



Week 14 — Developing Collective Understanding

Tags: `possession` `combination-play` `final-third` `full-squad-practice` `conditioning`

Weekly Overview

FIELD	DETAIL
Week number	14 of 36
Season phase	3 — Developing Collective Understanding
Core principle	Progression: through, around or over
Secondary principle	Overloads & rest defence
Previous match review focus	Apply the three routes below to the most recent fixture.
Weekly tactical problem	Week 13 taught the team to create overloads centrally and wide, but stopped at the moment the overload was used to progress the ball. This week asks what happens next: converting a numbers advantage into a genuine chance requires sharp combination play in a much smaller space than midfield offers, and requires enough players arriving into the box — at the right depths and at the right moments — to actually finish what the combination creates.
Formation-neutral explanation	Final-third combination play and arriving in the box with numbers are both mechanisms, not formations — a one-two, a third-man run, or a staggered set of runners into the box works identically whichever structure created the opportunity in the first place.
Example structural applications	In a 4-3-3: final-third combinations typically involve the front three plus an arriving midfielder or overlapping full-back; arriving in the box with numbers usually draws on a winger, a striker, and a late-arriving central midfielder at three different depths. In a 3-4-3 or back-three structure: final-third combinations often involve both forwards plus a wing-back; arriving in the box with numbers can draw on both forwards and a wing-back, with the double pivot providing the extra body further back. The specific players change; the mechanisms — a sharp combination to break the last line, and staggered arrivals to finish it — do not.

Match Review and Weekly Adjustment

Route A — Previous performance was strong. If the team played well, look for moments where a good final-third position wasn't converted because too few players arrived into the box — a strong performance can still hide underused crosses and cutbacks. Name it plainly.

Route B — Previous performance exposed a tactical weakness. If the team struggled to break down an organised defence in the final third, or crosses regularly found nobody in the box, this week answers it directly — open the relevant session with the specific moment from the match.

Route C — Attendance, facilities or player availability are disrupted. Both mechanisms — a sharp combination, and staggered arrivals into the box — scale to any numbers. Protect the timing elements above pure player counts.

Tuesday — Session 27

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	27 of 72
Week	14
Season phase	3 — Developing Collective Understanding
Training day	Tuesday
Session theme	Final-third combinations
Short summary	Teaches sharp, quick combination play in tight areas near goal — the one-two and the third-man run — as the tool for breaking down an organised defence once an overload has brought the team into the final third.
Tags	`possession` `combination-play` `final-third` `conditioning`
Primary learning objective	The team executes clean, quick combinations (one-twos, third-man runs) in tight areas near goal to break the last defensive line.
Secondary learning objective	Combinations are used specifically once an overload has already been created, not attempted against an even picture.
Match connection	This week's foundation for the match-day connection named for Thursday: more players arriving late into the box.
Expected tactical outcome	More frequent, cleaner combinations in the final third that produce a shot or a clear chance.
Expected physical load	Repeat sprint, high — short, explosive combination actions repeated at high frequency.
Recommended intensity	7–8 / 10.
Equipment list	20 footballs · 20 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, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout; in Practice 4 the defending goalkeeper is coached specifically on organising the low block. Week 14 tests them against.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 46 x 32 m (Practice 4).
Area layout	A tight technical zone near goal for Practice 2, widening through Practices 3 and 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 2 reduces to 3v2; Practice 3 becomes 5v5; Practice 4 becomes 6v6.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 4 can extend to 9v9.
Contingency — restricted space	Practice 2 works in any space near a goal; the combination principle survives compression well since it's already a tight-area skill.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

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

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:10-0:25	15 min	Technical practice — <i>The One-Two</i>	Club green
0:25-0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27-0:42	15 min	Skill game — <i>Combine to Finish</i>	Dark green
0:42-0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44-0:59	15 min	Conditioned match — <i>Break the Door</i>	Black
0:59-1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — COMBINATION REFLEX (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Raises heart rate through repeated quick combination actions before any tactical structure is added.

Organisation: 20 x 16 m grid, pairs and trios rotating. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join fully.

Walkthrough: Rapid one-two combinations between pairs, moving position after every combination, gradually increasing to trios practising a simple give-and-go-and-support pattern.

Rules: Each combination must be completed in two touches or fewer per player.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* clean, quick passing and movement.
- *Physical:* short, sharp, repeated actions.
- *Psychological:* speed of decision-making under a light time pressure.

PRACTICE 2 — THE ONE-TWO (TECHNICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Isolates the technique and timing of the one-two (wall pass) in a tight area near goal, the classic mechanism for beating a defender who has fully committed to the ball.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 28 x 20 m
- **Players:** 4 attacking outfield vs 3 defending, working toward a full-size goal
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the defending goalkeeper is included, reading the combination
- **Team sizes:** 4 v 3
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for starting positions
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** coach restarts on any stoppage
- **Coach position:** central, able to see the whole practice
- **Rotation method:** groups rotate every few minutes
- **Direction of play:** toward the one goal

Practice walkthrough: An attacking player in possession plays a short pass to a team-mate and immediately runs beyond the defender who committed to the ball, receiving a first-time return pass into the space created. The pattern is walked through slowly first, then repeated at full pace against passive, then live, opposition.

Rules: The wall pass must be played first-time by the receiving player to count as a successful repetition.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* the passer's run timing and the wall player's first-time execution are both essential.
- *Unit:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Transition:* not applicable — this practice is possession-focused throughout.

Decision-making triggers:

- A defender has fully committed to pressuring the ball-carrier → play the one-two.
- The defender hasn't committed, or a second defender is covering the space behind → hold possession and look elsewhere.

Communication language used: *Time, Travel.*

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Weight of the initial pass and clean, first-time execution of the return.
Tactical	Recognising the moment a defender has genuinely committed.
Physical	Explosive running into the space created.
Psychological	Confidence to attempt the combination rather than settling for a safer option.
Communication & leadership	The passer signalling their run clearly enough for the wall player to react instantly.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What told you the defender had genuinely committed to the ball?

2. What happened when the wall pass wasn't played first-time?
3. Why does the passer's run need to happen at the same moment as the pass, not after?
4. How does this connect to Week 13's third-body timing principle from central overloads?

Progressions:

1. Add a second defender covering the space behind, testing whether the combination still works.
2. Reduce the practice area, sharpening the timing required.
3. Add a condition that a shot must follow within two touches of the return pass.

Regressions:

1. Walk the pattern through with no opposition for longer before adding any.
2. Widen the practice area for more time and space.
3. Allow the wall player an extra touch while the technique is being learned.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The wall pass isn't played first-time, giving the defender time to recover	Habit of taking an extra touch	The defender recovers position before the return pass is played	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: rehearse the first-time execution	Resume
The passer's run is late, arriving after the space has closed	Hesitation after playing the initial pass	The runner arrives into a covered area rather than open space	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: reset the timing of pass and run together	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: heavy on *freeze-and-correct*, since precise timing between the pass and the run is the entire teaching point.

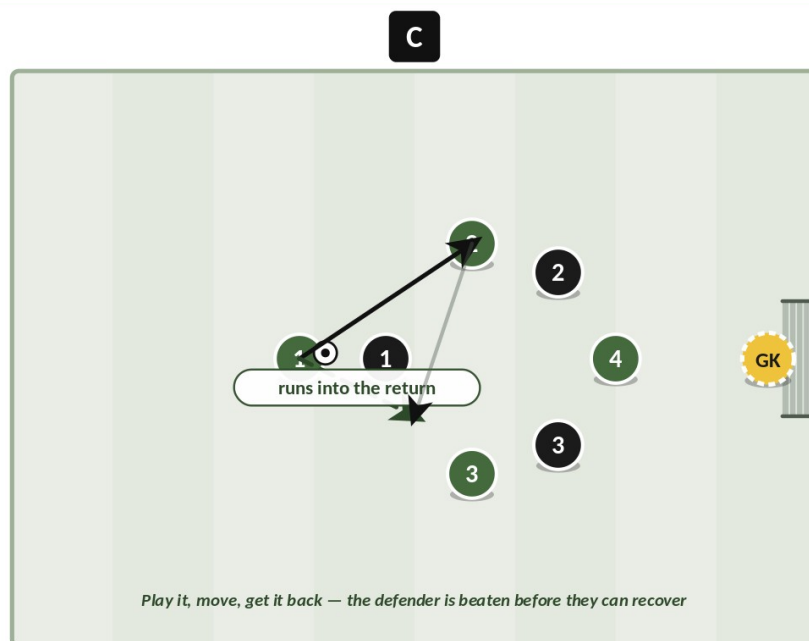
Success indicators:

- Wall passes are consistently played first-time.
- The passer's run and the pass are timed together, not sequentially.
- The combination beats the committed defender cleanly and repeatably.

Coach's eye: watch the defender's weight distribution as closely as your own players — a defender who has genuinely committed their weight forward is the specific picture this combination is designed to punish.

T14.2 THE ONE-TWO — Combination in Tight Areas

28 x 20 m • 4v3 near goal • a wall pass breaks a defender who has committed to the ball • 15 minutes



● Attacking team ● Defending team ○ Ball ➔ Wall pass out ➔ Run into the return

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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 28x20 metre area showing a full-size goal with a goalkeeper in yellow. Four players in dark green bibs numbered 1-4 and three players in black bibs numbered 1-3 near the goal. White football near a green player. A black solid arrow showing an initial pass, a faded grey arrow showing the return wall pass, and a short dashed run arrow labelled 'runs into the return' showing the passer's run into space. Title: 'THE ONE-TWO — Combination in Tight Areas'. Subtitle: '28 x 20 m • 4v3 near goal • a wall pass breaks a defender who has committed to the ball • 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 area near a full-size goal, a green-bibbed player playing a short pass and immediately sprinting past a committed black-bibbed defender, a team-mate returning the ball first-time into the runner's path, goalkeeper alert, coach observing the timing closely.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training near a full-size goal. A player in a dark green bib playing a short pass and immediately sprinting past a defender in a black bib who has fully committed to the ball. A team-mate in a matching dark green bib returning the ball first-time into the runner's path. The goalkeeper, in yellow, alert and reacting. A coach standing centrally, closely observing the timing. 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 — COMBINE TO FINISH (SKILL GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Moves the combination principle into a genuine small-sided game, rewarding a goal that follows a final-third combination — a one-two or a third-man run — connecting Tuesday's technical work to a real attacking outcome.

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 full-size or portable goals, 6 flat markers
- **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 that follows a final-third combination (a one-two or a third-man run inside the attacking third) is worth double. The coach notes, without necessarily announcing, how often the team combines rather than relying on individual play near goal.

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

Tactical roles: the full combination skill set from Practice 2, now inside live, directional play with a genuine attacking consequence.

Decision-making triggers: as established in Practice 2, plus the added decision of when a combination is genuinely on versus when an individual action or a simple pass is the better choice.

Communication language used: *Time, Travel, Turn.*

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean, quick execution of combinations under real opposition pressure.
Tactical	Recognising when a combination is genuinely on near goal.
Physical	Repeated high-intensity actions in tight areas.
Psychological	Confidence to attempt combinations rather than defaulting to individual play.
Communication & leadership	Players calling for and confirming a combination before committing to it.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What was your team's clearest example of a successful final-third combination tonight?
2. What happened when a combination was attempted against a defender who hadn't actually committed?
3. How does the timing here compare to Practice 2's isolated technical work?
4. How does this connect to Week 13's overload-creation principle — is a combination easier once an overload already exists?

Progressions:

1. Reduce the touch limit for the combination sequence.
2. Add a genuine offside line at each end.
3. Reduce the practice area, sharpening the pressure on timing.

Regressions:

1. Allow the coach to signal when a combination opportunity exists while the recognition skill is being built.
2. Widen the practice area for more time and space.
3. Reduce to 4v4 for more individual involvement.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Team attempts combinations against defenders who haven't genuinely committed	Eagerness to chase the bonus condition	Combinations are attempted into well-covered defenders and lost	Stop	Short group intervention: "was that defender really committed?"	Resume
Team avoids combinations altogether, defaulting to individual play or simple passes	Caution or lack of confidence after an earlier correction	No combinations attempted even when the picture clearly allows one	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "was there a combination on there?"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *short group intervention* and *questioning*.

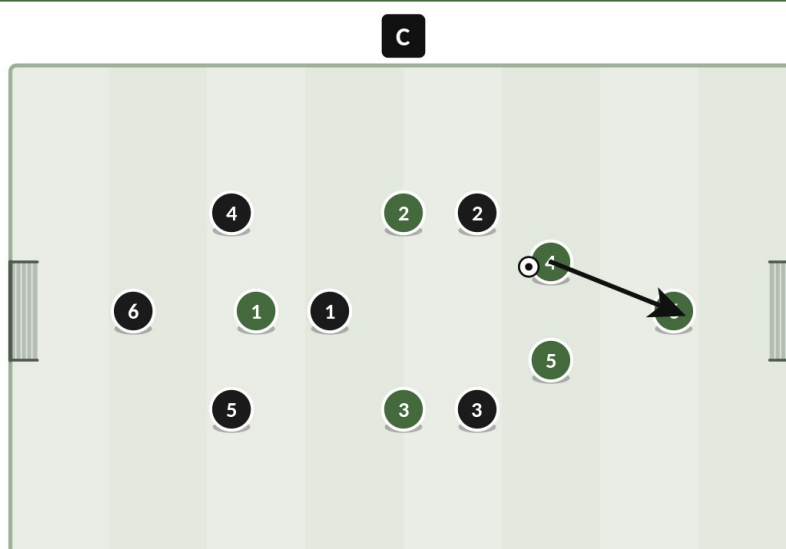
Success indicators:

- Bonus-condition goals increase across the practice.
- Combinations are attempted only when the picture genuinely allows them.
- Execution speed and cleanliness improve across the practice.

Coach's eye: watch for the moment a defender's weight commits forward — that is the exact trigger this practice is teaching the team to recognise and exploit.

T14.3 COMBINE TO FINISH — Small-Sided Game

32 x 20 m • 6v6 • a goal following a final-third combination (one-two or third man) is worth double • 15 minutes



● Team in possession ● Opposition ○ Ball ➔ Combination 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. A 32x20 metre pitch with a full-size 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 close to goal. A black solid arrow with an arrowhead showing a combination pass toward goal. Title: 'COMBINE TO FINISH — Small-Sided Game'. Subtitle: '32 x 20 m · 6v6 · a goal following a final-third combination (one-two or third man) 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 completing a quick combination near goal with a team-mate, a black-bibbed defender beaten and recovering late, both full-size goals visible, coach on the touchline tracking the moment closely.

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 full-size goals. A player in a dark green bib completing a quick passing combination near goal with a team-mate. A defender in a black bib beaten by the combination, recovering late. Late-afternoon light, realistic grass pitch and shadows, amateur adult players of varied build. A coach on the touchline, tracking the moment closely. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 4 — BREAK THE DOOR (CONDITIONED MATCH)

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

Tactical purpose: Confirms the week's principle at full match scale, requiring the team to combine sharply enough to break down a deliberately organised, low defensive block — the picture most likely to be faced against a well-drilled opponent.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 46 x 32 m (attacking third plus build-up area)
- **Players:** 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers play their own-goal role; the defending goalkeeper organises the low block
- **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:** match-realistic restarts
- **Coach position:** touchline, 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 sit in a deliberately organised, compact low block, and the attacking team is coached to use sharp final-third combinations — building on Week 13's overload-creation work — to break it down, rather than relying on crosses alone.

Rules: Standard conditioned-match rules.

Tactical roles: the full combination and overload-creation skill set, combined for the first time against a genuinely organised low block at match scale.

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Practices 2–3, applied under match conditions against a deliberately compact opponent.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution under full match pressure and fatigue.
Tactical	Sharp combination play specifically against a well-organised low block.
Physical	The week's peak physical demand — repeated explosive combination actions.
Psychological	Patience to build the picture before combining, rather than forcing it early.
Communication & leadership	Players organising who combines and who provides the supporting angle.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What was the clearest example of a combination breaking down the low block tonight?
2. What happened when the team tried to force a combination too early, before the picture was ready?
3. How does this connect to Week 13's overload-creation principle — did an overload usually come before the combination?

4. What is different about combining against a compact, patient block compared to Week 7's mid-block work?

Progressions:

1. Add a genuine offside line.
2. Reduce numbers to 7v7.
3. Instruct the defending team to become even more compact, raising the difficulty further.

Regressions:

1. Instruct the defending team to be slightly less compact while the combination skill is being consolidated.
2. Reduce to 6v6 on a smaller area.
3. Reintroduce Practice 2's isolated one-two drilling briefly if execution has broken down under full match conditions.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Team forces combinations against a defence that hasn't genuinely opened up	Impatience against a well-organised, patient block	Combinations attempted into crowded, well-covered areas	Stop	Short group intervention connecting directly to this week's principle	Resume
Team reverts to crossing without ever attempting a central combination	Habit of the more direct, less risky option	No combination attempts across a sustained period of possession	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "was there a combination on there instead?"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *short group intervention* and *questioning*, reserving deeper correction for the reflection immediately after.

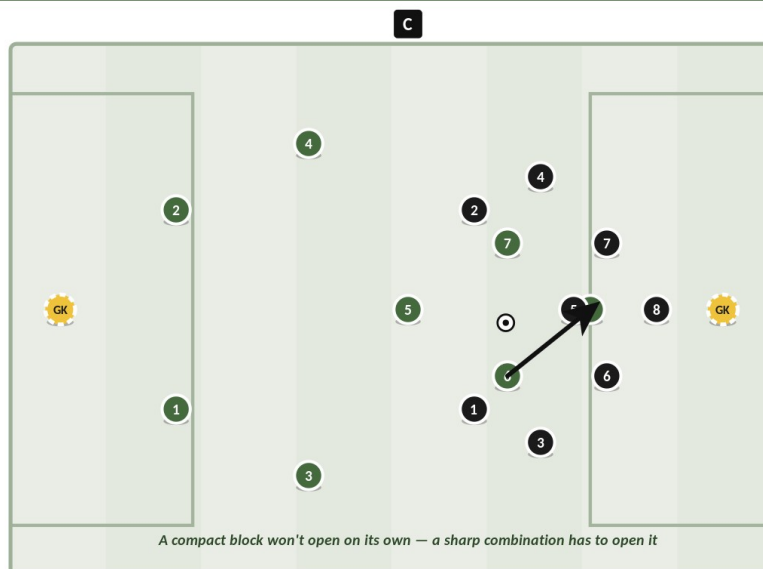
Success indicators:

- The team attempts and completes genuine combinations against the organised block.
- Combinations are timed to genuine moments of defensive commitment, not forced.
- The low block is broken down more than once across the practice.

Coach's eye: this practice is the week's clearest test of whether Tuesday's teaching has transferred — judge it specifically against how patiently the team builds toward a combination rather than forcing one prematurely.

T14.4 BREAK THE DOOR — Conditioned Match

46 x 32 m (attacking third + build) · 8v8 + GKs · combine to break down an organised, low defensive block · 15 minutes



● Attacking team ● Low block ● GK ● Ball → Combination 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 46x32 metre area 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 spread across the area, with the black players organised in a compact, low block near their own goal. A black solid arrow with an arrowhead showing a combination pass breaking into the block. White football near a green player. Title: 'BREAK THE DOOR — Conditioned Match'. Subtitle: '46 x 32 m (attacking third + build) · 8v8 + GKs · combine to break down an organised, low defensive 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: Wide elevated view of a full-scale 8v8 conditioned match, black-bibbed defenders organised into a compact, low block near their own goal, a green-bibbed player threading a sharp combination pass into the space between them, coach on the touchline near the attacking third tracking the whole picture.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Wide elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 8v8 conditioned football match on a grass pitch with full-size goals and goalkeepers in yellow at each end. Defenders in black bibs organised into a compact, low block near their own goal. A player in a dark green bib threading a sharp combination pass into the space between defenders. A coach stands near the attacking third on the touchline, tracking the whole picture. 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: "Name one combination tonight that genuinely broke the defence down, and what made it work."

Thursday — Session 28

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	28 of 72
Week	14
Season phase	3 — Developing Collective Understanding
Training day	Thursday
Session theme	Arriving in the box with numbers
Short summary	Teaches staggered, timed runs into the box at three different depths — near post, far post, and the edge of the box for a rebound — so a cross or cutback created by Week 13's wide overload work is actually met by enough players to convert it.
Tags	`possession` `finishing` `movement` `unit-work`
Primary learning objective	The team arrives in the box with staggered runners at three depths, timed to the delivery, rather than everyone arriving at once or too late.
Secondary learning objective	Runners choose which depth to attack based on the specific delivery, not a fixed, rehearsed assignment.
Match connection	The week's named match-day connection: more players arriving late into the box.
Expected tactical outcome	More players genuinely arriving to meet a delivery, at staggered depths, producing more shots and clearer chances.
Expected physical load	Repeat sprint, high — explosive, repeated arrival runs.
Recommended intensity	6.5–7.5 / 10, rising in Practice 4.
Equipment list	20 footballs · 20 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, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout; the defending goalkeeper is coached specifically on communicating across multiple simultaneous attacking threats.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 46 x 30 m (Practice 3).
Area layout	An individual timing area for Practice 2, widening into a full positional area for Practice 3, then a small-sided game for Practice 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 3 reduces to two staggered depths rather than three; Practice 2 and 4 scale down proportionally.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 3 can add a fourth staggered runner.
Contingency — restricted space	Practice 2 can be run in any space with a goal and marked target zones; Practice 3 needs realistic width and should not be excessively compressed.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

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

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
		<i>Depths</i>	
0:10–0:25	15 min	Technical practice — <i>Timed Arrival</i>	Club green
0:25–0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27–0:42	15 min	Unit / tactical practice — <i>Bodies in the Box</i>	Dark green
0:42–0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44–0:59	15 min	Confidence game — <i>Arrive to Score</i>	Black
0:59–1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — THREE DEPTHS (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Introduces the physical sensation of running to three different depths in sequence, before any tactical structure or delivery is added.

Organisation: 24 x 18 m grid with three marked lines at different depths. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join fully.

Walkthrough: Players sprint in sequence to each of the three marked depths on a coach's call, rehearsing the physical distinction between a near, middle and far arrival point before any ball is introduced.

Rules: Each call must be reacted to explosively, not jogged.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* not applicable — this is a pure movement warm-up.
- *Physical:* explosive, repeated sprint actions to three distinct depths.
- *Psychological:* quick reaction to a called depth.

PRACTICE 2 — TIMED ARRIVAL (TECHNICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Isolates the specific technique of timing a run into one of three staggered target zones — near post, far post, and the edge of the box for a rebound — based on the type of delivery being played, so the mechanism is reliable before it's tested inside a full positional practice.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 30 x 22 m
- **Players:** individual and small-group rotation, up to 3 runners at once with one deliverer
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through as the defending goalkeeper
- **Team sizes:** not applicable — a technical, rotational practice
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers marking the three target zones
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 6 balls with the coach and deliverer
- **Restart:** deliverer collects a fresh ball after each repetition
- **Coach position:** behind the delivery point, able to assess timing
- **Rotation method:** runners and deliverer swap every four to five repetitions
- **Direction of play:** toward the one goal, from a wide delivery position

Practice walkthrough: A deliverer plays crosses from a wide position while three runners start from deep and time staggered arrivals into the near-post, far-post, and edge-of-box zones — not simultaneously, but based on reading the delivery's likely destination as it's struck.

Rules: Runners must react to the delivery's trajectory, not commit to a fixed zone before the ball is struck.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* each runner's job is to read the delivery and arrive at the correct depth at the correct time.
- *Unit:* the three runners must avoid arriving at the same zone simultaneously.
- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Transition:* not applicable — this practice is possession-focused throughout.

Decision-making triggers:

- The delivery is low and driven toward the near post → the near-post runner attacks it.
- The delivery is higher and toward the far post → the far-post runner attacks it.
- The delivery is blocked, cleared, or falls short → the edge-of-box runner attacks the rebound.

Communication language used: *Time, Travel.*

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean finishing technique at each of the three depths.
Tactical	Reading the delivery's trajectory to select the correct zone and timing.
Physical	Explosive, repeated arrival runs.
Psychological	Trust in reading the picture rather than committing to a fixed assignment early.
Communication & leadership	Runners avoiding collision by reading each other's movement, not just the ball.

Guided discovery questions:

1. How did the type of delivery (low and near post, versus high and far post) change which runner should attack it?
2. What happened when two runners arrived at the same zone at the same time?
3. Why is the edge-of-box runner's job valuable even on repetitions where the initial delivery isn't cleared?
4. How does this connect to Week 9's near-post/far-post decoy work from the wide free-kick routine?

Progressions:

1. Add a defending line contesting the three zones.
2. Vary the deliverer's trajectory unpredictably, sharpening the runners' reading skill.
3. Add a condition that a shot must be attempted within one touch of arrival.

Regressions:

1. Call out the intended trajectory before each delivery while the reading skill is being learned.
2. Reduce to two runners and two zones.
3. Increase the time between deliveries for more recovery.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Two runners arrive at the same zone simultaneously	Runners aren't reading each other's movement, only the ball	Congestion in one zone, other zones left empty	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: reset and rehearse staggered timing explicitly	Resume
Runners commit to a zone before the delivery is struck	Guessing rather than reading the actual trajectory	Runners arrive in the wrong zone relative to where the ball actually goes	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: emphasise reading the ball's flight, not anticipating it	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: heavy on *freeze-and-correct*, since precise, reactive timing across three runners is the entire teaching point.

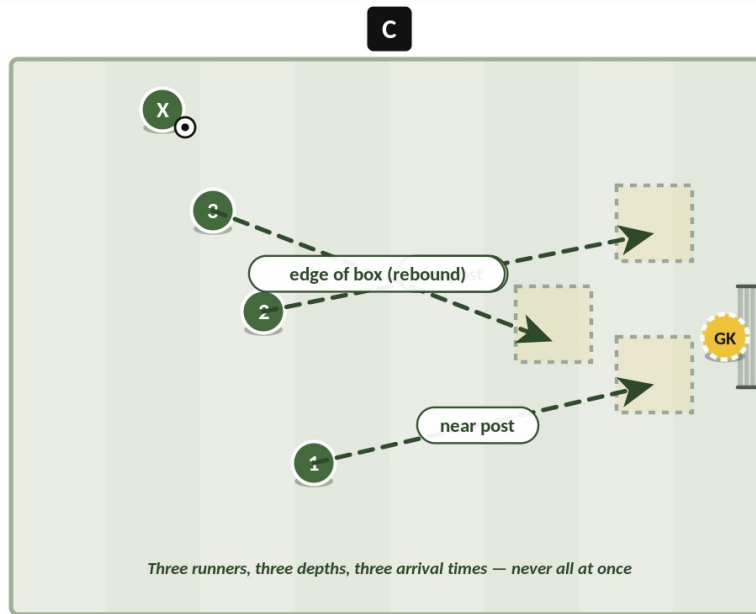
Success indicators:

- Runners consistently arrive at the correct zone for the delivery type.
- The three runners stagger their arrivals rather than converging on one zone.
- Finishing technique at each depth is clean and controlled.

Coach's eye: watch the runners' eyes and body shape as closely as the ball — a runner reading the delivery correctly will already be adjusting their line before the ball arrives.

H14.2 TIMED ARRIVAL — Staggered Runs Into the Box

30 x 22 m • individual and small-group timing practice into three staggered target depths • 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 30x22 metre area showing a full-size goal with a goalkeeper in yellow. Three small shaded target zones marked near post, far post, and the edge of the box. A player in dark green bibs labelled X positioned wide with a football, outside the box. Three players in dark green bibs numbered 1–3 positioned at varying depths, each connected to a short dashed run arrow labelled 'near post', 'far post', and 'edge of box (rebound)' respectively, heading toward their target zones. Title: 'TIMED ARRIVAL — Staggered Runs Into the Box'. Subtitle: '30 x 22 m • individual and small-group timing practice into three staggered target depths • 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 penalty box area, a player delivering a cross from a wide position, three team-mates arriving at noticeably different depths and moments — one at the near post, one at the far post, one just outside the box — goalkeeper alert and reacting, coach observing from behind the delivery point.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training near a full-size goal. A player delivering a cross from a wide position outside the penalty box. Three team-mates in dark green bibs arriving at noticeably different depths and moments — one near the goal's near post, one at the far post, one just outside the box. The goalkeeper, in yellow, alert and reacting to the delivery. A coach standing behind the delivery point, closely observing the timing. 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 — BODIES IN THE BOX (UNIT / TACTICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Combines Week 13's wide overload work with this week's staggered arrival technique inside a full positional practice, so the whole sequence — stretch, overload, deliver, arrive — is trained as one connected picture rather than separate skills.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 46 x 30 m
- **Players:** 16 outfield
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the defending team's goalkeeper is included, organising communication across multiple simultaneous attacking threats

- **Team sizes:** 8 v 8
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers, 1 full-size or portable goal
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** nearest player restarts any stoppage
- **Coach position:** mobile, able to see the full width of the pitch
- **Rotation method:** roles swap at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** toward the one goal

Practice walkthrough: The possession team works through the full sequence from Weeks 9, 13 and this week: stretch the defence, create a wide overload via an overlap or underlap, deliver early, and arrive with staggered runners at the three depths practised in Practice 2. The coach watches specifically for how many players genuinely arrive into the box, not just whether the delivery itself is good.

Rules: Standard positional practice rules; a clean delivery met by at least two staggered runners scores a bonus point beyond a standard successful attack.

Tactical roles: the full sequence from Week 9's switching, Week 13's wide overload creation, and this week's staggered arrival timing, combined for the first time.

Decision-making triggers: the full combined set from all three weeks' relevant principles, applied together.

Communication language used: *Switch, Travel, Time*, plus the depth calls from Practice 2.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Delivery quality combined with clean finishing technique at whichever depth is used.
Tactical	Sequencing the full picture correctly — stretch, overload, deliver, arrive.
Physical	Repeated wide sprints and staggered arrival runs.
Psychological	Patience through the early stages of the sequence, urgency in the arrival.
Communication & leadership	Players organising who arrives at which depth, in real time, based on the developing picture.

Guided discovery questions:

1. How many players genuinely arrived into the box on your team's best sequence tonight?
2. What was the relationship between the wide overload and the number of runners who could arrive?
3. Why might a team sometimes commit fewer runners even when the delivery looks promising?

4. How does this connect to Week 10's rest-defence principle — what's the cost of committing every available player forward?

Progressions:

1. Add a genuine offside line inside the delivery zone.
2. Reduce the time allowed between creating the overload and delivering the ball.
3. Add a fourth staggered runner, extending the picture further.

Regressions:

1. Remove the staggered-arrival bonus temporarily, focusing purely on delivery quality.
2. Widen the practice area for more time.
3. Reduce numbers to 6v6.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Delivery is good but too few players arrive to meet it	Runners are slow to react or start their runs too late	Crosses and cutbacks find empty space rather than a runner	Stop	Short group intervention: "who should have been arriving as that ball was struck?"	Resume
Runners arrive but rest defence is abandoned entirely	Overcommitment, echoing the risk first taught in Week 10	No players positioned behind the ball when the delivery is made	Stop	Short group intervention connecting directly to Week 10's rest-defence standard	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *short group intervention* and *questioning*.

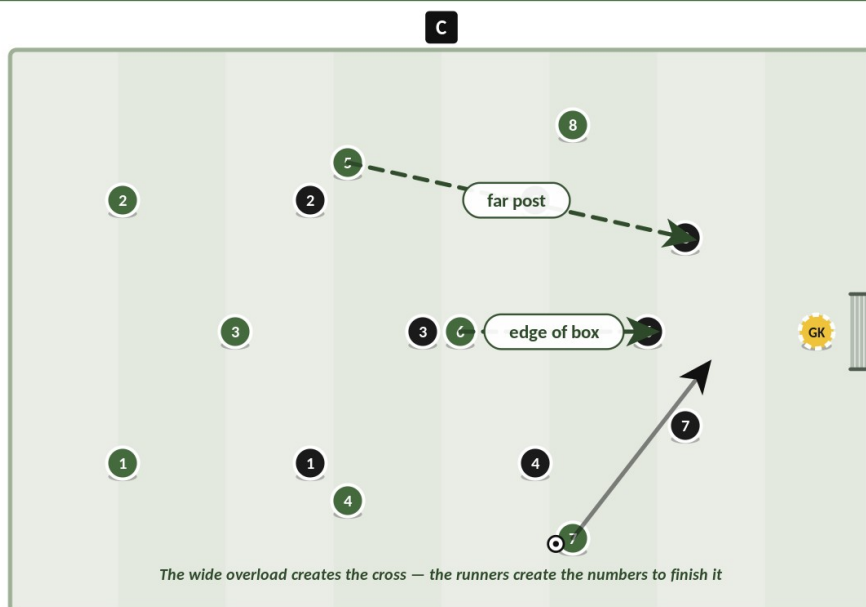
Success indicators:

- Multiple staggered runners genuinely arrive into the box on each sequence.
- The full stretch-overload-deliver-arrive sequence becomes visibly faster and more fluent.
- Rest defence is maintained even as runners commit forward.

Coach's eye: count the runners, not just the delivery — a good cross with nobody arriving to meet it has solved only half the problem this practice exists to fix.

H14.3 BODIES IN THE BOX — Wide Overload to Numbers Up

46 x 30 m • 8v8 • a wide overload draws the delivery, three staggered runners arrive to meet it • 15 minutes



● Attacking team ● Defending team ● Goalkeeper ● Ball → Staggered arrival run → Cross

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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 46x30 metre area with dimension labels, a full-size goal at one end with a goalkeeper in yellow. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 spread across the width of the pitch and eight players in black bibs numbered 1–8 marking them. A black solid arrow with an arrowhead showing a cross from a wide position. Two short dashed run arrows labelled 'far post' and 'edge of box' showing green players arriving at staggered depths. Title: 'BODIES IN THE BOX — Wide Overload to Numbers Up'. Subtitle: '46 x 30 m • 8v8 • a wide overload draws the delivery, three staggered runners arrive to meet it • 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 positional practice stretched across the full width of the pitch, a green-bibbed player delivering a cross from a wide overload, multiple team-mates arriving into the box at visibly different depths and moments, goalkeeper alert in position, coach observing from a central, elevated vantage point.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated wide three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur football positional practice stretched across the full width of a grass pitch. A player in a dark green bib delivering a cross from a wide position near the goal end. Multiple team-mates in matching dark green bibs arriving into the box at visibly different depths and moments. The goalkeeper, in yellow, alert and positioned to react. A coach observing from a central vantage point. 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 4 — ARRIVE TO SCORE (CONFIDENCE GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Closes the session with a competitive, enjoyable game that requires every goal to be scored by a player who started outside the box, reinforcing the week's technical and tactical work inside a genuinely fun context that sends players into the weekend confident.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 34 x 22 m
- **Players:** 14 outfield, rotating
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through
- **Team sizes:** 7 v 7
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 full-size or portable goals, 6 flat markers
- **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, one goal per end

Practice walkthrough: A 7v7 game in which a goal scored by a player who started the phase of play outside the box is worth double, directly rewarding the week's central theme of arriving with numbers rather than already occupying the box.

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

Tactical roles: the full arrival-timing skill set from Practices 2–3, applied inside free-flowing, competitive play.

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Practice 3, applied spontaneously as delivery opportunities arise during play.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean finishing technique on an arriving run, under game-realistic conditions.
Tactical	Timing the arrival to the delivery, as practised throughout the session.
Physical	Moderate, game-based intensity to close the week on a positive note.
Psychological	Confidence and enjoyment — this is the week's designed high point.
Communication & leadership	Team-mates encouraging an arriving run rather than crowding the box early.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made tonight's best arriving-run goal work?
2. What's one thing from this week — combinations or arrivals — you feel ready to take into Saturday?
3. Why does it matter who arrives late rather than who is already standing in the box?

Progressions:

1. Increase the bonus value for a goal scored by the third (latest) arriving runner specifically.
2. Add a genuine offside line.
3. Reduce the pitch width slightly to increase delivery frequency.

Regressions:

- 1. Allow goals from any source if the condition is proving too restrictive for the group's current confidence.
- 2. Increase the pitch size for more space and time.
- 3. Reduce to 5v5 for more individual involvement.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Players camp inside the box early, defeating the purpose of the condition	Habit, or misunderstanding of what counts	Players standing in the box well before any delivery is imminent	Stop	Short group intervention: reset and clarify the condition	Resume
Deliveries are rushed to try to catch a runner arriving, sacrificing quality	The bonus condition is chased at the expense of delivery quality	Poor, hurried crosses that no runner can convert	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "was that delivery actually good enough to arrive onto?"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: light touch — mostly *questioning*, preserving the game's flow and enjoyment as the session's intended closing note.

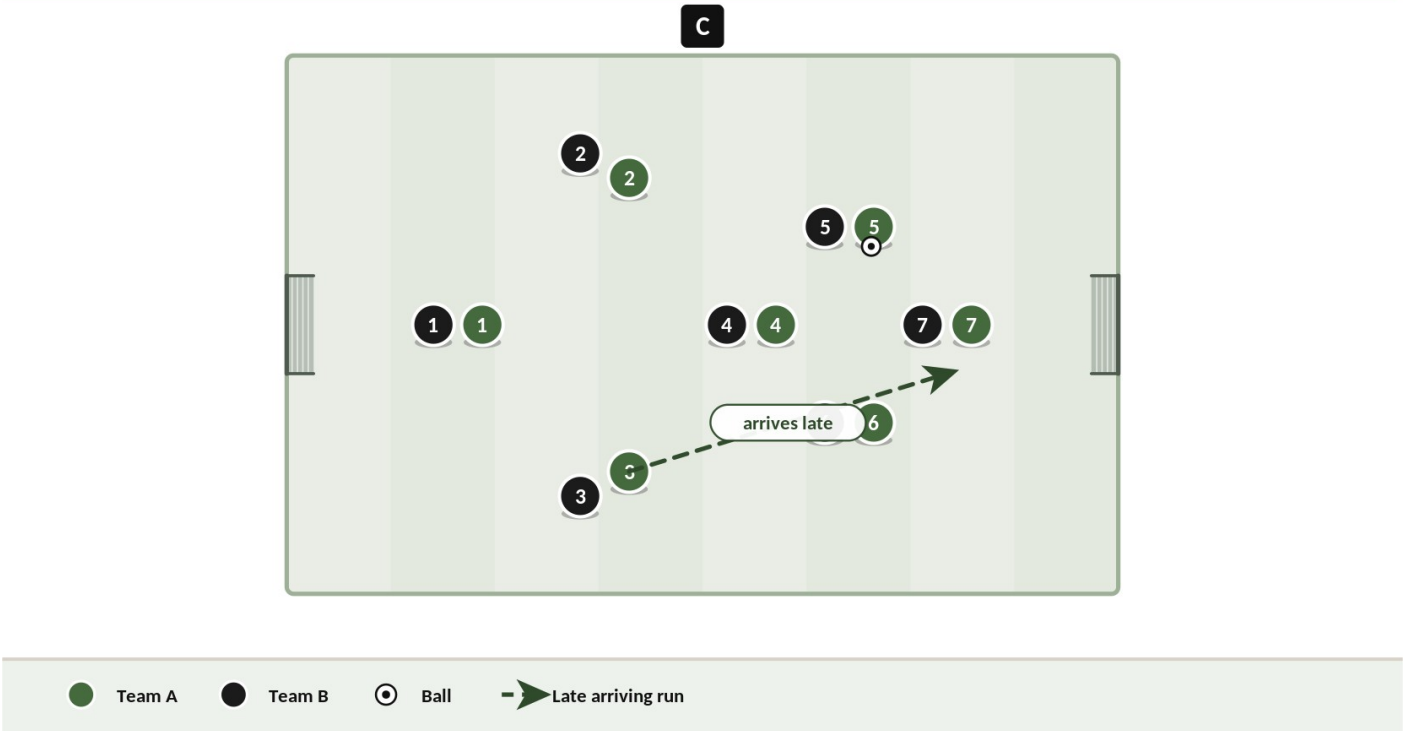
Success indicators:

- Goals from arriving runners increase across the practice.
- Players stay outside the box until genuinely timing a run, rather than camping early.
- Players finish the session animated and positive.

Coach's eye: this is a confidence-building close to the week — resist over- coaching it; let the week's earlier correction do its work and allow the group to enjoy what they've built.

H14.4 ARRIVE TO SCORE — Confidence Game

34 x 22 m • 7v7 • a goal scored by a player arriving from outside the box is worth double • 17 minutes



AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 34x22 metre pitch with a full-size goal at each end. 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 green player close to goal. A short dashed run arrow labelled 'arrives late' showing a green player arriving into the box from outside it. Title: 'ARRIVE TO SCORE — Confidence Game'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m · 7v7 · a goal scored by a player arriving from outside the box is worth double · 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, a green-bibbed player arriving at speed from outside the box to meet a cross and finish, team-mates reacting with visible excitement, both full-size goals visible, coach on the touchline smiling and encouraging.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 7v7 small-sided football game on a grass pitch with two full-size goals. A player in a dark green bib arriving at speed from outside the penalty box to meet a cross and finish on goal. Team-mates in matching dark green bibs reacting with visible excitement nearby. Warm early-evening light, realistic grass pitch and long shadows, amateur adult players of varied build showing visible energy and enjoyment. A coach on the touchline, smiling and encouraging. 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: "Name the three depths we're arriving at in the box, and who's arriving at each one on Saturday."

Match-Day Objectives

Three team objectives:

1. Combine sharply in the final third — a one-two or a third-man run — once an overload has already been created.
2. Deliver crosses and cutbacks early, once a wide overload has been established.
3. Arrive in the box with staggered runners at near post, far post, and the edge of the box, not all at once.

Three unit objectives:

1. **Back line and goalkeeper:** provide the central overload's extra body where the picture allows, without abandoning rest defence.
2. **Midfield unit:** time combination runs and the edge-of-box arrival for the rebound.
3. **Front and wide players:** provide the near-post and far-post arrivals, reading the delivery type to select the correct depth.

Individual role reminders:

- Only attempt a combination once a defender has genuinely committed to the ball.
- Read the delivery's trajectory before committing to a depth — don't guess early.
- Stay outside the box until the moment to arrive — camping early gives the picture away.

Measurable performance indicators:

- Number of final-third combinations completed successfully.
- Number of deliveries met by at least two staggered runners.
- Number of shots or clear chances created directly from a combination or a staggered arrival.
- Number of players arriving late into the box versus already occupying it before the delivery.

Formation Translation — Applying This Across Different Shapes

Final-third combinations:

STRUCTURE	WHO TYPICALLY COMBINES	WHAT STAYS THE SAME	WHAT CHANGES	KEY RISK
4-3-3	The front three plus an arriving midfielder or overlapping full-back	The one-two and third-man timing principle	Which specific player provides the extra combination option depends on the structure's width	Too many players committing to the combination, leaving no rest defence
3-4-3 / back-three structure	Both forwards plus a wing-back	The one-two and third-man timing principle	The double pivot can provide an additional combination option less commonly available in a back four	The wing-back and a forward occupying the same combination space simultaneously

Arriving in the box with numbers:

STRUCTURE	WHO TYPICALLY PROVIDES THE THREE STAGGERED DEPTHS	WHAT STAYS THE SAME	WHAT CHANGES	KEY RISK
4-3-3	A winger (near post), a striker (far post), and an arriving central midfielder (edge of box)	The three-depth staggered arrival principle	Which specific player takes which depth depends on personnel and the picture	Two players arriving at the same depth simultaneously, leaving another depth uncovered
3-4-3	Both forwards (near and far post) and a wing-back or advanced pivot player (edge of box)	The three-depth staggered arrival principle	Two natural forwards give an easier near-post/far-post split than a lone striker structure	Both forwards attacking the same post, leaving the far side uncovered

Coach Review

To be completed by the coaching staff after delivery.

What worked well this week:

What needs more work:

Attendance and availability notes:

Adjustments for next week:

Individual player notes:

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