



# PSV EINDHOVEN

*A One-Week Journal of Practices and Training Sessions*



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would like to thank Dave Clarke  
for his generosity and willingness  
to share this journal with  
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and its subscribers.

**A Week at PSV Eindhoven,  
Eindhoven, Holland  
April 19-24, 1999**

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### **Introduction**

I was fortunate to make contact with Bobby Robson, the head coach at PSV Eindhoven who invited me to Holland to observe his team and club in action for a week in April 1999.

PSV Eindhoven is one of the three biggest clubs in Holland along with Ajax and Feyenoord. They are all well known throughout Europe. The club has won 14 Dutch League Championships and was European Champion in 1988. Players of the caliber of Ruud Gullit and Romario have played for PSV; therefore, it was a pleasure to have the opportunity to travel to Eindhoven and experience first hand one of Europe's top clubs and meet with one of the best coaches in the world.

PSV has a professional section, an amateur football section and a youth football section. Two teams play professional football with the first team competing in the KPN Telecompetitie (Dutch First Division). The reserve team plays in the premier reserve league and is made up of talented youngsters, most of whom are a product of PSV's own youth development program.

As well as the first team and the reserve team, PSV has five amateur teams and eight youth teams. The youth teams from the B-team level and higher play in the national league. Two C-teams and one D-team play in a regional league. Because PSV's youth football is very much geared towards developing young talent, a great deal of attention is devoted to professional training. The youth section therefore has seven team coaches and a goalkeeper coach.

PSV plays at the 30,000 all-seater Philips Stadium in the center of Eindhoven. The club's own sports complex, "De Herdgang" is situat-

ed on the edge of town. It is comprised of training facilities for the professional teams (including a fitness center) and playing fields for the reserve, amateur and youth teams. The reserve, amateur and youth teams all play their home games at "De Herdgang". The complex has seven playing fields. A number of them have modern floodlighting installed, one of the fields also has a small stand and there is a goalkeeper training area, which includes a sandpit. The complex also features two canteens - for players and visitors - and an ultramodern fitness center.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank the following people for their help during my stay in Holland: Hennie and Corrie Doreleijers for their hospitality and for transporting me to and from "De Herdgang". Bobby Robson for inviting me to PSV and allowing me to observe his team, for the interviews and for letting me attend the game at De Graafschap. Pedro Salazar Hewitt for driving me to the game at De Graafschap. Patrick Greveraars and Frank van Kempen for their help throughout the youth sessions at De Herdgang. To PSV Eindhoven for allowing me access to their club and facilities for the week and to all other PSV staff who helped me out. I would also like to thank Ed Tremble (CJSA), Tom Goodman (Windsor World Class) and Pat O'Brien (Kelme USA) who sponsored the trip and made it all possible.

**PSV Eindhoven Professional Section  
Technical and Medical Staff**

Head Coach	Bobby Robson
Assistant Coach	Ernie Brandts
Goalkeeper Coach	Piet Schrijvers
Sports Physiologist	Luc van Agt
Senior Reserve Team Coach	Erwin Koeman
Assistant Reserve Team Coaches	Willy van der Kuylen & Leon Vlemmings
Club Scouts	Tony Bruins Sloth & Klaas van Baalen

**PSV Eindhoven Youth Section  
Technical Staff and Organization**

<b>Team</b>	<b>Coach</b>	<b>Practice</b>
A-1 Team	Willy van der Kuylen	6 times per week
A-2 Team	Geert Suylen	4 times per week
B-1 Team	Leon Vlemmings	4 times per week
B-2 Team	Robert de Wit	4 times per week
B-3 Team	Patrick Greveraars	4 times per week
C-1 Team	Frank van Kempen	3 times per week
C-2 Team	Mario Captein	3 times per week
D-1 Team	Patrick Grevaars	3 times per week
Goalkeeper Coach	Andre van Gerven	1 time per week

## Review

I spent one week at PSV Eindhoven and was able to observe all the youth and professional teams in action. The following are ten points that I feel stood out the most during the practices and games that I observed and the interviews that I conducted. They also help explain what makes PSV Eindhoven a successful soccer club.

### 1. Style of Play

PSV has a philosophy and a style of play that is based on passing and possession. Every team, from the U12's to the first team, play with the same style of play. Young players are taught the system and are conditioned from an early age to play with a PSV mentality. They are trained to fit the system, so that if they progress through the ranks of the club they know what is expected at the next level.

### 2. Passing vs. Dribbling

While it may seem from the Ajax videos that all Dutch players possess ball skills to match the great Johan Cryuff, the reality is quite different. There are players at PSV who can do tremendous things with the ball, but players with similar ability can be found in this country. Where the Dutch players are superior is in their ability to pass and maintain possession of the ball while under pressure. The philosophy of passing and possessing the ball with one and two touches is stressed from an early age. Players are taught that simplicity is the key to team success: control the ball, possess the ball, and pass the ball. Although dribbling moves are taught to young players, over elaboration and dribbling to maintain possession is not encouraged.

### 3. Goalkeeper as Sweeper

The young goalkeepers at PSV are used in field sessions whenever possible and are encouraged to work at their foot skills as much as their teammates. From an early age players are taught and encouraged to use their goalkeepers when needed. The idea is that they will be comfortable with the ball at their feet and become an effective supporting player at the back. The keeper's role is not restricted to stopping goals, but to also be an integral part of team play. They are expected to be an outlet for back passes, start attacks, maintain possession and play as a supporting player behind the defense. This role allows PSV to stretch the field and create more space in which their creative players can play. It also makes it harder for the opposition to regain possession of the ball.

### 4. Movement off the Ball

The ability of PSV to play a system based on possession relies on producing players with good technique. However, movement and running off the ball and quality support are just as important to the success of this system. PSV players, young and old, seem to have a sixth sense about this aspect of the game. Practice exercises for every team involves constant movement on and off the ball, so by the time players get to the U18 level, it becomes instinctive and a normal part of their game. Players go forward, track back, make overlapping runs, slide, drop and cover for each other and are constantly moving to receive the ball. Wherever the ball is on the field, PSV try to get players around it to support the player in possession. This constant movement and the technical ability of the players make all PSV teams tough to beat.

### 5. Player Development

Young players are exposed to realistic game situations in practice to help in their overall development. They are constantly denied time and space in which to play with the ball, so that they learn how to play under pressure. The young teams play older opposition as often as possible, so that they learn to play against stronger and more physical teams. This creates even more realistic competition to further test the development of PSV players. The result of these games and how PSV does in the league is not important. The ultimate goal is to develop and produce first team players capable of representing PSV in the Dutch first division. Coaches, players and parents understand and accept this concept and goal.

### 6. Communication

One aspect of the game that is almost overlooked by coaches is communication and the ability of players to talk on the field. The majority of players at PSV talk constantly throughout practice and games. They demand the ball, encourage and criticize each other and help organize the players around them. Talking is a normal part of their game and makes them better players and PSV a better team.

### 7. Set and Maintain High Standards

The club, coaches and players set and maintain very high standards making PSV one of the most respected clubs in Europe. All the players at the club are required to dress, behave, train and play in a manner that is beyond reproach. The players are expected to do nothing to tarnish the image and good name of PSV Eindhoven.

Players are punctual for practice and games and show respect to their coaches during training and games. Players get upset with themselves and each other when high standards of performance are not maintained, so very rarely does a coach have to criticize his players.

### 8. Attitude

The attitude of the PSV first team players is to be expected as they are highly paid and at the top of their profession. There is an air of quality about them as soon as they step on the field to train or play. This attitude is copied by the young players at the club who learn to play and train with the same mannerisms as their older club mates. They try to copy the things that players like Luc Nilis and Ruud van Nistelrooy do during games such as diving headers, overhead kicks and falling volleys. This helps them to improve as players.

During practice the attitude is to train the way you are expected to play; therefore, passing is crisp and realistic, finishing is clinical, and running on and off the ball is at game pace. This attitude and level of expectation helps produce players that can play for PSV Eindhoven at the professional level.

### 9. Appearance and Facilities

The first team squad at PSV has a stadium and practice facility similar to many of the top clubs in Europe while the youth teams have their own facilities that are second to none. The club staff consists of players, coaches, trainers, scouts, teachers, physios, doctors, masseurs, dietitians, and cooks. They bring a level of quality and expertise to PSV that is missing at other clubs and help in the overall success of the club. Players train and play on perfect fields, use modern facilities, amenities and equipment and receive some of the best coaching in Europe. It is the high standards of coaching and facilities at their disposal that attracts the best young players in Holland and Europe to PSV Eindhoven.

### 10. Money

PSV has a great history in Dutch football and a reputation throughout Europe that is the envy of many clubs. They are one of the top three teams in Holland and compete in European competitions on a yearly basis. This makes PSV an attractive proposition when trying to sign coaches, players and young talent. However, due to the Bosman Ruling and the success of the UEFA Champions League, PSV can no longer compete with teams like Bayern Munich, Juventus and Manchester United to sign players. They must invest time

and money in their own youth development system to produce players they hope will help maintain their standing in Holland and Europe. This requires money for scouting, coaches and world-class training facilities. The system cannot be organized and developed on a shoestring budget. PSV, Ajax and Feyenoord have made a financial commitment to identify and develop the best talent in Holland. Their success in doing so keeps all three teams at the top of the Dutch league and competitive in Europe.

Many people feel that copying PSV's practice sessions will help them produce quality players. It won't. To do so requires money spent on top class facilities, scouting and coaching to implement the PSV system. This is money that PSV is prepared to spend and will help ensure that they remain one of Europe's elite clubs.

**Monday April 19, 1999**  
**PSV Eindhoven**  
**“De Herdgang” Sports Complex, Eindhoven, Holland**

## Evening

### **C1 Team (Age 13) Game Against a Local Eindhoven U-14 Team (Lost 0-1)** **Observations of the Game (PSV Players Only)**

- Players were not afraid to play balls back to the goalkeeper and were encouraged to do so.
- Most of the time players played the ball the way they were facing.
- Players were talking non-stop throughout the game.
- Defenders and midfielders all showed for balls from the goalkeeper.
- There were no long balls out of the back and not once did a player just kick the ball clear.
- Defenders took two touches and tried to play out from the back.
- All free kicks were played short to the nearest player.
- Defenders were comfortable on the ball going forward and they could defend too.
- The goalkeeper played like a sweeper and was used as an extra option at the back. He was very comfortable with the ball at his feet and even had the composure to beat a forward on the edge of his area using a Cryuff move.
- Players were encouraged to play balls with the outside of the foot and not just the inside.
- Most corners were played short to the nearest player.
- Players were criticized by their teammates for over dribbling.
- The PSV players put the success of the team ahead of their own personal success.
- The opposition was older and stronger but PSV was more technical.
- Players did a cool down together immediately after the game and were not prompted by the coach to do so.
- There were many parents on the sidelines and very few negative comments were directed towards the PSV players.
- PSV believes in playing games against older teams. This provides “resistance” in their players’ development. “Resistance” is the added pressure of time, space and age. That is reduced time on the ball, reduced space in which to play and older opposition who are stronger and more physical.
- The Dutch pride themselves on the fact that their youth players are self-motivated. They want to be the best and don’t need the help of the coach to guide them. They want to win all the time and you could see it in this game, especially from the PSV players. They talked more to and at each other than their coach who was almost a casual observer on the sideline.

### **B1 Team (Age 16) Sixteen Players and Two Goalkeepers**

They spent the first hour in the parking lot working on fitness, running technique and movement exercises. For the second hour the team came out onto the field on their own and they brought all the balls and equipment with them. They immediately got organized into two teams and started playing a game without coaching supervision. The pace and intensity was very good. The pitch they used was very muddy after a day of heavy rain, but the conditions didn’t stop the players from passing the ball about. The game was very interesting to observe and the quality of the play and the goals scored belied the age of the players.

## Set Up

Field 40 x 30 yards, played 9 v 9 free play with goalkeepers.

Goals could only be scored using one touch.

No easy goals could be scored; therefore, they did not count deflections, rebounds or tap-ins.

They were looking to score the most spectacular goal and only good quality goals were counted.

The losing team had to collect all the equipment and bring it in to the dressing room.

## Local Indoor League

I was brought along to one of the many sports centers in Holland to watch a local club team play in a men's 5-a-side league. The game was quite good and was very technical. The fact that the player in possession could not be tackled made the game very interesting to watch and forced players to have good control and passing technique. This rule places the emphasis on technique and tactics and is a standard rule throughout Holland for indoor soccer.

## Set Up

Field 25 x 35 yards with regular size indoor goals and no boards around the field.

Kick-ins are used instead of throw-ins.

No tackling allowed. The player in possession could be closed down, but not tackled.

A free kick is awarded if the player in possession is tackled.

Games are made up of two 30-minute halves with unlimited substitution.

**Tuesday April 20, 1999**

**PSV Eindhoven**

**"De Herdgang" Sports Complex, Eindhoven, Holland**

## Morning (10 am to 12 noon)

### Injured Players Rehab Session

The first team left last night for today's very important game away to Vitesse Arnhem. Four players who were injured stayed behind and had a fitness training session with the club's sports physiologist, Luc van Agt. The four players were Ernest Faber, Ovidiu Stinga, Stan Valckx and Marciano Wink, three of whom are international players. At times, all four players were working with the physio while at other times, a player would step out to rest and stretch.



### Warm-up

Each player jogged and stretched individually for 5 - 10 minutes. They then did the Bleep Test (Yo-Yo Test) with the physio to calculate their level of fitness. The Bleep Test is done once a week for the players who have long-term injuries.

The players then did some sprint work. Starting on the goal-line, each player sprints to the top of the 18 yard box and back again. Players rotate to maintain the 1:3 ratio (1 part work, 3 parts rest).

### Ball Work

The players are lined up in pairs, side by side, five yards apart with one ball. The players pass and move to each other moving from end-line to half-line and back again.

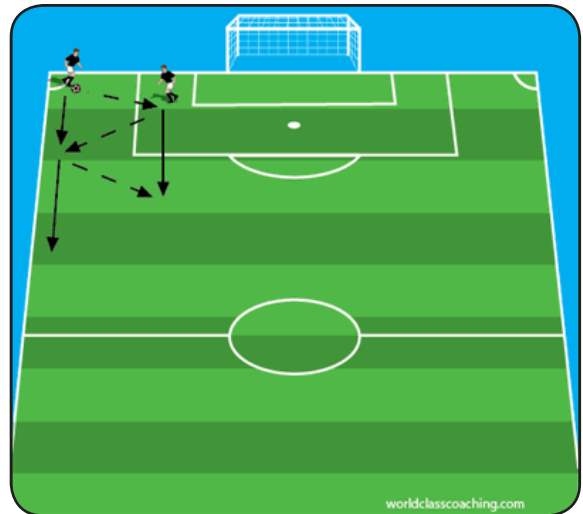


Diagram 1

### Ball Work

The players are lined up in pairs, side by side, five yards apart with one ball. Player 1 takes three touches forward, changes pace after each touch then passes to player 2 to repeat. Work end-line to half-line and back again.

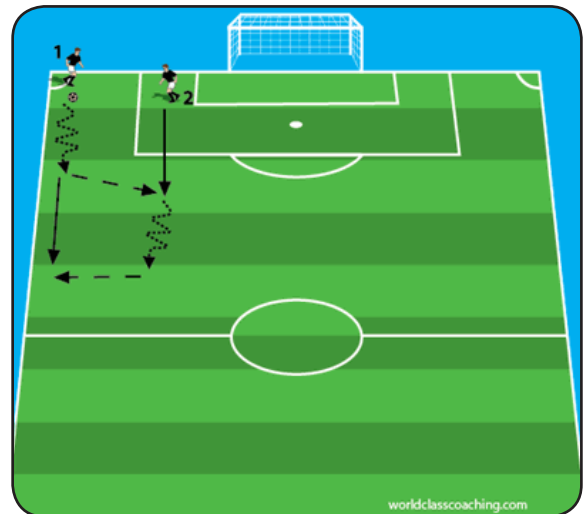


Diagram 2

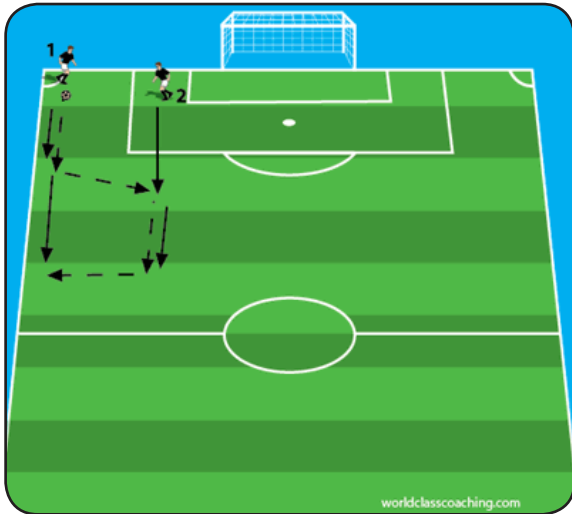


Diagram 3

### Ball Work

The players are lined up in pairs, side by side, five yards apart with one ball. Player 1 passes the ball 10 yards in front of him, sprints after it, then passes to player 2 to repeat. Work end-line to half-line and back again.

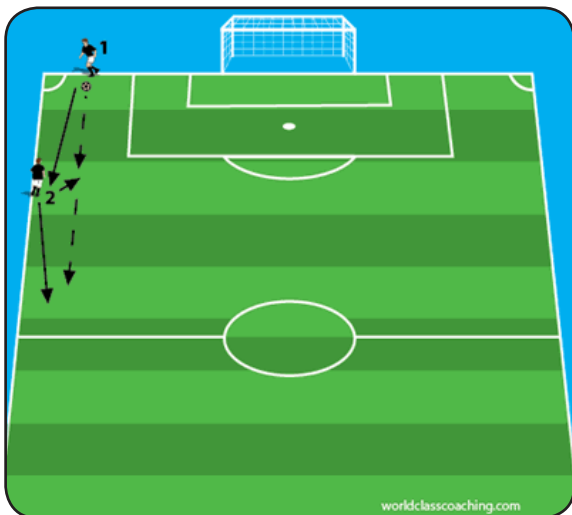


Diagram 4

### Ball Work

The players are in pairs facing each other. Player 2 runs backwards. Player 1 passes to player 2 who stops the ball, and continues running backwards to receive the next pass from player 1. The players maintain a gap of five yards. Work end-line to half-line and back again.

### Progressions

- Player 2 stops the ball and concentrates on short steps and quick feet while going backwards
- Player 2 serves with his hands to player one who heads it back to player 2

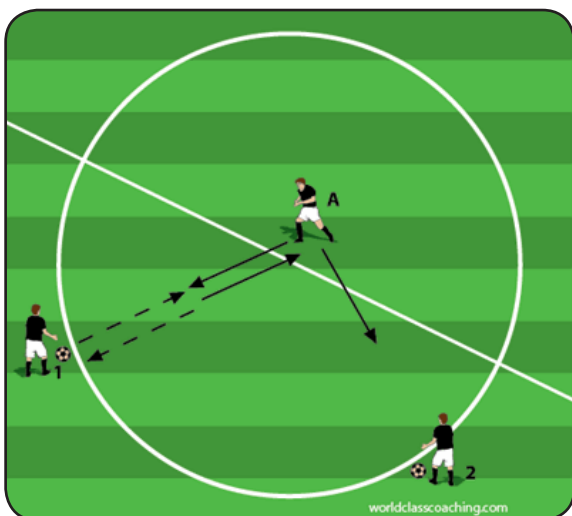


Diagram 5

*The exercises in diagrams 5 and 6 are timed and each player must work flat out for one minute. The players then rotate positions.*

### Center Circle Drill

Three players work - one rests. Player A is in the center circle. Player 1 is outside dribbling a ball. Player 2 juggles a ball. Player A in middle checks to player 1 to receive the ball and then passes it straight back. After the pass, he sprints back to the center spot and looks for a pass from player 2. Repeat.

### Progressions

Player A sprints backwards to the center spot concentrating on short steps and quick feet then sprints forward to receive the next pass.

### Center Circle Drill

The same organization as in diagram 5, but player A now plays a pass back to player 1 then moves straight to player 2 to receive a high serve and head ball straight back. He then runs back to the center spot and repeats the exercise.

### Progression

This time player 2 serves a ball for player A to receive and control on his chest and pass back to player 2. He then runs back to the center spot and repeats the exercise.

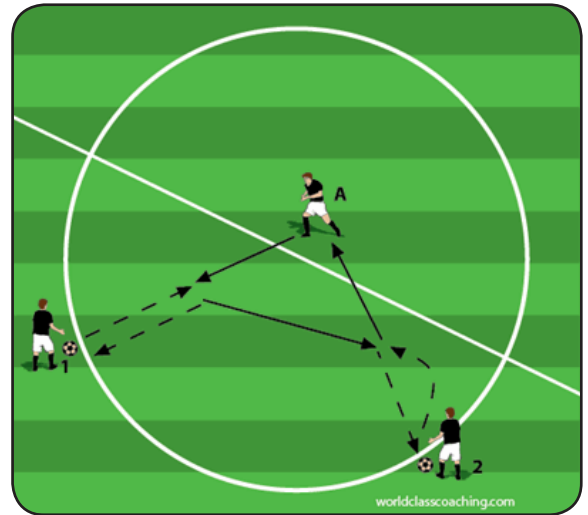


Diagram 6

### Ball Work

The players line up on the goal-line with a ball each. The first player in line juggles to the top of the 18-yard box then turns and dribbles back to the end-line.

He then juggles, using his head only, to the top of the 18-yard box and dribbles back to the end-line.

He then pushes the ball out to the top of the 18-yard box, sprints after it, turns and passes it to the coach, and finishes by sprinting past the coach. Each player goes three times.

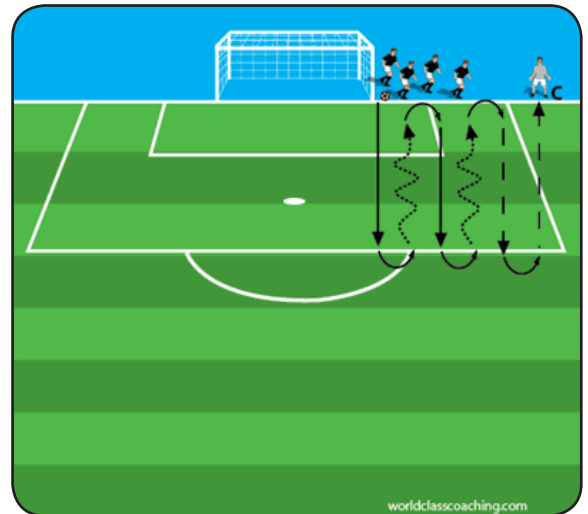


Diagram 7

### Grid

Organize three players in a grid 10 x 20 yards, two players with a ball, one without. The two players with a ball dribble and move within the grid. Player 1 calls for a pass from player 2, receives the ball in space, sprints to the ball and plays it back to player 2. He then calls for a ball from player 3. Player 1 works for one minute without the ball then alternates so the other two players take a turn.

### Progression

This time the players with the ball receive a work-out as well as the player without the ball. After receiving the pass, player 1, instead of passing straight back to player 2, passes into space for player 2 to sprint after. He then calls for a pass from player 3. Again, the players work non-stop for one minute each without the ball.

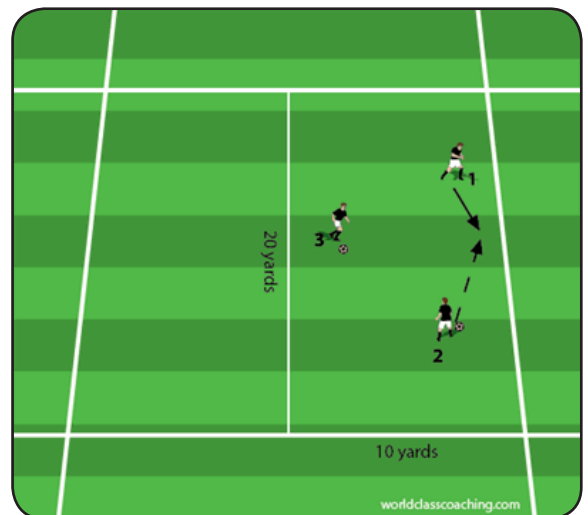


Diagram 8

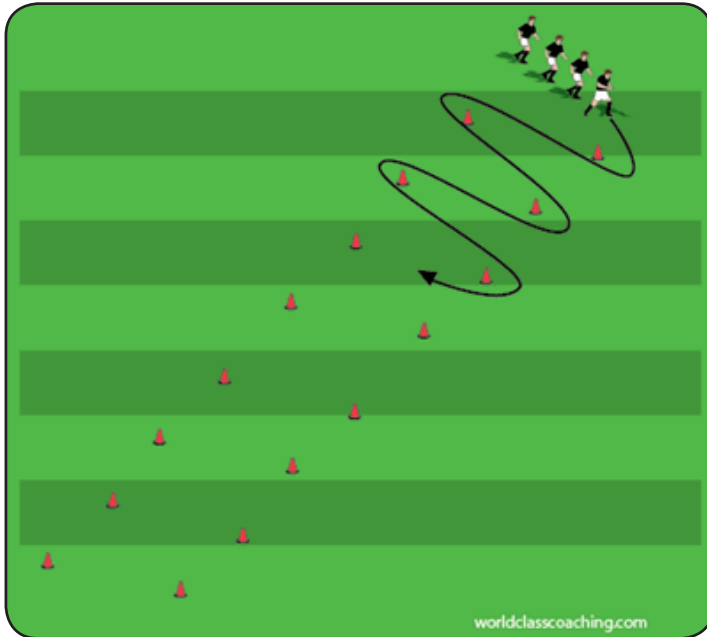


Diagram9

### Observations

- The players were constantly testing the coach making little jokes at his expense and making him demonstrate what he wanted them to do even though they knew what was required. They tried to bring chaos to the session at every opportunity to lighten the atmosphere.
- When the players were working, the joking stopped and everything was taken seriously.
- The fitness level of the players was not good due to a lack of playing on a regular basis.
- At times, their touch and control was lacking due to fatigue. Even juggling the ball became a struggle as the session went on.

### Cones

Set the cones five yards apart in a zigzag pattern. From start to finish is 80 yards. Each player goes five times. The next player goes when the one in front reaches the second cone.

- Jog through with short quick steps
- Run through at 3/4 pace
- Sprint side to side with short quick steps
- Full sprint turning outside each cone
- Various movements (skipping, bunny hops, hopping, etc.) through first four cones then full sprint to the end

### Cool Down

- 2 v 2 soccer tennis played one-touch on a real tennis court
- 1 v 1 soccer volleyball played free play on a real volleyball court
- 5-10 minutes of jogging and stretching

### Evening

I spent the afternoon at the Philips Stadium in the center of Eindhoven touring the stadium and meeting with the administrative staff. I was given permission to observe all of the practices at the club for the week at to the invitation of Bobby Robson and was told that the club would help me in any way that I needed.

I returned to “De Herdgang” for the evening session, but this time to the youth complex where all the youth teams train and play. It is across the road from the first team facility. I was met by club scout Klaus van Baalen who gave me a tour of the youth department offices and introduced me to the coaching staff. Two of the coaches, Patrick Greveraars and Frank van Kempen, explained the PSV youth set-up to me and became my unofficial guides for the week. They explained how many times each team trains, who the coaches were and what the topic for each session was going to be. Some of the organizational points of the youth system are as follows:

- All the youth players, professional and non-professional, attend school during the day then train at PSV in the afternoon or evening.
- The number of practices per week varies depending on the age group and level of the players involved. The U-11’s train three times per week while the youth professionals train six times per week.
- Each team plays in a league and has 1-2 games per week from August to May.
- The first hour of each session is spent working on running technique, movement exercises and fitness. The second hour is spent on the field working with the ball.
- Every youth player (U-11 to U-18) at the club receives a packet of equipment from the club’s kit manufacturer (in this case Nike) which includes two sets of everything (boots, sneakers, sweats, bags, rain jackets, polo shirts, training gear, etc.). The players must wear PSV

- gear traveling to and from practice and games. This identifies them as being PSV players and encourages them to behave accordingly.
- The kit is supplied free to each player; however, if they lose any item, they must replace it themselves before the end of the season. This forces each player to be responsible for their own equipment and not to take it for granted just because it is provided free.
- The players equipment, including boots, must be clean before they step out onto the field.
- PSV uses its own curriculum to coach and teach the players. They do not use a curriculum supplied by the Dutch federation, the KNVB.
- The players are allowed to play for other teams including their schools, but PSV retains the rights to all the players on their books.

As I stood in the middle of three fields watching the teams practice, I couldn't help but be impressed by the fact that every player dressed the same. The players looked the part, were very professional and PSV looked like the quality club that it is.

## A2 Team (Age 18) Fourteen Players (two injured) and Two Goalkeepers

The first hour was all fitness, movement and running technique exercises, which were similar to the exercises I had seen on the Ajax tapes. This part of the practice was held in the club's parking lot and the players worked very hard. The sprint work included plyometrics using hurdles and various movements (bunny hops, skips, bounding, etc. before sprinting). Distances varied, but were no more than 30 yards per run. The two injured players jogged around the complex on their own while their teammates were working. The players were on the field for the second hour.

### Warm-Up

8 v 2 keep away in a 5 x 5 grid.

40 x 30 yard field with full size goals and keepers. Play 4 v 4 plus goalkeepers with two target players on either side of both goals. The target players can move along the goal line but are restricted to one touch.

Target players must play balls back for the attacking team to get a shot on goal.

Outfield players don't have to play to the target players and have free play.

Games are five minutes with players rotating in and out.

This game was played for the whole hour.

There was no team cool down. The players stretched on their own then went in to the dressing room.

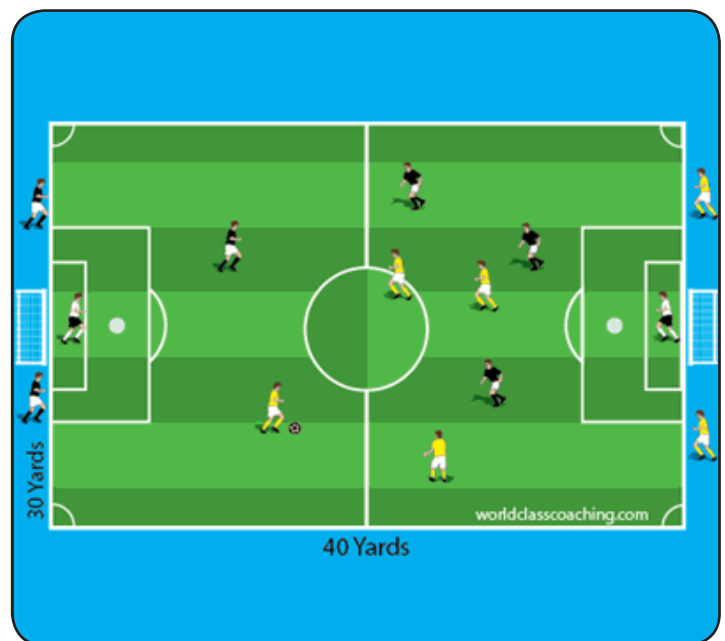


Diagram 10

### Observations

- The coach never stopped any of the games. All coaching points were made in the changeover between games.
- There was constant talking from every player and they placed tremendous demands for perfection and effort on each other.
- The standards were very high and players got upset when they made mistakes.
- The players played with lots of attitude. They always looked to score when they had the ball and always looked to win it back quickly when they lost possession.
- There was very little dribbling and most goals and quality play involved short, crisp passing.
- 90% of the time the players tried to do the simple thing.
- If it wasn't 'on' to pass forward or shoot, the ball was played back to the keeper to maintain possession.
- The only time players did anything elaborate was in the warm-up activity.

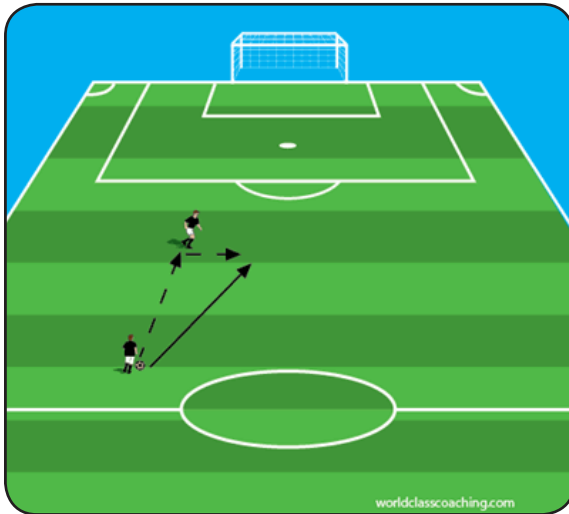


Diagram 11

## D1 Team (Age 11) Sixteen Players and Two Goalkeepers

### Warm-Up

The players are organized with a ball each, working on two moves in a group. The moves are the Maradona Spin and the Scissors. They are practiced in a passive/static environment before being introduced into game situations.

### Pass and Move

Using a half-field, the players are in pairs with one ball for each pair. Moving around the field, the players pass to their partner who lays the ball off and then moves to receive the return pass. Players alternate working on passing and receiving for one minute.

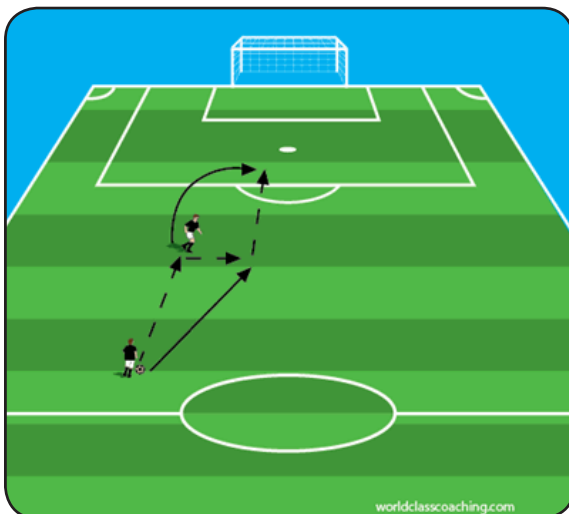


Diagram 12

### Pass and Move - Progression

This time player 1 passes to player 2 who lays off for player 1 to play forward into space. After player 2 lays off, he runs into space to receive the return pass.



Diagram 13

### Finishing

Two grids, 30 x 40 yards, with one goal and a keeper. Player 1 passes to player 2 who attacks player 3 (1 v 1) and tries to finish with a shot on goal. Two fields are working at the same time so there is constant movement and rotation.

### Emphasis

Working on the moves that were done in the warm up.

### Coaching Points

- Defender attacks the goal if he wins the ball • Player 2 must check away then back to receive the pass from player 1
- Player 2 must let the ball run across his body then attack player 3 with his front foot
- Defenders stay as defenders unless they win the ball, then they switch

The players then took a five minute break working on juggling and the two moves they practiced during the warm-up.

### Half-Field Game

Two teams played 8 v 8 on half a field with no restrictions.

### Emphasis

Attacking the defender and using moves to create space for a pass, shot or give-and-go options.

### Coaching Points

- The players were organized by position and could not cross over to another position during the game
- Free play with constant movement and running off the ball
- Looking for hard work and good passing technique
- Coach demanded two-touch (pass and move) unless attacking a defender



Diagram 14

### Progression

The game was finished by playing 5 v 3 (four defenders + keeper vs. three forwards) in each half. This created a numbers-up situation for the attacking team playing from the back.

### Cool Down

Jogging and stretching.

### Observations

- The attitude of the players was first class. They worked hard, played with discipline and listened to their coach.
- They had pace on their passes, talked non-stop and were constantly moving on and off the ball.
- The coach gave push-ups and sit-ups to the whole team when the equipment wasn't picked up and packed away in a timely fashion.
- During rest periods the players always had to be juggling the ball. PSV uses juggling as a tool to get the players to refocus on the ball, the coach, and the information being taught.
- The pace and level of execution was not the same as the U-18's, but there was no mistaking the style and pattern of play.
- Set plays were part of the practice and were used as much as possible in the final game.
- PSV had a young player named Fransisco on trial from Anderlecht in Belgium. He was one of a number of foreign players PSV was looking to bring in to the club to develop for the future.

### C1 Team (Age 13) Sixteen Players and Two Goalkeepers

The practice session for the C1's was very relaxed due to the fact that they played a game last night. Very little work and coaching was done during the session.

### Warm-Up

They played the customary 8 v 2 in a 5 x 5 grid. The players then jogged around the field together with each player conducting part of the warm-up at some point. Stretching and movement exercises were introduced as the players went around the field.

### Practice

Two games of 4 v 4 were played with small sided goals and no keepers. Teams rotated every couple of minutes. The session was finished by playing 8 v 8 on half-field to full goals with goalkeepers. There were no stoppages to make coaching points, no restrictions and the players were allowed to play.

### Cool Down

Jogging and stretching.

## B2 Team (Age 15) Fourteen Players and Two Goalkeepers

For the first half-hour the team worked in the parking lot on movement exercises. The second half-hour was spent working on fitness and speed work. The sprint work included plyometrics using hurdles and various movements (bunny hops, skips, bounding, etc.) before sprinting. Distances varied, but were no more than 30 yards per run.

### Warm-Up

8 v 2 keep away in a tight area 5 x 10 yards. All the players were inside the grid.

### Practice

In pairs, with one ball, working on various passing techniques over short and long distances. In two groups, with one ball per group. Played keep-up to see which group could keep the ball up the longest. Exercises were given to the losing group. Field 30 x 40 yards with full goals. Played 4 v 4 game plus goalkeepers with free play. Rotated players in and out every five minutes.

### Cool Down

Jogging and stretching.

## B3 Team (Age 14) Sixteen Players and Two Goalkeepers

### Warm-up

Played 8 v 2 in a 5 x 5 grid. In twos on the goal-line, jog to the half-line together using various movements: rotate arms, skip, knees up, heels up, etc. The players were responsible for the warm-up as no coach was there to supervise them.



Diagram 15

### Crossing and Finishing

With a supply of balls on the half-line, the team works to one goal with a keeper.

Player 1 checks back to the cones and receives a crossfield pass from player 2. Player 1 turns, attacks the endline and crosses into the penalty area for player 2 to finish. Players work left then right. A second runner is added (player 3) to make a near post run.

The team worked on various types of crosses: low and hard, near post, far post, bent, etc.



### Shooting

Goals 30 yards apart with goalkeepers. Half the group is beside one goal, half beside the other. Both groups have a supply of balls.

Player 1 checks towards player 2. Player 2 passes to player 1 who lays off for player 2 to shoot at goal. The emphasis is on quick, quality passing, receiving and finishing. As soon as the ball is shot, the next ball is played in from the opposite end.

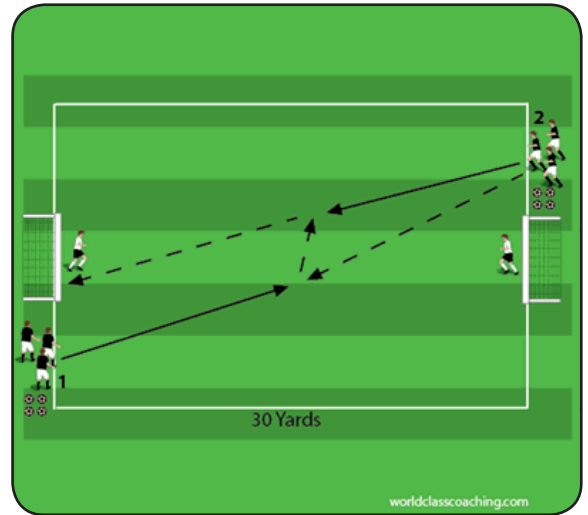


Diagram 16

### Shooting

Working in the same area, play 4 v 4 plus a target player (A). Free play, but the team in possession is looking to play the ball into A and receive it back for a shot on goal. For the first few minutes A is static then he is allowed to float. Practice ended with an 8 v 8 game on half field with no restrictions.



Diagram 17

### Cool Down

Jogging and stretching.

### A1 Team (Age 18) Eight Players and One Goalkeeper

#### Warm-Up

The coach joined the warm-up for 8 v 2 in a 5 x 5 grid and jogging and movement exercises.

#### Shooting

With a supply of balls on the half-line, the team works to one goal with a keeper. Player 1 passes to player 2 who lays off for player 3 to finish with a shot on goal. Rotate the groups.

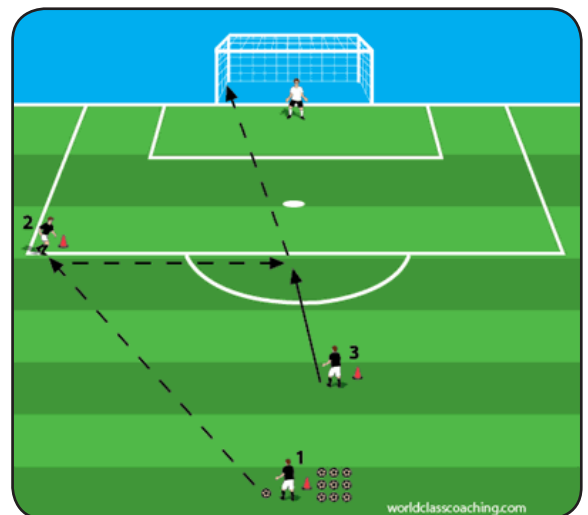


Diagram 18

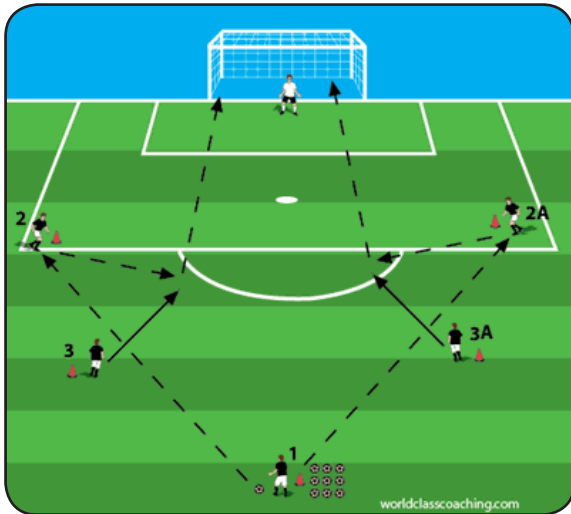


Diagram 19

### Progression

With a supply of balls on the half-line, the team works to one goal with a keeper. Same as before except now work both the left foot and right foot. Players must also follow in their shot looking for any rebounds. Players move to the next cone and work both sides of the grid.

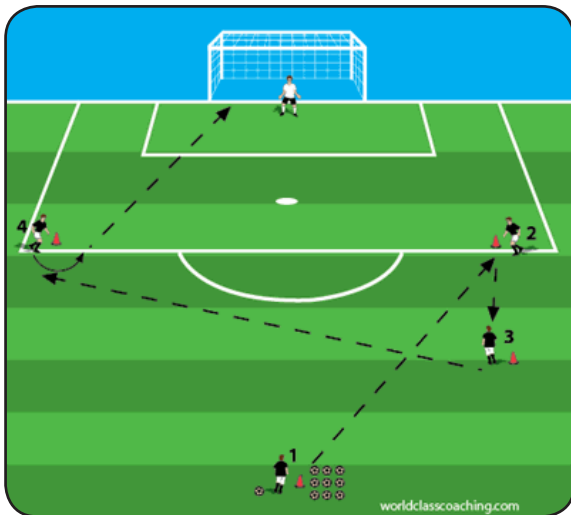


Diagram 20

### Shooting

With a supply of balls on the half-line, the team works to one goal with a keeper. Player 1 passes to player 2 to lay off for player 3. Player 3 passes to player 4 who must turn inside the cone and shoot on goal. Players then sprint to the next cone (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, 4 to 1).

### Point

This practice works because the players play with a Dutch mentality - simple team work, constant movement, play the way they are facing and simple passes.

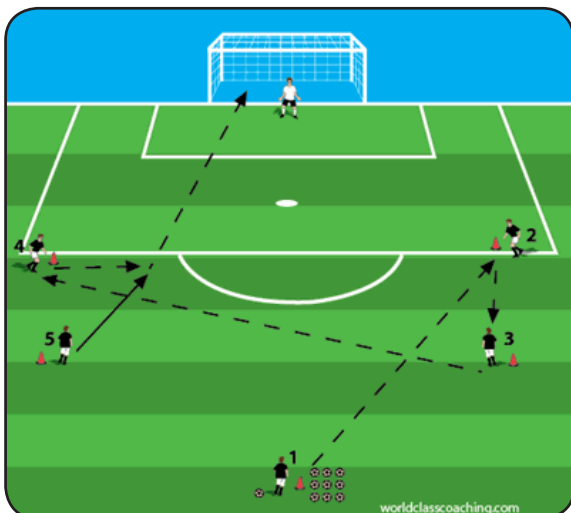


Diagram 21

### Shooting

With a supply of balls on the half-line, the team works to one goal with a keeper. Player 1 passes to player 2 who lays back to player 3. Player 3 passes to player 4 who lays back to player 5 to shoot on goal. Players lay the ball off first-touch or take a controlling touch if needed. Look for good quality strikes at goal. Players then interchange position by sprinting to the cone they passed to. After the shot, the player jogs back to the half-line.

### Small-Sided Game

Play 4 v 4 on a 40 x 30-yard field with one full goal and goalkeeper and one small-sided goal. When a team scores on the small goal, they change and attack the big goal.

### Cool Down

Jogging and stretching.

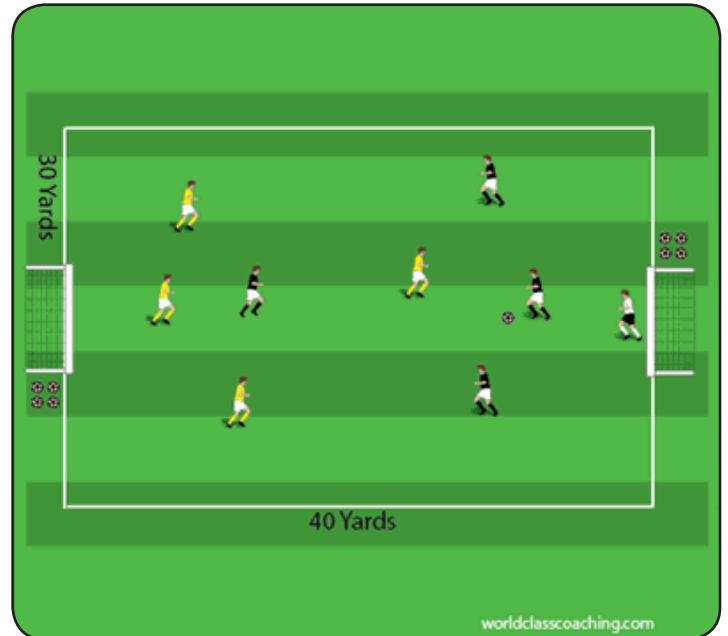


Diagram 22

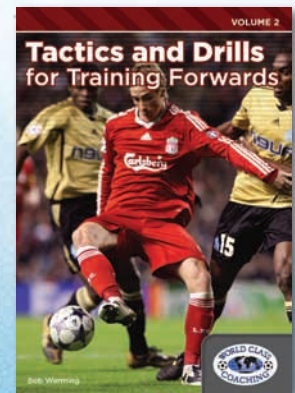
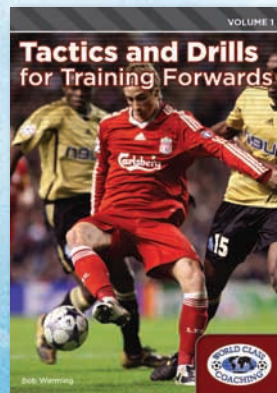
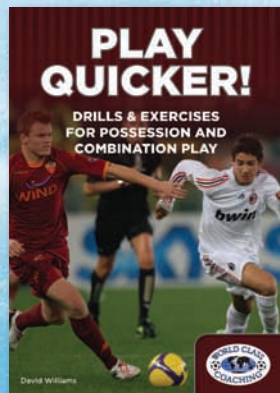
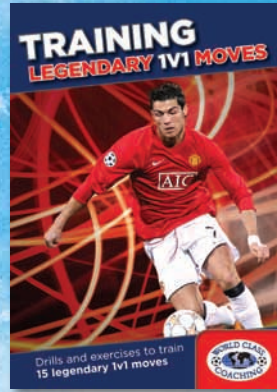
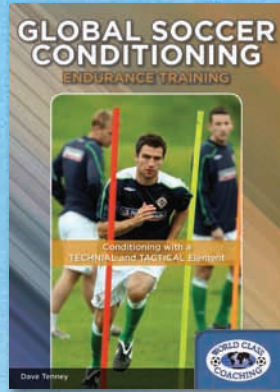
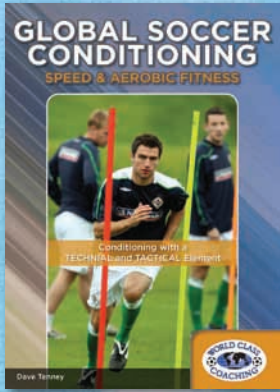
### Conversation with Erwin Koeman

Erwin Koeman is a former Dutch national team player who was a member of the 1988 European Championship winning team. He is now the Senior Reserve Team Coach at PSV and he was watching the A2 youth team practice to evaluate players. We talked before and after the session and here are some of his comments:

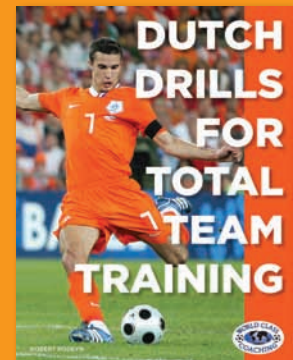
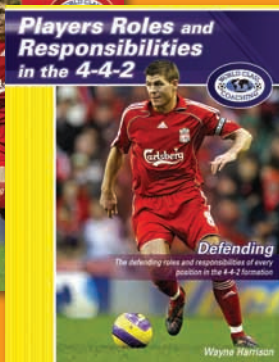
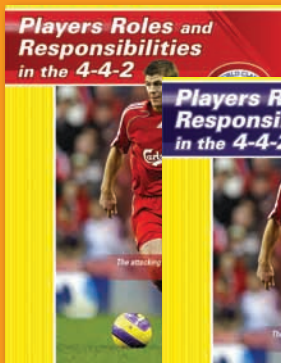
- As it is late in the season, the team just plays games and very little coaching occurs.
- The first hour of practice is devoted to coaching and teaching. The second hour is for the players to play, so that is why the PSV coaches don't stop the game to make points. The game is a reward for an hour of hard work.
- The best prospects in the youth team will be brought in to play with the reserves (second team) on a regular basis to give them experience at the higher level.
- He feels the Dutch youth professionals are spoiled compared to their fellow counterparts in England. They don't have to perform any of the duties that an English apprentice has to do (clean the boots, sweep the dressing room, etc.); therefore, this kills some of the desire of the players to work hard to make the next level. They are treated well everywhere they go and become accustomed to the good life, so sometimes there is no incentive for them to improve as a player.
- The youth players are signed to five-year professional contracts by PSV. This protects the interests of the club in the aftermath of the Bosman ruling. It also guarantees that players stay with the club for their immediate future and helps PSV to get a return on their investment. However, Koeman felt some players lose their incentive to improve when signed to such long-term deals.
- One very interesting comment that Koeman made regarding the much vaunted Ajax and PSV systems is that they are successful not because of the coaches or the players, but because both clubs have the money to implement the system. He said people observe both clubs to find out the secret of producing top quality players, but most overlook the obvious, money. Both clubs have extensive scouting systems, full time coaches, numerous teams and top class facilities. It is easy to produce good players when you have the money to do so.
- We had a discussion about Holland's victory over the Republic of Ireland in the 1988 European Championship Finals that knocked the Irish out of the tournament. It was a game he remembered well and felt the Dutch were lucky to win.

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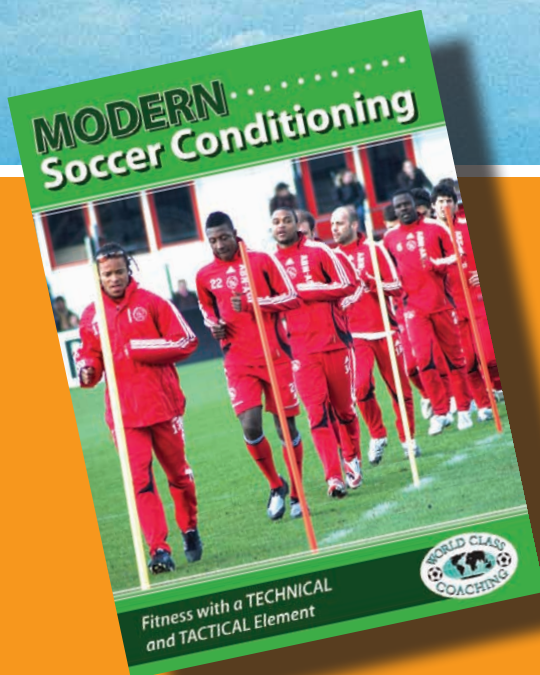
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Wednesday April 19, 1999

PSV Eindhoven

“De Herdgang” Sports Complex, Eindhoven, Holland

**Morning: 10 am to 12 noon**

### **First Team Practice Session**

I arrived at “De Herdgang” and met with Bobby Robson before practice began. He told me what the plans were for the morning session and discussed the previous night’s 3-3 draw at Vitesse Arnhem.

#### **Some of Mr. Robson’s comments were:**

- He felt last night’s result could cost PSV hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenue for failure to qualify for the 1999-2000 UEFA Champions League.
- He was very upset about the referee’s decision to award a last minute free kick which allowed Vitesse to tie the game and deny PSV three valuable points.
- He complained about the fact that PSV had to play 6 games in 13 days, which could jeopardize their chances of making next year’s Champions League.
- This morning’s practice was going to be a light session for the players that played in last night’s game, but tougher for those players that were on the bench or did not make the squad.
- He was disappointed that I wasn’t at his Monday practice session because he felt that he and the players put on a clinic.
- He talked about how good PSV could have been had they held on to the players that left the club the previous summer - Arthur Numan (Rangers), Jaap Staam (Manchester United) and Wim Jonk (Sheffield Wednesday). He also bemoaned the fact the PSV were missing four international players who were all out for the year through injury. But considering the loss of these players, he was of the opinion that PSV and himself had done remarkably well.
- He is looking for a coaching position in England for next season, but did not indicate his interest in any particular job. He did say, however, that it had to be in the Premiership, but that he would be patient as he is in a financial position where he never has to work again.
- He is a track suit coach and wants to be on the field with his team and his players therefore; a technical director’s position does not appeal to him right now.

#### **The coaching staff and the players were broken down into three groups for practice as follows:**

- Group 1:** Bobby Robson (First Team Coach) and Ernie Brandts (Assistant Coach) Working with all the players who did not play in the game with Vitesse.
- Group 2:** Luc van Agt (Sports Physiologist)  
Working with all the players who played the full 90 minutes in last night’s game.
- Group 3:** Piet Schrijvers (Goalkeeper Coach)  
Working with the first team goalkeepers.

### Passing

Two groups, 10 yards apart, with one ball. Pass to the first player in the opposite group then sprint to the end of the group opposite.

### Progressions

After the pass, jog to the end of the opposite group with heels up, knees up, skipping, etc.

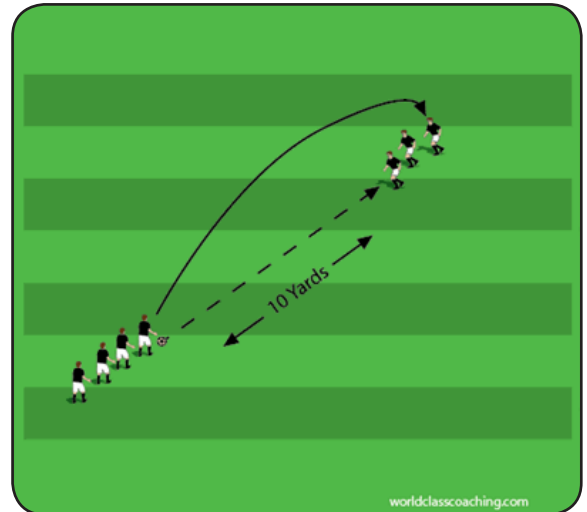


Diagram 23

### Progression

Two goalkeepers were introduced, each with a ball. After a pass to the opposite group, the player checks towards the keeper, receives the ball and passes it back to the keeper before jogging to the end of the opposite group. There should be three balls going constantly and passing must be one touch.

### Progression

The keepers vary the service on the ground, in the air or players to pass, volley or head back, etc.

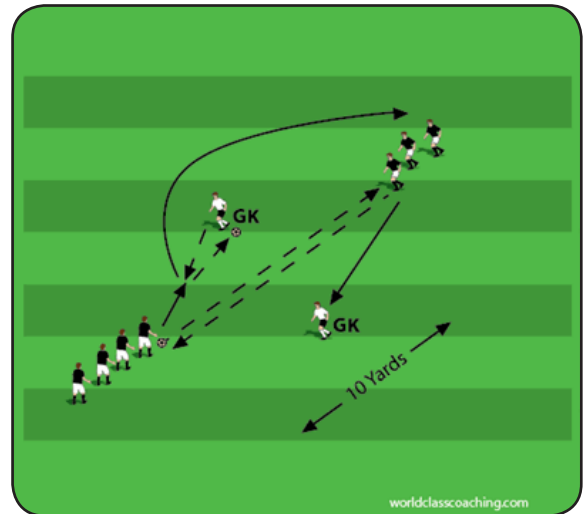


Diagram 24

### Passing

There are eight players in pairs, each pair wearing different colored vests (white, black, red and yellow). Organize in two 20 x 20-yard grids as shown with the grids 20 yards apart. Six players are in grid one playing 4 v 2 and two players are resting in grid two. One of the pairs playing 4 v 2 with possession looks to switch the ball to grid two. They follow their pass while the other pair rests. The two defenders must switch with the pass as well. They can only get out of the middle by winning possession of the ball.

### Emphasis

- Look for constant switching, movement and passing
- Attitude must be to play forward as soon as possible
- Quickly support the player in possession of the ball
- The ball can only be switched from one grid to the other when all six players are in the same grid

### Progression

This time the players MUST now play the way they are facing and play forward at every opportunity. The ball can still only be passed to the other grid when all six players are in the same grid.

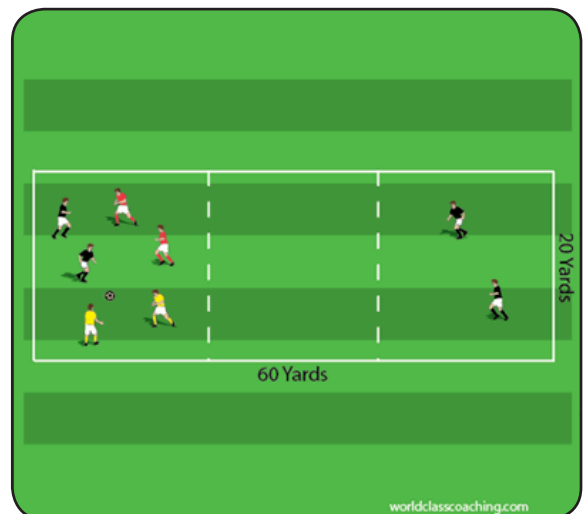


Diagram 25

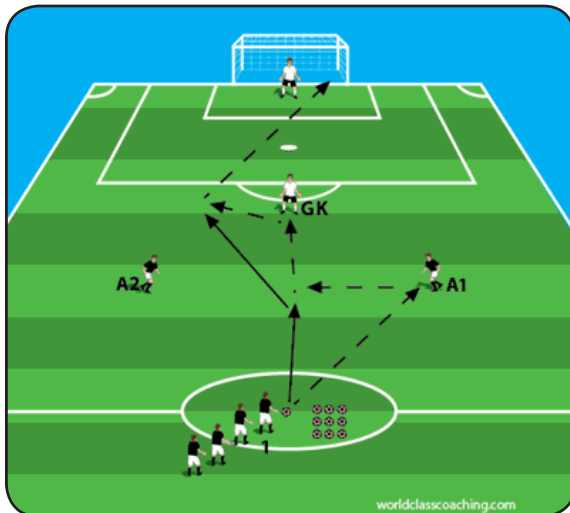


Diagram 26

### Small-Sided Game

Play 4 v 4 in a 30 x 20-yard area with small-sided goals and no keepers. The teams play free play, but goals can only be scored with one touch and must be from a pass from a teammate. Games were five minutes in length and the teams were rotated constantly.

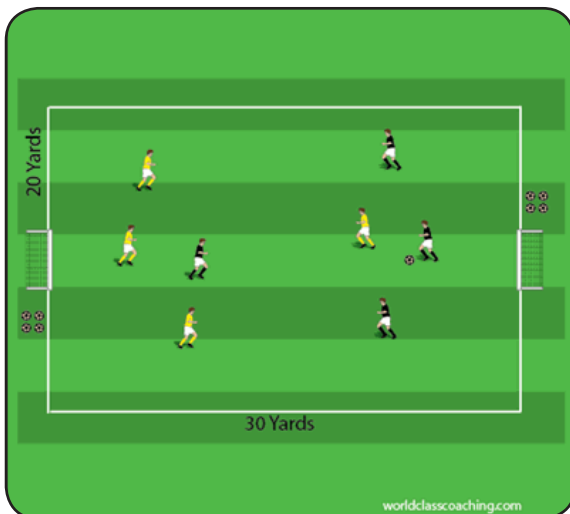


Diagram 27

### Cool Down

The players jogged around the field together and stretched individually at the end. Some did sit-ups and push-ups while others did extra fitness or finishing work.

### Observations

- The attitude of the players to sprint after each pass was very good.
- Robson got excited about good goals even in practice.
- Robson constantly got on players when they let their standards drop. In this session, he was constantly getting on Tomek Iwan for his technique and Georgij Gakhokidze for his work rate.
- Robson was constantly coaxing his players to get the best out of them and treated them like they were his kids. He scolded them if they were not good and praised them if they were.
- Brandts and Robson rarely stopped the session to make a point. They just set the tempo and supplied the balls. The players did the rest.
- The defenders and midfield players tried to blast every shot in the finishing exercises, but the forwards, like Gilles de Bilde, were clinical in their finishing.
- The quality of ball driven into the GK was very high and very few passes were wasted.
- The players that didn't play against Vitesse Arnhem last night trained for two hours.

### Shooting

A supply of balls is on the half-line with the players set up as shown. Player 1 plays a give-and-go with A1 or A2 then plays the ball into the hands of the goalkeeper on the edge of the penalty box who rolls the ball right or left for player 1 to shoot on goal.

### Progressions

- GK throws the ball up in the air for player 1 to shoot on the volley or half volley.
- GK rolls the ball into path of player 1 who can only place his shot or bend to the far post.
- GK rolls the ball into path of player 1 who must try to go around the goalkeeper in the goal and score.

### Emphasis

- At this level, the players know they can score with more than one touch, but this game disciplines them to play quicker and smarter and develops technique
- One-touch scoring forces players to play forward and support quickly
- The game forces players to close down quickly to stop the opposition getting off a shot
- The defensive attitude was to close down, not tackle. Therefore, the players did not wear shin guards

### Sprint Work

Two sets of 10 x 20 yard sprints.



## Group 2: Luc van Agt

Club sports physiologist, Luc van Agt worked with the players who played the full 90 minutes in last night's game. They jogged and stretched for 30 minutes before heading back to the dressing room. Some watched the reserves work and only Luc Nilis did any extra fitness or ball work.

## Conversation with Luc van Agt

He works almost every day with the four players who are out with long term injuries. Ernest Faber (achilles tendon), Ovidiu Stinga (ACL), Stan Valckx (ACL) and Marciano Wink (ACL) have all had surgery and will be out for most of the season. All four are quality players who would have figured highly in team plans and who have been badly missed by PSV.

Their rehab program consists of running, weights, ball work, pool work and physical and massage therapy and is devised with the input of the surgeon, club doctor, physio and masseuse. There is no pressure from management to have the players back as soon as possible, but it is van Agt's goal to have the players playing at the earliest possible date.

After practice, all the players and staff went in to the clubhouse where they must eat before they leave. Usually they must all eat together, but on a day like today, some are finished earlier than others, so they can come in, eat and leave. The club physio and doctor select the meals. The players must eat with the emphasis on proper nutrition and diet. Players are encouraged to eat pasta, rice, chicken, fruit and drink as much juice as possible. All the professional players must eat together at the club, so that they can be monitored to make sure they are eating properly and replenishing lost fluids. This also helps improve team chemistry. Former coach, Dick Advocaat introduced this concept at Glasgow Rangers after one week in Scotland because he was horrified at the dietary standards at the club. For home games, the players meet at 10 am and eat together at 10.30 am and most pre-game meals consist of pasta and lasagna. For important games, the team stays in a hotel the night before.

## Group 3: Piet Schrijvers

The goalkeepers did very little work with Schrijvers except stretching exercises, some sit-ups and basic ball handling skills. He worked with them when they were part of the shooting practice and coached them from behind the goal. At times he stepped into the game to demonstrate footwork and positioning and he was still capable of showing why he was a Dutch National Team goalkeeper during his career.

## Post Practice

- Bobby Robson and the players talked to some school kids on a field trip and signed autographs for them.
- Robson talked to some older fans about the 3 - 3 draw with Vitesse and he expressed his belief that PSV was robbed and told them that not even Manchester United would have scored three goals at Vitesse.
- Robson met with his coaching staff over lunch and they discussed last night's game, today's practice, the injured players, the squads for Thursday's reserve team game at Alkmar and Friday's first team game at De Graafschap. Only four reserve team players were going to Alkmar, as they wanted to see how some of the youth team players did at this level. When talking about last night's game, Robson used the salt and pepper shakers and drinking glasses to demonstrate his coaching points.
- He constantly referred to the decisions of the referee as having an effect on the outcome of the Vitesse game. He made particular reference to the last minute free kick that led to the Vitesse equalizer and a penalty claim for a hand ball that PSV was denied. Television replays later showed that Robson and PSV had a case. He argues his points more like a fan than a coach and comes across as being very passionate for the PSV cause. But it has to be said that his job is on the line with every game.
- Robson met with the team cook and discussed the schedule for the next two days.
- Two players were meeting with their agent talking over deals for the 1999-2000 season.

## Conversation with Ernie Brandts

Ernie Brandts was a great player in his time for both PSV and Holland and he is now the assistant coach at PSV. It is a position he will retain when Bobby Robson returns to England. He will become the assistant to the new coach, Eric Gerets. We spoke on numerous occasions throughout the week and he would always come over and explain the sessions

to me, and what they were trying to accomplish. Here are some of his views on PSV and soccer:

- He talked about almost signing with Arsenal in 1981 and that he would have liked to have had the opportunity to play in England and to experience first hand the pace of the game and the passion of the fans.
- He talked about playing Manchester United in a European Cup game and being surprised that the players didn't warm-up prior to the game, including Jesper Olsen who had played for Ajax.
- We discussed the standard and development of the game in America and he respects anyone that has completed their full coaching licenses and achieved academic qualifications in the States. He wouldn't mind working there at some point in the future.
- He is not a great believer in one style of play over another and enjoys watching different styles and seeing if passion can overcome technique.
- He was disappointed about last night's result against Vitesse, but I got the feeling that he wasn't as stressed by the result as Robson. Therein lies the psychological difference between being the head coach and being the assistant.
- Brandts' role within the team is to help Robson with his view on the Dutch game, who the players are, how the teams play, etc. He brings a PSV perspective to the dressing room.
- He feels that Robson is a better coach now than when he first came to PSV five years ago and put it down to the experience that Robson picked up in Holland, Portugal and Spain.
- He explained that the Dutch work on situations in practice that they have observed as problems during a game.
- At this late stage of the season, the team does little fitness work and most practices are relaxed with the emphasis on ball work and small sided games.
- He has a great respect for Robson and is impressed at the enthusiasm of a man who is 65 years old and who has accomplished so much in the game.

### Conversation with Bobby Robson

- He stressed the importance of coaching education and respects people that have passed their coaching licenses. He feels that taking a course, coupled with your experience in the game can only make you a better coach.
- We discussed the merits of Bryan Robson and David Platt getting high profile jobs at Middlesbrough and Sampdoria despite not having any coaching qualifications. Again, he stressed the importance of constant education and qualifications.
- He had just spoken to Howard Wilkinson who was recently appointed as the new director of coaching for the English Football Association. They talked about the demands of coaching in England versus coaching in Holland. Wilkinson was envious of the fact that Robson was finished at 12-noon everyday and his only responsibilities at PSV were coaching the team. This is not the norm in England where coaches have to be involved in all aspects of the club.
- He again complained about the loss of key players and the affect it has had on PSV's season. He especially missed Ovidiu Stinga who was injured in the 1998 World Cup in France while playing for Romania against England.
- We talked about tonight's Manchester United-Juventus Champions League match in Turin. He loves watching Manchester United play and, as an Englishman, wants to see them win the European Cup. Robson is very much a fan of English football and wants English clubs to be successful in Europe.
- We talked about the last month of his contract and his return to England. He was looking forward to the end of the season and getting back home. He had hoped to leave PSV having helped them qualify for the UEFA Champions League.
- During today's practice he was closely observing the injured players to see who stood the best chance of playing in the upcoming game with De Graafschap. He was also watching some other players who he feels don't always give 100% when he is not watching.
- He talked about how good a club PSV was and some of the extra things PSV does to keep players and staff happy in their time at the club. The club provides a language teacher to teach Dutch to all the foreign players, so that no one becomes isolated within the dressing room. The club has a sponsorship deal with Mercedes Benz so each first team squad player receives a new Mercedes while at PSV. This helps ease any jealousy in the squad caused by money and contracts by stopping players comparing what each other drives (i.e. no one can come to practice in a Ferrari).
- The rules of the club are that first team players must wear suits to a home game and sweat suits to an away game.

## Conversation with Head Scout, Tony Bruins Sloth

I met with Tony Bruins Sloth, the chief scout of PSV Eindhoven, who has his office in the youth complex at “De Herdgang”. Bruins Sloth was Johan Cryuff’s assistant at Barcelona and was also a former coach of Ajax. His office is the center of operations for all player scouting at the club. On his desk was a box of videos of every game from the 1999 FIFA U-20 World Cup. The staff will watch every game and identify players that may be of interest to PSV.

There were hundreds of videos from agents around the world who sent clips to PSV with the hope of having their players sign for the club. They wanted PSV to know that their clients were available to transfer, or sign as free agents at the end of the season. Tony did not have much hope of PSV signing a player from this pile and said they would still have to see a player in action before they would think about doing so.

PSV has scouts all over the world watching games at numerous levels hoping to identify players with the talent to play in Holland. The scouts are located throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. They have none in North America because they feel that American players possess bad technique, the level of play is poor in the States and that the best US players can be observed in National Team games.

### Dutch Women’s Game ODC vs. Braakhuizen Hoofdklasse League - Dutch First Division

#### ODC -1 Braakhuizen - 2

I went along with my host family to watch a Dutch women’s first division game, so that I could compare the standard with the United States. The game was a top of the table clash and a local derby between two southern teams from the Eindhoven area. My observations are as follows:

- The players and fans complained about the quality of the field, but it looked in tremendous condition. Dutch players become spoiled because they are so used to playing on quality surfaces as every field is so well looked after.
- The women try to play with the same style and pattern as the Dutch men, but not at the same pace.
- The defenders were not afraid to use their goalkeepers, who at times, played like sweepers.
- The players understood the concept of the offside trap and how to beat it. One team played it efficiently and the other tried to get the full backs forward from deep to beat the trap.
- The game was about maintaining possession and both teams were very patient with the ball. There were very few forced passes.
- On a wet night there were quite a few 50-50 tackles and the technique of the players was very good especially when sliding. It was much better than in the States.
- The players understood the subtle nuances of the game that are lost on their American counterparts - time wasting, shielding the ball while waiting for support, shepherding a ball out of play, playing the ball off the defender to get a corner, when to make tactical fouls, clearing balls out of the danger area, etc. It was quite obvious from watching the players that their exposure to the Dutch men’s first division and their national team has affected how they play. Most of what they do is copied from the men.

### Thursday April 22, 1999 PSV Eindhoven First Team Squad Practice Session “De Herdgang” Sports Complex, Eindhoven, Holland

## Introduction

PSV Eindhoven started the week in third place, one point behind Vitesse Arnham in the Dutch First Division. Both teams, along with fourth placed

Willem II, were seeking to finish second behind champions elect Feyenoord and qualify for next season's UEFA Champions League. A 3 - 3 away draw at Vitesse on Tuesday night (April 20) kept PSV's dream alive, but they now faced a third game in seven days, away to De Graafschap (April 23) and victory was vital if they were to secure the automatic place.

The first team was given Wednesday off and all first team squad players reported for training on Thursday morning at "De Herdgang" (PSV's sports complex).

Twenty players stepped out on the field at exactly 10:30 am. They were all dressed in the same PSV Nike training gear except for club captain and Belgian international, Luc Nilis. The balls and equipment were already out on the field and the surface was in immaculate condition.

Some players talked to the fans who came to watch the team train. They talked about Tuesday's draw with Vitesse, the upcoming game with De Graafschap and other general PSV gossip. The players had a smile and a hello for everyone present.

## The coaching staff for practice was:

Bobby Robson	First Team Coach
Ernie Brandts	Assistant Coach
Pete Schrijvers	Goalkeeper Coach
Luc van Agt	Sports Physiologist

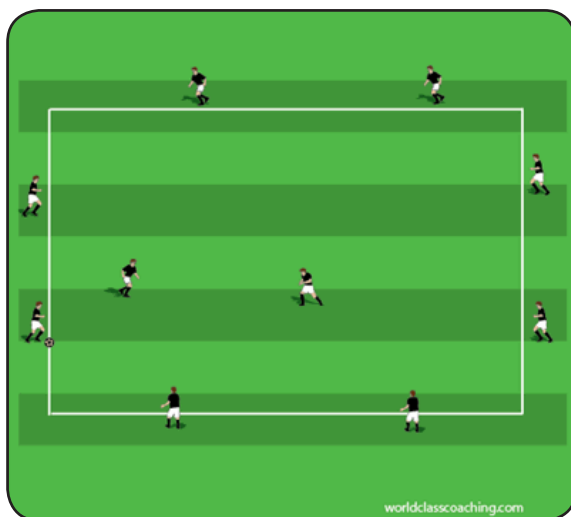


Diagram 28

## Warm up (30 minutes)

Bobby Robson called the team together, spoke for a few seconds and then sent the players off to warm up individually, or in small groups. The players did four to five laps each and most did various stretching and loosening exercises. No one was fooling around and the players were all very disciplined in their preparations.

## Warm-Up

Two groups of ten players in two 10 x 10 grids played 8 v 2 one-touch keep-away for 10-15 minutes. The two players in the middle only needed to touch the ball to get out. They had to stay in another turn if they were nutmegged with the ball, or if they were split by a pass. The players on the outside could only play one touch and they had to stay on the line to pass and receive. One of the groups varied the game by playing one touch in the air (15 minutes).

Every PSV team from the U10's to the first team plays this game prior to practice and all seem to enjoy the game. It is their free time within the practice to have fun and express themselves. At the first team level it required exceptional technique, quick feet and quickness of thought.

Two groups were divided up into starters and non-starters. Bobby Robson spent 15 minutes watching the non-starters to see who was working hard, to make sure that those players carrying knocks were playing at 100% and to keep an eye on certain players he feels relax when he's not watching.

### Small-Sided Game (30 minutes)

In the 18-yard penalty area, two teams (starters v non-starters) played 9 v 9. The game was free-play with no restrictions. The purpose was to get the ball into a two-yard zone on either end of the penalty area by dribbling or passing to a teammate. Each team defended one zone. Assistant coach Ernie Brandts had a supply of balls to quickly restart the game when needed. Play was always restarted with a throw-in. This game was usually played 11 v 11, but one keeper did some work with Pete Schrijvers and some injured players did a fitness testing session with the team's Sports Physiologist.

Players could not tackle in the end zone to reduce the risk of injury, but tackles were fierce and competitive everywhere else. Not one player wore shin guards which was interesting considering the competitiveness of the game and the importance of the following day's league game to PSV's season. Fortunately, no player got hurt.

The ball was hardly ever out of play for such a crowded area. The ability of the players to pass under extreme pressure and find space where none seemed to exist was tremendous. The game was very competitive, everyone wanted to win and all goals were celebrated by the scoring team. When possession was lost, the defending team worked extremely hard to get the ball back. It was a surprisingly tough and tiring game the day before an important league match.

Bobby Robson and Ernie Brandts rarely said anything to the players. They spent most of the session observing them play and making final decisions on the starting line up for the game with De Graafschap.

After the game, Luc Nilis and Ruudvan Nistelrooy (the two starting forwards) worked on individual shooting with one of the goalkeepers. There was no coach with them and they basically had a relaxed, but disciplined session together. They worked on bending balls, half and full volleys, one on ones, heading and finishing low balls. They were very disciplined when they worked together and did not do anything in the practice that they would not probably do in a game situation.

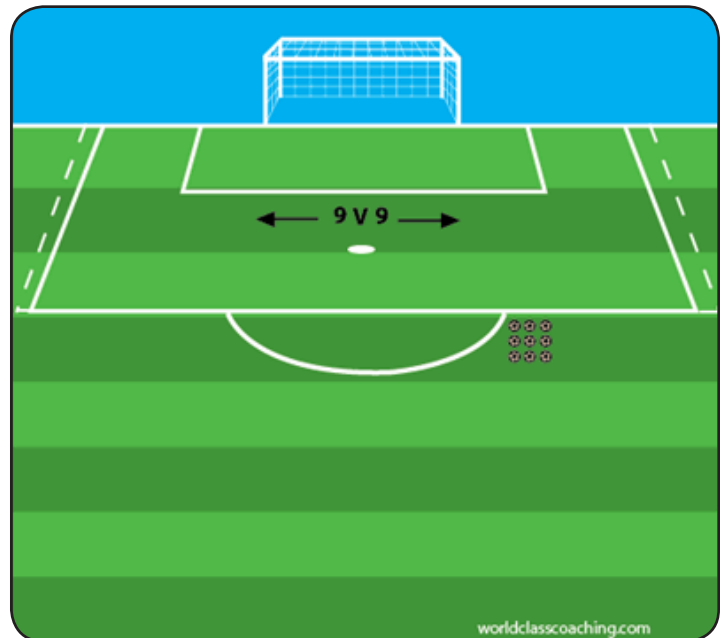


Diagram 29

### Functional Finishing Practice (30 minutes)

The rest of the team worked with Bobby Robson on a half-field functional passing and finishing practice. Players were placed according to the position they played for the team. Nilis and van Nistelrooy were kept out of this practice because Bobby Robson felt that they worked too hard in the finishing games and he wanted the players to conserve their energy for the game with De Graafschap.

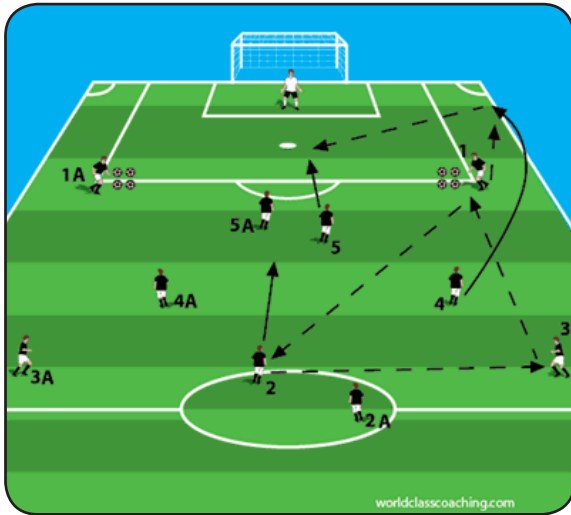


Diagram 30

### Attacking Combinations

- 1 has a supply of balls.
  - 1 plays long in the air to 2.
  - 2 controls and plays wide to 3 then continues a forward run into the penalty area.
  - 3 plays down the line for 1.
  - 4 makes an overlapping run around 1.
  - 1 plays the ball to 4.
  - 4 crosses into the penalty area for 5 and 2 to finish.
- One group worked on the right side of the field while the other group (A players) worked on the left side of the field. Players were rotated to different positions.

### Coaching Points

- Players in the group on the other side can make late runs into the penalty area
- Players were allowed to decide which player to pass to when they received the ball

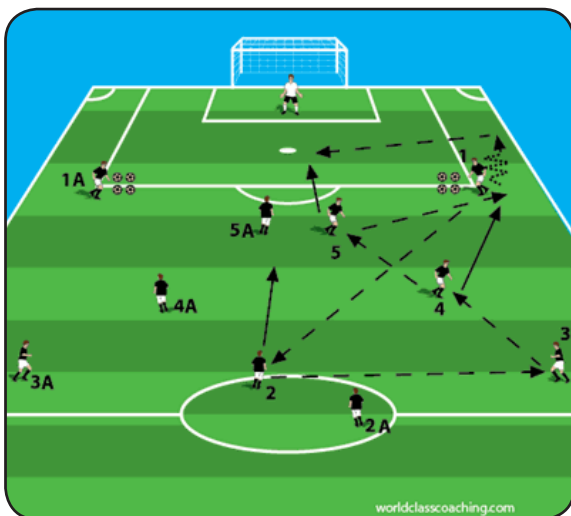


Diagram 31

### Variation

- 1 plays long in the air to 2.
- 2 controls and plays wide to 3 then continues a forward run into the penalty area.
- 3 plays to 4.
- 4 plays a give-and-go with 5.
- 4 crosses the ball into the penalty area for 5 and 2 to finish.

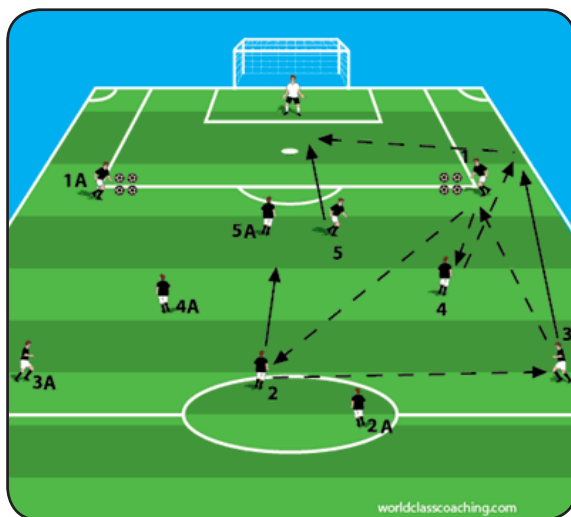


Diagram 32

### Variation

- 1 plays long in the air to 2.
- 2 controls and plays wide to 3 then continues a forward run into the penalty area.
- 3 plays to 1 then runs down the flank.
- 1 lays the ball back for 4.
- 4 plays the ball down the line for 3.
- 3 crosses into the penalty area for 5 and 2 to finish.

### Variation

- 1 plays long in the air to 2.
- 2 controls and plays to 3 then continues a forward run into the penalty area.
- 3 plays to 4 then runs down the flank.
- 4 plays to 1 or down the line for 3.
- 3 crosses into the penalty area for 5 and 2 to finish.

### Cool Down

Once the practice was finished at noon, Bobby Robson told his players they could go in and shower. There was no team or group cool down and Robson didn't speak to the players to end the practice. Half the players went in while the rest stayed out and did various activities: stretching, extra fitness work, sit-ups, and crossing and finishing.

### Observations of this activity

- There was constant movement in the practice and very little standing around.
- The running was done on and off the ball and each execution involved eight players.
- No defenders were introduced, so the success rate of finishing was high. On another day, defenders would have been introduced to the session.
- The standard of passing, runs off the ball, crossing and finishing was very high.
- Bobby Robson was constantly demanding high standards from his players and he got upset with them if they were not maintained.
- He constantly demanded quality passing, discipline, work rate and quality finishing.
- All shots were followed in by the shooter and the second forward. Rebounds were finished with authority.
- Crosses were varied: driven, bent, near post, far post, flighted, etc.
- Talking was non-stop with and without the ball. Players demanded the ball like they were playing in a real game.
- No coaching was done in the session.

Bobby Robson and I talked for a while together after the practice about the attitude of the players. He said that van Nistelrooy has to be kicked off the field because he will stay out and shoot all day, then at game time he will be tired. On this particular day he asked the forward to go inside, but he stayed out and played for a few minutes more. Robson told him to go inside once more and again van Nistelrooy still stayed out. Finally Robson said he would be fined 3000 Guilders if he didn't go in to the dressing room, so the player reluctantly went in. Maybe van Nistelrooy's extra work paid off because the 23 year old was named to the Dutch squad for the upcoming friendly game against Morocco.

The Sports Physiologist continued to work for another 30 minutes with the injured players who were not in contention for playing time in the game against De Grafschaap.

By 12:30 p.m. the whole squad was inside the club house for a team meal which no one other than the playing staff and coaching staff is allowed to attend. Robson said this is a policy that is sacrosanct to the inner workings of the club.

After the team left, Bobby Robson and I had lunch together and we had an in-depth discussion on coaching, coaching education and the game with De Grafschaap.

For an hour after our lunch Mr. Robson dealt with some of the administrative aspects of his job as first team coach of PSV Eindhoven.

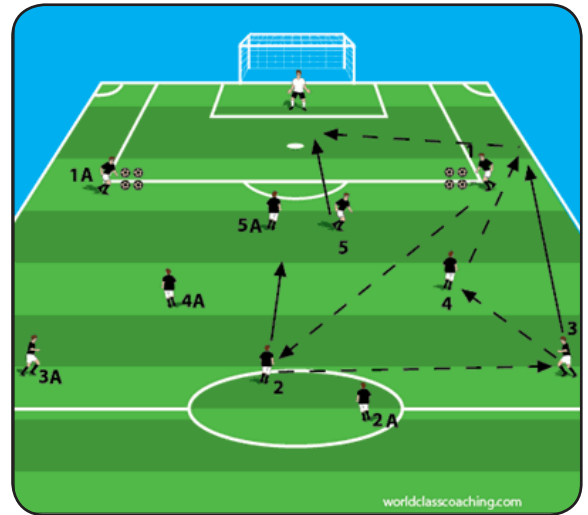


Diagram 33

- He spoke to a representative of a Portuguese club regarding a scouting report on a player they were interested in signing.
- He returned a call to a foreign player who wanted a trial with PSV.
- He called a soccer reporter to do an interview for Total Sport Magazine.
- He gave an interview to Finnish television regarding Joonas Kolkka, a Finnish national team player at PSV.
- He autographed PSV merchandise for supporters.

Evening

A1 Team (Age 18) : Six Players and Two Goalkeepers

The numbers were low due to the fact that most of the players were in the reserve team playing at Alkmar tonight.

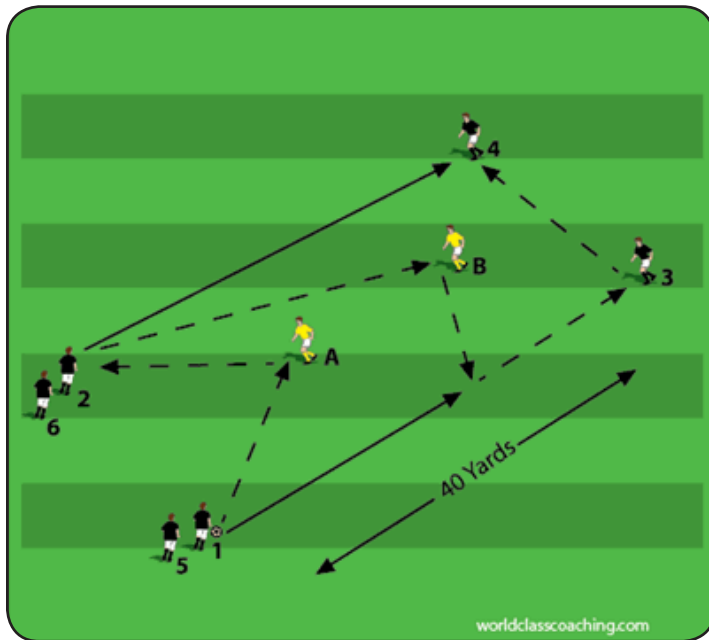


Diagram 34

Warm-Up

6 v 2 keep-away in a 5 x 5 grid.

Eight players were organized in a group as shown with one ball. Players 1 and 2 are 10-15 yards from each other and are 30 - 40 yards away from players 3 and 4. Two players are positioned in the middle as shown. Player 1 passes to player A. Player A lays off to player 2. Player 2 passes to player B then runs to join player 4. Player B lays off to running player 1. Player 1 passes to player 3. Player 3 lays off for player 4. Player 4 restarts the sequence by playing in to B. Players 5 and 6 will receive ball from players 3 and 4.

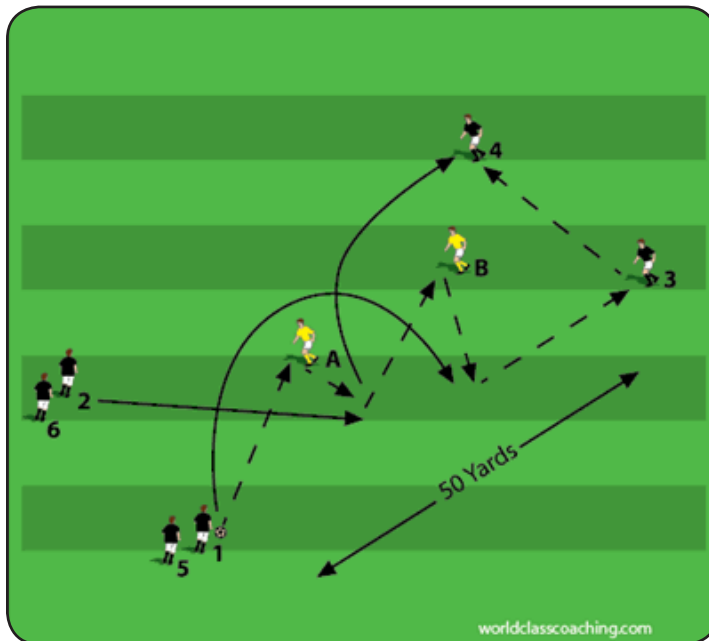


Diagram 35

Variation

This time the players criss-cross after they pass into A and B. The groups are now 40-50 yards apart.



### Shooting

Organize two full size goals 30 yards apart with goalkeepers. Position two groups of players, one beside each goal with a supply of balls. The first player in line dribbles out and shoots at the goalkeeper from about 15-20 yards. Then the first player from the opposite line dribbles and shoots at the other goalkeeper. This was the keeper's warm-up, so the shots were hit right at him. Then vary the shots low, high, near post, far post, chip and bent.

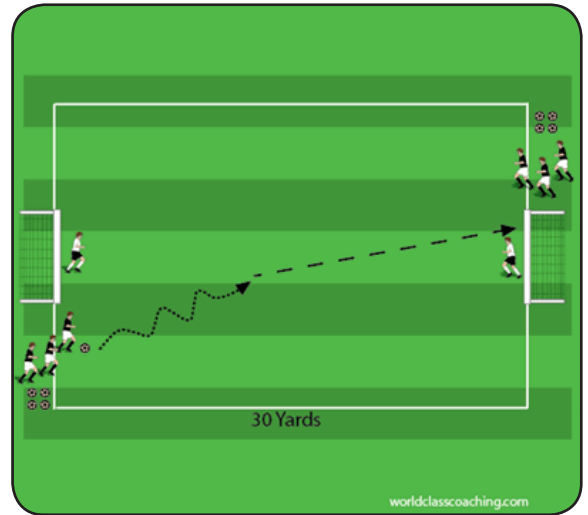


Diagram 36

### Progression

This time each group now has a target player in the middle. Player 1 passes in to the target player, 2, who turns inside for a shot on goal. Player 1 then becomes the target player and player 2 joins the back of the opposite line. Repeat from the opposite line.

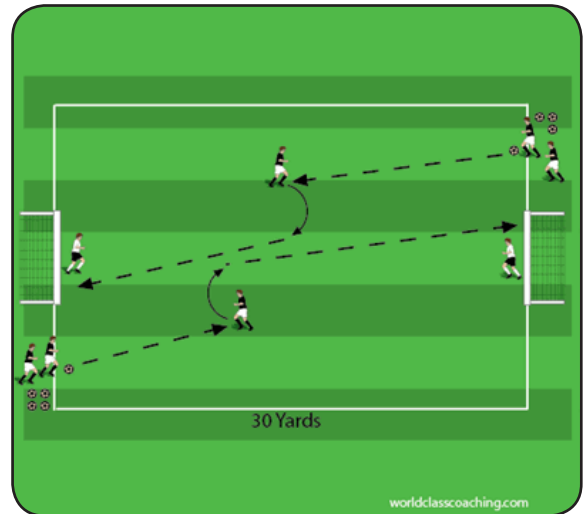


Diagram 37

### Coaching Points

- Look for a quick turn and shot
- Turn with one foot, shoot with the other
- When to turn inside and when to turn outside

### Progression

This time player 1 passes to player 2 who checks forward to receive the ball. Player 2 lays off for player 1 to have a shot on goal. Both groups go at the same time at opposite goals.

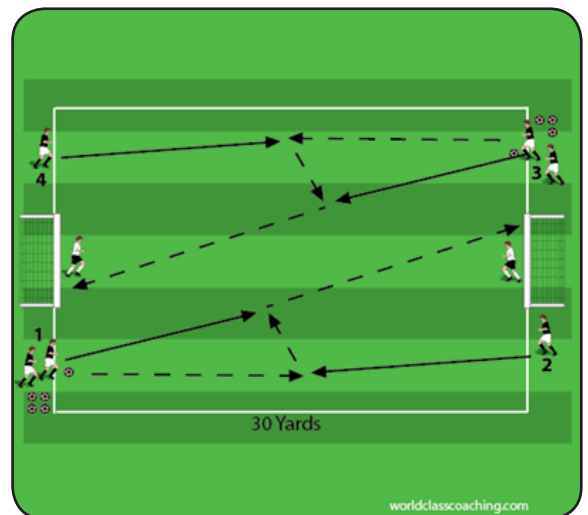


Diagram 38

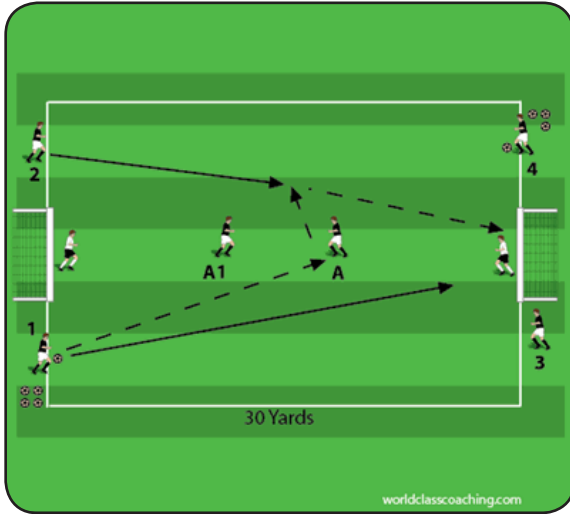


Diagram 39

**Progression**

Player 1 passes to A who lays off for player 2 to shoot on goal. Player 1 continues his run towards goal and finishes any rebound. The drill continues with player 4 passing to A1 who lays off for player 3 shoot in the opposite goal. A and A1 are 12-15 yards from goal.

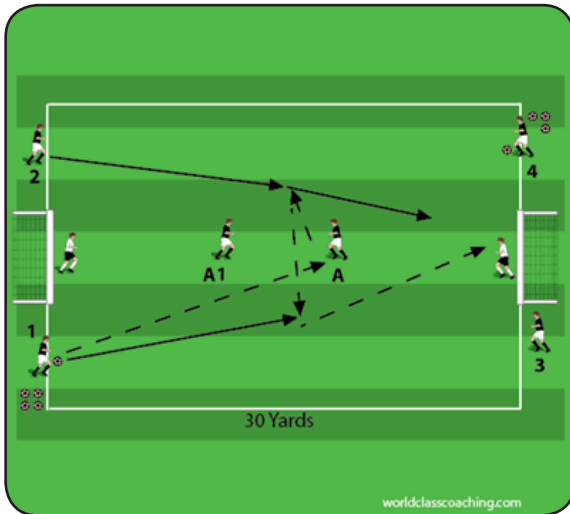


Diagram 40

**Progression**

Player 1 passes to A who lays off for player 2. Player 2 passes to player 1 who shoots on goal. Player 2 continues his run and finishes any rebounds.

**Note**

The quality of passing has to be excellent and the timing of the run by player 1 needs to be perfect.

Practice ended with a 3 v 3 game (free play) plus goalkeepers. Teams rotated every few minutes.

**Cool Down**

Jogging and stretching.

**C1 Team (Age 13) : Sixteen Players and Two Goalkeepers**

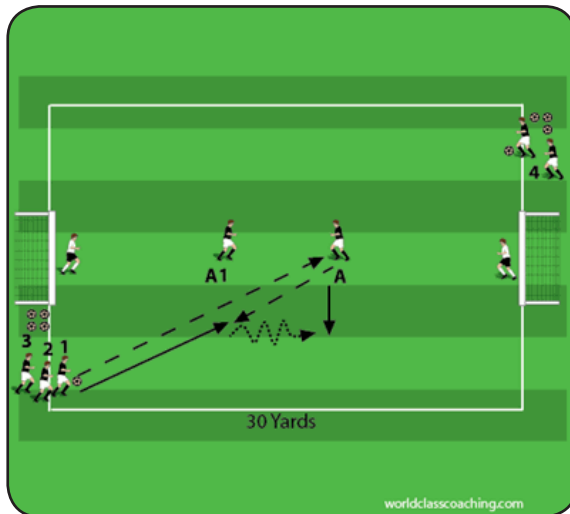


Diagram 41

**Warm-Up**

8 v 2 keep-away in 5 x 5 grid.

Set up an area with the goals 35-40 yards apart with keepers. Players set up as shown with two groups working.

Player 1 passes to player A.

Player A lays back to player 1 who attacks A (1 v 1) and looks to finish on goal.

Player 4 passes to player A1 going in the opposite direction.

**Progression**

Player 1 passes to player 2.  
 Player 2 passes straight back to player 1.  
 Player 1 passes to player A.  
 Player A passes to player 2 who attacks A  
 (1 v 1) and looks to finish on goal.  
 Players attack from both sides left and right.

**Variations**

- Must do a move (Matthews, Maradona) before finishing
- Must go around the goalkeeper before finishing
- Must run at the defender. If the defender wins the ball, he can go to goal

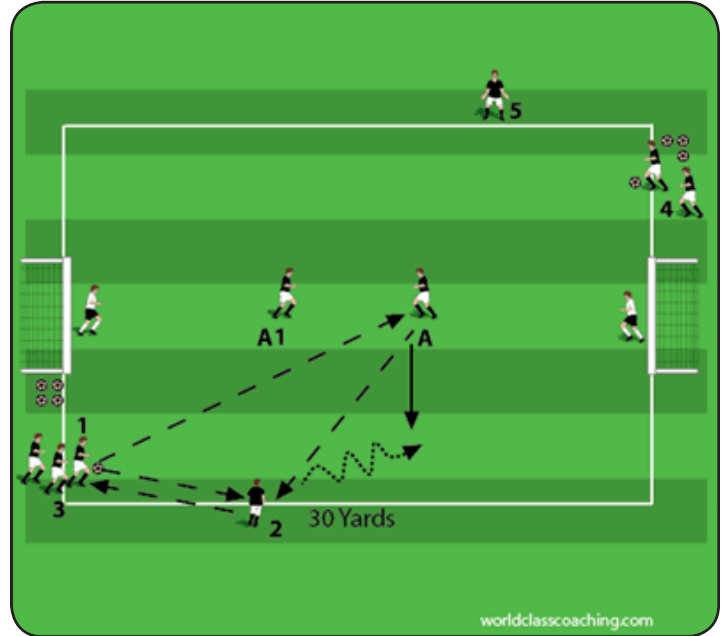


Diagram 42

After five minutes rest working on ball juggling and moves, practice ended with an 8 v 8 game on half field. The emphasis was on width and depth when in possession.

**Cool Down**

Jogging and stretching.

**C2 Team (Age 12) : Sixteen Players and Two Goalkeepers**

**Warm-Up**

8 v 2 keep away in 5 x 5 grid and jogging and stretching as a group.

The players work on half-field, half-line to one goal with a keeper.  
 Player 1 passes to player 2 who lays off to player 1.  
 Player 1 passes to player 3 who lays off to player 4 to shoot on goal.

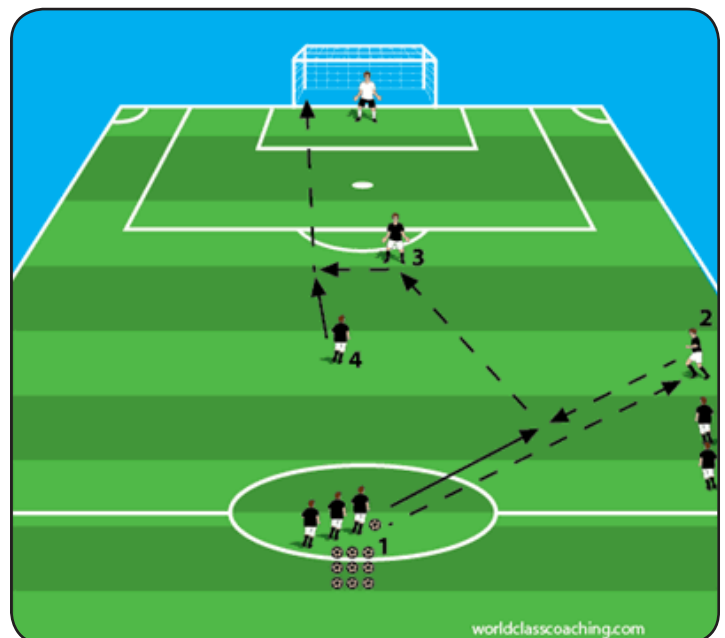


Diagram 43

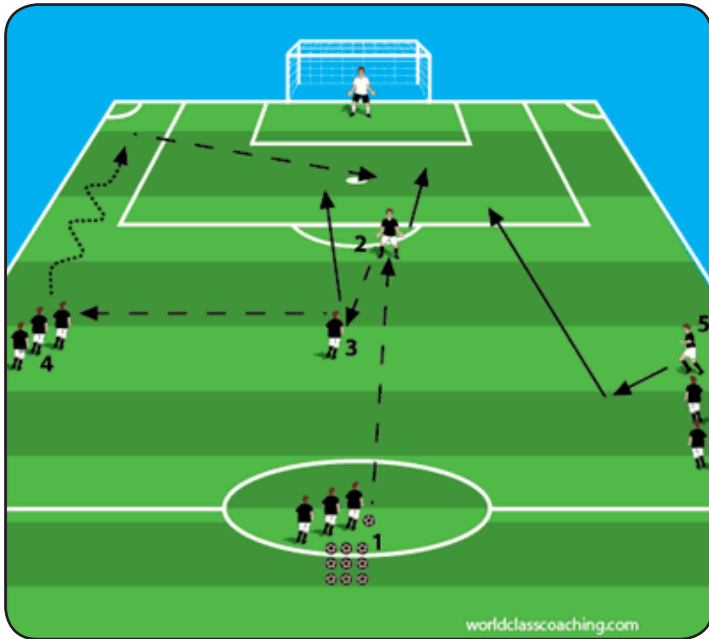


Diagram 44

The players work on half-field, half-line to one goal with a keeper. Player 1 passes long to player 2 who lays off to player 3. Player 3 plays wide to player 4 who attacks the goalline and crosses into the penalty area. As player 1 plays to player 2, player 5 checks back and then makes a late run into the area. Players 2, 3, and 5 attack the area and look to finish the cross. Rotate the players through cones.

### Coaching Points

- After a few repetitions, the coach stepped in and worked on the runs of the players - 3 to the near post, 2 to the far post and 5 makes the late run into area.
- The coach tried to get the players to walk until the cross was played before making their runs.
- Worked one side at a time (crossing from left then right).

The practice ended with an 8 v 8 game on half-field. The emphasis of the game was crossing and finishing.

### Cool Down

Jogging and stretching.

### Observations

- The attitude to score was impressive and the players put a lot of effort in trying to get on the end of a cross.
- The pace of the ball being crossed was excellent and most were whipped in and caused the keepers all sorts of problems.
- The players were not afraid to try diving headers, falling volleys or overhead kicks to score.
- The runs made into the penalty area were very realistic and the timing was good for such young players.

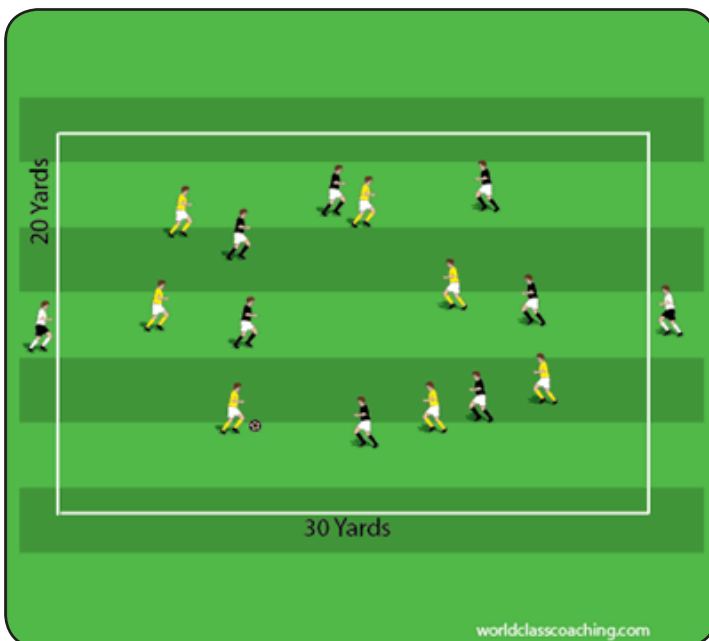


Diagram 45

### D1 Team (Age 11) : Fourteen Players and Two Goalkeepers

#### Warm-Up

The kids came out on their own and immediately played 8 v 2 in a 5 x 5 grid.

#### Small-Sided Game

Mark a grid 30 x 20 yards. Two teams playing 7 v 7 inside the grid with a target player on each end.

Play keep-away and use the target players to make the game 9 v 7.

Practice continued with a 4 v 4 game with no restrictions on a field 40 x 30 yards with full sized goals and keepers.

### Coaching Points

- Playing the way they were facing
- Setting each other up for the next pass
- Quality talking
- Quality movement and support.

While the 4 v 4 game was going on, the coach worked with four players beside the field in a 10 x 10 yard grid with one player on each side.

Player 1 passes to player 2.  
 Player 2 passes to player 3.  
 Player 3 passes to player 4.  
 Player 4 passes to Player 1.  
 Repeat back and forward.

Practice ended with an 8 v 8 game on half-field with full goals and no restrictions.

### Cool Down

Jogging and stretching.

### Observations

- Despite their young age, the players got themselves organized into an activity without coaching supervision. They really had fun playing keep-away, usually at the expense of the players in the middle.
- The discipline of the players to do the simple thing and play the way they were facing was evident even at this early age.
- The players really got into the 7 v 7 possession game and never got bored playing it. I am not sure that American players at the same age could play at the same pace, with the same attitude and discipline, or with the same proficiency.
- You can tell the young players are exposed to higher levels of the game and are surrounded by good players just by the mannerisms that they possess when they are playing.

### Geldrop FC : Dutch League Division 3

Two of the PSV youth coaches continue to play in the Dutch Third Division with a local team, Geldrop FC. After practice at PSV, I went with them to observe their practice and the standard of play compared to PSV. Geldrop train in a town funded complex, which is comprised of 10 immaculate fields, dressing rooms for each team, a compact little stadium and a club house. The set up of the club was excellent and very professional.

The first team is made up of players who were youth or reserve team players with PSV and professionals from other clubs around Holland like Willem II and Tilburg. The pace of the practice was good and the technique of the players was good, especially those players who had played with professional clubs. However, the best players were coming to the end of their career and few were headed for the top division any time soon. In my opinion, the level of play was equivalent to some of the top teams in the A-League while the style of play was definitely Dutch.

The coach was Martin Van Duren who was in his first season with Geldrop after 15 successful years as a professional player with PSV, Den Bosch, Groningen and Swiss side, Basel.

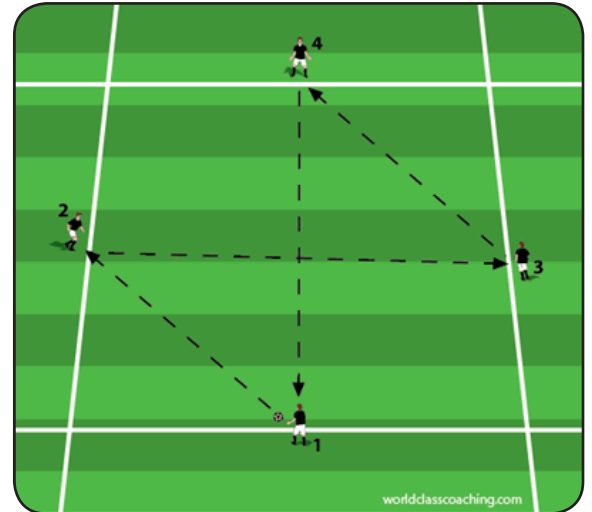


Diagram 46

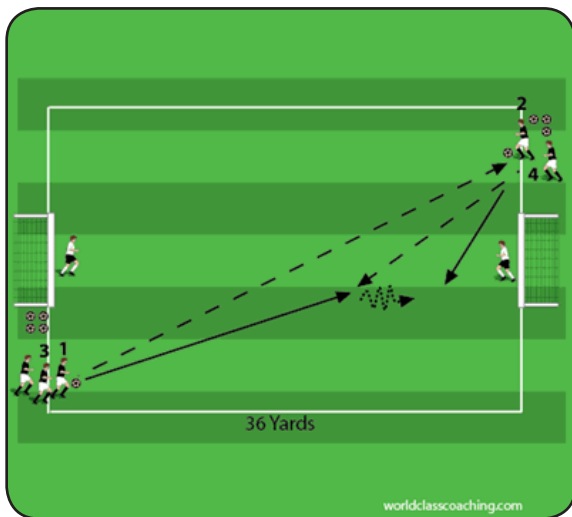


Diagram 47

### Warm-Up

Played 8 v 2 in a 5 x 5-yard grid, one touch only. Then the players jogged and stretched in a line going across the field doing various movements and exercises. This was followed by some 1 v 1 practice.

For the next part of practice, the goals were set up 36 yards apart. The first game of practice was 5 v 5 plus keepers, free play.

### One v One

Player 1 passes to player 2.

Player 2 passes straight back to player 1.

Player 1 then goes 1 v 1 against player 2 and looks for a shot on goal.

Practice continued with another 5 v 5 game with the emphasis on 1 v 1 attacking. Conditions were then introduced to the 5 v 5 game. One team must play two touch, the other team has free play.

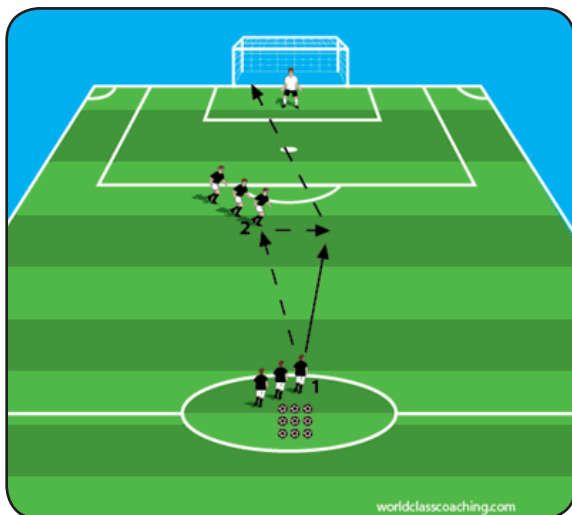


Diagram 48

### Shooting

Use half-field to one goal with a keeper.

Player 1 passes to player 2.

Player 2 lays the ball off for player 1 to shoot.

The player must sprint after the ball once he has passed into A.

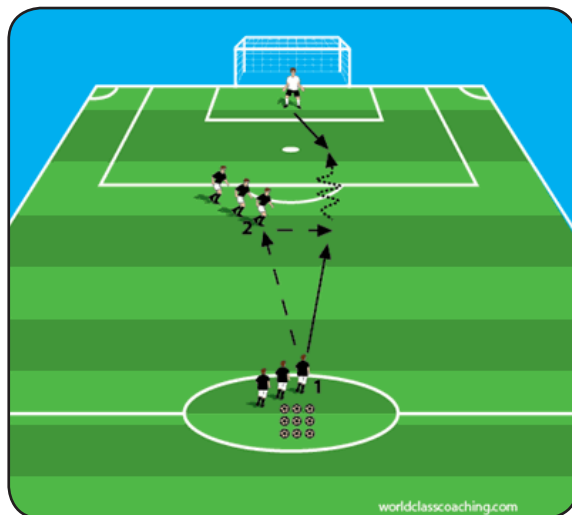


Diagram 49

### Progression

Player 1 passes to player 2.

Player 2 lays the ball off for player 1.

Player 1 then attempts to dribble around the goalkeeper and finish.

The goalkeeper must close down the player as if coming out on a breakaway.

Practice ended with a game, no restrictions, followed by a cool down.

**Friday April 23, 1999**  
**De Graafschap vs. PSV Eindhoven**  
**KPN Telecompetitie - Dutch First Division Game**  
**Stadion De Vijerberg, De Graafschap, Holland**  
**Kick Off 8.00 PM**

**De Graafschap - 1 PSV Eindhoven - 0**

The first team squad left early this morning for the game at De Graafschap. As the game was being shown live throughout Europe by Canal + it had to be played on Friday night giving PSV their third important league game in six days. They entered the game one point behind Vitesse Arnhem for second place and the automatic UEFA Champions League spot, so it was a must win game for PSV. De Graafschap on the other hand were languishing in 13th place in the 18 team Dutch First Division and were just above the relegation zone. Their role would be that of spoiler and one they would no doubt relish against their more illustrious opponents.

I traveled to the game with the club press manager, Pedro Salazar Hewitt and the club physician, Dr. Jan Koster. We arrived at the ground at 6.15 PM just before the first team bus pulled into the stadium. The kit manager and backroom staff were already there, so that everything would be ready for the team when they arrived.

It was a zoo behind the scenes with television crew and print media running wires, cameras and phones all over the place. The private reception area for players and staff was full of former players, reporters, wives and girlfriends enjoying the free food and drink. Some players did interviews before the game with television and newspaper reporters, but most just hung out in the dressing room.

I had the chance to walk out on the field and have a talk with Robson before the game and while he appeared relaxed, you new the pressure had to be building inside him. We talked about the game and the build-up and talked about being a long way from our home towns of Dublin and Newcastle. PSV went out onto the field at 7.30 PM, half an hour before the kick-off, for their warm-up. The players jogged and stretched individually and no team warm-up was done. De Graafschap warmed up as a team (starters only) going back and forth across the field. Both starting goalkeepers worked with their respective coaches.

PSV started out playing 4-4-2 with the wide midfield players hugging the touchline like out-and-out wingers. The full backs pushed forward at every opportunity and this allowed the home team to threaten on the break throughout the game. Everything positive that PSV started came through Luc Nilis. He dropped deep to pick up the ball as if playing in midfield and then tried to thread balls through for Ruud van Nistelrooy or the wide men. He also took every free kick and corner and was the playmaker for PSV. However, at times Nilis killed the play for his team especially, on the break, because he held the ball up too long at times and allowed De Graafschap time to get players back behind the ball.

De Graafschap played 4-4-2 as well, but were more direct than PSV and lacked the quality players of their opponents. They played the ball forward as quickly as possible and the midfield pushed on in support for the second ball. They were very physical and closed PSV down at every opportunity and were not slow to dive in on the tackle.

Three minutes before half-time, PSV was caught on the break by De Graafschap and conceded a goal. A simple pass out of the back was played long in behind the left fullback. The forward held it up and passed back to the trailing midfielder runner who buried the ball in the corner of the net from the top of the penalty area. PSV were behind in a game they had to win.

The second half was similar to the first. PSV had all the possession, but De Graafschap would close them down and try to score on the break. With 10 minutes to go, Robson brought on Gilles de Bilde in one last throw of the dice and went to a 2-3-5 formation. It didn't work, and in the end PSV never looked like scoring. It was game over, a disappointing result and Champions League qualification now looked very unlikely.

The mood in the dressing room was one of disappointment and not much was being said by the players or staff. After his press conference and a few words with his team, Robson came over and spent about five minutes talking to me about the game. He wanted to know what I thought, what I would have done differently and what the result meant.

I gave him my views on Nilis and also said that PSV never looked like scoring. He agreed with me. I also said that I was surprised he waited so long to bring on de Bilde. He disagreed with me on this point and said that the starting line up was his best team to get the result, so why make a change. If he thought de Bilde was going to score a goal in the last 10 minutes he should have been on from the start.

I asked him about practice on Saturday and Sunday, but he said he couldn't ask the players to come in. What would be the point? They were shattered mentally and physically and there was no point in training for the sake of training. So he gave the players the next two days off. We talked about my week at the club and I thanked him for everything that he had done for me and with that he jumped on the team bus and left for Eindhoven.

After the game I had to wait around with Pedro and Dr. Koster for PSV defender Andre Ooijer who was selected to provide a urine sample, a standard practice after games at this level. It took almost 90 minutes after the game before he was hydrated enough to provide the sample. The team bus left without him, so he drove back to Eindhoven with us. The topic of conversation in the car was the game and more importantly the result and the ramifications for next season. Only time would tell if it would cost PSV their Champions League place.

On the way to and from the game, the phone was constantly ringing in the car and Pedro had to deal with a number of calls. Most were to the media about the line up for the game or comments on the team's performance. He also had a call from Barcelona FC inquiring about a player, but they were told to go through player director, Frank Arnesen. Also, he called the teletext service to release to the media that PSV had signed Tom Devos to a contract for the next four years.

**Saturday April 24, 1999**  
**Eindhoven FC vs. Go Ahead Eagles**  
**Totodivisie - Dutch Second Division Game**  
**Eindhoven Stadion, Eindhoven, Holland**  
**Kick Off 5.00 PM**  
**Eindhoven 3 vs. Go Ahead Eagles 2**

I went along to see PSV's cross-town rivals in action in the Dutch second division against Go Ahead Eagles. Eindhoven was in 11th place in the table before the game while their opponents were in 7th. With less than a month to go in the season, both teams had nothing to play for. I expected a dour game, but it turned out to be a cracker.

Eindhoven warmed-up as a team going the down the field jogging and stretching about 30 minutes before kick-off. They then broke up into groups of three with one ball and worked on passing and movement. The goalkeeper warmed up with a coach.

Go Ahead Eagles went across the field as a team and then got into threes to work on passing. All the patterns they worked on were short-short-long. The substitutes played 4 v 1 keep away in a 5 x 5 grid and played one-touch. The goalkeeper was with a coach and worked mostly on crosses.

Eindhoven played 4-3-3 while the Eagles played 4-4-2. Eindhoven played more direct than their opposition who tried to pass the ball around. Eagles were more organized than the home team and every free kick and corner was varied and caused all sorts of problems for the Eindhoven defense. A lot of time and effort went into the Eagles' match preparations. Too bad it was all to no avail as Eindhoven came back from a 1-0 half-time deficit to win the game 3-2. The third goal came after Eindhoven had a player sent off and was scored with only six minutes left in the game.

It was a game that Go Ahead Eagles did not deserve to lose, but for all their skill, organization and domination, they went away empty handed. The standard was mixed. Eindhoven looked like they would struggle in the A-League, while Go Ahead Eagles looked like they could hold their own in the Dutch First Division. In my opinion, they were a better team than De Graafschap who had beaten PSV yesterday.