

20260420- Barkers Under 13 B Stu

Coach: Stuart Milne

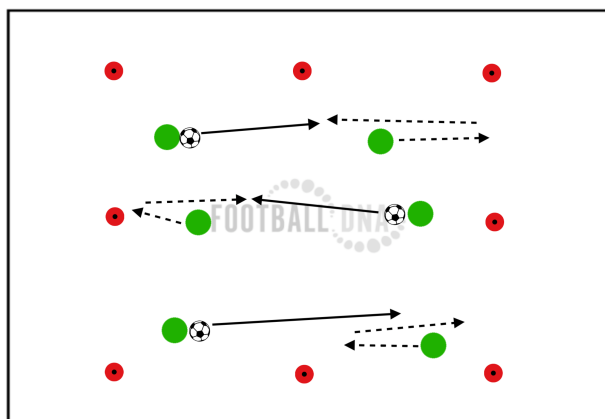
Team: Barkers under 13 B Stu

Date & Time: 20/04/2026 19:00

Duration: 90 Minutes

Session Objective: Defending and transition

Quick Movement Passing And Receiving



Equipment : Footballs, Cones, 6 - 12 Players

Overview:

This practice takes in an appropriately sized area dependent on the number of players in the group. The practice can run with a group size as small as 3 players. The focus is on passing and receiving with the players working on a series of different variations on a similar theme. These include straight line passing with the receiver 'checking' away to create space before coming back in to control the ball. Another variation includes spinning away into space before returning to receive a pass, working on both verbal and non-verbal communication between passer and receiver. Also practised, is movement after a pass with players in small groups, working on angled runs to create, then occupy space.

Coaching Points:

High Ball Speed Passing: All passing should be played with high ball speed to replicate game related situations. Players are encouraged to strike through the ball each time and test their team-mate's ability to control and then share the ball quickly themselves. The higher the ball speed, the more the receiver's controlling touch is focused on.

Head Movement: When moving off the ball after a pass, players must try and angle their head so that they are able to see the ball as much as possible. These affects their body shape when moving to maximise their focus and concentration on the ball. Prior to receiving a pass, players are encouraged to check their shoulder to get them into good habits of scanning, which in turn develops their spatial awareness.

Communication: When working in small groups, players will need to communicate both verbally and non-verbally using quick buzz words (e.g "hold") as well as positive eye contact and hand gestures to establish a connection with one another. Using both types of communication allows for the passing to be executed with good timing.

Quick Footwork: All movement after passing and off the ball must be executed with fast feet and movement, as there is minimal time in between ball involvements. Due to the high ball speed being encouraged, players need to move quickly to ensure they are balanced and ready to receive the next pass. By working on the balls of their feet, players can move in all directions (forwards, backwards, laterally) quickly whilst maintaining their balance.

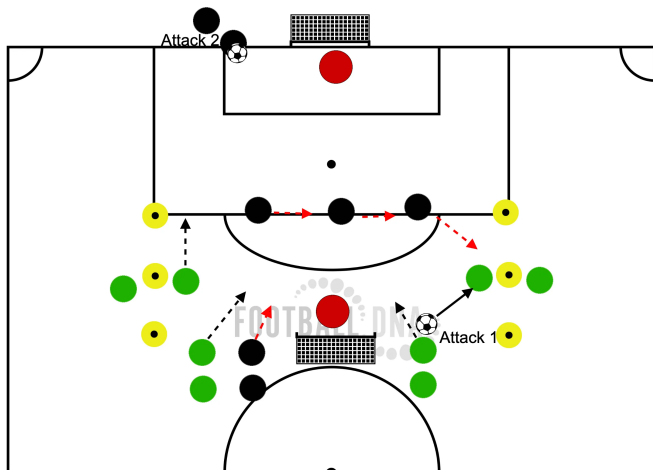
Progressions:

- One player passes, the other sets the ball back and then spins away to create space.
- As above, but this time the receiver goes to check away after the set pass, but then comes back in to receive another pass and set back to the passer.
- The receiver sets back and then checks away at an angle to receive a 2nd pass.
- Working in bigger groups beside each other, players have to pass straight and then move to a different group.

Regressions:

- Less players to reduce distraction and help players focus.
- Slow down the speed of the passing.

4 V 3 Transition Wave Game – Defending To Counter



Equipment : Footballs, Bibs, Cones, 2 Goals, 12 Players & 2 GK'S

Overview:

Setup an area using the width of the 18 yard area and just short of half a pitch with a goal each end. This practice consists of two attacks back to back. 3 defenders start inside the area and play against 4 attackers with the ball starting next to the goal and passed wide to start. After the first attack is finished another ball is served in but this time to the 3 defenders. They are joined by an extra team mate who comes from the opposite end of the area and cannot be offside to create a 4 v 4.

Coaching Points:

Defending Outnumbered: The defending team will have a +1 overload to defend against so they must work together and protect the middle of the pitch (goal). The distances between the defenders must be small with the aim of forcing the play into wide areas further away from the goal. When the ball is played wide, the outside defender presses with the middle defender covering and the far side defender sliding across too. Outside defenders will need to try and force the attackers to the touchline with their body shape and 1 v 1 defending.

Ball Speed: The attacking team have a +1 overload and need to move the ball quickly to exploit this. The attackers need to use the full width of the area to stretch the defending team and open gaps to exploit in between. If the ball is not passed quick enough, then this will give time for the defenders to slide across and cover any gaps. The attackers can also engage the defenders by dribbling towards defenders to try and draw them out to then exploit space created. On the transition, the defenders should look to play forward into their attacker quickly on the transition to prevent the other team getting into an organised shape.

Forward Runs: Attacking players will need to disrupt the defensive line by making forward runs in between and in behind. If the ball is kept in front of the defenders it will be easier to defend as they can slide across. Players on the ball will need to be creative to disguise their passes to break the defensive line and find the forward runs. Overlap and underlap runs can be effective to exploit outside defenders 2 v 1.

Finishing: When in front of goal, players will need to finish with composure and quickly before defenders recover. They will need to select the type of finish using one or two touches and which surface of the foot. If defenders don't apply enough pressure on the ball, players might be able strike from distance using the laces and driving through the ball. In and around the goal, one touch side foot finishes would be suitable.

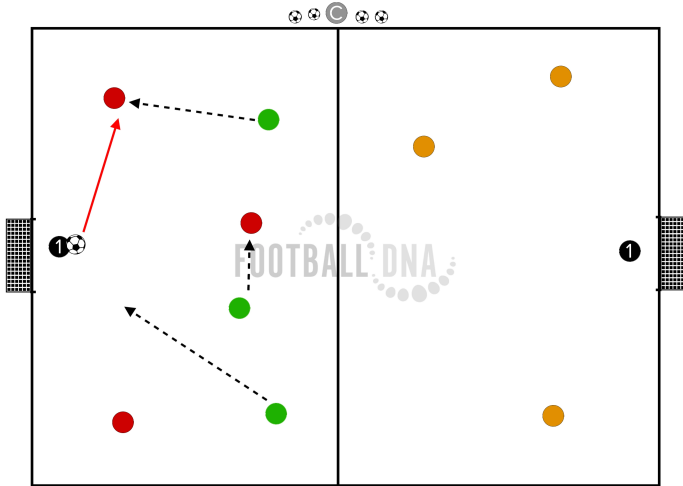
Progressions:

- Add an extra defender to make the first attack 4 v 4.

Regressions:

- Remove one attacker and defender to make a 3 v 2 into 3 v 3.

Pressing In Two Halves – Defending As A Unit



Equipment : Footballs, Bibs, Cones, Goals, 9 Players & 2 GK

Overview:

Setup a pitch and split the pitch into two and organise three teams. Two teams are organised into the attacking half as attackers and another team is in one of the halves as defenders. The coach plays the ball into one of the halves and the attacking team in that half has to try and keep possession for a set number of passes before trying to switch play. Once play is switched, the defenders have to move and win the ball in the opposite half. If the defenders win the ball or the attackers lose possession of the ball they are then replaced by the defending team. The defenders have to simply try and score once they have won the ball from their opponents.

Coaching Points:

Pressing Aggressively: Defenders should look to deny the attacker space either by pressing them quickly by moving aggressively as they enter the pitch. The defenders should look to try and cut out passing options when pressing and stop the attackers from being able to find passes into their team mates as well as from being able to play into the opposite half. Defenders should work collectively and communicate between them to ensure they press together.

Approach: As defenders press, they should look to force play wide / back and prevent them from being able to pass into the opposite half. Defenders should look to angle their approach to force the attackers the direction that they wish to send them and also the need to make sure that they slow down upon their approach to ensure they cannot be beaten by a pass or dribble from the attacking that they're pressing.

Body Shape: The defenders should look to get side on when defending to force play one way and prevent the attackers from being able to pass into the opposite half. When side on, encourage defenders to get on the outside of the ball to prevent the attacker from pass or travelling with the ball into the side that they have cut off.

1 v 1 Defending: Defenders should look to use their body when defending 1v1 and decide whether they need to win the ball on their front foot, or their back foot. The back foot should be used for emergency defender if they cannot win the ball on their front foot. Defenders should look to try and keep the ball in the area once they've won the ball and create an opportunity for themselves or their team mates to score.

Progressions:

- One player from the other team can drop into the half and create an overload for the attackers.

Regression:

- Defenders can decide how they press and if they wish to keep defenders in the other half whilst that team is keeping possession and trying to switch play if they can.