

IPSWICHTOWN

Chris Hutchings Defending against wingers

Overview:

This session is about denying attacking teams opportunities to get in behind the defence by pressing early. It is important to practise this because effective defending in 1v1 situations is vital, particularly for full backs facing skilful wingers.

When manager Paul Jewell and I first arrived at Ipswich, our aim was to shore up a leaky defence. By using this session we subsequently earned five clean sheets in quick succession; included in that total were away shut-outs at promotion-chasing sides Leeds United and Cardiff City.

In 1v1, the playing area we set up in this session is designed specifically to replicate how a full-back would confront an approaching winger. As we add more players, so too do we expand our reach to showcase defending principles against centre-forwards as well. We frequently find our players subconsciously working this positional thinking into their match day movements.

DEFENDING AGAINST WINGERS: MAIN SESSION

SET-UP

AREA

20x10-yard channels

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, 5-a-side goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Squad

SESSION TIME

1v1 20mins,
2v2 20mins,
4v4 20mins

What do I get the players to do?

We create a 20x10-yard channel with a target goal at each end. Either side of the right-hand goal, and lined up at the corners of the pitch, are the red team. The blue team take up identical positions at the other end of the area.

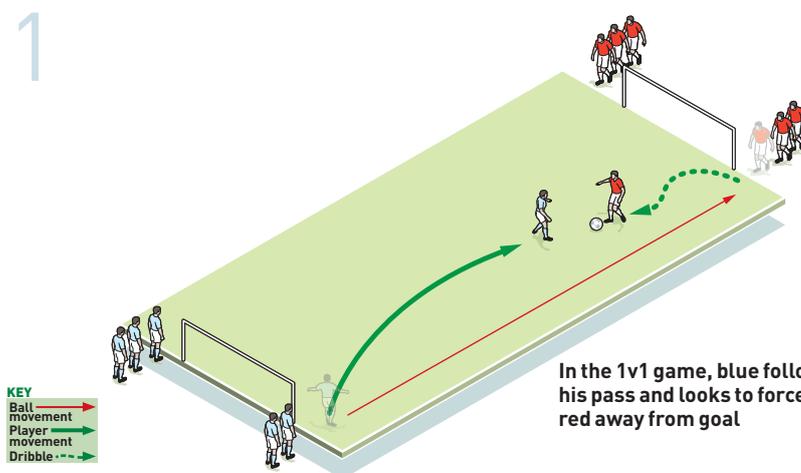
The first blue on the near touchline plays a pass to his opposite man - a red - and follows. Blue must close down quickly, get down the line of the ball and protect the goal behind him, into which red tries to score. If blue wins back possession he can attempt to score in the red goal.

Should the ball go out of play or a goal be scored, the players rejoin their queue and, anticlockwise, the sequence continues, with red playing to blue, and so on.

How do I progress the session?

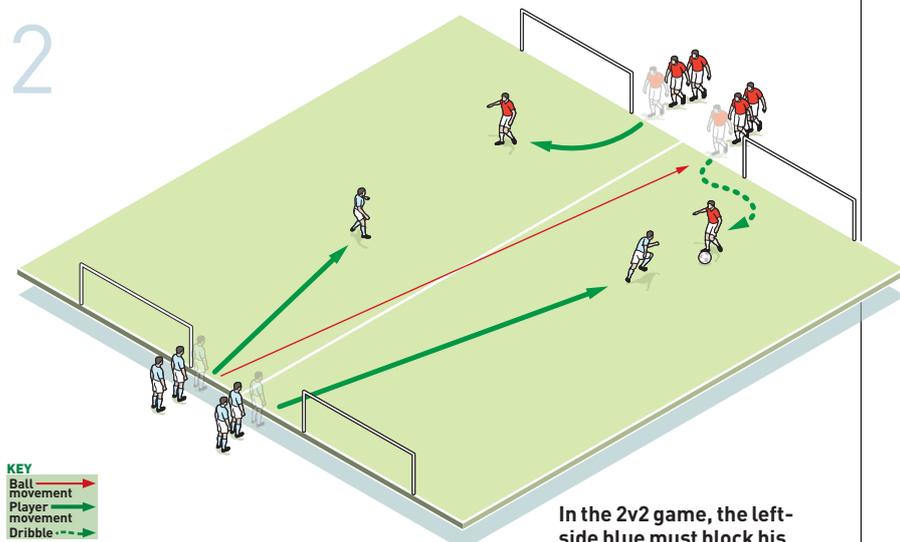
Next we move to a 2v2 scenario, placing two pitches side-by-side to produce a 20x20 playing area. Players this time start in between the goals, and work in pairs. ▼

1



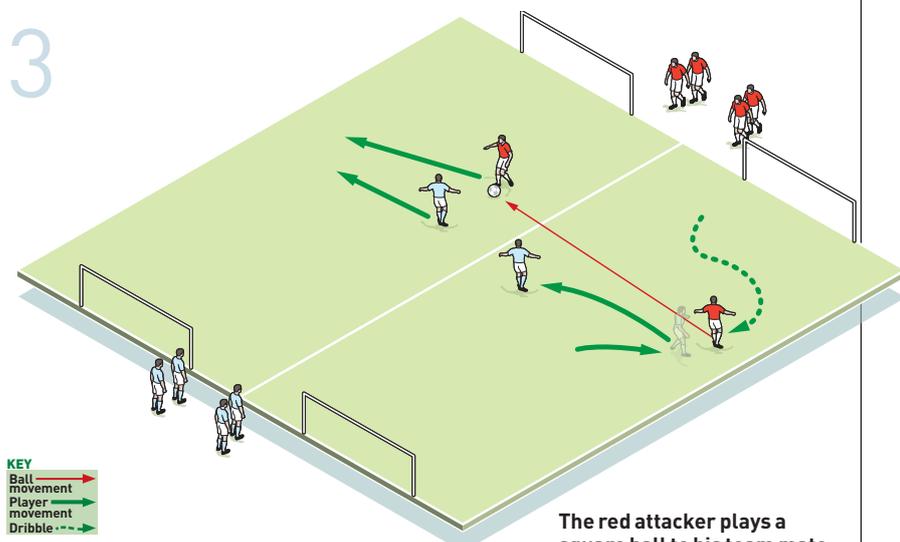
In the 1v1 game, blue follows his pass and looks to force red away from goal

2



In the 2v2 game, the left-side blue must block his opponent and any potential shot from the red in possession

3



The red attacker plays a square ball to his team mate after being forced wide. The blue defender makes a run to block the line to his goal



Chris Hutchings IPSWICH TOWN

Chris Hutchings accepted the role of assistant manager when linking up with Paul Jewell at Ipswich Town in January 2011.

Hutchings, 53, had previously worked under Jewell at Bradford, Wigan Athletic and Derby County, plus, notably, spent two years in the hotseat himself at Walsall.

As a player, Hutchings was a dogged defender who turned out for Chelsea, Brighton & Hove Albion, Huddersfield Town, Walsall and Rotherham United.

DEFENDING AGAINST WINGERS: MAIN SESSION

Blue plays a diagonal pass to red to start. The blue pair breaks out looking to close down space as reds move forward, but all players must remain in their designated channels. Players can pass between channels with the aim of scoring in either goal.

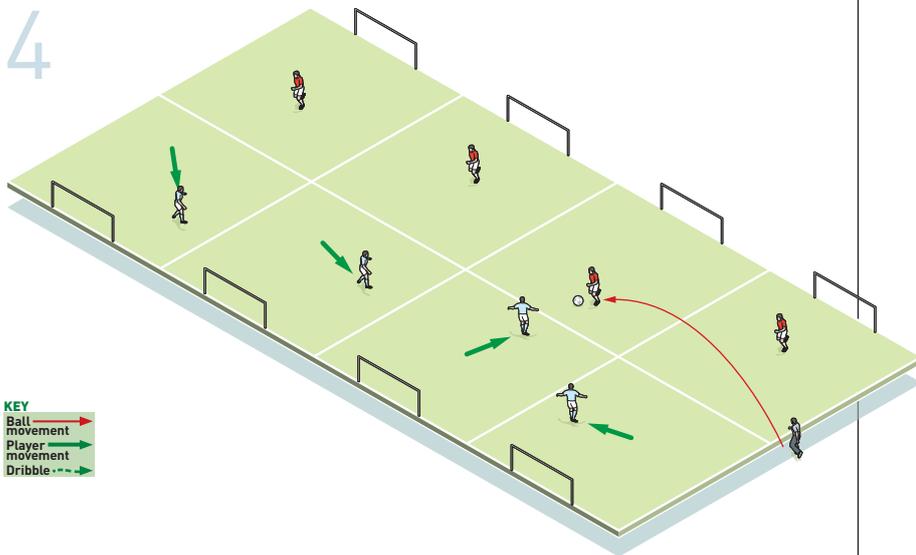
What are the key things to look for technically/tactically?

In the first set-up, we're looking for the blue player to close down quickly, monitor his position and stay on his feet. Progressing to the 2v2 scenarios, blues now need to cover and communicate, being quick to decide whether to show opponents inside or down the line.

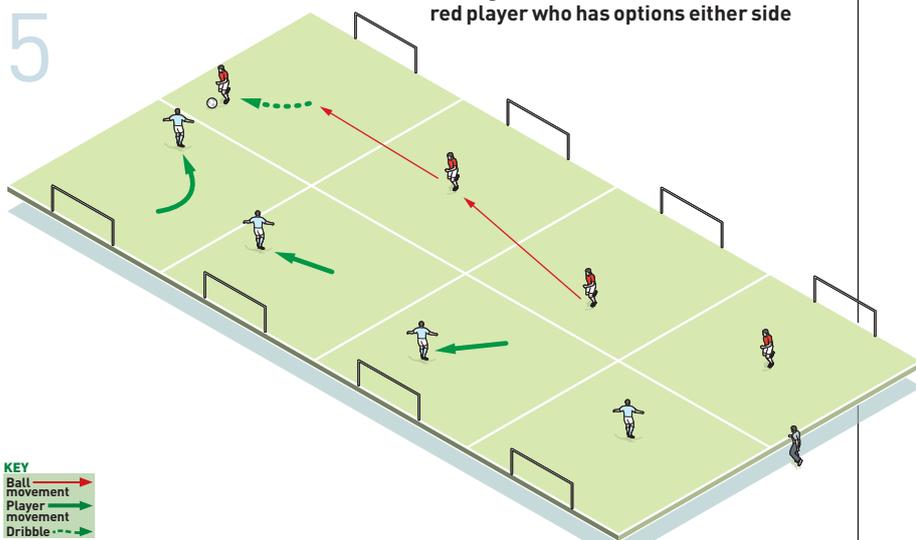
Repositioning when the opposition switches play is important, as is an awareness to recover back towards goal when the need arises.

How would you put this into a game situation?

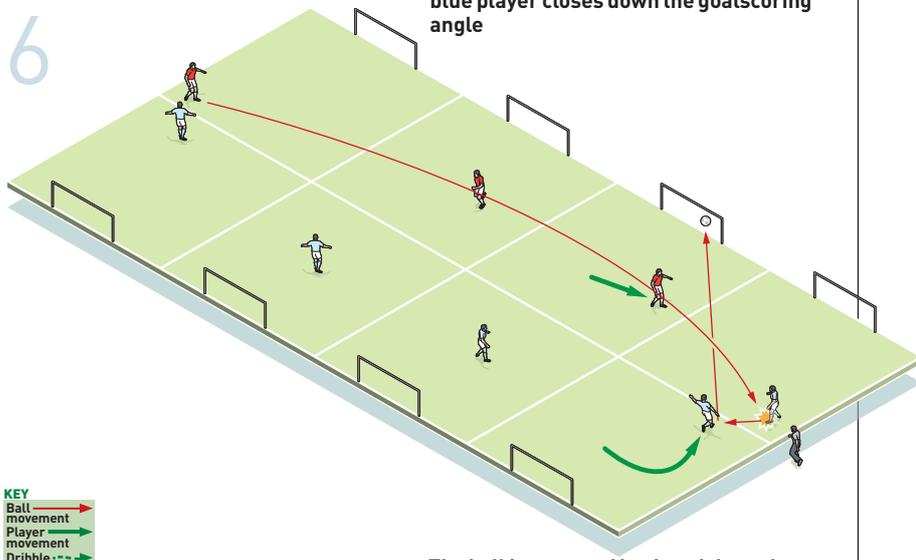
This can be progressed into to a 4v4 game by adding another two pitches, though all now have marked halfway lines which players cannot cross. Players begin in front of their respective goals. This time, we serve the ball to either team. Players are two-touch, but they can score in any of the four goals. ■



In the game situation, the coach serves to a red player who has options either side



The ball is switched to the right where the blue player closes down the goalscoring angle



The ball is reversed back and the red winger shoots, but the blue player presses high, intercepts, and scores

“Blues now need to cover and communicate, being quick to decide whether to show inside or down the line.”