

**PETERBOROUGH  
UNITED**

# Darren Ferguson Playing through teams in a 4-4-2 formation

**Overview:**

This session is about wide players or strikers receiving in between the lines. The focus is on quality of passing and timing of movements, and it's a scenario that we want to see come into play regularly when we use 4-4-2.

The zoned nature of the practice means we know where opposition players will be and can train with that in mind. It's a dynamic way of linking up play, and builds communication and rapport between team mates, particularly the wide players and strikers. In our league game against Sheffield Wednesday last season we used this session to devastating effect, regularly affecting their full-backs and playing balls down the side of their centre-backs on the way to a vital home win.

## PLAYING THROUGH TEAMS IN A 4-4-2 FORMATION

**SET-UP**

**AREA**

Up to the space between the boxes, full width

**EQUIPMENT**

Balls, cones, goals

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

Up to 11v11

**SESSION TIME**

Screens 10mins each, Zone Conditioned game 30mins

**What do I get the players to do?**

**Screen 1**

In the first screen, the ball is played across the central midfielders and into the wide player, who steps in to play as the ball arrives. He moves the ball on first time.

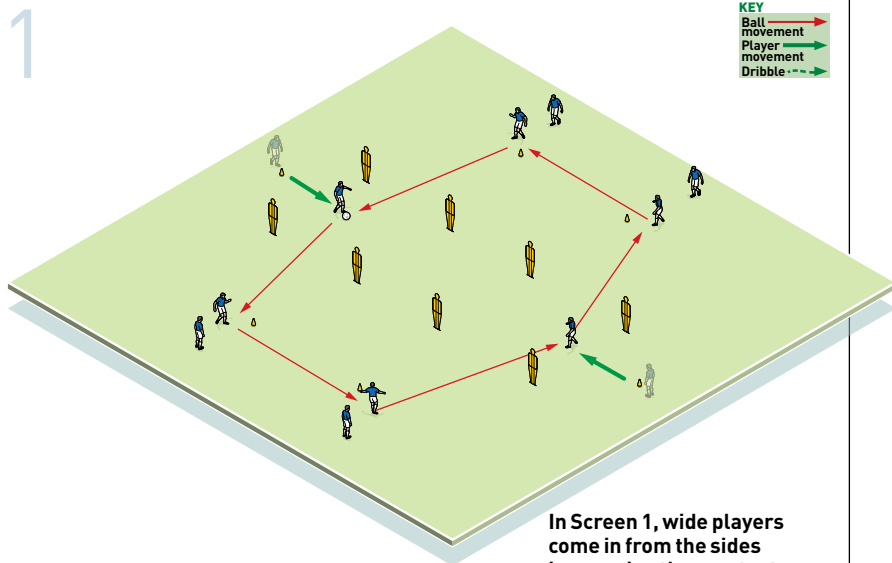
**Screen 2**

In the progression, the player steps in, controls, turns, then passes it out the other side, ensuring the run is made outside the wide mannequin. The timing of the movement here is vital in terms of receiving the pass and moving it to the right man whilst playing between the lines.

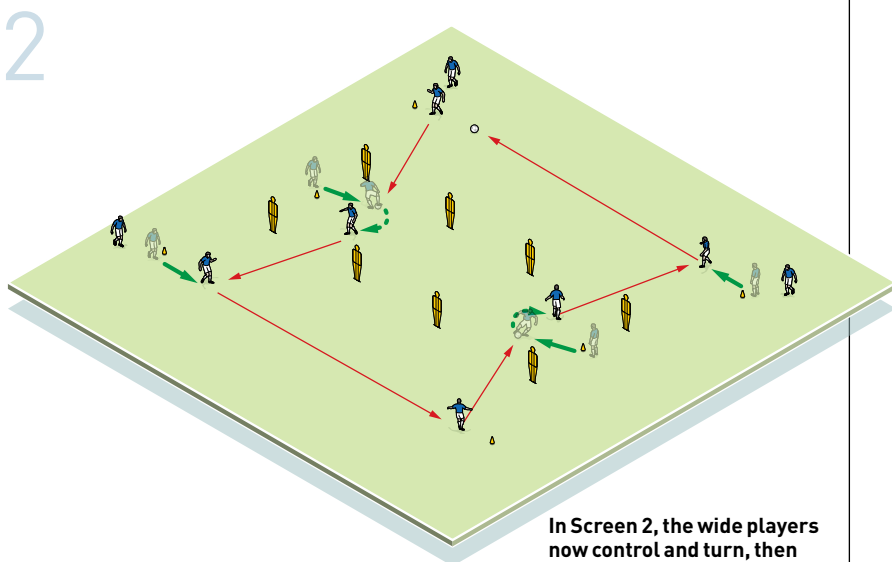
We will also add in variations to keep players on their toes – for instance, instructing quick one-tuos with the end player.

**Screen 3**

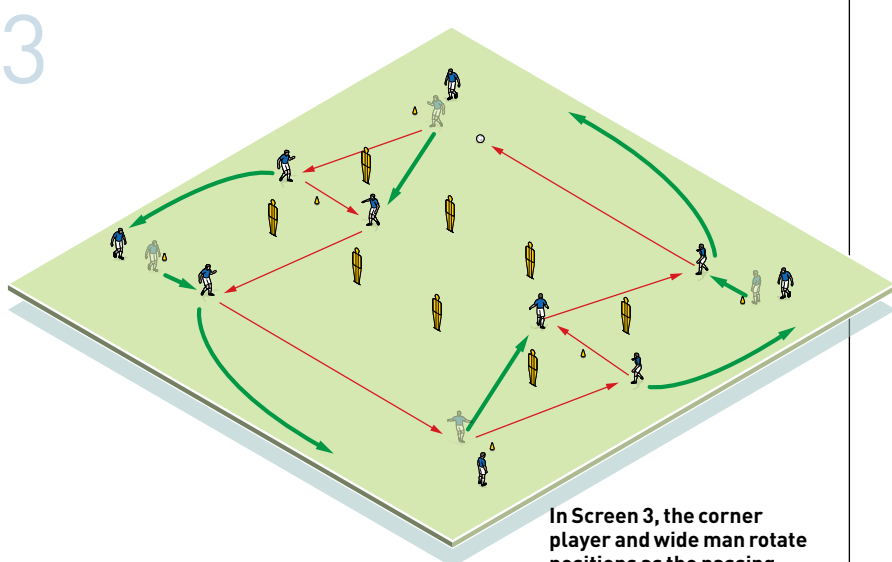
The next screen looks at the timing of rotation. Here, players on the corners pass into the middle then jog down the side ready to rotate with the central player. As the corner man runs towards



In Screen 1, wide players come in from the sides in ensuring the constant movement of the ball around the circuit



In Screen 2, the wide players now control and turn, then pass out the other side



In Screen 3, the corner player and wide man rotate positions as the passing circuit gradually increases in complexity



**Darren Ferguson**

**PETERBOROUGH UNITED**

Darren Ferguson's Peterborough United side are hotly tipped to make a return to the Sky Bet Championship this season having been relegated back to League One on the final day of last season in cruel circumstances.

The last-minute goal that sent Posh down was hard to take for Darren, son of Sir Alex Ferguson, whose side once against provided rich entertainment for the London Road faithful, playing a brand of expansive, attacking football – indeed, their tally of 66 goals was higher than Hull City, whose second-placed finish earned them promotion to the Premier League.

With the exception of a short spell in charge of Preston North End, Ferguson has now been in charge at Peterborough for six years, in that time earning the club two promotions.

“This is a passing drill so we want to see quality of pass and speed of pass in attempting to break the lines.”

**PLAYING THROUGH TEAMS IN A 4-4-2 FORMATION**

his team mate, he instructs as to where and how the switch will occur, enabling the two individuals to comfortably achieve the learning objective, namely to understand the rotation and the clearing space for a team mate to run into.

**Zone Conditioned game**

Setting up as shown, the defending team (yellows) must stay in their zones, while blue attackers can move between areas in creating overloads.

Play as you would do a normal game, but as soon as possession is turned over, the other team assumes the role of attackers and can then move about with those privileges.

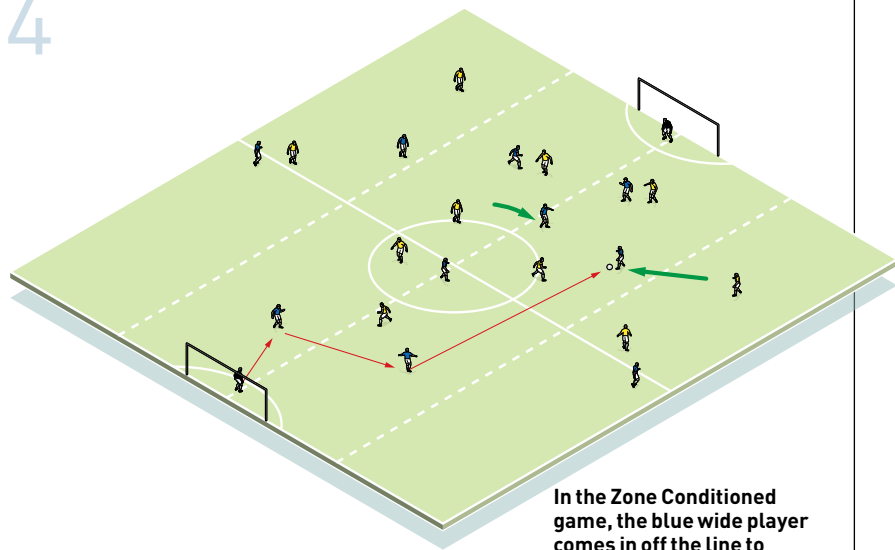
**How do I progress the game?**

As a progression, the full-backs are allowed to follow wide players into the next zone.

**What are the key things to look out for?**

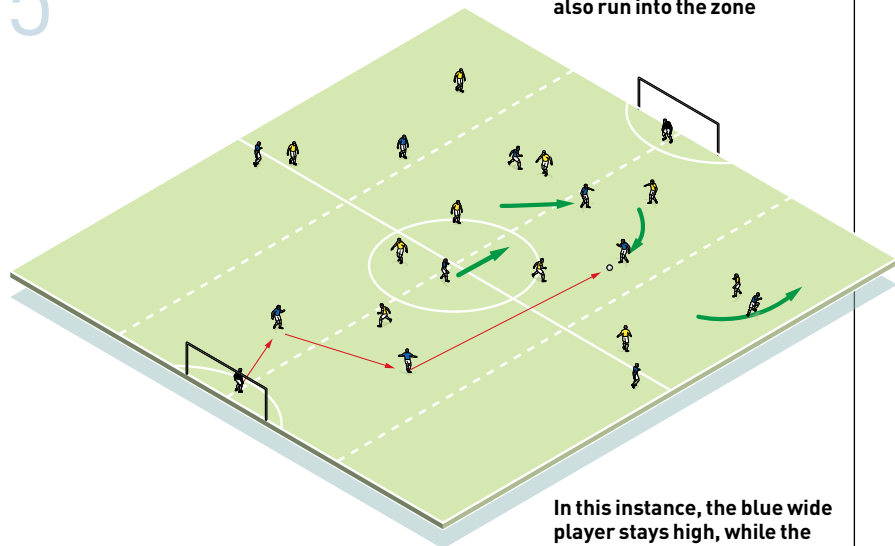
This is a passing drill so we want to see quality and speed of pass in attempting to break the lines. Receiving between and in behind players is obviously essential, as is the timing of movement coming in off the line. When on the attack, full-backs must use their first touch to open up with the intention of either playing down the side or inside. ■

4



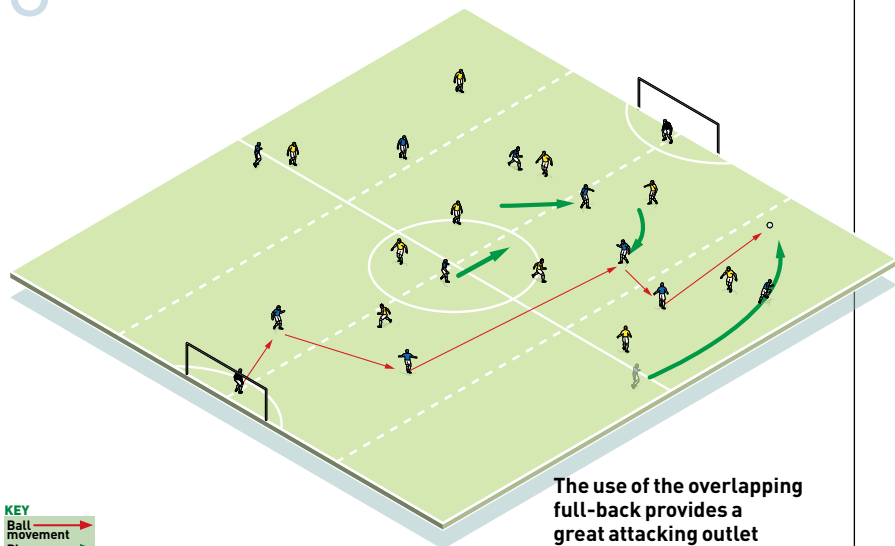
In the Zone Conditioned game, the blue wide player comes in off the line to receive the ball, and creates an attacking 3v1 overload, with a central attacker having also run into the zone

5



In this instance, the blue wide player stays high, while the striker comes to play in the pocket

6



The use of the overlapping full-back provides a great attacking outlet and equalises the player numbers in the wide zone

**KEY**  
Ball movement →  
Player movement →  
Dribble →