Overview

In modern soccer, the creation and usage of space while in possession of the ball is vital for successful attacking actions. Due to the ever-changing dynamic situations, it is extremely important that players have the ability to make quick decisions to transfer the ball to the wings and to support the movement created by that decision. Often one winger will have more space than the other, so players will need the vision to switch play from one side of the pitch to the other. The use of overloads is important for the success of the session and they create more match-like scenarios for players to solve. Modern players have all the tools to score in a variety of ways but practice is vital to ensuring they can play at a quick tempo when the opportunities present themselves in a match. Wing play can be the winning difference for teams on match days.

What do I get the players to do?

Warm-up

Set up in half a pitch as shown [1], using 10 players in two groups of five, with both groups performing the drill at the same time but starting from opposite corners. At one end play starts with a pass from the player at A to the player at B. Player A then runs for a lay-off from B, and passes to player C, who has started moving on the first pass of player A and who now receives the ball on the run. After receiving the ball, player C dribbles down the wing to the player at D, who begins the same sequence with the players at E and F.

Player A has now taken the place of B; player B has replaced C; player C has joined the back of the queue at D; and a new player with a new ball has started a new cycle from position A.

What do I get the players to do next?

4v3 + 2 neutral wingers

This is a drill that highlights the necessity of a good defending shape, especially when down in numbers and the attackers have an overload. For the defending team this activity is about regaining the ball, while for the possession team it’s focused on using the wingers as support when attacking.

Set up two 20x30 yard boxes separated by a 5-yard neutral centre zone, as shown [2a]. We’re using 10 players with two teams of four, one starting in each end zone, and two neutral wingers, one on each touchline. The team in possession has four players in their end zone and, playing with no more than three touches, must try to make seven consecutive passes using 4v3. No one can leave their position and challenge for the ball. The defenders must use their body and feet to block the ball. The attackers must try to get in behind and or around the block, score or make a cross. Play continues until a successful pass to a neutral winger is made or a player tries to go past a defender and is dispossessed.

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the help of the neutral wingers, who are limited to one-touch. If they complete seven passes, the possession team scores a point. To stop them scoring, the pressing team sends three players into the opposition end zone to try to win the ball and leaves one player in their end zone. If the pressing team wins the ball, as shown [2b], they must pass immediately to their team mate in the other end zone and follow the ball, forming a new possession team. The team that lost the ball sends three players into the other end zone to try to regain possession again. If the ball goes out of play, the coach passes to the lone player in the end zone and play continues. Change the neutrals regularly. Play five rounds of 90 seconds with two minutes of recovery time in between.

How do I progress the session?

9v9 + 2 neutrals

We now progress the session towards a game situation with an activity where the management of the ball while in possession can “open” the wing to help create scoring chances. Set up between the Ds of the two penalty areas, with four small goals in the corners and pole gates in the centre of the pitch, as shown [3]. We’re using 20 players, split into two teams of nine plus two neutral players, who help the team in possession. Players have three touches. The team in possession can score a point by passing to a team mate through one of the pole gates, or by making seven consecutive passes using the help of neutral wingers. The red pressing team must leave one player in their end zone and send three to win the ball in the opposition end zone. The passing players should have no more than three touches. The blue possession team has four players in their end zone. They can score a point by making seven passes using the help of neutral wingers.

4v3 + 2 Neutral Wingers: In this activity the attacking team use wingers to help them keep possession.

2a

Here the red pressers win the ball. They must pass immediately to their team mate in the other end zone.

4v3 + 2 Neutral Wingers: In this activity the attacking team use wingers to help them keep possession.

2b

The red pressing team must leave one player in their end zone and send three to win the ball in the opposition end zone.

The blue team that lost the ball sends three players into the other end zone to try to win the ball.

The other reds join their team mate to create a new possession team.

How would you put this into a game situation?

11v11 + wide channels

This is the last preparatory game. We would run before the regular 11v11 match and the main priority for the team in attack will be using the wings as much as possible. We set up between the two penalty areas with a goal at each end and with a central area coned off at the width of the penalty area, creating two channels on the wings, as shown [4]. Play 11v11 including goalkeepers, but if an attacker receives the ball in one of the two wide channels,
only one defender can go in and challenge for the ball. The main objective is to use the channels for crossing the ball or dribbling into the attacking zone using 2v1 overloads in the channel. Play three blocks of five minutes with two minutes of recovery time between. But if we decide to play a regular 11v11 game at the end of the session, we would only play two rounds of four minutes of this activity.

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9v9 + 2 Neutrals: There are three ways to score in this 9v9, which encourages movement of the ball out wide. Players must use no more than three touches.

11v11 + Wide Channels: The main objective is to use the channels for crossing the ball or dribbling into the attacking zone using 2v1 overloads.

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