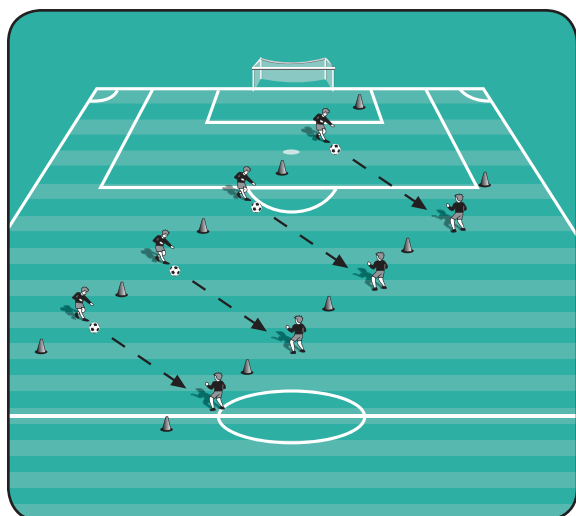


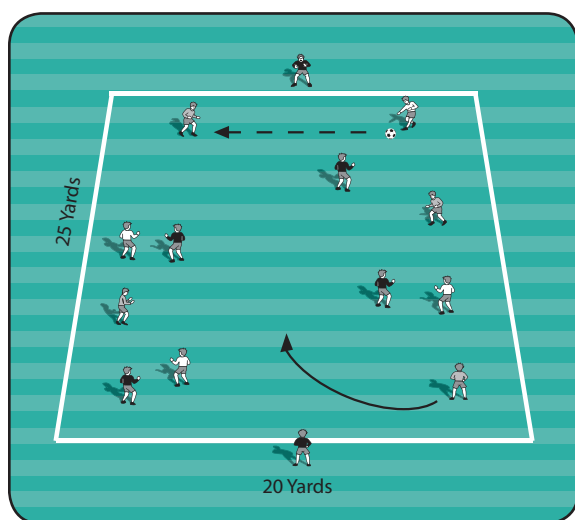
Long time subscriber Chris Panayiotou, visited Aston Villa of the English Premier League and observed a session with a focus on possession and speed of play.



Warm-Up

Following 10 minutes of jogging and stretching, the players organized themselves into pairs and did the following progressions.

- One-touch passing
- One-touch volleys
- Control with chest and volley back to partner



8 v 4 With Target Players

Three different colored teams of four players inside a 25 x 20-yard grid with one target player on each end.

Two teams combine to play keep-away from the other team of four. When the defending team win possession of the ball they attempt to pass to a target player as quickly as possible. The target player sends the ball back into the grid to any player other than the color that lost possession of the ball.

The team that loses the ball becomes the defending team and the cycle continues.

Coaching Points

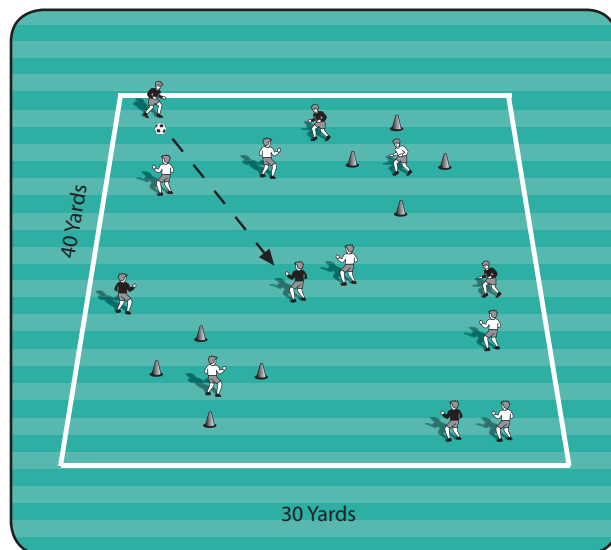
- The target players stay outside the grid
- Use the targets immediately
- The targets should move side to side to get open
- The color of the team that loses the ball should attempt to regain possession immediately - getting the ball back will be easier to do before the ball gets to the target players than after the target players play the ball back into the two teams that make up the new majority.
- The two teams that make up the majority have a clear numerical advantage that can be an advantage with quick passing decisions
- A team that finds themselves in the minority may need to increase focus, move off the ball quicker or play the ball quicker

6 v 6 + 2

Play 6 v 6 keep-away in a 40 x 30-yard grid. The goalkeepers are neutral/target players and are positioned in small coned areas.

Coaching Points

- Quick passes should be encouraged
- Look to play into the goalkeepers hands early in each possession

**7 v 7**

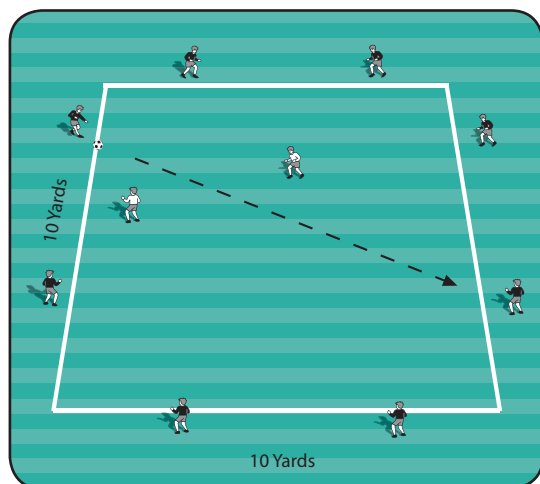
Continue skills used in previous exercises and add element of going to goal. This exercise is more game-like than the previous exercises, however the smaller field will give players more touches and decision making moments. Speed of play is accelerated.

Coaching Point

Encourage lay-off passes into negative space followed by positive passes forward. This indirect attack will improve possession and disorganize the defense.



During his visit, Panayiotou observed this session at the Aston Villa Youth Academy with a focus on crossing and finishing.



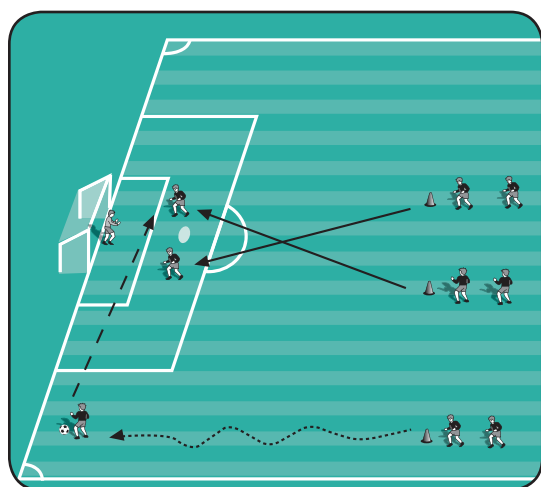
Warm-Up

Organize six players on the perimeter of a 10 x 10-yard area. The six teammates pass the ball across the area completing passes. Two players defend inside the area attempting to intercept passes.

The six players outside the area should use only one or two touches during the possession warm-up.

Coaching Points

- Practice proper body shape when receiving a pass
- Know where to pass before receiving the ball



Crossing

One player crosses and two players make runs inside the penalty area to get on the end of the crosses.

Beginning their runs outside the penalty area, two forwards cross so that the near forward runs to the far post and the far forward runs the near post.

The runs should be timed so the forward reaches his destination at the same time the cross arrives from the wing.

Coaching Points

- The wide player should use proper body technique to insure a quality cross
- The wide player should cross the ball with purpose to pick out a specific forward
- The wide player crossing the ball should strike through the ball to give the cross pace and dip