

U9-U12 Coaching Curriculum

This curriculum is designed, primarily, with a game-based methodology. This gives the kids a lot of chance to directly transfer the skills they are learning to the game. We will also use game constraints to try and evoke the actions we want to see. **We do not want players to kick the ball away!** Please do not celebrate these actions and, if you can, please get parents onto the same wavelength. Kicking the ball hard and far does not achieve anything in the game of soccer and will limit each child's learning opportunities. These habits can be hard to break as they get older, so the more we can drive it home now, the better.

In our Saturday games, we will be playing with goalkeepers. Players should rotate the position each game - even half. Allow players some freedom to play as a goalkeeper in practice too.

The practices are based mainly on technical mastery, but we are starting to introduce some basic tactical concepts. The older players will focus a bit more on the tactical side.

Here are some guidelines that our curriculum is based on:

- The players must have lots of individual ball contacts.
- The players must be encouraged to travel, turn, and dribble with the ball as a priority.
- Avoid making every decision for the players. Allow time for exploration and experimentation. This includes during games - give some guidance but mainly, allow them to play! A good rule of thumb is to not directly coach the player on the ball (or perhaps even while the ball is in play).
 - Accept that there will be many mistakes. Develop a kind, caring, calm and patient approach. Provide an environment where kids feel safe to make mistakes and grow from them.
- Accept that practices and games will look messy, this is part of the kids learning.
- Passing will become more of a focus in these age groups but still, focus on the individual technical mastery as the priority.
 - Decisions should be made by the player. Allow them to make mistakes! Ask why they made that decision; the answers will sometimes surprise you with what they were actually trying to do.
 - The players' physical literacy must continue to be developed. We want children with great movement capacity, and this will help whatever the sport or activity.

If you coach with these things in mind, and use the guidance in this resource, then you will be giving your players a great start. If you are inexperienced, there are practices to help guide you and give you some ideas, but you must also engage with each child so that you develop a deeper understanding and greater knowledge of the young children who keep coming back each week for you to coach them.

Please stick to the curriculum. Try not to react to something that happened in the previous game and stick to the program! This curriculum is designed with the player's long-term development in mind and we may not see immediate results. Consistently provide the same message and players will start to learn exactly what is needed. We must accept that during games, players might forget everything we have told them, but they will never remember something they have not heard before. Keep the message simple, consistent, and related to what we have been learning in practice. Try to avoid giving too much direction. Coaching points are included with each practice, you should carry these into each game to maintain the consistent message throughout the season.

Above all, have fun and be the best coach you can be! Thank you for volunteering your time to help develop our soccer players!

LEARN TO TRAIN 'L2T' – SESSION PLANS

Lesson #1: Introductions ... Building the Ground Game – Turns & Shielding

<p>ACTIVATION</p> <p>Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>1v1 On Inside with Wall Players on Outside</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players are paired and half of the pairs are on the outside spread around the square Pairs in colours play 1v1 inside of the area but they can use the students on the outside as a wall <p>Can you use the outside players? What help can they give you? What advantage does it give you to play to the outside players? How can you get into the space behind the defender?</p> <p>SOCRATIC APPROACH TO COACHING: Focus on one or two coaching QUESTIONS for entire exercises. Prove the participants with Questions. Ask them to figure out the Answers. Be careful not to give answers TOO SOON. There will be a moment of quiet before they come up with the answers.</p>	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>Free Dribble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players touch every step while moving around the area finding space between the other dribblers. Players roll ball across their body as they dribble. (make sure they cross their legs on roll). Roll then step over with the other foot. URNS: Inside and Outside of Foot Twist-off, Slide <p>ATTENTION SPAN RULE OF THUMB: 'Attention Span' or 'Attention Capacity' on any one exercise is a player's age plus 2 minutes. So, a 10-year-old would have attention capacity of 12 minutes. This keeps our coaching sharp as we have to be well prepared to get the best of the 12 minutes.</p>	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 15x15 or open area</p> <p>Shielding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with players passing in twos on touch. On the coach's command "GO", the player with the ball shields from the other player. Do not run away, attempt to stand your ground. Get half turned so you can see the ball and see the player at the same time. Keep arm out to the side, feet wide apart, and knees bent (staying low with solid base). Attempt to use all parts of the foot but avoid standing on the ball with one foot. Use turns to avoid danger. On "STOP" return to one touch passing. Keep ball in the 'SWEET SPOT' by using bottom of the foot to roll the ball to in inside of the same foot. 	<p>FINAL REFERENCE GAME</p> <p>Area: 25x20 or smaller</p> <p>5v5 Attack Least Protected Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a game of 5v5 etc. four goals are set up, two in each corner of the field several yards from the sideline. Switch the POINT OF ATTACK so they can attack the other side of the field or the Least Protected Goal. Use of turns and Shielding should be encouraged to keep the ball and START OVER or START AGAIN is a phrase we must emphasize in having them play back to 'start the attack again'. A player must be deep (as deep as possible) and must be the RELEASE player for their team. Have them move from side to side as they play the ball to the other side but remain deep. If this player goes forward, another player must drop back and be a PLATFORM (PLAYER FACING FORWARD WHO CAN PLAY FORWARD. <p>AT THE END OF THE LESSON CAN THEY PARTICIPANTS ANSWER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WHAT DOES 'START OVER/AGAIN' MEAN? WHAT IS A PLATFORM?

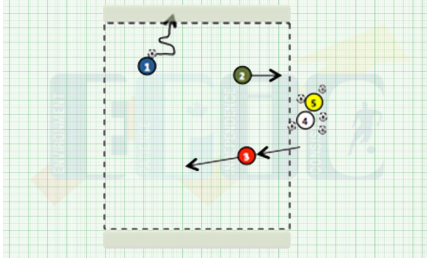
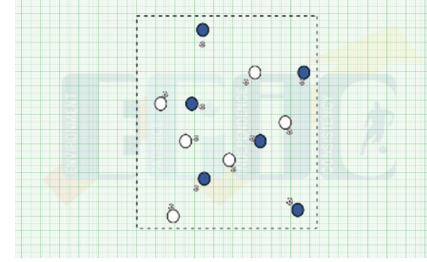
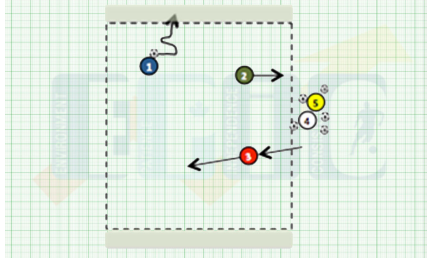
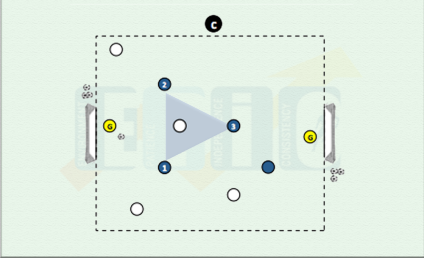

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Lesson #2: Continued work on Turns and Keeping Possession as Individual (Introduce PLATFORMS)

<p>ACTIVATION</p> <p>Area: 20x15 or smaller</p> <p>3v3 Four Goal Game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage use of turns from Lesson One Have one player behind the ball (PLATFORM) and one in front of the ball and behind the defenders. "We call this balance in attack." <p>PLATFORM: A player facing forward who is able to play forward.</p> <p>"How can you improve this?" (wider, farther apart, supporting farther off of the back)</p>	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>Free Dribble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players touch every step while moving around the area finding space between the other dribblers. MAKE THE BALL MOVE SIDE TO SIDE. Players roll ball across their body as they dribble. (make sure they cross their legs on roll). ROLL THEN STEP OVER WITH THE OTHER FOOT. <p>TURNS: Inside and Outside of Foot Twist-off (180 and 360), Slide</p> <p>Introduce: STEP OVER TURN</p>	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 20x15 or smaller</p> <p>3v3 Four Goal Game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage use of turns from Lesson One HAVE ONE PLAYER BEHIND DEFENDERS AND IN FRONT OF DEFENDERS. ONE FOR 'BEHIND' (PENETRATION) AND ONE FOR 'IN FRONT' (PLATFORM/POSSESSION). THIS IS BALANCE IN ATTACK. <p>"Player at the back, what can you say to help the teammate?" (Start Over or Start Again)</p>	<p>FINAL REFERENCE GAME</p> <p>Area: 25x20 or smaller</p> <p>4v4/5v5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open game but encourage keeping possession as an individual....shielding, turning and facing Balance in attack with a player forward and back (PLATFORM)....if four then width on either side.

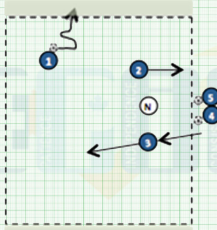
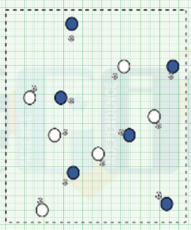
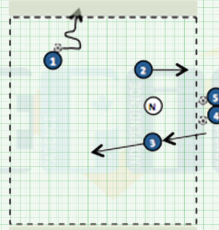
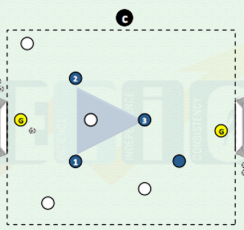

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Lesson #3: Introduction to Transition Mentality “Click”

			
<p>ACTIVATION</p> <p>Area: 15x12 or smaller</p> <p>Transition – 1v1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal is scored the defending player is off and next player comes in (remain in order of when they came off) If ball out of bounds, player that knocks it out is off and new ball played in to other player in one half of the field. Dribble across line and stop or turn within 2 metres for a goal (any further and the other player gets ball and the dribbler is off). Encouraged to “Click” – the moment they realize they have to attack the other end....the moment they realize they have enter the game 	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>Free Dribble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touch every step. MAKE THE BALL MOVE SIDE TO SIDE. Rolls and rolls with step over with opposite foot. <p>REVIEW TURNS: Inside and Outside of Foot Twist-off (180 and 360), Slide, Slide with Drag Back, Step Over Turn</p> <p>INTRODUCE: STOP TURN</p>	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 15x12 or smaller</p> <p>Transition – 1v1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to Transition “Click” exercise. Emphasis on use of change of direction/TURNS “After scoring how can you best attack the next player?” – immediately, don’t give chance to recover. Defenders “how can you best defend when it is your turn to enter the game?” – drop down and defend the line first 	<p>FINAL REFERENCE GAME</p> <p>Area: 25x20 or smaller</p> <p>4v4/5v5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on transition from attack to defense and defense to attack “Click” Can they recognize that they must quickly change shape when going A2D or D2A. “What ACTIONS will give your team an advantage when you win the ball or when your goalkeeper gets the ball?” “Can you ‘Click’ before the opposition ‘Clicks’?” “What can you do when your team loses the ball?” –drop down and tuck inside, get goal side, immediate pressure on the ball from one or two players 

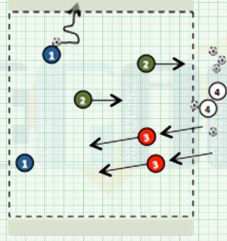
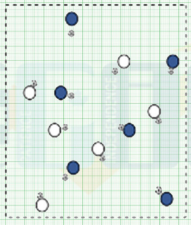
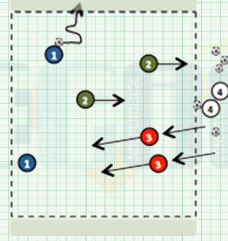
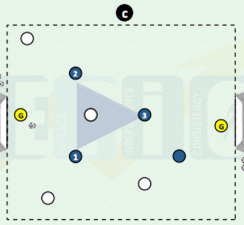

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Lesson #4: Review Transition Mentality “Click” and Introduce Visual Awareness

			
<p>ACTIVATION</p> <p>Area: 15x12 or smaller</p> <p>Transition – 1v1+Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now 2v1 in transition (one neutral player who stays in the game) Player coming on must now be aware of two players and will have to DROP DOWN to defend line first. Attacking players can score quickly with a pass if the second player gets to the opposite end line “Clicks” and a pass is played after the goal. If ball goes out of bounds, player that knocks it out is off and new ball played in to other player in one half of the field. Dribble across line and stop or turn within 2 metres for a goal (any further and the other player gets ball and the dribbler is off) Encouraged to “Click” – the moment they realize they have to attack the other end....the moment they realize they have enter the game to defend. 	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>Free Dribble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touch every step. MAKE THE BALL MOVE SIDE TO SIDE. Rolls and rolls with step over with opposite foot. <p>REVIEW TURNS: Inside and Outside of Foot Twist-off (180 and 360), Slide, step over turn & stop turn.</p> <p>INTRODUCE: ZIDANE (slower and more shielding like when compared to the Maradona) AND CRUYFF</p>	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 15x12 or smaller</p> <p>Transition - 1v1+Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to Transition “Click” exercise. Emphasis on use of change of direction/TURNS “After scoring how can you best attack the next player?” – Immediately, don’t give chance to recover or neutral player gets to the other end and we score with one pass. Defenders “how can you best defend when it is your turn to enter the game?” – drop down and defend the line first. 	<p>FINAL REFERENCE GAME</p> <p>Area: 25x20 or smaller</p> <p>4v4/5v5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on transition from attack to defense and defense to attack “Click” Can they recognize that they must quickly change shape when going A2D or D2A. “What actions will give your team an advantage when you win the ball or when your goalkeeper gets the ball?” “Can you ‘Click’ before the opposition ‘Clicks’?” “What can you do when your team loses the ball?” –drop down and tuck inside, get goal side, immediate pressure on the ball from one or two players 

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Lesson #5: Introduction to Passing & Control (Open the Curtains & Breaking the Line by Placing Yourself Behind the Curtains)

			
<p>ACTIVATION</p> <p>Area: 18x14 or smaller</p> <p>Introductory Game - 2v2 – Transition with three additional players</p> <p>Transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A – 1. Attack quickly, 2. Overlap or pen run behind defender, 3. Dribble to least protected side of both defenders pulled across. D – 1. Drop Down and defend goal first, 2. Closest player to the ball close down. 	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>Free Dribble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touch every step. MAKE THE BALL MOVE SIDE TO SIDE. Rolls and rolls with step over with opposite foot. CAN YOU ROLL BALL BACK UNDER BODY TOWARD STANDING FOOT. <p>REVIEW TURNS: Stop Turn and Cruyff Turn must to become STOCK TURNS which all of our players have mastered.</p> <p>INTRODUCE or Review: Zidane and Triangle Turns (drag back with hop and open up)</p>	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 18x14 or smaller</p> <p>Transition – 2v2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A – 1. Attack quickly, 2. Overlap or pen run behind defender, 3. Dribble to least protected side of both defenders pulled across. D – 1. Drop Down and defend goal first, 2. Closest player to the ball close down. <p>With the third player, one player drops to help keep possession (in front of defenders) and the other can try to penetrate (behind the defenders)there should be a focus on “how does your action influence the defenders?”</p>	<p>FINAL REFERENCE GAME</p> <p>Area: 25x20 or smaller</p> <p>4v4/5v5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defending – Drop Down and Closest Player to the Ball Close Down. Attacking – Possession Options, Penetrative Options, Get in Curtains to BREAK A LINE, Attack Least Protected Space. 

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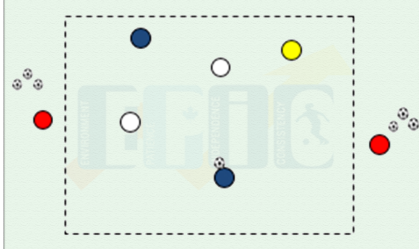
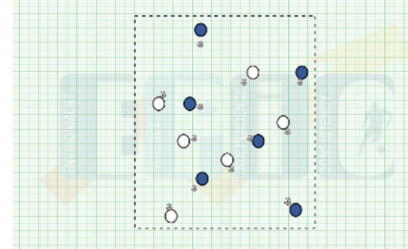
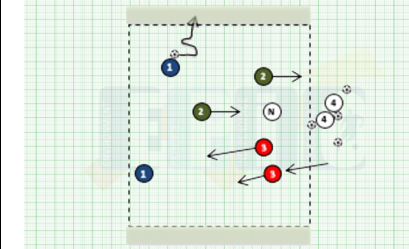
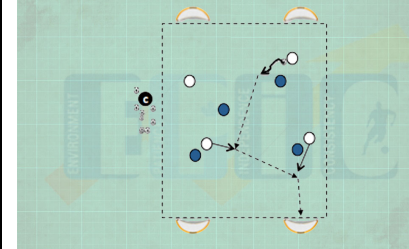

Lesson #6: Continued Work on Transition and Attentiveness ... Introduction of “Open Up”.

Reinforce (Open the Curtains & Breaking the Line by Placing Yourself Behind the Curtains)

<p>ACTIVATION</p> <p>Area: 20x20 or smaller</p> <p>Passing with Visual Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONE ball for every THREE players in the area, two touch and cannot play the same ball twice in a row. VISUAL AWARENESS. “What is visual awareness?” “Most information comes in through eyes so as we pass can you be looking around as you move for players in your group, players in the other group, the ball, and where you are on the field?” “Find spaces between players, curtains to pass through” “Can you be looking side to side and see if you can use players as the frame of the window, if that frame gets too small can you move to a larger one?” May have to go to passing in twos for a few minutes to discuss passing technique basics....shoulders back, hips forward, STEP BACKWARDS (foot down behind you) after every pass. 	<p>TECHNICAL REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 20x20 or smaller</p> <p>Controlling ‘In’ The Air</p> <p>With a partner.</p> <p>Partner throws ball side to side as the other uses the inside of the foot to ‘bounce’ the ball back into their hands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toss should ensure that the players move side to side. Foot farther out than the knee Toe pointed up Use a hop to raise your foot rather than simply lifting leg higher 	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 20x20 or smaller</p> <p>Transition – 2v2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A – 1. Attack quickly, 2. Overlap or pen run behind defender, 3. Dribble to least protected side of both defenders pulled across. CREATE 2V1 THEN WHEN SECOND DEFENDER COMES TO HELP PLAY BEHIND ... PEN RUN OR PEN PLACEMENT. D – 1. Drop Down and defend goal first, 2. Closest player to the ball close down. <p>With the third player, one player drops to help keep possession (in front of defenders) and the other can try to penetrate (behind the defenders)there should be a focus on “how does your action influence the defenders?”</p>	<p>FINAL REFERENCE GAME</p> <p>Area: 25x20 or smaller</p> <p>4v4/5v5</p> <p>Final Game (Play with Neutral Player if one available)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defending – Drop Down and Closest Player to the Ball Close Down. Attacking – Possession Options, Penetrative Options, Get in Curtains to BREAK A LINE, Attack Least Protected Space.

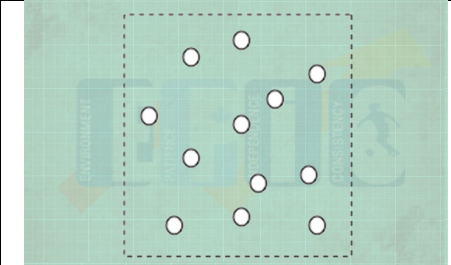
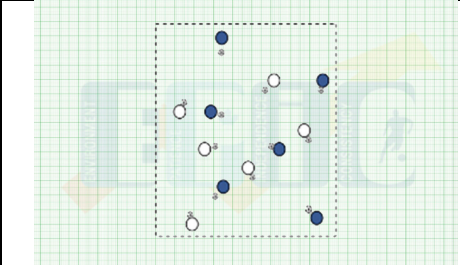
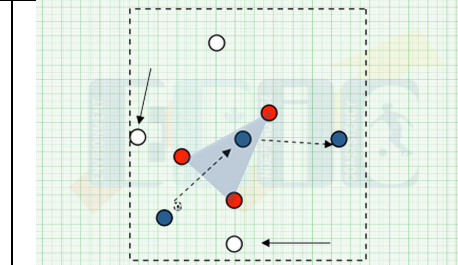
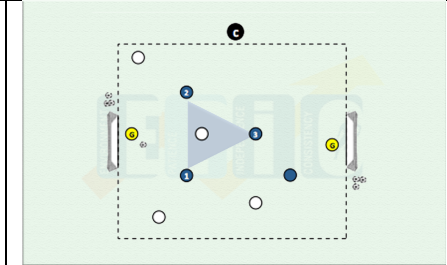
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Lesson #7: Consistent Vocabulary and Establishing OPENING UP.

			
<p>ACTIVATION</p> <p>Area: 10x10 or smaller</p> <p>2v2+1+2 End Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Flatten-out” immediately on each side. • One player move into a position to “Break the Line” • ENSURE THAT STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN THEY RECEIVE A PASS, THEY SHOULD LET THE BALL RUN ACROSS THE BODY “OPEN UP” 	<p>TECHNICAL REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>Dribbling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free dribble and touch every step making the ball move side to side. 	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 24x15 or smaller</p> <p>Transition - 3v2 – Players Can Also Get a Point if they Perform Stop Turn or Cruyff Turn Appropriately</p> <p>Transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A – 1. Attack quickly, 2. Overlap or pen run behind defender, 3. Dribble to least protected side of both defenders pulled across. CREATE 2V1 THEN WHEN SECOND DEFENDER COMES TO HELP PLAY BEHIND ... PEN RUN OR PEN PLACEMENT. • D – 1. Drop Down and defend goal first, 2. Closest player to the ball close down. <p>With the third player, one player drops to help keep possession (in front of defenders) and the other can try to penetrate (behind the defenders). There should be a focus on “how does your action influence the defenders?”</p>	<p>FINAL REFERENCE GAME</p> <p>Area: 25x20 or smaller</p> <p>4v4/5v5 Attack Least Protected Goal</p> <p>All REFERENCES including TURNS & OUT PLAYING OPPONENT</p> 

LEARN TO TRAIN 'L2T' – SESSION PLANS

Lesson #8: Review of Dribbling and Control from Air.

			
<p>ACTIVATION</p> <p>Area: 20x20 or smaller</p> <p>Pinnie Tag</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone tucks a pinnie into the back of their pants/shorts that must hang out at least 1/2 way (a tail), On the coach's command, all players try to pull out other players' tails while protecting their own (cannot protect with hands), When a player loses his/her tail, he/she must go outside of the area and perform an activity (push-ups, jumping jacks, etc.) before re-entering the activity, Replace his/her tail before re-entering, The area should be large enough that players are not bumping into each other but small enough that players have to work hard to not lose their tails. 	<p>TECHNICAL REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>Dribbling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review quickly Rolls, Stop Turn, Cruyff Turn. Reinforce inside and outside of the foot TWIST-OFFs...ensure the movement including a 'stop-start' of the ball. Introduce Step Over Turn with a HOP and take away with INSIDE of opposite foot. 	<p>REFERENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Area: 15x15 or smaller</p> <p>6v3 Transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRANSITION FOCUS Three teams....Two teams play together; when ball is lost the team who lost possession becomes the defending team and the other two teams play together to KEEP the ball. FIRST PLAY IN HANDBALL FASHION for a few minutes then go to ball on the ground where players can intercept passes with hands but cannot drop while intercepting. Stop game and show the TRIANGLES and ensure that players are in and out of the triangles. "You are able to break lines in how many directions when you receive it in the triangle?" Flattening out on either side, use of turns, breaking the line Be comfortable under pressure (two players playing short passes and to bring defenders forward then play through or around. BE A PLATFORM and LOOK BEYOND THE DEFENDERS 	<p>FINAL REFERENCE GAME</p> <p>Area: 25x20 or smaller</p> <p>4v4/5v5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take REFERENCES from GAG and apply to game with goals in a 4v4 or 5v5 Develop PLATFORMS for building. LIVE IN THE TRIANGLE Pass Breaks the Line between 1 & 2 to get into 3 3 places themselves in triangles where they can break the line then they can play out the other sides of triangle if necessary Players get across front to build platforms. 