

TRAINING FOR THE TRANSITION PHASE.

COLLECTION No. 1

By MASSIMO LUCCHESI

Exercises to prepare a team for effective transitions.

In modern soccer the ability to optimize the negative transition (shift from attacking phase to defensive phase) and the positive transition (shift from defensive phase to attacking phase) is increasingly becoming the key that “makes the difference”. We are proposing some exercises for training these aspects of the game.

EXERCISE No. 1

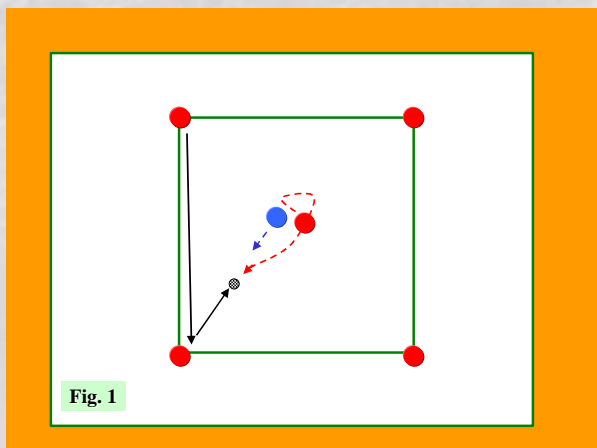


Fig. 1

This exercise takes place in a square with a player in each of the four corners. Inside of the square there are two more players, the major protagonists of the exercise, who alternate their role of attacker and defender. The objective of the attacking player is to receive the ball from one of the four corner players and return it. The defender will try to intercept this play, working on anticipation and/or tackling. The four corner players can transmit the ball directly to the central attacking player or after passing the ball among themselves. In the later option, i.e., when the corner player in possession of the ball changes, there is a new tactical context, both for the attacking player and for the defender, who are forced to make an adjustment to the new situation. The coach sets

the duration of the one vs one contest in the middle, before changing roles.

It is suggested not to contrast, in the initial phase, the returning pass of the attacking player; this way the focus will be exclusively on the adjustment (transition) phase.

An important variation consists in forcing the attacking player in the middle to return the ball to a corner player different from the one who passed the ball. This will stimulate the central player to optimize his body orientation when controlling the ball.

EXERCISE No.2

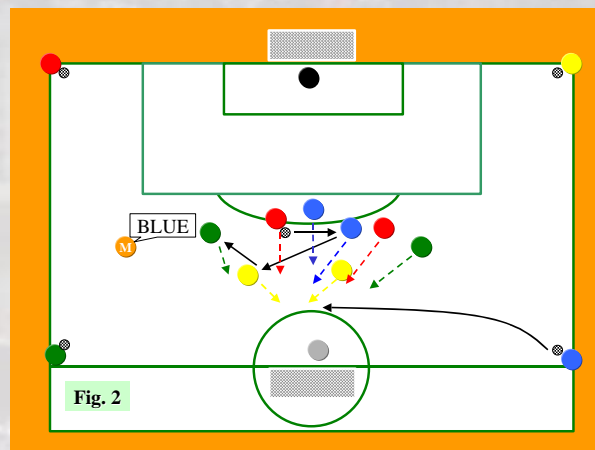


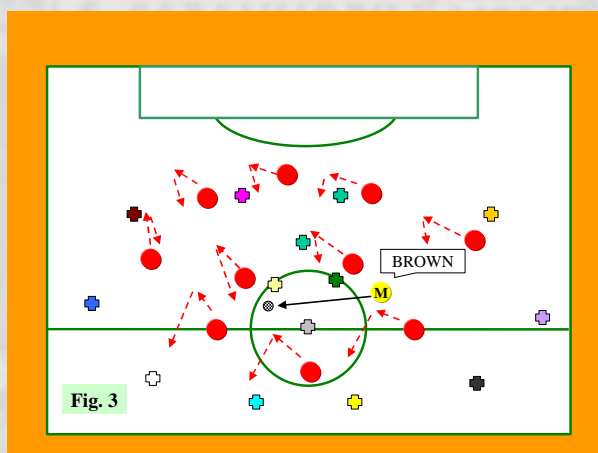
Fig. 2

The exercise takes place in one half of the field. Inside the playing field there are two teams of eight players each, with four different color shirts (example: red+yellow versus green+blue). At each corner of the playing field there is a player (each wearing one of the four colors) with the responsibility of sending in crosses for his teammates in the middle of the penalty area. Each of the two goals is defended by a goalkeeper.

The first part of the exercise sees the players passing the ball around, with the restriction of passing the ball to a player of a color different from the one who had passed the ball (example:

red passes to green, who passes to yellow, etc.). The players at the corners stay active with individual joggling. The second part of the exercise starts when the coach calls the name of one of the players in the corners. This will cross the ball toward a teammate (in positive transition) while the opponents (in negative transition) will try to contrast.

EXERCISE No. 3

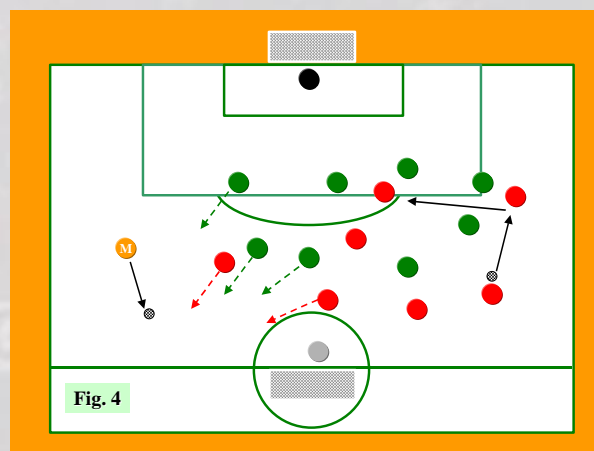


A full team is lined up inside of the full field, where there are also markers (cones or flags or shirts) of different colors, strategically placed by the coach. In the first part of the exercise the players will develop offensive schemes without opponents (shadow game). The second part starts when the coach calls or indicates one of the reference markers placed on the field. The team will have to quickly abandon the attacking maneuver and display the correct defensive position toward the reference "opponent" indicated. To follow, the coach will introduce a new ball, inviting the team to start a positive transition. The exercise continues with more continuous cycles, whose number depends on the level of the available players.

EXERCISE No. 4

Two teams face each other with the objective of scoring goals. The size of the playing field depends on the number of available players. To modify the tactical context of the match, the coach can replace the ball, at any time, with another ball kicked randomly into the field. This

helps players to optimize the reactivity to transitions.



EXERCISE No. 5

This exercise includes three teams with the different colors. Two of the teams cooperate on keeping possession of the ball. The third team is involved in trying to gain possession of the ball. In the course of the exercise, the coach will frequently modify the roles of the three teams. The continuous variation of tasks and objectives of the teams trains the players to react to changing stimuli (as in game transition phases).

