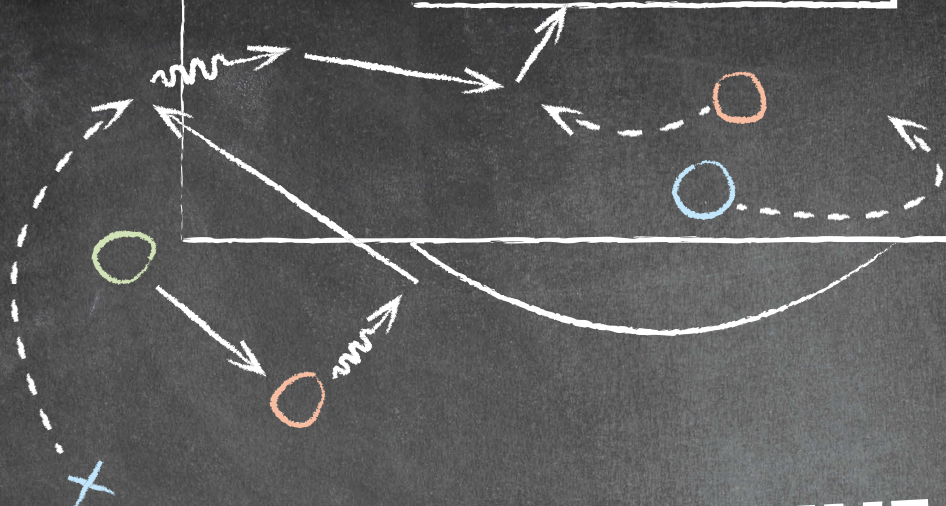


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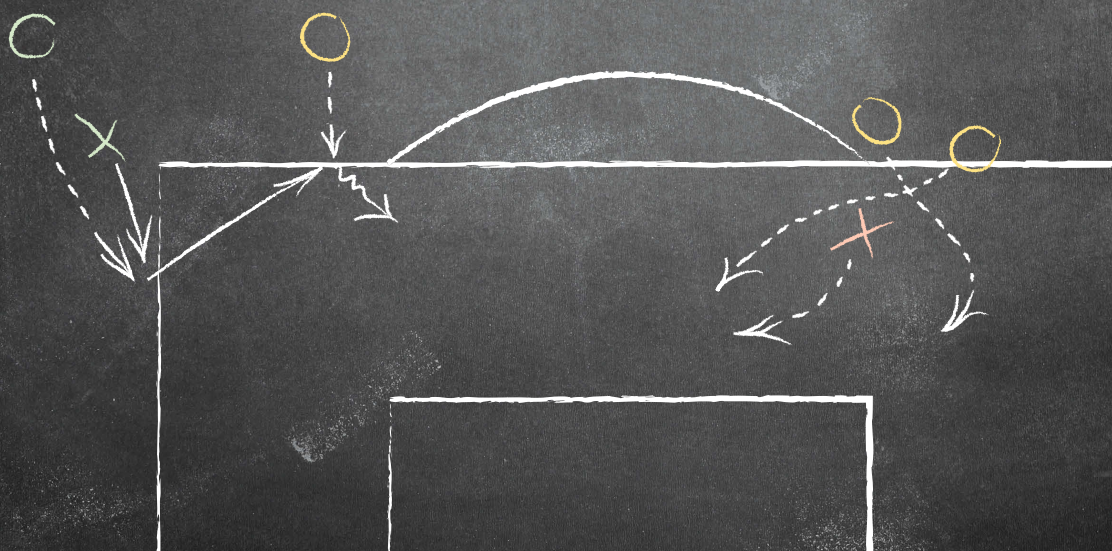
FABIAN SEEGER  
LOÏC FAVÉ



# CREATIVE SOCCER TRAINING

★ ★ ★ ★

350 SMART AND PRACTICAL GAMES  
AND DRILLS TO FORM INTELLIGENT PLAYERS  
— FOR ADVANCED LEVELS



MEYER  
& MEYER  
SPORT

## Creative Soccer Training

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FABIAN SEEGER | LOÏC FAVÉ

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# PREFACE



*Stephan Kerber*

For the past fifteen years I have served in a managerial capacity as the DFB's (German Football Association) base coordinator in Hamburg, Germany, to implement the DFB's talent promotion program at the Hamburg Football Association's six DFB bases. In doing so I have had the pleasure of working with an amazing, enthusiastic coaching team that enjoys developing modern training units for our young up-and-coming soccer players.

This book, with its special creative touch, is a team effort between long-time DFB base coach Fabian Seeger (seven years at the DFB base Sachsenweg) and Loïc Favé, who for the past two years has been working as DFB base coach at the DFB base Mümmelmannsberg.

Both are dedicated to providing attractive, open-ended training exercises to talented up-and-coming players to meet future demands in elite soccer.

In the process, diverse ideas and conversations about the elements of a highly nuanced soccer game resulted in the conception of the many multi-variant exercises intended to specifically develop the players' cognitive capabilities.

Thus this colorful book contains many training exercises such as sport-specific, technically and tactically demanding exercises that are based on geometric shapes, function out of order with simultaneous team actions, take place with and around target areas, promote spatial perceptiveness, and are demanding and thus suitable for an ambitious, ready-to-run, ready-to-work-hard, technically skilled team player.

Symbols, letters, numbers, and colors were used to vividly illustrate playing objectives for the reader in order to facilitate effective learning, particularly with respect to vertical play, chasing the ball, and seeing and recognizing spaces and gaps.

For this I would like to compliment the authors, because next to the motivational and fun training units for the players it will also be challenging for the implementing coach to train with such complexity and to cultivate the joy of playing in his teams.

Since these training exercises have been tested at the DFB bases or with Hamburg Football Association teams (age groups 1999-2005) we have a good idea of how appealing this content is. It results in a greater willingness to run, show more frequent high-intensity actions, help to make quick and accurate decisions, and reveal a high degree of motivation (deep runs, transition behavior in both directions of play). They prompt qualitative technical actions and, adapted to different age groups, generate lots of joy of movement and fun. Many of these exercises teach different elements of elite soccer in an indirect manner and create a myriad of amazing experiences for players, some unforeseeable, making them particularly original and thereby also providing the coach some exciting moments.

As a sequel to Fabian Seeger's first book *The Soccer Games and Drills Compendium*, this book is a continuation of its many ideas and a fantastic interpretation of the demands of today's elite soccer in the form of ambitious training exercises.

My wish for the book's authors and for our combined efforts is that this content may grow wings and be used widely.

Enjoy!

**Stephan Kerber**



# 1 INTRODUCTION AND CLASSIFICATION

This book is considered a sequel to the book *The Soccer Games and Drills Compendium. 350 Smart and Practical Games and Drills to Form Intelligent Players—For Advanced Levels*, published in 2016, and its content and quality build on that of its prequel. At the fore in *The Soccer Games and Drills Compendium* is fundamental training content such as passing, dribbling, shots on goal, feints, juggling, and dueling. Additional key subjects are transitioning and reacting, chaos and action, different ways to start a game, active defense, tournaments, tactical exercises, and athletics. This extensive compilation is realistically oriented toward a game-appropriate training approach. The realistic concept is characterized by a very direct representation of actual competitive action and requires the corresponding realistic techniques and tactics. With the book *Creative Soccer Training. 350 Smart and Practical Games and Drills to Form Intelligent Players—For Advanced Levels*, the authors continue their realistic training approach and differentiate the key aspects of basic and classic soccer training. Furthermore, modern, innovative, and new topics of training are cultivated. In addition to the technical-tactical basics in the areas of passing, ball control, shot on goal, tackles, transitioning, chasing the ball, capturing the ball, possession, circulating the ball, and game flow, there is also a focus on creative and imaginative content in the areas of cognition, awareness, pre-orientation, over-the-shoulder glance, color games, playing into the seams, rondos, target areas, action speed, and playing ability. The focus on creativity affects both players and coaches. On the one hand, the bounty of open-ended training activities with lots of options for action and behavior alternatives helps to develop creative players with a high degree of playing ability. On the other hand, the coach's view is directed to innovative training approaches away from the status quo. The training exercises and suggestions introduced here allow the coach to create new possibilities for an appropriately creative and fun training concept.

## 1.1 EXPLANATION AND USE

This book deliberately forgoes listing rigid field sizes and specific or established distances, and instead emphasizes creativity with respect to implementation on the practice field. The listed number ratios, team sizes, and player numbers are also considered examples and can be interpreted in different ways. Within the scope of implementation with their own training squad, the implementing coach should be given a content framework as a benchmark, without restricting certain organizational freedoms and capabilities. The implementing coach should have the ability to take into account the actual performance capacity, the age-related stage of development, and the current level of his own training squad, and adapt the presented exercises to the specific training situation and organize them in the best possible way. Next to basic training principles a coach's special tools will help to make the individual training exercises simpler or more difficult or adjust the content based on the training squad's current needs. A coach's tools pertain to the use of field size and zone measurements, distances and routes, goal size, team size, number of players and number ratios, verbal and visual coaching signals, and creating rules and standards and specific provocation rules. Next to the immediate effect of the content design of training exercises, the previously outlined coach's tools (i.e., different aspects of training such as intensity and workload, concentration and attentiveness, quality of tasks with respect to overloading or under-loading, transition moments and situations, superior and inferior-number situations, and opponent pressure and pressure of time and space) are impacted and specified. So increasing the field size, for instance, results in more running effort, less opponent pressure, more time for actions, more spread-out play, less ball action, and a corresponding increased focus on endurance while, by contrast, decreasing the field size results in more touches, more tackles, more pressure of time during possession, more pressing, increased intensity, and more fast actions. Increasing the number of goals will prompt more switch of play or initiate aspects such as spatial orientation and peripheral vision. By contrast, using a smaller goal requires more concentration, precision, or detailed techniques. Furthermore, increasing the goal size directly impacts the scoring rate or sense of achievement and has a motivational effect. Another example is the use of different pieces of training equipment to affect anticipation, fear, concentration, ball handling, shooting power, strength, getting-open behavior, or ball control. The deliberate omission of rigid specifications regarding the implementation of the training exercises presented in this book is an attempt to take this creative and varied training approach to the coaching level.





## 2 TRAINING EXERCISES

Themes in *Training Exercises* include various key subjects and aim to combine different training contents while providing a complex and integrated presentation. In doing so there is also a departure from the classic concept of *practice exercises*. Working on individual training content is replaced by more complex training of multiple elements and advanced content. Hence the term *training exercise* seeks to describe the targeted level of realistic play, heightened complexity, and increased demands. The *training exercises* incorporate elements such as practice, implementation, playing, and competing.

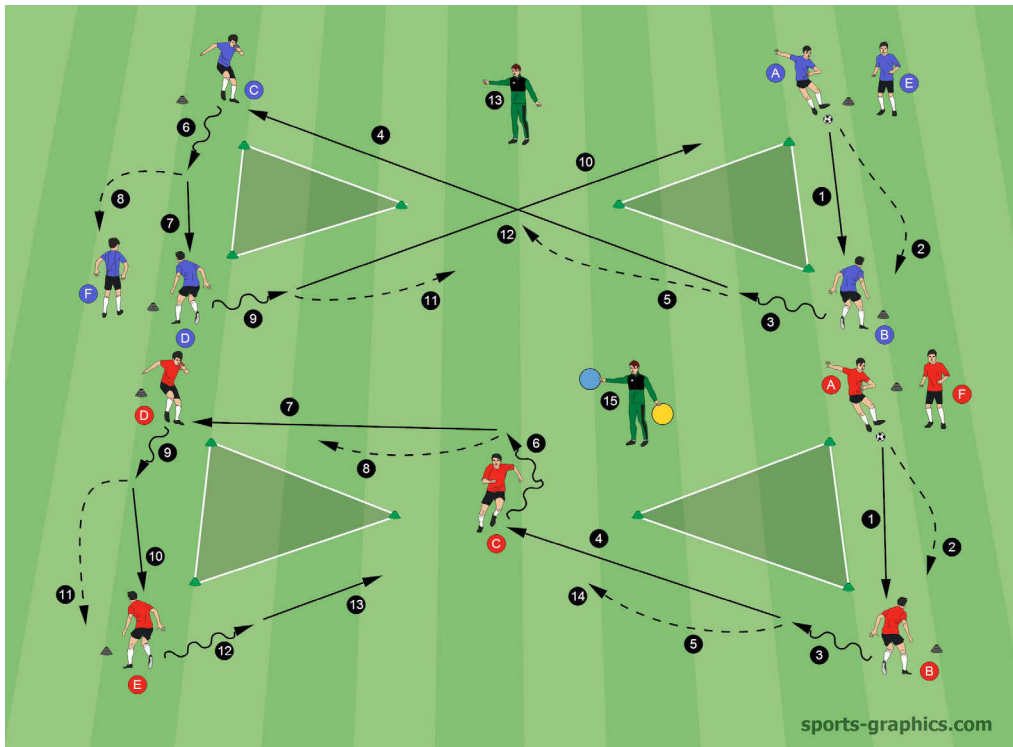
**PASSING**  
**BALL CONTROL AWARENESS**  
**SHOT ON GOAL EXPLOITING CHASING**  
**PRE-ORIENTATION CAPTURING THE BALL COGNITION**  
**OVER-THE-SHOULDER GLANCE TACKLES**  
**TRANSITIONS**

## 2.1 PASSING AND BALL CONTROL

*Passing and Ball Control* contains training exercises to improve passing and ball control techniques. Here the emphasis is on a varied and situation-appropriate technical execution. The passing technique is at the center and ideally should be executed with a firm ankle joint, follow-through movement of the passing leg, and a high degree of body tension. Passes should be played with as much precision as possible, target-oriented, and over various distances. Furthermore, players' awareness is directed toward recognizing passing options and the use of passing gaps. Starting motions that promote a focused receiving posture and an open body position in preparation for receiving a pass are required. Clean trapping and ball control are followed by connecting actions that are geared to position changes as well as starting into and creating space. Next to open passing with action alternatives, these training exercises also include predetermined passing sequences with specific running paths. The aim here is a high number of repetitions and practicing with both feet. Target zones, markers, interfering players, changing the direction of play, and specifying different numbers of touches drive organization, implementation, and variation.

**AUTOMATING  
 ANTICIPATING POSTURE REPETITION  
 RUNNING PATHS PASSING SEQUENCES  
 ENGRAIN FEINTS POSITION CHANGE  
 FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS STARTING MOTIONS  
 INTERFERING PLAYERS COACH'S SIGNALS  
 OPEN BODY POSITION PUSH PASSES  
 PLAYING WITH BOTH FEET FIRST-TOUCH BALL CONTROL  
 COMMANDS PRECISION**

## 2.1.1 Passing sequence (reacting)

**Execution**

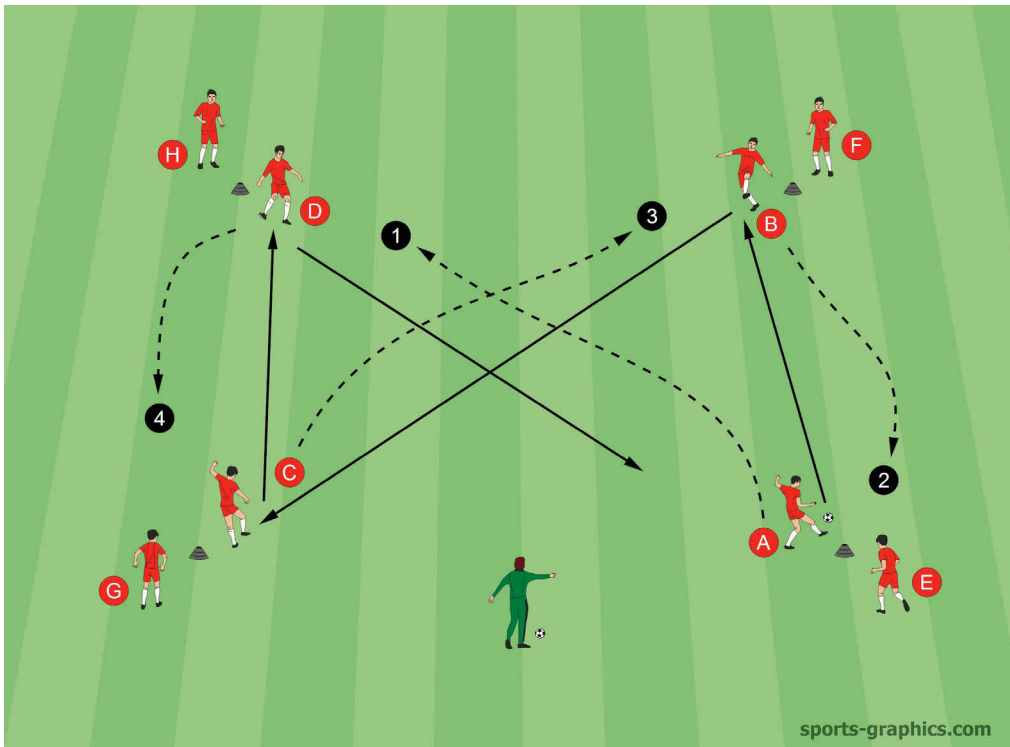
Below are descriptions of two passing sequences (see BLUE team and RED team). Each group of players circulates one ball around two small fields.

**Through pass variation (see BLUE team) and opening up variation (see RED team)**

*Through pass:* Player A passes to player B (see 1) and takes over his position (see 2). Player B controls the ball in the direction of play (see 3) and plays a deep diagonal pass between the two fields to player C (see 4). Subsequently player B runs into the center (see 5) and stops in the middle between the two fields. Player C controls the ball in the direction of play (see 6), passes to D (see 7), and takes over his position (see 8). Player D controls the ball in the direction of play (see 9) and plays a deep diagonal pass between the two fields to player E (see 10). The player who previously ran into the center (player B) lets the ball pass through close to his body (see 10) as a tunnel pass or through pass between his legs to player E, and immediately after the ball passes him runs to this new position C. Player D runs into the center and waits there for the diagonal pass from player A to player B. The coach has the option of changing the direction of play via a predetermined coach's signal (see 12).

*Opening up:* Player A passes to player B (see 1) and takes over his position (see 2). Player B controls the ball in the direction of play (see 3), plays a diagonal pass to player C positioned in the center (see 4) and takes over his position in the center (see 5). The central player C controls the ball and turns in the direction of play (see 6) to play to player D (see 7) and subsequently takes over his position (see 8). Player D controls the ball in the direction of play (see 9), passes to player E (see 10), and takes over his position (see 11). Player E controls the ball in the direction of play (see 12) and plays (see 13) to player B, who is now positioned in the center (see 14), and continues the passing sequence as described via player F. The coach can use a coach's signal during the passes to the center (see 4 and 13) to specify the side the central player will turn to (see 6).

## 2.1.2 Passing sequence (looking for position)



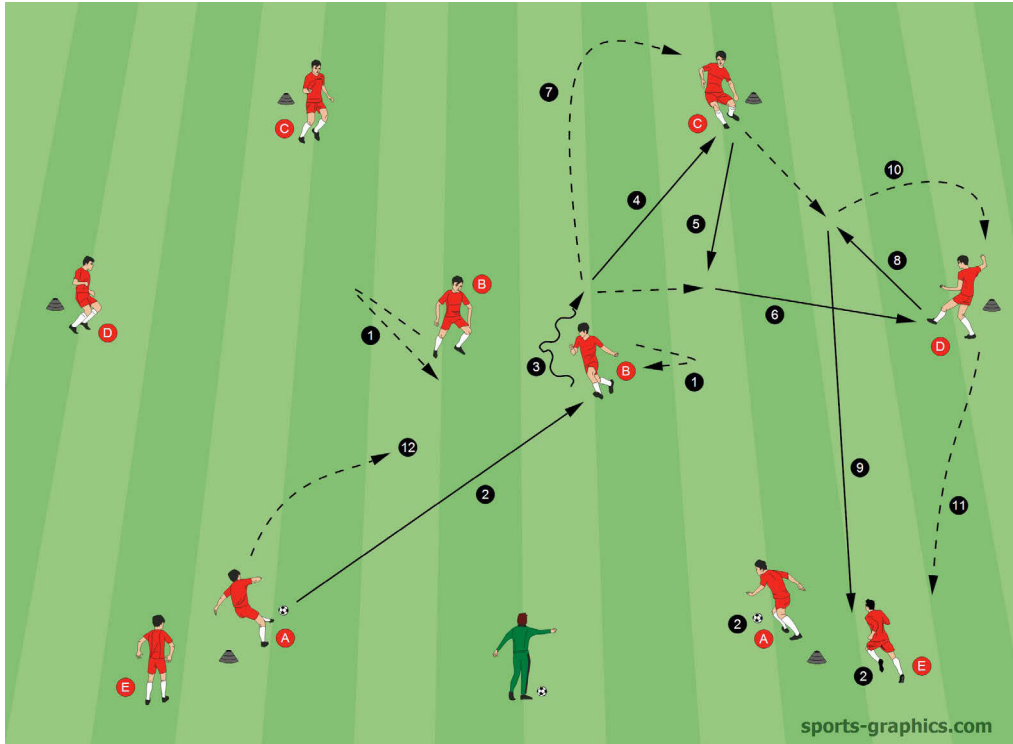
### Execution

Players complete a predetermined passing sequence and after each pass have to change to a different position. Position changes take place according to predetermined rules. Players cannot change to positions they passed to. They also cannot change to positions the previous passing player ran to. This means that players are forced to closely follow the passing sequence and be aware of the previously active players' actions in order to accomplish their own position search in accordance with the rules. Player A passes to player B, player B passes to player C, player C passes to player D, and player D passes to player E back at the starting position. The passing sequence continues indefinitely via players E, F, G, and H, and back to the starting position. According to the rules for position changes, player B cannot change to positions G or H (see 2). Player C cannot change to positions H or E (see 3). Player D cannot change to positions E or F (see 4). Starting player A is only restricted from changing to position F, and with his resulting running path (see 1) specifies the follow-up actions of the subsequent pass receivers.

### Variations

- ★ Specify playing leg (left/right).
- ★ Specify touches (direct play/two touches).

## 2.1.3 Passing sequence (opening up)

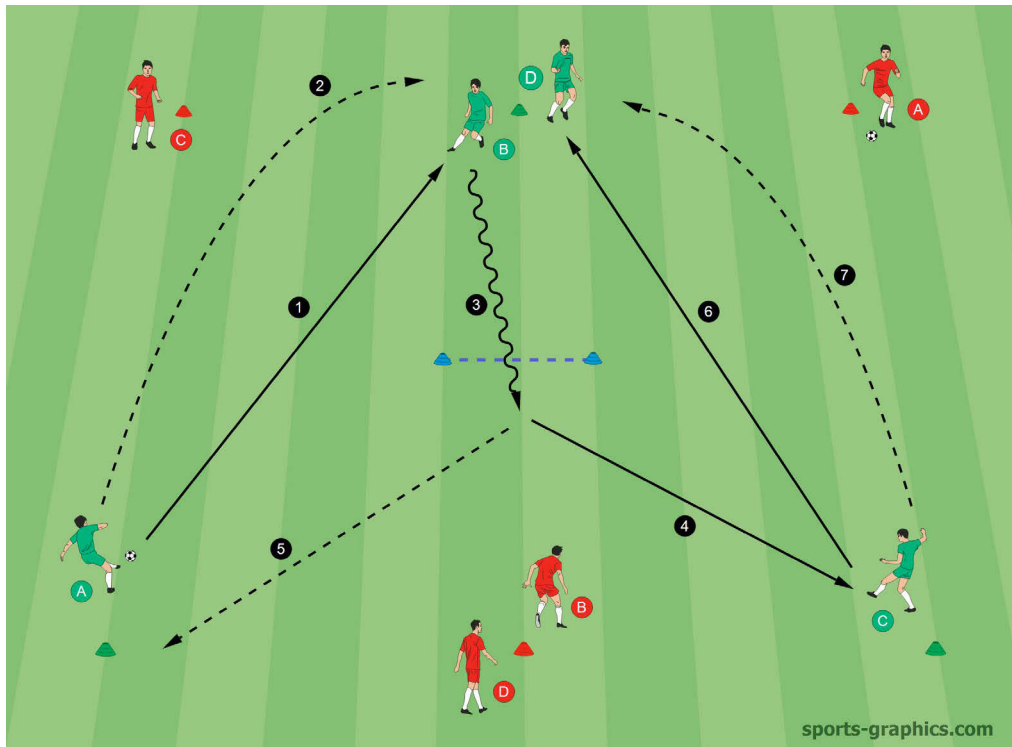
**Execution**

Players complete a predetermined passing sequence and, after completing their actions, switch to the subsequent position in the passing sequence. In doing so players always position themselves at the cone markers. The starting position is double-manned (see players A and E). There are also two players positioned in the center, even if this position is not marked with a cone. Within the passing sequence, two balls are played simultaneously. Players positioned in the center always begin their actions with a starting movement (see 1). Player A passes the ball to player B in the center (see 2). Player B controls the ball and opens up (see 3) and passes to player C (see 4). Player C plays a back pass to player B (see 5) and player B passes to player D (see 6) before changing to position C (see 7). Player D plays into player C's running path (see 8). Player C plays a deep ball to the starting position E (see 11). After their preliminary pass, players A take over the central position B (see 12). As soon as players E receive the pass (see 9) they start a new action (see 2) to players A now positioned in the center.

**Variations**

- ★ Specify number of touches (two touches).
- ★ Specify touches (direct play).
- ★ Perform predetermined feints prior to certain passes (see 1 and 9).

## 2.1.4 Passing sequence (speed dribbling)



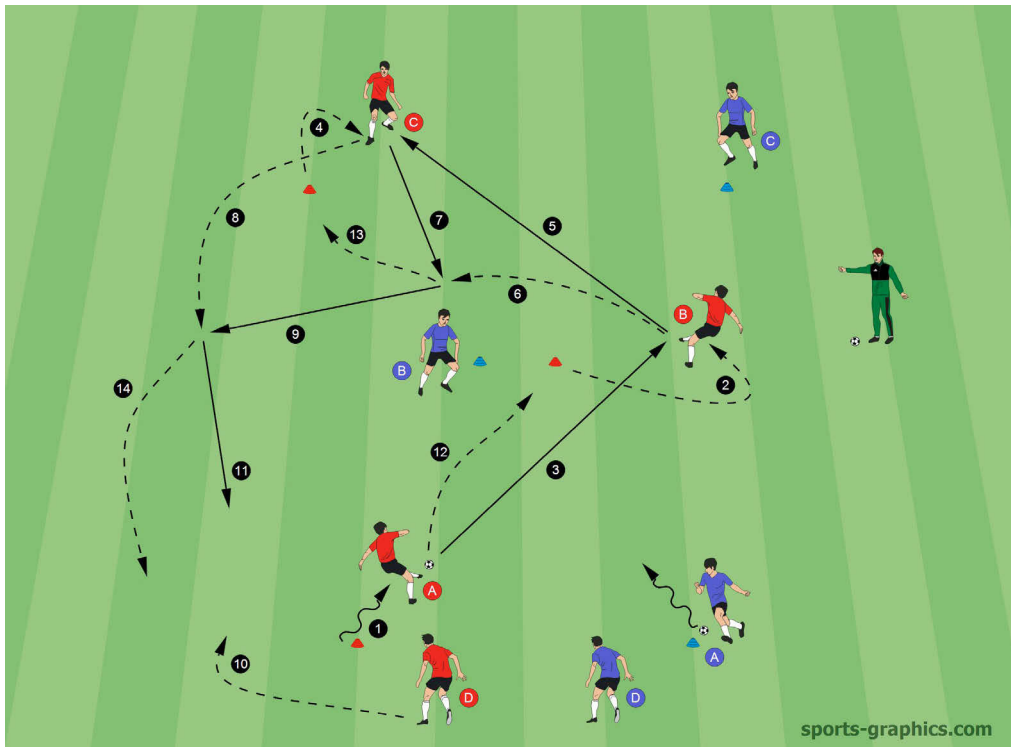
### Execution

Players from the GREEN team and players from the RED team simultaneously complete a predetermined passing sequence with the same exercise structure. There are some overlaps in the passing, dribbling, and running paths. This forces the players to keep an eye on the other team and find gaps in order to maintain a smooth flow of passes within their own team. Player A begins with a pass to player B (see 1), follows his pass, and switches to position D (see 2). Player B controls the ball toward the center (see 3) and dribbles through the blue cone goal to play a subsequent pass to player C (see 4), and then changes to position A (see 5). Player C now continues the passing sequence from the other side (see 6 and 7). The RED team trains simultaneously and starts with the identical passing sequence of players A and B.

### Variations

- ★ Specify passing leg (left/right).
- ★ Specify position change (double double-pass).
- ★ Perform a feint directly in front of the center cone goal (step-over or fake shot).

## 2.1.5 Passing sequence (getting open)

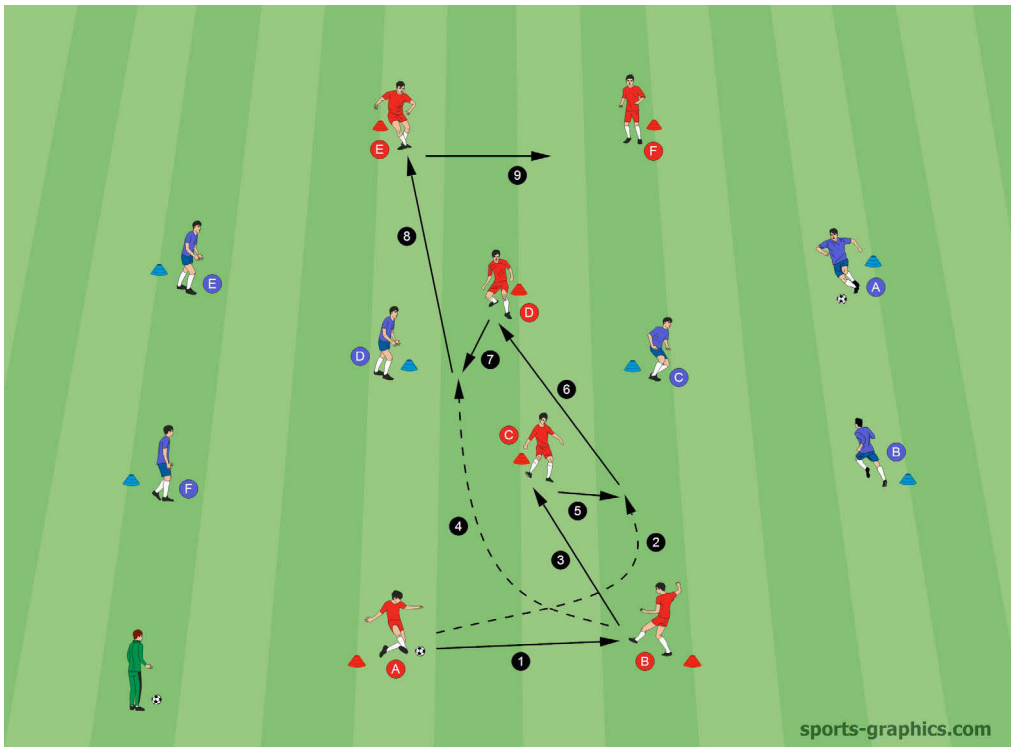
**Execution**

Players are divided into two teams (see RED team and BLUE team) with a minimum of four players each (see players A, B, C, and D). Each team completes a predetermined passing sequence with its own ball. Due to the configuration of the cones there is some overlap between the two passing sequences (see position B), so the active players must always keep an eye on the other team's disturbing players, make sure their passes are precise, and break away from any possible cover shadows. The two players A each start the preliminary action with a pass. Player A briefly dribbles (see 1). At the same time player B moves from his position into an open playing position (see 2) and receives the pass from player A (see 3). During A's pass (see 3), player C, who is next in the passing order, moves from his position (see 4) and receives the pass from B (see 5). Player B follows his pass (see 6) and receives the back pass from player C (see 7). Player C does a curved run and receives (see 8) the pass into player B's running path (see 9). During player B's pass (see 9), player D moves from the starting position (see 10) and receives the closing pass from player C (see 11). After their final actions the previously active players assume the subsequent starting position within the passing sequence (see 12, 13, and 14) and player D immediately begins a new passing round. The two teams can hold a competition where each team must complete a predetermined number of passing rounds more quickly than the opposing team. Teams regularly change starting positions.

**Variations**

- ★ Specify receiving and passing leg (left/right, right/left, or alternate).
- ★ Specify touches (direct play/two touches).

## 2.1.6 Passing sequence (forward play)



### Execution

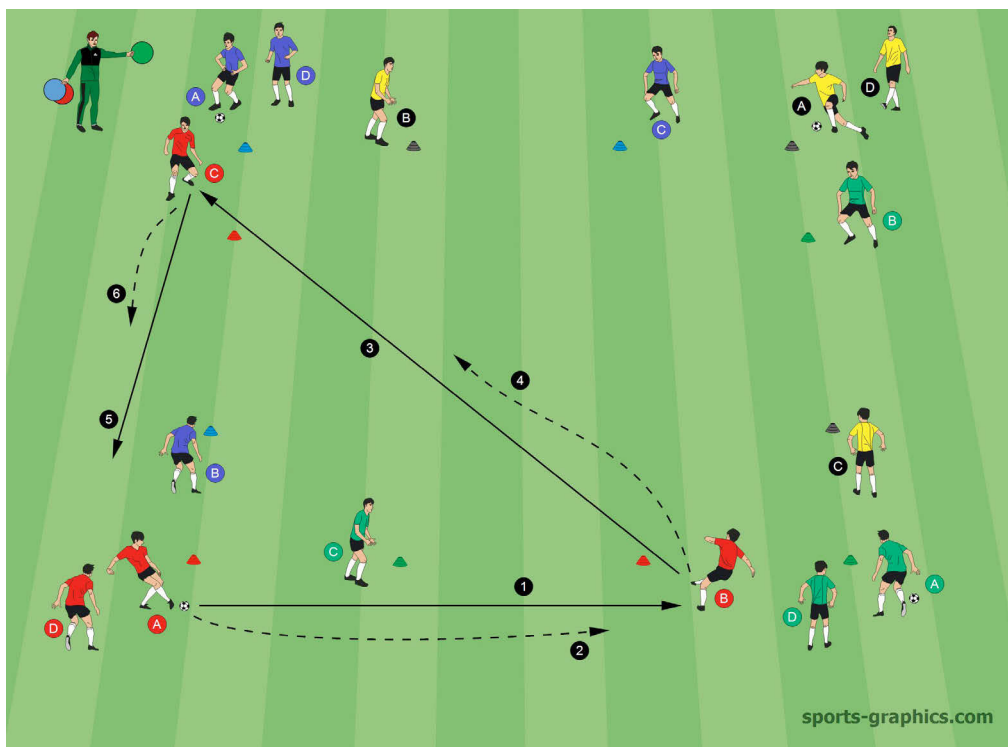
The RED team and the BLUE team each complete an endless passing sequence. Both teams use the same exercise structure and similar spaces, resulting in an occasional overlap of passing, dribbling, and running paths. This means the players are forced to keep an eye on the other team and find gaps in order to maintain a smooth flow of passes within their own team. On the RED team, player A starts the passing sequence with a pass to player B (see 1). Player A follows his pass on a diagonal (see 4). Player C lets the ball bounce off to player A (see 5). Player A plays a deep pass to player D (see 6). Player D lets the ball bounce off directly to player B (see 7). Player B plays a deep pass to player E (see 8). Next, players A and B assume the positions of players C and D in the center. Players C and D switch to A and B's positions. Player E now starts the described exercise sequence from the opposite side via player F (see 9). The BLUE team simultaneously completes the identical passing sequence (see player A).

### Variations

- ★ Specify playing leg (left/right).
- ★ Specify touches (direct play/2 touches).
- ★ Perform feints prior to certain passes (see 1/9 and 8).
- ★ Perform a double double-pass (see 8).



## 2.1.8 Passing sequence (interfering players) (1)



### Execution

Players are divided into four teams (see RED team, GREEN team, YELLOW team, and BLUE team) with a minimum of four players each (see players A, B, C, and D). Each team trains on a field marked with cones. The field is triangular and one player is positioned at each cone. The respective starting cone where the group first positions its ball is double-manned (see players A and D). Each group has its own ball and circulates it around their triangle according to a predetermined passing order. The four groups all train simultaneously. Since the four fields are linked, players must always keep an eye on the other teams' disturbing players, play their passes with the necessary precision, and break out of possible cover shadows. Player A plays a pass to player B (see 1) and subsequently takes over his position (see 2). Player B passes to player C (see 3) and takes over his position (see 4). Player C continues the passing sequence via player D (see 5) before assuming the starting position A/D (see 6). The coach can modify technical guidelines via previously agreed on coach's signals (direct play, play with two touches, pass with the left leg, pass with the right leg, or receive with the left/right leg and pass with the right/left), or spontaneously change the direction of play.

### Variations

- ★ Complete passing sequence with double double-passes.
- ★ Complete passing sequence with cross-team position changes.
- ★ Modify arrangement of linked diamond-shaped fields.