
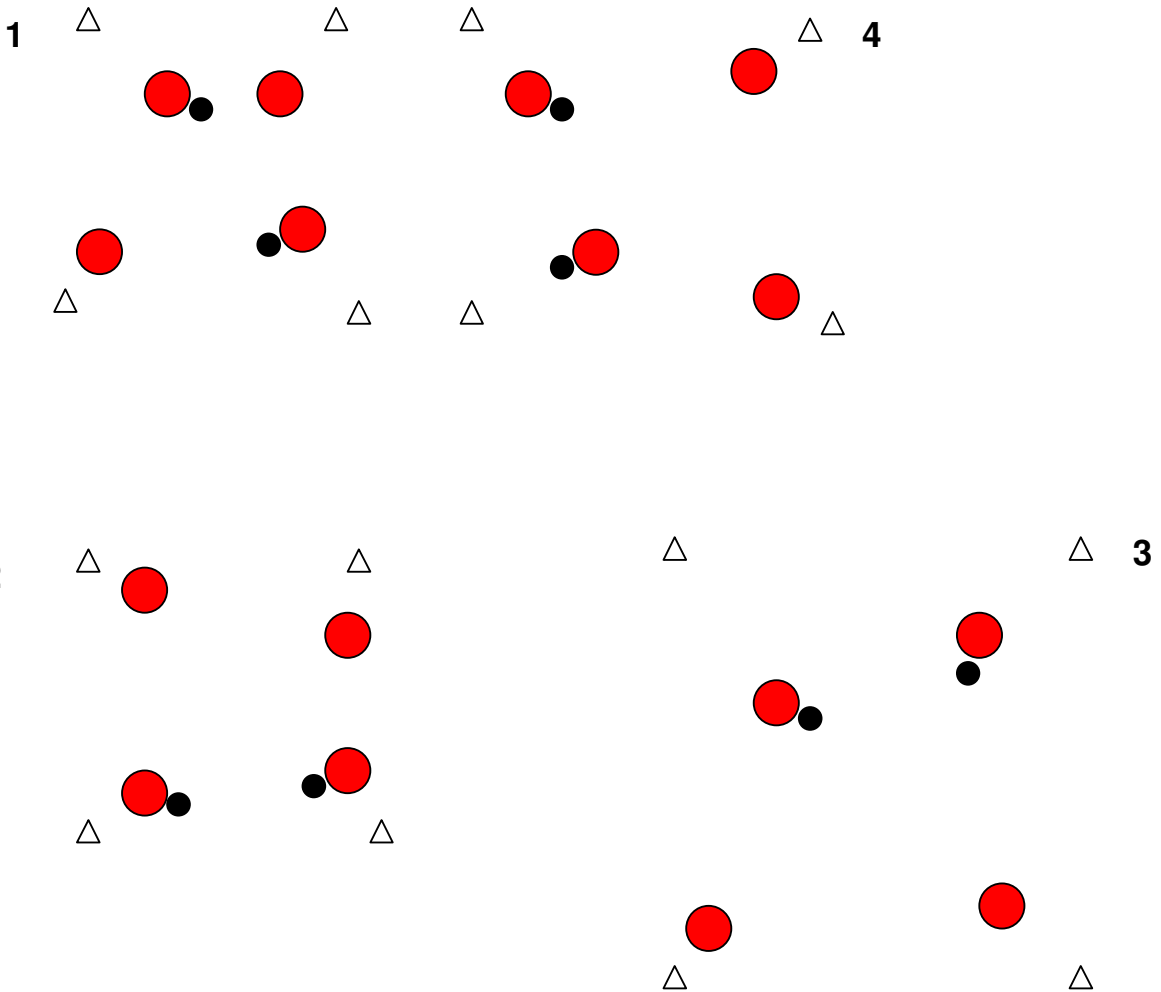


**Cumberland Coaches Association 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008**  
**Moving through space with & without a ball**

To start the session the 16 players  were shown, on a whiteboard, a layout with 4 squares of equal size and equal distance apart. The group were asked to lay out this practice and ensure there were 4 players in each area and that each area contained 2 footballs.

When the group had organised themselves this is what the practice looked like -



The areas were different shapes & sizes and different distances from each other. The practice area was not changed.

**Note** – Using a whiteboard assists Visual learners. Allowing the players to lay out the session and split themselves into groups gives them ownership and they need to make decisions even before a ball is moving. It also ensures they start to interact with each other at the start of the session. The different area shapes, sizes and distances from each other present different challenges to the players and actually help them to develop awareness of space, when working inside the grids and when travelling from one grid to another later in the session.

## Activity

1. The practice started with players passing and moving to each other within their own grid. **Note** - Variations can include one ball passed by feet, one by hands.
2. Players were then conditioned to play 1 touch or if they could not play quickly they had to take a minimum of 4 touches.
3. Players were asked to move around a cone when they passed a ball. **Note** - This starts to develop players' awareness of space, when moving away from the ball and back towards the ball. Players should be encouraged to move out to a cone where their path is not impeded. If their path is impeded they will need to demonstrate agility and timing of runs through space as it develops. As they move back in towards the ball they should be encouraged to identify space where they can receive a pass. Players were asked to show a variety of movements to do when moving around cones. The coach should recognise these movements and suggest others when the players have exhausted their ideas, to ensure FUNDamental movements relevant to football. **Note** – Variations can include different coloured cones as visual cues, e.g. must go around blue cone, or with a movement condition, e.g. red cone = side skipping, and moving around more than one cone with a combination of movements.

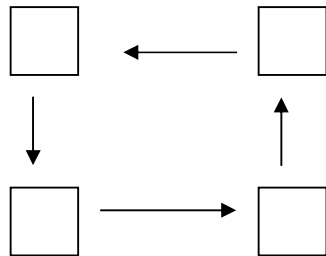
**Note** – For players at the younger end of the age group, 5/6/7, only one ball per grid may be more appropriate.

## Progression

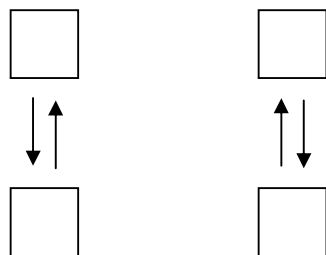
The session progressed with players moving from one grid to another. On a signal two players from each grid, one with a ball and one without a ball, moved to another grid.

**Note** – The signal to move can be a variety of signals to cater for all learners, e.g. audible signals – whistle, shout, clap hands - or visual signals - waving arms/bib, bouncing a ball. The coach can also move position around the practice area, which will also impact on players' observations and awareness.

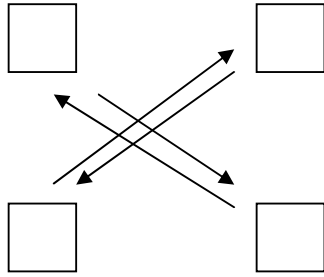
1. Movement of players was rotational, e.g. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4



2. Grids 'swapped' players, e.g. 1 + 2, 3 + 4

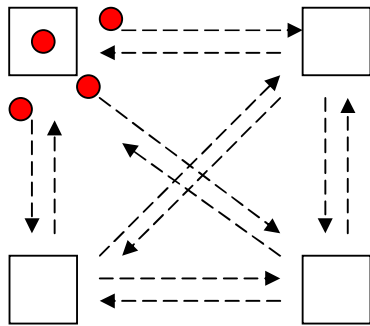


3. Grids 'swapped' players diagonally, e.g. 1 + 3, 2 + 4



To start with the two players moving between grids move independently. The two players are then asked to pass the ball between each other as they move between grids. **Note** – The different ways of moving start with no interference (1 above). As they develop (2 & 3 above) there is interference, which impacts on players' decisions of when/where to pass, getting into space to receive and all the associated techniques and skills. The earlier condition of players playing 1 touch or taking a minimum of 4 touches becomes relevant because players will have the option of playing to their partner quickly (1 touch) or will have to retain possession of the ball (min 4 touches) before passing.

For the final part of this practice, on the signal, one player in each grid who has possession of a ball should stay in the grid. The other three players move to a different grid. The players were asked to try and ensure there were four players and two balls in each grid after they had moved around. **Note** – There was no condition that the three players moving must go to three different grids. The aim of four players and two balls in each grid ensured players had to travel with or without a ball while observing what was going on around them. The type of things happening saw six players and four balls in some grids and two players and one ball in others. Players were encouraged to observe and work out where they needed to go, with or without a ball. **Further Note** - This part of the session was challenging even for adults, and coaches were advised that they may not get to this in a season or they may have to build up to it, after working on the sections of the session over a number of weeks.



Throughout the session the need to observe players and manage difference was pointed out to the coaches observing and participating. This was very clear at times, as groups took longer to start sections of the session due to different levels of understanding and needs of the players. Individuals could also be seen working out what to do next, where to go, how to do it, who with, etc.