

WOLVES

**Kevin
Thelwell**
**Developing
build-up
play
through
quick
passing**

Overview:

This session is specifically about build-up play and providing players with the opportunity to understand specific patterns of play. It's important that these elements keep with the playing style of our club.

In the modern game it is no secret that the most successful teams are those that maintain good possession of the ball and limit the number of turnovers. On this basis it is vital that our teams use the ball well when in possession and are clear about how they wish to play.

These activities combine both core technical skills and tactical understanding to support our players in refining their abilities.

“These activities combine both core technical skills and tactical understanding to support our players in refining their abilities.”

DEVELOPING BUILD-UP PLAY THROUGH QUICK PASSING

SET-UP

AREA

Up to ¾ of a pitch

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 22 (11v11)

SESSION TIME

Half-pitch practice
10mins each,
11v11 20mins

What do I get the players to do?

Half-pitch practice (1/2/3/4)

To begin, a keeper serves a ball to either wide player to start an attack – the aim is for the ball to be switched across to the other side of the defence before forward play develops. Forwards for both teams are passive defensively and participate only when their team is attacking. All defenders are ‘live’ at all times.

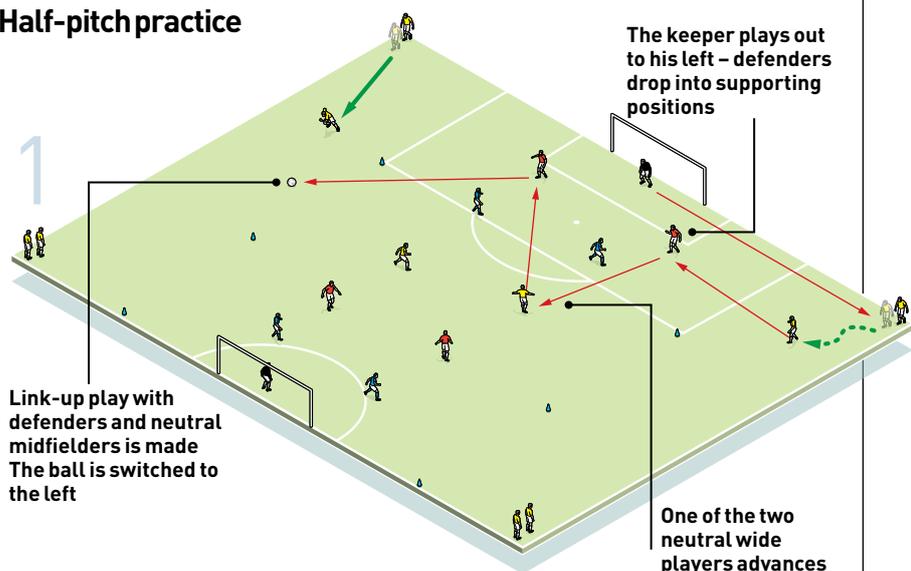
The attacking team plays to a finish. A new attack by the opposition begins with their keeper serving to a wide player (as previous) at the opposite end of the field.

What are the key things to look out for?

The timing of movement in receiving the ball is very important, especially as these movements must be coordinated with other players. Passing must also be of a high standard with the ball circulated quickly and securely.

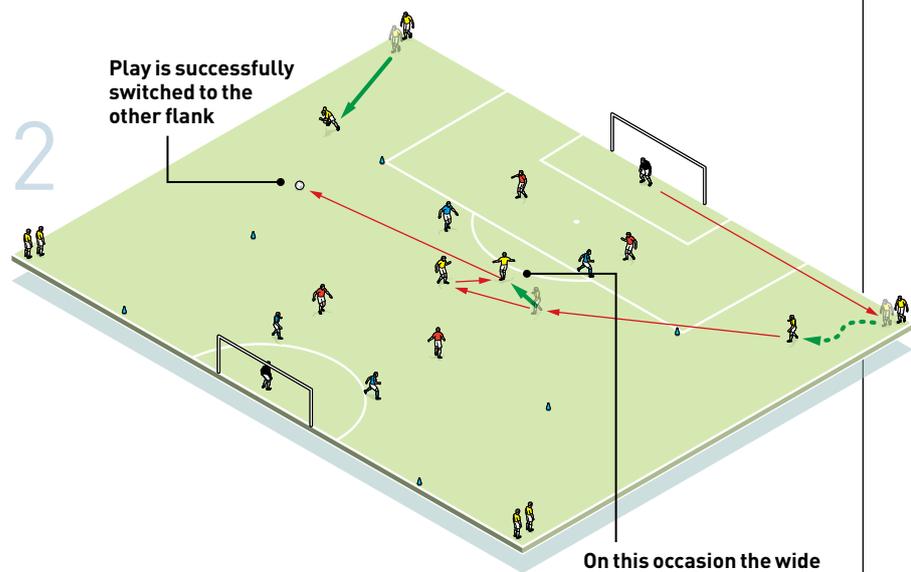
We believe it is fundamental that players understand

Half-pitch practice



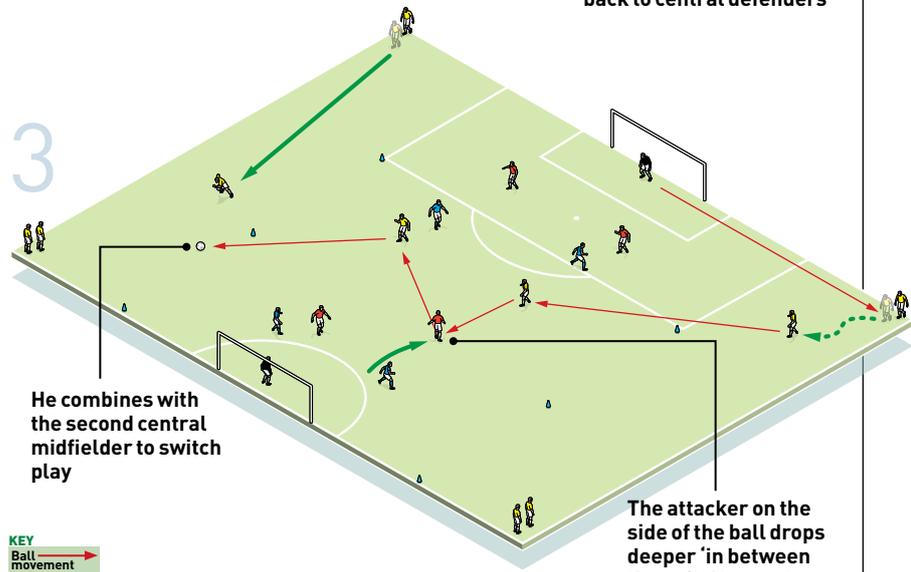
Link-up play with defenders and neutral midfielders is made
The ball is switched to the left

One of the two neutral wide players advances to receive the ball



Play is successfully switched to the other flank

On this occasion the wide players interlink, ignoring the opportunity to pass back to central defenders



He combines with the second central midfielder to switch play

The attacker on the side of the ball drops deeper 'in between the units' to create a three-man midfield





Kevin Thelwell
WOLVES

Kevin Thelwell is Academy Manager at npower Championship club Wolverhampton Wanderers.

He previously held the same position at Derby County and Preston North End, charged with developing the next generation of professional football.

The experienced former non-league player has also worked as Director of Coach Education for the Football Association of Wales Trust.

Thelwell is also the author of several coaching books including 'Coaching the European 3-5-2'.

DEVELOPING BUILD-UP PLAY THROUGH QUICK PASSING

their roles and responsibilities when we are in possession of the ball and are clear on how to progress the ball quickly and securely from one area of the pitch to another.

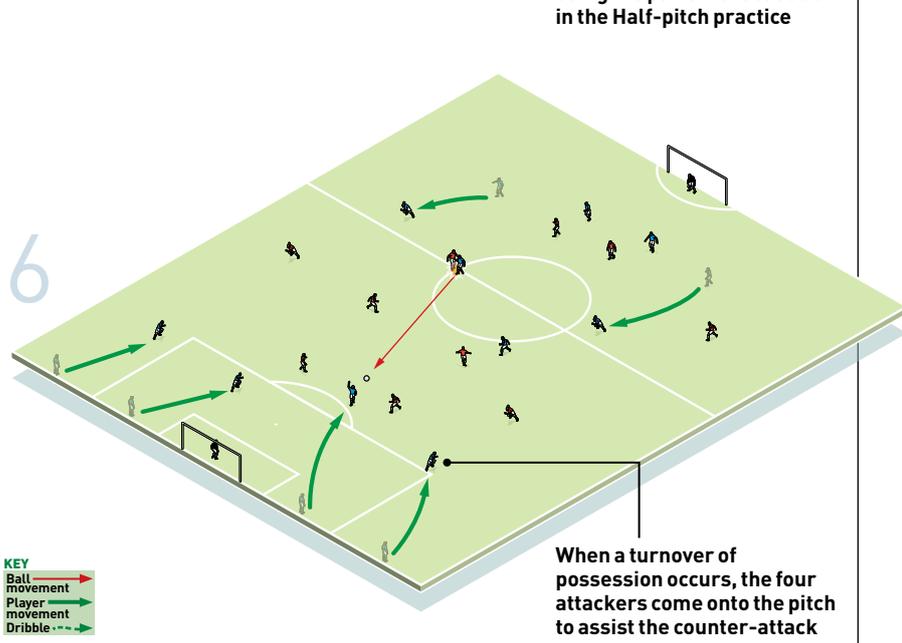
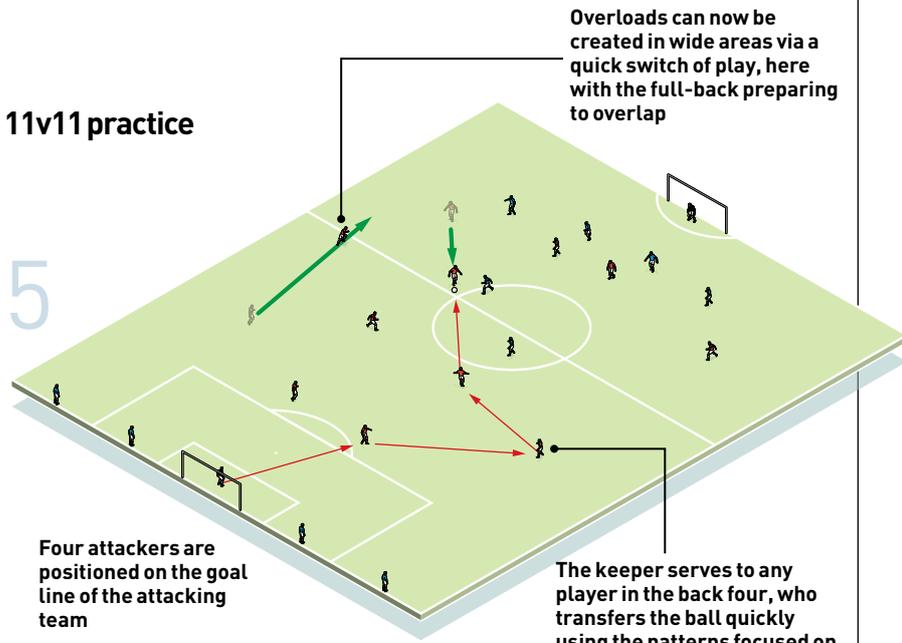
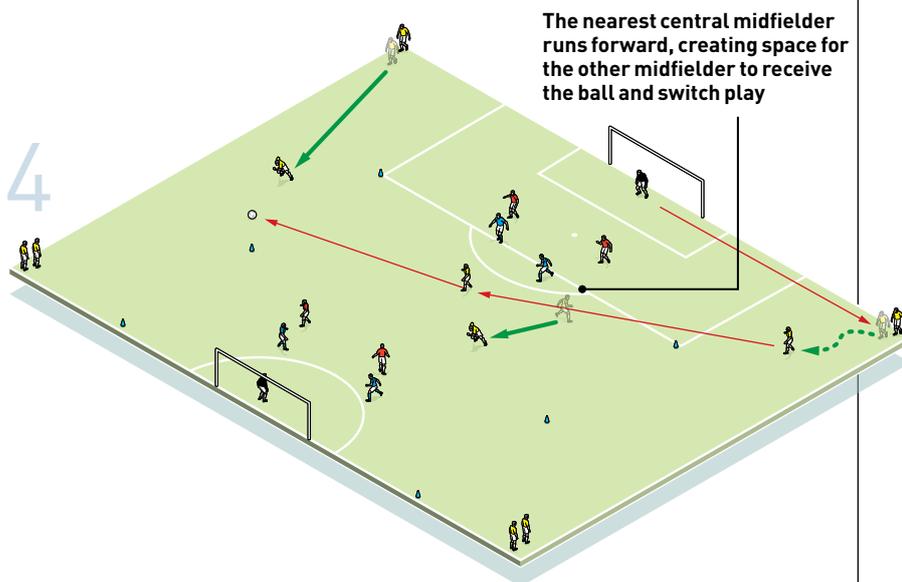
How do I progress the session?

We can progress the session by allowing forwards to become active at all times, thus pressurising all players in possession by creating an 8v4 overload. We might also add in opposing central midfielders, thus creating 2v2 in that area, and an 8v6 overload overall.

And to help ensure players handle the ball under pressure, we have the option of conditioning the practice so that they cannot pass directly back to the 'neutral' wide player they received the ball from.

Finally, we can progress to an **11v11 practice (5/6)** using three quarters of the pitch, as shown. One team is designated as attackers (blues), the other the build-up passing team (reds).

Four attackers are positioned on the goal line of the attacking team. If possession is lost by reds then these players can now enter play and a counter-attack launched. Once the counter-attack is complete, these four players leave the pitch and return to their starting positions. ■



“It is fundamental that players understand their roles and responsibilities, and are clear on how to progress the ball quickly and securely from one area of the pitch to another.”