

Dutch National Team

This session of the Dutch National Team was observed on May 17, 2002 by long time subscriber, Dave Clarke. The session was in preparation for the May 19 game against the USA. Clarke has also contributed articles in the past, most notably the PSV Eindhoven Journal, which included a full week of observations of their training sessions. Clarke is the head women's coach at Quinnipiac University, Director of Coaching for World Class Soccer, a member of the Region One ODP staff and a National Staff Instructor. SESSION PROVIDED BY www.worldclasscoaching.com

Clarke had the opportunity to speak with Dick Advocaat following the session in Boston.

Advocaat took a low key approach to the practice session and the upcoming game, as it was the end of a long season for his players. As Holland were not going to the World Cup there was no reason to push them hard. He planned a simple session with no tactical work due to the fact that there was nothing to play for in the game against the USA. He wanted to do a session that the players had done before so there would be little or no instruction made to the players, no time wasted in setting up the activities and little coaching made during the final game.

The practice game was very competitive and physical. Advocaat said that is the Dutch way and he would not stop

his players playing like that in practice.

Advocaat said that he always plans his teams ahead for the 7 v 7, 8 v 8 and 11 v 11 games played at the end of practice. He plays defenders and midfield players together or midfield players and forwards and tries to keep as many starters on the same team as possible. Depending on the topic he is trying to cover, he will pair players together who will be playing together in the game. For example, if working on playing from the back, the defenders and midfield players will play together.

His favored formation is the Dutch 4-3-3 but he will also convert it to a 3-4-3 when needed. One of his fullbacks will push forward into midfield and the remaining three defenders balance off and pick up the opposition forwards.

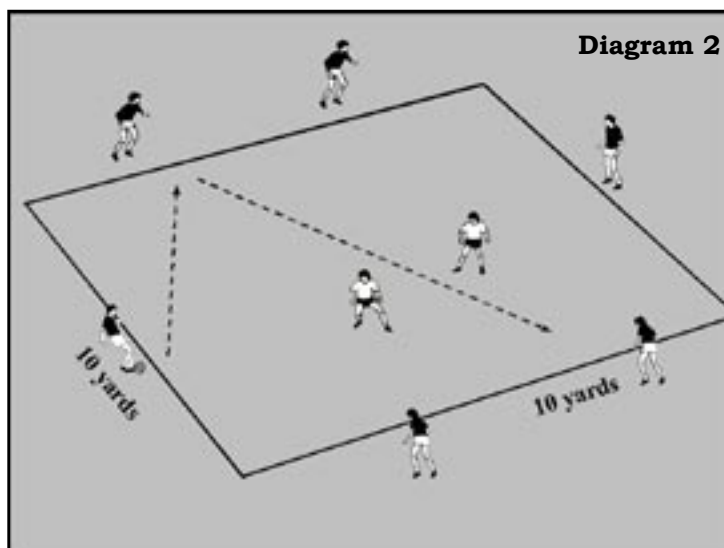
Warm-Up (20 Minutes)

Sixteen Dutch National Team players are dressed for practice under the supervision of Dutch National Team Head Coach, Dick Advocaat and his assistants, Wim Van Hanegem, Bert Van Lingen and team Physio, Rib Ouderland. Before the session begins, some players start playing with the balls. Most juggle on their own, some do it in pairs while others just pass the ball back and forth. At different times the players also do some stretching.

Advocaat gives a whistle and the players jog into the center circle. He talks for two minutes before the whole squad starts off on a slow jog around the field. They jog twice around the field and then stop for some stretching.

Warm-Up 6 v 2

Two groups of eight players in two 10 x 10-yard grids play 6 v 2 one-touch keepaway. The two players in the middle need to touch the ball to get out. They have to stay in the middle for another turn if they are nutmegged with the ball, or if a pass splits them. The players on the outside can only play one-touch and they have to stay on the line to pass and receive and any player that gives away possession goes in the middle.



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Observations

- The Orange group was very relaxed but competitive. The Green group containing Edgar Davids was ultra competitive and players were teasing teammates who were in the middle.
- Davids took the game very serious and the few times he was in the middle he worked very hard to win possession. Two of his tackles were studs up and over the top, which was an eye opener considering this was a warm-up and a practice session.
- Davids' attitude set a tone for his group and the quality of passing and possession was of the highest order. He definitely sent a message in the warm-up that he was not treating this session lightly.
- As time went on even the Green group began to relax playing keepaway and trying to nutmeg the players in the middle. If they did, they laughed at and berated the player on the receiving end with Davids as the main instigator.
- The groups were broken down into two teams who would later play against each other in the 8 v 8 game.

While his players were playing 6 v 2, Advocaat and his assistant coaches were passing the ball back and forth over 30-40 yards. He paid no attention to the players in the two grids and despite this, the standard and the pace of the keepaway never dropped.

Rehab Session

While the two groups are playing keepaway, the physio is working one-on-one with Victor Sikora of Vitesse Arnhem who is injured. They just jog slowly around the field and do some light stretching while the rest of the team plays keepaway. They then go to one corner of the field where the physio has the player perform various exercises between the sideline and the penalty area.

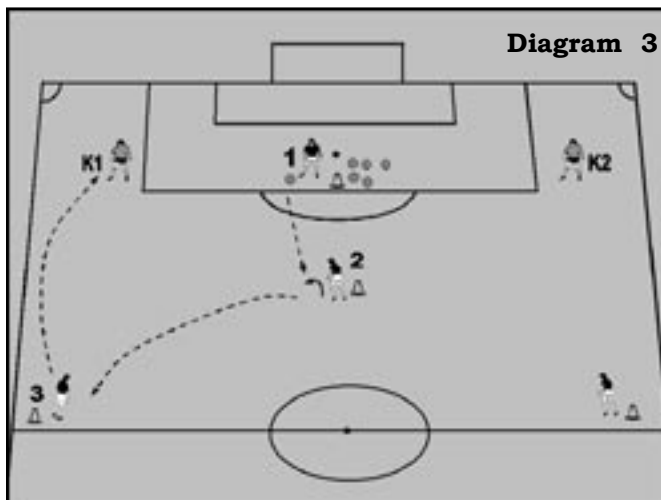
At the command of the physio, Sikora does two sets of the following exercises:

- Jogging with heels up
- Jogging with heels up as fast as possible
- Jogging with knees up
- Jogging with knees up as fast as possible
- Jogging while alternating knees and heels up
- Skipping with knees up and arms up
- Skipping with left knee touching right elbow and vice versa
- Sprinting on the spot while moving forward with arms pumping
- 3/4 sprint
- Full sprint

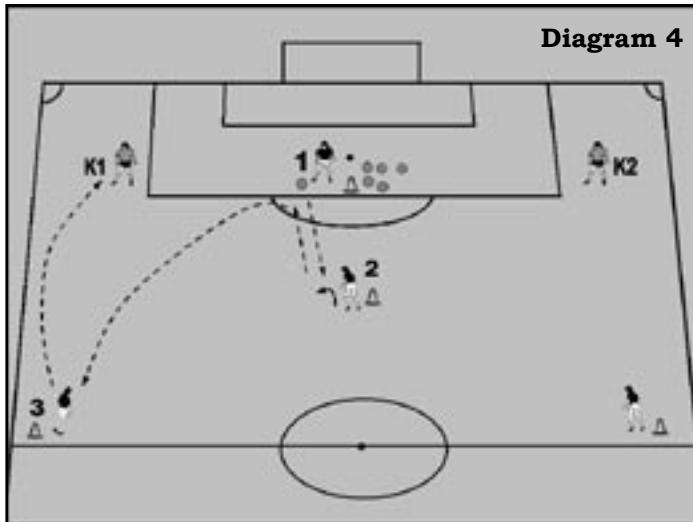
He then repeats two sets of each exercise but this time while jogging or skipping backwards.

Passing Activity - Variation One

Player 1 has a supply of balls and passes and follows to player 2. Player 2 turns with the ball and plays a pass to player 3. Player 2 follows his pass and takes the place of player 3. Player 3 controls the ball and chips a pass to the goalkeeper (K1) and then jogs into the penalty area. The sequence is repeated on the other side with the ball being played eventually to K2.



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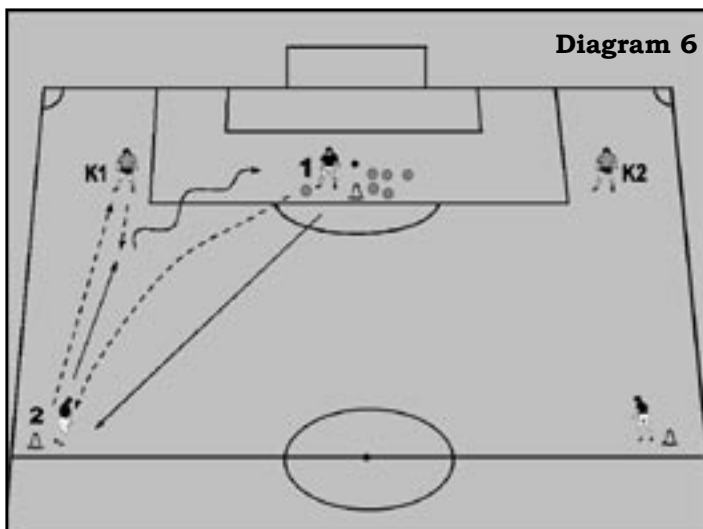
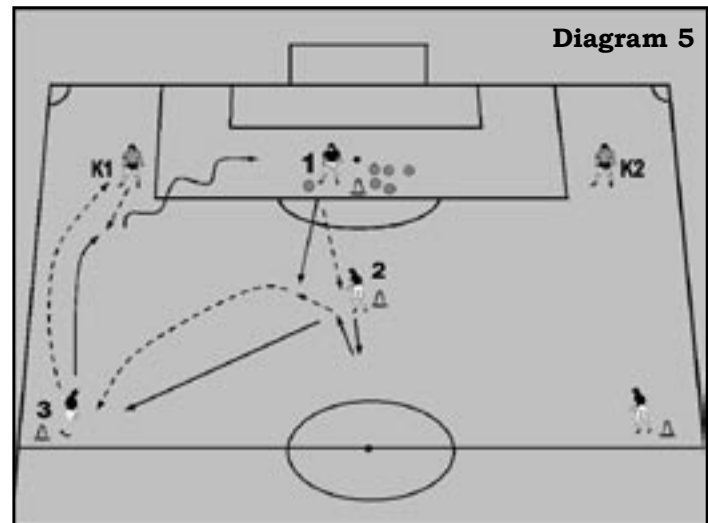


Variation Two

Player 1 has the supply of balls. Player 2 checks away, then quickly checks back to receive the ball from player 1. Player 2 then passes back to player 1. Player 1 passes to player 3 then follows his pass to replace player 2. Player 3 plays the ball into the goalkeeper and then jogs into the penalty area. Again, the sequence is repeated on the other side.

Variation Three

Player 1 passes to player 2. Player 2 lays the ball off to player 1, and after laying the ball off, player 2 turns sideways to face player 3. Player 1 plays a long pass to player 3 and as soon as he does so, player 2 sprints to player 3. Player 3 controls the ball and plays it into the goalkeeper (K1). Player 3 then sprints after the ball, receives it back from K1 then accelerates into the penalty area. The sequence is repeated on the other side of the field.



Variation Four

Player 1 plays the ball in the air to player 2. Player 2 controls the ball using his thigh, chest or head and then drives the ball to the goalkeeper (K1), sprints after the ball, receives it back from K1 then accelerates into the penalty area.

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8 v 8 Game (30 minutes)

Using two teams of eight, the goals are placed at the top of the penalty areas with the field as wide as the penalty area. The first half has a two-touch restriction with throw-ins and the offside rule in affect. The second half is free play. The white team played a 2-3-2 formation and the dark team a 4-2-1 formation.

Diagram 7

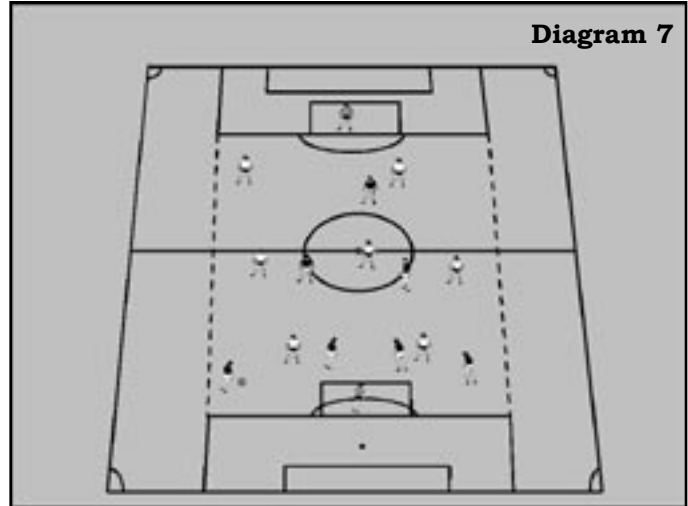
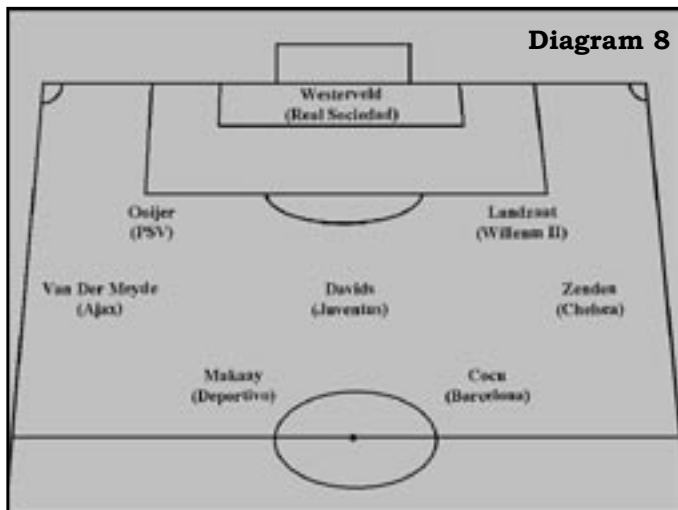


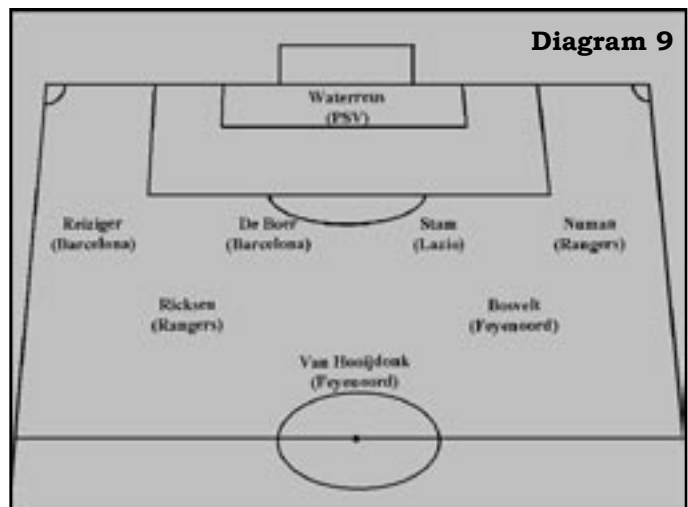
Diagram 8



8 v 8 Game (30 minutes)

White team players and formation.

Diagram 9



8 v 8 Game (30 minutes)

Dark team players and formation.

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Observations

No players were wearing shin guards during the game but that didn't stop the practice game from becoming very physical. In fact, Jaap Stam two-footed tackled Roy Makaay in the first few minutes of the game. It set the tone for what proved to be a very competitive practice match.

Stam's tackle on Makaay set a tone for the game and showed that the Dutch practice as they play, so the game was played at a very high standard.

After the Orange team scored to make it 1-0, the Green team began to argue amongst themselves in a manner that suggested they did not want to lose the game. Edgar Davids and Danny Landzaat criticized each other over who was at fault for the goal. Keeper Sandor Westerveld also got involved in what was a heated discussion considering it was only a practice.

Each team played with only one forward and the emphasis of the game was to hit the lone target man and then quickly get forward to support the player for shots at goal.

The two wide players on the Green team and the two fullbacks on the Orange team pushed forward into attack whenever possible.

The players were patient in possession and were constantly looking to play the ball forward and always tried to play the way they were facing.

Advocaat stopped play once to criticize a cross field diagonal ball by Arthur Numan which was intercepted. He pointed out to the player that he had better options open than making a risky pass. It was quite obvious that Advocaat did not want his players to needlessly give away possession of the ball.

The game ended 3 - 3 and was very entertaining and competitive. All six goals involved build-ups that involved passing combinations practiced in the previous activity.

Cool Down (5 minutes)

At the end of the session, the players spend five minutes in the center circle stretching and replenishing lost fluids.

When Advocaat dismisses the team, some players do sit-ups and other exercises and some players shoot at the cross bar. Most of the players head for the team bus and sign autographs for the fans in attendance as well as doing some television and newspaper interviews.

Additional Comments

The Dutch National Team trained at CMGI Field in Boston on Saturday, May 18 the day before they were to play the USA. The weather was very bad so the players just jogged and stretched, played keepaway and went through some set plays. As it was the day before the game, it was a very light session.

While the USA played well and deserved a result from the game on Sunday, Holland won 2-0 thanks to goals from Roy Makaay and Andy Van Der Meyde.