

Box-to-box midfielder

Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard have enjoyed worldwide acclaim playing in this “box to box” role. The term is used to describe a midfielder who has excellent stamina and can run up and down the pitch to score goals and stop the opposition from scoring.



What you tell your players the session is about

1. Improving your stamina.
2. Making forward runs to score goals.
3. Tracking your opponent's runs to stop them scoring.

Session planner

Warm-up 5 mins	Session 15 mins	Development 15 mins	Game situation 20 mins	Warm-down 5 mins
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Activity	Kit	Outcome
Warm-up	Balls	Players use quick movement and change of direction in “Cops and robbers”, from <i>The Ultimate Football Warm-Ups Manual</i> , exercise 87
Session	Cones, balls, one goal	The midfielder passes and runs to shoot and score
Development	One goal, balls, cones	The midfielder passes and then makes runs into the box in order to score a goal
Game situation	Two goals, balls, bibs, cones	The midfielder must make runs to score and also runs to track their opponents and stop them scoring
Warm-down	n/a	Gentle jogging and stretching exercises



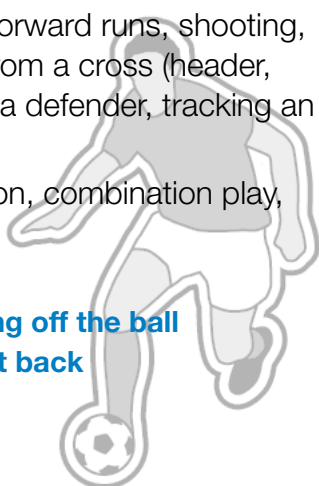
Where it fits

Individual skills: Passing, forward runs, shooting, communicating, scoring from a cross (header, volley), movement to lose a defender, tracking an opponent's run

Team skills: Communication, combination play, team work

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What to think about

- Midfielders that can score goals take pressure off the team's forwards.
- Making late runs into the opponent's box can be very effective as the defenders are occupied by watching the ball and often don't mark the runner.
- Midfielders who can work hard and cover lots of ground can wear down their opponent in the early part of the game then reap the benefits later in the match.





Set-up

Use half a pitch (30 yards wide by 40 yards long for seven-a-side or 50 yards wide by 70 yards long for 11-a-side) for the session and development.

Use a 50 yards long by 30 yards wide area for the game.



Session – 15 mins

Use two teams. Players on each team alternate being the box-to-box midfielder.

To start, the midfielder (1) makes a one-two with the first attacker (2) then makes a pass to the next attacker (3) and runs on to the return pass to shoot at goal.

The midfielder becomes the second attacker. The second attacker becomes the first attacker and the first attacker joins the line of midfielders.

The next team then takes its turn. Continue until all players have had a shot and rotate attackers as well.

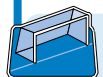


Development – 15 mins

To progress, include running forward and scoring from a cross. The midfielder (1) passes to the first attacker (2) and runs to receive a return pass.

Now the midfielder plays a pass out wide to the next attacker (3) who dribbles up the wing and crosses into the box.

The midfielder must make a gut-busting run at top speed to get into the box and score from the cross. Swap players as in the session so everyone practises each role.



Game situation – 20 mins

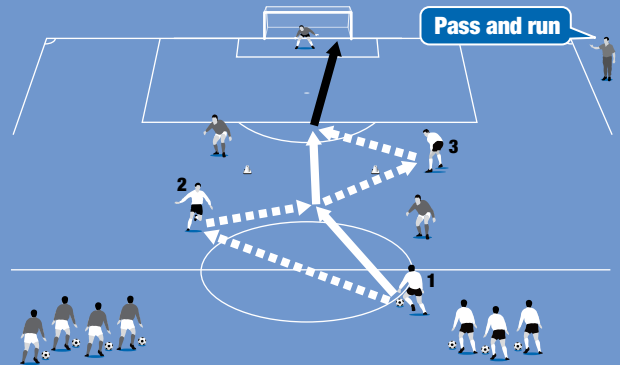
Using two teams, team A has a player on each wing and other team members try to score from a crossing situation. Players pass the ball wide and make forward runs into the box.

Team B has two forwards outside the pitch and next to the opponent's goal. Players on this team make forward passes to the players next to the goal and then make runs so they can receive the ball back for a shot at goal.

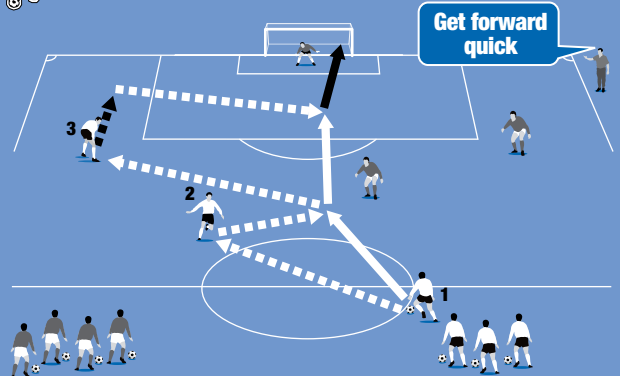
It is important you explain the importance of not only attacking but also tracking runs and defending against your opponent's forwards runs.

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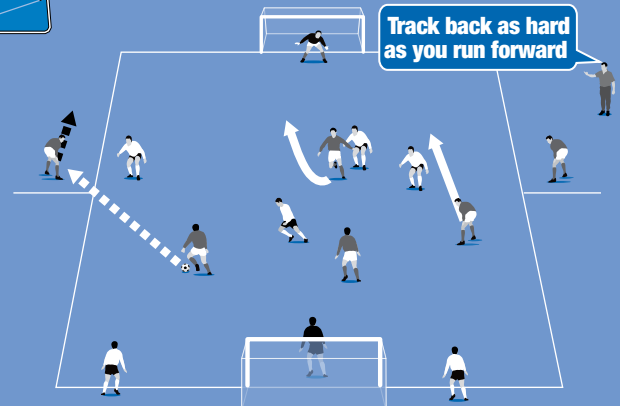
player movement \Rightarrow pass/serve $\square\square\square\Rightarrow$
run with ball \dashrightarrow shot \rightarrow



Each midfielder takes turns to play two one-twos and runs forward to shoot at goal.



Each midfielder makes two passes and then runs hard to try and score from the cross.



One team tries to score from a cross while the other tries to score from a pass back from the players on each side of the goal.