



Week 23 — Phase 4 Consolidation

Tags: `consolidation` `set-pieces` `full-squad-practice` `phase-review`

Weekly Overview

FIELD	DETAIL
Week number	23 of 36
Season phase	4 (review) — Tactical Adaptability
Core principle	All Phase 4 principles, consolidated
Secondary principle	Collective pressing triggers
Previous match review focus	Apply the three routes below to the most recent fixture.
Weekly tactical problem	Weeks 18–22 taught the team to change shape in possession, change front-player pictures, choose a block height, and solve both a high press and a low block. Week 23 asks whether all of it has actually fused into one adaptable team, rather than five separate skills the team can only produce one at a time. Tuesday strips away coaching instruction almost entirely, watching whether the team reads a picture and changes shape without being told. Thursday expands the set-piece programme with a genuine second attacking corner option and refines the defensive corner's marking assignments against a full season's evidence.
Formation-neutral explanation	Consolidation weeks are not new content — they are a test of whether previously taught, formation-neutral principles have become genuinely available to the team under realistic pressure, without the scaffolding (conditions, bonuses, coach cues) that helped install them.
Example structural applications	Whatever formation the team lines up in this week, the same test applies: can the team recognise the picture in front of it — an opponent's press height, a numbers-up situation, a game state — and adjust its own shape, block height, and front-player picture accordingly, without a coach's voice doing the recognising for them.

Match Review and Weekly Adjustment

Route A — Previous performance was strong. If the team played well, use this week's minimal-instruction practices as confirmation rather than teaching — watch specifically for evidence that Phase 4's principles are now self-generated, not coach-prompted.

Route B — Previous performance exposed a tactical weakness. If a specific Phase 4 principle (shape change, block choice, beating a press or a block) broke down in the last fixture, this week's minimal-instruction format will show clearly whether it has genuinely been learned or only rehearsed — watch that specific moment closely.

Route C — Attendance, facilities or player availability are disrupted. Protect the consolidation game and the set-piece expansion above everything else this week — both are foundational to the rest of the season, and both scale to reduced numbers using the contingencies below.

Tuesday — Session 45

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	45 of 72
Week	23
Season phase	4 (review) — Tactical Adaptability
Training day	Tuesday
Session theme	Phase 4 consolidation game — shape change under pressure
Short summary	Brings together everything trained in Weeks 18–22 — changing build-up shape, changing front-player shape, choosing between a high press and a mid-block, and beating both a high press and a low block — inside progressively less structured practices, finishing with a full conditioned match carrying no artificial conditions at all.
Tags	`possession` `defending` `structural-adaptability` `full-squad-practice` `conditioning`
Primary learning objective	The team recognises the picture in front of it and adapts its shape, block height, or front-player picture without being told.
Secondary learning objective	Every principle from Weeks 18–22 remains available simultaneously, not just the most recently trained one.
Match connection	This week's named match-day connection: formation changes mid-match without confusion.
Expected tactical outcome	A visible, spontaneous structural adjustment at least once during the conditioned match, made without a coach cue.
Expected physical load	Moderate — this is a review week, not a peak-load week.
Recommended intensity	6.5–7.5 / 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 goalkeeper's organisational voice is watched as closely as the outfield players' decisions.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 50 x 36 m (Practices 2 and 4).
Area layout	One large positional-practice area for Practice 2, narrowing for Practice 3, returning to full size for Practice 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 2 reduces to 6v6 + GKs; Practice 3 becomes 6v5; Practice 4 becomes 6v6.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 4 can extend to 9v9.
Contingency — restricted space	Reduce Practice 2 and Practice 4 proportionally; the minimal-instruction principle survives at any scale.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

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

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
		<i>on Sight</i>	
0:10–0:25	15 min	Positional practice — <i>Adapt or Break</i>	Club green
0:25–0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27–0:42	15 min	Skill game — <i>Phase 4 in One</i>	Dark green
0:42–0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44–0:59	15 min	Conditioned match — <i>Phase 4 Final</i>	Black
0:59–1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — CHANGE ON SIGHT (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Reconnects to the instant-recognition habit from Weeks 20–21, rehearsing quick reaction to a visual cue before any tactical structure is added.

Organisation: 20 x 16 m grid, small groups. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join fully.

Walkthrough: Players move freely in possession; the coach raises one hand (compress narrow) or two hands (spread wide), and the group must reorganise instantly without a verbal call.

Rules: React to the visual cue only — no verbal instruction from the coach during this practice.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* clean spacing adjustment under visual-only instruction.
- *Psychological:* attentiveness without needing a spoken prompt.

PRACTICE 2 — ADAPT OR BREAK (POSITIONAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: The week's signature diagnostic practice — the coach gives minimal instruction throughout, watching whether the team recognises pressing pictures, numbers-up situations, and game states, and adjusts its build-up shape, front-player shape, and block height accordingly, entirely on its own initiative.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 50 x 36 m (half pitch)
- **Players:** 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both goalkeepers play fully, including organisational responsibilities

- **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, deliberately quiet
- **Rotation method:** none required; goalkeepers may split time at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** standard, both teams attack opposite goals

Practice walkthrough: A near-full-scale match with almost no coaching input. The coach observes without directing, allowing the team to recognise pressing pictures (Week 21), build-up pictures (Week 19), and front-player pictures (Week 20) for themselves, adjusting shape and approach as the run of play demands. Any correction is held until the water break rather than interrupting the flow — this practice is a diagnostic tool as much as a training practice.

Rules: Standard match rules; no artificial conditions or bonuses.

Tactical roles: every tactical role from Weeks 18–22, expected to surface spontaneously rather than on a coach's prompt.

Decision-making triggers: the full accumulated set from Weeks 18–22, now expected to fire without external cueing.

Communication language used: the full season's language so far, used entirely by the players.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution quality under realistic, unprompted conditions.
Tactical	Spontaneous recognition and adaptation — the actual subject of this practice.
Physical	Match-realistic intensity throughout.
Psychological	Ownership — the team solving problems without waiting to be told.
Communication & leadership	Players organising each other's structural changes, entirely without coach input.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What changed about the team's shape during that practice, and who noticed it first?
2. Was there a moment the picture called for a change and the team was slow to make it — what happened?
3. How does this connect to everything trained since Week 18 — can you name the specific week a given adjustment came from?
4. What did the team do well tonight that would have needed a coach's voice back in Week 18?

Progressions:

1. Extend the practice's duration, testing whether the quality of self-organisation holds under fatigue.
2. Introduce a genuine scoreline scenario with no further explanation, watching whether the team applies Week 21's block-choice teaching unprompted.
3. Remove goalkeepers' organisational voice temporarily, testing whether outfield leadership fills the gap.

Regressions:

1. Allow the coach a single, brief intervention at the water break if the practice has genuinely broken down.
2. Reduce numbers to simplify the picture while the self-organisation habit consolidates.
3. Briefly reintroduce a specific week's practice (e.g. Week 19's Two Shapes, Same Ball) as a five-minute reset if a particular principle has clearly been lost.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The team reverts to a single, fixed shape regardless of the picture	Under low-instruction conditions, habit reasserts itself over recognition	The same shape is used throughout, even as the picture clearly changes	Let it flow, hold correction for the water break	Question at the break: "what pictures did we see, and did our shape answer them?"	Resume
No player takes ownership of organising a structural change	Diffusion of responsibility when the coach isn't directing	Confusion or delay when a change is clearly needed	Let it flow, hold correction for the water break	Question at the break: "whose job was it to call that?"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: minimal by design — almost entirely *questioning*, held until the water break rather than interrupting live play.

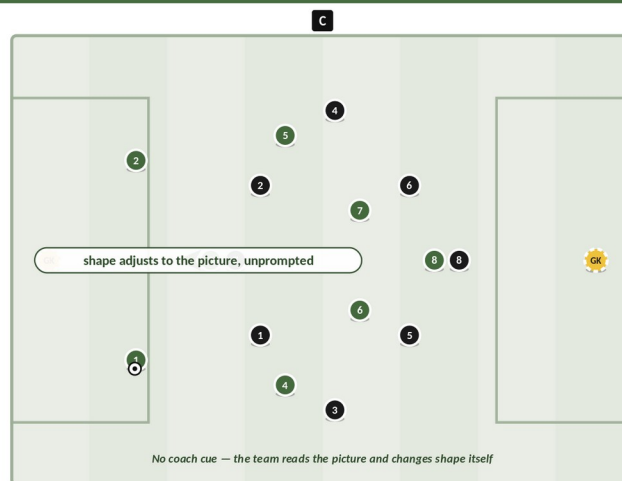
Success indicators:

- At least one spontaneous, unprompted structural change is visible during the practice.
- Players can identify and explain the change themselves afterward.
- The team's overall organisation holds up without coach direction.

Coach's eye: this practice exists to observe, not to teach — resist the urge to intervene, and treat every moment of silence from the touchline as data, not neglect.

T23.2 ADAPT OR BREAK — Positional Practice

50 x 36 m (half pitch) • 8v8 + GKs • minimal instruction — the team changes shape, block height, and front-player picture as the game demands • 15 minutes



● Team in possession ● Opposition ● Goalkeeper ● Ball ➔ Structural change

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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style, showing half of a football pitch, 50x36 metres, with penalty box markings at both ends and a full-size goal at each end with a goalkeeper in yellow at each. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 and eight players in black bibs numbered 1–8 spread across the pitch. A curved dashed line showing a player adjusting position without any coach prompt. White football near a green player. Title: 'ADAPT OR BREAK — Positional Practice'. Subtitle: '50 x 36 m (half pitch) • 8v8 + GKs • minimal instruction — the team changes shape, block height, and front-player picture as the game demands • 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 positional practice, green-bibbed players visibly reorganising their shape mid-play, black-bibbed opponents adjusting in response, coach on the touchline standing back, observing quietly with a notebook rather than directing.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Wide elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 8v8 football practice on a half-size grass pitch with full-size goals and goalkeepers in yellow at each end. Players in dark green bibs visibly reorganising their shape mid-play. Players in black bibs adjusting in response. A coach standing back on the touchline, quietly observing with a notebook rather than directing or calling instructions. 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."

PRACTICE 3 — PHASE 4 IN ONE (SKILL GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Compresses several of Phase 4's bonus conditions into a single skill game, so the team must recognise which specific principle a given moment calls for and apply the correct one, rather than chasing one condition throughout.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 26 m
- **Players:** 7 possession players vs 6 opposition
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through
- **Team sizes:** 7 v 6
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers, 6 cones, two marked bonus zones near each end
- **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:** groups swap every five minutes
- **Direction of play:** possession retention and progression, both directions

Practice walkthrough: A single game carries three simultaneous bonus conditions drawn from across Phase 4: a switch of play that leads to a clean entry into a marked zone (Week 22), a goal or entry following a front-two combination (Week 20), and a regain won through a correctly executed press or cover shadow (Week 20–21). All three are live at once, and the team must recognise which is genuinely on in a given moment rather than forcing one artificially.

Rules: Each of the three bonus conditions is worth an equal bonus point when achieved cleanly; standard possession rules apply otherwise.

Tactical roles: the full combined set from Weeks 20–22, now required simultaneously rather than in isolation.

Decision-making triggers: the full combined set from Weeks 20–22.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean execution across all three bonus conditions.
Tactical	Recognising which of the three conditions the moment genuinely offers.
Physical	Sustained, varied movement across the full range of Phase 4's demands.
Psychological	Flexibility — not fixating on a single favourite condition.
Communication & leadership	Players calling out which condition is developing as it happens.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Which of the three bonus conditions came up most naturally tonight, and why?
2. Was there a moment where two conditions were both available — how was the choice made?
3. How does combining several principles into one game change the decision-making compared to training them separately?
4. Which condition do you personally feel least confident recognising live?

Progressions:

- 1. Add a fourth bonus condition drawn from an earlier phase, testing retention.
- 2. Reduce the practice area, increasing the decision-density.
- 3. Remove the bonus zones' markers, requiring the team to judge the conditions by picture alone.

Regressions:

- 1. Reduce to two simultaneous bonus conditions while the combined recognition skill is being built.
- 2. Widen the practice area for more time and space.
- 3. Allow the coach to call out which condition is developing while the skill is being learned.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The team fixates on one bonus condition and ignores the other two	Comfort with the most recently trained principle overrides balanced recognition	The same condition is chased repeatedly even when another is clearly more available	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "what else was on there, that we didn't take?"	Resume
Decision-making slows down as the team tries to consciously check all three conditions	Cognitive overload from tracking multiple conditions at once	Hesitation and delayed passes as players "think through" the options	Stop	Short group intervention: "trust what you see — don't checklist it"	Resume

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

Success indicators:

- All three bonus conditions are achieved at least once across the practice.
- The team's recognition speed for whichever condition is live improves as the practice progresses.
- Players can articulate, after the practice, examples of each condition being used.

Coach's eye: watch for balance across the three conditions, not raw bonus count — a team that scores every bonus through the same route hasn't yet proven it can recognise all three.

T23.3 PHASE 4 IN ONE — Composite Skill Game

40 x 26 m • 7v6 • every Phase 4 bonus condition (switch, front-two combination, pressing regain) live at once • 15 minutes

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All of Phase 4's bonuses stacked into one game — the picture decides which fires

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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 40x26 metre area with dimension labels and two dashed bonus zones marked near each

end. Seven players in dark green bibs numbered 1–7 and six players in black bibs numbered 1–6 spread across the area. White football near a green player. A bold diagonal black arrow showing a switch of play toward one bonus zone. Title: 'PHASE 4 IN ONE — Composite Skill Game'. Subtitle: '40 x 26 m · 7v6 · every Phase 4 bonus condition (switch, front-two combination, pressing regain) 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 view of a training area with marked zones near each end, green-bibbed players combining and switching play, black-bibbed opponents pressing and covering, coach on the touchline tracking multiple threads of the game at once.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training on a marked area. Players in dark green bibs combining and switching the ball between different zones of the pitch. Players in black bibs pressing and defending. A coach on the touchline, closely tracking several different phases of play simultaneously. 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 — PHASE 4 FINAL (CONDITIONED MATCH)

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

Tactical purpose: Closes the phase with a full conditioned match carrying no artificial conditions at all — the clearest possible test of whether Phase 4's principles have become genuinely part of how the team plays.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 50 x 36 m (half pitch)
- **Players:** 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers play their full match role
- **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, halfway line, mobile
- **Rotation method:** none required; goalkeepers may split time at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** standard, both teams attack opposite goals

Practice walkthrough: A standard conditioned match with no bonuses, no gates, and no artificial triggers — simply the team playing, with every principle from Weeks 18–22 available to be used exactly as the picture demands, exactly as it would be on Saturday.

Rules: Standard match rules only.

Tactical roles: every tactical role covered across Phase 4.

Decision-making triggers: every decision-making trigger covered across Phase 4.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Full-match execution quality.
Tactical	Whether Phase 4's principles surface naturally, without any scaffolding.
Physical	Match-realistic intensity.
Psychological	Composure and ownership under completely unconditioned play.
Communication & leadership	Entirely player-driven organisation.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What is the single clearest piece of evidence tonight that Phase 4's teaching has genuinely landed?
2. What is still missing — be honest, since this is exactly what the phase review needs to know?
3. How does tonight compare to how the team played in Week 18's first session of this phase?

Progressions:

1. Extend the match duration to test sustained application under fatigue.
2. Introduce a genuine scoreline scenario with no further explanation.

Regressions:

- 1. Reduce numbers or area if the picture has become too chaotic to draw clear conclusions from.
- 2. Briefly reintroduce a specific week's language as a reminder, without stopping play for long.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The team plays safely, avoiding any of Phase 4's riskier decisions (switches, structural changes)	Uncertainty about whether the principles are truly theirs yet, reverting to older, safer habits	Fewer switches, front-two combinations, or shape changes than seen earlier in the phase	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "what would Week 22 have told us to try there?"	Resume
A specific Phase 4 principle is visibly absent all practice	That principle has not genuinely transferred yet	No examples of it across the full 15 minutes	Note for the phase review rather than correcting live	—	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: minimal — this practice is primarily diagnostic for the phase review, not a teaching moment.

Success indicators:

- Evidence of at least three of Phase 4's five weekly principles appearing naturally.
- The team's shape and approach visibly adapts at least once without any external prompt.
- The overall standard of play matches or exceeds Week 18's opening session.

Coach's eye: this practice is this week's most important evidence for the Phase 4 review — record specific, named examples rather than general impressions while they're still fresh.

T23.4 PHASE 4 FINAL — Conditioned Match

50 x 36 m (half pitch) • 8v8 + GKs • no bonuses, no gates — every Phase 4 principle, tested clean • 15 minutes

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No conditions to chase — just the team playing as it now genuinely knows how

● 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 half of a football pitch, 50x36 metres, with penalty box markings at both ends and a

full-size goal at each end with a goalkeeper in yellow at each. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 and eight players in black bibs numbered 1–8 spread across the pitch in a natural match shape. White football near a green player. Title: 'PHASE 4 FINAL — Conditioned Match'. Subtitle: '50 x 36 m (half pitch) • 8v8 + GKs • no bonuses, no gates — every Phase 4 principle, tested clean • 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, natural 8v8 match with no visible conditions or markers beyond the pitch itself, green-bibbed and black-bibbed players competing normally, coach on the touchline near halfway, watching intently and writing notes.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Wide elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 8v8 football match on a half-size grass pitch with full-size goals and goalkeepers in yellow at each end, played with no visible conditions or markers. Players in dark green bibs and black bibs competing in a natural, flowing match. A coach stands near the halfway line on the touchline, watching intently and making notes. Early evening light with long shadows, realistic grass pitch markings, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

REFLECTION (1 MINUTE)

One question to the group: "What is one thing about how we play now that would have surprised us back in Week 18?"

Thursday — Session 46

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	46 of 72
Week	23
Season phase	4 (review) — Tactical Adaptability
Training day	Thursday
Session theme	Set-piece expansion (second option)
Short summary	Expands the club's attacking corner routine with a genuine second option — flipping Week 5's near-post decoy into the intended finish, with the original far-post finish becoming the new decoy — then refines the defensive corner's marking assignments against a full season's evidence, per the Set-Piece Development Pathway (Season Architecture, Section 8).
Tags	`set-pieces` `unit-work` `full-squad-practice`
Primary learning objective	The team has a genuine, live second attacking corner option, indistinguishable in its early picture from the original routine.
Secondary learning objective	The defensive corner's marking assignments are refined and confirmed against evidence gathered across the season so far.
Match connection	This week's named match-day connection: formation changes mid-match without confusion — extended here to set pieces, where the team can now change its attacking corner's intended target without the opposition being able to tell in advance.
Expected tactical outcome	The opposition can no longer reliably predict which player the corner is actually aimed at.
Expected physical load	Moderate — set-piece work is technically and tactically demanding rather than physically taxing.
Recommended intensity	6–7 / 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	Central to this session — both keepers are needed, one commanding each box in turn, as in Week 5. Where only one goalkeeper attends, they take the defending role in Practice 3, and Practice 2 uses a bibbed outfield "GK" instead.
Pitch dimensions	Both set-piece practices are worked inside a 30 x 22 m attacking-third-plus area; the closing game uses 34 x 22 m.
Area layout	One end of the pitch, using a real penalty box and goal where available.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Reduce the attacking corner group to four attackers against three defenders; reduce the defensive corner marking rehearsal to five defenders.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Add a second wave of attackers/defenders rotating in every few repetitions, increasing repetitions without changing the core routines.
Contingency — restricted space	Both set-piece practices can be worked inside any area with a marked goal or target zone; the closing game scales down

FIELD	DETAIL
	proportionally.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00-0:10	10 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Delivery Detail</i>	Light green
0:10-0:25	15 min	Technical practice — <i>Near Post, Twist</i>	Club green
0:25-0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27-0:42	15 min	Live rehearsal — <i>Read the Runner</i>	Dark green
0:42-0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44-0:59	15 min	Confidence game — <i>Set-Piece Showdown</i>	Black
0:59-1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — DELIVERY DETAIL (ARRIVAL)

Duration: 10 minutes · **Training load:** Low-moderate

Tactical purpose: Sharpens the corner-taker's striking technique before the full routines are rehearsed, since both this week's attacking options depend on identical, disguised delivery.

Organisation: Corner-arc area, small groups. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join fully.

Walkthrough: The corner taker practises delivering an identical out-swinging ball to both the near-post and far-post areas, focusing on making the two deliveries look as similar as possible in their early flight.

Rules: Each delivery is scored by a partner for how similar its early trajectory looked to the previous one, regardless of where it ultimately landed.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* consistent run-up and striking technique regardless of intended target.
- *Psychological:* disguise as a deliberate technical skill, not an accident.

PRACTICE 2 — NEAR POST, TWIST (TECHNICAL / SET-PIECE PRACTICE)

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

Purpose: Installs the club's second attacking corner option — a direct mirror of Week 5's routine, with the near-post and far-post roles reversed. Where the original routine used a near-post decoy run to create space for a far-post finisher, this routine uses the near-post runner as the genuine intended finisher, with the far-post run now serving as the decoy. Run from the same side, with the same delivery and the same early picture, the two routines are designed to be indistinguishable to an opposition defence until the final moment.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 30 x 22 m attacking-third-plus area, using a real penalty box and goal where available

- **Players:** 5 attackers (corner taker, near-post finisher, far-post decoy, and two rest-defence players) vs 4 defenders

- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the defending goalkeeper commands the box; where unavailable, a bibbed outfield "GK" is used, since this practice's coaching content doesn't depend on genuine shot-stopping

- **Team sizes:** 5 v 4 (plus goalkeeper)
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for starting positions
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** a supply of balls with the corner taker
- **Restart:** a fresh corner after every repetition
- **Coach position:** positioned to see both the delivery and the near-post contact

clearly

- **Rotation method:** roles rotate every four to five repetitions
- **Direction of play:** attacking toward the marked goal

Practice walkthrough: The corner taker delivers an identical out-swinging ball to the one used in Week 5's original routine. This time, the near-post runner is the genuine intended finisher, attacking the ball first-time rather than flicking it on, while the far-post run now serves purely as a decoy, drawing a defender's attention away from the near post. The two non-negotiable rest-defence players remain in place exactly as in the original routine.

Rules: As with Week 5's routine, the two rest-defence players may not enter the box under any circumstances.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* the near-post finisher's job (arrive fast, attack the ball first-time) has flipped from Week 5's decoy job; the far-post runner's job has flipped from finisher to decoy.
- *Unit:* the corner taker's delivery must look identical regardless of which routine is live.
- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Transition:* the two rest-defence players protect against a defensive clearance breaking forward, exactly as in the original routine.

Decision-making triggers:

- The near-post area is being defended passively → attack it directly, first-time.
- A defender has clearly followed the far-post decoy run → the near post is likely to have more space than usual.

Communication language used: *Time, Turn* — plus the corner taker and near-post finisher confirming timing verbally before every repetition, as in Week 5's routine.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	First-time contact technique at the near post — a different technical demand from Week 5's flick-on.
Tactical	Disguise — the routine must look identical to the original until the final moment.
Physical	Explosive, well-timed arrival at the near post.
Psychological	Composure to attack the ball first-time under pressure.
Communication & leadership	The corner taker and near-post finisher's pre-corner communication, exactly as in the original routine.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What has to stay identical between this routine and the original for the disguise to work?
2. What happens to the routine if the near-post finisher arrives a beat too early or too late?
3. Why does the far-post decoy run still matter, even though it's no longer the intended finish?
4. How does having two genuine attacking options change what a defending team has to prepare for?

Progressions:

1. Add full, live opposition using the organisation from Practice 3.
2. Randomise which of the two routines (Week 5's original or this week's twist) is called just before the corner is taken.
3. Add a specific defender assigned to mark the near-post area tightly, testing whether the finisher can still win the contact.

Regressions:

1. Walk the routine through with no opposition before adding any.
2. Allow the near-post finisher extra time to arrive while the technical detail of first-time contact is being learned.
3. Reduce to a single defender in the near-post area.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Rest-defence players drift into the box to watch the delivery	Same pull toward the exciting part of the routine as in Week 5	Two players missing from their rest-defence positions	Stop, every time	Firm, immediate correction — this is non-negotiable	Resume from a fresh corner
The near-post finisher tries to flick the ball on instead of attacking it first-time	Habit carried over from the original routine's technical demand	The contact is a soft touch rather than a genuine attempt on goal	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: clarify this routine's different technical target	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *freeze-and-correct* and firm, non-negotiable correction on rest defence, mirroring Week 5's routine exactly.

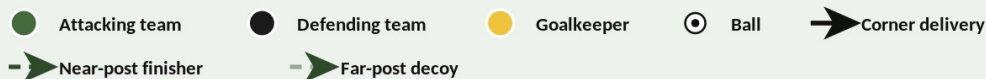
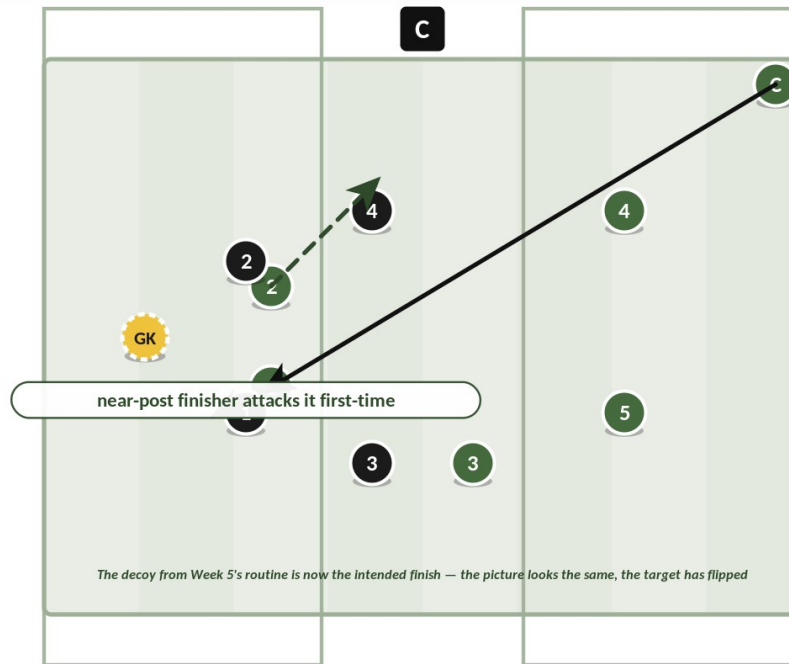
Success indicators:

- The near-post finisher wins the ball cleanly and attacks it first-time.
- The delivery and early picture remain indistinguishable from the original routine.
- Rest defence is maintained on every repetition without exception.

Coach's eye: the disguise is the entire point of this routine — if a defender watching from the sideline can tell which routine is coming before the ball is delivered, the routine has failed regardless of whether it produces a chance.

H23.2 NEAR POST, TWIST — Second Attacking Corner Option

Right-side corner, out-swinging · near-post is now the real target, far post is the decoy · 15 minutes



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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style, showing a penalty box area with a full-size goal on the left edge and a goalkeeper in yellow. A player in dark green labelled C at the top-right corner arc. Five players in dark green (near-post finisher, far-post decoy, and two rest-defence players positioned well outside the box) and one more inside the box. Four players in black bibs marking inside the box. A black solid arrow showing the corner delivery toward the near post. A green solid arrow labelled 'near-post finisher attacks it first-time' and a grey dashed arrow labelled 'far-post decoy run'. Title: 'NEAR POST, TWIST — Second Attacking Corner Option'. Subtitle: 'Right-side corner, out-swinging · near-post is now the real target, far post is the decoy · 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated view from behind the goal of a corner kick being delivered from the right, a green-bibbed attacker arriving sharply at the near post to strike the ball first-time, a second green-bibbed player making a decoy run toward the far post, black-bibbed defenders marking inside the box, coach positioned to see both the delivery and the near-post contact.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter view from behind the goal of an adult amateur football corner kick being delivered from the right-hand side. A player in a dark green bib arriving sharply at the near post to strike the ball first-time. A second player in a dark green bib making a decoy run toward the far post. Players in black bibs marking inside the penalty box. A goalkeeper in yellow positioned to react. A coach positioned pitch-side, closely observing the near-post contact. 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 — READ THE RUNNER (LIVE REHEARSAL, REFINED MARKING)

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

Purpose: Refines the defensive corner's marking assignments against a full season's evidence, and rehearses both attacking options live and unpredictably, so the defending team must recognise — rather than guess — which routine is actually coming.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 30 x 22 m attacking-third-plus area, using a real penalty box and goal where available

- **Players:** 7 defenders (the zonal-plus-post structure from Week 5) vs 5 attackers

- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the defending goalkeeper organises the picture, including calling which of the two attacking routines appears to be developing

- **Team sizes:** 7 v 5 (plus goalkeeper)

- **Neutrals:** none

- **Equipment:** flat markers for zonal reference positions

- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram

- **Ball supply:** a supply of balls with the attacking team's corner taker

- **Restart:** a fresh corner after every repetition

- **Coach position:** positioned to see the whole picture, particularly the near-post defender's recognition and reaction time

- **Rotation method:** roles rotate every four to five repetitions

- **Direction of play:** defending the marked goal

Practice walkthrough: The attacking team alternates unpredictably between Week 5's original routine (far-post finish) and this week's new routine (near-post finish), without announcing which is coming. The defending team applies Week 5's zonal-plus-post structure, but this week specifically refines the near-post defender's job: rather than committing early to blocking a flick-on, they must read the near-post runner's approach speed and body shape to recognise, in the moment, whether this repetition is the decoy or the genuine threat, and adjust their engagement accordingly.

Rules: As with Week 5's defensive routine, out-ball players may not enter the box.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* the near-post defender's recognition job is new and specific to this week — reading the runner rather than reacting to a fixed picture.

- *Unit:* the zonal markers and far-post defender continue their Week 5 jobs, now informed by the near-post defender's read.

- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.

- *Transition:* the two out-ball players continue providing transition protection exactly as in Week 5.

Decision-making triggers:

- The near-post runner arrives with genuine pace and a shooting body shape → engage immediately, this is the real threat.

- The near-post runner's approach looks softer or delayed → likely the decoy; hold position and prepare to react to the far-post threat instead.

Communication language used: *Show, Cover* — plus the goalkeeper's full organisational voice from Week 5's routine, now including calling which routine appears to be developing.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean defensive contact regardless of which routine develops.
Tactical	Reading the near-post runner's approach to distinguish genuine threat from decoy.
Physical	Explosive engagement once the read is made.
Psychological	Confidence to commit to a read rather than hesitating between two possibilities.
Communication & leadership	The goalkeeper's voice organising the whole picture, now including live recognition calls.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What specifically told the near-post defender which routine was actually coming?
2. What happened on repetitions where the read was wrong?
3. How does refining this one marking assignment change the defensive corner's overall structure from Week 5?
4. Why does the goalkeeper's calling role matter even more this week than in Week 5?

Progressions:

1. Add a third attacking option (Week 5's short-corner alternative) into the unpredictable rotation.
2. Reduce the time between the corner being awarded and taken, sharpening the defending team's preparation window.
3. Rotate which specific players are assigned each attacking routine, testing whether the defending team reads the picture rather than the personnel.

Regressions:

1. Announce which routine is coming while the near-post defender's recognition skill is being built.
2. Reduce the attacking team to a single routine temporarily.
3. Allow the near-post defender extra time to settle before each repetition.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The near-post defender commits early to one read regardless of the actual picture	Habit or a guess made before genuine information is available	The defender engages or holds before the runner's approach actually reveals the routine	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: reset and clarify what to actually look for	Resume
The goalkeeper stops calling once the picture becomes unpredictable	Uncertainty reduces confidence in organising others	Reduced vocal input as the two routines are mixed in	Let it flow with a drive-by call	Direct individual encouragement to keep organising even when unsure	Continue

Coach interventions used in this practice: a mix of *freeze-and-correct* and drive-by encouragement, mirroring Week 5's approach to this routine's teaching.

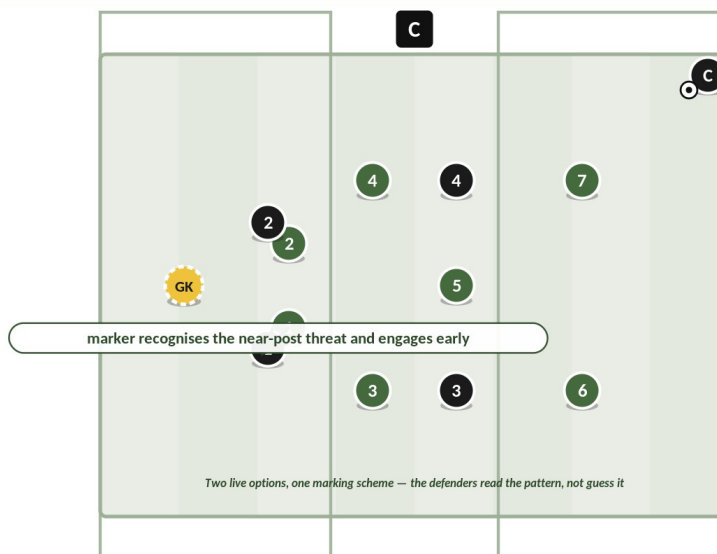
Success indicators:

- The near-post defender's read accuracy improves across the practice.
- The defensive corner concedes no clean, unmarked chances from either attacking routine.
- The goalkeeper continues organising the picture even as the routines are mixed unpredictably.

Coach's eye: watch the near-post defender's first movement, not just the outcome — a defender who commits on genuine information, even if occasionally wrong, is learning faster than one who guesses correctly by luck.

H23.3 READ THE RUNNER — Refined Marking, Live Rehearsal

Right-side corner, out-swinging • defenders read which of the two attacking options is live and mark accordingly • 15 minutes



● Defending team ● Attacking team ● GK Goalkeeper ● Ball → Engage on recognition

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AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style, showing a penalty box area with a full-size goal on the left edge and a goalkeeper in yellow. Seven players in dark green bibs organised in a zonal-plus-post defensive structure inside and around the box, with two more positioned well outside the penalty area. A player in dark blue labelled C at the top-right corner arc, with four more blue players inside the box. White football near the corner taker. A green solid arrow labelled 'marker recognises the near-post threat and engages early'. Title: 'READ THE RUNNER — Refined Marking, Live Rehearsal'. Subtitle: 'Right-side corner, out-swinging • defenders read which of the two attacking options is live and mark accordingly • 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated view from behind the goal of a defensive corner setup, green-bibbed defenders organised in a zonal-plus-post structure with two players positioned well outside the box, the near-post defender reacting sharply to a blue-bibbed attacker's run, goalkeeper in yellow organising the picture, coach observing the near-post defender's recognition closely.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter view from behind the goal of an adult amateur football team defending a corner kick. Players in dark green bibs organised in a zonal defensive structure inside the penalty box, with two players positioned well outside the box, facing outward. The near-post defender reacting sharply to an attacking run from a player in a dark blue bib. A goalkeeper in yellow organising the defensive picture with a raised arm. A coach positioned pitch-side, closely observing the near-post defender's reaction. 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 — SET-PIECE SHOWDOWN (CONFIDENCE GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Closes the session with a competitive, enjoyable game in which every restart is a corner, alternating unpredictably between both attacking options, reinforcing the week's set-piece expansion 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:** every restart is taken as a corner from the nearest corner

arc

- **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 dead-ball restart, regardless of where it would normally occur, is taken as a corner from the nearest arc, giving both teams high-repetition practice at both delivering and defending the week's two attacking options inside a genuinely competitive, enjoyable format.

Rules: As described; otherwise standard small-sided-game rules, with all restarts converted to corners.

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

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Practice 3, applied spontaneously as corners occur during play.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean delivery and finishing technique under game-realistic conditions.
Tactical	Choosing between the two attacking routines, and reading which one an opponent is running.
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 organising both the attacking routine and the defensive read at high speed.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made tonight's best corner routine — attacking or defending — work?
2. Which of the two attacking options do you feel more confident delivering under real pressure?
3. Why does having two genuine options matter more than having one very well-drilled one?

Progressions:

1. Award a bonus point for a goal scored from the near-post twist specifically, since it's the newer, less familiar option.
2. Reduce the time allowed between the restart and the corner being taken.

3. Increase the frequency of restarts converted to corners.

Regressions:

1. Allow normal restarts for a portion of the game if the corner-only format is proving too disruptive to flow.
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
The attacking team always uses the original routine, avoiding the newer near-post twist	Comfort with the more rehearsed routine overrides the value of unpredictability	The near-post twist is never attempted despite being available	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "what would happen if we mixed it up more?"	Resume
The game loses its natural flow from too many corner restarts	The format itself, rather than a technical or tactical problem	Players appear disengaged or frustrated by frequent stoppages	Stop	Reduce the frequency of corner-converted restarts	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.

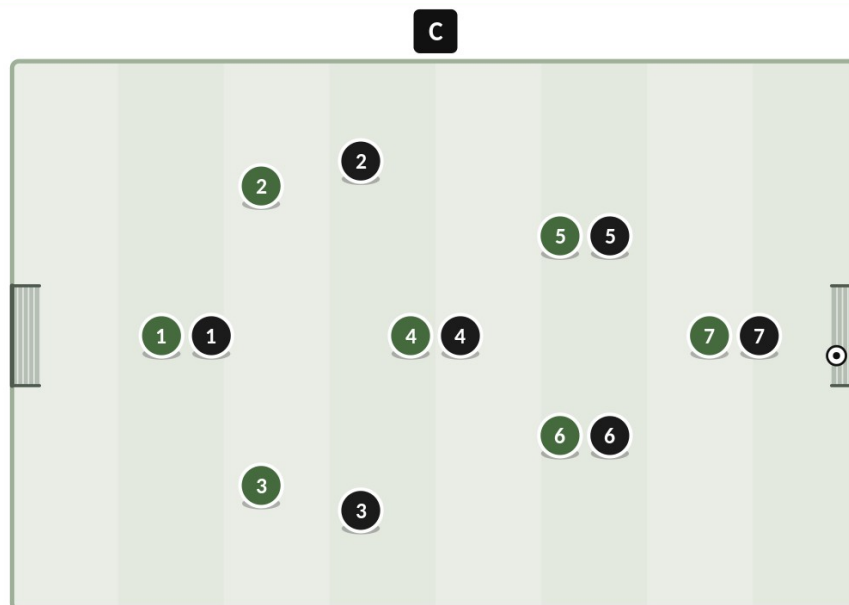
Success indicators:

- Both attacking routines are used across the game, not just the more familiar one.
- The defending team's recognition speed improves with repetition.
- 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 teaching do its work and allow the group to enjoy what they've built.

H23.4 SET-PIECE SHOWDOWN — Confidence Game

34 x 22 m • 7v7 • every restart is a corner, alternating between both attacking options • 17 minutes



● Team A ● Team B ● 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. A 34x22 metre pitch with a full-size goal at each end. Seven players in dark green bibs numbered 1–7 and seven players in black bibs numbered 1–7 spread across the pitch, several clustered near one goal as if defending a corner. White football near the corner arc. Title: 'SET-PIECE SHOWDOWN — Confidence Game'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m • 7v7 • every restart is a corner, alternating between both attacking options • 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 with players clustered around a corner arc preparing for a restart, 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, players clustered around a corner arc preparing for a restart. 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: "If the opposition has watched us all season, what do they now not know about our corners that they thought they did?"

Match-Day Objectives

Three team objectives:

1. Play with the shape, block height, and front-player picture the game situation genuinely calls for, adjusting without needing to be told.
2. Deliver at least one attacking corner using whichever of the two options — original or twist — the opposition's marking makes available.
3. Defend corners with the refined near-post read, distinguishing the genuine threat from the decoy in the moment.

Three unit objectives:

1. **Whole team:** demonstrate at least one spontaneous structural adjustment during the match, made without a coach's prompt.
2. **Set-piece attacking unit:** disguise the delivery so the opposition cannot tell in advance which routine is coming.
3. **Set-piece defending unit:** the near-post defender reads the runner's approach rather than committing on habit.

Individual role reminders:

- Trust the picture you're seeing — Phase 4 has given you the tools to read it yourself.
- If you're on a corner routine, your job may have changed from what it was in Week 5 — check which routine is live before you move.
- If you're defending a corner, read the runner, not just the routine you expect.

Measurable performance indicators:

- Number of spontaneous, unprompted structural adjustments observed during the match.
- Whether the attacking corner produces a genuine chance from either routine.
- Whether the defensive corner concedes a clean, unmarked chance from either routine.
- Evidence, named specifically, of Phase 4's principles appearing in match play.

Formation Translation — Applying This Across Different Structures

Phase 4 consolidation and the expanded set-piece programme

STRUCTURE	HOW PHASE 4'S PRINCIPLES APPLY	HOW THE SET-PIECE EXPANSION APPLIES	WHAT STAYS THE SAME	KEY RISK
4-3-3	The same shape-change, block-choice, and press-beating principles from Weeks 18–22, carried by whichever players occupy the relevant roles	The near-post twist typically uses a central midfielder or winger as the near-post finisher, mirroring Week 5's personnel logic	The recognition-and-adaptation habit this whole phase has built	Reverting to fixed, pre-decided shapes under match pressure rather than reading the picture live
3-4-3	The same principles, carried by the back three, wing-backs, and front three in their specific Phase 4 roles	The near-post twist can use a wing-back's delivery accuracy and a central attacker's near-post pace	The recognition-and-adaptation habit this whole phase has built	The back three's rest-defence discipline slipping if attention is drawn too heavily toward the attacking corner

Coach Review

To be completed by the coaching staff after delivery — this review should draw directly on the evidence gathered in Tuesday's Practices 2 and 4, and feed into the Phase 4 Review document covering Weeks 18–23.

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.