

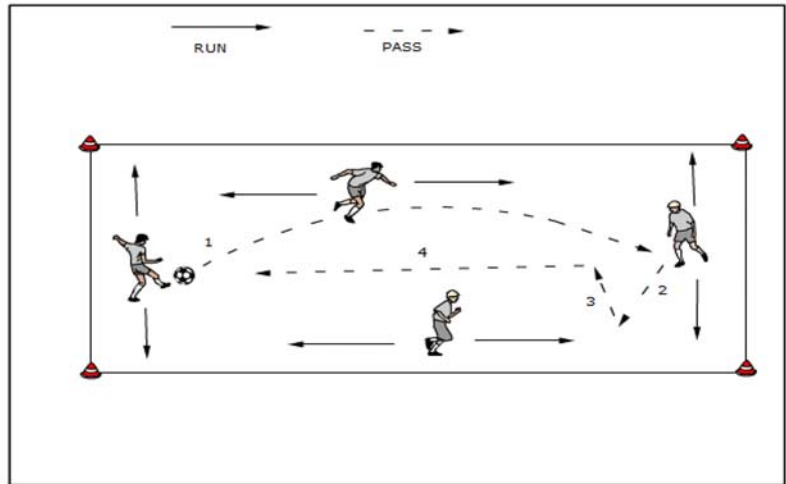


U14-U18 Functional Training of Forwards (1 forward)

By Mario Prata, MYSA Development Coach

OBJECTIVE: Functional training of the lone forward...recognizing the technical and tactical demands of the position and responding to them positively.

- 1) **4 v 0 or 5 v 0 Pattern Play (10-15 minutes)** In a 30yd x 40yd grid, each group of 4 or 5 players moves the ball from one end of the grid to the other. In this activity, the point is to move the ball accurately and quickly, while the players maintain their positions in a "kite-type" shape. The idea is to have 2 wide players supporting the player with the ball and one high player for a long pass option. The players in the area around the ball make 4-5 passes before looking long to the high option. Once the ball is played to the high player, the 2 wide players move to support the ball at the other end of the grid.

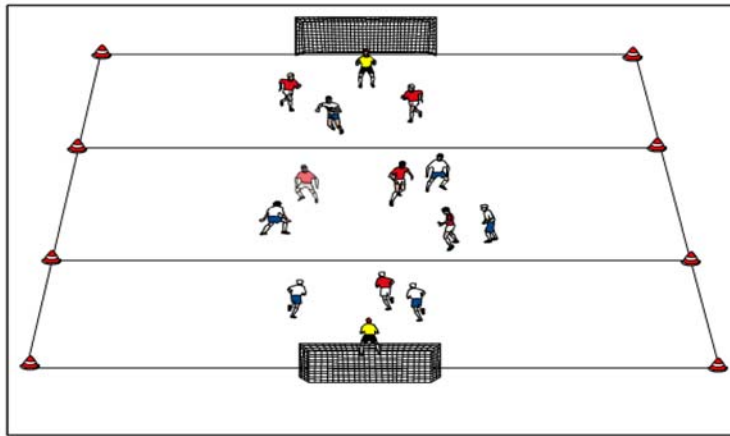


Coaching Points:

- Develop & keep individual and group shape
- Develop rhythm of play and increase speed of play
- Recognize visual cues such as body shape of teammates, supporting positions, high option "ON"
- High player needs to recognize visual cues from the other 3 players...i.e. when one of the 3 passing players looks up and prepares the ball in his direction, he can check to it and call for it.
- When the 2 supporting players move in to support the high player, simple combinations can be worked on to prepare the lone forward for his function in the game...i.e. double - pass, overlap, wall-pass or takeover.

2) **7v7...3 Zone game (15 minutes)**

On a field 40 yards wide x 60 yards long, create 3 zones (thirds of the field). Play a 7v7 game with the following formation for each team: a goalkeeper, 2 backs, 3 midfielders and 1 forward. The players are restricted to their zones (backs to the back third, midfielders to the middle third and forwards to the attacking third). When a ball is played into the lone forward in the attacking third, one player from his team can join him in the attacking zone. This can be a midfielder or a back. If the ball is played out of the attacking zone, the supporting player must return to their zone.

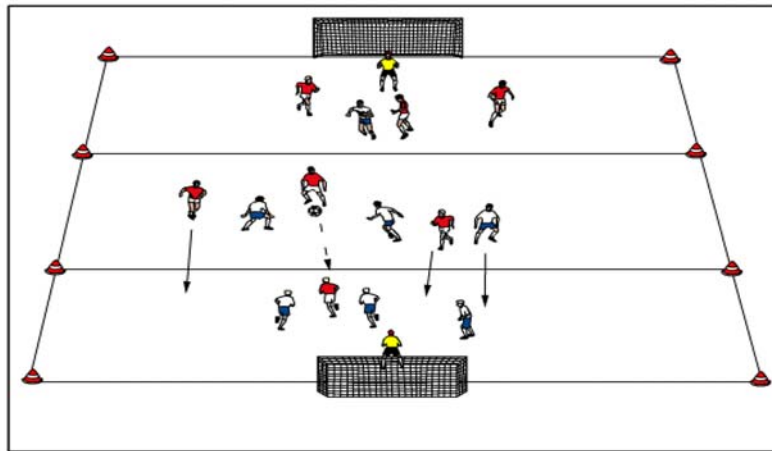


Coaching Points:

- Recognize the opportunities for penetrating passes from the midfield into the final third
- Lone forward must be risky and recognize the optimal times to penetrate (with the dribble, pass and/or shot)
- Cue of passer to forward – looking up – make eye contact and/or verbal communication
- Forwards' ability to create space for themselves and others – timing of runs to either get the ball themselves (recognizing passer's cues) or get in and behind the defense – angles of runs
- Quick 1-2 touch combinations (wall pass/take over/overlap/double pass)
- Intelligent runs by the forward – diagonal / straight / bent around defender to get ball back

3) **8v8...3 Zone game.** (20 minutes) (In a regular size 8v8 field divided into thirds).

On a field 55 yards wide x 80 yards long, create 3 zones (thirds of the field). Play an 8v8 game with the following formation for each team: a goalkeeper, 3 backs, 3 midfielders and 1 forward. The players are restricted to their zones (backs to the back third, midfielders to the middle third and forwards to the attacking third). When a ball is played into the lone forward, two players from her team can join her in the attacking zone. If the ball is played out of the attacking zone, the supporting players must return to their zones.



Coaching Points:

- Same points as game #1 and #2.

4) **Game to two goals with GKs** (35-40 minutes):

Play- 8v8 or 11v11.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session.

5) **Cool Down** (5-10 minutes)

Individual juggling...around the world (right foot, right thigh, head, left thigh and left foot). Statically stretch the large muscle groups.