

**CHARLTON ATHLETIC**  
**Phil Parkinson**  
**Running without the ball**

**Overview:**

We will practice this session at least once a fortnight. Running in behind without the ball is extremely valuable because it steers players into dangerous areas of the pitch. Constantly offering different threats to the opposition defence is important, but this move also helps us retain possession, which is vital. This set-up has already paid dividends for us this season. In our away league game at Leyton Orient we had been reduced to 10 men and were being held 1-1 with half-an-hour left.

We had to soak up pressure and break forward at pace. Our second goal on the night came from a great run in behind by Lee Martin, who picked out Scott Wagstaff to score. Wagstaff then turned provider for Chris Solly in the final minute as we emerged 3-1 winners.

**RUNNING WITHOUT THE BALL: MAIN SESSION**

**SETUP**

**AREA**

75x40 yard playing area, 5 yard scoring zones at each end

**EQUIPMENT**

Balls, cones

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

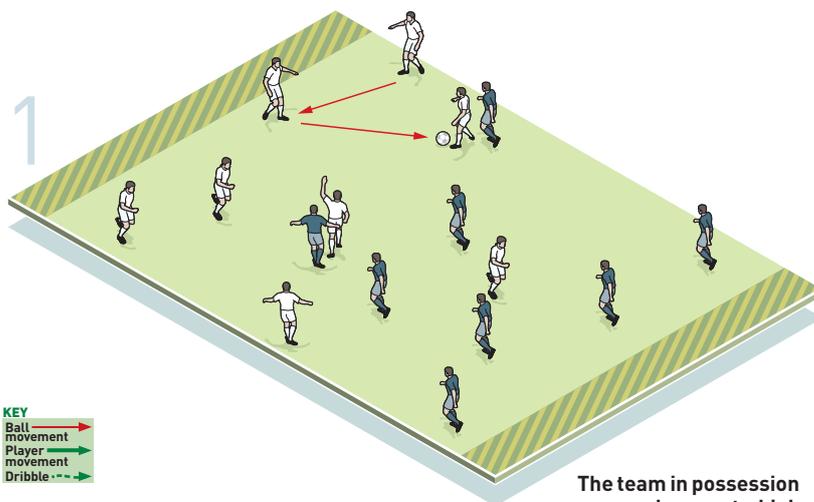
16 (two teams of 8)

**What do I get the players to do?**

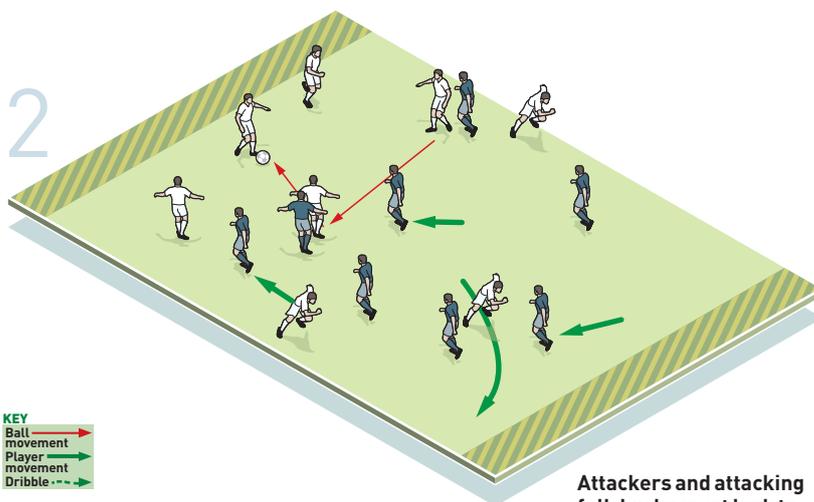
Each team of 8 players attacks an end zone. A point is scored when a player makes a run into the zone and receives a pass. That is the only time attackers can enter that area - they cannot stand there waiting for a pass. The same applies for defenders, who must remain outside until they are tracking a run. We always insist on playing at high intensity because as well as being good for positioning and tactical play, it's great for improving and maintaining fitness levels. Players can only score by making a run, so that encourages good and plentiful movement.

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

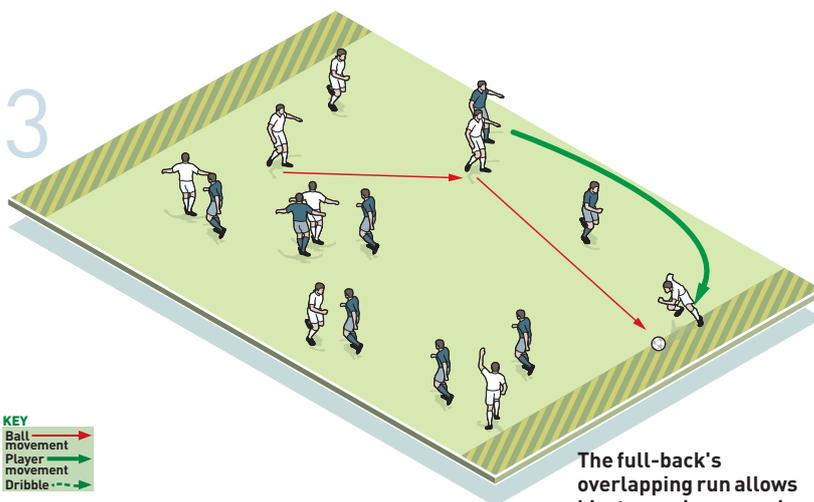
For attackers, quality of passing is essential. We have some very good footballers at Charlton Athletic, but you can never over-practice passing the ball, and this move tests accuracy and weight of pass in a pressured situation. Individually, players need to show they can make intelligent and



The team in possession pass and move at a high tempo.



Attackers and attacking full-backs must look to make runs into space, drawing defenders out of position.



The full-back's overlapping run allows him to receive a pass in the end zone and score.



**Phil Parkinson  
CHARLTONATHLETIC**

Phil Parkinson was appointed manager of npower League One side Charlton Athletic in December 2008, having previously been caretaker manager.

Athletic finished 4th in his first full season in charge, losing out to Swindon Town in their play-off semi-final.

The 42-year-old first moved into management with Colchester United in February 2003, transforming the club from League One relegation candidates to Championship play-off contenders.

Parkinson joined Hull City in June 2006 before agreeing to become Alan Pardew's number two at Charlton.

Parkinson took charge of first-team affairs in November 2008, being handed the job on a permanent basis on New Year's Eve.

As a player, he gained a reputation as a tough-tackling central midfielder at Reading, clinching two Player of the Season awards and clocking up 361 appearances for the Royals.

**RUNNING WITHOUT THE BALL: PROGRESSION**

well-timed runs, and instinctive decision-making is also key.

For defenders, the job is to approach and tackle, whilst always being aware of opposition runs in an around them. Mostly, these runs will come on the wings, but they also need to be aware of breaks through the middle.

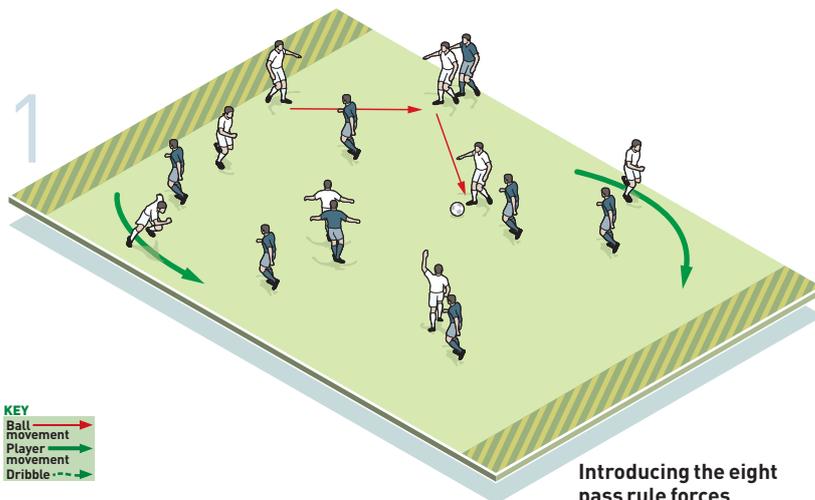
**How do I progress the session?**

We progress the session by reducing the size of the scoring zone at each end to 4 yards, then 3 yards. This creates the need for increased accuracy and timing.

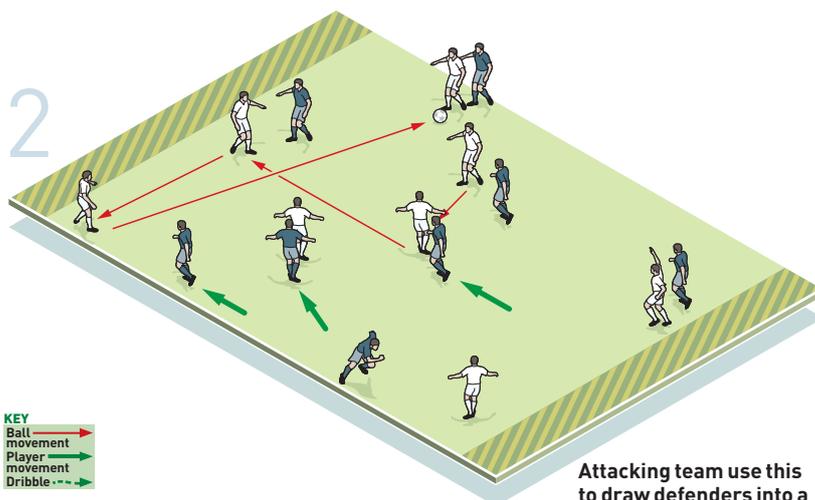
Award a point if a team manages eight consecutive passes. This will focus the attacking team, whilst forcing defenders to press their opponents knowing that they cannot sit deep. Additional space is created in behind which helps to naturally advance the session further.

**How would you put this into a game situation?**

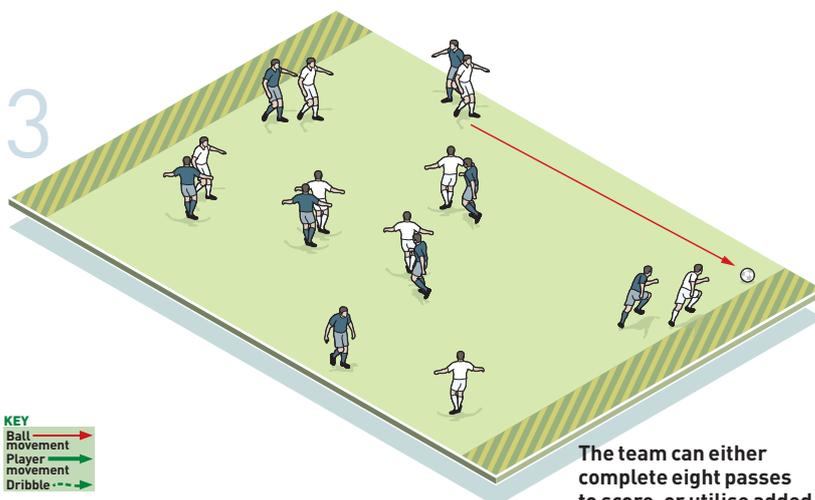
Use the full length of the pitch with a scoring zone at each end. Play 10v10, always looking for the runs coming in from behind.



Introducing the eight pass rule forces defenders forward to intercept play.



Attacking team use this to draw defenders into a certain zone.



The team can either complete eight passes to score, or utilise added space to release a pass into the end zone.