

# Getting behind the ball

## What you tell your players the session is about:

- 1 Getting goalside of the ball when defending.
- 2 Helping out team mates outnumbered by attackers.
- 3 Making decisions on where to mark.

## What you tell your players to do:

- 1 Run back as fast as possible.
- 2 Take a direct line towards your own goal.
- 3 Be aware of the position of your team mates.



### what to shout

- "Get back quickly"
- "Concentrate"
- "Heads up"



### what to look for

- Recovery lines should be like a funnel – wide players take a line back towards the near post, central positions head towards the penalty spot.
- Doing something useful once goalside – can your players first challenge the attacker with the ball, or if not, cover a team mate challenging for the ball? If the answer is no, they should mark an attacker, or failing that, mark space.



### what to think about

It's easy for players to think that just by getting back they've done their job. They haven't – stress to them that the job of defending properly begins at that point and it's important they don't switch off mentally.

## What you get your players to do:

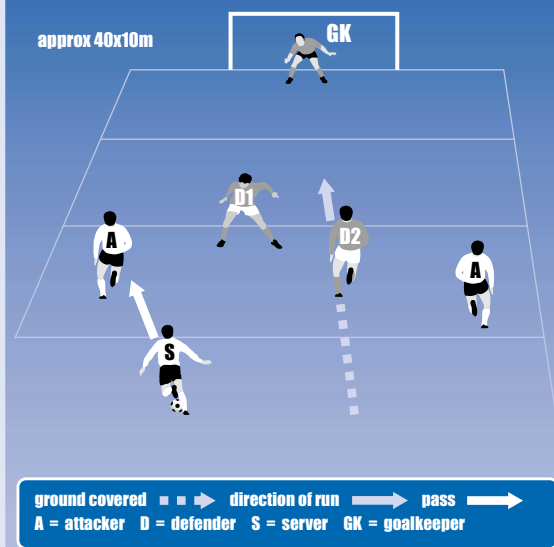
**Stage 1:** In an area approx 40 x 10 metres and using a full-size goal play one attacker versus two defenders.

A server begins the practice by passing to the attacker who has to try and beat the first defender and head for goal.

The second defender starts from a position approx 10m further back and can only start their recovery run once the server has passed the ball.

**Stage 2:** Switch players so everyone has a turn at getting goalside.

### Recovery runs



### Development

Add a second attacker.

### How would I put this into a game situation?

Encourage players in any small-sided games – for example 3v3, 4v4 – to get goalside of the ball when their team has lost possession.



# How to use smart sessions

Print off the session and take it to training. It should take you less than five minutes to read the instructions, set up the session, and then you are ready to communicate what happens to your players.

## **Number of players**

You only need six players to complete a session, though it can easily be expanded to meet your needs. With lots more players you could have a number of grids working at the same time.

## **Timings**

The timings are for a twenty minute session, but it can be expanded or reduced to meet your needs. It's your call.

As a rule of thumb 10 minutes would be enough time for a well executed first drill, development and feedback. Any shorter and you have not explored the full skill range or asked enough questions of the players. Longer is fine as long as you feel the session is developing. The game related element adds another 10 minutes.

## **Equipment**

The equipment used is simple. A set of cones (or trainers or tops) as markers and a couple of balls.

You can add in other equipment where you feel you need them – we just assume that you don't have them because sometimes the shed is locked or another coach is using them.

## **Training area**

The size of the training area is left for you to decide. Smaller players need a smaller area, but the session will never need more than a 20m x 20m grid for initial drills. The smaller the area the more intense the training.

## **The standard and age groups**

Smart sessions are based on the core skills of soccer. They will challenge any standard because a player can always perform the core better.

The "development" ideas can be used to differentiate between the different standards of your players; the "think about" section can challenge the more advanced; the "game related situations" can change the contact situations the teams face.

Players should wear shin pads in all coaching sessions. They should be suitable to the player's physique and worn correctly with socks pulled up.

## **Elements of the session**

### **What to tell your players the session is about:**

This is your introduction and outlines the objectives of the session. Just read this out. The players then have an objective. Return to this at the end of the session to see if you have achieved your objectives.

### **What you tell your players to do:**

This is how you want your players to achieve the objectives. You can tell the players straight away how to achieve the objectives, or you can tease it out of them as the session goes on.

### **What you get your players to do:**

This shows you how the session is going to work. Depending on what is going to be achieved, it sets out what actions the players are going to take. There are no exact measurements, or complicated patterns – the approach is "simple, stupid, successful". Slow motion the first few patterns – get the drill right and the skill right first before speeding up. Use the "What to shout" prompts to keep the players focused. Use the "What to look for" to keep your eye on why the players might be failing.

### **Development**

No session is worth doing unless there is some form of progression. Normally there will be an increase in pressure, say by adding more defenders, or by restricting the time available. Other areas for you to think about are: Where do I stand as coach? Do I throw the ball into the grid?

### **How would I put this into a game situation?**

All the elements of the session are geared to the game, but this section puts the session one step away from a full game, with attack, defence and a goal line.

### **What to shout**

Have the words handy, because apart from the usual words of encouragement, it is good to shout the key factors to players. Of course you can hold some of these "shouts" back and ask the players to identify how they can improve.

### **What to look for**

You need to keep your eyes open for "best practice". This section helps you identify quickly where players might go wrong so you can quickly put them right.

### **Think about**

Here you have the chance to challenge the players and situation, either by using feedback or just asking yourself the questions. It is a little more advanced and might not be appropriate for your players.

### **Where does it fit:**

To help you file and order our coaching we have given you the core areas of individual and team skills that the session covers.