

Attacking versus Defense in a 5v3

This multi-functional exercise works on a combination of passing patterns which develops into an attack versus defense scenario. Speed of play is a huge factor both in and out of possession, so this should drive the tempo to be as high as possible. Attacking pattern play does not challenge players to work under pressure so too often becomes unrealistic to the demands of the game. If you want your team to develop attacking habits, you must train under challenging conditions, which this should provide.

The exercise works on improving your players in the following four dimensions:

Physical – Attacking team is challenged to get into the final 3rd at speed, defending team must make recovery runs and organize quickly. Fitness and fatigue will become key factors as the exercise progresses.

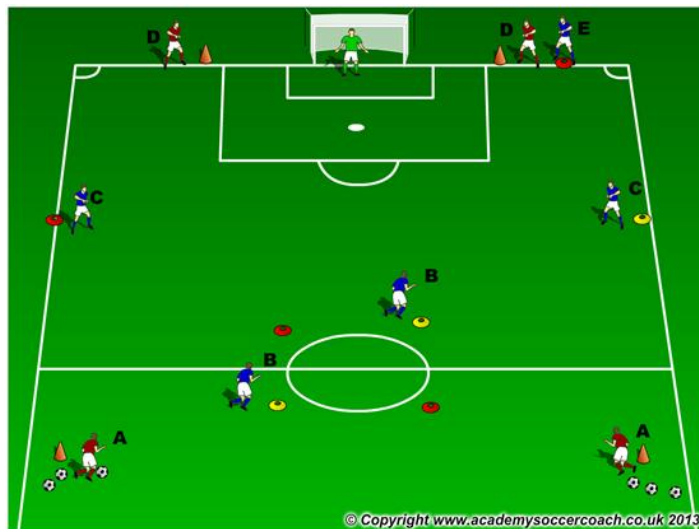
Technical – Players have to move the ball at speed unopposed for the first part and then play against opposition for the second part so technique under pressure is always a key component.

Tactical – Each player on the field is challenged to perform tasks specific to their position and the exercise mirrors a tactical scenarios that appear in the game.

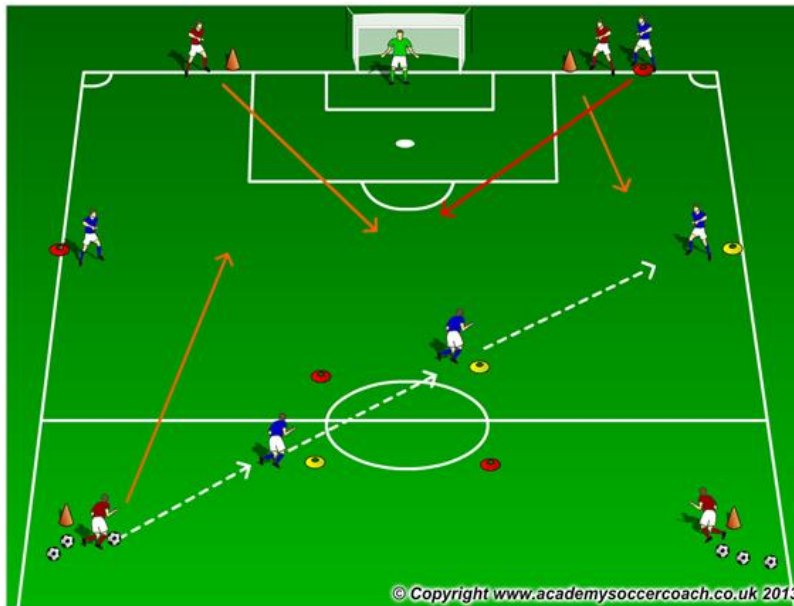
Mental – There are a number of decision making variables present for both attacking and defending players.

SET-UP:

The exercise takes place just over half a field and has players distributed in the cones by position. On cones A are full backs, B are center midfielders, C are wide attackers, D are center backs, E are center forwards, and a goalkeeper. If you have additional players, they can double up on cones and keep the exercise moving quickly. Ideally, you need two sets of center midfielders, where one starts on yellow cones, and the others on red. All defensive players on cones A and D are in red and balls begin with the fullbacks.



The exercise starts from the full back, who passes the ball to the closest center midfielder and then must recover to a defensive position. When the first pass is made, the two red center backs and blue center forward must sprint out to take their positions. Upon receiving the first pass, the blue center midfielder must pass the ball diagonally to the other center midfielder who then must pass it to the outside attacker on the other side. After each pass, both midfielders are now part of the attack. When the ball arrives to the outside attacker, the blue team can now attack the goal in a 5v3 situation. After the attack finishes, the players recover back to their position and the next set begins from the other full back.



OPTIONS:

The quicker the blue team moves the ball through the center midfielders, the more options they will have because the full back who started the play may not have recovered to a defensive position in time. Below you can see the options the blue team will have if they work the ball at a high tempo. The defending team will be vulnerable on the weak side for approximately ten seconds and the wide attacker in possession can use the center midfielder to work the ball to the other side and slide the other outside attacker in on goal. (See Below)



However, if the full back recovers quickly, it will take away the weak side attacking option for the blue team so they must adapt accordingly. The blue team can now use their numerical advantage in the center midfield to push a player forward into an attacking area. You can see in the diagram below how the wide attacking player passes the ball into the center forward who lays it into the path of the center midfielder who is now in a position to finish on goal.



PROGRESSIONS:

There are a number of attacking and defending progressions that you can make to this exercise, depending on abilities and numbers of players. The coach can put passing restrictions that incorporates playing off the center forward, combining with center midfielders, or even encouraging players to take advantage of 1v1 situations. The exercise is limited only by the imagination of the coach but if you want to keep quality high, monitor time and create a competitive environment between the red and blue teams.