



# PRACTICE PLAN



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**Date:** Week of Sep 29, 2025

**Theme:** Role of the Defensive Midfielder

**Duration:** 90 min

**Load Level:** Medium-High

## Session Overview

This session develops the tactical awareness and decision-making of defensive midfielders (DMs) within build-up and pressing contexts. Players move from 1v1 ball recovery and agility to structured 3v2+2+3 games simulating real central congestion. The final 4-2-3-1 SSG demands coordinated pivots, compact structure, and quick decision-making under press. The role of the DM (6) is emphasized both in and out of possession – from switching play and reading pressure, to leading counterpress moments after loss

## Learning Objectives

- Technical: Receive on the half-turn, disguise passes, play out under pressure
- Tactical: Understand pivot roles, switch point of attack, read pressing cues
- Physical: High-intensity sprints, recovery runs, change of direction
- Psychosocial: Communication, scanning, leadership, emotional regulation

## Activities & Progression

### 1. Warm-up / Activation: Follow-Your-Pass + Dynamic Movements

- Description: Combination of passing and dynamic movement – includes agility, balance, mobility work.
- Progression: Wall pass integration and varied touch patterns.
- Rationale: Prepare neuromuscular system while reinforcing technical rhythms.

### 2. 1v1 Circle and Go

- Description: 2 players circle opposite goal; ball placed at one end. On signal, both enter grid – 1v1 to score.
- Progression: Add shot requirement within 3 seconds.
- Rationale: Trains aggressive defending and attacker's ability to create shot space under pressure.

### 3. 3v1 Rondo (Back Foot Focus)

- Description: Classic 3v1 in tight space. Focus on movement off the ball, Receiving on back foot, anticipating angles.
- Progression: 1-touch variation; pass count = point; losing player enters.
- Rationale: Reinforce midfield tempo, pass timing, and pressing triggers.

### 4. 3v2+2+3 → 5v5 Transition Game

- Description: Set up in 4-2-3-1 midfield shape. Objective: circulate across width, trigger presses, and attempt direct play.
- Progression: After X passes, go to goal; nearest midfielder must press on loss.
- Rationale: Simulates DM role in building play, protecting back line, and initiating counterpress.

### 5. 4v4+4 End Line Game (Rotate on Scoring)

- Description: 3 teams – 2 inside, 1 as neutrals. 4v4 until a team scores → switch with neutral.
- Progression: Limit touches for neutrals; delay on entry; counter on turnover.
- Rationale: Forces midfielders to recognize space, switch point of attack, and initiate transition moments.

### 6. Midfield 4-2-3-1 – SSG 1

- Description: Dual-grid positional game. 6/8/10 move between grids, 4/5 recycle, outside players limited to 2-touch.
- Constraints: Must complete 8 passes to enter final third and go to goal.
- Progression: Add striker and wide players as active defenders.
- Rationale: Brings together pivot decisions, supporting structure, and compactness under pressure.

## Session Flow Notes

This session builds through positional isolation (3v1) into compact midfield overloads (3v2+2+3) before contextualizing into structured positional SSGs. The DM is consistently challenged to recognize pressure, lead transitions, and anchor circulation under dynamic conditions. The final SSG demands systemic understanding of 4-2-3-1 pivot roles, with passing and pressing outcomes contingent on the 6's performance.