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Brazilian Youth Academy Journal Atlético Mineiro



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Introduction

From August 20th to 24th, 2007 Paulo Moraes had the opportunity to watch the training sessions of the Atlético Mineiro U17 team. The sessions were conducted by head coach Leonardo Comdé along with his assistants Wladimir Braga and Sérgio Alves.

Atlético's U17 team won a tournament in Italy (Gradisca Tournament) in April and at the time of my visits was playing the State U17 tournament having won their first two matches.

Moraes' is a certified Brazilian soccer coach who completed an internship with Atlético Mineiro during the 2005 season. Moraes is currently working as a coach with Tavarez, an amateur soccer club located in Belo Horizonte, the capital city of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

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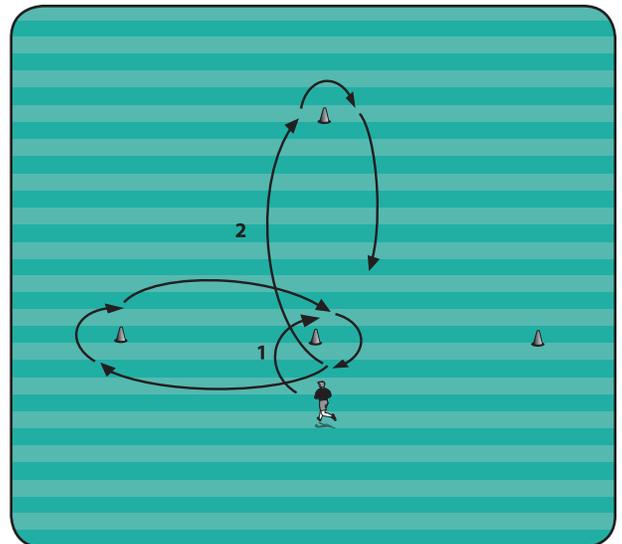
Monday – August 20th

The first part of the session is devoted to weight-training and physical work at the sand-box, for around 30 minutes each. At the sandbox the players are placed in two lines of five players and do repetitions of zigzagging moves and jumps over cones.

Ball Control

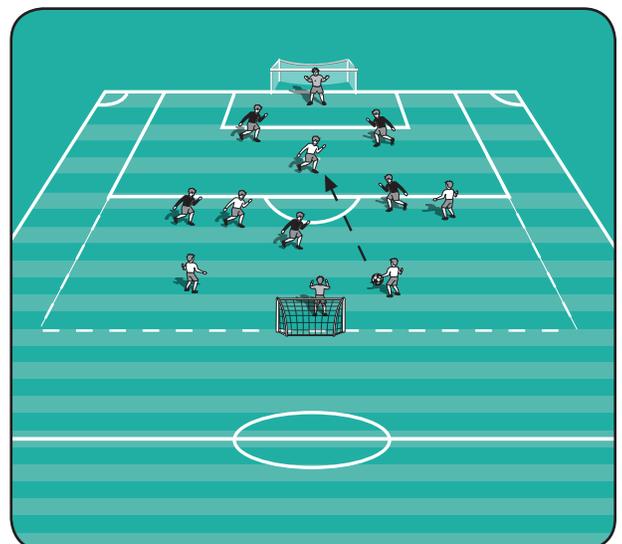
The second half of the training session consists of two activities on the pitch. First, two groups of 13 players do ball-control movements while running around the cones. First around the cone at the center, then to the left, center again, to the right, back to the center and around the cone in front of this one and back. All of the runs are made at a fast pace.

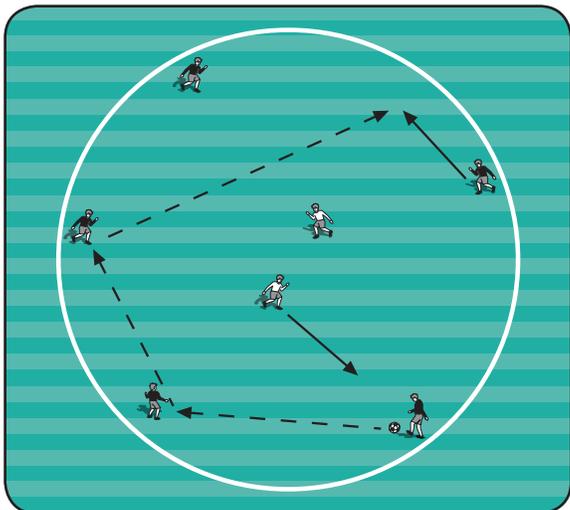
As a progression, the two groups do the activity competitively. The winning group is the one in which all of the players complete the activity in the shortest amount of time.



Mini Game

Two teams of five plus goalkeepers play a game on a third of the field. The emphasis is on playing at a fast pace and finishing.





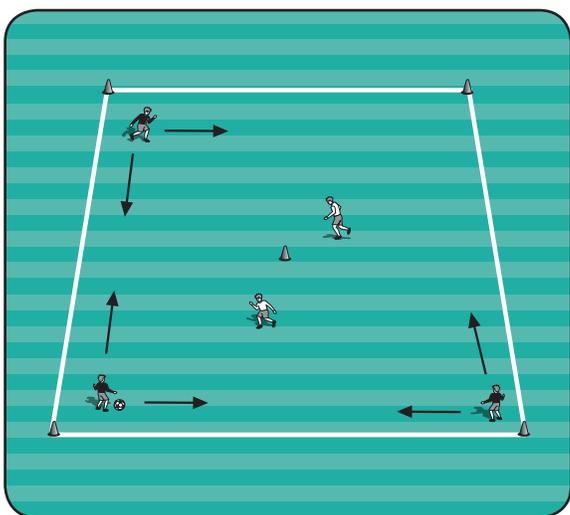
Tuesday – August 21st

As the U17 team goes to train on a pitch out of town I'm allowed to stay and observe the U15 team training session.

Wednesday – August 22nd

Warm-up

Keep away. Five players form a large circle with two players in the middle who are trying to get the ball.



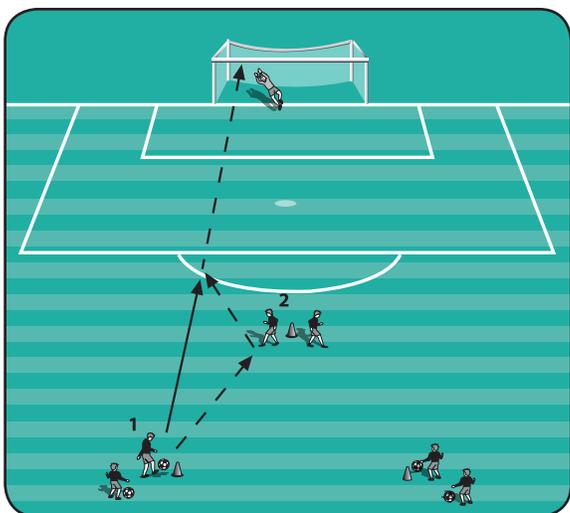
3 v 2

The team divided into five groups of five players. The cones limiting a small square area with a cone in the middle. The three players exchange three consecutive passes or more. When the two defenders get the ball they give it back to the three offensive players.

The players run back and forth through the lanes and even changed lanes in order to create space. The defenders are not allowed to invade the lanes. The players exchange places exchange passes for a set amount of time before two players change roles with the two defenders.

Duration : 45 minutes.

The emphasis is on passing accuracy and quick decisions.



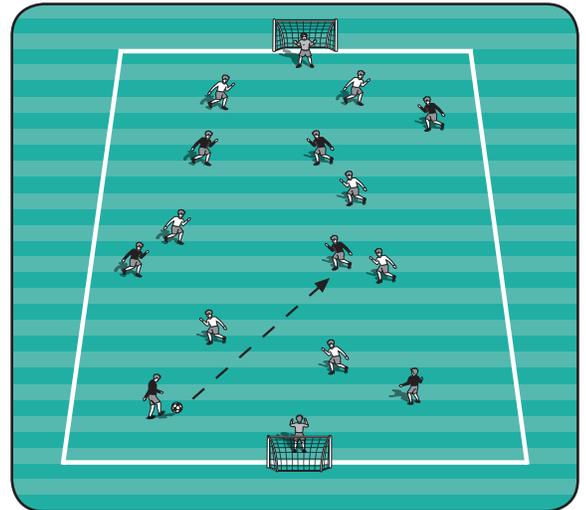
Passing and Finishing

Two groups are organized on half of a field with a goalkeeper in the goal. Player 1 plays a give-and-go with Player 2 and takes a shot on goal. Player 1 then takes the place of Player 2 who then goes to the end of the line on the other side of the field.

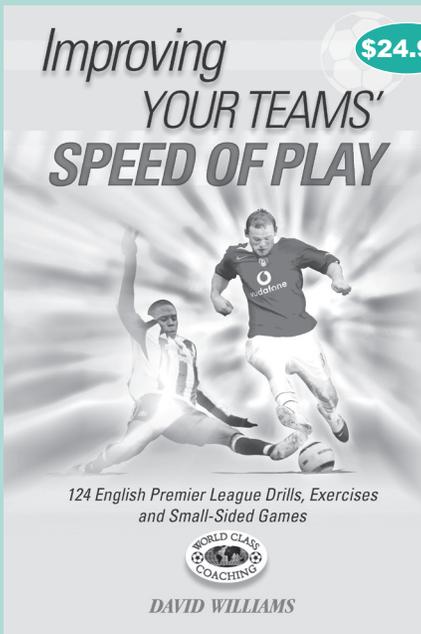
8 v 8

Two teams of eight play a game with a two touch limit on half of a field. The players are divided up into an A and B team.

The session ends with the teams playing with unlimited touches. The A and B team play for awhile and then the B team plays against some players who were being tested (try-outs).



Play at English Premier League SPEED



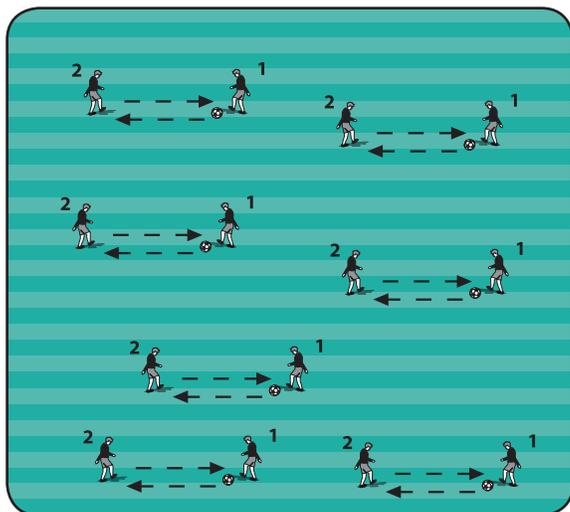
If you are a fan of the English Premier League, you will no doubt enjoy the incredible speed at which the game is played in England. It doesn't matter if it is foreign players like Thierry Henry, Ruud van Nistelrooy or Cristiano Ronaldo, or home grown players like Michael Owen, Wayne Rooney or Steven Gerrard, they all seem to perform at an incredible speed when they are playing in the English Premier League.

How do these and all other EPL players learn to play at such breakneck speed? It's down to their training sessions. The climate in England, plus the intense level of competition of the EPL forces the teams to practice at a great speed of play. This book shows you these practices.

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PLAY AT ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE SPEED

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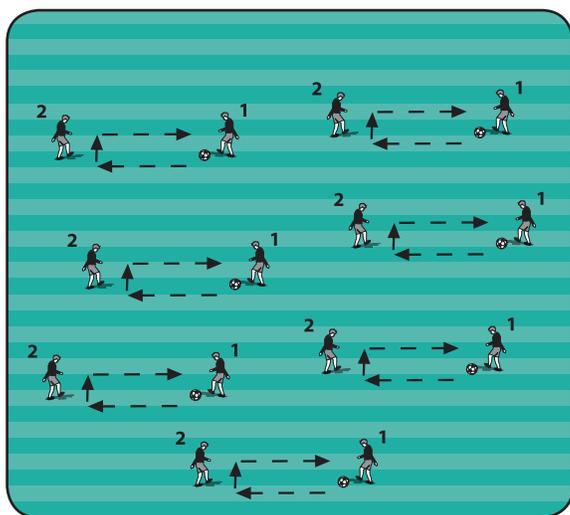


Thursday - August 23rd

Warm-Up and Technique

The players are divided into pairs. Player 1 passes the ball to Player 2 who passes it back in one touch. They repeated this for two minutes.

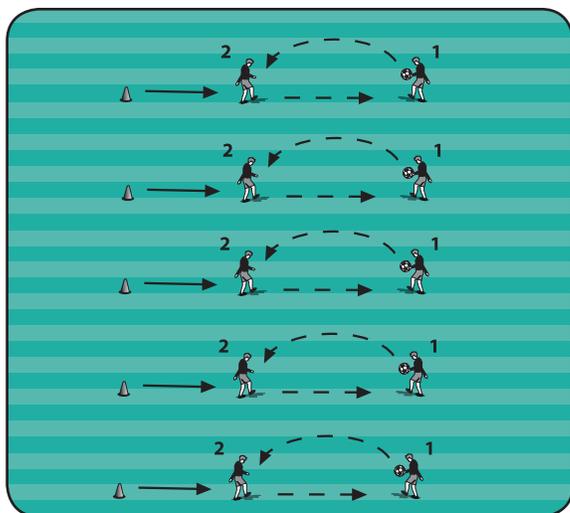
Then both players perform a hamstring stretch for one minute and then change roles.



continued

Player 1 passes the ball as before but now Player 2 controls the pass and plays it back to him.

After two minutes the players stop and stretch their hamstrings for another minute before changing roles.



continued

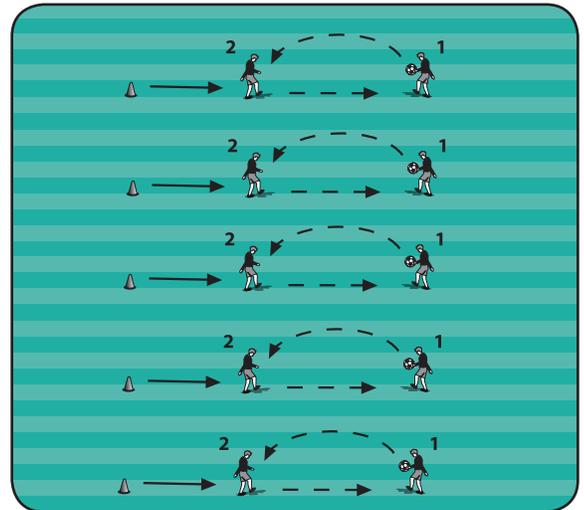
Player 1 uses his hands to serve the ball to Player 2 who has run forward to volley the ball back to Player 2's hands and then retreats back to his starting position.

After two minutes the players stop and stretch their quadriceps and then change roles.

continued

Player 1 throws the ball to Player 2 who receives the ball on his thigh and passes the ball back with his other foot.

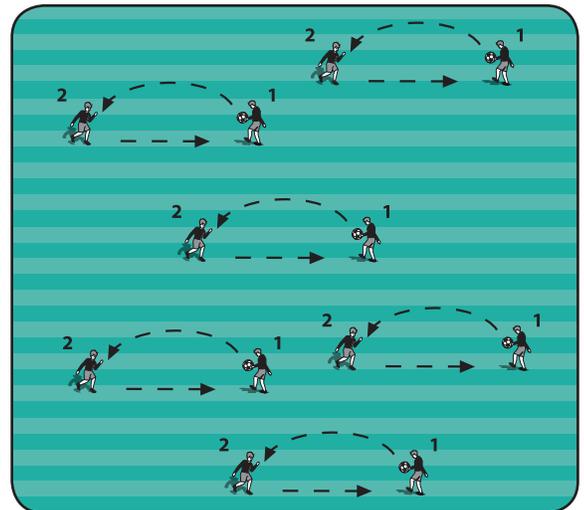
After two minutes the players stop and stretch their adductors and then change roles.



continued

Player 1 runs in place, called 'flipping', while Player 2 throws him the ball to volley back to Player 2's hands.

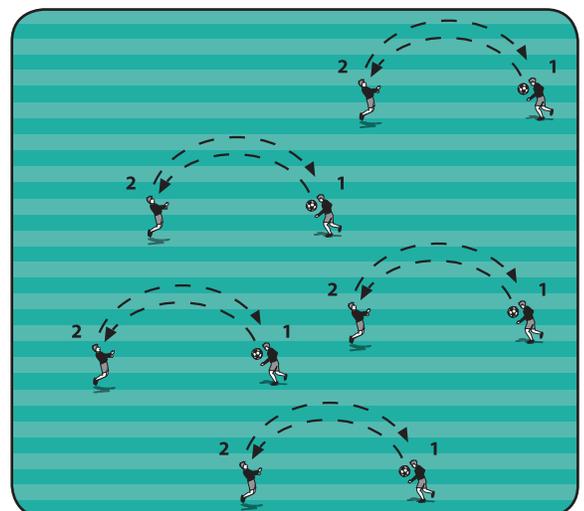
After two minutes the players stop and stretch their quadriceps and then change roles.

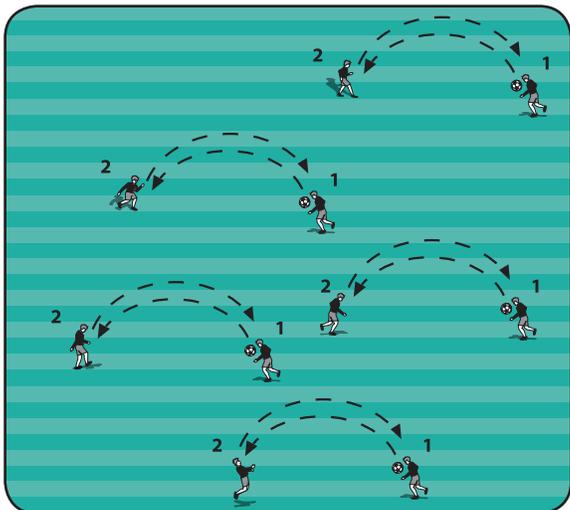


continued

Player 1 throws the ball up for Player 2 to head back to his hands.

After two minutes the players stop and stretch their backs and then change roles.



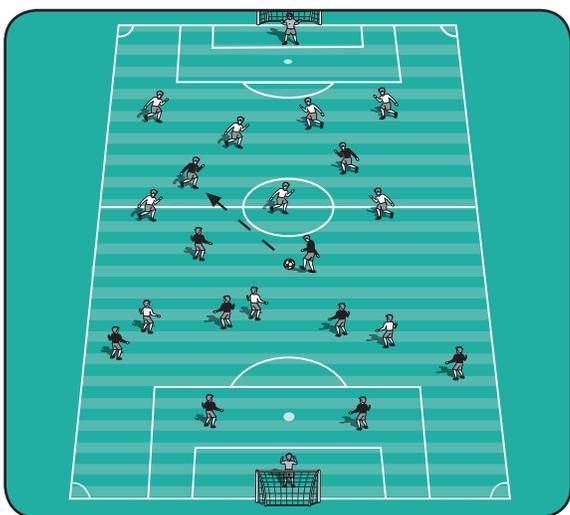


Partner Juggling

The players begin by serving the ball to their partner who receives it on their head, chest or thigh and then volleys it back to the first player who receives it in the same way and volleys it back.

Progressions

- The players move farther apart and continue to exchange passes without letting the ball touch the ground
- The players head the ball back and forth without letting it touch the ground
- The players continue to move farther apart while still keeping the ball in the air



11 v 11

The A team plays against the B team. The A team plays a 4 - 4 - 2 with a central square formation also known as a 'box midfield'. The match is played at a fast pace with tough marking.

The training is interrupted when the A team loses the ball due to marking pressure from the other team. The coach tells the players to repeat the pass, this time finding a free player to receive it.

Corner kicks are repeated three times.

Team A plays high pressure. The activity is concentrated on the attack and midfield areas.

When all the front players are marked the coach tells the players to pass the ball back to the defenders and re-initiate the progression to the front. This is better than trying to pass to someone who is pressured. When the possession is re-initiated the players in the midfield and attack run side-ways and diagonally to create space .

The teams put a lot of pressure on the opposition's full-back when he has the ball - 2 on 1 that turns to 3 on 1. As soon as the ball is taken the players run wide to create space.

Then the pressure is changed. Team A marks all the players except the two defenders. They give them space to pass (“giving space to the weakest passer”).

The teams take a short break and the coach complains that the A team is trying to rush things up, and is delivering bad early passes. He told the players to always try to pass to a free player and to choose the right time to be incisive on the attack.

He then changes marking stance. Now the A Team concentrate the marking in the middle third of the field. More players concentrated in the midfield area. (“Squeeze the middle third area”).

Team A wins 1 – 0.

Then the teams change. Team A plays the test players.
Team A now plays a 4-3-3 formation.

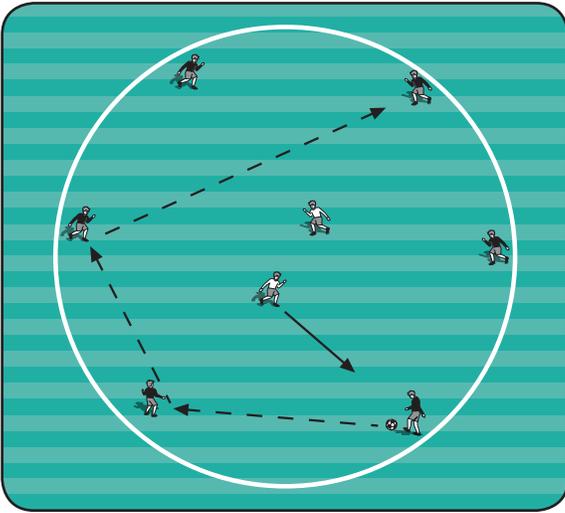
The coach complains that the A team players are too far from each other while going forward. He tells them to always go in 2's or 3's .

Team A doesn't do well in the 4-3-3 and it takes time for them to score against a much weaker team.

At last, the B team plays the test-team. The coach lets the players play as they choose. His focus now is on observing the test players. A very talented left winger grabs his attention.

During each game , every time there's a goal or a good move that results in a shooting opportunity all the other players applaud the move.

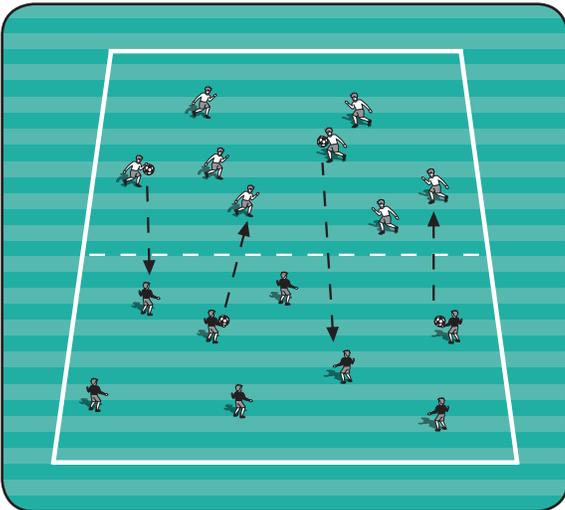




Friday – August 24th - A Day Prior to the Match

Warm-Up

The team divides into two groups of eight. Six players form a large circle and keep a ball away from two defenders in the middle of the circle.



Dodge Ball

The team divided in two and play a fun game of dodge ball for 30 minutes. They do this as a fun way to warm-up and prepare for the session.

The players do a series of abdominal exercises following the game.



Half-field Game

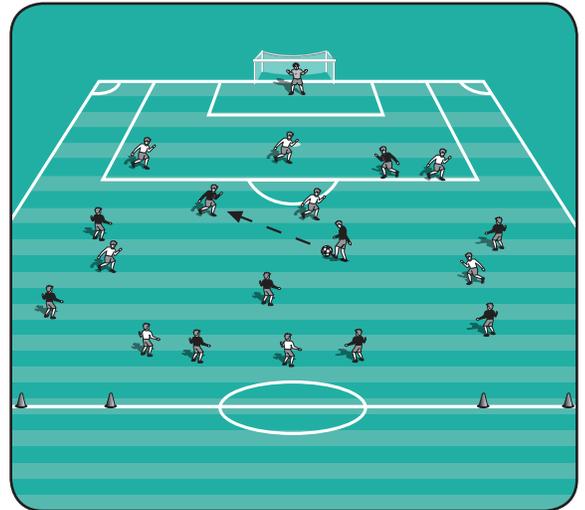
10 of the first team players in dark attack a goal defended by six players in white shirts and a goalkeeper. The attacking team plays with a central diamond shape.

The attackers attempt to win the ball and attack the goal. The defending team works to win the ball back and score by dribbling or passing the ball through one of two goals at the halfway line.

Progression

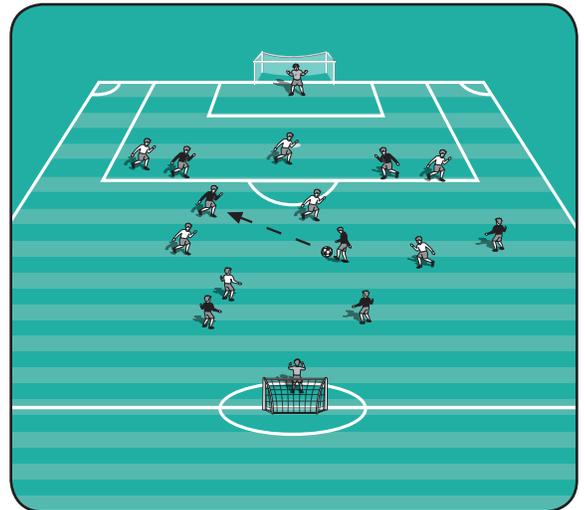
Two additional defenders are added to put more pressure on the attacking team and make it more difficult to score.

The game is interspersed with rest periods to deliver shots from fouls, from the flanks and from shots in front of goal.



7 v 7

The first team players divide into two teams of seven plus goalkeepers. The players are allowed to play freely without restriction.



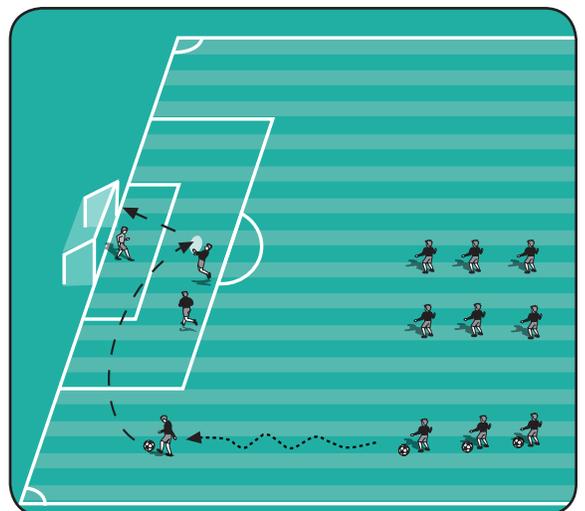
Crossing and Finishing

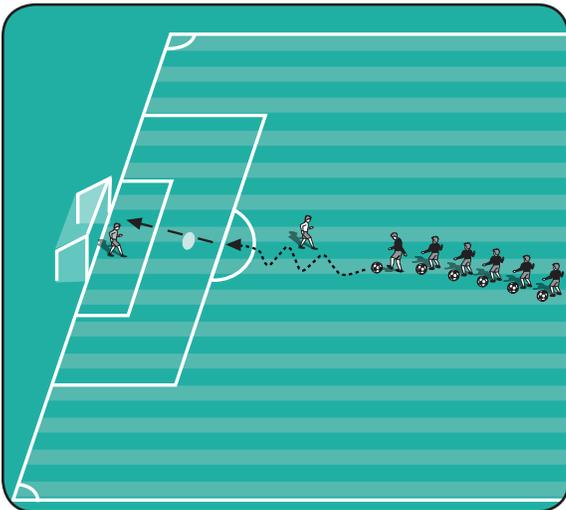
The players from the B team and the test players do a crossing and finishing exercise while the first team played the half-field games.

A player crosses to the far-post area from the left flank. Two attackers attempt to score from the cross while a goalkeeper tries to prevent them from scoring.

The exercise is repeated from the right flank.

Next, each player takes a turn dribbling down the center and shooting from outside of the box.

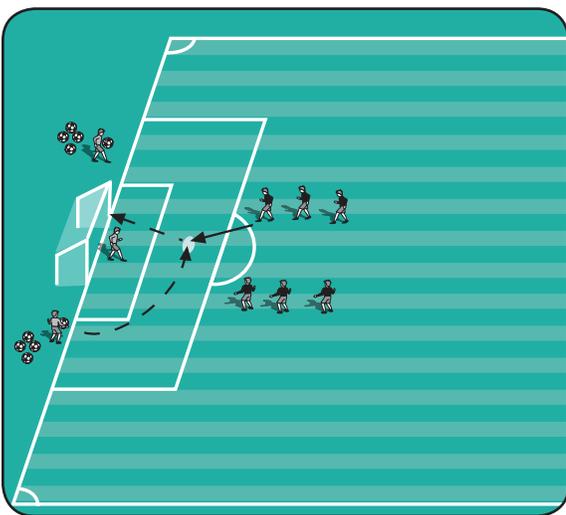




1 v 1 + Goalkeeper

An attacker attempts to beat a defender and score.

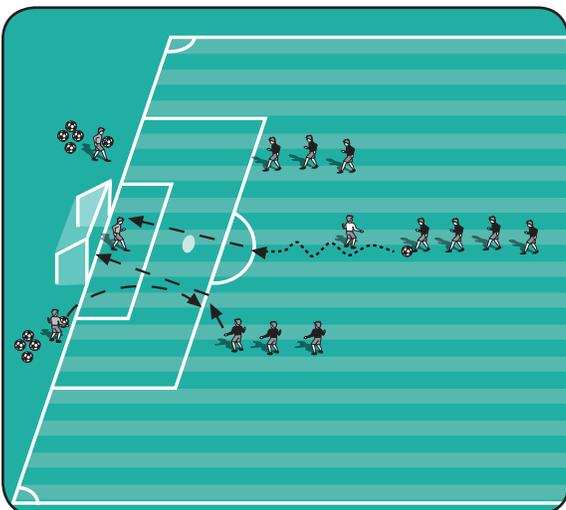
Special attention is given to the test players to evaluate their abilities.



Shooting

The ball is delivered from the end line for a player to shoot on or around the penalty spot.

Players in the left group shoot with their right foot while the players in the right group shoot with their left. The players alternate groups after each shot.



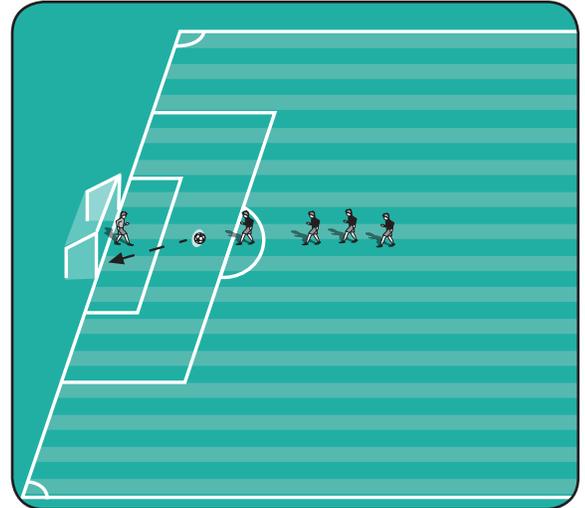
Progression

A third group is added at the top of the box. The outside groups receive a pass and shoot as before. When the players are in the center group, they must beat a passive defender before taking a shot.

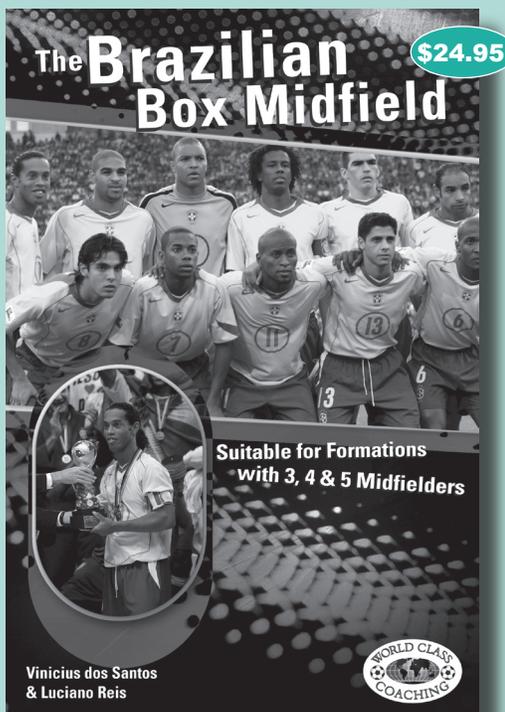
The groups alternate from left to right. And the players rotate to the right after each shot.

Penalty Kicks

The forwards from the first team stay behind after the session to take penalty kicks against the goalkeepers.



BRAZILIAN BOX MIDFIELD



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