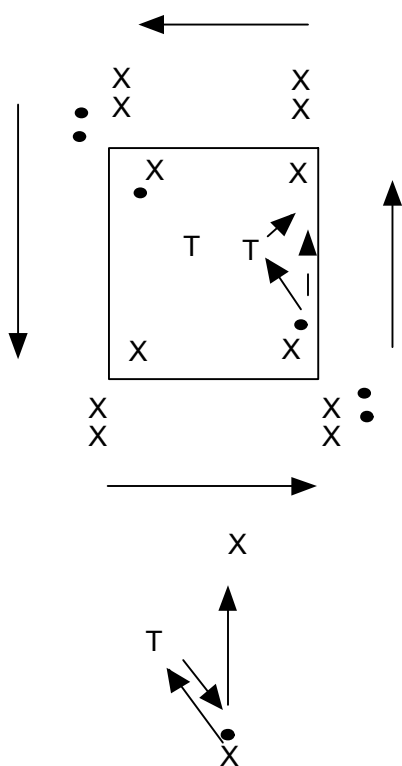


## MBSC Advanced Player Development Program Coach's Training: Small-sided Games to Meet Our Objectives

As a follow-up to the piece focusing on technical development objectives and practice methodology, the information below illustrates four activities that can help meet those objectives and coaching ideas.

### Activity

#### Extension of the Dutch Square: Wall-Passing and 3<sup>rd</sup> Man Running

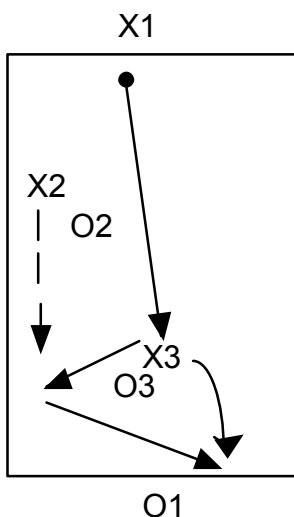


- A grid (20 x 30 to begin) is laid out with team (X's) divided into four groups on each edge of the square.
- Soccer balls are located in opposite corners as shown.
- Diagram shows an X player playing a "1-2" with target and running to opposite group as shown.
- Group on the opposite side completes wall pass in similar fashion.
- Players rotate counter-clockwise as shown, Targets changed every two minutes.
- 1st pass to target is critical in setting up the 2nd, wall pass: the service must be to the "midline" of the target player so the ball can be played on to the passing player.
- The return pass should lead the X player forward (the aim would be to eliminate a covering defender).
- Players should be encouraged to "disguise" the first and 2nd pass (use of the inside, instep and outside of the foot) to make this combination effective in the game.

- In the "3rd Man Run or Short-Short-Long Combination" shown, the above activity is modified using the Target player as the 2nd player in the combination.
- The X player on the ball plays into the Target, who returns the ball back (generally the 2nd ball is played back with less pace than the first pass).
- The third ball should be played at the awaiting X player; practice should focus on hitting serves with the instep and also "spun" into the 3rd player.
- As this exercise develops, the can be stretched to 4 yards in length and the second ball can be flighted to the waiting "X" player.

This activity extends the Dutch Square Activity that we have used in training our players in previous years. There are multiple technical components to the wall-passing and 3<sup>rd</sup> man running activity above. Players will be challenged by the need to play in a first touch to complete the sequence and will also get quality receiving as they cycle with the ball from one corner of the grid to another. It should also be noted that the activity should be done in a clock-wise rotation as well as that will incorporate left-footed passing as well.

## Small-Sided Game #1: Penetrate Opponents' Endline

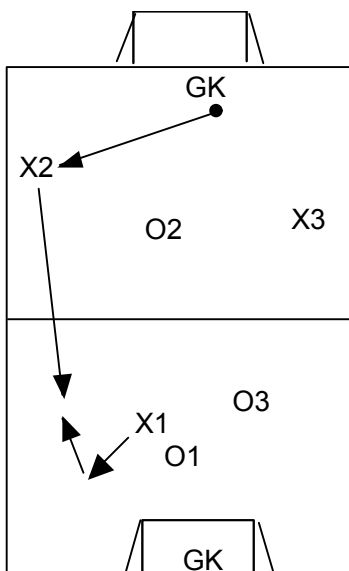


- On a small-sided field 30 x 20, 3 X's versus 3 O's.
- X1 and O1 are restricted to their line as shown and must play within two touches.
- Team on attack must penetrate line with wall-pass or 3rd man combination.
- End player can not defend.
- Game should expand to a 4 versus 4.

- In this activity, possession is important, but developing passing rhythm and movement is critical to getting the penetrating combination completed.
- Players should be encouraged to create the correct shape in 3's and 4's (triangles and diamonds) so that penetrating options are maximized.
- passing weight, accuracy and disguise are vital to this activity.
- Players must find ways to get into space ("how to run, wear to run...")

Attacking a line is a critical to establishing good penetration in attack. As this game progresses and numbers are added space should be created in the grid so that depth is created. Additionally, a short 3 yard zone running across the width of the field can be added pressurize the 1<sup>st</sup> touch work of the "resting" end players.

## Small-Sided Game #2: Play to Target(s) Over a Line

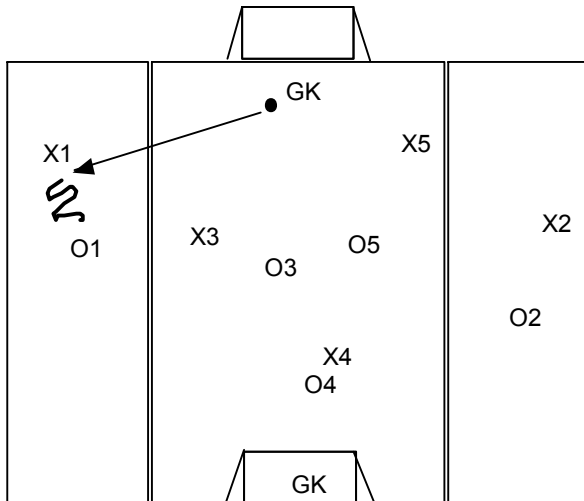


- On a field 25 x 40, X's have possession of the ball and must play the ball over the line to X1 before joining in the play in the attacking half of the field: X2 and 3 must begin each possession in the defending half.
- X1 must check away from X2 and then time a return (checking run back to X2's serve into the feet.
- Once this is completed, X2 or X3 can join X1 in attack and play against O1 and 3 going to goal.
- As in previous activities players should be encouraged to combine with wall-passes and 3rd man running. Additionally, Target player must receive ball on the front foot, away from the defender.
- As the game moves on, two additional players should be added (one in the back and one additional target player.
- Two target players must discover how to "play off each other." Running off the ball" and playing in partnership is critical to this activity.

Playing to a target or multiple targets places a high demand on technical ability. Additionally, the "shape" of the game demands that the targets learn how to come from "high" positions and at the right angle back to the ball. Inexperienced

target players will come too soon (must realize that the checking run should come when the player on the ball can play the ball forward, not before) and make run into spaces (e.g. onto the touchline from a central position) that negate good attacking play.

### Small-Sided Game #3: 1 v 1 Wing Channel Game



- X's play O's on a field 50 x 35.
- Each team has a designated winger in each wing channel (10 yards wide, running the length of the field).
- The game encourages 1 v 1 play by the designated channel. Additionally, support players can come into the channel to play 2 v 1 in the channel.
- \* The game should promote 1 v 1 play and then move on to combining.
- Wing channel players should be encouraged to run at their opponent in the channel at speed and beat them wide or to the inside on the dribble.
- Finishing situations result from short crosses and cut backs from the wing channel player.
- Speed of play is critical on the wings and players understand that getting into space behind defenders on the wing on the dribble and via wall passes is critical.

This game can be expanded in space and in number of players involved. The role of the goalkeeper is important in this game as he / she should start each possession with service to one of the wide players. For younger players, this game can be adapted to utilize one channel (3 players inside, one additional player in the channel). If this adaptation occurs, then each team should have a turn at attacking in each direction using the one channel.