

Movement “Off the Ball” in Passing and Support

Activity #1:

Set Up:

Start with a 15 x 15 yard grid and have a 4-yard equilateral triangle in the middle made up of cones as shown below. There are 5 players in the activity with one being a defender and the other four being on offense. For illustration purposes two grids are shown in Diagram (a) below.



Diagram (a)

Explanation:

The 4 players try to maintain possession while also looking to score goals by playing the ball through the triangle to their teammates. The defender is NOT allowed inside the triangle so he or she must be constantly working their way around the triangle trying to cut off the penetrating passes.

NOTES: The thing that makes this such an interesting activity is the required movement off the ball by the offensive players. On every pass they are moving in order to get into a better position to either make a penetrating pass or to receive one (as opposed to the norm in possession games when players wait till they receive a ball before thinking what to do next, in this game the players have to be thinking ahead of the passes because it's not good enough to just play the ball through the triangle, a teammate has to be there and receive the ball for it to count.

Increase the area to 30 x 30 and organise a 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 game (4v4 below) and two triangular goals. (Yellow team attack one goal and Red team attack the other).



Diagram (c)

Explanation:

Both teams compete for possession of the ball and attempt to score points by passing through a triangle. Teams may only score in one triangle. In the Diagram above, Player (A) has scored a point by successfully passing to teammate (B).

Progressions:

- Each team can score through both goals but it must be a pass and receive from one player to another through the middle of the triangle. This brings more switching the point of attack into the game.
- Condition it where once you score through one you need to try to score through the other. You can't go back to the goal you scored at previously until possession has changed and you have regained possession once again.
- Players can also score a goal by keeping possession and making 5 consecutive passes without an interception.

In Diagram (d) below the following sequence is illustrated:

1. (A) moves with the ball to open up the angle for a pass around the defender closing him down.
2. (B) receives the pass from (A) and a goal is scored. (B) then passes to (C) and (D) makes a run off the ball to receive a pass from (C) before the defenders can react quickly enough and another goal is scored.
3. Now (D) is looking to link up with his or her teammates to try to score in the other goal.
4. Constant back and forth play. Players must move to receive a pass to score a goal and they must try to time the run so they arrive as the ball arrives, not get there so early they are standing waiting and thus easily marked.

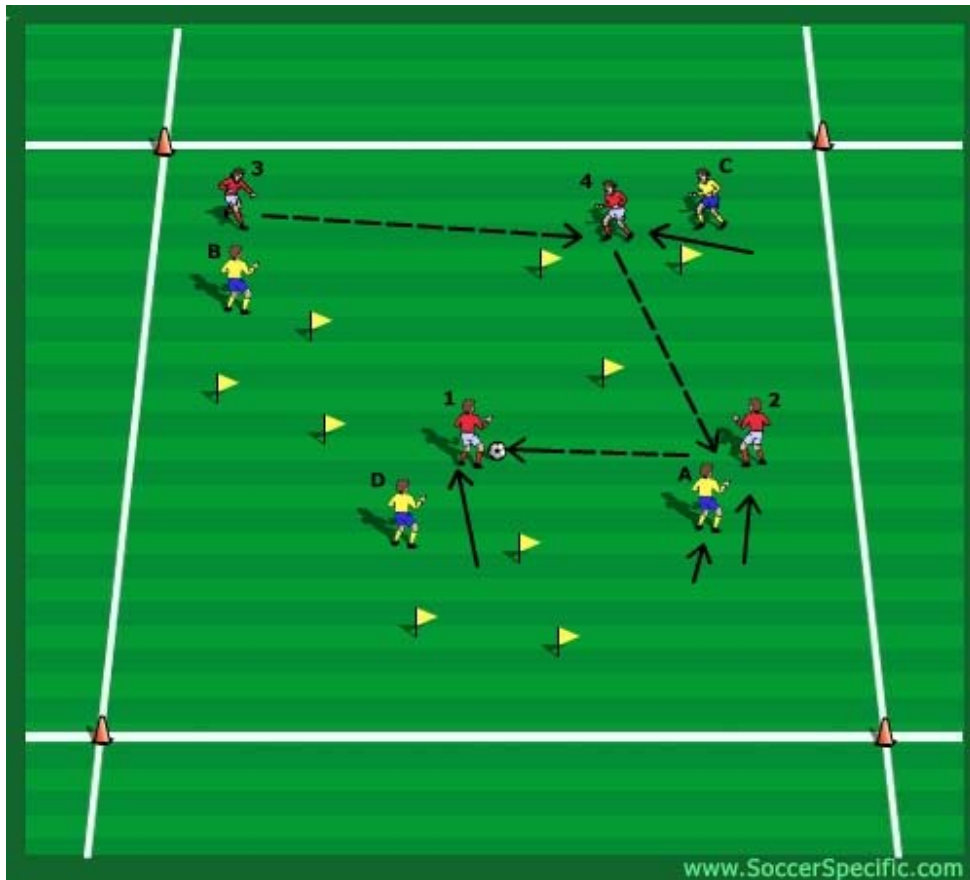


Diagram (d)

Using Three Triangular Goals in a Small-Sided Game

Set Up:

Three triangles are created using flags as shown below in Diagram (e).



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Diagram (e)

Explanation:

Using three triangular goals to attack as shown above, each team can attack ANY triangle but may NOT go back to the one they just score through unless they lose and then regain possession.

The following sequence is illustrated in Diagram (e) above.

1. (3) passes to (4) who works an angle to receive away from defender (C). (2) moves late and fast to escape marker (A) but having seen the support position early, and the numbers team score through the triangle.
2. (1) makes a run to support (2) before he or she receives the pass and (2) has already seen the movement **off the ball** and so passes the ball before (A) can close down the space and the resulting pass.

NOTES: This three goal game is good for encouraging players to switch the point of attack with there being three targets to aim for with three points of entry on each target. Movement "**Off the Ball**" is the focus as in all these games.

Using Four Triangular Goals in a Small-Sided Game

Set Up:

Using four goals now and increasing the area to a 40 x 40. The Red team attack goals north and south, Yellow team attack goals east and west.

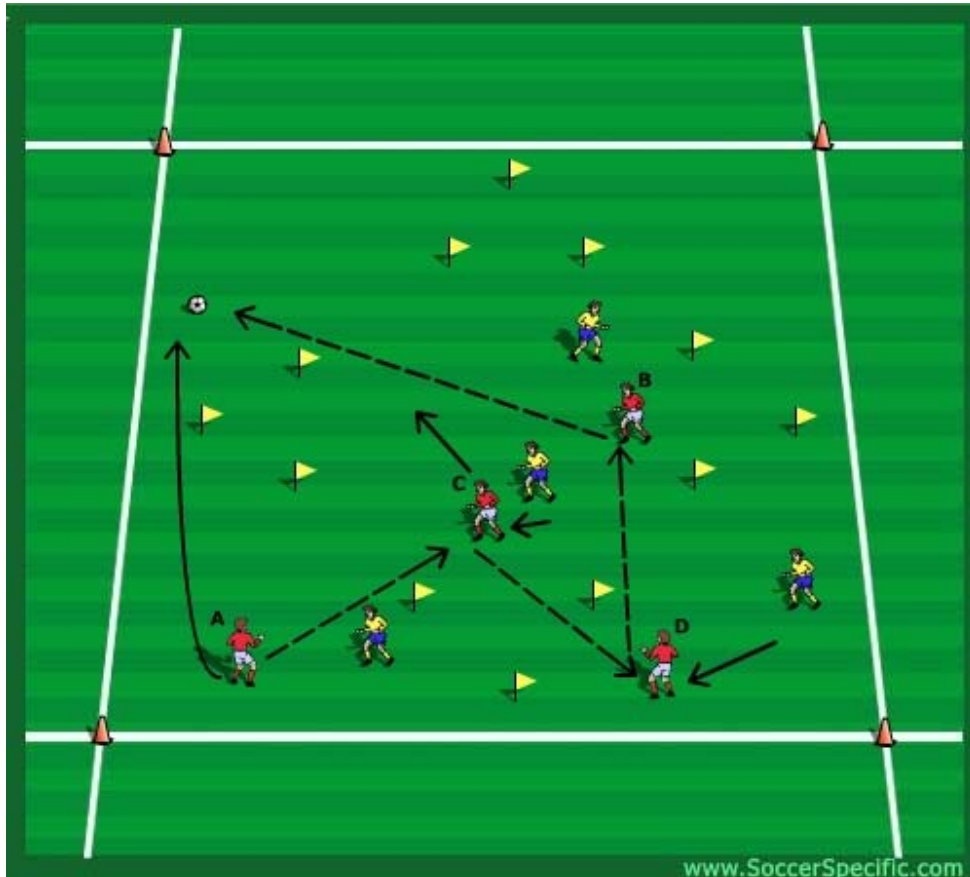


Diagram (f)

The following sequence is illustrated in Diagram (f) above.

1. The yellow defender blocks the straight pass through the triangle so (C) makes an angle for a pass off (A); receives it and scores a goal passing through the triangle to (D).
2. (D) sees (B) in position for the next pass as the ball is traveling and plays this player a one-touch pass into space.
3. (A) is already on a run "off the ball" to attack the other goal and give (B) a new passing option. (C) also is on the move after passing to join in the next build up.

Strikers Runs to Receive or Create Space - Highlighting "Movement Off the Ball"

Set Up:

Five players and one goalkeeper are positioned on a half-pitch as shown in Diagram (g) below.

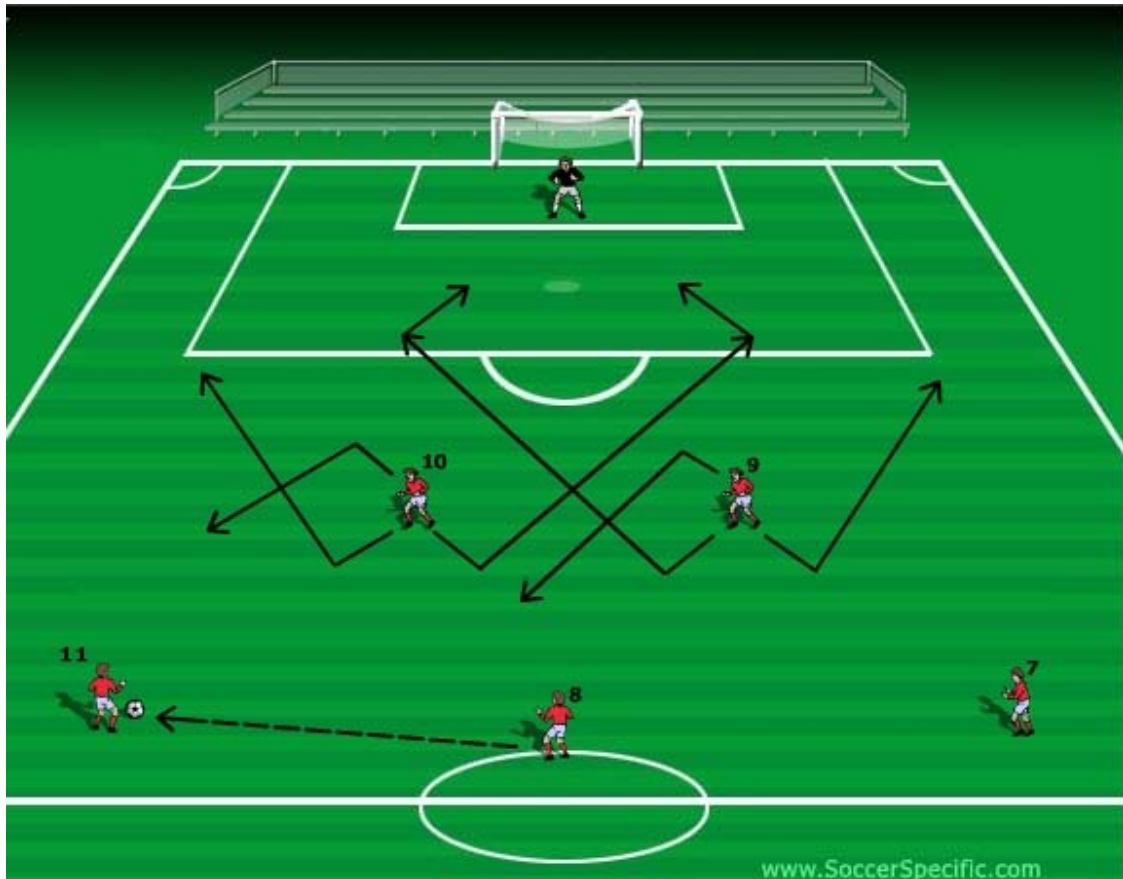


Diagram (g)

Explanation:

Players must use visual cues to determine their movement as the ball is traveling between players (7,8,11). Example, (10) goes short so (9) goes long etc.

Forward runs are back first or across the line, to avoid offside, then forward.

NOTES: First Striker (10) run options to receive or create space for another player to receive. If the player on the ball has **time** then it is better the striker initially runs in the **opposite** direction to **draw** the defender away from where the ball is going. As above (10) comes short to go long and goes long to come short and this will create an extra couple of yards of space to work in. For the run away (opposite diagonal) don't go in a straight line to avoid running offside. A lot of this depends on the time the passer has on the ball, if **no time** then **just** come short or just go long or just make the diagonally opposite run.

Two strikers need to understand each others runs and (8) must work a position off them. (8)'s movement mirrors the three basic runs. There are many options you can develop but these **three** are the easiest to use and result in creating space for the runner and / or others to exploit plus they move defenders into positions they don't want to go (especially man marker defenders).

(2) For the ball to (8) down the side of (C), (8) must go **late and fast** to get away from the marking of (C). Working the **opposite** run again and checking back. If (8) goes too early he / she **closes** down their **own** space to run into and receive the ball thus forcing them to receive with their **back** to goal instead of being at least half-turned towards the opponents goal and receiving the ball down the side of them to even face forward to shoot at goal or cross the ball in **one touch**. The momentum of the pass (pace) helps (8).

Movement Off the Ball - Taking the Sweeper Away from a Central Position

Set Up:

An 8v7 is organised on a half-pitch as shown below in Diagram (j).

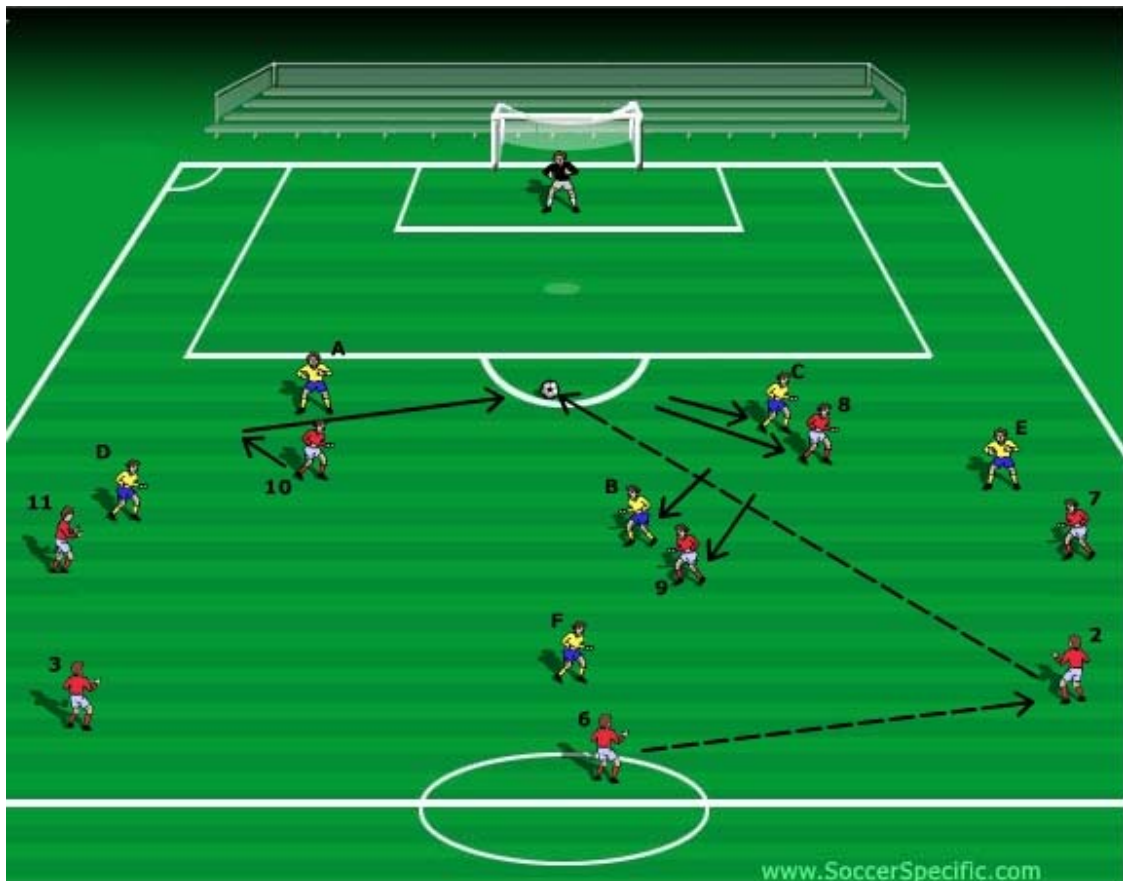


Diagram (j)

Explanation:

Pushing onto the sweeper means this player's position will be affected in terms of - does the sweeper now stay, man mark, or drop off to get free?

The following situations are illustrated in Diagram (j) above:

1. (9)'s **movement off the ball** creates space for (8) to move into. If (8) moves wide into that space to look to receive a pass does the sweeper let this player go free or follow and man mark?
2. If the sweeper follows then (8)'s movement off the ball creates space in the middle of the defense in front of the goal. This can be exploited by a run from (10).
3. If the sweeper stays in the middle and lets (8) go free then (8) can receive to feet and turn and attack one on one or link with another player.