

A black and white photograph of a plowed field with a tree in the background. The field is in the foreground, showing deep, wavy furrows from a plow. In the background, a large, leafy tree stands against a lighter sky. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

Would you have any drills?

What to encourage, who to
assist, how to modify

Philip Kerr

USING THE BOOK

First and foremost, I would urge you to take time to read and get to know the drills. We live in the age of instant and, unfortunately, that may lead to frustration if an answer isn't provided immediately or if understanding doesn't jump at us from the page.

Learning is messy; be prepared to work hard to get to grips with the drills. Don't settle for a 'bit of an idea' of how they might work. Practise drawing them, talking them through (to yourself and others) and even set and move items on a kitchen table to ensure you've a clear understanding of how they work.

Translating from paper to pitch can be challenging.

To your understanding of the mechanics of each drill, add clarity and depth by learning...

....*why you should run it*

....*what to encourage*

....*who may need help*

....*how to modify.*

Tips on these are included in each double-page spread.

Use the Skills Key and abbreviations to help you target the drills that best suit what you are doing on the training pitch.

As with any pitch training activity, whether that be games or drills, it's important to consider how you will use and integrate any of the 50 exercises in this book.

Many of the drills are written for groups of 3, 4 or 5 players. Your task is to decide if you wish to replicate an exercise in different parts of the pitch or if you will include it as a single activity, with small groups of players rotating through it.

Think about building one or two drills into a whole-part-whole session, where you start with a training game, break from it to work on some specifics and return to the game for further practice.

Set the scene before you run any of the drills. Check for understanding and allow time and space for players to make early mistakes as they get to grips with what's being asked of them.

Observation is a key component of any coaching. A drill should allow the coach to watch how players act and react. Games-based coaching often invites overcoaching; mentors find it difficult to let the game unfold and they can stop the play too early and too often. With drills, the opposite can be true. Coaches can be quite happy for drills to run smoothly and fail to see them as opportunities to encourage, to spot and to assist. Use them for learning and enjoy!

SKILLS KEY

Below is a selection of skills and their abbreviations. As you browse through the **Contents**, check which skills may be practised by players taking part in each drill.

Abbreviation	Skill/Action
A	Acceleration
B	Blocking
BB	Breaking Ball
DM	Decision-Making
E	Evasion
F/C	Fielding/Catching
FP	Fist Passing
G	Goalkeeping
KP	Kick Passing
LRS	Left/Right Sides
S	Shooting
SP	Support Play
SR	Solo Running
T	Tackling

CONTENTS

	Title	Skills Focus
1	Across the Line	S, A, SR, LRS
2	Break the Ball	SP, F/C, G
3	Cut and Drive	SR, DM, E, T, S, G, A
4	Diagonal Pass and Shot	S, SR, KP, A, LRS, G
5	Eighteens	S
6	Fist, Feint, Shoot	E, FP, S, LRS
7	Increase the Traffic	SR, KP, FP, LRS
8	Inside Support & Score	SP, S, KP, A, DM
9	Kick and Break	SP, KP, S, A, DM
10	Catch, Turn, Kick	KP, LRS, F/C
11	Long Kicking & Scoring	KP, LRS, F/C, S
12	Breakout	E, T, KP, DM
13	Match Running	KP, SR, FP, LRS, F/C
14	Moving Pivots	FP, F/C, LRS
15	Quick Hands, Quick Feet	FP, A, E, LRS
16	Off the Laces	SR, S, A, LRS
17	Pass, Close, Step	FP, T, E
18	Roll and Score	E, S, G, LRS
19	Split Second Window	KP, LRS, F/C, A
20	Star Kicking	KP, F/C, A, LRS
21	Turn to Score	S, KP, SR, A, E, DM
22	Kick, Catch, Evade	F/C, KP, E, LRS
23	Staggered Attack/Defend	T, S, E, DM, SP, LRS
24	Two Way Passing	KP, LRS, FP, DM
25	Stop or Score	SR, SP, E, A, DM, S

	Title	Skills Focus
26	Support and Pass	SP, KP, DM, LRS
27	Step, Space, Score	S, E, SR, G
28	Hook to Score	S, SR, FP, LRS
29	Freeze Frame	A, KP, T, DM, SP, E
30	Near Hand Race	SR, T, LRS
31	Near Hand Threes	T, SR, SP
32	Post Up, Shift Across	T, DM, S, SP, E, G
33	Pass and Run Tennis	E, KP, LRS, T, B, FP
34	One Point, One Goal	S, LRS, SR, FP, G
35	Field and Break	G, F/C, KP, DM, T
36	A Question of Angles	G, E, T, B, S, A
37	Decisions!	G, DM, T, A, E, S, FP
38	Different Pressures	S, FP, T, E, A
39	Slow and Steal	T, FP, E
40	Beat the Block	B, G, S, E, A
41	Circle Time	LRS, KP, FP, SR, E
42	The Perfect 1v1?	G, T, E, S, A
43	Breaking Lines	KP, E, T, SR
44	Advanced Mark and Shot	F/C, KP, S, DM
45	Fast Break Passing	KP, FP, LRS, F/C
46	Break Ball Cover/Support	BB, A, F/C, T
47	3v3 Breakouts	S, FP, KP, T, A, E, G
48	Sideline Solutions	KP, A, E, T, S, FP, G
49	No Stop Zone	G, FP, KP, LRS, S
50	Hook Shot Swap	S, G, FP

1. ACROSS THE LINE [shooting]

H



- Set two cones 30m apart along the 20m line. Start some players at each [all with footballs].
- On the whistle, let player A solo run across the pitch, parallel with the 20m line.
- The coach chooses when A should turn sharply towards goal and shoot for a point once he/she has crossed the 20m line.
- This call from the coach is the signal for player D [coming from the opposite side] to solo across the 20m line, before being called to turn and shoot.
- Ensure that players get the chance to retrieve the footballs [perhaps a third group behind the goals] and work from both cones.
- A player starting from the left cone should solo and shoot right-footed. Anyone running from the right cone will practise left-footed.

- Coaches should also vary the timing of the call to shoot to let players have different shooting angles [e.g. only let the player take one toe-tap before calling him/her to turn and shoot].

Encourage...

- *a sharp, explosive turn on your call.*
- *solid ball contact when shooting.*

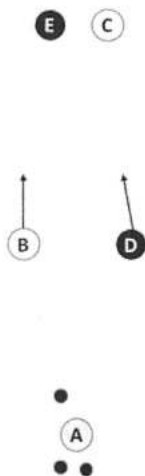
Work with...

- *the player who attempts a shot without making a turn and slices across the ball.*
- *the player who takes small steps on the turn and changes direction tentatively.*
- *the player who throws the ball in the air (rather than roll it off the fingers) when attempting a shot.*

Modify...

- *by introducing a defender.*
- *by changing the line distance.*
- *by altering the line angle.*

2. BREAK THE BALL



- An exercise for 5 players.
- Player A (goalkeeper) sets the ball on a kickout tee. The others form teams of two [e.g. BC and DE].
- One player from each team stands approximately 30m from the kicker, ready to contest the catch.
- The other two players (support runners) stand halfway between the kicker and the catchers.
- As the ball is kicked, these two turn to run towards the catchers, hoping to pick up any break ball.

- Should the ball be caught cleanly, the support runner must be ready for a quick pass to end the move.
- Should the ball be broken to a support runner, the catcher must move to be ready for a quick pass to end the move.
- Repeat, repeat...swap roles etc.

Encourage...

- *support runners to take risks and move at pace.*
- *communication beforehand between teammates (eg I will break the ball to my left).*

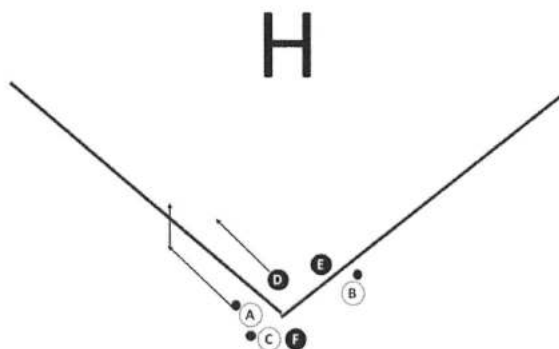
Work with...

- *the player who has poor technique (eg jumping off two feet) and is easily outfielded.*

Modify...

- *by using one support runner who acts for both teams.*
- *through a change in kick distance / kicking from the hands.*
- *by including a finish line for players to cross or changing the starting positions of support runners.*

3. CUT and DRIVE



- To set this up, stand at the mid-point on the 45m line. As you walk towards one corner flag, set out a line of white fleximarkers.
- Do the same towards the other corner flag with yellow markers. Your stage is now set. You have created a large V-shaped area close to goal.
- Ask an attacker and a defender to stand beside each other on that mid-point of the 45m line. Ready to go on the diagram are players A and D.
- Player A will solo run along a line of markers, staying on the outside of these. The defender, player D, should shadow his/her run on the inside of the same markers.
- When A decides, he/she should cross the line to run towards goal and take a shot. Once the attacker crosses that line, D may tackle.

- The attacker may use different types of evasion skill to make the cut [e.g. feint and side step / roll / swerve].
- When the first pair has finished (ie after a shot or a dispossession), the area inside the V is cleared and the next pair begins...B and E will run either side of the yellow line....then C and F will get ready.
- Swap roles when it suits.

Encourage...

- *attackers to decide early on an evasion skill and to accelerate into the area.*
- *the attacker to protect the ball from the defender during the move.*
- *the defender to have his/her feet moving constantly, ready for the attacker's move.*

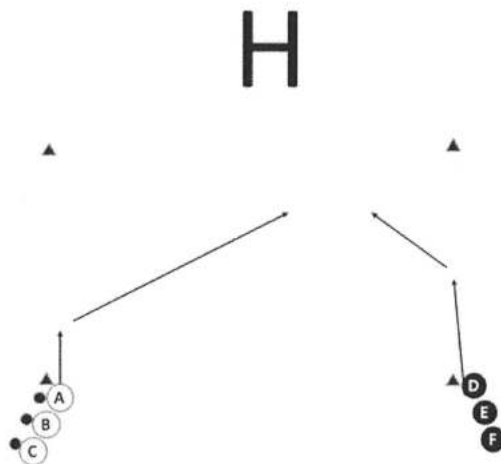
Work with...

- *players who are indecisive when needing to use an evasion skill to create room for a shot.*
- *tacklers who use arms only, who lean towards the attacker and have little or no footwork.*

Modify...

- *the angle of one or both lines / by stipulating points only or goals only / by setting a time limit.*

4. DIAGONAL PASS & SHOT



- Start two lines of players (ABC and DEF) along the 45m line and at two cones, 30m apart.
- Set two other cones on the 13m line, still 30m apart.
- Each player in the left line has a football.
- On the coach's signal, the first player in each line runs towards the nearest cone on the 13m line.
- The coach calls '**pass**' and the solo runner kicks a cross-field pass to the support runner. He/she receives and shoots for a point.
- The shooter retrieves the ball from those behind the goals and jogs out to become the solo runner.

- The 'pass' call is also the signal for the next pair to start.
- The coach should change the ball from the left group to the right group every few minutes to allow players to practise passing and shooting using both sides.

Encourage:

- *the passer to play the ball ahead of the receiver's run.*
- *the receiver to slow his/her run until the 'pass' call comes; then accelerate.*
- *passer and shooter both to focus on making good contact with the ball when kicking.*

Work with:

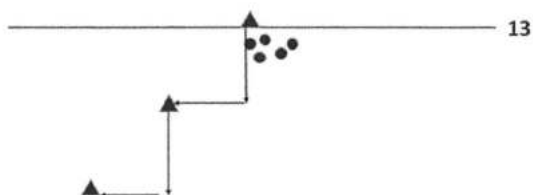
- *players who unwittingly narrow the gap between them as they run.*
- *the receiver who waits for a kind bounce or two before grabbing the ball.*

Modify...

- *the kicking and running distances / by taking the kick pass from static position / by replacing the kick pass with a fist pass.*

5. EIGHTEENS

H



- A practice drill for a **'free taker'**.
- The player starts by taking 5 shots from the 13m line, directly in front of goal.
- If successful with all 5, the player steps back five metres and to either left or right, five metres. From here the player hits 5 more 'frees'.
- If all are scored, the player steps back a further five metres and to either left or right, five metres.
- From here the player hits 5 more 'frees'.
- If successful, the player may hit 3 'frees' from any wide position [18 in total].
- A coach (even if not in attendance) can gauge how successful a player has been by the number given at the end of the practice. [e.g. 12 means

- the player hit the first five, the second five and only missed on the third kick of the next five]

Encourage...

- *the free taker to use the exercise to build a solid process that will hold up under pressure.*
- *the free taker to treat missed shots as opportunities to reflect rather than let emotion take over.*
- *the player to include a few shuttle runs between some attempts to simulate match participation.*

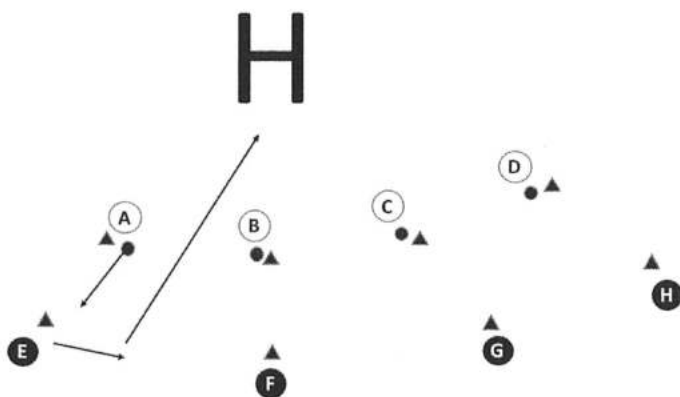
Work with...

- *the player who tends to rush shots in each group of five, rather than approaching each one as the only chance to score.*
- *those with poor technique (leaning back, hunched over the ball, no follow-through); be ready to discuss these.*

Modify...

- *by taking more or fewer frees from one or more of these positions / by increasing or reducing the dimensions / by working in pairs, alternating free taking and being a distraction.*

6. FIST, FEINT, SHOOT



- A simple drill to let players practise quick shooting after they evade an opponent.
- Set out 4 cones in a shallow arc on or near the 13m line.
- Set out 4 more to match these on or near the 20m line.
- A player stands at each of the 8 cones.
- The four along the 13m line have a football each and face those on the 20m line.
- Four more are behind the goals to retrieve.
- On the call, each of the players in possession fist passes the ball to a player on the 20m line and advances to close him/her down.
- The receiver has time only to feint, sidestep the opponent and kick for a point.
- The opponent provides passive resistance.

- After each shot, the kicker moves along the 20m line to the next position, ready for a first pass from another opponent.
- This allows players to evade different opponents and shoot from different positions.
- Players behind the goals feed the footballs to those on the 13m line.
- After a few minutes the groups rotate.

Encourage...

- *the kicker to experiment with different evasion techniques to make room for the shot.*
- *the kicker to focus on making good contact with the ball when striking it.*
- *players to kick with left and right.*

Work with...

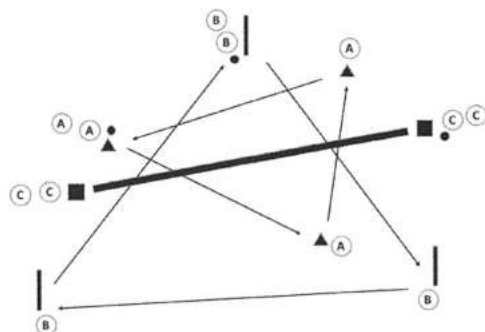
- *any players who struggle with technique. Decide if intervention is needed and, if so, when is best.*

Modify...

- *by spacing the cones across a broader area and allowing the first passer to follow up with an attempt to block the kick.*

7. INCREASE THE TRAFFIC

- Take three separate drills and superimpose.



- Fist passing (triangles), kick passing (poles), solo running (squares).
- Set distances to suit the players being coached.
- Divide your players into three groups, minimum 4 in each, and assign each to a drill.
- Demo these one at a time to let players become familiar with them.
- Now start all together, allowing players to practise their skills while others move among them and around the same area.
- Players who learn to cope with 'increased traffic' in a smaller area will be better equipped to carry this through to a game, where there are teammates and opponents getting in the way.
- How many footballs should you use? Two footballs per drill will be needed if there are five or more players in any group.

- Run the activity for two minutes, then swap each group to a different drill. Repeat.

Encourage...

- *receivers to anticipate the pass and move before the ball is kicked or fist-passed.*
- *passers to play the ball ahead of the receiver, rather than towards a cone.*
- *solo runners to practise looking up and scanning between toe-taps and bounces.*

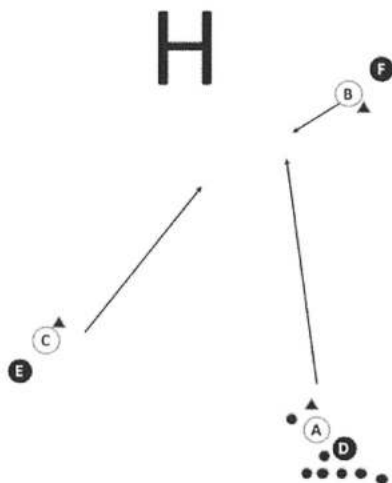
Work with...

- *passers who habitually play the ball towards a cone and seem unable to read the run.*
- *receivers who have a poor first touch.*
- *receivers who tend to stay on the cone.*
- *solo runners who make little use of the bounce and the distance it can carry a player.*

Modify...

- *by asking players to use left and right hands and feet when participating. Anti-clockwise play in any of the triangle drills lends itself to right-sided skill execution; clockwise suits left-sided.*

8. INSIDE SUPPORT & SCORE



- A drill set up to simulate an inside forward running out to receive a pass, then laying the ball off to a teammate who shoots.
- On the diagram, A kicks for B to run and collect while C times his/her run to support and shoot.
- The coach decides on distances to suit skill level and pitch conditions.
- This activity is best run with a maximum of three players on each cone.
- Everything about this drill illustrates the need to practise 'out to in' play.
- This type of movement and passing is the most important aspect of this activity.
- Groups swap every few minutes.

Encourage...

- *kickers to play a one bounce pass to the inside forward.*
- *passers to watch the receiver's run and play the ball ahead of it.*
- *inside forwards to practise breaking away from the starting cone at pace.*
- *support runners to practise accelerating runs rather than making them one paced.*
- *all players to focus on a clean first touch.*

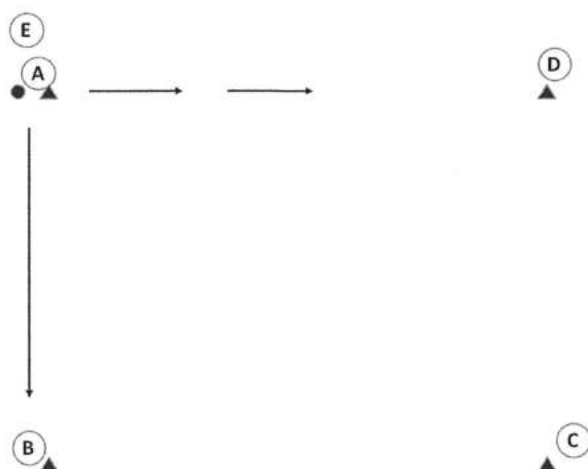
Work with...

- *runners who are indecisive, which leads to them slowing down.*
- *runners who meet too quickly for an effective pass.*

Modify...

- *by adding in a second cone to each of the three starting points. Ask players to start from these new cones, run to the original ones and play from there. This builds in a change of direction to the drill.*
- *by adding a defender, who tracks the inside forward and can tackle the support runner.*

9. KICK and BREAK



- A very simple drill to set up, yet a difficult one to execute properly at pace.
- Use poles or tall cones to set out a 25m square.
- Two players at one corner, A and E.
- A has the ball.
- B, C and D start on the other three corners.
- A kick passes it along one edge of the square to B and immediately sprints along the other edge to join another player (D) at a cone.
- **So....the kicker does not follow the ball.**
- B kick passes along the next side of the square to C and makes the same type of run along another edge, back to where E is standing.

- This drill forces players to change direction immediately after kicking and not let their attention be drawn to the flight of the ball.
- In a game situation, it is akin to kick passing to a team-mate and then breaking away quickly to make space or to mark an opponent.

Encourage...

- *kickers and receivers to play on the cones, rather than run for a pass or play the pass ahead of a teammate.*
- *kickers to practise accuracy and weight of pass.*
- *kickers to break quickly after playing the ball.*

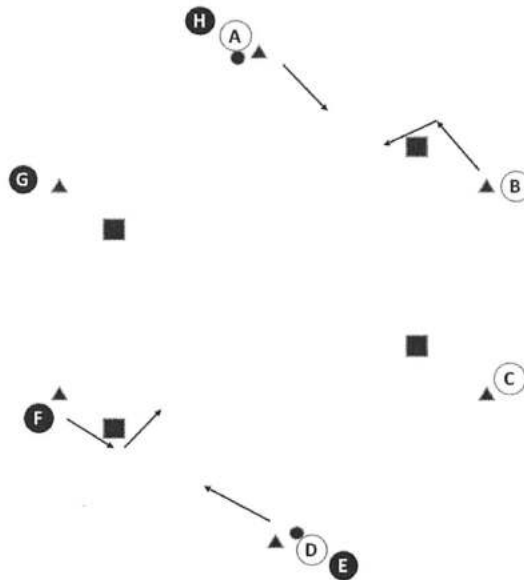
Work with...

- *players who tend to hesitate before kicking, as if they are working out where to run.*
- *players who focus too early on the run rather than on the kick and then deliver a poor pass.*

Modify...

- *by adding 5 more players and bib both sets of players differently (eg reds and yellows). Run the same exercise with each group working counter to the other.*
- *by having players kick with left and right.*

10. CATCH, TURN, KICK



- A drill using at least half of the pitch, shown here with 8 players but could involve more.
- Set out the triangular markers in a hexagon shape, 25-30m apart.
- Players will start from these, as shown.
- The square markers are set approx. 5m from four of the triangles. These force receivers to move for the pass and turn quickly around them before kick passing to the next.
- All kickers follow their passes.

- The triangular markers, top and bottom on the diagram, have no corresponding square markers.
- Any player at one of these simply receives and kick passes as if taking a 'free'.
- Start one football at each end marker, one with player A, the other with D.
- The pass and move sequences are A to B to C to E etc, alongside D to F to G to H etc.

Encourage...

- *players to kick pass to the receiver's advantage....one bounce maximum and in line with his/her run.*
- *kick passers to make solid contact with the ball...whether off the laces or with instep.*

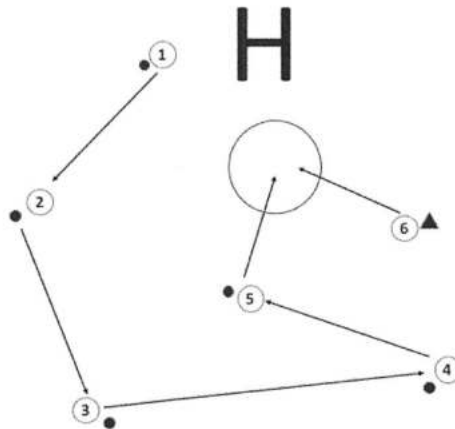
Work with...

- *passers who habitually kick the ball high into the air to get distance; work with them on a toe down/hard foot technique.*
- *receivers who make stuttering runs to collect passes...stepping back instead of forward when gathering the ball.*

Modify...

- *by shortening the distances and using fist passes; or by mixing fist passes with kick passes.*

11. LONG KICKING/SCORING



- A drill to run with big numbers of players and offer plenty of chances to deliver 20-25m passes and runs to match.
- Most kicks and runs are shown as solid lines on the diagram. (see later in explanation)
- Stand 4-5 players at each cone.
- Number the cones 1-6. Cone 1 is on the goal line.
- Start a ball at each of the first five cones. No ball at cone 6.
- On the whistle each player with a ball kicks and moves.
- 1 kicks to 2...2 kicks to 3...3 kicks to 4...4 kicks to 5...5 kicks into the circle [= scoring zone] for the player at 6 to run onto, collect and shoot.
- The shooter then runs to Cone 1, collects the ball he/she kicked and gets ready to start again.

- Remember, all footballs at each of the five cones should start at the same time, then let the drill flow for five minutes. Keep a few extra footballs behind the goals to allow for those that miss the ball catch.

Encourage...

- *players to kick pass to the receiver's advantage....one bounce maximum and in line with his/her run.*
- *kick passers to make solid contact with the ball...whether off the laces or with instep.*

Work with...

- *passers who habitually kick the ball high into the air to get distance; work with them on a toe down/hard foot technique.*
- *receivers who make stuttering runs to collect passes...stepping back instead of forward when gathering the ball.*

Modify...

- *by setting the cones up in a reverse pattern to that shown above.*
- *With a mix of distances between cones to practise different types of kicking.*

12. BREAKOUT



- An exercise to give players chances to break clear of an opponent to kick pass and receive... and to practise marking, tackling and interception.
- Set out two lines of fleximarkers, anything from 20-40m apart (to suit your players).
- These lines define the playing area between.
- A and D work together and start outside the lines. A has the ball.
- B and C are partners. They start inside.
- A must evade C and make room to kick pass to D, who must get separation from B to win the ball.
- ***It's important to remember that both A and D can cross their lines to kick and receive inside the playing area.***
- A successful pass = one point. Players run back quickly to starting positions; D is now the passer.

- If either B or C wins the ball back from a pass, they switch roles with A and D.
- First team to score 5 points wins the battle.

Encourage...

- *kick passers to use deception in order to make room for the pass.*
- *kick passers to practise spotting runs made by receivers (ie. when and where).*
- *receivers to try different ways to get separation from opponents.*
- *receivers to practise learning to time runs that match when the kick pass is possible.*
- *tacklers and markers to practise good footwork (always moving and not stretched).*

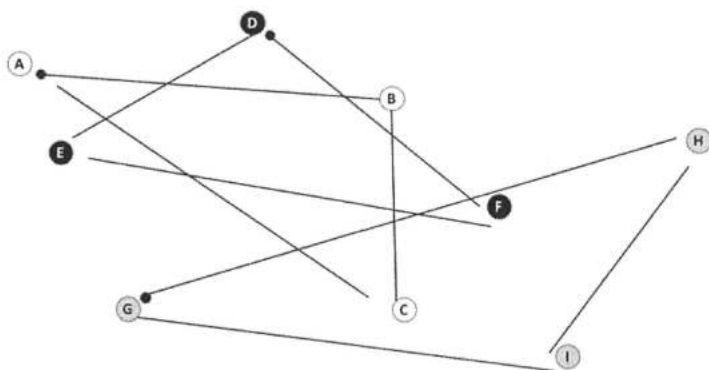
Work with...

- *passers who tend to kick before making room for the pass and get dispossessed.*
- *receivers who do everything one-paced and are easier to mark.*

Modify...

- *by demanding that receivers must win the ball, turn and get back over the starting line to earn a point.*
- *with reduced distances for a fist passing exercise.*

13. MATCH RUNNING



- Drills/exercises without cones, where players work in groups of 3 and complete the activities anywhere on the pitch.
- This helps simulate the running that happens in a game proper.
- It means that groups will work through each other, increasing the traffic and forcing players to look for teammates.
- The example shown is a *kick pass and move* exercise in 3s. ABC, DEF and GHI groups practise, with no direction of play set for any of their threes.
- All groups are active at the same time.

Encourage...

- *players to use the exercises to improve first touch, when performing each skill.*
- *players to change pace and direction when making runs to receive the ball.*
- *players to attack the ball when taking possession.*

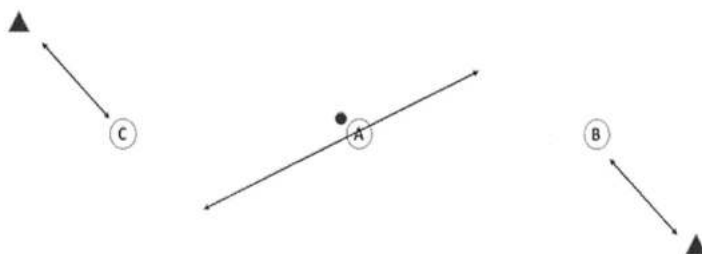
Work with...

- *players who perform the skills lazily or have a habit of jogging throughout.*
- *players who slow down or even take a step back to receive the ball.*
- *groups that tend to get closer and closer as the exercise develops, with players being unaware of this unwelcome bunching.*

Modify...

- *by running the same format for combinations of first passing, lifts, overhead catches, solo runs, evasion skills etc.*
- *through matching two groups against each other....eg. ABC v DEF....bibi the two and let them compete for one ball.*

14. MOVING PIVOTS



- An exercise to practise first passing with constant movement between.
- The player who is placed in the middle of a line drill to receive a ball and pass it on is normally called the pivot. In this diagram A is a moving pivot.
- A moving pivot must stay on the move between two cones while still acting as a link between the players at both ends of the line.
- Sometimes the other two players, B and C, remain fairly static; in this exercise they move immediately after giving a return pass to A.
- So....A passes to B, makes an angled run to take the return pass, turns sharply to carry, then passes to C etc. etc.
- B and C make their own angled runs around the cones and back, after playing the ball to A.
- Players switch roles after one minute.

Encourage...

- *passers to strike the ball firmly with the heel of the hand rather than rely on a soft flick off the fingers which is likely to lead to a weaker pass.*
- *passers to play all passes when moving forward, rather than from a static position.*
- *receivers to mix run speeds in order to properly time runs towards the pass.*

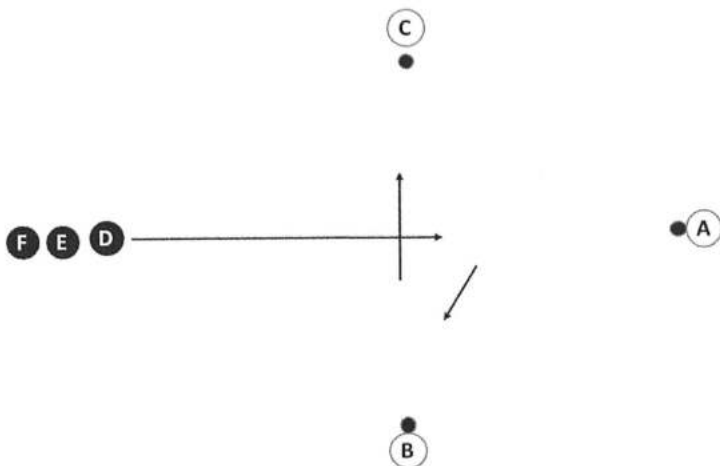
Work with...

- *passers who have a habit of throwing the ball into the air before striking it.*
- *passers who attempt to cover the distance between them and receivers by playing a high, looping pass when a firm, flat pass would be better.*

Modify...

- *by extending the distances to make it a kick passing exercise or mixing the distances to blend the passing types.*
- *by adding in one or two passive defenders whose job it is to try and intercept passes, thereby forcing both passers and receivers to change direction unexpectedly.*

15: QUICK HANDS, QUICK FEET



- An exercise to give each player 3 opportunities to practise receiving and passing the ball within a few seconds and the chance to do so using sharp footwork.
- Set up players ABC as shown. Give each player a ball.
- Decide on distances between them, based on your playing group.
- Line up DEF, all facing player A.
- The drill starts with D running to take a first pass from A and giving a return pass immediately.
- D then turns quickly to work a similar pass/return from B.
- Finally, D completes the same move with C and runs back to the starting position.

- To ensure plenty of activity and extra traffic for players to negotiate, player E starts his/her running once D has passed the first ball back to A.
- F does likewise when E plays that return pass.
- Swap roles for ABC and DEF when it suits.

Encourage...

- *passers and receivers to practise giving and taking longer fist passes.*
- *passers to use the heel of the hand for good contact and to get greater purchase on the ball.*
- *active players to be ready to make sharp turns and use quick evasion skills to get a clear path to pass or receive.*

Work with...

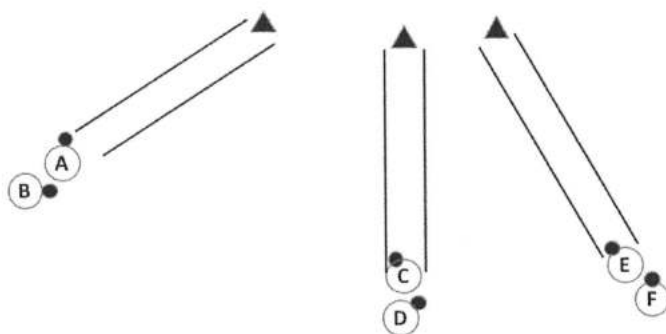
- *runners/passers who let the gap between them close too much and diminish the worth of the exercise.*

Modify...

- *by changing one of the pass/returns to suit kicking rather than fist passing.*
- *by insisting that each player uses both left and right hands to pass (eg right to A, left to B, right to C).*

16. OFF THE LACES

H



- A drill to let players practise running straight for goal and shooting off the laces for a point.
- Use fleximarkers to set out the 3 narrow channels.
- They should only be 1 metre wide and up to 10 metres long.
- Each must be positioned pointing right at the centre spot on the crossbar.
- Place a large cone or pole at the shooting end of the channel as a limit.

- * Players take turns to solo run at pace and shoot when they reach the end of the channel.
- A good drill to set up with four groups (e.g. 3 players in each channel and 3 retrieving footballs).
- Groups swap positions every couple of minutes.

Encourage...

- *players to run the channels at pace and practise remaining balanced as they shoot.*
- *players to experiment with foot, knee and chest positions as they shoot (eg toe down/hard foot...chest facing the target....knee pulled up rather than extended).*
- *players to kick both left and right.*

Work with...

- *players who find it difficult to shoot off the laces (remind them there is still room for instep and outstep kicking, but this is a skill worth learning too).*
- *those shooters who slow their runs down and kick from an almost static position.*

Modify...

- *By introducing a defender/by changing the shooting distance/by altering the line angle.*

17. PASS, CLOSE, STEP



- A square set out with tall cones or poles. Experiment with dimensions. 10m is usually good.
- One player at each corner: ABCD.
- Player A has the ball and starts with a sharp fist pass to any of the other three.
- Player A follows that pass with an immediate race to close the receiver down and tries to win the ball back.
- The receiver can step off his/her cone to evade the tackle and **must pass without first taking a bounce or toe-tap.**
- For example: A passes to C, who manages to sidestep A and immediately passes to B.

- C quickly moves to close B down while A takes C's place at the cone.
- If any player wins the ball back after passing it, reset the exercise and start the ball with the player who didn't complete his/her pass.
- This can be a very taxing exercise; one minute of action and one minute of rest is a good mix.

Encourage...

- *players to fist pass firmly and accurately, using the heel of the hand.*
- *receivers to keep moving on the spot, so that the footwork for evasion is easier if the pass comes.*
- *receivers to anticipate the pass and scan for possibilities in advance.*

Work with...

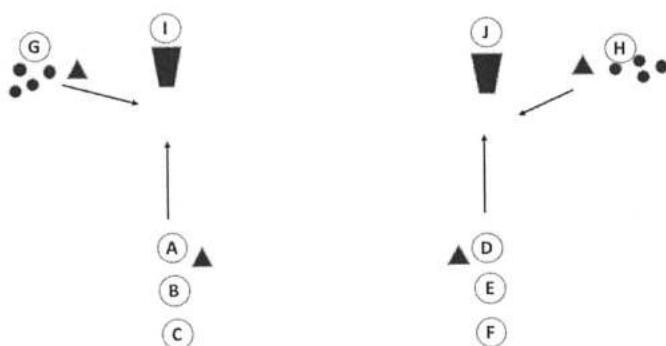
- *passers who focus on the race to tackle and ignore the need for a quality pass.*
- *receivers who struggle to evade tacklers.*

Modify...

- *by asking passers not to try and win the ball back; instead, they just close the receiver down to make the next pass difficult.*
- *by allowing potential receivers to move off their cones and around the perimeter.*

18. ROLL & SCORE

H



- A drill using tackle shields to let players practise receiving a ball and being immediately faced by an opponent.
- With so little time to react, often the best form of evasion is the ROLL.
- The key to the drill is to feed the ball to the attacker only a couple of strides before he/she hits the tackle shield.
- Having rolled out of the tackle, the player must regain balance to shoot without the need for a toe-tap or a bounce.

- * Best done with two shield holders (I and J), two feeders (G and H), six runners/shooters (ABCDEF) and two retrievers (not shown).
- Swap groups of six as it suits.
- Have a plentiful supply of footballs for each feeder.

Encourage...

- *patience when learning the details of how to roll properly and slow practice to perfect it.*
- *proper technique...ie plant one foot, spin away from the tackler using the same side shoulder as a hinge.*

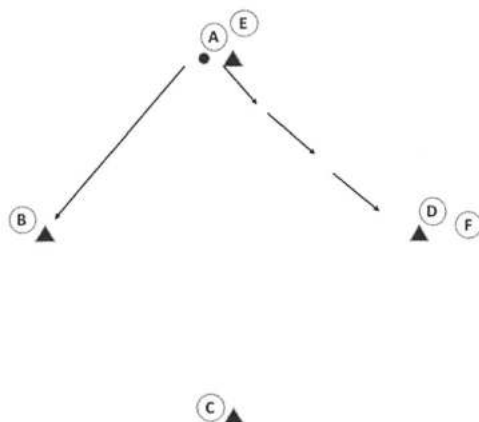
Work with...

- *any player who makes this turn facing his/her opponent throughout. The player must be facing away from the tackler as the roll happens.*
- *any player whose shot technique needs attention.*

Modify...

- *by removing the tackle shields and instead, having a opponent step forward as the feeder passes the ball...token tackle only.*
- *by allowing the player to use a bounce or toe-tap to get set for the shot.*

19. SPLIT SECOND WINDOW



- An exercise to speed up the delivery of a pass.
- Create a situation that is unopposed, yet forces players to receive and pass the ball on **in one movement**.
- Allow no more than one steadying step to be taken and let players practise receiving the ball and playing it in a split-second. It will be difficult, but it will be worth it.
- A starts drill by kick passing to B. Distance between cones should be 20m minimum.
- A immediately runs to join D, rather than follow the ball.
- B receives ball and, in one stride, kick passes on to C. B immediately runs to where the pass came from (i.e. where A was at the start).

- C receives the ball and, in one stride, kick passes on to D
- C immediately runs to where the pass came from (i.e. where B was at the start) etc.etc..
- Remember, the key is to get players to receive and pass in one movement

Encourage:

- *passers to play the ball to the advantage of the receivers...eg a one bounce pass.*
- *receivers to focus on a clean first touch before getting set for playing a pass.*
- *players to break away quickly after passing to help ingrain this instinct for use in games.*

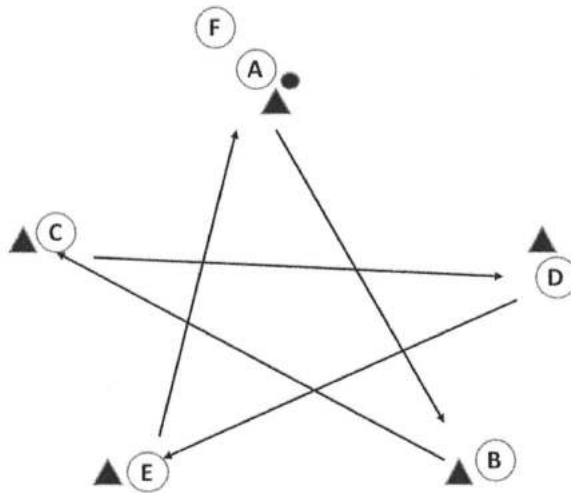
Work with...

- *players who struggle with footwork and balance when trying to receive and pass in one movement.*
- *players who have difficulty perfecting first touch.*

Modify...

- *if you have a group of players with high skill proficiency, by calling out left or right as the receiver takes the pass. He/she must play the next pass with that foot.*

20. STAR KICKING



- Set up a five-pointed star in a 30m area.
- Use 6+ players as shown. Make sure they know and understand the direction of passes before running the exercise.
- A has the ball and starts the drill with a kick pass to B, followed by a run that tracks the pass.
- B moves to receive the pass, then turns sharply to round his/her cone before passing to C.
- B follows the pass etc.

Encourage...

- *players to practise working on a clean first touch when passing and receiving.*
- *receivers to work on catching the ball while moving towards the flight.*
- *receivers to practise making sharp turns with the ball and accelerating back to the cone.*

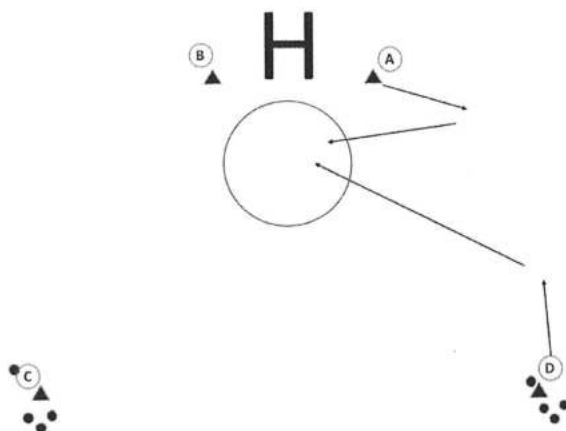
Work with...

- *players who habitually stop or step back to receive passes.*
- *players who tend to take lots of small steps when turning.*
- *those who are one-paced throughout and show no signs of accelerating.*

Modify...

- *through having the players pass the ball using left, then right, then left etc.*
- *by keeping the dimensions and running it as a fist passing exercise. Players can solo run to close the gap.*
- *by running a counter drill in the same area (eg another star) to increase the traffic and cause players to focus even more intently.*

21. TURN TO SCORE



- A drill to practise double runs, diagonal kick passes and scoring.
- Set up a circle of markers in front of goal. You decide the size. This is the scoring zone.
- For the purposes of explanation I have only drawn one player on each cone. Add others to fit your numbers.
- A and D work together, as do B and C.
- As D sets off solo running, A breaks from 'in to out' towards D's running line. This is A's first run.
- A then turns sharply to make a second run from 'out to in' towards the scoring zone. D plays a diagonal pass in. A gathers and takes a shot.
- As they finish, B and C link up.

- *Players may swap roles after each shot or after a few shots. Keep a good supply of footballs for passers.*

Encourage...

- *players to practise different timing of runs, especially when to turn to make the second (receiving) run for the pass.*
- *players to practise kicking diagonal passes to the advantage of the receiver who is making that second run from 'out to in'.*
- *passers to kick with left and right into the zone.*

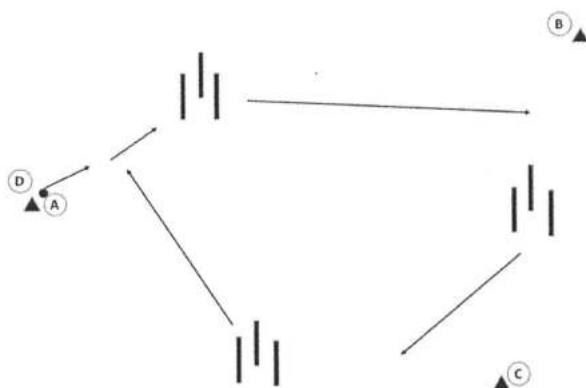
Work with...

- *passers who find it difficult to play the ball in front of the runner's path.*
- *players who make both runs at the same pace and with slow turns.*
- *players whose shooting is inaccurate from within the scoring zone.*

Modify...

- *by having players swap sides to work on left and right kick passing and shooting.*
- *by including a goalkeeper and randomly calling a shot for goal rather than for a point.*
- *by adding a defender, passive then active.*

22. KICK, CATCH, EVADE



- An exercise to let players practise all three skills in quick succession.
- This time the kicking target is very deliberately set part-way between a starting cone and three poles.
- The poles should be arranged in an order that will force players to use an evasion skill as they run between them.
- Set your kicking distances to suit the players you coach.
- A starts with the ball and solo runs through the poles.
- B then breaks towards the next set of poles and A kick passes to B's advantage (ie ahead of the run).

- B catches, evades the poles and plays the ball for C to start the next move etc.
- For the purposes of illustration, only four players are shown. As you add more, use more footballs.

Encourage...

- *kick passers to target that gap between cone and poles...often they will find this difficult.*
- *runners to practise timing their starts.*
- *runners to try different evasion skills to negotiate the poles (eg feint and sidestep, roll, swerve)*
- *kick passers to practise playing the ball with one bounce to the receiver.*

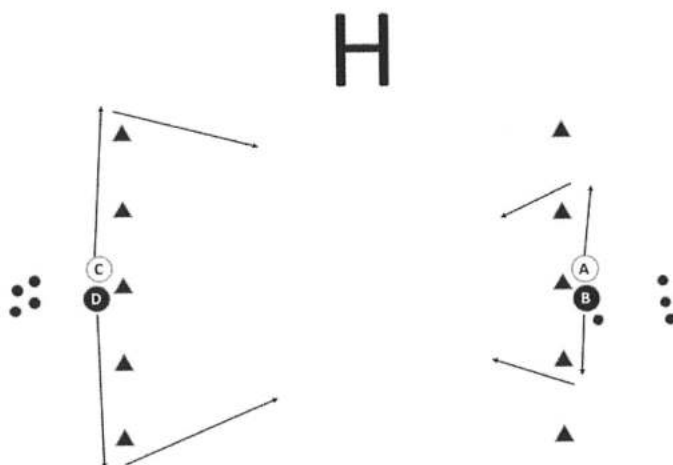
Work with...

- *those players who tend to kick the ball directly at either the starting cone or at the poles.*
- *runners who are reluctant to break at pace.*
- *receivers who use the same evasion technique each time.*

Modify...

- *by making it a fist passing drill.*
- *by setting up different kick passing distances.*
- *by adding in more poles to challenge player evasion skills or using a passive opponent instead of poles.*

23. STAGGERED ATTACK/DEFEND



- An exercise to allow attackers and defenders join the play at different times and at different distances from goal.
- Set out two lines of markers, about 30m apart and with 5m distance between each marker.
- You decide the distance from goal to suit your players.
- B and D are attackers: A and C are defenders. B has the ball.
- All four players start their runs as shown, at the same time.
- BvA is the first battle, as they have shorter distances to run before entering the playing area.

- D and C have further to run and they join a second or two later.
- C will defend deep, while D will become B's support runner.
- The move finishes with a shot or with a turnover. Players swap roles or are replaced by another four. Your call.

Encourage...

- *pairs of attackers and defenders to discuss and plan their moves before the exercise starts. Give them time to adjust after each play.*
- *attackers to be decisive in their actions rather than wait for support if a shooting chance presents itself.*

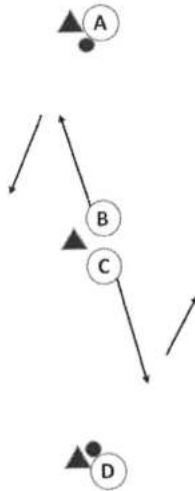
Work with...

- *defenders who are easily rounded by attackers (watch for poor footwork).*
- *attackers who support from only a few metres away and tend to get bottled up by defenders.*
- *players who participate without communicating.*

Modify...

- *by mixing up the distances players have to cover before entering the playing area.*

24. TWO WAY PASSING



- Simple to set up; challenging to get right.
- Place three markers in a line, each 20-30m apart.
- Begin with four players, ABCD, as shown.
- Players A and D each have football.
- Players B and C start the action by breaking quickly for 'free kick' passes from A and D.
- B immediately plays a return fist pass to A and C does the same to D.
- B and C then turn sharply and break at pace to receive 'free kick' passes from D and A respectively.
- Play for one minute then swap roles.

Encourage...

- *the 'free taker' to kick pass from a static position and play the ball in front of the receiver's run.*
- *player to make sure all passes are accurate to allow receivers to be ready to play the next 'free kick'.*
- *players to make all turns sharp and to move at pace.*

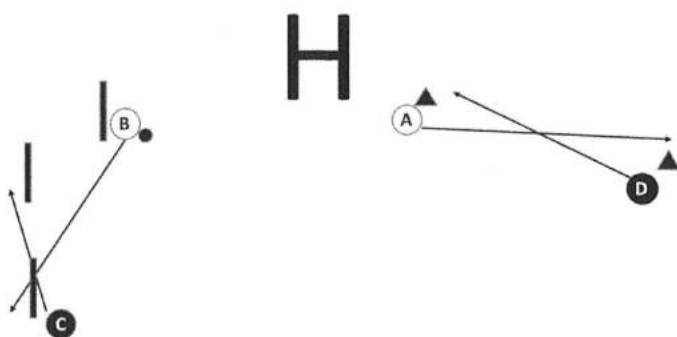
Work with...

- *any player who, after a period of time to get used to the pattern, still appears slow to make a decision.*
- *players who participate at one pace, rather than with acceleration and deceleration.*

Modify...

- *as follows: Instead of returning the ball to the 'free kick' passer, turn immediately and solo run briefly before playing a kick pass to the other static player. Eg B takes a pass from A, turns sharply, carries and finishes with a kick pass to D. B then turns, breaks again for a pass from A...etc.etc.*

25. STOP or SCORE



- AB v CD in an attacking/defending exercise
- Set out two cones as shown, with 20m distance between. Place one on the goal line and the other on the 13m line.
- Now set out three poles, this time with 10m between each; the inside one on the 13m line and the other two spaced accordingly.
- On your call, A and B run the routes shown, turn sharply around the cone/pole and attack. C and D run theirs too (C's run is shorter than the rest).
- All players are now in a 2v2 battle. B has the ball.
- The move finishes with a score, wide or turnover.
- Have four more players step in immediately.
- Rotate some roles.

Encourage...

- *attackers and defenders to discuss tactics before and between attempts.*
- *attackers to focus on spacing between them and not close the gap unnecessarily.*
- *defenders to communicate loud and clear during the exercise...particularly the one closest to goal.*
- *attackers to practise evasion and acceleration as a way to make room for a shot.*
- *defenders to maintain a narrow stance and keep feet moving, rather than get caught flat-footed.*

Work with...

- *attackers who, after a number of opportunities, fail to break the defensive cordon.*
- *shooters who find it difficult to score.*
- *defenders who (again..after a number of opportunities) are still being easily passed by opponents.*

Modify...

- *by adding an extra defender or attacker, who is already in the playing area as the runs begin.*
- *through the rule that any scoring move must have minimum one pass (even though I'm not a fan of forcing a pass just for the sake of it).*
- *by adding a goalkeeper; make it 'goal only'.*

26. SUPPORT & PASS



- This exercise lets players practise how to time one type of support run and play an accurate kick pass immediately after.
- Set up two lines of markers as shown. The distance between needs to suit the players in your squad. Ideally that distance should accommodate a kick pass from behind one line that lands behind the other line.
- Four pairs take part. AA and BB are linked. CC and DD are linked.
- One A player starts with the ball and kick passes across the gap for one B player to catch.
- The B players must decide quickly, who will receive and who will drop off to be the support runner.
- When the B receiver gets hold of the ball, the support runner should be moving to take a short pass off the shoulder.

- Once the support runner has the ball, he/she plays a kick pass across the gap to the two A players.
- Now the A players decide who should catch the ball and who should support and pass etc.
- The C and D players do exactly the same and at the same time, just to increase the traffic.

Encourage...

- *support runners to experiment with dropping back different distances behind the receivers and starting their runs at different times (eg. Just before a teammate catches the ball or just as that teammate catches the ball).*
- *good communication between players as the ball is kicked across the gap to them.*

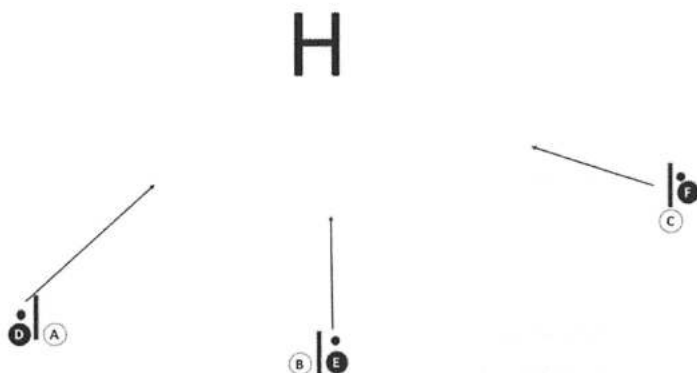
Work with...

- *players who find it difficult to time their support runs...especially those who move too early or are unsure about starting runs from further away.*
- *any pair of players confused about roles.*

Modify...

- *by changing the type of kick pass to a high ball for overhead fielding or to a low, grubber kick that forces the receiver to use a proper lift.*

27. STEP, SPACE, SCORE



- A drill to practise taking an opponent's ground and creating room to shoot.
- Set out three poles as shown. Decide the distances from goal and the angles to goal that will suit your playing group.
- For illustration purposes, six players are shown, in three pairs. Others can be participating in different session activities.
- Let's focus on DvA. Player D solo runs towards goal, with Player A running alongside (passive).
- When D chooses, he/she steps across A's path, forcing A to check his/her run and creating room for D to shoot.
- Run the other pairings simultaneously (if there's room) or in quick succession.
- Swap groups regularly.

Encourage...

- *the opponent to play a passive role, yet stay close alongside the solo runner as he/she carries.*
- *the solo runner to practise changing direction with a long stride and step across the opponent.*
- *the solo runner to work on choosing the moment to make this move and take the opponent's ground.*
- *players to stay balanced when taking shots, rather than focus entirely on the step across.*

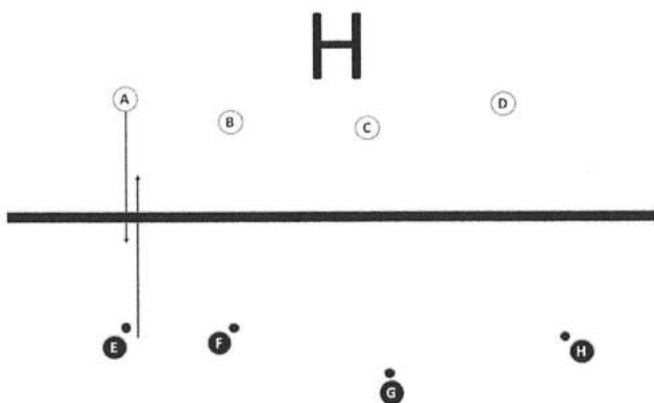
Work with...

- *players who, after a number of practice runs, still find it difficult to execute the step across.*
- *any player whose shooting accuracy or distance can be improved.*

Modify...

- *the positioning of an opponent to practise a different way to make room for the shot.*
- *the set up for C and F on the drawing. If Player F is predominantly right-footed, he/she may not need to step across and in front of the defender.*
- *the move, to simply make it a step into the opponent (shoulder to shoulder) and put that player off his/her stride.*

28. HOOK TO SCORE



- A simple practice to allow players to rehearse hook kicking for scores.
- Set a line of markers across the pitch and 25m from goal. As usual, you will decide if this distance suits your squad.
- Pair some players. In this diagram, four pairs are active.
- Let's use A and E to illustrate the action.
- Both take up position on opposite sides of the line, about 10m back from it. E has the ball.
- They call their own starts, with E solo running towards A and A running towards E.
- As they pass each other, E gives a short hand pass to A.
- Once A has crossed the line, he/she turns side on to goal and hook kicks the ball for a point.

- E runs on to retrieve the ball and kick passes it to A, who has stayed beyond the line.
- They start the same move again; this time E is taking the shot.
- All other pairs are active at the same time.
- **Each pair may shift their starting positions and the angles of their runs at anytime. They just have to start on opposite sides of the line.**

Encourage...

- *players to focus on making sure the hand pass is accurate and easily gathered.*
- *shooters to practise with shoulder pointed to the goal and to focus on good contact on the ball.*
- *each pair to work from different angles.*

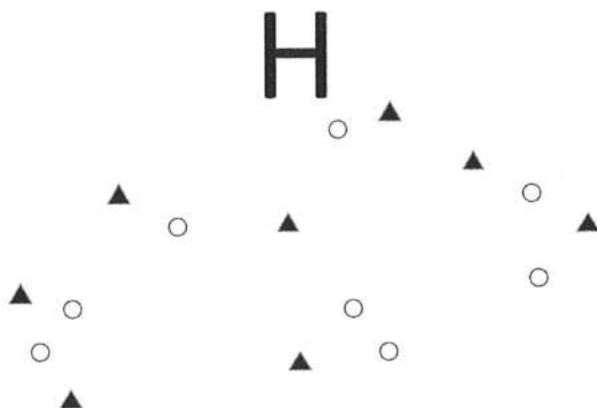
Work with...

- *any players who find it difficult to execute a successful hook shot.*

Modify...

- *by changing each pair into a three, as you add a passive/active defender to track the shooter's run from inside the line. The defender can either run to distract the hook kicker or attempt a block on the shot. You may have to stagger the activity (ie. not every group active at the same time).*

29. FREEZE FRAME



- A way to work on attacking movement with repeat attempts from the same positions.
- Randomly scatter eight yellow fleximarkers (shown as circles on the diagram) across an area between the 45m line and the goal.
- Do the same with eight blue fleximarkers (shown as triangles on the diagram).
- Choose 3, 4 or 5 defenders and ask each to stand tight beside any yellow marker.
- Choose one less attacker (2, 3 or 4) and ask each to stand tight beside any blue marker.
- You now have a freeze frame of a typical attacking situation from a game, with the defending group having one more player than the attacking group.

- Add another attacker, this time with a ball and starting somewhere outside the 45m line.
- Begin the move on your call. The ball carrier and inside attackers are trying to score. The defenders are trying to prevent a score.
- Regardless of whether the move finishes with a score, a wide or a turnover, set up the same freeze frame again and run it. Repeat this another three times (five in total).
- Change players or positions or both to run again.

Encourage...

- *attackers to deliberately move to create space between each other, opening up more gaps to pass and shoot.*
- *defenders to communicate clearly among each other to alert teammates to potential threats.*
- *players to use the repeats to try different moves.*

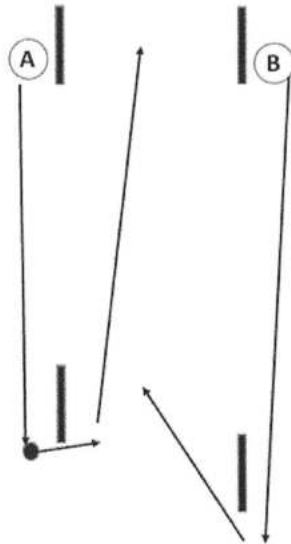
Work with...

- *any players who, after taking part in the repeat drills, still appear unsure of what to do, where to run etc.*

Modify...

- *by overloading one side of the pitch with markers*
- *by only counting goals (goalkeeper needed).*

30. NEAR HAND RACE



- A race between solo runner and near hand tackler (potentially!)
- Set four poles as shown. Leave 5m between the top two and 20-25m from those to their corresponding poles at the foot of the diagram.
- Make the tackler (B) run the longer distance as A has to lift the ball properly from where it rests beside the lower pole.
- On your call, both A and B run their routes. As they turn, A lifts the ball and begins to solo run back to the start.

- B must close the gap to A and get in position to make a clean near hand tackle to dispossess.
- Award a point to A for a completed solo run or one to B for a well-executed near hand tackle.

Encourage...

- *solo runners to go straight rather than weave a mazy run (for the purposes of the exercise).*
- *opponents to focus on getting quickly into position to give themselves a real chance of making a near hand tackle.*
- *tacklers to lead with a long stride when striking to dispossess.*

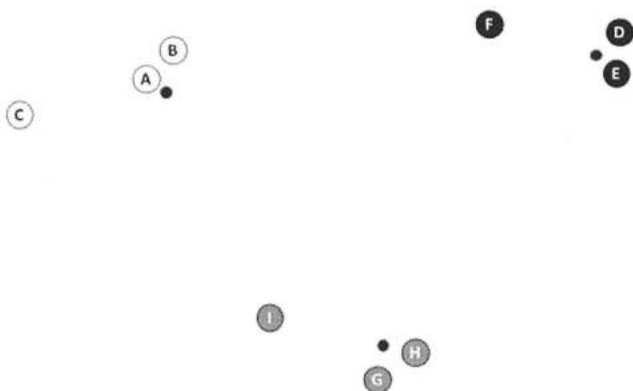
Work with...

- *players who reach too early to make the tackle, tending to bend from the waist rather than get hip to hip and lead with a long stride.*

Modify...

- *by changing the position of any pole to shorten or lengthen distances for a solo runner or a tackler. Usually this is done to ensure the chaser gets a realistic chance of making a quality near hand tackle.*
- *by reversing the runs to ensure tacklers get to work on left and right sides.*

31. NEAR HAND THREES



- Divide your squad into groups of three.
- Each group has a solo runner, a tackler and a support player.
- These roles rotate as the practice develops.
- The solo runner sets off, the tackler makes ground to get into position and the support player runs alongside the other two, about 4-5m from them.
- The tackler chooses the right moment to execute a near hand tackle, dispossessing the solo runner.
- As the ball breaks loose, the support player runs quickly to gather it.
- This player now becomes the solo runner. The tackler acts as support player; the third player turns tackler.

- Keep rotating for 2-3 minutes, giving players time to practise different roles.

Encourage...

- *all three players to change the pace of what they do. No need to run at a constant pace; better to jog into position each time they rotate roles, before accelerating through the move itself.*
- *the solo runner to take a direct path rather than a mazy one.*
- *the tackler to get hip to hip before 'jumping the queue' and leading the tackle with a long stride.*

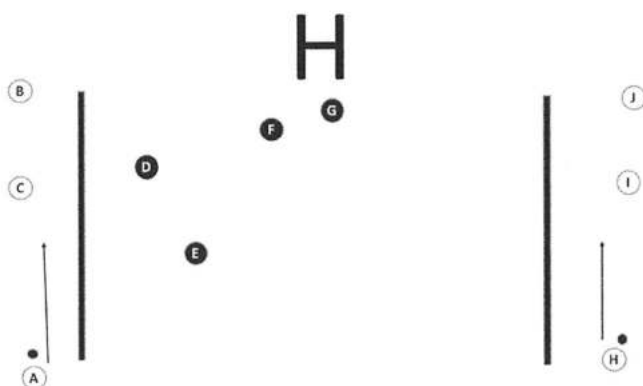
Work with...

- *players who reach too early to attempt the tackle, tending to bend from the waist.*
- *groups that appear not to understand the idea of slowing to set up the move, then accelerating.*

Modify...

- *the exercise by promoting peer coaching of the tackle by both the solo runner and the support player. They are often best placed to identify good and bad practice.*

32. POST UP, SHIFT ACROSS



- An opposed drill to practise '**out to in**' attacking and attempts to counter it.
- Use fleximarkers to create two wide channels, each running from halfway to one endline and 15-20m in from a sideline.
- Attacks will come from one channel at a time and from groups of three players...ABC and HIJ.
- The defence will have four players DEFG, always remaining within the middle zone and protecting the goal.
- Attackers will set up as the diagram shows, two post wide and well ahead of the ball (BC); the third (A) starts with the ball, on or near the halfway line.
- Once the attack has begun, ABC are free to combine as they wish.

- For as long as they stay in the wide channel, they cannot be tackled. Once they break into the middle zone, DEFG can mark and tackle.
- An attack ends with score, wide or turnover.
- The end of an attack is the signal for the next one to start, involving HIJ. The defenders, DEFG, shift across while ABC reset in their channel in a different formation, ready for their turn again.
- Run the exercise for up to three minutes.

Encourage...

- *attackers to get together briefly to discuss plans for how their group of three will go for a score. Who will break inside? When will they move? Where will each player run?*
- *the same players to repeat their discussions during breaks (ie when other groups are attacking).*
- *each attacking group to observe others for ideas.*

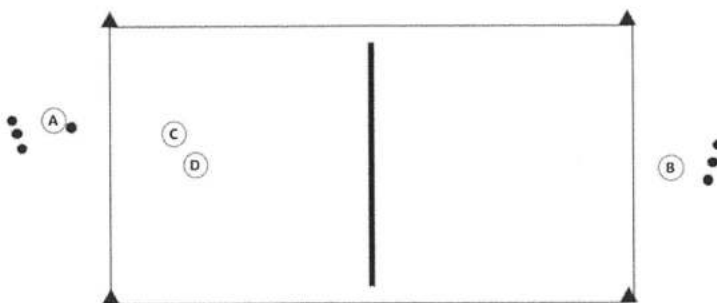
Work with...

- *players who keep repeating the same moves, with little or no success.*

Modify...

- *by having one attacker from each group start in the middle zone.*

33. PASS and RUN TENNIS



- An exercise to allow players to practise evasion, passing and dispossessing as fatigue sets in.
- Set up a rectangle with dimensions to suit (20x30m perhaps). Run a line of fleximarkers across the middle.
- This is your pitch area, two players active inside and two passive outside.
- Start the ball with A, who passes to C.
- C must make room to kick pass to B, without crossing the line of fleximarkers. D tries to stop the pass and win the ball back.
- If C completes the pass, he/she crosses the line to take a short fist pass from B. Player D is still trying to spoil the move.
- Now C must kick pass to A...etc...etc.
- If D dispossesses C by blocking, tackling or causing a poor pass, he/she becomes the passer and receiver. C becomes the tackler.

- Run the exercise for one minute before changing roles. A and B become active inside. C and D passive outside.

Encourage...

- *outside players to move back and forth along the edge of the playing area, to receive passes from inside players.*
- *passers to practise different evasion techniques to make room for the pass.*
- *opponents to stay balanced and to work on avoiding being deceived by players in possession.*

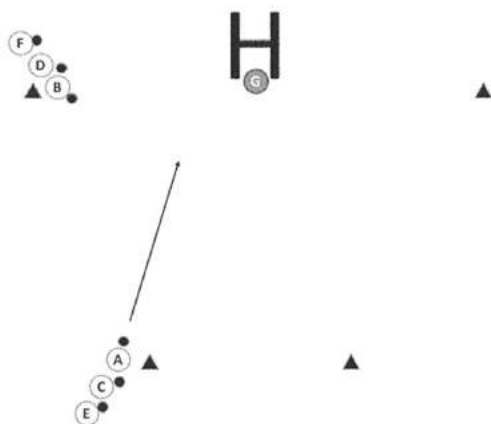
Work with...

- *players in possession who, when faced with an opponent, do several small turns and cannot get room to get the pass away.*
- *players who have a habit of kicking through the opponent's block or tackle.*
- *any player who is easily deceived and beaten on a number of occasions by a passer's evasion.*

Modify...

- *by alternating the active player who receives the short fist pass to start the move..eg..C gets the ball from A and passes to B. Then D receives from B and passes to A.*

34. ONE POINT, ONE GOAL



- A drill to focus on two types of shot, taken in quick succession.
- Players solo run to shoot for a point, then immediately receive a pass to shoot for goal.
- Set four cones as shown. Use two at any one time. After a while, switch across to use the other two cones.
- Player A solo runs towards goal and shoots for a point.
- He/she turns immediately to take a first pass from B and shoots for goal (goalkeeper in position).
- Players A and B swap roles, each gathering a football on the way.
- C starts to solo run once A has shot for goal.

Encourage...

- *players to solo at pace towards the first shooting spot.*
- *those taking shots to stay balanced and to focus on making good contact on the ball.*
- *players to concentrate on executing the shot for a point before thinking of the next one for goal.*

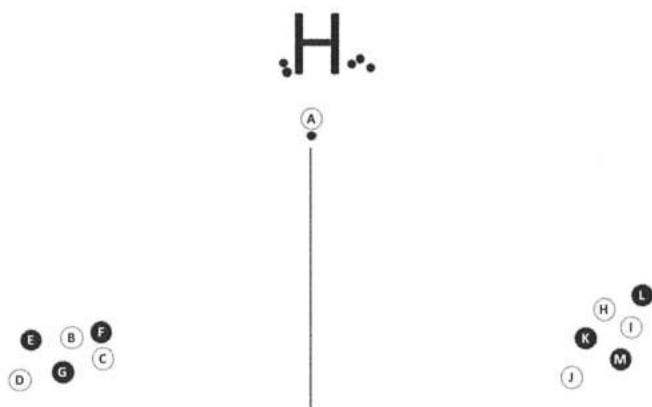
Work with...

- *players who rush the shot for a point just to get quickly into position to take the pass.*
- *players who tend to have their shots easily saved by the goalkeeper. They may need reminded to look last at the spot where they want to kick the ball.*
- *passers who don't give the ball to the advantage of the runner/shooter (eg fist passes that are too low or too high).*

Modify.....

- *by insisting that shots from the left side of goal are hit with the left foot and those from the right side are kicked with the right foot.*
- *by creating a distinction between shots for points and goals. Players must kick one with the left and the other with the right.*

35. FIELD and BREAK



- An exercise to let players practise fielding longer kickouts and attacking/defending thereafter.
- Run a line of fleximarkers from 20m to 65m down the centre of the pitch.
- Set up two groups as shown, on or about the 45m line (or further if it suits your squad).
- Have a 3v3 in each. At any time, one will be active while players in the other 3v3 will be observing and learning.
- Goalkeeper (A) kicks to the area with BCD v EFG.
- Players contest the kickout. Winners break to attack. Their aim is to score a point or goal.
- At least one player from this attacking group must cross the line of markers to practise creating width and spacing.
- The opponents work to win the ball back. If successful, they should go for goal only.

- When the ball goes dead (or at the coach's discretion) this 3v3 steps away to regroup and the other 3v3 becomes active. Kickout to start.

Encourage...

- *good communication between each group of 3, to get the best chance of fielding or winning loose ball from the kickout.*
- *attackers to break that centre line at pace and without stopping beforehand to check back.*
- *the player with the ball to practise looking for clear opportunities to pass or to accelerate through a gap created by teammates.*
- *defenders to work hard, especially when trying to win the ball back from the player in possession.*

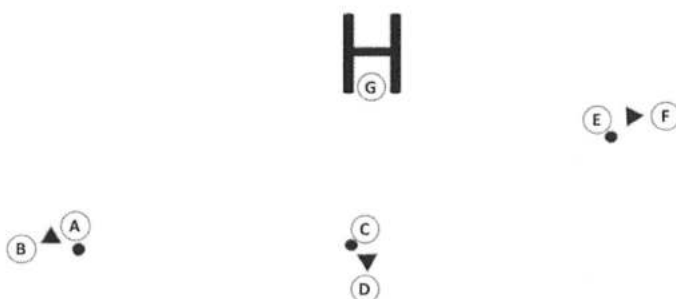
Work with...

- *those who appear reluctant to break quickly from the fielding area and away from the ball.*
- *any ball carrier who struggles to see and use passing opportunities.*

Modify....

- *by changing numbers per group or adding a neutral defender inside.*

36. A QUESTION of ANGLES



- Three different 1v1s, all set up no more than 20m from the goal.
- In each, the player closest to goal has the ball.
- All players face away from the goal, at the angles shown above.
- One pair works at a time.
- Player A lobs the ball over Player B, directly away from goal.
- Player B gathers the ball, turns and attempts to score a goal. Player A and the goalkeeper (G) work to prevent it.
- Coach must set a time limit on possession before a shot. The move must reflect the game. Eg 6 seconds max from the time player gets the ball.
- When the move finishes (score, wide, turnover) both players step away quickly for CvD to happen.

- Each pair may rotate through the three positions to get a flavour of attacking/defending from different angles.
- It may also be an idea to keep a pair at the one spot for a while, in order to allow further practice.

Encourage...

- *the defender to lob the ball over the attacker's head, almost like a basketball shot (to land directly in front, rather than at a distance).*
- *the attacker to practise using a mix of acceleration and an evasion skill to beat the defender.*
- *the attacker to see a spot in the goal to hit and to avoid looking at the goalkeeper.*

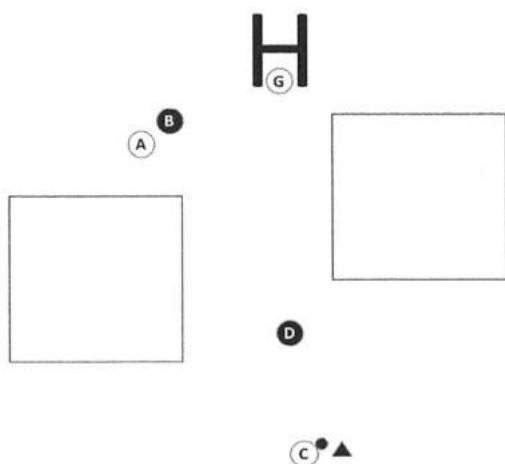
Work with...

- *attackers who try two or three evasion skills in the one move and end up going nowhere.*
- *defenders who are easily beaten due to poor foot movement (made more difficult by a wide stance or a seated position).*

Modify...

- *by working from 10m distance and reducing the attacking time to 4 seconds.*

37. DECISIONS!



- An exercise for groups of four outfield players and a goalkeeper, to promote decision-making in attack and defence.
- Use fleximarkers to set out two large squares, one centred on the 13m line and the other centred on the 20m line.
- Position the players as shown.
- A and C are trying to score a goal; B, D and G are working to prevent that.
- Player C is ready to take a free kick.
- The move begins with A breaking quickly to either of the two squares for C to pass the ball.
- C must then race to reach the other square, before breaking to support A.

- The attempt on goal can happen with or without passing.
- Now for the decisions:
Will C run decoy? Will D ignore C and double up on A to win the ball back? Will A use C or go it alone? Will either pair have a degree of understanding?

Encourage...

- *players to experiment, without fear of criticism if a move fails.*
- *players to communicate before each attempt on goal.*

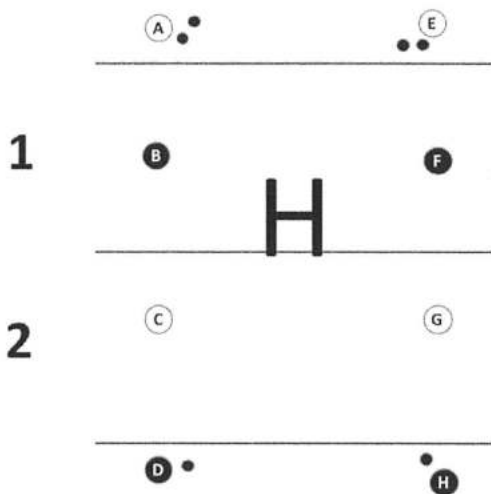
Work with...

- *any player who, after a series of attempts at attacking or defending, is still doing the same thing and it's not working.*
- *pairs of players who want ideas from the coach rather than always experiment without prompts.*

Modify...

- *by removing the squares to let players practise how to work the same moves without structures.*

38. DIFFERENT PRESSURES



- A drill for players to practise kicking for points, while under different types of pressure.
- The pressures are:
 1. Turning to shoot after only four steps
 2. Shooting after evading an opponent.
- Place a portable goal with at least 30m of space to the front and back of it.
- Set three lines of fleximarkers...one as a goal line and the other two 30m either side, as shown.
- These lines identify Zones 1 and 2.
- Players ABCD work together. EFGH do likewise.
- The activity begins with B running towards A to take a fist pass, turn and (within four steps) shoot for a point.

- B immediately runs to D to collect another first pass. This time B is opposed by C and must evade to shoot.
- Score or no score, B rests. C now runs to A to start the same process, with B as the opponent when C crosses to take a pass from D.
- EFGH work at the same time as ABCD.
- Swap roles after a set time or number of attempts.

Encourage...

- *all running between shots to be done with acceleration rather than at one pace.*
- *players to be composed when taking shots rather than rush and lose balance.*

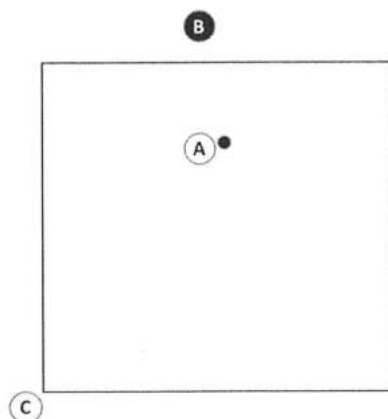
Work with...

- *any player who has difficulty with shot accuracy.*
- *players who use the same evasion technique repeatedly, with little success against different opponents.*

Modify...

- *by reducing running and shooting distances.*
- *by letting the tacklers become passive defenders.*

39. SLOW and STEAL



- Replicate this exercise to accommodate more groups, each made up of 3 players. The focus is tandem tackling.
- Set out a 10m x 10m square.
- Player B stands on one side of this square and outside its perimeter. He/she will be the attacker.
- Players A and C are both defenders. They start as shown. Player A has the ball.
- The drill begins with A first passing to B, who then tries to solo through the square to cross the opposite line.
- Player A's task is to slow B's progress through the square but not execute a tackle, always trying to stay between B and the finish line.

- Player C can enter the square while this is happening.
- C gets to practise looking for the right moment to race in, tackle and steal the ball. By slowing and corralling the ball carrier, A creates this opportunity for C.
- Rotate the roles based on time or attempts.

Encourage...

- *defenders to stick to their roles. If A rushes in, B will have the chance to evade and leave a 1v1 with C. This is not the focus of the exercise.*
- *B to use pace and a direct line of running to get to the finish line. This makes A and C work harder.*

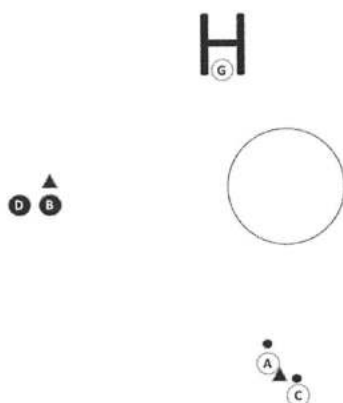
Work with...

- *any defender who tends to be easily by-passed.*
- *any defender in the C role, who keeps missing clear opportunities to make the tackle and steal.*
- *attackers who make mazy solo runs that do not reflect what happens in the real game.*

Modify...

- *by allowing Player C to experiment with different starting positions along the perimeter of the square.*

40. BEAT the BLOCK



- A breakaway scoring situation, with one defender racing to stop the shot for goal.
- On the 13m line, use fleximarkers to set out a 5m diameter circle.
- Place two cones 10m from the circle, as shown.
- Players A and C are the breakaway attackers; B and D are defenders.
- Begin the move on the whistle, with A solo running to shoot for goal from inside the circle.
- At the same time, B runs to block the shot/steal the ball/force the attacker out of the circle.
- The attacker may shoot on the run (only from inside the circle) or may use deception to make room for a shot.
- When the move finishes, start C and D.

- Add others to the exercise (no long queues) and rotate roles if it suits the players you have.

Encourage...

- *attackers to use four big strides before bouncing the ball or toe-tapping it. This will allow them to cover ground quicker towards the circle.*
- *an attacker to be aware of the defender's position to gauge whether there is time to shoot or if a decoy move is needed.*
- *defenders to get as close to the kicking foot as possible, when blocking.*
- *defenders to stay balanced and keep their feet moving, rather than lunge into tackles and be easily evaded.*

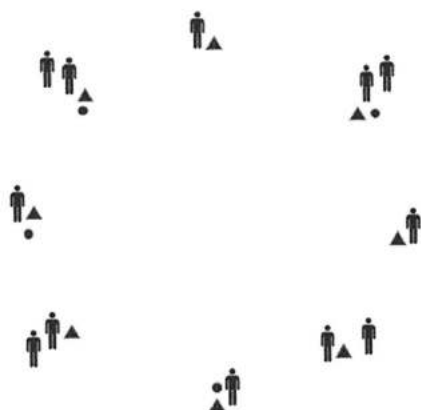
Work with...

- *any attackers who repeatedly have a poor kicking action (eg. poor contact on the ball, little power in the shot, inaccuracy)*
- *any defenders who find it difficult to time blocks or tackles.*

Modify...

- *by reducing the running distance to the circle for attacker and/or defender.*
- *by switching the position of the circle.*

41. CIRCLE TIME



- A passing exercise for left and right.
- Using 8 tall cones, set out a large circle, minimum 40m diameter.
- Stand a player at each cone and add in extras (here we have 12 taking part in the drill).
- Use 4 footballs minimum. One to each of any four players.
- Ask each player in possession to take four steps into any part of the circle and pass to another who is at a cone.
- The passer must immediately break left or right to reach any other cone (not where the ball went) and be ready for the next pass.
- Ball carriers should only need to use four steps to get to a suitable kick passing distance.

- The chaos inside the large circle goes some way to mirroring the busy nature of a game and demands that players scan and call passes.
- The coach can change the type of pass to suit...right and left fist passes...right and left foot passes. When fist passing the ball, players should only use their four steps and a bounce before passing. No need for more than that.

Encourage...

- *crisp fist passing from hand to chest.*
- *good contact on the ball when kick passing, with one bounce between passer and receiver.*
- *players to be on the move when receiving passes.*

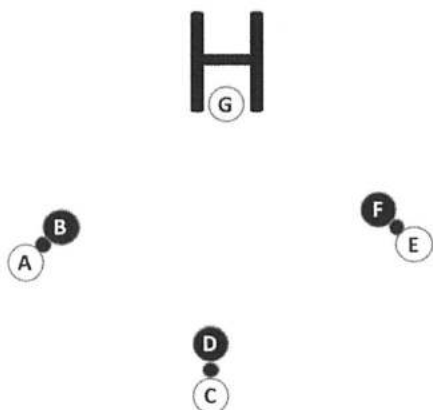
Work with...

- *players who cannot seem to get distance or accuracy on the ball when fist passing.*
- *players who tend to run/play at half pace.*
- *players who like to step back or remain static when receiving a pass.*

Modify by...

- *changing the dimensions of the circle, though bigger is better than smaller.*
- *using more footballs and cutting the chance of a queue forming.*

42. A PERFECT 1v1?



- So many opportunities here for players to experiment and for coaches to observe.
- Anywhere on or near the 13m and 20m lines, have three pairs of players stand ready at different angles to goal.
- Keep a significant distance between each group.
- ACE are shown as attackers; BDF are defenders.
- One pair plays while the other two wait. A typical move will only last for 5-7 seconds max.
- Stand AvB as shown. **Both players have hands on the ball, at arm's length.**
- On the call, A grabs the ball and tries to beat B (and the goalkeeper) to score a goal.

- * Will Player A evade and accelerate? Will B step off or drive forward to close the attacker's space? Should A use a roll to make room for the shot? How good is B's footwork?
- When the move ends (score/wide/turnover/ time limit called by the coach), A and B quickly clear the area for CvD to play.

Encourage...

- *players to experiment with different attacking and defending methods, to find those that work more often than others. (eg attacker takes four powerful strides to get past the defender and make room/defender works on fast and constant foot movement).*
- *fellow coaches to give plenty of time for players to trial these, without unnecessary intervention.*

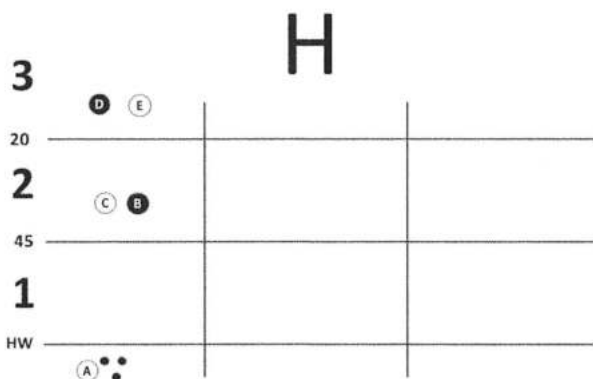
Work with...

- *players who, after experimenting, still find it difficult to attack or defend with success. Eg. attackers taking too many small steps and getting nowhere and defenders adopting a wide, crouched and flat-footed tackling stance.*

Modify...

- *nothing. Do not increase time limit given.*

43. BREAKING LINES



- An exercise to let players practise winning the ball under pressure and moving it up the pitch.
- Use fleximarkers to set out the zones shown.
- For the purposes of explanation, let's focus on the zones to the left side of the diagram.
- The move is best explained by an example....
- Player A lobs the ball into zone 1. B and C break from zone 2 to compete. B wins it and turns to kick pass into zone 2 for D. Player D wins it and turns to solo run into zone 3 to finish the move.
- Players C and E are also trying to win the ball in their respective zones.
- Example: A lobs the ball. B wins it but C turns the ball over. C passes into zone 2 for E to take it and solo into zone 3.
- Rotate players and roles to suit.

- * Replicate the same set up in the other two areas..middle and right.
- Fifteen players can be active at the same time.

Encourage...

- *players to focus on a clean first touch.*
- *players who win possession to use one evasion skill plus acceleration to make room for the kick pass or run to the next zone.*
- *those players in zone 3 to delay any runs into zone 2 until the passer has room to play the ball.*
- *players who don't win possession to work hard to win the ball back and continue the move.*

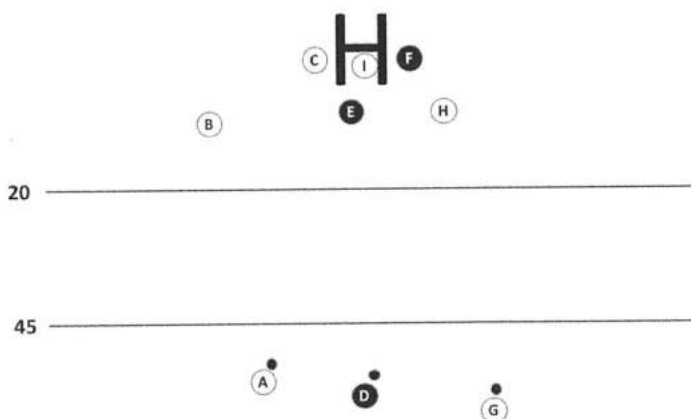
Work with...

- *players in possession who tend to evade by swaying their shoulders but have little foot movement and cannot get separation from opponents.*
- *players who break from a zone too early for the ball and finish in a static position, waiting for the pass.*

Modify...

- *by starting the exercise with only one player receiving the ball in zone 1 or have a passive defender.*

44. ADVANCED MARK and SHOT



- A drill with no markers, some chaos and extra distance to take guesswork out of the activity.
- In a competition game, a pass only has to travel at least 20m in the air. Here it must travel 25m.
- Groups of three work to kick pass, receive, take shots and return the footballs.
- Kick passes are played from outside the 45m line to inside the 20m line.
- When a ball is caught on the full (before hitting the ground), the receiver has 15 seconds to shoot as he would from a 'free'.
- Here, the groups are ABC, DEF and GHI.
- No group has to wait for another to play the ball and there are no set positions for kickers or receivers.

- *Players are free to kick from anywhere outside the 45, catch anywhere inside the 20 and take the shot from there.*
- *Build a rotation within each group to allow every player to experience, passing, receiving and returning the ball.*

Encourage...

- *passers to kick on the run rather than from a static position.*
- *receivers to practise their timing of runs. Do they start before the pass? Do they wait to see the flight of the ball first?*
- *receivers to think about the direction of runs...eg run to make the catch in the scoring zone.*

Work with...

- *passers who drop the ball short. Are they making solid contact? Is trajectory of the pass right?*
- *receivers who have an erratic first touch and miss catching opportunities.*
- *shooters who regularly miss from inside the scoring zone.*

Modify...

- *by reducing pass distance...by increasing shot distance...by adding a defender.*

45. FAST BREAK PASSES



- A way to practise kick passing to players who are running ahead of the ball.
- Set out a line of three cones, each 15m apart.
- Set out a similar line, 60-70m away from the first one.
- ABC line up as shown, with DEF facing them.
- Player A has the ball, ready to kick pass from a 'free'.
- G and H wait behind ABC.
- The drill starts with B and C running ahead of the ball, always maintaining the 30m between each other laterally.
- Player A can choose to kick pass to either B or C.
- Let's say B gets the pass. B then plays a diagonal kick pass to C, who finishes with a fist pass to D.

- E and F now break ahead of the ball for D to choose a receiver etc.
- When the ball is first passed to A, players G and H will be ready, either side of A, to break ahead of the ball.
- Remember to rotate the A and D roles after a few minutes.

Encourage...

- *the passer to play the ball in front of the runner.*
- *runners to ensure they take opportunities to pass the ball with left and right (foot and fist).*
- *runners to focus on making good contact with the ball when kick passing.*

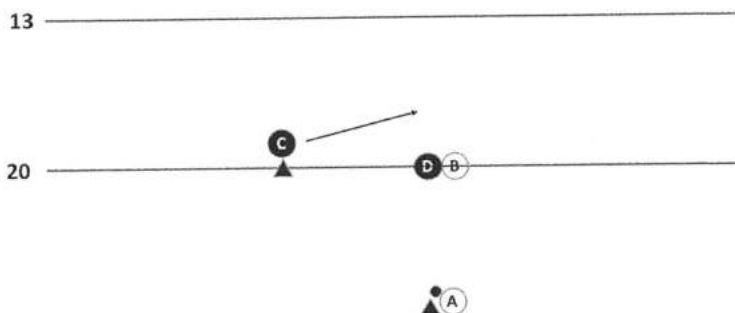
Work with...

- *passers who find it difficult to play the ball into the path of a runner and tend to drop it short.*
- *runners who appear unsure about breaking ahead at pace for the pass from the 'free' taker.*
- *passers who are reluctant to play a diagonal / cross field ball with the non-dominant foot.*

Modify...

- *by increasing the distance from one set of cones to the other or by increasing the width between runners.*

46. BREAK BALL COVER/SUPPORT



- Players get to practise positioning for breaking ball, reaction to it and movement after it.
- Use the 20m line as a starting point. Place one cone 7m out from that line. Place the second cone on the line, 5m to the left of the first.
- Players stand on the spots shown in the diagram.
- A and B are attackers. C and D are defenders.
- B and D will contest a lobbed ball, while A and C will seek to support.
- Start the move with A throwing the ball high into the air. Insist that this is high enough for players to get underneath the flight.
- C immediately moves behind to cover, while A steps in front of the two fielders.
- If the ball is won by A or B, they must stride out of that area to get the ball over the 13m line.
- If it is won by C or D, they must drive outfield to get beyond the cone where the move began.
- Pairs who don't win the ball must tackle.

- The action usually lasts only 3-5 seconds and may be set up again immediately and repeated.
- Swap player positions and pairs to suit and replicate the drill with other groups across the pitch.

Encourage...

- *whoever wins the break ball to explode out of the contest into space. The player may or may not use his/her teammate.*
- *support/cover players to keep feet moving and watch the flight of the ball so that they can adjust quickly.*
- *teammates of those who win possession to create width asap, allowing space to open up for a run or a pass.*

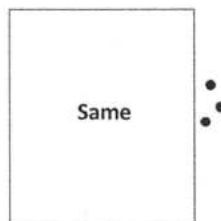
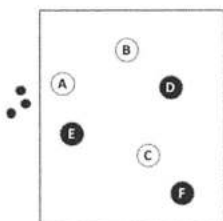
Work with...

- *players who are unsure of positioning under a breaking ball.*
- *players who contest the high ball and are slow to decide on their next move after landing.*

Modify...

- *by altering the cone positions/distances to create different angles and length of support runs.*

47. 3v3 BREAKOUTS



- Two 3v3 contests, one at a time, to let players practise breaking away from congested situations for a shot on goal.
- Use fleximarkers to set up two rectangles, each 20m wide and running between the 13m and 45m lines. Make the sideline one edge of each rectangle.
- A 3v3 contest begins with the coach throwing in the ball.
- A team must first work the ball over the 13m line and then over the 45m line before breaking out of the rectangle into space and attacking the goal.
- At all times, the other team must try to win the ball back.

➤ Example:

Ball is thrown in....D wins it and combines with E and F to work the ball over the 13m end of the rectangle (no need for all players to cross this line...just one player with the ball). The same 3 players then work it over the 45m end. ABC try to win it back but can't. Now DEF can break out of the rectangle to attack the goals. ABC still try to win it back. If they do, they may score.

Encourage...

- *teams in possession to use the full length and breadth of the rectangle when working the ball across lines (player spacing is key).*
- *players to break out early if they see that their team is about to get over the second line.*
- *the use of a kick pass to get the ball away from the congested area to a breakout player.*

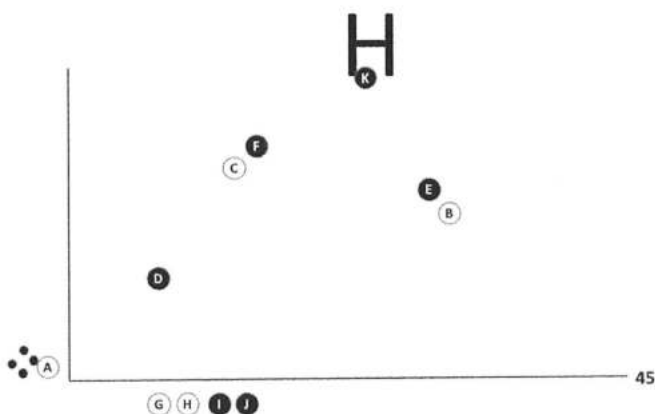
Work with...

- *players who tend to bunch as a three rather than get ahead of the ball.*
- *players who are unsure about when to break from the rectangle.*

Modify...

- *by placing a neutral defender in the D.*

48. SIDELINE SOLUTIONS



- An exercise to allow increasing numbers of attackers and defenders practise winning and making use of sideline passes.
- Set out some footballs where the 45m line meets a sideline. Player A will start here, taking the sideline kick.
- Inside the 45, begin with only two attackers ahead of the ball, being marked by two defenders... BvE and CvF.
- Have one extra defender (D) stand 13m from the point where player A takes the sideline.
- To start the action, C and B must break quickly to get separation from defenders and give A options for a pass.
- Once the ball is passed, player A joins the action and D marks A.

- The 3 attackers try to work a score (point or goal) against defenders and goalkeeper.
- If the defenders win the ball back, they must work it over the 45m line to end the move.
- Add players GvI (then HvJ a few moves later) to increase numbers and give players a chance to practise with reduced space.
- Remember to swap A and D with others to ensure they get to play different roles.

Encourage...

- *quick, decisive movement from receivers who want to claim the pass from a sideline ball.*
- *receivers to use deception before breaking fast.*
- *the player taking the sideline to practise different angles and timing of support runs.*
- *defenders to keep communicating with each other in order to be alert to attacking runs.*

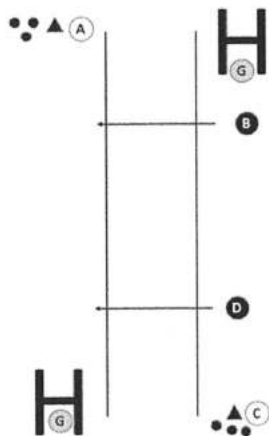
Work with...

- *attackers who have limited ideas on how to get and maintain separation from defenders.*
- *attackers who confuse support with crowding.*

Modify...

- *by switching sidelines, shortening or increasing distances.*

49. NO STOP ZONE



- A way to practise timing of lateral runs to pass and shoot.
- Set out two lines of fleximarkers, 30-40m long and 10m apart.
- This creates a long, narrow channel which is a *No Stop Zone*. Players must only run fast across it.
- Now place two portable goals, two cones and six footballs as shown on the diagram.
- Players A and C are feeders. Their job is to first pass the ball directly in front of where they stand.
- Players B and D act as receivers, passers and shooters.
- Start with B running across the *No Stop Zone* to take a short first pass from A.
- B turns to kick pass to D who must also make that run across.

- When player D gathers the pass, he/she turns immediately to shoot for goal past G.
- Whether the shot ends with a score, a save or a wide, D quickly races across the *No Stop Zone* to collect a short fist pass from C.
- D kick passes to B (who has crossed over too).
- B turns immediately to shoot for goal.
- The same move continues until all six footballs are used up.

Encourage...

- *active players to run at pace when crossing.*
- *passers and shooters to use left and right feet.*
- *the shooter to break across the zone a little later than the passer, so that he/she is not receiving the kick pass in a static position.*

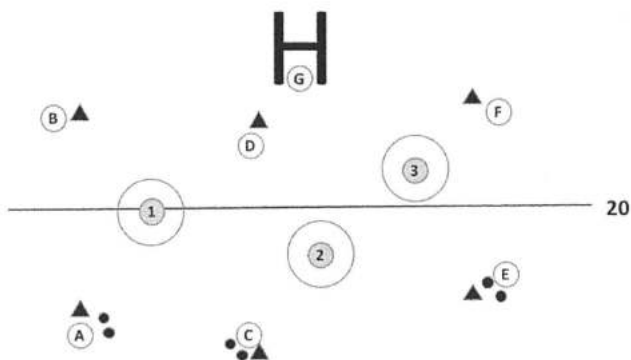
Work with...

- *players who find it difficult to time their runs across the zone.*
- *shooters who tend to have their shots go wide or be saved.*
- *players who are reluctant to pass and/or shoot with left and right foot.*

Modify...

- *by rotating player roles and altering distances.*

50. HOOK SHOT SWAP



- An opportunity to practise the hook kick under pressure of time and space, from different angles and with left and right sides.
- Set up three circles of fleximarkers, each 3m diameter and positioned as shown on the diagram (1, 2 and 3).
- Now place the cones. Two match each circle. They are set 10m either side and at an angle. Copy what's on the diagram.
- Finish the prep by setting two footballs at each of the outer cones.
- I'll use Players A and B to show how the drill works.
- On the coach's call, B breaks quickly towards Circle 1 and A first passes the ball.
- When inside the circle, B turns quickly to hit a right-footed hook kick for a point.

- Meanwhile, player A has run to the cone from where B started.
- B runs quickly to lift the second ball at the outer cone and plays a fist pass to A as he/she runs into the circle etc.
- Players CD and DE copy everything.
- Any player shooting from Circle 2 may use right or left foot. From Circle 3, it's left foot only for the hook kick.
- Run the exercise as a competition. Which pair can score two points in the shortest time?
- Swap group positions after every two shots.

Encourage...

- *players to focus on making good contact with the ball when shooting and to stay balanced.*
- *players to break quickly from cone to circle, then stay composed for the shot.*
- *fist passers to play the ball cleanly and to the receiver's advantage.*

Work with...

- *anyone who finds the hook kick difficult to execute.*

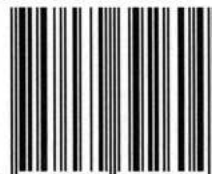
Modify...

- *by increasing distance and/or changing angles.*

A black and white photograph of two cyclists riding away on a dirt path through a dense forest. The path is covered in fallen leaves, and the trees are thick with foliage. The cyclists are wearing helmets and jackets.

A Gaelic Football Coaching Book

ISBN 9798430392604



9 798430 392604

90000

