

LMA AMBASSADOR
Darren Ferguson
Stepping out and creating overloads in a 3-5-2

Overview:
The 3-5-2 formation remains hugely popular in modern football, though with so many teams becoming smart to its threat, we need players to be adept and precise in their execution of the set-up if it is to continue to reap rewards. For me, it's always been a formation that offers strength across the middle of the park, yet this practice emphasises how the real impact of the set-up isn't in fact created by five across the middle, but the flexibility and versatility of the attacking and defending areas in front of and behind. And not only will mastering the mechanics of this session help players become proficient in the elements of 3-5-2, they will notice increased technical ability and smarter movement as well, both in their own game and that of their team mates.

STEPPING OUT & CREATING OVERLOADS IN A 3-5-2

SET-UP
AREA
Up to a half-pitch
EQUIPMENT
Balls, cones, discs, goals, mannequins
NUMBER OF PLAYERS
11v11
SESSION TIME
Warm-up and progression 20mins, Boxes set-up and progression 40mins

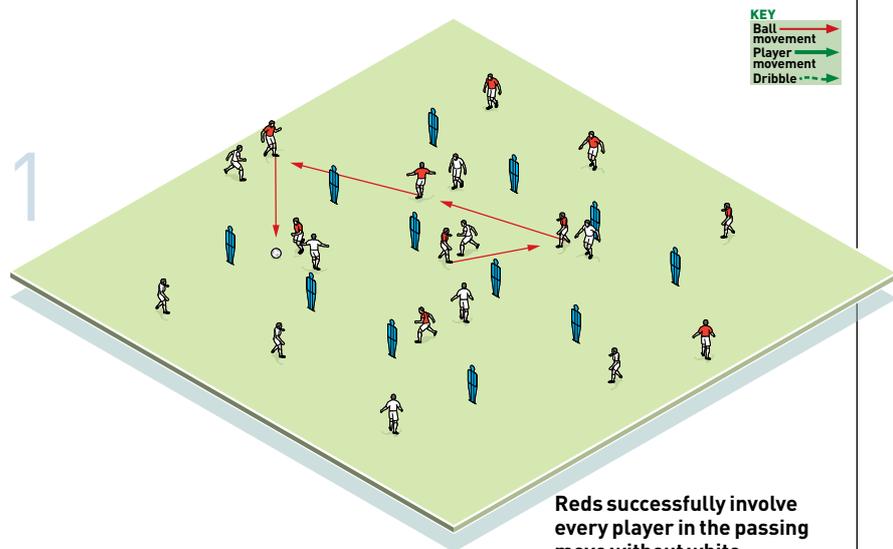
What do I get the players to do?

Passing warm-up

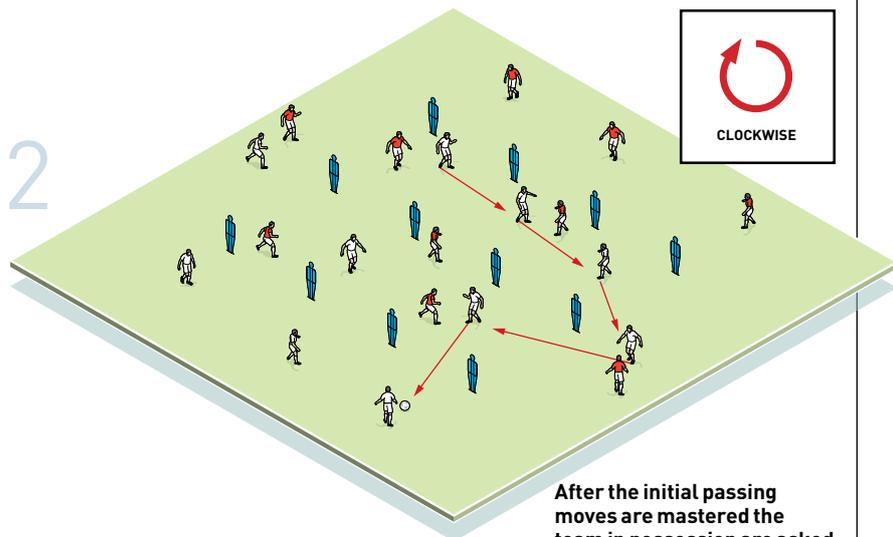
The warm-up is played in a relatively small area – perhaps 40x40 yards – to enable lots of repetition and full involvement by all.

Reds start in possession of the ball (1) – when every player has had a touch it's switched to the whites who must do the same. Teams must avoid tackles or interceptions through communication, organisation and good technical skills.

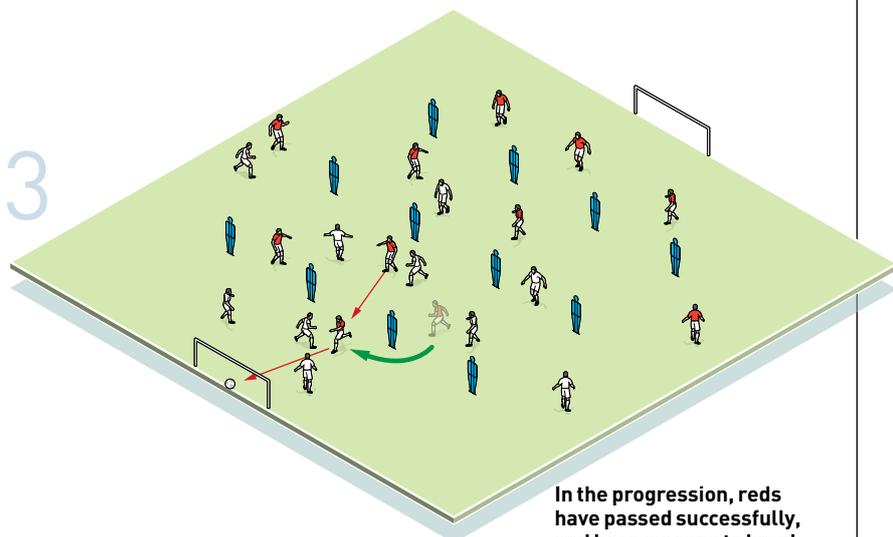
Once mastered, we progress the session by introducing picture cards to the team in possession. The card will depict a 'picture' of play that has to be followed – this, for instance, could be the ball being passed only clockwise (2), or just on one side of the playing area, or each player receiving the ball and dribbling forward a yard before passing. Whatever the instruction, the card must only be visible to the team in possession so that pressing opponents do not know the game plan.



Reds successfully involve every player in the passing move without white pressing opponents able to successfully tackle or intercept



After the initial passing moves are mastered the team in possession are asked to make specific moves – for example make all passes clockwise



In the progression, reds have passed successfully, and here manage to break through to score past the three white defenders



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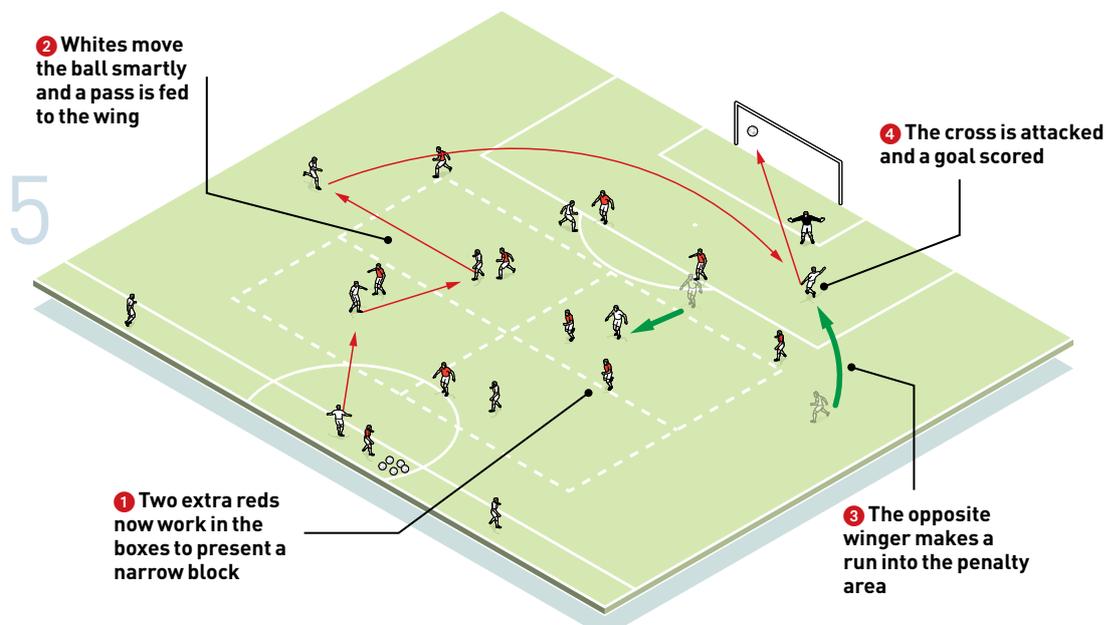
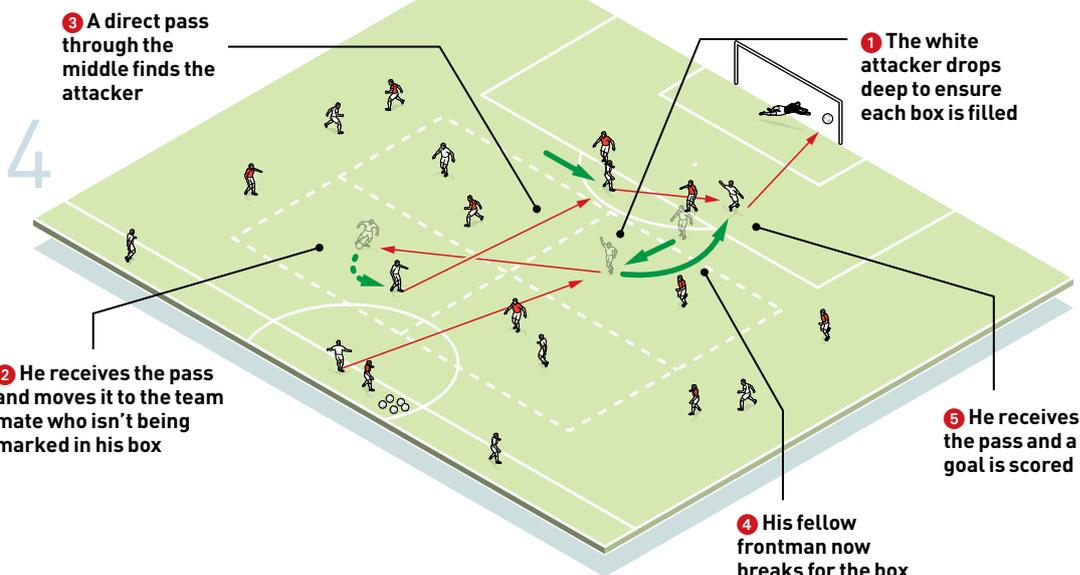
LMA AMBASSADOR

When Darren Ferguson departed Peterborough United in February 2015 it brought to a close a six-year association with the club, over two spells, that had yielded unprecedented success and entertainment, with Posh impressing onlookers with a brand of ambitious, attacking football that saw them become a welcome addition to the Sky Bet Championship.

In between, the 43-year-old Scot had a spell at Preston North End where he masterminded an incredible 6-4 win against Leeds United - his side coming back from 4-1 down.

Darren's playing career began at Old Trafford, before he moved to Wolverhampton Wanderers, Sparta Rotterdam and then Wrexham, for whom he made over 300 appearances.

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We can then move the session on again by adding a goal at each end (3). Now teams play to a finish once every player has had a touch of the ball, breaking towards goal against three defenders and shooting.

What are the key things to look out for?

We're looking for good awareness, movement, excellent technical skills and positive passing moves. In the case of the defending team,

we want excellent pressing ability and, if possible, the psychological wherewithal to work out their opponents' game plan.

Boxes set-up

Now, setting up as shown (4), red defenders can only have one of three midfielders in a box at any one time. Whites, meanwhile, must make sure they occupy each of the four boxes by using wide players, strikers or even centre-halves stepping into the

free box. The objective for whites is simply to find the spare man in a box, then attack from this trigger.

In the event of a turnover, players must reorganise quickly.

What are the key things to look out for?

Awareness of team mates is key, finding the spare man with clever passing. Speed of play is also vital, particularly when the ball is switched into the final third, while players

supporting others in their movement (for instance, the opposite wing-back getting into the box from crosses) is essential.

In the progression, we set up a scenario that mimics opponents defending narrow (5) by dropping two more red players into the central boxes. The emphasis is now on whites to circumnavigate the narrow block by switching play and moving the ball outside the boxes. ■