

Attacking in a 4-4-2 diamond

The key elements of the session:

- Positioning
- Passing
- Support

Overview

The objective of this practice is to educate players in the principles of attacking when setting up tactically in a 4-4-2 diamond. Specifically, this means creating different lines of passing for the player in possession, as well as exploring the decisive factors that dictate the choice of pass.

It's important to practise this with the England national women's football team because although our principles of play remain the same no matter where we are on the field, the midfield diamond represents one of the four key tactical structures we adopt as a team, such is its perceived importance in the modern game.

This and other practices aim to help further the players' understanding of our core principles as well as teaching them the key tactical team movements within the diamond itself.

As a result, we have developed an engaging practice that moves quickly and offers maximum 'take out' for players.

"The player in possession is encouraged to be aware of the position of his/her team mates and opponents before selecting the right pass for the team."

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 72x44 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

SESSION TIME

48mins

ATTACKING IN A 4-4-2 DIAMOND

What do I get the players to do?

We begin in a 30x25-yard area. Players are split into three teams of four with two acting as common players who only play for the team in possession. One team of four sets up with two players on each end line (to help the players relate the practice to the match as these would be the central defenders and strikers). A 4v4 situation now occurs inside the rectangle with both teams working in a diamond formation, with the common players on the sides representing full-backs.

The objective of the practice is for teams to work the ball from end to end with a point being scored each time this is achieved.

Players on the outside are able to pass to each other but can also be tackled. The only condition at the start of the practice is that these outside players are limited to two touches of the ball. The normal 'work to rest' ratio is 1:1 with a working time of two minutes and recovery time of two minutes (six sets).

The four players on the outside would then swap with a team in the middle with the common players remaining on the side.

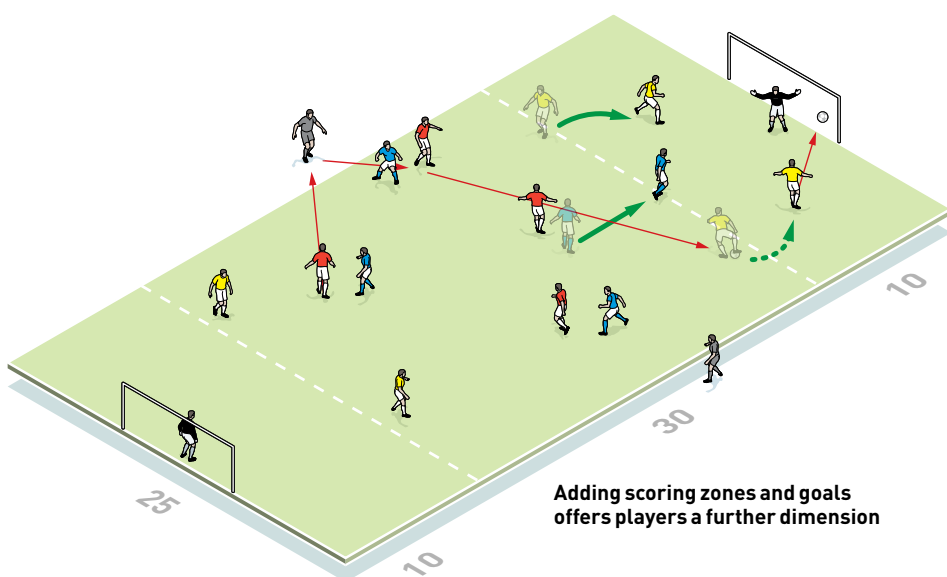
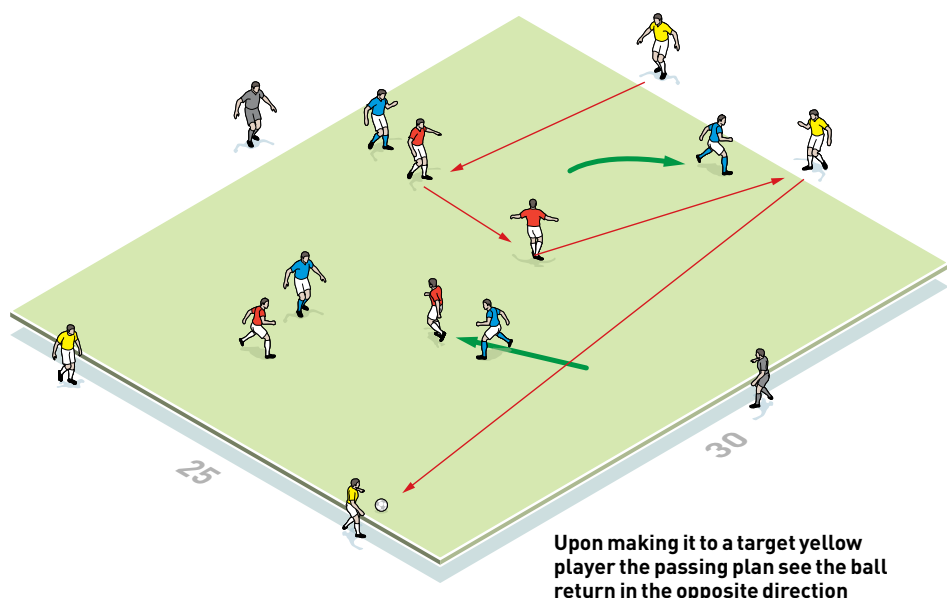
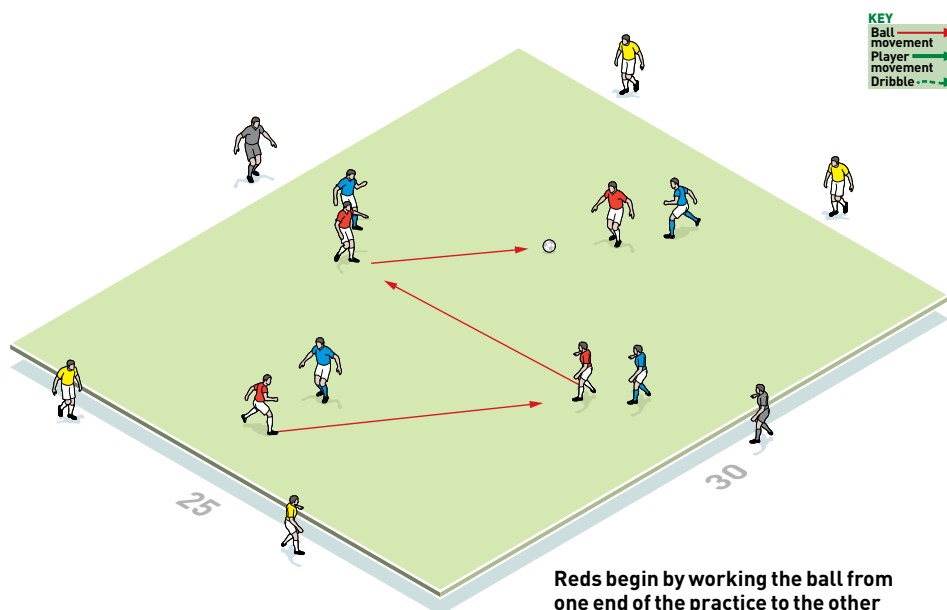
What are the key things to look for technically/tactically?

The first thing we look for is the positioning of the players so they are not on the same horizontal or vertical line as any of their team mates. This automatically creates a number of different passing lines for the player in possession.

Players need to constantly scan the pitch to be aware of their position in relation to what's happening on the ball (whether pressure or no pressure), the position of their team mates and position of the opponents.

We encourage team mates to provide the player in possession with various types of support: a team mate who has come off an opponent to offer a short pass, moving in between opponents to offer a more penetrative pass, and moving in behind opponents to offer a longer pass.

Other supporting players would adjust their position based on this movement, what is happening on the ball and the positions of opponents.



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How do I progress the session?

As an initial progression, we restrict players in the middle to only one touch of the ball. To enhance the challenge further, for a goal to count the end player receiving the ball must play a successful pass one-touch to a supporting player inside the rectangle.

Next, we can add goals 10 yards behind each end line to give the forward the option of moving in behind to score, with the end line then acting as an offside line.

How would I put this into a game situation?

We'd set up a small-sided game played on a pitch the size of two penalty boxes, with an area the size of a penalty area behind each goal. The game is 8v8 with two players from each team on the opponent's goal line either side of the post (acting as strikers). There are two common players, one on each side (acting as full-backs) and four keepers (one in each goal).

The remaining six players are set up into a 2-4 formation with the two players at the back (acting as centre-backs) and the four players in midfield (as a diamond set-up).

Teams can score in either of the two goals their team is attacking. Strikers are limited to one touch when playing to a team mate, or can take more touches if they decide to attempt to score in goal B.

We won't play offside unless the striker wishes to receive a pass then move towards goal B - he/she would need to move onto the pitch to an onside position to then attack the goal. If the striker decides to attempt to score in goal B his/her strike partner can support with two players from the middle section, but two defenders can recover also.

There are no throw-ins or corners - the ball would always start with the keeper in goal A. We would play this match with a 'work to rest' ratio of six minutes play with two minutes recovery (three sets).

