

SESSION PLANS

Controlling Possession

How to use this guide

Understanding the session

This session guide assumes you have 60 minutes with 16 players but as our guidelines point out, this can be adapted based on the number of players you have in your team.

As your confidence grows you may adapt or experiment with the practices provided, but these tasks are designed to follow a process which gradually ramps up the challenge for the players from minute one to minute sixty.

The key below outlines what the images mean on the diagrams. We have created a series of themed practices which allow players to experiment on the ball under no pressure, limited pressure and full pressure.

From a coaching perspective, understanding the level and needs of your players will help you decide when you should ramp up the challenge, or potentially reduce it.

If you have questions about the practices, contact the PDP Team or share your views on the [Player Development Project Slack Community](#).

Interpreting the diagrams



Cone



Pancake/Disc



Pole



Ball



Mannequin



Goals



Ball movement/pass



Without the ball



Varied movement



Curved run



LESSON

Controlling Possession

Supporting young players with their ability to keep possession is a crucial component of the game. It helps to ensure they are confident to work with their team, share the ball and be brave in keeping possession individually.

Try and set tasks where players have to make realistic decisions. For example, does the practice allow players the chance to decide if now is the best time to keep possession? Or alternatively, to progress (up the field). Possession can take different forms through different areas of the pitch, from build up play in the back third, through to possession or progression in midfield, or penetration in the attacking areas of the pitch.

Designing tasks that support your players find solutions to go around, through or over their opponent will be beneficial in their game understanding as they develop.

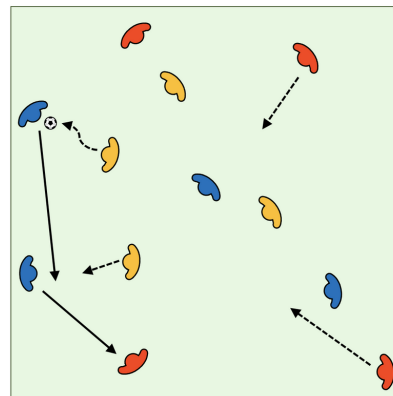
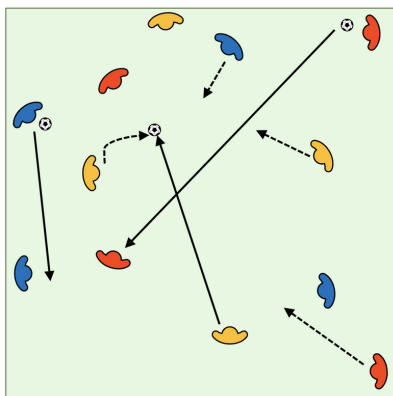
This session is designed to support your players control possession and focus on building passing and receiving skills. The practices are very adaptable for all age groups and it's important that you test different area sizes.

Generally, the smaller the pitch, the faster the game therefore the tougher the challenge for the players. Understanding this means that you can experiment with different area sizes to work on shorter, quicker passing or possession (in a smaller area) or slower, longer range passing or possession practices (in a larger area).

The value in having a theme for the session allows you and the players to focus on one outcome, however it's important to remember that within any practice that has opposition, direction or goals, other elements of the game will still exist. So, while one team is working on controlling possession, the other team will still have to find solutions to win the ball back and keep it or progress with it.



Passing & Receiving

Topic: Passing & Receiving**Practice type:** Skill Training**No. of players:** 12-16**Offsides:** N/A**Timing:** 15 minutes**Goalkeepers:** N/A**Pitch Size:** 30 x 30m**Age group:** All Ages

Objectives

This practice is designed to help players work on a variety of passes with increased interference. Key focus is on playing passes between players without hitting them and taking their first touch into space so they can pass to a player on a clear line.

Organisation

Players work in 3 (or 4) teams of different colours with a ball each. They can only pass to their own colours. The aim is to keep the ball inside the area and avoid kicking the ball into other players or kicking it out. To make it competitive teams can count how many errors they make, lowest score wins. You can progress the practice to an opposed version as per image two. Two teams (red and blue) keep the ball away from yellow. If yellow win it from a red player, they combine with blue and red becomes the defending team.

Observations & Interventions

What you might see

Balls going out, balls being kicked into players, players not communicating.

Actions you might take

- Introduce a rule that every pass must have the name of a team mate on it.
- Make the space bigger or smaller
- Have players work in smaller groups e.g. 3 players

Adaptations:

Is the session too easy?

Make the space tighter, introduce a second ball per each team of four, progress to opposed version.

Is the session too hard?

Make the space bigger, play with two teams instead of 3 if you have low numbers (e.g. 10 players or less)



CONTROLLING POSSESSION

Building Possession

Topic: Building Possession

Practice type: Functional Practice

No. of players: 8-16

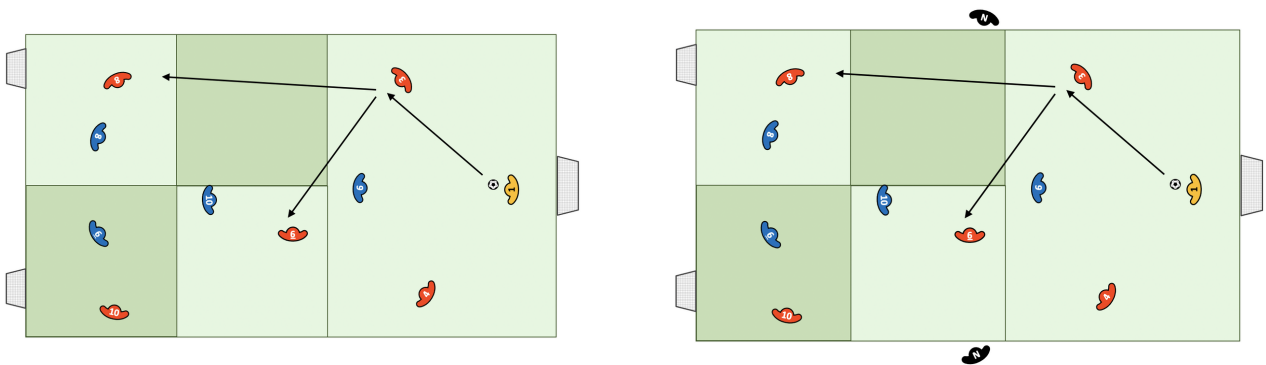
Offsides: N/A

Timing: 20 minutes

Goalkeepers: Yes

Pitch Size: 30 x 30m

Age group: All Ages



Objectives

The aim here is high level of repetition of playing out from the back. The GK and two red defenders are locked in the zone with the 1 blue striker (3v1). In the midfield, the 3v3 scenario means players go from limited pressure to high pressure (3v3). Reds are aiming to score in the mini goals. If you don't have mini goals, use flat cones or poles. Blue are aiming to intercept and score in the big goal. Blue team are tasked with working on pressing or screening to win the ball back. Encourage them to attack quickly when regaining the ball from red.

Organisation

Set up a pitch with one big goal and two mini goals. If possible, divide one half of the pitch into quarters using flat rubber discs. This helps give players some guidance around dispersal. Adjust the area size based on your players age and stage.

Observations & Interventions

What you might see

Reluctance for players to play forward.

Actions you might take

- Introduce a rule that every pass must have the name of a team mate on it.
- Make the space bigger or smaller
- Have players work in smaller groups e.g. 3 players

Adaptations:

Adapt the pitch size to suit age of players. If you have two GKs, second GK can play as target player between two mini goals for red and play as pivot for blue. If you have extra players implement neutral wide players (as demonstrated in second image) who play as FBs for red and wingers for blue. Can limit their touches.



CONTROLLING POSSESSION

Switching Play Game

Topic: Switching Play

Practice type: Small Sided Game

No. of players: 8-16

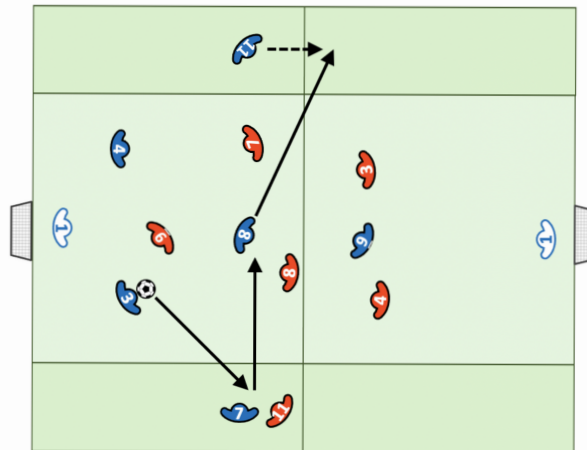
Offsides: N/A

Timing: 25 minutes

Goalkeepers: Yes

Pitch Size: 30 x 50m

Age group: All Ages



Objectives

Two teams (red v blue) play a 7v7 game. Adapt the game based on your player numbers. If you have odd numbers, introduce a 'magic player' who plays for the team in possession creating an overload. Aim of the game is to get the ball into wide channels in order to score 3 points. 1 point for a normal goal, 3 points if the ball goes from channel to channel before scoring.

Organisation

Set up an age appropriate pitch and use flat rubber discs to mark two channels on each side of the area. Ensure a halfway line is visible using cones on the side of the pitch or rubber discs across the middle. You can restart play every time from the GK if you want repetition of playing out of the back, or you can play normal throw ins/kick ins.

Observations & Interventions

What you might see

Players playing wide when they could play through the middle, players not maintaining width.

Actions you might take

- Ensure players are rewarded for different types of goals (e.g. 1 point for central, 3 for switch)
- You can create a rule that in possession, the team in possession must have a player in each channel

Adaptations:

The game can be adapted to work on timed sets which focus on controlling possession. For example, blues have to keep the ball for 3 minutes whilst reds can score in either goal. If red win, they transition quickly to score at either end. This brings out concepts like transition, recovery, securing the ball, counter pressing and defending outnumbered. You can then progress to a normal game with the conditions above, rewarding triple points for goals which have exploited a switch of play and controlled possession in build up. This game is effective from 5v5 through to 11v11.