

PLAYING THE ODDS

-Converting Flank Attacks to Goals

The following is a summation of US Soccer Federation National Staff Coach Janet Rayfield's "Flank Attacks" session held at the NSCAA annual convention on January 19, 2002 in Philadelphia.

I. Theory:

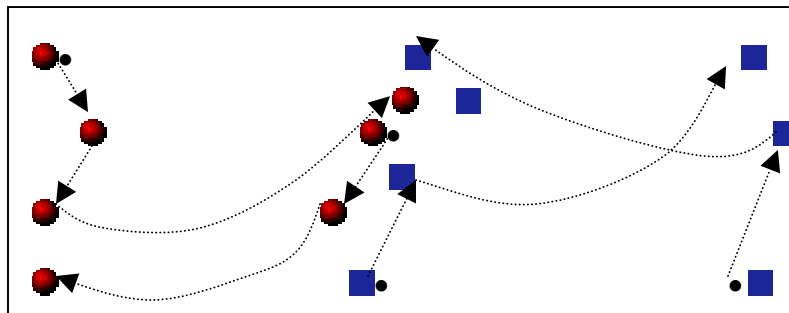
Often times attacking down the flank spaces is an effective means of penetrating and breaking down a well-organized defense. As defenders concentrate in front of the goal, the flank often provides space and opportunity for players to get behind defenders. However, the next step must be to convert that penetration into a goal scoring chance and ultimately a GOAL!!! There are several tactical situations that can be recognized during a flank attack. Recognizing these situations, selecting the proper service technique and target, and organizing the targets within the box greatly enhance a team's chances of converting the successful flank attack into GOALS.

- a. SOME of the Possible Tactical Scenarios:
 1. Ability to penetrate to the end line
 2. Ability to dribble up the end line toward the near-post
 3. Penetration behind a flat or retreating defense
 4. Penetration behind defender on flank provides an "early" service opportunity
 5. Ball cleared or served to the flank with players already in the attacking box
- b. The Tactical Decisions:
 1. When, where, how to serve the ball from the flank
 2. How to organize the box (and reorganize if necessary)

The goal of the session is to provide answers to the above questions in as many of the scenarios as possible.

II. Training Session

- a. **Warm-up:** Two groups of 6-8 players in separate colors subdivided into two smaller groups of 3-4 players. Each group has a ball. Sub-groups knock ball to each other until long service to other group of teammates is on, then serve ball to teammate.



Instructions to players: Develop rhythm for long service w/ prep touch.

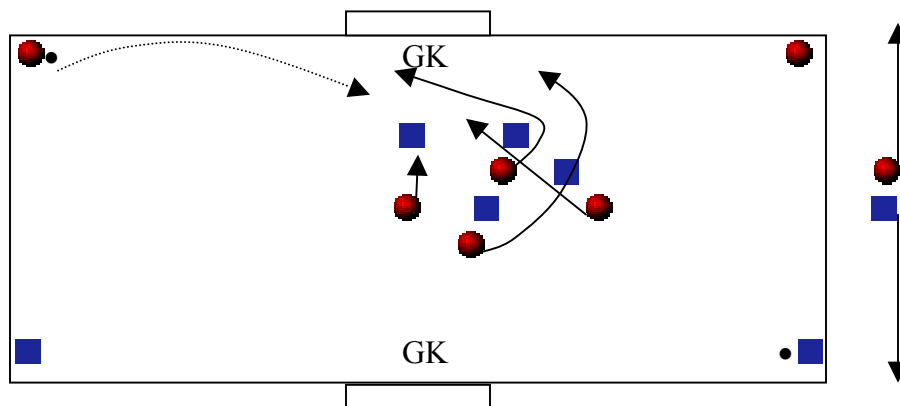
- Progression:**
- Play with minimal coaching.
 - Every long service a driven ball to head height.
 - Every long service a flighted longer ball.
 - Every long service a bending ball

- Coaching points:**
- Technique of service
 - Prep touch

b. Flankenspiel: 50 x 44 yard grid. 4v4 to Big Goals with Gk's and 2 Servers for each team (one on each flank).

1. Servers for each team on team's attacking end line.

Start with service from end line. Services should alternate between teams. Once ball served in then 4v4 until goal or out or bounds-ball may be played out to server. Provides repetition of Near/Far/Slot organization in the box and service choices from end line.



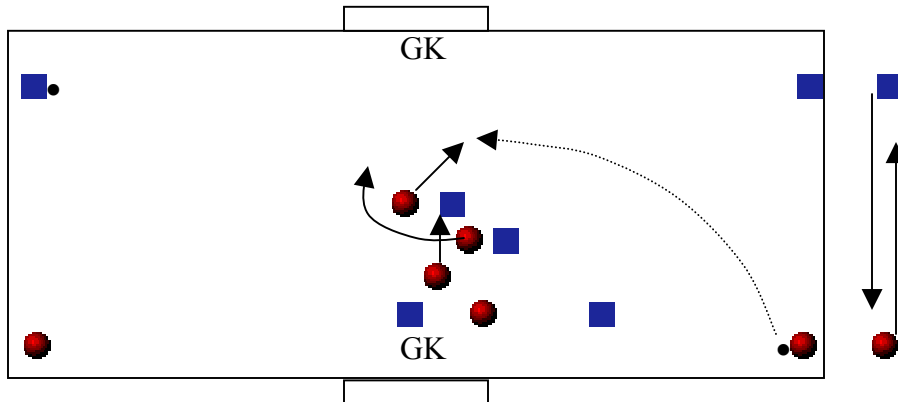
Instructions to Players: Servers have two touches- prep touch then service, creating rhythm and timing of runs. Players must organize box for near post, far post and slot runs.

Coaching points:

- Organize Box:
 - Communicate who makes which runs
 - Proper Near Post, Far Post and Slot runs
 - Frame goal when ball goes by runner
- Bent Runs
- Runs Behind Defender
- Timing of Runs- near post run must be first
- Choice of Service- Driven, Flighted or Bending

2. Servers for each team on team's defending end line.

Provides early service options when players already in the box and when attacking the box from farther out. Start with service from end line. Services should alternate between teams. Once ball served in then 4v4 until goal or out or bounds- ball may be played out to server from the middle.

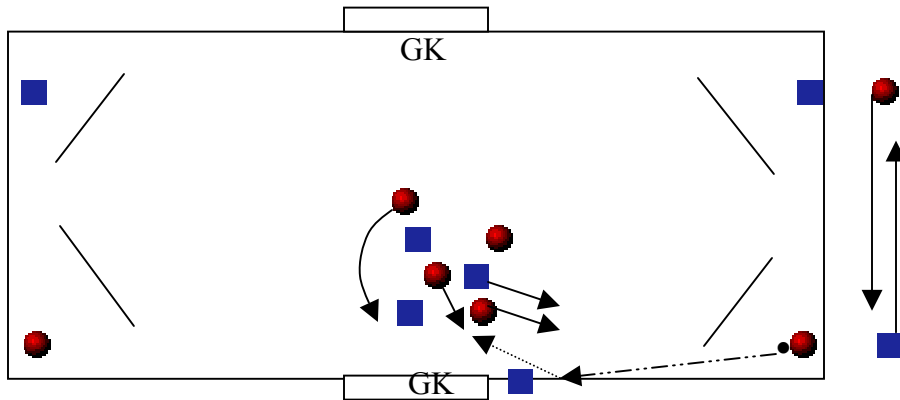


Instructions to players: Same as above but service now on Back end line. Be aware that runs will now change because of where service from.

Coaching Points:

- Timing/Choice of service of Service:
 - When caught up and space behind defenders then service should be early and into space behind defender;
 - When defenders are already set up in the box then service should be to near post attacker who should front/post-up the defender and flick the ball on to late runners at far post.

c. Four Corners: 4v4 in same area with corner/flank players for each team in attacking corner. All balls in goal and all restarts are from GK. Corner players are “live,” but cannot be defended. This activity provides additional option of penetrating up the endline toward the near post and makes the server a more active part of game.

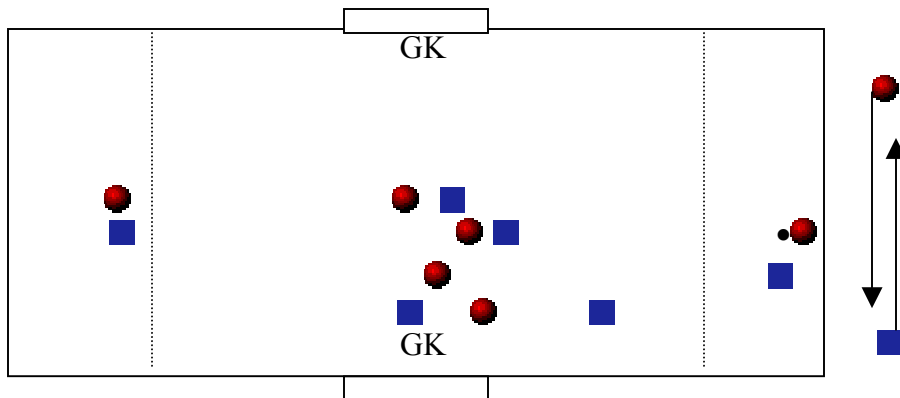


Instructions to Players: 4v4 to goal. Get the ball wide and to corner as much as possible. Sort out the appropriate run when corner player dribbles endline toward the near post.

Coaching Points:

- Runs Behind Defender
- Timing of Runs- near post run must be first
- When wide player dribbles the endline towards the near post the other attackers must find and /or create seams between the defenders. The server's job then is to play the ball into the gap between the two defenders.

d. Channel Game: Same as above, but now corner players play 1v1 along flank channel.



- Variations:**
1. Get ball to flank before you can score.
 2. If in flank then can only defend pass into flank, but cannot defend cross.
 3. 6v6 with goals off of crosses counting double.