

Midfield unit remaining compact

Practice organisation

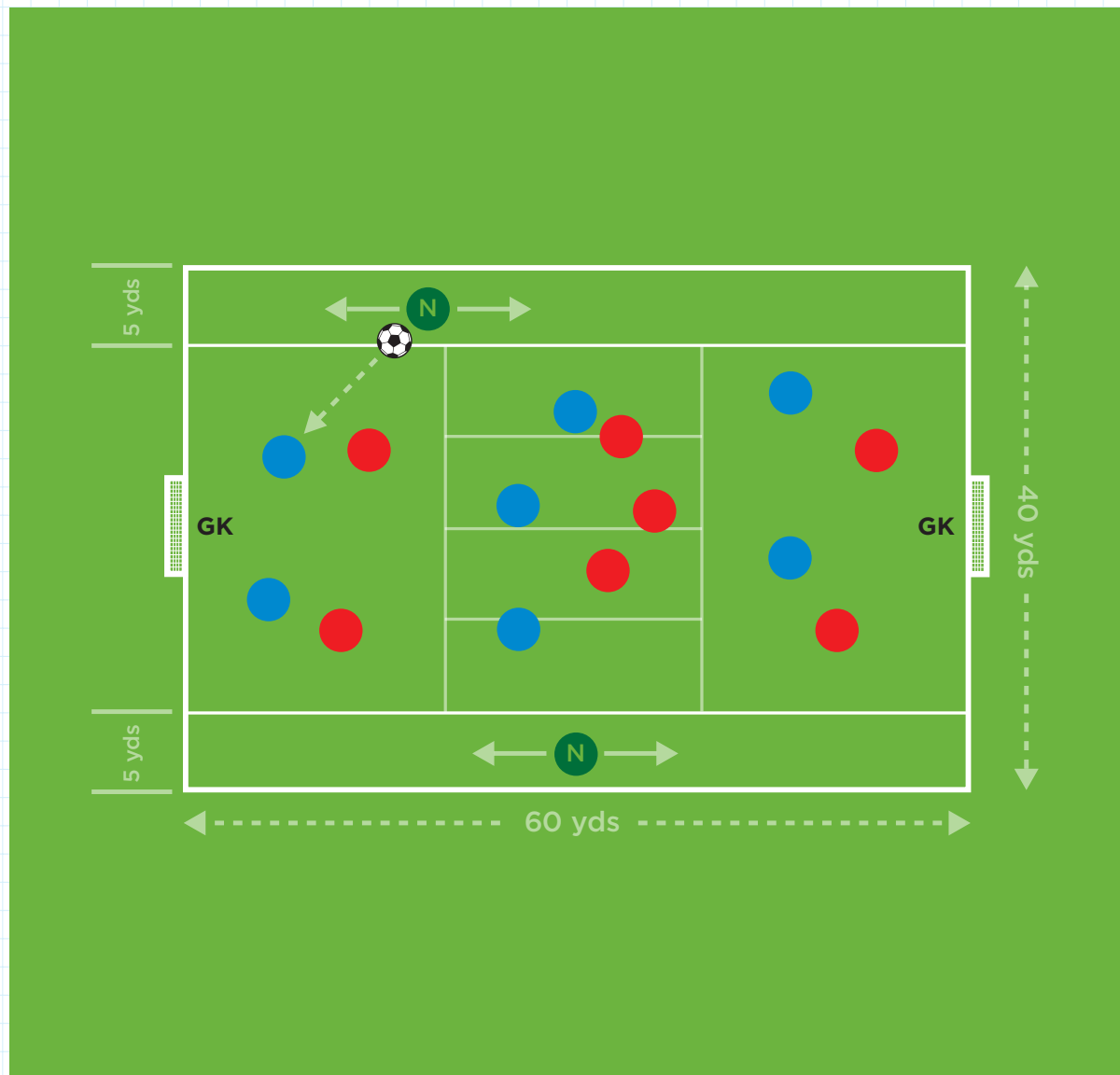
- Area 60x40yds, marked into equal thirds, with mid-third divided into 4 zones, two 5yd channels length of area down both sides & appropriate size goals at each end, as illustrated.
- 18 players (incl. 2GK's), arranged 8v8, plus two Neutral players who operate in wide channels, 1 ball.
- D's in mid-third attempt to cover 2-3 of the 4 zones.
- Practice starts with: ball fed from side by N to player in defensive third.
- All attacks must pass through middle third.
- N's can be used for support by both teams & must pass into middle third on receiving.

Detail

- Challenge: Try to win ball back in midfield areas to establish counter-attack
- Opportunities to rotate players in position should be taken, due to structured nature of practice.
- In Midfield areas:
 - Marking positions & distances.
 - Passing opponents on to other MF defenders.
 - Moving across pitch together as a 3 man unit.
 - Tracking opponents as they move forward.
- Simple progressions for this practice are:
 - Man-for-man marking used in each end zone.
 - Two of the three MF players can move forward into attacking third to take up scoring positions.

Key coaching points

- In Midfield:
 - Defensive compactness & shape in each of the thirds.
 - Defensive distances.
 - Defensive pressure, cover & balance.
- Angles & distances of support to the pressurising D.
- Positioning & looking to intercept.
- Keeping sight of ball when in marking & covering situations.
- Tackling off front & back foot.
- Preventing attackers from turning.
- Blocking passes crosses & shots.
- Organising against counter-attack.



Defensive play whilst
'in balance'

Age group
12-16 years