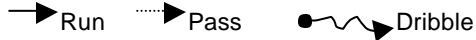


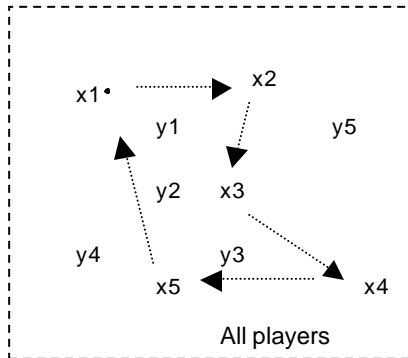
St. Mary's Youth Soccer Training Series

Topic: Flat Back Four 1 of 2
Age/Level: 13 ↑
Type: Functional/Tactical



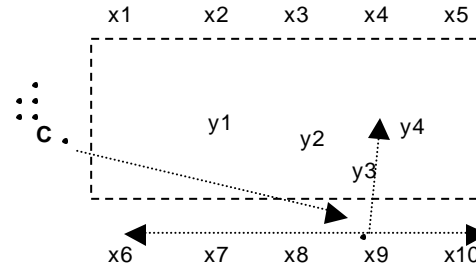
Notes: This training session is designed to help teams learn to play the Flat back four system. Please note: Flat is a misnomer, seldom are they Flat. Repetition is absolute key to the success of playing a zonal defense. Like this. The principles of pressure, cover, and balance are stressed throughout this session and should be stressed from back to front and front to back within your team.

Progression: 1 (Warm-up)
 Exercise: Keep-away
 Time: 10 Minutes



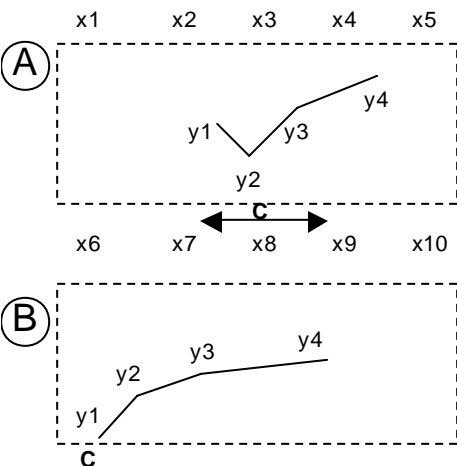
Two teams play keep-away in a grid 25-35.
Variations/Points to consider: add a 2nd ball and/or third ball, stretch as Necessary at various intervals.

Progression: 3
 Exercise: Balance Drill w/balls
 Time: 20 Minutes



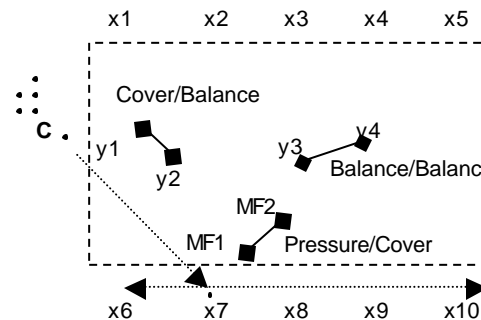
Building from progression 2 and same grid size, now the coach will play balls in from side to x players who will play balls side to side to teammates until they think they have created a lane to pass across to the other side x players. Balls must be played on ground.
Variations/points to consider: Want to maintain good shape with pressure, cover, balance. X players trying to move y players side to side to break them down to pass across grid. Communication is the key to movement, someone should always indicate, "I'm up".

Progression: 2
 Exercise: Balance Drill
 Time: 5-10 Minutes



All players involved to learn and understand function of Back four players. Four defending players in middle of A 10x25 yard grid (y1-y4) as indicated. Coach will 1st Walk players thru Pressure, Cover Balance, acting as The ball. The coach simply walks down the line as indicated and has the y players move accordingly. We Need to have pressure, cover, & balance always.
Variations/Points to consider: maintain shape, pressure, Cover, balance. Grid A shows Y2 Has pressure, y1 & y3 have cover and y4 has balance. Cover needs to be tight Enough to take over pressure if Y2 gets beat, but lose enough to drop/slide to ball. Y4 Needs to be able to cover space/runs should pressure be broken.

Progression: 4
 Exercise: Balance drill w/MF
 Time: 10 Minutes



We now expand the grid 20x25 and add 2 MF players in front of back four.
Variations/points to consider: Pressure, Cover and balance still, but now you get extra balance. MF work hard to create the pressure, all other players work to cover and balance all passing lanes. If ball get passed thru, stop session, allow MF to get set on other side, or let session keep going and have y2 & y3 become MF players and have MF1 & MF2 become center backs.

St. Mary's Youth Soccer Training Series

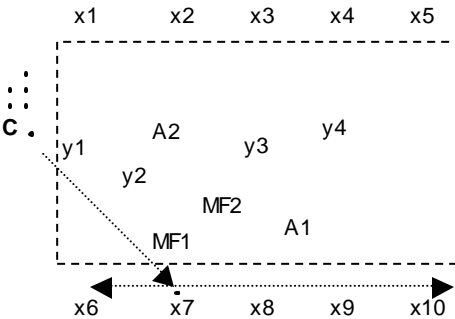
Topic: Flat Back Four 2 of 2
Age/Level: 13 ↑
Type: Functional/Tactical

→ Run → Pass ●→ Dribble



Notes: We must make sure as we progress with this session that we Don't move on for the sake of moving on and that we clearly paint the Proper pictures for the players to clearly understand what you want them To do. Remember: slide first, drop if you need to, pressure as a unit to Create proper shape with your pressure, cover, and balance. If balls are Passed negative and while ball is being passed, we must step to narrow Field as one unit.

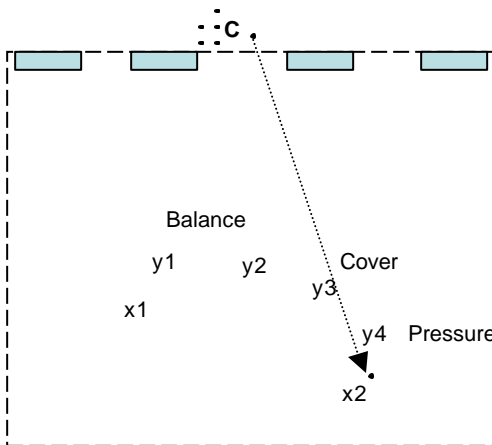
Progression: 5
 Exercise: Balance drill w/MF/Attack
 Time: 10 Minutes



We now expand the grid 20x25 and add 2 MF players in front of back four. We also add 2 attacking players into the space. Attacking players have free reign to go anywhere.

Variations/points to consider: Pressure, Cover and balance still, but now you must pay attention to A1 and A2. do not man mark them, try to keep them and the ball in front of Defenders as much as possible. Make sure that pressure can be applied instantly on either of them should they get the ball. Defenders win if A1 or A2 get ball and play it back, don't let them turn and play thru. Still must maintain shape.

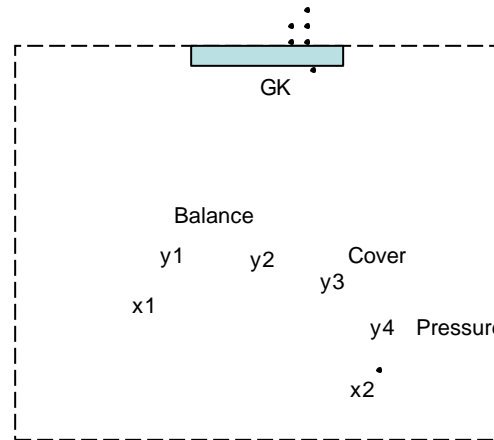
Progression: 6
 Exercise: Back 4 Defend 4 goals
 Time: 10 Minutes



Now defend end line w/4 goals 3 yds. Wide. Grid is now 40w x 40-50L. Coach on end line w/balls. Coach will play balls out to 2 attacking players, x1 & x2, y players must now move as a unit by sliding first toward the ball, then applying pressure, cover, & balance. X players can score in any of four goals.

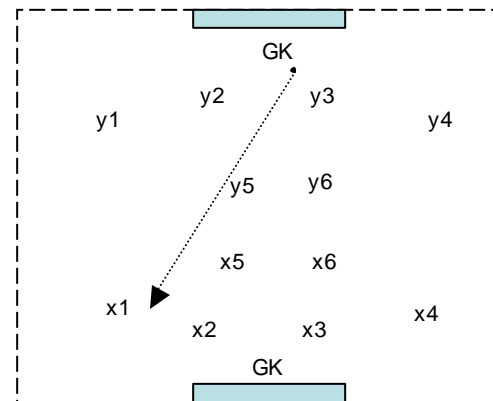
Variations/points to consider: Add more attacking players if y team is successful in defending. Keep ball in front of unit, don't chase free attacking players around, just know where they are & position so they can get ball passed thru the back 4. Add a GK to cover all four goals if you like later on.

Progression: 7
 Exercise: Back 4 + GK Defend goal
 Time: 10 Minutes



Same as progression 6, however, we now go to full size goal with GK. **Variations/points to consider:** Add more attacking players if y team is successful in defending. Keep ball in front of unit, don't chase free attacking players around, just know where they are & position so they can get ball passed thru the back 4. Make sure GK is communicating and helping with shifts and who to pressure, cover and balance. If Defenders force attacking team to take shots from distance or very bad angles, they have pretty much done their job, GK should be able to handle the rest.

Progression: 8
 Exercise: 6v6 Game
 Time: 10 Minutes



Using 1/2 field, we now play 6v6 to two goals w/GK's. Balls played out from GK's **Variations/points to consider:** Same principles apply all the way from progression 2. Stop the game and show positive and negative shape, fix it if it is wrong, walk thru, go live. Paint the correct pictures for the players and make sure that pressure, cover & balance are being maintained. Balance is crucial and should not be overlooked.