

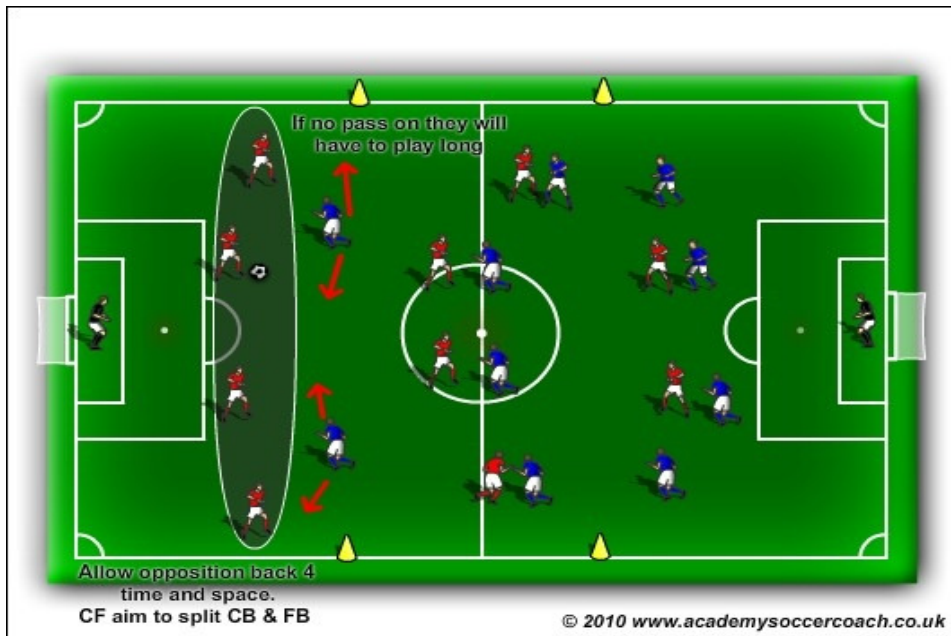
Phase of Play - Defending from the Middle Zone

To deny opposition time and space on the ball

To force a mistake or win the ball back in the middle zone in order to counter attack



FOOTBALL
COACHING RESOURCE



Area

Full pitch.

Numbers

Two teams - 10v10, plus goalkeepers. One team is identified as the defending side.

Layout

The team in blue play as in a 442 formation. The team in red can setup as a 442, 451 or 433 - the tactics are the same no matter the formation.

Rules

The ball starts with the opposition goalkeeper and must be played to one of the back four.

Success is achieved if the blue team can either force a mistake or win back the ball. If the ball is won the team can counter attack and try to score.

Duration of 30-40 minutes. Or 2 x 15/20 mins with the teams changing roles at half-time. (Intensity 90%).

The purpose of the practice is to ensure that the team apply pressure as a unit and therefore have a greater opportunity to winning back the ball. It also reduces the amount of work required defensively from the CF and therefore allows them a chance to conserve their energy for the counter attack

Development

The practice can begin with limited pressure until there is complete understanding. It is important that all players are aware of their roles and responsibilities, understanding the triggers and the timing of their movement. Once this is achieved the game can be played as an 11v11.

Coaching Points

Depending on the formation the two centre forwards or the lone centre forward and a wide player or attacking midfielder will split between the full back and centre back but not pressurise the opposition back four. Their role will be to try to stop passes into midfield and encourage the opposition to either play across the back four or go long.

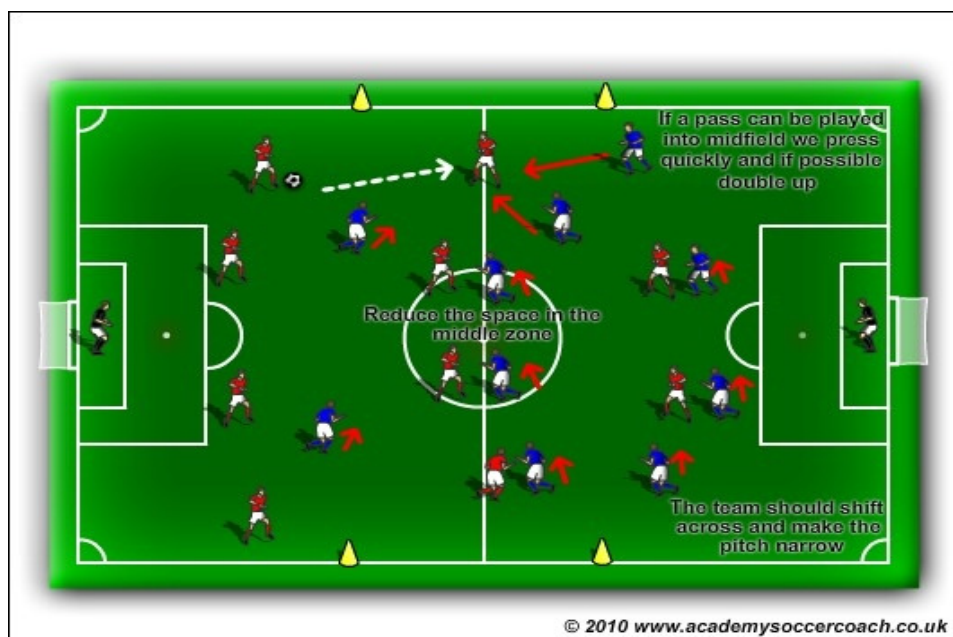
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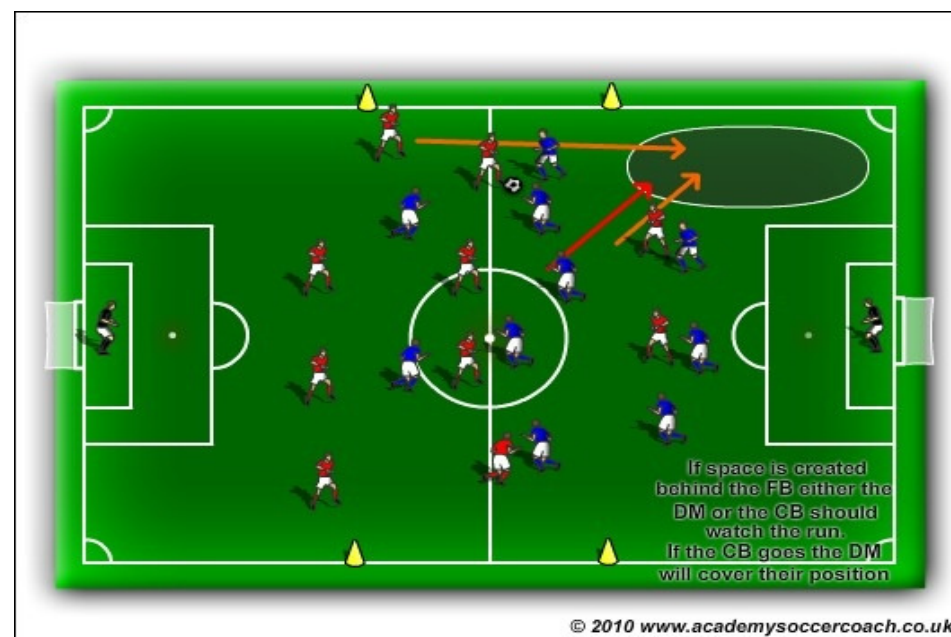


FOOTBALL
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Coaching Points

If a pass is completed into the middle zone the whole team will react to immediately reduce space. The team will shift across the pitch to make it narrow (If the ball is in wide areas the opposite wide player and full back should use the back post as a guide). The aim is to double up on the opposition and dictate their passing options. In wide areas pressure will be offered by the wide players and the full backs.



Coaching Points

Full backs should show the opposition inside into pressure rather than allowing them to get into the space behind. The opposition could still look to play into the space behind the full back. Either the defensive midfielder or the centre back should watch for a run and be committed to covering this space. If the centre back moves into this position the defensive midfielder should cover for the centre back. The centre forward will take up a position to block the pass back into the back four.

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Notes

Coaching Points

In central areas one centre midfielder should put pressure on the ball and the other should offer cover. As the ball moves across the pitch the roles are reversed. If the ball is played behind the centre midfielders then one centre back should apply pressure on the ball with the other offering cover slightly deeper. Just like the wide position scenario, the team will double up on the opposition with the centre backs being supported by the centre midfielders. The back four should be careful not to sit too deep and aim to push up to the edge of the middle zone in order to reduce the space.