



The Compact Block — Making the Pitch Small

Session 26 • Defending as a team • 14–16 players • 60 minutes

0:00 – 0:10 • 10 MIN

The Square That Follows

0:10 – 0:25 • 15 MIN

The Block

0:25 – 0:40 • 15 MIN

The Band

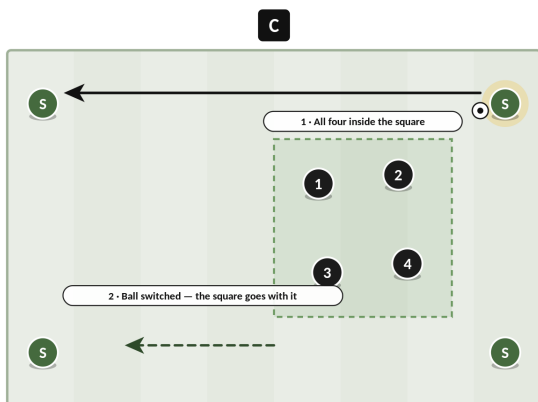
0:40 – 0:55 • 15 MIN

Make It Small

0:55 – 1:00 • 5 MIN

Questions and homework**26.1 THE SQUARE THAT FOLLOWS**

Warm-up • 10 min



TEN METRES WIDE, TEN METRES DEEP • IT MOVES, IT NEVER STRETCHES

SET UP

- 30 × 20 m with four servers, one on each side.
- Four defenders inside, working as a unit. With 14–16, run two areas or rotate a four in every ninety seconds.

RULES

- Four servers outside, four defenders inside. Servers have two touches.
- All four defenders must stay within about ten metres of each other.

COACH IT

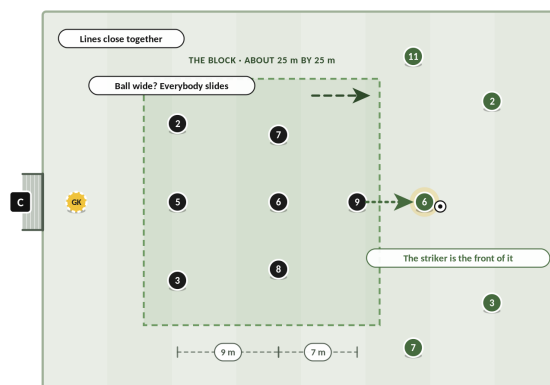
- Technical: Sideways movement without crossing the feet; scanning to see the ball and your nearest teammate at the same time.

SAY

- You've left three behind. Come back and take them with you.

26.2 THE BLOCK

Technical practice • 15 min



SHORT FROM FRONT TO BACK • NARROW FROM SIDE TO SIDE

SET UP

- 46 × 34 m with a full goal and goalkeeper at one end.
- Seven attackers with the ball; seven defenders in a 3-3-1 block plus the goalkeeper.

RULES

- Attackers score 1 in the goal. Defenders score 1 for winning it, 2 if the block was intact.
- No more than about nine metres between lines and about nine between players in a line.

COACH IT

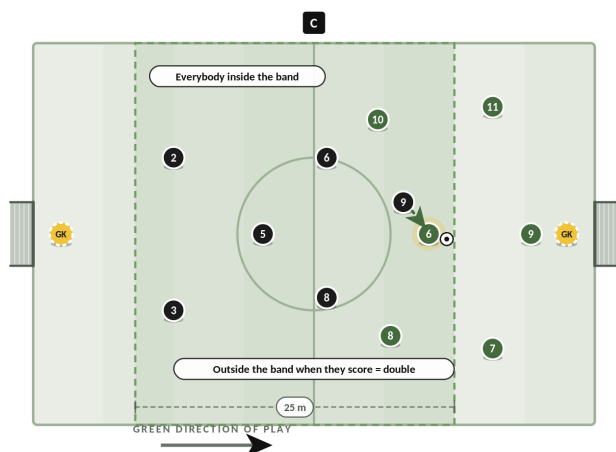
- Technical: Sliding, turning to face the ball, and the front defender's angled approach that shuts off the inside pass.

SAY

- The single most important thing to watch. Freeze it and stand in the gap yourself — the picture is ...

26.3 THE BAND (6 v 6 + GKs)

Skill game • 15 min

**SET UP**

- One pitch, 44 × 30 m, both full goals with a goalkeeper in each.
- A 25 m band marked across the middle with poles or markers on both touchlines.

RULES

- The team without the ball must have all six outfield players inside the 25 m band.
- A goal scored while any defender is outside the band counts double.

COACH IT

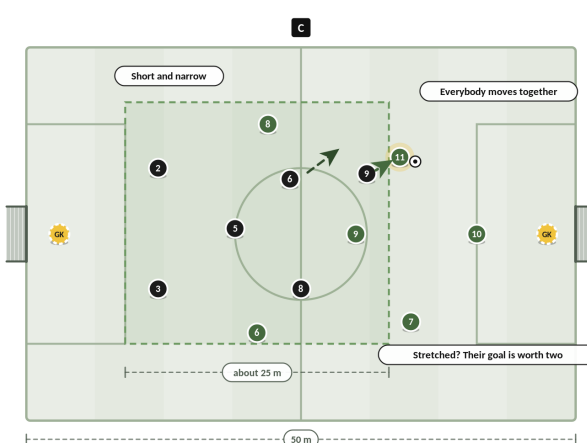
- Technical: Nothing new — this is entirely positional.
- Tactical: The striker who stays upfield costs his ...

SAY

- Expected and constant. Come in — you can go again when we win it.

26.4 MAKE IT SMALL (7 v 7)

Conditioned match • 15 min

**SET UP**

- 50 × 34 m with full-size goals and marked boxes.
- 7 v 7 including goalkeepers (14). With 15–16, play 8v8 or roll substitutes every two minutes.
- 2-3-1 shape assigned.

RULES

- A goal conceded while stretched beyond about 25 m counts double.
- From minute 7: winning the ball while compact makes your next goal worth 2.

COACH IT

- Technical: Match-speed sliding and stepping up. Note whether the back line steps forward together when the ball is cleared.

SAY

- The measurement that drives the whole practice.
- Out! Out! The most valuable single moment of ...