

Session Summary

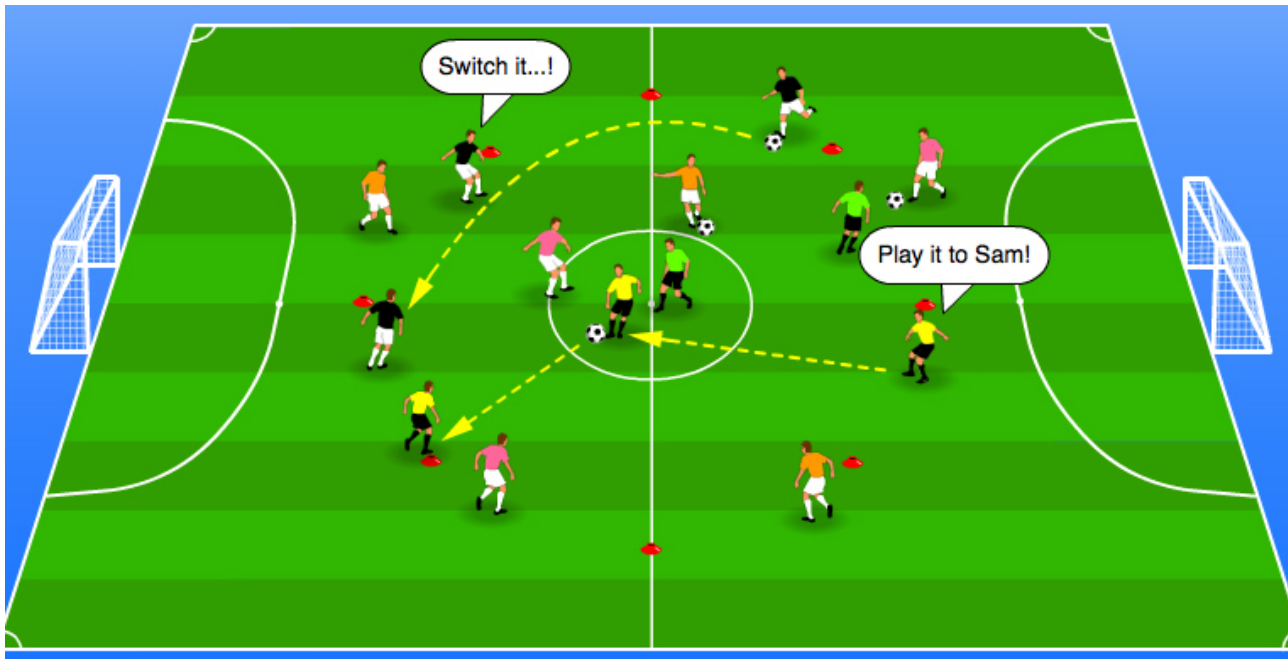
Session:	PASSING CIRCLE PRACTICE		
Date:	-	Coach:	Ian Knapp (ianknappuk@googlemail.com)
Duration:	15 - 20 mins	Equipment:	Balls, bibs, cones
#Players:	Any	Age Group:	U9 - U17

Introduction

This circle practice gets your players receiving the ball on the back foot to play forward, creating angles for a passing option, moving off the ball, communicating and practicing a range of passing techniques. It can be advanced by adding in cues and triggers for players to swap roles and defenders to provide some opposition and increase the challenge.

Setup

- A coned circle of around 25 x 25 yards. Adapt the size of the circle for younger / older players.
- Teams of 3, each team in different coloured bibs. One ball per team.
- 2 members of each team are positioned anywhere on the outside of the circle, starting roughly opposite each other.
- The third player from each team is positioned somewhere in the middle of the circle.
- Coach with more footballs to the side.



Rules

- Each group of 3 players passes the ball between them, from one edge player to the other, always going through the central player.
- Once an edge player has played a pass, they must move around the edge of the circle to take up a new position.
- Rotate roles every couple of minutes to give everyone a turn at being the central player.
- Coach sends in a new ball if the existing one goes out.
- Team that completes the most consecutive passes without losing control of the ball in a certain time frame wins (or complete 8 passes to score a point etc.)

Progressions & Variations

- Allow the edge players to decide whether to go long direct to the other edge player.
- All a bounce pass from the central back to the original edge player.
- If the edge player receives the ball and does a turn or trick, that is the cue for the opposite edge player to switch roles with the central player.
- Introduce 2 defenders (green in the above diagram), who can pressure the central players from any team. If they win the ball, they score a point. Rotate defenders regularly.

5 Key Coaching Points / Challenges

- Central player - can you drop off at an angle, so you can see both edge players and have an open body stance that allows you to receive on the back foot and play forwards to your team mate?
- Weight, type and accuracy of pass. Where does the receiving player want the ball and with what power do they want it?
- Movement - after you've played the ball, can you move into a new space to be an option for a future pass?
- Communication - tell the player on the ball what to do with it (verbal or pointing).
- Awareness - play with your head up - know where your team mates (and defenders) are at all times.

Key Coaching Points (FA's 4 Corners)

Technical

- **Body shape** - receive on the half turn / across your body to play forwards.
- Passing to the **correct foot** of the receiving player.
- **Weight** and **type** of pass (aerial, driven, lofted, cushioned etc.)
- **First touch** - take the ball where you want it to go so you can make the next pass. Might be controlling with left or right foot, chest, thigh...
- **Movement** off the ball
- Play with your **head up** - know where your team mates / opponents are at all times.

Psychological

- **Communication** (tell the player on the ball what to do with it)
- **Thinking ahead** - decide what you're going to do next BEFORE the ball has arrived with you
- **Reading cues** - in the progression where the edge players can turn to trigger a switch of roles, are you switched on to notice this and quickly switch?
- **Decision making** - what type of pass, who to pass to.
- **Awareness** - being mentally alert to where the other players are.
- For the defenders, **communicating** as a team to win the ball back.

Physical

- **Speed** of play (quick is usually better, but if no option, hold the ball up and then play)
- **Body shape**
- **Agility** to reach the ball, control it and pass it on.
- If defenders introduced then holding them off and **shielding** the ball.

Social

- Working as a **team**
- **Encouraging** others and not being negative
- **Communication**
- Have **fun!**