

Wing it

Things don't always go to plan in the attacking third. Encourage your players to "wing it" by showing them that how they deliver the ball into the box doesn't matter – as long as it gets there.



What you tell your players the session is about

1. Improving crossing techniques.
2. Improving the decision making of the winger.
3. Improving your team's chances of scoring from crosses.

Session planner

Warm up 10 mins	Session 15 mins	Developments 15 mins	Game 15 mins	Warm down 5 mins
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Activity	Kit	Outcome
Warm up	Balls and cones	Players manipulate the ball by dribbling. From <i>The Ultimate Warm-Ups Manual</i> , exercise 31
The session	Balls, cones, goal, mannequins or poles	The wingers are displaying improved technique in a range of crossing situations
Development	Balls, cones, goals, mannequins or poles	The wingers are providing a range of quality crosses for the forwards to attack
Game	Balls, cones and goals	The wingers are now mixing their game up by providing early crosses or dribbling and crossing
Warm down	n/a	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



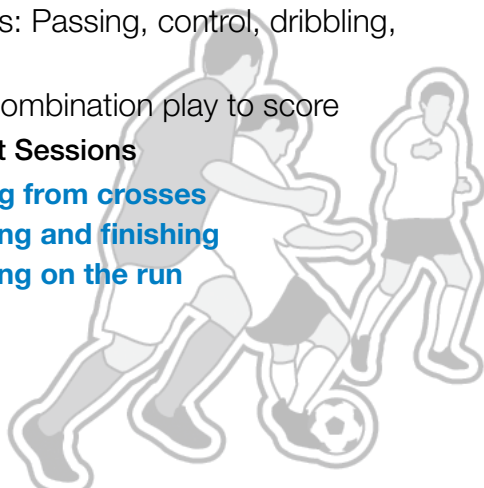
Where it fits

Individual skills: Passing, control, dribbling, crossing

Team skills: Combination play to score

Related Smart Sessions

- 11 [Scoring from crosses](#)
- 44 [Crossing and finishing](#)
- 52 [Crossing on the run](#)



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What to think about

- The winger must be unpredictable and "mix-up" his game in order to make himself hard to mark.
- Different techniques are needed for the various crossing positions. Deep crosses are often diagonal "driven" balls; around the box you would use a curled cross; from the goal line you could use a grounded pull-back or chip to the far post. Therefore, the decision making on technique must be coached.
- Develop your wingers' weaker foot as this enables them to go both sides of the defender and cross. This is a skill that is hard for any defender to stop.





Set-up

- Create a 60 yards by 40 yards playing area with a goal and penalty area.



What you get your players to do

The server passes to the winger, who makes a diagonal cross towards the target area.

The winger then runs to collect ball two, goes past the mannequin and curls another cross into the target area.

Next, the winger collects ball three and goes past another mannequin in order to get to the goal line and cross.

Finally, the winger collects ball four and dribbles inside to make a pull-back.



What to call out

- “Use match speed”
- “Pick out the target area”
- “Relax when crossing”



Development

Add a second goal and a 5 yards channel down each side of the playing area. Progress to a coached game.

The white team has the wide players in each channel and the players are allowed to pass to them.

The wingers cannot be tackled and have the freedom to choose which cross they would like to make. Attackers advance to meet the cross and defenders cover as normal.

After five attacks, swap so the grey team has wingers.



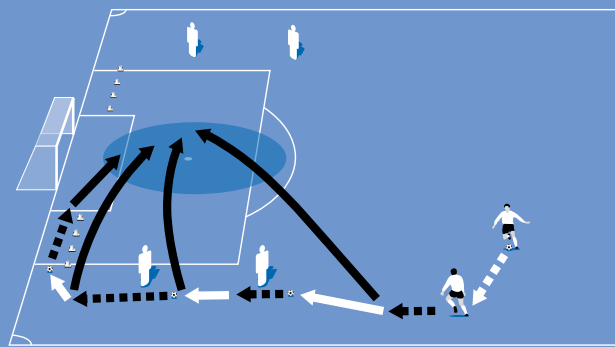
Game situation

Now both teams have wingers. The wingers are allowed to receive the ball free of pressure inside the wide channel. However, after their first touch, a defender is allowed to close down and tackle.

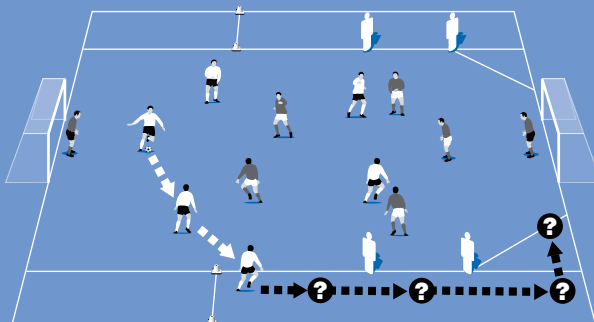
Can the winger make a good decision on when and how to cross the ball?

Wing it

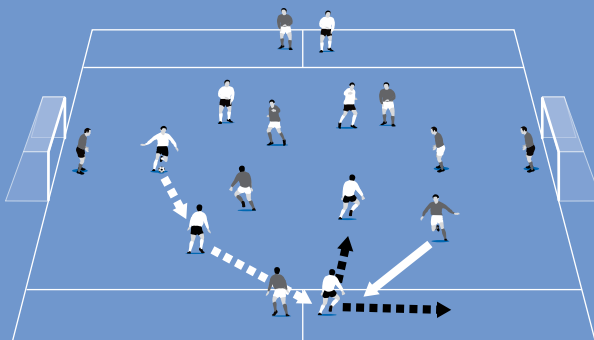
direction of run \Rightarrow pass $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$
dribble \dashrightarrow cross/cut back \dashrightarrow



The winger must complete four different crosses in order to get the ball inside the target area.



Which position will the winger deliver the cross from?



Now both teams have wingers. The wingers can receive the ball in the 5 yards channel, but then a defender is allowed to tackle.