



PDP COACHING GUIDE

COVID-19 Session Plans

**How to Create Socially Distanced
Sessions For Your Players.**

James Coutts

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The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the world of sport. Football coaches have had to adapt for the resumption of play as nations around the world phase training back in with strict protocols. Covid-safe sessions are a new normal for many coaches and adapting to these challenging circumstances is a new problem to solve. However, it also presents an opportunity for coaches to develop their session design skills, and work on technical outcomes in a new way.

This guide is designed to provide coaches with adaptable ideas to apply with players across a range of ages and stages. Importantly, the images outlined are a guideline, they are not to scale and it's important that coaches who utilise these sessions adhere to their local federations safety guidelines.

PDP Coaching Advisor, James Coutts is a former professional player at AFC Bournemouth and Southampton FC. He is an AFC A licensed coach with vast experience working with youth and senior players. James presents a range of practices with a variety of outcomes that are easily adapted and simple to follow. As with any Player Development Project session, we encourage you to use these as inspiration, adapt them to your players individual and collective needs and of course utilise the progressions or create your own based on the ability in your group.

We hope this guide adds value to your coaching environment as the global football landscape changes. Stay safe and enjoy your time back on the grass with your players.

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Coaches around the world are having to innovate with their session design as football training kicks off after the global pandemic.

PDP Coaching Advisor, James Coutts shares some practical ideas for sessions that allow for social distancing.



Like many coaches preparing to get back onto the grass I started designing my sessions for the various groups I'd be working with as football resumes with a whole new remit – social distancing.

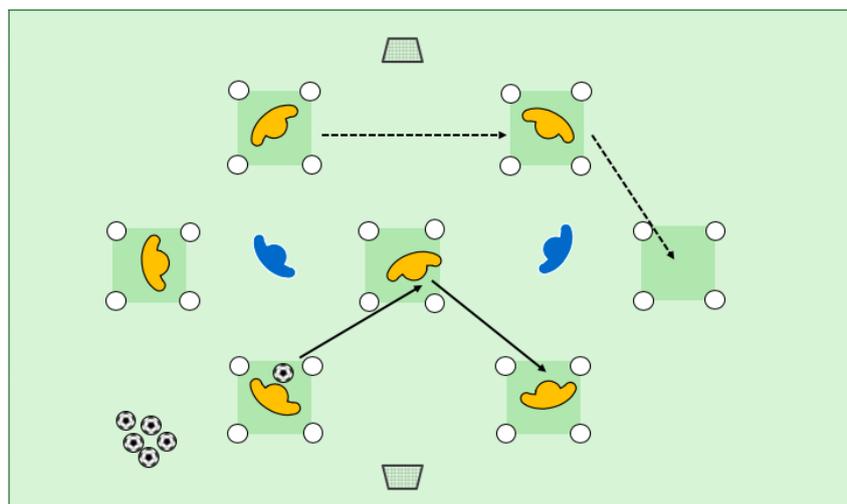
Most sessions I'd implemented prior to the Covid-19 lockdown included full contact, so designing sessions where this can't happen has provided a great challenge and an opportunity to develop new sessions whilst still having the same common themes:

- Players being challenged to score goals
- Players being challenged to stop goals
- Competitive edge
- Fun and enjoyment

With a 6-8 week build up towards playing competitive games again, I didn't want to just design sessions that involved passing patterns or unopposed finishing. From a players perspective, this could become quite boring, repetitive and lacking in realism if it was the only focus.

While social distancing is still vitally important, I am confident that utilising the sessions below means I can still get the desired outcomes, just in a slightly different way. As with all practices we share at Player Development Project, I would encourage you to look at these and adapt them both to your players needs, and of course their age and stage of development.

Session 1: Rotational Rondo



Explanation/Rules

- Yellow players can only pass and receive in the highlighted boxes.
- Players are free to move from box to box to ensure the player on the ball has support.
- Yellows score a goal for every 10 passes in a row.
- If the yellow player's first touch takes them out the box then they must leave the ball.
- Defenders score by winning the ball back and scoring within 3 seconds.
- Yellows can try and block the shots but cannot tackle.
- Change defenders every two minutes.
- One defender per half of the pitch.

- Blues: Defenders anticipating where the outside players will pass.
- Blues: Quick passing when winning the ball into either small goals.

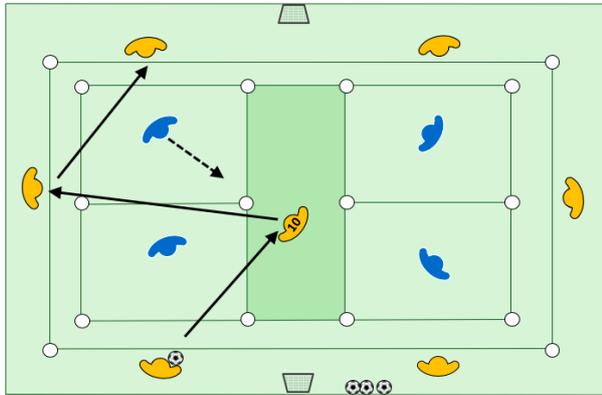
Adaptations

- Adapt the size of the boxes if too hard or too easy.
- Progression: Limit to 2 touches.
- Progression: Limit time on the ball to ensure fast paced play.
- Progression: Create a rule that ball must be shifted across within 4-5 passes to ensure lots of movement off the ball.

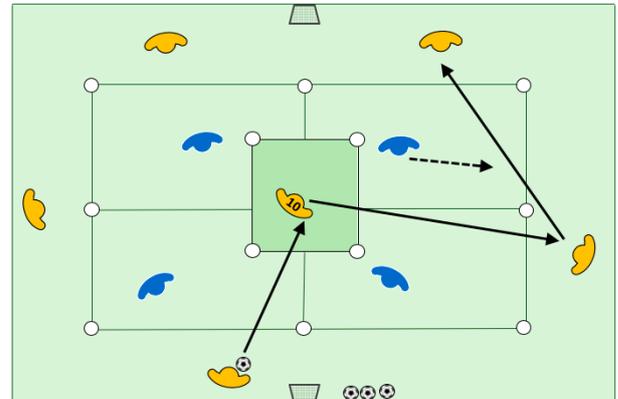
Coaching Points/Encouragements

- Yellows: Movement off the ball to ensure the player on the ball has options.
- Yellows: Disguise when passing through lines.
- Yellows: Having a high pass appreciation.
- Yellows: Reaction to losing the ball.

Session 2: Find the 10



Layout 1



Layout 2

Explanation

- Outside Yellow players must stay on the outside of the area.
- Where there are two players on the outside on the same line these players cannot pass to each other.
- Yellow 10 can only receive in his highlighted channel and ideally plays quickly off as few touches as possible.
- Every 10 passes is a goal for the yellows OR must go from end player to end player to score.
- When blues win the ball they have 3 seconds to try and score in the little goals.
- Change the defenders every 2-3 minutes.

- Blues: Anticipation of passes.
- Blues: Communication between the 4 defenders.

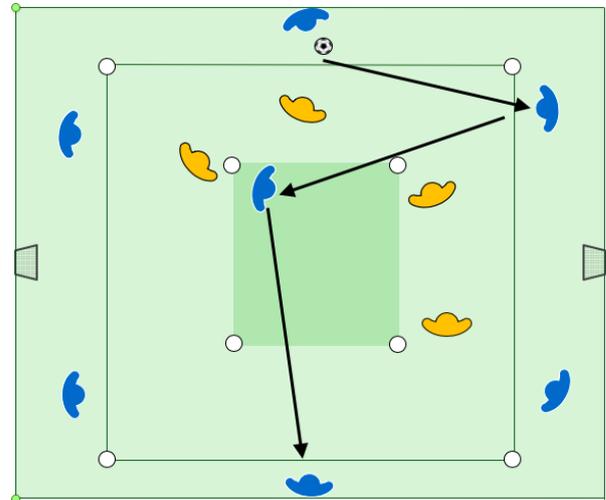
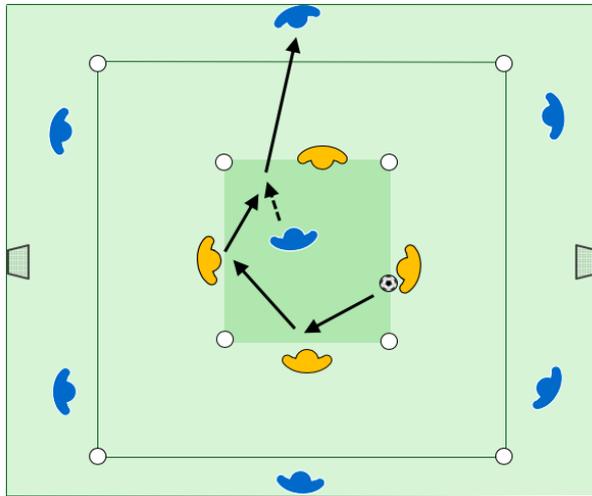
Adaptations

- Progression: Adapt with numbers, could be 4 players on the outside and 1 centrally to create a 5v4
- Progression: limit touches.
- Progression: Rule that every 3rd pass must go centrally.
- Progression: Make area bigger.

Coaching Points/Encouragements

- Yellows: Pass appreciation.
- Yellow 10: Receiving in between lines and pro-active movement.
- Yellows: Disguise when passing through lines.
- Yellows: Patience in possession until gaps appear to play through centrally.

Session 3: Transitional Rondo



Explanation

- Practice starts with a yellow 4v1 in the central zone. Yellow players are fixed for this part in between the white flat discs. Blue defender can only intercept and not tackle.
- 10 passes is a goal for the yellows, after 10 passes they then pass to the outside blues and transition to defenders. If the blue defender wins it back within 10 passes (Graphic shows winning the ball back on 3rd pass and passing outside) and stops a yellow goal they must then also play to blues and create a 7 v 4.
- Blues are then looking at keeping the ball for as long as possible. Can add in scoring system, 10 passes a goal etc.
- Blue defender must stay within the central highlighted area on 2 touches.
- Yellow defenders can only intercept and not tackle.
- If 2 players on the outside are on the same line, they cannot play to each other.
- Once Yellows win the ball they have 3 passes to score in either small goal.

Coaching Points/Encouragements

- First phase – Yellows quickly transition into defensive shape/organisations as soon as they lose the ball.
- Central player looking to receive on angles in order to play within 2 touches.
- Pass appreciation around the outside.
- Awareness of mid and longer-range passes.

Adaptations

- Progression: Reduce size of square centrally.
- Progression: Limit to all players to 2-3 touches maximum.

Session 4: Breaking Lines - Small Goals

Explanation

4v4 or 5v5

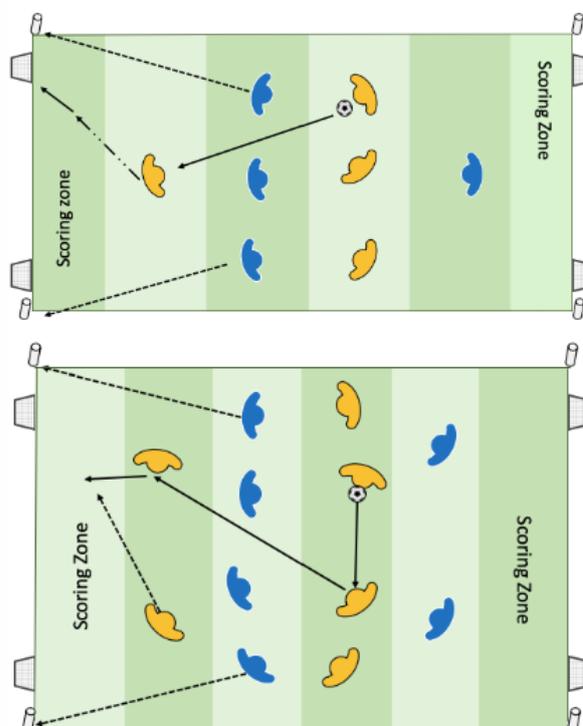
- Teams are locked into their zones.
- Within 10 passes or 10 seconds in your zone you must look to penetrate through the opposition line into your striker's feet.
- All play under head height.
- To complete the goal your striker must take the ball into the scoring zone and score into 1 of the mini goals. (4v4)
- To complete the goal your strikers must combine to score in either small goal. (5v5)
- The defenders can stop the goal though by straight away running back and touching either pole before the striker scores.
- Approx. 1min-2mins then change the striker/s with another player or players until all players have been the striker.

Coaching Points/Encouragements

- Look for the right moment to penetrate.
- Disguise when passing through lines.
- Striker in position to take first touch forward.
- Striker on the move and looking to receive through lines.
- Positive reaction from defenders when ball breaks through by tracking back.
- Defenders anticipating passes.
- Communication between defenders to ensure stay compact.

Adaptations

- Progression: Strikers must finish within 2 touches, 1 striker sets the other inside the scoring zone to finish. (5v5)
- Progression: Lone striker must take 1st touch from zone started into the scoring zone, 2 touch finish. (4v4)
- Progression: Limit to 5 passes before players have to transfer the ball. This will also increase intensity if desired.



Session 5: Breaking Lines - Big Goals

Explanation

5v5 or 6v6

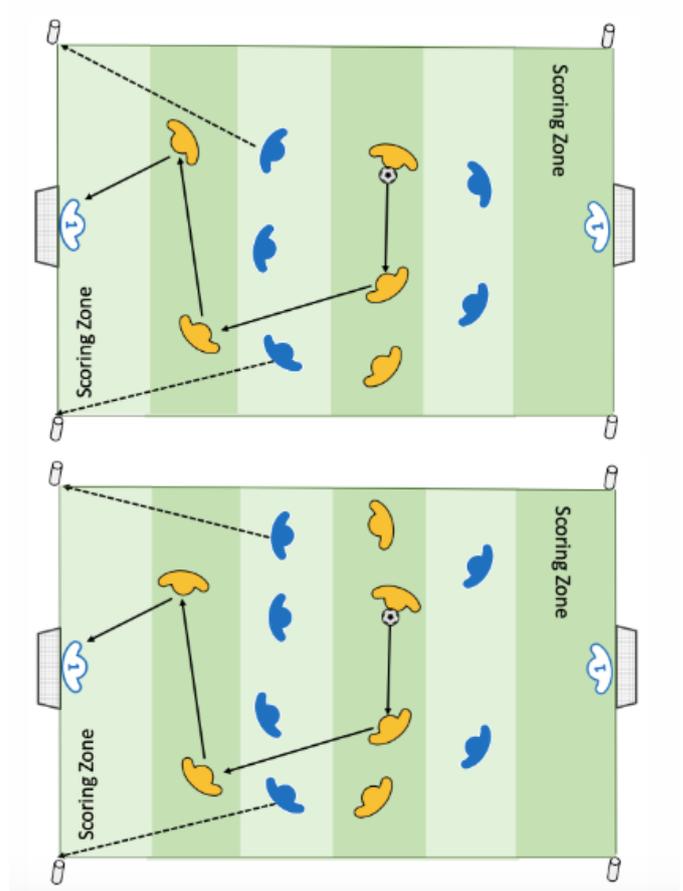
- Teams are locked into their zones.
- Within 10 passes or 10 seconds in your zone you must look to penetrate through the opposition line into your striker's feet.
- To complete the goal your strikers must combine to score into the big goals as quick as possible. Both strikers must touch the ball before they can score.
- The defenders can stop the goal though by straight away running back and touching either pole before the goal is scored.
- Work for approximately 2 - 3 minutes then change the strikers.

Coaching Points/Encouragements

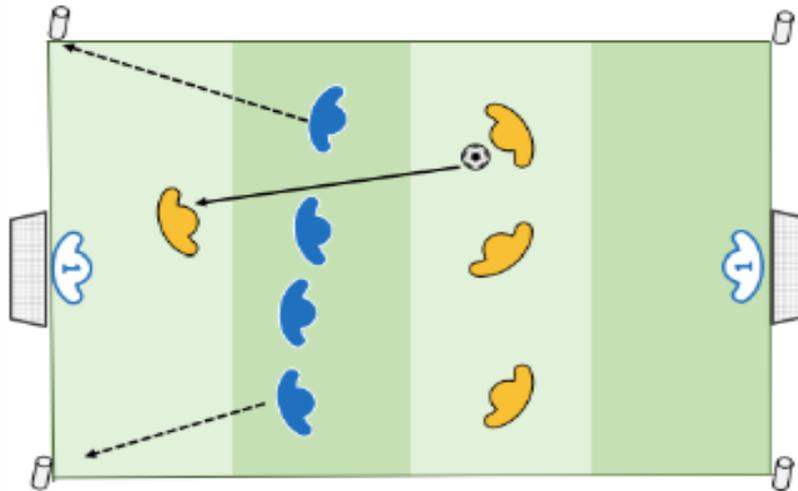
- Look for the right moment to penetrate.
- Disguise on passing through lines.
- Striker in position to take 1st touch forward or 1st time to their teammate.
- Strikers on the move and looking to receive through lines.
- Positive reaction from defenders when ball breaks through by tracking back asap.

Adaptations

- Progression: Limit to 5 passes before players must transfer. This will also increase intensity if desired.



Session 6: Breaking Lines v Counter from distance



Explanation

- Teams are locked into their zones.
- Within 10 passes or 10 seconds Yellows are looking to play through the lines to their striker who has to score as soon as possible.
- The defenders can stop the goal though by straight away running back and touching either pole before the striker scores.
- If blues win the ball, they have 5 seconds to score from distance into the opposite big goal
- Yellow players can block the long shots.
- Swap teams every 2-3 minutes.

Adaptations

- Progressions: Make pitch smaller.
- Progressions: Limit touches.
- Both teams can score from distance.

Coaching Points/Encouragements

- Look for the right moment to penetrate.
- Disguise when passing through lines.
- Striker in position to finish sharply.
- Defenders anticipating passes.
- Communication between defenders to ensure they stay compact.
- Positive reaction from defenders when ball breaks through by tracking back.
- Positive reaction when winning the ball back by shooting quickly.



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