Counter-attacking from midfield

Practice organisation

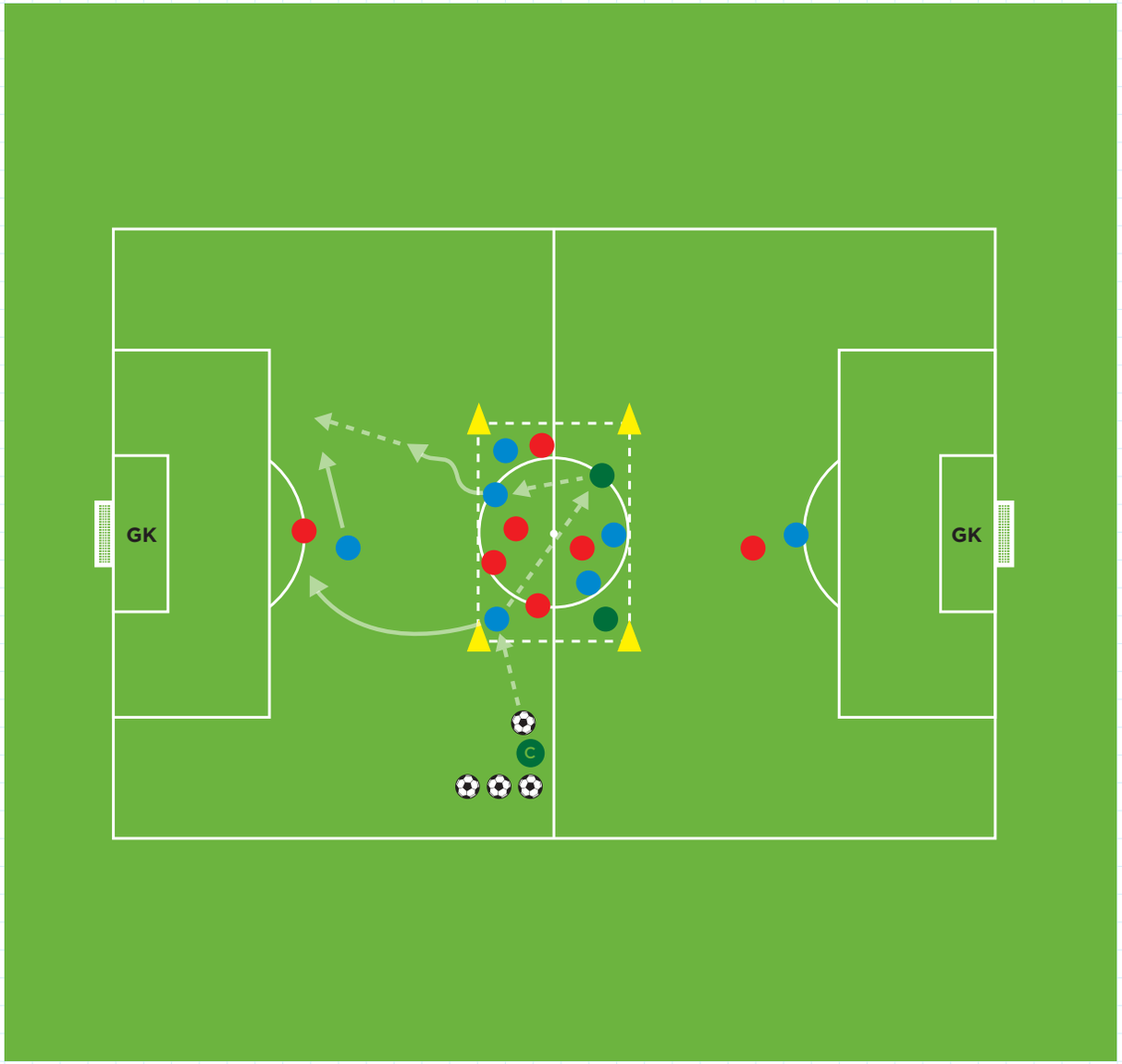
- Full pitch with goals, as illustrated.
- 18 players (incl. 2GKs) arranged 8v8 plus 2 Floaters, 1 ball.
- Players arranged 5v5 in extended centre circle area (approx. 20x28yds), with 2 floaters providing numerical advantage for team with ball.
- Practice starts with coach who serves ball into central area.
- Initial objective is for one team to keep possession in area for 5-6 passes, before looking to play into or behind (a marked) A who starts centrally, approx. 20yds from goal.
- With exception of player making pass to A, one player can break from central area to quickly support (creating 2v1) to achieve strike on goal.
- If D wins possession: he can quickly supply his team in central area & they break forward to counter-attack their opponents goal.
- When play breaks down: practice recommences with same start position & play builds towards opposite goal.

Detail

- Assess movement of A & position of D to select best passing option.
- Execution & nature of forward passing, with emphasis on accuracy, weight & whether aerial or along ground.
- Remaining on-side.
- Finishing skills & composure in front of goal involving A & MF's.
- Simple progressions for this practice are:
  - Opposite side floating player joins-in to make 3v1 attacking situation.
  - A's send 2 players forward & D's send 1 back (to create a 3v2).
  - Further similar numerical permutations to develop complexity of practice are natural progressions.

Key coaching points

- Precise control to enable MF's to play with head up & assess opportunity to play into A with quality & accuracy.



- Early recognition of pass required to play into or behind A.
- Timing & nature of quick support.
- Finishing & following-up for rebounds..
- Execution of link-up play & actions after releasing ball to support player.
- Intelligent movement of A to create space to receive.
- A retaining individual possession & holding-up play for MF's to make ground.
- A looking to turn D & threaten goal with first touch control.