

Movement Off the Ball to Create and Exploit Space

Warm Up:

15 players are organized in a 50x30 yard grid as shown in Diagram (a) below. Each player is in possession of a ball.

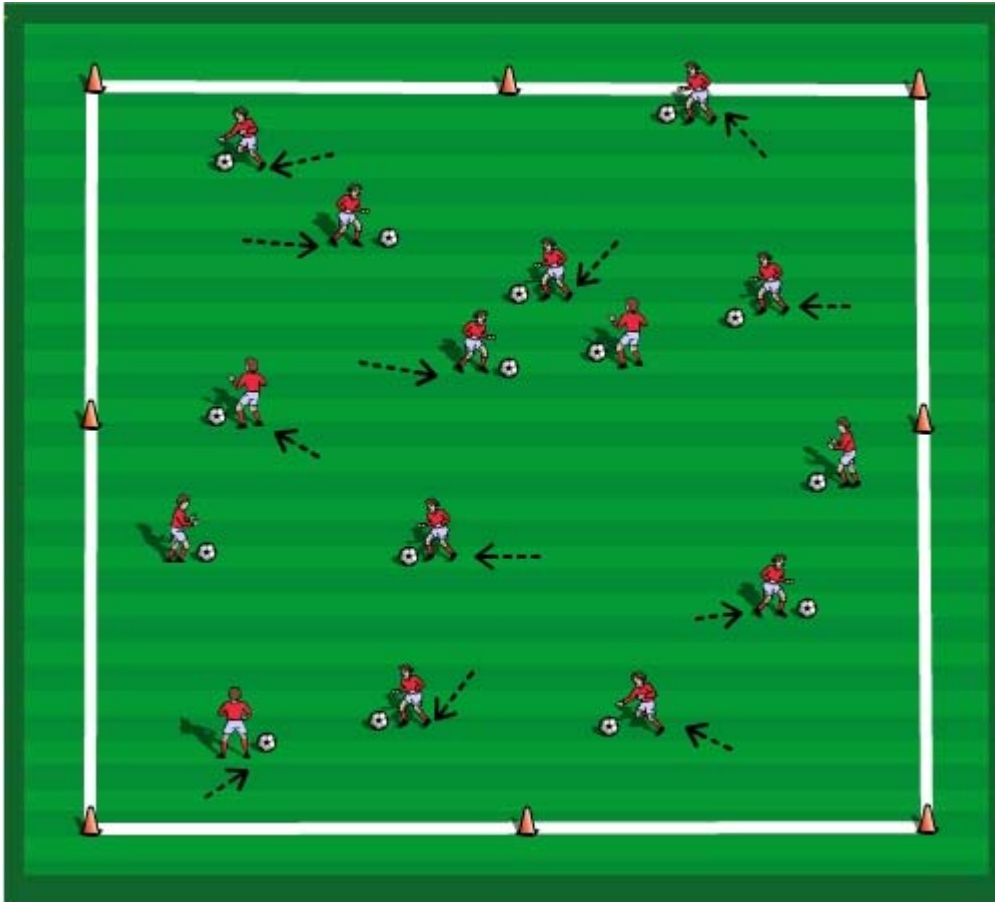


Diagram (a)

Explanation:

Players move freely through the grid changing directions and speeds. Various turns are encouraged – outside hook etc.

Progressions:

(1) Players are organized into three groups of 5 players and are numbered 1,2,3,4,5. Coach calls out a number: that player has 30 seconds to tag as many players as possible. All players must remain in possession of their ball.

(2) Working in Pairs (*one group of 3 players*) Passing and moving around the grid, gradually introduce the following:

- (a) Pass to partner, then run around outside cone.
- (b) Pass and on receipt perform a turn.
- (c) Use outside of one foot to pass, inside of other foot to control.

(3) Group of 3 act as defenders and attempt to kick the other balls out of the grid while each pair tries to get a certain number of passes.

Activity #1:

Set Up:

Three players are organized in a 30x10 yard grid as shown below in Diagram (b).

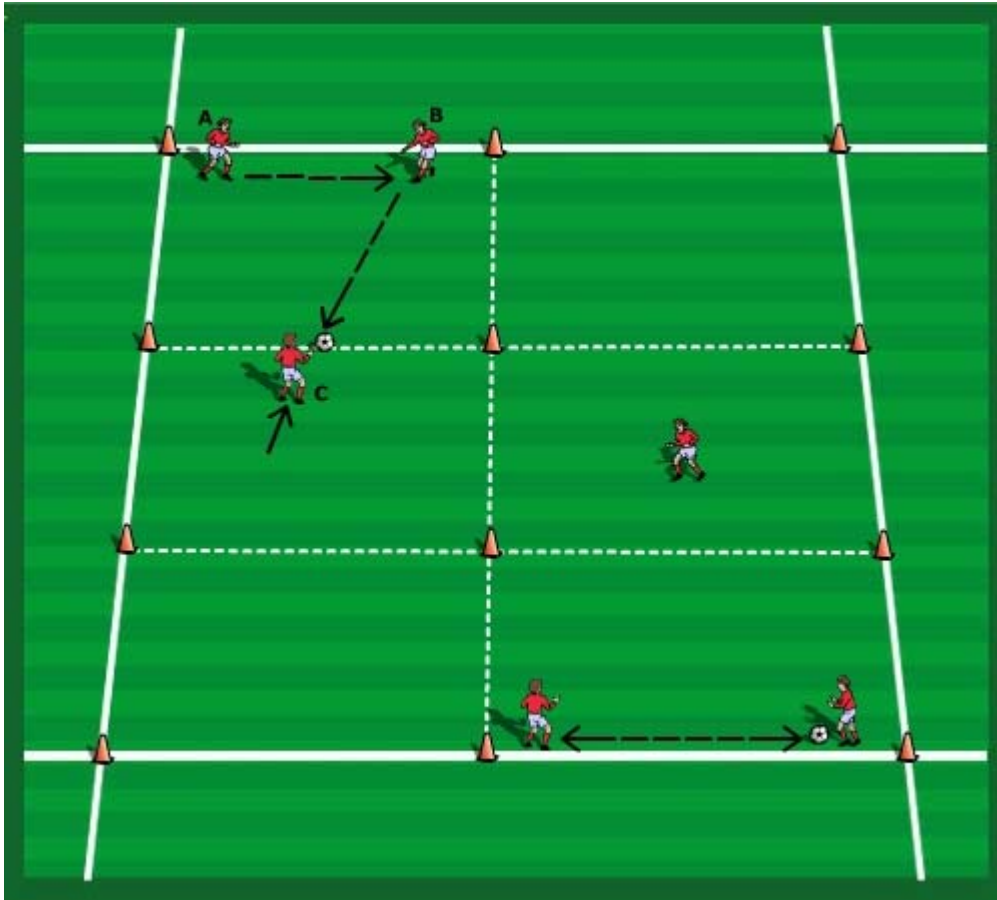


Diagram (b)

Explanation:

Phase 1 - Players (A) and (B) pass the ball back and forth while looking at the movement of target player (C). Player (C) must time his movement to receive a pass from (A), player (C) must play the ball first time to (B). Rotate players after 5 moves.

Total Time – 3 minutes.

Progressions:

Phase 2 - Players (A) and (B) pass while looking at the movement of target player (C). Player (C) times his run to receive a pass from (A). Player (A) passes the ball to (C) and then makes a forward run as shown below. Player (B) receives the lay-off from (C) and plays a curved ball to (A).

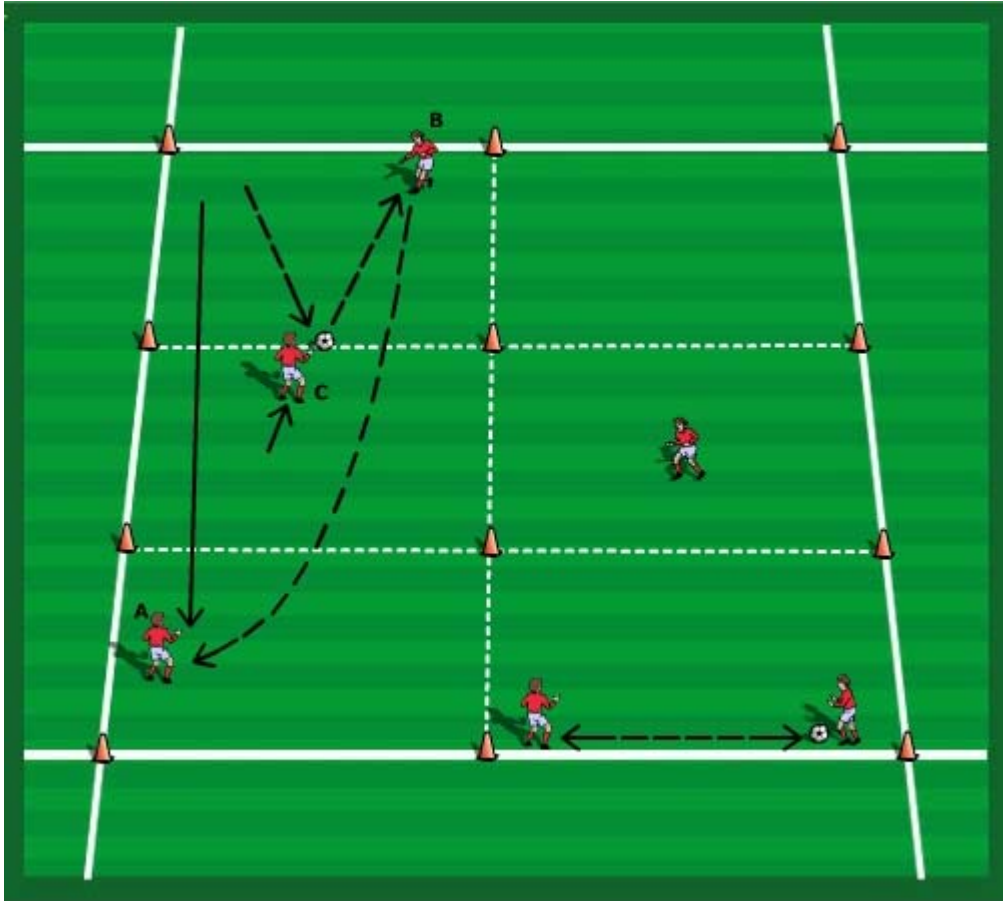


Diagram (c)

Player (B) now becomes the next target player and the movement is repeated in the opposite direction.

Total Time – 6 minutes.

Phase 3 - As above except, this time the pass is straight but the run is a curved run forward. In diagram (d) below it can be seen that player (B) has made a curved run to receive the pass.

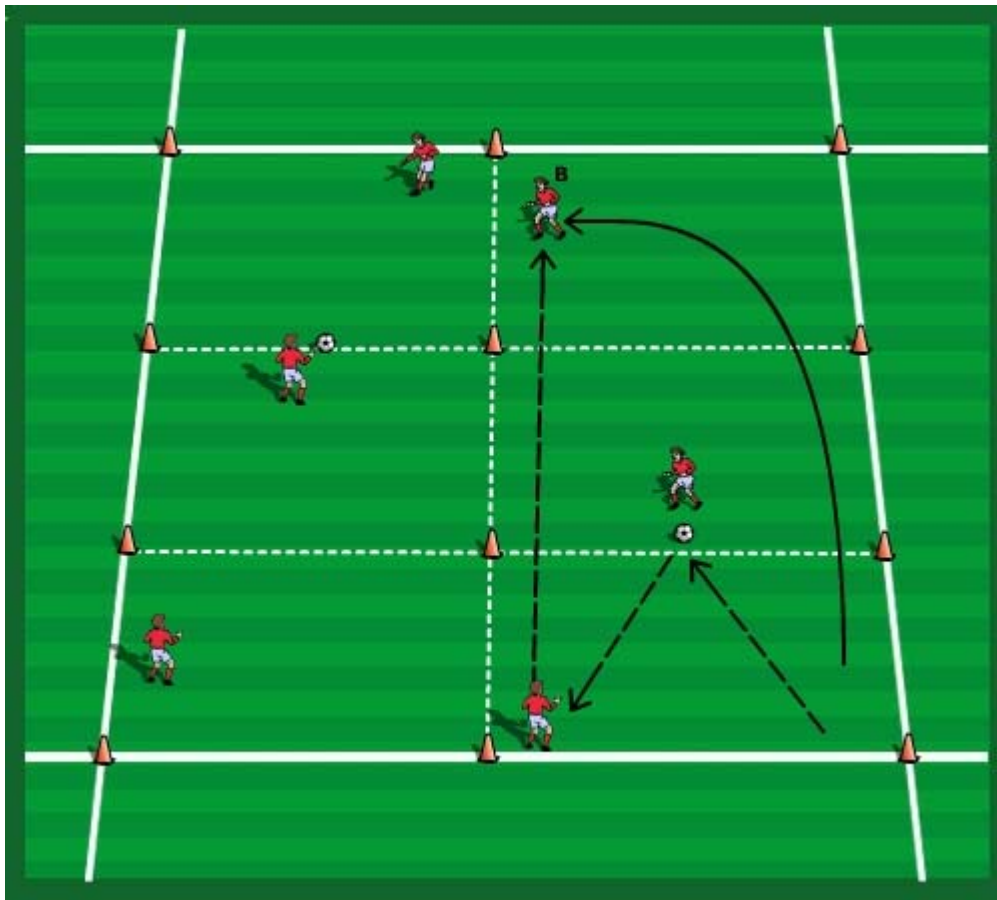


Diagram (d)

Total Time – 6 minutes.

Coaching Points:

- Communication and awareness by all 3 players.
- Timing of runs.
- Weight of passes.
- Weight of lay-offs to allow first time passing over distance.
- Awareness of which pass to make – straight or curved.

Activity #2:

Set Up:

Players remain in their groups of three from previous activity. Players are positioned inside a 40x30 yard grid as shown in Diagram (e) below. Each group of three players has 1 ball.

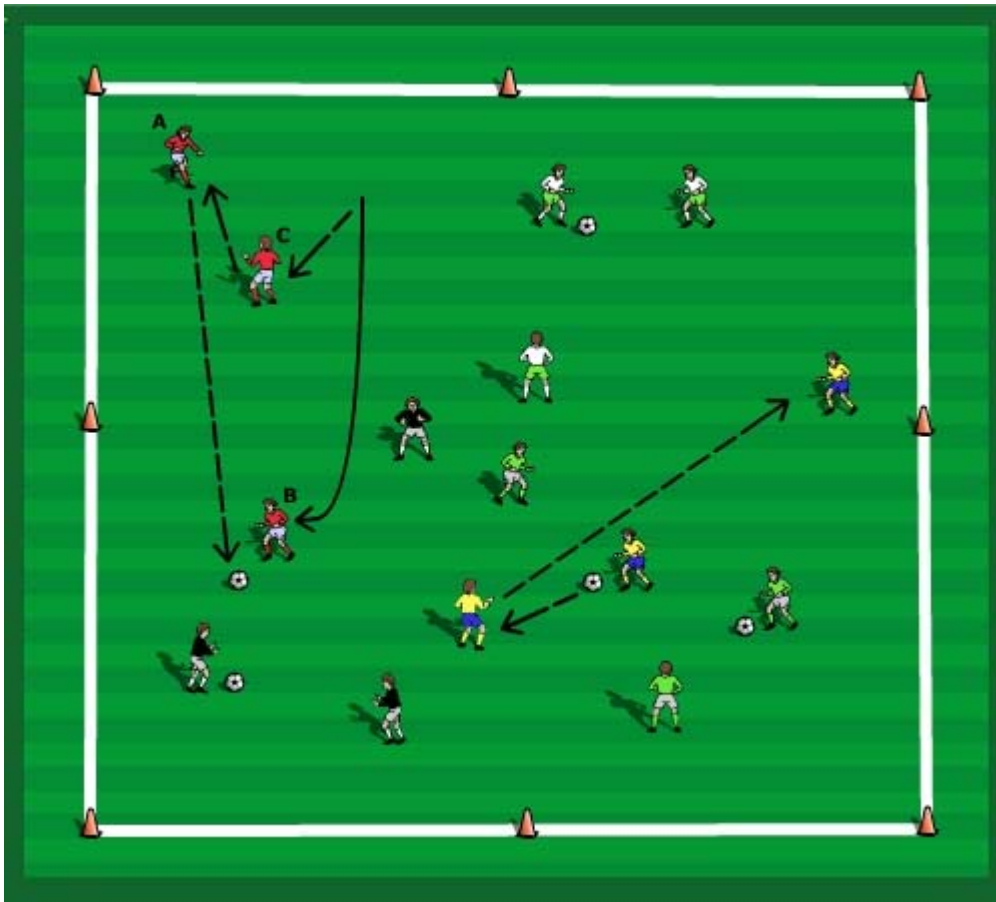


Diagram (e)

Explanation:

The same movements from the previous activity are repeated. This time the players must conduct the movements/passes while other groups are moving throughout the grid. Players are now forced to find space in a congested playing area.

As can be seen from the above diagram, player (A) received a lay-off from (C) and has played a long ball to teammate (B) making a bent run into space.

Total Time – 10 minutes.

Coaching Points:

- Communication and awareness by all players.
- Timing of runs.
- Weight of passes.
- Weight of lay-offs to allow first time passing over distance.
- Awareness of which pass to make – straight or curved depending on the available space.

Activity #3:

Set Up:

A 5v5v5 is organized in a three zone game as shown in Diagram (f) below. Three zones are separated by cones as shown. White team starts as the defensive team in the middle third of the field. Red and Green start in each end third of the field as shown.

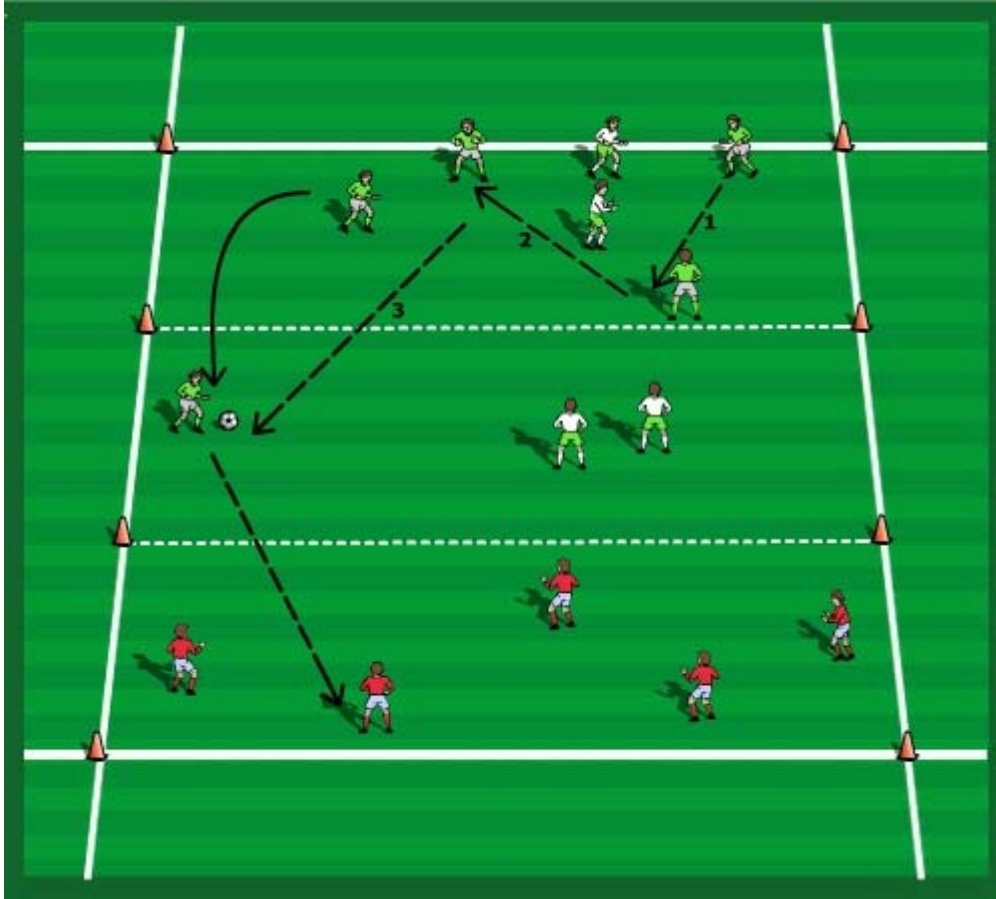


Diagram (f)

Explanation:

Three players from the defensive team (white) enter the end zone to create a 5v3 situation. The 5 attacking players must attempt to maintain possession of the ball against the 3 defenders. When the opportunity arises, one of the attacking players must break forward into the space to receive a pass from his teammate. In the above diagram one of the green players has been released into the space by a penetrating pass by his teammate. This player must now pass the ball to the team at the opposite end before returning to his original zone. The game is then repeated in the opposite direction.

Total Time – 20 minutes.

Coaching Points:

- Communication and awareness by all players.
- Timing of runs.
- Weight of passes.
- Weight of lay-offs to allow first time passing over distance.
- Awareness of which pass to make – straight or curved depending on the available space.

Progressions:

(1) If 5v3 does not allow enough space to create the runs increase the size of the area *OR* set up a 4v4v4 with the 3 additional players acting as “plus” players in (one in each third). Two defenders

must then enter the end zones creating a 4v2 with a plus player (5v2).

(2) Player that leaves the grid to go forward may continue into the other end zone creating a 6v2 situation.

(3) When the defensive team (white) gains possession they switch roles and become the attacking team.

NOTE:

Coach must use the first 10 minutes to stop the practice to “fix” certain situations as well as to highlight options with the players.

The second 10 minutes allow free play to see if the players have grasped the concept.

Coaching Points:

- Communication and awareness by all players.
- Timing of runs.
- Weight of passes.
- Weight of lay-offs to allow first time passing over distance.
- Awareness of which pass to make – straight or curved depending on the available space.
- Being prepared to make decoy runs to allow a teammate to benefit.

Activity #4:

Set Up:

A 7v7 with a “floater” (white) is organized on a small pitch as shown below. A sweeper instead of a goalkeeper is used.



Diagram (g)

Explanation:

Both teams compete for possession of the ball and attempt to score in their opponents goal. Encourage the use of all previous applied concepts.

Total Time – 25 minutes.

Possible restrictions:

(1) Only allow an attack if it involves a 3rd man run.

Cool Down:

5 minutes of light activity and stretching.