Overview
This training session is all about creating overloads in tight spaces when in possession. Three is the magic number here and this session encourages players to use the three-player support system to create overloads. Players are fully engaged due to the simplicity of trying to support the ball with a minimum of three players and it also helps to improve receiving and releasing skills and will encourage quick play. The session progresses into a game-related 11v11 practice where players can implement what they have learnt from the opening activity. We also use the session to encourage an aggressive press when out of possession, again in threes, which also helps to improve the intensity and quality of our play when in possession.

1 SUPPORT IN THREES
Like the SAS, get in and get out!

1. The coach starts play with a pass to a blue attacker.
2. After stringing three passes together, the attacker can pass to a team mate in another box, as here, or one of the floaters can dribble the ball into a new box.
3. The two yellow floaters can move freely and must follow the ball into the box and combine with the attacker to keep possession.
4. The floaters follow the ball into the new box and work to pass with a blue in a new 3v1.
5. Each box contains one red defender and one blue attacker. They are locked into their box.

KEY
Ball movement
Player movement
Dribble
**Chris Beech: Creating Overloads in Tight Spaces**

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

**Support in threes**

We set up a grid of 20x20 yards containing four 10x10-yard boxes. We’re using 10 players, split into a blue attacking team of four and a red defending team of four, plus two yellow floaters. Each box contains one blue attacker and one red defender, who are locked in their boxes. The two yellow floaters move between boxes, supporting the attacker in keeping possession and making it 3v1 in each box when the ball is there.

Play begins with a pass from the coach to a blue attacker. The floaters enter that box and combine with the attacker to help them string at least three passes together before the attacker can pass to a team mate in another box, as shown [1]. The floaters follow the ball into the new box. If a floater is in possession after the completion of the three passes, he can dribble the ball into another box (followed by his team mate) to start a new passing 3v1.

The emphasis should be on speed of play, with movement and support both key to the success of the session. The coach should be looking for fast control with support.

We play in five blocks of 90 seconds, rotating players into the floating role every 90 seconds. On completion, we repeat for another five blocks of 90 seconds.

**How would you put this into a game situation?**

**11v11 game**

We set up on a full size pitch with a goal and a goalkeeper at each end, but the pitch size can be adjusted depending on our needs. We play a normal 11v11 game based on our own formation and the formation of our next opponents, but the players must be encouraged to work in the three-player support system they learnt in the first practice.

As an example of this, in the diagram [2a] when the ball is played from the left centre back to the left back, the three players nearest to the ball must move to support. Other players farther away must also move.

“Players are fully engaged due to the simplicity of trying to support the ball with a minimum of three players”
closer, in order to cover the spaces vacated by the supporting players. This also means that they are close enough for link-up play when the ball is moved on again.

In the diagram, the proximity to the ball is shown by a series of rings centred on the position of the ball. The ball is received by the left back in the central ring labelled 'IN'. The nearest players – the left centre back, the centre midfielder and the left winger – move from the 'AROUND' ring to the 'IN' ring to support the player on the ball. The support play enables the left back to link up with the left winger, who turns and passes to the centre forward, who has moved to support, as shown [2b].

Now the right winger comes into play, having moved more central to pick up a pass and scores. The coach is looking for an instant reaction to the pass, with speed of movement and quickness of play critical to creating the space for opportunities on goal.

Players can exaggerate the movement by moving from 'BEYOND' to 'AROUND' on the pitch but they should stay position specific and not leave gaps. For instance, when the left centre back moves to support the player with the ball, the right centre back moves towards the 'AROUND' ring to cover the space.

What are the key things to look out for?

Technically, we want to see players able to use a soft touch, fast passing, a good body shape and the skills to be able to play the ball in tight spaces. Players should also demonstrate a good awareness of what’s around them and try to play forwards whenever possible.

Tactically, we’re looking for players to support the ball with at least three players when in possession and to press with three players near the ball when out of possession.

Most importantly, we want to see quick movement and the ability to react to changing situations.

“We want to see quick movement from players and the ability to react to constantly changing situations”