



Unmarking to create space

• **The act of unmarking or unmarking** is the most important individual offensive movement. **Unmarking** is one of the 5 principles of applied technique when in possession of the ball:

1. **Unmarking**
2. **Shielding or defend the ball**
3. **Passing**
4. **Feint and Dribbling**
5. **Shooting**

• **Unmarking to create space** is synonym of mobility and it is a fundamental concept to develop team play. If a player in possession of the ball does not have teammates who move off the ball, he will not make an impact. It is only proper movement off the ball that allows the player with the ball to have more options to pass and more solutions available to him.



•**Definition of unmarking:** unmarking consists of movement with a purpose of getting away from a defender, to move into free space, allowing the teammate with the ball more solutions



A player must be good at unmarking from:

- **a direct marking:** direct marking is when one player is checked by the defender and followed closely. As you can see in the video, the player can unmark himself with a counter-movement.



- **An indirect marking:** indirect marking is when a player is not checked but his positioning does not allow his team-mates to pass him the ball, because an opponent is in the line of the pass. In this case the player that is indirectly marked must move in the line of the pass or channel.



Unmarking is based on 5 concepts:

- *The movement*

- *Who must move “Who”*

- *Where we must move “Where”*

- *How we must move “How”*

- *When we must move “When”*

We will analyze each of the 5 elements following a set progression with a series of exercises.



The movement



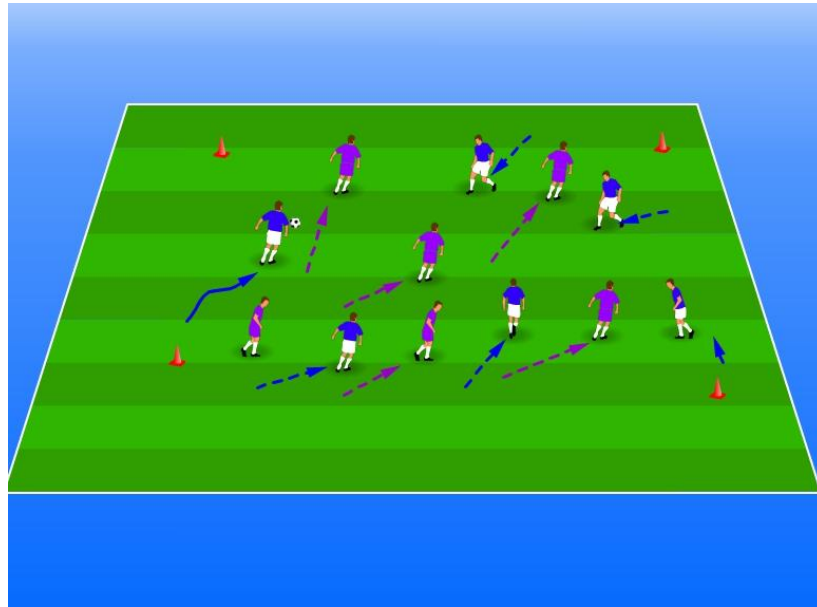
The movement:

“without movement there is no game”, this seems a simple concept but if we observe the young players, it is not easy to teach the concept of movement.

Let's look at the first exercise to teach the young players the concept of movement:

The movement: WARM UP GAME

Description: the game is played with the hands. The team with the ball must tag the opponents. Only the player with the ball can tag the opponent and while doing so he cannot drop the ball. The player tagged must sit and act as an obstacle. The teammates of the player with the ball must cooperate and move accordingly, checking the opponents or making it difficult to move around. Team work and team strategy is required to succeed



Psychological objective: cooperation and communication.

Tactical objective: support when unmarking.

Coordination objective: Space-time orientation, reaction, anticipation.

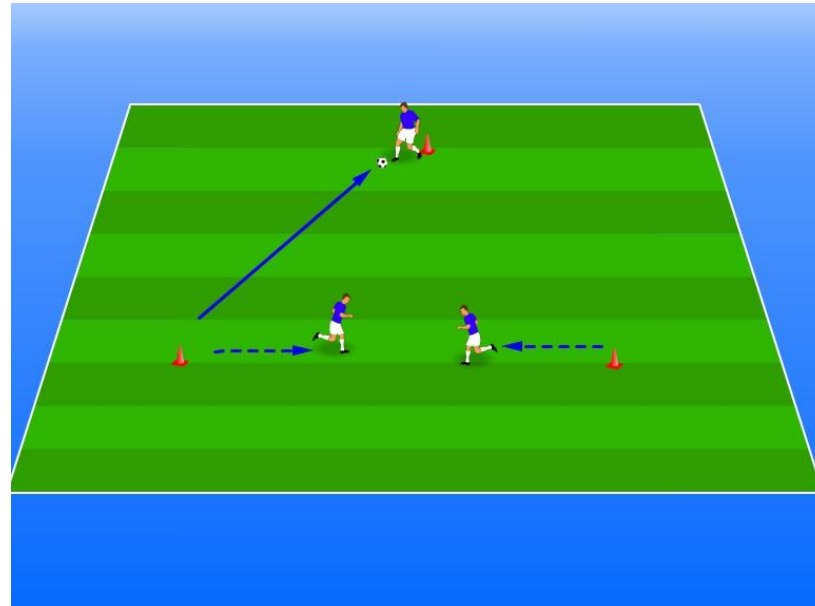
The movement: **TECHNICAL EXERCISE**

Description: We propose 3 progressions which force the players to move. The players must combine a technical gesture (first with the hands then with the feet) with a motor action of movement

A: 3 players, #2 passes to #4 and interchange with #3.

B: #2 passes to any of the other 2 players and move into the free space.

C: #2 passes to any of the 2 players and interchange with the opposite player.



Psychological objective : concentration and focus.

Tactical objective : propensity to movement.

Technical objective: passing and receiving.

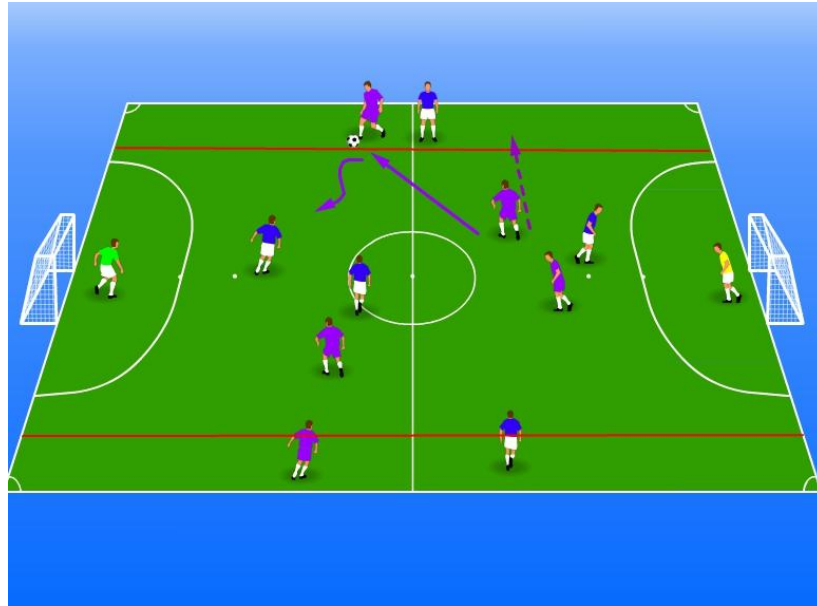
Coordination objective : reaction ability.

The movement: *SMALL SIDED GAME*

Description: game of 5vs5 with a goalkeeper. On the field the players play a 3vs3 with 2 players from each team on the flanks. The rule is for all players to move.

When the ball is passed to the outside player he moves inside and the passer takes his place outside.

The game is played with hands at first scoring with a header, then the players can use their feet, limiting the touches available to the outside players.



Psychological objective : focus, concentration, communication.

Tactical objective : overlapping (using the width to create space and to attack from the flanks if defenders are compact), wall pass.

Coordination objective : reaction, anticipation.

The movement: *GAME WITH A THEM*

Description: two fields are side by side with two small goals. A 4vs4 is played on one field. When the coach passes a ball on the other field the third team on this field will play against one of the two teams on the other field called by the coach.



- Psychological objective** : concentration.
- Tactical objective** : propensity to movement.
- Coordination objective** : reaction ability



“WHO”



“WHO”:

Once the players have understood the concept of movement with the progressions outlined earlier, the next step is to focus on who. **WHICH PLAYER** must make the **MOVEMENT TO UNMARK** himself.

We will present an example to training session to explain our players the concept of movement:

“WHO”: WARM UP GAME

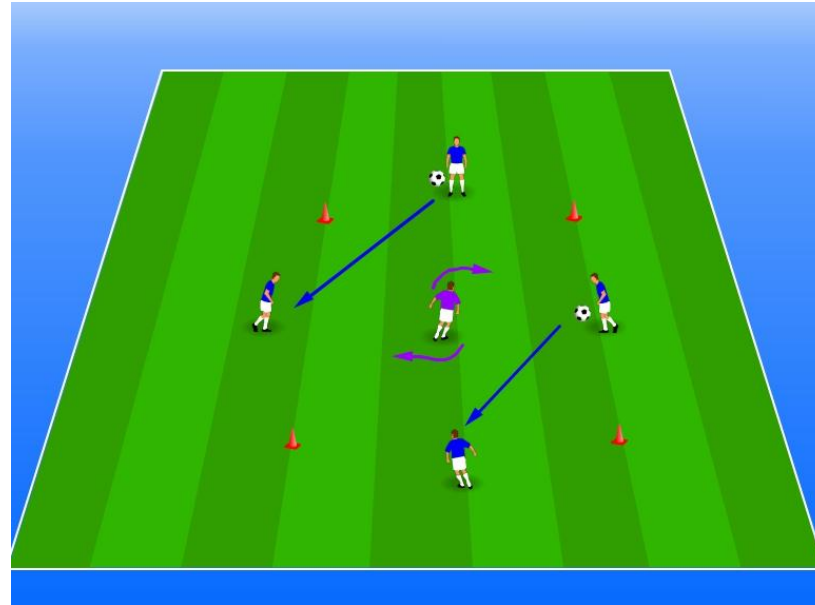
Description: **GAME 1:** four players are on the side of the box and 1 player in the middle. The objective is to hit the back of the player in the middle with the ball. The game will stimulate the tactical thought of the players to find the right player who will be able to hit the back of the player in the middle, the Who.

GAME 2: In this game there are only 3 players who can move in the empty side of the field

Psychological objective : cooperation and communication.

Tactical objective : who moves to reach the objective.

Coordination objective : reaction and anticipation ability.



“WHO”: TECHNICAL EXERCISE

Description: the game is played with the hands.

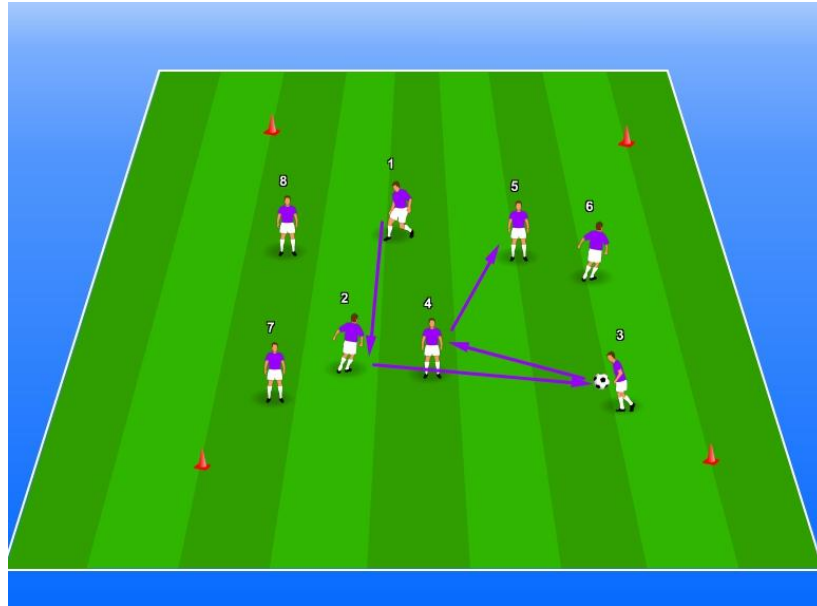
Step I: players are assigned numbers and player 1 passes to player 2 and so on (if players stand still they are asked to step outside of the field)

Step II: the pass is not valid over the head.

Step III: Passes behind the shoulder are not allowed.

Step IV: only forward passes are allowed.

Step V: players can use their feet.



Psychological objective : concentration, focus and communication.

Tactical objective : who moves to receive the ball?

Technical objective: Passing and receiving

Coordination objective: space and time orientation

“WHO”: SMALL SIDED GAME

Description: game.

GAME 1: the field is divided in 2 zone attacking and defending zone. One of the 2 defenders can follow the play and move in the attacking zone to create numerical advantage: which defender goes?
 Step II: who runs back to defend when possession of the ball is lost? (obviously the player closer to the goal).

GAME 2:
 The field is divided in two vertical zones. Players can move in both zones provided the flanks are occupied by at least two players of the same team: which of the 2 players move?



- Psychological objective** : concentration, focus
- Tactical objective** : who moves to create numerical advantage (who comes back to defend?)
- Coordination objective** : anticipation, reaction and space time orientation abilities



“WHO”: GAME WITH A THEME

Description: all the players must touch the ball before they can score. This type of game helps the players to think who has not touched the ball, which player needs to move into space and unmark



Psychological objective : cooperation, concentration and communication.

Tactical objective : who moves, organization and strategy.

Coordination objective : space and time orientation, anticipation and reaction abilities.



“WHERE”



“WHERE”:

The next concept of Where, is to teach the players where to run to unmark themselves. An effective movement of unmarking has to be made in the right place. It is important the players understand this concept.

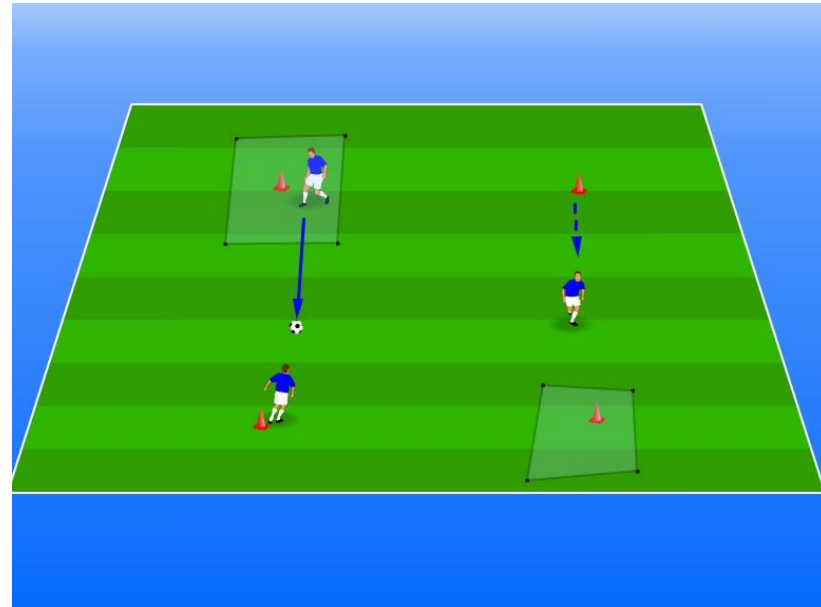
Let's see a training session to teach the players the concept of movement:

“WHERE”: WARM UP GAME

Description: 3 players pass the ball making sure the player with the ball has two lateral options:

Progression:

- 1) Play with the hands
- 2) Play with the feet
- 3) Introduce a player in the middle to disturb the 3 players that are on the corners of the box.



Psychological objective : focus and concentration.

Tactical objective : where to move to give two options to the teammate with the ball.

Coordination objective : anticipation and reaction abilities.

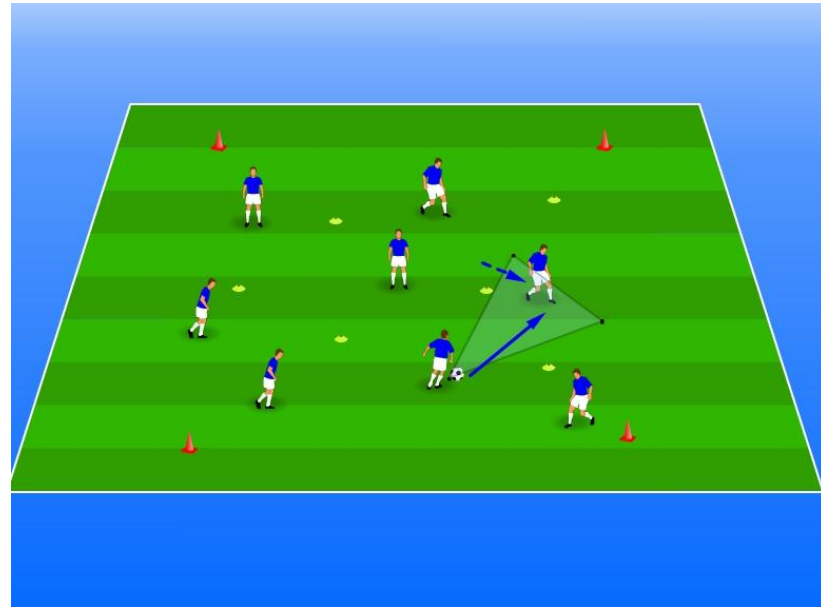
Technical objective: passing and receiving.

“WHERE”: TECHNICAL EXERCISE

Description: 8 players are in a 25x25 field with cones scattered around. Players must pass the ball and receive it between the cones. The players are required to move in the channel of the cones

Variation:

- Every 3 passes the players must play a give and go
- Every 3 passes players must make an overlap run
- Introduce 4 PASSIVE opponents who move and constantly change the passing lanes.



Psychological objective : concentration, focus and communication.

Tactical objective : where to move to unmark, concept of passing lane, overlapping, wall pass, support.

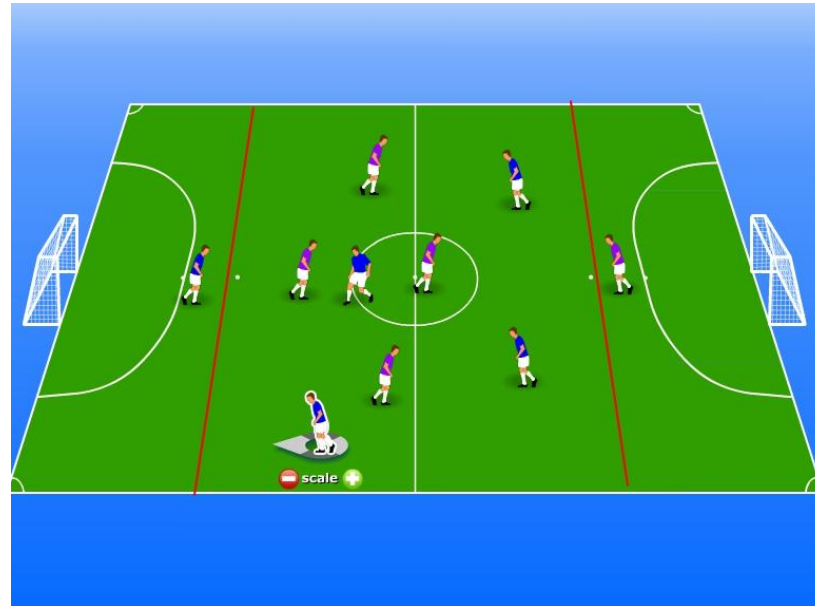
Technical objective: passing and receiving

Coordination objective : space and time orientation, anticipation and reaction abilities.

“WHERE”: GAME WITH A THEME

Description: the field is divided in 3 zones. In the center zone the players play a 4vs4, in the end zones there is 1 forward. When the ball is played to the forward he will turn and play 1vs1 with the goalkeeper after making a run in of the 3 small nets.

Variation: the forward plays the ball back to one of his 4 teammates who must take a shot first timer.



Psychological objective : focus.

Tactical objective : where to move to receive the ball.

Coordination objective : space and time orientation, anticipation and reaction abilities.



“HOW”

“HOW”:

The how to unmark is a key concept. Very often players, although they understand the concept of movement, of who must move in open space to unmark and where to move to unmark, they do not move correctly.

One of the most common mistakes is that they run on a straight line. The run on a straight run is not effective because:

- ✓ It is easy to fall in an offside trap. The best forwards never make straight runs. The width of the run is as flat as the player is closest to the penalty box.
- ✓ It does not allow for a good peripheral vision: a diagonal run allows a wider field vision, and the player is more aware of the positions of his teammates and opponents.

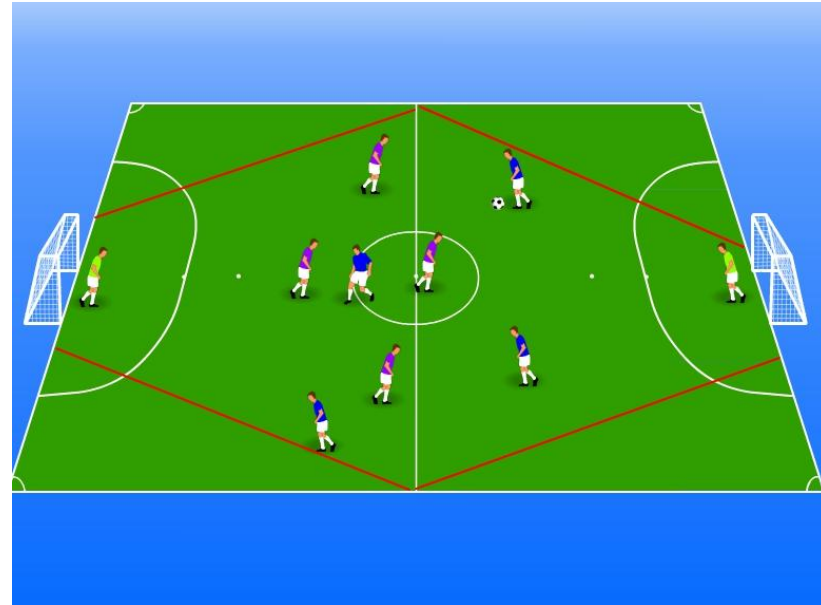
Let's see an exercise that trains the diagonal movement:

“HOW”: GAME WITH A THEME 1

Description: the characteristic of this mini-game is the shape of the field, a diamond shape. The diamond shape will force the players to:

- Open up with a diagonal run when in possession of the ball
- Cut towards the goal when approaching the goal.

As we can see the straight runs would not be effective on this type of field.



Psychological objective : critical thought.

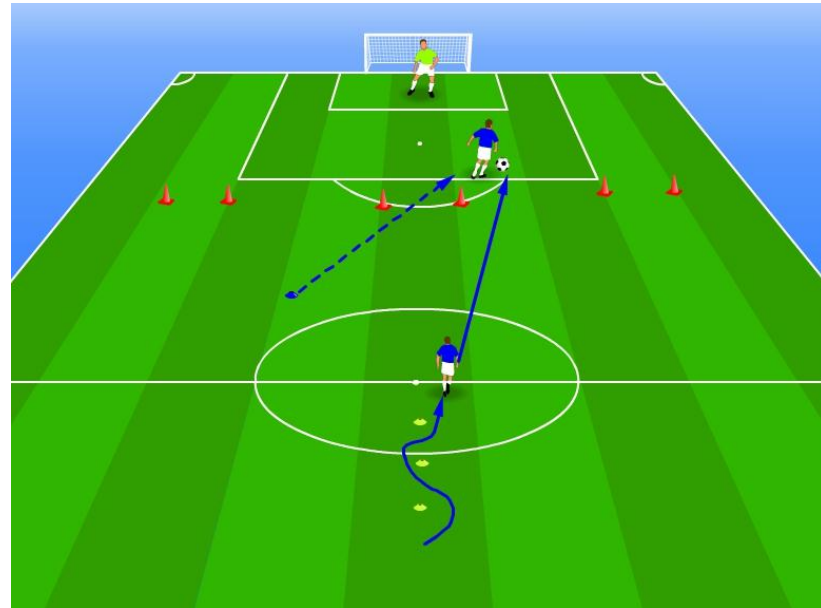
Tactical objective : diagonal runs/cut, width when building up the play and verticalize towards the goal. Concentration when defending

Coordination objective : space and time orientation, anticipation and reaction abilities

***“HOW”*: SPECIFIC EXERCISE FOR FORWARD PLAYERS #.1 and #.2**

Description exercise 1:

A center midfielder dribbles through the cones and pass to the forward who attacks one of the 2 small nets around the edge of the penalty box. It is obvious the pass between the goals forces the forward to make a diagonal run.



Description exercise 2:

The back line moves according to the pressure or not on the ball (defensive elastic). The forwards move with the back line avoiding to get off-side and to provide depth with the movement of **Compass**





“WHEN”

“WHEN”:

When to unmark is the most difficult element to teach. At the same time it is the most effective concept when applied for the success of the offensive play.

At the end of this curriculum on marking, it is necessary to introduce a series of exercises where the timing of the run is key.

➤ the fundamental concept of unmarking is that the movement must be made (the WHEN) at the same time our teammate with the ball is able to make a pass, therefore:

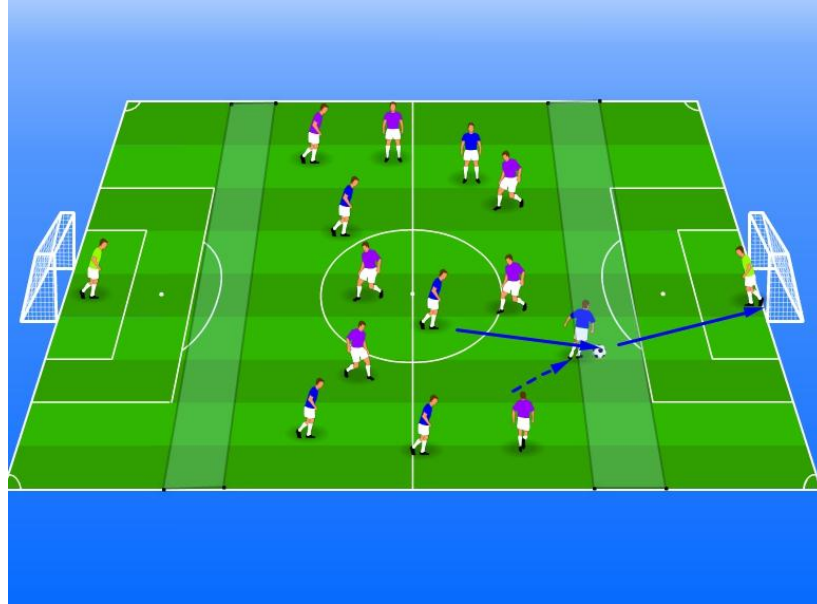
- if our teammate must still receive the ball and we move to unmark, we will be anticipating the play!
- If our teammate has already full control of the ball and we delay to unmark, we are late in the play!

“WHEN”: GAME WITH A THEME 1

Description: 6vs6 game where players try to score only after they time a run inside the free zones. If Player A times the run and receive the ball inside the zone, he can control the ball and shoot.

Variation:

1. Players play with hands and score on a volley
2. Players play with their feet and score with a shot after receiving the ball
3. Players play with their feet and the pass in the zone must be on the ground
4. Players play with their feet and finish one timer after receiving the ball in the zone.



“WHEN”: EXERCISE 1

Description: In a 25x25 or 30x30 field, two teams of 6 or 7 players play a mini game. The objective of the game is to keep possession and after 5 consecutive passes the ball can be passed outside the field and if the ball is controlled by a teammate the team gets 1 point.



