



Mill Hill

Instilling values, inspiring minds

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Mill Hill School

Skill Development: Individual Possession

Playing 1v1 and Staying on the Ball



Developing Individual Possession

In order to produce teams and players that can dominate and dictate matches, we must first put in place conditions that encourage the development of individuals to become comfortable and capable in possession of the ball.

Qualities we may look for in individual possession include:

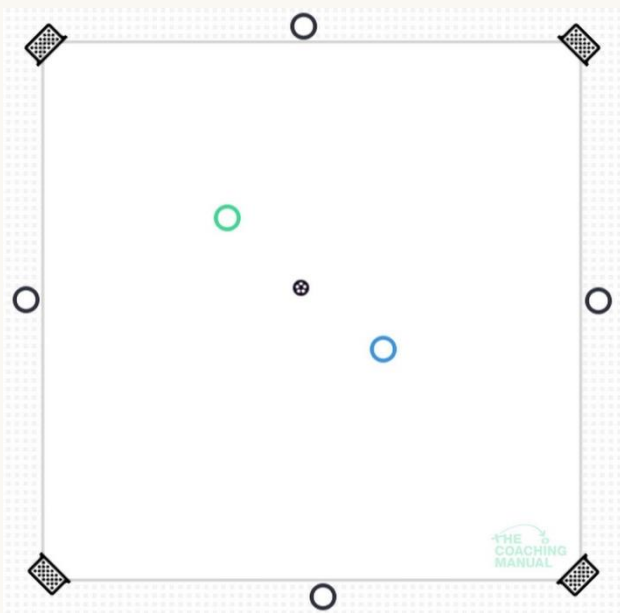
- Receiving skills to take the ball from a team mate
- Dribbling skills to move past a defender and/or into space
- Turning skills to deceive a defender
- Shielding skills to hold onto the ball under pressure
- Strength and balance to hold off a defender
- Spatial awareness to identify the next move and/or where to take the ball

Our players should be given an opportunity each week to focus specifically on developing the skills integral to being confident and able in possession. The activities and games below can be implemented in our sessions - some as warm-up activities - to expose pupils to 1v1 situations in which they need to beat a player, or to stay on the ball until a better option becomes available. If you try out any of the activities below, do feedback on any success and progress you see in your players' individual possession skills.



"I'm not strong, nor fast, nor skilful. I try to always find the space but most importantly the defender must never win the ball off me in a 1v1"
Xavi Hernandez

Activity 1 – 1v1+4



Set Up

- Coach throws the ball into play
- The ball must bounce three times before either player can touch the ball
- Players can score in any of the four mini-goals
- They must play a wall pass with one of the outer players before scoring.

Key Points

- Can players shield the ball from their opponent and stay on the ball?
- Do players use individual skill or physical qualities to beat an opponent?

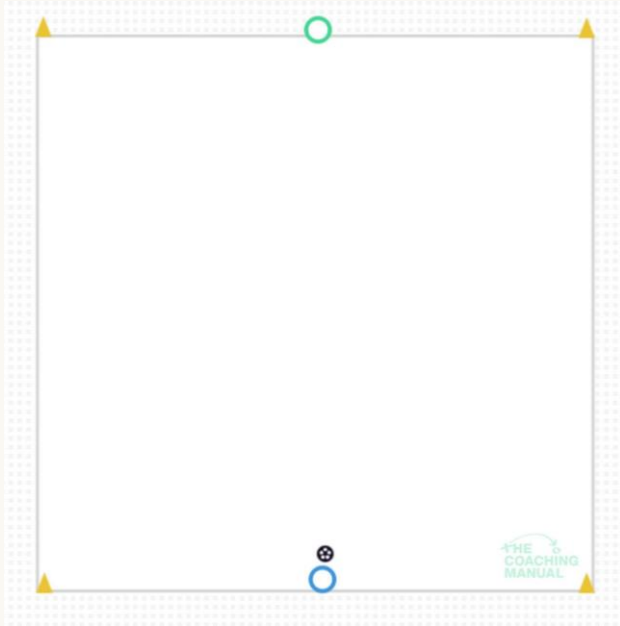
Adaptations/Progressions

- Change the size of the space depending on the current capabilities of your players, or to alter the physical requirements of the activity
- Reduce the number of goals or make the game directional
- Award bonus goals for skills you want to see players demonstrate
- Have another pair working in the middle to increase interference



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shielding the ball • Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball • Passing • Movement off the ball to receive the pass 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making in 1v1 situations • Confidence to beat a player
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiovascular endurance • Strength to hold off opponents 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with those on the outside when passing & receiving • Working with peers to create solutions

Activity 2 - Lineball



Set Up

- Defender starts play by passing to their opponent
- When attacker receives the ball, defender may close them down
- Attacker scores by stopping the ball on the defender's line

Key Points

- Do players use both feet and are they capable of attacking both sides of an opponent?
- Can players use individual skill or physical strengths to beat an opponent?

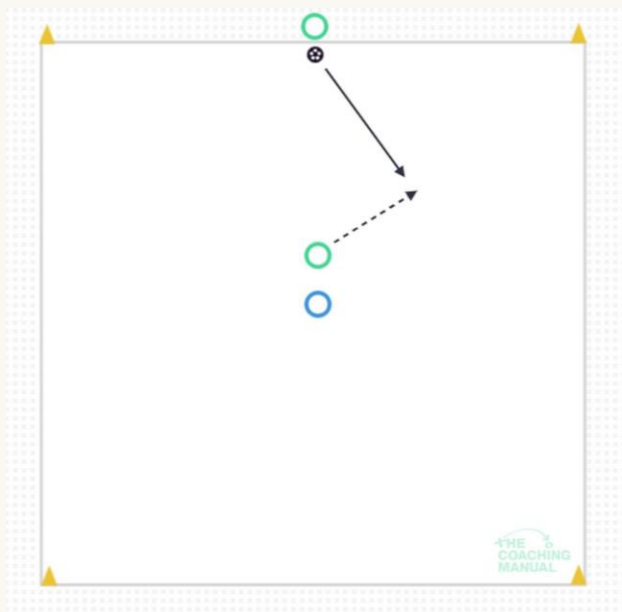
Adaptations/Progressions

- Change the size of the space depending on the current capabilities of your players
- Allow defender to transition into attack if they win the ball
- Award bonus goals for skills you want to see players demonstrate
- Work in a large grid with multiple pairs to increase interference
- Turn into a competition by moving winner up a grid, loser down a grid



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receiving the ball• Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball• Passing	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision making in 1v1 situations• Confidence to beat a player• Identifying the correct moment to attack a defender
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strength to hold off opponents• Agility• Acceleration & speed	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working independently to find or create solutions

Activity 3 – Lineball 2



Set Up

- 1v1 inside the grid. The attacker moves to lose the defender and trigger the pass from his team mate
- The attacker can attempt to beat the defender to score by stopping the ball on his line
- If the attacker can hold on to possession for 10 seconds, his team mate can join him in the grid to make a 2v1

Key Points

- The attacking player has a key decision to make – attack the defender, or stay on the ball and wait for support. Can they play to their strengths? Can they develop their weaknesses?
- Does the movement to receive the ball create space and give them the option to play forward? Can they roll the defender if put under pressure and facing their own goal?

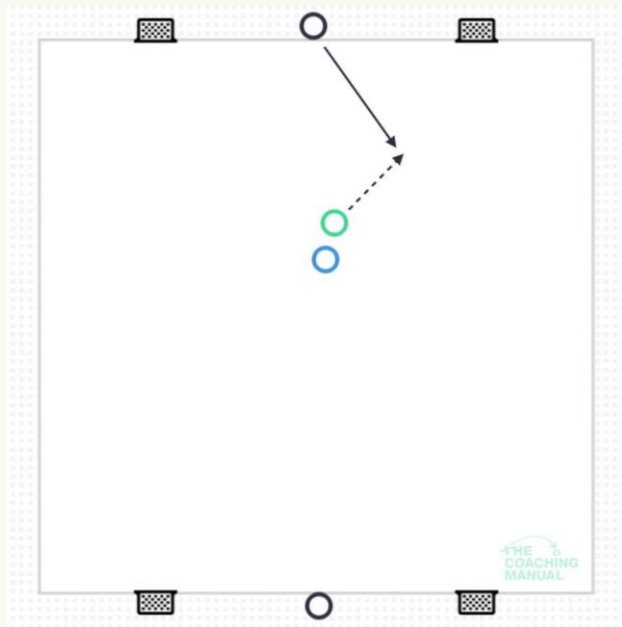
Adaptations/Progressions

- Make the defender start on their goal line to give the attacker more time
- Allow defender to transition into attack if they win the ball
- Adjust the amount of time before the team mate can join in to make it harder/easier
- Work in a large grid with multiple pairs to increase interference
- Add a goal/goalkeeper



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving the ball • Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball • Movement to create space 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making in 1v1 situations • Confidence to beat a player • Identifying the correct moment to attack a defender
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength to hold off or roll an opponent • Acceleration and/or change of direction to lose a marker 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal and non-verbal communication to link-up in a 2v1 • Demanding the ball from a team mate

Activity 4 – 1v1+2



Set Up

- Players are 1v1 inside the grid
- Ball played in from one end
- Attacker must score in one of the target goals at the other end
- Attacker can use the neutral player at the other end for a one-two/lay-off

Key Points

- Are players able to shield and stay on the ball under pressure from their opponent, until they have help from a teammate?
- Can players use different means to beat the defender, e.g. 1v1 skill, one-two, up-back-through

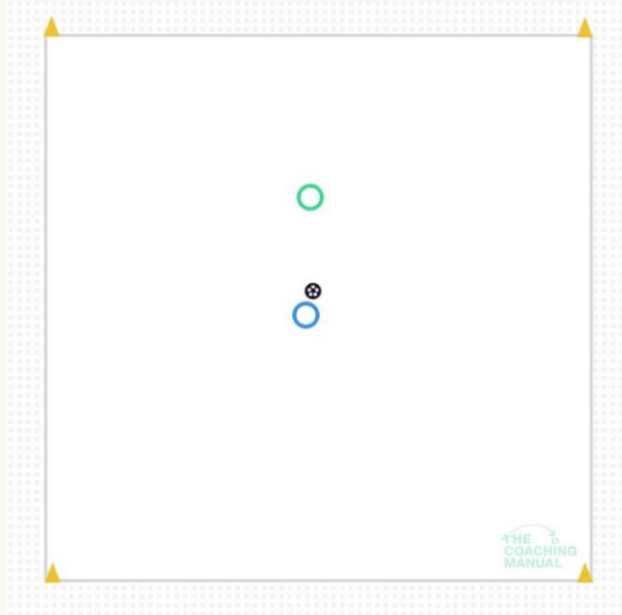
Adaptations/Progressions

- Adding more pairs into one grid will increase interference and increase need to stay on the ball
- Increase grid size to increase physical requirements



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving the ball • Body shape to shield the ball • Using different surfaces of the foot to keep control • 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making in 1v1 situations • Concentration to identify a moment when a point could be won
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength to hold off opponents • Agility • cardiovascular endurance 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-verbal communication to receive the ball or execute combination play, e.g. one-two

Activity 5 – Keep it on the Court



Set Up

- Players are 1v1 inside the grid
- If the ball goes out of the grid, the player who did not touch it last wins a point

Key Points

- Are players able to shield and stay on the ball under pressure from their opponent?
- Can players find or create opportunities to win a point?

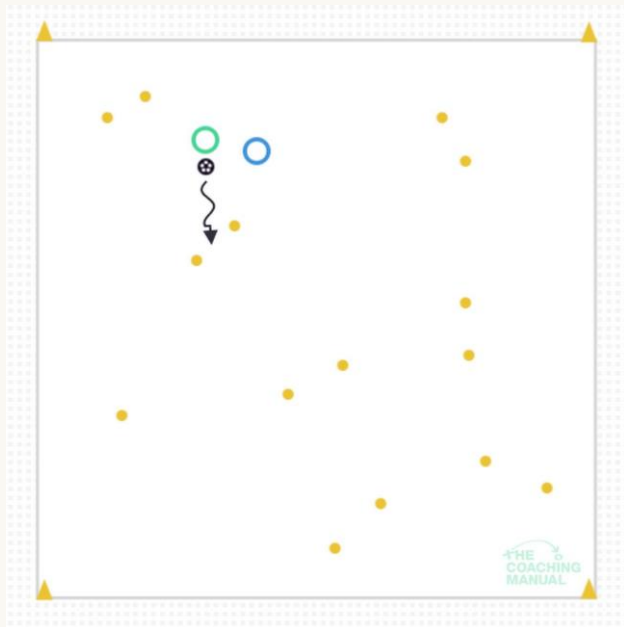
Adaptations/Progressions

- The smaller the grid, the more difficult this activity
- Adding more pairs into one grid will increase interference
- Turning this into a 2v2 would increase exposure to decision making – when to stay on the ball and when to pass to a team mate



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Body shape to shield the ball• Using different surfaces of the foot to keep control	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision making in 1v1 situations• Concentration to identify a moment when a point could be won
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strength to hold off opponents	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working productively with a partner in 1v1 situations

Activity 6 – Through the Gate



Set Up

- 1v1
- Player on the ball must try to stop the ball in a gate to score a point
- Opponent tries to win the ball back
- If opponent wins the ball, they try to stop the ball in a gate
- Take turns to attack

Key Points

- Are players aware of the space and options to score around them?
- Can players carry out a piece of skill to move past their opponent?

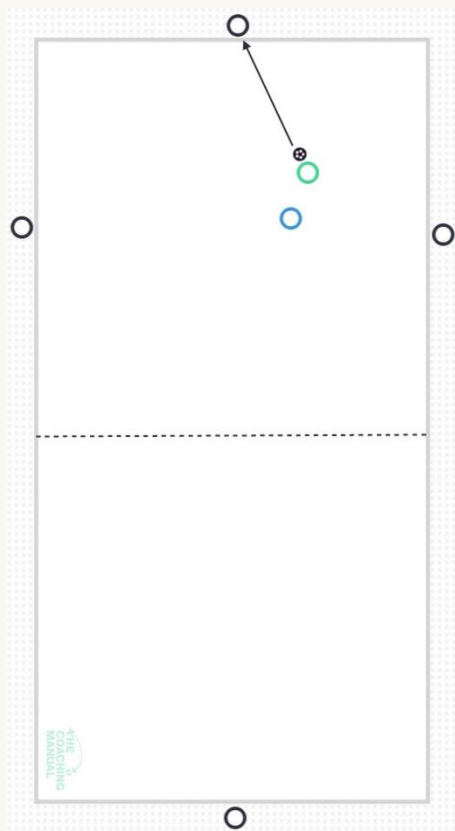
Adaptations/Progressions

- Adjust the size/number of gates depending on the current capabilities of your players
- Award bonus points for skills you want to see players demonstrate
- Ask players to suggest skills they can attempt for bonus points
- Work in a large grid with multiple pairs to increase interference



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dribbling and running with the ball • Turning • Individual skill to beat an opponent • Use of different surfaces of the feet 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making and spatial awareness in 1v1 situations • Confidence to beat a player
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiovascular endurance • Agility and balance to beat a defender • Acceleration & speed to lose a defender 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working productively with a partner in 1v1 situations

Activity 7 – 1v1+4 Passing Combination



Set Up

- Rectangle grid, split into two squares
- 1v1 in the grid, with four neutral players
- Attacker aims to make three passes with the neutral players, before moving to the other box to repeat. The two neutral players on the side of the grid slide down to work in the other box
- If the defender wins the ball, he becomes the attacker and tries to combine with the defenders
- The attacker cannot combine with the same neutral player twice in a row

Key Points

- Can the attacker shield the ball and roll the defender to open up a pass?
- Can attackers protect the ball when defenders apply pressure?

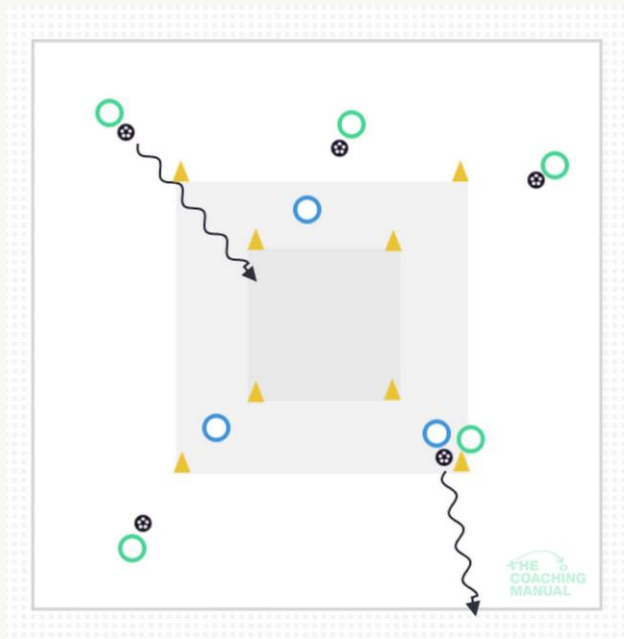
Adaptations/Progressions

- Modify the number of neutral players
- Adapt the size or shape of the grid
- Change the number of passes required
- Limit the touches of players inside or outside the grid



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body position to shield the ball • Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball • Dribbling and running with the ball 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience under pressure • Confidence to beat a player • Identifying the correct moment to attack a space
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength to hold off opponents • Acceleration & speed to get into the scoring zone 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with those on the outside when passing & receiving • Working with peers to create solutions

Activity 8 – Attacking with the Ball



Set Up

- Three zones – scoring zone in the middle, the defending zone, and the outer zone
- Attackers have a ball each and attempt to dribble into the scoring zone and stop the ball – this earns them a point
- Defenders are restricted to the defending zone; however, if they win the ball back, they score a point by dribbling out of the grid and recovering to the defending zone
- On coach signal, defenders have 10 seconds to leave the grid and win the ball. After 10 seconds, those without a ball are now defenders

Key Points

- Do players move quickly and with good control when a space opens up between defenders?
- Can players protect the ball when defenders apply pressure?

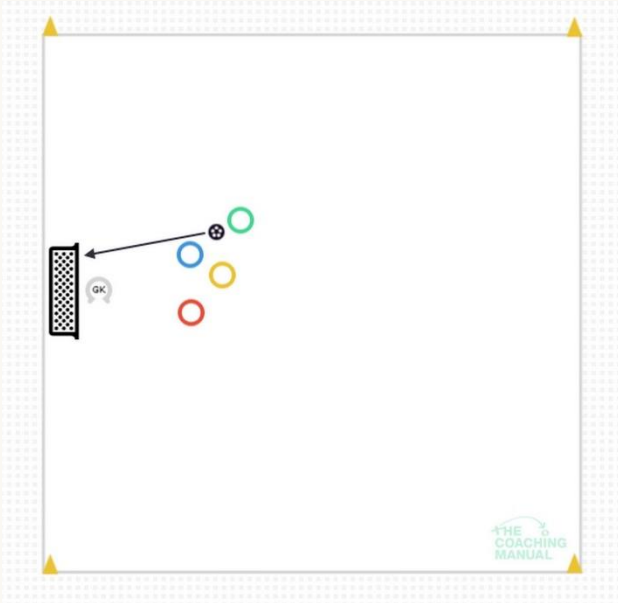
Adaptations/Progressions

- Add/remove defenders to change difficulty
- Increase or decrease the size of the defending zone



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body position to shield the ball • Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball • Dribbling and running with the ball 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience under pressure • Confidence to beat a player • Identifying the correct moment to attack a space
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength to hold off opponents • Acceleration & speed to get into the scoring zone 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working cooperatively with other attackers to distract defenders and create attacking opportunities

Activity 9 - Wembley



Set Up

- Players are 1v1v1v1, plus one goalkeeper
- Goalkeeper throws the ball in to start the game
- Players aim to gain possession and score a goal
- If the ball is deflected into the goal, the player who shot is awarded the goal
- The player with the most goals at the end is the winner

Key Points

- Can players maintain possession under pressure from more than one defender?
- Can players manoeuvre the ball to create a shooting opportunity?

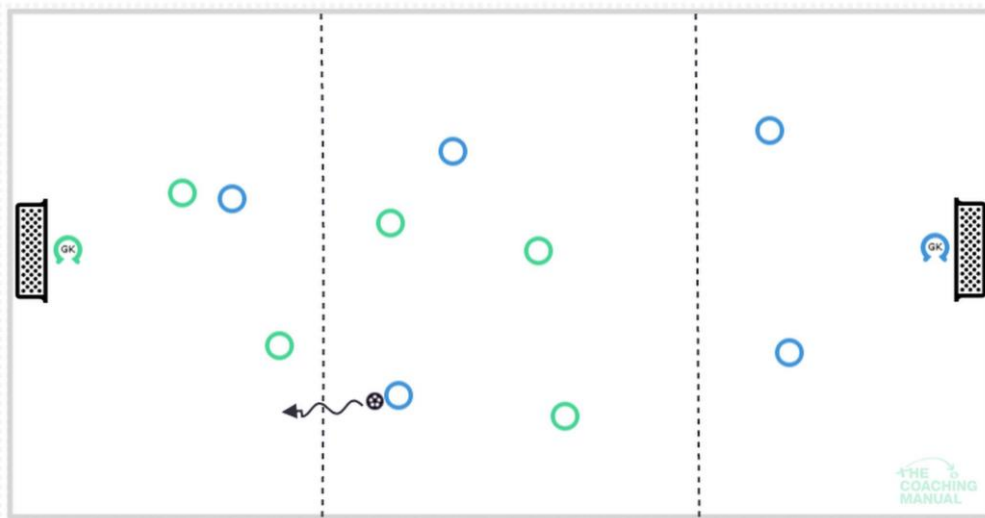
Adaptations/Progressions

- The fewer the players, the more exposure each player will get to the ball
- Letting some players play as pairs will make the game easier for those players and more difficult for the singles
- Play 2v2v2v2
- Play in a full-size goal and use the penalty area to increase realism



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Controlling/bringing the ball down• Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball• Shooting	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision making in 1v1 situations• Confidence and determination to beat a player
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strength to hold off opponents• Acceleration to beat an opponent	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working together to defend as a team

Activity 10 – Conditioned Game 1



Set Up

- Teams must play through the thirds
- They can only enter the attacking third by dribbling or running with the ball

Key Points

- Do players identify appropriate moments to drive forward with the ball?
- Can players stay on the ball in the final third until they can create a chance to shoot?

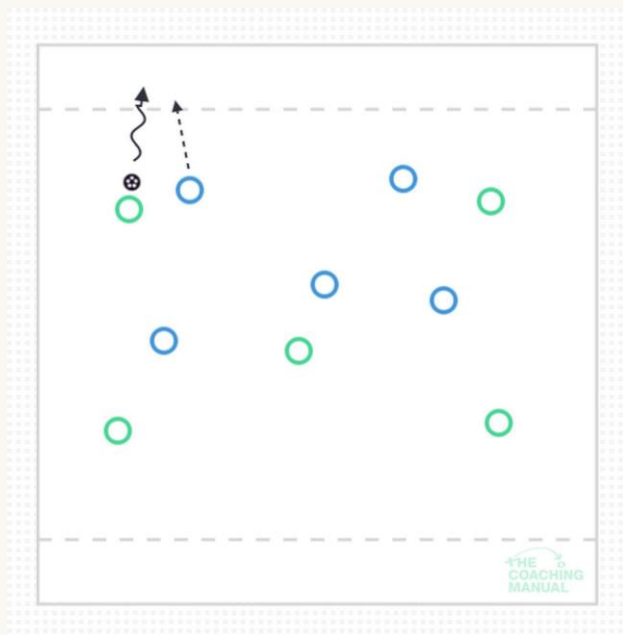
Adaptations/Progressions

- If a player dribbles into the final third, they *must* shoot; if he cannot get a shot away, you could allow this player to pass backward into the middle third to retain possession



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball • Dribbling/running with the ball • Shooting 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making in 1v1 situations and identifying when to break into the final third • Confidence to beat a player •
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength to hold off opponents • Balance • Acceleration & speed 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication to support the player in possession • Working with peers to create solutions

Activity 11 – Conditioned Game 2



Set Up

- End-zone game
- Attackers score a point by dribbling ball into the end-zone
- One defender may follow the attacker into the end-zone and try to win the ball. If the attacker can hold onto the ball for five seconds, they score double

Key Points

- Are players aggressive and decisive in moving into the end-zone when the opportunity arises?
- Are players robust in the end-zone to hold off challenges from the defender?

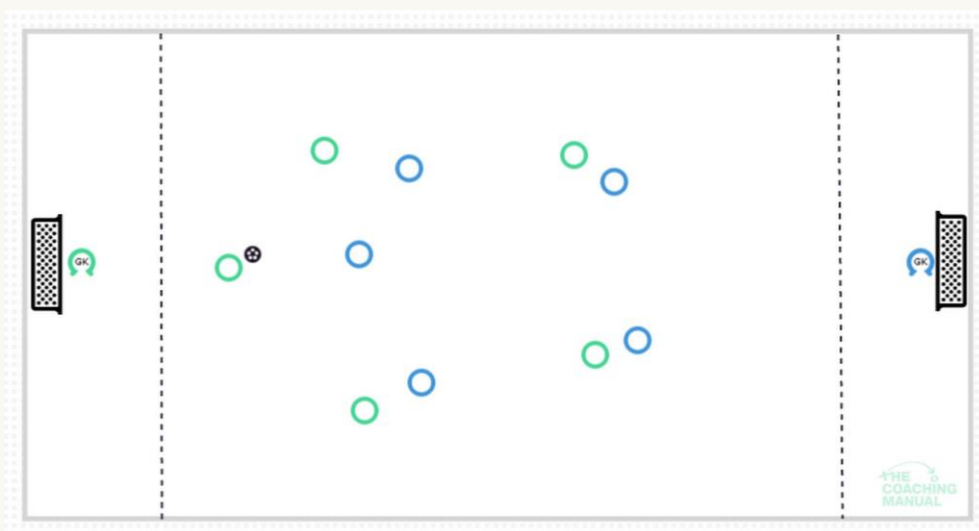
Adaptations/Progressions

- Increase/decrease the size of the end-zone
- Allow an extra defender to enter the end-zone to increase pressure on the attacker
- Overload one team to give them increased space to dribble



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball • Dribbling/running with the ball • Shielding the ball 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial awareness • Confidence to beat a player • Identifying the correct moment to attack a defender
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength to hold off opponents • Balance • Acceleration & speed 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication to support the player in possession • Working with peers to create solutions

Activity 12 – Conditioned Game 3



Set Up

- Players cannot pass backwards in the central area
- In the end-zones, players can pass backwards (e.g. to their goalkeeper, or to pull back a cross)

Key Points

- Can players stay on the ball until they find an option to play forward?
- Can players use their skill, physical and spatial capabilities to create opportunities to play forwards?

Adaptations/Progressions

- Adapt the size of the central zone
- Allow dribble-ins from the sideline so that players can play forward quickly



Technical/Tactical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual skill to beat an opponent or to stay on the ball • Dribbling/running with the ball • Holding and shielding the ball 	Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making in 1v1 situations • Spatial awareness and identifying opportunities to play forward
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength to hold off opponents • Agility and balance to turn away from an opponent 	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating options to the player in possession • Working with peers to create solutions

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