

LMA AMBASSADOR

## John McMahon Crosses into the box

**Overview:**

This session examines the roles of the keeper when dealing with crossing, and attacking threat from wingers and forwards in penalty box situations.

While strikers have to recognise space and position in front of the goal, for keepers the understanding of what's around them – both opponents and team mates – is vital, and this is a progressive practice that looks at preparing a keeper for crossing scenarios as well as highlighting the fundamental movements and occurrences that happen at speed in football matches.

Of course, by the end, what we expect to see is a mutual appreciation of the runs and movements both attackers and keepers must make, and that are happening regularly in every game at all levels.

**SET-UP**

**AREA**

Up to a half pitch

**EQUIPMENT**

Balls, cones, discs, goals

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

Up to full squad

**SESSION TIME**

70mins

### CROSSES INTO THE BOX

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

**Keeper warm-ups**

**1v1 approach (10mins)**

Setting up as shown (1), the keeper must work with his defender to shepherd the attacker away from goal. Ideally the attacker must be prevented from shooting, but if he does get a shot away it must be blocked by the defender or, as a last resort, the keeper.

**Double save (10mins)**

Now, the keeper must make a block from the attacker who is positioned on the side of the six-yard box. Upon making the block, he must turn and dive to stop a second shot coming in from the attacker stationed in the D (2).

**Cross and save (10mins)**

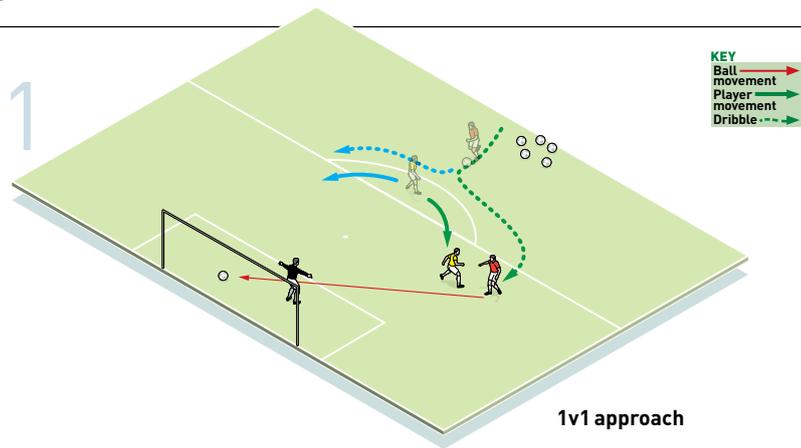
To enhance the crossing element that will play a part in the main pitch practice to follow, the side attacker now sends a diagonal ball back for the player in the D, who shoots (3).

**Front block (10mins)**

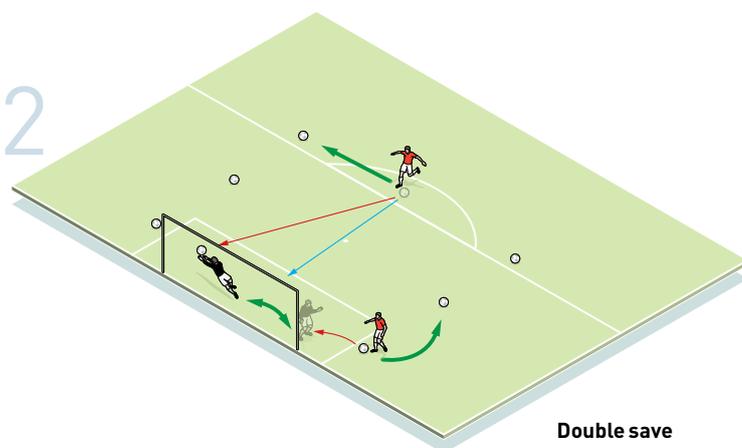
In the final warm-up, the keeper must move around the chicane as the attacker runs in. The challenge is to see who can make it to the ball first and whether, ultimately, the keeper can smother a shot (4).

**Pitch practice 1 (10mins)**

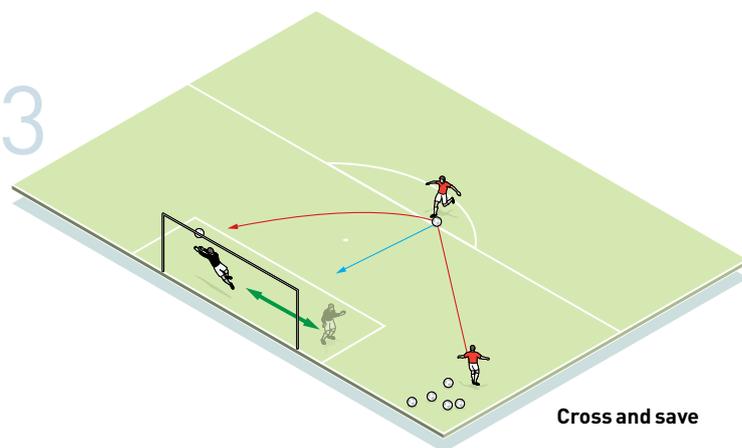
Keepers work alternately to the left and right, throwing the ball out with pace and accuracy to wide players. These wingers dribble in and out of cones (or mannequins) at pace and



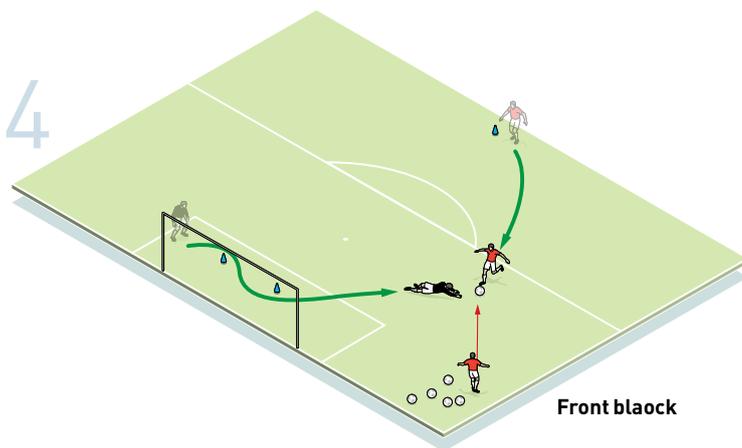
1v1 approach



Double save



Cross and save



Front block



**John McMahon**  
**LMA AMBASSADOR**

After injury forced him to retire early from playing, John McMahon moved into coaching, landing a prized role at the Everton Academy.

There, he worked hard to lay the foundations of one of the UK's most fertile youth set-ups, nurturing playing style with an inherent talent for bringing personality and social development out of players.

**CROSSES INTO THE BOX**

cross for two incoming strikers who have advanced from the back and make crossover runs. Keepers must anticipate the danger, judge the cross, catch or prepare to block. The working keeper now works to the left as the move comes back the other way (5).

**Pitch practice 2 (10mins)**

Now both keepers throw the ball to the left to start (6). This gives strikers bodies and traffic in front of them to negotiate. They now have to make runs to avoid collisions while also keeping an eye on the ball with the wide men preparing to deliver a cross into the box.

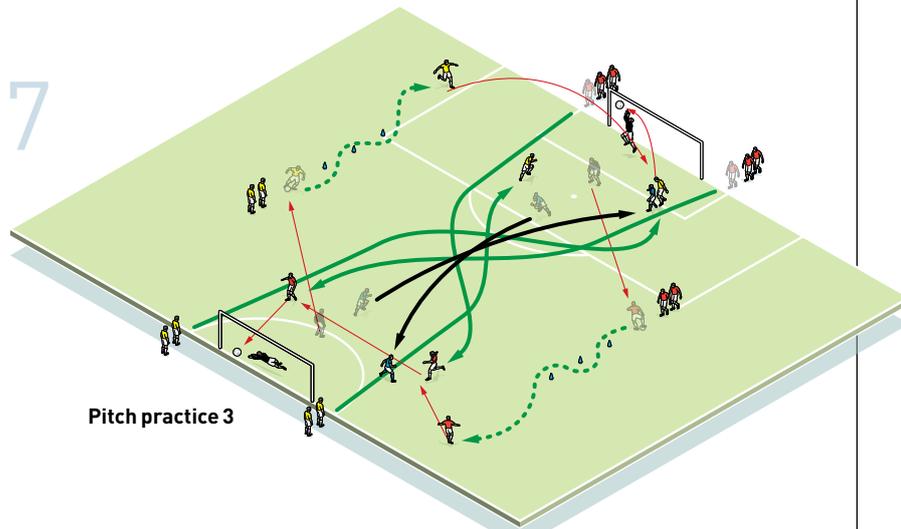
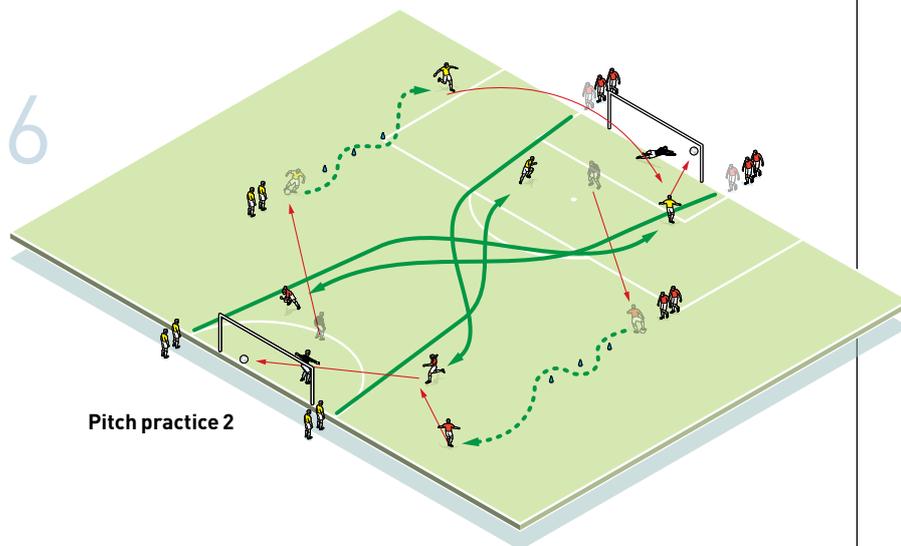
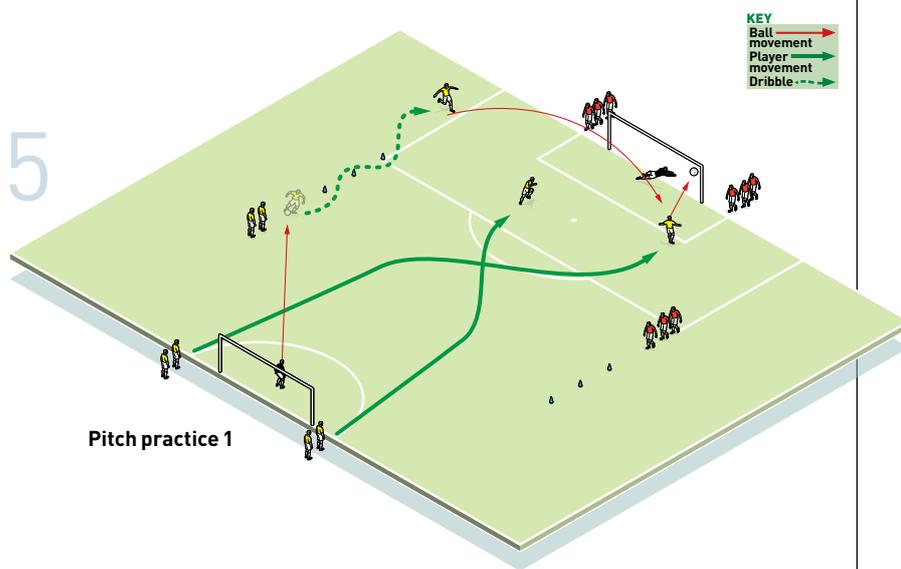
**Pitch practice 3 (10mins)**

The practice now progresses to introduce one defender at each end who, aided by his keeper, tracks the two strikers' movements, then defends the cross. All players must be aware of others' movements and runs, avoiding collisions whilst remaining alert to crosses (7).

All players are governed by the coach's whistle to ensure total control of the practice and its timings.

**What are the key things to look out for?**

We must see a quality throw from keepers out to wide players, while communication is vital for all players in judging runs, crosses and movement. ■



“Communication is vital for all players in judging runs, crosses and movement.”