Crossing, Finishing & Overlapping Runs

**Session Aims:** To demonstrate the timing and shape of runs into the box, to cross the ball into the path of attacking players and how to make an overlapping run.

**Warm Up:** Switch and Run

Line 4 groups up on each corner of a square. Player 1 starts by passing the ball into Player 2 opposite. The ball is returned to Player 1 with a lay off/one touch pass so they can switch the ball to Player 3. Once Player 1 has made this pass, they must sprint with a curved run around the cone joining the back of the group opposite. Player 2 follows their pass and jogs to the back of the line opposite them. When the ball reaches Player 3, the process repeats itself.

**Coaching Points:**
1) Good first touch.
2) Quality of short and long passes.
3) Runs must be made quickly and curved.

**Variations:**
1) Change the direction of the pass to encourage players to use their other foot.
2) Change the type of run (zigzag), or provide two alternative runs for them to choose.
3) Spread the groups out and play a lofted switch passes.

**Fundamental/Individual:** Crossing & Finishing

Player 1 passes to Player 2 who passes to Player 3. Player 3 makes a long pass into the channel in front of the winger, Player 4. As the ball is played forwards, Players 1 and 2 make cross-over runs through the gate on the edge of the box. The winger crosses the ball across the front of the goal and Players 1 & 2 try to score. The goalkeeper should be passive to begin with. Once the attack is over, Player 3 takes the place of Player 4 and Players 1, 2 & 4 join the back of the lines.

**Coaching Points:**
1) As above.
2) Quality of cross and runs; runners should change their pace and direction as they exit the gate, arriving to meet the ball.
3) Player 1 should arrive at the 6 yard line level with the front post, Player 2 should arrive level with the penalty spot and back post.
4) 1st time finish; volley, half volley or header?

**Variations:**
1) Use both right and left wingers, runners then use the other gate.
2) If the cross is over hit, allow the far winger to join the attack.

**Game Related/Group (Incrementally adding pressure): Overlapping Runs**

Keep playing as above, except add passive defenders to Players 2 & 4. Add a fifth player 10 yards behind Player 4. Now, when Player 3 passes to Player 4 they play a weighted pass towards the end line. Player 5 makes an overlapping run and crosses the ball.

**Coaching Points:**
1) As above.
2) Correct weight of pass by Player 4 to the end line.
3) Timing of overlapping run; do not arrive at the ball too soon.
4) Attacking players should now be looking to lose defenders with their runs and beat defenders with their crosses.

**Variations:**
1) Allow defenders and goalkeeper to become more active.
2) Allow Player 4 to beat the defender and cross the ball themselves.
3) Allow players to play in their natural positions instead of rotating.

**Game (Small-sided/Conditioned)**

Play half field with 2 goals and create 2 channels down the wings. To begin with, place 1 winger on each side so that they can play un-opposed crosses into the attackers. They are always on the attacking team.

**Coaching Points:**
1) As above.
2) Encourage distribution to wide players.

**Variation:**
1) Add a defender to the wing to play 1v1.