

## ATTACKING GROUP SHAPE

### TRIANGLES – U10

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*This paper provides coaches with a full training session on small group shape while attacking. Detailed notes and a “dissection” of each training activity are provided.*

### **ATTACKING**

#### **Principles of Play**








**Penetration:** Keep possession in any direction

**Support:** Help around the ball; Combine with a teammate; Take defenders out of position

The training session objective is to introduce the concept of a small group shape to U10 players. Building off training given in the U8 age group on pairs play a third attacker is added. The triangle shape should now become part of the tactics on the attack.

The training session should be 60 to 75 minutes long. This is a moderate intensity (workload) training session, so be sure to have at least 24 hours recovery time between this training session and a match.

In all of the exercises the goal is to help the players improve:

-  Passing technique
-  Receiving technique
-  Dribbling technique
-  Moving to support the teammate with the ball
-  Passing backwards or square in order to set up the chance to pass forward
-  Timing of runs and passes
-  Recognizing mistakes by the defenders to know that now is the moment to make the pass and/or the run.

The players will have a better chance at accomplishing these goals by having their heads up and constantly scanning the playing area. They must also constantly ask themselves this question, “Where does the player with the ball need me to be?”

*Equipment:* two age appropriate goals, four cones, three black training bibs, three green training bibs, six soccer balls

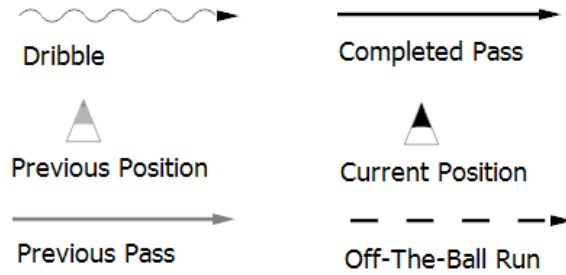


FIGURE 1 - DIAGRAM KEY

**Activity 1 (Technical Warm-Up) | Fig. 2**

*Teaching Objective:* improve passing, receiving and dribbling skills; improve the timing of off-the-ball runs, collective play across the grid

*Set Up:* the grid is 15 x 15 yards

*Activity Rules:* 3 vs. 0. Start the activity with the ball with the player in the middle who passes to an outside player and must then run to the outside of that player. Move back and forth across the grid with a different player initiating the play each time. After three rounds have been completed then stop to stretch. Then repeat the activity.

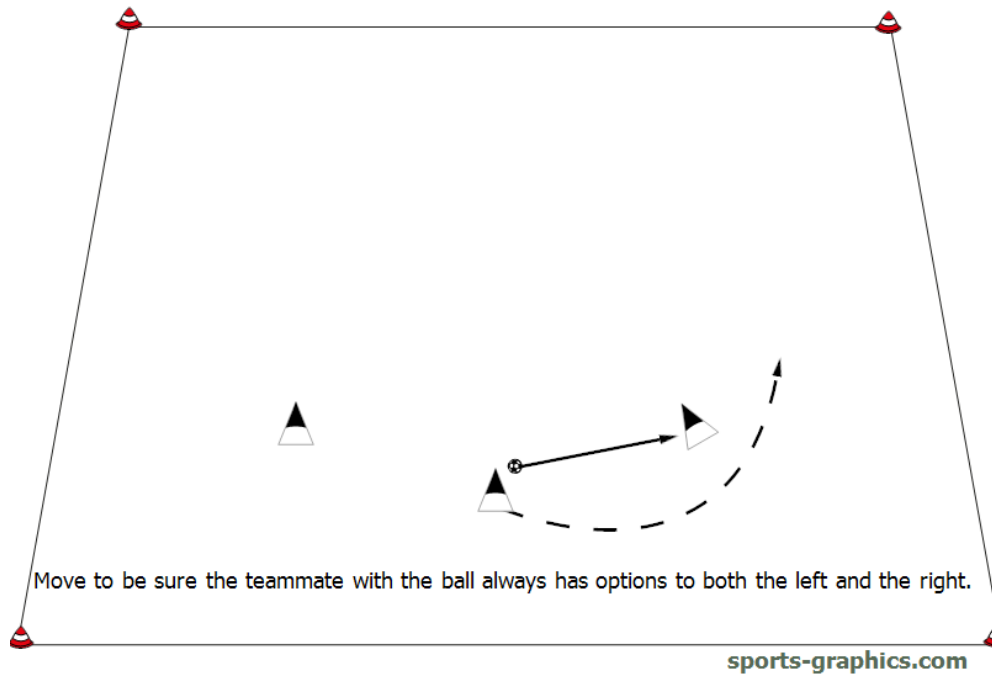


FIGURE 2 - MAINTAIN A TRIANGLE SHAPE

*Coaching Points:* Teach players that they MUST always have passing options for the 1st attacker to both the left and right as they move across a grid. Work on the timing of the runs and the quality of the passes and receiving.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD PASS – Accuracy, Pace, Angle, Height, Timing, Disguise

*Guided Discovery:*

Q. – When should your pass go to feet and when should it go to space?

A. – If my teammate is standing or moving slow then pass to feet. If my teammate is moving fast then pass into forward space.

Q. – When should you start your run to get wide of the teammate with the ball?

A. – As soon as the pass is made.

*Coach Dissection:* [the sub-bullet points in each Coach Dissection segment will occur during the activity, but they are not the focus of your coaching]

- i. Physical – light movement with occasional short bursts
- ii. Psychological – alertness, persistence, patience
- iii. Tactical – anticipate teammate’s pass, move to give 1<sup>st</sup> attacker passing options to the left and the right (attacking triangle shape), visual communication (eye-to-eye contact)
  - a. Defender blocks direct path to end line
- iv. Technical – passing, receiving, dribbling
  - a. Intercepting
  - b. Tackling

**Activity 2 (Small-Sided) | Fig. 3**

*Teaching Objectives:* The defensive pressure may force some back passes in order to keep possession before making the penetrating pass. More diagonal passes should be encouraged.

*Set Up:* the grids is 20 x 15 yards; place a single age appropriate goal on one end line.

*Activity Rules:* 3 vs. 1. Play to get across the far goal line of a grid or to a goal. Train on the same objective as # 1, but now with a modicum of pressure. Shots on goal are allowed only once the attack has gotten into the space behind the defender.

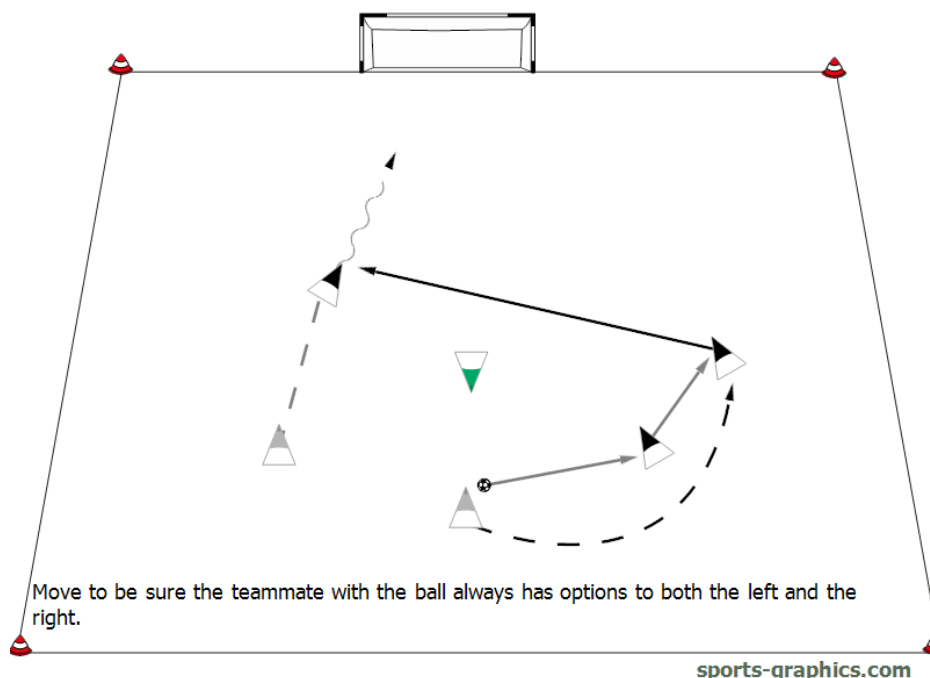


FIGURE 3 – WHEN NUMBERS UP IN THE ATTACK PASSING ELIMINATES THE DEFENSE

*Coaching Points:* Draw in the defender toward the ball in order to further open up the two support attackers. Do not get into a flat shape – keep that triangle shape all the time! Move early to create angles to receive and give diagonal passes.

*Guided Discovery:*

- Q. – Why should you make mostly diagonal passes in this 3 vs. 1?  
 A. – Because square passes are more likely to be intercepted.  
 Q. – Why should you play with quick passes when you're numbers up?  
 A. – The other defenders then have less time to recover.

*Coach Dissection:* [the sub-bullet points in each Coach Dissection segment will occur during the activity, but they are not the focus of your coaching]

- i. Physical – light movement with occasional short bursts
- ii. Psychological – alertness, persistence, patience
- iii. Tactical – anticipate teammate's pass, move to give 1<sup>st</sup> attacker passing options to the left and the right (attacking triangle shape), timing the run, visual communication (eye-to-eye contact)
  - a. Defender blocks direct path to the goal
- iv. Technical – passing, receiving, dribbling, shooting
  - a. Intercepting
  - b. Tackling
  - c. Blocking shot

### Activity 3 (Expanded Small-Sided) | Fig. 4

*Teaching Objective:* Train on the same objectives as activities # 1 and # 2, but with firm defensive pressure.

*Set Up:* the grid is 25 x 20 yards; place a single age appropriate goal on one end line.

*Activity Rules:* 3 vs. 2. Play to get across the far goal line of a grid or to a goal. Defenders should play hard to get the ball and then pass it over the goal line away from their goal.

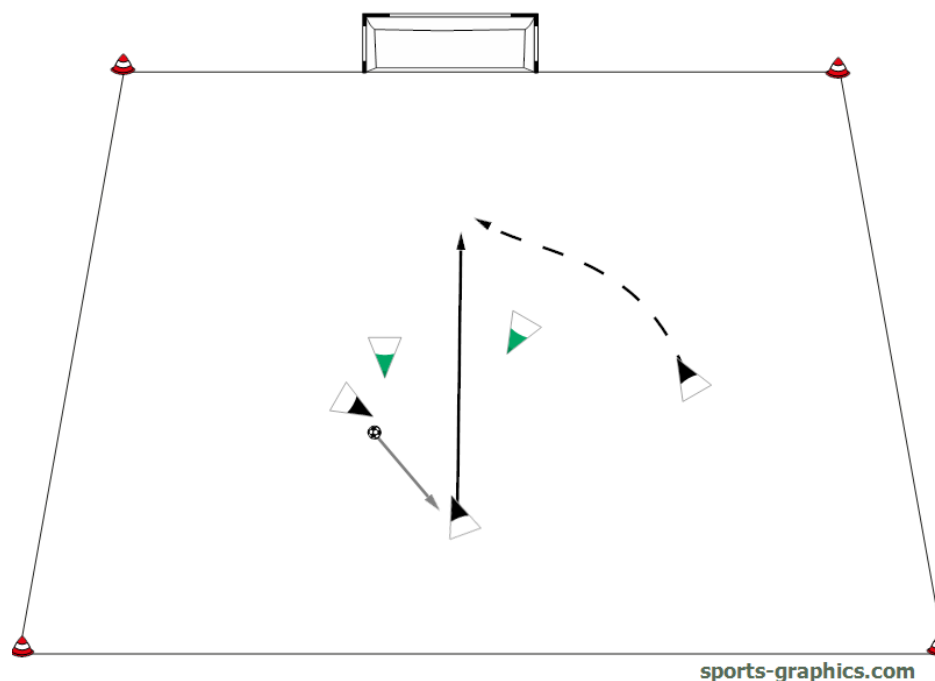


FIGURE 4 - SPLIT THE DEFENDERS WITH A PASS OR AN OFF-THE-BALL RUN

*Coaching Points:* The split pass from the deep point of the triangle is possible now.

*Guided Discovery:*

- Q. – What’s your cue that the split pass can be made?  
 A. – Look for when the defenders get square to each other.  
 Q. – When should the third attacker start to run?  
 A. – Right after the pass is made to keep from being in an offside position.

*Coach Dissection:* [the sub-bullet points in each Coach Dissection segment will occur during the activity, but they are not the focus of your coaching]

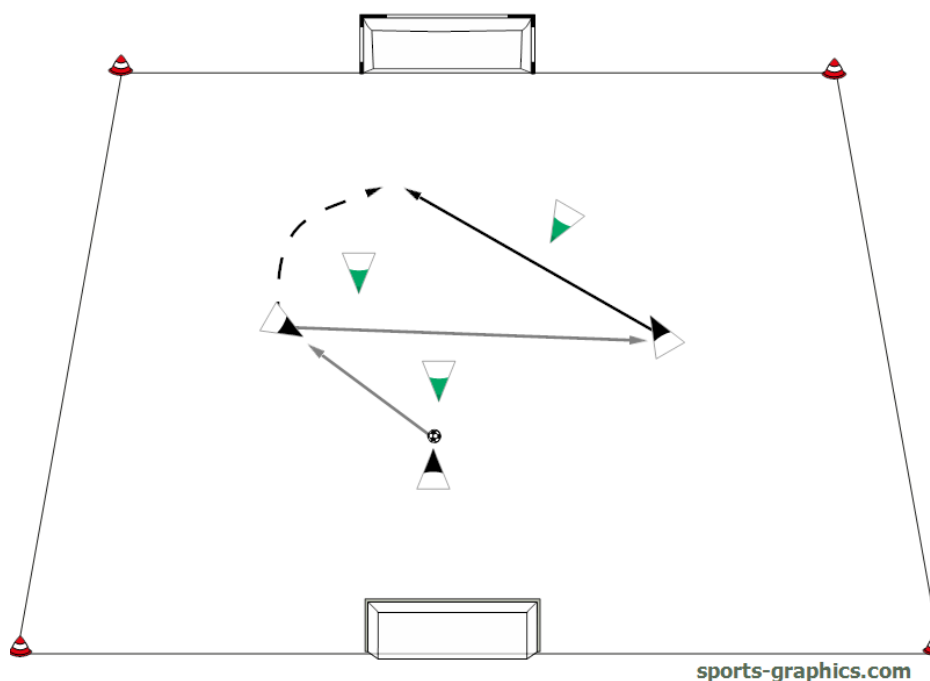
- i. Physical – light movement with occasional short bursts
- ii. Psychological – alertness, persistence, patience
- iii. Tactical – anticipate teammate’s pass, timing the pass, move to give 1<sup>st</sup> attacker passing options to the left and the right (attacking triangle shape), timing the run, visual communication (eye-to-eye contact)
  - a. Defender blocks direct path to the goal
  - b. Counterattack/counter-defend
- iv. Technical – passing, receiving, dribbling, shooting
  - a. Intercepting
  - b. Tackling
  - c. Blocking shot

**Activity 4 (Match) | Fig. 5**

*Teaching Objectives:* maintain the triangle, but change the distance and angles between the attackers as the situation dictates. Recognize when to play possession and when to penetrate toward goal.

*Set Up:* the grids is 30 x 25 yards; place an age appropriate goal on each end line.

*Activity Rules:* 3 vs. 3. Play to get across the far goal line of a grid or to a goal. With full pressure this will be the hardest exercise for the players.



**FIGURE 5 - MAINTAIN A TRIANGLE SHAPE FOR BOTH WIDTH AND DEPTH IN THE ATTACK**

*Coaching Points:* The emphasis will be on keeping possession in the triangle until the chance to pass or dribble or shoot forward shows itself.

*Guided Discovery:*

Q. – How can you draw in two of the opponents closer to the ball in order to open up space behind or between them?

A. – Use short passes between two of us and once the defenders move in toward the ball look to pass behind them for our third player.

At this final stage of the training session mostly observe the players. Very few coaching comments should be made now.



*Coach Dissection:* All aspects of match play may occur now within the four components of the game. Keep your coaching observations focused on defending.