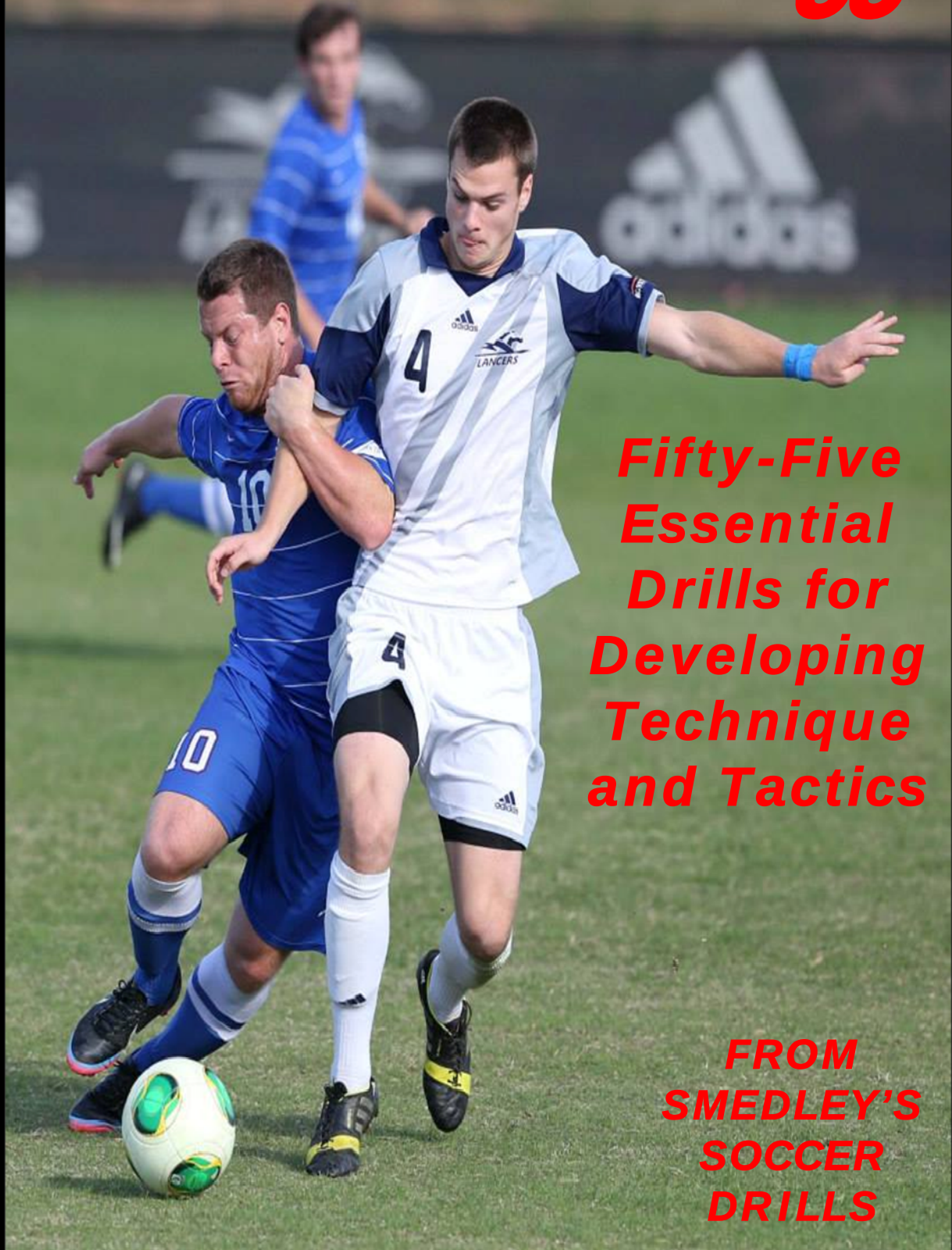


THE FUNDAMENTAL 55

***Fifty-Five
Essential
Drills for
Developing
Technique
and Tactics***

***FROM
SMEDLEY'S
SOCCER
DRILLS***



For the cover boy, Michael Durr

***THE
FUNDAMENTAL
FIFTY-FIVE***

***55 Essential Drills
for Developing
Technique and Tactics***

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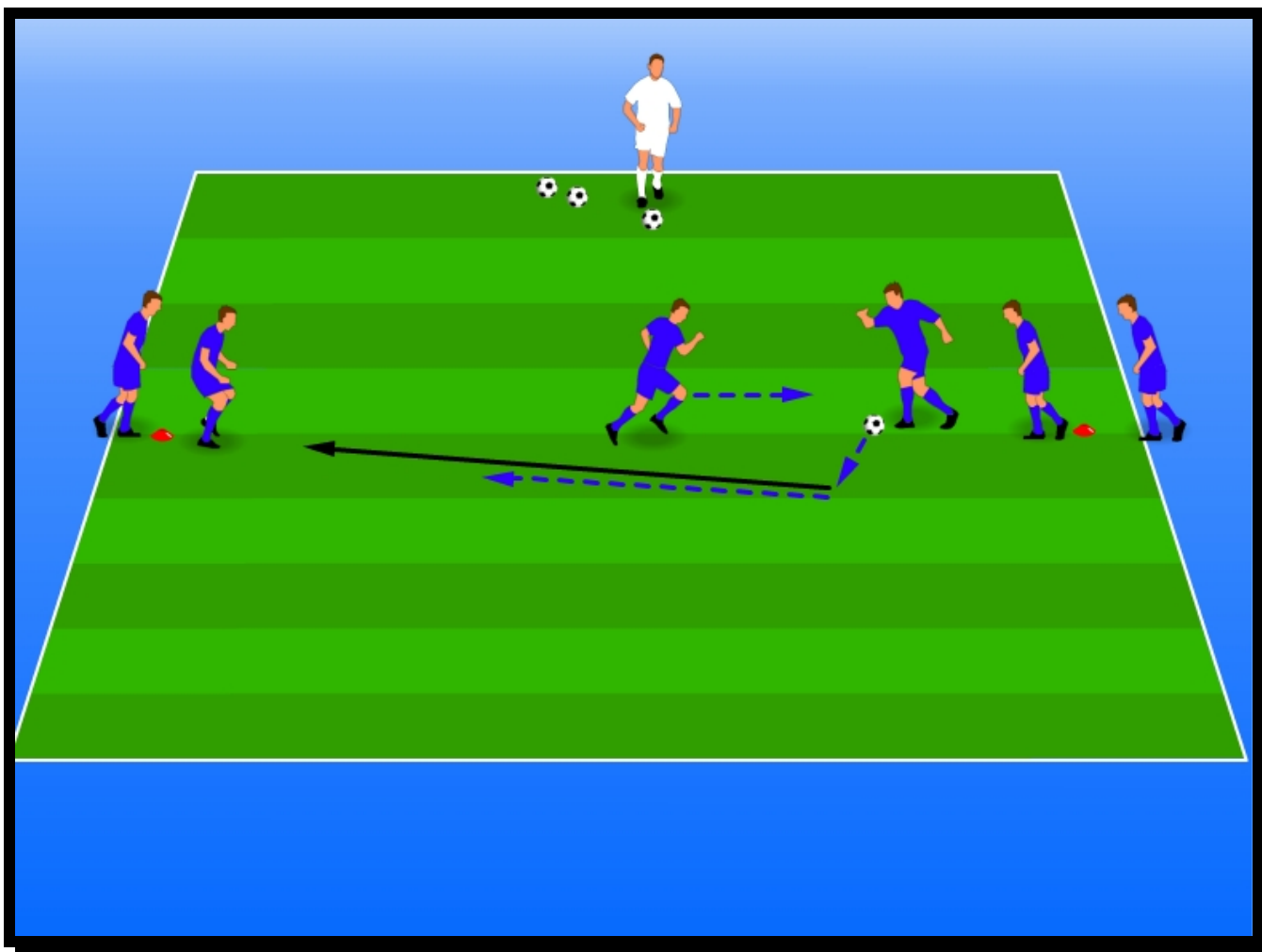
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Feed and Pressure

Fundamental

Dribbling



Set Up: There are 6-8 players set up on the small grid, with lines starting at the cones.

Procedure: The players pass and follow their own pass across the grid, putting pressure on the next attacker as he receives. Play continues back and forth across the grid in a shuttle fashion, and the amount of defensive pressure put on by the defender is determined by the coach (see Progressions).

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Receiving.
- 2 Dribbling moves.
- 3 Attacking 1 v 1.

Progressions:

- 1 The defender charges straight in.
- 2 The defender sticks a foot in.

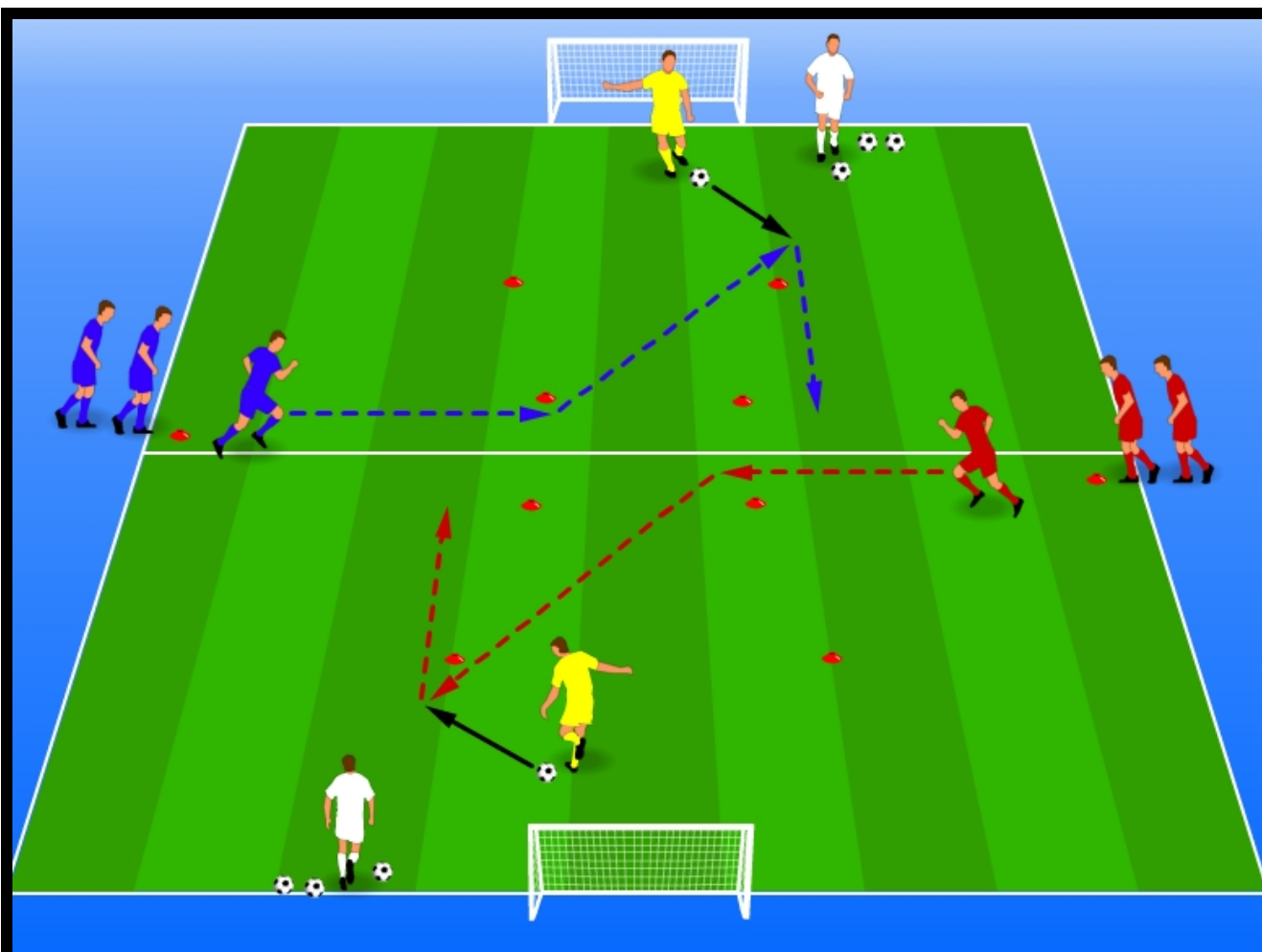
Coaching Points:

- 1 Take your first touch off to the side, not straight ahead.
- 2 When the defender over commits, touch the ball past him as he charges in.
- 3 Use feinting moves behind the ball in order to slow down the defender's run.

Finishing Race

Fundamental

Dribbling



Set Up: There are two teams of 3-5 players set up on the small field, with lines starting at midfield.

Procedure: The two teams line up at the cone near the midfield line. On the Coach's signal, the first player sprints thru the box (marked by the cones) and picks up a ball from the goalkeeper. The attackers turn up the field and carry the ball into the other half for a finish on goal. As soon as the shot is taken, the next player in line can begin his run. The first team to score three goals wins, and the teams play a best-of-five series.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Speed dribbling.
- 2 Finishing.
- 3 Shooting.

Progressions:

- 1 Double pass with the goalkeeper, turn, and then run onto a thru pass.

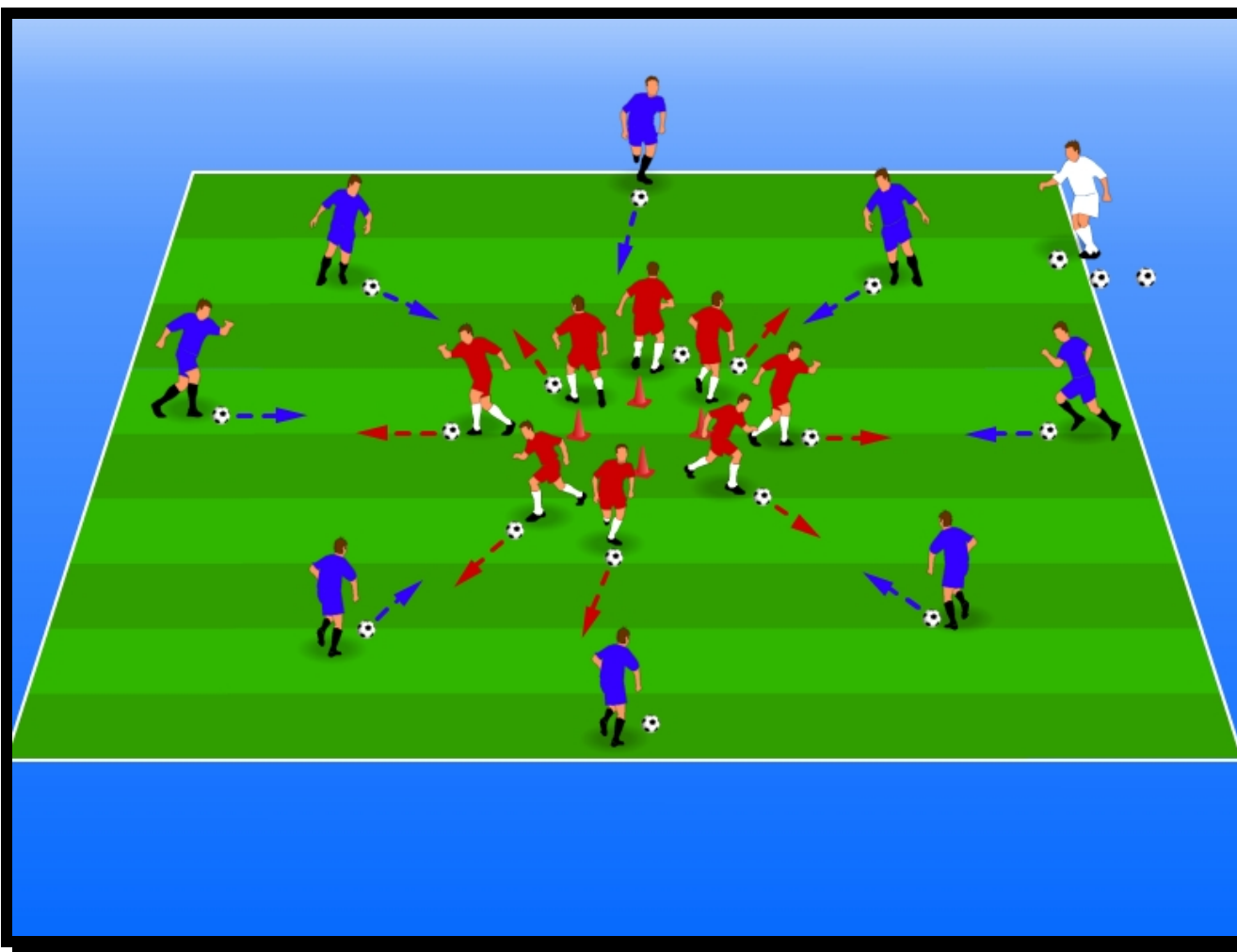
Coaching Points:

- 1 Dribble with the instep, sprinting in between touches.
- 2 Dribble with your head up and deal with the goalkeeper.
- 3 Take your last dribble touch to the side to create a better shooting angle.

Traffic Jam

Fundamental

Dribbling



Set Up: There are sixteen players set up inside the grid, each player starting with a ball.

Procedure: On the signal, the first group of eight players dribbles directly towards the cones at game speed. When they get close to the cones, they perform a 180 degree turning move and dribble the ball back out. As soon as they turn, the second group of players starts in towards the cones, and both groups must avoid contact with each other. Possible moves are: Step over, Step on, Full sole roll, Pull behind the leg, Cruyff, Chop with inside or outside of the foot, etc.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Turning moves.
- 2 Feinting moves.
- 3 Ball control.

Progressions:

- 1 Players can kick the ball away from another player.

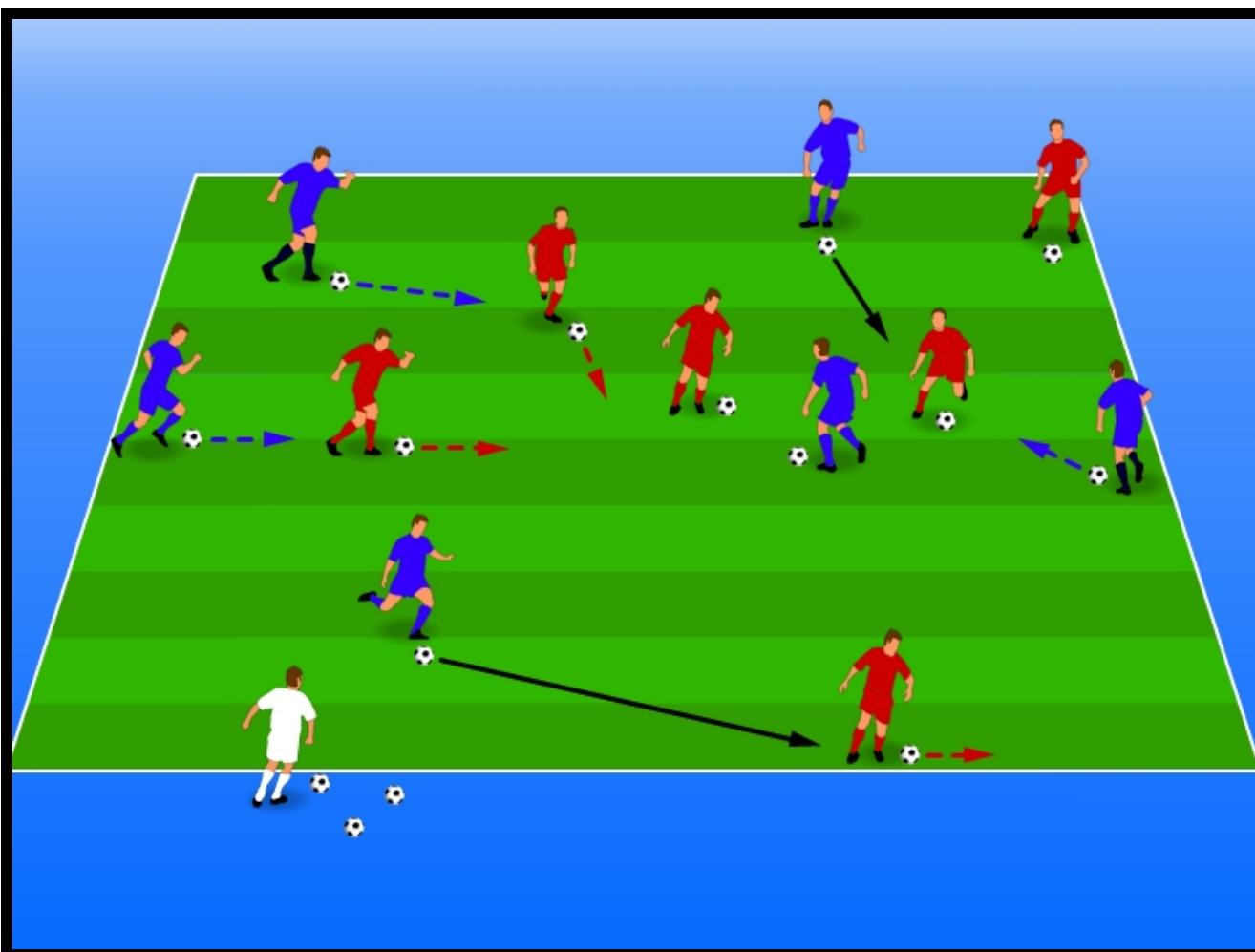
Coaching Points:

- 1 Accelerate out of your turning move in order to create enough space to pass.
- 2 'Sell' your turning moves with ball and body feints.
- 3 Keep the ball close to your foot and be able to turn away from pressure at any time.

Sharks and Minnows

Fundamental

Dribbling



Set Up: 12-20 players are set up inside of the large grid, split into two teams.

Procedure: Every player in the grid starts with a soccer ball. The players on one team try to chase down their opponents and knock their soccer balls out of the grid, using their own ball. When a player has his ball knocked out, he leaves the grid. Play ends when all of the players on one team are out of the grid, and the team that stays in the longest is the winner.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Dribbling moves.
- 2 Feinting moves.
- 3 Turning moves.

Progressions:

- 1 Use three or four teams of 4-5 players.

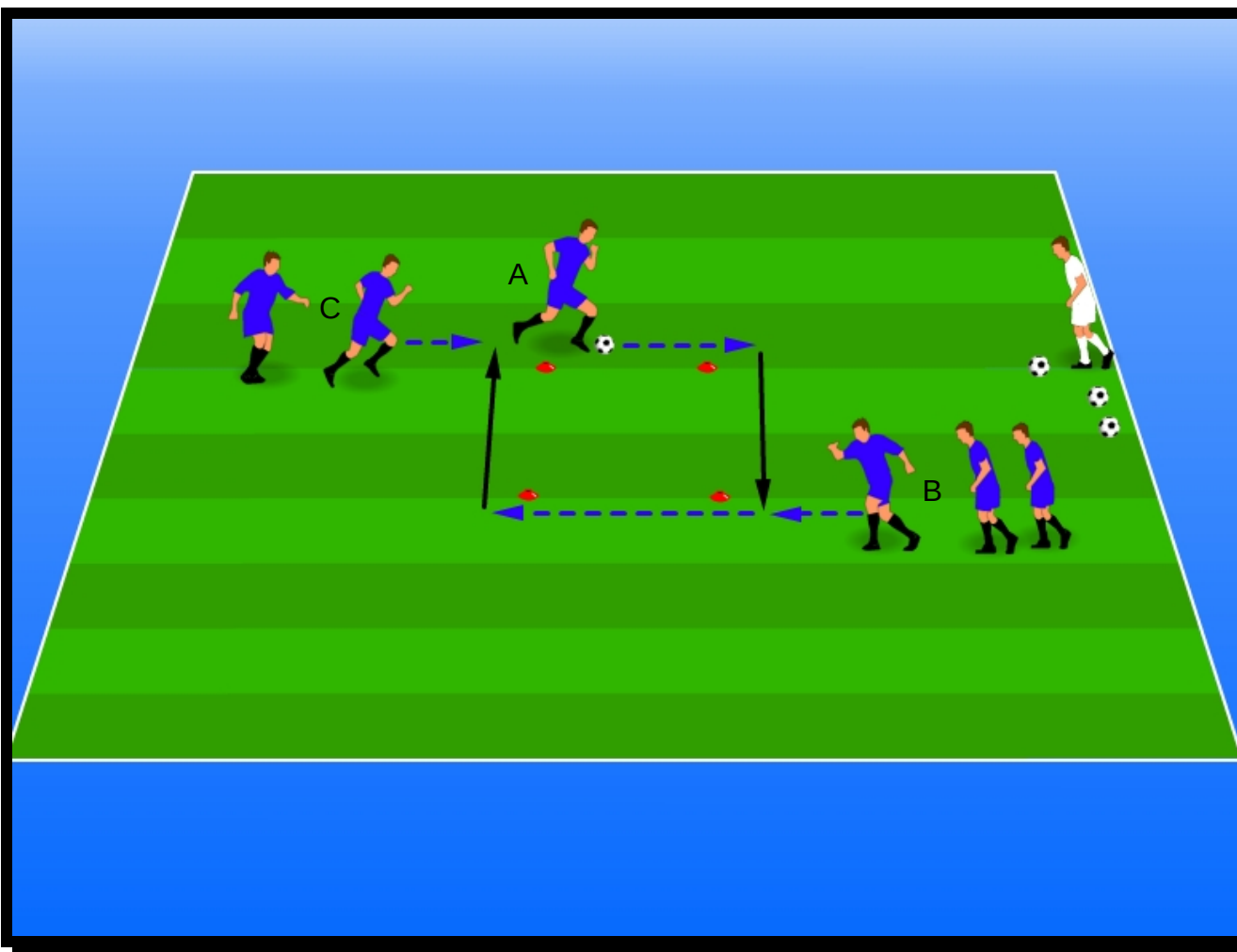
Coaching Points:

- 1 Dribble with your head up and be ready to shield.
- 2 'Sell' your dribbling moves with ball and body feints.
- 3 Make sharp changes of speed and direction to beat defenders and/or create space.

Outside of the Foot

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: There are 6-8 players set up on the small grid, with lines starting at the cones.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player A dribbles to the cone and passes sharply across the grid to Player B, using the outside of the foot. Player B receives the pass and dribbles to the cone as well, passing the ball back over to Player C. Play continues back and forth across the grid in a shuttle fashion, with the players only using the outside of the foot to pass. After passing, the players go to the opposite line.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Passing technique.
- 2 Passing accuracy.
- 3 Ball control.

Progressions:

- 1 Use a smaller grid to increase the speed of the drill.

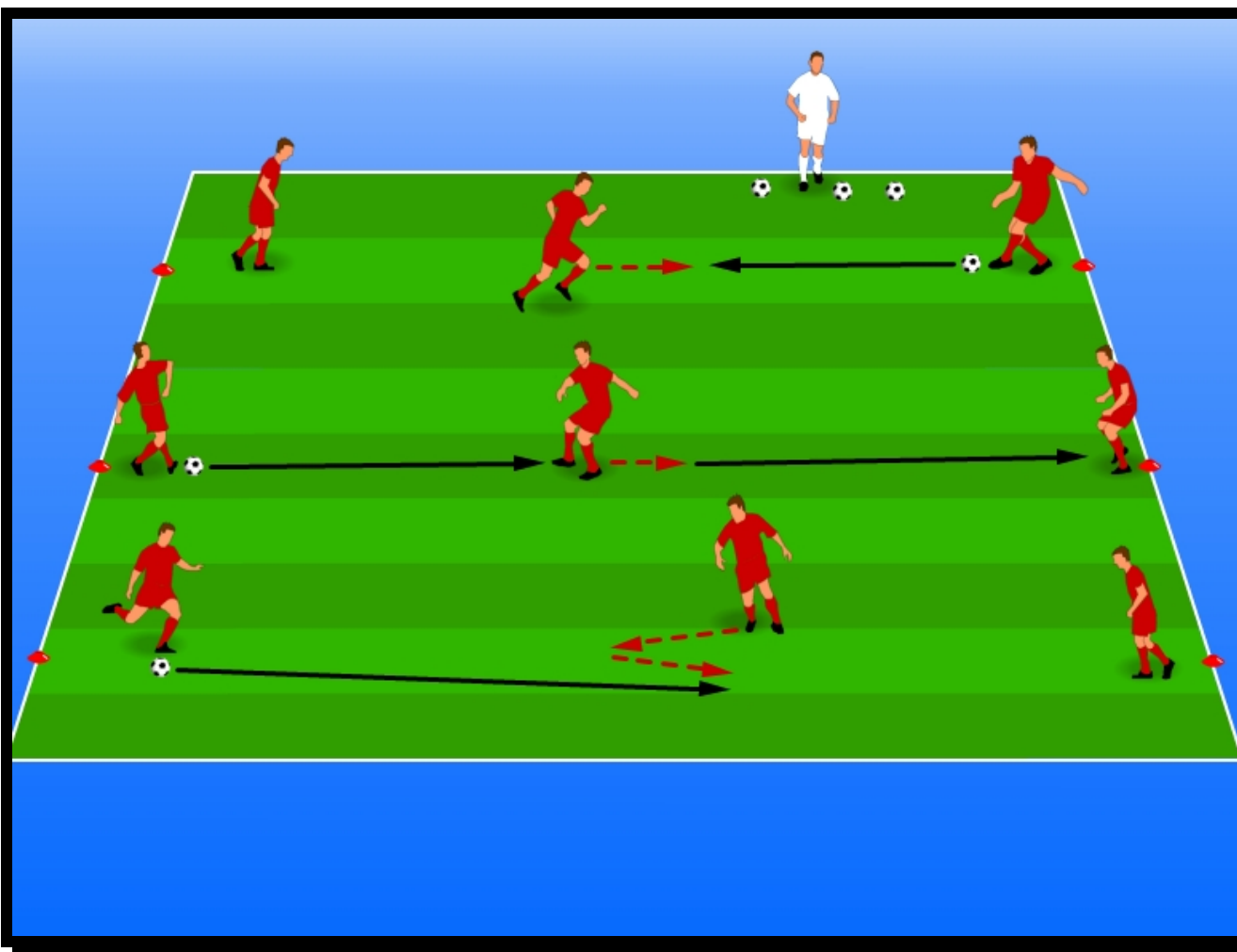
Coaching Points:

- 1 Use a hard flick of the foot to pass the ball sharply across to the next player.
- 2 Pick your head up and check the target at least once before passing.
- 3 Keep the ball on the outside of the foot to receive, dribble, and pass.

Receiving Drill

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: Nine players are set up inside of the grid, working in groups of three between the cones.

Procedure: One player in the group plays between the other two, receiving and turning with the ball in the center. The players at the cones challenge the central player with their passes, striking them at game speed or faster. After 60 seconds, the players change positions.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Checking back.
- 2 Let it run by.
- 3 Turning moves.

Progressions:

- 1 Shorten the passes.
- 2 Use specific turning moves in the center.

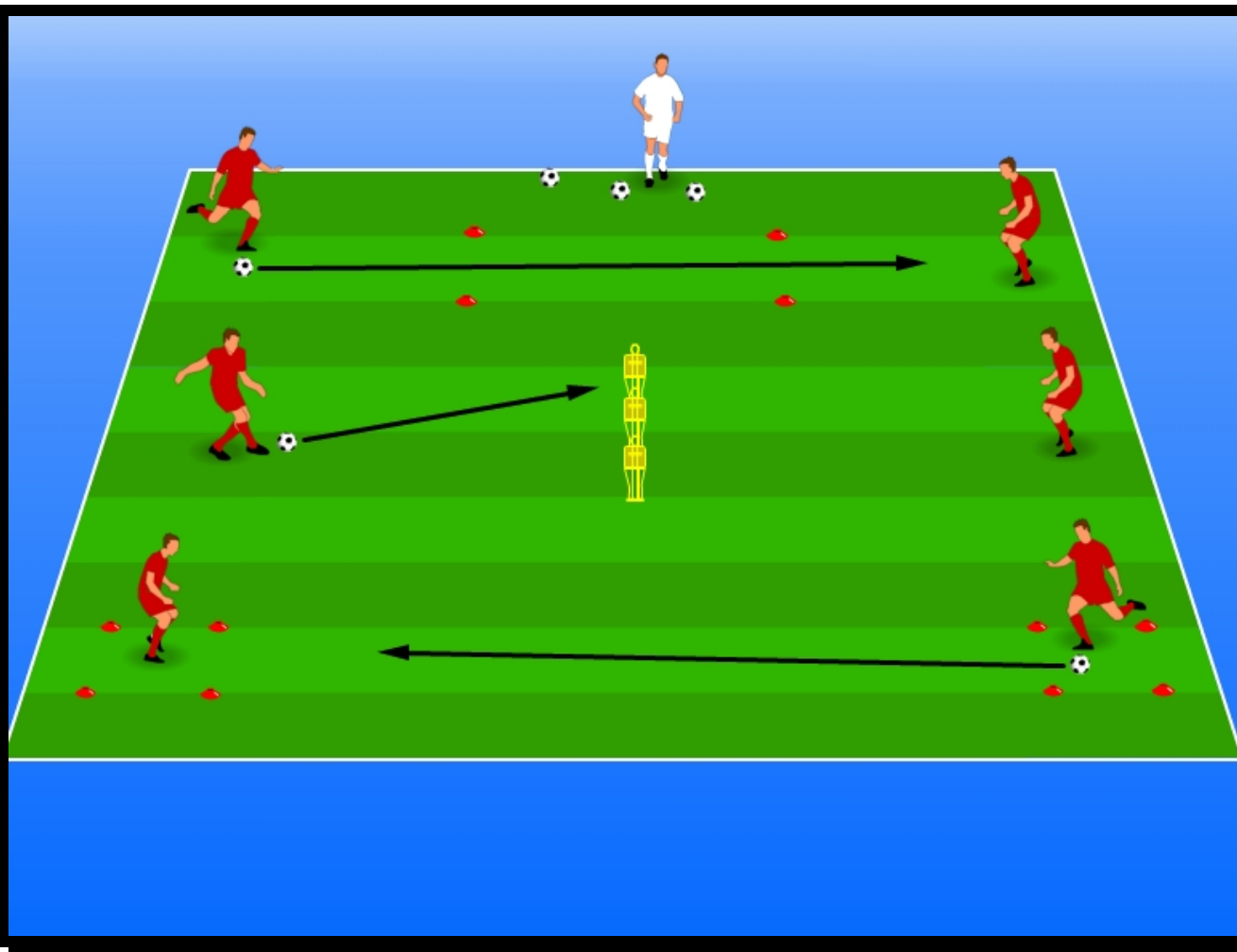
Coaching Points:

- 1 Go to the ball in order to receive. Imagine that there is a defender on your back.
- 2 The ball must be moving relatively slowly if you choose to let it run by.
- 3 Take your first touch away from the defender as you turn.

Target Game #2

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: There are six players set up on a small field, playing in pairs. Target goals (or barriers) are placed between them.

Procedure: The players pass the ball back and forth thru the target goals (or over a barrier), and the players are limited to one or two touches. Points are scored when the target goal is missed or too many touches are taken. The first player to five points wins the game, and the players compete in best out of three matches before changing partners.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Receiving.
- 2 First touch.
- 3 Ball striking.

Progressions:

- 1 Decrease the size of the target.

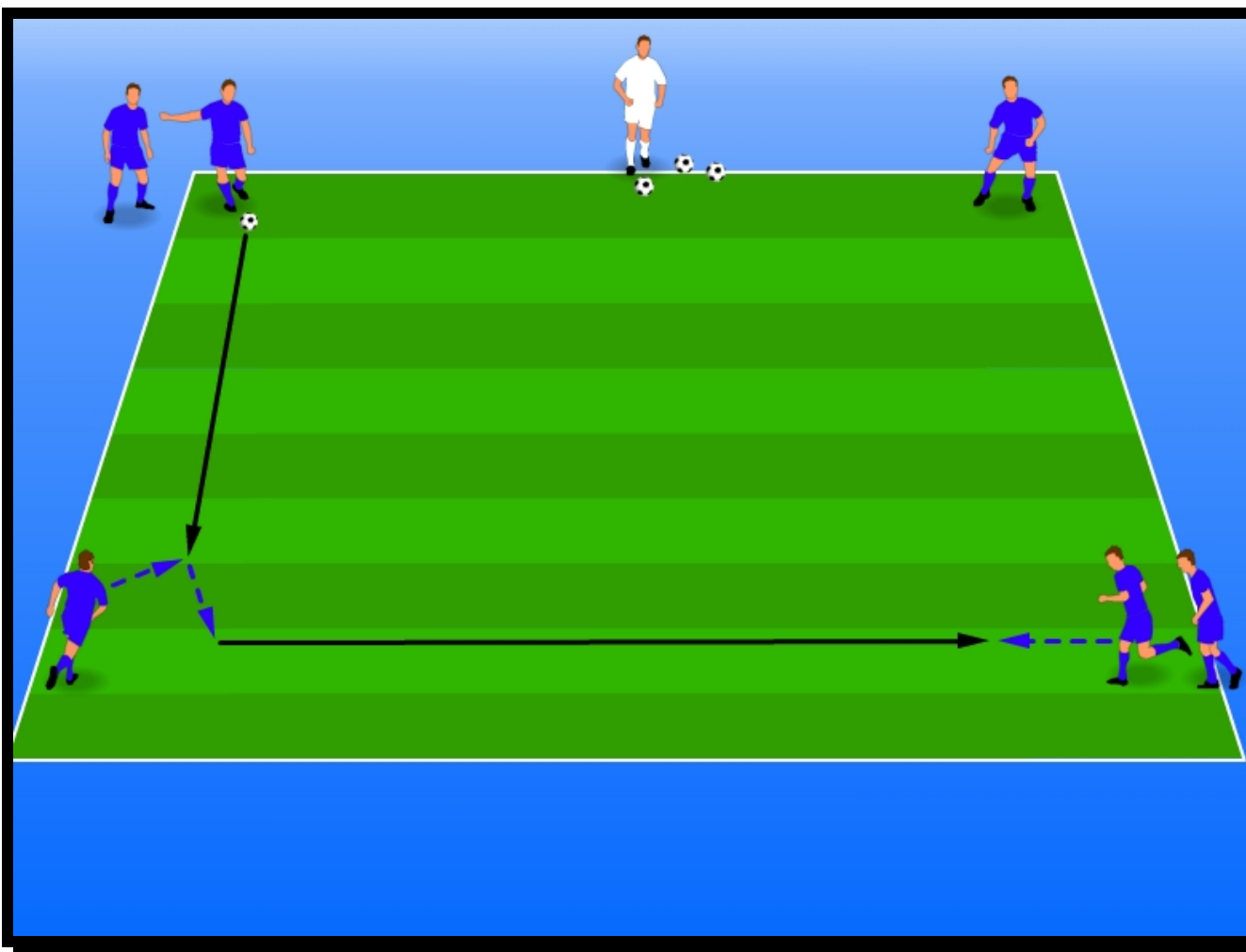
Coaching Points:

- 1 Move into the path of the ball and get your feet set as early as possible.
- 2 Prepare the ball at the proper angle and distance in order to strike a quality pass.
- 3 Drive the ball with the instep to give it pace and backspin.

Passing Square, #1

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: There are 6-8 players set up in the small grid, starting in the corners.

Procedure: During the drill, the players receive passes at each corner, checking to the ball and then opening up with their first touch. After receiving and turning, they pass the ball to the next corner and follow their own pass, moving counter-clockwise around the grid. During the drill, the direction of play may change and/or a new technique may be added.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Opening up.
- 2 Passing technique.
- 3 Checking runs.

Progressions:

- 1 Touch the ball into the open space, and then run onto it.

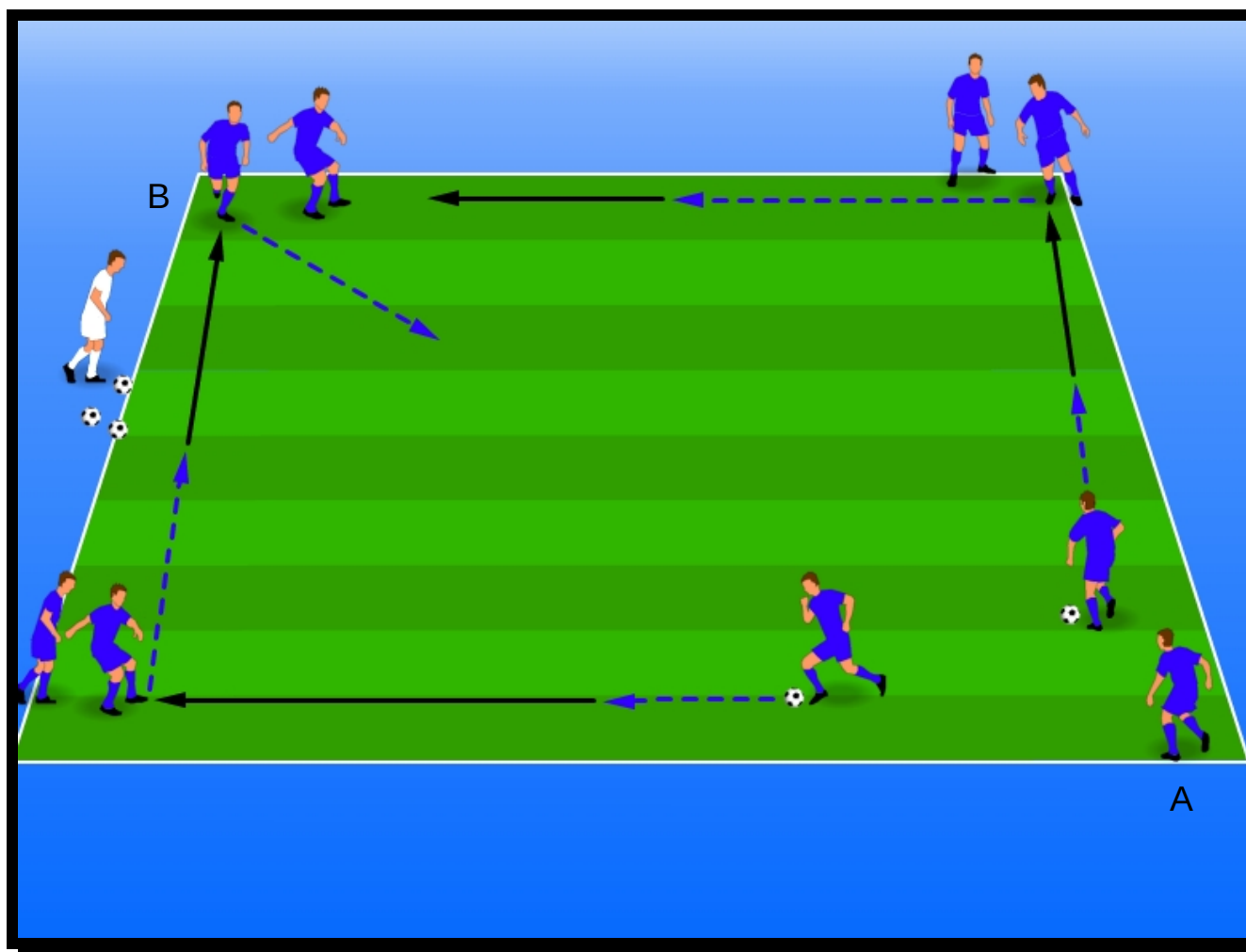
Coaching Points:

- 1 Let the ball run across your body so that you can open up with your first touch.
- 2 When passing, check for the target one last time just before you strike the ball.
- 3 Check away, feel for the defender, and then break back to the ball.

Smedley's Square

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: There are 8-10 players set up inside the grid, starting at the corners. Two balls are used during the drill.

Procedure: At the start of the drill, two players dribble out of the same corner (A) in opposite directions. From there, the players dribble halfway across the grid and pass to the next corner. When the ball reaches the corner across from the start (B), play moves diagonally across the square and back to the start. The drill continues in this pattern, with one player going left at the start (A), and the next one going right.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Positive first touch.
- 2 Footwork.
- 3 Speed dribbling.

Progressions:

- 1 Make two touch passes out of every corner.

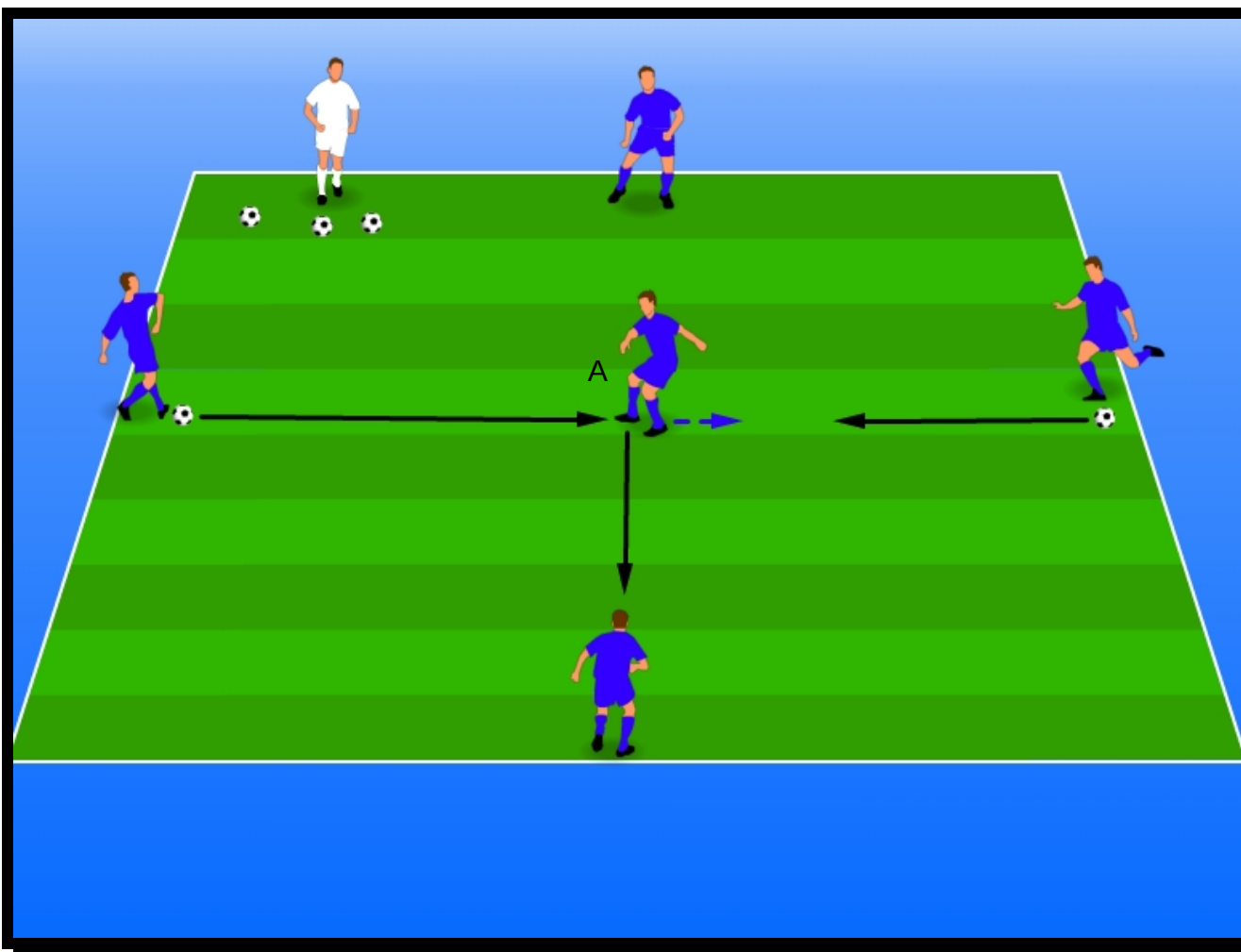
Coaching Points:

- 1 Run out of the corner, making the first touch straight at the next corner.
- 2 Get your feet set early when receiving, and be up on your toes.
- 3 Move the ball at game speed—dribble at full speed and strike game speed passes.

One Touch Drill, #1

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: Five players set up on a small grid. Two soccer balls are used during the drill.

Procedure: Four players are stationed around the outside of the grid, feeding passes into the center for Player A. Player A distributes the ball around the grid to open players, using one or two touches. No return passes are allowed. Players on the outside must wait until Player A has touched the ball off before playing the next ball in. The outside players may also pass to the other outside players, forcing Player A to turn and find the next ball. A new player switches in for Player A after 30-60 seconds.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Receiving.
- 2 Vision.
- 3 Passing.

Progressions:

- 1 Reduce the size of the grid.

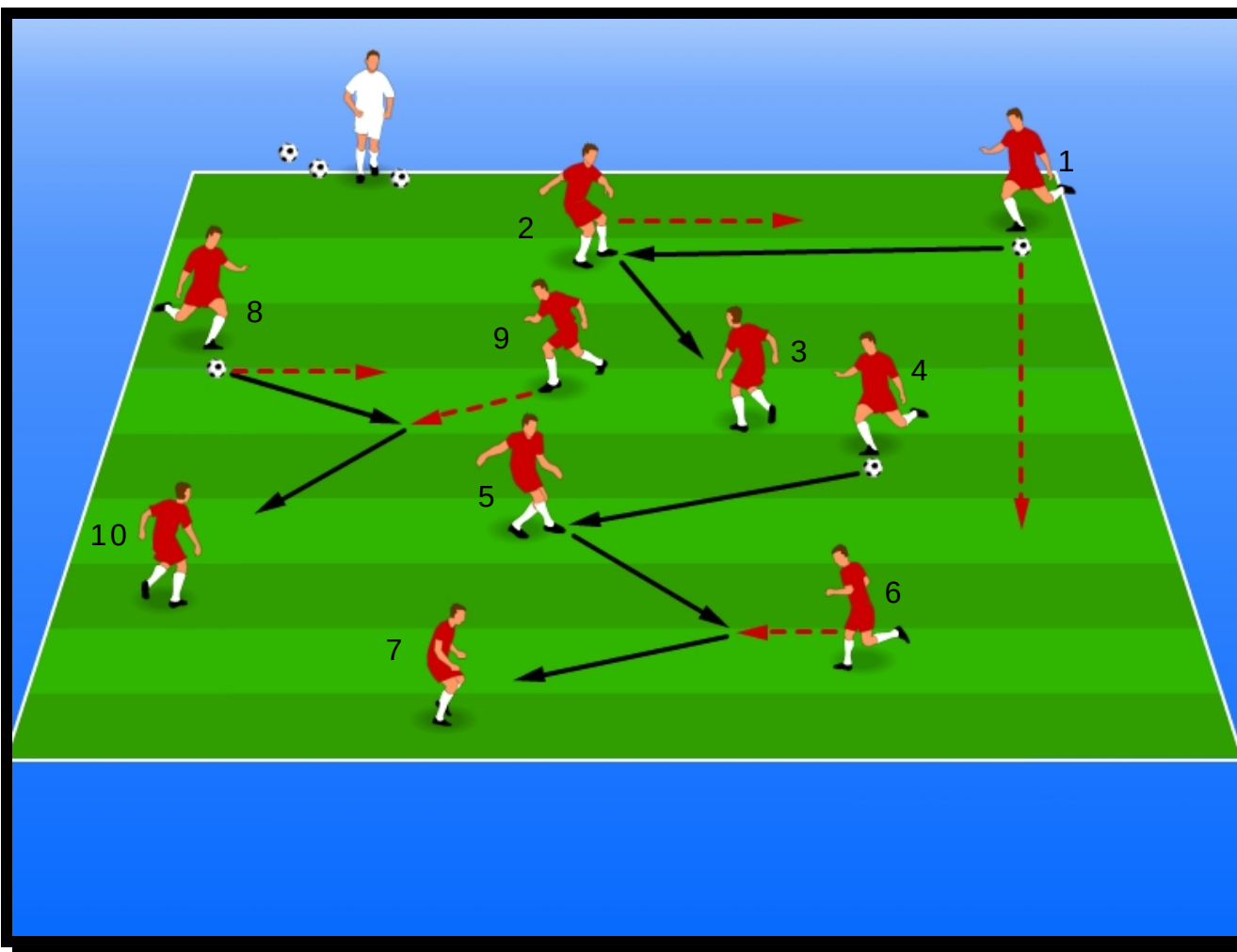
Coaching Points:

- 1 Get your feet set early, and choose your technique right away.
- 2 Open up your stance while receiving, and be able to see both sides of the field.
- 3 Passes must be struck at game speed. No grandma passes.

By the Numbers

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: Ten players are set up inside of the large grid.

Procedure: During play, the ten players pass three balls around the field in sequence, with Player 1 passing to Player 2, Player 2 passing to Player 3 and so on, until the ball reaches Player 10. Player 10 then passes to Player 1, and the cycle continues. The conditions of the drill may vary during play (see Progressions), and the direction of play can be reversed at any time.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Verbal and visual cues.
- 2 Preparing to pass.
- 3 Runs without the ball.

Progressions:

- 1 One or two touch limit.

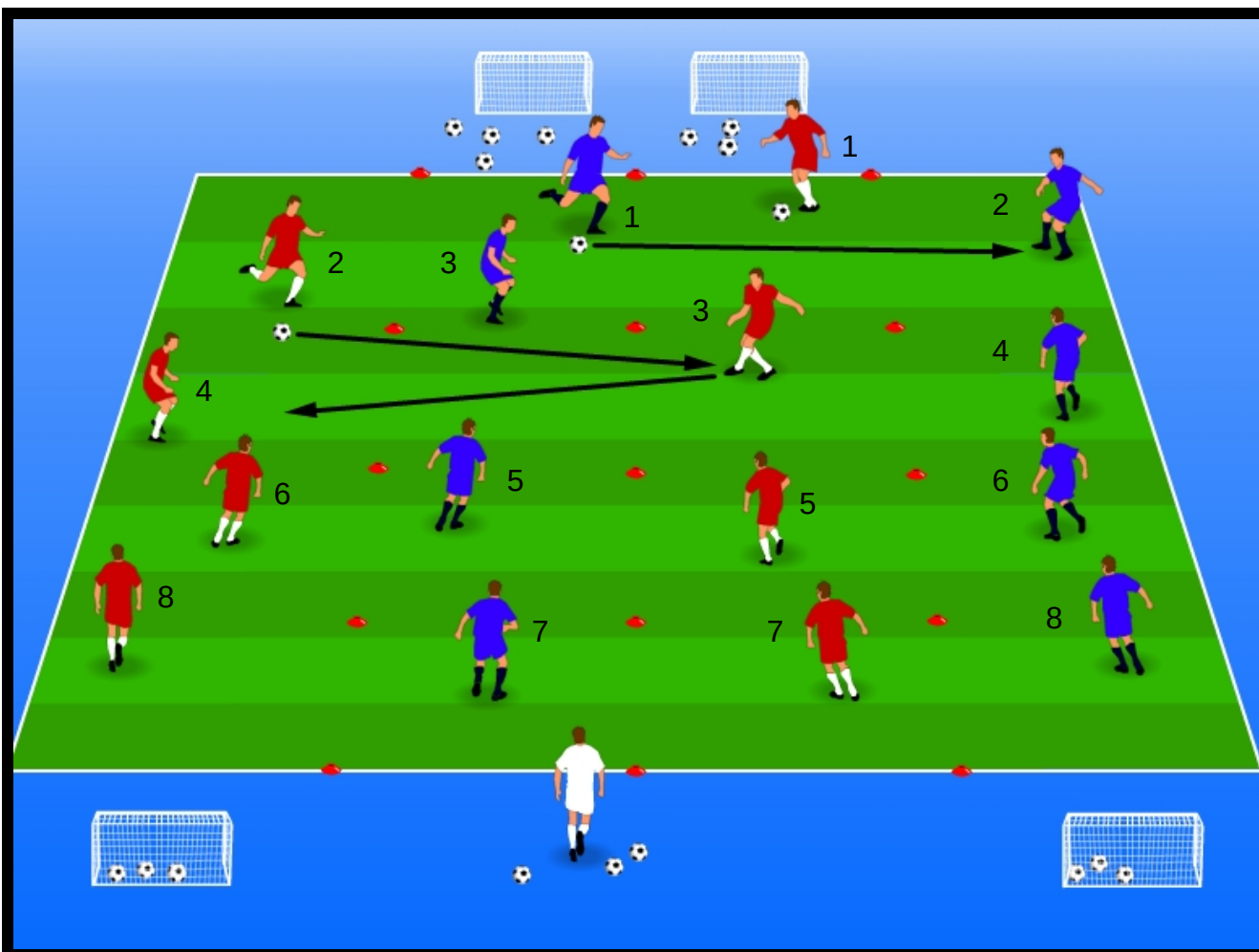
Coaching Points:

- 1 Players should make eye contact and talk on every pass.
- 2 Players waiting to receive should not hide in traffic (aka 'hiding in dead space').
- 3 The passer should look up and check the target again just before striking the pass.

Behind the Eight Ball

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: There are 16 players set up inside of a small field split into four zones.

Procedure: The two teams occupy alternating zones of the field and pass the ball in sequence, from Player 1 → 2 → 3, and so on until the ball reaches Player 8. Player 8 then finishes the ball in the small goal set up outside the field. Missed shots have to be chased down and scored. After each goal, Player 1 starts the next ball. The first team to finish eight balls scores one point, and five points wins the game.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Verbal and visual cues.
- 2 Passing angles.
- 3 Passing.

Progressions:

- 1 Any player can shoot.
- 2 Players can block the other team's passes.

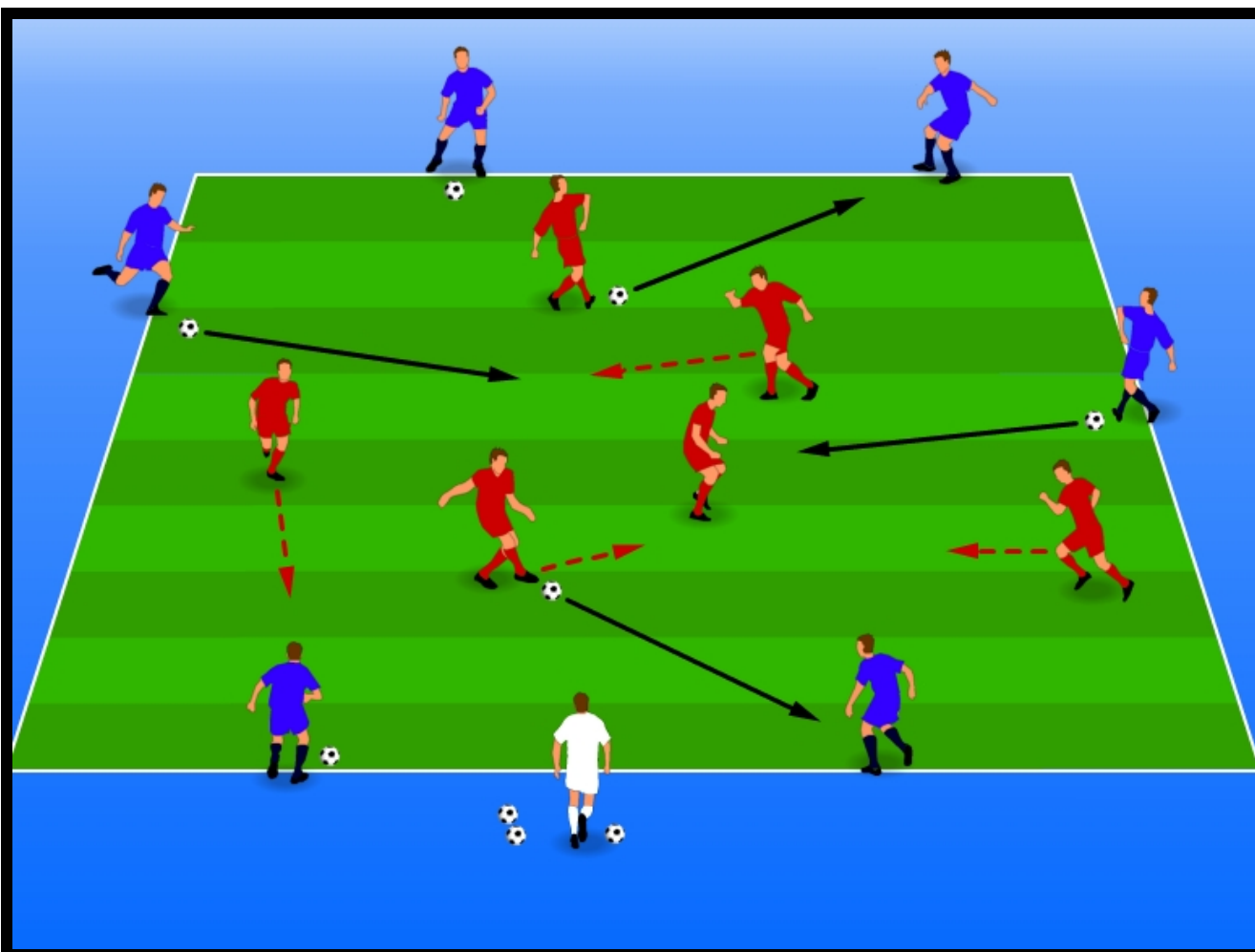
Coaching Points:

- 1 Players should make eye contact and talk on every pass.
- 2 When receiving, players should not hide in traffic (aka 'hiding in dead space').
- 3 The passer should look up and check the target just before striking the pass.

Open Windows

Fundamental

Passing



Set Up: Twelve players are set up on a large grid, with six players starting on the inside and six on the outside.

Procedure: Six players move within the grid, receiving balls from the six outside players. Certain conditions can be put on the drill:

- 1) One touch return passes.
- 2) Control an air ball, pass it back out.
- 3) Receive, turn away, and pass to a player on the outside.
- 4) Head the ball back to the server.
- 5) Pass the ball to an outside player and trade places.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Speed of play.
- 2 Decision making.
- 3 Ball control.

Progressions:

- 1 Progress to Windows in Threes.

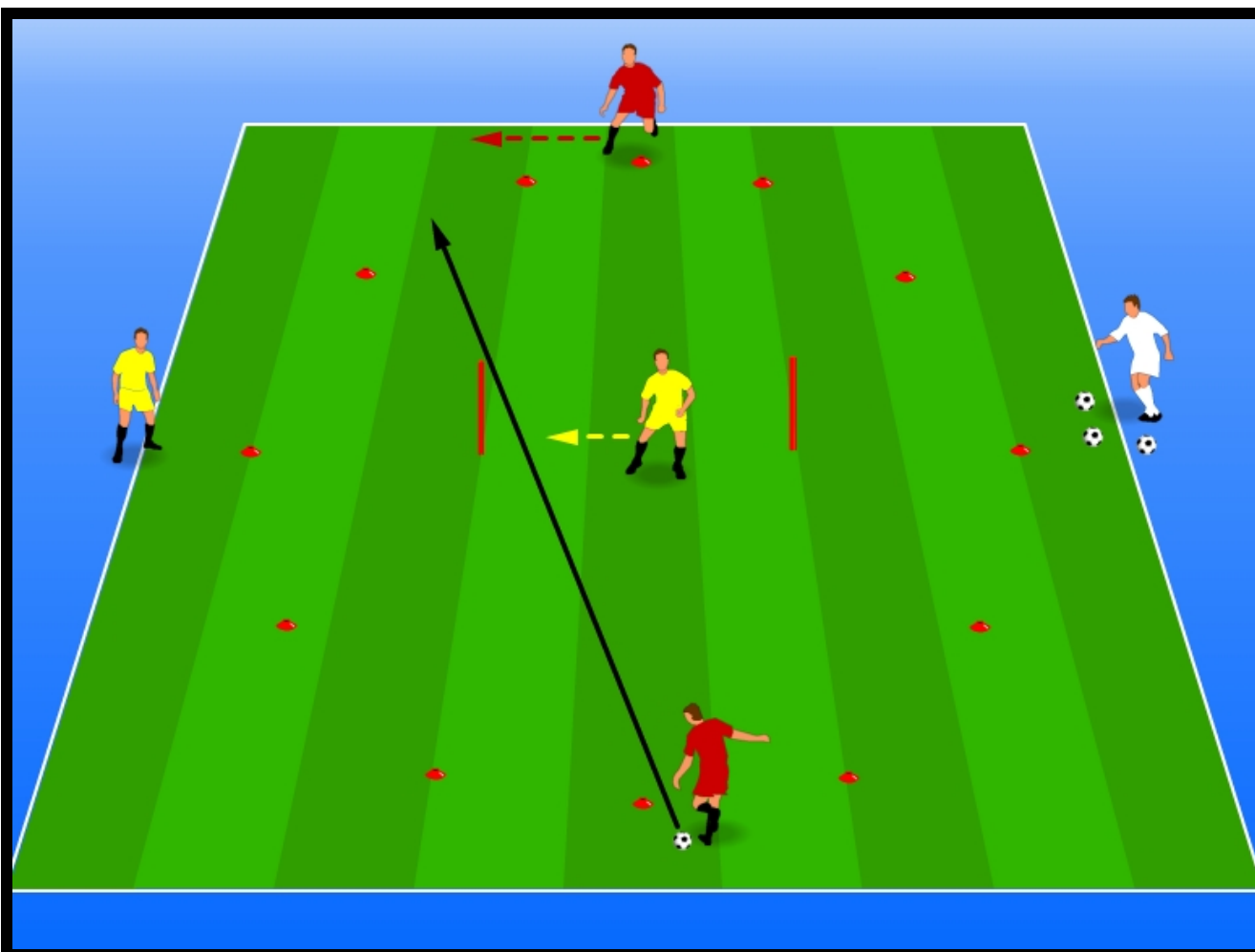
Coaching Points:

- 1 An air ball should be controlled and passed within two touches.
- 2 Choose the ball control technique as early as possible (chest trap, thigh trap, etc.)
- 3 Direct the first touch away from the traffic (or away from an imaginary defender).

On the Frame, #1

Fundamental

Finishing



Set Up: There are two players set up on a small field, with a central goal.

Procedure: One attacker plays at each end of the field, trying to score in the two-sided goal set in the center. The attackers must shoot from behind the cones, and when shots are missed high and/or wide, the ball can be played immediately by the other attacker. The goalkeeper defends both sides of the goal and switches out after five shots. The two goalkeepers keep score, and the first one to get scored on three times loses the game.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 First touch.
- 2 Finishing.
- 3 Shooting angles.

Progressions:

- 1 Progress to 2 v 2 in both halves.

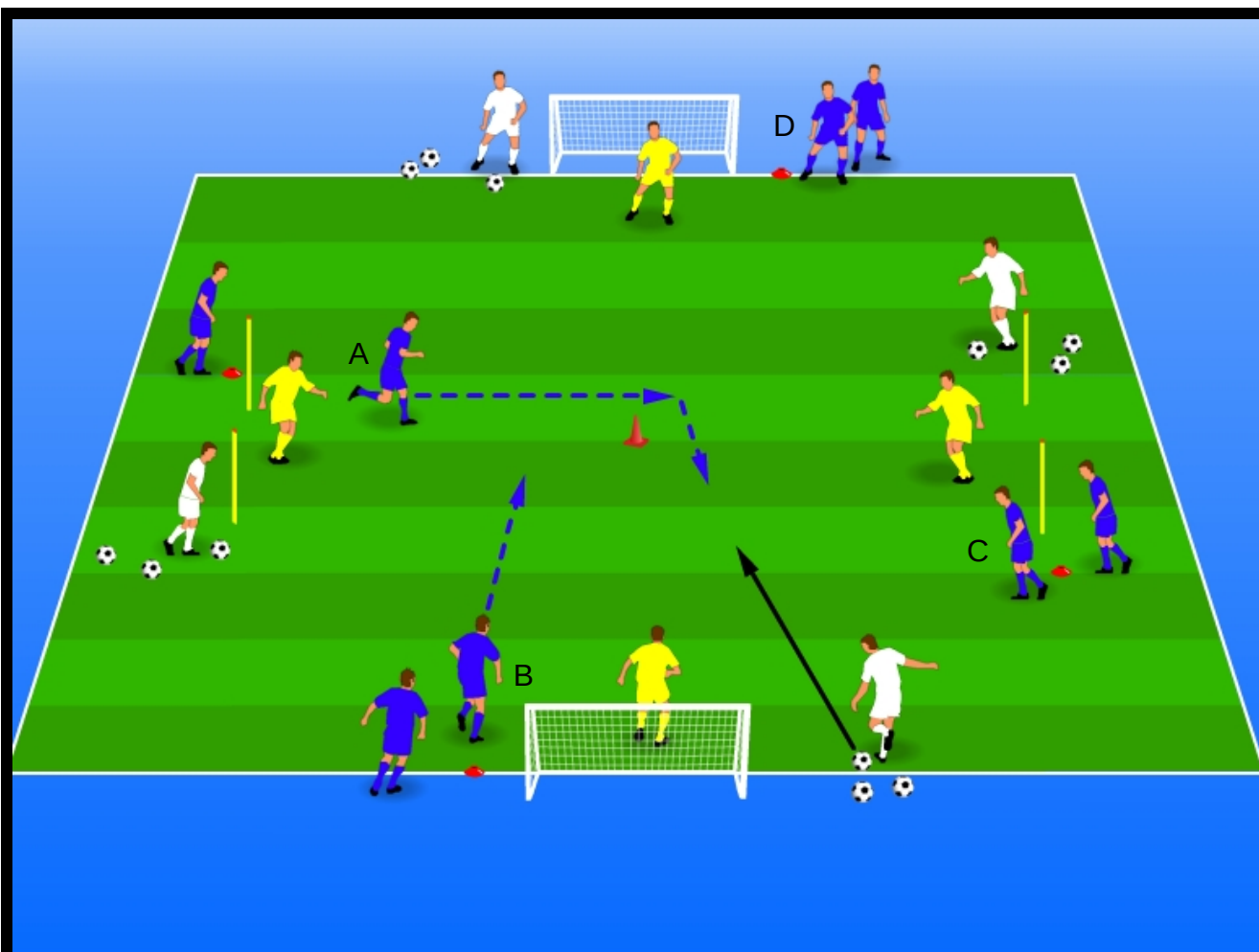
Coaching Points:

- 1 The first touch has to set the ball off at the correct angle and distance.
- 2 Pick your head up after you make your first touch and deal with the goalkeeper.
- 3 Take the last dribble touch off to the side and get the goalkeeper moving.

Shooting Circuit, #2

Fundamental

Finishing



Set Up: There are 8-12 players set up on the small field, starting at the cones.

Procedure: Player A begins the drill with a run from the goal post into the center, turning right at the center cone. The Feeder sets the ball back from the end line for Player A to finish. The drill continues in a counter-clockwise direction, with Player B beginning his run as soon as Player A has reached the cone. Player C follows Player B, and so on. After 5-10 minutes, the Feeders switch out and the shooters change direction.

Teaching Topics:

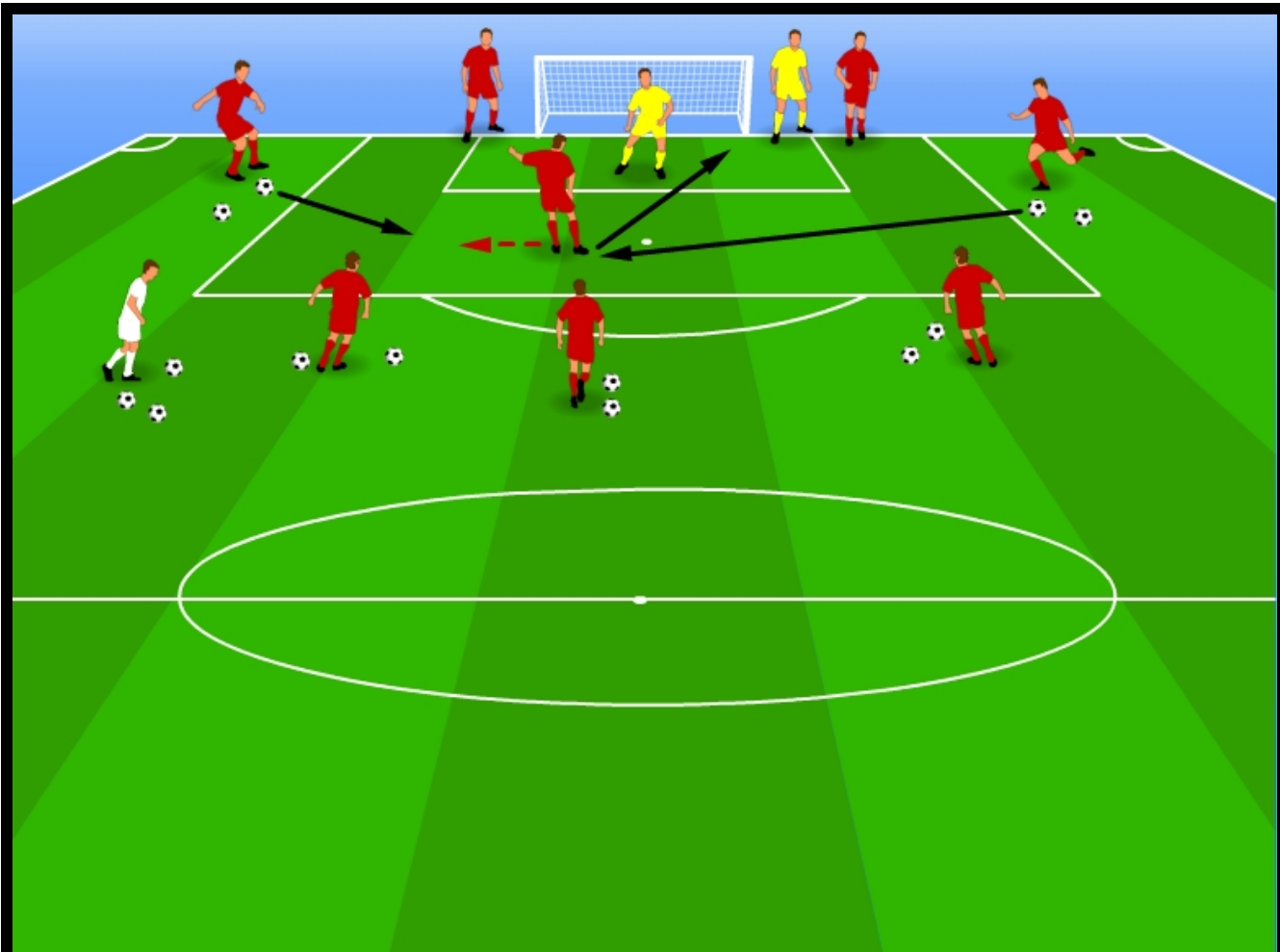
- 1 Speed of approach.
- 2 Positive first touch.
- 3 Angle of approach.

Progressions:

- 1 Air ball service.
- 2 Hard service, two touch finish.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Once you are past the cone, slow down your run in order to adjust to the pass.
- 2 The first touch should make for a better shooting angle. Don't take the ball out wider.
- 3 Approach the ball from a forty-five degree angle rather than coming straight on.

Ten Shots, Drill #5**Fundamental****Finishing**

Set Up: There are 8-10 players set up in the attacking third of the field.

Procedure: The shooter begins at the penalty spot, calling for passes from the Feeders in a random order. The shooter should go as quickly as possible from one shot to the next, shooting each ball within two touches. After ten shots, the shooter switches out. During the drill, the three shooters keep a running tally of goals scored, and the winner keeps shooting. The losing players switch out and become Feeders.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 First touch.
- 2 Finishing.
- 3 Ball striking.

Progressions:

- 1 Air ball service.
- 2 Driven ball service.

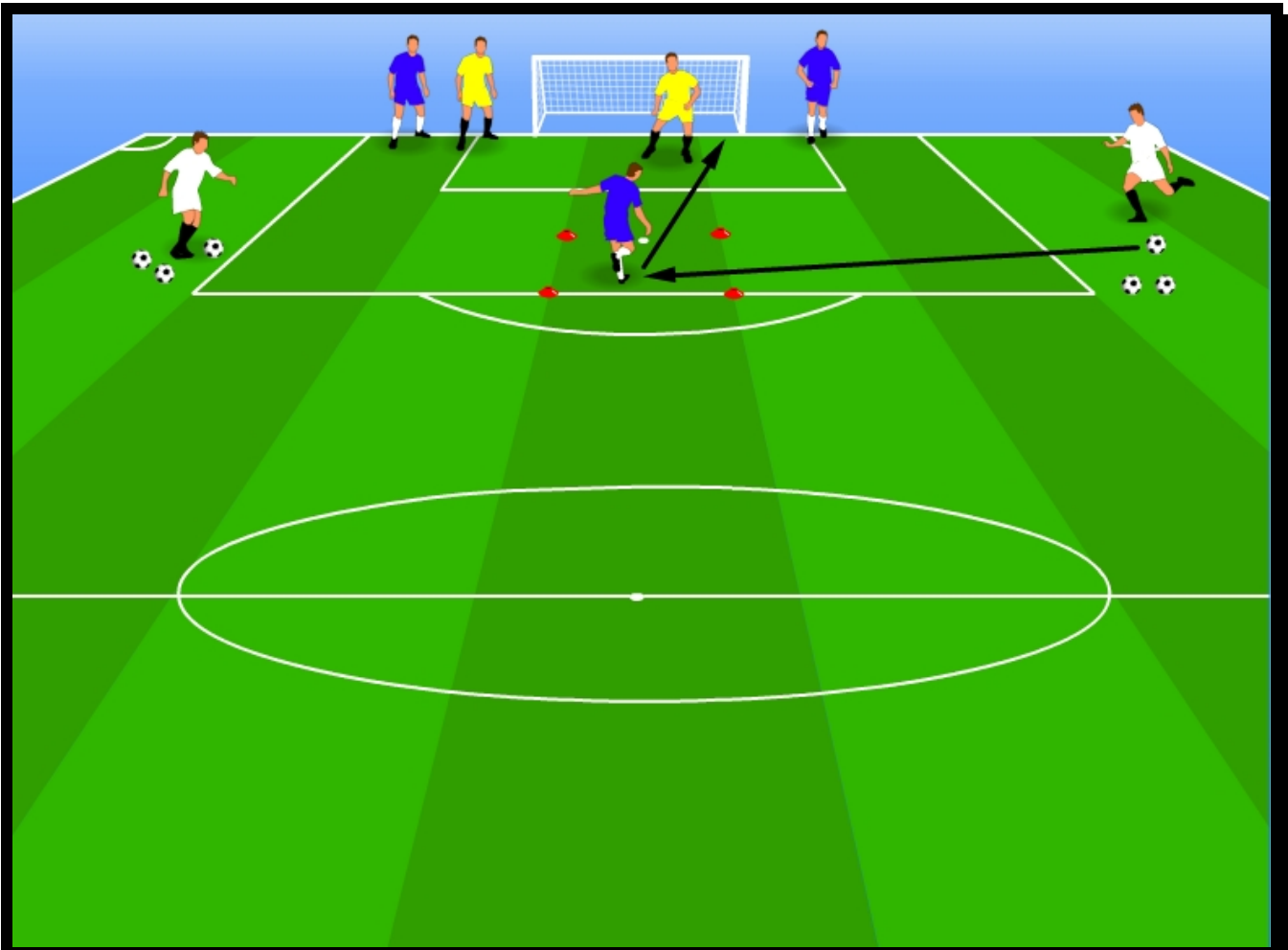
Coaching Points:

- 1 Get your body turned sideways towards the goal before making the first touch.
- 2 Look up and deal with the goalkeeper as opposed to just hitting the ball towards goal.
- 3 Approach the ball at a forty-five degree angle. Circle the approaching run if necessary.

First Time Shot

Fundamental

Finishing



Set Up: Three players are set up inside of the penalty area, along with two Feeders.

Procedure: The shooter is stationed inside of a small target square placed between the penalty spot and the 18. The Feeders alternate service to the shooter, who finishes first time on goal. After five shots, a new shooter rotates in. The goalkeepers switch out every three shots.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Angle of approach.
- 2 The volley.
- 3 Shooting.

Progressions:

- 1 Air ball service.
- 2 Driven ball service.

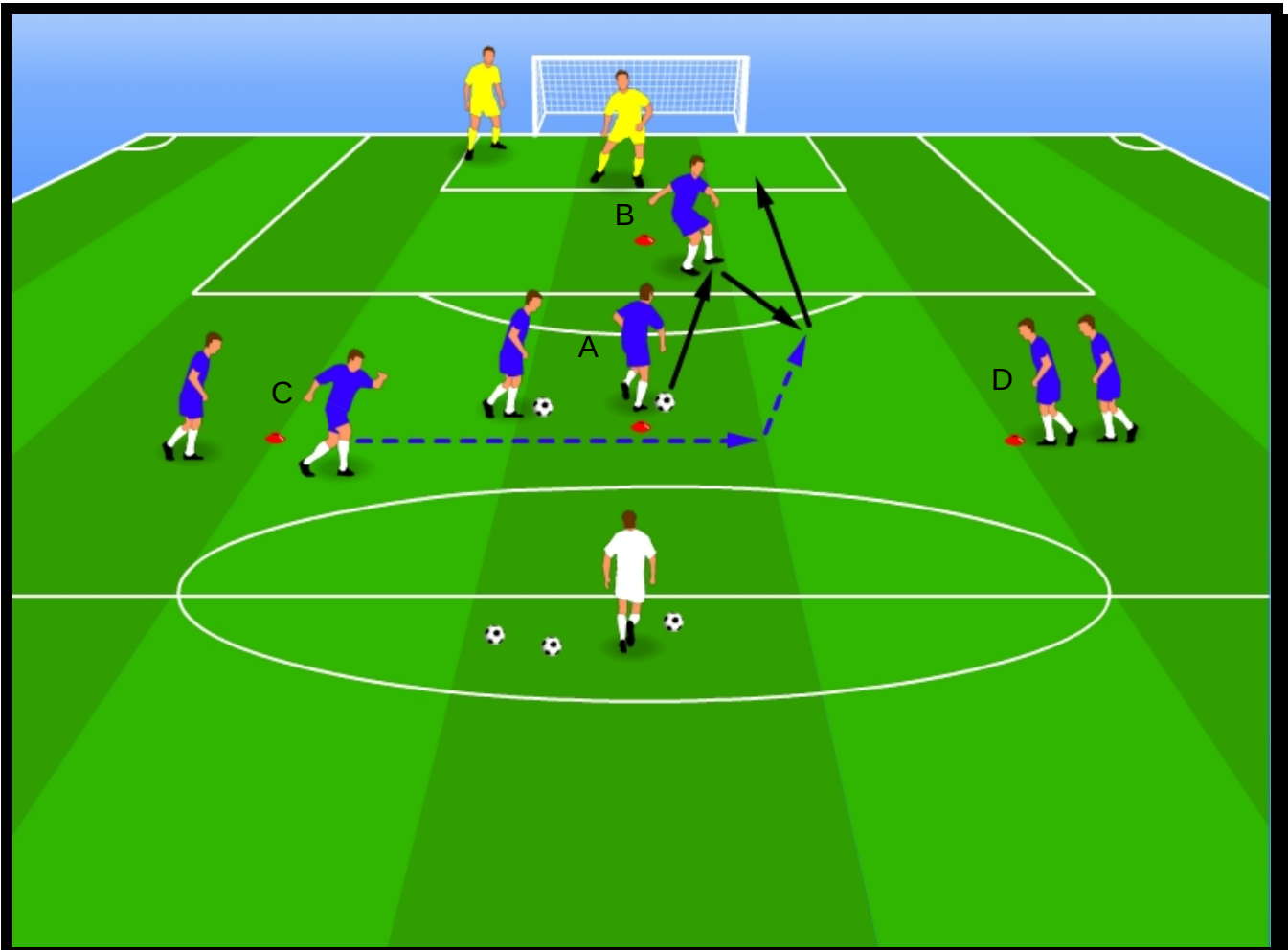
Coaching Points:

- 1 Approach the shot at a forty-five degree angle as opposed to straight on.
- 2 On volleys, let the ball come down to earth and concentrate on making good contact.
- 3 Get into the path of the ball early, so as not to rush the shot.

Layoff to Goal

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: There are 6-8 players set up inside of the attacking third, with players starting at the cones.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player C overlaps around Player A, as he passes the ball up to Player B. Player B lays the ball off for Player C to finish. During the drill, the outside lines alternate turns, with Player D making the next run to goal. Player B rotates out of his spot after five minutes and the other players rotate from A → C → D during the drill.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Passing.
- 2 Passing angles.
- 3 Positive first touch.

Progressions:

- 1 Wall pass, finish.
- 2 Back pass, finish.

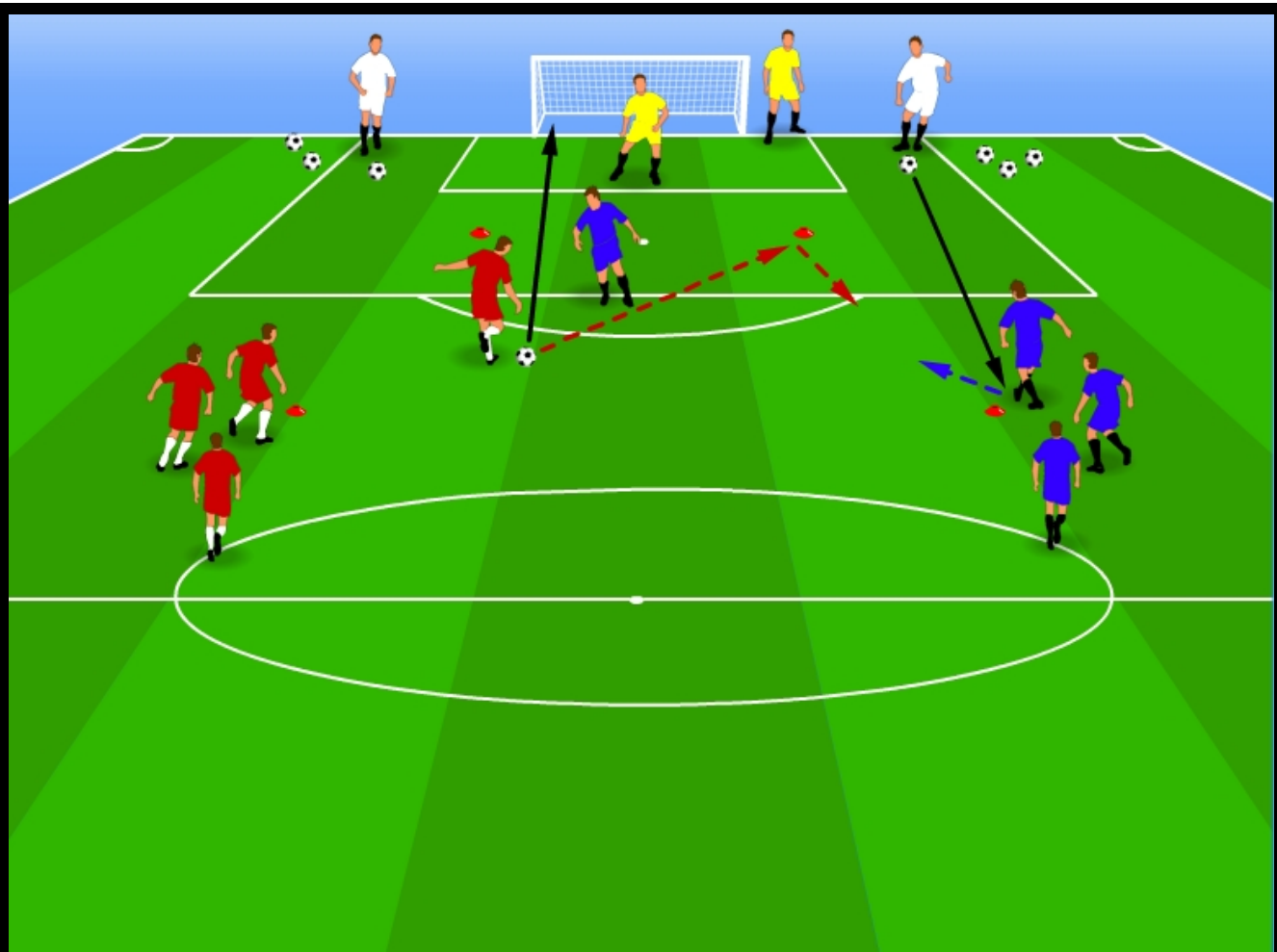
Coaching Points:

- 1 A poor first pass will affect the quality and the timing of the second pass.
- 2 The second pass cannot take the shooter too wide or too close to the goalkeeper.
- 3 If the shooter takes his first touch away from goal, it creates a poor shooting angle.

Finish, Defend

Fundamental

Finishing



Set Up: There are 8-10 players set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones.

Procedure: The Feeder begins the drill with a pass to the attacker (in red in the diagram). The attacker shoots, runs to either cone set at the 12 yard line, then runs back to defend against the next shooter (in blue). From there, the 1 v 1 continues to completion. Each of the Feeders works with one team, varying the service (see Progressions) and the amount of time the players have to shoot. After five minutes, the two teams switch to the other side of the field.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Finishing.
- 2 Fake shots.
- 3 First touch.

Progressions:

- 1 Air ball to service.
- 2 Driven ball service.

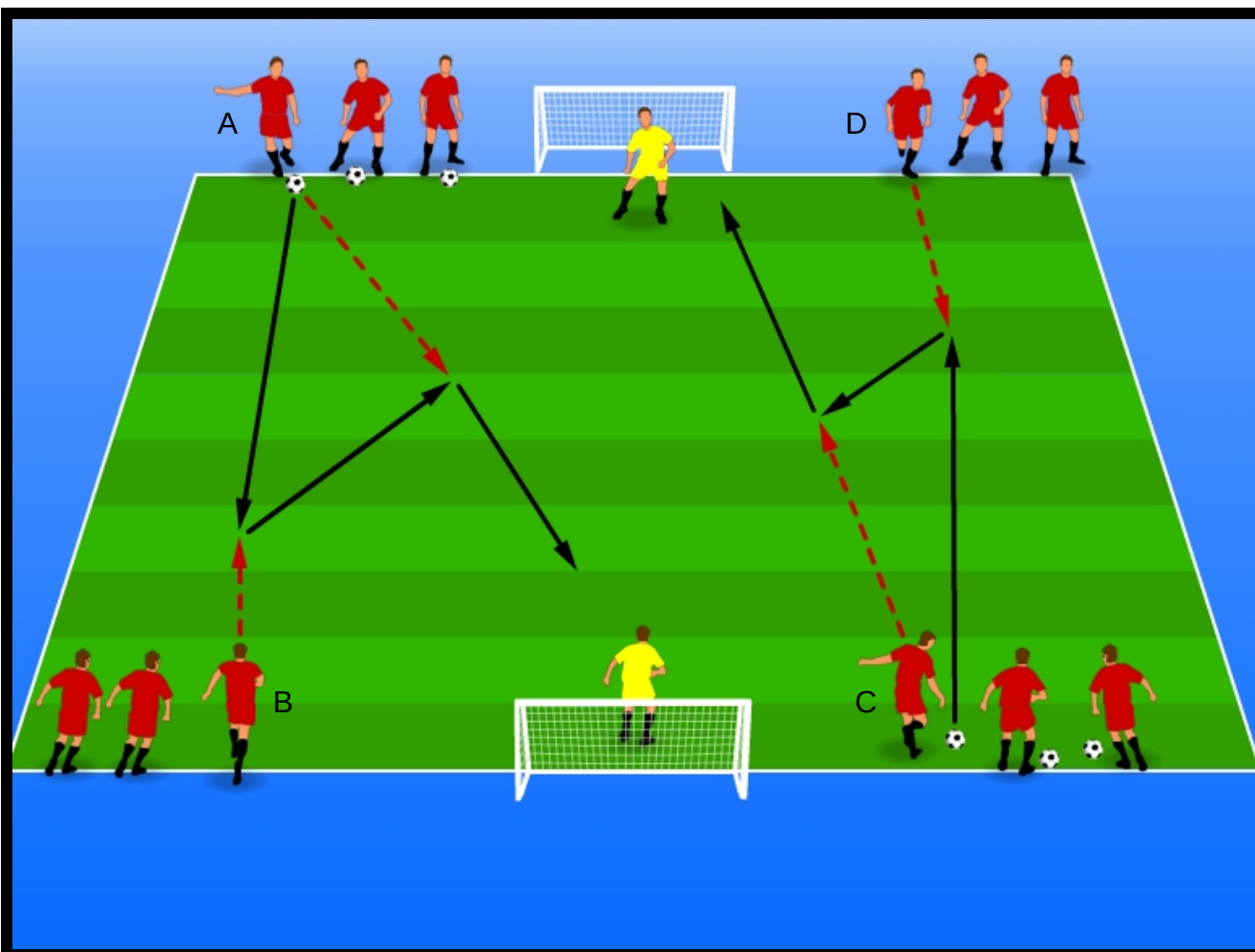
Coaching Points:

- 1 If the shot is there, take it. No one will go for your fakes unless you shoot.
- 2 If the defender charges in, fake the shot and push the ball past him.
- 3 If your first touch is poor, you will have to improvise the rest of your 1 v 1 attack.

Layoff, Shot

Fundamental

Finishing



Set Up: There are 12-16 players set up on a small field, starting on the end lines.

Procedure: To begin play, Player A makes a long pass to Player B and then runs to goal. Player B lays the ball off to Player A for a first time shot. After Player B makes his pass, Player C begins his finishing run towards the opposite goal, combining with Player D. During the drill, the players rotate to the line that they passed to, and after 10 minutes, the players switch to the other side of the field.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Timing the runs.
- 2 Positive first touch.
- 3 Finishing.

Progressions:

- 1 Player B runs to the center, Player A overlaps and finishes a layoff pass.

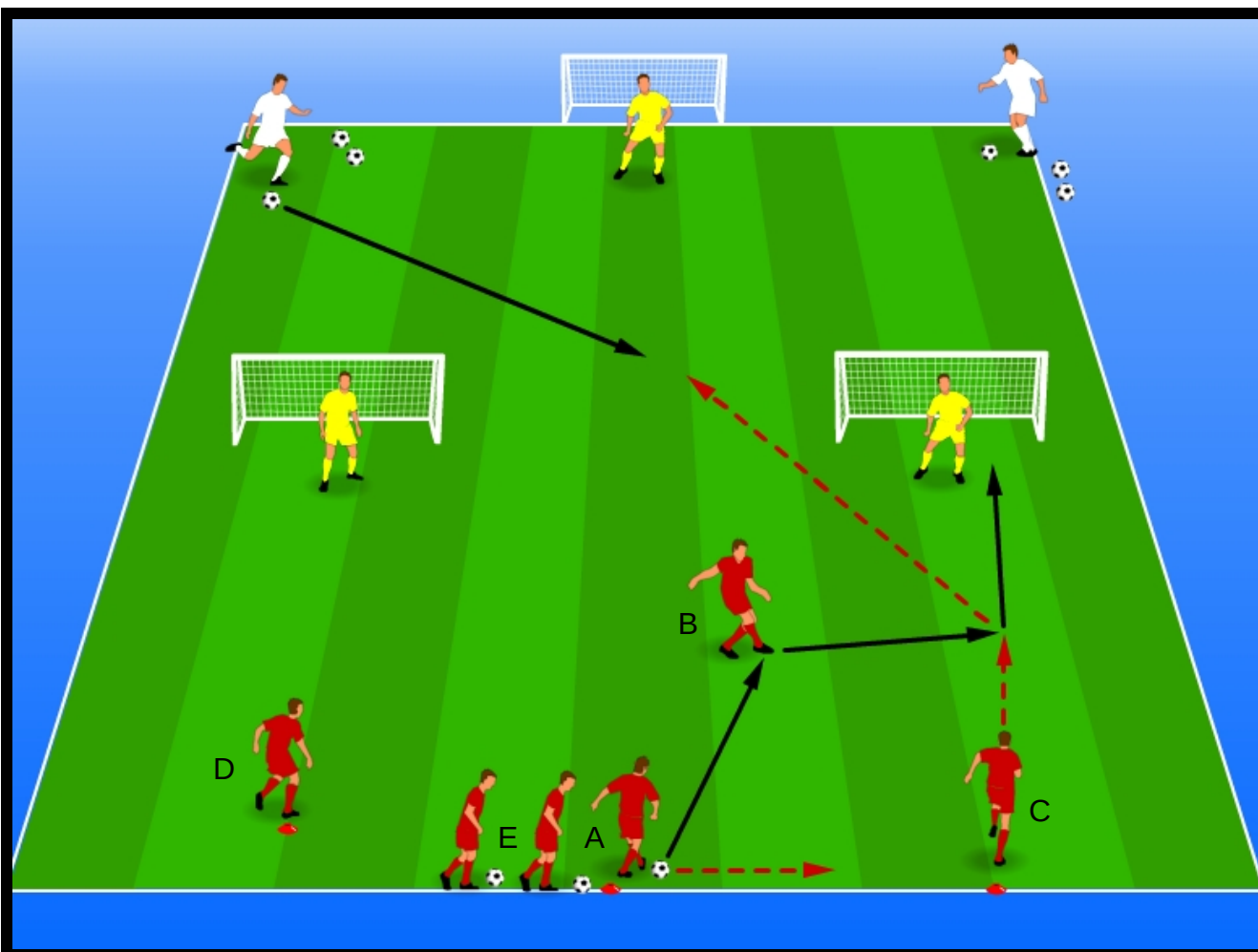
Coaching Points:

- 1 Hold the run in order to adjust to a square pass or a back pass.
- 2 You do not have to overpower a ball set back to you. Just make solid contact.
- 3 Deal with the goalkeeper as opposed to just hitting the ball at the goal.

Finish Twice, #1

Fundamental

Finishing



Set Up: There are 8-10 players set up on a large field with three goals and goalkeepers.

Procedure: Player A begins the drill with a pass up to Player B. Player B lays the ball off to Player C, running to goal. Player C finishes, and then runs forward to finish a cross from the Feeder. Player A rotates to the shooting spot on the right. Player E makes the next pass up to Player B, and Player B lays the ball off to the other side for Player D. Player D then takes his two shots on goal. Players should go to both sides of the field during the drill, and Player B should rotate out after five minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Finishing runs.
- 2 First time shooting.
- 3 Angle of approach.

Progressions:

- 1 First shot—finish a drop pass.
- 2 Second shot—finish a volley.

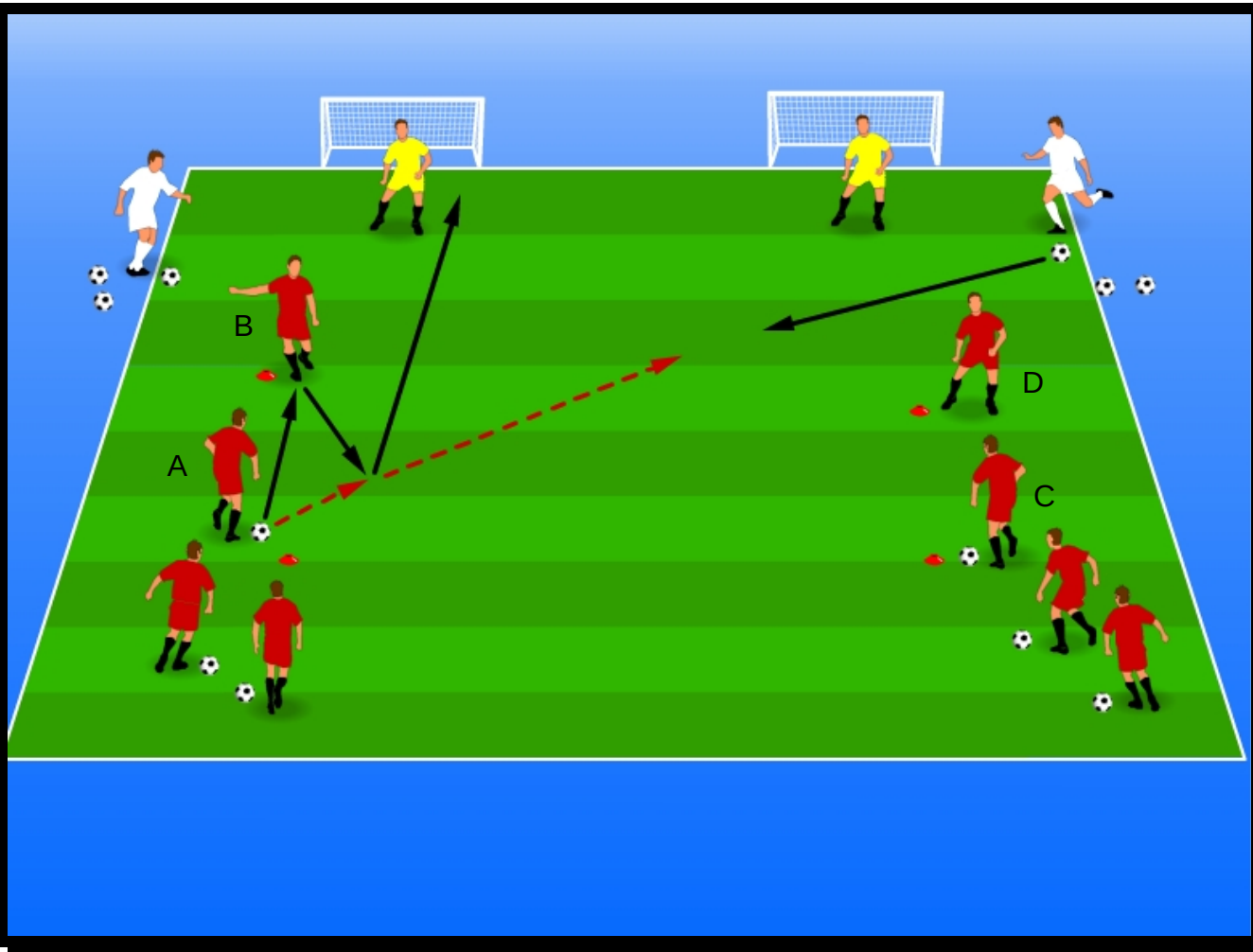
Coaching Points:

- 1 Delay the finishing run in order to finish the cross at sprint speed.
- 2 When finishing, slow down the approach so that you can adjust to the pass.
- 3 Make a curved run to the ball in order to create a better shooting angle.

Two Shots, Two Goals

Fundamental

Finishing



Set Up: There are 8-10 players set up on the small field, with players starting at the cones.

Procedure: The drill begins with a wall pass from Player A to Player B, followed by a finish on goal. After shooting, Player A runs to the goal on the other side of the field to finish a cross from the Feeder. After Player A hits his second shot, Player C starts the same sequence on the other side, combining with Player D on the wall pass. The players stay on the other side of the field after their second shot, and the passers (Players B and D) rotate out after five minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 First time shooting.
- 2 Finishing runs.
- 3 Angle of approach.

Progressions:

- 1 The second shot must be a volley.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Delay the finishing run in order to finish the cross at sprint speed.
- 2 Slow down the approach so that you can adjust to a back pass.
- 3 Make a curved run to the ball in order to create a better shooting angle.

Far Post, Near Post #1

Fundamental

Crossing, Finishing



Set Up: There are 8-12 players set up in the attacking third, with players starting at the cones.

Procedure: The Feeder begins play with a thru pass to either flank attacker. The two central attackers make runs to the near and far posts, and the attacker on the opposite flank also makes a run into the box. The flank attacker crosses, and the three players in the box finish first time on goal. The Feeder alternates service to both flanks, and the players rotate to all four of the lines.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Crossing.
- 2 Timing the run.
- 3 Finishing.

Progressions:

- 1 Add defender in the penalty area.

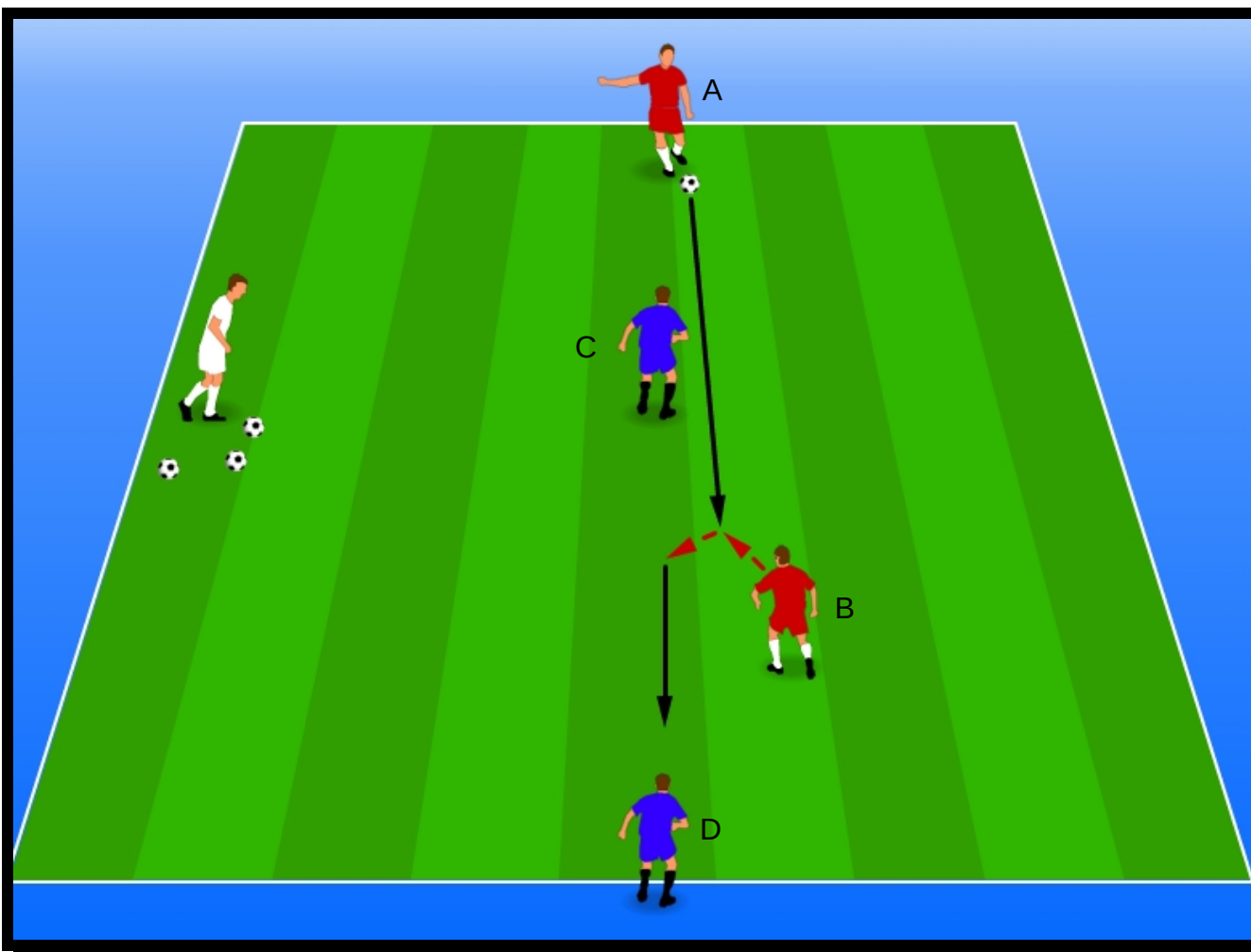
Coaching Points:

- 1 Look up and check the target just before striking the cross.
- 2 Begin the finishing run when your teammate takes his last dribble before crossing.
- 3 Hold the run and sprint to the ball so that you can finish with power.

Air Ball Service

Fundamental

Receiving, Turning



Set Up: Four players are set up in the large grid, starting with two players in the center and one on each end line.

Procedure: Player A serves the ball to Player B, playing it over the head of Player C. Player B controls the ball, turns, and then passes to Player D. Player D then reverses the direction of the drill, serving the ball over the head of Player B to Player C. Player C controls and turns, and then passes to Player A. The ball is played back and forth across the grid in this pattern, and the players switch places every five minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Decision making.
- 2 Turning.
- 3 Passing.

Progressions:

- 1 Progress to Short, Short, Long.

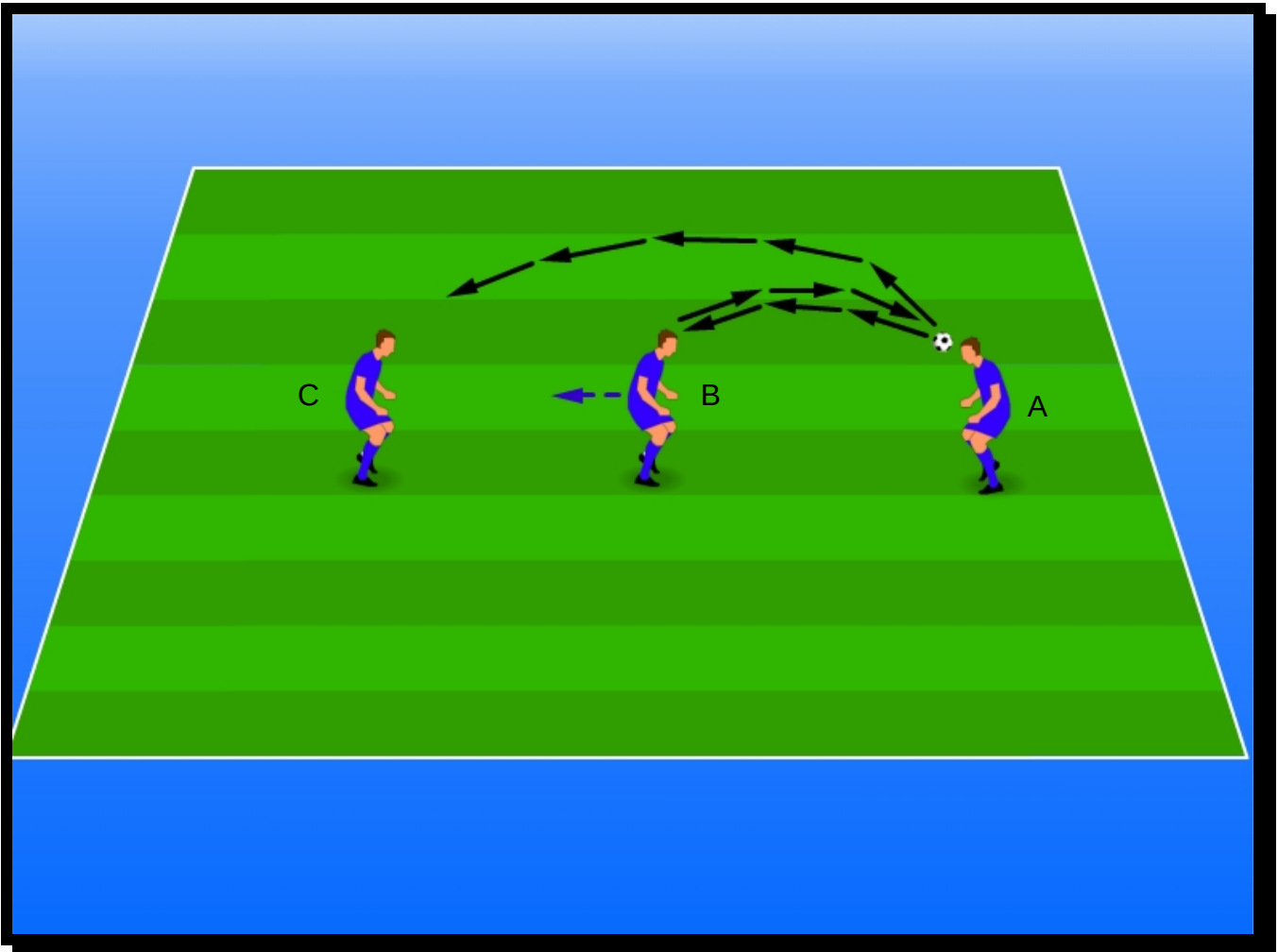
Coaching Points:

- 1 Choose your ball control technique (which body part to use) as early as possible.
- 2 Control and turn with your first touch, and pass the ball with your second touch.
- 3 Let the ball come down to your feet as you strike the pass. Bring it down to the ground.

Up, Back, and Over

Fundamental

Heading



Set Up: Three players are set up inside of the small grid, playing head balls only.

Procedure: During the drill, the ball is played back and forth between the three players in a short, short, long sequence. Player A plays to Player B, Player B heads back to Player A, and then Player A plays long to Player C, over the head of Player B. Player B then turns around to combine with Player C on the same short, short, long sequence. Groups of three can compete against each other, trying to get the most consecutive touches in a ten minute period.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Clearing headers.
- 2 Footwork.
- 3 Heading for distance.

Progressions:

- 1 Juggle the ball for 2-3 touches before passing to the next player.

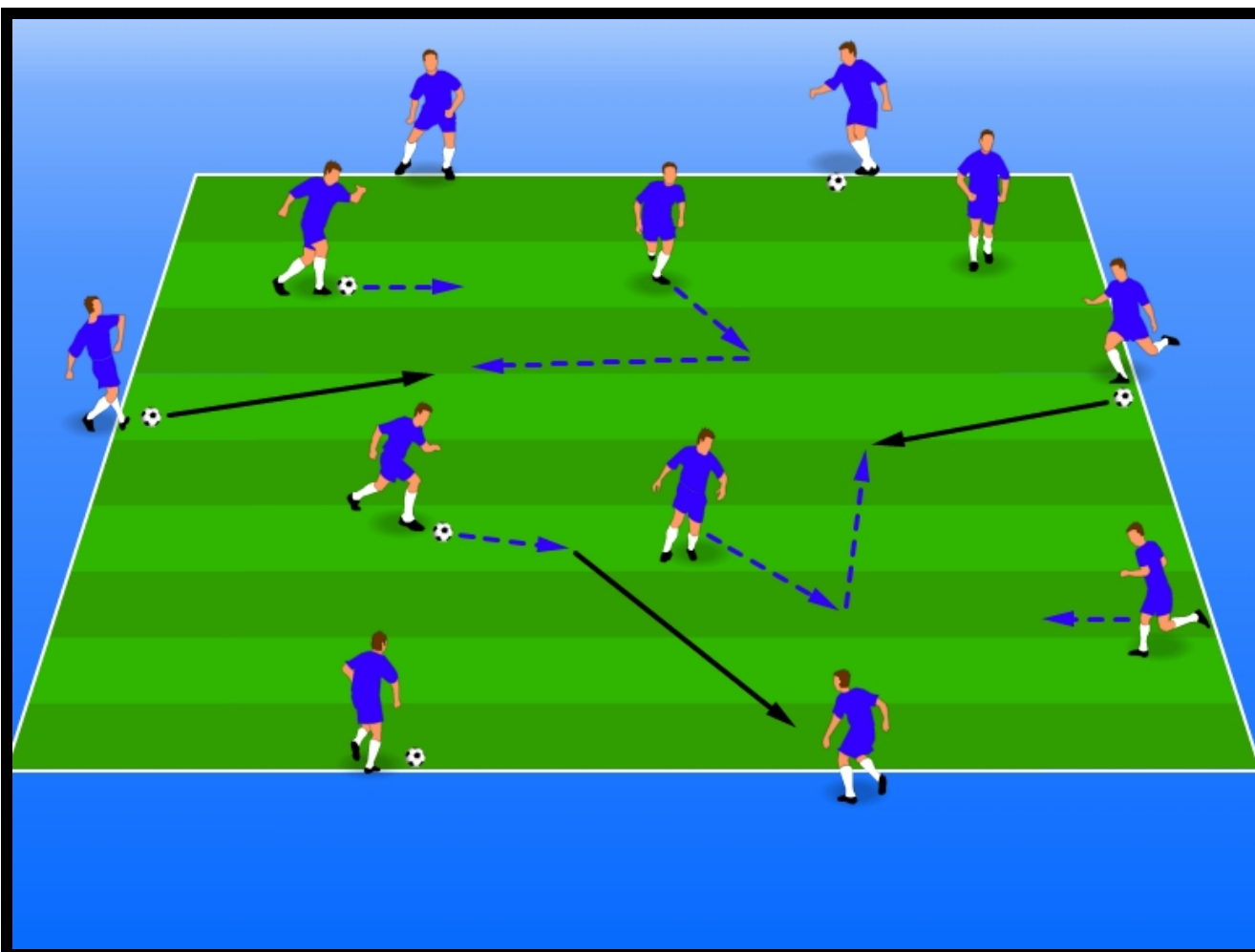
Coaching Points:

- 1 Direct the ball up at an angle when clearing as opposed to heading the ball downward.
- 2 Keep your feet active in your stance, with one foot forward and one foot back.
- 3 Bend backwards at the waist and step into the header in order to generate power.

Checking Runs

Fundamental

Passing Patterns



Set Up: There are 12-20 players set up on a large grid, with half of the group on the inside of the grid and half of the group on the outside.

Procedure: Each player on the outside starts with a ball, serving it to the players on the inside. The players inside the grid make checking runs away from the ball, and then check back in order to receive. After receiving, the players turn away from the passer, play the ball back out to an open player, and then look to receive another pass. After one minute, the players switch positions.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Ball control.
- 2 Speed of play.
- 3 Decision making.

Progressions:

- 1 Air ball service.
- 2 Play hard ground balls to feet.

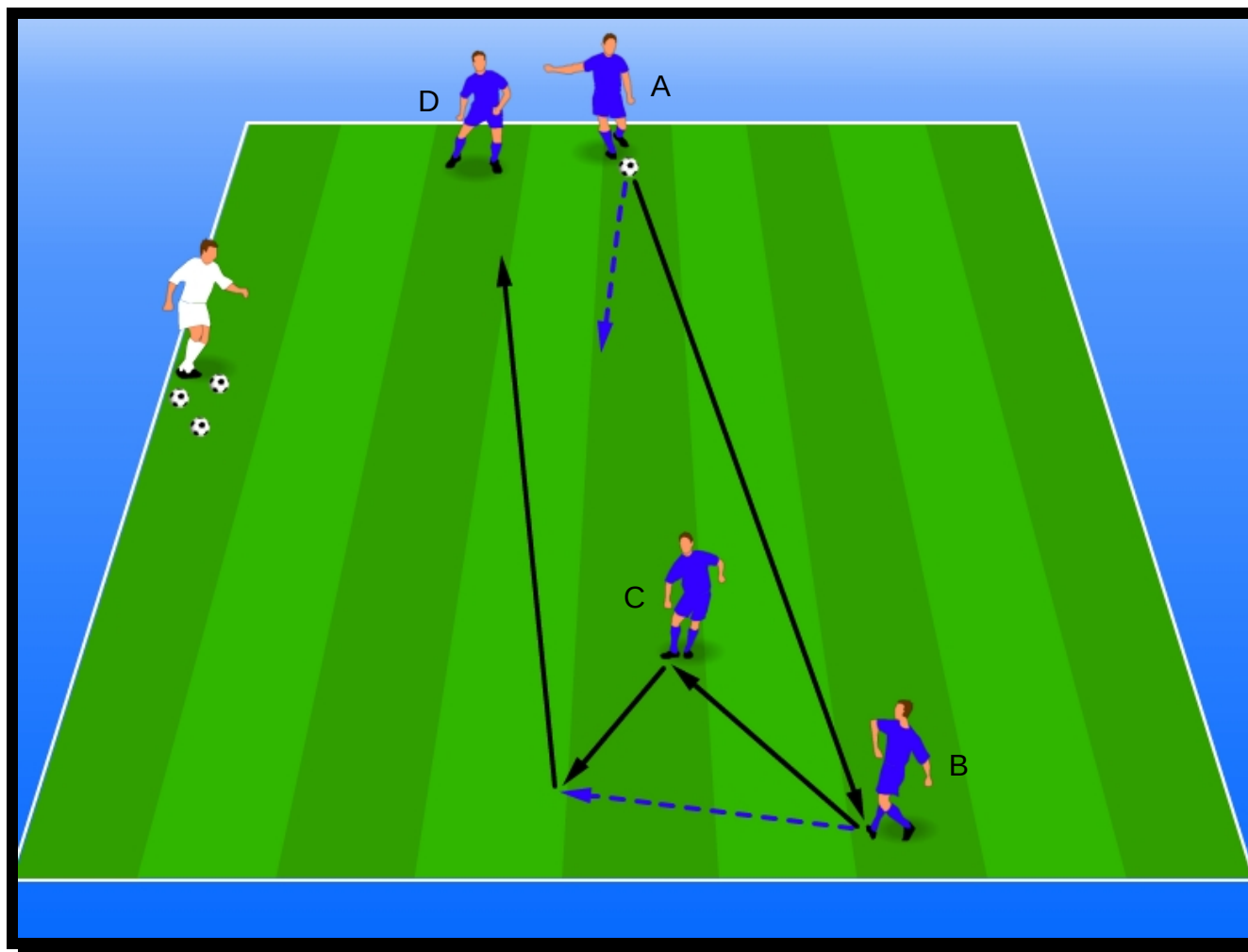
Coaching Points:

- 1 Direct the first touch away from traffic (or away from an imaginary defender).
- 2 Control and pass the ball back out with as few touches as possible.
- 3 Choose the ball control technique as early as possible (the turning and dribbling move).

Short, Short, Long #1

Fundamental

Passing Patterns



Set Up: There are four players set up in the large grid, with two players starting at each end.

Procedure: Player A begins the drill with a long driven pass to Player B. Player B plays it short to Player C and makes a run into space. Player C lays the ball off for Player B, who drives the ball back across the grid to Player D. Play continues back and forth across the grid in this short, short, long pattern. Players A and D change positions each time they play the ball long, as do Players B and C.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 The long pass
- 2 The back pass.
- 3 Support play.

Progressions:

- 1 Add a third player at each end of the field.

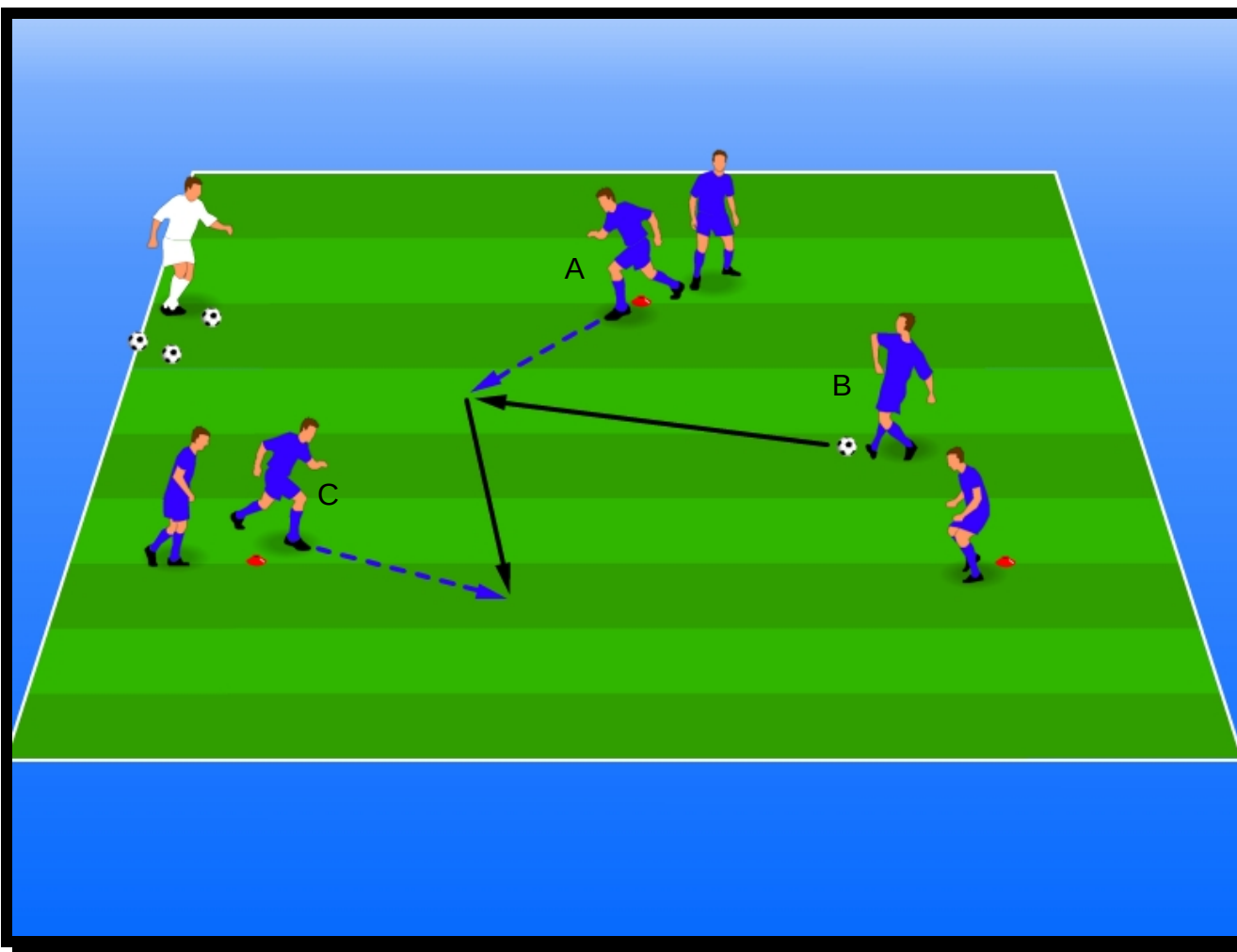
Coaching Points:

- 1 The long pass is a driven ball, struck with the instep. It stays low and has backspin.
- 2 The short pass should settle to the ground and take most of the pace off of the long ball.
- 3 While the long pass is in the air, show yourself and communicate with your partner.

Lead Pass Cycle

Fundamental

Passing Patterns



Set Up: Six players are set up in the small grid, starting at the cones.

Procedure: Player A initiates the play by making his run into space and calling for the ball. Player B leads Player A towards the next cone with his pass, and as Player A receives, Player C initiates the next passing play with his run into space. Play continues counter-clockwise around the triangle. All passes should be made in one or two touches, and the players should reverse direction every two minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Communication.
- 2 Speed of play.
- 3 Passing.

Progressions:

- 1 Limit the players to one touch.

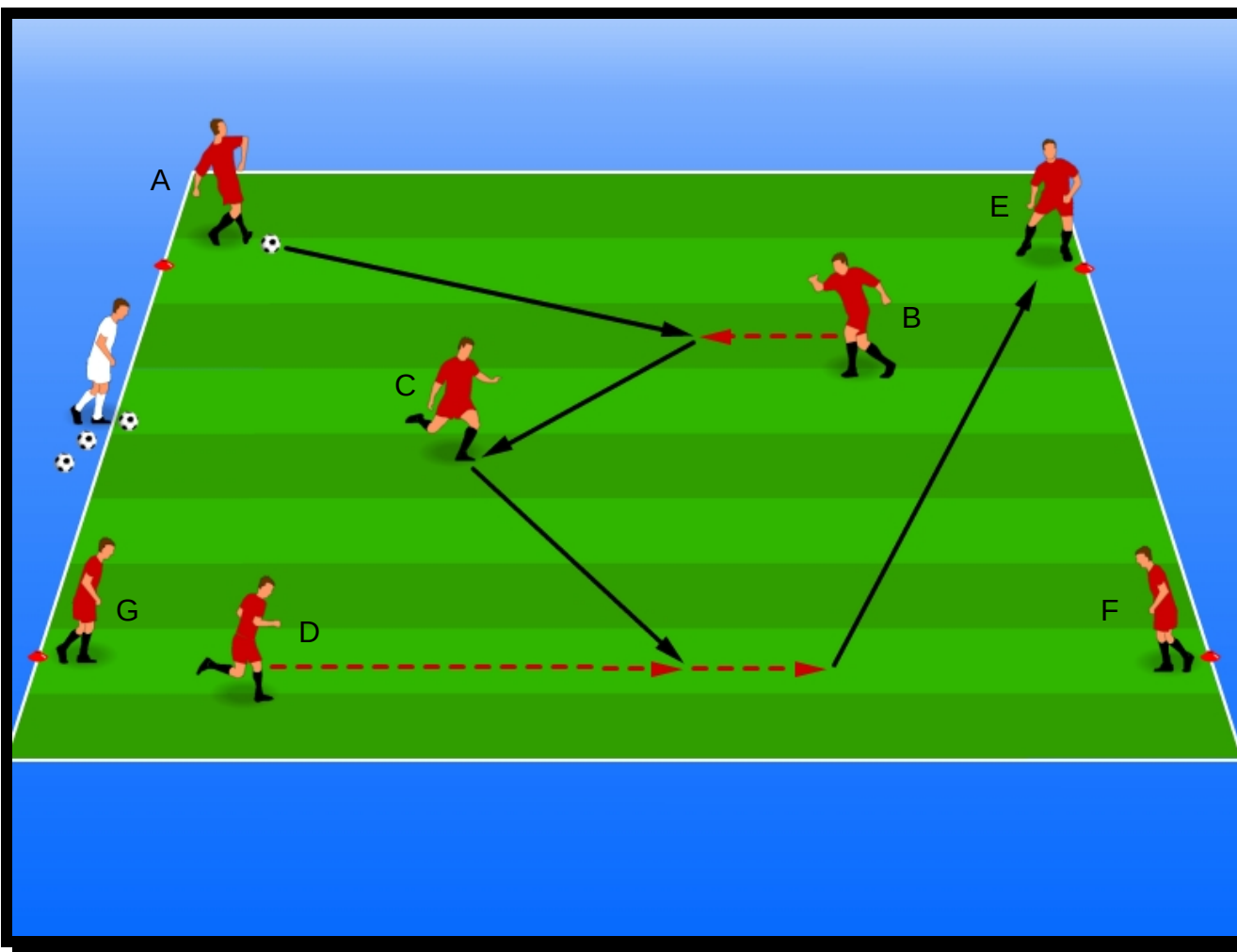
Coaching Points:

- 1 Both players should talk and make eye contact with each other on every pass.
- 2 A poor first touch will slow the play down and throw off the timing of the run.
- 3 Strike the top half of the ball in order to keep it on the ground.

Up, Back, and Thru, #1

Fundamental

Passing Patterns



Set Up: There are seven players set up in the small grid, with two playing in the center, and five starting at the cones.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player A passes up to Player B. Player B passes back to Player C, and Player C finishes the combination with a thru pass to Player D. Player D plays the ball over to Player E to restart the drill in the opposite direction. On the next sequence, Players B and C switch roles, and the ball moves from Player E → C → B → F. During the course of the drill, the players rotate to every position.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Timing the runs.
- 2 Visual cues.
- 3 Speed of play.

Progressions:

- 1 Limit Player B and Player C to one touch.

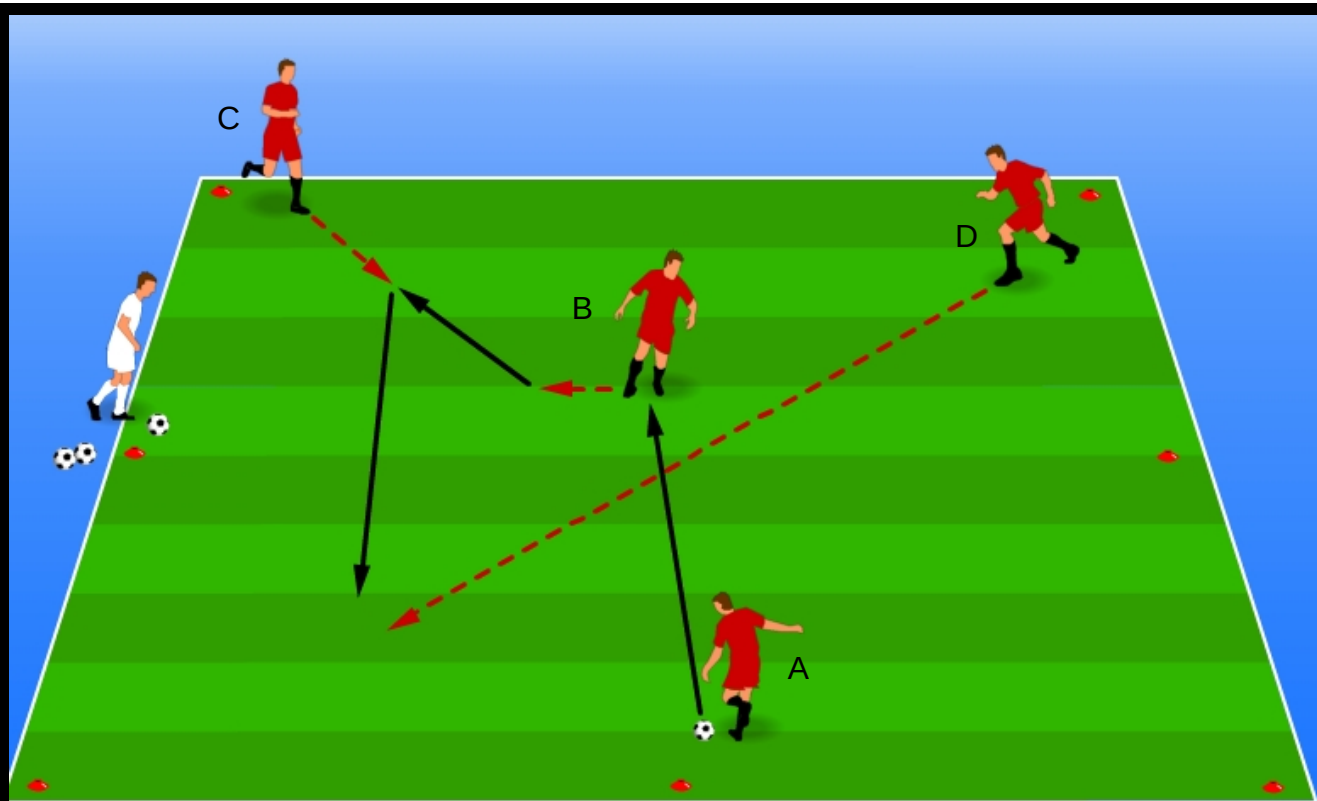
Coaching Points:

- 1 You must watch the play develop in order to time your run correctly.
- 2 When defenders turn their heads to watch the back pass, make the blind side thru run.
- 3 The thru pass should not slow down the run of the player receiving it.

Thru Pass Circuit

Fundamental

Passing Patterns



Set Up: Four players are set up inside of the grid, starting at the cones.

Procedure: Player A begins play with a pass up to Player B. Player B turns and plays it back to Player C, who makes a thru pass to the corner to Player D (during the drill, Player B can make the back pass to Player C or Player D). After running onto the thru pass, Player D returns the ball to Player A, who moves to the right side of the grid, re-forming the 'Y' formation. After five minutes, the players should rotate over to a new starting position.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Turning.
- 2 Timing the runs.
- 3 Speed of play.

Progressions:

- 1 Run two groups at the same time.

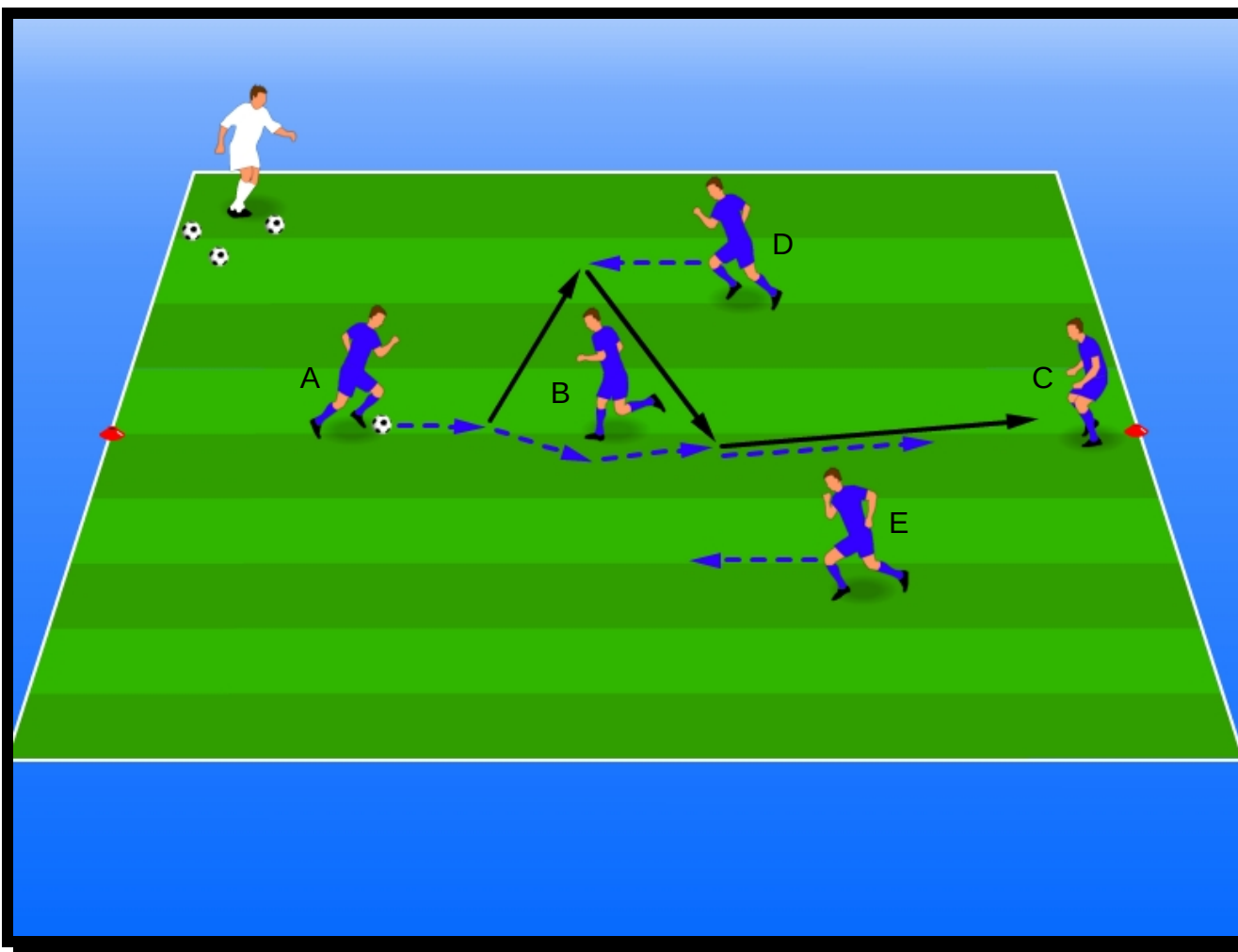
Coaching Points:

- 1 Player B must be able to turn and pass accurately within two touches.
- 2 Player D should start his run as soon as he sees Player B turn away from him.
- 3 Play a one touch thru pass so that Player D doesn't have to wait for the ball.

Wall Passes in Fives

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: Five players are set up inside of the grid, working back and forth between the two cones.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player A looks to combine with Player D or E, as Player B comes to the ball (as a passive defender). Player A walls with Player D (or E), and then passes the ball up to Player C. After making his last pass, Player A goes to the ball and plays passive defense. Player C then looks to combine with Players D and E. The pattern continues with the central players (A, B, and C) working in a shuttle fashion, while Players D and E run back and forth in support of the ball. Every 30-60 seconds, the players should rotate to new positions.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Attacking 2 v 1.
- 2 Speed of play.
- 3 Supporting runs.

Progressions:

- 1 Limit the players to one touch.

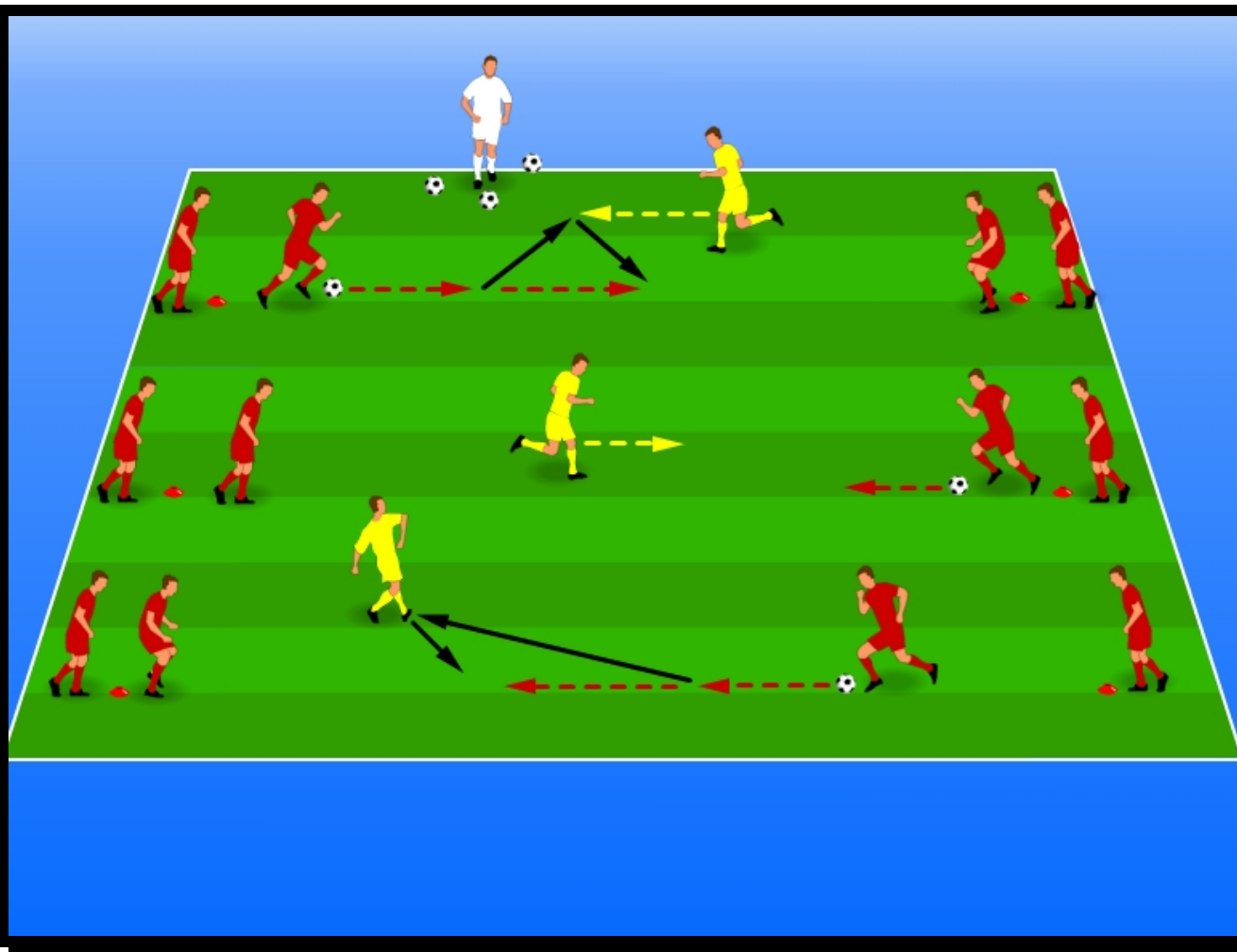
Coaching Points:

- 1 Player A must commit the defender by attacking him at speed with the dribble.
- 2 Accelerate after making the first pass and run by the defender.
- 3 The wall player should set up slightly behind the defender, out of his field of vision

Wall Pass Shuttle, #2

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: Fifteen players are set up inside the grid, lined up at the cones.

Procedure: The players work in groups of four, with two players starting at each end of the grid. Three support players move inside the grid, in between the lines. During the drill, the players dribble back and forth across the grid, combining with any of the supporting players. The passing combinations can involve more than two players. If no one supports the dribbler, he simply speed dribbles across the grid and leaves the ball for the next player in line. The support players rotate out every five minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 The Wall pass.
- 2 Supporting runs.
- 3 Speed of play.

Progressions:

- 1 Support players can pass to each other.

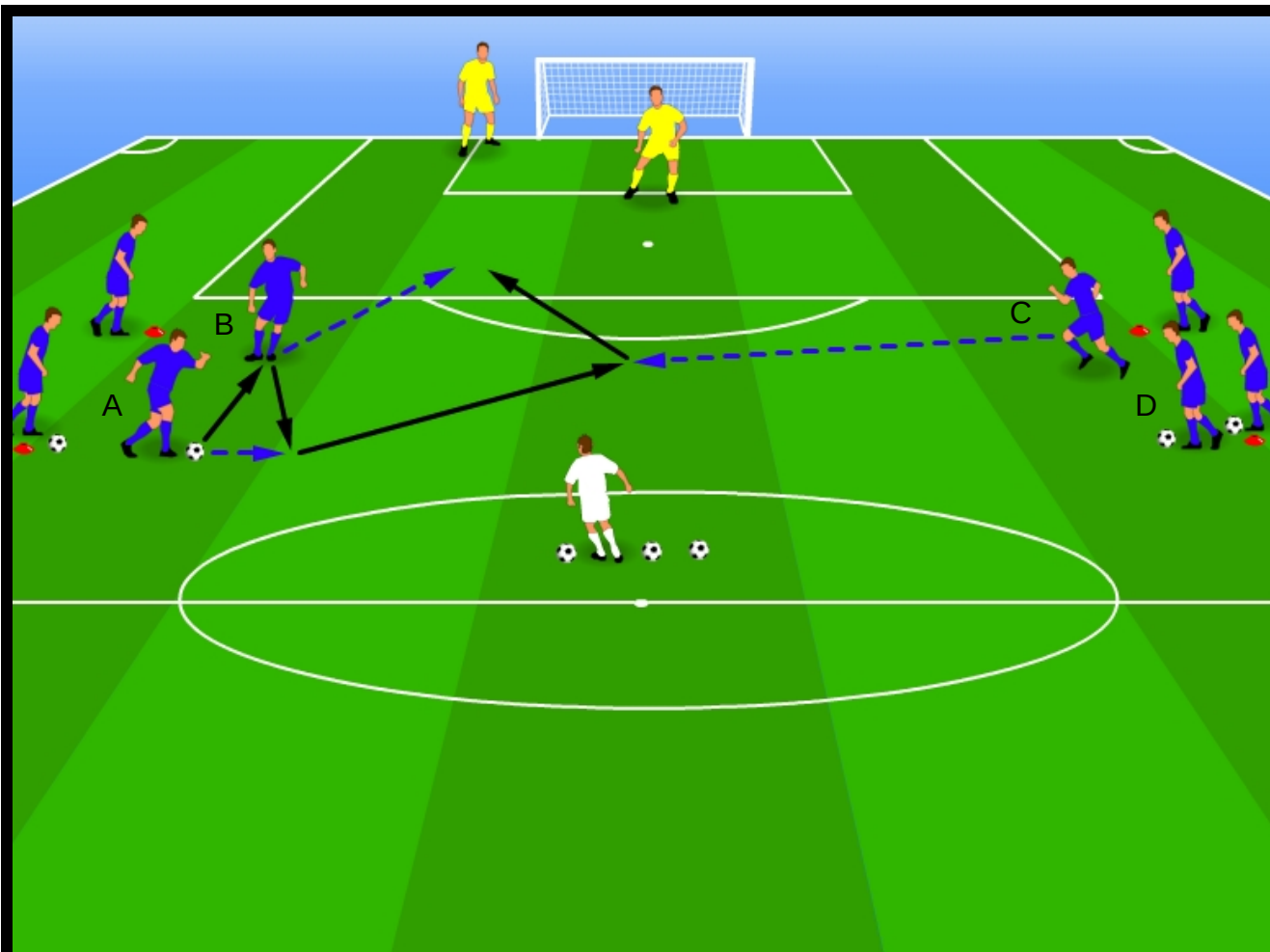
Coaching Points:

- 1 A poor first pass is likely to result in a poor return pass.
- 2 The support player should come to the ball in order to initiate the combinations.
- 3 After making the first pass, the dribbler sprints up the field to receive the next pass.

Wall Pass, Turn

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: There are 8-12 players set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones.

Procedure: To begin play, Player A wall passes with Player B. Player B then turns to goal, and Player A looks across the field for Player C. Player C makes a horizontal run across the field, receives the thru pass from Player A, and one touches the ball off for Player B, running to goal. After Player B finishes, the drill re-starts on the opposite side of the field with Player D. The players rotate counter-clockwise during the course of the drill.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Timing the runs.
- 2 The Wall Pass.
- 3 Turning.

Progressions:

- 1 Add a defender and call offsides.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Player C and Player B must hold their runs until the play develops.
- 2 Both passes in the wall pass combination should be played directly to the feet.
- 3 With a defender on your back, lay the ball off and spin into the space behind him.

Two Walls, Finish

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: There are 8-10 players set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player A performs a wall pass with Player B. After receiving the second pass, Player A plays the ball up the Feeder and runs to goal. Player B also runs to goal, and the Feeder lays the ball off to Player A or B for a finish. The players go to both lines during the drill, and Player B's line moves over to the left side of the field halfway thru the drill.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Quality first pass.
- 2 Passing angles.
- 3 Finishing angles.

Progressions:

- 1 The Feeder can turn and take a quick shot.

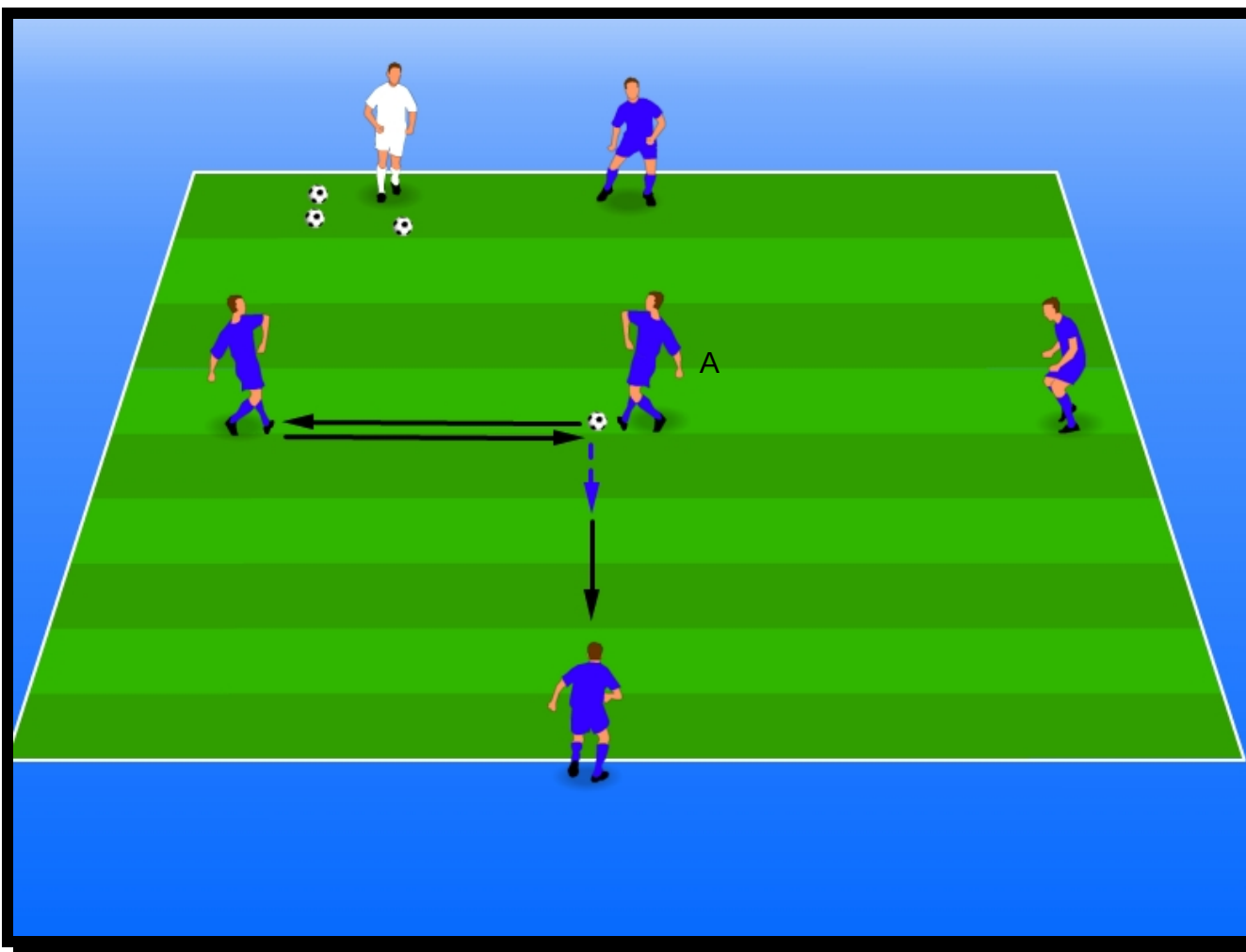
Coaching Points:

- 1 If the first pass in the wall is poor, the second pass is likely to be poor as well.
- 2 The layoff pass should not take the shooter out too wide.
- 3 The last dribble touch should allow you to shoot to all four corners of the goal.

Double Pass, Turn

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: There are five players set up inside of the small grid.

Procedure: Four players start on the outside of the grid, and Player A starts in the center with the ball. Player A distributes it around the grid, double passing with each player in a random order. Each time Player A receives a return pass, he must take a dribble touch away from the passer before playing the ball back outside. A new player switches into the center after 30-60 seconds.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Passing.
- 2 Turning moves.
- 3 Receiving.

Progressions:

- 1 Very hard service.
- 2 Reduce the size of the grid.

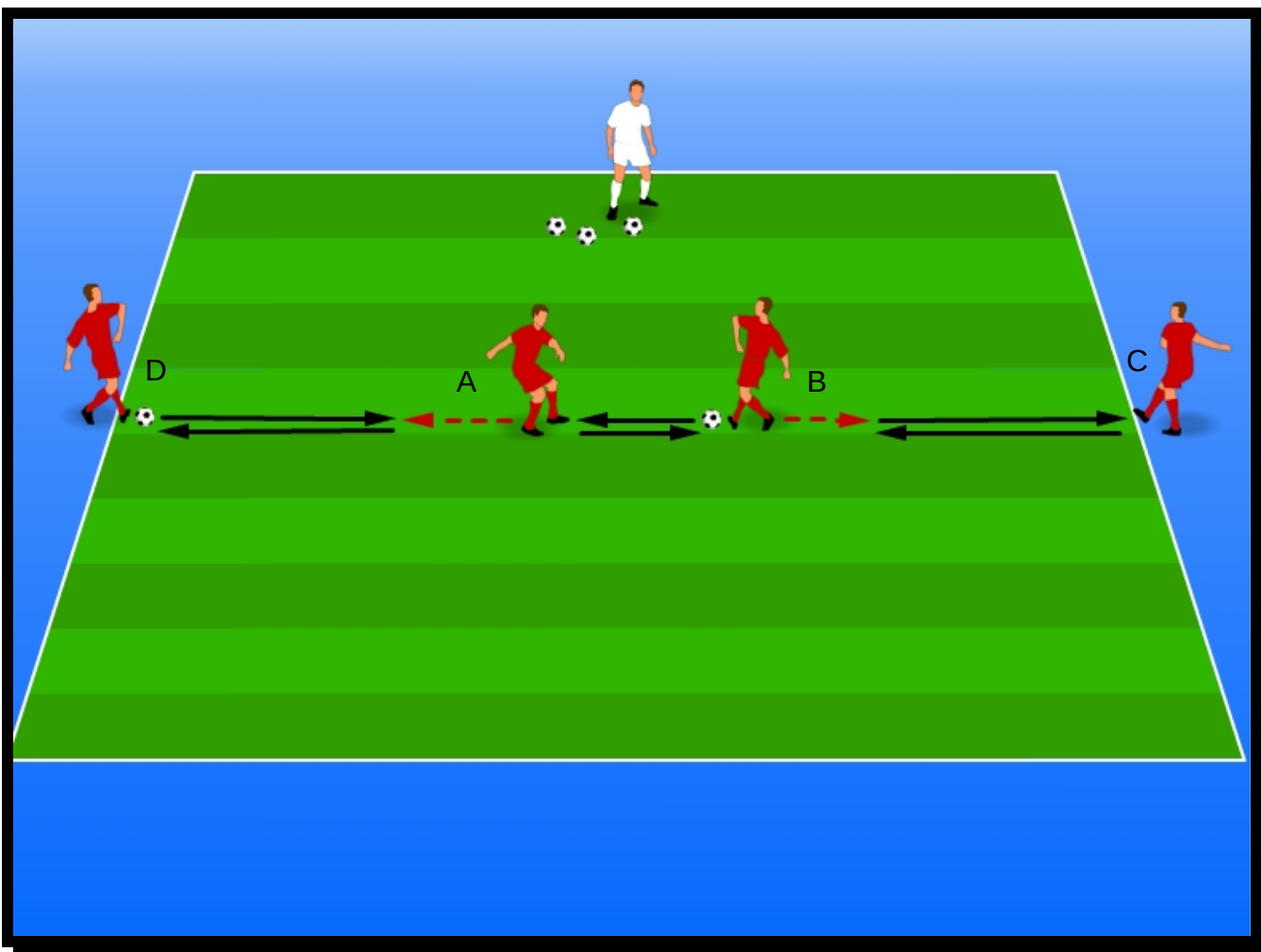
Coaching Points:

- 1 Strike the top half of the ball in order to keep it on the ground.
- 2 Use both the inside and outside of the foot on your dribble touch.
- 3 Get your feet set as quickly as possible, and choose your technique early.

Double Pass, Twice

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: Four players are set up inside of the grid, starting 10-15 yards apart.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player B performs a double pass combination with Player A. Both players then turn and perform double pass combinations with the players on the ends (Players D and C). After completing those double passes, Players A and B turn back towards each other and repeat the sequence. The passing combinations continue back and forth across the grid, and the players switch positions every two minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 The Double pass.
- 2 One touch passing.
- 3 Communication.

Progressions:

- 1 Shorten the passes.
- 2 Use specific turning moves in the center.

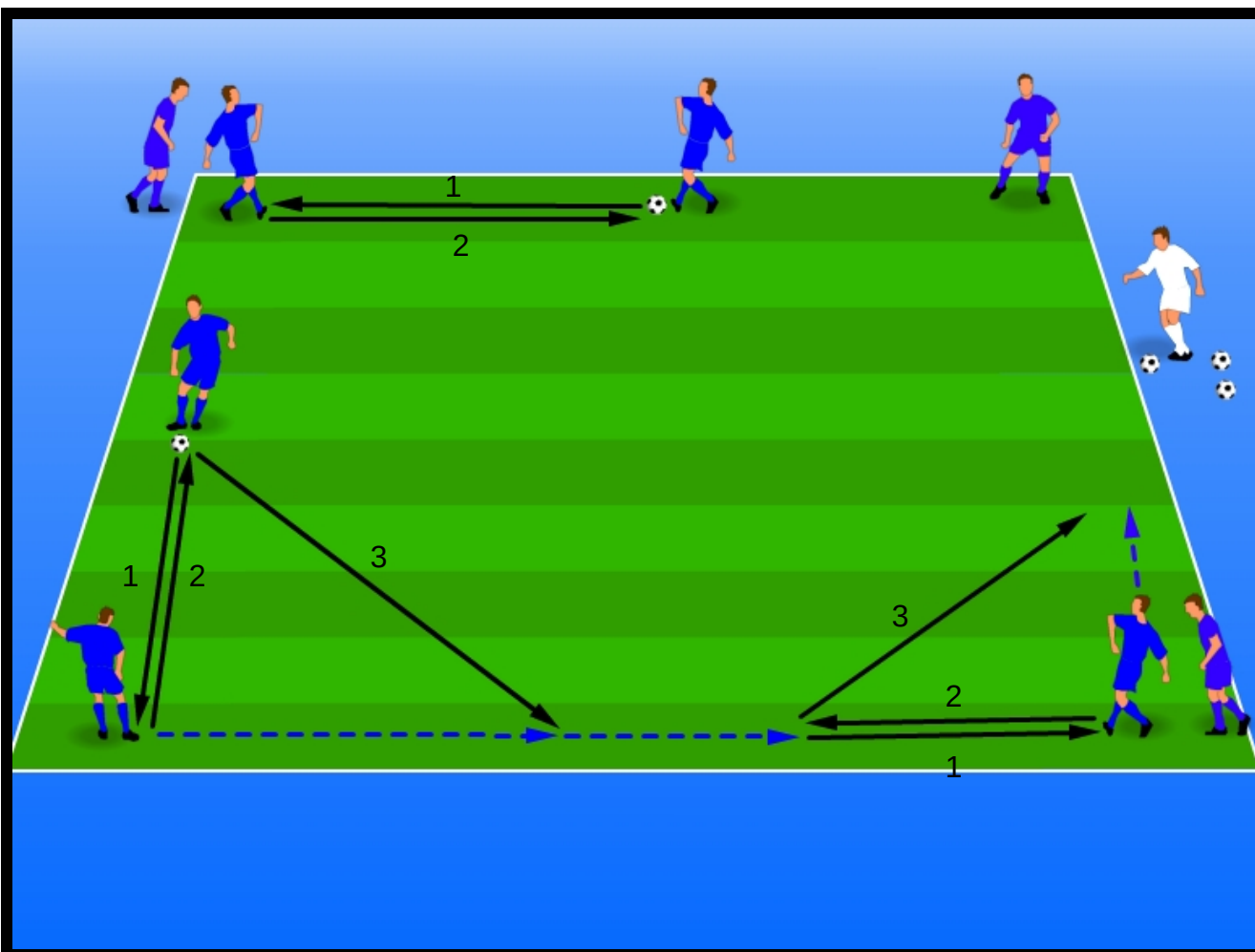
Coaching Points:

- 1 To complete the double pass combination, take a dribble touch away from the passer.
- 2 Strike the top half of the ball to keep it on the ground, and don't lean back.
- 3 Call for the pass in a big, clear voice and make eye contact with your teammate.

Double Pass, Wall #1

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: 8-10 players are set up in the small grid, starting in the corners.

Procedure: During the drill, the players perform a double pass combination in each corner, followed by a wall pass. Players receiving in the corner should check away from the ball first, and then come back to meet the first pass. Two or three balls are used at the same time, and the direction of play changes after 5-10 minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Combination play.
- 2 Speed of play.
- 3 Checking runs.

Progressions:

- 1 Progress to the Long Wall drill.

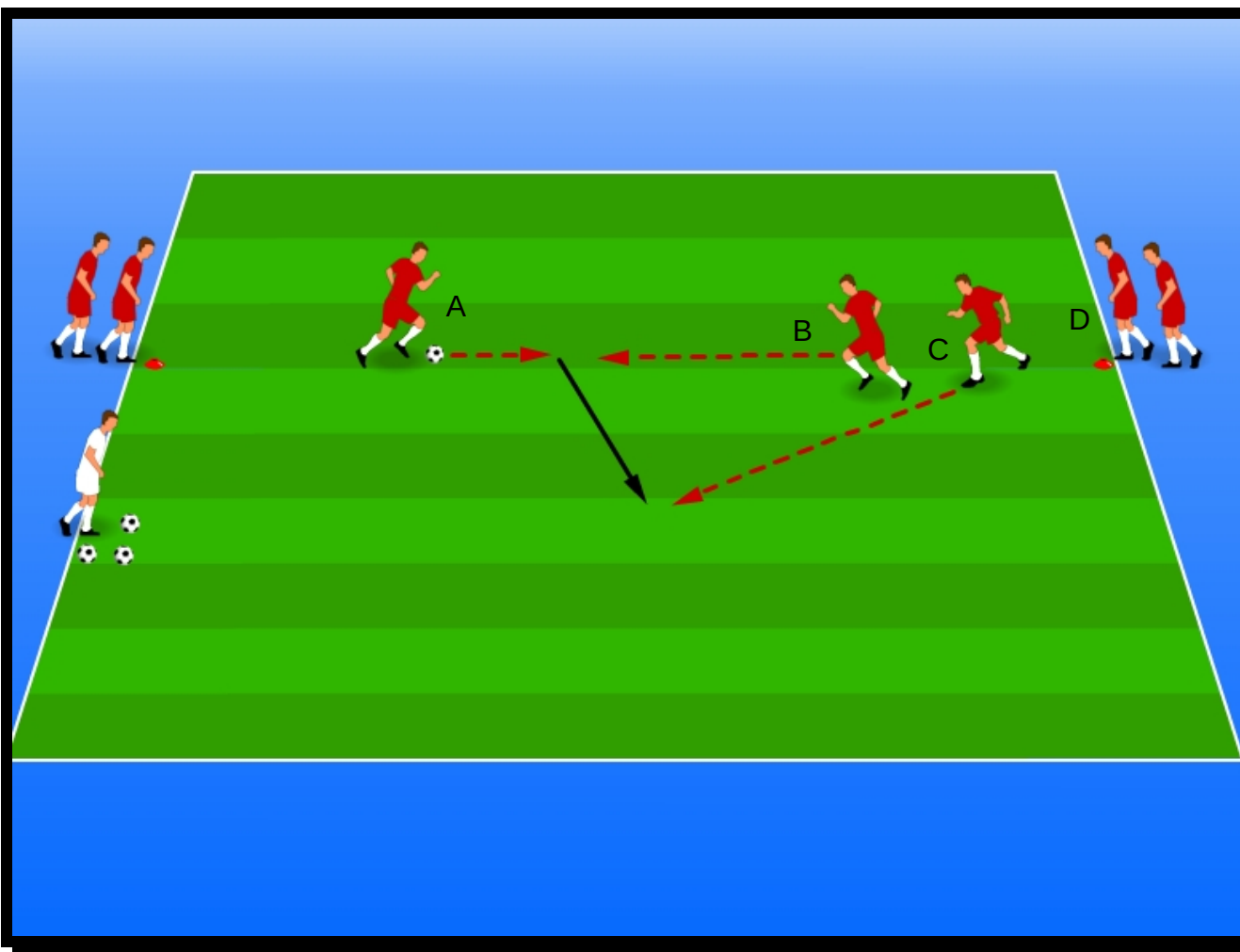
Coaching Points:

- 1 The double pass combination is on whenever you catch a defender chasing the ball.
- 2 Use one touch passes when you can, use two touches when you should.
- 3 Check away, and then break back to the ball. Don't receive while standing still.

2 v 1 Shuttle

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: There are 6-8 players set up in the small grid, with two lines starting at the cones.

Procedure: Player A begins play by dribbling towards the other line. Player B—the first player in that line—jumps out to defend. The second player in line—Player C—looks to combine with Player A to beat the defender with a 2 v 1 combination. Upon completion of the combination, the ball is passed to Player D, who begins the next attack in the opposite direction.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Blind side runs.
- 2 Combination play.
- 3 Passing angles.

Progressions:

- 1 A second defender pressures Player C.

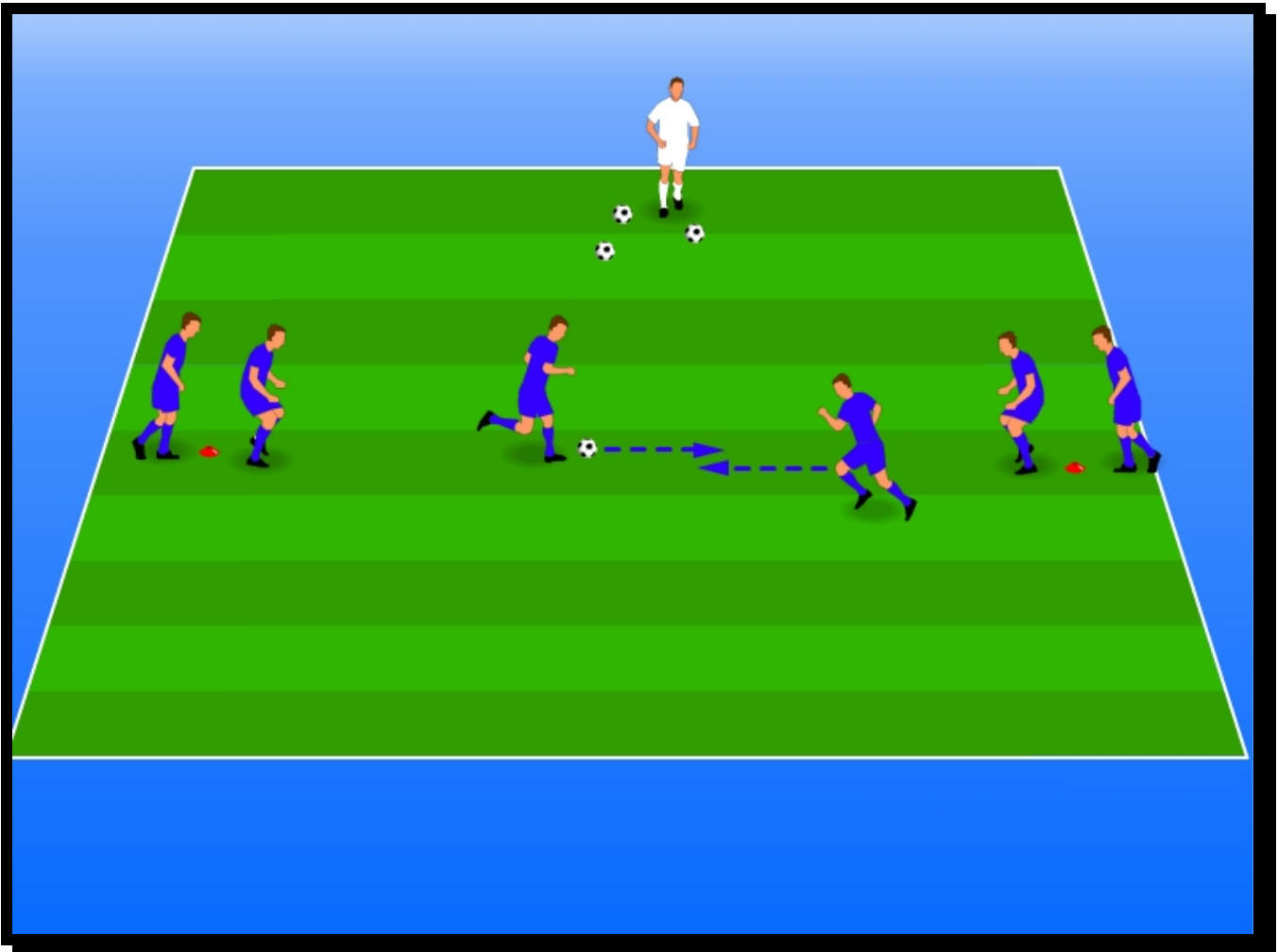
Coaching Points:

- 1 Player C must read the defender and set up on his blind side.
- 2 Look for other combinations (thru pass, double pass) as well as the wall pass.
- 3 Player C must jump out and show himself, and not hide behind the defender.

Takeover Shuttle

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: There are 6-8 players set up at opposite ends of the grid, with the two lines facing one another.

Procedure: To begin play, the first player in line dribbles across the grid towards the other line. The first player in the other line makes a run into the center of the grid, and the two players perform a takeover or a heel pass combination. After the combination (or fake) is made, the ball is dribbled across for the re-start. Play continues back and forth across the grid with players combining for heel passes, takeovers, or fakes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 The Takeover.
- 2 The Heel pass.
- 3 Fake combinations.

Progressions:

- 1 No talking allowed.

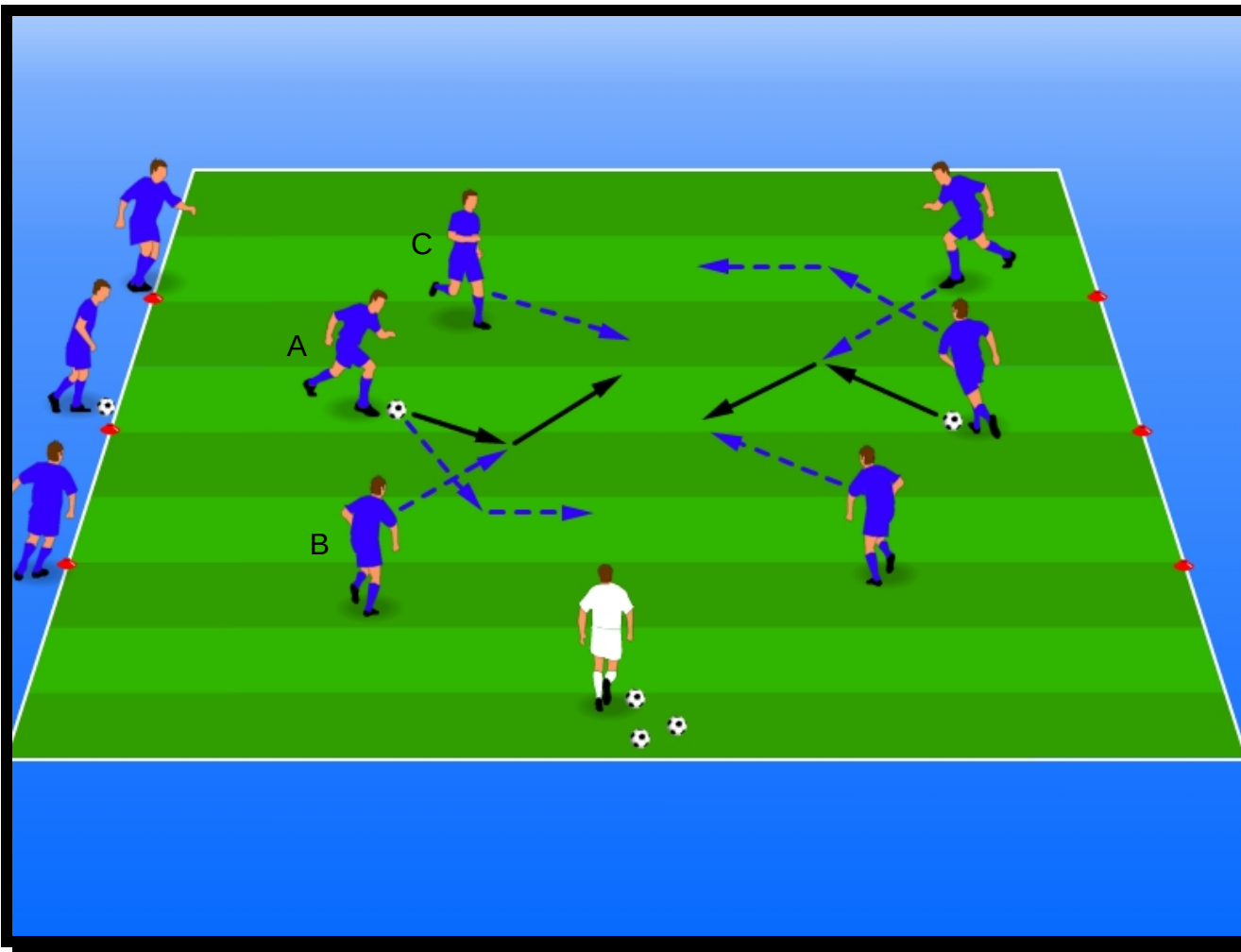
Coaching Points:

- 1 After the receiver calls "leave it", the dribbler should not touch the ball again.
- 2 The heel pass should not slow the receiver down. You may have to play it early.
- 3 Kick the knee up to fake the combinations, and accelerate out of the fake.

Overlap Weave

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: There are 9-12 players set up inside the grid, starting at the cones.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player A passes to Player B and makes an overlap run around him. The pass should lead Player B into the center of the field. Player B then lays the ball off to Player C and makes the same kind of overlapping run. The three players continue to pass and overlap until they reach the other end of the grid, and then they reverse direction. Groups of players will have to communicate and avoid contact with each other during the course of the drill as it continues to run in both directions.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 The Overlap.
- 2 Timing the runs.
- 3 Feinting.

Progressions:

- 1 Limit the players to one touch.

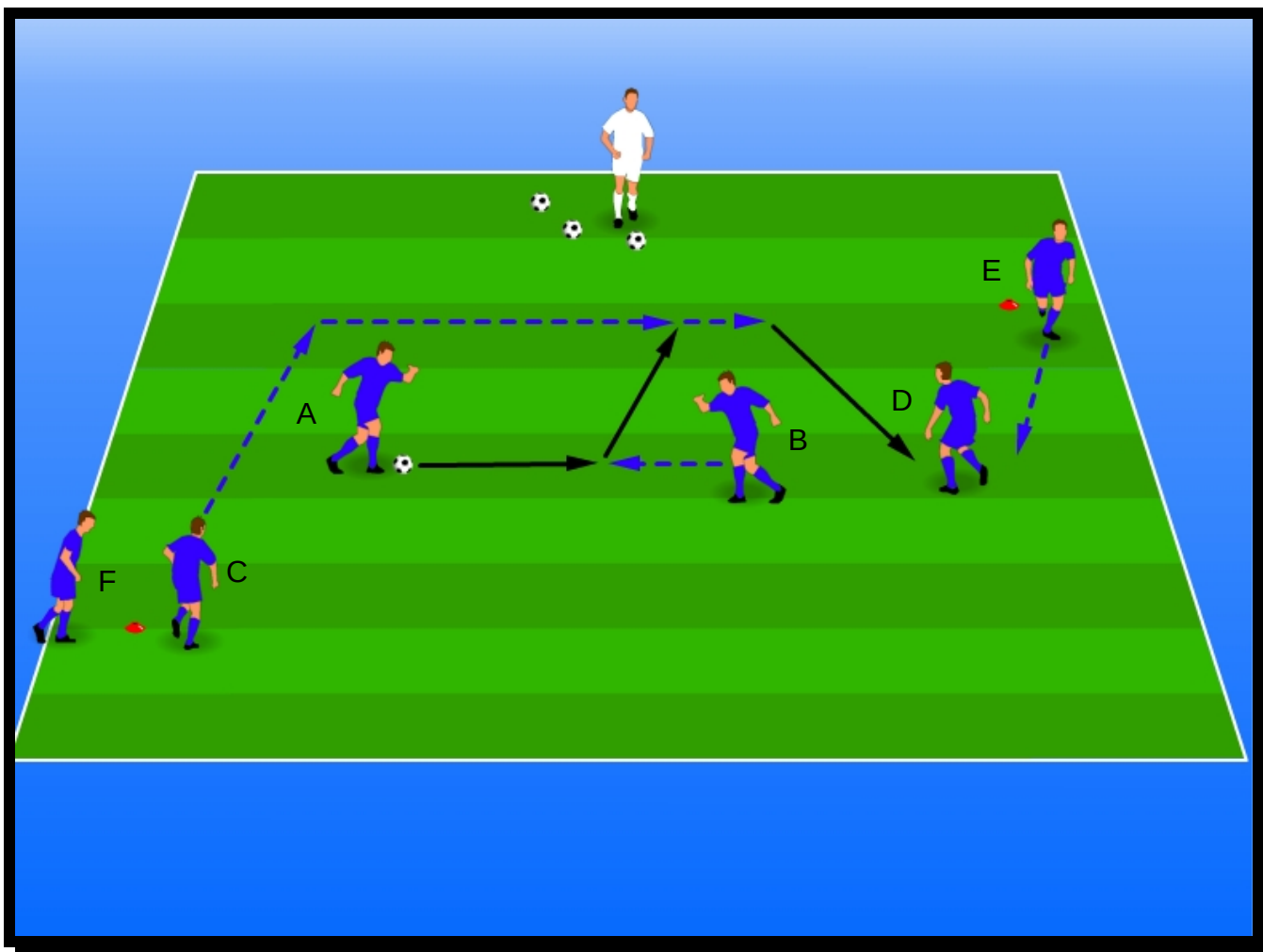
Coaching Points:

- 1 Cut in on the heels of the player you are overlapping. Don't run out too wide.
- 2 Accelerate into the center just before the pass is struck. Run onto the ball at top speed.
- 3 Take a look at the overlapping player before making your pass.

Overlap Shuttle, #3

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: Six players are set up inside of the grid, working back and forth across the field.

Procedure: Player C begins play with an overlapping run around Player A. Player A passes up to Player B, and Player B lays the ball off for Player C. Player C passes up to Player D, and Player E restarts play in the other direction with the overlap run. From there, the play moves from D → A → E. During the course of the drill, Players C, E, and F continue to run overlaps across the grid, while Players A, B, and D shuttle back and forth in the center. After 3-5 minutes, the players change starting positions.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Timing the run.
- 2 Feinting.
- 3 Passing.

Progressions:

- 1 Add another support player on the outside.

Coaching Points:

- 1 The player making the overlap run must hold his run and let the play develop.
- 2 Fake away from the player running the overlap before laying the ball off to him.
- 3 Pass to the player's feet, not out into space for him to run onto.

Overlaps to Goal

Fundamental

Combination Play



Set Up: There are 6-10 players set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones. A support player is stationed inside of the 'D'.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player B runs an overlap around Player A. Player A passes up to Player C, and runs an overlap around the other side. Player C lays the ball off to either player for a shot on goal. The players alternate lines during the drill, and after five minutes, a new player rotates in for Player C.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Quality first touch.
- 2 Timing the runs.
- 3 Speed of play.

Progressions:

- 1 Add a defender inside of the penalty area.

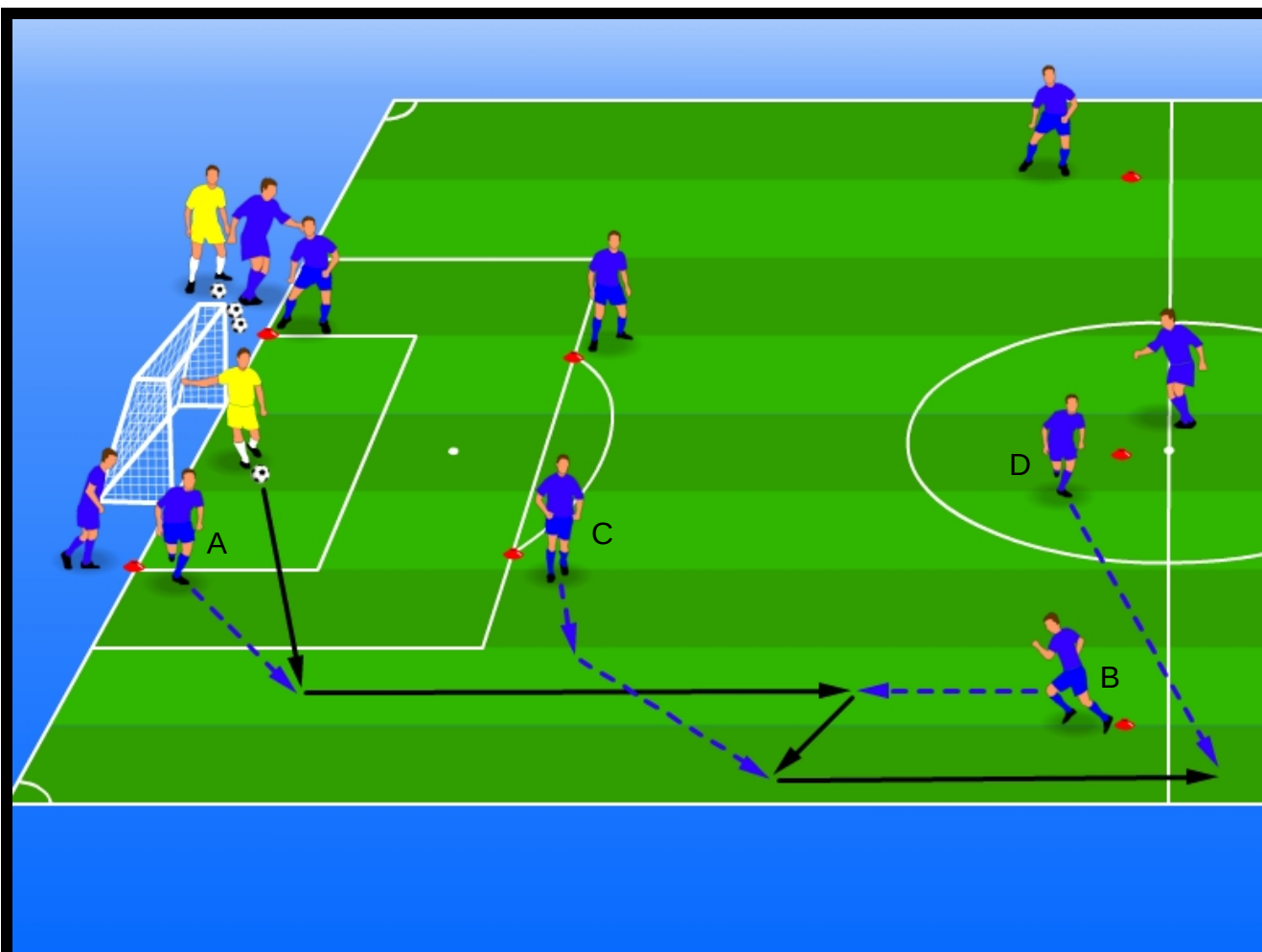
Coaching Points:

- 1 A poor first pass will throw off the timing of the entire combination.
- 2 Hold the run and maintain the correct distance in case the ball is played backwards.
- 3 Use as few touches as possible, and don't slow down the run with a weak pass.

Breakout Drill #1

Fundamental

Patterns of Play



Set Up: There are 12-15 players set up in the defending half, starting at the cones.

Procedure: The goalkeeper begins play with a pass out to Player A. Player A passes up to Player B as Player C makes an overlapping run down the line. Player B lays the ball off to Player C, and he passes the ball up the line to Player D, making an inside out run from the center. Player D dribbles the ball back to the end line, and the players rotate from A→C→B→D. During the drill, the goalkeepers alternate service to both sides of the field.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Checking runs.
- 2 Timing the runs.
- 3 Speed of play.

Progressions:

- 1 Limit the players to one or two touches.

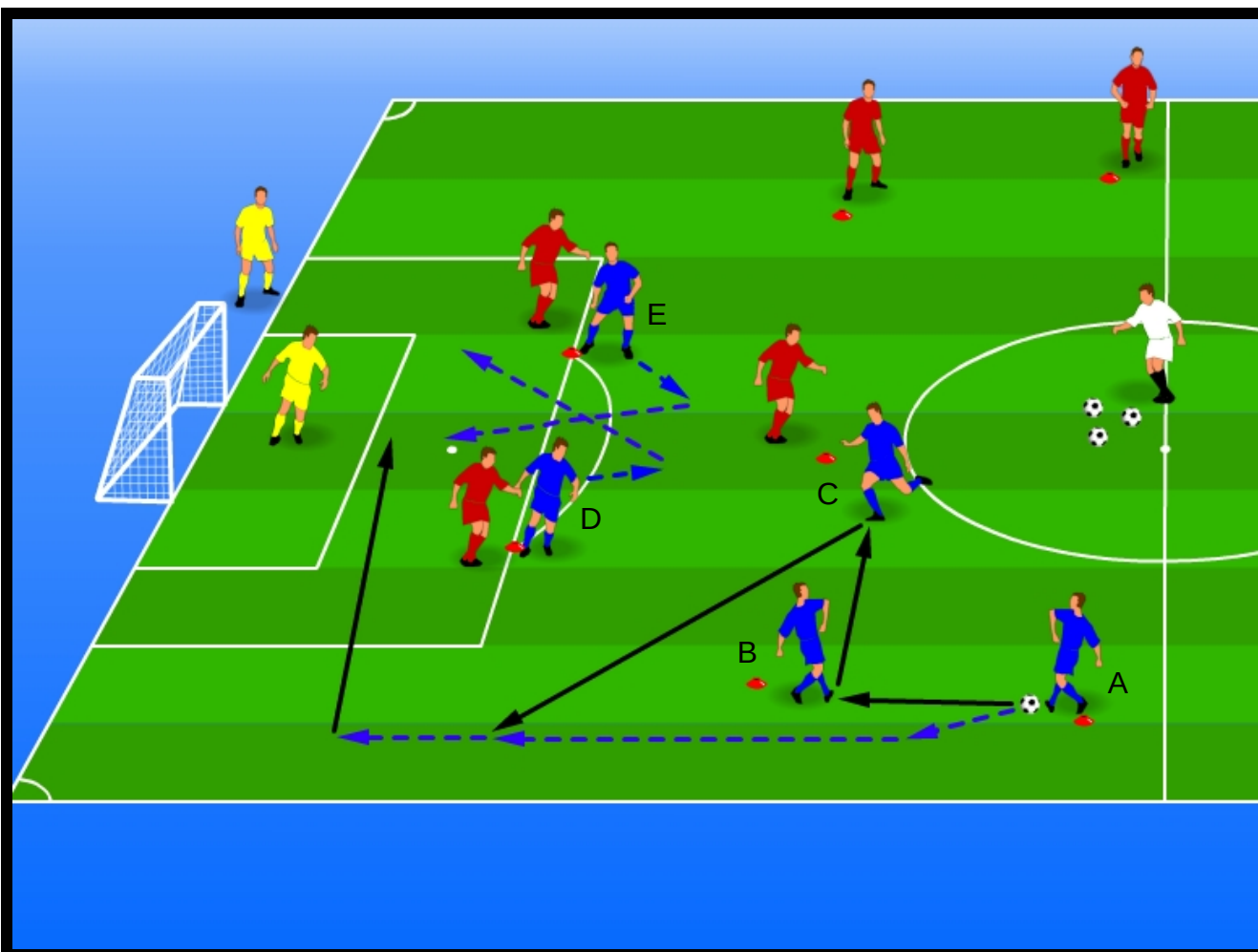
Coaching Points:

- 1 Player B must check away from the ball before coming back to receive the pass.
- 2 Player C has to watch the play develop before making his overlapping run.
- 3 Play in a one and two touch rhythm, and don't slow the attack down.

Outside, Inside #2

Fundamental

Patterns of Play



Set Up: Ten players are set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones.

Procedure: To begin the drill, the Feeder plays the ball outside to Player A. Player A passes the ball up to Player B, and overlaps him. Player B passes square to Player C, who then plays the ball thru to Player A. Player A crosses to Players D and E for a finish on goal. Upon completion, the Feeder re-starts the drill on the opposite side of the field. During the drill, the players rotate from A → B → C, and Players D and E switch places. After five minutes, new players rotate in to the striker spots.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Speed of play.
- 2 Checking runs.
- 3 The Overlap.

Progressions:

- 1 The strikers in the second group defend the cross.

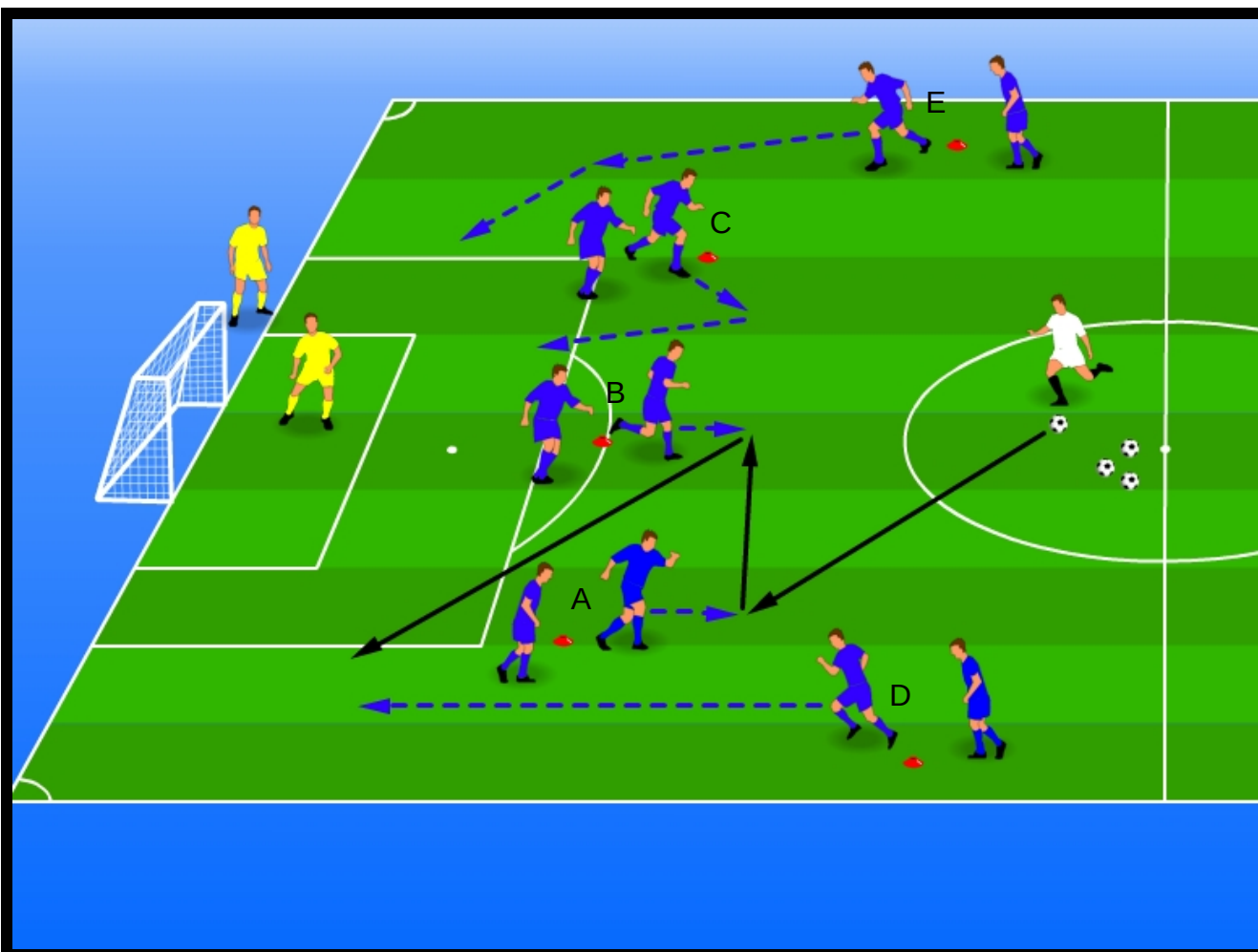
Coaching Points:

- 1 Players B and C should not slow down Player A during his run.
- 2 All players should check away, and then sprint back to the ball to receive.
- 3 Player B should fake a pass to Player A before playing the ball to Player C.

Outside, Inside #6

Fundamental

Patterns of Play



Set Up: There are ten players set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones.

Procedure: The Feeder begins play with a pass out to Player A (or Player C). Player B comes back to the ball to receive a pass from Player A. Player D runs down the line and receives the thru pass from Player B. The sequence finishes with a cross and finish. Upon completion, the players return to the same starting positions, and the Feeder re-starts the drill with the next ball in to a central attacker. Players rotate to new positions after five minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Timing the runs.
- 2 Shielding.
- 3 Crossing.

Progressions:

- 1 Add a defender inside of the penalty area.

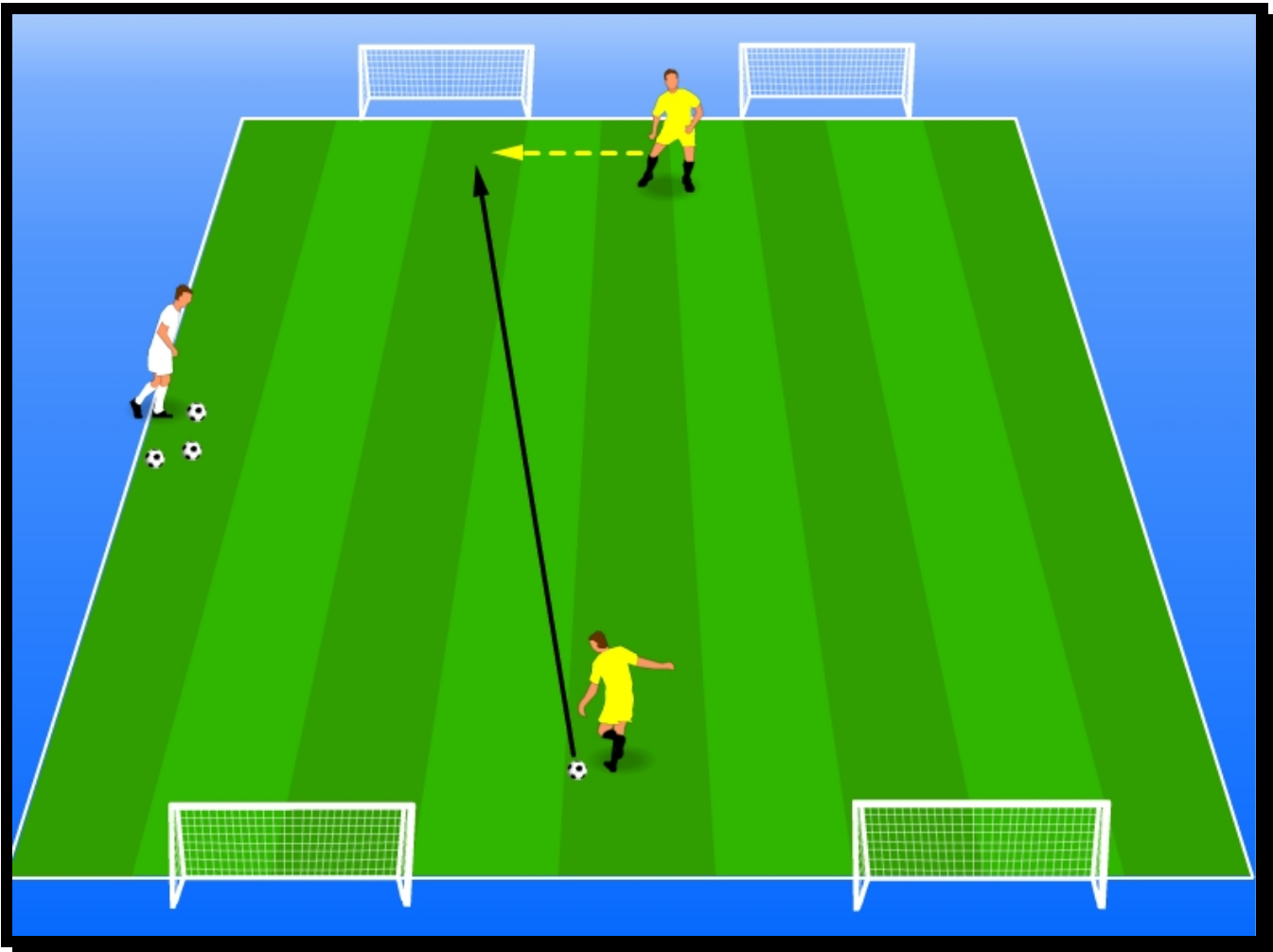
Coaching Points:

- 1 Players must hold their runs until their teammates are ready to deliver the pass.
- 2 Get sideways on to the defender and create some distance between him and the ball.
- 3 Crosses should be struck first time and driven at chest height.

Keeper Distribution, #3

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: Two goalkeepers are set up on a narrow field, with two goals placed at each end.

Procedure: The goalkeepers shoot the ball back and forth, trying to score in either goal. The service can vary during the game: 1) One or two touch limit. 2) Drop kick. 3) Side volley. 4) Direct kick. 5) Throws.

The first player to three points wins the game, and the players compete in a best of seven series.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Shooting rhythm.
- 2 Preparing to pass.
- 3 Ball striking.

Progressions:

- 1 Reduce the length of the field.

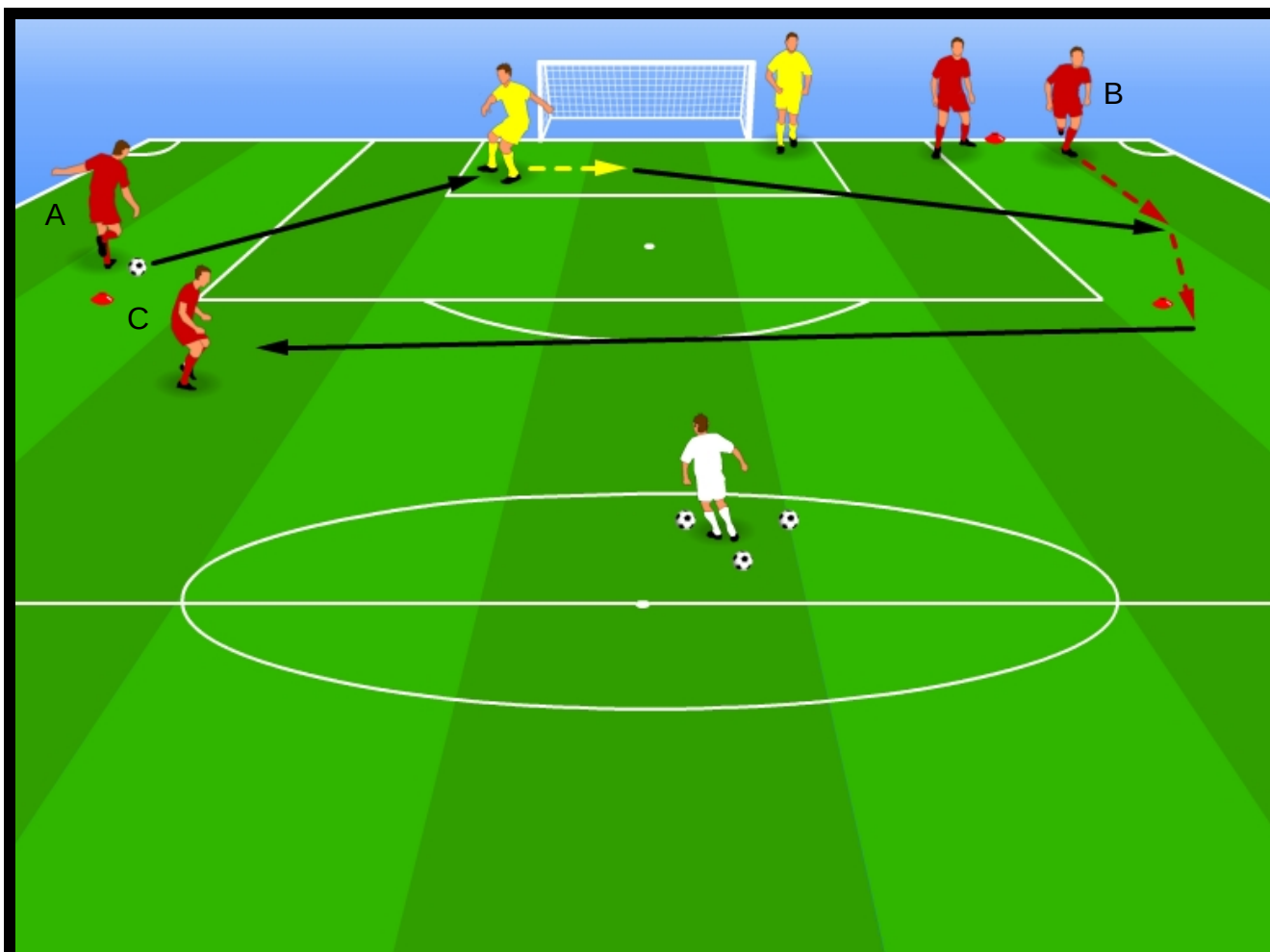
Coaching Points:

- 1 Time your drop kick or volley so that you strike the ball when it's close to the ground.
- 2 Your first touch must create the proper angle in order to strike a hard, accurate pass.
- 3 Point the toe down and slice under the ball in order to drive it with back spin.

Long Pass Circuit #1

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: There are 4-6 players set up in the attacking third, with players starting at the cones. The goalkeeper starts at the corner of the six-yard box.

Procedure: To begin the drill, Player A plays the ball back to the goalkeeper, who turns and distributes the ball out to the other side to Player B. Player B speed dribbles to the cone, then drives the ball across the field to Player C. Player C re-starts the drill with the other goalkeeper. The players rotate clockwise during the drill, and the goalkeepers move the starting point over to the other side of the field after 5-10 minutes.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Switching the field.
- 2 First touch.
- 3 Back passes.

Progressions:

- 1 Lead Player B up the field with the pass.

Coaching Points:

- 1 With the first touch, the goalkeeper should open up and look to the opposite side.
- 2 The goalkeeper should be up on his toes and ready to run with the ball.
- 3 Back passes should be made as early as possible to discourage runs at the goalkeeper.

Keeper Outlet, #3

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: There are four players set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones.

Procedure: Player D plays the ball to the feet of the goalkeeper who opens up and distributes the ball out to Player C. Player B runs out of the corner, receives the layoff pass from Player C, and then plays the ball into the small goal. Player B then switches with Player C, and plays the next ball in. The goalkeeper receives and then plays out to Player D. Play continues in this pattern, as each goalkeeper plays ten consecutive balls before switching out.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Switching the field.
- 2 Distribution.
- 3 Passing.

Progressions:

- 1 Air ball service.

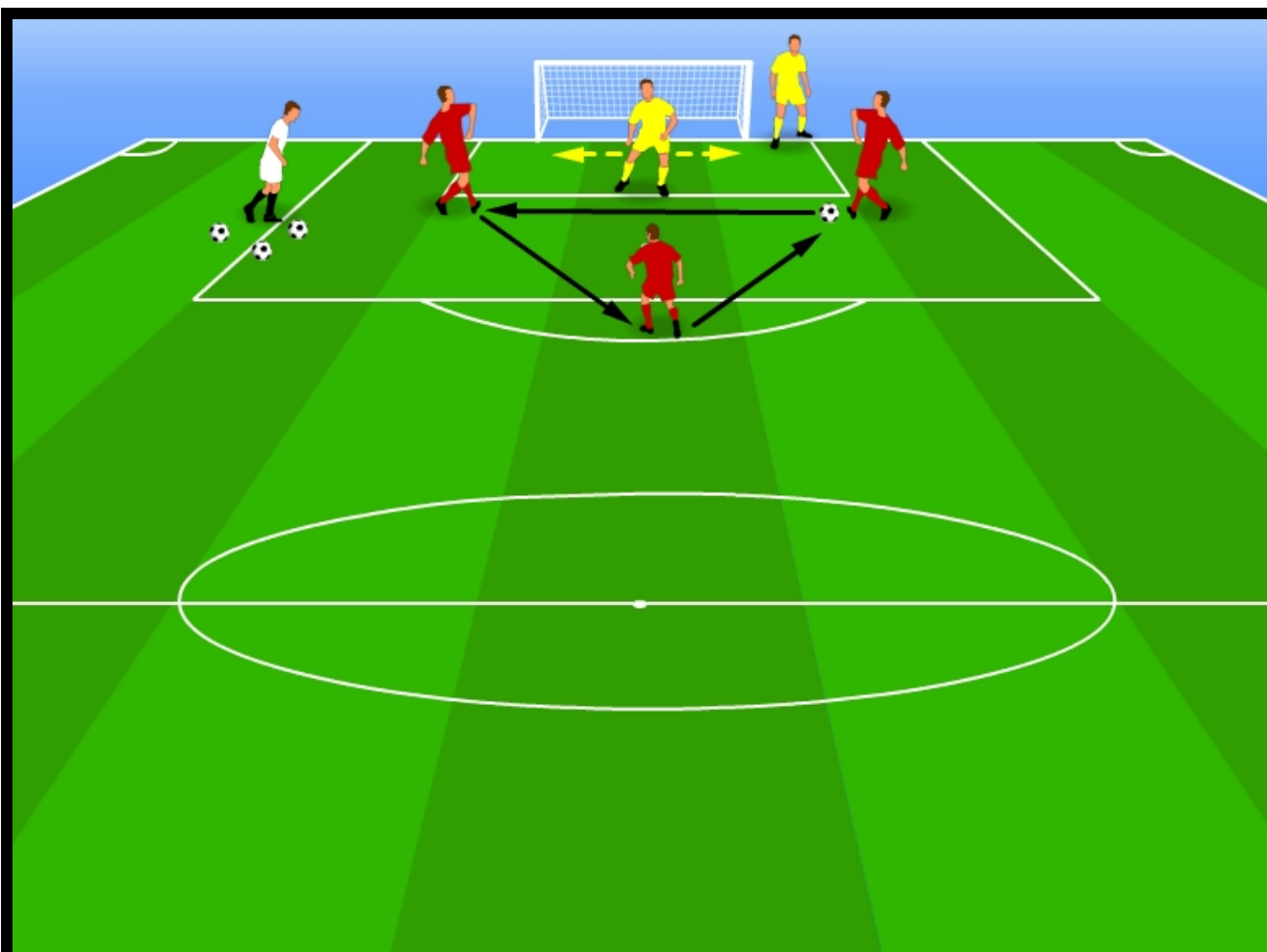
Coaching Points:

- 1 Open up with the first touch and immediately look to the opposite side of the field.
- 2 Look for the outside midfielder as well as the outside back when you open up.
- 3 Long passes should be driven with the instep, and not played with the inside of the foot.

Move the Keeper

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: There are three players set up in the penalty area, just outside of the six yard box.

Procedure: The attackers pass the ball around the triangle (using one or two touches), and the goalkeeper re-adjusts his position with each pass. After three passes are made, the attackers are free to shoot on goal at any time, but they can only finish with first time shots. After three shots, the goalkeeper switches out, and the attackers rotate to new positions.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Set position.
- 2 Concentration.
- 3 Save technique.

Progressions:

- 1 One touch limit on passes.
- 2 Use a smaller triangle, only shoot at half of the goal.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Come to a set position before the ball is struck, regardless of where you are.
- 2 Concentrate on the ball and ignore ball and body feints.
- 3 Choose to catch or parry as early as possible. Parry hard shots from in close.

Poaching Drill

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: There are 6-8 players set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones. The goalkeeper starts on his line.

Procedure: Player A begins the drill with a thru pass to Player B, leading him into the penalty area. The goalkeeper tries to come off of his line to cut out the pass. A new goalkeeper switches in after each shot, and the shooters go to both lines during the drill. After ten minutes, the starting position is switched over to the right side of the field.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Set position.
- 2 Angle of approach.
- 3 Decision making.

Progressions:

- 1 Player A serves a bouncing ball towards goal.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Cheat off of the line as much as possible before the pass is made.
- 2 Curve the run to the ball and force the shooter to go in one direction.
- 3 Make an early decision to cut the ball out or to move with the shooter.

Cross, Shot

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: There are four players set up in the attacking third, with two goalkeepers.

Procedure: Player A begins the drill with a cross into the penalty area. The goalkeeper catches, and then moves over to play the shot from Player B. Player C follows the shot with his cross, and after the goalkeeper catches the third ball, Player D shoots. The goalkeeper saves and re-adjusts his position with each ball, and switches out after four balls. The shooters move quickly, giving the goalkeepers just enough time to recover in between saves.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Set position.
- 2 Recovery runs.
- 3 Save technique.

Progressions:

- 1 Add an attacker in the penalty area.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Come to a set position before the ball is struck, regardless of where you are.
- 2 Use small, quick steps to get across the penalty area.
- 3 Parry or punch the crosses you cannot catch, and send the ball out wide.

Keeper Recovery, #1

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: Two shooters are set up outside the penalty area on opposite sides of the field. The goalkeeper starts on his line.

Procedure: The goalkeeper begins the drill by coming off of his line and out to the 12. The first shooter hits the goalkeeper in the hands from close in, and after the goalkeeper saves, the second shooter drives a ball towards the crossbar from 30 yards out. The goalkeeper must recover back and make the save at the far post. The speed of the drill can be increased to force the goalkeeper to get over quickly for the second ball. During the drill, the goalkeeper switches out after saving the second ball.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Concentration.
- 2 Recovery run.
- 3 Decision making.

Progressions:

- 1 The goalkeeper must dive on the first ball.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Play one ball at a time. Make sure of the first save before moving for the second.
- 2 Take small, quick steps as you recover back, and angle the run towards the far post.
- 3 Choose to catch or tip the ball over the bar as early as possible.

Keeper Recovery, #2

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: Two shooters are set up in the attacking third of the field, along with two goalkeepers.

Procedure: The goalkeeper begins the drill by coming off of the near post and out towards the 1st shooter. The 1st shooter hits the goalkeeper in the hands from close in, and then the 2nd shooter drives a ball on the ground between the six-yard box and the penalty spot. The goalkeeper must recover back towards the center and then cut out the second ball. The speed of the drill can be increased to make the second save more difficult.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Set position.
- 2 Recovery run.
- 3 Save technique.

Progressions:

- 1 The goalkeeper must dive on the first ball.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Come to a set position before the ball is struck, regardless of where you are.
- 2 Use small, quick steps to get across the penalty area, and run towards the ball.
- 3 Choose to catch or punch as early as possible. Parry hard shots from in close.

Second Save

Fundamental

Goalkeeping



Set Up: Four players are set up in the attacking third, starting at the cones.

Procedure: The goalkeeper begins the drill by coming off of his line to save the first shot from Player A. After the 1st save, Player B sets a ball back for Player C to shoot. The goalkeeper must recover and make the 2nd save at the other post. The speed of the drill can be increased to force the goalkeeper to get over quickly for the second ball. During the drill, each goalkeeper plays two shots and switches out. The shooters rotate clockwise during the drill.

Teaching Topics:

- 1 Recovery runs.
- 2 Concentration.
- 3 Decision making.

Progressions:

- 1 Move the shooters in closer, and only use half of the goal.

Coaching Points:

- 1 Use small, quick steps as you move across the penalty area.
- 2 Play one ball at a time. Make sure of the first save before moving for the second.
- 3 Parry shots from in close and don't try to hold balls that you can't handle.

About the Author



Don Herlan—aka “Smedley”—is a coach and author, currently living in Western New York with his pal, Bandit.

He has been coaching at the college level since 1981, including stops at SUNY Geneseo, the University of Buffalo, Saint Francis University, Juniata College, and Longwood University. He has a Masters degree in Exercise Physiology from the University of Akron, and has also taught Exercise Science at several universities. His Facebook page—Smedley’s Soccer Page—can be viewed starting in January of 2015, and his website—Smedley’s Soccer Site—will be launching in the Spring of 2015.