



National Soccer Coaches
Association of America

SMALL-SIDED GAMES: 9v9

Excerpts from the NSCAA Special Topics Diploma Manual



9v9 CREATING SPACE IN THE FINAL THIRD 1

Why use it?

This 9v9 game related activity provides the coach with an opportunity to work on off the ball movement to create space in the final third of the field. Creating space with movement off the ball is certainly a challenging topic when working with young players and will take regular repetition and reinforcement to develop proficiency. Strikers initially move away from the ball and then make penetrating runs between and behind the defenders.

Set up

2 teams play on a full 9v9 field - 75x47 yards in size. To begin there are two games running concurrently at each end of the field. Each half is subdivided to create 2 zones. In each end the attacking team starts with 2 unopposed midfield players in the zone closest to the halfway line and in the attacking zone play 3v2 in favor of the attacking team. A server for the attacking team starts the activity on the sideline and starts the activity when all players are in a ready position. The coach stands to one side to observe both games.

How to play

The objective is to work with the front three forward players to create space in the final third. The servers initiate each attack passing to one of the midfield players. When a midfield player has the ball wide, the attacking players should make runs away from the player with the ball. This coordinated movement will either create space for the midfield player to penetrate with a dribble, or isolate a single striker 1v1 against a defender. The defenders cannot leave the end zone to begin. Progress to 3v3 in each end zone and 2v2 in the central zone using 1 ball. Play until 3 goals have been scored or in 5 minute intervals.

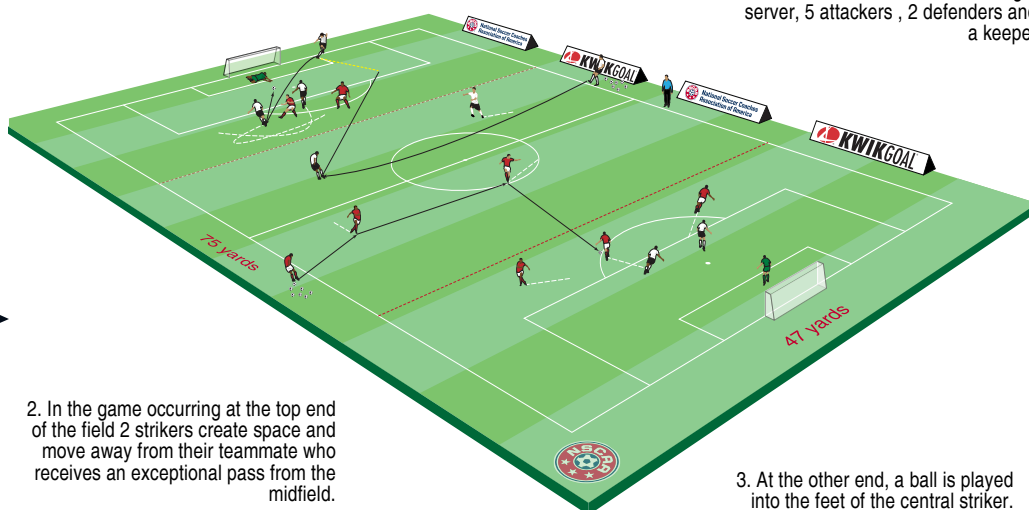
Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Help players to recognize visual cues to create space.
Coaching Tips: Be prepared to choreograph some designed movements and combination plays.

How to modify

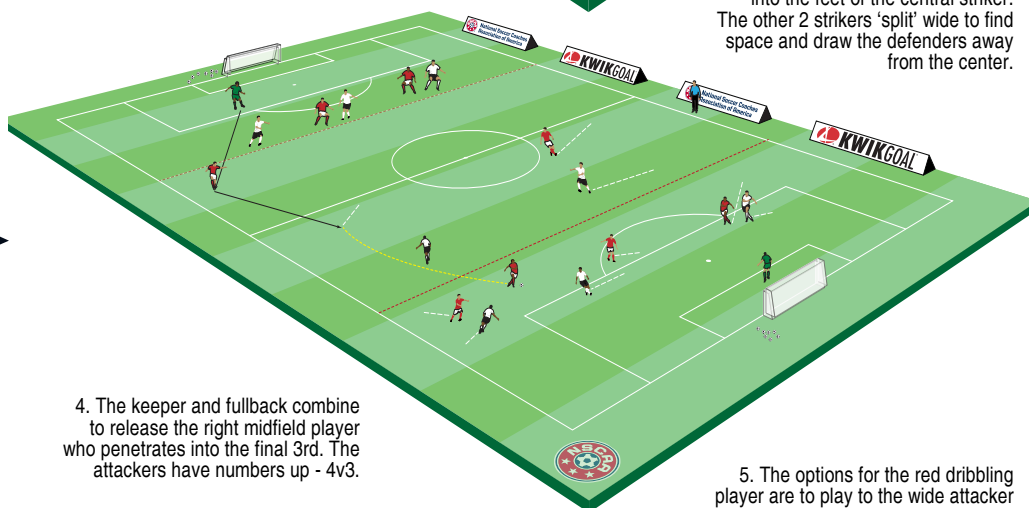
Less Challenging: Remove defenders and work through some pattern play. Then add in 'passive' defenders.
More Challenging: Add more defenders to both zones, remove the zones and play 9v9 without restrictions.

1. Two games are running concurrently at each end of the field involving 1 server, 5 attackers, 2 defenders and a keeper



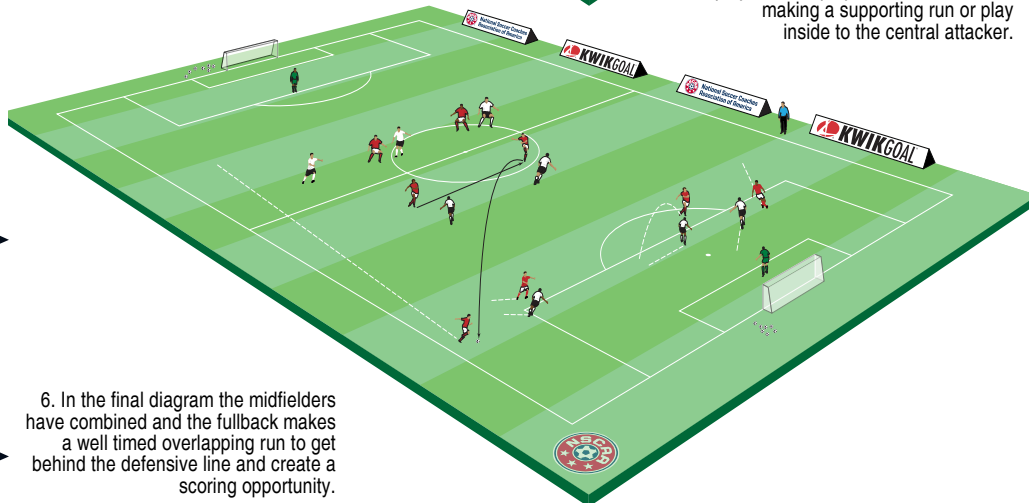
2. In the game occurring at the top end of the field 2 strikers create space and move away from their teammate who receives an exceptional pass from the midfield.

3. At the other end, a ball is played into the feet of the central striker. The other 2 strikers 'split' wide to find space and draw the defenders away from the center.



4. The keeper and fullback combine to release the right midfield player who penetrates into the final 3rd. The attackers have numbers up - 4v3.

5. The options for the red dribbling player are to play to the wide attacker making a supporting run or play inside to the central attacker.



6. In the final diagram the midfielders have combined and the fullback makes a well timed overlapping run to get behind the defensive line and create a scoring opportunity.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

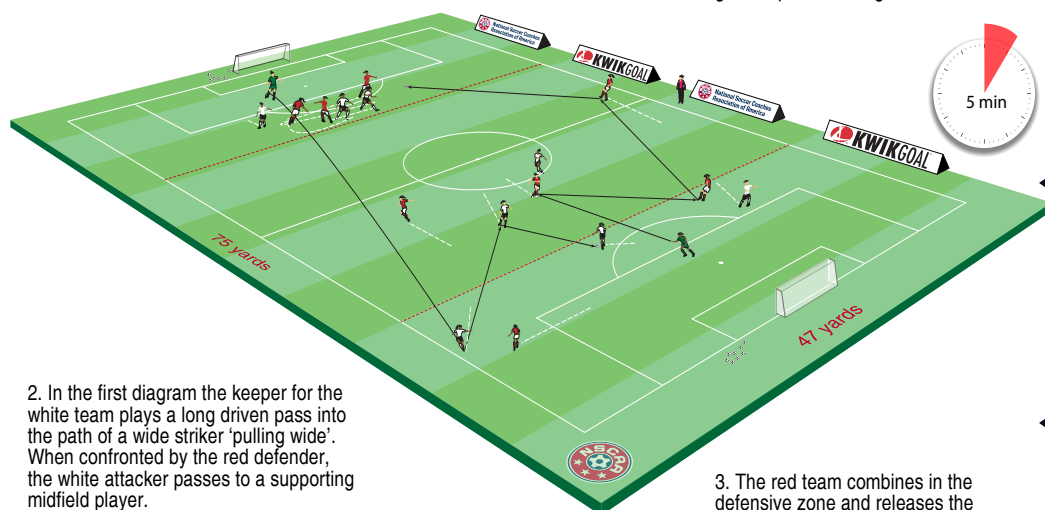
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing, creating space as an individual and team, and support.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over short to medium distances, attacking as a unit of the team and communication.

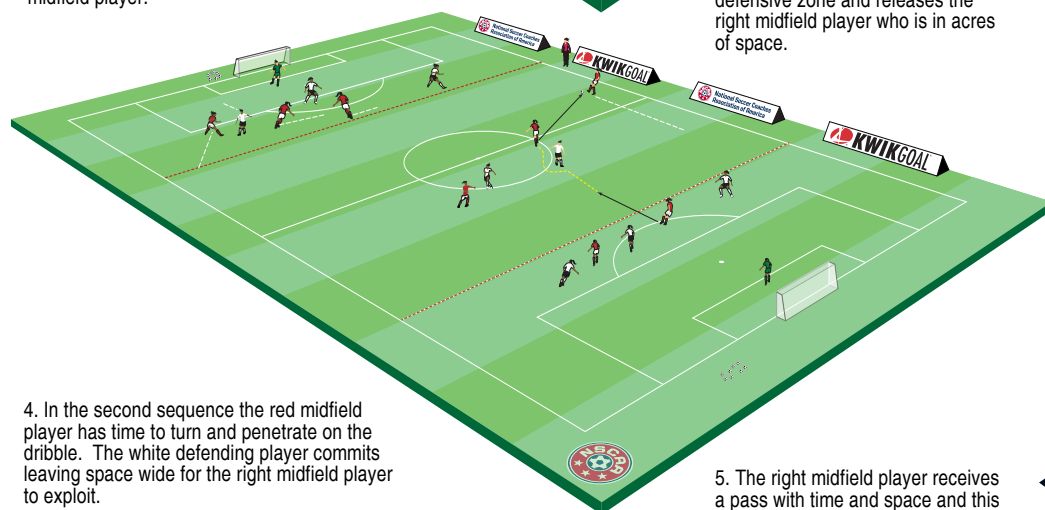
9V9 CREATING SPACE IN THE FINAL THIRD 2

1. Two games occur concurrently with goalkeepers initiating the attack.



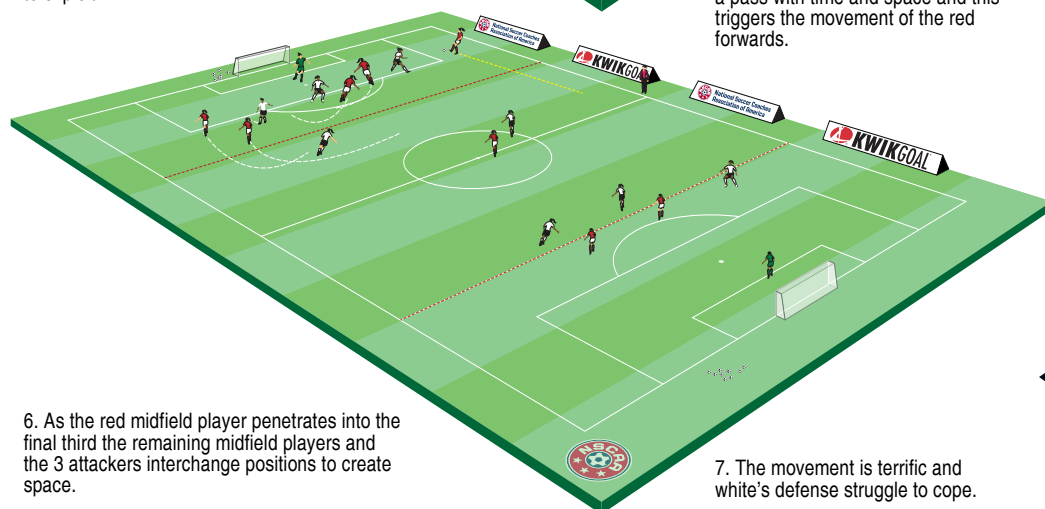
2. In the first diagram the keeper for the white team plays a long driven pass into the path of a wide striker 'pulling wide'. When confronted by the red defender, the white attacker passes to a supporting midfield player.

3. The red team combines in the defensive zone and releases the right midfield player who is in acres of space.



4. In the second sequence the red midfielder has time to turn and penetrate on the dribble. The white defending player commits leaving space wide for the right midfielder player to exploit.

5. The right midfielder player receives a pass with time and space and this triggers the movement of the red forwards.



6. As the red midfielder player penetrates into the final third the remaining midfield players and the 3 attackers interchange positions to create space.

7. The movement is terrific and white's defense struggle to cope.

Why use it?

Continuing the theme of creating space, this activity provides the coach with opportunities to work with the midfield and forward players. With repetition the players will learn to identify visual cues and will respond with complementary movements.

Set up

2 teams play on a full 9v9 field - 75x47 yards in size. The field is subdivided into 3 zones. To begin there are two games running concurrently each initiated by the goalkeeper. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and coach.

How to play

The objective is to work with the front three forward and midfield players to create space in the middle and final thirds of the field. In the first sequence the goalkeeper initiates the attack with a pass or throw to a teammate. The attacking players are allowed to move freely, but the defenders must remain in the zone they started or quickly recover to their zone once an attack has broken down. The team the coach will work with first should be set up in a 1-2-3-3 formation and the opponent in a 1-3-2-3. The attacking team should attempt to create a numbers up situation in each zone. When possession is lost the players return to their original starting zone. Play until 3 goals have been scored or in 5 minute intervals.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: At first encourage the attacking team to attack from wide positions so the visual cues are clear for the forwards. Movements should be away from the ball carrier to create space in dangerous positions and then cut back towards the ball.

Coaching Tips: Insist the passing is crisp and realistic to the game. Creating movement restrictions on players can sometimes result in players losing concentration and playing at half pace.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Remove defenders and work through some pattern plays. Add in 'passive' defenders and reduce the length of the field to start attacks closer to goal.

More Challenging: Remove the zones and play 9v9 without restrictions.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing, creating space as an individual and team, and support.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over short to medium distances, attacking as a unit of the team and communication.

CREATING SPACE IN 9v9 GAME

Why use it?

The final game activity is a great way to determine how much the players have learned during the technical, functional and phase of play sessions. The emphasis and focus for the coach is movement of players in the final third of the field to create individual and team space.

Set up

The set up is a full 9v9 field with an appropriate size goal at both ends. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside. Both teams have a full complement of players - 9v9 - to start.

How to play

Begin by setting up the team you are going to coach in an attacking formation -1-2-3-3. The opponent should be set up in a 1-4-2-2 formation. Commence with a pass/throw from the goalkeeper playing for the team you are coaching. Once the ball enters the field, play normal rules. The objective for the attacking team is to attack the opponent down either flank and for the strikers and attacking midfield players to work on movement patterns to find space. Initially 3 players on the defending team are prevented from recovering into their defensive half. This condition should create a numerical overload in attack. Encourage the strikers to switch positions as the attack develops, making it difficult for the defenders to 'mark' the attackers. Use a points system to emphasize attacking with pace. A goal scored within 8 seconds is worth 5 points and a goal scored in 9 or more seconds is worth 1 point. Play until the attacking team has scored 15 points or for 8 minutes per interval. Play a total of 3 intervals.

Coaching notes

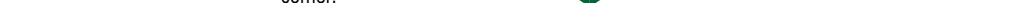
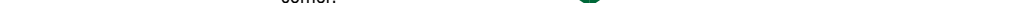
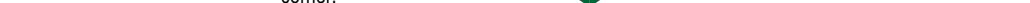
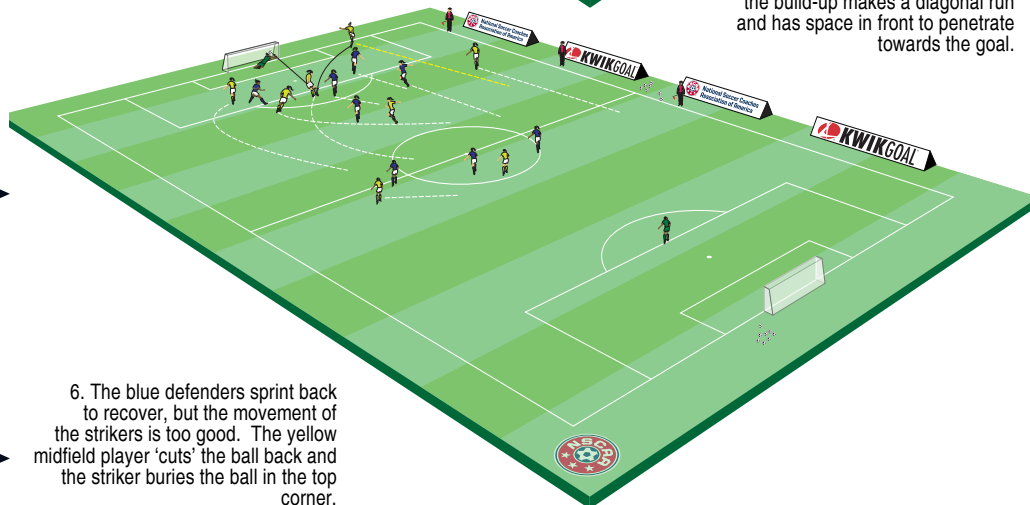
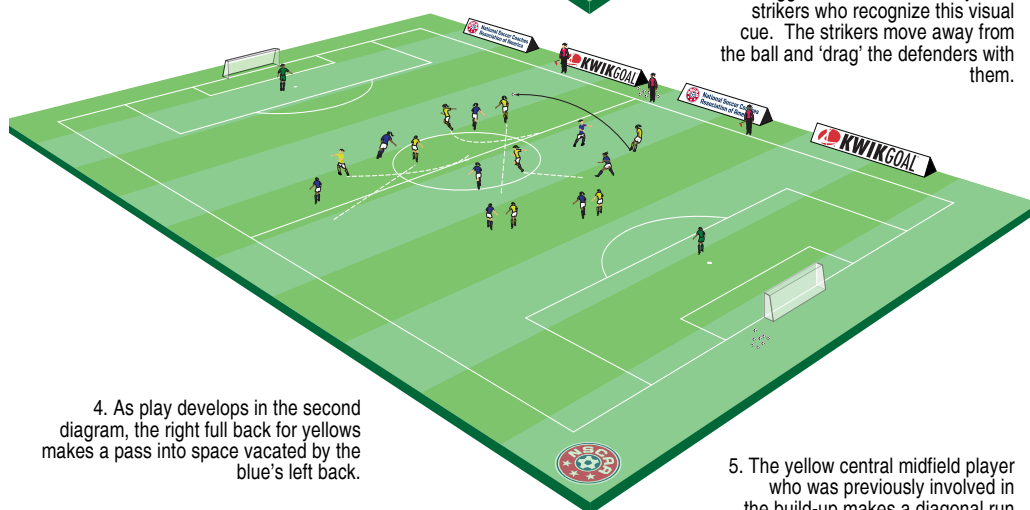
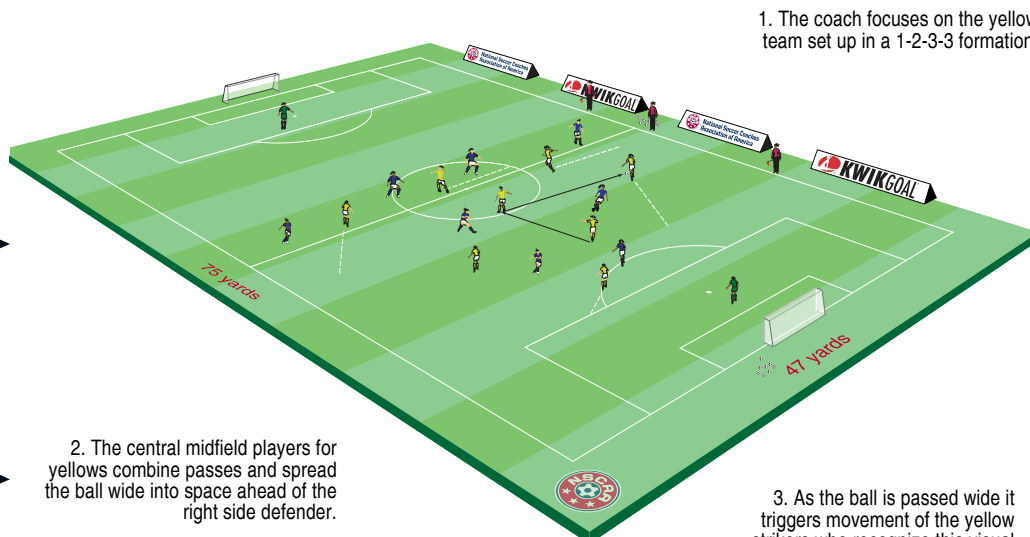
Coaching Objectives: Help players to recognize the correct timing of movements to create space for an individual and/or a teammate.

Coaching Tips: Be prepared to choreograph some designed movements and combination plays.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the number of defenders and then add them back gradually.

More Challenging: Restrict the number of touches allowed by the attacking players. Allow all the defenders to recover over the halfway line.



Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

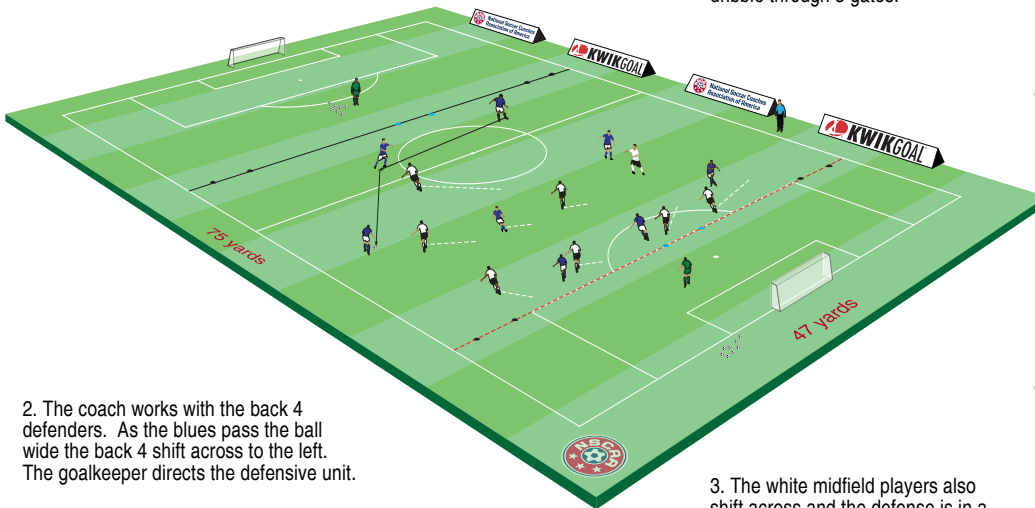
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Passing, creating space as an individual and team, and support.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over short to medium distances, attacking as a unit of the team and communication.

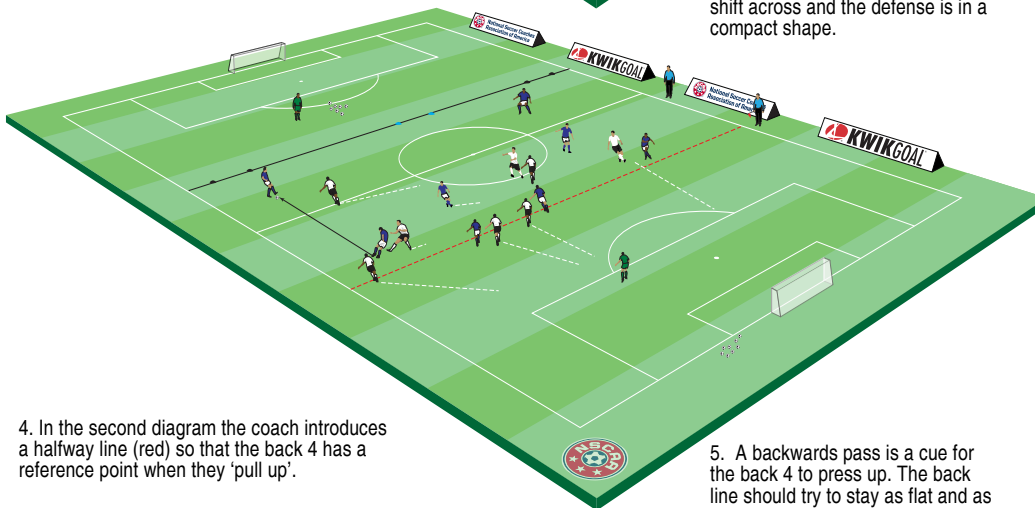
DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION BACK 4

1. The white team defend against the blue team, who are attempting to dribble through 3 gates.



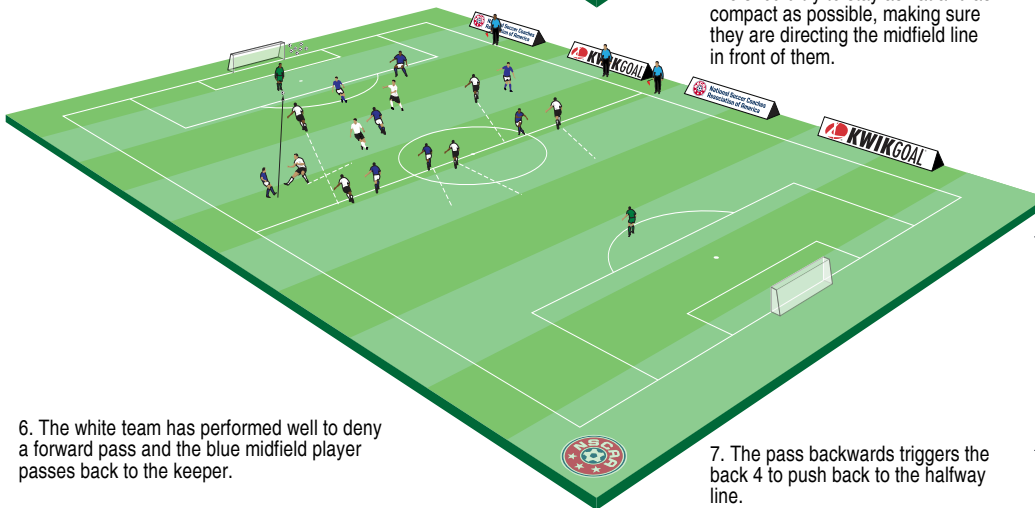
2. The coach works with the back 4 defenders. As the blues pass the ball wide the back 4 shift across to the left. The goalkeeper directs the defensive unit.

3. The white midfield players also shift across and the defense is in a compact shape.



4. In the second diagram the coach introduces a halfway line (red) so that the back 4 has a reference point when they 'pull up'.

5. A backwards pass is a cue for the back 4 to press up. The back line should try to stay as flat and as compact as possible, making sure they are directing the midfield line in front of them.



6. The white team has performed well to deny a forward pass and the blue midfielder passes back to the keeper.

7. The pass backwards triggers the back 4 to push back to the halfway line.

Why use it?

This activity provides the coach with an opportunity to work with the organization of the back 4 defenders.

Set up

2 teams play on three quarters of a 9v9 field. A defensive zone is marked across the top of the penalty box and 3 gate goals are created at both ends of the field. Play 9v9 with a goalkeeper for each team standing in the space behind each end line. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

How to play

The defensive objective is to work on a sequence of scenarios with the back 4 defenders. As the ball is transferred by the attacking team to different parts of the field the defensive unit must shift. The goalkeeper is an important part of the defensive unit and has an ideal vantage point to help direct the movement of the back 4. The coach should focus on the team defending the full-size goal. Set up the team in a 1-4-3-1 formation and the opponents in a 1-2-3-3 formation. If the defenders win possession they attack the 3 gate goals and can score by passing the ball through. The attacking team also have 3 goals and must dribble through. In the first sequence to score a point. In the first interval, the goalkeepers start as servers behind the end lines. The coach then removes the restraining line at the top of the box and the 'dribbling goals'. The offside law is now in effect so use the support of an assistant to monitor the offside line. The attacking objective is to score in the full size goal. In the final interval the coach removes the 'passing goals' and the teams play on a full field. Play until one team scores 3 goals or in 5 minute intervals.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Work with players to trade roles - pressure, cover and balance. Coaching Tips: Communication between the defenders is crucial to coordinate the movement of the defensive unit.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the size of the area.
More Challenging: Reduce the number of defenders

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Defensive organization, pressure, cover and balance roles, counter attack.
Top 3 Competencies: Defending in pairs and small groups, positional play and communication.

DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION MIDFIELD 3

Why use it?

This activity emphasizes the defensive responsibility of the midfield players and specifically recovery runs and organization of a midfield 3.

Set up

Played on a 9v9 field, a zone is marked from the halfway line 8 yards inside one half. At the other end place a full size goal. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside.

How to play

The focus of this session is the defensive organization of the team defending the full size goal. Play starts from the goalkeeper, and the team defending the goal has to work the ball up into the zone adjacent to the halfway line. Once the team has the ball in the zone, the players have to make 3 consecutive passes for a point. The opponent must attempt to win possession and counter attack. As soon as the team turnover possession, the midfield 3 must make recovery runs to solidify the defense in front of the defenders.

Coaching notes

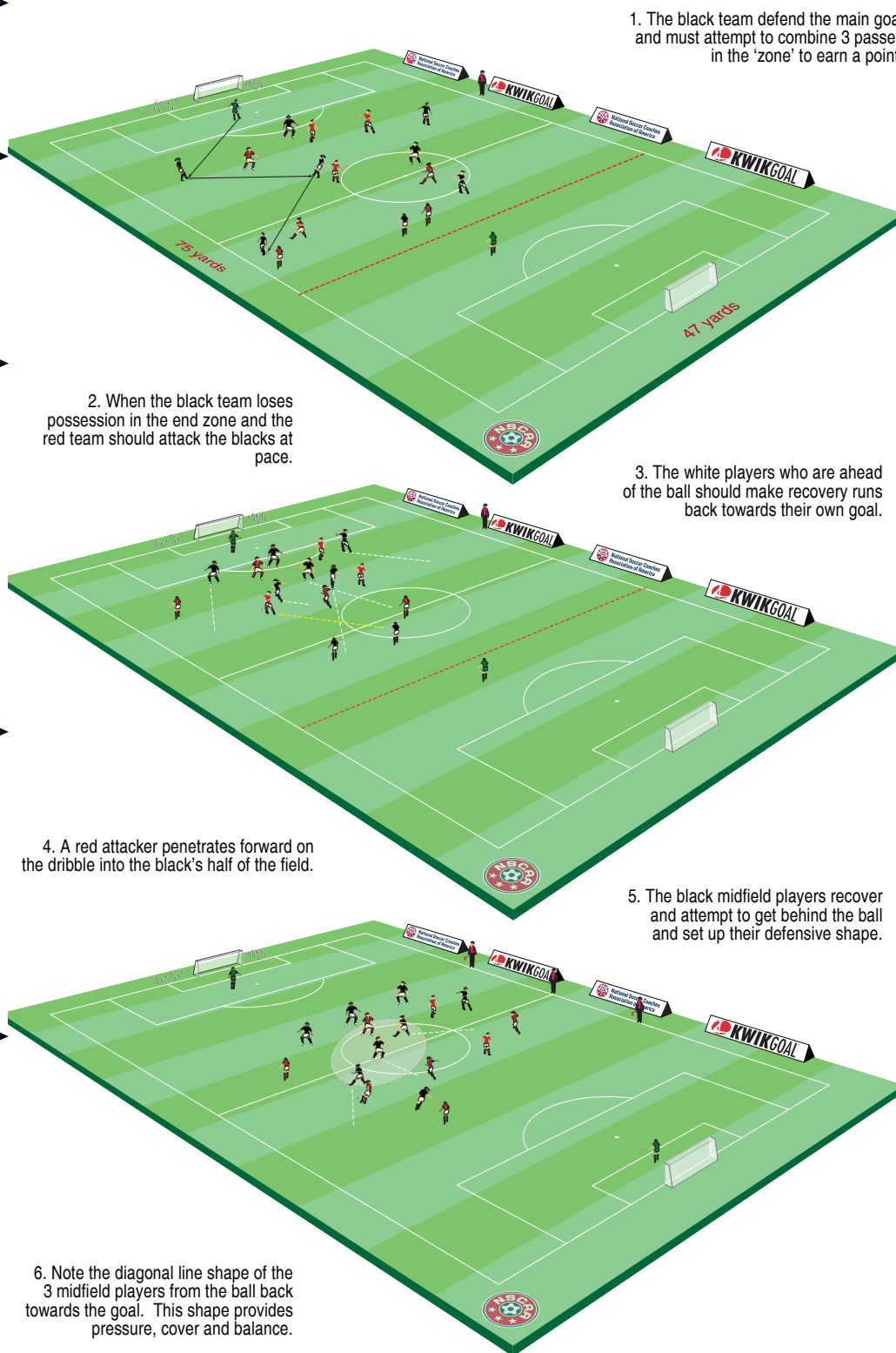
Coaching Objectives: Work with the midfield players on the recovery runs, shape of the defense, roles of pressure and cover and communication between the players.

Coaching Tips: Instead of stopping play or requiring the defenders to kick the ball out, provide both teams with an objective when the ball is won to add realism to the practice.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the number of attackers and then add them back gradually.

More Challenging: Delay the recover runs of one or more of the midfield players.



Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

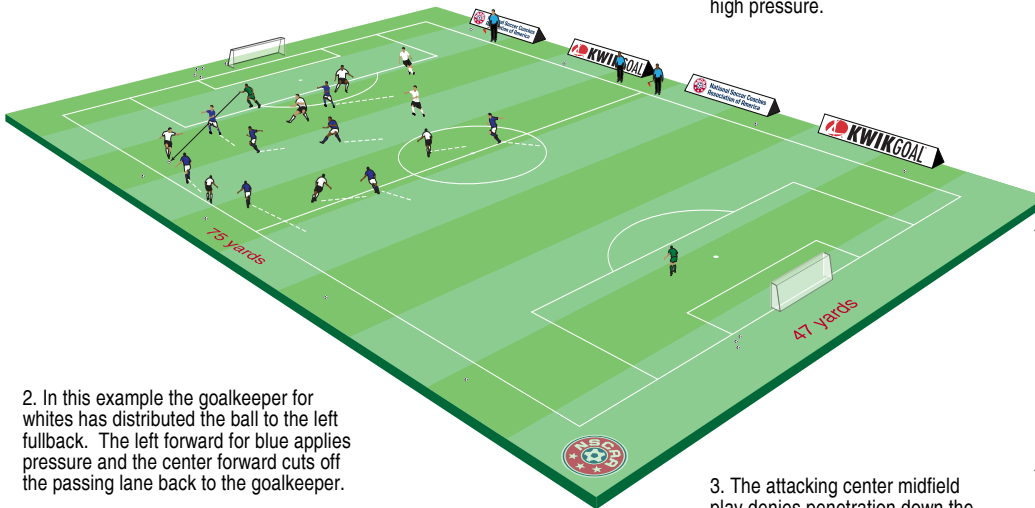
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Defensive organization, pressure, cover and balance roles, and counter attack.

Top 3 Competencies: Defending in pairs and small groups, positional play and communication.

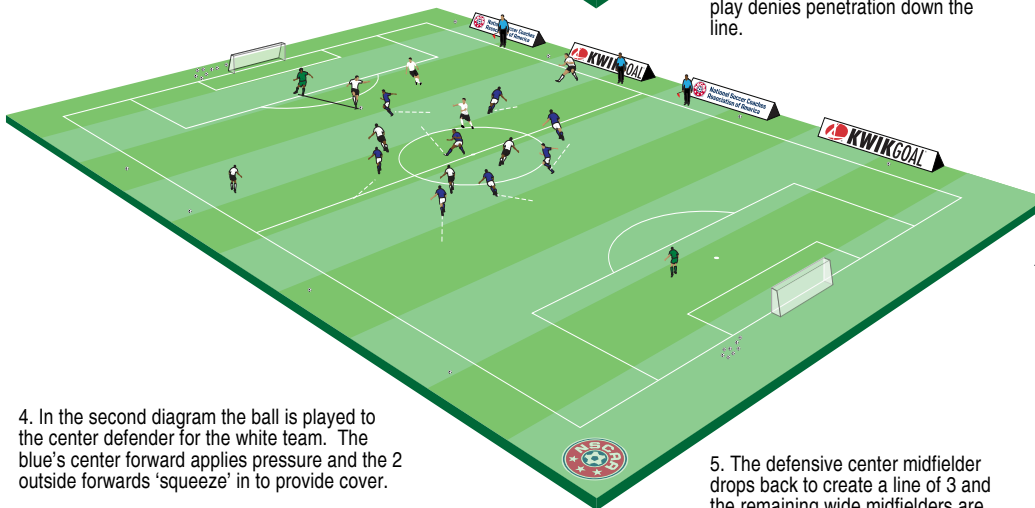
DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION HIGH PRESSURE

1. The blue team is losing 2-0 with 10 minutes left of the game. The coach has instructed the team to play with high pressure.



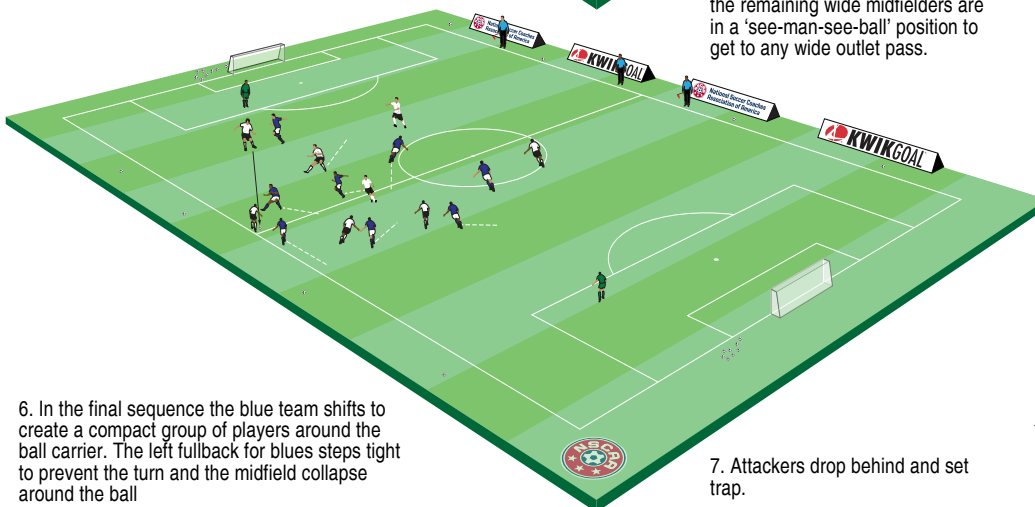
2. In this example the goalkeeper for whites has distributed the ball to the left fullback. The left forward for blue applies pressure and the center forward cuts off the passing lane back to the goalkeeper.

3. The attacking center midfielder play denies penetration down the line.



4. In the second diagram the ball is played to the center defender for the white team. The blue's center forward applies pressure and the 2 outside forwards 'squeeze' in to provide cover.

5. The defensive center midfielder drops back to create a line of 3 and the remaining wide midfielders are in a 'see-man-see-ball' position to get to any wide outlet pass.



6. In the final sequence the blue team shifts to create a compact group of players around the ball carrier. The left fullback for blues steps tight to prevent the turn and the midfield collapse around the ball.

7. Attackers drop behind and set trap.

Why use it?

This activity introduces a scenario occurring frequently in competitive games. Your team is trailing 2-0 with 10 minutes of regular time remaining and there is a heightened level of urgency for your team to win the ball back. Coordinated high pressure defense is required to force a turnover.

Set up

The set up is full 9v9 field with an appropriate size goal at both ends. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside. Both teams have a full complement of players - 9v9 - to start.

How to play

With very little time remaining in the game, the coach instructs the team to play high pressure with the objective to force an immediate turnover. In the event that the team you are coaching loses the ball, introduce the 'Barcelona Rule' - your team must attempt to win back possession within 6 seconds of losing it.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: When the team is 'out' of possession the defense must step into high gear and the nearest player must work tirelessly to close down the player with the ball. All other teammates are responsible to deny a pass and this is achieved with the 2-3 players nearest the ball collapsing the space around the ball carrier and getting close to their opponents.

Coaching Tips: Communication between the defenders is crucial to coordinate movement of the defensive unit. Recognizing an opportunity to play high pressure must involve the entire team and all players must know their responsibilities to provide pressure, cover and balance. Equally, the coach must restrain the young players from chasing all over the field in a disorganize manner. There is a fine balance between high intensity and thoughtless defending.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Place balls around the perimeter of the field to allow the attacking team to quickly restart. Require the attacking players to take at least 2 touches to allow the defenders a second or two extra time to close space.
More Challenging: Encourage the attacking team to play 1-2 touch.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Defensive organization, pressure, cover and balance roles, counter attack.
Top 3 Competencies: Defending as a team, high pressure defending and communication.

SWITCHING THE POINT OF ATTACK

Why use it?

The ability of a team to move the ball quickly from one side of the field to another is a tremendous advantage, particularly when faced with a well organized and resolute defense.

Set up

Played on a 9v9 field, use cones to create zone down both sides of the field. The cones should extend from the goal post to the halfway line (approximately 2 yards from the sideline). Only after an attacker has received or dribbled the ball into the wide zone can a defender enter the same space. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside.

How to play

Play a regular game with only attackers permitted to enter the wide zones first. The objective for the attacking team is to move the ball at pace and attempt to pass the ball into the wide zone to exploit time and space. The central defenders and central midfield players are important in transitioning the ball from side to side. A goal can only be scored if the ball has 'visited' both wide zones consecutively. This condition forces the players to switch play.

Coaching notes

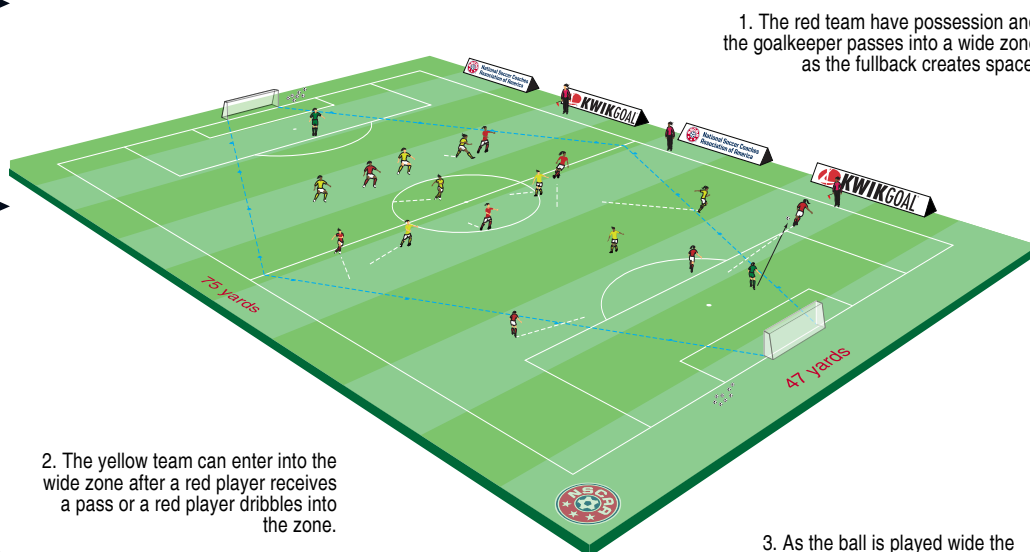
Coaching Objectives: Help the players to recognize when a switch of play is available. Cues such as a defense playing high pressure on one side of the field and an attacking overload developing on the 'weak-side', provide some indication that a switch of play may be possible.

Coaching Tips: In this instance the use of a wide zone keeps the defense relatively narrow and provides an opportunity for the attacking team to make a switch of play into an area permitting only the attacker.

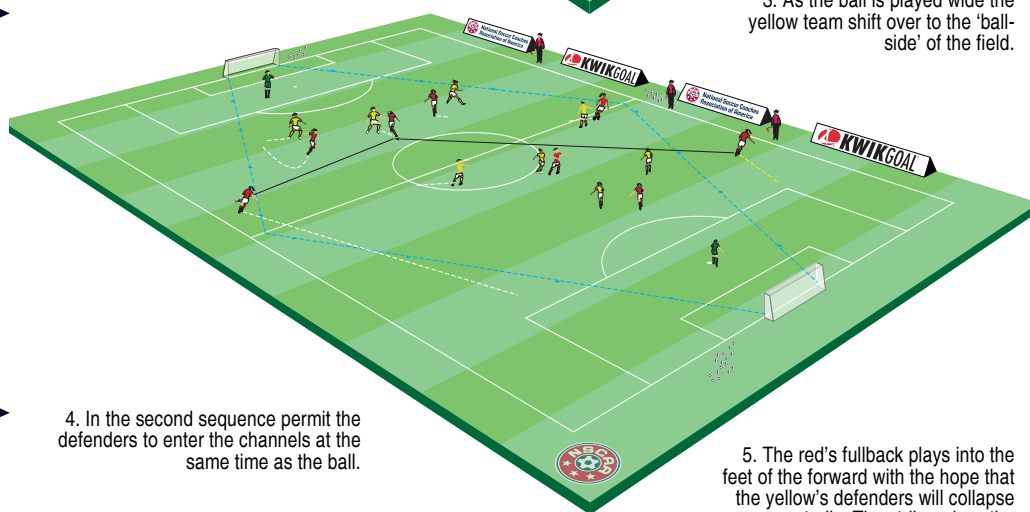
How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the number of defenders and then add them back gradually. Also make the zones wider to force the defenders inside the field to free up more wide space.

More Challenging: Reduce the number of touches allowed for each player. Allow the defenders to enter the zones at the same time as the ball and attacker. The final progression is to allow players to go anywhere, but maintain the requirement of passing to both flanks consecutively before scoring.

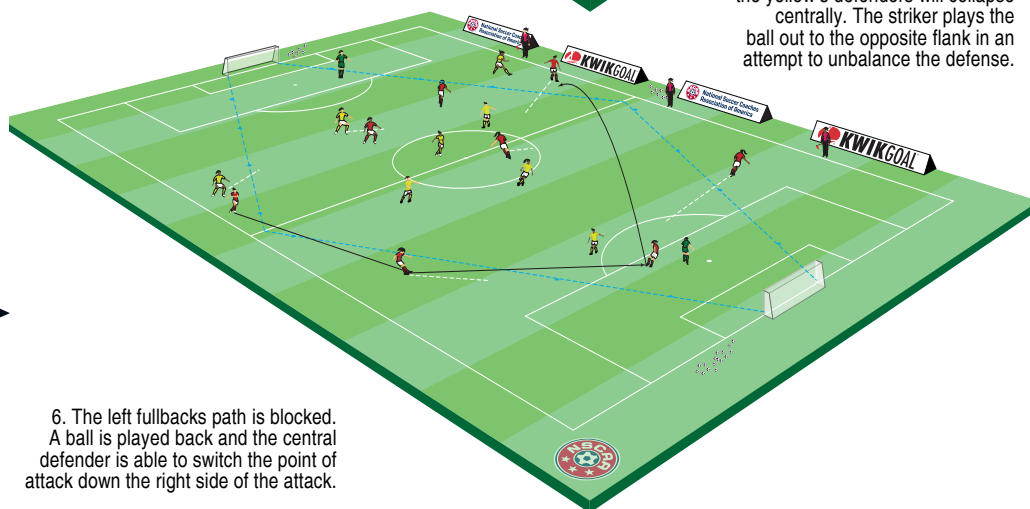


2. The yellow team can enter into the wide zone after a red player receives a pass or a red player dribbles into the zone.



3. As the ball is played wide the yellow team shift over to the 'ball-side' of the field.

4. In the second sequence permit the defenders to enter the channels at the same time as the ball.



5. The red's fullback plays into the feet of the forward with the hope that the yellow's defenders will collapse centrally. The striker plays the ball out to the opposite flank in an attempt to unbalance the defense.

6. The left fullbacks path is blocked. A ball is played back and the central defender is able to switch the point of attack down the right side of the attack.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

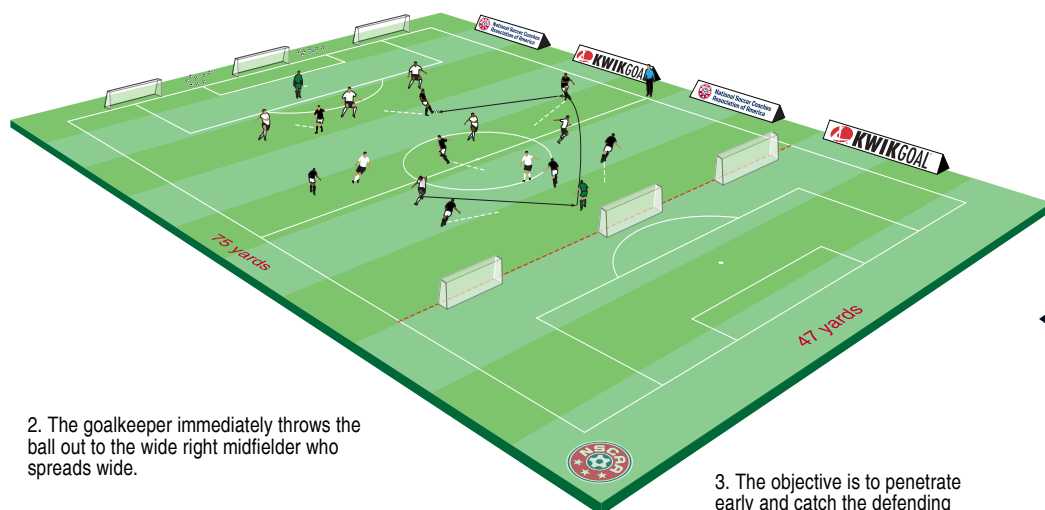
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Switching the point of attack, possession and creating space as a team.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over medium and long distances, movement to create space and communication.

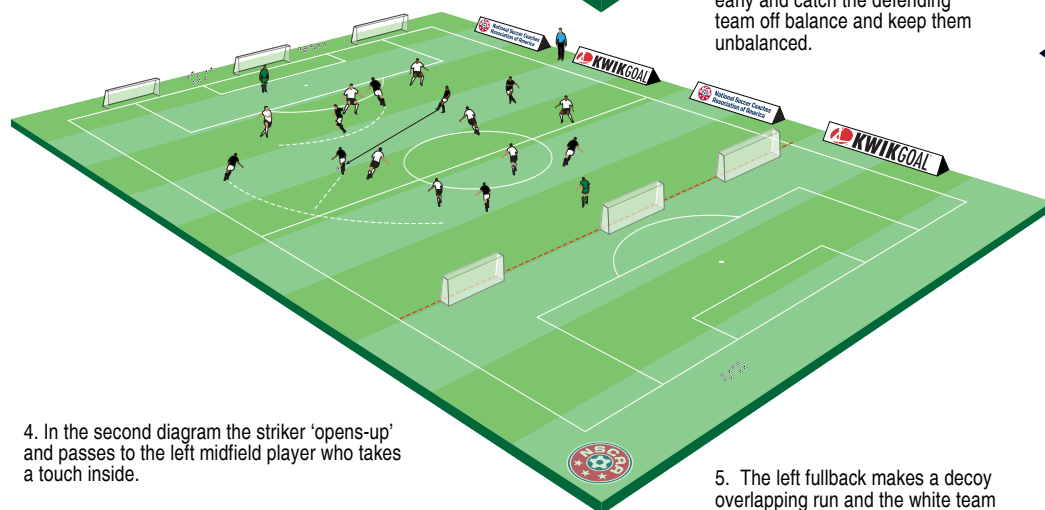
9V9 ATTACKING THE WEAK-SIDE

1. The black team's goalkeeper makes a save from the white attacker's shot.



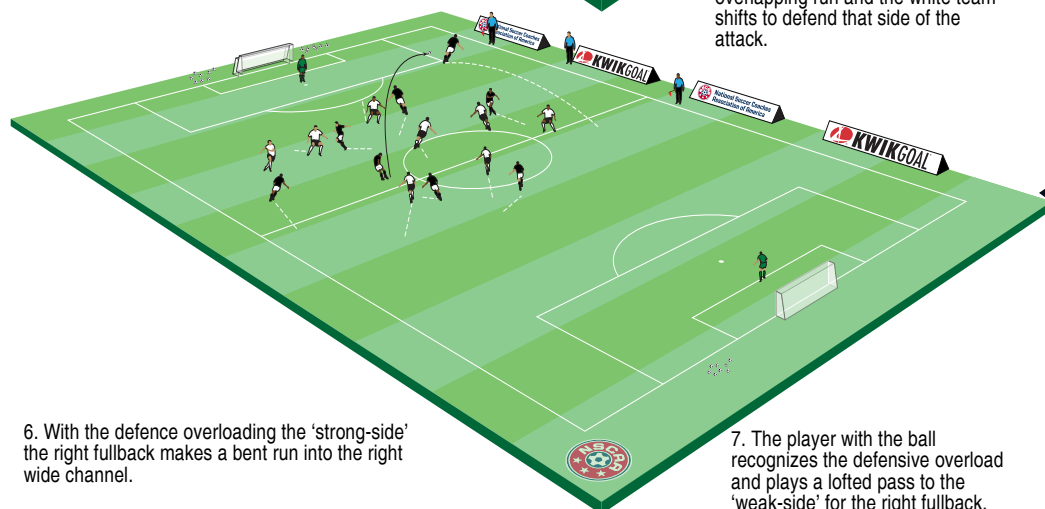
2. The goalkeeper immediately throws the ball out to the wide right midfielder who spreads wide.

3. The objective is to penetrate early and catch the defending team off balance and keep them unbalanced.



4. In the second diagram the striker 'opens-up' and passes to the left midfielder player who takes a touch inside.

5. The left fullback makes a decoy overlapping run and the white team shifts to defend that side of the attack.



6. With the defence overloading the 'strong-side' the right fullback makes a bent run into the right wide channel.

7. The player with the ball recognizes the defensive overload and plays a lofted pass to the 'weak-side' for the right fullback.

Why use it?

This 9v9 game related activity provides the coach with an opportunity to work on off the ball movement to create space in the wide channels. Players initially move towards the ball to open up the weak-side wide channel for the outside backs to exploit. This is an ideal activity if your team is having a problem getting around a packed defense or if you are constantly having to tell your flank players to stay wide.

Set up

2 teams play on three quarters of a 9v9 field. 3 goals are placed along the end line at both ends of the field. Play 9v9 with a goalkeeper for each team. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

How to play

Play a regulation game with all FIFA rules applied. The attacking team the coach will be working with is set up in a 1-3-3-2 formation. The opposing team is set up in a 1-3-2-3 formation. There are 3 goals for each team to attack and the goalkeeper can move laterally to project all 3 goals. Encourage the attacking team to score in a goal unprotected by the goalkeeper. One point for a goal except for a one touch finish worth 3 points. It is important the opponent starts the attack as the coach will want the attacking team to commence from a compact defensive position. The objective is for the attacking team to spread wide quickly once the ball is turned over or the goalkeeper has made a save. If the defense is able to block the route to goal, the attackers should look to play early into the space on the 'weak-side' of the field.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: The coach should attempt to develop some patterns of play in attack. Particular emphasis should be on forward and midfield players making runs away from the player with the ball and cutting back into dangerous areas vacated by creative movement of teammates.

Coaching Tip: The coach can control the tempo of the game by playing a ball to the opponent to take a shot on goal.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Make the defenders start the activity from behind the attackers goal.

More Challenging: Reduce the number of attackers if there are too many scoring opportunities.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Switching the point of attack, possession and creating space as a team.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over medium and long distances, movement to create space and communication.

9V9 PATIENCE IN ATTACK

Why use it?

The coach can use this activity to break down a team that is defending deep in front of their own goal (parked the bus).

Set up

2 teams play on three quarters of a 9v9 field. At one end there is an appropriate size goal and at the other end are 3 mini goals. Play 9v9 with a goalkeeper for each team. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

How to play

The coach is working with the team attacking the full goal and defending the mini goals. The attacking objective is to score against a deep lying and compact defense. This can be achieved a couple of ways. Firstly, the attacking team must be patient in their build-up and must attempt to move the defense laterally by exchanging passes quickly and with considerable movement of players along the forward line. A second strategy is to maintain possession away from goal in an attempt to draw the opponents towards the ball - a tactic that is more effective with youth players than a disciplined adult team. If the defenders win possession they must attempt to score in the 3 mini goals.

Coaching notes

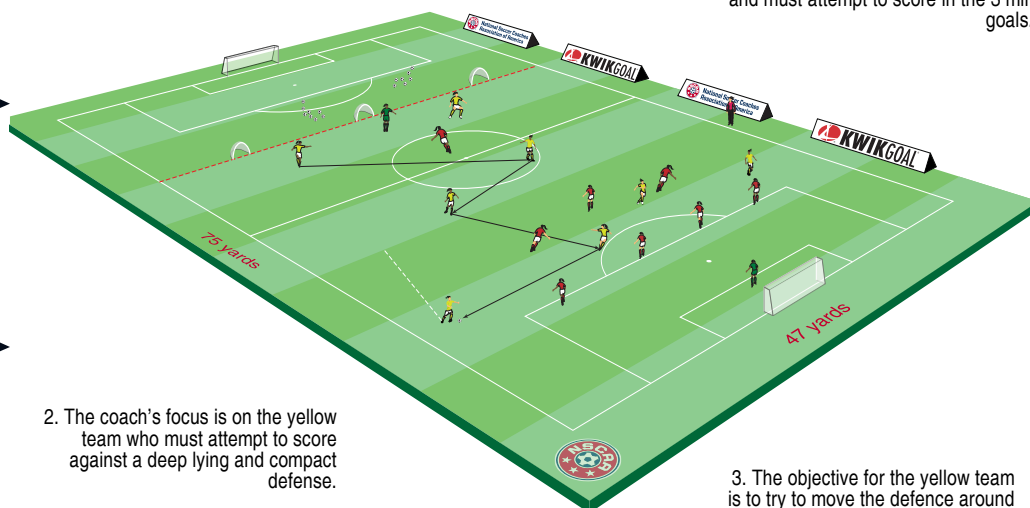
Coaching Objectives: Work with the players to maintain possession and to probe the defense with movement and penetrative passing. A pass to an attackers feet may draw the surrounding players towards the ball, leaving space out wide to attack.

Coaching Tips: On occasion the best time to beat a deep lying defense is when it has possession of the ball. In order to have a chance of scoring the team must send some players forward and this temporarily weakens the compact defensive shape. If the opponent can win possession and counter at pace, the defenders may not be able to regain the defensive shape quickly enough.

How to modify

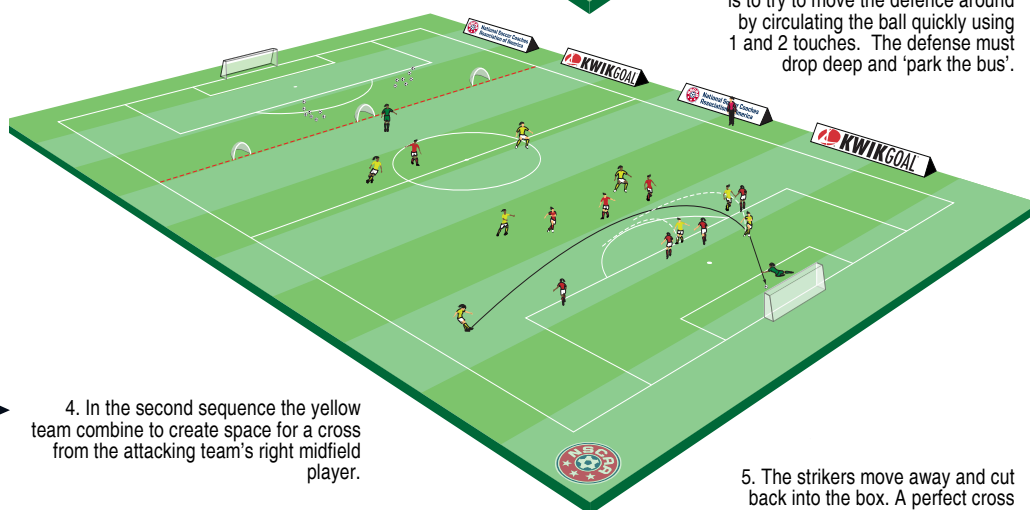
Less Challenging: Reduce the number of defenders.

More Challenging: Reduce the number of touches allowed for each player.
Decrease the size of the area.



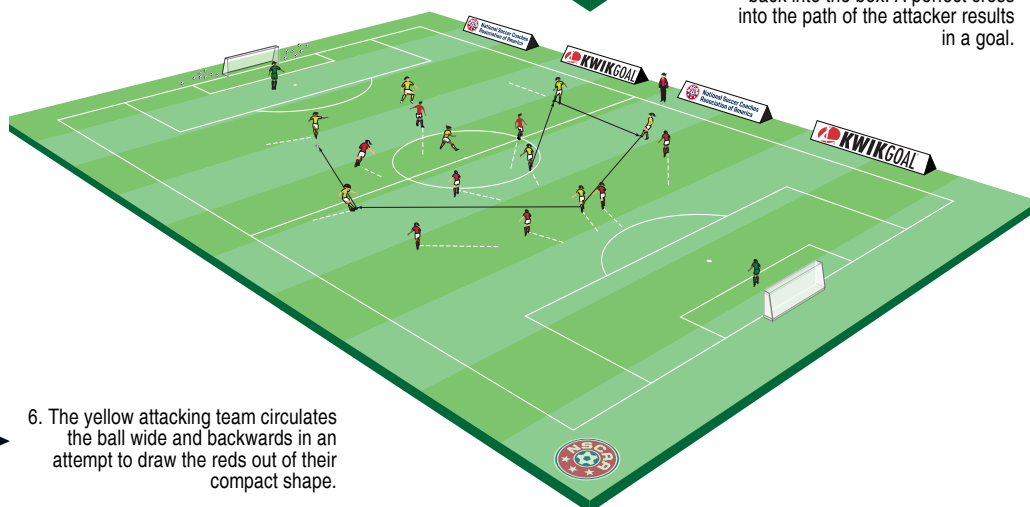
1. The red team defends the main goals and must attempt to score in the 3 mini goals..

2. The coach's focus is on the yellow team who must attempt to score against a deep lying and compact defense.



3. The objective for the yellow team is to try to move the defence around by circulating the ball quickly using 1 and 2 touches. The defense must drop deep and 'park the bus'.

4. In the second sequence the yellow team combine to create space for a cross from the attacking team's right midfield player.



5. The strikers move away and cut back into the box. A perfect cross into the path of the attacker results in a goal.

6. The yellow attacking team circulates the ball wide and backwards in an attempt to draw the reds out of their compact shape.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

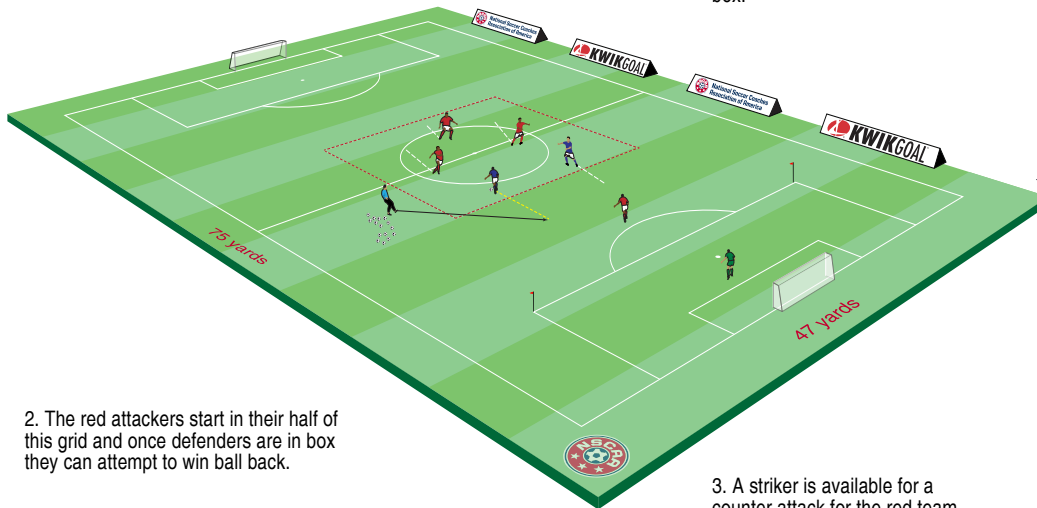
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Switching the point of attack, possession and creating space as a team.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over medium and long distances, movement to create space and communication.

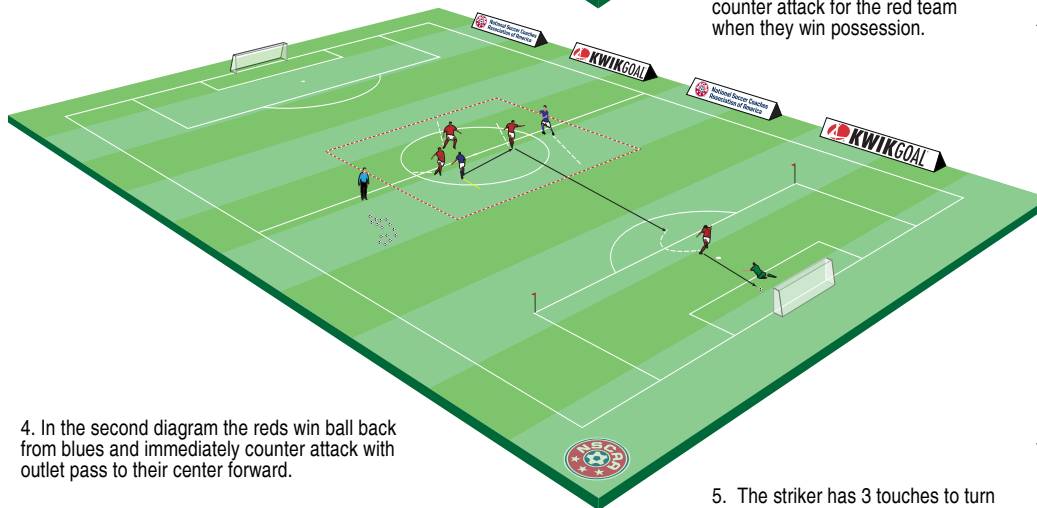
4V3 TO 4V4 MIDFIELD PRESSURE AND COUNTER ATTACK

1. The coach passes to 2 blue defenders who dribble into the midfield box.



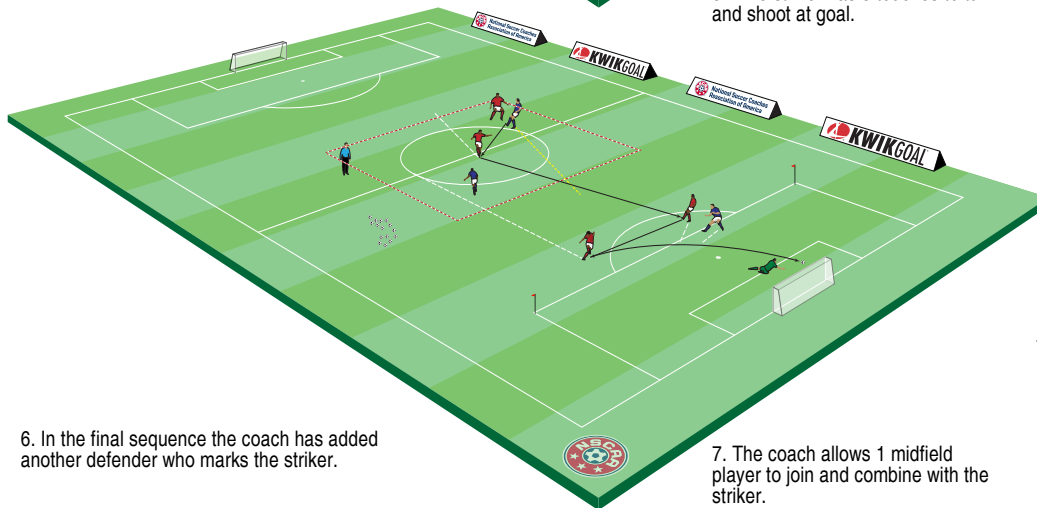
2. The red attackers start in their half of this grid and once defenders are in box they can attempt to win ball back.

3. A striker is available for a counter attack for the red team when they win possession.



4. In the second diagram the reds win ball back from blues and immediately counter attack with outlet pass to their center forward.

5. The striker has 3 touches to turn and shoot at goal.



6. In the final sequence the coach has added another defender who marks the striker.

7. The coach allows 1 midfield player to join and combine with the striker.

Why use it?

This activity replicates a game related defensive scenario focusing on the midfield and forward players. The objective is for the midfield players to win the ball back from the opposition and counter attack quickly by combining with the striker.

Set up

The activity is played on a 9v9 field with a 20x20 yards box straddling both sides of the half way line. The coach works with the team attacking the large goal. 3 midfield players and 1 striker start the game against 2 defenders and a goalkeeper. The 3 midfield players must start the activity in their half of the field. The coach stands adjacent to the box and has a large supply of balls.

How to play

The coach starts the activity with a pass to the 2 defenders starting outside the area. On receipt of the ball the 2 defenders enter the area and attempt to penetrate over the end line on the dribble. The 3 attackers try to deny penetration and win possession. Immediately, the player who wins the ball must attempt to pass to the striker who has 3 touches to score goal. Play 4 x 3 minute games. After a couple of rounds add a central defender and allow 1 midfielder to burst out of grid to support the striker to create a 2v1 to goal.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: The midfield players should apply high pressure with a numerical advantage and collapse around the 2 defenders. After the ball is won, the attackers should transition to a counter attack and play forward quickly.

Coaching Tips: Adding a time or touch restriction for the attacking team increases the speed and intensity of the game. Game conditions require the team to play with urgency before the opponent is able to regroup and compact.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Start with 1 defender and move the box closer to the goal.

More Challenging: Add additional defenders, increase the size of the field and add time limits for the attacking team.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Defending as a unit, counter attacking and shooting.

Top 3 Competencies: Pressure and cover defending, tackling technique and communication.

DEFENDING 8v8 PLUS 1

Why use it?

This activity places players in a game related environment emphasizing the coordination of the team's defensive organization.

Set up

Play on a 9v9 field with two cone lines marked the width of the penalty box to narrow the field. The area is split into 3 equal size zones. Each team has 7 field players and a goalkeeper. The team in possession has an all-time offensive player to create a numerical advantage. Both teams set up in a 1-3-2-2 formation. The coach stands on the sideline to observe.

How to play

The defensive team works together in 3 defined lines (defense, midfield and forwards) in an attempt to make play predictable and win possession. The coach should help the players to identify visual cues and implement individual and small group defending strategies. The coach has a whistle and referees game. The coach should first observe and work on the relationship between 2 of the 3 lines, for instance the relationship between attacking line and the midfield line. Then progress to working with 3 lines and the players roles.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: The defending team must organize the units/lines to make play predictable. The team should press forward and prevent progression towards the goal. Recovery runs can be addressed when ball gets behind a 'line'.

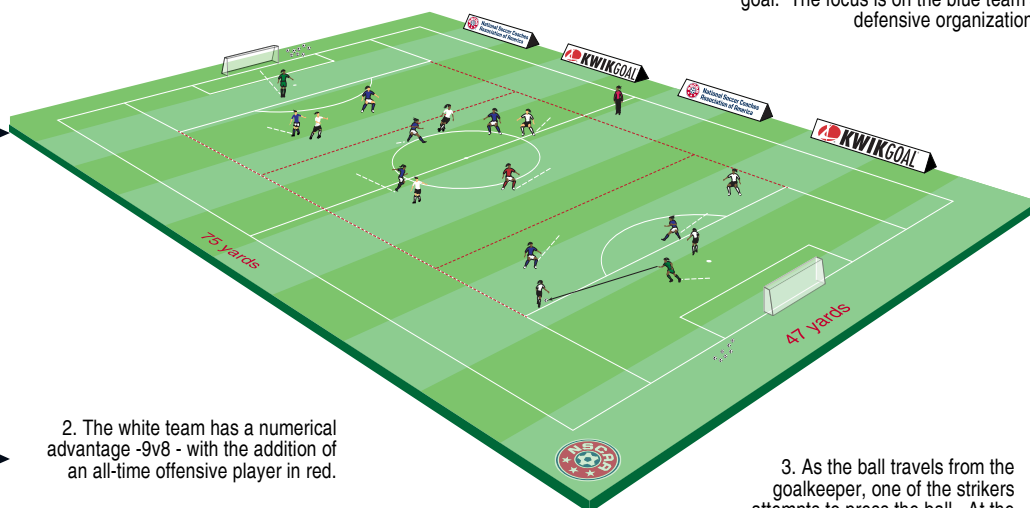
Coaching Tips: To place a defending team in moment of crisis, a player shooting at goal must run around a corner flag before recovering to help win the ball back.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Remove the all-time offensive player.

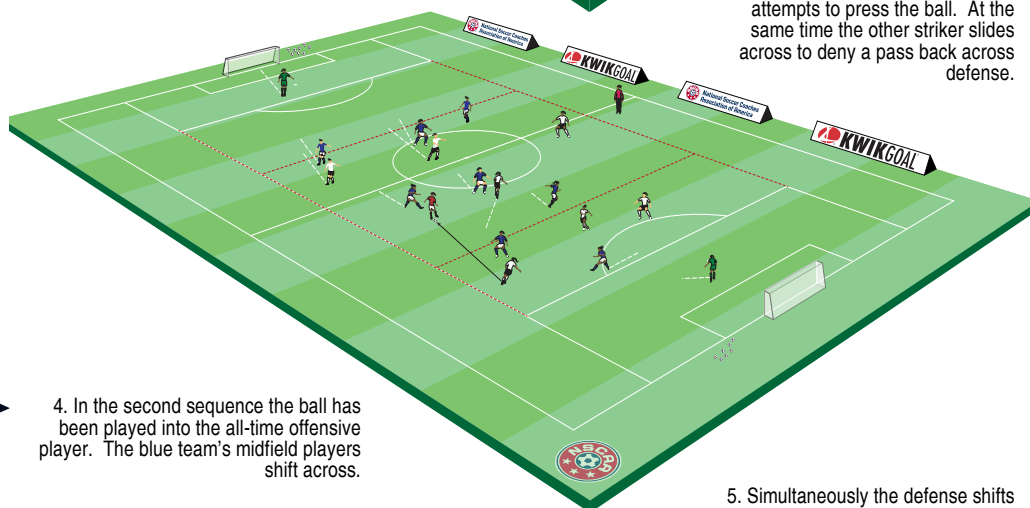
More Challenging: Widen the field and maintain a numerical advantage for the attacking team.

1. The white team attack the blue team's goal. The focus is on the blue team's defensive organization.



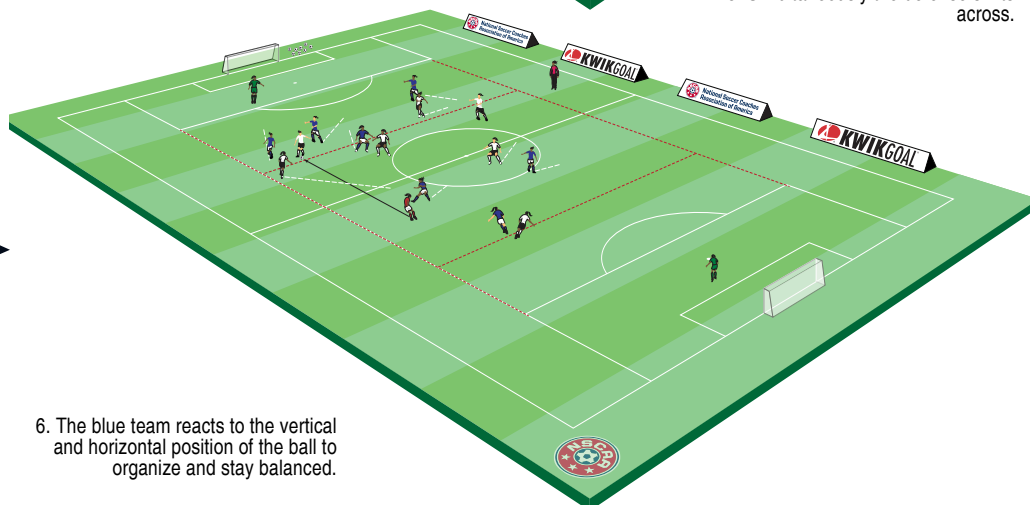
2. The white team has a numerical advantage - 9v8 - with the addition of an all-time offensive player in red.

3. As the ball travels from the goalkeeper, one of the strikers attempts to press the ball. At the same time the other striker slides across to deny a pass back across defense.



4. In the second sequence the ball has been played into the all-time offensive player. The blue team's midfield players shift across.

5. Simultaneously the defense shifts across.



6. The blue team reacts to the vertical and horizontal position of the ball to organize and stay balanced.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

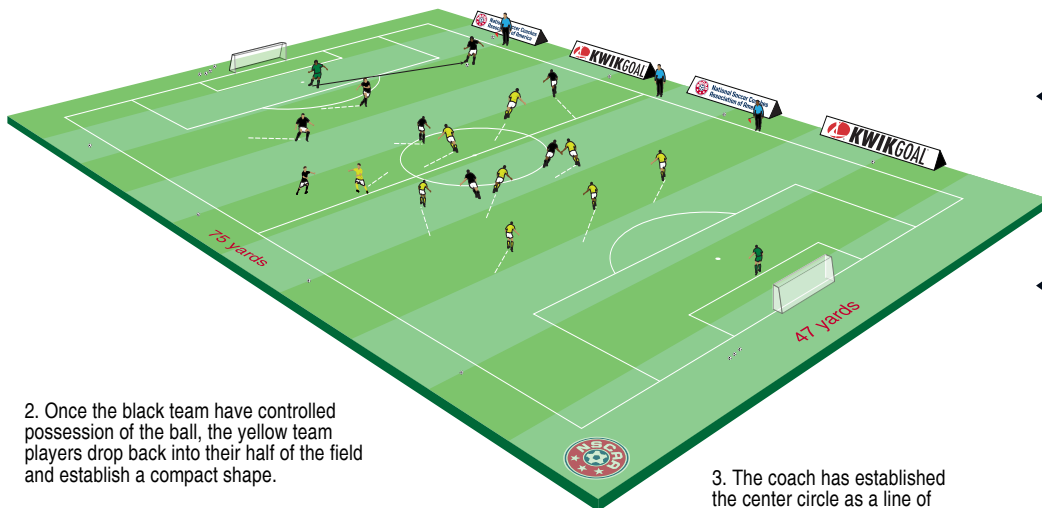
Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Defending as a unit, counter attacking and shooting.

Top 3 Competencies: Pressure and cover defending, tackling technique and communication.

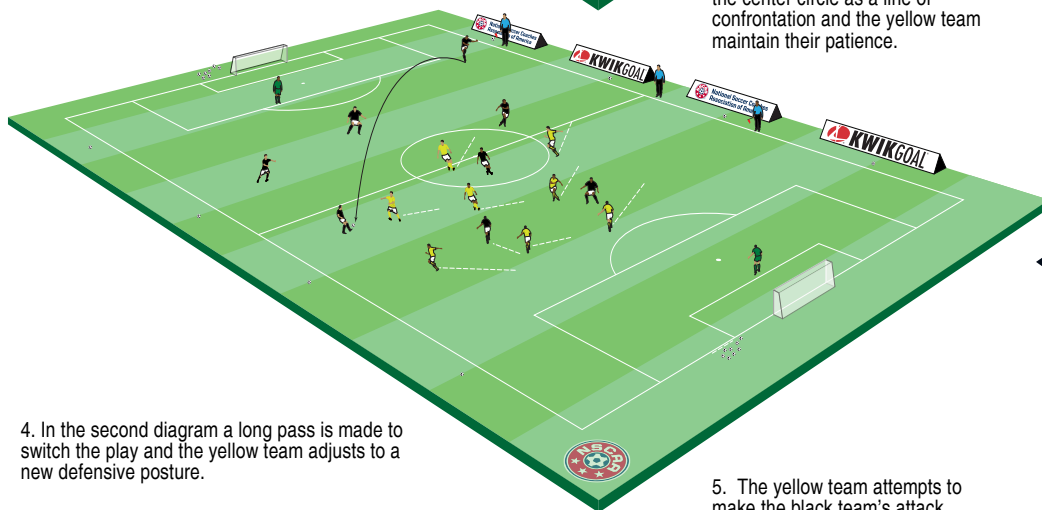
9v9 LOW PRESSURE DEFENDING

1. The yellow team defends against the black team.



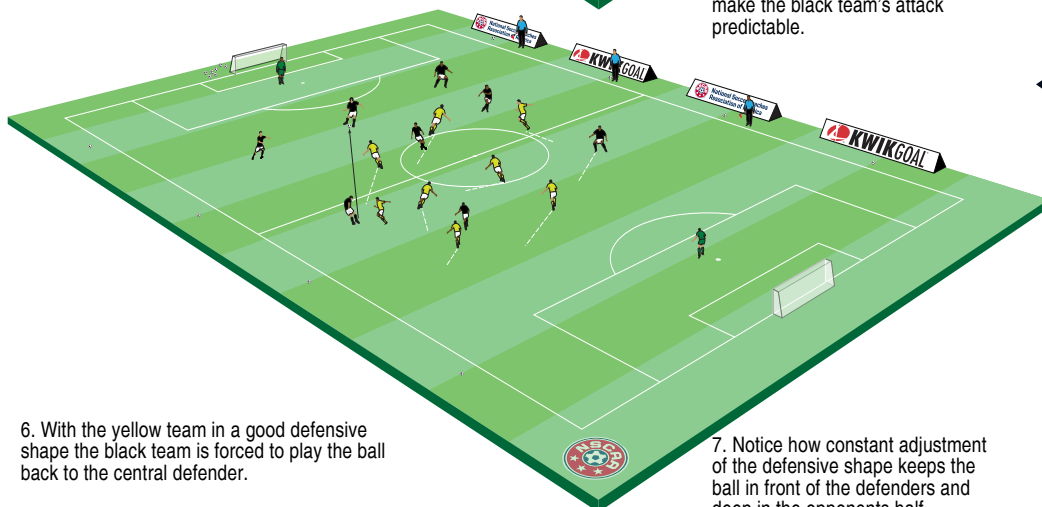
2. Once the black team have controlled possession of the ball, the yellow team players drop back into their half of the field and establish a compact shape.

3. The coach has established the center circle as a line of confrontation and the yellow team maintain their patience.



4. In the second diagram a long pass is made to switch the play and the yellow team adjusts to a new defensive posture.

5. The yellow team attempts to make the black team's attack predictable.



6. With the yellow team in a good defensive shape the black team is forced to play the ball back to the central defender.

7. Notice how constant adjustment of the defensive shape keeps the ball in front of the defenders and deep in the opponents half.

Why use it?

This is an ideal activity for a team that is susceptible to counter attacks and is too slow to organize in defense.

Set up

2 teams play 9v9 field on a full field. Balls are placed around the field just off the sideline. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

How to play

Play a regular game with both teams set up in a 1-3-3-2 formation. Make sure that balls are placed around the field at various points to get the game restarted quickly. Introduce situational play where the team you are coaching is winning 1-0 and must maintain a 1 goal lead for 5 minutes.

The defensive objective is to recover the defensive shape with a low pressure approach. All players should drop back into the defensive half of the field and form a compact shape. This tactic will allow the attacking team time and space in front of the defense, leaving less room for the opponents to play through or over.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Work with players and their angles and speed of recovery.

The first instinct must be to get back between your goal and the ball and then once the defense is organized start to exert pressure.

Coaching Tips: Communication between the defenders is crucial to coordinate the movement of the defensive unit.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the number of attackers and decrease the size of the playing area.

More Challenging: Add a touch restriction or time target for the attacking team to speed up play.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Defending as a unit, low pressure and shooting.

Top 3 Competencies: Recovery runs, defensive shape of the team and communication.