



Week 25 — Match Management

Tags: `game-management` `overloads` `breaking-down-a-block` `full-squad-practice`

Weekly Overview

FIELD	DETAIL
Week number	25 of 36
Season phase	5 — Match Management
Core principle	Progression: through, around or over
Secondary principle	Overloads & rest defence
Previous match review focus	Apply the three routes below to the most recent fixture.
Weekly tactical problem	Week 24 taught the team to reduce risk when protecting a lead. This week teaches the mirror skill: recognising when the game state calls for increased urgency, and finding the extra numbers and territory a losing position demands, without the effort collapsing into chaos. Thursday narrows the focus specifically to the hardest version of this problem — breaking down a deep, organised opponent who is happy to sit in and protect their own lead, exactly the picture the team is most likely to face when chasing a game late on.
Formation-neutral explanation	"Chasing a game" describes a team's relationship to the game state, not a formation — any team, in any structure, needs to recognise when the picture calls for increased risk and additional numbers forward, and this is a decision-making skill layered on top of whatever shape the team is already playing, exactly as Week 24's lead-protection skill was.
Example structural applications	A 4-3-3 team chasing a game might push a full-back higher to create a temporary back three with an auxiliary attacker, or bring a holding midfielder into the box on a late set piece. A 3-4-3 team doing the same might push both wing-backs higher simultaneously, accepting a genuinely committed, attacking structure for the closing stages. In both cases, the underlying formation label matters less than the deliberate, coached decision to add bodies forward and accept the associated risk.

Match Review and Weekly Adjustment

Route A — Previous performance was strong. If the team played well, check specifically whether territory and clear chances have been won in the closing stages of matches the team was losing — if the underlying performance has been good but the team has struggled to find urgency when behind, this week directly addresses the gap. Name it if worth naming.

Route B — Previous performance exposed a tactical weakness. If the team looked passive or disorganised when chasing a game, or couldn't break down a deep opponent, this week answers it directly — open the relevant session with the specific moment from the match.

Route C — Attendance, facilities or player availability are disrupted. Both themes scale to reduced numbers — the underlying urgency-with-a-plan skill matters more than rehearsing every scenario at full numbers every week.

Tuesday — Session 49

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	49 of 72
Week	25
Season phase	5 — Match Management
Training day	Tuesday
Session theme	Chasing a game
Short summary	Teaches the team to recognise a losing scoreline as part of the picture, deliberately committing an extra body forward to create genuine overloads while accepting the rest-defence trade-off, then applies the decision inside a full conditioned match scripted around chasing an equaliser.
Tags	`game-management` `overloads` `decision-making`
Primary learning objective	The team recognises when the scoreline calls for increased urgency, and commits extra numbers forward in a deliberate, coached way rather than chaotically.
Secondary learning objective	The rest-defence trade-off that comes with committing extra numbers forward is understood and managed, not ignored.
Match connection	This week's named match-day connection: more territory won in the closing 20 minutes when behind.
Expected tactical outcome	More clean chances created in the closing stages of matches the team is losing, without a corresponding rise in chances conceded on the counter.
Expected physical load	Moderate-high — urgency-driven practices with genuine intensity.
Recommended intensity	7–8 / 10.
Equipment list	20 footballs · 20 flat markers · 12 cones (orange) · 2 sets of bibs (2 colours, 10 each) · 2 full-size or portable goals
Player numbers	Designed for 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers; scales 10–22, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout; in Practice 4 the leading team's goalkeeper is coached on the specific demands of defending against a team that has committed extra numbers forward.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 50 x 36 m (Practice 4).
Area layout	A tighter overload zone for Practice 2, widening through Practices 3 and 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 2 reduces to 5v3; Practice 3 becomes 6v5; Practice 4 becomes 6v6.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 4 can extend to 9v9.
Contingency — restricted space	Practice 2 works in any area with cones marking the overload zone; Practice 4 needs realistic width and should not be excessively compressed.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00-0:10	10 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Urgency Rondo</i>	Light green
0:10-0:25	15 min	Technical practice — <i>Find the Extra Man</i>	Club green
0:25-0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27-0:42	15 min	Skill game — <i>Chase It Down</i>	Dark green
0:42-0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44-0:59	15 min	Conditioned match — <i>Turn It Around</i>	Black
0:59-1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — URGENCY RONDO (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Introduces a sharper, more urgent tempo than a standard warm-up, before any tactical structure is added.

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

Walkthrough: Rondo-style possession played at a deliberately higher tempo than usual, with the coach calling "time's short" periodically to sharpen the group's urgency without sacrificing technical quality.

Rules: The ball must move within one touch more often than usual once "time's short" is called.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* clean, quick technique even at a sharper tempo.
- *Psychological:* urgency without panic.

PRACTICE 2 — FIND THE EXTRA MAN (TECHNICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Isolates the specific technical and positional skill of a deep player stepping forward to create a genuine overload, the foundation of chasing a game effectively without simply throwing numbers forward at random.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 26 m, with a marked overload zone
- **Players:** 6 attackers (including one deep player who steps forward mid-practice)

vs 4 defenders

- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through as part of the attacking group

- **Team sizes:** 6 v 4
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers marking the overload zone
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** coach restarts on any stoppage
- **Coach position:** central, able to see the whole picture
- **Rotation method:** groups rotate every five minutes, including which player takes

the deep-stepping role

- **Direction of play:** toward a target end

Practice walkthrough: Five attackers begin in a settled shape, with a sixth player starting deep. On a coach cue, the deep player steps forward into the attacking zone, creating a genuine 6v4 overload where there was previously a 5v4. The group must recognise the extra body and use it immediately, before the defending team can adjust.

Rules: Standard possession-to-target rules; a clean use of the extra player within three passes of them arriving scores a bonus point.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* the stepping player's timing and the rest of the group's recognition of their arrival are the whole point of this practice.
- *Unit:* the group's spacing must adjust immediately to incorporate the new overload.
- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Transition:* not applicable — this practice is possession-focused throughout, though the coaching points name the rest-defence trade-off explicitly.

Decision-making triggers:

- The deep player has stepped forward and is available → use them immediately, before the picture resets.
- The extra player is well marked → continue the existing attacking pattern rather than forcing the connection.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean receiving and combination technique with the newly arrived extra player.
Tactical	Recognising and using the overload the moment it arrives.
Physical	A genuine, sharp forward run from the stepping player.

CORNER	POINT
Psychological	Confidence to commit an extra body forward, accepting the trade-off.
Communication & leadership	The stepping player announcing their arrival clearly.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made the group recognise and use the extra player quickly, or fail to?
2. What is actually being given up at the back when this player steps forward?
3. Why does the timing of the step matter as much as the decision to make it?
4. How does this connect to Week 13's overloads-and-rest-defence work — is this the same trade-off, now applied specifically to a losing scoreline?

Progressions:

1. Add a genuine defensive transition consequence — if possession is lost, the defending team scores by reaching the vacated deep space.
2. Reduce the time the group has to use the extra player before the bonus opportunity expires.
3. Add a second defender specifically assigned to track the stepping player.

Regressions:

1. Walk the stepping movement through with no opposition before adding any.
2. Widen the zone for more time and space.
3. Reduce the defending team to three players.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The group doesn't recognise the extra player has arrived	Attention fixed on the existing pattern rather than scanning for the new option	The extra player is available but not used within a reasonable window	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: reset and clarify the recognition cue	Resume
The stepping player arrives too early, before the picture genuinely calls for it	Impatience, or a habit of stepping on a fixed rhythm rather than reading the moment	The step is made even when the existing shape hasn't created a genuine opening	Stop	Short group intervention: "was that the right moment to go?"	Resume

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

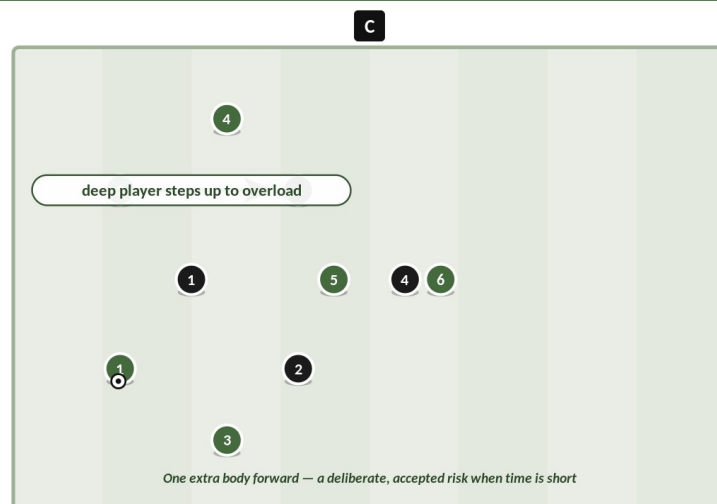
Success indicators:

- The group recognises and uses the extra player with increasing speed across the practice.
- The stepping player's timing improves, arriving when genuinely needed rather than on a fixed schedule.
- Players can articulate the rest-defence trade-off being accepted.

Coach's eye: watch the moment just before the step is made — a player who steps forward because the picture has genuinely opened up is showing more understanding than one who steps forward out of habit or frustration.

T25.2 FIND THE EXTRA MAN — Creating an Overload When Behind

40 x 26 m • 6v4 • a deep player steps forward to create a genuine overload, accepting the rest-defence trade-off • 15 minutes



● Attacking team ● Defending team ● Ball ➞ Steps forward to overload

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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. Six players in dark green bibs numbered 1–6 and four players in black bibs numbered 1–4 spread across the area. White football near a green player. A curved dashed line showing a deep green player stepping forward into the attacking picture. Title: 'FIND THE EXTRA MAN — Creating an Overload When Behind'. Subtitle: '40 x 26 m • 6v4 • a deep player steps forward to create a genuine overload, accepting the rest-defence trade-off • 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, a green-bibbed defender making a sharp forward run to join the attacking group, team-mates recognising and using the extra body immediately, black-bibbed defenders adjusting under the new pressure, coach centrally positioned observing the timing closely.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training. A player in a dark green bib making a sharp forward run to join an attacking group. Team-mates in dark green bibs recognising and using the extra player immediately with a quick pass. Players in black bibs adjusting under the new pressure. A coach standing centrally, closely observing the timing of the run. 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 — CHASE IT DOWN (SKILL GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Moves the urgency-with-a-plan principle into a genuine possession game against a real opposition group, with the coach calling a losing scoreline scenario that the team must translate into increased urgency without losing its shape entirely.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 34 x 22 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
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** nearest sideline
- **Coach position:** sideline, central, calling scenarios
- **Rotation method:** groups swap every five minutes
- **Direction of play:** possession retention and progression

Practice walkthrough: Seven possession players face six opposition players, and the coach periodically calls "0-1 down, fifteen to go" or similar losing scenarios, requiring the possession team to increase tempo and commit more numbers forward, while a designated deep player remains responsible for basic rest-defence cover.

Rules: Standard possession-progression rules; the coach notes, without necessarily announcing, whether the team's urgency matched the called scenario without collapsing into disorganisation.

Tactical roles: the full comparative skill set from Practice 2, now applied as a live decision rather than a rehearsed constraint.

Decision-making triggers:

- The scenario calls for urgency → commit an extra body forward, accepting the rest-defence trade-off.
- The team is already stretched or has just lost the ball → recover shape before committing further numbers forward.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean execution at an increased, urgent tempo.
Tactical	Genuine, live translation of a losing scenario into increased, organised urgency.
Physical	Sharp, high-tempo actions appropriate to the situational demand.
Psychological	Confidence to take risks when the situation calls for it, without panic.
Communication & leadership	The team organising and confirming who is stepping forward and who is holding rest-defence.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What told the team how much urgency was appropriate for the called scenario?
2. What happened when the team's urgency tipped over into disorganisation?
3. How quickly did the team adjust its approach once a new scenario was called?

- How does this connect to Week 24's scenario-based work — is finding urgency the mirror image of protecting a lead?

Progressions:

- Call scenarios more frequently, testing how quickly the team adjusts.
- Add a genuine transition consequence for the opposition when possession is lost.
- Reduce the practice area, sharpening the pressure on the decision.

Regressions:

- Allow the coach to state the recommended approach directly while the decision-making skill is being built.
- Widen the practice area for more time and space.
- Reduce to 6v5 for more space per player.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The team plays the same way regardless of the scenario called	Habit overrides the genuine situational decision	No visible change in urgency or numbers forward after a new scenario is called	Stop	Short group intervention: "what did that scenario actually call for?"	Resume
Urgency collapses into chaos — too many players committing forward with no rest-defence structure	Overcorrection, or panic under the pressure of a losing scenario	The whole team is drawn forward, leaving no cover behind the ball	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: reset and clarify who holds rest-defence responsibility	Resume

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

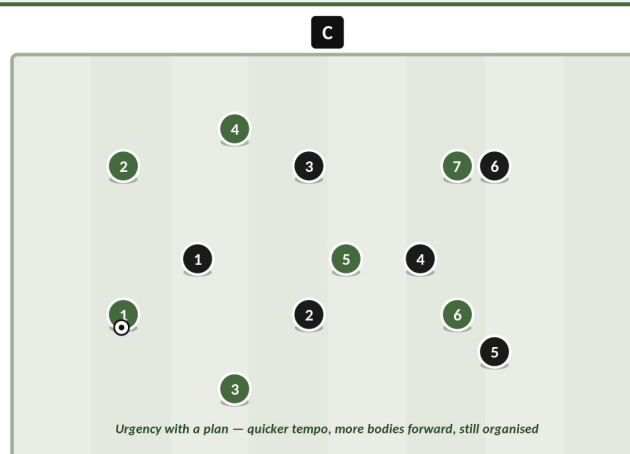
Success indicators:

- The team's urgency visibly increases to match the called scenario.
- At least one designated player consistently holds rest-defence responsibility even under urgency.
- The team retains its underlying organisation even while playing with increased tempo.

Coach's eye: watch for controlled urgency, not just raw effort — a team that commits numbers forward with a clear plan for who stays back has understood the lesson; a team that simply floods forward has not.

T25.3 CHASE IT DOWN — Small-Sided Scenario Game

34 x 22 m • 7v6 • "0-1 down, fifteen to go" — the team in possession must find urgency without losing its shape entirely • 15 minutes



● Chasing team ● Leading team ○ 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 area with dimension labels. 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. Title: 'CHASE IT DOWN — Small-Sided Scenario Game'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m · 7v6 · \"0-1 down, fifteen to go\" — the team in possession must find urgency without losing its shape entirely · 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, seven green-bibbed players in possession playing at visibly increased tempo against six black-bibbed opponents, coach on the touchline mid-call with an animated, urgent posture.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training. Seven players in dark green bibs in possession, playing at a visibly quicker tempo against six players in black bibs. A coach on the touchline, animated, mid-call, urgently communicating a scenario to the team. 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 — TURN IT AROUND (CONDITIONED MATCH)

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

Tactical purpose: Confirms the week's principle at full match scale, scripting one team into a notional 0-1 deficit that it must overturn within the remainder of the practice, applying the full week's teaching under realistic, sustained match pressure.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 50 x 36 m (half pitch)
- **Players:** 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers play their own-goal role; the leading team's goalkeeper is coached on defending against a team committed forward

- **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:** teams swap the chasing role at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** standard, both teams attack opposite goals

Practice walkthrough: One team is scripted as trailing 0-1 from the start and must find a genuine equaliser within the practice's remaining time, applying the week's overload and urgency principles under sustained match pressure from the leading team, who are coached to defend as Week 24 taught.

Rules: Standard conditioned-match rules; the chasing team's actual goal difference is tracked separately from the notional 0-1 deficit, so the practice reflects realistic pressure to find a goal.

Tactical roles: the full comparative and decision-making skill set, combined for the first time with a genuinely live, moving opponent at match scale.

Decision-making triggers: the full set from Practices 2-3, applied under match conditions with a moving, live opponent and a genuine scripted scoreline.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution under full match pressure and fatigue, at an urgent tempo.
Tactical	Genuine, sustained application of increased-risk decision-making across a full period of play.
Physical	High, sustained intensity throughout.
Psychological	Composure and belief under sustained pressure to find a goal.
Communication & leadership	The chasing team organising and confirming its game-management approach out loud.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What was the clearest example of the team correctly chasing the game tonight?
2. Where did the chasing team come closest to being caught out by its own commitment forward?

3. How does this connect to Week 22's low-block-breaking work — is chasing a game partly about applying that same patience and manipulation, just with more urgency behind it?
4. What did the leading team do to try to protect their advantage against a team committed forward?

Progressions:

1. Reduce the time remaining announced to the chasing team, increasing the pressure of the closing stages.
2. Add a genuine offside line.
3. Reduce numbers to 7v7.

Regressions:

1. Reduce the leading team's defensive organisation while the recognition skill is being consolidated.
2. Reduce to 6v6 on a smaller area.
3. Reintroduce Practice 2's overload zone briefly if the chasing team's structure has broken down.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The chasing team commits everyone forward, conceding easily on the counter	Panic or overcorrection under sustained pressure to find a goal	The chasing team is repeatedly caught with no cover behind the ball	Stop	Short group intervention connecting directly to this week's principle	Resume
The chasing team doesn't increase its urgency enough for the scripted scenario	Habit or hesitation, playing too passively for the situation	The team's tempo and numbers forward don't visibly change from a normal, level scenario	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "does this look like a team that's chasing the game?"	Resume

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

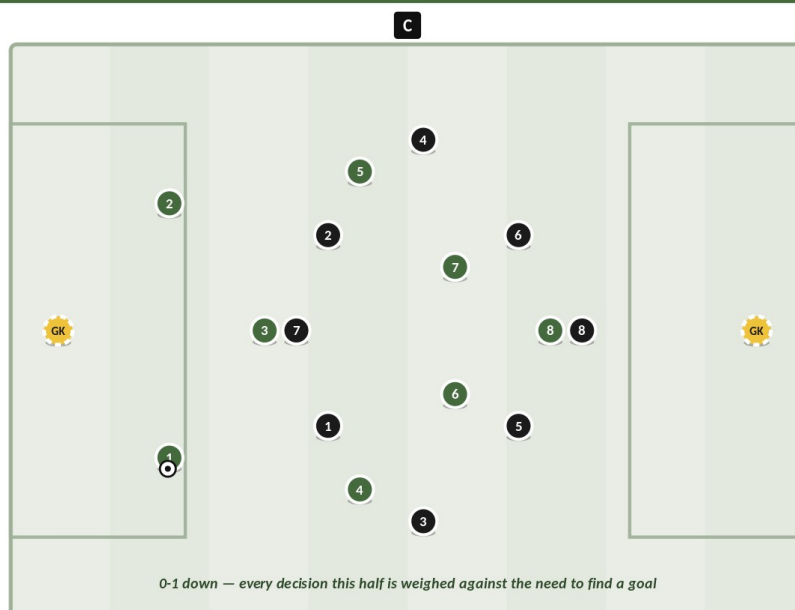
Success indicators:

- The chasing team visibly increases urgency and numbers forward while maintaining some rest-defence structure.
- Clean chances created in the chasing team's favour increase as the practice progresses.
- The team can articulate, after the practice, specific moments where urgency was applied well.

Coach's eye: this practice is the week's clearest test of whether Tuesday's teaching has transferred — judge it specifically against the quality of the risk-management decisions under sustained pressure, not just whether a goal was scored.

T25.4 TURN IT AROUND — Conditioned Match

50 x 36 m (half pitch) • 8v8 + GKs • one team starts 0-1 down and must find urgency for the remaining time • 15 minutes



● Team chasing the game ● Leading team ● 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. White football near a green player. Title: 'TURN IT AROUND — Conditioned Match'. Subtitle: '50 x 36 m (half pitch) • 8v8 + GKs • one team starts 0-1 down and must find urgency for the remaining time • 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Wide elevated view of a full-scale 8v8 conditioned match, green-bibbed players committed forward with visible urgency, black-bibbed opponents defending compactly and looking to break, coach on the touchline near halfway tracking the whole picture.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Wide elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur 8v8 conditioned football match on a half-size grass pitch with full-size goals and goalkeepers in yellow at each end. Players in dark green bibs committed forward with visible urgency and energy. Players in black bibs defending compactly, looking to break forward. A coach stands near the halfway line on the touchline, tracking the whole picture. Early evening light with long shadows, realistic grass pitch markings, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

REFLECTION (1 MINUTE)

One question to the group: "If we're 0-1 down with fifteen minutes left on Saturday, what does finding urgency actually look like — and what do we not give up?"

Thursday — Session 50

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	50 of 72
Week	25
Season phase	5 — Match Management
Training day	Thursday
Session theme	Breaking down a deep, organised opponent
Short summary	Narrows the week's focus to the hardest version of chasing a game — an opponent that sits deep and organised, happy to protect their own lead — teaching direct, urgent combination play built on a deliberate overload, then applying the full team's commitment to breaking the block down while managing the rest-defence risk this creates.
Tags	`overloads` `breaking-down-a-block` `game-management`
Primary learning objective	The team commits deliberate extra numbers forward to break down a deep, organised opponent, with genuine urgency rather than patience alone.
Secondary learning objective	The rest-defence trade-off created by committing extra numbers is managed by a clearly understood, minimal group left behind the ball.
Match connection	This week's named match-day connection: more territory won in the closing 20 minutes when behind.
Expected tactical outcome	More clean entries into the box against a deep, organised opponent, without a corresponding rise in clean counter-attacking chances conceded.
Expected physical load	Moderate-high — urgency-driven combination work against a well-organised defensive picture.
Recommended intensity	7–8 / 10.
Equipment list	20 footballs · 20 flat markers · 12 cones (orange) · 2 sets of bibs (2 colours, 10 each) · 2 full-size or portable goals
Player numbers	Designed for 16 outfield + 2 goalkeepers; scales 10–22, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout, with the attacking goalkeeper's role in supporting a committed, forward-loaded team specifically coached in Practice 3.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 50 x 34 m (Practice 3).
Area layout	A tight, packed zone for Practice 2, widening through Practices 3 and 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 3 reduces to a 6-player attacking group vs 6 low-block defenders.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Practice 3 can extend to a fuller 9v9.
Contingency — restricted space	Practice 2 works in any packed area with cones marking the zone; Practice 3 needs realistic width and should not be excessively compressed.

TIMELINE (60 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00–0:10	10 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Quick Combinations</i>	Light green
0:10–0:25	15 min	Technical practice — <i>Add the Overload</i>	Club green
0:25–0:27	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:27–0:42	15 min	Unit / tactical practice — <i>All In</i>	Dark green
0:42–0:44	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:44–0:59	15 min	Confidence game — <i>Find a Way</i>	Black
0:59–1:00	1 min	Reflection	—

PRACTICE 1 — QUICK COMBINATIONS (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Reconnects to Week 22's tight-space combination work, rehearsing quick, decisive passing before any full tactical structure is added.

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

Walkthrough: Rondo-style possession in a deliberately tight grid, rewarding quick, one- or two-touch combinations over sustained circulation.

Rules: No more than two touches per player.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* clean, quick one- and two-touch technique.
- *Psychological:* decisiveness in tight spaces.

PRACTICE 2 — ADD THE OVERLOAD (TECHNICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Isolates the specific technique of an underlapping or overlapping run adding a genuine overload against a packed defence, with real urgency rather than the patient build-up of Week 22's low-block work.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 34 x 22 m, with a marked packed zone
- **Players:** 6 attackers (including one player starting outside the zone who makes a run to add the overload) vs 4 low-block defenders
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through, providing a recycling option outside the packed zone
- **Team sizes:** 6 v 4
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers marking the packed zone
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** coach restarts on any stoppage
- **Coach position:** central, able to see the whole picture
- **Rotation method:** groups rotate every five minutes, including which player makes the underlapping run
- **Direction of play:** possession retention and progression through the zone

Practice walkthrough: Five attackers work inside a packed central zone against four low-block defenders, as in Week 22's practice, but this time a sixth player starts outside the zone and makes a sharp, urgent underlapping run to add a genuine extra body at the moment the defence is already stretched, rather than relying purely on patient combination play.

Rules: A clean pass that finds the underlapping runner inside the box or target area scores a bonus point.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* the underlapping runner's timing and pace are the whole point of this practice.
- *Unit:* the five players already inside the zone must recognise and use the runner the moment they arrive.
- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Transition:* not applicable — this practice is possession-focused throughout, though the coaching points name the rest-defence trade-off explicitly.

Decision-making triggers:

- The low block has genuinely narrowed to defend the central combination → the underlapping run is likely to find space.
- The low block hasn't shifted → continue the central combination rather than forcing the run.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Sharp, well-timed running technique for the underlapping run; clean weighted passing to find it.
Tactical	Recognising the moment the low block has genuinely opened space for the run.
Physical	Explosive, sustained running for the underlapping player.

CORNER	POINT
Psychological	Urgency and commitment to the run, even under fatigue.
Communication & leadership	The runner calling for the ball clearly as they arrive.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made the underlapping run succeed or fail at finding space?
2. How is this different from Week 22's patient combination work — what does urgency add here?
3. What is being given up by committing this extra body forward?
4. How does this connect to Week 20's front-player combination work — is a well-timed underlapping run a similar kind of third-man idea?

Progressions:

1. Add a defender specifically assigned to track the underlapping run.
2. Reduce the time the runner has to arrive and be used before the bonus opportunity expires.
3. Add a genuine transition consequence if possession is lost during the run.

Regressions:

1. Walk the underlapping run through with no opposition before adding any.
2. Widen the packed zone for more space and time.
3. Reduce the low-block defenders to three.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The underlapping runner arrives too early, before the block has genuinely opened space	Impatience or a fixed-rhythm habit rather than reading the picture	The block adjusts to cover the run before it becomes dangerous	Stop	Freeze-and-correct: reset and clarify the timing cue for the run	Resume
The five players inside the zone don't recognise the runner has arrived	Attention fixed on the existing combination rather than scanning for the new option	The runner is available but not used	Stop	Short group intervention: clarify the recognition habit needed	Resume

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

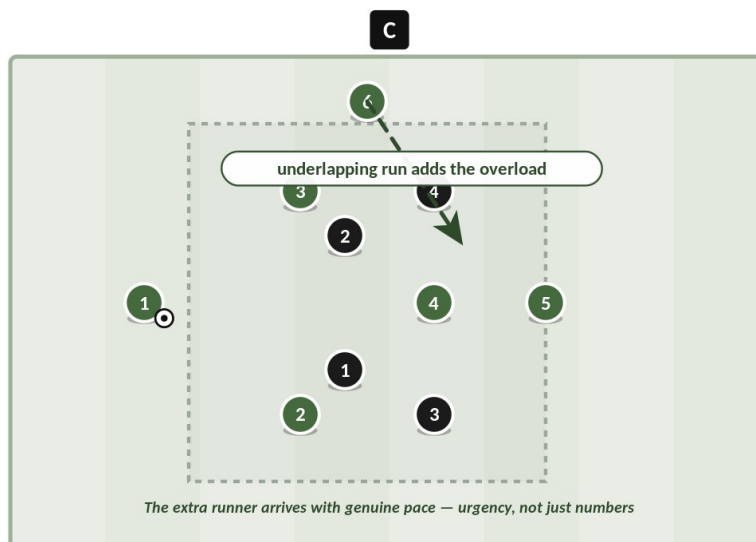
Success indicators:

- The underlapping run finds space and is used cleanly with increasing frequency.
- The timing of the run improves, arriving when genuinely needed rather than on habit.
- Players can articulate the rest-defence trade-off this run represents.

Coach's eye: watch the moment the run begins relative to the ball — a run that starts as the ball is played into the zone is better timed than one that starts before the picture has genuinely developed.

H25.2 ADD THE OVERLOAD — Direct Combination Against a Packed Block

34 x 22 m · 6v4 in a packed zone · an underlapping run adds a genuine overload with real urgency · 15 minutes



● Attacking team ● Low-block defenders ⊙ Ball ➞ Underlapping run

Castlewellan Town FC · Senior Coaching Curriculum · Week 25 · 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 area with dimension labels and a dashed packed central zone. Six players in dark green bibs numbered 1-6 combining against four players in black bibs numbered 1-4 defending compactly, one green player positioned outside the zone making an underlapping run into it. White football near a green player. A curved dashed line showing the underlapping run. Title: 'ADD THE OVERLOAD — Direct Combination Against a Packed Block'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m · 6v4 in a packed zone · an underlapping run adds a genuine overload with real urgency · 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 tight, congested training zone, five green-bibbed attackers combining against four compact black-bibbed defenders, a sixth green-bibbed player making a sharp underlapping run into the space, coach centrally positioned observing the timing closely.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training in a tight, congested area. Five players in dark green bibs combining against four compact players in black bibs. A sixth player in a dark green bib making a sharp underlapping run into the space with visible urgency. A coach standing centrally, closely observing the timing of the run. 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 — ALL IN (UNIT / TACTICAL PRACTICE)

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

Tactical purpose: Expands the underlapping-run work into a full team practice, teaching the whole team to commit extra numbers forward to break down a deep, organised block, while a clearly understood minimal group manages the rest-defence risk this creates.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 50 x 34 m
- **Players:** 8 attacking outfield + goalkeeper vs 8 low-block defenders
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** the attacking team's goalkeeper supports a genuinely committed, forward-loaded team, including distributing quickly to exploit any transition opportunity

- **Team sizes:** 8 + GK v 8
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for starting positions and a marked rest-defence risk

zone

- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** nearest player restarts any stoppage
- **Coach position:** mobile, able to see the whole picture
- **Rotation method:** roles swap at the midpoint
- **Direction of play:** the attacking team works to break the block down with

genuine numbers committed forward; the defending team holds a compact, organised low block and looks to break on a turnover

Practice walkthrough: The attacking team commits genuine extra numbers forward — more than Week 22's patient overload work — deliberately accepting that only a small, clearly understood group remains to provide rest defence. The team is coached to name, out loud, exactly who is providing that cover before committing further numbers forward, so the risk is managed rather than accidental.

Rules: Standard positional practice rules; a clean entry into the box scores a bonus point for the attacking team, a clean break from a turnover scores a bonus point for the defending team, sharpening the real stakes of the trade-off.

Tactical roles: the full underlapping-run skill set from Practice 2, combined with a team-wide, deliberately committed structure.

Decision-making triggers:

- The block has genuinely narrowed or tired → commit the extra numbers and press the advantage.
- Possession has just been lost or is under immediate threat → the named rest-defence group must recover shape before anything else.

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean combination and running technique under a genuinely committed structure.
Tactical	Naming and managing exactly who provides rest-defence cover.
Physical	Sustained high-tempo running from the committed attacking numbers.
Psychological	Belief and urgency, balanced against defensive discipline from the named cover players.

CORNER	POINT
Communication & leadership	The team organising and confirming who is committed forward and who is holding rest-defence, continuously.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Who was providing rest-defence cover during that practice, and was it always clear?
2. What happened on the occasions the defending team won the ball and broke forward?
3. How does this connect to Week 13's overloads-and-rest-defence work — is this the same trade-off, taken further because of the game situation?
4. What did the low block have to solve once the team had genuinely committed extra numbers forward?

Progressions:

1. Add a genuine, live counter-attacking target for the defending team on a turnover.
2. Reduce the number of players allowed to remain in the rest-defence group, sharpening the risk.
3. Add a time constraint, simulating the closing minutes of a match.

Regressions:

1. Increase the number of players allowed to remain in the rest-defence group while the trade-off is being learned.
2. Reduce the low block's numbers temporarily, simplifying the picture.
3. Allow the coach to call out who should be holding rest-defence while the habit is being built.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
No player is clearly responsible for rest-defence, and the team is caught completely open on a turnover	Diffusion of responsibility when everyone is focused on attacking	A clean break is conceded with no defender in position to stop it	Stop	Short group intervention: "whose job was that, and did they know it?"	Resume
The team is too cautious, refusing to commit the genuine extra numbers this practice is teaching	Comfort with a safer, more familiar structure overrides the situational demand	The attacking numbers never genuinely increase beyond a normal picture	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "is this genuinely committed, or are we playing it safe?"	Resume

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

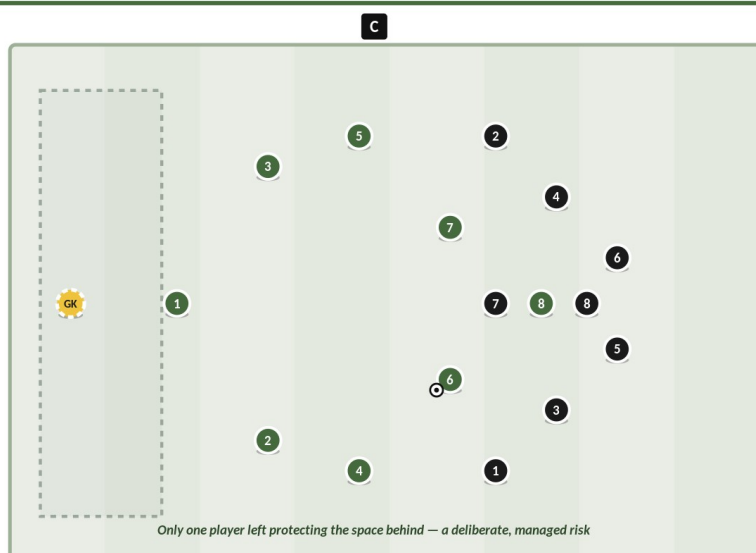
Success indicators:

- The team commits genuine extra numbers forward while clearly naming who holds rest-defence.
- Clean box entries increase as the practice progresses.
- Clean breaks conceded on turnovers decrease as the naming habit becomes more consistent.

Coach's eye: listen for the naming, not just watch the shape — a team that verbally confirms who is holding rest-defence before committing further numbers forward is managing the risk deliberately; a team that commits silently is gambling.

H25.3 ALL IN — Committing Numbers Against a Deep Block

50 x 34 m • 8v8 + GK • commit extra bodies forward to break down a deep block, managing the rest-defence trade-off • 15 minutes



● Attacking team ● Low-block defenders ● Goalkeeper ● Ball ■ Rest-defence risk zone

Castlewellan Town FC • Senior Coaching Curriculum • Week 25 • 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 50x34 metre area with dimension labels and a dashed rest-defence risk zone marked near the attacking team's own goal. A goalkeeper in yellow on the left. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 heavily committed forward, with only one green player remaining inside the marked risk zone, and eight players in black bibs numbered 1–8 organised in a compact low-block shape. White football near a green player. Title: 'ALL IN — Committing Numbers Against a Deep Block'. Subtitle: '50 x 34 m • 8v8 + GK • commit extra bodies forward to break down a deep block, managing the rest-defence trade-off • 15 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated wide view of a positional practice, a heavily committed green-bibbed attacking team pressing forward against a compact black-bibbed low block, one lone green-bibbed defender visible holding position near their own goal, coach observing from a central, elevated vantage point.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated wide three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of an adult amateur football positional practice on a grass pitch. A heavily committed group of players in dark green bibs pressing forward against a compact defensive block of players in black bibs. One lone player in a dark green bib visible holding a defensive position near their own goal. A coach observing from a central vantage point. Overcast evening light, realistic grass texture, amateur adult players of varied build. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 4 — FIND A WAY (CONFIDENCE GAME)

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

Tactical purpose: Closes the session with a competitive, enjoyable game that rewards a goal following a deliberate overload against a packed defence, reinforcing the week's technical and tactical work inside a genuinely fun context that sends players into the weekend confident.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 34 x 22 m
- **Players:** 14 outfield, rotating
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through
- **Team sizes:** 7 v 7 (defending team plays with a compact block bias)
- **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 the defending team is coached to hold a compact, packed low block, and a goal that follows a deliberate overload run is worth double, directly rewarding this week's central skill.

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

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

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

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

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean combination and running technique under game-realistic conditions.
Tactical	Correctly identifying when the block has genuinely opened space for an overload run.
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 recognising and rewarding a well-timed overload run.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made tonight's best overload-run goal work?
2. What's one thing from this week — chasing a game or breaking down a deep block — you feel most confident about heading into Saturday?
3. Why does managing the risk matter just as much as taking it?

Progressions:

1. Increase the bonus value for a goal following a run from a player who started outside the attacking third.
2. Add a genuine offside line.
3. Reduce the pitch width slightly to increase the central congestion the low block creates.

Regressions:

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

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Players force overload runs without a genuine opening, chasing the bonus	The condition is chased rather than played naturally	Runs are attempted into spaces that are still well covered	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "was that space really open?"	Resume
The team avoids committing extra numbers altogether, defeating the purpose of the condition	Caution or lack of confidence after an earlier correction	No overload runs attempted even when the picture clearly calls for one	Stop	Short group intervention: "we need to trust the run again — that's what tonight is for"	Resume

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

Success indicators:

- Goals following a genuine, well-timed overload run increase across the practice.
- The team commits extra numbers deliberately, not randomly.
- Players finish the session animated and positive.

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

H25.4 FIND A WAY — Confidence Game

34 x 22 m · 7v7 · a goal following a deliberate overload against a packed defence is worth double · 17 minutes

C

● Team A

● Team B

⦿ Ball

Castlewellan Town FC · Senior Coaching Curriculum · Week 25 · 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 seven players in black bibs numbered 1–7 compressed toward one side of the pitch near a goal. White

football near a green player. Title: 'FIND A WAY — Confidence Game'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m · 7v7 · a goal following a deliberate overload against a packed defence is worth double · 17 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated sideline view of a lively small-sided game, a green-bibbed player arriving on a determined overload run to finish a chance near goal, black-bibbed defenders caught slightly short-handed, 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 small-sided football game on a grass pitch with two full-size goals. A player in a dark green bib arriving on a determined forward run to finish a chance near the goal. Players in black bibs caught slightly short-handed in defence. 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 we're chasing a game on Saturday, who commits forward — and who stays to make sure we don't get caught out doing it?"

Match-Day Objectives

Three team objectives:

1. Recognise a losing scoreline as part of the picture, committing genuine extra numbers forward when the situation calls for it.
2. Break down a deep, organised opponent using deliberate overload runs, not just patient circulation alone.
3. Name and manage exactly who provides rest-defence cover when extra numbers are committed forward.

Three unit objectives:

1. **Back line and goalkeeper:** provide quick, secure distribution to launch the team's urgency, and organise rest-defence cover clearly.
2. **Midfield unit:** recognise the moment to step forward and add a genuine overload.
3. **Front players:** combine directly and use overload runs decisively when the picture allows.

Individual role reminders:

- If we're chasing the game, know whether your job right now is to commit forward or to hold rest-defence — and say it out loud.
- Time your overload run off the picture, not off habit or frustration.
- Urgency is not the same as chaos — stay organised even as the tempo rises.

Measurable performance indicators:

- Number of clean chances created in the closing 20 minutes of matches the team is losing.
- Number of clean counter-attacking chances conceded while committed forward.
- Whether rest-defence responsibility was clearly named and held during committed periods.
- Number of successful overload runs against a deep, organised opponent.

Formation Translation — Applying This Across Different Structures

Chasing a game and breaking down a deep, organised opponent

STRUCTURE	HOW CHASING A GAME IS TYPICALLY ORGANISED	HOW BREAKING DOWN A DEEP BLOCK IS TYPICALLY ORGANISED	WHAT STAYS THE SAME	KEY RISK
4-3-3	A full-back pushes higher to create a temporary back three with an auxiliary attacker, or a holding midfielder joins a late set piece	A full-back or winger provides the underlapping run while the double pivot maintains a minimal rest-defence presence	The recognition-and-commitment principle, and naming who holds rest-defence	Both full-backs pushing forward simultaneously, leaving the back three completely exposed to a switch
3-4-3	Both wing-backs push higher simultaneously, accepting a genuinely committed, attacking structure	A wing-back provides the underlapping run while the back three and a single holding midfielder manage rest-defence	The recognition-and-commitment principle, and naming who holds rest-defence	The back three being left as the sole rest-defence with no protective midfielder if both wing-backs commit forward at once

Coach Review

To be completed by the coaching staff after delivery.

What worked well this week:

What needs more work:

Attendance and availability notes:

Adjustments for next week:

Individual player notes:

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