

SWITCHING THE POINT OF ATTACK

Why use it?

The ability of a team to move the ball quickly from one side of the field to another is a tremendous advantage, particularly when faced with a well organized and resolute defense.

Set up

Played on a 9v9 field, use cones to create zone down both sides of the field. The cones should extend from the goal post to the halfway line (approximately 2 yards from the sideline). Only after an attacker has received or dribbled the ball into the wide zone can a defender enter the same space. The coach observes from the sideline and is supported by 2 assistants monitoring offside.

How to play

Play a regular game with only attackers permitted to enter the wide zones first. The objective for the attacking team is to move the ball at pace and attempt to pass the ball into the wide zone to exploit time and space. The central defenders and central midfield players are important in transitioning the ball from side to side. A goal can only be scored if the ball has 'visited' both wide zones consecutively. This condition forces the players to switch play.

Coaching notes

Coaching Objectives: Help the players to recognize when a switch of play is available. Cues such as a defense playing high pressure on one side of the field and an attacking overload developing on the 'weak-side', provide some indication that a switch of play may be possible.

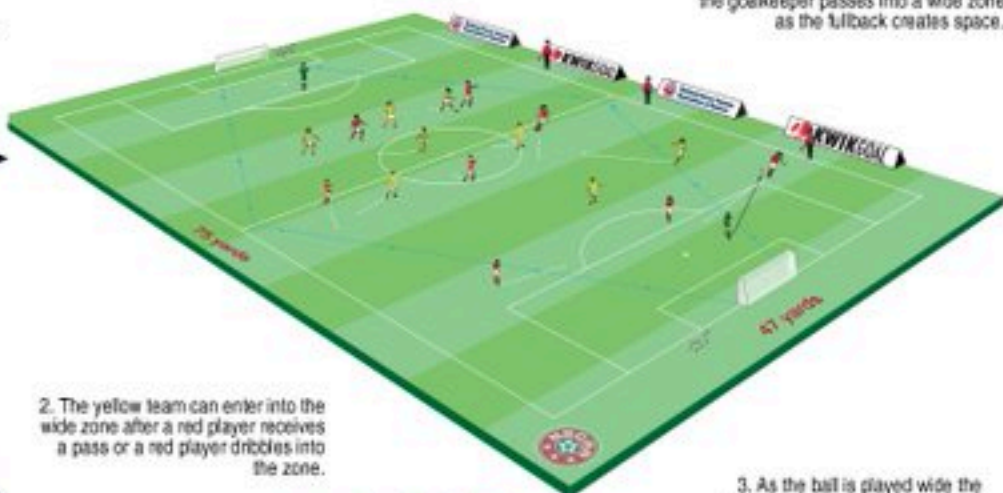
Coaching Tips: In this instance the use of a wide zone keeps the defense relatively narrow and provides an opportunity for the attacking team to make a switch of play into an area permitting only the attacker.

How to modify

Less Challenging: Reduce the number of defenders and then add them back gradually. Also make the zones wider to force the defenders inside the field to free up more wide space.

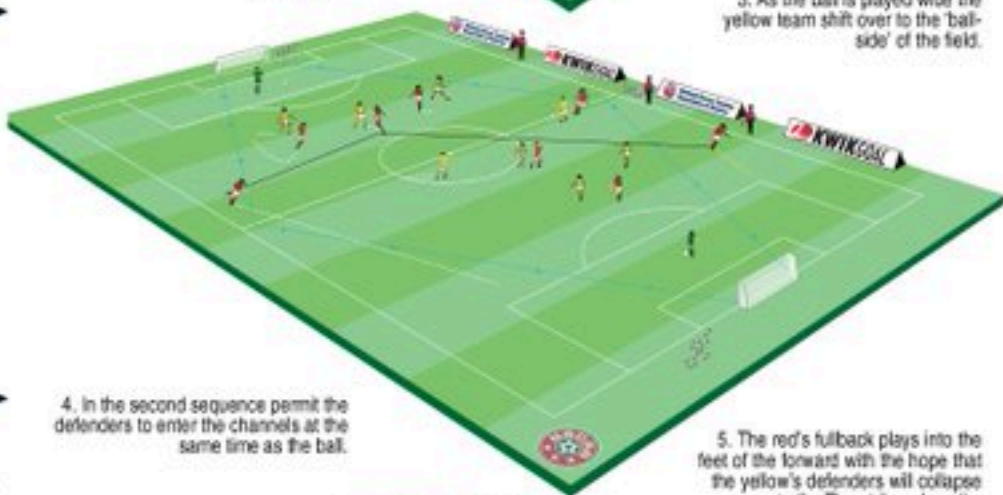
More Challenging: Reduce the number of touches allowed for each player. Allow the defenders to enter the zones at the same time as the ball and attacker. The final progression is to allow players to go anywhere, but maintain the requirement of passing to both flanks consecutively before scoring.

1. The red team have possession and the goalkeeper passes into a wide zone as the fullback creates space.



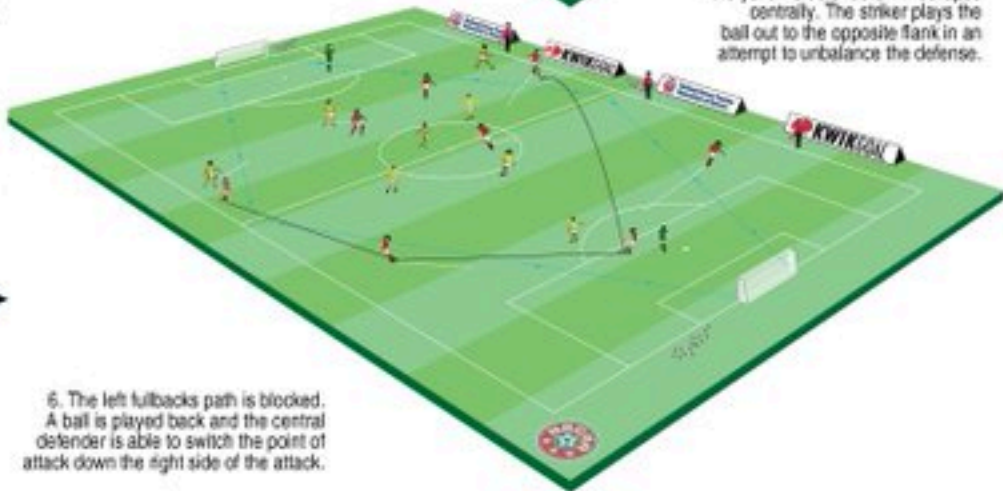
2. The yellow team can enter into the wide zone after a red player receives a pass or a red player dribbles into the zone.

3. As the ball is played wide the yellow team shift over to the 'ball-side' of the field.



4. In the second sequence permit the defenders to enter the channels at the same time as the ball.

5. The red's fullback plays into the feet of the forward with the hope that the yellow's defenders will collapse centrally. The striker plays the ball out to the opposite flank in an attempt to unbalance the defense.



6. The left fullbacks path is blocked. A ball is played back and the central defender is able to switch the point of attack down the right side of the attack.

Stage/s of development covered by activity

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players.

Development themes and competencies

Top 3 Themes: Switching the point of attack, possession and creating space as a team.

Top 3 Competencies: Passing over medium and long distances, movement to create space and communication.