

PSG ACADEMY (USA)

Dmitri Lavrinovic
Attacking transition

SET-UP

AREA	Up to two thirds of pitch
EQUIPMENT	Balls, bibs, cones, poles, 1 target goal, 2 goals
NUMBER OF PLAYERS	16 players + 2 goalkeepers
SESSION TIME	Warm-up: 20mins Possession game: 20mins Attacking a low block: 20mins 4v3+1: 20mins 9v9 game: 20mins

Overview

This session is all about the transition from defence to attack. Players love it because they get a lot of opportunities to express themselves and there are numerous ways to develop both individual and team learning on this topic. It's important we teach players skills that will prepare them to play at the highest possible level, skills that also reflect the developments in the modern and future game. Therefore, teaching them to recognise early opportunities to attack is an important part of the coaching process. At PSG Academy Plantation, we work a lot on moving the ball forward as quickly as possible. Attacking transition is part of the coaching curriculum for all academy teams and age groups. This particular session has been designed for the professional development phase, from ages 17 to 21, but it can be easily adopted for the youth development phase, from ages 13 to 16.

What do I get the players to do?
Warm-up

We set up a playing area around the centre circle in the middle third of the pitch. The area is divided into four zones: the two halves of the centre circle form two zones (zones 1 and 2), while the halfway line separates another two zones (zones 3 and

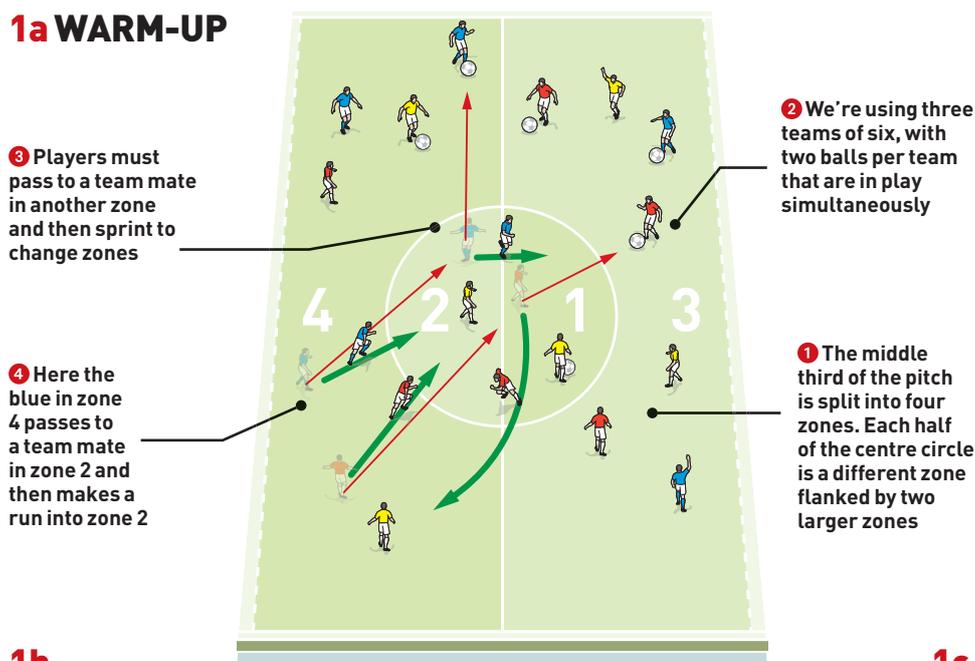
4). We're using 18 players split into three teams of six, with two balls per team that are in play simultaneously. Players must pass to a team mate in another zone and then sprint to change zones themselves, moving into any other zone. For clarity, we demonstrate this in our diagram as an overview of all three teams, as shown [1a], and in a close up representing the movement of just one team, as shown [1b]. The player in possession needs to see the early opportunity to pass and must not spend too much time on the ball. We encourage players to limit themselves to two touches if they can or three touches if they need them. We want to

see a sharp change of pace by the player after making the pass, accelerating quickly into another zone. An awareness of space and the position of supporting team mates is vital to the success of this busy and crowded activation exercise. The quality of passing and receiving is also key. We can progress the activity by asking players to make their pass and then sprint to a third zone – one that has not been used in that passing move so far, as shown [1c]. This needs to be to a zone that the ball wasn't passed to or from. We can progress the warm-up further by requiring players to make their pass to a player from a different team.

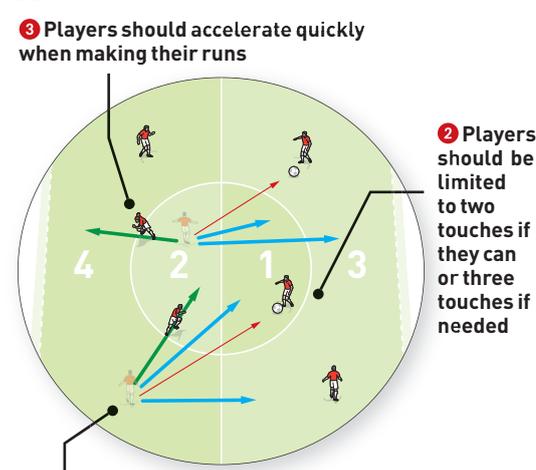
KEY

- Ball movement →
- Player movement →
- Dribble - - - - - →
- Optional movement →

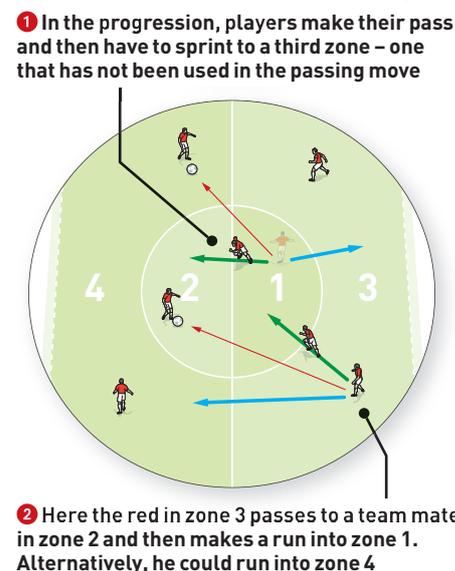
1a WARM-UP



1b



1c



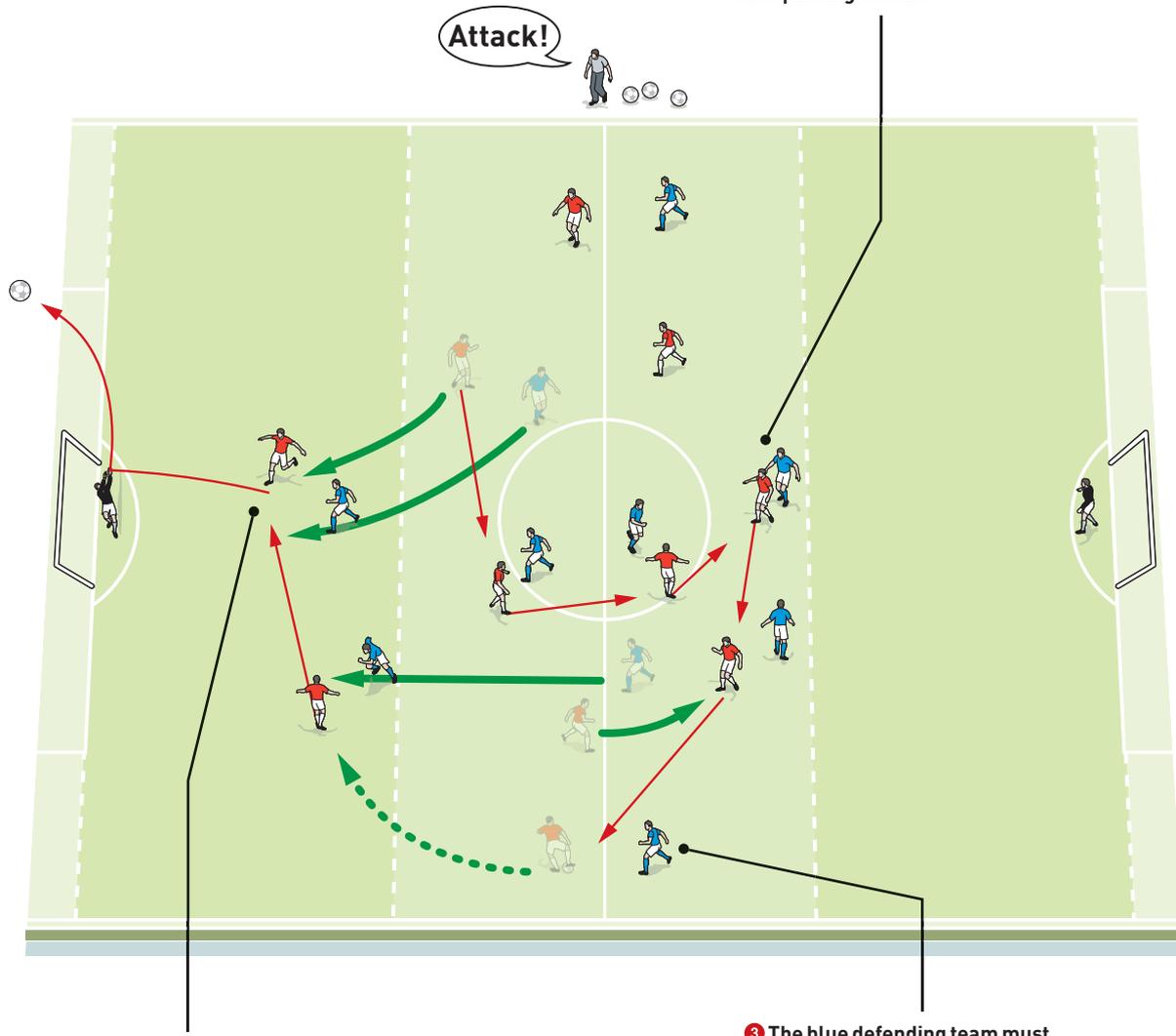
DMITRI LAVRINOVIC: ATTACKING TRANSITION

2 POSSESSION GAME

KEY

- Ball movement →
- Player movement →
- Dribble→

1 We play an 8v8 game in the midfield third, starting with the possession team passing the ball



2 On the coach's call, the possession team break out of the midfield third and try to score in either goal

3 The blue defending team must quickly try to stop the attack

“Players love this session because they get a lot of opportunities to express themselves and there are many ways to develop individual and team learning”

What do I get the players to do next?
Possession game

We set up between the two penalty areas with a goal and a goalkeeper at each end. The playing area is divided into thirds. We're using 16 outfield players split into two teams of eight. We play an 8v8 game in the midfield third. On the coach's call, the team

in possession can break out of the middle third and try to score in either goal, as shown [2]. The other team must quickly try to defend against the attack. If the possession team scores in the goal, they get three points. Another way to score is for the possession team to make 10 passes in the central third and for

this they get one point. Play always restarts from the midfield third. We want to see players reacting quickly to launch an attack and using good decision making to pick the best option for the attack, whether that's the choice of goal or the decision to use individual attacking play over combining to attack. ▼

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Attacking a low block

We set up on two thirds of the pitch with a goal at each end. We're using 16 outfield players and two goalkeepers split into two teams of nine. We play a 9v9 game with two conditions. Firstly, if the possession team loses the ball when attacking in the opposition's half, every player from that

team must recover back into their own half, with no immediate pressing allowed on transition. Secondly, the team that wins possession must make a pass in their own half before the ball can be played across the halfway line, as shown [3]. At the end of the game, we get together with the players

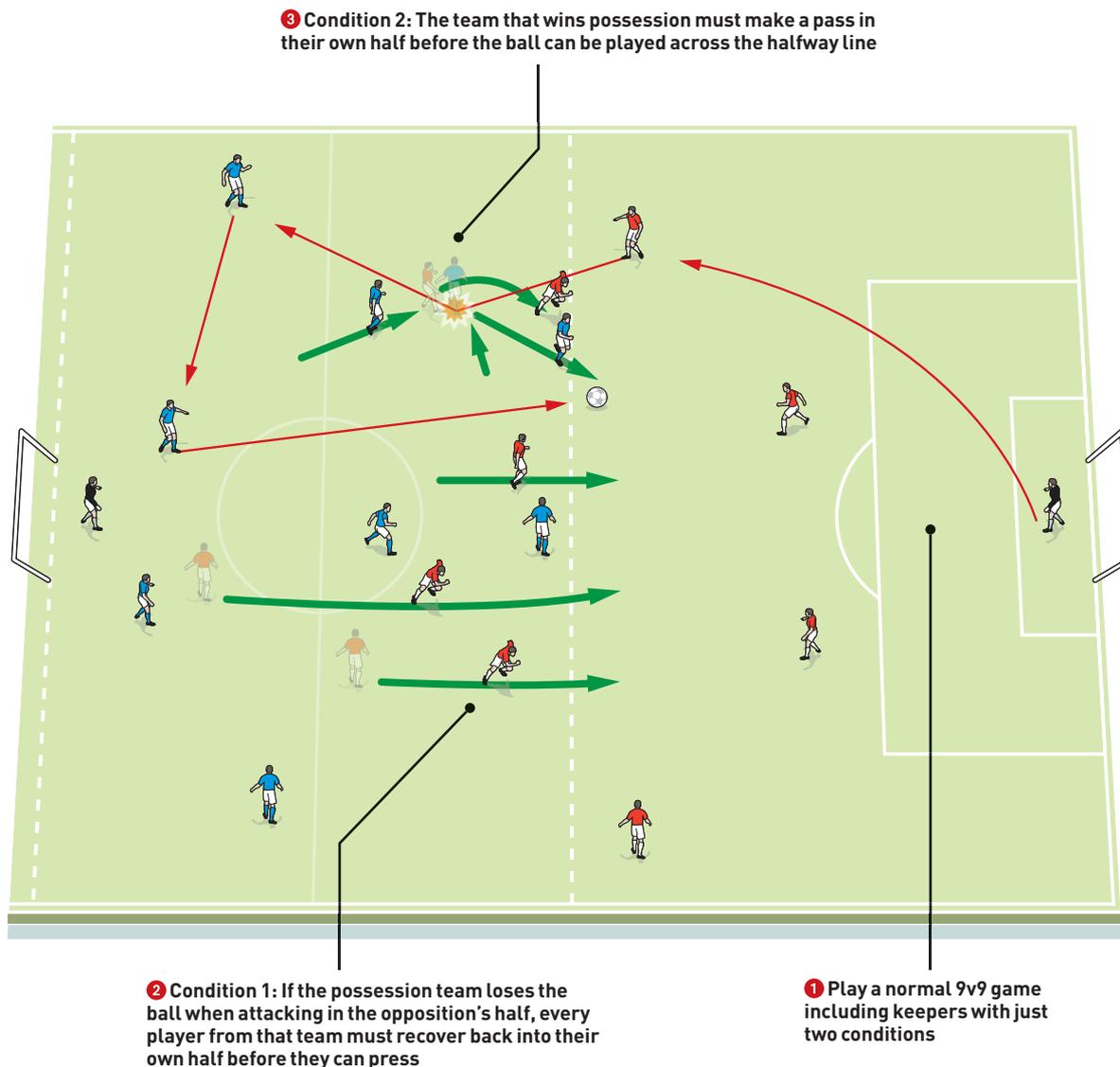
and compare the amount of goals that have been scored in this game with the amount scored in the previous game. This should demonstrate to players the importance of transition, as it will be harder to score whilst the opposition recovers behind the ball and builds a defensive block.

KEY

- Ball movement →
- Player movement →
- Dribble →

“We want to see players reacting quickly to launch an attack and using good decision making to pick the best possible option for the attack”

3 ATTACKING A LOW BLOCK



DMITRI LAVRINOVIC: ATTACKING TRANSITION

4v3+1

We set up an area of 60x40 yards with a small target goal at one end. The area is divided into thirds, with poles marking either end of the line between the middle third and the third with the goal. We're using eight outfield players divided into a blue attacking team of four and a red counter-attacking team of four. One blue stays in his own defending third, while his three team mates start in the attacking third and try to score in the small goal protected by the four red defenders, as shown [4a]. When the reds win the ball, they must combine to transfer it over the red line and into the opposition's defending third within five seconds. On the transition, the three blues can track back to defend and the lone blue at the other end must try to stop the ball crossing the red line. To progress this activity, set the defending team the challenge of having to combine to transfer the ball into the opposition's defending third before the three players from the attacking team are able to run around the poles and get back into their defending third, as shown [4b]. This activity offers repeated opportunities to rehearse the transition to attack under pressure from opponents and under timing pressures too. It also gives us the opportunity to work with players individually. We want to see players making direct attacks with pace, while supporting players should make runs to create space and offer a passing option. Players should also demonstrate the skills to take on defenders, particularly when attacking the red line.

How would I put this into a game situation?

We would finish the session with a free play 9v9 game including keepers [not shown]. This is to check that the players have understood all the coaching points.

What are the key things to look out for?

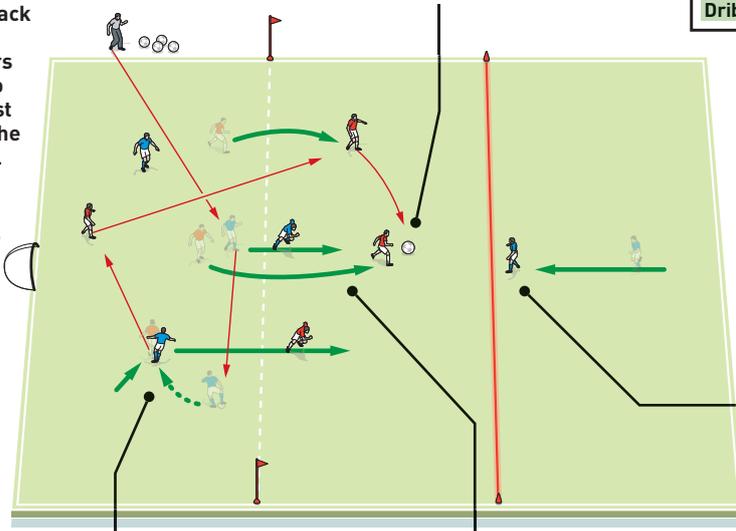
The first thing we want to see is a

4a 4v3+1

1 Three blues attack four red defenders and try to score past them in the mini goal

2 When the red defenders win the ball, they have five seconds to combine and run it over the red line at the other end

KEY
 Ball movement →
 Player movement →
 Dribble→



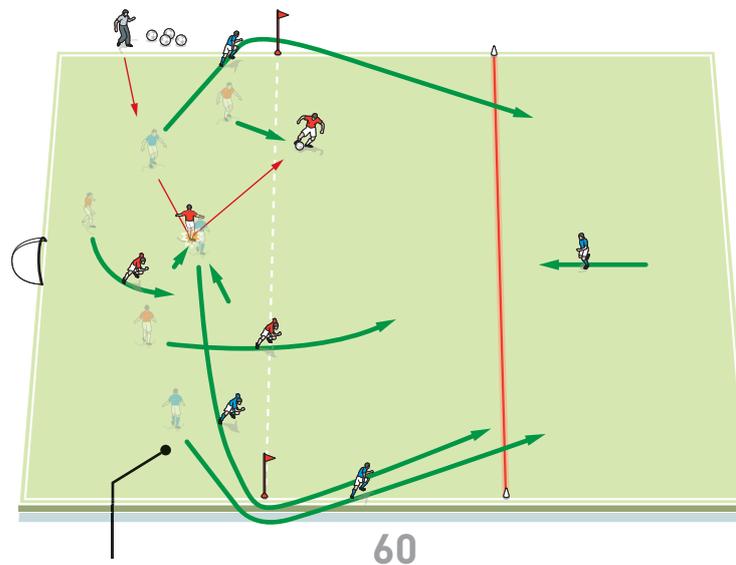
5 On the loss of possession, the other three blues can recover to help their lone team mate defend the other end

3 Supporting players should make runs to create space and offer passing options

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4 One blue stays in his own defending third and tries to prevent the reds bringing the ball over the red line

4b



1 In this progression, the reds must run the ball into the opposition's defending third before the three recovering blues are able to run around the poles and get back into their defending third

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positive attitude. Psychologically, players need to be very focused, positive and aggressive, and they must be on the front foot when setting up an attacking transition. Technically, we want to see players showing us they have the ability to dribble and make the correct runs. Bravery on the ball is important, as is the ability to take players on and stay on the ball. Tactically, there is a lot of decision-making involved in the activities, both on and off the ball.

What are the typical mistakes players might make and how do I avoid them?

At the beginning players try to play safe, playing the ball square or making back passes. As coaches, we should give them the clear message that the first pass or movement must be forward and that players off the ball must provide support ahead of the ball by making runs. As coaches we need to encourage creativity, giving a lot of vocal positive reinforcement.