

Fun Soccer Games for 9 to 11 Year Olds



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Foreword

Dear Coach,

Welcome to my second book of fun games for younger children. Moving up from 5 to 8, we now focus on 9 to 11 year olds.

Addressing this older age group presented a different challenge for me as I'm sure it does you.

This age group presents a slightly different concept as we are working with players who are now a little more aware of the "real" game. Players in this age group are watching the Premier League on TV, understanding the game more and recognising star players.

With this in mind I have linked some of the games directly to the 'real' game alongside some themed games relating to movies, events and things that the kids see as FUN.

Fun is still our priority here as it promotes self-learning and keeps them coming back for more.

As ever, these games are ideas and - with adaptation - can and should be used with older age groups. All soccer players are big kids after all, just make sure you change the size of the playing area, the rules and the demands you put on the players accordingly.

I would like to mention my colleague, Pete McGovern, and former Manchester Utd youth coach from the Beckham and Giggs era, Eric Harrison, for the inspiration behind the game Silence is Golden. I adapted Pete's design to Eric's big philosophy on teaching awareness for this one.

Of course I must not forget my wife, Pauline, who insisted I link a game to her current place of work, hence New Scotland Yard aka NSY.

Yours in soccer,



Keith

My 25 Top Tips for Coaching 9 to 11 Year Olds

1. Be pre-organised for when they arrive. Have the first game ready to go.
2. Be welcoming, enthusiastic, and remember to smile.
3. Keep explanations simple, let them ask questions.
4. Be inclusive, involve all players.
5. Always encourage and praise.
6. Use a whistle or clear instruction like "FREEZE" to stop play and highlight good points, or give helpful advice.
7. Use visual aids/colours to enhance their observation.
8. Avoid highlighting errors or weaknesses, and do not use negative words.
9. Use your player's names. If a player has a nickname that is fine, but don't make one up, it could upset them.
10. Make sure they know your name or they call you coach, not sir.
11. Use the correct size footballs. Size 3 or 4, though it can be fun to use a mixture including size 1 & 2 skill balls in any of the close control and dribbling games.
12. Mix teams around so players don't dominate.
13. Encourage natural leaders to be good role models for the team.
14. Stay calm and patient with bad behaviour. Sit poorly behaved players out in a sin bin if need be, but ensure they are supervised.
15. Involve them in problem solving. Ask questions and let them discuss amongst themselves, just guide them in the right direction.
16. Have a contingency plan if the practice is not working or they find it too easy or too hard.
17. Politely ask parents and guardians to remain unobtrusive as children need to focus on you and the game.
18. Don't be tempted to join in. This affects your control and is dangerous.
19. Ensure fair play. Don't overlook breaches of rules.
20. Encourage flair and risk taking, they must not be scared to make a mistake.
21. Keep heading sessions to no longer than 20 to 30 minutes max and check inflation on balls (not too hard/soft).
22. Use hand ball games to introduce co-ordination and passing and movement.
23. Remember, they watch your body language so stay bubbly. Avoid habits like folding your arms, constantly looking at your watch, getting distracted by a keen parent or looking fed up.
24. Keep them busy. Minimum stoppages, except for drinks, and you can use this time for any questions.
25. Use and encourage humour but take care to avoid overuse of jargon. Remember, what adults see as funny, children may not.

All of the above are in addition to the normal health and safety issues like registers, medical info, field and equipment checks, and the correct playing kit etc.

It is vital that you have an assistant or other adult with you when coaching minors.

Always dress appropriately. Set an example.

How To Use This Book

Contents

The games have been graded by difficulty and age appropriateness. The majority of games have been illustrated using 12 players, but in the contents you can find a suggested range of numbers within which the game works well.

Odd numbers are an inevitability of coaching kids soccer. Many of the games in this book easily cater for odd numbers but others may require uneven sides to accommodate an odd number of players.

Set Up

The size of the playing area is by no means an absolute and can be varied if you have more or less players. The playing area can also be adjusted according to the ability of your players, whether this requires a smaller or larger area depends on the game.

In order to mark out the area, as a general rule 10 yards is equal to 7 strides. You can use this simple equivalent to mark out the area you need; 20 yards = 14 strides, 30 yards = 21 strides etc.

Equipment

The majority of games in this book require little more than some footballs, cones and bibs. Some of the games require goals, these can be made using cones or poles if actual goals are not available where you train or you do not have portable goals.

The Rules

Easy to read and easy to understand. Everything you need to know to run the game successfully once you have set it up.

Main Objectives

A quick overview of the skills and techniques promoted in the game.

What To Call Out

Never be lost for words with these concise and constructive phrases. Remember, this is "what to call out" not "what to shout", you should deliver these games in a way that your players respond to. Always focus on the positives.

Progression

Are your players finding the game too easy or too difficult? Look to this section for advice on how to tweak the rules to take the game forward.

Hint

Quick bits of advice that can help the game run more smoothly.

Game Finder

Page	Game	Players	Age Range	Difficulty*
1	Shapes	6 to 20	9 - 11 yrs	1
2	Pizza Party	7 to 15	9 - 11 yrs	1
3	Boot Camp	9 to 18	9 - 11 yrs	1
4	Skill Relays	8 to 30	9 - 11 yrs	1-2
5	Soccer Nuts	6 to 20	9 - 11 yrs	1-2
6	Gladiators	8 to 16	9 - 11 yrs	1-2
7	Secret Weapon	11 to 14	9 - 11 yrs	1-2
8	Powerball	8 to 12	9 - 11 yrs	2
9	Throw-in Frenzy	10 to 15	9 - 11 yrs	2
10	New Scotland Yard	10 to 15	9 - 11 yrs	2
11	The Swamp	10 to 12	9 - 11 yrs	2
12	Head Up	6 to 18	9 - 11 yrs	2
13	Chippy	10 to 12	9 - 11 yrs	2
14	Mazy Runs	11 to 14	9 - 11 yrs	2
15	No Escape	9 to 11	9 - 11 yrs	2
16	Crossfire	9 to 11	9 - 11 yrs	2
17	Find the Keeper	12 to 14	9 - 11 yrs	2
18	The Alamo	12 to 15	9 - 11 yrs	2
19	Interceptors	4 to 20	9 - 11 yrs	2
20	Reactor	10 to 14	9 - 11 yrs	2
21	Sound of Silence	5 to 18	9 - 11 yrs	2
22	Buddy Hollys	8 to 12	9 - 11 yrs	2-3
23	Top Gun	12 to 15	9 - 11 yrs	2-3
24	Switch On	11 to 14	9 - 11 yrs	3
25	Meteors	12 to 14	10 - 11 yrs	3

*The games have been given a relative difficulty. All are easy to run but some are more challenging for players than others.

The Rules

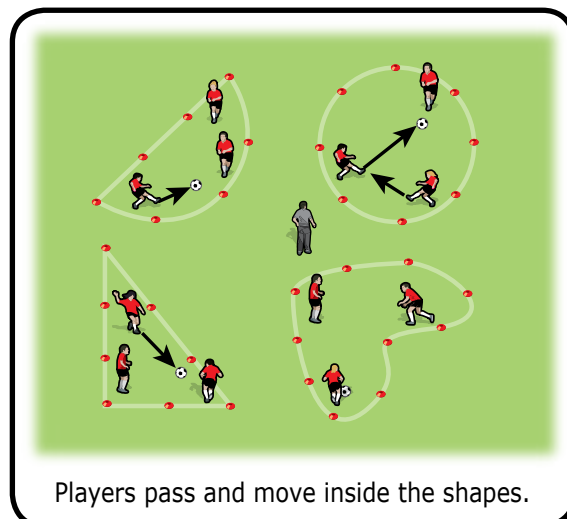
Mark out several areas in different shapes. Use triangles, circles, semi-circles, diamonds or any other shape you wish to use.

Players work within one shape at a time playing one-touch pass and move for three minutes.

The players move around each of the shapes in their team of three.

Players count the number of passes in each shape. The highest total after all shapes have been played is the winner.

Once a circuit has been completed, restart in the original shape.



Main Objectives

Improve one touch passing and movement in tight areas.

Set Up

Area: Several areas up to 12x12 yards maximum
 Players: 6 – 20
 Equipment: Lots of cones, one ball per group

What To Call Out

"Pass and move"
 "Don't stand still"

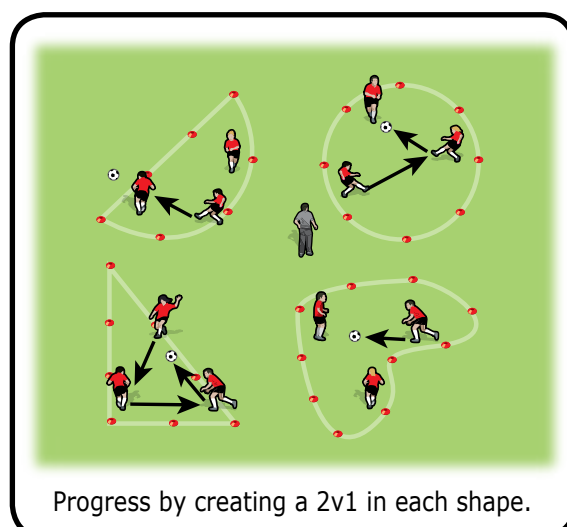
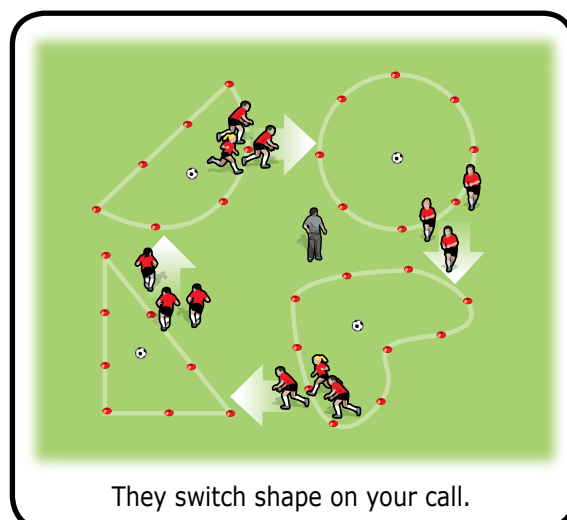
Progression

Instead of rotating the whole team, one player at a time in sequence leaves the shape with the ball and links with two different players in the next shape. Scores are checked after each 3 minute interval as teams are constantly changing.

Alternatively, in sequence, one player leaves each shape without a ball and runs to the next shape to try and win the ball by knocking it out of the shape, thus creating a 2v1 situation. The last pair to lose possession wins. Restart with the three now in the shape but with a different player leaving.

Hint

Vary the size and shape of each area to keep players thinking about how best to use different spaces.



The Rules

A group of attackers (chefs) start inside the hut. They need to add toppings to the pizza slices by dribbling balls and stopping them on top of the pizza slices.

Unfortunately, there are two or three customers that don't like the topping and will try to stop it going on the pizza. They do this by knocking the topping out of the kitchen.

The chefs go in pairs until all balls have been played.

How many toppings can they get on the pizza slices?

Main Objectives

Improving dribbling, disguise and change of direction in 1v1 and 1v2 situations.

Set Up

Area: 30x30 yards with triangular "pizza slices" at each end and a 10x12 yards pizza hut on one of the long sides.

Players: 11

Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Deliver the toppings"

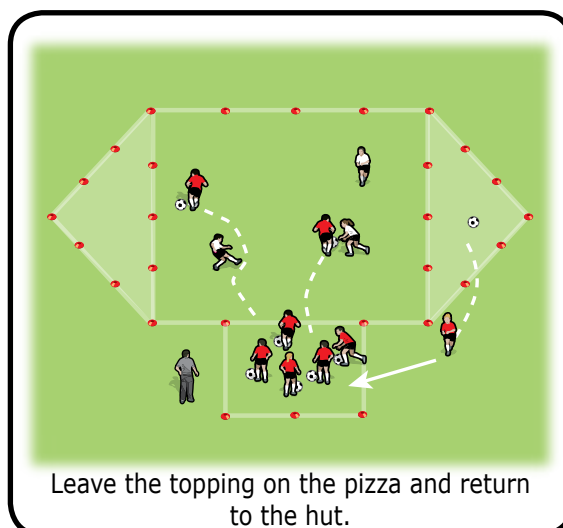
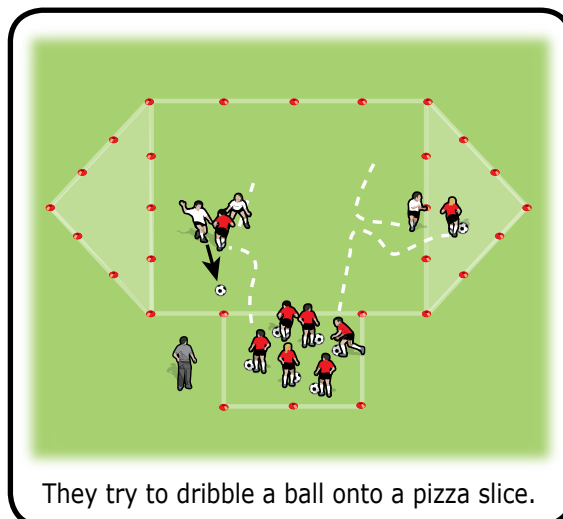
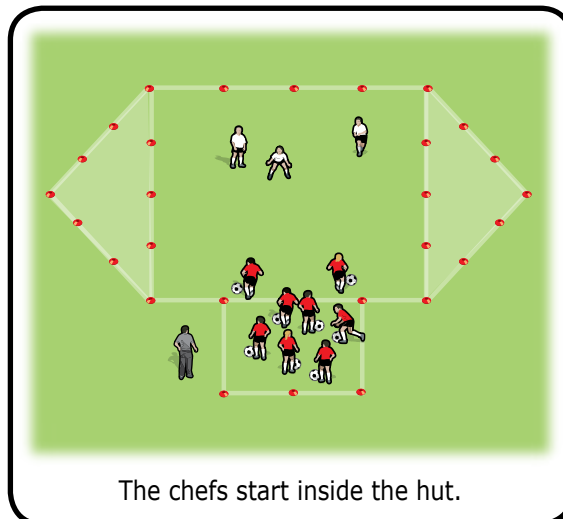
"Anchovies"

Progression

To deliver the finished pizza all the chefs run out together and bring the toppings back to the hut whilst the defenders try to steal the toppings again. How many pizzas can they deliver?

Hint

Before each pair of chefs set off call out the topping they are trying to put on the pizza. Alternatively, allow the players to pick a topping, however bizarre.



The Rules

Players divide themselves into 3 even teams and each player takes a number.

Players dribble inside the zone farthest from the goals, keeping their balls close and looking for space.

When you shout a number that numbered player from each group has to break out of the zone into space with a good first touch.

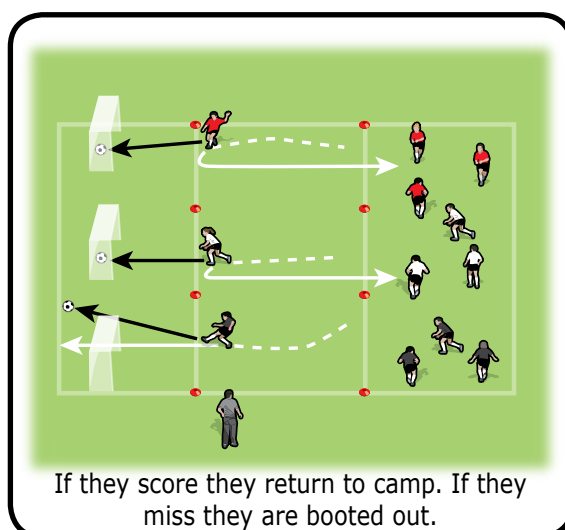
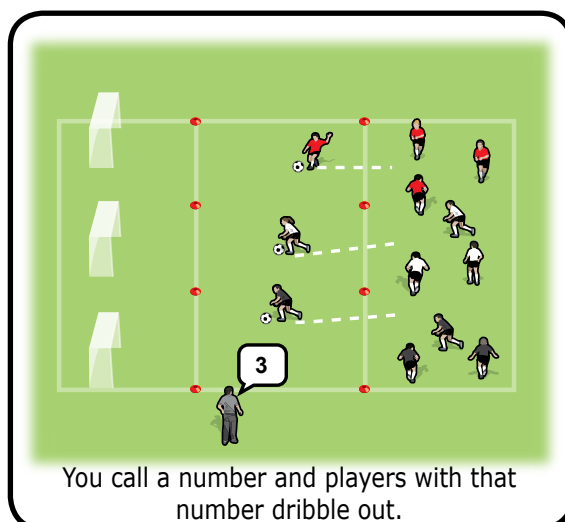
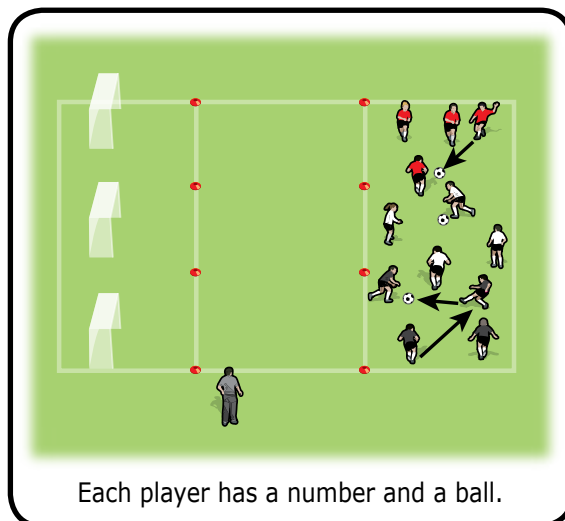
They dribble across the middle zone and shoot into any of the goals on or before reaching the end of the zone.

If a player misses a shot they are out of boot camp and go behind the goal to collect missed shots.

If they score the player collects their ball and returns to the dribbling zone.

Play until the last three players at which point the quickest to score wins.

→ PASS → RUN → Dashed line → GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Improve close control, recognising space to attack, running with the ball and shooting.

Set Up

Area: 45x30 yards divided into 3 sections.
Goals are 5 yards in from the end line
Players: 12
Equipment: Cones, ball per player, 3 goals

What To Call Out

"Keep your head up and listen for a call"
"Try to hit the target"

Progression

If a player scores quickly (risks shooting from distance perhaps) they can try to defend against the other players breaking out.

Alternatively, the first two or three players to miss become permanent defenders or goalkeepers, or both. In either case the winner is resolved as before.

Hint

Allow players to follow up rebounds as this breeds good habits.

Clearly shout out numbers and keep a check on who scores and who misses.

The Rules

Divide players into equal teams, each team has a channel to work in.

One player from each team stands at the far end of the channel where a box is placed.

The first player in line runs down the channel to the box at the end and plays 10 quick passes with their team mate.

They then replace their team mate who sprints back to the team and tags the next player who repeats the drill.

The relay ends when all players have completed the skill and returned to their team.

Award each team points based on their position (3 points for 1st, 2 for 2nd, 1 for 3rd, for example).

Main Objectives

Improve speed, control, technique and teamwork. Great entertainment and competitive fun.

Set Up

Area: 30x4 yards with 4x4 yards box
 Players: 8 or more
 Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Count your passes out loud"

"Keep the ball under control"

"Tag your team mate when you get back"

Progression

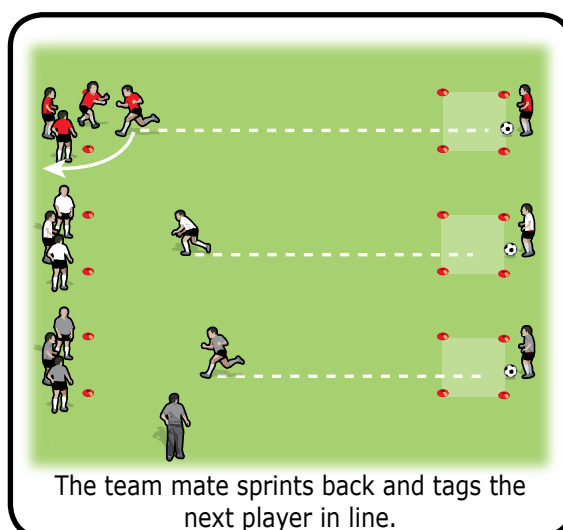
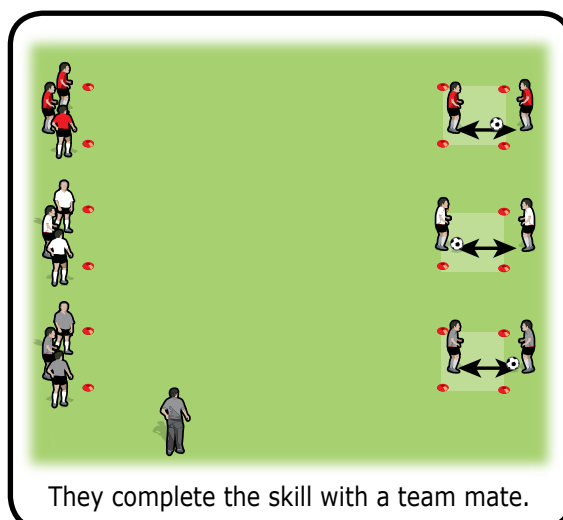
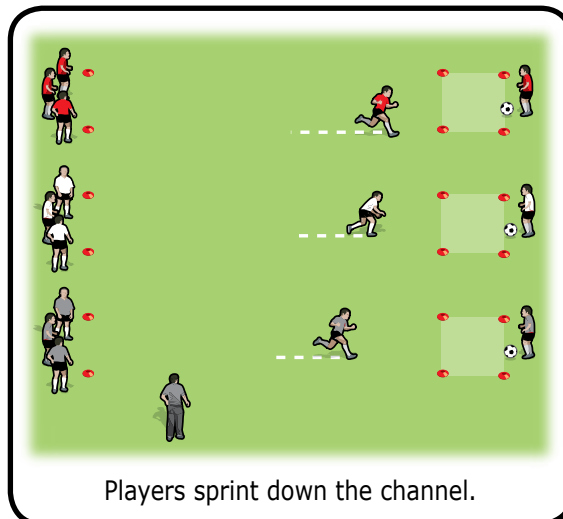
Many different skills can be used instead of short passing. For example, volleys, headers, and even back heels.

One favourite is to put a tall cone 6 yards past the box and play Spinners. The players take turns to dribble out to the box where they stop the ball before running on to the cone.

They place one hand on the cone and one on their head and spin around the cone ten times, then attempt to dribble the ball back down the channel.

Hint

Spinners is great fun to play and watch. However, some children might not want to play it so remember (as always) not to force anyone to take part. This has never happened to me though.



The Rules

Six balls (nuts) are stored in one of the semicircles of cones.

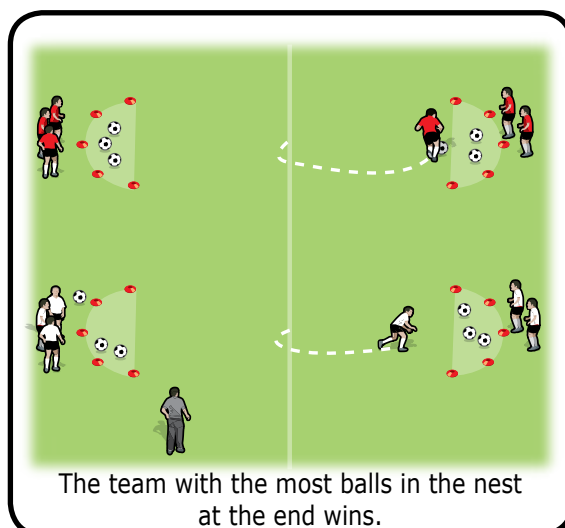
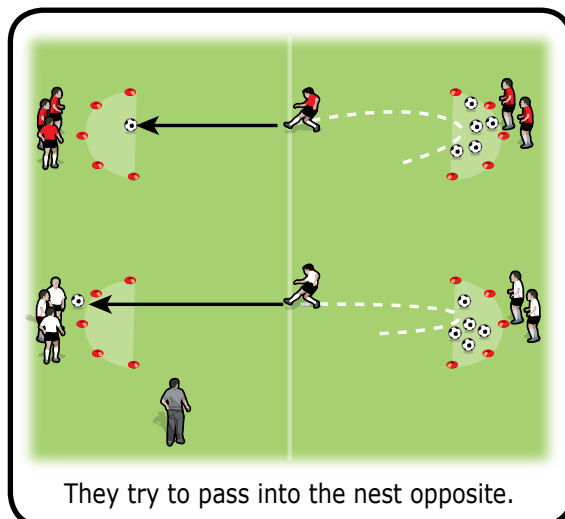
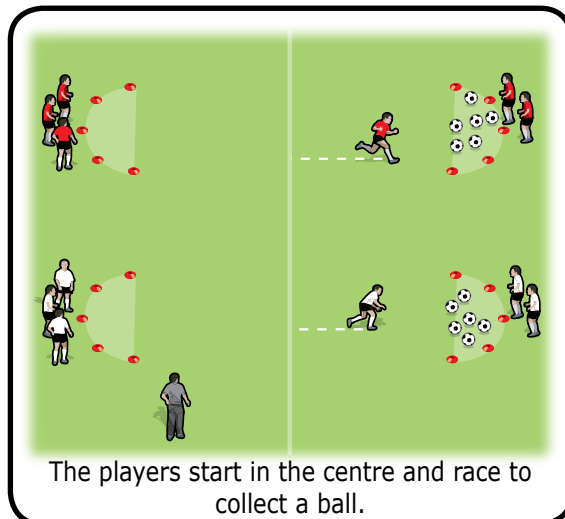
The first player starts in the centre between the cones. On your call they sprint to the full nest, steal a nut and run back to the centre with it where they attempt to pass into the nest opposite.

The ball must stop within the semi circle to count. Any ball that misses the nest is lost from the game.

Once the first player has tried to steal all of the nuts, the second player comes in and repeats the drill in the opposite direction using only the balls that landed safely in the nest.

When each player has had their turn, the team with the most nuts in the final nest wins.

PASS **RUN** **GROUND COVERED**



Main Objectives

Improving observation skills and weight and direction of pass.

Set Up

Area: 2 semicircles of cones 8 yards wide and 40 yards apart
 Players: 6
 Equipment: Ball each

What To Call Out

"Go"
 "Safe"
 "Go and fetch it"

Progression

If a player misses the nest they must sprint and collect the one that got away and place it in the nest. This will cost them vital time.

With the previous progression still in place make the players play three nuts with their right foot and three with their left to develop their weaker foot.

Hint

To make the game easier ensure you increase the depth of each nest as well as the width.

The Rules

Gladiators have a ball each and before the game they each select (or are given) an opponent. This is the only gladiator with whom they are competing.

Any spare player can be a random gladiator and attack who they want.

Gladiators compete to try and knock their opponent's ball out of the coliseum.

If a gladiator's ball is knocked out of the coliseum they must go down on one knee and await judgement from Caesar (you).

If the gladiator put up a good fight Caesar might give them a thumbs-up. Thus spared, they can collect their ball and re-enter the coliseum.

If the gladiator succumbed too easily Caesar will give them a thumbs-down, meaning they have been beaten and must leave the arena.

Main Objectives

Improve close control, dribbling and running with the ball, turning and screening in 1v1 situations.

Set Up

Area: 20 yard diameter circle
Players: 8 to 16
Equipment: Cones, a ball each

What To Call Out

"Gladiators ready"
"Protect your ball"
"Be decisive"

Progression

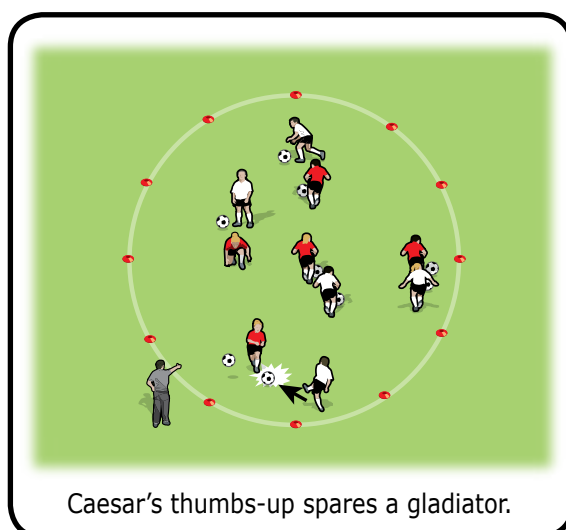
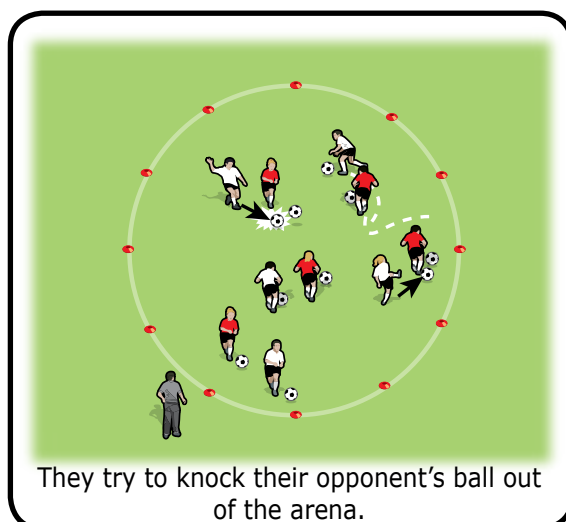
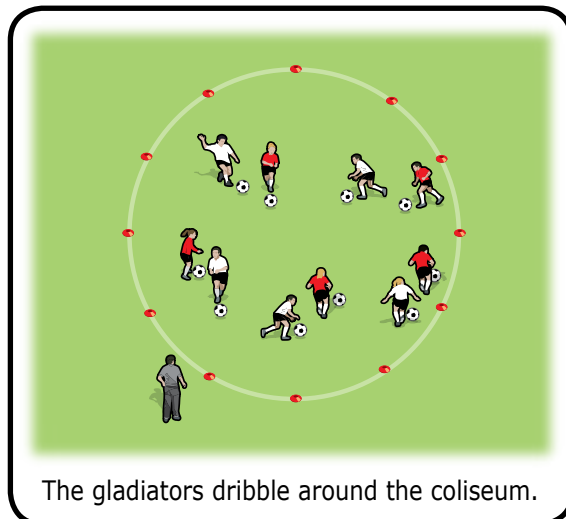
Gladiators that have been knocked out can become tigers patrolling the outside of the coliseum. If they see a loose ball they can steal it (no tackling). Caesar decides if this is fair.

At any time Caesar can call for the beaten gladiators to return to the coliseum and attack anyone.

Hint

As Caesar you must be firm, but fair. Make sure no-one's game ends too soon!

→ →
PASS RUN GROUND COVERED



The Rules

Prior to each kick off, each team forms a huddle and selects its secret weapon. This is the only player that can score for their team.

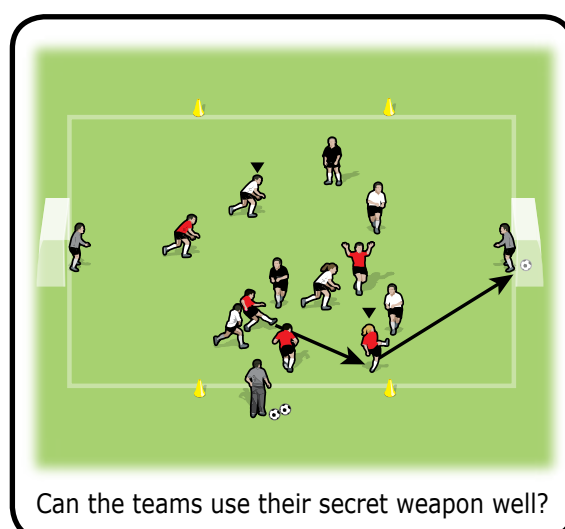
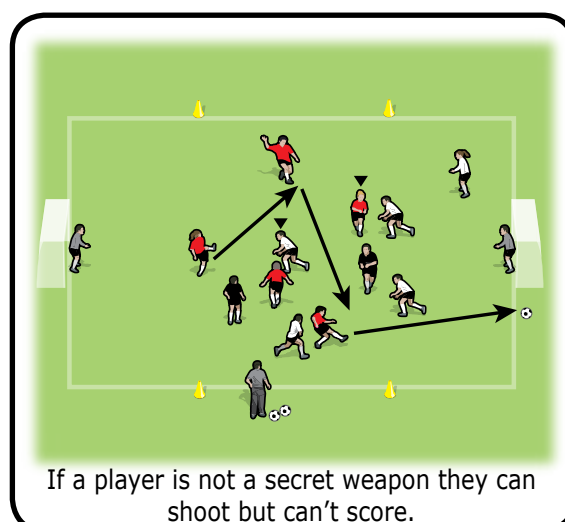
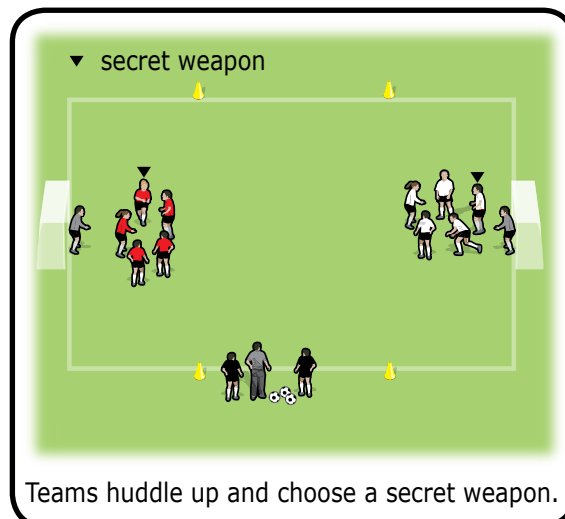
The teams whisper the name of their secret weapon to you and you relay the information to the floaters.

As well as trying to set up their own secret weapon teams must identify and stop their opponent's.

Players who are not the secret weapon can shoot – and perhaps deliberately miss – in order to trick their opponent into identifying the wrong player as the secret weapon. This gives an introduction to tactics and strategy in a fun way.

Every player should be chosen as the secret weapon at some point which is a great way to integrate even the shyest of players.

→ PASS → RUN GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Individual and team play to create goal scoring opportunities for a specific player in a game situation. Defensively, to recognise playing style and identify the danger.

Set Up

Area: 50x40 yards
 Players: 12 including 2 floating players
 Equipment: Cones, balls, 2 goals

What To Call Out

"Create space"
 "Pass forwards"
 "Shoot"

Progression

Each team is allowed two secret weapons. Do not go above two per team though as this begins to defeat the purpose of the exercise. Using two secret weapons increases the demands on each team defensively.

Allow the teams to choose one of the floaters to be their secret weapon. This could result in the same player being the secret weapon for both teams.

Hint

Make sure you remember who each team has nominated as their secret weapon. It's your job to ensure only goals scored by the nominated player count.

The Rules

Both teams play at once.

One player from each team defends the five pots (small circle of markers approximately 1 yard across) against an opponent who tries to dribble or run with the ball and stop it in a pot to score a point.

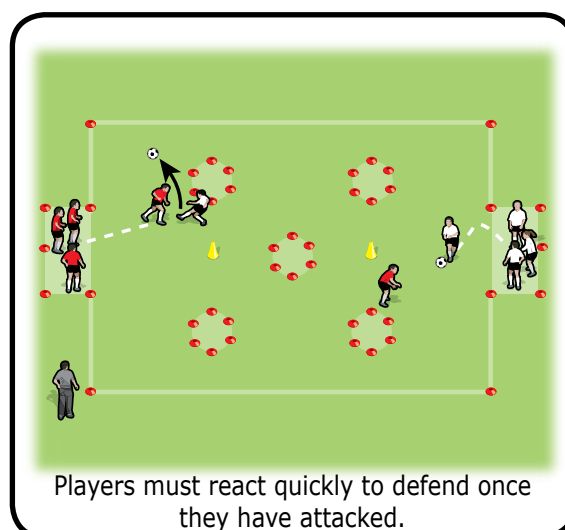
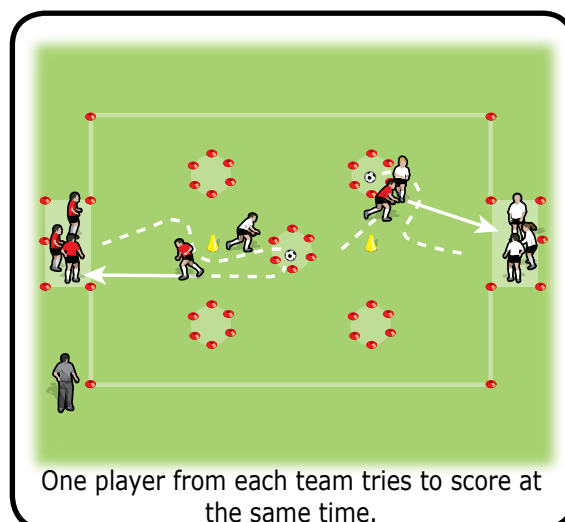
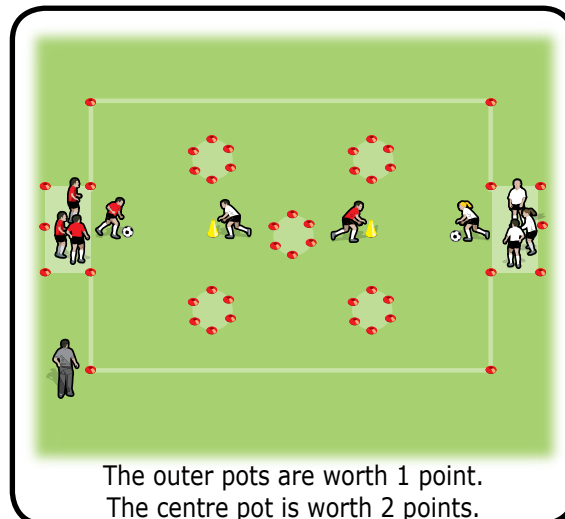
Each team has five balls with every player having a go at attacking. Once a player has attacked they need to react and defend against an attacker on the opposite team. The previous defender returns to their team.

Once a ball is stopped in a pot it is safe and cannot be removed.

The defender can stop the attacker by tagging them; they do not need to tackle the player. If they do this the player loses the ball.

Defenders are not allowed to run through or over any of the pots, giving the attacker a bit of protection.

The middle pot is worth double points.



Main Objectives

Improve close control, speed, agility and reactions.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards with collection pits at opposite ends
Players: 10
Equipment: Cones, 10 balls

What To Call Out

"React"
"Look for another pot"
"Score!"

Progression

Give each pot a limit of two balls.

You can allow players to knock a ball out and replace it with their own. The defender must now decide whether to protect pots in which their team has a ball, or go all out to stop the attacker scoring, leaving their ball unguarded.

Hint

It will be easier to keep score if you have access to two colours or designs of ball. Or use a mixture of sizes.

The Rules

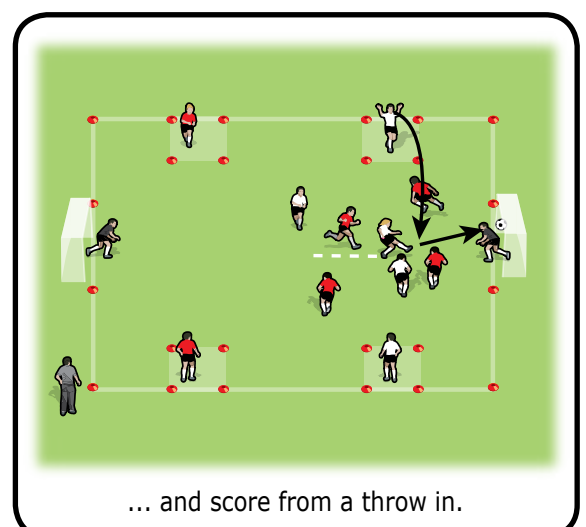
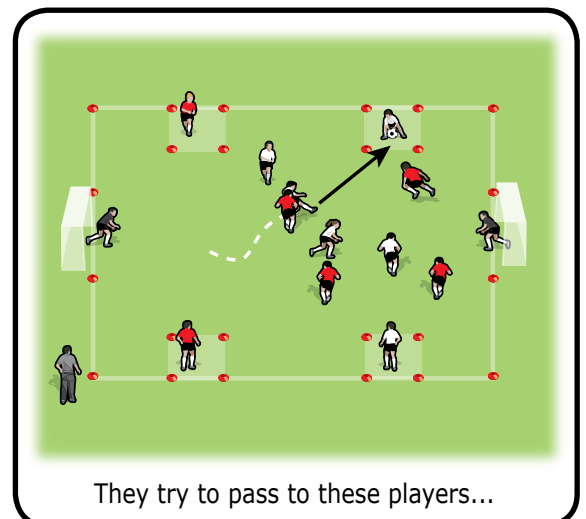
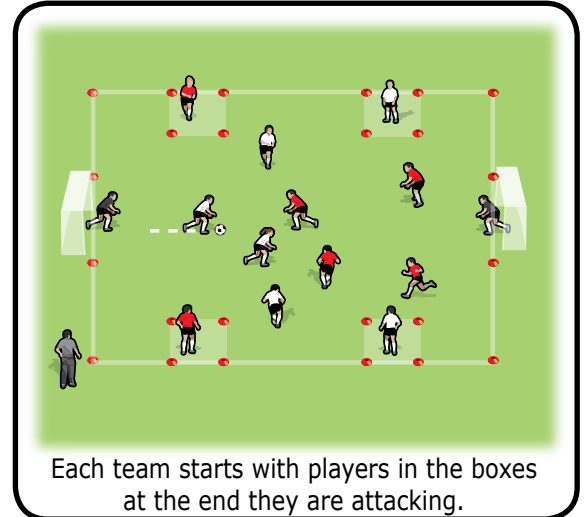
Two players from each team are put into the boxes at the end they are attacking. The remaining players play in the main area.

To score, a team must pass to one of the boxed players, who catch the ball or pick it up and quickly look to take a legal throw-in.

The attacking team is looking to create a goal scoring opportunity from the throw-in before the defending team can get organised.

Rotate the players in the boxes at regular intervals.

PASS **RUN** **GROUND COVERED**



Main Objectives

Encourage and improve the use of quick throw-ins to gain an advantage.

Set Up

Area: 50x40 yards with goals. Two 8x8 yard boxes on each side, 10 yards from the goal line
 Players: 12
 Equipment: Cones, balls, 2 goals

What To Call Out

"Can we hit the box?"
 "Take it quick"
 "Who is showing?"

Progression

Allow the receiver to play the ball back to the thrower who can then cross or shoot themselves.

The thrower can now join in by exiting the box with or without the ball. How do players react to this?

Hint

Before playing this game you might want to make sure that your players are all aware how to take a legal throw-in and give them a chance to show their technique.

The Rules

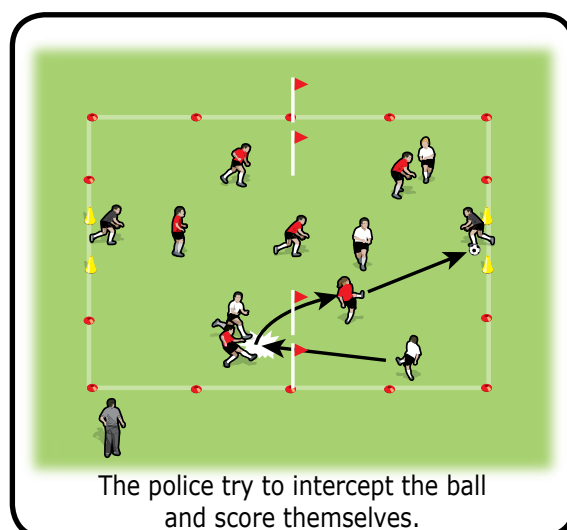
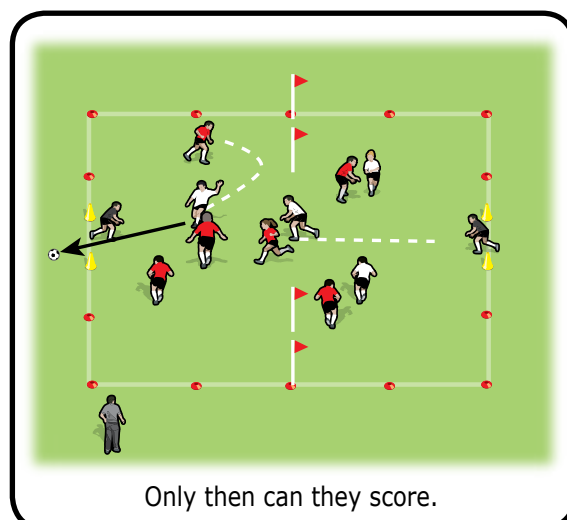
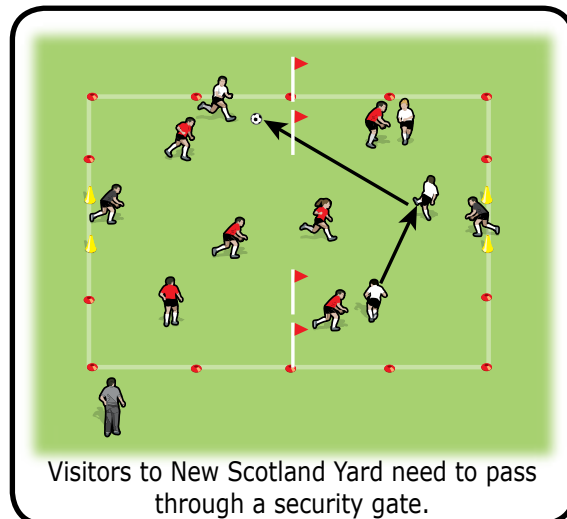
Two uneven teams play in the main area, 6 visitors v 4 police guards.

The teams can score in either goal.

For the team of visitors to be able to score they first need to pass through one of the security check points. The police guards do not need to go through a check point in order to score.

If you are not using goalkeepers players must dribble through the goal rather than shooting or passing the ball in.

Rotate the roles at timed intervals.



Main Objectives

Improve possession play and selection of pass.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards with two gates (security check points) 3 yards wide on each end of the half way line
 Players: 10
 Equipment: Lots of cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Find space"
 "Look out for the police"
 "Try and pass through the security gate"

Progression

The players must combine to make a wall-pass when going through a gate.

You can also balance the number of players on each side.

Hint

Players should communicate with each other so they know where the police are and don't get caught in possession.

The Rules

Inside the main area the teams try to maintain possession until they see the opportunity to dribble through the swamp at either end.

If they get through the swamp without hitting a cone (alligator) they can score in the goal by passing the ball in with accuracy, not power.

If they hit an alligator the attack stops and possession is given to the other team.

If they score, they keep possession and must attack the opposite end.

Main Objectives

Improve passing, runs off the ball, dribbling and close range finishing. Flexibility and reaction.

Set Up

- Area:** 50x30 yards with 5 yard end zones at either end filled with cones. Goals are a further 5 yards outside the area.
- Players:** 10. If you have odd numbers use a floater inside the main area
- Equipment:** Lots of cones, balls and 2 goals

What To Call Out

- "Keep your head up"
- "Have a go"
- "Can you dribble?"

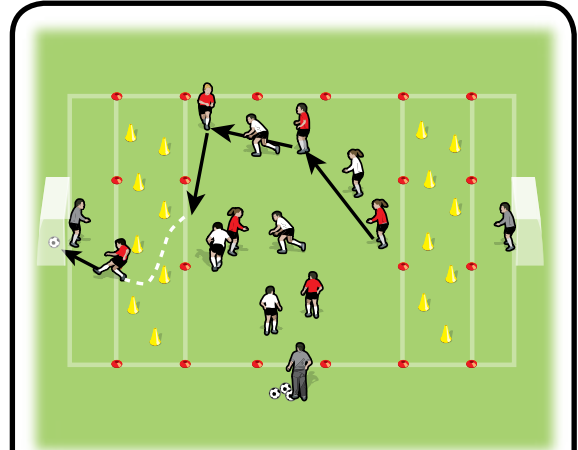
Progression

Allow one defender to follow the attacker into the swamp. However, if they touch a cone – they must move around not jump over them – they must stop.

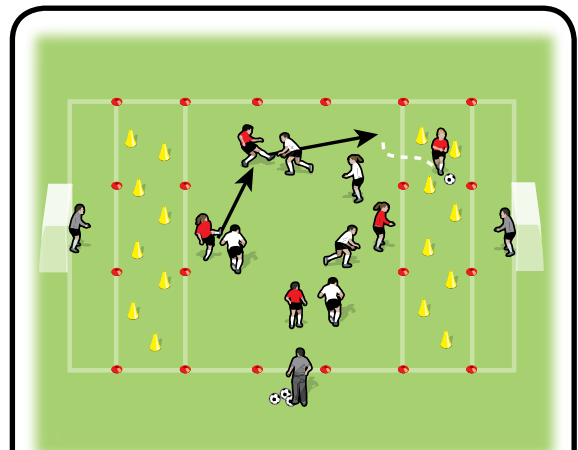
Alternatively, the teams attack one end each and are allowed to shoot through the swamp, again avoiding the alligators. If the ball goes in after hitting an alligator the goal does not stand. This is more fun with goalkeepers in place.

Hint

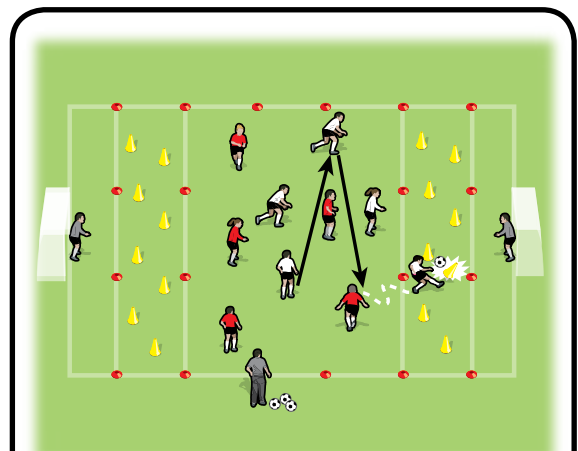
Make sure players stick to the rules and have a supply of balls ready. If using goalkeepers ensure that they stay on their line and do not enter the swamp. As always, praise good technique.



The cones represent alligators in the swamps.



Players must dribble through the swamp avoiding the alligators.



If a player hits an alligator possession is lost.

The Rules

One team of three starts in each half of the grid.

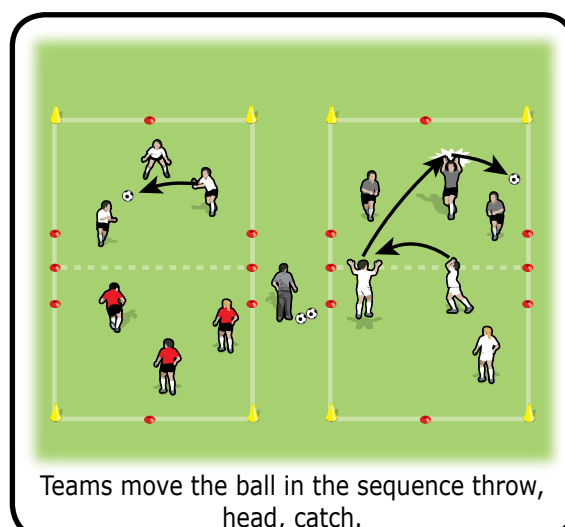
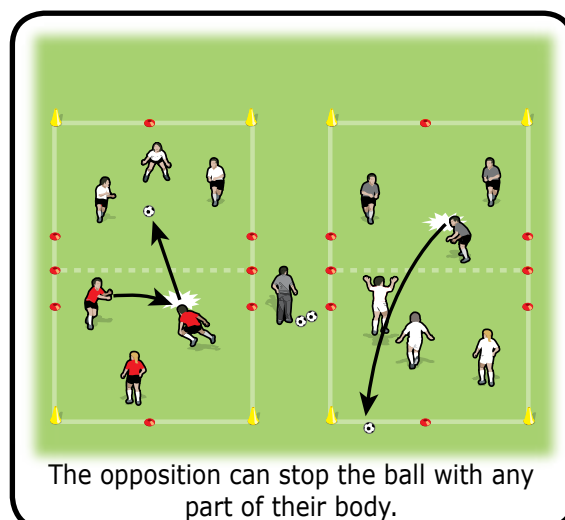
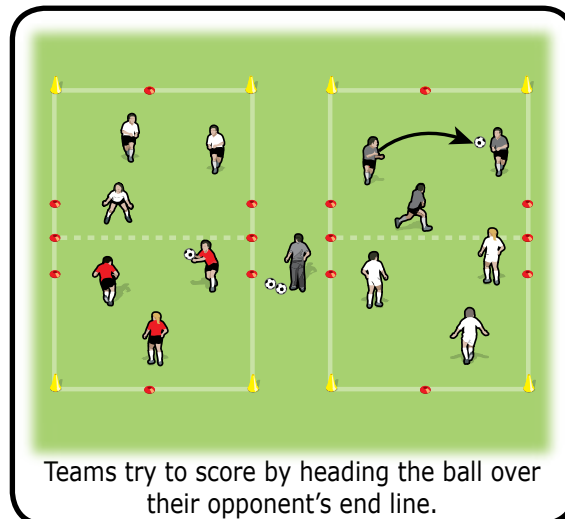
Unlike head tennis, the object of the game is to head the ball out of the grid over the end line.

The team moves the ball using the sequence throw, head, catch until an opportunity arises to head the ball high over the end line working on the principals of height and distance.

The opposite team can stop the ball any way they want including with their hands, so even goalkeepers get to practise here too.

Teams score a point for each header that clears the end line.

Play first to 5 or 10 and, if using more than one grid, play a round robin to see who the champions are.



Main Objectives

Improve defensive heading.

Set Up

Area: 20x30 yard grids with a marked halfway line
 Players: Ideally 3v3 but 2v2 and 3v2 also work
 Equipment: Lots of cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Attack the ball"
 "Eyes open"
 "Head under the ball"

Progression

To make it easier allow only one player from each team to save with their hands, others must use their head.

Allow players to exploit a weak header by heading straight back over the opponent's end line.

Hint

Stand centrally when refereeing for the clearest view.

The Rules

One player stands in each gate, the remaining players form a 4v4 in the area. You can outweigh the numbers to guarantee success or accommodate odd numbers.

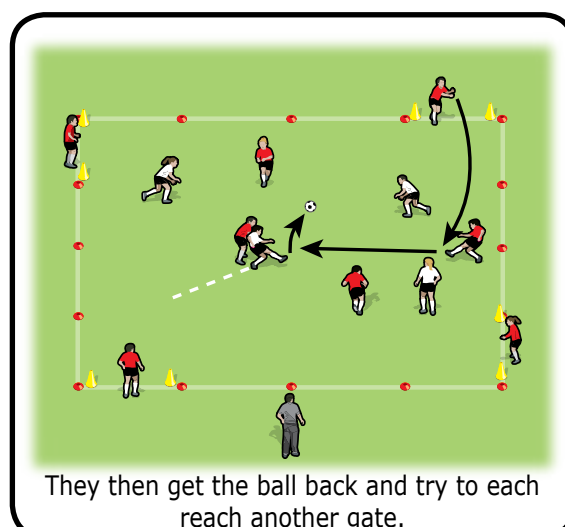
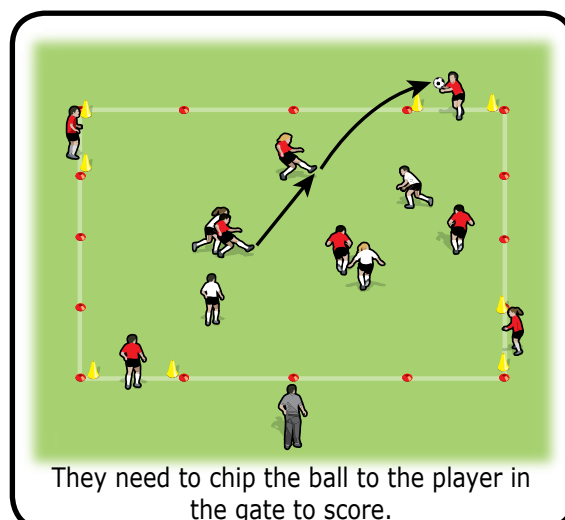
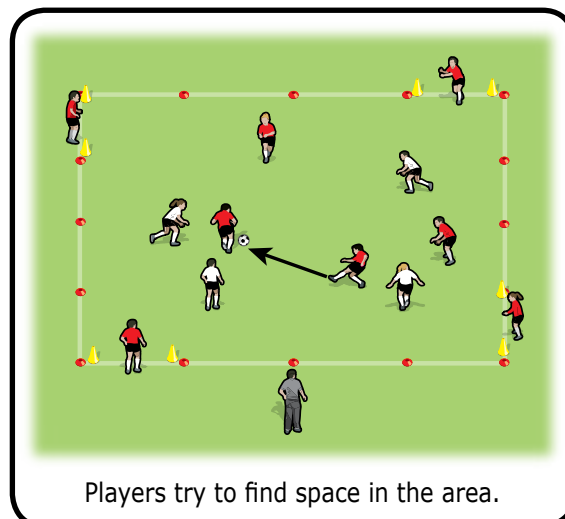
Start by passing the ball into the area. The team in possession attempt to pass the ball and create space to be able to chip the ball to one of the players in the gates. The player must catch the ball for a point to be scored.

The player in the gate then returns the ball to the team that scored and they try to score in a different gate.

The opposition can only win the ball by block tackling or intercepting inside the area. They are not allowed to guard the gates.

Play to a set time limit of, say, 10 minutes.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Improve the technique of chipping the ball.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards with 10 yard gates as shown
 Players: 10-12
 Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Create space"
 "Stab the bottom of the ball"
 "Can you chip it?"

Progression

The players in the gates can no longer use their hands so the chip must be more accurate and they must work on controlling the ball in the air with only three touches to get it under control and make a pass.

Alternatively, the players in the gates must try to pick out a player with a header or first time volley directly from the chip.

Hint

Rotate the players in the gates regularly.

The Rules

Play 6v4 (or any outnumbered teams) in the main zone.

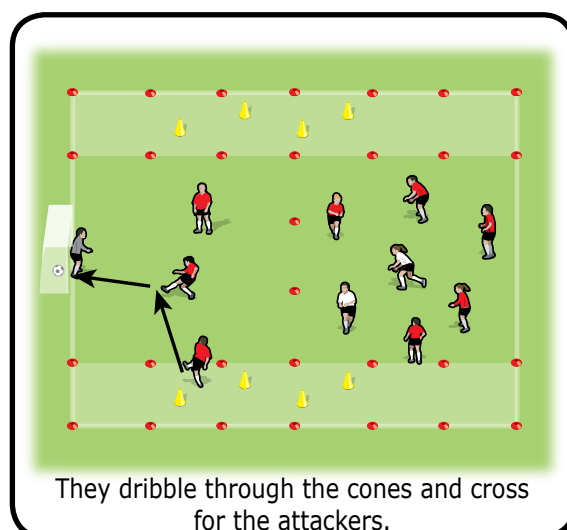
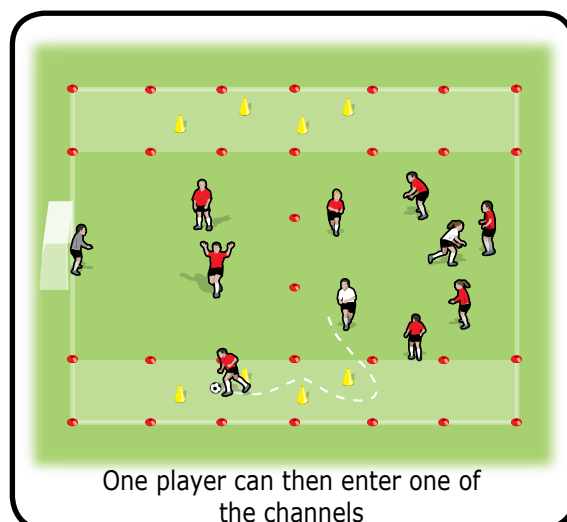
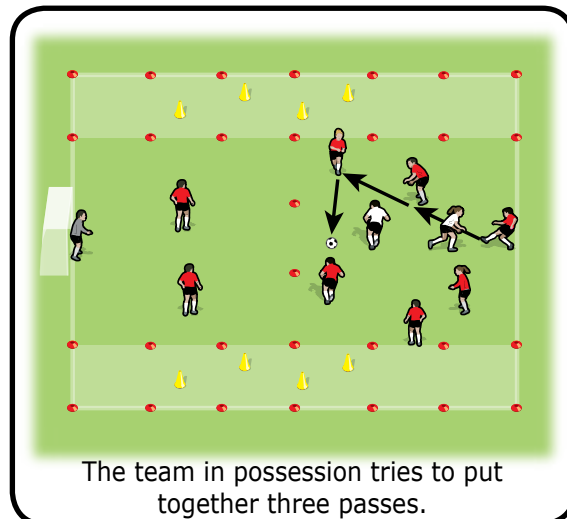
When a team puts together, say, 3 passes, a player can break into either channel unopposed.

Here they must make a mazy run through the cones and deliver a good cross.

Two strikers wait in the scoring zone to attack the cross unopposed except for the goalkeeper.

Alternatively, if you have fewer players available, two team mates can break out into the scoring zone from the main zone in order to attack the cross.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Improve dribbling. A mazy run is used to describe a player beating multiple opponents with good skills.

Set Up

Area: 50x40 yards with two 5 yard channels either side. Divide the main area into a 30x30 zone and 30x20 scoring zone

Players: 13

Equipment: Lots of cones, balls, one goal

What To Call Out

"Can you break out?"

"Keep the ball close"

"Get your cross in"

"Finish!"

Progression

Reduce the space between cones in the channel for closer control and/or place a realistic but challenging time limit on getting through the cones to encourage speed under pressure.

Allow one defender to recover into the scoring zone to challenge the two strikers.

Hint

Rotate the player's roles so they all get a chance to attack and defend.

Make every effort to enable each player to have an attempt to make a mazy run, not just the dominant players.

The Rules

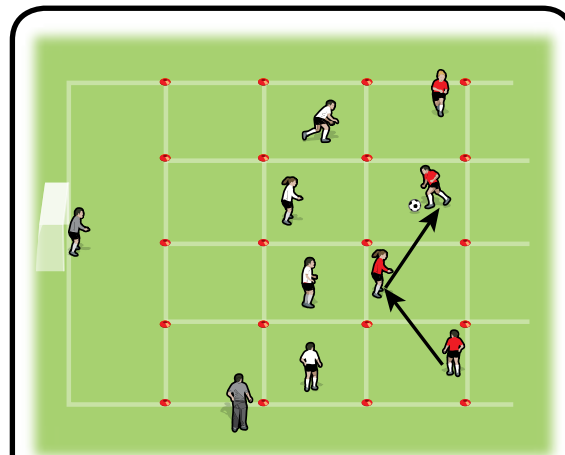
The attacking team pass the ball across their zone until one decides to take on a defender 1v1.

The defenders are each restricted to one 8 yard x 8 yard box and can tackle the player with the ball or force them backwards or sideways into another defender's box.

Once through the defensive line the attackers try to score against the goalkeeper unopposed. If the attacker is tackled they go back and start again.

Only the player with the ball moves beyond the defensive line.

→ PASS → RUN → Dashed line → GROUND COVERED



The attacking team look for an opening.

Main Objectives

Improve 1v1 defending, building up to 2v1 and, finally, defending as a unit.

Set Up

Area: 32x32 yards
Players: 9-13 including goalkeeper
Equipment: 20 cones, balls, one goal

What To Call Out

"On guard"
"Work together"

Progression

Allow one defender to recover into the last zone to apply pressure to the attacker if they get through.

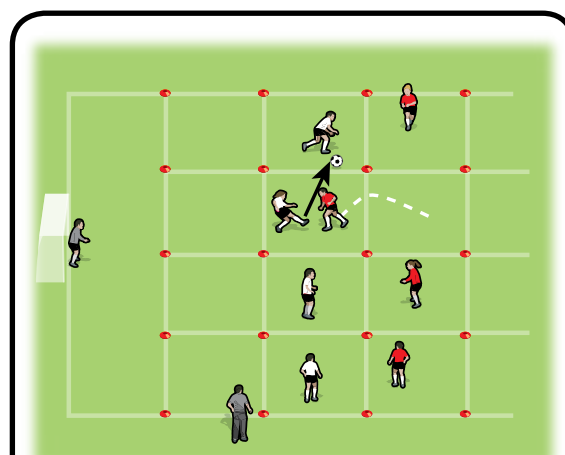
Alternatively, you can allow the second closest defender to enter the box at the risk of releasing the attacker in their own channel. This decision is dependent on the angle and distance and whether or not they can realistically win the ball.

Finally, allow all players to be active but defenders should try to ensure that no more than two are inside any box at once to help teach good covering distances.

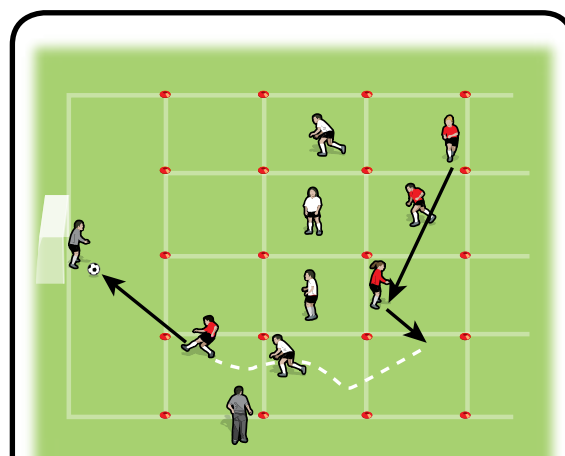
Hint

If you only have 7 players reduce the number of channels to 3. The principles of individual and group defending remain the same.

Concentrate on the defensive aspects but remember to praise the attackers too.



An attacker tries to beat their defender but is tackled.



They attack again. This time the attacker gets through.

The Rules

One wide player is placed in each of the 5 yard channels. They are neutral players and must cross for both teams.

Goalkeepers are also considered neutral.

When in possession a team must put together 3 passes before playing out to one of the wide players. They must then try and score from the cross.

Teams can score in either goal but a player can only score from a cross if their team made the pass to the wide player.

Main Objectives

Improves passing, crossing and finishing.

Set Up

Area: 40x40 yards including 5 yard channels lengthways on either side

Players: 12

Equipment: Cones, balls, 2 goals

What To Call Out

"Get it wide"

"Cross early"

"Attack the cross"

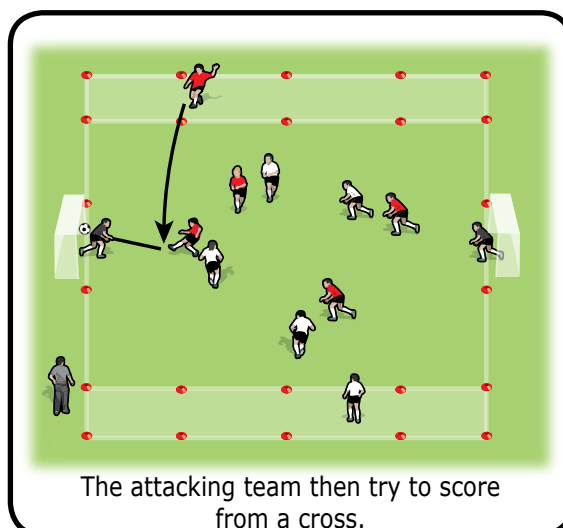
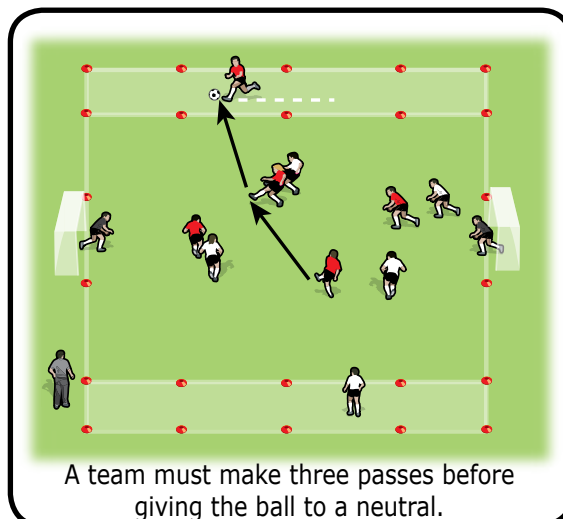
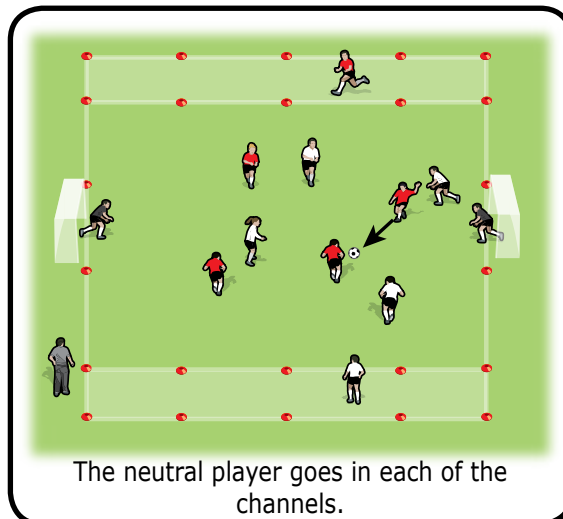
Progression

After, say, three goals have been scored, add the condition that the ball must be switched from side to side at least once before the cross.

Finally, to involve the goalkeepers more allow them to throw the ball direct to the wide player for a quick counter attack. But beware, the cross may come straight back and any player can score which tests everyone's reactions.

Hint

Ask goalkeepers to stay on their goal line to allow more attacking opportunities from the crosses.



The Rules

Divide the players so that you have 5 players and a goalkeeper in each end zone.

The players number themselves 1 to 5 and attempt to retain possession from the goalkeeper by passing in sequence.

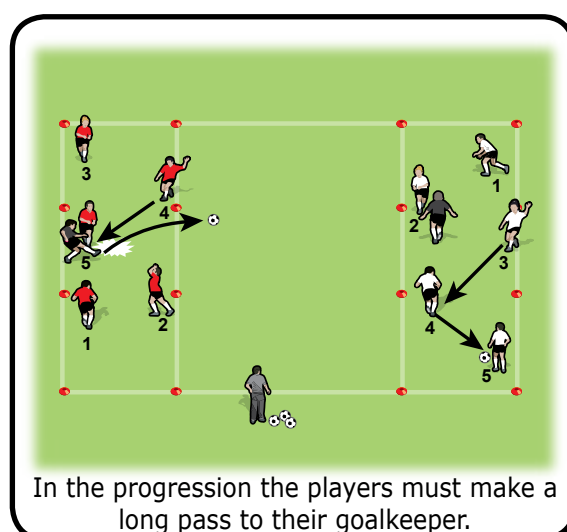
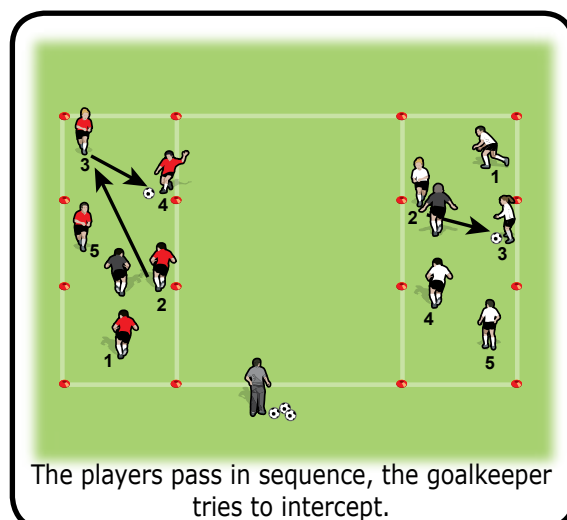
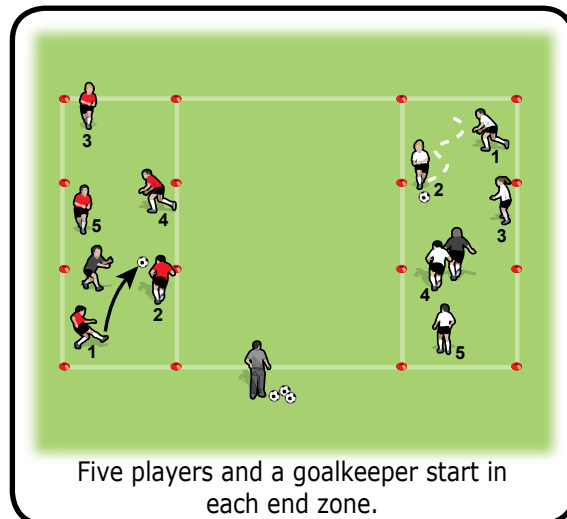
Players must shout out their number when they are looking to receive the ball (encouraging communication). And the player in possession should be encouraged to dribble with the ball or protect it from the goalkeeper until a call is heard.

The goalkeepers may win the ball through interception with their hands or feet, or by tackling a player in possession.

Ten passes wins a point for the team. See which team can score most points in ten minutes.

Teams can change numbers halfway through to confuse goalkeepers.

PASS **RUN** **GROUND COVERED**



Main Objectives

Possession play and accuracy of long passing.

Set Up

Area: 45x30 yards divided into 3 15x30 yard zones

Players: 12

Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Find space"

"Pass quickly"

"Find the keeper"

Progression

Allow players to pass in any sequence. Now, on your call they must look for the first opportunity to pass across the empty zone to their goalkeeper in the other zone. The goalkeeper can catch or control the ball with feet. Defenders can intercept the ball but not tackle the goalkeeper.

Finally, allow defenders to move into the middle zone to force the long pass to be made over the top of them.

Hint

You can play 6v2 in the end zones which makes retaining possession more difficult but gives an option for the long pass.

The Rules

Place the flag in the middle of the area with three defenders. As there are four entry points the defenders will always have one gate unguarded.

The remaining players split into 3 teams of 3 or more.

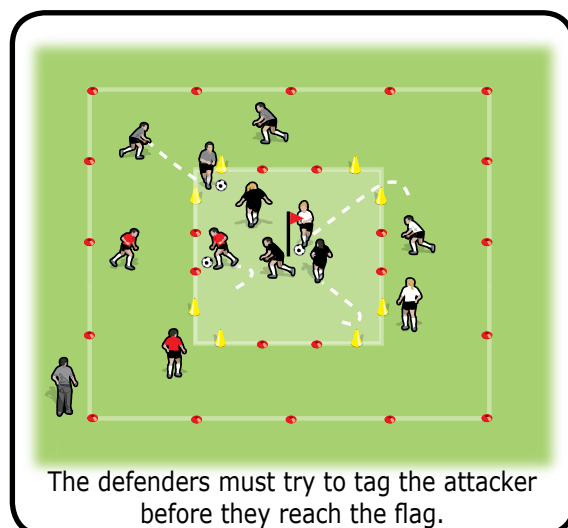
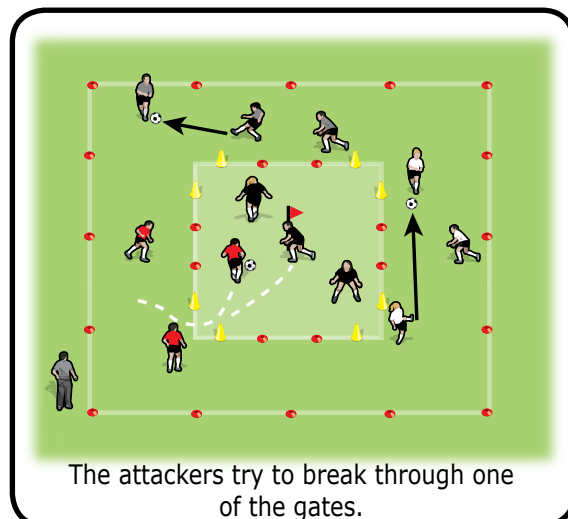
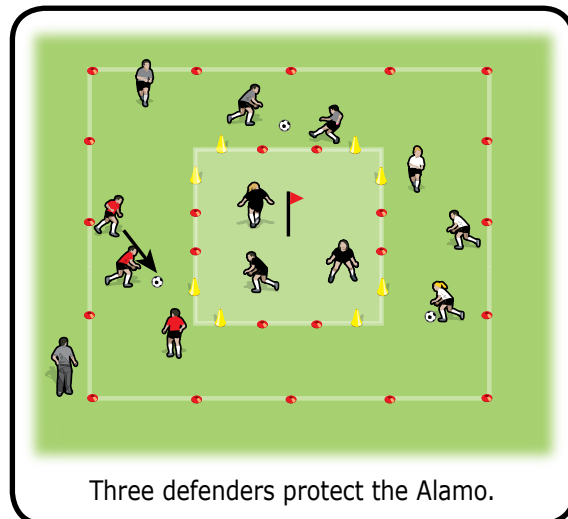
The teams try to break into the Alamo by going through one of the gates with the ball under control and reaching the flag in the centre.

Attackers cannot pass through a gate if a defender is standing immediately on the opposite side.

If an attacker breaks through, defenders try to tag them before they reach the flag.

The defenders play for a set time. The team that allows the fewest attackers to reach the flag wins.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Improving interpassing and attacking small spaces. Defensive reactions and decision making.

Set Up

Area: 30x30 yards with 1 yard wide gates on each corner (indicated by different coloured cones)
 Players: 12
 Equipment: Cones, 3 balls, flag

What To Call Out

"Cover the gates"
 "Turn away"

Progression

Allow one of the defenders to go over the wall and press one of the balls. If they do this well, the remaining two defenders should be able to cover the two remaining teams well. If not, they leave the Alamo exposed.

Alternatively, give the defenders a ball each. They can prevent an attacker reaching the flag by hitting them below the knee with their ball if they cannot tag the attacker.

Hint

Quick passing is the key to this game. The attacking teams will need to move the ball from gate to gate in order to find an opening. They should quickly learn that the ball can move faster than the defenders can run.

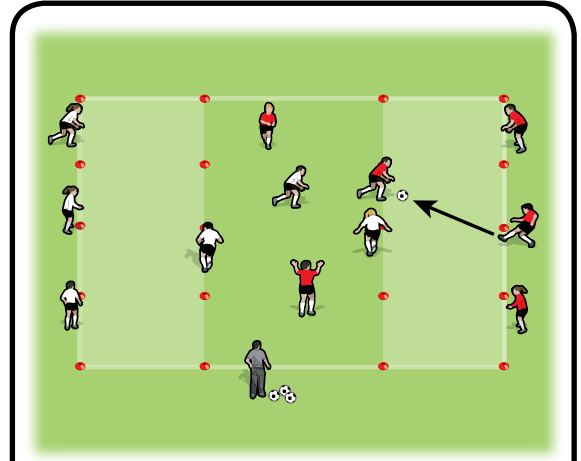
The Rules

Playing 3v3 in the main area, the attacking team receives a ball from a server and tries to turn and pass to the opposite side.

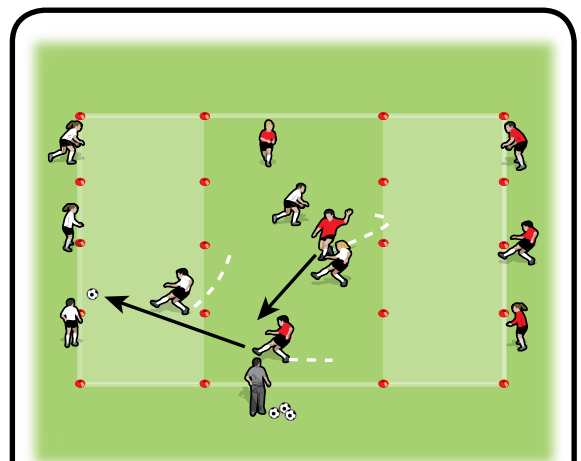
Defenders can win the ball back in the main area or step into the end zone if they are able to anticipate the timing and direction of a pass.

Each successful interception gains a point. Upon intercepting the ball the defender turns and passes to the opposite side and the roles reverse.

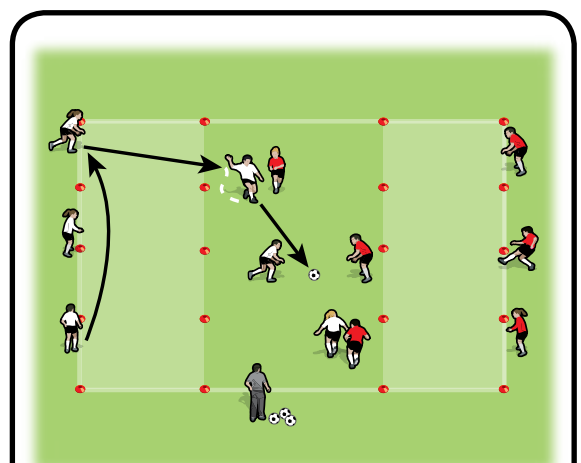
Switch the servers and middle players after, say, 10 points (total).



The team receives a pass from a server.



They try to turn and pass to the players on the opposite side.



The defenders try to intercept the ball and attack.

Main Objectives

Improve marking distances and anticipation of an opponent's pass in order to intercept and counter attack.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards with two 10 yard end zones
 Players: 12
 Equipment: Cones and balls

What To Call Out

"Touch tight"
 "Stay side on"
 "Be patient"

Progression

Encourage the defending team to press the server. This should enable them to force the direction of the pass making it predictable for the other two defenders and easier to intercept the ball.

Hint

Don't allow players to slide tackle. The focus of this game is reading and intercepting passes, not tackling.

Praise all good skills and decisions.

The Rules

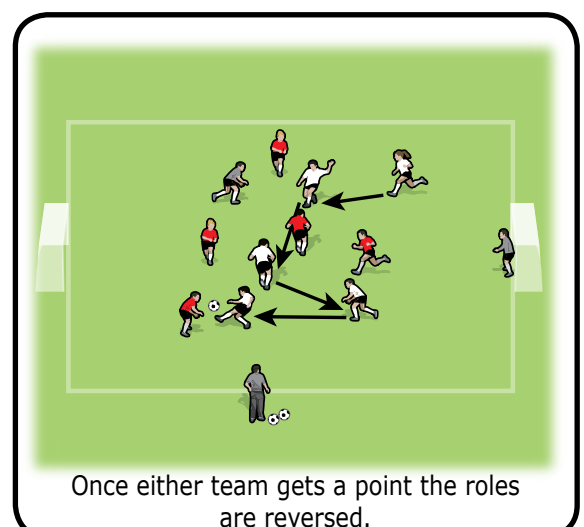
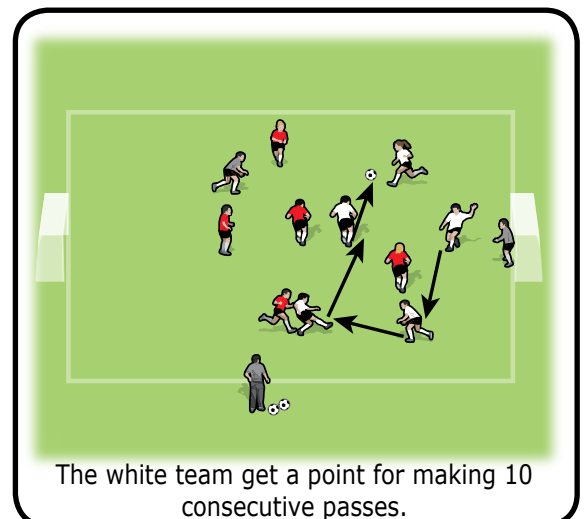
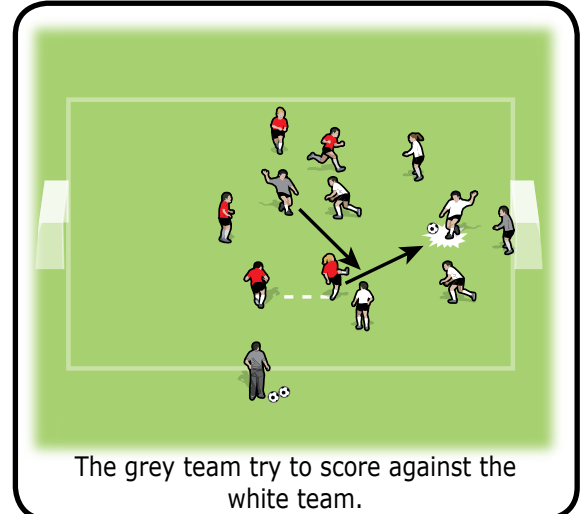
One team starts with their goalkeeper in goal and their target is to score after making ten passes without interception by the other team.

The other team's goalkeeper can play outfield to create an overload. Their target is to score in the opponent's goal.

The team retaining possession cannot be offside, the team trying to score in the goal can.

If either team scores the roles are reversed and players must react to their new target.

→ →
PASS RUN GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Retaining possession, reacting to winning/losing possession individually and as a team.

Set Up

Area: 50x30 yards
Players: 12 – 2 equal teams with goalkeepers
Equipment: Cones, 1 ball, 2 goals

What To Call Out

"React"
"Ten passes - goal"
"Find space"

Progression

Limit the touches allowed on either or both teams or on specific players.

Insist on one touch finishing – for the tenth pass or to put the ball in the goal.

The size of the goals and number of passes can also be modified to make scoring more or less difficult for either or both teams.

Hint

Keep a supply of balls nearby to allow the game to flow quickly.

Encourage variation of passes – short, long.

The Rules

Using a maximum of 1 or 2 touches players pass and move inside the area ensuring that the ball does not cross the boundary lines.

The drill must be completed in silence. Players cannot communicate by talking, clapping, whistling or making any kind of noise.

1 or 2 balls can be used.

Main Objectives

Vision and awareness, first touch, control.

Set Up

Area: 20x20 yards
Players: 6
Equipment: Cones, 1 or 2 balls

What To Call Out

"Keep your head up"

"Move into space"

"Look over your shoulder"

Progression

Convert 1, then 2 players to defenders who must try to win possession.

The attacking team tries to achieve a set number of passes, say 10, without the defenders intercepting the ball.

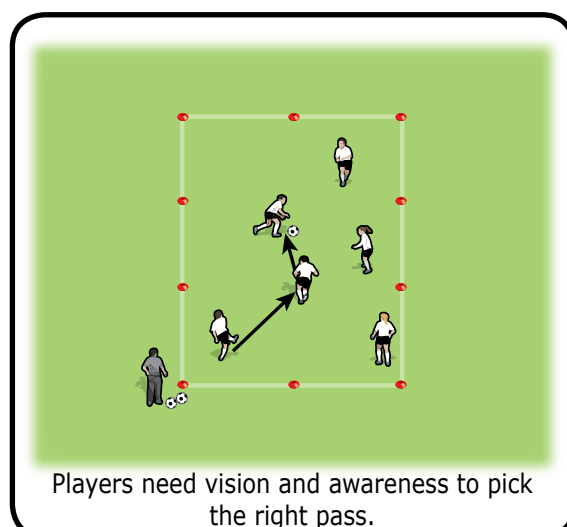
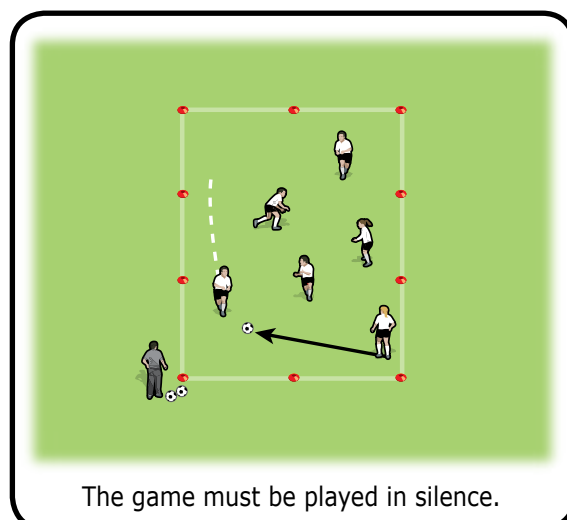
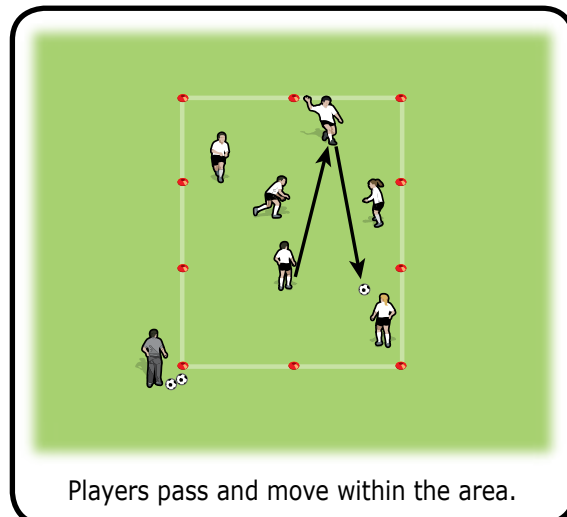
To make it more difficult for the attacking team the defenders are allowed to communicate with each other. This allows them to form a strategy for closing down and winning possession.

Rather than penalising the loss of possession by switching players – as is often used in these games – keep the same defenders for, say, 2 minutes and give a player making a bad pass a chance to do better by having another go.

Hint

With bigger groups you will need to either run multiple areas at the same time or increase the size of the area to accommodate more players. 8 v 4 in a 40 yard x 40 yard area, for example.

Keep a count of the passes so you can award a goal when the target is reached and remember to praise the defenders when they do well.



The Rules

Four players – three attackers and one defender - start inside the playing area with four goalkeepers. Four servers stand between the goals, one at each corner.

The attackers play the ball between them and at any time can chip the ball to one of the servers.

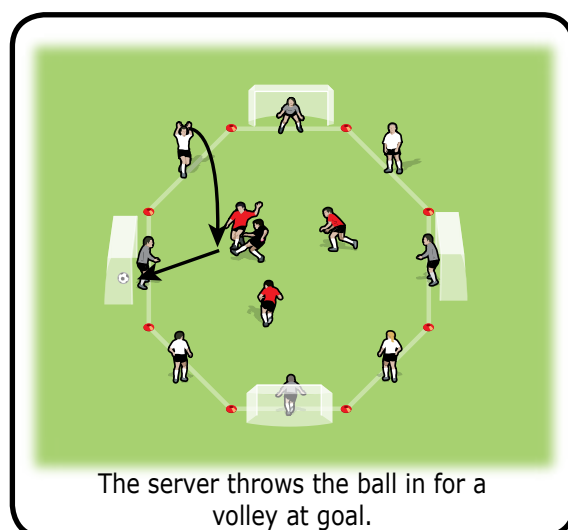
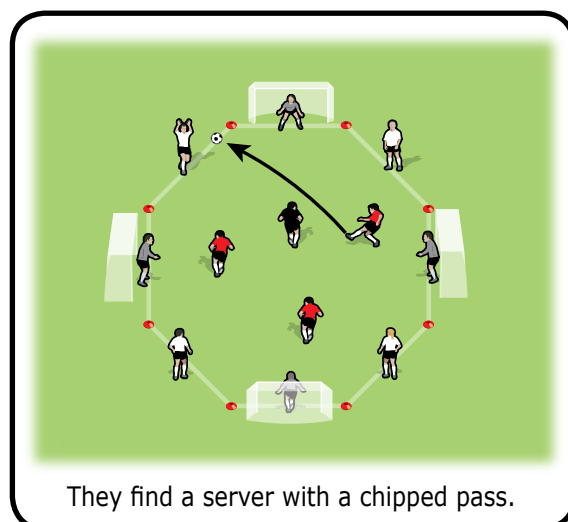
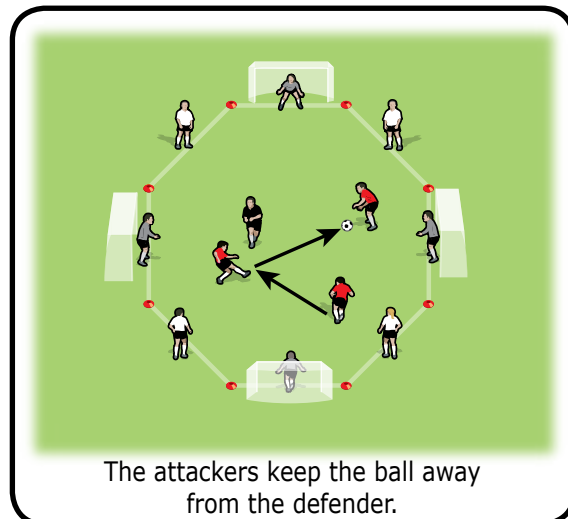
The server then throws the ball to any of the attackers to volley at goal.

The defender tries to stop the pass and put pressure on the volleying player.

Goalkeepers should stay on their line to allow players to attack the ball without fear.

After a set time or number of goals rotate the players. The winning team is therefore the team that scores the most within the time limit, or reaches the scoring target fastest.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

To improve volleying technique – half or full volleys.

Set Up

Area: Octagon with a goal on four opposite sides
 Players: 12
 Equipment: Cones, balls, 4 goals

What To Call Out

"Chip out"
 "Who is in space?"
 "Eyes on the ball"

Progression

Allow players to take a touch first before volleying. For example, chest then volley.

To make it more difficult you can balance the number of attackers and defenders in the middle or use only two servers who must use the proper throw-in technique to get the ball back in play.

Hint

Overhead volleys should be avoided at this age due to risk of poor technique and the possibility of injury to the neck and other bones.

The Rules

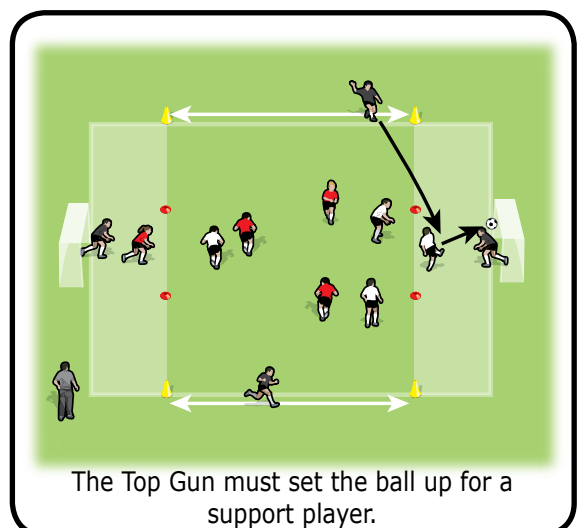
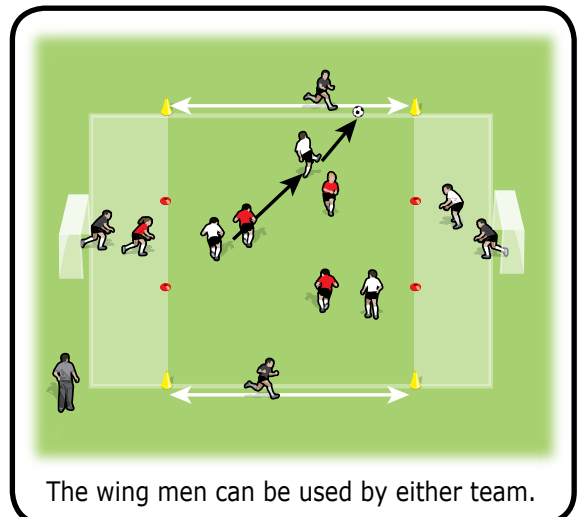
Each team has a Top Gun who operates in the opponent's airspace (the ten yard end zone in front of goal).

Two neutral Wing Men – one on each long side of the area – can move up and down the wing playing for the team in possession.

The team must get the ball to their Top Gun, but they cannot score until the Top Gun has linked with a support player.

When the support player has linked up with the Top Gun they can either shoot or pass back to the Top Gun or another team mate.

If the team loses possession they must create the link with the Top Gun once more upon regaining possession. Link ups do not count beyond one attack.



Main Objectives

Creating space, timing and angle of runs off of the ball, support runs.

Set Up

Area: 50x30 yards
Players: 8
Equipment: Cones, 2 goals, balls

What To Call Out

"Scramble"
"Lock on"
"Support your Top Gun"

Progression

One defender and one support player can be allowed into the end zone on the target player's first touch.

Allow the goalkeeper to move off of their line and allow a defender in the end zone at all times. To counter this, the Top Gun can move out of the end zone when they receive the ball.

Hint

Get the kids to give themselves fighter pilot names. Iceman, Wolf, Maverick, Lightning, Zodiac, Nightshade etc.

The Rules

Play 6v6 or, if you have odd numbers, use a floater that can play for either team.

The teams try to score a point by passing to a team mate in one of the corner boxes.

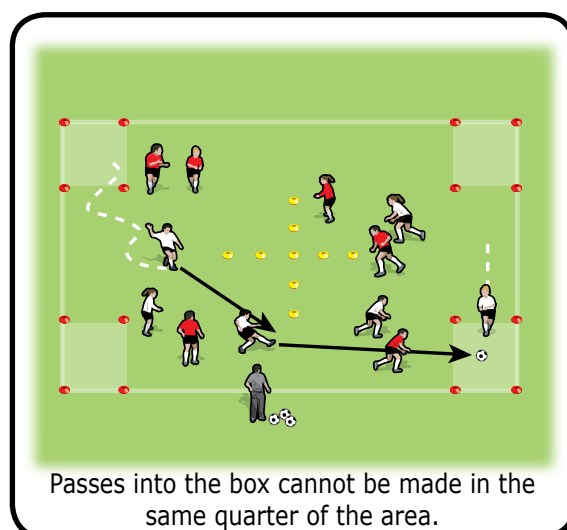
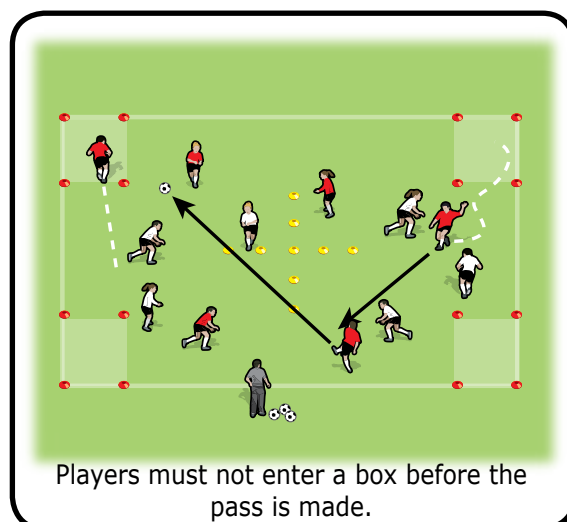
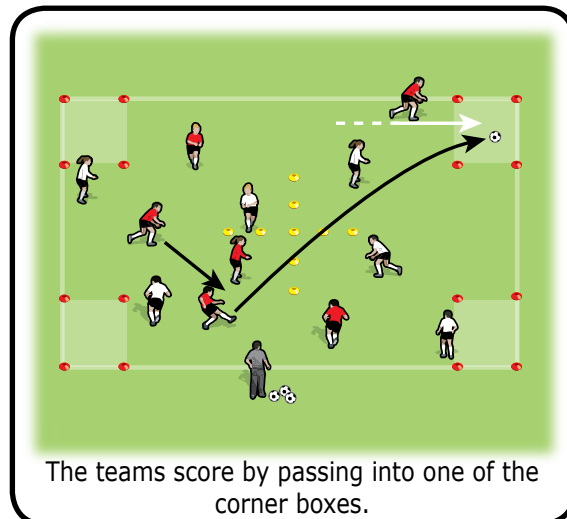
Players can move freely around the area but can only enter the corner boxes at the same time as the ball. If they enter a corner box too early this is considered offside. This encourages players to time their runs.

In addition, the ball must be played from any of the larger areas except the one in which the corner box is being targeted. This needs longer passes and quick switching of play.

Upon scoring a point possession is maintained. To re-score in the same corner box the ball must leave that quarter of the area before returning.

Play to, say, 10 points before changing teams around.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Helping players understand how, when and why we switch play in a game.

Set Up

Area: 60x40 yards divided into four rectangles with 8x8 yard squares in each corner
 Players: 12
 Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Find space"
 "Is the switch on?"
 "Don't run into the box too soon"

Progression

Insist that points can only be scored with lofted or chipped passes and must not hit the ground before entering the box.

Give a bonus point if the ball is controlled in the air – using the chest for example – thus encouraging aerial control skills.

Hint

Avoid crowding in one area by encouraging players to keep moving.

The Rules

Teams play outnumbered possession – such as 4v2 or 3v1 – in each half.

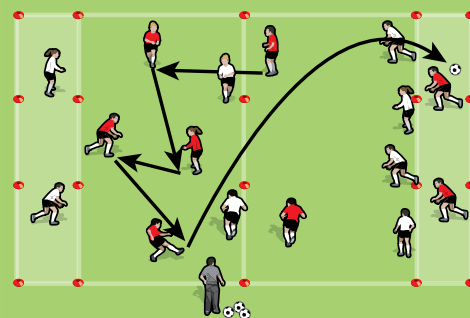
The team in possession needs to create an opening to play an accurate long ball to the goalkeeper(s) in the end zone.

The team not in possession should position themselves on the edge of the end zone to stop the meteors reaching the goalkeeper(s) easily – let them work this out for themselves though.

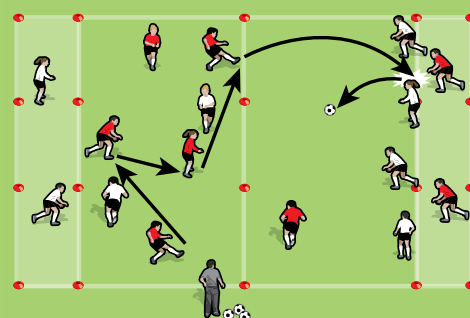
Goals only count for balls that are hit over the defenders' heads from behind the half-way line.

Play for a set time before rotating the attackers, defenders and goalkeepers.

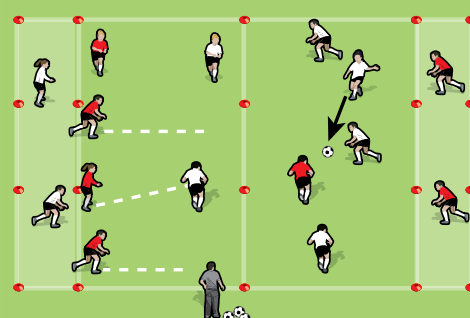
→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



The attacking team creates an opening to play a long ball.



The defenders drop deep to intercept the meteor.



They launch a counter attack so the grey team go deep.

Main Objectives

Improve long-lofted pass, defensive heading and goalkeeper catching under passive pressure.

Set Up

Area: 60x30 yards including two 6 yard end zones, half-way line must be clearly marked
 Players: 16
 Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Get your head up"
 "Launch a meteor"
 "Incoming"

Progression

Allow the forwards to score with a chip pass or to help a long pass reach a goalkeeper with a flick header.

If allowing chip passes, points should be doubled for long-lofted passes as they are the focus of this game.

Hint

Defenders should be encouraged to check over their shoulders in order to better cover the goalkeepers.

