

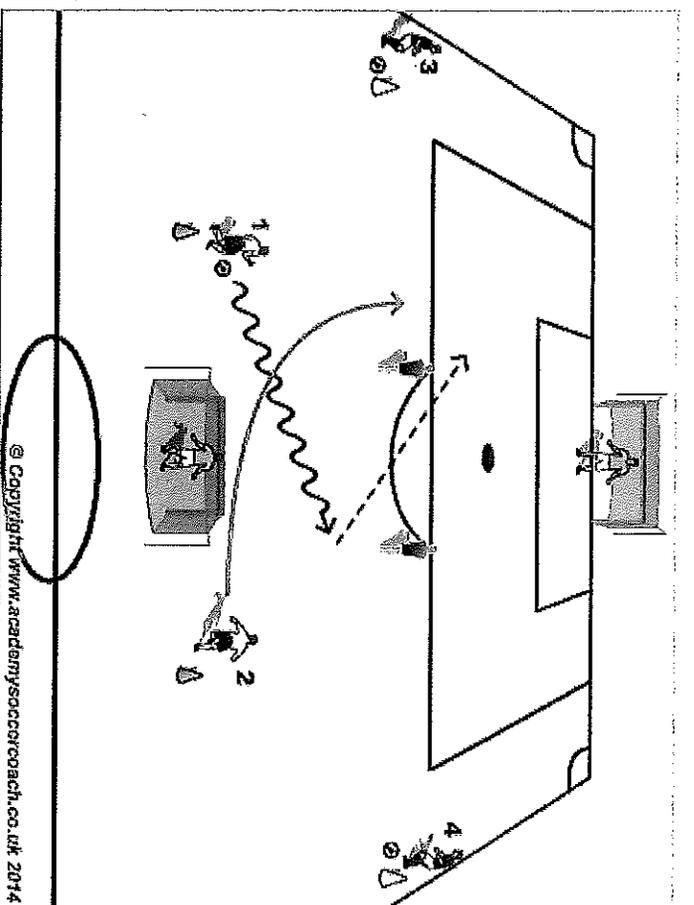
Progressions

- Change the angle on the combination play with the server. You can challenge the player on their left foot, with a volley, or having to turn with the ball and shoot.
- Add a time limit for the forward to complete all three sections. Does fatigue play a role in the quality of the finish? If so, this is an area that must be focused on.
- Take away the poles at Pole C and add a defender. Now the attacker must take on the defender and create a shot on goal. You can also add another attacker and create a 2v1 situation.

Exercise Seven

Although a traditional central forward pairing may be somewhat scarce in the game today, it is not a bad idea to practice finishing scenarios with one. Any exercise where players get to combine with each other sees them get an appreciation of space and always challenges angles of support. For unopposed exercises, this is very important, otherwise players would simply go where they like. In this exercise, two center forwards work together and perform three types of finish: through ball centrally, cross from a wide area, and a pullback from a wide area. Play takes place in the final third and includes two goals, four forwards, two goalkeepers, a supply of balls, and two mannequins.

Two center forwards in white shirts (Players 1 and 2) will start the exercise facing the top goal. Player 1 dribbles diagonally towards goal and Player 2 overlaps at full speed. With the right timing, Player 1 plays a reverse pass between the mannequins for Player 2 to run onto and finish into goal. Player 1 continues their run towards goal and follows up any rebounds. (See below)



Immediately following the first finish, both Players 1 and 2 must turn and sprint to the bottom goal. As soon as they pass the halfway point, Player 3 takes off towards the touchline on the dribble at full speed. When Player 3 gets close to the line, they deliver a cross towards Players 1 and 2 to finish from close range. (See below)

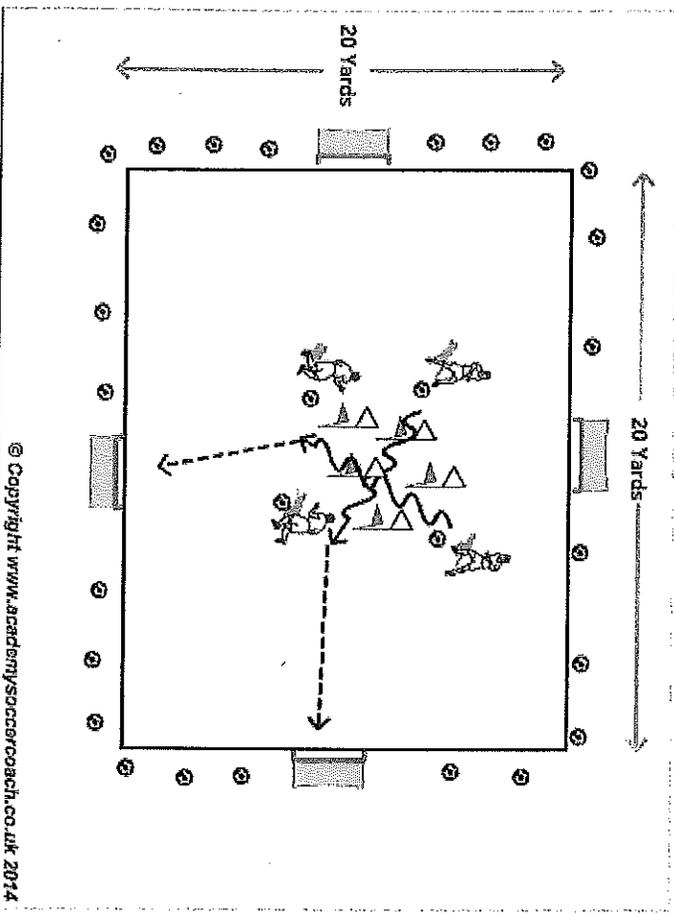
- Player in middle checks into ball
- Speed of play and quality of pass of middle player

Progressions

- Competition between four players. Each player has one minute and the coach will count how many passes they can play successfully.
- Change the size of the playing area:
 - Smaller to work on speed of play
 - Bigger to receive and pass driven balls in the air

Exercise Two

Dribbling is a skill that has not always been associated with an attacking midfielder but with compact defensive systems creating tighter areas in today's game, it has become an 'X factor' in the attack. We are not talking about becoming a Messi or Robben, but rather the ability to take the ball out of an area of high pressure before finding a pass. This exercise challenges attacking midfielders for their ability to dribble, process information quickly, and pass when under pressure.



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Four midfielders work at one time in a 20x20 grid. There are four goals on each line, four poles in the middle, and a good supply of balls around the perimeter. Every player starts with a ball and on the coach's signal, they must dribble into the middle, drive out at an angle, and pass the ball into the goal directly ahead. After the pass, the player must then sprint to the outside perimeter, get a ball, and dribble into the middle to start the process again. The exercise lasts for 90 second sets.

There are two rules:

1. Two players cannot dribble and pass into the same goal. The player who drives out of the middle first has right of way. The second player must return back to the middle and look for another opening.
2. You cannot go to the same goal twice.

Coaching Points

- Using a change of pace to your advantage when dribbling into the middle zone
- Dribble out of the middle at full speed – seeing space ahead and driving towards it
- Quality of passing under the pressure of time and competition
- Does the quality of passing drop when fatigue sets in?

Progressions

- Competition between midfielders who get one point for each goal scored
- Limit touches when players dribble out of the middle so the range of passing has to be a little longer
- Add players beside the goal and now the midfielders must play a give-and-go before the pass into the goal.

Exercise Three

The objective of this exercise is to combine the physical demands of an attacking midfielder alongside technical ones. The higher the level, the more critical it is for both of these aspects to work in tandem with one another. An attacking midfielder who can cover ground, has speed over