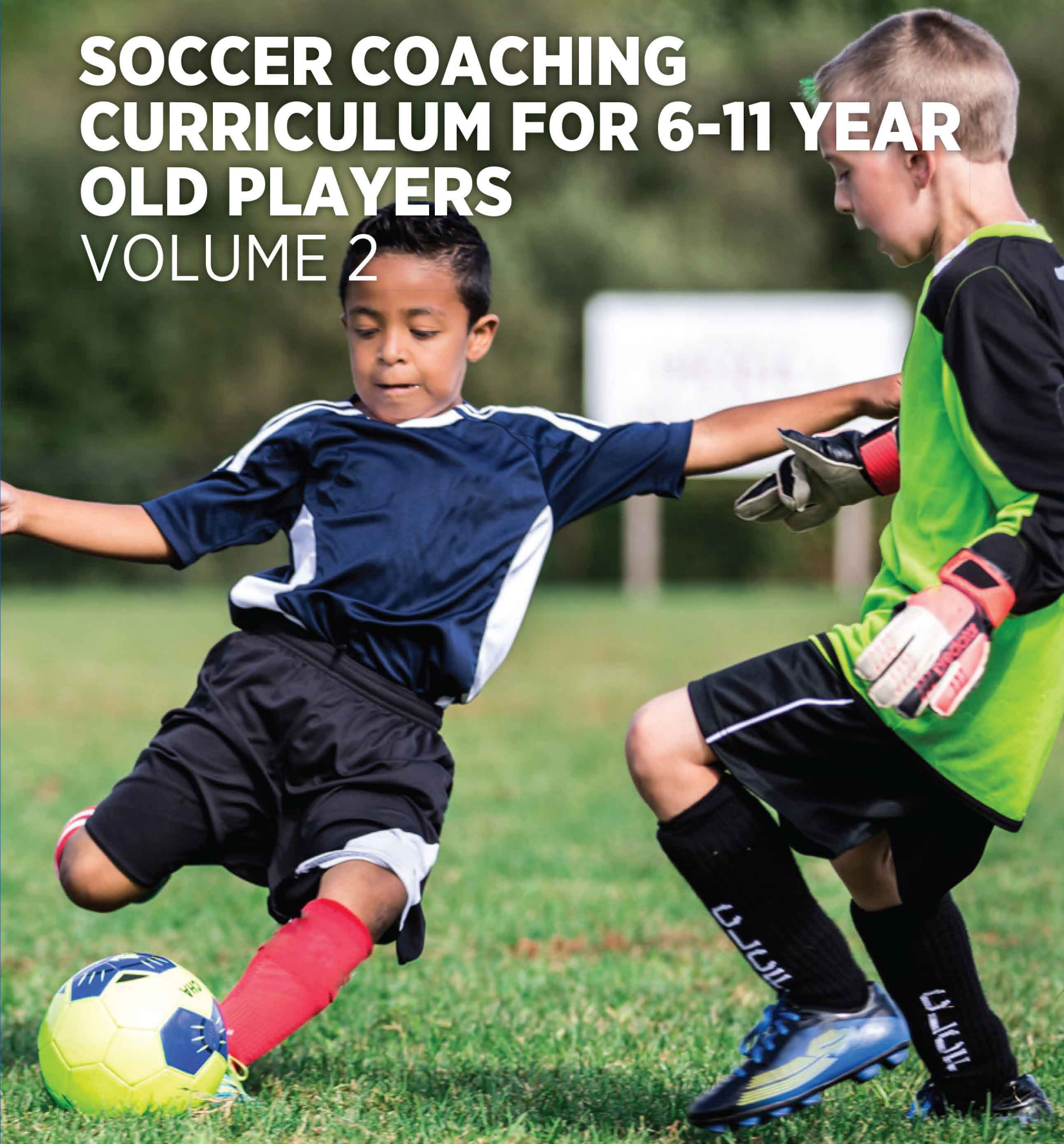


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SOCCER COACHING CURRICULUM FOR 6-11 YEAR OLD PLAYERS VOLUME 2



DAVID NEWBERY

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SOCCER COACHING CURRICULUM FOR 6-11 YEAR OLD PLAYERS - VOLUME 2

AUTHOR

David Newbery, eLearning Coordinator, NSCAA



Since 1988, David has studied and worked in youth education, soccer development and coaching. A former University Professor and current CEO of a 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, authoring numerous on-demand courses and hosting live coaching education webinars. He is the co-author of NSCAA Level 1 Coaching Diploma and creator of NSCAA Player Development Curriculum Diploma Series. David also serves as Coordinator for NSCAA Club Standards Project, an initiative designed to raise player development, coaching and administrative performance in youth soccer. At the time of publication over 170 youth clubs in USA and Canada had been evaluated by and NSCAA Consultant.

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 to soccer publications, has authored and edited 8 books focusing on player and coach development and presents at national soccer events. David has been coaching soccer since 1987 and has held numerous professional and volunteer coaching positions at youth, collegiate and semi-professional levels of the game.

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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 Volume 2'**. 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.

This is the second volume. It extends on the topics presented in the first volume and introduces many new areas of focus. The manual also supports NSCAA Player Development Curriculum Diploma Course Series 2, an eLearning program offered by National Soccer Coaches Association of America. The table below provides an overview of the topics and focus of the entire series of manuals one and two.

STAGE	SERIES/MANUAL 1	SERIES/MANUAL 2
STAGE 1 - 3-5 YEARS OLD PLAYERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dribbling and turning.2. 1v1 attacking and defending.3. Ball mastery - individual technique.4. Shooting to an unopposed goal.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dribbling and turning.2. 1v1 attacking and defending.3. Ball mastery - individual technique.4. Shooting to an unopposed goal.
STAGE 2 - 6-8 YEARS OLD PLAYERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Passing and receiving.2. Dribbling and turns.3. Attacking as an individual.4. Defending as an individual.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 1v1 beating an opponent.2. Defending pressure.3. Passing over a short distance.4. Teaching games for understanding.
STAGE 3 - 9-11 YEARS OLD PLAYERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Passing combinations - triangles.2. Attacking transition.3. Defending in pairs and groups4. Shooting.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attacking small sided games.2. Creating space as an individual and small group.3. Small group defending principles.4. Passing combinations in pairs - wall pass and overlap.
STAGE 4 - 12-14 YEARS OLD PLAYERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Switching the point of attack.2. Counter-attacking and finishing breakaways.3. Group defending.4. Transition and attacking rhythm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attacking combinations close to goal.2. Building play from the defensive third.3. Small group possession.4. Passing over medium and long distances.
STAGE 5 - 15-18 YEAR OLD PLAYERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Group and team defending.2. Advanced technical training and fitness.3. Team possession with purpose.4. Crossing and finishing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Position training - attacking midfield.2. Defensive organization.3. High and low pressure defending.4. Transition to attack.

Our eLearning mantra is 'Education. Where you want it. When you want it. How you want it.' To learn more about NSCAA eLearning, visit www.NSCAA.com/eLearning. NSCAA is committed to delivering convenient coaching education in a variety of methods – methods that reflect different learning styles and interest levels of our members. Our priority is to present vibrant and engaging content in a low cost elearning format to supplement and enhance existing NSCAA courses and events. 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. We hope you enjoy the manual. Please don't hesitate to provide us with feedback relating to the webinars, manual and discussions.

Kind Regards,



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PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

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

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? 	Aims	Equality of Opportunity	Establishing standards	Continuity and coherence	Promotes understanding	Pathway (3-18+ year old players)
	Outcomes	Achieve soccer standards	Achieve academic, social and health aims	Commitment to learning	Confident learners	Individual and team success
	Focus		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? 	Content	Fundamental movement skills	Tactical awareness and understanding	Physical and mental preparation	Academic and social responsibility	Fundamental soccer skills
	Methodology	Practical and theory	Individual and team assessment	Guided practice	Self-discovery	Directed and modeling
	Supporting knowledge	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
	Learning environment	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?	Evaluation	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)

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

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.



**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 - 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 enrolment as an NSCAA Member Club. Benefits include: discount on individual full membership, registration for NSCAA Convention, tournament advertising and much more.*

Note: *Tier 2 and 3 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. nscaa.adobeconnect.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
or contact David Newbery at dnewbery@nscaa.com or 401-377-7008.**

Features, benefits and pricing correct as of August 1, 2014 and are subject to change.



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WHEN YOU WANT IT. HOW YOU WANT IT.**



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)
- + 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 (see NSCAA Education Partner Prospectus on previous page).

To learn more and register to be an NSCAA Affiliate Education Partner, visit www.NSCAA.com/eLearning

or contact David Newbery at dnewbery@nscaa.com or 401-377-7008.

Features, benefits and pricing correct as of August 1, 2014 and are subject to change.



EDUCATION. WHERE YOU WANT IT.
WHEN YOU WANT IT. HOW YOU WANT IT.

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
PHYSICAL LITERACY SKILLS																
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						-				+						
DRIBBLING SKILLS																
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
DRIBBLING SKILLS CONTINUED																
Running with the ball				-			+									
Feints and dribble		-						+								
Beating an opponent			-					+								
Escaping an opponent			-					+								
RECEIVING																
Control - Foot			-							+						
Control - Thigh					-						+					
Control - Chest						-						+				
Control - Head						-						+				
PASSING																
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							-					+				
SHOOTING																
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
SHOOTING CONTINUED																
One on one with Goal Keeper								-					+			
HEADING																
Basic technique				-							+					
Defensive header							-						+			
Attacking header							-						+			
PHYSICAL CONDITIONING																
Own body weight strength exercises								-								+
Core body strength								-								+
Dynamic warm-up						-										+
Flexibility							-									+
Aerobic Endurance training									-							+
Anaerobic Endurance training									-							+
Speed training (Anaerobic)									-							+
MENTAL/COGNITIVE CONDITIONING																
Confidence	-												+			
Commitment							-									+
Concentration	-												+			
Composure							-									+
GOAL KEEPING																
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
GOAL KEEPING CONTINUED																
Advanced Techniques - crosses, punching etc										-						+
SET PLAYS																
Throw in				-				+								
Penalties				-						+						
Corners				-								+				
Goal Kicks				-						+						
Free Kicks				-										+		
ATTACKING PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES																
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						-										+
DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES																
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
DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES CONTINUED																
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							-									+
LAWS OF THE GAME																
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' (+).

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 +				

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?

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

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



National Soccer Coaches
Association of America

EVENTS



From coaches to administrators, parents to players, the **NSCAA hosts** a myriad of **events for all** members of the **soccer community**. Whether you're looking for **coaching inspiration** and ideas, or interested in meeting and mingling with fellow football aficionados, the NSCAA offers **educational gatherings**, **international trips** and **engaging events** for everybody involved in the beautiful game.

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NSCAA.com/elearning/player-development-curriculum.

LEARN. PARTICIPATE. BELONG.

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

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)

ACTIVITIES LISTING FOR STAGE 2: PLAYERS 6-8 YEARS OLD

23 1V1 TO 2V2 OLYMPICS

- + Stages 1, 2, 3 - 3-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

24 1V1 TO 3V3 TEAM WARM-UP

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1, small group attacking, defending and dribbling.

25 TURN AND SHOOT 1V1

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1, shooting and creating space.

26 1V1 TO 2V1 SHOOTING

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1-2v1, shooting and creating space.

27 1V1 DUELS ROUND ROBIN

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

28 ATTACKING AND DEFENDING SKILLS DRILLS

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

29 2V1 WITH DEFENSIVE PRESSURE

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 2v1, defending 1v2 and dribbling.

30 DEFENDING TWO GOALS 1V2 AND 2V1

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking individually and in small groups, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

31 1V1 DEFENDING PRESSURE WIDE

- + Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking individually, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

32 FULL PRESSURE DEFENDING 1V1-1V2

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: 1v1 attacking and defending, 1st defender and creating space.

33 PASSING PAIRS

- + Stages 2, 3 - 6-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, dribbling and creating space.

34 CRISS CROSS TECHNICAL TRAINING

- + Stages 1, 2 & 3 - 3-9 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, dribbling and creating space.

35 NUMBERS PASSING

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and communication.

36 1V1 TO 2V2 PASSING RHYTHM

- + Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving with the feet and creating space.

37 2V1V1 PASSING AND SUPPORTING ANGLES

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, creating space and defending 1v1.

38 ALL UP - ALL BACK 3V3

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.

39 COUNTDOWN

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.

40 DRIBBLE THE GAUNTLET

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, 1v1 defending and creating space.

41 SQUARES

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing, receiving and creating space.

42 BLOCK AND POKE TACKLING TECHNIQUES

- + Stages 2, 3 - 6-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: 1v1 Defending, defensive pressure and tackling technique.

1V1 TO 2V2 OLYMPICS

WHY USE IT

Players can earn points with great attacking and solid defending. As the activity progresses, the players are matched with an equally successful opponent - Gold, Silver and Bronze.

SET UP

25x15 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at one end of the area. At the other end of the area the coach places a cone for each team 2 yards from the sideline. Approximately 15 yards along both sidelines is a cone and a large supply of balls are placed on the end line.

HOW TO PLAY

To begin this activity the coach places a single soccer ball at the far end of the grid. On the command of "GO", the first person in each line sprints along the side of the field. The first person to reach the first cone continues around the second cone and collects the soccer ball. When reaching the first cone the slower player makes a bent run onto the field and prepares to defend. The attacker attempts to score in either of the two goals and the defender attempts to win the ball and dribble the ball over the end line. There must always be a winner after every duel - if the ball is kicked out of the area the coach decides which player had the best performance in that particular duel. The winner moves up a group and the loser moves down a group. After each player has had 8 to 10 repetitions, the player in the highest group wins the gold medal, second the silver medal and third the bronze medal.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - The rules of this activity naturally reward the quickest player. As in the game, the player in possession is the attacker and so it is important for the coach to impress upon the players to be ready, on their toes and cover the ground quickly.
- + Coaching tips - Providing young players with an opportunity to be successful is essential and to do so we have to differentiate our coaching. By placing a cone along the sideline a slower player will not be eliminated from the game. The slower player must prepare quickly to defend.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: To give each player equal opportunity to attack, adjust the starting positions and/or allow one player a head start.
- + More challenging: Increase the number of players to 2v2 or 3v3. Require the attacker to perform a particular move before scoring. Initiate multiple pairs at one time.

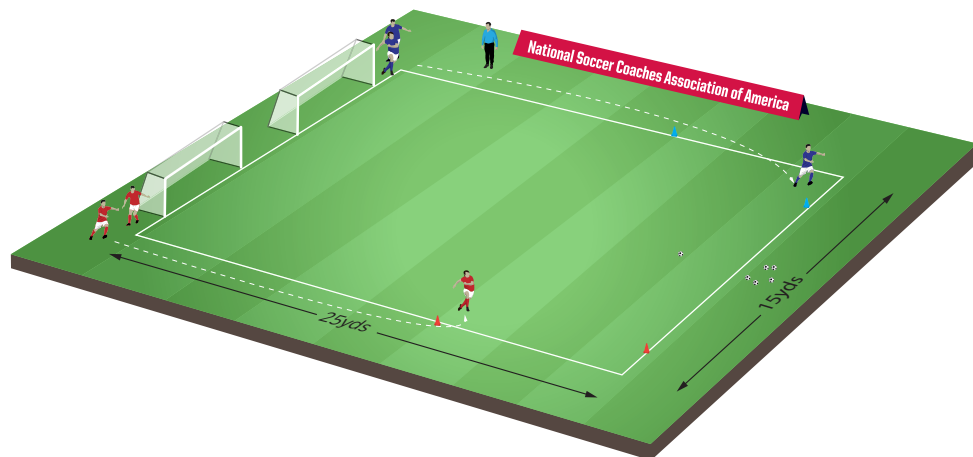
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1, 2, 3 - 3-11 year old players

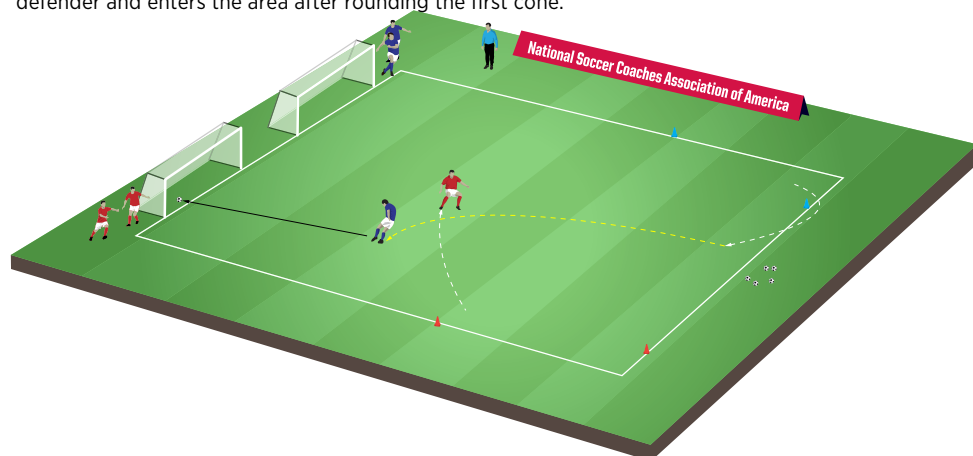
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

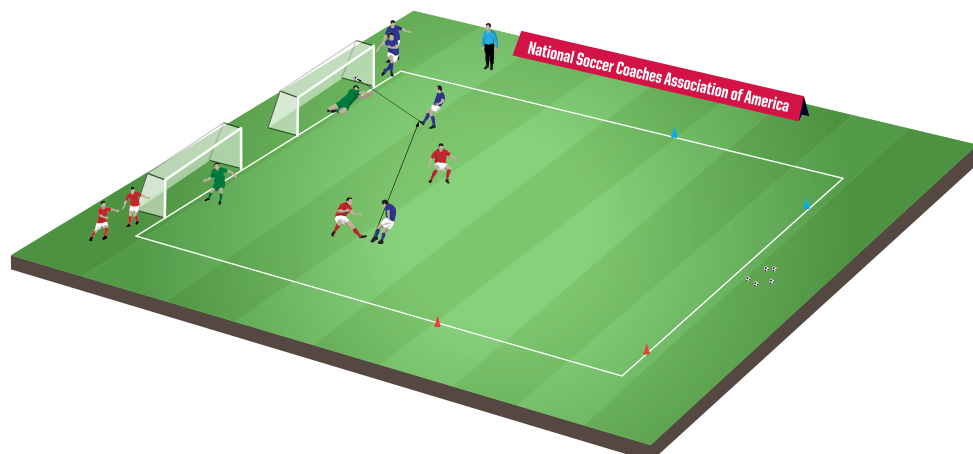
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + On the command of "GO" a player from each team sprints along the sideline.
- + The blue player reaches the first cone before the red player.
- + The blue player continues to sprint around the second cone and collect a ball. The red player is the defender and enters the area after rounding the first cone.



- + The blue attacker collects the ball and dribbles at the red defender.
- + The red defender attempts to win possession and dribble over the end line, but the blue attacker is too good and scores.



- + The coach progresses the activity by creating a 2v2 game and adding goalkeepers.
- + The blue team is again first to the ball and the reds defend.
- + A neat pass to split the defense presents the blue attacker with a goal scoring opportunity.

1V1 TO 3V3 TEAM WARM-UP

WHY USE IT

This is a wonderful warm-up activity that can introduce numerous attacking and defending concepts and themes. Use this activity with younger and older youth players, adjusting the conditions to increase the intensity.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at each end. The coach stands at the halfway with a large supply of balls and 2 teams of players start at a cone 3 yards from the coach.

HOW TO PLAY

To begin the session the coach plays a ball into the area and the first player in each line sprints to the ball. Based on the starting positions of the players the first player to the ball should attempt to take a firm touch towards the goal and score. Playing 2v2 enables the coach to teach players different movements and combinations, such as an overlap, under lap and wall pass. The coach can also discuss the importance of maintaining possession if a quick attack is not available, with the available space often behind the player in possession. The coach should keep the activity flowing, sending multiple groups with a few seconds in between.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the players to make decisions based on the position they receive the ball on the field, the number of teammates, teammate's position and the location of the opponents. As a general rule the order of decision making questions for young players is - Can I shoot? Can I dribble? Can I pass? As player's become more competent the order of the questions may change to: shoot - pass - dribble.
- + Coaching tips – The service from the coach will establish the challenge for attackers and defenders. For example, if the coach plays a short straight ball, the attacker will be able to see the field and penetrate quickly. If however the coach plays the ball long or behind one of the players, the attacker will start with momentum going away from goal.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

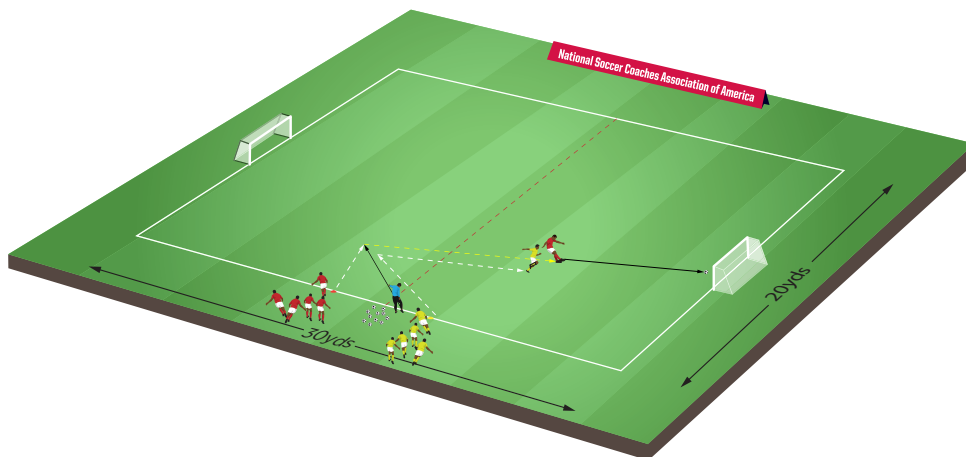
- + Less challenging: Keep the number of players on the field to a minimum - 1v1. The coach can also play straight passes to the attackers so they can see the whole field.
- + More challenging: Add more players gradually, change starting positions, serve the ball in different directions and speeds.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

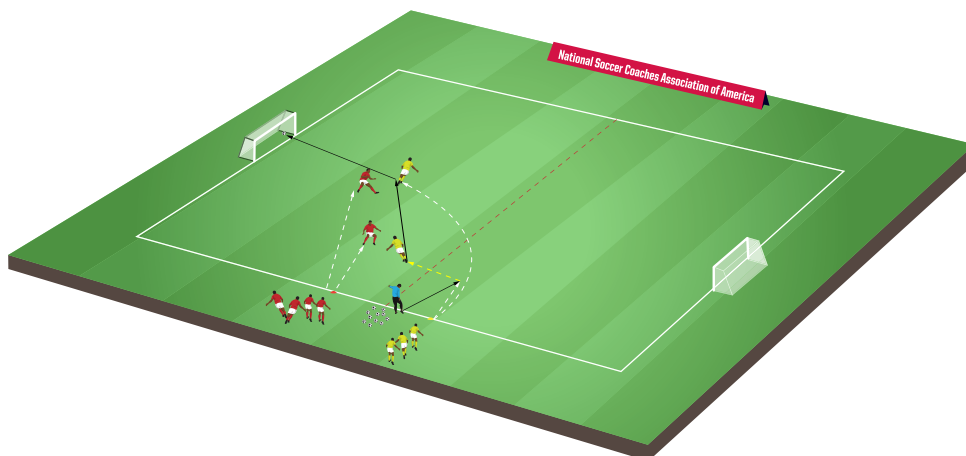
Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

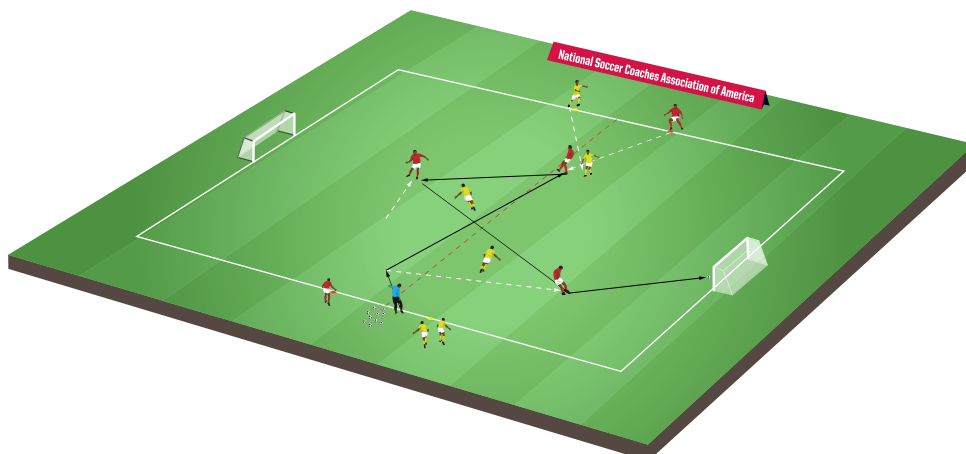
Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1, small group attacking, defending and dribbling.
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + The coach starts a 1v1 duel with a ball played at an angle to the red player.
- + The yellow defender closes down the red attacker, but the attacker is able to beat the defender.
- + The red attacker shoots at an unopposed goal and scores.



- + The coach progresses the activity by playing 2v2.
- + The pass by the coach is short and straight and the yellow attacker is first to respond.
- + The teammate of the attacker exploits a massive space and makes an overlap to score.



- + In the final progression, the coach plays 3v3, with 1 player from each team entering from the far side.
- + The first red player entering from the ball side plays to the player entering the field on the far side.
- + Possession is maintained well by the red's with a pass backwards followed by a forward pass for a shot.

TURN AND SHOOT 1V1

WHY USE IT

This is an introductory shooting activity for players in late Stage 2 and Stage 3. Players receive numerous opportunities to pass over a short/medium distance, receive the ball, turn and shoot. Goalkeepers and defenders can be added for older players.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at each end. 2 cones are placed halfway, approximately 12 yards apart and 2 groups of players start in opposite corners with a large supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The focus is on the striker in the center shooting at goal, but the quality of pass made from the server, supporting runs following a pass, goalkeeping and defending can also be coached. The activity commences with a player from one group starting in the middle of the area facing the other group. The first player in the serving group makes a firm pass to the feet of the striker. With young players it is acceptable for the player to receive the ball and turn, but as the players get more proficient the coach should encourage the central player to move away from the ball and check back to replicate creating separation from a defender. On receipt of the pass the striker turns and attempts to shoot at goal within 2-3 touches. The coach can place some cones or run a line 8 yards from goal and the striker must shoot before crossing the line. Once the pass is made, the server should sprint to the middle and he/she is the next striker receiving the pass from the other group.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work on different turns to evade the defender and smartly take a shot. Sensing the direction of defensive pressure is essential for a striker who should constantly look over the shoulder to see the positioning of their opponent.
- + Coaching tips – Add defenders starting at the cones to each side of the striker. Only 1 defender is permitted to defend each serve and the coach should identify which defender is permitted to defend before the serve. Now the striker must decide how to receive into space to set up the shot.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Bring the servers closer to the center to shorten the pass. Remove the goalkeepers.
- + More challenging: Add defenders and goalkeepers. Let the defenders choose who defends.

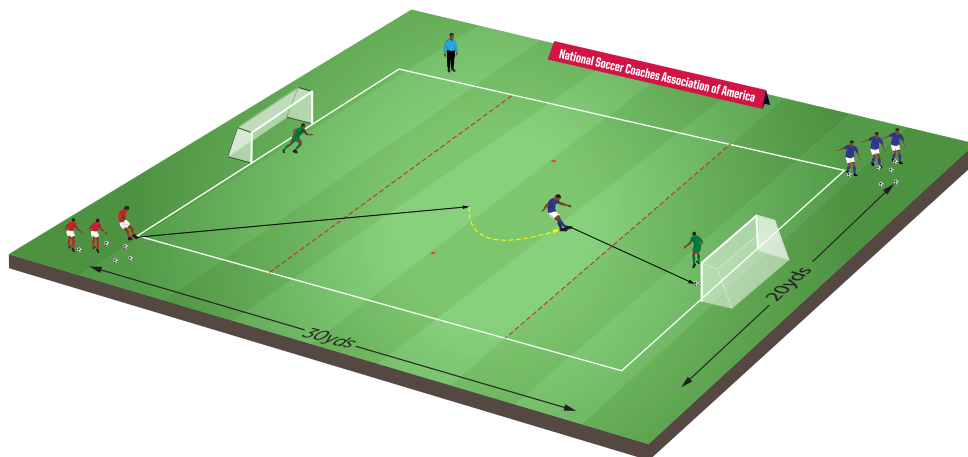
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1, shooting and creating space.

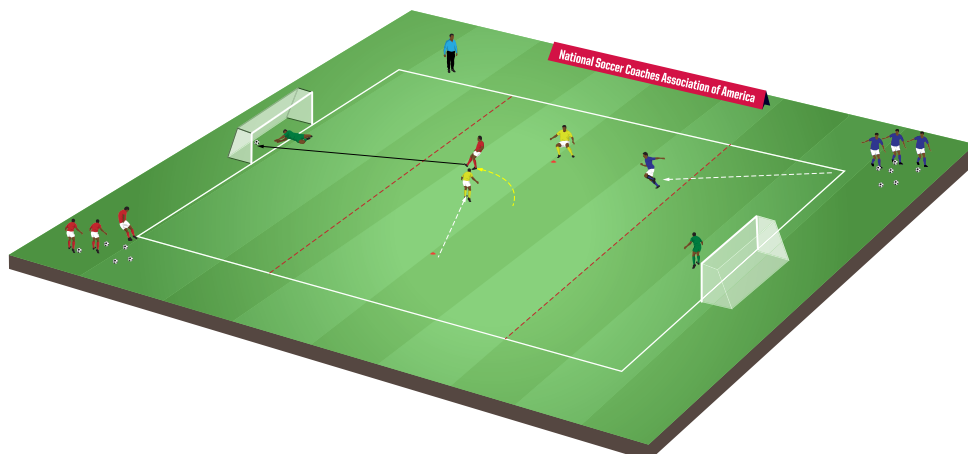
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and turning with the ball.



- + A blue player starts in the center of the area facing the red players. The blue striker must be on his/her toes.
- + The red server drives a short pass into the feet of the blue striker.
- + The striker decides to receive the ball on the half-turn and moves in the direction of the pass before unleashing a shot low and hard into the corner for a goal.



- + The red server continues his/her run into the center and becomes the next striker.
- + The coach has now added 2 defenders standing next to cones 5 yards inside each touch line.
- + Sensing the pressure is coming from the ball side, the striker allows the ball to run across the body.



- + In this sequence the defensive pressure comes from behind the striker.
- + After a quick glance over the shoulder, the striker plays a firm touch into space and shoots.
- + The striker's decision to turn to the ball side is a good one and the defender has no chance to stop the shot.

1V1 TO 2V1 SHOOTING

WHY USE IT

In this activity all players will have an opportunity to attack with numbers-even and numbers-up and to defend numbers-even and numbers-down. Transition from one end to the other must be quick and players can demonstrate their creativity to beat an opponent.

SET UP

The set-up is a 40x20 yards area with 2 appropriate size goals at each end and 2 teams with 5 players. In one half of the field a solitary defender waits to play 1v1 with an oncoming attacker and at the other end an attacker from the same team starts.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts the game with a pass to the team with 5 players starting next to the goal. The first player sprints out and receives the ball in his/her half of the field. The opponent in the same half is not involved in the first sequence and must not prevent the player from dribbling at the defender in the other half. The attacker dribbles at pace and attempts to beat the defender and shoot into an unopposed goal. As this action occurs a defender enters the field at the other end. If the attacker scores or misses, he/she must leave the field and rejoin the team and the coach passes a new ball to the defender to attack the other end 2v1. If a defender wins possession in either game, he/she should attempt to counter attack and score.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work through 2 different types of challenge for attackers and defenders. When playing 1v1 the attacker should be direct and down the middle, but in a 2v1 the dribbler should attack wider to create space for a teammate. Defensively, the player in the 1v1 can move forward aggressively to apply pressure away from goal, but when facing a 2v1 must be more patient to slow the speed of the attack.
- + Coaching tips – The benefits of playing without a goalkeeper to promote attacking confidence are numerous. However, the defensive benefits can be equally important. Without a goalkeeper a defender may wish to play high and aggressive and prevent the attacker getting close to goal.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Remove the goalkeepers.
- + More challenging: Build up player numbers, place a time limit to score and add the goalkeepers.

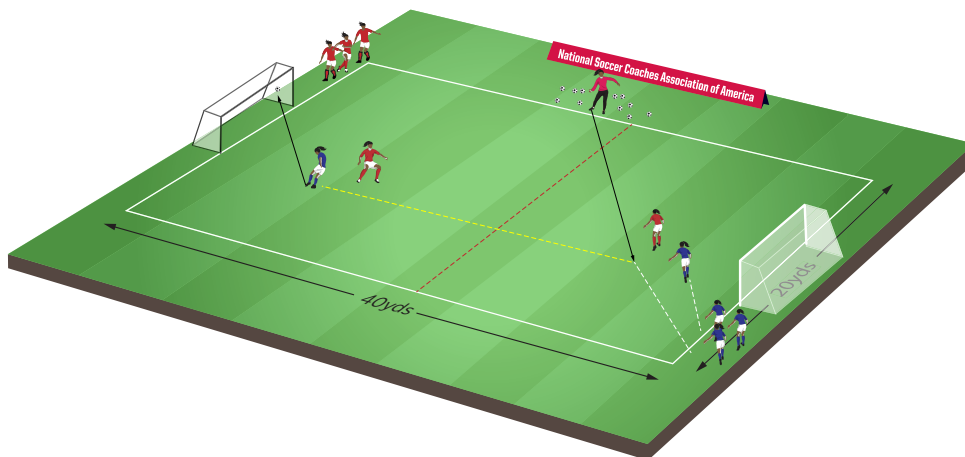
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

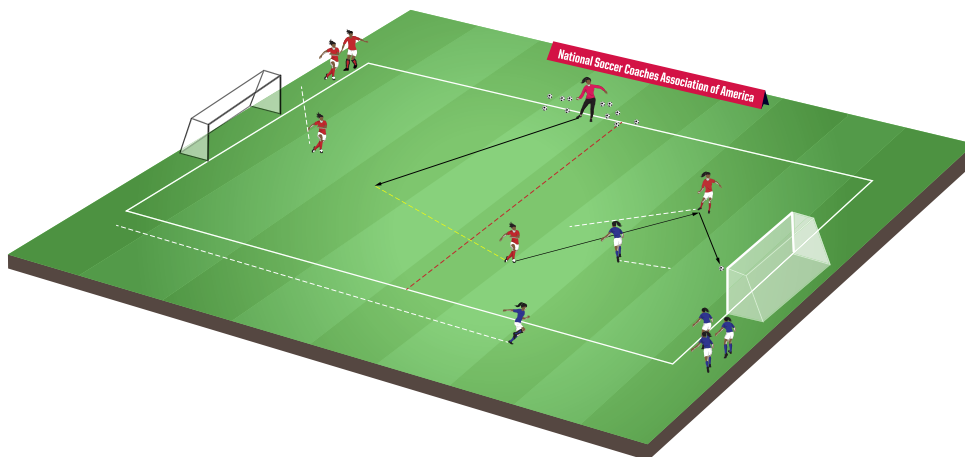
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1-2v1, shooting and creating space.

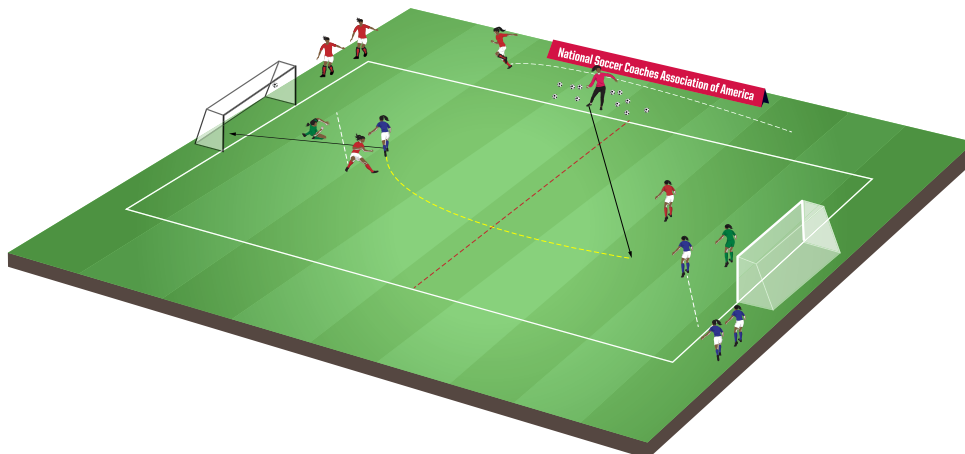
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and shooting technique.



- + In the first diagram the coach starts with a pass to an oncoming blue attacker.
- + The attacker dribbles the ball into the opponents half and beats the defender before scoring.
- + As the play progresses another blue player enters the field as a defender waiting for the reds to attack.



- + When the blue attack is over the blue attacker leaves the field and the coach passes to the red defender.
- + The reds now attack the blues goal - 2v1. The red player dribbles at a slight angle to create space.
- + The other red attacker moves wide and creating that separation allows the attackers to combine and score.



- + The reds attack and a new red defender enters the area ready for the next blue attack.
- + The red attacking player from the previous sequence leaves the field and the dribbler stays on the field.
- + The coach has added goalkeepers to add to the complexity of the activity.

1V1 DUELS ROUND ROBIN

WHY USE IT

The vast majority of time in Stages 1-3 should be dedicated to individual technical development. The modern game requires players to be competent in 1v1 attacking and defending. Who can win the 1v1 duels?

SET UP

40x30 yards. 6 duelling areas, set up as shown. Each area has a different configuration. 2 teams of 6 with 1 player from each team in each area. 4 balls are strategically placed to allow quick restarts.

HOW TO PLAY

This is a round robin competition, each pair competing in 6 game formats. Different rules apply - odd number field - reds start with the ball, even number fields - orange start: Area 1 - Players attempt to score on short/wide field. If the ball leaves the area, opponent sprints to the side and bring a new ball in play. Area 2 - traditional shape field. Area 3 - players must stop the ball in the opponents end zone. Area 4 - players start on end line with attacker in front of defender. The coach passes the ball and attacker starts with back to goal. Area 5 - 3 flags in the middle. Attacker must beat defender and stop the ball in the triangle for a point. Area 6 - goals on the diagonal. These are intense 2 minute games, with 1 minute reset and movement to the next area. 3 points for a win, 1 for a tie and 0 for a loss.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - If focusing on attack - use take on moves to beat an attacker. Discuss with players how the setup changes the tactics - i.e. Where is the space in relation to the goal? Defending - force the attacker away from goal and towards the sidelines.
- + Coaching tips - Once the coach has established the rules, let the players play uninterrupted and let them referee their own games. Discuss ways the players can resolve disputes - such as alternate possession.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Keep the setup simple, creating more space to assist the attackers and less space to assist the defender.
- + More challenging: Add a neutral player to play with the attacker to create 2v1. Limit the number of touches the attacker has before scoring. Change the players starting positions.

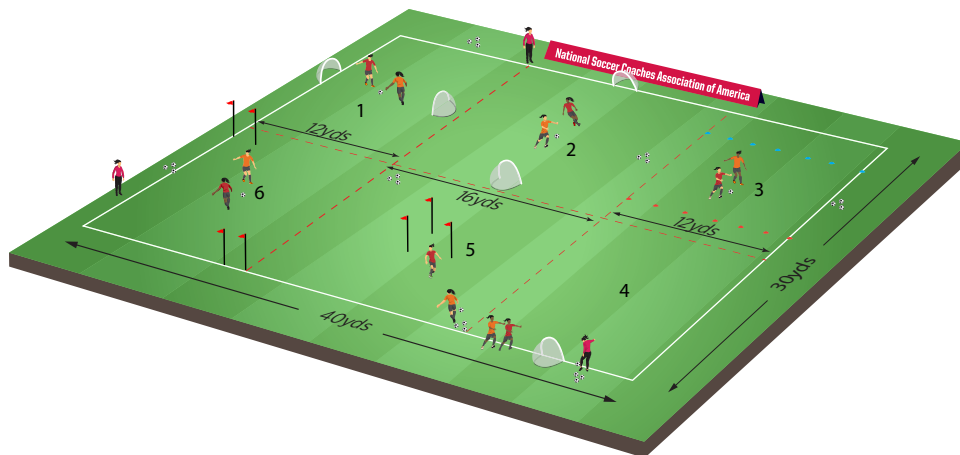
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

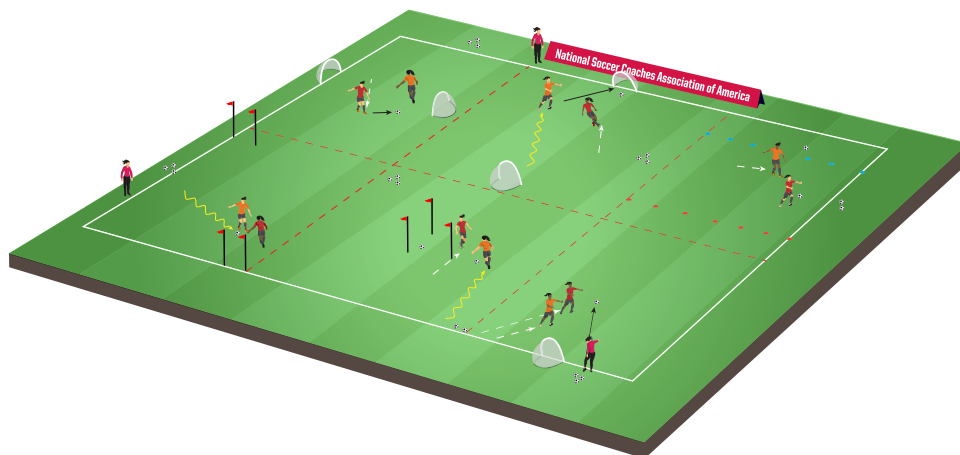
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

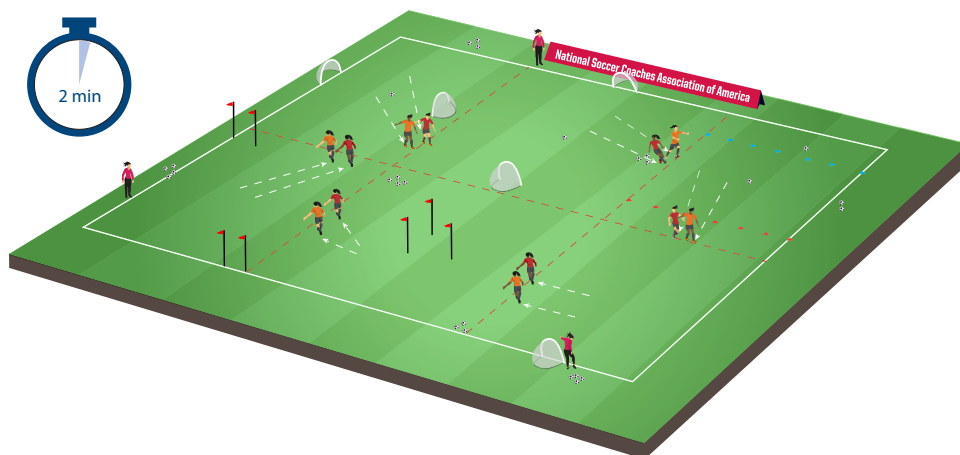
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + 6 different game formats to create a round robin competition.
- + All games start at the same time and last 2 minutes.
- + Reds start with the ball on fields 1,3 and 5 and orange start on fields 2,4 and 6.



- + The coach should allow the games to flow, making coaching points between games.
- + Encourage attackers to innovate, using moves they have learned to beat an opponent.
- + Work with defenders to apply pressure, stand on their feet and not dive into tackles.



- + After 2 minutes, the players should reset the area they were playing in and rotate.
- + Coaches move around the perimeter encouraging players in their attacking and defending responsibilities.

ATTACKING AND DEFENDING SKILLS DRILLS

WHY USE IT

This is a series of 3 different 1v1 activities that offer the players continuous repetition of defensive and attacking techniques. Varying starting positions and ball delivery will change the attacking and defending options.

SET UP

1) - 20x10 yards rectangle with 2x2 yards cone goals placed on each long side. **2)** - 20x20 yards square with a cone placed centrally on each side line and a 5x5 yards square in the center. **3)** - 20x10 yards rectangle with 2x2 yards cone goals positioned in the corners at the opposite end to the players. Another cone is halfway along the sideline nearest the defenders.

HOW TO PLAY

1) The defender passes firmly along the ground to the attacker. On receipt of the pass, the attacker attempts to score in either of the side goals. If the defender wins possession, he/she should dribble over the opponent's end line. **2)** 2 attackers with a ball each take it in turn to dribble at a defender in the center of the square. The attacker must penetrate the square in the center. If the defender wins, he/she can dribble to a cone for a point. **3)** The defender sprints along the sideline and enters the area through a small corner goal. When the defender reaches a cone placed halfway along the sideline, the attacker can dribble and attempt to score in either goal. The defender can score by dribbling over the end line.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – With the focus on individual pressure defending: Approach the attacker at pace and at an angle to force the attacker in a particular direction. Slow down when 4-5 yards away, lower the center of gravity and position the feet so the body is side on. If an opportunity arises to perform a poke tackle take the chance to win the ball, or wait until the attacker makes a mistake.
- + Coaching tips – A common mistake of young defenders is approaching the attacker square-on and swinging at the ball. Teach them the correct side-on position and the poke and block tackle techniques.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Make the area smaller to give the defender less space to cover and make the play more compact. Change the players starting positions to provide an advantage to the defender.
- + More challenging: Add more attacking players as the defenders become more competent.

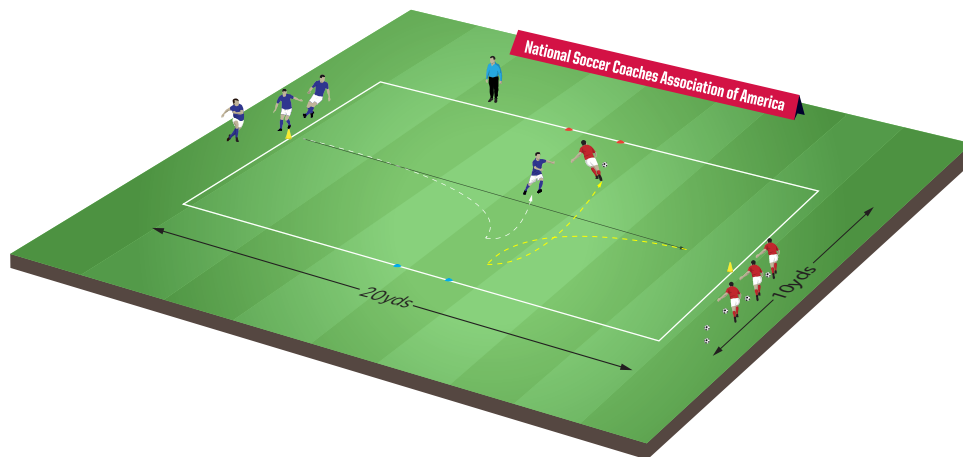
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

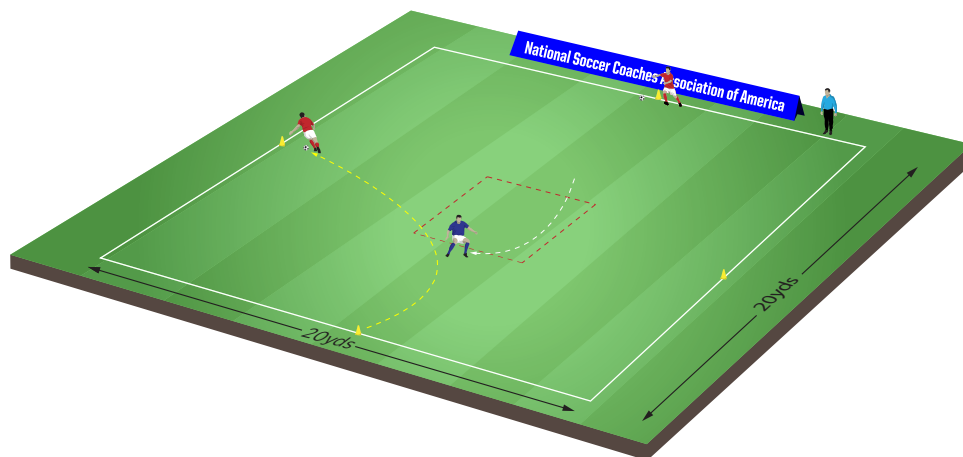
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

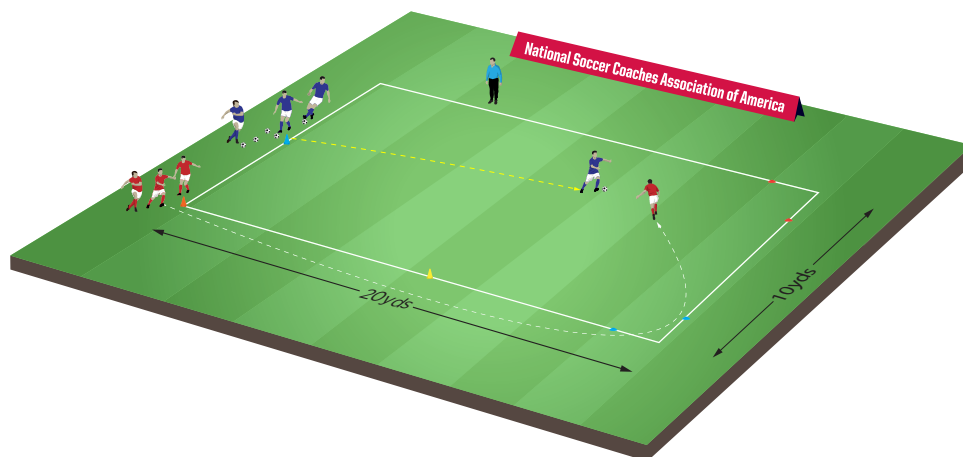
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + The blue defender passes firmly to the red attacker and then closes down space quickly.
- + The defender should apply pressure in an effort to force a mistake by the attacker.
- + A curved approach run to force the attacker to their weaker side is a good strategy for young defenders.



- + Alternating, the red attackers dribble at the blue defender and beat him/her.
- + The defender must reset quickly between attacks, moving forward to confront the attacker.
- + The attacker can dribble to any cone for a point.



- + The red defender sprints along the sideline and enters the area through a corner goal.
- + As the red defender reaches a cone halfway along the sideline, the blue defender attacks on the dribble.
- + The red defender makes a curved run and starts to close down space to prevent the attacker scoring.

2V1 WITH DEFENSIVE PRESSURE

WHY USE IT

The defender is put through his/her paces in this fast moving activity. Intentionally the defensive player is selected late as the activity progresses, so players need to be attentive and 'read' the visual cues. This is an equally good attacking activity to work with players on penetration and support.

SET UP

The set-up is a 25x15 yards area with an appropriate size goal at one end and two small counter attacking goals at the other. 2 attacking players with a large supply of balls start on the end line opposite the large goal and a pair of players are positioned 15 yards along both sides of the field. The coach can decide whether to play with a goalkeeper.

HOW TO PLAY

An attacker starts the activity by dribbling towards the goal. On the attacker's 3rd touch he/she passes to either of the support players to the left or right. The player receiving the pass becomes the attacking teammate and the other player is the defender. The 2 attackers attempt to score and the defender must attempt to win possession and score in one of the counter attack goals. If the goalkeeper saves the ball he/she distributes to the defender for a counter. The first team to 5 goals wins and then change the teams over.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Once the defender is known he/she must prioritize preventing a shot at goal over winning possession. A curved run towards the goal followed by inching forward to close space is an appropriate tactic.
- + Coaching tips – The number of touches the coach imposes on the dribbling player should change the approach by the defender. 1-2 touches only before passing to the support player will provide the defender with more time to get into position, whereas 3-4 touches allows the attacker to make progress up the field and gives the defender less time to adjust.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Prevent the attacking player from dribbling before passing or allow just 1-2 touches. The coach can also narrow the field to make defending easier.
- + More challenging: Change the starting position of the attacker to present a different challenge and/or allow the dribbler 3-4 touches before passing.

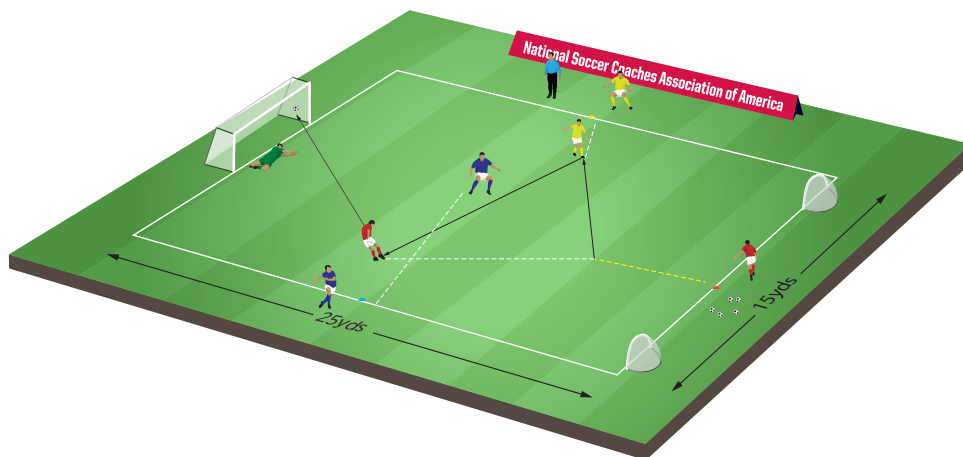
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

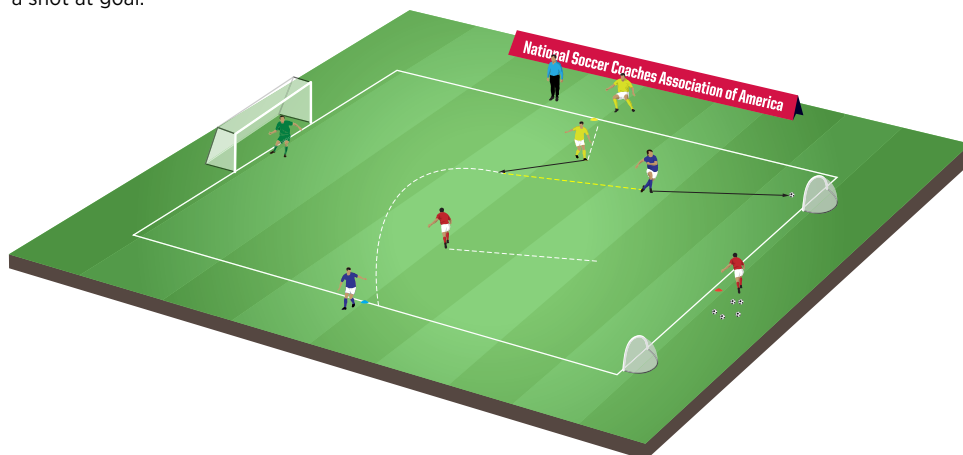
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v2, defending 1v2 and dribbling.

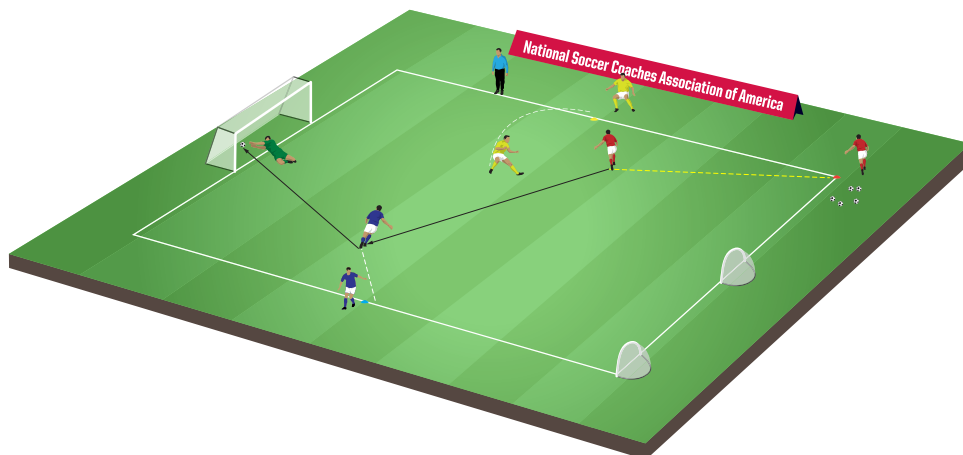
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + The red attacking player dribbles towards the goal and seeks to pass to a support player on the 3rd touch.
- + The blue and yellow support players wait at their cone and the red selects a teammate by passing to yellow.
- + The blue defender makes a straight run into 'no-man's land' allowing the attackers to combine and take a shot at goal.



- + In the second sequence the red attacker once again selects yellow as a teammate.
- + This time the blue player reacts quickly making a curved run to prevent the shot and apply pressure.
- + The yellow attacker is hurried into a poor pass and the blue player intercepts, dribbles and scores.



- + In the final illustration the coach has changed the angle by moving the attackers to the corner.
- + The new angle presents a different challenge as the red player dribbles directly at the defender.
- + The yellow defender overplays the dribbler and this enables the red player to release the blue into space.

DEFENDING TWO GOALS 1V2 AND 2V1

WHY USE IT

This is a fast-paced attacking and defending transition activity with plenty of goal scoring opportunities. Numbers can be added to progress from individual to small group duels.

SET UP

The area is 25x25 yards with appropriate size goals centrally located on two sides of the square. Opposite each goal with a supply of soccer balls are two teams of four players. In the first instance play without goalkeepers.

HOW TO PLAY

The activity commences with a black defender starting in the center of the area and 2 red players attacking the goal opposite their line. One red player dribbles or passes the ball to the other player. The attacking objective is to beat the black defender and score quickly. The defending objective is to win possession of the ball and pass the ball to the teammates on the sideline. As soon as the attack is over the black player and one of the red players leave the field and two black attackers attempt to score against the remaining red player. Play the first team to score 10 goals. To progress the activity the coach can play 2v2. The two attacking players must now be more creative if they are to beat a full strength defense. The coach can now work with the first defender applying pressure and the second defender covering.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the first defender to close down space and to apply pressure to the attacker on the ball. The second defender should drop deeper and if the first defender is beaten by the attacker, he or she will need to cover and prevent a shot.
- + Coaching tips – Setting up a continuous activity, where players are required to transition from a defensive role to an attacking role in the flow, mirrors game day conditions. These situations are important to replicate as often young players will lose concentration in transition.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

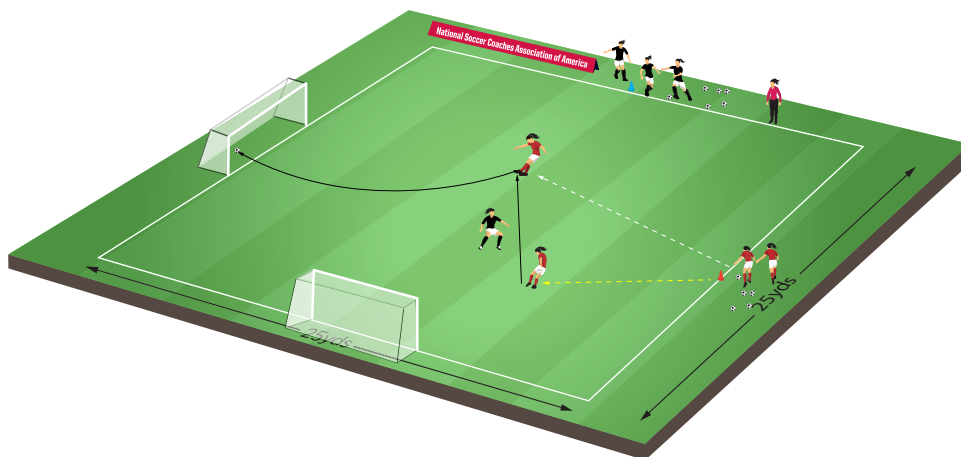
- + Less challenging: Start the activity without goalkeepers to give the attackers some shooting success. Play 1v1 if the defender is struggling against 2 attackers.
- + More challenging: Add more attacking players as the defenders become more competent and progress to even numbers.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

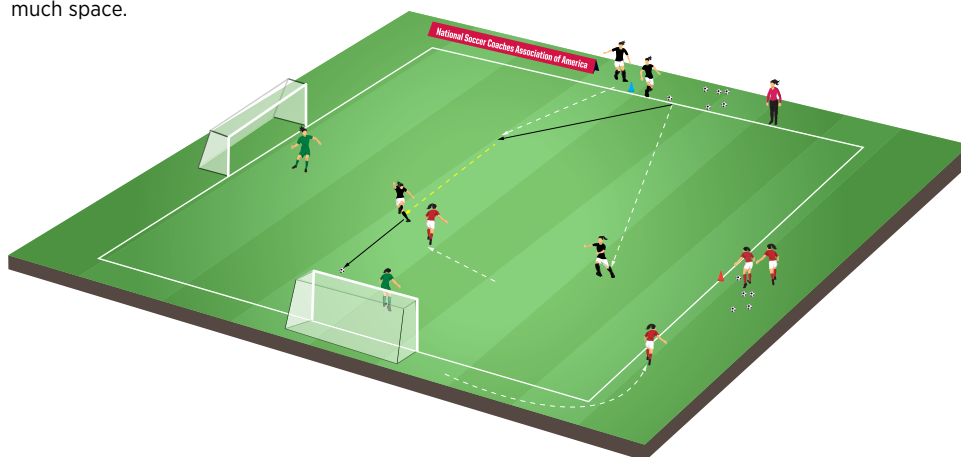
Stages 2, 3, 4 - 6-14 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

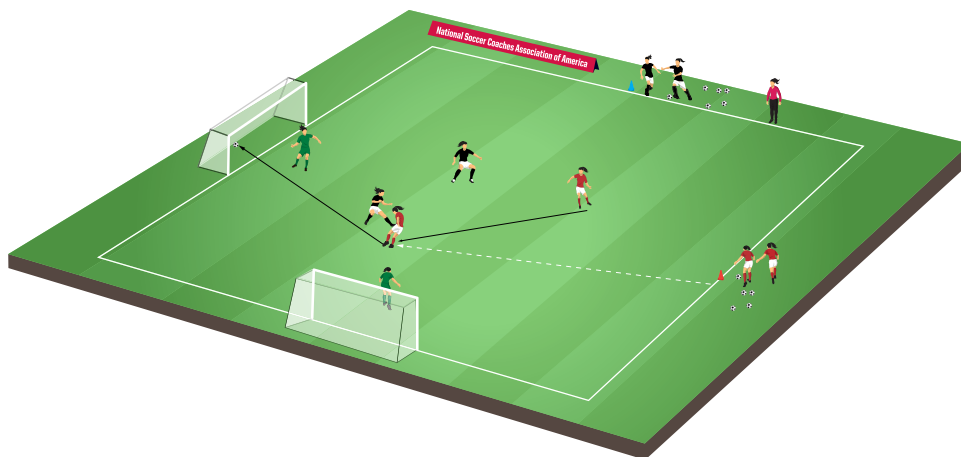
Top 3 themes: Attacking individually and in small groups, defending 1v1 and dribbling.
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + A black defender starts in the center of the area and 2 red attackers attempt to score in the goal opposite.
- + Outnumbered, the black defender must prevent the player on the ball dribbling and shooting at an unopposed goal. Similarly, the defender must not over-commit and leave the second attacker in too much space.



- + When the red attack has ended, the black defender and 1 red attacker must leave the field immediately.
- + Two black players now attack the remaining red player who has transitioned into defense.
- + On this occasion an early pass is made and the defender fails to close down the space to prevent a shot.



- + The coach has decided to play 2v2 with both attacking players transitioning to defense.
- + With two defenders the coach can work on pressure and cover defending.
- + Transition must be quick and all players should be alert and ready to attack and defend.

1V1 DEFENDING PRESSURE WIDE

WHY USE IT

Applying defensive pressure does not always occur with an attacker approaching to the front of the defender. In this activity the attacker starts wide and the defender must attempt to keep the attacker away from goal.

SET UP

The area is 30x20 yards with an appropriate size goal at one end. Along both sides of the field are counter attack goals and 3 cones are placed on the line opposite the goal. The defenders start from the center cone with a large supply of balls. The attackers start on the corner cones and a goalkeeper is in goal. There is a cone placed 10 yards from goal indicating how close the attacker must get before shooting.

HOW TO PLAY

A defender starts with a pass to either side of the field in the path of an attacker. As soon as the pass is made the defender can enter the area and must attempt to prevent the attacker scoring in the large goal. The attacker can enter the area as the pass is made and dribble towards goal. The attacker must pass the cone 10 yards from goal before shooting. If the defender can win possession of the ball, he/she can score in either of the counter attack goals. Once each player has had an opportunity to attack and defend send pairs off every 4-5 seconds to keep the action constant.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – When the defender is starting a recovery run from a central position he/she should take a direct route to goal with the objective of getting ahead of the attacker a priority. The defender can then attempt to cut-off the attacker, delay and force play to the width.
- + Coaching tips – To differentiate the activity the coach can manipulate variables to favor the attacker or defender. The coach can change the starting positions of both players, can adjust the angle of the initial pass and move the cone in front of goal.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start the activity without goalkeepers to give the attackers some shooting success. Hold the attackers run to give the defenders a head start.
- + More challenging: Remove the cone in front of goal to allow the attacker to shoot earlier and progress to 2v1 with both attackers entering the area from the corners as the ball is passed.

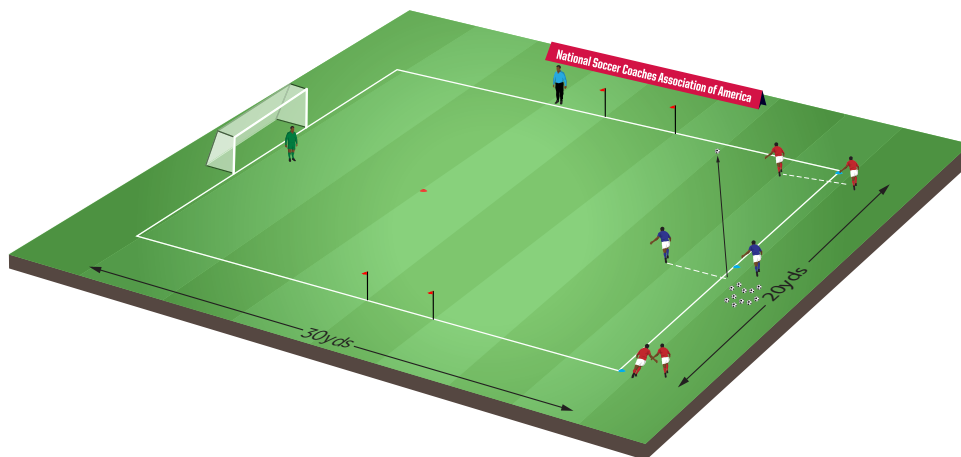
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

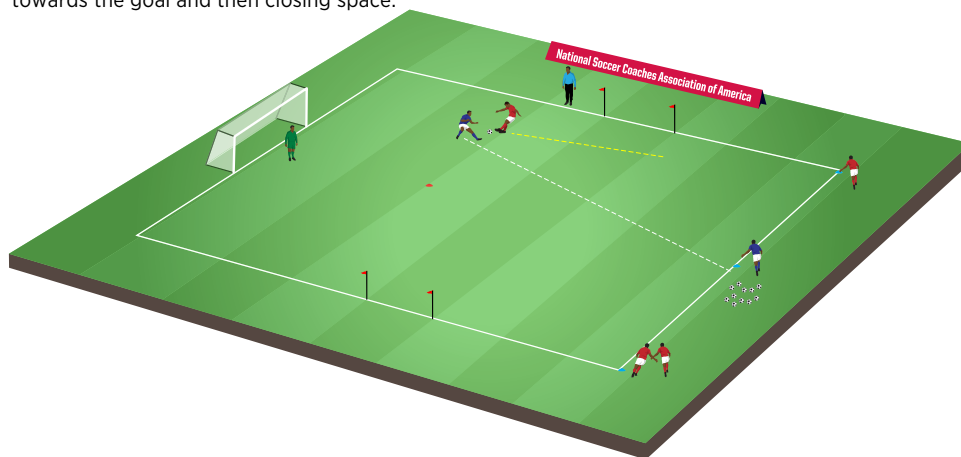
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking individually, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

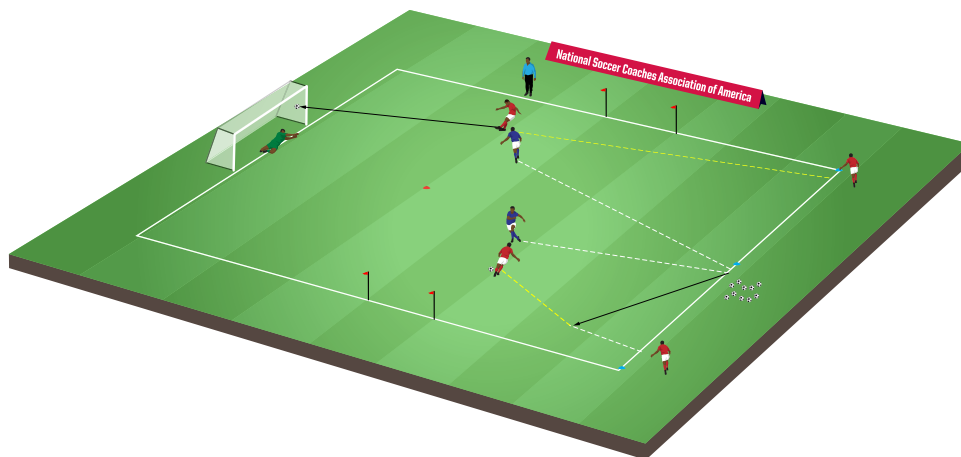
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + A blue defender starts from a central position with a supply of balls and passes wide to either red attacker.
- + As the ball is played into the path of the red attacker, the defender starts to make a recovery run.
- + Although the defender wants to win possession, the first priority is to cut off the route to goal by running towards the goal and then closing space.



- + In this illustration the defender has performed well and has managed to cut off the attacker's route to goal.
- + The next objective is to close down space and force play away from goal.
- + If the defender can force the attacker to turn away from goal he/she achieves the first defensive objectives.



- + As the activity progresses the coach sends pairs at 5 second intervals to maintain player engagement.
- + In one duel the defender is too slow to cut off the attacker and a goal is scored.
- + In the other duel the defender has covered the ground quickly and is well positioned to win possession.

FULL PRESSURE DEFENDING 1V1-1V2

WHY USE IT

This activity is equally as beneficial for defenders and attackers. Defensively, players work on closing space, applying pressure and intercepting passes. The attacker must create space, make firm accurate passes and be innovative in beating the defender.

SET UP

20x20 yards area with 4x10 yards clearly marked. To begin, 2 servers from each team stand opposite each other at the center point of each sideline. Each team also has a pair of players in the center. Each server has a ball to start.

HOW TO PLAY

Central players start in separate boxes as shown in illustration 1. Pairings are designated before the game commences. Orange is the attacker and black the defender in pair 1 and Black is the attacker and Orange the defender in pair 2. The attacking player in each pair initiates the activity by moving into any of the 4 squares - if a square is occupied by another pair, the attacker must move to an unoccupied area. The defender must play 'man to man', following the attacker. Once in a square the attacker calls/points to indicate the server from the same team to pass the ball. If the attacker receives the ball in the area and the defender is not in the same area, the attacker earns 1 point. If the defender tracks the attacker into the same square, no points. On receipt of the pass, the attacker must attempt to pass the ball back to the target to earn another point. If the defender can intercept the ball and play to either server of the same color, 2 points are scored by the defender. To reset, players jog to the starting positions and restart. First to 5 wins - rotate with the servers.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Defensive player must stay close to the attacker, adjusting the body position to see the ball and the player. Help defenders decide when to win the ball and when to be patient.
- + Coaching tips - If the defender is struggling to keep up, add a 2 touch condition to the attacker to slow the pace.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: No defender to begin - use shadow play. Restrict attacker to move in only one half.
- + More challenging: Add an extra attacker creating a 1v2 and on receipt, the final pass must be made to the other server.

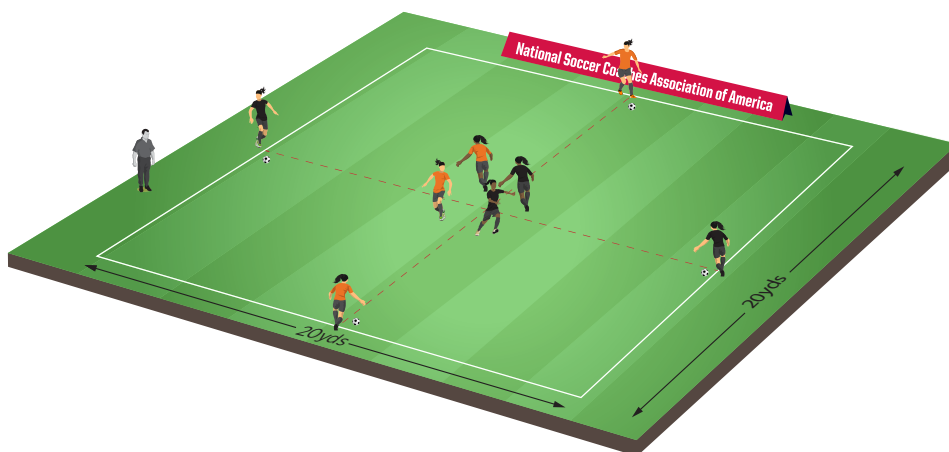
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

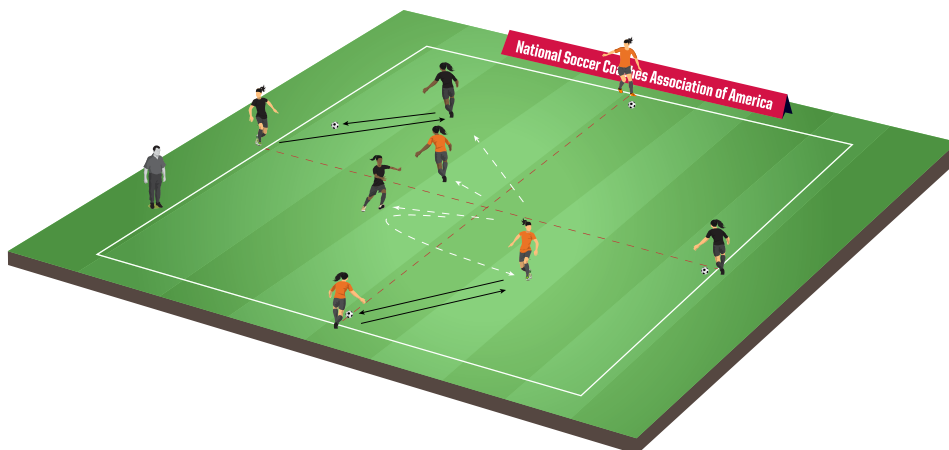
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: 1v1 attacking and defending, 1st defender and creating space.

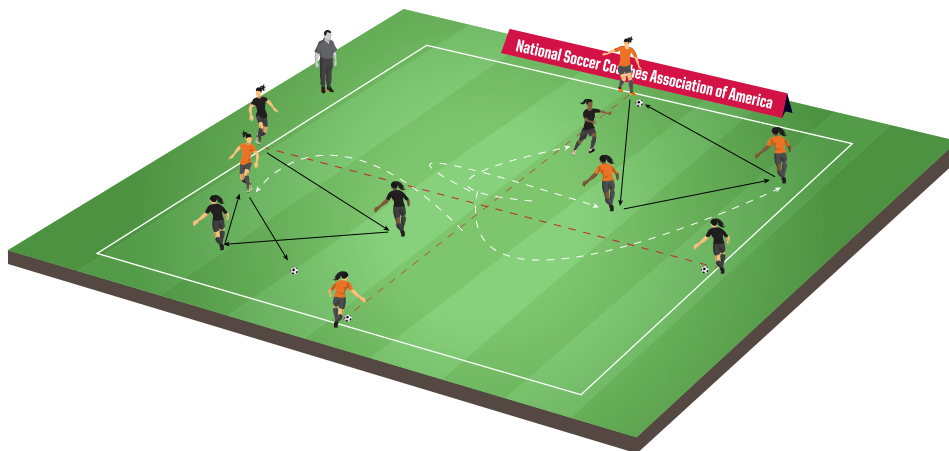
Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, controlling touch and defensive pressure.



- + 2 servers from each team start with a ball each.
- + 2 pairs of players in the center, each within their own area.
- + Orange is the attacker and black the defender in pair 1 and vice-versa in pair 2.



- + Pair 1 - the black attacker moves quickly to exchange passes with the black server. The orange defender is slow to close the space, but is in the same square. 1 point for black.
- + Pair 2 - the orange player makes a move and loses the black defender - 2 points to orange



- + An additional attacker is added to the center - now there are 2 games of 1v2.
- + Game 1 - the orange attackers exchange passes quickly before the defender is ready.
- + Game 2 - Orange defender intercepts the pass and plays to the orange server for 2 points.

PASSING PAIRS

WHY USE IT

Keeping basic passing activities fun and realistic is often a challenge. This practice incorporates short passing combinations between 2-3 players moving with and without the ball to create space.

SET UP

20x20 yards. One ball per player.

HOW TO PLAY

8-10 players dribble around the area, using different moves and ball mastery skills. A pair of players pass the ball, moving around the area with 2-3 touches maximum. The passing players must avoid hitting the dribbling players and their soccer balls. The dribbling move with a 'fluid motion' and cannot stand between the passing players. Passing players start with 5 points and each time contact is made they lose a point. Play for 2 minutes or until passing players lose 5 points. Rotate players. The pair with the highest score at the end of 2 minutes win. Progress the activity by adding multiple pairs of passers and make the activity directional - meaning, the passing pairs must travel across the area from side to side. If they manage to get across the area and stop the ball on the end line they gain a point. Keep moving back and forth for 2 minutes. In the final progression, the coach introduces a 5-8 yard channel. The dribbling players move through the channel from end to end. The passing players must play quick, adjusting their position forward and back to maintain a quick rhythm. How many consecutive passes can be made in 2 minutes?

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with players to recognize time and space, different weight of passes, protecting the ball and identifying clear passing opportunities.
- + Coaching tips – Adjust the number of players in the area to increase or decrease the chances of passing success.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Reduce the number of players in the area and instruct the dribbling players to travel across the area in one direction only.
- + More challenging: make the activity directional - passers must travel from side to side. Add a third passer to create triangles and limit touches.

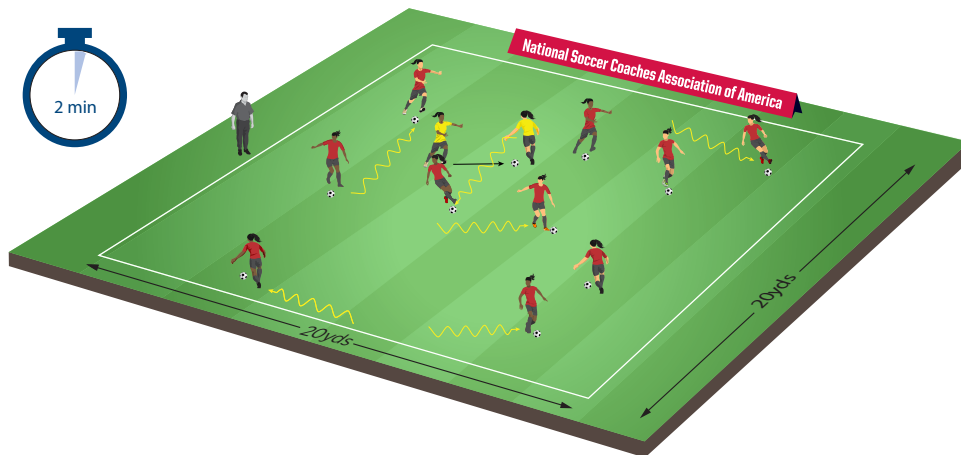
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 - 6-11 year old players

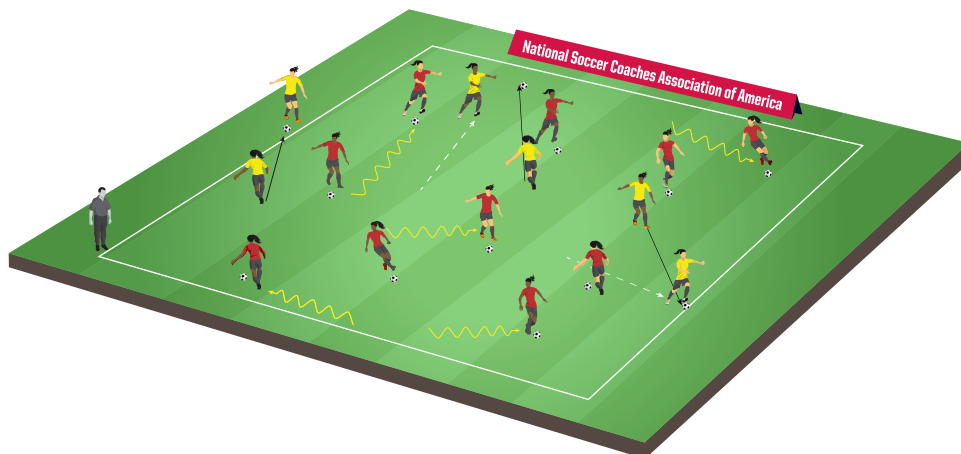
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, dribbling and creating space.

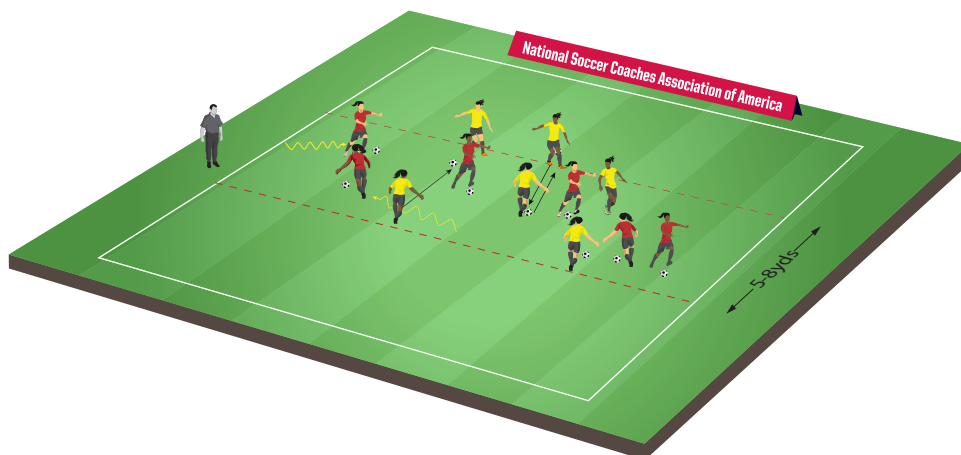
Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, controlling touch and dribbling basics.



- + 2 yellow players move around the area by passing and avoiding the ball touching dribblers.
- + Maintain 5+ Yards between the passing players.
- + The red players dribble randomly and on occasions across the line of the passing pair.



- + Add 2-3 more passing pairs.
- + The activity is now directional - moving side to side.
- + To score a point the passers must stop the ball on the side line - 2 touches only.



- + Change the game set-up, creating a channel down the center.
- + Passing players play across the channel and reds dribble down the channel.
- + Yellow players adjust their position back and forth to avoid dribbling players.

CRISS CROSS TECHNICAL TRAINING

WHY USE IT

Technical repetition for players in the first 3 stages of development can be demanding, exciting and enjoyable. In this activity players work in small groups to perform a variety of dribbling and passing routines against 1-3 other teams.

SET UP

The area is 15x15 yards with cones placed halfway along each side of the square. 2 players start at each cone and work with the pair opposite. Each team has a ball.

HOW TO PLAY

The objective of this activity is for both teams to move the ball from one side of the area to the other avoiding a collision with the opponent in the center. One team is required to dribble the ball to within a yard of their teammates before exchanging the ball with a take-over move. The other team is allowed 3 touches only and must make a 'self-pass' before making a final pass to the player opposite. Each time the team transfers the ball from one end to the other they win a point and if the ball hits an opponent the team loses a point. Play for 1 minute and then switch the conditions so both teams have an opportunity to dribble and pass. Build up to 8 pairs playing 'criss-cross' patterns.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the dribbling players to take a firm first touch and then penetrate at pace and under control. The coach should also help the passing players to get their bodies into a good position and play a firm pass with the inside of the foot.
- + Coaching tips – Increasing the degree of challenge for attacking players does not necessarily have to involve defenders. In this activity the player's technique can be tested by adding more groups of players to the same space, changing the type of pass or dribble and reducing the space.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Keep the passing combinations simple, have both teams dribble or pass only and stick to 4 pairs of players.
- + More challenging: Stipulate the dribbler must take 10 touches before switching, add more groups, require a passing combination such as a double pass, insist on passes being made from halfway across the area, require the dribbler to perform a take-on move before exchanging and add conditions on the fly with the ball in play.

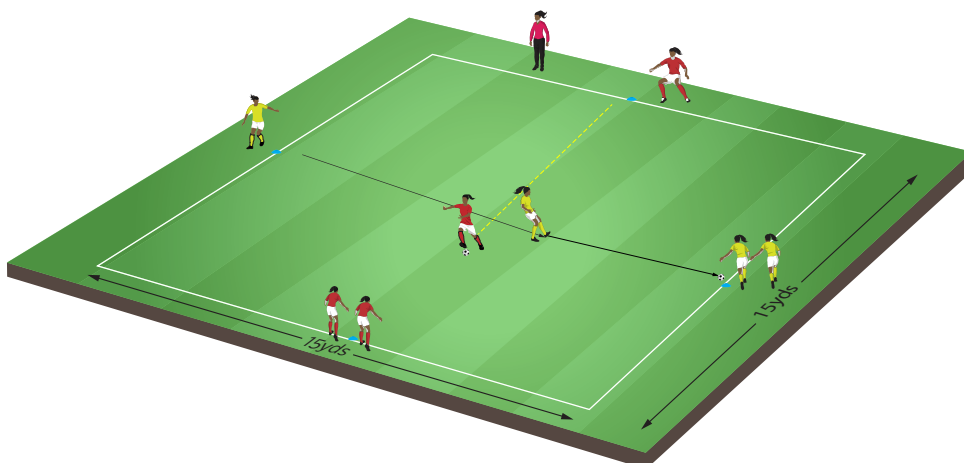
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1, 2 & 3 - 3-9 year old players

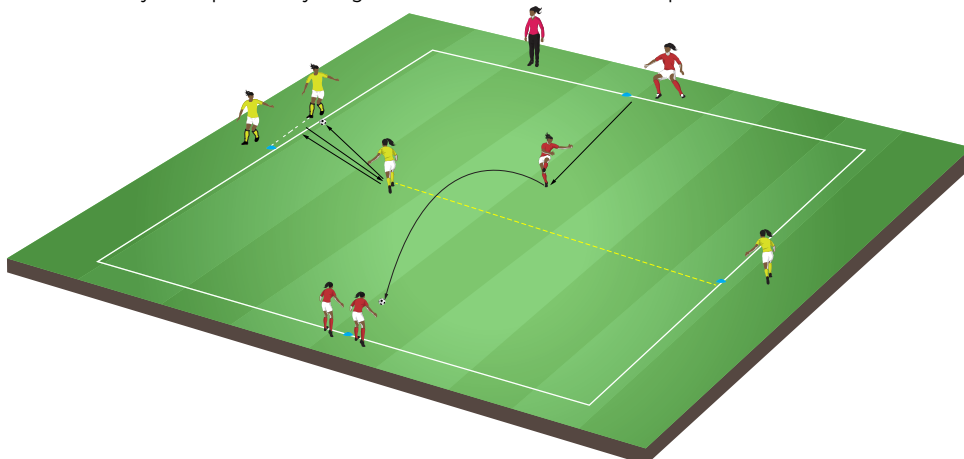
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, dribbling and creating space.

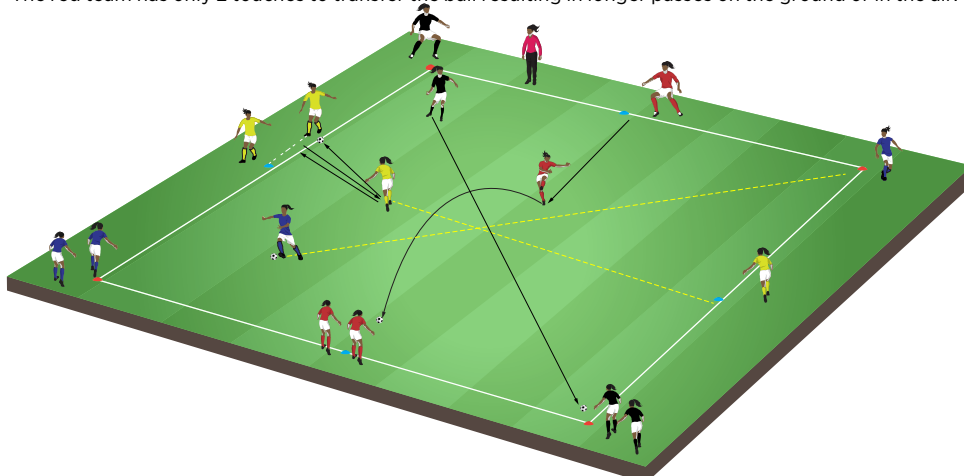
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and dribbling.



- + In the first sequence there are 2 teams of 4 players, each split into pairs facing each other 15 yards apart.
- + The red team must move the ball from one side to the other on the dribble avoiding the yellow team.
- + The yellow team is required to move across using only 3 touches. If the teams successfully complete their tasks they earn 1 point. Play the game for 60 seconds and then swap the conditions for both teams.



- + With the same layout, the coach now imposes new conditions to make the activity more challenging.
- + The yellow team dribbles across to within 4 yards of the other line before making a double pass.
- + The red team has only 2 touches to transfer the ball resulting in longer passes on the ground or in the air.



- + In the final sequence the coach has added 2 new groups starting from the corners of the area.
- + The coach can decide whether to have all 4 groups perform the same technical challenge or assign a different condition for each group.

NUMBERS PASSING

WHY USE IT

A terrific unopposed introductory passing activity can be employed with equally great effect with 6 and 18 year old players. Intensity can be increased - fast!

SET UP

20x20 yards. 8-10 players randomly space themselves in the area. The coach gives each player a number, i.e. 1, 2, 3 ... 9, 10. One ball starts with player 1.

HOW TO PLAY

'Walk through' the activity with the players for 1-2 sequences. If needed, rehearse the activity by passing the ball with the hands using a basketball style chest pass. Pass the ball from one teammate to another in number order - i.e. 1 passes to 2, 2 to 3 etc. When 10 receives the pass from 9, 10 passes to 1 and the routine starts again. Begin with unlimited touches and then restrict to 2 touch or eventually, 1 touch. At first, expect players to stand flat-footed, unsure where to move. This is your teaching moment! In addition to coaching short and medium length passing, the coach can also teach movement and creating space. Instruct the players to move away from the ball after they have made a pass, look for space. With more advanced players have them 'look over their shoulder' to locate space with the first touch. Once the group has established a rhythm, instruct players they must run through a corner gate before re-entering the area - always watching the play as they run to the corner.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Passers should concentrate on first touch away from pressure and a firm pass on the ground to feet or space. Receiver should attempt to get in front of the passer to prevent the passers need to turn. Communication - call names or numbers.
- + Coaching tips - Freeze the play to allow players to see space - ask them to move to a better position and restart.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

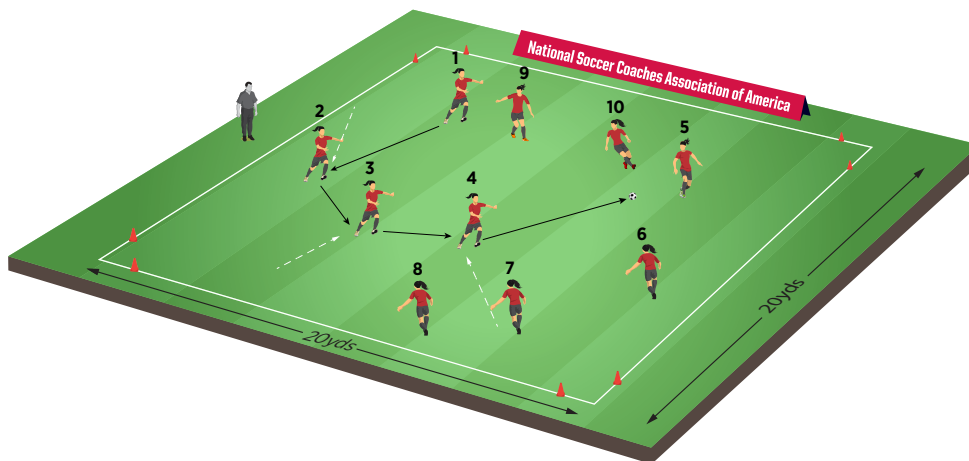
- + Less challenging: Pass the ball with the hands, reduce the number of players, increase the space.
- + More challenging: Add 2-3 balls, players run through corner gates, 1 touch quickens the pace, split the group into 2-3 teams working in the same area, add a double pass combination.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

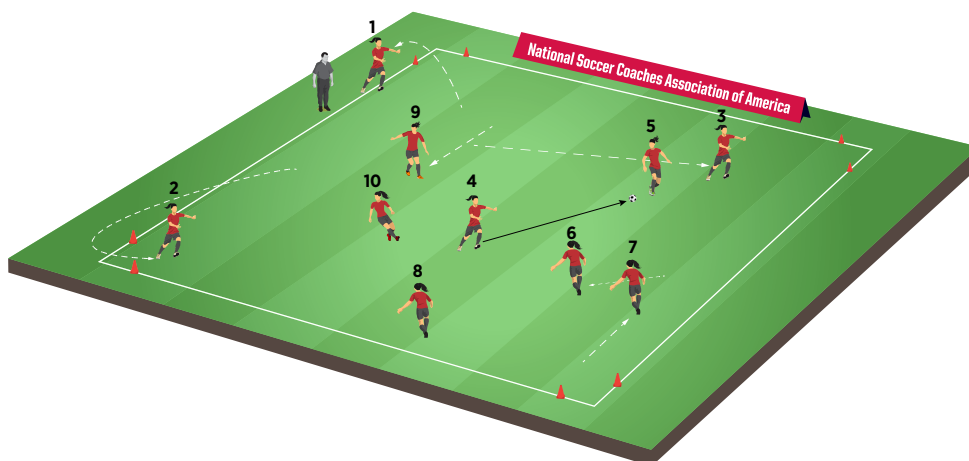
Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

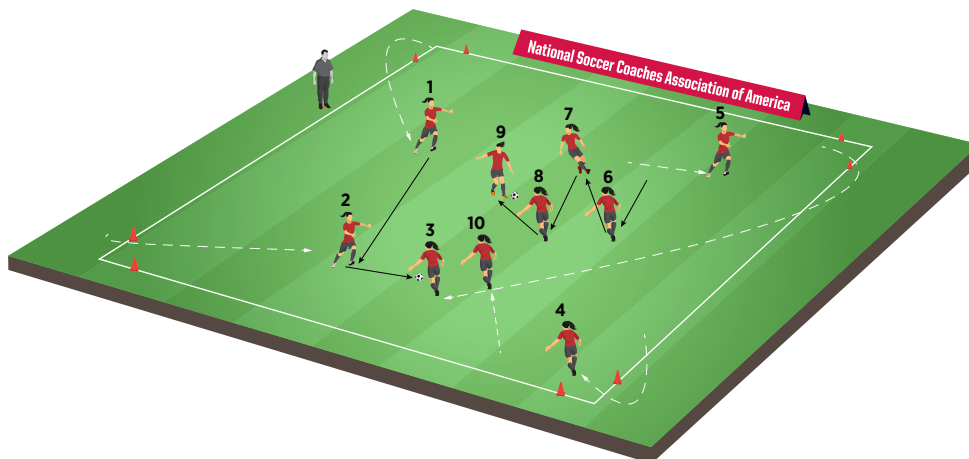
Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and communication.
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.



- + Players are numbered 1-10.
- + Player 1 starts the activity with a pass to player 2.
- + Sequence continues and number 10 passes to 1.



- + Following a pass, the player runs through a corner gate before rejoining the activity.
- + Players should keep their eyes on the play as they run - 'don't turn your back.'
- + The receiver should predict where and how the teammate will receive the ball and work hard to get in front.



- + The coach can progress the activities in several ways, in this example a second ball has been added.
- + Players now need to work quickly to return to the area in time to receive the next pass.
- + Adding a 1 touch restriction puts even more pressure on the players.

1V1 TO 2V2 PASSING RHYTHM

WHY USE IT

This activity is a series of passing and receiving exercises designed to provide players with plenty of technical repetitions in a fun and challenging format. These can be used as a warm-up or as active rest.

SET UP

The set-up is a 16x16 yards area with 4 quadrants. In each quadrant 2 players start with a ball. The coach can set up more areas for larger numbers of players.

HOW TO PLAY

This is a series of 3 activities that can be played in sequence or used on their own in a session. In the first activity players start approximately 4 yards apart and on the coach's command they pass back and forth. If a ball stops moving or leaves the area the pair must stop playing whilst the other teams play. Play in 1 minute intervals and any team still passing after 30 seconds gains 1 point and after 60 seconds - 2 points. To add variety insist on passes made with the laces or outside of the foot. In the second activity 3 cones are placed 2 yards apart in each quadrant to form a triangle. A player must pass through 2 sides of the triangle and then move to the vacant side to receive the next pass. The players must get into a 2 touch rhythm and the quicker they can play the better. A point is scored when the partner makes an errant pass or hits the cones with the ball. In the final activity the players play in pairs against another pair across 2 quadrants. Similar to tennis the players must play the ball into the opponents half whilst remaining in their half. If the ball stops moving the other team win a point and if the ball leaves the 'court' a point is won.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - To provide players with large quantities of passing and receiving opportunities to improve their technical competence.
- + Coaching tips - It is important that players move in-line with the ball, adjust their body positions to receive the ball and set up a pass. Help players to open their bodies to allow a fluid passing motion and encourage them to use the entire inside-surface of the foot.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Allow unlimited number of touches.
- + More challenging: Restrict the number of touches to 1-2, left or right foot only, 2 touches require - 1 on the left and one on the right and require both players to touch the ball in game 3.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

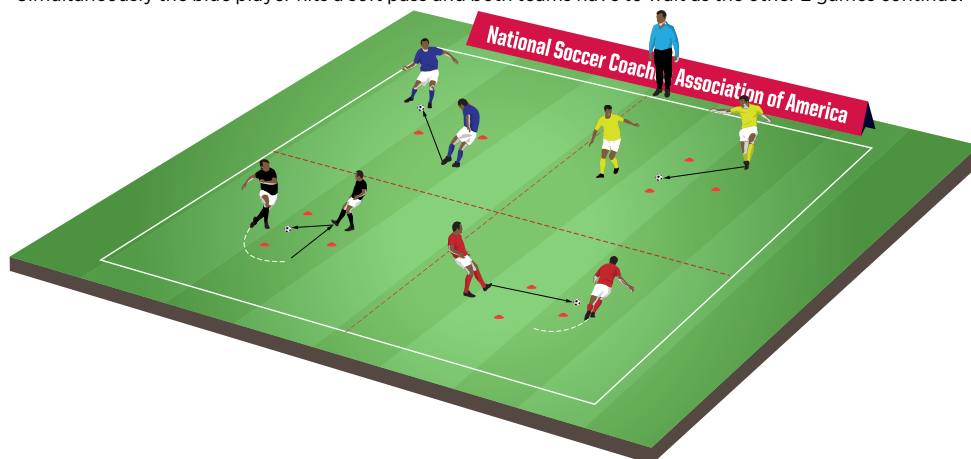
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving with the feet and creating space.

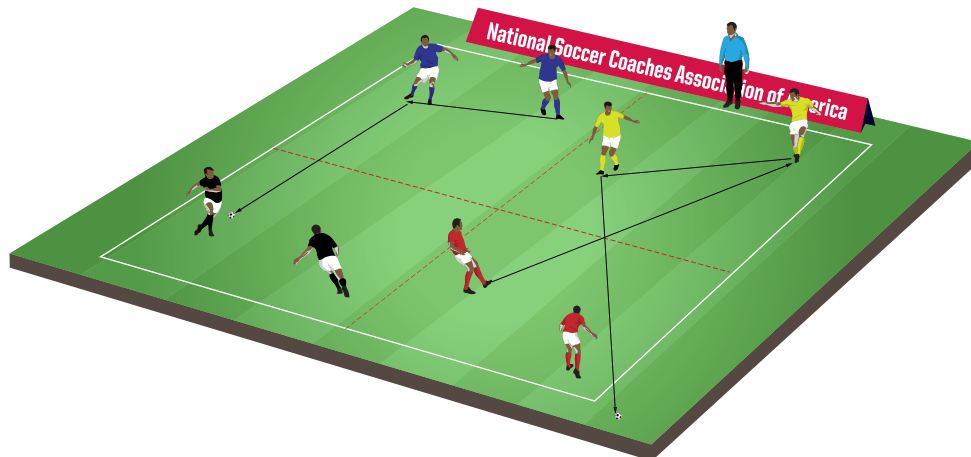
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.



- + In the first activity the coach has assigned pairs with a ball to each quadrant of the square.
- + On the command of "GO" the pairs start to pass back and forth and must keep the ball moving.
- + The black player makes a bad pass and the red partner is unable to prevent the ball going out. Simultaneously the blue player hits a soft pass and both teams have to wait as the other 2 games continue.



- + In the second diagram each pair is passing and moving around a triangle with 2 yards between the cones.
- + The black player makes a pass and moves quickly around to the vacant side of the triangle.
- + The partner cannot pass back through the same 2 sides as the previous pass.



- + In the final passing game pairs play against each other across 2 quadrants in a game similar to tennis.
- + The blue team make 1 touch passes and play to the blacks half. Don't let the ball stop rolling.
- + The red and yellow teams exchange passes but the yellow pass is too firm and reds win a point.

2V1V1 PASSING AND SUPPORTING ANGLES

WHY USE IT

This activity introduces young players to the 'timing' of a pass and an appreciation when to pass to feet and when to pass to space.

SET UP

20x10 yards with a line sectioning the area into 2x10 yard squares. 2 attacking players stand at one end with a supply of balls. One defender stands on the center line and the other defender starts off the end line at the opposite end.

HOW TO PLAY

One of the attacking players dribbles a ball and the other attacker supports. The first defender is restricted to the 1st square and attempts to win the ball. The attacker in possession of the ball must decide whether to dribble or pass to the team mate. Work with players on the timing of the support run and the release of the pass. In the first square there are no offsides, so the support player can run behind the defender and receive a pass behind the defender. When the first defender is beaten, the attackers enter the attacking half of the field. The 2nd defender can move into the area on the third touch by either attacker in the first sequence (the slower the attack the more time the defender has to confront the attackers higher up the field). The 1st defender cannot enter into the attacking half. If either defenders win possession, they can counter attack and attempt to score - creating a 2v2. With older players (stage 3+), position a coach/parent to enforce offsides, so attackers don't move too early into advanced positions.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the attackers on their starting positions - using the width of the area ensures the defender must cover more ground. Discuss the role of the support player in providing a good angle of support - delaying the supporting run to allow more space in front for the partner to pass into. Introduce terms such as passing to the 'front foot' and 'back foot'.
- + Coaching tips – Be ready for a coaching moment to occur and then stop play, demonstrate, rehearse and then play.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Narrow the width.
- + More challenging: Add a 2nd defender in the attacking half to create 2v2 and potential for a 3v2 counter attack.

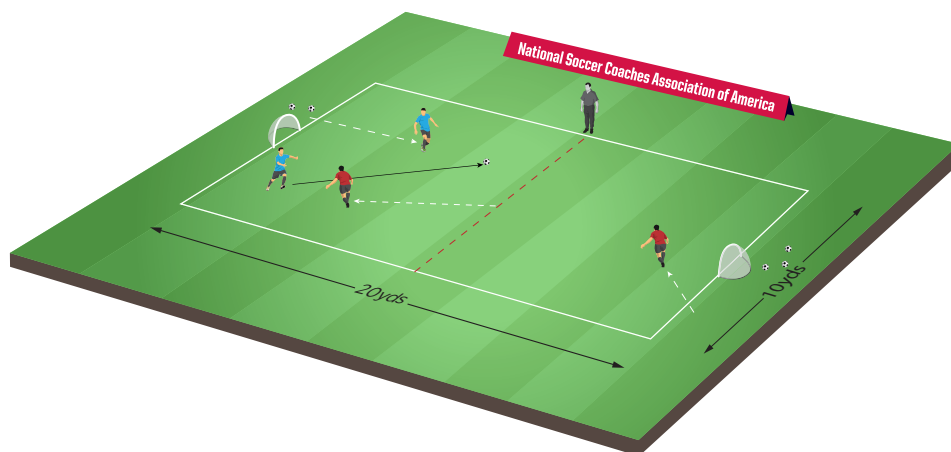
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

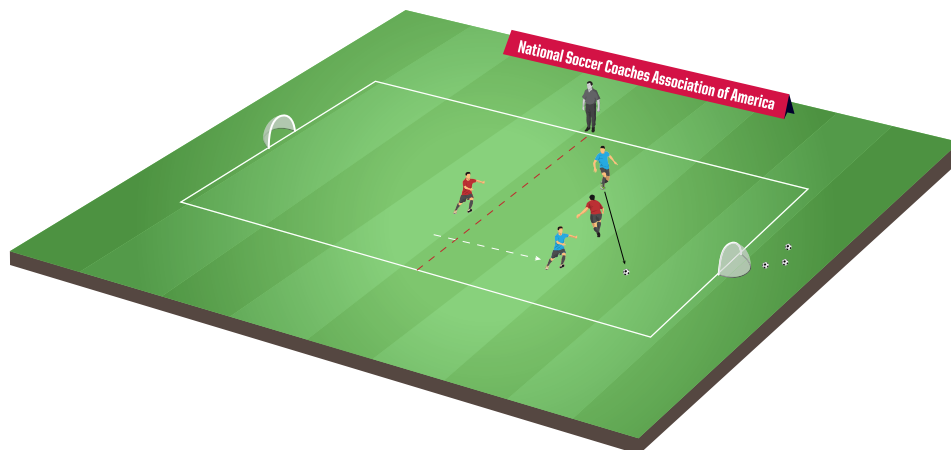
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, creating space and defending 1v1.

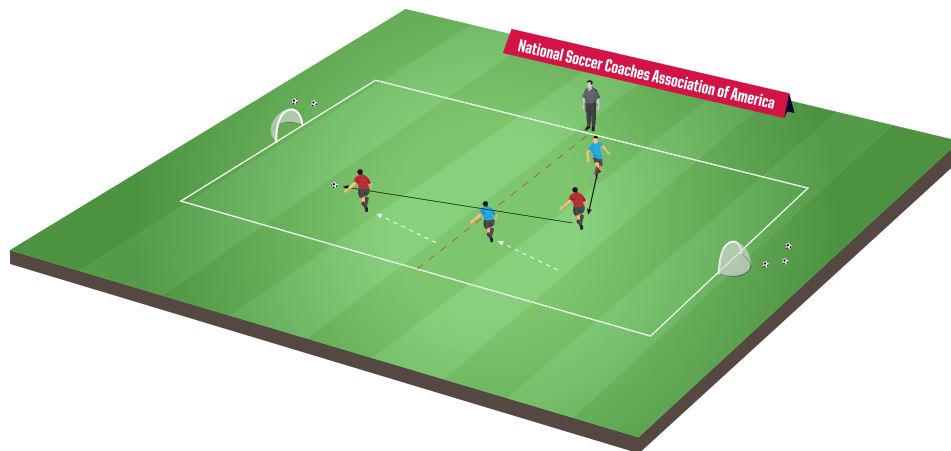
Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, controlling touch and defensive pressure.



- + 2 blue players attack the 1st red defender.
- + The red defender over commits towards the dribbling attacker and an early pass to space is on.
- + On the 3rd touch by either attacker, the 2nd defender starts to close the space.



- + The attackers manage to beat the 1st defender and then proceed to play 2v1 against defender 2.
- + The 2nd defender does not commit fully to either attacker and leaves space behind.
- + The support player delays the run and is able to beat the offside trap to run onto a pass behind.



- + A flat-square pass is intercepted by the red defender.
- + The red defender makes an early pass to his teammate before the blues can recover and defend the counter attack.

ALL UP - ALL BACK 3V3

WHY USE IT

This small sided game is a great way to reinforce previously learned attacking and defending concepts. The rules require players to support teammates in attack and recover quickly to defend.

SET UP

25x15 yards. 3v3 with a small goal at each end. Training vests and a supply of balls at each end of the field.

HOW TO PLAY

Play commences with one team taking a kick-off. Both teams attempt to score in the opponent's goal. To encourage players to support the attack, a goal is only counted if all the players from the attacking team are in the attacking half of the field when the ball crosses the goal line. Similarly, to encourage defenders to work back to prevent a goal, all defenders must be in the defensive half of the field when a goal is conceded. If a defender is caught in the attacking half when a goal is scored, the goal counts as 2. There are numerous attacking and defending concepts the coach can review with players. The rules/conditions favor communication between players, such as letting teammates know when all players are in the attacking half. Equally, the coach can suggest that attacking at pace may catch a defender or 2 over committed in the attacking end of the field. When the ball leaves the field, use the nearest ball and restart quickly. First to 5 points wins.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Adding the all-up and all-back conditions should create urgency in the players. Players will learn quickly to support the attack, but not over commit so there is no defensive cover.
- + Coaching tips – Using a points system is a good way to add emphasis to the main theme of the session.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Increase the length of the field to give the attackers more space and more time to get over the halfway line. Reduce the length to make space easier to cover for the defenders.
- + More challenging: If a goal is scored and one or more attackers or defenders are in the other half, the 'lazy' players have to step off the field for the next sequence - leaving the team with players 'down'.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

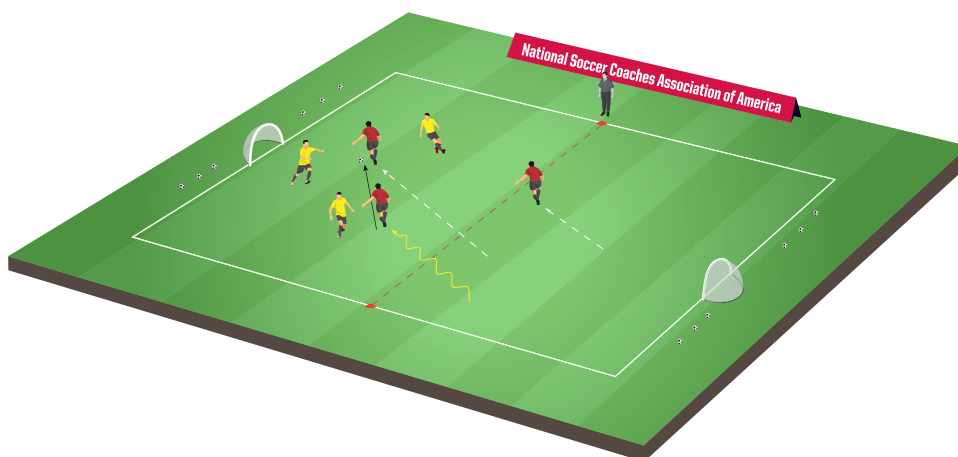
Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and 1v1 defending.



- + 3v3 game, with a line or line of cones splitting the field in half.
- + Spare balls are placed along both end lines, so quick restarts are possible.
- + Reds start with a kick off and attempt to attack the yellow team's goal.



- + The red's combine to create a shooting opportunity.
- + The red attacker keeps possession instead of shooting, because a red attacker is slow to enter the attacking half.
- + If a goal is scored without all attackers in the attacking half, no points are counted.



- + Yellows quickly counter attack and all 3 yellows enter the attacking half of the field.
- + One red defender is slow to recover into the defensive half.
- + Yellows score. The yellow team receive 2 points because the red player is caught in the wrong half.

COUNTDOWN

WHY USE IT

Countdown is a very popular game with the players as it is fast paced and exciting. As the number of players on both teams start to dwindle the importance of decision making increases.

SET UP

The area is a 30x20 yards rectangle with a 3 yards end zone marked at both ends. Two teams of 6 players nominate a target player to stand in the opponents end zone and the remaining players spread out in between the zones. The coach stands on the sideline with a large supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the game is to be the first team to have all players in the opponents end zone. To achieve that goal the players must combine passes with the target player. If the target player is able to control the ball and place their foot on top of the ball in the end zone, the player making the final pass joins the target player. If the ball leaves the area the coach restarts and makes a pass to the opposing team. Continue the sequence until the last player on either team makes the final pass to a target player and then play again.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – There are numerous attacking and defending competencies that a coach can focus on in this activity. Defensive compactness to prevent penetrating passes into the target players and movement by players to create width are just a couple of objectives.
- + Coaching tips – There are times in a training session the coach will just want to 'let the game be the teacher'. Once players understand the rules and objectives, give them the responsibility to work on their own tactics. Typically, discussions will occur on who to start as the target player and which player the team wants to be the last to pass.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start with 2-3 target players to provide more room in between the zones at the start.
- + More challenging: Add a second ball, insist on a passing combination before passing to the target, introduce a touch restriction, if a ball leaves the field the team must send back a target player and change the shape of the field to create different challenges.

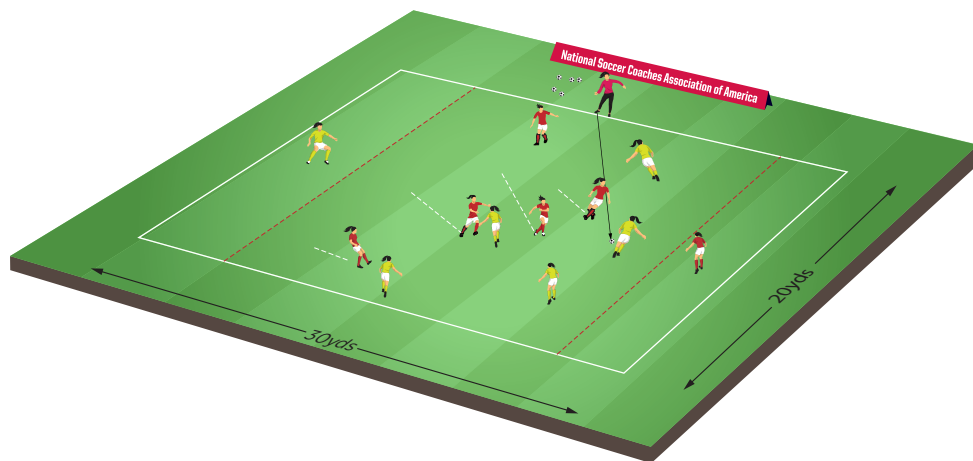
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

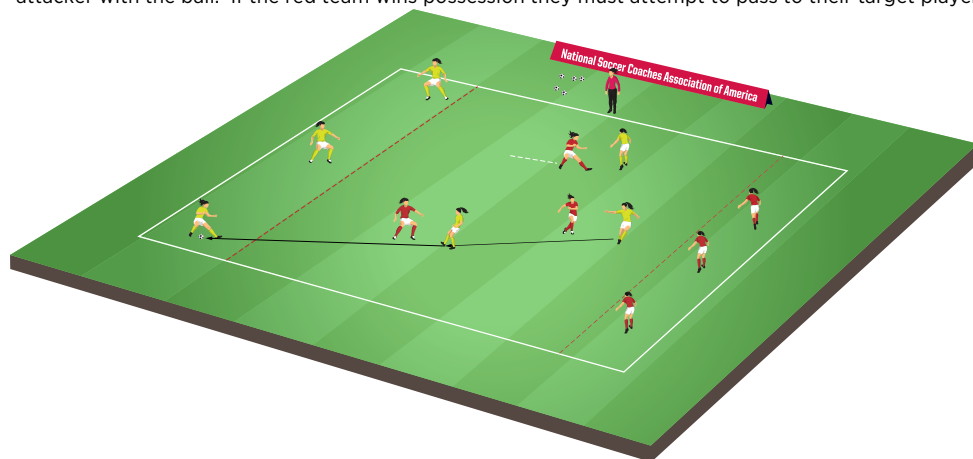
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.

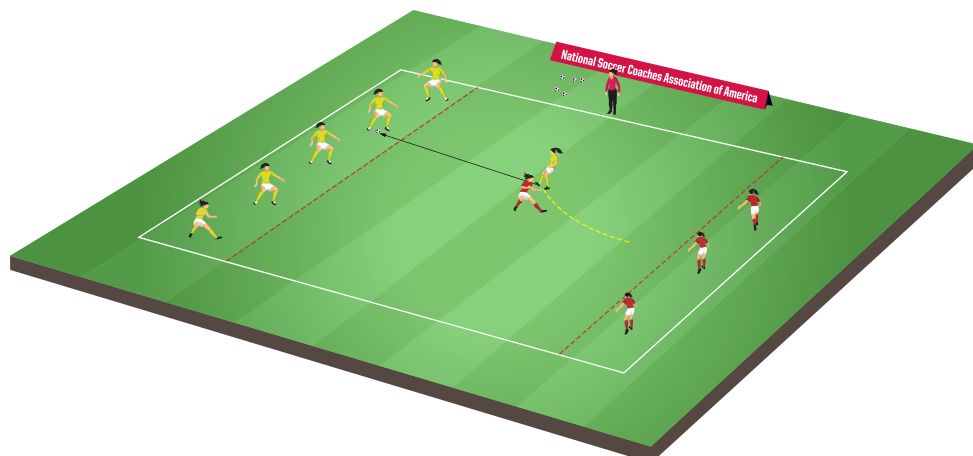
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and 1v1 defending.



- + The coach passes to the yellow team who have 5 players in-between 2 end zones.
- + The yellow team must attempt to pass the ball into a yellow target player standing in the red team's zone.
- + The red team applies immediate pressure with the 2 nearest defenders closing tightly around the yellow attacker with the ball. If the red team wins possession they must attempt to pass to their target player.



- + The game has progressed and both teams have successfully sent 3 players to the end zone.
- + The yellow team has possession and the coach has insisted on a passing combination before a pass can be made into the end zone by either team. The yellow team achieves this goal and a successful pass is made.



- + The excitement builds as both teams trade players into the end zone.
- + Inevitably the game rests with the last player from each team in the center of the area.
- + A 1v1 duel ensues and the yellow player dribbles past the red defender before making the winning pass.

DRIBBLE THE GAUNTLET

WHY USE IT

This is a small sided game providing an opportunity for 1v1 attacking and defending, dribbling and take on moves, short passing and creating space.

SET UP

25x25 yards, with a smaller square 8x8 yards in the center. 2 defenders are restricted to the center square and attempt to prevent players dribbling through. 3 teams of 3 players attempt to dribble the gauntlet, with 2 target players on the perimeter of the large square and 1 attacker between the large square and the smaller square. Each team has a ball.

HOW TO PLAY

A target player on the perimeter of the large square makes a firm pass along the ground to the feet of the attacker inside the area. With a good positive first touch, the attacker penetrates the 'gauntlet' square on the dribble with pace. The 2 defenders attempt to win possession of the ball and make a pass to the coach on the sideline for a point. If an attacker can dribble through the square and make a pass to the other perimeter player, the team win a point. The perimeter player making the first pass into the attacker, moves into the area to receive the next pass from the other perimeter player. The attacker moves to the perimeter as soon as the ball is passed to the 2nd perimeter player. All 3 teams work at the same time to outnumber the defenders. First to 10 points and then rotate the defenders.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Help players to recognize the attacking space and look for the position of the defenders. Players should use different dribbling speeds and take on moves to beat defenders.
- + Coaching tips – Utilizing an activity with multiple games occurring at one time is a great way to create challenges for the attackers and defenders.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: To establish the rhythm, start with the ball in the players hands. Start with no defenders or defenders kneeling.
- + More challenging: Attackers losing possession become defenders and the defenders take the attackers place (hold pinnies for easy transfer). Allow players to play random patterns as they gain confidence.

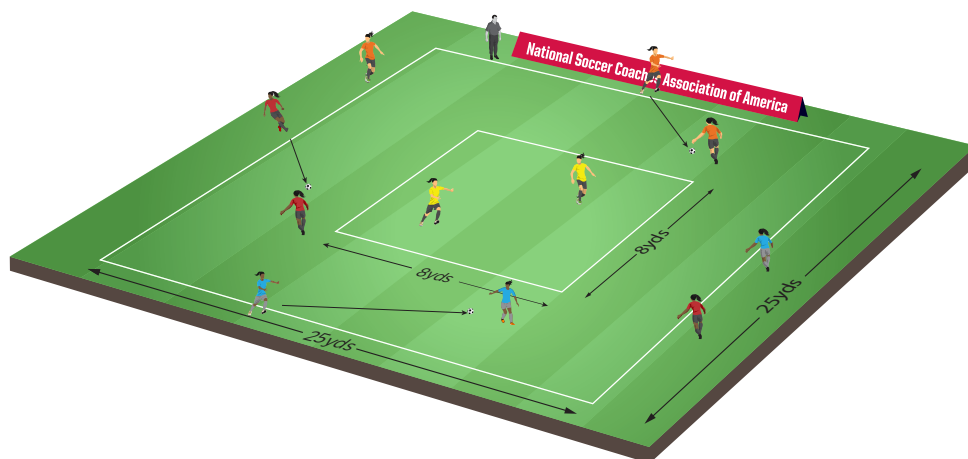
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

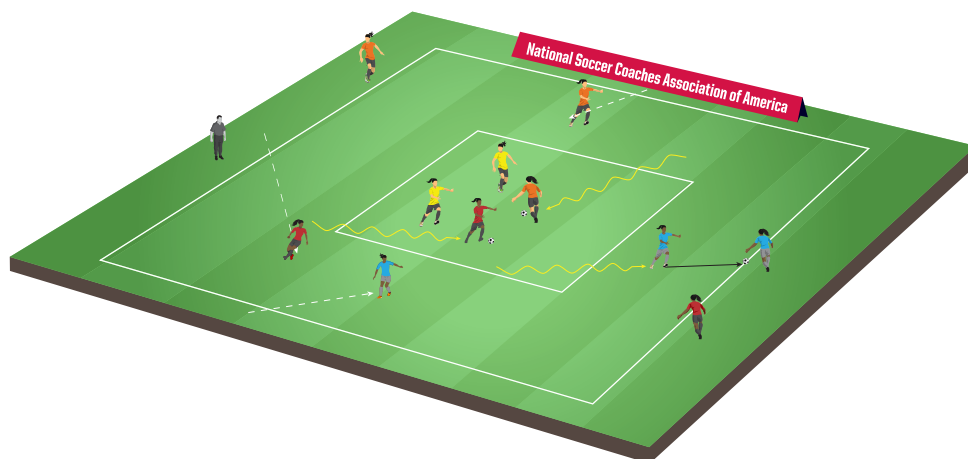
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, 1v1 defending and creating space.

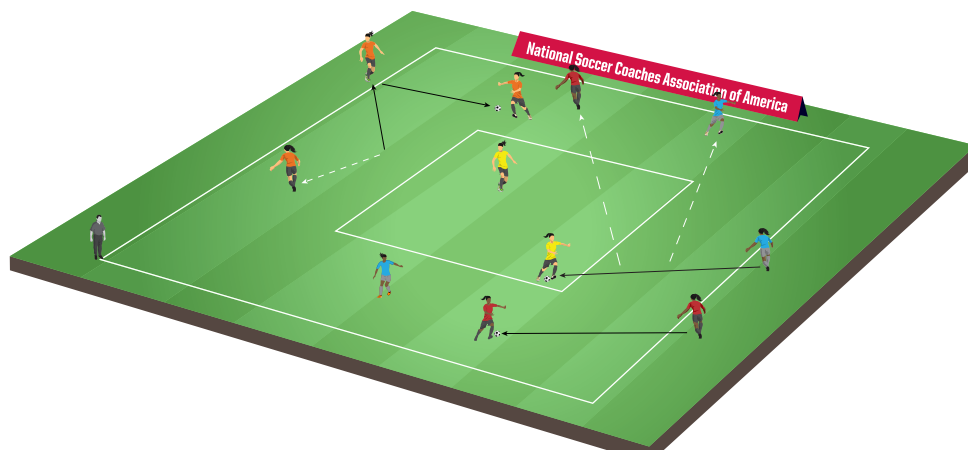
Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, movement off the ball & defending pressure.



- + 2 defenders start in a 8x8 yard center square (the gauntlet).
- + 3 teams of 3 attempt to combine and win points by dribbling through the gauntlet.
- + 2 target players start on the perimeter and 1 attacker between the 2 squares,



- + Once the perimeter player makes a pass the perimeter player enters the area for the next pass.
- + The attacker dribbles through the area attempting to avoid the defenders.
- + If a defender intercepts a ball, he/she must attempt to pass to the coach for a point.



- + Once an attacker has successfully penetrated the gauntlet, a pass is made to the other perimeter player.
- + The attacker immediately sprints to the outside and becomes a perimeter player.
- + The new attacker creates space and receives a pass from the target. Play first to 10 wins and rotate.

SQUARES

WHY USE IT

As kids, we spent more time playing squares than any other game. It is easy to set-up, the players can self regulate and it is tremendous fun!

SET UP

10x10 yards. The tighter the area the better to create quick feet and fast reactions. 8-12 players start in the area with a few extra balls around the outside to keep the game going. Ideally the area should be lined - if not, go to the corner of a lined field and use cones close together to mark the other 2 lines.

HOW TO PLAY

It is all-against-all. Last player left in the area is the winner. The game is fast pace, but to keep everyone active have some extra balls so eliminated players can practice juggling and ball skills. Introduce the rules gradually: 1) Players are allowed only 1 touch before another person touches the ball - 2 or more touches and the player is out. 2) The player touching the ball last before it leaves the area is out ... unless ... 3) A player did not make a reasonable effort to keep the ball within the lines. 4) If a player is 'nutmegged' - a ball played through the legs - out! 5) If the ball stops - nearest player is out. 6) If a ball is played off the ground and is caught - the player chipping the ball is out ... unless 7) the player attempting to catch the ball drops it and then the player attempting to catch is out. Play the next ball in quickly to keep the flow going.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Quick feet, movement around the area, being ready and 'on the toes', forceful and accurate passes. Players that just stand are easy targets and will get knocked out early.
- + Coaching tips - This is a great 'activation' activity at the beginning of the session when the players arrive at practice. It can also be used as 'active rest' between activities.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start with less players in the area. When 4-5 players are knocked out, start a 2nd game in an adjacent square to keep all players engaged.
- + More challenging: Reduce area size. Add conditions: left foot only, alternate feet on each touch, must be 2 touch, 2 teams and add a goal - after 3 touches a player can score and a player eliminated from the game rejoins.

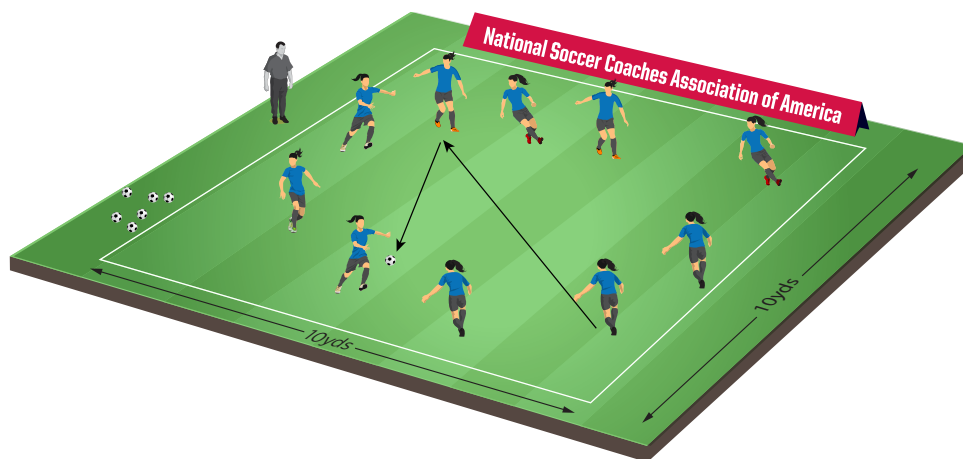
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

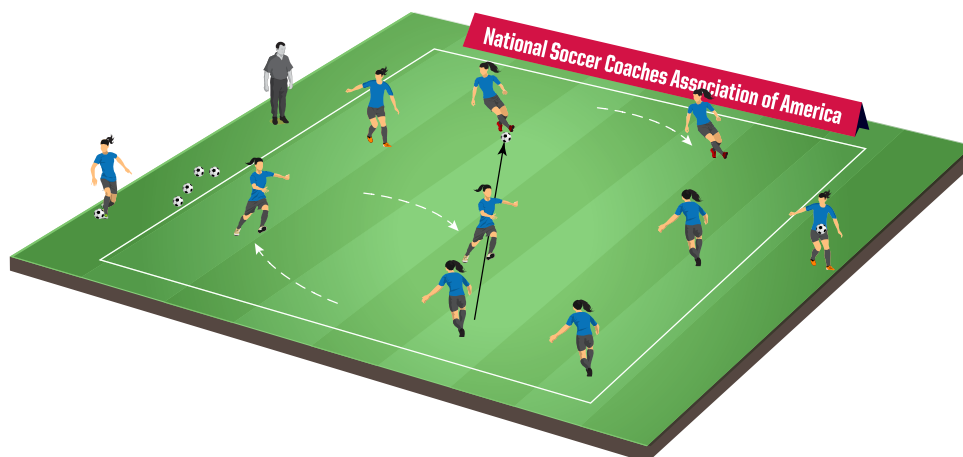
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing, receiving and creating space.

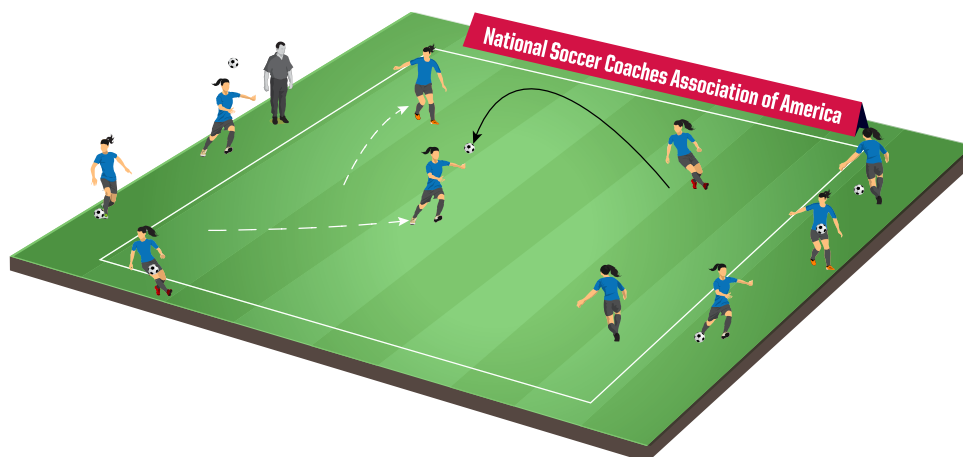
Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, controlling touch and movement off the ball.



- + 8-12 players start in a 10x10 yard square with lines clearly marked.
- + Coach introduces the rules gradually.
- + Spare balls on the sideline to keep the game moving.



- + A player is 'nutmegged' and is consequently eliminated.
- + Eliminated players must leave the square immediately and practice juggling.
- + Encourage players to move around the area. Standing on the sideline makes an easy target.



- + A ball chipped into the air can be caught and the passer is eliminated.
- + Play until there is a winner.
- + Add rules as players become more efficient.

BLOCK AND POKE TACKLING TECHNIQUES

WHY USE IT

Teaching young players the correct tackling techniques is crucial. Knowing how and when to employ the block tackle, poke tackle and slide tackle takes repetition and reinforcement and rarely receives sufficient time the techniques require.

SET UP

25x15 yards. 2 teams of 3-5 players in training vests. 2 small goals at both ends and a large supply of balls to ensure maximum 'on-task' time.

HOW TO PLAY

In the first sequence, 2 players stand facing each other in the center of the playing area with a ball between their feet. The players place the same non-kicking foot on opposite sides of the ball and their hands on each other's shoulders (this prevents players taking a run-up before learning block tackling technique). The other players stand on the sideline waiting to come onto the field - one team responsible for bringing on a ball. The block tackle technique is typically used when the attacker is attempting to go past a defender. Timing is critical - the defender using the inside of the foot to 'block' the ball and force the ball to 'squirt out' in favor of the defender. On the command of 'GO', both players forcefully block the ball. Insist on no kicking through the ball to avoid injury. As soon as the ball clears the legs, players break free and play 1v1. To practice the poke tackle, the coach passes a 2nd ball to either player. The poke tackle is used to disrupt an attacker's dribble when the attacker is in front of the defender. The defender reaches forward and pokes the ball with the toe, keeping a low center of gravity whilst maintaining balanced.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Provide players with repetition and reinforcement of the techniques in an opposed environment.
- + Coaching tips - Break down the technique into 'parts'. Demonstrate the position of the non-kicking foot, the body position and the use of the inside of the foot or toe.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start the activity with players joined with hands on each others shoulders.
- + More challenging: Allow defenders to step into the block tackle, play multiple games at once, and add a points system to create competition.

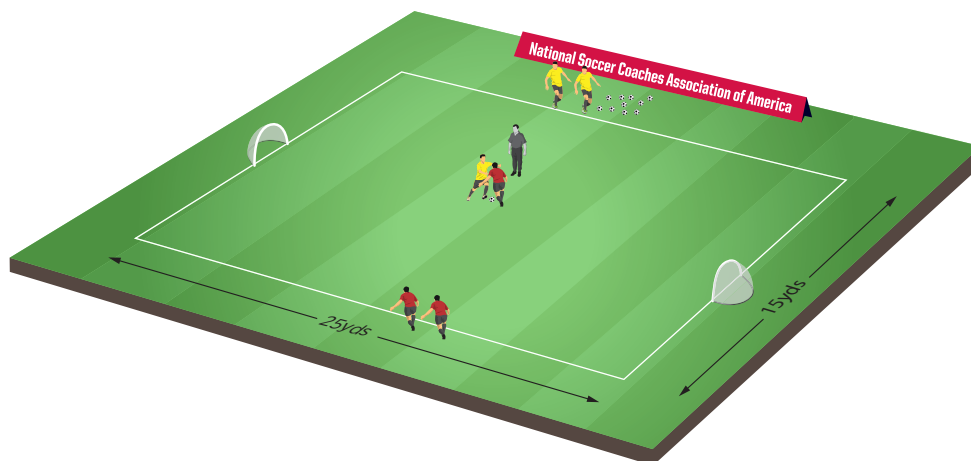
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 - 6-11 year old players

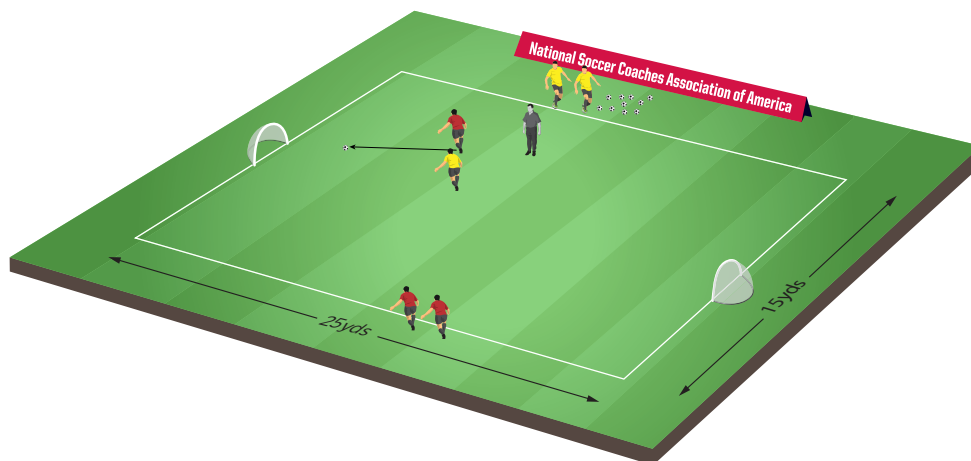
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: 1v1 Defending, defensive pressure and tackling technique.

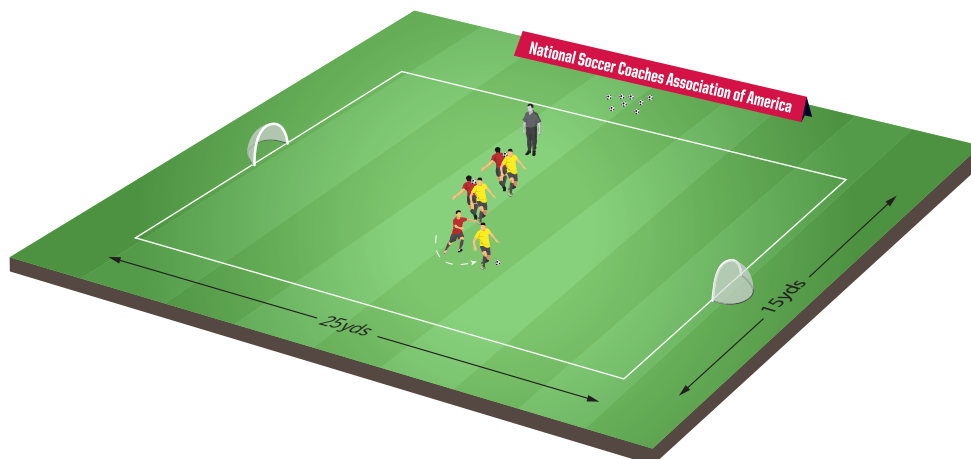
Top 3 competencies: Poke Tackle, Block Tackle and defensive stance.



- + 1v1 in the center with a ball between the 2 players.
- + The coach is close by to ensure the correct technique and to minimize the chance of injury.
- + Players start with their hands on each others shoulders.



- + On the command of 'GO' play commences.
- + Players make a block tackle and release each other as the ball squirts out.
- + Invariably the best block tackling technique leads to winning the ball.



- + As players become more competent, set up 3 pairs across the grid - back to back.
- + A ball is placed between the player's shoulder blades and on the shout of 'GO', players spin around.
- + As the ball drops, the players use a block or poke tackle to win possession.



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

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.

ACTIVITIES LISTING FOR STAGE 3: PLAYERS 9-11 YEARS OLD

47 SMALL SIDED GAME WITH CROSSING

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and creating space.

48 BUILD UP ATTACK 2V1 TO 6V5

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short/medium distances, creating space and passing combinations.

49 5 MINUTES TO WIN IT

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and creating space.

50 SHOOTING GAME FOR POINTS

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and shooting.

51 WORLD CUP 3V3

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and defending.
- + Top 3 competencies: Attacking 1v1, beating and escaping an opponent and support.

52 CREATING SPACE WITH SIMILAR AND OPPOSITE MOVEMENTS

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Combination play, creating space as an individual/small group and passing.
- + Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, movement off the ball and defending pressure.

53 PASSING PATTERNS 5V0 TO 6V1

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Combination play, creating space as an individual/small group and passing.
- + Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, movement off the ball and defending pressure.

54 PASSING AND CREATING SPACE WARM-UP

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and communication.

55 CENTER MIDFIELD LINK-UP AND FINISHING 3V2

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and link play.

56 CREATING SPACE WITH MOVEMENT AND COMBINATIONS 6V3

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and defending.

57 DEFENDING IN PAIRS AND 3'S - 2V5 TO 3V5

- + Stages 3, 4 - 9-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

58 DEFENDING IN PAIRS AND 3'S OVERLOAD

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

59 DELAYING THE ATTACK 1V1 TO 2V2

- + Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

60 RUSH GOALIES 2V2 TO 3V3

- + Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

61 ROCK SOLID DEFENDING 3V5

- + Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

62 6 BALL PASSING

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over a short distances, combination play and creating space.

63 ATTACKING COMBINATIONS CLOSE TO GOAL 1V1-2V1

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and shooting technique.

64 ONE TOUCH SHORT PASSING COMBINATIONS

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

65 2V1 TO 7V5 OVERLAPS

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

66 ONE-UP AND ONE-DOWN

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

SMALL SIDED GAME WITH CROSSING

WHY USE IT

3rd stage of development is a good time to introduce crossing from wide positions. Once players have demonstrated a level of passing proficiency over short and medium distances, the coach can now work with players to deliver a ball centrally whilst on the move.

SET UP

The area is 40x30 yards with an appropriate size goal at both ends. Use cones to mark a 5 yard wide channel along the length of one side and a few markers to create a halfway line. Goalkeepers are optional and there are 4 teams of pairs.

HOW TO PLAY

The game commences with 2 players in the wide channel - 1 servicing each half of the field. The wide players start in the defensive half and run into the attacking half once the ball is played. A pair of players start in each half as defenders and 1 pair starts in one half of the field as the attackers. The coach passes a ball to the attackers. The defenders in the same half as the attackers cannot intercept or apply any pressure. The attackers combine to release a pass to the wide player in the opposite half of the field. The combination could be a simple pass or a combination such as a wall pass, double pass or overlap. One wide player dribbles at game speed down the channel unopposed and simultaneously, the attackers enter the other half and make runs towards the goal. The defenders play live as soon as the attackers enter their half of the field. The wide player crosses the ball. If a goal is scored or the ball leaves the playing area, the coach restarts with a pass to the 2 players who were defending to attack the other end. If the defenders win possession, they can attack the other end.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – In a 5v5 environment, work with full backs to support the attack from wide and learn to cross off the dribble.
- + Coaching tips – The coach should carefully plan the players starting positions to introduce a level of game realism. Small sided games in Stage 3 is a good time to discuss positional roles. This activity is the start of functional training as forwards and midfield players combine.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: No goalkeepers.
- + More challenging: Remove defensive restrictions wide and add players.

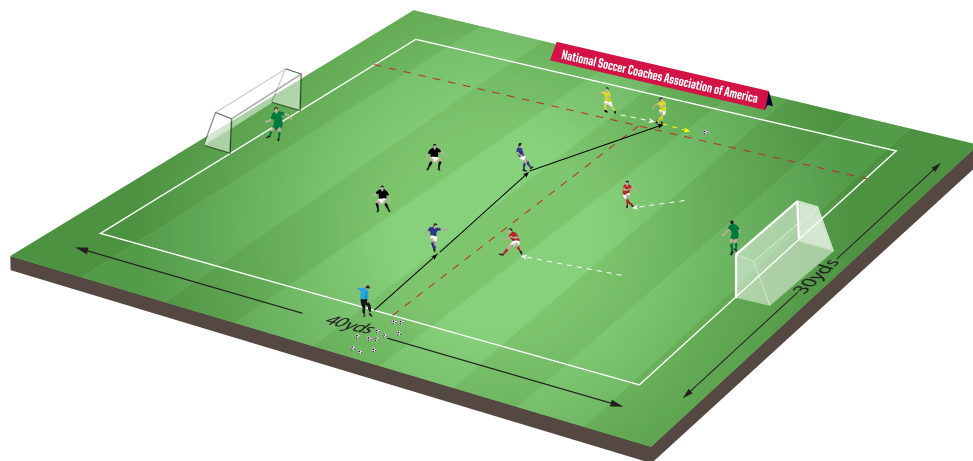
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

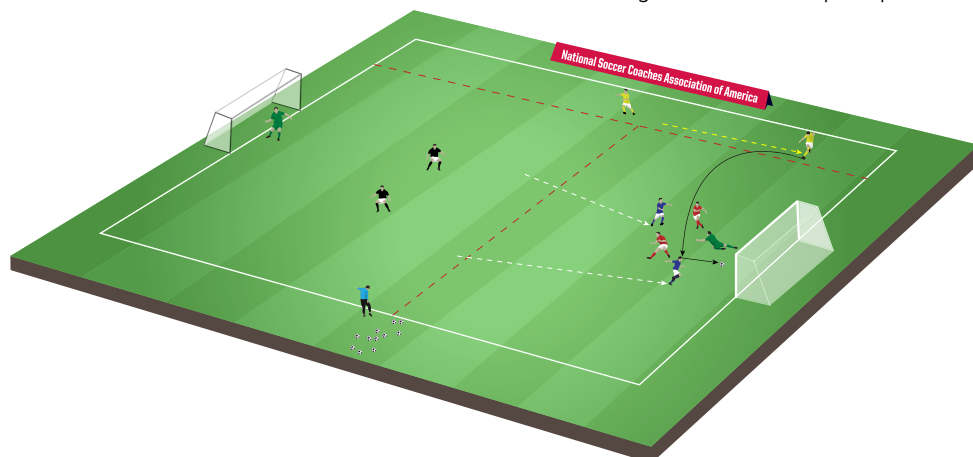
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and creating space.

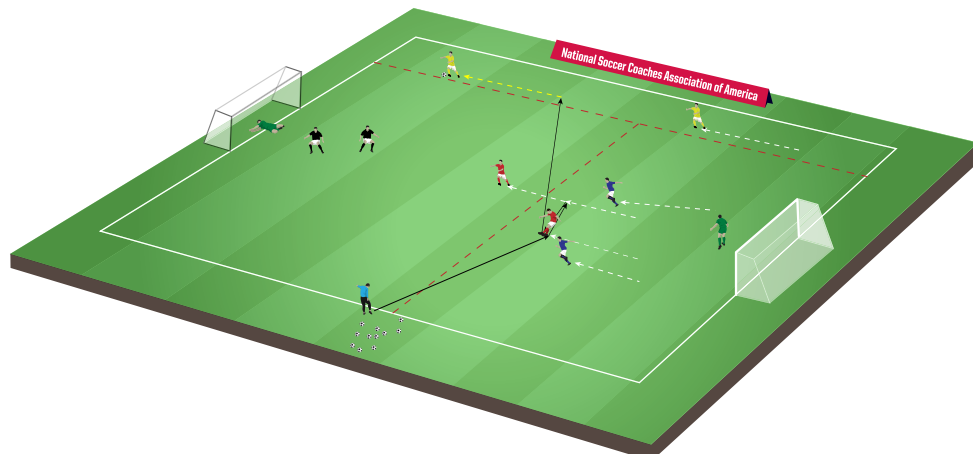
Top 3 competencies: Passing over medium distances, receiving and penetrating runs.



- + The coach serves the ball to 2 attackers starting in the defensive half of the field.
- + The 2 yellow wide players also start in the defensive half and move into the attacking half as the ball is played.
- + The red defenders wait for the blue attackers to enter the attacking half and then can pick up runs.



- + The yellow wide player has dribbled at game speed along the channel unopposed and served far post.
- + The blue attackers make straight runs near and far post. The coach can work with different attacking runs.
- + The defenders are caught under the ball and as a result a goal is scored.



- + The coach immediately serves a new ball to the red players who are now attacking the black team.
- + The blue players and the wide yellow players jog back into the starting position for the next attack.
- + The red players make a double pass combination in midfield before passing wide to the other wide player.

BUILD UP ATTACK 2V1 TO 6V5

WHY USE IT

This small sided game incorporates a variety of attacking themes including creating space, establishing overloads, penetration on the dribble, passing combinations and shooting. The coach can also emphasize defensive pressure and defending in pairs and in a unit.

SET UP

50x40 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at both ends. A 10 yards wide channel in the center of the field is the 'creative zone'. 6 players from each team start at the end line adjacent to the goal and the game can be played with or without a goalkeeper. The coach has a supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

One team commences with 2 attackers and the other team with 1 defender. The coach starts the game with a pass from the sideline to the feet of an attacking player. The attacking players attempt to score, but to do so, they must play through the creative zone using a move or moves determined by the coach. At stage 3, an overlap, wall pass or double pass combination would be appropriate. Once the attacking players have achieved the creative zone objective they can move into the attacking half. If the defender wins possession he/she can attack the other end. To begin, the defender can only touch the ball in their defensive half. Once the attack is dead, the coach plays the next pass to the defensive team to attack. The single defender is joined by 2 more players to create a 3v2 going the other way. The 2 attacking players must transition quickly to defend and must get back inside the defensive half before they apply pressure. Continue adding players for each new game up to the typical number of players for the age group.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the attacking players to establish width for 2-3 attackers and width and depth when there are 4-6 attackers.
- + Coaching tips – A small sided game can be used at the beginning of practice as well as to finish. This method is called whole - part - whole.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Keep numbers small and start without goalkeepers.
- + More challenging: Start with 3v2 or 4v3. Add a goalkeeper. The coach can also add more complexity in the creative zone. For example, the players may need to chip over the zone, or play only 1 touch in the zone etc.

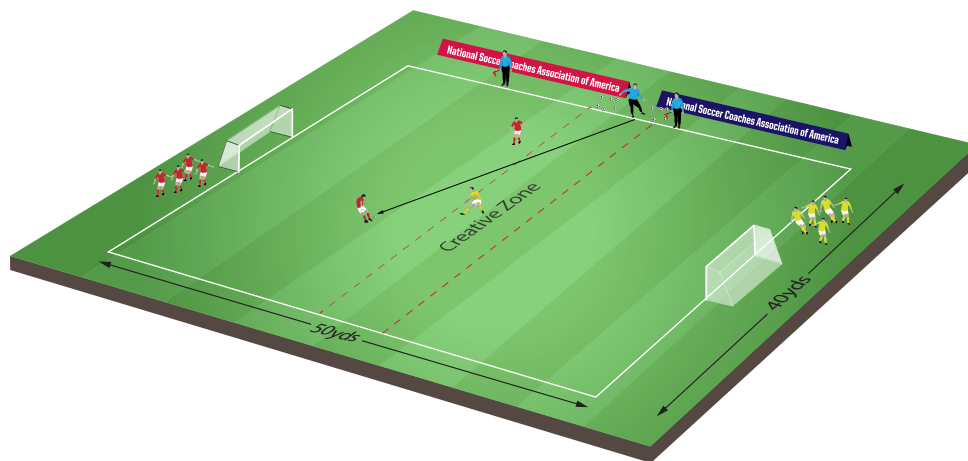
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

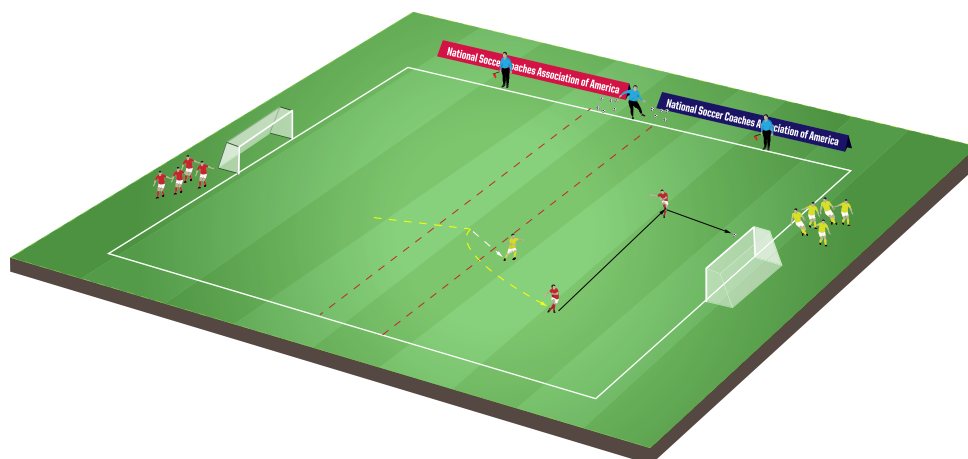
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short/medium distances, creating space and passing combinations.

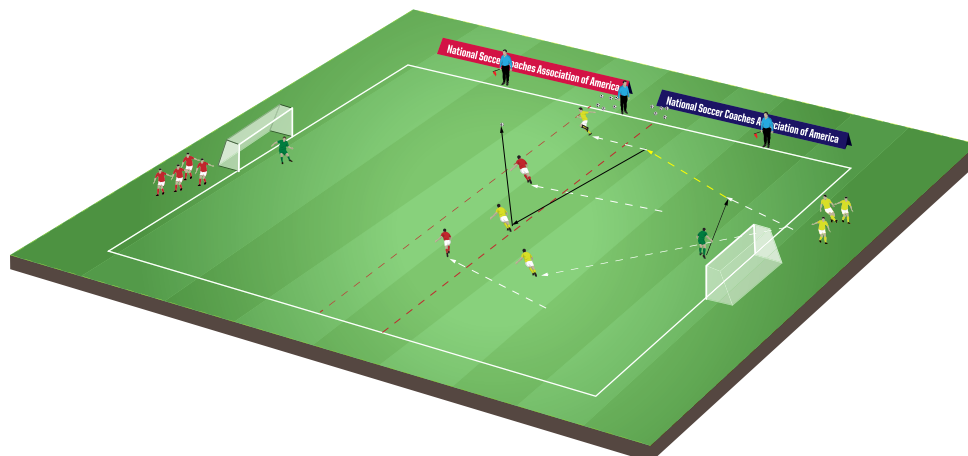
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, support, movement and shooting.



- + The coach passes to one of the red attackers in the defensive half of the field.
- + The other red attacker moves wide to create space.
- + The yellow defender starts to close down space but cannot go past the creative zone.



- + In this sequence the coach has stipulated the attacker must perform a take-on move in the creative zone.
- + The attacker passes the yellow defender and passes for red advancing. An assistant coach looks for offside.
- + 2 yellow players are ready to come on in the next sequence to create 3v2.



- + In this illustration goalkeepers have been added. The goalkeeper initiates the next attack with a pass.
- + 2 yellows join the player defending and now attack the 2 red players who must transition to defense.
- + The yellow attackers play a wall pass in the creative zone and release the wide player into attack.

5 MINUTES TO WIN IT

WHY USE IT

The rules of this small sided game are manipulated by the coach to create a game like situation. The teams have 5 minutes to win, tie or hold out for a win.

SET UP

The area is 40x30 yards with an appropriate size goal at both ends. Balls are placed around the periphery of the field at 5 yard intervals to allow for quick restarts. 2 teams of 6 (5 outfield players and a goalkeeper), with every player having 2 colored training vests.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach sets up a scenario for both teams. For example, there are 5 minutes left in the game and one team is winning by a single goal and the other losing by a single goal. At the end of 5 minutes, if the team that was leading wins by 1 goal all the players win 1 point. If they extend their lead all players receive 2 points. The team that started a goal down can win 2 points for each player if they come back to tie or 3 points for a win. The coach may decide to announce the objectives of one or both teams, or keep it private until the end of the game and allow the players to guess the other team's objective. Essentially, the coach is introducing to the young players some tactical scenarios that they will likely face in their games. The players can suggest different ways to achieve their team's objective and counter act the other team's tactics. At the end of the 5 minutes, players are all reassigned to form 2 new teams.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Assist the players to appreciate that different scenarios in a game require different tactical approaches. Start with simple concepts such as - a goal up with 5 minutes left and discuss what the team that is leading might do differently to the team that is losing.
- + Coaching tips – Keep the situations simple with young players. 8 and 9 year old players are certainly old enough to engage with the coach in some basic problem solving, so ask them what next?

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Keep the rules and the objectives very simple.
- + More challenging: Add additional conditions for older players, such as playing with 1 less player due to an injury or player sent off. The coach can also stop the game to award 1 team with a free kick, corner or throw-in, so players must adjust positions.

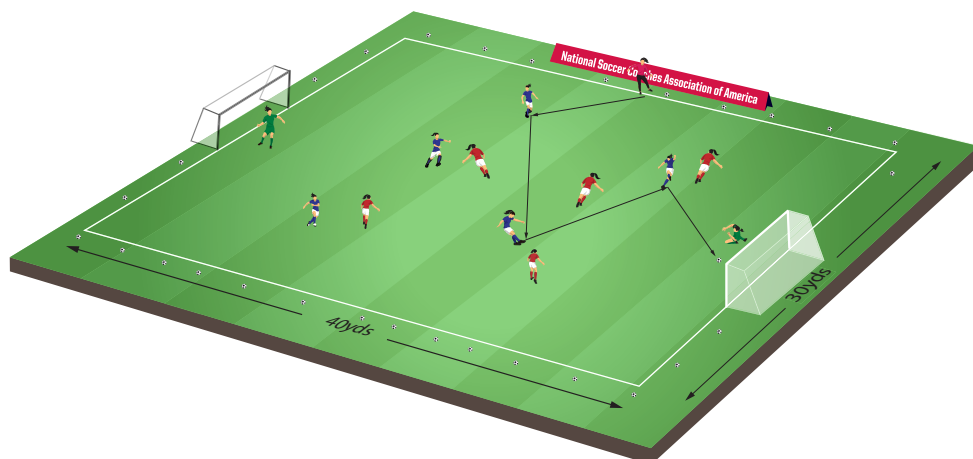
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

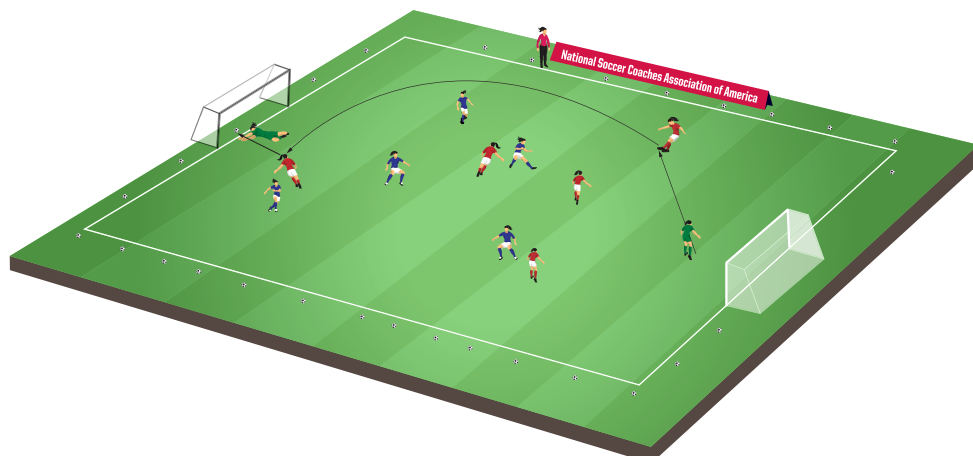
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and creating space.

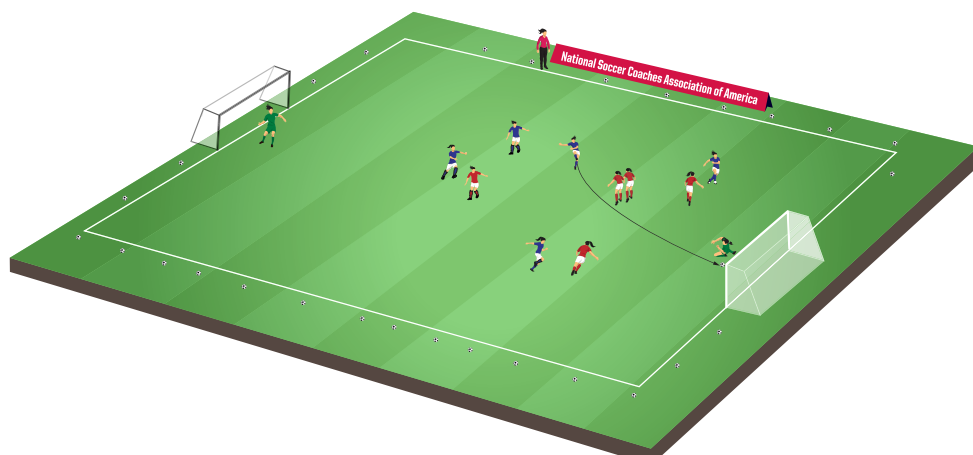
Top 3 competencies: Passing over medium distances, receiving and penetrating runs.



- + The coach serves the ball to any player. The team in receipt of the pass are the attackers.
- + The blues interchange passes quickly and score a goal.
- + Play for 5 minutes, with the players on the winning team scoring 2 points each. Then re-group the players.



- + At the beginning of the game the coach lets the players know the team's objective.
- + In this illustration, the reds are running out of time to score a tying goal.
- + The reds play a more direct style of play and catch the blues in transition with a long ball for a headed goal.



- + The coach has introduced a new condition to award a team making 5 consecutive passes with a free kick.
- + The blues achieve 5 passes and when a free kick in shooting range.
- + The reds make a 2 player wall, but the blue player strikes a majestic free kick into the top corner.

SHOOTING GAME FOR POINTS

WHY USE IT

This is an extremely fun shooting game to play and as players become more familiar with the rules they will start to develop their own team tactics.

SET UP

The activity is played at one end of an appropriately sized field in and around the penalty box. 2-3 teams can play with 3-4 people on each team. A goalkeeper protects the goal and is not on any particular team. The balls are placed in the net and are served by the keeper.

HOW TO PLAY

The goalkeeper starts by kicking/throwing the ball in the air and into space outside the penalty box. The players from the 2 attacking teams must be outside the area when the ball hits the ground. If any player is caught inside the area when the ball hits the ground, a penalty is awarded to the other team. The two teams must compete to score. If one team plays the ball into the box and that team scores, the player that scored must take a penalty kick to win 1 point. Failure to convert the penalty results in zero points. If a goal is scored from outside the area, a penalty must be taken and a successful spot kick scores 2 points. Again, missing a penalty results in no points. A headed goal followed by a successful penalty equals 3 points and a penalty scored after a player is too slow to leave the penalty box equals 1 point. First team to 7 points wins. If a ball is played into the penalty box by the red team, only the red team can score. The blue team must recycle the ball outside the box to be able to score.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Encourage the players to take the first opportunity they have to shoot and stress the importance for following up rebounds.
- + Coaching tips – This is a realistic game-like activity to practice penalty kicks. The penalty follows immediately after open play so there are no lines of players waiting to take their shot.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Don't employ the rule that all players have to exit the area by the first bounce of the ball. Play without a goalkeeper.
- + More challenging: Limit the number of touches players can take in the box to encourage faster shooting and ball movement. Allow players only 10 seconds to take the penalty and if they fail to shoot in time they miss the opportunity to score points.

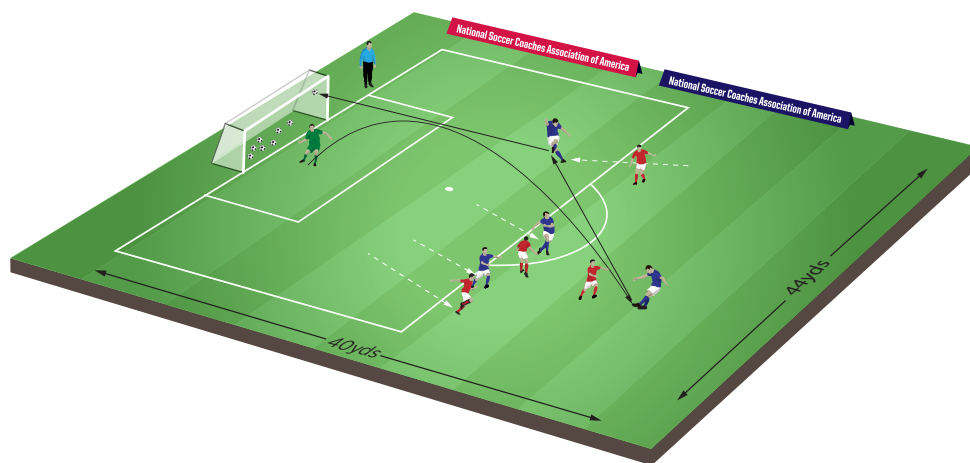
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

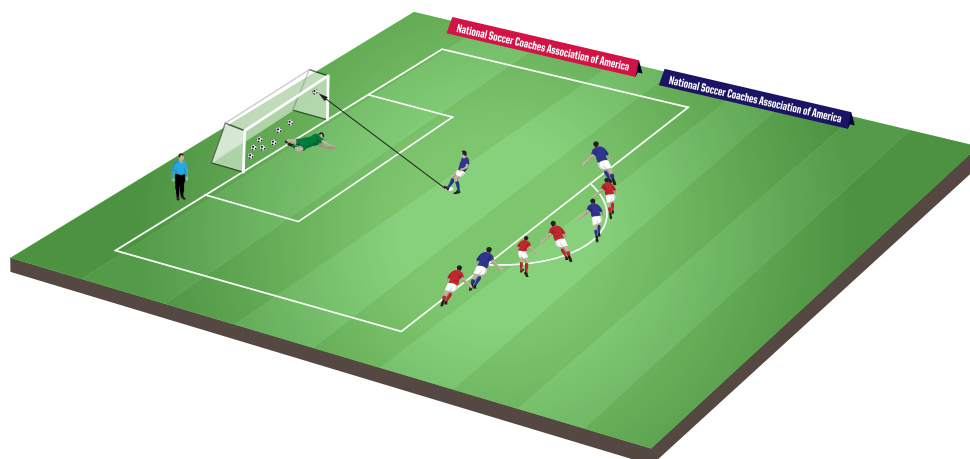
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and shooting.

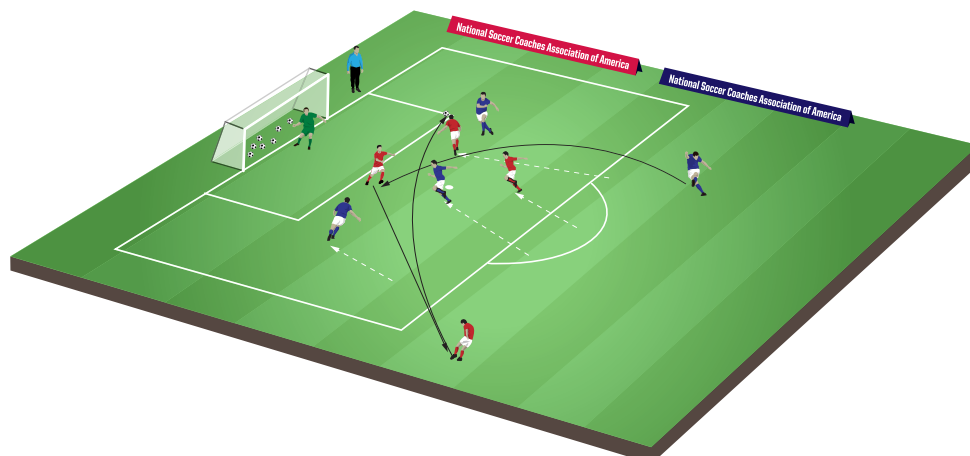
Top 3 competencies: Passing short and medium distances, shooting technique and movement.



- + The goalkeeper passes the ball in the air and beyond the edge of the penalty area.
- + The blues get to the ball first and a pass is made into the path of the blue attacker in the penalty box.
- + The reds are slow to react and the blue attacker scores.



- + The player scoring from open play quickly places the ball on the penalty spot and all other players retreat.
- + The player drives the ball into the top corner.
- + One point is scored for converting the penalty following a goal from inside the penalty box.



- + In this sequence the cross by blues is intercepted by the red defender.
- + Red's transition to the attack and are required to make a pass outside the area to be able to score.
- + A ball is played to a red player outside the box and a cross is made to the head of an attacker.

WORLD CUP 3V3

WHY USE IT

This is a challenging and high intensity game that can be used equally effectively as a warm-up and concluding activity. The number of players can be adapted from 1v1 to 5v5 depending on the coach's objectives.

SET UP

30x20 yards area with appropriately sized goals at each end. In this example there are 4 teams of 3 players with a goalkeeper at each end. The coach is positioned centrally and is responsible for restarting the games from the sideline.

HOW TO PLAY

2 teams take the field and the coach serves a ball to one of the teams to start a 3v3 game. The other 2 teams line up next to the coach waiting to be called upon. The game is winner stays on, so the team conceding must exit the field immediately as the coach invites another team to enter the playing area. The transition of teams must be fast and immediately the coach feeds a ball into start a new game. The team that scored continues playing as other teams rotate into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds, restart the game with a kick in from the coach. The coach can add a number of additional challenges to one or both teams. For example, the next goal cannot be scored by the same person. Another condition could be the team coming on have unlimited touches, but the team that scored must play 2 touch. The coach can vary the conditions to meet the objectives of the session.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – If the defensive team transitions quickly from the sideline and is organized, be patient and possess the ball.
- + Coaching tips – At Stage 3, the coach can start to discuss with players different attacking objectives and strategies when playing against an organized or disorganized defense. The more organized the defense the greater need to maintain positive possession of the ball and use width and depth.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

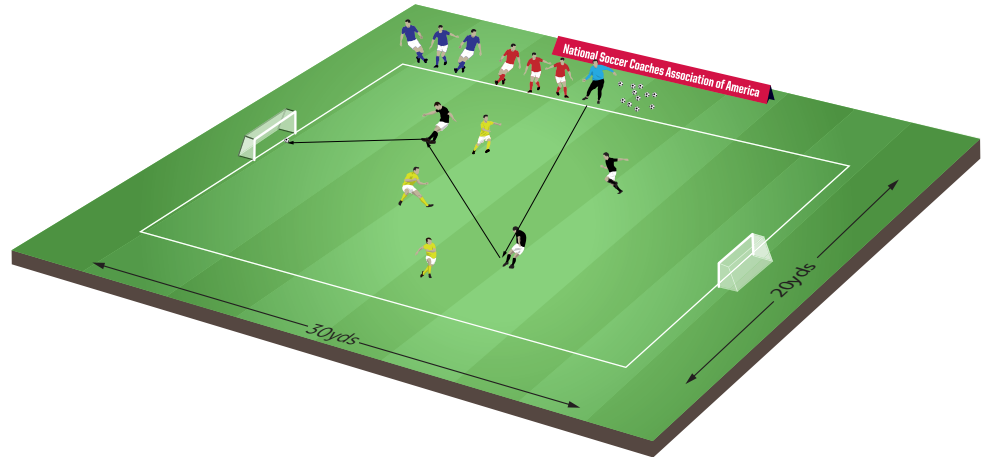
- + Less challenging – Do not impose too many restrictions and conditions to begin. The coach may also like to send different numbers onto the field to create numbers up for one team.
- + More challenging – Add conditions as the game progresses. a) limited touches for one or both teams, b) if a team takes too long to get onto the field, the team is replaced immediately, c) encourage the keeper to step forward and support the attack as the modern game requires.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

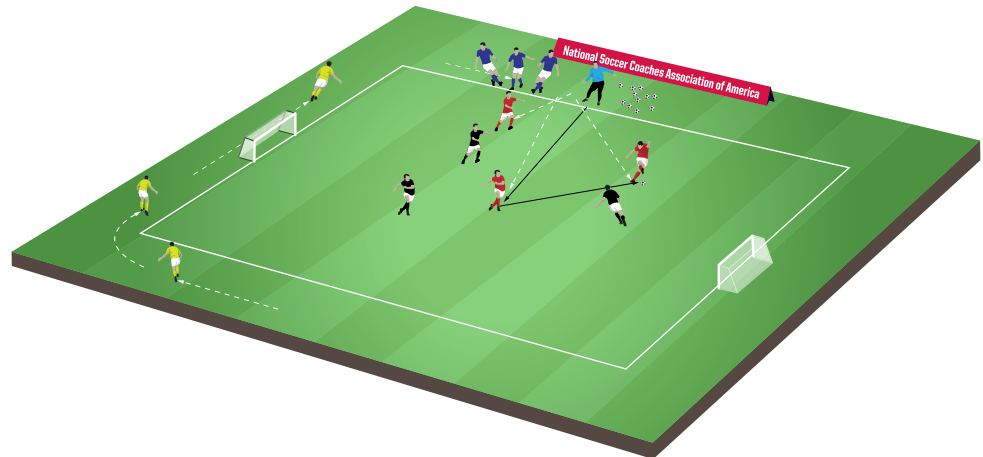
Stages 3, 4 & 5 – 9-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

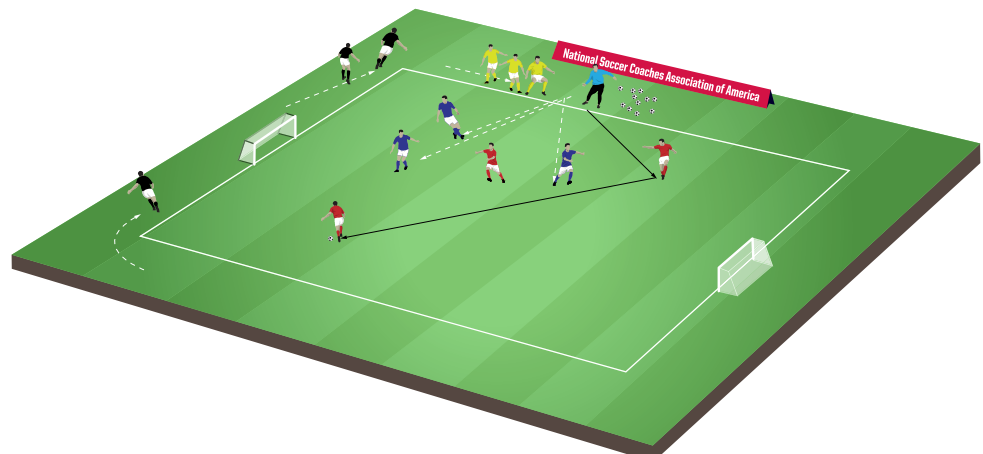
Top 3 themes: Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and defending.
Top 3 competencies: Attacking 1v1, beating and escaping an opponent and support.



- + The black and yellow teams start the game on the field. Each team has a goalkeeper.
- + The black team is quick to see an attacking opportunity and a through pass is made to a deep teammate.
- + A goal is scored by blacks and the reds are ready to come onto the field.



- + The reds transition quicker than blacks and a red attack is rapid.
- + A 2v1 in favor of reds results and the 2 black forwards cannot recover in time.
- + To slow the attack down and allow the defense to organize, the coach can pass the ball behind the defense.



- + This time the coach plays backward and this allows the blues to stop the immediate penetration to goal.
- + The red defender drops deeper and another red player spreads wide and into space.
- + A firm cross field pass is made in front of the attacker who has an open goal.

CREATING SPACE WITH SIMILAR AND OPPOSITE MOVEMENTS

WHY USE IT

As players enter the 3rd stage of development, coaches will want to help players to understand how their movements on and off the ball can be complimentary and opposite. This is a simple set that will provide passing, movement and attacking opportunities.

SET UP

10x20 yards area with cones placed in the 4 corners and halfway down both long sides. 1 player with a ball starts centrally at one end of the area, a player without a ball in the center of the area and a third player without a ball starts centrally at the other end line. The coach takes a position to see all the action.

HOW TO PLAY

The movement patterns of players is triggered by the first touch of the passing player with the ball on line 1. The support player on the 2nd line moves in the opposite direction to the touch of the passing player. As the support player moves to the sideline, he/she should face the ball and open the body to be able to see the ball and the player on line 3. The player on line 3 moves complimentary to the player on line 1 and opposite to the support player on line 3. These are important considerations, as these movement patterns create the maximum amount of attacking space for the 3 players to operate. On receipt of the pass, the support player opens his/her body and passes with 2 touch to the third player. To create a transitional moment, the sequence changes to an attacking and defending activity as the final pass is made. On receipt of the ball, the player on line 3 becomes an attacker and drives forward into space on the dribble. The player on line 2 transitions into a defender and moves to confront the attacker. The attacker can perform a take on move to beat the defender. The players rotate with the player on the 1st line moving to line 2, player 2 to line 3 and player 3 to line 1.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Players should adjust their positioning by recognizing visual clues, such as the movement of the ball and players.
- + Coaching tips – Attention to detail is vital for activities requiring technical precision. Insist on a firm pass to space, a solid first touch out of the feet and sharp purposeful movements off the ball.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging – Start the support players in their final positions.
- + More challenging: Increase the distances to play longer passing.

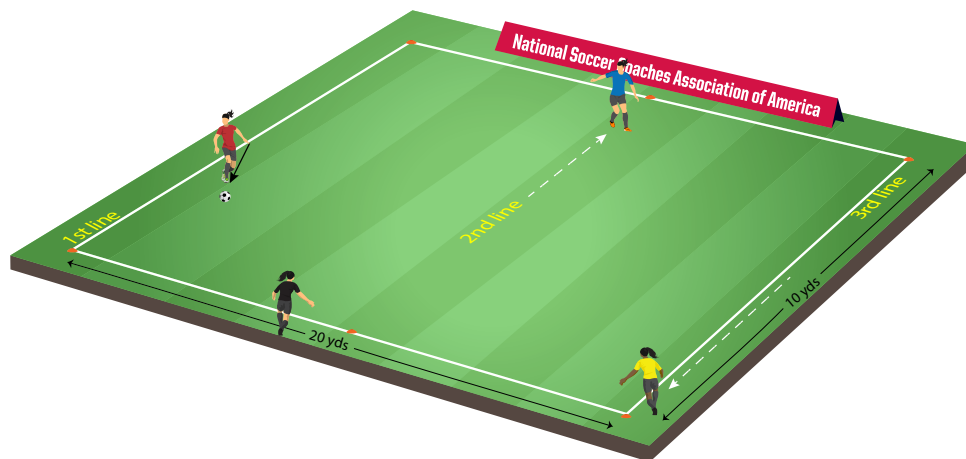
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

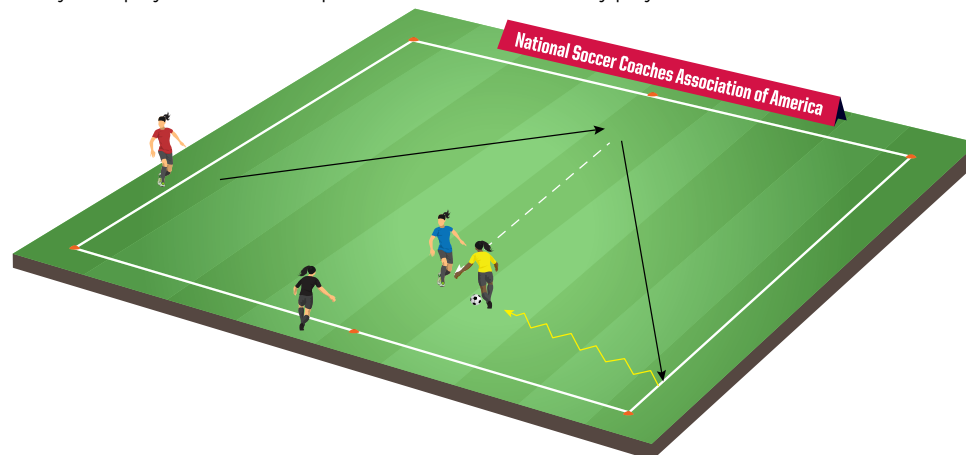
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Combination play, creating space as an individual/small group and passing.

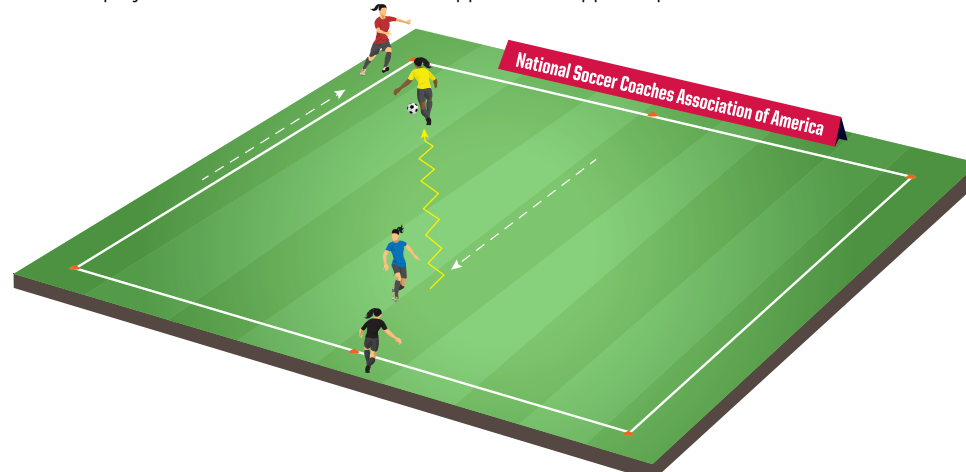
Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, movement off the ball and defending pressure.



- + The 3 attackers move to create angles of support wide and attacking depth.
- + The red player takes a touch to the right.
- + The movement of the ball initiates opposite movement by the blue player back peddling to the sideline.
- + The yellow player moves to complement the ball movement by player 1.



- + The red player looks up and plays a firm pass along the ground to the 'back foot' of blue for a quick turn.
- + Blue plays in 2 touches to yellow who transitions to an attacker and penetrates into space.
- + The blue player transitions to a defender and applies semi-opposed pressure.



- + The yellow player performs a take on move to beat the blue defender.
- + If the blue defender wins the ball, he/she can dribble over line 3 for a point.
- + To add an additional challenge, the red player can also transition to defend the yellow attacker.

PASSING PATTERNS 5V0 TO 6V1

WHY USE IT

This is an exceptional activity to teach players how to create space in and out of ball possession. Players will learn to move in the opposite direction of their pass and to create confusion for defenders.

SET UP

25x15 yards area with a cone placed in each corner and one cone in the center of the rectangle. A player stands 1 yard outside the area in each corner and one player starts in the center.

HOW TO PLAY

The ball starts with a player in one of the corners who makes a pass along the short side to a player who checks away from the cone to provide some separation from an imaginary defender. It is important that all passes around the outside do not cross into the area and close down the available space for the central player. The receiving player then looks to make a pass to the central attacker who makes movement away from the ball initially and checks back at an angle. As the ball is played into the attacker, it is important for he/she to open the body to see the ball and the players at the other end. With two touches the central player makes a pass to either player at the other end of the area. As soon as the pass is made the central player runs in an opposite direction towards one of the corner players. As the ball is being transferred along the short side by the players at the opposite end, the corner player must react to the central players runs and switch positions quickly. The pass and movement sequence continues.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Focus on making a properly weighted pass, movement away from the ball to create space, receive the ball with a solid first touch and movement away from the ball following a pass.
- + Coaching tips – It is commonplace for young players to close down space following a pass. A pattern play activity can help players to appreciate movement away from the ball and this time and space can be beneficial for a teammate receiving the pass.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Use pattern play to break down the movement patterns and passing sequences into small manageable chunks. The coach can also reduce the size of the area to make passing distance shorter.
- + More challenging: Add a passing combination between 2 central players and add a defender.

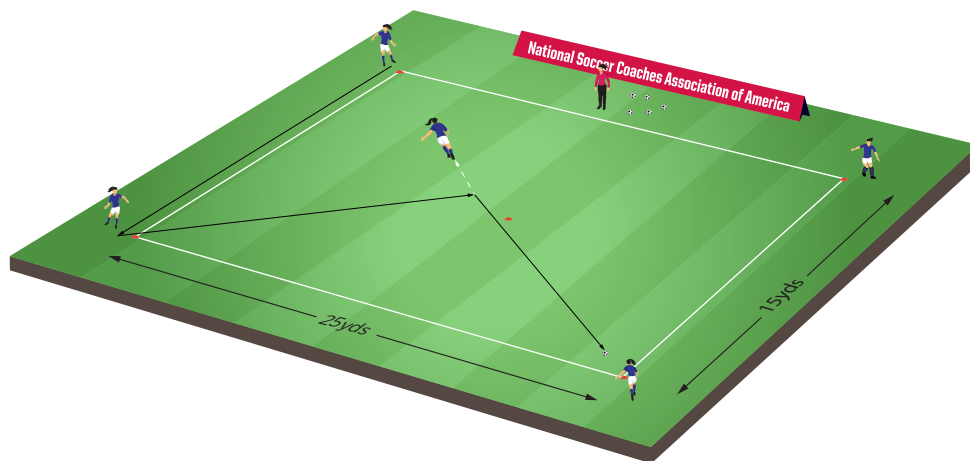
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

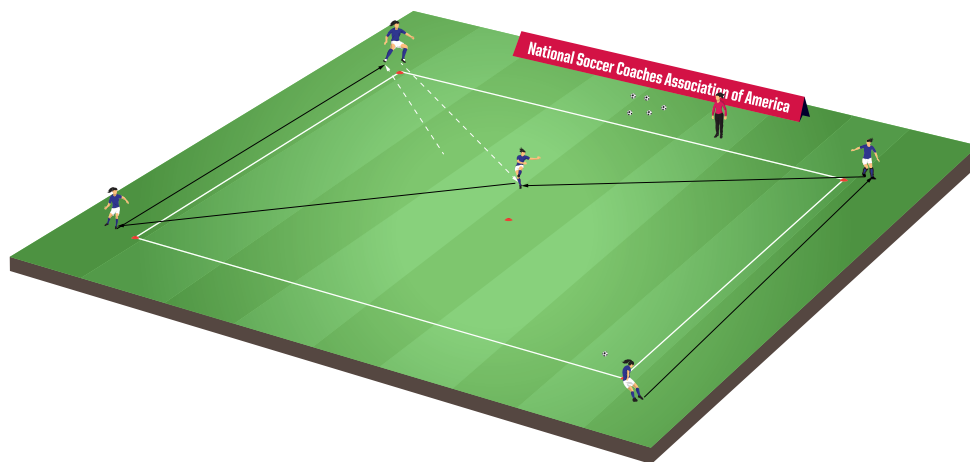
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Combination play, creating space as an individual/small group and passing.

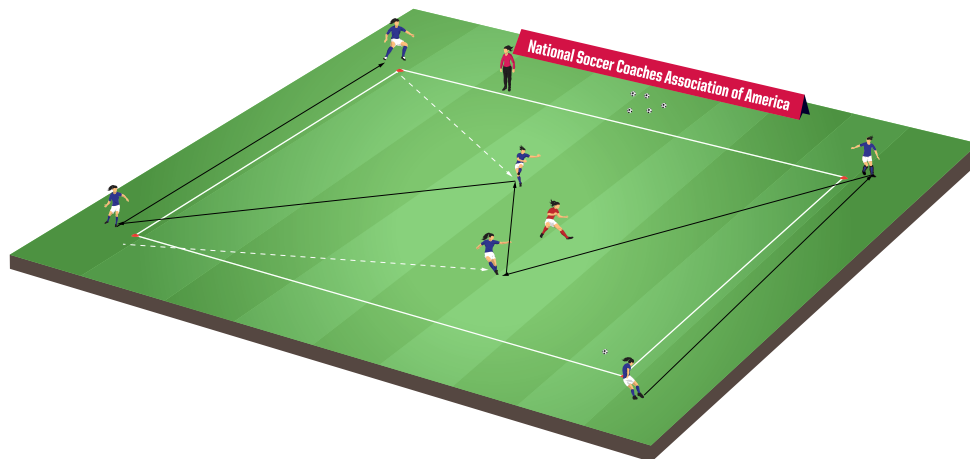
Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, movement off the ball and defending pressure.



- + 4 attacking players are positioned in each corner of the area at least one yard from the edge.
- + Another attacking player starts in the area near a central cone.
- + A passing combination along the short side, to the central attacker and to either corner player develops.



- + As soon as a pass is made to the corner player, the central player runs in the opposite direction.
- + The corner player exchanges positions with the central player as the ball transfers between corner players.
- + The passing combinations continue from one end to the other with corresponding movements off the ball.



- + To progress the activity the coach can firstly add an extra player to the center to encourage a wall pass.
- + The next step is to add a defender so the corner player must make a decision which central player to pass to.
- + Both central players exchange with the corner players as soon as the pass is made.

PASSING AND CREATING SPACE WARM-UP

WHY USE IT

An extremely versatile activity for introducing technical concepts with your players. The coach can manipulate numerous variables to change the focus and the intensity.

SET UP

35x20 yards. '3 or 4 even numbered 'teams' are in the area. One ball per player and 3-4 colored training vests. Lines and/or cones are needed to establish the playing area.

HOW TO PLAY

As players arrive at the training session, give them a vest and a ball so they can commence dribbling in the area. Allocate a take-on or escape move to practice. Transition to passing combinations between pairs. Players dribble and pass one ball, moving around the area attempting to cover as much of the space as possible. Passing exchanges must be quick and at least 8 yards apart. Introduce the wall pass, overlap, double pass and takeover - whatever you decide is the main theme of the session. Work with the passer to create time and space by looking over the shoulder and playing the ball into space or the feet of the partner. Think of the other players as defenders, and make passes away from pressure. Work with the receiver on first touch into space and verbal and non-verbal communication. Progress to working as a team of 4 - players cannot make 2 consecutive combinations with the same partner. Then position 2 players from each team on the outside of the area - players on the inside should combine with the outside teammates. Finally, each team has 1 ball and must move from one side to the other combining passes with all 4 players - wall pass, overlap, takeover etc.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with individual players on body shape, first touch and movement off the ball.
- + Coaching tips - Use this activity multiple sessions, focussing on 1-2 coaching points each time. Repeat and reinforce.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

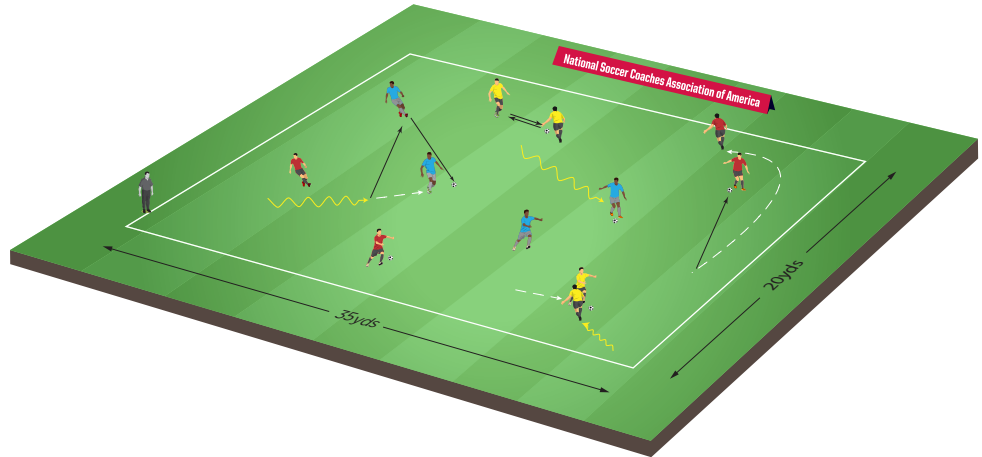
- + Less challenging: Unlimited touches, reduce the number of players, increase the space.
- + More challenging: Limit touches to 2 or 1 touch, add a double pass combination, change the type of combination - wall pass, overlap and add a movement sequence.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

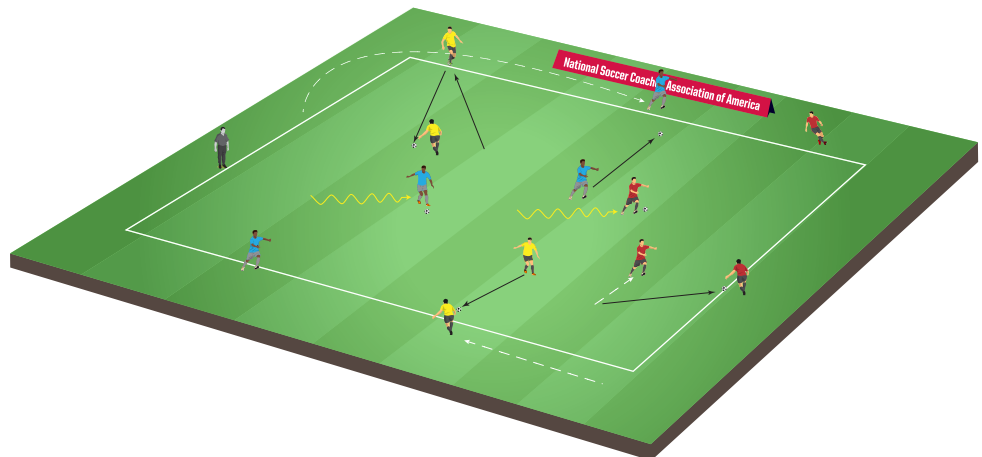
Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

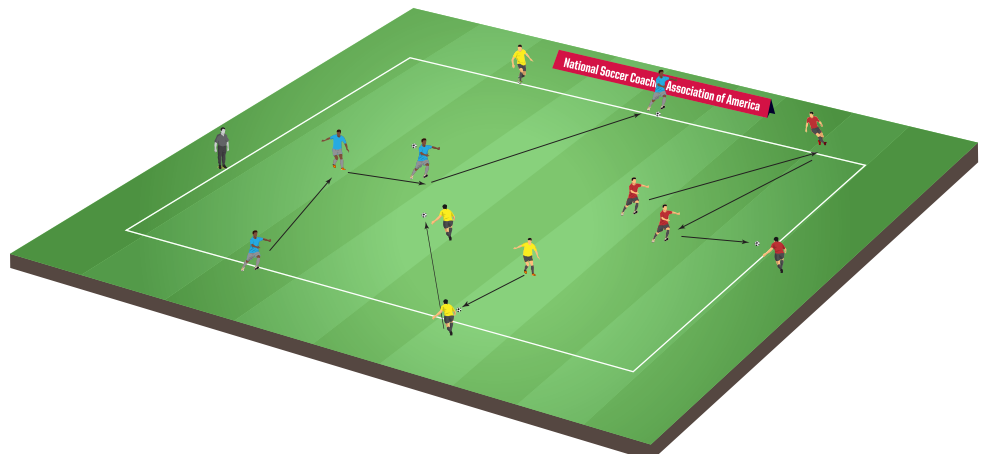
Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and communication.
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.



- + Players work in pairs with 1 ball, dribbling, passing and moving.
- + Each team color has 2 pairs.
- + Introduce moves such as, a wall pass, overlap, double pass and takeover.



- + 2 players from each team work around the perimeter - moving freely to support the inside players.
- + Inside players must combine with outside players with a wall pass.
- + The coach can work with inside players on different ways to create space - open body, let the ball run etc.



- + 1 ball per team.
- + Inside players must combine with the 2 outside players in a fluent and rhythmic sequence.
- + Add different conditions - 1 or 2 touch, outside players must move to a different side, etc.

CENTER MIDFIELD LINK-UP AND FINISHING 3V2

WHY USE IT

As young players start to develop a proficiency in the basic techniques, coaches can start to work with players on positional roles and principles of play. In this activity our focus is on the link play between central midfield players and strikers and creating depth in attack.

SET UP

A 40x20 yards area with 2 small goals at both ends of the field approximately 8 yards apart. Play 2v2 inside the area and each team has a striker positioned off the end line and between the goals at the attacking end of the field. The coach starts with the balls on the sideline.

HOW TO PLAY

In a 6v6 to 11v11 game, coaches will often play with 1 or more central midfield players and strikers. Time is well spent on the training ground working on link play and emphasizing different types of passing combinations and movements of the ball. The coach starts the activity by playing a pass to either team in their defensive half of the field. The objective is for the attacking team to score in either of the 2 small goals. The attacking team has a striker positioned between the goals that should be used to maintain possession and establish triangle combinations between the 3 attackers. The defenders must attempt to win possession and counter attack using the numerical advantage - 3v2.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with the attacking team to use their numerical advantage and deep lying striker. Challenge the attacking team to play quickly to the unmarked striker and make runs off the ball to confuse the defense.
- + Coaching tips - Playing with 4 lines - goalkeeper, defense, midfield and strikers - requires the team to develop depth (spreading the play vertically). With players in stage 3, in particular, the concept of depth is often hard to grasp, so the coach can impose conditions such as playing with a striker 'fixed' to the end line to establish depth.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Remove 1 of the defenders if the attackers are struggling to combine and score. Move the goals further apart to spread the defenders and give the striker more room to operate. Start the defenders in the defensive end.
- + More challenging: Limit finishing touches to 1 touch, insist that before every goal the striker must touch the ball and add a condition that all 3 attackers must touch the ball before a goal is scored.

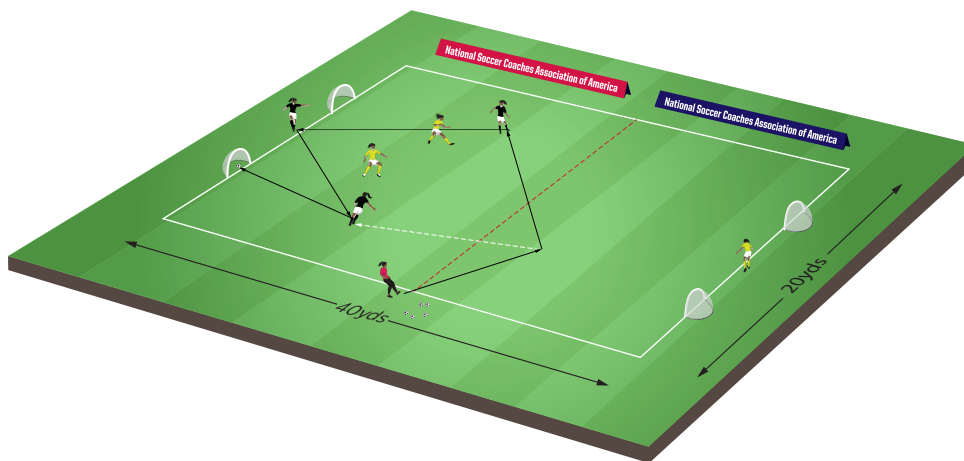
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

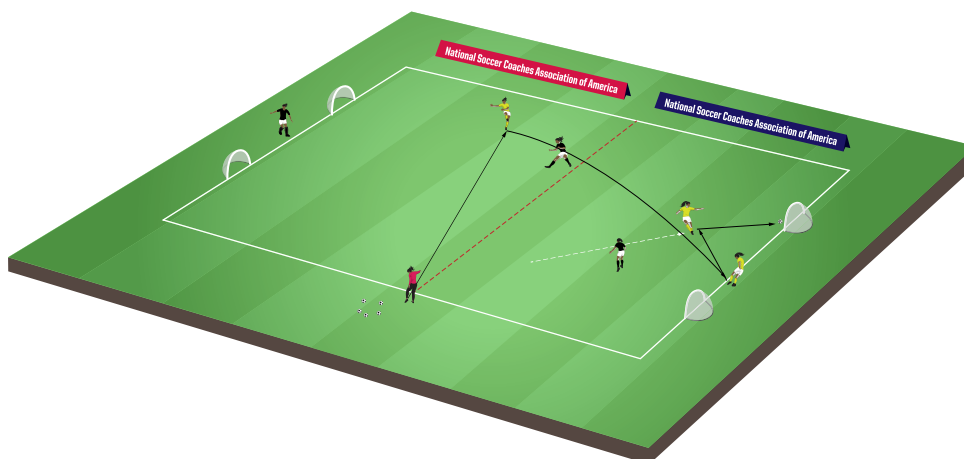
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and link play.

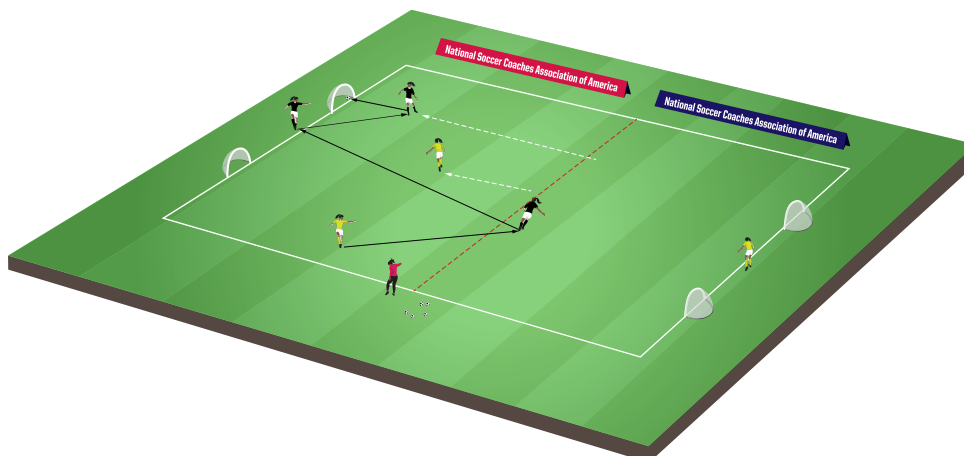
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, making support runs and defending pressure/cover.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to a black player in the defense half of the field.
- + The black attackers attempt to create width inside the field and the striker between the goals provides depth.
- + An effective passing combination with the striker and intelligent movement off the ball leads to a goal.



- + The coach again restarts the game with a pass to the yellow team.
- + The yellow attacker has good vision and decides to play direct to the unmarked yellow striker.
- + As the ball is travelling the yellow midfielder makes a run under the path of the ball and has a tap in.



- + In the final sequence the black team intercepts the ball and catches the yellow team in transition.
- + The black player intercepting the ball makes a firm penetrating pass to the striker.
- + The striker is supported quickly in transition by the other black player who is left unmarked and scores.

CREATING SPACE WITH MOVEMENT AND COMBINATIONS 6V3

WHY USE IT

Developing the correct 'spacing' between players and movement off the ball to create space are hot topics for coaches working with players in Stages 3 and 4. Young players have a tendency to reduce space for themselves and others as they edge closer and closer to the ball.

SET UP

The set-up is a 40x20 yards area with 2 goals at one end of the field approximately 8 yards apart. 2 attackers play against 1 defender in a 10 yard end zone stretched across the width of the field. Play 3 attackers v 2 defenders in the larger area segmented into 4 triangular shaped zones with cones. Opposite the goals at the other end of the field is an attacker in a 10 yards end zone stretching the width of the area. The balls are placed in the goals to start.

HOW TO PLAY

The attacking team must attempt to pass the ball from the back field, through midfield and reach the target player at the other end of the field. The attacking players in the zone near the goals start with the ball and must try to pass to one of the attacking midfield players. To help the attackers appreciate the need to maintain distance between them, no more than 1 attacker can occupy the triangular spaces in the center of the area. Once a midfield player has touched the ball a pass can be made to the attacking target player for a point, or the attacking players can possess the ball to create an opening. The defenders can move anywhere and if they win possession they attempt to score in either of the 2 goals for a point. First team to 5 points wins.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - The attackers must attempt to make the field 'big' making maximum use of the available space. Midfield players should move the extreme edges of their area to create width and depth.
- + Coaching tips - Restricting the number of players allowed in a particular area provides some control over the space between players. The coach will need to reinforce 'stretching' the field wide because the natural tendency for young players is to creep into the center and follow the ball.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Commence pattern play with a passive defense.
- + More challenging: Impose a touch restriction for attackers. Require players to play in a particular pattern and add an extra defender.

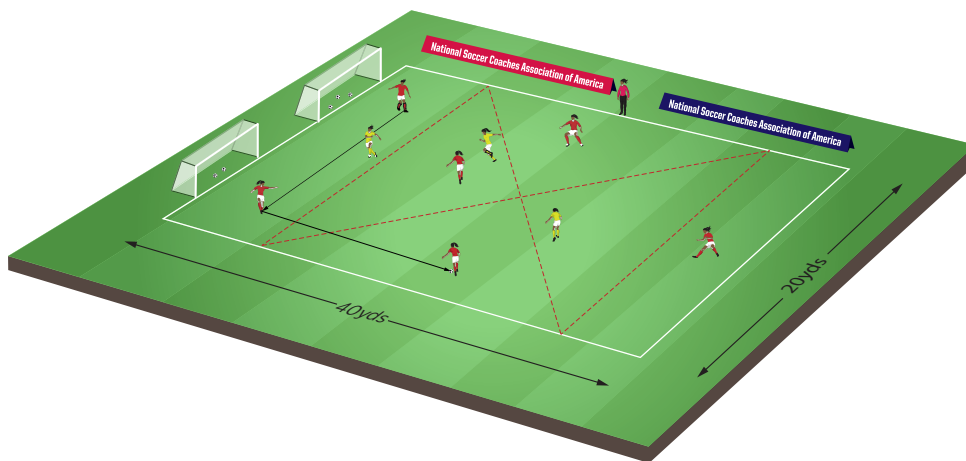
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

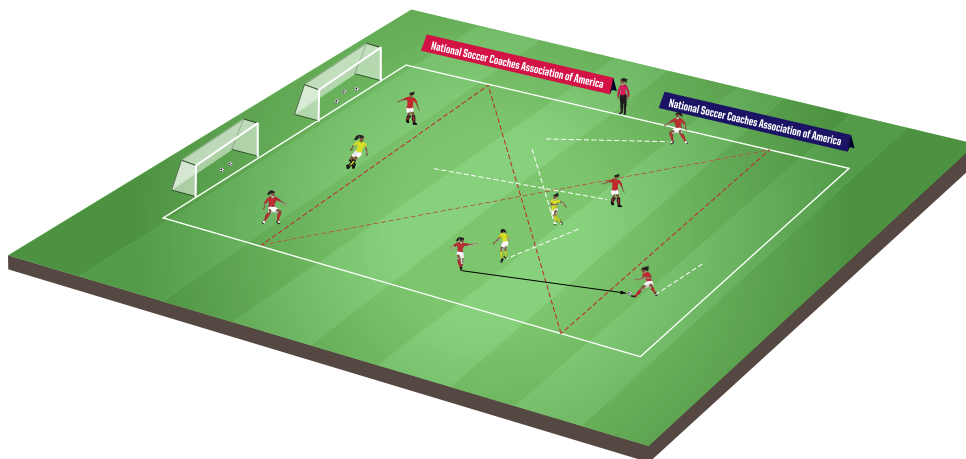
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and defending.

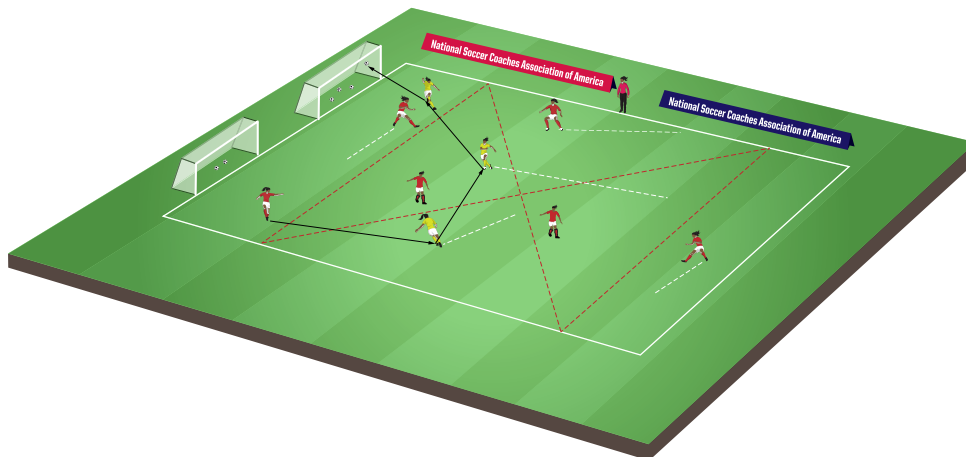
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, making support runs and defending pressure/cover.



- + One of the 2 attacking players close to goal start the activity by collecting a ball from inside one of the goals.
- + A pass is made by the red attacker to switch the field from left to right. The defenders are slow to react.
- + The red midfielder moves wide and receives a pass in 'acres' of space.



- + With time to turn the red midfielder makes a pass to the red target player moving along the end zone.
- + The red team are restricted to only one player in each triangular zone and they do well to maintain space.
- + 'Spreading the field', the red team makes defending challenging and yellows cannot prevent reds scoring 1pt.



- + In the final sequence the yellow team have intercepted an errant pass out of the backfield by reds.
- + The counter attack is swift and the yellow attacker is able to find sufficient space to score.
- + The yellow players can move freely in the area, but the reds are restricted to their zones.

DEFENDING IN PAIRS AND 3'S - 2V5 TO 3V5

WHY USE IT

This activity is versatile and can focus on attacking and defending concepts. In this variation the emphasis is on the defensive responsibilities and techniques of the pressure and cover defenders.

SET UP

15x15 yards square with a small 2x2 yards square in the center. Approximately 2 yards off the edge of the large square and located adjacent to each corner are 4 small sided goals. 4 attacking players start centrally along each side of the large square and 1 attacker stands inside the smaller square. 2 defenders can move freely inside the larger square. The coach stands with all the balls and is responsible for starting the play.

HOW TO PLAY

The action starts with a pass from the coach to any of the 4 peripheral attacking players who can move along the outside of the square, but must stay on their side of the area. The objective of the game is for the attacking players to combine passes and seek an opportunity to make a penetrating pass to the attacking player in the center. Each successful pass earns a point for the attackers. Conversely, the defenders must prevent the pass to the attacking player and they attempt to intercept a pass. The defenders can play up to the edge of the area, but must not step outside the square. If the defenders intercept the pass, they must attempt to score in any of the corner goals for 2 points. First team to score 6 points wins. If the defenders win possession, the outside attacking players must sprint to protect the goals.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – The coach has an ideal opportunity to work with the pressure defender on body positioning, being patient and waiting for a bad first touch by an attacker, closing down space and time and working in unison with the cover defender. The cover defender must protect against the penetrating pass and communicate effectively.
- + Coaching tips – Coaches must know the 5 principles of defending, namely pressure, cover, balance, compactness and restraint. This activity requires excellent appreciation of the principles by the players.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

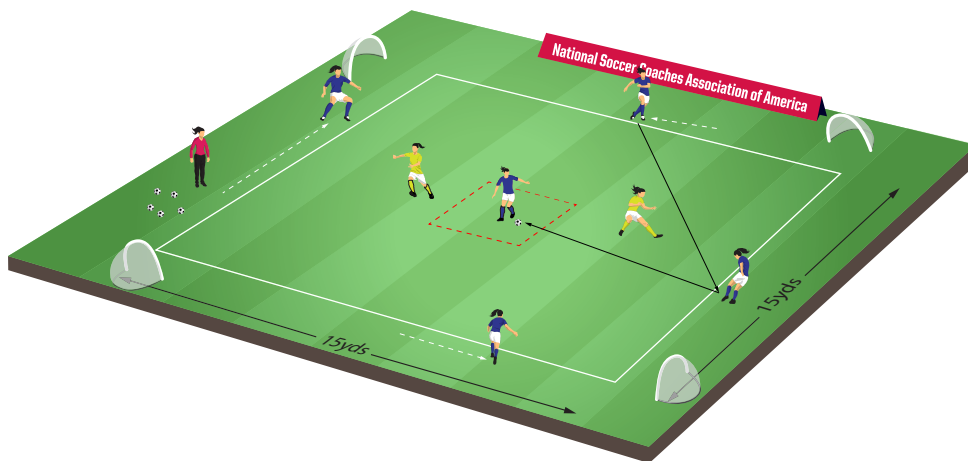
- + Less challenging: Start with 3 peripheral attackers so play becomes slower and predictable.
- + More challenging: Limit the attackers to 1 or 2 touches to increase the speed of play.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

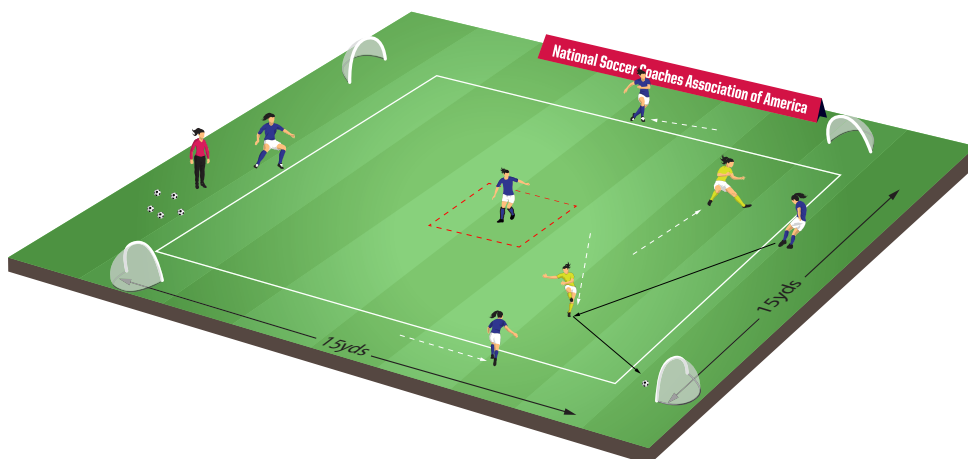
Stages 3, 4 – 9-14 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

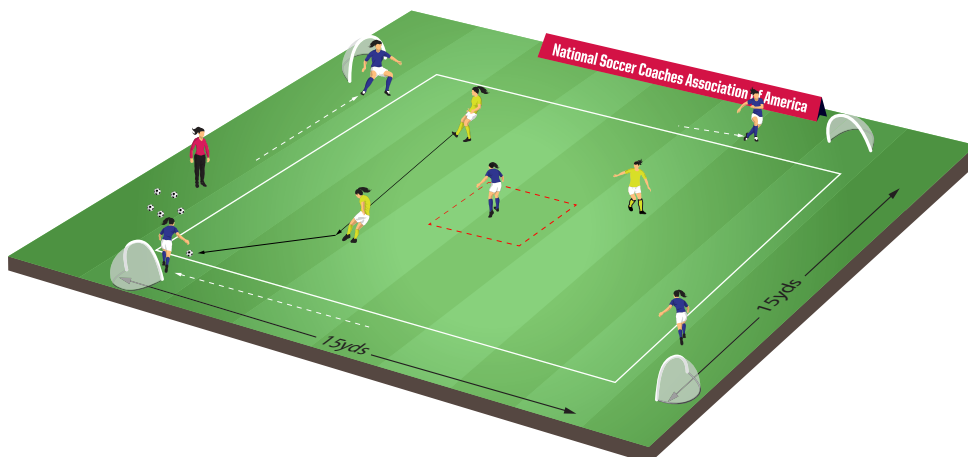
Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, cover defending and transition to attack.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to 1 of 4 peripheral attackers.
- + 2 attackers combine and pass to the central attacker for 1 point.
- + The yellow defenders do not coordinate their efforts and allow big spaces for the attackers to exploit.



- + In this sequence the yellow defenders work well together, with the first defender making an angled approach.
- + The second defender takes an excellent cover position to prevent a penetrating pass centrally.
- + The outside attacker is under pressure and attempts a pass across that is intercepted by the cover defender.



- + In the final sequence the yellows intercept the pass and decide to combine passes inside the square.
- + The blue attackers transition to defence and move quickly to protect the 4 goals.
- + The yellows are too slow and find all 4 goals are blocked.

DEFENDING IN PAIRS AND 3'S OVERLOAD

WHY USE IT

In this fast paced activity the objective is to delay the attack as long as possible to allow help to arrive.

SET UP

2 adjacent 30x15 yards areas with a small sided goal placed at one end. Cones or a line divide each area into two. 2 games are played concurrently, with 1v1 in each quadrant. The coach stands at the end opposite the goals with a large supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts the activity with a pass to the attacking player in each of the adjacent areas. The objective for the attacking team is to advance the ball into the attacking zone and score a goal worth 5 points. If the defenders win possession and make a pass to the coach they are awarded 1 point. The attacker with the ball must attempt to pass to the attacker in the attacking zone. Once a pass is made, the players can move into the attacking zone and play 2v2. If a goal is scored, a pass is made to the coach or the ball goes out of play, the defenders from one game can now support the 2 defenders from the other game to create a defensive overload. The attackers cannot transfer over to the other game.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Teaching young players patience in defense is not an easy task. This game rewards the patient defenders by allowing reinforcements to arrive and create an overload. Applying tight pressure and force play away from goal is needed, as is immediate chase if a defender is beaten by an attacker.
- + Coaching tips – The coach can communicate a clear message to the players by adding conditions, rules and objectives. In this example the coach has created a very lopsided scoring system to favor the attackers. With a goal worth 5 points the defenders will hopefully value preventing the attackers from scoring and wait for support over winning possession.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

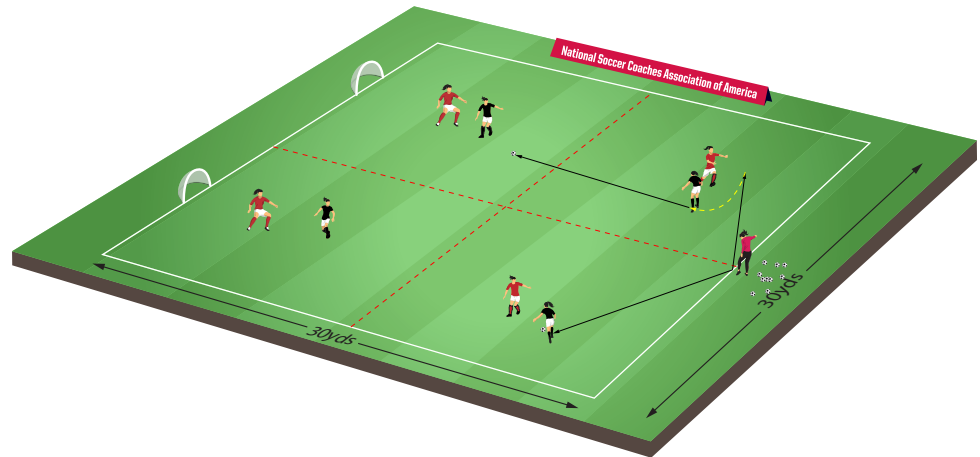
- + Less challenging: Remove the line splitting the zones and play 1v1. Prevent players leaving their zone and narrow the area to reduce the space for the defender to cover.
- + More challenging: Make the activity continuous by restarting each game once a ball is out of play. In so doing, the defenders must decide which attack to prevent.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

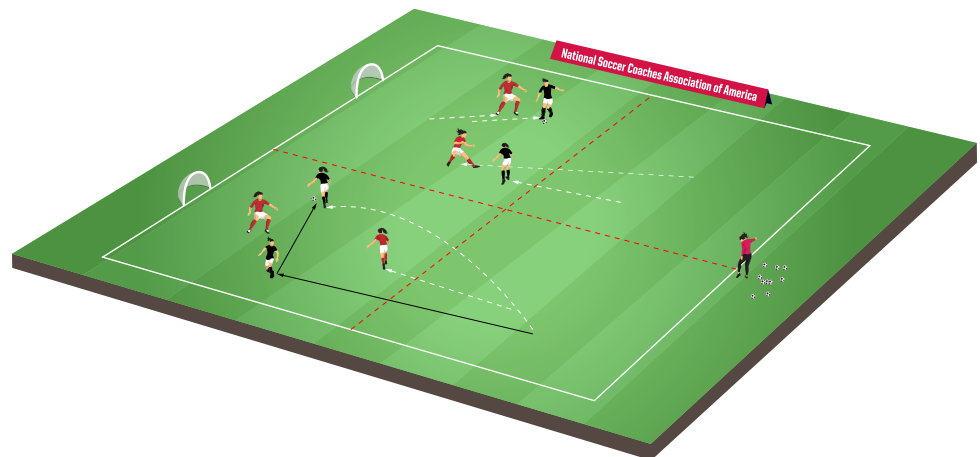
Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

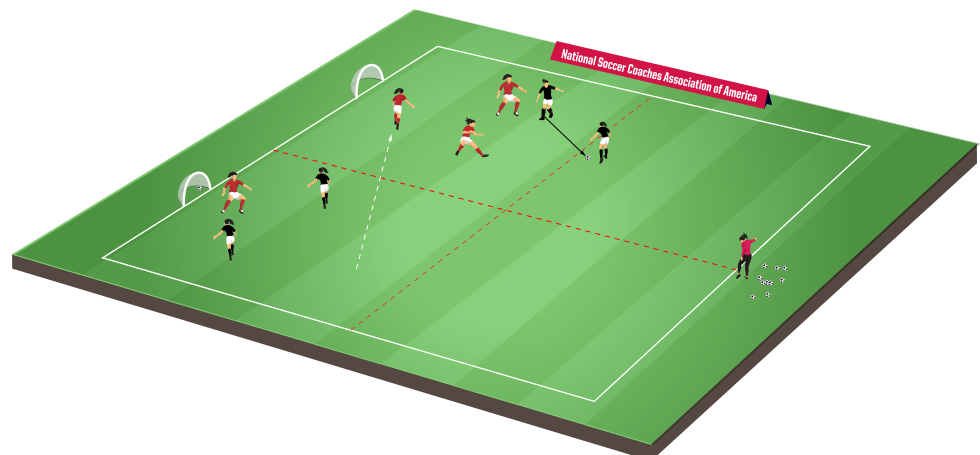
Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, cover defending and transition to attack.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to the black attacking players.
- + There are 2 games occurring simultaneously.
- + The attackers must try to combine and score, and the defenders try to force the attack away from the goal.



- + In game 1 to the coach's left, the reds have allowed the blacks too much time and space and the attacking player has an open goal to shoot at.
- + In game 2, the red defenders have established good defensive positioning and have delayed the attack.



- + As a result of the defenders success in game 2, a defender from game 1 is able to join the red team.
- + A 3v2 defensive overload is established and so the red team can start to become more aggressive.
- + The coach could immediately restart game 1 leaving the defenders to decide which game to support.

DELAYING THE ATTACK 1V1 TO 2V2

WHY USE IT

A frequent occurrence in games involving players in Stages 3 and 4 is a 1v1 breakaway. Training young defenders to manage these situations will be time well spent and the result will likely be more defensive success and fewer goals conceded.

SET UP

The set-up is a 40x30 yards area with an appropriate size goal at each end. 3 zones are created - 2 end zones 15 yards wide and a middle zone 10 yards wide. In each end zone start with a goalkeeper plus 1v1 and in the center zone play 2v2. The coach stands at the halfway point with a large supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts each sequence with a pass into the defensive zone. On receipt of the ball the defender has 2 uncontested touches before the striker can attempt to win the ball. This extra time should permit the defender to make a pass into one of the 2 midfield players. Following a successful pass the defender can join to create a 3v2. The attacking objective is to work the ball through the zones and serve the attacker. As the ball approaches or when the striker moves the defender must prepare and adjust his/her position and body shape. Play first to 5 goals wins.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – As the ball enters into the attacking zone the defender must apply pressure and force play away from goal. Delaying the attack is critical and defenders must not be overly eager to win the ball. Although somewhat counter intuitive if a defender gives a young attacker in possession time, he/she will invariably turnover the ball to the defensive team.
- + Coaching tips – The prevailing attitude of most coaches playing 5v5 or 6v6 is to commit all but 1 or 2 players to attack and this often leaves a solitary defender anchoring the team. As turnovers happen frequently at these age groups, defensive players are often caught in transition. This results in a good number of 1v1 breakaways. Consequently, coaches must take time to teach defenders to be patient and delay.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

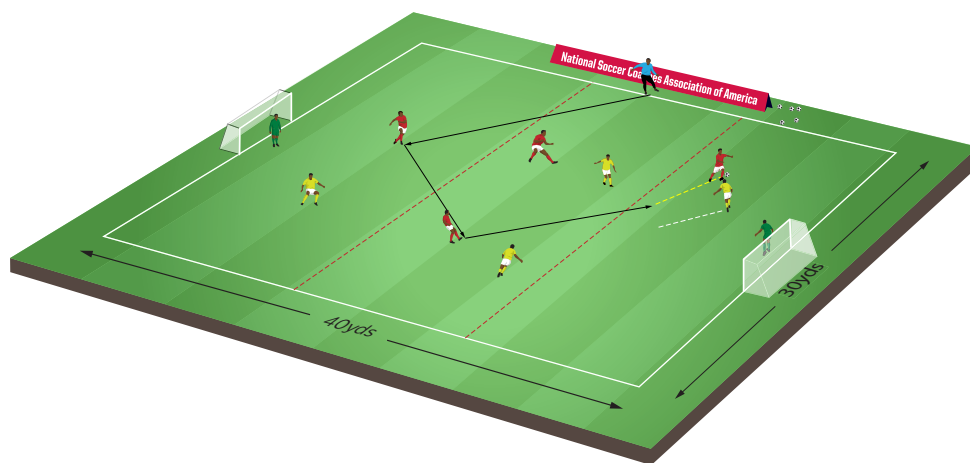
- + Less challenging: Keep the number of players equal and restrict the attackers to their zone.
- + More challenging: Permit 1 attacker and 1 defender to support the attack and create 2v2.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

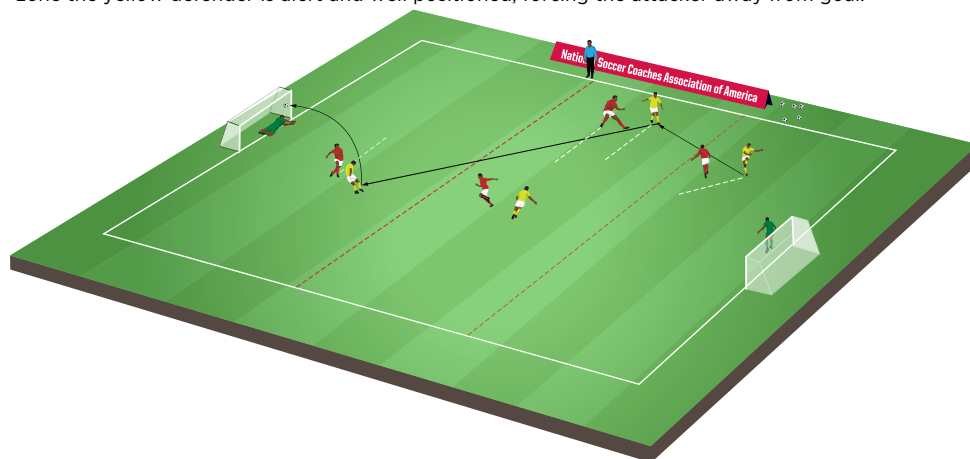
Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

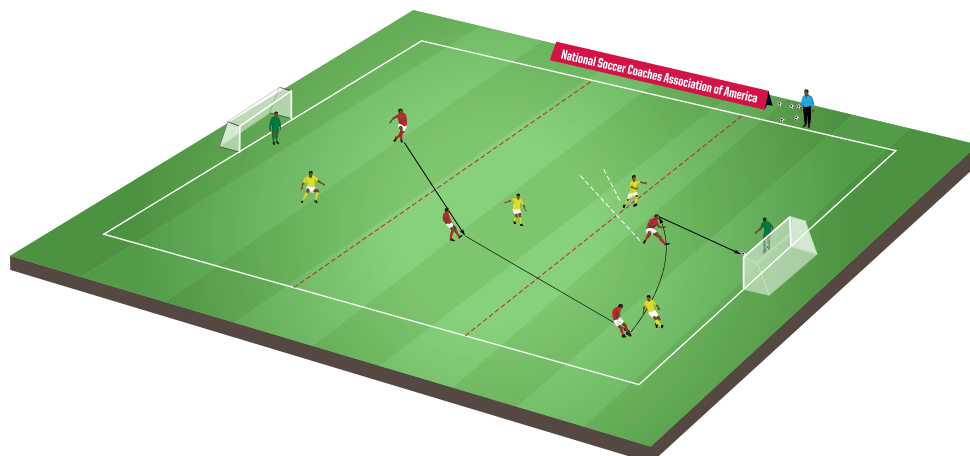
Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, defending to delay and transition to attack.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to the red defender in the defensive end of the field.
- + The defender has 2 uncontested touches before the striker can attempt to win the ball.
- + The red team are successful in building up play to the red striker. As a pass is made into the attacking zone the yellow defender is alert and well positioned, forcing the attacker away from goal.



- + As play progresses the yellow defender is patient and the red attacker loses possession.
- + The yellow defender quickly transitions the ball to the midfield player who turns and passes forward.
- + Unlike the yellow defender, the red defender is not ready and the yellow striker turns and shoots at goal.



- + In the final sequence the red team builds up play through the zones and releases the red striker slightly wide.
- + The yellow defender does well again to prevent a shot and hold the attacker wide.
- + However, a red midfielder supports centrally and a yellow midfielder player fails to work back goal side.

RUSH GOALIES 2V2 TO 3V3

WHY USE IT

This activity is extremely versatile and can be used to teach attacking and defending concepts. In this example we are focusing on defending and specifically recovery runs. 'Rush Goalie' is a term we used as kids to describe an outfield player allowed to use their hands.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area with a medium size goal at each end. Use cones or lines to split the field in two. Start with 2v2 and progress to 3v3 if appropriate. Balls should be placed next to each goal.

HOW TO PLAY

Prior to commencing the game ask each team to nominate a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper is the 'Rush Goalie' who can support attacks. This player is the only one allowed to handle the ball within 3 yards of goal. Play starts with a keeper distributing the ball to his/her partner. To begin only 1 opponent is able to contest for the ball and the Rush Goalie must sprint back to within 3 yards of the goal. The objective for the attacking team is to score in the opponent's goal but both teammates must be across the half when the ball enters the net. This condition forces the Rush Goalie forward and consequently when the ball is turned over the rush goalie must make a recovery run to get into a position to save a shot. As the keeper is recovering the teammate must defend with patience and delay the attack.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the defenders to make good recovery decisions. The Rush Goalie must sprint back to protect the goal and the teammate must delay as long as possible so the defenders can regain an organized shape.
- + Coaching tips – The inclusion of a Rush Goalie introduces an interesting dynamic and teaching moment. From an attacking perspective the keeper must support to provide even numbers, but cannot over commit or the opponents will be able to score easily in transition. The pair working effortlessly when they turn over the ball will be most successful.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

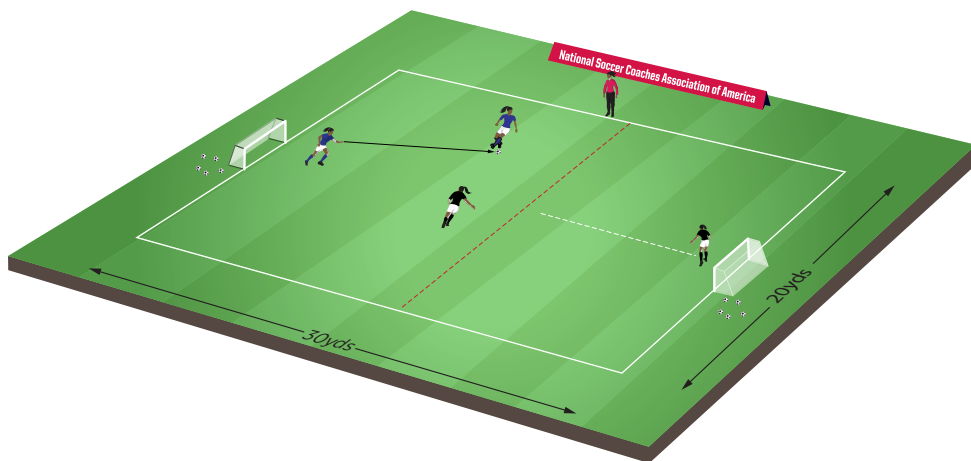
- + Less challenging: Start with 2v2 and insist on the Rush Goalie retreating to the goal following a turnover.
- + More challenging: Add an additional player to each team and reduce or eliminate restrictions.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

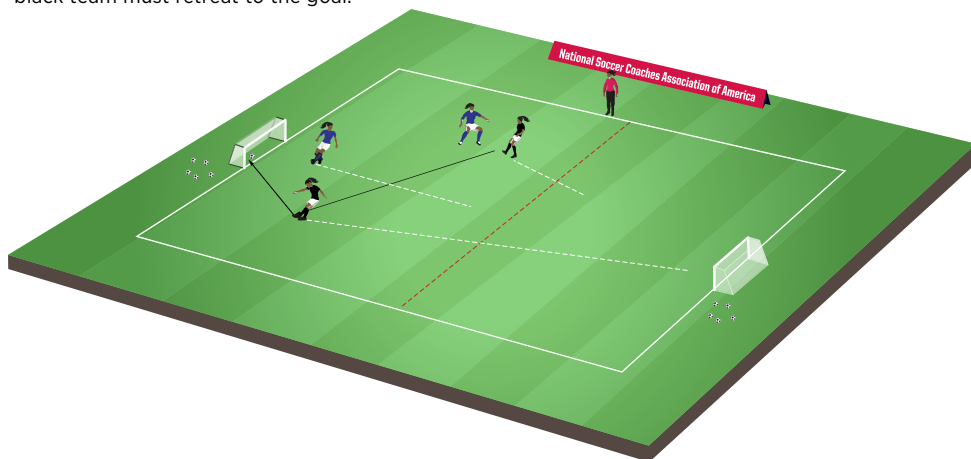
Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

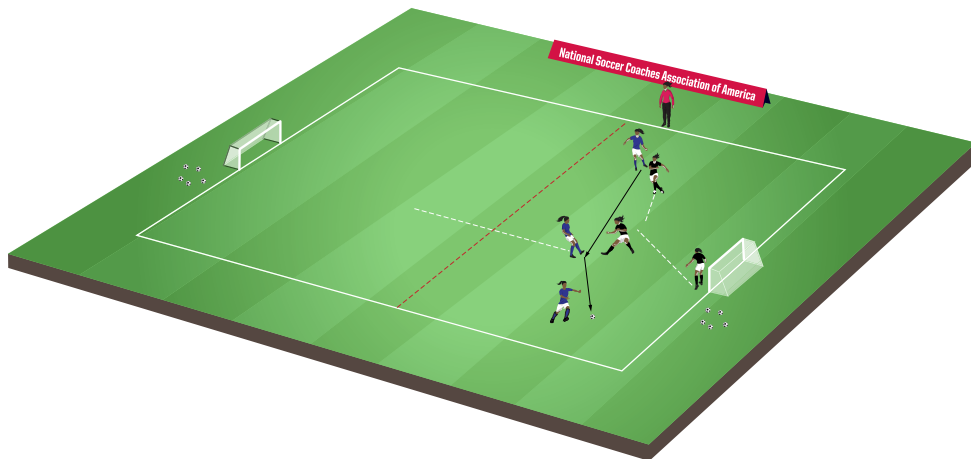
Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, defensive recovery runs and transition to attack.



- + The blue goalkeeper starts with the ball in the defensive end and passes to a teammate.
- + Each team has 1 person that is allowed to handle the ball - the 'Rush Goalie'.
- + Only 1 player from the black defending team is allowed to enter the blue half and the Rush Goalie for the black team must retreat to the goal.



- + The black defender forces a turnover and keeps possession until the Rush Goalie can sprint to support.
- + The blue players are slow to recover and the blue's Rush Goalie is caught too high up field.
- + The blacks combine well and score into an open net.



- + In the final sequence the coach has added a player to each team to create 3v3.
- + The tactics change and both teams can be more defensive minded as they attack.
- + The black team is able to drop into a compact shape around their goal, making attacking difficult for blues.

ROCK SOLID DEFENDING 3V5

WHY USE IT

This activity provides defenders plenty of opportunities to perfect pressure, cover and balance defending in and around the penalty box. Margins for error are small when the attacking team are so close to goal. Consequently, defensive movement to close down a shooting opportunity or to provide support to a player out of position is important to rehearse.

SET UP

The activity occurs in and around the penalty area with a goalkeeper protecting an appropriate size goal. Inside the penalty area are 3 defenders playing against 2 strikers and on the periphery of the penalty box are 2 wide attackers and a central attacking midfield player. The coach stands 10 yards outside the box with a large supply of balls and initiates all restarts.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach has 4 options to start the game. The first is to pass to the central attacking midfield player who can dribble, pass or shoot and the second is to pass wide to either winger who can dribble, pass or shoot. The third option is to play into the feet of the strikers who must try to combine with the other striker and the fourth option is to keep the defense on their toes and shoot. Play for 5 minutes and then change the teams.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – There are several opportunities to coach the defenders. Priority one is to close down the space and pressure the ball to prevent a shot or cross. As one player moves towards the opponent with the ball, the other 2 defenders must adjust their positions and body shape to provide cover and balance.
- + Coaching tips – Coaches working with players in the 3rd stage of development will find this activity particularly useful in developing player confidence and understanding. Often young players will be slow or reluctant to shut down a shot and give attackers far too much time and space within shooting range.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

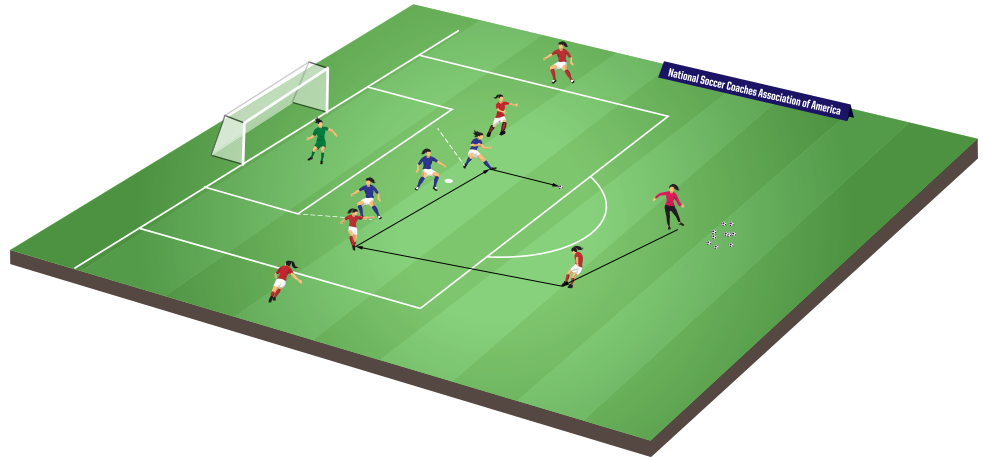
- + Less challenging: Start with 1 attacking option and work with the defenders on positioning and decision making before adding.
- + More challenging: Serve a ball quickly to catch the defenders in a disorganized shape.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

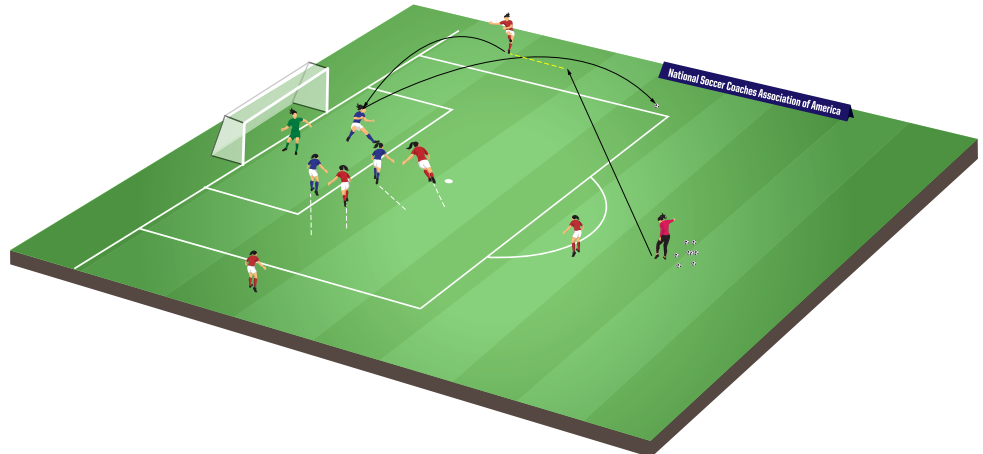
Stages 3 & 4 – 6-14 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

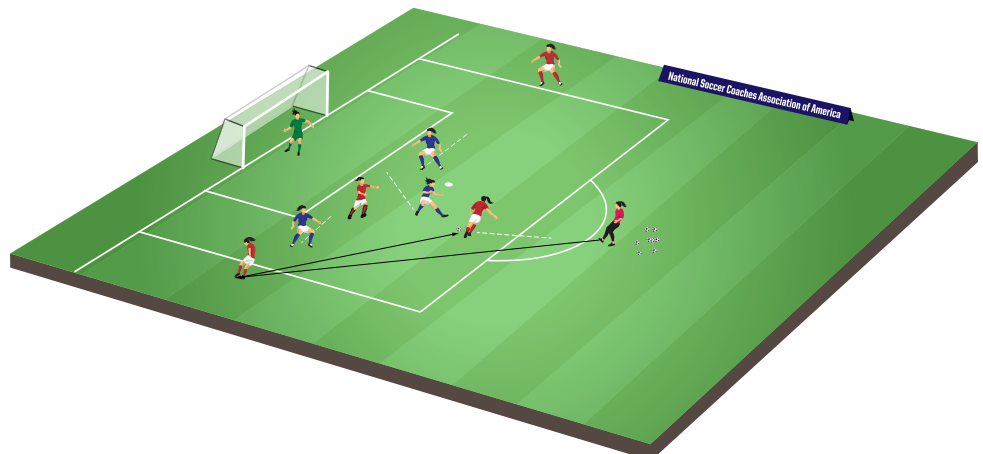
Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, marking in the penalty box and communication.



- + The 3 blue defenders must be alert to prevent the 5 red attacking players shooting at goal.
- + The coach can play a pass to either red winger, the strikers or the attacking midfield player.
- + As the ball is moving the blue defenders must start to adjust their positions and body shape. An attempt by the red striker to combine in the box is anticipated by the defender who intercepts the pass.



- + In the second diagram the coach spreads the ball wide to the winger on the right.
- + The defenders elect to stay compact in front of goal and not charge towards the winger to prevent the cross.
- + The decision to remain close to goal is a good one and the defender is able to head a near post cross clear.



- + The red team attempts to attack down the opposite side and the winger cuts the ball back into the path of the attacking midfielder moving into the penalty area.
- + The defenders are once again alert and one defender applies pressure and the others recover to mark.

6 BALL PASSING

WHY USE IT

This passing activity adds the pressure of defenders, time and the challenge of another team. Quick feet and creativity are needed in abundance in a tight space to transfer 6 balls from one end of the area to the other.

SET UP

Two adjacent 10x6 yard areas separated by a 2 yards safety zone. In each area, play 4v1 with 2 target players and 2 attackers against 1 defender. Each group needs 6 balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the activity is for the attacking team to transfer 6 balls from one end of the area as quickly as possible to the other. Each ball successfully transferred wins a point. In the first sequence, if the defender wins the ball, the ball is 'dead' and a new ball is served. Rotate the players after each round. At least 1 attacking player must touch the ball before it is transferred. In the 2nd sequence, add a counter attack goal for the defender to score - if a goal is scored deduct a point from the attackers. In the final sequence, add a second defender creating a 4v2.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the server to select the best pass – to the 'front foot' or 'back foot'. Attacking players need to move wide and deep, exchanging places to find space. Body position when receiving the ball is crucial and is based on the defensive pressure. The aim is to play quick and direct, show attackers must take the opportunity to pass. Encourage innovative play and tricks.
- + Coaching tips – Use player numbers to add more or less challenge at the appropriate time, alternating until achieving the right balance.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Increase the width of the area, start the defender in the back half of the area and allow the internal attackers to combine with the server to create 3v1.
- + More challenging: Introduce a 2nd defender. Once a pass is made to the target, the target and passers change positions in the flow. Defenders can play 2v2 on 3 occasions – stepping off on the other 3 (i.e ball 1, 3 and 5). Allow the server to enter the area to create 3v2.

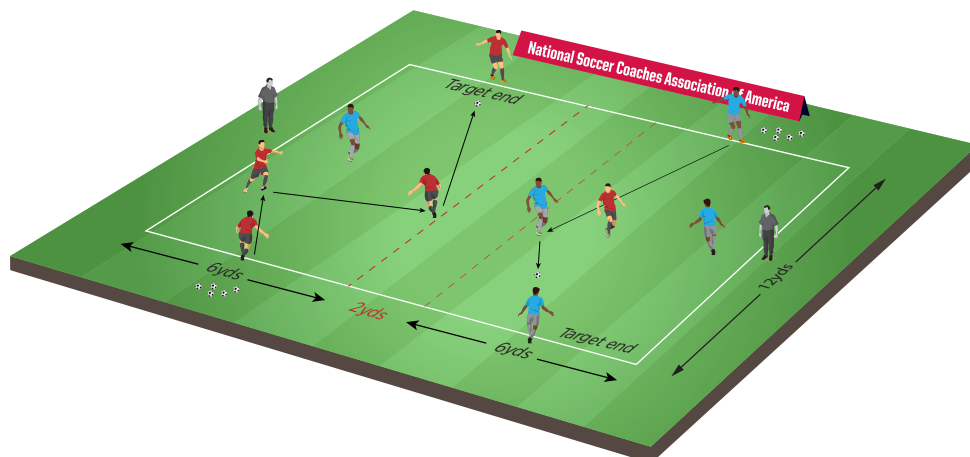
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

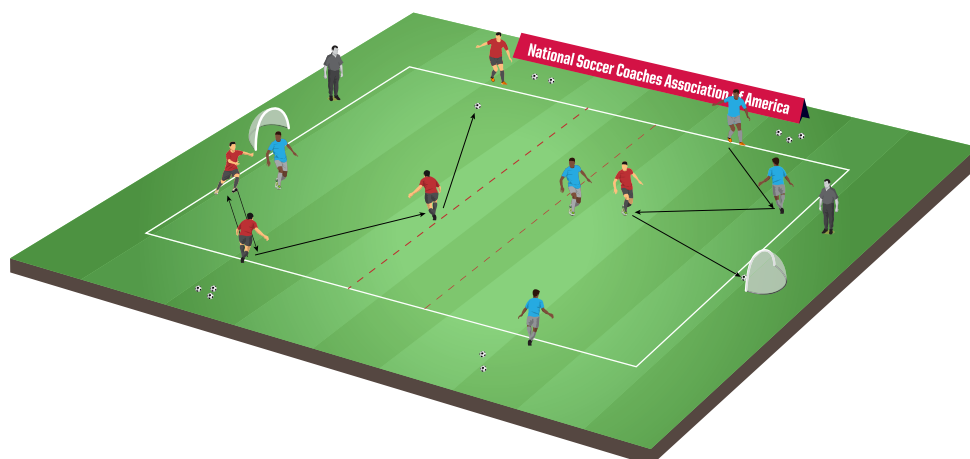
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over a short distances, combination play and creating space.

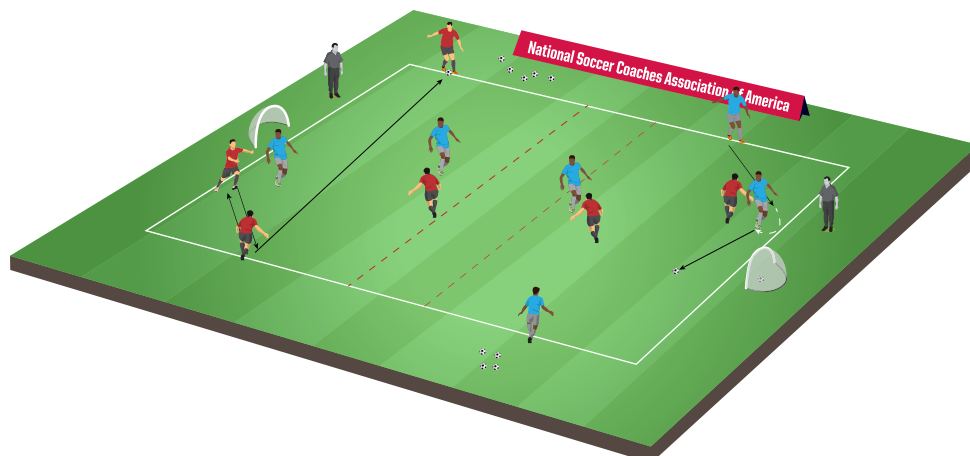
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.



- + A red server with 6 balls plays a pass to an attacker that finds space.
- + Red attackers play in front of the defender and pass to the target player.
- + The blue attackers play more direct, with a first time pass to the target.



- + The blue defender plays 'high and tight', so the server plays a double pass and releases the other red.
- + The blue attackers make a weak square pass that is cut out by the red defender.
- + The red defender scores in the counter attack goal and blues lose a point.



- + An additional defender is added. 4v2 in each area.
- + Both red attackers are tightly marked. The server combines and plays a direct pass to the target.
- + The red defender attempts to cut out the servers pass, but the blue attacker spins and passes to the target.

ATTACKING COMBINATIONS CLOSE TO GOAL 1V1-2V1

WHY USE IT

A dynamic attacking activity emphasizing accurate passing combinations, 1v1 and 2v1 attacking play, creating space and retaining possession. The activity can also focus on defending and goalkeeping.

SET UP

20x10 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at both ends. A line/cones split the field in half. In one half, play 2 attackers v 1 defender and in the other half 1v1. A goalkeeper at each end. The coach has a supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The activity starts with one attacker in each half passing a ball to the attacker in the other half. The 2 attackers attempt to combine and score as quickly as possible against 1 defender. In the other half, the single attacker plays 1v1, attempting to score or to keep possession until attacking support is available. If the 2 attackers score, the player that did not shoot can quickly join the attacker playing 1v1 to create a 2v1 if the teammate still has possession. If the defenders win possession, they play a pass to the coach. Restart the activity with the same starting positions.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – With 2 games running concurrently, awareness of the other game progress is critical – discuss with players what decisions they can make to change this scenario. Emphasize how the urgency to attack and score is different at either end. The defensive challenges are of course opposite.
- + Coaching tips – Coach the attacker playing 1v1 to use different shielding techniques to maintain possession. For example, positioning the body to block the defender, rolling the ball with the sole of the foot and/or dribbling to space.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Work through a few different patterns with passive defenders.
- + More challenging: Increase the length of the area to practice shooting from greater distances. Allow the defender in the 2v1 game to recover and support their teammate and create 2v2. Add another attacker and defender to both ends to create 3v2 and 2v2. Establish a minimum number of passes before shooting. Add a coach to the 2v1 half of the field to call offsides.

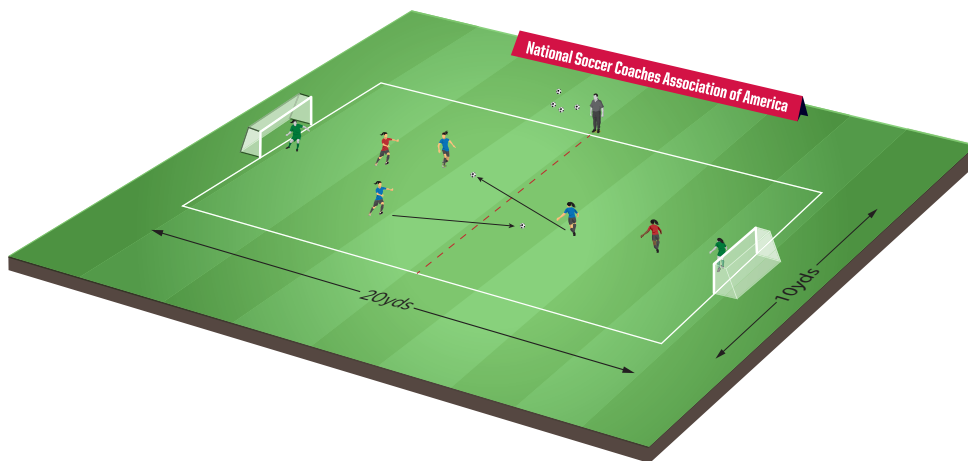
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

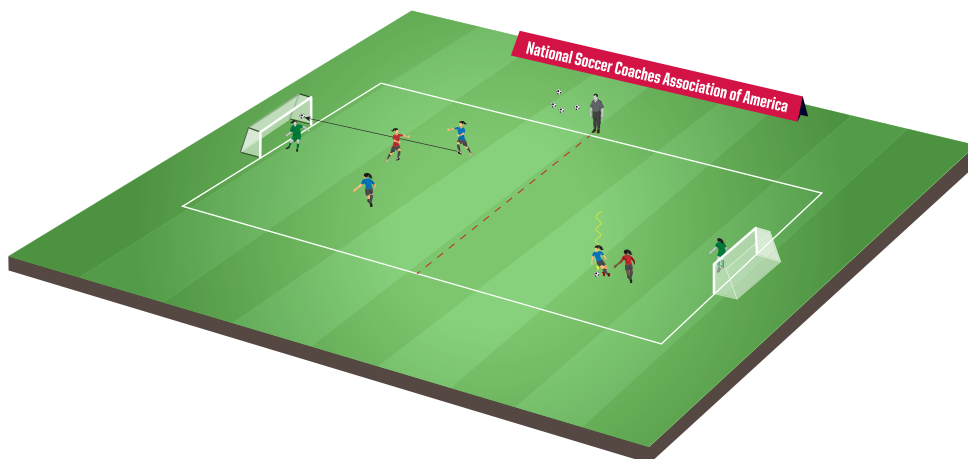
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and shooting technique.

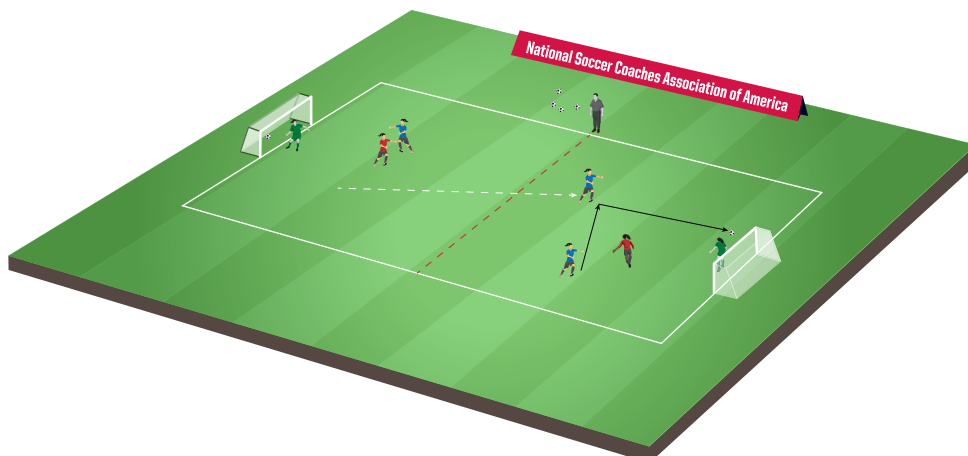
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, support, movement and scoring.



- + 2v1 in one half and 1v1 in the other half.
- + An attacker in each half starts the activity with a pass.
- + Attackers attempt to score past the defender and the goalkeeper.



- + The 2 blue attackers score quickly against the red defender.
- + The blue attacker - playing 1v1 - uses the space to create separation from the defender.
- + If the defenders win possession they must pass to the coach.



- + The support attacker in the 2v1 situation can support the attacker playing 1v1.
- + The 1v1 attacker is successful in establishing possession and is able to play a pass in the path of the support attacker.

ONE TOUCH SHORT PASSING COMBINATIONS

WHY USE IT

This is a 1 touch fast paced warm-up passing activity used to prepare the body and mind for training. As simple as the activity seems, the player must remain focused and technically precise.

SET UP

The set up requires 3 cones, 5 players and a ball. Two cones are positioned adjacent to each other with a 1 yard space between and another cone is set a distance of 5 yards from the other cones.

HOW TO PLAY

This activity requires quick thinking and supreme individual passing and receiving technique. Refer to the adjacent diagrams to better understand the passing and movement sequence. The activity is a sequence of one touch passes and complimentary movements between 5 players. At first expect regular mistakes, incorrect movement and inaccurate passing as the players start to grapple with the demands of the activity. After a few sessions a higher ability group should be able to perform with speed and rhythm. Set up multiple groups and play for 5 minutes before moving to the next activity.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – This is a great activity to work with players on their movement after passing the ball. Young players will often stand admiring their pass instead of moving into another position to provide support.
- + Coaching tips – It is not unreasonable for a coach to want to emulate fluent passing teams such as Barcelona and Bayern Munich. These teams spend hours on the training ground working with players to play out of tight and challenging environments. Youth coaches can similarly establish these environments in training.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Allow players to take 2 touches and increase the distance between the cones to 10 yards to provide players with more time.
- + More challenging: Reduce the distance between the cones to quicken the pace, insist on 1 touch passing combinations, stipulate which foot the players should use to make the pass and add double pass requirements.

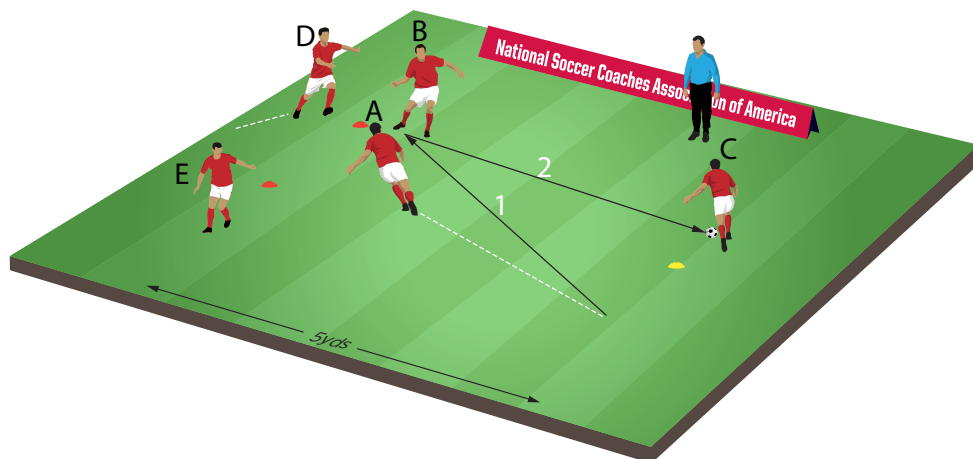
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

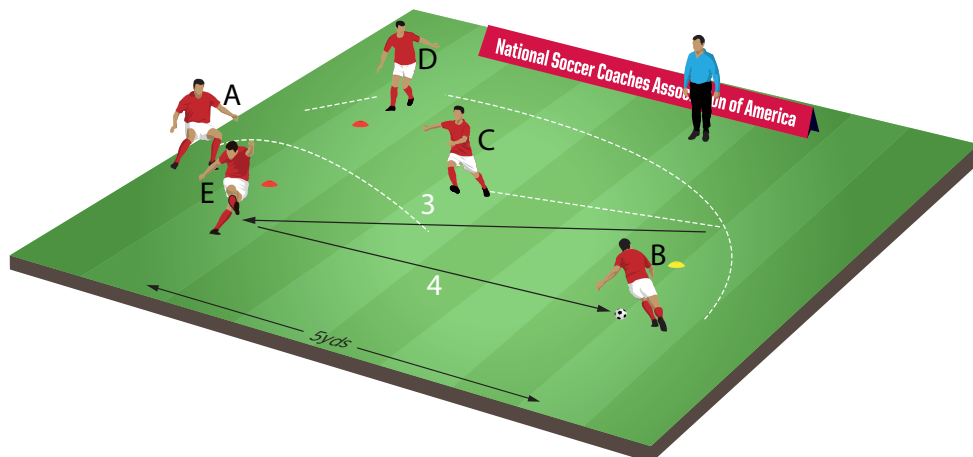
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

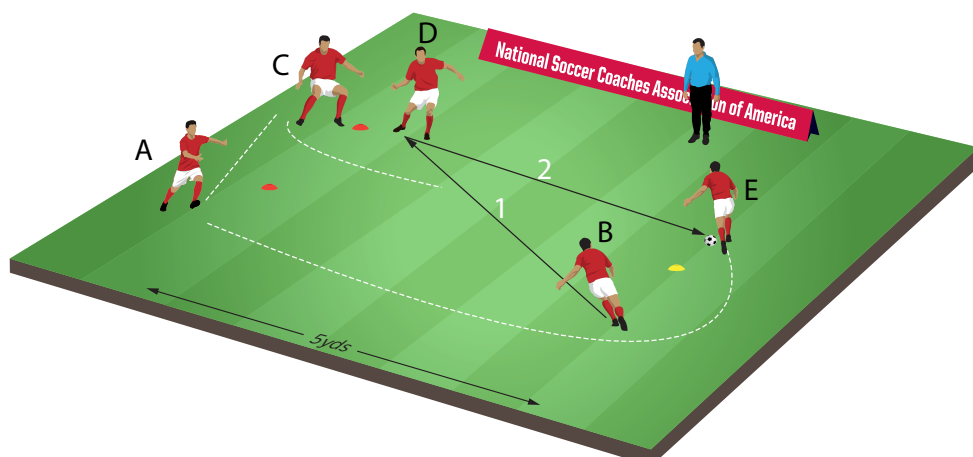
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving with the feet and movement.



- + Players A and C start either side of the yellow cone, 5 yards apart from 2 red cones.
- + Players B and E start on the outside of each of the red cones and player D stands between the red cones.
- + Player A passes to player B to the outside of the cone and player B plays a one touch pass to player C. As soon as player A makes the pass he/she should sprint up the middle towards the double cones.



- + On receipt of the ball, player C passes diagonally to player E to the outside of the cone and makes a run.
- + Meanwhile player B sprints around the single cone to receive the pass from player E and player D moves to fill the position vacated by player B. Player A is ready to step forward as soon as player E moves.



- + In the final diagram, Player E runs around the cone and A fills the vacant position.
- + The sequence starts again with all players in new positions.
- + The coach can alter the intensity by changing passing conditions and adjusting the distance between cones.

2V1 TO 7V5 OVERLAPS

WHY USE IT

The third stage of development is an appropriate time to introduce various movement patterns to support the player on the ball. In this activity we use a part-whole methodology to introduce the overlap.

SET UP

The set-up for the first sequence is a 20x15 yards rectangle with 2 attacking players against 1 defending player. The activity is then progressed to a small sided field with appropriate size goals at each end.

HOW TO PLAY

To begin the coach isolates the skill, providing the attacking players with plenty of practice before adding additional challenges. An attacking player starts at one end with the ball and a second attacker is situated 8 yards along the sideline. The defender starts at the other end and can move forward to defend when the first pass is made. The attacker passes wide and on receipt of the ball the second attacker dribbles inside and towards the opponent's end of the field. The passer makes an overlap run and the dribbler attempts to pass into space. The defenders and attackers can score a point by stopping the ball close to the opponent's end line. Once the players are competent the coach can make this a functional/phase of play activity. The attacking team has a couple of neutral players in support and must make an overlap before scoring. The defenders are only allowed to send 2 players into the attacking half in an attempt to win the ball.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – To help young players understand when to make an overlap and to do so the coach must identify some of the visual cues. Firstly, there should be space on the outside and this is generally created by a player vacating the space on the dribble or by making a run. Secondly, the attacking team should have controlled and positive possession before a player leaves their defensive position.
- + Coaching tips – To give the attacking team the best opportunity to make overlap runs the coach can manage 2 variables: A) adding 2 additional attacking players and B) restrict the defending team to send 2 players into the attacking half.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Continue with the technical activity until players develop confidence and understanding. The coach can also prevent defenders entering the attacking half.
- + More challenging: Allow defenders to freely roam the field.

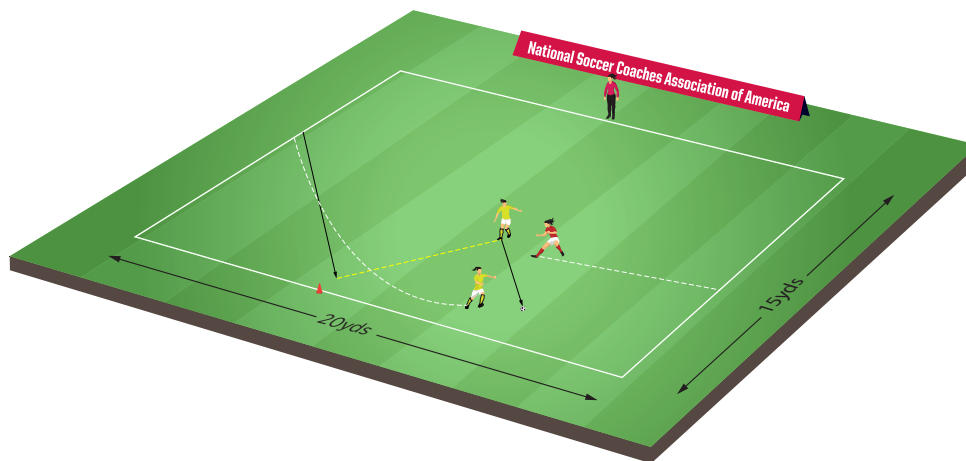
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

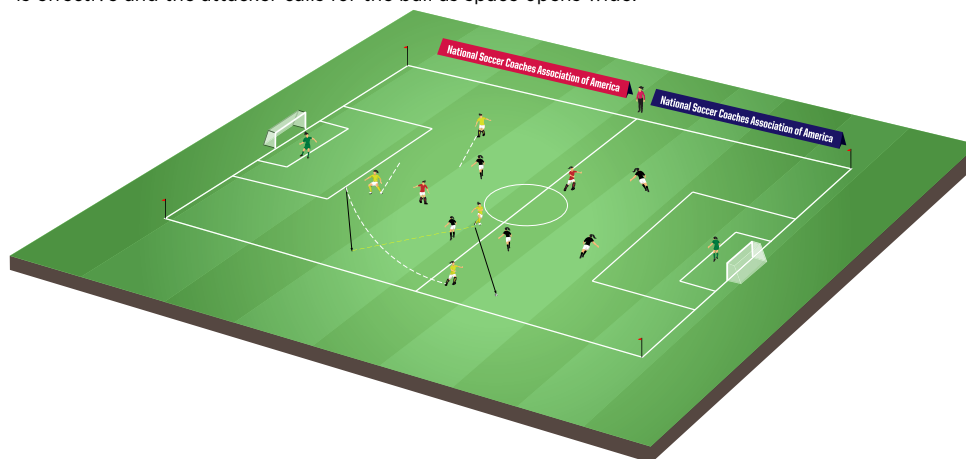
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

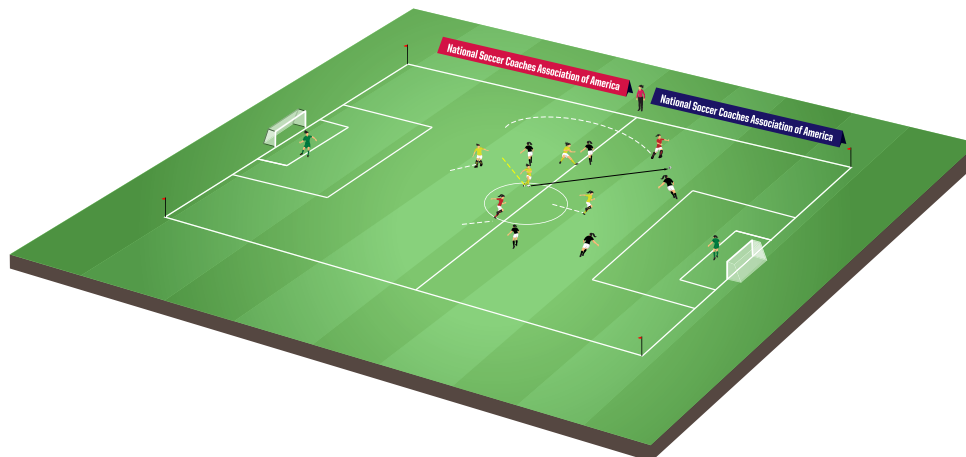
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving with the feet and movement.



- + In the first sequence the coach introduces players to the overlapping run by isolating the skill.
- + The yellow attacking player passes wide to the other attacking player who dribbles inside at the defender.
- + The yellow dribbler commits the defender and the yellow passing player makes a run behind. The overlap is effective and the attacker calls for the ball as space opens wide.



- + In the second sequence the activity is moved to a small sided field for a 5v5+2 game.
- + The yellow team must perform an overlap before scoring and can use the all-time offensive players.
- + The defenders are only allowed to send 2 players into the attacking half to allow the attackers more time.



- + In the final diagram the coach has lifted all the conditions other than the need to make an overlap.
- + The yellow team is conscious how to create overlap opportunities and an attacker dribbles inside.
- + The neutral player recognizes this movement and runs into the vacated space.

ONE-UP AND ONE-DOWN

WHY USE IT

This is a small sided game that can be used as the main theme or final activity. The focus is on attacking combinations and movement including over-lap and under-lap running, wall pass and possession passing.

SET UP

The set-up is a 40x20 yards area with 2 teams of 5 players - numbered 1-5. A small goal is positioned centrally at both ends with a large supply of balls either side for quick restarts. There are no goalkeepers to start the game.

HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the game is to score goals and in the process provide the team with a numerical advantage in attacking personnel. This is achieved by completing a combination or movement pattern determined by the coach. For example, if two players can make a wall pass around an opponent the coach calls out "1". The player with the corresponding number must leave the field and run around the opponent's goal before re-entering the game. As the player is off the field the attacking team have a numerical advantage and can either go for goal or attempt to play another combination to eliminate another opponent. There are a number of conditions the coach can employ to highlight the main theme of the session - see how to modify the game below. If a team scores the coach can allow the team conceding to start with a pass from their end of the field or the teams can reverse the attacking direction. In this eventuality all the players must be alert and the coach can add another challenge by insisting all the players on the conceding team run around the goal.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with players to maintain width so space is available centrally to perform overlap and wall pass combinations.
- + Coaching tips - Requiring that a defensive player leave the field provides a momentary advantage to the attacking team and helps to create some urgency. The attacking team will want to recognize when the opponent is reorganizing and take advantage of any weaknesses.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Play without a goalkeeper, reduce the number of players and add an all-time offensive player.
- + More challenging: Change the conditions for the attacking team, such as making an overlap, require 4 passes or add a touch restriction. The coach can also add a goalkeeper for each team and randomly call a number to reduce the number of defending players.

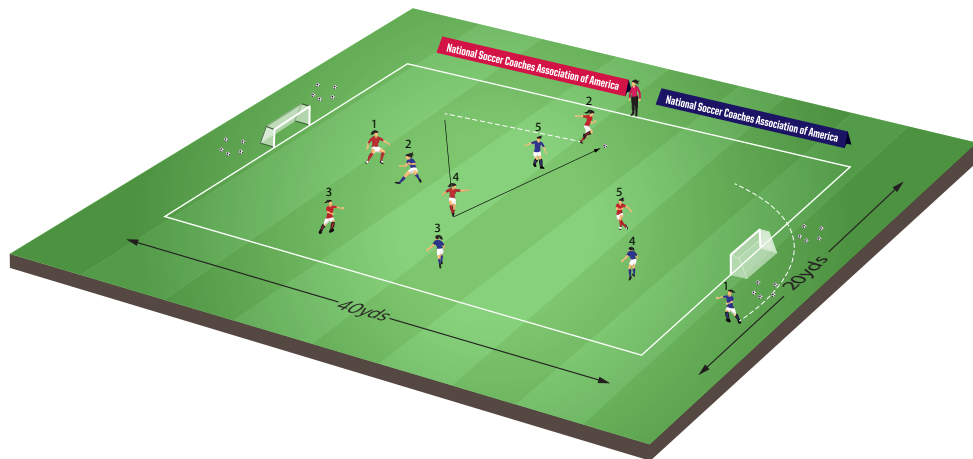
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

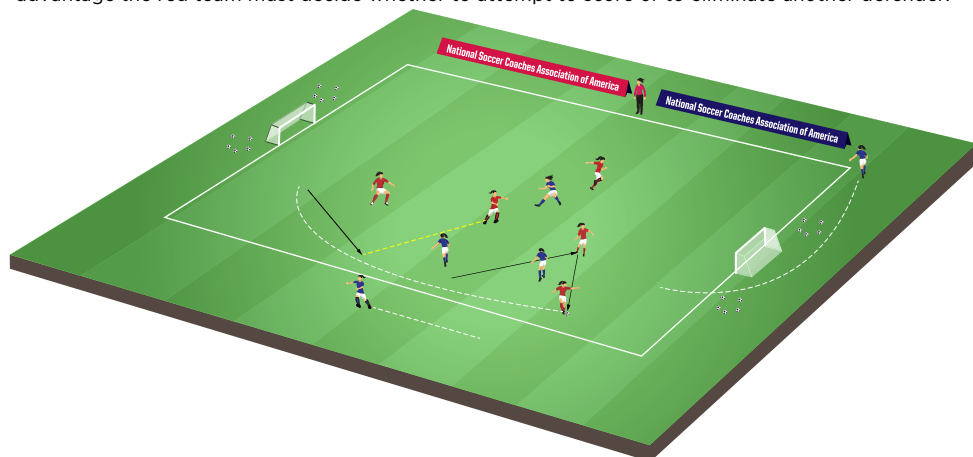
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

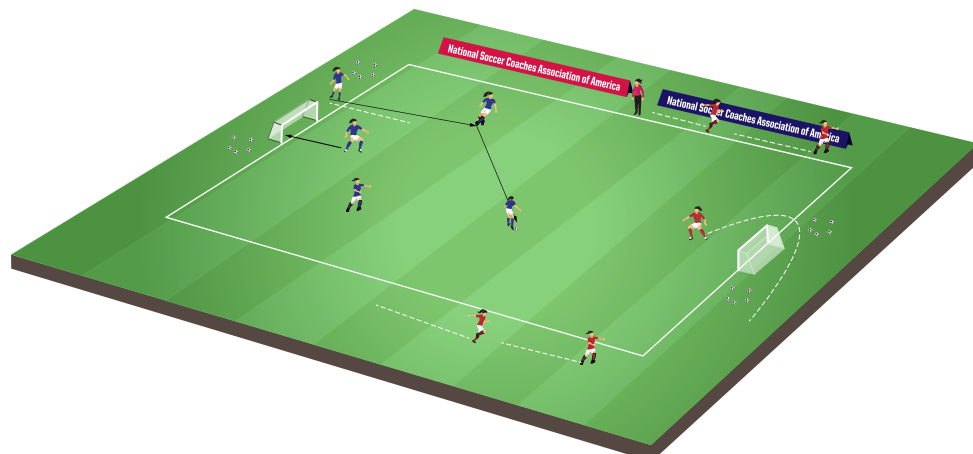
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving with the feet and movement.



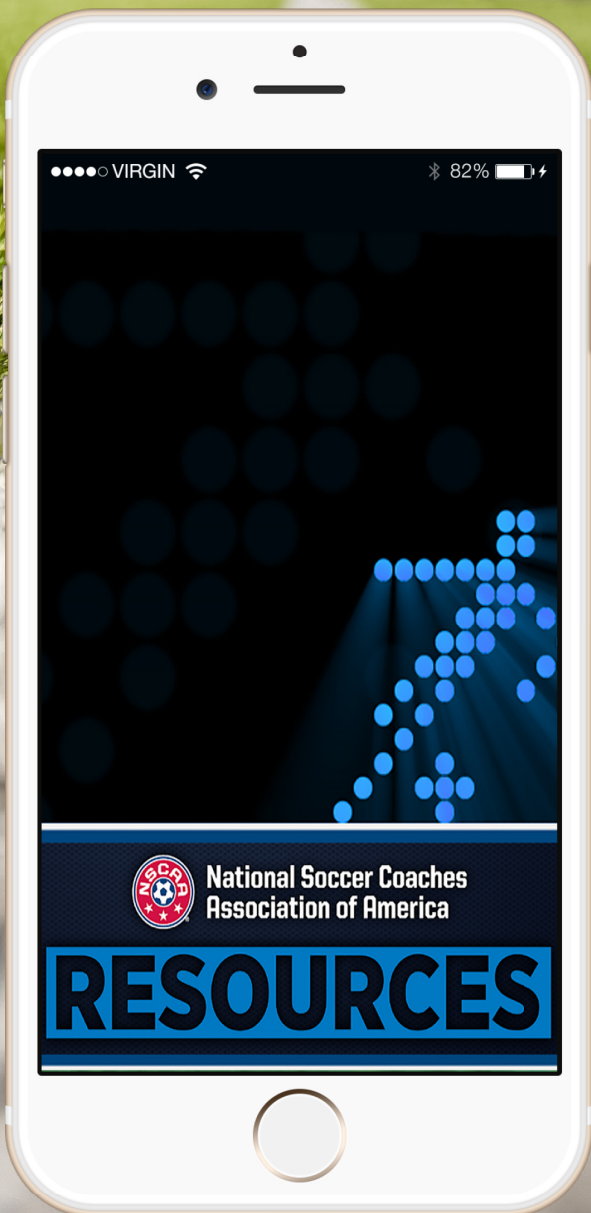
- + 5 players on each team are numbered 1-5 and are instructed to run around the opponent's call when called.
- + A couple of red attackers combine with a wall pass to play around a blue defender and the coach calls "1".
- + The blue team number 1 leaves the field and starts to run towards the red team goal. With a numerical advantage the red team must decide whether to attempt to score or to eliminate another defender.



- + In the second sequence the red team take an opportunity to eliminate 2 blue team players.
- + Firstly, a defender plays wide and the winger cuts inside on the dribble to create an overlap opportunity.
- + Secondly, the player making the overlap receives a return pass and makes a wall pass combination.



- + In the final diagram the blue team have scored and this changes the attacking direction for both teams.
- + Having conceded, all the red team players must sprint around the outside and run around the blue team goal.
- + Meanwhile the blue team must make at least 3 passes before they can shoot at goal.



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PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

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.

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.

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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Attacking

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY



GOALKEEPER & DEFENDERS
IN ATTACKING PLAY

DEVELOPING STRIKERS IN
TODAY'S GAME

WAYS TO ATTACK THROUGH
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