

## PASSING/RECEIVING CIRCLE PROGRESSION

There are a number of high level coaches that use a lot of circle drills in their sessions including Barry Gorman (long time coach at Penn State) and David Williams (Manchester United Academy). I've had the opportunity to watch both of them run sessions at our International Coaching Seminar so I've used some of their ideas with my teams. Here's a session from David Williams that he presented at our first seminar in Connecticut.

### Warm-Up

Organize the players in a 40-yard circle with four cones placed in the center as shown in diagram 30. Start with two balls. Dribble into the center square, dribble out and pass to another player, then take his place on the circle perimeter.

Add the following conditions:

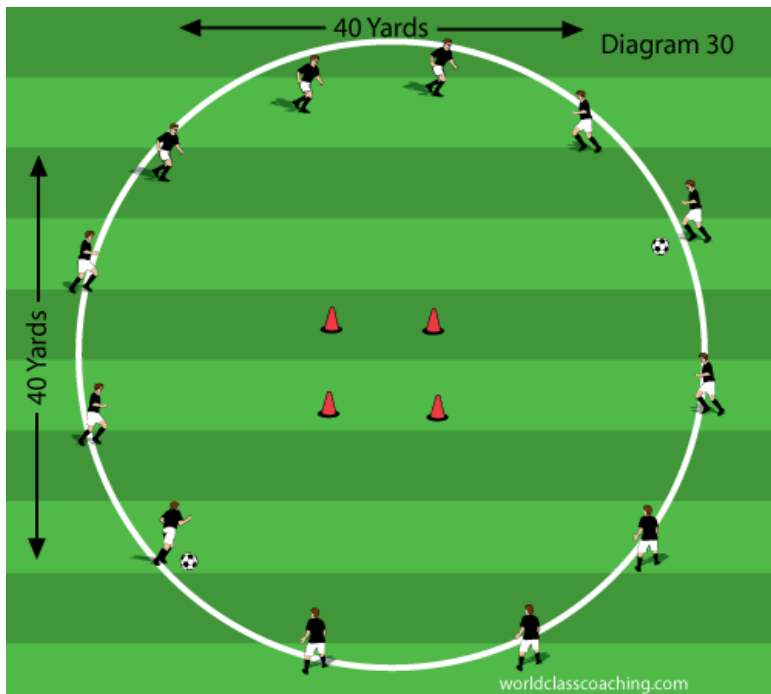
- Left/right foot only
- Perform a turn in the center
- Change of pace, go in slow, come out fast.
- Change direction

### Coaching Points

- Don't let gaps appear on the circle perimeter
- Communicate, and move around the edge to fill any spaces
- Start with two balls – add or take away balls as necessary

### Progression

Once the player has been through the center square, instead of passing the ball to another player, the receiving player 'takes' the ball in a take-over move.



## Give-and-Go

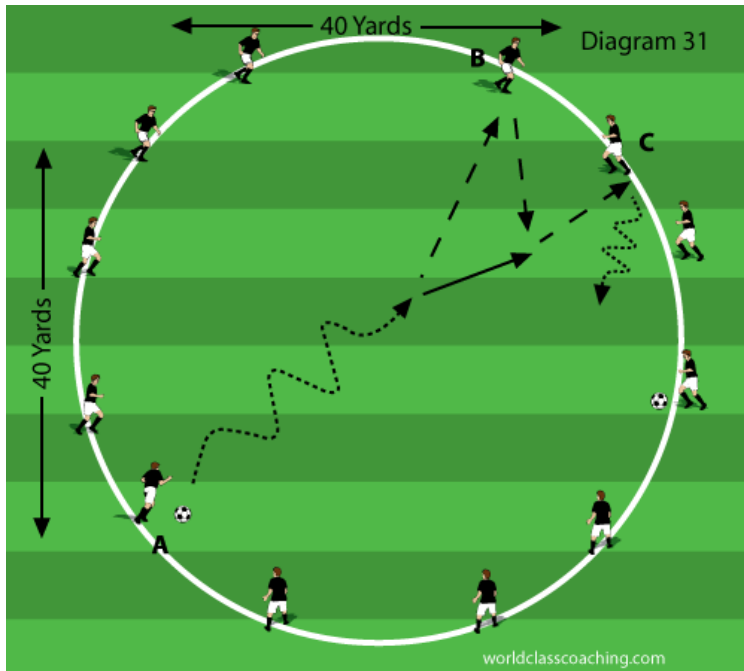
In this example, player A dribbles the ball into the center of the circle and passes to player B. Player B passes back with one touch to player A who then passes one touch to player C. Player C continues the drill by dribbling into the center of the circle. Again, start with two balls and adjust accordingly. This exercise helps build quick play around the goalbox.

### Coaching Points

- One-touch passes if possible
- Always be ready 'off' the ball
- Fill the gaps around the circle as the players move
- Be aware of where the other balls are and don't dribble to that area
- Try to increase the speed of drill
- The 'set up' pass must be of good quality to allow the next player to pass with one touch

This exercise helps the following:

- **Technical** – pace and angle of pass
- **Fitness** - sprinting, running
- **Mental** - always thinking

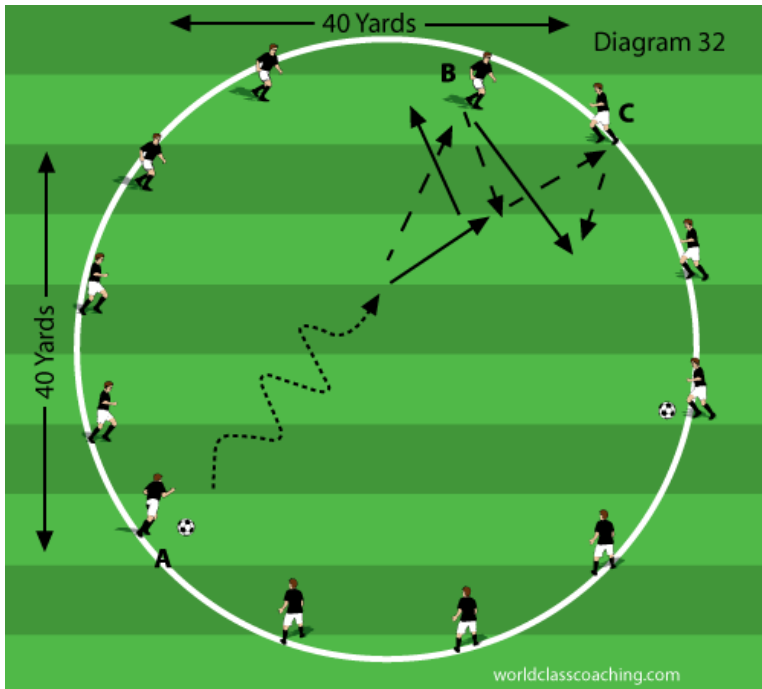


## Third Player Running

The same as the previous exercise, except this time after player B has made the return pass to player A, he moves into the center to receive the pass from player C. Player A moves into the spot vacated by player B.

### Coaching Points

- Timing is vital – don't make your runs too early
- The ball must keep moving
- The third player must be aware of where he will receive the pass

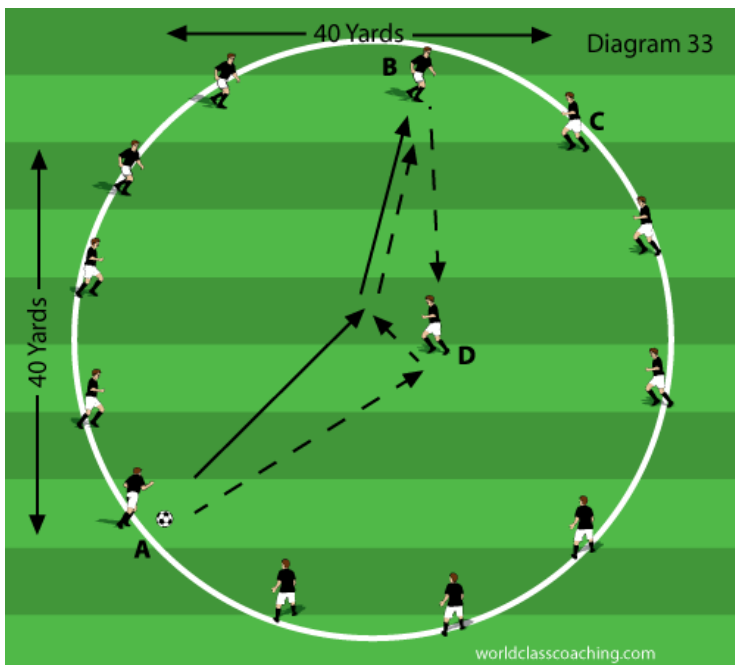


**Center Player**

Start with a player who stays permanently in the center of the circle. Player A starts by passing to the center player, D. Player D plays a give-and-go with player A who then passes across the circle to player B. Player B continues the drill by passing to player D.

**Coaching Point**

The player in the center 'runs' the drill, communication, speed, etc.



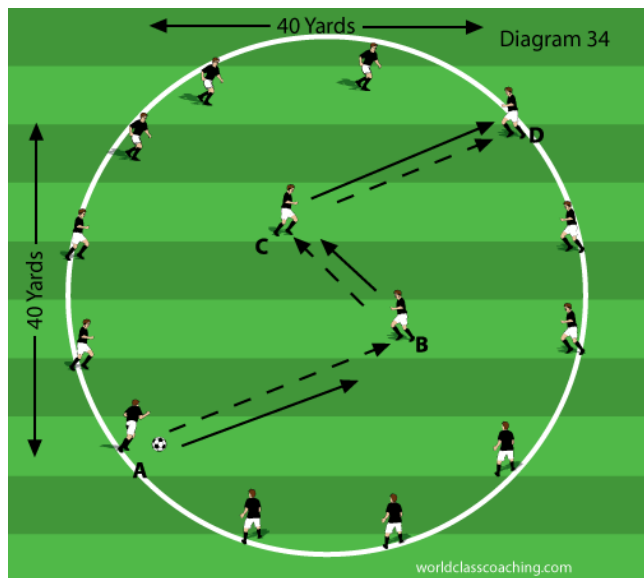
### Progression—Two Center Players

Add a second player in the center.

Start with two players in the center. Player A passes a firm pass to player B. Player B lays a pass into the path of player C. Player C passes across the circle to player D. Each player follows his pass.

#### Coaching Points

- Players on the outside must always be ready
- The central player 'without' the ball makes the decision for his team mate as to where to pass the ball

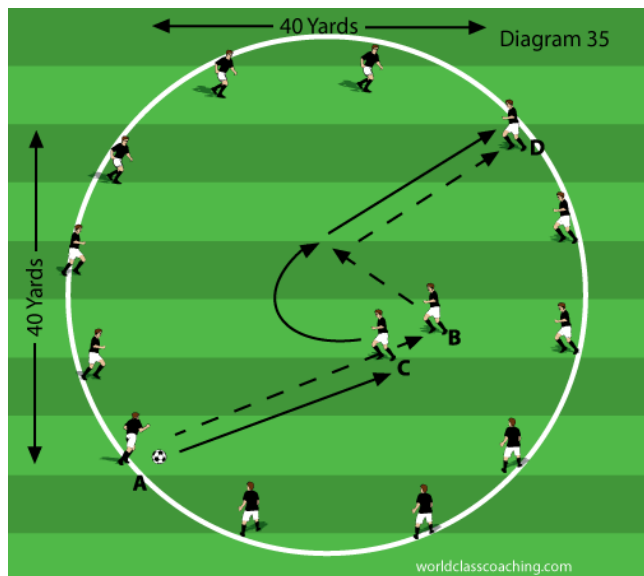


### Two Center Players

In this example, the players perform an “over”. Player A passes to player C who allows it to run through his legs or by the side of him to player B. Player B lays the ball off into space for player C who has spun round into the space. Player C passes across the circle to player D.

#### Coaching Points

- Player B must be the one to shout “over” – this communicates to player C to let the ball run by him
- Player C must spin quickly to receive the ball



## Small-Sided Game

End practice with an 8 v 8 game and look to incorporate all the moves learned during the circle practices.

