



Attack Like The SAS

If you want your strikers to forge a partnership as deadly as Sturridge and Suarez, get your players to model themselves on the SAS and run our attacking training sessions

In the modern game, where so many teams play in a 4-3-3 formation, strike partnerships are a dying breed. If you look at Arsenal, they play with Olivier Giroud up front, with their midfielders supporting – likewise Chelsea with Fernando Torres. But you don't need to throw away the idea of creating your own strike partnership quite yet.

One club where two players have worked well in tandem is Liverpool, where the pairing of Daniel Sturridge and Luis Suarez has flourished, leading to the duo being nicknamed the SAS!

In Suarez's enforced absence due to his early-season suspension, Sturridge led the line impressively in a 4-3-3 and the big question was, "Where does Suarez fit in when he comes back?"

Well, Liverpool coach Brendan Rodgers was one step ahead and switched to a 3-5-2 formation to accommodate both players. It was a strategy that worked to perfection in their first Premier League game back together against Sunderland, with both players on the score sheet.

With Steven Gerrard operating in the 'hole' behind them, the pair thrived on through balls from midfield and gave the

Sunderland centre-half pairing problems all afternoon. One striker is tall and one is slight, but their speed, both physically and mentally, will always create problems for opponents. Their fluid interchanging makes them difficult to mark but they would be the first to admit that they rely on good, accurate service from midfield.

To interchange so effectively, there is also the need for good understanding as a pair, too. You will see them working in close proximity to each other; they won't be separated or stretched very often and this is imperative when scoring goals.

Often there are short, sharp passes between the pair, while other times you will see Sturridge peel out wide to pick up the ball, with Suarez quickly losing his marker before darting in at the near post for the return ball. Sometimes it will be Suarez who will ghost into areas behind the back four, before teeing up his partner.

The pair's flexibility means that they can also adjust comfortably if Rodgers decides to change formation; Sturridge's physical presence means that he can play up front as a lone striker, with Suarez playing just off his shoulder. He has the hold-up play to do this and he is also a

selfless player, happy to create goals for his strike partner.

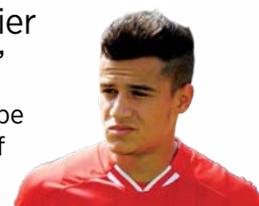
With both players in the top three Premier League scorers at the time of Sturridge's injury at beginning of December, Liverpool will be hoping to have the pair reunited as soon as possible. And when Sturridge and Suarez are finally back together, you can tell your players to watch them closely in action. Then try running the activities on the following pages to make your strike partnership attack like the SAS.

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"They're great players. They're always on the move and scoring goals and I'm happy to play with them. They make our work moving forward easier because they're always looking for space, and it's easier to pass them the ball"

– Liverpool midfielder Philippe Coutinho sings the praises of the SAS



Parallel Lines

Get your strike partners firing on all cylinders like Liverpool's forward pairing Luis Suarez and Daniel Sturridge with this simple, unopposed shooting activity

WHY USE IT

Simple unopposed link up play is an ideal way to start your strike partners working together. Receive, look up, lay off, support – this is the way attackers should be behaving in the final third.

SET UP

Set up an area of 20x20 yards split into two 10-yard areas. The strikers work in one half, the goalkeeper in the other. We've used six players including three servers. You need cones, balls and a goal.

HOW TO PLAY

Two strikers work in one half of the area and must combine and shoot in that half. The servers go in sequence to pass into one of the strikers, who with two touches must pass to his strike partner. The strike partner must shoot with his first touch.

After receiving from each server twice, swap the strike partners with two of the servers and then with the keeper and the other server so all players get a chance. This should be a high tempo session as the game is unopposed, so get servers to play the next ball in immediately after the shot.

TECHNIQUE

Great to practise first touch and the movement of the supporting player. It's a good workout for both shooting technique and the weight and direction of the lay off.

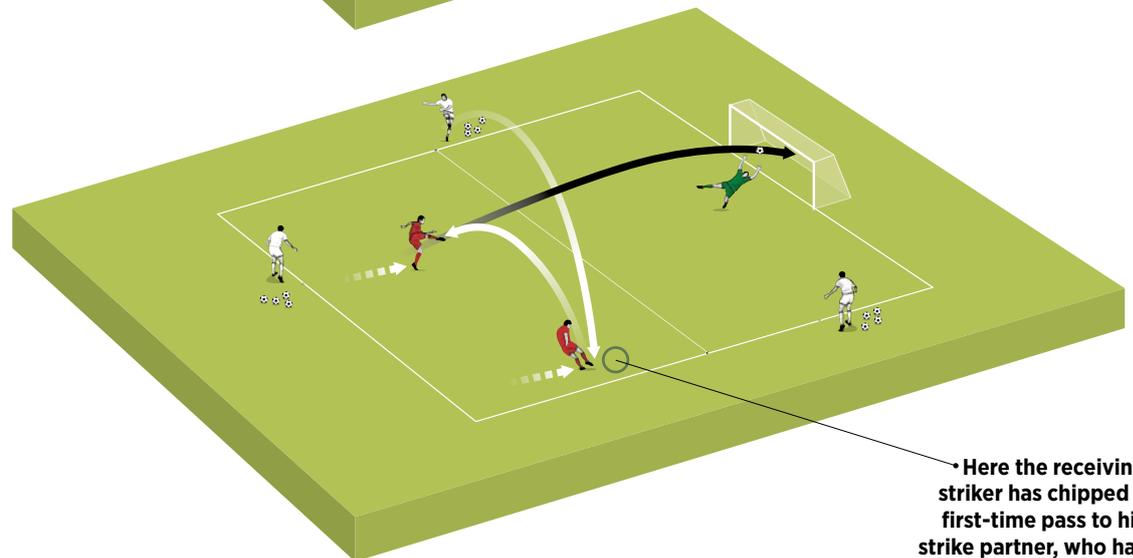
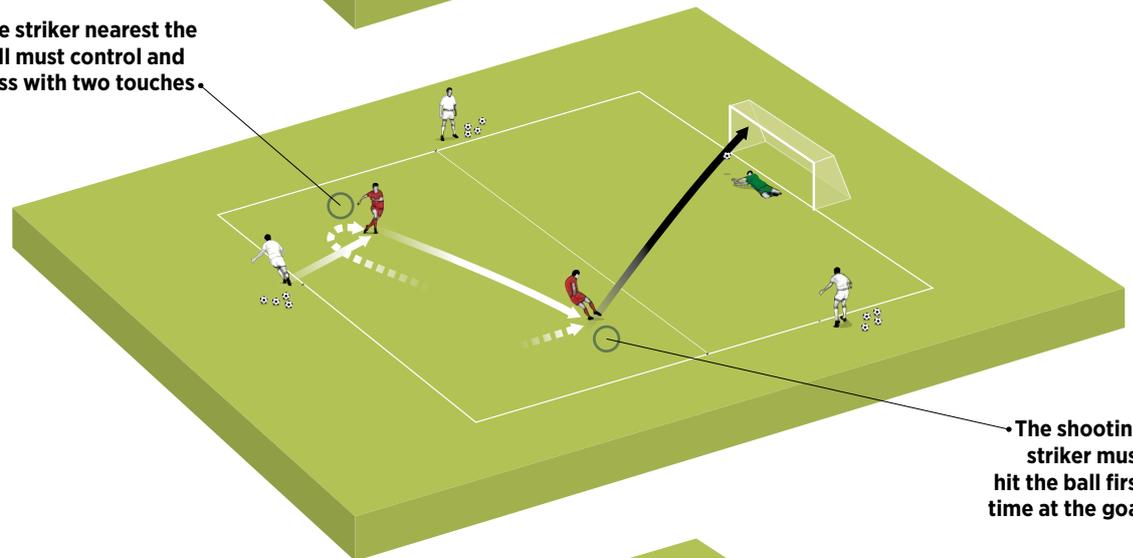
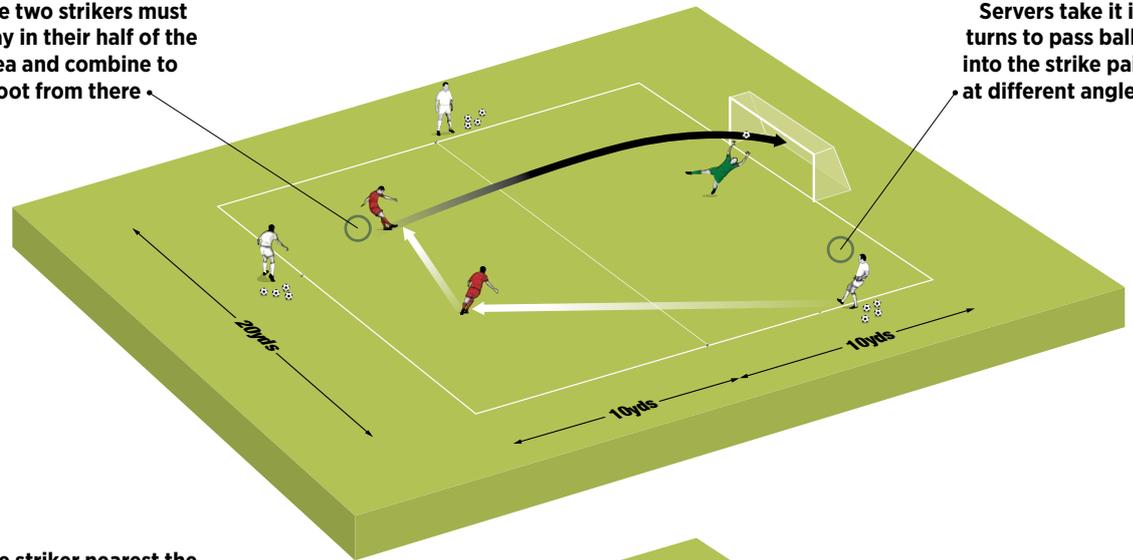
The two strikers must stay in their half of the area and combine to shoot from there

Servers take it in turns to pass balls into the strike pair at different angles

The striker nearest the ball must control and pass with two touches

The shooting striker must hit the ball first time at the goal

Here the receiving striker has chipped a first-time pass to his strike partner, who has volleyed into the net



Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot

Lose Your Marker

If you want your forwards to work on their movement, this session will help striker partners shake off markers in the box and link up to create scoring opportunities

WHY USE IT

This is about playing passes from midfield that the front two can latch onto and turn into scoring opportunities. The strikers are 2v2 up front but good possession can create space for a great pass out of midfield into the striking pair.

SET UP

Set up an area of 50x30 yards split into three zones: the centre zone is 20 yards wide and the outer zones are 15 yards wide. We've used 20 players. You need balls, bibs, cones and goals.

HOW TO PLAY

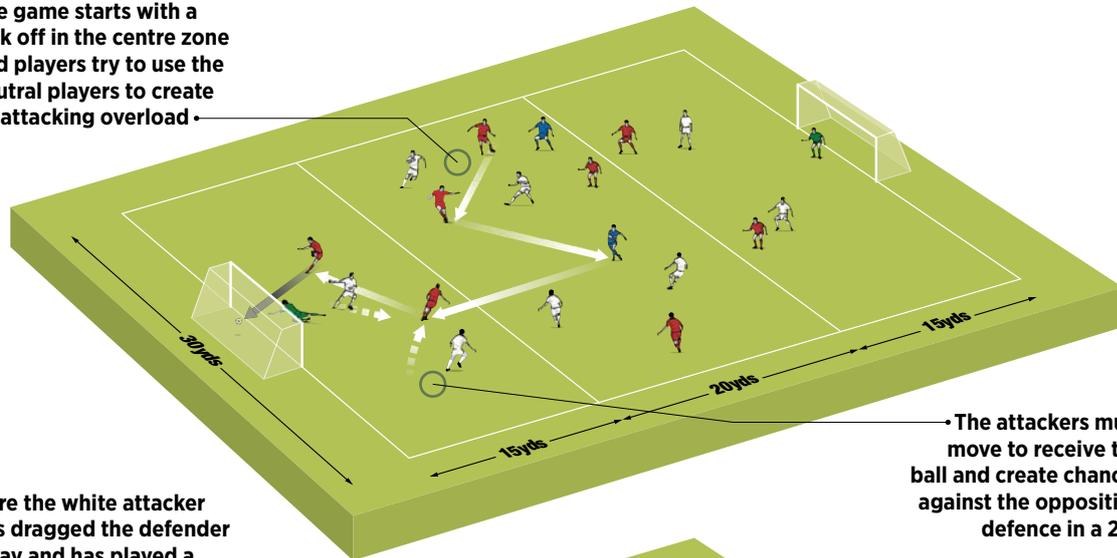
Split the players into two teams of nine including keepers, plus two neutral midfield players who play for the team in possession. In the middle zone is a 4v4 and the two outer zones are 2v2. The neutral players are in the middle zone. All players are locked into their zones.

Start with a normal kick-off and use the neutral midfielders to create an overload that will allow the team to get good balls through to the two strikers.

TECHNIQUE

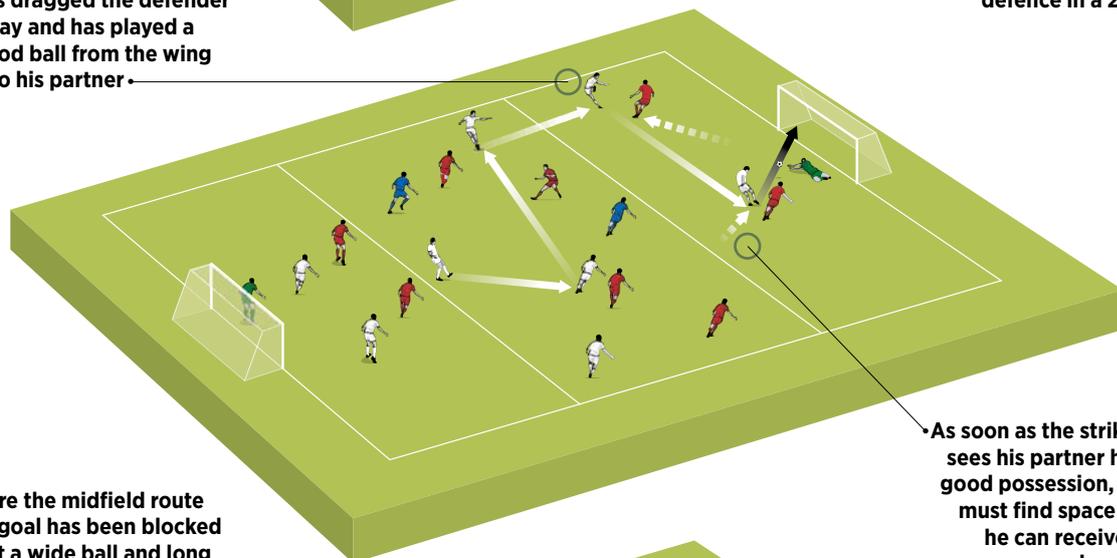
Movement is vital to the session, with the overload in midfield giving the attacking team the advantage in the centre zone, but that requires the two strikers to make space so they can capitalise on the advantage.

The game starts with a kick off in the centre zone and players try to use the neutral players to create an attacking overload



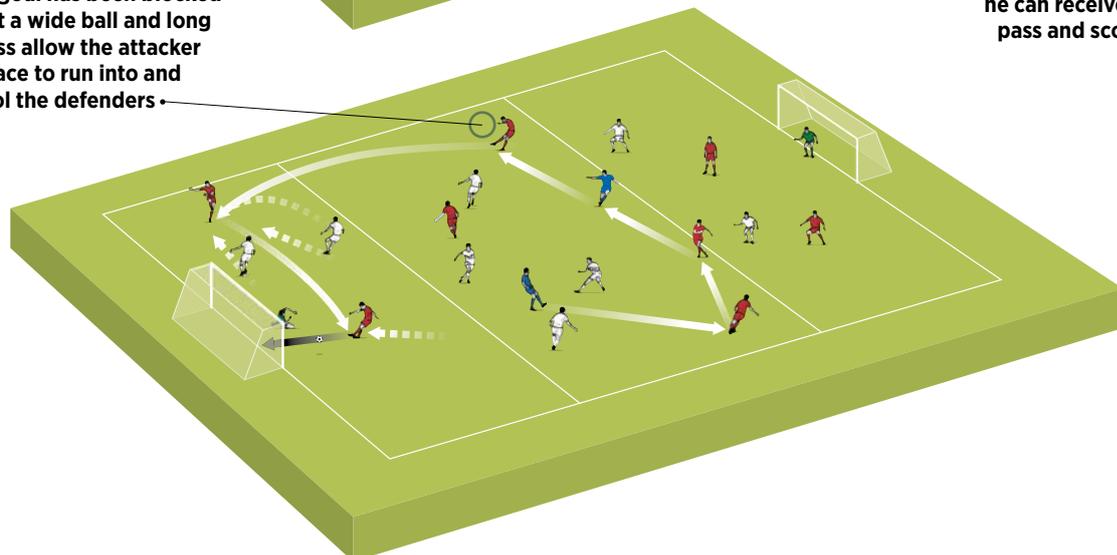
Here the white attacker has dragged the defender away and has played a good ball from the wing into his partner

The attackers must move to receive the ball and create chances against the opposition defence in a 2v2



Here the midfield route to goal has been blocked but a wide ball and long pass allow the attacker space to run into and fool the defenders

As soon as the striker sees his partner has good possession, he must find space so he can receive a pass and score



Player movement

Ball movement

Run with ball

Shot