



## Grades 7-12 Session 3: Combination Play

Category: Tactical: Combination play  
Skill: U14

Pro-Club: Loudoun Soccer Club  
Dan Raben, Leesburg, United States of America

### Description

#### 2v2 games (15 mins)

**Objective:** activate players from the start by scrimmaging

**Duration:** 10-15 minutes

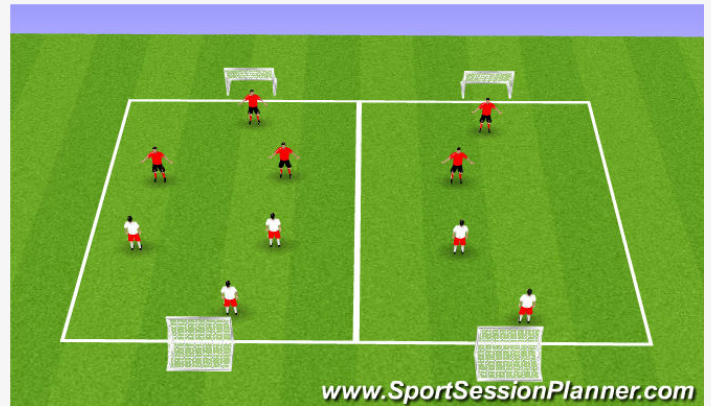
**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

\*multiple small sided fields to play 2v2 or 3v3

\*add players to game as they arrive

**Key Points:**

encourage quick combinations and passes



#### combination play (15 mins)

**Objective:** emphasize passing and receiving techniques, movement off the ball, playing within windows

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

\*4 lines of players, with center square marked in cones. 1st player in each line starts with a ball.

\* 1st player in each line must dribble through center square, then pass to next player in opposite line. Process repeats, with 1st player moving to end of that line.

\* Progression: players must perform a combination play before switching roles:

Double Pass (3 quick 1-touch passes)

Wall Pass (give and go): player from inside passes to outside player. Outside player receives ball, then plays 2nd touch pass to inside player. Inside player plays 1-touch pass back into space.

**Key Points:**

Head up while dribbling, head up to make eye contact with teammate

Outside players: demand ball

Attacking first touch when receiving – change pace

Double Pass - "step into" (come to it) and hit through your one touch pass to ensure proper weight is used and the ball stays on ground

Wall-pass: check at angle and open up your hips to the play, play 1-touch, use up-field foot when possible, hit thru the ball



#### Get Out of There! (15 mins)

**Objective:** use combination play in attack toward goal

**Duration:** 15 mins

**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

\* Coach plays ball into space and calls a number ("Two" means 2v2) and players enter field. Add obstacles before entry if desired.

\* Objective: teams attempt to score goal.

\* Play until ball is out of bounds, goal is scored, or coach yells "Get Outta There!"

\* Players return to lines for next play.

\* Bonus point for combination play

\* Variation: coach calls color instead of number for numbers up sequence (Red = 3 for red, 2 for white)

\* Variation: play with large goals and goalkeepers

**Key Points:**

\* Attack with urgency to create #s up situations



- \* identify #s up (2v1) and combine with teammate, or use "threat" of combination to dribble
- \* Attack through window - burst of speed with dribble, pass to teammate, or shot on goal
- \* 2nd attacker (teammates off the ball):  
"drift away" to create space for teammate  
Play within teammate's vision

## 6v6 + 2 game (20 mins)

**Objective:** create #s up opportunities in attack to combine with teammates

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

- \* 6v6 + 2 neutrals.
- \* regular rules of soccer apply
- \* Neutrals - play 2 touch restriction to encourage quick play. Rotate neutrals.

**Key Points:**

- \* find the numbers up in attack and play with urgency
- \* movement off the ball to initiate combination. The Run dictates the Pass (run comes first to show teammate what they want).
- \* when numbers even or numbers down - keep possession and change point of attack to create numbers up.
- \* penetrate with speed - dribble or pass or shot.



## 7v7 game (20 mins)

**Objective:** apply concepts and techniques from previous activities into full game

**Duration:** 15-20 mins

**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

- two teams
- full rules (throw-ins, corner kicks, etc.)

**Key Points:**

- team shape - stay connected as the ball moves up and down the field, and to offer supporting options
- combination play - use in middle third of field to generate scoring changes.
- finishing - crack a shot when the window is open and you're within range





## Grades 7-12 Session 4: Game Day Prep

**Category:** Tactical: Playing out from the back  
**Skill:** U12

Pro-Club: Loudoun Soccer Club  
Dan Raben, Leesburg, United States of America

### Description

#### throw-in windows (10 mins)

**Objective:** emphasize passing and receiving techniques, and throw-in technique

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

\*players in two groups - one group forming a circle, and the other group inside it. Place a small square of cones (5x5 yards) inside the middle of the circle.

Activity:

1. players on the inside run through the square toward a teammate on the outside.

2. players on the outside throw-in the ball to teammate on the inside.

3. player on inside receives the ball, and passes back to teammate on outside.

4. repeat process by running through square and finding a new open teammate.

Rotate rolls every 2 minutes.

Progression: after inside player receives throw-in, dribble through square and pass to open outside player. Repeat by running through square and receiving ball from different outside player.

**Key Points:**

\*throw-in technique: "lock" both feet on the ground. Both hands on the ball. Bring ball straight back behind head, and then release forward.

\* throw-in strategy - release ball toward teammates' feet.

\* showing for the ball - make eye contact with teammate on outside, call for the ball, and then check to it. Avoid standing/waiting for thrower.

\* receiving the ball: get body balanced (on toes, feet shoulders' width, knees bent, weight forward), use foot, thigh, chest, etc. to receive ball. Determine which surface to use. Present that surface. Withdraw that surface upon contact to settle the ball.

\* passing technique: connect back to thrower's feet - step in with placement foot, lock ankle (toe up, heel down) of kicking foot, hit through.

\* heading technique (chin up, neck stiff, mouth closed, eyes open, stagger feet, arms out, use forehead for contact, hips forward with shoulders back - then snap forward. **Minimize reps for this!!!**



#### transfer boxes (15 mins)

**Objective:** Numbers up possession to keep possession of ball, quick transition to play out of pressure

**Duration:** 15 mins

**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

6v2 or 7v7 in one box. Objective for numbers up: connect 5 consecutive passes. Objective for defenders: win ball, and play it into their box to create 6v2 (transition).

Variation: after 5 passes, defending team add an extra defender (6v3, then 6v4, etc.)

If defenders kick out of bounds - restart with #s up throw-in. If #s up kicks it out, restart with coach playing ball into defender's box and transition occurring.

**Key Points:**

\*angles of support: provide left and right options for short passes, which may create chance to "split" the defenders with a pass.

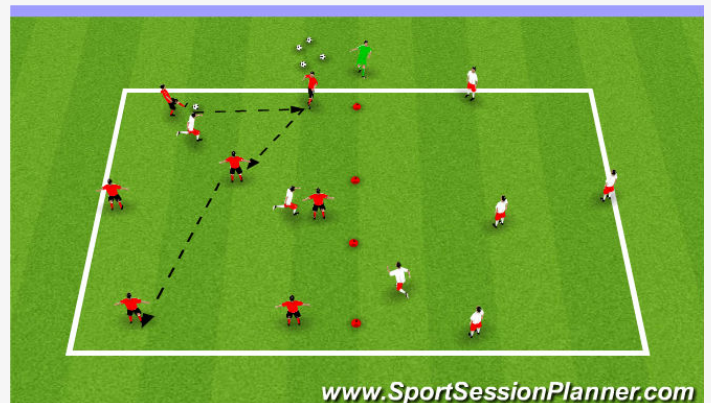
\*playing out of pressure - draw in defenders, then "find our way out" either directly or by linking passes

\*delivery of passes - varying weight, height (in air or on ground), and creativity of passes

\*transition (group of 2): play out of pressure into own box as quickly as possible

\*transition (group of 6): win ball back immediately, collapse space and prevent ball from leaving box

\*communication by players - "I got ball!" when entering opponent's box.





## 6v6 to targets (15 mins)

**Objective: emphasize short, quick passes to play away from pressure**

**Duration: 15 minutes**

**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

Two even teams. Each team has a target or a bumper at each end line. Creates a 7v5 #s up scenario.

Targets may move laterally between their cones, but not into opponent's half of end line.

Objective: connect 5 consecutive passes = 1 goal.

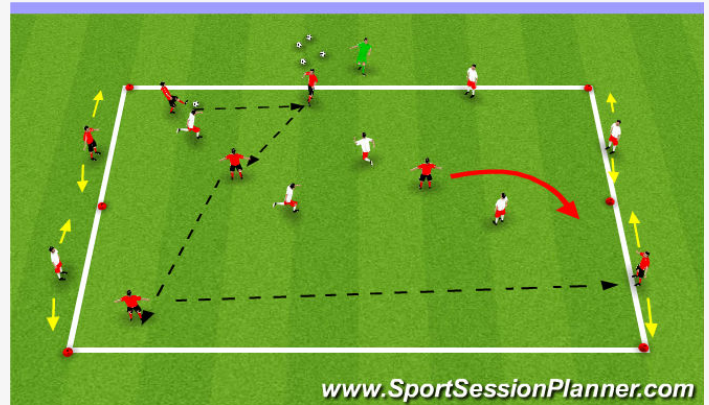
Rotate bumpers/target players.

Restarts as throw-ins over sidelines, and kick-ins over end lines.

Variation: if you play to a bumper, the bumper dribbles on the field and the passer takes the bumper's place at the end line.

**Key Points:**

- \* find your "out" - passes away from pressure
- \* passing technique - use of instep (laces) to connect longer distance passes, including in the air.
- \* movement off the ball - as ball is played to target, provide immediate support at good angles.
- \* transition - connect out of pressure as soon as you win the ball - get the ball off your foot.



## 8v8 game (40 mins)

**Objective: apply concepts and techniques from previous activities into full game**

**Duration: 30 mins**

**Description (rules, number of players, grid size, etc.):**

two teams

full rules (throw-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks, etc.)

play two 20-minute halves to replicate game. Adjust formation and positions each half.

**Key Points:**

- \*team shape - stay connected as the ball moves up and down the field, and to offer supporting options
- \*transition - pushing up quickly to join the attack, dropping back quickly to defend goal
- \*finishing - crack a shot when the window is open and you're within range
- \* decision-making - possess from defensive third to middle third, use of 1v1 moves in middle third and final third.

