

ENGLAND WOMEN

Mark Sampson
Defensive transition

SET-UP

AREA
Up to 60x40 yards
EQUIPMENT
Ball, bibs, cones, 2 goals
NUMBER OF PLAYERS
12 players + 2 goalkeepers
SESSION TIME
Total: 40mins
Practice 1: 15mins
Practice 2: 25mins

Overview

With this session, we are looking to develop the player's decision-making ability and the execution of his/her actions in the moment that possession is turned over.

Working with the players to understand the importance of balance, both in attack and defence, are consistent themes for us as a group.

A key aspect of our balance is to create a structure where the players are in the best possible position to find solutions to the various moments that the

game will inevitably bring.

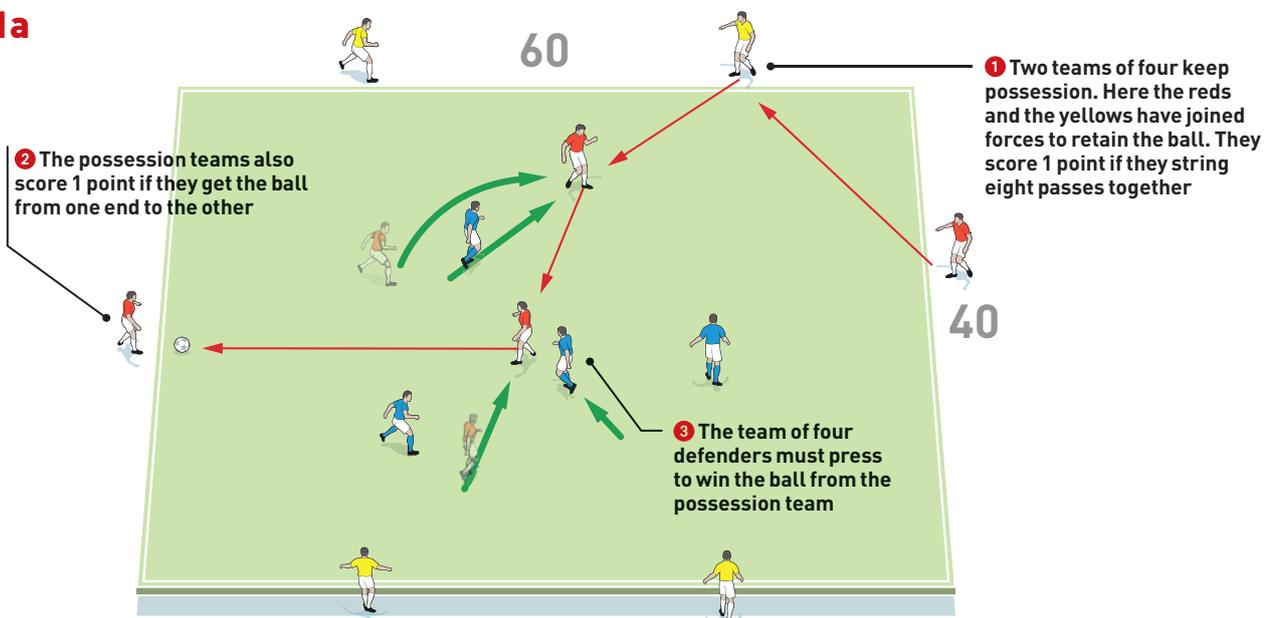
One key moment is when we lose the ball – we want players to be in positions to make a decision to either regain possession immediately or recover to a defensive shape to create the right circumstances to force a regain.

In every practice we endeavour to replicate game situations. Key adjustments would be made to the format of the practice in order to encourage the type of behaviour we are looking to develop within that session.

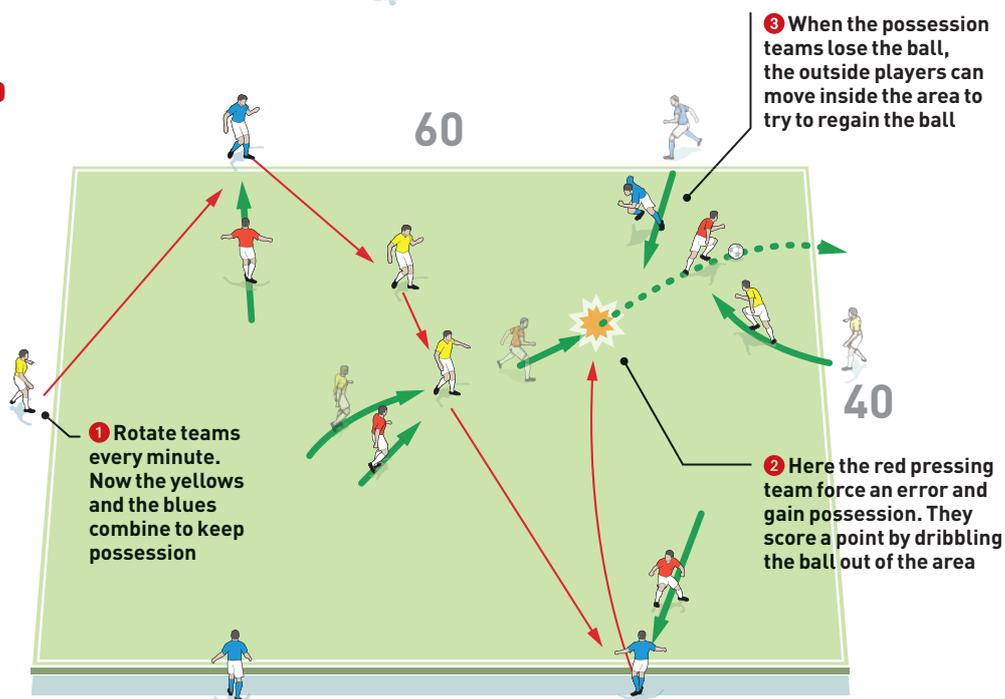
KEY

- Ball movement →
- Player movement →
- Dribble - - - - - →

1a



1b



“When we lose the ball we want players to make a decision to either regain possession immediately or recover to a defensive shape”

MARK SAMPSON: DEFENSIVE TRANSITION

What do I get the players to do?

Defensive transition 1

Set up an area of 60x40 yards. Split your squad into three teams of four. One team are the defenders and they press to overturn possession in the centre of the area. The other two passing teams work together to retain possession. One of the passing teams has two members on each side of the area; the third team has one member at each end and two inside the area. The possession teams must use their position on the outside, their numerical advantage, and the support of the two

inside players to keep hold of the ball. They score by either by making eight consecutive passes or by passing from one end player to the other, as shown [1a]. The pressing players must try to win the ball from the possession team – and if they do, they can score a point by dribbling the ball out of the area, as shown [1b]. However, on losing possession, the outside players can come into the area to try to regain ball. Play for 15 minutes and rotate teams every minute.

Defensive transition 2

Set up an area of 50x35 yards with a goal and a

goalkeeper at each end. Split your outfield players into two teams of six and play a normal 7v7 game (including keepers) with no offsides. When a team is in possession its players are free to move anywhere on the pitch, with one catch – when the team loses possession, its players are locked in the half they are in at the moment of turnover. This means your players must be aware of both their position on the pitch and the position of their team mates, so they can react to transitions of the ball. If teams go all out in attack and they lose the ball, as shown [2a], they will pay the penalty because they are unable

to recover to a defensive position, as shown [2b]. Play for 25 minutes.

What are the key things to look out for?

We are looking for the players to consider how their position in attack can support the team in the moment we lose the ball. If we have strong connections with team mates when attacking, we will naturally have strong connections at the moment that we lose the ball. When the ball is lost we are looking for the players to consider three key areas before selecting the best decision for the team in that moment...

