

The Overlap

If there is free space on the flank, ahead of the ball carrier, the overlap could work as a dangerous weapon. When used down the wing, the overlap is very difficult to cover by enemy defenders. When executed across the width of the field, the overlap usually spreads apart the enemy defense.



The purpose of an overlapping run is to create a 2 vs 1 situation where the defender has to make a decision between the player with the ball and the runner going forward. Normally, if the defender goes with the runner, the player with the ball keeps it and goes toward goal. If the defender goes with the outside midfielder, then the ball gets played to the overlapping runner who can either go to goal or serve the ball.

Combination plays are some of the most fundamental and most incisive attacking weapons in the soccer team's strategy. One such combination play is the overlapping run. At its most basic, this combination involves a player running past the player with the ball at a close distance from a position behind the ball into space ahead of the ball. When performed skillfully, it is a very difficult play to defend against. Read on to learn how to coach overlaps in soccer.

Set up a small grid around the goal that is the width of the penalty area, and 40 yards long from the end line. Use cones to denote the playing area. Place a goalkeeper in goal. Coach stands at the top of the area facing the goal and acts as a server.

Step 2

Divide the squad into two groups. Place pins on each group, two different colors to denote the groups. Place one group behind the goal--this is the defending group. Place the other group at the top of the playing area facing the goal--this is the attacking group. Play will be in a two versus two format. Two players from each group will play against each other for a short burst, with the attacking group looking to make an overlapping play, while the defending group looks to intercept the ball and play it back to the coach.

Step 3

Coach serves a ball to one of the two active attacking players, and they must try to score. Condition the drill such that the attacking group cannot score until they make

one successful overlapping play, or after 30 seconds have elapsed. Once the overlapping play is made, the attacking pair may try to score.

Step 4

The coaching points to look for when overlapping are--player on the ball cuts inside to create space; nearest attacker overlaps from behind into space created; player on the ball chooses to play the pass to the overlapping player and move to score, or uses the overlapping run as a decoy to create space for themselves to shoot.

Step 5

Rotate the groups after 10 to 15 minutes. Once the drill is complete and all players understand the concept of overlapping, bring the coaching points into a free game, and coach the players to understand the concept on the bigger field with more players. generally, overlaps are done in wide positions, so coach wide players to look for these opportunities.