

Playing Out of the Back – Using the Goalkeeper

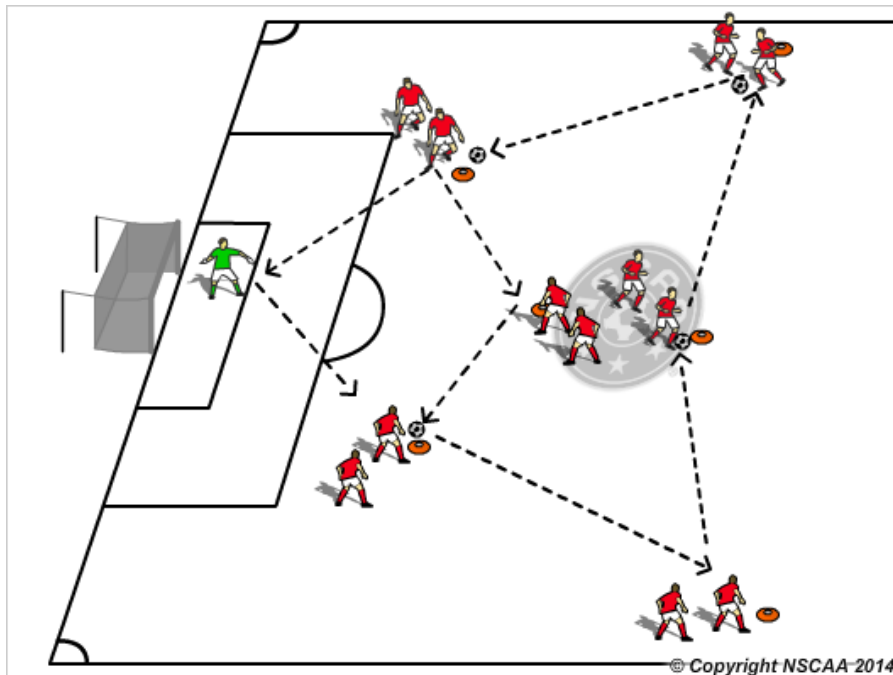
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First, notice I didn’t title this article “building out of the back”. Building possession out of the back using the keeper is certainly part of this article but not the whole picture. The goalkeeper needs to be part of the constructive possession out of the back building into an attack on the opponent’s goal and the goalkeeper needs to be able to play into advanced positions quickly for possession and for creating counter-attack “quick strike” opportunities their team.

The following exercises are suggestions for both these scenarios. Remember, it is important to practice building out of the back with the team and goalkeeper for them to be comfortable dealing with pressure close to their own goal and also to help them know when the risk is not worth the gain and to play into more advanced areas. The coach should slowly introduce the build concepts into his or her team’s games so that the players don’t feel like they have been thrown into the deep end. Remember, giving up goals because you are trying to build out of the back isn’t the problem (make sure you let the parents know what you are working on) the challenge is not to destroy your individual players and the team’s collective confidence with possession from deep positions before they are ready.

Warm-up:

Use a passing grid – set up to mimic back defenders and midfielders positioning when building out of the back.



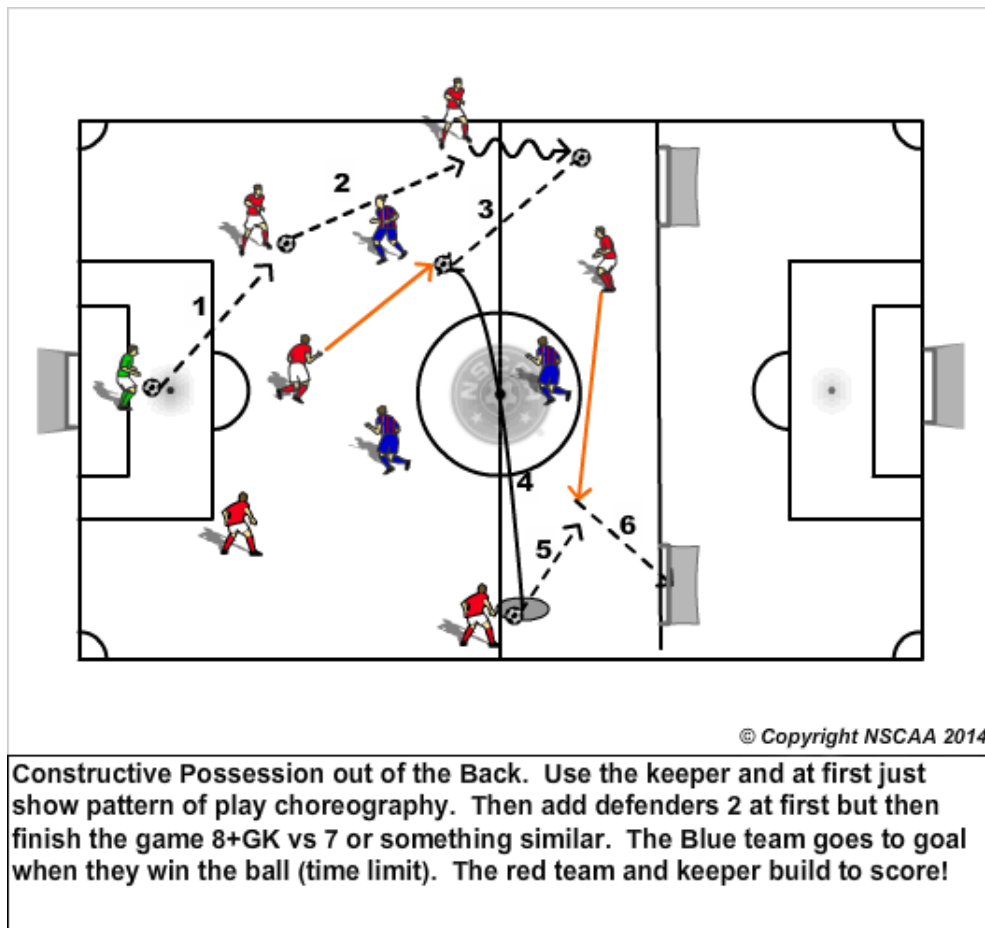
Create a passing grid that mirrors playing out of the back. Then add in the goalkeeper and have the keeper either foot distribute or distribute with hands. Change up the patterns and change direction of the patterns.

Phase 2 - Add in the goalkeeper and now have the GK call for balls (using verbal commands and body language). Whether the GK receives balls in front of goal or wide of the frame is the coach's decision. Once the ball is received by the keeper, play passes either central (if receiving player has the correct body shape) or play to wider player. Note, the goalkeeper does not need to receive back pass every time.

Phase 3 – Now have the goalkeeper also play to the outside backs that are wide and up-field on occasion. This will test their accuracy with a longer pass. (players in the passing grid move-on as if they made the pass)

Exercise 1 - Play with the GK; 4 backs, a Holding Midfielder and an Attacking Midfielder (7) vs 3. Then continue to add numbers until the numbers are 8v7. This will test the building team's ability to get out of the back.

Key coaching points are to be patient, send outside backs up and wide, split the 2 center backs, drop the holding midfielder in between the 2 center backs, use the goalkeeper often, change the point of attack and double change. The team building should have goals to build to and the team defending should look to score on the big goal.



Exercise 2 – Coach the goalkeeper to quickly play into advanced positions. This can be from goal kicks; saves with early kicks or saves with run to the top of the box and long-accurate throws. Adjust rules to make sure that crosses or shots are being taken so that the keeper will handle the ball often and look to play into advanced positions for “quick strike” attacks.

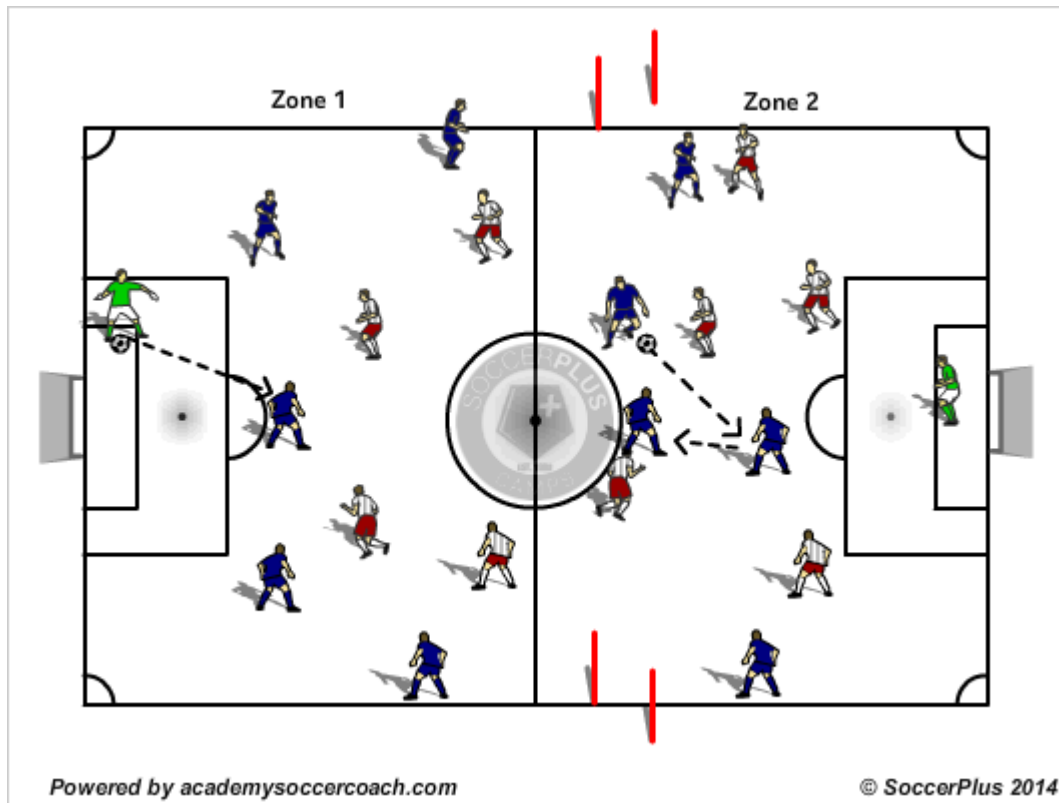


Field size - 78 yards x full width

Counter-attack from goalkeeper game. Play 5v3 in each penalty area. 2 of the 5 are target players (in channels) for the keeper to play to with urgency. The midfield Gk is one for the defenders in each grid to play to and that Gk plays with feet of hand distribution into the attacking channels.

Exercise 3 – Play a 2 zone game. The game in zone 1 is 6+GK vs 5 or 4 and the play in zone 2 can be 5v5+1 (adjust based on numbers available). The key for the players in zone 1 playing with the GK is to advance the ball into zone 2. The zone 2 players try to score and if the defenders win the ball, they play to small cones on edge of the field.

The key is to as soon as a ball goes to zone 2 another ball comes into zone 1. Now the zone 1 players need to wait until the zone 2 ball is dead before playing forward. This forces zone 1 players to keep possession, to use the keeper often and to keep their heads on a swivel to see when zone 2 is open.



Final Game – play 9v9 or 11v11 full field with both teams looking to build from defense and if that isn't on to play quickly to start a counter-attack opportunity.

*Tony DiCicco is former Head Coach, USA Women – '96 Olympic Gold Medal; '99 World Cup Championship; '08 U20 World Cup Championship. Also goalkeeper coach for the USA Women and U20 Men at World Cups. For information on **SoccerPlus Goalkeeper School**, call 1-800-keeper1 or go to www.soccerplus.org*