



**Mark
Yates**

CHELTEMHAM TOWN

Mark Yates landed the Cheltenham Town manager's post just three days before Christmas last year.

He had previously been with the club as a player, part of an 18-year professional career that saw him play extensively in the Football League for the likes of Birmingham City, Burnley, Lincoln City, Doncaster Rovers and Cheltenham Town.

And at Birmingham, he clinched the 1991 Leyland DAF (now Johnstone's Paint) Trophy at Wembley.

After five years as a player and a further three years treading the managerial boards in the Conference with Kidderminster - during which time he led the Aggborough club to an FA Trophy final against Stevenage Borough - Yates accepted the offer to return to Whaddon Road, overseeing Cheltenham's ambitions of promotion back to power League One.

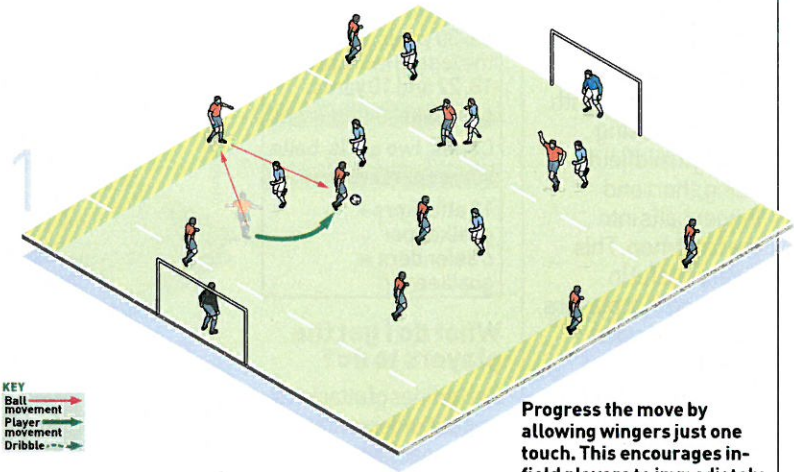
POSSESSION PLAY: PROGRESSION

What are the key things to look out for technically/tactically?

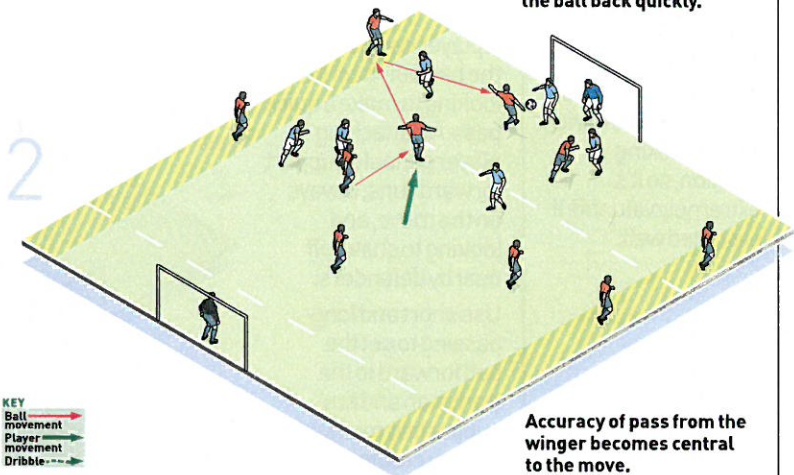
This move relies primarily on passing techniques and, as an end product, the ability for the forward and supporting frontmen to hit the target with a low shot into the corner of the goal. But decision making is crucial to the whole process as well - players have to react so that their movement and support is neither too early nor too late.

How do I progress the session?

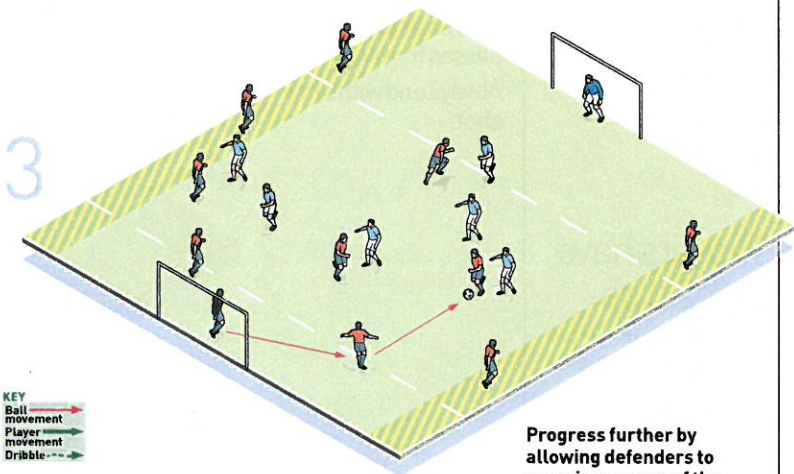
The simple way to progress this session is by limiting touches of the wide men to two. We might also alter the set-up by allowing defenders to roam anywhere, or instruct for the ball to go in and out of the midfield area three times before a goal is scored. To make this into a small-sided game, we use 8v8 or 9v9, limiting the number of touches allowed for the defending team so that we achieve regular turnovers.



Progress the move by allowing wingers just one touch. This encourages in-field players to immediately adopt free positions because they know they will receive the ball back quickly.



Accuracy of pass from the winger becomes central to the move.



Progress further by allowing defenders to roam in any area of the pitch.

"Always end with a low shot."

CHELTENHAM TOWN Mark Yates Possession play

Overview:

The session focuses on build-up play with forward passing through midfield using short and longer balls into the frontman. This is very useful in ensuring that players keep possession in midfield, whilst always having in their minds the need to play the ball forward and support.

In every game this scenario will come about. The result is breaking forward using possession to make a 2v1 scenario in an attacking position, so it's extremely valuable if executed well.

POSSESSION PLAY: MAIN SESSION

SETUP

AREA

50x30 yards, break up the length into areas of 18, 22 and 10 yards.

EQUIPMENT

Cones, two goals, balls

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 18

10 attackers + goalkeeper
6 defenders + goalkeeper

What do I get the players to do?

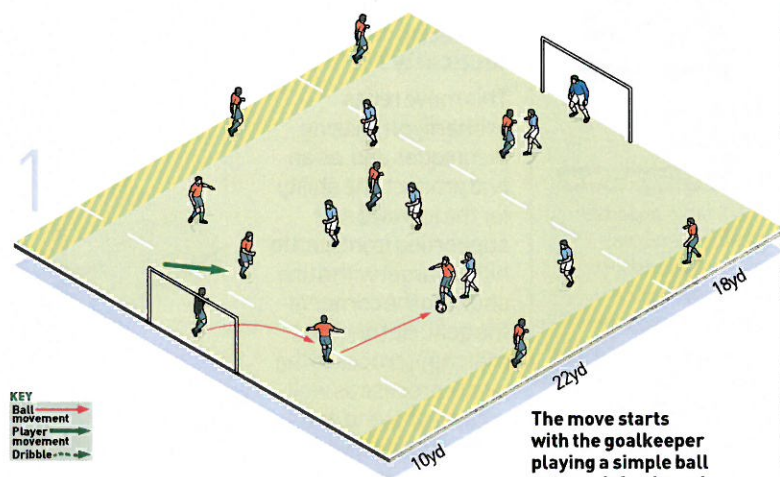
Set up lines of attackers and defenders with a goal at each end.

The attacking team goalkeeper throws the ball out to a forward.

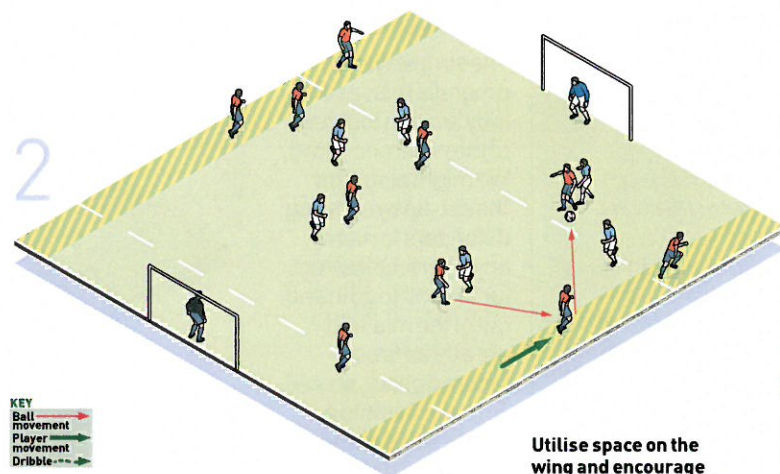
A player can run with the ball but must be looking to make a quick pass. All attacking players should support forward runs, always on the move, and looking to shake off nearby defenders.

Use short and long passing to get the ball forward to the frontman and any supporting midfielder so as to create an overload situation. Four wingers operate outside the playing area so as to give extra passes from wide.

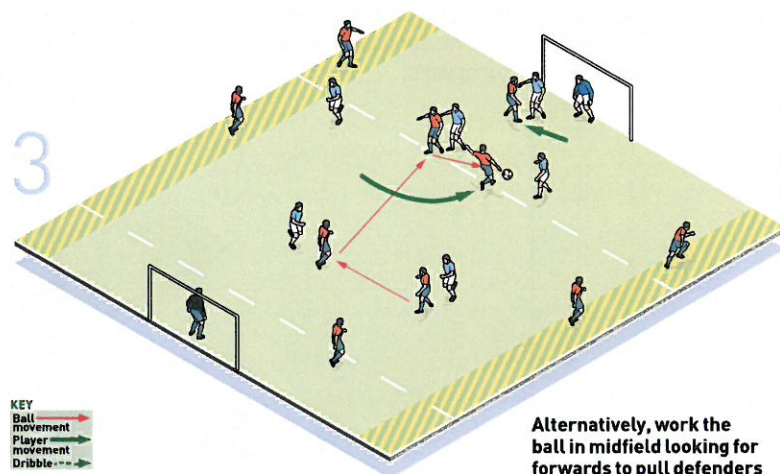
Always end with a low shot.



The move starts with the goalkeeper playing a simple ball out to a defender, who progresses, involving his team-mates.



Utilise space on the wing and encourage players without the ball to progress.



Alternatively, work the ball in midfield looking for forwards to pull defenders out of position, setting up chances for supporting players.

“Players have to react so that their movement and support is neither too early nor too late.”