



CANADA SOCCER

ACTIVE START



LEGEND



RED PLAYERS = ATTACKING PLAYERS



WHITE PLAYERS = DEFENDING PLAYERS



BLACK ICON = COACH



GREY ICON = PARENT / GUARDIAN



DRIBBLE THE BALL



PASS OR SHOOT THE BALL



STOPWATCH



FOOTBALL



CONES



GOAL



POOL NOODLE



PINNIE



BALLS



LADDER

MANAGE THE ENVIRONMENT

If activities are illustrated as using fewer players than the total attendance, consider these solutions to keep everyone playing:

- Multiple small games (set up 2-3 games)
- Third team (Managing rest time)
- Add target players

MANAGE THE ENVIRONMENT

Avoid coaching a lot and telling players what to do! Players do not want to listen to their coach constantly and want to feel they can try and make decisions. Let them play frequently and praise good actions or behaviours.

Ask questions and set challenges as this helps them reflect and solve problems.

MANAGE THE ENVIRONMENT

You can use constraints or scoring systems to reward skill sets and positive play to invite players to solve problems.

Example: If you want players to dribble, you can reward the opposition with points if they intercept a pass. This approach does not limit the player's choice, but it creates a risk-and-reward scenario for them to explore.

1. Attacking Organization (We Have the Ball)

Our team has the ball. We try to keep it, move forward, create chances, and score.

2. Defensive Transition (We Just Lost the Ball)

We just lost the ball. We must react quickly—try to win it back or get back into our defensive positions.

3. Defending Organization (They Have the Ball)

The other team has the ball. We stay organized, protect space, and try to stop them from scoring.

4. Attacking Transition (We Just Won the Ball)

We just won the ball back. This is a good moment to attack quickly before the other team gets organized.



INDIVIDUAL PLAYER SUPPORT STRATEGIES



ON FIELD STRATEGY

01. INDIVIDUAL CONSTRAINTS

Use rewards/restrictions to influence individual behaviors.

02. PLAYER PAIRS TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE

Pair players intentionally to increase repetition. E.g., small with small, fast with fast, etc...

03. ISOLATED ME AND BALL PRACTICE

Increased repetition of an action allowing the coach to work more forensically.

04. QUESTION PLAYERS ON GOALS DURING SESSIONS

Use questions to gain attention & set challenges "when would you...?"

05. INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS

Ask the player to evaluate performance and things they seek to improve on.

06. PEER-TO-PEER ROLE MODELING

Use older or more experienced players to demonstrate key behaviors.

07. TARGETED CHALLENGE

Use targeted challenges that act as a guide for learning "Try to score within 6 secs"

08. REPETITION WITHOUT REPETITION

Rehearse behaviors repeatedly with varied angles, timing and distances.

09. VERBAL CUES

Coach and players verbalize intended behaviors (eg, "Can you show me how to...")

10. RELATIONSHIP WORK

Ask players in pairs to discuss questions based on session skill sets.

11. ZONES

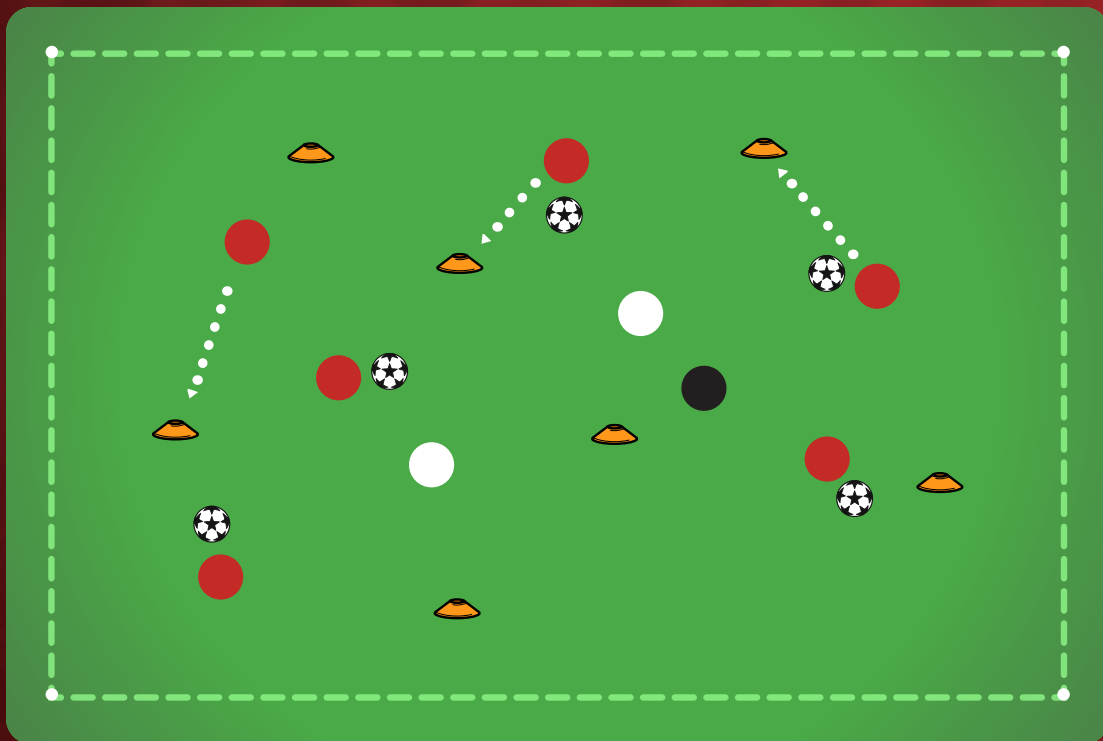
Mark areas on pitch where players must perform behaviors to increase intentionality.



PHYSICAL LITERACY GAMES



DRIBBLING GAME – ISLAND TAG



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Cone off a 15m x 15m playing area in one colour.
2. Scatter different coloured cones inside the area in another colour.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Choose 2 Taggers (coaches or parents). Every player has a ball.
2. Players are safe on an island (a cone). Players can be tagged while moving between islands.
3. Taggers try to tag as many players as they can in 30 seconds.
4. Encourage players to visit as many islands as possible.

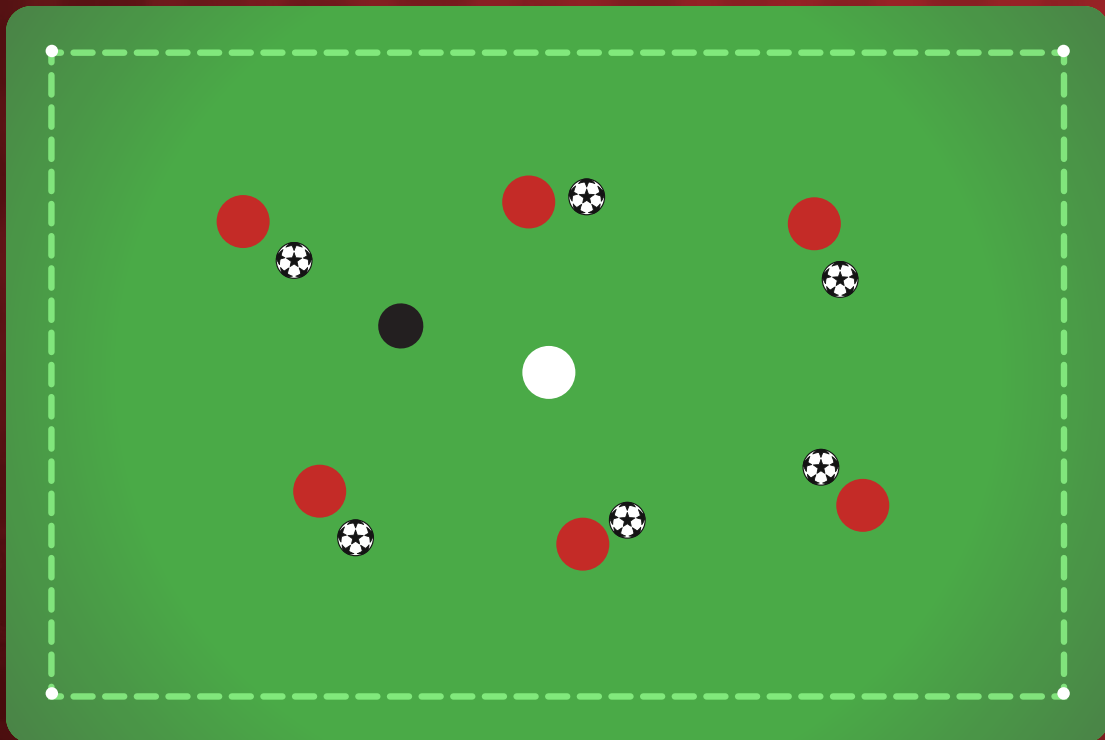
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to keep your ball as close as you can.
- Try to dribble fast and slow.
- Try to change direction with the ball as fast as you can.



3-2-1 BLAST OFF



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up a 20m x 20m area.
2. A ball for each player.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Each player has a ball at their feet and explores the space.
2. Coach calls “3-2-1 Blast Off!”
3. Players pick up their ball and throw it high in the air.
4. When the ball lands, players show their soccer pose (foot on the ball).
5. Players then start exploring the space again.

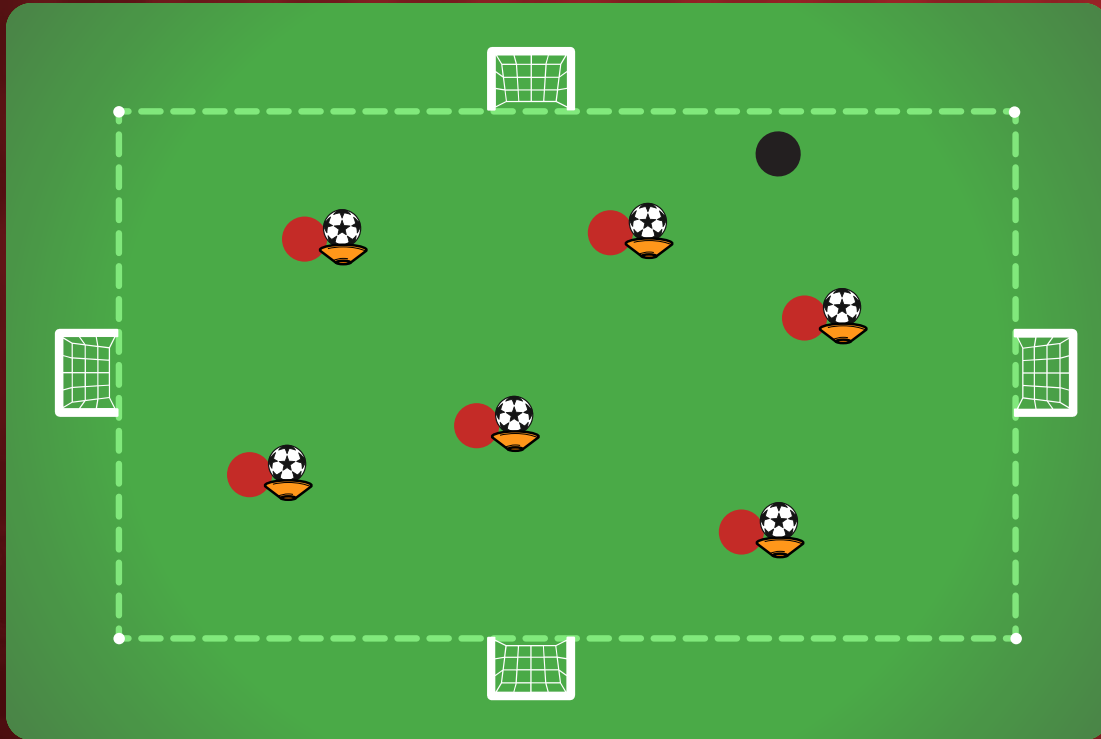
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- How quickly can you land the rocket ship by putting your foot on top of the ball?



I SCREAM, YOU SCREAM, WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM!



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up a 20mx20m area.
2. Goals around the perimeter (option to include various number of goals)

HOW TO PLAY

1. Each player has a tall cone and a ball.
2. Players turn the cone upside down and place the ball on top to make an ice cream cone.
3. Players carry their ice cream cone to the net.
4. At the goal, players drop the ball and score.

HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

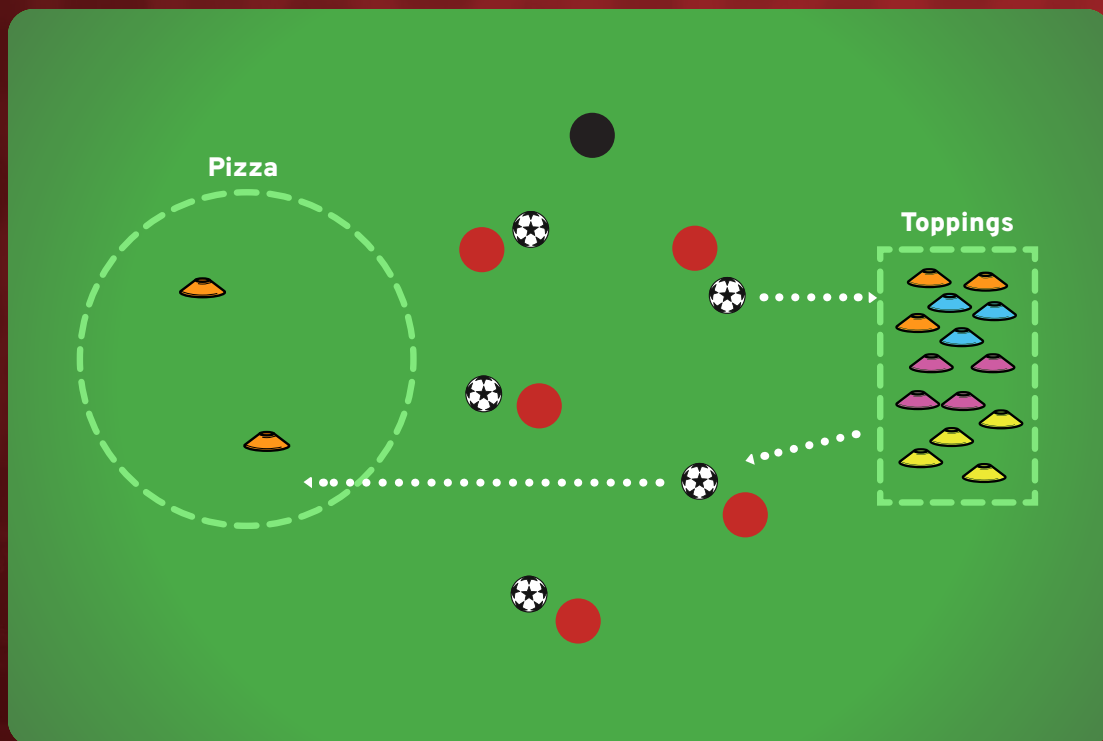
- How fast can you get to the goal?
- Can you use the top of your foot to control the ball?

Questions:

- What flavour ice cream do you have?



PIZZA PARTY



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Using a circle of cones, create a large circle (pizza).
2. Create an area for various coloured cones and pinnies to use as toppings.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Each player has a ball at their feet.
2. Players choose a topping for the pizza.
3. Players hold the topping and dribble their ball to the pizza.
4. They place the topping on the pizza and return for another topping.
5. Continue until all toppings have been placed on the pizza.

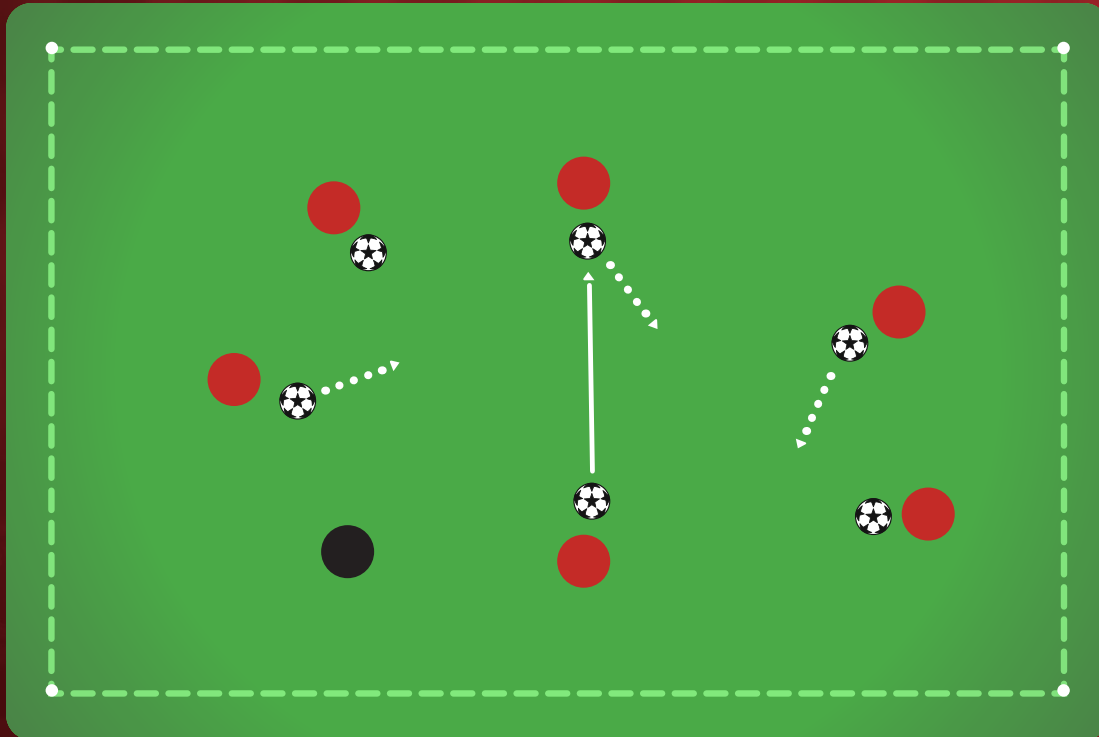
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to keep the ball moving with light taps instead of big kicks.
- Try to stop and start quickly without losing control of the ball.



SOCCER BALL TAG



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up a 20mx20m area.
2. Players each have a ball and begin by dribbling within the designated area.
3. Progress into a “soccer ball tag” game, with one ball per player.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Players pass their ball to hit another player’s ball and score a point.
2. Dribble to avoid getting hit by another player’s ball.
3. If a player’s ball goes out of the area, their points restart at zero.

How to Modify:

Use a point system:

- Inside of foot = 1 point.
- Laces = 2 points.
- Outside of foot = 3 points.
- Backheel = 5 points.
- Add these as players improve.
- Make the playing space smaller.

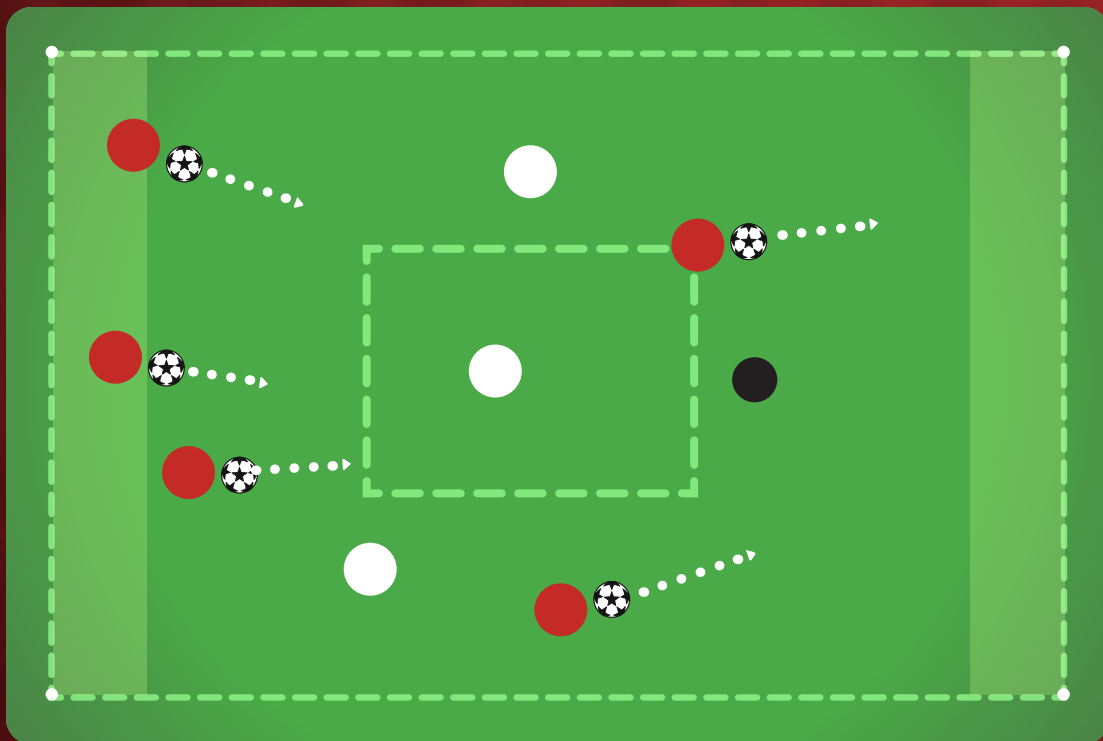
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to hide your ball in your feet (shield)
- Try to find open space.
- Try to dribble fast and change direction.



SPACE INVADERS



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up a rectangle area appropriate to space. Available, with a smaller square inside.
2. Have 3 or 4 players as taggers.
3. Players have a ball each (red).
4. Adjust area size based on player success or group size.

HOW TO PLAY

1. 3-4 taggers (white) in the middle try to tag as many players as they can.
2. Players with the ball (red) start in the end zone and try to travel with the ball across the area.
3. Players get 1 point for reaching the opposite end zone without being tagged and 5 points if they can travel through the middle square into the end zone without being tagged.

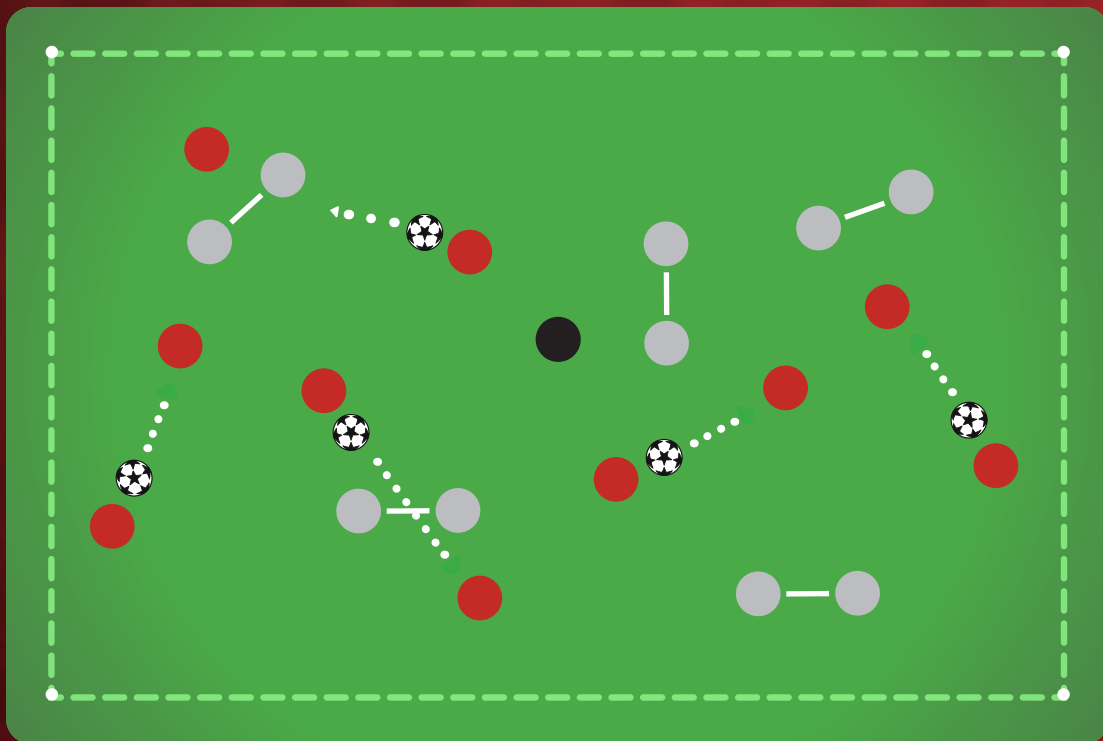
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to see when you can dribble fast.
- Try to be sneaky and get by the tagger.



HUMAN GOAL POSTS



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up 20mx20m area.
2. Give the supporting adults a pinnie to hold at each end to create the crossbar; their legs/bodies form the goalposts.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Paired Adults (grey) represent a goal, moving around the area.
2. Players (red) look to score on a moving 'goal' by shooting through the goal.
3. Switch roles after 1 minute.

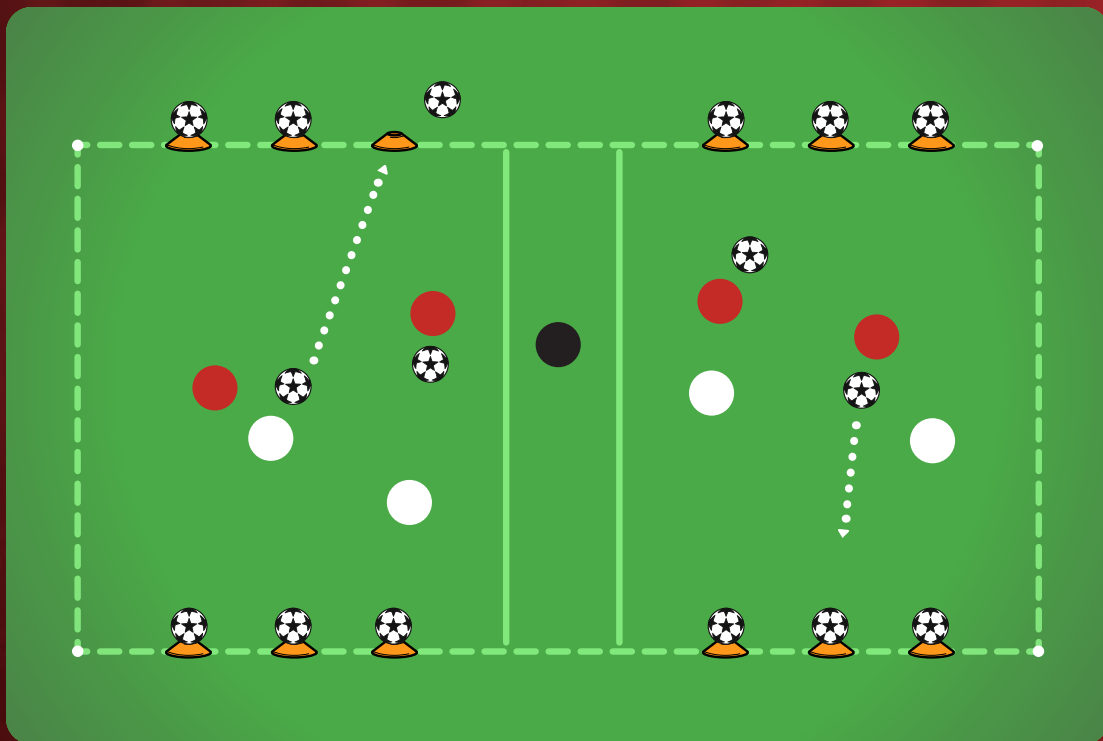
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to strike the ball through the moving goal before it moves away.
- Try to look up and spot the moving goal before you strike.



KNOCK DOWN THE CASTLE



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Balance three balls on top of three cones (one castle).
2. Set up as many castles as needed – one castle between two players.

HOW TO PLAY

1. **The Mission:** Players work together in their team of two to strike the ball and successfully knock a ball off a cone to score.
2. **The Win:** The first team to knock all three balls off their cones wins the round. Let the players continue until they are all knocked down.
3. While the team who knocks them all down first might 'win', set them up and keep challenging them to keep knocking them down and count how many times they knock the castles down.

How to Modify:

1. Use a point system:
 - Inside of foot – 1 point.
 - Laces – 2 points.
 - Outside of foot – 3 points.
 - Backheel – 5 points.
 - Add these as players improve.
2. Players then strike the other teams castles whilst defending their own.

HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to look at the ball when you are striking it.
- Try to strike the middle and back of the ball.



DISCOVERY AND CURIOSITY GAMES



HUNGRY HIPPOS



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Define a 15mx15m grid with cones ('The Swamp')
2. Players are placed in the area with a ball each.
3. Cones are scattered randomly across the playing area as 'rocks'.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Players dribble around the swamp, avoiding the rocks (cones) and other animals (players).
2. The Attack: Hippos try to poke away with their feet the other players' soccer balls.
3. Recovery: If a ball is poked away, the player retrieves the ball and rejoins the game.

HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

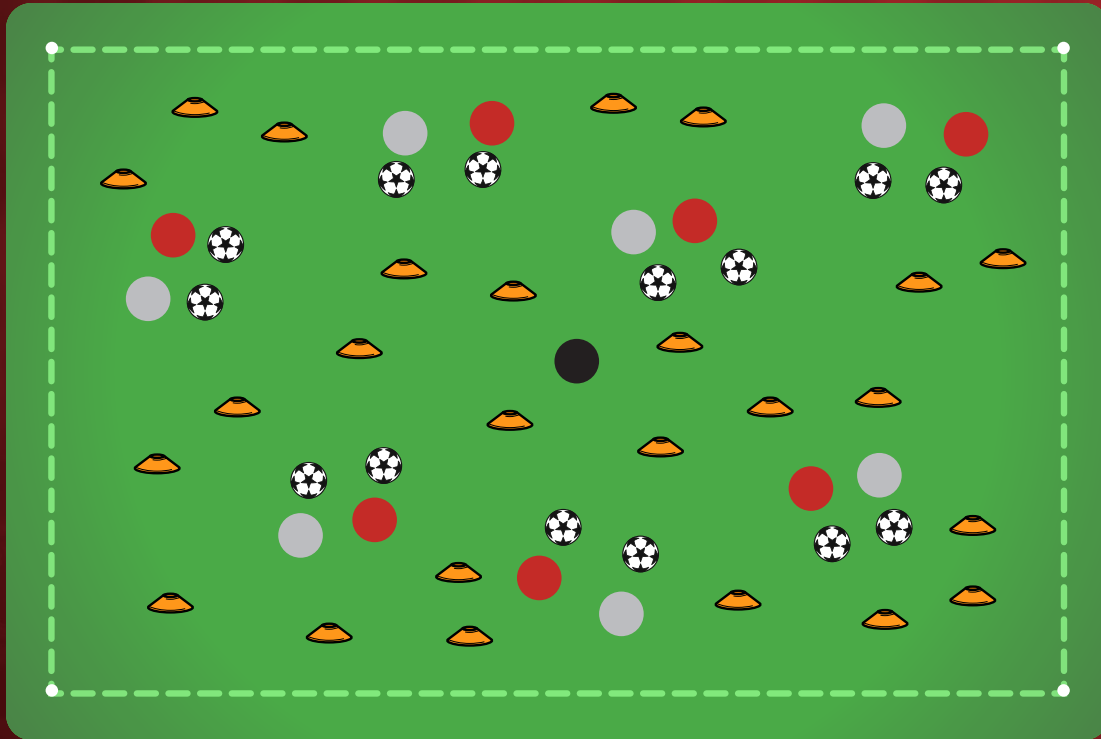
- Try to keep the ball close to your feet.
- If someone comes to take the ball, turn and go a different way.

Questions:

- For Defenders: How many balls can the Hippos touch in one minute?
- For Dribblers: How many times can you avoid being "eaten" (tackled) by the swamp?



TREASURE HUNT! FIND THE OBJECTS!



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Players and parent/guardian each have a ball and are placed in a 20m x 20m grid with small and tall cones spread randomly across the area.
2. Ask players to close their eyes.
3. Hide objects such as stickers, bean bags, toys, figures, pinnies etc under separate cones (any object small enough to fit under a cone BUT large enough they cannot put in their mouths and swallow - if in doubt leave it out).
4. Play 30-second rounds.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Players dribble between cones looking for treasure.
2. To “lift a rock” (check under a cone), the player must first complete 5 toe taps or 5 side-to-sides with their ball.

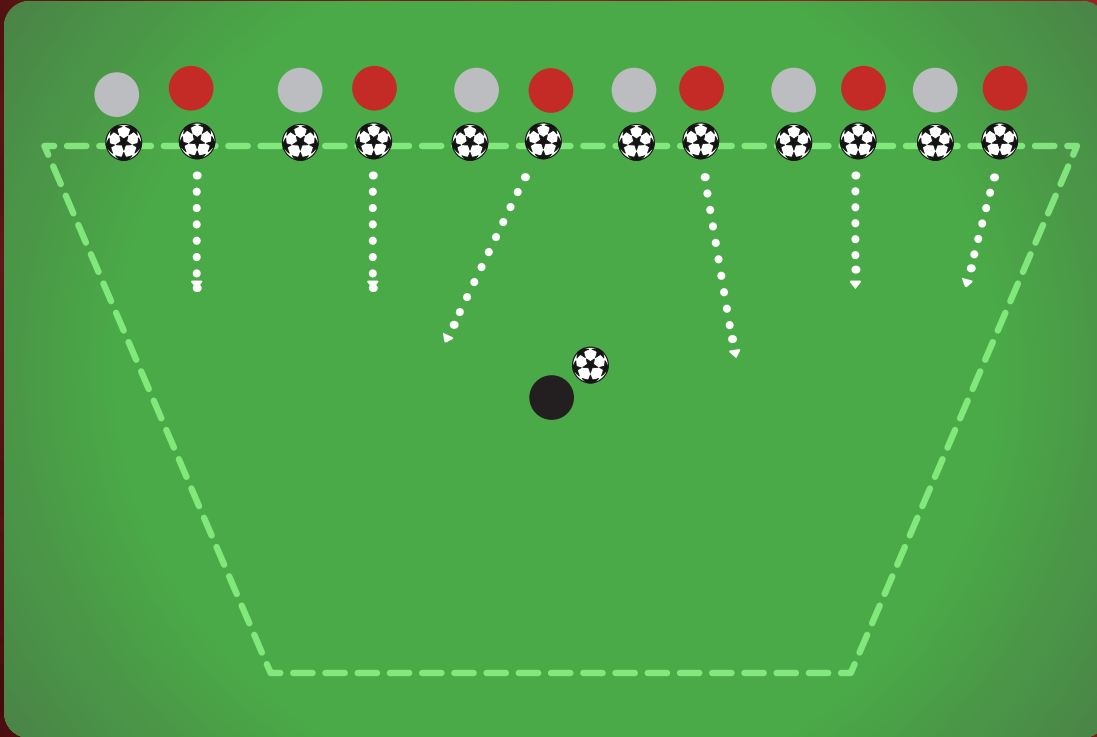
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to use two feet to change direction with the ball.
- Try to take lots of little touches to keep the ball close.



WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Cone out a funnel shape as shown for the pitch with the longest side being 20m.
2. Parents should participate alongside their child.
3. All players are positioned on the 20m line facing the coach.
4. No ball required – great as a warm-up activity.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Players are “dogs” (they can pick a name like Snoopy, a dog from Paw Patrol or a dog from their own life).
2. Players must get from one side of the area to the other without being tagged.
3. The coach/parent starts as the “Big Dog” trying to tag players.
4. If a player is tagged, they also become a “Big Dog” to help the coach/parent.

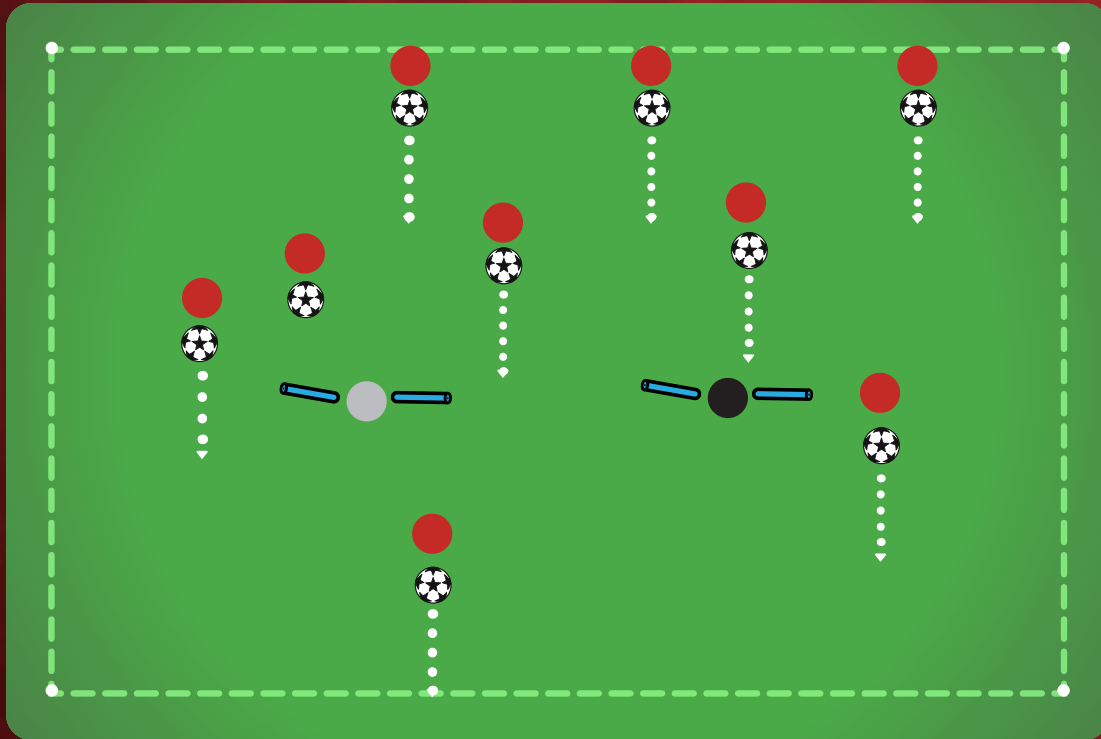
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to change direction quickly if a tagger is close.
- Try to be brave and run as fast as you can into space to see if you can out run your opponent with the ball.



THE OCTOPUS



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up a 20m wide x 12m long rectangle.
2. The coach and another adult start as the octopus with the pool noodles.
3. Players and their adults line up along the 20m line facing the coach (octopus).

HOW TO PLAY

1. Dribblers try to cross the area without being tagged by the “octopus”.
2. The coach and other adult are in the middle and use their pool noodles to tag the players.
3. Players get 1 point for every successful crossing. Change the “octopus” every minute.

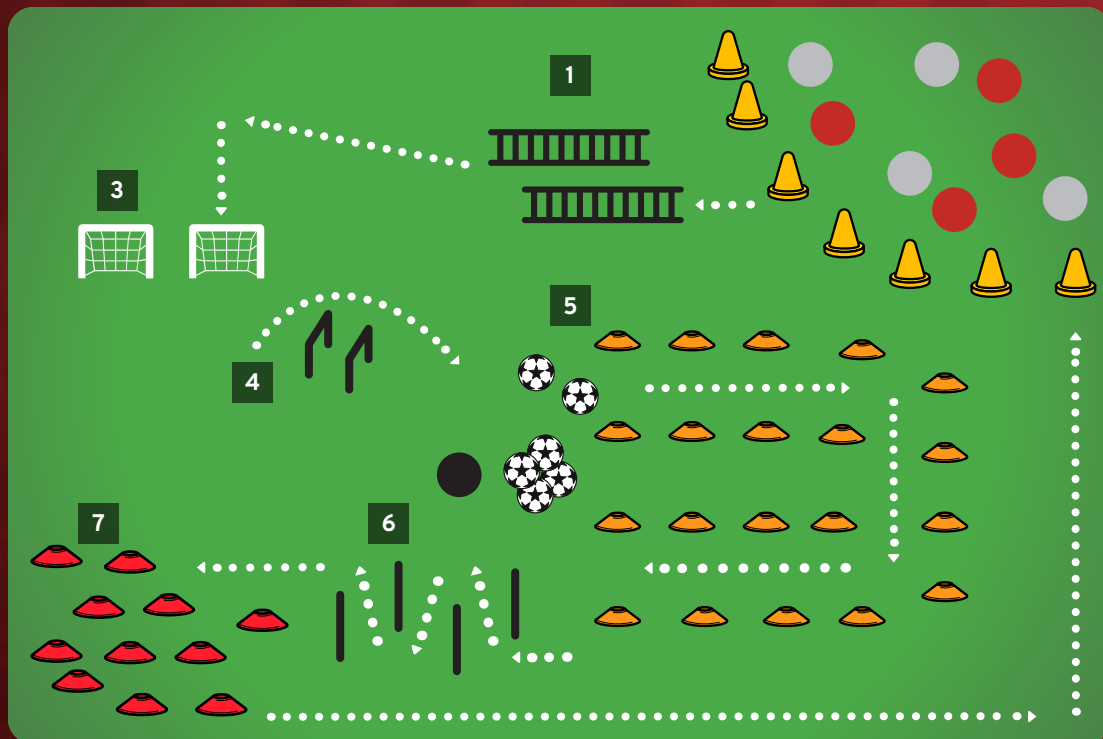
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to dribble the ball using small touches.
- Try to keep the ball within one step in front of you.
- Try to dribble fast into open space.



OBSTACLE COURSE



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up a fun obstacle course as shown using equipment where players can dodge, climb under, and move through.
2. On the first run-through, encourage parents to go alongside the child to guide and engage them.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Tell players they are on a journey through a forest and they must rescue the lost toys.
2. Players go over ladders (stairs), crawl under mini goals, jump over hurdles (fences), steer a boat through the river (ball and coned area) and weave through poles (forest).
3. Collect a toy (cone) at the end and bring it back to the start.

HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Can you look up while moving and see where to go next?
- How fast can you go?
- Can you find the fastest way to get through?



ME AND A BALL ACTIVITY



READY STEADY WOBBLE



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Cone off a 20m x 20m area.
2. Place goals on the outside of the area facing inwards.
3. Each player has a ball and a cone to put on their head.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Players have 1 minute to score as many goals as they can.
2. Players must dribble with a cone on their head and score without it falling off.
3. Goals only count if the cone remains on their head.

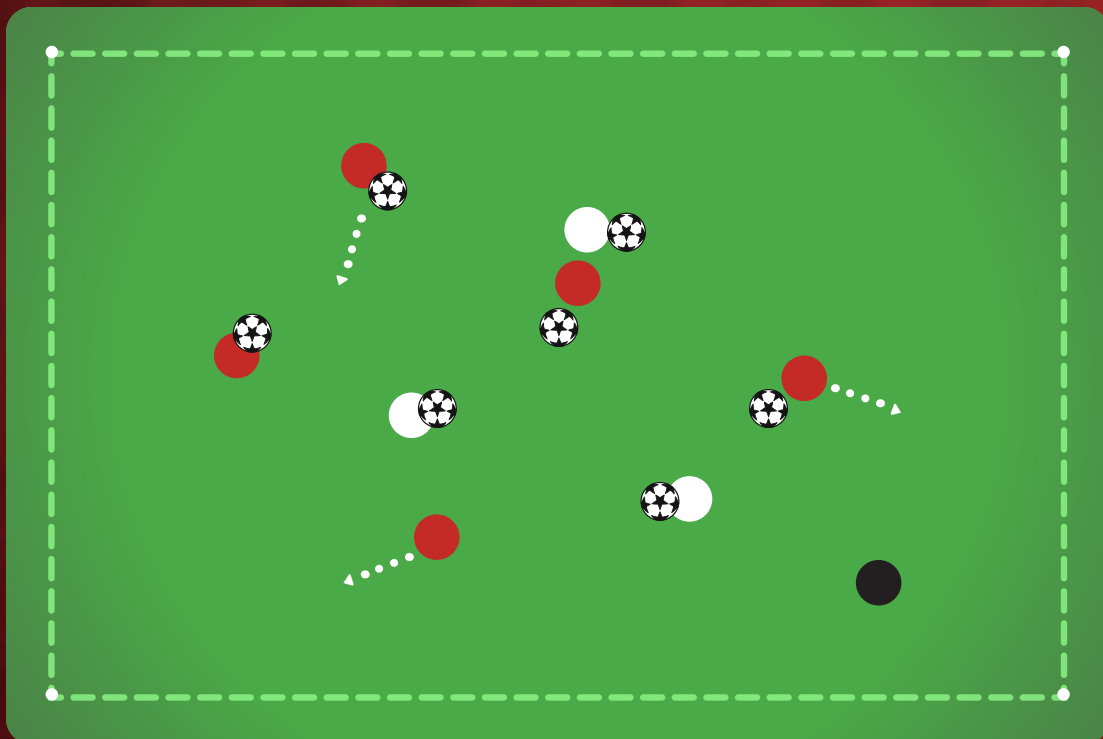
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to dribble fast for short bursts, then slow down smoothly.
- Try to change direction if another player is nearby.



BUMPER CARS



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up a rectangle area appropriate to space available.
2. All players with a ball:
 - Players (red) ball at feet
 - Taggers (white) with ball in hand
 - Change area size pending success or numbers of players.

HOW TO PLAY

1. 2-3 players start with a ball in their hands (Taggers).
2. Dribblers move around the grid keeping their ball close to avoid being hit.
3. Taggers move through the grid and throw their ball to try to knock a Dribbler's ball away.

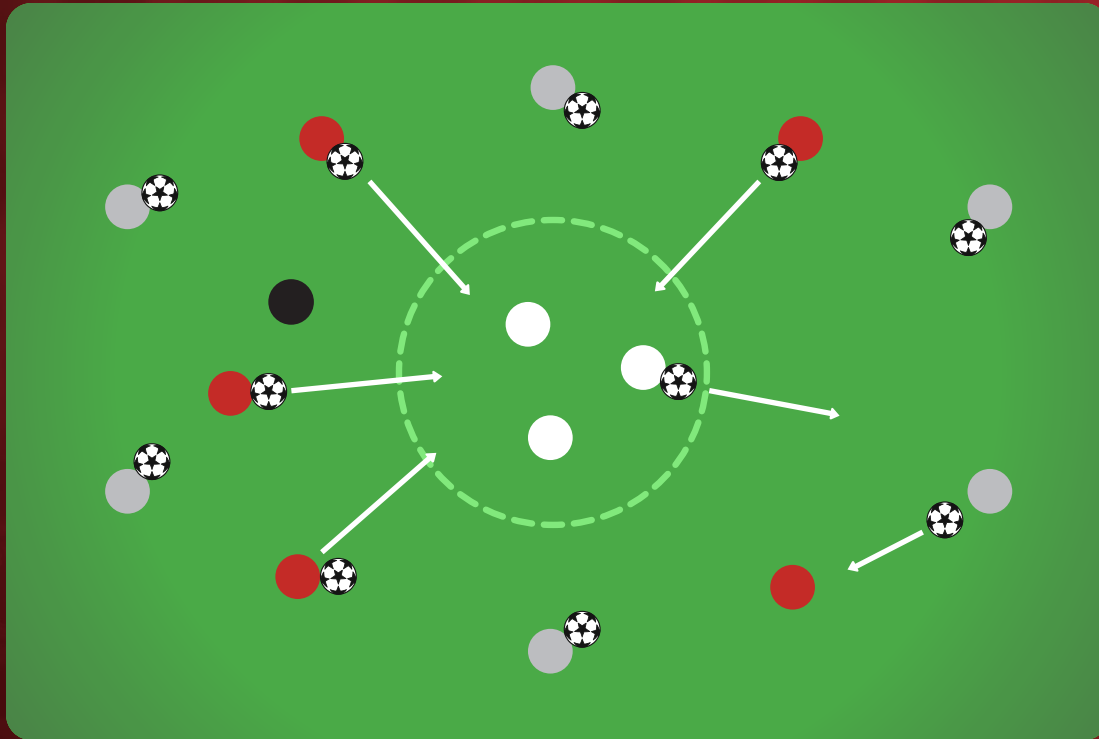
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to shield the ball with your body.
- Try to turn your body away from the tagger.
- Try to hide the ball in your feet.



PIRATES AND LIFEGUARDS



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Create a beach (circle shape) roughly 15 m in diameter.
2. 3 players are placed on the beach (inside the circle) without a ball.
3. 5 players are placed 10 metres away from the circle with a ball.
4. Adults are on the outside and have a ball nearby to give to a child who needs a new ball.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Define a specific zone to be the “Beach”.
2. Pirates (red): Must get their treasure (ball) buried on the beach to score.
3. Lifeguards (white): If ball enters beach, strike it far away into open space.

HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

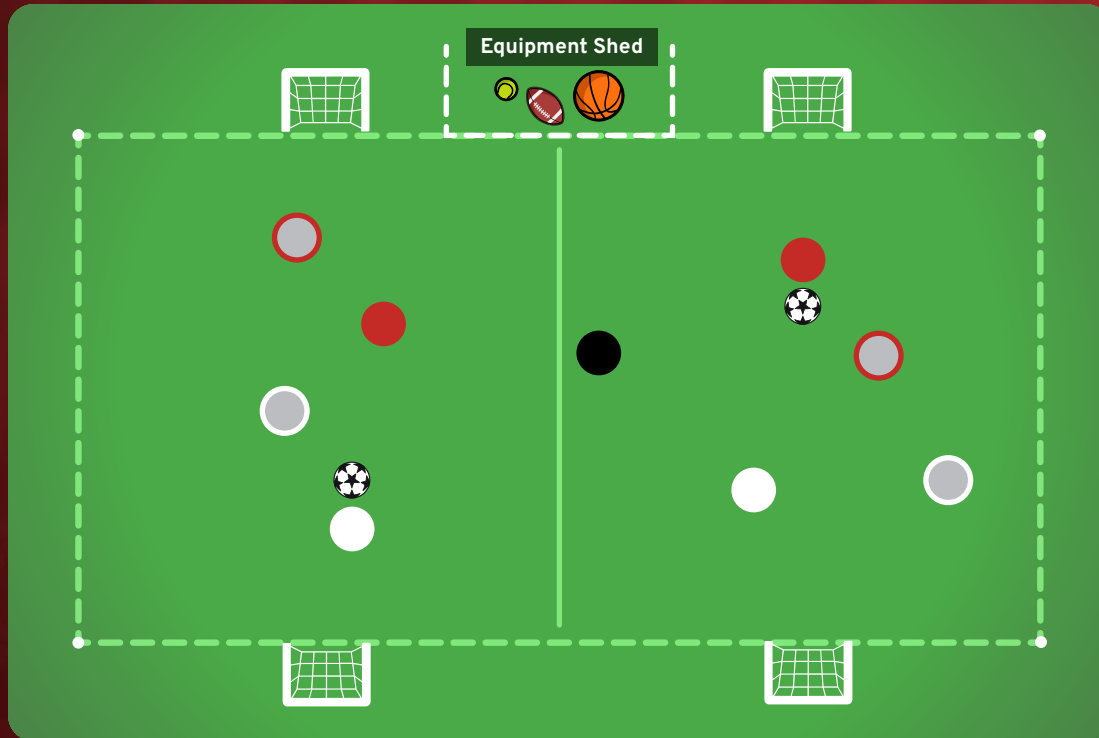
- Try to keep the ball very close to your feet at all times.
- Try to use both inside and outside of your feet to dribble.
- Try to practise gentle taps to keep the ball under control.
- Remind Pirates that having their ball kicked away is just part of the game; they should simply go get it and try again.



SMALL SIDED GAMES



BALL BONANZA!



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Set up two fields side by side, size can vary based on space available.
2. Have a variety of balls to play with (larger, soft, small, rugby ball, tennis ball etc.).
3. 2v2 games.
4. 3 min games.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Players play with a soccer ball and try to score in each others goal. Adults support and if necessary each child can start with a ball.
2. Once a player has scored a goal with a soccer ball, they run to the equipment shed and play with a different ball and try to score with their new, different non-soccer ball.
3. If a player knocks their new ball out of bounds or if they score a goal, they return to using a soccer ball again.
4. Each time a player scores with a soccer ball they return to the equipment shed to get a new type of ball.

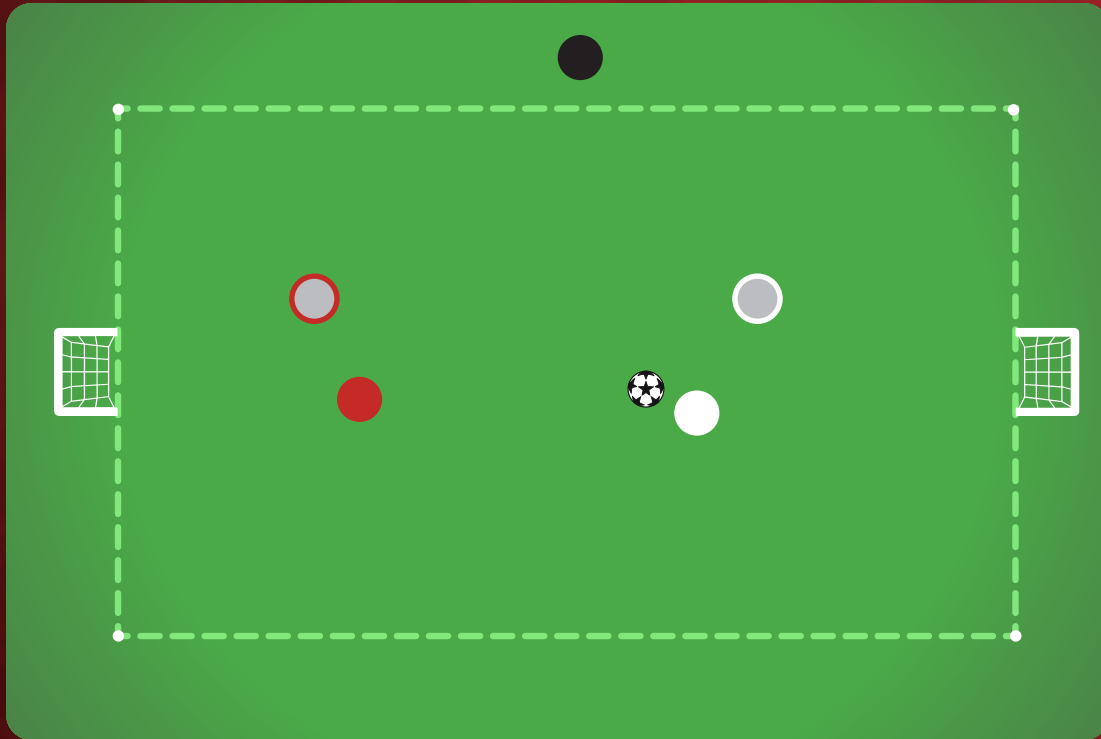
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Can you score a goal quickly?
- Can you run with your ball?



BACKYARD SOCCER!



HOW TO ORGANIZE

A small-sided game emphasising parent-player teamwork

1. Organize players into 2v2.
2. (1 player and a parent vs 1 player and a parent/guardian)
3. Start with children having a ball each.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Play a 2v2 game with one child and one parent/guardian per team.
2. Parents should help the children as much as possible during play.
3. If the ball goes behind the goal, grab the nearest ball to keep moving.
4. If the ball goes off the side, keep playing or have the coach restart with a new ball.

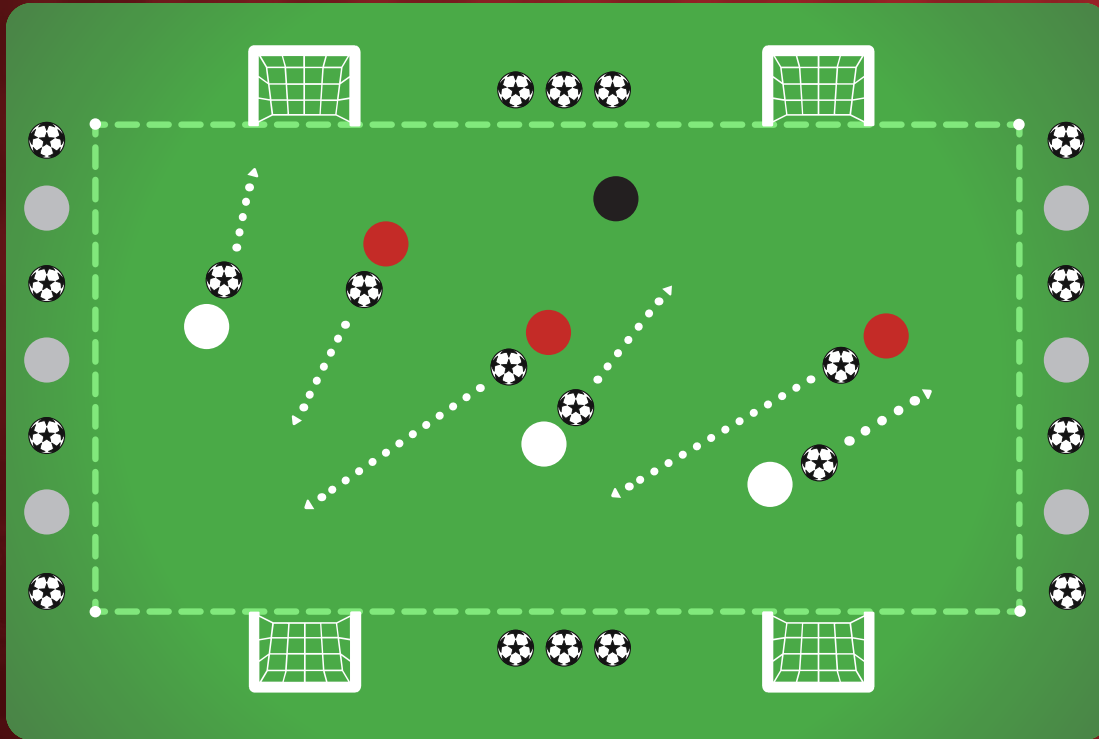
HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to use small touches to control the ball and keep it away from opponents.
- Try dribbling with both feet, switching feet often.



GOAL!



HOW TO ORGANIZE

1. Two teams of three are placed on the field with 1 or 2 goals at each end.
2. Each player starts with a soccer ball.
3. Spare balls and adults are placed around the outside of the field.
4. Once a player has scored, give them another ball to avoid being hit while collecting one from a goal.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Every player plays as an individual within their team and can score on any goal.
2. Continuous Play: After scoring, players get a new ball from a grown up and head for a different goal.
3. Adults Role: Adults provide the new balls count the goals and help players stay inside the field.
4. Celebration: Encourage a big celebration for every goal – high fives, bows, or ‘power stances’.

HOW TO COACH

Challenges:

- Try to keep the ball close to your feet while moving.
- Try dribbling with both feet, switching feet when the ball goes close to your other foot.