BRIDGE DEFENDERS

Dribbling -> 1v1 -> passing -> combination play

SESSION OVERVIEW

SESSION AIM

Use one familiar game format to develop dribbling, 1v1 ability, passing and combination play.

THEME	PRACTICE 1	PRACTICE 2	END GOAL
Technical Development	**SWITCHING SIDES**	**BRIDGE DEFENDERS**	**Progress to free 4v4 play**

PRACTICE 1 | SWITCHING SIDES

ORGANISATION

Create a rectangular area with a central bridge marked by two flags. Split players into two groups, one on each end line. Every player has a ball.

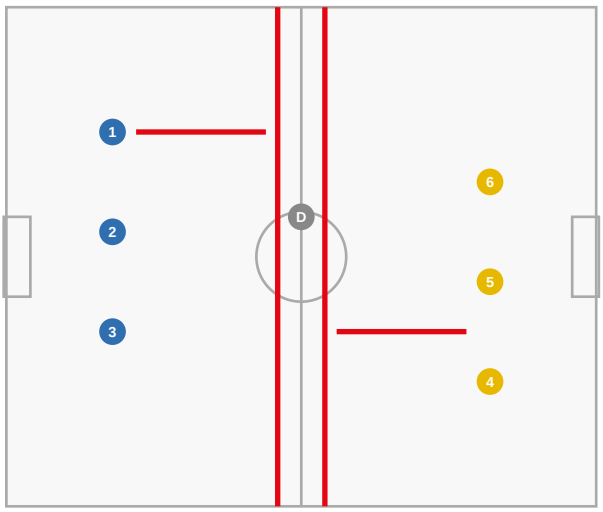
HOW IT WORKS

Both groups dribble across the bridge at the same time and try to reach the opposite end line first. Players must remain inside the area and avoid collisions.

COACHING POINTS

- Keep the ball close when traffic is tight.
- Look up regularly to scan for space and players.
- Change speed to escape congestion.
- Use both feet while dribbling.

DIAGRAM



Players cross the central bridge while protecting the ball.

PROGRESSIONS

1. Allow players to knock opponents' balls away while protecting their own.
2. Add goals on the end lines and finish after crossing.

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PRACTICE 2 | BRIDGE DEFENDERS

ORGANISATION

Divide the centre line into two bridges. Assign one bridge to each team and place one defender on each bridge.

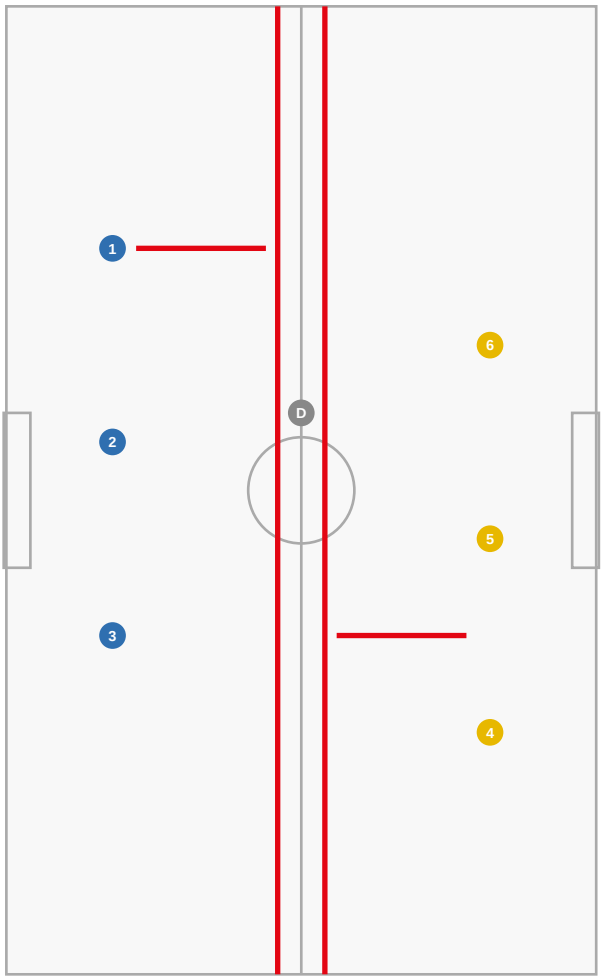
HOW IT WORKS

Attackers try to cross their assigned bridge with the ball. Bridge defenders must stay on the bridge and try to stop opponents by winning or knocking the ball away.

COACHING POINTS

- Approach the defender under control.
- Use disguise, feints and changes of direction.
- Accelerate once the defender is beaten.
- Defenders stay patient and balanced.

DIAGRAM



Defenders protect the bridge while attackers dribble through.

PROGRESSIONS

1. Narrow the bridges to increase pressure.
2. Allow players to cross one at a time or simultaneously.

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PRACTICE 3 | ENTRANCES AND EXITS

ORGANISATION

Make each bridge several yards long with an entrance and exit line. Start with one defender at the entrance, then add a second defender at the exit.

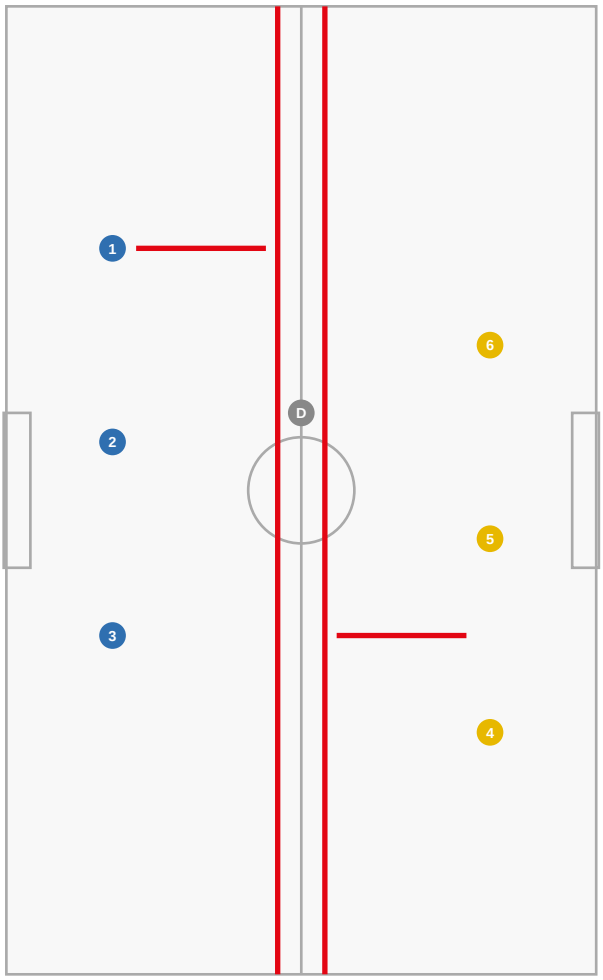
HOW IT WORKS

Attackers must beat the first defender and remain in control until they cross the exit. Simply knocking the ball past the first defender is not enough.

COACHING POINTS

- Keep the ball within playing distance.
- Use a positive first touch through the entrance.
- Accelerate between defenders.
- Stay composed enough to cross the exit under control.

DIAGRAM



Attackers must enter, stay on and exit the bridge in control.

PROGRESSIONS

1. Let the defender move anywhere inside the bridge.
2. Use two defenders, one at each end.

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PRACTICE 4 | PASSING TO THE AGENT

ORGANISATION

Place an agent beyond each bridge. The attacker stays on the near side and the defender protects the bridge.

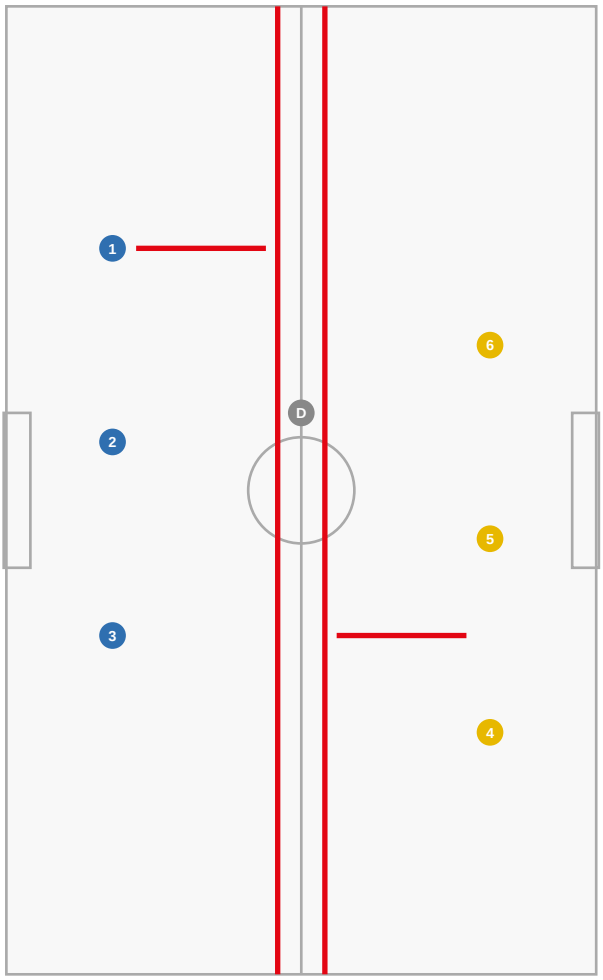
HOW IT WORKS

The attacker must pass accurately past the defender to the agent. The agent can then pass across the end line or finish into a goal.

COACHING POINTS

- Create a clear passing lane before playing.
- Pass with the correct weight and accuracy.
- Agents show early and receive on an open body shape.
- Use movement and disguise to shift the defender.

DIAGRAM



Use movement and accurate passing to play through the bridge.

PROGRESSIONS

1. Place one agent on the bridge and one beyond it, requiring two accurate passes.
2. Add a goal and goalkeeper after the final pass.

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PRACTICE 5 | DEVELOP TO 4V4

ORGANISATION

Use two long bridges with two defenders on each. Two attackers cooperate to cross each bridge and then finish.

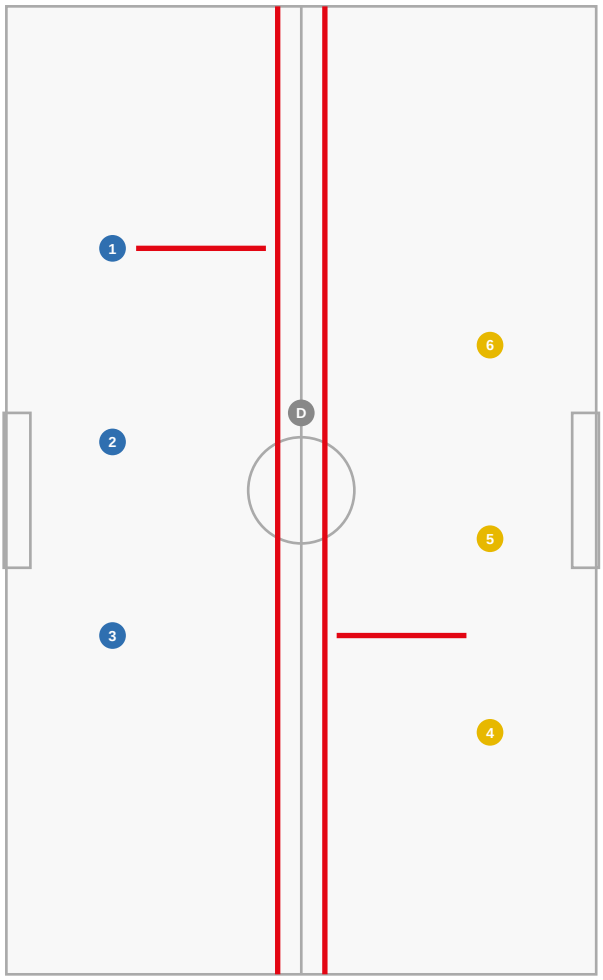
HOW IT WORKS

Attackers can dribble, combine with a teammate or play through the bridge. Once players understand the structure, remove the dividing line to create a 4v4 game.

COACHING POINTS

- Support the player on the ball at useful angles.
- Recognise when to dribble and when to pass.
- Move immediately after passing.
- Transfer the same ideas into the 4v4 game.

DIAGRAM



Progress the familiar bridge game into free 4v4 play.

PROGRESSIONS

1. Allow defenders to leave fixed positions and defend freely.
2. Remove bridge restrictions and play normal 4v4.