



SESSION 3 • STANDALONE PLAN

Passing With Purpose — Weight, Surface and Both Feet

Individual technique • Reference format: U12 9v9 • 60 minutes • 14–16 players

AT A GLANCE

TIME	MINS	PHASE	PRACTICE
0:00 – 0:10	10	■ Warm-up	3.1 Call the Range
0:10 – 0:25	15	■ Technical practice	3.2 The Diamond Rotation
0:25 – 0:40	15	■ Skill game	3.3 Split the Gates
0:40 – 0:55	15	■ Conditioned match	3.4 Third-to-Third Match
0:55 – 1:00	5	■ Reflection	Player-led review

USING THIS SESSION

This is a standalone plan. It does not depend on any other session in the set and can be run whenever it is useful to you — as a one-off, out of order, or repeated. Nothing here assumes the players did something last week.

U12 nine-a-side is the reference format, not the audience. The session is written at 9v9 because something has to be, and the phone index adapts it to the other four Irish FA formats — pick your team at the top of it and this session will tell you whether to run it as printed, scale it, adapt it, or leave it for another age.

Scaling up, and down as far as 7v7, is a matter of numbers. Keep roughly the same space per player: to 7v7 that is about a fifth smaller with a player off each team, to 5v5 about a third. **For eleven-a-side** add ten to fifteen metres to the length of the bigger practices and put the extra players in as outside players or a second team, never in a queue.

Below U10 it is not just a matter of size, because the game itself is different. There is no offside, no throw-in — restarts are a dribble or a pass in — no referee, and no league result. At U8–U9 the technical practice usually wants shortening or dropping. At U6–U7 there are no goalkeepers at all and the four-phase hour is the wrong shape entirely. The Formats tab in the phone index has the rules for each stage.

WHY THIS SESSION MATTERS

Most Under-12 players have one pass. It is an inside-foot pass, played with the stronger foot, at whatever pace comes naturally, and it works beautifully over eight metres to a stationary teammate. It fails over eighteen metres, it fails to a player who is running, and it fails when the receiver needs the ball on a particular side. Passing is not one skill — it is a family of skills, and choosing the wrong member of that family is why so many promising attacks die on the final ball. Tonight the squad learns three things: that **WEIGHT** is chosen by the situation and not by the distance, that the **SURFACE** is chosen before the pass and not during it, and that the **WEAK FOOT** is an option rather than an emergency. Sessions 1 and 2 built the scan and the touch. This one completes the loop: see it, control it, deliver it.

BY THE END, PLAYERS CAN

- **Weight a pass to the situation** — firm into pressure, softer into space, and into the path of a moving player rather than at their feet.
- **Choose the surface before the pass** — inside foot for accuracy, laces for distance, outside foot for disguise.

- **Pass with either foot**, selecting the foot by where the ball needs to go rather than which one feels comfortable.
- **Recognise when to pass round and when to pass through** — the safe option and the penetrating one, and the difference between them.
- **Play the pass that eliminates an opponent**, not just the pass that keeps possession.

KIT LIST

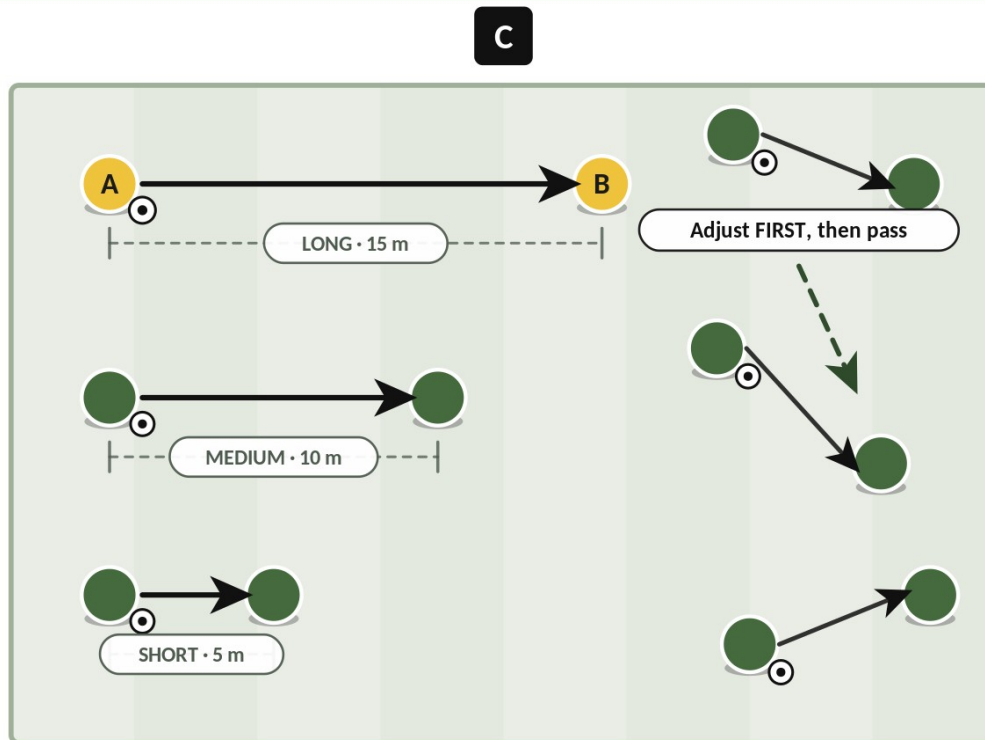
Ground needed: about 60 × 40 m. The diamond in 3.2 uses the same footprint as **Session 2's** warm-up grid, so it can be marked while the squad is still arriving. Mark the thirds on the match pitch before the session starts — do not do it at minute 40 with fourteen children waiting.

ITEM	QTY	USED IN
Footballs (size 4)	16	All practices
Flat markers	56	Grid, diamond, thirds
Cones (tall)	12	Split gates (3.3, 2 pitches × 6)
Bibs — red / blue / yellow	8 / 8 / 3	3.2, 3.3, 3.4
Mini goals	4	Skill game (3.3) — two per end
Full-size goals	2	Conditioned match (3.4)
Poles	4	Optional diamond corner markers (3.2)

3.1 CALL THE RANGE

Break the one-pass habit immediately. Pairs move freely; the coach calls a range and they must adjust their separation **BEFORE** the next pass — so the same technical action has to be re-weighted three different ways within a minute.

30 x 20 m • pairs • one ball per pair • coach calls short / medium / long • 10 minutes



SAME PASS, THREE DIFFERENT WEIGHTS • PICK THE SURFACE TO MATCH



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SET UP

- 30 × 20 m grid marked with flat markers.
- One ball per pair — 7 or 8 pairs. Odd number: a group of three, with the spare player as a moving target.
- Balls at the grid edge so the first arrival starts immediately.
- Three reference distances demonstrated once at the start: **short 5 m, medium 10 m, long 15 m**. Pace them out in front of the group — don't describe them.
- Coach outside the grid to call the ranges; move inside from minute 5.

HOW IT RUNS

- Minutes 0–3 — arrival.** Greet each player by name and send them in with a ball. Free dribbling and passing. **Collect the Session 2 homework numbers as they arrive** — *how many of that midfielder's touches went forwards?*
- Minute 3.** Pair up, one ball per pair. Ninety seconds of Session 2 revision: *first touch out of your feet, and it has a destination.*
- Minute 4 — walk the three ranges.** Pace out 5 m, 10 m and 15 m in front of the squad so the words mean something physical. Twenty seconds.

4. **Minute 5 — start calling.** *SHORT! ... LONG! ... MEDIUM!* Pairs must adjust the distance between them **before** the next pass, not while playing it. Call a new range roughly every 30 seconds.
5. **Minute 7 — add the surface.** *Short passes: inside foot. Long passes: laces, and get your head over it.* One 20-second demonstration of a long pass, then straight back in.
6. **Minutes 8–10 — add the weak foot.** Alternate feet on every pass, whatever the range. Expect it to be poor and say so cheerfully before it happens.

RULES & SCORING

- **Adjust the distance first, then pass.** A pass played from the wrong range doesn't count.
- Maximum three touches per possession.
- All passes along the ground except when the coach calls LONG — then the ball may be lifted.
- Loose ball: nearest player retrieves; the pair restarts on the move.
- One demonstration and one range-call at a time. No group freezes beyond the two built into the steps.

COACHING POINTS — THE FOUR CORNERS

Technical	Short: inside foot, ankle locked, follow through low and towards the target. Long: laces, non-kicking foot planted alongside the ball, head steady over it, full follow-through. Both: the standing foot points where the ball is going — this is the single most reliable accuracy cue at U12.
Tactical	Weight is decided by the situation, not the distance. A ten-metre pass to a player under pressure is firm; a ten-metre pass into space in front of a runner is softer and ahead of them.
Physical	Continuous movement between passes. The long-pass technique demands hip mobility and a planted, stable standing leg — the range-changing running does that preparation naturally.
Psychological	Normalise the weak foot before anyone fails at it: <i>Everyone's weak foot is rubbish tonight. Mine is too. That's the point.</i> Players who feel safe being bad at something learn it far faster.
Social	The receiver is responsible for telling the passer what they need: "feet!" or "in front!" Passing quality is a two-person job.

WATCH FOR

WHAT YOU'LL SEE	WHAT TO DO
Same weight at every range — long passes falling short, short passes bouncing off the receiver's shins	Don't correct the technique first. Ask: <i>Did that arrive how you wanted? What would you change — where you hit it, or how hard?</i>
Toe-poking the long pass — no follow-through, ball skidding sideways	One cue only: <i>Get your head over it and finish with your foot pointing at your partner.</i> Demonstrate once, then leave them alone.
Adjusting the distance while the ball is travelling rather than before	Freeze the pair for ten seconds: <i>When should you have moved — before the call or after it?</i>
Weak foot avoided by turning the body — twisting to get the strong foot to the ball	Make it visible: <i>Show me which foot's closest to the ball. Now use that one.</i>

ASK THEM

- What changes between a five-metre pass and a fifteen-metre pass — apart from how hard you hit it?
- Which part of your foot did you use for the long one? Why?
- Where should your standing foot point?
- If your partner is being closed down, should the pass be harder or softer?

- What can your partner say to make your pass easier to play?
- What's the hardest thing about your weak foot — the accuracy, or the power?

ADJUST IT

HARDER	EASIER
Call the range as the ball is travelling — the receiver must adjust for the NEXT pass while playing this one.	Two ranges only — short and long. Drop medium until the difference is clear.
Two-touch maximum at every range.	Static receiver — the passer does the moving so only the pass is being judged.
Weak foot only for two full minutes.	Ground passes throughout — remove the lifted long pass entirely.
Add a receiver instruction — the receiving player calls "feet" or "in front" and the passer must obey it.	Strong foot only for the first six minutes, weak foot as a bonus challenge.

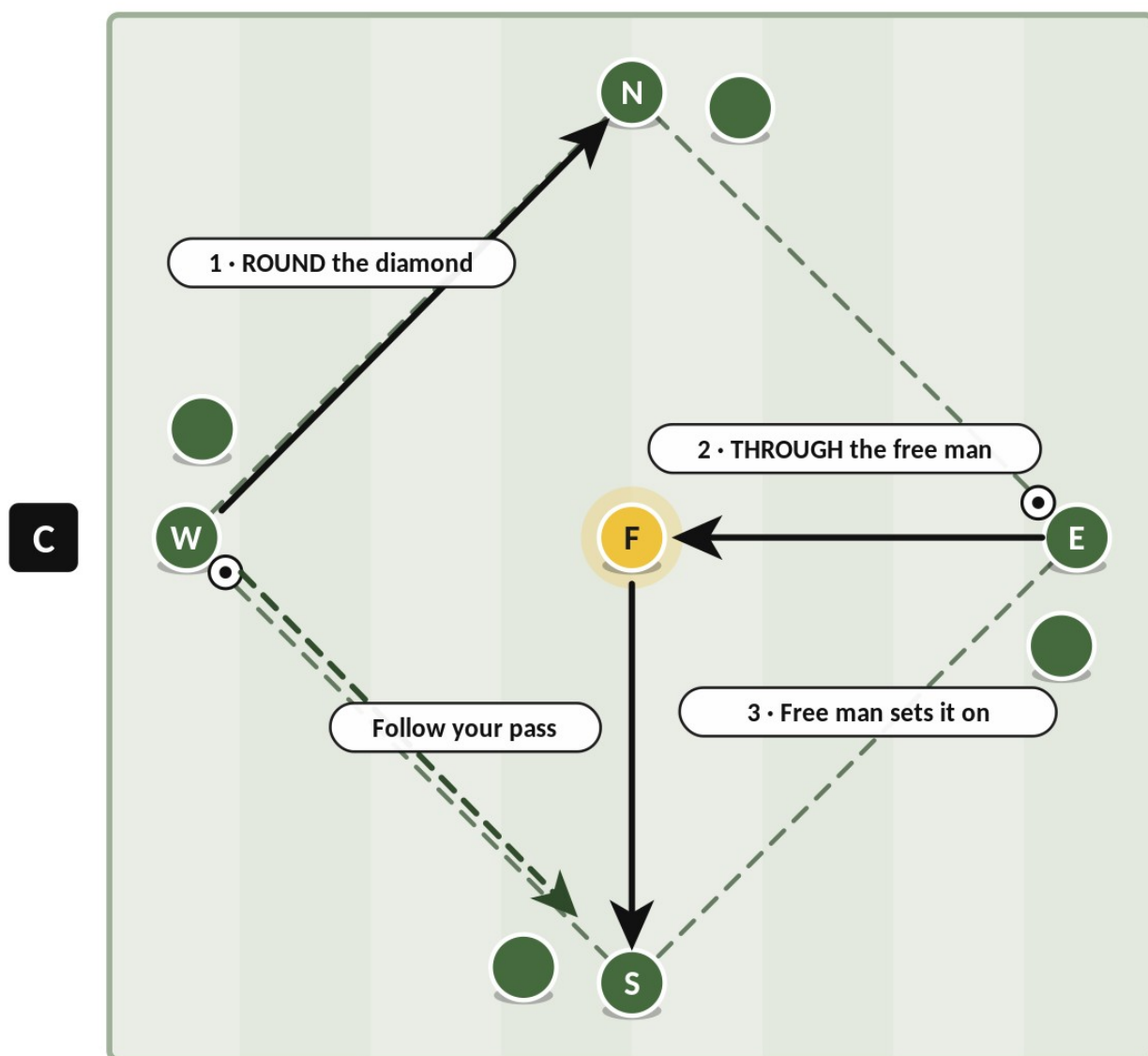
IT'S WORKING WHEN

- Visibly different techniques at different ranges — inside foot short, laces long.
- Pairs adjusting their separation **before** the pass, not during it.
- Long passes arriving at the receiver rather than short of them.
- Weak-foot passes being attempted rather than avoided.
- Receivers calling "feet" or "in front" without prompting.

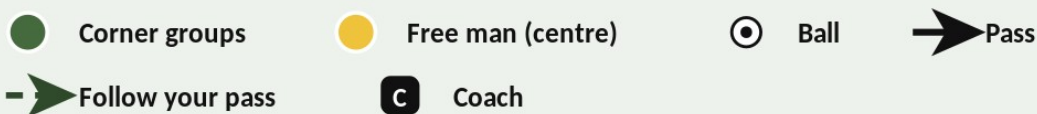
3.2 THE DIAMOND ROTATION — Round or Through

High-repetition passing with a live decision built in. Two balls circulate a diamond at once, so every receiver must scan before the ball reaches them. The free man in the centre creates the session's key question: do I go **ROUND** the diamond, or **THROUGH** it?

24 x 24 m diamond • 14–16 players • TWO balls in play • 15 minutes



TWO BALLS AT ONCE • LOOK BEFORE YOU RECEIVE • ROUND OR THROUGH?



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SET UP

- A 24 × 24 m diamond marked with flat markers — one station at each point (North, East, South, West), plus one player in the centre.
- Three or four players at each corner station, standing in single file behind the station marker. **One free man in the middle wearing yellow.**
- **Two balls in play**, starting at opposite corners (West and East).
- 14–16 players: 3 per corner + 2 free men rotating, or 4 per corner + 1 free man.
- Coach positioned outside the diamond, level with the centre, where every receiver's body shape is visible.

HOW IT RUNS

1. **Start with one ball, going round the diamond only.** Pass to the next corner clockwise, then **follow your pass** and join the back of that station. Two minutes to establish the pattern.
2. **Minute 2 — add the second ball**, starting at the opposite corner. Nothing else changes. This is the moment scanning becomes compulsory rather than advisable.
3. **Minute 5 — add the free man.** Now the player on the ball has a choice: pass **ROUND** to the next corner, or **THROUGH** to the free man, who sets it on to a different corner. The free man plays one-touch or two-touch only.
4. **Minute 9 — reverse direction.** Anti-clockwise for four minutes. This forces the other foot, which is the whole point and should be said out loud.
5. **Minutes 13–15 — competitive.** Count the group's consecutive successful passes across both balls. A misplaced pass or a collision resets it to zero. Best score of two attempts.
6. **Rotation:** always follow your pass. The free man swaps with the player who passes to them every third minute.

RULES & SCORING

- **Follow your pass** — always. Nobody stays at a station.
- The free man is limited to **two touches**, and cannot return the ball to the player who passed it.
- Round the diamond is **17 m**; through the free man is **12 m** — the weight must change accordingly.
- A ball that leaves the diamond is retrieved by the player who misplaced it, and restarted from their station.
- **If the two balls arrive at the same corner, that's a coaching moment, not a failure** — ask the group how it happened and let them solve it.

COACHING POINTS — THE FOUR CORNERS

Technical	Open the body before the ball arrives so both options are visible. First touch across the body and out of the feet — the Session 2 habit under a new demand. Inside foot for the through-ball, and firm: a soft pass to the free man is an intercepted pass.
Tactical	Round is safe, through is penetrating. Go through whenever the free man is available and facing the right way; go round when they are not. Scan for BOTH balls, not just yours.
Physical	Repeated 12–17 m jogs and accelerations with the follow-your-pass rule. This is the aerobic load of the session and it needs no separate fitness work.
Psychological	The two-ball demand raises cognitive load sharply and some players will find it stressful. Reassure openly: <i>If you get caught out, stop, look, and go again. Everybody gets caught out at first.</i>
Social	The receiving station calls the option — " round! " or " through! " — before the ball is played. This is the first time in the curriculum that a teammate makes the decision easier by talking, and it is worth naming out loud.

WATCH FOR

WHAT YOU'LL SEE	WHAT TO DO
Passing before looking — the ball is played into a corner that already has a ball arriving	Don't fix it yourself. Ask the group: <i>Why did that happen? What would stop it?</i> They will invent the scanning rule themselves, and then they own it.
Everyone going round, nobody going through — the free man never touches the ball	Score it: two consecutive 'throughs' is worth double in the competitive phase. Or ask the free man: <i>How many balls have you had? Why?</i>
Under-hit passes through the middle — intercepted or reaching the free man behind them	<i>Through the middle is shorter but tighter. Which needs more accuracy — round or through?</i> Then let them adjust.
Same foot every pass even after the direction reverses	Name it before it happens: <i>We're going the other way now. Which foot does that make you use?</i>
Traffic jams at a corner — the follow-your-pass rule ignored	One reminder, then use the group: <i>How many people should be at each corner? Sort it out.</i>

ASK THEM

- How do you know whether to go round or through?
- What do you have to do before the ball reaches you? How is that different with two balls?
- Which pass needs to be more accurate — the one round the outside, or the one through the middle?
- Free man — what makes it easy for you to receive? What makes it hard?
- When we changed direction, what changed for you?
- What could the corner call to make your decision quicker?
- In a match, when would 'through the middle' be the right answer?
- What caused the two balls to collide, and how did we fix it?

ADJUST IT

HARDER	EASIER
Three balls. Chaotic for about ninety seconds, then genuinely excellent.	One ball only — keep the free man but remove the cognitive load of the second ball.
One-touch for the free man , which forces the corners to pass to their correct foot.	Bigger diamond (28 m) — more time on the ball and a longer look before receiving.
Two free men , so there are two through-routes and a choice between them.	Unlimited touches for everyone including the free man.
Add a defender in the middle who can intercept the through-ball but not the round-ball.	Remove the free man and simply rotate round the diamond, focusing on weight and follow-your-pass.

IT'S WORKING WHEN

Heads turning before the ball arrives — the two-ball format makes this immediately visible.

The free man receiving regularly rather than being ignored.

Different weights for round and through, and players talking about the difference.

Both feet in use, especially after the direction reverses.

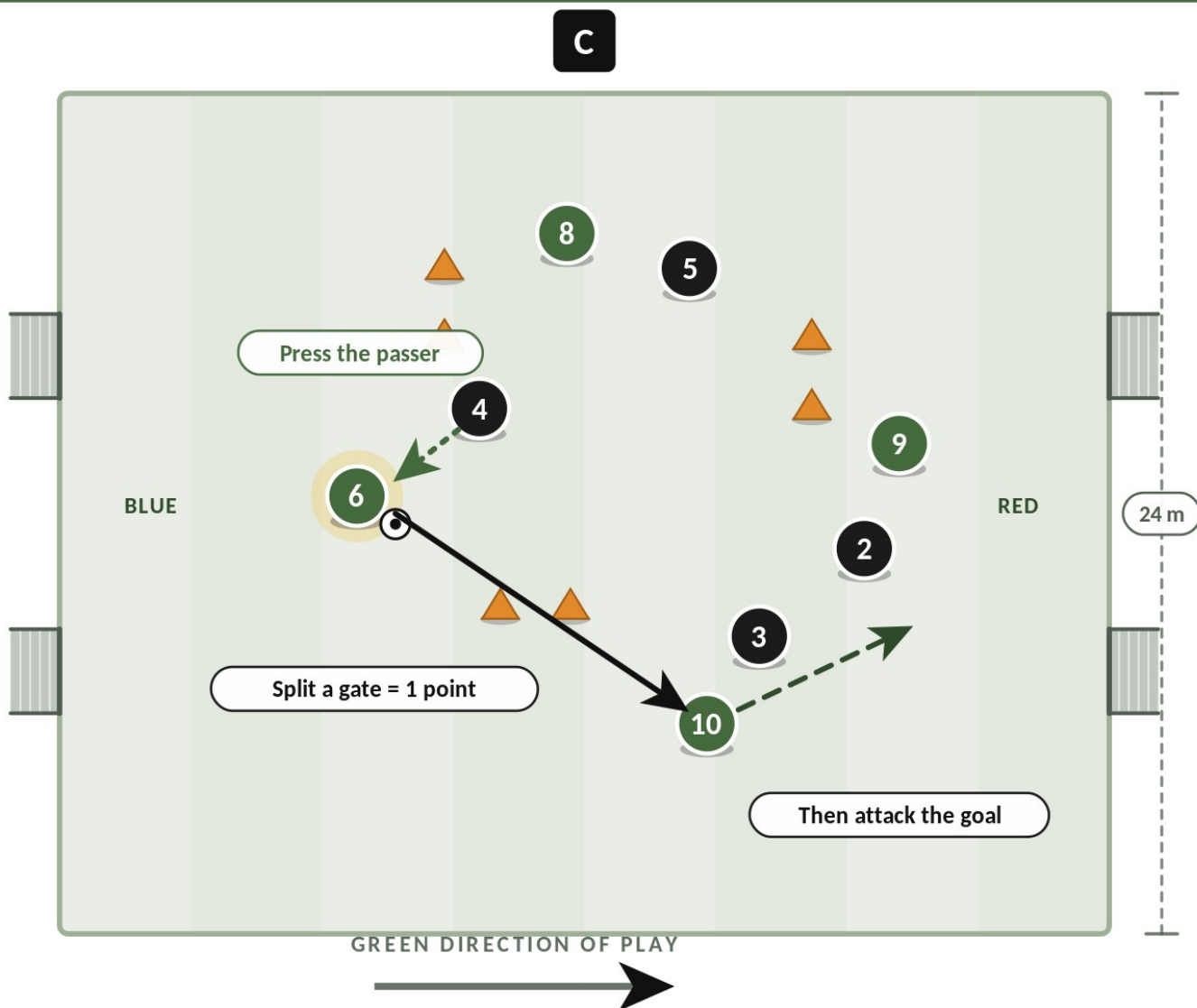
A consecutive-pass score that improves on the second attempt.

Players self-organising the traffic without the coach directing it.

3.3 SPLIT THE GATES (4 v 4)

Reward the penetrating pass in a live game. Three small gates scattered in the middle of the pitch mean a point is available for any pass played through a gate to a teammate — the game version of 'the pass that eliminates an opponent'.

30 x 24 m • two mini goals per end • three 2 m split gates • 15 minutes



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SET UP

- Two pitches, each 30 × 24 m, side by side with a 5 m corridor between them.
- Per pitch: **two mini goals at each end**, plus **three 2 m split gates** made of cones, scattered in the central area — one left, one central, one right, at different angles.
- 4 v 4 per pitch (16). With 14, run 4v4 and 3v3. With 15, run 4v4 and 4v3.

- Coach in the corridor between the pitches, feeding both games with a spare ball.

HOW IT RUNS

1. **Bibs out while you explain.** Teams balanced for ability.
2. **Explain in 25 seconds:** *Two mini goals each end — a goal is 2 points. Any pass through one of the middle gates that a teammate receives is 1 point. Three minutes. Go.*
3. **Game 1 — no coaching.** Watch who looks for the gate and who plays round it every time.
4. **Between games 1 and 2, one question:** *Which is worth more — a pass through a gate, or the pass that comes after it?* Let them argue about it.
5. **From game 3, add the bonus:** a goal scored **within five seconds of splitting a gate** is worth 4 points. This links the penetrating pass to the outcome instead of leaving it as a party trick.
6. **Four games of three minutes with 45 seconds between,** using the usual ladder — winners of Pitch 1 stay, losers swap.

RULES & SCORING

- **Mini goal = 2 points. Pass through a gate received by a teammate = 1 point. Goal within five seconds of a gate split = 4 points.**
- A gate may be split from either direction, but not twice in a row through the same gate.
- Ball out: the coach rolls a new ball in immediately. No throw-ins, no corners.
- No stoppages during games. Coaching happens in the 45-second gaps, as a question.
- **If the gates are being ignored completely, do not lecture — move one gate somewhere more inviting** and see what happens.

COACHING POINTS — THE FOUR CORNERS

Technical	Firm, accurate, along the ground, and usually with the inside foot. Disguise matters: look one way, pass the other. The receiving player must control it on the far side of the gate — a pass through a gate that nobody reaches scores nothing.
Tactical	Look for the gate before you receive. Move the defender first, then play the pass — a gate that is covered can be opened by taking one touch sideways. Teammates: get on the far side of a gate and stay there, so the pass exists before it is played.
Physical	Three minutes on, 45 seconds off, four times. Cut the last game to two and a half if quality drops.
Psychological	The penetrating pass will be intercepted often, especially early. Say it plainly: <i>A gate pass that gets cut out is a better mistake than a safe pass sideways. Keep looking for them.</i>
Social	The receiving player must show themselves: a call and a movement. "Through!" joins the vocabulary tonight.

WATCH FOR

WHAT YOU'LL SEE	WHAT TO DO
Nobody using the gates — the game becomes a normal 4v4	Move a gate to a more natural passing line rather than explaining harder. Position beats instruction.
Passing at the gate instead of through it to someone — a point claimed for a ball that nobody receives	Be precise and let them police it: <i>A teammate has to get it on the other side. Otherwise it's just a pass into space.</i>
Forcing the gate pass when it isn't on — repeated interceptions	<i>Was that gate open, or did you want it to be open? What could you have done first to open it?</i>

WHAT YOU'LL SEE	WHAT TO DO
Only playing gate passes with the strong foot, ignoring gates on the weak side	Add a temporary bonus: weak-foot gate splits are worth 2 points.
Defenders standing in the gates	That's clever, not cheating. Praise it, then ask the attackers: <i>So how do you make him move?</i>

ASK THEM

- What has to be true before you can play a pass through a gate?
- How do you make a defender move away from a gate?
- Which is worth more — the gate pass or the goal that follows it? Why did I score it that way?
- What can the receiving player do to make the gate pass possible?
- Which foot did you split the gates with? Were there gates you couldn't use?
- Defenders — how did you stop the gate passes? What worked best?
- When in a real match would this pass be worth trying?
- If you could move one gate, where would you put it and why?

ADJUST IT

HARDER	EASIER
Gates narrowed to 1.5 m.	Gates widened to 3 m.
Two gates must be split before a goal counts.	Two gates instead of three , placed on the most natural passing lines.
First-time pass only through the gates — the ball must be played through without a preparatory touch.	Dribbling through a gate also scores , giving a second route to success.
Add a fifth gate and remove one mini goal per end, tilting the game further towards penetration.	3 v 3 on 26 × 20 m — more space, more time, more gate passes.

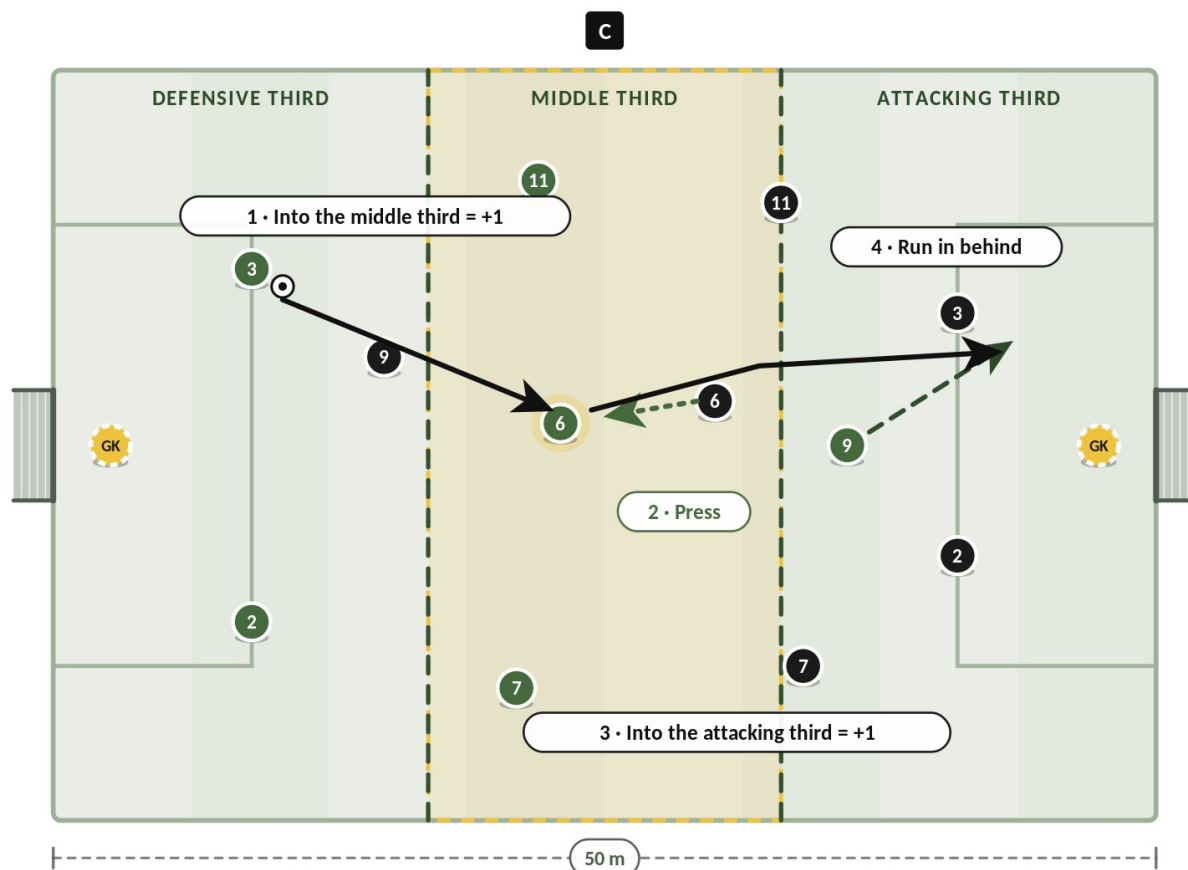
IT'S WORKING WHEN

At least three gate splits per team per game by game 3.
 Players **looking for the gate before receiving**, not after.
 Movement to the far side of the gates — the pass existing before it is played.
 Attempts continuing after interceptions rather than the team retreating to safe passes.
 The word "through" being used on the pitch.
 At least one 4-point sequence — a gate split leading directly to a goal.

3.4 THIRD-TO-THIRD MATCH (7 v 7)

Scale the penetrating pass up to a match picture. The pitch is marked in thirds and a controlled pass from one third into the next is worth a bonus point — so progression is rewarded, sideways passing is not punished but is not paid for either.

50 x 34 m • pitch marked in thirds • a controlled pass into the next third = +1 • 15 minutes



● Greens (attack right) ● Blacks ● Goalkeepers ● Ball ■ Middle third
 ➔ Line pass (+1) ➔ Press ➔ Forward run C Coach

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SET UP

- 50 × 34 m with full-size goals. **Two dashed lines** across the full width at 17 m and 33 m, dividing the pitch into thirds. Shade the middle third with a different marker colour if you have one.
- Four spare balls in the back of each goal.
- 7 v 7 including goalkeepers (14). With 15–16, play 8v8 or roll subs every 90 seconds.
- 2-3-1 outfield shape in front of each keeper. Keepers swap at the halfway point.
- Coach on the halfway line, outside the pitch.

HOW IT RUNS

1. **Keep the bibs and teams from the skill game.** Keepers and shape assigned in 30 seconds.
2. **Explain the condition once:** Normal game. Every time you pass the ball from one third into the next and a teammate controls it, that's a bonus point. Nothing else.
3. **Minutes 0–5 — no interruption.** Watch how the team progresses the ball and whether anyone is available in the next third at all.

4. **Minute 5 — drinks break, one question:** *You can only pass into the next third if somebody's there. Whose job is that?*
Restart.
5. **Minutes 6–15.** Announce bonus points as they happen. Maximum two individual interventions. No group freezes.
6. **If the bonus is flowing freely, raise it for the last three minutes:** only passes that **beat an opponent** on their way into the next third count.

RULES & SCORING

- **Goal = 3 points. Bonus = 1 point** for a pass from one third into the next that a teammate controls.
- The bonus does not apply to goalkeeper distribution — otherwise every keeper simply thumps it.
- No touch restrictions. This is a match.
- Keepers restart within five seconds. Throw-ins may be taken as pass-ins.
- Two individual interventions maximum, plus the scheduled break question.

COACHING POINTS — THE FOUR CORNERS

Technical	Weight the pass to the receiver's situation: firm and to the back foot when they are marked, softer and in front when they are running. Pick the surface before the pass. Head up on the pass, not just before it.
Tactical	Somebody must be available in the next third before the pass can exist — this is the first appearance of depth as a team idea. Full-backs give width so the passing angle into midfield is open. Players receiving in the next third should already be facing the way they want to go.
Physical	Fifteen minutes of continuous match play at the end of a full session. Keep the ball rolling — a stop-start game is more tiring, not less.
Psychological	Reward ambition. Say it out loud when a forward pass is attempted and intercepted: <i>Right idea. Keep looking for it.</i>
Social	The receiver in the next third has to demand the ball — a call and a movement. The best passers in the team are often made by the loudest receivers.

WATCH FOR

WHAT YOU'LL SEE	WHAT TO DO
Nobody in the next third — the ball goes sideways because there is genuinely no forward option	This is a movement problem, not a passing problem. One intervention to a forward: <i>When our defender has the ball, where do you need to be? Show me next time.</i>
Hopeful long balls into the next third that nobody controls	The bonus already requires control. Reinforce: <i>Did anyone get that? Then it wasn't a pass, it was a clearance.</i>
The same player making every forward pass	Ask a different player: <i>How many times have you played into the next third? What's stopping you?</i>
Receiver facing the wrong way in the next third — a good pass wasted	Straight back to Session 1: <i>Open out before it comes to you. What could you see?</i>
Goalkeepers thumping it	The rule excludes them from the bonus, so let it go tonight and note it. This theme exists for exactly this.

ASK THEM

- What has to be true before you can pass into the next third?
- Whose job is it to be available up there?
- When you received in the next third, which way were you facing?
- Should that pass have been firm or soft? How did you decide?

- Which was harder — finding the pass, or having someone to pass to?
- What did we do differently after the drinks break?
- How is this the same as the gates game we just played?
- If the opposition stopped every forward pass, what would you try instead?

ADJUST IT

HARDER	EASIER
Only passes that beat an opponent count towards the bonus.	Any forward pass counts , not just one that crosses a line.
Double bonus for a pass that goes from the defensive third directly into the attacking third and is controlled.	Widen the middle third to 20 m so there is more space to receive in.
Two-touch in the middle third , combining Session 2's condition with tonight's.	No pressing in the middle third for the first four minutes.
Man-marking in the middle third , raising the difficulty of receiving there.	6 v 6 on 40 × 30 m — more space per player, more forward passes available.

IT'S WORKING WHEN

At least five bonus points across the two teams.

Players making themselves available in the next third **before** the ball is played.

Passes arriving at a receiver who is already facing forward.

Visible variation in weight — firm into pressure, soft into space.

Forward passes still being attempted after one has been intercepted.

More than one player in the team making the forward pass.

Finish, match day & homework

REFLECTION — 5 MINUTES, SITTING DOWN

- Circle up and **sit down**.
- Name three different passes you played tonight and tell me what was different about each one.
- What decides how hard you hit a pass — how far it has to go, or something else?
- Who played a pass with their weak foot on purpose?
- Round or through — which one did you choose most, and why?
- **Collect the Session 2 homework numbers out loud.**
- Finish with two named pieces of specific praise: one technical, one for an ambitious pass that didn't come off.

MATCH-DAY LINK

MATCH OBJECTIVES	WATCH FOR	ASK AFTERWARDS
- Every player attempts at least one forward pass that beats an opponent. - At least three passes played into the path of a moving teammate rather than at their feet. - The team plays out of the defensive third by passing, not by clearing, whenever there is an option.	- Where the pass arrives. At the receiver's feet, or in the space they're moving into? Pick two players and watch only their passes for ten minutes. - Whether anyone is available forward. When a defender has the ball, count how many teammates are ahead of it and visible. - Weak-foot passes. Count them. Any number above zero is progress.	- <i>Tell me about the best pass you played on Saturday. What made it good?</i> - <i>Was there a forward pass you saw but didn't play? What stopped you?</i> - <i>Did anyone make it easy for you by moving or shouting?</i>

HOMEWORK — "THREE PASSES" · 15 MINUTES, THREE TIMES BEFORE YOU NEXT TRAIN

- **Range ladder.** Mark 5 m, 10 m and 15 m from a wall. Play ten passes from each distance with each foot — sixty passes in total. **The ball must come back within one step of you;** if you have to chase it, the weight was wrong.
- **Surface swap.** From 10 m, play twenty passes with the inside of the foot, then twenty with the laces, then ten with the outside. Notice which one is most accurate and which travels furthest.
- **Watch a game with a job.** Fifteen minutes of any professional match watching **one player's passes only**. Count how many go forwards past an opponent, and how many go sideways or backwards. Bring both numbers next time.
- *Optional extra:* twenty weak-foot passes against a wall every day.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

Same theme — individual technique. These cover the same ground from other angles and can be run in any order, before or after this one: **1** Scan, Open Out, Receive Across Your Body; **2** The First Touch That Travels; **4** Travelling With the Ball.

A natural follow-on. Session 4 — Travelling With the Ball: Change of Direction and Speed. The summary session for this theme completes the individual toolkit. Having built the scan, the touch and the pass, players learn to carry the ball — driving into space with the laces, changing direction to escape pressure, and knowing when to run with it rather than pass it. Session 4 also closes this theme with the first four-week review, so bring your notes on who has and hasn't developed the scanning habit.

Or simply run this one again. Nothing in the set has to be done once. A session repeated three weeks later with a harder progression is usually worth more than a new session the players are meeting cold.