

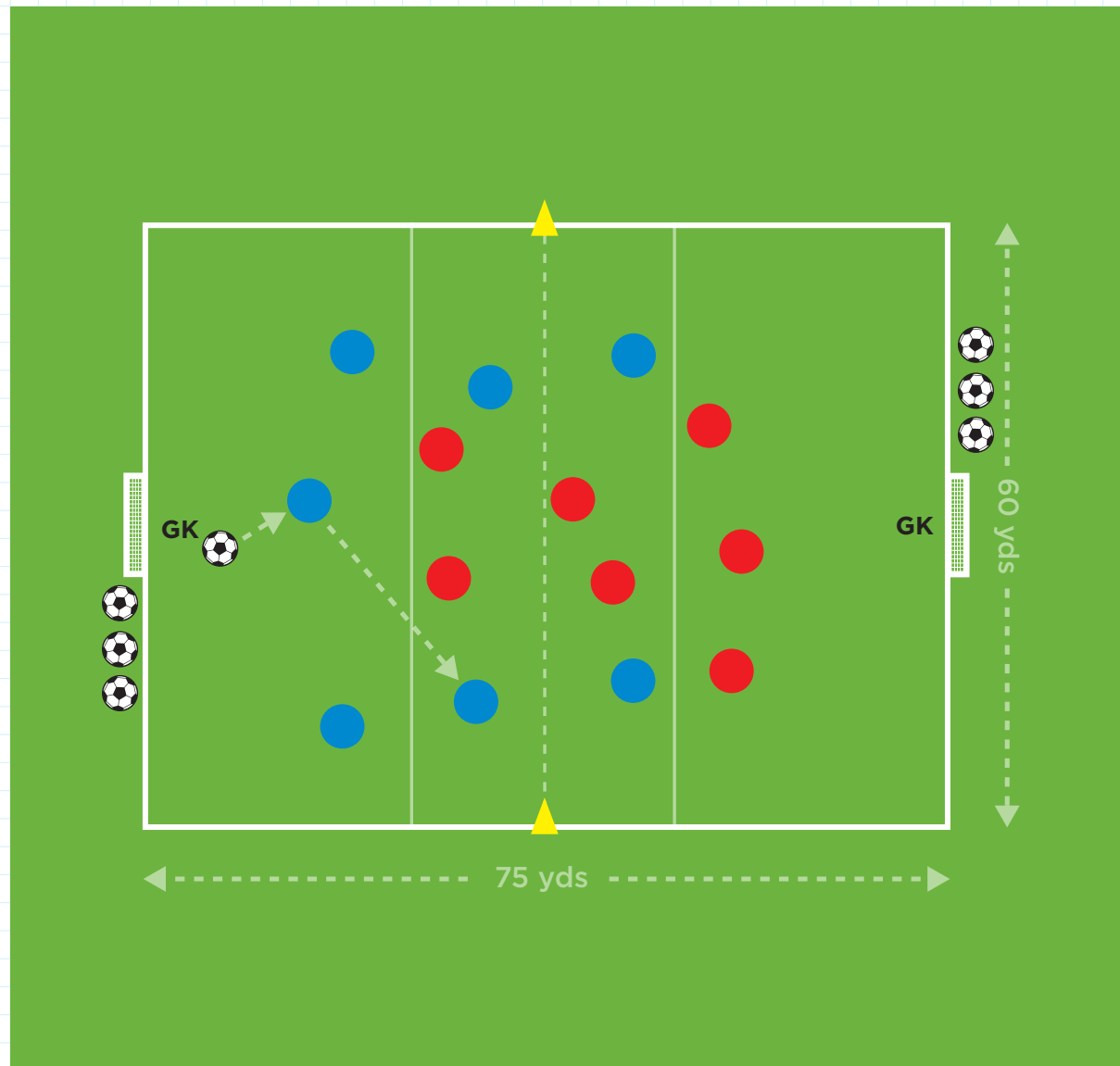
Defensive balance & compactness

Practice organisation

- Area 75x60yds divided into equal thirds, with half way line marked & appropriate size goals, as illustrated.
- 16 players (incl. 2GK's) arranged 8v8, 1 ball.
- Game is organised 4v4 in middle third & both teams have 3 supporting players in their defensive third.
- Practice starts with: GK rolls ball out to supporting player in defensive third, who in-turn, looks to pass into midfield.
- Players look to shoot from long range, or break into attacking third with numbers to play against 3 Defenders.
- D's gaining possession must play into midfield third.
- When ball goes 'dead': practice restarts with opposite team GK rolling ball to D's, who then look to pass into MF.

Detail

- Area can be modified, depending on numbers & age of players.
- This should form part of regular practice content to develop game understanding.
- On breakdown of play: MF's need to reorganise & retreat to middle third as quickly as possible
- Deciding quickly which player takes responsibility for opponents.
- Role of pressing player.
- Role of the two other MF players in terms of cover & support.
- Change of responsibilities as possession passes between opponents.
- Marking opponents & passing on to other D's.
- Simple progression for this practice is:
 - Employ man-for-man marking in MF.



Key coaching points

- Marking positions.
- Challenging & pressurising opponent in possession.
- Showing opponents into agreed areas or positions in middle third.
- Preventing penetrating through passes.
- Covering the pressing player.
- Achieving (& maintaining) compactness both centrally & wide.