



TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT: WIDE PLAYERS

SESSION OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES

- Enhance the wide players' proficiency in crossing accurately and finishing effectively.
- Develop their skills to beat opponents in 1v1 attacking situations.

PART 1: EARLY CROSSING

This segment focuses on semi-opposed crossing practice with an emphasis on delivering early crosses. The presence of defenders challenges the crossing players' decision-making and prompts them to scan the field before crossing. The coach provides valuable guidance on what to observe while making the best decision on the cross.

PART 2: 4V2 FINISHING

In this opposed finishing practice, the wide players are given ample opportunities and a high repetition of finishes. The focus lies on various finishing techniques and the necessary movement to create space for goal-scoring opportunities. Players will refine their ability to find the back of the net with precision.

PART 3: 1V1 ATTACKING

This zoned practice isolates wide players in 1v1 attacking situations in and around the box. It tests the players' decision-making in the final third, where they must choose whether to cross or shoot after beating a defender. Emphasis is placed on their capacity to create space through changes of speed and execute the final ball effectively.

Throughout the session, the wide players will work on their overall attacking prowess, improving their crossing accuracy, finishing finesse, and decision-making in 1v1 situations. Regular practice of these skills will make the wide players more effective and versatile attackers, contributing significantly to the team's offensive success on the field.

EARLY CROSSING (PART 1)

This semi-opposed technical practice is specifically designed to enhance the wide players' ability to deliver early crosses effectively. The session takes place on an area spanning the full width of the pitch.

An additional line is marked 30 yards from the goal, and the defending centre-back (#6) must start on this line.

Diagram 1: The coach initiates the practice by playing the ball out to the left-sided wide player (#11). The wide player is limited to two touches: one touch to control the ball and the second touch to execute a cross.

The striker (#9) and the opposite wide player (#7) strive to position themselves within the box, anticipating the incoming cross. As soon as the coach plays the ball, the centre-back is allowed to drop back to defend.



Diagram 2: In this scenario, the left-sided wide player receives the ball, but the defender has reacted quickly and managed to defend the front half of the goal. Consequently, the decision to cross is altered, and the ball is played to the opposite wide player (#7).

PROGRESSION

- To progress the practice and challenge the wide players further, coaches can introduce variations in the service provided to both wingers. This may involve changing the angle and/or trajectory of the delivery, requiring the wide players to adapt their approach to early crossing.
- Additionally, altering the distance of the line away from the goal will create different scenarios for both the crossing player and the defender, fostering decision-making and defensive awareness.
- To intensify the practice, coaches can include additional defenders and attackers, providing more complex and realistic scenarios that simulate match situations.

Through this session, wide players will refine their early crossing abilities, develop their awareness of defensive movements, and enhance their overall contribution to the team's attacking play. Regularly modifying the practice will keep the players engaged and continuously develop their skills in a dynamic and challenging environment.

COACHING PROCESS

FIRST TOUCH

- **Prioritise First Touch:** Emphasise the significance of the wide player's first touch before attempting to cross. The touch should be skill-fully weighted, allowing the player to advance smoothly onto the ball and deliver the cross with their second touch.
- **Mastering Weighted Touch:** Train the wide player to accurately 'weight' their first touch, enabling them to perform the technique with high intensity and maintain control of the ball.

SCANNING

- **Pre-Cross Scanning:** Instruct the wide player to scan the field before crossing the ball. This process allows them to gather essential information, including the movement of the defending centre-back, positions of attacking teammates, and available spaces to target with the cross.
- **Quick Decision-Making:** Encourage the wide player to take a quick glance between their first and second touches, enabling them to make the best decision regarding the destination of their cross.

EARLY, SHAPED CROSS

- **Out-swinging Shape:** Guide the wide player to utilise an out-swinging shape when delivering early crosses. This involves curving the ball between the centre-back and the goalkeeper, with the objective of finding the striker in a central position in front of the goal.
- **Finding the Right Power and Shape:** Emphasise the importance of delivering the cross with sufficient power and the correct shape to evade the first centre-back, while still allowing the striker to reach and connect with the ball effectively.



DEEP CROSS

- **Specific Trajectory:** For deep crosses, the wide player needs to execute a precise trajectory that is high enough to clear both centre-backs but low enough to find the opposite wide player at the far post.
- **Balancing Weight and Timing:** Train the wide player to play the deep cross with the correct weight, ensuring it bypasses the centre-back effectively and gives the far-side wide player enough time to reach the far post and make contact with the ball.

By focusing on these technical aspects and providing targeted coaching, wide players can refine their crossing abilities, becoming more effective contributors to the team's attacking play. Regular practice and reinforcement will lead to improved accuracy and decision-making when delivering crosses during matches.

4V2 FINISHING (PART 2)

This opposed technical practice is designed to hone players' finishing skills and takes place on an area spanning the width of the 18-yard box and located 40 yards from the goal.

An additional line is set 30 yards from the goal, where the defending centre-backs (#5 and #6) must start, as depicted in both diagrams.

The session begins with the coach making the first pass to a central player, commencing a 4v2 situation where the attacking team has the numerical advantage. The objective is for the attacking team to work the ball to a wide player and score using two different methods, as illustrated in the diagrams. If the defenders regain possession, they attempt to score in one of three target goals positioned at the far end of the pitch.

Goals scored by the wide players carry a higher value of three points, adding significance to their contributions during the practice.

PROGRESSION

- To progress the practice and add realism to the scenario, coaches can introduce a time limit within which the attacking team must score. The heavy overload in favour of the attackers emphasises the need for quick and decisive play.
- Increasing the defensive challenge, coaches can include an additional defender to make the task more difficult for the attacking team, promoting greater tactical awareness and teamwork.
- To vary the dynamics of the practice, coaches can alter the start position, adjusting the distance from the goal or positioning it off-centre, leading to different angles of attack and defensive setups.

Through this session, players will sharpen their finishing abilities, improve decision-making in attacking scenarios, and develop effective teamwork. Regularly modifying the practice will keep the players engaged and continually enhance their ability to capitalise on goal-scoring opportunities in match situations.



COACHING PROCESS

MOVEMENT TO RECEIVE

- **Tactical Awareness:** Coach wide players on when to make runs in behind the defence and when to receive on the shoulder of their opponent. Understanding the right moments for each movement is crucial in creating shooting opportunities.
- **Deceptive Movement:** Encourage wide players to be as deceptive as possible with their runs, aiming to fool their opponent and create half a yard of space for a clear shooting chance.

FIRST TOUCH

- **Directing First Touch:** Instruct wide attackers to focus on their first touch before shooting. The first touch should be directed in a way that eliminates the defender they are facing.
- **Creating Shooting Space:** Teach the wide players to take their first touch away from pressure or across the defender, allowing them to create the necessary space for a clear shot on goal.

SHOTS ACROSS GOAL

- **Finishing from the Outside:** When wide players are in a goal-scoring position from an angle on the outside, emphasise the importance of going hard and low across the goal.
- **Proper Technique:** Guide the players to keep their body over the ball and strike through the centre of the ball with power. This technique will keep the ball low and propel it at high speed towards the target.

WHIPPED FINISHES

- **Cutting Inside to Finish:** When wide players cut inside to take a shot, encourage them to attempt a whipped finish by striking the ball on its side.
- **Striking Technique:** Advise the players to use the inside of their foot to generate power and accuracy. This will create curl on the ball, making it difficult for the goalkeeper to reach and increasing the chances of scoring.

By focusing on these technical aspects and providing targeted coaching, wide attackers can improve their finishing abilities. Regular practice and reinforcement of these techniques will make the wide players more potent goal threats and enhance their overall contribution to the team's attacking play.

1V1 ATTACKING (PART 3)

This opposed technical practice is designed to enhance players' wide attacking skills and decision-making. The session takes place on an area spanning the width of the 18-yard box and located 35 yards from the goal, with the pitch divided into three vertical channels. The two wider channels measure 10m from the touchline.

An additional line is set 25 yards from the goal, where the defending centre-backs must start.

Diagram: The session commences with the coach delivering the first pass to a wide player, initiating a 3v2 situation. The nearest defender (#5 in Diagram 1) drops back to defend against the wide attacker in a 1v1 situation. The wide player, restricted to their channel, is not allowed to pass inside, cross, or shoot until they break over the line where the defenders start.



Once in the attacking zone, the wide player must make a decision based on their 1v1 situation with the defender and the positions of their teammates and the second defender. They have the option to either cross or cut back for a striker, as shown in Diagram 1, or take the ball forward and shoot.

If the defenders win the ball, they attempt to score in one of the three target goals at the far end of the pitch.

PROGRESSION

- To progress the practice and add realism, coaches can introduce a time limit for the attacking team to score. This time constraint simulates match scenarios, where quick decision-making is vital despite having an overload.
- Alternatively, coaches can include an additional defender to remove the attacking team's overload, increasing the difficulty level and challenging the players' ability to execute under pressure.

Through this session, players will develop their wide attacking prowess, improve their decision-making in 1v1 situations, and enhance their overall attacking contributions. Regularly modifying the practice will keep the players engaged and continually refine their skills in a dynamic and competitive environment.

COACHING PROCESS

FIRST TOUCH

- Focus on First Touch: Emphasise the importance of the wide players' first touch and guide them to move the ball away from pressure, positioning themselves for a 1v1 situation.
- Keep the Ball Moving: Encourage wide players to maintain a continuous flow with their first touch, minimising the defender's opportunity to close them down and make a tackle.

CHANGE OF SPEED

- Dynamic Running: Instruct wide attackers to vary their running speed while attacking, going from slow too fast and fast too slow, to unsettle and imbalance the defender. This tactic allows the attacker to create space for a shot or a cross.

AWARENESS

- Reading the Defender: Train the wide attacker to pick up cues from the defender during 1v1 dribbling situations.
- Identifying Imbalance: Encourage the attacker to focus on the defender's hips and body weight, which will help them determine the best direction to take the ball and create an imbalance in the defender's positioning.

END PRODUCT

- Quality of the Final Action: After successfully beating their opponent in a 1v1 situation and creating space, emphasise the significance of the final action.



- **Shooting Technique:** Guide wide players to shoot low and hard across the goal when shooting from wide positions. If cutting inside, advise them to strike with the inside of their foot to curl the ball towards the goal
- **Crossing Decision:** In situations where the wide player opts to cross, stress the importance of scanning the field to assess their teammates' positioning and the location of the other defender. This will help them determine the type of cross or cut-back required to create goal-scoring opportunities.

By focusing on these technical aspects and providing targeted coaching, wide attackers can refine their skills and decision-making, making them more effective and versatile in their attacking play. Regular practice and reinforcement of these techniques will enhance the wide players' contributions and increase the team's offensive potential.