

BRISTOL CITY

**Derek
McInnes**
**Functional
attacking
plan**

Overview:

This session is about functional attacking play within a system, involving all players in the squad.

It's a practice that, at its heart, looks at the key exchanges in 2v1 and other overload situations – the roles of attackers, defenders, wide players, full-backs and wingers.

The principles featured really worked for us last season during some key relegation battles, particularly illustrating for us how our front five or six – depending on the formation – got at opponents' defensive lines.

“We can vary the overload... this might be decided by how many strikers we intend to play in the next match.”

FUNCTIONAL ATTACKING PLAN

SET-UP

AREA

Up to half pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Full squad

SESSION TIME

Phases 30mins,
6v4 15mins

What do I get the players to do?

We run a practice that involves three attacks on goal per phase – a central attack, a wide attack and a 'second ball' shot. We'll then re-run the phase, rotating players.

Central attack

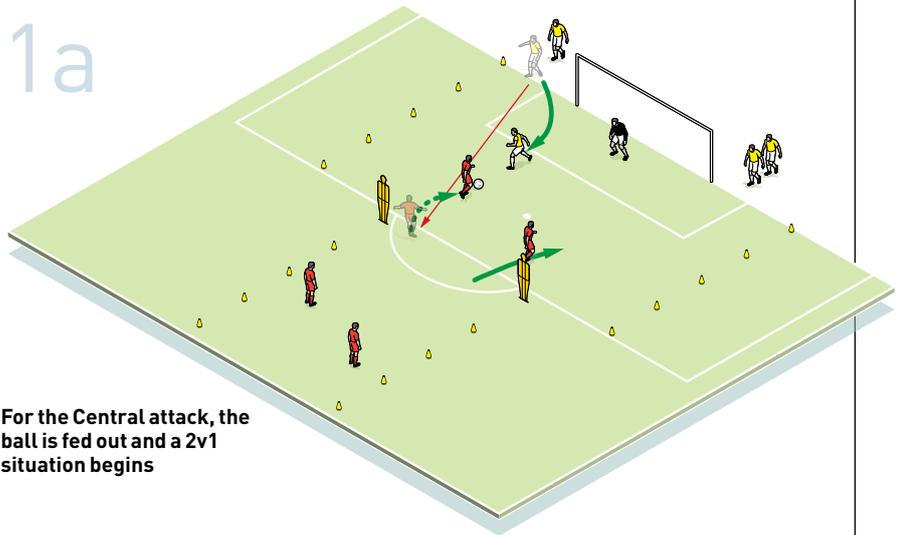
We set up as shown on a half pitch with defenders behind the goal and pairs of attackers positioned in a channel outside the box. A defender lays the ball to one of the strikers (1a), who receives and moves forward with his team mate to form a 2v1 scenario (1b).

We can vary the overload situation in favour of attackers or defenders (2/3) – this might be decided by how many strikers we intend to play in the next match, or by what defensive structure the team expects to come up against.

Wide attack

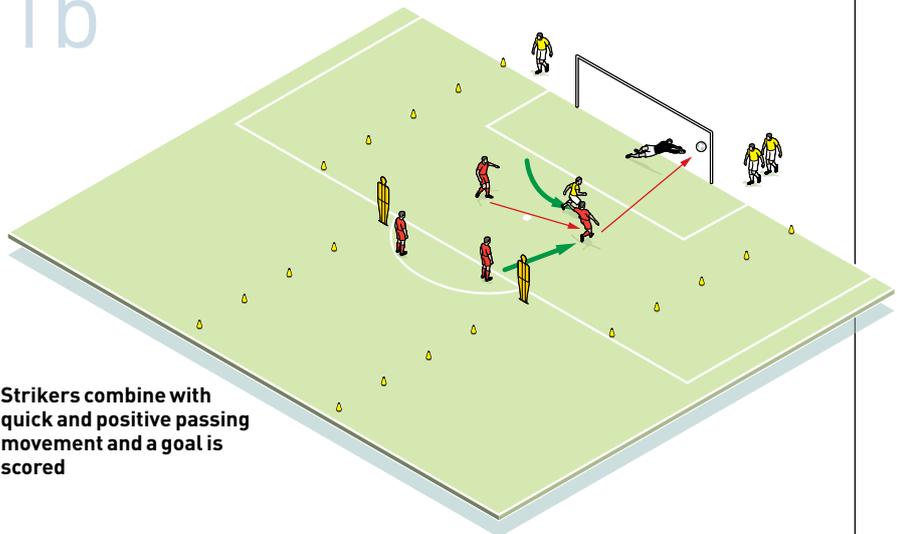
Next, an unopposed attack sees midfielders combine and play the ball out wide. Wide players develop a crossing situation using the mannequin as a guide to staying near the

1a



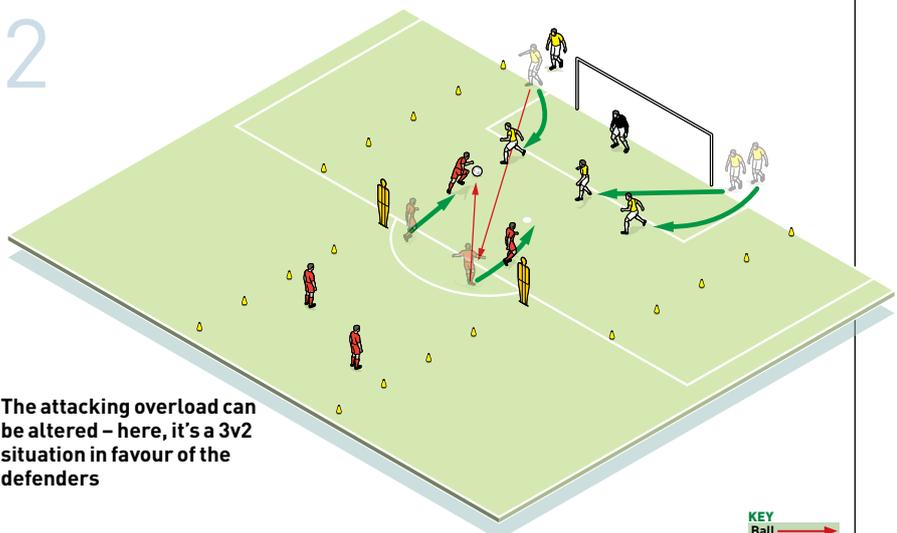
For the Central attack, the ball is fed out and a 2v1 situation begins

1b



Strikers combine with quick and positive passing movement and a goal is scored

2



The attacking overload can be altered – here, it's a 3v2 situation in favour of the defenders

KEY
Ball movement →
Player movement →
Dribble →



Derek McInnes
BRISTOL CITY

In his first season in charge of Bristol City, Derek McInnes guided the npower Championship side to safety, instilling a brand of attractive yet disciplined football.

The 40-year-old made his mark in coaching at St. Johnstone, securing the Perth outfit promotion to the Scottish Premier Division in 2009, ensuring the club's top-level status in the seasons that followed.

As a player, McInnes made 221 appearances for Greenock Morton before enjoying five years at Rangers. He also enjoyed successful spells at West Bromwich Albion at Dundee United, operating as a tough-tackling midfielder.

FUNCTIONAL ATTACKING PLAN

flank. Strikers look to score in the goal against two or three defenders. (4a).

'Second ball' shot

Immediately, the coach – positioned to the side of the goal – lays a simple ball back to the edge of the box for one of the inrushing midfielders to shoot (4b). This is designed to replicate the idea of a 'second ball' in a match. Defenders must rush out to press and close down.

What are the key things to look out for?

Strikers must work together to find a route to goal, communicating well, varying their approach play, and finding space and shooting angles. Positivity in attacking crosses is also essential.

Midfielders need to create balance in their set-up play and movement, while wingers must be inventive, quick and positive.

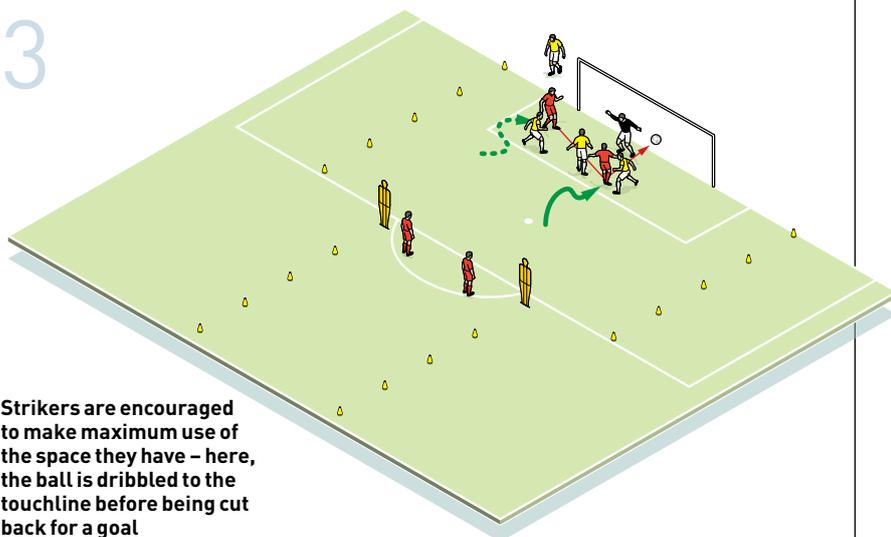
How do I progress the session?

We progress the session by creating a full 6v4 situation where attacks can come from any angle. Players must remain in position, practising the previously coached movements and principles.

How do I put this into a game situation?

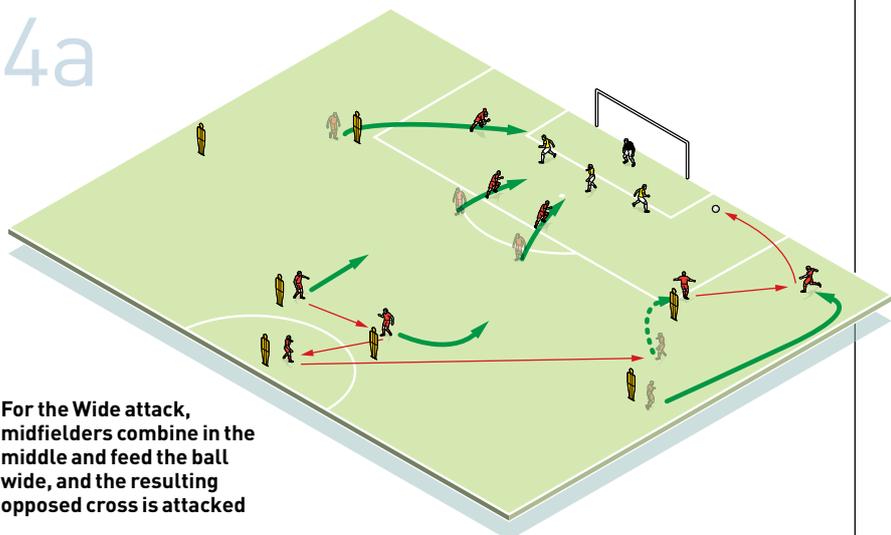
As an opposed game, we move this into a 15-minute 11v11 match on a full pitch. ■

3



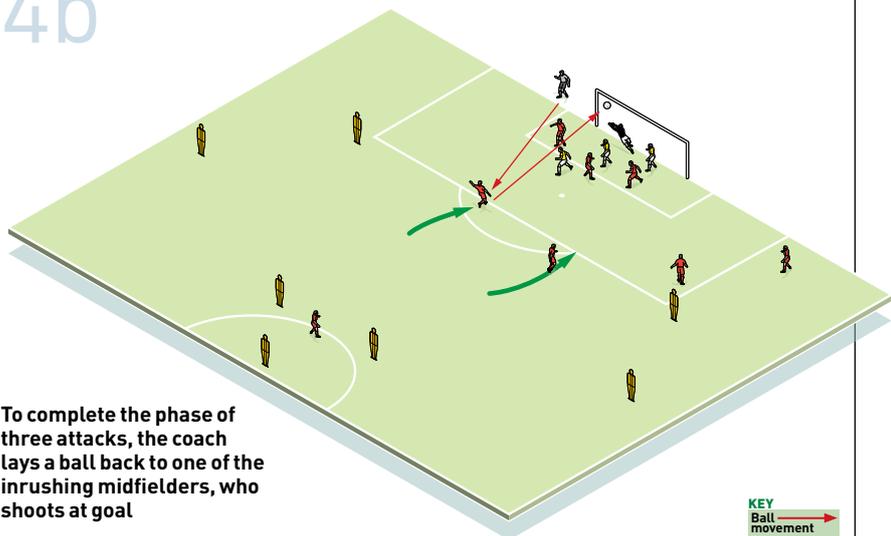
Strikers are encouraged to make maximum use of the space they have – here, the ball is dribbled to the touchline before being cut back for a goal

4a



For the Wide attack, midfielders combine in the middle and feed the ball wide, and the resulting opposed cross is attacked

4b



To complete the phase of three attacks, the coach lays a ball back to one of the inrushing midfielders, who shoots at goal

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Ball movement →
Player movement →
Dribble →