



# **SOCCER COACHING CURRICULUM FOR 6-11 YEAR OLD PLAYERS VOLUME 1**



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National Soccer Coaches  
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Standards

# **SOCCER COACHING CURRICULUM FOR 6-11 YEAR OLD PLAYERS - VOLUME 1**

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NSCAA eLearning

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# VOLUME 1 - ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



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eLearning Coordinator, NSCAA

Since 1988, David has studied and worked in youth education, soccer development and coaching. A former University Professor and CEO of a Youth Sports Company, David has been fortunate to travel extensively in the USA, meeting with coaches and club officials and learning about their approach to player development and coaching. David oversees the NSCAA eLearning program and is Coordinator for NSCAA Club Standards Project. David developed the 5 Stage of Development Pathway used as a framework for this manual in 2007 (an adaptation of the LTAD model from Canada). He contributes articles regularly to soccer publications, has written books focusing on player and coach development and presents at national soccer events. In a volunteer capacity David operates a youth soccer program for player's age 3 to 11 in Connecticut and Rhode Island.



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Assistant Technical Director for Coaching and Player Development, North Carolina Youth Soccer

Sari works full time in youth development and coach education. Soccer has been a significant part of Sari's life and has been involved as a player, coach and administrator. Rose had a stellar career at Wake Forest where she studied for bachelors degree in politics and religion. As a four-year varsity letter winner Sari was the starting goalkeeper for the first ever Wake Forest women's soccer team. Sari spent 7 years as an NCAA Division I College Assistant Coach and Recruiting Coordinator, taught English and social studies for two years at High School and traveled with the US State Department to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Palestine to promote youth sports. Amongst her numerous qualifications, Sari has achieved NSCAA Advanced Diploma, NSCAA Regional Goalkeeping, USSF National Youth License and USSF B License. Sari is the Youth Girls Representative on the NSCAA Board of Directors.



**IAN BARKER, AUTHOR STAGE 3**

Director of Coaching Education, NSCAA

Ian has held leadership positions with US Youth Soccer and NSCAA and he has had extensive experience at youth and college levels. Ian coached for 21 seasons with the men's programs at the University of Wisconsin and Macalester College, before becoming NSCAA Director of Coaching Education in 2012. Ian was the Director of Coaching and Player Development for Minnesota Youth Soccer Association for 10 years and is a Head Coach of Region II Boys Olympic Development Program. Ian has extensive international coaching experience, including: New Zealand, Brazil, Italy, Uganda, Spain, Argentina, Costa Rica and Germany. Ian's qualifications are extensive and he holds the USSF 'A' License, NSCAA Premier Diploma and NSCAA Master Coach Diploma. Ian graduated from University of Warwick with a Bachelors Degree in Philosophy and Literature and a Post Graduate Certificate of Education in English.



**ROBERT PARR, AUTHOR OF STAGE 4**

Director of Coaching for the Arkansas State Soccer Association and NSCAA Club Standards Project Consultant

Robert Parr has spent 27 years in the game as a coach and program director at both the youth and adult levels. He holds a USSF A license, NSCAA Premier Diploma, and a USSF National Youth Coaching license. Previously, he served as the Director of Coaching and WPSL Head Coach for the Puerto Rico Capitals FC, the first international franchise to compete in the Women's Premier Soccer League. From 2003-2008, he was the Head Women's Soccer Coach at Georgia College & State University and also coached for the Georgia State Soccer Association Olympic Development Program. Previously, Robert was the Director of Training for the American Soccer Club "Eagles", South Texas Men's State Team Coach and a South Texas YSA State Staff Coach for both the Olympic Development Program and the Coaching Education Program. He is the co-creator of SoccerROM.com and he has helped author or edit 3 soccer-related books.



**TONY ENGLUND, AUTHOR OF STAGE 5**

Assistant Director of Coaching at Sporting St. Croix Soccer Club and Academy

Tony has over 24 years of high-level coaching experience. For over a decade, Tony has worked is a Director of Coaching capacity and is the Assistant Director of Coaching at Sporting St. Croix Soccer Club and Academy. Tony is the High School Boys Coach for Mahtomedi High School, leading then to the State Championship quarter finals in 2014. Tony has been An NSCAA Associate Staff Coach since 2001 and holds more has a dozen NSCAA coaching awards. He has a masters degree in diplomatic and military history from the University of Minnesota. He is a frequent presenter at symposiums and clinics in the Midwest, he is also the author of four popular soccer coaching books, including 'Style and Domination: A Tactical Analysis of FC Barcelona' that is sold in over 30 countries. His most recent book 'The Art of the Duel - Elite 1vs1 Training, focuses on a most critical aspect of the modern game, the importance of winning an 'battle 1v1 over an opponent.



**National Soccer Coaches  
Association of America**

# **NSCAA EDUCATION PARTNER PROSPECTUS**

National Soccer Coaches Association of America invites youth soccer clubs in North America and around the globe to become an **NSCAA Education Partner**.

NSCAA offers a club with an opportunity to provide its coaches, administrators, parents and players with access to free and low cost education content that is flexible and responsive to the needs of its members. NSCAA eLearning provides a club with clinics and courses delivered live and/or on-demand that will supplement and existing training program or establish a clear in-house education framework.

## **Features:**

1. Coach access to dozens of free presentations and downloads, including introductions to Attacking and Defending Principles of Play.
2. Free access to NSCAA Level 1 Diploma core content - a free, on-demand online course for beginner and intermediate coaches, release date April 1, 2015.
3. 'Partner Pricing' on all current and future eLearning presentation and clinics, including NSCAA Player Development Curriculum: a 5 Stages of Player Development training program for coaches working with 3-18 year old players.
4. Use of the NSCAA brand and logo on the organization's website as an Official **NSCAA Education Partner**.
5. Access to tracking and reporting on the education performance and attainment of the organization's members\*.
6. Free introductory 6 month Membership to NSCAA for all new individual members\*.
7. Free enrollment as an NSCAA Member Club. Benefits include: discount on individual full membership, registration for NSCAA Convention, tournament advertising and much more.\*

Note: \*Tier 2 NSCAA Education Partner benefits

## **Partnership Levels:**

### **Tier 1 (free)**

- + The NSCAA Education Partner promotes NSCAA eLearning to its members.
- + Posts the **NSCAA Education Partner** logo prominently on the home page of the organizations website with a link to NSCAA eLearning.
- + NSCAA refers to the organization as an 'Official **NSCAA Education Partner**' and post the organization's logo on NSCAA.com.

### **Tier 2 (\$1000)**

- + A Tier 2 **NSCAA Education Partner** receives all Tier 1 benefits, plus:
- + A unique education URL (i.e. [www.nscaa.com/name\\_of\\_club](http://www.nscaa.com/name_of_club))
- + NSCAA will create with the club, a 2-3 minute club introductory presentation to proceed the course content. Content to include, welcome, club philosophies, club mission, style of play presentation, etc.
- + Special NSCAA eLearning promotions, such as deep discounted pricing, exclusive screening of new content and early registration for programs with limited registration.

To learn more and register to be an NSCAA Education Partner, visit [www.NSCAA.com/eLearning](http://www.NSCAA.com/eLearning) or contact David Newbery at [dnewbery@nscaa.com](mailto:dnewbery@nscaa.com) or 401-377-7008.



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**National Soccer Coaches  
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# **NSCAA AFFILIATE EDUCATION PARTNER PROSPECTUS**

National Soccer Coaches Association of America invites associations, corporations, league organizers and other stakeholders in coaching education and player development to partner with NSCAA. As an **NSCAA Affiliate Education Partner**, your organization will receive full support to achieve the objective of providing convenient and affordable high-quality learning experiences to your membership.

By incorporating NSCAA's significant on-demand content library with your organization's current education initiatives, collaboratively we can offer richer and more convenient educational experiences for your members and greatly reduce operating costs. In fact, this partnership opportunity can also generate a revenue stream to help financially support your education plans.

## **Features:**

1. Provide your members with dozens of free presentations and downloads.
2. Partner Pricing\* on all current and future eLearning presentation and clinics, including NSCAA Player Development Curriculum – potentially free education giveaways to your members.
3. Co-branded presentations.
4. Collaborate with NSCAA to create new eLearning content utilizing NSCAA eLearning delivery platform.\*
5. Affiliate Education Partner's own education unique URL.\*
6. Set up live training events with virtual classrooms, video conferencing and rich-media content.\*
7. Access to tracking and reporting on the education performance and attainment of the organization's members.\*
8. Corporate NSCAA Member.\*

Note: \*Tier 2 and 3 NSCAA Education Partner benefits

## **Partnership Levels:**

### **Tier 1 (free)**

- + NSCAA Affiliate partner promotes NSCAA eLearning to its members.
- + Posts the **NSCAA Affiliate Education Partner** logo prominently on the home page of the organizations website with a link to NSCAA eLearning.
- + NSCAA refers to the organization as an 'Official **NSCAA Affiliate Education Partner**' and post the organization's logo on NSCAA.com.

### **Tier 2 (\$1500)**

- + A Tier 2 NSCAA Affiliate Education Partner receives all Tier 1 benefits
- + A unique education URL (i.e. [nscaa.adobeconnect.com/name\\_of\\_organization](http://nscaa.adobeconnect.com/name_of_organization))
- + NSCAA will create with the organization, a 2-3 minute club introductory presentation to proceed the course content. Content to include, welcome, philosophies, etc.
- + All member clubs introduced by **NSCAA Affiliate Education Partner** will be connected to NSCAA content via the affiliate's URL and will receive affiliates messaging.
- + Special NSCAA eLearning promotions, such as deep discounted pricing, exclusive screening of new content and early registration for programs with limited registration.

### **Tier 3 (free)**

- + A Tier 3 **NSCAA Affiliate Education Partner** receives all Tier 1 and 2 benefits.
- + 5% of all club spend on eLearning products once the affiliate has introduced 10 or more Tier 2 clubs.

To learn more and register to be an NSCAA Education Partner, visit [www.NSCAA.com/elearning](http://www.NSCAA.com/elearning) or contact Dave Newbery at [dnewbery@nscaa.com](mailto:dnewbery@nscaa.com) or 401-377-7008.



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# VOLUME 1 - INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Coach,

On behalf of the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, we would like to thank you for purchasing this **'Soccer Coaching Curriculum For 6-11 Year Old Players'**. Packed with 40 coaching activities, curriculum diagrams and an abundance of coaching tips, our approach to player development is constructed around a 5 Stage Model. This manual focuses on stages 2 and 3, 6-11 year old players and is an excellent resource for an experienced and novice coach alike.

The manual supports NSCAA Player Development Curriculum Diploma Course Season 1, an eLearning program offered by National Soccer Coaches Association of America. To learn more about NSCAA eLearning, visit [www.NSCAA.com/eLearning](http://www.NSCAA.com/eLearning). NSCAA is committed to delivering coaching education in a variety of methods – methods that reflect different learning styles and interest levels of our members. Presenting vibrant and engaging content in a convenient and low cost elearning format to supplement and enhance existing NSCAA courses and events is a priority.

It is now possible for a coach, at their convenience, to participate in highly informative and tremendously interesting courses and presentations and receive formal recognition/credit for participation. Benefits of eLearning are considerable, both for the individual and NSCAA. Expect to see many more low cost opportunities in the near future to engage with top professional educators without the need to leave your home, office or local library.

There are 4 manuals now available to support NSCAA Player Development Curriculum Diploma Course Season 1:

1. **Soccer Coaching Curriculum For 6-11 Year Old Players – Volume 1:** with activity contributions from David Newbery, eLearning Coordinator, NSCAA and Sari Rose, Assistant Technical Director of Coaching and Player Development, North Carolina Youth Soccer.
2. **Soccer Coaching Curriculum for 6-11 year old Players – Volume 1:** with activity contributions from Sari Rose, Assistant Technical Director of Coaching and Player Development, North Carolina Youth Soccer and Ian Barker, Director of Coaching Education, NSCAA.
3. **Soccer Coaching Curriculum for 12-18 year old Players – Volume 1:** with activity contributions from Robert Parr, Director of Coaching, Arkansas State Soccer Association and Tony Englund, Author of FC Barcelona - Style and Domination.
4. **Soccer Coaching Curriculum For 6-11 Year Old Players – Volume 1:** includes all 5 stages of development in one manual.

We hope you enjoy the manual. Please don't hesitate to provide us with feedback relating to the webinars, manual and discussions.

Kind Regards,

David Newbery and Ian Barker



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## INTRODUCTION - **CURRICULUM DESIGN**

The term 'Curriculum' is most commonly associated with teaching and school education. In general terms, an educational curriculum consists of everything that promotes intellectual, personal, social and physical development of the participants. When transferred to sport, the term curriculum is usually related to a book of activities and games organized in such a way to aid the coach plan for a practice session. Rarely do these curriculum books engage the reader in a rationale for selecting such activities, or describe how coaching methodology is as important as the activities themselves. Unfortunately this approach usually leads to very low adherence by the coaches – particularly if subsequent coaching sessions do not realize the outcomes suggested in the text.

In the context of youth soccer, learning is often left to chance. Clubs and coaches seem satisfied to accept the major benefits of participation as activity and having fun. Although these outcomes are very beneficial to the child, wider ranging results can also be realized through a structured and organized program – a 'true' curriculum. Soccer participation offers children experiences to

develop confidence, self esteem, knowledge, physical development and in some cases the opportunity to participate in elite level competition at High School and College.

The NSCAA Player Development Curriculum details the framework, aims, objectives and content that creates tremendous value and helps to raise standards, performance and expectations. The curriculum includes approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, quality of relationships between coach and the player and the values embodied by the club.

### **NSCAA APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DESIGN**

In partnership with practitioners and curriculum experts, NSCAA has developed an approach to curriculum design based upon three key elements:

1. Element 1: Curriculum Aims
2. Element 2: Curriculum Organization
3. Element 3: Curriculum Evaluation

## ELEMENT 1 **WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?**

The NSCAA Player Development Curriculum provides an opportunity to create a relevant, coherent and engaging environment for all players, parents and coaches. Having clear purposes representing the club's hopes and desires for the players is an important starting point. Purposes not only provide a reference point for decision making but also a direction on how learning experiences are to be organized.

### **Curriculum Purposes**

The purposes of the NSCAA Player Development Curriculum are:

1. Establish an entitlement – for every child entering the program irrespective of social background, wealth, gender or differences in ability.
2. Establishes standards – at each stage of development so progress of players and coaches can be monitored, goals and improvement targets can be established and players can be selected for the appropriate development groups.
3. Promotes continuity and coherence – facilitates the transition of players between teams and phases of skill development, and provides a framework for coaches to adhere to.
4. Promotes understanding for parents and players – increases understanding and confidence in the player development philosophy and coaching team.

### **Curriculum Aims**

The NSCAA Player Development Curriculum aims to:

1. Provide attainment standards for measuring coach and player performance
2. Reflect best practice
3. Promote intellectual, social, personal and physical development
4. Establish high expectations for all constituents
5. Identifies outcomes relating to skills, knowledge and other performance criteria
6. Reflects the vision and mission of NSCAA
7. Provide equal opportunity for all players to learn and achieve

# VOLUME 1 - **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM**

## **Curriculum Outcomes**

A successfully implemented NSCAA Player Development Curriculum will result in:

1. Players enjoying playing and learning
2. Players committing to playing and learning
3. Result in best possible progress
4. Achieve highest attainment for all players
5. Develop player and coach confidence
6. Offer opportunities to work individually and as a team
7. Enable players to think creatively and critically and solve problems

## **ELEMENT 2 HOW DO WE ORGANIZE LEARNING?**

The NSCAA Player Development Curriculum is developed from the work of Istvan Bayli. Now widely adopted in many sports in Canada and Europe, the Long Term Athlete Development System was adapted by David Newbery to become relevant to soccer and in particular, recreation and travel soccer programs. Commencing with the youngest players, the curriculum is organized into building blocks of learning – learning that is deep. When appropriately implemented, the building blocks will stack together to form a pathway of teaching and learning experiences appropriate for all players.

There are several components that contribute to curriculum organization including: 1) Content – games and activities chosen to accomplish a coaching outcome; 2) Methodology – a wide variety of approaches to teaching and instruction to encourage player participation and learning; 3) Supporting knowledge – scientific evidence, philosophies and opinions underpinning the curriculum model; 4) Learning Environment – consideration of the different types of soccer provision and interaction between practice and competitive play.

By understanding the dynamic interplay between these four factors, NSCAA can help every player make progress, building on their experiences both at club organized training and competitions, at home or at the park with friends and family. To this end, one objective of the curriculum is to encourage players and parents to appreciate that learning experiences should occur beyond the scheduled club activities. In fact, in many countries around the world, players develop their knowledge and understanding more quickly by watching high level play on TV or in person at live games and by dedicating ‘homework’ time to individual ball mastery.

Considering the critical relationship between coaching and curriculum, the curriculum document and games and activities must not be used in isolation. It is imperative that coaches firstly understand about the players (stage of development, level of proficiency, interest and commitment etc). Secondly, they choose the activities wisely to meet the needs of the player, team and environment and thirdly they adopt measures to continually assess progress of players and coaches.

## **ELEMENT 3 HOW WELL ARE WE ACHIEVING OUR AIMS?**

The concepts of assessment and evaluation regularly cause concern and are uncomfortable topics. This is no truer than in a youth sports environment where assessment is typically associated with selection. In soccer, assessment means tryouts and tryouts are designed to answer one question – are you good enough to play travel soccer?

Assessment has its place, it should be used at every opportunity to make a difference for learning. Assessment should also be fit for purpose – the quantitative and qualitative methods used must be appropriate to the stage of development and also relevant to the skill, knowledge or behavior being tested. Identifying the appropriate level of play for a particular child often provides an organization with a number of sensitivity issues. Talent identification should not be restricted to a once a year occurrence, but needs to be an ongoing process involving coaches, players and parents. Ultimately, the aim of a talent identification program is to ensure that all players have the opportunity to progress at a rate and level that their talent and development allows. Matching the resources and expertise to meet the needs of the player requires both an internal and external perspective.

A progressive assessment process encourages a variety of methods. For example, utilizing several assessors to evaluate players can offer strength to the process, as does the use of video analysis.

# THE BIG PICTURE CURRICULUM

PURPOSE, AIMS AND OUTCOMES						
1. What is the purpose of the curriculum?	<b>Aims</b>	Equality of Opportunity	Establishing standards	Continuity and coherence	Promotes understanding	Pathway (3-18+ year old players)
	<b>Outcomes</b>	Achieve soccer standards	Achieve academic, social and health aims	Commitment to learning	Confident learners	Individual and team success
	<b>Focus</b>		Skill development (individual and team)	Knowledge and understanding (e.g. identifying visual cues and tactical awareness)	Attitudes and attributes (e.g. sportsmanship, respect, and confidence)	
2. How is the curriculum structured?	<b>Content</b>	Fundamental movement skills	Tactical awareness and understanding	Physical and mental preparation	Academic and social responsibility	Fundamental soccer skills
	<b>Methodology</b>	Practical and theory	Individual and team assessment	Guided practice	Self-discovery	Directed and modeling
	<b>Supporting knowledge</b>	Cognitive development and mental acumen	Biological development, growth and maturation	Emotional development, confidence and self-esteem	Nutrition, balanced diet and hydration	Physical fitness, speed, agility, balance and coordination
	<b>Learning environment</b>	Team practices, positional instruction and optimal sessions	Street soccer and unstructured practice	Competition (e.g. 11 v 11 and small-sided games)	Tournaments and festivals	Indoor training and games
3. Are the aims being achieved?	<b>Evaluation</b>	Skill acquisition (Against performance standards)	Team selections (Tryout process combined with regular seasonal assessments)	Talent identification (Planning for exceptional talent)	Knowledge and understanding (Decision-making and tactical awareness)	360 Review (Parents, players, coaches, and administrators)

## **THEORY OF PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**

The NSCAA approach emphasizes development-appropriate skill acquisition to maximize the player's potential. The supporting theory supports ever more complex and demanding conditions placed on the player as they advance through several stages of development, which include pre-puberty, puberty, post-puberty and maturation. In addition to physical transformations, the model also accounts for changes in emotional and cognitive development, factors having a dramatic effect on the capacity of players to learn and perform. Significant developmental differences also exist between children of the same gender and same age. To this end NSCAA model supports the adage – “if you are good enough ... you are old enough”. It is extremely important to offer programming flexibility to enable each child to find their training and performance level. This perspective should not only apply to ‘playing-up’, but also to placing players ‘down’. Our focus must always be on what is best for the child – a decision involving a number of variables. One reason players plateau and leave soccer is an overemphasis on competition instead of training during the important period in their athletic development. Stage 1, 2 and 3 are the most important phases of preparation, physically, mentally, emotionally and in the development of key soccer skills of dribbling, passing and control.

## **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY**

Children entering soccer at aged 3, 4, 5 or 6 will start a ‘journey’ that should have a clearly defined beginning, middle and end, including multiple assessment points and learning experiences. Some players and parents will choose to end the journey early, but for others who aspire to play soccer into adulthood, the Player Development Model manages every step of the way. For many players and parents understanding the steps to success, expected outcomes and focus on education and training are extremely important factors. True Player Development provides such a pathway, building programs around principles that respect the developmental needs of all children.

## **STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT**

Originally a model for Elite Athlete Development, the NSCAA pathway provides a process for development from early childhood through retirement. Stage 1 (4 and 5 year olds), Stage 2 (6-8), Stage 3 (9-11), Stage 4 (12-14) and Stage 5 (15-18). Each stage of the model promotes a different development focus – the interplay between physical, cognitive, emotional, psychological and social variables. For example, when working with four and five year olds consider that players of this age tire easily, need repetition and reinforcement, have short attention span and mostly approach tasks individually.

In terms of soccer participation, we need to ensure the sessions are short, activities change constantly, skills are demonstrated and continually reinforced and information needs to be camouflaged and concealed, such as using cartoon characters and creating a story for a particular activity. Importantly, every child should have a ball at their feet for the vast majority of time. Team play at this stage of development should be restricted to small sided games and 1v1 situations. As players move into Stage 2 we start introducing passing and working cooperatively with teammates.

## **LEARNING FOCUS**

In the context of youth soccer, learning is often left to chance. Clubs and coaches often seem satisfied to accept the major benefits of participation as activity and having fun. Although these outcomes are very beneficial to the child, wider ranging results can also be realized through a structured and organized program. Regardless of age and ability a Player Development Coach is focused on nurturing players to achieve end of stage goals and attainment targets.

To this end, NSCAA has developed a Player Development Competency Matrix (4-18 years old). Benchmarks for performance are provided at the end of each stage of development. The assessment program measures the players ‘competence’ – the relationship between skill, selection and application of skills, tactics, strategies and ideas and the readiness of body and mind to cope with the activity.

# COMPETENCY MATRIX

Stage of Development	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3			Stage 4			Stage 5			
Age in years	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>PHYSICAL LITERACY SKILLS</b>																
Run with stops and starts	-			+												
Run and change directions	-			+												
Gallop	-			+												
Skip	-			+												
Lateral movements - side-step	-			+												
Rolling, bending low, arching	-			+												
Balance - on a line	-			+												
Balance - on one foot	-			+												
Throw - strong hand	-				+											
Throw - weak hand	-				+											
Jump - make shapes in air	-		+													
Jump - one foot to another	-		+													
Jump - stride and bound patterns	-						+									
Jump - hurdles	-						+									
Quick feet and crossovers		-			+											
Speed - Coordination of arms and legs					-					+						
Speed - explosive first step						-				+						
Running technique		-								+						
Sprinting technique						-				+						
<b>DRIBBLING SKILLS</b>																
Turns - basic	-				+											
Turns - advanced				-			+									
Dribbling basics	-				+											

Competency based coaching: this approach suggests performance improvements are acquired progressively – meaning, competency in basic skills/knowledge must be achieved before progressing to more complex skills and concepts. With this in mind, the Competency Matrix helps coaches to know when players should be 'Introduced' (-) to a skill/concept and when players should be expected to demonstrate 'Competency' (+).

# COMPETENCY MATRIX

Stage of Development	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3			Stage 4			Stage 5			
Age in years	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>DRIBBLING SKILLS CONTINUED</b>																
Running with the ball				-			+									
Feints and dribble		-						+								
Beating an opponent			-					+								
Escaping an opponent			-					+								
<b>RECEIVING</b>																
Control - Foot			-							+						
Control - Thigh					-						+					
Control - Chest						-						+				
Control - Head						-						+				
<b>PASSING</b>																
Ground - Inside of foot - 5 yards				-				+								
Ground - Inside of foot - 10 yards					-				+							
Ground - Inside of foot - 20 yards						-					+					
Ground - Instep						-				+						
Long pass						-						+				
Chip/Lofted pass							-					+				
Swerve pass - inside of foot							-					+				
Swerve pass - outside of foot							-					+				
Crossing							-					+				
<b>SHOOTING</b>																
Instep			-						+							
Half volley						-					+					
Volley						-					+					

Competency based coaching: this approach suggests performance improvements are acquired progressively – meaning, competency in basic skills/knowledge must be achieved before progressing to more complex skills and concepts. With this in mind, the Competency Matrix helps coaches to know when players should be 'Introduced' (-) to a skill/concept and when players should be expected to demonstrate 'Competency' (+).

# COMPETENCY MATRIX

Stage of Development	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3			Stage 4			Stage 5			
Age in years	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>SHOOTING CONTINUED</b>																
One on one with Goal Keeper								-					+			
<b>HEADING</b>																
Basic technique				-							+					
Defensive header							-						+			
Attacking header							-						+			
<b>PHYSICAL CONDITIONING</b>																
Own body weight strength exercises								-								+
Core body strength								-								+
Dynamic warm-up						-										+
Flexibility							-									+
Aerobic Endurance training									-							+
Anaerobic Endurance training									-							+
Speed training (Anaerobic)									-							+
<b>MENTAL/COGNITIVE CONDITIONING</b>																
Confidence	-												+			
Commitment							-									+
Concentration	-												+			
Composure							-									+
<b>GOAL KEEPING</b>																
Basic Catching Techniques						-				+						
Positioning							-				+					
Diving								-					+			
Distribution								-					+			

Competency based coaching: this approach suggests performance improvements are acquired progressively – meaning, competency in basic skills/knowledge must be achieved before progressing to more complex skills and concepts. With this in mind, the Competency Matrix helps coaches to know when players should be 'Introduced' (-) to a skill/concept and when players should be expected to demonstrate 'Competency' (+).

# COMPETENCY MATRIX

Stage of Development	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3			Stage 4			Stage 5			
Age in years	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>GOAL KEEPING CONTINUED</b>																
Advanced Techniques - crosses, punching etc										-						+
<b>SET PLAYS</b>																
Throw in				-				+								
Penalties				-						+						
Corners				-								+				
Goal Kicks				-						+						
Free Kicks				-										+		
<b>ATTACKING PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES</b>																
Attacking as an individual 1v1		-										+				
Attacking in pairs (2v1 and 2v2)				-								+				
Attacking in small groups (3's and 4's)							-							+		
Attacking as a unit and team								-								+
Support with and without the ball						-							+			
Attacking from wide positions								-						+		
Crossing balls into the penalty box								-						+		
Transition and counter attacks							-									+
Finishing						-										+
Attacking set plays									-							+
Communication							-									+
Positional Play						-										+
<b>DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES</b>																
Defending as an individual 1v1 - pressure				-						+						
Defending in pairs (2v1 and 2v2) - pressure and cover						-						+				

Competency based coaching: this approach suggests performance improvements are acquired progressively – meaning, competency in basic skills/knowledge must be achieved before progressing to more complex skills and concepts. With this in mind, the Competency Matrix helps coaches to know when players should be 'Introduced' (-) to a skill/concept and when players should be expected to demonstrate 'Competency' (+).

# COMPETENCY MATRIX

Stage of Development	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3			Stage 4			Stage 5			
Age in years	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES CONTINUED</b>																
Defending in small groups (3's and 4's) - pressure, cover, balance									-					+		
Defending as a unit and team										-						+
Marking								-					+			
Recovery							-					+				
Communication							-							+		
Transition from defense to attack							-									+
Defensive set plays								-					+			
Positional Play							-									+
<b>LAWS OF THE GAME</b>																
Individual and Team Behavior	-									+						
Field and Equipment		-								+						
Restarts				-			+									
Fair and foul play	-									+						
Basic Rules	-					+										
Free kicks - offside, direct and indirect etc				-						+						
Misc laws - advantage etc					-					+						

Competency based coaching: this approach suggests performance improvements are acquired progressively – meaning, competency in basic skills/knowledge must be achieved before progressing to more complex skills and concepts. With this in mind, the Competency Matrix helps coaches to know when players should be 'Introduced' (-) to a skill/concept and when players should be expected to demonstrate 'Competency' (+).

# VOLUME 1 - **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM**

## **LONG TERM FOCUS**

Research exists suggesting that becoming an Elite athlete requires dedication of 10,000 hours. Three hours of practice every day for 10 years. Although this elite level of performance outcome is only applicable to a very small percentage of the playing population, this example does illustrate a correlation between time, maturation and achievement. The NSCAA Model represents a more realistic perspective of commitment, focusing more on the quality of instruction, ratio of practices to competitive games and self dedicated time, than on the volume of hours. However, becoming a competent performer takes time as the body and mind need to adapt to growth and experience. Unfortunately, in youth soccer a short term perspective is regularly implemented by coaches and parents with an over-emphasis on winning and achieving immediate success – this has been referred to as ‘Peaking by Friday’ mentality.

Progression is a term used frequently in soccer coaching to represent advancement in training complexity or applying coaching conditions to increase demands on the players. Progression is also used to describe how coaches gradually build learning experiences in stages rather than all at once, coordinating the instruction and content with the player’s motivation and developmental phase. In moving too quickly to tactics, formations and positions, coaches will pass over general movement skills and gradual skill progression. This is a significant oversight as failure to become proficient in the fundamentals of the game and in movement will create deficiencies in performance later. For players and parents with aspirations of playing soccer in college or beyond, failure to master the foundations of the game will affect their opportunities in adult sport.

## **HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LEARNING**

Former USA Women’s National Team Coach, Tony DiCicco uses a phrase ‘Soccer sessions life lessons’ to describe the role soccer should play in developing characteristics such as leadership, team work, commitment and responsibility. Participation in sport and physical activity not only helps to shape character traits but can also contribute to better academic performance.

A strongly held belief by many administrators of town soccer is the perception that fun and learning are mutually exclusive – if we make the environment more conducive to learning (small side activities, ability based, player assessments, individual instruction, shorter and more focused sessions etc) we sacrifice fun. This belief has no scientific foundation and in fact flies in the face of common logic. In cases where programs cite bad experiences in implementing a ‘learning environment’, we propose the issue is more in the way implementation was approached and communicated, than in the idea itself. In his book ‘Good to Great’, Jim Collins addresses organizations having an issue in changing when their current approach is seemingly realizing good results. Collins refers to ‘good being the enemy of great’ and this is certainly applicable to youth soccer. Why change the approach to learning when participation numbers in soccer exceed all other sports in the town?

We must also think of ways to encourage players to learn the sport outside of scheduled practices and games. Taking the ball out in the yard with friends and parents, attending a live game (high school, college or professional) or watching the game on TV are some of the ways we can further engage players and parents in the learning experience. Finally, NSCAA believes a Player Development Model should encourage players to play a variety of sports for as long as possible, until such times as the player decides to commit more fully to soccer. Soccer performance can benefit significantly by learning from physical transfers from other sports and vice versa. For example, tactical similarities such as attack and defense in basketball or field hockey - rebounding, quick feet and lateral movements in basketball can greatly enhance explosive movements required in soccer. Playing soccer 3-5 nights per week for a 7 year old child is too much. We do however recommend players participate year round to limit performance regression – developing their competencies in movement and fundamental ball skills.

# PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM MODEL



Player Development Continuum: Development occurs on a continuum where development is more important than the chronological age of the player. Developmental differences between players of the same age are common place and can correlate to +/- 2 years of chronological age. Thus, in a mixed ability group of 10 year old players, it is feasible to have players performing at a level of an average 8 year old and an average 12 year old - a 4 year development range.

5 STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT MODEL																	
Age in years	0-3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Bayli LTAD	Active start			Fundamentals			Learning to train			Training to train			Training to compete				
Stage of Development	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3			Stage 4			Stage 5				
Age groups	U4-U6			U7-U9			U10-U12			U13-U15			U16-U19				
Soccer age (development)	2 years +/-			2 years +/-			2 years +/-			2 years +/-			2 years +/-				
Coaching time per year	40-90 hours			100-120 hours			150-320 hours			150-320 hours			150-540 hours				
Developmental focus	Social			Technical			Technical			Technical			Tactical				
	Physical			Social			Social			Tactical			Psychological				
	Technical			Physical			Tactical			Physical			Technical				
	Psychological			Tactical			Physical			Psychological			Physical				
	Tactical			Psychological			Psychological			Social			Social				
Specialist training	No positions			Attack and defend			Specialist positions			Groups and units			Whole team				
Players per session	12			12 to 15			12 to 18			12 to 18			18 to 22				
Length of session	30 to 45 mins			45 to 60 mins			60 to 90 mins			75 to 90 mins			75 to 90 mins				
Training to game ratio	Training only			4:1			3:1			3:1			2:1				
Training format	1v1 to 3v3			1v1 to 5v5			1v1 to 8v8			4v4 to 11v11			4v4 to 11v11				
Game format	Training only			3v3 to 5v5			5v5 to 8v8			7v7 to 11v11			11v11				
Player assessment frequency	Once per season			2 per year			3-4 per year			3-4 per year			4+ per year				
Coach certification	NSCAA L1-3			NSCAA L1-3			NSCAA L3-6			NSCAA National			NSCAA National +				

# VOLUME 1 - **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM**

## **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Physical and emotional changes that occur as people mature affect all aspects of life, including sport. A child centered coach needs to understand the different phases of development and how they can affect sports performance – particularly coaches of young athletes. Coaches need to consider not only the player's physical needs but also their social, emotional and cognitive needs. Adapting teaching methodology and content to meet the player's needs significantly improve their progress in soccer. Training, competition, and recovery programs should be designed to match the physical, mental, cognitive, and emotional development of each player. Ethics, fair play and character building should also be taught according to each child's ability to understand these concepts at different ages.

Discussions about development center around two factors - Growth and Maturation: 'Growth' refers to measurable changes such as height, weight and fat percentage. 'Maturation' refers to more subtle qualitative adaptations, such as cartilage changing to bone. Noticeable and subtle changes in growth and maturation are referred to as development, and these include social, emotional, intellectual, and motor performance. There is also a distinction between chronological age (days and years since birth) and development age (the degree of physical, mental, cognitive, and emotional maturity). The development age of the player is of primary importance to the successful implementation of the NSCAA Player Development Curriculum. As a player's developmental age can differ by as much as two years from their chronological age, it is important that all content and teaching methodologies are appropriate to development. For example, a player who is 12 calendar years old could be 10 to 14 in developmental age.

Knowing if a player is an early, average, or late developer is critically important in adopting an approach to coaching. This knowledge will provide the basis for determining the starting point and capacity of a player to absorb information and perform. Most importantly, appreciating where a player is situated along the Player Development Continuum allows for the coach to plan for individual needs. Failure to recognize development cues can contribute to several negative outcomes, including selecting teams based on size, strength and speed. Research has concluded that children born in the first third of the year (i.e. January to April for sports using the calendar year) have a statistically significant advantage over children born near the end of the year. However, research also concludes that children with late birthdays eventually draw alongside their older peers and in many cases surpass performance levels. Unfortunately, many average and late developers do not reach their full soccer potential when they are passed-over at age 10, 11 or 12 and don't receive good coaching, patience and perseverance.

The development considerations for each stage in the curriculum are explored in the 'Stage' sections of this curriculum.

## **CHILD CENTERED CURRICULUM**

Central to the theme of Player Development is the concept of 'Child-centered' learning. The focus of the NSCAA Player Development Curriculum is the need of individual players (child) – first and foremost. The education environment is constructed to focus on the player's, abilities, interests, and learning styles and the coach performs as the facilitator. At each stage of development the player should actively participate in creating learning experiences. Individual performance outcomes should largely direct coaching content and activities. Conversely, 'Coach-centered' approaches have the coach as the central director and players in a passive, receptive role.

A 'Child-Centered Coach' uses a variety of techniques to engage the players in thought and discussion. One technique used consistently is questioning. Questions give children an opportunity to solve a problem and typically players try hard to solve it. Solutions generated to address the issues are theirs and subsequently players take greater ownership than if they were told what to do, when to do it and how to do it. Solving problems through questioning enables players to explore, discover, create and generally experiment with a variety of techniques and tactical processes.

There are several approaches to help players reflect on their learning while practicing and playing games:

- + Skill questions develop purposeful feedback and skill awareness. Skill questions include what and where. For example, What happened to the ball when you lean back? Where did your head finish when you took that shot?
- + Tactical questions develop decision making and problem solving with respect to the strategies of the game/activity. Tactical questions include how and why. For example, how can you and your teammate work together to get into a position to score a goal? Why did you run faster this time?
- + Review questions develop thinking skills to help modify activities to make it more challenging, enjoyable and inclusive. For example, what did you enjoy about this activity? What would you change about this activity? What did you learn about this activity?

## FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS (FMS)

As soccer coaches, we spend a considerable amount of time and energy planning sessions to develop fundamental soccer skills. This is particularly the case with the youngest players entering soccer for the first time at age 4, 5 or 6. However, whether consciously or unconsciously, we all too often overlook the foundation for fundamental soccer skills – fundamental movement skills.

Naturally we should expect parents, preschool and school systems to provide young players with instruction and exposure to skills such as walking, running, jumping, skipping, kicking, catching and throwing. Unfortunately, evidence suggests many children do not receive suitable movement education and as a result they stay at the elementary stage of skill development. Failure to acquire movement skills by the end of Stage 2 (8 years) has a dramatic effect on the progress potential for children in youth sports programs. In a wider context, children need to develop basic physical skills and a degree of competence to continually participate in physical activity, not just sport. Perceptions about physical activity formed during the first few years of participation provide the key to future motivation and participation. In general, movement skill acquisition leads to confidence and performance successes that in turn lead to continuous adherence to a sport or physical activity.

As previously discussed, before progressing on to more complex skills, it is imperative the child can competently perform foundation and basic skills. Fundamental movement skills are the building blocks upon which all sport skills are based and must be mastered before learning more complex, specialized skills like those needed in games, sports and recreational activities. To this end, movement competence is a prerequisite for fundamental soccer skills. That is not to say, however, a soccer ball cannot be introduced into movement skill activities.

Fundamental Movement Skills are the building blocks upon which all sport skills are based and must be mastered before learning more complex, specialized skills like those needed in games, sports and recreational activities.

LOCOMOTOR SKILLS	STABILITY SKILLS	MANIPULATIVE SKILLS
Involve the body moving in any direction from one point to another	Involve the body balancing either in one place (static) or while in motion (dynamic).	Involve handling and controlling objects with the hand, the foot or an implement (stick, bat or racket)
Crawling Running Galloping Walking Hopping Skipping Dodging Jumping Sliding Leaping	Stopping Bending Twisting Landing Climbing Balancing Turning	Throwing Catching Striking Bouncing Dribbling Kicking

# STAGE 2: PLAYERS 6-8 YEARS OLD

## 16 STAGE 2 - MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (6-8 YEARS OLD)

Development focus and characteristics related to coaching.

## 18 ISLAND DRIBBLING

Appropriate for stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

## 19 FRUIT SALAD

Appropriate for stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

## 20 PIRATES TREASURE

Appropriate for stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players.

## 21 LINE DRIBBLE

Appropriate for stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

## 22 SIX GOAL GAME

Appropriate for stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

## 23 CATEGORIES

Appropriate for stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

## 24 COCONUTS IN THE SKY

Appropriate for stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

## 25 GATE PASSING

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## 26 BOSS OF THE BALL PASSING

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## 27 CAPTURE THE BALL

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## 28 ICE MONSTER

Appropriate for stage 2 - 6-8 year old players.

## 29 MINUTE TO WIN IT

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## 30 ICE CREAM SCOOP CHALLENGE

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## 31 2V2 TRANSITION TO GOAL KEEPER

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## 32 3V3 CHANGE GAME

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## 33 HOW TO FEED YOUR DRAGON

Appropriate for stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players.

## 34 POPCORN

Appropriate for stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players.

## 35 1V1 BOX COMPETITION

Appropriate for stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players.

## 36 STAR WARS 3V1

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## 37 TRIANGLE GOAL GAME

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## STAGE 2 - MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (6-8 YEARS OLD)

A 6 year old is eager, active and likes to be on the go. Although keen to act independently, a 6 year old needs parental approval, understanding, praise and encouragement. Pushing too hard or expecting too much can result in the child becoming tense and nervous. An 8 year old is able to accept moderate responsibilities. Peer groups become important and the child will identify with other youngsters of the same sex and with similar interests and activities.

### DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Movement skills and technical development remain top of the agenda in Stage 2.
- Small sided games and teamwork activities are introduced.
- Speed training commences for Girls (6-8 years) and Boys (7-9 years)
- Optimal time for training suppleness occurs for both Girls and Boys in stages 2 and 3 (6-10 years)

KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 2		
Physically	Psychological/Social	Cognitive/Mental
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordination and body control improve rapidly as there is slower growth.</li> <li>2. Boys and girls have equal ability.</li> <li>3. Reaction time is slow, but improves as the child grows.</li> <li>4. Lots of energy as endurance levels but there are fluctuations in energy.</li> <li>5. High need for skill development.</li> <li>6. Fine motor skills developing.</li> <li>7. Visual and hand/eye coordination improving.</li> <li>8. Height and weight increasing at a steady rate.</li> <li>9. Balance improves with ear developments.</li> <li>10. Learns best by being physically active.</li> <li>11. Needs to repeat activities that are well known and mastered.</li> <li>12. Eye development and ability to track objects in motion improving.</li> <li>13. High center of gravity, so balance can be difficult.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interests often change rapidly.</li> <li>2. Enjoys initiating activities.</li> <li>3. Enjoys being praised for endeavors from adults.</li> <li>4. Starts to become more independent and attempts to exercise more control over own environment.</li> <li>5. Appreciates consistency in own environment.</li> <li>6. Learns by repetition.</li> <li>7. Experimental, exploratory behavior is part of development.</li> <li>8. Still egocentric – each player wants a ball.</li> <li>9. Peer group becomes increasingly important.</li> <li>10. Players are concrete thinkers and find abstract concepts difficult.</li> <li>11. Players start to develop powers of reasoning – if you do ‘X’ the result will be ‘Y’.</li> <li>12. Easily motivated and eager to try something new. Willingness to seek risk and adventure.</li> <li>13. Needs guidance and praise from adults to stay on task and to achieve the best performance.</li> <li>14. Increasingly self-assured but can be childish and silly at times.</li> <li>15. Stronger sense of right and wrong.</li> <li>16. Growing desire to be liked and accepted by friends.</li> <li>17. Enthusiastic and impatient.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Imaginative, spontaneous and creative.</li> <li>2. Able to stay on task longer due to increased attention span.</li> <li>3. Likes to be tested but often dislikes public failure.</li> <li>4. Likes to try new activities.</li> <li>5. Better able to understand and learn because of growing memory capacity.</li> <li>6. Starting to visualize instructions –although demonstrations are much more concrete.</li> <li>7. Inconsistent attention span.</li> <li>8. Interests can be short and fast changing.</li> <li>9. Highly verbal.</li> <li>10. Asks fact-orientated questions (e.g., wants to know how, why and when).</li> <li>11. Rapid development of mental skills.</li> <li>12. Greater ability to describe experiences and talk about thoughts and feelings.</li> <li>13. Less focus on one’s self – seeks social comparison.</li> </ol>

## STAGE 2 - MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (6-8 YEARS OLD)

### DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS TRANSLATED TO COACHING PLAYERS IN STAGE 2

#### TRANSLATED TO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THIS MEANS

1. Continued involvement of fundamental movement skills – running, jumping, skipping, throwing etc
2. Focusing on ball familiarization and dribbling skills – one ball per child.
3. Introduction of paired and cooperation activities.
4. Help players understand a task by demonstration and asking questions
5. Sessions requiring players to be extremely active.
6. Selecting activities that do not place undue stress on the muscles, bones and energy systems of the body.
7. Repeating activities regularly – constant change and insufficient reinforcement negatively affects learning
8. Camouflaging and concealing technical information by using names, characters and stories.
9. Encouraging trial and error, keeping instruction to a minimum
10. Using equipment and props to increase complexity but continue to make the sessions fun – hurdles, hoops, ladders, bean bags, etc.
11. Including competitive games, but emphasize success other than just winning (i.e. effort)
12. Providing considerable encouragement.
13. Including 'games and matches' in every session
14. Introduction to small sided games – 2 v 2 to 4 v 4 – play at the end of a practice session – don't sacrifice practice sessions for games at this stage.
15. All players to receive fundamental goal keeping skills – catching, throwing and diving (players love to dive!).
16. Introduce basic rules of the game – including restarts when ball leaves the field.
17. Passing skills can be introduced.
18. Avoiding temptation to place players in specialist positions (i.e. full back, forward or goal keeper)

# ISLAND DRIBBLING

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.

## WHY USE IT

This activity develops player's confidence - using moves to beat a defender and improving player's vision

## SET UP

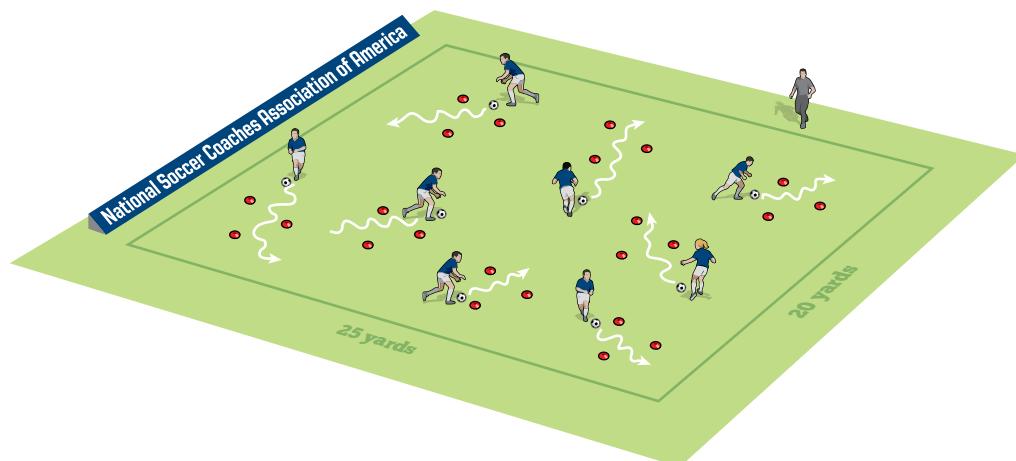
20x25 playing area marked with cones in the corners. Use three cones to make a triangle or island and create 8 islands in the grid. Each player will start with a ball.

## HOW TO PLAY

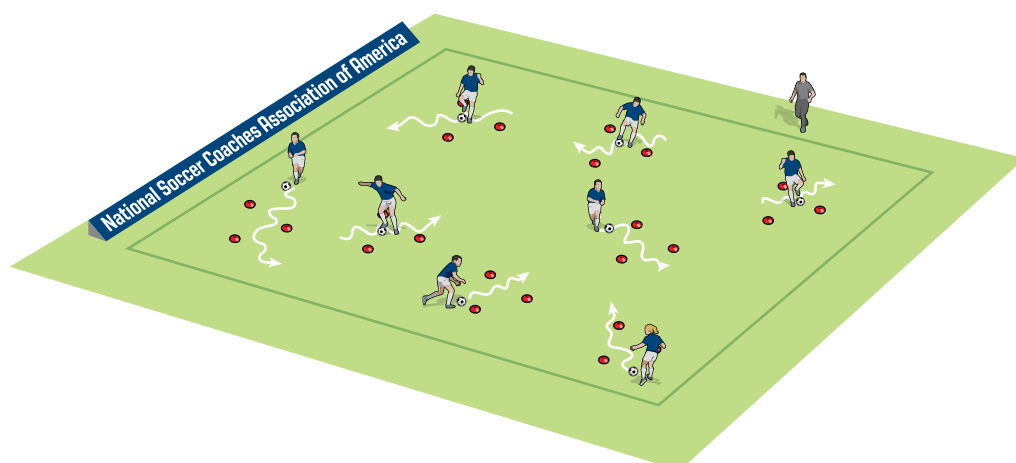
The first few rounds of play the players will try to dribble through as many islands as possible in 45 seconds. In subsequent rounds player will have to perform a move to beat or escape a defender in the center of the island: such as inside cut, scissor, step over, etc.

## COACHING NOTES

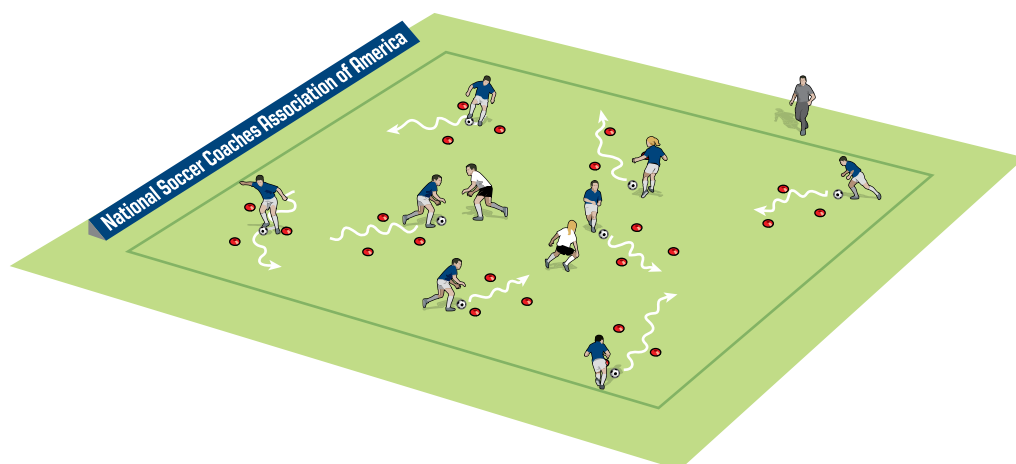
- + Main coaching objectives - develop confidence on the ball and quickness when performing moves.
- + Coaching tips - the triangle/island encourages players to dribble in one side and out another side. Emphasize that players should accelerate after the move.
- + Adaptations - add two 'taggers' in the final stage to increase difficulty



- + Players look to dribble through islands as fast as possible in 45 seconds.
- + Can players improve on their last score?



- + Players now need to perform a move in the center of the island.
- + Coach can tell them the first few moves and then ask the players to come up with their own moves.



- + Have two players try to win the ball from those that are dribbling.
- + Once they win the ball they drop the training vest.
- + Players may stop on an island and are safe for 5 seconds from taggers.

# FRUIT SALAD

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.

Competencies:

- + Physical literacy skills.
- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.

## WHY USE IT

This activity is designed to get players to dribble with their head up and also use different surfaces of the foot to dribble.

## SET UP

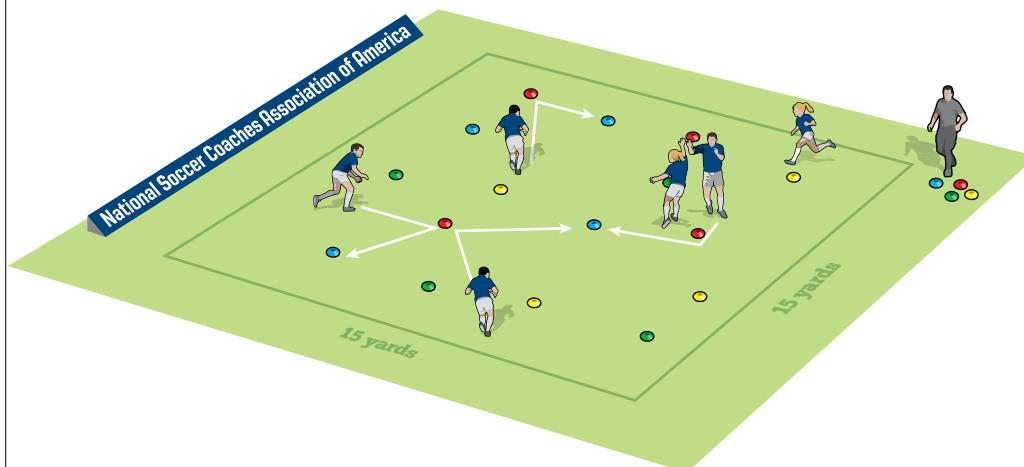
15x15 playing area marked with cones in the corners. There are 16 cones scattered throughout the grid. The cones are yellow, red, orange, and purple. Each of the 12 players will need a ball for the second phase. The coach also has one cone of each color in her hand.

## HOW TO PLAY

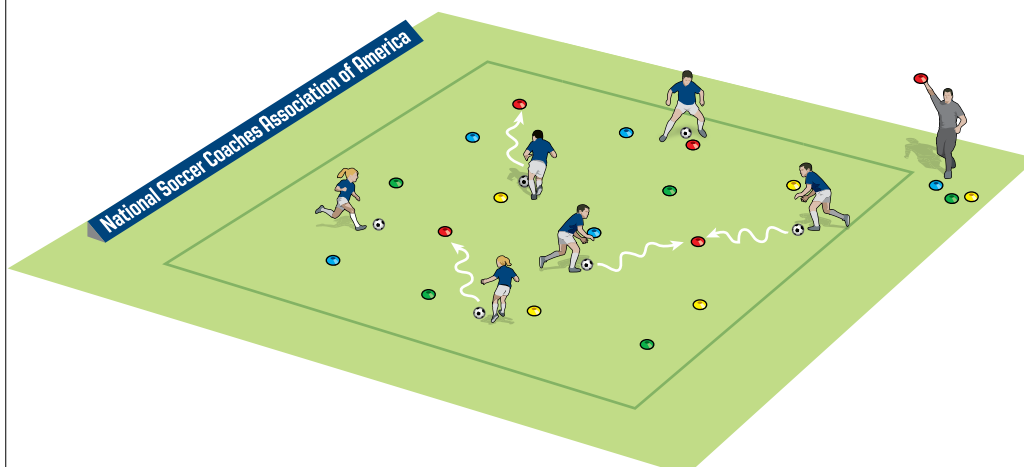
Players start out performing different movements between the cones as a warm-up. Players then must dribble inside the grid and avoid the cones. The coach will hold a cone up and have the players call out a fruit of that color. The players will progress from dribbling with different surfaces, to performing stationary moves at a cone, and then moves to beat a player.

## COACHING NOTES

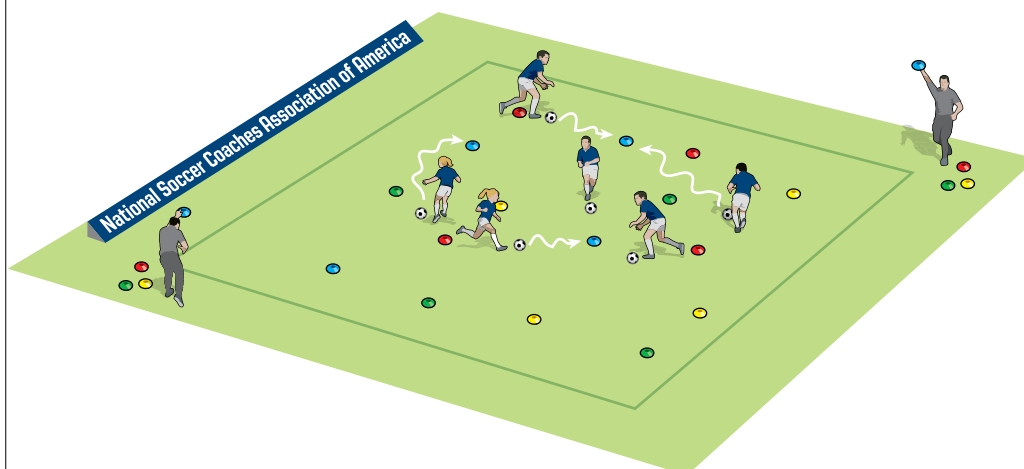
- + Main coaching objectives – develop player's vision and comfort on the ball.
- + Coaching tips – you can make the space smaller to make it more difficult for players or enlarge the grid to make it easier.
- + Adaptations – have another coach or parent also hold up cones so players have more than one person to look out for while dribbling.



- + Coach calls out a movement for players to perform.
- + Coach can ask players to give “high fives” to teammates.



- + When the coach raises a cone the players have to call out a fruit of that color.
- + Players dribble to a cone and perform 6 reps of a stationary move, i.e. toe touches.



- + Players now accelerate to the cone.
- + Have a coach or parent also hold up cones.

# PIRATES TREASURE

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.

## WHY USE IT

This game incorporates dribbling moves to beat a defender, turning, and body coordination.

## SET UP

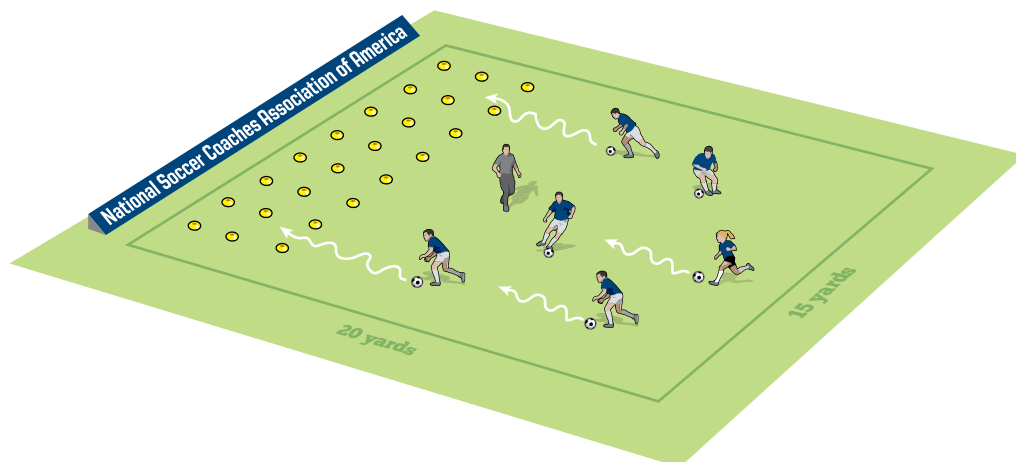
15x20 playing area marked with cones in the corners. 24 cones (gold) are positioned at the end of the grid (island). Each player with a ball will start on the opposite side of the grid. The coach is in the middle of the grid.

## HOW TO PLAY

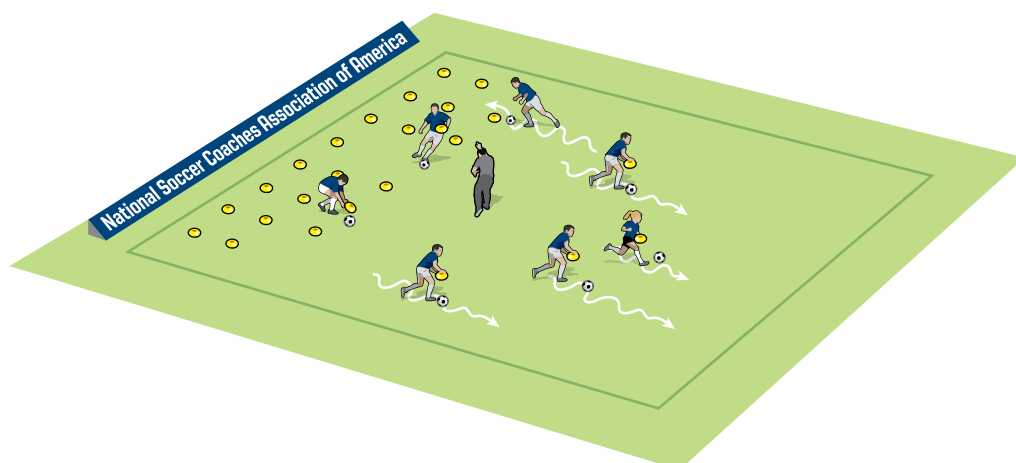
Players must dribble past the coach in the middle who acts as passive defender. When the players get to the treasure area, they must pick up one piece of gold and dribble back to the end line. Once all the gold is picked up the players can then dribble down with it and bury it back on the island.

## COACHING NOTES

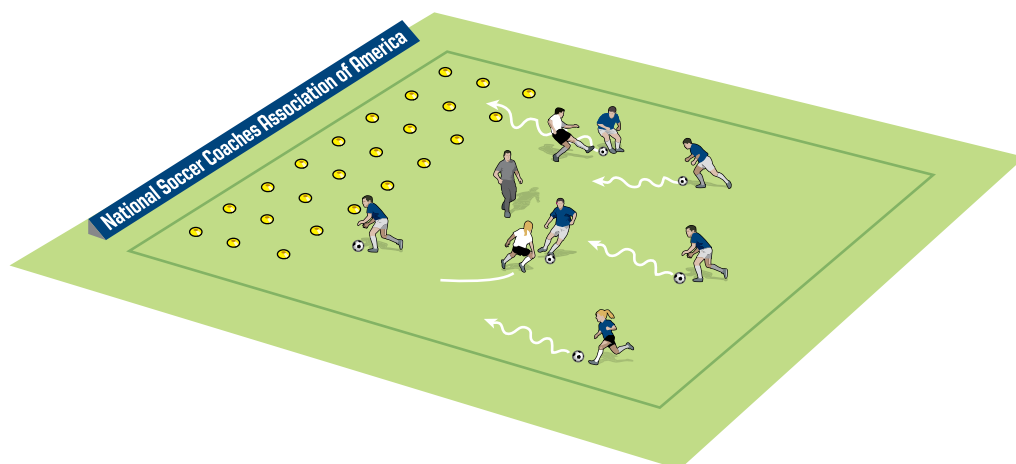
- + Main Coaching Objectives – Players should look to time their moves to beat the coach. Players should recognize the cues to take long touches to attack space vs short touches to set up a move.
- + Coaching tips – if there is not enough space have players dribble in two waves instead of one.
- + Adaptations – add more defenders who can win the ball



- + Players must perform a move while dribbling to get to the treasure.
- + The coach acts as a passive defender as the players try to dribble to the island.



- + The coach can now defend.
- + Players should recognize when they have space to take bigger touches.



- + Have 1-2 players act as defenders.
- + Once a dribbler loses her ball she joins the defenders.

# LINE DRIBBLE

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Passing and receiving.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.
- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.
- + Shooting technique.

## WHY USE IT

This game is designed to give players repetition using moves to beat a defender.

## SET UP

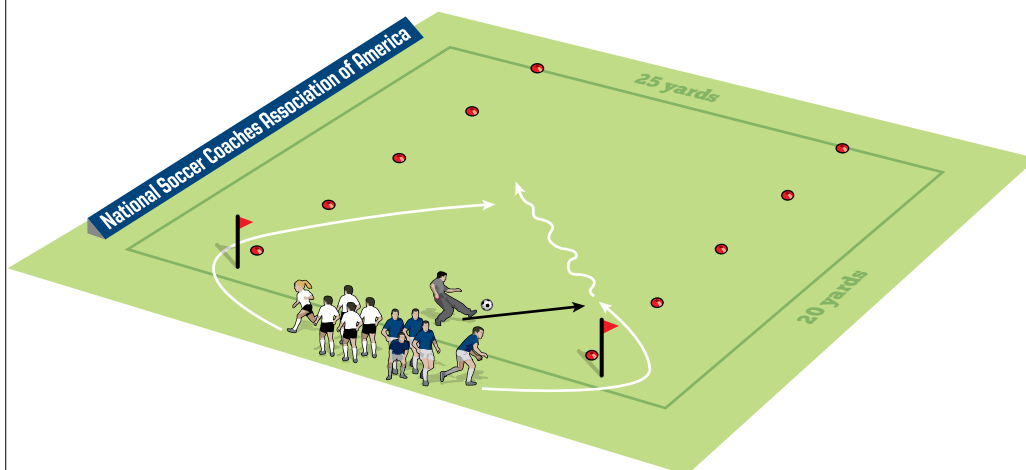
20x25 playing area marked with cones in the corners. Cones are also laid 5 yards off each end line to create end zones. Flags are also placed 10 yards from the center of the sideline where the coach stands. Players are split into two teams of six and each team wears a different colored vest. The coach is on the touchline with all the balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

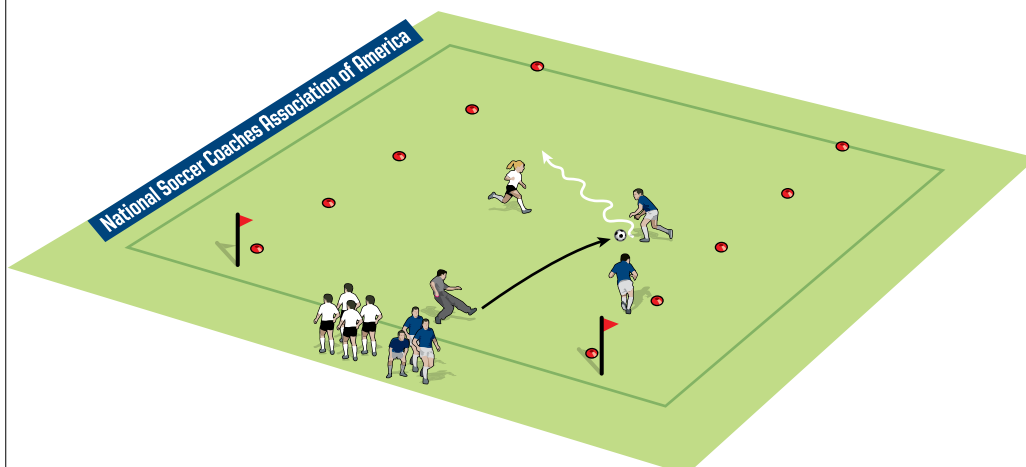
When the coach says, "Go" the first person in each line must run down to the flag on their side before entering the field. The coach plays a ball towards one player to create an attacking advantage. The player must dribble to the opposite end zone and stop the ball for a point. If the defending player wins the ball, she can score at the opposite line.

## COACHING NOTES

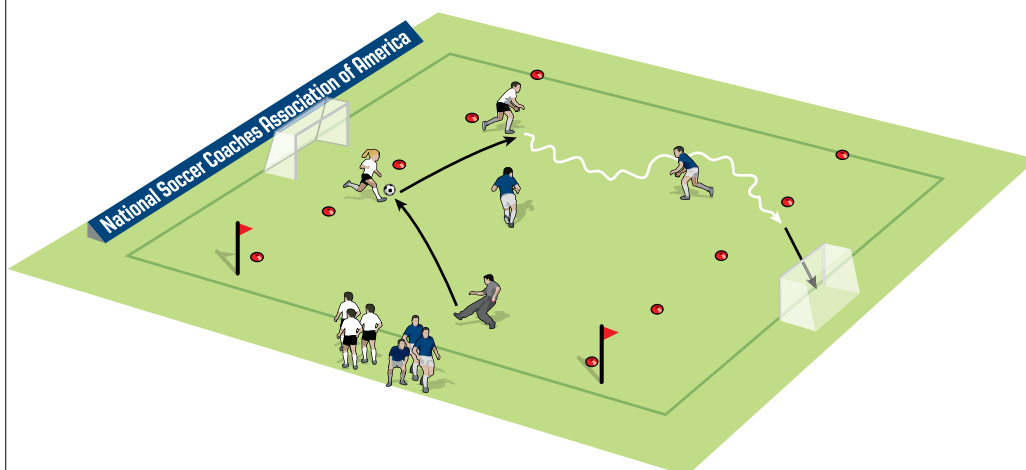
- + Main coaching objectives – players need to make a good first touch and attack the defender at speed.
- + Coaching tips – if the groups take too much time you can play a 2nd ball out for the next group to play simultaneously.
- + Adaptations – start to add numbers to the activity to create 2v1, 2v2, and 3v2 games



- + Coach says "Go" and first person in each line runs around their flag.
- + Player who last touched the ball brings it back to the coach.



- + Coach can now call out more than one player from a team, for example: "2 blue and 1 white."
- + Have players leave the ball if it goes out of bounds or if they score.



- + Add a small goal at either end.
- + The coach talks with the players while they wait in line to play.

# SIX GOAL GAME

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Passing and receiving.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.
- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.

## WHY USE IT

Using multiple goals allows for players to keep their heads up and find other scoring options. Players can dribble to penetrate to goal or recognize when to change direction.

## SET UP

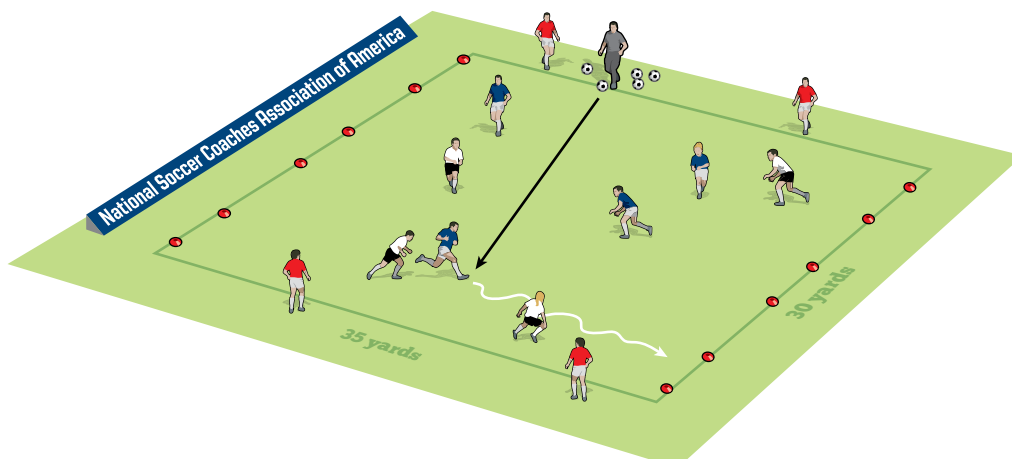
30x35 playing area marked with cones. 3 goals that are 2 yards wide are created on each end-line with cones. 12 players are placed on 3 teams, each with a different training vest. Soccer balls are with the coach on the side.

## HOW TO PLAY

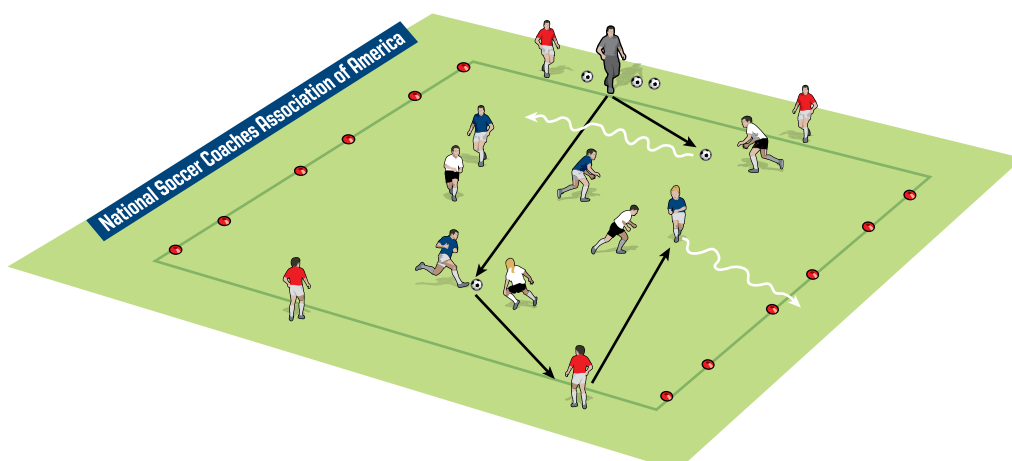
2 teams will play 4 vs 4 on the field and a third team acts as bumpers on the touch line. Teams will play for 2 minutes and then the bumper team will switch with a team on the field. The coach is the “boss of the ball” and restarts each game with a pass.

## COACHING NOTES

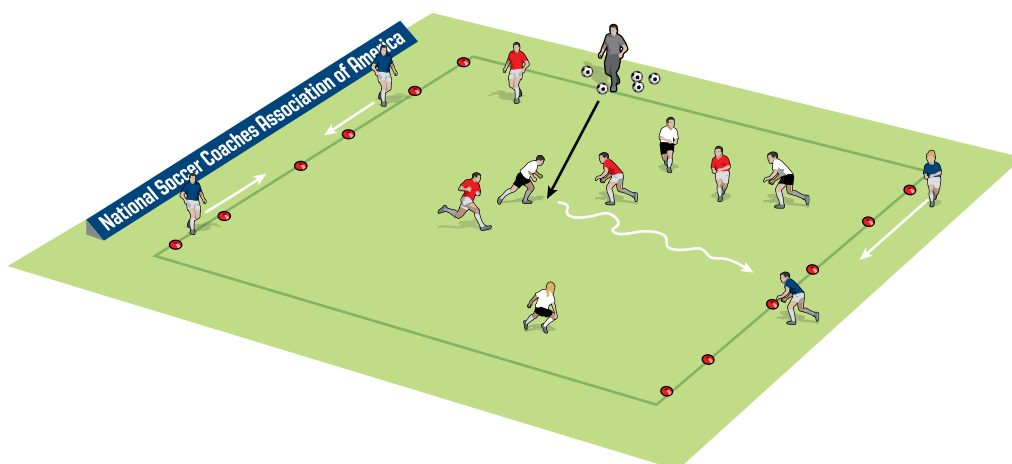
- + Main coaching objectives – decision making of when to dribble to penetrate; vision to see scoring options.
- + Coaching tips – play more than one ball in to get more players involved
- + Adaptations - instead of acting like bumpers the third team can stand behind the goals as gate keepers who take turns stepping into goals to close them off.



- + Coach plays the ball in any time a goal is scored or a ball goes out of bounds.
- + Teams may play to the bumper team for support.



- + If there are players that are not active, the coach may play in an additional ball.
- + Coach should remind bumper players to move to support the play.



- + To increase the difficulty of the activity, allow the resting team to act as gate keepers for the goals.
- + They may step in and close off goals at varying times.

# CATEGORIES

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Passing and receiving.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.

## WHY USE IT

Teach players how to angle their run and receive a ball

## SET UP

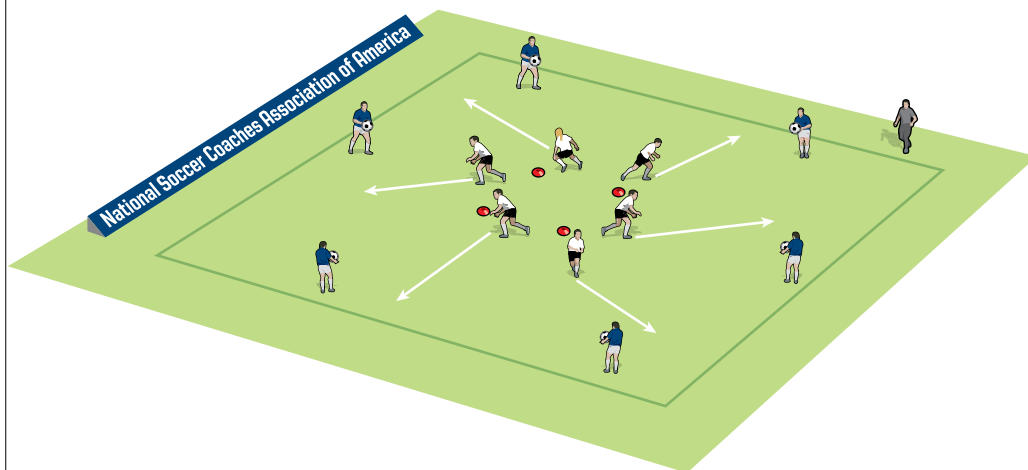
8x8 square in the center of a large circle of players. Players are split in half so that half start in the middle square and the others are around the circle with a ball.

## HOW TO PLAY

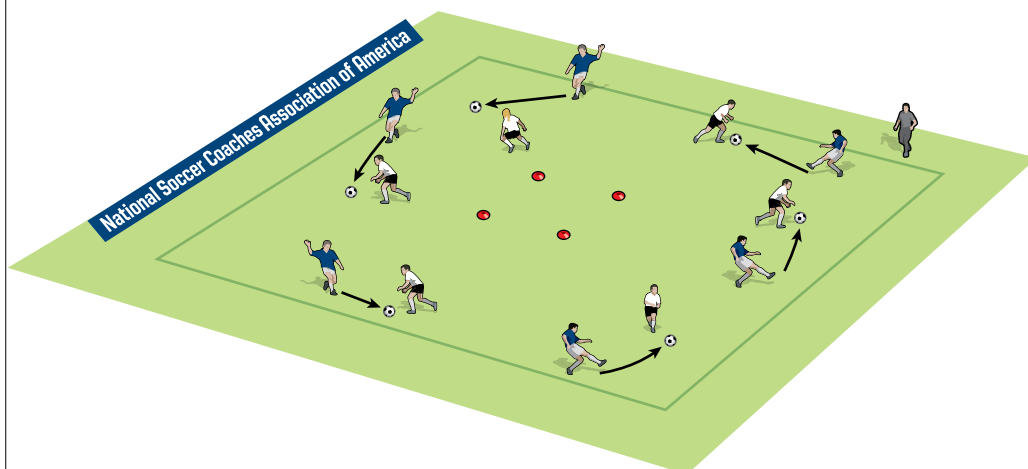
The coach calls out a category at the start of each round. Players who start in the center square must check to an outside player and call out a name from the category the coach has chosen. For example the coach may say "Fruits". The center players must then run to the outside player and say the name of a fruit before the outside player will pass them the ball. The center players will receive the ball and play it back to the outside person. Center players must then run back through the square before checking to another outside player.

## COACHING NOTES

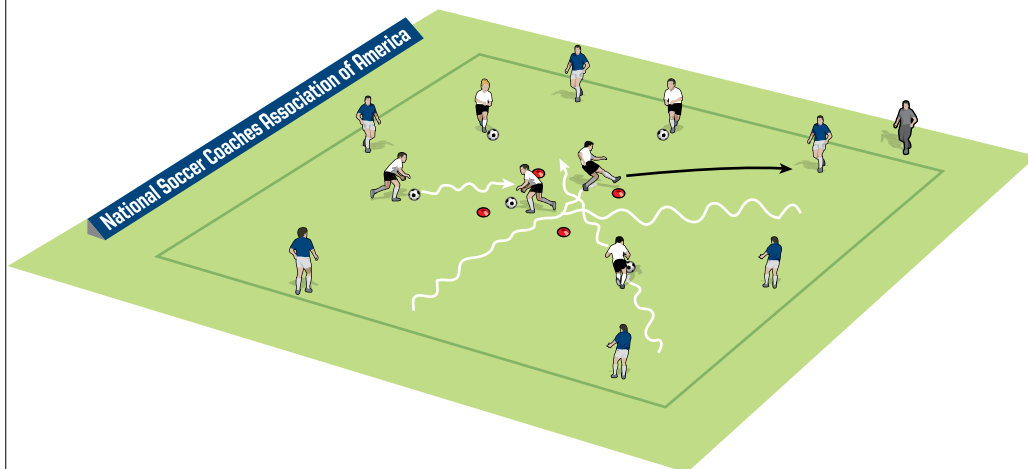
- + Main coaching objectives – players check at an angle to 'open their body' to see the field.
- + Coaching tips – players need to cushion the ball when they receive it, but their first touch needs to be out from under them.
- + Adaptations – players can be split into thirds with one third in the middle and two thirds on the outsides



- + Outside players pass with their hands to check players.
- + Receiver should look over their shoulder before receiving the ball



- + Center players check at an angle to receive the ball.
- + Coach can change the surface the receivers use to pass.



- + Players dribble through the center of the square.
- + Once through players pass the ball to an open player.

# COCONUTS IN THE SKY

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Theme:

- + Passing and receiving.

Competencies:

- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.

## WHY USE IT

This activity teaches players about passing accuracy and receiving

## SET UP

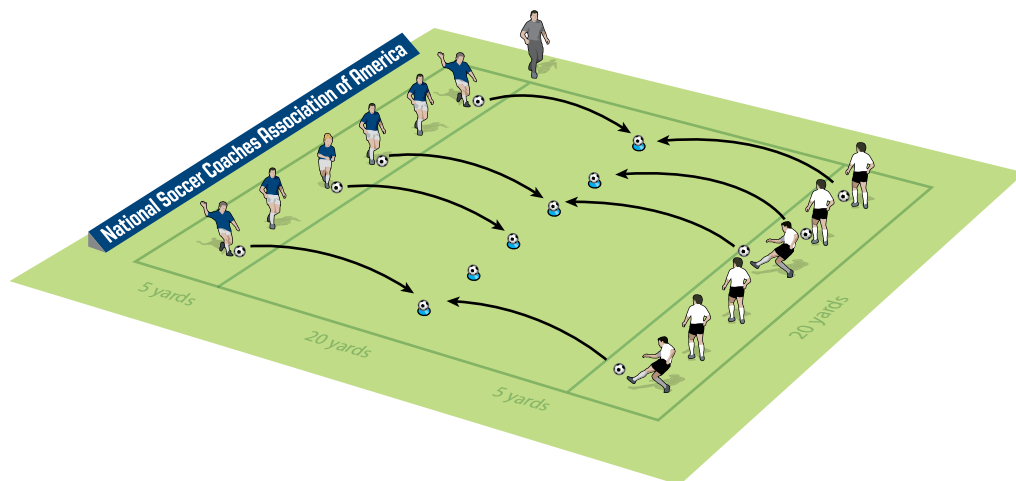
25x20 grid with cones in the corners. 5 yard end zones are on each end line and there are 6 cones with a ball on top of each in the middle. These are the coconuts.

## HOW TO PLAY

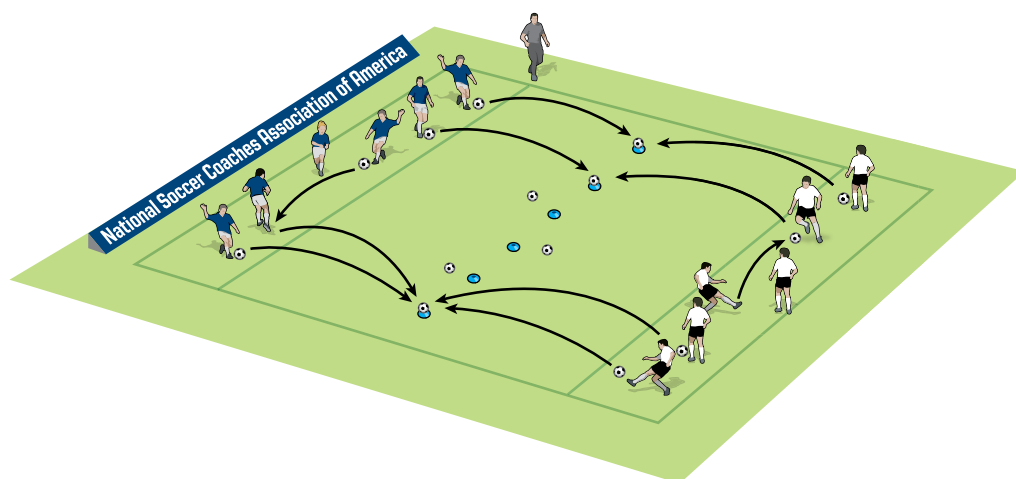
Players are split into 2 groups and they must stay in the end zones. The objective is to pass a ball to knock off the coconuts from the cones. Players in one end zone will receive balls that roll past the coconuts. The team that knocks off the most coconuts will win.

## COACHING NOTES

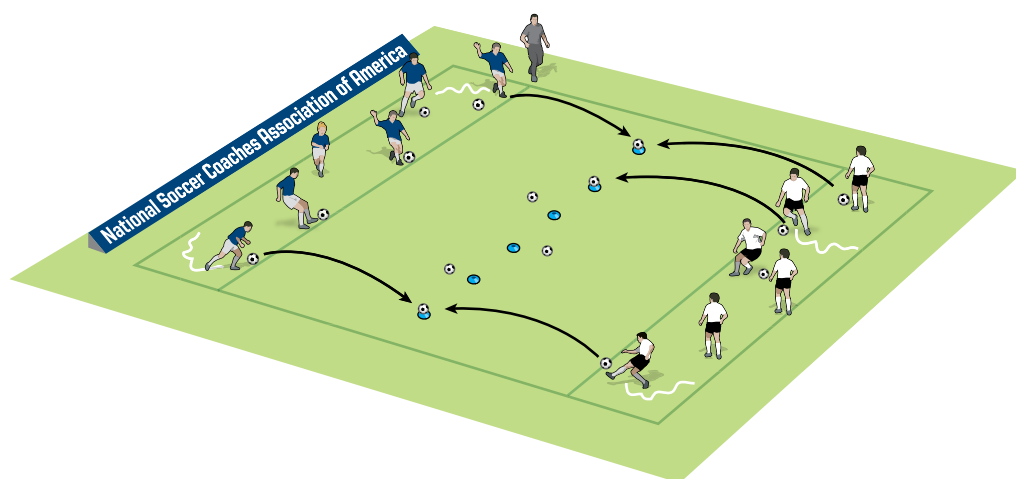
- + Main coaching objectives – teach players to pass with greater accuracy and receive a ball to set up a pass.
- + Coaching tips – adjust the size of the grid to the players ability to pass over distance.
- + Adaptations – instead of keeping track of points, a team can win if they knock the last coconut off the cone.



- + Players should take a setup touch before passing the ball.
- + Players may use different surfaces to receive the ball.



- + Receive with the knee over the ball and a cushioned touch
- + Players pass to teammates for a better chance at knocking off the coconut.



- + Players practice a feint before passing the ball.
- + Coach asks players to receive the ball and complete a move before passing.

# GATE PASSING

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Theme:

- + Passing and receiving.

Competencies:

- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.

## WHY USE IT

Teach players to work in pairs using passing and moving with the ball.

## SET UP

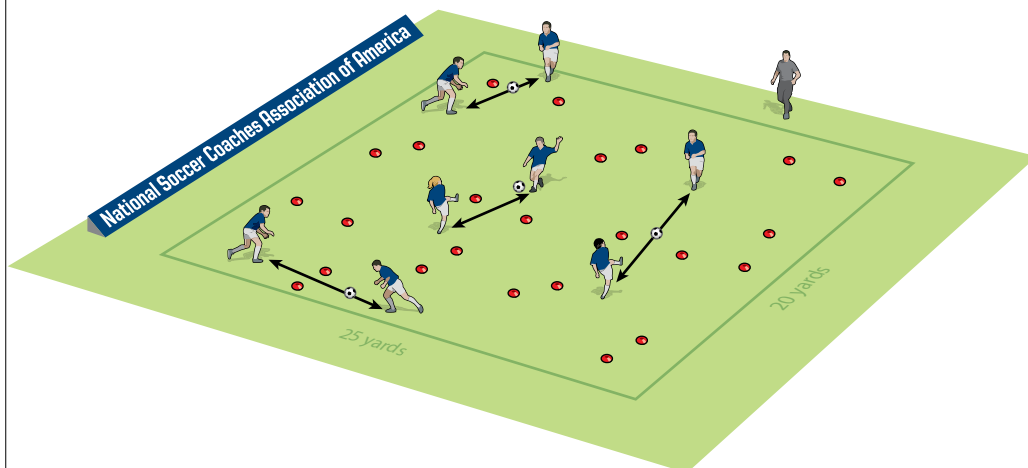
25x20 grid with cones in the corners. 12 gates of varying sizes made from two cones, are set up in the grid. Players are split into pairs and each pair has a ball.

## HOW TO PLAY

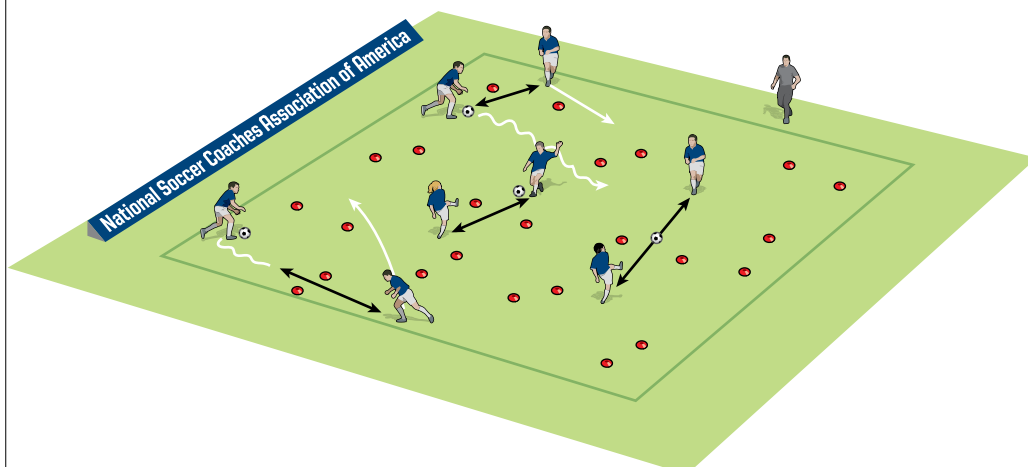
Partners will first pass through a single gate to review passing technique. Pairs will then have one minute to pass through as many gates as they can. The coach should play several rounds to allow players to devise strategies that will allow them to improve their score.

## COACHING NOTES

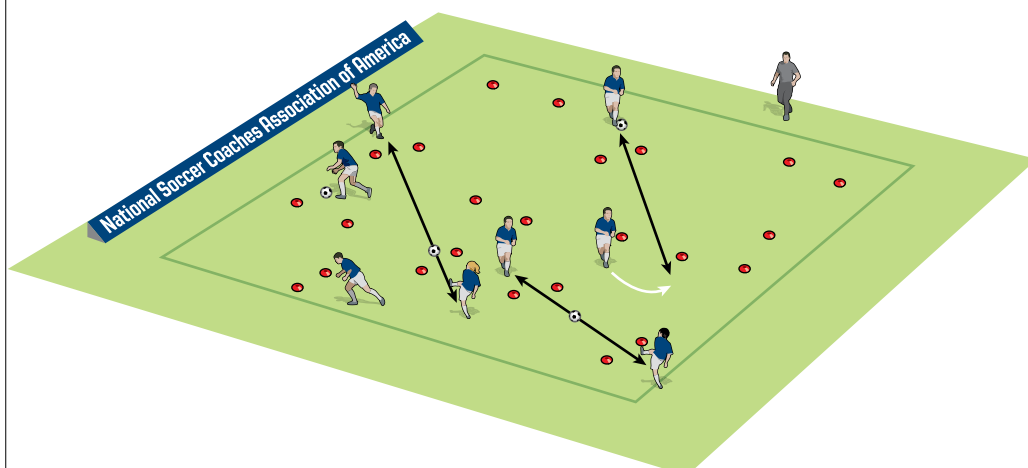
- + Main coaching objectives - players should improve passing accuracy, vision, and receiving the ball with their next movement in mind
- + Coaching tips - players should strike through the middle of the ball, use the metaphor of the ball is an "Oreo cookie" and players should hit the cream.
- + Adaptations - to increase difficulty one pair can act as bandits to try and steal the ball from other pairs



- + Partners pass between a gate - how many passes in a minute?
- + Coaches ask players to pass or receive with different surfaces of the foot.



- + Players must pass and move to different gates.
- + Take a first touch in the direction of the next gate.
- + Think about the pace of the ball played to a partner.



- + Players look to play the ball through more than one gate at a time.
- + Players think about short and long passes and the pace needed.

# BOSS OF THE BALL PASSING

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing and receiving.

### Competencies:

- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.

## WHY USE IT

Players must work in groups and use their passing skills.

## SET UP

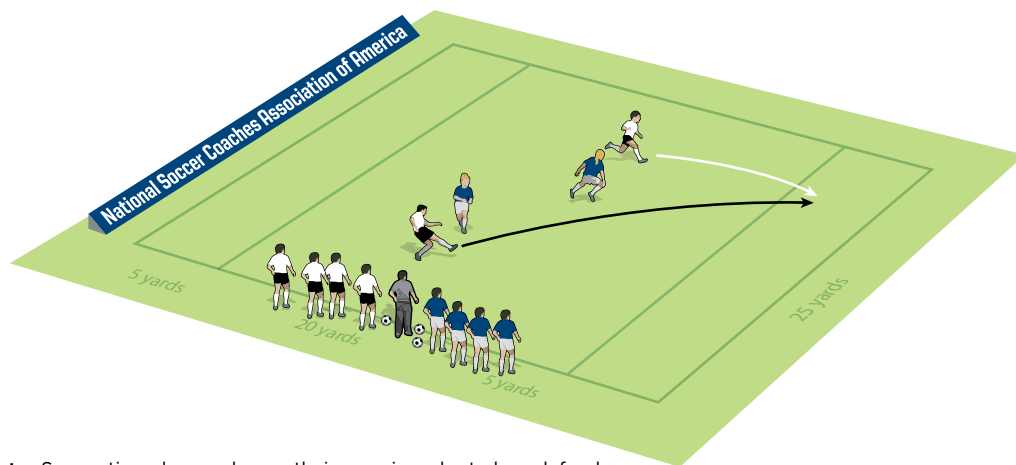
25x20 yard grid with cones in the corners. 5 yard end zones are on each end line. The coach is in the middle of the touchline with all the balls. Players are split into 2 teams wearing different colored vests and lined up on either side of the coach.

## HOW TO PLAY

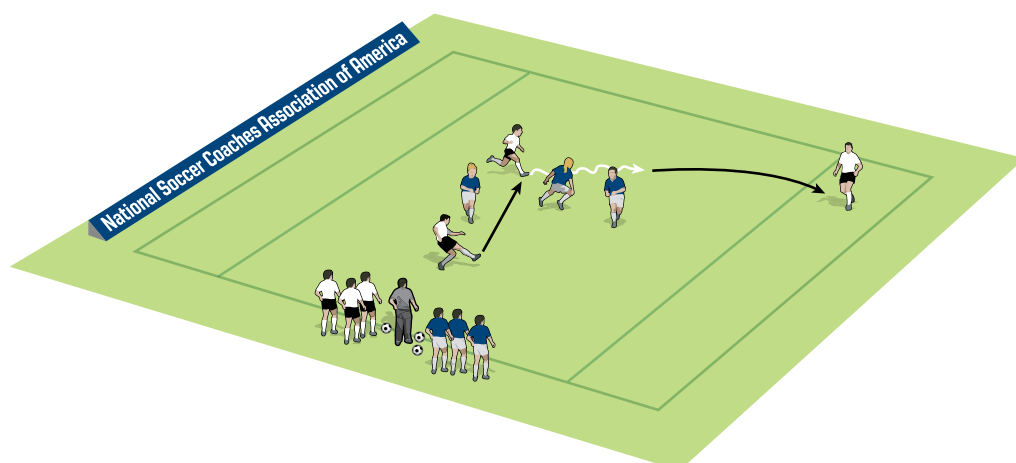
The coach calls out a number and that number of players must enter the field of play. One team defends one end zone and the other team defends the other end zone. Teams get a point for each time they can complete a pass to someone in the opposition's end zone.

## COACHING NOTES

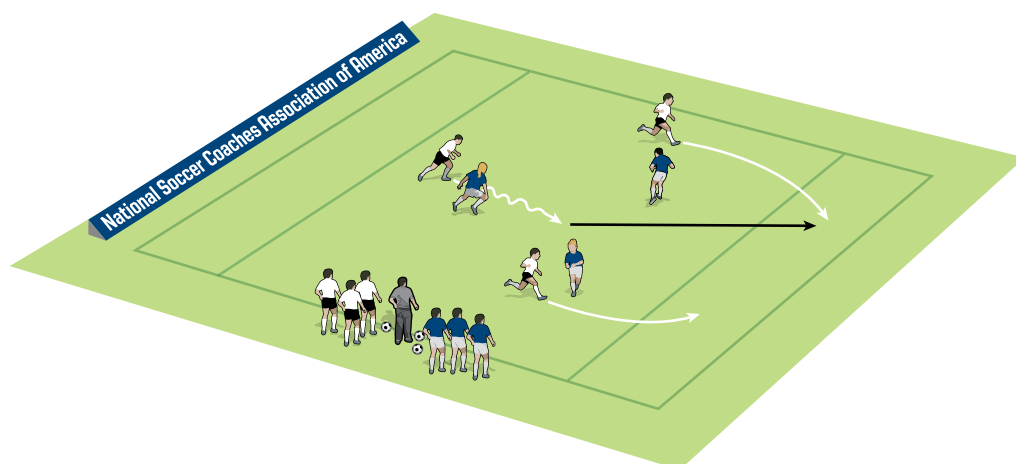
- + Main coaching objectives – players must work together using their passing accuracy and timing of their runs.
- + Coaching tips – instead of stopping play, coaches can use the time that players are waiting in line to give instructions
- + Adaptations – if there are more than 4 players waiting in a line look to create a second grid for play



- + Supporting players change their pace in order to lose defenders.
- + Player on the ball must use the proper weight of pass.



- + First touch to go forward.
- + It is important to engage a defender to set up a pass.



- + Points awarded if players receive the ball as they are running into the end zone.
- + Discuss the importance of the timing of runs.

# CAPTURE THE BALL

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Theme:

- + Passing and receiving.

Competencies:

- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.

## WHY USE IT

Players must use their passing skills in small groups and with opposition.

## SET UP

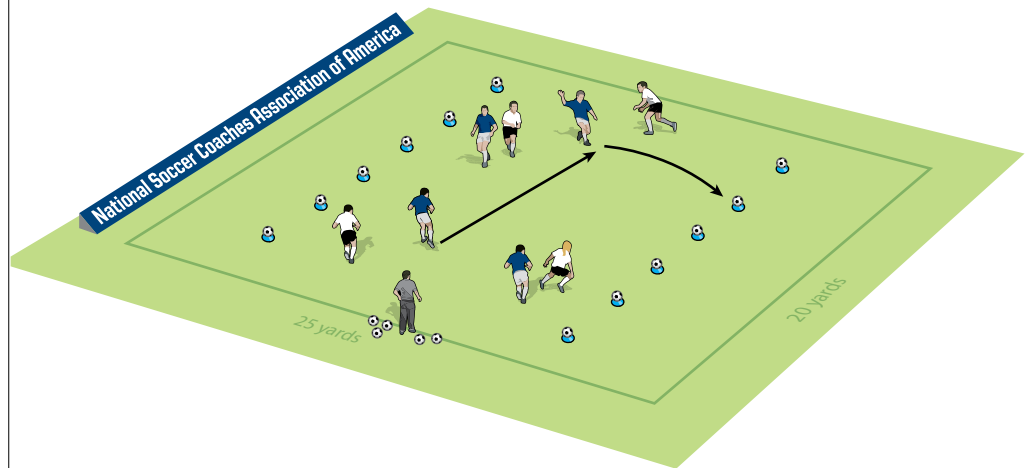
25x20 grid with cones in the corners. 6 balls are placed on top of cones 5 yards off each end line. Players are split into teams of 4 and each team is in a different colored vest. The coach is in the middle of the touchline with extra soccer balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

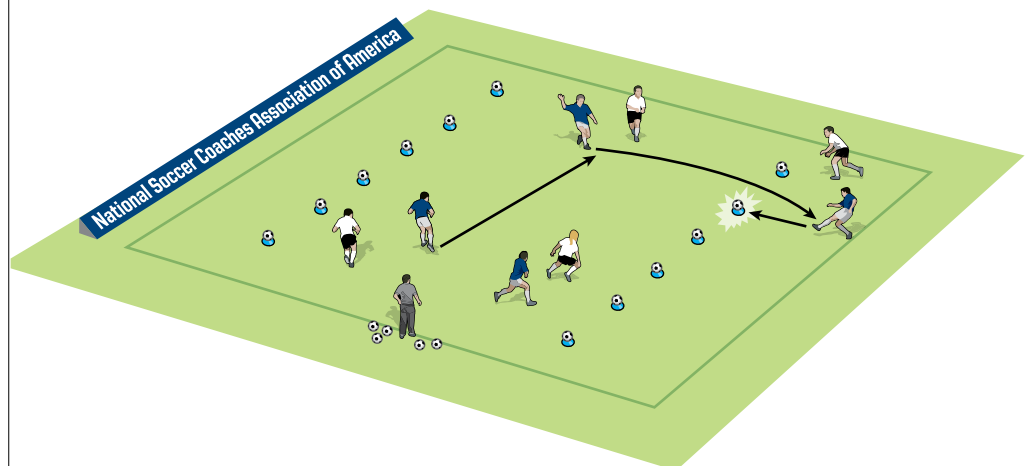
2 teams will play 3 minute games. The coach will play balls in to restart the activity. Teams must try to pass a ball and knock one of the balls off the cones. If they are successful, then they move the ball and the cone to their side of the field and set it up there. The winner at the end of 3 minutes is the team with the most balls set up on their side.

## COACHING NOTES

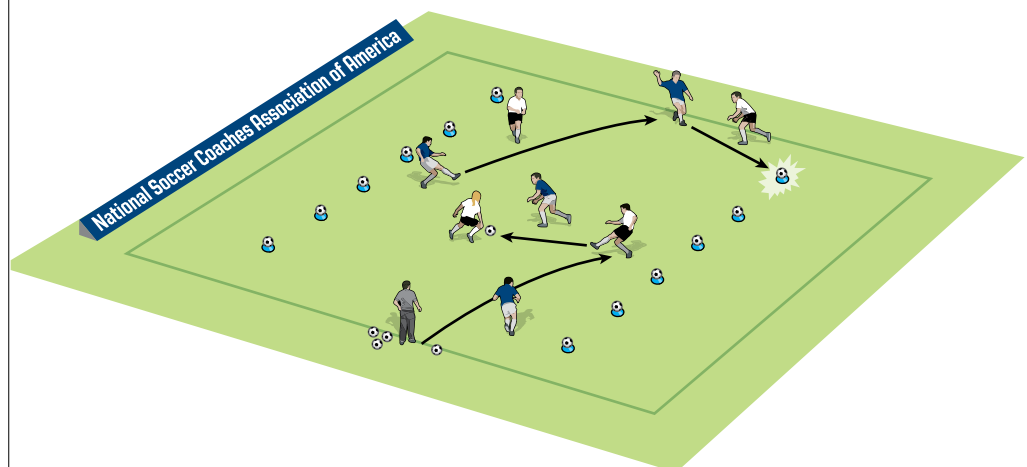
- + Main coaching objectives – players must work together and use their passing accuracy
- + Coaching tips – make sure to play balls into players that may not be as active in order to include them
- + Adaptations – use multiple balls at a time if any players are inactive



- + Player's first touch should take them away from pressure.
- + Player's body position should allow them to see the field.



- + Players should look to communicate and support their teammates.
- + Players are allowed to move behind the balls to support the pass.



- + Introducing multiple balls allows more players to be involved.
- + Players should look to use long and short passes.

# ICE MONSTER

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 - 6-8 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.

## WHY USE IT

This is a great game to introduce the idea of patience when defending and not diving in to win a ball.

## SET UP

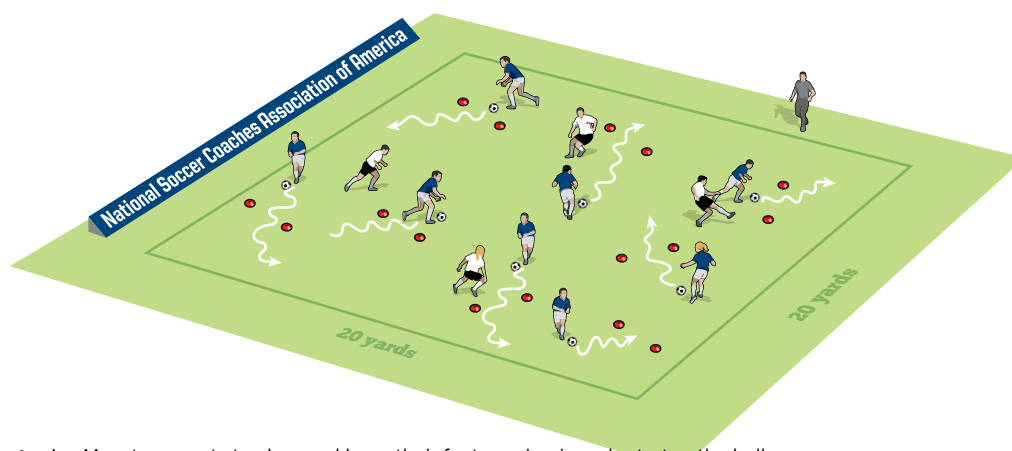
Create a 20x20 grid. 8 players each have a ball and are dribbling. 4 players (Ice Monsters), are each holding a colored vest. Eight gates of varying sizes are positioned in the grid.

## HOW TO PLAY

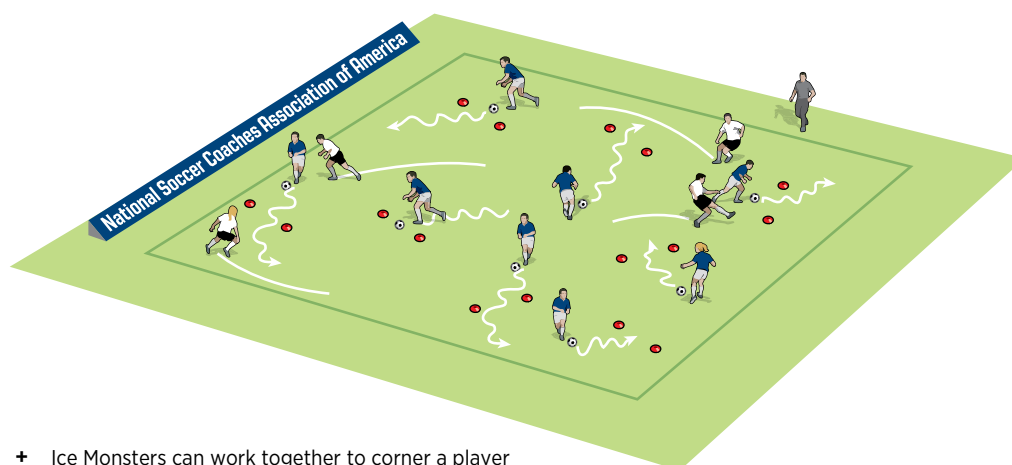
Players are on a frozen island. Players with a ball dribble around for 1-2 minutes to see how many gates (heaters) they can get through. The 4 Ice Monsters are trying to freeze players by tapping the ball of a dribbler with their foot. If a dribbler's ball is tapped by an Ice Monster they must freeze in place. Players are unfrozen when another dribbler comes up to them and does 4 toe touches on the ball to heat them up. Switch Ice Monsters every 1-2 minutes.

## COACHING NOTES

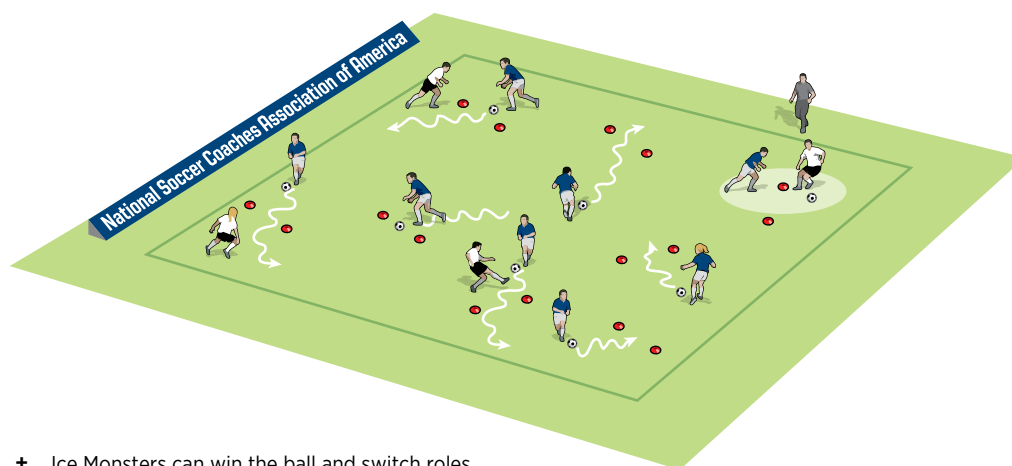
- + Main coaching objectives – defenders must maintain control of their body and not just kick the ball away
- + Coaching tips – adjust the gate size to challenge the players
- + Adaptations – Ice Monsters hold the vest and try to win the ball back. If they are successful they drop the vest and the player who lost the ball becomes the Ice Monster.



- + Ice Monsters must stay low and keep their feet moving in order to tap the ball away



- + Ice Monsters can work together to corner a player



- + Ice Monsters can win the ball and switch roles

# MINUTE TO WIN IT

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4- 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.

## WHY USE IT

This activity focuses on players speed and angle of approach when defending.

## SET UP

Create a 20x20 grid. Players are in lines of 3-4 players in the corners of the area. There is a 2 yard gate goal in each corner of the field.

## HOW TO PLAY

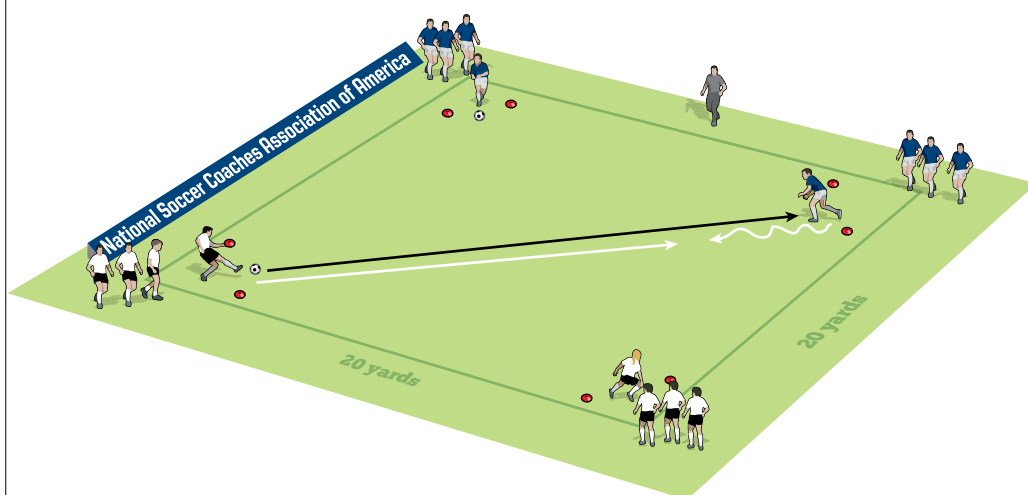
The first person in line plays a ball across the area on the diagonal to line 3 and then runs to defend. If the player from line 3 can dribble through the 'gate' defended by the player from line 1, he/she earns a point. If the defender from line 1 can win possession, he/she has 2 options:

1. Attempt to play back to his/her team for a point
2. Play it through the gate of line 3 for 2 points.

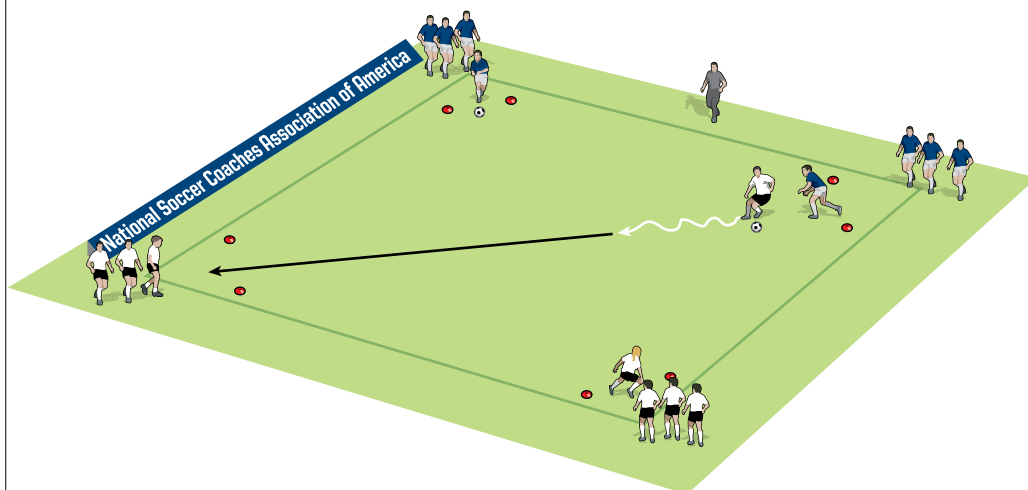
Once the game has finished, the first player from line 2 plays the ball across to line 4 for a similar game. Play for 2 minutes and then switch roles.

## COACHING NOTES

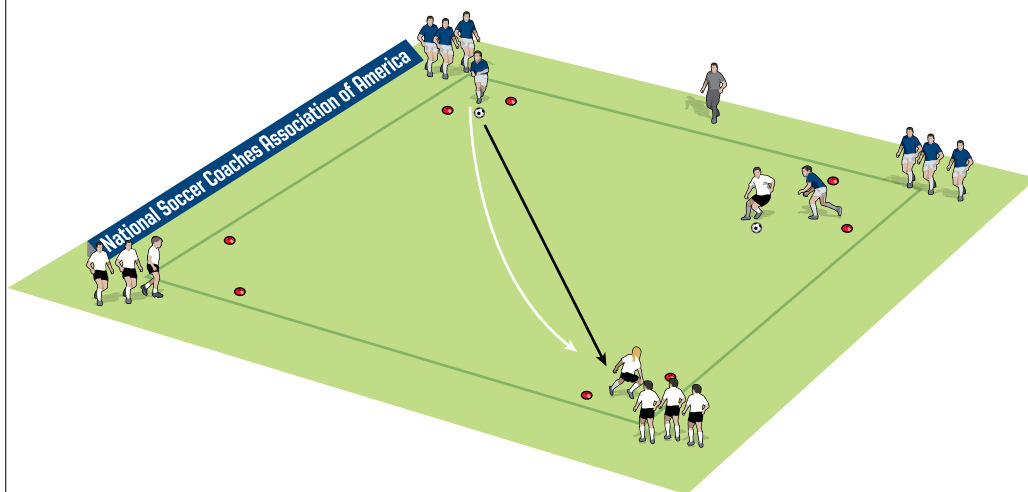
- + Main coaching objectives – defenders angle of approach to force the attacker away from goal; defenders speed of approach
- + Coaching tips – create teaching moments and talk to players as they are waiting in line to allow for more repetitions
- + Adaptations – have more than one group play at the same time; or have a trigger word to stop play if players are static and not attacking the goal.



- + The defender sprints to the attacker to apply pressure.
- + Slow down and take smaller steps as the defender gets close to the attacker.



- + The defender needs to read when the ball comes off the attacker's foot, so that they can win it.
- + If the defender wins the ball, he/she should look to see if they can penetrate to goal or play back to a teammate.



- + As two players are working, a second group can start to play to keep the game active.

# ICE CREAM SCOOP CHALLENGE

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.

## WHY USE IT

This 1v1 game allows players to work on their defensive approach and stance. In addition this allows attacking players to practice moves to beat a defender.

## SET UP

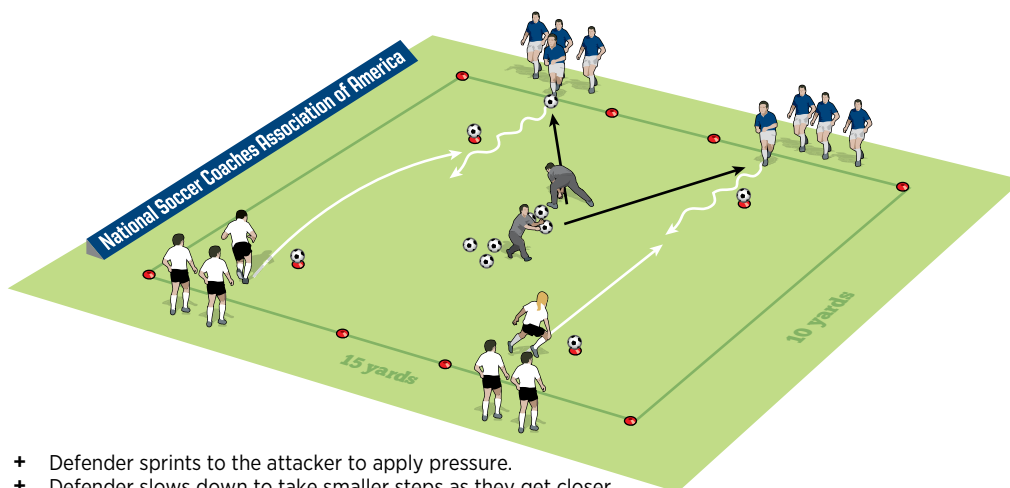
Create 2 - 10x15 yard areas. Place a cone with a ball on top 2 yards off the end line of each grid. The coach will stand in the coaching channel between the two grids. Divide players into 4 groups with 2 groups starting on opposite end lines.

## HOW TO PLAY

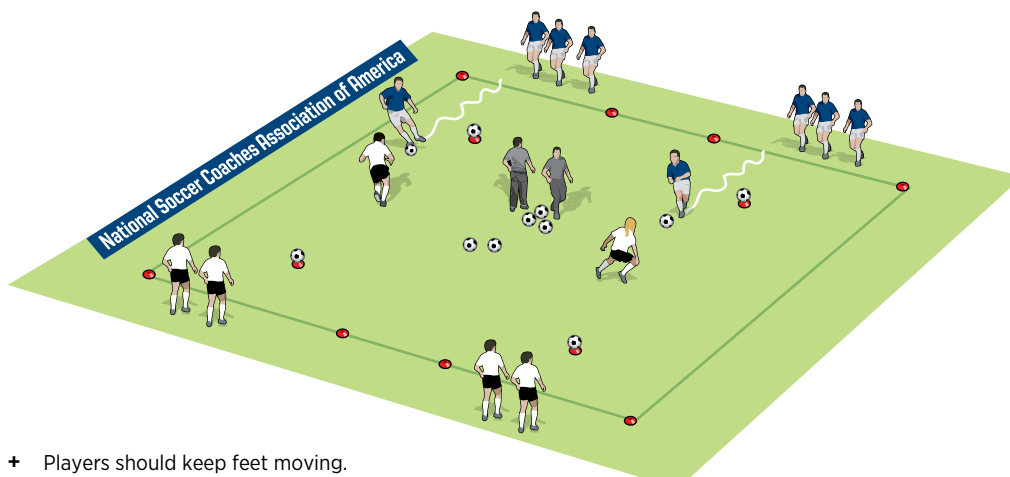
One side of the area starts attacking. The coach plays a ball into the attacking player. The attacking player attempts to beat the defender and pass the ball to knock the ice cream off the cone. If the defending player wins the ball they can try to knock the ice cream off the other cone.

## COACHING NOTES

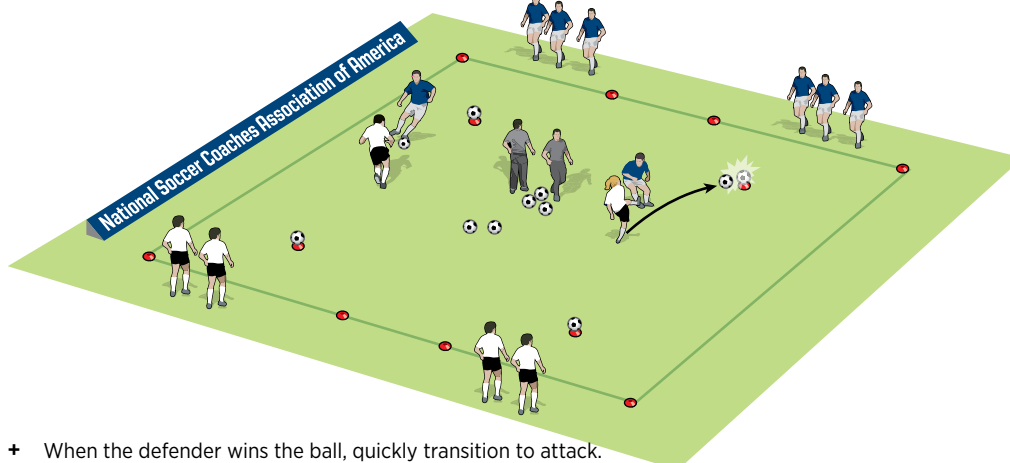
- + Main coaching objectives - can players recognize when to slow down and keep their body under control in order to keep the attacker in front of them.
- + Coaching tips - try to have lines be uneven so as to avoid players going against the same teammate.
- + Adaptations - this activity can build to 2v1 or 2v2.



- + Defender sprints to the attacker to apply pressure.
- + Defender slows down to take smaller steps as they get closer.



- + Players should keep feet moving.
- + Players should angle their body and attempt to keep the attacking player in front.



- + When the defender wins the ball, quickly transition to attack.

# 2V2 TRANSITION TO GOAL KEEPER

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.
- + Passing and receiving.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.
- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.

## WHY USE IT

This is a fun transition game and allows players to work on their individual defending and communication with a partner.

## SET UP

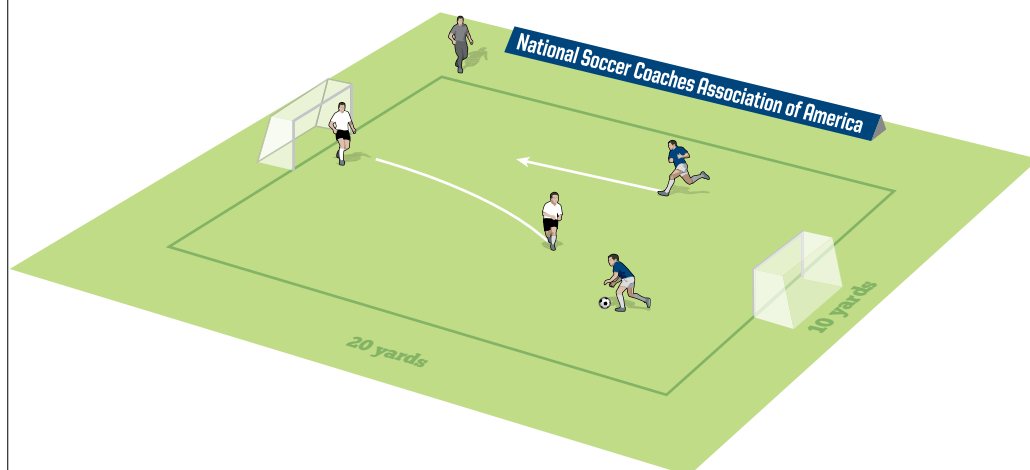
Create several 10x20 grids with a small goal on each end line. This will allow for multiple groups to play at the same time. Players will be split into teams of 2.

## HOW TO PLAY

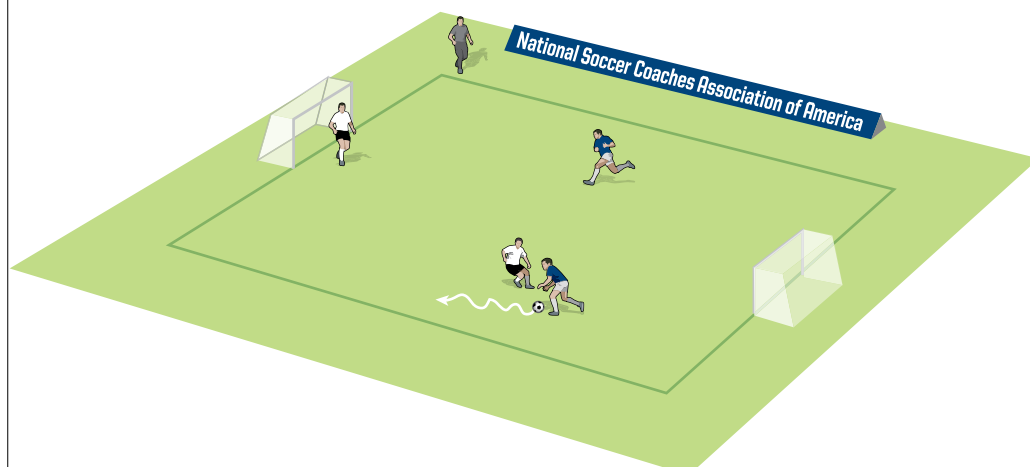
The team without the ball will play with 1 player on the field as a defender and the other player is restricted to the area in front of the goal to act as a keeper. If the defender wins the ball, she must play the ball back to the keeper, to start the attack. The team that lost possession will then have one player assume the role of the goalkeeper and the other a defender.

## COACHING NOTES

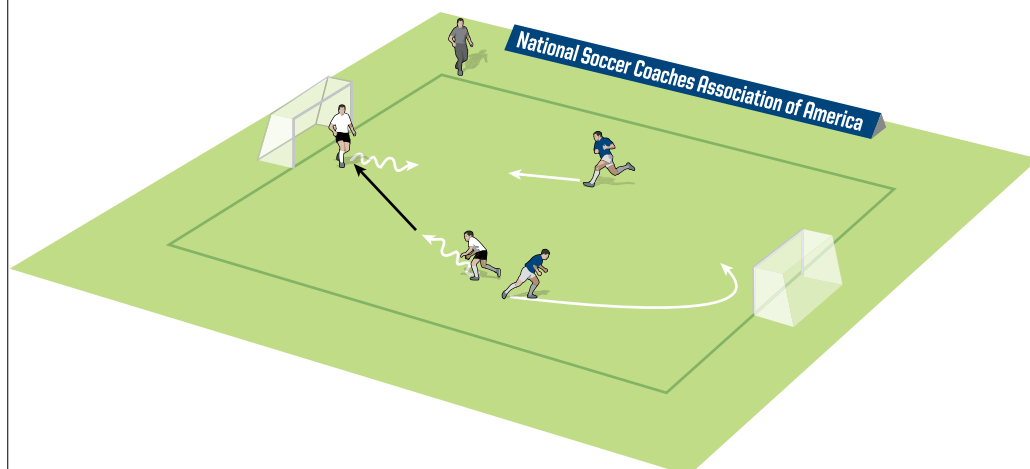
- + Main coaching objectives – players should think about their defensive body position and approach to the ball
- + Coaching tips – switch teams every few games to allow players to work with other teammates
- + Adaptations – players do not need to play the ball back to the keeper before starting the attack to allow for a quicker transition from defense to attack



- + Pressure - Defender makes an angled run attempting to cut off the pass to the other attacker



- + Defender should stay low and keep their feet moving to force the attacker to the side line



- + If the defender sees an opportunity to win the ball they should do so and play to their keeper to transition to attack.

# 3V3 CHANGE GAME

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.
- + Passing and receiving.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.
- + Passing over a short distance.
- + Receiving the ball with the feet.

## WHY USE IT

This game has players working in small groups with an emphasis on communication and putting pressure on the ball.

## SET UP

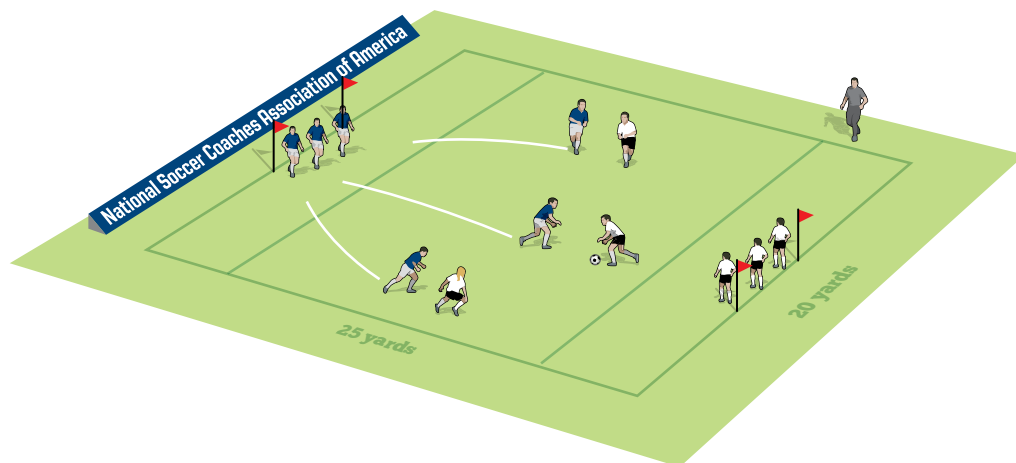
20x25 yard grid divided into 3 zones. Middle zone is 15 yards long and end zones are 5 yards deep. A large goal created from flags on each end line. 4 teams of 3 players wearing a different colored vest.

## HOW TO PLAY

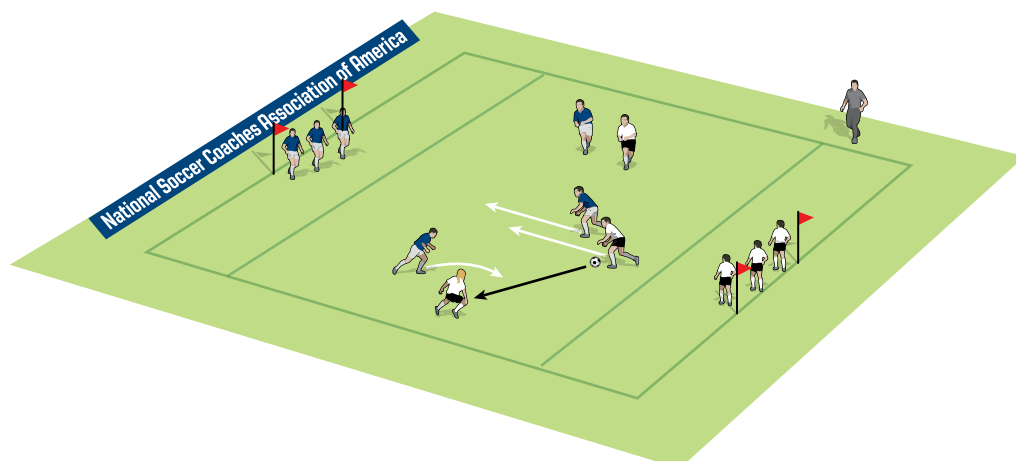
2 teams play 3v3 in the middle area. The remaining teams act as the goalkeepers. The 3 players on those teams must hold hands as they move around the goal. When the coach says the word "Alakazam" the two teams in the middle switch with the two teams acting as goalkeepers.

## COACHING NOTES

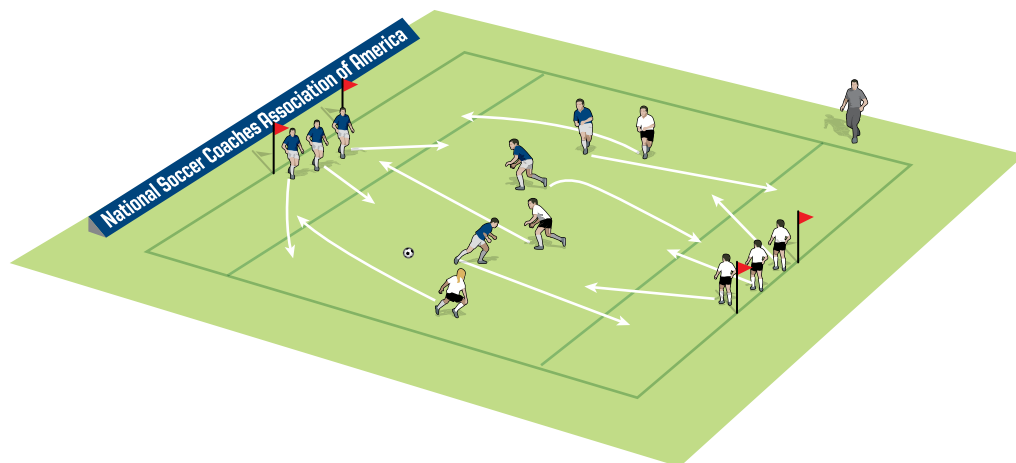
- + Main coaching objectives – team communication and pressure on the ball.
- + Coaching tips – make the goals big enough so that keepers must move to defend them and work together
- + Adaptations – Instead of calling "Alakazam" the coach can call out the two colors that will play each other, so that teams can play a new opponent.



- + Teams must communicate and to decide who puts pressure on the ball.



- + When the attack passes the ball defenders must adjust to keep players in front of them.



- + Coach calls "Alakazam" teams leave ball and switch roles.

# HOW TO FEED YOUR DRAGON

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.

## WHY USE IT

A simple game incorporating agility with goal scoring with the inside of the foot.

## SET UP

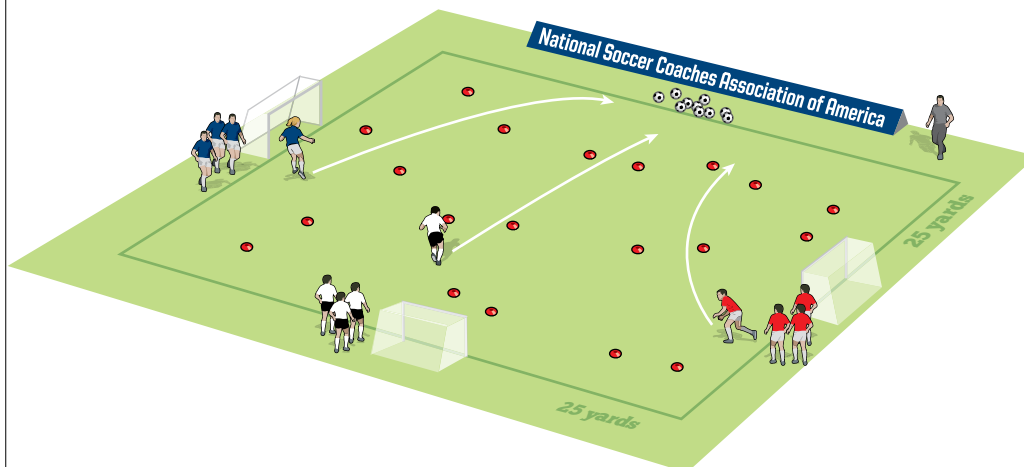
25x25yd area. 3 small goals are set up in the middle of 3 sidelines. Balls are placed in the middle of the 4th sideline - inside a semi circle created with cones. Make sure there is at least 1 ball per player. A minimum of 10 gates (varying distances apart) are spread throughout the grid.

## HOW TO PLAY

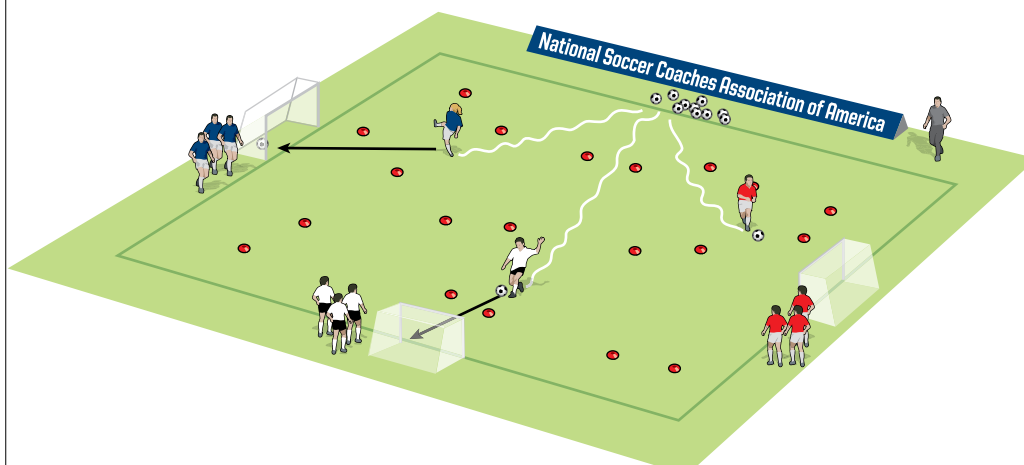
3 teams each stand next to a goal. The goal represents the team's 'Pet Dragon' and the balls are food for the dragon. When the coach says "GO" the 1st person in each line moves through 3 sets of gates to 'power up'. The players will then get a ball from the pile. The player is allowed to take 1 piece of food/ball and dribble it back near their goal before passing it into the dragon's mouth/goal. Once the first person has gone the next person in line will repeat the activity. Time teams and/or see which team feed the dragon the most.

## COACHING NOTES

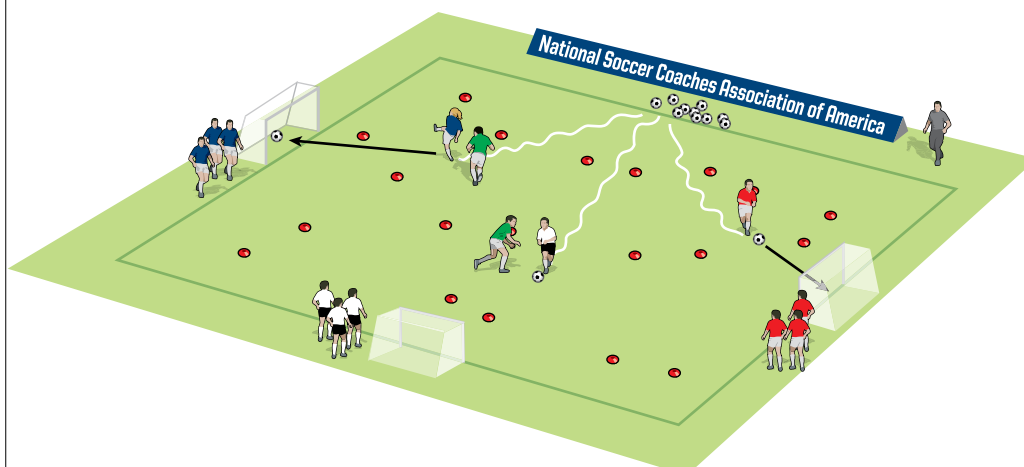
- + Main coaching objectives – warm players up with various movements; accuracy of finishing with inside of foot
- + Coaching tips – to get players finishing from farther away set up a shooting zone in front of the goal
- + Adaptations – players dribble back through 3 gates before shooting.



- + Coach assigns a different movement for each round of the game (jogging, skipping, carioca etc)
- + Players must move through three gates before getting a ball



- + Players must get the ball and then dribble back to their goal to shoot
- + Plant foot needs to point towards the goal when finishing



- + The coach can assign two players as bandits who act as passive defenders.
- + When finishing players must keep their head down and strike through the middle of the ball

# POPCORN

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.
- + Passing and receiving.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.
- + Passing and receiving.

## WHY USE IT

Players learn how to shoot off the dribble using their instep.

## SET UP

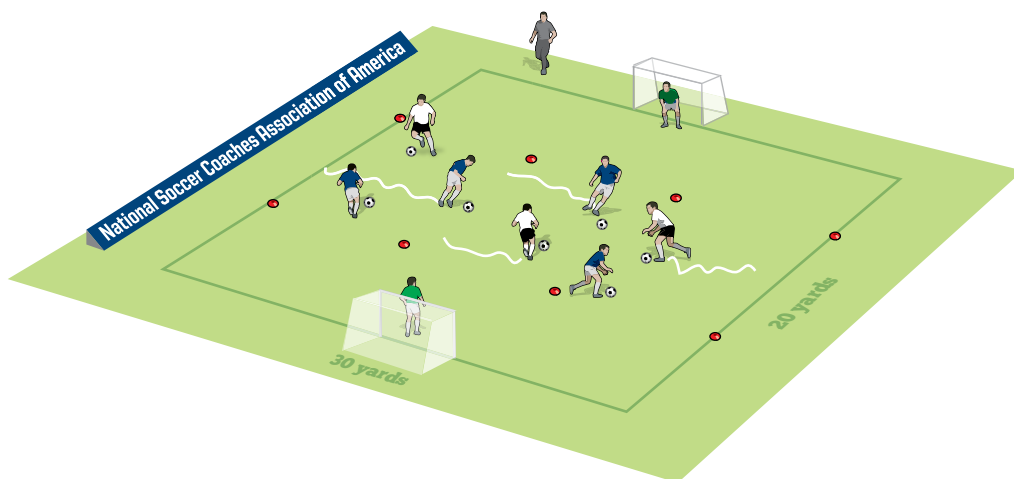
30x20yd area. 2 goals. In the middle there is zone the width of the space and 8-10 yards long. 2 teams wearing a colored vest. Every player starts with a ball in the middle zone. Players assigned a number 1-6. Goalkeepers in each net.

## HOW TO PLAY

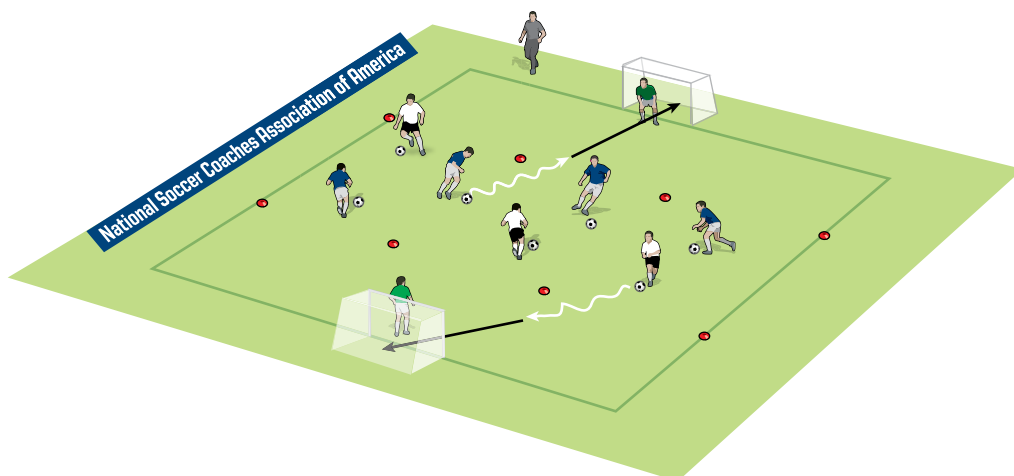
Story: Players are each an individual piece of corn and the middle zone is the popcorn pot. Teams are assigned to a goal that they will try to score in. Players dribble in the middle zone avoiding each other and heating up in the pot. The coach calls a number and players from each team must "pop" out of the pot (by dribbling) and then shoot on their goal. Coaches can see who can score the most goals in two minutes.

## COACHING NOTES

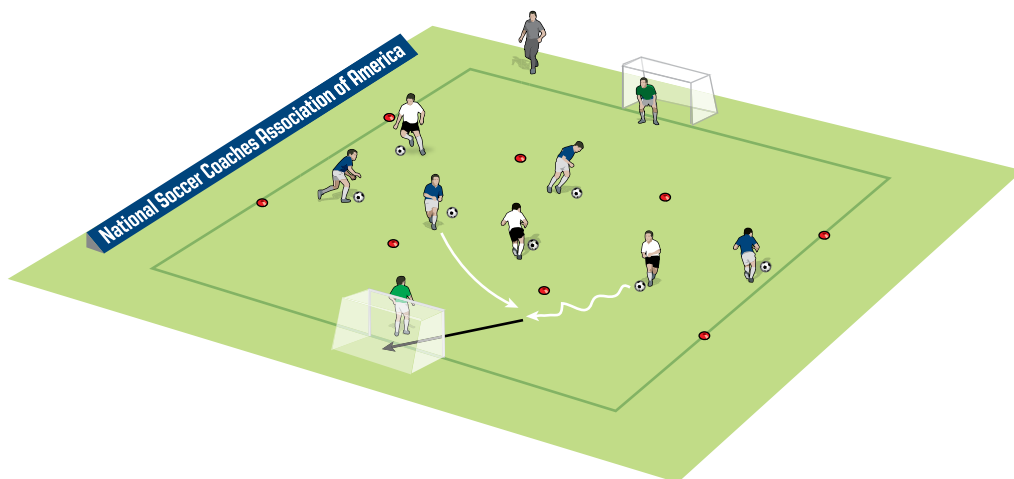
- + Main coaching objectives – player's shooting technique: toe down, ankle locked, knee over the ball and striking with their laces
- + Coaching tips – use parent volunteers to help collect soccer balls
- + Adaptations – coach calls out a color and a number, so that the player whose color is called is attacking their goal and the player with the same number on the other team must try to defend them.



- + Players dribble around the middle zone avoiding other players and working on different moves until their number is called.



- + When a player hears their number, they should make a clean move to turn to goal
- + Make sure that players have the ball under their knee or a little in front when shooting



- + Make sure players are striking the ball with their laces and keeping their head down

# 1V1 BOX COMPETITION

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.
- + Shooting technique.

## WHY USE IT

This activity allows for players to gain confidence executing a move to beat a defender to set up a shot.

## SET UP

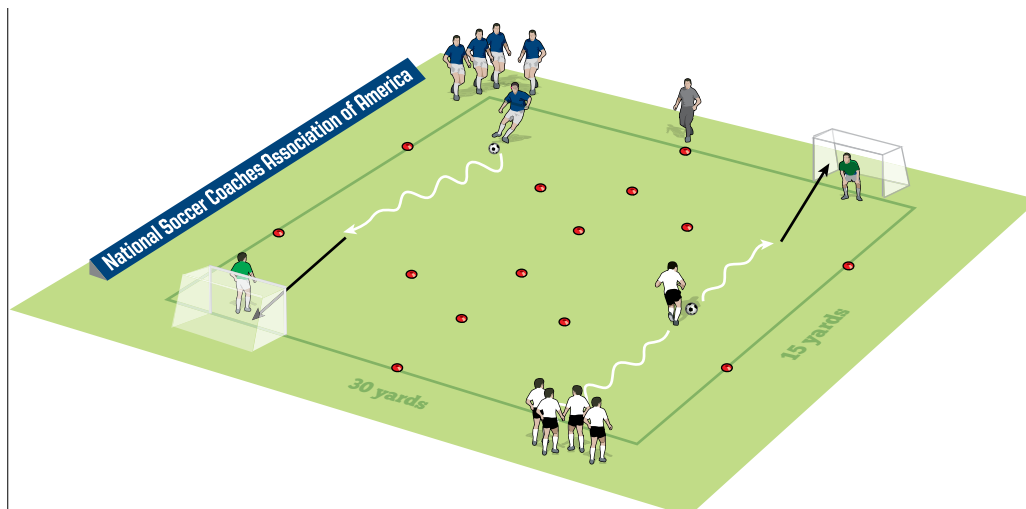
2 fields are set up side by side. A large goal is placed in each field. Each field is 30x15 with a 8x8 yard box about 15 yards from the goal. Players are split into teams and each team is positioned behind a cone 5 yards behind the grid.

## HOW TO PLAY

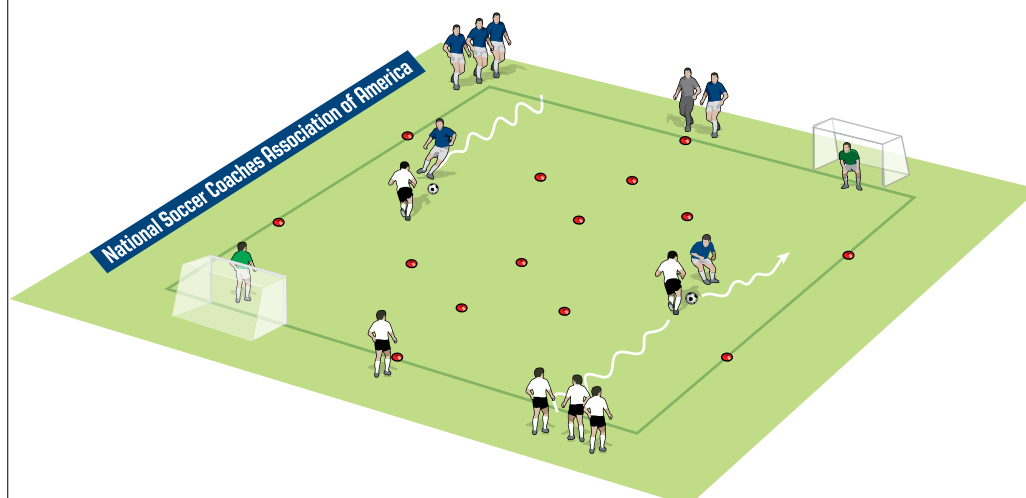
The first person in each line must dribble up to the grid and perform a move to beat a defender. The player will then look to dribble and score at the edge of the grid. The coach will tell the teams that they have two minutes to see how many goals they can score. In the second phase a defender is added in each grid.

## COACHING NOTES

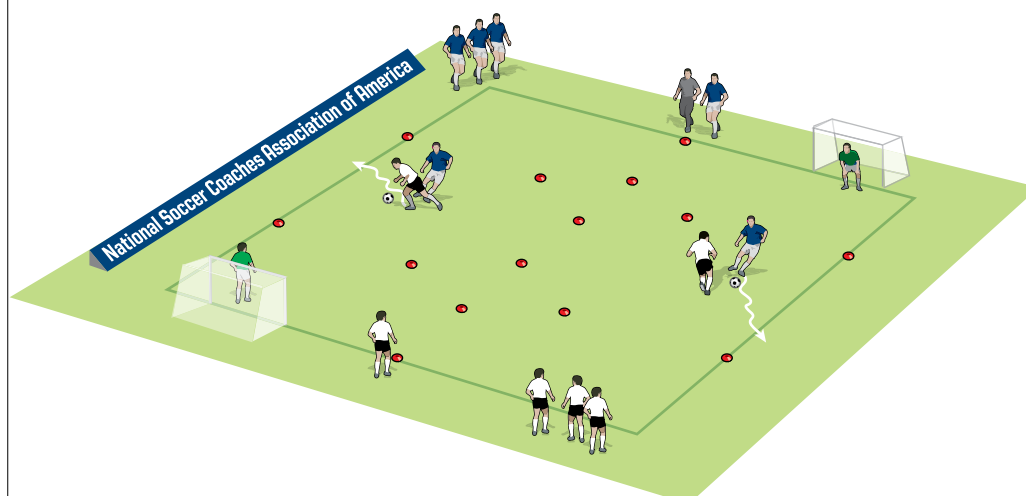
- + Main coaching objectives - increase comfort attacking 1v1 and shooting on goal
- + Coaching tips - remind players of the timing of their move versus the defender and to have a prep touch that gets their body facing the goal when shooting.
- + Adaptations - the distance of the grid from the goal can be adjusted to make it harder or easier to score.



- + Players must keep the ball close to them when performing the move before shooting.



- + The player must now try to beat the defender in the box before shooting.
- + Players need to focus on the timing of the move to beat the defender.



- + If the defender wins the ball they can dribble out of the grid for a point

# STAR WARS 3V1

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Dribbling and turns.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Defending as an individual.
- + Passing and receiving.

### Competencies:

- + Dribbling basics.
- + Turning basics.
- + Feints and dribble.
- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.
- + Passing and receiving.

## WHY USE IT

Players must work together to create scoring chances in the box.

## SET UP

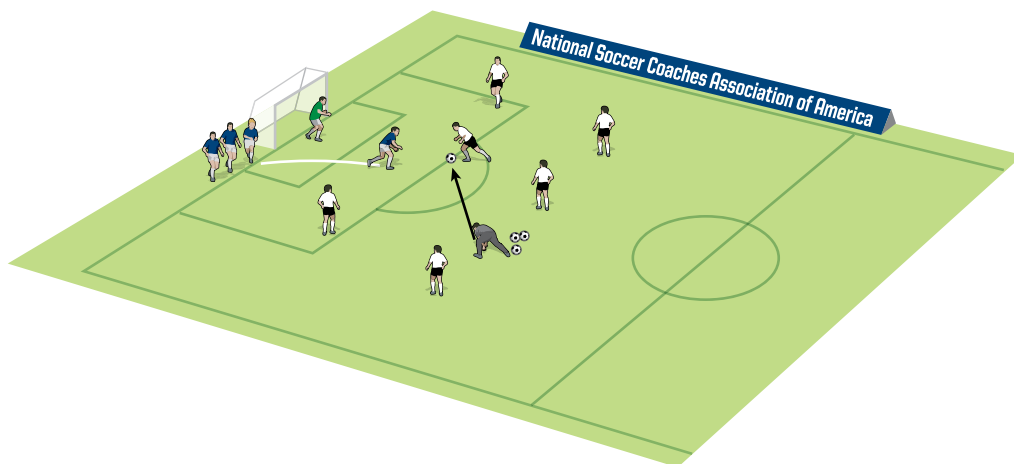
20x35 yard area. Players are split into 2 teams. The attacking team is 5 yards from the top of the box in teams of 3. The defending team forms a line on the end line. Add a goalkeeper. Coach is positioned near the attackers with the soccer balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

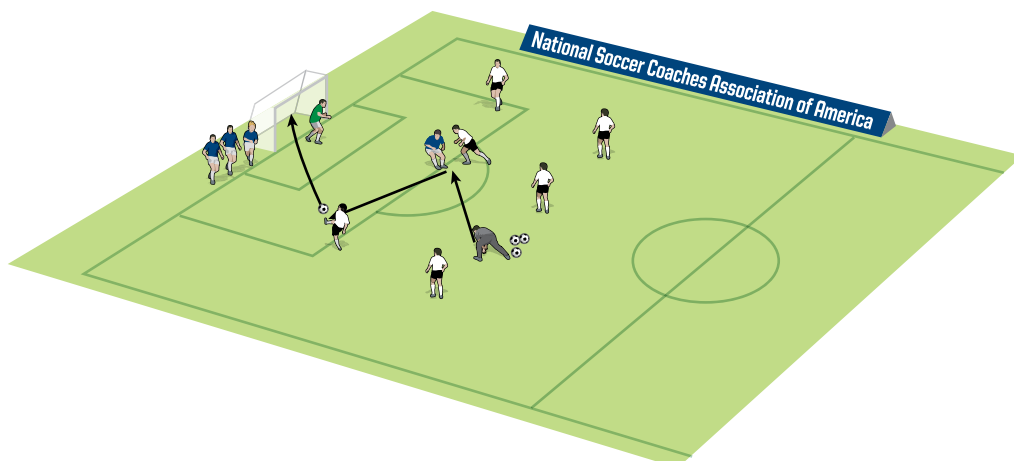
The coach plays a ball into one of the players at the top of the box. As the coach plays the ball the first person in the defending line will run out to defend 3v1. The attacking team works together to try and score in the big goal.

## COACHING NOTES

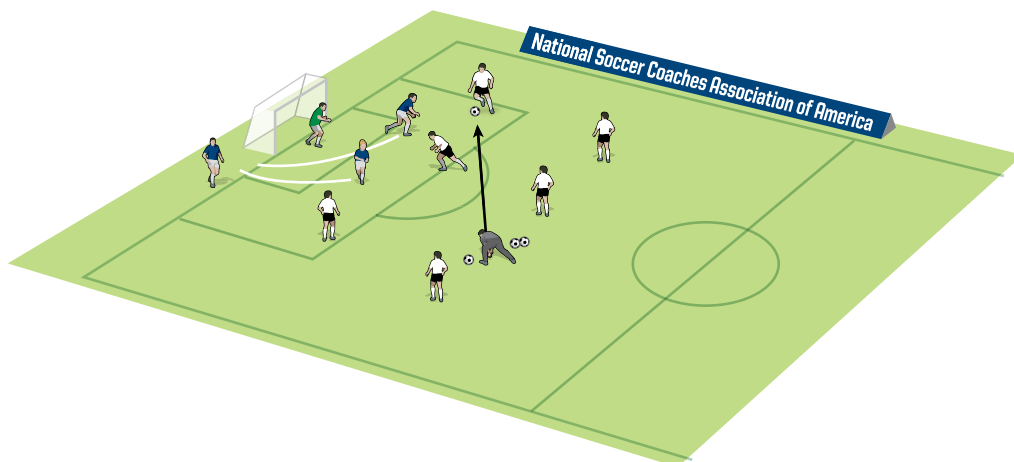
- + Main coaching objectives – players body position when receiving; 1st touch is out from under them to set up a quick shot
- + Coaching tips – vary which line the ball is served into to involve more players
- + Adaptations – increase the difficult by allowing another defender to enter once the attacker makes the first pass.



- + First player to receive the ball should look to see if they can shoot immediately.
- + If the defender closes the shot, can the player pass to an open teammate?



- + Players must position their body to receive the ball so that they are facing the goal.
- + A player's first touch should be out from underneath them to allow for them to step and shoot.



- + Remind players to have their head over the ball when shooting and avoid leaning back
- + A second defender can join in after the first pass is made.

# TRIANGLE GOAL GAME

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Passing and receiving.

### Competencies:

- + Beating an opponent.
- + Escaping an opponent.
- + Passing and receiving.

## WHY USE IT

This game creates continuous shooting opportunities and allows teams to work together to create shooting angles.

## SET UP

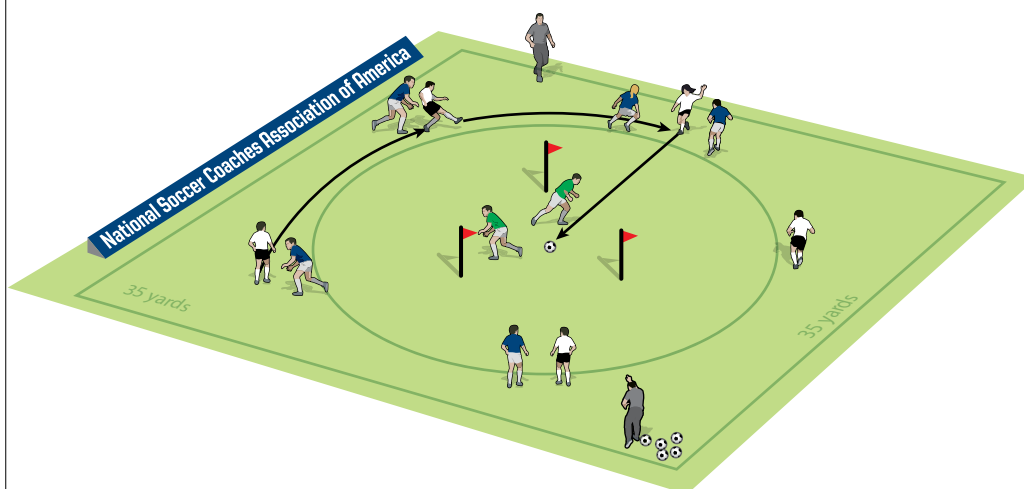
35x35 yard grid marked by cones in the corner. A triangle goal is in the middle of the grid with flags 8 feet apart. Players are split into two teams of 5 and there are two goalkeepers defending the three goals created by the triangle. (Parents may also be used as goalkeepers if needed.) The coach is positioned in one corner with all the soccer balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

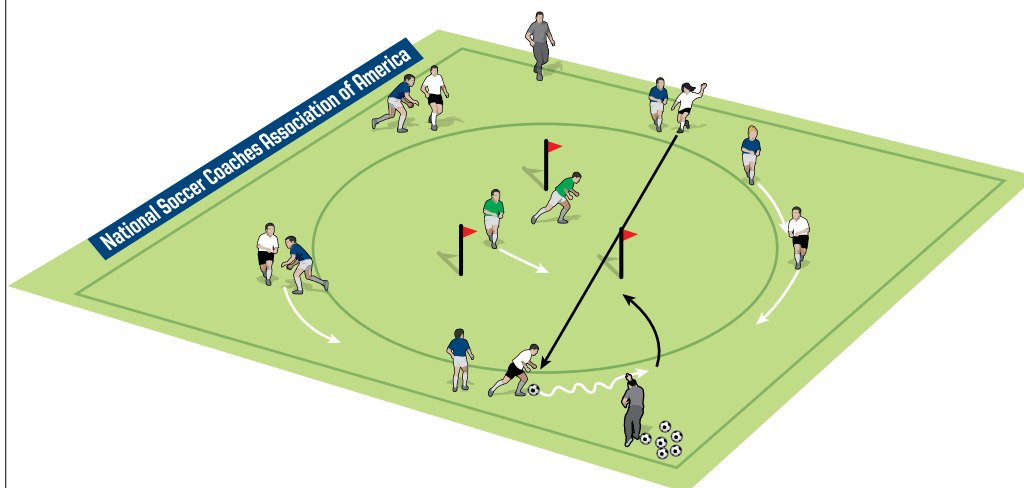
The coach plays a ball into one of the teams. The teams can shoot through any side of the triangle goal. Goal is worth 1 point. The ball remains in play once it goes through the triangle and it is available for whichever team wins it. If a keeper saves the ball, they distribute it to the coach. The coach can keep track of goals scored and saves made to create a competition between the two teams and the keepers.

## COACHING NOTES

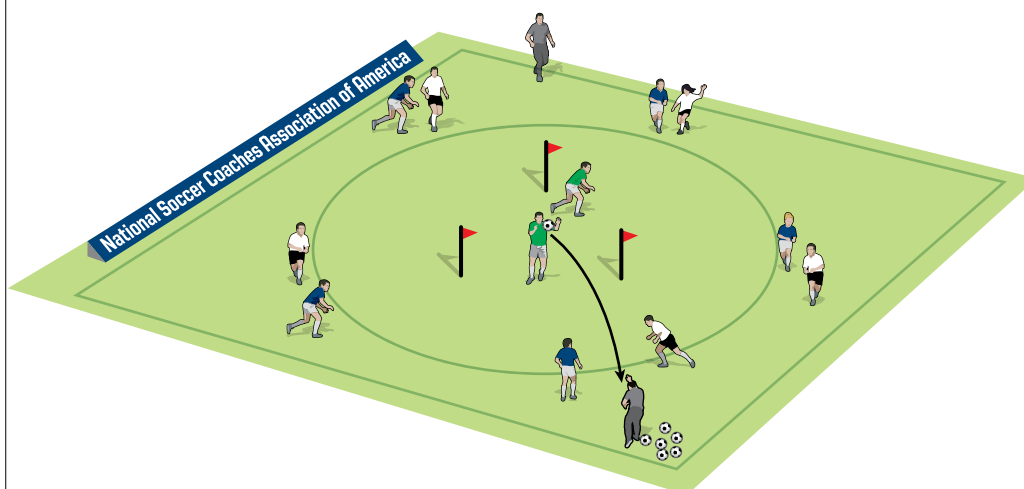
- + Main coaching objectives - 1st touch to set up a shot; movement from players to create scoring chances.
- + Coaching tips - create a 5 yard area out from the goal, so that players are not shooting too close to the keepers.
- + Adaptations - to create more scoring chances add 1-2 neutral players.



- + Players must pass the ball to find an open shooting angle.
- + The toe should be down, ankle locked and knee over the ball when striking it with the laces.



- + The player receiving the ball from the shot needs to cushion the ball.
- + Players without the ball should look to move to support the player on the ball



- + If a keeper makes a save they should throw the ball to the coach

## STAGE 3: PLAYERS 9-11 YEARS OLD

### 39 STAGE 3 - ADOLESCENCE/ EARLY PUBERTY (9-11 YEARS OLD)

Development focus and characteristics related to coaching.

### 41 4 CORNER GAME

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 42 COCONUTS

Appropriate for stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

### 43 COMBINATION WARM-UP

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 44 N.E.W.S

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 45 MICRO SOCCER

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 46 FAST BREAK GAME

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 47 TRIANGLE TECHNICAL WARM UP

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 48 SUBS UP

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 49 NUMBERS UP TO GOAL

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 50 MIRROR GOAL

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 51 2 VS 2 TO SMALL GOALS

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 52 SHOOTING CIRCLE

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 53 DEFENDING THE CROSS

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 54 4 VS 2+2

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 55 RUN AND SHOOT

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 56 6 GOAL GAME

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 57 WIDE GATE GAME

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 58 HEX FIELD GAME

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 59 PATTERN PLAY

Appropriate for stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players.

### 60 KNOCK AND MOVE

Appropriate for stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players.

## STAGE 3 - ADOLESCENCE/EARLY PUBERTY (9-11 YEARS OLD)

This is the beginning of pre-adolescence. Children begin to 'spread out' as their rate of development accelerates. Girls in particular start to physically mature quicker than boys and this growth surge can lead to awkward performance, particularly on tasks requiring fine motor movements. As friendships are developing and players are becoming more reliant on their peers it is important for team selection to be handled sensitively. The reason why so many athletes plateau during the later stages of their careers is primarily because of an over-emphasis on competition instead of training during this important period in their development.

### DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- This is a crucial time for developing advanced competency in basic techniques and this platform allows for the introduction of more advanced skills.
- Some basic tactical appreciation can also be introduced.
- Commence aerobic capacity training at stage 3, prior to the adolescent growth spurt, also known as Peak Height Velocity
- Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.
- It is also very important that children are encouraged to take part in unstructured play and other sport participation is encouraged.

KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 3		
Physically	Psychological/Social	Cognitive/Mental
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Heart size is increasing in relation to body size.</li> <li>2. The players ability to perform anaerobically (high intensity and short duration movements) is limited due to slow development of anaerobic energy system.</li> <li>3. The players aerobic system (activities lasting for durations of 30 seconds plus) is not as efficient as older players.</li> <li>4. Large muscle groups are more defined than small muscle groups.</li> <li>5. Extreme heat and cold affects players rapidly.</li> <li>6. Players develop balance due to changes in the functionality of the inner ear.</li> <li>7. Developments in the nervous system facilitate the development of strength.</li> <li>8. Onset of puberty in females results in breast and hip-width development impeding performance and fall behind late developers.</li> <li>9. Early developing males are bigger and stronger than late developers and often experience success.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individual need for attention and 'showmanship' is common.</li> <li>2. Self confidence and self awareness is developing through peer group experiences.</li> <li>3. Structured environments provide comfort.</li> <li>4. Players generally like consistency in approach and application of rules, etc.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attention span continues to increase.</li> <li>2. Players still prefer to learn by doing – players can become impatient quickly.</li> <li>3. Players learn by repetition.</li> <li>4. A predominant learning style begins to surface – most children learn by doing</li> <li>5. Language is not fully developed so players find it hard to articulate fully.</li> </ol>

## STAGE 3 - ADOLESCENCE/EARLY PUBERTY (9-11 YEARS OLD)

### DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS TRANSLATED TO COACHING PLAYERS IN STAGE 3

With appropriate coaching and focus on fundamental movement and basic soccer skills at Stage 1 and Stage 2, the performance of players at Stage 3 start to resemble more traditional soccer that we witness adults and older youth play. A player in possession will be thinking of passing to a team mate and will understand the need to support in attack and defense. Players will have greater awareness for the team, allowing coaches to develop simple tactics involving small groups and units. However, coaches must not abandon individual skill development and this focus must continue to take precedent over team tactics.

#### TRANSLATED TO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THIS MEANS

1. Players can perform lower intensity activity for at least an hour.
2. Speed and endurance activities should be included to train and enhance the development of the energy systems.
3. Girls – be conscious that girls going through puberty are more susceptible to drop out so be patient and provide plenty of encouragement.
4. Boys – early developers will dominate other players by virtue of their size and speed. Ensure that evaluations are based on several factors including execution of technique and understanding the game.
5. Players at this stage in their development cannot maintain exercise intensities or durations that players in the next stage can.
6. Technical development must form a large focus of training and players should be encouraged to practice at home informally and skills such as juggling and 'freestyle' moves should be encouraged.
7. Warm-up activities are important to raise body temperature and heart rate.
8. Players must be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids prior to practices/games and they must replenish lost fluids during and after activity.
9. Correct technique must be emphasized to complement the development of neural pathways.
10. Sessions should be progressed into small sided games/activities – 2 v 1 and 3 v 2 with a neutral player playing for the team in possession is an excellent ways to introduce introductory tactics.
11. Sessions can follow a theme but activities should be changed regularly to maintain interest.
12. Encourage and reward creativity in practice and games.
13. Different learning styles must be accommodated, so different coaching methodologies should be employed.
14. Praise and reward effort and create many opportunities for success.
15. Positive coaching focusing on strengths promotes confidence and self esteem.
16. Set goals and high expectations for all players.
17. Continue to encourage players to engage in unstructured physical play
18. Players should be working on flexibility, speed, endurance and strength. Strength activities should be using their own body weight, Swiss Balls and Medicine Balls.

# 4 CORNER GAME

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations
- + Attacking transition.
- + Defending in pairs and groups.

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Attacking support.

## WHY USE IT

This activity helps develop a rhythm in possession and combination play. Players also appreciate that space gets less as play progresses forward.

## SET UP

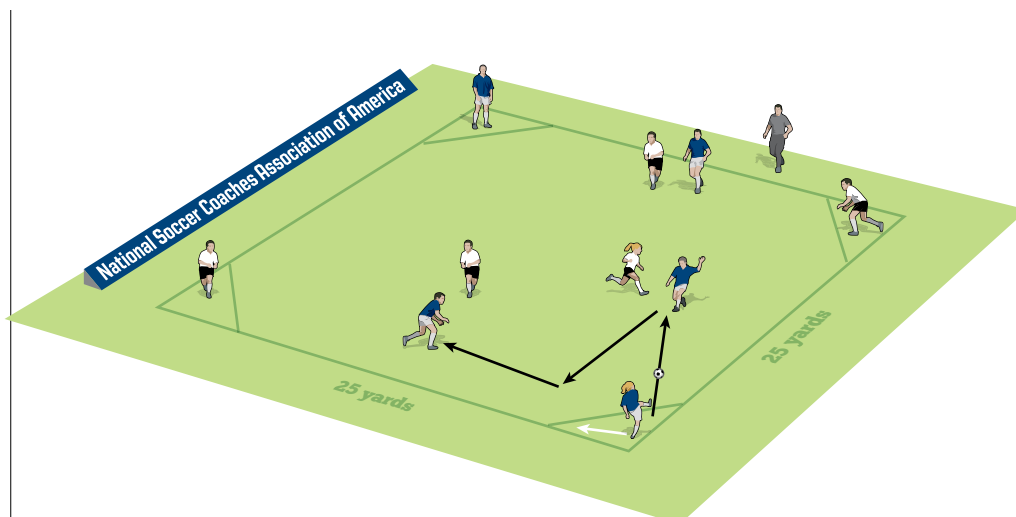
25x25 yard square. Play 3v3 in the area for possession with each team having two players in a corner zone across from each other on the diagonal to make a 5v5.

## HOW TO PLAY

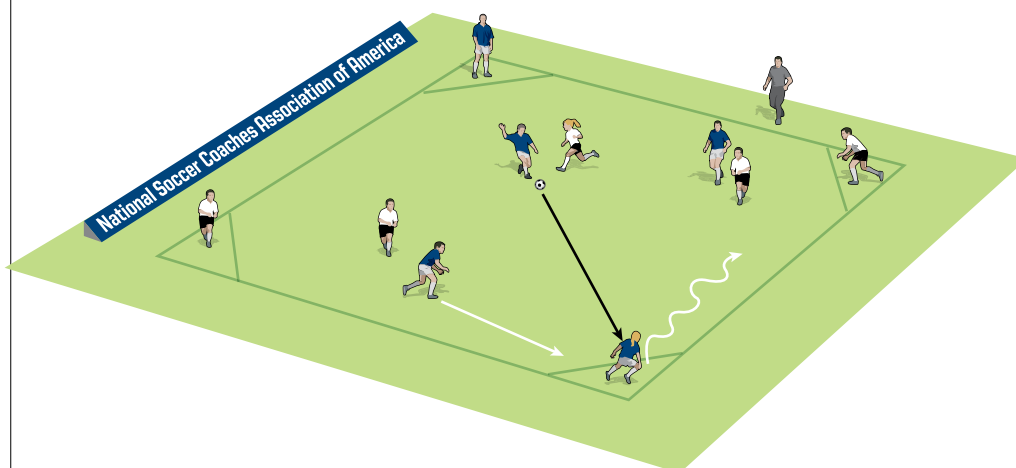
In possession teams look to use the corner players to support the play. If the ball can be moved from one corner to the other the team scores a point and the play is continued without stoppage. When a successful pass is made to the corner player, the passer switches places as the game continues to flow.

## COACHING NOTES

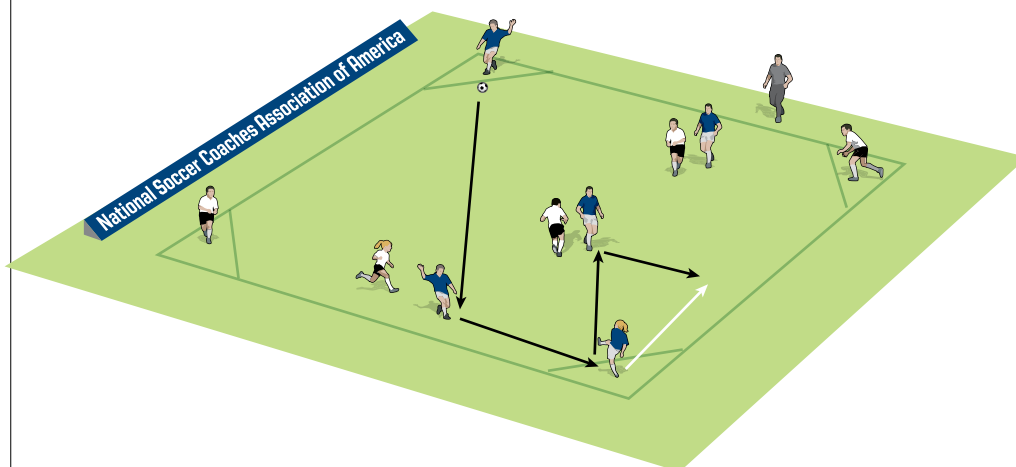
- + Coaching objectives - to improve the players recognition of support in possession.
- + Coaching tip - work the activity for short periods with the ball always in play.
- + Adaptations - increase challenge with touch restrictions and allow the target players to enter the field.



- + Blue target passes to a well-marked team mate who cannot turn.
- + The target moves in support to receive the ball back.
- + The pass is played to an open support player.



- + A pass to a target scores a point.
- + The target immediately begins play with a dribble.
- + The passer moves into the corner.



- + The blue team completes two passes to score.
- + Target plays a quick give and go.
- + Passing sequence allows the target to get into space.

# COCONUTS

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players.

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations.
- + Attacking transition.
- + Defending in pairs and groups.

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Attacking support.

## WHY USE IT

This activity has a lot of technical challenges and also introduces the idea of switching the point of attack and moving off the ball into advanced positions.

## SET UP

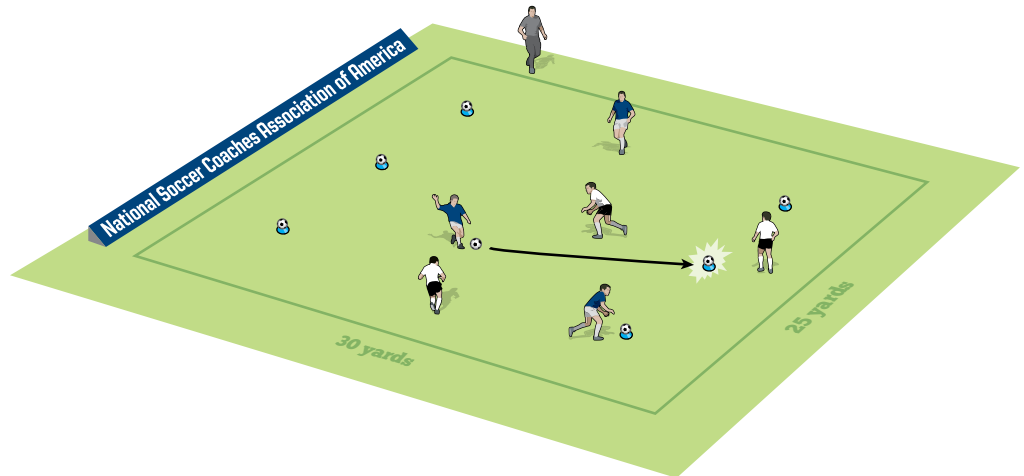
30x25 yard area. Set up inside the playing space 3 balls on top of cones at both sides of the area to create targets. The targets are 5 yards from each end line.

## HOW TO PLAY

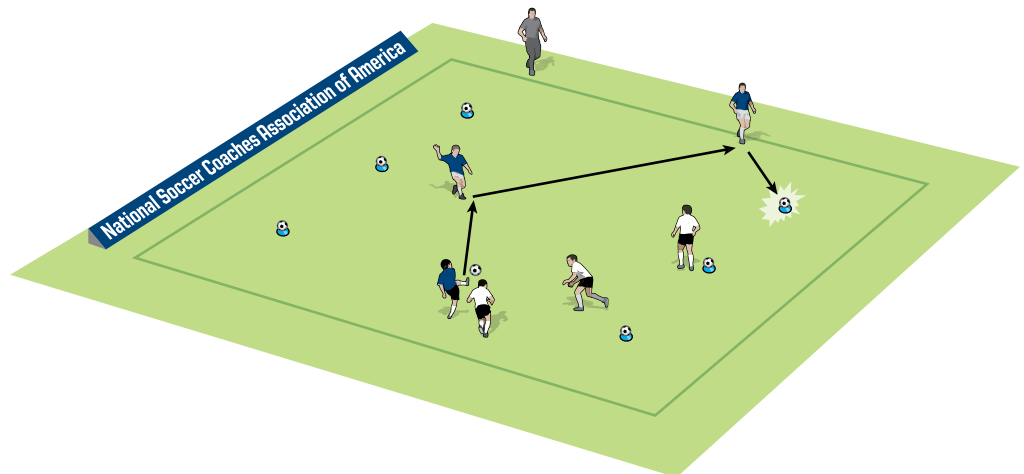
The object of the game is to pass or dribble the game ball into a target and dislodge the target ball. If a score is achieved the target is reset and play continues. Players are encouraged to use the playing space behind the targets when on attack.

## COACHING NOTES

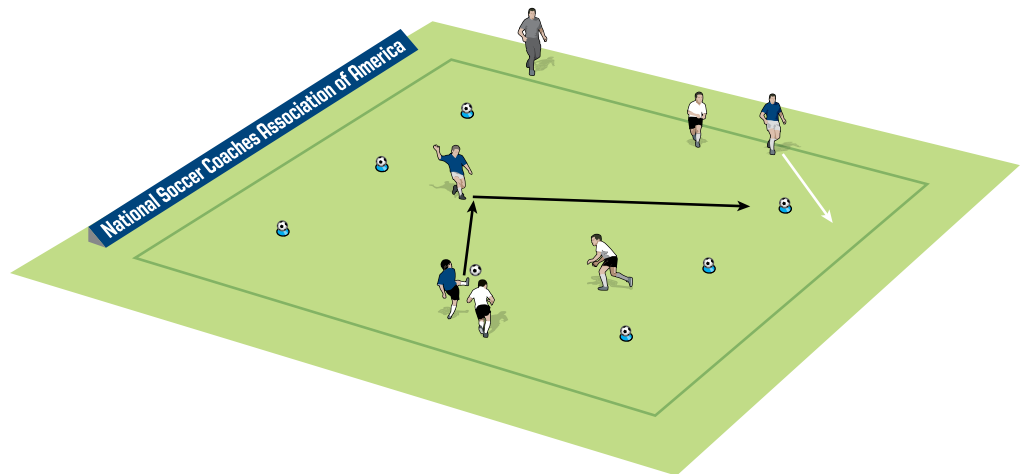
- + Coaching objectives – to encourage players to play forward or to switch play.
- + Coaching tip – remind players on the available space vertically and horizontally.
- + Adaptations – observe the offside rule. Players cannot go behind the targets until the ball is played.



- + The player in possession identifies a clear passing channel between two opponents and has a clear sight of the target.
- + An accurate and weighted inside of the foot pass is used to try to score.



- + The defending team is effective in denying a clear channel to the targets.
- + The player in possession elects to pass the ball on and initiate a quick switch of the play.
- + The player on the far side receives the ball with time to pass at, or dribble over, or into the target.



- + The defending team is effective in denying a clear channel to the targets and has the far side player marked.
- + As the play is switched the far side player moves into a position behind the target.
- + If the shot at the target misses, the far side player is in position to collect the ball and keep the attack alive.

# COMBINATION WARM-UP

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.

## WHY USE IT

As a warm up to get players passing and moving in combinations of 3 players.

## SET UP

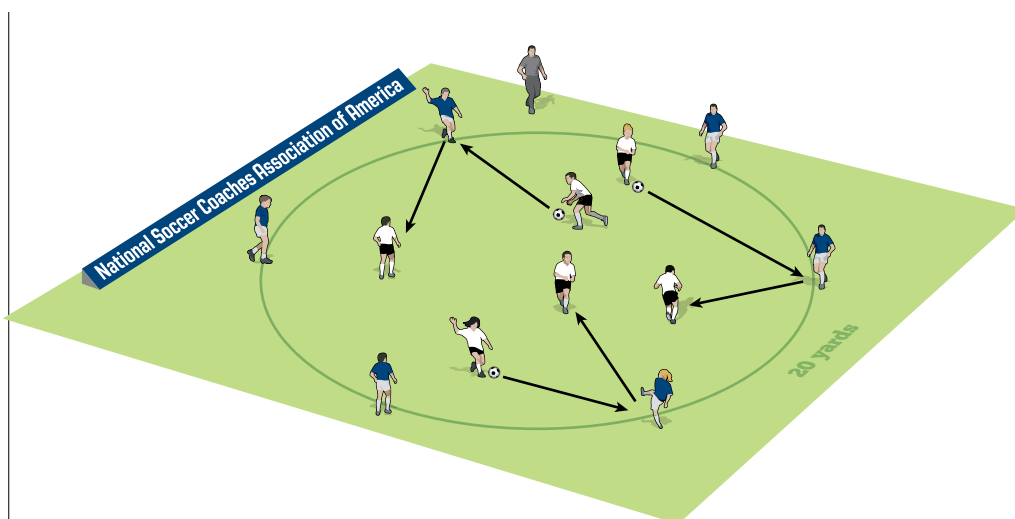
Circle approximately 20 yard diameter. 6 players form a circle and the other 6 players get into pairs with a ball between them.

## HOW TO PLAY

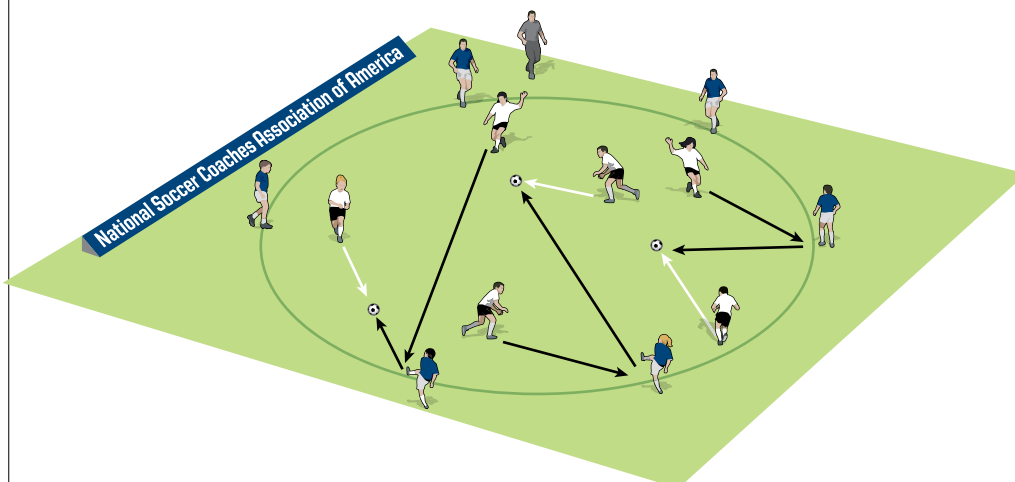
The pairs in the middle of the circle pass back and forth and every few passes look to combine with a peripheral support player. The peripheral player returns a pass to the other partner. The partners pass back and forth before one passes to an outside player who then plays the ball back to the other partner.

## COACHING NOTES

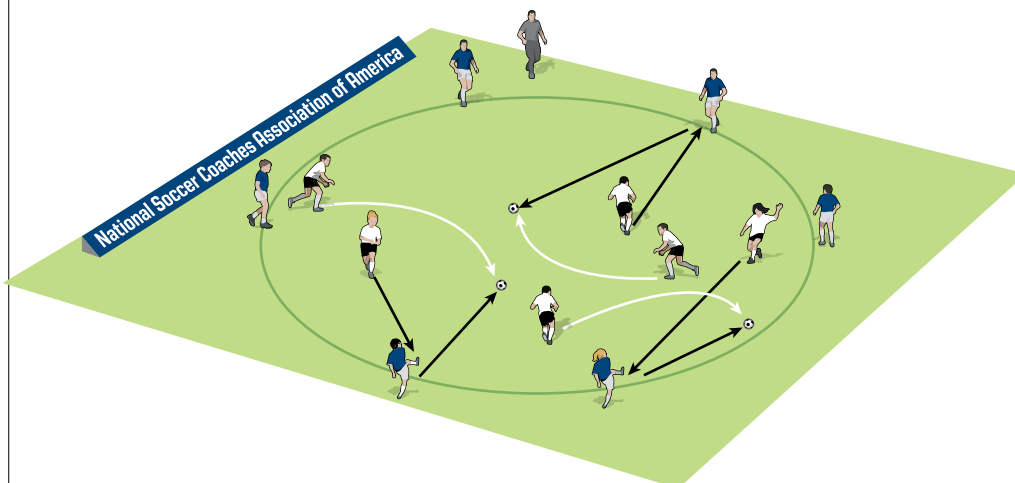
- + Coaching objectives – to activate the players physically and mentally.
- + Coaching tip – have players switch in and out on the fly rather than stop the action.
- + Adaptations – include a defender in the middle to challenge the pairs awareness.



- + Pairs in the circle combine with a peripheral player.
- + Peripheral player passes back to other partner.
- + The outside player must be alert.



- + Ball is played to peripheral player.
- + The other center player moves short or long.
- + Peripheral player must be aware of movement towards or away from him/her.



- + The inside receiver makes a shaped run to an open space.
- + Peripheral player plays a pass to space.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations
- + Attacking transition.
- + Defending in pairs and groups.

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Attacking support.

## WHY USE IT

This activity helps players develop a rhythm and purpose in possession.

## SET UP

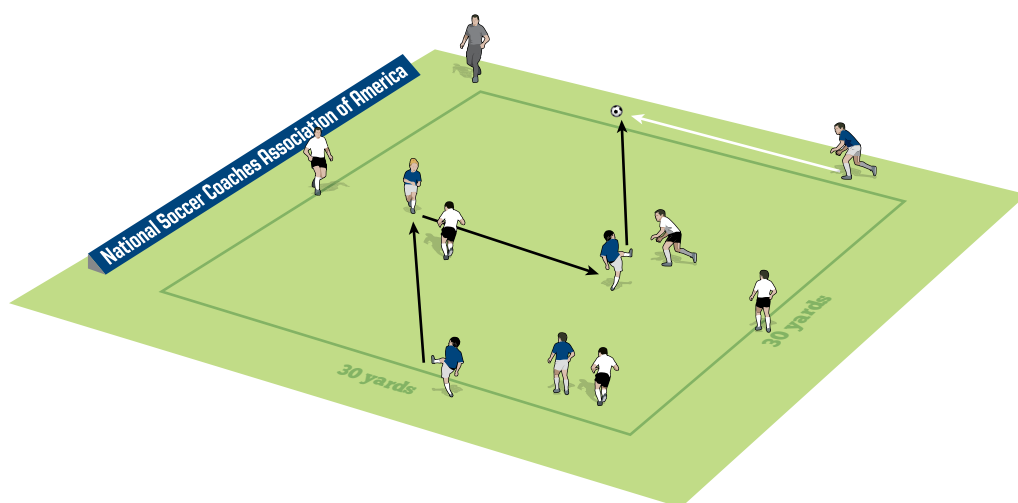
30x30 yard square. Play is 3v3 in the area with a target player on two sides for each team (5v5). The target players are on opposite sides of the square.

## HOW TO PLAY

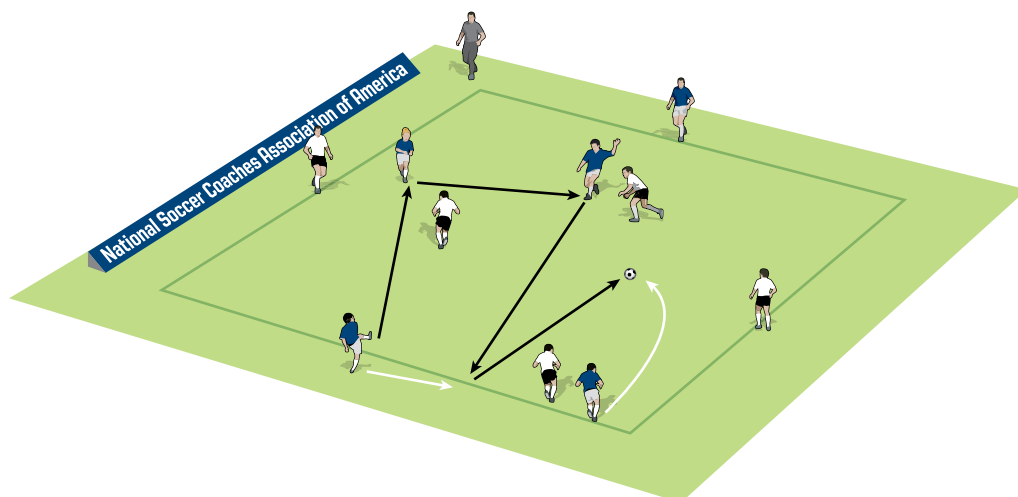
Each team seeks to maintain possession using their target players. The objective is to move across the square by combining passes and avoiding turning the ball over to the other team.

## COACHING NOTES

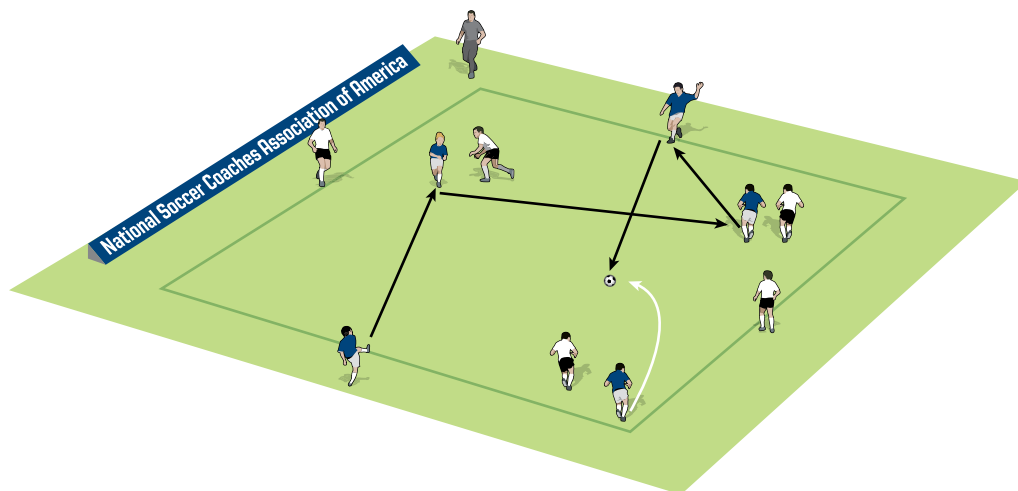
- + Coaching objectives - to encourage players to be positive in possession.
- + Coaching tip - observe the supporting movements of the target players.
- + Adaptations - once a pass is made to the target, the passer can switch positions with the target player on the fly.



- + Blue team combined effectively from one target to the other.
- + Target players move along the line to receive the final pass.



- + The white team defends well.
- + The target player moves well in support of the ball.
- + The target player is involved multiple times.



- + Off the ball an inside player anticipates and moves to receive.
- + An immediate pass from the second target player maintains possession.

# MICRO SOCCER

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations.
- + Attacking transition.
- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Shooting

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Attacking support.
- + Shooting technique

## WHY USE IT

The activity encourages speed of play and positive transitions to attack.

## SET UP

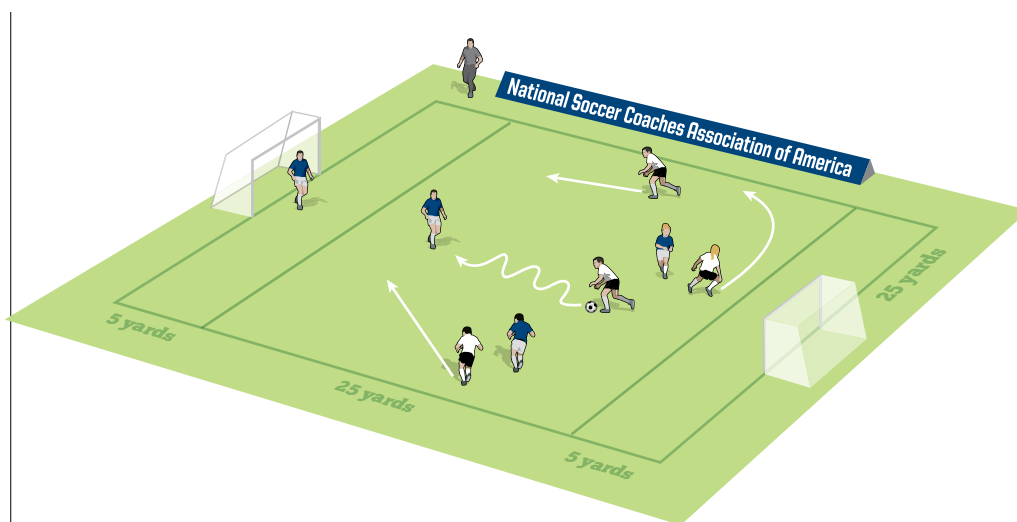
35x25 yard field with 5 yard end zones and small goals. Play is 4v4.

## HOW TO PLAY

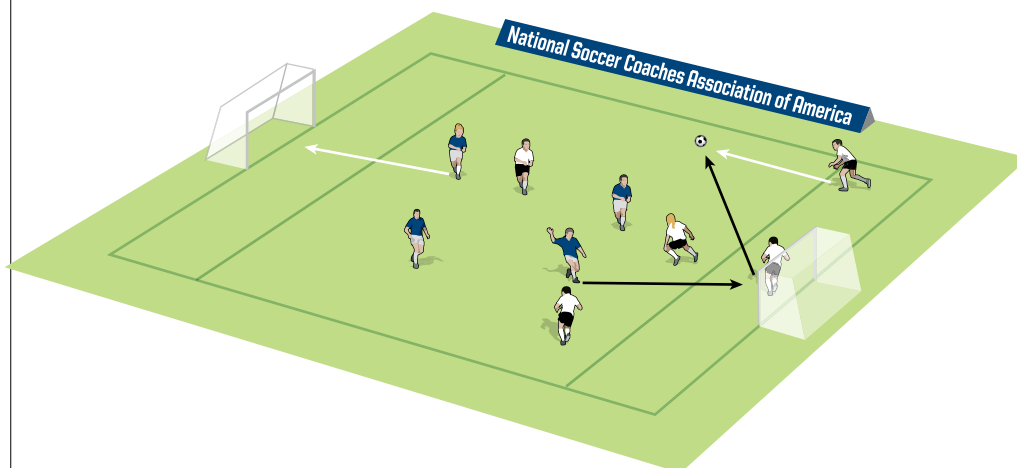
The game commences with the coach passing to one of the teams of 4. The defending team must drop one player back into the end zone, to leave 3 defenders against 4 attackers. When the ball is turned over, the team losing possession must drop a player into the defensive zone and the attacking team can attack at full strength - 4v3.

## COACHING NOTES

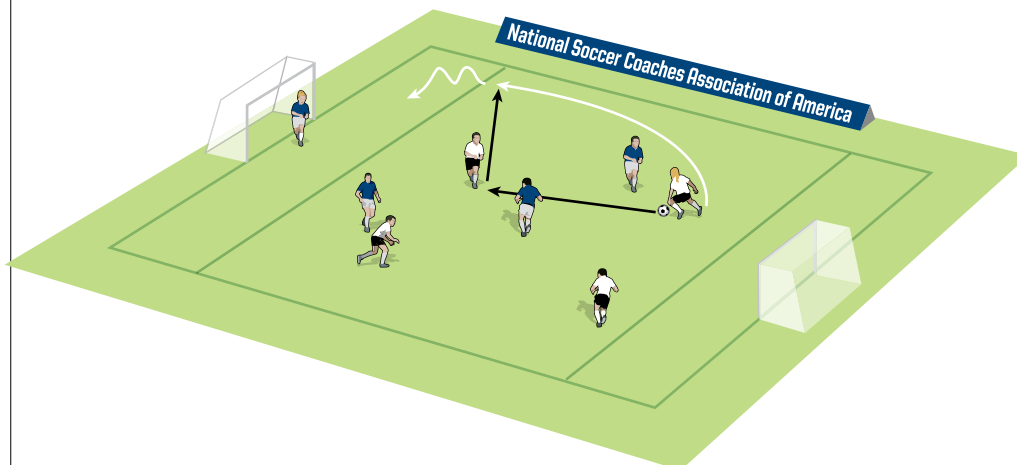
- + Coaching objectives - to get players to play fast and positive in attacking transition.
- + Coaching tip - have a good supply of balls so play is continuous and fast paced.
- + Adaptations - allow the attacking team to penetrate the end zone on the dribble.



- + The player with the ball commits the opponent on the dribble.
- + The other 3 attacking players move wide and with good movement get open.
- + 4 white players establish a shape to stretch the 3 blue players.



- + The blue team's strike at goal is saved.
- + White team quickly transition with an outlet pass.
- + Simultaneously, one of the blue players immediately recovers to the goal.



- + The white team breaks down the well-organized defense.
- + A give and go eliminates a blue opponent allowing the white player to get into the space behind.

# FAST BREAK GAME

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations
- + Attacking transition.
- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Shooting

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Attacking support.
- + Shooting technique

## WHY USE IT

To encourage players to attack the goal numbers up with speed.

## SET UP

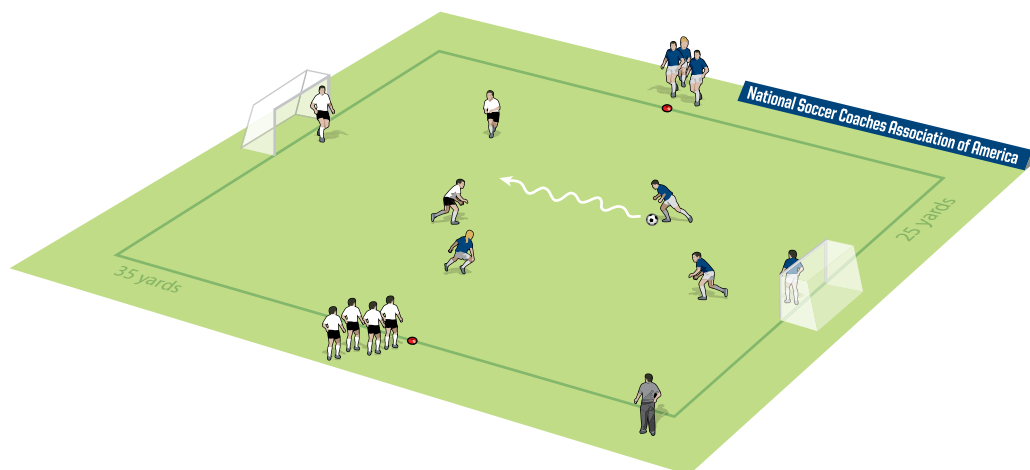
35x25 yard space. 14 players split into 2 teams. 2 goals. A goalkeeper in each end. Start with 3 blues and a goalkeeper vs 2 whites and a goalkeeper - with extra players for both teams on the side of the field.

## HOW TO PLAY

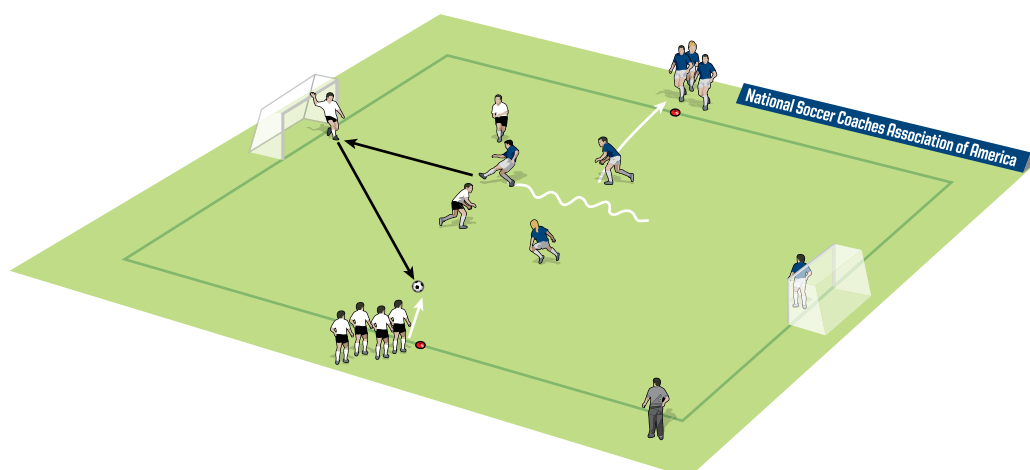
Commence the game with the coach playing a pass to blues. Blues attack the white's goal. When a goal is scored or the defending team wins possession (turnover) the team winning possession add an extra attacker and the opponent drops a player to create a 3v2 overload in the other direction.

## COACHING NOTES

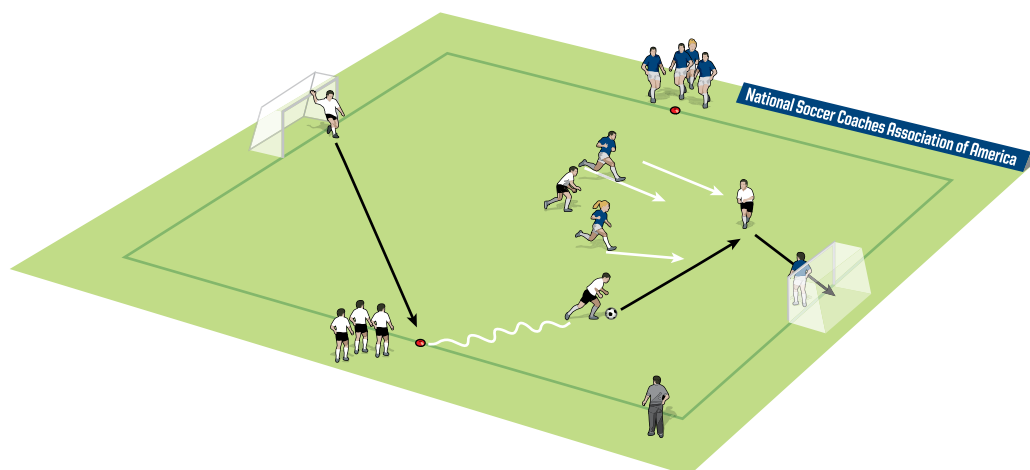
- + Coaching objectives – to have players play with positivity and creativity when attacking the goal.
- + Coaching tip – really focus on the moment of transition to attack and encourage speed of play.
- + Adaptations – increase the field size and the playing numbers for added complexity.



- + Start with 3v2.
- + Attacking 3 players commit the opposing defenders.



- + Goalkeeper immediately sends the ball to the next white player 'on deck'.
- + During a turnover, an attacker must leave the field.



- + 2 defenders immediately transition into open attacking spaces
- + 3v2 the other way.

# TRIANGLE TECHNICAL WARM UP

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Theme:

- + Passing combinations

Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking support.

## WHY USE IT

To physically activate players in a technical pattern warm up, focussing on passing, receiving and movement with the ball.

## SET UP

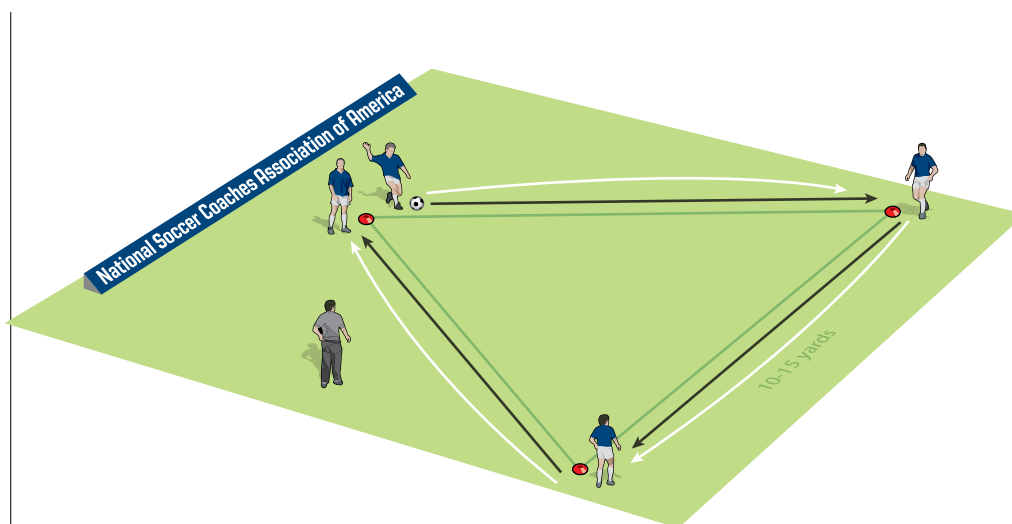
3 cones, 10-15 yards apart, make an equilateral triangle. At 2 of the cones there is a player and at one cone there are 2 players. Play commences from the cone with 2 players.

## HOW TO PLAY

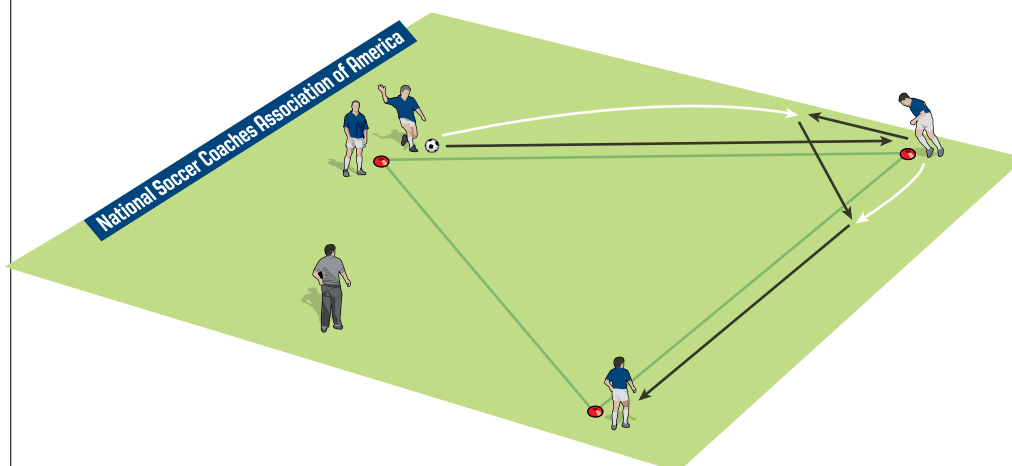
The warm up activity has a series of prescribed progressions of passing and movement. To begin, players pass to the outside of the triangle in a clockwise direction. The pass should be firm and along the ground. Once a rhythm has been established the coach can introduce passing combinations such as a give and go or overlap.

## COACHING NOTES

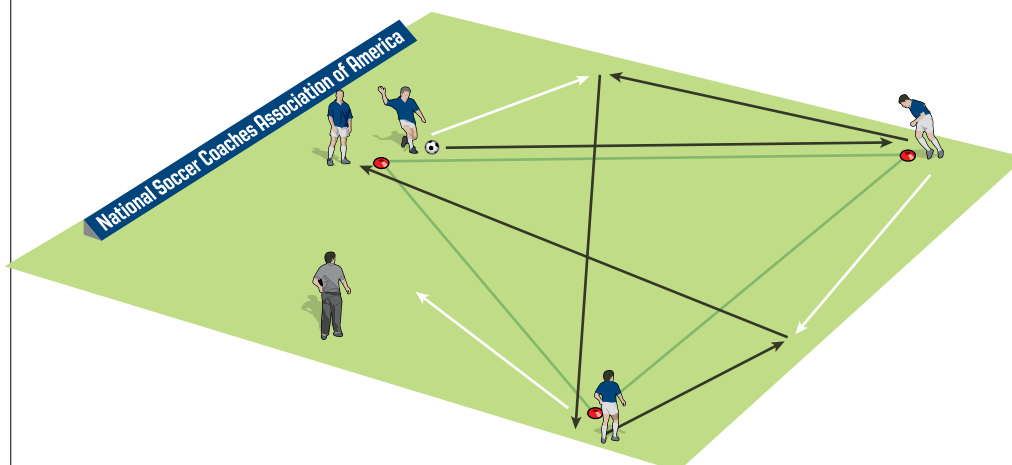
- + Coaching objectives – to get the players passing and moving with purpose.
- + Coaching tip – encourage/demand technical sharpness as the activity is unopposed.
- + Adaptations – develop into 1 or 2 touches, and have groups of 4 compete against time.



- + The ball is passed to the outside of the cone.
- + The passer then follows their pass.
- + The receiver passes the ball on to the next player.



- + The ball is passed to the outside of the cone.
- + The receiver passes the ball back.
- + A give and go is completed around the cone.



- + The ball is passed to the outside of the cone.
- + The receiver passes the ball back.
- + The ball is passed across the triangle.

# SUBS UP

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations
- + Attacking transition.
- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Shooting

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Attacking support.
- + Shooting technique

## WHY USE IT

To encourage players to react quickly to transition moments of the game.

## SET UP

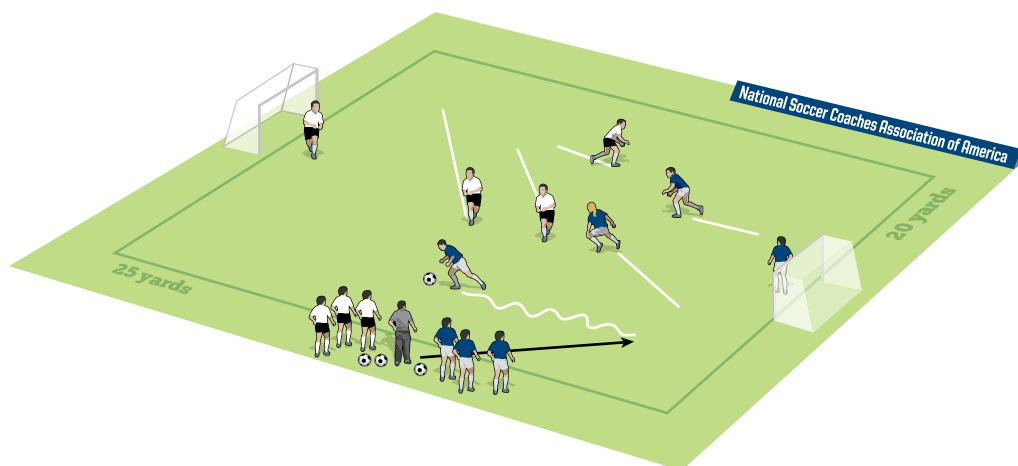
25x20 yard area with a goal at each end. Players are split into 2 teams with a goalkeeper for each team. Play 3v3 with extra players for both teams on the side of the field.

## HOW TO PLAY

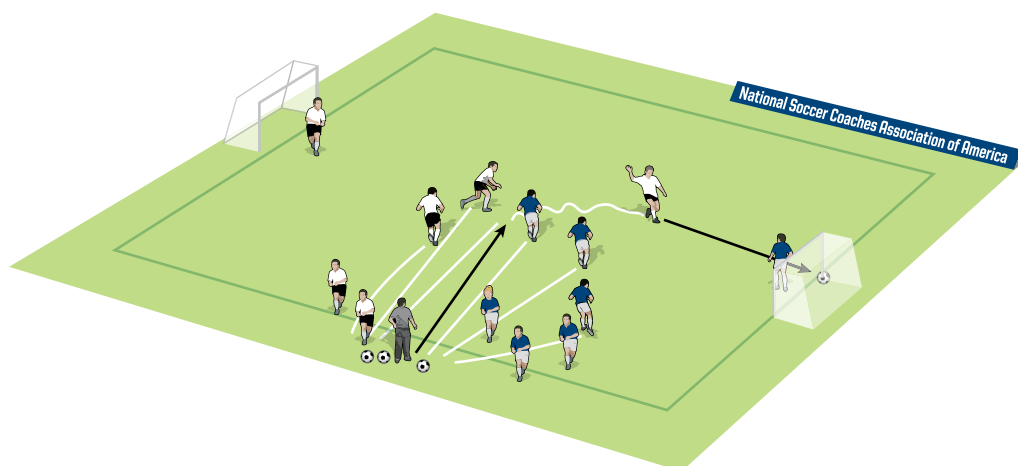
Every time the ball goes out of play the coach serves in another ball. After a number of repetitions the coach calls "subs up" and all players must exchange with teammates. The players and the teams that react the quickest will have the opportunity to score as the opponent is transitioning into defence. Players will be engaged and ready to switch in on the coach's command.

## COACHING NOTES

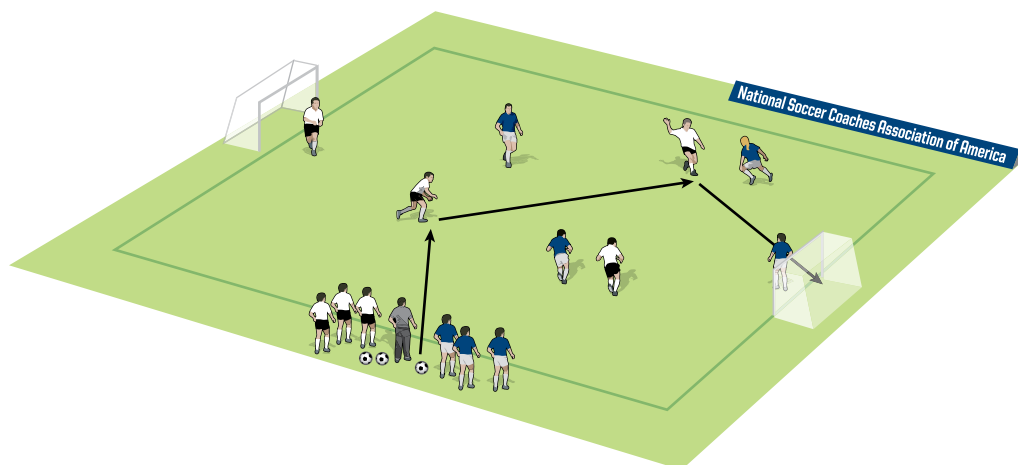
- + Coaching objectives - to have players play with positivity and creativity and demonstrate quick reactions to the ball.
- + Coaching tip - Consciously manage where the ball is played into to challenge certain players or one team or the other and challenge reactions.
- + Adaptations - Create different match ups by changing only one team.



- + 3v3 with goalkeepers.
- + Player immediately penetrates on the dribble.
- + The decision to dribble is a good one.



- + The coach calls for all players to sub out.
- + One player in white has responded quickest.
- + The urgency to get in is good and scores.



- + The coach plays in a 50/50 ball.
- + The white player immediately plays a penetrating forward pass.
- + The decision to pass quickly is a good one.

# NUMBERS UP TO GOAL

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations
- + Attacking transition.
- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Shooting

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Attacking support.
- + Shooting technique

## WHY USE IT

To encourage players to play direct to goal and to identify a 'numbers up' situation.

## SET UP

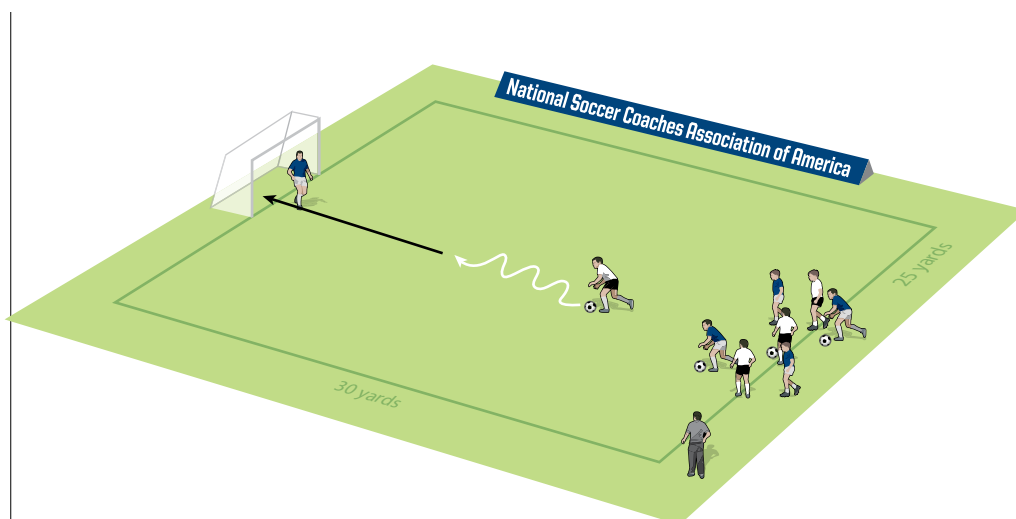
30 x 25 yards with 1 goal. A goalkeeper and 2 teams of 4 players. Supply of balls and 2 sets of pinnies.

## HOW TO PLAY

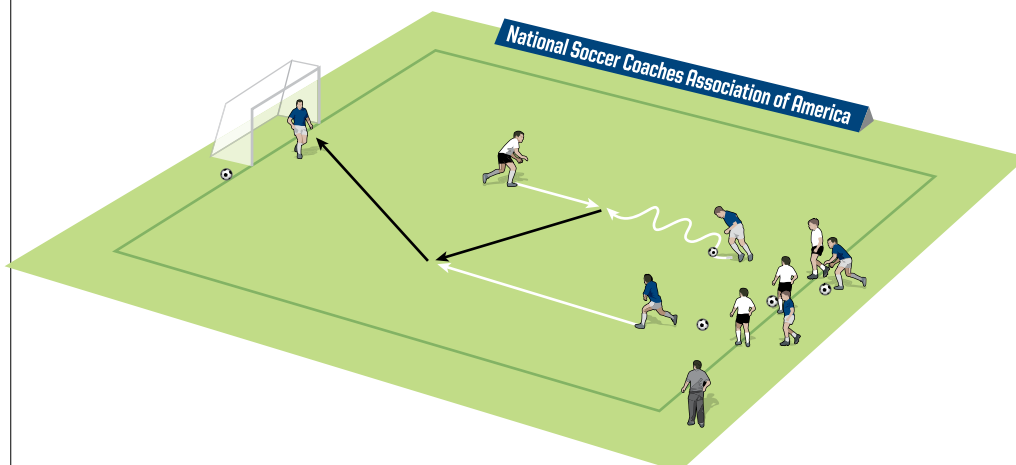
Play begins with 1 attacker v goalkeeper. Whatever the outcome, the attacking player becomes a defender. 2 attackers set off from the cones and attempt to score past the defender and goalkeeper. The defender steps off the field and re-joins the line. As before, once the ball is won by the defenders or a goal is scored, the 2 attackers now transition to being the defenders against the next 3 attacking players. The next progression is 4v3 and the final progression is 4v4. If the defenders win the ball they should return it to the coach as a counter option. Restart the game, switching out the goalkeeper.

## COACHING NOTES

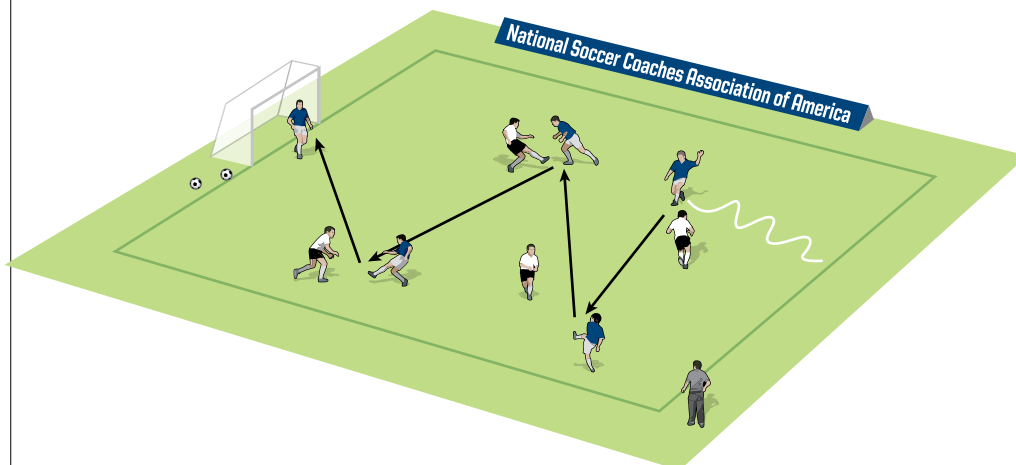
- + Coaching objectives - To encourage players to play incisively and quickly to goal.
- + Coaching tip - Encourage each new attack to begin immediately after the ball goes dead.
- + Adaptations - Add a points system - goal 2 points, defenders pass to



- + 1 player dribbles at pace before a strike at goal.
- + 2 opposing players are on deck to attack.



- + Attacker on the ball commits the defender.
- + 2nd attacker receives a pass for a shot at goal.



- + The game progresses to a 4v4.
- + The attacking team pass and move to create a shot

# MIRROR GOAL

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Theme:

- + Shooting

Competencies:

- + Shooting technique

## WHY USE IT

To encourage players to play direct to goal. The use of the Mirror Goal gives the players lots of opportunity to shoot at goal. It also allows for the efficient retrieval of balls and an opportunity for the coach to critically observe the players technique.

## SET UP

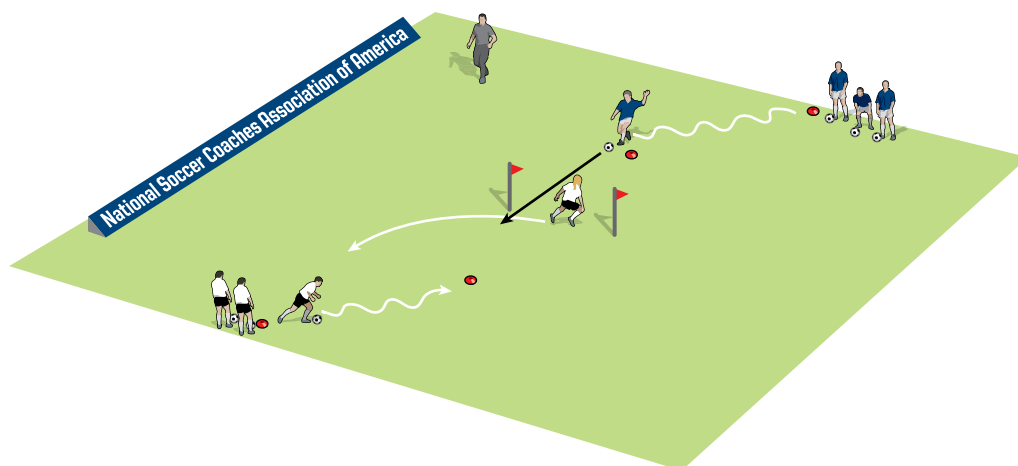
Set up an appropriately sized goal using flags. 2 teams of 4 players, with a ball each are on either side of the goal. The distance from goal should be appropriate for the players technical level – start a distance of 20 yards and then modify.

## HOW TO PLAY

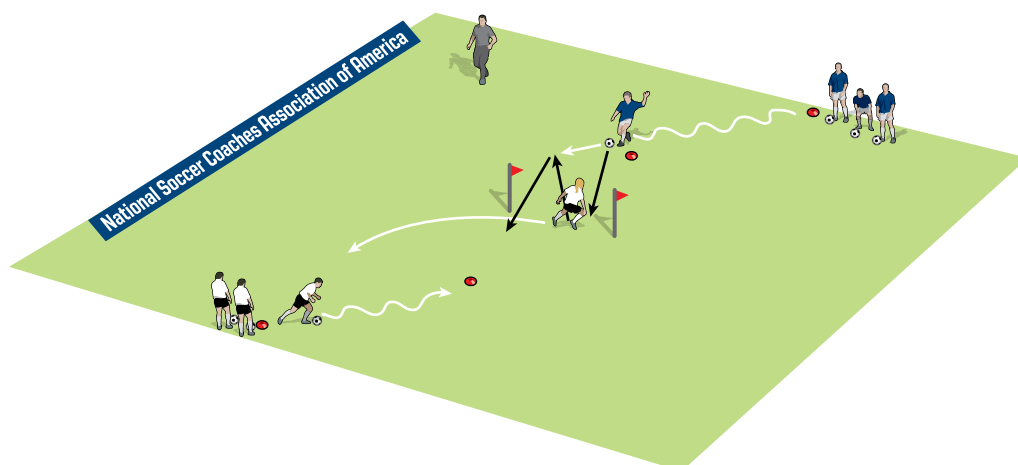
One team provides a goalkeeper. The first player from the opposing team dribbles the ball forward and shoots before a cone marking a designated distance from goal. After the shot the shooter moves forward to be in goal and receives a shot from the other direction. The outgoing keeper is responsible for retrieving the ball and returns to their team. The first player in line from the other side now dribbles forward and shoots.

## COACHING NOTES

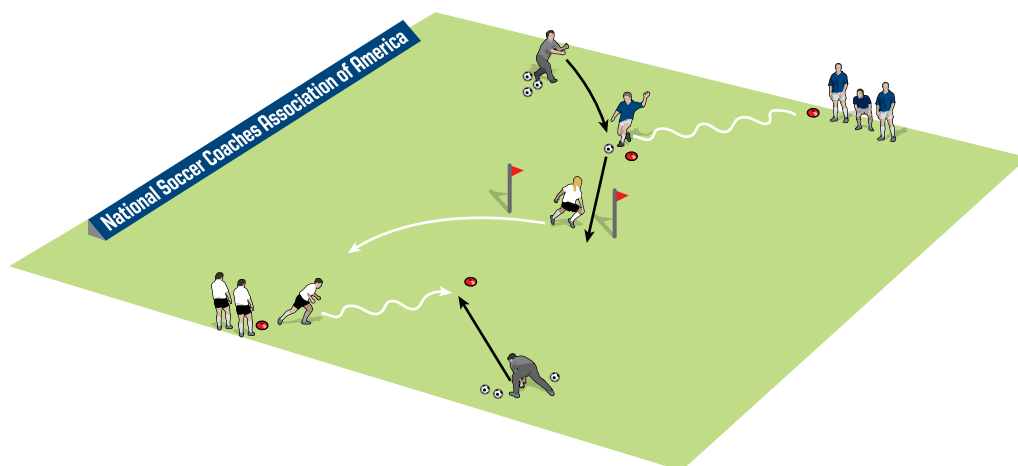
- + Coaching objectives – to provide the players valuable repetition of striking a moving ball at goal.
- + Coaching tip – observe closely the position of the non-kicking foot and the head at the moment of impact as this will impact the strength and direction of the shot.
- + Adaptations – provide a server to challenge the players with both feet, different pace of the ball and different angles.



- + Blue player dribbles and shoots.
- + White goalkeeper recovers ball.
- + White shooter is ready to play.



- + Blue player dribbles and shoots.
- + White goalkeeper gives up a rebound.
- + Blue player can finish rebound with one touch.



- + A server plays the ball to the blue player.
- + White goalkeeper retrieves the ball.
- + Immediately a server for white plays a ball forward.

# 2 VS 2 TO SMALL GOALS

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations
- + Attacking transition.
- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Shooting

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Attacking support.
- + Shooting technique

## WHY USE IT

This activity gives pairs lots of repetition and opportunity to learn important principles of defending - pressure and cover.

## SET UP

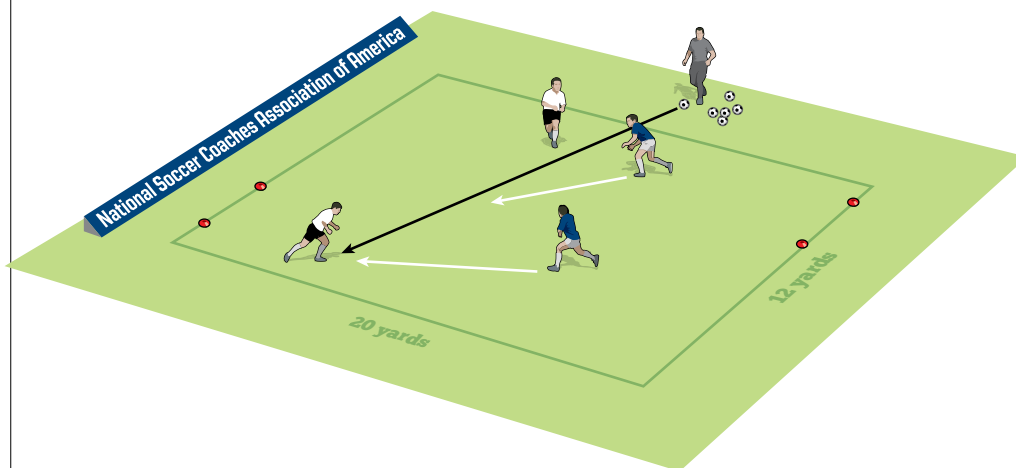
In a 20x12 yard grid place two small goals on a diagonal from each other. Play 2v2 inside the grid with the ball being introduced by a server each time.

## HOW TO PLAY

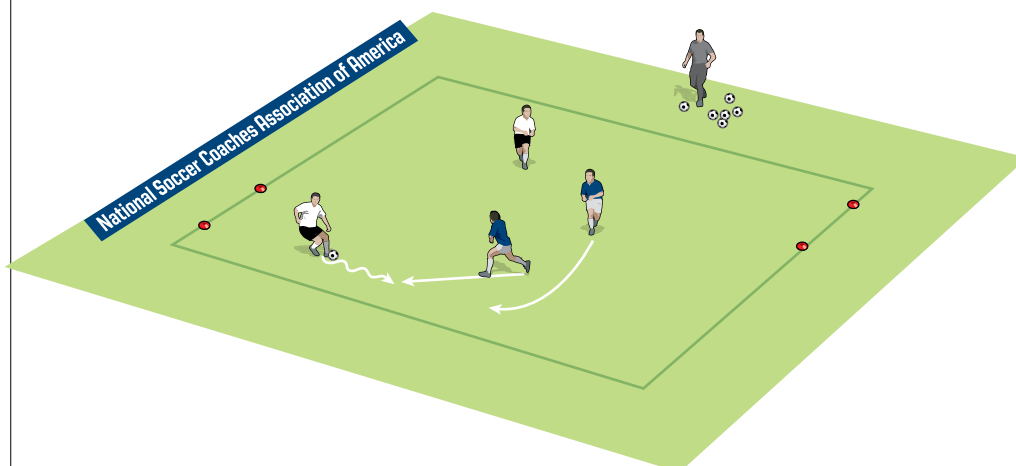
Both pairs start in their own half of the field to begin. The server should favor one pair or the other with the ball. The other team must communicate who will pressure the ball and where they will direct the pressure - inside, outside or backwards. One player will pressure the ball and the other will provide cover to effectively double team.

## COACHING NOTES

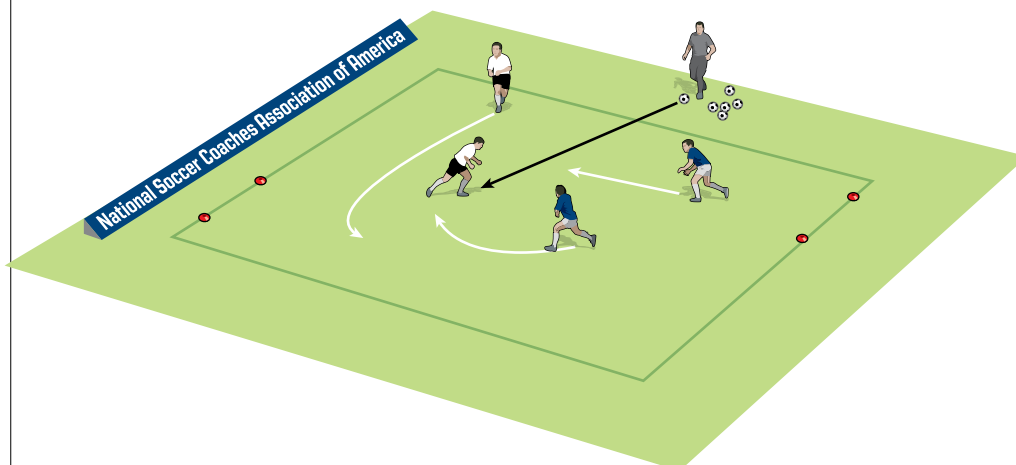
- + Coaching objectives - to train all players the fundamentals of small group defending. PRESSURE and COVER.
- + Coaching tip - vary the service and the start positions of players to create different scenarios for the players to defend.
- + Adaptations - replace goals with an end line to dribble in order to vary the challenge for the defending pair.



- + Closest blue player 'presses' white as the ball arrives.
- + 2nd blue player moves to cover teammate.



- + As white receives the first blue player 'presses'.
- + Blue pressure forces the attacker to the outside.
- + 2nd blue player runs to cover on the outside.



- + 2nd white player overlaps.
- + Blue pressure forces to inside.
- + 2nd blue player covers to inside.

# SHOOTING CIRCLE

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations
- + Attacking transition.
- + Shooting

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards).
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking as an individual.
- + Attacking in pairs.
- + Attacking support.
- + Shooting technique

## WHY USE IT

This activity creates shooting frequency. The types of shooting scenarios can be varied and the coach can observe closely to provide individual instruction.

## SET UP

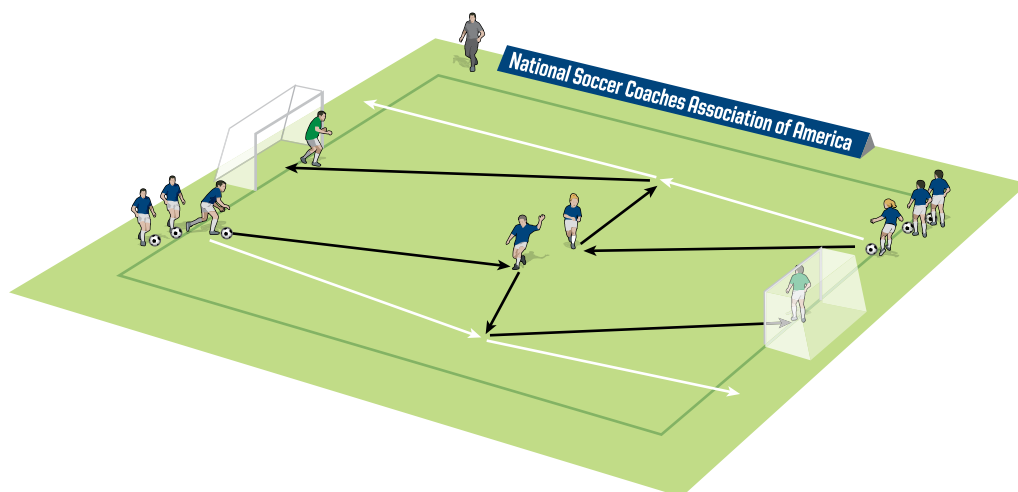
Use 2 big goals with keepers. The distance between goals should provide an appropriate challenge. Start with groups of players at each goal with plenty of balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

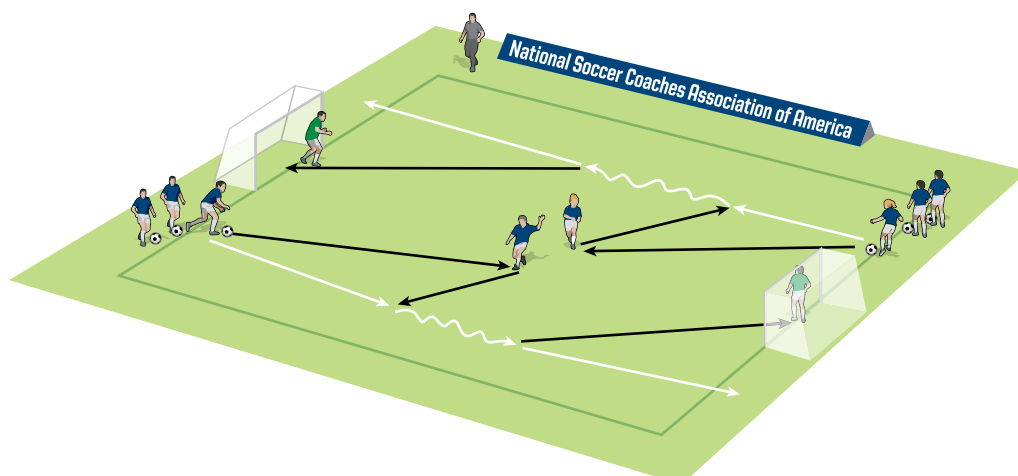
The ball is passed by the shooter to a target who lays it off for a shot. When the ball is dead the shooter becomes the target and the target retrieves the ball.

## COACHING NOTES

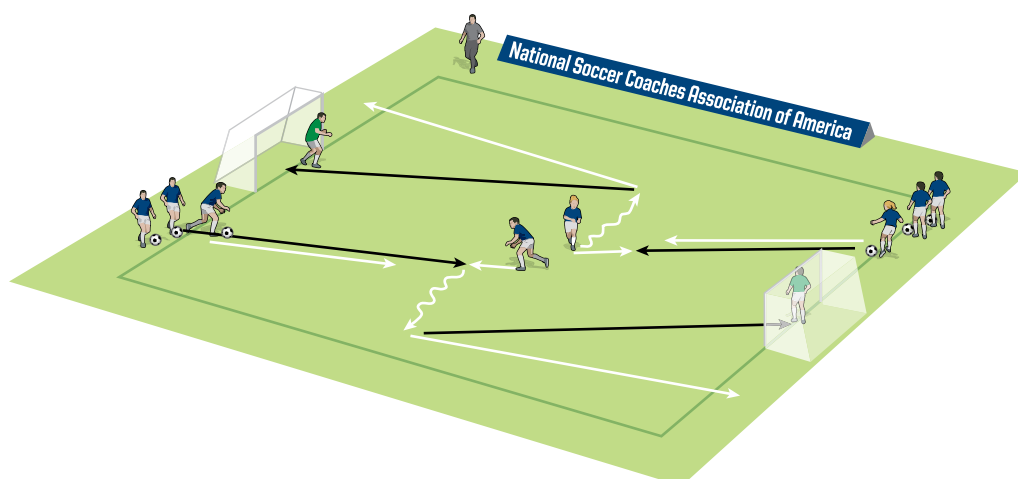
- + Coaching objectives - to give the players repetitions for strikes at goal with a variety of service.
- + Coaching tip - encourage players to take a look at the goalkeeper's position as they move, without the ball, on to the shot. Head over the ball for the shot.
- + Adaptations - have the target spin and take the shot (diagram #3)



- + A pass made to a central target is laid off to the outside.
- + The shooter runs onto the ball.
- + The shooter attempts to score to the near or far post.



- + A pass made to the central target is played back.
- + Shooter must collect ball and dribble before shot.



- + The target player checks to the ball, receives and turns.
- + The target player takes the shot on the turn then retrieves the ball.

# DEFENDING THE CROSS

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Shooting

### Competencies:

- + Medium to long passing.
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Shooting technique.

## WHY USE IT

This activity helps train the goalkeeper and central defenders to organize for crosses served into the penalty area.

## SET UP

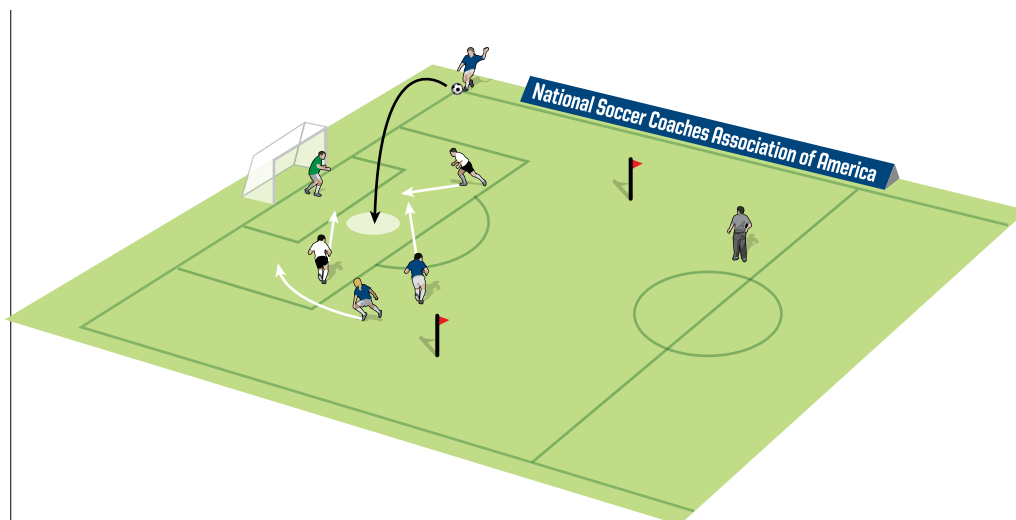
The activity focuses on the penalty area. A server provides crosses to the forwards running from outside the area to goal - these crosses are unchallenged. Both the defenders and goalkeeper start goal side of the forwards. Flags are placed outside the area as a target for the defenders to aim the clearance towards.

## HOW TO PLAY

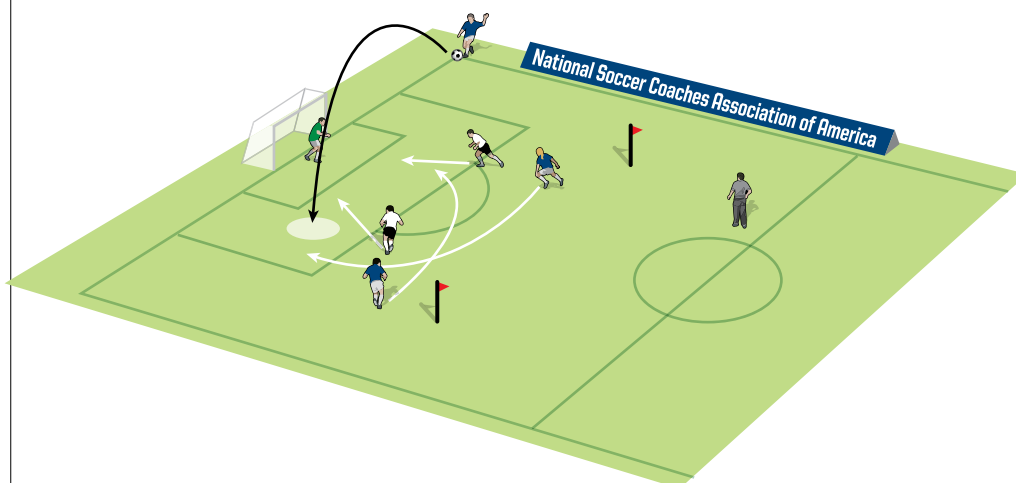
Have the server signal a cross is to be served to begin the movement of the forwards. As the forwards move the defenders must respond to their movement, the flight of the ball and the direction of the goalkeeper.

## COACHING NOTES

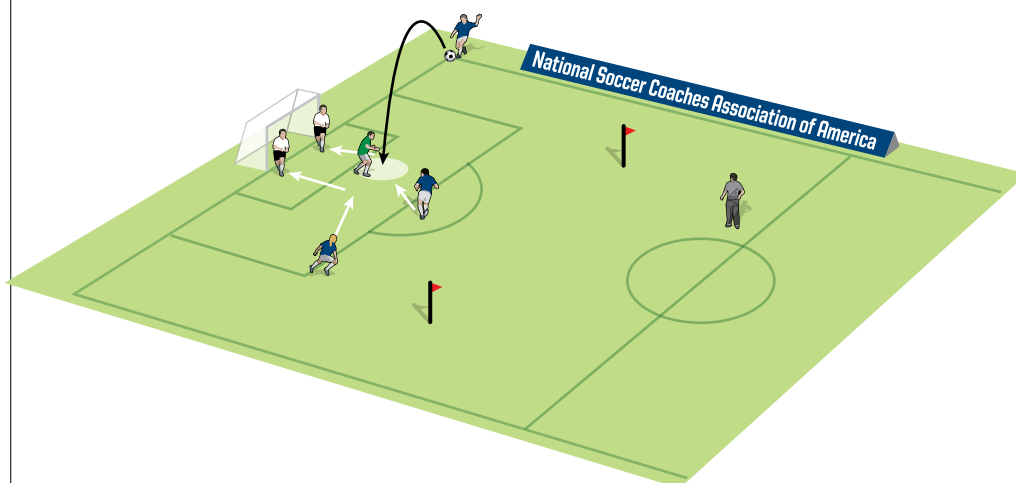
- + Coaching objectives - to train defenders to mark opponents on crosses and clear the ball.
- + Coaching tip - vary the starting points of the attackers and defenders to create different situations that will occur in the game.
- + Adaptations - increase the number of attackers and vary the position of the crosser.



- + Forwards move near and far post.
- + Defenders recover to deep and inside positions.



- + Forwards make crossing runs.
- + Defenders avoid crossing each other.
- + Defenders recover to goal.



- + The goalkeeper calls for the ball and comes out.
- + Defenders recover to the goal line to cover the goalkeeper.

# 4 VS 2+2

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Attacking transition.
- + Passing combinations.

### Competencies:

- + Medium to long passing.
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.

## WHY USE IT

Activity works on pressure - cover and transition. It assists players in both communication and identifying situations that occur in the game.

## SET UP

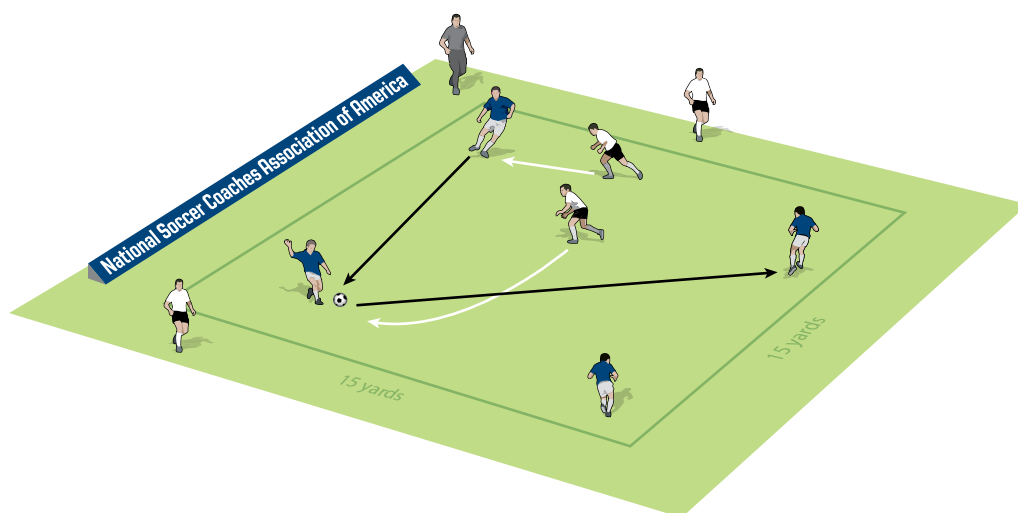
In a 15x15 yard grid start with 4 attackers with a ball and 2 defenders. 2 other defenders start outside the area.

## HOW TO PLAY

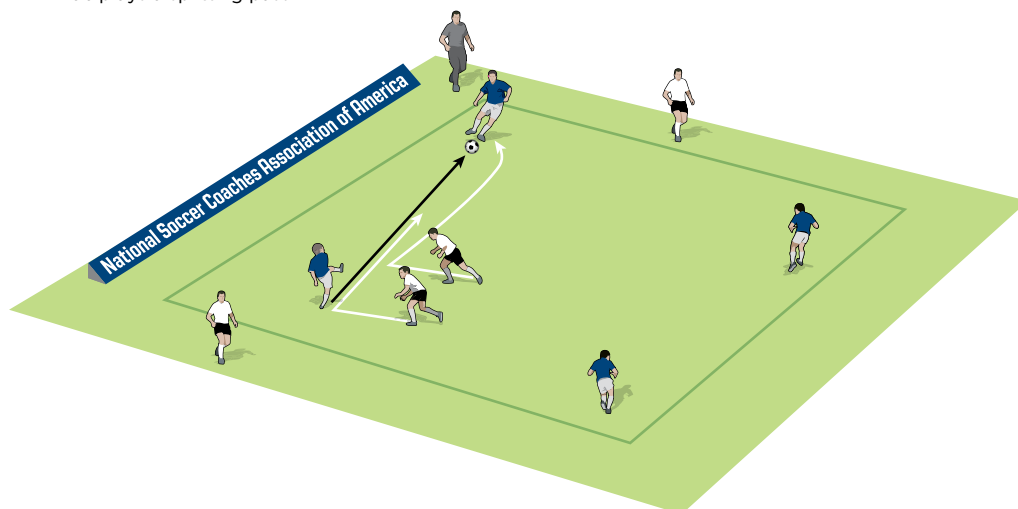
Play a standard game of keep away - blues attempting to combine passes to keep the ball from the white defenders. The focus is on defending. Specifically, on the role of the first defender to press the ball and the second defender to provide cover - without giving up a 'splitting' pass between defenders. Include an incentive for the defenders that if they win the ball and can pass it out of the area to their team mates they can switch roles. Play can be continuous with coach supervision.

## COACHING NOTES

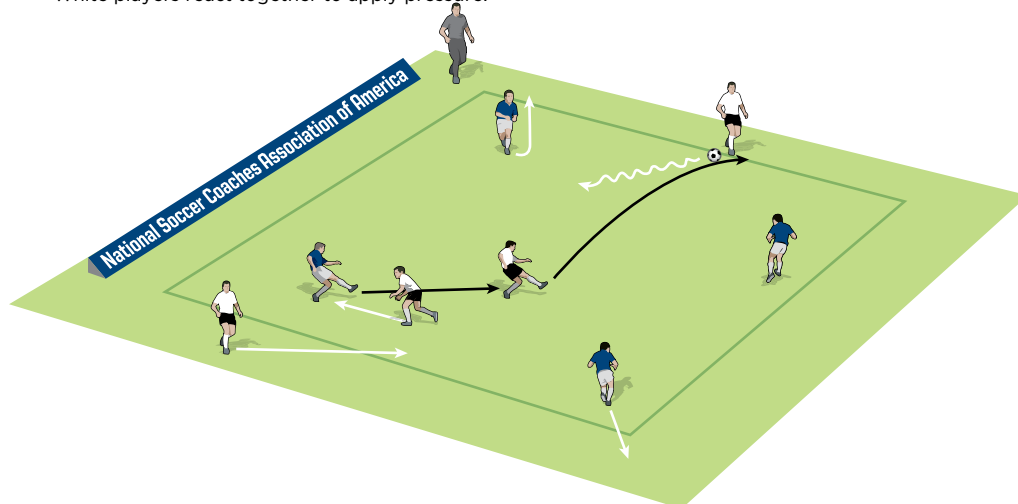
- + Coaching objectives - to encourage the two defenders to work in tandem, to win possession and in transition play to their team mates in space.
- + Coaching tip - help the two defenders reminding them to make up space as the ball is traveling, rather than wait for the ball to arrive at an opponent.
- + Adaptations - as the defenders improve make the grid bigger to increase the challenge.



- + White force blue to pass the ball square.
- + Only one white player reacts.
- + Blue plays a splitting pass.



- + White players work together.
- + Blue is forced to pass square.
- + White players react together to apply pressure.



- + A white player intercepts the attempted splitting pass.
- + White players pass to their peripheral targets.
- + Teams switch roles.

# RUN AND SHOOT

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Attacking transition.
- + Passing combinations.
- + Shooting.

### Competencies:

- + Medium to long passing.
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Shooting technique

## WHY USE IT

This activity allows for a lot of frequency of shooting under pressure. Attackers are rewarded for being direct. The target player adds combination options.

## SET UP

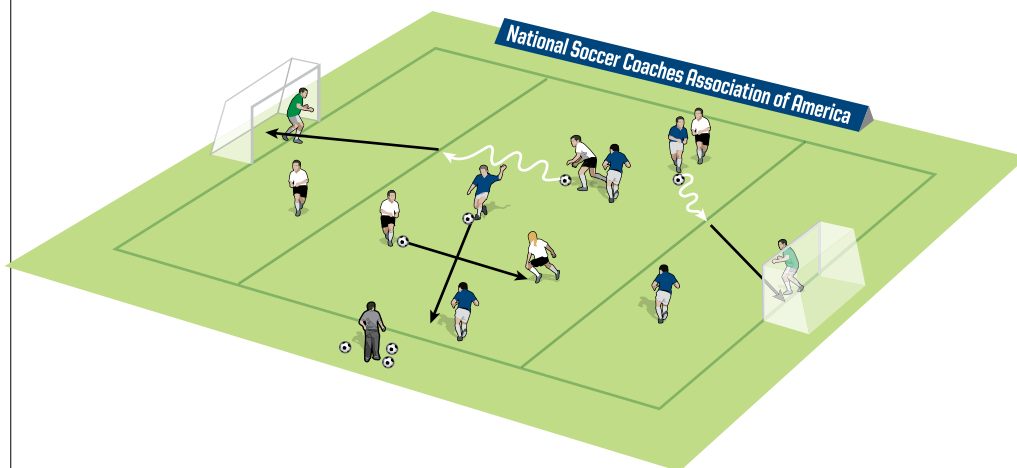
2 big goals with keepers. Using 3 zones have a target for each team in the attacking zone. Have 4 players with 2 balls for each team in the middle zone.

## HOW TO PLAY

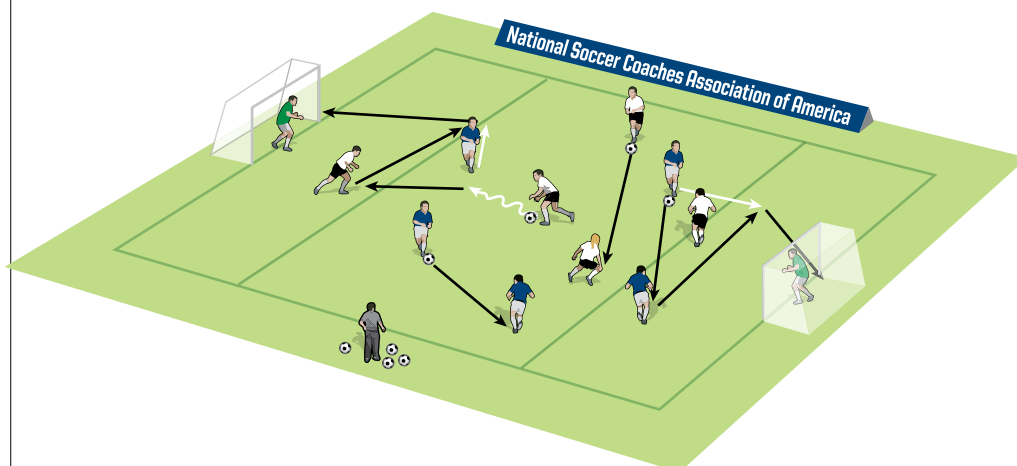
Each team passes and moves with 2 balls. Players are numbered 1-4 for each team. When their color and number is called they attack the goal and the opposing number defends. Attackers can use the target for support. The target can finish rebounds.

## COACHING NOTES

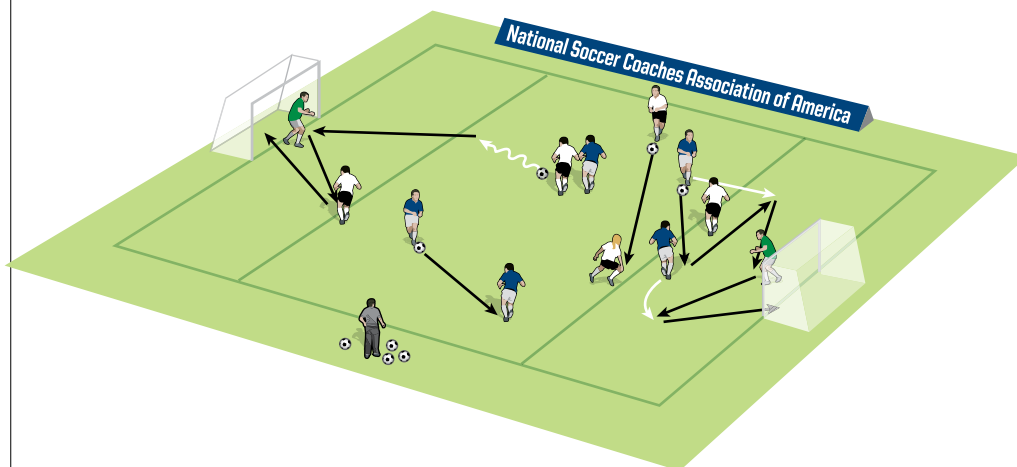
- + Coaching objectives – to increase confidence in front of goal under realistic pressure.
- + Coaching tip – encourage players to be positive in front of goal and not to pass up a clear chance.
- + Adaptations – call 2 numbers to attack and defend and/or have a defender on the target.



- + Defenders give immediate chase.
- + Attackers dribble and shoot under pressure.



- + Defenders get goal side.
- + Attackers use targets to get shots off.



- + Shots on goal are saved by the goalkeepers.
- + Target players finish rebounds.

# 6 GOAL GAME

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Attacking transition.
- + Passing combinations.

### Competencies:

- + Medium to long passing.
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.

## WHY USE IT

This activity allows for realistic challenges to the defending team. To defend effectively players must demonstrate ability to pressure and cover.

## SET UP

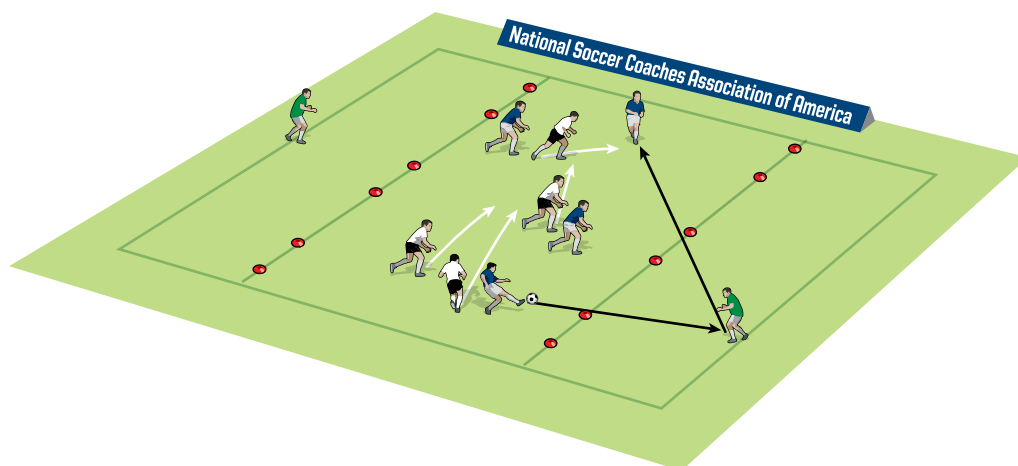
Have 3 cone goals for each team to defend. Behind those goals have a Goalkeeper who is a support player for the team in possession. Goalkeeper's begin each repetition.

## HOW TO PLAY

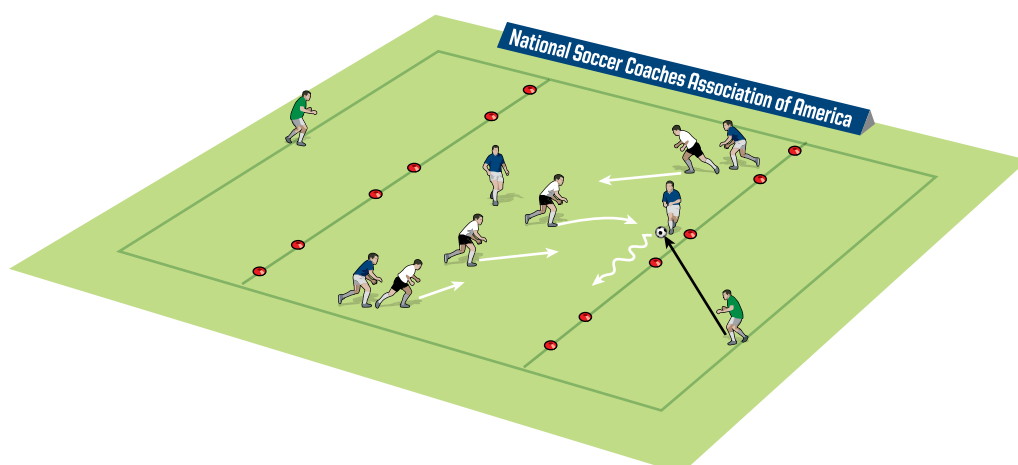
The objective for the possession team, in conjunction with their supporting Goalkeeper, is to pass or dribble through one of the 3 cone goals. The opposing team must try to deny the score, win the ball and counter.

## COACHING NOTES

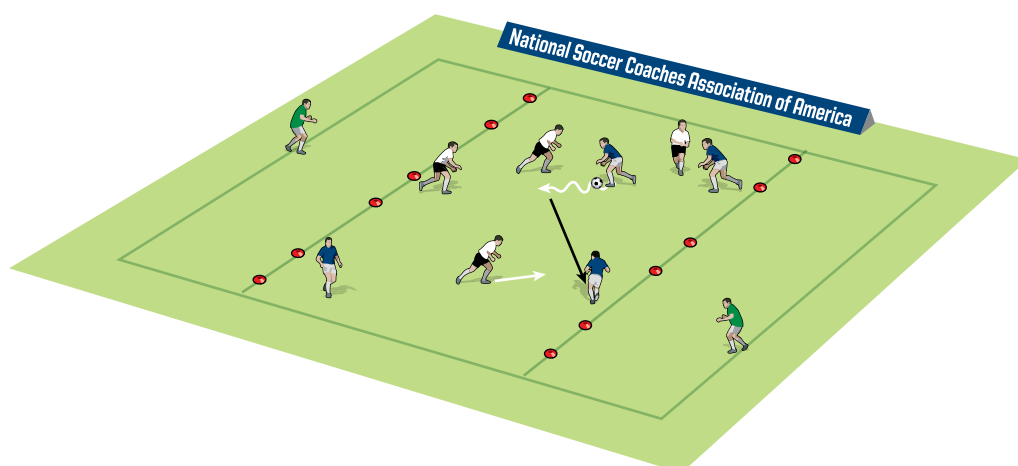
- + Coaching objectives - to have effective defending at the point of the ball to allow for effective team defense.
- + Coaching tip - make sure your vision takes in all members of the defending team and can assess their positions.
- + Adaptations - employ an all-time attacking player to further challenge the defending team.



- + Blue is forced to play backwards and switch.
- + White reacts well to press and cover.



- + The entry pass is well defended.
- + Blue is forced to dribble into pressure.



- + Blue attacks on the dribble.
- + Pressure and cover forces a negative backward pass.

# WIDE GATE GAME

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Attacking transition.
- + Passing combinations.

### Competencies:

- + Medium to long passing.
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.

## WHY USE IT

This activity encourages players to support passes they play forward. It reinforces the importance of width and mobility in the attack..

## SET UP

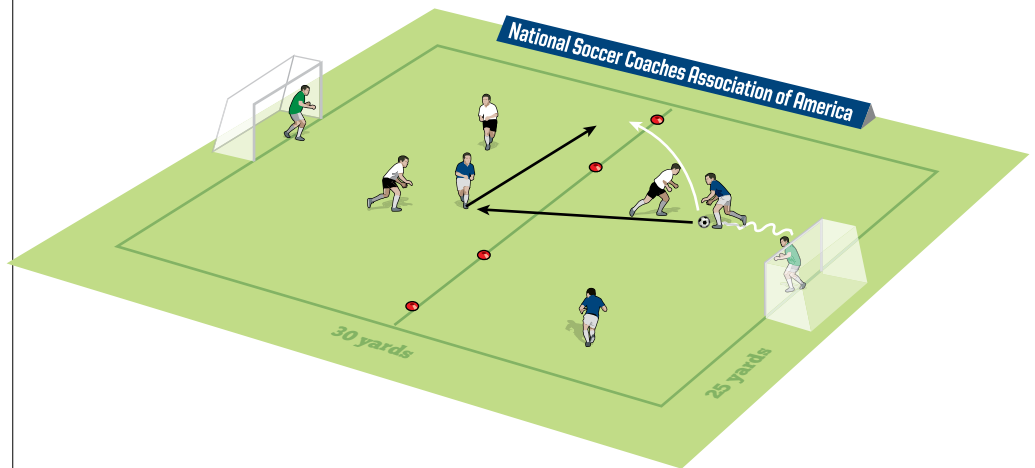
Field is 30x25 with wide gates on the half way line. Two small goals with keepers and 3v3 on the field.

## HOW TO PLAY

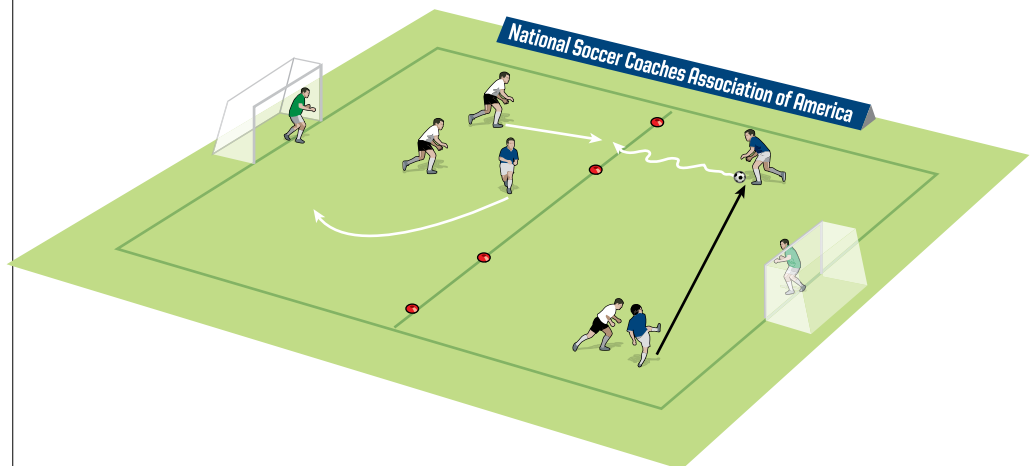
In each half there is a 2v1 advantage to the team defending that end. When the ball is played forward to the lone target, one of the deeper players must support by running forward through the gates.

## COACHING NOTES

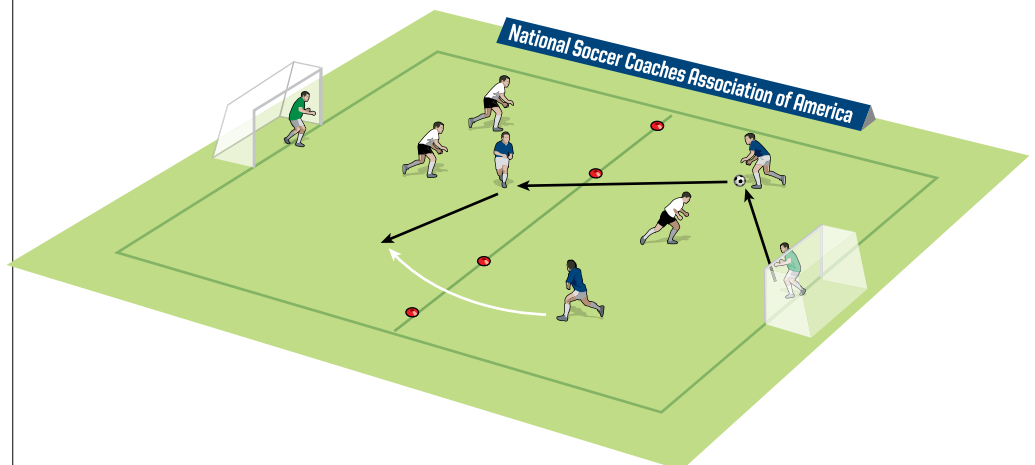
- + Coaching objectives – to have effective defending at the point of the ball to allow for effective team defense.
- + Coaching tip – make sure your vision takes in all members of the defending team and can assess their positions.
- + Adaptations – employ an all-time attacking player to further challenge the defending team.



- + White commits blue on the dribble.
- + The pass forward is followed by a wide run.



- + Blue penetrates on the dribble.
- + The blue target checks to the back post.



- + The ball is played forward to the target.
- + The third player moves off the ball to support.

# HEX FIELD GAME

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Attacking transition.
- + Passing combinations.
- + Shooting.

### Competencies:

- + Medium to long passing.
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Shooting technique.

## WHY USE IT

This activity creates increased challenge the closer to goal players get. Players pick up their speed of play as they go forward.

## SET UP

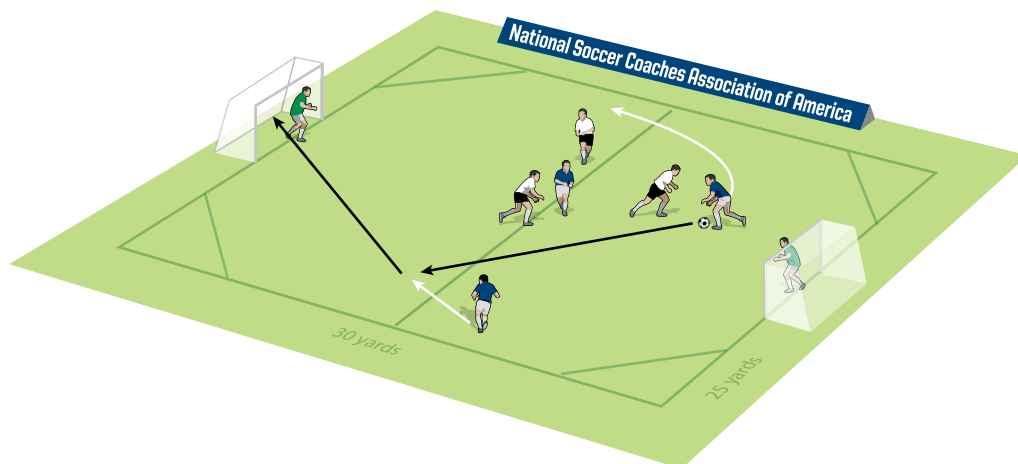
Field is 30x25 with each corner coned off to create a hexagon. Use two big goals with keepers and 3 v3 on the field.

## HOW TO PLAY

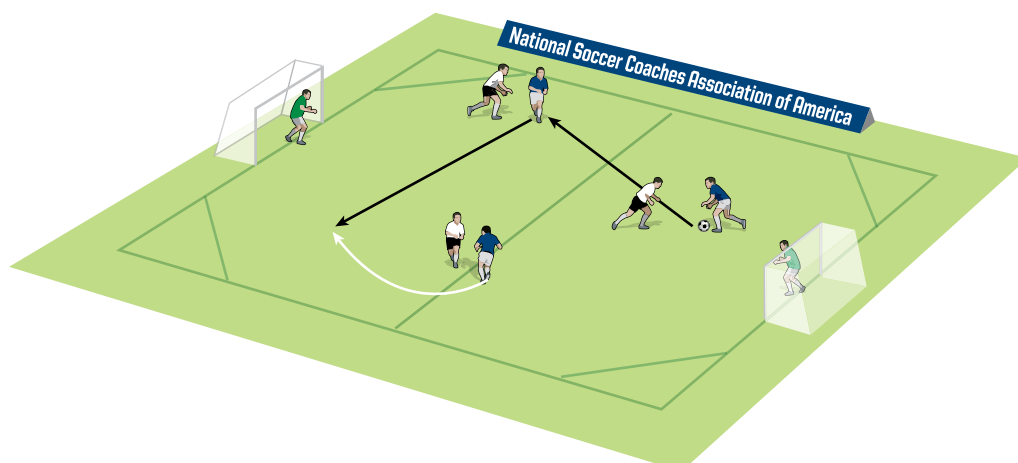
Play is a regular scrimmage on the modified field. The zoned off corner space is out of bounds.

## COACHING NOTES

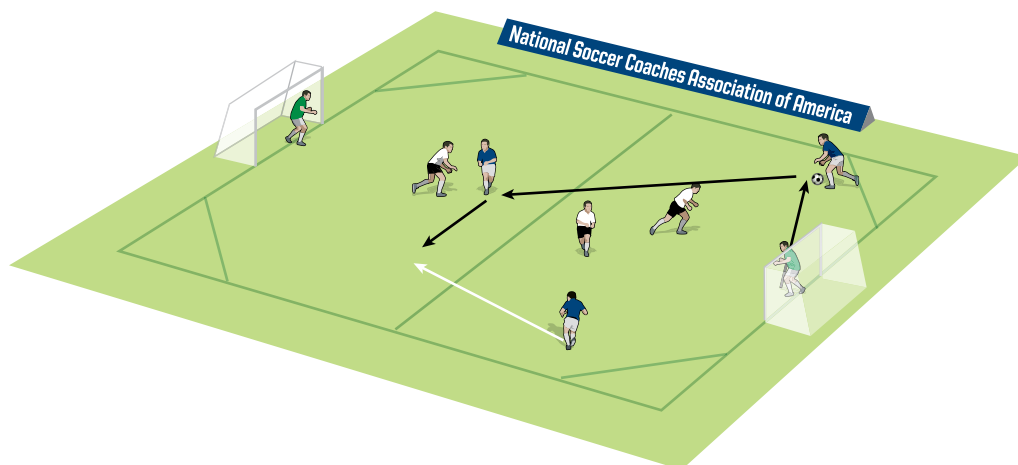
- + Coaching objectives – to encourage players to increase their speed of play closer to goal as space diminishes.
- + Coaching tip – encourage width in the development phase of an attack to challenge the defending team.
- + Adaptations – use an all-time attacking player to improve success if need be, before getting to even numbers.



- + In the biggest area of the field the ball is played wide.
- + Attacking movement comes way from the ball.



- + The ball is played as far forward and wide as possible.
- + Attacking runs are made centrally.



- + Play is developed from the back.
- + The attacking run is central.

# PATTERN PLAY

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Defending in pairs and groups.
- + Attacking transition.
- + Passing combinations.
- + Shooting.

### Competencies:

- + Medium to long passing.
- + Receiving using the feet.
- + Mobility on and off the ball.
- + Attacking and defending as an individual.
- + Attacking and defending in pairs and small groups.
- + Shooting technique.

## WHY USE IT

This activity helps the coach establish identifiable patterns of play for the team to put into practice. It can help teams develop a style.

## SET UP

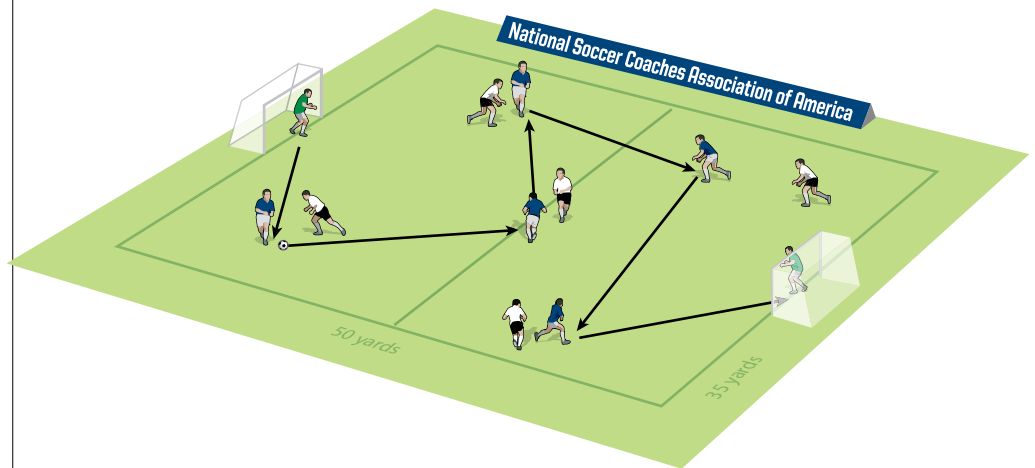
Field is 50x35. Use two big goals with plenty of balls, two keepers with five teammates each.

## HOW TO PLAY

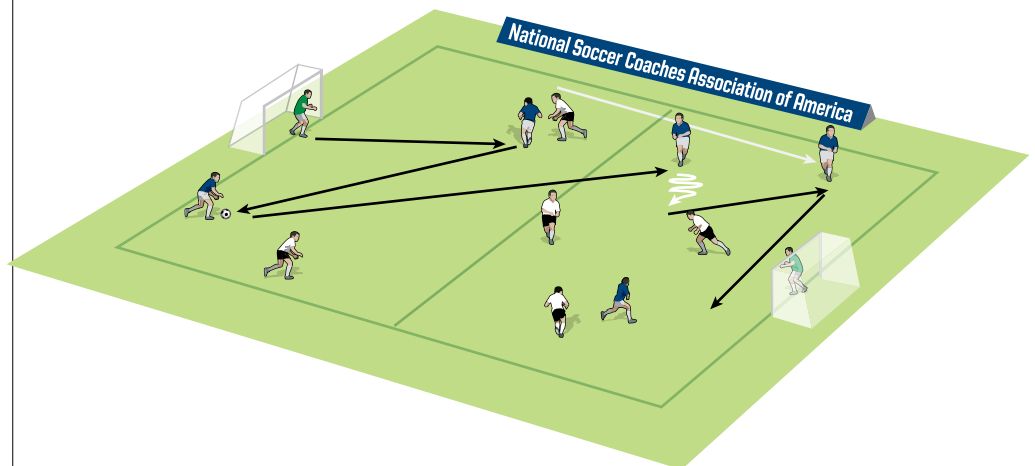
Starting with the keeper the team plays a sequence of unopposed passes toward their opponent's goal before shooting. They then reset and repeat. Both teams pass and move through each other.

## COACHING NOTES

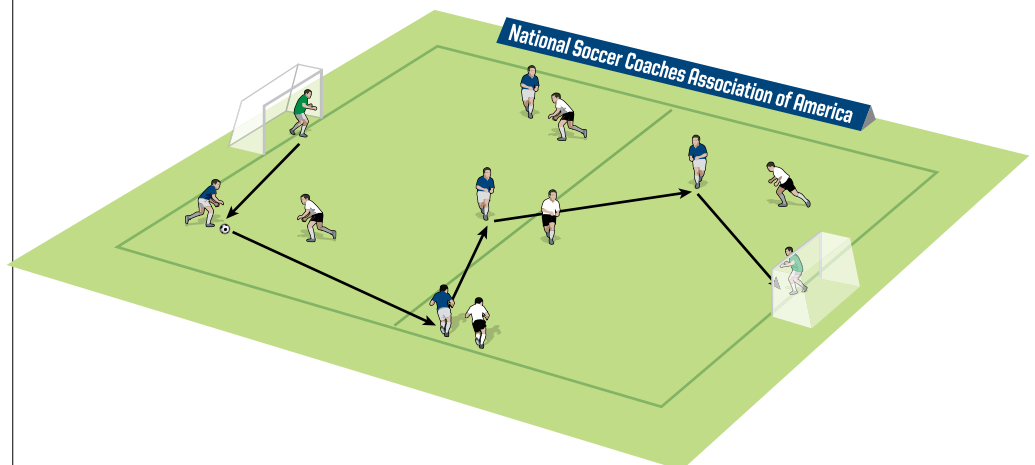
- + Coaching objectives – to develop patterns of passing and movement that translate into the game.
- + Coaching tip – encourage players to be technically clean and to always be moving forward in the possession.
- + Adaptations – go alternately at first if need be. Develop to having some opposition to each pattern.



- + Ball begins wide and is played to a center mid.
- + Ball is switched twice before the shot.



- + The ball begins centrally and is dropped back.
- + A long diagonal is supported by a deep overlap.



- + Play is developed down one flank.
- + The point of attack is switched from the center.

# KNOCK AND MOVE

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

### Theme:

- + Passing combinations

### Competencies:

- + Short passing along the ground (5-15 yards)
- + Receiving using the feet
- + Mobility on and off the ball.

## WHY USE IT

To develop passing and passing receiving technique. To develop patterns of movement.

## SET UP

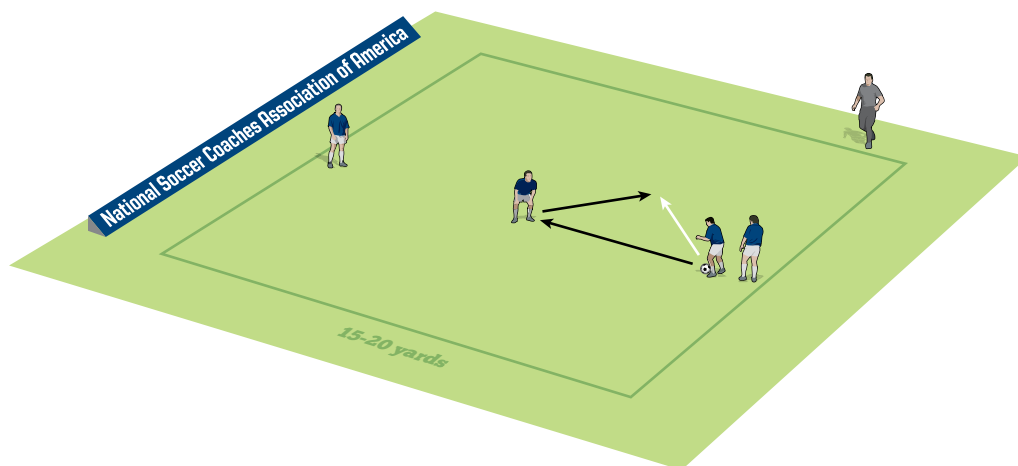
Use four players 15-20 yards apart, with one player in positioned in the middle.

## HOW TO PLAY

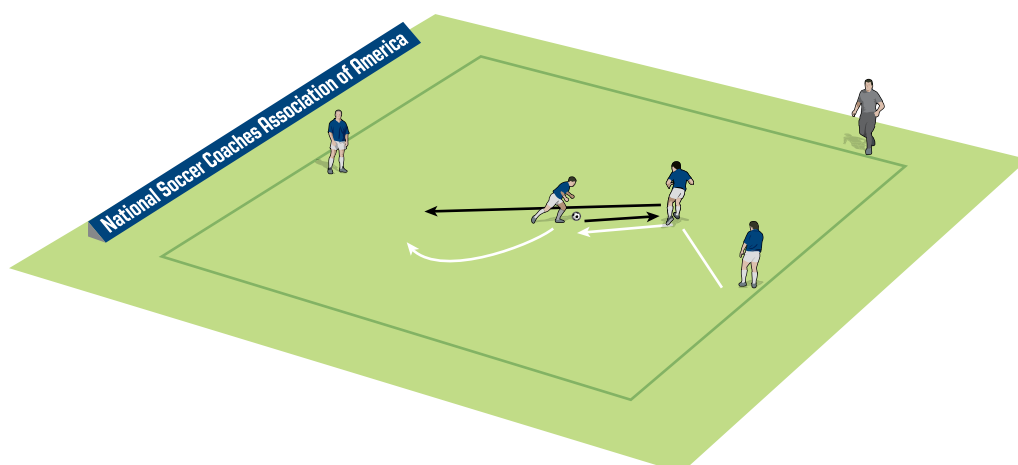
The activity is a 4 pass sequence, with 4 corresponding movements. Once the sequence is played it comes back the other way. The passing sequence involves four passes and four movements. The sequence goes back and forth and is continuous.

## COACHING NOTES

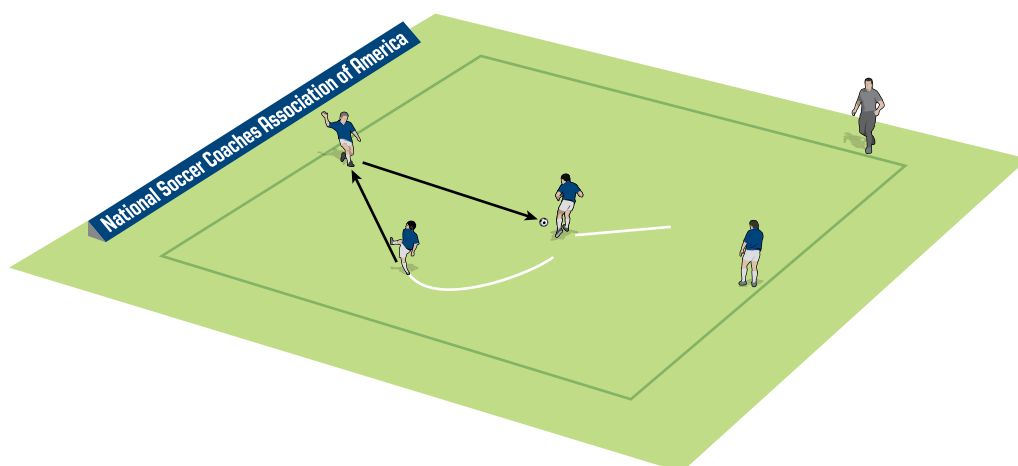
- + Coaching objectives – to have players play the way they face and turn without the ball.
- + Coaching tip – make sure the spin movement of the middle player is wide, not long.
- + Adaptations – develop to a two or one touch sequence.



- + The first pass is played into a central player.
- + The passer moves off at an angle to receive the ball back.



- + The central player makes a bending run wide and away.
- + The first passer plays the ball to the runner and moves to the central position.



- + The ball is played to the player at the opposite end of the space.
- + The passer follows the pass.
- + The entire sequence of four passes and four movements then resets the other way.

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Principles of play are the underpinning concepts of the game and can be coached from the first stage of development onwards. The principles relate to attacking and defending and should not be confused with systems of play – the formation of the team on the field. The principles of play are the same in any system of play. It is important for the coach to know and understand the principles before helping the players to understand. With a good appreciation and excellent technique a team will be able to play any system and style.

## ATTACKING PRINCIPLES

There are 5 principles of attack:

### 1. Penetration

In simplistic terms penetration is the act of breaking through the defense by dribbling, shooting, running or passing. We can start to coach penetration at stage 1 of development.

### 2. Depth and support

A player in possession of the ball receives help to maintain possession. Support attackers provide forward, backward and sideways options to the attacker in possession. We can start to coach support at stage 2 of development with passing and receiving.

### 3. Width

The attacking team attempts to stretch the opponent's defensive shape. The attacking players use the width of the field to tempt the defenders from a compact shape covering the dangerous areas in front of goal and in so doing create space. The attackers move the ball to change the point of attack in an effort to find a seam or space between or behind the defense. We can start coaching 'width' in late stage 2 and early stage 3.

### 4. Mobility

Attackers make runs into different areas of the field in order to draw defenders out of their positions. A coach can commence teaching this principle is best during stage 3 of development.

### 5. Improvisation, Creativity and Surprise

Attackers will try to break down defenses by employing the element of surprise. Skills such as back-heels, cut backs, flicks, feints and fakes are all used to this end. Comfort on the ball is critical and this training starts in stage 1 of development.

## DEFENDING PRINCIPLES

5 principles of defending designed to counteract the effects of the attacking principles:

### 1. Pressure

Early in the development process a coach should work on individual defending. 1v1 activities are great ways to teach the skill of 'pressure'. The objective of the defender is to force the attacker to make a mistake without over committing to win the ball. The defender must apply pressure to the attacking player with the ball and either win possession, delay the attack by preventing the shot, pass or dribble. 1v1 scenarios can be introduced at stage 1, but formal coaching of pressure commences at stage 2.

### 2. Cover/Support/Depth in Defense

Following our coaching efforts to teach defenders to apply pressure to the player on the ball, we progress to work with support defenders off the ball. When defending in pairs, the second defender cuts off passing lanes and is ready to revert to the role of the pressure player if the attacker beats the first defender. This principle is ideal to introduce in the stage 2 stage of development once the players have a good handle on the first principle of pressure.

### 3. Balance

There are a variety of defensive shapes used to counteract an attack. For example, when the ball is central in the midfield area, the defensive shape is more pie shaped with the defender nearest the ball applying pressure and the other defenders retaining defensive balance. A third defender will drop off the ball and get into a position where they can mark a player, follow a penetrating run or step forward to pressure the ball. Naturally, adding a third and fourth defender follows pressure and cover and should be introduced in the third stage of development.

# VOLUME 1 - **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM**

## **4. Delay/Patience/Discipline/Restraint**

All too often young defenders will be over eager to win possession of the ball off an attacker. Impatient defending can result in the loss of defensive shape and compactness. It is important for a coach to teach defenders to read the game and make good decisions on when to win possession, when to apply enough pressure to force an attacker to lose possession and when to force the attack in a direction most beneficial to the team. It is now common place in soccer for coaches to work seriously on transition from defense to attack. Counter attacking and fast breaks are deemed great ways to create an attacking overload as over committed defenders are chasing back to get goal side of the ball. To this end, the defensive principle of delay is paramount. The objective is to slow the attack by forcing the ball to less dangerous areas of the field and allow teammates to get back into position. We can start to work on this principle in the later stage 2.

## **5. Compactness**

Defensive compactness is the polar opposite of Attacking width. The aim is to condense the middle of the field and limit the space and likelihood of penetration. We often see this tactic employed by a less capable team when they are playing against a stronger and more fluent passing team. The phrase 'parking a bus in front of the goal' has been used to describe how difficult it becomes for an attacking team to overcome a compact defense. One can employ this principle in small sided games at stage 3 of development.

## **SYSTEMS OF PLAY**

A system of play is the formation of the team during a game. Commencing post puberty (mid to late teenage years), we can start to focus on 1 or 2 positions in an 11v11 game. However, specializing on one position should not occur until adulthood, and even then the more versatile the player (the ability to perform well in different positions of the field), the more value the player has to the team.

Specific positional training can take many years as each role in the team has a unique set of attributes and demands. It is a mistake to limit a player to one position or role before it is imperative to specialize. To that end, throughout the youth experience, a key role of the coach is to provide players with an opportunity to play in many different roles in the system before they specialize.

As coaches of youth players it is far more important for development that we focus on the principles of play and positioning – and not be over concerned with positions. It takes significant time for young players to understand and execute the principles of play, so patience is extremely important. Repetition and reinforcement is crucial and over time player positioning will improve.

### **Small Sided Games (Stage 1-2)**

If a program insists on playing competitive games with 5 and 6 year old players, a 3v3 format with no goalies is most suitable. Applying a system of play is not appropriate and quite frankly pointless. Naturally, players at this age will likely follow the ball. This is a good sign and coaches should encourage the enthusiasm of young players to participate. The aim is to create as many 1v1 situations as possible with all players attacking and defending.

### **Small Sided Games (Stage 2)**

A 4v4 format and no goalie is appropriate for players 7 and 8 years old, although continuing with 3v3 is also beneficial. Remember, the more players on the field the less touches individual players will get. As the players start to appreciate the basic principles of attack and defense learned in practice sessions, the less frantic the game and the more likely you will observe players working together. The coach can start to introduce a 2-2 formation in the second stage of development. However, the formation the players commence the game in will be quickly lost. Two players in the defensive line and two in the attacking line make straight line passing possible. 2-2 formation promotes the idea of playing in pairs.

A cautionary note; as coaches we want defensive players attacking and attacking players defending, so if an opportunity occurs for a defensive player to collect the ball, penetrate space and create an overload of attackers, we should applaud. Similarly, all 4 players should be coached to get behind the ball and defend when the opponents have the ball.

### **Small Sided Games (Stage 3)**

A 6v6 format – 5v5 on the field with a goal keeper is appropriate for players 9 & 10 years old. 3v3 or 4v4 can also benefit these players. A 3-2 formation is recommended. Although a three line formation with a midfield player is a possible formation, it is not recommended. Adding a third line adds to the complexity of the game and is more difficult for the players at this stage to overcome and certainly harder to coach. The addition of 2 new players including the goalkeeper introduces new tactics and opportunities to work in groups and this is certainly a big enough progression in difficulty. The team formation of 3-2 results in more triangles, a very important tactical concept at this stage of development.

# VOLUME 1 - **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM**

## **Small Sided Games (Stage 4)**

An 8v8 format – 7v7 on the field with a goal keeper is appropriate for players 11, 12, 13 and 14 years old. Smaller playing numbers such as 4v4 and 6v6 will also benefit these players. A 2-3-2 formation is recommended. A midfield line is now introduced as 2 more field players have been added to the team. Several formations are possible, but any formation used must make it easy for the players to execute the principles of play. 2-3-2, produces many triangles and places great focus on transitioning from attack to defense and defense to attack. Many tactics can now be introduced

## **Full Sided Games (Stage 5)**

11v11 format. Choosing to move from one format of the game to the next should not be a question of age, but one of readiness. Many players are not ready to make the transition to 11v11 soccer at age 13 or 14. The tactical and decision making complexities are significant – too much for some players. To this end, don't spend an inordinate amount of time trying to fix 11v11 performance issues in your team practices. Instead, find ways to focus on the developmental needs of the players and continue to reinforce simpler tactics. Remember in the modern game of soccer, defensive players often find themselves with opportunities to attack and score and should thus spend training time working with a balance between defensive and attacking practices. Equally, attacking players should be encouraged to track the opposing defenders as they make their forward runs, so a good appreciation of defensive responsibilities is important.

## **Summary of Principles and Systems**

Regardless of system or style of play, the principles will always remain the same. Successful soccer at all levels determined by one factor - 'technique'. The execution of technique and tactics are highly correlated. Limited technical abilities of the players results in limited tactical opportunities.

As a guide, use the principles of attack and defense as your blueprint for coaching youth soccer. Start with a strong individual technical focus and use the competency matrix to direct you on what is and what is not appropriate. Acquiring the fundamental building blocks of soccer is critical to the development of the player.

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# SOCCER COACHING CURRICULUM FOR 6-11 YEAR OLD PLAYERS - VOLUME 1

Soccer Coaching Curriculum For 6-11 Year Old Players - Volume 1 includes 40 developmentally appropriate coaching activities in full color, curriculum diagrams and an abundance of coaching tips. NSCAA approach to player development is constructed around a 5 Stage Model adopted by progressive youth clubs around the globe. Our methodology is proven to raise player and coach performance, leading to long term consistently positive and meaningful results. This manual focuses on Stages 2 and 3, loosely based on the age groups 6-11 years old. It is an excellent resource for an experienced and novice coach alike. Directors of Coaching, Head Coaches and Administrators will find this as an excellent tool to assist in developing a organization's in-house coach education program.

The manual supports NSCAA Player Development Curriculum Diploma Course Season 1, an eLearning program offered by National Soccer Coaches Association of America. To learn more about NSCAA eLearning, visit [www.NSCAA.com/eLearning](http://www.NSCAA.com/eLearning). NSCAA is committed to delivering coaching education in a variety of methods – methods that reflect different learning styles and interest levels of our members. Presenting vibrant and engaging content in a convenient and low cost elearning format to supplement and enhance existing NSCAA courses and events is a priority.

There are 4 manuals available:

**Soccer Coaching Curriculum for 3-8 year old Players – Volume 1:** with activity contributions from David Newbery, eLearning Coordinator, NSCAA and Sari Rose, Assistant Technical Director of Coaching and Player Development, North Carolina Youth Soccer.

**Soccer Coaching Curriculum for 6-11 year old Players – Volume 1:** with activity contributions from Sari Rose, Assistant Technical Director of Coaching and Player Development, North Carolina Youth Soccer and Ian Barker, Director of Coaching Education, NSCAA.

**Soccer Coaching Curriculum for 12-18 year old Players – Volume 1:** with activity contributions from Robert Parr, Director of Coaching, Arkansas State Soccer Association and Tony Englund, Author of FC Barcelona - Style and Domination.

**Complete Soccer Coaching Curriculum for 3-18 year old Players – Volume 1:** includes all 5 stages of development in one manual.

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