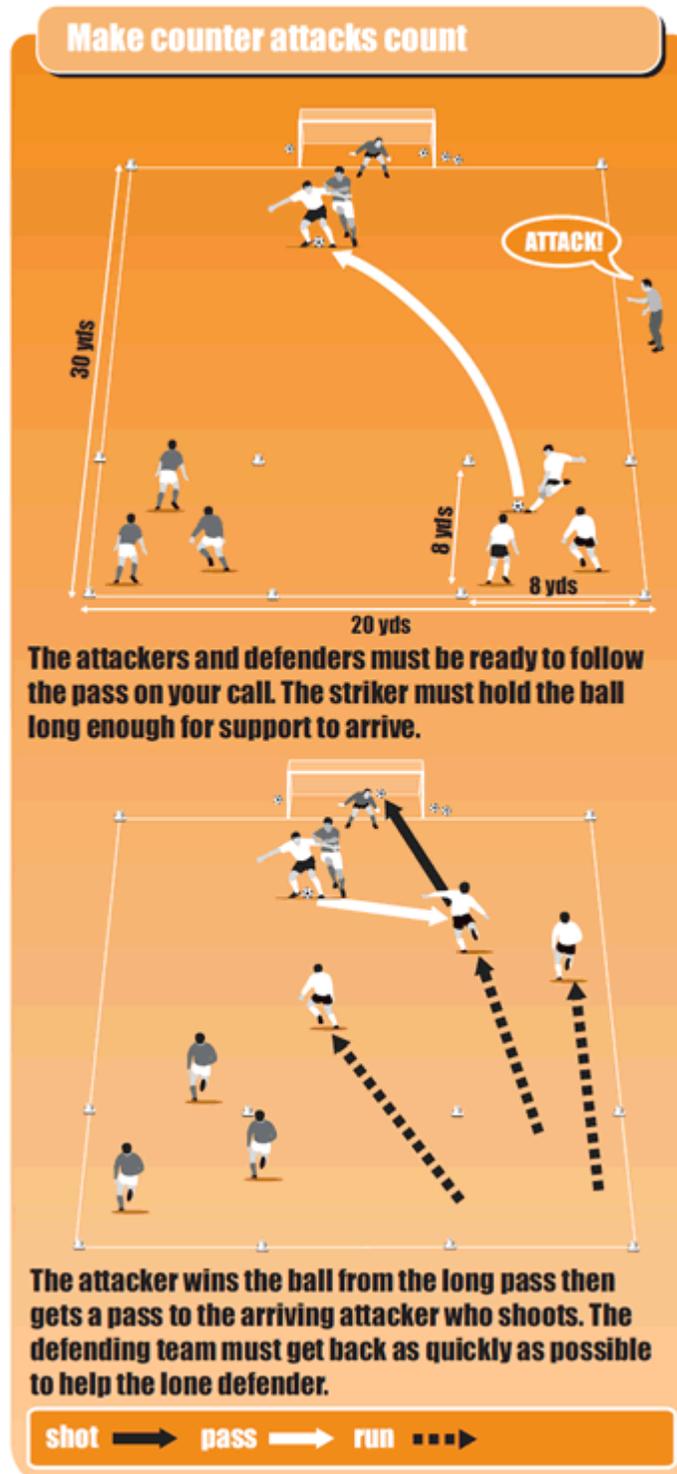


Counter attack like Roberto Mancini

By David Clarke

Roberto Mancini's players are good at exploiting counter attacks but one problem an attacking team has is: Can they make the most of having the ball in so much space?

Not every team has a David Silva or Sergio Aguero in their team. Players need to practise this from both the attacking and the defending point of view so that they know how to react it happens in matches.



I use this exercise, which I first saw being used by Manchester City under manager Roberto Mancini. It is a really good workout for your players and gives all the players involved a realistic idea of what they have to do when the opposition breaks away with the ball.

When you play it, your players can hit long balls or fast, one-touch football and combination play to get the ball up the pitch. Just make sure your attacker is ready.

The player left up the pitch needs to be strong and fast to get to the ball first and hold it up. Using the exercise in the picture, you can replicate a counter attack by holding the forwards and defenders in two boxes before releasing them.

The attackers are racing away with the ball while the defenders are forced to make recovery runs.

How to play it

- Set up an area 30 yards long by 20 yards wide, with two eight-yard boxes marked with cones at one end and a goal at the other.
- Put two teams of three players in each box. One is the attacking support and one is the defending support.
- You need a striker and a defender near the goal, and a goalkeeper in the goal.
- On your call the attacking team passes long to the striker. Attackers can move once the ball has been passed.
- On your next call the defenders run to help defend.
- Depending on how long you leave it between calls will make it harder or easier for the attacking team.
- You can also change the numbers in the two boxes to favour attack or defence.
- Swap the lone players regularly and swap attackers with defenders after five attacks.