

DAGENHAM & REDBRIDGE

Wayne Burnett Playing through midfield

Overview:

Playing through midfield with confidence and precision is vital for any team and it's essential we coach players in how to receive, pass and work space, linking defence with attack. The session takes the form of three different practices. Within these, we vary the size of the playing area, and encourage creativity in midfield through different formations, in order for players to feel comfortable working in the ever-changing conditions they will experience on match day.

“Playing through midfield with confidence and precision is vital for any team.”

PLAYING THROUGH MIDFIELD

SET-UP

AREA

Up to 54x25 yards

EQUIPMENT

Balls, cones, goals

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Up to 16

SESSION TIME

15mins per game

What do I get the players to do?

Boxes challenge

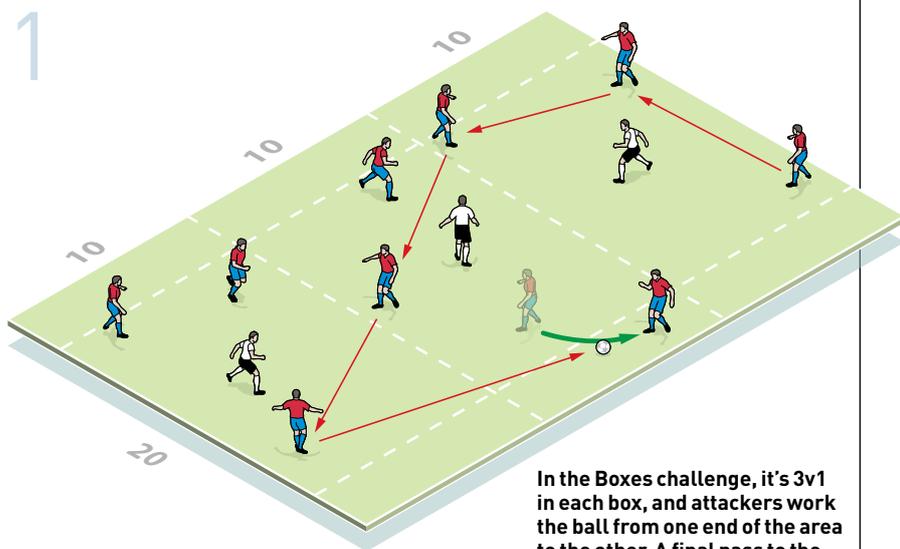
We setup 3v1 in each box, and the ball has to be played from end to end through the middle section (1).

We will vary what we want to see from each move - for example, three passes requested in each section to improve technical skills and movement. Alternatively, two balls can be played at the same time to improve awareness (2).

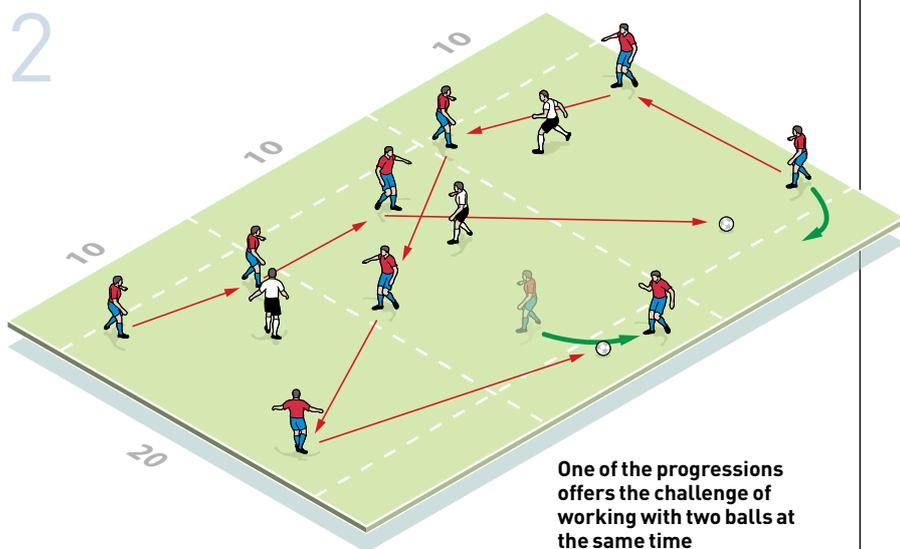
Outer sections can be used to give attacking players more time on the ball, because defenders cannot track in those areas. But any ball received on the outside must then be played back into a central section.

Middle channel challenge

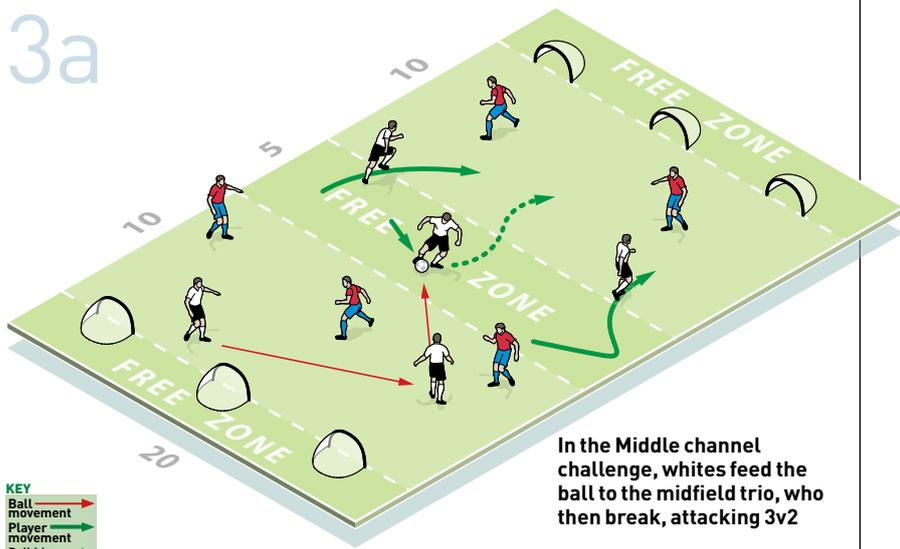
Now we move into a 5v5 game. The middle section is a free zone that defenders are not allowed into. The team in possession (whites) can position three midfielders in the zone. If the ball is successfully passed into this area, they can attack defenders 3v2, looking to score in any goal (3a). When out of



In the Boxes challenge, it's 3v1 in each box, and attackers work the ball from one end of the area to the other. A final pass to the right means the attacker can rest as he won't be tackled there



One of the progressions offers the challenge of working with two balls at the same time



In the Middle channel challenge, whites feed the ball to the midfield trio, who then break, attacking 3v2

KEY
Ball movement →
Player movement →
Dribble - - - →



Wayne Burnett

DAGENHAM & REDBRIDGE

Dagenham & Redbridge manager Wayne Burnett enjoyed a prolific lower league career, turning out for the likes of Leyton Orient, Plymouth Argyle, Huddersfield Town and Grimsby Town before hanging up his boots in 2004. Having also played semi-professionally, he dropped into the non-league game for his first managerial post, at Fisher Athletic in 2004. He went on to manage Dulwich Hamlet and Grays Athletic, before accepting the assistant manager's job at Dagenham in 2009. And after first-team boss John Still left for Luton Town in February, 41-year-old Burnett stepped up, immediately guiding the club to safety in power League Two.

"We're looking for movement to receive and a good body shape, so the player can see both goals."

PLAYING THROUGH MIDFIELD

possession, they must vacate the middle zone and the other team will go in there, while a quick turnover of possession can spark a counter-attack (3b).

Sections challenge

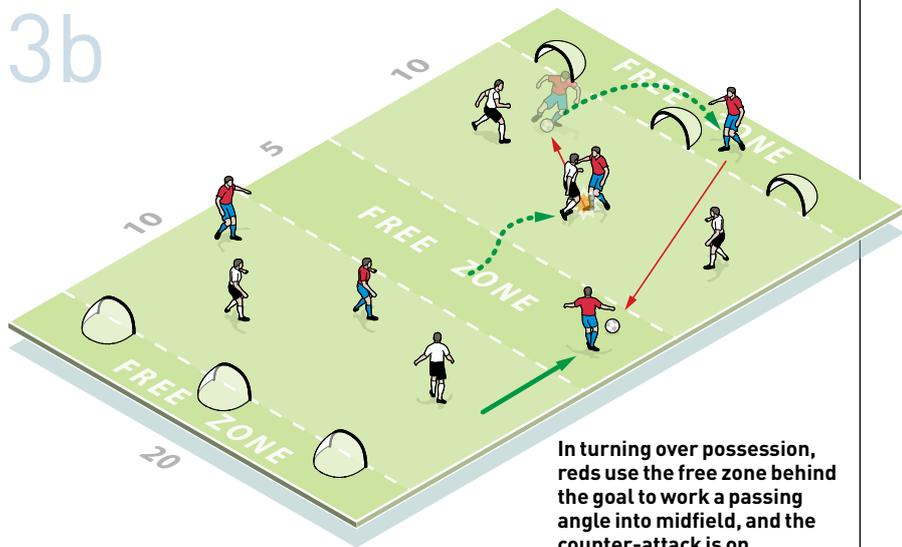
In the final set-up, teams must go through midfield on each attack. After playing this as a standard 2-2-1, we apply various progressions. At first, attacking players can move from the middle to the end section to create a 2v2. Defenders cannot follow, nor for the next progression, where an attacker can drop into the middle section (4a). But in the final progression, when players support or drop into a different zone, opponents are allowed to follow (4b).

A number of different passing systems can be used with this session – 2-3-1, 2-3-2, 3-4-2, 3-3-2 and more.

What are the key things to look out for?

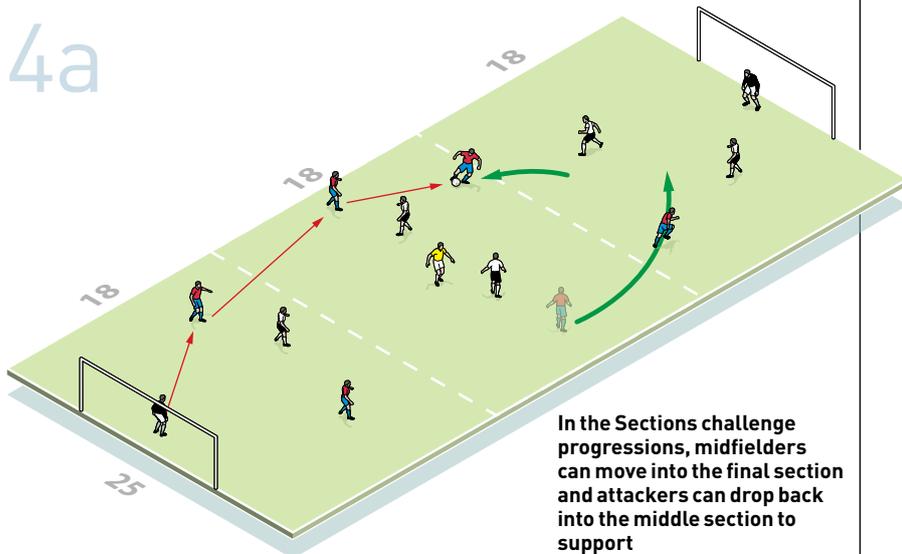
We're looking for movement to receive and a good body shape, so the player can see both goals. Smart decision-making – knowing when and where to pass – is important, as are passes to feet at a sensible weight. Timing of runs from midfield is obviously key, as is support in front or behind, plus distances and angles of passes. ■

3b



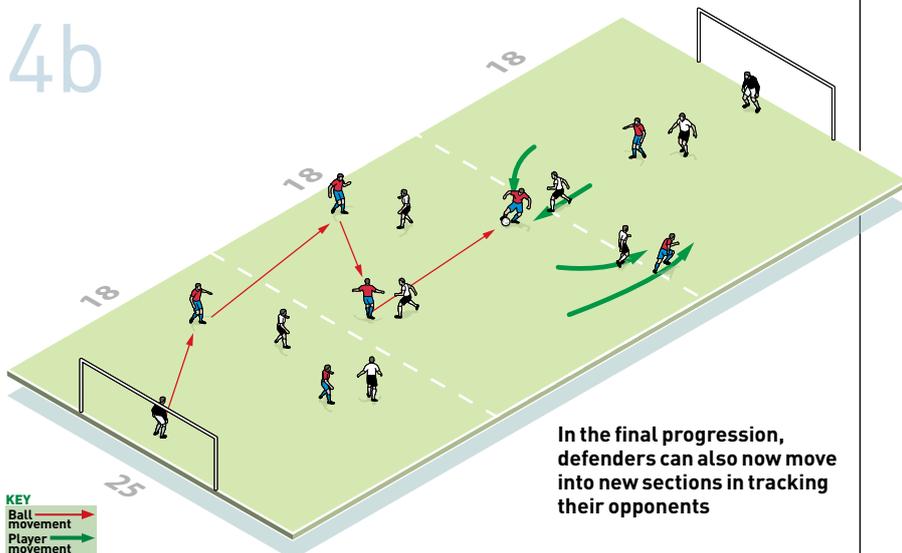
In turning over possession, reds use the free zone behind the goal to work a passing angle into midfield, and the counter-attack is on

4a



In the Sections challenge progressions, midfielders can move into the final section and attackers can drop back into the middle section to support

4b



In the final progression, defenders can also now move into new sections in tracking their opponents

KEY
Ball movement →
Player movement →
Dribble →