NEW!

SOCCER ATTACK!

80 Shooting & Finishing Drills

Michael Beale
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Introduction

At its heart, football is a simple game. The difference between winning and losing comes down to your team’s ability to score more goals than your opponents.

Everybody loves to watch attacking football; club sides like Arsenal and Manchester United and international teams like Brazil and Holland are followed by millions of people who do not necessarily support those teams, but who enjoy watching fast, incisive and attractive attacking football.

The thrill of scoring a goal and the feeling it gives you is very hard to describe. This is the same for a young player playing his first game, or a veteran on a Sunday park pitch, as it is for a top professional in the World Cup final. However, one thing is for sure, once you score that first goal, you are immediately in love with the game and the feeling of scoring a goal.

This book aims to increase your team’s chances of creating and converting goal scoring opportunities. The drills aim to build confidence in possession of the ball and enhance your player’s understanding of when, where and what to do in the final 3rd of the pitch.

The drills are designed to allow maximum time in contact with a ball and include lots of variation on movement and choice of action by the players. As a coach you can modify the drills and add your own rules that fall into line with your own tactics and vision of how you would like your team to play.

Often the best attacking play is instinctive and “off the cuff”; however, in your training sessions you must be able to show the players all the possibilities that are open to them when attacking. Once you have opened up your players awareness, then they will be more flexible and creative in game situations. This in turn will lead to more goal scoring chances being created.

This book is divided into three key areas of training:

1 – Unopposed build up and combination play
2 – Opposed drills
3 – Small-Sided Games

As we go through the book, we will describe why each area is so important in creating the building blocks of training and learning.

Michael Beale
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Setup

Area

You may not be able to exactly recreate the suggested area for any number of reasons. The size is by no means an absolute but should not be deviated from too excessively. As a general rule 10 yards is equal to 7 strides. You can use this simple equivalent to mark out the area you need; 20 yards = 14 strides, 30 yards = 21 strides etc.

Players

Each drill in this book shows a recommended number of players needed to run that particular drill. The drills can, on the whole, be easily expanded and many assume that you will have a queue of players that keep the drill ticking over while your players collect errant shots and make their way back to the starting point.

Equipment

One of the beauties of the game is that it can be played almost anywhere with a reasonably flat surface. If you do not have some of the equipment listed in the Setup section, you can, of course, substitute equipment you do have. Training tops become cones, corner flags become goalposts, parents and coaches become mannequins.

The Steps

The steps required to run each drill have been broken down into 3 sections, each relating to a numbered illustration showing what movements should be made within each step.

In section 3 (Small-Sided Games) some of the games are continuous so the steps shown here are in fact the initial rules and apply throughout the duration of the game.

Rotation

Some of the drills in this book operate on a more obvious rotation than others. A player takes his shot and then rejoins the back of the queue for example. Others require players to move from one station to the next taking on the role of attacker, defender or server. Others, such as the small-sided games in section 3, operate continuously for a set period of time.
SECTION 1 Unopposed build up and combination play

“Unopposed drills improve the technique, movement and, most importantly, the confidence of players when attacking the opponents’ goal. We start this section with simple two player combinations and gradually build into crossing areas and team build-up play in order to score a goal”
Unopposed build up and combination play

1 - Free Movement to Score

“This drill encourages your forwards to find and attack space beyond the back line.”

SETUP
Area: Half Pitch
Equipment: 3 Mannequins, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 4 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS

1. The midfielder makes an angled movement in order to receive a pass. He receives the ball side on and then dribbles towards the mannequin.
2. The midfielder looks up whilst dribbling and makes a through pass for the forward.
3. The forward receives the pass into space and then shoots at goal.

ROTATION

- The midfielder becomes the forward.
- The forward joins the queue to become the attacker.

KEY

Player Movement      Ball Movement

The midfielder moves to receive a pass.

The forward must time his run to stay onside.

The forward receives the ball in space and shoots at goal.
**Unopposed build up and combination play**

## 2 - Hat-Trick of Chances

“*Test your attackers with this simple drill which encourages a range of finishing techniques.*”

### SETUP

**Area:** Half Pitch  
**Equipment:** 3 Cones, 1 Goal  
**No. of Players:** 4 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

### THE STEPS

1. The shooting player passes into the target player and runs to receive a return pass and shoot.  
2. The shooting player reacts and runs to the goal line server in order to receive an aerial pass to head at goal.  
3. Finally, he runs to the last server and receives a pass to turn and shoot at goal.

### ROTATION

- The shooting player becomes the target player.  
- The target player joins the queue to become the attacker.

### KEY

![KEY](image)

*Player Movement  Ball Movement*

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1. The forward plays a one-two and shoots at goal.

2. Then runs into the box for a header...

3. ...before running out to receive a third ball for a final shot at goal.
"Get your strikers moving along the line and timing their runs to perfection to meet a through ball and beat the keeper."

**SETUP**

Area: 40 x 30 yards  
Equipment: 2 Cones, 2 Mannequins, 2 Goals  
No. of Players: 4 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

**THE STEPS**

1. The dribbling player runs with the ball at full pace towards the mannequin.  
The forward makes a run along the line of the mannequins and then into the space behind as the dribbling player makes a through pass.  
2. The forward attempts to score with a first time shot.  
3. Immediately the attack comes from the opposite end.  
The original dribbling player is now a forward and must react quickly to make his run and score at the opposite end.

**ROTATION**

- The dribbling player becomes the forward.  
- The forward joins the queue to become the dribbling player.  
- The target player joins the queue to become the attacker.

**KEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player Movement</th>
<th>Ball Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The forward must time his run to stay onside.

Before finishing the dribbling player’s through ball.

The dribbling player becomes the new forward and attacks the opposite end.
“Keep your strikers on their toes as they try to get back onside for a second chance to score.”

SETUP
Area: 40 x 30 yards
Equipment: 2 Cones, 2 Mannequins, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 4 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS
1. The attacker dribbles, completes a skill (such as a stepover) and then shoots at goal.
2. Now the attacker reacts to quickly get back onside.
   Once back onside, the attacker makes another run in behind the mannequin as a 2nd ball is played into space by the coach.
3. The forward races after the ball and gets a 2nd shot at goal.

ROTATION
• The attacker joins the back of the queue on the opposite side ready for their next turn.

...before latching onto a through ball for another chance to score.
Unopposed build up and combination play

5 - Yorke and Cole

“This practice enables both strikers to combine in order to shoot at goal and is reminiscent of Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole in their Manchester Utd. heyday.”

**SETUP**

Area: 40 x 30 yards  
Equipment: 2 Cones, 1 Goal  
No. of Players: 4 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

**THE STEPS**

1. The black striker comes short and plays a one-two with his team mate.  
   Now a longer pass is made into the white striker.  
   The white striker now sets the grey striker to shoot at goal.
2. Immediately both players react.  
   The white player calls for a pass from his team mate.  
   The white player now dummies this pass and spins to receive a lay off from the black striker.
3. The white striker now shoots at goal.

**ROTATION**

- The players join the back of the queue for the other role ready for their next turn.

**KEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player Movement</th>
<th>Ball Movement</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Sharp, accurate passing releases the black striker for a shot at goal.

The white striker dummies the pass and spins to receive a layoff.

The white striker is now through on goal for a chance to shoot.
Unopposed build up and combination play

6 - Score and Assist

“Can the first attacker finish his chance before spinning to lay-off a pass from his teammate and create a second opportunity?”

SETUP
Area: 40 x 30 yards
Equipment: 2 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 2 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS
1. Player 1 dribbles and shoots at goal.
2. Immediately Player 1 spins and plays a wall pass for Player 2 to shoot at goal.
3. Player 1 then follows the shot in order to get any rebounds off of the goalkeeper or posts.

ROTATION
• The players switch roles for the next attack.

Player 1 dribbles with the ball and takes a shot.

He must react quickly to play a one-two with Player 2...

...and follows Player 2’s shot to capitalize on any rebounds.
7 - Combination Play to Score (Part 1)

“This drill is perfect for encouraging attacking midfielders to support the forwards and turn possession into a goal scoring opportunity.”

SETUP
Area: 40 x 30 yards
Equipment: 3 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 3 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS
1. To start the drill, Player 1 passes into Players 2 and 3.
2. Players 2 and 3 combine as Player 1 makes a supporting run.
3. Players 2 and 3 make a through-pass for Player 1 to shoot at goal.

ROTATION
• Player 1 becomes Player 2.
• Player 2 becomes Player 3.
• Player 3 joins the queue to become Player 1.

KEY
Player Movement      Ball Movement
“Develop the midfielder’s decision making as they must choose whether to shoot or cross if sent wide.”

**SETUP**

Area: 40 x 30 yards
Equipment: 4 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 4 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

**THE STEPS**

1. Player 4 passes into Players 1, 2 and 3 who combine with each other.
2. After passing, Player 4 runs to receive a through pass in order to shoot at goal.
3. If Player 4 ends up in a wide area then he must improvise and cross the ball for the other players.

**ROTATION**

- Player 4 joins the target players.
- Player 1 becomes the new starting player.

If he is sent wide, Player 1 must decide whether to shoot or cross for the other players.
“Great strikers can score with any part of their body. Set your players on the road to greatness with this exercise to get them scoring with either foot.”

**SETUP**

Area: 40 x 30 yards  
Equipment: 4 Cones, 2 Goals  
No. of Players: 6 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

**THE STEPS**

1. The starting player makes a long pass into the coach and runs to receive a lay off.  
2. The player now shoots with one foot.  
3. After shooting, the player reacts and runs to receive a 2nd ball from the server and shoots with the other foot.

**ROTATION**

- After completing the circuit, the player becomes a server for the next shooter.

**KEY**

Player Movement  
Ball Movement
“Get your strikers and midfielders combining in this exercise that requires a neat lay off and a precise threaded ball to set up the shot across the ‘keeper.”

**SETUP**

Area: 40 x 30 yards  
Equipment: 4 Mannequins, 2 Cones, 2 Goals  
No. of Players: 6 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

**THE STEPS**

Both groups work at the same time

1. The forwards make a movement off the mannequin in order to receive a pass.
2. The forwards set the pass to the supporting midfielders.
3. The midfielders then return the pass into space for the forwards to spin and run after. The forwards now shoot across the goal.

**ROTATION**

- The midfielder becomes the forward for the next turn.

**KEY**

Player Movement  Ball Movement

Encourage the players to shoot across the keeper.
Unopposed build up and combination play

11 - Crossing Alley 1

“This drill encourages wide players to practice crossing the ball using both feet and gives your strikers practice at finishing crosses.”

SETUP
Area: 40 x 30 yards
Equipment: 6 Cones, 2 Goals
No. of Players: 9 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

THE STEPS
1. The wide player dribbles to the opposite corner and crosses the ball.
2. The attackers must use realistic movements to get into the box and attempt to score from the cross.
3. Once a cross has been made, a different wide player dribbles straight away in the opposite direction to make a cross on the other goal.

ROTATION
• The drill runs continually for a set period of time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

Once a shot has been taken an attack is launched in the opposite direction.
Unopposed build up and combination play

12 - Crossing Alley 2

“This development of the previous exercise tests your wingers’ ability to get the ball into the box first time.”

SETUP
Area: 40 x 30 yards
Equipment: 6 Cones, 2 Goals
No. of Players: 9 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

THE STEPS
1. The wide player receives a pass from the coach and plays a longer pass to the opposite player.
2. The opposite player sets the ball back so that the wide player can run onto the ball and cross 1st time.
3. The attackers must use realistic movements to get into the box and attempt to score from the cross.

ROTATION
• The drill runs continually for a set period of time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

KEY
Player Movement Ball Movement

The wide player receives a pass and plays it long to the opposite corner.

The wide player runs to receive a lay off...

...and crosses for the attackers to score.
Unopposed build up and combination play

13 - Crossing Alley 3

“A further progression of the previous drills gets your wingers changing pace, covering half the ground without the ball and half with it before crossing to the strikers.”

SETUP
Area: 40 x 30 yards
Equipment: 6 Cones, 2 Goals
No. of Players: 9 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

THE STEPS
1. The wide player starts by playing a one-two with the coach.
2. He then dribbles to a crossing position in the opposite corner.
3. The attackers must use realistic movements to get into the box and attempt to score from the cross.

ROTATION
• The drill runs continually for a set period of time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

KEY
Player Movement Ball Movement

The wide player plays into the coach and runs to receive a return pass.

He then dribbles the ball to the opposite corner...

...before crossing for the attackers.
“Any team that can get their fullbacks into crossing positions will create chances. The overlap run gets them into a dangerous area to put in a first time cross.”

**SETUP**
Area: 40 x 30 yards
Equipment: 6 Cones, 2 Goals
No. of Players: 9 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

**THE STEPS**
1. The wide player starts by passing into the coach.
2. He makes an overlapping run in order to cross the ball from the opposite corner.
3. The attackers must use realistic movements to get into the box and attempt to score from the cross.

**ROTATION**
- The drill runs continually for a set period of time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

**KEY**
- Player Movement
- Ball Movement
"The build-up play becomes more intricate in this further progression of Crossing Alley as the wide players link up to get into a dangerous crossing area."

**SETUP**

Area: 40 x 30 yards  
Equipment: 7 Cones, 2 Goals  
No. of Players: 9 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

**THE STEPS**

1. The starting player passes into the wide player who immediately sets the ball back.  
2. The starting player passes the ball into space for the wide player to run after and cross.  
3. The attackers must use realistic movements to get into the box and attempt to score from the cross.

**ROTATION**

- For the next attack the starting player becomes the new wide player and crosses on the opposite goal.  
- The drill runs continually for a set period of time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

**KEY**

Player Movement  
Ball Movement

The central player runs to the touchline to receive a return pass and cross for the attackers.
“Finding the space to cross does not always come from a run straight down the wing. In this exercise the wingers must decide whether to cut inside or head for the by-line.”

SETUP
Area: 30 x 30 yards
Equipment: 4 Mannequins, 2 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 6 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS
1. The wide players work towards goal and have a choice on the cross to be made.
2. The wide players complete a skill to go past the mannequin on the outside and make an out-swinging cross using their right foot.
3. Or, they can cut inside the mannequins and make an in-swinging cross using their left foot.

ROTATION
• The drill runs continually for a set period of time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

KEY
Player Movement      Ball Movement

...cut inside and make an inswinging cross.
Unopposed build up and combination play

17 - One-Two Cross

“Release your wide players to cross for the attackers who must time their runs to arrive in the box at the same time as the ball.”

SETUP

Area: Half Pitch
Equipment: 6 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 10 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS

1. One of the deep wide players makes a one-two with his team mate to get into a crossing position.
2. He crosses for the two attackers to score.
3. The next attack comes from the opposite side.
   Keep the attacks flowing from side to side.

ROTATION

• The drill runs continually for a set period of time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

The deepest wide player plays a one-two with his team mate...

...and crosses for the attackers to score.

The next attack starts from the opposite side.
Unopposed build up and combination play

18 - Overlap Cross

“In this progression from the previous practice - One-Two Cross - the wide players overlap and pull the cross back from the byline for the forwards to attack.”

SETUP
Area: Half Pitch
Equipment: 6 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 10 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS
1. The deepest wide player passes the ball to his team mate and makes an overlapping run.
2. The two attackers make runs into the box and attempt to score from the cross.
3. The next attack comes from the opposite side.

ROTATION
• The practice runs continually for a set period of time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

KEY
Player Movement  Ball Movement

The deepest wide player passes to his teammate and makes an overlapping run...

...before crossing for the attackers to score.

The next attack starts from the opposite side.
Unopposed build up and combination play

19 - Two Cross Combination

“For this quick-fire practice the wide player must complete both a one-two and an overlap to give the attackers two opportunities to score.”

SETUP

Area: Half Pitch
Equipment: 6 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 10 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS

1. The deepest wide player makes a one-two with his team mate and crosses for the attackers
2. The wide player that doesn’t cross must react and receive a 2nd pass from the coach.
3. The player then passes to the crossing wide player and makes an overlap to cross the ball into the box.
   The attackers have reacted from the first cross and made a 2nd run in order to try and score for a 2nd time.

ROTATION

• The next attack comes from the opposite wing. time before the attackers and crossers switch roles.

KEY

Player Movement | Ball Movement

The wide players play a one-two and cross for the attackers.

The coach passes in a second ball which is moved wide.

The player who received the ball from the coach overlaps and crosses for the attackers.
Unopposed build up and combination play

**20 - Power From Distance, Place in the Box**

“Develop your attacker’s full range of finishing with this two-strike drill to test both their power and precision.”

**SETUP**

- **Area:** 40 x 30 yards
- **Equipment:** 1 Mannequin, 1 Cone, 1 Goal
- **No. of Players:** 3 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

**THE STEPS**

1. The attacker dribbles, completes a skill on the mannequin/cone and shoots with power.
2. Immediately the attacker must react and run to receive a pass from the server.
3. The attacker now shoots from inside the box with a placed finish.

**ROTATION**

- The drill runs continually for a set period of time with attackers rejoining the back of the queue after each turn.

**KEY**

| Player Movement | Ball Movement |

The attacker dribbles past the mannequin...

...and shoots with power from outside the box.

Before moving for a close range finish with precision.
Unopposed build up and combination play

21 - Team Finishing Circuit

“Get your players combining with this varied finishing circuit that will test their ability to work as a team as well as a range of individual skills.”

SETUP

Area: Half Pitch
Equipment: 5 Cones, 2 Goals, 1 Mannequin
No. of Players: 8 Outfield, 2 Goalkeepers

THE STEPS

1. Player 1 dribbles, completes a skill on the mannequin and shoots at goal.
2. Immediately, Player 1 reacts and receives a pass from Player 2 and shoots for a 2nd time.
3. Player 2 immediately reacts and runs to play a one-two with Player 3. Player 3 now crosses for Players 4 and 5 to score.

ROTATION

• After each attack the players move to the next place on the circuit.

KEY

Player Movement      Ball Movement

Player 1 is first to take a shot.
He gets another chance from Player 2's pass.
Players 2 and 3 combine to cross for 4 and 5 to score.
Unopposed build up and combination play

22 - Build Up to Score 1

“Crisp, accurate passing combined with effective runs from the wide player and attackers will carve out chances time-after-time.”

SETUP
Area: Half Pitch
Equipment: 5 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 9 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS
1. The central player makes a pass out to the wide player.
   The wide player sets the ball back to the full back.
2. The full back plays a pass into the centre forward.
   The centre forward now plays the ball down the line for the wide player to run onto.
3. The wide player crosses for the two forwards to score.

ROTATION
• The central player becomes the full back.
• The full back becomes the wide player.
• The wide player becomes the forward on their side of the pitch.
• The forward returns to the beginning and waits to become a central midfielder.

KEY
Player Movement Ball Movement

A series of passes moves the ball wide to the full back.
The forward lays off a pass from the full back for the wide player.
The wide player crosses for the forwards to score.
“In this progression of the previous drill, a run from deep by the full-back enables the wide player to join the forwards giving three targets for the cross.”

**SETUP**

*Area:* Half Pitch  
*Equipment:* 5 Cones, 1 Goal  
*No. of Players:* 9 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

**THE STEPS**

1. The central player passes out to the wide player.  
2. The wide player dribbles inside and passes into the forward.  
   The forward plays a pass wide for the overlapping full-back to cross.  
3. The two forwards and the wide player get into the box to score from the full-back’s cross.

**ROTATION**

- The central player becomes the full-back.  
- The full-back becomes the wide player.  
- The wide player becomes the forward on their side of the pitch.  
- The forward returns to the beginning and waits to become a central midfielder.

**KEY**

- Player Movement
- Ball Movement

The ball is played out to the wide player.

He cuts inside and creates space for the full back to overlap.

The full back receives the ball and crosses for the wide player and two forwards to attack.
Unopposed build up and combination play

24 - Build Up to Score 3

“A further progression of drill 22. One of the forwards spins into the wide channel while the wide player covers ground to get on the end of the cross.”

SETUP
Area: Half Pitch
Equipment: 5 Cones, 1 Goal
No. of Players: 9 Outfield, 1 Goalkeeper

THE STEPS

1. The central player passes to the wide player who sets the ball back to the full back.
2. The full-back passes into the centre forward as the wide player starts his run.
3. The centre forward spins outside and into a wide area to cross for the wide player and the opposite forward to score.

ROTATION

- The central player becomes the full back.
- The full back becomes the wide player.
- The wide player becomes the forward on their side of the pitch.
- The forward returns to the beginning and waits to become a central midfielder.

KEY

Player Movement  Ball Movement

The players combine to move the ball to the full-back.

The wide player moves inside as the ball is played to the nearside forward.

He spins outside with the ball and crosses for the wide player and second forward to attack.
Unopposed build up and combination play

25 - Build Up to Score 4

“Finish a similar build-up scenario with a through ball to one of the forwards. Make sure the second forward spins into the box to benefit from a miss-hit shot or rebound.”

THE STEPS

1. The central player passes to the wide player who sets the ball back to the full back.
2. The full back passes into the centre forward who lays the ball off to the wide player who has made a supporting run inside.
3. The wide player now makes a through pass to the opposite centre forward to shoot. The nearside forward should follow up for any rebounds.

ROTATION

- The central player becomes the full back.
- The full back becomes the wide player.
- The wide player becomes the shooting forward.
- The shooting forward returns to the beginning and waits to become a central midfielder.

KEY

Player Movement      Ball Movement

The ball is played out to the full back.

The wide player moves infield to receive a layoff from the nearside striker.

Before releasing the striker to score.