



Finishing

Tags: `individual-technical` `standalone` `finishing` `shooting`

Kicker: Week 33 asks where a player's finishing breaks down. It was never built to teach the technique in the first place — that assumption has to come from somewhere. This is where.

Session Overview

FIELD	VALUE
Session theme	Finishing — Placement, Power and Composure Under Pressure
Short summary	Four stages building finishing technique from the ground up: unopposed striking technique, the choice between placement and power depending on angle and distance, finishing under real time and physical pressure, and a closing live game that rewards clean, clinical finishing directly. This is the progressive technical building block the programme has been missing — Week 33's diagnostic session assumes it, and now it exists.
Total duration	50 minutes across four practices
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers should attend — this is also genuine live practice for their own Goalkeeping session's Set and Save work.
Area layout	An unopposed striking area for Practice 1, a full box working area for Practices 2–4.
Equipment	A generous supply of balls, cones marking striking positions and angles.
Contingency — lower attendance	Practices 2–3 work fine with a smaller rotating group and a single goalkeeper; Practice 4's closing game scales down to a smaller grid rather than losing the finishing emphasis.

PRACTICE 1 — CLEAN CONTACT (ARRIVAL)

Duration: 8 minutes · **Training load:** Low

Tactical purpose: Unopposed striking repetition — no goalkeeper, no pressure, no decision-making. Purely grooming clean technical contact before either placement or power is added.

Organisation: Each player has a ball and an empty target (a goal, a wall, or a marked zone), working individually with space between them.

Walkthrough: Players strike a series of shots at a consistent target, focusing entirely on a clean, controlled contact through the middle of the ball, alternating between the instep and the side of the foot.

Rules: No goalkeeper opposition yet — this is technique only, at a pace each player controls.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* a locked ankle and a strike through the ball's centre for a driven finish, or the side of the foot for a placed one.
- *Technical:* a settling first touch before the strike where one is needed — most poor finishes start with a poor first touch, not a poor strike.

No diagram, guided discovery questions, or progressions are attached to the arrival activity — it is deliberately kept simple so the session's teaching time is protected for the three main practices below.

PRACTICE 2 — PLACE OR POWER (TECHNIQUE CHOICE)

Duration: 14 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Builds the judgement between placing a finish precisely and driving it with power, based on angle, distance, and the picture the goalkeeper presents — the decision that separates a clinical finisher from one who only has one gear.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** full box with marked striking positions at varying angles and distances
- **Players:** rotating group of finishers, one goalkeeper
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** live and reacting throughout
- **Team sizes:** individual work, one finisher at a time
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** cones marking 4–5 striking positions across different angles and distances
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** a supply at each marked position
- **Restart:** next finisher steps up immediately
- **Coach position:** able to see the finisher's technique and the goalkeeper's position at the moment of the strike
- **Rotation method:** each finisher takes a shot from every marked position before rotating out
- **Direction of play:** always toward the same goal

Practice walkthrough: Finishers work through a series of marked positions — some close and central, some wide and tight-angled, some further out with more time — and choose between a placed finish into a corner or a powerful strike through the goalkeeper, based on what the position and the goalkeeper's set-up actually offer. The coach asks for the decision to be named before or immediately after each strike.

Rules: Each finisher must be able to explain why they chose placement or power on that specific attempt — an unconsidered default to one or the other is corrected even if the shot succeeds.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean execution of both techniques — genuine accuracy on placed finishes, genuine pace on powerful ones.
Tactical	A considered choice between placement and power based on the actual angle, distance, and goalkeeper position, not habit.
Physical	A balanced, controlled approach and strike regardless of which technique is chosen.
Psychological	Full commitment to the chosen technique — a finish that tries to do both often does neither well.
Communication & leadership	None required — this is deliberately isolated individual technical work.

Tactical roles: **Finisher** — reads the position and the goalkeeper, and commits fully to the chosen technique. **Goalkeeper** — provides a genuine, live picture to read and react to.

Decision-making triggers: a tight angle or a goalkeeper well-set favours placement into the far corner; a central position with the goalkeeper narrowing the angle favours power through or across them.

Communication language used: none specific — the emphasis is on the finisher's own decision-making process, verbalised to the coach.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made you choose placement over power on that attempt, or the other way round?

2. What did the goalkeeper's position tell you before you struck the ball?
3. Was there a shot where, looking back, the other technique would have worked better?

Progressions:

1. Reduce the time available before each strike, sharpening the speed of the decision.
2. Add a passive defender providing a partial block, forcing a finish around or through traffic.

Regressions:

1. Remove the goalkeeper again briefly if either technique is breaking down under live opposition.
2. Fix the technique choice in advance (all placement, then all power) until each is individually solid before combining them.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The finisher defaults to the same technique regardless of the position or picture	Comfort with one technique over genuine in-the-moment reading	The same finish type used from clearly different angles and distances	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: ask the finisher to name what the position actually offered	Resume
The finish tries to combine both power and placement and achieves neither	Indecision resolved too late, mid-strike	A weak, central shot that was neither placed accurately nor struck with real pace	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: rehearse committing to one technique before the strike begins	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: freeze-and-correct for a habitual, unconsidered technique choice and for an indecisive, half-committed strike.

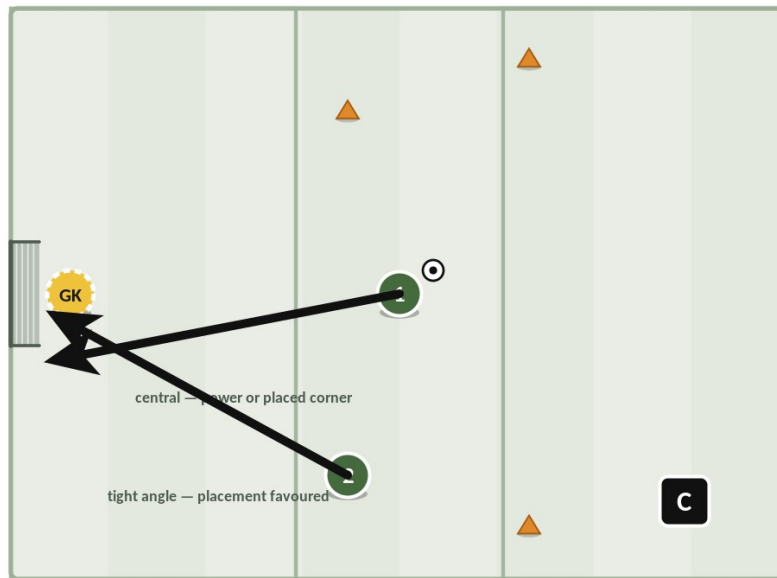
Success indicators:

- Technique choice visibly varies according to the actual position and picture, not habit.
- Both placement and power are executed with genuine technical quality when chosen.
- Finishers can explain their own decision-making after each attempt.

Coach's eye: a player who is technically excellent at placed finishing but never chooses power when it's the better option has half a toolkit — watch for the decision as closely as the strike itself.

TC4.2 PLACE OR POWER — Technique Choice

Box with marked striking positions · read the angle and distance, choose the technique · 14 minutes



● Finisher (rotating positions)

● Ball

➡ Finish on goal

▲ Marked striking position

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PRACTICE 3 — UNDER THE GUN (FINISHING UNDER PRESSURE)

Duration: 14 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate-high

Tactical purpose: Builds composure and technical reliability on first-time and half-chance finishes under genuine time and physical pressure — the realistic version of a finishing opportunity, which rarely arrives clean and unhurried.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** full box
- **Players:** rotating group of finishers, 1–2 chasing defenders, a service player, one goalkeeper
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** live and reacting throughout
- **Team sizes:** finisher against a recovering defender, with a service player feeding the chance
- **Neutrals:** the service player feeds crosses, cutbacks, or knock-downs
- **Equipment:** a supply of balls at the service position
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** reset at the service position after each attempt
- **Restart:** next service begins as soon as the previous attempt resolves
- **Coach position:** able to see the service, the finisher's technique, and the defender's pressure
- **Rotation method:** finisher, defender, and service player rotate every 4–5 attempts
- **Direction of play:** always toward the same goal

Practice walkthrough: A service player delivers a genuine half-chance — a low cross, a cutback, a knock-down — while a defender applies real, chasing pressure and the finisher must strike first-time or with minimal touches under that pressure. The finisher is coached to simplify their technique under pressure rather than trying to force the more elaborate finish they might attempt with time and space.

Rules: The finisher has a maximum of two touches, including the finishing strike itself, reflecting the genuine time pressure of a real half-chance.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	A simplified, reliable technique under pressure — a clean connection matters more than power or elaborate placement here.
Tactical	Recognising a half-chance for what it is and adjusting technique accordingly, rather than forcing the Practice 2 approach into a situation that doesn't allow for it.
Physical	Balance and body control maintained despite genuine defensive pressure and limited time.
Psychological	Composure under real physical and time pressure — the core skill this practice exists to build.
Communication & leadership	A clear call from the finisher for service timing, where the practice allows for it.

Tactical roles: **Finisher** — simplifies technique and commits under real pressure. **Defender** — applies genuine, realistic chasing pressure. **Service player** — delivers a realistic half-chance, not an easy set-up.

Decision-making triggers: limited time and defensive pressure is the trigger to simplify — a clean, first-time strike beats an elaborate attempt at placement in this picture almost every time.

Communication language used: none specific — the finisher may call for the service, but the practice is otherwise deliberately quiet, matching a real match moment.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What changed about your technique when you had less time and real pressure behind you?
2. What's the risk of trying to place a finish precisely in this kind of moment?

3. What did the defender's pressure actually take away from you, and how did you adjust?

Progressions:

1. Reduce the finisher's touches to one, sharpening the technical simplification further.
2. Add a second defender, increasing the realism and pressure of the chance.

Regressions:

1. Allow an extra touch while the technique under pressure is still being learned.
2. Reduce the defender's pressure intensity temporarily if technique is breaking down completely.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The finisher tries an elaborate, placed finish that the time and pressure don't allow for	Habit from Practice 2 applied to a situation that doesn't suit it	A rushed, poorly struck attempt at precision that a simpler strike would have beaten	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: rehearse the simplified technique this specific picture calls for	Resume
The finisher rushes the touch before the strike, losing control entirely	Panic under the combined time and physical pressure	A heavy touch that takes the ball away from the finisher before any strike is possible	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: slow the service pace temporarily and rebuild composure	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: freeze-and-correct for over-elaborate technique under pressure and for a panicked, heavy touch.

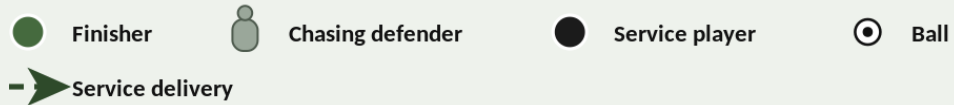
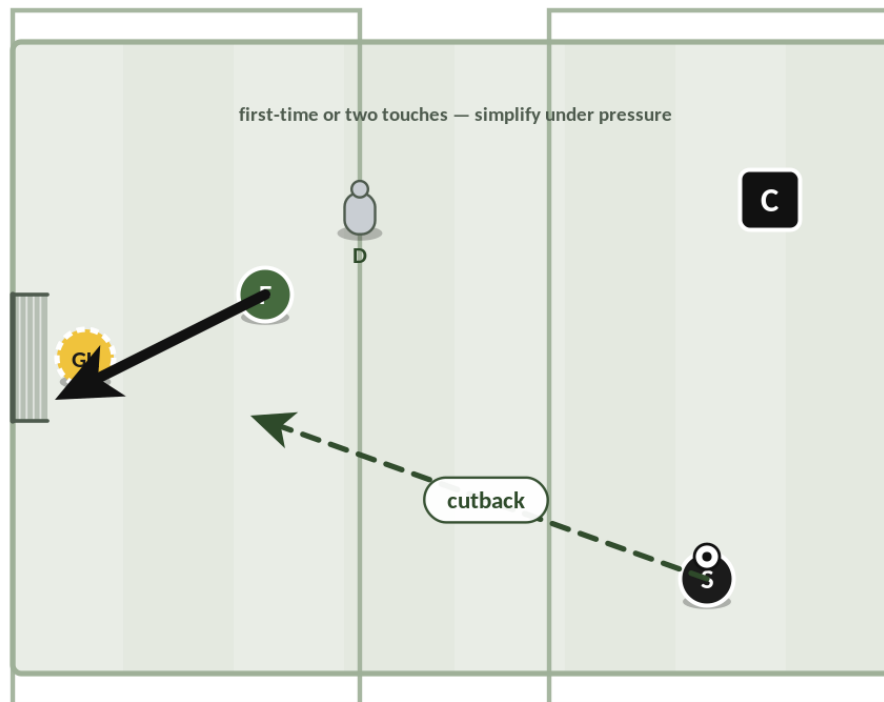
Success indicators:

- Technique visibly simplifies under pressure compared with Practice 2's more considered approach.
- The two-touch limit is met consistently without panic.
- Composure holds even when an attempt doesn't result in a goal.

Coach's eye: the goal is not perfection here — it's a finisher who stays calm and technically reliable when a chance arrives messily, because that's how most real chances actually arrive.

TC4.3 UNDER THE GUN — Finishing Under Pressure

Box • service, defender pressure, two touches max • 14 minutes



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PRACTICE 4 — CLINICAL (CLOSING LIVE GAME)

Duration: 14 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate-high

Purpose: Closes the session with a live small-sided game that specifically rewards clean, clinical finishing, bringing technique choice and composure under pressure together under real, unscripted match conditions.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 30 m working area including a full box
- **Players:** two teams of 6–7 with goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** each keeper defends their own goal, live practice for their Goalkeeping session's Set and Save work
- **Team sizes:** 6v6 or 7v7 with goalkeepers
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** none beyond standard small-sided game markers
- **Starting positions:** open play
- **Ball supply:** a supply near the halfway line for quick restarts
- **Restart:** standard small-sided game rules
- **Coach position:** mobile, observing finishing decisions and technique as they arise
- **Rotation method:** roles rotate naturally through open play
- **Direction of play:** both directions, standard small-sided game rules otherwise

Practice walkthrough: A small conditioned game runs normally, with any goal scored with a first-time finish or inside two touches worth double, directly rewarding the clean, decisive finishing this session has built, without discouraging composed, well-placed finishes taken with more time.

Rules: Standard small-sided game rules, plus goals scored first-time or within two touches count double.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Both the technique choice from Practice 2 and the composure under pressure from Practice 3 hold up under live, unscripted conditions.
Tactical	Genuine recognition of the type of chance presented, and a technique response that matches it.
Physical	Sustained sharpness in the box across a longer, more demanding game context.
Psychological	Full composure in a live, scored game, not just in isolated practice repetitions.
Communication & leadership	Support play and service into the box that creates the chances this session rewards.

Tactical roles: the full set of roles from Practices 2 and 3, now applied inside a live, unpredictable game with a genuine scoring incentive attached.

Decision-making triggers: the same triggers from Practices 2 and 3, now tested under live conditions and the pull of the doubled-goal incentive.

Communication language used: none specific — the incentive structure itself provides the emphasis.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Did the bonus for a quick finish change your decision-making tonight, for better or worse?
2. What was the best finish you saw or were part of tonight, and what made it work?
3. What's one thing from tonight's session you want to take into a match?

Progressions:

1. Increase the bonus value further to sharpen the incentive.
2. Add a specific bonus for a finish taken under genuine defensive pressure, rewarding Practice 3's specific skill directly.

Regressions:

1. Remove the doubled-goal incentive temporarily if it's distorting decision-making rather than sharpening it.
2. Reduce the game intensity if finishing technique is breaking down badly under full pressure.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Players rush a finish purely to chase the two-touch bonus, when more time was actually available	The incentive outweighing sound decision-making about the picture in front of them	A rushed, poor finish attempted when a settled touch and placed effort were clearly on	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "did you actually need to rush that one?"	Resume
Composed, well-placed finishes with more time become less common as players chase the bonus	Over-correction toward the incentivised behaviour	A drop-off in Practice 2-style considered finishing compared with earlier in the session	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	A reminder that a good finish with time is just as valuable as a quick one	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: reflective questioning for unnecessarily rushed finishes; a direct reminder that composed finishing still has full value.

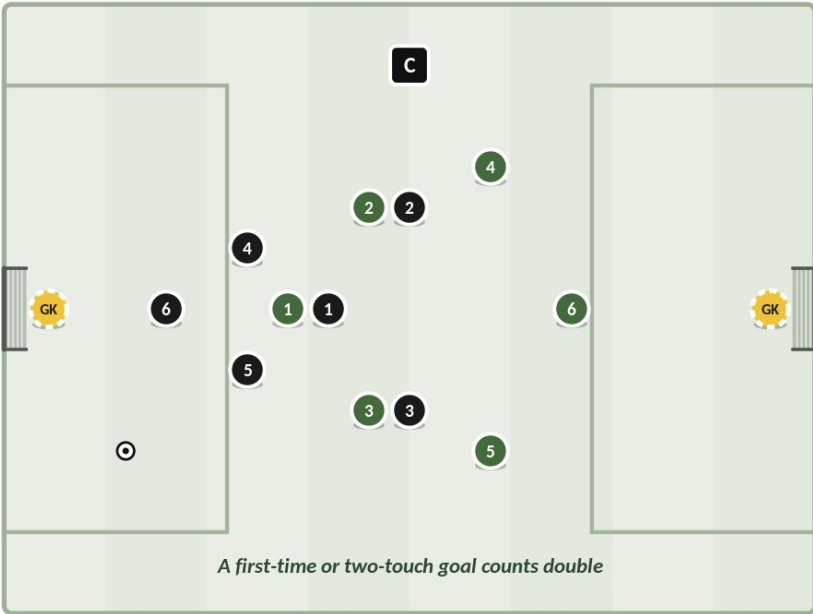
Success indicators:

- Technique choice continues to reflect the actual picture, not just the incentive.
- Composure under pressure from Practice 3 is visible in the live game.
- Genuine goalscoring quality — from both quick and composed finishes — improves visibly over the session.

Coach's eye: the bonus is there to spotlight decisive finishing, not to replace good judgement — watch for the balance between the two holding up as the game goes on.

TC4.4 CLINICAL — Closing Live Game

40 x 30 m • 6v6 or 7v7 with keepers • a first-time or two-touch goal counts double • 14 minutes



● Team A ● Team B ● Ball

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Written by Alan Cunningham with Claude AI • Castlewellan Town FC • Standalone Individual Technical Session