

Moonrakers

English Premier League midfield stars such as Paul Scholes, Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard use raking diagonal passes at every opportunity to open their opponent's defence.

This creates 1v1 crossing situations or chances to run behind the defence and into goal-scoring positions. This session will improve your team's ability to do the same.



What you tell your players the session is about

1. Playing a diagonal pass.
2. Making quick forward passes that lead to goal-scoring opportunities.
3. Stretching out and using the whole pitch.

Session planner

Warm up 12 mins	Session 12 mins	Developments 12 mins	Game 20 mins	Warm down 4 mins
--------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	-----------------	---------------------

Activity	Kit	Outcome
Warm up	Balls	Players stand 30 yards apart and work on driven, lofted and curled passing techniques
The session	Balls, cones, one goal	A diagonal pass that leads to a shot at goal
Development	Balls, cones, one goal	A diagonal pass that leads to a crossing situation
Game	Balls, cones, two goals	Diagonal passes that create opportunities to score a goal
Warm down	n/a	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



Where it fits

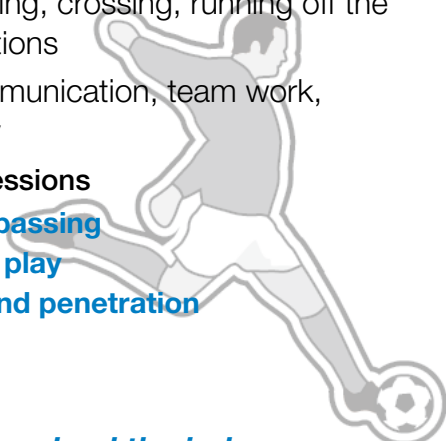
Individual skills: Passing technique, receiving/first touch, shooting, crossing, running off the ball, communications

Team skills: Communication, team work, combination play

Related Smart Sessions

- 16 [Distance passing](#)
- 24 [switching play](#)
- 40 [passing and penetration](#)

[Click here to download the index](#)



What to think about

- A diagonal pass can be made in a number of ways. These include a low driven pass (to reach the intended target quickly), a lofted pass (to go over the top of defenders) or a curled pass (to go around defenders and into the target's path).
- Switching play can take the ball from a crowded area of the pitch and free up a player, usually on the wing, for a 1v1 or a 2v1 situation.
- When attempting a switch of play, try to play the pass behind or between defenders for a team mate to run on to.
- The longer it takes to switch the ball, the easier it is for the opponents to defend, therefore a switch of play must be completed at top speed.





Set-up

Use a 60 yards by 40 yards area for all three practices.

The small-sided game has two big end zones of 25 yards by 40 yards and one centre zone of 10 yards by 40 yards. The wide channels are outside of this area.



What you get your players to do

You will work as a server in this practice. To start, the first player passes to you and runs to receive a return pass. This player makes a long diagonal pass into space for the wide attacker to run on to and shoot at goal. The first player continues his run and becomes the new wide player. Alternate the side which players attack from.



What to call out

- “Be aware of where you are on the pitch”
- “Look to switch the play”
- “Can we exploit the space we have created?”



Development

The first player passes to the centre forward who returns the ball and spins away to run into the box. The first player then plays a diagonal pass to the wing for a wide player to run on to and cross into the box for the centre forward to shoot. Choose two players to remain as crossers. The other players rotate from being the first midfielder player and centre forward.



Game situation

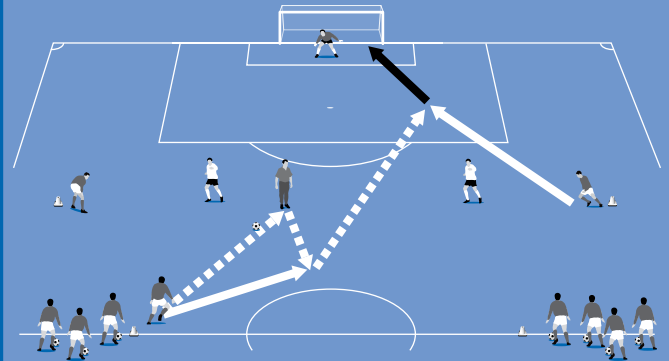
Split the pitch into three zones. The white team has two defenders in the centre zone and the black team has a striker in the same area who can pressure the defenders and try to intercept passes. The black team has a player in each of the wide channels.

Each team has four players in the area being attacked by the white team. The black team must attempt to regain possession and play a raking ball behind the white defenders for one of the wide players to run on to.

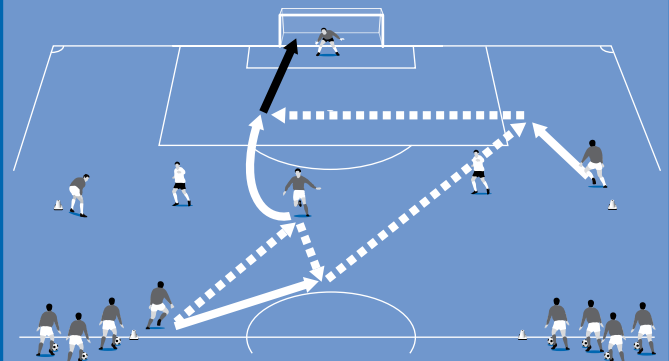
A 3v2 situation commences with the three black attackers (two wide players and centre forward) against the two white defenders. Play always restarts inside the black team's half of the pitch.

Moonrakers

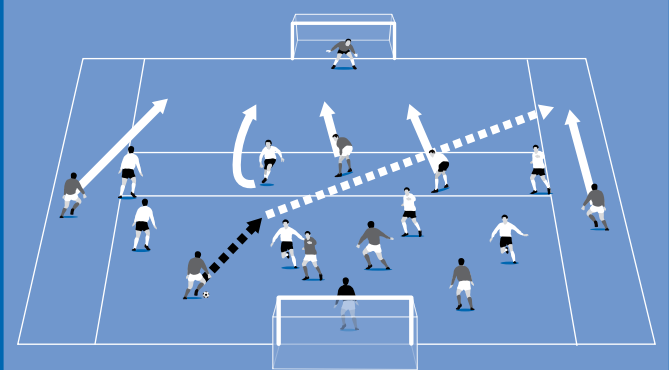
direction of run \Rightarrow pass $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$
 run with ball \dashrightarrow shot \blackrightarrow



Players make a wall pass with you and then play a diagonal pass behind the defence for the wide player to run and shoot at goal.



Players make a wall pass then play a diagonal pass for the wide player to run and cross for the forward.



The black team tries to win the ball and then play a quick diagonal pass behind the defence to run and score in a 3v2 situation.