



Week 17 — Developing Collective Understanding (Phase 3 Review Week)

Tags: `consolidation` `possession` `defending` `set-pieces` `full-squad-practice`

Weekly Overview

FIELD	DETAIL
Week number	17 of 36
Season phase	3 — Developing Collective Understanding (closing week)
Core principle	All Phase 3 principles, consolidated
Secondary principle	Player between the lines
Previous match review focus	Apply the three routes below to the most recent fixture.
Weekly tactical problem	Weeks 12–16 introduced five separate ideas — connected lines, central and wide overloads, final-third combinations with staggered box arrivals, defensive shifting, and pressing adapted to the opponent's build-up shape. This week asks the same question Weeks 5 and 11 asked at the end of their phases: can the team produce all five inside one game, without the practice artificially isolating them?
Formation-neutral explanation	As with every consolidation week, the test is deliberately formation-neutral — the whole point is confirming that none of Phase 3's five weeks were taught as tricks tied to one picture. If a principle only shows up when the practice is built specifically around it, it hasn't been learned as a principle yet.
Example structural applications	Tuesday's practices are run with minimal instruction, exactly as in Weeks 5 and 11 — players organise themselves and are simply watched for whether connected lines, overloads, combinations, defensive shifting and adapted pressing all appear without being asked for.

Match Review and Weekly Adjustment

Route A — Previous performance was strong. If recent form has been good, use Tuesday's consolidation game to push standards further rather than repeat what already works — the Phase 3 review that follows this week is the place to formally recognise the progress and set the bar for Phase 4.

Route B — Previous performance exposed a tactical weakness. If a specific problem has recurred across recent fixtures, Tuesday's "Phase 3 Final" conditioned match is the moment to observe whether it's a genuine gap in the principles taught across Weeks 12–16, or simply inconsistent execution — the Phase 3 review records which.

Route C — Attendance, facilities or player availability are disrupted. Protect the consolidation game and the set-piece review above everything else this week — both are foundational to Phase 4, and both scale down without losing their value.

Tuesday — Session 33

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	33 of 72
Week	17
Season phase	3 — Developing Collective Understanding
Training day	Tuesday
Session theme	Phase 3 consolidation game
Short summary	Brings together everything trained in Weeks 12–16 — connected lines, central and wide overloads, final-third combinations with staggered box arrivals, defensive shifting, and pressing adapted to the opponent's shape — inside progressively less structured practices, finishing with a full conditioned match carrying no artificial conditions at all.
Tags	`possession` `defending` `combination-play` `full-squad-practice` `conditioning`
Primary learning objective	All five of Phase 3's principles are visible in the same session, unprompted.
Secondary learning objective	Central receivers are found and used as a natural part of the team's play, not a specifically drilled event.
Match connection	The week's named match-day connection: combination play visible in the final third.
Expected tactical outcome	The team plays a recognisable version of itself in the final conditioned match, without needing bonus conditions to produce the right behaviours.
Expected physical load	Moderate — Phase 3's closing week carries a similar weight to Weeks 5 and 11's consolidation sessions.
Recommended intensity	7.5–8.5 / 10.
Equipment list	20 footballs · 24 flat markers · 16 cones (orange) · 2 sets of bibs (2 colours, 10 each) · 2 full-size or portable goals
Player numbers	Designed for 18 outfield + 2 goalkeepers, allowing the closing game to run at 9v9; scales down to 16 outfield (8v8) without losing value.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout and are coached as full participants in every principle this week.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 55 x 38 m (Practice 4).
Area layout	A large positional grid for Practice 2, a standard small-sided area for Practice 3, and close to two-thirds of a full pitch for Practice 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 4 reduces to 6v6 on a 44x30 m area; Practices 2 and 3 scale down proportionally.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 4 can extend to a genuine 10v10.
Contingency — restricted space	Compress all three practices proportionally; the coaching content this week is about integration of ideas rather than absolute distances covered.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00–0:10	10 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Five Weeks, One Picture</i>	Light green
0:10–0:25	15 min	Positional practice — <i>The Whole Picture</i>	Club green
0:25–0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27–0:42	15 min	Skill game — <i>Phase 3 in One</i>	Dark green
0:42–0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44–0:59	15 min	Conditioned match — <i>Phase 3 Final</i>	Black
0:59–1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — FIVE WEEKS, ONE PICTURE (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Raises heart rate while cycling through every call the squad has used since Week 12, a light but deliberate act of consolidation before the session's harder content begins.

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

Walkthrough: Individual ball work, then paired passing in which the coach calls out a word from the season's language every 20–30 seconds — players must immediately demonstrate it inside their pair, not just say it back.

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

Coaching points:

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

PRACTICE 2 — THE WHOLE PICTURE (POSITIONAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: The first practice this phase to deliberately combine connected lines, overloads and combination play inside a single, largely coach-silent positional game, rather than isolating one idea at a time as every previous week has done.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 44 x 28 m
- **Players:** 16 outfield
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through the possession team
- **Team sizes:** 8 v 8
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 8 flat markers (loose reference only), 3 footballs
- **Starting positions:** free — players organise themselves rather than being placed
- **Ball supply:** spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** nearest player restarts any stoppage
- **Coach position:** mobile, observing rather than directing
- **Rotation method:** roles swap at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** none — positional possession

Practice walkthrough: Sixteen players are split into a possession team and a defending team and given almost no instructions beyond the practice's basic rules — deliberately, since the whole point is to see whether five weeks of separately-taught principles now show up together without prompting. The possession team is watched for connected lines, overloads and combination play; the defending team is watched for shifting as a block and pressing appropriately to whatever build-up shape the possession team settles into.

Rules: Standard positional possession rules — a set number of consecutive passes scores a point for the possession team; a clean regain scores a point for the defending team.

Tactical roles: every individual, unit and team role introduced across Weeks 12–16 is live and available; this practice does not introduce any new ones.

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Weeks 12–16, applied together for the first time without the practice isolating any single one.

Communication language used: the complete set so far.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Consistency of execution across a longer, less structured practice than any single previous week.
Tactical	Whether connected lines, overloads and combinations reinforce each other naturally, or interfere with each other.
Physical	Sustained moderate-high intensity over a longer, less-interrupted practice.
Psychological	Self-organisation without instruction — a genuine test of ownership after five weeks of coached introduction.
Communication & leadership	Which players organise the team's shape and combinations without being prompted.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Which of Phase 3's five ideas showed up most naturally, and which needs more work?

2. Did the back line and midfield line stay connected while overloads were being created — or did one come at the cost of the other?
3. What happened when the defending team's press was tested by a build-up shape it had to read live?
4. What would you tell a new player joining the squad today about how this team plays, based only on what you've seen in this practice?

Progressions:

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

Regressions:

1. Reintroduce a marked connection corridor or pocket zone from Week 12 briefly if the team's shape has genuinely regressed.
2. Reduce numbers to 6v6 for more individual involvement.
3. Allow the coach to prompt with a single word rather than staying fully silent.

Common problems and corrections:

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

Coach interventions used in this practice: deliberately minimal — mostly *questioning* at natural stoppages, since the whole value of this practice is seeing what the team does without help.

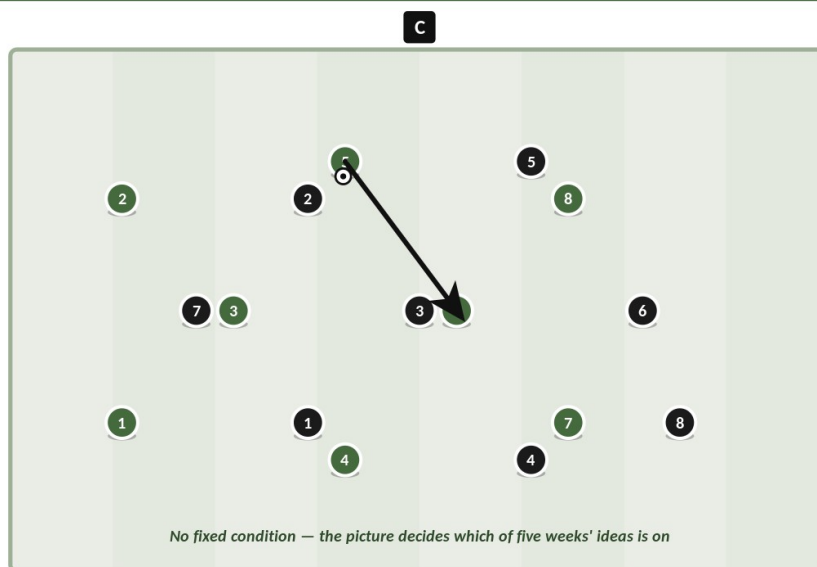
Success indicators:

- Multiple Phase 3 principles are visible without prompting.
- The team organises its own shape and combinations, with an identifiable player or players leading that.
- Fewer coach interventions are needed than in any previous week's equivalent practice.

Coach's eye: this is a diagnostic practice as much as a training one — take notes on what you see for use in the Phase 3 review that follows this week.

T17.2 THE WHOLE PICTURE — Positional Practice

44 x 28 m · 8v8, self-organised · connected lines, overloads and combinations, all live at once · 15 minutes



● Possession team ● 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 44x28 metre area with dimension labels. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 spread in a connected, organised shape and eight players in black bibs numbered 1–8 organised in a compact defending shape. White football near a green player. A solid black arrow showing a completed combination pass. Title: 'THE WHOLE PICTURE — Positional Practice'. Subtitle: '44 x 28 m · 8v8, self-organised · connected lines, overloads and combinations, all live at once · 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated wide view of a large positional possession practice, green-bibbed players organised in a clearly connected shape across the width and depth of the area, black-bibbed defenders organised into a compact, shifting block, coach standing back from the practice with a notebook, observing rather than instructing.

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

PRACTICE 3 — PHASE 3 IN ONE (SKILL GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: A genuinely composite small-sided game, layering bonus conditions from Weeks 12–16 onto a single game, asking players to recognise which opportunity is in front of them at any given moment.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 34 x 22 m
- **Players:** 12 outfield, rotating
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through
- **Team sizes:** 6 v 6
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 mini goals, 6 flat markers, 4 cones
- **Starting positions:** even split
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** nearest sideline
- **Coach position:** sideline, central
- **Rotation method:** none required at this scale
- **Direction of play:** both directions, two goals

Practice walkthrough: A 6v6 game carrying three simultaneous bonus conditions, lightly officiated by the coach: a goal created by an overload combination (central or wide, Weeks 13–14) is worth double; a goal scored by a player arriving from outside the box (Week 14) is worth double; and a regain won within three seconds of a collective press or block shift (Weeks 15–16) is worth a bonus goal. All three conditions run at once, and players must recognise in real time which picture is in front of them.

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

Tactical roles: the full set from Weeks 12–16, applied together.

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Weeks 12–16, recognised and acted on without the practice isolating any one of them.

Communication language used: the complete set introduced so far.

Coaching points:

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

Guided discovery questions:

1. Which of the three bonus conditions did your team produce most often, and why that one?
2. How did you decide which opportunity to chase when more than one was available?
3. Which of Weeks 12–16 do you think is currently your team's strongest, based on this game?
4. What would a coach watching only this game be able to tell about how your team plays?

Progressions:

1. Add a fourth condition — a genuine central receiver turning between the lines (Week 12) — completing the full Phase 3 set.
2. Reduce the practice area, raising the tempo and cognitive load further.
3. Remove the coach's officiating and ask a nominated player to judge instead.

Regressions:

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

Common problems and corrections:

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

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *drive-by coaching* and occasional *short group intervention*.

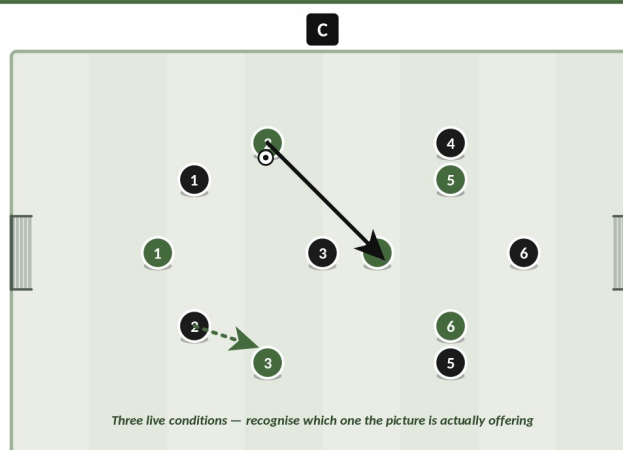
Success indicators:

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

Coach's eye: this practice tells you more about the team's genuine tactical understanding of Phase 3 than any single-idea practice has — watch for fluency, not just correctness.

T17.3 PHASE 3 IN ONE — Small-Sided Game

34 x 22 m • 6v6 • bonuses for an overload combination, a staggered box arrival, and a collective regain — all live at once • 15 minutes



Three live conditions — recognise which one the picture is actually offering

● Team in possession ● Opposition ⊙ Ball ➔ Combination pass ➡ Collective press

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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 34x22 metre pitch with a small goal at each end. Six players in dark green bibs numbered

1–6 and six players in black bibs numbered 1–6 spread across the pitch. White football near a green player. A solid black arrow showing a combination pass, and a short dotted red press arrow with a chevron arrowhead showing a collective press. Title: 'PHASE 3 IN ONE — Small-Sided Game'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m · 6v6 · bonuses for an overload combination, a staggered box arrival, and a collective regain — all live at once · 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

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

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

PRACTICE 4 — PHASE 3 FINAL (CONDITIONED MATCH)

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

Tactical purpose: The genuine test of the whole block — a conditioned match with no bonuses, no gates, no artificial scoring conditions at all. If Weeks 12–16 have worked, the team's identity should simply be visible, unprompted, inside ordinary play.

Organisation:

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

Practice walkthrough: As close to a genuine match as the season has come since Week 11, with no structural teaching aids. The coach's role is almost entirely observational, gathering evidence for the Phase 3 review, and intervening only where something needs correcting before it becomes a habit heading into Phase 4.

Rules: Standard match rules.

Tactical roles: the complete set from Weeks 12–16, applied without any structural support.

Decision-making triggers: the complete set from Weeks 12–16.

Communication language used: the complete set introduced so far.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution under full match intensity and fatigue.
Tactical	Genuine, unprompted expression of five weeks of principles.
Physical	Phase 3's peak physical demand.
Psychological	Composure and identity under match-realistic conditions.
Communication & leadership	Whoever is organising the team by this point in the season — the clearest evidence yet of emerging leadership.

Guided discovery questions:

1. If you had to describe how this team plays in one sentence, based only on this game, what would you say?
2. What was the single best moment of the whole session, and which of Weeks 12–16 did it come from?
3. What is still missing, seventeen weeks in?
4. How ready do you feel for Phase 4, which starts introducing genuinely new ideas about structural adaptability next week?

Progressions: not applicable — this practice is deliberately the least structured Tuesday session since Week 11; further progression happens in Phase 4.

Regressions:

1. Reduce to 7v7 if fatigue or attendance requires it.
2. Reduce the area proportionally.
3. Reintroduce a single, light structural aid from Weeks 12–16 if the team's shape has genuinely regressed under full match conditions.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Old habits reappear under full match pressure and fatigue	Five weeks is real progress but not yet permanent	A specific Week 12–16 problem reappears	Let it flow, note it for the Phase 3 review	None during play — this is diagnostic, not corrective, time	Continue
Team looks tired and disorganised late in the practice	Genuine accumulated in-season load	Visible fatigue in the final five minutes	Let it flow	Light-touch encouragement	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: almost entirely *observation*, with findings recorded for the Phase 3 review rather than corrected live.

Success indicators:

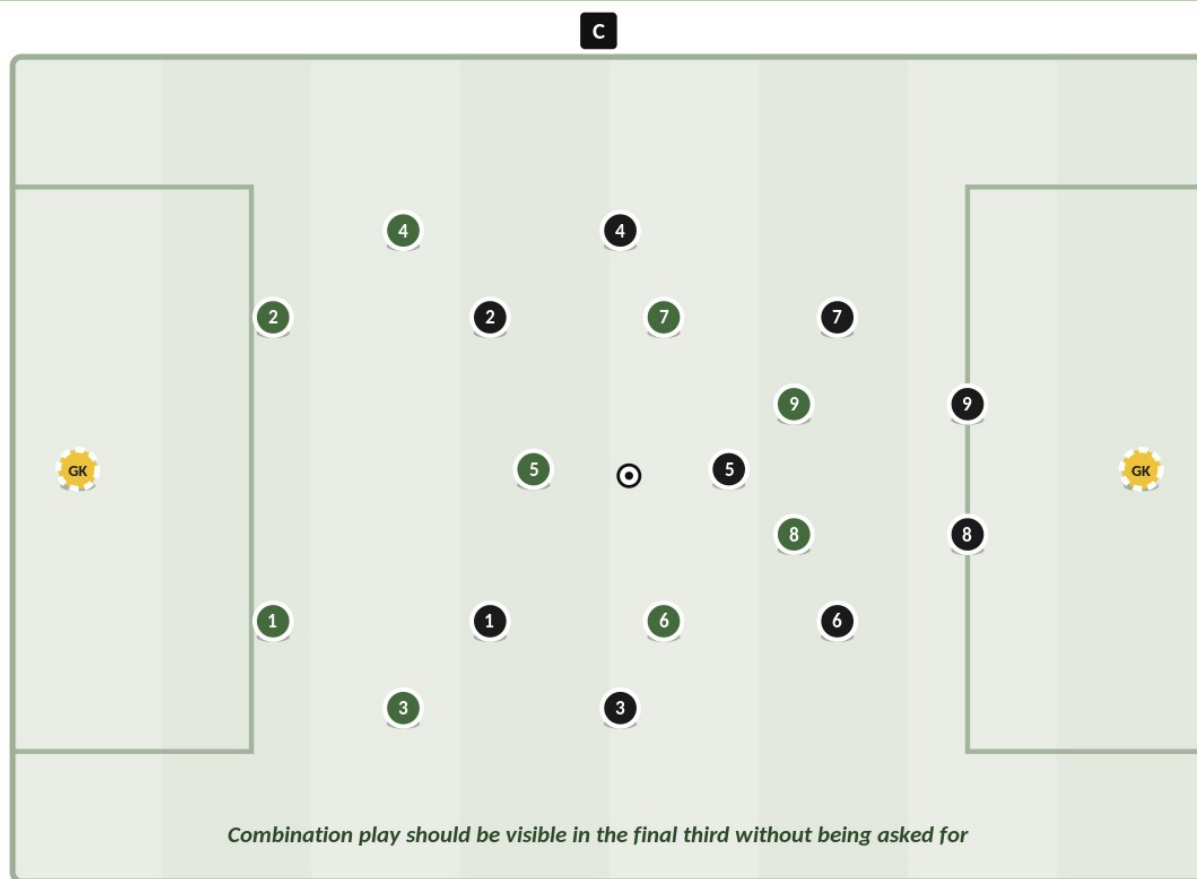
- Multiple Phase 3 principles visible without prompting, across both teams.
- The team organises its own shape without instruction.
- The session ends with the coach having a clear, evidence-based picture for the Phase

3 review.

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

T17.4 PHASE 3 FINAL — Conditioned Match

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



● Team A ● Team B ● Goalkeeper ● Ball

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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style, showing a 55x38 metre pitch with penalty box markings at both ends, full-size goals with goalkeepers in yellow at each end. Nine players in dark green bibs numbered 1-9 and nine players in black bibs numbered 1-9 spread across the pitch in realistic, organised match shape. White football near a central player. Title: 'PHASE 3 FINAL — Conditioned Match'. Subtitle: '55 x 38 m • 9v9 + GKs • no bonuses, no gates — just play it well • 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

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

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

REFLECTION (1 MINUTE)

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

Thursday — Session 34

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	34 of 72
Week	17
Season phase	3 — Developing Collective Understanding
Training day	Thursday
Session theme	Set-piece review
Short summary	Reviews all six set-piece routines installed across Phases 1–3 — the attacking and defensive corners with the second-phase plan, the wide free kick, the throw-in patterns, and the defensive free-kick wall — at high repetition, then confirms two under fully live opposition before closing with a confidence finishing game.
Tags	`set-pieces` `unit-work` `finishing` `full-squad-practice`
Primary learning objective	Every player can execute their role in all six established set-piece routines without a walkthrough.
Secondary learning objective	The team finishes clean chances with confidence and conviction.
Match connection	A complete, fixture-ready set-piece programme heading into the second half of the season.
Expected tactical outcome	Faster, more confident organisation into any of the six routines when a restart is awarded.
Expected physical load	Moderate — technical and organisational quality prioritised over physical intensity, rising in the closing game.
Recommended intensity	5.5–6.5 / 10, rising in Practice 4.
Equipment list	20 footballs · 24 flat markers · 14 cones (orange) · 2 sets of bibs (2 colours, 10 each) · 2 full-size or portable goals
Player numbers	Designed for 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers; scales 10–22, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Central to this session — both keepers are needed across the circuit, organising their own box in turn.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 44 x 30 m (Practice 3).
Area layout	Four parallel stations for Practice 2, a single live area for Practice 3, then a small-sided game for Practice 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 2's four stations run sequentially in two pairs rather than fully in parallel; Practice 3 selects the single most relevant routine rather than two.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 2 can run all four stations simultaneously with fuller numbers at each.
Contingency — restricted space	All three practices can be run inside a genuine penalty-area-sized space if the rest of the pitch is unavailable.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

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

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:08–0:25	17 min	Circuit — <i>The Set-Piece Gallery</i>	Club green
0:25–0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27–0:42	15 min	Live rehearsal — <i>Two Under Pressure</i>	Dark green
0:42–0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44–0:59	15 min	Confidence game — <i>Finish the Phase</i>	Black
0:59–1:02	3 min	Reflection	—

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

PRACTICE 1 — SET-PIECE RECALL (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: A light, focused warm-up connecting back to the technical actions behind this season's set pieces — striking, throwing, heading — preparing the group's attention for a technically precise session.

Organisation: 16 x 12 m grid, one ball per player for three minutes, pairs for five. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join fully, though handling and footwork warm-up is layered in separately.

Walkthrough: Individual ball work, then paired passing focused on delivery weight and accuracy — a general technical primer for the circuit that follows.

Rules: None beyond standard technical practice conduct.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* striking and throwing technique refreshers.
- *Psychological:* calm, focused energy appropriate to a technically precise session.

PRACTICE 2 — THE SET-PIECE GALLERY (SET-PIECE REVIEW CIRCUIT)

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

Tactical purpose: Reviews all six established set-piece routines — attacking and defensive corners with the second-phase plan (Weeks 5, 16), the wide free-kick routine (Week 9), throw-in patterns (Week 10), and the defensive free-kick wall (Week 8) — at high repetition, confirming every player still knows their job without a full reintroduction.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 50 x 26 m, split into four parallel station areas
- **Players:** squad split into four groups, rotating through all four stations
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate between stations as needed
- **Team sizes:** roughly even quarters of the squad per station
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for each station's starting positions, corner

flags/cones

- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** balls distributed to each station
- **Restart location:** each station's own restart point
- **Coach position:** mobile between stations, spending roughly equal time at each
- **Rotation method:** groups rotate stations every four minutes
- **Direction of play:** toward each station's own goal or target

Practice walkthrough: Four stations run in parallel — Station 1 reviews the attacking and defensive corner routines, including the second-phase plan; Station 2 reviews the wide free-kick routine; Station 3 reviews the throw-in patterns; Station 4 reviews the defensive free-kick wall. Each group spends four minutes at each station, repeating the routine at full speed against passive opposition. This is deliberately a review, not a reintroduction.

Rules: Each routine follows its own established rules, as set out in Weeks 5, 8, 9, 10 and 16's Set-Piece Programme fields.

Tactical roles: the complete role sets from all six routines, reviewed rather than newly taught.

Decision-making triggers: the complete decision-making sets from Weeks 5, 8, 9, 10 and 16.

Communication language used: the full season's set-piece-specific language, reviewed across all four stations.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Confirming technical standards haven't drifted since each routine was introduced.
Tactical	Correct starting positions and timing recalled without a full walkthrough.
Physical	Explosive, well-timed actions at each station.
Psychological	Confidence that comes from genuine, demonstrated retention.
Communication & leadership	Players organising each station's routine among themselves with minimal coach input.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Which routine came back to the group fastest, and which needed the most reminding?
2. What has changed, if anything, about personnel or preferred options since each routine was first introduced?
3. Why is a regular review like this valuable even for routines that have already been used successfully in matches?

Progressions:

1. Add live, competitive opposition at each station rather than passive.

2. Reduce the walkthrough time allowed before full-speed repetitions.
3. Test one player from each station on their role without the diagram or verbal reminder, purely from memory.

Regressions:

1. Allow a full walkthrough at every rotation if retention has genuinely slipped.
2. Reduce to two stations rather than four, giving more time to each.
3. Allow the coach to stay at a single struggling station for longer than the standard rotation.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
A routine has genuinely drifted since it was introduced	Weeks have passed without match repetition, or personnel has changed	Starting positions or timing visibly incorrect compared to the original routine	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: full walkthrough reset at that station	Resume
Players rush through stations without real focus, treating it as a formality	Review sessions can feel lower-stakes than new content	Sloppy technique or careless positioning	Stop	Short group intervention: "this is exactly what we'll need on Saturday"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *freeze-and-correct* where drift is found, and *short group intervention* to maintain focus and standards.

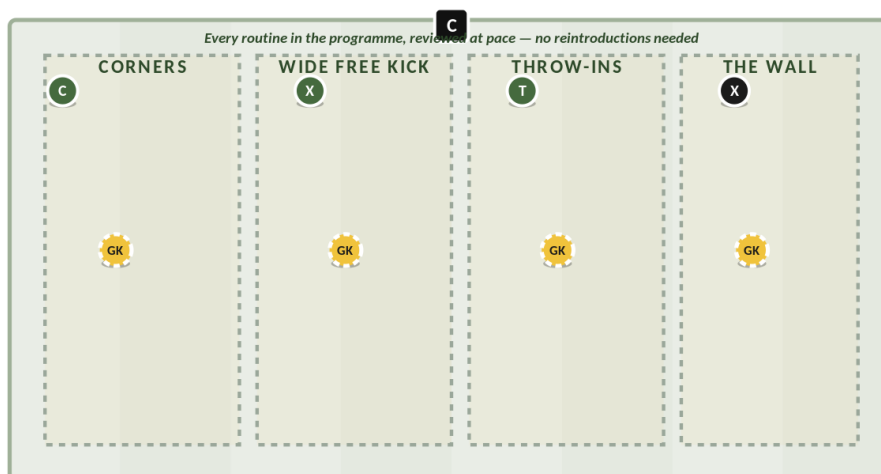
Success indicators:

- All six routines are recalled and executed correctly with minimal reminders.
- Technical standards remain consistent with when each routine was first introduced.
- Players organise each station with increasing independence across the rotation.

Coach's eye: use this circuit to identify which routine, if any, needs a fuller reintroduction — that finding feeds directly into the Phase 3 review and Phase 4 planning.

H17.2 THE SET-PIECE GALLERY — Full Routine Review

50 x 26 m • 4 stations rotating every 4 minutes: corners, wide free kick, throw-ins, defensive wall • 17 minutes



● Attacking team ● Defending team ● Goalkeeper ○ Ball ■ Station area

Castlewellan Town FC • Senior Coaching Curriculum • Week 17 • Diagrams not to scale

AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 50x26 metre area divided into four shaded station zones labelled 'CORNERS', 'WIDE FREE KICK', 'THROW-INS', and 'THE WALL'."

KICK', 'THROW-INS', and 'THE WALL'. Each station shows a goalkeeper in yellow and a player in dark green bibs at the relevant restart position (labelled C, X, T, and X respectively). Title: 'THE SET-PIECE GALLERY — Full Routine Review'. Subtitle: '50 x 26 m · 4 stations rotating every 4 minutes: corners, wide free kick, throw-ins, defensive wall · 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 wide view of a training pitch divided into four visibly separate working areas, each with its own small group rehearsing a different set-piece routine, coach moving briskly between the four areas with a clipboard.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated wide three-quarter view of an adult amateur football training pitch divided into four separate working areas. Small groups rehearsing four different set-piece routines — a corner, a wide free kick, a throw-in, and a defensive wall — simultaneously across the divided pitch. A coach moving briskly between the four areas, holding a clipboard. 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 — TWO UNDER PRESSURE (LIVE SET-PIECE REHEARSAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Selects two of the six routines — the defensive corner with its second-phase plan, and the wide free kick — judged the two most likely to be needed this Saturday, and rehearses both under fully live, competitive opposition.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 44 x 30 m
- **Players:** 8 attacking vs 8 defending + goalkeeper for the wide free-kick routine; roles reverse for the defensive corner and second-phase plan
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** full — both keepers take turns defending their box under live conditions

- **Team sizes:** 8 v 8 + GK
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for starting positions, 1 full-size or portable goal
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram, per each routine's established

Set-Piece Programme fields (Weeks 5, 9 and 16)

- **Ball supply:** 4 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** the relevant restart point for each routine
- **Coach position:** central, behind the attacking shape, able to see all starting positions
- **Rotation method:** groups swap attacking/defending roles and routines every five repetitions
- **Direction of play:** toward the one goal, from the fixed restart

Practice walkthrough: Both routines are rehearsed fully live, with genuine competitive opposition from the first repetition — no passive build-up, since both routines have already been established and reviewed in Practice 2. The coach freezes play only where a genuine structural error appears, not for minor timing variance.

Rules: As established in each routine's original Set-Piece Programme fields (Weeks 5, 9 and 16); standard match rules apply otherwise.

Tactical roles: the complete role sets from both routines, now tested fully live.

Decision-making triggers: the complete decision-making sets from Weeks 5, 9 and 16, including the alternative options, opposition cues, and second-phase plan.

Communication language used: the full season's language, plus each routine's specific calls.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Delivery and execution quality under genuine, unpredictable opposition.
Tactical	Correctly reading live opposition cues to select the right option, as originally taught.
Physical	Explosive, competitive actions against a genuinely resisting opponent.
Psychological	Composure under real pressure, not the more forgiving pressure of a walkthrough.
Communication & leadership	Organising the routine's roles — including the second-phase plan — quickly against a live, moving opponent.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What was different about executing each routine live compared to the circuit in Practice 2?
2. Was the second-phase plan needed today, and if so, did it work as rehearsed?
3. What would you change about either routine based on what live opposition just showed you?

Progressions:

1. Add a genuine scoreline or match-state context to either routine.
2. Introduce a defender specifically instructed to disrupt the routine's key decoy or screen role.
3. Rehearse both routines back-to-back without a rest interval, testing composure under fatigue.

Regressions:

1. Reduce opposition to passive briefly if either routine has broken down structurally.
2. Reduce numbers slightly for a simpler live picture.
3. Allow a brief walkthrough reminder before the first live repetition of each routine.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
A routine that looked clean in the circuit breaks down against genuine live opposition	Passive repetition doesn't fully test decision-making under real resistance	Roles or timing collapse once opposition is competitive	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: identify exactly which role or decision broke down	Resume
Rest defence, out-ball, or second-phase discipline lapses under the excitement of live opposition	The pull toward the ball is stronger under real competitive pressure	Players drawn out of their non-negotiable positions	Stop, every time	Firm, immediate correction, consistent with Weeks 5 and 16's original standards	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *freeze-and-correct* for genuine structural breakdowns and firm, consistent enforcement of the non-negotiable rest-defence and second-phase standards.

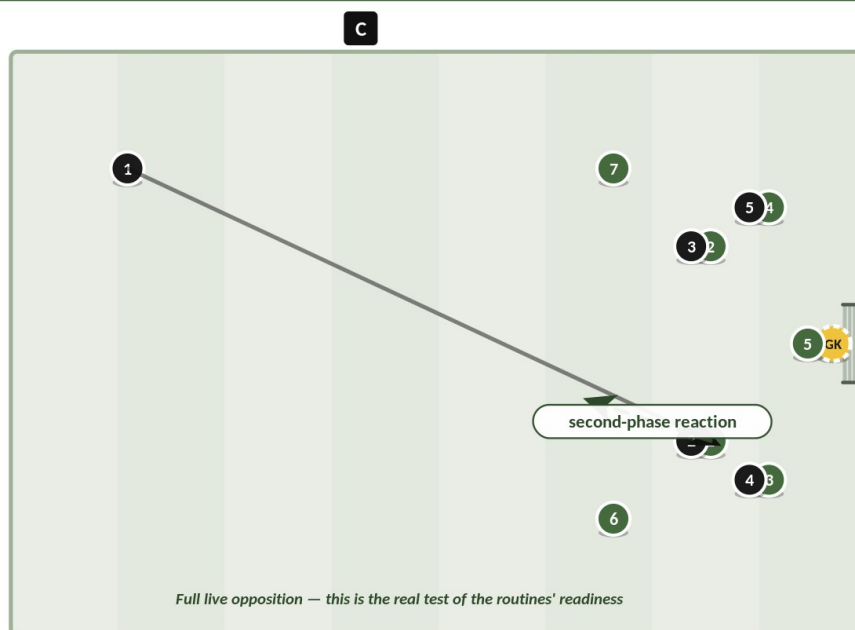
Success indicators:

- Both routines hold their structure under fully live, competitive opposition.
- The correct alternative option or opposition cue response is selected when the picture calls for it.
- Rest defence, out-ball, and second-phase discipline are maintained throughout.

Coach's eye: this practice is the clearest test of whether the season's routines are genuinely match-ready, not merely well-drilled in isolation.

H17.3 TWO UNDER PRESSURE — Live Set-Piece Rehearsal

44 x 30 m · full live opposition on the defensive corner + second-phase plan and the wide free kick · 15 minutes



● Attacking team ● Defending team ● Goalkeeper ● Ball ➔ Rehearsed run

Castlewellan Town FC · Senior Coaching Curriculum · Week 17 · Diagrams not to scale

AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 44x30 metre area showing a penalty box outline at one end with a full-size goal and a goalkeeper in yellow. A player in dark green bibs labelled X positioned wide with a football, outside the box. Five players in dark green bibs numbered 1–5 positioned at varying points around and inside the penalty box, two more in dark green bibs positioned outside the box labelled as second-phase players, connected to a short dashed run arrow labelled 'second-phase reaction'. Five players in blue bibs numbered 1–5 marking positions inside and around the box, fully live and competitive. Title: 'TWO UNDER PRESSURE — Live Set-Piece Rehearsal'. Subtitle: '44 x 30 m · full live opposition on the defensive corner + second-phase plan and the wide free kick · 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 during a fully live, competitive set-piece rehearsal, genuine physical contest for position between attackers and defenders, two players positioned just outside the box specifically watching for a loose second ball, goalkeeper alert and commanding, coach observing intently from a central vantage point.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter view of a penalty box during an adult amateur football training session, showing a fully live, competitive set-piece rehearsal. Players in dark green bibs and blue bibs genuinely contesting position inside the box. Two players in dark green bibs positioned just outside the box, alert and watching for a loose second ball. The goalkeeper, in yellow, alert and commanding the area. A coach observing intently from a central vantage point behind the box. Overcast evening light, realistic grass and penalty-box markings, amateur adult players of varied build showing real physical effort. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 4 — FINISH THE PHASE (CONFIDENCE FINISHING GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Closes the session and Phase 3 with a competitive, high-energy finishing game, rewarding early, confident, well-taken chances and sending players into the weekend sharp and self-assured rather than fatigued.

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 every clean sight of goal must be taken early and confidently — hesitation or an overly cautious extra touch when a genuine chance is on is gently penalised (possession turned over to the opposition), while a committed, early shot is encouraged regardless of outcome.

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

Tactical roles: finishing decision-making inside free-flowing, competitive play.

Decision-making triggers: a clean sight of goal inside a shootable range → shoot early, don't invite a second defender in.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean, early contact on the shot rather than an over-controlled extra touch.
Tactical	Recognising a genuine chance the moment it appears.
Physical	Moderate-high, game-based intensity to close the phase on a positive note.
Psychological	Confidence and conviction — this is the session's designed high point.
Communication & leadership	Team-mates encouraging a shot rather than demanding an extra pass when the picture says shoot.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made tonight's best finish work — was it mostly technique, or mostly conviction?
2. What's one thing from Phase 3 as a whole you feel most confident about heading into Phase 4?
3. What's one thing you know Phase 4 needs to improve?

Progressions:

1. Add a genuine offside line.
2. Reduce the time allowed to shoot once a clean sight of goal appears.
3. Add a live scoreline context for the closing minutes.

Regressions:

1. Remove the turnover penalty for hesitation if confidence is currently low.
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 over-elaborate rather than shooting when a clean chance is on	A pattern of caution built up over recent weeks' more structured practices	Extra, unnecessary touches before a shot that was clearly on earlier	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "was there an earlier moment to shoot there?"	Resume
Shots are rushed and inaccurate rather than genuinely early and controlled	Overcorrection toward speed at the expense of technique	Wayward shots taken from poor body positions	Let it flow with a drive-by call	"Early doesn't mean careless — still pick your spot"	Continue

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

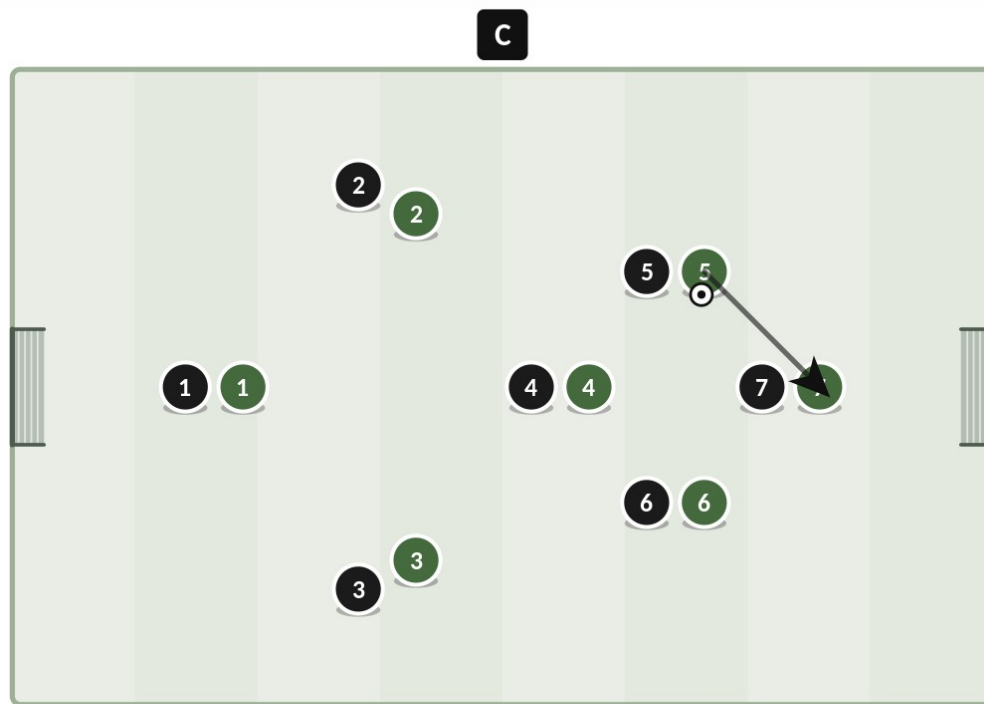
Success indicators:

- Shots are taken earlier and more confidently across the practice.
- Hesitation on clean chances decreases.
- Players finish the session animated and positive.

Coach's eye: this is a confidence-building close to Phase 3 — resist over-coaching it; let seventeen weeks of earlier correction do its work and allow the group to enjoy what they've built.

H17.4 FINISH THE PHASE — Confidence Finishing Game

34 x 22 m • 7v7 • every clean chance must be taken early and confidently • 17 minutes



Castlewellan Town FC • Senior Coaching Curriculum • Week 17 • Diagrams not to scale

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 blue 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 final pass into a shooting position. Title: 'FINISH THE PHASE — Confidence Finishing Game'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m • 7v7 • every clean chance must be taken early and confidently • 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 striking a shot early and confidently from a clean sighting of goal, both full-size goals visible, team-mates celebrating nearby, coach on the touchline smiling and encouraging, players clearly enjoying the closing game of the phase.

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 striking a shot early and confidently from a clean sight of goal. Team-mates in matching dark green bibs reacting nearby with visible energy. 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 (FINAL 3 MINUTES, SEATED)

Seated as a group, captain(s) present — closing Phase 3.

Questions put to the group:

1. Can you state your job on all six of the club's set-piece routines without checking?

2. What is one thing from the whole of Phase 3 (Weeks 12–17) you're proudest of as a group?

3. What is one thing you know Phase 4 needs to improve?

Coach's closing input: confirm all six routines are match-ready for Saturday, and tell the group plainly that this closes Phase 3 — the Phase 3 review that follows this session sets the agenda for Phase 4, which begins introducing structural adaptability next week.

Match-Day Objectives — Week 17

Three team objectives:

1. The team's identity from Weeks 12–16 is visible without needing to be reminded of it.
2. At least one of the six established set-piece routines is executed correctly.
3. At least one central receiver is found and used between the opposition's lines during open play.

Three unit objectives:

- *Defensive unit*: the defensive corner, second-phase plan, and defensive wall are organised within a few seconds of the restart being awarded.
- *Midfield unit*: connected lines and overload creation from Weeks 12–13 are visible without prompting.
- *Attacking unit*: the wide free-kick routine's timing is executed as rehearsed, and clean chances are finished early and confidently.

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

- Every player should be able to state their job on all six established set-piece routines without checking.
- Central receivers should check their shoulder before every reception, every time.
- On a clean sight of goal, shoot early — hesitation is the one thing this week's Thursday session was built to remove.

Measurable performance indicators:

- Whether the team's principles are visibly present regardless of the picture facing it.
- Number of set-piece routines executed correctly across all six types.
- Number of clean chances taken early versus over-elaborated.
- Squad's own account, given in the closing reflection, of Phase 3's proudest moment and Phase 4's priority — feeding directly into the Phase 3 review.

Formation Translation — Applying This Week Across Different Shapes

Principle: All Phase 3 principles, consolidated.

In a 4-3-3 (back-four structure): connected lines run through the back four and midfield three; central overloads typically draw on a holding midfielder or centre-back; wide overloads use a full-back's overlap or underlap; staggered box arrivals draw on a winger, striker and arriving midfielder; the block shifts as back four plus midfield three; pressing adapts between the front three (vs a back four) and a stepping wide player (vs a back three).

In a 3-4-3 or back-three structure: connected lines run through the back three and double pivot; central overloads often need one fewer extra body since the back three provides a head start; wide overloads typically use a wing-back with an underlapping midfielder; staggered box arrivals draw on both forwards plus an advanced pivot player; the block shifts as a back three (or five, with wing-backs dropping); pressing already has a natural third body against a back three, and needs a wide player to step up against a back four.

What stays the same: all five of Phase 3's principles, the season's communication language, and the non-negotiable rest-defence, out-ball and second-phase standards on every set piece.

What changes: which specific players and positions provide each principle's function in each structure.

What must not change: the underlying identity — organised, adaptable, competitive and brave — described in the Season Architecture's opening philosophy, regardless of which structure is chosen on a given Saturday.

Risk in each structure: a back-four structure risks its central overloads over-committing the holding midfielder, thinning the base of midfield; a back-three structure risks over-committing both wing-backs simultaneously, leaving rest defence short.

Opposition influence: against a team that presses aggressively and narrow, the back-three structure's wider natural rest-defence coverage may be the more comfortable choice; against a team that sits deep and compact, the back-four structure's extra central body in midfield may help break lines more easily. Neither choice changes which principles are coached — only which structure currently expresses them most naturally for this squad.

Coach Review — Week 17

(To be completed by the coach after both sessions have run, before the Phase 3 review is delivered.)

- **Match result and performance (Route A/B/C applied):** record what actually happened and which route was used to shape this week.
- **Attendance:** Tuesday ____ / Thursday ____.
- **Consolidation evidence:** which of Phase 3's five principles were most and least visible in Tuesday's "Phase 3 Final" conditioned match?
- **Set-piece evidence:** how confidently were all six routines executed by the end of Thursday's session?
- **Communication evidence:** is the season's full language being used accurately and without prompting?
- **Physical observations:** how did the squad handle this phase's peak physical week?
- **Leadership observations:** who has emerged as an organiser across the seventeen weeks so far?
- **Feeds directly into:** the Phase 3 four-week review, produced alongside this week.

Written by Alan Cunningham with Claude AI · Castlewellan Town FC — Senior Coaching Curriculum, Week 17 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.