



Week 7 — Early-Season Identity

Tags: `progression` `possession` `mid-block` `defending` `unit-work` `full-squad-practice`

Weekly Overview

FIELD	DETAIL
Week number	7 of 36
Season phase	2 — Early-Season Identity
Core principle	Progression — through (central)
Secondary principle	Compactness (formalised into a named defensive structure: the mid-block)
Previous match review focus	Apply the three routes below to the most recent league or friendly fixture.
Weekly tactical problem	Week 6 gave the team a reliable way around a press, wide. Left there, the team becomes predictable — an opponent who simply blocks the wide overload forces the team back to square one. This week adds the harder, higher-value central route: playing through the middle, between an opponent's lines, using third-man combinations. On the other side of the ball, the team learns its first named defensive structure beyond an isolated shape: the mid-block, a patient, compact defending picture that invites the opponent forward before engaging.
Formation-neutral explanation	Playing through centrally depends on players occupying the pockets between an opponent's lines — a role, not a formation. Any formation can produce a player between the lines: a number 10, a withdrawn striker, a central midfielder stepping up, even a full-back cutting inside. Equally, a mid-block is a defensive discipline, not a formation — a team defending in a 4-4-2 shape and a team defending in a 5-3-2 shape can both hold an identical mid-block, engaging at the same height and with the same patience, while looking different on a team sheet.
Example structural applications	In a 4-2-3-1: the attacking midfielder is the most natural player to occupy the pocket between the lines, supported by underlapping runs from the double pivot. In a 3-4-3: with no dedicated number 10, the same pocket is more often filled by one of the front three dropping short, or a central midfielder stepping forward at the right moment — the role exists regardless, filled by whichever player the structure makes available.

Match Review and Weekly Adjustment

Route A — Previous performance was strong. If the previous fixture went well, raise this week's practices to their fuller progressions — live, full-intensity opposition from the start rather than the simplest introduction — and use the specific example from the match to show players what "playing through" actually looks like when it works.

Route B — Previous performance exposed a tactical weakness. If the team struggled to break down a well-organised opponent, or was overly predictable (always going wide, never centrally), say so directly at the start of Tuesday's session — this week's content is the direct answer.

Route C — Attendance, facilities or player availability are disrupted. Protect the core idea — receiving between the lines and combining with a third-man pass — even if numbers force smaller versions of every practice. This principle scales down to very small numbers (as few as three or four players) without losing its value.

Tuesday — Session 13

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	13 of 72
Week	7
Season phase	2 — Early-Season Identity
Training day	Tuesday
Session theme	Playing through pressure — central
Short summary	Develops the "through" route in depth — receiving between an opponent's lines and combining with a third-man pass to break defensive lines centrally — as the complement to Week 6's wide overload.
Tags	`progression` `possession` `conditioning` `decision-making`
Primary learning objective	Players occupy the space between an opponent's lines and receive facing forward.
Secondary learning objective	The team uses a third-man combination to break a defensive line centrally.
Match connection	Directly supports the week's named match-day connection: fewer turnovers in the build-up third, since a team with a genuine central option is less predictable and less easily pressed into errors.
Expected tactical outcome	The team produces at least several clean central line-breaks across the session, not just wide ones.
Expected physical load	High duel intensity — playing through the middle means playing through contact, more than the wide route did.
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 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers; scales 10–22, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout; in Practice 4 they are coached as the player who often starts a central line-break with the first pass into the pocket.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 50 x 36 m (Practice 4).
Area layout	A zoned central corridor for Practice 2, widening through Practices 3 and 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 2 reduces to 5v3; Practice 3 becomes 5v5; Practice 4 becomes 6v6.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 4 can extend to 9v9.
Contingency — restricted space	Compress all grids proportionally; this principle depends on picture-reading more than distance.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00–0:10	10 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Third</i>	Light green

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
		<i>Man Warm-Up</i>	
0:10–0:25	15 min	Technical practice — <i>Between the Lines</i>	Club green
0:25–0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27–0:42	15 min	Skill game — <i>Third Man Through</i>	Dark green
0:42–0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44–0:59	15 min	Conditioned match — <i>Central Break</i>	Black
0:59–1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — THIRD MAN WARM-UP (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Raises heart rate through repeated combination-passing patterns, introducing the third-man idea physically before the session's harder content begins.

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

Walkthrough: Individual ball work, then a simple three-player passing pattern: A passes to B, B lays the ball off first-time, and C (the "third man") runs onto the lay-off and carries forward — repeated with rotating roles.

Rules: The lay-off must be first-time; the third man's run must start before the lay-off is played, not after.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* clean, accurate first-time lay-offs.
- *Physical:* explosive third-man runs, timed to the pass rather than early or late.
- *Psychological:* trust in a team-mate's timing without needing to check first.

PRACTICE 2 — BETWEEN THE LINES (TECHNICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Isolates the specific skill of receiving in the pocket between an opponent's defensive and midfield lines — arguably the single most valuable receiving position on a football pitch, and one most amateur players are never explicitly taught to find.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 30 x 20 m
- **Players:** 6 possession outfield vs 4 representing two opposition lines
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through the possession team
- **Team sizes:** 6 v 4
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 8 flat markers marking the "between the lines" zone, 2 footballs
- **Starting positions:** two defenders forming a back line, two forming a midfield

line, with a marked pocket of space between them; six possession players positioned around and inside the picture

- **Ball supply:** spare ball with the coach
- **Restart:** nearest player restarts any stoppage
- **Coach position:** grid edge, able to see the pocket clearly
- **Rotation method:** every 90 seconds
- **Direction of play:** none — positional practice

Practice walkthrough: Four defenders form two connected lines, echoing Week 3's compact-corridor structure, with a marked pocket of space between them. Six possession players work the ball around the picture, with the explicit target of finding a team-mate who has moved into the pocket, received side-on, and can play forward immediately. A pass into the pocket that is played backward or sideways because the receiver was facing the wrong way does not count — receiving on the correct body shape is the entire coaching point.

Rules: A pass received inside the pocket, facing forward, that is then played forward again scores a point. A pass into the pocket received with the wrong body shape (forced backward) does not.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* the "player between the lines" role (Season Architecture) is the entire focus — scanning before arriving in the pocket, arriving at the right moment, and receiving with an open body shape.
- *Unit:* the two defending lines must stay connected (Week 3) to keep the pocket small and defensible.
- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Transition:* not the focus — kept deliberately simple.

Decision-making triggers:

- The pocket between the lines is empty → move into it before calling for the ball, not after.
- The ball is about to arrive and I'm facing the wrong way → adjust body shape before the pass, not after receiving it.
- A defender steps out to close the pocket → recognise the space that opens up behind them instead.

Communication language used: *Time, Turn* — both from Week 1, now applied specifically to the highest-value receiving position on the pitch.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	First touch that immediately progresses the ball forward, not just controls it.
Tactical	Timing the run into the pocket — arriving too early lets a defender adjust; arriving as the ball is

CORNER	POINT
	played is ideal.
Physical	Sharp, short accelerations into the pocket, then an immediate turn or forward touch.
Psychological	Courage to receive in a tight space with defenders close on both sides — a genuinely uncomfortable position for many players.
Communication & leadership	The passer confirming the receiver has scanned and is ready before committing to the pass into the pocket.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What told you the pocket was open right now, rather than a moment ago or a moment from now?
2. What happened when you received facing the wrong way?
3. How did the defending lines try to close the pocket down, and what did that open up elsewhere?
4. Why is this position so valuable compared to receiving in front of the defending line?
5. How does this connect to Week 6's wide overload — are they competing ideas or complementary ones?

Progressions:

1. Add a fifth defender specifically assigned to track the player moving into the pocket.
2. Reduce the size of the pocket, raising the technical and spatial demand.
3. Add a direction of play and a target zone beyond the defending lines.

Regressions:

1. Enlarge the pocket while the idea beds in.
2. Reduce to three defenders (a single line) before introducing the second.
3. Allow the coach to call "pocket!" as a live prompt during the first few reps.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Players receive in the pocket with their back to goal, unable to progress	Old habit, or fear of the tight space	Repeated backward or sideways passes immediately after receiving in the pocket	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: reset the body shape, show the difference	Resume
Nobody moves into the pocket at all	Discomfort with the position, or simply not scanning for it	The space stays empty for long spells	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "who could have used that space just then?"	Resume
Run into the pocket arrives too early, allowing defenders to adjust	Eagerness	Receiver waiting in the pocket rather than arriving with the pass	Let it flow with a drive-by call	"Time your run — arrive as it arrives"	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *freeze-and-correct* early and *drive-by coaching* once the picture is understood — this is a genuinely uncomfortable skill for many players and merits patient, repeated correction.

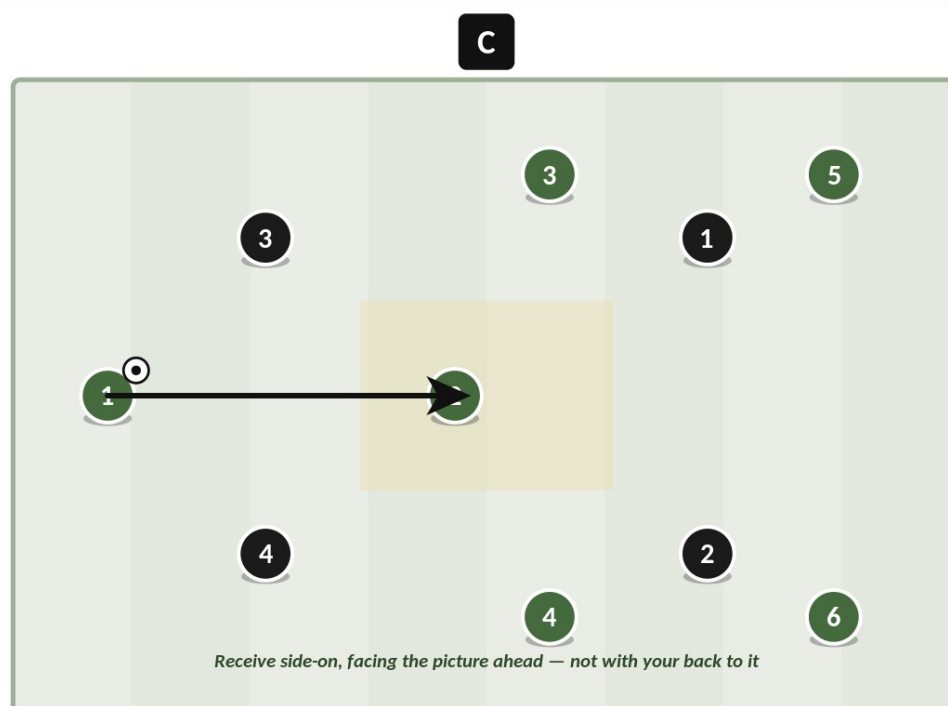
Success indicators:

- Players move into the pocket without prompting.
- Receiving body shape is consistently open, facing forward.
- The proportion of pocket receptions that lead to a forward pass rises across the practice.

Coach's eye: watch the moment just before the ball is played into the pocket — is the receiving player already scanning and adjusting their shape, or only reacting once the ball has arrived?

T7.2 BETWEEN THE LINES — Receiving to Progress

30 x 20 m • 6v4 • a free player must receive facing forward inside the pocket • 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 30x20 metre grid with dimension labels and a shaded yellow zone in the centre labelled implicitly as the pocket between two lines. Four players in black bibs organised in two lines (numbers 1-2 and 3-4) either side of the shaded zone. Six players in dark green bibs numbered 1-6 around the picture, one positioned inside the shaded zone facing forward. White football near a green player. A black solid arrow showing a pass into the pocket. Title: 'BETWEEN THE LINES — Receiving to Progress'. Subtitle: '30 x 20 m • 6v4 • a free player must receive facing forward inside the pocket • 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 of a training grid, a green- bibbed player receiving the ball in a pocket of space between two lines of black-bibbed defenders, body clearly turned to face forward, a pass arriving into their feet, coach at the grid's edge observing the receiving body shape closely.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training. A player in a dark green bib receiving the ball in a pocket of space between two lines of black-bibbed defenders, body clearly angled to face forward rather than back toward their own goal. A football arriving at their feet. A coach standing at the edge of the grid, closely observing the receiving player's body shape. 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 — THIRD MAN THROUGH (SKILL GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Adds a goal and full opposition to the same central-progression idea, specifically rewarding the third-man combination — pass, lay-off, and a third player's run that breaks the defending line — as the clearest, most reliable version of "playing through."

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:** as shown in the diagram
- **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 in which a goal created by a third-man combination — a first pass, an immediate lay-off, and a third player's run breaking the defending line to receive — is worth double. The coaching emphasis is on timing: the third player's run must start as the first pass is played, not after the lay-off.

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

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* every player alternates between the three roles inside the combination — the initial passer, the link player providing the lay-off, and the third man breaking the line.
- *Unit:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Team:* recognising when the picture supports a third-man combination versus when a simpler, direct route is available and should be taken instead.
- *Transition:* a lost ball during a forced third-man attempt is dangerous, connecting to Week 4's transition-to-defence content.

Decision-making triggers:

- A team-mate is about to receive under pressure, facing their own goal → this is a lay-off situation, not a turn situation.
- The third player's run is unmarked → the timing window is now, not a moment later.
- The picture doesn't support a third-man combination → a simpler, direct pass is the better read; forcing the pattern for its own sake is coached out.

Communication language used: *Time, Turn, Hold* — all from Week 1, now applied to a specific combination pattern.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	First-time lay-off technique under real pressure.
Tactical	Recognising when the third-man pattern is genuinely on versus forcing it.
Physical	Explosive third-man runs, repeated across the practice.
Psychological	Trust in team-mates' timing without needing to check.

CORNER	POINT
Communication & leadership	The link player calling for support before receiving, so the third man's run can begin in time.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made your best third-man goal work — what was the timing like?
2. When did the pattern not work, and why?
3. What is the risk of always trying to force a third-man combination rather than reading whether it's on?
4. How does this connect to Practice 2's "between the lines" idea?

Progressions:

1. Increase the bonus for a third-man goal that also includes a between-the-lines reception, combining both ideas.
2. Reduce the practice area, compressing the timing window.
3. Add a genuine offside line.

Regressions:

1. Walk the pattern through cooperatively before adding full opposition.
2. Widen the practice area.
3. Reduce to 4v4 for more individual involvement.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Third man's run starts too late, after the lay-off	Habit of reacting rather than anticipating	Runner arriving after the space has already closed	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: rehearse the timing at reduced pace	Resume
Team forces the pattern even when it isn't on	The pattern is being chased for the bonus rather than read from the picture	Repeated failed attempts in congested areas	Let it flow with a drive-by call	"Is that really on, or are we just trying to make it happen?"	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *freeze-and-correct* early and *drive-by coaching* throughout.

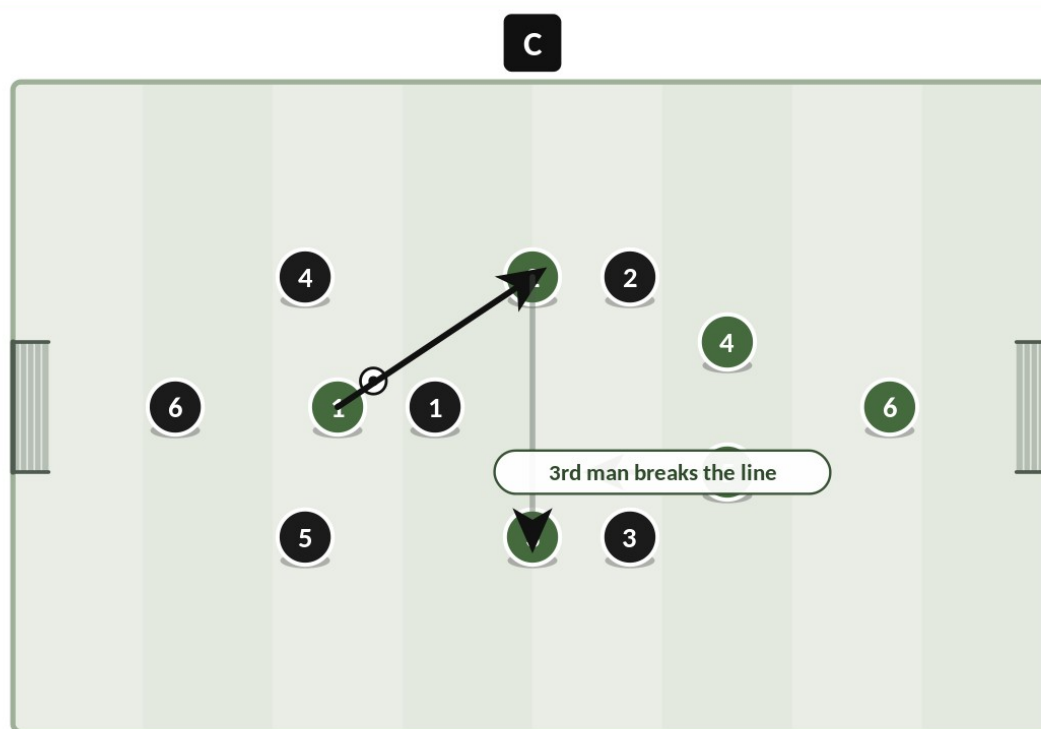
Success indicators:

- Multiple genuine third-man goals scored across the practice.
- The pattern is attempted only when the picture supports it, not indiscriminately.
- Timing of the third player's run improves visibly across the practice.

Coach's eye: watch the third player specifically — their run's timing is the whole practice's coaching content, more than the first two passes.

T7.3 THIRD MAN THROUGH — Small-Sided Game

32 x 20 m • 6v6 • a goal from a third-man combination is worth double • 15 minutes



● Team in possession ● Opposition ⊙ Ball ➔ 1st pass - ➔ 3rd man run

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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 black solid arrow showing the first pass, a second faded grey arrow showing the lay-off, and a green dashed arrow labelled '3rd man breaks the line' showing the third player's run. Title: 'THIRD MAN THROUGH — Small-Sided Game'. Subtitle: '32 x 20 m • 6v6 • a goal from a third-man combination is worth double • 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 6v6 game, a green-bibbed player laying the ball off first-time under pressure, a third green-bibbed team-mate sprinting onto the pass to break the black-bibbed defending line, both mini goals visible, coach on the touchline animated.

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 playing a first-time lay-off under pressure from a black-bibbed opponent, a third team-mate in dark green sprinting onto the released ball to break beyond the defending line. Late-afternoon light, realistic grass pitch and shadows, amateur adult players of varied build. A coach on the touchline, animated, tracking the move. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 4 — CENTRAL BREAK (CONDITIONED MATCH)

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

Tactical purpose: Confirms the week's principle at full match scale against a defending team specifically organised in a compact mid-block — a light preview of Thursday's content, seen this time from the attacking side of the same picture.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 50 x 36 m (half pitch)
- **Players:** 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers play their own-goal role, coached as a genuine starting point for a central line-break
- **Team sizes:** 8 v 8
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 full-size or portable goals, 8 flat markers, corner cones
- **Starting positions:** standard match shape; the defending team is specifically asked to hold a compact, patient mid-block rather than press high
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** match-realistic restarts
- **Coach position:** touchline, halfway line, mobile
- **Rotation method:** none required; goalkeepers may split time at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** standard, both teams attack opposite goals

Practice walkthrough: A conditioned 8v8 match in which the defending team is instructed to hold a compact mid-block rather than press aggressively — deliberately inviting the building team to find central, line-breaking solutions rather than being forced long or wide by a high press. This gives the attacking team's central progression work a realistic picture to solve.

Rules: Standard conditioned-match rules; the defending team is coached specifically to hold shape rather than press.

Tactical roles: the full central-progression role set from the week, tested against a genuinely patient, organised opponent.

Decision-making triggers: as established in Practices 2-3, now under full match conditions against a settled defensive picture rather than a live, chasing press.

Communication language used: the full season's language so far.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Composure and technique under genuine duel intensity in central areas.
Tactical	Breaking a patient, organised block, which is a different problem from beating a high, aggressive press.
Physical	High duel intensity, particularly in central areas — this week's specific physical theme.
Psychological	Patience to build the picture rather than forcing a central pass into a well-organised block.
Communication & leadership	Central players organising the team's approach to a settled opponent.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What is different about breaking down a patient mid-block compared to beating a high, chasing press like Week 6's?
2. Which route worked best against tonight's opponent — through, around, or over?
3. What did the defending team do well tonight, and what does that suggest about Thursday's content?
4. How does duel intensity change when the picture is central rather than wide?

Progressions:

1. Instruct the defending team to squeeze the block progressively tighter as the practice continues, raising the difficulty.
2. Reduce numbers to 7v7.
3. Add a genuine offside line.

Regressions:

1. Instruct the defending team to hold a slightly larger block while the attacking picture is being learned.
2. Reduce to 6v6 on a smaller area.
3. Reintroduce the marked pocket zone from Practice 2 briefly if the read has regressed.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Team reverts to forcing wide play only, ignoring the central option	Comfort with Week 6's more recently learned solution	No attempts at central combinations despite space being available	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "what does the middle offer tonight that the wing doesn't?"	Resume
Turnovers rise in central areas under genuine duel intensity	First time combining centrally against a fully committed defence	Frequent losses of possession in central areas	Stop if unproductive	Short group intervention resetting composure and picture-reading	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *natural stoppages* and *questioning*.

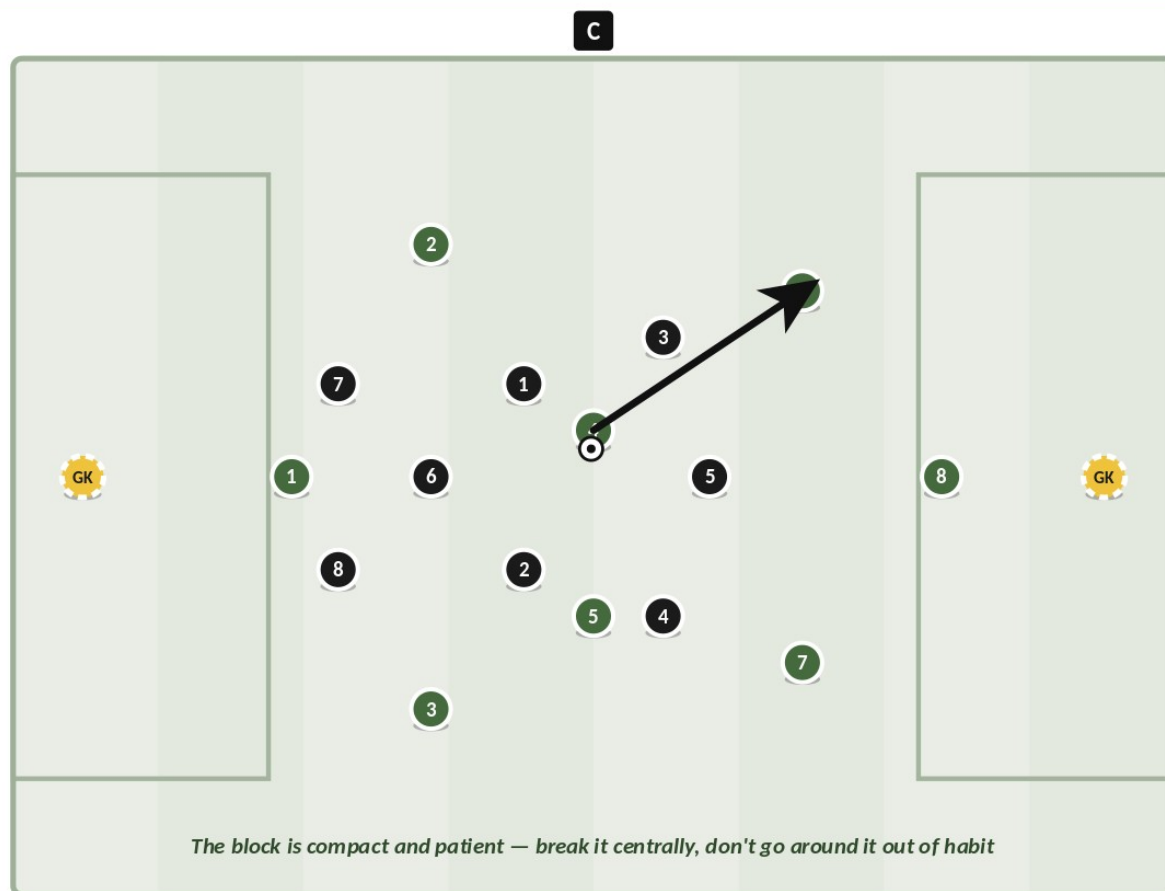
Success indicators:

- The team produces central line-breaks as well as wide ones across the practice.
- Duel intensity is high but composed, not chaotic.
- The team recognises and exploits the mid-block's patience rather than panicking against it.

Coach's eye: watch whether the team's route selection is genuinely balanced between central and wide, or whether old habits from Week 6 dominate — this is the clearest evidence of whether this week's content has actually added something new.

T7.4 CENTRAL BREAK — Conditioned Match

50 x 36 m (half pitch) • 8v8 + GKs • break the mid-block centrally • 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 half of a football pitch, 50x36 metres, with penalty box markings at both ends and a full-size goal at each end with a goalkeeper in yellow at each. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1-8 and eight players in black bibs numbered 1-8 organised in a compact, patient mid-block. White football near a central green player. A thick black solid arrow showing a line-breaking central pass. Title: 'CENTRAL BREAK — Conditioned Match'. Subtitle: '50 x 36 m (half pitch) • 8v8 + GKs • break the mid-block centrally • 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 full-scale 8v8 conditioned match, a black-bibbed team organised in a compact, patient block in the middle third, a green-bibbed player threading a pass centrally between two defenders, goalkeepers in yellow at each end, coach on the touchline near halfway observing closely.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Wide elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 8v8 conditioned football match on a half-size grass pitch with full-size goals and goalkeepers in yellow at each end. A team in black bibs organised in a compact, patient defensive block in the middle third of the pitch. A player in a dark green bib threading a pass centrally between two black-bibbed defenders. A coach stands near the halfway line on the touchline, arms crossed, closely observing. 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: *"What's harder — breaking a team down through the middle, or going around them — and why might you need both?"*

Thursday — Session 14

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	14 of 72
Week	7
Season phase	2 — Early-Season Identity
Training day	Thursday
Session theme	Compact mid-block introduced
Short summary	Names and installs the team's first defensive structure beyond an isolated shape: the mid-block — a compact, connected, patient defensive picture that invites the opponent forward before engaging, rather than pressing high or sitting deep.
Tags	`mid-block` `defending` `unit-work` `full-squad-practice`
Primary learning objective	The team holds a connected, compact shape in the middle third without engaging until the ball enters a defined trigger zone.
Secondary learning objective	Pressure, cover and balance (Week 3) are applied inside the mid-block once it engages, not abandoned.
Match connection	A specific, named defensive picture the team can choose to use against particular opponents, alongside the high press implied by Weeks 3–4's content.
Expected tactical outcome	The team can hold a mid-block shape for sustained spells without being drawn out of position.
Expected physical load	Moderate — a patient, positional defensive structure asks for less running than a high press, though the engagement moments themselves are sharp.
Recommended intensity	6–7 / 10, rising only in the closing game.
Equipment list	16 footballs · 24 flat markers · 12 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.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout; the defending team's goalkeeper organises the block's depth from behind, calling whether to hold or step.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 50 x 34 m (Practice 3).
Area layout	A marked trigger zone for Practices 2 and 3, widening for Practice 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 3 reduces to 6+GK v 6; Practice 4 becomes 5v5.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 3 can extend to a fuller 9+GK v 9 picture.
Contingency — restricted space	A mid-block is, helpfully, the structure least dependent on a large facility — a smaller pitch makes holding compact shape easier, not harder.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00–0:08	8 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Patience</i>	Light green

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:08–0:23	15 min	Technical practice — <i>What Is a Block?</i>	Club green
0:23–0:25	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:25–0:40	15 min	Unit / tactical practice — <i>Mid-Block Hold</i>	Dark green
0:40–0:42	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:42–0:59	17 min	Small-sided game — <i>Hold the Block</i>	Black
0:59–1:00	1 min → extended below	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — PATIENCE (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: A shorter, sharper Thursday warm-up with a deliberately calm theme, setting the tone for a session about discipline and patience rather than intensity.

Organisation: 16 x 12 m grid, one ball per player for three minutes, pairs for five. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join fully.

Walkthrough: Individual ball work, then paired passing where one player must count to three before releasing the ball — a simple, physical rehearsal of not reacting immediately.

Rules: No release before the count is complete.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* composed touches under a deliberate delay.
- *Psychological:* comfort with waiting rather than acting immediately — the whole session's theme in miniature.

PRACTICE 2 — WHAT IS A BLOCK? (TECHNICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Introduces the mid-block concept as simply and visibly as possible: a connected defending shape that holds its position in the middle third, resisting the urge to chase the ball, until it enters a clearly marked trigger zone — at which point the block engages together.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 28 m
- **Players:** 8 defending outfield vs 3 building attackers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through the defending block
- **Team sizes:** 8 v 3
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 10 flat markers marking the trigger zone, 4 cones
- **Starting positions:** two connected banks of four, as in Week 3, positioned in the middle third rather than higher up the pitch
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** attackers restart from the coach on any stoppage
- **Coach position:** behind the defending block, able to see the whole shape and the trigger zone
- **Rotation method:** attackers rotate with tired defenders every few minutes
- **Direction of play:** attackers work to find a pass through the block

Practice walkthrough: Eight defenders hold two connected banks, exactly as rehearsed in Week 3, but this time positioned specifically in the middle third with a marked trigger zone in front of them. Three attackers (initially passive-to-moderate pressure, since the coaching content is the defending team's discipline, not the attackers' skill) probe for gaps. The defending team's job is to hold its shape and position patiently — not stepping out to press — until the ball enters the trigger zone, at which point the nearest players engage together, using Week 3's pressure-cover-balance shape inside the block.

Rules: Defenders may not engage the ball outside the trigger zone — doing so is marked immediately by the coach as a shape failure, regardless of the outcome. Once the ball enters the zone, engagement is expected and rewarded.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* every defender's discipline not to step out early is the core skill.
- *Unit:* the two banks hold their compact, connected shape throughout, exactly as in Week 3.
- *Team:* recognising, collectively, the moment the trigger zone is entered and engaging together rather than individually.
- *Transition:* not the primary focus this practice — kept deliberately simple.

Decision-making triggers:

- The ball is outside the trigger zone → hold position, do not step out, regardless of how tempting the ball looks.
- The ball enters the trigger zone → engage immediately and together, using pressure-cover-balance.
- An attacker is level with or behind the block's front line → this is not yet a pressing trigger on its own; the ball's zone is what matters, not the attacker's position.

Communication language used: *Squeeze, Step* — with "Step" specifically reserved this week for the moment the trigger zone is entered, not before.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Body shape while holding — side-on, ready to react, not flat-footed.
Tactical	Discipline to hold position outside the trigger zone — the single hardest habit this practice asks for.
Physical	Controlled, patient positioning punctuated by sharp, explosive engagement once triggered.
Psychological	Resisting the pull toward the ball — a genuinely difficult discipline for eager defenders, echoing Week 3's patience lesson at a team level rather than an individual one.
Communication & leadership	The player who first sees the ball enter the trigger zone calling it immediately for the whole block.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What was the temptation to step out early, and how did you resist it?
2. What happened on the reps where a defender stepped out before the ball entered the zone?
3. How is this different from Week 3's pressing work — what's changed, and what's stayed the same?
4. Why might a coach ask a team to invite the opponent forward rather than pressing high?
5. What is the risk of a mid-block that holds its discipline perfectly but engages too softly once triggered?

Progressions:

1. Increase the attackers to four, testing whether the block's discipline holds under greater probing.
2. Shrink the trigger zone, raising the precision required.
3. Add a live outcome (a small goal for the attackers to aim for) to increase the stakes of a shape failure.

Regressions:

1. Enlarge the trigger zone while the discipline is being learned.
2. Reduce the attackers to two.
3. Allow the coach to call "hold!" as a live reminder during the first several repetitions.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
A defender steps out to press before the ball enters the trigger zone	Strong pull toward the ball, especially for naturally aggressive defenders	A gap opens in the block's shape as one player engages early	Stop, every time	Firm, immediate correction — this is the practice's core discipline	Resume
The block engages too softly once the ball does enter the zone	Overcorrection — so focused on not engaging early that the actual press lacks conviction	Ball retained easily by attackers even inside the trigger zone	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "now that it's on, are we really committing?"	Resume
The two banks drift apart while holding position	Concentration lapse during a patient, less physically active phase	Growing gap between the banks even though nobody has stepped out	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: reconnect the shape	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: heavy on *unit coaching during play* and firm, immediate correction of early engagement — this single discipline is the practice's entire value.

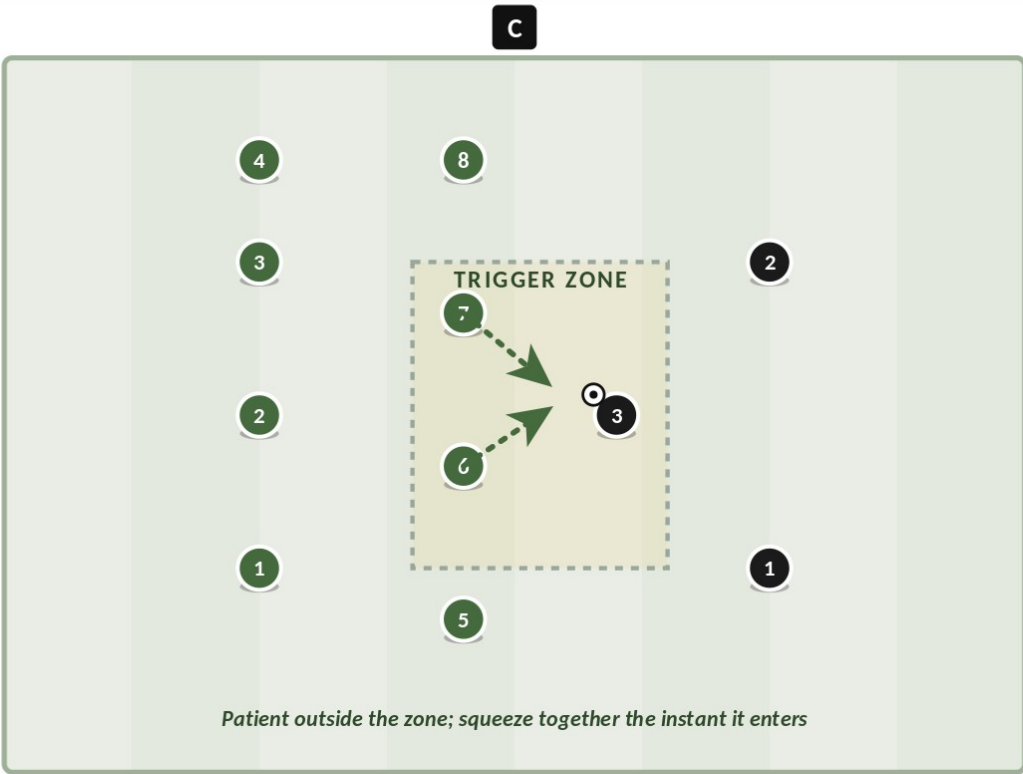
Success indicators:

- Zero or near-zero early engagements outside the trigger zone by the end of the practice.
- Engagement inside the trigger zone is sharp and committed, not tentative.
- The two banks stay connected throughout, even while holding a patient position.

Coach's eye: this practice is almost entirely about what the team does *not* do — watch for restraint as closely as you would watch for action in a more aggressive practice.

H7.2 WHAT IS A BLOCK? — Holding the Middle Third

40 x 28 m • 8 defenders hold shape until the ball enters the trigger zone • 15 minutes



Defending block

Building team

Ball

Trigger zone

Squeeze once triggered

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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 40x28 metre area with dimension labels and a shaded yellow zone in the middle labelled 'TRIGGER ZONE'. Eight players in dark green bibs organised into two connected banks of four (back line and midfield line) either side of the zone. Three players in black bibs numbered 1-3 positioned with the ball near the zone. White football near a black player. Two short dotted red press arrows with chevron arrowheads showing the block engaging as the ball enters the zone. Title: 'WHAT IS A BLOCK? — Holding the Middle Third'. Subtitle: '40 x 28 m • 8 defenders hold shape until the ball enters the trigger zone • 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 of a compact, connected group of green-bibbed defenders holding position in two lines on a grass pitch, a marked trigger zone visible via cone lines in front of them, black-bibbed attackers probing just outside the zone, one defender's body language showing readiness rather than early engagement, coach observing from directly behind the block.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training. Eight players in dark green bibs organised into two clearly connected, compact lines, holding a patient defensive position on a grass pitch. A trigger zone marked with flat orange cones visible in front of them. Players in black bibs probing with the ball just outside the marked zone. The nearest green-bibbed defender is in a ready, coiled stance without stepping out early. A coach stands directly behind the block, closely observing the shape. Overcast evening

light, realistic grass pitch and 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 — MID-BLOCK HOLD (UNIT / TACTICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Scales the mid-block up to a full phase-of-play practice against a genuinely building opponent, directly connecting to Tuesday's session — the same mid-block the attacking team practised breaking down on Tuesday is now trained from the defending side on Thursday.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 50 x 34 m
- **Players:** 8+GK building vs 8 holding a mid-block
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the building team's goalkeeper restarts every sequence; the defending team's goalkeeper organises the block's depth and the moment to engage

- **Team sizes:** 8+GK v 8
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 10 flat markers, 4 cones
- **Starting positions:** building team in a back-four-or-three-plus-midfield shape; defending team holding a connected mid-block in the middle third

- **Ball supply:** goalkeeper restarts from hands or a goal kick
- **Restart location:** goal kick position
- **Coach position:** central, able to see both pictures
- **Rotation method:** roles swap at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** building team always attacks the same direction

Practice walkthrough: The building team constructs its picture as in Tuesday's session, working through, around or over as the mid-block's shape allows. The defending team holds its position patiently, exactly as rehearsed in Practice 2, only engaging once the ball enters the middle third in earnest. This is the fullest test yet of whether the defending team's discipline (Practice 2) holds up against a team actively trying to progress, rather than three cooperative attackers probing.

Rules: As in Practice 2 — early engagement outside the block's effective zone is a shape failure; a clean progression past the block scores the building team a point; a regain scores the defending team a point.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* every role from both Tuesday's and this week's Thursday content is live simultaneously.
- *Unit:* both teams' units are tested against each other directly.
- *Team:* the defending team's collective patience versus the building team's collective picture-reading — the week's central tactical contest.
- *Transition:* both directions are live and consequential, connecting to Week 4's content throughout.

Decision-making triggers:

- (Building team) the block hasn't engaged yet → there is time to build the picture patiently; forcing urgency the picture doesn't require is a mistake.
- (Defending team) the ball has entered the effective engagement zone → commit fully and immediately, together.
- (Both teams) a turnover happens → both weeks' transition content (4) applies immediately.

Communication language used: the full defending and building sets combined — *Squeeze, Step, Cover, Delay, Time, Turn, Travel, Switch*.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution under the specific demands of both pictures — patient building, patient defending.

CORNER	POINT
Tactical	The mid-block seen from both sides of the same problem in one session.
Physical	A different physical picture from Tuesday's high-intensity press work — more positional discipline, sharper but shorter engagement moments.
Psychological	Patience for both teams — the building team not forcing urgency, the defending team not engaging early.
Communication & leadership	Both goalkeepers organising their respective pictures — the building team's angles, the defending team's depth and engagement timing.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What did the defending team do well that made the building team's job harder than Tuesday's live-press practices?
2. When did the block engage, and was the timing right?
3. How does a mid-block change the building team's decision-making compared to a high press?
4. What would you tell a new player about the difference between Week 6's live press and this week's mid-block?

Progressions:

1. Allow the defending team to choose between a mid-block and a high press from repetition to repetition, adding a live decision layer.
2. Reduce the trigger zone's size, sharpening the defending team's discipline further.
3. Add a genuine offside line.

Regressions:

1. Return to Practice 2's smaller-scale picture for a few repetitions if the discipline has broken down at this larger scale.
2. Reduce numbers to 6+GK v 6.
3. Widen the practice area.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Defending team's discipline breaks down against a genuinely purposeful building team	The picture is harder than Practice 2's more cooperative version	Early engagements reappear under real pressure	Stop	Short group intervention reconnecting to Practice 2's standard	Resume
Building team forces urgency the picture doesn't require	Discomfort with a patient opponent who isn't chasing the ball	Rushed, low-percentage attempts against a settled block	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "what's the rush? They're not even engaged yet"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *short group intervention* and *questioning*, addressing both teams' distinct challenges as they appear.

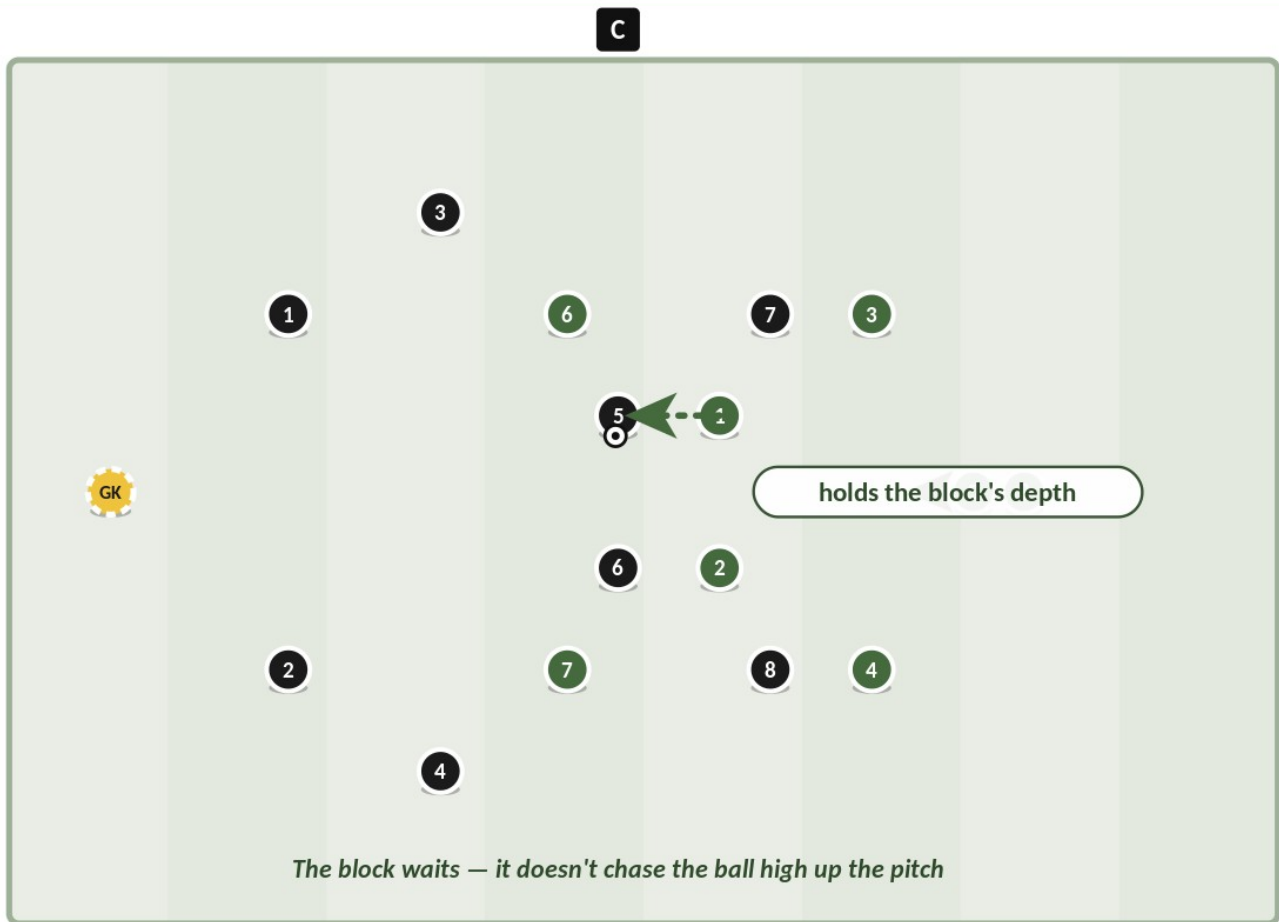
Success indicators:

- The defending team's discipline from Practice 2 survives against a genuinely purposeful opponent.
- The building team shows patience rather than forcing urgency against a settled block.
- Engagement, when it happens, is sharp, committed, and collective.

Coach's eye: watch both pictures — this is one of the few practices this season where both teams are being coached with equal, simultaneous attention.

H7.3 MID-BLOCK HOLD — Phase of Play

50 x 34 m • 8+GK building vs 8 holding a connected mid-block • 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 50x34 metre pitch with dimension labels. A goalkeeper in yellow positioned in the defensive third. Eight players in black bibs numbered 1–8 organised in a build-up shape around the goalkeeper. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 organised in a compact, connected mid-block positioned in the middle third, not pressing high. White football near a black player. A green dashed arrow labelled 'holds the block's depth' and a short dotted red press arrow labelled implicitly as pressing once triggered. Title: 'MID-BLOCK HOLD — Phase of Play'. Subtitle: '50 x 34 m • 8+GK building vs 8 holding a connected mid-block • 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 phase-of-play practice, black-bibbed team building patiently from their goalkeeper, a green-bibbed team holding a compact, connected mid-block in the middle third without pressing high, both goalkeepers visible and organising their own pictures, coach positioned centrally taking in both sides of the contest.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training — a phase-of-play practice. A team in black bibs building patiently from their goalkeeper. A

team in dark green bibs holding a compact, connected defensive block in the middle third of the pitch, clearly not pressing high up the field. Both goalkeepers, one in each colour, visibly organising their own team's picture. A coach stands centrally on the pitch, taking in both sides of the contest. Overcast evening 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 — HOLD THE BLOCK (SMALL-SIDED GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Closes the week with a confidence-building game rewarding discipline — a regain won inside the block's own defined zone, rather than a scrambled, out-of-position one — sending players into the weekend sharp and clear.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 34 x 22 m
- **Players:** 14 outfield + 2 goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers play their own-goal role
- **Team sizes:** 7 v 7
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 full-size or portable goals, 6 flat markers, 4 cones
- **Starting positions:** even split, with a marked central zone as in Practices 2–3
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** fast, small-sided-game restarts
- **Coach position:** touchline, mobile
- **Rotation method:** none required
- **Direction of play:** standard

Practice walkthrough: A 7v7 game with a bonus: a regain won inside the marked central zone, with the defending team's shape still connected at the moment of the win, is worth an immediate point, tallied alongside the normal score. This keeps the week's discipline-focused theme alive inside an otherwise open, enjoyable game.

Rules: Standard small-sided-game rules; bonus as described, judged by the coach.

Tactical roles: every principle and role named across the week is available; coaching focus is recognition and encouragement.

Decision-making triggers: as established across the week.

Communication language used: the full set introduced so far this season.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean, decisive engagement at the moment of the press, not a rushed or reckless one.
Tactical	Recognising and rewarding the week's discipline in full flow.
Physical	The week's second-highest load, appropriately placed at the end.
Psychological	Finishing the week on a genuine high, having mastered a genuinely difficult discipline.
Communication & leadership	Players organising and encouraging each other with reduced coach input.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What did your team's best organised regain tonight have in common?
2. How does holding a block connect to everything the team has learned since Week 3?
3. What is one thing from this week you want to see on Saturday?
4. Looking back across seven weeks now, how many different defensive pictures can this team now produce?

Progressions:

1. Increase the bonus if the organised regain also leads to a goal within ten seconds, tying this week's defending content to Week 4's transition work.

2. Reduce the grid slightly to raise tempo for the closing minutes.
3. Add a golden-goal condition in the final two minutes.

Regressions:

1. Widen the grid for a gentler close to the week.
2. Remove the bonus condition in the closing minutes for open, unconditioned play.
3. Reduce to 5v5 if fatigue is visible.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Fatigue reducing discipline in the final minutes	A demanding week of new tactical content now behind the group	Early engagements reappearing late in the practice	Let it flow	Light-touch encouragement only	Continue
Game becomes stretched and transitional	Natural end-of-session tempo rise	More end-to-end play, fewer sustained block-holding sequences	Let it flow	None needed	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: minimal — encouragement and recognition of good examples.

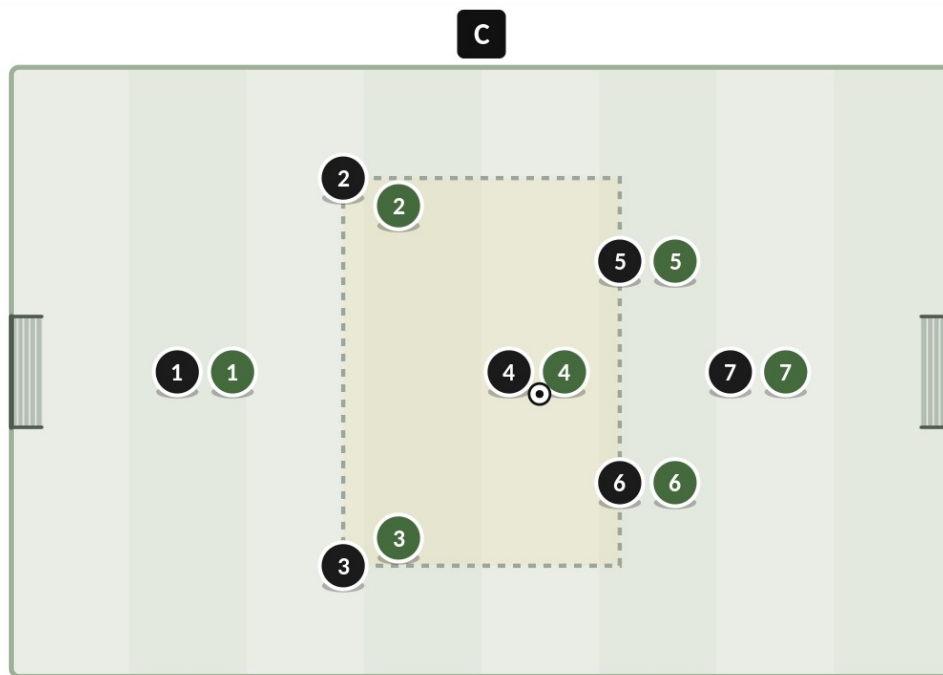
Success indicators:

- Multiple bonus points earned through genuinely organised regains.
- High energy and communication maintained into the closing minutes.
- Visible enjoyment and organisation from the players themselves.

Coach's eye: as in every Thursday session, read the group's mood as closely as their shape.

H7.4 HOLD THE BLOCK — Confidence Game

34 x 22 m • 7v7 • bonus for a regain won inside the block's own trigger zone • 17 minutes



● Team A ● Team B ● Ball ■ Trigger zone

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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 34x22 metre pitch with penalty box markings and a goal at each end, and a shaded yellow zone in the centre. Seven players in dark green bibs numbered 1-7 and six players in black bibs numbered 1-6 spread across the pitch. White football near a central contested area. Title: 'HOLD THE BLOCK — Confidence Game'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m • 7v7 • bonus for a regain won inside the block's own trigger zone • 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 sideline view of a lively 7v7 game at dusk, a green-bibbed player winning the ball cleanly inside a marked central zone with team-mates still connected around them, both goals visible with nets, coach on the touchline relaxed and pleased.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 7v7 football game at dusk on a grass pitch with two full-size goals visible. A player in a dark green bib winning the ball cleanly in a central area, team-mates in dark green still visibly connected and organised around the moment of the win. Warm, low evening sunlight, long shadows, genuine energy among players. A coach in training kit stands relaxed on the touchline, visibly pleased. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

REFLECTION (FINAL 3-4 MINUTES, SEATED)

Seated as a group, captain(s) present.

Questions put to the group:

1. What is a mid-block, in your own words, and how is it different from what we did in Weeks 3 and 4?
2. What was the hardest part of tonight's discipline, and did you get better at it across the session?
3. What's one thing you want to see this team do on Saturday — through the middle, around the outside, or both?

Coach's closing input: name two or three specific, positive examples from across the week, and confirm that the team now has two distinct defensive pictures available (a live press from Weeks 3–4, and a patient mid-block from this week) — a genuine piece of tactical adaptability worth naming plainly to the group.

Match-Day Objectives — Week 7

Three team objectives:

1. The team produces at least one clean central line-break, not just wide ones.
2. Third-man combinations are attempted only when the picture genuinely supports them.
3. If the team defends in a mid-block, no player engages the ball outside the agreed zone.

Three unit objectives:

- *Defensive unit*: the two banks hold connected, patient shape until genuinely triggered.
- *Midfield unit*: at least one player occupies the pocket between the lines consistently.
- *Attacking unit*: forward players recognise when to drop short (between the lines) versus stay high (threatening depth).

Individual role reminders *(assign according to the shape the coach selects)*:

- Central progression player: your job is to be found in the pocket, facing forward.
- Link player (third-man combinations): a clean, first-time lay-off is your whole job in that moment.
- Transition runner (third man): time your run to the first pass, not the lay-off.
- Any defender in a mid-block: your discipline not to engage early is as valuable as any tackle.

Measurable performance indicators:

- Rough count of central line-breaks achieved during Tuesday's Practice 4, alongside the wide-route count from Week 6, to track balance between the two.
- Number of early engagements (shape failures) during Thursday's Practice 3, expected to trend toward zero across the week.
- Squad's own account, given in the closing reflection, of the team's growing tactical range — recorded for the Week 11 review.

Formation Translation — Applying This Week Across Different Shapes

Principle: Progression through the centre; the mid-block.

In a 4-2-3-1: the attacking midfielder is the most natural occupant of the pocket between the lines; the double pivot provides the underlapping support for a third-man combination. Defensively, the same 4-2-3-1 can hold a mid-block with the front player and the attacking midfielder forming the front line of a compact shape, the double pivot and back four forming the rear.

In a 3-4-3: with no dedicated number 10, the pocket is more often filled by one of the front three dropping short or a central midfielder stepping forward at the right moment. Defensively, a back three's mid-block often has slightly more natural central solidity (an extra body centrally) but needs its wide players to work harder to connect the block's width.

What stays the same: the pocket-receiving skill itself, and the mid-block's core discipline (hold, then engage together) — both are formation-independent.

What changes: which player is best placed to occupy the pocket, and how the block's specific personnel connect across its width.

What must not change: receiving body shape in the pocket, and the mid-block's non-negotiable discipline against early engagement — both are the week's central coaching points, regardless of formation.

Risk in each structure: a 4-2-3-1 that loses its attacking midfielder's positional discipline leaves the double pivot without support against a press. A 3-4-3's mid-block can be stretched wide more easily than a back four's, since there is one fewer body to cover the same width.

Opposition influence: against a team that struggles to break lines centrally, a mid-block is often the more efficient defensive choice, conserving energy compared to a high press. Against a team with genuine quality between the lines, the mid-block's trigger zone may need to be pushed higher, engaging sooner rather than inviting too much central passing time — a judgement call the team will practice making more explicitly in Phase 4 (Week 21 onward).

Coach Review — Week 7

(To be completed by the coach after both sessions have run, before Week 8 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 ____.
- **Technical/tactical evidence:** how often did the team break lines centrally during Tuesday's Practice 4, compared to wide breaks in Week 6?
- **Mid-block evidence:** how disciplined was the team's engagement timing during Thursday's Practice 3?
- **Communication evidence:** is "Step" being reserved specifically for the trigger moment, as coached?
- **Physical observations:** how did the squad handle a week with a different physical profile — high duel intensity centrally, more positional discipline defensively?
- **Leadership observations:** who called the block's engagement most accurately?
- **Priority for Week 8:** based on the above, does Week 8 (collective pressing triggers) need any adjustment to its planned emphasis?

Written by Alan Cunningham with Claude AI · Castlewellan Town FC — Senior Coaching Curriculum, Week 7 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.