
CHAPTER 6

Switching Play

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SWITCHING PLAY TO CROSS - FUNCTIONAL DRILL



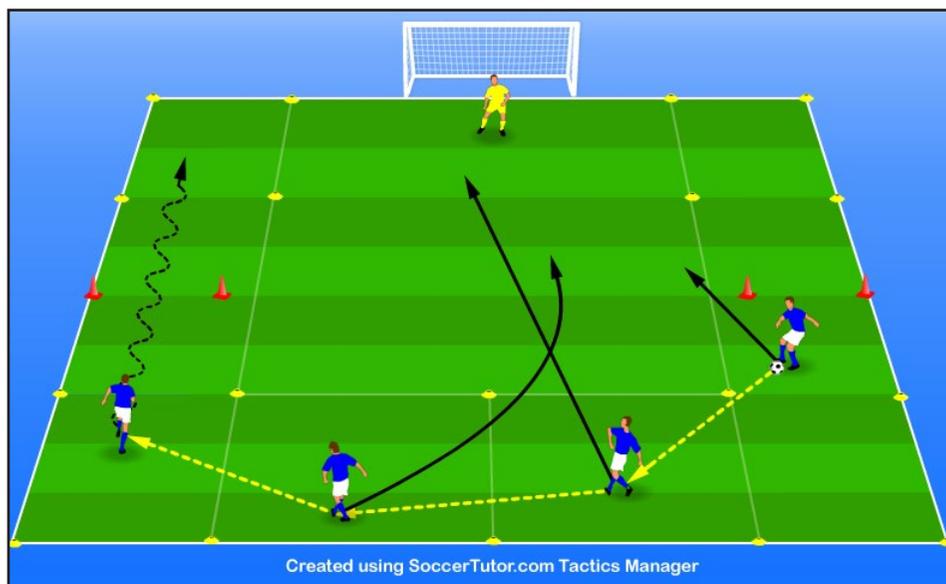
Here we have four players spread across the pitch, the ball starts with one of the central players, in this case the centre-left player.

The player passes the ball across to the right wing via the other central player. The central players should start on the more advanced cones and check back to receive the ball, which is passed safe side, facing forward and on the back foot.

The ball is then passed out wide to the right winger who dribbles towards the gate positioned 5 or 10 yards ahead of them. All the players should move forward at this point. The winger, pretending the gates are defenders, should turn and lay the ball back across the pitch to the player inside right who has checked back to receive the ball.

The ball is then passed back across the pitch to the left winger who can then dribble forward with the ball beyond the final cones before crossing.

The two central players can then make crossing runs forward, just as we coached earlier, and the right winger can make a supporting run to the edge of the box as they try to score.



The diagram above shows the ball being played to the left and the runs from our strikers.

Can we remember the speed and type of runs needed?

The furthest striker should sprint toward the near post as soon as the crossing players head comes up.

The nearest player moves across and then forward in a slower more semi circular type movement aiming to arrive around the far post. The player should also arrive a good few paces further back and not in line with the other striker.

The last player should aim to support diagonally back from the back post and further back again.

What else might we say about the drill?

Don't forget to practice switching the ball in both directions. This means we need both central players taking turns to start the drill, sending the first pass in different directions.

Can we now progress our functional practice?

SWITCHING PLAY - SMALL SIDED GAME



Let's base our small sided game on a simple 4 v 4 without goalkeepers, adding two wide channels with target goals at each end of the pitch. The teams line up 4 v 4 but with the extra neutral or floating player to give a 5 v 4 overload to the attacking team.

Let's think about how we have the game set out and how we can use it to promote switching play.

How can we force our players to switch the point of attack?

We will add a simple rule. The attacking team need to pass the ball into a player positioned in one of the wide channels, or dribble it into the channel, to allow them to score in the opposite channel goal.

So in the diagram above we see the black shirted players attacking the two top

goals. They play the ball out wide, passing to a player in the right channel. This opens the goal top left allowing them to switch play back across left for a shot.

As they have also passed across into the left channel they have now opened the right hand goal, so should the opportunity to shoot be blocked they can always switch back right.

How can we progress the drill, adding to the difficulty?

Simply remove the floating player to play 4 v 4.

As the coach how do you think this will impact the players and challenge them?

Obviously one less player means the defending team can go man to man.

The attacking team and specifically the player with the ball now needs to open their body, keep their head up and look for options. Maybe they need to dribble at another defender to create space or take them on.

The attacking team and more specifically the players without the ball need to work on their movement, can they “go to show” or “show to go” in order to create space for a pass.

We as the coach, need to look for all these technicalities as we observe our players during the game. If we see a problem with the movement of the players or we notice them with their head down for example, we need to step in and explain, coaching our players.

Can we also think about their movement not just to create space to receive a pass but also to create width.

What advantage does creating width add to an attacking team?

It is always easier to defend a compact team. A team that uses width spreads the defenders and therefore the spaces between them which can be used for a pass.

Can we show this to our younger players in a game related environment?

7 A-SIDE SWITCHING PLAY - PHASE OF PLAY



We can use half of our mini-soccer pitch and again set up two wide goals on the halfway line for the defending team to attack, should they gain possession of the ball.

The attacking team start with a standard 7 a-side formation with one striker, three advanced midfielders spread across the pitch and a holding midfielder or centre back who starts the phase of play.

Our defending team starts with a goalkeeper, one deep defender and two midfielders.

Why have we created such a big overload in midfield 3 v 2 and then 4 v 2? Should the holding midfielder move forward?

With our younger players we want to promote success. We want them to see the advantages of spreading the play.

How and what can we coach using this phase of play?

Let's start by keeping our holding player back. If we need to, we can put a line across the pitch as a visual aid to prevent the player advancing.

Now we can promote attacking interplay going forward and across the pitch with our three midfielders.

Let's look at a wide player dribbling inside with the ball. In this case our central player can overlap and provide further width. If a central player dribbles out wide, then that wide player can drive inside to support centrally, this movement may even take the wide defender away with them, leaving the wide channel free to exploit.

The holding player can support all this movement by always being in a defensive position, communicating and showing as an escape route to play the ball back and central.

This will also allow them to switch the point of attack easily. The midfielder turns to play the ball back to the holding player who can then pass out across to the other side.

Do you think we can progress this drill?

We can allow our holding midfielder to move forward and join the phase of play in a more attacking position.

What does this mean for our attacking team?

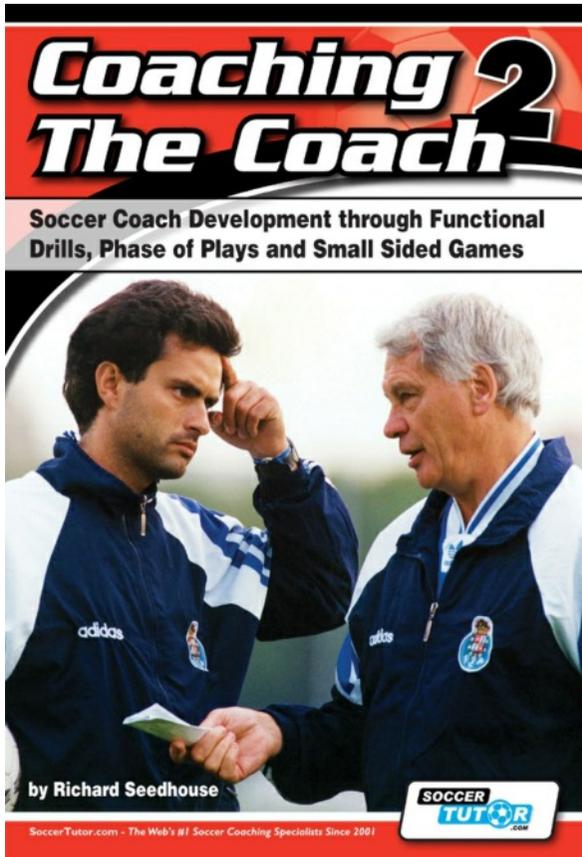
It obviously makes it easier for them with the overload increasing to 4 v 2.

But can you think of any problems or possible coaching points?

How do we think this overload will affect the way our attacking team plays?

We can assume they become more confident and attack minded which could result in other issues.

How to Coach and Progress your Practices, Build Training Sessions Through Functional Drills, Phase of Plays and Small Sided Games



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