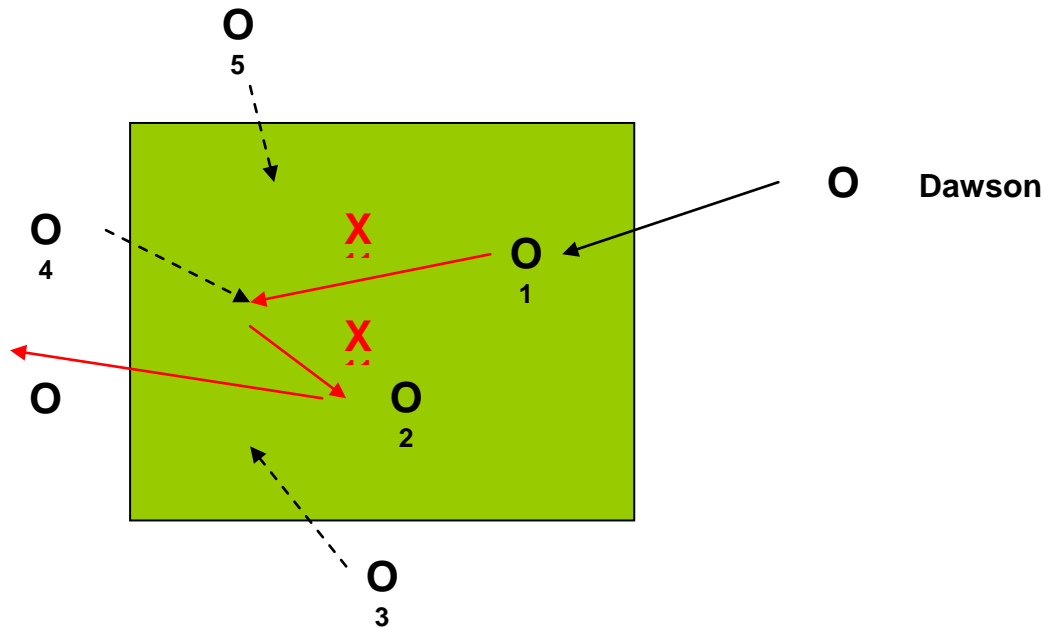
Managing Upwards

Why

- People above know the bigger picture
- The Academy is a means to an end
- People above hire and fire
- Carry the purse strings

Tottenham – “Box Overload” Approach

4/3/3 or 4/4/2 – Create 5v2/ 5v3 by stepping into the box



“Playing through/ in between the lines” – quick one/two play (very South American)

Also encourages full backs to attack the space left behind by wide players coming into the box.

Tottenham Hotspur Youth Academy

Values/Cultures

Developing the **“24 hour professional”**

Minimum expectation: Be professional

Maximum expectation: Be good enough to play 1st team football.

Psychometric testing used to assess character (levels of hunger)

Staff – must put the **interests of the players first**. The sessions and decisions are made so that they are right for the player.

Player Development Philosophy

Work done to help **A players** (“Working at the rate of the best player” – not the weaker player)

Every session is tailored to the development of the **A players** in the group and other players are there to improve and to speed up the development of the A players to the 1st team.

Social Development Aspect:

Library visits in inner-city London to improve literacy levels in themselves and other young people, coaching in the community, black history month, “kick and cook” initiatives.

Social responsibility gives young people the “holistic approach” required. They promote themselves and their clubs (ambassadorial roles).

Syllabus – technical and tactical mix

Core technique

Style and intent

Creativity and risk-taking big parts of approach

Physical element

Use of Technology

A DVD is produced for every game. It features;

Attacking entries

Crosses

Attempts on goal

Corners

Free kicks

Counter attacks

Coaching points

Opposition

Players receive their own copies to study their own development.

Skill Development – Session Structure

Each session starts with a “**10 minute rule**”

Purpose: extra time to address specific weaknesses in addition to the actual session topic.

6 sessions per week x 10 minutes = 1 hour per week

43 weeks of year = 43 hours of additional work on weaknesses (e.g. left-footed players working only on right foot)

Agreed with the coaching staff (e.g. left-footed Goalkeeper opening up on right side and playing out with right foot).

Problem-solving sessions with practices that demand INTELLIGENCE.

“QUICK AND THICK” WON’T SURVIVE

The Summer Birthday Debate (Club recognition)

15% of current Spurs players have a summer birthday (later maturation to be taken into account)

Staff – relaxed, player-led, helpful

Scouting – a major concern of the club is that scouts miss the subtleties of less effective players who have the greatest potential (maturation etc....)

Working with a 4/3/3 system

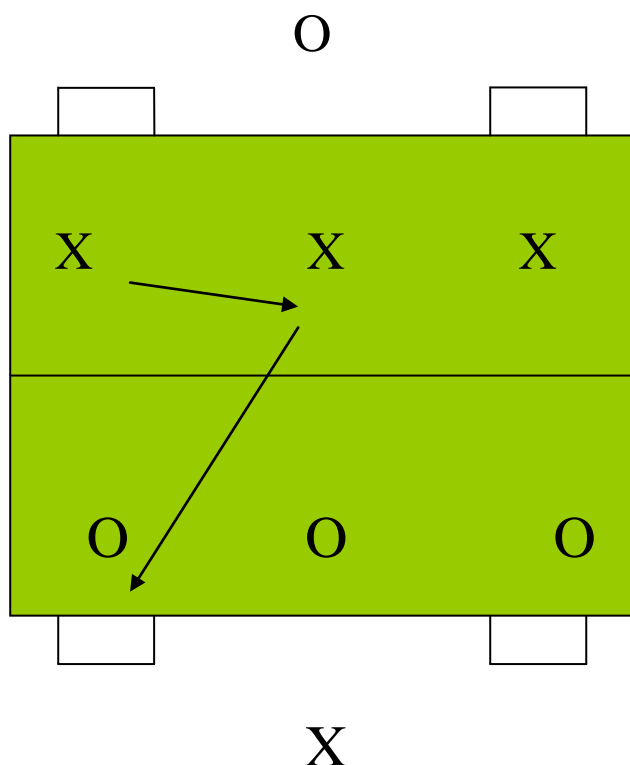
Friday morning session (preparation for Saturday match)

2 coaches (John McDermott and Alex Inglethorpe) worked 2 different practices simultaneously with 8 players (practice A) and 12 players (practice B). Then swapped over after 25 minutes

- 1) **“10 Minute Rule”**
- 2) SAQ (fast footwork drills) – 10/ 15mins

Focus: Planting foot, accelerate/ decelerate, cut inside man and spin across man

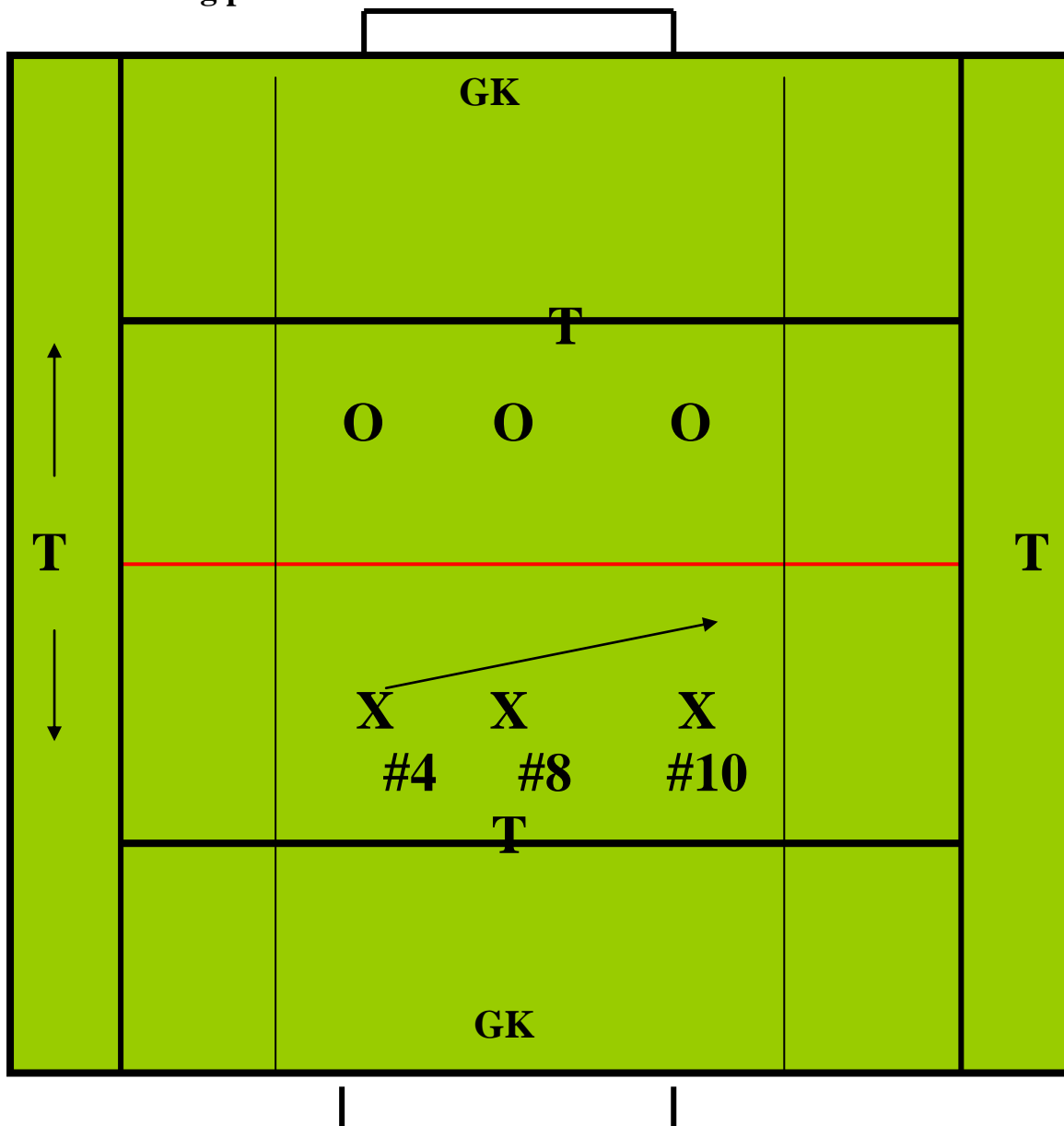
- 3) **Skill practice A – PRESSING/ QUICK PLAY/ COUNTER-ATTACKING**



15 YARDS LONG X 12 YARDS WIDE, 4 MINI GOALS
 5 GOALS TO WIN A SET
 5 SETS TO WIN
 2 GOALS FOR BALL TO TARGET PLAYER
 1 GOAL FOR SHOT THROUGH SMALL GOAL

- 8 to 12 players (use spare players as ball boys to encourage speed)
- Keep ball when you score
- Defending 3 work hard to press to retain ball. Only 1 defender can break the line to press in opposing half (slide, equal distances, relationships, nearest man).
- Target man can apply pressure from behind but must return to base line.
- Focus on reaction and counter-attack on regain.
- Work very hard to defend, create a BLOCK of defenders to break down – stop the shot.
- Encourage attacking players to: move ball quickly (purpose), pop it off and play through gaps (risk taking), combination play and rotation of players (overlaps, wall passes etc..)
- Decision-making and patience (control the game) – retain ball and wait for gap if defenders block the route to goal.

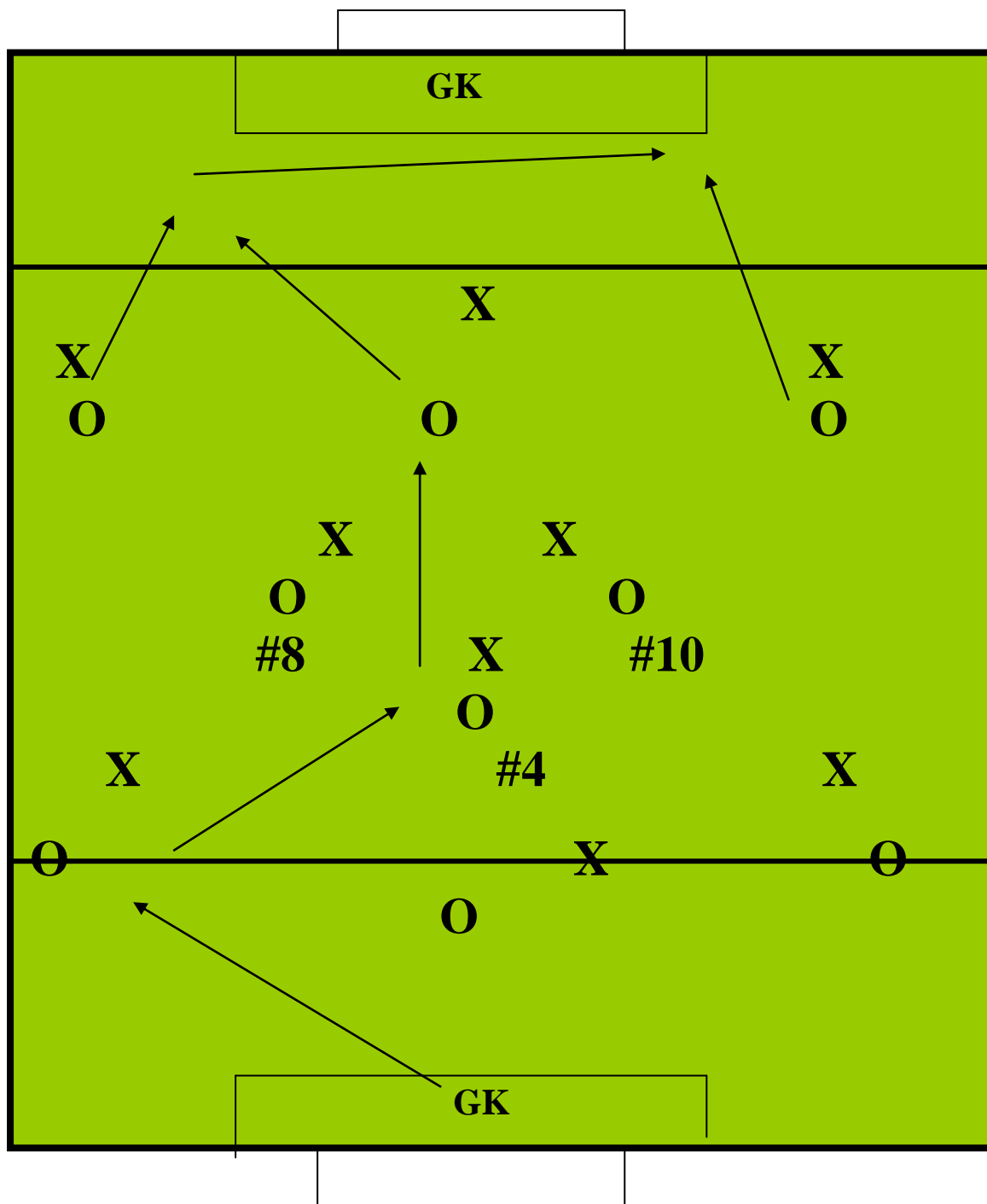
Skill/ Unit work Practice B – 3 Central midfielders and 3rd man running practice



- Width of the central area – 6 yard area (encourage narrow pitch)
- Length of the area – box to box
- Target players down each flank (play for the team in possession)
- Target player (central striker) on edge of each box (ball must go through them to create 1 v 1 scoring opportunity). This central target player must **set ball back** for **third man running**. Other wide flank player can join in final third and a player can break from midfield to join in.
- 12 players needed in total.

- **6 v 3** overload practice (3 midfielders + 1 striker + 2 wide target players)
- with 2 goalkeepers
- 2 touch maximum
- Opportunity to enter final third – 2 men can join in when Target player has it wide position (e.g. Target striker and 1 breaking midfielder)
- “SET” ball back for third man running
- Quick play and break the line of defence by bouncing the ball round players in tight areas.

4) 4/3/3/ (3/3/3) Match in 3 x 15 minute periods



9 V 9 + 2 Goalkeepers

Width of penalty area only (narrow pitch)

Length: Box to Box

Timed games: 3 x 15 minute matches

Play hard/ match tempo

- Encourage rotation of wide strikers deep into midfield to allow attacking midfielder to drive into attacking areas
- 20 minute spell – exciting not sterile
- Encourage overlaps, midfielders running beyond attackers, rotation of midfielders/ wide players with defenders to get ball from keeper.

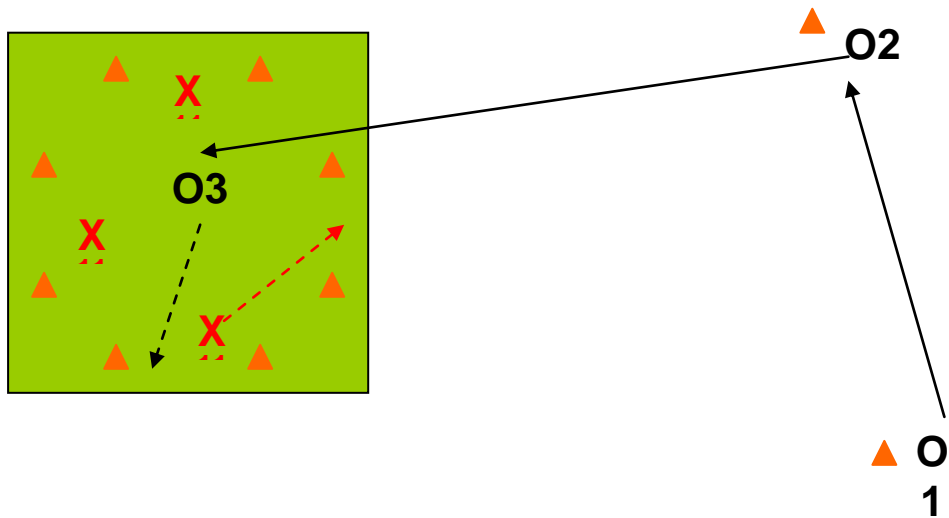
Coaching points

- Can't always score or play penetrative pass so retain possession and wait for opportunity to probe (Go in, come out).
- Do jobs in both boxes.
- Pull it back from byeline, get across keeper (first defender)
- Communication – use of voice to get message of urgency across to team mates.
- Watch for too many turnovers of possession (keep ball)
- Fast feet of strikers can be the difference between being able to set the ball back for the set up and missing the opportunity.
- Who has control of the game?
- Risk taking, rotation to come and receive ball from keeper/ defenders.

Technical Session – U14 to U20

Alex Inglethorpe – Under 18s Coach

- 1) Light jogging and warm up – **5 mins**
- 2) Technical practice 1 – **5 mins**

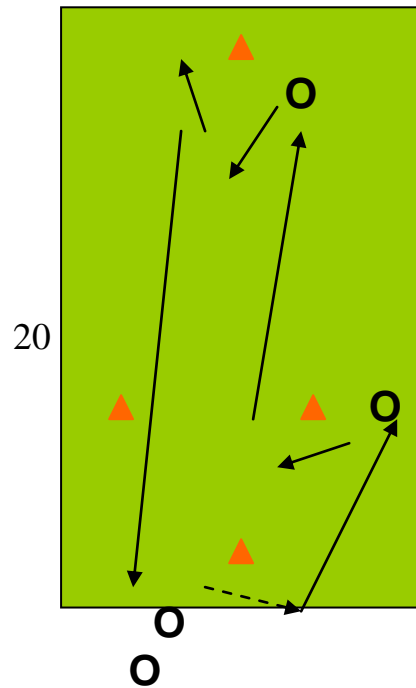


- O1 “fires” ball into O2, O2 receives and can do a turn before firing the ball into O3 through the gates.
- The Xs must cover the ground quickly to protect the open gate but will always leave 1 gate open in doing so. O3 must keep the ball close and work an opening in this **tight area** and can escape by bursting through the open gate to score. Then swap players.

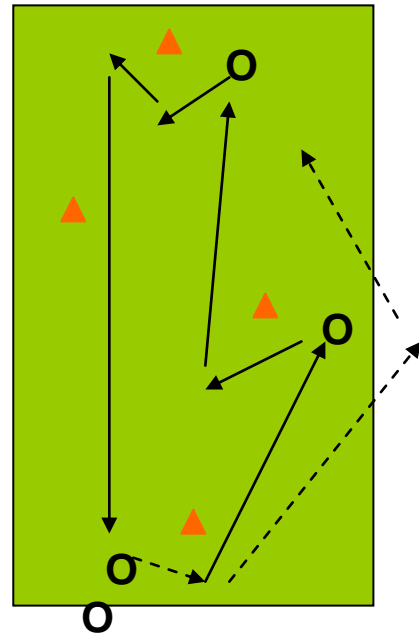
- 3) Core stability and dynamic jogging/twisting etc – **5 mins**

4) Passing – 10 minutes

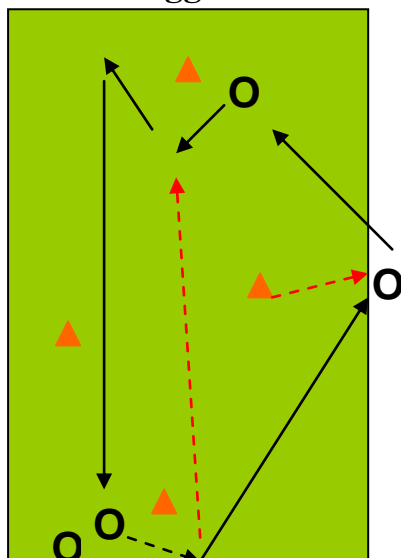
PART 1 - “fire it in”



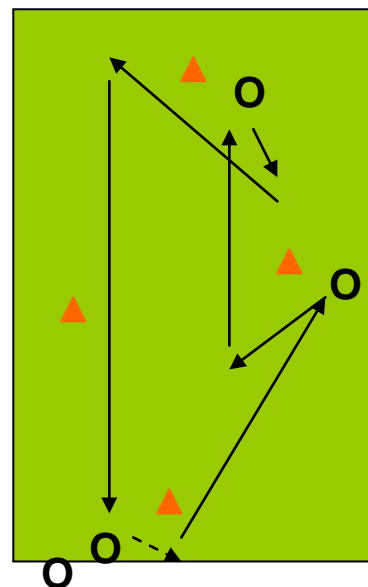
PART 2 – “overlapping runs”



PART 3 – “aggressive off the shoulder”



PART 4 – “Two’s”

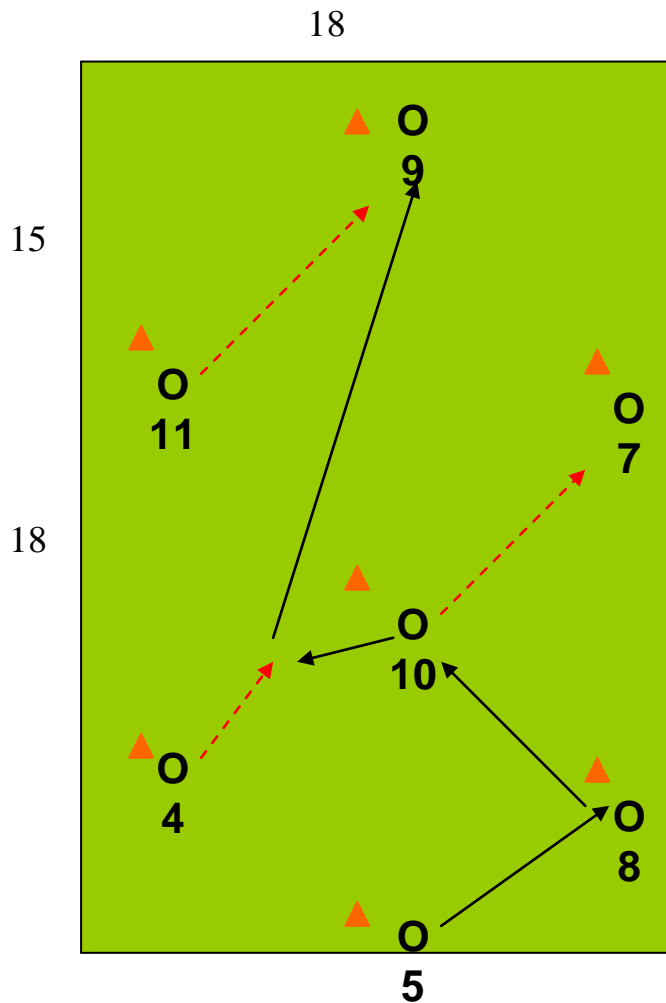


Details – Give ownership to players to solve problems through Parts 1 - 4

- Movement off the mannequin – **aggressive**, off the shoulder, creating angles
- Brave 1st touch **away** from mannequin

- Communication with **gestures** – “the hand gesture leaves the clue”
 - Xavi/Iniesta Spanish pass – “**beat the lines**” and “fire it in”.
- 5) More stretching and jogging/ twisting etc.. work with conditioner – **5 mins**

6) Combination play and passing – 5 mins



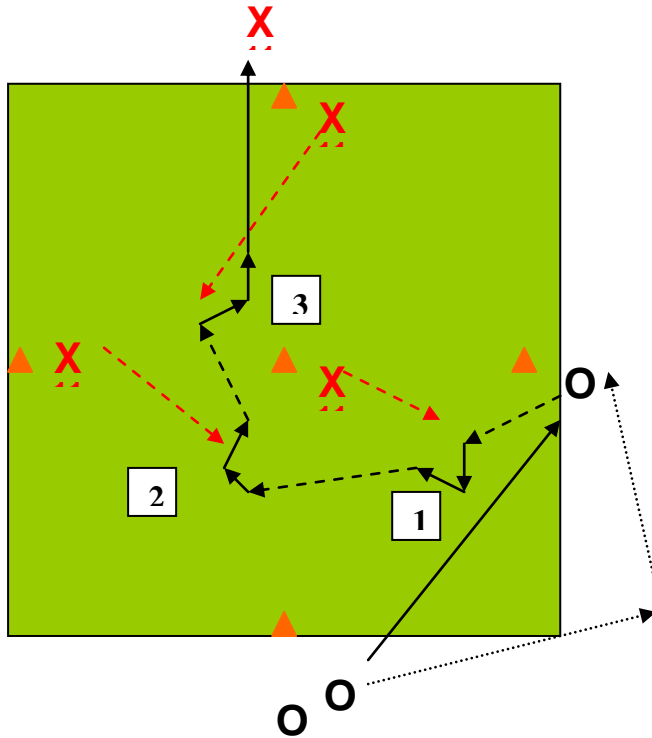
Details – CB/ 3 x CMs/ 3 x CFs – mirrors 4/3/3

- Encourage rotation between positions
- Find spare cone – the “pockets”
- Encourage “one-twos”, “step overs”, “megs” etc.
- Fire in first pass/ softer return pass (if player follows to receive again)
- Opposite movements
- Play on angles

- Change the point of attack – both laterally and centrally (into Number 9)

7) Light jogging and stretching – **5mins**

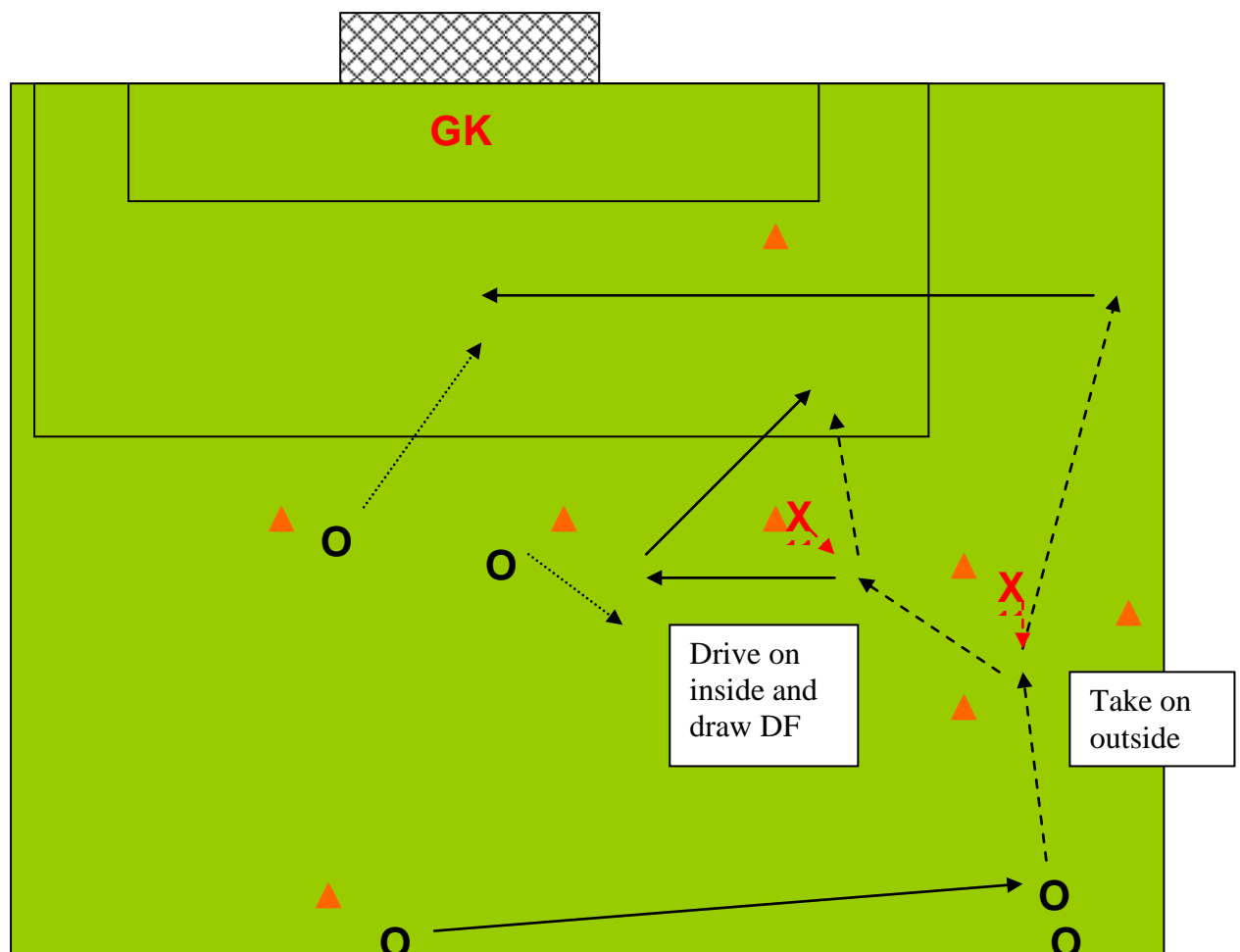
8) Turning in tight areas – **5 mins**



- Good 1st touch
- Draw in the 1st defender and turn away,
- Draw 2nd defender and turn away
- Draw 3rd defender and turn away
- Finish by firing ball in.
- Turns – cut back the ball, step overs etc..

9) Stretching and light jogging – **5mins**

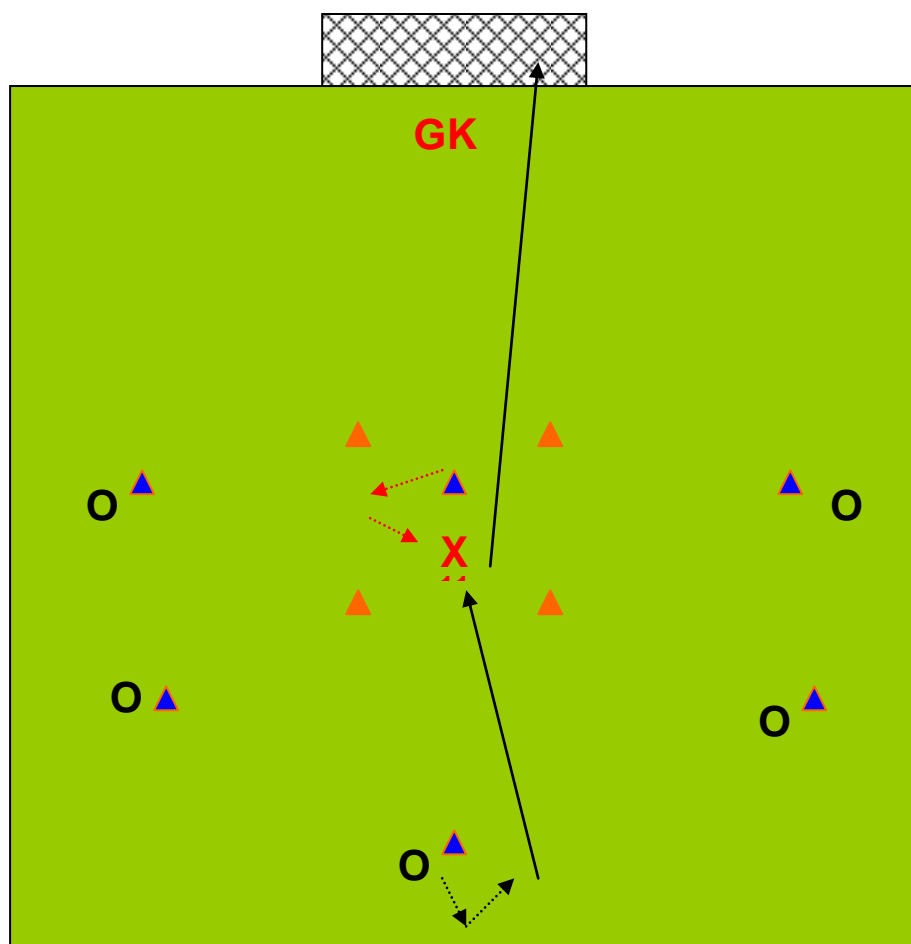
10) Wide players driving inside/outside the fullback – **15 mins**



Details

- Add Defender to encourage wide player to drive inside fullback and between 1st central defender
- Encourage combination play with Centre forwards (one-twos etc..)

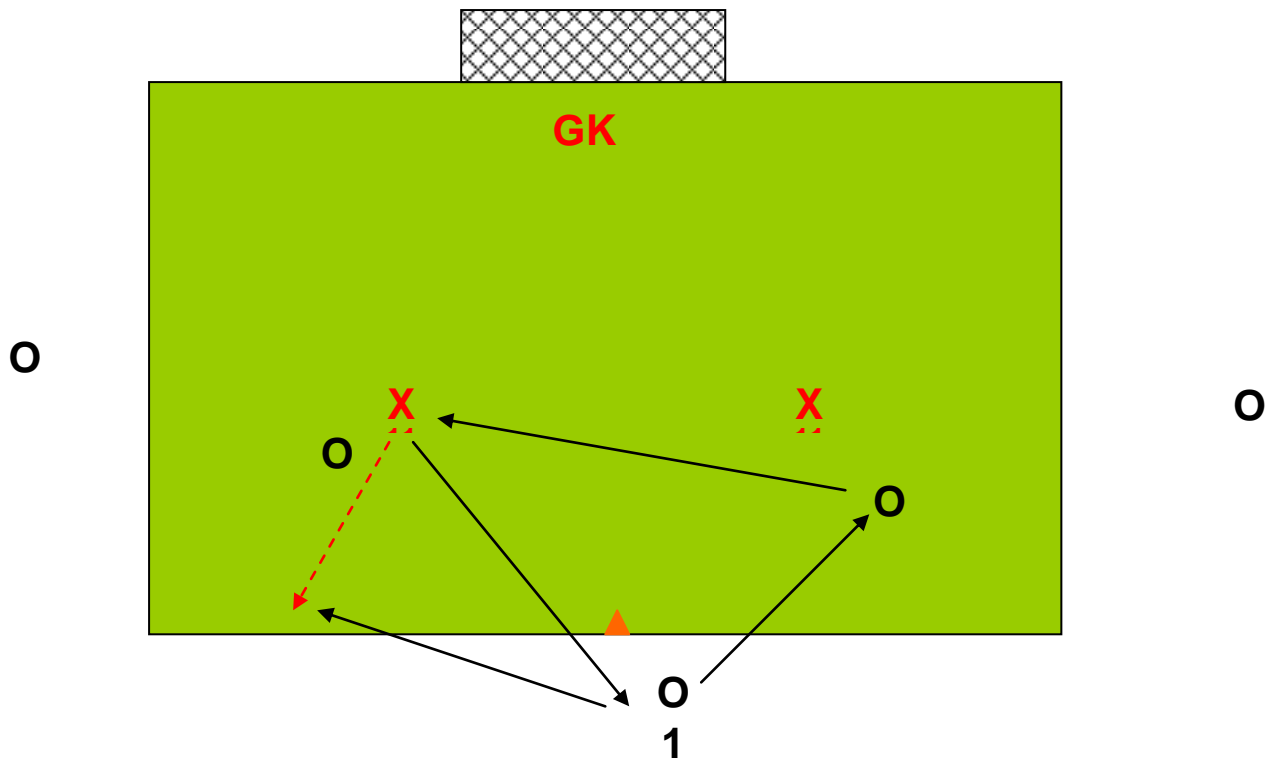
11) Receiving and shooting in tight areas – **8 minutes**



Details

- Os do a turn with the ball on outside and when Coach calls their name, they fire the ball into X.
- X must work off the shoulder and move to the ball, receive and strike.
- Tight turns on outside
- Quick reactions and Spanish pass
- Sharp receiving skills in tight area

12) 2 v 2 attack and defence – **8 minutes**



Details

- Os can play off outside Floaters for wall pass only to retain possession.
- If X regains possession, they must play back to O1 first before they can receive the ball back and take possession of the game.
- Floaters on 1 touch
- 2 minute rounds x 4 sets
- Head control when shooting

Observations of Alex Inglethorpe

- Attention to **detail** – How to receive? When? Where? Who? Why?
- Quick fire rounds of **high intensity** work (e.g. 6 x 3 minute rounds with no intervention other than words of encouragement)
- Allows for creativity in players and provides **ownership** to them to find solutions through **guided experimentation**
- Praise, **positive**, great (gentle) manner
- **Fun**, creative sessions with lots of movement, passing and finishing.
- Light **jogging**, dynamic movements and stretching between each part of the session.
- Relates aspects of the session very well to modern players and Tottenham players (e.g. What does Modric do in this situation?)
- Attention to **“firing” the pass in** and continual references to Xavi and Iniesta and the “Spanish way”