



Week 34 — Performance Consolidation

Tags: `load-management` `pressure-cover-balance` `support-angles` `taper`

Weekly Overview

FIELD	DETAIL
Week number	34 of 36
Season phase	6 — Performance Consolidation
Core principle	Pressure, cover, balance (Tuesday)
Secondary principle	Support & passing angles (Thursday)
Previous match review focus	Apply the three routes below to the most recent fixture.
Weekly tactical problem	This week begins the season's taper (Season Architecture, Section 7: Weeks 30–36, "a controlled taper toward the season's most significant fixtures — reduced volume, sustained quality, protecting freshness over accumulating more work"). Nothing new is taught. Tuesday revisits the defensive shape principles first built in Phase 2 (pressure, cover, balance); Thursday revisits support and passing-angle quality first built in Phase 1 — both delivered at deliberately reduced physical volume and deliberately higher technical demand.
Formation-neutral explanation	Maintaining sharpness through fixture congestion is not about training harder — it's about protecting the quality of execution while reducing the total physical cost of getting there, and individualising that reduction based on how much each player actually played on Saturday.
Example structural applications	A 4-3-3 team's pressure-cover-balance shape is expressed through its back four and double pivot; the taper principle applies identically regardless of which players occupy those roles. A 3-4-3 team's support-angle quality is expressed through its back three's passing lanes and its wing-backs' width; the same reduced-volume, high-quality approach applies. The taper is a training-management principle, not a tactical one, so it travels across any structure unchanged.

Individualised Load Management This Week

This is the week the Season Architecture's minutes-played guidance (Section 7) matters most. Apply it explicitly across both sessions this week:

SATURDAY'S INVOLVEMENT	THIS WEEK'S TRAINING ADJUSTMENT
Played 75+ minutes	Standard Tuesday load, with particular emphasis on quality over volume in the first 15 minutes; full rotation through Thursday's lighter work.
Played a fragment (under 45 minutes)	Standard-to-elevated Tuesday load — this remains a legitimate training stimulus for this group even during a taper week.
Returning from injury	Individualised reduced volume, built up according to medical guidance — see the caution below.
Missed the match / unused substitute	Elevated Tuesday load, with additional targeted conditioning worked into the session's games rather than delivered separately.

A caution, stated once and meant throughout the programme: none of the above overrides medical guidance for a specific player. Where a conflict exists between this table and medical advice, medical advice always takes priority.

Match Review and Weekly Adjustment

Route A — Previous performance was strong. If the team played well, this week simply protects that form — resist the temptation to add extra work "to be safe"; the taper exists precisely because more training volume this late in a congested fixture schedule tends to cost more than it gains.

Route B — Previous performance exposed a tactical weakness. If a specific tactical issue emerged recently, note it for attention, but keep this week's actual training load as planned — a congested fixture period is not the moment to add significant new tactical volume; address it through Week 33's diagnostic process instead if it's recurring, or through in-game coaching if it's a one-off.

Route C — Attendance, facilities or player availability are disrupted. This week already assumes uneven individual loads — the differentiated table above handles this directly; simply apply it to whoever is actually present.

Tuesday — Session 67

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	67 of 72
Week	34
Season phase	6 — Performance Consolidation
Training day	Tuesday
Session theme	Maintaining intensity — fixture congestion management
Short summary	Revisits the season's core defensive shape principles — pressure, cover, and balance — at controlled tempo and reduced physical volume, protecting technical and tactical sharpness without accumulating unnecessary training load during a congested fixture period.
Tags	`load-management` `pressure-cover-balance`
Primary learning objective	The team executes pressure, cover, and balance with the same quality as earlier in the season, at a lower physical cost.
Secondary learning objective	Individual training loads are managed appropriately based on each player's involvement in the most recent fixture.
Match connection	This week's named match-day connection: squad freshness into the run-in.
Expected tactical outcome	Sharp, correct defensive shape decisions delivered without excessive physical accumulation.
Expected physical load	Reduced volume, high quality.
Recommended intensity	5.5–6.5 / 10, individually adjusted per the load table above.
Equipment list	16 footballs · 16 flat markers · 8 cones (orange) · 2 sets of bibs (2 colours, 8 each) · 2 full-size or portable goals
Player numbers	Designed for 14 outfield + 2 goalkeepers; scales 10–20, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout at a similarly managed, quality-focused load.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 40 x 26 m (Practices 2 and 4).
Area layout	A moderate technical zone for Practice 2, a compact rondo square for Practice 3, a moderate area for Practice 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 2 reduces to 6v4; Practice 3 becomes 4v2; Practice 4 becomes 6v6.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Rotate additional players through Practice 4 in short shifts, protecting the reduced-volume principle rather than extending total playing time.
Contingency — restricted space	All practices scale proportionally; this week's smaller footprint already suits a compact facility.

TIMELINE (50 MINUTES)

(This week's total session length is deliberately shorter than the usual sixty minutes, consistent with the taper's reduced-volume principle.)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00–0:08	8 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Sharp Start</i>	Light green
0:08–0:20	12 min	Technical / positional practice — <i>Press, Cover, Balance</i> — <i>Refreshed</i>	Club green
0:20–0:22	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:22–0:34	12 min	Positional practice — <i>Quality Rondo</i>	Dark green
0:34–0:36	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:36–0:50	14 min	Small-sided game — <i>Controlled Game</i>	Black

PRACTICE 1 — SHARP START (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Primes the body and the first touch without accumulating unnecessary physical load, setting the tone for a quality-focused session.

Organisation: 16 x 12 m grids, pairs. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join, working technical distribution at a controlled tempo.

Walkthrough: Simple passing and movement combinations at a controlled, unhurried tempo, with an explicit emphasis on clean technique over physical intensity.

Rules: None beyond standard technical warm-up play.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* clean first touch and passing weight.
- *Physical:* controlled, low-intensity movement — this is a taper week, not a loading week.

PRACTICE 2 — PRESS, COVER, BALANCE — REFRESHED (TECHNICAL / POSITIONAL PRACTICE)

Duration: 12 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Revisits the three core defensive shape principles first established in Phase 2 — pressure, cover, and balance — at a controlled tempo, sharpening the quality of the collective decision without the higher-volume repetition of a typical technical practice.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 26 m
- **Players:** 8 defending players vs 5 possession players
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through, organising the shape from behind at a controlled tempo

- **Team sizes:** 8 v 5
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for starting positions
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** coach restarts on any stoppage
- **Coach position:** mobile, observing shape quality closely
- **Rotation method:** groups rotate every four minutes
- **Direction of play:** the defending team works to press, cover, and balance

correctly

Practice walkthrough: Run at a deliberately controlled tempo rather than full match intensity, the defending eight organise their pressure, cover, and balance against five possession players, with the coach prioritising the correctness and timing of the shape over the number of repetitions completed.

Rules: Standard pressing-and-shape rules, run at a controlled rather than maximal tempo.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* whoever is nearest the ball presses; the next nearest covers; the rest of the unit balances across the pitch.
- *Unit:* the whole defensive shape moves together, exactly as first taught in Phase 2.
- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Transition:* not the focus of this practice.

Decision-making triggers: the original Phase 2 set — ball moves, the shape adjusts collectively; whoever is goal-side and nearest presses, the next covers, the rest balance.

Communication language used: "press," "cover," "balance" — the original Phase 2 language, refreshed rather than replaced.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean, correct body shape while pressing and covering.
Tactical	Accuracy and timing of the collective press-cover-balance decision.
Physical	Controlled, moderate intensity — quality over volume.
Psychological	Calm, confident execution of a well-known principle.

CORNER	POINT
Communication & leadership	Clear, early calls organising the shape.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What's the same about this compared to when we first learned it in Phase 2 — and what's sharper now?
2. How does running this at a controlled tempo change what we notice about our shape?
3. Why does protecting quality matter more than adding volume this week specifically?

Progressions:

1. Add a sixth possession player briefly, without extending the practice's overall duration.

1. Reduce the practice area slightly to sharpen the technical demand.

Regressions:

1. Reduce the possession group to three players.
2. Slow the tempo further if any rotation group shows signs of accumulated fatigue.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The group unconsciously increases tempo toward full intensity	Habit and competitive instinct overriding the week's controlled-tempo intent	Noticeably higher physical intensity than the practice calls for	Stop	Short reminder: "quality, not volume, this week"	Resume
Shape quality drops because the group is under-motivated by the lower intensity	Reduced physical demand mistaken for reduced attentional demand	Sloppy positioning despite low physical effort	Stop	Short group intervention refocusing on precision	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: light touch — brief reminders to maintain the controlled tempo and technical precision.

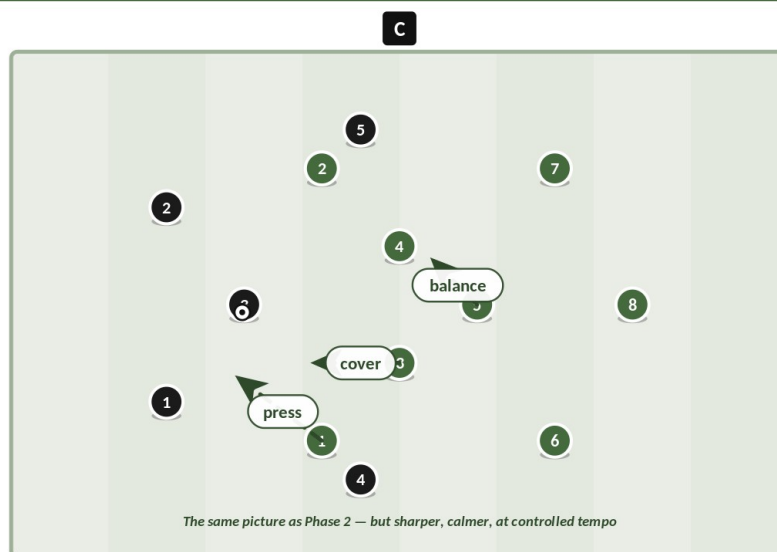
Success indicators:

- Press-cover-balance decisions remain accurate and well-timed.
- The practice's physical intensity stays visibly controlled throughout.
- Players can articulate why quality is this week's priority.

Coach's eye: resist your own instinct to push the tempo up — the discipline this week requires is restraint, not intensity.

T34.2 PRESS, COVER, BALANCE — REFRESHED — Technical Practice

40 x 26 m • 8v5 • controlled tempo • revisiting the defensive shape principles at quality, not volume • 12 minutes



● Defending team ● Possession team ● Ball ➔ Press / cover / balance movement

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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. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 organised in a compact defensive shape, and five players in black bibs numbered 1–5 spread wider. White football near a black player. Three curved arrows labelled 'press', 'cover', and 'balance' showing the collective defensive movement. Title: 'PRESS, COVER, BALANCE — REFRESHED — Technical Practice'. Subtitle: '40 x 26 m • 8v5 • controlled tempo • revisiting the defensive shape principles at quality, not volume • 12 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated wide view of a training area, a calm, organised green-bibbed defensive shape moving together at a controlled tempo against black-bibbed possession players, coach observing quietly, relaxed body language reflecting the week's lower-intensity intent.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated wide three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training. A calm, organised group of players in dark green bibs moving together in a controlled, measured defensive shape against players in black bibs holding possession. A coach observing quietly nearby, relaxed body language. Soft evening light, realistic grass texture, amateur adult players of varied build showing controlled, purposeful movement rather than maximum effort. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 3 — QUALITY RONDO (POSITIONAL PRACTICE)

Duration: 12 minutes · **Training load:** Low-moderate

Tactical purpose: Delivers a high volume of technical repetitions inside a very low physical footprint, sharpening first touch, passing accuracy, and pressing decision-making without significant running load.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 18 x 18 m
- **Players:** 6 possession players vs 2 pressers, rotating
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through as possession players
- **Team sizes:** 6 v 2
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers marking the square
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** nearest player restarts any stoppage
- **Coach position:** just outside the square, close enough to correct technique

precisely

- **Rotation method:** the pair that loses the ball, or the player who gave it away, rotates in to press
- **Direction of play:** possession retention

Practice walkthrough: A standard rondo, run with an explicit emphasis on technical precision — passing weight, body shape to receive, disguised passing angles — rather than physical intensity, giving the whole squad a large number of technical repetitions for very little physical cost.

Rules: Standard rondo rules; two-touch maximum to sharpen decision speed without adding physical load.

Tactical roles: individual technical execution and pressing decision-making inside a very low physical footprint.

Decision-making triggers: the season's full passing and pressing language, applied at rondo scale.

Communication language used: the season's established possession and pressing language.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Passing weight, disguise, and receiving body shape under two-touch constraint.
Tactical	Quick, accurate reading of the pressing pair's position.
Physical	Very low — this practice is specifically designed for volume without load.
Psychological	Sharp, confident decision-making under time constraint.
Communication & leadership	Concise, clear calls for the ball.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What lets us keep this sharp without needing to run hard?
2. How does the two-touch limit change our decision-making compared to an open practice?

Progressions:

1. Reduce to one-touch for advanced groups, without increasing the physical area.

2. Reduce the square size slightly to sharpen the technical demand further.

Regressions:

1. Allow three touches if quality is dropping under the two-touch constraint.
2. Increase the square size slightly for more time on the ball.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Passing quality drops under the two-touch constraint	The constraint is more demanding than the group's current sharpness allows	Frequent misplaced passes or heavy touches	Stop	Briefly allow three touches, then return to two-touch once quality recovers	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: light, precise technical correction — this practice rewards close coaching attention given its low physical cost.

Success indicators:

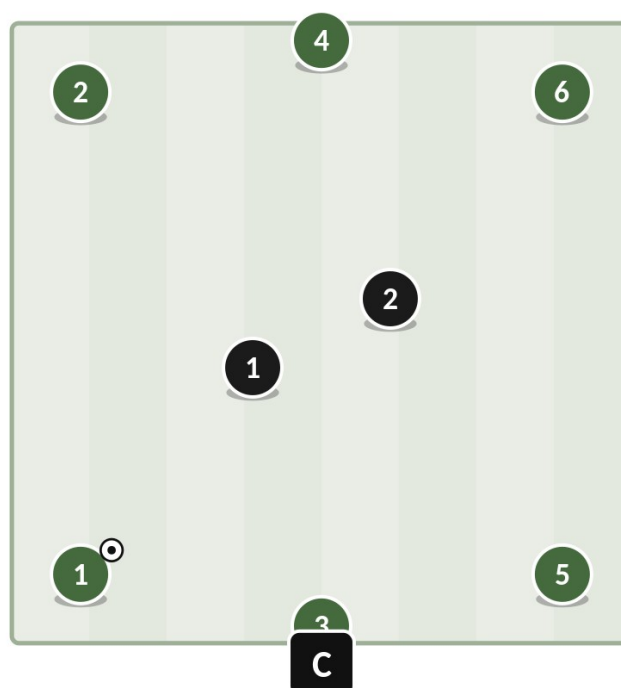
- Passing accuracy and receiving quality stay high under the two-touch constraint.
- The group completes a high number of clean repetitions with minimal physical fatigue.

Coach's eye: this is the week's best opportunity for close technical correction — the low physical cost means players have the attention available to genuinely absorb detailed feedback.

T34.3 QUALITY RONDO — Positional Practice

18 x 18 m • 6v2 rotating • low physical volume, high technical and tactical quality • 12 minutes

Fewer repetitions, but every one of them clean and correct



● Possession team ● Pressing pair ⊙ 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. An 18x18 metre square with dimension labels. Six players in dark green bibs numbered 1–6 spread around the perimeter of the square, and two players in black bibs numbered 1–2 in the centre. White football near a green player. Title: 'QUALITY RONDO — Positional Practice'. Subtitle: '18 x 18 m · 6v2 rotating · low physical volume, high technical and tactical quality · 12 minutes'. Legend row at bottom. High-resolution landscape vector illustration, clear typography, no decorative elements, no club badges or logos."

Realistic illustration — description: Elevated close view of a tight rondo square, players in dark green bibs passing crisply and calmly around two black-bibbed pressers, coach standing close by giving quiet, precise technical feedback.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated close three-quarter view of a tight rondo drill on a grass training pitch. Players in dark green bibs passing crisply and calmly around two players in black bibs pressing in the centre. A coach standing close by, giving quiet, precise technical feedback. Soft evening light, realistic grass texture, amateur adult players of varied build showing calm focus. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 4 — CONTROLLED GAME (SMALL-SIDED GAME, MANAGED LOAD)

Duration: 14 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Applies pressure, cover, and balance inside live, competitive play, at a deliberately shorter duration than a typical week's conditioned match, with individual playing time carefully managed against Saturday's minutes.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 40 x 26 m
- **Players:** 14 outfield, rolling rotation
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through
- **Team sizes:** 7 v 7
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 full-size or portable goals, 8 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, managing rotation actively
- **Rotation method:** rolling substitutions, weighted by the load table above —

players who carried 75+ minutes on Saturday rotate out more frequently

- **Direction of play:** both directions, one goal per end

Practice walkthrough: A shorter, standard small-sided game applying pressure, cover, and balance under live conditions, with the coach actively managing rotation so that players who carried a full match load on Saturday receive proportionally less game time tonight than those who didn't play, or played only a fragment.

Rules: Standard small-sided-game rules; rotation is managed actively by the coach rather than left to chance.

Tactical roles: the full press-cover-balance identity from Practice 2, applied under live, competitive conditions.

Decision-making triggers: the full defensive shape set from earlier in the session, applied spontaneously during live play.

Communication language used: "press," "cover," "balance."

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Execution quality under live, competitive conditions.
Tactical	Press-cover-balance shape maintained live.
Physical	Moderate, carefully managed and individually differentiated.
Psychological	Confidence and sharpness heading into the coming fixture.
Communication & leadership	Clear organisation of the defensive shape under live conditions.

Guided discovery questions:

1. Did our shape stay as sharp under live pressure as it did in the earlier, slower practice?

1. How did it feel to manage minutes actively tonight rather than just playing through fatigue?

Progressions: none planned — this week deliberately avoids adding further physical demand.

Regressions:

1. Shorten individual rotation shifts further for any player showing signs of accumulated fatigue.
1. Reduce to 5v5 if the group as a whole needs a lighter night.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
A player who should be rotated out pushes to stay on	Competitive instinct overriding the week's managed-load intent	A player visibly requesting to continue despite having carried a full match load	Stop briefly	Firm, kind reminder: "this is protecting you for Saturday, not punishing you"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: active, ongoing management of rotation — this practice requires more coach attention to substitution timing than a typical week's conditioned match.

Success indicators:

- Press-cover-balance shape holds up under live conditions.
- Individual rotation is managed proportionally to Saturday's minutes.
- The group finishes the session with visible energy remaining, not depleted.

Coach's eye: the real success measure tonight isn't the quality of the football alone — it's whether the group leaves training fresher than a standard week would have left them, while the football stays sharp.



AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 40x26 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. White football near a green player. Title: 'CONTROLLED GAME — Small-Sided Game, Managed Load'. Subtitle: '40 x 26 m • 7v7, rolling rotation • pressure, cover and balance applied live, with individual playing time managed by Saturday's minutes • 14 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 controlled, competitive small-sided game, a substitute in matching bib jogging on as a rotation change while another player jogs off calmly, coach on the touchline actively managing the rotation with a clear sense of purpose.

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 substitute player in a dark green bib jogging onto the pitch as another player jogs off calmly during a rotation change. A coach on the touchline actively

managing the substitution with a clipboard. Soft 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."

Thursday — Session 68

FIELD	DETAIL
Session number	68 of 72
Week	34
Season phase	6 — Performance Consolidation
Training day	Thursday
Session theme	Sharpness & confidence work
Short summary	Revisits support and passing-angle quality first built in Phase 1, delivered through short, sharp, enjoyable technical and small-sided work designed specifically to build confidence and technical sharpness heading into the fixture, without adding significant physical load.
Tags	`load-management` `support-angles` `confidence`
Primary learning objective	The team's support positioning and passing-angle quality are sharp and confident heading into Saturday.
Secondary learning objective	The squad finishes the week feeling confident and fresh, not fatigued.
Match connection	This week's named match-day connection: squad freshness into the run-in.
Expected tactical outcome	Crisp, confident passing and support play, delivered at low physical cost.
Expected physical load	Reduced volume, high quality.
Recommended intensity	5–6.5 / 10, individually adjusted per the load table above.
Equipment list	16 footballs · 16 flat markers · 8 cones (orange) · 2 sets of bibs (2 colours, 8 each) · 2 full-size or portable goals
Player numbers	Designed for 14 outfield + 2 goalkeepers; scales 10–20, see contingencies.
Goalkeeper requirements	Both goalkeepers train throughout at a managed, quality-focused load.
Pitch dimensions	Largest area this week is 34 x 22 m (Practice 4).
Area layout	A moderate technical zone for Practice 2, a similar area for Practice 3, a small-sided area for Practice 4.
Contingency — lower attendance (10–13)	Practice 2 reduces to 6v3; Practice 3 becomes 5v5; Practice 4 becomes 6v6.
Contingency — higher attendance (20+)	Rotate additional players through Practice 4 in short shifts.
Contingency — restricted space	All practices scale proportionally.

TIMELINE (50 MINUTES)

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:00–0:08	8 min	Arrival & warm-up — <i>Crisp Touches</i>	Light green
0:08–0:20	12 min	Technical / positional practice — <i>Angles That Work</i>	Club green

TIME	DURATION	PHASE	COLOUR CODE
0:20-0:22	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:22-0:36	14 min	Skill game — <i>Quick Combinations</i>	Dark green
0:36-0:38	2 min	Water break / transition	—
0:38-0:50	12 min	Confidence game — <i>Feel Good Football</i>	Black

PRACTICE 1 — CRISP TOUCHES (ARRIVAL)

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

Tactical purpose: Sharpens first touch and passing technique at low physical cost, setting up the session's technical focus.

Organisation: 16 x 12 m grids, pairs. No goalkeeper requirement — both keepers join, working distribution technique.

Walkthrough: Simple, crisp passing combinations at a controlled tempo, with an explicit emphasis on the quality of contact rather than volume of movement.

Rules: None beyond standard technical warm-up play.

Coaching points:

- *Technical:* clean, confident contact on every pass.
- *Psychological:* building early confidence through visible technical quality.

PRACTICE 2 — ANGLES THAT WORK (TECHNICAL / POSITIONAL PRACTICE)

Duration: 12 minutes · **Training load:** Low-moderate

Tactical purpose: Revisits the support and passing-angle principles first established in Phase 1, sharpening the quality of angled support positioning at a controlled tempo and low physical cost.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 30 x 20 m
- **Players:** 8 possession players vs 4 pressers, rotating
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through as possession players
- **Team sizes:** 8 v 4
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** flat markers for starting positions
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 2 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart:** coach restarts on any stoppage
- **Coach position:** mobile, observing angle quality closely
- **Rotation method:** groups rotate every four minutes
- **Direction of play:** possession retention

Practice walkthrough: Eight possession players face four pressers, with the coach's attention specifically on the quality of the angle each support player offers — not flat, not too central, genuinely offering a passing option the ball carrier can actually use — refreshing the exact principle first taught in Phase 1 rather than teaching anything new.

Rules: Standard possession-retention rules, run at a controlled tempo.

Tactical roles:

- *Individual:* every off-ball player adjusts their angle continuously to stay genuinely available.
- *Unit:* the group's overall shape offers multiple simultaneous angles.
- *Team:* not applicable at this scale.
- *Transition:* not the focus of this practice.

Decision-making triggers: the original Phase 1 set — ball moves, every nearby player re-checks and adjusts their supporting angle.

Communication language used: the season's established support and passing language.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Passing weight and accuracy onto the correct angle.
Tactical	Genuine, continuously-adjusted support angles rather than static positioning.
Physical	Low-moderate — small, sharp adjustments rather than sustained running.
Psychological	Confidence in a well-known, well-practised principle.
Communication & leadership	Clear calls indicating an available angle.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What makes an angle genuinely useful to the player on the ball, rather than just technically "open"?

1. How does this feel compared to when we first learned it in Phase 1?
2. Why does sharpness in this specific skill matter heading into a fixture?

Progressions:

1. Add a fifth presser briefly, without extending the practice's overall duration.
2. Reduce the practice area slightly to sharpen the technical demand.

Regressions:

1. Reduce the pressing group to three players.
2. Widen the practice area for more time and space.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Angles become static rather than continuously adjusted	Comfort and habit rather than active reading of the picture	Support players standing still rather than adjusting as the ball moves	Stop	Short reminder: "the angle isn't fixed — it moves with the ball"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: light, precise correction on angle quality specifically.

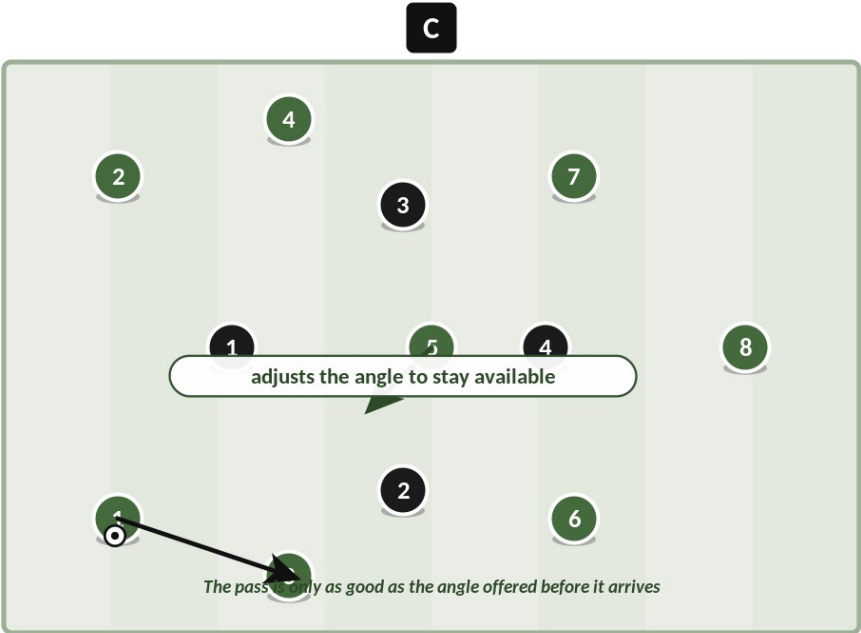
Success indicators:

- Support angles are genuinely useful and continuously adjusted.
- Passing accuracy and tempo stay high under the controlled practice conditions.

Coach's eye: watch for players re-checking their shoulder and adjusting position before the ball arrives, not just reacting once it does — that anticipation is the actual mark of a sharp support angle.

H34.2 ANGLES THAT WORK — Positional Practice

30 x 20 m • 8v4 rotating • sharp, correct support angles at controlled tempo • 12 minutes



● Possession team

● Pressing team

⊙ Ball

➡ Support angle adjustment

AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 30x20 metre area with dimension labels. Eight players in dark green bibs numbered 1–8 spread across the area offering angled support positions, and four players in black bibs numbered 1–4 pressing. White football near a green player. A black solid arrow showing a pass to a correctly-angled support player, and a curved dashed line showing a player adjusting their angle. Title: 'ANGLES THAT WORK — Positional Practice'. Subtitle: '30 x 20 m · 8v4 rotating · sharp, correct support angles at controlled tempo · 12 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, several green-bibbed players calmly adjusting their body position to offer a clear passing angle as the ball moves, coach observing closely, calm and controlled atmosphere.

AI image-generation prompt (realistic illustration): "Elevated wide three-quarter sideline photograph-style illustration of adult amateur football training. Several players in dark green bibs calmly adjusting their body position to offer a clear passing angle to a team-mate on the ball. A coach observing closely nearby. Soft evening light, realistic grass texture, amateur adult players of varied build showing calm, controlled movement. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

PRACTICE 3 — QUICK COMBINATIONS (SKILL GAME)

Duration: 14 minutes · **Training load:** Moderate

Tactical purpose: Rewards sharp, one- and two-touch combination play inside a genuinely competitive game, building technical sharpness and confidence heading into the fixture.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 30 x 20 m
- **Players:** 12 outfield, rotating
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through
- **Team sizes:** 6 v 6
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 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:** groups swap every five minutes
- **Direction of play:** both directions, possession-based scoring

Practice walkthrough: A 6v6 game in which a clean combination of three or more one- or two-touch passes leading to a chance is worth a bonus point, sharpening quick, confident combination play inside genuinely competitive conditions.

Rules: Coach awards a bonus point for a qualifying combination; goals are worth three points.

Tactical roles: the angle-and-support identity from Practice 2, applied under competitive, quick-tempo conditions.

Decision-making triggers:

- A genuine one- or two-touch option is available → take it decisively.
- No genuine quick option is available → take an extra touch rather than forcing it.

Communication language used: the season's established support and passing language.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Clean execution of quick, sharp combination play.
Tactical	Recognising when a quick combination is genuinely on.
Physical	Moderate, sharp bursts rather than sustained running.
Psychological	Confidence in quick, decisive combination play.
Communication & leadership	Quick, clear calls supporting the combination.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What made tonight's best combination work?
2. How did keeping this sharp and quick, rather than slow and safe, feel different?

Progressions:

1. Increase the bonus value for a four-pass combination.
2. Reduce the practice area slightly to sharpen the tempo demand.

Regressions:

1. Reduce the qualifying combination to two passes if the group needs an easier target.
1. Widen the practice area for more time and space.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
Players force a quick combination even when a simpler option is clearly better	Chasing the bonus rather than playing naturally	A forced, low-percentage pass attempted purely to extend the combination	Let it flow, then a natural stoppage	Question: "was that combination really on, or were we chasing the bonus?"	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: light touch — mostly *questioning*.

Success indicators:

- Quick, clean combinations increase in frequency and quality across the practice.
- The team's overall tempo and sharpness feel visibly higher than earlier in the week.

Coach's eye: this practice should feel energetic and sharp, not laboured — if the group looks tired rather than sharp, ease the intensity rather than pushing through it.

H34.3 QUICK COMBINATIONS — Skill Game

30 x 20 m • 6v6 • one and two-touch combination play rewarded, sharpness over volume • 14 minutes

C

Sharp, one-touch, confident — exactly the feeling we want heading into Saturday

● Team A

● Team B

⦿ Ball

AI image-generation prompt (tactical diagram): "Top-down 2D vector football coaching diagram, clean white background, UEFA coaching-manual style. A 30x20 metre area with dimension labels. Six players in dark green bibs numbered 1–6 and six players in black bibs numbered 1–6 spread across the area. White football near a green player. Two black solid arrows showing a quick one-two combination. Title: 'QUICK COMBINATIONS — Skill Game'. Subtitle: '30 x 20 m • 6v6 • one and two-touch combination play rewarded, sharpness over volume • 14 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 sharp, energetic small-sided game, two green-bibbed players completing a crisp one-two combination past a black-bibbed defender, coach on the touchline visibly pleased, positive atmosphere.

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. Two players in dark green bibs completing a crisp one-two passing combination past a player in a black bib. A coach on the touchline, visibly pleased and encouraging. Warm early-evening light, realistic grass pitch and long shadows, amateur adult players of varied build showing sharp, energetic movement. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."*

PRACTICE 4 — FEEL GOOD FOOTBALL (CONFIDENCE GAME)

Duration: 12 minutes · **Training load:** Low-moderate

Tactical purpose: Closes the week with expressive, enjoyable football and no new tactical instruction, deliberately building confidence and a positive feeling heading into the fixture, with individual playing time managed carefully against Saturday's minutes.

Organisation:

- **Pitch dimensions:** 34 x 22 m
- **Players:** 14 outfield, rolling rotation
- **Goalkeeper involvement:** both keepers rotate through
- **Team sizes:** 7 v 7
- **Neutrals:** none
- **Equipment:** 2 full-size or portable goals, 6 flat markers
- **Starting positions:** as shown in the diagram
- **Ball supply:** 3 spare balls with the coach
- **Restart location:** nearest sideline
- **Coach position:** sideline, relaxed, encouraging
- **Rotation method:** rolling substitutions, weighted by the load table above
- **Direction of play:** both directions, one goal per end

Practice walkthrough: A free-flowing small-sided game with no artificial conditions and minimal coaching intervention — the week's technical and tactical work is complete, and this practice exists purely to send the squad into the coming fixture feeling sharp, confident, and positive.

Rules: None beyond standard small-sided-game rules.

Tactical roles: whatever emerges naturally — no specific tactical focus.

Decision-making triggers: none imposed — free play.

Communication language used: whatever occurs naturally, encouraged positively.

Coaching points:

CORNER	POINT
Technical	Whatever quality emerges naturally, encouraged rather than corrected.
Tactical	Not the focus of this practice.
Physical	Low-moderate, carefully managed and individually differentiated.
Psychological	Confidence and enjoyment — the session's explicit closing purpose.
Communication & leadership	Positive, encouraging communication throughout.

Guided discovery questions:

1. What's one thing you're feeling confident about heading into Saturday?

Progressions: none — this practice is deliberately unstructured.

Regressions:

1. Shorten individual rotation shifts further for any player showing signs of accumulated fatigue.

Common problems and corrections:

PROBLEM	WHY IT HAPPENS	COACH RECOGNISES BY	STOP OR FLOW?	INTERVENTION	RESTART
The coach instinctively starts correcting technical or tactical detail	Habit of coaching overriding the week's deliberately hands-off closing intent	Frequent stoppages for correction late in the week's final practice	Stop briefly	Self-correction: let it go, this practice's purpose is confidence, not correction	Resume

Coach interventions used in this practice: minimal — encouragement only.

Success indicators:

- The squad finishes the session visibly positive and confident.
- No new corrections or concerns are introduced this late in the week.

Coach's eye: if you find yourself wanting to stop play and coach something, ask whether it can wait until next week — this practice's entire value is in what it doesn't do.

H34.4 FEEL GOOD FOOTBALL — Confidence Game

34 x 22 m • 7v7, rolling rotation • expressive, enjoyable, confidence-building football to close the week • 16 minutes

C

No new lessons tonight — just the feeling of playing well together

● Team A ● Team B ● Ball

Castlewellan Town FC • Senior Coaching Curriculum • Week 34 • 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 spread across the pitch. White football near a green player. Title: 'FEEL GOOD FOOTBALL — Confidence Game'. Subtitle: '34 x 22 m • 7v7, rolling rotation • expressive, enjoyable, confidence-building football to close the week • 16 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 relaxed, smiling small-sided game, players in dark green bibs enjoying free-flowing play, both full-size goals visible, coach on the touchline smiling and relaxed, clearly positive end-of-week atmosphere.

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 in dark green bibs smiling and enjoying free-flowing play. A coach on the touchline, smiling and relaxed. Warm golden-hour light, realistic grass pitch and long shadows, amateur adult players of varied build showing visible enjoyment and lightness. Professional sports-photography style, high resolution, landscape orientation, no club badges, sponsor logos, or identifiable real players."

Match-Day Objectives

Three team objectives:

1. Execute pressure, cover, and balance with the same sharpness built earlier in the season.

1. Offer sharp, genuinely useful support angles throughout the match.
2. Play with the confidence and freshness this week was specifically designed to protect.

Three unit objectives:

1. **Back line and goalkeeper:** organise pressure, cover, and balance with calm, practised confidence.

1. **Midfield unit:** offer continuously-adjusted support angles that keep the ball moving sharply.

1. **Front players:** combine quickly and confidently in the final third.

Individual role reminders:

- Trust the sharpness this week protected rather than trying to force something new.
- Play with the freshness this week was built to give you.
- Quality over volume — in training this week, and in your decisions on Saturday.

Measurable performance indicators:

- Accuracy and timing of defensive shape decisions.
- Quality and frequency of useful support angles offered.
- Subjective freshness and sharpness reported by players heading into the fixture.

Formation Translation — Applying This Across Different Structures

Pressure, cover, balance and support & passing angles, at reduced volume

STRUCTURE	HOW PRESSURE, COVER, BALANCE TYPICALLY EXPRESSES ITSELF	HOW SUPPORT & PASSING ANGLES TYPICALLY EXPRESSES ITSELF	WHAT STAYS THE SAME	KEY RISK
4-3-3	Through the back four and double pivot's collective shape	Through the front three and midfield's angled support positioning	The underlying reduced-volume, high-quality training approach	Mistaking reduced volume for reduced attentional demand and letting quality slip along with quantity
3-4-3	Through the back three and wing-backs' collective shape	Through the same angled support principle, applied via different personnel	The same underlying approach	The same risk — the taper protects the body, not the standard of execution

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.