



TRANSITION PHASES

(From “Success In Soccer” by Kenny Kormelink & Klaus Pabst)

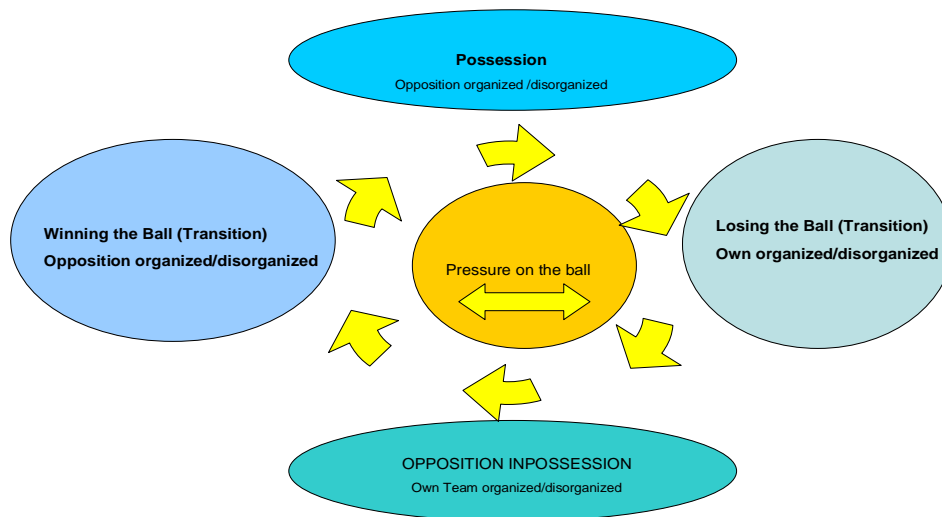
Four Phases of the Game

Every soccer match can be divided into 4 Phases:

1. Phase 1 - Possession:
This phase depends how well the other team is organized and your team’s ability to disrupt this organization and get the ball and your own players past as many opponents as possible.
2. Phase 2 - Losing the Ball (Transition):
This phase depends on how well and how quickly your team is organized in defence after losing the ball by getting numbers behind the ball in order to win the ball back quickly and to prevent your opponent from scoring on the counterattack.
3. Phase 3 - Opposition in Possession:
This phase depends on your team’s discipline and organization such as getting players behind the ball. Disorganization by your team may permit your opponents a goal scoring opportunity.
4. Phase 4 - Winning the Ball (transition):
This phase depends on taking advantage of your opponents disorganization immediately upon their losing possession of the ball. You take advantage of your opponent’s weakness with an attack at goal.

Almost every soccer match follows these 4 phases. In unusual situations such as extreme opposition pressure on the ball, the game may alternate between the 2 Transition Phases (Phases 2 & 4) instead of the usual 4 phases.

The 4 Phases of the Game of Soccer



Tactics – Phase 1

When your team has the ball follow the following tactics:

- Efficient Play with accurate ground balls with few (minimum) touches.
- Spread wide and central creating three passing areas on the wings and in the center.
- Open up passing lanes, make runs and for the ball.
- Maintain your basic formation. Shifting the point of attack creates a new game situation.
- Always look forward first and wide second. Getting the ball forward quickly is critical to success.
- Look and wait for an opening. If defenders have the ball they can use combination plays to move the ball up field.
- Change your play from combination play and individual play which slows down the game to forward passes which speed up the game.
- Make quick decisions when the situation presents itself.
- Be creative and be prepared to take risks in the opponent's end of the field.

Tactics – Phase 2

When in this phase the objective is to get into the defensive position as quickly as possible. Players should whatever position is closest to them and close down the inside path to goal and to get as many players as possible behind the ball.

Tactics – Phase 3

When in this phase the objective is to disrupt the other team's organization by being disciplined yourself. And to:

- Play ball oriented defense. Follow the ball as a unit and close down space around it.
- Maintain your defensive position behind the ball as long as possible.
- Fall back and close down the space which will slow the opposition and give you time to get organized.
- Pressure the ball carrier as a unit when the opportunity presents itself.
- Close down passing lanes.
- Take the initiative by steering the ball carrier into a position that disadvantages him/her and advantages you such as forcing the opponent onto his/her wrong foot, down the sidelines etc.
- Threaten the ball with fakes to force the opponent to make mistakes.
- Players in the rear should coach the players in front of them.

Tactics – Phase 4

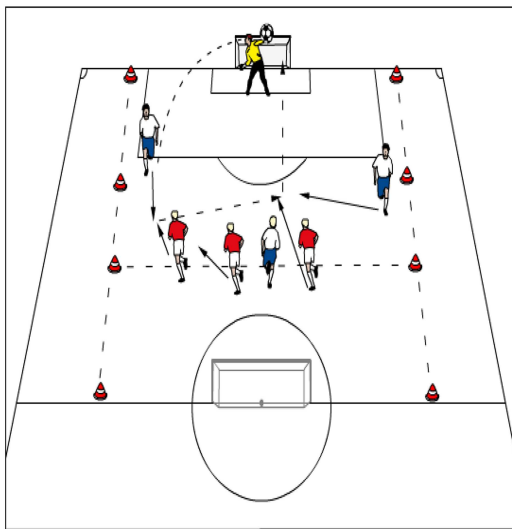
When you win the ball you must secure it by individual play or by passing to team mates who are open and then look for a disorganized defense to pass as far forward as possible to create a goal scoring opportunity.

Ages 12 to 14: Training for Transition

Start training in small groups and gradually add players. This permits easier communication to players.

1. Players first priority after winning the ball is to play it forward quickly.
2. If not possible to play it forward then the ball should be played and then forward.
3. Remind players to keep looking forward at all times.
4. The narrow field forces players to play the ball forward.
5. Make corrections as they occur.

4 v 3 Plus Goalkeeper



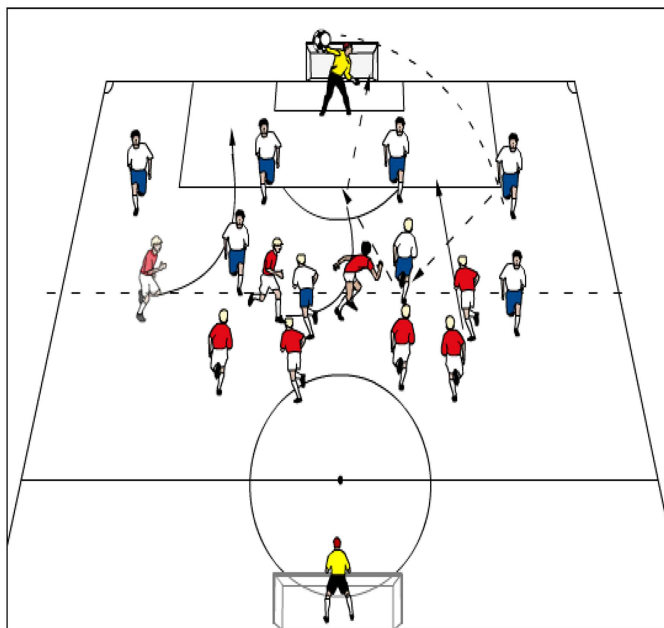
Set Up

- Teams play 4 v 3 with 4 attackers plus goalkeeper in a narrow field slightly wider than the 18 yard box and to center.
- A line is marked 12 yards in front of the center field goal which does not have a keeper.

Sequence

1. Play starts with a throw by the keeper to one of the attackers.
2. The defending team drops back to the 12 yard line and defends from there.
3. If the defending team wins the ball they move the ball forward quickly and attempt to score.
4. If the attackers get the ball across the 12 yard line they can score,
5. Restart after each attempt.

8 v 8 on Two Goals with Goalkeepers



Set Up

- Teams play 8 v 8 on two goals with 2 goalkeepers in $\frac{3}{4}$ of the field.
- Mark a line across the field in the defensive half of the field 10 yards from center.

Sequence

1. Play begins with a throw from the keeper.
2. The defending team drops back to the marked line.
3. If the defending team wins the ball they attack by moving the ball forward quickly.
4. Play starts with the attacking team after each attempt at goal.
5. Teams switch roles after a set number of attempts.

Variation

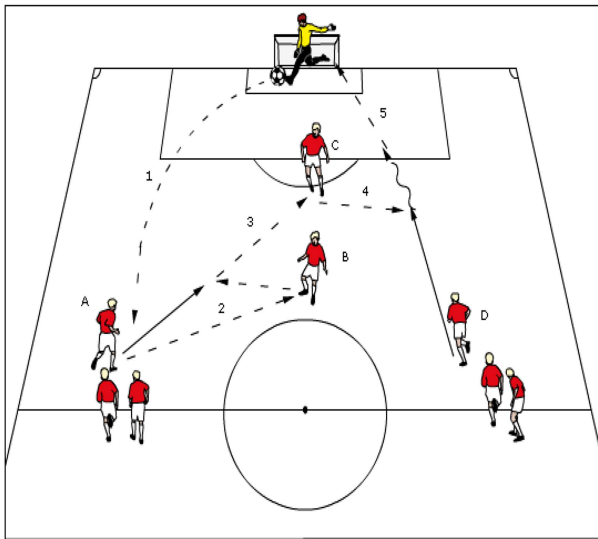
Free Play with teams looking to play the ball forward quickly each time they win the ball.

Ages 14 To 16: Warm-Up on Transition

Players should be warming up starting with combination play built around winning the ball and moving it forward quickly. Focus on:

1. Receiving and controlling high balls in the air.
2. Accurate passing to a teammate's strong foot.
3. Fast passing by keeping the ball moving.
4. Forwards and attacking mids should use while getting open and showing for the ball.
5. Quick movements by forwards and midfielders.

Wall Pass - Through Pass – Square Pass



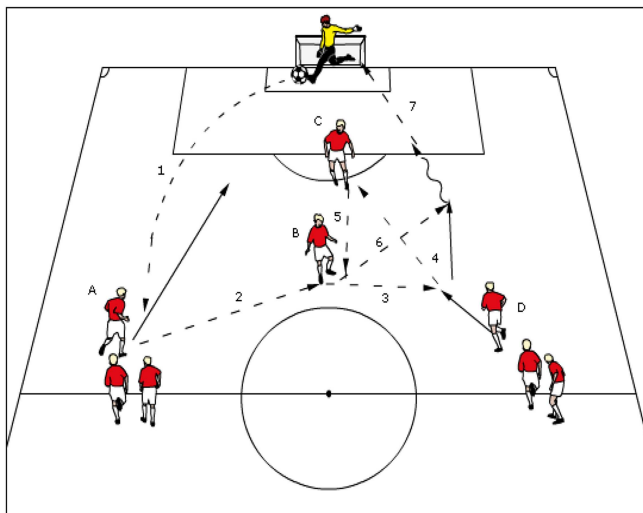
Set Up

- Set up players in one half of the field with one goal and one keeper as indicated in the diagram. Distances will depend on player's abilities.

Sequence

1. The keeper plays a lofted ball to forward "A" (1).
2. "A" plays a Wall Pass with attacking forward "B" (2).
3. Next "A" passes to center forward "C" (3).
4. "C" plays a Square Pass to the outside forward "D" (4).
5. "D" finishes (5).

Square Pass – Through Pass – Back Pass – Through Pass



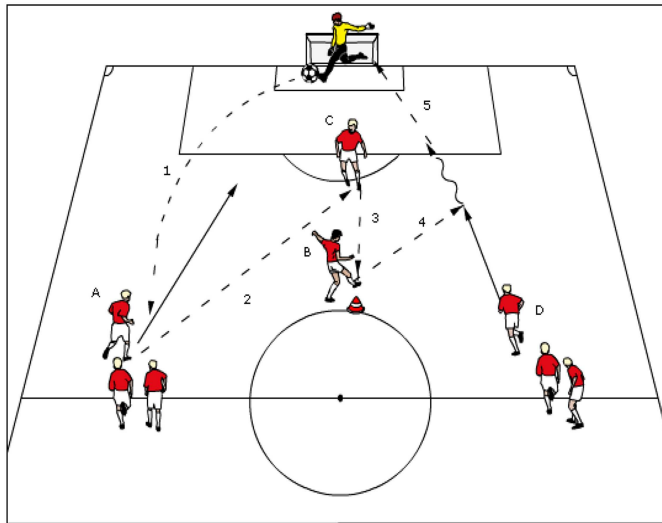
Set Up

- Set up players in one half of the field with one goal and one keeper as indicated in the diagram. Distances will depend on player's abilities.

Sequence

1. The keeper plays a lofted ball to forward "A" (1).
2. "A" passes to attacking midfield "B" (2).
3. "B" lays the ball off to outside forward "D" as "D" moves up the opposite flank (3).
4. "D" passes to forward "C" (4) who drops the ball back to "B" (5).
5. "B" plays a forward pass to "A" or "D" (6) who finishes (7).

Through Pass – Back Pass – Through Pass



Set Up

- Set up players in one half of the field with one goal and one keeper as indicated in the diagram. Distances will depend on player's abilities.

Sequence

1. The keeper plays a lofted ball to forward "A" (1).
2. "A" passes to forward "C" (2) who laysw the ball off to attacking mid "B" (3).
3. "B" plays a forward pass to "A" or "D", who finishes.

Variation

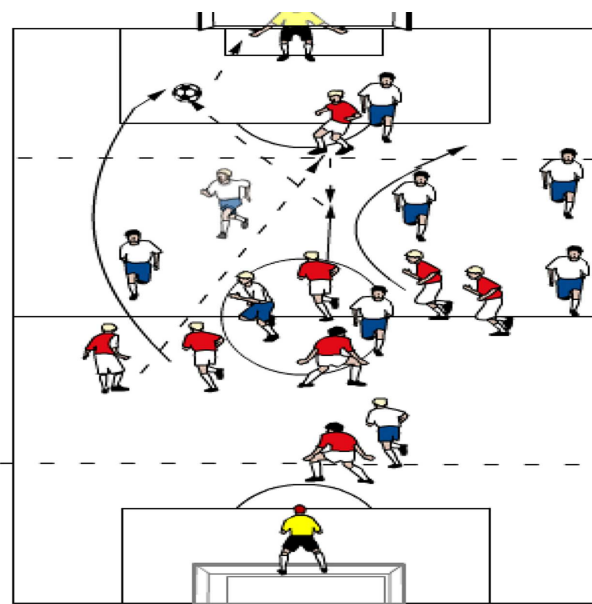
Players chose which of the three combinations to use.

Ages 14 To 16: Main Session on Transition

Players use these exercises to learn how to transition after winning the ball. Focus on:

1. Working together to put pressure on the ball.
2. the first look after winning the ball is forward.
3. One forward should be a forward target showing for the ball deep in the opponent's half.
4. The other forwards should move up as well.
5. The attacking mid should stay behind the forwards to support (back passes etc.)

6v6 With One Target Player Each



Set Up

- Teams play on a standard field with 2 goals with goalkeepers.
- One forward and one defender stand about 20m in front of each goal.

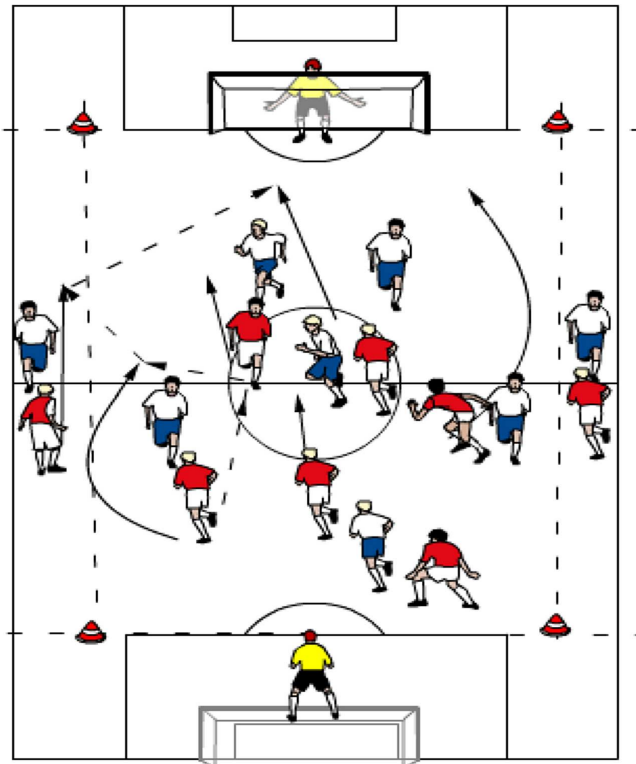
Sequence

1. Play begins with a 6v6 in one half.
2. Team "A" plays to maintain possession (10 passes equals a goal for example)
3. Team "B" tries to win the ball and play the ball forward to their striker in the other half. Each goal following a forward pass equals 2 points.
4. Ball out of play on the wings goes back to the team that had it last.
5. Team switches roles after each goal.

Variation

Limit the number of touches for the target players or all of the players on team "A".

6v6 With Two Outside Forwards Each



Set Up

- Teams play 8V8 on two goals with GKs on a field extending from one endline to the opposite penalty box.
- Wing zones are marked on the sides.
- Each player positions one player in each wing zone at the centerline creating a 6v6 in the middle.

Sequence

1. The defending team drops back into its own half.
2. If the defenders win the ball, they try to initiate a quick counterattack by passing to one of the wing players.
3. However, the wing players are not allowed to score but must pass the ball (back pass, wall pass, cross etc.) first. This forces their teammates to move up upfield.

Variation

Use the off-side rule for game like quality.

Ages 14 to 16: Warm-Up and Main Session on Transition

Players should warm-up without opponents.

1. Coaches should watch for technically precise execution: fast & accurate passes into the receiver's path and counterattacks.
2. During the main session players should:
 - Quickly drop back into their own half when the ball is lost to draw attackers in.
 - Then attack aggressively forward.
 - Play forward quickly and as direct as possible as long as the opponents are still disorganized.
 - Make good decisions: If a forward passes are not possible then make passes that are square or diagonal that will maintain possession.

Forward Pass Combination



Set Up

- Players play combinations in one half with GK.

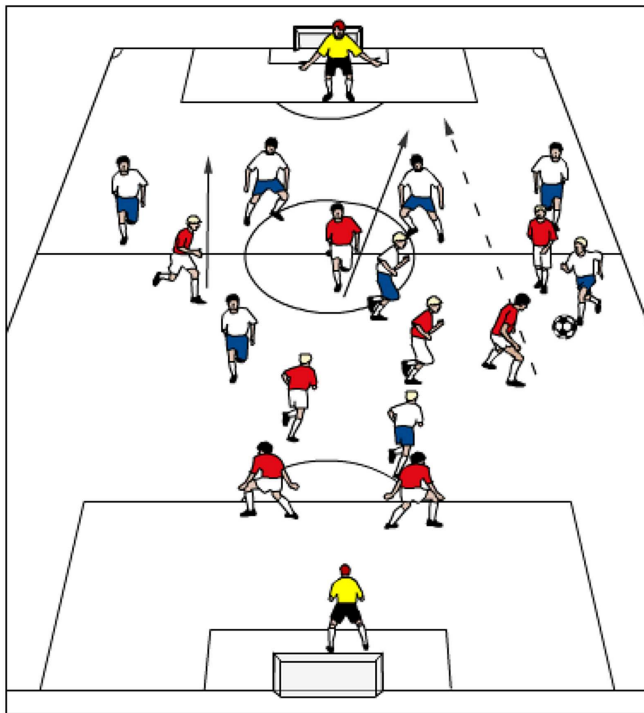
Sequence

1. The GK plays a high ball to "A" (1) who lays it off to "B".
2. "B" plays a wall pass with "A" (2) who then passes to the Striker (3).
3. Either the Striker shoots or lays off the ball (4) to "D" who shoots (5).

Variation

1. Put several players at position "A" and have them switch roles every few rounds.
2. Alternate with the same exercise on the opposite side

8v8 on Two Goals With Goalkeepers



Set Up

- Teams play 8V8 on two goals with GKs on a field extending from one end line to the opposite penalty box.

Sequence

1. Team A plays a 2-3-2 formation.
2. Team B always starts with the ball and builds an attack.
3. Team A drops back into its own half, slows down B's attack and maintains a compact defence formation.
4. If team A wins the ball, they assess the chances for a forward pass or maintaining possession with a diagonal flank pass or square pass.