



DAVID CLARKE'S  
**ULTIMATE SOCCER**  
**COACHING SESSIONS**

Coaching plans you can take straight on to the field

**SUPERSTAR SKILLS**

**Soccer Coach**  
WEEKLY

## FOREWORD

# Welcome to Ultimate Soccer Coaching Sessions: Superstar Skills

*Ultimate Soccer Coaching Sessions* is a new way of bringing you, the coach, a concise set of coaching plans that will help you develop specific elements of your team's play.

Each book contains 10 specially chosen training sessions that will provide you with a great platform for developing and enhancing specialist soccer skills, such as crossing, tackling, heading, wing play and more.

The book is made up of two sections – Core sessions, which gives you plans for developing fundamental skills, and Advanced sessions, which shows how you can use drills to help your players move towards an elite level. Each session is broken down into easy to follow elements, making them simple to fit into your coaching plan.

You often find that the greatest players have a special skill or technique that they have perfected and made their own. Usually it's a skill that can unlock a defence or change a game. In

*Superstar Skills* I have chosen 10 of the best for your team to try.

Yours in soccer  
David Clarke  
Editor



## CORE SESSIONS

1. **Cristiano Ronaldo "chop"**
2. **Robinho stepover**
3. **Cruyff turn**
4. **The Matthews move**
5. **The next... Michael Carrick**

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# Cristiano Ronaldo "chop"

Frequently used by the brilliant Portuguese international winger, adding this technique to a player's skill-set will give them more ways of dribbling past an opponent and therefore improve your team's ability to disrupt even the most well-organised defences.



## SET-UP

- 2 players per group with a ball each.
- For the final progression use one ball between both players.



## WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Start square-on with legs fairly wide apart and a stationary ball between them.

Jump and land with one foot in front of the other, the inside of the back foot cutting behind the front foot and hitting the ball to the side.



## DEVELOPMENT

Alternate several left foot-right foot "chops", but stop the ball after each chop so that it doesn't roll away.

Dribble forward a small distance then try the technique. Repeat using the other foot.

Now dribble towards a stationary defender and practice the chop. Make sure players follow the ball as they move past the defender.



## GAME SITUATION

One attacker and one defender start in opposite corners of a four-sided grid. The drill begins with the defender passing the ball to the attacker. Once the attacker has possession, they use different techniques and feints to dribble past the defender. The attacker gains a point for dribbling across either of the two sides of the grid which are immediately to the right and left of the defender. They must retain control of the ball, and they get extra points for successfully performing a Ronaldo Chop. The defender wins a point for winning the ball.



## THINK ABOUT

- Arms out for balance.
- As players become more comfortable encourage them to dribble with their head-up rather than watching their feet.
- Accelerate away after performing the "chop".



## CALL OUT

- "Stay relaxed"
- "Now try with your weaker foot"
- "Keep the ball under close control"

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Dynamic stretching, gentle running and dribbling with twists and turns
The Session 20-30 mins	Learning a new dribbling technique
Development 10 mins	Developing skill by introducing dribbling and opposition
Game 10-15 mins	Practising skill in a game environment
Warm-down 5-10 mins	Gentle running, static stretching

direction of run → pass ⇐⇐⇐

1



Pay close attention to the technique.

2



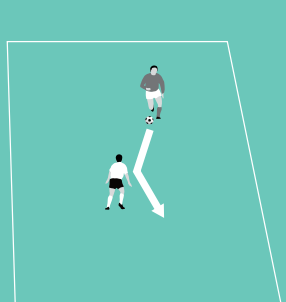
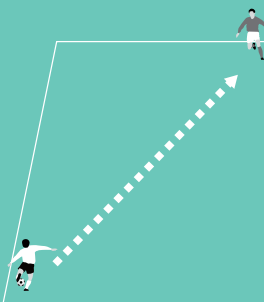
Attacker dribbles towards defender

Attacker performs Ronaldo 'chop'

Attacker follows the ball

Now use the "chop" to take the ball past a defender.

3



This games awards extra points for using the skill, or stopping the attacker.

# Robinho stepover

The Robinho – or double – stepover is a great way to beat a defender and give your players space to cross or shoot. This is a great skill for players to practice on their own in the garden.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Dynamic stretching, gentle running and dribbling with twists and turns
The Session 15–20 mins	Learning stepover technique
Development 15–20 mins	Practising stepover skill
Game 15–20 mins	Improving close control and dribbling skills
Warm-down 10 mins	Gentle running, static stretching



## SET-UP

- A ball each.



## WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Starting slightly behind and with a foot each side of a stationary ball, use one foot to circle the ball several times, ending back at its starting position after each circle.

Repeat with the other foot.

Still with a stationary ball, alternate feet in a sideways ‘8’ motion (‘∞’) around the ball.

Repeat several double stepovers but with the players up on their toes.

Starting with the right foot, perform a double stepover, then touch the ball to the right using the outside of the right foot. Repeat several times then switch to the left foot.



## DEVELOPMENT

Introducing a passive defender, very slowly dribble the ball forward and perform the Robinho stepover, using the final touch to the right or left of the defender to push the ball to the side and past them.



## GAME SITUATION

In a grid approx 10 x 20 metres set up 3 players with 2 balls. A defender is positioned on the halfway line and is only allowed to move side to side to stop the dribbling attackers, who begin at opposite ends and take it in turns to beat the defender. The attackers can use any means to beat the defender but are awarded extra points for successfully going past them using the Robinho stepover.

direction of run ⇨ dribble ⇨⇨⇨  
direction of ball ⇨



*Introduce the skill with players stationary.*



**Attacker dribbles towards defender**

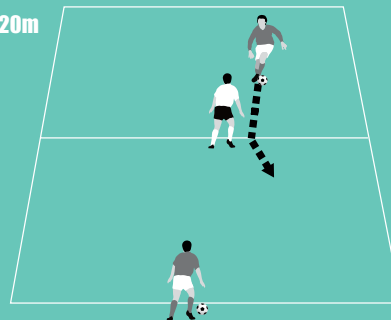
**Attacker performs Robinho ‘stepover’**

**Attacker follows the ball**

*Slow down on approach then use the Robinho stepover to “fake” and unbalance the defender.*



10x20m



*Increase the pressure in this game and award extra points for using the stepover.*



## THINK ABOUT

- Keep the circles around the ball as small as possible.
- Keep feet low to the ground.
- Approach the defender slowly and do stepovers just before reaching them.
- Commit the defender and accelerate past.
- Practice going past the defender on both sides.



## CALL OUT

- “Take your time – don’t rush it”
- “Keep the ball under close control”
- “Be light on your feet”

# Cruyff turn

Named after the legendary 1970s Holland international Johan Cruyff, this turn is ideal for losing a defender and creating space in a tight situation.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Dynamic stretching, gentle running and dribbling
The Session 15 mins	Learning technique for Cruyff turn
Development 15 mins	Practicing technique under pressure
Game 15 mins	Using skill in a competitive environment
Warm-down 10 mins	Gentle running, static stretching



## SET-UP

- 1 ball.
- Cones approximately 5 metres apart.



## THINK ABOUT

- Plant non-kicking foot to one side and just ahead of the ball.
- Feint to pass or cross.
- Bend knees.
- Body weight on non-kicking foot.
- Turn kicking foot inward with toe down.
- Using inside of kicking foot to drag ball behind the standing leg.
- Change direction and accelerate away.



## WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Two players stand at one cone and take it in turns to dribble at half pace with the ball to the second cone, perform a turn then come back. The second player repeats.

Make sure players practice turns using both feet. Follow the steps on the previous page to execute the turn properly.



## DEVELOPMENT

Players stand at opposite cones. Players take turns to run to the second cone, perform the turn just in front of the other player and return to their cone.

Now Player 2, acting as a defender, applies a little pressure by taking a step or two towards Player 1 when they begin their dribble. Players should alternate roles.



## GAME SITUATION

Keeping the set-up the same, the players now position themselves opposite each other with the cones to the right and left and of them. Using a combination of turns and fakes to outsmart their opponent, Player 1 has to reach either cone and stop the ball beside it with the sole of the foot before Player 2 can reach that cone and touch it with their own foot.



## CALL OUT

- “Slow down – get the technique right first”
- “Attack the turn”
- “Sprint away”

player movement ⇨ dribble ⇨⇨⇨



*Pretend to kick the ball but move the foot over the top and drag through the legs.*



*Practice the turn against a passive opponent.*



*Use turns and feints to beat the opponent to either of the cones.*



# The next... Michael Carrick

Michael Carrick has shown how a defensive midfielder can intercept the ball to break up attacks and then begin a counter attack. This session will help your players emulate the Manchester United star.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Dynamic stretching, gentle running with slight changes of direction
The Session 15 mins	Practising intercepting skills
Development 10 mins	Defenders combine to pressurize opposition and create interception opportunities
Game 15 mins	Taking skills learned into a game situation
Warm-down 10 mins	Static stretching for longer, de-brief Q&A



## SET-UP

- Use one ball and four players in a 10-yard square area for the session. Use an area 35 yards long by 20 yards wide for the development and game situation.



## WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Play 3v1 keepaway. Award a point to the attackers for completing five passes. The defender earns a point for knocking the ball out of play or forcing the attackers to kick it out, and two points for stealing the ball. Play two-touch and switch defenders after each minute of play.



## THINK ABOUT

- Anticipate the pass – does the passer’s eye or head movement give away their intentions?
- Defensive principles – apply pressure, make play predictable and use good communication.
- Use a quick pass to start a counter attack.



## DEVELOPMENT

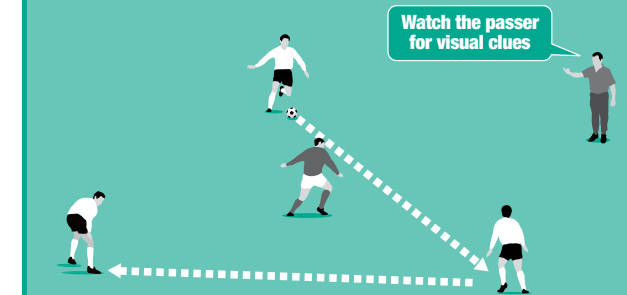
Divide the pitch into two halves and use two teams. Two players from team B go into team A’s half of the pitch and try to win the ball in a 4v2.

Team A wins a point for making five consecutive passes in their own half. The two players from team B earn two points for their team by winning the ball and passing it back to a team mate in their own half.

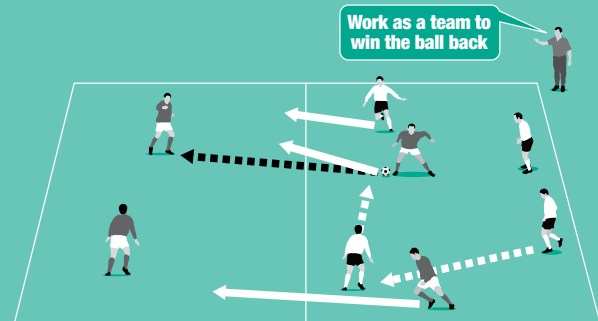
If that happens, they and two players from team A enter team B’s half and start a new 4v2, with the objectives reversed.



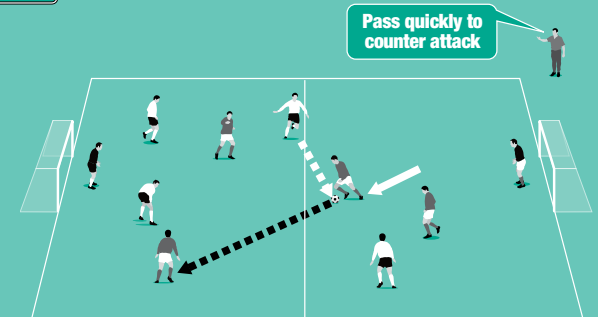
direction of run → interception and pass ■■■→  
pass ■■■→ what to call out ■■■



Play a 3v1 keepaway game. The defender tries to intercept the ball.



Two players from one team try to steal the ball back from the opposition and take it to their half of the pitch.



In a small-sided game, play two-touch so there is lots of passing which offers a good chance of being intercepted.



## CALL OUT

- “On your toes”
- Watch the ball!



## GAME SITUATION

Play a small-sided game and condition the number of touches a player can have to two, to encourage lots of passing and therefore opportunities to intercept the ball.

To progress, lift the two-touch restrictions.

# Ronaldinho elastic

Named after the Brazilian international who played for Barcelona and is now at AC Milan, this trick is a superb way of making a defender think you're going one way but actually going the other. It makes a fantastic addition to any player's skill-set.



## SET-UP

- 1 ball per player.



## THINK ABOUT

- Players should slow down as they approach the defender.
- Use arms for balance.
- Accelerate away from defender after the trick.
- As players become more comfortable encourage them to dribble with their head-up rather than watching their feet.



## CALL OUT

- "This is tricky so start slowly"
- "Keep the ball under close control"
- "Now blast past the defender"



## WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Begin by shifting the ball alternately with the outside and inside of the kicking foot while stationary.

Now, with the right foot at the back of the ball use the little toe to move the ball to the right.

Keeping the foot in contact with the ball, move around the back and use the big toe to bring the ball back to the left.

Increase speed until it becomes one smooth movement.

Repeat with weaker foot.



## DEVELOPMENT

At half pace to begin with, try skill against a passive defender.

Increase speed.

Try with weaker foot.



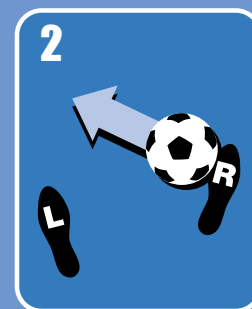
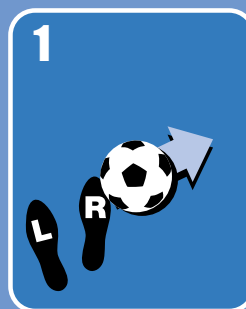
## GAME SITUATION

Two teams of 4 players line up approx 20-25 metres away from goal. The 1st player from team A must use their skill to beat the 1st player from team B and score a goal past a goalkeeper. After the shot, the 1st player from team A becomes the defender in the 1v1 situation and tries to stop the 2nd player from team B.

Award points for successfully creating space for the shot, and for scoring. The team with the most points wins.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Dynamic stretching, gentle running and dribbling with twists and turns
The Session 15-20 mins	Learning new dribbling technique
Development 10-15 mins	Developing skill by introducing dribbling and passive opposition
Game 15-20 mins	Attempting technique in a match-type situation
Warm-down 10 mins	Gentle running, ball work, static stretching

run with ball → → → shot →



Practice the move individually keeping the foot in contact with the ball throughout.



Attacker dribbles towards defender

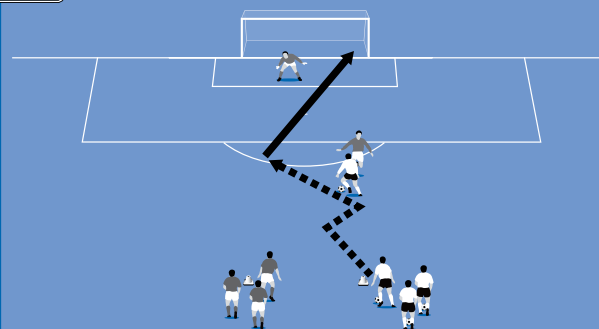


Attacker performs Ronaldinho 'elastic'



Attacker follows the ball

Now use the move to get around a passive defender.



See which team can score the most in a continuous game using tricks and feints to beat the defender.

## Gerrard v Lampard

This is a session your players will love as it encourages them to develop the skills used by two of England's best midfielders, Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Pass and make a forward run
The Session 15 mins	The players are passing and receiving, and shooting from distance
Development 15 mins	The players are able to combine passing and receiving, shooting and forward runs
Game 15 mins	The players are able to react to the team winning possession before bursting forward to attack
Warm-down 5 mins	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



### SET-UP

- Create a 50 x 30 yards area with a goal and keeper at one end.
- Split the area into two halves of 25 x 30 yards.



### THINK ABOUT

- A goal-scoring midfielder is a huge asset for any team. Players like Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard are known for their ability to score goals from distance or make late runs into attacking positions.

This session aims to develop these skills along with other qualities vital to a midfielder's game, such as passing and receiving, dribbling to beat defenders and hard work to regain possession.



### CALL OUT

- "Retain the ball"
- "Can you get into a shooting position?"
- "React to the ball going wide and make a run into the box"



### WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

The working midfielder passes across to a player opposite (1) and runs to receive a return pass (2). Now the midfielder turns and passes to the next player in his line (3) in order to receive another return pass (4). On receiving the second pass, the midfielder dribbles past the mannequin before shooting.



### DEVELOPMENT

Progress the session by adding a cross and finish to the move. Therefore, after he has shot at goal, you pass the midfielder another ball (1). He passes the ball out wide to a winger (2), who dribbles before crossing (3). After passing to the winger, the midfielder must make a forward run and score from the cross (4).



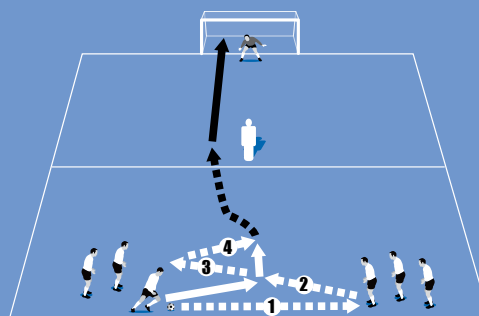
### GAME SITUATION

The white team has one more player than the grey team in the main pitch. The grey team has one extra player as a winger outside the pitch.

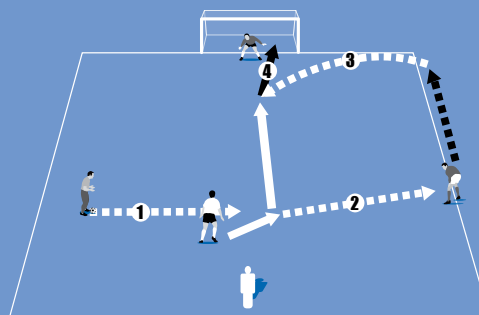
The white team try to keep possession of the ball. If a grey player wins the ball, they are free to dribble across the half way line and shoot at goal. The player can also pass to a team mate to run across the half way line. After the player has shot at goal, he must then react to a cross made by the winger and try to score again.

Play for a set time period before rotating the teams. The grey team now has the player overload in the pitch and the white team has the winger.

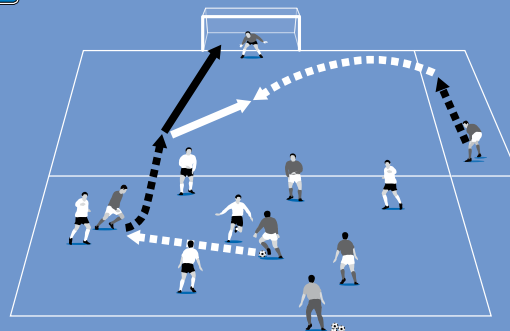
direction of run  $\Rightarrow$  pass  $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$   
dribble  $\dashrightarrow$  shot  $\rightarrow$



*On receiving the second pass, the midfielder dribbles past the mannequin and shoots.*



*After shooting, the midfielder plays another pass to the winger. The midfielder must now run into the box to score from the cross.*



*The white team tries to keep possession. When a grey player wins the ball, he can dribble and shoot. He must then react to score from a cross.*

## The Messi challenge

Lionel Messi's attacking ability from both wide and central areas is unrivalled. Get your players to copy him in the Messi challenge – a session that will give them the confidence to attack from any position.



### SET-UP

- Create a 50 yards by 30 yards playing area, with a halfway line and goal at either end.



### THINK ABOUT

- Why not try your wide attackers on the opposite wing? Left footers play on the right and right footers on the left. This enables players to cut inside and shoot at goal, just like Messi for Barcelona.
- It is important your players are positive when they receive the ball and look to attack their opponents.
- The players must recognise when to dribble (1v1 situations) or when to pass (when faced with two defenders or when a team mate is free to shoot).



### CALL OUT

- "Attack the defender"
- "Can you go past him?"
- "Can you get half a yard to shoot?"



### WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Four players work at the same time. The (white) "Messi" players first attack from wide areas and look to beat a defender inside or outside to shoot. The attackers then react and run to collect a second ball and attack the opposite goal from a central area. Therefore, the defenders play one attack against each white attacker.

If a player is tackled, the attack finishes.



### DEVELOPMENT

Develop the techniques in a small-sided game. The grey team has two defenders and two attackers. They attack the central areas, where a forward can pull into the free, central zone to receive and then dribble to create a 2v2 situation.

The whites have two defenders and three attackers. They attack in wide areas and can use the free wide zones to receive a pass and then dribble to make a 2v2 with the centre forward.

Play first to three goals or for 10 minutes before swapping team roles.



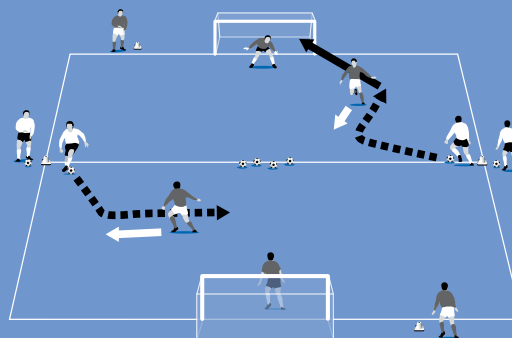
### GAME SITUATION

Play a normal game and encourage the players to dribble at defenders at every opportunity. Award free-kicks against players not dribbling in space or 1v1 situations.

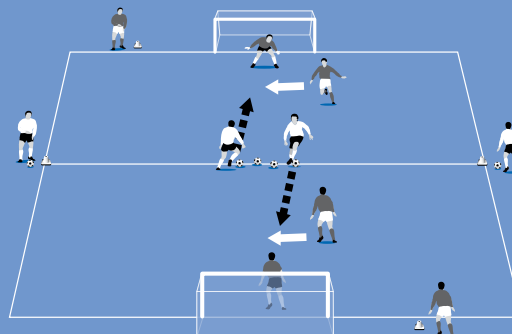
You can also penalise players if they dribble at the wrong time (when outnumbered or in defensive areas).

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Players reacting to change speed and direction when dribbling
The Session 10 mins	Circuit drill where players learn to attack in wide and central areas
Development 20 mins	Small-sided game – rotate attacks in central and wide areas
Game 15 mins	Small-sided game – players are attempting to dribble when they receive the ball
Warm-down 5 mins	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises

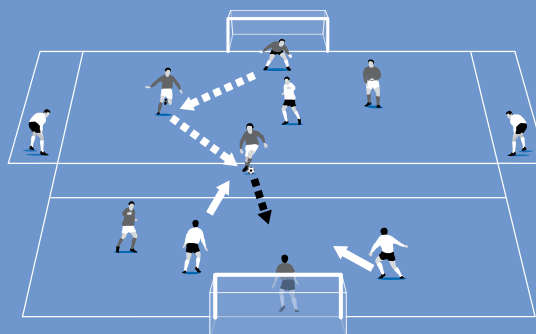
direction of run pass   
dribble shot



Players start on the wing and dribble forward to attack the defender on the inside or outside.



The players then turn to collect a second ball on the halfway line and run at the other defender from the middle of the pitch.



One team's players work on being like Messi in central areas. The other team's players work on being like Messi in wide areas.

## Xavi and Iniesta

The Barcelona midfield pairing of Xavi and Iniesta have taken soccer to a new high in terms of passing, creation and domination of the ball. This session will elevate the skills of your players so they can pass and move like these Spanish masters.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 10 mins	Passing and receiving with a team mate
The Session 10 mins	Passing and receiving the ball at speed
Development 15 mins	The playmakers are constantly receiving the ball and keeping possession
Game 20 mins	The team is keeping the ball by using the two neutral players
Warm-down 5 mins	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



### SET-UP

- Create a 30-yard diameter circle using cones.



### WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Split the team into two groups of players (Xavis and Iniestas). Nominate one player from each team to be in the circle. These two will be Xavi and Iniesta who work simultaneously. The players must try to complete as many “give and gos” (return passes) with their team mates on the outside of the area.

The game lasts for 90 seconds with the player completing the most passes declared the winner.



### THINK ABOUT

- Players should always be on the move and looking to receive a pass.
- Make sure your players are aware they need to find an available team mate for a pass.
- Can players pass quickly by using a maximum of three touches?
- Can the passer give the receiver some information, such as a shout of “time” or “turn”?
- Are players receiving the ball on their “back foot” (the foot furthest away from the passer), allowing them to turn and dribble the ball away in a different direction.



### DEVELOPMENT

Now Xavi and Iniesta work together in the circle. The remaining players come together in pairs and mark each other on the outside of the circle.

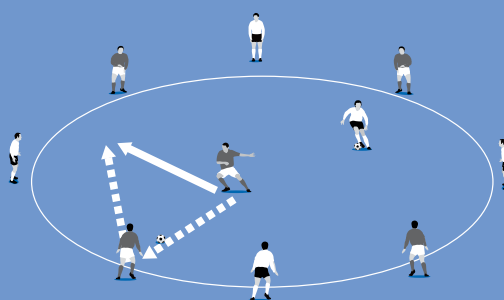
Xavi and Iniesta are limited to three touches and have to play the ball to one team of players outside the circle and receive a return pass. If a pass goes astray or is intercepted then the other team are now in possession of the ball.



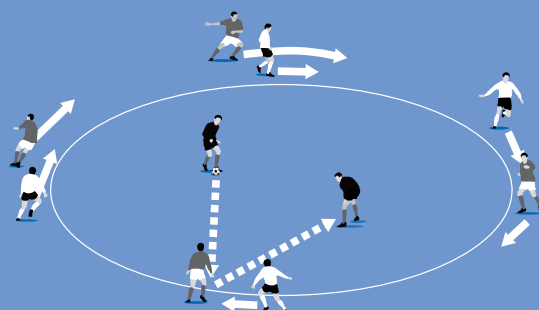
### GAME SITUATION

Now play a possession game with all players inside the circle. The game will now be 4v4 or 5v5 with Xavi and Iniesta playing for the team in possession of the ball. A goal is awarded each time a team completes five passes. Once you are happy with the standard of the game you can progress by playing a normal game with goalkeepers and give double goals for each one set up by Xavi or Iniesta.

player movement ⇨ pass ⇨⇨⇨



“Xavi” and “Iniesta” are inside the circle and make quick “give and go” passes with team mates on the outside.



Xavi and Iniesta combine with one team of players outside the circle to keep the ball until it is intercepted, then they help the other team.



A 4v4 game in which Xavi and Iniesta help the team with the ball keep possession.



### CALL OUT

- “Play quickly.”
- “Call for the ball.”
- “Receive on your back foot and change direction.”

## The next... Jack Wilshere

Arsenal and England prodigy, Jack Wilshere, is a shining light in Arsene Wenger's first team with his excellent close control and eye for making a deadly pass. This session will help teach your players to play like him.



### SET-UP

- Use a 30-yard square with scattered cones for the session.



### THINK ABOUT

- The player should always be looking to score a goal.
- When receiving the ball, the first thought should be, can I beat the defender with a skill?
- Secondly, if I cannot beat the defender with a skill, can I beat the defender by making a pass and running into space?



### CALL OUT

- "Play at full speed"
- "Keep control of the ball"
- "Look for the runner"



### WHAT YOU GET YOUR PLAYERS TO DO

Players each dribble a ball on to the pitch. They try to use close control and quick footwork to go in and out of the cones then take a shot at their respective goal.



### DEVELOPMENT

Use an area measuring 40 x 30 yards. In one half, mark out a 10-yard square and have a goal at the opposite end. Place one defender and two attackers on the halfway line, and one defender and three attackers in the 10-yard square.

Start with a 3v1 passing practice in the 10-yard square. Attackers must complete four passes, after which one attacker must dribble the ball out of the area towards the halfway line and then make a through pass for one of the attackers to run and score. The defender can only defend along the halfway line.



### GAME SITUATION

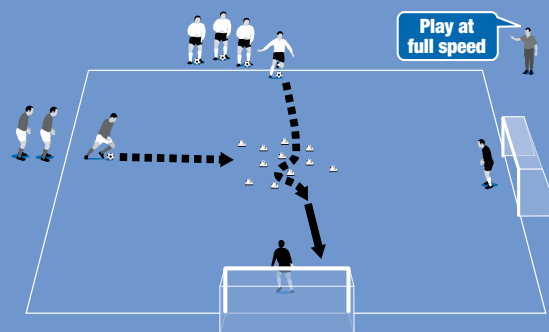
Split an area measuring 60 x 40 yards into three zones – the end zones are each 15 yards long and the central area is 30 yards long.

The game is played mainly inside the central zone. In the first half, goals must be scored by a player dribbling into the opponent's end zone to go 1v1 against the goalkeeper.

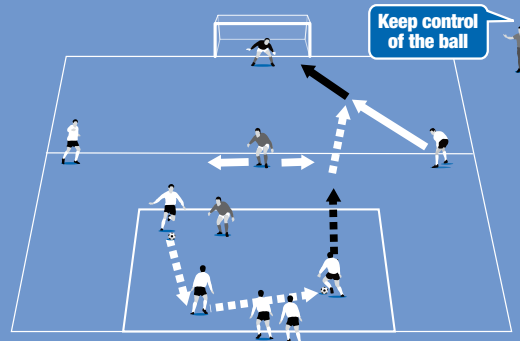
In the second half, goals must be scored by a player running on to a through pass in the opponent's end zone and shooting past the goalkeeper.

Activity	Outcome
Warm-up 5 mins	Players learn different balls skills and tricks
The Session 15 mins	The players use their quick feet and skills to go through the cones and shoot at goal
Development 15 mins	The players quickly combine to create a goal scoring opportunity
Game 20 mins	The players dribble or pass to unlock the opponents defence
Warm-down 5 mins	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises

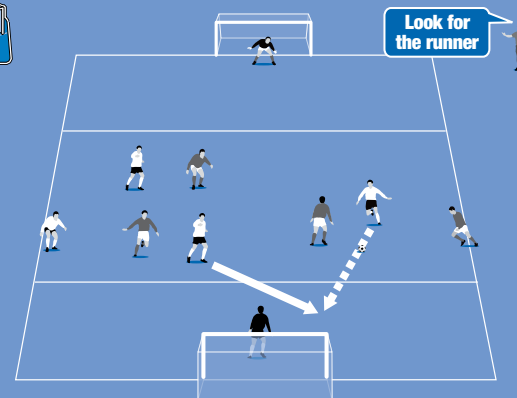
player movement pass shot   
run with ball what to call out



Both sets of players dribble through the cones and shoot at the goal in front of them.



Once four passes are completed in the small box, one player dribbles upfield to release an attacker for a shot.



The action takes place in the central area. Goals are scored by either a through pass or dribbling into the end zone to shoot.