



Week 5 — Pre-Season Foundation (Phase 1 Review Week)

Tags: `pre-season` `consolidation` `set-pieces` `unit-work` `full-squad-practice` `conditioning`

Weekly Overview

FIELD	DETAIL
Week number	5 of 36
Season phase	1 — Pre-Season Foundation (closing week)
Core principle	All Phase 1 principles, consolidated
Secondary principle	Attacking corners (the season's first set-piece routine)
Previous match review focus	Apply the three routes below to the most recent pre-season fixture.
Weekly tactical problem	Four weeks have introduced four separate ideas — angled support, width and depth, pressure/cover/balance with compactness, and the two transitions. The problem this week solves is integration: whether the team can produce all four at once, inside one game, without the practice artificially isolating them the way the last four weeks deliberately did.
Formation-neutral explanation	Consolidation is inherently formation-neutral — the whole point of the week is to confirm that none of the first four weeks' principles were taught as formation-specific tricks. If a principle only shows up in one shape, it hasn't actually been learned as a principle yet.
Example structural applications	This week's Tuesday practices are deliberately run without specifying a fixed formation — teams are simply picked and asked to organise themselves, in whichever shape they choose, showing the coach whether the principles survive without instruction. If the group settles into a back four, that's coached; if into a back three, that's coached too — the four weeks' content applies equally either way, which is itself the thing being tested.

Match Review and Weekly Adjustment

Route A — Previous performance was strong. If the most recent friendly showed good signs, use Tuesday's consolidation game to raise standards further rather than simply repeating what worked — the four-week review below is the place to formally recognise the progress and set the bar for Phase 2.

Route B — Previous performance exposed a tactical weakness. If a specific weakness has shown up more than once across the four fixtures so far, Tuesday's "Phase 1 Final" conditioned match is the moment to observe whether it is a genuine gap in the principles taught, or simply inconsistent execution — the four-week review below asks the coach to record which.

Route C — Attendance, facilities or player availability are disrupted. Protect the consolidation game and the attacking corner routine above everything else this week — both are foundational to everything that follows in Phase 2, and both scale down without losing their value.

Tuesday — Session 9

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	9 of 72
Week	5
Season phase	1 — Pre-Season Foundation
Training day	Tuesday
Session theme	Four-week consolidation game
Short summary	Brings together everything trained in Weeks 1–4 — angled support, width and depth, pressure/cover/balance, compactness, and both transitions — inside progressively less structured practices, finishing with a full conditioned match carrying no artificial conditions at all.
Tags	`possession` `progression` `defending` `transition` `full-squad-practice` `conditioning`
Primary learning objective	All four of Phase 1's principles are visible in the same session, unprompted.
Secondary learning objective	Players organise their own shape without being told a formation.
Match connection	This session is, in effect, a rehearsal of the identity statement in the Season Architecture — a team that is organised, adaptable, brave in possession and disciplined without the ball, tested all at once.
Expected tactical outcome	The team plays a recognisable version of itself in the final conditioned match, without needing bonus conditions to produce the right behaviours.
Expected physical load	Moderate-high — pre-season's peak load, the last big physical week before Phase 2 begins settling into an in-season rhythm.
Recommended intensity	7.5–8.5 / 10.
Equipment list	20 footballs · 24 flat markers · 16 cones (orange) · 2 sets of bibs (2 colours, 10 each) · 2 full-size or portable goals
Player numbers	Designed for 18 outfield + 2 goalkeepers, slightly larger than previous weeks to allow the closing game to run at 9v9; scales down to 16 outfield (8v8) without losing value.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout and are coached as full participants in every principle this week, not as a separate category.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 55 x 38 m (Practice 4).
Area layout	A large positional grid for Practice 2, a standard small-sided area for Practice 3, and close to two-thirds of a full pitch for Practice 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 4 reduces to 6v6 on a 44x30 m area; Practices 2 and 3 scale down proportionally.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 4 can extend to a genuine 10v10, the closest the season has come so far to full match conditions.
Contingency — restricted space	Compress all three practices proportionally; the coaching content this week is about integration of ideas rather than absolute distances covered.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00–0:10	10 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>The Season So Far</i>	Light green
0:10–0:25	15 min	Technical practice — <i>The Complete Picture</i>	Club green
0:25–0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27–0:42	15 min	Skill game — <i>Four Weeks in One</i>	Dark green
0:42–0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44–0:59	15 min	Conditioned match — <i>Phase 1 Final</i>	Black
0:59–1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — THE SEASON SO FAR (ARRIVAL)

Duration: 10 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Raises heart rate while cycling through every call the squad has learned across four weeks, a light but deliberate act of consolidation before the session's harder content begins.

Organisation: 20 x 16 m grid, one ball per player for four minutes, then pairs for six. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join fully.

Walkthrough: Individual ball work, then paired passing in which the coach calls out a word from the season's language (Time, Turn, Hold, Drop, Squeeze, Step, Cover, Delay, Travel) every 20–30 seconds — players must immediately demonstrate it inside their pair, not just say it back.

Rules: A demonstrated action must match the call, or the pair repeats it.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* clean execution of each called action.
- *Psychological:* recall under a light layer of time pressure, a gentle rehearsal for the cognitive demand later in the session.

PRACTICE 2 — THE COMPLETE PICTURE (TECHNICAL PRACTICE)

Duration: 15 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate-high

Tactical purpose: The first practice this season that deliberately combines an attacking principle (width, depth and angled support together) with a defending principle (pressure, cover and balance) inside a single positional game, rather than isolating one at a time as every previous week has done.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 26 m
- **Players:** 16 outfield
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through the possession team
- **Team sizes:** 8 v 8
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 8 flat markers (loose reference zones, no longer enforced as strict rules), 3 footballs
- **Starting positions:** free — players organise themselves rather than being placed
- **Ball supply:** spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** nearest player restarts any stoppage
- **Coach position:** mobile, observing rather than directing
- **Rotation method:** roles swap at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** none — positional possession

Practice walkthrough: Sixteen players are split into a possession team and a defending team and given almost no instructions beyond the practice's basic rules — deliberately, since the whole point is to see whether four weeks of separately-taught principles now show up together without prompting. The possession team is watched for width, depth and angled support; the defending team is watched for pressure, cover, balance and compactness. The coach's role this practice is closer to an assessor's than a teacher's — intervening only where a genuine gap in understanding appears, not to polish minor detail.

Rules: Standard positional possession rules — a set number of consecutive passes (the coach's judgement on the day) scores a point for the possession team; a clean regain scores a point for the defending team.

Tactical roles: every individual, unit and team role introduced across Weeks 1–4 is live and available; this practice does not introduce any new ones.

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Weeks 1–4, applied together for the first time without the practice isolating any single one.

Communication language used: the complete set so far — *Time, Turn, Hold, Drop, Squeeze, Step, Cover, Delay, Travel, Switch*.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Consistency of execution across a longer, less structured practice than the team has faced so far this season.
Tactical	Whether principles combine naturally or interfere with each other — for example, whether width is sacrificed under defensive pressure, or vice versa.
Physical	Sustained moderate-high intensity over a longer, less-interrupted practice.
Psychological	Self-organisation without instruction — a genuine test of ownership after four weeks of coach-led introduction.
Communication & leadership	Which players organise the team's shape without being prompted — the clearest leadership evidence the season has produced so far.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Which of the four weeks' ideas showed up most naturally, and which needs more work?
2. Did the team organise its own shape without being told — and who led that?
3. What happened when the possession team's width came under real defensive pressure — did it hold or collapse?
4. How is this practice different from every technical practice in the first four weeks?
5. What would you tell a new player joining the squad today about how this team plays, based only on what you've seen in this practice?

Progressions:

1. Remove the loose reference zones entirely, testing whether the shape holds with even less structure.
2. Add a genuine direction of play and a target zone, moving toward a fuller game picture.
3. Introduce a live scoreline context (announced by the coach) to add a light psychological layer.

Regressions:

1. Reintroduce the six-zone structure from Week 2 briefly if the team's shape has genuinely regressed.
2. Reduce numbers to 6v6 for more individual involvement.
3. Allow the coach to prompt with a single word (e.g., "angles," "compact") rather than staying fully silent.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
One principle dominates at the expense of another (e.g., width sacrificed for compactness)	Four weeks of separate teaching hasn't yet fully integrated	Visible imbalance — for example, a very narrow possession shape despite four weeks of width work	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "what happened to an idea from an earlier week just then?"	Resume
Team reverts to a rehearsed pattern rather than reading the picture	Old habits are more comfortable than live decision-making	Repetitive, formulaic possession patterns regardless of the defending picture	Let it flow with a drive-by call	"What does the picture actually say right now?"	Continue
No clear organiser emerges	Leadership still developing	Disorganised early shape with no player correcting it	Stop, briefly	Short group question: "who should be organising this?"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: deliberately minimal — mostly *questioning* at natural stoppages, with the coach acting as an observer more than an instructor, since the whole value of this practice is seeing what the team does without help.

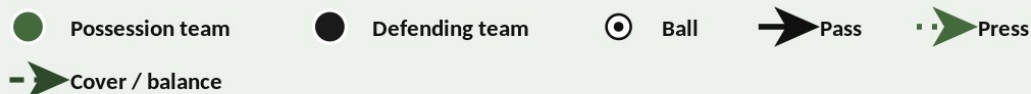
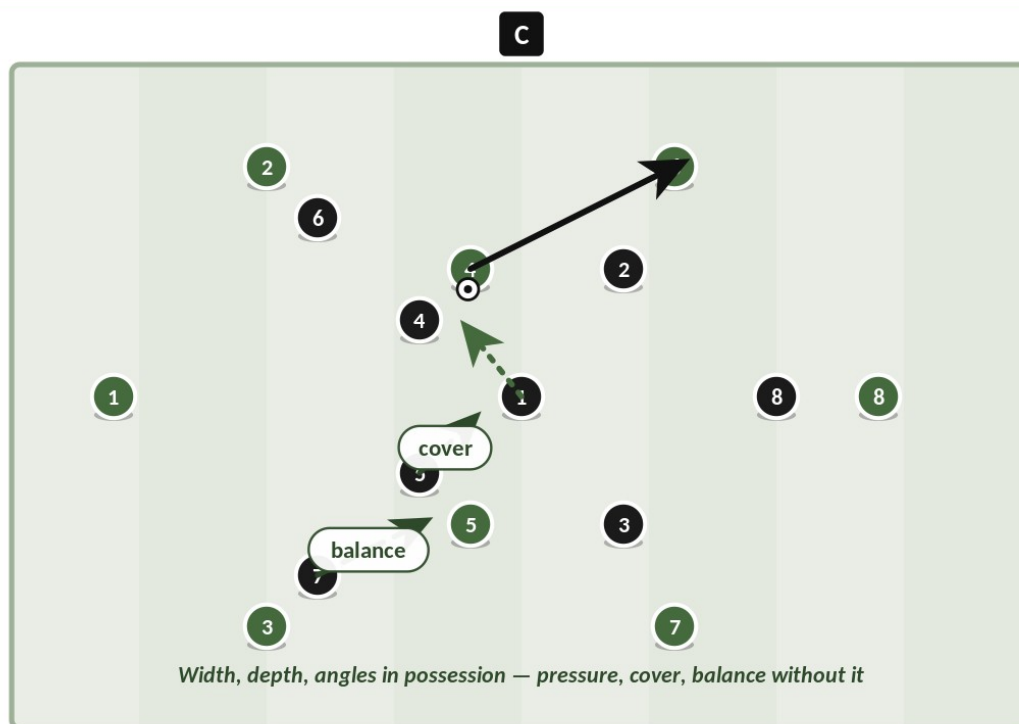
Success indicators:

- Multiple Phase 1 principles are visible without prompting.
- The team organises its own shape, with an identifiable player or players leading that.
- Fewer coach interventions are needed than in any previous week's equivalent practice.

Coach's eye: this is a diagnostic practice as much as a training one — take notes on what you see for use in the four-week review that follows this week.

T5.2 THE COMPLETE PICTURE — Every Principle at Once

40 x 26 m • 8v8 possession • width, depth, angles vs an organised press • 15 minutes



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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 40x26 metre area with dimension labels. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 spread wide and deep in an offset shape, and eight players in black bibs numbered 1–8 organised in a press-cover-balance shape. White football near a green player. A solid black arrow showing a completed pass, a short dotted red press arrow with a chevron arrowhead, and two green dashed arrows labelled 'cover' and 'balance'. Title: 'THE COMPLETE PICTURE — Every Principle at Once'. Subtitle: '40 x 26 m • 8v8 possession • width, depth, angles vs an organised press • 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated wide view of a large positional possession practice, green-bibbed players spread across the full width and depth of the area in a clear offset shape, black-bibbed defenders organised into a visible press-cover-balance triangle, coach standing back from the practice with a notebook, observing rather than instructing.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training. Sixteen players split into two groups on a grass training pitch — eight in dark green bibs spread wide and deep across the full practice area in a clear, organised shape, eight in black bibs organised into a visible pressing triangle around the ball. A coach stands back from the play near the touchline, holding a notebook, observing quietly rather than instructing. Overcast evening light, realistic grass texture, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 3 — FOUR WEEKS IN ONE (SKILL GAME)

Duration: 15 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate-high

Tactical purpose: A genuinely composite small-sided game, layering bonus conditions from all four weeks so far — an angled combination, an organised regain, and a fast, correctly-read transition — onto a single, otherwise normal game, asking players to recognise which opportunity is in front of them at any given moment.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 32 x 20 m
- **Players:** 12 outfield, rotating
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through
- **Team sizes:** 6 v 6
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 mini goals, 6 flat markers, 4 cones
- **Starting positions:** even split
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** nearest sideline
- **Coach position:** sideline, central
- **Rotation method:** none required at this scale
- **Direction of play:** both directions, two goals

Practice walkthrough: A 6v6 game carrying three simultaneous bonus conditions, lightly officiated by the coach: a goal created by an angled third-man combination (Week 1) is worth double; a goal created within six seconds of an organised regain (Weeks 3–4) is worth double; and a turnover conceded within five seconds of winning the ball (the Week 4 penalty) costs the team a bonus goal against. All three conditions run at once, and players must recognise in real time which picture is in front of them rather than chasing a single, familiar bonus.

Rules: As described; otherwise standard small-sided-game rules.

Tactical roles: the full set from Weeks 1–4, applied together.

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Weeks 1–4, recognised and acted on without the practice isolating any one of them.

Communication language used: the complete set introduced so far.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution quality under a genuinely busy cognitive load — three live conditions rather than one.
Tactical	Recognising which opportunity (of three) is actually in front of you at a given moment.
Physical	High-intensity, repeated actions across a demanding, integrated practice.
Psychological	Managing complexity without becoming overwhelmed — a deliberate step up from any single previous week.
Communication & leadership	Calling out which opportunity is on, in the moment, for team-mates who may not have seen it yet.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Which of the three bonus conditions did your team produce most often, and why that one?
2. How did you decide which opportunity to chase when more than one was available?
3. What is different about playing with three live ideas at once compared to one at a time?

4. Which of the four weeks do you think is currently your team's strongest, based on this game?
5. What would a coach watching only this game, with no knowledge of the previous four weeks, be able to tell about how your team plays?

Progressions:

1. Add a fourth condition — width and depth (Week 2) — rewarding a goal that follows a switch of play, completing the full set.
2. Reduce the practice area, raising the tempo and cognitive load further.
3. Remove the coach's officiating and ask a nominated player to judge instead, adding a leadership dimension.

Regressions:

1. Reduce to two simultaneous conditions rather than three while the integration is bedding in.
2. Widen the practice area for more thinking time.
3. Reduce to 4v4 for more individual involvement.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Players fixate on one bonus condition and ignore the others	Cognitive overload — three live ideas is genuinely demanding	Repeated attempts at only one type of bonus, others ignored even when clearly available	Let it flow with a drive-by call	"There's more than one way to score double tonight"	Continue
Quality drops as players try to force a bonus condition artificially	The reward is more visible than the picture in the moment	Forced, low-percentage attempts at a specific bonus type	Stop	Short group intervention: "only take it if it's really there"	Resume
Fatigue reduces recognition speed as the practice continues	Genuine demand of a long, integrated practice	Slower, less accurate reads in the second half	Let it flow	Light-touch encouragement — expected at this stage	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *drive-by coaching* and occasional *short group intervention*, kept light so the practice can demonstrate genuine integration rather than coach-led correction.

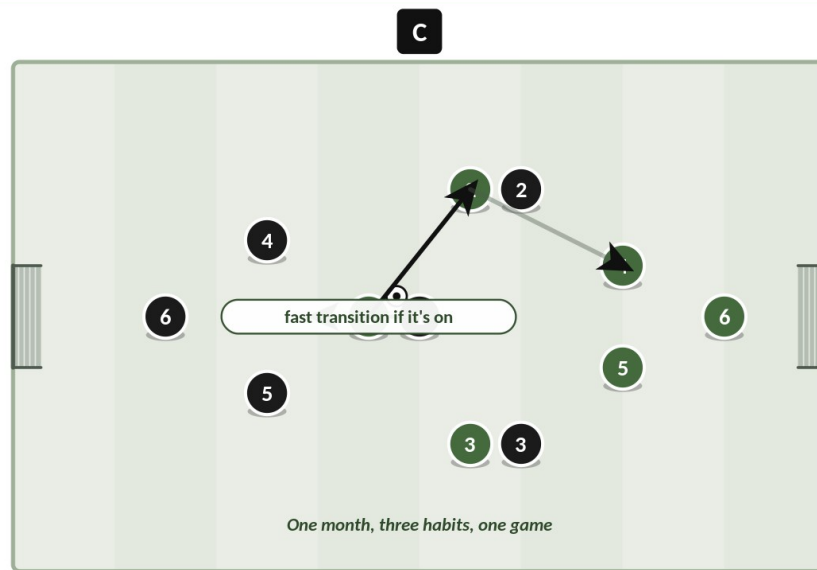
Success indicators:

- All three bonus conditions are achieved at least once across the practice.
- Players can name, when asked, which opportunity they were chasing at a given moment.
- Fewer forced, artificial attempts at a bonus condition by the end of the practice than the start.

Coach's eye: this practice tells you more about the team's genuine tactical understanding than any single-idea practice this season has — watch for fluency, not just correctness.

T5.3 FOUR WEEKS IN ONE — Small-Sided Game

32 x 20 m • 6v6 • bonus for an angled combo, an organised regain, and a fast correct transition • 15 minutes



● Team A ● Team B ● Ball ➔ Angled combo ➔ Organised regain ➔ Fast transition

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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 32x20 metre pitch with a small goal at each end. Six players in dark green bibs numbered 1–6 and six players in black bibs numbered 1–6 spread across the pitch. White football near a green player. A solid black arrow showing an angled pass, a second faded grey arrow showing a follow-up pass, and a green dashed arrow labelled 'fast transition if it's on'. Title: 'FOUR WEEKS IN ONE — Small-Sided Game'. Subtitle: '32 x 20 m • 6v6 • bonus for an angled combo, an organised regain, and a fast correct transition • 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated sideline view of a lively 6v6 game, a green-bibbed player completing a sharp angled pass into a team-mate arriving at speed, black-bibbed opponents reacting, both mini goals visible, coach on the touchline animated and closely engaged.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 6v6 small-sided football game on a grass pitch with two mini goals. A player in a dark green bib completing a sharp, angled pass to a team-mate arriving at speed into space. Opposition players in black bibs reacting a fraction late. A coach on the touchline, animated, closely engaged and gesturing. Late-afternoon light, realistic grass pitch and shadows, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 4 — PHASE 1 FINAL (CONDITIONED MATCH)

Duration: 15 minutes · **Training load:** High

Tactical purpose: The genuine test of the whole opening block — a conditioned match with no bonuses, no gates, no artificial scoring conditions at all. If Weeks 1–4 have worked, the team's identity should simply be visible, unprompted, inside ordinary play.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 55 x 38 m
- **Players:** 18 outfield + 2 goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers play their own-goal role, fully integrated
- **Team sizes:** 9 v 9
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 full-size or portable goals, 8 flat markers, corner cones
- **Starting positions:** free — teams organise their own shape
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** match-realistic restarts
- **Coach position:** touchline, mobile, largely observing
- **Rotation method:** none required; goalkeepers may split time at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** standard, both teams attack opposite goals

Practice walkthrough: As close to a genuine match as the season has come so far, with no structural teaching aids. The coach's role is almost entirely observational, gathering evidence for the four-week review that follows this session, and intervening only where something needs correcting before it becomes a habit heading into Phase 2.

Rules: Standard match rules.

Tactical roles: the complete set from Weeks 1–4, applied without any structural support.

Decision-making triggers: the complete set from Weeks 1–4.

Communication language used: the complete set introduced so far.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution under full match intensity and fatigue.
Tactical	Genuine, unprompted expression of four weeks of principles.
Physical	The pre-season block's peak physical demand.
Psychological	Composure and identity under match-realistic conditions.
Communication & leadership	Whoever is organising the team by this point in the season — the clearest evidence yet of emerging leadership.

Guided discovery questions:

1. If you had to describe how this team plays in one sentence, based only on this game, what would you say?
2. What was the single best moment of the whole session, and which of the four weeks did it come from?
3. What is still missing, four weeks in?
4. How ready do you feel for Phase 2, which starts introducing genuinely new ideas next week?

Progressions: not applicable — this practice is deliberately the season's least structured so far; further progression happens in Phase 2.

Regressions:

1. Reduce to 7v7 if fatigue or attendance requires it.
2. Reduce the area proportionally.
3. Reintroduce a single, light structural aid (e.g., the switch-of-play bonus from Week 2) if the team's shape has genuinely regressed under full match conditions.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Old habits reappear under full match pressure and fatigue	Four weeks is real progress but not yet permanent	A specific Week 1–4 problem (isolated pressing, forced forward balls, narrow shape) reappears	Let it flow, note it for the four-week review	None during play — this is diagnostic, not corrective, time	Continue
Team looks tired and disorganised late in the practice	Genuine accumulated pre-season load, appropriately peaking this week	Visible fatigue in the final five minutes	Let it flow	Light-touch encouragement	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: almost entirely *observation*, with findings recorded for the four-week review rather than corrected live — this is deliberately the exception to the rest of the season's more actively coached practices.

Success indicators:

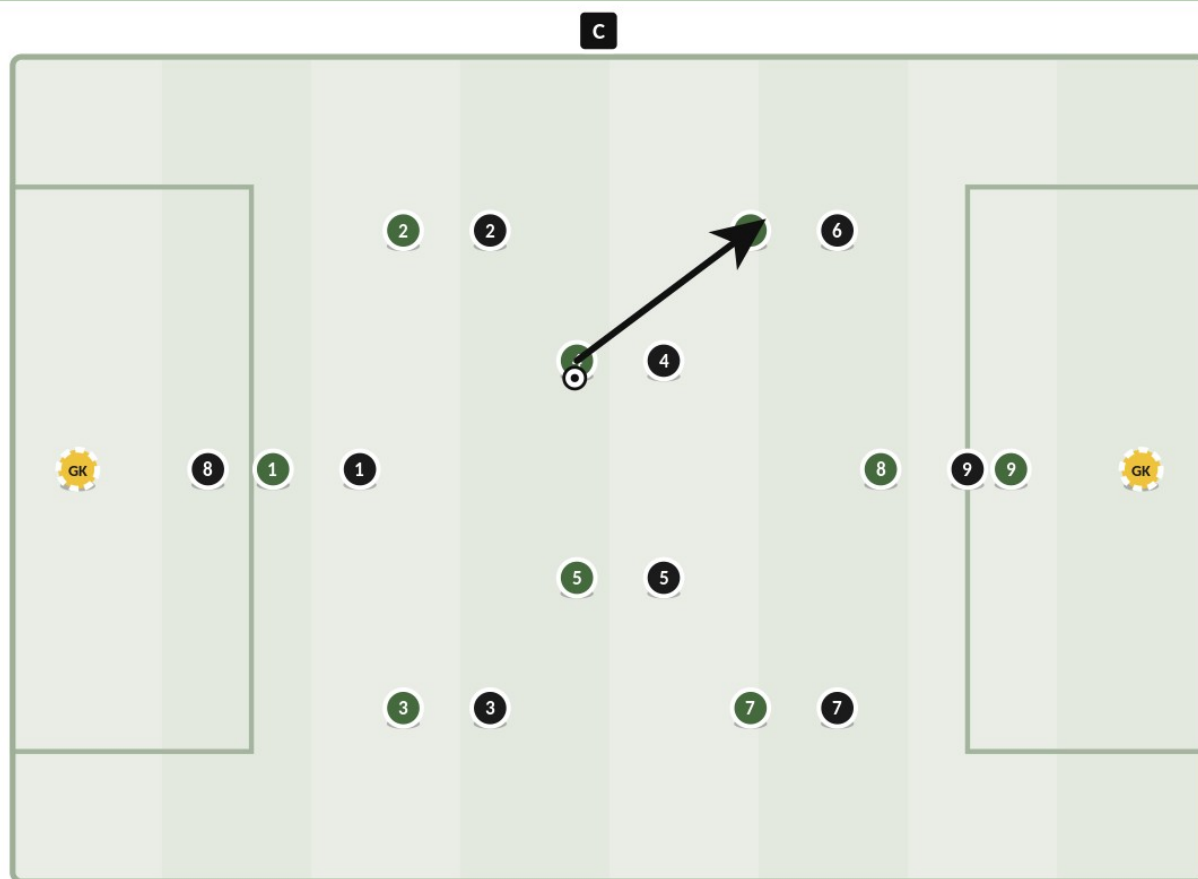
- Multiple Phase 1 principles visible without prompting, across both teams.
- The team organises its own shape without instruction.
- The session ends with the coach having a clear, evidence-based picture for the

four-week review.

Coach's eye: watch the whole game, not any single principle — this is the moment to see the team as a team, not as four separate lessons.

T5.4 PHASE 1 FINAL — Conditioned Match

55 x 38 m • 9v9 + GKs • no bonuses, no gates — just play it well • 15 minutes



● Team A ● Team B ● Goalkeeper ● Ball → Pass

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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style, showing a 55x38 metre pitch with penalty box markings at both ends, full-size goals with goalkeepers in yellow at each end. Nine players in dark green bibs numbered 1-9 and nine players in black bibs numbered 1-9 spread across the pitch in realistic, organised match shape. White football near a green player. A single solid black arrow showing a pass. Title: 'PHASE 1 FINAL — Conditioned Match'. Subtitle: '55 x 38 m • 9v9 + GKs • no bonuses, no gates — just play it well • 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Wide elevated view of a genuine 9v9 conditioned match on a large grass area, full-size goals with goalkeepers at each end, both teams organised into clear, recognisable shapes, coach on the touchline standing quietly with a notebook, observing rather than instructing.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Wide elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 9v9 conditioned football match on a large grass pitch with full-size goals and goalkeepers in yellow at each end. Both teams, one in dark green bibs and one in black bibs, organised into clear, recognisable shapes across the pitch, playing with genuine match intensity. A coach stands quietly on the touchline near halfway, holding a notebook, observing closely. Early evening light with long shadows, realistic grass pitch markings, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

REFLECTION (1 MINUTE)

One question to the group: *"In one sentence — what does this team stand for, four weeks in?"*

Thursday — Session 10

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	10 of 72
Week	5
Season phase	1 — Pre-Season Foundation
Training day	Thursday
Session theme	Set-piece foundations: corners
Short summary	Installs the season's first two set-piece routines — one reliable attacking corner and a defensive corner organisation — in full detail, per the Set-Piece Development Pathway (Season Architecture, Section 8), then rehearses both under game-realistic pressure.
Tags	`set-pieces` `unit-work` `full-squad-practice`
Primary learning objective	Every player knows their specific job, starting position and run on the club's attacking and defensive corner routines.
Secondary learning objective	Rest defence and transition protection are built into both routines from day one, not added later.
Match connection	The week's named match-day connection: a genuine, fixture-ready attacking corner routine the team can call on this Saturday.
Expected tactical outcome	The team can execute both routines calmly and correctly under moderate opposition pressure.
Expected physical load	Moderate — set-piece work is technically and organisationally demanding but not physically taxing in the way open-play practices are.
Recommended intensity	5.5–6.5 / 10, rising only in the closing game.
Equipment list	16 footballs · 20 flat markers · 8 cones (orange) · 2 sets of bibs (2 colours, 10 each) · 2 full-size or portable goals
Player numbers	Designed for 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers; scales 10–22, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Central to this session — both keepers are needed, one commanding each box in turn. Where only one goalkeeper attends, they take the defending role in Practice 3, and Practice 2 (attacking corner) uses a bibbed outfield "GK" instead, since the attacking routine's coaching content doesn't depend on genuine shot-stopping. Where no goalkeeper attends, both practices use a bibbed outfield "GK."
Pitch dimensions	Both set-piece practices are worked inside a 44 x 30 m attacking-third-plus area; the closing game uses 40 x 26 m.
Area layout	One end of the pitch, using a real penalty box and goal where available.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Reduce the attacking corner routine to four attackers plus two rest-defence players against four defenders (rather than five attackers vs six); reduce the defensive corner organisation to five defenders. Both routines' core structure survives the reduction.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Add a second wave of attackers/defenders rotating in every few repetitions, increasing repetitions without changing the core routine.

FIELD	DETAIL
Contingency — restricted space	Both routines can be walked through and lightly opposed inside a genuine six-yard-box-and-penalty-area space even where the rest of the pitch is unavailable — this is the week least dependent on open space.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00–0:08	8 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Restart Reflexes</i>	Light green
0:08–0:25	17 min	Set-piece practice — <i>Near Post Front, Far Post Finish (Attacking Corner)</i>	Club green
0:25–0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27–0:42	15 min	Set-piece practice — <i>Defensive Corner Organisation</i>	Dark green
0:42–0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44–0:59	15 min	Small-sided game — <i>Corners Count</i>	Black
0:59–1:02	3 min	Reflection	—

(8 + 17 + 2 + 15 + 2 + 15 + 3 = 62; two of the timeline's transition minutes are absorbed into the set-piece practices themselves, which naturally include brief walk-throughs between repetitions — the practical running time is 60 minutes.)

PRACTICE 1 — RESTART REFLEXES (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: A light, focused warm-up connecting back to Week 1's restart discipline work, preparing the body and the group's attention for a technically precise session rather than a physically demanding one.

Organisation: 16 x 12 m grid, one ball per player for three minutes, pairs for five. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join fully, though their specific warm-up (handling, footwork) is layered in separately by the coach alongside the group activity.

Walkthrough: Individual ball work, then paired passing focused on delivery weight and accuracy — a direct technical primer for the corner deliveries that follow.

Rules: None beyond standard technical practice conduct.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* striking technique — the specific technique used for out-swinging deliveries.
- *Psychological:* calm, focused energy appropriate to a technically precise session.

PRACTICE 2 — NEAR POST FRONT, FAR POST FINISH (ATTACKING CORNER)

Duration: 17 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Purpose: The club's first reliable attacking corner routine — a simple, repeatable picture with a near-post decoy run, a far-post finisher, and rest defence built in from the first repetition, designed to be learnable in one session and refined for the rest of the season rather than replaced.

Tactical purpose within the session: Gives the team a genuine, match-ready set-piece option this week, directly delivering the session's named match-day connection.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** worked inside a 44 x 30 m attacking-third area, using a real penalty box and goal where available
- **Players:** 6 attacking outfield + 1 corner taker, vs 4–5 defenders + goalkeeper
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the defending goalkeeper commands the box fully; the attacking team's own goalkeeper is not involved in this practice (they train the defensive routine in Practice 3 instead)
- **Team sizes:** 6 attackers (including the corner taker) v 4–5 defenders + GK
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for starting-position reference, 1 corner flag or cone
- **Ball supply:** a supply of balls with the corner taker for repeated deliveries
- **Restart location:** the corner arc

Player roles and starting positions:

- **Corner taker** — right-side corner arc, delivering an out-swinging ball toward the near post.
- **Near-post runner (decoy)** — starts on the edge of the penalty area, arcs a run to arrive at the near post just ahead of the delivery, aiming to flick the ball on toward the far post rather than necessarily finishing themselves.
- **Far-post finisher** — starts deeper, at the edge of the six-yard box on the far side, timing a run to arrive just as the flick-on is played, the primary intended finisher.
- **Two rest-defence players** — remain outside the penalty area throughout, positioned centrally, never joining the box; their job is exclusively to prevent an immediate counter-attack if the corner is cleared.
- **One additional attacking player** — positioned at the edge of the box as a second-phase / rebound option, ready to strike a loose ball or clearance that falls short.

Delivery type: out-swinging, driven toward the near post, low enough to be flicked on rather than looped.

Runs: the near-post runner's arc must start late and arrive fast — an early arrival gives the defending team time to adjust their marking; the far-post finisher's run is timed off the near-post runner's contact, not off the corner taker's delivery, since the flick-on is the actual moment of service for the intended finisher.

Blocks/screens: legal, incidental screening only — an attacking run that occupies space a marking defender would otherwise use is legitimate; a deliberate, standing block of a defender's path is not, and is coached out explicitly as against the Laws of the Game.

Rebound positions: the additional attacking player at the edge of the box is positioned specifically for this, along with the far-post finisher if their initial run is unsuccessful.

Rest defence: two players, positioned centrally just outside the penalty area, non-negotiable on every single repetition — this routine is taught with rest defence built in from the first rehearsal, not added once the attacking pattern is learned.

Transition protection: the two rest-defence players' explicit job, connecting directly to Week 4's transition-to-defence content — an opposition counter-attack following a defended corner is met immediately by two players already goal-side rather than a team caught fully committed forward.

Alternative option: a short corner, played to a player stationed just outside the box, used when the near-post/far-post picture is well-defended by the opposition — introduced this week as a named option without full rehearsal; developed further in Phase 3's set-piece expansion (Week 16–17).

Practice walkthrough: Walk the routine through at cone-marked walking pace first, confirming every player's starting position and run. Then repeat at full pace against progressively increasing opposition — first no opposition, then passive opposition, then a genuine defending unit using Practice 3's organisation once both practices have been introduced.

Rules: Standard corner-kick rules and offside apply. A successful routine is judged by quality of execution (correct runs, timing, delivery), not only by whether a goal results.

Opposition cues: if the opposition defends zonally, the near-post runner's decoy is more likely to draw a marker out of position, opening space for the far-post finisher; if the opposition man-marks, the far-post finisher's run should specifically aim to lose their marker in the traffic created by the near-post decoy.

Contingency for a key player unavailable: if the intended far-post finisher (often the team's most aerially dominant player) is unavailable, the roles of near-post decoy and far-post finisher can be swapped between the two next-most-suitable players without changing the routine's structure — the picture, not the specific personnel, is what matters.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Delivery weight and height — low and driven enough to be flicked on, not looped.
Tactical	Timing of the far-post run off the flick-on, not off the initial delivery.
Physical	Explosive, well-timed runs rather than early, static positioning.
Psychological	Composure and precision in a technically exacting practice.
Communication & leadership	The corner taker and near-post runner confirming timing verbally before every repetition.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Why does the near-post runner's job matter even on repetitions where they don't touch the ball?
2. What happens to the routine if the far-post finisher arrives too early?
3. How does the routine change against a zonal defence compared to man-marking?
4. Why are the two rest-defence players non-negotiable, even when the routine looks like it's working well without them?
5. What is the short corner alternative for, and when would you use it instead?

Progressions:

1. Add full, live opposition using the organisation from Practice 3.
2. Add a specific defender assigned to man-mark the near-post decoy, testing whether the far-post run still finds space.
3. Practice the short-corner alternative as a live option, rotating between it and the primary routine.

Regressions:

1. Walk the routine through at cone-marked pace for longer before adding any opposition.
2. Remove the rebound player initially, adding them back once the primary pattern is secure.
3. Use a mini goal instead of a full goal and goalkeeper while the timing is being learned.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Near-post runner arrives too early, allowing defenders to adjust	Eagerness, or misjudging the delivery's flight time	Runner waiting at the near post rather than arriving with the ball	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: walk through the timing once more	Resume
Rest-defence players drift into the box to watch the delivery	Attention pulled toward the exciting part of the routine	Two players missing from their rest-defence positions	Stop, every time	Firm, immediate correction — this is non-negotiable	Resume from a fresh corner

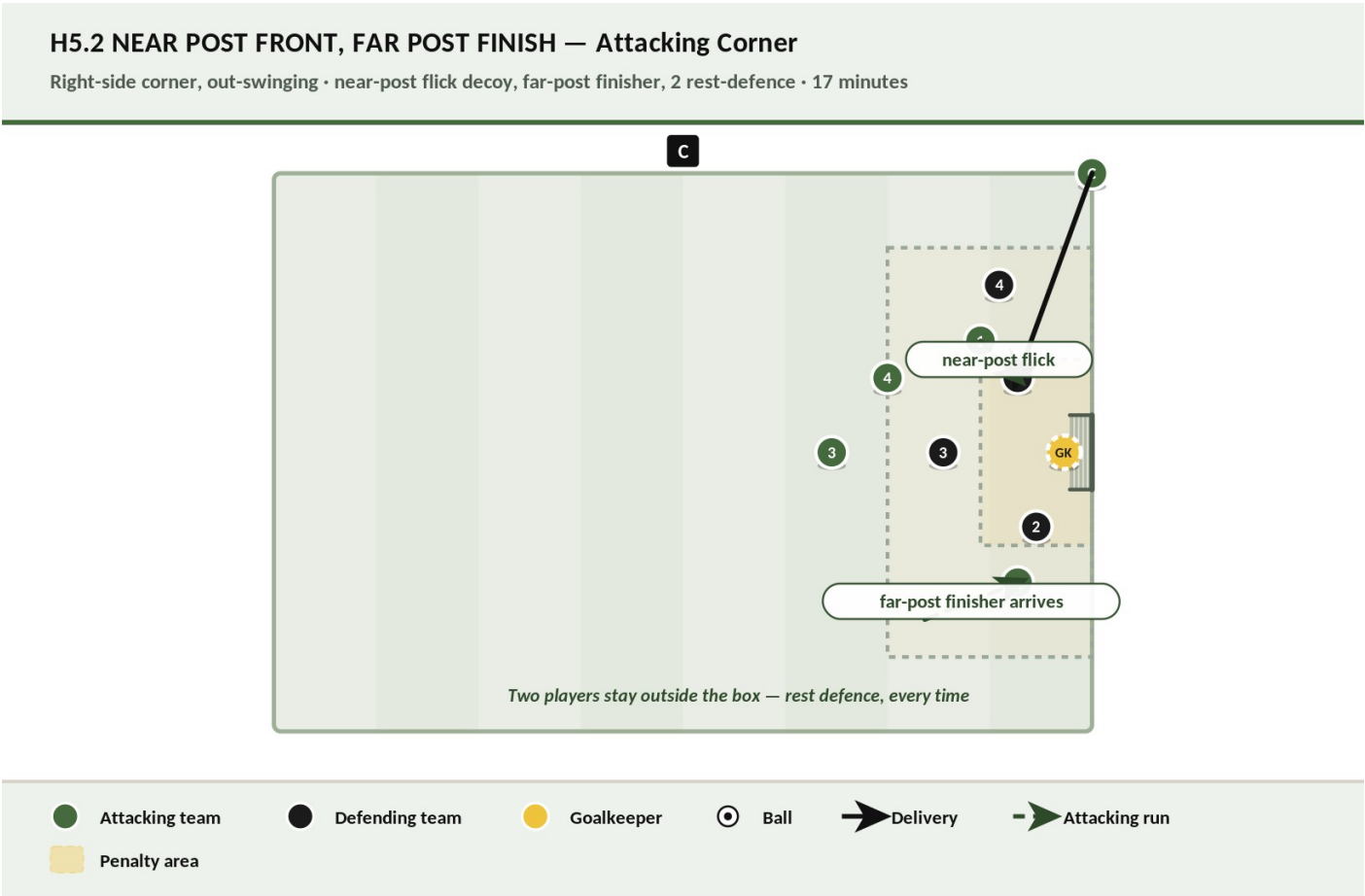
PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Delivery is too high or too slow to be flicked on	Technical execution under the pressure of a real routine	Ball looping over the near-post runner rather than being flickable	Let it flow with a drive-by call	Technical cue on the corner taker's technique	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: heavy on *demonstration* and *rehearsal* early, moving to *drive-by coaching* once the pattern is established; the rest-defence rule is enforced every single time without exception.

Success indicators:

- Both runners arrive at the correct time relative to the delivery, not too early.
- Rest defence is maintained on every repetition without reminders by the end of the practice.
- The routine produces genuine goal-scoring opportunities against realistic opposition.

Coach's eye: watch the two rest-defence players as closely as the attacking pattern itself — a beautifully executed routine that leaves the team exposed to a counter is not a success by this club's standards.



Castlewellan Town FC · Senior Coaching Curriculum · Week 5 · Diagrams not to scale

AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style, showing a penalty box area on the right side of a 44x30 metre pitch with dimension context. A full-size goal on the right edge with a goalkeeper in yellow. A player in dark green labelled C at the top-right corner arc. Four players in dark green (near-post runner, far-post finisher, and two rest-defence players positioned well outside the box) and one more inside the box as a rebound option. Four players in black bibs marking inside the box. A black solid arrow showing the corner delivery toward the near post. A green dashed arrow labelled 'near-post flick' and a second green dashed arrow labelled 'far-post finisher arrives'. Title: 'NEAR POST FRONT, FAR POST FINISH — Attacking Corner'. Subtitle: 'Right-side corner, out-swinging · near-post flick decoy, far-post finisher, 2 rest-defence · 17 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated view from behind the goal of a corner-kick routine in progress, a green-bibbed corner taker delivering the ball, a green-bibbed runner arriving at the near post to flick it on, a second green-bibbed player arriving at the far post, black-bibbed defenders marking inside the box, two green-bibbed rest-defence players clearly visible standing outside the penalty area, goalkeeper in yellow positioned to react, coach observing from the edge of the box.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): *"Elevated three-quarter view from behind the goal of an adult amateur football corner-kick routine in progress on a grass pitch. A player in a dark green bib delivering a corner kick. A green-bibbed player arriving at the near post to flick the ball on, a second green-bibbed player arriving at the far post to finish. Players in black bibs marking inside the penalty box. Two players in dark green bibs standing well outside the penalty area, clearly positioned as rest defence, not involved in the attack on the ball. A goalkeeper in yellow positioned to react to the delivery. A coach standing at the edge of the box, observing closely. Overcast evening light, realistic grass pitch and penalty box markings, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."*

PRACTICE 3 — DEFENSIVE CORNER ORGANISATION

Duration: 15 minutes • **Training load:** Moderate

Purpose: Gives the team a clear, repeatable defensive corner structure — a hybrid of zonal and player-specific marking — that protects the near and far posts, contests the central area, and, like the attacking routine, builds transition protection in from the first repetition rather than treating it as an afterthought.

Tactical purpose within the session: The defensive mirror of Practice 2, and the second half of the week's set-piece foundation.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** worked inside the same 44 x 30 m area as Practice 2
- **Players:** 6 defending outfield + goalkeeper, vs 6 attackers + corner taker
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the defending team's goalkeeper commands the box and organises the whole picture — the season's clearest single example yet of the goalkeeper's organisational role
- **Team sizes:** 6 defenders + GK v 6 attackers (including corner taker)
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for zonal reference positions
- **Ball supply:** a supply of balls with the attacking team's corner taker
- **Restart location:** the corner arc

Player roles and starting positions:

- **Near-post defender** — stationed directly on the near post, covering the space the goalkeeper cannot reach on their near side.
- **Far-post defender** — stationed on the far post, mirroring the near-post job on the opposite side.
- **Two zonal markers across the six-yard box** — covering the central area between the posts, picking up any attacker who arrives in their zone rather than following a named opponent.
- **One player marking the edge of the box / most dangerous opponent** — a player-specific assignment on the opposition's most aerially dangerous or most central attacking threat, wherever they start.
- **Two out-ball players, positioned beyond the penalty area, facing outward** — not involved in defending the delivery at all; their sole job is to be an immediate, available out-ball the instant the corner is cleared, protecting the team's transition to attack.

Delivery type addressed: organised to cover out-swinging and in-swinging deliveries to near post, central, and far-post areas alike — the zonal-plus-post structure is deliberately delivery-agnostic.

Runs: defenders hold their zone or mark until the delivery is struck, then attack the ball aggressively — passive zonal defending (waiting to react rather than attacking the ball) is coached out explicitly.

Blocks/screens: defenders may not deliberately impede an attacker's run in a way that breaches the Laws of the Game; legal jostling for a zonal position is coached, blocking is not.

Rebound positions: the two post defenders are also the first line for a rebound after the goalkeeper saves or parries; the zonal markers are coached to react to loose balls inside the box as a second priority after their zonal jobs.

Rest defence / transition protection: the two out-ball players beyond the box are this routine's direct equivalent of Practice 2's rest defence — positioned specifically so that a cleared corner can be turned into an attacking transition immediately, connecting directly to Week 4's "recognise the picture" principle applied to the very first pass after a defensive set piece.

Alternative option: against a team that consistently overloads the six-yard box with numbers, the two zonal markers can be supplemented temporarily by dropping one of the two out-ball players in as a third zonal marker — used only when genuinely needed, since it weakens the team's transition protection.

Practice walkthrough: Walk the structure through at cone-marked pace, confirming every player's zone or mark. Progress to opposed repetitions using Practice 2's attacking routine as the live opposition, so both practices reinforce each other directly within the same session.

Rules: Standard corner-kick and offside rules apply.

Opposition cues: if the opposition's corner routine features a near-post decoy runner (as the club's own routine does), the near-post defender's job is to engage that runner physically and fairly, disrupting their run rather than allowing a free flick; if the opposition loads the six-yard box with numbers, the zonal markers' early engagement becomes even more important than usual.

Contingency for a key player unavailable: if the team's most commanding aerial defender (often the far-post defender) is unavailable, prioritise placing the next-best aerial player at the far post specifically, since it is statistically the area most associated with unmarked headers at this level, and accept a lesser matchup at a zonal position instead.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Attacking the ball aggressively rather than waiting passively for it to arrive.
Tactical	Zonal discipline combined with player-specific awareness of the most dangerous opponent.
Physical	Explosive jumping and contact actions, timed correctly.
Psychological	Concentration through a long, potentially repetitive set-piece practice — a real and different demand from open-play practices.
Communication & leadership	The goalkeeper's voice organising the whole picture — marking assignments, zonal reminders, and the moment to attack the ball.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What is the goalkeeper's job in this routine beyond shot-stopping?
2. Why are the two out-ball players not involved in defending the delivery at all?
3. How does this structure change against an opponent who overloads the box with numbers?
4. What is the risk of a purely zonal system with no player-specific marking at all?
5. How does defending this corner well connect to what the team learned in Week 4 about transition to attack?

Progressions:

1. Add a genuine live attacking routine (Practice 2's) at full pace and intensity.
2. Introduce a second attacking wave (a rebound phase) to test the zonal markers' second-priority job.
3. Rotate the player-specific marking assignment among different opposition "threats" to test adaptability.

Regressions:

1. Walk the structure through with no opposition for longer before adding any.
2. Reduce to a smaller defending unit (5 rather than 6) against fewer attackers while the structure is learned.
3. Allow the coach to call out each player's job during the first several repetitions.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Zonal markers defend passively, waiting for the	Zonal marking is sometimes	Defenders static, allowing attackers to win first	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: demonstrate attacking the ball aggressively	Resume

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
ball rather than attacking it	misunderstood as "stand and wait"	contact		from a zonal start	
Out-ball players drift into the box to help defend	Same pull toward the exciting part of the routine as Practice 2's rest defence	Two players missing from their out-ball positions	Stop, every time	Firm, immediate correction	Resume from a fresh corner
Goalkeeper stays quiet rather than organising the picture	Not yet confident in the full organisational role this routine asks for	Little or no vocal input organising marking assignments	Let it flow with a drive-by call	Direct individual encouragement to the goalkeeper	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: heavy on *demonstration* and *rehearsal* early, with the rest-defence-equivalent (out-ball) rule enforced every time without exception, as in Practice 2.

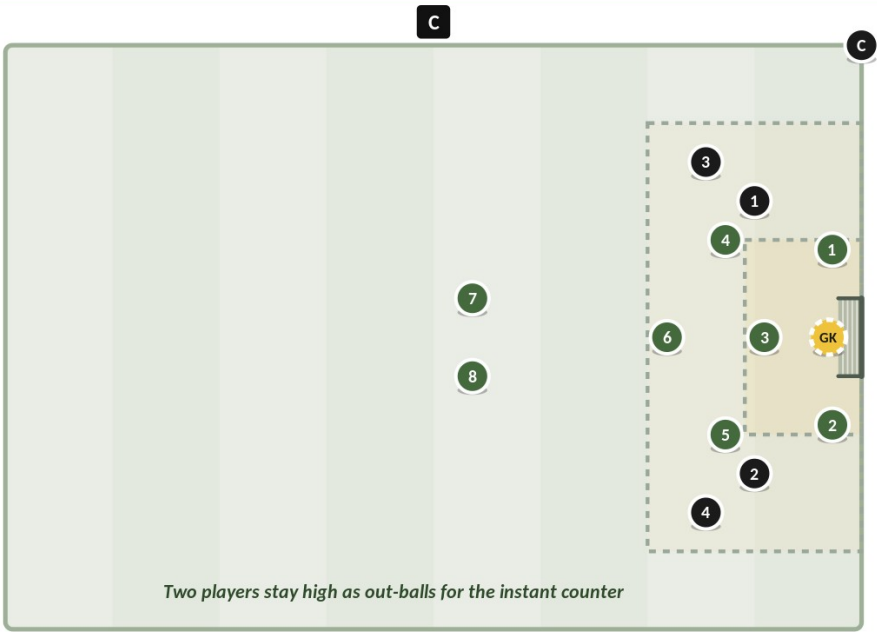
Success indicators:

- Defenders attack the ball rather than waiting for it.
- The two out-ball players hold their position on every repetition by the end of the practice.
- The goalkeeper is heard organising the picture audibly and specifically.

Coach's eye: watch the moment of delivery specifically — a well-organised structure that then defends passively at the actual moment of contact has not really solved the problem this practice exists to solve.

H5.3 DEFENSIVE CORNER ORGANISATION — Zonal + Posts

Zonal marking across the six-yard box, a player on each post, 2 out-balls beyond the box • 15 minutes



Defending team

Attacking team

Goalkeeper

Ball

Zonal marking area

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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style, showing a penalty box area on the right side of a 44x30 metre pitch. A full-size goal on the right edge with a goalkeeper in yellow. Six players in dark green bibs organised in a zonal-plus-post structure inside and around the six-yard box, and two more dark green players positioned well outside the penalty area facing outward, labelled as out-ball players. A player in black labelled C at the corner arc, with five more black-bibbed attackers marked

inside the box. Title: 'DEFENSIVE CORNER ORGANISATION — Zonal + Posts'. Subtitle: 'Zonal marking across the six-yard box, a player on each post, 2 out-balls beyond the box · 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated view from behind the goal of a defending team organised for a corner, green-bibbed defenders positioned on each post and across the six-yard box, two green-bibbed players standing well outside the box facing away from goal as out-balls, goalkeeper in yellow commanding the box vocally, black-bibbed attackers preparing to attack the delivery, coach observing from pitch level.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter view from behind the goal of an adult amateur football team organised to defend a corner kick on a grass pitch. Green-bibbed defenders positioned on the near and far posts and spread across the six-yard box in a zonal structure. Two players in dark green bibs standing well outside the penalty area, facing outward, clearly separate from the defending action. A goalkeeper in yellow at the centre of the goal, one arm raised, visibly organising and calling out to team-mates. Players in black bibs preparing to attack the incoming delivery. A coach standing at pitch level near the box, observing closely. Overcast evening light, realistic grass pitch and penalty box markings, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 4 — CORNERS COUNT (SMALL-SIDED GAME)

Duration: 15 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate-high

Tactical purpose: Closes the week by rehearsing both new routines under genuine game pressure rather than isolated repetition — the game restarts periodically with a corner, giving both routines a realistic context and sending players into the weekend sharp and confident, per the stated purpose of every Thursday session.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 26 m
- **Players:** 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers play their own-goal role, each organising their own defensive corner when required

- **Team sizes:** 8 v 8
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 full-size or portable goals, 8 flat markers, corner cones
- **Starting positions:** standard match shape
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** the coach awards a corner to alternate teams roughly every 90

seconds, regardless of how the ball actually left play, to guarantee repeated practice of both routines within a normal game context

- **Coach position:** touchline, mobile
- **Rotation method:** none required
- **Direction of play:** standard, both teams attack opposite goals

Practice walkthrough: A normal 8v8 game, interrupted every 90 seconds or so by the coach awarding a corner (alternating which team) regardless of how play actually stopped. Both teams execute their attacking and defensive corner routines inside a live game context, with normal play resuming immediately afterward — including defending the transition if the corner is cleared, directly testing the rest-defence and out-ball principles from Practices 2 and 3 under real, if lightly manufactured, pressure.

Rules: Standard small-sided-game rules; corner restarts awarded by the coach as described.

Tactical roles: both routines' full role sets, now inside live, continuous play.

Decision-making triggers: as established in Practices 2 and 3, now applied without a clean, isolated repetition to prepare for.

Communication language used: the full season's language, plus this week's set-piece-specific organisation calls.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution quality under the pressure of a live game rather than an isolated practice.
Tactical	Recognising and executing the correct routine the instant a corner is awarded, without a lengthy reset.
Physical	A different physical picture from the rest of the session — short, explosive set-piece actions inside an otherwise flowing game.
Psychological	Confidence heading into the weekend, having rehearsed both routines under realistic pressure.
Communication & leadership	Organising the routine quickly after a corner is awarded, without needing a full walkthrough each time.

Guided discovery questions:

1. How quickly could your team organise itself once a corner was awarded?
2. What happened differently executing the routine inside a live game compared to the isolated practice earlier?
3. Did the rest-defence and out-ball principles hold up when the corner was actually cleared into open play?
4. What is one thing about tonight's two routines you feel confident about heading into Saturday?

Progressions:

1. Reduce the interval between awarded corners, raising the frequency of practice.
2. Remove the coach's artificial awarding and rely on corners won naturally within the game.
3. Add a defending-with-ten-players scenario immediately after a corner, connecting to Phase 5 content still to come.

Regressions:

1. Increase the interval between awarded corners, reducing the practice's density.
2. Allow a brief walkthrough pause before each awarded corner while the routines are still being learned.
3. Reduce to 6v6 if fatigue is visible this late in the week.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Routine organisation is slow, disrupting the game's flow	Routines are still new, first time applied inside live play	Long pauses before each corner is taken	Let it flow	Light-touch encouragement — expected in week one of a new routine	Continue
Rest defence / out-ball discipline breaks down under game excitement	The pull toward the ball is stronger in a live, scored game than in isolated practice	Players drawn into the box despite their assigned job	Stop, every time this happens	Firm, immediate correction, consistent with Practices 2 and 3	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: consistent enforcement of the non-negotiable rest-defence/out-ball rule, otherwise light-touch encouragement.

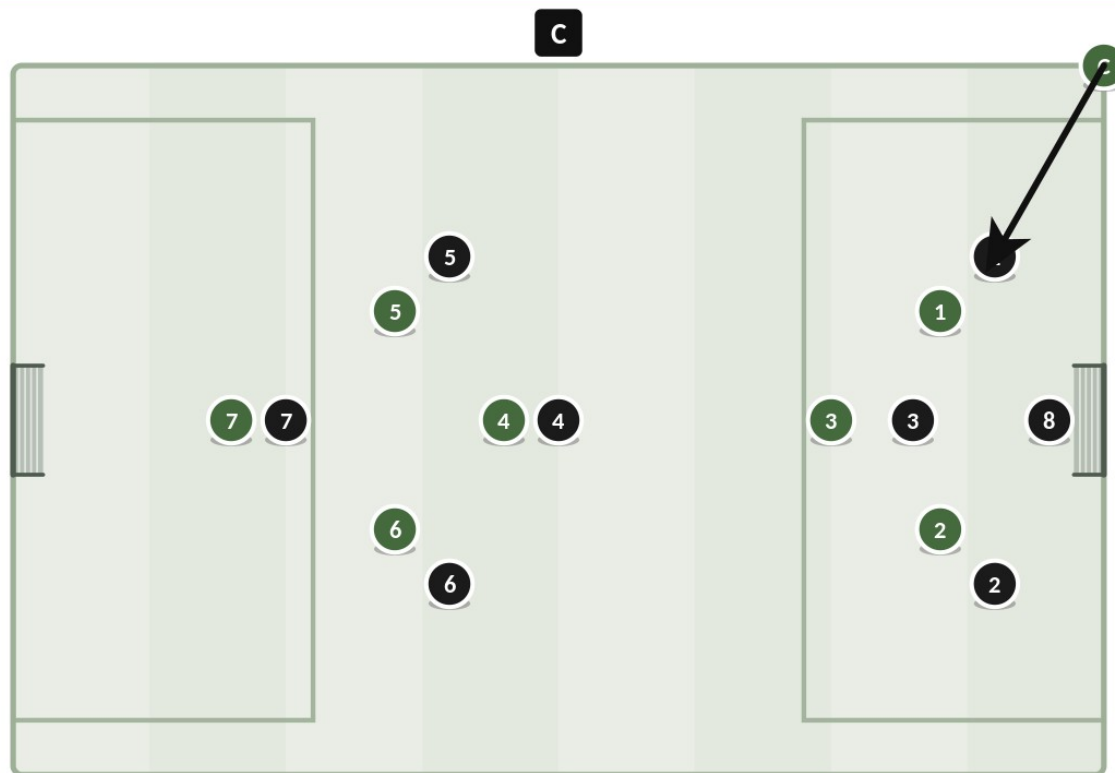
Success indicators:

- Both routines are organised and executed within a reasonable time of being awarded.
- Rest defence and out-ball discipline hold up under live game pressure.
- Players finish the session confident in both routines.

Coach's eye: as in every Thursday session, finish by reading the group's confidence as closely as their execution.

H5.4 CORNERS COUNT — Confidence Game

40 x 26 m • 8v8 • restarts every 90s with a corner from open play • 15 minutes



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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style, showing a 40x26 metre pitch with penalty box markings and a goal at each end. A player in dark green labelled C at a corner arc. Seven more players in dark green bibs numbered 1–7 and six players in black bibs numbered 1–6 spread across the pitch in match positions. A black solid arrow showing the corner delivery. Title: 'CORNERS COUNT — Confidence Game'. Subtitle: '40 x 26 m • 8v8 • restarts every 90s with a corner from open play • 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated sideline view of a normal 8v8 game paused for a corner kick, a green-bibbed corner taker about to deliver, both teams organised in their attacking and defensive corner structures, full-size goals visible, coach on the touchline having just awarded the restart, checking a watch or timer.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 8v8 football game paused for a corner kick on a grass pitch with full-size goals. A player in a dark green bib about to deliver a corner kick, both teams organised in clear attacking and defensive structures around the box. A coach stands on the touchline, having just awarded the restart, glancing at a stopwatch. Warm, late-afternoon light, realistic grass pitch and shadows, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

REFLECTION (FINAL 3 MINUTES, SEATED)

Seated as a group, captain(s) present — closing Phase 1.

Questions put to the group:

1. What is your job on the attacking corner, and what is your job on the defensive corner — can you state both without checking?
2. What is one thing from the whole of Phase 1 (Weeks 1–5) you're proudest of as a group?
3. What is one thing you know Phase 2 needs to improve?

Coach's closing input: confirm both routines are match-ready for Saturday, and tell the group plainly that this closes Phase 1 — the four-week review that follows this session sets the agenda for Phase 2, which begins introducing genuinely new tactical content next week.

Match-Day Objectives — Week 5

Three team objectives:

1. The team's identity from Weeks 1–4 is visible without needing to be reminded of it.
2. The attacking corner routine is executed correctly at least once.
3. The defensive corner organisation concedes no clear, unmarked chances.

Three unit objectives:

- *Defensive unit*: the defensive corner structure — posts, zones, and out-balls — is organised within a few seconds of the corner being awarded.
- *Midfield unit*: the team's transition-to-attack decision-making (Week 4) is visible immediately after any defensive clearance, corner or open play.
- *Attacking unit*: the attacking corner routine's timing (near-post decoy, far-post finisher) is executed as rehearsed.

Individual role reminders *(assign according to the shape and personnel available)*:

- Corner taker: delivery weight and height are the whole routine — low and driven, flickable.
- Near-post runner: your run matters even if you never touch the ball.
- Rest-defence / out-ball player: this job is never optional, regardless of how the routine looks.
- Goalkeeper (defensive corners): organise the picture — this is your job as much as any save.

Measurable performance indicators:

- Whether the attacking corner routine produces at least one genuine chance on Saturday.
- Whether the defensive corner organisation concedes from a set piece.
- Squad's own account, given in the closing reflection, of Phase 1's proudest moment and Phase 2's priority — feeding directly into the four-week review.

Formation Translation — Applying This Week Across Different Shapes

Principle: All Phase 1 principles, consolidated; attacking corners.

In a 4-3-3: the attacking corner routine typically draws its near-post decoy from a central midfielder or winger, and its far-post finisher from a centre-back or the central striker; the two rest-defence players are usually the two centre-backs, already positioned centrally and readily available.

In a 3-5-2: with an extra centre-back available, one can join the attacking corner as an additional aerial threat while the remaining two provide rest defence — a genuine structural advantage a back three offers this specific routine, worth naming explicitly to players.

What stays the same: the routine's core picture (near-post decoy, far-post finish, non-negotiable rest defence) and the defensive corner's zonal-plus-post structure, regardless of formation.

What changes: which specific players are best suited to each role, and how many spare bodies are available for rest defence versus the attack itself.

What must not change: the non-negotiable nature of rest defence and out-ball positioning — the single most important coaching point of the whole week, in any formation.

Risk in each structure: a back three that commits its spare centre-back forward to the attacking corner has, by definition, only two players providing rest defence — the same as a back four, so this is not actually a disadvantage, but it does mean the team has one fewer recovery option if the corner is well cleared.

Opposition influence: against a team that defends corners with heavy zonal numbers, expect the near-post decoy to draw less space than usual — the short-corner alternative becomes more valuable against exactly this kind of opponent.

Coach Review — Week 5

(To be completed by the coach after both sessions have run, before the four-week review is delivered.)

- **Match result and performance (Route A/B/C applied):** record what actually happened and which route was used to shape this week.
- **Attendance:** Tuesday ____ / Thursday ____.
- **Consolidation evidence:** which of the four Phase 1 principles were most and least visible in Tuesday's "Phase 1 Final" conditioned match?
- **Set-piece evidence:** how confidently were both corner routines executed by the end of Thursday's session?
- **Communication evidence:** is the season's full language (ten calls so far) being used accurately and without prompting?
- **Physical observations:** how did the squad handle pre-season's peak physical week?
- **Leadership observations:** who has emerged as an organiser across the five weeks so far?
- **Feeds directly into:** the Phase 1 four-week review, produced alongside this week.

Written by Alan Cunningham with Claude AI · Castlewellan Town FC — Senior Coaching Curriculum, Week 5 of 36 · session design follows the four-corner model used in UEFA coach education and the principle-led, formation-neutral approach set out in the Season Architecture (Stage 1). An independent club resource, not an official UEFA or Irish FA publication and not endorsed by either.