



A GUIDE TO MANAGING IN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL





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INTRODUCTION FROM DAN ASHWORTH

As The FA's technical director I am always proud and mindful of who and what the England team represents for the people of this country. When we play I am aware that all of our youth or senior representative teams can embody the hopes of tens of thousands of amateur adult teams and players that provide us with the vibrant structure of grassroots football that we are privileged to have.

Our country is unique around the world for the diversity of organised football that is on offer in every community. Our structure thrives because of the contribution of volunteers that undertake the innumerable tasks required to get a team across the white line every week.

This resource is designed to hopefully make that job a little easier for those involved in managing a grassroots adult team. What you'll find in this resource is guidance provided by some of the FA's experts but hopefully presented in a way which recognises the reality of running a grassroots team.

You may not have a settled squad, the fittest players or the best training facilities but there is content in this resource that will help you make the best of what you have.

I wish you a successful and enjoyable season

Dan Ashworth
FA Technical Director



BEING THE MANAGER

So you've got the job. You're the gaffer. Whether you're a budding Mourinho or a reluctant volunteer you've got the responsibility of managing the team. You might have a detailed five-year strategy or just a few stinky bibs and some flat footballs but hopefully this resource will provide you with a few pointers in the art and science of running a grassroots (amateur Saturday or Sunday) team.

SO YOU'VE GOT A TEAM – WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THEM?

Before you unveil your tactical master plan it's important that you establish some key principles as to how you want to manage. If you can personify the following there is a chance that your players will pay some attention to you.

Fair. The players need to know that the manager will treat them fairly. Be consistent.

Don't insist that your nephew takes all the free-kicks, corners and penalties.

Organised. The manager must be a good organiser of time and players. If players know that they will turn up to find a full team, ready to play then you're much more likely to get and retain their commitment. If you've got nine players, no goalie, no first-aid-kit, flat footballs and an unwashed kit don't

be surprised if some players start to look elsewhere.

Understand the players. The manager must know the strengths and weaknesses of his players. That cliché about 'square pegs and round holes' applies. As far as possible get players to play in a positions that they are suited to. Don't expect your veteran full-back to suddenly develop the motor required to be a wing-back. Try to work out how best to influence individuals.

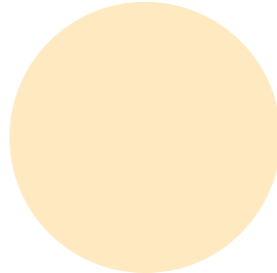
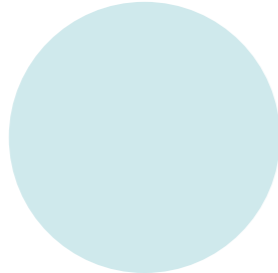
Leadership. The manager must set an example worthy of emulation. The players will take a lead from you – if you turn up late,

so will they. If you're undisciplined don't be surprised to find your players racking up the reds and yellows.

Standards Set the highest standards for everyone. You're not one of the lads. You're the gaffer.

All managers start life by looking at what they have and then making a decision as to whether they need to recruit. The opportunity to raid the international transfer market is not available to you but there are time-honoured and newer digital techniques of recruiting players.

Having got your squad you need to ideally identify a way of playing which complements your strengths and minimises your weaknesses. This might mean that you place a particular emphasis on, maintaining possession, set-pieces, playing off a front man, speed on the break, or pressing the opposition. Having identified your strengths then you need to choose a formation that will ideally complement this approach.



TACTICS AND FORMATIONS

MIDFIELD DIAMONDS, CHRISTMAS TREES AND OTHER PERMUTATIONS ...

These are the key characteristics of common formations

4-4-2

Seen to be the most traditional of modern formations it can sometimes be considered outdated at the highest levels of the game against more fluid formations which can exploit space between the 4-4-2 'lines'. The two major strength of this formation are that with four defenders at the back it offers the best coverage across the width of the pitch and provides sufficient defensive cover when the full-backs push into attacking positions. The two forwards up front mean that you can be less precise with your passing game than when playing with a single striker.

The two strikers ideally play close together with one playing slightly deeper than the other or alternatively one of them running beyond and threatening the space behind the defence. Play this way if you have two good forwards that can combine together. You might also want to emulate the AC Milan of Arrigo Sacchi who won three European Cups with this formation.

4-5-1

The big difference with this approach is your dependence on the sole front man. Get it wrong and they get isolated and stifled by opposition defenders but with swift and accurate passing and good support play it can work. With five midfielders at least three of them have to be tasked with getting forward and supporting the front man.

From a defensive viewpoint this strategy should offer you the ability to get nine outfield players behind the ball when out of possession and offers enhanced cover for your full-backs against the opposition wide players.

Play with this formation if you can find a forward that is mobile, good at holding up the ball with their back to goal, capable of turning and getting shots off, heading crosses and bringing others into play. Good luck with that!

4-3-3

The key characteristics of this formation are the movement and flexibility of the front three players. If the ball is on one side of the pitch the wide forward on the other wing must look to come in and play off the central

pivot or attack the back-post area. The wide players in this formation also have a responsibility to restrict the opposition full-backs coming forward. In the 4-3-3, the central midfielder tends to be given the responsibility to primarily defend and patrols the area just in front of the back four. The remaining two midfielders play an all-round role in defence and attack.

5-3-2 & 3-5-2

5-3-2 and 3-5-2 are two football formations that largely differ because of the roles that they assign to the two players on each flank. In the 5-3-2, these players are considered as full-backs while in 3-5-2 they are considered more as wingers. In practice, 3-5-2 is simply 5-3-2

in an offensive mode.

The key players in the 5-3-2 formation are the full-backs: their primary tasks are to defend the flanks but they also give width to a team's attack by providing support from the sides. As these players have to bomb up and down the length of the pitch you require fit, athletic players to take on these roles. If your wing-backs can't get back down the pitch after their forward runs the central three defenders are likely to find themselves being pulled out of position to defend large areas of exposed space on the flanks, outnumbered by the opposition.

Play this formation if you have an aspiring Danny Rose or Marcelo.

MATCH DAY SCENARIOS

PLAN A AND PLAN B...

Whatever your plan A there will be many occasions when as a manager you'll be asked to adjust your tactics and formation to nullify the strengths of the opposition, to respond to an injury or when you're chasing a game. Try to prepare yourself for such eventualities. Ideally the team should practise some of these responses in training.

For instance look at the following scenarios

The opposition have particularly quick wingers that are causing havoc

All of the following are possible responses;

- Stop their supply of the ball if it's coming from a particular source. You could look to close down an opposition playmaker
- You could offer the full-backs greater

support by doubling up when the wingers receive the ball

- You could look to show the winger on to a weaker foot
- Your team could seek to reduce the space behind the defence by dropping deeper and only pressing when the opposition cross the halfway line.

The opposition are big physically and pose a threat at set-pieces

- Good defending – avoid giving away corners or set pieces
- Encourage your goalkeeper to claim or punch the ball
- Ensure that everyone knows what they are doing defensively at corners. Make a decision on 'Man for Man', Zonal marking,

defenders on posts

- Consider doubling up on players that pose a particular threat and blocking runs to attack the ball.

You've had a player sent off or you're starting with 10.

Your response will reflect the state of the game.

- If scores are equal you might revert to a 4-4-1. This leaves your centre forward to look after their two centre halves. Everyone else is 1 v 1
- If you're behind in the game you might revert to a 3-4-2 formation to enable you to have a more attacking threat with two forwards

The opposition have 10 players or fewer.

The first reaction is to automatically presume that you need to win by a hatful of goals but often it proves to be far more challenging. The reality is that you need to remain calm, the opposing team are likely to play with a single attacker, defend deeper and look to counter-attack or score with a set-piece. Consider the following approach

- Push your full-backs higher to exploit the greater space they are likely to find in wide positions
- Use your numerical advantage to stretch the opposition. Keep possession but don't overdo it. Many teams struggle to deal with the additional time and

space they are offered and over-complicate play

- You are stretching the opposition in order to tire them out and create larger gaps between opposing players. Having created this gap – particularly in wide positions – it's important that balls go into the box either as crosses or through-balls.



RUNNING A TRAINING SESSION

Training should ideally reflect the way that you want to play and work on weaknesses revealed during matches. In reality the training venues that grassroots teams have access to may not permit this, the players may be disinclined to be coached intensively and you only get together once a week. So how do you get the best out of the time that you have?

HOW SHOULD A SESSION BE MADE UP?

Ideally a session should combine the following elements; Warm-up, conditioned small-sided game, work on aspect of match-play, short sharp physical section, small-sided game, warm-down

Warm-up – Everyone will be familiar with a warm-up and as players get older so does its importance. It's about preparing the body for the demands that will be placed

upon it. It should include something to raise the pulse rate (jogging/skipping/running forward/backwards), a mix of static (standing) and dynamic (on the move) stretches. You could also introduce a game that gets players moving in a football-related way – short sprints, changes of direction but avoids collisions/tackles. This might just be keep-ball in a circle or perhaps a football/netball games where two teams pass the ball by hand. You can't run with the ball and you score with a header or volley into a small goals at either end.

A conditioned small-sided game – Instead of just playing five-a-side why not play a conditioned game that will develop as aspect of your play? Traditionally this has just involved placing a restriction on the number of touches but there is so much

more that can be done. Have a look at the games section in Appendix 3 of this resource to pick up some ideas.

Work on aspect of match play – There will be an aspect of your play that didn't go as planned at the weekend. Try to devote a section of your session to deal with this – It might involve shooting, finishing, crossing, corners, playing out from the back. Whatever it is try to recreate a realistic scenario where you get to rehearse and improve.

Short, sharp physical section – Traditionally this is the least popular aspect of any training session particularly if the players know what's coming. If your session is well-planned the players should be doing a lot of running that they don't notice in the conditioned small-sided game. So once you're into a season focus on a short-sharp physical session that replicates the demands of football in terms of the distances to be

run at varying intensities. Try to vary what you ask players to do and as with everything introducing a competitive element will always raise the intensity and interest of players. Avoid team drills with long queues that allow players an extended recovery period or a drill that has the fitter/younger players disappearing off into the distance and the others losing motivation as tail-enders. Have a look at Appendix 2 for ideas on a session you could run.

Small-sided game – Whether professional or amateur all players want to play the actual game at some part in their training so leave enough time for this.

Warm-down – It's a good habit to get into. Encourage the players to end the session with gentle jogging, mobilisation and stretching. They might moan but it will reduce muscle soreness, improve flexibility and reduce injuries.

DEALING WITH THE UNPREDICTABLE

As a grassroots coach running a training session one of the challenges that you'll inevitably face is that you'll have to regularly adjust this activity to match fluctuating numbers of players. This might involve too many, too few, odd numbers, different playing standards, with or without goal keepers. Once the session under way you may depending on the activity, space available or selection require some of the players to step out but you'll need to consider how best to keep inactive players engaged and active. The following tips may be of some use

- Consider starting your session with a social activity that easily accommodates the involvement of latecomers. Different variations of one or two touch 'Rondo' (keep-ball) are always popular alternatively warm-up games like football-netball where on a shortened pitch and using small goals the ball is passed by hand but goals need to be scored with a header or volley.

- If you have an odd number of players they can be given a different coloured bib and assigned to play for whichever team is in possession but they cannot score. Alternatively if you're playing a game with different zones they can be positioned to create an offensive or defensive 'overload'
- If you're asking a number of players to stand down they can be kept involved either as feeders of a new ball to restart play or as players positioned outside the playing area that the team in possession can use to bounce passes off. Change teams regularly. While they are off the pitch perhaps challenge the non- playing group to keep the ball in the air for 20, 30 touches or pass the ball around the group in the air – taking one touch the first time, two on the next, then three etc.
- If the playing area that you're training on is too small for the number of players that you have, consider making use

of additional goals to spread the play. If you have two goals located either end players will orientate themselves around these. Smaller goals located in the corners or in the middle of the pitch will create greater space between the players and improve the quality of what you're doing. Consider also dividing the area across the pitch and play two or three small-side games again using smaller goals. Rotate the teams to create a mini tournament. Play two goals to win, or for a set time-period – whichever comes first, to ensure players aren't waiting around on the sidelines for too long.

- If you've got a weaker player or one returning from injury they can perhaps be given a degree of immunity by identifying a time delay (count of 1,2,3) before they can be challenged, employed as a feeder to restart the activity or designated a small area or channel in which they can't be challenged

- If you have goalkeepers in attendance try to include them in all activities. If they are not comfortable in free play then adapt your games so that the ball has to be played into their hands and they have to redistribute with a throw or a placed kick.
- If you have no goalkeepers in attendance then perhaps challenge the outfield players to score goals where the ball has to hit the back of the net without bouncing, or hitting the side netting. One-touch finishes from inside an area will also add reality to the game.
- If you have no goals, set up an end-zone where players have to receive or dribble into to score a 'goal' for their team. Other ways to score might include knocking balls off cones, or having target players to feed the ball into.

GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS

HOW TO DELIVER A PRE-MATCH TEAM TALK AND HALF-TIME INSTRUCTION?

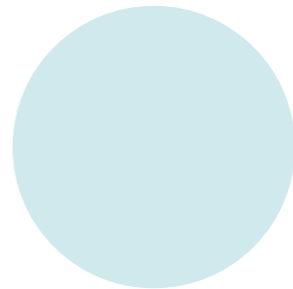
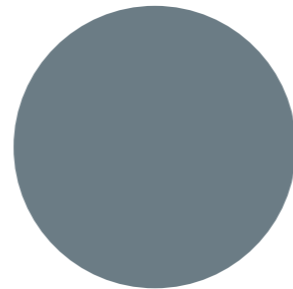
Ok you're 2–0 down. Their left winger is running riot and your central midfielder is absent in all but name. You have five – ten minutes to make an impact on the way that your team is playing. What do you do?

- Get the players in. Give them a minute to grab water, adjust kit, sound off.
- Opt for a communication style that you're

comfortable with but will have an impact on the team

- Get their attention – You're the manager.
- Yours should be the only voice speaking until you invite others to contribute or until you've finished
- Keep it simple – Identify one or two things that need changing in tactics or formation. Make sure those affected understand what they need to do.

- Try to achieve 'cut-through'. Find the motivating issue that get the player's attention and increase their commitment. This might be points at stake, promotion, relegation, dislike of the opposition, playing for friends, family, a sense of injustice, dread of the journey home with nothing to show etc. It's a challenge but try to avoid the same old cliches.



DEALING WITH INJURIES

As a minimum someone on the team needs to be first-aid trained, preferably with an FA Basic Treatment of Injuries Award. There should also be a well-stocked first aid kit that will provide you with what you require to deal with the bumps and bruises of grassroots football. The days of the bucket and the cold sponge are long gone. If you have younger players in the team under-18s you also have a duty of care to your players even though they may be playing for an adult team.

Without someone with first-aid training an injury in grassroots football can often prompt all sorts of incorrect and sometimes dire prognoses from the line with managers and players often speculating on snapped ligaments, torn cartilages and dislocated shoulders. Players with possible fractures are told to run it off, players with concussion are offered a sip of water and sent back into the fray, hot and cold sprays are applied in equal

measure regardless of the injury.

Injuries are predictable in football and not to prepare for them is asking for trouble. It's worthwhile taking the time to pull together a Club Medical Emergency Action Plan as unfortunately there may be occasions where there is a delay in the arrival of an ambulance. This plan should include a trained first aider and first-aid kit, details about the nearest hospital, medical records (including details of next-of-kin in case of emergency) and when to move/not move a casualty. In your team registration process you should seek information on any pre-existing medical conditions or any allergies that may impact on the treatment offered following an injury or incident.

Any serious or persistent injury should be looked at by a Doctor (GP) or a Chartered Physiotherapist, but minor injuries, such as

mild sprains and strains, can initially be treated at home using the PRICE regime for two or three days. Not all injuries necessitate a visit to the Accident and Emergency Department of the local hospital.

PRICE stands for protection, rest, ice, compression and elevation

- **Protection** – protect the affected area from further damage by 'off-loading' the injured part/damaged tissue. Following injury the player should be safely withdrawn from activity and moved to a safe location. Thereafter, crutches should be used if the player is unable to bear weight on the limb; a sling may help if the injury is to the shoulder/upper limb.
- **Rest** – to prevent further damage and ease any pain or discomfort the player should avoid activities which cause pain or swelling and particularly movement in

the direction which caused the injury. The degree of rest is governed by the injury, its severity and the area that is affected. Prolonged immobilisation of minor injuries, such as a mild sprain, is not necessary. The rest phase should be of limited duration and restricted to the period immediately after trauma.

- **Ice** – crushed ice in a plastic bag which is wrapped inside a towel or some material to avoid it directly touching the skin and causing an ice burn will work well. Ice packs should be applied to the injured area for 10-15 minutes every two to three hours; a football sock, elasticated bandage or cling film may be used to secure the ice pack.

- **Compression** – use elastic compression bandages during the day to limit swelling; non-stretchy taping or bandages must not be used.
- **Elevation** – the injured body part should be raised above the level of the heart whenever possible; this will help to reduce any swelling. When elevated you should try gently moving the affected joint in pain-free ranges as soon as you are able to do so to promote recovery.

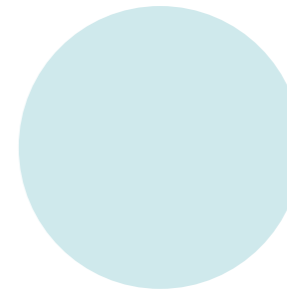
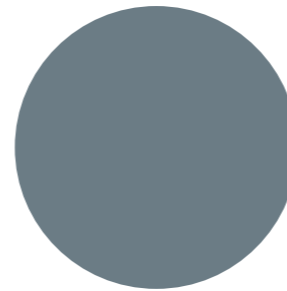
Pain relief

Painkillers, such as paracetamol, can be used to help ease the pain. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs tablets or creams, such as

ibuprofen, can also be used to help ease any pain and help to reduce any swelling.

Recovery times

For anything that appears serious or is not getting better with basic PRICE management you should direct your players towards their GP or a Chartered Physiotherapist. Treatment and recovery advice for sports injuries can also be found on www.nhs.co.uk



ADVISING PLAYERS ON NUTRITION AND DIET

It's not uncommon to see grassroots players turning up to matches still eating their pre-match meal and then trying to run round half an hour later feeling sluggish, bloated and regretting a last-minute chocolate bar or bag of crisps.

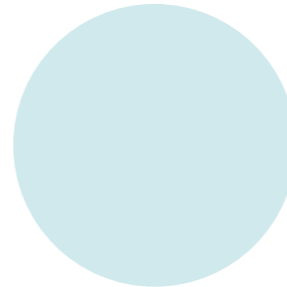
Depending on what you eat you should leave at least an hour and if it's a more substantial meal two – three hours before engaging in physical exercise. Grassroots players are very unlikely to be as disciplined about their diets as professionals but if they adopt some of their regime it might make a difference.

Before a match, most professional players will load up with carbohydrates such as potatoes, brown bread, brown rice, cereals and pasta, which provide long-lasting energy.

By contrast, sugar steals stamina, as it gives a rush of energy that wears off quickly. Carbohydrates should make up a quarter of your plate. For concentration, oily fish such as salmon and good fats such as nuts and seeds are ideal. Avoid eating large amounts of saturated fat, which is found in red meat, butter, full-fat milk, ice-cream and crisps.

After exercise, carbs will also replace lost energy. Wholegrain versions of food are best as they release energy more gradually, as do potatoes when eaten in their skins. Protein-rich foods such as milk can help with post-match niggles and help to rebuild damaged muscle tissue. Vitamins, minerals and fibre protect you from illness and help your body to produce energy. There should be no need for supplements if you have a balanced diet

It's essential for your player's performance to drink enough water - losing just 2% of body weight through sweat can negatively affect their mental and physical performance. Players can easily check on whether they've drunk enough water by checking the colour of their urine on match-day morning. If it's light in colour you're probably drinking enough, if it's dark you're likely to be dehydrated and this will impact on your performance. Try to get your players in the habit of sipping water in the run-up to the game from a feed bottle rather than trying to consume large amounts just before they play which will just make them feel bloated. Generally water is considered the best way of maintaining hydration but there is some evidence to suggest that if you're playing for longer



than an hour then a drink that also includes carbohydrates and some of the essential salts and minerals that are lost through sweating may have benefits. This might involve a branded sports drink or the homemade version which involves 50% juice, 50% water and a very small pinch of sea salt

WORKING ON PERSONAL AND TEAM FITNESS

Most players will need to do their own training to get themselves fit for weekend football. This may range from virtually nothing to a range of activities – five-a-side, running, going to the gym, swimming, golf. What approach will make the greatest impact in the shortest time?

To be the perfect footballer requires an amalgam of skill, strength, stamina, speed and agility. For the average player to build a training programme that incorporates all these features in the course of a week is a real challenge. The key question is to attempt

to make your training as specific to football as possible. Going for a long steady run will have some benefits but football is a game of different speeds and multiple short to medium sprints. A shorter run that replicates these demands upon the body may be more beneficial. Similarly being a gym bunny might be great for your biceps and pecs but if you can't trap or pass a ball you're not much use to anyone. Incorporate some ball work, small-sided football or football training into your matchday preparation.

You can find detailed guidance on personal and team conditioning programmes at the back of this guide.



RUNNING THE TEAM

Running a grassroots football team will always pose some challenges and at certain stages you might find yourself mentally grouping everyone you meet into those who can play for you on Saturday or Sunday morning and those who can't! Set out your non-negotiable principles early on. Probably the most important are

- It's amateur football. Players pay to play. It's not your role to subsidise someone else's football
- Match fees are due on the day – players shouldn't turn up with empty pockets
- If a player is booked or dismissed, they and not the club or manager pay the fine
- Managing the team doesn't mean that you also have to wash the kit, put up the

nets, collect the subs, cut up the oranges, fill the water bottles, look after the ref, complete the match report – share these responsibilities round

- Communicate the arrangements and selection for the next match as early as possible. Give yourself time to make adjustments if players are unavailable
- Require honesty and openness from your players. If they can't play you need to know as soon as possible.
- Set out the last acceptable time someone can withdraw from a game barring fire, flood or something equally serious. Any withdrawals after this may result in club disciplinary action.

Give some consideration to making use of some of the social networking apps, tools and website to get organised. There are many teams that are now arranged via Facebook or a WhatsApp Group or make use of Teamer which is specifically designed to take the hassle out of organising sports teams and communicating with players. If you're looking for players then sites such as UK Football Finder or Gumtree will allow you to advertise at little or no costs and reach considerable audiences.

There are a number of tasks required to ensure that the organisation for a fixture runs smoothly. Have a look at Appendix One for a detailed breakdown of what's required.



10

GETTING YOURSELF QUALIFIED

Now that you're a manager why not get yourself a FA Coaching qualification? It will help develop your own knowledge of the game and give you greater confidence that, yes, you do know what you're talking about! It's also likely to improve your credibility with your players, knowing that you're a qualified coach. Contact your County Football Association for details on courses in your area.

RUNNING A TEAM – ORGANISING AND CONFIRMING FIXTURES

In order that you can focus on what you really want to do – which is working with the team and the players on matchday – it's important that other arrangements related to the fixture are completed and confirmed so that everything runs smoothly. Depending on the club and the league that you're involved in you may be required to undertake all, some or a few of the duties relating to the fixture. If it's 'all' then you really need to get some help – delegate some responsibility to the players if necessary.

PRIOR TO MATCHDAY

Confirming the fixture

The process of confirming a fixture varies with each competition so ensure you are aware of the league's process but generally the home club details should be sent to the opposition

and the match officials three-to-seven days before the fixture giving

- Details of the ground location
- Date and time of kick-off
- Colours you intend to play in

Competitions will normally require a confirmation of the details from the opposition. Don't just leave a voice mail or send an email and assume its been received. The opposition, match officials and competition should be notified immediately of last minute changes to the match giving notice of any revised details.

Team colours

Ensure there is no clash of kit colours including the goalkeeper's jersey. Each competition will have their own minimum period of notice that the teams have to notify

each other of the kit colours and which team has to make any alternative arrangements.

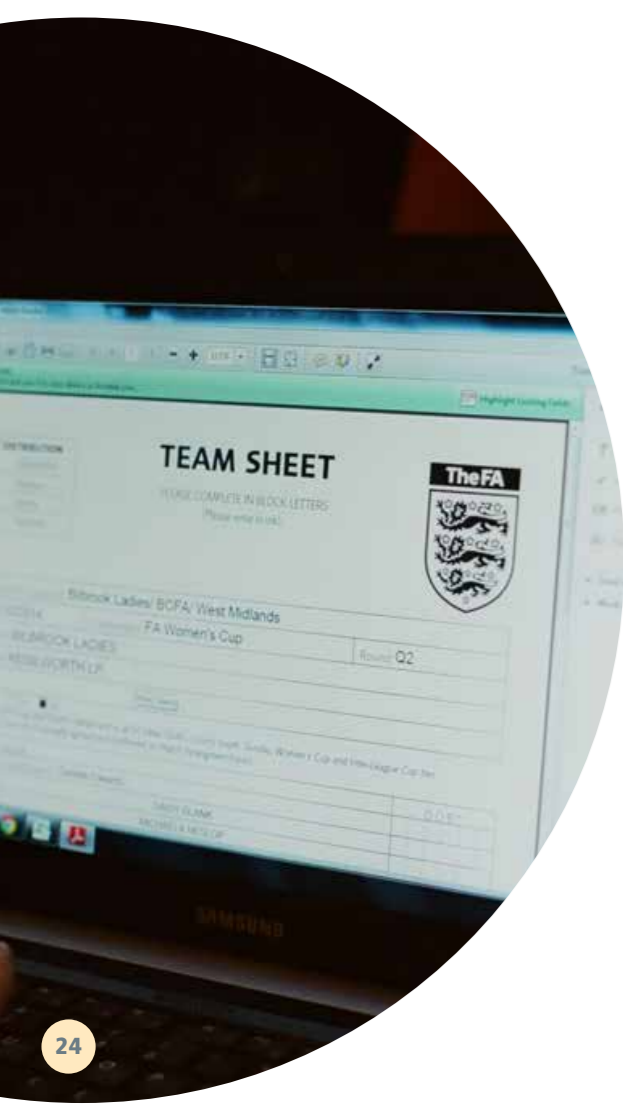
Cancellation of fixture

The pitch owner or local authority may be responsible for deciding that the pitch is unplayable so ascertain if this is the case or whether this is left to the match officials. Some competitions allow a local referee to inspect the pitch well before the start of the match to avoid the opposition, match officials and spectators travelling to the ground. Ensure you inform the opposition, the officials and the competition secretary as soon as the match is cancelled.

MATCH DAY

Away travel

When travelling to away fixtures ensure all



drivers have directions or the postcode for satellite navigation systems and give sufficient time to allow for any unexpected incidents. Ensure those transporting others have the appropriate insurance cover.

Preparing the pitch

Ensure the pitch is safe, playable and the posts are erected correctly and the nets are securely fastened. It is always wise to make a full inspection of the pitch and remove anything that may be unsafe.

Preparing the changing rooms

Open and clean the changing rooms prior to both teams arriving. Check that both the home and away visiting team changing rooms are clean, accessible and safe, removing any items that may cause injury or offence to the players and officials.

First aid medical requirements

Always ensure you have the appropriate first aid equipment and trained, competent personnel prior to the start of the game. Competitions may set their own standards of provision to which

clubs have to conform. Always ensure the first aid kit is replenished after each match or incident where it is used. The County FA will run appropriate first aid courses for club personnel.

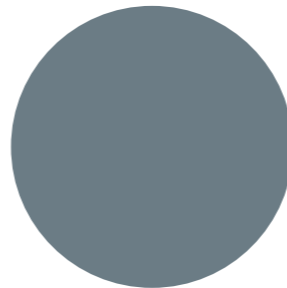
Match officials

Confirm the appointment of the match official(s) if made by the League, County FA or The FA. If the match official cannot make the appointment for some reason inform the competition and try to make alternative arrangements. Some competitions will require teams to provide their own assistant referees to run the line so ensure you have someone available.

Greet the match official(s) when they arrive at the ground and show them to the changing rooms and pay them either prior to or after the fixture whichever they prefer. Some competitions may state when to pay the officials.

Competition rules

Always ensure you are aware of the rules of the competition for example if you are playing a knock out competition and the game is level after full time whether



the game is replayed or goes to extra time and penalty kicks. As teams may play in numerous competitions clarify the rules prior to the match with the opposition club officials and the match officials.

Team sheets

Submit a completed team sheet to the match official(s) and the opposition club secretary if the competition rules require this and by the stated time of the competition. Check your specific competition rules and whether any players are cup-tied or suspended for the fixture. Ensure that all players are eligible to play within that game as errors may result in the match being forfeit and the club receiving a financial penalty, as will not correctly completing the team sheet and submitting it within time.

Footballs

Match balls that meet Law 2 of the Laws of The Game need to be provided. Some competitions may provide these otherwise competition rules may state what match balls and how many need to be provided prior to the start of the game. Ensure the match officials have checked the match balls prior to kick off.

Sponsorship

If the club has any sponsorship agreements that provide the sponsor with specific rights for example using branded warm-up kit or displaying sponsorship boards, make sure these rights are delivered each game. Leagues and competitions may also have their own sponsorship agreements that require clubs to display specific branding so make sure you are aware of these.

Hospitality

Provide appropriate hospitality for the match officials and the opposition according to club custom or competition requirements. Some competitions also require hospitality for opposing club officials.

Hospitality may be required prior the commencement of the match, during half time and after the game has concluded. Providing hospitality over and above what is required reflects positively on the club.

AFTER THE MATCH

Notification of result or match report

Ensure that the result of the competition is forwarded to the competition or league as soon as possible and within the specified time limits for each competition. Each league and competition may have different timescales but make sure the match report form is completed in full and received on time or the club may receive financial penalties. Ensure it is signed by club officials from both teams and the match official if required.

Collection of match fees

If your club collects match fees from players each game make sure these are collected straight after the game to reduce the chance of players building up debts owed to the club. Many clubs have experienced cashflow problems as they don't have a process for collecting match fees after a game.

Washing of kit and equipment

Collect all the dirty kit and equipment at the end of the game and make sure it is washed and cleaned prior to the next fixture. Keep a rota if necessary so that the players share this responsibility.

Club websites and social media

The club may wish to post the result on the club website or social media such as Facebook together with a match report. Remember that you are responsible for the content and if anything inappropriate is posted the individual or the club can be charged by The Football Association. So if you're still raging after a defeat it might be best to cool off before you post your comments!

Press Release

It is advantageous to promote your club in any local press or media outlets. The production of a press release sent to the sports editor of your local newspaper could provide positive media coverage for your club and any associated sponsors.

APPENDIX TWO

PERSONAL AND TEAM FITNESS FOR FOOTBALL

MARK ARMITAGE – CONDITIONING ADVISOR TO ENGLAND NATIONAL TEAMS

What can grassroots players do to achieve improved football specific fitness ?

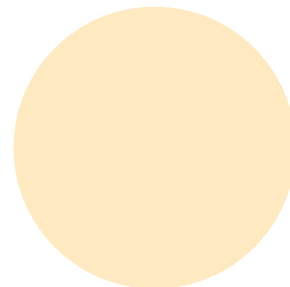
Football is a complex, high-intensity, stop/start sport which involves a range of movements and actions at different speeds. While ideally these actions should be trained separately most can be improved through improving strength as this is a key component in speed, power and changing direction.

If you have the opportunity to weight train in a gym ideally you should be completing 3–5 sets of 3–5 repetitions, of large muscle group activities (i.e. squats, lunges, presses, pushes, pulls). Before doing this though, your body should be used to performing such activities therefore start with a lighter weight which increases over time as repetitions decrease. Table 1 provides an example of reducing reps over six weeks to increase load and as a consequence improve strength. Please note – do not increase the weight too rapidly and ensure you execute with the correct technique. You should look to complete this 2–3 times a week

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 7
Reps	10	8	6	5	4	3
Sets	2	3	4	3	4	5

Table 1: Six-week training programme, reducing reps, increasing sets and load

As well as strength you'll also want to improve your stamina and cardiovascular fitness but in doing this it's important that your training mimics the physical demands of the game. As such when completing work on bikes/treadmills etc. you should try to intersperse periods of high-intensity



activity (hardly comfortable) with lower intensity (comfortably hard) active recovery periods. This is known as interval training. Box 1 and 2 provide examples of how you can go about doing this on an exercise bike. Please note that these templates could also be used on a treadmill with the levels/speed altered accordingly or performed whilst running outside. If you run on a treadmill ensure the incline is 1% to replicate running outside on slightly uneven surfaces.

Bike/treadmill session one

Warm up – 5 minutes self-paced. Try to increase

speed and level each minute

15 secs max (i.e. level 9)

15 secs easy (i.e. level 6)

15 secs max (i.e. level 9)

15 secs easy (i.e. level 6)

1 set = 1 min. Five sets total.

2 mins 30sec active recovery. Easy/light pace

Repeat work block (i.e. 15 sec on/off x 5)

Cool down – 5 minutes self-paced. Try to decrease speed and level each minute

Total time = 30 mins

Note: Levels are only to demonstrate an increase/decrease in effort. This will vary depending on the bike and your personal fitness.

If it is too easy increase/hard decrease!

Bike/treadmill session two

Warm-up:

- 1 min @ level 6
- 1 min @ level 8
- 1 min @ level 9
- 1 min @ level 10

Main content:

- 12sec hard, 4sec easy, 24sec hard, 4sec easy, 12sec hard, 4sec easy x 6 (6mins) (level 10)
- 2mins active recovery (easy/light pace)
- Repeat work block

Cool down:

- 1 min @ level 8
- 1 min @ level 7
- 1 min @ level 6 • 1min @ level 5

Total time = 22 mins

Note: Levels are only to demonstrate an increase/decrease in effort. This will vary depending on the bike and your personal fitness. If it is too easy increase/hard decrease!

2. CONDITIONING BASED (RUNNING) SESSION

Your training should prioritise improving intensity (quality) rather than volume (quantity). An excellent tool in doing so is MAS (Maximal Aerobic Speed) training because this enables the body to be stretched to increase physical qualities rather than working at a sub-optimal level but for a longer period of time. This type of training replicates the interval based work proposed on the bike/treadmill and sees 15 seconds of hard (high) work separated with 15 seconds light (low) work. This can be completed six times to create a 3 minute drill block (or set) and be repeated (i.e. 3 times) with appropriate rest (or light technical work) in between sets (i.e. 1 to 2mins depending on fitness levels). Again this can be progressed over a period of time using either an increase in distance or decrease in time as demonstrated below:

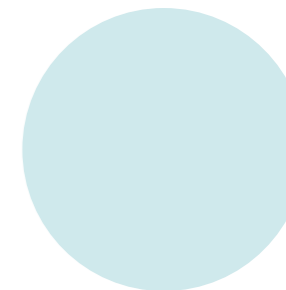
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 7
Distance (m)	70	72	75	77	80	80
Time (on/off) (sec)	15/15	15/15	15/15	15/15	15/15	14/16

Table 2 – MAS running progressions over six weeks using an increase in distance

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 7
Distance (m)	80	80	80	80	80	80
Time (on/off) (sec)	15/15	14/16	13/17	12/18	11/19	10/20

Table 3 – MAS running progressions over six weeks using a decrease in time

Although both methods will provide a gradual overload doing so via an increase in distance may be better for those with a lower level of fitness whilst decreasing time might be more appropriate for more physical advanced players. 80m in 10sec x 6 x 3 will be quite physically demanding. In addition to overloading across sessions you could also stretch players within i.e. set one = 15/15 x 6, set two = 14/16 x 6 and set three – 13/17 x 6.



MAS Drill

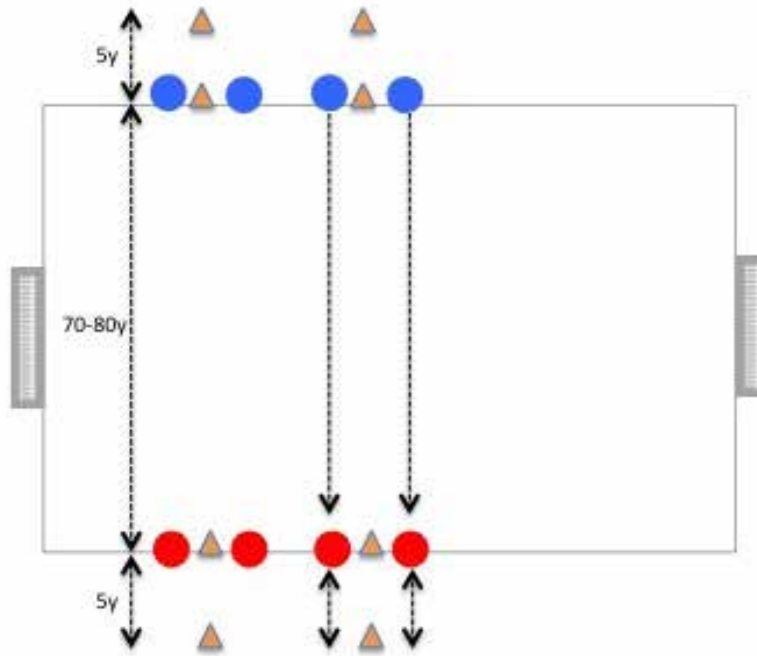


Figure 1 – Drill diagram of MAS running activity

Organisation

- Place two sets of cones 70-80y apart (this might be the width of your pitch), with a cone set back 5y behind each.
- Depending on numbers work in pairs with two at each one.
- On the first whistle one pair (blue) transfer to other end in allotted time (i.e. 15sec).
- At the same time the other pair walk around the cones behind (5y).
- The walking pair should return back to their start cone as the others arrive (i.e. on 15sec).
- On the allotted time (i.e. 15sec) they run to the other end

whilst the pair walk around the cones.

- Repeat both ends for the desired time.

Progressions

- Increase the distance (i.e. 70, 72, 75, 77, 80y)
- Decrease the time (i.e. 15, 14, 13, 12, 11secs. Note – always go every 30sec, if shorter running time active recovery increases)

What to look For:

- Ensure players 'get in' on time
- Ensure players walk around the cone
- Try to get pacing so that they run at a constant speed rather than fast/slow or vice versa. Counting aloud can help with this

3. IF YOU WANT TO GET FIT FOR FOOTBALL ... PLAY FOOTBALL

While the sessions above might be added extras for you to incorporate into your training programme the most effective way to improve football fitness is to play football. Not only does this replicate the specific movement patterns and speed required to participate in the game but it also gives an opportunity to work on the technical, tactical, psychological and social considerations at the same time.

For the body to get better it has to be pushed just over the edge of what it is currently capable of, then after rest it will adapt so it can now cope with this new level with relative ease and therefore can be stretched again. If you do too much too soon you are likely to become injured. With this in mind a football specific training session can be altered and manipulated over time so that it increases the physical demands on the participating players:

- Where possible try to start (at the beginning of a training block i.e. start of pre-season) with bigger numbers so that workloads can be shared out and the ball can do the majority of the work. This might be useful in pre-season

when looking at new players i.e. 10 v 10 to 8 v 8 games. Try to work with longer blocks of time i.e. 10 to 20mins. Perhaps you could overload this over time i.e.:

- Week 1 - 10mins x 2 + 3mins rest (23mins)
- Week 2 - 12mins x 2 + 3mins rest (27mins)
- Week 3 - 14mins x 2 + 3mins rest (31mins)
- Week 4 - 20mins (20mins)
- Week 5 - 16mins x 2 + 3mins rest (35mins)
- Week 6 - 18mins x 2 + 3mins rest (39mins)

* Please note 4min increases per week. Taper/de-load in middle

**Remember that this is the 'game time' section of your training session you'll also need to factor in warm up, tactical/technical work, other conditioning activity and a cool down.

The above should give players a good endurance base but to overload the physical

demands of the game the numbers should be reduced i.e. from 7 v 7 to 4 v 4, and then 3 v 3 to 1 v 1. Generally the less space players have to work within the more accelerations and decelerations they will perform which will place a higher cost on the body. This can either be achieved on a fortnightly basis i.e. weeks 1-2 = 10 v 10 to 8 v 8, weeks 3-4 = 7 v 7 to 4 v 4, weeks 5-6 = 3 v 3 to 1 v 1 or split sessions can be performed within the week i.e. Tuesday 6 v 6 up to 10 v 10, Thursday night 6 v 6 down to 1 v 1's with a game on a Saturday/Sunday.

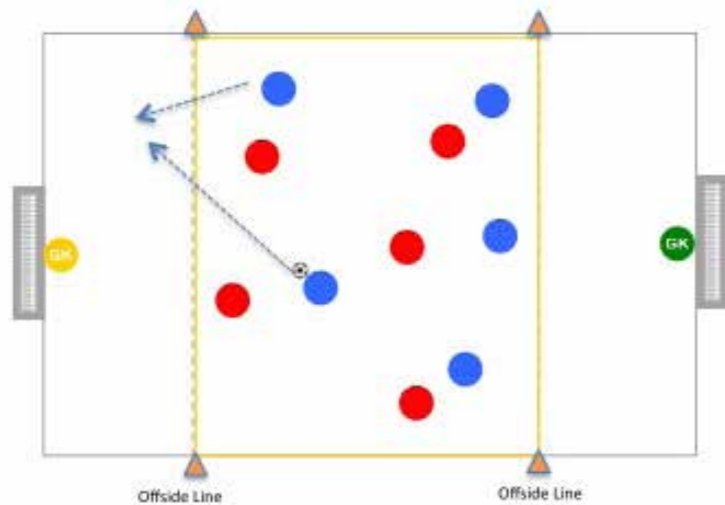
When designing your practices consider the below with regards to small sided games as each can alter the physical return:

- The size of the area
- The number of players
- Work/rest ratio
- Rules i.e. off-sides
- Constraints i.e. man marking
- External factors i.e. coach encouragement

TRAINING SESSION - GAMES AND ACTIVITIES JAMIE GODBOLD - FA COUNTY COACH DEVELOPER

IN POSSESSION

Break Out



Organisation

- Play 5v5 in a marked area in the middle of the pitch.
- Object of the game is to 'breakout' by passing into the end zone for a team mate to run onto, while staying onside, before beating the keeper.
- No defenders are allowed in the end zone, unless they are receiving the ball off their keeper.

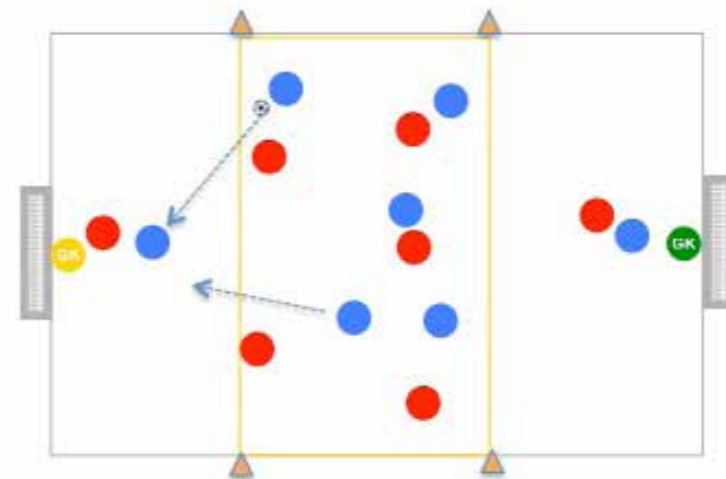
Progressions

- Defenders can retreat to recover
- A second attacker can support
- Players can dribble into the breakout area
- Offset end zones

What to look For:

- Quality of through ball
- Timing of run
- Finishing skills
- Patience

Break Out 2



Organisation

- Play 5v5 in a marked area in the middle of the pitch.
- Players try to pass into centre forward, who can be supported by any teammate, before going on to try and score

Progressions

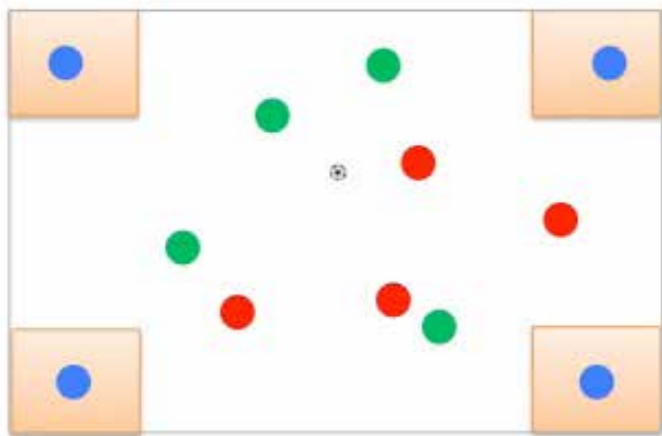
- Defenders can retreat to recover
- A third attacker can support
- Players can dribble

- into the breakout area
- Offset end zones

What to look For:

- Patience before finding Centre forward
- Hold up Play
- Support positions of midfielders
- Defending outnumbered

4 v 4 Keep Ball



Organisation

- 2 teams play against each other in the middle with one team supporting in corners of the pitch.
- To score, teams in the middle must transfer the ball from one target player to the other
- Rotate teams around

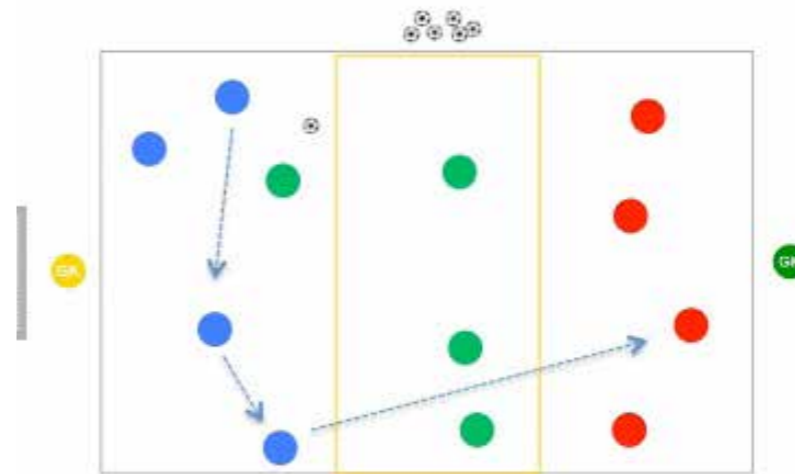
Progressions

- Limit target players to fewer touches

What to look for:

- Scanning
- Combining
- Supporting
- Shielding
- Risking v Playing safe
- Pressuring
- Transition

Playing forward



Organisation

- Organise pitch into thirds and 3 equal teams.
- Object of the game is to complete 4 passes before transferring the ball into the opposite end zone to gain a point. One defender is allowed to try to prevent the team from getting 4 passes. The middle team acts as a screen to prevent the ball being played through.
- If the team give the ball away or it leaves the area, they become the defending team
- Coach restarts the game to keep the

game flowing.

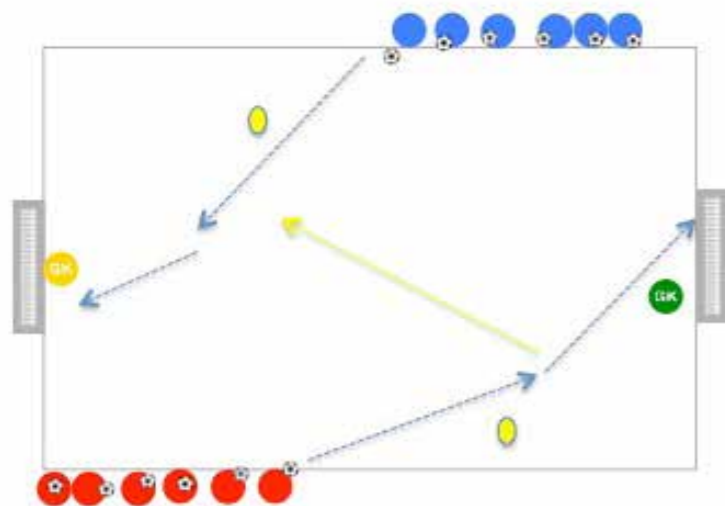
Progressions

- Increase number of defenders
- Defenders try to score in either goal if they win possession
- Increase /decrease no of passes
- Forward can drop into the middle zone to receive and play into attacking zone

What to look for

- When to risk and when to maintain possession
- Playing through or over the 'screen'
- The 'screen' working together

More of the same!



Organisation

- Split into 2 teams
- First red player goes and attempts to score against GK. When red player shoots, first blue attacker sets off to score. Red player immediately tries to recover to stop the Blue. As soon as blue player shoots, second red player starts to play 2v1 and so on until teams play 6 v 6.
- Keep score and

rotate the team that goes first

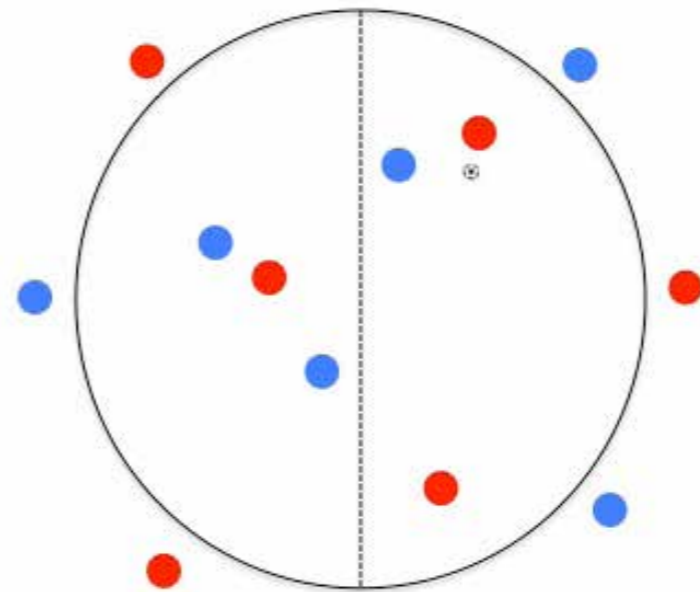
Progressions

- Include a scoring zone

What to look for

- Positive attitude
- Recovery runs
- Taking advantage of the extra man
- The game changes as more people appear in the pitch

Midfield Play



Organisation

- Play 3 v 3 inside the circle, with remaining players on the outside.
- Object of the game is to score by transferring the ball from one side of the circle to a teammate on the other. If you score you maintain possession and try to score the other way.
- Rotate players around

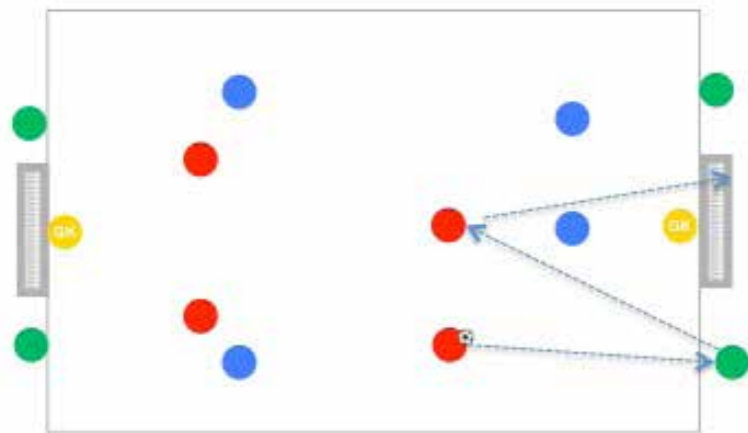
Progressions

- Play with overload/underloads. E.g. 3v2
- Rotate with players on the outside – play out, go out

What to look for

- Dispersal - players being in different halves of the circle
- Combinations
- Body shape to play forwards
- Penetration – first-time passes forward

Forward passing/Finishing



Organisation

- Organise into 3 teams with one team acting as targets along the byline
- To score, players must combine with a target before shooting
- Rotate after 4 minutes OR 2 goals wins the game

Progressions

- One touch finish

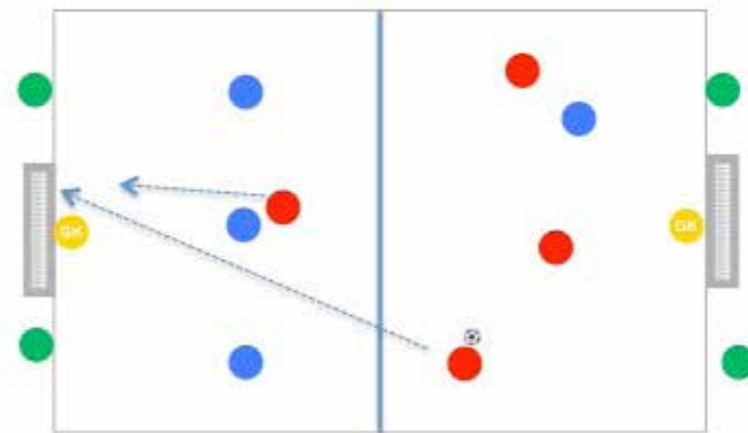
only

- 2 goals automatically wins the game

What to look for

- Opportunities to play to targets
- Creating space to allow to play forwards
- Supporting the target
- Finishing techniques

Shooting/Finishing



Organisation

- Organise into 3 teams with one team acting as targets along the byline
- Play 3 v 1 in each half.
- Players try to combine to shoot from their own half. Striker looks for rebounds
- Target players try to keep the ball in play to allow opportunities for striker to score a rebound

- Rotate after 4 minutes OR 2 goals wins the game

Progressions

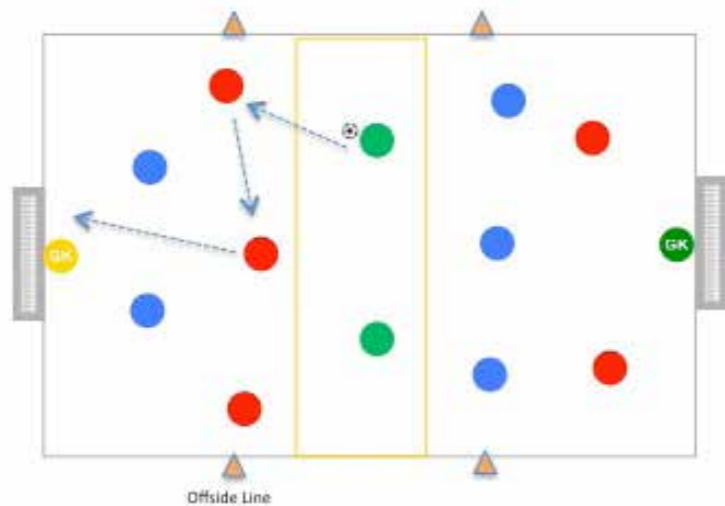
- Defenders can play into striker to score/set
- Defenders can follow the pass into striker to score

What to look for

- Positive attitude
- Hitting the target
- Striker/defenders reacting for rebounds
- Clever movement/ passes into striker

OUT OF POSSESSION

Defending Outnumbered



Organisation

- Play 3 v 2 in attacking half
- 2 Floaters in a small middle zone
- Attackers try to score, defenders try to stop them. If defenders win the ball, play into the Floaters or directly into attacking players.

- Attackers can use Floaters to recycle if required. Floaters can combine with each other.

Progressions

- Attacker can recover to support

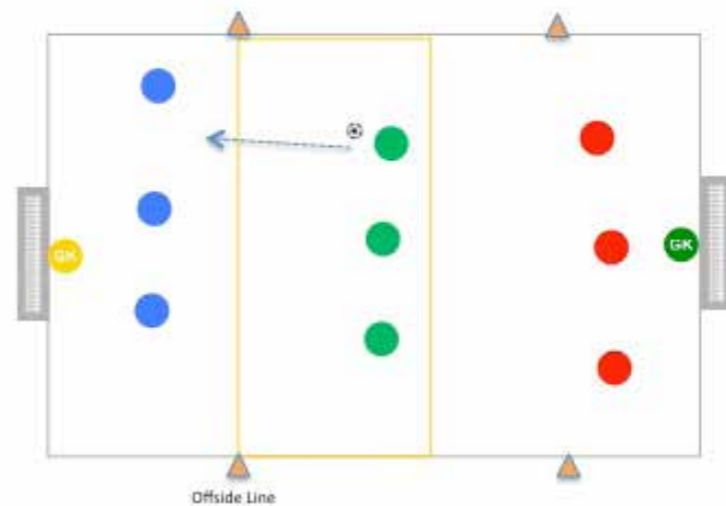
defenders on a negative pass (sideways or backwards)

- GK can serve straight into Floaters/Attackers
- Attackers can set Floaters to shoot from distance

What to look For:

- Delay the play for as long as possible
- Deny space in behind
- Working together
- Emergency defending – block/tackle
- Transition

Defending in Balance



Organisation

- 3 teams of 3 + 2GKs.
- Offset the end zones so the challenge is different within each end zone
- Team in the middle start with the ball and try to score at one end. If successful, coach throws in another ball to attack opposite end.

- If the defenders win the ball, immediately attack the opposite end.
- Team that concedes the most goals wins

Progressions

- Attacker can

recover to support defenders on a negative pass (sideays or backwards)

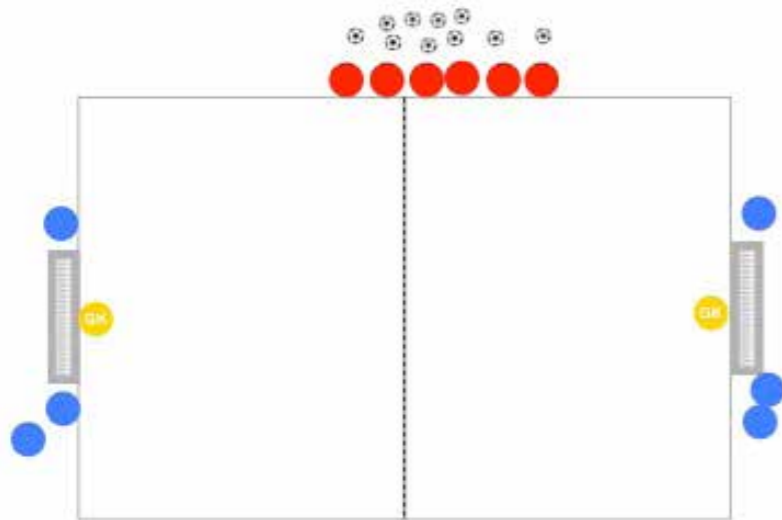
- GK can serve straight into Floaters/Attackers
- Attackers can set Floaters to shoot from distance

What to look For:

- Delay the play for as long as possible
- Deny space in behind
- Working together
- Emergency defending – Block/tackle
- Transition

TRANSITION

Risky Business



Organisation

- 2 equal teams and a handful of footballs + 2 GKs.
- Attacking team gets to make the decisions:
- 1v1 = 6 points
- 2v1 = 2 points
- 3v2 = 4 points
- Coach calls out the chosen number decided by the players. If attackers miss then that ball is over. If they score, coach rolls in another ball to attack opposite end.

- Teams come off and receive bonus points if they can score 3 consecutive goals
- Rotate teams after 6 attempts

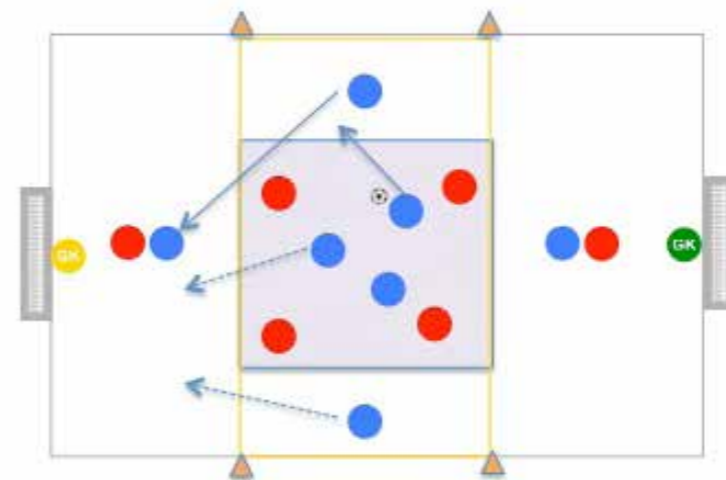
Progressions

- If defender(s) win the ball, attack the opposite end and score for double points

What to look for

- Positive attitude
- Composure
- Movement/support
- Scoring goals

Break Out 3



Organisation

- Play 4 Reds v 3 Blues in the middle area. Reds score 1 point for every 4 passes they make.
- If Blues win the ball, look to counter-attack either end by passing either CF or wide players to go and score.
- A Blue midfielder can support, and a red midfielder can retreat.
- Keep score and rotate players after an agreed time period.

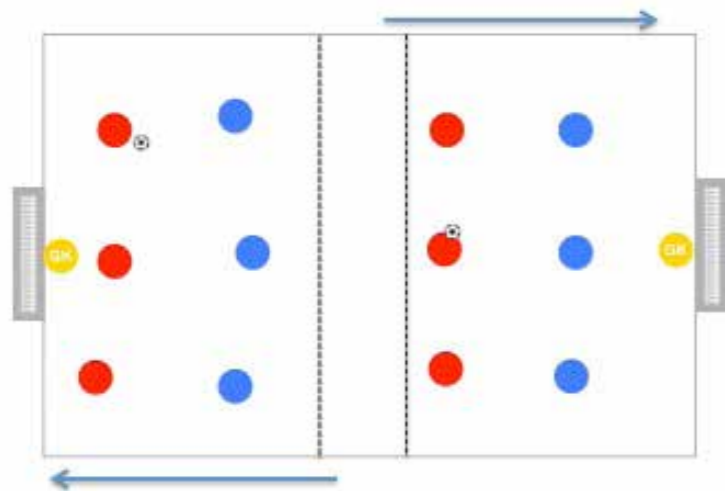
Progressions

- If defender in the final third wins the ball, try to counter the counter by scoring at the other end.

What to look for

- Transition from defence to attack
- Supporting quickly
- Decision making – when to shoot/pass/dribble
- Speed of attack

Half Court - Attack v Def



Organisation

- 2 separate games taking place at the same time on half a pitch each.
- Attacking team try to score. Defending team try to prevent attackers from scoring.
- If defending team win possession, try to dribble/pass the ball into the middle zone. If successful, they become the

attacking team.

- Play for 4 minutes before rotating players

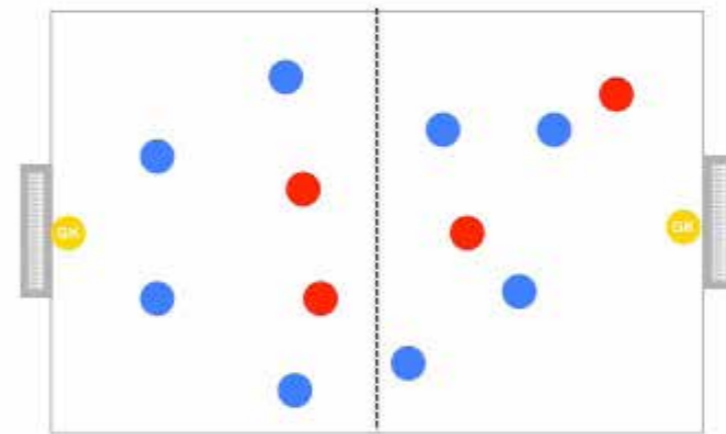
Progressions

- Play with overload/underloads

What to look for

- Fitness levels

8 v 4 Transition



Organisation

- Play 8 v 4 including 2 GKs
- Objective of the 8 is to transfer the ball from GK to GK.
- If the reds win the ball, try to score in either goal
- Rotate the 4 in the middle

Progressions

- Reds gain extra points if they can score in the goal furthest from which

- they won the ball
- Increase number of defenders

What to look for:

- Reds strategy to win the ball back (setting traps, hunting in packs etc)
- Quick thinking of reds to attack on regaining possession
- Blues reaction to losing possession

Who will you be today?



Show some Respect

TheFA.com/Respect



Respect

We all have a part to play



Respect Code of Conduct

Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials

We all bear a collective responsibility to set a good example and help provide a positive environment in which children can learn and enjoy the game. Play your part and observe The FA's Respect Code of Conduct at all times.

On and off the field, I will:

- Use my position to set a positive example for the people I am responsible for
- Show respect to others involved in the game including match officials, opposition players, coaches, managers, officials and spectators
- Adhere to the laws and spirit of the game
- Promote Fair Play and high standards of behaviour
- Respect the match official's decision
- Never enter the field of play without the referee's permission
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- Be aware of the potential impact of bad language on other participants, facility users or neighbours
- Be gracious in victory and defeat

When working with players, I will:

- Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything, including winning
- Never engage in or tolerate any form of bullying
- Ensure all activities I organise are appropriate for the players' ability level, age and maturity
- Co-operate fully with others in football (e.g. officials, doctors, physiotherapists, welfare officers) for each player's best interests

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by my club, County FA or The FA:

I may be:

- Required to meet with the club, league or County Welfare Officer
- Suspended by the club from attending matches
- Suspended or fined by the County FA
- Required to leave or be sacked by the club

In addition:

- My FA Coaching Licence may be withdrawn

TheFA.com/Respect

We all have a part to play



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jamie Godbold – FA County Coach Developer

Brent Hills – FA Head of England Women's Elite Development

Mike Healy – FA Head of Education (Medical)

Mick Baikie – FA National Club Services Manager

Mark Armitage – Conditioning Advisor to England National Teams

Alex Welsh – Chief Executive – The London Playing Fields Foundation

Old Meadonians Football Club

