



The exercises we've shared for "Passing and Ball Circulation" practice are set up to allow the players to work on the passing and movement we would most likely expect to see on the field. Keep the following things in mind when using these exercises:

- These patterns reflect common movements of the ball through common 11v11 and 8v8 team shapes. It is useful to rehearse them, but players should have the freedom to improvise in games.
- In each exercise, each player should move to create space and then to "show" for the ball prior to receiving it. The movement is as important as the passing.
- Hip angle is key when receiving. The direction that players face as they receive the ball is very important in terms of their ability to move the ball on to teammates quickly and successfully.

Note on the importance of the passing exercise:

The passing exercise I've included, called Tactical Circulation 1, has special significance for how you build your players' technical base. That significance remains regardless of whether you are playing with an 11-a-side team or an 8-a-side team.

If you look at Figure 1 at right, you will see an 8-a-side team's attacking shape diagrammed. The team shape for this group would be GK-3-3-1, but the wide players in both the midfield and back would normally push forward when attacking, making the team shape 2 diamonds stacked on top of one another.

When you lay the passing and shooting activity over top of the team shape as it is set out (Figure 2), you will see that the passing sequence is designed to compliment the team shape by allowing the players to relate to one another and move the ball through a realistic attacking sequence, hence the term "tactical circulation."

The specific movements before passes, ways of receiving the ball, and ways of passing are the same they will make in each position in a game and are included to allow players to improve their positional play as they rotate through the exercise. They are, in effect, getting repetition of touches on the ball as they would do it at these positions in games, and by doing so, they are learning to play each of the positions in a given exercise of this type.

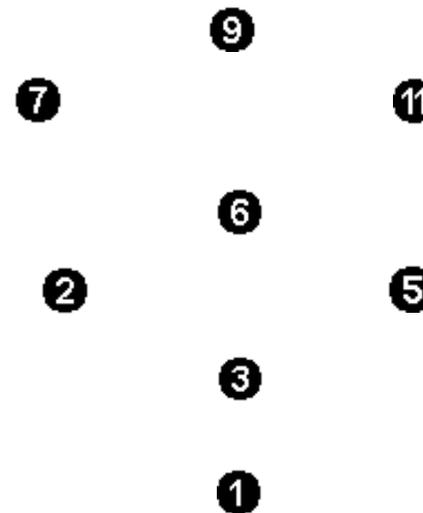


Figure 1, 3-3-1 in attack

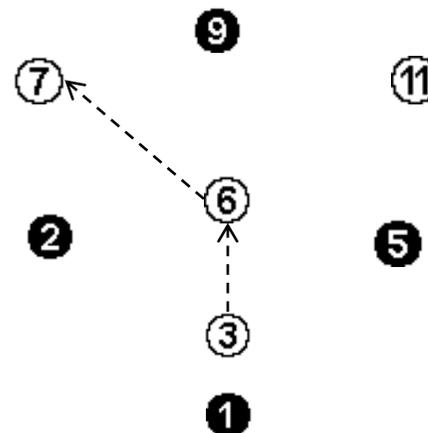


Figure 2, tactical circulation relates to team shape

Note on the importance of the passing exercise:

If you have played as an 8-a-side team and worked on your players positioning by using exercises that relate to the players' positions such as the "Tactical Circulation 1" exercise, your players have also been learning to play as an 11-a-side team since the team shapes relate to one another.

In Figure 3, you will see a team shape that is becoming very common, 4-1-4-1. This is essentially a 4-3-3 set up in which the center triangle points backward (one defensive midfielder and two attacking midfielders).

While there are players added to the team from the 8-a-side format, the basic principles of play are the same with the 11-a-side team. In Figure 4 players 3, 6, and 7 will relate to one another in exactly the same way they did before, and the players getting touches in those spots during training will be getting "specific" training for the positions identified.

Over time, they will start to see the field and move the ball more quickly, and players without the ball will become better at freeing themselves for a pass if this training concept is employed.

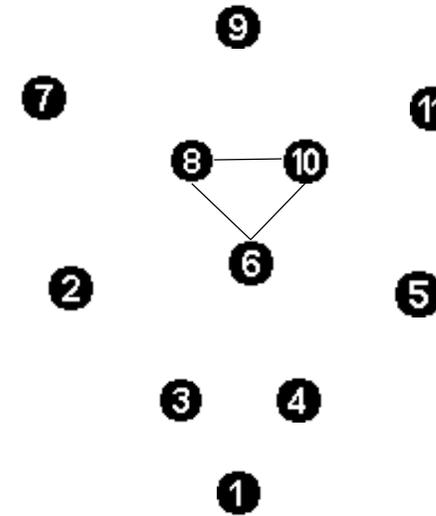


Figure 3, 4-1-4-1 in attack

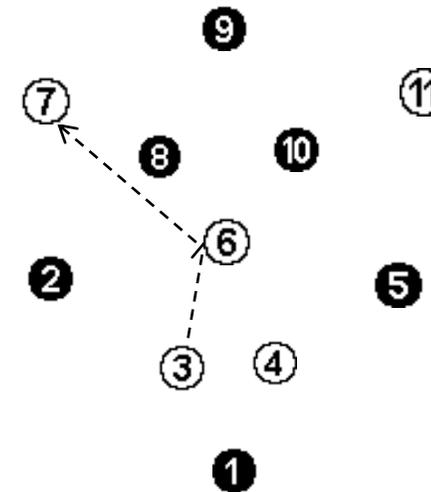


Figure 4, tactical circulation relates to team shape